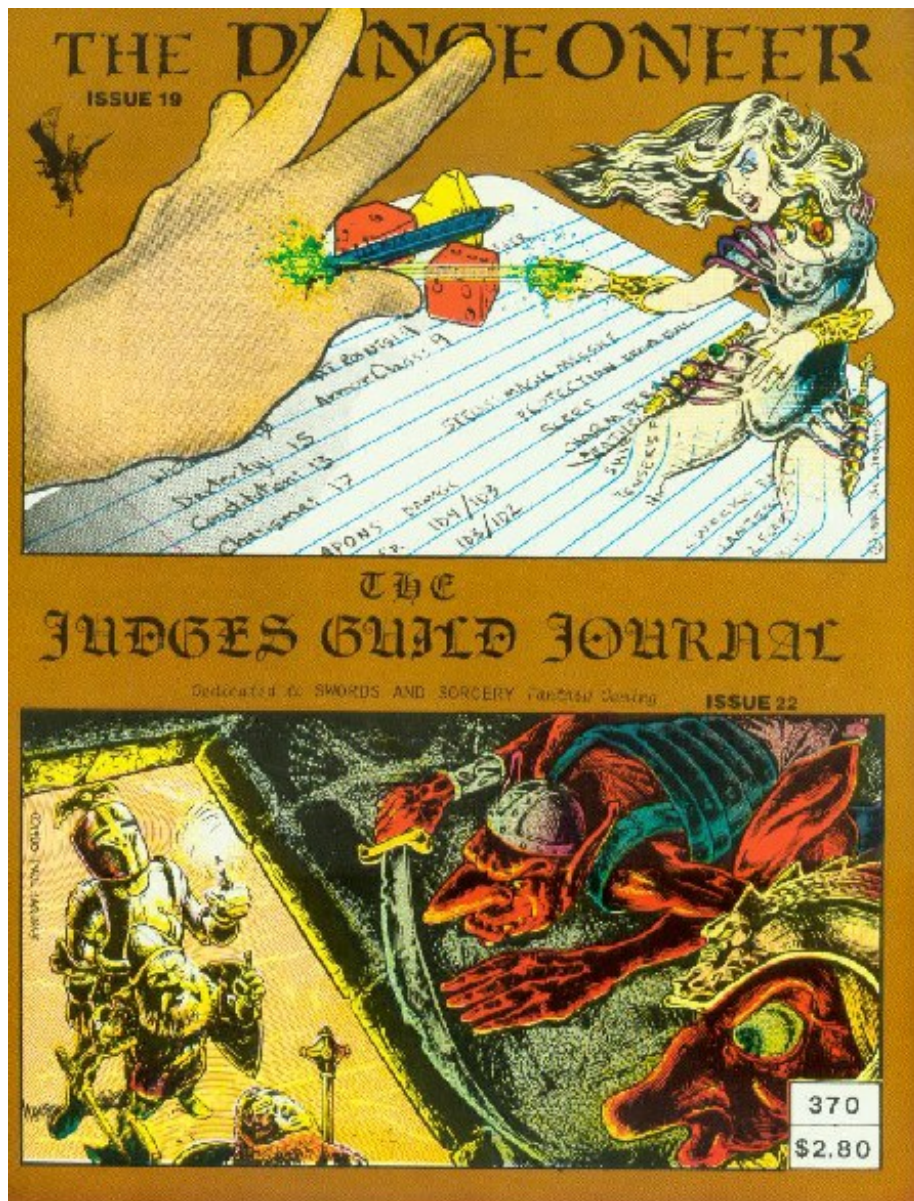


Why did you become an adventurer? (d30)

1. Early one morning you saw the sky crack, then break, revealing strange worlds behind the sky. You haven't been able to live an ordinary life ever since.
2. You came home one day and the sister you buried a year prior was alive and well. No one else in the family remembers her illness or death, yet her tombstone still stands in a nearby graveyard.
3. You used to work as a computer technician in a futuristic domed city, but woke up one morning the idiot child of the village blacksmith.
4. One day the bucket of the village well brought up blood instead of water. No one else seemed to mind, but you sure as hell did.
5. After the eclipse everyone else spoke a different language. You're pretty sure the folks back home thought you'd been possessed by a babbling demon. You've only now just picked up the basics of your new native tongue.
6. Returning from a visit to a distant kinsman, an ancient forest covers the exact spot your village used to occupy. You turned around and the trail you followed was gone.
7. You were caught up in a war between shadowy angels and titanic metal gods. At the final battle you took a blow to the head. When you came to you were still on the same charred and bloodstained field, but everyone and everything else was gone. None of the locals remember the war or its combatants, yet you have a dozen scars from it.
8. One night you came home after a long day in the fields. The womenfolk wailed and the menfolk cowered. Your own brother drove you out of the house with a cleaver in one hand and a holy symbol in the other. Later you found your own gravestone. According to it, you've been dead 3 years.
9. You worked up the nerve to ask the elder of the clan what had happened to the shadows. Why were they no longer a luminous rainbow glow, but instead dark and spooky? Without answering, he had you driven out of the community.
10. On the day after midsummer everyone you knew started calling you by a different name, as if it had always been your own. They also began blaming you for a wide variety of petty crimes. Then you realized your face had changed as well. Who are you?
11. You used to live by the sea until one night a brass galleon with a skeletal crew slid into the harbor. A skeleton prince wearing a flaming crown blew a silent note on a bronze horn. Everyone in your village marched aboard the galleon, as if in a daze. It sailed away, leaving you alone forever.
12. In all your dull life you never expected to see an aerial battle right above your village. Dragons and demons and flying ships exchanged strange fires and multi-colored lightning. One of the dragons fell. Only then did you realize how far up and how huge the combatants were. The dying dragon crushed everyone and everything you ever cared about.
13. You used to be a dog. Slightly smarter than most dogs, but just a dog. Your young owner treated you cruelly. Then one day you and your owner swapped bodies for no discernible reason. The dog ran away--no doubt fearing revenge--but you had to run too because you couldn't successfully imitate your former owner.
14. One day you awoke in a mass grave. It was only after you climbed out of a pile of rotting corpses that you realized you had no idea who you were or how you got there.

15. No one else back home can see the hole in the sky or the baleful gaze of the hideous cosmic beast that watches us through it. You couldn't work in the open fields any more, knowing it was always looking over your shoulder. You had to flee. It still watches.
16. You used to be the whole universe, one vast ecstatic cosmic consciousness. But then more and more of your all-body became numb and alienated. Now you're just this tiny lump of ambulatory meat and you don't know what happened or why.
17. You don't know on what strange battlefield it received its wounds or whether it was a giant or a god or something else, but it stumbled into the village green and promptly died. Everyone else in the village entered into some weird frenzy, gleefully tearing the corpse apart and devouring it raw. As you fled in horror they started to change into unhuman things.
18. Twice a year every year you had taken the old ferry, for as long as you could remember. This time when you reached the far bank of the river it was a totally different place. You turned around and the ferry was gone. So was the river.
19. You used to be a professional circus freak, the Hideous One-Headed Four-Limbed Abomination. Then one day the sky flashed a weird color and suddenly everyone else was deformed just like you. The poor bastards don't even remember their former three-headed, six-limbed glory. You're not a freak anymore, but you're out of a job and still kinda feel like one.
20. One day you started growing at a prodigious rate--or perhaps everything else shrunk--until your head cracked open the sky. You grew and grew until you were normal size in a much bigger universe outside your old one.
21. You were born with a special gift: You can dimly remember your past and future lives, as if your consciousness were a tangled thread in the weave of time. People back home thought you were a witch. Maybe they're right, but the whole burning-at-the-stake thing they tried was still super rude.
22. One day the earth shook and the land shifted. Your home and all your kin sunk beneath the waves, which was surprising seeing as how you lived a hundred leagues from the sea. You'd have drowned, too, if not for that log you clung to.
23. One day cracks opened in the sky. You suddenly fell upwards and landed someplace else.
24. One day you noticed an extra door in your home. From the darkness beyond a gnarled green hand beckoned. You're still not sure why you followed or who that goblin was.
25. You used to be an astronaut. Your single seat orbital spacecraft passed through a strange energy field and you lost all contact with mission control. You splashed down in a world that doesn't seem to be Earth.
26. The block of ice you were frozen in thawed out. Apparently your home civilization has been gone for a whole ice age.
27. Back in the day you were a glorious 7-dimensional hyperbeing. Then the war in heaven came. An omega angel wielding a meson blade sliced off a 3-dimensional appendage, which fell down to ordinary spacetime. You may look like an normal person, but you're really a living amputation in a fallen world.
28. The glowing blue rain turned everyone else in your home village into hideous snake people. They told you they still loved you, even though you're now the local freak. But you couldn't cope and fled.
29. You were a footsoldier in the last of the Psychic Wars, but an Oblivion Bomb has scrambled most of your memories of the conflict. You're not even sure how you ended up on this particular planet.
30. You used to be a god. Your whole pantheon fought in Ragnarokkagedon, but your side lost. To escape the Cosmic Regulators and the inevitable trial for Crimes against Divinity, you dispersed your god-power and implanted your essence into a mortal body.



The Dungeoneer #19/*Judges Guild Journal* #22 is an odd duck of a magazine. The *Journal* was the flagship periodical of the Guild, while the *Dungeoneer* began life as one of the early D&D fanzines, this one launched by the great Jennell Jaquays and friends. Jaquays et al. produced six issues before they sold to Bob Bledsaw. (JG also reprinted the first 6 issues as a single book usually called *Dungeoneer Compendium*, though the cover says its *The Dungeoneer: The Adventuresome Compendium of Issues 1-6*. Whatever you call it, I rank it right up there with the first 3 *Arduin Grimoires* as one of the best supplements from the good ol' days.)

The Guild decided to merge the two publications and this is the first issue of the merger, hence the two half-covers. Take a moment to enjoy the cover art. I don't know which I like better, the spell lady magic missile-ing the hand that created her, or the party looking up into the hole in the ceiling, not knowing some red gobliny dudes are waiting up there for them. (Extra nerdy note: The character sheet in the top illo is clearly from an OD&D game that used Supplement I: *Greyhawk*. Score an extra nerd point in the comments by explaining how I know that.)

After this weird hybrid, the next three magazines put out by Judges Guild would be issues 23 through 25 of *The Dungeoneer Journal*, followed by issue one of *Pegasus*. The latter magazine ran 12 issues. An issue #14 came out in 1999 and #15 was, I believe, a PDF only from around 2004. Did *Pegasus* #13 ever get published? I honestly don't know. What I do know is that while I've never been a collector of Judges Guild campaign installments or Journals, I've never been disappointed with issues of *Dungeoneer*, *Dungeoneer Journal*, or *Pegasus*. As a whole, I give these periodicals two hearty thumbs up.

I'm not going to run through everything in this issue, because I intend to focus on one article. But here are some of the other cool things inside.

- "Critical Hits and Fumbles on Non-Humans" by Glenn Goddard. Two functional looking percentage charts, similar in many ways to Dave Hargrave's charts. My fave result for sheer gruesomeness is probably "spine ruined."
- "Dungeons Diseases" by the great Lewis Pulsipher. I'll admit this one disappointed me initially. I was hoping for disgusting fungal infections, orc rot, rectal bees, etc. Instead it's a comedy piece commenting on certain kinds of players. Example: Mapitis in which the "victim becomes more interested in maps than monsters. He incessantly asks questions about angles and distances."
- "Jewelry" by the also great Steve Marsh. One page of charts of various things that can be jeweled.
- The regular Monster Matrix column includes a nifty critter called the Balloon Beast by Gregg and John Pittenger. It's a shame that this monster has not been folded into the umpteen varieties of beholder variants. The Waldweibchen by Kurt Smeby is a great example of the kind of grumpy and mercurial fairy that D&D needs more of.
- "Mac's Packs" by Thomas A. McCloud is another example of the "fast pack" concept. 4 pre-packaged sets of adventurers gear in a container (backpack or sack) sold at a discount. Personally, I lean towards charging more than regular because of the premium on convenience. Still, neat stuff.
- "Adapting the *Book of Demons*" also by Lew Pulsipher. I can't leave something with the words "*Book of Demons*" off this list, but it's about making a demonology game product work better with bog standard D&D assumptions. I'm not certain, but I suspect the work in question is the same *Book of Demons* that ended up bundled into Gamescience's *The Fantasy Gamer's Compendium*. At the moment I can't locate my copy of the latter to confirm, but, as I recall, one of the reasons I've never made much use of this *Compendium* is that all of its components seem written for a fairly idiosyncratic campaign. Pulsipher seems to be dealing with that exact issue in his article.
- "Metallurgy and FRP," also by Steve Marsh, is a one column piece on considering how the rise and fall of demand brought on by new technologies can impact the relative value of metals in your campaign.
- "Dungeon Generator" by Charles L. Evans is exactly what it says on the tin. It resembles the one in the Gamescience product *The Book of Tables*, but I can't confirm if they are the same just now. My guess is that both Gamescience products are sitting next to each other on some bookshelf or another.
- "Traveller Rumors" by Bill Paley is one page with 13 adventure seeds for any campaign. I'm pretty sure that the planets mentioned in the text (Pickering, Salivarius II, Credosh III, Bendex III, Krestmast, Samelos XII) do not appear in any known canonical sector.
- "The Old Hill" is an adventure by Steve Marsh written for *Chivalry & Sorcery*. It is set in a pocket universe called a Garden World, one of "a series of interlocking planes of existence... They were the lesser hearths of each of the Vali or Star Powers summoned by the Norns when they wove the world... Then came the blight of Upharsin and many things changed." This isn't the first time I've really grooved on Marsh's sense of cosmic history. In the adventure itself PCs can be struck by the literal Wrath of God as well as fight an angel, a daughter of Lilith, and a really grumpy tree. I also live this bit from the introduction: "Some of the inspiration for this came from Ed Simbalist and from William Glenn Seligman. An Erol Flynn movie ran as background for the typing and mapping. I especially want to thank Lee Gold for her helpful comments." Lee Gold is the matriarch of *Alarums & Excursions*, the long-running D&D apa-zine. Ed Simbalist is one half of the team that created *Chivalry & Sorcery*. And Bill Seligman is the author of one of the best *Dragon* articles ever written, "[Gandalf was Only a Fifth Level Magic-User](#)."

None of those articles or the ones I haven't mentioned are why I started this piece. Instead I want to talk about Kevin Fortune's "Using Klutz Factors." This is a short piece in the long tradition of making magic-users roll dice to

cast spells. I've tackled this sort of thing before myself, as have many others. What I want to give to you today is NOT a simple transcription of Fortune's system, but a slightly spruced-up version. My two main objects with the system as presented are 1) too many percentile rolls and 2) some multiplication of percentages. By switching to mostly d20-based rolls and adding an extra chart to remove the math, I feel like the result preserves the spirit of Fortune's system while trimming the fat considerably. I've also limited myself to the first 14 levels of experience and 6 levels of spells. Gandalf may have been higher than 5th level but I don't care much about anything higher than Expert level anymore.

Revised Klutz Factors

after Kevin Fortune, *Dungeoneer #18/Judges Guild Journal #22* pages 7-9 (Aug/Sep 1980)

I. What You Gain

No magic-user likes limitations on their power and this system, which requires a casting roll for every spell, is pretty limiting compared to a lot of versions of D&D. However, it comes with one big advantage for MU's: **you may keep casting the same spell but the Klutz Factor doubles each time**, until a Klutz effect (a fumble) prevents you from casting again. This system actually sounds like it would work well for those BX referees who stick to the hard version of the spellbook rules, which say that if your MU can cast 2 first level spells a day and 1 second level that is the maximum number of spells allowed in your book (see page B16). Some DMs might even want to forbid players from doubling up on spell memorization under this scheme (e.g. no 2nd level MUs memorizing 2 *sleep* spells).

II. What You Need to Track

Each MU has a Klutz Factor for each level of spell they can cast. This is a three variable factor, so in a 2-d presentation like this screen, it'll take two charts to get to. Every time your MU changes INT or their level, you'll need to look this back up. Use Tables 1 and 2 to find your character's Klutz Factor.

Table 1: MU Level versus Spell Level

	Spell Level					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
MU level						
1	A	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)
2	E	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)
3	I	B	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)
4	J	E	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)
5	K	G	C	(A)	(A)	(A)
6	L	I	E	(A)	(A)	(A)
7	L	J	G	D	(A)	(A)
8	M	K	H	E	(A)	(A)
9	M	K	I	G	D	(A)
10	M	L	J	G	E	(A)
11	N	L	J	H	F	E
12	N	L	K	I	G	F
13	N	M	K	J	H	G
14	N	M	K	J	H	H

The A's in parentheses are spells someone of that level shouldn't be able to cast. They don't figure into Fortune's original tables, but I added them in case you wanted someone to fumble a high level scroll under this system or something like that.

Once you have the letter code for each spell level you can cast, cross index the result on Table 2 to find the Klutz factor for each level of spell your MU can cast. You should probably record this number adjacent to the spells/per day indicator on your character sheet.

Table 2: Intelligence to Klutz Factor

	Magic-User Intelligence															
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
A	19	18	16	15	14	13	11	10	9	8	6	5	4	3	1	1
B	12	11	11	10	9	8	7	7	6	5	4	3	2	2	1	1
C	11	11	10	9	8	8	7	6	5	5	4	3	2	2	1	1
D	10	10	9	8	8	7	6	6	5	4	3	3	2	1	1	1
E	9	9	8	8	7	6	6	5	4	4	3	3	2	1	1	1
F	8	8	7	7	6	6	5	5	4	3	3	2	2	1	1	0
G	8	7	6	6	6	5	4	4	4	3	2	2	2	1	1	0
H	7	6	6	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	0
I	6	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	0
J	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	0
K	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	0
L	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
M	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
N	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0

This Klutz Factor is a d20 thing. When an MU fails to cast a spell you've got to roll **over** this number to avoid a spell fumble. Every subsequent time you cast the same spell in a day, this number doubles. That looks absolutely disastrous for low-INT magic-users, but you need to blow the casting roll to even reach this point in the process. One of the downsides of this system, probably the one that trips me up the most, is that you need to look this stuff up for NPC magic-users. Since I'm super lazy about such things, here are all the Klutz Factors for an MU of 11 Intelligence.

Table 3: Typical MU Klutz Factors

MU level	Spell Level					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	9	(9)	(9)	(9)	(9)	(9)
2	4	(9)	(9)	(9)	(9)	(9)
3	3	6	(9)	(9)	(9)	(9)
4	2	4	(9)	(9)	(9)	(9)
5	2	4	5	(9)	(9)	(9)
6	1	3	4	(9)	(9)	(9)
7	1	2	4	5	(9)	(9)
8	1	2	3	4	(9)	(9)
9	1	2	3	4	5	(9)
10	1	1	2	4	4	(9)
11	1	1	2	3	4	4
12	1	1	2	3	4	4
13	1	1	2	2	3	4
14	1	1	2	2	3	3

Example: Andrigal of the Weeping Beard, a 3rd level MU, attempts his second *web* of the day. His normal Klutz Factor, as a default Int 11 NPC, is 6 for second level spells. Since he has attempted *web* once today, his Klutz Factor is doubled to 12. His chances to cast are the same as always (see below), but if he fails the casting roll then he will fumble the spell on a second d20 roll of 1-12. Note that his 3rd and subsequent *web* spells of the day are all going to be fumbles IF he blows the spellcasting roll, but he can risk it as many times as his shriveled heart desires.

III. The Casting Roll

Before the Klutz Factor comes into play, Fortune's system calls for a casting roll similar to that employed in *Chainmail*, but d20 based and expanded to cover a wider range of levels. On the chart below an I indicates Instantaneous success (the spell goes off), a D indicates a Delay, the MU must keep chanting and gesticulating for d3 rounds before the spell goes off (d3 turns for non-combat spells), and an N indicates No Effect. According to Fortune's system **only when a No Effect occurs is the Klutz Factor check made.** Though I'd also consider using Klutz Factor rolls for when someone took damage while working through a Delay effect.

Table 4: Spellcasting Chart

MU Level	Spell Level					
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1	1-8N/9-12D/13-20I	(1-9N/10-14D/15-20I)	(1-10N/11-15D/16-20I)	(1-10N/11-16D/17-20I)	(1-10N/11-17D/18-20I)	(1-10N/11-18D/19-20I)
2	1-7N/8-11D/12-20I	(1-8N/9-12D/13-20I)	(1-9N/10-14D/15-20I)	(1-10N/11-15D/16-20I)	(1-10N/11-16D/17-20I)	(1-10N/11-17D/18-20I)
3	1-6N/7-10D/11-20I	1-7N/8-11D/12-20I	(1-8N/9-12D/13-20I)	(1-9N/10-14D/15-20I)	(1-10N/11-15D/16-20I)	(1-10N/11-16D/17-20I)
4	1-5N/6-9D/10-20I	1-6N/7-10D/11-20I	(1-7N/8-11D/12-20I)	(1-8N/9-12D/13-20I)	(1-9N/10-14D/15-20I)	(1-10N/11-15D/16-20I)
5	1-4N/5-8D/9-20I	1-5N/6-9D/10-20I	1-7N/8-11D/12-20I	(1-8N/9-12D/13-20I)	(1-9N/10-14D/15-20I)	(1-10N/11-15D/16-20I)
6	1-3N/4-7D/8-20I	1-4N/5-8D/9-20I	1-6N/7-10D/11-20I	(1-7N/8-11D/12-20I)	(1-8N/9-12D/13-20I)	(1-9N/10-14D/15-20I)
7	1-2N/3-6D/7-20I	1-3N/4-7D/8-20I	1-5N/6-9D/10-20I	1-7N/8-11D/12-20I	(1-8N/9-12D/13-20I)	(1-9N/10-14D/15-20I)
8	1N/2-5D/6-20I	1-2N/3-6D/7-20I	1-4N/5-8D/9-20I	1-6N/7-10D/11-20I	(1-7N/8-11D/12-20I)	(1-8N/9-12D/13-20I)
9	1-4D/5-20I	1N/2-5D/6-20I	1-3N/4-7D/8-20I	1-5N/6-9D/10-20I	1-7N/8-11D/12-20I	(1-8N/9-12D/13-20I)
10	1-3D/4-20I	1-4D/5-20I	1-2N/3-6D/7-20I	1-4N/5-8D/9-20I	1-6N/7-10D/11-20I	(1-7N/8-11D/12-20I)
11	1-2D/3-20I	1-3D/4-20I	1N/2-5D/6-20I	1-3N/4-7D/8-20I	1-5N/6-9D/10-20I	1-7N/8-11D/12-20I
12	1D/2-20I	1-2D/3-20I	1-4D/5-20I	1-2N/3-6D/7-20I	1-4N/5-8D/9-20I	1-6N/7-10D/11-20I
13	1-20I	1D/2-20I	1-3D/4-20I	1N/2-5D/6-20I	1-3N/4-7D/8-20I	1-5N/6-9D/10-20I
14	1-20I	1-20I	1-2D/3-20I	1-4D/5-20I	1-2N/3-6D/7-20I	1-4N/5-8D/9-20I

For many campaigns, it would make sense to allow the players to record these numbers for their character. But when I've tried a similar system before I kept this sort of info behind the screen because I like to keep some of the workings of magic a mystery to the players. Note that a system like allows for a campaign where high level casters don't necessarily reshape the world in their image. Wizards know that high level spells are unpredictable enough they should only be used in emergencies.

I've added the numbers that are highlighted/in parentheses for situations like a low level MU casting a spell directly out of some higher level character's spell book.

IV. The Klutz Effects

Okay, so your favorite pet magic-user has rolled an N effect on their casting roll and then rolled high enough on the follow-up d20 that a fumble has occurred. Throw a d10 and consult the chart below to see what actually happens.

Table V: Klutz Result Chart

1. Spell has normal effect, but on the wrong side of the conflict.
2. Spell has reverse effect on target.
3. Spell has normal effect, but only on Magic-User who cast it.
4. Spell has no effect and caster Mind Blanked, unable to cast for rest of day.
5. Spell has normal effect but Magic-User drained 1-4 points of Intelligence for rest of day.
6. Spell has no effect and Magic-User drained 1-4 points of Intelligence for rest of day.
7. Spell has reverse intended effect on wrong side of conflict.
8. Spell has reverse effect, but only on Magic-User who cast it.
9. Spell negated and Magic-User loses ability to cast a random spell for 1-4 days.
10. Spell klutzed so badly that Magic-User is scared to use it again.

Obviously once you have the whole system in place this last chart is the sort of thing that can be added to and/or modified to suit the spirit of the campaign. Also, Fortune includes a few lines about overcome the fear effect of number 10, but it references the mechanics "Bravery," "character roll," and "Conversion Chart" without explaining what those things actually are.

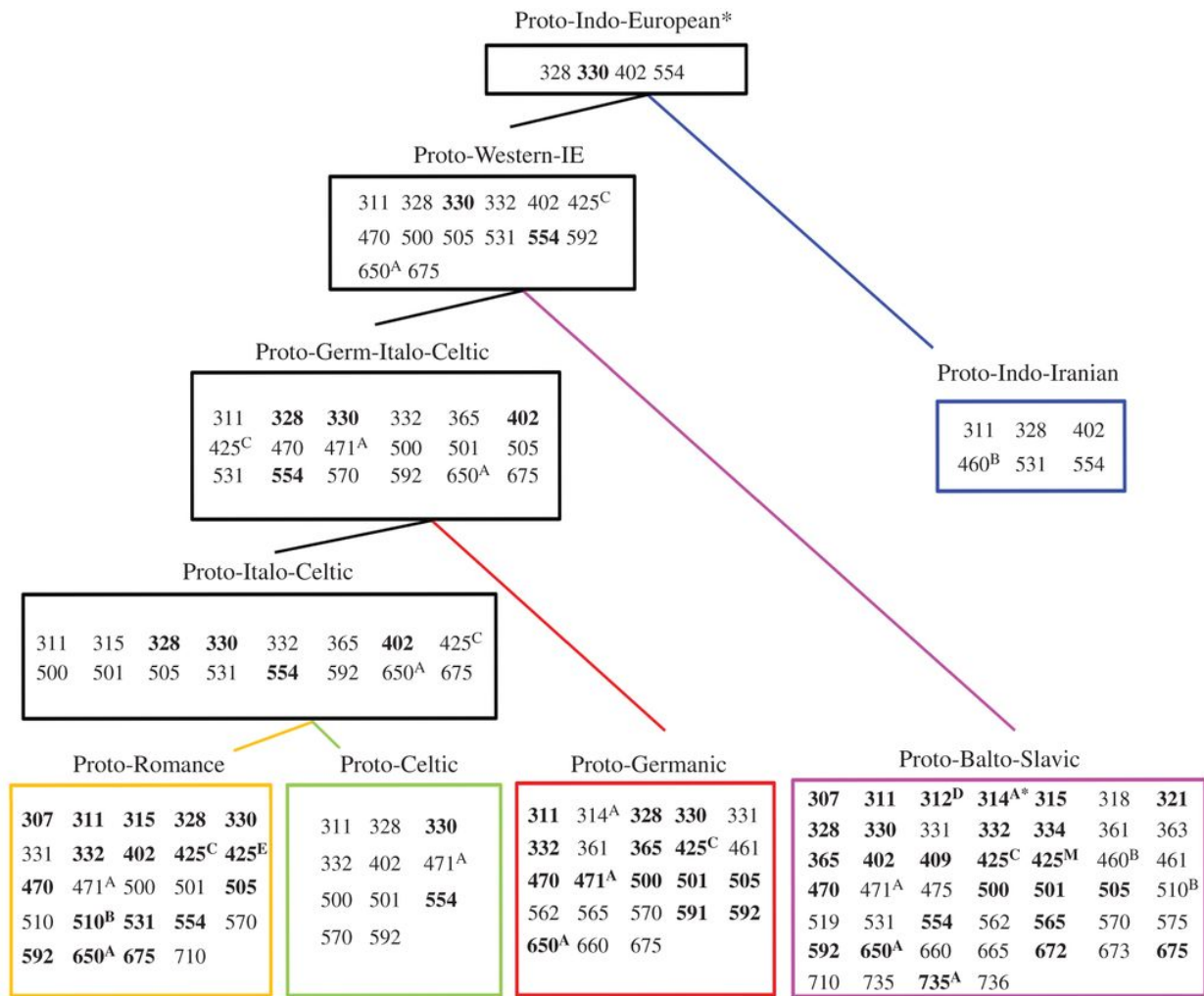
So there you have it. Another system for making MUs more complicated and a bigger pain in the ass to play. I'm



normally pro-MU and anti-complication, but I'm also pro-rolling more dice and anti-magic is as reproducible as a grade school science demonstration.

Hey, remember me? The semester is over and I have half a minute before my summer class begins, so I decided to write about a little something. This is an idea that's been brewing since January when that venerable institution the Guardian ran a story titled "[Fairytales much older than previously thought, say researchers.](#)" Yeah, I read the Guardian sometimes. I usually treat inflammations of my chronic anglophilia with a bottle of Newcastle and old Doctor Who reruns, but sometimes I need stronger medication.

Any, these researchers da Silva and Tehrani did some big data type analysis to a corpus of international fairytales and basically built a family tree. Here's the key chart from [their paper](#):



International tale types

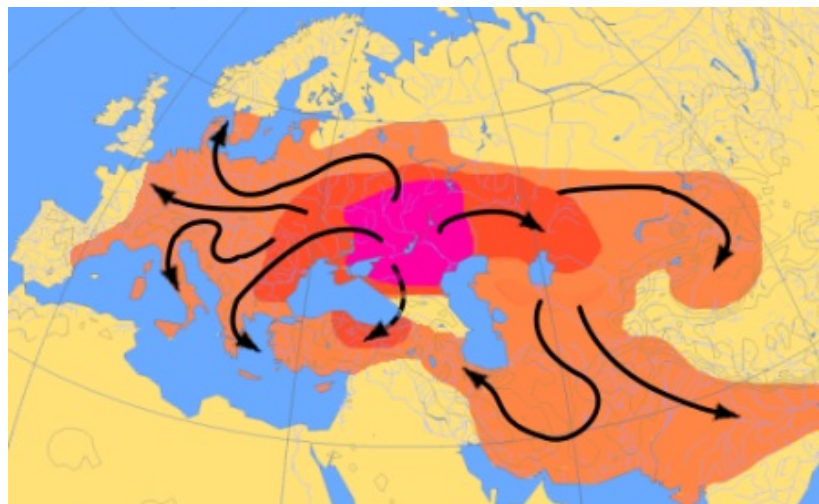
307	The Princess in the Coffin	409	The Girl as Wolf	562	The Spirit in the Blue Light
311	Rescue by Sister	425C	Beauty and the Beast	565	The Magic Mill
312D	Rescue by the Brother	425E	The Enchanted Husband	570	The Rabbit-Herd
314A	The Shepherd and the Giants	425M	The Snake Bridegroom	575	The Prince's Wings
314A*	Animal Helper in the Flight	460B	The Journey	591	The Thieving Pot
315	The Faithless Sister	461	Three Hairs	592	The Dance Among Thorns
318	The Faithless Wife	470	Friends in Life and Death	650A	Strong John
321	Eyes Recovered from Witch	471A	The Monk and the Bird	660	The Three Doctors
328	The Boy Steals Ogre's Treasure	475	The Man as the Heater	665	The Man who Flew and Swam
330	The Smith and the Devil	500	Supernatural Helper	672	The Serpent's Crown
331	The Spirit in the Bottle	501	The Three Old Spinning Women	673	The White Serpent's Flesh
332	Godfather Death	505	The Grateful Dead	675	The Lazy Boy
334	Household of the Witch	510	Cinderella and Peau d'Âne	710	Our Lady's Child
361	Bear Skin	510B	Peau d'Asne	735	The Rich and the Poor Man
363	The Corpse-Eater	519	The Strong Woman as Bride	735A	Bad Luck Imprisoned
365	The Dead Bridegroom	531	The Clever Horse	736	Luck and Wealth
402	The Animal Bride	554	The Grateful Animals		

The three columns at the bottom look like they'd make pretty sweet band names.

What you're looking at is a family tree of fairy tales grouped by language family. The thing that blew me away about this chart is the small box at the top, which suggests that humans have been telling and retelling the same four stories since French and German and English and Spanish and Slavic and a whole bunch of other tongues were all the same language. That puts the origin of these fairy tales around 2500 to 4500 BC. Some folks identify the original speakers of this Proto-Indo-European (PIE) language as the kurgan (barrow)-builders living in the region between the Black Sea and the Baltic. You know, like the villain from the one and only Highlander movie.

“I have something to say: It’s better to burn out than fade away!”

The kurgan fairy tales then spread with the Proto-Indo-European language as it migrated and diverged into the dazzling array of linguistic variety we see today. Here’s a map of the initial movement from the center:



Back in 2010 (when this blog was still a daily thing) I wrote a five part series on D&D set in this long lost era called [Imperishable Fame](#). Today I want to talk about incorporating the four Proto-Indo-European fairy tales into a typical faux European vanilla fantasy setting.

First, let’s talk about the tales themselves. They’re identified in da Silva and Tehrani’s research paper like so:

- 328 - The Boy Steal’s Ogre’s Treasure
- 330 - The Smith and the Devil
- 402 - The Animal Bride
- 554 - The Grateful Animals

The Smith and the Devil is bolded because the researchers are flagging it as an even more likely component of the PIE corpus than the others. My basic idea here is that we should be mining these tales for plot elements to our games. After all, they represent our joint heritage in the exact sort of mytho-poetic imaginative nonsense we engage with in D&D every day. I’ll get to some ideas of how to do that at the end of the post. For now, I want to give some details on these four tales.

The numbers for each of the fairy tales on da Silva and Tehrani’s are what is called their ATU number. That stands

for Aarne-Thompson-Uther. Folklorists Aarne and Thompson put together a huge ass taxonomy of hundreds of structurally similar stories and a cat named Hans-Jörg Uther later revised it into a four-volume work called *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography*. For a similar work on a smaller scale, see S. John Ross's [The Big List of RPG Plots](#).

I spent the better part of this semester getting my hands on Uther's book, so I could get the details on these tales beyond their names. About the only library in Illinois that has a copy is at the University of Chicago, and they are not very good sharers. My school is part of a consortium of 84 schools and academic libraries in Illinois that allow for easy inter-library lending. I get books shipped in from all over the state quite regularly. UC's library is conspicuously not a member. I finally ended up having to get Iowa State University's copy shipped to me, which is slightly embarrassing. As a native inhabitant of Illinois, I have been inculcated from birth to look down with disdain on neighboring midwest states that lack a Chicago.

Anyway, let's look at these tales. Or rather, you might call them meta-tales. They're the raw plot elements out of which fairy tales are built.

328 - "The Boy Steals the Ogre's Treasure"

In this ancient tale a group of brothers (numbers vary) arrive at the house of an ogre, or possibly the devil. For some reason they stay the night. The ogre/devil decides to murder them in their sleep, but the youngest brother (occasionally the kid sister of the brothers) somehow foils the plan by swapping caps with the daughters of the monster.

Later the brothers take service in the king's court. The brothers, jealous of the young hero, claim to the king that the youngest sibling can steal the ogre's/devil's treasure. (Some versions dispense with this intro and instead start out with the youngest sibling seeking out the ogre for revenge of past mistreatment or to help a friendly king.) Possible treasures include a magic horse, bedspread, carpet, parrot, lamp, sword, musical instrument, or some sort of poultry. The magic treasure may be made of gold and/or silver. The youngest sibling acquires the treasure by cunning and guile.

Later the brothers, now presumably more jealous than ever, claim that the youngest sibling can kidnap the ogre or devil. The hero puts on some sort of disguise and somehow persuades the monster to lie down in a coffin to measure it. The youth nails the coffin shut, trapping the monster. The youth is given a princess for a wife.

As you can see, there is a lot of room for variation here as these tales mutate over time to better fit local needs. For instance the classic English tale of Jack and the Beanstalk is considered a major variant of ATU 328. Incidentally, Jack and the Beanstalk is one of the key inspirations (along with its RPG successors, the *Against the Giants* series and the more obscure Judges Guild module *Under the Storm Giant's Castle*) for my adventure *Broodmother Skyfortress*. Last I heard that project is finally going to be printed just in time to not make it out for GenCon.

330 - The Smith and the Devil

In this tale a smith sells his soul, sometimes because he is impoverished. The buyer of the soul is typically the devil, but it could also be death itself. Later this smith gives shelter to Christ and St. Peter as they travel the earth in disguise. [Obviously these characters would be different in a pre-Christian telling.] As a reward for his kindness, his divine guests grant the smith three wishes. St. Peter warns that the smith should use one wish to get his soul out of the devil's clutches and into heaven instead, but the smith ignores him. Instead, the smith wishes up three magic items. The first two are a tree and a bench/chair to which people stick like glue at his command. The third item is usually a knapsack that can draw people into but sometimes it is a pack of cards with which the owner always wins and occasionally it is something else entirely.

When the devil or death shows up to carry the smith off to his eternal doom, the smith tricks him into sticking to the

bench/chair and the tree. In order to be released from this trap, the devil/death agrees to terminate the contract for the smith's soul. In some versions trapping the devil/death like this results in a period where no one can die. After freeing the smith's soul, the devil/death winds up inside the knapsack, which is placed on the smith's anvil. The devil/death is pummeled with the smith's hammer. Later, the smith discovers that he cannot die. Neither heaven nor hell will admit him. He grows tired of life and eventually tricks his way into heaven using the knapsack or cards.

In some versions of this tale the hero isn't a smith, but an allegorical figure such as Misery, Envy, or Poverty. These versions focus on the intentional gaining of immortality by tricking the devil into trapping himself inside a tree.

402 - "The Animal Bride"

A father, possibly a king, cannot choose among his sons (usually three of them) to inherit his property/kingdom. He sends all of them on a year-long quest. In some cases the quest is to learn a profession. In others it is to bring back a special object, such as textiles (yarn, linen), fine chain, a ring, a horse, or the smallest dog they can find. At the end of the year, the father will name as his heir whoever best succeeds at the task.

The youngest son, who is sometimes explicitly a fool, goes into the forest and enters into the service of some sort of animal. Cat, rat, frog, and mouse are the common options. As payment for his service he is given the most beautiful example of the object that the father requires. Owing to the jealousy of the older brothers, two further tasks are set. The final task is to bring home the most beautiful woman or to bring home the most beautiful bride.

For each subsequent task the young fool returns to the animal, who promises to help. Some event disenchant the animal (burning, mutilation, decapitation, or simply crossing a river) and the animal resumes its original form of a beautiful princess. In most versions the young fool and beautiful princess return to the father to win the final task. In some variants they first trick the parents, either the son returns in rags and is ridiculed or he returns dressed as a prince and is not recognized until a mole identifies him. Or else the trick is that the princess arrives in animal form and yet wins the tasks assigned to the brides to determine which is best. The last (third) bride task is to attend a feast, where the animal turns back into her human form.

In some versions the son renounces the inheritance and goes with his bride back to her realm. In some others the young fool burns the animal skin in hopes of preventing his bride from resuming animal form. She is offended and abandons him. He must go out on a final quest to win her back.

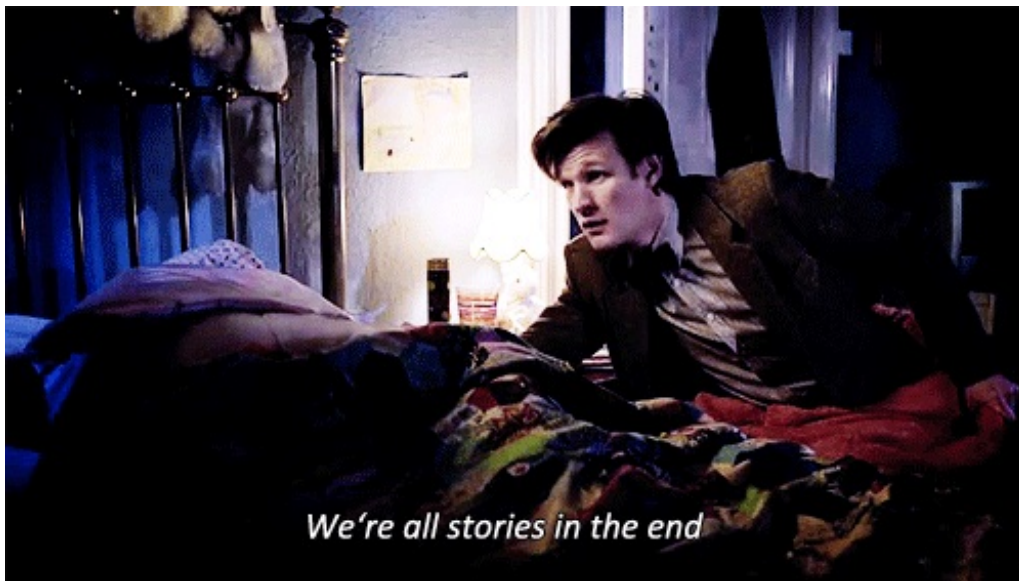
554- The Grateful Animals

This tale appears to have atrophied over the millennia and now tends to appear in the record as part of another story.

In it a traveller meets three animals. One is avian, one aquatic, and one terrestrial. Each of them is in trouble and the traveller aids them. In some versions it is the traveller's brothers, who accompany him on his journey, that are the source of the distress. The traveller either prevents woe of some sort befalling the animal or compensates for the misdeeds/carelessness of his brothers. Each animal promises to help the traveller later.

The traveller falls in love with a princess. Her father sets three impossible tasks that must be accomplished before he will permit their marriage. The traveller calls upon the aid of his animal friends, who help him complete his task.

So here we have these four echoing voices from the linguistic dawn of Western civilization. What can we as DMs do with them? As much as I am onboard for the "here's a dungeon, stop asking stupid questions" mode of D&D, a little bit of backstory to hang a campaign on can be really helpful.



Oops! There goes my anglophilia flaring up again.

If you need a little raw material for your campaign, why not start with the oldest stories we have handy and build from there? These stories possess that oddly familiar strangeness that undergirds many fairy tales, that sense of the uncanny that Freud discusses in his essay *Das Unheimliche*. Below are six thoughts per story, thumbnail sketches of what they can do in your campaign.

The Boy Steal's Ogre's Treasure

1. If nothing else, you can introduce one or more treasures into your campaign, magic items in the form of a golden/silver horse, bedspread or carpet, parrot or poultry, lamp, sword, or musical instrument. With the exception of the sword, those are some pretty out of the ordinary magical treasures. On top of that, you know at least two previous owners, an adventurer who married into royalty and possibly the devil himself. Sure the Golden Chicken of King Koraz is the best magic item in the campaign world, but it's annoying as heck all the people who want it back.
2. The devil apparently has several daughters. What is their deal, anyway? Do they want dad's magical silver lamp back? Did one or more of the brothers sleep with one or more of them, leading to a race of half-devils?
3. The brothers may have made off with the caps belonging to the devil's daughters. What strange properties are possessed by diabolic sleepytime headgear?
4. Somewhere out there is a coffin that has been nailed shut. Inside sleeps the devil himself, or some campaign equivalent thereof.
5. If the devil has daughters, who is their mother?
6. Are the brothers still in the service of the king? Are they even more annoyed now that their kid brother (or sister) has married into the royal family?

The Smith and the Devil

1. Like the previous story, having the devil stuck somewhere seems like a fun opportunity. Can he trick the PCs into chopping the tree down with a magic axe or maybe a herring?
2. Who is this smith? What has he made? Perhaps he is one of the great artifact-crafters of your campaign world. He traded his soul for magic smithing powers. Maybe he made the magic item(s) in the previous story.

3. If the story is over, what happened to the smith's magic items? Maybe his knapsack or pack of cards made it back to earth.
4. What kindly divinities go about your campaign world giving out wishes in exchange for a little hospitality?
5. What other strange events might have been triggered by the day/month/year when nobody died?
6. The PCs need some critical magic item made or repaired and only the legendary Wandering Smith, unable to die and unwilling to live, can do the job. Can they find him and convince him to assist them?

The Animal Bride

1. Hey, man. Have you heard? The new king's wife is a lycanthrope!
2. If everyone thinks something like the One Ring or the Ring of Gaxx is in your dungeon, then all the brothers might be leading or sponsoring NPCs parties to get it.
3. On the other hand, a bunch of pain-in-the-asses princes scouring the campaign world for the smallest dog they can find is a really funny concept. Maybe one of them wants to hire the PCs for an expedition to the fabled Isle of Minimals?
4. I'm fond of the ending where the hero tells dear ol' dad where he can stick his stupid contest and goes to live happily ever after in his wife's magic animal person kingdom. Maybe the old man wants the PCs to track junior down to deliver a royal apology?
5. Then there's the endings where the hero pisses off his new bride and she leaves him. Could the PCs help locate the Hidden Queendom of the Swanmays?
6. How is this band of brothers related to the ones that visited the ogre? Is the king here the hero of that tale grown old and somewhat silly?

The Grateful Animals

1. Even if he possesses no other powers, surely there's some hash to be made of an NPC who is friends with a bear, an eagle, and a shark.
2. Ordinary animals talking may be a step too far for some groups. It might hold to make the three animals into magical semi-divine rulers, like the King of Snakes, Duchess of Eagles, and Mayor of Fiddler Crabs.
3. The three animals of three types theme lines up a bit with the shapeshift powers of some versions of the druid. Perhaps the animals taught shapeshifting to the hero, who is now the Druid King.
4. If we're in shapeshifting animal territory anyway, we might as well posit the animal bride of the previous story as one of the animals. Does she whisk off to aid her totally platonic adventuring buddy at the drop of a hat? And how do their spouses feel about that?
5. Seriously, what is up with all these douchebag older brothers? Is it a natural consequence of the fact that it's the runt of the litter that must rely on social skills like storytelling to survive, thus all older brothers are memorialized as envious bullies? Maybe every bard in your campaign needs a couple of mean older bros.
6. We've got three stories with three beautiful princesses. Are they sisters? Are they the same princess? What are they up to while all this crazy stuff happens around them?

So, off the top of my head, those are the ideas I can squeeze out of the fragments of these old, old stories.

Fairy tales may come and go, but Clancy Brown is forever.

Idea #1 - XP for rescue and assistance

Maybe rescuing someone from the clutches of the bad guys ought to be worth some XP. 100xp per level of the person rescue might be a good starting benchmark. Count low level but important people as higher level for purposes of this calculation. (E.g. the richest merchant in the land might be a 1,000 point rescue, even though he's a 3 level chump.) Whether this XP is in addition to or in lieu of XP for reward money is up to the stinginess of the DM. If the PCs mistreat or further endanger the poor wretches, XP ought to be reduced.

"Assistance" is worth half as much as rescue, and could be interpreted broadly. Help a treant find the missing piece to the 5,000 piece puzzle he's spent 150 years trying to complete would be worth treant HD x50.

Idea #2 - XP multipliers by Alignment

Lawfuls - Double XP for rescue and assistance, double XP for chaotic defeated (suddenly, a reason to be lawful!), half XP for lawful defeated

Neutrals - Double XP for treasure, double XP for any monster defeated by non-combat means

Chaos - Double XP for Lawfuls defeated, double XP for any treasure not split with other party members

Obviously all this doubling is going to speed up advancement. More importantly, by giving characters different goals it forces the party to negotiate over why the heck they are even in the dungeon.



DICE

This is one of those ideas so simple, I'm certain someone else came up with it. Maybe I read it and forgot about it.

So in many D&D versions, both official and house-ruled, there's this weird thing when you roll one number to see if you hit the orc and another to see if you chop its fool head off. This means you can end up with a range like this:

1 ... Miss! (maybe it's a fumble if the DM is cruel)

2-11 ... Miss!

12-17... I hit! Alright!

18-19 ... Argh! So close to a critical!

20 ... Yeah, baby! This orc is toast!

That 18-19 range is my concern today, or really any number that's less than a critical but well in excess of the minimum needed to hit. Tom Moldvay tried to smooth out the transition from normal hit to uber crit by adding in [a chart of extra effects](#). What I'm about to propose here gets you an extra effect for a better hit while dispensing with the rigamarole of tracking who is carrying what penalties to their actions.

In BX all standard weapons do d4, d6, d8 or d10. That's a 2 point jump in max damage for every die size increase. So here's my basic idea: **for every 2 points you exceed to to-hit target, bump your die up one size**. If applied to the monsters as well that's going to make it easier for high hit die monsters to mangle the PCs.

Before trying this one would need to set the maximum die size. You could cap it at the largest die actually in use for weaponry, the d10. That means under the right circumstances a dagger is as lethal as a polearm, but nothing is actually more deadly than the normal standards of BX play. Alternatively, you could use this rule as a low-complexity, high-damage alternative to crit rolls by allowing the max die size to get ridiculous. There are many more possibilities once you decide you're not bound by the notions of propriety held by mere mortals:

- d10 becomes d12 becomes d20
- d10 becomes d12 becomes d20 becomes d30
- d10 becomes d12 becomes d20 becomes d30 becomes d100

Or use some funky dice like the DCC rpg folks. The sequence d10 -> d12 -> d14 -> d16 follows the +2 max damage progression, but you could always tack on -> d20 -> d24 -> d30 -> d100 for extra insanity.

Easy to implement (if you can subtract the actual roll from the target roll) and your players will love it (until it kills them).

(I will readily admit to not actually knowing the technical definition of the term "overclock.")



Over on the Google Plus fellow traveller Paul Schaefer asked me an interesting question and with his permission I'm going to answer it here rather than in a private discussion:

As a Basic D&D DM, since it has race as class, what do you do if a player wants to play a race but also wants to use a weird class from another source such as Arduin, Field Guide, Arcanum, or what have you?

| *Do you just sort of eyeball it, try to balance the race and class abilities?*

There are several strategies a BX Dungeon Master can employ when a player makes this sort of request. Which one you use depends largely on your comfort level and your vision for the campaign.

Option 1: Just Say No

As I was just discussing with [Jeffro Johnson](#), there's nothing wrong with insisting that this is a game with a specific ruleset and all dwarves, elves, and halflings follow the same simple rules. You've got to run the darn thing, so you're responsible for deciding when the rules as written will bend. Rather than go the typical route of class/race editions, where you hang your hat on being a Halfling Sewer Assassin or Dwarf Poisonmage or Elf Tree Idiot, the way one distinguishes oneself in such a game is to play the Best Damn Halfling Ever, The Most Memorable Dwarf We Ever Encountered, That One Elf Who Didn't Suck, etc.

Option 2: Add Race to the Class

Under this scheme the class is the basis for the rules pertaining to the character. Adding the race selection only grants the character two things, 1) the items listed under the relevant SPECIALABILITIES on pages B9 and B10 and 2) the race-based saving throws.

Modify the experience needed for second level for the class using the chart below, then recalculate the rest of the chart.

Demi-Human Costs for Weirdo Classes

Halfling ... +150xp

Dwarf ... +250xp

Elf ... +250xp

Elf would be little higher than dwarf, but I'm assuming the level racial caps (H9, E10, D12) are in play.

You can use this for the standard classes as well, if you need something like a Dwarf Cleric or Halfling Thief. In fact, since it's so popular an option, here's my proposed chart for the latter combo.

Halfling Thief XP chart

1st level ... 0xp

2nd level ... 1,350xp

3rd level ... 2,700xp

4th level ... 5,400xp

5th level ... 10,800xp

6th level ... 21,600xp

7th level ... 43,200xp

8th level ... 80,000xp

Note that I rounded the XP amount for 8th level down slightly, as in the original chart.

This option ought to work well if you've got a clear understanding of the new class and how it will impact your game.

Option 3: Add Class to the Race

So you've decided you're going to allow a Halfling Techno or a Dwarf Alchemist or Elf Bounty Hunter. In this option,

you start with the Race-As-Class as your basis and layer on freakish class abilities. Keep the hitdice, saves, special abilities, and attack progression of the default race. Look at whatever the weird class needs to get to level two. Subtract 1,200 from that amount. Why 1,200? That's what thieves need for second level, the canonical BX class with the fastest progression. (Because they suck.)

Add this amount to the figure for the dwarf, elf, or halfling in question and recalculate. For example, say you got a player who wants to be a Halfling who is also an Arduin-style Merchant. According to the original Grimoire, a Merchant needs 2,250 XP for second level, or 1,050 XP over the thief horizon. The XP chart for a Halfling Merchant would look like this:

Halfling Merchant XP Chart

1st level ... 0xp
2nd level ... 3,050xp
3rd level ... 6,100xp
4th level ... 12,200xp
5th level ... 24,400xp
6th level ... 48,800xp
7th level ... 97,600xp
8th level ... 200,000xp

The result is a character that follows all the Halfling rules and gets all the special abilities of a Merchant. Note I used a little judicious rounding for 8th level, just like the normal halfling chart on page X6. Only I rounded up because I'm a jerk.

You may also want to drop some features of the base to bring down the XP totals a bit. I'm thinking particularly of curtailing the ability to wear heavy armor (halflings in plate mail have always irked me anyone), the wide weapons choices, and possibly elvish spellcasting. Do the math for second level as above, then modify according to this handy-dandy chart I just made up:

Discounts for Surrendered Abilities

No Plate ... -50
No Plate or Chain ... -100
No Armor ... -200
Restricted Weapons ... -75
No Spells (elves only) ... -1,000

By "limited weapons" I mean something comparable to the cleric's lame selection. If it's more like a magic-user's lame selection, double the discount. Note that those numbers may seem small, but they will really add up as the XP needed doubles from level to level.

This option will probably end up costing the PC more in terms of XP needed for progression. But if its a weird class and you aren't sure how its going to interact with the BX demihuman rules then it may be a good thing to put the brakes on a little bit.

Option 4: Build it From Scratch

Paul Montgomery Crabaugh's article "Customized Class: How to Put Together One-of-a-Kind Characters" from *Dragon* #109 (pages 8, 10-13*) is my go-to source for puttering with BX classes. In recent years at least two people have put work into improving Crabaugh's method. One is my buddy Nick on his blog [Of Dice and Djinn](#). He's also built a [crapton of cool classes](#) using his system. Perdustin over at Thoul's Paradise has also written at least [four articles](#) tackling the subject. Both those blogs have great titles, by the way. (True fact: I almost called this blog "The Half-Orc's Lair," quoting from Uncle Gary for the tagline "**Half-Orcs** are boors. They are rude, crude, crass, and generally obnoxious." (DMG 16) But then I realized that would only encourage me to act like a jerkbutt on the internet. So I put my real name at the top instead.)



Option 5: Go Find Your Class

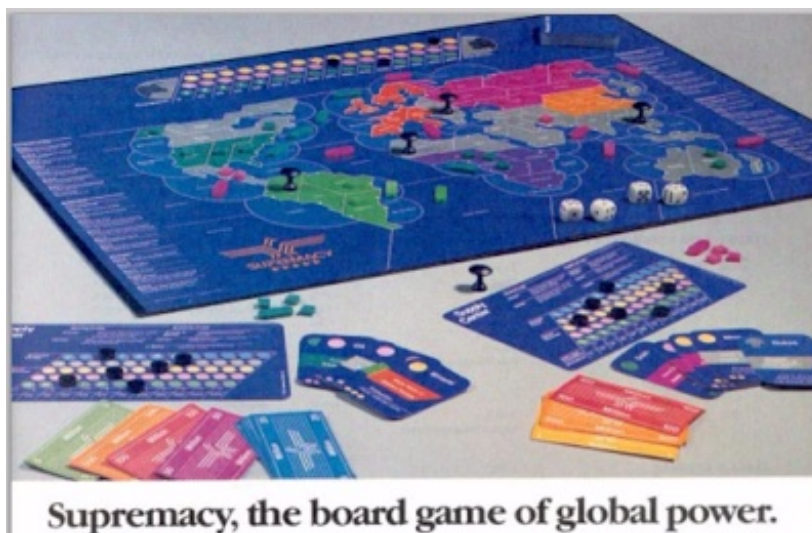
This option eschews fiddling with XP and instead turns the whole problem into a quest. "You want to be a dwarf alchemist? Fine. You start out as a regular, well-adjusted dwarf. Now find an alchemist who will take you on as an apprentice." This option works really great if you're playing in a big sandbox. Just pick a few places where the PC might be able to get the training they want, then sprinkle the map with a few more places that have leads for the PC. Then once they find an alchemist (or whatever) willing to take them on, the PC has to finish another adventure to Prove They Are Worthy.

At that point, award the PC with the abilities of a first level whatever-it-is. Then every time they gain a new level in their regular gig they also have to complete a side quest assigned to them by Master Yoda to also level up in the new class.

Option 6: Ignore the Problem

Not a terrible option for games with a good PC body count. An elf with berserker abilities/berserker with elf abilities isn't that much harder to murder at 1st level than an elf or a berserker. At least if you try hard enough.

*Page 9 of *Dragon* #109 is a full page ad for the global throwdown simulator *Supremacy*. Never played it, but I always loved the fact that it came with tiny plastic mushroom clouds.



One of the things I've always found interesting about the BX/AD&D1 split is that the monsters aren't quite the same. A few iconic D&D monsters don't appear in BX, such as the beholder, while the BX lineage has a few weirdoes of its own, such as the thoul. Then there are the cases where the monster looks the same, but there are striking

differences if you look closely. One example of this case is the shadow. In AD&D a shadow is an undead. In BX it is not. With its ghostly creepiness and Strength drain attack it sure as hell looks like undead, but the damn thing can't be turned.

Another case where first edition AD&D and the 1981 Basic/Expert rules diverge is the way giants are described. I don't use a lot of giants in my D&D games, except for the two or three times I've run the classic module series G-1-2-3 Against the Giants. But today I want to attempt to nail down the differences, particularly the non-mechanical ones. I don't care that much that an Expert set Hill giant has 8 hit dice while the Monster Manual version has 8+1-2 points, or that an MM fire giant has a point better AC.



HILL GIANT	Expert rules p. X32	Monster Manual pp. 44-45
Height	12'	10½'
Description	stupid, hairy brutes	reddish brown skin, brown or black hair, red-rimmed eyes
Equipment	animals skins, clubs, spears	hides/skins, any weapon but favor clubs
Allies	none	dire wolves, giant lizards, ogres
Other	no mention of stone-throwing	throws stones like all other giants

In my mind Hill Giants have always been oversized neanderthals, and I think much of the art in the hobby (illos and minis) bears this out. I'd be more inclined to paint a hill giant honky white rather than reddish brown, but that has as much to do with Ringo Starr in Caveman as it does to any hard data. The MM line about hill giants using "any form

of weapon available” makes me want to give one a laser cannon sometime.

STONE GIANT	Expert rules p. X32	Monster Manual pp. 44-45
Height	14'	12'
Description	grey, rock-like skin	grey to grey-brown skin, dark-grey to blue-grey hair, metallic silver-steel eyes, rock-colored garments
Equipment	stalactite clubs	stone weapons
Allies	cave bears	cave bears
Other	May live in crude stone huts. Why are these guys bald, anyway?	Seriously, have you ever seen a stone giant with hair? What is the deal with that?

Uncle Gary’s MM description includes greyish or bluish hair, but I can only think of maybe two cases where I saw a stone giant that wasn’t a chromedome:

I think that’s from a Forgotten Realms product, but what I know is that those giants are BAD ASS.

Here’s the only other stone giant I know who doesn’t suffer from male pattern baldness.

You can check out that adventure [here](#), by the way.

Final thought on stone giants: If you run BX and your overland map lacks a quaint pastoral village of 14’ tall rock people living in stone-thatched huts then you need to rethink your life decisions.

FROST GIANT	Expert rules p. X32	Monster Manual pp. 44-45
Height	18'	15'
Description	pale skin, light red or blue hair, full beards	dead-white or ivory skin, blue-white or yellow hair, pale blue or yellow eyes
Equipment	furs and iron armor	as per “northern barbarian”
Allies	polar bears, regular-type wolves	winter wolves
Other	live in castles	live in castles or caverns



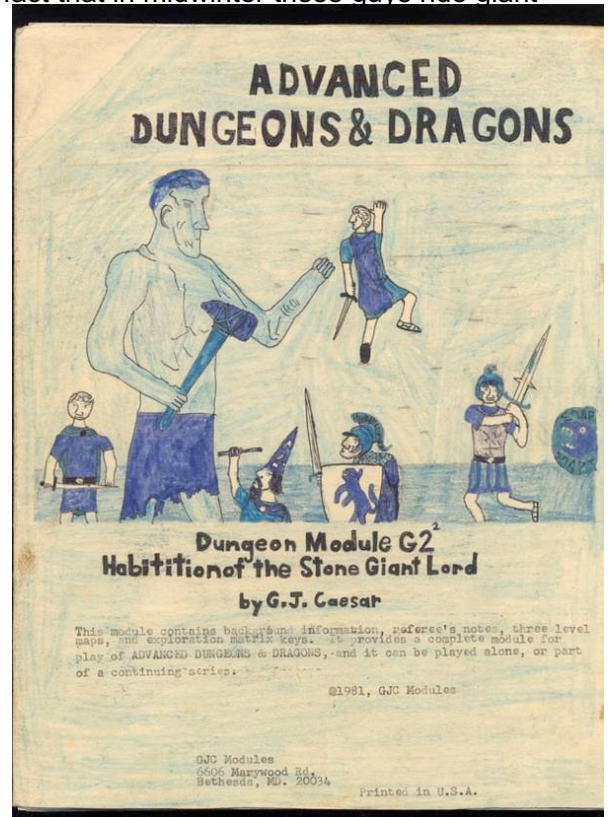
These guys are my favorites, because they are totally Giant Sized Marvel Hella Vikings #1. What is not to like? The

only thing missing from the official description is the known scientific fact that in midwinter these guys ride giant longships to plunder villages along the southern coasts.

Here's my alltime favorite depiction of frost giants:
Awww, yeah. That's the stuff. My love for the work of [Erol Otus](#) is undying, but who's betta than Frazetta? NO ONE THAT'S WHO.

Here's a neat alt-version of frost giant coloration, unsupported by the canon.

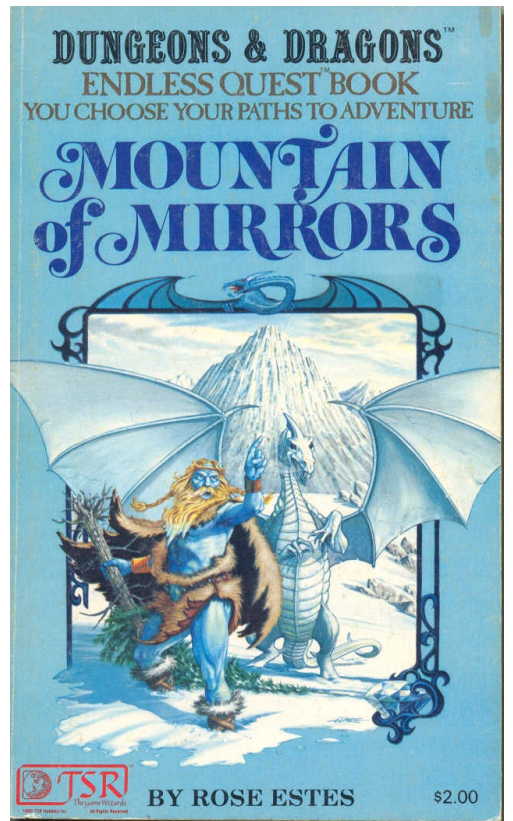
Gotta say I'm digging that pale blue skin. (Warning: Do not read any D&D books by Rose Estes unless you are a fan of stuff that sucks.)



FIRE GIANT	Expert rules p. X32	Monster Manual pp. 44-45
Height	16'	12'
Description	red skin, dark black hair & beards	broad like dwarves, coal black skin, flaming red or bright orange hair, deep red eyes, yellow orange teeth
Equipment	copper, brass or bronze armor	armor or dragon hides, huge swords
Allies	hydras, hellhounds	hellhounds
Other	dwel in low thick-walled castles of black baked mud reinforced with iron	dwel in castles or caverns



Here's another spot where the Expert rules provide a thumbnail sketch of an adventure locale you totally need to be using. More importantly, the Expert and MM versions of Fire Giants seem to be totally different species. One is 25% shorter than the other, the taller ones have red skin and black hair, while the shorter, stocky ones have black skin and red hair. Additionally, I assume all dragons hate the shorter dudes, since they prance around in dragonhide armor. And neither of them look like the cool blue-skinned version on the cover of G-1-2-3:



Height	20'	18'
Description	white or grey skin or hair	pale blue white to light blue skin, silver white or brass colored hair
Equipment	pale robes	jewelry, great clubs
Allies	giant hawks, dire wolves	spotted lions
Other	neutral aligned	neutral good or neutral evil

Man, I just can't get worked up about cloud giants. Maybe that's why I wrote a module that reinvented them as horrible slobbering beasts. I'm crossing my fingers that thing ends up published before the year is out.

So this is the third giant species in a row that could be blue-skinned if you wanted them. Maybe frost, fire and cloud giants should all be branches of the same bluish family tree in your campaign world. PCs could get involved in giant family politics, like fights over inheritances when a giant king dies without an heir, or a frost giant Romeo running off with a fire giant Juliet.

STORM GIANT	Expert rules p. X32	Monster Manual pp. 44-45
Height	22'	21'
Description	bronze skin, bright red or yellow hair	pale light green skin w/dark green hair, emerald green eyes OR violet skin w/deep violet or blue-black hair, silvery-grey or purple eyes
Equipment	none specified	none specified
Allies	griffons, giant crabs	rocs, griffons, sea lions
Other	lightning bolt attack	lightning bolts

These guys are just weird. I've never used one, though I did have a PC fried by a wrathful storm giant back in the eighties. Ah, to be young and piss off creatures with more hit dice than your entire party. Aside from fiddly spell mechanics and skin color they are basically identical.

Since storm giants are among the good guys, a fun way to draw them into the campaign might be via unintended consequences. For example: the giant crab infestation the PCs cleared out happens to be the breeding grounds for the storm giant's pets.

Finally, I wondered how all these giants should look standing next to 1/72 figures, like the 11th century crusaders my folks just bought me for my birthday (thanks folks!). As a reminder, at 1/72 scale, a 6 foot tall dude is represented by a 1 inch tall figure.

Giant	Size	1/72 scale
MM Hill Giant	10½'	1¾" ~44mm

Expert Hill Giant	12'	2" ~50mm
MM Stone Giant	12'	2" ~50mm
MM Fire Giant	12'	2" ~50mm
Expert Stone Giant	14'	2½" ~59mm
MM Frost Giant	15'	2.5" ~64mm
Expert Fire Giant	16'	2⅔" ~68mm
Expert Frost Giant	18'	3" ~76mm
MM Cloud Giant	18'	3" ~76mm
Expert Cloud Giant	20'	3⅓" ~85mm
MM Storm Giant	21'	3½" ~89mm
Expert Storm Giant	22'	3⅔" ~93mm

I wonder if anyone ever made a dwarf with a sword and platemail in the 2" to 2⅔" range? That would make a great fire giant.

