



Board Enterprises proudly presents
Build Your Fantasy World in

Small Bites



GOLEMS AND THEIR MANY USES

& THE HALFLINGS OF THE TRIAD

WHO BUILD THEM

aka All About Golems & Halflings



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Small Bites, more officially known as Build Your Fantasy World in Small Bites. We don't think there is another way to build campaign worlds, so small bites seems both the best and most efficient way to do it.

We want to help you do that - build your fantasy campaign world. We want you to be a better game master! Why? Because better game masters run better games. Better games keep people engaged in our hobby longer and more deeply. That's good for all of us.

But we have this HUGE subject this month: Golems. We try to keep everything generic (of rule systems), but it is impossible. But if we have any hope of making the subject "golems" worthwhile to you, we need to set up what they are.

Are golems huge, fearsome creatures? They sure can be. Those huge hulking monstrosities of stone are what we're going to call colossuses, but any golem can be used offensively. But do they have to be used offensively? No!

Here's an example we think works and might make sense to you, especially those of you who think that any use of magic outside of combat is worthless: In the modern world, we have cars, trucks, motorcycles, and tanks. All of them can be used to drive from one place to another. Cars make the ride comfortable. Trucks carry large amounts of cargo. Motorcycles accelerate quickly and are fun. And tanks are used for battle. All of them are motorized vehicles you can drive. Only tanks are directly used for war, and the other drivable vehicles greatly outnumber the tanks.

So are cars and trucks useless, unimportant or forgettable in the modern day? Should they be ignored when you're running a modern day RPG? Of course not! Yet to suggest to some that magic has a use outside of battle seems foolish in some FRPGs. Well, we don't run games or game worlds that way. Anyone with money is going to spend it on what they want. What they often want is to make more money, and there are times when golems can do that for you.

That's a lot of what we're going to be looking at in this edition: the use of golems for all sorts of things. Not just battle, but we'll touch on that too. How can they be used for transport? How can they be used to replace the steam engine (sort of a fantasy version of steam punk)? Where else can they find a place where their incredible cost can actually be made to be worthwhile?

We're entering into the realm of high fantasy where magic is useful and people abuse it. Forget the great unwashed, 'cause here we go ...

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Fletnern World of Fletnern

FLETNERN WIKI

All of these posts are already out on the wiki and you can refer to them there. We have gathered them here, because we think they are valuable in a group, and they all pertain to our theme for the month. All of them are also tagged as being in the categories of "Triad" and "Golems" in case you are more comfortable using the wiki instead of this edition.

Golem

Item

On Fletnern, a golem is any magically constructed creature crafted by an enchanter. While some are built for battle, the vast majority of them are built to serve as laborers or "engines" for other processes or machinery. For example, wind mills will sometimes have a golem on hand in case the wind dies down. The golem would be able to in some way turn the proper axles and power the mill.

Golems are crafted to look like living creatures. This is done because golems must have moving parts. The magic will serve to power the creature, but it cannot cause a solid piece of stone crafted to look like a leg to bend unless there is a hinge where the knee would go. If enchanters were able to conceive of a different life form with moveable parts alien to what they know, they could



craft this into a golem, but it would be incredibly difficult for them to force their minds to see things in such a manner. Therefore, mimicking real life is the easiest way to craft a golem.

There are many types of golems, most commonly segregated by the amount of strength they have in response to the magical power that drives them. For example, toy-golems are the weakest. They are most commonly used for very minor tasks or as the name suggests, as toys. A standard golem could easily be far stronger than a human and thus serve as a useful tool, in a similar way to how beasts of burden can be utilized. Colossuses are by far the biggest and strongest of golems and they are often used in construction or massive destruction projects.

Golems may be strong and even durable, but they are notoriously slow, making them of less value for moving goods around the world. However, being magically constructed creatures, they do not need to sleep or eat. If they can be trusted to continue their functions all night long, this additional time working can often make up for their slow movements. They are also incapable of independent thought and can only follow instructions, though anyone ordering a golem should be very specific on those instructions or catastrophe can occur.

Clan Crevicerock

Group

Clan Crevicerock is a Dolindor clan of stone cutters and tunnelers. They live predominately in the southern reaches of the Rocchairian Nation and actively trade with the aldar. In their work, they have developed various golems to help them. The work foremen are so careful with the golems created by the clan that the enchanters

have been able to create more golems than are needed by their own workers. This has led to the Crevicerock clan exporting these golems, typically to the Ruedar and other aldar cartels.

Clan Crevicerock often violates the rules of the Rocchairian Nation when it trades, because they do not allow official traders to handle the sales. The official traders typically sell the golems to Rhoric merchants, and the golems are spread across the Rhoric Plains and into the Townships. Clan Crevicerock is not very supportive of the communistic government and only pays the Clanmasters' Council lip service.

Halfling Slaves

Slavery

During the Conquering War, Garnock invaded Villai and all but razed the city. During these attacks, the Latvich military captured a large number of war slaves and brought them back to Garnock. In many ways, these slaves have formed the core of owned slaves in Garnock ever since.

In Garnock, most halflings are slaves, and a free halfling will often be hassled about proving that they are in fact free. Halflings are seen as strong enough and smart enough to do work, yet still easily enough overpowered should they ever attempt to rebel.

Not surprisingly, the halflings of both the Triad and Villai see the Garnock slave population as a problem that should be rectified. Diplomacy has so far failed, and the halflings are not in a position to go off storming the walls of Garnock. Therefore, a large number of halflings are involved in an "underground railroad" style of process where halflings are smuggled out of the city-state of Garnock and returned to Villai or the Triad.

Within the halfling communities, slavery is often illegal and virtually always frowned on. There are a small number of kobold slaves within the Triad, but halflings owning slaves in Villai is unheard of.

Paquas

Cities

Paquas is a halfling city in the Triad with a population of around 12,000 halflings. It does not have soil as rich for farming as the other Triad cities and is therefore more oriented towards livestock. Hogs, sheep and especially ponies can be found in Paquas. It is the seat of the Triad government because it was considered centrally located but holds no extra power for the privileged.

Paquas is the homeland of several families famous for producing soldiers of incredible skill. Despite the region generally being at peace for centuries, these families continue to train soldiers, both their own and others willing to join the Triad's army.

Paquas is also the location of several ceramics factories. The poor soil still makes for good clay, and

everything from bricks to dishes to statuettes is crafted in Paquas.

Plum Rose Hill

Cities

While the actual name of the town is Top of Plum Rose Hill, the neighboring town Bottom of Plum Rose Hill changed its name to Gardenplot to avoid confusion. Plum Rose Hill is notorious for the number of golems in the town. There are three families in the town that each run golem making factories. Over centuries, these three families have interbred to the point that they are now completely mixed. Their culture makes it acceptable for first cousins to marry. In fact, the members of these three families no longer marry outside the families. There are “outsiders” who move to the town, but they only marry other outsiders. This is not because the three families are elitist or rude. They will treat outsiders in the friendliest and most accepting manner. They will form life-long friendships. They just won’t marry them.

The interbreeding has caused a hereditary problem. As high as five percent of the children born to the three families are mute. Their minds work perfectly well, but they lack the ability to speak. They have all of the proper body parts, but speech patterns will never come out of their mouths. Rather than seek a cure for this and perhaps give it a social stigma, the townspeople have learned to live with their mute kinsmen and accept them unconditionally.

The industry of Plum Rose Hill is the making of golems. Originally the Mulberry family crafted magical dolls (toy golems), while the Pinelawn family crafted non-magical, clockwork toys. Currently, all three families (Mulberry, Pinelawn and Viehope) craft golems, though the townsfolk also make clockwork toys simply to confuse others. Because the families are intermixed, it is nearly impossible to classify who is a member of which family and therefore impossible to classify the type of work they do. Despite this, it is generally accepted that the Mulberry family makes useful golem tools, such as toy golem clocks or a golem post hole digger. The Pinelawn family makes toys, both for adults and children. The Viehope family makes golem laborers.

The people of Plum Rose Hill are craftsmen and take great pride in their work. They prize creative and comical uses for golems. Not surprisingly, the town is filled with golems of all sizes. Because of the golems mute nature, they typically carry slate boards for chalk writing. The mute inhabitants of the town follow this trend as well, and the lack of talking in the streets is very unnerving to some people.

Plum Rose Hill is often considered to be the location of the best golem trainers in the world, but it is important to remember that they are non-violent. War golems are never crafted in Plum Rose Hill, and anyone

attempting it would be thrown out of the town. It is also important that while they might craft a large number of golems in this town, they are not attempting to craft the most powerful. The goal in Plum Rose Hill is to craft the cleverest golems, not the strongest.

Rhoric

Cultures

The Rhoric peoples are an ethnicity of humans concentrated in the Rhoric Plains. The cities of Snobist and Rhum and the cities of the Triad are all considered to be Rhoric cities.

Rhorics are known for being one of the more diverse ethnicities with hair color most often in the brown-tan range, but every shade from blonde to black will be found. Similarly, they are known to show every shade of human eye colors. They tend to be stockier, built on large skeletal frames, certainly larger than the Marils.

Rhorics are known for their enjoyment of what other cultures see as cold weather. They live in northern (cooler) regions and often in the hills and even mountains. More often, they will use hides and pelts for clothing. Their famous lederhosen are often doe skins, and their trade in animal furs is legendary.



Rougnera

Cities

Rougnera is the smallest and most forgotten of the Triad of cities. With a population of only 8,000 halflings, they also seem the most rural or perhaps better said, least urbanized of the Triad cities. They are the only one of the three to sport significant populations of non-halflings, typically humans and centaurs. East and south of the city are hardwood forests that supply the city’s woodworkers with the perfect materials for furniture and toys. The competition in Rougnera is so fierce that unskilled craftsmen are quickly driven out of business. Only the finest items are produced in this city, though they are most typically sized for halflings.

Thistledale

Cities

Thistledale is the largest of the Triad cities with a population around 16,000, nearly all are halflings. It is located on the Pleasant River, a narrow stream running northeast past the city. Although not an impressive river, it does provide the power for various mills and other industry. It is not useful for moving trade goods, due to its shallow spots and narrow channels. With factories utilizing the river, Thistledale is the manufacturing center of the Triad.

Thistledale is also seen as the finishing center for many of the local agricultural businesses. They support grist mills, spinning and weaving shops, tanning and other businesses focused on taking the raw goods of the farmers and turning them into trade goods. This means they are the center of the sugar trade in this region.

Three Relay, The

Group

The Three Relay is a halfling run mentalist organization that competes with the High Order of Telepathy. Utilizing “part-time” mentalists who also have other jobs, they have been able to cut costs to about half of what the High Order charges. The High Order is so furious with this competitor that they have promised to cut off services (interdict) any city-state that allows The Three Relay to operate within their borders. The Triad has been under interdiction for ten years, yet no other areas have received anything more than threats.

Like the High Order, The Three Relay has telepaths set up at various relay stations. They communicate with each other using telepathy and pass the messages from one relay to the next. This allows messages to cross hundreds of miles in mere minutes. They work quite similarly to a telegraph office in America’s “wild west” days.

Triad

Region

The Triad is a group of three halfling city-states that have formed themselves into a unified government. Together, they govern the majority of the territories inhabited by halflings. The largest of the three is Thistledale with a population around 16,000. Paquas is about three-fourths the size of Thistledale, and Rougnera is only half the size of Thistledale. Despite the disparity in sizes, each city has a single vote in the representative government which meets in Paquas.

A Mayor and a group of Aldermen govern each city. Each city then elects a Representative and an Ambassador. The Representative votes for the city in Triad meetings, while the Ambassador handles more social events and negotiations. Ambassadors travel the Triad quite extensively, lobbying the other cities’ Mayors and Representatives.

All elections are handled with “open voting”. In the Triad’s open voting system, the candidates for an office stand on a platform, where the gathered citizens cheer for their favorite candidate. This is often seen as mob rule, but the system does seem to work for them.

Thistledale is located in the southwestern region of the Triad. Paquas is to the north. Rougnera is a more eastern city. The rural areas around these cities are densely covered in farms. Those regions not suited to farming often hold pony ranches or shepherds. The Triad of cities follows closely with the human Rhoric culture of Snobist and Rhum.



Each city is self-sufficient in that they produce enough food and goods to survive. The Triad was mainly formed to unite the region under a central government who could be relied on to coordinate the military defense of the region. Paquas has long provided the most skilled soldiers, and Thistledale and Rougnera wished to have their reputation for fierce warriors protecting their cities. Paquas gains in that it can rely on having a large number of reinforcements should they ever be forced to contend with a large city-state such as Garnock.

THE SOUNDING BOARD

The Sounding Board is the name of Board Enterprises' weekly blog. We gather the latest and most appropriate blog postings here so they can relate to this month's theme, but they are available online by clicking this link.

High Fantasy - Golems vs. Robots

My son is heavily into steam punk. I like it, but I don't know that I see it as all that different from other fantasy or sci-fi, and I generally like it all. But it occurs to me that different steam punk producers (writers, artists, programmers, etc.) see it differently. (Hang with me! I'm getting there!)

In the modern age - when we think of a "machine" or convenience, we generally expect a black box that takes something in and puts something we want out. But this is where some of the steam punk guys are getting things wrong. For example - If a steam punk inventor were building a pancake flipping machine, would he build a contraption where the pancakes went in on a conveyer belt, cooked one side, flipped inside the machine, cooked the other side, and then delivered the pancake onto your plate? That's the kind of thing we would want today - black box. Add a bunch of gears and whistles, and it's steam punk. But, I think steam punk and fantasy have their mind set on human or animal power. I think a steam punk inventor or fantasy enchanter would instead build a robot or a golem that would be taught to flip pancakes - at least a robotic arm that would wield a spatula.

Why does it matter? Well, if you're trying to apply magic to technological issues/solutions, I think you need to put yourself in this mindset. Yes, in Fletnern, the dwarves have perfected a perpetual motion machine (enchantment) and they cast this spell on gears which then become engines. But everybody else, if trying to make a magical engine would craft a golem with huge strength and no ability to fatigue and then have that golem turn a huge crank. Or a golem ox that they could yoke to something and have it work. The ogres craft zombies and use them for nearly everything: porters, workers, guards (well, meat shields), etc. But on zombies, it's a little easier because you're forced to think of them in humanoid form.

It is more efficient to build the black box - fewer things to break and fewer parts have access to the outside world. But that's how these guys would think. I personally believe that the change in thinking probably comes with the weaving machines, the ones that used punched cards. The idea that one machine could do

multiple things depending on which punched card was inserted - that's a pretty important change. Assuming your tech level is prior to 1800, no problems, go with the "man" power, not black box.

This might not feel like a major change, but the implications are pretty huge. Less likely to see "bombs" or tanks, and more likely to see automated ballistae and "knightly" golems. Honestly, it takes a little more thought, because we are all children of the tech age, but both the feel and the "coolness" of your game is vastly improved.

How Much Magic Is There?

I am often at odds with myself as to how much magic there should be in the World of Fletnern. One of the things we did intentionally with **LEGEND QUEST** was to make enchanting a weapon a secondary thing - When you want a magic sword, first you get a sword, then you get it enchanted. You don't just go to a magic shop and buy a magic sword. What if the grip isn't right? What if you wanted a certain kind of cross guard or pommel?

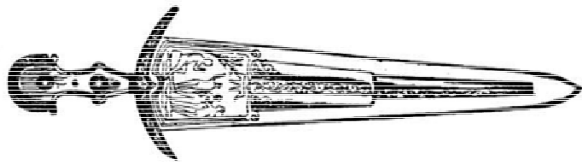
This makes enchanting a service you can buy in most major cities. It's not cheap, but it is absolutely available. I know that goes against some GMs' worlds, but to each his own, right? But how much magic do I allow in my world? Probably far more than most people would expect.

One of the consequences of making enchanting a service, is that it has a generally accepted price. Journeymen enchanters make about 300sc a day. That's 30x what a carpenter makes, but still within the reach of some successful adventurers. But with an established cost, you can start doing some cost-benefit analysis. If you have to pay an enchanter four days (or ~1200sc) to enchant the sail on a ship in order to shave 10% off the travel time, then when is it worth it? Well, ironically (according to Grain Into Gold), the salary of a ship's captain and crew is about 300sc per day. So if the sail will shave 10% of the travel, and therefore 10% of the payroll off the ship, then the sail only has to last 40 days in order to break even. If you could shave 10% of the payroll off a ship for six months with one magical sail, you would save yourself 4,200sc. ($300\text{sc per day} \times 10\% \times 180 \text{ days} = 5400 - 1200 \text{ for the sail} = 4200$). Now, I'm not suggesting that a +10% speed sail only costs 1200sc (I don't know, but I am writing myself a note to figure it out), but if it did ...

Which leads to the big question: So what? Any time an enchantment can last long enough to save a significant amount of time and therefore cost, then the people will be using magic to enhance their business. Solar glass is an alchemical that when used in greenhouses allows them to soak up sunlight, even on cloudy or rainy days. That means you can now grow tropical plants anywhere you want to. Is that worth a couple of thousand silver coins assuming it lasts 5-10 years? Yep!

OK - How do I justify magical weapons and armor? I actually ran through the math on this. Assume that you are actually paying a soldier during his training. Two years at 10sc p/ day, let's just call it 8,000sc. Then add his equipment: spear, shield, chain mail. That is a pretty big investment. Assuming an officer has five years of experience, that investment is too much to risk. Now what keeps him alive best? The main combat enchantments in LQ are animated attack (increases your "to hit"), animated parry (decreases his "to hit"), and sharpness (decreases his armor protection, which effectively increases damage). Animated parry is easier and cheaper to cast than the others, and it therefore fairly dramatically reduces the enemy's chance of scoring hits and thus lowers overall damage. My factory enchanters are not the greatest, but they can churn out a +20% parry shield for about 1,200sc. Risking 1,200 to protect ~18,000 - that's a good bet. It is especially important if you know the history of the Latvich military and know that they got their keisters kicked at Rhum because the Rhoric snipers kept picking off their officers. Keeping those officers alive is a vital part of the new Latvich army.

So how much magic is there? There is as much magic as makes sense economically. For those cities that have enchantment factories, every officer will have some manner of magical item. Nearly every elven soldier has at least half a healing potion. Plantation owners make use of rain makers.



An extra point though: Golems can cost 12,000sc. Now a 12K golem is a fearsome fighting machine, but is it worth 25-30 mercenary soldiers (assuming it would last about a month in battle)? No. It just isn't. So very few rulers have an army of golems hidden away. OK, a couple do, but these are the guys who have enchanters who are legitimately bored. The cost-benefit often shows that it is better/cheaper to just use more people.

It's Not Every Day You see a Golem Horse (or is it?) - Part One

So the question has been asked in this blog before: How Much Magic Is There? For a GM and world builder, I think that is probably the most vital question. Seriously, that is THE question that must be asked when you are setting up your world. Once you decide, you can tweak your answer, but you cannot change it too much, maybe with a huge global event, but not "just because".

So what do you do? For me, it has always been easy. I play High Fantasy. In fact, I even played a game

called "High Fantasy", which always confused me because they allowed for guns. Anyway, in a high fantasy setting, there is a lot of magic. Lots of magic comes with huge concerns for maintaining game balance. Let the party acquire too many magical long swords and you could make them unstoppable. Nowhere is this risk bigger than when you let your PCs purchase magical items.

In Fletnern, you can bring in nearly any item and have it enchanted. This makes the game balance risk huge, because as the GM you get the party enchanting weapons, armor, rings, shoes, horseshoes (you want a flying horse, don't you?), and so on beyond your ability to predict. So how do you counter this? OK, how you counter magic unbalancing your game is a topic for a 300 page book, but we'll hit a few of the highlights here.

First, enchanters and alchemists need to be expensive! By keeping magic costly and watching how much treasure you hand out, you can restrict what they are able to buy.

But second, and I think more importantly, actually make up the enchanters in the party's home town. If you say, "There is an enchanter in town and he will enchant anything you can afford to buy" you have already lost the campaign. Maybe it's easier in **LEGEND QUEST** because enchanting is a defined form of magic, but if I recall correctly that other huge game required the enchanters to know a whole bunch of spells if they were going to try and craft anything. The point is - don't let them know every one of those other spells.

Let's use **LQ** as an example: The enchanter in this smaller city knows the following spells: animated parry, hardened-steel, and flight. He has three power levels (journeyman enchanter). So what does that mean? Well first off, it means that he cannot make your sword hit more often, in fact he's pretty much focused on defensive magics. Why would someone do that? Well, mainly so his customers don't kill him. If some barbarian who hates mages orders a battle axe with vorpal sharpness, what are the chances that he cleaves the enchanter in order to avoid paying him or to recover his payment? Too high for the enchanter. This guy avoided that possibility by not knowing and therefore not offering vorpal sharpness as a service.

But what can he do? Actually quite a lot. By putting animated parry on both sword and shield, he can make the PC a lot harder to hit in battle. With hardened-steel, he can allow mages to carry glass swords that will function just as well as steel ones but not interfere with their magic. (Steel and magic don't mix in **LQ**.) With flight, he can allow people to move faster and gain other advantage normally not allowed. Or he could cast it on a spear and allow the spear to have ranges more like a bow. These are not small things.

But he is also limited by the power level 3. He's not crafting the most powerful magical items in the world. This allows the GM to put in a couple of juicy magical items (anything Power level 4 or better) into the adventures and still have the players get excited.

One of my better uses for this specific "details as restrictions" is the Ivory and the Amber Enchanters. These two guys are active in the city of Rhum. They are friends and rivals. One always etches his protection amulets on ivory while the other always uses amber. (Being formerly living things they both make enchanting easier.) If you want fire wards, frost wards, or "shield spells" (defense-magical), you go to the Ivory Enchanter. If you want defense-physical, defense-magical or charm wards, you go to the Amber Enchanter. Other than protecting people from spells (defense-magical) they don't even compete, and are happy enough to send clients to each other. Because they are so limited in what they sell, they actually have protection amulets on hand and can sell them to a party ready to head out on an adventure right now. No need to wait while he crafts the thing.

There is an underlying thought here that may not yet be obvious: I allow magical items to be sold in every major city in Fletnern, BUT only the lesser items. This gives adventurers something to save up for, but the truly game unbalancing things come only from me as the GM or seen another way, from looting the corpses of the big nasty evil guys at the end of the dungeons.

It's Not Every Day You see a Golem Horse (or is it?) - Part Two

OK, so we needed a Part 2 because Part 1 got off on a tangent that wasn't supposed to happen. Part 1 became all about game balance and magic items. This was supposed to be about how magic is viewed by the "commoners".

But it is important to know how common magic is in your world before you can figure out what people's reaction to it is going to be. Most low fantasy worlds employ witch hunters, mainly because rare things, like magic, are to be feared.

But what about in high fantasy worlds? Do the farmers just watch golem horses march past their farms and think, gee, don't see that every day? Or do they gather their children and hide in the root cellar? Well, if your world has the large amount of magic Fletnern has, it's probably somewhere in-between.

All of this really does depend on the amount of magic you have in your world and whether it is seen as being evil, or dangerous, or just a normal part of life. For me, the "commoners" (I don't know what else to call all of the regular people) recognize magic most often when they see it. If they see certain types of magic, they probably react with a "Gee that's interesting" kind of an

attitude. Things like healing magic or healing potions probably get this type of reaction. Though a full resuscitation from the dead should get a stronger reaction.

But if the farmers are out in the fields and a fireball goes of whizzing by their heads, they do grab the children and head for the root cellars. They know enough to be afraid of battle magic, even if they aren't terrified of healing magic or golems or even a necromantic skeleton. This most likely comes from some level of familiarity with magic. If they were completely ignorant of magic, they might not know to be afraid if some sort of colorful fog cloud killer came rolling over the fields towards them. Those poisonous fog attack spells can be pretty devastating, but if they've never heard of this before, they might mistake a poisonous cloud for a normal cloud. OK, they may still do this, but ...

So the point is really this: You need to know how commonplace and unexceptional magic is in order to figure out how people will react to it. This is yet another of the "you really need to do some of the world building" things.

But does it matter to the players what the commoners think? It should. There are magical items that show themselves clearly: golem horses, flaming swords, lighted staves, armor etched with glowing sigils, etc. What happens when the party comes to town looking for a room at the inn? Does the innkeeper tell them all the rooms are full? Does the sheriff show up to walk them to the other end of the town? Are the witch hunters brought out to interrogate them?

The reaction to magic in general should be the reaction to the party, at least once they become successful. In most places (low population density places) all strangers are suspect. This goes triple for the ones carrying weapons and looking like they are ready to kill something (i.e. adventurers).

But the stories and myths matter too. If there are stories of foolish adventurers opening old crypts and letting all the evil creatures out, then the people are going to be that much more concerned about strangers. If every myth is about heroes gloriously conquering all evil, well, then maybe not so much. Yeah, it's almost always somewhere in the middle, isn't it?

The commoners' reaction to magic should also be a regional issue. The plantation folks are going to be a lot less trustful of mages than the folks whose town is centered around a magical university, or probably any university for that matter. But those closer to universities and other centers of young, untrained folks making relatively big mistakes would be those who know the stories of what happens when things go wrong. It is complicated and that's OK!

One of the better ways to handle it is to make the reaction different for different people, even in the same town, but that puts a lot more stress on you as the GM. Unquestionably, stereo-types are easier to GM than individuals.

Still - presentation means a lot. A hero who flies his white pegasi into town for lunch and tips well is not going to be feared as much as the dark and sinister looking wagon driver who has two skeletal oxen pulling his wagon. It may be silly, but simply wearing a black hat or a white hat matters.

Are All Golems Golems?

In **LEGEND QUEST**, golems can be formed in any shape the enchanter (and his stone carver) can imagine. Golems made of stone are not remarkably different from golems made of iron. The important part of this is that these are created creatures and mindless on their own. This means we are ignoring the **LQ** earth golems and that other game's forged people "race", at least for now.

So our question really comes down to how do you control a mindless creature? This same question can be asked of most skeletons and zombies. Why do most people (we mean players) assume that a newly risen zombie knows how to hold its sword and swing it? Why does the spell caster who just crafted a golem think it understands commands like "go kill that warrior and bring me his helmet"?

Now some of this depends on how your created creatures are formed. In **LQ** it takes a while (a day or two) to put a zombie together. It isn't something you just pull out of the ground. OK, it can be with the bag of bones spell. And maybe the zombies are animated by a style of death magic that utilizes "forgotten memories" of the corpse in the spell, allowing it knowledge of how to swing that sword. So that's why we'll focus just on magical constructs, like golems, for the rest of this.

Golems don't have memories to utilize. OK, so games have the flesh golems, but this isn't necromancy and they shouldn't be able to reach back into their memories in order to use old skills. If they do, they are going to pull out a lot more of those memories and they are going to cause a lot more trouble than they would be worth!

What can we be sure of with any magically constructed creature? Poison immunity. No need for sleep. Tireless. Limited or no brain activity (we assume none). Are these of benefit? Of course they are! What else? Expensive! How expensive? Well, so expensive that few GMs will allow the party members to have them, and if they do, the golem has to be treated like a figure of glass. If the golem cost you 10,000 whatever, don't use it as a meat shield. There are living creatures almost as stupid who will act as meat shields for far less.

Without trying to dig deeply into any particular set of game rules - golems are great fun for GMs. They can stand absolutely still, resembling statues or gargoyles until they spring to life and surprise the party. In fact, they can stand still for centuries. Long after the guy who built it is dead and gone, the golems will still be standing there protecting whatever they were supposed to. This makes them perfect "ruins" monsters.

But that same trait can be used for living characters as well. Do your adventurers always wait for the bad guys to be asleep before attacking? Fine, put some golem guards to work. They are always awake and never tire. String bells on them and the second the golem gets into a fight, it will serve as its own alarm bell. That way it won't have to stop and hit the warning gong; the noise will just start.

We know - There is a strong faction of people out there who don't care about anything that doesn't do damage in an actual fight, but golems can be so much more than just stone fighters. The tireless aspect allows them to work 24 hours a day (or 21 if you're from Flettern). The poison resistance and no breathing thing can be used to allow them to walk underwater, through evil forests with poisonous plants, or ignore that poison spitting dragon you thought was so tough.

So when to use them outside of combat? Think of them as engines that never need to eat, drink or rest. Your fantasy house doesn't have air conditioning? Let the golem fan you all day long - or turn the axle that fans the whole house - or maybe bellows? Not really sure how that works, but maybe.

But that can work too. The golem pumps the bellows on the forge with one hand and swings the hammer with the other - boom - better than an apprentice who is always bitching about being tired and he swings harder than the veteran smith. Or pulls as strong (or stronger) than the mule. Or carries chests filled with treasure that the party never would have been able to budge.

There are often people who try to use magic to mimic modern day conveniences - like our fanning suggestion. Golems aren't just engines or vehicles, they're the fantasy era robot. How interesting are robots? Well, judging from the amount of sci-fi stories about them, pretty darn interesting. But we said they were mindless? So what? This is high fantasy, who's to say that a demon, ghost or something cannot take over the golem? That would be pretty cool - needing to exorcize the golem in order to regain control of it!

Please don't get hung up on what's different about golems between the different games. Recognize these things for what they are - massively strong soldiers or laborers who never tire and will never run away in fear. That is a cool thing!

LIFESTYLES OF THE MAGICAL AND MUNDANE

The world of Fletnern has several different halflings populations, and many of their cultures can be quite different. As this edition is mainly about golems and the halflings of the Triad that craft them, we will be focused on the Triad halflings, but even these halflings have many differences based on what they do for a living and exactly where they live. This is as it should be!

A big question might be, “Why do the halflings of the Triad craft golems more than others?” The answer is actually quite simple: The halflings are one of the weakest races, mainly due to their size. While their reaction speeds are phenomenal, their overland speeds are lacking due to their short legs. So halflings lack strength and speed.

Golems are enormously strong, but often quite slow. Where a human would need to slow down considerably in order for a golem to keep up, the halflings are not slowed, or at least not slowed anywhere near as much. Also, where a human is unlikely to be as strong as a golem, the difference in strength is again, not as dramatic as the difference between a halfling and a golem. So simply put, halflings benefit greatly from a golem’s strength, but are not as inconvenienced by a golem’s lack of speed.

So, is the Triad overrun with golems? No. Not even close. Plum Rose Hill? Still not overrun. Golems represent less than 5% of the population, if they were to be considered part of the population. Why? Well, because of the expense.

But perhaps more to the point, the town does not seem to be overrun by golems because many of them are very small. Golem alarm clocks and other small kitchen tools (like the toy golem with a “battle axe” used for dicing vegetables) are equal in number to the vastly larger plow golems. So even the true number of golems is not easily seen simply due to the scale and size.

This points out an incredibly important fact of life in the Triad and elsewhere: what the adventurers see as “normal” is not what other people see as normal. The number of golem alarm clocks in the apartments of magical university students is phenomenally higher than the number owned by farmers. However, the adventurers may not fully recognize this. Very similar arguments could be made when discussing how often someone has teleported. Farmers would have never teleported and may refuse to try. Adventurers have probably had it happen a few times and know whether or not they get teleporter sickness.

So the question of how many golems or other magic items are around is very likely different for different classes of people within the same culture.



The lifestyle of an enchanter in Plum Rose Hill is going to be vastly different, most would say better, than the lifestyle of a farmer in Gardenplot. First off, the enchanter is likely to earn in and around 250sc per day of work. This is less than the “average” only because Plum Rose Hill has a lot of enchanters and commonality breeds competition and competition lowers prices.

Worse still for their incomes, most golem makers do not work every day. They may work at golems for weeks at a time, and then take two weeks off in order to do some research and development. Eternal curiosity is not a good thing when it comes to the bottom line. But this R&D is expensive, draining their purses even more. It might result in a new type of golem that revolutionizes the entire industry, but far more likely it will result in a different way of doing something that is costlier than the previous way of doing it, or in others words - yield nothing of use.

Now shed no tears for the enchanters. With the average craftsman making around 11sc per day, 250sc will carry them for quite some time before they need to worry about their next meal.

Speaking of their meals, Plum Rose Hill has a very large number of restaurants and quick service eateries. The enchanters are known to work crazy hours, and several of these shops stay open, willing to grab a few extra sales by serving the late night magical craftsmen. The enchanters tend not to be cooks, seeing that as alchemy and not their forte.

One might think that the enchanter’s spouse would then simply handle the home chores, but enchanters tend to be married to each other, meaning that there are not that many who have a “normal” home life. This additional socializing time is needed as they are highly isolated during their work.

Clearly the enchanters are having enough children to take over for them, but many of these married couples of enchanters wind up not having children at all. These are the ones likely to “adopt” their golem(s) as pets and virtual children. While this is absolutely crazy in the

eyes of outsiders, the enchanters will treat these constructs as beloved pets. They will dress them in clothing and costumes, have rooms for them at home, and basically spoil them as one might a child. They are aware the construct is not a real person, but they still have emotions for it.

The Pocktish Halflings

In the higher elevations of the Drypstriene Mountain Range (northeastern Hughijen) lives a culture of halflings unlike any others. Not only is their lifestyle strange, but so are their myths, their language, and their origin.

Known by most outside cultures as “the goat people”, these halflings instead refer to themselves as the Pocktish. In their language Pocktish is a combination word roughly meaning “men on the mountain”. But even this plays into their unique history.

According to their legends, a very long time ago, they lived in a place that was filled with volcanoes. They describe these volcanoes as lava spewing horrors, despite the fact that there are no similar style volcanoes anywhere near their homeland. The volcanoes in the Drypstriene Range erupt in a more plinian style (like Mount St. Helens) - all smoke and dust, but not lava. Their history tells that they “climbed” the mountains in order to get away from their previous homeland and escape to where they are now, which they refer to as the Home of the Spires.

Also tied into this is the legend that while they are the Men on the Mountain, there are also the Pocktuck, the Men under the Mountain. The Pocktuck are considered to be furry and savage, with arms too long for their bodies and small heads. While the Pocktish swear that these Pocktuck will from time to time find their way to the surface, no other culture has any record or legends of them.

The reason all of this is in question is that all the other halflings on Hughijen and Drentae were brought there by the titans in ships. The volcanic activity described in the legend certainly could be the destruction of the continent of Baelyndit and the creation of the Great Archipelago, but the Pocktish insist that there was no sea travel, only the climbing of mountains - though they do admit it wasn't simply up, they had to climb up and down in order to cross mountain ranges.

The prevailing theory amongst “scholars” is that the Pocktish are just wrong. They invented this mythology for themselves because they did not want to accept that they, like every other race of men, descend from titan slaves. But this is the way of scholars - to dismiss that which they do not understand.

A different explanation that believes the Pocktish suggests that perhaps they somehow crossed under the ocean using the Tunnel World. However, there are no

known passages through the Tunnel World to Hughijen. Those who believe this theory suggest that the violent destruction of Baelyndit may have severed any connecting tunnels, preventing anyone from proving that such a passage would be possible. Further, the Pocktuck could be some Tunnel World species that may now be extinct or extremely rare due to their homeland being destroyed during this period.

It does not help that most scholars who believe the Pocktish do so mainly to justify their own theories on the destruction of Baelyndit. They are part of a movement that is trying to show that the destruction of an entire continent must have had far larger consequences than what is typically assumed, and they plan to be the ones who chronicle these other impacts.

So leaving the truth of their origins behind, it is still highly questionable that these halflings have built a homeland here with a language that is barely recognizable by the other linguists who utilize “titan” languages. If they were instead escaped slaves, like so many believe them to be, their language should be more similar to Tandish, and yet it is not.

All of this is about how the Pocktish were, and not about how they are. They are known as the goat people, not simply because they keep goats, but instead because they are said to act like them. When defending their homes, the Pocktish rely heavily on the terrain. With their small size, they are able to squeeze through openings that other races cannot, allowing them to move about in their homeland far more easily than any invading force. When forced to move along the tops of these rocks, they move in a leaping style that is reminiscent of the mountain goats. By leaping or squeezing (or most likely both), they move through these mountains quickly and typically with cover from any missile weapons.

As they move through the region, they also stop to utilize specially prepared “posts”. These posts are spots where they have an especially good view of the surrounding area and can use their slings (and far more rarely bows) to attack anyone attempting to follow them. Worse yet for the attackers, if the Pocktish feel sufficiently threatened, they have set up avalanche traps. These traps would allow the Pocktish to dump an enormous amount of rock and stone on an invading force, but would require them to return later and attempt to dig out in order to return their “roads” to passable. Many sea raiders have learned the error of attempting to assault a major Pocktish settlement.

The Pocktish are very fearful of outsiders. While there are some settlements who do trade with other cultures, mainly the Voors to their west and some sea merchants, the vast majority of Pocktish will climb high into the mountains when outsiders are near. While they live in the lush valleys and along lower slopes where



their livestock can easily graze, they have mountain top fortresses that few outsiders could get to no matter how much gear they brought with.

These fortresses are natural places, caves and plateaus where they have supplies secreted and places to house their dairy goats. These are truly where outsiders would face the stiffest defenses of posts, traps and possible avalanche.

In their true homes, they most commonly live in a mixture of natural and constructed homes. A common house would be a natural formation of boulders that gave the occupants shelter from the winds roofed over with woven branches and thick thatch. The Pocktish use a variation of bamboo for their thatch as there are no swamps or marshes anywhere nearby.

Their main source of food is their goat herds. Their livestock is maintained primarily for dairy / cheese purposes, but they also butcher the young male goats for the meat and utilize the wool for fabrics and ropes. Their main source of meat however is brought in by the hunting parties. This too is goat, but the wild goats that live in the same region they do. The Pocktish hunters are experts, not only in tracking and shooting their prey, but also in knowing how to trap small herds where they can be picked off. Losing a large mountain goat because it fell off the mountain is of no use to these people or their families waiting for meat.

The Pocktish do not consider themselves to be farmers, but instead herders, yet they do still maintain some crops. Quinoa and a form of sweet potato are amongst their largest crops, but they are also growing seasoning herbs. This is in addition to hunting and foraging parties bringing back wild fruits and nuts as well as other herbs and greens.

The Pocktish have done some landscaping modifications to help their agriculture, but they are of small numbers and have not managed to dramatically change their environment. When possible, they do divert

streams and water channels towards their villages. The most elaborate of these will redirect water run offs on the east side of the mountains to communities on the west side. They have also been known to carve trenches to direct the snow melting in the spring to where they need it to be.

Though they utilize plateaus for their gardening, they have not done much to create their own mountainside plateau farms. It appears they simply don't have the man-power for such a task, though the cultural impacts of "not being farmers" may factor in here as well.

The Pocktish rarely build with wood, preferring to use the far more abundant stone whenever possible. For this reason, their homes are most commonly stone, as are the fences keeping their animals. Wood is harvested primarily for fuel.

For a people so entrenched and protected by their defenses, they are a very peaceful people. Pocktish communities simply don't go to war with each other. Nearly all disputes, even between families or communities, are settled by their elders. They have no true written language, and yet they utilize symbols and markings to a great extent. For example, a shepherd may carve a few symbols into a tree to notify his family that he is taking the flock into a different grazing site, or a community may post a warning of dangerous terrain ahead to other Pocktish travelers, but they do not write down their history.

It is rare that a Pocktish leaves his homeland and travels into the Tandish regions of the continent, but from time to time it will happen. These "barbarians" are always treated as oddities, and they seldom can settle into urbanized areas. They may find a place for themselves among other herding halfling communities, but this would be a best case scenario. Although rare, a few Pocktish have become adventurers utilizing their slings and speed to great effect.

One last "origin" point: The Pocktish, like all other halflings, resemble a mixture of the Rhoric and Velesans, and typically do not resemble the Tands. They have hair that is shades of brown, not the consistent blonde or their human neighbors. This fact is used by many to "prove" all manner of theories about halflings in general, such as:

- The halflings must have been created by the titans because they don't vary within their own race like humans do.
- Even the Pocktish are wanderers or else they would be of a more ethnically similar appearance.
- Halflings and humans are not related despite appearances, because they do not vary like humans.

All of these theories are false.

NEWS OF FLETNERN

On the sale of golems:

While the people of Plum Rose Hill love their creations and the creative creations of their friends and neighbors, they always place the living above golems. This became a problem when the town began selling mining golems. The golems were intended to go places that were too dangerous for people to go, and thereby save lives. When the golems were sold to centaurs, the golems were sent into the mines with human and halfling slaves. The golems would dig furiously while the slaves would gather the coal and carry it out. Because of the conditions, the golems actually made it more hazardous for the people. The town stopped making the mining golems and has become more concerned about who is using their laboring golems and for what purposes.

The people of Plum Rose Hill (and other Triad golem makers) can afford to be choosy in deciding who to sell to. There is a nearly endless demand for golems, and they make incredible sums in crafting them. The idea of becoming “even richer” is annoying to these folks. They have vastly more than they need, and their culture does not support seeking even more.

Interdiction

The High Order of Telepathy is Fletnern’s largest communications “company”. For a fee, they will telepathically send your message(s) through their relay stations until they reach your intended destination. They will also send messages that serve to move money along this same relay network and thus are the world’s biggest “bank” as well. No one can compete with them.

So imagine how angry they got when a group of halflings attempted to do just that, compete with them. The halflings of the Triad felt that the High Order of Telepathy was not putting enough relay stations in their region. Therefore, they sought to add relay stations in the smaller towns - stations that would take the messages from the High Order’s stations and then continue to send them down the lines to the much smaller towns - towns the High Order was not willing to service directly.

This additional service began under the name of The Three Relay - intending to service the area of the Triad. They fully expected to be an add-on to the High Order, not to replace it. Their overhead costs were far less, and since they would not be moving money, they did not need the strong walls or numerous guards.

At first barely noticed by the High Order, The Three Relay began to grow. The High Order looked at different ways to stop the budding competitor but in truth, they didn’t understand what the halflings were attempting to do. Not only were the halflings cutting

prices by utilizing telepaths who were doing this as a side job, but they were working in the communities that truly wanted to feel important and supported. The High Order is simply too large an organization to apply this level of service. Too large and too arrogant.

So after nearly two decades of seeming to ignore this upstart, the High Order began to show their anger. They began to threaten the politicians of the Triad that if nothing was done to shut this enterprise down, they would utilize their biggest threat: interdiction. They promised that if forced to compete with The Three Relay, they would shut down their stations within the Triad and refuse to offer communication or banking services. The threats were delivered with the least amount of diplomacy imaginable, and were therefore treated with derision. Not only were the High Order being ignored, they were being mocked.

The High Order superiors in Helatia decided to teach these “fools” a lesson and imposed interdiction on the Triad on Shade 5, 645P. Their intent was to “block” the halflings from communicating with the rest of the world anticipating that the Triad would be forced to go along with them within a matter of months if not weeks. That was ten years ago.

At first, the High Order even left their staff in place, expecting that they would be back to work any day. They expected the people to rise up against their politicians and this upstart organization, but no one seemed to notice. Graffiti was appearing on the High Order’s towers, but no one seemed all that upset that the doors were closed. Their huge threat was again being treated as a punch line.

After four months of existing without business, the High Order pulled all of their people out of the Triad. The biggest complaints were coming from their other customers who were now paying more because they needed to pay for additional relays to go around the Triad instead of going through it.

Once the High Order left the Triad, The Three Relay organization was given all of their towers by the government of the Triad, and business continued on. The Triad is in some ways isolated from other portions of the world, but news does make it to their cities, just not via telepathy.

When the High Order fully pulled out of the Triad, they threatened to interdict any city supporting The Three Relay. This hit Rhum hardest, and the Merchants’ Guild of Rhum was unwilling to take the risks. They negotiated with The Three Relay and the agreement put the halfling telepaths a short distance outside the city walls. Villai refused to move their Three Relay station, and the High Order has not done anything to punish them for their inaction.

Golem Armies

It is extremely rare to see an army of golems marching to battle. Both the expense of fielding such an army and the dangers of trying to direct golems in battle make this tactic at least inefficient. And yet, from time to time it happens.

The most recent was during the Hollywood War when the Siestene Witches Alliance attacked the Barony of Hollywood. After the battles had begun, The Baron and Baroness of Forsbury revealed an “army” of golems they had been secreting under their castle. 16 golems marched from Forsbury in a 4x4 formation all the way to Hollywood. They marched day and night, or it would have taken them far too long to make the journey and they would have arrived too late to participate.

It is important to note that they did not do this simply to place super-strong soldiers onto the field of battle. They had two different motives. The first was that the Yugsalantis of the SWA had released some undead ghouls - creatures that can turn their prey into ghouls as well if the undead venom takes hold. The golems, being unliving and unable to be bitten, were immune to these ghouls and therefore far better soldiers to utilize than people. They were also immune to the fear and terror caused by such abominations.

Secondly, Forsbury did it to further intimidate the other barons of the Council of Baronies. Throughout the remainder of the conflict, Baron Forsbury was overheard saying things such as “There’s at least a dozen more where these came from”. The threat (believed to be true) that this was only half of the true golem forces of Forsbury was taken to heart by most of the other allies on the field, making Forsbury an even bigger military threat than they were known to be.

The Forsbury forces also showed a clever tactic in the use of these golems. Each golem was assigned to a single soldier, most of whom were crossbowmen. The crossbowmen would direct only their golem, often using it as a shield and bodyguard. This allowed them to avoid some of the difficulties of directing golems in battle as well as offset the issues of a crossbowman reloading in combat. One weakness noticed during one of the battles was that the golems are colorblind. When ordered to punch “the one with the yellow hat”, the golem did nothing but look around the field. While the missile-men did find ways to control their golems, they were unable to direct them by color.

THE GOOD LIFE

Golem Form

Golems must be crafted in a means where they will mimic life. For an enchanter to mimic life, it must be life in a shape that he or she has been able to observe.

Let’s do an example: A miller has a windmill and wants the wind mill to be enchanted to work like a golem, because sometimes the winds are not as strong as he wishes they were. This won’t work! An enchanter cannot enchant a windmill to act as though it were alive through a golem spell. If he were able to put together enough power in an animated life spell, it could work, but animated life spells are notoriously weak and would never be strong enough to power a mill. So you cannot have a golem windmill.

Instead, what the mill owner needs to do is add a mechanism, probably some manner of crank, that a humanoid golem could grab hold of and turn. Or possibly the mechanism could be some gears and an axle and the golem could be in the form of a four legged animal who walked around and around in a circle and thereby power the mill - which is a fairly normal part of the machinery of some mills.

The difference is important. The golem must mimic a life that the caster can understand, either a humanoid or a four legged animal. These golems can then lend their supernatural strength to a task, such as walking around in a circle or turning a crank. If the miller wanted a gear that turned round and round constantly, he would need a perpetual motion enchantment and not a golem. But they really do spin round and round forever. They don’t turn off and on. To use a perpetual motion machine in this case, the miller would need to be able to engage and disengage the perpetual motion gear from the rest of the machinery or else grind down his grindstones vastly quicker.

Golems do not have to be entire figures. The crank turning golem suggested above could lack legs and instead be bolted to the floor. This might be to prevent it being stolen by the miller down the road or for whatever reason, but the portions that were there would still need to mimic an understandable life form. This is the case where some enchanters have famously put golem arms inside safes. The golem arm then holds the safe closed except for under certain circumstances, such as when it hears a particular phrase or sees the owner through a slit in the safe. In this way, even a clever thief who can pick the lock is unable to open the safe unless he can also beat the golem’s strength.



Cuisine

The halfling farmers of the Triad are responsible for one of the most important crops in the world, namely - sugar from sugar beets. (We asked around the BE offices, and other than coffee, sugar was considered the most important crop! That's science!) So how do they do it? Well, a lot of them are using golems. Rather than have slave labor process sugar, they are using magic, though admittedly, some are using kobold slaves.

Most of the sugar beet plantations grow their own seed, so they are self-sustaining. When the beets are ready for harvest, they will send out the golems who "top" the beets, leaving their surface leaves in the fields. They then come back and "dig" with specialized forks, that loosen the soil and typically leave the beets sitting above the ground. Any beets severely damaged in this digging are thrown in a pile to attract bees, but we'll get to that later.

People (typically halfling workers) will then pick up the beets and get them to the factory site or sometimes dump them into pack pony golem baskets to be carted off "automatically". Once at the factory or workshop, a set of golems will wash them. Later people will wash them again, but this job is much easier after the golems have given the beets their first major scrub.

Then the golems will "shred" the beet by cutting them into thin strips, not unlike french fries. These strips will then be boiled to remove the sugars. The remaining

solids will be dumped out of the factory to be dried as beet pulp - the major livestock feed within the Triad.

The syrup extracted from the strips will be boiled and processed and then the water content will be slowly boiled off. Eventually they need to separate the molasses from the sugar, which is done by golem powered centrifuges. Both the molasses and the sugar are considered valuable products.

A major plantation using golems will usually have field golems and factory golems. A field golem will top, dig and carry in the fields. A factory golem will wash, slice, and work the centrifuge inside. Trying to get the same golem to do all of these tasks has proven difficult. Keeping "gross movement" tasks to the field golems and "fine movement" tasks to the factory golems seems to work far better.

So to be clear, the halflings are producing "red strap molasses" and "red loaf sugar". While the molasses does not have any difference in color due to being made from beets instead of sugar cane, the sugar does have a slight reddish tinge. In the same way that "brown" sugar is a bit tan, "red loaf sugar" has a reddish-brown hue.

Red loaf sugar is the most common form of sugar found in the northern half of Drentae. Not only do the halflings grow them better (higher yield) than most others, but they seem to know all the secrets to extracting the sugar from the beets.

But the halflings have other secrets they use to attract bees for honey. The bees are both useful to the sugar beet crops and attracted to them, especially if they are harvested and left for the bees. Like most Drentae honey "farmers", the halflings don't keep bees in boxes, but instead strongly encourage them to build hives in their trees and other spaces by luring them in. Then once the hive is "full" they will drive off the bees and harvest the wax and honey.

With all this sugar and honey being produced, the Triad is thought of as the sweets capital of the world. But there are some unexpected issues to this. Foremost is that the Triad is a bit lacking in fuels. Large amounts of coke are brought in from the lands around Parnania, but this transport does increase the cost. Additionally, all those sugar beet plantations need huge amounts of fuel to boil the liquids out of the beets and syrup.

So with fuel being more expensive, few homes have ovens. Every home will likely have a cast iron oven ("dutch oven") and might have a second one formed like a muffin tray, but as for actual "ovens", they rely on their local bakers.

This means that housewives are not baking bread, cakes or turnovers. The traditional home desert is more likely to be a cobbler or crisp, a "pie" with no crust on the bottom. This is for multiple reasons, only one of which is the lack of fuels. Full ovens take a lot of iron or

steel, another resource the halflings do not have in abundance. But the Triad homemakers are some of the most prolific “canners”. They will turn nearly any fruit they can get their hands on into a jam, jelly or preserve and then use these sugar laden preserves in their cobblers.

This is not to say that the halflings are not eating bread, just that they are not eating raised bread, or at least not making them in their homes. Especially in the more rural areas, most homes will serve dinner on a ceramic plate with a cornmeal “trencher”. This trencher is sort of a combination of a pancake and cornbread. The poorer the home, the thinner the trencher, but the idea is for the trencher to soak up any juices or flavors from the meal and then serve as the bread portion of the meal. These “pan-cakes” are made in a skillet, typically a skillet formed to go with the plates - being the exact same size. This is more important than you might think, because many of their plates are rectangular.

But halflings do like yeast/raised breads as well. Nearly every village, no matter how small will have a bakery. While they certainly make bread, typically as various styles of rolls or even muffins (muffins are more common in the southern “Velesan” regions), it is the sweetbreads that are known across the lands. The best known of these sweetbreads are the various types of cinnamon rolls. These come in all manner of shapes and forms. Most are like what we would know as a cinnamon roll (cinnamon mixture rolled or folded into a dough to form an interior swirl). Other forms include “doughnuts” covered in cinnamon sugar, cinnamon breads, and “coffeecakes”. They also produce puff pastries with filling (“danish”). These can come in an unlimited number of flavors / fillings, such as: cream cheese, fruit jams, cinnamon, fruit or berry, nuts, raisins, or even meat - typically bacon or sausage. The cinnamon roll with icing is a halfling invention gaining popularity in the human cities surrounding the Triad.



Halfling Toys

The stereo-type is that halflings like gadgets, and the golems simply play into this. There certainly is some truth to this. One of the most common toys is most often attributed to the shepherds of the Triad. While in the fields minding their livestock, these shepherds will carve small pieces of wood into marble runs. Then the pieces can be assembled in a small box to design different paths that a marble can follow. Small lifts allow some pieces to be higher than others, giving the marble its speed (gravity), and then the pieces can be stored in the box. These can also be used with or as building block toys which are also popular. The shepherd carved versions are often made from the most interesting woods they can find, while more professionally built versions are available in Parnania, but are crafted from plain pines.

The halfling tinkers are also famous for their contraptions, including spring activated wind up boxes. These boxes are most commonly moving parts teamed with music boxes, such as the well-known spinning “dancing” girl, though boxes that only play music or just have a moving figure are known. The workings of these toys is most commonly bronze, though they may be plated in silver if the additional shine is thought to add. Again, the halfling crafted versions are typically crafted from beautiful woods, and if the wood is considered too plain, they will be decorated with a carving of some type. Music boxes that do clever or humorous things are the most prized, though most halflings do seem to have a child-like admiration for even the more simplistic boxes.

Halfling Holes

Throughout the rural regions of the Triad, especially those in the northern, hillier areas, the landscapes are filled with “halfling holes”. These “holes” are storage cellars dug horizontally into the hills and are used for storage and other purposes similar to root cellars in other areas. One odd point is that the doors are most commonly circular instead of being half-round (rounded tops but square or rectangular bottoms) as the doors on the homes are. This is simply a cultural thing. Most halflings believe this was a way to signify which door was the cellar and which door was to the home.

But too often, humans not as familiar with the halfling cultures believe that halflings live in these holes. Most commonly, this is because the hole / cellar is closer to the road and the home is higher up on the hill and thus away from where passersby would see it more frequently. The legend in most human cities is that the land owner lives on top of the hill, and all of the workers live in these holes towards the bottom of the hill. The legend even goes on to say that the foreman lives closer to the top and has a nicer hole.

Most halflings laugh these silly ideas off, but there are some who find it insulting. After all, it is rude to believe that someone lives in a dirt hole in the ground. (These are not beautifully furnished as they seem to be in some fictional accounts.) But most halflings find it funny that humans think they are wealthy enough to have servants and workers. This idea is actually the racist one, as too many humans believe that halflings are incapable of putting in the work required to run a farm.

If the home owner has a stable (and most would), it will be on top of the hill behind the house. The homes and the halfling holes do not connect, and these are not simply basements. In the flatter regions, such as nearer to Thistledale, most rural farmers use root cellars in the same fashion that most of the human cultures do.

Often times, the digging of the hole (or root cellar) has a dual purpose. Not only will the area be used for storage, but if it can be dug in a clay area of the property, then the clay dug out of the ground can be used to make the ceramic vessels that things will be stored in.

Other Halflings

The halflings seem to be of only one race. Originally seeming Tandish, like most of the “white” races of Men, the halflings generally moved to Drentae along with other human colonization waves. This means that there should be Tandish, Rhoric, Anglic, and Velesan halflings, but there do not seem to be. There seems to be only one ethnic group of halflings, which is a mix of Rhoric, Velesan and Anglic ethnicities.

Even the halflings of Purity seem to be this combination. They have hair ranging from blonde through to darker browns. Eye colors are also of the more common for “white” humans, including (in order of probability) blues, browns, tans, hazels, and greens. In no clear way do these halfling populations seem anything but consistent.

The belief is that the halflings continue to move about pursuing their “wanderlust”, but this is a fairly racist point of view. The idea that all halflings have this wanderlust is at best silly, but yet they do seem to be one consistent ethnicity, despite the fact that humans have formed into multiple groups.

Despite similar looks, they have developed separate cultures. The halflings of the Triad have been covered in length in this book. The halflings of Villai are relatively similar, though seem to be more urban than those of the Triad. The halflings of Garnock can be assumed to be enslaved, most of them either taken during the Conquering War or descended from those who were.

There are communities of halflings in Snobist, Rhum and Parnania. Each of these minority communities manages to fit in well in the human dominated societies. However, in Purity, the halfling

population is seen as unable to be as successful as the humans are. Therefore, they are given welfare payments.

The nearby halfling population towards the eastern edge of Hughijen is far more savage than the other populations. These “Pocktish” live amidst the rough hills and mountains using their small size and cleverly planned defenses to protect them against wild animals and enemies. Often referred to as the “goat people” by the humans who live nearby, these halflings appear to simply leap around the boulders of their homes, surefooted as the mountain goats they keep for wool and milk.

The Construction Colossuses of Rimmim

Rimmim is an island nation and probably one of the most highly magical in all the world. There farms are tended by zombies, most of the citizens have a means by which they fly, and their construction projects are completed by colossuses.

These enormous golems are best known for standing hip deep in the waters of the sea surrounding the island hammering in the pylons that will support the dykes. These dykes are vital, because Rimmim continues to try and expand the size of Sambrek Island by claiming land that should be underwater. But while these are the most visible of the construction golems, they are not the only ones.

Every minable resource on the island was dug out centuries ago. Lacking any workable land mines, the clever enchanters of the island designed golems and colossuses that can function underwater and moved to see what they could find there. The first and often most important resource mined is the earth and stone of the ocean floor. These resources are then used to build the walls held in place by the pylons. The dykes of Rimmim are the city-states most important project as they protect what little arable land the island nation has.

Colossuses are rarely used inside the city of Rimmim proper, and typically only for construction projects at the edge of the island or out in the more rural areas. This is because the city of Rimmim is very congested, with many of its buildings being supernaturally tall - supernatural in that the only thing holding them together at those great heights is magic. Trying to get a huge, impossibly strong, but very clumsy creature / machine into the city is simply asking for trouble, something the people of Rimmim have seen happen far too often to allow it to continue.

It is believed that Rimmim is the only place where colossuses are created on a regular basis.

WHAT'S MISSING

This is the "World Walker" version of this edition. Therefore, it is not the complete version, but instead the slimmed down version. So the question is - What's missing? Here is a summary of what you'd see if you got the Game Masters' version of the book:

How to Play a ... Golem Trainer: Controlling mindless creatures is difficult, as is funding your crafting of these creatures. We give you some great ideas on how to start building useful golems, even at the lowest levels of your game. Colossuses are fun, but you don't need a 20' tall monster to be effective!

How to GM a ... Magical Creatures: Before your players start crafting their own golem monsters, you need to know how they are going to work in your game and what restrictions you might need to think through. Golems can be a useful arm of the game rules, but here's how to allow them in without throwing the game out of balance and without causing arguments between your players and you.

The Enlistment Report: How well do armies of golems actually do on battle fields? Marshal Whenteng isn't a fan, but he does a decent job of explaining his position and what some of the pros and cons of fielding golems or other mindless creatures can be.

Optional Rules: How do you actually craft a golem? Are they just statues come to life? (They aren't) And what other forms of enchantment can be used to give them even more power than they might have started with? If you're going to do this, do it right!

Silver Sense: Believe it or not, the cultural impact of how golems are constructed and used affects the cost to build them. Here are some common sense approaches to how the golems can function in civilization and what the costs of that would be.

Gold, Silver and WHAT!?!: The halflings are the vital cog in the agricultural production of sugar beets! Without them, the only sweetener in the north would be honey. Oh, and there's a long list of what the various golems cost.

Monsters & Other Menaces: Ever hear of the diwndoals? They're little land squids, who's heads look more like brains. Why are they here? Well, they are the masters at riding golems into battle. Drivers use the golems to battle, while the bolters use them as steed from which they can throw lightning bolts all over the place. Small, but quite dangerous if found with their golems.

By the Numbers: The economics of a golem. Sometimes, a golem will turn out to be cheaper than a horse, but what factors should be considered before your entire world stops riding horses and shifts to golems. As we normally do, this is a comprehensive look at the costs on both sides so you can make the decisions for your world.

Huge Adventures: How does all of this fit into the Holy War or the Merchant Wars that are brewing through Fletnern? Even if the party isn't directly involved in those other battles, here's some here are some of the consequences of living in a world that is currently at war.

Small Towns and City Neighborhoods: Plum Rose Hill may craft lots of golems, but what about their neighbor Gardenplot (formerly Bottom of Plum Rose Hill)? Some notes on living next to incredibly rich, incredibly powerful enchanters, and what it does to your town.

Tavern Talk: As per usual, Guido has some opinions on the inns and taverns within the Triad. When hospitality may depend on your height, best to get an expert to give you the inside story for travelers.

On Magical Matters: A new article this month, we go into some of the rumors and legends about golems and try to show which are true. More of a world building piece, we're trying to understand enchanters better and what drives them. After all, motives lead to hiring adventurers for missions.

Pull Back the Curtain: We think you'll be surprised how much of Fletnern is based on an article we wrote back in 1996 called A World of Difference. Here is the article in full as well as some current commentary.

Y? Y? Y!: Fletnern's underground elves, the aldar, are not the same as you find in other games and other worlds. Instead of just mentioning them, we'll give some content about these albino elves and how their thirst for profits drives their culture (and combat).

The full Game Master version of this edition is 47 pages of content. That is considerably more than what you're seeing here.

Do you know how to get the Game Masters' version instead of this World Walker edition? Well, use the links on the next page to head out to our Patreon site and become a patron. Check it out because there's a ton of stuff that we're doing, and we want you to be involved.

Not sure how much you trust us? Why not become a patron for only \$1 per month? As you see all the great content and begin to get more and more involved in the process, you may choose to increase your support level, which would be great, but the risk really is minimal.

IN CONCLUSION

This edition, we wanted to try to link the various editions together here at the end rather than just talk about what you've already read. This works well for this particular edition.

While this edition has been about halflings and their golems, we have touched on dwarven enchanting as well, especially the perpetual motion enchantment and how it differs from the golems. For more on dwarves and their enchantments, please check out our All About Dwarves edition.

Most of the trade in and out of the Triad is controlled by the merchant cartels of Forsbury who will trade with the halflings on their way to Helatia. For more on these traders, please check out All About Merchant Wars.

Throughout this book, the city-state of Villai is referred to as a halfling city. It is and it isn't. For more details on the other main population of Villai, please see All About Centaurs.

There are halfling slaves in Garnock. To better understand the corrupt government of this city-state, please check out All About Organized Crime (in Fantasy).

Please remember that the editions linked here are all the World Walker editions. They are not the full editions and typically run about half the length/content of the Game Masters' editions. You don't have to pay for prior editions of Small Bites. If you come on board as a Patreon patron, every dollar you donate will earn you one "Board Buck". These Board Bucks can be exchanged for any Board Enterprises content, including previous editions of Small Bites. This means that you will receive the GMs' edition for that month and can use your Bucks to get any previous editions or get two per month, at least until you catch up.



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The good looking map is courtesy of Sean Nelson. Thanks Sean!

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We are incredibly proud of the community we are building within Patreon. The community was why we started this Small Bites project and it is really beginning to bloom. We knew it wouldn't happen overnight, and it didn't, but we are getting feedback, participation, opinions, constructive criticism, the whole works!!

We would love for you to join that community (if you haven't already). Just click the link:

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Why? Well, first, you'll get the full edition of this book; that's the GM's Edition, and not just the World Walker edition. But if you want to help us along and sponsor us at \$1, then you'll get the World Walker edition emailed to you at the end of every month, instead of having to go out and find it several weeks later when it becomes available to the general public. The GM's edition is usually double or triple the length of the World Walker edition, but that might not be what you're looking for.

Far more important to us, you'll become part of this community we're so interested in: a community of role-players, game masters and world builders, sharing ideas, and sharing our hobby - for many of us, our passion.

You'll be able to participate in polls and other ways to let us know what you're thinking. Several times, we thought we had the best plans laid out, only to hear from our patrons that they had a different idea of what the priorities should be. So we changed the priorities and changed the order in which these editions have come out. Does it make sense? Of course it does, but without that communication, there is little we can do to properly address your priorities.