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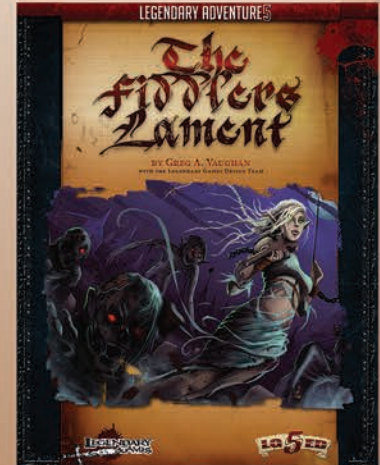
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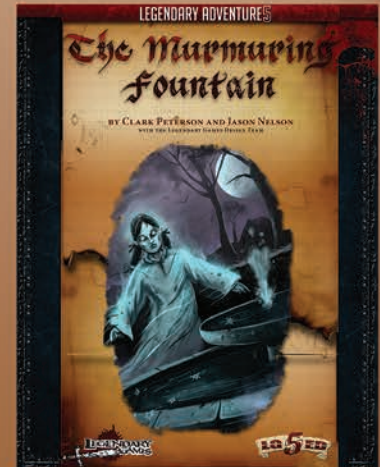
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Editorial

by Steven D. Russell, Illustration by JOHN

Valentine's Day may have come and gone, but what's not to love about hearts? Or, more precisely, what's not to love about blood? This issue devotes several articles to blood. Aaron Phelps gives us a great piece on Blood Stones. I really enjoyed this piece and look forward to using these in my own games. I love both the fluff and the crunch. I have no problem imagining some alchemist or necromancer in the group who keeps a few pouches full of these little dark red dried blood chips that he's always munching on. "They're tasty. Really. You should try one!" I think my favorite part of the article is the contaminants. There is no end to the number of new ones that canny GMs can create for their own campaigns (and the surprises this can cause for unwary players are most excellent).

In *Blood is Life*, Steven Helt offers us a few new feats and spells in addition to several new mysteries. Why not add some elements to the game allowing some individuals to use their blood to special effect? Frankly, the Blood Vigor feat is a really nice bit of (ahem) flavor for a campaign. If orc barbarians aren't scary enough, what about an orc barbarian who sometimes consumes some of its opponent's blood which then makes that orc even tougher than a raging orc barbarian already is?

The templated creature in this issue has the nasty habit of spending time next to creatures who are already bleeding, and making that creature's bleeding even worse. Nice, right? In addition, it has the terrifying capacity to drain the blood of victims. Sure, this trope has been used to tremendous effect elsewhere, but, in this case, the creature can use the power it gains from draining blood to transform itself into a person of youth and beauty.

The spell showcased in this issue from *101 Subterranean Spells* is *bloodsense*. I think that the material component for the spell is a bit on the complicated side and would encourage GMs to play around with it a little bit (after all, there's no way for casters who are just barely the right level to get access to the spell to also get access to the component). But, the spell itself fits nicely with this issue. After all, once it's been cast, the caster has a supernatural ability to detect other creatures by being aware of their blood. Furthermore, there are some nice, weird added tweaks to the spell, when multiple people are using it. See what you think.

In addition to the themed material, we have a wonderful pile of reviews for you to get through and a couple (more!) brilliant pieces by Creighton Broadhurst.



Dread Sayona Creature Template

by Steven D. Russell, Illustrations by Bob Greyenstein

Dread sayona covet youth above all else. Stories of their origins claim that the first was a vain woman who grew old and whose lover left her for a younger paramour; the woman avenged herself by bathing in the blood of her lover's children, then killed herself. Cursed by the gods for such a vile act, dread sayona now wander the world crying tears of blood and preying on beautiful young creatures—slaying them, stealing their beauty, and transforming them into ghastly undead fiends to forever share the dread sayona's fate. After absorbing the blood of youth through their skin they either appear as they did in the spring of their youth and beauty or they appear as revolting, ancient withered corpses. They are often called "weeping vampires" though they absorb blood rather than consume it.

Creating a Dread Sayona Creature

"Dread Sayona" is an acquired template that can be added to any creature with an Intelligence score of 3 or greater (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

A dread sayona uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

CR: +3

Alignment: Changes to Chaotic Evil.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead with the appropriate augmented subtype. Do not recalculate HD, base attack bonuses, saves, or skill points. Size is unchanged.

Senses: A dread sayona gains lifesense 120 ft., darkvision 120 ft., and the scent special ability.

Armor Class: Natural armor improves by +10.

Defensive Abilities: channel resistance +6, fast healing 5 (if the dread sayona's CR is 6 or higher increase to 10, if 12 or higher increase to 20, see living form); DR 5/good and silver (if the dread sayona's CR is 6 or higher increase to DR 10/good and silver, if 12 or higher increase to 15/good and silver); Immune acid, cold, electricity, sonic, undead traits

Special Abilities: A dread sayona creature retains all the special abilities of the base creature, plus the special abilities as described below:

Absorb Blood (Su): A dread sayona adjacent to a bleeding creature automatically accelerates the bleeding, dealing 2 points of Con damage to that creature once per round at the start of its turn, the blood flows in a stream to the dread sayona as it absorbs the blood through its skin.

Accursed Gaze (Su): *blood curse* (see below), 30 feet, Will DC 10 +1/2 the dread sayona's HD + her Cha modifier negates. This is a necromantic curse effect.

Bleed (Ex): A dread sayona's melee attacks inflict the bleed condition equal to its Str modifier (minimum 1).

Blood Drain (Su): A dread sayona can consume blood from any creature it touches once per round by making a successful touch attack. This deals 1d6 points of Constitution damage. The dread sayona heals 5 hit points or gains 5 temporary hit points for 1 hour (up to a maximum number of temporary hit points equal to its full normal hit points) each round it drains blood.

Command Ghouls (Su): As a free action, a dread sayona can automatically command all normal and dread ghouls within 30 feet (as the *command undead* spell). Ghouls never attack a dread sayona unless compelled.

Create Spawn (Su): When a dread sayona kills a creature with its absorb blood or blood drain ability, the victim rises 24 hours later as a dread ghoul with the blood drain ability. A *protection from evil* or *gentle repose* spell cast on the corpse prevents this.

Dreaded Aura (Su): A revealed dread sayona radiates a 60-ft. aura of fear; those in the area of effect must attempt a Will save DC (10 +1/2 the dread sayona's HD + her Cha modifier). Failure means that the victim cowers in fear for 1d4+1 rounds. A successful save renders the target shaken for 1 round. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

Living Form (Su): As an immediate action, a dread sayona can transform into a young, beautiful person for 12 hours. It can only use this ability if it has absorbed or drained blood in the past hour. In this form, the dread sayona has the aura of a living creature instead of an undead (for the purpose of *detect undead*, *true seeing* and



similar effects), its fast healing doubles, positive energy attacks (such as channel energy) deal no damage to it and instead heal it. However it cannot use its fear or gaze attack in this form.

Exposure to holy water negates this form for 12 hours.

Paralysis (Su): A dread sonya's melee and touch attacks paralyze their victims unless they succeed at a successful Fortitude save (DC 10 +1/2 the dread sayona's HD + her Cha modifier).

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +8 (+4 to attack and damage, +4 to Climb and

Swim skill checks, +4 to Strength and CMB checks, +4 to CMD), Dex +6 (+3 to ranged attack rolls; AC and touch AC, initiative checks, and Reflex saves; +3 to Acrobatics, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Fly, Ride, Sleight of Hand, and Stealth checks; add +3 to any of the base creature's Dexterity-based DCs), +6 Cha (+3 to Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Perform, and Use Magic Device checks; +3 to attempts to influence others, and Channel Energy DCs, +3 to any of the base creature's Charisma-based DCs). Being undead, a dread sayona has no Constitution score.

Llorona

CR 10

XP 9,600

Dread Sayona Scorpionfolk

CE Large Undead (augmented [monstrous humanoid])

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft. lifesense 120 ft. scent; **Perception** +17

Aura accursed gaze (30 ft., DC 21), dread aura (60 ft., DC 21)

DEFENSE

AC 29, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 25 (+4 Dex, +16 natural, -1 size)

hp 132 (12d10+66)

Fort +6, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities: channel resistance +6, fast healing 10 (see living form); DR 10/good and silver; Immune acid, cold, electricity, sonic, undead traits; Resist fire 5; SR 18

OFFENSIVE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee sting +20 (1d8+8 plus poison, bleed and paralysis), 2 claws +17 (1d6+4 plus bleed and paralysis), touch attack +17 (blood drain and paralysis)

Special Attacks bleed (8), blood drain (1d6 con), absorb blood, command ghouls, paralysis (DC 21), poison, trample (1d6+4, DC 20)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

1/day – *major image* (DC 15)

2/day – *mirror image*

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 18, **Con** -, **Int** 18, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 35 (39 vs. trip attempts)

Feats Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (sting)

Skills Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +17, Perception +17, Sense Motive +15

Languages Common, Terran

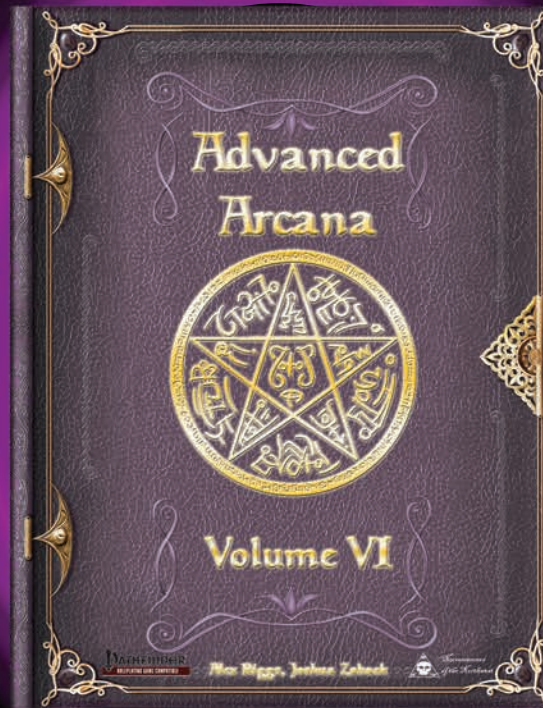
SQ create spawn, living form

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Sting – injury; *save* Fort DC 16; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Dex; *cure* 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.



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20 Things to Loot From the Wizard's Body

By Creighton Broadhurst, Illustrations by Lexa Leksa and Alex Troll



During the course of their adventures, our heroes are likely to slay many evil wizards (and loot their bodies).

Sadly, most such individuals seem to never carry anything beyond a spell component pouch, a few magic items and some loose coinage. Not only is this boring, it's also utterly lacking in verisimilitude—after all, everyone carries odds and ends in their pockets. Use the table below to generate such items of minor interest and make looting the body of a slain wizard much more interesting!

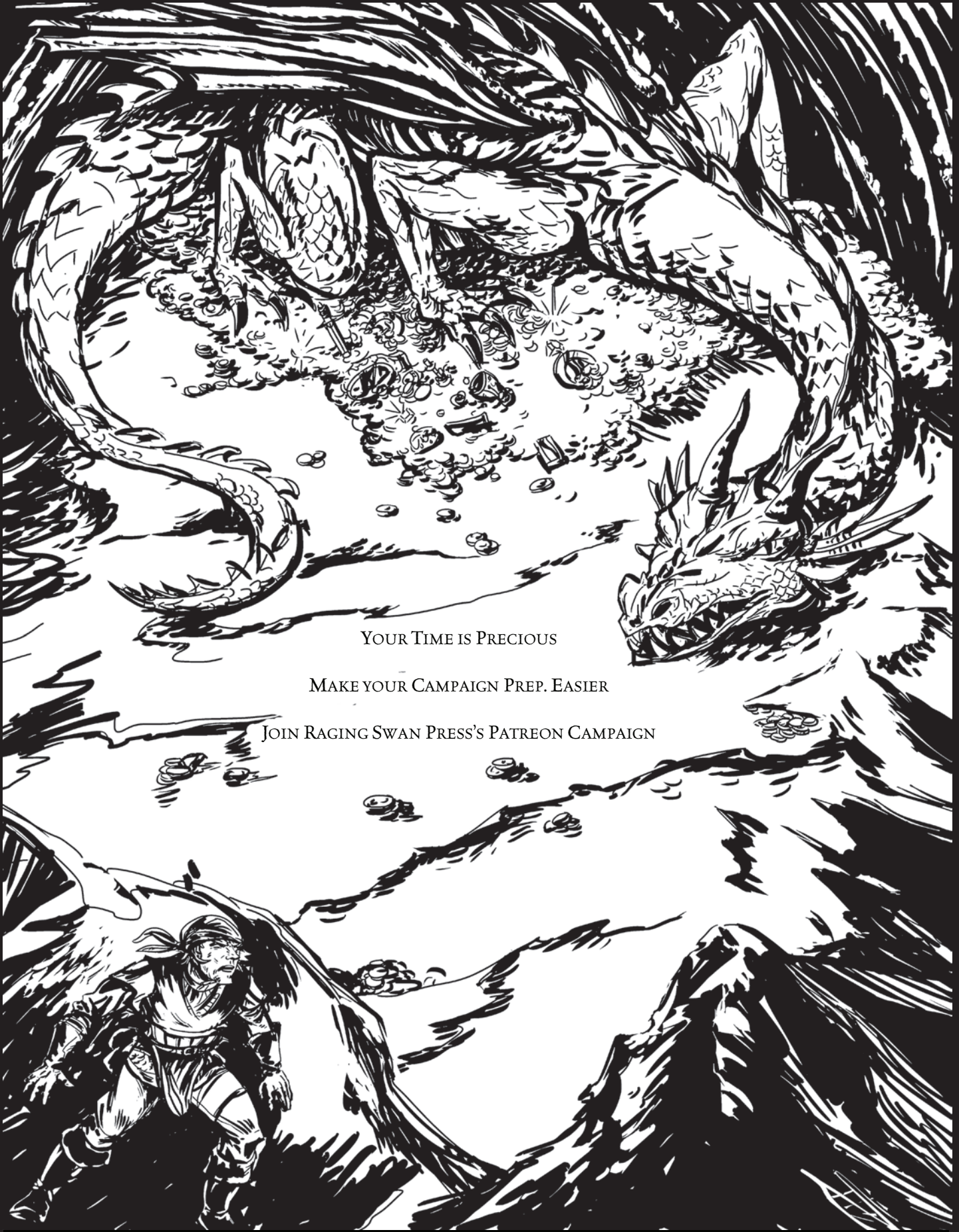
1. An amulet comprising a single, yellowed dragon's tooth suspended from a leather thong. A rune for protection is carved into the tooth.
2. A small flask of powered silver (worth 50 gp). The leather flask itself has a small strap allowing it to be carried over the shoulder.
3. A silver dagger is concealed in one of the wizard's boots. The dagger is clearly unused—its blade is sharp and polished to a high sheen.
4. A silver bracelet from which hang a number of charms. Each is decorated with a single rune—fire, water, air, earth, dragon, devil, demon—among them. The whole thing is worth 75 gp.
5. A leather scroll tube crudely painted bright blue. It is stoppered with a leather bung that clips into the place. The bung has been painted red.
6. These fine leather boots have a number of small, unobtrusive pockets hidden inside. Most of the pockets hold commonly available spell components, but two of them each hold a single platinum coin.
7. This plain scroll tube contains several pieces of parchment the wizard used to make observations of the stars. These comprise several complicated diagrams of various constellations and cryptic notes regarding "the wanderer."
8. The torn and scorched cover of "Agananzar's Workbook" is wrapped in cloth and hidden in the wizard's pack. Sadly nothing else of the book's contents remains.
9. A pouch contains a variety of small bones—probably finger bones—clearly "harvested" from a variety of different creatures. Each is in pristine condition—all the skin having been boiled away.

10. Three empty potion vials; one is marked “invisibility” while the other two smell slightly of cinnamon.
11. A locket holding a lock of coarse black hair. It is evident from the hair’s texture—and the slight smell of rotten eggs—the hair is not from a natural source.
12. A dozen small semi-circular stones worn perfectly smooth. An esoteric rune—depicting various types of magic—adorns each stone.
13. A slender belt pouch specially treated to be waterproof. Inside the pouch, the wizard stored a variety of dried herbs. Each bunch is tied together with twine.
14. The shattered stub of a wooden stake. Black blood covers the stake’s tip. Barely visible under the blood is some kind of rune, but its meaning is impossible to determine as part of it is missing.
15. Three quills wrapped in an ink-stained cloth and two small vials of ink—red and black—all carried in a small pouch along with several scraps of crumpled parchment.
16. A bent iron spike, the head of a hammer and a shard of incredibly tough stone.
17. A black velvet cloth inlaid with golden thread wrapped around a dried and perfectly preserved red rose. The rose’s thorns are sharp and its flower emits a particular heady scent.
18. A small treatise depicting the various protective circles—against good, evil and so on—along with notes on how to quickly create such protective barriers. A perceptive reader skilled in spellcraft spots several of the diagrams are fatally flawed.
19. A flask of holy water and a flask of unholy water—both clearly labelled in Elven—along with a fine painter’s brush, two owlbear feathers and one gigantic feather (perhaps from a roc or other huge bird).
20. A small red velvet pouch. The pouch is all but empty—however a determined examination reveals a few flecks of diamond dust stuck to the pouch’s lining.

GMs Miscellany: Dungeon Dressing

If you enjoy the table above and like dungeon dressing, check out *GM’s Miscellany: Dungeon Dressing* from Raging Swan Press—Endzeitgeist’s choice as the number one book of 2014! Crammed with over 300 pages of information and charts designed to bring your dungeon alive, *GM’s Miscellany: Dungeon Dressing* is an essential part of any GM’s arsenal.





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8,000 Pieces of Graffiti

By Creighton Broadhurst, Illustration by Joe Darkbugg

Dungeons are not pristine environments. Chances are the party is not the first to dare its precincts. Previous adventurers, the dungeon's builder or even its residents all leave their marks. Graffiti is a common feature of dungeons. Graffiti can have four main purposes:

- **Decoration:** Whether created by skilled artisans or bored guards, some graffiti is designed to decorate a locale. Such graffiti might take the form of stylised pictures or religious phrases.
- **Message:** Graffiti can serve as a means of passing on a message. These messages could be a lament for a fallen comrade, the ravings of a madman or even a final message from a doomed explorer.
- **Warning:** Adventurers—when they survive—sometimes leave warning of what lies beyond. Of course, these warnings could be hopelessly out of date or just plain wrong.
- **Lure:** This seemingly benign or welcoming graffiti serves to entice explorers or visitors further into the dungeon (perhaps to a specific location).

Use the tables below, to generate the details of graffiti found in a dungeon or other hostile locale.

Message (d20)

The graffiti says:

1. "Not this way."
2. "Your doom is near."
3. "The darkness has eyes!"
4. "Beware. It lurks in the dark."
5. "Alas, poor Enrulf."
6. "Don't search for me."
7. "This way."
8. "I'm sorry."
9. "Tell Engelf I loved her."
10. "I'm watching you."
11. "For glory!"
12. "Pray for my soul."
13. "Don't delve too deep."
14. "Go Back!"
15. "I tried."

16. "Hungry. So hungry."
17. "Fear the dark. Seek the light."
18. "The old man lied."
19. "Safety lies beyond."
20. "Welcome."

Characteristic (d20)

If you want to add a notable characteristic to the graffiti, use this table. The graffiti is:

1. Written hastily in chalk.
2. Written in dried blood.
3. Written in fresh blood.
4. Carved crudely into the wall with a dagger or similar blade.
5. Crudely written—as if by a child.
6. On a piece of parchment stuck or pinned to the wall.
7. Smearred as if someone has tried to rub it out.
8. Written in charcoal as from a burnt torch.
9. Written very low down on the wall at roughly knee height for a human adult.
10. Hidden behind an open door, tapestry or other covering.
11. Shows excellent—even cultured—penmanship.
12. Written on the ceiling.
13. Covered by cobwebs.
14. Written in overly large—or small—letters.
15. Only half written; the message ends abruptly as if the writer had been interrupted or distracted.
16. Written upside-down.
17. Written back-to-front.
18. Written on the floor.
19. Each word written in a different colour chalk.
20. Obviously written in several different hands.

Special Characteristics (d20)

Sometimes there is more to graffiti than meets the eye. The graffiti is:

1. A trap. It contains an *explosive runes* trap.
2. A trap. It contains a *glyph of warding*.
3. Written in more than one language.
4. The first letter of each word spells out the command word of a magic item hidden somewhere in the dungeon.
5. Covers up an older piece of graffiti.
6. Written to conceal a secret message.
7. Magical. It disappears once read, like a magic scroll.
8. Glowing slightly. It gives off illumination equal to a candle.
9. Slowly burning itself into the wall.
10. Wriggling and writhing across the wall.
11. Only visible to those with dark vision (in the dark).
12. Written in invisible ink.
13. A trap. The graffiti contains a hidden *sepia snake sigil*.
14. Obscuring the trigger for a secret door.
15. Written to subtly highlight the trigger for a secret door.
16. Apparently gibberish. However, in reality it is a pass phrase dungeon denizens use to identify themselves to fellow denizens.
17. Magical. The air in the immediate vicinity is much colder.
18. Written in some form of ink that resists all but magical cleaning.
19. Written in huge letters the height of a grown man.
20. The letters hang in midair, blazing with light equal to that of a torch.

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Blood is Life

By Steven T. Helt, Illustrations by Oxid and Jason Rainville

Few concepts carry more cultural or literary power than the idea of bloodshed. From the “eye for an eye” approach of Old Testament law to the concept of leeching by pre-industrial healers, to the romanticized emotional release during an intimate stabbing (recently popularized by Heath Ledger’s Joker and the character of Joe Carroll in television’s *The Following*), the emotional, medicinal, and mystical power attached to blood is significant.

The concept of blood supplies limitless options for characters in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* (or any other rpg). Spells like *blood biography*^{APG} and *boiling blood*^{UM} refer directly to the substance itself, while bloodragers and sorcerers derive power from bloodlines.

Blood concepts permeate culture, history, and literature, so they should be equally prevalent for characters in every approach to adventuring. The following are rules that incorporate blood, for good or ill, into several ideas for characters.

Blood Revelations

The following revelations tie the power of blood into several oracle mysteries. Each revelation lists the mysteries intended for it. Some of them help expand the role of their respective mysteries as well, using blood magic to make an oracle of bones into a healer or turn an oracle of life into a deadly combatant.

Cleansing Blood (Su) Whenever you cast a healing spell on a creature currently affected by disease or poison, you purge impurities with hot blood. That character can immediately make a new saving throw to end the effect, regardless of the number of saves he is normally required to make.

Mysteries: flame, life, lore, nature

Sap Blood (Su) As a standard action, you can cause 1 living ally per level to ooze thickened, sticky blood (or actual sap for plant creatures). Affected creatures are immune to the bleed condition and gain a +1 bonus to CMB and CMD while grappling. As an immediate action, affected creatures struck by a manufactured weapon can make a disarm attempt against a creature that struck them. This effect lasts for 1 minute.

Mysteries: battle, life, nature, wood

Scarring Scabs (Su) As a standard action, you can cause allies within 30 feet to gain fast healing 1 for 1 round per level. The value increases by 1 at 5th level, and again at every 5 levels after. At 10th level, the radius increases to 40 feet. Wounds healed in this manner form discolored scars, giving each ally who benefits from this ability a +1 bonus on Intimidate checks. The scars, and this bonus, disappear at the end of combat.

Mysteries: battle, life, nature, time

Thin Blood (Su) You or your weapons magically cause your opponents to bleed profusely.

Whenever you confirm a critical threat with a spell or weapon, you deal additional damage equal to your Charisma modifier. Creatures immune to critical hits or other precision damage are immune to this extra damage.

Mysteries: battle, bones, metal, waves

Blood Feats

The following feats rely on precious blood as a mystic life-giving substance, or as a physical reality of combat.

Blood Brothers

You share a special bond with a companion that makes you potent allies.

Prerequisite: You must share this same bond with one intelligent creature. You forge this bond by both being injured and mingling your blood through embrace, or by performing Heal checks on one another.

Benefit: Your bond makes you efficient allies, with an almost supernatural connection. Whenever one creature with this bond performs the aid another action to assist a blood brother in an attack roll or skill check, she grants a +3 bonus to the check’s result instead of +2. Blood brothers increase the bonus on attack rolls for flanking to +3, so long as each party gaining the bonus is a blood brother.

Special: You can take this feat only once, but multiple creatures can become blood brothers so long as they all meet the prerequisites and bond with every other blood brother. No creature can have more than one blood brother per point of its own Charisma modifier. A creature cannot belong to more than one group of blood brothers.

Bloodslinger

You partially blind your opponents by slinging blood into their eyes.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +4

Benefit: After you confirm a critical hit against a living creature with a melee weapon, you can sling blood or ichor into your opponent's eyes or other sensory organ as an immediate action. Until the beginning of your next turn, you have concealment from that opponent. For every 6 full points of base attack bonus, you can choose an additional creature to blind with this action. Each creature you affect with this ability must be adjacent to you or to the initial creature you scored the critical hit against.

Blood Vigor

You gain power by consuming the fresh blood of your enemies.

Prerequisites: Undead creature type, or a living creature with the bloodrage, rage, or raging song class features.

Benefit: Whenever you confirm a critical hit with a melee weapon against a living creature, you can capture some of the creature's blood (absorbing it orally or through the skin) as a free action. If you are an undead creature, you gain 5 temporary hit points and a +2 bonus on the next Fortitude save you make within 1 minute. If you are bloodraging, raging, or using a raging song, the current round does not count against your daily uses of that ability.

Special: If you are an undead creature using one of the above class features, you gain both benefits.

Blood Magic

Ritual blood magic and necromancy are hallmarks of fantasy literature and games. The following spells offer a little bit of white necromancy to battlefield medics, and provide more sinister options to those who use the power of life against the living.

Bad Blood

School Necromancy; **Level**

Antipaladin 3, Bloodrager 3, Cleric/Oracle 4, Occultist 3, Psychic 4, Shaman 4, Sorcerer/Wizard 4, Spiritualist 3, Witch 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a drop of ammonia)

Range Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target 1 living creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

Duration 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You cause the wounds of living creatures to bleed profusely. When any creature affected by the spell takes hit point damage, it immediately takes 1 point of Constitution damage and begins to bleed for an additional 1 hp of damage every round starting at the beginning of its next turn. This bleed damage increases by 1 additional point per round at 5th caster level and every 5 caster levels thereafter (to a maximum bleed of 5 hp at caster level 20). Creatures who already have hp damage when the spell is cast are immediately affected.



Stitches

School Necromancy; **Level** Antipaladin 2, Bard 3, Cleric/Oracle 3, Druid 3, Paladin 2, Psychic 3, Shaman 3, Sorcerer/Wizard 3, Witch 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, F (the caster's own scar)

Range 60 ft.

Target 1 living creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 feet apart

Duration 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw Fortitude negates (object) **Spell**

Resistance No

Creatures within the affected area develop fast-growing scab and scar tissue that responds immediately to new wounds. Each creature in the affected area is immune to bleed conditions (including bleeds that involve ability damage, but not other ability damage such as disease or poison). Whenever a creature suffers a critical hit with a weapon attack, the tissue immediately fills and binds the open wound. Hardened scabs cover the wound and provide the subject with a +1 bonus to natural armor on subsequent attacks. This natural armor bonus increases by +1 when you reach 5 caster levels, and an additional +1 for every 5 caster levels thereafter (to a maximum natural armor bonus of +5 at 20th level).

Transmute Water to Blood

School Transmutation; **Level** Antipaladin 4, Cleric/Oracle 6, Medium 5, Occultist 5, Paladin 4, Psychic 6, Shaman 6, Witch 6

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a vial with dried blood)

Range Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area a 30-ft. radius spread

Effect A volume of water up to 1 cubic foot/level

Duration Permanent

Saving Throw Fortitude negates (object) **Spell**

Resistance No

You change a volume of water (or liquid based on water) into warm human (or humanoid) blood. You can affect a single body of water or a total amount of fluid separated into different containers. Potions or other liquids in the possession of another creature receive an item saving throw to negate the effect. Living creatures are not affected by the spell. The blood renders potions and other transmuted substances useless, but pure water can still be consumed to prevent starvation and thirst for 1 minute. After this minute, the blood congeals and begins to decay normally. Creatures that must consume raw flesh or blood can use this substitute blood even after it is congealed.

Note that a cubic foot of blood is approximately 8 gallons and weighs about 65 pounds. This volume is sufficient to transmute up to 32 potions/caster level.



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**JON BRAZER
ENTERPRISES**

Blood Stones

By Aaron Phelps, Illustration by Emilia Ildiko Tokes

The life essence of blood is a powerful force. While some believe value can only be found in the blood of creatures blessed with magic, learned practitioners of alchemy can show you otherwise. Through the craft, they have unlocked the power and mystery hidden away in even the most mundane of blood and distilled that power into useful alchemical items. These blood stones, as they've come to be known, are available in the form of single use stones that dissolve in the stomach, to larger decorative stones that grant continuous use of powers derived from the life force of others.

While the use of blood normally contains a stigma of evil, the development of items from blood doesn't have to be a depraved act at all. The blood needed for these stones can be given freely or found as well as being forcefully taken from others. It simply depends on the type of blood stone and the crafter.

Ranks in Craft (alchemy) as well as the applicable type of blood are needed in order to create blood stones. Some of the more powerful varieties require the crafter to meet additional prerequisites. The blood collected for crafting will remain fresh for 24 hours. Once the crafting of a blood stone has begun, the blood is considered to be preserved by the alchemical process, thus allowing for the creation of larger bloodstones that may take days or weeks to produce. Blood kept in cold storage can remain viable indefinitely. The preservation aura granted by the optional Blood Stone Crafter feat also allows for the storage of blood.

The cost to create blood stones is relatively inexpensive in terms of gold, but the monetary savings reflects the difficulty of obtaining the right type of blood to fuel the magic. Note that a blood stone requires actual blood. Creatures that do not bleed cannot provide the essential ingredient needed to craft a blood stone.

Blood stones can be crafted by anyone with ranks in Craft (alchemy), but a special feat is available to those who wish to master the craft.

Feats

Blood Stone Crafter

You can create blood stones, a type of alchemical item.

Prerequisite: Craft (alchemy) 5 ranks

Benefit: You do not require this feat in order to create blood stones, but taking it provides many benefits. First, you can infuse your own blood into a blood stone you create in order to lower the DC. For every 5 hit points of blood added to the mixture, you lower the crafting DC by 2. Hit points lost in this manner cannot be healed magically but can be recovered normally with rest. Secondly, you radiate a preservation aura that keeps blood fresh. The aura allows you to preserve 3+ your Hit Dice vials of blood. Normally, unused blood goes bad within one day.

Simple Blood Stones

Simple blood stones are small, one-time use items that are swallowed by the user. They are often the color of dried blood and resemble small pebbles or jagged rock chips. The effect(s) of the blood stone takes place one round after ingestion. If the user of a simple blood stone vomits before the next round, the

blood stone is ejected and has a 25% chance of being destroyed. Unless otherwise stated, the effects of simple blood stones last for one hour. Only a small amount of blood is needed to create a simple blood stone, 1 hit point worth of blood loss is sufficient.

Blood Scent

Price 5 gp; **Craft DC** 15; **Blood Required:** Any creature

You gain the scent ability but only in regards to the specific creature whose blood was used to create the blood stone. Any ability or spell that would alter the blood of the creature, such as *corrosive blood*, changes the composition of the blood enough that the creature will smell differently to anyone using a blood stone crafted before the application of the spell or ability. You can only benefit from the ability of one blood scent stone at a time.

Coagulate

Price 20 gp; **Craft DC** 20; **Blood Required:** Troll

You gain immunity from bleed effects. If you are currently under a bleed effect when you consume the coagulate blood stone, you stop bleeding at the first of your next turn before taking the bleed damage and you gain immunity.

Pheromone

Price 75 gp; **Craft DC** 20; **Blood Required:** Any animal, vermin, or magical beast.

You secrete a pheromone that provides a +4 bonus on Handle Animal checks and a +4 bonus to Disguise checks against the type of creature from which the blood was derived. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to Stealth checks against creatures using scent to attempt to smell like the creature whose blood was used to create the pheromone blood stone.

Slayer

Price 30 gp; **Craft DC** 20; **Blood Required:** Any Creature

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and +1 to damage against a subtype of creature. If you already possess the favored enemy ability, you cannot stack the bonus from the blood stone if it affects the same subtype of creature. You can only use one slayer blood stone at a time.

Transfusion

Price 100 gp; **Craft DC** 25 **Blood Required:** Special

You gain fast healing 1. Only the creature whose blood was used to create the transfusion stone can gain the benefit. These stones require 10 hit points of blood to create and the blood taken cannot be healed magically, but through normal rest only. The effect of a transfusion blood stone lasts only for 10 rounds. You cannot take more than one transfusion blood stone at a time.

Contaminants

Simple blood stones can contain more than one type of blood and if the crafter so chooses, they can mix in an extra blood sample (and other reagents) to cause a harmful side effect known as a contaminant. The contaminant cannot remove the primary effect of the blood stone. Adding a contaminant to a simple blood stone increases the craft DC by 1. The effects of the contaminants last for one hour, even if the effect of the simple blood stone lasts only minutes.

If someone wishes to check a blood stone for a contaminant, they can make a Craft (alchemy) check. If the check beats the total DC of the blood stone by 10 or more, they can properly identify if it is contaminated.

Dry heave

Blood Required: Otyugh

You are affected by random waves of nausea. Unlike most contaminants, dry heave remains dormant until you receive any type of magical healing. Upon receiving magical healing, you must attempt a DC 20 Fortitude save. If you fail the save, you have a 50% chance, each round, to be sickened for that round. If you lose a quarter of your hit points after receiving healing, you bleed out the contaminant and the effects of the dry heave stone end. A successful Heal check, DC 20, allows one additional save.

Illuminate

Blood Required: Gnome

You radiate light as brightly as a torch from every part of your body, including your eyes. In addition to providing light, you cannot use Stealth to attempt to hide in shadows. You are also easier to hit in the dark from afar and ranged attacks against you receive a +1 to hit.

Hemophilia

Blood Required: Stirge

You are now a hemophiliac and any type of physical damage causes you to bleed profusely. You must make a DC 20 Fortitude save every time you take physical damage or you suffer the effect of bleed 1. Magical healing will stop the bleeding but you will continue to suffer from bleed effects each time you take damage until you have lost a total of 15 hit points.

Pungent Odor

Blood Required: Troglodyte

You produce a noxious odor that forces you and surrounding creatures to make a DC 13 Fortitude save or become sickened for 10 rounds. Creatures that make their save are no longer affected by the stench for 24 hours. New creatures affected required a new saving throw. If you lose one quarter of your total hit points, the stench fades from your body on your next turn. Creatures with the scent ability receive a +2 bonus to Survival checks made to track you.

Ravenous

Blood Required: Cyclops

You become uncomfortably hungry and find that all of your thoughts are consumed by the need to eat. You must make an initial DC 17 Fortitude save to see if the hunger takes hold. If you fail, then you must make 5 consecutive Fortitude saves starting at DC 15. Each subsequent roll increases the DC by one. If you fail a save, you become overwhelmed with hunger and for three rounds can take no other action than to eat or seek out food if you do not carry any on your person. The hunger is not so severe that you are compelled to attack friends, but you will attempt to remove items from their packs, even in combat. If you cannot find food within three rounds then you suffer -2 to Constitution and become fatigued.

Complex Bloodstones

Complex bloodstones are born from magic mixed with alchemy. Unlike simple blood stones, complex bloodstones are not consumed and are worn around the neck, offering continual access to their power. Complex blood stones often have a shimmering surface containing two or three different colors.

Bloodline Amulet

Aura moderate varies; **CL** 10th
Slot neck; **Price** 2,000; **Weight** 0.5 lbs.

You must have levels in sorcerer in order to gain the effects of a *bloodline amulet*. When you activate the amulet, you replace your level one bloodline power with the level one bloodline power of the type of sorcerer from whom the blood was extracted to create the blood stone. You can use this new bloodline power exactly the same way you would use your normal level one bloodline power.

The *bloodline amulet's* activation is instant and can remain in effect as long as you wish. You can also deactivate the amulet at any time, but it takes one full day from when the stone is deactivated for you to regain your original bloodline power. The bloodline amulet requires one full day to recharge before being activated again.

The person whose blood is used to create the blood stone cannot use their level one bloodline power for one week after the creation of the bloodline amulet.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft wondrous item, blood from sorcerer, Craft (alchemy) 5 ranks; **Cost** 1,000 gp

Heart Stone Amulets

Aura moderate necromancy; **CL** 8
Slot neck; **Price** 20,000 gp; **Weight** 0.5 lbs.

You can only utilize a *heart stone amulet* which has been made with your blood. These amulets are always made in pairs and you must activate these two amulets simultaneously with one other person. The two of you gain the ability to share your life essences with each other, granting the use of a combined hit point pool as long as you are within 200 feet of each other. If at any time your combined hit points go below zero, regardless of which person takes the damage, both wielders fall unconscious and the stones deactivate. You cannot receive the benefit of any type of healing magic while the *heart stone amulets* are activated. Both you and the wielder of the other amulet must be conscious in order to active the power. You can deactivate the amulets at any time.

In addition to other requirements, the users of the *heart stone amulets* must each give up a substantial amount of blood which results in a permanent -1 Constitution penalty. Because the transfer of life force must be close, crafters cannot create *heart stone amulets* for creatures whose Hit Dice are separated by more than 2 Hit Dice. Attempting to do so results only in the creation of two beautiful, but ultimately worthless, stones.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft wondrous item, blood from two creatures, Craft (alchemy) 5 ranks; **Cost** 10,000 gp

Leech Stone

Aura strong necromancy; **CL** 12
Slot neck; **Price** 17,500 gp; **Weight** 0.5 lbs.

Leech stones have a similar appearance to *heart stone amulets*. However, unlike *heart stone amulets*, these particular blood stones channel hit points in one direction. The stone which extracts hit points is known as the *siphon stone*. The *leech stone* which receives the hit points is known as the *receiving stone*.

You must make a DC 17 Will save in donning the *siphon stone* or you cannot remove the stone. You can voluntarily fail the save. If you are the wielder of the *siphon stone*, you receive no benefit. However, if you are wearing the *receiving stone*, you automatically receive hit points from the wielder of the *siphon stone* on the next round after you are injured. You can only receive a maximum of 10 hit points per round but your stone continues to

siphon hit points until you are full. The *receiving stone* can only be removed by the wielder or if the wielder is dead or unconscious. Any magical healing received by either wielder is reduced by half while the stones are active.

In addition to the other requirements, users of the *leech stones* must give up a substantial amount of blood which results in a permanent -1 Constitution penalty.

The siphon portion of the stone can only be removed with a *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, *remove curse*, or *wish* spell or by removing the receiving end from the other wielder.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft wondrous item, blood from two creatures, Craft (alchemy) 5 ranks; **Cost** 8,750



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Questhaven: The City of Tritonis

By Elton Robb, Illustrations by Louis Icysage and Moh

Note: This article assumes that *Atlantis* is a global lost civilization in the world of Questhaven.

3rd Party Notice: This article makes use of *Cerulean Seas Campaign Setting* and deals with seafolk (mermaids and mermen) like they were human and not how they were purposed in the *Bestiary* or the *Advanced Race Guide*.

Dear Qwilion:

I am sorry to report that one of my sister ships, the Starrider, was partially sunk after hitting some shoals off the Sacred Island of Maka'i. The ship partially sank but mermaids rescued all hands. We investigated the question of these "mermaids" with the crocodile people, and they tell tales of a fish people that rescued our people and they are indeed real. They live in the city of Tritonis which is under the waves.

Lacking any way of investigating the city under the waves, I ordered three of our gnomish engineers to build a vehicle that is able to travel underwater. I am sorry to say that they are still working on solving the problem. We have a working prototype, and we used that to see what Tritonis is like. But its crush depth is only 500 feet, and we have to surface to revitalize the air.

*Yours truly,
Captain Harmony*

The City of Tritonis is a sunken city claimed by the sea seven thousand years ago. Many of its spires poke up out of the sea during low tide, creating a navigation hazard for many types of ships. It's also located near the sacred island of Maka'i where the natives train many of their chiefs and kings in their ways.

The strangest thing about the City of Tritonis is that it's actually inhabited by beings who are humans from the waist up and fish from the waist down. Most people speak of mermaids. However, most people in the Admiralty call them by the more generic "seafolk." Captain Harmony's small fleet encountered Tritonis during low tide, and the city took the small caravel *Starrider* as apparent payment for negotiating its dangerous "shoals."

After this, the gnomish engineers repurposed the *Starrider* into a boat where sinking is controlled. They called it a *submarine*. Using the submarine, the crew of the *Starrider* made some observations at a depth of 200 feet. And this is their report.

Physical Size of Tritonis

Tritonis looks like it was built by human hands. Everything leads to this particular conclusion. Jutting out of the sea during low tide are fifteen towers of varying height, all of them capable of scraping a ship's

hull and causing irreparable damage. Sometimes on the towers rest the merfolk, both male and female. Some of the towers are covered in barnacles, and others have been calcified and colonized by the reef.

Tritonis spans ten miles from shore to sea. It is mostly populated by the Triton nation of Sea Folk, which span from the island of mercy to the underwater villages of sahuagin in the south. The Tritons are kind to humans, if a bit gruff with them. However, some human skeletons have been spotted, leading to the human theory of Tritonis' origin. It is unknown how deep Tritonis actually is. And it is said that the gnomish engineers are working on a ship that can go deeper than 500 ft.

Tritonis Environs

Using magic and the construction of a diver suit, six sailors dived to explore the reefs around Tritonis. Called the Tritonis Reef, the reef is one of the largest as it covers Tritonis. Being part of the tropical/artic confluence, the diversity of the reef include many types of coral. Including brain corals, fans, and tree types. The team gathered sponges, looked at sea snakes and sea turtles, and identified fifteen types of fish. Including the dangerous moray eel and barracuda fish.

Tritonis Dangers

A reef and barnacles covers much of Tritonis. This makes the underwater city a danger to be navigated by deep bottom ships like our Caravels. However, the natives seem to get around the area quickly and easily. Lurking in the reefs, however, is a Cresendo Dragon (*Cerulean Seas*, p. 209) and its attendants. Several moray eels, a reef drake (*Cerulean Seas*, p. 223) had been spotted so their might be more. And then there was several cute sea otters (*Cerulean Seas*, p. 243). But the primary inhabitants of Tritonis were the seafolk (*Cerulean Seas*, p. 41 or below).

Triton Culture

While the crew talk to the Tritons, they find out that the tritons are divided over two political parties.



Thinking that they must have a republic, they find that the Tritons are actually ruled by a king, which the humans never had the pleasure to meet. So they call him King of the Tritons, or just King Triton for short.

The two factions opposed in the king's parliament. One faction is the old guard, which cares about increasing the range of the king's domain, fighting, and maintaining the kingdom's aristocracy. While the opposing faction worries more about what the

common seafolk asks for. However, everything changed a hundred years ago when a group of seafolk found treasure in the deep parts of Tritonis.

Seafolk Dress

The Seafolk typically dresses in nothing, only that the females repurpose scallop shells for modesty around their chests, held by strong seaweed. This is typical of the Triton sea folk, as for the others we don't know yet. As soon as the new, steel based, submarine vehicle is constructed, we can visit the other seafolk kingdoms. And hopefully have protection against the sahuagin once we visit.

Seafolk Diet

Seafolk depend on the bounty of the sea to feed their populations. They typically eat scaled fish, and moderately predate on the shark, usually when the sharks attack them, since nothing is wasted in the sea.

The favorite food of the seafolk include some delicacies. This includes abalone, winkles, clams, and oysters. All of these are delicacies, however, since they are not fish with scales. The favorite fish with scales tend to be sardines, mackerels, and others. They typically stay away from tuna, but they enjoy whitefish and salmon fish. However, nothing is wasted, and sometimes the rare octopus is found on the menu. It's taboo to eat squid, however. The reason is unknown.

Seafolk Writing

The Seafolk use sea shells and seaweed for their writing systems most of the time. At other times, they inscribe runes where they live. Such is the power of writing, that whole histories have been inscribed on Tritonis' buildings. The sea shell and seaweed writing method is durable, but don't last as long. Sometimes, they turn to tattooing. This form uses squid ink to inscribe the runes on their bodies. Some of the crew think this is why eating squid is taboo.

Seafolk Adventurers

The only Triton seafolk that would actually talk to us were *adventurers*. The types that most people distrust since they actually go looking for danger and frequently get into dangerous situations. These Triton seafolk go on adventure for reasons that are as personal as a human's. Some of them are wondering what is beyond the reef, others do it for revenge, and so forth. There doesn't seem to be any racial motivation behind it.

Seafolk Magic

The Triton seafolk use magic like our wizards and priests. However, they worship the ocean itself. It was believed that this is like the worship of our sea deities, but the Tritons depend on the ocean, and so they worship the ocean itself. Their wizards, however, tattoo their spellbook on their bodies, using their bodies as their own spellbooks. Plus, their magic has to be different enough. After all, one of the surface wizards tried a *fireball* under the water, and all he could create was a mass of steam. The Triton seafolk called it *mageboil*, which was the equivalent of the spell *fireball*.

Getting Around

The Tritons depend on *hippocampi* or the fabled *hippocampus* to get around the sea in quick fashion. The Hippocampus are stabled, and sometimes are attached to a sea chariot. To get somewhere faster, though, they typically attach the chariots to a faster sea creature: the ichthyosaurus. Although the hippocampi steeds are beautiful and muscular, they are not built for speed, and since the ichthyosaurus is built for speed, fast travel is needed around the city, they use these.

However, for long distance travel, the Tritons usually travel with a pod of dolphins. They take advantage of surface currents and speed, and swim with the dolphins to get to one part of the sea to the other. The ocean is a highway for the seafolk, and it's likely that Triton seafolk has been seen around Questhaven's shores.

Appendix: Seafolk Racial Traits

These racial traits supersede the racial traits for merfolk in the *Advanced Race Guide* when using the *Cerulean Seas Campaign Setting*.

Aquatic Medium Humanoid (10 RP total)

- **+2 to Any Ability Score:** The seafolk gain a +2 to any single ability score of your choice during character creation. This is because they are like humans and are the most versatile race of the sea. (0 RP)
- **Swim Bladder:** Seafolk have a swim bladder full of oxygen where their lungs should be, giving them a Racial Buoyancy* of -60^B, and a Depth Tolerance of 300 ft. (1 RP)
- **Fast Swim Speed:** Seafolk have a base swim speed of 40 ft. (1 RP)
- **Skilled:** The seafolk gain an additional skill rank at 1st level and one additional skill rank whenever they gain a level. (4 RP)
- **Flexible Bonus Feat:** The seafolk select one extra feat at 1st level.
- **Legless:** The lower half of a seafolk is a fin of a fish, with the flukes turned like a dolphin's. They cannot be tripped. (0 RP)

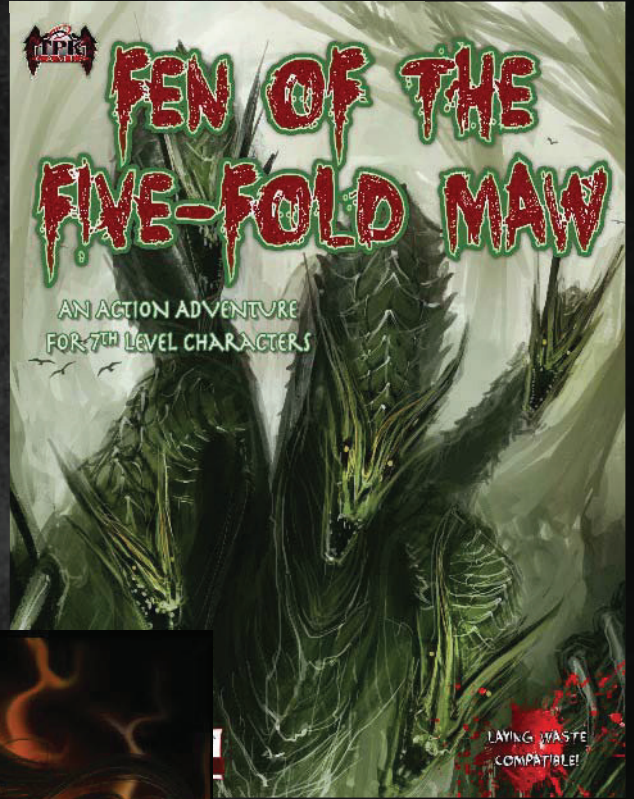
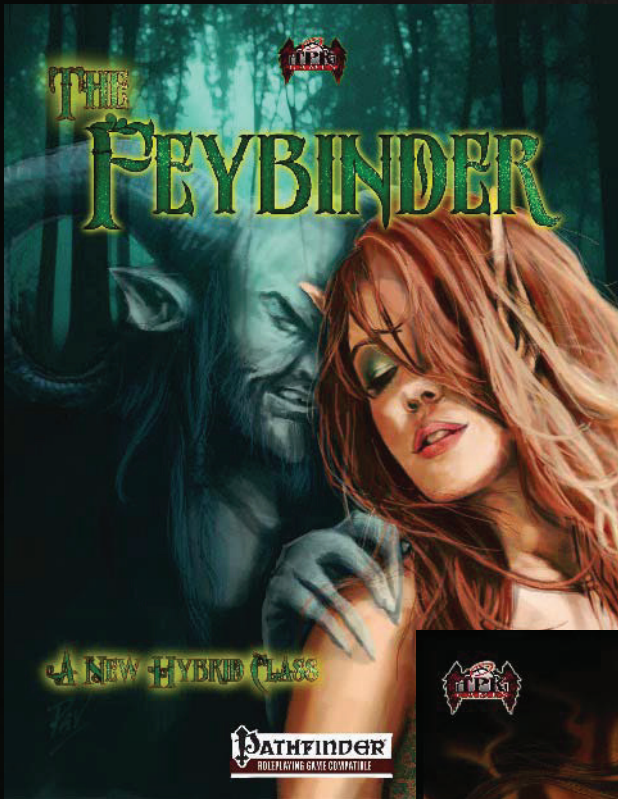
* See *Cerulean Seas* page 10 for Buoyancy rules.





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Subterranean Spells Showcase

By David J. Paul, Illustration by Dennis Darmody

Chandus set down his tankard; it made a hearty thump against the oft-stained oak beams of the table. He flexed his greasy fingers right before wiping them on the towel at his side. "You do know that the place will be crawling with creatures. If you'll be slinking about quietly to avoid being caught, you also won't be able to hear each other." He paused to let a bit of gas escape—bread and ale had that effect on him. "And you'll want to be keeping in touch."

Wynston smiled his unusual, thin-lipped smile. "It won't be a problem."

"How's that?" Tacton interrupted while simultaneously raising an eyebrow.

"Ari and I have it taken care of."

Tacton leaned much farther back in his chair, raised his legs, and shoved his bone-covered plate aside with his feet. "And how, exactly, do you two have this covered?"

Arianna cleared her throat. "Remember the gore weaver?"

Chandus whistled appreciatively. "Indeed. Good times fighting that."

Arianna nodded in response. "After the two of you," she moved her gaze from Chandus to Tacton, "managed to drop the beast, and moved along to reciting verses to one another of your valor..."

"For the bards to recount, naturally," Chandus said through a smile speckled with bits of chewed chicken.

"Of course, my lord," Arianna mocked, "for the bards to recount." She paused long enough to roll her eyes. "As I was saying, as you two were bragging about another conquest, Palin and I drained the thing of many vials of blood."

"You spellcasters have the most peculiar proclivities," Tacton enunciated in his most high-brow tone.

Wynston smiled his strange smile again. "Yes," he said, reclining and clasping his thin-fingered hands, "we do."

"At any rate, because of that blood, Wynston and I have this covered. No need to worry yourselves. Our," she paused for a moment to get the phrase right, "peculiar proclivities, will carry us through."

Bloodsense

School: Divination; **Level:** Alchemist 3, Sorcerer/Wizard 3, Witch 3

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Components: V, S, M (a drop of ghorazagh blood)

Range: Personal

Target: You

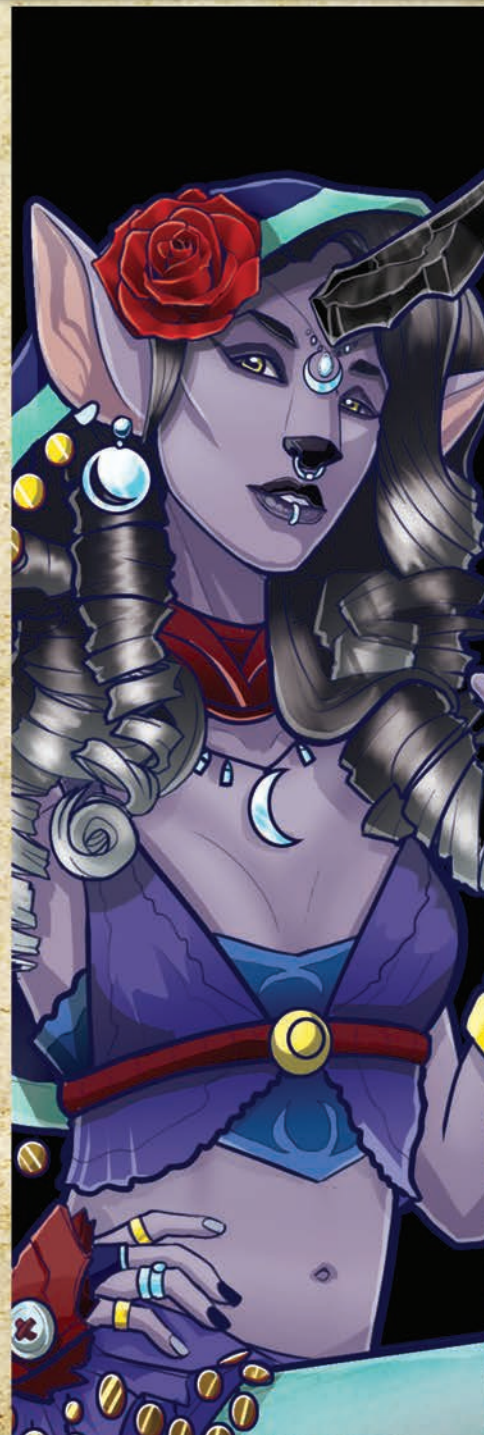
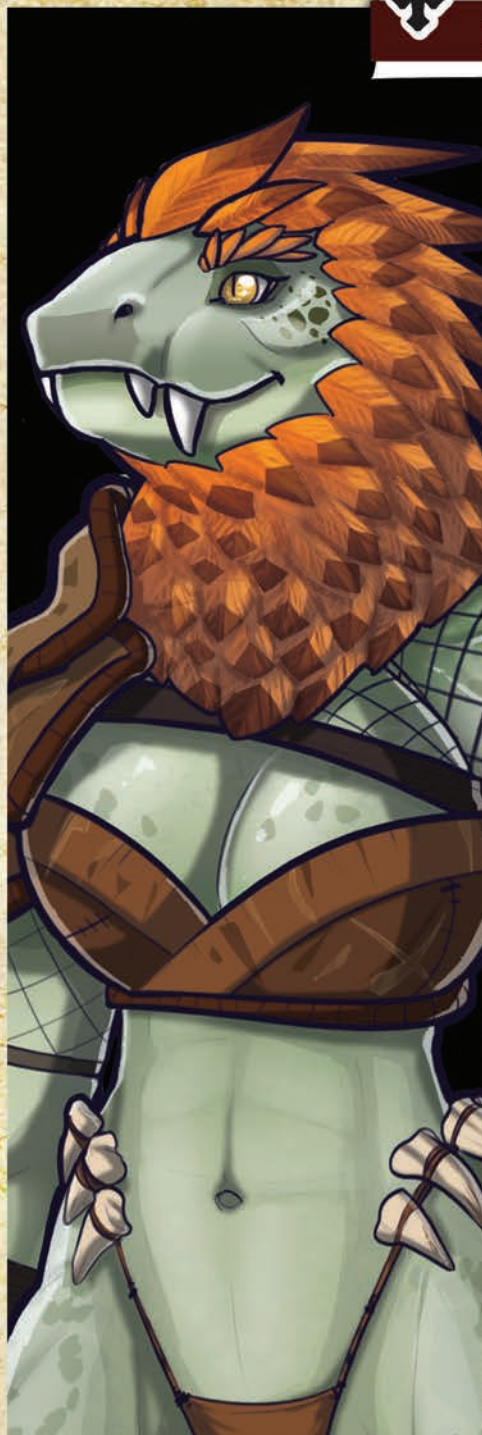
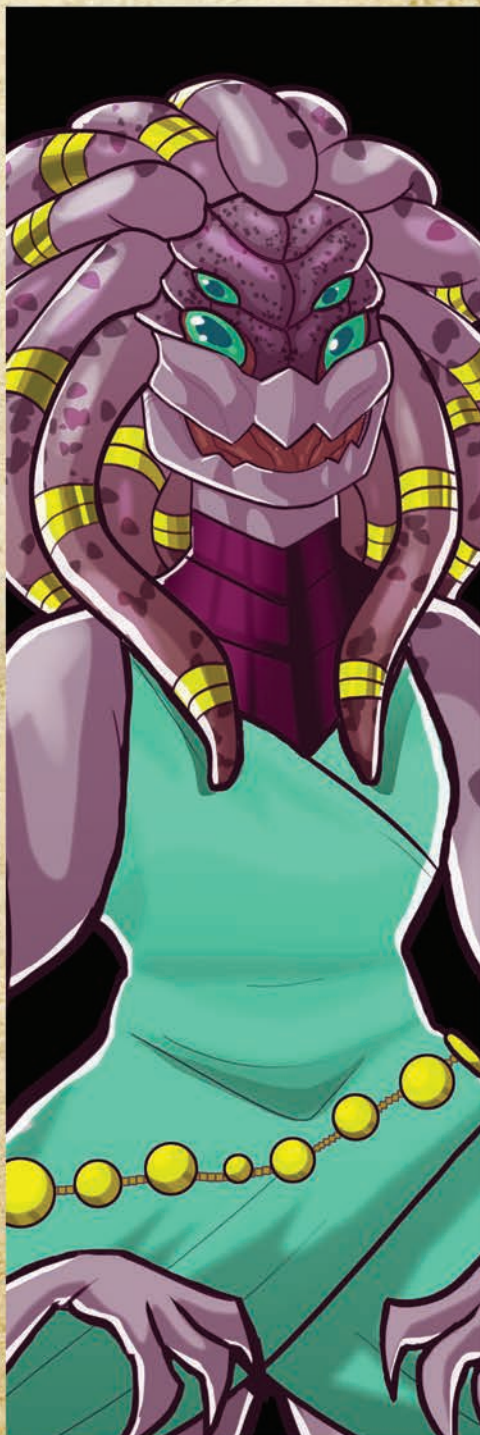
Duration: 10 minutes/level

You gain the ability to detect any living creature that has blood in its body to a range of 60 feet. This is a chemical effect and not scent; treat it as blindsight, but only with respect to creatures with blood in their bodies. If two or more allies are affected by *bloodsense* and within 60 feet of one another, they have a supernatural sense of what the other is doing; it is akin to telepathy without language, each just seems to know something of what the other knows, without quite being able to express that in words. Whenever either is required to make a skill check using a skill in which both allies have ranks, the check is made with a +2 bonus.



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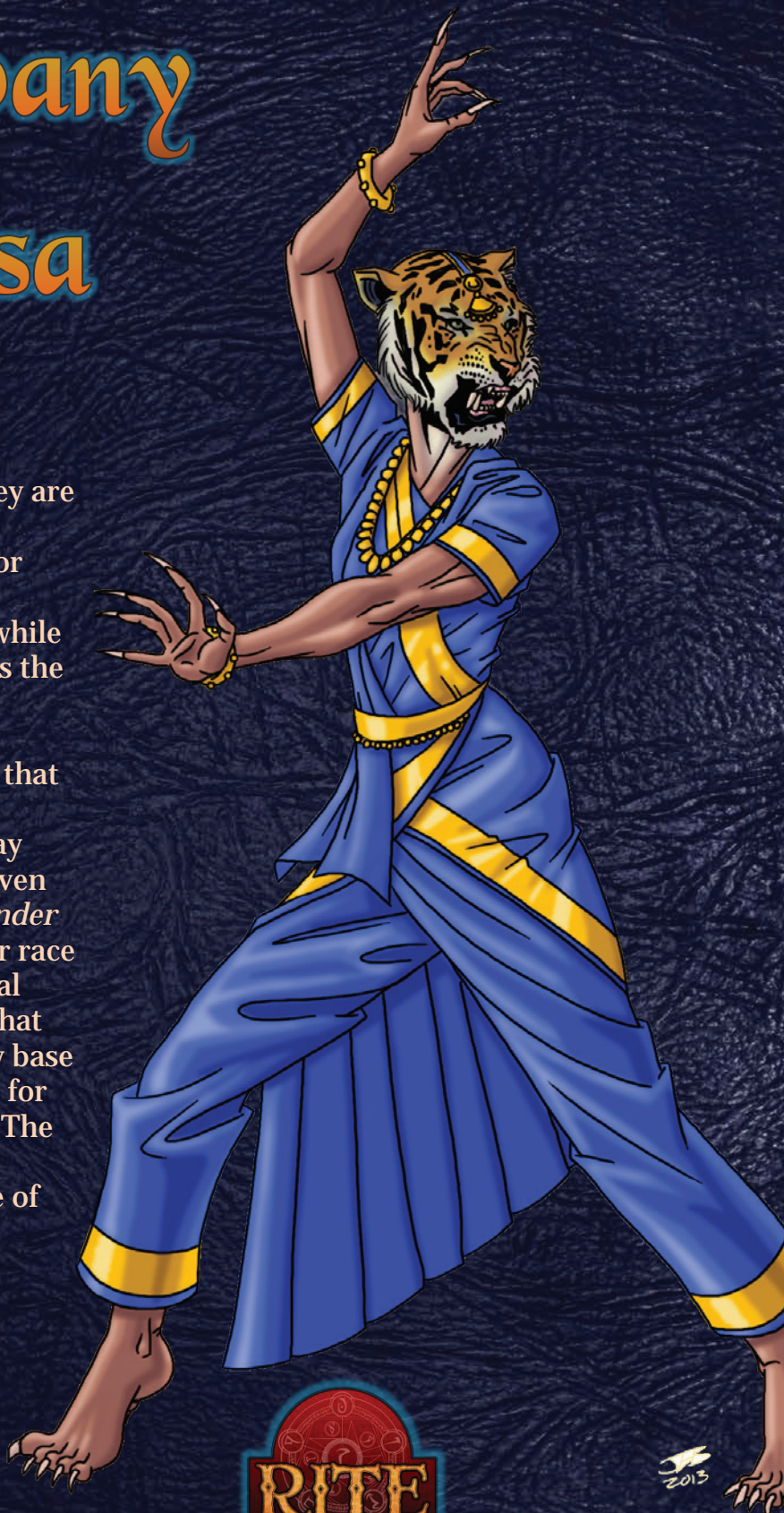
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2013

Twenty Questions with Alex Riggs

By Steven D. Russell

1. Could you tell us a little about yourself?

I'm the Head Designer at Necromancers of the Northwest, and a freelance game designer, who's contributed to several projects for Paizo, Legendary Games, and a few others. I've been doing game design for almost six years now, and have really grown to appreciate the great community of third party publishers that Pathfinder attracts. If you're familiar with Necromancers of the Northwest, or any of our products, I do about half of the writing and design work, some of the editing, and all of the layout, so I have a hand in everything we do. If you've never heard of Necromancers of the Northwest, you can find my work in *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Occult Adventures* (some of the spiritualist archetypes, and a few magic items), *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary 5* (caller in darkness, emotion ooze, tulpa, and a couple of others), and some Legendary Games products, such as *Mythic Monsters 31: Daemons* and *Mythic Monsters 34: Egypt*.

2. What is your home game like?

Recently, it's suffered a bit from lack of prep time, because it's unfortunately been forced to take a back seat to design work and other concerns. Just a few months ago we wrapped up a two-year-long *Reign of Winter* campaign, which was modified to make use of mythic rules (no small endeavor: every encounter had to be rebuilt to reflect the party's mythic abilities). When possible, I like to drop in a spell, magic item, or monster from something that I've done, and I like to encourage it from players, too, just because it's fun to get to see all of this stuff in action. Overall, though, my main goal is for everyone to have fun, and so I generally try to accommodate whatever crazy schemes my party comes up with, and as much as I try to stick to the rules, I'm prepared to bend them a bit in the name of fun.

3. What is your favorite Paizo product?

This is a tough one. The *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* was a major inspiration for me to become a third-party publisher myself, and *Occult Adventures* is the first Paizo product I ever contributed to (plus I love occult flavor, and the skill unlocks), but I think my favorite would probably have to be *Mythic Adventures*. I love the way it encourages mechanics and effects that "break the rules" and let you do things you're not supposed to do, and I think it's much more rewarding, mechanically, than the epic level rules of 3.5. There are some balancing

issues, and it's definitely not for everyone, but I found it very satisfying to GM for, and even more satisfying as a designer, since it opened up whole swaths of new design space to play with.

4. You are currently Head Designer for Necromancers of the Northwest, how did that start and how would you characterize the company today?

One day I woke up and decided that I wanted to do tabletop game design for a living. Sadly, I had no experience, and my first few attempts at pitches and trying to find an "entry level" design position didn't go too well. Eventually, I decided that the only way I was going to get anywhere was to get some experience, and that if I couldn't find any opportunities to get experience elsewhere, I would have to make some for myself. At the time, *Pathfinder* wasn't really the game I had in mind to design for, but I knew the system (or, at least, *Dungeons and Dragons* 3.5) pretty well, and had made some custom content for my own game. I figured "how hard could it be, really?" I've been learning ever since.

Necromancers of the Northwest is a very, very small company, and it's only really ever been myself and a handful of others. As co-owner of the company with our other main designer, Joshua Zaback, my main focus is primarily on making the kinds of projects that we enjoy. Ultimately, I think Necromancers of the Northwest is more a labor of love than anything else.

5. What is your favorite Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible product you worked on and could you tell us a little about it?

I've always had a particularly soft spot in my heart for our *Advanced Arcana* series, and we just recently released the latest annual installment, *Advanced Arcana Volume VI*. The idea behind *Advanced Arcana* is that it's a collection of spells, but rather than just being a giant pile of random one-offs, which tends to be the norm, each *Advanced Arcana* has a theme, and introduces some new mechanics that are used in a number of the spells. For example, in the first *Advanced Arcana*, we explored the question of what the "cost" of a spell was, and so the book had some spells that used up multiple spell slots, but gave you a really big payout, and other spells that were somewhat less powerful than you might expect at a given spell level, but when you cast them, you also regained an expended spell slot of a lower level, among others, and for each of these mechanics we would make a variety of spells that played with the

mechanics in a few different ways, and of course there are some fun one-offs, too.

At *Necromancers of the Northwest*, we were pretty blown away by the inclusion of thought and emotion components in *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Occult Adventures*, and it got us thinking about what other sorts of components could be invented, so that's the direction that we took *Advanced Arcana Volume VI*. There's several brand new components, including terrain components (which require being in a certain terrain type to cast a spell), energy components (which are inspired by, but different from, a kineticist's burn), soul components (finally a use for trapped and stolen souls), sacrifice components (requiring the ritual sacrifice of a living creature to cast the spell), and something we're calling intricate components, which take verbal, somatic, thought, and emotion components to a new level, requiring the caster to succeed on skill checks in order to cast the spell successfully, but offering a big payoff in exchange. All told, the book has over 160 spells, plus appendices including tons of archetypes, several new familiars, and more. It's hard to spend that much time and put that much work into something without developing a certain amount of affection for it.

6. What was your favorite moment working on *Advanced Arcana Volume VI*?

Without a doubt, that would be when I finished writing the appendix with all the archetypes. Since the first *Advanced Arcana*, we've always included a few appendices at the end with some non-spell content that explores the book's theme in a few other ways, like feats, alternate familiars, and new subsystems like creating arcane sanctums or practicing certain spells until you "master" them for additional benefits.

Over the years, the appendices have gotten larger and larger, and this year, I determined that one appendix I wanted to do was a collection of archetypes for spellcasting classes, which changed whether the class was arcane, divine, or psychic (since this also impacts what kinds of components they use). Obviously, these changes cast the class' flavor in a new light, and that means that we start swapping out other class features to fit. A warpriest that's arcane instead of divine becomes a battle mage, while a divine sorcerer seems like a natural to be a descendant of a deity, and so on.

I had a lot of trouble picking which classes I wanted to do, and it seemed wrong to leave any spellcasters





out. Luckily, one of the advantages of having your own company is, now and then, you get to indulge yourself and just make the product as long as you want, and this was one of those times. Unfortunately, that meant writing 25 whole archetypes, which was a lot more than I had planned on initially (it's really a massive appendix, more like a whole chapter), but I feel like it really paid off in the end, and I was quite proud when I finally finished that particular section.

7. What do you feel was the most ingenious part of *Advanced Arcana Volume VI*?

I'm really quite proud of the intricate components that we developed. On the surface, components seem like a very dull theme for a book. After all, they're pretty much completely ignored by most players most of the

time: unless you're wearing armor or in a grapple, you don't think twice about somatic components, and unless you're silenced, you don't care about verbal components, and so on. But components are really flavorful. There's a reason why spells list non-costly material components like gum arabic and bat guano, and it's because it lets people get hooked into the flavor and fantasy of casting spells. In other fantasy media, you often get a whole lot of attention placed on having to speak the magic words just the right way, or making particular sigils or glyphs, and sometimes they go even further, like in the *Death Gate Cycle* novels by Margaret Weiss and Tracy Hickman, where certain spellcasters cast their spells by performing an intricate dance, but in *Pathfinder*, all of that is just sort of "hand-waved" into obscurity.

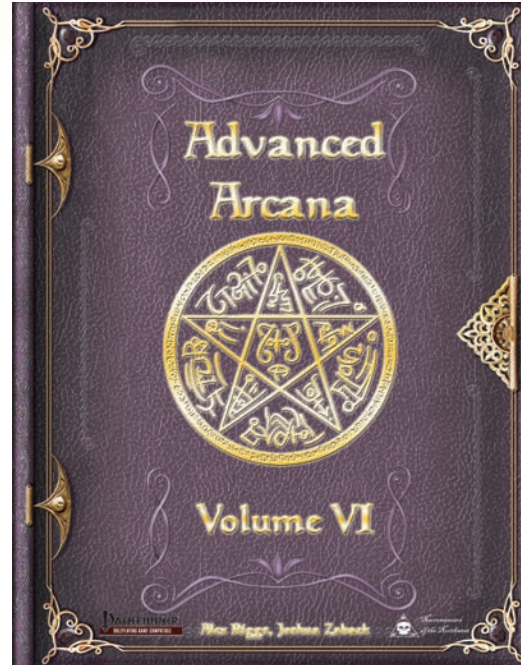
The intricate components were born out of an attempt to build a mechanic that would put components in the spotlight. The main reason why they get ignored so often is because, unless there's something stopping you from performing them, the game just sort of assumes you can automatically perform them, so the obvious answer is to turn them into a check, requiring characters to succeed in order to cast the spell. Obviously, this makes the player jump through an extra hoop, which means that we gain the ability to make the spell a little bit more powerful. By making the check a skill check, we can allow characters to get better at casting the spell (and performing the difficult components) as they level up, and can also reward specializing in certain skills.

Ultimately, though we didn't want it to be very easy to just fail to cast the spell, because then the spells would either be very powerful (if successfully cast), or worthless (if not successfully cast), making them a little more unpredictable than we had in mind. So, we made failing the check not necessarily cause the spell to be lost, but also required that the caster potentially make multiple checks, until the sum of their results reached a certain threshold. This allowed us to grant extra bonuses if the threshold was reached with only a single check, and so really reward characters who were better with the skill in question. The final result is that a low-level or poorly trained character may spend several rounds struggling to cast one of these spells, while one who's well-trained in the skill it's tried to would cast it right away, and with a stronger result, and that's exactly the sort of flavor we were looking to capture.

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

As is often the case with *Advanced Arcana* books, it can be a little difficult sometimes to find the right kind of flavor for a certain spell, especially those that make use of the new mechanics. The way we build the book, we try to get a good mix of spell schools and spell levels for each new mechanic the book introduces, and because there are only so many effects in the game, naturally a certain number of the spells wind up being "like [spell X], but with [mechanic Y] to give it an interesting twist." Sometimes, though, the flavor of the mechanic makes it hard to find a spell that's a flavorful fit.

For example, we have forty spells in the book that use the new intricate components (ten for each type of intricate component). Since the whole idea of intricate components is that they're a lot harder to perform than regular components, there's a certain pressure on each of the spells that have



them that the spell's effect should in some way explain what it is about the spell that requires this more demanding component, besides just bigger numbers, so you wind up with the intricate vocal spells tending to involve singing, or true names, and that sort of thing, whereas the intricate somatic spells involve oddly-shaped areas that you have to mimic with your hands, and so on. In the end, I think we came up with some great spells, but finding a point where each mechanic intersected with each school was sometimes pretty hard.

9. Did you learn anything while working on it?

The biggest takeaway is probably that it's not enough to just have a good idea for a product: you'll do a lot better if you have an idea that you can sum up in a catchy and succinct way. I had faith in the idea of a book of spells that focuses on components from the beginning, but I knew it wouldn't be an easy sell, especially when the other main designer at Necromancers of the Northwest needed convincing. When it came time to write the back of the book, and explain what *Advanced Arcana Volume VI* was actually all about, it was hard to condense all the cool things we had done to make spell components exciting into just one page, without being able to break it down and explain it all piece by piece. It probably didn't help that we have a whole lot of different approaches to the problem, either, because, while that makes for a nice well-rounded product, the versatility also makes it harder to summarize.

10. Other than your work and Necromancers of the Northwest products, what's the best Pathfinder Roleplaying Game-compatible product out there?

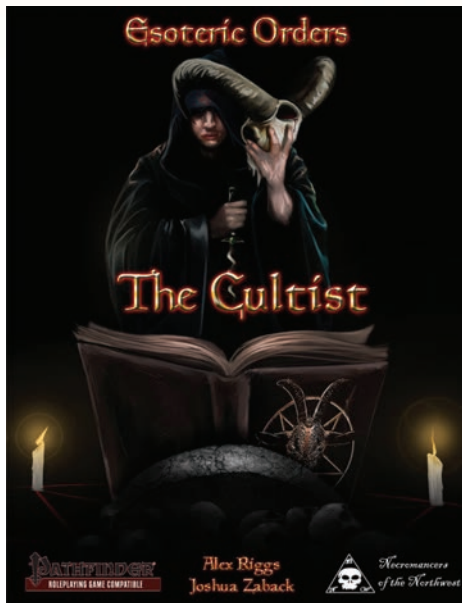
I've always been a big admirer of the great work done by the folks at Dreamscarred Press. I love pretty much everything I've seen from their updated psionics rules, and look forward to someday having an excuse to put my copy of *Psionics Unleashed* to good use. It's got a lot of content in it, and there's a great mix of revitalizing and updating the old 3.5 psionics content, with completely new and exciting stuff. From the races to the classes to all of the powers and archetypes, you can tell that it was all made by people who were especially passionate about what they were doing, and they took care to give it a great deal of polish.

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

There are a lot of different things that are potentially important when making a good *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* compatible product, and there are lots of potential pitfalls to watch out for. What I think makes for the best products are ones that address specific gaps in the game's rules: things like, "I think the system could handle X better," or "there really isn't any support for Y," and then going out and doing something about it. But even if you're not that ambitious, there should always be something in there that readers couldn't just make themselves: that's why whenever we make a monster, or even an NPC, at Necromancers of the Northwest, the rule is that they always have at least one unique ability that can't be found anywhere else, just because anyone can throw together a stat-block, and give it some Universal Monster Rules, but not everyone can design a cool ability from scratch.

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

Brandon Hodge is probably the first designer whose name I learned to recognize from seeing it listed in books, rather than from hearing the name in industry talk. I ran the entire *Reign of Winter* adventure path for no other reason than to be able to run through the adventure he wrote for it, and it was definitely the highlight of the campaign. He does horror and all things strange very well. I've



very much enjoyed being able to work with him on some recent Paizo products.

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

Start writing, and then keep writing. Start by doing some writing for your home game, or just for fun: make some new monsters, spells, or feats, or make an adventure and write it up like you were going to publish it. Once you feel like you have a handle on what you're doing, reach out to some publishers, show them what you can do, and see if you get any bites. If so, congratulations, you're a freelancer! If not, consider publishing for yourself

for a while. Getting a website is cheap and easy, and if you release content digitally, your costs are pretty much free time and whatever you choose to spend on art. Keep designing, and always try to improve on your last project, and sooner or later, you won't have trouble finding people who want to work with you.

14. Who is your favorite tabletop RPG Illustrator that you have worked with?

Necromancers of the Northwest is not known for our art, as we generally try to stick to stock art in order to keep our prices low, so I can't say that there are very many illustrators that I've gotten a chance to work with. Gennifer Bone consistently exceeded our wildest imagination in the commissions she did for us for *Cosmic Threats: A Bestiary of Alien Creatures*, and *Insidious Intentions: The Book of Villainy Volume I*. More recently, we worked with the very talented and very fast-working Phill Simpson, who provided all of the art in *Esoteric Orders: The Cultist*. I would definitely recommend both of them to other publishers.

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

For the last couple of years, Necromancers of the Northwest has had a presence at Paizocon, running a few games there, as some other third-party publishers do. For the most part, the games that we run feature a party of vampire player characters, and are designed to show off the rules framework for vampire PCs that we created in *Liber Vampyr*. It's always a blast, because everyone winds up really enjoying their characters and their vampire powers, and on more than one occasion we had someone head down to our vendor stall and pick up a hard copy of the book during a break in the game, because they were just that excited.

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

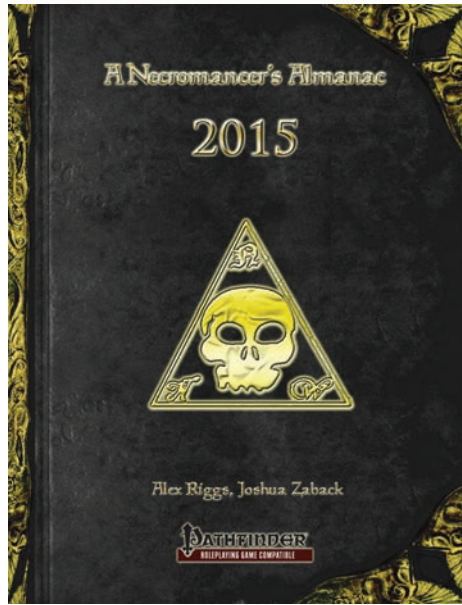
We're kind of at the end of our annual production cycle, and most of our current focus is on putting together *A Necromancer's Almanac: 2015*, a compilation of all the material from our website over the last year. While we think it's very exciting, there's not much to tease. I can tell you that we've started on a book of new medium spirits that are going to try to recapture the unique and individualistic flavor of spirits from the *Occult Adventures* playtest. There's another project that's very ambitious, so you won't see it any time soon, but we've started working on a project to let players take on the roles of deities, with rules that provide for a somewhat more unique play experience than you'll find in the old 3rd edition *Deities and Demigods*. Since it's still in its early stages, and has a long way to go, I don't have much more to share about it right now.

17. Do you have any goals for Necromancers of the Northwest that you have yet to obtain or overcome?

For a long time, we've bandied about the idea of making our own system, with absolutely nothing to do with Pathfinder. Making whole systems from scratch is exponentially more difficult than just making feats, spells, monsters, or even classes that largely plug into existing mechanics, though, and so it's always kind of been left on the back burner. Of course, the main goal is to use my time and experience at Necromancers of the Northwest to leverage my way into a full-time design position. So far, it's opened a lot of doors for freelancing, so I'm halfway there, but there's still a ways to go.

18. Can you tell us a little about *A Necromancer's Almanac: 2015*?

Of course! Like I said before, it's a compilation of all of the content that went up on the www.necromancers-online.com website over the course of the year. We have free articles



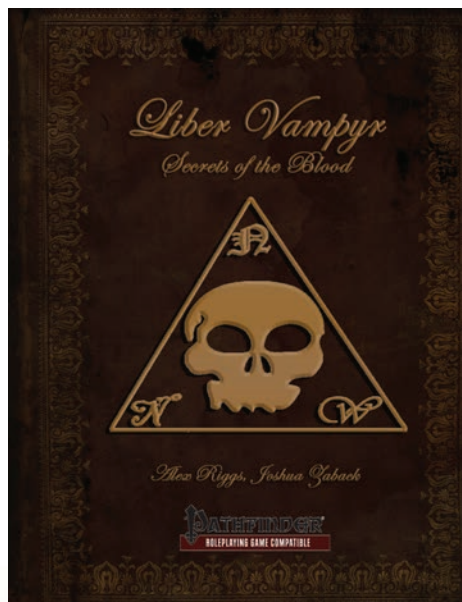
four days a week, most weeks of the year, so it adds up to a lot of content: this year, it's something like 40 archetypes, 20 monsters, 10 NPCs, 5 player races, 5 templates, 120 spells, and 100 or so magic items. At the end of the year, we put it all in one book, organized for ease of use, with extensive bookmarks and hyperlinks, and, of course, a print edition. We've been putting out *A Necromancer's Almanac* since 2012, and it's one of our most popular recurring products.

19. You mentioned a book called *Liber Vampyr* before. Can you tell us a bit more about that?

Liber Vampyr was the first book that Necromancers of the Northwest put out. The idea was to provide support for vampires as player characters. Obviously, the vampire template from the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* existed then, but that template isn't really designed for players, what with its constant *dominate person* and the numerous weaknesses that are either so debilitating the character is unplayable, or are completely meaningless, depending on the GM and the party. *Liber Vampyr* approaches vampiric powers through the more traditional player character tools of classes and feats, and, since everyone seems to have their own take on vampires these days, it's designed to be highly modular, letting you pick and choose which vampire powers and weaknesses you take. We redid the whole thing from the ground up a few years ago, since the original was starting to show its age, and it's available for free on our website, www.necromancers-online.com.

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

If you've played with any of the stuff that I've written, or even just read through it, I'd love to hear your thoughts about it. Drop me a line at ariggs@necromancers-online.com and let me know how it played out at your table.



Welcome to Adventure Quarterly 6...

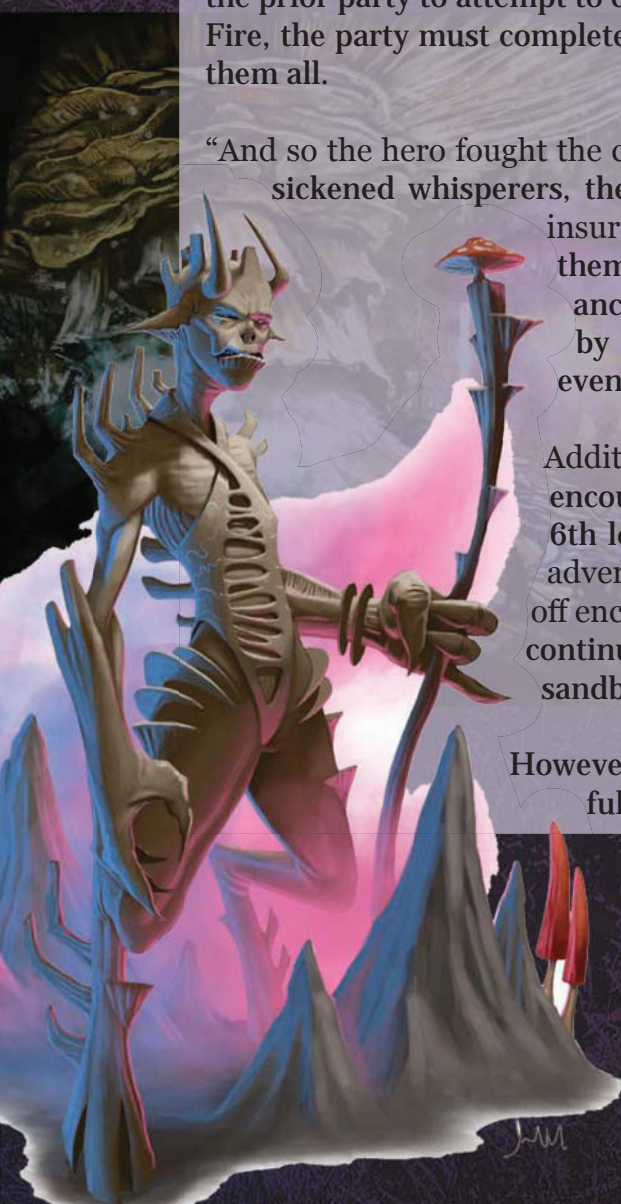
With our next installment to the *Ruins Perilous*, dangerous wonders are birthed from the spoils left by those that came before. “The Fungarium” carved itself into being from the leavings of a formerly grand banquet hall, an excursion by myceloids, and the exacting corruption of a deal with a dragon with an uncanny twist. How fares Questor candidates in a test of diplomacy between a pair of races with alien frames of reference and points of view. *Ruins Perilous - The Fungarium* is intended for a party of 4th level characters by Mike Welham.

“*Fire & Ice*” is a mission of destruction for 9th level characters by Bret Boyd. Are the PCs up to the mission of destroying a minor artifact? A mission that all-but destroyed the prior party to attempt to complete it? On an island that intersects with the Plane of Fire, the party must complete their mission before an unknown nemesis lays waste to them all.

“And so the hero fought the corrupting god, in hand the ageless brand / withstood its sickened whisperers, the knight in iron clad.” Deep within a badlands, against insurmountable foes, a party of 14th level characters finds themselves as the blood, heart, mind, muscle, and sinew of an ancient construct known as the Iron Knight. “*In Iron Clad*” by Alex Putnam, challenges a party in this most unusual event-based adventure.

Additionally, Creighton Broadhurst offers up a pair of drop-in encounters, *Bal’s Garden* and *Deluge of Death*, respectively for 6th level and 13th level characters. Suitable for underground adventures, Broadhurst’s talented mind offers enjoyable one off encounters to challenge your players. Then Steven D. Russell continues his demonstrable advice on how to use and work sandbox campaigns.

However you slice it, this issue of *Adventure Quarterly* is chock full of adventure and excitement, something we all crave.



Reviews



A Flirtation with Fey

Publisher: Run Amok

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This module clocks in at 66 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page ToC, 1 page SRD, leaving us with a massive 62 pages of content, so let's take a look!

As always with modules, the following text does contain SPOILERS. Potential players should jump to the conclusion to avoid spoiling this adventure.

All right, only GMs around? Great! We enter the stage this time around in the town of Thaven (fully mapped), where a former adventurer-turned notary/scrivener, the gnome Gustavus Hodgedar, hires the PCs, who has inadvertently stumbled over a dastardly plot – but he doesn't know that yet. What he does know is that a shipment has disappeared – oddly, one containing histories of the local town and its eminent families...strange target, right? Anyways, the man who was supposed to bring them hasn't shown and thus, the PCs happen upon a complex plot that transcends the humble beginnings. Upon finding the missing cart, the PCs will have to deal with lethal traps and gremlins, but, upon returning, they will not find an open office, but rather the charred remains of Gustavus' house, with a fire brought under control only to a nearby shop of weird contraptions. Investigating the onlookers, watchmen and checking out Gustavus' shop, the PCs will realize pretty soon that Gustavus hasn't perished in the fire – instead, he's nowhere to be seen.

This would be as good a place as any to comment on the extensive diversification of skill-result benefits: Scaling degrees of success yield different information, with most checks providing not only 2-3, but even more diverse results. I really like this from a design perspective. Similarly, I enjoy the sense of concise magical realism evoked by the utilization of proper spells: You see, as the PCs are investigating, they stumble upon an animal messenger with a handout note, telling them about Gustavus being held hostage in a wine cellar. Unbeknown to the PCs, their investigations are already shadowed by an agent of the antagonists, who then continues to exert subtle pressure as the PCs try to piece together the clues in a massive, detailed investigation scenario.

The wine-label upon which they received their message makes for an obvious clue that yields the information, that it's from a rare vintage indeed – only two bottles having been sold in recent history. beyond training with clockwork dummies in the local fighter's brotherhood, the PCs may also learn about Gustavus less legal endeavors, while a lavishly detailed tavern becomes the staging point for an assault by the PC's adversaries. Beyond clockworkery and *A LOT* of means to unearth details (sporting counter-intelligence-info for the foes of the PCs) and several rather detailed encounters, the PCs will note that the esteemed Reniverrea family might be involved. In order to free Gustavus, they will have to infiltrate the massive, gorgeously mapped Renvierrea estate, which, coincidentally, hosts a massive birthday party – and here, things get full-blown magic spy-genre. Handling the party and investigating the Gustavus-connection may yield some rather surprising pieces of information, a corpse and some rather disquieting implications – however things go, the trail does lead towards the untamed wild, for it seems like Balanidhren's daughter has fallen in love with a satyr – and perhaps, they may recover the books and piece things together and confront the conspirators: You see, an evil fey has secretly seeded changeling-like creatures, the Paoternosh, born from the vile womb of the evil belgar. Said creatures has executed a hostile take-over of the Renvierrea family that included a doppelganger, aforementioned satyr, its spawn and copious amounts of gaslighting....a plot that was jeopardized by Gustavus' books.

How things ultimately turn out and how much your PCs find out about the plot, though, depends on their prowess...and yes, this module's aftermath can yield certainly many more adventures as follow-ups, particularly since the city of Thaven is actually provided in the appendices in lavish detail – including a feat for Mephit familiars and 3 solid traits for local PCs. Thaven most certainly is an interesting village that can act as a great starting place for subsequent adventures.

Beyond this, the module contains very detailed scaling rules for PCs of 2nd and 5th/6th level, including an upgraded CR 8 version of the satyr. The module's new monsters, much like many of the NPCs herein, get full stats and accompanying high-quality b/w-artworks and no less than 4 handouts and 5 pregens supplement the module and make it pretty easy on the GM to run.

You know what's even better? The adventure comes with a massive 25-page map-booklet, which

sports the maps in regular size AND in an enlarged battle-map size that you can print out and cut up. Quality-wise, the maps (with two exceptions) are Paizo-level of beauty – so yeah, this may be worth the low asking price for the maps alone. Oh, and in the map-bonus, the maps are in gorgeous full-color!

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I noticed no significant glitches. Layout adheres to run Amok Games' printer-friendly two-column b/w-standard and sports numerous beautiful B/w-artworks, none of which I've seen before. So yes, this is an aesthetically truly pleasing book. The map-booklet with its superb cartography and the blown-up maps for battle-map use, all player-friendly, is just the icing on the awesome cake regarding the use of cartography as handouts and GM-friendliness – publishers and authors, take a look here: This is how it's done.

Gregory Hanigan and Ron Lundeen deliver, let me state that very clearly, one absolutely awesome investigation module – barring means to get unduly stuck, the constant presence of thwarting agents and modular nature of this module, alongside its overarching plot and compellingly written gazetteer make this not only a great, fun module, but also a compelling starting point for more adventures in and around the surprisingly concise and alive city of Thaven. With relatively subdued clockwork-elements, this is easily transported to Midgard and, should you dislike steampunkish elements, you can easily explain them away as magical or simply ignore/reskin the few of these elements that can be found in this book. With different degrees of success and easy tools for the GM to control the pace (the rats), we have an investigation that is surprisingly fast-paced, but still manages to build up tension and even end with a nasty "darker things to come"-realization if your players have truly grasped the threat behind the adventure's plot. Well written, concise and very considerate for the diverse needs of different groups, this is a stellar adventure well worth a final verdict of 5 stars + seal of approval.

You can get this inexpensive, fun module here on OBS and here on d20pfsrd.com's shop!

Endzeitgeist out.



Treasury of the Machine

Publisher: Legendary Games

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This pdf containing items intended for the use with the Iron Gods-AP clocks in at 28 pages, 1 page

front cover, 2 pages editorial, 1 page ToC, 1 page introduction, 1 page SRD, 1 page back cover, leaving us with 21 pages of content, so let's take a look!

We begin this book with a handy list of items by respective price, ranging from varies/50 GP to 180K gold/minor artifact-levels – quite a lot, so what can be found herein precisely? Well, we begin with the technological armor, the slipsuit, which enhances means to prevent being grappled or otherwise impeded. 3 forms of cybertech are provided thereafter – beginning with the amnesia tick and going on to provide discipline and rapture chips – whether to eliminate memories, create obedience or generate BTL (Better than life for non-Shadowrun-savvy readers...)-style bliss (yes, including potential for addiction), these items sport significant potential for story-telling and dystopian narratives...neat indeed, with a cool artwork as a bonus.

Temporarily sowing flesh together with nanite gauze – but where things become more interesting is with the three variants of adrenaline surges, which allow for stimpack-like rage-boosts...but each use puts a strain on the body...too many may even kill the user, providing a potentially hard decision for the PCs – one final boost and risk potential death/unconsciousness to defeat the dread foes...pretty cool! Biotech-wise, optic-enhancers granting low-light vision/darkvision and dermal grafts that provide nourishment via photosynthesis cover utility as well as narrative potential.

Chemosols are sprays that provide cones/can be inhaled and contain artificial pheromones and hormones, irritants or generate susceptibility to environmental conditions. Chemical stunners and a cloud that makes people stunned, but also has them twitch uncontrollably in random directions complement the material further – cool and unique!

Robotics-wise, we receive alternate design specs for androids designed akin to the non-human core-races and the pdf also sports a minor artifact that allows you to hijack robots in line of sight...nasty! Surprisingly, the pdf btw. sports a new robotic creature – the delightfully disturbing CR 1 walking eye, which has a neat little force field and a great full color artwork. Think of it as a disturbing flesh/metal-graft spy-drone. Damn cool!

Obviously, there also are quite a bunch of different technological items, including a capsule that hastens oxidization (think of these as rust-bombs...) and an orb that allows for the nigh-perfect duplication of scanned circuits. I also love the visuals of the detector globe: What basically is a rather conservative means of detecting poisons, magic, etc. is made awesome by the way it works:

The glove rises in the air and sends scanning filaments out...pretty cool.

Also awesome – a unit that allows the wearer to pass through solid matter: The harder, the more charges are consumed...and yes, you don't want to get stuck inside the material. Gravity belts that allow for personal gravity in Zero-G-environments similarly are damn cool! Similarly, quick retraining via a helm (utilizing downtime-rules from Ultimate Campaign) is just awesomeness. Oh, and what about a Batman style grappling hook with concise rules, one that also explains how the device is operated? Yeah, pretty glorious!

Speaking of which: What about a probe that can transfer memories? In the field of combat-utility, a means of at-range dousing fires/ridding characters of acid sludge/etc. most definitely will become a favorite of my PCs! Retina-based locks and universal tools as well as solar charging options breathe a spirit of true imaginative potential that combines utility with potential for adventure-crafting and thumb-sized, inflatable sleeping bags for sub-zero conditions make sense. Thermite-like salts and preservation-enhancing vacuum sealers also are brilliant!

Nanoweave material provides toughness at a low weight and weaponry-wise, beam sabers, lingering lightning guns, disciplinary rods, potentially addiction-inducing rapture-guns, better tangelfoot-grenades and guns that daze foes and can maintain hexes – there is some great material herein, in both fluff and crunch-departments. Oh, and the pdf provides gravity cannons, singularity grenades and telekinesis-duplicating guns...have I mentioned zero-g-grenades? Damn cool!

The pdf concludes with modern firearms, from heavy guns to automatic shotguns, as well as modifications like varying targeting computers, recoil compensators and scopes...though personally, I prefer other takes on the topic of recoil rules than those championed herein – average damage die as a modifier, reduced by Str-modifier, may be rather solid, but in the end is pretty complicated. Still, that's a personal preference.

Conclusion:

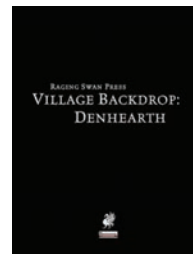
Editing and formatting are top-notch, I noticed no significant glitches. Layout adheres to Legendary Games' two-column full-color standard for Iron Gods plug-ins and the pdf sports numerous original, gorgeous pieces of full-color artwork. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

Tim Hitchcock, Robert Brookes, Jeff Lee, Jonathan H. Keith – these gentlemen seem to have had a field day here, with development from Jason Nelson:

Treasury of the Machine is the most inspired book among the treasuries so far. This book has everything you'd want from an item-centric book: Heck, even basic spell-duplicators herein feel unique and sport some sort of twist that renders them distinct in mechanics and feeling. There literally is no filler herein, making this an all awesome smörgåsbord of pure awesomeness: When an item-book sports items that, in the vast majority of cases, manages to inspire the reader regarding modules; when such a book provides means of telling new and exciting stories – then you know, you've got something great on your hands. This is such a case. My final verdict for this inspired book will clock in at 5 stars + seal of approval.

You can get this inspiring item-book here on OBS and here on d20pfsrd.com's shop!

Endzeitgeist out.



Village Backdrop: Denhearth

Publisher: Raging Swan

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This installment of RSP's Village Backdrop-series is 10 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page advertisement, 1 page editorial/ToC, 1 page SRD and 1 page back cover, leaving us with 5 pages of content, so let's take a look at the settlement.

Situated high atop the mountains on an isolated plateau, Denhearth has suffered long from the vile predations of the powerful red dragon nick-named Cinderblaze – until the vile creature was slain by the benevolent gold dragon Galiantana – under her auspices, the village prospered and even saw the creation of a fabled academy, established to guide those that have the sorcerer's gifts towards a wholesome and controlled application of their draconic gifts.

But, alas, all golden ages (Get it? ... -.-...sorry, will put a buck in the bad pun jar later) must end eventually and noble Galiantana has not been seen in quite a while. Some rumor her to be dead, while others only fear her to be missing; in any case, Denhearth, with its academy, seems rife for the picking by the forces of darkness once again. Now, as always, the village comes with copious information on both local color (like nomenclature, clothing habits and the like), lore to be unearthed via the respective skills, rumors and events as well as magic for sale; and yes, the rumors, questioning e.g. the parentage of dragon-blooded locals and similar interesting hooks provide a neat and uncommon, yet sensible angle to the village's plot-

options – which include btw. options to develop Galiantana’s absence in various ways.

Unlike most recent installments of the series, this time around we get two damn cool sample statblocks, the first of which would be a CR 8 sorcerer/dragon disciple, while the second would be a half-dragon chupacabra – yes, you read right. Oh, and the fellow is one of the anti-theft security measure of the local shop, which deserves its name “The Hoard.”

Conclusion:

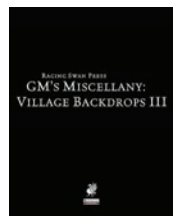
Editing and formatting are top-notch, I didn’t notice any glitches. Layout adheres to RSP’s smooth, printer-friendly two-column standard and the pdf comes with full bookmarks as well as a gorgeous map, of which you can, as always, download high-res jpegs if you join RSP’s patreon. The pdf comes in two versions, with one being optimized for screen-use and one to be printed out.

Jacob W. Michaels’ Denhearth is a thoroughly compelling settlement – with a unique angle, capable NPCs and a surprising emphasis on kind characters as a beacon of light, the place not only will be useful for the PCs, it’ll be a place they WANT to keep safe – which ties in perfectly with the numerous options and narrative directions a GM can take the village. Considering all of that, the uncommon locale and cool premise, we have a prime candidate for a final verdict of 5 stars + seal of approval.

You can get this inspired settlement here on OBS and here on d20pfsrd.com’s shop!

You can support/subscribe to Raging Swan Press-releases here on RSP’s patreon!

Endzeitgeist out.



GM’s Miscellany: Village Backdrops III

Publisher: Raging Swan

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This installment of Raging Swan Press’ groundbreaking, critically acclaimed GM’s Miscellany-series clocks in at 101 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page advertisement, 1 page editorial, 2 pages of ToC (including statblocks by CR-table), 1 page author-bios (which, frankly, more books should feature!), 1 page SRD, 1 page back cover, leaving us with a massive 93 pages of content, so let’s take a look, shall we?

This review was moved up on my review-queue as a prioritized review at the behest of my patrons.

If you don’t know at this point what the Village

Backdrops-series is, let me enlighten you: Village backdrops are small pdfs, each detailing a fully mapped village (in this book’s case, crafted by Simon Butler, Matt Morrow and none other than Tommi Salama)...but they are so much more. Know that one adventure that sports non-descript fantasy village XYZ? Know how e.g. your PCs got attached to Sandpoint, but not to such bland default-fare villages? Well, basically, this series is all about providing the ultimate antidote for bland villages – with a healthy selection of these up your sleeve, you’ll not only have truly awesome villages at your disposal, your players *will* care.

Beyond simply depicting a village, it is the sheer amount of detail crammed into each and every one of these settlements that ultimately make the village backdrops so exciting: Beyond the concise settlement statblocks featured, it is via the local customs, nomenclature and information on clothing habits that the places come to life. The supplements also feature whispers and rumors, magical items for sale and sample events – in the best of cases, they actually work as adventures of their own. One village contained herein, John Bennett’s Kennutcat, particularly made the heart of this Ravenloft-fanboy skip a beat. You know, I got this when I simply had no time to prepare anything and I simply dropped my PCs there – by virtue of the interaction with the place, an adventure developed organically, all on its own – my players couldn’t believe this was no module, but simply a settlement set-up.

There is another peculiarity you have to be aware of: Most of the respective settlements feature NPCs, monsters, haunts and similar hazards... and the series is actually a record-holder. No other series has managed to accumulate so many seals of approval. No matter how ridiculously high I set my standards, this series does not disappoint, surpassing itself time and again.

This compilation does sport btw. some of the most awesome books in the whole run of the series. In case you’re curious, this book covers Aubade, Arrowhill, Aldwater, Coldwater, Denhearth, Edgewood, Fulhurst Moon, Hopespyre, Idyll, Kennutcat, Red Talon, Sea Bitch, Starspun Hollow, St. Fiacre and Wellswood. All of these installments have in common that I have covered them in my respective reviews for them – and since I hate repeating myself unduly (and wasting your time), I’d simply advise clicking on the Village Backdrop-tab on my homepage endzeitgeist.com for a handy list of all of the reviews.

And, well, yeah – that’s about what I can say about this compilation – it collects thoroughly

awesome material, presents it in an easy-to read and use manner and overall makes for a great purchase, particularly if you're like me and simply prefer print.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I noticed no significant glitches. Layout adheres to Raging Swan Press' two-column b/w-standard and the book comes fully bookmarked for your convenience. The pdf comes in two versions, one for the printer and one optimized for screen use. If you want key-less, high-res versions of the map, you can get them by signing up for Raging Swan Press' patreon. Artworks featured herein are high-quality b/w and a particular shout-out should be extended to the brilliant cartographers that make each village feel distinct and unique.

Oh, but don't take my word for it – take a look at the authors: John Bennett, Creighton Broadhurst, Richard Green, Mike Kimmel, Jacob W. Michaels, Jacob Trier, Mike Welham. Notice something? Yes, this is a veritable who is who of some of the most talented mood-crafters among the authors currently active in the 3pp-circuit – it should come as no surprise, then, that one village herein actually has managed to achieve nomination as a candidate for my Top Ten of 2015 – an honor I need to extend to this book alongside 5 stars + seal of approval, mainly because its array of thematic excellence and diversity makes it an even better deal than the individual pdfs were. If you already have them, though, then there's admittedly not that much of a reason to get this, unless, as mentioned before, you want a nice, easy to sue print version of this.

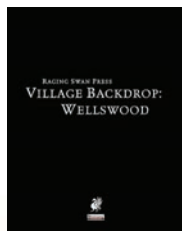
If you haven't yet seen how good this series is, well, then this is the perfect way to check it out!

You can get this superb book here on OBS and here on d20pfsrd.com's shop!

But, know what's best here? You don't have to take my word: You can get a slimmed down, free version here on OBS and here on d20pfsrd.com's shop and form your own opinion on the quality of the book!

If you want to support Raging Swan Press' patreon, you can do so here!

Endzeitgeist out.



Village Backdrops: Wellswood

Publisher: Raging Swan

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This installment of RSP's Village Backdrop-series is 10 pages long,

1 page front cover, 1 page advertisement, 1 page editorial/ToC, 1 page SRD and 1 page back cover, leaving us with 5 pages of content, so let's take a look at the settlement.

In this installment of Raging Swan Press' by now legendary series, we travel to the village of Wellswood – which is aptly-named: Situated in the midst of a gorgeous forest, the settlement sports numerous wells – both natural ones and those crafted by dwarven hands, for the settlement sports a significant dwarven population, who faithfully serves the local dour and somewhat greedy, but none too unpleasant lord Ilmari Issakainen.

The uncommon occurrence of a forest-bound dwarven clan also results in a surprising amount of fortified stone buildings jutting forth from the massive forest. While secure, the rather significant taxes imposed are not to be trifled with, though merchants and travelers won't have too much of a problem paying them. No less than three inns (all coming with information on accommodation-prices and food) are detailed within these pages, as befitting of a village under the auspice of a church of travelers – which btw. includes a brief deity-write-up. Industry-wise, the local lake with its fishing (requiring permission of the lord...which is, again, taxed) is based mostly on the massive influx of travelers passing through.

Oh, but I've failed to mention the interesting component here: You see, aforementioned lake, much like the hold of the dwarven clan, is subterranean and heavily regulated – though that does not mean that there are no means of getting down there sans the lord knowing...if you know whom to ask. Yes, the subterranean lake actually writes adventures of itself, considering the plethora of potential dangers there and the mere presence of it makes a potentially cataclysmic earthquake all the more dangerous – so yes, plenty of development options are provided here, from the local color (the village sports notes on nomenclature, clothing, magic items for sale etc.) to more massive storylines – after all, there is a reason the dwarves are here – but to know that, you'll have to travel to Wellswood yourself!

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I didn't notice any glitches. Layout adheres to RSP's smooth, printer-friendly two-column standard and the pdf comes with full bookmarks as well as a gorgeous map, of which you can, as always, download high-res jpegs if you join RSP's patreon. The pdf comes in two versions, with one being optimized for screen-

use and one to be printed out and sports a great artwork of a fishing trip on the subterranean lake.

Creighton Broadhurst's Wellswood is a compelling settlement that manages to strike a precarious balance: On the one hand, it is a pretty pleasant place that, in itself, is not yet an adventure and the lack of a central conflict means that you don't have a streamlined narrative cut out for you. However, unlike many a supplement with such a broad focus, Wellswood still manages to retain a sense of holistic integrity, a feeling of concise options, ready to be explored at any time. From politics to potential threats, whether as just a waystation or as a new home for the PCs, the village manages to support and accommodate threats both significant and trivial. While the supplement does not achieve the highest echelons of the series, it remains an excellent book that does offer a significant, tight array of interesting options for GMs and players to explore and, more important, a tight and unique place to visit – hence, my final verdict will clock in at 5 stars.

You can get this cool village here on OBS and here on d20pfsrd.com's shop!

If you want to support Raging Swan Press, you can do so here on Raging Swan Press' [patreon!](https://www.patreon.com/RagingSwanPress)

Endzeitgeist out.



Shattered Heart #2: The Temple of Jewels and Mirrors

Publisher: AAW Games

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

The second installment of Michael Allen's saga about the fight over the soul of the halfling people of Piccolo clocks in at 48 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page ToC, 2 pages of SRD, 1 page back cover, leaving us with 42 pages of content, so let's take a look!

This being an adventure-review, the following contains SPOILERS. Potential players of this AP should jump to the conclusion.

All right, still here? After re-consecrating the subaqueous temple of the Goddess and potentially brokering a peace between the folk of Pembroke and the Vikmordere (or killing the intruders), there may be an angle for the repair of the next temple: Agents have reported to Carlyetta of some strange Cyclopean ruins (some of which the PCs may have seen in module #1) that may actually contain a weird type of glyph magic which may strengthen the bond of elemental magics with the Goddess.

But in order to further research these runes, Caryetta's (and the PC's) next step on the journey is the dwarven enclave of Stoneroot – after all, it was the dwarves that did craft the alchemical mirrors that provided sunlight to the subterranean holy tree that is the goal of this module's quest -and the PCs will need the information regarding the means by which this restoration can be achieved.

Thus, we begin this module with a social ROLEplaying-heavy sandboxing scenario wherein the PCs walk the streets of Stoneroot, dealing with backdealings, missing people and more – most importantly, though, capable investigation is required to make heads or tails of the different theories concerning the cyclopean ruins...and the decidedly smart manipulations of the PC's shadowy adversary. Indeed, smart players will be required to notice the subtle clues that slowly accumulate – from enchantments to forged documents, there are some smart moves on behalf of the adversaries here -and for a reason. The runes, while clearly powerful, will prove to be dangerous indeed... but, in tune with the first module, we're still talking about consequences and choices: Once again, the defining feature of the saga remains the means by which PCs shape the destiny of the very heart and soul of Piccolo's halflings. Community points are gathered and lost and e.g. the choices on how to deal with disgruntled dwarves and the like remain important – particularly when strife is unleashed and the poor bosun of the Autumn Leaves becomes assimilated by a dread intellect devourer, further shaking Carlyetta and making her susceptible to the notion of requiring power – fast.

On the journey to the temple, with copious supplies and the like, the PCs will encounter truly lavishly-rendered new monsters: The Zagnatti, spawned from the insane mind of a fragmented god can be first encountered – from the empathic-shielding of blood pustules to the powerful queens, these somewhat mantis shrimp-like creatures rank among the most interesting insectoid adversaries I've seen in quite a while – oh, and each of their artworks just rocks and drives home their power: Think of Alien meets colorful mantis shrimps. And yes, once again, the PCs can save lives here...and gain even more support. (By the way – each of the respective encounters herein does have its own, neat full-color artwork!)

Now, the eponymous temple of jewels and mirrors is one of the most wondrous dungeons I've seen in quite a while – not only does the map of the dungeon look like a tree, it is ultimately a dungeon that is unique in that its rot has driven its guardian

insane, while trolls and worse roam its place – the PC’s task, then, is not only to repair the mirrors used to funnel sunlight through the tunnels towards the tree, they also have to contend with the dungeon’s unique inhabitants, traps...and the sacred tree at the temple’s center itself, which lashes out against those foolish enough to step into its presence. The writing and imagery of this dungeon is downright awesome and sports a truly diverse array of challenges – and, once the PCs are victorious, the module is not yet done – the sanctification of the temple, with or without the runes, will be the crucial finale of the module and, once again, the PCs will reap what they have sown regarding trust, kindness and their own investigative prowess.

As with the first module, we get a community point tracker-sheet and player-friendly maps as well.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I noticed no glitches. Layout adheres to a beautiful two-column full-color standard with copious amounts of gorgeous, original pieces of full-color artwork and AAW Games’ usual, high-quality cartography – and yes, player-friendly versions of all maps are part of the deal. The pdf is fully bookmarked and, like the predecessor module, I urge you to get the premium print version – it’s glorious and the module is well worth it.

Why? Well, Michael Allen delivers a more conservative module in its genre here – but at the same time, he does something right that almost all adventure-series, whether they be APs or adventure arcs, get wrong. What do I mean by this? Well, know how e.g. in the original RotRL, sin-tracking was deemed a thing...only to then not really matter? How some seemingly important consequences are glossed over in later books? This is pretty much the antithesis to this practice: From small side-character’s deaths to PC behavior, literally everything the PCs do, everything that happens, matters in some way – and the decisions and performance in module #1 carries over perfectly to this one, providing an incredibly concise narrative, a feeling of organic growth, also regarding the interactions with the NPCs... and, once again, there are several choices, several outcomes to the conundrums posed. That and the new monsters are awesome.

Shattered Heart #2 actually manages to maintain the incredibly high quality established by its predecessor and continues to captivate and astonish with fantastic vistas, the rewarding of smart player choices and nail-biting action – and,

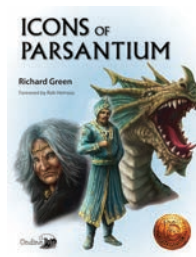
if this series manages to maintain this level of quality, we’ll have a truly astounding experience once it has been concluded. I remain with a final verdict of 5 stars + seal of approval + nomination as a candidate for the Top Ten of 2015 – if Michael Allen continues to deliver this level of quality, we’ll be looking at an author who’ll rank among my all-time favorites alongside illustrious names such as Richard Develyn, Matthew Finch, Bill Webb and similar titans of their craft.

You can get this awesome module here on OBS!

Want to have it for Fantasy Grounds? You can get it here on OBS!

Do you currently prefer D&D 5e? You can get the adventure for 5e here on OBS!

Endzeitgeist out.



Icons of Parsantium (13th Age)

Publisher: Ondine

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This massive pdf clocks in at 47 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page ToC, 1 page SRD, 1 page advertisement, leaving us with 42 (!!!) pages of content, so let’s take a look!

Richard Green’s Byzantine-analogue fantasy city of Parsantium is easily one of the most unique settings I’ve read all year: While mostly setting-agnostic, the city’s unique backdrop and flair rendered Parsantium a wonderful breath of fresh air among all too many redundant concepts. This year, I also saw a broadening of my focus, extending my reviews to covering 13th Age, among other systems, amid my portfolio.

If you’ve read my reviews of 13th Age core supplements, you may have noticed that I love the system and certain components of the Dragon Empire setting – but the icons are not one of the components I like. The default icons pretty much are archetypes in the traditional sense and only in recent supplements and some tidbits, the icons slowly are getting a kind of identity that transcends bland fantasy fare. If you’re planning on using 13th Age properly with a given campaign setting, you’ll need to determine unique icons for the setting – and this supplement does just that.

After a neat b/w-map of the surrounding country as well as foreword by none other than one of 13th Age’s creators, Rob Heinsoo, we immediately introduced to the respective icon-write-ups and their level of detail is significant: The write-ups sport a sample quote, notes on the usual location where

the icon can be found, detailed common knowledge as well as advice for handling adventurers and their relationship with the icon. Champions and followers, allies and adversaries, enemies, the icon's history – all covered...including "The True Danger" – so yes, everything you'd expect is here... and more.

The pdf also covers two racial write-ups for use as PCs: Gnolls and Vanara. Gnolls get +2 Con or Dex and a racial power that makes piling on foes more lethal. Vanara receive +2 Dex or Wis and get a racial power that allows them to disengage 1/battle as a free action – annoyingly called "pop free from an enemy" in the rules-language. *sigh*

Oh well, you're here for the icons, right? So what are they? Well, first we'd have the Archbishop, His Radiance Arcadius, head of Helion's church, a devout and pious scion of civilization who is as strong as his faith...rendering him susceptible to some nasty ploys, but also extremely powerful. The Basileus Corandias XVIII the Lionlooded would be the city's sovereign, the emperor-analogue, if you will. Of course, the underworld has a similar ruler, The Boss of All Bosses, the informal fourth tribune of the city ultimately makes for a compelling character that diverges enough from the Prince of Shadows to be interesting. There also would be the Great Caliph Faisal al-Aqil: Scholar, astronomer and conqueror of Parsantium – which, if you're not yet familiar with the city, should make one thing clear: The power-dynamics of Parsantium are much more unique, less monolithic and thus more rife for adventure than those of the default icons.

Parsantium, however, is also home to a Dragon, a bronze who, in times of need, has risen to defend the city – but for which ultimate agenda, no one knows as the dragon walks the streets well-disguised, while hunted by the agents of darkness. The Emperor of the Jade Throne further complicates the net of allegiances of the political landscape of the icons here – obviously an Eastern-inspired ruler who has significant interests in the city...and a dire feud versus the Gnoll Khan, for it is the gnolls that stand in for the nomadic, raiding hordes of the Mongols in real world history, being led by the Grand Khan of the Gnolls.

Arcanists obviously also are represented – here, by the Grand Master of the Blue Lotus, who not only is the foremost wizard of his massive esoteric order. In a twist on the classic trope, the vanara is actually a champion of the downtrodden and common people! Haven't seen that one before – kudos! The Lady of Summer Kingdoms, as alluring as she is dangerous, would be obviously a Fey

Queen – and one that may, with her capricious whims, bring e.g. the Archbishop to his kneed. The Maharani, a half-deity, rules over the analogue of India and her massive realms. Similarly, but in a more sinister way, the legendary mummy of Queen Merytnofru is gathering hordes to recreate her massive erstwhile kingdom.

The paladins of the Platinum Knights would be a force for order and civilization from the predations of the green-skins, adding an implicit angle of interesting prejudice to the mix. That's not all, though: The dread Rajah of Rakshasas is also playing his game in the city and the Water Lords, elected rulers of Loranto, could be considered to be pseudo-Venetian schemers united in the goal of securing maritime supremacy...and then, there is, finally, the legendary witch of Flotsam – a mysterious crone, black market dealer...and apothecary.

Do you notice something? Even in my admittedly brief summaries of these icons, you'll notice ambiguity: Even the more villainous icons have angels that make them appropriate for heroes...and vice versa. The collection of these icons inspires, provides the potential for not one, but a vast array of potential story-lines...and the book does not end there.

For your convenience, each icon sports positive and negative 5 + 6 entries for the icon's respective relationship dice – and yes, these entries are intriguing and helpful indeed...and then there would be the handy glossary and the secret information provided, which contains some truly intriguing hooks to develop...and no, I'm not going to spoil them here.

Conclusion:

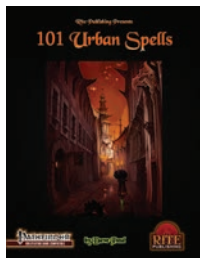
Editing and formatting are top-notch, I noticed no significant glitches. Layout adheres to a printer-friendly 2-column b/w-standard. Interior art is a blending of the color art you see on the cover and b/w-artwork – it does its job, though I wished each icon had its own artwork. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

Richard Green's Icons of Parsantium are absolutely STUNNING: They walk a tight line and manage to keep the balance...between what? Well, you see, if the icons diverged too much from 13th Age's core icons, we would have an issue regarding adventure-conversion. If they remained too close to the default icons, they'd be unnecessary. Quite the contrary is the case, but let me elaborate: 13th Age, as presented in the core book-line, is pretty much a system with a certain intended playstyle that extends to the stories told: Full-blown, in your face high fantasy. The thing is, the system would

support more playstyles, but the global scale and relatively one-dimensional icons of the base setting do not lend themselves particularly well to shades of gray moralities, politics or less global campaigns...which I always considered a pity.

Enter this book. Sure, you can consider and use the icons herein very much the same way as 13th Age's default icons – but they have more depth and diversity to them: The icons herein are very much tangible; they are characters with names, histories etc....and yes, they may die and fail and struggle. What we have here are proper characters with ambiguous, versatile uses...that lose none of the icon's required gravitas. Even if you're not interested in Parsantium (why?), I pretty much can guarantee that, if you're even remotely interested in a more down-to-earth or sword and sorcery-esque version of 13th Age, the icons here will provide inspiration galore for your own designs...or make for great scavenging material. I have no significant gripes whatsoever I can field against this great book and indeed, will probably revisit Parsantium with 13th Age-rules, just to sue these icons more. My final verdict will clock in at 5 stars + seal of approval.

You can get this awesome supplement here on OBS! Endzeitgeist out.



101 Urban Spells (PFRPG)

Publisher: Rite Publishing

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

The latest, massive book of Dave Paul's terrain-centric spell-collections clocks in at a whopping 50 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, leaving us with a massive 47 pages of content, so let's take a look!

This review was moved forward in my review-queue as a prioritized review at the request of my patrons.

Okay, so at this point, I have to quite frankly admit to being giddy like a school-girl whenever one of these terrain-centric spell-books by Rite Publishing hits my review-pile. At a point where I honestly considered the topic of spells to be done and covered, these spells have, time and again, blow me away by their precision and unique concepts - and similarly, this one begins with a rather exciting mechanical innovation: We take a look at settlement-sizes and their size-modifiers, which range from -4 to +4 - it is said size modifiers and settlement sizes that directly influence how the spells contained herein work. Additionally,

some of the spells contained herein are designed to appeal explicitly to uncommon caster classes and combinations - like arcane tricksters et al.

The pdf codifies spells by class and level before diving into the main meat of the product - the spells. And from the get-go, I'm smiling: Acrophobia instills fear of heights; Alight the Holy Terrace duplicates Word of Recall, but saves only you and dumps you at the stairs of a church, later even inside - we've all read comics where the hero, battered and bruised, escapes and crashes in front of a church, to be found in the middle of the night. So yeah, sold! The third spell herein increases your chances of finding extraordinary treasure - and this is more exciting in practice than in theory...how did the item get here? Why is it for sale in the first place? This is a means for the GM to give the players what they want sans breaking the rules AND facilitates introducing new plot-lines. Gold.

The second level spell Ameliorate Disease is a bit of an odd duck - on one hand, it is a clear power-creep that allows for easier, sooner disease-control. At the same time, it applies the settlement modifier and does not prevent re-infection and costs gold. This may actually, for more grim settings, be a better default spell than the regular magical means of dealing with disease. (and yes, there is a poison-variant of this one in here as well...)

Blasphemous Aura is a game-changer of a spell - at 3rd level, this one allows for the hampering of divine magic and channel energy, both of which now have a chance of failure while inside the emanation. The spell sports a warning sidebox - though personally, I don't consider it problematic: You see, for one, fiction sports ample instances where proximity to a particularly viable creature, be it a servant of the elder gods or a powerful undead, hampers spellcasting for divine characters. Secondly, the conservative AoE ultimately results in the spell being of an appropriate power-level for 3rd level spells. Thirdly, as any GM who has faced a channel-centric character (like a divine channeler) in the hands of a power-gamer can attest, the lack of a decent countering mechanic for the Su is a rather obvious hole in the rules-context. So yeah, as far as I'm concerned, I'll be adding this spell to the arsenal of quite a few of my adversaries. If you're still somewhat hesitant - my Scion of Discordia-class in Interjection Games' Strange Magic was playtested for months and features similar lock-down abilities, so no - this does not break your game, though admittedly, it may make bastions of churches and casters less secure...but at least in my book, from a narrative point of view, that's a good thing.

Speaking of specific spells that really make a GM's job easier - Can't Leave Town is the spell-representation of the delightful horror-trope, where you try to leave a settlement, only to re-enter it. Similarly, versatile Columns of Smoke can make it rather easy to escape...and notify allies/send signals. Of course, there would also be spells herein to conjure forth constructs of filth and loathsome debris to squash your adversaries (and even merge them in the case of more powerful variants). There would also be a spell that allows you to place a ring on the finger of a target to compel the target to only deal nonlethal damage - this makes so much sense for the punishment options of a society wherein magic exists. Similarly, nonlethal force-based means of dispersing crowds make sense as magical riot-control.

Calling forth dogs or summoning cockroach swarms can be found here - as can be a cantrip to dry clothes. There also is a rather nasty one that allows you to fear on the fear of crowds, consuming it and converting it into personal power - a neat magical representation of instigators feeding on fear. There is also a particularly interesting spell called Fortune Teller's Curse - this one nets you insight into past, present and limited prescience and is VERY powerful - but it also represents a way of burdening a PC and adding unique means of enhancing investigations...at a price that will make the PC want to get rid of it. I'd consider this one problematic, were it not for the warning. Rather interesting from a story-telling perspective: Gleaning information from graffiti! Making mirrors Narcissus-traps or traveling by them. Illusion-based misdirecting vapors or becoming Nondescript is interesting - and what about a spell called Persistently Unconvinced that installs a conviction in the mind of the adversary that he's not really in danger - this does look wrong, right? A kind of illusion, surely? In the hands of a halfway decent illusionist, this makes for a lethal smoke and mirrors game!

Better roof running, scrying via mirrors in various iterations or conjuring clothes from the stuff of shadow. Gold for any storyteller and a seed for unique culture - there is a spell that allows you to transfer diseases and poison from the living to the undead. This little spell makes for a viable reason why undead are kept around; it allows for a "benevolent" undead overlord to heal his subjects for just a small price; it provides a justification for people to actually serve undead or tolerate necromancers. I love this. Teleporting through crowds and conjuring weasels forth to steal keys

for you...oh, and there actually are multiple spells that deal with structures - from collapsing roofs to crews of vexgit wreckers. Oh, and I really like the curse that makes the target verbose when trying to deceive...

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good, I noticed no significant glitches. Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's two-column full-color standard and the pdf comes with multiple awesome, gorgeous full-color artworks. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

Dave Paul has singlehandedly reignited my excitement for new spells. After more than 2000 spells read, I was, quite frankly, bored by most such books. When Dave Paul came along and began crafting not only exceedingly precise and complex spells, but actually started innovating within the frame work of what spells usually do - and he expanded his game. So far, not a single one of these books is anything short of pure excellence - and this is no different. Using settlement size modifiers here and there is pretty interesting and, for the most part, the magic herein is MAGICAL. It feels like magic.

You won't find bland "deal x damage" spells herein. If you're looking for those, open just about any pdf out there and look for the spell-section.

What you'll find is themes, flair, complex options and spells that inspire whole modules, perhaps even campaigns - this book practically demands being inserted into any urban campaign - from Road to Revolution to Curse of the Crimson Throne to Council of Thieves and beyond, this pdf enhances the game, innovates mechanically and provides precise, complex spells that get their wording right. Where something can be problematic in contexts, the pdf warns you, even in cases like the anti-channeling where I'd issue no such warning myself. All in all, this continues Dave Paul's streak of absolutely stellar spell-books, cementing the series further as the unquestionable benchmark for what good spellbooks can and should do. My final verdict will clock in at 5 stars + seal of approval, given without any hesitation. Stellar!

Endzeitgeist out.



The Secrets of the Divine: Death, Justice, Healing & Madness

Publisher: Rite Publishing

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

The latest installment of Rite Publishing's books detailing the unique pantheon of Questhaven along with the unique servants of the respective deities clocks in at 26 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 2 pages of advertisement, leaving us with 21 pages of content, so let's take a look!

Now if you're not familiar with the series, here's the basic summary: The deities in Questhaven are peculiar in that their true names are not spoken – instead, they have aliases like “Our Shifting Oracle of Genius” or “Their Mistress of Madness,” with the precise epithet depending on your personal relationship with the deity. The deities sport favored weapons, domains and the like and concise write-ups and the pdf also offers unique options for the respective servants of the deity – often to the point, where the archetypes and feats provided radically change how a character serving the deity plays.

The first deity covered herein is, concept-wise, already very interesting: Our Mother of Many Ways is a chaotic neutral deity associated with jackals, badgers and the like – however, unlike most jackal-associated deities out there, she is not an evil creature – instead, the basic idea is to take the old adage of the thin line separating genius and insanity is represented and embodied by this deity. The vine of inspiration and its associated benefits, the manifestation of her favor and information on the holidays of the deity -all written in the compelling prose we've come to expect from the series. The deity also grants two subdomains for Knowledge, namely Prophecy and Inspiration, with domain powers allowing for insight bonuses to be granted to skill-checks or for or for relative flexible premonitions that allow you to act in surprise rounds or gain insight bonuses to AC/attacks, etc.

The deity also sports 3 new feats, one of which retaliates 1/day (not expended if the target saves) an attack on your person with a madness affliction (narrative gold!). Another allows for exactly one revelation with activation time of 1 full round or less to be used as a swift action – which can be pretty potent. Finally, feat number 3, is a high-concept one, allowing you to transform wine of significant quantities into ingested poison. While very circumstantial, I can see this being a cool plot-device indeed! (How did this one group take the fortress back from the ogres?) The write-up also contains, surprisingly, the Joyous Fellowship – a paladin archetype/orga that represents chaotic good followers that receive perceptive gaze (with a cut-copy-paste error referring to inquisitor levels), an aura of hope and, more interestingly, at 4th

level an euphoria-powered barbarian rage in lieu of spells. The higher level auras are also rather distinct, allowing for the smite-powered extension of rage to allies, with chaos-based DR/lawful and apotheosis as well as banishment-powered smite. On a cool fluff-level, the archetype also features a fully depicted code of conduct – overall, a solid chaotic pala.

The second deity covered herein would be “Our Queen of Wisdom and Mercy”, the shepherdess of contrition and mercy – enormously popular due to healing offered free of charge, but unsurprisingly none too popular among the clergy-in-spe due to the exceedingly high moral standards required by the church. The write-up of the feats this time around contains two feats, one of which is exceedingly interesting: Sister's Lace allows you, to, as a swift action, consume three uses of both healing and protection domain 1st level abilities to lace conjuration (healing) or harmless spells, either granting a significant long-term AC-buff that scales with your levels or charge a creature's weapon with healing, which is discharged upon being touched by the weapon – which offers some surprising, tactical tricks I haven't seen before.

The second feat, Healer's Grace, allows for the expenditure of domain powers to grant rerolls versus negative conditions based on the cleric's own Will-save – pretty powerful, but fitting one. We also get a new paladin, the Queen' Man – at 4th level, they can significantly enhance the casting of spells and provide a defensive shield that wards against conditions you can negate via mercies and high-level paladins can convert damage in a huge radius into non-lethal damage can be considered truly cool – that battle waging on the grounds of a misunderstanding? Well, these guys can make sure no-one dies! (On a nitpicky side, the archetype is once erroneously called “compassionate son” – but that's pretty much a cosmetic gripe.) The capstone similarly emphasizes taking conditions, damage, etc. of others, making the archetype's final levels predisposed to notions of heroic sacrifice, something I really like in the frame of paladins and, since this replaces spells, the power of the class feature seems justified. Furthermore, the archetype sports a number of unique and complex modifications of divine bond with a specific ward-creature that makes the Queen's Man a superb bodyguard for the target creature. We also receive a second archetype, the Harmonious Spirit warpriest, who receives a modified list of skills and proficiencies as well as several monk-related abilities. Automatic merciful spells, merciful extraplanar prisons to

deal with vanquished foes and the like render this archetype rather cool for groups like mine, where murder-hobo-ing intelligent life is NOT considered behavior that's acceptable for good characters. The harmonious spirit also receives a code of conduct, while aforementioned paladin does not.

The third deity herein was one I've been pretty much excited about for a long time – the Reaper of Death and Rebirth, served by the Crematorium of the Grim Gatherer – and yes, this is an interesting component of the church: Beyond the usual death-related iconography and different takes on the religion, the addition of phoenix and rebirth as central concepts render this one a surprisingly fresh take on the death-god-trope. The archetype provided here would be the Ruiner fighter, who gets a specific ruin pool equal to $1/2$ class level + Cha-mod, which can be used defensively, to make wounds that are hard to heal or cast curse spells – though I'm honestly hard-pressed to note a sufficient amount of spells with the cures-descriptor – a spell-list, even a small one, would have been very much appreciated here. Additionally, higher level ruiners receive hexes, bonus damage versus cursed foes and the stalwart ability (not a fan – basically, evasion for Fort- and Will-saves) and high-level ruiners can prevent the very first attack in a full attack executed against them by cursed targets. Overall, a cool, if somewhat user-unfriendly archetype.

Now on the interesting side, there is also a universal archetype contained herein, the Phoenix Child... which is less of an archetype and more of a GM-based template that is applied to characters. Think of it as a kind of mythic path sans tiers that is instead tied with linear progression to the respective class levels. You see, these beings may be reborn in fire, but they also return from the grave with a list tattooed into their arms – this is the list of specific tasks the character has to rectify in order to be absolved of the sins committed in a previous life, with final death being the reward...though redemption thus gained is scarcely attained. Beyond various flame-themed abilities, this one is basically a power-increase, a narrative option...and made me immediately contemplate a campaign, where all PCs are Phoenix Children. Not suitable for every campaign and GMs should be aware of the additional power, but still, I consider this AWESOME.

The final deity herein would be Our Steely-Eyed Judge, the deity of justice and law – stern, fierce and vigilant, supported by a rather well-written Truth inquisition that includes a honesty-enforcing curse, with the two feats once again sporting a domain-powered lacing effect, which, this time around, offers

for a kind of flanking curse and a limited retributive bestow curse (lacking italicization), which is nice. The write-up also sports the Thief-taker Slayer archetype, a specialist of urban tracking (with handy DCs/modifier-tables provided), including the rather cool generation of tracer-objects and high-level quarries and a talent that allows for the garroting of enemies and a non-lethal incapacitation talent that erroneously mentions the bounty hunter in another minor hiccup.

Beyond these option, we conclude this book with some truly intriguing pieces of fluff that elaborate the themes and concepts of Questhaven, including the crossroads of dream and some important pieces of advice some authors out there should take a look at – making fluff not read like a DVR instruction manual is something that would make my reviewer's obligations significantly more compelling...but I digress.

Conclusion:

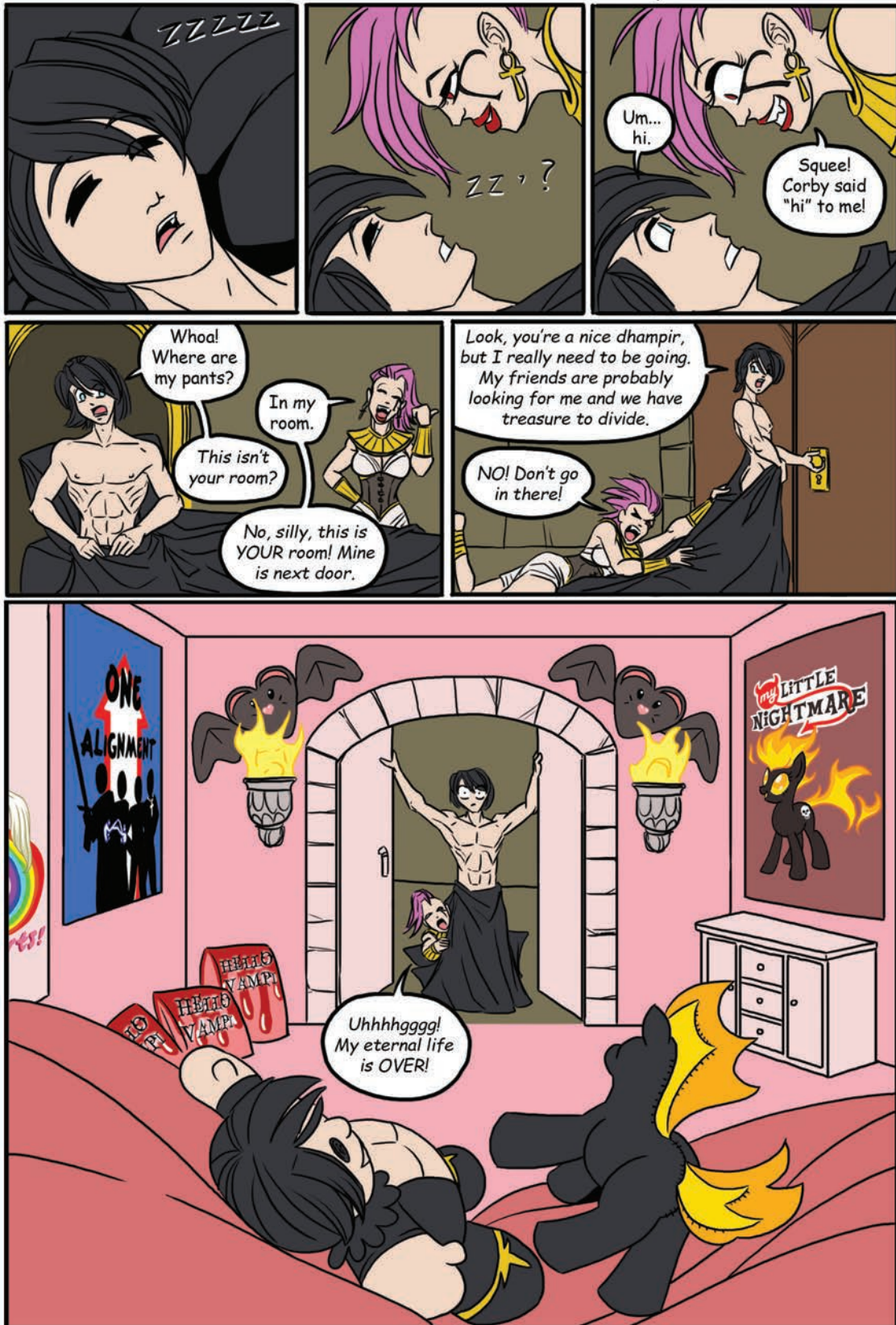
Editing and formatting are the one component of this supplement that could have used some streamlining – there are quite a few punctuation glitches in here and references to the wrong class in some abilities, remnants of either cut-copy-paste glitches or revisions in the class-name's respective nomenclature. Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's two-column full-color standard and the pdf has nice artworks for the deity's symbols and more, most of it in full color. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

Okay, so this one is pretty hard on me – I like just about all of the respective options portrayed herein, though the ruiner could really have used a list of curse spells by level. I also would have loved a code of conduct for the Queen's Man. Then again, the significant majority of archetypes and options here not only sport some awesome concepts, they also manage to use rather innovative mechanics and inspire to an extent that makes me come up with plot-lines by virtue of simply reading them – a feat not many pieces of crunch achieve. So yes, Steven D. Russell's latest collection of deities and related material must be considered to be inspired, though it also feels a bit rougher on the edges than what I would have liked it to be. Still, most glitches herein are ultimately cosmetic in nature – which makes me settle on a final verdict of 4.5 stars, rounded up due to the inspired ideas herein to 5 for the purpose of this platform.

You can get this high-concept book here on OBS and here on d20pfsrd.com's shop!

Endzeitgeist out.

THE PATH LESS TRAVELED #23: The Secret Life of the Undead Teenager
By Jacob E. Blackmon



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