

Issue #10
April 2014

SAVAGE SINSLIDER

For All Things Savage

Make it Epic



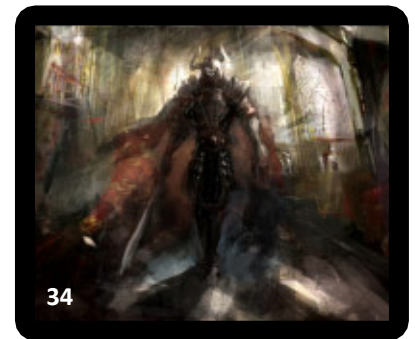
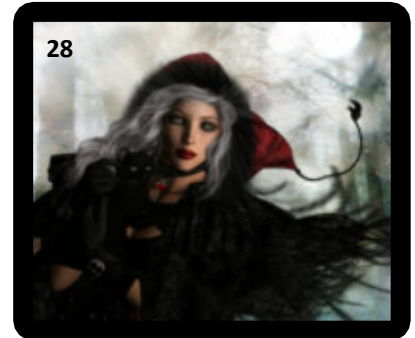
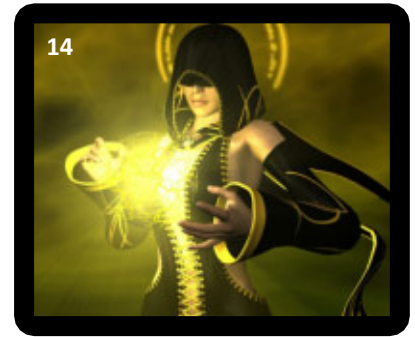
Any World. Any Time.



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Make it Epic

By Aaron T. Huss

Make it Epic is our all-fantasy issue of *Savage Insider*. To show our support for all fantasy themes, there's a little bit of everything sprinkled throughout usable in epic fantasy, dark fantasy, fantasy horror, and modern fantasy. It starts out with a look at the ranger archetype, what makes them unique, and how they fit into different fantasy themes. Next we have a special General Interest piece from John Arcadian discussing the use of power trappings and how you can turn your powers into something exciting while at the table. Then you can journey through the town of Norlynn and discover its magic secrets. Following that is a character gallery of one of Norlynn's long lost residents, the powerful wizard Millicent McMire. From there you step into the full-length, two-part Great Adventure *Once and Once and a Log Time Ago*; an adventure filled with dangers, exploration, and even the chance of diplomacy. Moving along we step into the ideals of building and using pantheons in your settings in the latest *Divine Intervention* article coauthored

by two individuals versed in religious history, Gilbert Gallo and Charles White. Next you can grab the Black Flame sword in a new Equipment Corral. You can use that sword in your fight against the restless dead of the canine world in the battlemap-supported *Random Encounter Dogs of War*. This *Random Encounter* features maps from *DramaScape's Crypts* product. Finishing up is a collection of three Equipment Corral pieces and our regular Calendar of Events. This issue also marks a special point in the history of *Savage Insider* as the title of Editor-in-Chief is being handed over to assistant editor and marketing specialist Vicky A. Beaver. Vicky will take on the duties of producing and publishing the magazine through her imprint *Obatron Productions*. Look for new issues and updates from them including a new Facebook page, Twitter account, and home for the *Savage Insider* Online website. It's been a wonderful first ten issues and it's time to give the next person a chance to bring awesomeness to the *Savage Worlds* community!

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VISIT THE LAND OF FIRE IN THE WORLD OF HELLFROST

Brought to you by the pen (or keyboard actually) of well-known Savage Worlds author Wiggy (Paul ‘Wiggy’ Wade-Williams), *Land of Fire* is sure to keep your epic fantasy desires satiated throughout the years.

It’s time to move from the cold climate of the Rassilon continent to warmer weather in the first geographic expansion to Triple Ace Games’ epic fantasy setting *Hellfrost* – *Land of Fire*. Contrasting with its Norse influences, *Land of Fire* takes its inspiration from those akin to Arabian Nights.

With the successful Kickstarter campaign and release of the core setting guide in July 2013, *Land of Fire* is following the Hellfrost development cycle with its first collection of Region Guides. The initial ten Region Guides have been released since the core setting guide numbering #0 – 9: *The Bedu*, *Hekata*, *The Jinn Lands of Old*, *The Great Northern Desert*, *The Great Southern Desert*, *The Southern Oceans*, *The Heart of Fire*, *The Salt Basin*, *The Empty Zone*, and *The Great Dune Sea*.

If *Land of Fire* is anything like the first part of *Hellfrost*, it’s reasonable to think we’ll see a number of new Region Guides supported by adventures, creature

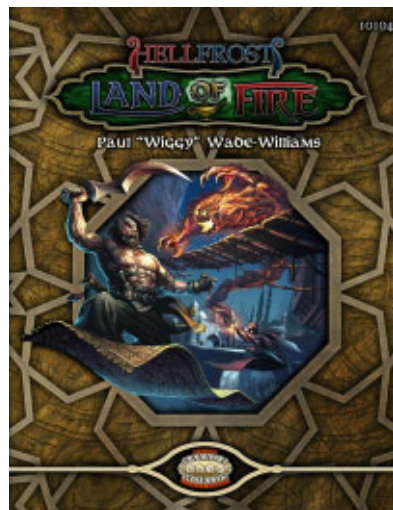
supplements, and maybe another hardcover release.

Wiggy had this to say:

Land of Fire is the first major geographical expansion to the *Hellfrost* setting. Whereas *Hellfrost* drew its inspiration from the myths of Northern Europe, *Land of Fire* owes much to the stories of the Arabian Nights. It is a land of flying carpets, arrogant jinn, fearsome undead, glittering palaces, scheming wizirs, regal sphinxes, ancient ruins, trap-laden tombs bloated with fabulous treasure, dashing rogues, and scimitar-wielding warriors.

Formerly slaves of the otherworldly jinn, who ruled over the sands for 800 years, the civilized races are now masters of their own destiny. Amid the sands stand the great cities of the Hadaree (settled humans) and Bedu (nomadic tribes), the wise and honorable jackal-headed cakali, the less cultured hyaenidae (hyena-men), and the lowly, camel-humped sand goblins.

With just four major civilized realms and one independent city, much of the land is sparsely settled and full of dangers. Within the civilized realms are the great cities, sprawling metropolis home to tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of citizens. From



Jadid, City of Trade to Sha’ib, City of Mazes, from Tamarah, City of Heavenly Sin to Sirhan, City of Stars, each city is a miniature realm, with its own unique character and culture.

Although a separate geographical region, Al-Shirkuh is not isolated from events in the north. The Hellfrost, though thousands of miles away, affects even the blistering desert—temperatures are dropping, rainfall is diminishing, and desertification is increasing. The Siphoning, the mysterious force that can drain mages of their arcane power, is felt among the dervish, jinn, khem-hekau, and ushabti mages.

Product List

- Land of Fire core book (192-page book detailing the Land of Fire)

- Land of Fire action deck
- Adventure N1: The Curse of the Sand Lord
- Tales from the Sands (a compendium of four full-length adventures)
- Realm Guides (a series of PDFs expanding on information concerning one specific realm and providing more information on the continent). To date Realm Guides covering Bedu, Hekata, Jinn Lands of Old, Great Northern Desert, Great Southern Desert, Southern Ocean, Heart of Fire, Salt Basin, Empty Zone, and Great Dune Sea have been released

FULLY UPDATED FULL METAL CYBERPUNK

After a successful Kickstarter campaign, and many months of development with an amazing staff, Gun Metal Games has released *Interface Zero 2.0*. Although the Kickstarter campaign funding has allowed a wealth of content to be developed, the core setting guide is now available in PDF format. To fully support everyone's buying habits and give players a cost-reduced entry

method, the core setting guide is available as a single book alongside a *Player's Guide* and *GM's Guide*. Additionally, there is a set of figure flats and a world map from 2090.

From Gun Metal Games' president David Jarvis:

"The response to *Interface Zero 2.0: Full Metal Cyberpunk* has been overwhelmingly positive! Game Geeks gave the book a

stellar review, and so far the E-book is an Electrum Pick on Drivethru RPG, and we've begun a pre-order for the print book on our website (www.gunmetalgames.com).

For a limited time, people can get the book for kickstarter prices (50.99), which is a great deal, given the fact that the book will retail in stores for 59.99.

In the future, we're going to be releasing adventures from



Steve Kenson, John Wick, and others. The solar system book for *Interface Zero* is also in development, as are other books in support of this line!

How do you survive in a world that wishes you dead?
Come to Dhuran and fight for everyone's survival
in a dark fantasy setting for *Savage Worlds*
brought to you by Mystical Throne Entertainment.



ANCIENT WORLD

WALK THE DARK PATH IN ACCURSED

Another product funded through Kickstarter is the dark fantasy, *Accursed*, from Melior Via. John Dunn, head of Melior Via, enlisted his fellow RPG developers Ross Watson, Jason Marker, and Andy Chambers to produce this interesting twist where characters take the role of creatures often hunted in the worlds of epic fantasy.

Through the Kickstarter, *Accursed* is available as a single core setting guide and accompanying *Player's Guide* (for players who only need to make characters) alongside a pair of novellas: *Pathwork* and *The Festival at Glenelg*. Additionally, there are three card accessories to coincide with the setting.

John Dunn shared this about Accursed:

Accursed is a dark fantasy setting, where monstrous heroes fight for redemption. Witches have ruled the land of Morden since the last battles of conquest, but their Grand Coven has been sundered, leaving behind remnants of a once-mighty army. The survivors of the horde include captured citizens of the conquered nations that fought as the Witches' shock troops. These are the Accursed – the Witchmarks burned into their flesh and souls transformed these men and

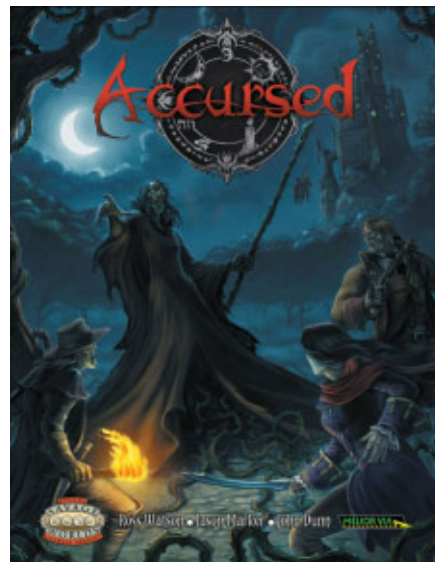
women into monsters. Now, unable to return to their former lives, the Accursed wander the land, giving aid to those in need in an attempt to atone for past sins.

Light has failed, darkness is ascendant. Only those bearing the forms of monsters – including Dhampir, Golems, Mummies, and Shades – can stand against the tide of the Witches' evil. The Accursed are this world's only hope – they must learn to embrace their curse or fight against it, and find some way to free themselves forever of their Witchmark.

Accursed includes background information on the nations of Morden. Game mechanics include horrific new Witchbreeds for use as playable characters, along with Setting Rules, Hindrances, Edges, and Powers suited to telling stories set in Morden. The full setting guide also includes detailed information on eight of the Witches and their banes, as well as a range of adventure hooks and a plot point campaign.

Currently, we have the following products available:

- *Accursed* setting guide (\$20 PDF, \$35 Softcover, \$40 Hardcover)



- *Accursed* Players Guide (\$10 PDF)
- *Accursed: The Festival at Glenelg* (\$4.99 epub/mobi - novella by Richard Lee Byers)
- *Accursed: Patchwork* (\$.99 epub/mobi - novella by Mel Odom)
- *Accursed* Poker Deck (\$4.99 PDF / \$9.99 Print)
- The Banshee of Loch Finnere, a full length adventure by Richard Baker.
- An untitled full length adventure by Sean Patrick Fannon.
- A sourcebook featuring Hebron and Hyphrates by George Ziets and Chris Avellone.

We have announced the following products in development. All are expected to release in the first half of 2014:

- Four different 1-sheet adventures. One each by Shane Hensley, Sean Preston, Adam Jury, and Colin McComb.

Beyond that, we have T-shirts available through Zazzle.com and are in discussion with companies about several different possible collaborations.

We have plans for additional game products, but we need to wait until they're a little further through the development cycle before we can make any announcements.

NEW STEAMPUNK ALTERNATE HISTORY IN STEAMSCAPES

Four-in-Hand Games has released their steampunk campaign setting *Steamsapes*, starting with a look at North America. *Steamsapes* is described as an alternate history of Earth rather than a world of steampunk design. Thus the first setting guide, *North America*, takes a look at the alternate history of North America as it sits in the *Steamsapes* universe.

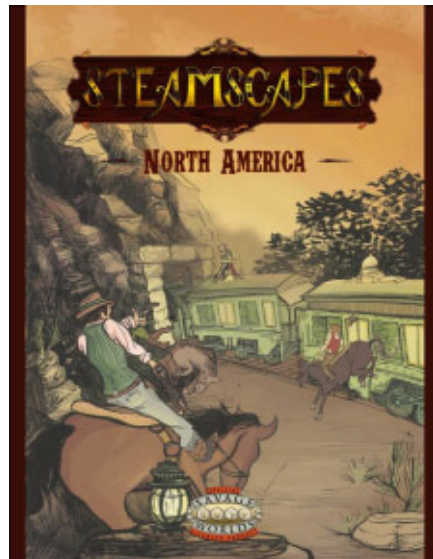
Steamsapes: North America is supported by a free set of GM Screen Inserts and four free PDF previews.

Steamsapes line developer, Eric Simon, had this to say:

Steamsapes from Four-in-Hand Games is a realistic alternative historical

approach to steampunk. As such, it contains many of the things you would expect in a steampunk setting - airships, automatons, electricity gone wild - but places them in a real-world context. There is no magic in the *Steamsapes* setting, no floating rock worlds, and no fantasy races. It is pure steampunk, as real as it can be.

Steamsapes: North America, the first major setting book, was released in late 2013. It describes 100 years of alternate history covering four different North American nations that are unique to the *Steamsapes* world. It provides rules, edges, and gear for six new professions such as Gearsmith, Spark Wrangler,

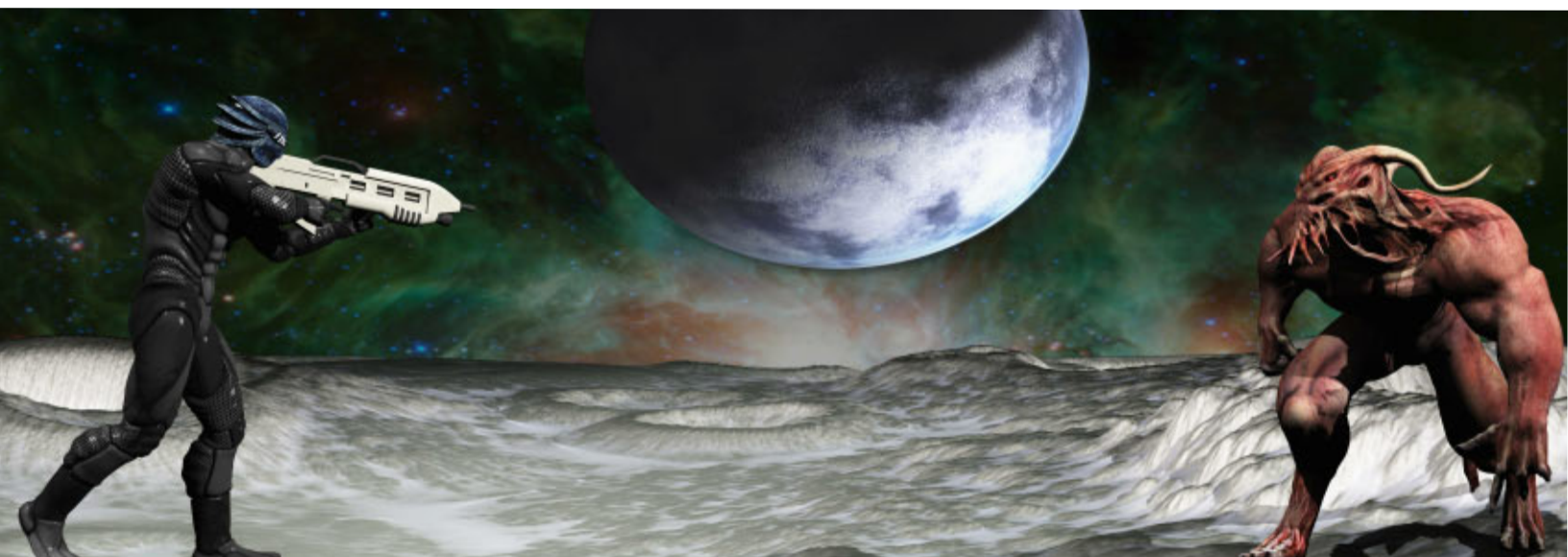


and Aviator, as well as the Automaton racial template. It contains several sample scenarios, including the first chapter of the ongoing adventure path that is now being released episodically as free downloads through Studio 2 and DriveThruRPG.

The next *Steamsapes* book will be the PDF-only *Gunslinger's Guide*, which is targeted for a May release.

This supplement will contain numerous historical examples of Gunslingers and their weapons, as well as an extensively detailed system for creating custom guns using the Gunsmithing skill. After that, Four-in-Hand Games will be preparing a summer Kickstarter project for the next major setting book - *Steamsapes: Asia*.

What for the all new Mercenary Breed coming May 2014!



TIME TRAVEL, SAVAGE WORLDS STYLE

GRAmel has put out another new setting, this time putting all of history in the hands of the characters through the use of time travel in *TimeZero*. This new setting puts the perils of time crimes into your adventures and assigns the proper time traveling team to save history.

In addition to the *Operative's Manual*, the core setting guide, there are already two adventures, *The Mirror's of Carthage* and *Tomorrow Bomb*.

GRAmel mastermind Piotr Korys shared this about TimeZero:

TimeZero is a setting where the players take the role of TimeGuard Operatives, highly trained agents devoted to protecting the continuum from perils. Typical dangers Operatives are going to face are chrontal anomalies, Alternates (creatures from alternative realities) and the always present shadow of the Triad, a mysterious criminal syndicate of the far future, which is the main villain of the setting.

The corebook shows you how to design scenarios with different levels of historical accuracy, always keeping the focus on the fun factor and pulpy feel more than on strict adherence to real history.

Currently, the setting comprises the *Operatives' Manual* (the core rulebook) and four long adventures (two released and two upcoming). Each adventure includes a long appendix, called The Sunday Files, containing additional background and rules on the theme of the scenario (the

first adventure details Inventors, the second one Weapons of Mass Destruction).



OTHER NEW RELEASES

Pinnacle Entertainment Group has released a new adventure module for the neo-noir fantasy horror Deadlands Noir called *The Case of the Jumbo Shrimp*. This latest adventure takes place in New Orleans.

paNik Productions has released a full *Campaign Worldbook* for their action and adventure R.E.A.C.T. setting. This latest release includes new divisions, archetypes, and advancements.

Suzerain is a multi-layered campaign setting with multiple genres and themes tied together through the Continuum. To ease your

way of understanding the Suzerain universe, Savage Mojo has released a new supplement, *Continuum*, which discusses what is available within this multi-layered setting.

Sneak Attack Press has entered the realm of Savage Worlds licensing with their Kickstarter-funded post-apocalyptic setting *Broken Earth*. The core setting guide touches on the northern Midwest of the United States and parts of southern central Canada.

Mystical Throne Entertainment has released a *Quick Start Guide* for the Greek mythology setting Mythos presenting a full

adventure from The Argonauts' Legend.

DramaScape has released their first Savage Worlds Adventures mini-setting and adventure set, *Skull Cove*. This first set includes a secluded island owned by pirates, a large collection of fleshed-out NPCs, adventure ideas, and a full map of the entire island.

PLAYING CARDS

Playing cards are an integral part of Savage Worlds for initiative and action cards. Now, not one, but two publishers are expanding on that use by introducing playing card accessories.

Warning Label has released seven *Cast of Cards* sets

which include quick-use NPCs including stat blocks and basic backgrounds. All seven sets are designed for fantasy games, but are usable across any setting and theme.

DramaScape, publisher of numerous battlemaps, has released the first of many playing card sets starting with *SciFi Weapons* and *SciFi NPCs*. *SciFi Weapons* includes illustrated weapons with full stats and ammo tracker while the *SciFi NPCs* includes illustrated NPCs that can double as paper stand-ups with fully fleshed-out details in the accompanying PDF.

Ranger

Since the first armies, generals have found value in those willing to risk their lives to scout the unknown. Rangers have long relied on a combination of personal skill, knowledge of the wild, and raw guts to forge a trail and discover both the wonders and dangers of what is hidden away from the experiences of the common man.

In every land lie great frontiers, vastly unknowable in their entirety, that grip the souls of those who leave the comforts of society in favor of exploring. While others may hear the call to explore and are able to ignore it, rangers are different.

They feel a longing for acceptance that cannot be satisfied behind the safety of the city's walls. They may not have been born to the wild, but they can't shake that call for open spaces away from the artificial structures of civilization. Eventually obsession wins out, and the ranger parts ways from the rest of society to live among the trees, animals, and those few wandering souls he may truly consider kin.

From an outsider's perspective, the ranger may very well appear to be a madman possessed by the concept of self-reliance, throwing away everything society has built to make life easier and more convenient. They could be correct.

THE OLD DEBT

A man draped in dark green walks the forest alone. The morning dew lingers as the sun refuses to rise. A light breeze reveals his quarry waiting upwind for their final confrontation. The hunter has

run the old cur ragged for days. The forest will reward him, if he is worthy.

His dry throat aches for relief. He checks his empty waterskin once more hoping for a different result. The man curses himself. Weak. Stupid. Undisciplined. The forest doesn't allow for mistakes.

A flash of gray fur lunges at him as the light of dawn finally breaks on the low horizon. His lack of rest doesn't excuse the blurriness in his vision nor the delay in notching arrow to string. Thought gives way to instinct as the silent stalker in his shadow launches itself at the bear's throat and the hunter rolls aside. It's an old maneuver, but proven. The wolf buys him time to draw the bowstring to its full length just as his quarry flings itself yards away into a thick collection of blue-green forest ferns.

No time to show concern for his companion. Blood gushes from the bear's throat,

but it's not enough to put the monster down for good. The man releases his first missile with a quiet sigh of the bowstring. The head of the arrow plunges deep into the bear's left eye starting a second, new flow of dark red fluid. It roars with rage before dropping to all-fours and charging the hunter who desperately readies another arrow.

Too slow. Maybe it's lack of sleep or food, maybe both, but the ranger underestimates the bear's grace even in its death throes. The ancient brute doesn't know yet that it will soon greet death, or perhaps it doesn't care. With one swipe, a massive arm swats the bow from the hunter's hands. The second blow knocks the air from his lungs and sends him hard against the nearest tree, a giant oak decades older than any animal drawing breath in its forest.

The man knows it's over. The forest is ready to claim him after so many years.



The bear's roar deafens him as it rages against its own death. But before it can strike the killing blow it wheels in anger at an unseen force behind it.

The hunter regains his breath and produces a foot-long dagger honed to a sharp point like a needle. He has one chance. No hesitation. The needle plunges into the skin, passed the thick skull of the bear.

Gray shoulders slump and the massive corpse of the bear collapses into a pile of meat, bones, and fur sticky with blood still flowing freely. The hunter falls to his knees, and the wolf limps over to him licking the sweat from his face like a mother cleaning her pup. The hunter pushes her away. He feels no joy or relief in the culmination of the days-long hunt.

He owes everything to the forest. Day after day he takes what he needs, and the forest continues to provide. Food, water, warmth, even a companion in the wolf. He knows someday he'll need to pay it all back. His debt won't be forgiven. He doesn't expect it to be.

Trailblazer

At his core, the ranger is a daring individual who risks everything to know more than anyone else about the wild, untamed frontier. He doesn't depend on well-trodden paths; he makes his own. No one knows the backwoods, the countless trails through the mountains, the forgotten jungles, better than the ranger. At his best, he's just another aspect of nature itself, or as close as a man can get.

Perhaps he's an expert on the local ruins which the nearby villagers believe to be haunted. He may have searched for the game trails long-forgotten by modern man that lead to a greater hidden prize than anyone alive could imagine.

Font of Natural Knowledge

The ranger constantly assesses his surroundings for threats or opportunities for

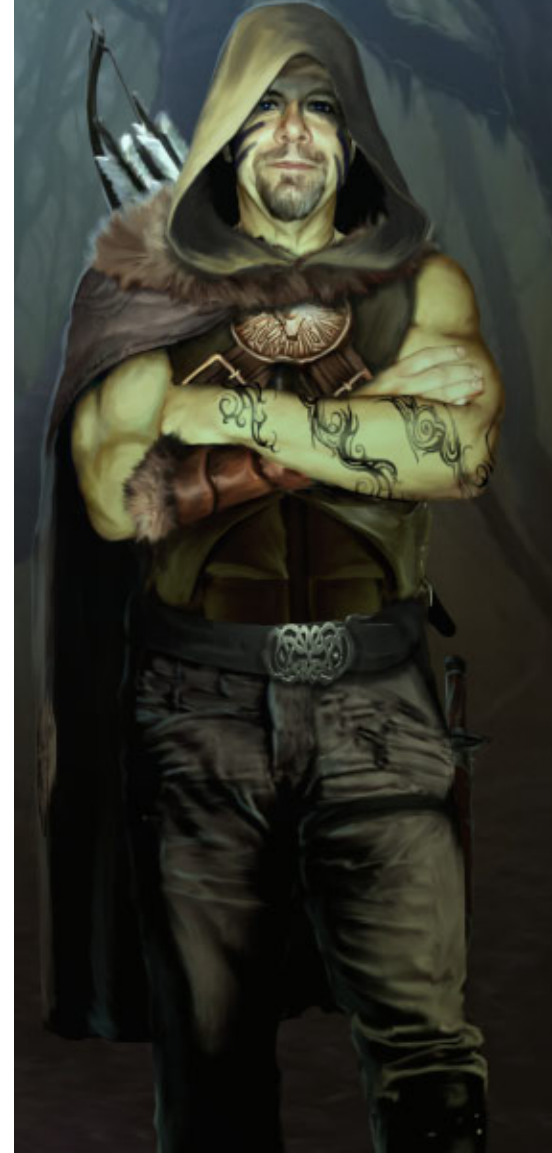
profit, and because of this, he is a bountiful source of information about the natural wonders of the world. He usually operates within a very specific geographical location and becomes one of the world's leading experts as a result of his travels.

There is no one who knows more about the behaviors and dangers of the animal kingdom. The ranger may even find himself more at home living among the animals than he does surrounded by other, more evolved beings. It's a comfort that can't be taught, but rather lives in the ranger from birth and chases the man through his entire life.

Though they may become mundane to him, the ranger doesn't underestimate the potential dangers of the wild. He knows there are flowers that, if eaten, will kill even the stoutest man with a single petal. He knows that there are things in the forest that can kill a man without ever being seen.

To those unfamiliar with animals, he may appear as foolish as an untrained tamer sticking his head in the mouth of a hungry lion. The ranger knows better. He knows how to avoid the tiger with the unmistakable look of desperate hunger in its eye. He lets the raging moose do its worst while he hides safely in the branches above. He cultivates the antidote to the deadliest snake in the grass. He knows these things because he must know them to survive. The ranger that lives to see adulthood is one who has proven himself in the face of utter disaster by living through it.

The forest is eager to provide for all the needs of survival if one is only clever enough to see it. Herb lore can be just as valuable as a cleric's god when it comes to healing mundane injuries. His healing may not be a permanent solution, but the ranger can keep a party on its feet long after it should have fallen.



Lone Wanderer

The stresses and anxieties of civilization can be overwhelming for anyone, but the ranger is particularly susceptible to the pressures of society and so often chooses to remove himself altogether. Every ranger is unique when it comes to the company he chooses to keep. Some can stand the presence of a few chosen comrades, while others limit themselves to all but the bare minimum of human contact.

Many rangers choose an animal to work closely with in developing a bond not dissimilar to that of a brotherhood. The two train years together under some of the harshest conditions possible. The choice of companion animal either complements or enhances the natural disposition of the ranger. For example, a Ranger may pick a bear as his companion because he is small and needs good dis-

tractions in order to aim the perfect shot with his longbow. On the other hand, a ranger may choose a wolf because it's the perfect partner with which to stalk the night and launch at prey as he wields his pair of twin long knives.

What may appear to be a partnership of convenience for the ranger is actually a deep bond developed to help keep him sane. The man is conflicted between his primal urge to avoid civilization and his need for some kind of companionship. While the animal is always used in the hunt or to scout ahead of the ranger, the most important role it can play is to provide an emotional counterpoint for the hunter.

This balance brought about by the animal companion – most often a dog, wolf, bird of prey, or large wild cat – gives the ranger a certain serenity in the face of the unknown. It allows him to avoid civilization without losing his mind to the isolation of the natural world.

Tools of the Hunt

The ranger favors tools to kill rather than weapons with which to fight. He values the tool that is most efficient and effective, as well as that which limits his personal exposure to danger. The simpler the weapon, the more likely it is to be utilized. He maintains all of his own equipment, so anything that can be fixed quickly on the move is much more reliable and useful in the long run.

The ranger prefers weapons that put some distance between him and his prey. He knows the most dangerous animal is the one fighting for its life. The boar spear, a massive hunting spear with prongs placed about a foot behind the spearhead to stop a stabbed boar from sliding further down the shaft and gorging the hunter, is a favorite among many for this very reason.

The longbow is the classic ranged weapon of the ranger. Offering more stopping



SHAILEY MORANOVE

Born in the palatial ruins of the Moranove Imperium and left by her mother to die in the wild, Shailey owes her life to the kindly forest witch who found and raised her.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Healing d6, Investigation d4, Knowledge (History) d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6

Hindrances: Big Mouth (Minor), Outsider (Minor)

Edges: Ambidextrous, Animal Companion (Mireen the Falcon/Quick Recovery)

Equipment: Longbow, 2 daggers, and leather armor

Shailey Moranove was born without a name and hardly a chance to survive. She can only guess at the motives of her parents for bringing her to the ruins of a long-lost empire to be birthed and left

to die from exposure to the elements. She would have perished if not for the intervention of an old witch of the forest known to Shailey as *Mother Worm*.

Shailey grew up in isolation with only Mother Worm to turn to for companionship. On her 16th birthday, the only birthday she ever celebrated, her adoptive mother gave her the only true gift she would ever receive - a falcon who seemed to understand her words like no other animal she had encountered before. She cherished the falcon and gave her a name - Mireen.

On her 18th birthday, Mother Worm disappeared, but left all her scrolls, mysterious vials, and cupboards of unmarked ingredients to Shailey. The young woman could have chosen to live a life of solitude in Mother Worm's abandoned hut. Instead, she seeks answers to her past, who her parents were, and why she was brought to the palace of a defunct empire only to be left for dead.

power and range than a short bow, and fewer moving parts to break and greater speed than that of the traditional crossbow, the longbow is the perfect hunting implement. Arrow shafts can be crafted quickly or recovered and repaired. Arrowheads can be made either of stone in the field or metal bought from vendors on one of his rare trips back to civilization.

Another necessity is the hunter's knife. The knife can skin an animal, repair gear, or in a worst-case scenario, be used as a killing implement. Even when a ranger uses a pair of knives to fight, he doesn't fool around with techniques designed to dazzle or astonish a crowd of onlookers. Every thrust of the point is one that intends to kill his target and remove the threat as swiftly as possible.

Nature's Protection

Where the knight straps plates of steel to himself and the man-at-arms hangs chainmail from his shoulders, the ranger is armored almost entirely by his wits and instincts. When those fail him and a threat gets within striking distance, light leather padding protects the most vital portions of his body. He cannot afford to be weighed down by heavier armor. He relies on speed, stealth, and endurance to cross vast distances through territory that is anything but civilized.

Along with his leathers and linens, the ranger has learned the lessons of animals that seem to melt into their surroundings. Those in similar roles to the ranger may move with as much slippery cunning, but his knowledge of the patterns found in nature combined with his patience allows him to survive and avoid

dangers like no one else. He waits for his prey to stray unwittingly into his sight. If he does his job right, his target never even knows he is there.

Using the Ranger

The ranger performs a very specific function for a group and often views his role when working with others as more of a job than a calling. He has dedicated his life to his craft, and the work he does with others is merely a momentary distraction from his true life's work.

While certainly able as a fighter if the situation calls for it, he is wasted if only utilized because of his bow and spear. A ranger in the group increases everyone's odds of survival. His knowledge of the wilderness allows him to discover traps before they are sprung or find the hidden path to ambush the enemy. The ranger's skill of stealth is unparalleled even compared to a thief's or assassin's. After all, these others simply target humans whereas the ranger hunts animals possessing a far superior sense of survival instincts.

He knows the ways of ancient dungeons and underground ruins and can be the most useful member of a party when the quest is to seek ancient gold, magical trinkets, or discover the cursed texts of a lich whose lair is buried deep in the earth.

THE RANGER ARCHETYPE

The ranger archetype is a flexible role for building your character. Following is the basic ranger archetype at Novice level with no experience. In addition, you'll find the new ranger edge **Companion Animal**.

Following that is a discussion of how the ranger can be adapted to fit various fantasy subgenres. For each setting there is a sample NPC that started off as the basic ranger archetype and was customized

into a NPC or ready-to-go player character for that subgenre.

GENERAL RANGER ARCHETYPE

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Tracking d6

Hindrances: Outsider (Minor), Stubborn (Minor)

Edges: Two-Fisted, Ambidextrous, or Animal Companion (see **New Edge**)

Equipment: Dagger, longbow, short sword or spear, and leather armor



CAPTAIN NATHAN PILLORY, RANGER SCOUT FOR THE 2ND ARMY

A former regimental scout of the king's army now loosed in the wilds for long-term recon, sabotage, and cartography.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 7, **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d6, Tracking d6

Hindrances: Curious (Major), Loyal (Minor), Outsider (Minor)

Edges: Alertness, Command, Command Presence

Equipment: Dagger, scout's standard army crossbow (crossbow with RoF 2), rapier, and leather armor

Few live long enough in the king's service to retire, and even fewer take the opportunity when offered. The navy blues that marked him as a king's man have long gone grey and been discarded, replaced with a deep green stained

New Edge

ANIMAL COMPANION (WEIRD)

Requirements: Novice

The ranger has spent time developing an instinctual set of commands and gestures and built a true bond with a chosen animal. The animal can be anything found in the native environment of the ranger such as a bear, wolf, fox, hawk, or snake. The animal should be named and given unique personality traits, but it is otherwise not considered a character mechanically.

When *Animal Companion* is chosen as an edge, choose one of the following effects to apply to your character whenever he is in the presence of his animal companion and the animal companion is free to act.

from long nights spent alone in the wilderness. Below the cloak remains the king's crown stitched into the shoulder of his otherwise unmarked tunic.

The captain is on permanent reassignment, long-term in the wilds beyond the borders of the kingdom. He was given a simple writ of cartography and one single order: sabotage the enemy. Even so, Nathan can't avoid his natural instincts to lead and command those who would trust in his skills. He naturally draws people to him and can't help but organize those who have made the wilderness their home into parties to explore and report their findings. Old habits die hard.

Still, the man remains an outsider. He has no resources other than what he can take for himself. He's naturally inquisitive and a damned terrible man to be on the wrong side of. His swift *Scout Standard* is unlike any weapon outside of the boundaries of the king's land and is a testament to the king's engineers.



BILLY TUROW - GUIDE-FOR-HIRE

A young man with a debt to pay to the Sons of 4th, the nastiest family south of Burnt Crow Row.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Fighting d8, Knowledge (Criminal Underworld) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d6

Hindrances: Greedy (Major)

Edges: Extraction, Quick Draw

Equipment: Dagger, longbow, spear, and leather armor

A man's got to be slippery to make it to adulthood, and young Billy Turow's one of the slipperiest guides in the southern district. It's not often that the gangs send their own people out beyond the high city walls, but when they have to move merchandise, they know who to contact to lead the venture.

Billy grew up in the city. He has contacts, and it's these contacts that he owes his life to. If he's not careful, they'll decide to collect on his debt before he's ready to pay. He's never felt comfortable in the city, and he jumped at the first chance he had to take a trip into the thick untamed woods surrounding it.

Things have gotten worse over the years as the brawls within the city continue to spill outside. Territory once thought neutral is claimed through a brutal, bloody turf war. Billy finds himself pushing away from the atrocities of the city and its true rulers - the street gangs which have carved it up and rule like small impotent kings fighting over the smallest of kingdoms. And yet, the job remains. His debt goes unpaid. If he could just find one good job that paid it all off and gave him the freedom he desires, he could go into the forest and never come back. If only.

A Good Distraction: When you take the defend action, your Parry increases by +3 instead of +2.

Coordinated Attack: When your companion is within melee range of a target, it may be counted as an extra attack for the purposes of **Ganging Up** on a target.

Effective Attack: When you make a successful damage roll, add one additional raise to the damage roll.

Perceptive Partners: When making a Tracking roll, increase the die type by one, or if you don't have the Tracking skill, treat the Smarts roll as a skilled roll (without suffering the -2 penalty).

Quick Recovery: When you succeed at a Spirit roll to remove Shaken, you may take one additional action suffering a (-2) penalty to the second action.

This Edge may be taken multiple times, each time adding a new effect to the chosen animal companion showing that a greater bond has been built. If the animal is killed, the ranger will need to find a

new animal with which to build a bond before he is able to regain any of the effects of this Edge. The character with this Edge explains what the animal does on his turn with final approval going to the GM.

Epic Fantasy - The Historian

In epic fantasy games, countless civilizations have risen and fallen leaving behind relics, works of literature, ancient artifacts, and the ruins of their cities trapped forever in a moment of quiet solemnity. These ruins can contain anything and are often the target of some evil plot or the resting place of some great treasure just waiting to be plundered by a foolish adventurer.

Before entering these ruins, it's best to hire someone familiar with the secret paths and hidden dangers. The ranger excels in this capacity as a result of his numerous delves spent exploring and

studying the ruins firsthand. He is the default historian of the group because of this experience. He knows things that others can't without having walked the ranger's path.

The ruins spread throughout the wilderness are as varied as all the works tucked away in the great library and contain just as much hidden knowledge. The ranger is thus a field scientist who learns through doing rather than studying. He relies on his knowledge of lost civilizations to survive in some of the most dangerous environments ever explored.

Classic Fantasy - The Scout

In classic fantasy games, the ranger is most revered for his skill as the scout. His feats of stealth and perceptive eye are legendary. Any group finding themselves in hostile territory without a ranger is a party who finds trouble around every corner, always taking the wrong path at the fork in the trail.

The ranger in the classic fantasy subgenre is a walking contradiction that can't decide between a civilized life and spending his time alone in the woods to live a life of solitude. He may have ties to other adventurers that pull him to nearby settlements or villages. He might hate himself for it, but he finds satisfaction in the work he does with others.

As a part of his scout training, the ranger may have been part of an organized brotherhood or even army regiment of scouts and received formal training under a mentor. The bonds he created with his fellow scout trainees allow him to feel a closer kinship with other men and women of the forest and helps him find resources and a network of contacts over a vast geographical area.

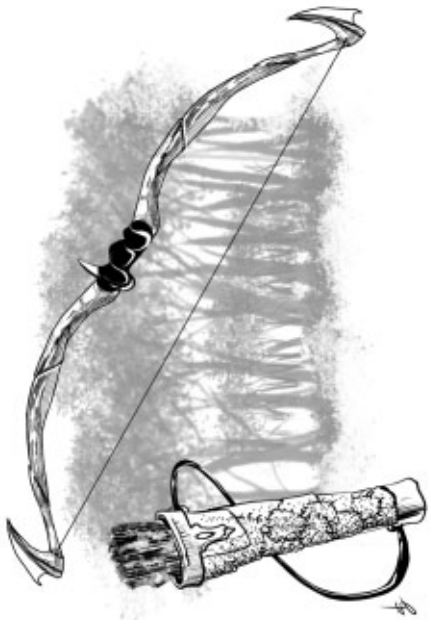
Dark Fantasy - Hired Guide

Madness can quickly overcome even the staunchest isolationist. Although it turns his stomach to face the atrocities man

can inflict upon his fellow man, the ranger cannot avoid periodically returning to civilization to interact with others lest he lose all traces of his humanity. He can't help but find work leading some of the worst criminals into the wilds to find what they seek or to cut a path around the authorities to get merchandise moved quickly and quietly for his client.

The ranger in dark fantasy not only has a particular set of skills, but also a very specific mindset. He knows to keep his mouth shut and forget things when it's convenient in order to survive in his line of work. The ranger often has to ask himself if criminals found in cities are worse than the savages produced by the desperation of the wild. He plans his jobs meticulously to avoid any mishaps or miscalculations of how long a journey will take or how much food and water to bring. Things always go wrong, but the best rangers, the ones who survive, know how to improvise to survive.

In dark fantasy, everyone's in it for the money to survive another day. The ranger is no different. There's no great destiny, no great cause to fight for. Just like everyone else, the ranger has to work to live. Good thing he has a unique, valuable set of skills.



Fantasy Horror - Monster Hunter

There are things that walk the woods in the dark of night that are hungry, angry, and hold a grudge. They haunt the territories unconquered by man and anyone foolish enough to stray into their paths likely won't see the dawn. The ranger in a fantasy horror setting is the one responsible for knowing the lore of these monsters, but more importantly he knows how to kill them. After all, what is a monster other than just another kind of animal to hunt in the wilds?

The ranger is marked for his daring to walk those paths few would tread to hunt the creatures most spend their time avoiding. Whether it's for bragging rights or out of a sense of duty to kill the things

that would destroy the way of civilized life, he embraces his role with vigor.

The ranger's weapons in a fantasy horror setting are highly specialized and well cared-for in order for him to get the job done. He knows that some creatures are only vulnerable to an onyx arrowhead and that to truly kill others you must remove the head and burn the body.

There are limits to his knowledge though, and of course to his courage as well. He prefers to hunt the things he can wrap his hands around. Demons, ghosts, and other more ethereal monsters are not his domain and the smart ranger, the one who survives longer than the rest, knows to call in the help of a cleric or paladin to get the job done.



OROS BESK, TROPHY HUNTER

Once you've seen this hunter in action slaying a monster, you won't forget him. He won't let you.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d4

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Tracking d6

Hindrances: Arrogant (Major), Death Wish (Minor), Delusional (Minor)

Edges: Brave, Trademark Weapon - Whisper

Equipment: Dagger, whisper (Long-bow), spear, and leather armor

The smart, *sane* reaction to being charged by a werewolf is to run the other way and hope you can get out of its territory before getting caught. Then there are those few crazy people who actively seek to clear out the woods of the things that threaten humanity and civilization as a whole. Some do it for the betterment of their community.

Some do it because their desperation gives them no other choice.

Then there are those who do it purely for the joy of the hunt. Oros Besk is one such man. He's quite capable, good even. After surviving years on the hunt, everyone who goes through such trials comes out changed, and Oros is no different. Survivors either become broken by the horrors they've seen or armored against these things that would test the courage of the average mortal.

Oros, like all other big-game monster hunters, has developed a unique way of viewing the world. He's good at one thing – stalking and hunting the monsters that terrify everyone else. Some say he fights for a day where he can achieve some final hunt and happily resign to a long-overdue death. Others say he sees monsters hiding in plain sight under the skin of his fellow hunters. Regardless, the man can stand up in a fight versus the ugliest perversions of nature, and that counts for something, at least until the day he snaps.



POWER TRAPPINGS

RAMPING UP THE EPIC ON TRAPPINGS

“The golems seem affected by electricity, so Angela and I should use lightning spells to disrupt and distract them while you guys sneak up to the pedestal and stop the island from sinking. That work for everyone? Ok, I'll cast *blast* with double the power points and roll my damage... ok, 12. Heck yeah!”

“Nice! I'll cast with double power points as well. I pull a bit of glittering dust out of my pouch and throw it in the air. Wetting my finger, I catch the dust and draw out glowing streaks of light that hang in front of me, making a sigil as I whisper the incantations. My eyes glow bright blue from under the cover of my white hood. As I complete the glowing circle and runes with one hand, my other is held back in reverent prayer gathering up the arcane energy from the air around me. I put that hand up to the circle and say the final phrase. The letters and runes of the sigil shatter and break into lightning bolts that spread across the

area, branding the letters into the golems' skin. Got an 8 and a 4 on my Wild Die, so I hit. Now 3d6 and ... I do 8 damage.”

“What in the seven heavens of baconhalla was that?!”

“Just *blast*. It's how I see the trappings of the power when my character casts it. Was it too much?”

“No, it was great! I'm just jealous that I keep forgetting to do awesome stuff like that with Delgar!”

I love *Savage Worlds* for moments exactly like that. It is a solid and clean mechanic set that lets me build a character to match the epic concepts in my head, and then gets out of the way so I can do awesome stuff with that character. A core part of *Savage Worlds* allowing for these sorts of moments is leaving the trappings and cosmetic elements of powers and abilities up to the players. Something as simple as the stock powers of *bolt* or *blast*, the foundations for most arcane attacks, can be modified and re-imagined in infinite ways through their trappings so they fit the character concepts and settings we come up with.

Trappings make our characters more than just empty shells with numbers. They turn a magic user into an Ice Mage of the Eastern Wastes, trained in the ways of her people and capable of turning the elements to her will through something as simple as adding the cold or ice trapping onto an Arcane Background and applying some of our imagination. With a little more thought, we can ramp up the use of trappings to epic levels and make games uniquely ours. So, how do we get the most out of the trappings attached to our powers and our characters? How do we turn our characters into *Conan* and not just another barbarian?

DON'T FEAR THE DETAILS

Trappings can be as simple as saying the *blast* power our mage or magic sword uses is lightning instead of ice, or a blast of profane brimstone instead of just arcane energy. This very simple use of trappings multiplies the options in the narratives of our games while keeping the *Savage Worlds* system light and easy to use. One thing to remember is that we aren't limited to budgets when we bring about the trappings of our characters. A blast of brimstone is more impressive than a fireball, but thematically the flame that shoots from Finnegan's hand and molds itself into a dragon's head and long neck, spewing black smoke from its open maw before impacting the unsuspecting orc is no different from either of the two previous options.

Imagining what the trappings look like takes little more than a few words and interesting thoughts. When the cleric uses his holy power to *detect arcana* in the area, he could read from his holy book and a light glow reveals the presence of magic items. There is nothing stopping the effects of that power being more elaborate, interesting, or meaningful to the player. The letters from the holy book could glow and lift off the page, floating in the air and resting on the objects which the cleric's patron deity has so graciously revealed as magic through the heavenly light that spills down from above. Details like these are what make our characters special and unique. The freedom to use trappings like this are what changes a warrior with a sword into the fabled hero blessed by the gods or the thief in the shadows into the unseen hand who plucks gold from the undeserving, leaving behind a calling card.

Trappings are the final layer of paint on the mechanical bits of the character, and it doesn't take much extra effort to do the Sistine Chapel instead of a monochrome color with primer. But, there are two things that can be done to ensure epic levels of detail in the cosmetic elements like these. First, give the players agency to be as epic as they desire. Second, make sure they've got control of the spotlight so that they can express their epic themselves.

Agency

Whenever I sit down to a new game, I need to know what I'm allowed to do within the theme of the game. If the GM doesn't tell me what type of game play they are going for, I ask. If they say they are good with epic and incredible actions and characters, I don't feel limited in playing my character as cool as I can imagine. If they are going for a more realistic and somber vibe, then I pull myself back and focus my character on less flashy options to achieve my ends. Knowing what the acceptable limits of the game play style are helps players to fully use their characters without feeling like they are out of bounds. To reach epic, the GM should give the players the permission to do so. It was probably discussed when the character was made, but it enables so much more if it's explicitly stated that the trappings are allowed to be epic and individual, with whatever details the player wants to have. This gives Delgar the ability to use his Aura of Dragon Might like this:

"I raise the sword high in the air and call forth the secret name of the ancestor dragon spirit. Lightning and thunder from the crimson plane of Talador crash down from the opening in the sky. As Tyzankivel's spirit rides down the trails of the electricity and into my body, ghostly crimson wings sprout from my back as my eyes glow red. Ok, I get +1 die type to my Strength for the next few rounds, right?"

While the bonus gained from the power (*boost/lower trait* with a different name) is fairly simple and straightforward, the trappings and narrative control make Delgar the epic hero that his player envisioned, not just a warrior with a buff to strength. Without the permission to make it epic, Delgar's player might make the trapping of his power something basic like: "My eyes glow red as the dragon spirit gives me strength," and that would be absolutely fine. Having the permission to affect the narrative and thematic effects of the power enables Delgar's player to choose whether to keep it a simple buff or ramp it up to a key part of the character's identity and back story.

Spotlight

Almost as important as giving permission to make the trappings epic is making sure the spotlight focuses on the player when it comes to their turn. I know of no better way to do this than to hand off narrative control and let the player explain how awesome it is. Doing this puts the power in the player's hands and shines the spotlight directly on the character. With the permission to control the cosmetic elements of their actions within the scene, using a power becomes a cut-scene from a video game or the CGI effects from a Hollywood blockbuster, instead of a low budget shoestring effect or keeping the epic images

tied up inside one player's head. A few simple words from the GM can hand off the narrative spotlight control and let the player make the character shine.

"It's your turn Logan; tell me what activating the power looks like. You've got complete control to do whatever you want."

"Rick, you're up. You said you were going to use *quickness* to beat the prince in the race? What does it look like with your Time Walker? I'll limit it if I need to, but describe it as cool as you want it to be."

"Ok Paula, you levitate the flaming potion, coming towards you, up and over the house? What does your spell casting and the effect look like? The visuals are totally in your hands. You can't do anything wrong with it."

Handing off narrative control of the spotlight for the scene makes it much more likely to bring incredible ideas into play and make the trappings of powers much more epic. It also takes some of the weight off the GM's shoulders. Coming up with evocative and interesting descriptions for hours on end is challenging for even the most veteran GM.

More than a few of my games have featured 'standard' trees or 'regular dungeon walls' because after three hours in, I just can't think of anything new to say to evoke the feel of the game. That's fine for the background elements, but when it comes to the players, you want it to be incredible. And the players are sitting there, with fresher brains than the GM's since they only have to focus on the one thing under their control: their characters. Handing over control lets them show off the incredible details they imagined for their characters and the GM doesn't have to lift a finger to get one more epic element in their game.

TRAPPINGS FOR MORE THAN POWERS

While the term 'trappings' is used in *Savage Worlds* to refer to the cosmetic effects of powers, trappings are much more than that. Every cosmetic element that gets applied to a character's skills, background, physical look, and way of solving problems is a trapping, and the details of these elements are what make a character **MY** character. If I'm playing a knight turned vampire who travels through the kingdom using his dark powers to seek redemption and do some good, then the way he operates, the physical effects of and nature of his brand of vampirism, the design of his hundred year old tattered armor, and even his cold expressionless stare are what make the character unique. Those elements are what make the character into a Wild Card and not just another character. While this concept is wrapped into the *Savage Worlds* system in the many thematic elements left to the players to determine, we can make these trappings

epic as well and use the narrative spotlight to build incredible characters, even when we aren't using powers.

Brendan's ninja-like character wants to sneak behind the guard so his attack will be unnoticed. He makes a roll to sneak, but instead of the normal quiet crouch up to the guard, Brendan might opt for something different if he is given narrative control. He might describe how his character throws a stone as a distraction, uses his highly trained reflexes to perform a quiet run down the hallway, and ends up running along the side of the wall with a final mid-air flip so his dagger has extra force to quickly – and silently – cut through the throat of the guard who just turned around to see what the noise was. If the epic trappings of the action are just cosmetic and don't change the mechanical situation, it's no different from a quiet sneak behind the NPC. The major difference is how much Brendan enjoys the scene and how much the other players become engaged in the game and want to do something as awesome on their turn.

MECHANICAL ENABLERS

The benefits of dialing up the epic nature of trappings are many, but sometimes a group needs more than permission to really bring it into play. Having mechanical options enables the epic use in a concrete way. The power and permission sit right inside an Edge or an already-written house rule that can be referenced at the table. It adds a layer that turns a simple use of *stun* into a something that the Norse god Thor might do in a big budget movie. Here are some rules options for you to modify or drop right in to mechanically enable epic trappings.

Bennies

Bennies can be a great mechanical enabler. Give out Bennies for epic descriptions of actions and Trappings and players will jump at the chance to make their characters shine. You can also use an optional rule to give Bennies greater utility and require the players to describe their actions in an epic way to gain that benefit.

EPIC TRAPPINGS BENNIES (OPTIONAL RULE)

Bennies can be spent to add +2 to any roll. To do this, the player must describe the trappings of a power or action in an epic, but completely cosmetic, way.

Edges

Edges are another good way to enable epic trappings. They allow the characters to include the reason for narration of epic trappings into their character, providing some small benefit to the rolls. A few Edges that hand narrative control of the action over to the players are written up below for you to use or gain inspiration from.

EPIC ACTION

Requirements: Novice, Wild Card

The character may spend a Benny to take narrative control of their action, describing it with any cosmetic effect they desire and adding +2 to their roll. If the player draws a face card or Joker during initiative, they may use this Edge without spending the Benny.

PERSONAL STYLE (PROFESSIONAL EDGE)

Requirements: Novice, Wild Card, Relevant Trait d8+

The character has a unique personal style and theme. Their gear, actions, powers, and abilities all have trappings that fall in line with this style. When the character makes any roll that falls in line with their theme and describes their actions in an epic way, they gain +2 to their roll.

A trait relevant to the character's chosen theme must be at d8+ to take this Edge. A Personal Style should be written as a short phrase or sentence that describes the theme of the character such as: 'Kilted hooligan who enjoys porters and good natured fights' or 'Descendent of the ancient dragon kings, capable of calling upon their power from beyond the veil.'

TRADEMARK ATTACK (WILD CARD EDGE)

Requirements: Novice, Wild Card, Relevant Combat Skill d8+

The character has developed one combat maneuver into an art form and can perform this epic attack when they draw a Joker. The attack is done with +1 die level and the damage is doubled. The player gains narrative control of the scene to describe the attack and its effects.

REIGNING IT IN

Using techniques like these to ramp up the thematic trappings of your games is an easy way to make something incredibly unique, but there are times when you still have to put some limits on it. Look at the effects of a trapping and how it affects the game to determine if it is too powerful. Will something brought into the narrative give an unfair advantage? Is the cosmetic effect of the trapping changing the mechanical balance of the game? Is it mimicking something that should require a separate roll or is it just a more fun way to do the same thing? Does everyone have a chance to use epic trappings or is it really only being used by one or two people to dominate the game? Does the use of the epic trappings fit the theme you want for your game?

If you find there is an imbalance to some element of your game, it might be time to employ a few restrictions. Having a list of expectations written down and stuck in the front of your GM's screen helps players understand the boundaries. Write up what you expect out of the players when they use epic trappings and what sorts of uses are too far. This is the list I usually go off of.

- You can describe your character's powers and actions in any way you want, so long as it fits the overall theme of the game. The themes of this game are _____. Please, no more crazy mime magic. Ok, just a little.
- Your descriptions can't change the mechanical nature of the situation, just the cosmetic effects.
- If you want some mechanical effect to be applied because of your description, I'll make you spend extra Power Points or do another roll to make that separate effect happen.
- I am the Game Master. I will veto it if it doesn't fit and you can change your description as needed. Don't let a veto make you shy about making the effect epic next time.

When all else fails, the GM can make the final call on the rules. Be lenient to let the players have some epic spotlight time, but if something is out of hand, feel free to say no. If the trappings of the character's magic require them to draw runes and sigils and activate them, don't worry too much about how long that takes unless it stretches past the boundaries of logic. The enemy soldiers aren't going to sit and wait three minutes while the complex formulae are drawn on the wall, but the caster is also practiced at this and probably has gotten it down to a few seconds because of her nature as a Wild Card. She can't, however, expect that her very showy sigils are going to go unnoticed if she attempts to cast it unseen, unless of course you levy some other penalty like 1 less die type for the roll or an extra Power Point to modify the nature of the spell as a Minor Effect. Let logic temper the absurd, but allow fun to win in the end.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In any role-playing game, what matters are never the epic dice rolls or the incredible powers the characters use, but the narrative and the memory they create. The true enjoyment players take away from a game is the knowledge that their incredible characters got to truly live at the table and show off the detail and awesome ideas that went into creating them. When we make the trappings of our characters epic and put that control in the players' hands, Wild Cards change from capable entities into the heroes of yore.

So dial up the epic on trappings and shine a light on the cool pieces of the characters that might be hidden away inside a player's mind.

Norlynn

Norlynn is a very old village, north of the Sparkling Sea, south of the Great Riverlands, and east of the Wildlands. It is populated by around three hundred villagers, and to passersby would appear to be nothing more than a hub for the local farmers and fishermen. Those who know of the local lore, however, know that Norlynn is anything but a simple trading hub. While most of the villagers who live there are relatively average folk, Norlynn is home to the arcane order known as the Magicker's Guild, and, more importantly, the ancient building known to most simply as the House of Doors.

Enchanted Manor

On the South border of the village stands an old, alluring building. It is an unfortified manor, its architectural style smooth and rounded, unlike any other building in town. Ancient twisting plants and flowers stand before and within it, their species unknown, never dying nor showing a hint of age. Long ago, the mysterious archmage, Millicent McMire, constructed this building, known as the House of Doors.

In the old days, when magic flowed more freely and fantastical creatures lived in every part of the world, Millicent studied and befriended the mysterious merfolk living in the Sparkling Sea to the south. In time, as she gained apprentices and was called on for deeds of great magic across the many lands, the construction of the House of Doors came underway. More than simply a home for herself and her eccentric experiments, the building was a hub for 108 magical portals that would carry her to the halls of kings to answer their summons, distant wilds to gather

rare specimens, and strange, hidden halls where her more valuable secret experiments resided.

Eventually, Millicent vanished, as the greatest of wizards occasionally do. Whether she passed into another realm, died quietly, or exists in hiding after these hundreds of years is unknown.

Arcanitorium

Just further south of the House of Doors is the Arcanitorium, a collection of buildings housing the Magicker's Guild. Long ago, these buildings were the only other standing buildings in Norlynn, being the homes and workshops of Millicent's various apprentices. From generation to generation, the apprentices have passed on ownership and continued to work together as the Magicker's Guild.

The guild keeps mostly to itself – it is not a school of magic, so mages are not taught in the guild. Rather, it is a place of study, where experienced mages come together to work on magical experiments. The guild owns several buildings, each with a unique master and purpose.

Augurarium

The building furthest west in the guild's grounds, the Augurarium, was once a home for the farseers, scryers, and prophets. Long since, the art has been lost to the guild, so the building has been re-purposed as a warehouse for various important goods. The Augurarium stores the guild's food, ale, tools, raw materials, and even their extra stock of enchanted items. Rumor has it that part of the seers' powers was tied to the building, though

no one so far has been able to use the grounds to aid them in the gift of farsight.

Incanter's Tower

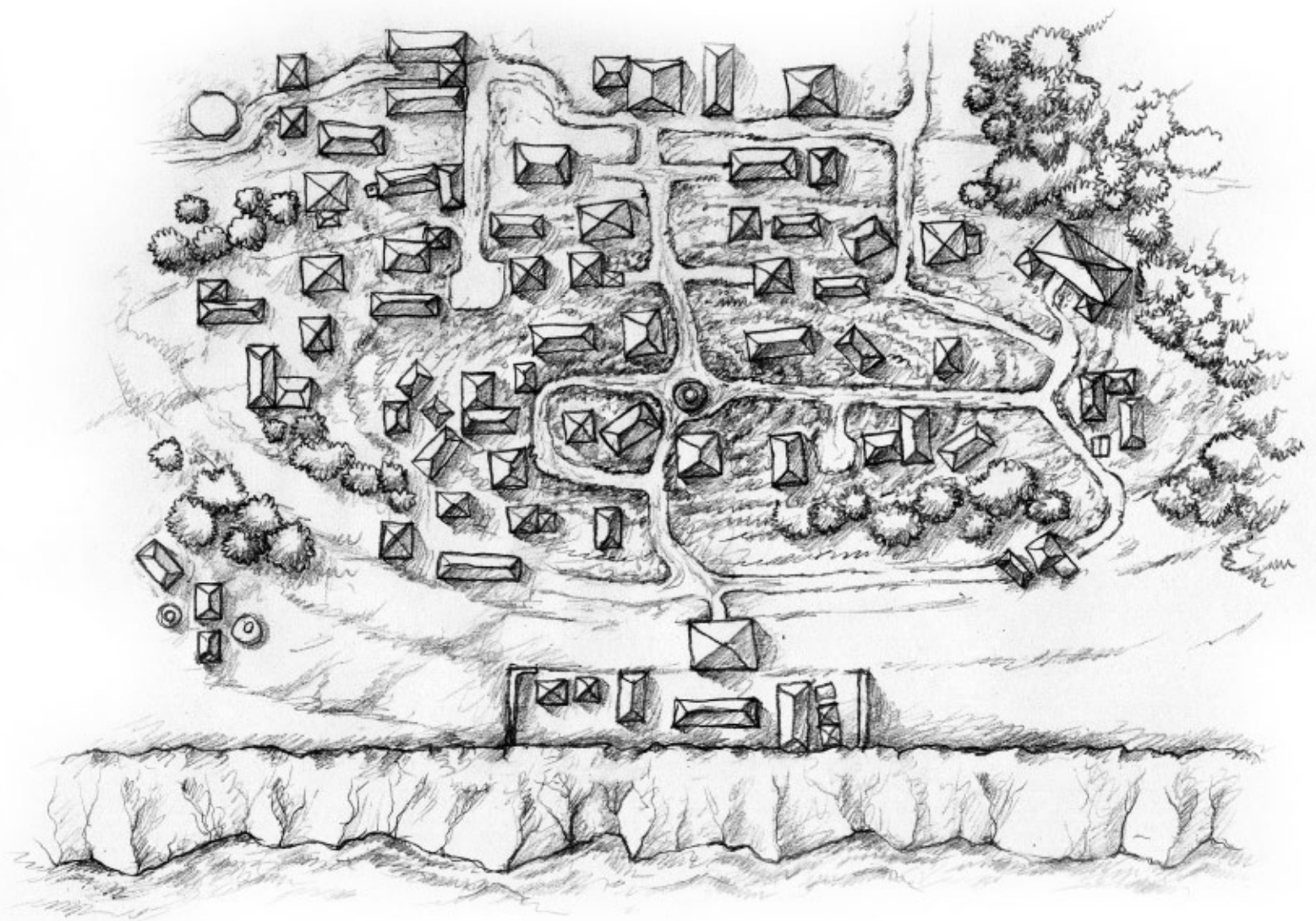
The Incanter's Tower is, in many ways, a library to the guild, although the books held within do not detail history or sciences or even the inner workings of magic – every book is filled only with incantations. It is said the books stored there were written by Millicent and she never shared words of true power. The books with truly magical spells were kept safe behind one of her magical doors, but the chants and rituals written within the Incanter's Tower bring subtler magics; some of those needed for enchantments, others useful as parlor tricks.

The Incanter's Tower is three stories tall, and has a basement floor as well. It sits on the east side of the Augurarium and is home to Abram Jerrickson, the guild's current Master Odditeer.

Library

The Library is a long building, resting east of the Incanter's Tower. Unlike the tower, its books do not contain instructions on actual magic, but anything which the guild members may find useful, such as reports on old field studies, theories on the inner workings of magic, encyclopedias of rare relics, bestiaries of rare creatures, etc.

The Library is a large source of income for the guild, as they charge travelers, townsfolk, and adventurers who wish to use it. Inside the Library, all of the bookshelves are locked behind glass panes. One can request use of a specific book for a six hour period within the library for 10 coins. For 100 coins they can have access



to an entire shelf for that length of time. For an hourly rate, they can hire the Master Lorist, Namid Pepsins, to find the appropriate books for them. Namid charges 20 coins per hour or 5 coins per question, but answers any question to the best of his ability.

Namid lives in a small room in the back of the Library's first floor. The building's second floor is home to more closely guarded books which cost more to access. The basement is home to books only spoken of in hushed whispers, and it is rumored that Namid keeps the key to the basement inside a magic brazier of everlasting dragon flame.

Longhouse

Next to the Library and just south of the House of Doors sits the Longhouse. As indicated by its unimpressive name, it's in most respects an unimpressive building, serving as a living space, meeting

hall, and auxiliary building for the guild. Guild members who have been accepted, but do not have a specific trainer, or those whose trainers are not capable of or interested in housing their apprentices, live in the Longhouse's tightly packed basement room known as the Cots. The Cots has enough space for twelve occupants, but occasionally has fewer. Currently, nine students live there.

The Headmaster, Reuben McMeer, supposedly a distant relative of Millicent's, lives on the upper floor of the Longhouse. While his job is primarily mundane, tending to bookkeeping and budgeting and paperwork for the guild, he is renowned as the greatest wizard of the guild – though the exact truth of this is unknown. One thing about Reuben is known though: he knows the magic words needed to unlock many of the portal doors within the enchanted manor.

The Enchantery

The Enchantery is a large warehouse-like building. While its purpose was originally the enchantment of mundane items to carry unique magical powers, the ability to do so has fallen from common knowledge and it is said that only Jonathan Redlynn, Master Enchanter, knows the truth of this. Most every guild member seeking arcane knowledge becomes one of Jonathan's apprentices, primarily because he is the master with the most space and largest volume of work to do.

The Enchantery is used to create items of lesser magic utility – the bottom floor is a very high-ceilinged forge. It is capable of creating all sorts of mechanical and complex shapes such as magical stoves, ploughing machines, everlasting iceboxes, and very rare ironsteeds, the magically powered horseless carriages.

The second floor is divided into many smaller rooms. In one, alchemical implements are used to process herbs and rare ingredients into salves and medicines which the locals call potions. In reality, truly magical potions are rarely made as the ingredients are hard to find and the magic used to make them is powerful, though there is another, often unused room where they can be brewed.

The other rooms on the second floor are quarters for guild members who have done enough for the Enchantery to be allowed to stay there. This includes Jonathan's room, where he keeps several mysterious locked boxes, rumored to be filled with arcane treasures.

NORLYNN

Norlynn itself is full of somewhat regular folk. It is a small town like any other, where bored farm folk occupy their free time with rumors, gossip, and storytelling, and where outsiders are welcomed warmly by some, and eyed with suspicion by most.

The people of Norlynn have a shaky relationship with the Magicker's Guild. While many of the superstitious townsfolk are afraid of the goings on of the guild, and most all of them agree the House of Doors itself is a cursed place that should not be entered, most keep their grumblings to themselves, lest they lose the opportunity to trade with the guild. Most families in Norlynn have their own magic stove, everlasting icebox, assisted plough, or medicine cabinet. The mayor himself is known to travel in the town's only currently functioning ironstead.

Norlynn Manor

On the east side of town, flanked by a tool shed and small stable and backed by a thick forest, stands Norlynn manor. The

manor is home to Lord Norlynn, mayor of the town and baron of the outlying lands.

The manor is a large and lavish building, and has gathered a large assortment of magical and mechanical implements and tools over the generations. Most famous of these is the Norlynn Page, a boy shaped automaton with a face of porcelain and metal innards. The Page is capable of listening to the words of its master, remembering thousands of them in a row, and slowly, diligently writing each one onto pages of parchment.

Greta's Property

Greta's property comprises two small buildings and a rather large fenced off garden, separated from the majority of town by a small copse in the southeast, accessible by two roundabout roads, one extending from the House of Doors and the other from the Norlynn Manor. The largest of the two buildings is Greta's home – a decaying, rustic house more suited to a family of two or three than for one person. Next to the house is Greta's garden, where rows of strange herbs and roots are grown. She willingly gives these alchemical ingredients to the Enchantery, and it is because of this that the madwoman lives in relative peace, untouched by the other villagers.

The Fountain of Mirth

The disproportionately large Fountain of Mirth is seated in the center of Norlynn. It's an old stone fountain with a statue of a laughing mermaid whose eyes weep water slowly and endlessly into the pool beneath. The statue was built during Millicent's lifetime, though few know what for.

The fountain is magical, the water from within the statue seemingly materializing from nowhere – some believe there is a

spring underneath the fountain, others that it contains a portal much like the doorways in the old enchanted manor. Though there is no plaque to denote the fountain's name, no one argues its name.

While no one in town knows of it, the truth is that the fountain was in fact built atop a spring, and much of the water in the pool is from said spring. Under the statue are small cracks in the structure where water seeps out, but the statue's magical tears are not purely made of water. Since water from the spring dilutes the statue's tears so heavily, no one realizes that anyone who drinks the statue's tears will be overcome with delirious happiness for hours on end with no true side effects. No living person can tell why such a magical thing was made, but it stands there nonetheless, overlooked as nothing more than a piece of decorative stonework amidst a town of much greater wonders.

Patterson's Inn and Tavern

Patterson's Inn is the most popular inn for a hundred miles, and for many good reasons. All sorts of interesting and rich folk make the journey to Norlynn to see its strange wonders and visit the House of Doors. While the inn itself is not rich by any means, it is comfortable and rustic in every way. The inn is kept by a friendly man named Bartleby and three beautiful young barmaids. The maids regularly take water from the Fountain of Mirth outside for all manner of things – from simple drinking water to boiling water and water for floor cleaning.

Bartleby has a deal with the Magicker's Guild allowing him to take paying customers on a tour of their grounds, including the House of Doors. The guild takes a large cut of this money, but Bartleby is still profiting.

IMPORTANT PERSONS

Lord Norlynn, Jerrod Astleigh

Lord Norlynn, also known as Jerrod Astleigh to his closest friends, is a rotund and greedy man in his early thirties. Since his family has spent generations ruling over a land under magical care, they have grown decadent and lazy. Lord Norlynn takes what he wants in the name of his noble blood. He can't actually write at all, having spent his whole life having the Norlynn Page write everything for him, and spends much of his time reading or lounging about alone with his trophy wife, Tara Astleigh, (Lady Norlynn).

Lord Norlynn is not a ruthless man and can't stand the sight of bloodshed or battle, but through guile, bullying, and trickery, will take whatever he can from others.

Lady Norlynn, Tara Astleigh

A young woman of not yet twenty, Lady Norlynn is a spoiled and selfish brat. Her unhealthy pale complexion is aided by her constant opium use and her naturally dull brown hair is often worn in the most complex of styles. Tara was born to be married off and values her beauty and youth above all else. She's a perfect match for her husband – indulgent, arrogant, and greedy. However, she is not lazy nor does she have a weak stomach.

Tara is often bored and dislikes her husband's company. She has been known to seek out others simply for entertainment, but occasionally has some sort of a plan in mind as well. She is an opportunist and is not afraid of magic, hoping some day (soon) that she can unlock the secrets of eternal youth or perhaps greater beauty.

Master Odditeer, Abram Jerickson

Abram is an elderly man, and is in many ways what you might expect when you think of an old wizard in a tower. He

wears ugly, simple robes, clogs, and a dull colored beanie on his mostly hairless head. He wears thick spectacles and is soft spoken, eccentric, enigmatic, and unfortunately very forgetful. Some say that when he was young he had every incantation in the tower memorized, and while he has lost much of this knowledge, he still knows many minor glamours and cantrips.

Abram is always ready to show off his spells, though few are considered useful to a proper wizard. Although the guild is not a school of magic, many looking to learn useful tricks seek out the Master Odditeer. However, he has not taken on an apprentice in the twenty years since his last one died in an embarrassing, and secret, magical accident.

Master Lorist, Namid Pepsins

Namid is a thin man in his forties with milk chocolate skin and jet black hair. He has a sharp fashion sense and moves with graceful precision. Namid is from a foreign land and knows powerful magics. He



was once the favorite assassin of a powerful king before coming to Norlynn to live a life of peace among books, scrolls, and non-martial wizards.

Namid protects a key to the basement of the Library, although it is one of two keys required to open the magically protected door. The key is frozen in the centre of a block of ice that seems impossible to melt. Namid obtained the key from a vault hidden in one of the enchanted manor's magic doors. He doesn't even know it's for the Library's basement, although he guesses it's likely less exciting than what is behind the doors in Millicent's manor.

Guild Headmaster, Reuben

McMeer

Reuben is a portly old man in his sixties, often sporting silky hand-me-down sorcerer's robes which he claims were sewn from pixie hairs in the days of Millicent's life. The robes are so tight on him that

many townsfolk find him painful to look at.

Despite his social ineptitude, Reuben is an experienced spellcaster and knows the words to open over a dozen of the magic portals within the House of Doors. Reuben spends his nights disgracefully with wild things in a garden of fae, which he enters through the House of Doors. His wife knows that he enters the building at night, but has so far been unable to catch him.

Headmaster's Wife, Clara

McMeer

Clara is a kind woman in her sixties with a beautiful round face and fiery orange curly hair. She is a practiced mage and master of animal manipulation. Clara spends most of her days divided between the study of magic and partaking in the town's gossip, and is one of the few guild members who spends a great deal of time with the villagers.

Clara is fierce and strong-willed, and, while humble about it, has had a more colorful past than most of the other master mages. Her relationship with her husband is strained as of late, due to his mysterious trips into the House of Doors. While she is suspicious of him, she still loves him, and speaks well of him to others in most regards, except for his taste in fashion.

Master Enchanter, Jonathan

Redlynn

Jonathan is a strong blonde man in his thirties with a do-it-yourself attitude and an easy grin. His naturally friendly personality lends itself well to the many apprentices he has in the Enchantery. Contrary to popular belief, Jonathan is not a particularly good enchanter, and isn't capable of doing much more than creating the usual items which come out of the Enchantery. That said, he does hold on to a few magical items and is studying to become a true enchanter,



LORD NORLYNN

The town's mayor and baron of the surrounding lands, Lord Norlynn is selfish and lazy.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 2;

Toughness: 6

Skills: Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d6, Riding d4, Streetwise d6

Hindrances: Illiterate (partial, cannot write, can read, minor), Mean, Obese (Minor), Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Noble

Armor: None

Weapons: Bejewelled dagger (Str+d4)



LADY NORLYNN

Lady Norlynn is a rotten, selfish brat with a penchant for violent solutions to imaginary problems.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2;

Toughness: 5

Skills: Intimidation d8, Persuasion d6, Streetwise d4, Taunt d10

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty (Major), Greedy (Minor), Mean (Minor)

Edges: Killer Instinct, Very Attractive

Armor: None

Weapons: None



ABRAM JERICKSON

Abram is an old wizard and keeper of mysterious minor magics.

Attr: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 4

Skills: Investigation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Notice d8, Spellcasting d8, Taunt d4

Hindrances: Bad Eyes (Minor), Elderly (Major), Quirk (Minor, eccentric and cryptic)

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Power Points (15 total)

Powers: *slumber* (lullaby of magic words), *speak language* (mysteriously understands and speaks languages fluently), *wall walker* (magic glue for

boots, takes a minute to cast but duration ten times greater)

Armor: None

Weapons: None

Special Abilities:

- **Minor Magics:** Assuming he can speak aloud, Abram can make a Spellcasting roll to do any of the following at a range of Smarts: curdle milk, untie knots, change the color of tulips, make a six sided die come up a three, levitate feathers, repair shattered glass (the pieces have to be touching already), ignite candlewicks, display images in still water, create rainbows, and transmute quartz into granite. Abram doesn't remember the other several thousand such spells in the Incanter's tower, though anyone can learn one with a successful Investigation roll and 1d6 days' time.

unlocking the power of relic creation. In his room, he has several magical items including a fifteen foot rope with the power to straighten into a bar shape and become hard as steel, a candle which never goes out, and a gaudy cow themed sweater which protects the wearer as much as chainmail.

Jonathan has worked at the guild since he was a boy, and his father was the previous Master Enchanter. He is best friends with the innkeeper, Bartleby, which is well-known as one of the only strong relationships between a villager and a guild member.

Greta

Greta is a mad old woman with wild eyes, a crooked back, and a frizzy mess of hair that looks more akin to a bird's nest. While she is crazy, she's not dangerous. She's lived in town longer than anyone else, and it's said that a very long time ago she knew the words to open many of the portal doors herself, but few truly

believe that these days. It is common knowledge that she was a guild member once – the personal apprentice and attendant of Reuben's predecessor, but she has long since gone completely mad and lost all magical skills.

Greta has been known to bang pots and pans around loudly at night, tell stories with no rhyme or reason or meaning, steal others' shoes claiming them to be her son's (she has no son), and occasionally cry into the shoulder or arms of people she has never met. The people in town tolerate her though, because most pity her, and they know the town relies on her land, herb-lore, dedication, and seed collection to grow many of the ingredients required for the potions the Enchantery makes.

Bartleby

Bartleby is a baby-faced man in his late thirties with a brown comb-over hairstyle. When he speaks, he has a tendency to use grand and expressive hand ges-

tures, and wears his feelings plainly on his face.

Bartleby moved into town when he was barely twenty and made his way as a very clever and charismatic merchant, working at Patterson's as an aid to the previous owner. Over a couple of years, Bartleby befriended most of the folks in town, and when Patterson's last owner died suddenly with no local relatives and leaving no will, Lord Norlynn offered the property to Bartleby at a remarkably low price as a personal favor. Since then, Patterson's has been renovated and turned into an inn and tourist attraction, and Bartleby has nearly singlehandedly turned the town into a place where travelers feel comfortable.

Bartleby has many friends in town, but has enemies as well who are jealous of success, especially as an outsider. There are also those who speak ill of him because of the scandalous rumors sur-



NAMID PEPSINS

Namid is both the Magicker's Guild's librarian and an ex-battle mage.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4;

Toughness: 6

Skills: Fighting d4, Investigation d10, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Notice d4, Spellcasting d10, Streetwise d6

Hindrances: Enemy (Major, betrayed king), Outsider (Minor), Wanted (Major, in homeland)

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Arcane Resistance, Power Points x3 (25 total)

Powers: *bolt* (ray of heat), *burst* (gout of fire), *smite* (red hot weapon)

Armor: None

Weapons: Katar (Str+d6)



REUBEN McMEER

The awkward, cheating, aged manager of the Magicker's Guild.

Attr: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: -1; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Investigation d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d12, Persuasion d4, Spellcasting d8

Hindrances: Elderly (Major), Habit (Minor, horrible fashion sense)

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), New Power x5, Power Points x2 (20 total), Wizard

Powers: *blind* (bright flash of light), *confusion* (loud noises), *detect/conceal arcana* (squinting eyes to detect, waving hands to conceal), *dispel* (powerful word), *drain power points* (whispered words), *light/obscure* (ghostly torch, thick fog), *stun* (bolts of energy), *summon ally* (up to Heroic)

Armor: None

Weapons: None



CLARA McMEER

The friendly gossip and druid wife of Reuben.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 4

Skills: Investigation d4, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Knowledge (Herbs) d4, Persuasion d6, Spellcasting d6, Streetwise d8, Survival d6, Tracking d4

Hindrances: Vow (Major, to maintain her marriage happily with Reuben)

Edges: Attractive, Beast Bond, Beast Master

Powers: *beast friend*, *shape change* (up to Veteran), *teleport* (change into a bolt of lightning)

Armor: None

Weapons: Improvised weapons

rounding the barmaids who work and live at the inn.

Dianna

Dianna is a petite young woman in her early twenties with a sharp youthful face and a quick playful grin. Her wavy brunette hair is worn in a short girlish style which compliments her tiny stature.

Dianna is one of the three barmaids at Patterson's, famed in the town for their beauty and sought after not only by travelers but the young villagers as well.

Dianna hails from a large city to the north and was born a street urchin. She came to Norlynn without a penny and Bartleby was kind and smart enough to give her work at his tavern. No doubt, her charming personality and good looks are part of the reason the place is so successful.

Dianna is witty and fast thinking, and more or less open-minded to criminal opportunities. Despite that, she is not always incredibly wise, and is kept out of

trouble largely because those around her are setting a good example.

Roberta

Roberta is a well postured lady entering her twenties with a porcelain face and captivating, luminous blue eyes. Her golden locks are often held tightly into a braided ponytail, revealing her soft pale ears and neck.

Roberta is one of the three barmaids at Patterson's and the newest of the three in town. She left her home, a village to the west, after ogres roved in and destroyed the place, capturing or killing the majority of her family and friends. In the year since, Roberta has worked her way through much of the grieving, but the heaviness of the situation clearly weighs on her heart from time to time.

Roberta's family was rich – not noble, but cultured – and quite religious. She is often embarrassed or concerned by small things which wouldn't be of consequence

to others due to her religious background. That said, her youth and curiosity are sometimes quite apparent and she can set aside her prudish and old-fashioned tendencies to indulge occasionally (and guiltily) in a little excitement.

Roberta is kind and gentle, offering her friendship and help easily without much concern for personal benefit. She is wiser than she appears and easily understands the simple truths of life.

Iris

Iris is a voluptuous woman in her mid-twenties with a soft, freckly face and a small, delicate nose. Her straight auburn hair is nearly always worn down, reaching to her shoulder blades and framing her generous bust. She is the oldest of the three barmaids at Patterson's and is good friends with both Dianna and Roberta, acting as an older sister to the two.

Iris is well-known for her singing and is a clever, independent woman. Among her



JONATHAN REDLYNN

The friendly master of the chantery.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Spellcasting d6, Streetwise d4

Hindrances: None

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Charismatic, Rapid Recharge

Powers: *armor* (mystical glow), *barrier* (force field), *boost/lower trait* (glowing aura)

Armor: Magic sweater (Torso, Arms +2)

Weapons: Improvised weapons



GRETA

Greta is the town loony and guild's unofficial gardener.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Knowledge (Herbs) d10, Survival d4

Hindrances: Elderly, Delusional (Major, see description)

Edges: None

Armor: None

Weapons: None



BARTLEBY

The grandiose tour guide of the guild and keeper of the inn.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Fighting d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Streetwise d6, Taunt d6

Hindrances: None

Edges: Charismatic

Armor: None

Weapons: Short sword (Str+d6)

meager possessions is a chessboard with which she consistently proves her intellectual prowess and competitive nature.

Iris is the only one of the three barmaids with a distinct interest in magic. She doesn't speak of it, but secretly wishes to be a great mage and use her powers to do grand things.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

Creatures found in the following adventure hooks should be sourced from the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook.

For King and Country

Word has reached the ears of a king that this House of Doors contains portals not only to dangerous places, but into his own hall, as his ancestors trusted and often called upon Millicent for help during her lifetime.

Realizing this may be a security issue, the king has sent a group of his most trusted

knights to protect the manor from wrong-doers and enemies. Treat these knights as *experienced soldiers*. Depending on the challenge level the GM is looking for, they might have one knight for every PC, or maybe one for every two PCs. She might just pick a number like 'five'. This is left intentionally vague to suit the campaign's style and any optional rules it might have. Any number of the knights can be treated as Wild Cards as well for additional difficulty. If any of the PCs are knights or agents of a king, they could be from an enemy king's court, or from the same one to create additional tension.

With the knights controlling the mansion, the guild becomes very tense and makes an attempt to explain that it's their property, but the knights don't listen. The guild goes into a strike and stops producing goods for the town, which rallies Lord and Lady Norlynn to their cause. Nothing

short of killing the knights gets them to budge.

A guild member explains that if the king wants security, he can destroy the gate on his side. The knights say anything to refuse this idea; secretly their mission has nothing to do with the security of their king's call, but is in fact to use one of the doors to invade an enemy king's hall and assassinate him. Their orders are to discover the way to open the door and report back to their king so that he can send an army of several hundred men to march through the door and take the enemy capital from the inside.

What this means for the campaign depends on who the knights work for and who his enemies are. He might be a good king trying to destroy an evil orcsish domain, or he might be a corrupt warlord seeking conquest and selfish ends. Perhaps he is not particularly good or evil, but the eruption of a new war or the bloody end of an old one could have a



DIANNA

The attractive street urchin turned barmaid.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2;

Toughness: 4

Skills: Climbing d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6

Hindrances: Curious (Major), Illiterate (Minor), Small (Major)

Edges: Thief, Attractive

Armor: None

Weapons: Concealed dagger (Str+d4)



ROBERTA

The kind, but conservative, barmaid.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2;

Toughness: 5

Skills: Healing d6, Investigation d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Riding d4, Streetwise d4, Survival d4

Hindrances: Cautious (Minor), Code of Honor (Major)

Edges: Attractive, Brave

Armor: None

Weapons: None



IRIS

The alluring and musically-talented barmaid.

Attr: Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2;

Toughness: 5

Skills: Investigation d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d6, Swimming d4, Taunt d6

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Charismatic, Attractive

Armor: None

Weapons: None

significant impact, good or bad, on the PCs. Consider as well what effect this king's influence may have on Norlynn.

One way or another, only Reuben knows the magical word to open the door for them, and he won't give it up easily.

The Open Door

The PCs have been hearing rumors about the Headmaster's mysterious midnight jaunts and decide to check it out. Reuben can be followed into the House of Doors at a safe distance in the middle of the night with a successful Stealth roll. Failing this means he notices the PCs and doesn't go into the manor for a few days. Once inside the manor, he walks up the stairs to the second floor and approaches one of the doors in the hall. In a low voice, he says the magic word that will open it and slips inside, shutting the door behind him.

There are several ways to get through the door and follow him. First, if a PC is able to get very close when he says the magic word, they can hear it and repeat it to open the door. However, Reuben carries a lantern, which he lights once inside the house, and there are no hiding places near the door he enters. The PCs have to be very creative to find a way to get so close. Second, he is foolish enough to leave the door open one in six times if he is drunk at the time he enters. Third, if any of the PCs are mages or if they manage to enlist the help of one of the mages from town, they can come up with a magical means of getting through the door or hearing the magic word to open it.

On the other side of the door is a seemingly endless expanse of lively and wonderful landscape. The world on the other side is surreal and strange in every way, but very beautiful.

A long pathway winds away from the door and eventually comes to a fork. If the PCs do not follow Reuben directly down this road and see which way he

goes, they may wind up going the wrong way. Along the wrong path is a tower belonging to a flesh eating troll (Wild Card). If they go any farther, they may end up lost or in any manner of trouble in this unexplainable mystical realm.

Along the other road is a staircase leading down into a well-kept glade, with gardens of strange and mysterious fruits and flowers. Living within the glade is a fairy nymph named Delypha, the illicit mistress of Reuben. She is not concerned with anything except continuing to spend private time with her lover and does not speak any language but that of the fairy world in which she lives.

Once they are found, the adventure can turn many directions. If Reuben is caught with Delypha, he pleads for secrecy lest his reputation be completely ruined. He can be blackmailed into revealing the words to open other doors within the manor, and this alone can serve as a reward for completing the adventure. If it suits the campaign, the GM can make Delypha into a villainous character, using magic or wiles to lure Reuben away from his wife. In another campaign, she might be young and misunderstood, perhaps taken advantage of by the old man and in need of rescuing herself. Perhaps the two are in legitimate love and Reuben needs to be convinced to confess to his wife and leave her for a better thing. For this reason, Delypha is left intentionally without statistics so that the GM can create their own set which they find appropriate for their campaign.

Invasion

The House of Doors is often an uneventful place as magical words are needed to open any of the portals within it. But today a known word has been spoken from the other side of the door, and something's coming through. The invader was once one of Millicent's apprentices, a lesser man named Percy. Percy never became a true mage and was in truth

little more than a servant and a bag carrier for Millicent and her party.

On one occasion however, Millicent and her group had travelled deep into the mountains on the other side of one of the manor's doors to hunt down a dangerous vampire lord. Percy was among the casualties in that battle and the party thought him dead and buried him. Unfortunately, he rose as a young vampire only days later to find himself deep underground. Percy was trapped and driven mad until a group of teenagers from a new settlement near the vampire's old castle recently dug up his grave. After Percy slew all of the townsfolk, the sheer dark power of his rage and madness caused them to rise again as zombie minions.

Percy often fantasized about returning to Norlynn and killing Millicent and her apprentices for what they (unknowingly) did to him, and is determined to return through the door from whence he came and kill everyone on the other side. Depending on how the GM wants to run things, the invasion force can be handled as a onetime battle or as a horde with growing waves. Percy may not come through himself and may have to be chased down to the ancient vampire's castle in the mountains. Depending on the rules for vampires in their world, the GM might have Percy 'bestow' vampirism onto others and introduce other intelligent villains. The vampire lord's castle can be set up as a dungeon crawl as well, full of traps, magic, and guardians.

This plot is also a good hook to allow players access to more doors, as Percy could justifiably know one, five, or every magic word for the House of Doors.

The Augur

Through one unlikely happenstance or another, Lady Norlynn comes into possession of a forgotten tome that once belonged to Millicent or her coterie. Contained within are writings of an ancient

and magic tongue – unreadable to young Mrs. Astleigh, except for a single sheet of notes that was left pressed between the pages. The notes detail a ritual to be performed in the Augurarium. There are no details about the purpose of the ritual, but Tara believes that it grants the user power and hopes to get one step closer to her dream of immortal youth and beauty.

When Tara completes the ritual, her mind's eye is opened to all manner of things for a short time. This time can be as long or short as the GM likes – it could be only a minute if the PCs are present, or a few days if the GM wants to build tension. If the GM is running a campaign which includes prophecy, this can be a good excuse to introduce it. If seeing the future isn't suited to the campaign, Tara can instead look into faraway places or perhaps into the hearts and minds of others. If the GM wants to drag this process out, she might become a significant and powerful rival for a short time as she has the ability to predict and thereby easily manipulate the world around her.

Unbeknownst to all are the side effects to opening oneself to the cosmos in such a way. Since Tara has no training in the art of farsight, she falls prey to an eldritch possession by a mysterious astral soul-sucker. The possession is very obvious; Tara's eyes turn white and she begins to move towards any living being to suck out their soul. The soul-sucker is a Wild Card and the possession can be stopped with the *banish* spell. Without it, Tara has to be slain to stop this creature.

At this point, Tara is completely inhuman, without language, never tiring, and seeking out the souls of the living. She gains the *bolt* power, a Spellcasting die of d8, and 10 Power Points. She uses this power to defend herself from any would-be attacker, but otherwise marches steadily toward any living being to suck out their soul.

Soul-sucking is an opposed Spirit roll against an adjacent target – the ethereal possessor has a Spirit die of d10. If the victim succeeds in their roll, they resist the soul-sucking power. If the soul-sucker succeeds, the victim is Shaken. If the soul-sucker succeeds with a Raise, the victim loses its soul and dies immediately.

Once the soul-sucker takes five souls, it takes the magic book to the Augurarium and uses the nearest torch or lantern to try and burn the two of them to a crisp. With these tasks completed, it releases possession of Tara and the town is left safe, albeit scarred by the grotesque and dazzling wonders of that which lies beyond the veil. The true meaning of this cosmic possession or the origin of the book is a mystery for the GM to unravel at their disposal – or perhaps a secret to keep. Sometimes the best mysteries are the ones never solved.

The Western Wildlands

Roberta has approached the heroes, having heard a little of their deeds, and solemnly requested some time alone to speak with them. Once they are alone, she tells them that ever since she moved to Norlynn, she has been having dreams about the attack on her village.

She thinks that if the ogres were to be slain and her family's remains found and properly buried, she would be able to rest easier, and because she has no one else to turn to, she asks the PCs to do this. If they seem hesitant to help her, she explains that her father was a baronet and that he had many valuable treasures they could help themselves to, if they manage to find them. In reality, she is very reluctant to offer up her father's riches to strangers, but the thought of righting the wrong done to her hometown is enough to change her mind.

If the PCs have befriended any of the town's NPCs, including Roberta, they might be able to convince them to come

along with an appropriate Persuasion roll. Any NPC who comes along probably wants an equal share of any loot though.

It is a day-long ride to Roberta's hometown, Westwatch, which sits on the border of an old forest. The town itself is completely abandoned and ruined, and the evidence of an ogre attack is clear (though aged by a year). Looters have helped themselves to anything of value in town, and there are bones lying around. A successful Healing roll with a (-2) modifier can determine that the human remains are those only of men and women too young to have been Roberta's parents. In truth, the ogres only prefer the meat of aged humans, and when they attacked they took with them any bodies, dead or alive, of those above forty.

The party must trek west into the woods for another two days before they are deep enough in to find signs of the ogres. At this point, the ogres can be traced back to their lair with a Tracking roll with a +2 modifier. If it's suited to the campaign, this is a good time to insert an unexpected monster battle in the forest against whatever creatures the GM finds appropriate.

The ogres live in a giant clearing with a large pool in the center and a stream of freshwater leading to it. They live in oversized pavilions sewn from the skins of stolen cattle and keep a relatively constant bonfire which makes their presence even easier to track. They also keep several dire wolves as pets and guards.

Not far from the chieftain's tent is a gigantic pile of bones which has been amassing for years. If the party has the chance to search this area and the ability to identify bones, the skeletons of Roberta's parents can be found here. The chieftain's tent can have as much or as little treasure as the GM finds appropriate – and maybe no items previously owned by Roberta's parents.

Millicent McMire

Millicent McMire is a master wizard, designed for fantasy settings and connected to *Surveyed: Norlynn*.

THE WORLDWARP

In a time when mystical energies swathed the world in a pristine glow, a sorceress was born. Millicent was born, some say, to a nymph or some other unnatural creature. She was the bastard child of Roderick McMire, a great wizard whose name was once known in all corners of the world. Since then, his daughter's name has cast him so deeply into shadow that he's been all but forgotten.

THE TRAGIC TALE OF MILLIE WORLDWARP

In halls of great wizards, Millicent's writings are studiously pored over. Tales of her deeds are told around campfires and sung of in taverns. She was a master of the arcane, a dragon-slayer, destroyer of liches, and inventor of great and fantastical things. She was known for her magic sword, *ghostblade*, which had the power to become partially intangible and phase through her enemy's swords, shields, and armor without touching them. She saved kingdoms time and time again until there was nothing left to save them from.

Once there was less of a need for her heroism, Millicent became all the more eccentric and found new projects to occupy her time. She constructed a manor next to a lake and filled it with 108 magical doors, each of which warp her from one place to another. Many of these doors took her from her home to visit the civilized places across the world. Others took her into secret places of her choosing – the magical realms of fae and demons, or the weird mysterial halls in which she stored her strangest experiments and many treasured artifacts. She became widely known as the worldwarper, or more fondly as Millie Worldwarp.

As Millicent grew greater and greater in power, she became further detached from those she once loved and sought to protect. In time, she became so powerful that she was no longer interested in mortal kind and began to spend all of her time alone or in the company of strange beings from expanses

unknown. She unlocked the ways of so many magics that she started to experiment with some of the very things she once fought to destroy – she began to see human bodies and souls as playthings for her great mind to unravel or control.

It was in this time that Millicent's beloved apprentices fought to save their reputation, and hers. They banded together with all that she had taught them and hexed her power sources, weakening her arcana enough that they could turn one of her experiments against her – Millicent was pushed into the 109th door in her magical manor. Millicent had been working on this door herself, but to the knowledge of her apprentices, it was unfinished and would do nothing but disintegrate what entered it.

When Millicent disappeared, the apprentices destroyed the door and swore never to speak ill of her. The doorway she had passed through was gone, so even if she had somehow survived, she was forever trapped. When they had joined her, she was a wise-woman, a saint, and a hero. They swore to preserve her memory as such, though time would prove her remembered more for her power than her goodness. However, they did not know the truth of the final door, and are no longer alive to discover it.

The 109th Door

Millicent had been working on the 109th door in secret; her apprentices believed that this was because of her usual anti-social nature in her final days around her, but in truth it was because she was creating a doorway to a completely different world for her research. While some of her doors took her to lands full of demons or fae, these realms were not far off in a cosmic sense and nothing like the world she intended to travel to.

Millicent's destination was a land she dubbed 'the vagary'; aberrant to the world she once knew, where spaces could subtly shift when not held deeply in thought and time itself was not synchronous with her home. In this world she traveled for months, trying to unlock the lucid power of its dreamlike substance.

The Vagary

By opening her mind and her soul to this world, Millicent unleashed her most powerful memories unto it. For a time, her nightmares became her foes, as real as she was, and because they were born of her own mind, she was unable to slay them. It was a long time before she learned to gain mastery over them and turn her nightmares into friends and companions, but by this time, her sanity was lost.

During Millicent's time as a heroine, she was forced to destroy a council of liches in a struggle that lasted over ten years. It was during this quest that her lover, the paladin Raymond Mallory, was slain and she suffered her first true loss. When she continued to fight the liches, they decided to use their foul witchery to resurrect Raymond as a perverse echo of his living self, a hateful, destructive, and yet intelligent and sentient death knight. After several battles, Raymond was killed once again, but the scar remained in Millicent's psyche.

When Millicent entered into the vagary, her memories of Raymond in life and her fear of him in death created her recurring nightmare – a dreamlike version of the death knight was recre-

ated, and because he was perpetuated by her fear, at first invincible. In time, she learned to reconcile her fear and the dream-being was altered. The dream Raymond was given life by Millicent's loving memories of the real Raymond.

Escape to the Crystal World

Once Raymond was no longer Millicent's enemy, he became a manifestation of her power over the vagary. He convinced her that she could, in time, learn to control every aspect of reality. After becoming completely accustomed to the vagary, she gained the power to think a doorway into existence. She intended to return to her home plane, but the vagary seemed to have something else in store for her and her dead companion.

When Raymond and Millicent entered the door, they escaped the vagary moderately intact. Millicent lost her reality altering powers, as they only truly functioned in the vagary, but was left with a strange reflection and a very real, subservient death knight with all the memories of her young love.

The two emerged in a strange world, though much less strange than the vagary. Before them was a sprawling landscape of





MILLICENT McMIRE

The fallen heroine and one of the most powerful mages of all time, Millicent is left forever changed by her time in the vagary

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d12+2, Spirit d12+1, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Charisma: -1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Skills: Fighting d10 (+2 w/ Ghostblade), Intimidation d8, Investigation d12+2, Knowledge (Arcana) d12+2, Knowledge (Occult) d12+2, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Repair d12, Riding d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8+2, Survival d6, Swimming d8, Taunt d6, Spellcasting d12+2

Armor: Greater Amulet of Protection (+4 Armor)

Weapons: *Ghostblade* (Str+d8, AP 4, ignore enemy parry bonus for shields and weapons and treat all enemies as unarmed)

Hindrances: Delusional (Minor, believes that she can alter reality with thought alone, only that she needs to remove chaotic elements from around her to keep her from being distracted), Habit (Minor, checking to see if she's in a dream), Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Investigator, Mastery (Spellcasting), Improved Level Headed, Improved Nerves of Steel, Improved Rapid Recharge, Power Points x8, Scholar, Soul Drain, Improved Trademark Weapon (*Ghostblade*), Wizard

Powers: Millicent knows every available spell

Special Abilities:

- **Twisted Reflection:** Since Millicent's exposure to the vagary, she has been inherently altered. While in all other regards she appears to be nothing more than the arcane master she is, her reflection shows her shifting from one dreamlike state to the next, often in grotesque and strange detail. Those who see her reflection must make a Fear (-2) check.

giant crystalline mountains, with a violet sky and deep blue snow. They spent months learning to live off of this strange land, and if not for Millicent's great magical power, could never have survived. It was here that she regained some bearing on non-lucid, fully tangible matter. Despite this, her mind was permanently cracked and would never truly understand concrete, corporeal existence again.

Throughout the months spent in the jeweled world, Millicent and Raymond faced down many outlandish and marvelous creatures, and nearly gave up on leaving, constructing a home for themselves atop a great transparent spire.

The Journey Home

After leaving the vagary, the undead Raymond was given true life (or unlife) separate from Millicent's memories, and in the time they spent in the crystal world, came to think of it truly as home.

Millicent however, was not pleased; she would not settle and swore vengeance on the traitorous apprentices who kicked her out of her own universe. She continued to spend much of her time trying to alter reality with thought alone, but to no avail. She believed it had to be some side effect of the crystal realm, and this only increased her fervor to get home.

During one of her long ponderous walks, Millicent came upon one of the rare and astounding beasts of the gem domain – a lioness-like creature with the natural ability to bend space, creating small, personal wormholes and teleportation. She used her spells to calm and befriend the animal and led it home to Raymond.

It was then that the creature's very existence removed Millicent from her sullen stupor, and she realized that it offered a chance for her to escape the glassy province. She believed that if one of these crystal lions could warp space enough to teleport itself, a pack of them could possibly reach much farther, sending her and her beloved back to her homeland. Millicent named the cat Amethyst, after the crystal and the sobering effects it was meant to have. The witch, her pet, and her armor clad shade set out to find Amethyst's relatives and began the long arduous journey home.

Solace at Last

The three of them came across the pride of crystal lions, and Millicent summoned her greatest powers to control each and every one of them. Using Amethyst as a focal point, she used the pride's power and her own knowledge of world warping to try to blast the three of them back to her home town, Norlynn.

THE CHARACTERS – A CLOSER LOOK

Millicent McMire, the Worldwarper

Millicent appears to be a middle-aged woman with stocky shoulders and tanned skin. Her lightly freckled face is marked with a nose many times broken. Her light brown hair is cut short, often sporting a small ponytail that reaches no farther than her shoulders and straight boyish bangs just above her eyebrows. She has long eyelashes and wizened hazel eyes.

Millicent has a tendency to alternate between acting the part of the world-weary heroine and the jaded, heartless ultra-villain. She is mysterious and has a commanding presence, even in silence, but is naturally introverted and thoughtful. She often speaks of macabre or misanthropic things, and reminisces over past battles and adventures with anyone who will listen. She considers herself too powerful to be concerned with her enemies and has a habit of showing off.

Since her time in the vagary, Millicent has trouble telling the difference between dreams and reality, and is constantly checking to see whether her experiences are real. She jumps to test the stability of the ground, pinches her cheeks, smells and touches random objects to test their properties, and occasionally counts seconds out loud to make sure that time is flowing normally. Sometimes, she verbalizes the events of the last day or two to make sure that her memories are intact.

Raymond Mallory, the Dream-born Death Knight

Raymond appears to be mostly skeletal, with a few dried out ligaments and patches of old muscle or skin remaining. His empty eye sockets have a slight red glow to them, which intensifies into a bright fiery crimson when he gets passionate. He's tall with broad shoulders, but any muscles he might have boasted are long gone.

Because he doesn't need to eat or sleep and has no desire for comfort, he constantly wears his jet black bone-adorned plate armor. He carries a large magical claymore, which he wields with one supernaturally strong arm. When drawn, the sword sets alight with a lurid green flame.

The real Raymond died long ago, and even his reanimated corpse is long gone. This Raymond was created by Millicent's memories and imagination with the power of the vagary, and was only partially real until escaping into the crystal world. This dream Raymond has had years to come to terms with reality and develop his own sense of being.

Millicent has a strange relationship with Raymond. When she was younger, perhaps thirty years younger in her personal timeline, Raymond was a dear friend and close lover; she considered him a candidate for marriage and was proud to fight alongside him. After his death, she became much harder to relate with and focused tenfold on her magical studies and heroic quests. When the original Raymond death knight was created, he was a mockery and a husk of the living person, and Millicent had to put her feelings for him aside in order to kill the monster.

The dream-born Raymond is a different creature though, with all of the horrifying evil that made Millicent afraid of him and all of the feelings and personality that allowed her to love him.

Because she created the vagary's Raymond and learned to master him, he is subservient to her and completely loyal. She knows on some level that he is not real, but the two of them retain the framework of the relationship that the real living Raymond had with Millicent all those years ago. Things are made difficult by his undead, evil nature and her psychotic unstable psyche, but they try nonetheless.

The dream-born Raymond found himself to be a pragmatic, realistic, and cynical being when confronted with obstacles in the gem world, but despite that, was relatively peaceful, though prone to keeping himself busy. When Raymond is not busy, he notices uncomfortable details about his existence, such as his lack of nervous system and disconnection from the living.

When Raymond arrives in the real world, he finds his memories of life with Millicent to be ever-present and becomes enraged with the living, whom he envies. He discovers a raging, blood-thirsty, warlike side to himself born of Millicent's memories of the horrible weapon the liches made. When encountering the living, Raymond's first choice is to slaughter all who do not flee, though he does so with a dull ache of anger and a removed attitude.



RAYMOND MALLORY

The product of Millicent's mind and the power of the vagary, Raymond appears to be your average death knight until closer inspection. As a realized version of a deadly nightmare, Raymond is nearly unstoppable in a fight.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d12+1

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8 (9 with sword and shield); **Toughness:** 16 (5)

Skills: Fighting d12, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d6, Riding d10, Survival d6

Armor: Black enchanted plate armor (covers all, +5), kite shield (+2 parry, +2 armor vs ranged)

Weapons: Flaming claymore (Str+d10+d6, parry -1, 2 hands unless wielded by Raymond)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty (Major), Loyal (Minor)

Edges: Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Improved Frenzy, Harder to Kill, No Mercy, Improved Sweep, Tactician

Special Abilities:

- **Fear:** Anyone who encounters the undead warrior must make a Fear check.
- **Undead:** Raymond is a walking skeleton with no internal organs. He adds +2 to his Toughness (this has already been calculated), +2 to recover from being shaken, suffers no additional damage from called shots, no Wound Modifiers, and is not affected by

disease or poison. He also has no need for food, water, air, or rest.

- **Unnatural:** Due to his undead nature, animals are spooked and disgruntled by his presence. Raymond needs a supernatural steed or a very specially trained one to ride, and naturally frightens dogs, cats, and most other creatures he encounters.

Amethyst, the Crystal Lionness

Amethyst is a massive catlike creature with unnaturally large and literally razor sharp teeth and watery, translucent yellow eyes. She has completely transparent skin which is covered almost entirely by huge ridges of glassy, pinkish crystals.

Amethyst is not capable of speech and has no wish to do more than the average animal, but is mildly sentient, has a working understanding of the common language (due to her advanced alien intelligence and training with Millicent). She has all of the personality, pride, and spunk of three household cats combined.

Like most cats, she is concerned with sleeping, playing, hunting, and eating. She is antisocial, except with her master whom she often nuzzles and cuddles. More often than not, Millicent looks to Amethyst for company because of her disconnection with most other beings, and due to the resemblance to her familiar in days of old who was also feline.

Amethyst enjoys hunting and killing as most cats do, but has no qualms about killing humans. Because of her sentient nature, she could theoretically develop a moral opposition to doing so, but since Millicent doesn't value human life, she has taught Amethyst the same.

Amethyst's teleportation comes as naturally to her as jumping might to a human. It takes effort, focus, and finesse to be done well, but provided she is healthy and conscious, she can practically do so as many times as she likes without much difficulty at all. Because teleporting is a natural part of her species, she does so casually to go from one place to another, across a room for instance, or to her master's side. When she teleports, she actually switches places with the air in the spot she moves to, leaving little sound, but there is a bright flash of pink light each time which gives her old and new positions away immediately. For this reason, she may opt not to do so when attempting to be stealthy. She will also avoid it if she is feeling particularly lazy, as usually walking somewhere takes somewhat less effort.

Amethyst's attitude makes her not always partial to commands, and she certainly has a mind of her own. Her personal feelings at any given moment take precedence over the complex long term plans of others which she doesn't seem to understand. She usually responds to communication, though not always sympathetically. She is protective of her master and

fights alongside Millicent if she feels their safety is at stake. If Amethyst ever gets to a critically wounded state, she flees to fight another day.



AMETHYST

A crystal covered teleporting lioness from a far off world

Attr: Agility d10, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Survival d6, Tracking d10

Armor: Crystalline ridges (+4)

Weapons: Razor teeth (Str+d8, AP 2)

Edges: Improved Frenzy

Special Abilities:

- **Low Light Vision:** Amethyst ignores penalties for Dim or Dark lighting
- **Pounce:** Amethyst can pounce 1d6" to gain +4 to her attack and damage. Her Parry is reduced by (-2) until her next action when performing this maneuver however.
- **Teleport:** Every turn as a free action, Amethyst can make a Spirit roll. For every success and Raise, she may teleport once at a distance of up to 6" in any direction at any point in her turn. If she teleports just prior to making an attack, her enemy is entitled to a free Notice roll to avoid The Drop from her. If she still has free teleportations left over from her turn when an enemy attacks, she may teleport as a reaction and force the attack to miss.

INCORPORATING THE WORLDWARPER

What follows is a short guide on how to include Millicent and her companions into a campaign.

The Legend of Millicent McMire

One very effective tactic a GM can use before incorporating Millicent into a game is to really build up her legends. Because she is a key figure in Norlynn (the village also provided for play in this issue of *Savage Insider*), it is easy to come up with reasons for NPCs to discuss her.

Often what makes a villain successful with a group of players is not their statistics or background, but their reputation and impact on the overall story of the game. If effectively built up, even a single encounter with Millicent could become very memorable if simply for the perceived rarity of such an event.

GMs are encouraged to have the players look up to Millicent, as during her time she was a great heroine and her darker side was kept secret by her apprentices. Because of her connection with the House of Doors, she had the ability to travel all over the world, and so she could even be introduced outside of Norlynn. The GM may find it appropriate to include her in bits of the campaign's history, to expand on her enemies, struggles, and triumphs. This way, when the players encounter her and see that she has lost all goodness, the scene will be more meaningful as they may be able to relate to her as a role model or (if it's a very high level campaign) an equal.

At the very least, even if the PCs never take a liking to her, knowing how much Millicent meant to the rest of the world will make her defeat much richer, as defeating a world renowned character of mythical power is a very rewarding feeling.

Adventures with the Worldwarper

The GM has plenty of choices about what to do with Millicent and her compatriots. If it is appropriate and the players are playing in the village of Norlynn (described in this issue of *Savage Insider*), then Millicent and her group can arrive right in the center of town, allowing madness to ensue right off the bat. This choice could be fairly disastrous if the GM intends to keep most of the PCs and the villagers alive – Millicent is seeking vengeance on the town and would likely begin to attack upon arrival.

As another option, Millicent could have accidentally wound up far to the west in the lands described as 'the Wildlands'. There she could, as many traditional fantasy villains do, raise an army of monsters, such as orcs, goblins, ogres, and trolls, to march east and conquer the civilized lands. This could be the center of a long campaign with mass battles and kingdoms at stake, or if she took control only of a single tribe or pack of monsters, she could lay siege to Norlynn and serve as the villain of only a few adventures.

For GMs who want to build more tension and are playing less of a hack and slash game, Millicent could have a longer, more cunning plan than controlling monsters. Perhaps she has Raymond lead a group of monsters into battle to remove suspicion from her true motives – a good way to do this is to (using the House of Doors described in this issue) have her traversing the various lands of the doors gathering her artifacts, perhaps freeing old, imprisoned villains, going to sacred grounds for dark rituals, even assassinating important political figures.

The House of Doors can be used as a weapon, and Millicent would no doubt use it if given the chance. Even posting guards outside or within the manor might not stop her, as she can turn

invisible or intangible, teleport, or simply slay the guards (unless they're very powerful).

As for her companions, both are intelligent and theoretically complex characters and may have a larger role to play in the story than simply as her minions. Raymond, for example, may seek out the peace he found in the crystal world, especially if his master is killed, and try to enlist help to open a portal back to it. In doing so, this could open up a new avenue of adventure for the PCs as they explore this odd and unlikely landscape. Raymond may also reconnect with the good side of himself and could become a redeemed character, maybe aiding the PCs in a few quests before asking for their help in exchange. Perhaps instead of leaving the world, he wishes to be resurrected, or find another peaceful place on this plane of existence.

Amethyst is a passionate and short sighted creature, so she could easily add interesting complications to the story. For example, if she felt slighted by Millicent, she might defect and join the other side, assuming there were characters around to keep her fed and entertained (though they may have to get clever to avoid becoming the food and entertainment). If Millicent dies, her life will surely go on and she will find something new to do. Perhaps she becomes a recurring creature, occasionally helpful, and occasionally conflicting. Or perhaps if the GM wants an alternative route to bring the crystal world into the campaign, Amethyst can, with some magical assistance, send the PCs across. Whether or not they have a way back is up to them.

If the PCs defeat Millicent and manage to interrogate her, they could learn all sorts of invaluable things about the House of Doors, such as how to surpass the traps in some of the magic halls behind the doors, or the locations of hidden treasures behind others. They may just want to know the magic words required to open the various doors in the house. If the PCs have bigger plans, they could force her to create new doors to places they want fast travel to. If they're very creative, they may even be able to get her to open a door back into the vagary.

The GM should be very careful about what Millicent does; statistically speaking, she is far more powerful than most PCs, and will require teamwork and cunning to defeat even alone. With her two allies, she's more than enough to result in a total party kill and an abrupt ending to a campaign. If the GM wants to include her as a more minor villain, her power points can be cut in half and her skill dice reduced by two types each to account either for her madness or for her reputation being greater than she truly was.



Once and Once and a Long Time Ago...

Once and Once and a Long Time Ago is a fantasy adventure in two parts. Either part can be run without the other, but they can be strung together to create a longer and more complete adventure as well. It's meant to be a generic fantasy adventure—one that can be inserted in any campaign with as little muss and fuss as possible—so most of the names and titles are generic as well. In places where it's appropriate, an attempt has been made to offer suggestions for changes, but if you have a place or character that would work better for you or your game, just cross out the one written here and scrawl that one in.

In short, feel free to make this adventure your own.

It should also be noted this adventure isn't designed with any particular character rank in mind. Obviously, a group of Novice characters (let alone a single Novice character) will have a difficult time. In fact, it's not likely they'll succeed. That doesn't mean they *won't*, or that they shouldn't try, just that the odds are against them. On the other hand, Legendary characters aren't likely to feel too challenged by the circumstances—and

they should have already made their names as Legends, for that matter. Seasoned or Veteran PCs are recommended.

As GM, make sure the PCs understand the challenges, risks, and rewards they're likely to face, and then give them free rein to handle things as they will.

Synopsis

Things could be summed up as 'circles within circles'. Once upon a time, the Witch of the Wild felt her heart drawn to a handsome and valiant Knight Errant, but his eyes and his heart were only for the King's daughter, the Princess. This became all too apparent when the witch approached the knight and offered herself to him.

Bitter and scornful at being rebuffed, the witch cursed the knight; his heart became twisted, and his love turned to lust. His actions began to reflect his now-tarnished soul, and it wasn't long before he became known as the Black Knight.

This is when the characters come onto the scene.

WHO'S THIS AGAIN?

For purposes of creating this adventure, a number of default names have been given. If they don't work for you, just change them. For that matter, Princess Valeria doesn't have to be a princess. If it works better for you to have her be the daughter of a duke, baron, or even the mayor of something, then do that. On the other hand, if you haven't already got a fixed setting in mind, you'll have enough information to work with to turn this into your own playground.

In part one, *The Black Knight*, it ultimately becomes the PC's job to rescue the Princess after she's abducted by the eponymous Black Knight. Of course, it won't be as easy as simply riding up to his castle and defeating him in single combat.

In part two, *The Witch of the Wild*, the characters have the opportunity to redeem the Black Knight, and maybe even redeem the witch, if they've the mind to.

It should be mentioned again that neither part directly relies on the other, so each one can be played by itself for a shorter adventure. However, they also tie in directly to each other, so the GM may run them in such a way as to tell a full story.

PART ONE: THE BLACK KNIGHT

The Black Knight *centers on the kidnapping of the King's only daughter and heir.*

The characters happen to be staying at a roadhouse where Princess Valeria is taking refuge for the night. As a result, they're on hand when brigands attack the place and abduct the Princess. The surviving knight of her retinue, Sir Marlon, sends the characters to report to the King, while he follows the kidnapers in an effort to recover the Princess.

Along the way to the castle, several more knights reaffirm the characters' mission before heading after Sir Marlon to assist him in the rescue, should he need it. This is at least until the characters run into the wizard, Zeledon, who warns the characters that Valeria is still in peril. The knights who have gone after her have all fallen because they are lacking the proper protection to stand against the Black Knight.

Zeledon sends the characters to the Cairn of the Green Man, an ancient and dangerous place, but a place where they can acquire the Green Man's armor, which will be useful against the powers being brought to bear by the Black Knight. Once they

have the armor, they can rescue the Princess and collect the reward now being offered by the King.

The characters set off to find the Sacred Grove where the Green Man's Cairn lies, and (hopefully) defeat all the dangers in their way. The final barrier proves to be the Green Man himself, but with his defeat, the characters have the armor they're looking for.

From there, the characters can set out directly for the Black Knight's fortress, and confront him. Or at least his minions. The Black Knight has a powerful minion (a gift from the Witch of the Wild, though the characters aren't likely to know that at this time), and it's only if they can defeat it that they can gain the fame, glory, and reward they are after.

ACT I: A ROYAL MESS

It all starts in a roadhouse; one the characters have stopped at to take refuge for the night. For such an out-of-the-way place, it's unusually crowded: soldiers, servants, and even a couple of knights have filled up the common room.

You can spend as much or as little time as desired (or the players are comfortable with) letting the characters mingle with the guests or use their Streetwise skills to try and dig up information about what's going on. If a character succeeds at a Streetwise roll, he learns that "someone important" is staying at the roadhouse; on a Raise, he learns that it's Princess Valeria.

With a successful Common Knowledge roll, a character knows that Princess Valeria is the daughter of King Turian; on a Raise he also knows Valeria is Turian's *only* child, and stands to inherit the throne and pass the Kingship on to whomever she marries. If a character manages *two* Raises, he's heard that, while Valeria has many suitors, she hasn't taken a serious interest in any of them.

The *real* action doesn't start until everyone's asleep...

HERE'S AN IDEA...

You can use any old roadside tavern to fill the role of starting location, but if you happened to pick up issue 2 of *Savage Insider Premium*, you've got a ready-to-use roadhouse in the form of the *Fox and Brew*. The princess is staying in the Private Room, the knight and several servants have the Little Room, and the remaining soldiers and staff have the Big Room. The characters are forced to camp out in the Pantry, but Grey could probably be persuaded to give them a free meal to make up for it.

Scene 1: Roadhouse Rumble

The characters wake up to the sounds of yelling, screaming, and fighting. They have just enough time to scabble for their weapons—there's not enough time to armor up—before a bunch of goblins (two per character) burst through the door(s) into wherever the characters are sleeping.

Ideally, the fight takes long enough that the bad guys have time to get away with the Princess. However, when it comes to combats and plots, things seldom go 'ideally'. If the characters manage to wade through the goblins too easily, you can throw another wave at them (2 per Character). If they push through those, throw a wave of orcs at them (1 per Character).

Do this on an individual basis. For example, if one character finishes off both his goblins, throw two more at him. If he finishes off those two, throw an orc at him. Meanwhile, the rest of the group can fight at their own ability.

Note: *You can use this to gauge the effective strength of the group and adjust any future encounters accordingly. If they can walk all over a bunch of goblins, turn all future goblin encounters into orcs.*

Another way to slow the characters down is to divert them. If they break through the goblins and start rushing to where they believe the Princess to be (assuming they learned about her), have them spot one of the roadhouse staff being threatened by more goblins (or orcs). Be sure to give a Benny to any character who stops to help.

After the characters defeat their opponents, or 6 rounds pass (whichever comes first), there's a sound like a thunder clap, and the building trembles. Any remaining enemies immediately withdraw and disappear into the darkness of the countryside.

It seems the fight is over, and the characters soon learn the enemy got what it came for.

GOBLINS (3 PER CHARACTER)

These are generic goblins, so you can use the stats found in the Savage Worlds core rules.

ORCS (1 PER CHARACTER)

These are generic orcs, so you can use the stats found in the Savage Worlds core rules.

Scene 2: A Matter of Honor

Once the worst of the fighting is over, the characters and the other survivors can take stock of the situation. There's one surviving knight, Sir Marlon. Any other knights, as well as all of the soldiers, are dead (as well as any random Extras you think might have perished in the carnage).

There is a hole in the wall of the Princess's room. It shouldn't take a high Smarts to realize this has something to do with the explosion they heard and felt earlier. Any character wishing to investigate a little more can attempt a Notice roll. With a Success, he can tell that something actually blew the wall out. It's tough to discern much else about it with the available information.

However, the shields and banner of the attacking force leave no doubt as to who was behind this heinous act: the Black Knight.

Little is really known about the mysterious Black Knight—even a Common Knowledge roll only reveals that he's evil and wears black armor. A Raise adds the idea that he's a fallen knight of the Realm.

If someone has an appropriate Knowledge skill (like History, although Arcana with a -2 modifier will do in a pinch), they can attempt a skill roll using it instead. In that case, a Success allows the character to remember that the Black Knight was originally a knight named Sir Tarquin. According to the story, he went mad one day and slaughtered everyone in his holding before burning it to the ground; then he rode into the mountains and gathered a horde of evil minions. With a Raise, the character has also heard something about Sir Tarquin having been cursed for some evil or another.

It's possible (even likely) that the characters will want to set out in pursuit of Princess Valeria at this point. Sir Marlon forbids it, however. He points out that word must be taken back to King Turian about what transpired at the roadhouse and, as a Lord of the Realm, orders the characters to fulfill that task.

On the off chance that one of the characters happens to be a Noble, Sir Marlon appeals to the character's sense of honor, insisting it's *his* duty to go after the Black Knight—after all, the Princess was supposed to be under his protection.

Sir Marlon commandeers a local woodsman (*not* one of the characters) to help him track the Black Knight back to his stronghold, and sets off almost immediately.

Scene 3: Chance Encounters

Ideally, the characters accept Sir Marlon's charge to take word back to the King, however it's no major problem if they choose to forge ahead on their own—either way, you just have to put the next couple of encounters in front of them; either on the road to the Royal City, or on the trail to the Black Knight's Fortress.

Encounter 1: If the characters choose to head straight to the Black Knight's Fortress, feel free to toss more goblins and orcs at them; otherwise, their journey should be relatively peaceful (although there's no reason they can't run into other random

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

As stated before, this adventure has been designed to be dropped into the setting of your choice with as little hassle as possible. For this reason, most of the place names have been left 'generic'—as descriptions rather than specific names. However, if you don't have any specific names in mind, you can use 'Highdramer' as the Royal City and 'Wolfcrag' as the Black Knight's Fortress. These are locations that exist in the same world as the Barony of Foxwood, where the Fox and Brew Roadhouse can be found.

encounters of the GM's devising). The first 'real' encounter they should have is with other knights, either on the road or at inns along the way. Ultimately, there are two: Sir Bayard and Sir Garland, if names are needed.

Both knights ask for news and, either from the characters or through local rumor, they should learn of the Black Knight's attack and the abduction of Princess Valeria. In both cases, the knights either reaffirm to the characters the duty given them by Sir Marlon, or strongly suggest they should turn around and head to the Royal City to alert the King as to what's happened. Then they quickly set out in an effort to rescue the Princess. Most of this can be role-played out as there's nothing new to be learned yet, and neither knight is going to give in to another course of action.

Encounter 2: The next encounter is really more of an event:

If the characters have done as asked and headed toward the Royal City, a messenger arrives at whatever inn they're staying at. He's obviously exhausted and has traveled fast and hard. After a quick, quiet word with the inn's proprietor, the messenger is told to sit as food and drink are brought to him.

Either by talking to the messenger (which requires a successful Persuasion roll) or the innkeeper (which requires a successful Streetwise roll), the characters learn that all three knights—Sir Marlon, Sir Bayard, and Sir Garland—have been killed in their quest against the Black Knight, as have several other knights who'd taken on the quest. The messenger is riding hard to get back to the Royal City and alert the King.

At this point, the characters can toss a few coins at the messenger (or simply try to Persuade him) to deliver their own message—obviously he's headed the way they're going anyway. Of course they'll have to think quickly to do this, as the messenger (call him Lyle, if you really need a name) will leave with a fresh horse after just a few hours of sleep.

If the characters have *not* done as asked and are headed toward the Black Knight's Fortress, they can attempt a Notice roll.

If successful, they see a cloud of crows in the distance and can follow it to where the body of one of the knights lies ravaged. This happens three times: once for Sir Garland, once for Sir Bayard, and once for Sir Marlon.

Even if they Fail the Notice roll, the characters still find the bodies, but only by stumbling across where they're being torn apart by wolves. The characters have a fight on their hands in this case:

WOLVES (3 PER CHARACTER)

These are generic wolves, so you can use the Dog/Wolf stats found in the Savage Worlds core rules.

The bodies are too badly mauled to allow an easy autopsy, although a Raise on a Healing roll (made for each body) reveals the knight was badly burned.

Regardless of which way the characters were originally going, they're likely to have some questions at this point—and possibly even the desire to reevaluate their course of action. Fortunately, the final fixed encounter should give them direction.

Encounter 3: As the characters travel (whichever way they're going), they see an old man sitting on a rock in the shade of a tree. He's smoking a pipe, and a gnarled wooden staff leans against the rock next to him. A pony munches grass nearby. The man appears to be a ragged old traveler, except he addresses the characters by name.

This is Zeledon—which he'll tell them if they bother to ask. He's a powerful wizard and, in the past, he's served as a councilor to kings—which he *won't* tell them, whether they bother to ask or not.

Zeledon informs the characters they could have a greater role in events than they realize, and through the course of conversation he reveals the following information:

- King Turian is growing anxious about the fate of both his daughter and the Kingdom—Sir Marlon, Sir Bayard, and Sir Garland aren't the only knights to have fallen in the effort to rescue Princess Valeria.
- In fact, King Turian is willing to offer the hand of his daughter in marriage to any hero able to free her from the clutches of the Black Knight. Of course, Zeledon points out this may be subject to the whims of the Princess—especially if there is more than one 'eligible' hero—but whoever she marries stands to be the next king.
- The other knights have failed—and died—because they lack something needed to accomplish the task: the Armor of the Green Man. This armor would be better protection than normal armor against the power the Black Knight currently has his disposal.

- The Armor of the Green Man was buried with him in his cairn. The Spirit of the Green Man protects the cairn, but if the characters are true to themselves and stout of heart, they should be able to win and acquire the Armor.
- The Green Man was an Elven King of old. As far as Zeledon is concerned, the story of the Green Man is immaterial to what the characters are doing other than the fact his armor will be useful to them.

Zeledon can give the characters directions on how to get to the Green Man's Cairn. They must travel to the Sacred Grove within the Heart of the Wood.

If the characters express curiosity as to why Zeledon is helping them, he states cryptically, "You have a destiny upon you. Or not. Heed or don't heed my suggestion... It's entirely up to you."

Then he taps out the ash from his pipe, takes his staff, mounts the pony, and begins riding in the opposite direction than the characters are headed.

The characters shouldn't fight Zeledon, but if you need to make any rolls for him, here's his stats:



ZELEDON, LEGENDARY WIZARD

Zeledon is largely a McGuffin in the finest tradition of wizard mentors. He can be used to dispense information or put the characters back on the right track. He won't get involved in their quests under any circumstances. As he would put it, "My time to be a hero has long since passed. Far be it for me to steal your thunder and diminish your glory."

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (2); **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Notice d10, Spellcasting d12+2, Stealth d6

Gear: Pony, traveling robes

Armor: Ring of Stoneskin (+2 Armor)

Weapons: Wizard's Staff (Str+d4+1, 2 Hands, Reach 1)

Hindrances: Elderly

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Connections, Improved Rapid Recharge, Master (Spellcasting), New Power, Power Points, Professional (Spellcasting), Wizard

Powers: *armor, blast, bolt, detect/conceal arcana, dispel, fly, light, puppet, and teleport.*

ACT II: THE SACRED GROVE

At this point, the characters should be heading toward the Great Forest in an effort to find the Heart of the Wood and the Green Man's Cairn. If they decide to ignore the wizard and simply strike out after the Black Knight, let them. Just don't cut them any slack when the final confrontation comes around.

WHICH WOOD?

You can use any name for the forest where the Sacred Grove lies—in fact "The Great Forest" is nicely generic if you don't already have a name. Or you can use the Fox Wood, which gives the Barony of Foxwood its name.

...OR NOT

Rynion of the Bough and his history are purely conveniences to tie the story together. If you have a better elf (or any king with strong ties to nature), don't feel constrained by the text here. For that matter, if you'd prefer a more amicable relationship between ancient elves and humans, you can simply claim that Rynion (or whoever) aided the human Kingdoms in a war against... whatever works for you.

The characters might also be interested in knowing more about the Green Man. In this case, Common Knowledge won't reveal a lot—just the fact he was some sort of ancient elven king and had something to do with a big war. On a Raise, he also knows the Green Man was supposed to wield powerful magic.

A character with Knowledge (History) can make a roll with a (-2) penalty. With a Success, he knows the Green Man is the epithet given to Rynion of the Bough, an elven chieftain who led the elves in a war against the humans a long time ago—Rynion only failed because the human tribes were able to put aside their differences long enough to band together and form an alliance with the dwarves. With a Raise, the character also knows Rynion was said to have several magic items—including a sword, a bow, and armor—although the knowledge of their exact properties has been lost with time.

Scene 1: Journey to the Forest

The trip to the Great Forest is pretty straightforward, and can take as long (or as short) a time as seems appropriate. The journey can be spiced up a bit with some random encounters—for every day of travel (assume that the trip won't take more than two weeks or less than one) draw a card; on a Club there's an encounter:

CARD RANK	ENCOUNTER
2 or 3	Wolves (3 per Character); stats can be found in the <i>Savage Worlds</i> rules.
4 or 5	Bandits (1 per Character); see below for stats.
6 or 7	Goblins (2 per Character); stats can be found in the <i>Savage Worlds</i> rules.
8 or 9	Orcs (1 per Character); stats can be found in the <i>Savage Worlds</i> rules.

10 or Jack	Ogres (1 per 2 Characters); stats can be found in the <i>Savage Worlds</i> rules.
Queen or King	Trolls (1 per 2 Characters); stats can be found in the <i>Savage Worlds</i> rules.
Ace or Joker	Draw two more cards and use the Ranks to determine the encounter (by combining the results). Additional Aces can result in more draws if they come up again. If any of the cards drawn is a Joker, draw again, but there is only one of what is indicated by the new card and it's a Wild Card.

BANDITS (1 PER CHARACTER)

Generally ragged, dirty, and of low moral character, bandits are outlaws and get what they want or need by waylaying travelers they perceive as being rich or weak. Generally they try to flee if they lose more than half their number.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1); **Charisma:** -2

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean

Armor: Leather armor (+1), medium shield (+1 Parry; +2 Armor vs Ranged)

Weapons: Short sword (Str+d6), bow (12/24/48; 2d6)

If playing out the journey to the forest, the characters should arrive at a roadhouse or small village at the end of their first week of travel so they can rest, re-provision, or take care of anything else they need to at that point.

Their next stop is the forest itself.

Scene 2: Heart of the Wood

According to Zeledon, the Green Man's Cairn should be located in a Sacred Grove called 'the Heart of the Wood'. The trick is *finding* it.

The good news is the Heart is powerful, and anyone who opens his mind to it can sense that power. What this amounts to is something akin to a Dramatic Task: the characters must make a series of group Spirit rolls with no penalty, gaining 1 token if they make a Success or 2 tokens if they get a Raise. On a Critical Fumble by the person leading the group roll, the characters lose 2 tokens. Once the characters have gained 10 tokens, they reach the Heart of the Wood.

However, after each group Spirit roll—unless the characters have made it to the Heart of the Wood—draw a card to see what they run into and have to deal with. Each encounter can only happen once. If the same number is drawn again, redraw until a new encounter arises.

[2] Light Woods and Thickets: The tree growth here is thin enough to allow some sunlight through and, as a result, there is a lot of thick brush and undergrowth. Unfortunately, this is the sort of place wild boars like to live. If all of the characters can make successful Stealth rolls, they can avoid an encounter. Otherwise they've disturbed a wild boar and must fight it. If the characters kill it, they can use its meat to substitute for a day of rations.

**WILD BOAR**

This Boar is big and mean and doesn't like anyone encroaching on its territory. It fights until dead.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Special Abilities:

- **Berserk:** When a boar is Shaken, it goes berserk. It gains +2 to all Fighting and Strength rolls and its Toughness, but its Parry is reduced by 2.
- **Gore:** If a boar can charge at least 6" before attacking, it adds +4 to damage.
- **Tusks:** Str+d4

[3] Light Woods and Flowers: The tree growth here is thin enough to allow some sunlight through, and there are lots of wildflowers growing in the area, fed by a small brook that burbles nearby. Unfortunately, a pack of wolves has learned to hunt here for any creatures that come to drink from the water. If a character can make a successful Tracking roll, he finds signs of a wolf kill, and the characters can leave before they run into any trouble—otherwise, they must fight the wolves.

WOLVES (3 PER CHARACTER)

*These are generic wolves, so you can use the Dog/Wolf stats found in the *Savage Worlds* core rules.*

[4] Light Woods and Rills: The tree growth here is thin enough to allow some sunlight through, and the area is riddled with small streams and high rills. Unfortunately, one hillock holds a cave that has become the lair for a huge, old bear. If a character can make a successful Tracking roll, he finds signs of the bear, and the characters may leave the area before they run into trouble—otherwise, they must fight the bear.

**BEAR**

*This Bear uses the stats found in the *Savage Worlds* core rules, except that it's a Wild Card. If it takes more than 2 Wounds, it attempts to flee to its lair.*

[5] Light Woods and Glade: The tree growth here is thin enough to allow some sunlight through as the characters emerge in a narrow glade. Unfortunately, a small band of centaurs considers this glade to be their territory, and approach

the characters almost immediately with readied spears and drawn bows. The characters can enter into a Social Conflict to persuade (or cajole) the centaurs into leaving them be. If none of the characters speak the Sylvan tongue, they can still make their rolls with a (-2) penalty (using hand gestures and pantomimes). If the characters don't achieve at least 1 token, the centaurs attack, otherwise they let the characters leave in peace. If the characters earn at least 3 tokens, the centaurs also direct the characters toward the Heart of the Wood—give them an extra token to that end. If the characters get 5 or more tokens, the centaurs also offer them hospitality, allowing them to rest and buy provisions.

CENTAURS (1 PER CHARACTER)

These centaurs come from one of several bands that inhabit the Great Forest. They aren't particularly hostile, nor are they friendly to outsiders. If more than half their number is killed, they flee—although the characters should be on the lookout for their return... with reinforcements!

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (1)

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d8

Gear: Treasure worth 1d10 x \$10

Armor: Leather armor (+1)

Weapons: Spear (Str+d6, reach 1, 2 hands), bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6)

Special Abilities:

- **Fleet-Footed:** Centaurs roll a d8 when running instead of a d6.
- **Hooves:** Str+d4
- **Size +2:** Centaurs are the same size as riding horses.

[6] Heavy Woods and Hillocks: The tree growth here is thick—even during the day characters suffer penalties for Dim Lighting—and the ground is hilly and rocky. Unfortunately, a coven of hags is living in a nearby cave, preying on anyone (or anything) foolish enough to venture this far into the forest. If any character gets a Success on a Notice roll, he smells their foul stench; with a Raise, he also sees the gleam of their eyes in the dark trees, watching. The hags don't attack if they're noticed; otherwise they attack with Surprise (and possibly even The Drop). If the characters know the hags are there, they can choose to leave—although they lose 1 token—or attack.

HAGS (1 PER 2 CHARACTERS)

These hags are hideous and ugly—they're also the harem of the troll that dwells in the forest, and if the characters have killed him in a previous encounter, the hags gain a +1 to their Fighting and Damage rolls. In any case, they fight to the death.

Attr: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6; **Charisma:** -2

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d12, Spellcasting d10, Taunt d8

Gear: Treasure worth 1d10 x \$100

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d6
- **Fear:** Anyone seeing a hag must succeed at a Spirit roll or suffer the effects of Fright.
- **Spells:** Hags have 20 Power Points and know the following spells: *armor*, *boost/lower trait*, *fear*, *obscure*, *puppet*, and *quickness*.

[7] Heavy Woods and Glade: The tree growth here is thick—even during the day characters suffer penalties for Dim Lighting—although there's a small glade surrounding a large oak tree where the sunlight penetrates brightly. This glade and tree, however, belong to a dryad named Shen. Any character that specifically looks for something may make a Notice roll opposed by Shen's Stealth d10 to realize the dryad is hiding, but watching. She won't fight unless she must, in which case she animates her tree, but if the characters truly need her help (and succeed at a Persuasion roll) she comes forward to assist. She knows little of the forest beyond her glade, but can offer some suggestions (+1 to the next Spirit roll to get to the Heart of the Wood).



DRYAD (SHEN)

Shen is generally shy and peaceful, and tries to stay out of sight and out of the way when strangers come around.

The only way to really provoke her is to attack either her or her tree. Like most dryads, Shen is willing to help good travelers in need, but she fights to the death to protect her tree.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5; **Charisma:** +2

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d10

Special Abilities:

- **Animate Tree:** Shen may animate her tree as a war tree (see below). This costs 20 Power Points and has a fixed duration of 1 hour.
- **Attractive:** Shen resembles an attractive human female with a green tint to her skin.
- **Magic:** Shen has 30 Power Points and knows the following powers: *armor*, *barrier*, *beast friend*, *deflection*, *entangle*, *healing*, *shape change*, and *stun*.
- **Tree Bond:** Shen shares her soul with her oak tree. She must remain within 36" of the tree or her magic doesn't work. If the tree dies or becomes unhealthy, so does Shen (and vice versa).

**SHEN'S OAK**

The Oak Tree, if animated, fights on Shen's behalf—although it's not a sentient being itself.

Attr: Agility d4, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+6, Vigor d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 19 (4)

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** Thick bark.
- **Branch Swipe:** Str+d6; Reach 1
- **Huge:** Attackers are +4 to attack rolls against Shen's Oak due to its size.
- **Plant:** Plants are not subject to Fear or Tests of will.
- **Size +8:** Shen's Oak is over 40 ft. tall.
- **Stomp:** Str+d10. Non-rigid armor offers no protection against this attack.
- **Sweep, Improved:** Shen's Oak can attack all adjacent foes at no penalty.
- **Weakness (Fire):** Fire attacks cause +4 damage.

[8] Heavy Woods and Pond: The tree growth here is thick—even during the day characters suffer penalties for Dim Lighting—although some sunlight shines where a small stream bubbles down a tumble of rocks into a forest pond. Unfortunately, a group of naiads claim this pond as their own and don't take kindly to a band interlopers barging in on their play. They aren't naturally hostile, however, and the characters can attempt a group Persuasion roll to avoid a confrontation. With a Success, the characters can rest and refill their canteens; with a Raise, the naiads help direct the characters on their quest (+2 to the next Spirit roll to get to the Heart of the Wood).

NAIADS (2 PER CHARACTER)

These forest nymphs mostly like to frolic and play. Think of them sort of like river otters, only more attractive and much more dangerous if provoked. Generally they avoid a direct fight, but if their pond is threatened, they fight to the death.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5; **Charisma:** +2

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d10, Swimming d10

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Naiads have a Pace of 10 underwater.
- **Attractive:** Naiads resemble beautiful human females.
- **Magic:** Naiads have 30 Power Points and know the following powers: *barrier*, *beast friend* (aquatic only), *entangle*, *healing*, *invisibility*, *shape change* (aquatic only) and *stun*.
- **Pool Bond:** Naiads share their soul with a particular pool or similar small body of water. They must remain within 36" of the water or her magic doesn't work. If

the pool becomes polluted, the naiad must make a Vigor roll every day or gain a level of Fatigue until the taint is cleansed.

[9] Heavy Woods and Wildflowers: The tree growth here is thick—even during the day characters suffer penalties for Dim Lighting—and a number of wildflowers grow neatly between the trees, almost as if arranged that way. Unfortunately, this is the camp of a clan of forest elves, and they don't appreciate interlopers... especially *human* interlopers. A number of elves step into the clearing with drawn swords and bows. The characters can enter into a Social Conflict to persuade (or cajole) the elves into leaving them be. Unless the characters have at least one elf among them, all of the rolls, regardless of the skill used, are made with a (-2) penalty. If the characters don't achieve at least 1 token (or if they mention their quest to reach the Cairn of the Green Man), the elves attack, otherwise they let the characters leave in peace, although they're likely to shadow the characters unless they earned at least 3 tokens. If the characters get 5 or more tokens, the elves offer them hospitality, allowing them to rest and buy provisions.

FOREST ELVES (3 PER CHARACTER)

These elves, like many of their kin, have withdrawn into the forests of the land and shun any contact with outsiders. While they aren't exactly 'enemies', they're not friendly to most non-elves. This band, in particular, counts itself as descended from the Green Man (whom they call Rynion the Radiant), and don't take kindly to any desecration of his Cairn.

Attr: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1); **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Cautious

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Marksman, Woodsman

Gear: Treasure equal to 1d10 x \$10 per character

Armor: Leather Armor (+1)

Weapons: Short sword (Str+d6), longbow (15/30/60; 2d6)

Special Abilities:

- **Low Light Vision:** Elves ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

[10] Heavy Woods and Cairn: The tree growth here is thick—even during the day characters suffer penalties for Dim Lighting—and in the twilight is a huge stone cairn. Unfortunately, this isn't the cairn the characters are looking for (many dead have been laid to rest in the trees and hills of the Great Forest), but is one that a troll has chosen as its lair. If any character gains a Success on a Notice roll, he smells a foul stench and hears ragged breathing. If any characters get a Raise on the Notice roll, the group can choose to withdraw from the area.

hough they lose 1 token—or attack. Otherwise, the troll attacks with Surprise (and The Drop on anyone who failed the Notice roll).



TROLL

This troll uses the stats found in the Savage Worlds core rules, except that it's a Wild Card. The hags that live in the forest are its harem, and if the characters have killed all of them in a previous encounter, the troll fights as if Berserk (as per the Edge, but no activation is necessary). If the troll takes more than 2 Wounds, it attempts to escape and flee... unless it's Berserk, in which case it fights to the death.

[J] Dense Woods and Fungus: The tree growth here is very thick—even during the day characters suffer penalties for Darkness—and the dark, damp conditions have created a perfect place for large mushrooms and mosses to grow. Fortunately, there is a ranger passing through the area, harvesting useful ingredients. He gives his name as Orin, and as long as the characters don't provoke him, he's willing to talk. A Success on a Persuasion roll makes him Friendly, and he'll try to aid or assist the characters (as long as they can offer something in return); a Raise makes him Helpful, and he'll help the characters in return for nothing. This includes healing, provisions, and even directions (+1 to the next Spirit roll to get to the Heart of the Wood).



ORIN

Orin is a typical Ranger (if there's such a thing), although he likes to keep well away from civilization. This is why he's deep in the Great Forest picking moss and mushrooms.

That and he's fond of a young alchemist, Rowena, who needs the ingredients for her potions. She lives in a town not too far from the forest, and Orin stays there when he's not 'ranging'.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1); **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Healing d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Hindrances: Code of Honor

Edges: Beast Master, Woodsman

Gear: 3 healing potions worth \$150 each

Armor: Leather Armor (+1)

Weapons: Short sword (Str+d6), longbow (15/30/60; 2d6)

[Q] Dense Woods and Vines: The tree growth here is very thick—even during the day characters suffer penalties for Darkness—and a dense tangle of vines inhibits forward progress. Unfortunately, those aren't vines, but rather spider webs! This part of the forest serves as a nest for a cluster of giant spiders. If a character can make a successful Tracking roll (or an appropriate Knowledge skill, like 'Nature'), he can alert the group to the danger and they can either go in prepared or backtrack to avoid it (which costs them 1 token). Otherwise, once the characters are caught in the midst of the webs, the giant spiders attack.

GIANT SPIDERS (2 PER CHARACTER)

These are generic giant spiders, so you can use the stats found in the Savage Worlds core rules under "Spider, Giant".



[K] Dense Woods and Creek: The tree growth here is very thick—even during the day characters suffer penalties for Darkness—and a trickling stream of water runs through the area like a delicate tracery. Unfortunately, this ancient grove belongs to the treemen, a race of sentient trees. It's unlikely any of the characters will be aware of the treemen (if a character is actively looking for something, he can roll Notice opposed by the treeman Stealth d6+4—rolled as a group)—unless the characters are brandishing axes or fire. In that case, the treemen move in on the characters, and unless they can win a Social Conflict, they're in for a fight. Treat the Social Conflict identically to the elves **[9]** unless the characters manage to encounter the treemen *without* provoking them with axes or fire, in which case treat it identically to the centaurs **[5]** and assume the treemen speak a form of the Common Tongue.

TREEMAN (1 PER CHARACTER)

The treemen consider themselves the shepherds of the forest—only they tend to trees rather than sheep. For the most part, they're peaceful and quiet, but if they are exposed to axes or fire they get their dander up pretty quick. If they're fighting an enemy who wields either axe or fire, they fight to the death. Otherwise they attempt to retreat if more than half their number is destroyed.

Attr: Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+6, Vigor d12+1

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 21 (2)

Skills: Fighting d10, Stealth d6

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Thick bark.
- **Camouflage:** When a treeman isn't moving or attacking it looks just like a normal tree. It adds +4 to Stealth rolls.
- **Gargantuan:** Heavy Armor. Attackers are +4 to attack rolls against Treemen due to their size. Treemen's attacks are Heavy Weapons. Add size to damage when using the Stomp attack.
- **Lashing Branches:** Str+d10; Reach 6
- **Powers:** Treemen have 25 Power Points and know *beast friend* and *entangle*.
- **Size +11:** Treemen are over 100 ft. tall.
- **Stomp:** Str+d10. Non-rigid armor offers no protection against this attack.
- **Sweep, Improved:** Treemen can attack all adjacent foes at no penalty.
- **Weakness (Fire):** Fire attacks cause +4 damage.

[A] Dense Woods and Rocky Hillock: The tree growth here is very thick—even during the day characters suffer penalties for Darkness—and the trees are twisted, blackened, and burned all

around a rock-strewn hill. Unfortunately, this is where a drake makes its lair. The characters can make a group Common Knowledge roll to determine their course of action. If they get a Success, they realize what they're looking at, and may choose to attack the drake or leave (losing 1 token); on a Raise, they can attack the drake with Surprise. If the roll is a Failure, the drake smells the characters and comes out—they have no choice but to fight; a Critical Failure allows the drake to attack with Surprise.



DRAKE

This is a standard Drake, so you can use the stats in the Savage Worlds core rules. Additionally, in its lair is 1d10 x \$500 in coins and jewelry, as well as a single magic item. This issue of Savage Insider has a few listed, or choose one from another source.

[Joker] Standing Stones on a Grass-Covered Hill: The Forest gives way to a glade dominated by a grassy rise covered with several menhirs. A unicorn stands in the middle of the stones and watches the characters patiently. Have them make a group Persuasion roll (they get a +2 if the Leader is female; +4 if she happens to be a virgin). For every Success and Raise, the characters gain a token—there is no maximum on the number of tokens that can be gained through Raises in this case—as the unicorn beckons to the characters and leads them toward the Heart of the Wood. If the roll is a Failure, the unicorn simply leaves, disappearing quickly into the dark forest around the hillock.



UNICORN

It's white, seems to give off its own light, and looks like a horse with a golden horn. The unicorn can theoretically heal any characters in need of it—although the characters need a Raise or better for it to do so. The characters also shouldn't be fighting the unicorn, but you never know with players...

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d12, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8

Special Abilities:

- **Fleet-Footed:** Unicorns roll a d8 when running instead of a d6.
- **Force of Good:** Unicorns add +2 to damage when attacking supernatural evil foes, and have +2 Toughness when suffering damage from such creatures.
- **Healing:** A unicorn can cast *healing* and *greater healing* by touching its horn to a target and making a Spirit roll. It has 40 Power Points. If cut from a unicorn, the horn still retains these powers, however the person

responsible for removing the horn is cursed by the gods with boils and warts, giving them -4 to Charisma.

- **Kick:** Str+d6
- **Size +2**

Scene 3: The Green Man's Cairn

Once the characters have received 10 tokens, they find their way to the Heart of the Wood, where the Green Man's Cairn lies.

The dark forest gives way to a glade, where a stream trickles past the remains of the Cairn. The dolmen that formed the Cairn is partially exposed where the stream has eroded the grass and dirt, and the whole place reeks of power.

Nothing happens until the characters approach the opening of the tomb. At that point, a voice issues from the darkness, speaking in an archaic form of Elven: *"Comest not closer, lest thou be consumed by thy greed. Take heed all of ye."*

Assuming the characters aren't dissuaded by these words, the Green Man and his entourage attack.



THE GREEN MAN (RYNION OF THE BOUGH)

The Green Man doesn't care what purpose the characters might be about—he simply wishes to fight and destroy (especially humans), and he'll do so until he's dead. It's obvious this creature was once an elf, but has now become a wight.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 12 (3/2)

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d10

Gear: Treasure worth 1d10 x \$1,000 in the Cairn in coins and jewelry

Armor: The Green Man's Armor (laminated wooden bands over silk—think samurai armor; +3 Armor/+2 Armor if an attacker hits with a Raise; grants an additional +2 Armor versus electrical attacks and arrows)

Weapons: The Green Man's Sword (resembles a katana with a leaf motif; Str+d6+3; +1 to Fighting, +1 Parry), The Green Man's Bow (15/30/60; 2d6+1; +1 Shooting)

Special Abilities:

- **Bony Claws:** Str+d6
- **Fear -2:** Character's who see the Green Man for the first time must make a Spirit roll at -2.
- **Fearless:** The Green Man is immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Poison:** A Wight's claws have a nasty poison. Anyone Wounded by them must make a Vigor roll at (-2). Success means the target is at (-1) to all actions for the next 24 hours. Failure results in immediate Incapacitation and death in 2d6 rounds.

- **Quick:** The Green Man redraws any Initiative cards under 6.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to remove Shaken status; Immune to Poison and disease; Takes no extra damage from called shots, and doesn't suffer from Wound penalties.

RYNION'S GUARD (2 PER CHARACTER)

These warriors were loyal to Rynion in life, and they remain so in death. They fight until destroyed.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Gear: Each Wight has treasure worth 1d10 x \$500 in coins and jewelry in the Cairn

Armor: Chainmail (+2)

Weapons: Long Sword (Str+d8)

Special Abilities:

- **Bony Claws:** Str+d4
- **Fearless:** Wights are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Poison:** A Wight's claws have a nasty poison. Anyone Wounded by them must make a Vigor roll at (-2). Success means the target is at (-1) to all actions for the next 24 hours. Failure results in immediate Incapacitation and death in 2d6 rounds.
- **Quick:** Wights redraw any Initiative cards under 6.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to remove Shaken status; Immune to Poison and disease; Takes no extra damage from called shots, and doesn't suffer from Wound penalties.

If the characters win the day, they may freely claim the Green Man's Armor, as well as any other treasure they wish to loot. However, if they ran afoul of any elves earlier in the journey, they may have more to worry about now as well.

The journey out of the forest can be as detailed as desired, although it shouldn't take as long since the characters aren't searching for a specific location—just the edge of the wood. For a mechanical effect, simply allow the characters to backtrack themselves with a successful Tracking roll (although they'll need to be on the watch for any encounters they didn't resolve), or they can find their way out in the same way they came in, but only requiring 5 tokens to accomplish (the same encounter draws can be used).

Once the characters have left the Great Forest, it's a simple enough matter for them to strike out in the direction of the Black Knight's Fortress once more.

NO BLACK KNIGHT?

The reason the Black Knight isn't in his fortress is so he can be redeemed in Part 2. If he were at the fortress, odds are the characters would attack—and possibly kill—him. If you don't plan on running the next part, you can go ahead and have him at the fortress for the characters to have some closure and a sense of accomplishment. In that case, the Black Knight's stats can be found at the end of Part 2. Or you could save him as a recurring villain for later on.

ACT III: THE BLACK KNIGHT'S FORTRESS

This part of the adventure is much more straightforward than the previous. Hopefully the characters went and got the Green Man's Armor, because from here they simply have to approach the mountain fortress of the Black Knight, and pretty much fight everything in their way.

The trek to the Black Knight's Fortress should take two or three weeks (depending on from where the characters start). At this point, any random encounters can be determined from the table in **Act II, Scene 1**.

The thing to bear in mind is that the Black Knight himself isn't there. Instead, he's left a lieutenant and a handful of subordinates to guard the Princess. In order to rescue her, the characters still need to act quickly and decisively.

Scene 1: Ascent Into Darkness

The Fortress of the Black Knight looms dark and ominous on a mountain bluff overlooking the valley. Once the characters reach it, they no longer have to contend with mere orcs and goblins. Now they must deal directly with the Black Knight's personal guards.

The first group of them is just outside the fortress gates, and attacks the characters when they approach, with no warning and no mercy. Unless the characters aren't wearing metal armor (note that the Green Man's Armor is *not* metal), they could be in a lot of trouble.

THE BLACK GUARDS (2 PER CHARACTER)

These fallen warriors are evil, one and all. They have foresworn their humanity to follow the Black Knight, and are willing to die for his cause.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 10 (3)

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Riding d8

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Improved Block, Improved Frenzy, and Level Headed

Gear: 1d10 x \$10

Armor: Enchanted black leather (+3 Armor, +2 Arcane resistance)

Weapons: Lightning Great Swords (Str+d8 damage unless they strike someone wearing metal armor, in which case they do Str+2d8 damage; if the swords hit with a Raise, the target must also make a Vigor roll or be (-2) Parry until his next action)

As soon as the last Black Guard falls, a chime sounds from atop the High Tower of the Fortress, followed by a sonorous chanting and the baleful glow of a black light. It should be obvious that some sort of ritual is taking place up there; the characters might be wise to get there before it's finished. However, they'll be fighting Black Guards all the way up.

This is a Dramatic Task in every sense of the words. Use the rules from *Savage Worlds* with the following considerations:

- Each round is a group Fighting roll, although only the leader must roll Fighting. Those supporting may use Shooting, Throwing, Spellcasting, or any other skill that seems appropriate, however all rolls suffer the same penalty as the lead roll (-2 in most cases/-4 on the draw of a Club). Characters may choose not to assist the roll if they're low on ammunition or Power Points and don't know how to fight, but they still suffer the damage effects.
- If the roll for the round results in a Raise or better, the group gets 2 tokens as normal. However, each character takes 2d4 damage; any character using Shooting loses 1d4 ammunition, while any character using powers loses 1d4 Power Points.
- If the roll for the round is a Success, the group gets 1 token as normal. However, each character takes 2d6 damage; any character using Shooting loses 1d6 ammunition, while any character using powers loses 1d6 Power Points.
- If the roll for the round is a Failure (on any suit other than Clubs), the characters gain no tokens and each one takes 2d8 damage; any character using Shooting loses 1d8 ammunition, while any character using powers loses 1d8 Power Points.
- If the roll for the round is a Critical Failure, or is a Failure on the draw of a Club, the characters suffer the same damage and effects as a normal Failure, but the ritual is also completed—the characters are too late to stop it. Move on to the next Scene.

Scene 2: The Black Knight's Lair

The scene that awaits the characters upon reaching the High Tower depends on their Success or Failure at the Dramatic Task above. In either case, the Princess lies on a purple couch, surrounded by scores of candles. She is pale, with her arms folded across her chest, and appears to be sleeping. She's actually in an enchanted slumber, and any character who's worried she's dead can make a Notice roll to realize her chest is slowly rising and falling as she breathes. Of more immediate import is the chamber's other occupant(s).

If the characters were successful at the Dramatic Task, they arrive in the High Tower to find a figure in black robes attempting to summon something into a summoning circle, dark energies playing about the room with an audible thrum. He breaks off the ritual to face the characters, and the energies dissipate; the room grows quiet. The wizard is *not* Zeledon, nor will he pause to parley with the characters—should they stop to question him, he uses the opportunity to cast *armor* on himself, then attacks.

If the characters failed at the Dramatic Task, there is another peal of a resonating chime as the Black Wizard finishes the ritual. Now, in addition to the other things in the room, a Demonic Knight bars the way, and the characters must fight it as well as the wizard (who has already cast *armor* on himself).

If the characters didn't even bother with the Dramatic Task and chose the slow way up, the Demonic Knight has also had the opportunity to summon reinforcements in the form of Demonic Footmen with a Raise, which means there are 2 per character!



THE BLACK WIZARD

All black robes and dark demeanor, this guy serves the Black Knight faithfully. He's keeping the Princess in an enchanted slumber, which is broken if the wizard dies. He won't surrender, although if he takes 3 Wounds he attempts to teleport away and escape.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 5; **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Notice d10, Spellcasting d12, Stealth d6

Hindrances: Overconfident

UNHEROIC HEROES

If, for some reason, you've got a group of characters who don't want to rush into the breach and face a Dramatic Task, you don't have to force them. Just let them fight five waves of Black Guards (1 per Character), and if they survive, they arrive on scene too late to stop the ritual. Move on to the next Scene as if they'd failed at the Dramatic Task.

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Connections, Improved Rapid Recharge, New Power, Power Points, Wizard

Powers: *armor, blast, bolt, damage field, dispel, havoc, stun, summon ally* (Sentinel), *teleport*; all have the electricity trapping; Power Points: 50 (10 from Ring of Power)

Gear: Ring of power (10 Power Points); Amulet of Deflection (+2 parry and -2 to be hit by ranged attacks); coins and jewelry worth 1d10 x \$1,000 in the chamber

Weapons: Staff of *electrical shock* (Str+d4; Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 Hands, +1d4 damage against metal armors)



DEMONIC KNIGHT

It's a demon that's a knight, all decked out in black armor. What more needs to be said? If it is killed, it dissipates back to wherever it came from.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 11 (3); **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Battle) d10, Riding d10

Special Abilities:

- **Arcane Resistance:** +2 Armor vs. damage-causing powers and +2 on Trait rolls to avoid resisted powers.
- **Armor +3:** Black plate armor with a full helm (horned, of course)
- **Bale Fire Great Sword:** Str+d10; Anyone struck by the weapon, whether hurt or not, has a chance of catching on fire.
- **Demon:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; Immune to poison and disease; Half damage from non-magical attacks except for cold iron.
- **Elite Soldier:** The Demonic Knight has access to the following Edges: Combat Reflexes, Improved Block, Improved Frenzy, and Level Headed.
- **Size +1**
- **Summon Reinforcements:** Once per day, the Demonic Knight can summon 1 Demonic Footman per character for each Success and Raise on a Spirit roll. These minions appear within 6" of the Knight.
- **Weakness (Cold Iron):** Demons take normal damage from cold iron weapons.

DEMONIC FOOTMEN (1 OR 2 PER CHARACTER)

These foul entities resemble soldiers with black holes for eyes and red blistered skin. They are utterly loyal to the Knight that summoned them, and fight to the 'death', at which point they dissipate into a puff of black mist.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7(2)

Skills: Fighting d6

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Black chain mail with conical helms.
- **Demon:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; Immune to poison and disease; Half damage from non-magical attacks except for cold iron.
- **Swords and Shields:** Demonic Footmen have medium shields (+1 Parry) and short swords (Str+d6).
- **Weakness (Cold Iron):** Demons take normal damage from cold iron weapons.

Scene 3: Happily Ever After...?

Should the characters kill the Black Wizard, the Princess awakens. This could be bad if they were forced to fight the Demon Knight and haven't finished it off, since the Princess is likely to panic and get herself hurt.

On the other hand, if the characters have emerged victorious, all the accolades are theirs. The King proclaims them Heroes of the Land, knights for those who desire it (treat as getting the Noble Edge, but with no extra money), and presents the Princess to marry *one* of the characters. Note that the Princess won't automatically be happy with this turn of events (unless one of the heroes is particularly handsome and charming), which could lead to an entirely different mess. Any characters

not marrying the Princess are gifted with coins, jewels, and gear worth up to \$5,000 each (yes, this can include magical items).

And what of the Black Knight? That remains to be explored by the characters later on (which can be done by continuing to Part Two if desired).

PART TWO: THE WITCH OF THE WILDS

The Witch of the Wilds *focuses on an attempt to find some sort of 'cure' for the Black Knight.*

While the characters are on the road, they encounter the wizard, Zeledon, who has another quest for them—if they're interested.

The wizard sends the characters after the Chalice of Divinity, which can be used to restore a cursed Knight Errant, now known as the Black Knight, to his right mind and spirit. The dangers are very real, but removing the Black Knight from the picture (in one way or another) would ensure more security in the Realm.

The characters must travel to where the chalice lies, wrest it from the dragon that guards it, and then take the chalice to where the Black Knight currently is: guarding the lair of the Witch. This means they must get past any other guardians, and then somehow administer a drink from the chalice to the Black Knight.

It may not be as easy as it sounds.

**MORE OPTIONS**

This part of the adventure assumes the characters have played through *The Black Knight*, but it's not necessary that they do so. If you want to run it separately, it doesn't require any real changes—just have the wizard (Zeledon) approach the characters for his own reasons. Also, the Witch of the Wilds doesn't have to be named Ysenda, nor does the Knight Errant/Black Knight need to be Sir Devlin. These are just names for convenience sake, and as with all parts of this adventure, they may be changed to best suit your needs.

ACT I: THE CHALICE OF DIVINITY

The characters can be brought into this adventure any time they're on the road (perhaps while they're headed for or leaving the Royal Castle if they played through *The Black Knight*).

This can be played out for as long or short a time as necessary. If random encounters along the road seem necessary, draw a card for every day of travel and on a Club there's an encounter:

CARD RANK	ENCOUNTER
2 or 3	Wolves (3 per Character); stats can be found in the <i>Savage Worlds</i> rules.
4 or 5	Bandits (2 per Character); use stats from Part One, Act II, Scene 1 .
6 or 7	Bears (1 per 2 Characters); stats can be found in the <i>Savage Worlds</i> rules.
8 or 9	Dire Wolves (2 per Character); stats can be found in the <i>Savage Worlds</i> rules.
10 or Jack	Griffons (1 per 2 Characters); see below for stats.
Queen or King	Skeletons (2 per Character); stats can be found in the <i>Savage Worlds</i> rules.
Ace or Joker	Draw two more cards and use the Ranks to determine the encounter (by combining the results). Additional Aces can result in more draws if they come up again. If any of the cards drawn is a Joker, draw again, but there is only one of what is indicated by the new card and it's a Wild Card.

GRIFFONS (1 PER 2 CHARACTERS)

Part eagle, part lion, these ferocious predators love to eat horse meat, and occasionally swoop down on lowland farms and travelers to acquire their prey.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d12, Stealth d6

Special Abilities:

- **Bite/claws:** Str+d6
- **Flight:** Griffons have a flying Pace of 12" and a climb of 6".
- **Grapple:** If a griffon gets a Raise while performing a grapple, it has pinned its opponent. Bite attacks against a pinned foe are made at +2.
- **Horse Terror:** Horses seeing a griffon must make a Spirit roll or become Panicked.

- **Improved Frenzy:** A griffon can make two attacks each round with no penalty.
- **Size +2**
- **Swoop:** Griffons can swoop on their prey to pin it to the ground. It gains +4 to its attack and damage for this action. Its Parry is reduced by (-2) until its next action when performing this maneuver, however.

When it seems the right time to begin the story, move on to Scene 1.

Scene 1: Another Chance Encounter

This encounter can take place at a roadhouse where the characters have chosen to take refuge for an evening, or the road along which they're traveling. Or it can replace the draw of a Joker on the Random Encounter table—whatever seems most appropriate.

Whatever the case, the characters see an old man sitting and smoking a pipe, a staff leaning against where he sits. He appears to be a ragged old traveler, except he addresses the characters by name.

Some of them may recognize Zeledon, if they've encountered him before—although they only know his name if they've bothered to ask (or do so now). Zeledon is a powerful wizard and, in the past, he's served as a councilor to kings—something he *won't* tell them, whether they bother to ask or not.

If the characters were successful in *The Black Knight*, the wizard congratulates them for a job well done before telling them there's more they can do, if they're so inclined. Otherwise, he just informs the characters they could have a greater role in events than they realize. In either case, through the course of conversation he reveals the following information:

- The evil Black Knight, known for his many wicked exploits (most recently abducting the Princess, for example), wasn't always the Black Knight, nor was he always particularly evil. The fact is, the Knight is under a curse, and could be saved—which would be of great benefit to the Kingdom, as it's a little short on good knights at the moment.
- In fact, the Black Knight was once a Knight Errant named Sir Devlin. Unfortunately for Sir Devlin, he was caught up in something of a failed love triangle: he only had eyes for the Princess (though not the prestige to seek her hand in marriage), while being the object of desire for a witch named Ysenda—more commonly known as the Witch of the Wild. When Ysenda's jealousy grew great enough, she placed Sir Devlin under a curse—which is how he came to be the Black Knight.

- The curse could be lifted through the power of the Chalice of Divinity, a cup said to be able to heal the gravest injuries and lift the darkest curses if one drinks fresh water from it.
- The chalice is currently in a horde held by a dragon—Xenothraxus. Xenothraxus is no larger or smaller than others of his kind, but while all dragons are basically mean and greedy, they're also intelligent, which means the characters might be able to strike a deal with it, if they aren't inclined to earn glory (or death) by being dragon slayers.
- The Black Knight is currently in the lair of the Witch of the Wild, a hut in the Great Forest. And there should be plenty of fresh water in the Great Forest to use in the chalice.

Zeledon can give the characters directions on how to reach the Lair of Xenothraxus. They must travel into the mountains, to an ancient tomb marked with three menhirs. He can also direct them roughly to where they should find the hut of Witch of the Wild.

There's theoretically nothing to stop the characters from simply heading out to the Witch's lair and slaying the Black Knight, however Zeledon says to them, *"You should take every pain to leave Ysenda alive. It's entirely possible she could be redeemed as well. But **not** if you slay Sir Devlin. And, more to the point, killing Ysenda may make the curse on Sir Devlin permanent—even the chalice won't be able to save him then."*

When the conversation is finished, the wizard taps out the ash from his pipe, takes his staff, and heads off in the opposite direction than the characters are headed (or to his room, which is roughly the same thing).

The characters shouldn't fight Zeledon, but if you need to make any rolls for him, his stats can be found in **Part One, Act I, Scene 3**.

Scene 2: Journey to the Standing Stones

The trek into the mountains should take a couple of weeks. If the characters played through *The Black Knight*, they'll likely recognize some of their path, since it takes them just south of where the Black Knight's Fortress was.

The table at the opening of **Act I** can be used to flesh out the journey up to the mountains; however things change once the characters actually reach the mountains. As the green lowlands give way to the rocky highlands and creatures more suited to the environment, as the footing has become more treacherous.

CARD RANK	ENCOUNTER
2 or 3	Loose rocks! Each character must succeed at an Agility roll or take 2d6 damage.
4 or 5	Bandits (2 per Character); use stats from Part One, Act II, Scene 1 .

6 or 7	Dire Wolves (1 per Character); stats can be found in the <i>Savage Worlds</i> rules.
8 or 9	Gargoyles (2 per Character); see below for stats.
10 or Jack	Ghosts (1 per Character); stats can be found in the <i>Savage Worlds</i> rules.
Queen or King	Griffons (1 per 2 Characters); use the stats from the opening of Act I , above.
Ace or Joker	The characters see a dragon winging its way above the high peaks. If they are within a day or two of their destination, the characters can choose to implement a Dramatic Task using the Tracking skill to reach Xenothraxus' lair before the dragon returns. If they Succeed, they have a chance to find and take the chalice while the dragon is gone, although it's likely the dragon will note their scent and come looking for vengeance at a later date. If they Fail, the dragon returns to its lair while the characters are there; if it was a Critical Failure (or a Failure on the draw of a Club), they have no choice but to fight the Dragon. In any case, proceed to the next Scene.

GARGOYLES (2 PER CHARACTER)

No one seems to be able to agree where these foul, flying creatures were originally spawned, but pretty much everyone agrees they're a menace up in the mountains, and a danger to the unprepared.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Leathery, thick skin.
- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d6
- **Camouflage:** Gargoyles receive +2 to Stealth rolls in rocky terrain due to their skin color.
- **Flight:** Flying Pace of 10" and a climb of 4".

After the characters have traveled for two weeks, they finally see the three menhirs jutting upward from the top of a high peak. They've arrived at the dragon's lair.

Scene 3: Dealing with a Dragon

The three standing stones mark a deep declivity in the mountain that was once a tomb. Now it's the lair of a dragon, and the characters need to decide how to deal with it. Some options may have arisen as a result of random encounter draws, but if

they have to acquire the chalice while Xenothraxus is present, they have several other options:

First, they can simply attack the dragon and hope to win the day. Depending on their abilities, the characters may or may not succeed with this. Xenothraxus fights to the death to protect his hoard, but will allow attackers to flee if they desire. After all, he can always track them down later to 'deal' with them.

Another option would be to attempt to sneak in and steal the chalice (and perhaps other treasure). This is handled as a Dramatic Task using Stealth. If more than one character attempts it, each must roll separately and take the worst result. In any case, Failure or Critical Failure ends with a physical confrontation with the would-be thieves and an angry dragon. And even if they're successful, remember that Xenothraxus can eventually track down the thieves to exact vengeance on them.

The final—and possibly best—option is to attempt to haggle with the dragon. At least it's the best option if the group has a character with high Charisma and Persuasion. On the plus side, it isn't likely to result in the dragon attempting to hunt them down later. This is a Social Conflict, opposed by the dragon's Smarts, and the characters need at least 3 tokens to convince Xenothraxus to surrender the chalice—even then, he'll want something magical (or at least valuable) in return unless the characters can achieve 5 or more tokens. If the characters don't get *any* tokens, they're basically back to option number one, since Xenothraxus attacks; if they only get 1 or 2 tokens, the characters can back up and try to come up with another plan.



XENOTHRAXUS

Xenothraxus is a typical dragon, so you can use the stats found in the Savage Worlds core rules. You can also assume it has 3d10 x \$1,000 worth of coins, gems, and jewelry, as well as two other magical items besides the Chalice of Divinity.

ACT II: THE ROAD TO THE WILDS

With the Chalice of Divinity in hand, the characters must now make their way to where the Witch of the Wild resides. Unfortunately, given the Witch's magical prowess, it's probable she's already aware of their movements and seeks to hinder their quest if possible.

To that end, from here on out, whenever a Joker is drawn for a random encounter, draw a second card and apply these results:

ABOUT THE CHALICE

The "Chalice of Divinity" is technically a McGuffin itself—something to allow the characters to complete their quest by removing a curse. However, players like to have stats, and are likely to want to use the chalice themselves, so assume it confers the use of the Powers *dispel*, *greater healing*, *healing*, or *succor* with no roll necessary, but each use costs either the appropriate number of Power Points or an equivalent amount of Fatigue (which can't kill in this case). *Dispel* is the Power used to remove the Black Knight's curse, and the Fatigue comes from him, which is why he initially passes out when cured.

Second Card Encounter

Any Number Swarm of Insects; stats can be found in the *Savage Worlds* rules.

Red Face Card Ghosts (1 per Character); these are the restless spirits of those who have died while in the Witch's thrall. If the characters have killed any Charmed Mercenaries (see below), they may see a familiar face among the ghosts. Stats can be found in the *Savage Worlds* rules.

Black Face Card Charmed Mercenaries (2 per Character); see below for stats.

Another Joker Elemental (1 Wild Card); the type of elemental depends on where the characters currently are—near a lake, it'll be water, for example; on the plains, it'll be air. Use your best judgment. Stats for each type of elemental can be found in the *Savage Worlds* rules.

CHARMED MERCENARIES (2 PER CHARACTER)

Normally these guys would only work for gold, but the Witch of the Wild has her ways. They are under the Witch's thrall, and utterly loyal to her. If anyone thinks of it, the Chalice of Divinity could be used to break the spell, although getting any of the mercenaries to drink could be a trick.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Hindrances: Loyal

Gear: None

Armor: Leather Armor (+1)

Weapons: Short swords (Str+d6)

Scene 1: Back to the Forest

The journey (back) to the Great Forest requires another two weeks of travel. There should be at least one roadhouse or other stop along the way—certainly one the characters can stop at after the first week of travel. Feel free to use any locations that have been developed along the way.

Additionally, draw for any random encounters using the table from the beginning of **Act I**, bearing in mind the notes regarding random encounters given at the start of *this* Act.

Scene 2: Finding the Hut

Locating where the Witch of the Wild lives isn't quite as bad as finding a needle in a haystack, but it isn't easy. Fortunately, there are plenty of signs to mark the Witch's presence (creatures behaving unnaturally and the like), which means a savvy character can find his way there given enough time.

Treat this exactly like finding the Heart of the Wood in **Part One, Act II, Scene 2**, except the Dramatic Task is a series of Smarts rolls with no penalty. Again, they gain 1 token if they make a Success; 2 tokens on a Raise. Once they've acquired 10 tokens, they've found the Witch's Hut.

As in **Part One**, after each group Smarts roll—unless the characters have reached the Witch's Hut—draw a card to see what they might have to deal with. Use the same list as in **Part One** with the following changes:

[2-4] Treat each encounter as written.

[5] The Centaur Glade: If the characters have previously encountered the Centaurs in **Part One**, base their reaction on how the characters did at that time. Otherwise, treat the encounter as written.

[6] Heavy Woods and Hillocks: The tree growth here is thick—even during the day characters suffer penalties for Dim Lighting—and the ground is hilly and rocky. A wanderer named Brand makes his camp here; however, Brand has a dark secret: he's a werewolf. If the card drawn was red, the characters stumble upon Brand during the daylight, he's in his human form, and tries to encourage the characters to leave before dark (use the bandit stats from Part One, Act II, Scene 1 if stats are needed). Unless the characters can make a Persuasion roll with at least a Raise, he won't speak of his curse. If the card drawn was black, the characters stumble upon Brand at night, while he's in his werewolf form—he attacks immediately. Note the Chalice of Divinity can be used to remove the Curse of Lycanthropy from Brand, should the characters think of it. Give them a Benny if they cure Brand.





WEREWOLF (BRAND)

This werewolf uses the stats found in the Savage Worlds core rules, except that it's a Wild Card. If it takes more than 2 Wounds, it attempts to flee into the forest.

[7] Heavy Woods and Glade: If the characters have previously encountered the dryad in **Part One**, base her reaction on how the characters did at that time. Otherwise, treat the encounter as written.

[8] Heavy Woods and Pond: If the characters have previously encountered the naiads in **Part One**, base their reaction on how the characters did at that time. Otherwise, treat the encounter as written.

[9] Heavy Woods and Wildflowers: If the characters have previously encountered the elves in **Part One**, base their reaction on how the characters did at that time. Otherwise, treat the encounter exactly like the centaurs (above), unless one of them is wearing the Green Man's Armor and isn't himself an elf—then the elves automatically attack.

[10] Heavy Woods and Cairn: The tree growth here is thick—even during the day characters suffer penalties for Dim Lighting—and in the twilight is a huge stone cairn. Unfortunately, an ogre has chosen this cairn as its lair. If any character gets a Success on a Notice roll, he recognizes the signs of an ogre camp. If any characters got a Raise on the Notice roll, the group can choose to withdraw from the area—although they lose 1 token—or attack. Otherwise, the ogre attacks with Surprise (and The Drop on anyone who failed the Notice roll).



OGRE

This ogre uses the stats found in the Savage Worlds core rules, except that it's a Wild Card. If it takes more than 2 Wounds, it attempts to escape and flee.

[J] Dense Woods and Fungus: If the characters have previously encountered Orin in **Part One**, base his reaction on how the characters did at that time. Otherwise, treat the encounter as written.

[Q] Treat the encounter as written.

[K] Dense Woods and Creek: If the characters have previously encountered the treemen in **Part One**, base their reaction on how the characters did at that time. Otherwise, treat the encounter as written.

[A] Dense Woods and Rocky Hillock: If the characters have previously encountered the drake in **Part One**, they find its empty lair if they defeated it. Otherwise, treat the encounter as written.

[Joker] Treat the encounter as written, except the unicorn leads the characters toward the Witch's Hut.

Scene 3: The First Guardian

Once the characters have received 10 tokens, they find their way to where the Witch's Hut stands amid a small glade. The 'hut' is actually more of a cottage, and overlooks a pond. A pair of old, gnarled tree trunks have been carved into a roughly human shape, and act as something of a gateway to the steps of the Hut.

As soon as the Hut is approached, however, the tree trunks animate and attack. They're actually wood golems. The Hut can only be entered if they are defeated.



WOOD GOLEMS (2)

These look like trees that have grown into a shape resembling a gnarled human, with some extra carving to complete that appearance. However, they are fairly tough and sturdy—and quite dangerous to the unwary.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6

Special Abilities:

- **Arcane Resistance:** +2 Armor vs. damage-causing powers and +2 on trait rolls to resist opposed powers (this is in addition to the wood golem's natural armor).
- **Armor +2:** Hardened wood.
- **Branch-like Claws:** Str+d8
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from Called Shots; Immune to poison and disease.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Weakness (Fire):** Fire attacks cause +4 damage.

ACT III: FULL CIRCLE

Once the Witch's golem guardians have been dealt with, the characters have only to enter her hut. Of course, they've got to pick the lock (Lockpicking with a (-2) penalty) or bash the door down (Toughness 10) first, but once all the external barriers have been dealt with, the characters are free to enter the Hut.

Scene 1: In the Witch's Lair

The Witch of the Wild is fully aware of the characters' presence and waits for them within her living room, sitting on a divan and surrounded by cushions, books, and vases of wildflowers. She is alone, although there's a door leading to the rear of the Hut.

It's hard to say what the characters might have been expecting, but the Witch is... *beautiful*. All pale skin and raven hair; black

flowing robes of silk and lace. Her first goal will be to use Persuasion and guile to dissuade the characters from their quest. She's willing to offer them anything they might desire if they abandon their task and swear allegiance to her.

This can go on as long as the Witch can keep them talking. She won't even attempt to stop the characters if they try to leave. But if it looks like they plan to fight, or if they attempt to force their way into the back of her Hut, she uses her *puppet* power on the strongest character with the weakest Spirit.



THE WITCH OF THE WILD (YSENDA—HUMAN FORM)

The Witch of the Wild is extremely beautiful, powerful, and dangerous. In fact, she's no longer even human, having become a lamia some time ago. She prefers to greet guests in her human form, since it often puts them off guard.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6; **Charisma:** +4

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidate d8, Notice d6, Persuade d10, Spellcasting d12, Stealth d6, Taunt d8

Gear: Silken clothing; coins and jewelry worth 1d10 x \$100

Powers: *armor, bolt, boost/lower trait, burrow, deflection, detect/conceal arcana, dispel, fear, invisibility, obscure, quickness and speak language*; Power Points: 30

Special Abilities:

- **Hypnotic Gaze:** Ysenda can use the *puppet* power using her Smarts as her arcane skill. She can use and maintain the power indefinitely, but may only affect one target at a time.
- **Quick:** Ysenda redraws action cards of 5 or lower.
- **Strong Willed:** Ysenda cannot be swayed by threats or taunts. She receives a +2 bonus to defend against Tests of Will.
- **Very Attractive:** Ysenda's human form is a pale skinned, dark-haired beauty.

Scene 2: A Final Confrontation

Once the fighting breaks out (which it's likely to do), two things happen: the Black Knight emerges from the back of the Hut, and the Witch of the Wild assumes her true form as a lamia—a creature with the torso of a woman and the body and tail of a serpent!

There's no way to predict how the characters may choose to handle the fight, but one thing should be taken into account: if either the Black Knight or the Witch of the Wild is actually killed, they've functionally failed the quest. No bonus XP for them *this* time. All of the curses become irrevocably permanent for any survivors.

Clever characters might attempt to force the Black Knight, or even the Witch of the Wild, to drink from the Chalice (there's

fresh water right outside the Hut) during combat by using a trick. Treat it as an Agility trick for the Black Knight and a Smarts trick for the Witch. If successful, however, it still takes another 3 rounds to fully administer the drink which means someone should probably be grappling the target—or at least have him or her immobilized for the duration—since neither knight nor witch is cooperative.



THE BLACK KNIGHT (SIR DEVLIN)

Clad in black plate, the Black Knight exudes dark energy. He fights until dead, and if the Witch of the Wild is slain, he automatically goes Berserk (as per the Edge).

Attr: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d12

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 11 (3); **Charisma:** +2

Skills: Fighting d12, Healing d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Riding d10

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Vow

Edges: Champion, Command, Noble

Armor: Full black plate armor and closed helm (+3 Armor)

Weapons: Long Sword (Str+d8), medium shield (+1 Parry)

Special Abilities:

- **Fear -2:** The Black Knight radiates an evil aura. All who face him must make a Spirit roll at -2.
- **Regeneration:** As long as the Witch of the Wild lives, the Black Knight regenerates in a manner similar to a troll. He may make a natural healing roll every round—even if he's been Incapacitated. If the Witch of the Wild is killed, the Black Knight loses this ability.



THE WITCH OF THE WILD (YSENDA—LAMIA FORM)

Although still possessed of an unearthly beauty, Ysenda in her true form is much more frightening, her pale skin merging into pale scales lined with black. She is a lamia—half woman; half snake.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidate d12, Notice d10, Persuade d10, Spellcasting d12, Stealth d6, Taunt d8

Gear: Silken clothing; coins and jewelry worth 1d10 x \$100

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d6
- **Constrict:** Ysenda may choose to constrict a foe in her coils by making a Fighting attack. The round it entangles and each round thereafter it causes Str+d8 damage. The prey may attempt to escape by getting a raise on an opposed Strength roll. Given its large size, a Lamia may constrict one foe and strike another with its claws, suffering the standard multi-action penalty.
- **Hypnotic Gaze:** A lamia can use the *puppet* power using its Smarts as its arcane skill. It can use and main-

tain the power indefinitely, but may only affect one target at a time.

- **Magic:** Ysenda, like all lamia, practices arcane magic. She has 30 Power Points and knows the following spells: *armor, bolt, boost/lower trait, burrow, deflection, detect/conceal arcana, dispel, fear, invisibility, obscure, quickness* and *speak language*.
- **Quick:** A lamia redraws action cards of 5 or lower.
- **Shape Change:** As an action, a lamia can change into female human form with a Smarts roll at (-2). Changing back into lamia form requires a Smarts roll with no modifier.
- **Size +3**
- **Strong Willed:** A lamia cannot be swayed by threats or taunts. It receives a +2 bonus to defend against Tests of Will.

Scene 3: The End...?

Once a drink from the Chalice has been administered to the Black Knight, he collapses to the floor, unconscious. He's Incapacitated due to Fatigue, and awakens after an hour.

The Witch, if still fighting, shrieks in anger and attempts to flee into the forest. What the characters do at that point is up to them. Even if she escapes, they've accomplished their task, and

AND WHAT NEXT?

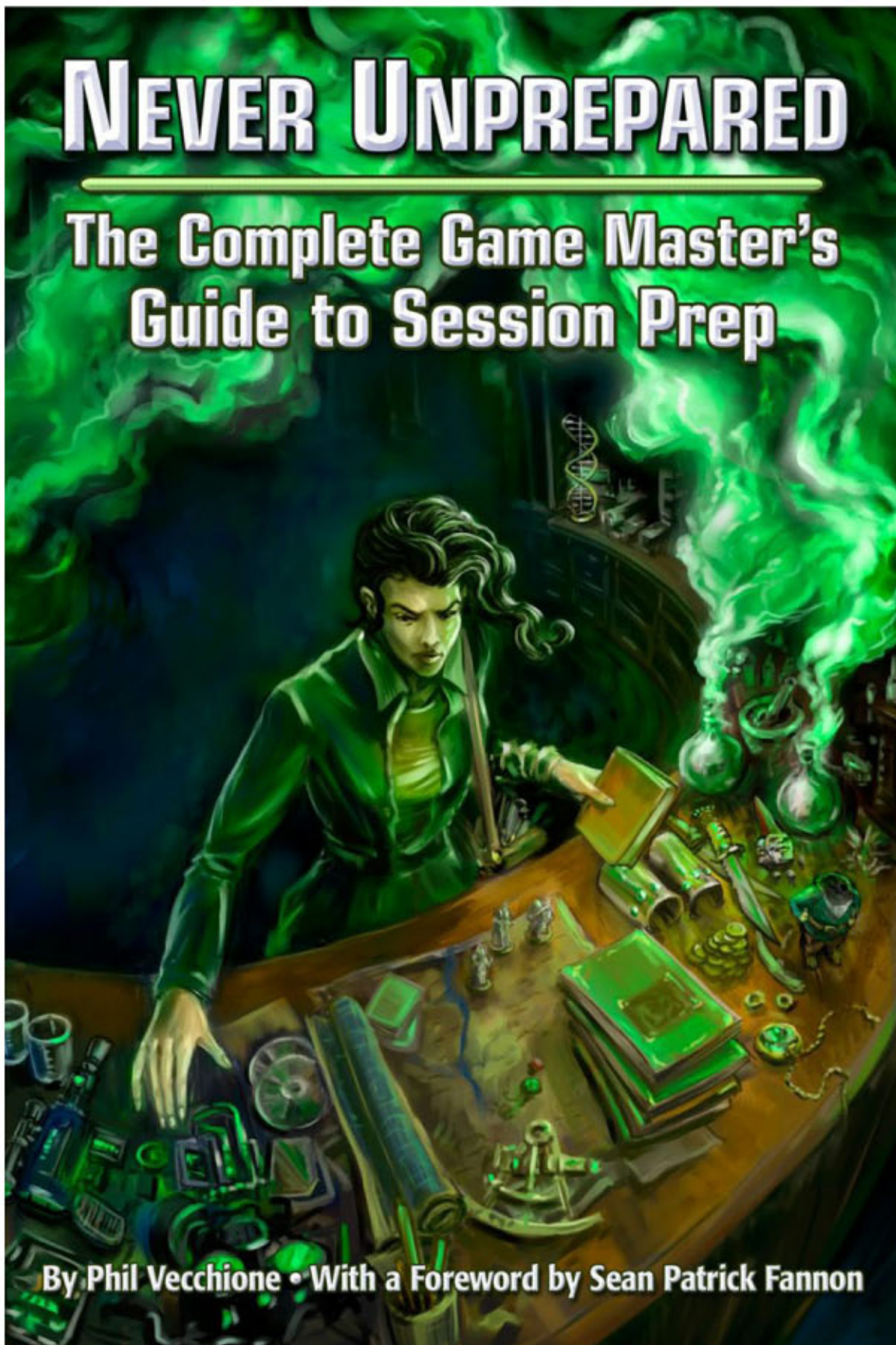
There are certainly other adventures to be explored within the context of these two stories. Why does Zeledon ultimately want to save Ysenda? Perhaps, in an ironic twist of fate, he's always loved her. Or maybe she's destined to fall for one of these new heroes. And what of the dragon, Xenothraxus? Or any of a number of potential friends and enemies the characters may have made along the way? The bottom line is the extent of these adventures is only limited by your imagination. Enjoy!

Zeledon the wizard is quite pleased. As he points out, healing Ysenda is a task for another day.

Should the characters succeed in freeing the Black Knight from the Witch's curse, he's grateful—though his first inclination is to seek penance and join a Holy Order. On the other hand, if the characters want to have him going back to being a 'proper' knight, they can manage it with a Raise on a Persuasion roll. In that case, if any of them have acquired a noble title (perhaps by marrying the Princess), Sir Devlin is willing to swear fealty to him. For the time being, the characters are heroes—they've freed the realm from the scourge of the Black Knight, and receive the appropriate accolades



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Pantheons

PANTHEON INFLUENCES

“You must have done something to make someone up there pretty mad!”

Ever heard someone say that when the sky suddenly opens up with a torrential downpour or you have a freak accident?

For eons, human beings have attributed strange and powerful things to the divine. They heard thunder and thought the gods were displeased. They felt a cool breeze on a summer day and thought the gods had smiled on them in some small way.

Religion answers some basic but important questions: What, How, and Who. When you ask “Who”, you are talking about the nature of the divine. In ancient times, this meant talking about the pantheon of the gods.

Unlike the overwhelming tradition today of monotheism, the worship of one god, ancient cultures were often polytheistic. In polytheistic religions, multiple deities comprised the family of gods that influenced every aspect of human life.

In primitive societies, individual gods tended to rule the primal forces of nature. In these societies, the most important thing was the struggle for survival as natural events such as tornadoes, floods, or lightning strikes threatened their daily lives. Since these events seemed random and happened without warning, ancient people felt there must

be a divine being controlling these events. They thought that if they could seek the favor of these gods, they could minimize the effects of these events.

But which divine being controls the rain and which one controls the lightning? This question gave birth to an oral tradition that provided a name and a personality to the gods that ruled over the natural forces impacting the daily lives of every living thing.

The tradition created a rich mythic history that painted a picture of the personalities of the members of the pantheon. This allowed worshipers to gain a better understanding of the members of the pantheon and learn their character as well as their sphere of influence. However, how a god was viewed was dependent on a variety of facts, not the least of which was the location of the adherent.

Where societies were located colored the way they viewed the deities within the pantheon and shaped the personalities of these gods. For example, in an arid land, the god of rain and thunder might be quite fickle and violent, since rain is sparse and storms are typically brutal. However, in a fertile area, the god whose portfolio includes rain may be viewed as nurturing and caring since he or she ensures a bountiful harvest.

In most instances, members of a pantheon are portrayed as larger than life human beings with regards to appearance and attitude, despite being divine.

In many respects, a pantheon is the ultimate large family complete with sibling rivalries, bitter feuds, and strong interconnections.

As societies evolved, so too did the gods with respect to their number and spheres of influence. The forces of nature were still the purview of the gods and were still viewed as powerful. However, as a society shifts from hunting and gathering to farming, there is a shift from a nomadic way of life to one fixed in a single location. That creates challenges unique to a non-nomadic way of life.

The first major component is farming. This includes the raising of crops and livestock, both of which are critical to the survival of a society. This means that one or more of the gods must have influence over this vital activity, possibly creating new gods or goddesses. However, some religions simply cause the gods to evolve. In other words, the god of rain might become the god of the harvest, farmers, and rain to reflect the change in society and the need for divine oversight in these new areas. This process continues as a society grows to encompass other things such as commerce and politics.

If new gods enter the pantheon, this typically occurs in one of three ways: the new god is a child of two current gods, the new god is the offspring of a god and a human, or the new god might be a mortal who has lived such an exemplary

life that he or she is elevated to godhood. Typically, the last two are referred to as demigods to indicate they are inferior gods as they were not born from a pure, divine lineage. Whatever the case, typically gods added to the pantheon are viewed as minor gods and have smaller spheres of influence, such as Tyche, the Goddess of Luck. (She was the daughter of Aphrodite and Zeus.) Another example is Nike, the goddess of victory, who was the daughter of the Titan Pallas and Styx.

However, there can come a time when a society advances to a point that a polytheistic form of religion doesn't make as much sense to the masses. They recognize a divine presence in their lives, but become disillusioned with the petty nature of the gods as presented in the oral or written traditions. The result is a shift to a monotheistic form of religion.

The interesting thing about monotheism is that it can sometimes feel like polytheism light. Monotheism may have a singular divine figure that rules over every aspect, but there may be intermediaries, intercessors, or servants that have the appearance of a demigod in their level of power and the nature of their relationship to the single god. This can give a quasi-pantheistic feel to the religion as practitioners pray to or invoke the name of one of these servants when faced with a particular crisis.

For example, the Roman Catholic tradition contains the veneration of saints who have patronages. These patronages loosely resemble the spheres of influence attributed to gods in a pantheistic tradition. A great example of this is St. Christopher. Many Catholics wear St. Christopher medals and venerate this saint as the patron saint of traveling and transportation, just to name a few. They may pray to St. Christopher for safe travel as they embark on a long journey.

However, some religions evolve more rapidly than their culture. A good example of that would be the evolution of a primal religion into a complex nature religion. As survival becomes easier and society more structured, this pantheon might evolve to include other elements of nature. The purest forms of these natural elements comprise the pantheon.

In this type of pantheon, the gods aren't given human traits. Instead, they are a representation of the perceived essential traits of animals. In this pantheon you find deified animals such as the Great Wolf who is the guide and the Great Coyote who is the trickster. From each of these can be learned important lessons and through their mortal animal counterparts they interact with mankind.

So, where do you start building a pantheon when it comes to your game? That is a very interesting question because it's both very simple and quite complex. In any world, whether it's fantasy, modern, near-modern, or future, there's bound to be a religious component, which will have structure as it pertains to the theological truth of that religion.

The first thing that you should do is answer where and when. You must know where the country or geographic area is located in terms of typography and geographical features, and in terms of its development before creating a pantheon.

For example, is the country landlocked, arid, surrounded by water, frigid, etc.? Is this a society reminiscent of Europe during the Renaissance or is it more akin to Rome during the height of the Empire? Once you answer these questions, you'll know what is important to the inhabitants of that region, influencing who your gods will be. It is important to note that

when building a world, you will want to conduct this exercise for every major society.

Another question you should ask is whether there are multiple pantheons or a single pantheon in your world. The most common way to answer this is by stating that there is a series of pantheons comprising the totality of religion in your world.

However, there is another way of approaching this. Each nation might have a god or gods that are important to their inhabitants. These gods might all come together to form a single large pantheon. Some gods in the pantheon might not be worshipped at all in certain parts of the world while others hold major and minor levels of veneration depending on where the worshipper is located.

This model is reminiscent of the original *Dungeons & Dragons* world, *Mystara*. In the original D & D world, numerous gods comprised the world pantheon, but some were worshipped to a greater extent in certain geographic locations. As cultures blended, such as in the Kingdom of Karameikos, so too did the gods of the cultures that comprised the kingdom. The result was a church that attempted to unify the kingdom by blending the various religious traditions.

Still another way to approach this would be more of a Greek model. All of the gods are venerated, but each city-state has a god that is their patron, held in higher esteem. The rest of the gods are still venerated, but one holds a higher place, such as Athena, from whom Athens took their name. She served as their protector and patron.

It has been said that good cannot exist without evil. The same is true when talking about either historical pantheons or pantheons found in your world. For example, not all of the Greek gods were

good. While many of the gods might be viewed as crass and petty, Cronus and Nyx are typically viewed as evil. You must take this into account as you build your pantheon.

As you look at the societies that comprise your world, it is not hard to find needed deities to fit these roles. A god whose purview is pestilence, lies, cheating, sloth, murder, etc. will be evil. If you ever get stuck, just think of the seven deadly sins and you have your evil gods. It is important to note that evil gods and their adherents make very good antagonists.

SHAPING YOUR FANTASY PANTHEON

Sooner or later, a seasoned or enthusiastic GM might wish to build his own world. If this world is a modern or futuristic one, divinities probably won't be a GM's concern. On the contrary, if he wishes to create a fantasy world, he'll have to face a daunting world builder's issue: defining a pantheon.

Inspired by the excellent *World Builder's Guidebook* by R. Baker, and using the content above, let's see how to solve some of the most problematic divine issues in a simple, human way.

Why Build a Pantheon?

This is an often-overlooked question, but actually it's the most important one and the first stone to place to build a coherent and sturdy palace. In any fantasy setting, the more you define and detail religions and gods, the more flavor and character motivations you provide to the setting. A warrior cannot enter a battle referring to a "generic war divinity" without knowing at least its name. That would be too shameful. Nei-

ther can paladins devote their lives to a "generic good divinity". That would be too frustrating. That's why the minimum requirements for a pantheon in every fantasy setting are the gods' names and their spheres of influences. As a GM wishing to build a fantasy-like world, you should do at least that.

How Important are the Gods?

In any fantasy world, the gods' role can be anything from being main characters of your fantasy stage to merely distant entities providing flavor and motivation to your setting. Of course, the more important the role, the more work required to define a coherent pantheon.

Think for a moment to Robert E. Howard's *Conan* setting. Although it's a fantasy setting, gods play a very marginal role. All that we know about Crom, the divinity mostly invoked by Conan, is that he should be a male, wants his adepts to be brave, and holds the riddle of the Steel. He has no interactions of any kind with mortals; he doesn't provide divine

powers to his followers, doesn't smite those who oppose him, and never shows his face to mortals. Moreover, Conan believes it best not to call Crom's name to avoid angering him. This is a perfect example of distant gods who could serve in your world only to provide flavor and motivations, but don't help or interfere with the characters' lives and campaigns. Such gods need only a few traits to be fully operational and are perhaps the best choice for GMs who don't wish to spend much time defining a detailed pantheon. On the other hand, clerics, priests, paladins, and sometimes wizards dislike distant gods because they mostly rely on the powers bestowed by gods. That's why distant gods can be a great choice for low-magic, sword & sorcery campaigns, but don't really fit in a high-magic, epic campaign.

On the other hand, think about the classical, mythological Greece's pantheon, which is fully described in the *Mythos* setting. There, gods not only play a very important role in world-shaping and power-bestowing, they also frequently



Illustration © Antonio Abrignani/Shutterstock.com

show themselves to mortals, helping them, deceiving them, and even loving or killing them. Such a big and daily influence needs to be detailed, regulated, and motivated. For example, Zeus, the all-ruling god, watches heroes from his Olympian throne, but frequently indulges in erotic affairs. On the other hand, Hera, his wife, cherishes marital fidelity, and tries her best to kill every illegitimate offspring. Ares cherishes (violent) action over thinking while Athena prefers to think twice before acting. Creating and describing such a complex pantheon is a great challenge for every GM, but provides the greatest flavor and an endless list of character motivations. Such an extensive pantheon fits best in a high-magic, epic campaign, possibly being wasted in a low-magic one.

Your soon-to-be-made fantasy pantheon will probably land somewhere between the “distant” *Conan* type and the “invasive” *Mythos* type. Just remember: the more important the gods are in your world, the more detailed their descriptions, history, motivations, and interactions must be.

How Many Pantheons?

Choosing a number of pantheons should be decided before creating individual deities. Oddly enough, most fantasy worlds have only one pantheon. In such cases, while people may follow one god, they believe all the others exist. Followers of this kind of religion would hold one god or goddess, whose domain most directly impacts their lives, in higher esteem, but still pay respect to the other gods when necessary. A shopkeeper might hold a goddess of commerce above all others, but he would certainly pay the god of fertility respect when a child is born or ask a favor from the goddess of trickery if he was somehow guilty of a crime.

Few fantasy settings take inspiration from the real world where multiple pantheons exist alongside monotheistic and atheistic beliefs (here meaning a belief in a religious philosophy). Depending on the specific culture and religion, followers of religions may or may not believe gods from other pantheons are real, or in the case of monotheistic and atheistic beliefs, people may not believe *any* other gods are real. The Christian God is quoted as saying “put no other gods before me,” which may imply that His followers still believe in other gods, but must put Him first. The Romans were well-known for adopting gods from the places they conquered. Additionally, many wars have been fought over one group disbelieving another group’s religion.

The notion of multiple pantheons often gets overlooked in fantasy games or relegated to something simpler like “the elves have a few different gods as do the dwarves.” However, throughout history, many pantheons have existed at the same time. These often vary by culture (the Greeks had their gods at the same time as the Egyptians), but within major cultures, there could even be multiple religions, if the leadership is particularly tolerant.

Monotheistic religions or philosophies without gods are often overlooked in fantasy settings, probably because many people associate the idea of “fantasy” to polytheistic. Too often, people design a game world with a number of gods without considering that a religion might have just one god or even no gods. A religion without a god or goddess could be a pursuit of an idea, such as logic, freedom, or technology. Therefore, it is helpful to emphasize that the term “religion” is used herein for any belief, whether it has a large pantheon of gods, one god, or no gods.

None of the above touches on another fantasy convention: the demon-sect. Another form of religion in fantasy worlds (often in sword & sorcery ones) is the demon or devil attempting to break through a magical or divine barrier to devour mortals. This entity is often found corrupting a sorcerer with promises of power in exchange for helping to break the barrier.

There are multiple ways to handle whether or not your world has multiple religions; here are some examples:

- **One, Universal Religion:** The whole world has only one religion. While different cultures may emphasize one god or aspect of the religion more than another, everyone generally believes the same gods or religious truths exist. This is probably the most used solution.
- **Overlapping Religions:** The same basic religion exists throughout the world. However, different cultures and groups may refer to the gods by different names, have different approaches to achieve the same religious truth, or have slightly different stories about the gods.
- **Neighboring Pantheons:** Each culture may have its own religion(s) and all of these religions truly exist in the game world. The gods of one culture know about the gods of the other cultures. They may even help or conflict with each other. Generally, each set of gods has its place (Asgard, Mt. Olympus, the Abyss, etc.) in the game universe’s cosmology or planar alignment.
- **Distant Pantheons:** Each culture may have its own religion(s), but deities of different religions do not know each other. Mortals may play a role here settling conflicts between the religions as each one attempts to influence the others.

One Dogma vs. Different Truths

One issue with multiple religions in a fantasy setting is how people handle competing religions when priests for each religion can prove the religion's existence through a simple cure spell. Here are a couple of ways to handle this:

- People disbelieve what they saw, claiming it was staged.
- Disbelievers claim herbs were secretly used instead of divine power.
- People claim the god in question is simply one of theirs, but with a different name.
- Most people do not travel to other regions and thus aren't exposed to other religions.

Religious conflicts can be very pronounced through wars or may simply be in the background where religions are attempting to out-influence each other socially or politically. The conflicts could be a combination of these if there are several cultures in your game world, depending on how compatible the religions are to each other. If a violent conflict is desired, those religions should vary in some prominent way or have some other significant cause of the conflict.

Designing a Specific Pantheon

After deciding how many pantheons to put in your fantasy world and how they interact, it's time to build it. When designing a pantheon, keep in mind that religions in the real world typically exist for two reasons: explaining the unexplainable mysteries of life and providing hope and meaning to followers' lives. Of course, we're talking about role-playing games here, so your religion should also:

- Bestow supernatural powers.
- Provide motivations and drama.

There are many examples from real world religions and other fantasy settings to borrow from or even import into your setting. However, unless you want to run an alternate history campaign, using the same gods with the same names as a real world religion might be jarring for players interested in a fantasy experience. Further, you may want to search for resources (a good book or online resource on the religion or mythology you are borrowing) to help you better understand the motivations and personalities of the gods or people of the chosen religion.

Remember to have basic ideas about the culture behind this religion as it should influence your design decisions. For example, a seafaring culture will hold a water god in high esteem or may have multiple gods with influence over water while a culture with a harsh climate may have harsh gods.

Consider the size of the religion with respect to the number of gods. As mentioned above, there are reasons a religion might have just one or even no gods. However, if you are going to have a pantheon of gods, and if it is going to be the universal religion for the world, consider keeping the pantheon on the large side, or make sure the rest of your religion's concept is expandable for subsequent growth. A large pantheon could contain a few major gods (2-6), several intermediate gods (3-8), and many lesser and demigods (3-10 of each). If your religion is monotheistic, these may instead be prominent heralds and leaders under the god such as angels, prophets, and saints.

Also consider how the religion is organized. *Here are some examples:*

- **Family:** The gods are an extended family with roles and friction based on their status in the family.

- **Racial:** Each major race's key feature is embodied by a god. (The Dwarven god might represent strength, the Elven god might represent beauty, etc.)
- **Elemental:** Each god represents an element (air, fire, etc.) or quasi-element (lightning, tornadoes, etc.).
- **Celestial:** Each god is a constellation in the sky.
- **Heroes:** The pantheon is made of mortals who were somehow elevated to god-like status.
- **Natural:** The gods represent natural things such as the sky and mountains, a number of plants, or a number of animals.
- **Stewards:** The gods are themselves creations of a higher power given stewardship over the world.
- **Bureaucracy:** Each deity is a department in a large bureaucracy responsible for managing the world.
- **Mixed:** A combination of the above.
- **Object:** The religion is organized based on an object. The religion in the *Rose of the Prophet* books by Weis and Hickman was organized like a d20. Each god had his own side of the d20 and each edge or point was a domain such as love, war, etc.
- **Idea or Intangible Object:** Perhaps each god's name starts with a different letter of the culture's alphabet or the religion is based on a single idea with different sub-religions based on different interpretations of the religion.

All that should be left is a bit of clean-up, making sure the pantheon is internally cohesive and giving your gods and goddesses names. If your pantheon exists in a game with alignments, make sure to assign each god and goddess to a particular alignment that best pertains to their ideals.



EXAMPLE

Let's take a nation that has quite a bit of coastline, but also has lush forests and plains. In addition, the summers are mild, but the winters tend to be harsh. The inhabitants are hardy people that rely on the sea for a large portion of their food, but still raise crops and livestock. They are a non-nomadic people. For ease, we will call this nation Manath.

Since Manath relies so heavily on the sea, the primary god in the pantheon is Wenden, god of the sea, sailors, and fishermen. Who else do we need? Well, we need a god that deals with the happy times of year: spring and summer. Let's name this god Aiela. She is the goddess of the sun, rebirth, and joy. A counterpoint to her could be Kreseth, god of the night and death. Kreseth represents the lethality of the frigid cold which is found most powerfully at night and the treacherous nature of sailing under the stars.

Then there might be Valnoy, goddess of the harvest, farmers, and livestock. Also there might be Steyden, god of storms, wind, and rain. If Manath was a warring nation, then we would also have a god of war or battle. We'll name this god, Groth.

So, how do these gods relate to each other? Given that light and darkness are opposite sides of the same coin, it is easy to see Kreseth and Aiela as twins. However, their personalities are complete opposites. Aiela is portrayed as warm and nurturing while Kreseth is dark, cold, and brooding. As this society evolves, it is quite possible that Aiela would also become the goddess of child-birth and family, or perhaps it would be her daughter that held this title, while Kreseth becomes the god of assassins and thieves.

Wendon is the leader of the pantheon. Perhaps he is the father of all of the gods. Whatever the case, he is very stern. He is seen as a strict but benevolent father figure by most. He maintains a stoic relationship with all of the members of the pantheon, but is weary of Steyden, whose violent outbursts often destroy ships and ruin fishing. However, Steyden can be kind to those sailors whom he favors. To these few, Steyden offers gentle breezes that carry them swiftly and safely across the water, but just as quickly these breezes can change to gales and destroy those whom he once blessed.

Valoy is best friends with Aiela and their clerics often work side by side with great relationships. The two are often portrayed as sisters. Given Valoy's focus on the harvest and farmers, she is seen as having a tense relationship with Steyden, who sometimes brings destruction

to crops in the form of rain and wind. These two are often portrayed as lovers or even as husband and wife due to the tension that exists between them.

Groth is prone to outbursts of rage, but always respectful of Wenden. Sailors on warships often venerate both Wenden and Groth as they both represent important aspects of the lives of these sailors. Groth is friendly with Kreseth, but really isn't close to anyone. He despises Aiela and his clerics often bully her followers. He holds Valoy in very low regard and begrudgingly acknowledges her as a necessary evil to the conduct of war, especially as she has the ear of Steyden. An army travels on their stomachs and without crops, this becomes more difficult. Waging war can become even more challenging if an army is hampered with bad weather.

This is just a brief example of the typical dysfunctional family found in most pantheons. This is a very simple example as most pantheons would have a much larger family tree with complicated relationships being the norm (although this example can be easily expanded). However, these relationships are important as they affect how the worshipers of the various gods view each other and interact.

No matter how you choose to structure the religion of your world, one simple rule applies: whatever you do, make sure your players have fun. Be accommodating. If a player wants to worship the god of justice, but one doesn't exist in your world, make one or assign this to an existing god. In terms of RPGs, creating a pantheon isn't solely an intellectual exercise. Instead, it is an exercise designed to enhance the experience of your players. Remember this and everyone at the table will have fun!

Black Flame

Black Flame is a sword of terrible power. It is a bastard sword and looks to have been deftly carved from obsidian. It's harder than any steel and won't shatter no matter how hard one strikes it against a solid object. The blade itself glows with an ultraviolet light that reflects some sort of runes beneath the surface of the blade. Although the sword doesn't actually make any sound, everyone around it can't help but to feel as if a soft singing or keening is coming from it, just on the edge of hearing.

The exact history of this blade is no longer known, but those who have heard of it¹ generally fear it... or lust after its power.

According to legend², Black Flame was forged from the heart of a demon, and therefore feeds on the souls of the living—it's a powerful blade and a dangerous one as it must have blood every time it is drawn. More specific information³ claims that Black Flame was actually forged from the heart of the Demon Lord, Zhastät Khan, who used the blade to wage war and consume the souls of his enemies. Though the Demon Lord was thrown down, his sword was taken by a follower, Bhaklam Khan, and lost to history. It is said Zhastät isn't dead, but entombed in eternal slumber—the only way to truly kill him is to slay him with Black Flame. This is likely the only way to destroy the sword, as well.

When Black Flame is found, it's invariably imbedded in the chest of some hapless soul. When anyone picks up the blade, it telepathically communicates just once with the wielder, offering power to him with the caveat that it *must* have blood every time it is drawn. A character who refuses the pact gains no bonuses whatsoever from the sword.

¹Requires a Success on either a Knowledge (Arcana) or a Knowledge (Occult) roll.

²Characters with access to an arcane or occult library can learn this information with a successful Investigation roll.

³If the character got a Raise on his Investigation roll.

BLACK FLAME

This large sword seems to be forged from obsidian and glows with a black light. Runes seem to reflect from the depths of its blade, and you feel like you can almost hear a soft voice singing quietly to you.

Weight: 10; Magic Bastard Sword (True Relic—treat as a Wild Card)

Damage: Str+d8+3+special (see below); Fighting +2, Parry -1; Additional +1 Damage if used with 2 Hands

Attributes: Smarts d6, Spirit d12+2

Skills: Fighting d10(+2), Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Knowledge (Occult) d6

Personality: Bloodthirsty, Cruel

Goal: Subjugate the living races to the demons.

Special Abilities:

- **Blood Drinker:** Black Flame can only gain power through blood. It can't draw power from any creature with the Construct, Demon, Ethereal, Elemental, or Undead templates.
- **Must Taste Blood:** Every time Black Flame is drawn, the sword must have blood. If a character draws the sword and attempts to sheath it before it gets blood, Black Flame attempts to attack the nearest target. This amounts to a Battle of Wills (opposed Spirit). If the Sword wins, it uses its Fighting skill to attack a nearby target until it does at least 1 Wound. If there is no other target available, Black Flame attacks the wielder!

- **Right of Bleeding:** Whenever the sword is drawn, the first Wound done by Black Flame belongs to the sword, and the wielder can't gain any benefit from it (*i.e.* he gains no Tokens).
- **Soul Drinker:** When Black Flame tastes blood, it gains power, which it can confer upon its wielder. For each Wound done by the sword (after the first), the wielder gains a Token. These Tokens can be spent to immediately heal a Wound on the wielder, or grant a +1 bonus to Damage on the wielder's next hit. These numbers are cumulative, up to a full healing (although the sword can't revive a character who has died, nor can it restore permanent injuries) or an additional +4 damage. Note that beings killed by Black Flame are truly and irrevocably dead.



By Brian Reeves

Dogs of War

Dogs of War is an adventure designed around “The Crypt” battlemap, copyright and published by DramaScape with cartography by Simon Powell, and used with permission. DramaScape's battlemaps are available exclusively through DriveThruRPG. Use the following link to purchase The Crypts battlemap from DramaScape:

<http://rpg.drivethrustuff.com/product/103883/The-Crypts>

BACKGROUND

Over a century ago, the kingdom of Unaya was embroiled in a bitter war with a neighboring nation, Caldar. Though the squabble that started the war soon became forgotten, the war raged on for many years. One of Unaya's prized weapons in this conflict was its dogs of war – tenacious beasts with a fear-inducing howl and jaws like bear traps.

These war dogs were trained in a special compound not far from a keep in the northern forests of Unaya, a wild place far from the reach of the capitol with few settlements. Run by Baron Arnovar, the keep was known for producing high-caliber soldiers, but how he was able to produce such deadly dogs was always a mystery.

Like all wars do, eventually the war between Unaya and Caldar came to an end. The war machines were wheeled back to their respective capitols to be retired. Battlefields grew silent and were eventually returned to being farmland. With peace accords signed, the crown's lingering suspicions about Arnovar's war dogs eventually led to a personal visit from the king. What he found were dogs that were nearly deranged, roaring and slavering in their pens. Being something of an animal lover, the king determined these dogs had been the subjects of cruel abuses to create their mental state and had the place shut down. A disgrace to the new peaceful order, Arnovar was stripped of his lands and title, and the head trainer, a man named Orvane, cast into the dungeons where he soon perished.

When it came time to deal with the war dogs, agents of the crown found themselves with an impossible task. After several agents were mauled to death trying to euthanize the uncontrollable war dogs, the entire place was sealed and burned to the ground. The howls of the dogs could be heard for miles. When

at last the ashes cooled, the place was struck from the maps and forgotten, along with Baron Arnovar's entire contribution to the war. The only remnant of Arnovar is the keep that bears his name.

Satisfied with the destruction of the kennels, agents of the crown departed and the place was completely abandoned. Over the years the remaining charred walls were overtaken by moss and weeds. But if they had bothered to explore the ruins, they would have discovered a staircase leading into tunnels carved out under the complex and the dark secret at the heart of the kennel.

An Infernal Pact

The staircase leads into the only part of the old kennel complex that survived the fire: the crypt. This is where dogs that perished during training were brought to rest. Orvane was known as a ruthless master but he did hold a great deal of affection for his dogs, and he decreed that each one should be given a proper burial upon death. The entire first floor of the crypt is dedicated to the stone caskets of his prize hounds. Shrines to fellow master trainers are also situated in these hallowed halls.

However, there is another floor under the crypts. Here, in a massive chamber held up by tall pillars, was the secret training floor for the kennel. Dogs were brought here for their most rigorous training, which often included killing humans (captured brigands or other criminals, selected for just this purpose) so that they'd get a “taste” for human flesh. The spirits of the men killed here still cling to the stones and seek vengeance from the living.

But the greatest secret lies in the third and final floor of the crypt. Down here is a massive chamber carved from the bowels of the earth. A crack in the steaming floor is a hell mouth – one of the few places in the world where the underworld borders on the lands of the living. Summoning forth a powerful hellhound, Orvane bound it in the chamber, then had a massive hound statue erected to hold the hellhound's enraged spirit. It was here that Orvane brought his most promising dogs – the ones which had lived through the brutal training exercises and showed the requisite tenacity. The dogs were chained to the altar before the statue and Orvane would perform a ritual to

steal some of the hellhound's infernal power and transfer it to his earthly dogs, turning them into fierce and wild war dogs.

As the years passed after the torching of the war dog kennel, the hellhound remained trapped in statue, bound in place by the ritual cast by Orvane. However, the ritual called for a binding of 99 years, and that time has finally passed. A few months ago, the magic bonds sealing the hellhound finally vanished, and it emerged from its statue and escaped the crypts.

Terror in the Night

For the last few months, a creeping fear has gripped the town of Daggerford, a sleepy hamlet in the shadow of Arnovar keep. At first, farmers in the outlying areas complained of slaughtered sheep and howls in the night. Locals knew these were no wolves; since the attacks occurred on the three nights of the new moon, lycanthropy was ruled out. The attacks began to become more brazen, and people began to turn up dead, their bodies horribly burned and disemboweled. Terror swept through the town. The mayor, Kaul Terlan, organized a watch system and search parties. Again, nothing was found. Before long, people began to realize the attacks happened only during the new moon, when the night was darkest. Sure enough, upon the next new moon, several townsfolk were found dead, their bodies roasted and sundered.

Kaul Terlan has applied for help from the countess, but a rise in bandit activity has stretched her resources thin. Now, with another month ending and the new moon approaching, the town of Daggerford is preparing for more nights of horror.

GETTING THE CHARACTERS

INVOLVED

There are several ways for the characters to become involved in the mystery at Daggerford. In each hook, the characters arrive in the area during the first night of the new moon.

Scene of the Crime

While passing through the area at night, the characters hear distant howls. Not long after, they stumble upon an overturned wagon in the road. The driver of the wagon has been mangled, his body still smoking from being torched. Pinned under the wagon is a terrified teenage boy who, after overcoming his initial shock, can tell the characters it was "the Beast" that killed his father. It's not hard to locate great muddy paw tracks which can be followed back to the ruins of the old kennels.

Hunted!

The characters are in the forest some ways out of town when night falls. A farmhouse is nearby, and in the lonely, quiet darkness, it looks very inviting. If the characters ask to rest there, they encounter a jumpy farmer and his wife, who douse the lights and cower in their home. They tell the characters what little they know: some kind of terrible wolf has been killing people in the Daggerford area and it only comes during the new moon. Sure enough, not long into the night, the beast attacks the home. It crashes through the window and fights for several rounds. As soon as it is wounded, it flees into the night and the characters can pursue.

Defend the Town

The mayor of Daggerford has been trying to get his town ready for the upcoming new moon, intending to be ready in case the beast comes back. As the characters pass through town, the mayor recognizes their potential as defenders of the town and asks them to perform the task. He can pay, though not much. All the characters need to do is set up a watch and make sure the beast doesn't make it into the town. It strikes later that night, and the characters can pursue it back to its lair.

THE CRYPT

Whatever brings the characters to the site of the old kennel, there isn't much for them to see on the surface; very little remains of the complex. Anyone walking through the weeds can easily make out straight, long lines where walls once stood, and in some places the walls still remain in crumbling, chest-high patches. Here and there are scorch marks in the weeds. Though evidence that this place was once burned no longer remains, these scorch marks are fresh.

Characters familiar with the area can make a Common Knowledge roll to see if they know anything about the ruins. With a success, they have heard of a former baron in the area who lost his lands to treason, and this would have been part of the land set aside for his troops. With a raise, the character has heard of the kennel and comes to the conclusion that this could be it.

With so little remaining on the surface, it is not hard to discover the stairs leading into the tunnels. No markers have survived to indicate the purpose of the steps. The hole is choked with growth and soil, but is still easy to enter. It plunges 30' down, and all along the way the steps are littered with bones and tracks from some kind of over-large dog.

The following descriptions are linked to specific locations on the map. All doors are 2" thick stone slabs which can be opened

and closed without much difficulty, though they do not lock. The ceilings are 10' tall unless otherwise noted.

1. The Entry Hall

At the bottom of the stairs is a small chamber with a great stone door. Over the door are the words "Your Loyalty and Service Shall Be Forever Honored." Flanking the door are 7' tall statues of two different men wearing plate armor without a helmet. At the foot of each statue is a stone plinth upon which is a small bowl. The bowls are empty but show traces of long-decayed offerings. The statue on the right is engraved, "Lashar Taraxa, Master Trainer, 932 – 970." The statue on the left is engraved, "Roryn Crane, Master Trainer, 927 – 971."

Characters with Knowledge (Religion) or the Faith skill can determine the function of the bowls is to hold offerings to the revered Master Trainers. Placing burning incense in the bowls will create an aura (large burst template) into which the hellhound is unable to approach for as long as the incense burns.

2. Crypt of the Faithful

This is the largest room on this floor, and it is filled with rows of old stone caskets. At first glance these appear to be human caskets, but each contains the skeletal remains of an adult dog. Plaques on the casket lids offer names for each of the dogs

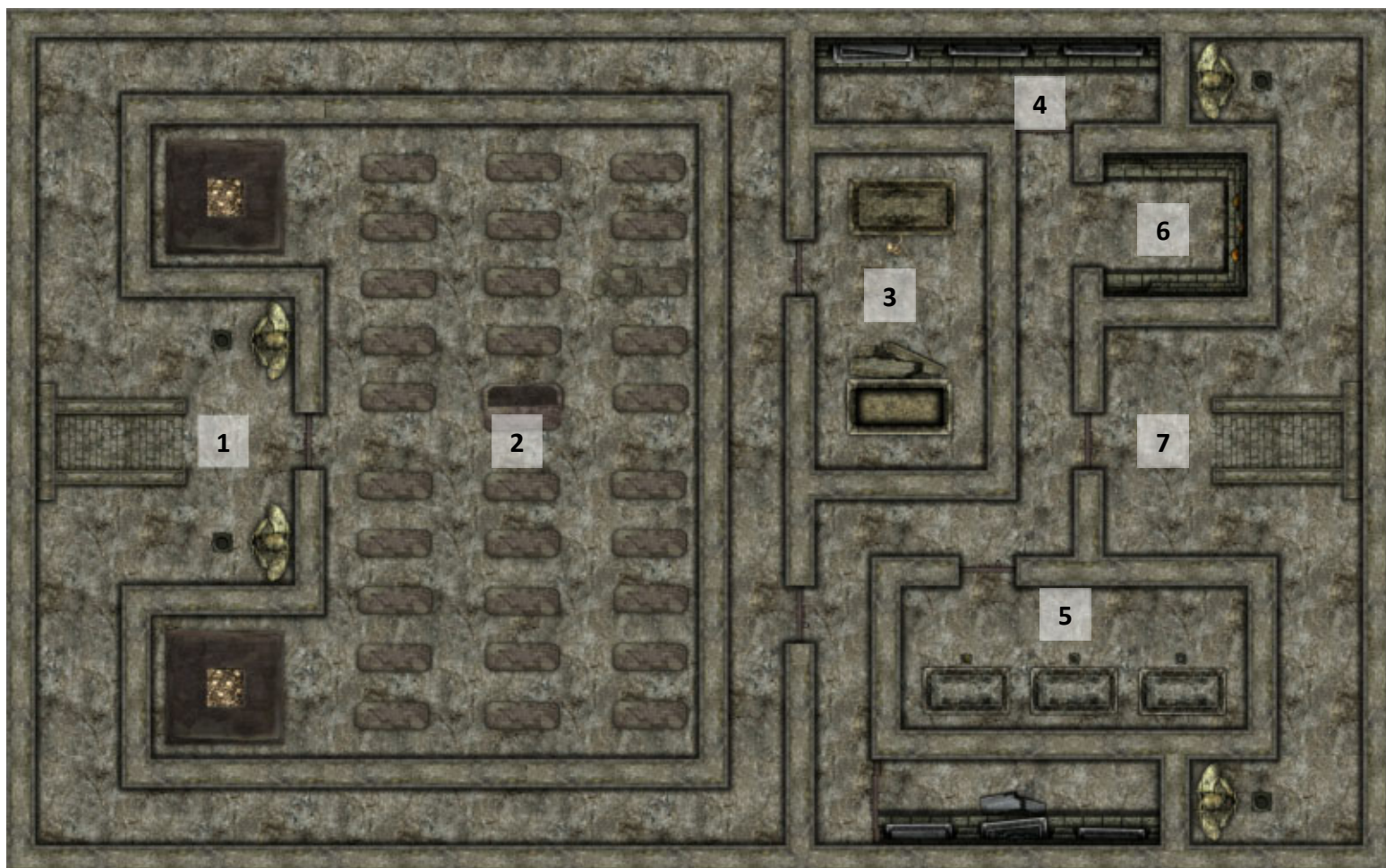
(such as Blacky, Rogue, Maximilian, Monster, Fang, Baldric, Silver, and so on). One casket has no name plate and no remains, as if ready for a future tenant. In the corners of each room are strange stone structures filled with bones – these are the remains of human victims killed in the lower level during advanced dog training exercises.

If the characters disturb any of the caskets, the dark magic of the crypt calls the dogs back from the grave to defend their grounds. Their bones animate, erupting from their sealed caskets and swarming around any transgressors until they leave the crypts or the hounds themselves are slain.

3. Crypt of the Master Trainers

Two sarcophagi occupy this rectangular chamber. The names Madelyn Doresh and Torvin Doresh are engraved on the caskets. A plaque on the wall explains that the husband and wife team of Master Trainers lost control of some dogs during a training exercise and were tragically mauled. One of the sarcophagi appears to have been thrown open from the inside, and the skeletal remains of Torvin are now crumpled at the side of Madelyn's casket.

Torvin has returned from the grave as a revenant to protect Madelyn even after death. Characters are free to investigate



Torvin's casket (they find only minor effects worth a handful of gold), but if they touch Madelyn's casket or interfere with it in any way, Torvin's remains animate to kill the offender. As soon as combat begins, spectral hounds materialize nearby and come to his aid.

4. Kennel Servants' Ossuary

Along one wall of this narrow, dead-end hallway are two rows of shelves upon which are stacked simple coffins. Few of the coffins hold anything of value, and nothing in this hall poses a threat.

5. Crypt of the Mothers

Three stone sarcophagi are placed along one wall in this room. Plaques bear the names, "Misha," "Nila," and "Mella." Inside each one is a preserved hound wreathed in funerary flowers. These were the female hounds that birthed the first generation of war dogs for the kennel, and they were given a hero's burial. They were buried with more riches than the trainers themselves – jewelry and dozens of small gold statuettes of puppies, each of which would fetch a good price. However, if anyone approaches any of the sarcophagi, the three mothers emerge from their eternal rest as spectral hounds (see **Bestiary**) and attack without mercy.

6. Room of Ashes

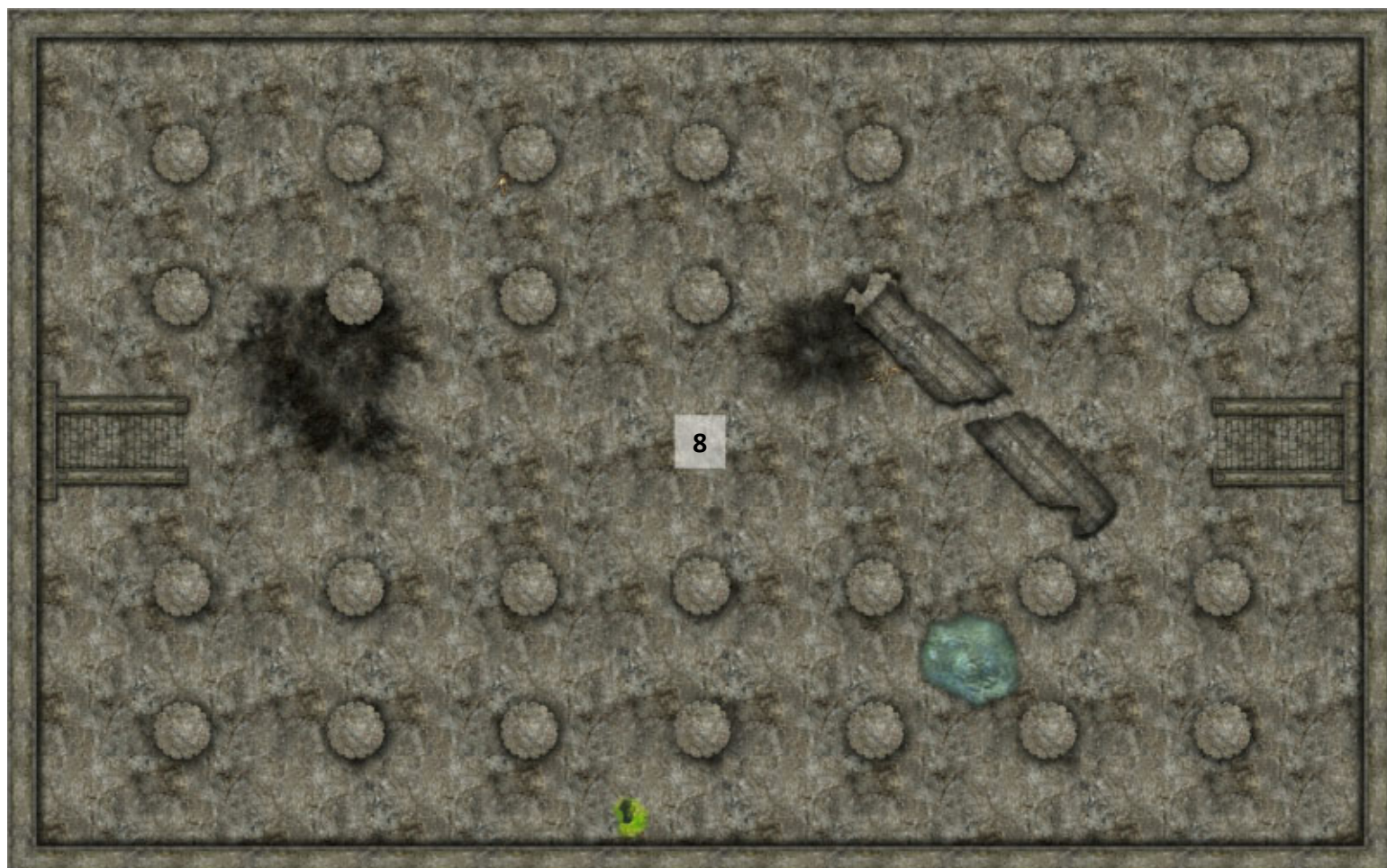
This odd chamber is lined with stone shelves upon which are numerous small urns with names of dogs. Every single one is marked with death dates that indicate the remains belonged to young dogs or pups. In every urn are ashes and bone chips.

7. Lonely Shrines

Down at the end of this long, dusty hallway is a shrine to a Master Trainer. Identical in all ways to the two statues near the entrance, these shrines depict a man and a woman, wearing training plate, and have a plinth and bowl set before them. One statue is engraved "Madelyn Doresh," and the other "Torvin Doresh." Burning an offering in the bowl turns the shrine into a holy area, as per the description in **The Entry Hall**.

8. The Hall of Death

Following the stairs down from the crypt leads to a massive chamber measuring 140' wide and 230' long. The ceiling here towers 80 feet into the air, held in place by 10'-thick pillars of etched granite. One of the pillars has toppled, brought down by a powerful *blast* spell in the distant past. A skeleton partially pinned under the felled pillar is wearing shreds of clothing. A successful Common Knowledge roll identifies the clothes as something a prisoner might wear.



Scorch marks blacken the floor here and there, though they are very old. A broad but shallow puddle has formed on one side of the hall from a steady drip in the ceiling. Algae have made the stone floor under the puddle very slick; anyone attempting to move through the puddle must make an Agility roll or fall prone. Also of note is a patch of weird slime growing out of a hole near the edge of the room. The slime is harmless, but it conceals the hole very well. Anyone passing through this square must make an Agility roll or fall into the hole, taking 1d6 damage. It extends down 10', but is so slick that it is impossible to escape without assistance from someone above.

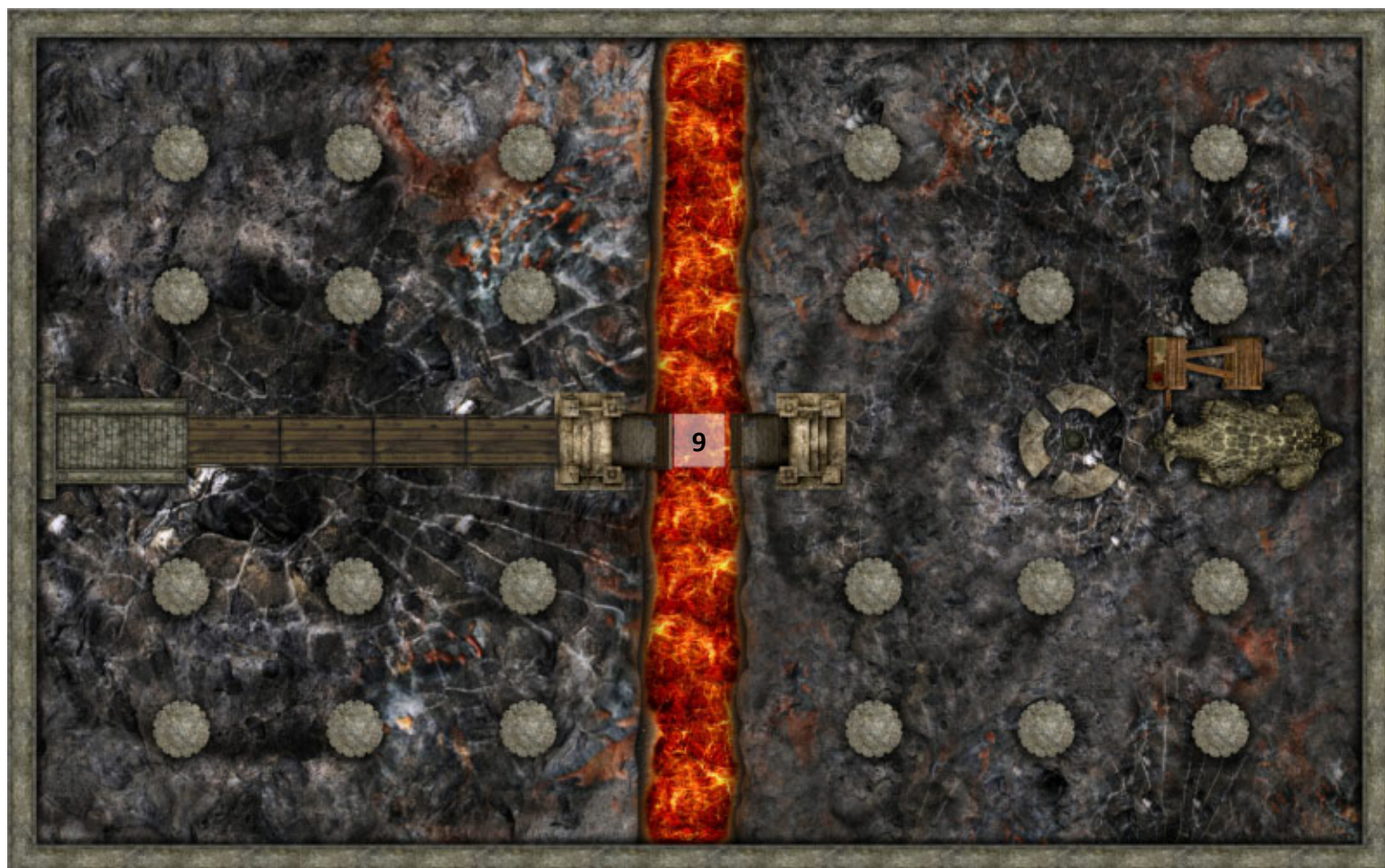
It was in this chamber that Orvane led his most sinister training exercises, the ones he kept even from some of his trainers. War dogs already possessed by the spirit of the hellhound were turned loose on captives in a series of horrific challenges designed to teach them the joys of hunting humans. The spirits of the victims still cling to these stones and are consumed with resentment. It takes a few rounds for them to awaken from their slumber and begin to form a Hate (see the Bestiary). At that time, no matter where the characters are, dark shadowy forms begin to emerge from the pillars and the floor, their transparent, twisted shapes reaching for warm flesh.

9. The Mouth of Hell

The final flight of stairs is very long, stretching 100' into the earth under the Hall of Death. As the characters progress, the air will grow hotter and hotter, the stone walls dripping with condensation. Any character with the Arcane Background (Miracles) Edge can make a Spirit roll to detect the presence of supernatural evil.

At the bottom of the stairs is another massive chamber cut out of the living rock. The air in here is quite warm (120 degrees Fahrenheit) and oppressively humid. This won't be enough to damage the characters, but they immediately begin to feel the effects of heat stress. Five minutes after entering the room, everyone must succeed at a Vigor roll or gain one level of Fatigue. Those wearing armor incur a (-2) penalty.

The heat comes from a huge crack that runs perpendicular to the path and across the opposite end of the chamber. Waves of heat and the occasional licking flame rise up from this crack, but more alarmingly, the distant sounds of tormented souls can be heard issuing from the crevasse. This is clearly no normal magma tube. In fact, those who succeed on a Knowledge (Geology) roll realize this part of the country is not known for volcanism.



The ceiling of this chamber is 80' tall and very rough, unlike the walls, which have been cut smooth and decorated with towering images of dogs engulfed in fire and battling soldiers. Pillars, which are identical to the ones in the Hall of Death, support the room.

The chamber's floor is searing, blackened lava rock. The jagged rock is thin and striated with numerous cracks which reveal white-hot magma beneath. Though it is strong enough to support even great weight, the surface of the floor is very hot, and anyone touching it takes 1d4 heat damage every round. Here and there can be seen the skeletal victims of those who succumbed to the scorching floor.

Crossing the room is made possible by an old wooden bridge that stands 10' off the floor, held in place by stone supports. There are no railings on the bridge, and in places it threatens to give way underfoot. At the end of the bridge is a stone platform upon which is a mechanism for lowering a drawbridge across the hell mouth. The mechanism still works, though it is very slow and rusty. Raising or lowering the bridge requires three successful Strength rolls at (-2).

On the other side of the bridge is an awe-inspiring sight. A massive statue of a glowering hound rises 20' off the steaming floor. It seems to gaze down at a trio of stone altars centered on an obsidian bowl. Steps and a raised platform offer access to the statue's muzzle. A cage off to the side still contains chains and dog collars. This is where Orvane forced the trapped hell-

hound to offer up some of its essence to his best-trained dogs. Up to three dogs at a time could be tied down on the altars. Orvane would then fill a bowl with flammable liquid and climb the steps so that he could hold the bowl before the hellhound's mouth and command it to breathe. Some of its foul flame would emerge and ignite the contents of the bowl, at which time Orvane would return to the dogs and force them to drink until the infernal fire had entered them, making them vessels for unholy power.

Though the magic circle that bound the hellhound to the statue is now gone, the hellhound has grown accustomed to its surroundings and returns here after every hunt. When the characters enter, the hellhound is once more inside the statue, but it is already aware of their approach and is plotting an attack. At the best moment, it causes flames to belch from the statue (use the cone template; anyone caught in the blast takes 2d10 damage) and then it materializes in the fire.

When the hellhound is vanquished, the flames in the pit begin to shrink and the room becomes noticeably cooler. However, the whole place begins to quake as the power that created it begins to fade. The pillars start to crumble and a huge spider web of cracks under the footbridge widen. Unless the characters dawdle, or have been trapped in some way, escaping the chamber in time is not hard, but it is a close shave. The rest of the complex becomes treacherous as walls and floors split, but they otherwise remain intact.

BESTIARY

The crypt is home to several horrors. Exact numbers are not given, so GMs can adjust the scale of encounters as desired.

HATE

This dark cloud of screaming faces is comprised of the raging spirits of those hunted and slain in the Hall of Death during training.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Skills: Notice d8

Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** Hates are immune to normal attacks. Magic items, weapons, and supernatural powers affect them normally.
- **Fear:** Anyone seeing this

creature must make a Fear check.

- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Rage:** A hate fills a Large Burst Template. Any character under the template must make an opposed Spirit roll. On a failure, the victim goes Berserk (as the Edge) and launches a violent attack against the nearest character, friend or foe. The character may try to end his rage as normal, but must succeed on an opposed Spirit roll rather than making a Smarts roll.
- **Swarm:** Parry +2. Because the hate is composed of dozens of souls, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-affect weapons work normally.



HELLHOUND

Hellhounds are vicious dog shaped beasts from the Abyss.

They have black hide, burning red eyes, and oversized razor-sharp teeth. They are expert hunters and unstoppable killing machines.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10, Stealth d6

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6
- **Fear:** Anyone who sees a hellhound must make a Fear roll.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Fleet Footed:** Hellhounds have a d10 running die.
- **Go for the Throat:** If a hellhound gets a raise on its attack roll, it

strikes its opponent's least armored location.

- **Immunity (Fire):** Hellhounds take no damage from fire.
- **Terrible Wounds:** The jagged teeth of a hellhound inflict terrible wounds, which do not heal quickly. Healing rolls, including magical and natural healing, are subject to a (-2) penalty in addition to wound penalties.

SKELETAL WAR DOG

These are the dried old bones of dead war dogs, animated through some foul sorcery.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d10, Stealth d8

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6
- **Fleet Footed:** Roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- **Go for the Throat:** Dogs instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on an attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly armored location.
- **Size -1:** Dogs are relatively small.
- **Fearless:** Skeletons are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage.

SPECTRAL HOUND

Spectral hounds appear as mist-shrouded, disembodied hounds with piercing red eyes.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d10, Stealth d8

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6
- **Fleet Footed:** Roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- **Go for the Throat:** Dogs instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on an attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly armored location.
- **Size -1:** Dogs are relatively small.
- **Ethereal:** Spectral hounds are immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks.
- **Fear -2:** Spectral hounds cause Fear checks at -2 when they are seen.



TORVIN DORESH

Though long-dead, Torvin's love for his wife has brought him back as a revenant, and he will seek to kill any who disturb her sarcophagus.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

Armor: Chain Hauberk (+2, torso only)

Weapons: Flail (Str+d6, ignores shield/weapon parry or cover bonus)

Special Abilities:

- **Command:** Torvin's close relationship with his war dogs allows him to use the Command Edge with any Spectral Hound or Skeletal War Dog in his command radius, adding +1 to their Spirit rolls to recover from Shaken.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Fervor:** War Dogs or Spectral Hounds within Torvin's command radius add +1 to their Fighting rolls.
- **Invulnerability:** If a revenant is Incapacitated, it collapses into a pile of bones for 1d3 days. It can only truly rest if its vengeance is sated, or a *banish entity* spell is cast over its Incapacitated form.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage.
- **Vengeful:** Torvin adds +2 to all actions and damage against any individual who has physically touched Madelyn's coffin.



Lash of the Master

Created to drive fear into the hearts of beasts, the Lash of the Master is a long, well-crafted snakewhip of supple black leather. The handle and butt knot are made of woven leather bands, and a 15' long thong tapers down to a slender popper of silvery thread. It glistens with alchemical luster and seems to slither in the hand like a coiled viper.

The Lash of the Master was created over a century ago by a man named Orvane, a master trainer for the kennels of Baron Arnovar. Orvane got his start as an animal handler through his work in a traveling circus – a milieu that offered him the respect and admiration he secretly craved.

Unfortunately, the beasts of the circus were far from easy to master. The trained dogs were obedient, but the bears which performed acrobatics took occasional swipes in his direction, and the strange, foreign, striped cat the circus owner called a “tiger” downright disobeyed Orvane. He attempted to dominate it the way the other circus handlers taught him, but the tiger was petulant and eyed Orvane like a potential meal. Several times during practice, the tiger lashed out at Orvane, leaving him with permanent scars on his legs and back.

Finally, the circus was due to perform before the Empress in a special engagement held on the palace grounds. Know-

ing his reputation as an animal handler was on the line, Orvane crept out of the circus at night and made his way to a shady district of the capitol city where he sought out the home of a sorcerer known for enchantments. He commissioned the sorcerer to create a special whip for him, one that would forever ensure his dominance over all animals. The sorcerer's work was well worth the money, as the whip he created gave Orvane the ability to terrify nearby animals merely by cracking it loudly. It worked perfectly that night and the show went off without a hitch.

Orvane's prowess with the animals caught the notice of Baron Arnovar, a lord known for training the most disciplined and skilled warriors in the Empress' army. Orvane went to work for Arnovar, pioneering a kennel for war dogs of unprecedented ferocity.

GMs running the adventure *The Dogs of War* (see Random Encounters) can tie the Lash of the Master with the adventure. The best place for it is hanging on a peg in the Hall of Death, along with several other regular whips, prods, vambraces, and other training gear.

Powers

Anyone wielding the Lash of the Master immediately feels a sense of calm superiority when around animals of any type. While possessing the whip, they are

granted the Beast Bond and Beast Master Edges, even if they do not otherwise qualify for them.

Additionally, the Lash of the Master has unlimited use of the *Fear* power, but it only affects animals (beasts with Animal intelligence) within a Large Burst Radius centered on the wielder. Humans and other creatures are unaffected. The wielder of the whip must spend an action cracking it to activate the power.

In all other respects, the Lash of the Master is a normal weapon. Whips do Str+1 damage, have a Range of 2", and reduce the wielder's parry by (-1). However, if the wielder rolls a raise on his attack roll, the attack doesn't inflict an additional d6 damage; instead, the victim suffers (-2) penalty to Parry until his next action.



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Pavor Unum

The Pavor unum is a small, circular disk approximately 5 inches in diameter made of a black, unknown metal. The top of the disk is ringed with white images along its perimeter depicting men being shackled, whipped, and tortured by dog-headed humanoids. The bottom of the disk has a single word etched into its surface: 'Servus'. Although the disk appears benign, it is actually an ancient artifact of deadly evil.

When the bearer utters the word on the disk, his mind is bombarded with intense images of horrible demons, human torture, and ritual sacrifice. Those able to withstand the mental onslaught are rewarded with incredible power, at least temporarily. Repeated, long term use slowly erodes the mind's ability to resist the artifact, eventually turning the bearer into a babbling madman.

History

When Earth was first formed and humanity was young, powerful ancient creatures fought for control of the world. An especially evil deity named Skalitobs forged the Pavor unum from bits of his own essence. With it, he hoped to turn enough humans to his side to force all others away from the world, ruling it entirely. Eventually he and his ilk were defeated and cast into oblivion, but the Pavor unum remained and with it, a bit of his power. Legend says that if the Pavor unum is able to absorb enough human souls, Skalitobs will return to wage his war once more.

Effect

Once the Pavor unum is in an individual's possession it begins whispering dark thoughts while the bearer sleeps. These thoughts manifest as dreams full of conflict and malice. Slaying one's companions or abusing the weak comes across as

useful and promising. The real terror begins once the bearer utters the word on the disk's bottom: 'Servus' – slave.

At that moment the bearer undergoes extreme mental stress as he witnesses horrific images as described above. The onslaught only lasts a few seconds, but is so powerful the individual must make a Fear check. If successful, the wielder gets a sense of power and confidence. If he fails, he must roll on the following table.

The confidence only lasts 24 hours, but the character always remembers how the disk made him feel after saying the trigger word. Every additional time the word is spoken, the character must make an additional Fear check with a cumulative (-1) penalty. Eventually, this leads to a failed check in which case the character must roll on the following table. The relic desires to consume human souls, but is only interested in being nourished by the most powerful.

Table

1d20	Effect
1-4	The character suffers no negative effect and gains all abilities listed below.
5-8	The character is Shaken and becomes Shaken at the beginning of every combat for the next 24 hours.
9-12	The character becomes Panicked, drops the disk, and moves his full Pace plus running die away from the disk for 2 minutes.
13-16	The character gains a Minor Phobia Hindrance to the disk and reacts accordingly.
17-18	The character gains a Major Phobia Hindrance to the disk and reacts accordingly.
19-20	The Hero is Shaken, receives a Major Phobia Hindrance to the

disk, and suffers some cosmetic physical alteration associated with fear. This permanently reduces his Charisma by 1.

Abilities

Once the character can freely utilize the object, he gains the following Powers, each usable once per day: *lower trait*, *confusion*, *darksight*, and *fear*. However, this power comes at a price. After each use, the character must make a Spirit roll to determine if he maintains his sanity. This roll initially receives a hidden +99 bonus. (The GM should add the bonus without the player's knowledge.) This bonus is reduced by 1 for every check until it becomes a penalty.

The hero is free to give away or stop using the relic at any time, resulting in the hero feeling depressed and withdrawn. Every ten or so rolls associated to using the disk, the hero should be given a subtle hint that the relic is altering him in some small way; headaches, chills, fever, or additional bad dreams are all appropriate warning signs. Once the character fails his Spirit roll, his soul is absorbed into the disk and is forever destroyed, devoured to power Skalitobs' return. The hero's body continues to function, but devoid of his soul, he becomes a raving, aggressive, madman.

Hooks

The Pavor unum is suitable for insertion into any campaign, but it is best utilized as an item to be stopped. Perhaps the PCs learn of the disk's existence via an ancient text or an adversary who has remarkable power. Or the PCs might be warned that Skalitobs is close to returning and the instrument of his return must be destroyed. If a PC begins to use it, outside intervention might be necessary before the hero is lost to the campaign.

By Christopher J.N. Banks

Spear of Uldearium

The Spear of Uldearium is a relic of a bygone age. An age when monstrous creatures roamed the world freely, kept in check only by stalwart heroes. One particular city state, Uldearium, was renowned for its ability to stave off attacks. Heroes, however, were not the reason for Uldearium's safety. Instead, it was the instrument of their defense, the Spear of Uldearium. Legend says that in the hands of a hero of 'pure heart,' the spear lights the way to victory.

The spear has an 8' long shaft of black ash topped with a 12" silver blade. Pristine blue sapphires lay scattered and imbedded along the shaft with a silver hand hold. It is lighter than a normal spear and emits a low, white glow and crackles with energy when it strikes.

History

The Spear was created by a conclave of druids long before recorded history to protect them from the wildness of the world around them. They fused magical essence into the spear over an especially powerful leyline. Their hero, Uldear, protected the settlement with the spear, driving back dozens of monsters and beasts. Uldear established himself as head of the settlement which, with safety, eventually grew and prospered until it became a city. After Uldear's passing, the city continued to grow and was christened 'Uldearium'.

For several hundred years the weapon was housed in the royal library in Uldearium, surrounded by the city's elite guards. One night it simply vanished from

the library, stolen by some enterprising soul. The instrument of the city's defense became the instrument of its demise. Once news of the spear's disappearance spread, the citizens of Uldearium lost faith in its safety. Monster attacks began to penetrate outer perimeters and advance deeper and deeper into the city. More and more citizens left for safer grounds, until the last vestiges of Uldearium fell to the wilds.

Since that time the Spear has popped up periodically in history and legend, usually found in the hands of a protector or village leader. The Spear has taken on a desire to bring civilization to the wild. Anyone wielding the Spear long term is filled with a desire to clear the wild, create a home, and encourage others to do the same. The desire is not overwhelming, just enough to push a wanderer into a settler.

Effect

Damage: Str+3d6

Weight: 3

Cost: * see explanation

Notes: Parry +2, Reach 1, 2 hands**

*The Spear of Uldearium can very rarely be purchased. If someone was extremely anxious to part with it and knew its nature, it would undoubtedly cost whatever the seller is asking and the buyer is willing to pay.

**The weapon does triple damage against creatures of Gargantuan size or larger. Wounds from the Spear of Uldearium cannot be Soaked.

Hooks

The Spear of Uldearium is well known throughout history for its ability to drive off massive and legendary creatures. Heroes may encounter the weapon in the hands of a town elder, willing to part with it temporarily to drive off a threat. The weapon may also be found deep in the heart of a fallen city, the centerpiece to an ancient city's defense. If in the hands of a hero for a long time, the GM should drop subtle hints that the Spear is slowly changing their demeanor. Wanderlust will fade and houses, settlements, and family seem more important. If the weapon is eventually lost, this sentiment slowly fades over time.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Descriptions are as described on event websites and were accurate as of this printing.

UNITED STATES

ODYSSEY CON -

WWW.ODYSSEYCON.ORG

Panels, events, games, and costume contest revolve around this year's themes: D & D's 40th birthday and Dr. Who's 50th anniversary.

Madison, WI

4/4-6/14

CONGLOMERATION -

WWW.CONGLOMERATION.INFO

ConGlomeration is Louisville, Kentucky's own fan-run multimedia science fiction and fantasy convention.

Louisville, KY

4/11-13/14

GNOMECON - GNOMECON.ORG

GnomeCon, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to education, literacy, and creativity through the spectrum of the science-fiction/fantasy multi-genre culture, hosting yearly conventions and events which highlight these important aspects.

Savannah, GA

4/11-13/14

UBCON - UBCON.ORG

Although there is a strong emphasis on gaming, over the years UBCon has evolved and accrued many other interests and fans, and today we celebrate the same core concept of coming together to celebrate common interests. Last year we had over 1600 gamers, cosplayers, LARPer's, NERFers, role-players, and other convention-goers.

Amherst, NY

4/11-13/14

MAG CON - MAGCON.ORG

A school fundraiser offering a huge, FREE Board Game Library, RPGs, Miniatures, Board Games, Door PRIZES! There's free, convenient parking, a flea market, concessions, and affordable admission.

New Caney, TX

4/12-13/14

SPRING MINICON - POLYCON.ORG

A smaller version of PolyCon, this convention provides the gaming community with a place to gather to enjoy gaming and fun. It is presented by students and alumni of Cali-

fornia Polytechnic State University.

San Luis Obispo, CA

4/19/14

MAGE CON SPRING - MAGE

PAGE.COM

There is something for everyone at a convention: great games, contests, miniatures, costumes, seminars, artwork and special guests.

South Sioux City, NE

4/25-27/14

NO BRAND CON -

NOBRANDCON.ORG

Hailing itself as Wisconsin's premiere anime convention, No Brand Con offers a wide array of gaming.

Eau Claire, WI

4/25-27/14

RAVENCON - RAVENCON.COM

A weekend celebrating the genres of Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror. Mystery fits well here, too.

Richmond, VA

4/25-27/14

ANOTHER GAME CONVENTION -

ANOTHERGAMECON.COM

RPGs, board games, card games, seminars, and more.

Hudson, OH

5/1-4/14

CAMP NERDLY -

CAMPNERDLY.WIKISPACES.COM

Camp Nerdly is a place you go to get some DIY gaming done, without a great deal of organization. Camping and gaming for all ages.

Prince William Forest Park, VA

5/16-18/14

CONCAROLINAS -

CONCAROLINAS.ORG

Full weekend of gaming, talks, contests, and more.

Raleigh, NC

5/16-18/14

CON DE MAYO - POLYCON.ORG

Our next event will be the Santa Maria Spring Games Day held on May 16, 2014 in the Community Room of the Santa Maria Town Center East in the lovely city of Santa Maria. In case you didn't realize Town Center East is in fact the mall of Santa Maria.

Santa Maria, CA

5/16/2014

GAMEX - STRATEGICON.NET

Our conventions offer the chance to play, watch and buy a variety of board games,

card games, miniatures, role-playing, collectables, and computer games.

Las Angeles, CA
5/23-26/14

KUBLACON - KUBLACON.COM

KublaCon is the West Coast's largest gaming convention, with over 72 hours of non-stop gaming FUN! Experience a huge choice of games from board games, to roleplaying, to special events of all sorts.

Burlingame, CA
5/23-26/14

THE NORTH TEXAS RPG CON - NTRPGCON.COM

The NTRPG Con focuses on old-school Dungeons & Dragons gaming as well as any pre-1999 type of RPG produced by the classic gaming companies of the 70s and 80s. We also support retro-clone or simulacrum type gaming that copies the old style of RPGs. Any RPG games are welcome at the Con so long as there are enough players.

Ft. Worth, TX
6/5-8/14

A-KON - A-KON.COM

If you like to watch Anime movies, television shows, read manga or comics, or play

games, you would probably have a great time at A-Kon.

Dallas, TX
6/6-8/14

SALTY BACON CON -

SALTYBAYCON.COM

Salty Bay Con is a convention for gamers, organized by gamers. This includes tabletop gamers, LARPer, fans of CCGs and board games, and war gamers too!

Tampa, FL
6/6-8/14

ORIGINS - ORIGINSGAMEFAIR.COM

Games of all kinds, vendors, special events, and artists, too.

Columbus, OH
6/11-15/14

DIECON 12 - DIECON.COM

Board Games, RolePlaying Games (RPGs), Collectable Card Games (CCGs) and Miniatures Games. With over 100 different games being played during the three days of our convention, you're sure to find something you like.

Collinsville, IL
6/20-22/14

POLYCON 32 - POLYCON.ORG

Our 32nd PolyCon will be held over three fun filled days at

the University Union of Cal Poly State University.

San Luis Obispo, CA
6/20-22/14

RAPIER CON - RAPIERCON.COM

We gladly welcome any board, miniatures, and role-playing games.

Jackson, FL
6/20-22/14

LIBERTYCON - .LIBERTYCON.ORG

LibertyCon is a convention that prides itself on great guests, phenomenal panels, and a killer ConSuite. We're a convention that is small on purpose since we want to give the fans a chance to sit down and chat with the guests.

Chattanooga, TN
6/27-29/14

ENGLAND

UK GAMES EXPO -

UKGAMESEXPO.CO.UK

UK Games Expo aims to be the premier event in the UK where all aspects of the gaming hobby are represented under one roof: card games, board games, role-playing games, miniature games, and family games.

Birmingham
5/30-6/1/14

RAIDERS OF THE GAME CUPBOARD

WWW.RAIDERSOFTHEGAMECUPBOARD.CO.UK

One day gaming convention featuring board games, role-playing, CCG, and many, many more. Quarterly.

Burton upon Trent
6/21/14

ITALY

PLAY: THE GAMES FESTIVAL -

WWW.PLAY-MODENA.IT

Like every year, PLAY aims to broaden and improve the range of games on offer, with special focus events and brand new gaming areas.

Modena, Italy
4/5-6/14

SCOTLAND

CONPULSION -

WWW.GEAS.ORG.UK/CONPULSION

RPGs, LARPs, Board Games, CCGs, and more!

Edinburgh, Scotland
4/25-27/14

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