WARRIORS KICK ASS!

- 13 New Combat Spells
- Race and the Fighting Classes

20 EXOTIC WEAPONS

New Prestige Class
The Duelist

Build the ULTIMATE D&D MUSIC LIBRARY!

PLUS: DUNGEONCRAFT POP QUIZ! TEST YOUR DMING SKILLS!
Measured by the Evil they face.

Now, for the first time, you can summon allies over the Internet as you prepare for the ultimate battle. Face sinister monsters, devious traps and cunning enemies. The power is in your hands, the outcome is uncertain. Do you have what it takes to become a Legend?

- New 3D gaming worlds powered by the advanced LithTech™ gaming technology.
- Six new characters ready for battle with different skills, spells and advantages.
- Customize your character with scores of armor, weapons and abilities.
- Richly detailed single player campaign and story.
- Cooperative and Deathmatch multi-player action over the Internet.

Legends of Might and Magic™

www.mightandmagic.com

3DO™

New World Computing

Better Internet Gaming

3dfx

EAX
Cover artist Mark Zug can speak of his half-orc paladin far more eloquently than some draconian art director. He writes, "It is a cool, misty morning touched with biting frost. As his loyal squire prepares their mounts, the knight rededicates himself to his relentless quest— for life, his people, his faith, and his lady. Hardship cannot swerve him: none of the sundry trials of being a half-orc—the prejudice of humans and elves; finding armor that fits; the drizzle of snot that runs from his squat nose into his tusked mouth—can distract the resolve of his noble soul."

—Peter Whitely, Art Director
You Hear a Soft Cliché as the Chest Opens...

If you've played Dungeons & Dragons more than once or twice, you already know how clichés can turn what should be heroic situations into dice-rolling contests about as thrilling as a game of Yahtzee. The same thing can happen to movies, meals, and magazines. Even the greatest stories grow old if told too often.

Roleplaying is an exercise in visualization. Illustrations and maps can help with the mechanical aspects of combat and offer clues that work best when seen, but the core of the game is played in our imaginations. The beauty of this process is that the worlds come alive for each of us. It can also lead to painful misunderstandings. For example, in my D&D campaign, I imagine that my character looks like Nicolas Cage, while my fellow players envision me as Steve Buscemi.

Attentive readers might have noticed subtle changes in Dragon recently. Beyond adopting a new look to reflect the new edition, our goal was to make Dragon challenge your imagination as much as playing D&D does. You'll still find as much of the advice, fiction, and new things to use in your games, but we're hoping you also get a sense of the dirtiness of a dungeon crawl, the ancient breath of a gold dragon, or the smell of sweat radiating from a thief screaming a volatile trap. (Unfortunately, our printer informs us that orc-smelling inks are still on the horizon.) A game as flexible as D&D should have a magazine that never allows you, the reader, to stop and regain hit points.

Dragon Magazine's history is rich with compelling images, but you probably won't soon see a picture of a hearty adventuring party leaning over a pile of loot as a huge beast looms unseen over their heads. Yes, it's a classic joke. Yes, it's a part of the genre's history. Yes, it's a gag to be feared and respected. Mostly, though, it is one of the many clichés that bind the genre and the game.

There's plenty more, too. Let's not too quickly forget the warrior vixens clad in chainmail bikinis as they fade from these pages. Oops, don't want to forget the ale-swilling Dwarf celebrating his newfound wealth in his "horned viking" helmet (which I'm told the Vikings didn't even wear). These things have gone the way of the wizard's pointy cap. What you get in return is fresh imagery that carries the potential to help you reinvent the game your way.

In my favored imagination, I would love to replace these tired old stories with what I feel are much more compelling images—specifically, the huge beast politely offers his treasure to the party. (But why?) The bikini-clad warrior has a Charisma score of 18 only in her mind. (While to others she is a generous 6 in dim light.) Our alcoholic dwarf in the funny hat plans on slaughtering each and every inn patron this evening while they sleep. These, to me, are much more interesting and suggest a story yet to be told. This is the essence of Dragon's new look: to reinvent the stories but not forsake the game.

Above all other considerations, Dragon Magazine is yours. As art director, I might have ideas that I think you'll enjoy, but you decide what is written and how it's presented. Though you probably already know it, I invite you to criticize, analyze, and improve upon this magazine—your magazine.

And if you see a dwarf in a viking helmet, sleep with one eye open.
An RPG as Vast as Legend Itself.

"...one of the biggest RPGs ever."
— IGN PC

Wizards & Warriors™

Encounter over 100 NPCs, battle 75 monsters, wield weapons and cast over 100 magic spells.

Create a party of six adventurers from 15 different classes. Utilize 300 inventory items, including customizable pieces.

Embark on over 100 quests in 200 hours of gameplay, battling in real-time and turn-based combat.

From the creator of WIZARDRY V, VI, AND VII, D.W. BRADLEY

www.activision.com

ACTIVISION

Wizards & Warriors is a trademark of MicroProse, Inc. © 1998 MicroProse, Inc. Published and distributed by Activision. Activision is a registered trademark of Activision, Inc. Wizards is a registered trademark of 12001 NC Ontario, Inc. All rights reserved. The ESRB logo is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners.
Imagine your worst day.
Not even close to what he's going through.

DOWNFALL
The Dhamon Saga: Volume One

JEAN RABE

Sequel to the Dragons of a New Age Trilogy
Downfall: The Dhamon Saga • Volume One
Look for these novels at better book and hobby stores everywhere.

The Best of Tales
0-7869-1567-6

Dalamar the Dark
0-7869-1565-X

Rebels & Tyrants:
Tales of the Fifth Age
0-7869-1576-1

More Leaves from the
Inn of the Last Home
0-7869-1516-1

Adventure so vivid, we suggest
you keep a sword nearby.

DragonsLance®

All trademarks are property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©2000 Wizards
www.wizards.com/books
Keep in Touch!

To share your opinions on this issue of the magazine, post a letter to:

"Scale Mail" DRAGON Magazine
1801 Lind Avenue S.W.
Renton, WA 98055, USA

Send email to scalemail@wizards.com.

Include your full name and mailing address if you expect your letter to be printed, and let us know how much of that address you'd like printed. (We'll assume city and state otherwise.)

For subscription inquiries, send email to dragon@pcspublink.com, or call 1 (800) 395-7760.

Upon a Soapbox

The Changing Play

By Gary Gygax

Ever since word got around that I was reviewing and critiquing the new edition of the D&D game, there has been a steady stream of inquiry as to my opinion of the work. As I have not actively played the new system for a sufficient period of time to feel comfortable writing "learned" material pertaining to it, I have been reticent. For the record, I have stated that it was intriguing to me and that I found the Dungeon Master's Guide a "must read" for all Game Masters with a desire for excellence in developing the dungeon adventure. In addition, I have explained that as soon as the core system books are commercially available, I intend to begin a campaign, "get in the trenches," and really learn the system. It is different from AD&D, certainly, and there are many interesting aspects of the new game that I wish to explore and test. The best way to accomplish this is to get a group of young players together and have at it. So by the time you are reading this, it is likely that I will be doing just that at the local shop, the Game Guild, in Lake Geneva, which brings me to a related topic, a part of what inspired the title of this month's essay.

As 1999 was the 25th anniversary of the publication of the original Dungeons & Dragons game, I decided to DM that primal version for my own group, then at conventions. While all the players were eager to participate, I noted something that was astonishing to me at first. The survival rate for low-level characters on the 1st level of the original Castle Greyhawk dungeons was only about 20%! Remarkably on this at PentaCon, one "old hand" at dungeon adventuring, whose PC bit the dust, confessed something to this effect: "Gary, most players today are used to modules that are linear, where progression is mandatory. They have not learned about running away to fight another day … and I forgot that early lesson."

Indeed, many adventures are linear, particularly computer roleplaying ones. Even with non-sequential computer games now being produced, and many of the old standard adventure modules having multiple paths possible, even necessary, to success, it seems as if most players today are bent on bulling ahead. The elementary skill of knowing when to retreat has been lost to many current gamers.

There must be a way through this. The key is knowing when the current situation and resources preclude immediate success. In other words, knowing when to run away!

Collaterally, and not to make too fine a point of it, some approach other than hack-and-slash in the beginning, some "yak-and-schmooze" perhaps, might have enabled passage through the area without conflict. Likely proponents of "roleplaying" — that is to say, speaking in character and seeking solutions of a non-violent sort through interaction with NPCs and monsters—often forget, or simply dismiss, such possibilities when placed in a "dungeon crawl" setting. Naturally, neglect of the parlry option then brings about the self-fulfilling prophecy, to wit: "Dungeon crawls are nothing but hack-and-slash."

After a few weeks of pure exploration and combat-based dungeon
Anti-Dungeon Conspiracy

I remember the switch from 1st to 2nd Edition and how sorely it was needed. Although 2nd Edition has gone by too quickly, it seems, there is no denying the cumbersome proportions it has achieved. Thankfully, everything I have seen in previews of the new edition indicates that the developers are doing whatever it takes to make the new D&D a lean, mean, roleplaying machine.

Although I have not had the opportunity to playtest it, every rule and revision in the new D&D seems utterly intuitive, while the new character classes and abilities sound both exciting and well-balanced. And although the new edition characters look to be inherently more powerful than their counterparts in 1st Edition, the myriad of feats and skills they command seems completely justified by the equally improved abilities of the new edition monsters. Even if the artwork captures my imagination in a way that few illustrations ever have.

The only thing I am a little disappointed about is that, from what I have seen, it seems as if the Society and Ecology sections of monster descriptions are being cut out in the new edition. While I am sure there are some who will be glad to see them go, I personally found them to be indispensable tools for creating encounters with creatures that seemed to be a real part of their environment, as opposed to contrived opposition for the characters. As you might imagine, I greatly enjoy your "Dragon Ecologies" articles, so I hope that you will continue to publish them to help flesh out the monsters of the new edition.

Specific to issue #272, "Up on a Soapbox!" finally hit home for me with "Hooray for the Dungeon Crawl!" Mr. Gygax has struck the nail squarely on the head in this article, exposing one of the grandest conspiracies in all of roleplaying—to take the "dungeons" out of Dungeons & Dragons. Perhaps "conspiracy" is too strong a word, but our beloved game would be irreparably crippled were campaigns to cease incorporating adventures back in 1972, it became evident that the setting needed many other facets. Problem solving and negotiation were essential elements of play in subterranean settings from 1973 on. For roleplaying opportunities, consider the city of Erethil Cindu in Vault of the Drow. No power gaming approach would have a chance there. Few DMs took advantage of the place to test their players' combat abilities, and that fewer players complained of that neglect, might be indicative of something common to all participants. No matter what mode of play is in vogue, DMs desire player approval.

Players, while interested in GM approval, are more interested in personal gratification. Whether this comes through having the most powerful PC, the one that is "always in character," or whatever, it means a game persona that is extant, not dead. The only satisfactory PC demise is one so remarkable that the character thereafter lives on in the legend of the campaign.

Whatever the game system, its emphasis, and the mode in which it is played, there is a constant in gaming: All participants want longevity of play. This is achieved through many things: a good game system, campaign world setting, DM, and players. That "good" is a subjective judgment is unquestionable. That subjectivity is why we have so many different roleplaying games, genres thereof, world settings, and varying emphasis on one or another of the elements that go into the game.

Has play changed over a quarter of a century? Aside from the increase of available options, not much. The minor thing noted above is not different per se, it is just a bit of knowledge needed to be re-learned. In the case of the roleplaying game that is destined for longevity, the more things change, the more they are the same.

Eric Edmonds
Eric started playing the Star Frontiers game at age 12 with his younger brother Chad. Eventually, he moved on to the Dungeons & Dragons basic set, where he ran modules for years until he discovered Advanced Dungeons & Dragons and the Forgotten Realms campaign setting. For six years, Eric ran one of the most intriguing Forgotten Realms campaigns that I have ever participated in.

During that campaign, we were transported to the Demiplane of Dread in the RAVENLOFT setting, where not even the wise Van Richten could prevent us from being killed by Strahd Von Zarovich on numerous occasions. Eventually, Eric needed a new challenge, so he got behind the screen for many Al-Qadim and Dark Sun campaigns. However, those campaign worlds could not keep up with his writing skills, so he focused his attention on the father of all campaign settings: the world of GREYHAWK.

Eric can only now show his superiority as a Dungeon Master. He has vowed to run D&D games for the rest of his life, and he plans to continue with the GREYHAWK setting for many years to come.

Having been on both sides of the DM screen, Eric knows what players want. He takes his duties as a DM seriously, wearing a referee's jersey and using a "call bell" just in case we even think of getting out of character at the table.

Though Eric tried to get a job as a janitor at TSR after meeting a staff at the Gen Con Game Fair in 1993, the closest he has come to being published was in the letters column in issue #129 of DRAGON.

Eric is now 28 and married to a beautiful woman named Maria, who has been roleplaying for three years. He loves D&D so much that he even named his cat Bigby and Tenser.

Eric gives everything he has to being the best, and I believe that he is.

Joe Manning • Henderson, TN
dungeons simply because players and DMs alike were afraid of being branded “immature” and excommunicated from the society of “true” roleplayers.

Not only is the dungeon a classic element of the fantasy genre, it is a vital tool for acquainting new players with the game, and for allowing neophyte DMs to try out new ideas while honing their skills in a controlled environment. Moreover, creating a satisfying dungeon adventure can be one of the greatest challenges for an experienced DM; winning the appreciation of a seasoned group of players for a well-constructed dungeon is commendation enough for any dungeon master.

Lastly, the “Bahamut and Tiamat” article was a lot of fun. While normally I do not get excited about articles introducing new spells, monsters, or magic items, this one was an exception. Both the writing and the artwork revitalized these two classic characters in my mind, and helped pull them out of the world of Dragonlance and

My attitude toward the new edition has changed dramatically, from initial shock to an “I can hardly wait” feeling

Swell Shocked

Since the day that I became aware that Wizards of the Coast had officially announced the coming of the new edition of the Dungeons & Dragons game, I've been watching the progress with a fair deal of interest. When the news came, I was quite shocked and disappointed, and I remember many were that day. Of course, there were many people who insisted that good would come of it. It took me only a day or so to get over my initial shock, but for some time still not exactly looking forward to the new edition. I at least felt more or less, well, neutral. I then bought my first copy of the Dragon Magazine in January (issue #287), after hearing from a friend that information on 3rd Edition was being showcased in the magazines. I had been reading the FAQs and interviews on Wizard's site, but I was eager for more information.

I must say, after reading the articles presented here in Dragon, that my attitude toward the new edition has changed dramatically, from initial shock to an “I can hardly wait” feeling that seems to be spreading rapidly among the folk here in Canada. While there's nothing technically “wrong” with the and Edition rules, I can now easily spot the places where improvement was welcome, and needed. The new art is fantastic, and Wizard's newest addition to their website, a small preview of the Player's Handbook, left me rather amazed at the quality of the new edition, in look and feel. I must say that I'm most optimistic about the success level of 3rd Edition. I'd like to congratulate everyone who worked on the new edition in any way. You've all helped make the game that I've come to enjoy a better one, and now I can enjoy it even more. If ever I was asked to express my opinion on 3rd Edition D&D with a single word, it would simply be, “heroic.”

Rylee Isitt • Lower Nicola, Canada

Profiles

Game designer Monte Cook is used to questions about the new edition of the D&D game. “It allows for more flexible character customization with feats and skills, and gives characters more options to choose from in play,” he sums it up. “Some people have thought that this was just strictly a ‘power up,’ but really it’s about giving more options and having more fun. It more clearly balances the classes, both in power and in how much fun they are to play.”

Monte should know: Along with Jonathan Tweet and Skip Williams, the 32-year-old designer has just put the finishing touches on the new edition of the Dungeon Master’s Guide. (All three

What Class Should You Play in the new D&D Game?

“Well, there's no 'best class'—they're all good. But people who have always avoided playing clerics should give them another look; they're much cooler. And people should also give rogues ('thieves' in 2nd Edition) a long, hard look—they've really improved in the new edition as well.”
Can love survive the struggle between good and evil? This is one of the questions you’ll confront in Baldur’s Gate II: Shadows of Amn. Immerse yourself in a world of intrigue, adventure and fierce combat where the line between friend and foe is defined only by your instinct and a quick blade. You may discover why some vows are better left unspoken.

- Offers single and multiplayer experiences in the sequel to the Roleplaying Game of the Year.
- Create a new character or import your Baldur’s Gate character into Baldur’s Gate II and continue the epic saga.
- Encounter hundreds of different types of monsters, thousands of NPCs and over 130 new spells in a huge and intricate world.
- New races and character kits such as the Half-Orc, Beastmaster, Undead Hunter and Assassin add to an extensive array of character options.

www.interplay.com/bgate2
June Pride

The June issue was the best in a long time. Ever since it was hinted at several months ago, I've been anticipating the release of the stats on Tiamat and Bahamut. Of course, now that I've seen them, I realize that I'll probably never be able to use them. A creature (okay, so he's a god) with 1,086 hit points is a bit above even my crew of "Bring it on!" gamers. But, did you mess up in this article? You gave me enough hints about the new edition and info that I can actually understand it now! Needless to say, I'm eagerly awaiting the new release. Gotta have it!

"Dragon Poisoning" contained some good info. I don't personally use gnom dragoons in my campaign, but I've always thought that the gnomes were neglected, both in Council of Hyrims and D&D.

"How to Talk to a Dragon" came along just in time. My players (just the paladin, actually) were just about to encounter a black dragon. The outcome was much better with a little dialogue and no actual trading of blows. In the end, the paladin was fooled into releasing the dragon to keep his word. He'll be paying penance for awhile, considering that the dragon immediately flew off and wrecked havoc in a "nearby farming" community.

"The Secret Library of Vecna" was really cool. I meant to write earlier about this subject. The articles that involve a slew of new spells are not really needed all that much. After all, there's currently a spell for any occasion. Four volumes of them. The "Greyhawk Grimoires" and articles like "The Secret Library of Vecna" are much better, giving information on spells books and scrolls, like who they belonged to, where they've been, and what the spells were used for--this is a really useful tool for detail-oriented DMs.

There are a few bones to pick now. First, "Up on a Soapbox" seems like a waste of good advertising space.

Finally, please put the date back on the spine. You only did it for a few months, but it was a great idea for those of us who file our mags on a bookshelf. I can often recall what month I read an article, but not what issue number it came from. It was a good idea; please put it back.

On a scale of 1 to 10, Dragon's artwork rates around a 99. Awesome! If Dragon keeps up its current quality and content, I'm a subscriber for life. Great work!

Louie S. Fox-Bishop • Panama City, FL

By your command, the date is now back on the spine. What do you think of the new cover treatment?

Designers contributed to the three core books, then each designer actually wrote one of the books based on those contributions.) After 22 years of roleplaying—mostly as a DM—Monte has the opportunity to add his experience and advice to a product that was in design for slightly over two years. "The new Dungeon Master's Guide is probably the work I'm most proud of," he admits. When Gary Gygax, D&D's creator and author of the first DMG, commented on the new DMG, his feedback to the team was a point of pride and accomplishment for Monte. "He said that the material in the new DMG would help him become a better DM," Monte says. "That was really cool—and satisfying in a completion of the circle sort of way."

He Got Game

Those twenty-two years of roleplaying have led Monte to work on an impressive number of different roleplaying supplements and core products, including the conspiracy game Dark Matter (1999) and dozens of supplements to the Planescape setting for D&D. "I started work with TSR as a freelance in 1992, writing a whole slew of stuff for the old Marvel game that never came out because the game was canceled.

Prior to joining the TSR team (where he designed most of his favorite works: Dark Matter, Dead Gods, and A Paladin in Hell in 1998, the Planarwalker's Handbook in 1996, and Labyrinth of Madness in 1995), Monte worked for Iron Crown Enterprises for four years, as a freelancer and two as a full-time designer. Now a Senior Designer at Wizards of the Coast, he's found working on the new edition of the D&D game to be an extremely satisfying experience, but it's not been without its challenges. "For a while, instead of multiclassing, we were going to create full-blown classes that melded aspects of two classes," he says when discussing what didn't make the cut. "Instead of multiclassing as a wizard and a fighter, you'd choose the class 'warrior mage' or some such." Other ideas—like a half-dozen variations of the initiative system or a shaman-like class with spells that guided the character—simply didn't work out. Most, Monte notes, evolved into concepts that exist in the game in its final form. "Only a very few," he says, "were just outright cuts."

As the game stands now, Monte feels that it's much better than it was before. "It provides a smoother play experience due to standardized mechanics," he says. "You always roll a d20 and you want high rolls, specifically some number that the DM sets." He hopes that future designers will

If You Could Adapt a Book, Film, or TV Show to Roleplaying...

"...I'd choose to work on something else," Monte freely admits. "I like creating original material more than adapting the work of someone else. I'm not disparaging such work, as I think some of it has been done really well—it's just not for me."

When pressed, however, Monte is able to offer up at least one title that he wouldn't mind working on: Stephen Donaldson's The Land from The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever. "This is a wonderful place full of really powerful magic and great characters," he says. "That what you will of Covenant—I know a lot of people hate the character—but The Land encompasses great concepts that would lend themselves well to a roleplaying game. Everything is black and white in a vibrant way, for forces of Evil literally corrupt the surroundings, and Good can visibly heal."

12 September 2000
Johnny Appleseed this ain't.

Edited by
Jess Lebow

Folklore is different when you're in Dominaria. Angels watch over the righteous. Sea monsters sink ships. Dark figures lurk under every child's bed. This is The Myths of Magic Anthology, a collection of stories that explain the mysteries of the Planes.

J. Robert King, Francis Lebaron, Vance Moore, Paul B. Thompson, Jeff Grubb, and other well-known Magic: The Gathering® authors finally let you in on some secrets.

Look for The Myths of Magic Anthology at your favorite book or hobby store.
Next, we present Bruce Beyer's ferocious rebuttal to Oliver Dickinson's comments in issue #472, mainly so we can print the word "balderdash." Of course, we had to condense it from its heroic length, but we love to watch dueling historians. If this fight keeps going, we'll move it over to the basement of "Forum," where the first rule is, "Don't talk about Forum."

**Fight!**

My suspicions about modern man's insecurities are confirmed on a regular basis, especially when some pompous critic writes that an ancient general hap-hazardly effected a victory, or that an ancient scientist stumbled upon a discovery, or that the pyramids were constructed by little green men from space. The facts are that the ancient man was physically more adept, more intelligent, and most assuredly more gallant and honorable than we are.

The first pyramid in Egypt was constructed in 2600 B.C. and still exists today. Modern buildings last rarely more than 50 years before becoming unstable. The Romans built a vast infrastructure connected by an intricate network of roads, many of which became modern autobahns.

Ancient man's physical superiority can best be illustrated through the work of Homer (7th-Century B.C.), who writes about the men of the Trojan War (1200 B.C.). He writes, "In a time when men were stronger than they are now..." Another example of ancient man's physical superiority can be found in the writings of Xenophon (431 B.C.), a Greek cavalry lieutenant who led a march of 10,000 hoplites out of Persia after the defeat of Cyrus the Younger. They covered a distance of over 2,000 miles—no modern army could accomplish such a feat.

Now to put modern man's mental capacity into perspective. Heraclides of Pontus (350 B.C.) derived that the earth rotates on its axis once every 24 hours, and Aristarchus had developed a heliocentric solar system in 310 B.C., 1700 years prior to Copernicus. Eratosthenes calculated the Earth's circumference, without the aid of Hubble, to 250,000 stades, within 2% of the precise circumference (in 235 B.C.). Hipparchus concluded the length of the lunar month to within one second of the modern value (in 200 B.C.). Prolemy of Egypt wrote many great treatises to include the Almagest, Planetary Hypothesis, and Optics during the last century B.C. He can be credited with being the father of modern calculus.

An example of gallantry, honor, and esprit de corps unknown to the majority today is the battle of Thermopylae in which 300 Spartan soldiers, lead by their king Leonidas, delayed the advance of nearly 100,000 Persian soldiers. Against overwhelming numbers, the Spartans managed to fend off the larger Persian Army for two days until an Athenian traitor showed the Persian king a goat trail around the pass. The Spartans fought valiantly to the last man after being completely enveloped by the Persians. Tales of the sound of the battle echoing from the pass by bypassing Persian soldiers abound.

recognize the value of these standardized mechanics and not "take a step backward" to reinstate subsystems for rolling. He points out that "2nd Edition had similar, but actually very different, methods for resolving saving throws, attacks rolls, and ability checks, for example." The new system is certain to make life more real and imaginary, easier for players and DMs alike.

**What's Cooking?**

Monte doesn't mind taking his work home with him. He currently runs a single DD11 campaign for two different groups of players. "Each group plays on a different night," he explains, "but it all takes place in the same setting."

Now that the DUNGEON Master's Guide is finished and the new edition of DD11 has hit the streets, you'll think that Monte could take it easy for a while. Not a chance. "There's a great deal of exciting stuff coming for the new edition," he says, "like some really cool adventures, a pionscific book, and books for prestige classes and feats."

Monte is personally working on an adventure that takes characters from 3rd level to as high as 15th: Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil is scheduled for release in mid-2005. As you might expect, it deals with the return of evil forces to the original temple, but there's lots of completely new material," Monte promises. It would seem that there was more going on with "Elemental Evil," then this time around the PCs will come face-to-face with it all. "It's a great time to be working here," Monte says happily of his involvement with Wizards of the Coast and DUNGEON & DUNGEONS. "because every product is big, important, and innovative."

**The Mantle of Cons**

You've probably never heard of it—since it's not really a convention but a gaming weekend for a big group of friends—but after four MonteCons, it's quite the weekend experience. "MonteCon I was a joke, literally," Monte explains. "Back in Lake Geneva, five or six years ago now, I had some friends over and we play a couple of games. The joke got started that it was 'MonteCon.' We even made badges the next day and handed them out to everyone who was there."

A few years and half a country later, Monte and his wife, Sue Weinlein Cook, wanted to have a housewarming party... but not the usual kind of housewarming party. Instead, Monte and Sue hosted a "games until your ears bleed" weekend, one filled with a variety of different games all being played at once. Thus was reborn "MonteCon."

In addition to having six or seven games running simultaneously, MonteCon now has badges, program booklets, and even a movie room. "We get about 60 attendees every year," Monte says, "some of them coming from California, Wisconsin, and Canada. There's a lot of gaming, a lot of food, and everyone seems to have a great time."
Dragonscroll.com
Discounts So Big, We Can't Advertise Them!

RPGs, CCGs, War Games, Miniatures, Anime, & More!

Order Securely Online, Over the Phone, or by Mail.

Online Auctions
20,000 Item Inventory
24 Hour Ship Times

www.dragonscroll.com
1-877-SCROLL-1
6689 Peachtree Ind. Blvd., Suite J
Norcross, GA 30092
I will now address my critic, to whom I must suggest that you cannot rely on one source of historical information, especially those of the English derivative. In my opinion, English historians tend to put an English spin on everything. A true historian must research several resources, discard inconsistencies, and make conclusions on common recordings.

Do I believe that Ramses the Great’s victory at Kadesh was a near escape from disaster? Balderdash, no, most certainly not. To suggest that Ramses’ interdiction of the Hittite Army was a mere accident is to sell short perhaps one of the greatest tactical minds of all time. Ramses skilfully planned the corndoning of Kadesh by placing portions of his armies on key avenues to and from the city in order to isolate it. The city could neither be reinforced from outlying Hittite forces nor could those in the city escape without coming into contact with the Egyptian forces. When Muwattali learned that Ramses was moving against Kadesh, he moved quickly to reinforce his city and, in doing so, made contact with Ramses’ army. This was no accident.

As far as the Hittites go, little was known of this culture, and there was no physical evidence to confirm their existence for nearly 3,000 years, until 1906 A.D. when actual evidence of this civilization was uncovered in modern Turkey. Prior to 1906 A.D., the Hittites existed only in biblical writings and ancient texts, primarily Egyptian.

The Sea Peoples were not one people but a compilation of cultures. I do not doubt the possibility that their ranks were swollen with veteran Greek warriors (Achaeans) of the Trojan War, since that war occurred only ten years prior to the advance of the Sea Peoples on Egypt. The Greeks, by nature, were notorious sea raiders; in fact, you could say they were pirates.

In conclusion, I will say that it is obvious that we have a lot to learn from ancient man. We have done little to expound upon the work already completed by our forefathers or even to apply cognizant thought as to how they achieved the great wonders they did. Instead we throw up our hands in frustration and conclude that ancient space men are responsible. Sources. He says he wants sources. School is now in session.

... it is obvious that we have a lot to learn from ancient man.


Bruce F. Beyers • Watertown, NY

And that’s all for this episode of Historian Deathmatch. Will Oliver return for a rematch next month? Or has the mighty Beyers dealt him a finishing blow? There’s only one way to know, and that’s to join us again in 30 days. Let’s get ready to rumble!
Be thee like a ruby, blossom in the tomb, red vessel of fire, defying deaths gloom.

Customizable characters - learn dozens of skills, hundreds of spells

Unique combat system - tactics are more important than speed

Advanced parties - adventure with your friends

RUBIES OF EVENTIDE
www.rubiesofeventide.com
AN INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN A WORLD OF MAGIC

Danger awaits, hardy traveler, in the turbulent lands of Arcanum! Prepare potion or pistol, for armament is a must! Encounter more than 500 friends and fiends of the oddest sort on dozens of quests and campaigns. Travel alone through this massive realm, or invite companions to join you online. And for those with discriminating taste, we sport the most advanced role-playing system ever created in this or any other reality.

Brigands beware! Eighty spells in 16 Colleges are at your disposal, while the mechanically inclined can construct wonders of the age with 56 technological degrees from eight disciplines.

An epic story with multiple paths ensures you'll never play a single or multiplayer game the same way twice. Or create your very own online campaigns with the Arcanum World Editor.

Dozens of quests and a limitless character design let you decide the destiny of your character, be it elf, half-ogre or other sundry races.

www.arcanum1.com
Bullets & Brimstone

Witness the metallurgical might of the repeating rifle or unleash the dark arts of a Hellgate, as a mechanical future challenges a magical past.

Arcanum

© of Steamworks & Magick Obscura
CHALLENGE YOUR PERCEPTIONS

available everywhere

www.wizards.com/dnd

All trademarks are property of Wizards of the Coast LLC. © 2000 Wizards. Artwork by Scott Fischer.
september events

CONQUEST 2000
September 14-16
Clarion Hotel, Manchester, NH
Contact: CONQUEST-RG
Website: www.conquest-con.org
Details: Featuring: RPGs, LARP, miniatures, board games, computer games, flea market, auction, painting contests.

COGCONS
September 20-24
University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL
Contact: Robert Habib
Website: www.cogcons.com

WINCON
September 13-15
Empire, Maryland, USA
Contact: David W. Kimble
Website: www.wincon.org
Details: Featuring: High Sierra TCG, Canadian National, Space, The Hopper Derby, RPG tournaments, TCGs, RPG events, Vampire LARP.

RATCON III
September 11-13
The Donington, 4-H Fairground, Lebanon, NH
Contact: RATCON III
Website: www.ratcon.org
Details: Featuring: Six different TCG tournaments, miniatures, board games, RPGs.

TRINOC CON 2000
September 28-30
Durham, New Hampshire, USA
Contact: Complete Strategy Gaming
Website: www.trinoc-2000.org
Details: Featuring: RPG events, computer games, board games, miniatures, LARPs, CGMs, hall rides, and dealer room.

GET CON 2000
September 28-30
Durham, New Hampshire, USA
Contact: Complete Strategy Gaming
Website: www.getcon.org
Details: Featuring: RPG events, computer games, board games, miniatures, LARPs, CGMs, hall rides, and dealer room.

November events

CARNAGE ON THE MOUNTAIN
November 3-5
Memorial Student Center, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX
Contact: David Allen
Website: www.carnagemt.com
Details: Featuring: RPG events, computer games, board games, miniatures, LARPs, CGMs, hall rides, and dealer room.

SYNDICON 2000
November 19-21
Holiday Inn Express, Fortuna, CA
Contact: Cory Caraher
Website: www.sheepcon.com
Details: Featuring: RPAC events, computer games, board games, miniatures, LARPs, CGMs, hall rides, and dealer room.
FEELING ALIENATED ON EARTH?

ESCAPE TO CYBERTOWN
The Sci-fi Community of the Future

It's not hard to feel out of place on this strange planet of ours called Earth.

If you'd like to find a place where you can feel more at home, you owe it to yourself to check out Cybertown.

In Cybertown you create your own life, choose your name and how you want to look. You pick your own customizable 3D virtual reality home with chat and furniture. You can get a job, go dancing, play games and even choose a virtual pet!

You don't just get a glimpse of the future in Cybertown, you also become part of the adventure and all for free!

JOIN NOW! Get your own life at http://www.cybertown.com

Produced by blaxxun interactive

Win great prizes in our ongoing contests!
DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE
A D&D Core Rulebook
by Monte Cook

The DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE is an essential rulebook for the D&D game and a must-have for every Dungeon Master.
The DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE features 224 pages of beautifully rendered, intuitively presented rules and material designed to get a D&D campaign up and running.

$19.95 / $30.99 CAN
TSR#1351

DUNGEON MASTER'S SCREEN
A D&D Core Rulebook

The DUNGEON MASTER'S SCREEN is a shield that allows the Dungeon Master to hide notes, charts, and maps from players.
This new screen comes packed with eight panels of the most useful tables and charts for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. Designed for easy access and comprehensive utility, DMs will have the most important information right in front of their eyes at all times.

$9.95 / $15.99 CAN
TSR#639
ISBN: 0-7869-1639-7

THE SUNLESS CITADEL
A D&D Adventure
by Bruce R. Cordell

A once-proud fortress fell beneath the earth in an age long past. Renamed the Sunless Citadel, its broken halls are home to nefarious races and malign creatures.
This is the first of eight adventures strategically designed to highlight the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules. The Sunless Citadel will set the stage for years of game adventures to follow.

$9.95 / $15.99 CAN
TSR#1640
ISBN: 0-7869-1640-0
Open your eyes to the world of shadows lurking beneath the surface of our reality!

Poor Yakumo - No one chooses "Zombie" for their career goal...
Coming Soon

Dungeon

Dark Times in Sherwood
By Ian Malcolmson
Can a band of merry outlaws thwart the evil machinations of Baron de Belame?
A D&D adventure for 3rd-level PCs but adaptable for levels 1-9.
Includes a poster map of Sherwood Forest and Nottingham Castle.

Evil Unearthed
By Ed Stark
People are vanishing from the sleepy hamlet of Brookhollow. Can you solve the mystery in time to save them?
A D&D adventure for 1st-level PCs but adaptable for levels 1-7.

Playing with Fire
By Jeff Grubb
The lair of the infamous fire cult has been sealed for years—it’s time to open the doors.
A D&D adventure for 2nd-level PCs but adaptable for levels 1-8.

Eye for an Eye
By Patrick W. Ross
The Search for a stolen jewel leads heroes into the heart of a perilous swamp.
A D&D adventure for 3rd-level PCs but adaptable for levels 1-9.


D&D GAZETTEER
A D&D Accessory
By Skip Williams
The D&D Gazetteer overviews the world of Oerth, the general setting for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game.
Smart players and Dungeon Masters alike will start their campaigns here with a quick tour of the most important areas, kingdoms, and personalities to be found within this land of danger and intrigue.

$9.95/$15.99 CAN
TSR1742

THE NETHER SCROLL
A FORGOTTEN Realms Novel
by Lynn Abbey
A young wizard sets out to avenge the murder of his teacher and save her son from a similar fate.
Facing evil and treachery, he must brave the ruins of Dekanter to find a missing artifact that might be the clue to the source of all magic in the FORGOTTEN Realms.

$6.99/$8.99 CAN
TSR1566
ISBN: 0-7869-1566-8

CHILDREN OF THE PLAINS
A DRAGONLANCE Novel
by Paul B. Thompson & Tonya C. Cook
A young man and woman escape a pack of predators and strike out on their own, their lives taking parallel courses linked to the destiny of different tribes. But dark powers watch the rise of civilization with cold calculation and deadly intent.
Children of the Plains explores the lives of new heroes in the world of Krynn and introduces previously unexplored lands. It will be a welcome addition to any DRAGONLANCE fan’s collection.

$6.99/$8.99 CAN
TSR3139
ISBN: 0-7869-1391-6

$4.95 U.S./$6.50 CAN
TSR Product No. 82682
Servant of the Shard
R.A. Salvatore

The dark elf Jarlaxle is bent on becoming all-powerful. He gets his greedy hands on the Crystal Shard, but soon the evil artifact's demonic force overrides him. His assassin compatriot, Artemis Entreri, tries to help him break free, but the dark power of the Shard is too mighty. With time running out, they must seek help elsewhere.

The Nether Scroll
Lynn Abbey
LoST EmPIRES Series

A young magic-user sets out to avenge the murder of his teacher and save her son from a similar fate. Facing evil and treachery, he must brave the ruins of Dekaster to find a missing artifact that might be a clue to the source of all magic in the Forgotten Realms.

Shadow's Witness
Paul Korp
Serbia Series

Cale, the loyal butler of the Uskeven family, holds a terrible secret—he knows the city of Selgaunt's dark corners. When a ruthless evil is unleashed, Cale's ties to the underworld put the entire Uskeven family in jeopardy. He has only one chance to prove his loyalty.

The City of Ravens
Richard Baker
The Cities Series

Jack Ravenwild's ambitions plunge him into a plot to destroy the city, a noble quest to find a lost hoard, and a conspiracy to seize the reins of power. Worse yet, Jack must choose between a life of freedom and saving the city he doesn't even know he loves.

Forgotten Realms
Unforgettable Adventures
Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn
A Forgotten Realms Novel
by Philip Athans

The heroes of Baldur's Gate set off on another action-packed adventure in this follow-up novel, based on Baldur's Gate II, the sequel to the record-setting computer RPG.

As the disciples of Bhaal, the god of murder, grow in numbers and in strength, Abel and his allies must stop the fanatical horde from resurrecting their fallen deity, or the shores of the Sword Coast will be bathed in blood.

$12.99/$8.99 CAN
TSP-1560
ISBN: 0-7869-1525-0

Upcoming Product Guide
October

Star Wars Episode I Adventure Game

Monster Manual
Into the Dragon's Lair
Servant of the Shard
Bertram's Guide to the Age of Mortals
Xenoforms

Boxed Game $14.95
D&D Core Rulebook $19.95
FR Adventure $17.95
FR Novel $24.95
DL Novel $6.99
DM Accessory $19.95

November

Dungeons & Dragons: The Movie
Pool of Radiance
Forge of Fury
Living Greyhawk Gazetteer
Shadow's Witness
Pool of Radiance
Draconian Measures

Boxed Game $14.95
FR Adventure $17.95
D&D Adventure $9.95
RPGA Campaign $26.95
FR Novel $7.99
FR Novel $6.99
DL Novel $6.99

Coming Soon

Living Greyhawk Journal
Now Being mailed to RPGA members!

The first issue of the rest of your campaign. Get in at the start of the RPGA Network's Living Greyhawk shared-world campaign. The Living Greyhawk Journal is not available in stores, it is sent only to Guild-level (TM) members of the RPGA. To join the network, visit www.wizards.com/rpga.

Spotlight on Kaelend
By Gary Holian
Explore the oldest kingdom in the Flanaess in a wide-ranging survey by the co-author of the Living Greyhawk Gazetteer.

Enchiridion of the Fiend-Sage
By Sean K. Reynolds
Delve into the lore of the xvart, Greyhawk dragon, and other unique monstrous denizens of Geth in the first of an ongoing series that provides new Dungeons & Dragons statistics for some of your favorite and soon-to-be-classic Greyhawk creatures.

We Give You the World
The First Living Greyhawk Contest
Want to play an unusual character? Have a hankering for a special magic item? Participate in our first member contest, where we give the winners their heart's desires, (most likely) with no strings attached!

Plus Campaign News, Places of Mystery, Scenario Previews, news from around the Flanaess, and more!
Chapter One

Are you ready...

to open a new chapter in Computer RPGs?

Enter Dragon-Cave.com to experience Siege of Avalon;
the new phenomenon of Episodic Computer Gaming

Get substantial new chapters to continue gameplay
every couple of weeks. Log on to Dragon-cave.com
to get your first downloadable chapter
free of charge.

Digital Dome™ Played Any Good Books Lately?™

www.Dragon-Cave.com
DORK TOWER

BY
J O H N K O V A L I C

HMM, SO LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT: ACCORDING TO THE SECOND EDITION/THIRD EDITION CONVERSION HANDBOOK...

UH-HUH?...

YOUR CONSTITUTION OF FIVE IS NOW A CONSTITUTION OF SIXTEEN...

REALLY? GO FIGURE...

REALLY. AND THAT, APPARENTLY, BRINGS WITH IT A TWENTY-FOLD INCREASE IN EXPERIENCE POINTS.

NO KIDDING? WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT IT?

AND YOUR DEXTERITY OF EIGHT ALREADY WENT UP TO...

...EIGHTEEN. MY, MY, MY.

WHILE YOUR CHARISMA...

DOUBLED.

THE WEIRD THING IS HOW YOUR DAGGER, LEATHER JERKIN AND PONCHO ARE NOW FULL PLATE ARMOR, A +5 SWORD AND A CLOAK OF INVISIBILITY...

WEIRD INDEED. BUT IN THE RULES, HUH?

RIGHT IN THE RULES, IN FACT, ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL CONVERSION CHARTS, YOUR SECOND-LEVEL GNOME ILLUSIONIST IS – IN THE NEW EDITION – A FIFTEENTH-LEVEL PALADIN DEMI-GOD!

WHO HAS ACCESS TO DESKTOP PUBLISHING EQUIPMENT, APPARENTLY...

SHHHH!

ALTHOUGH, SURPRISINGLY, WIZARDS OF THE COAST MIS-SPELLED "GNOMISH", "LEVEL", "PALADIN", "DEMI" AND..."OH "GOD..."
What do the greatest names in gaming have in common?

- Dungeons & Dragons
- Battletech
- Warhammer 40,000
- Mordheim
- Battlefleet Gothic
- Warhammer Epic 40,000
- Magic

You can find them all right here, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week...

mycomicshop.com

Check us out at: www.mycomicshop.com/dragon

LONE STAR COMICS has been serving comics fans and collectors since 1963! If you are in the Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex, be sure to check out one of our eight fantastic store locations. Check out our web site for directions to each store!
Unusual Suspects
Barbarians, Paladins, and Rangers
by James Wyatt • Illustrated by Ron Spencer

Have you ever played a halfling paladin?

Even if you’ve played the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game until now, you probably haven’t experienced all it has to offer. Earlier editions of the game made a halfling, paladin off-limits, and even now there might be some Dungeon Masters out there who simply won’t allow it.

Race and class combinations like the halfling paladin or the elf barbarian might seem strange, but with a little thought, they can add worlds of depth and fascination to a campaign. If you’re a DM working on building your own campaign world, think hard before you ban some of these more unusual combinations. If you’re a player, think about these possibilities when you make your next character—and maybe you can help shape your DM’s campaign.

Barbarians

According to the Player’s Handbook, humans and half-ors are the most common barbarians, while dwarven barbarians are rare and others are rarer still. However, any race could have certain cultures that are barbaric, perhaps located in out-of-the-way places such as the far north or a deep jungle. Consider these ideas:

DWARVES

- A nation of dwarves akin to the Vikings lives in the bitter North. Those dwarves share not only the Viking berserker rage but also a tradition of sailing across the northern seas to raid their neighbors. This nation might be the dwarven homeland, making more civilized dwarves an anomaly (if they exist at all), or it could be simply one dwarven nation among many.
- Dwarves of remote “hill tribes” live far from the great cities on the fringes of human farming villages. These dwarves, in their colorful costumes, come down to the plains to trade with humans on occasion, but for the most part maintain their ancient tribal ways untouched by modern civilization. They war fiercely against each other and, more often, against the even more savage orc tribes (or even the advanced orcs’ civilization!) of the highlands.
- In the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting, there are two wilder offshoots of the dwarven race: the wild dwarves of the southern jungles and the arctic dwarves of the Great Glacier. These dwarves are perfect barbarians. (Both of these subraces
Barbarian Armor
Barbarians are proficient with light and medium armor, but many barbarian peoples do not have the technology to forge metal armor. (In the real world, the use of chainmail was not widespread in Europe until the Crusades.) Some barbarians, therefore, find other materials with which to make armor, including bone, cord, or wood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Armor</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Armor Bonus</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Dex.</th>
<th>Armor Check</th>
<th>Arcane Spell Failure</th>
<th>Speed (30 ft.)</th>
<th>Speed (20 ft.)</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bone (light)</td>
<td>20 gp</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30 ft</td>
<td>20 ft</td>
<td>20 lb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cord (light)</td>
<td>8 gp</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30 ft</td>
<td>20 ft</td>
<td>15 lb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood (light)</td>
<td>15 gp</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30 ft</td>
<td>20 ft</td>
<td>20 lb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bone: A cloth or leather coat reinforced with strips of bone cut from whatever animals the barbarians use for food. The armor covers the torso but leaves the limbs free for better mobility.

Cord: Fibers of hemp or other natural material woven and knotted into a thick, tough fabric. The armor forms a complete suit, hampering movement somewhat, but offering decent protection without the use of metal or leather. This armor is particularly popular among wild elves, who often avoid curing animal hide.

Wood: Similar to bone armor, but this armor is reinforced with wood strips instead of bone.

are detailed in Monster Compendium: Monsters of Faerûn, scheduled for release in February 2001.)

ELVES
Elves are a fallen race. Thousands of years ago, a great elven empire ruled the world. Tall elven cities graced the land, blending naturally and beautifully into the forests. Graceful elven ships sailed the seas, spreading elven culture and conquering other lands. The other races, if they existed yet, were all subservient to the elven empire. But the fall of that great empire was also the fall of the elven race. The great cities and provincial capitals were destroyed and their populace slaughtered. Elves in smaller towns and out-of-the-way places were driven from their homes and cut off from trade and communication. They gradually—over many elven generations—fell into a state of total savagery. Their descendants are barbarians in every sense of the word, ignorant of the ancient glories they possessed before the birth of humanity.

Elves are a new race, born from the trees as the world's last hope for survival. Dragons rule the world, and their ravages are threatening to destroy the very planet. Huge expanses of land are made into barren wastes in the wake of wars between the wyrm's, the deserts are rapidly expanding, and volcanoes erupting. The elves are the firstborn of the humanoid races, created for the purpose of subduing the dragons.

Their culture and technology is primitive compared to most D&D games, but it is the best their world has yet produced.

Elves fill their normal role in the world, but there are wilder offshoots of the elven race. Wild elves might live deep in the remotest forests—temperate woodland, torrid jungle, or frigid taiga. Perhaps aquatic elves (capable of breathing air for long periods and thus possible as a PC race) are fierce and uncivilized compared to their land-dwelling cousins. Maybe the fearsome dwarfs, long ago driven underground for their evil ways, are now a race in decline, forgetful of their more civilized past.

GNOMES
Hidden in a great swamp, small villages of gnome hunters and gatherers—tough, wiry, and ferocious in battle—live in fear of a warlord's armies. Mounted on giant lizards, the gnome warriors raid the warlord's caravans, then disappear back into the swamp. These gnomes have little patience for the stereotypes of gnomes as ridiculous tinkers—though they have been known to create ingenious traps to entangle their enemies or destroy the warlord's war machines.

Deep in the Underdark, an entire race of gnomes—the deep gnomes, or svírfneblin—has been enslaved by the great dragon empire. For centuries, they have toiled in servitude to their evil masters, losing all traces of the great civilization they once boasted. Reduced to a savage state, the barbarian heroes of these deep gnomes fight fiercely to free their people from the yoke of oppression.

HALFLINGS
A tribe of nomadic halflings ride sleek ponies on the wide plains. Living by a strict code of warrior honor, these halfling barbarians are experts at mounted combat (including archery) and are fierce in battle. They are also incredibly attuned to the natural surroundings of their native plains. Over the years, the gradual encroachment of human settlers onto the plains has forced the halflings closer to the western mountains, where a goblinoid kingdom blocks any further retreat. Caught between the goblinoids and the humans, the halflings are facing drastic changes to their traditional lifestyle. Many turn to a life of adventure, either in the human lands or on the borders of the goblin kingdom. Others gather in the slums of human cities, while some bands have been captured by the goblinoids and sold into slavery.

The warrior-champions of the halfling god of war, Aivoreen, are gifted by their god with an uncharacteristic battle frenzy. These special halfling barbarians are often multiclassed clerics, with access to the Destruction, Strength, and War domains (favored weapon: battleaxe). They are viewed with a mixture of fear and admiration by other halflings, and often turn to an adventurous life to avoid the disapproving stares of Yondalla's staid clerics.
The feral halflings of the Dark Sun campaign setting would also make excellent barbarians. These halflings live in villages in the rainforests on the outskirts of the civilized world, viewing all other races with suspicion, distrust, and hunger.

HALF-ORCS

Barbarian is the favored class for half-orc characters. Half-orc barbarians, according to the *Player's Handbook*, are assumed to have lived among orcs before abandoning that part of their mixed heritage, but consider these alternatives:

- Centuries in the past, there was a great deal of interbreeding between orcs and certain humans. (Perhaps an evil human kingdom had a close alliance with an orc tribe, or maybe the orcs once lived as equals, noble and good, beside their human counterparts.) Something changed (the alliance disintegrated, or the orcs fell from grace), and the multitude of half-orcs were driven out of both societies. Living as a society of their own on land neither parent race wanted (deep underground, in a great swamp, or within an ancient forest), the half-orcs became a distinct race, culturally separate from both orcs and humans. These half-orcs, living in inhospitable terrain, still share their orcish side's strength and hardness, and produce great barbarian adventurers.

- A tribe of human barbarians could remain on good terms with its orcish neighbors, producing a number of half-orc children. These children might be the natural leaders of their human tribes, as they excel in the qualities the human barbarians admire. Others, feeling the difference between themselves and their human kin, might flee into the wider world in search of a better life.

Paladins

Traditionally limited to humans, paladinhood is appropriate for any race or culture that has a powerful lawful good church with a militaristic ideal. Dwarves are generally lawful good, and halflings and gnomes (as well as humans) often share that alignment. Ponder these possibilities:

DWARVES

- Dwarves have a military bent that makes them excellent paladin candidates. Perhaps a dwarf clan traditionally provides paladins for the defense of the stronghold, so that loyalty to clan and loyalty to the paladin's call are no longer in conflict. This clan also serves as an internal watchdog, ensuring that the dwarves themselves never stray too far from the path of law and good in its vigilance against the evil outside.

- A certain faction within a major dwarven stronghold is promoting a religious revival, calling the dwarves to put faith in their gods (or one god in particular) above the divisive allegiances of race and clan. Members of this revivalist movement are pious and devout to the extreme, giving up their family names and voluntarily adopting a harshly ascetic lifestyle. Many members, flushed with the enthusiasm of conversion, take up the mantle of the clerics or paladins, seeking concrete and obvious external ways of living out their new-found faith. These dwarven paladins might epitomize the stereotype of the overzealous paladin, but their devotion to law and goodness, and their fierce hatred of evil, cannot be denied.

GNOMES

- Decades of grueling warfare against a neighboring kobold tribe, goblinoid kingdom, or evil theocracy has made the gnomes a grim and war-hardened race. Their war has placed them firmly on the side of law and good, however, and the toughest, most idealistic, and (some would say) most fanatical of their soldiery are paladins.

- The race of deep gnomes, or svirfneblin, might produce many gnomish champions of law and good as they struggle to survive in the Underdark, beset by such foes as drow, duergar, and mind flayers.

HALFLINGS

- The halfling race originated in the Deeping Valley, far to the west. Two centuries ago, a conquering evil army swept through the valley, decimating the peaceful halflings and occupying their land. These oppressors forbade any expression of the halflings' native religion, on penalty of death. Meeting in secret shrines far underground or deep in the forests at the edge of the valley, the lawful good church of the halflings ordained holy warriors—paladins—to fight these enemies. Clad in light armor (to maximize stealth) and wielding slings and shortbows (for hit-and-run tactics), these halfling paladins are not the stereotypical knights in shining armor, but they are no less dedicated to the paladin's code. Some might even have acquired a few levels as rogues before taking
Alternative Paladin Mounts

Most of the common nonhuman races are not particularly fond of riding horses or even ponies. Nonhuman paladins might attract a different sort of mount, rather than a warhorse. At the DM’s option, a paladin might be required to rise higher than 5th level before attracting a special mount like these, particularly if the mount can fly or has other special abilities.

Dwarves: Dire wolf, dire boar, dire wolverine, giant lizard.
Elves: Unicorn, griffon, giant owl, dire weasel.
Gnomes: Dire badger, riding dog, large ram (use bison statistics), warpony.
Halflings: Riding dog, leopard, warpony.
Half-orcs: Rhinoceros, brown bear, elephant.

When you’re a pint-sized (read: gnome) paladin of Pelor you can sneak into places that aren’t expecting any divine retribution.

up the call to paladinhood. Many of these knights wander the lands outside their home valley, hoping to gain experience and rally support for their cause, but all will someday return to drive the evil armies from the valley.

The halflings of an archipelago are shipbuilders and sailors of the highest caliber, but their islands are plagued by pirates. An order of oceangoing paladins called Seaguards are charged with the defense of the archipelago, reporting to the halfling king and also to their high priest.

HALF-ORCS

Some half-orcs are so driven to prove themselves in the face of wide spread prejudice and hatred that they find themselves drawn to the life of a paladin. These characters are usually loners, wandering the countryside in their war against evil, usually asking and receiving no thanks for the work they do, but somehow vindicated in their own hearts.

Consider the earlier example (under “Barbarians”) of a nation of half-orcs formed of outcasts and refugees. Instead of living as barbarians in inhospitable terrain, these half-orcs might have found a “promised land” of their own, where they could thrive and prosper as a civilized nation. Perhaps these half-orcs are threatened by an evil neighbor, or perhaps they still strive against the evil orcs and humans who cast them out years ago. In either case, paladins might arise among these half-orcs and set out to prove their worth, championing their cause against the evil forces who would exterminate them.

RANGERS

Members of virtually any race can be rangers, though dwarf and halfling rangers are rare. Reflect on these variations:

DWARVES

The Player’s Handbook suggests the possibility of dwarf rangers, called “cavers,” who operate underground rather than in the wilderness. For a more traditional ranger, consider the following options:

A dwarf stronghold was overrun in a massive invasion (of drow, mind flayers, duergar, or orcs) centuries ago. The remnants of this stronghold fled—not into new caverns, but out onto the surface, where they adapted to a new way of life, cut off from their ancestral halls. While they are accustomed now to life in wilderness settings and adept at wilderness lore, these dwarves dream of one day reclaiming the ancient stronghold from its new inhabitants. Many dwarf rangers come from this remnant, and their first favored enemy is always the race that destroyed their home.

ELVES

In a world where orcs are the dominant species, a civilized (but still evil) people dwelling in decadent cities surrounded by heavy stone walls, the elves still live in their wild forests. Only the elves (and perhaps half-elves and halfelf halflings) retain the connection to the natural world required to be rangers.

Rather than a standing army of fighters and warriors, the elven nations maintain only a small military force made up of guerrilla units of rangers. These rangers are skilled at fighting in the trees, peppering their foes with arrows before disappearing again into the forest. Elves from this nation would rarely take the fighter class, and elven paladins and barbarians would be virtually unknown, with the ranger class representing the ultimate archetype of the elven soldier.
Favorite Two-Weapon Combinations

One of the greatest benefits of the ranger class is the ability to fight with two weapons with a reduced penalty. Many rangers (particularly human rangers) fight with a longsword in one hand and a shortsword in the other. Nonhuman rangers often choose more distinctive weapon combinations. Note that all these combinations allow the ranger the least penalty (−2 to both attacks) because the off-hand weapon is light. A ranger willing to accept a larger penalty can use a larger weapon in his off-hand.

Dwarves: Battleaxe and handaxe, heavy pick and light pick, warhammer and light hammer, dwarven waraxe (exotic weapon) and handaxe. Dwarven waraxe is a two-handed weapon.

Elves: Longsword and shortsword, longsword and dagger, scimitar and sickle.

Gnomes: Handaxe and dagger, light hammer and dagger, shortsword and dagger.

Halflings: Shortswords and dagger, sickle and kukri (exotic weapon), shortsword and spiked gauntlet.

Half-orcs: Bastard sword (exotic weapon) and handaxe, bastard sword and shortsword, battleaxe and shortsword.

You'll make a good ranger as a halfling because you're already so close to the ground.

GNOMES

Several gnome tribes have been conquered and enslaved by the duergar, taken from their traditional homes in the deep Underdark. A gnome ranger might be an escaped slave, dedicated to liberating his people and destroying the evil dwarves. Similar to a dwarven caver, such a gnome would be more adept in underground settings than in the wilderness.

A gnome village was torn asunder when it was infiltrated by a family of gnome werewolves (gnomes who can assume the form of dire wolves). While the lycanthropes were eventually smoked out and driven off, a handful of gnomes from the village—particularly those who lost close friends or family members to the werewolves' predations—have sworn revenge on all lycanthropes. Venturing out from their shattered village into the surrounding lands, these gnome rangers are suspicious of all strangers, fearing that a bestial visage lies behind every smiling face. Shapechangers are their natural-fooled enemy, but as they continue their hunt (and advance in level) they might extend their hatred to other monsters that hide in innocent guise—certain undead, evil outsiders, or even dragons.

HALFLINGS

In a world where demonic invaders have overrun the halfling lands (see "Paladins," above), the halflings might not be able to conduct any structured military training. Instead of paladins, then, the halfling champions are rangers, dedicated to the extermination of the demons, with evil outsiders as their favored enemy.

Some halfling clans are always on the move, traveling between the settlements of other races like gypsies. They might set up camp in one place for weeks or even months, trading with the natives, but they always move on. Among the most respected individuals in such bands are the Trailfinders, halfling rangers who are expert trackers and hunters on whom the survival of the clan often depends. When the Trailfinders leave their clans, for some reason they never settle down—these halflings find a sedentary life impossible to contemplate. A life of adventure is a natural replacement for the wandering life to which these hardy folk are accustomed.

HALF-ORCS

Some half-orc rangers are driven by their hatred for a certain species. In a few cases, these rangers direct that hatred at the humans and orcs who have shunned them and made them outcasts. These rangers are often evil, or at least neutral, unless the humans they particularly oppose are evil. Other half-orc rangers, naturally distrustful of magic, focus their energy against magical creatures, including constructs, dragons, elementals, fey, magical beasts, outsiders, or undead.

A surprisingly large number of half-orcs traces its ancestry back to one man: a ranger named Thorkos Orcfriend. Thorkos, a chaotic neutral ranger, found many points of common interest with an orc tribe that lived near his forest. He became friends with the tribe's chieftain and eventually married the chieftain's daughter. His influence mollified the orcs somewhat, though he himself was a rough and savage man. He and his orc wife had many children, and the half-orcs descended from him boast with pride of their parentage. Many, hoping to follow in their ancestor's footsteps, seek out the path of the ranger.

Creating a unique and interesting campaign has a lot to do with defining what sets it apart from the generic standard. Giving the classes—or class and race combinations—an unusual twist in a D&D campaign can go a long way toward creating a rich campaign world with a flavor all its own.
"Fighters are a great group to illustrate," says artist Stephen Schwartz. "In fact, I felt a little confined with only fourteen images, and only head and shoulders at that. I really enjoy dreaming up the wild armor and weapons of the new D&D game. I tried to show all the professionals from the various races, as well as some new blood just starting to test their courage and the temper of their weapons. I like the grittier, grimmer look the new D&D has, and look forward to doing more of it."
How To Design a Feat
by Jonathan Tweet and Sean K Reynolds

A feat is a special feature that either gives your character a new capability or improves one he or she already has.
- Player's Handbook

This simple statement opens up a world of opportunities for DMs and players. Most want to enhance characters in their shared world, and most consider creating new feats the way to make their gaming experience fit their conceptions of the characters and world. However, creating a new feat requires careful study of the rules, existing feats, and the purpose of feats. When designing a feat, you must consider what you want the feat to do, the relative power of the feat, and the effects of the feat on the game. Note that during this process, we'll show that certain feats, as published in the Player's Handbook, are breaking some of these rules.

What Does It Do?
Feats give you an ability you didn't have before (such as Power Attack), give a bonus where none existed (Mobility), or reduce a penalty (Improved Bull Rush). Determine which is most appropriate for your feat, then consider the following:
- Efficiency: Do you need a feat for this, or can it already be done with the existing rules? Squeeze as much as possible from the rules you have before you make a new rule.
- Minimalism: Start with the minimal award possible. You can always increase it later in the design process. In most cases, the minimum is a +1 or −1 on a d20 roll.
- Offense: An offensive feat is more fun than a defensive feat. When you attack, you are in control and can decide to use the feat. When you are defending, you might not have the choice of using your feat (if you are held, attacked by an invisible opponent, or defending against multiple attackers for example).
- Duplication: Is your feat similar to another feat? If so, consider using the other feat, or make your feat unique. A feat that gives a +3 bonus to Listen checks and a +1 bonus to Spot checks is almost exactly like Alertness; it is better to leave Alertness as an option and make the feat do something else. We call this rule, “Things should be the same, or they should be different.”

How Powerful Is It?
- Multiplicity: It's better to give a bonus that a character will be happy with than give a smaller bonus that characters can take multiple times. The saving throw feats (Great Fortitude and so on) were originally only +1 but could be selected multiple times.
- Probability: An extra attack is more powerful than an attack bonus, which
is more powerful than a damage bonus. Extra attacks can be used every round, but a damage bonus can only be used if you roll high enough to hit.

- **Mimmaxing:** Design the feat based on the optimal character (mimmaxed), not the average character. A feat designed for an average character can break the system when used by a mimmaxed character.

- **Specificity:** Just because a feat is more specific does not mean it is better. For example, Skill Focus gives you +2 on one skill of your choice; Alertness gives you +2 on two skills, but they have to be Listen and Spot. Any character considering Skill Focus (Listen) would be foolish to take that instead of Alertness because Alertness is clearly better. (You get the +2 on the skill you want and +2 on another skill.)

- **Evaluation:** One way to judge the power level of a feat is to compare it to similar feats, rating each criteria for the feat with a +, 0, or -1. A feat that has too many positives compared to negatives should be adjusted. Remember that the primary cost of a feat is the fact that taking it means a character isn’t taking a different feat.

- **Balance:** The idea of perfectly balancing feats is an illusion. Some feats are clearly better than others (Alertness vs. Skill Focus), and comparing the strength of combat feats against non-combat feats is very difficult (Power Attack vs. Scribe Scroll). Once you have done your best to weed out any obvious dangers, the best test for a feat is actual play over several sessions.

- **Revision:** It is perfectly acceptable to change your mind about a feat you created, even if characters are already using the feat. If you need to decrease the power of a custom feat and your players feel that the feat no longer fits their character concept or a valuable addition to a feat than required to use a feat. A feat with a Strength 15+ requirement is less fun than one without a Strength requirement, even though someone with a higher Strength might benefit more. It’s fun to have a character with a Dexterity of 8 able to select Lightning Reflexes and justify the saving throw bonus as being so clumsy that the character often falls out of harm’s way.

---

**What Shouldn’t You Ever Do With Feats?**

- **Don’t give a character a class-exclusive ability,** such as a monk’s Slow Fall, arcane or divine spellcasting, or the bard’s and rogue’s access to the Use Magic Device skill. These abilities can be gained by multiclassing, and if a character wants those abilities, the character should multiclass to get them (and pay the consequences for it).

- **Don’t make a particular class, or a certain number of levels in a class, be a prerequisite for a feat.** If a character’s class and level actually represent something in the game world, then that something should be the prerequisite for the feat. If it doesn’t represent something in the game world, it can’t be a prerequisite for a feat. Being a fighter means that you have focused on learning how to fight, giving you more skill than most characters of the same level. Having a feat that requires you to be a good fighter means, having a feat that requires you to be a 4th-level fighter does not, because that being a 4th-level fighter means is you have a certain amount of fighting skill—just like any other character with a +4 base attack bonus. Such a feat should instead have a minimum base attack bonus as a prerequisite. Note that according to this rule, Weapon Specialty should just have a “Base attack bonus +4 or higher” prerequisite. Extra Turning should actually have “turn undead” as a prerequisite, and Spell Mastery should have “arcane spellcaster that prepares spells” as its prerequisite (for while only the wizard is such a spellcaster in the Player’s Handbook, you might create a prestige class that uses similar spellcasting rules).

- **Don’t break the game’s implicit rules.** For example, many precision-based abilities have a 30-foot limit (see sneak attack, Animal Empathy, Read Lips, Point-Blank Shot, and so on). Extending this range begins to skew the fundamental rules that the game uses to model the world and sets a precedent for other modifications (changing a 5-foot step to a 10-foot step, for example).

- **Don’t slow down the game.** Feats that involve complex decision-making or dice rolling every round detract from the fun of playing because you spend time on those instead of playing. They also cause you to spend a greater amount of time dealing with that player, to the detriment of other players.

- **Don’t reward a low ability score.** If low ability scores give you advantages that you can’t have with high ability scores, it reduces the benefit of having high ability scores. The Too Ugly To Die feat, which allowed you to stay conscious at negative hit points if your Charisma was 6 or less, was cut from the Player’s Handbook for this reason.

- **Don’t use silly names, contemporary names, or names that break the “fourth wall” for the characters.** Imagine the character saying the name of the feat, if it’s jarring, it’s probably inappropriate. The feats Sunder, Precise Shot, Spring Attack, and Mounted Archery were changed from Property Damage, Got Your Back Charlie, Sucks To Be You, and Born a Mongol for this reason.
**Sample Abilities Granted By Feats**

- **attack bonuses**
  (Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus)
- **damage bonuses**
  (Power Attack, Point Blank Shot)
- **save bonuses**
  (Great Fortitude, Iron Will)
- **initiative bonuses**
  (Improved Initiative)
- **skill bonuses**
  (Alertness, Skill Focus)
- **remove penalty**
  (Armor Proficiency (light), Simple Weapon Proficiency)
- **hit point bonuses**
  (Toughness)
- **negate attacks of opportunity**
  for actions you take
  (Quicken Spell, Sunder)
- **Armor Class bonus**
  (Dodge, Mobility)
- **increase maneuverability**
  (Ride-By Attack, Spring Attack)
- **enhance character abilities**
  (Extra Turning, Spell Mastery)
- **on/off feats**
  (Scribe Scroll, Stunng Fist)
- **affect magic abilities**
  (Spell Focus, Enlarge Spell)

-way (sometimes called the “Jar Jar effect”). Note that if you have an ability score as a prerequisite, it should always be an odd number to encourage characters to develop their scores beyond the even-numbered “break points” where the modifier changes.

**Compensation:** A feat that improves a weak feature is better than one that improves a strong feature because it widens the range of good character choices. The Toughness feat is a good feat because it allows an elf wizard with an 8 Constitution to be able to take a dagger hit without dropping. If Toughness were available only to characters of a certain level or minimum Constitution score, it would not be as useful.

**Realism:** Take a look at what the feat allows a character to do in a game. Is the feat realistic and possible without the supernatural? If not (for example, a feat that allows you to run 30 feet up the side of a building), it shouldn’t be a feat. In a game with spells and fire-breathing dragons, things that anyone can do (and anyone can choose feats) should hold to what’s possible in the real world (even if it would take a well-trained specialist to do it).

**Mechanics:** A feat should be defined with mechanics, not with subjective comparisons or DM arbitration. All parties involved need to be 100% sure how a feat works in every situation, and requiring you to interpret each situation for the purpose of a feat slows down the game, makes the game more complex, and makes the feat less fun to use. For example, consider a Dirty Fighting feat that lets you kick sand in an opponent’s face as a move-equivalent action (giving that target a -1 penalty on attacks for 1 round). Can this feat be used on a carrion crawler or a giant ant? Insect eyes might be immune. Can you use it on a giant? It might be too tall for the sand to reach. Can you use it on a gnomish? It has eyes but doesn’t use them. Can you use it on a zombie? It doesn’t feel pain.

**Category:** If the feat is appropriate for the fighter bonus feat list, a metamagic feat, or an item creation feat, be sure to list it as such so that appropriate classes can benefit from their special abilities.

**Weirdness:** Prepare for the bizarre. Don’t create a feat with “sword” in mind when it’s possible that the feat could be used by biting dragons, ogres with clubs, and wizards with touch spells. Examine the consequences of how the feat might be used. If you were a player, how would you use this against your DM’s minions?

**Classes:** A feat should be relatively even across all classes (as it noticeably better for characters of a certain class?), levels (does it become too weak or too powerful at middle and high levels?), and reasonable with the most abusive combination of abilities. A feat that allows you to use your unarmed attack bonus with any weapon is a great benefit to monks and useless to other classes. A feat that increases your base attack bonus by +1 is a much greater benefit to characters with a base attack bonus of +5, +10, or +15 because they would get an extra attack each round. A feat that lets you subtract your Strength bonus from your attack roll and add it to your damage becomes extremely dangerous for a 20th-level fighter character with 20 Strength and Power Attack (+10 to attack, +15 damage).

**Conclusion: Learn The Rules**

Designing feats requires a strong knowledge of how the D&D rules fit together: Casual implementation of game rules while ignoring these guidelines can result in characters that are too weak or more powerful than other characters in the group. Fortunately, you always have the option of readjusting a feat after it has been created. If you keep in mind the guidelines and use the checklist when your feat design is finished, you’ll add unique flavor to your D&D campaign without fear of unbalancing your game. This saves you a lot of time and trouble down the road.

**Example Creation of a Feat #1**

For your campaign world, you’re creating an order of archers that train to fire many shots with extreme accuracy. You decide to make a new feat, Improved Rapid Shot, that reduces or negates the penalty from Rapid Shot -1.

**Efficiency:** The rules already allow a character to have multiple accurate shots just by gaining levels. However, you justify creating the feat because most of the archers of this order are going to be low-level NPCs, and you want them to be an effective threat against the orc barbarians that are common in the area.

**Minimalism:** You start with the smallest change, reducing the -2 penalty to a -1.

**Multiplicity:** You would rather the characters choose this feat once and be happy with it than feel they have to take it twice to make it truly effective, so you increase the feat’s effect so that it fully cancels the penalty. It also makes the bookkeeping convenient for the players (having no penalty is easier to remember than having a penalty).

**Probability:** This feat isn’t as powerful as one that would simply let the archer get another attack, but it suits the flavor of what you’re looking for, so you leave it the way it is.

**Minimizing:** A 1st-level human fighter could choose Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, and Improved Rapid Shot, getting two missile attacks per round with no penalty. You think that’s a little much at 1st-level, especially because you want the feat to reflect some training beyond the basic fighter training. You think about this while considering the other points of design.

**Evaluation:** You compare this feat to the Ambidexterity/Two Weapon
Fighting feat combination. The latter reduces the attack penalty from \(-6/-10\) to \(-4/-4\), while your new feat combo reduces the penalty from \(-2/-2\) to \(+0/+0\). Just by comparing numbers, this new pair is not more powerful than the other pair (a net effect of \(+2\) compared to \(+8\)).

- **Prerequisites**: Rapid Shot already has a Dex/Int prerequisite, so you don’t need to add another one. The training requirement mentioned earlier makes you think that raw recruits wouldn’t be able to do this, so you set the prerequisites for this feat to Rapid Shot (of course) and base attack bonus +2 or higher. This allows a 2nd-level fighter of any race to get the feat (if it was on the fighter’s bonus feat list) if he chose Point Blank Shot and Rapid Shot at 1st-level.

- **Realism**: Could a fighter with some training fire two arrows accurately in a period of 6 seconds? Certainly.

- **Category**: This feat is obviously a suitable feat for fighters, and you want a fighter to be able to get it at level-0, so you note that it is on the fighter’s bonus feat list. Also, the feat doesn’t specify that this ability was for bows only, but if monsters with ranged weapons—even nonstandard ranged weapons, like a manicore’s tail spikes—learned this feat, it wouldn’t harm the game.

- **Classes**: The low base attack bonus requirement means the fighting classes can get it earlier than others, but it’s still available to all classes and doesn’t give any particular class an advantage with all other factors equal.

A quick look over the “What Shouldn’t You Ever Do with Feats” sidebar shows that you’re in the clear, so the feat is done and ready for play. If the feat proved too powerful, you could always try knocking it back down to \(-1\) on each attack, or even negating the penalty on only the first attack. The final version of the feat is:

### Improved Rapid Shot [General]
You are an expert at firing weapons with exceptional speed.

- **Prerequisites**: Dex 13+, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, base attack bonus +2 or higher.
- **Benefit**: When using the Rapid Shot feat, you can ignore the -2 attack penalty on all of your ranged attacks.

---

### Example Creation of a Feat #2
After looking at delayed blast fireball, you want to open up the delaying option for other spells, and the best way to do that is with a new meta-magic feat.

**Delay Spell**: You cast a spell and delay the actual effects for several rounds.

- **Efficiency**: No rule exists for this, although a parallel exists between fireball and delayed blast fireball.

---

### A feat that improves a weak feature is better than one that improves a strong one.

The latter is four levels higher, so you set the initial adjustment for the delayed spell to four levels higher than the original, and use the -1/5 round variable from delayed blast fireball for the feat.

**Balance**: Again using the existing spells as a comparison, a normal fireball has a maximum of 1d6 damage, while a delayed blast fireball uses d8s for damage, has no damage cap, and a higher DC. A delayed fireball still has the 1d6 damage cap and the same DC as a regular fireball. Compared to the existing spell, a feat-enhanced spell falls short on two counts. You decide to make the feat a three-level jump instead of a four-level jump, which gives sorcerers and wizards a reason to actually learn delayed blast fireball (because it’s better at a higher cost than just using the feat).

**Mechanics**: The functioning of the feat needs to be described, and you can use delayed blast fireball as a baseline.

- **Category**: Obviously, this is a meta-magic feat and should be classified as such, so a wizard can pick it up with one of her bonus feats.

**Weirdness**: While the feat’s effects are obvious for direct spells like fireball, a delayed magic missile is less certain. If one of the targets of a delayed magic missile moves more than 15 feet away from the other targets, what happens? If you cast a ray of enfeeblement and the target moves before the spell is activated, does it still strike that target or does it hit whoever occupies that square? These questions require too much DM arbitration, slowing down the game (which is on the Don’t’s sidebar list). These problems can be avoided by limiting which spells the feat affects.

Area spells are straightforward—the spell’s area is precisely defined when cast, and other creatures moving into or out of it won’t alter the effects (functioning exactly like delayed blast fireball). Personal spells are similarly easy, as you always in range of yourself. (You could delay a healing spell for yourself, activating it automatically 3 rounds into combat, or an invisibility spell on yourself so that it activates the round after you blast an enemy with a Melf’s acid arrow.) Touch spells allow you to hold a charge until you specify exactly what target is to be affected—by touching the target—and thereafter the spell effect waits to be activated on that target (allowing you to delay a harm spell on an enemy fighter whom you know is about to be cured by a rival cleric).

To avoid headaches later, you decide to limit the feat to these kinds of spells. The final version of the feat is:

**Delay Spell** [Metamagic]
You can cast a spell that triggers at a set duration after casting.

- **Benefit**: A delayed spell doesn’t activate until 1-5 rounds after you finish casting it. You determine the delay when casting the spell, and it cannot be changed once set. The spell activates on your turn on the round you designate. Only area, personal, and touch spells can be affected by this feat. Any decisions you would make about the spell (including attack rolls, designating targets, or determining or shaping an area) are decided when the spell is cast, while any effects resolved by those affected by the spell (including saving throws) are decided when the spell triggers. A delayed spell can be dispelled normally during the delay, and can be detected normally in the area or on the target with spells such as detect magic. A delayed spell uses up a spell slot three levels higher than the spell’s actual level.
The Right Tool for the Job

More Exotic Weapons for the D&D Game

by Andy Collins • illustrated by Kennon James & David Day

If your characters are tired of longswords, battleaxes, and polearms, or if you need a new surprise to spring on your players, an exotic weapon can fit the bill.

Exotic weapons take many forms. Some come from distant lands or foreign cultures, while others are designed to take advantage of a specific race’s aptitudes, and still others fit a unique or unusual niche in combat situations.

Regardless of their nature, each of the weapons listed below requires the character to select the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat to become proficient in its use. As stated in the feat’s description, the character chooses a specific exotic weapon when she selects the feat; without the appropriate feat, the PC suffers a -4 penalty on attack rolls when using an exotic weapon.

Blowgun or Halfling Blowgun

The blowgun is most often used by primitive tribes to deliver poison to an unfortunate target.

This weapon requires two hands to use. Loading a blowgun is a move-equivalent action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

The blowgun has a maximum range of five range increments. The halfling blowgun is for Small users.

Bolas

A bolas is a set of three weighted balls connected by leather cords. To attack, you whirl the bolas in a circle over your head and then fling it at a target. The bolas connect with your opponent with a successful ranged touch attack: Disregard any armor, shield, or natural armor bonus of the target.

A character struck by bolas must make a Reflex save (with a DC equal to the attack roll of the bolas’s wielder). If the saving throw fails, the target takes subdual damage and is considered pinned. (See “Grapple” in Chapter 8: Combat of the Player’s Handbook for more information.) The bolas can pin only a Tiny, Small, or Medium-size target.
### Exotic Weapons - Melee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Damage</th>
<th>Critical</th>
<th>Range Increment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TINY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sai</td>
<td>10 gp</td>
<td>1d4</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1/4 lb</td>
<td>Bludgeoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tortoise blade, gnome</td>
<td>20 gp</td>
<td>1d4</td>
<td>1g-20/x2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 lb</td>
<td>Piercing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMALL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckler-axe, dwarf</td>
<td>30 gp</td>
<td>1d6</td>
<td>x3</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 lb</td>
<td>Slashing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescent knife</td>
<td>20 gp</td>
<td>1d3</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 lb</td>
<td>Slashing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEDIUM-SIZE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lajatang, halfling</td>
<td>80 gp</td>
<td>1d6/1d6</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 lb</td>
<td>Slashing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scourge</td>
<td>20 gp</td>
<td>1d6</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 lb</td>
<td>Slashing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinblade, elven</td>
<td>100 gp</td>
<td>1d8</td>
<td>18-20/x2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 lb</td>
<td>Piercing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LARGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crusher, orc</td>
<td>60 gp</td>
<td>1d8</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td></td>
<td>15 lb</td>
<td>Bludgeoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gythika</td>
<td>100 gp</td>
<td>1d8/1d8</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td></td>
<td>12 lb</td>
<td>Slashing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lajatang</td>
<td>90 gp</td>
<td>1d6/1d8</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 lb</td>
<td>Slashing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mancatcher</td>
<td>30 gp</td>
<td>1d4*</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 lb</td>
<td>Bludgeoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scimitar, great</td>
<td>50 gp</td>
<td>2d6</td>
<td>18-20/x2</td>
<td></td>
<td>16 lb</td>
<td>Slashing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Exotic Weapons - Ranged

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Damage</th>
<th>Critical</th>
<th>Range Increment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TINY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skiprock, halfling</td>
<td>4 gp</td>
<td>1d3</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1/4 lb</td>
<td>Bludgeoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMALL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolas</td>
<td>10 gp</td>
<td>1d6*</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3 lb</td>
<td>Bludgeoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolas, barbed</td>
<td>20 gp</td>
<td>1d6</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4 lb</td>
<td>Piercing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomerang</td>
<td>20 gp</td>
<td>1d4</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2 lb</td>
<td>Bludgeoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charkha</td>
<td>40 gp</td>
<td>1d6</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7 lb</td>
<td>Slashing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEDIUM-SIZE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blowgun, halfling</td>
<td>15 gp</td>
<td>1d2</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 lb</td>
<td>Piercing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darts (10)</td>
<td>1 gp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1/4 lb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LARGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blowgun</td>
<td>20 gp</td>
<td>1d3</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2 lb</td>
<td>Piercing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darts (10)</td>
<td>1 gp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1/4 lb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The weapon deals subdual damage rather than normal damage.*

To escape the bolas, the pinned character must either break out (Strength check, DC 20), wriggle free (Escape Artist check, DC 20), or cut (or be cut) loose (5 hp and only slashing weapons do damage).

Regardless of the method, escaping is a full-round action. (Remember that a target can use the take 10 or take 20 action to escape if the situation allows.)

If the saving throw succeeds, the target suffers normal damage but is not pinned.

---

**Bolas, Barbed**

The barbed bolas is similar to a normal bolas, except that its weighted balls are studded with hooked bars.

The barbed bolas functions identically to the bolas except that its damage is subdual damage. In addition, on any failed attempt to break or wriggle free, the grappled character takes an additional 1d4 points of damage.

**Boomerang**

The boomerang is a curved throwing stick that will return to its thrower on a miss. To catch a returning boomerang, the character must make an attack roll (as if he were throwing the boomerang) and hit AC 10. Failure indicates that the boomerang lands 10 feet away from the thrower in a random direction.

**Buckler-Axe, Dwarfven**

This weapon is favored by dwarven fighters. In addition to its obvious protective qualities, it proves a capable off-hand weapon or emergency weapon when disarmed.
Though at first glance the dwarven buckler-axe appears similar to a standard buckler, this weapon has enlarged blade-like edges at its top and bottom, allowing the wielder to swing it like a handaxe.

**Chatkcha**

This strange three-pointed crystalline or obsidian wedge was originally common to some humanoid tribes that lacked metalworking technology. However, it is now becoming more common among peoples with the ability to forge metal. As a result, most chatkcha encountered in the course of a campaign should be constructed of metal. The statistics given in the table above are for a metal chatkcha.

The chatkcha returns to its thrower on a miss. To catch a returning chatkcha, the character must make an attack roll (as if he were throwing the chatkcha) and hit AC 10. Failure indicates that the weapon falls to the ground 10 feet away from the thrower in a random direction. A nonproficient user who fails in his attempt to catch the chatkcha also suffers 1d4 damage from the weapon’s sharp edges.

**Crescent Knife**

This weapon, which resembles a crescent-shaped blade affixed to a crossbar handle, allows its wielder to make two simultaneous attack rolls (using the same modifier) each time he attacks with it. Each attack is resolved separately.

**Crusher, Orc**

This heavy, clublike weapon is favored by orcs, particularly in battle formations. An orc crusher has reach. You can strike opponents up to 10 feet away.

This long, flexible club is unlike any other sort of polearm. To use it, the wielder actually plants the butt of the crusher in the ground and grips the middle part of the weapon’s haft. She then snaps the lethal head of the weapon forward toward an enemy by rapidly moving the haft back and forth.

Because of its reach and flexibility, the crusher can be used to attack over a Medium-size or smaller ally in front of its wielder without penalty.

**Gythka**

This polearm has razor-sharp slashing blades—originally made of obsidian or similar materials—at both ends. Like the chatkcha, the gythka was often used by races without metalworking skills, but it is now more commonly found constructed of metal.

Because of the unique shape of the gythka’s blades, you can also use it to make trip attacks. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the gythka to avoid being tripped.

A gythka is a double weapon. You can fight with it as if fighting with two weapons, but if you do, you incur all the normal attack penalties associated with fighting with two weapons: a one-handed weapon and a light weapon. (See the “Attacking with Two Weapons” section in Chapter 6: Combat in the Player’s Handbook.) Note that you can make two trip attempts with the gythka as a full-round action. A creature using a double weapon in one hand, such as an ogre using a gythka, can’t use it as a double weapon.

**Lajatang or Halfing Lajatang**

The lajatang is a staff with a crescent-shaped blade at each end. It is common to Eastern cultures or any culture with a tradition of monks and martial artists.

A lajatang is a double weapon. You can fight with it as if fighting with two weapons, but if you do, you incur all the normal attack penalties associated with fighting with two weapons: a one-handed weapon and a light weapon. (See the “Attacking with Two Weapons” section in Chapter 6: Combat in the Player’s Handbook.) Note that you can make two trip attempts with the lajatang as a full-round action. A creature using a double weapon in one hand, such as an ogre using a lajatang, can’t use it as a double weapon.
Chapter 8: Combat in the Player's Handbook. A creature using a double weapon in one hand, such as a human using a halfling lajatang, can't use it as a double weapon.

A monk using a lajatang can strike with her unarmed base attack, including her more favorable number of attacks per round, along with other applicable attack modifiers. The monk can only use her more favorable number of attacks per round with one end of the weapon. The halfling lajatang is for Small monks.

**Mancatcher**
The mancatcher is used by city guards and others who prefer to capture their opponents unharmed.

A wielder who hits a Small or Medium-size opponent with a mancatcher can immediately initiate a grapple (as a free action) without provoking an attack of opportunity. (See “Grapple” in Chapter 8: Combat of the Player's Handbook for more information.) In addition to the normal options available to a grapple, the wielder of a mancatcher can attempt to pull his target to the ground (the equivalent of a trip attack, though no attack roll is necessary).

The mancatcher has reach and cannot be used against adjacent opponents.

It is rumored that the strange subterranean race known as the kuo-toa have a larger, more dangerous version of this weapon called a pincer staff.

**Sai**
Despite some images of the sai as a sharp weapon, it is actually blunt with pronglike extrusions designed to help catch and disarm opponent's weapons. The sai can also be thrown.

A monk using a sai can strike with her unarmed base attack, including her more favorable number of attacks per round, along with other applicable attack modifiers.

A sai user who attempts to disarm her opponent gains a +4 bonus to the opposed attack roll required. (You don’t gain any bonus if someone tries to disarm your sai.)

**Scimitar, Great (not pictured)**
The great scimitar is common to Arabian-style settings and is often wielded by strong humanoid creatures (such as orcs).

**Scourge**
This three-tailed barbed whip allows the wielder to make three simultaneous attack rolls (at the same modifier) with each attack. Each attack roll is resolved separately.

The scourge is often dipped in an insinuative poison to take advantage of its multiple attacks.

**Skiprock, Halfling**
These polished, perfectly weighted stones are prized by halflings, for they are designed to ricochet off one target to strike a second.

If the halfling skiprock hits its target, it ricochets toward another target (of the thrower’s choice) adjacent to the original target (that is, within 5 feet). The thrower immediately makes a second attack roll for the skiprock against the new target, using the same attack modifiers as the first roll (but with an additional -2 penalty).

**Thinblade, Elven**
This rapierlike weapon is favored by dextrous elven fighters and rogues alike. Its thin, flexible blade slips easily into the seams of armor. Some elven nobles carry a thinblade—decorated with intricate filigree and tiny gemstones—as a sign of their station, even if they aren’t proficient in its use.

You can use the Weapon Finesse feat to apply your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier to attack rolls with an elven thinblade.

**Tortoise Blade, Gnome**
This interesting contraption is designed to be used in a gnome warrior’s off hand, and it is particularly useful in cramped tunnels or warrens where swinging a weapon is difficult or impossible. It looks like a turtle shell strapped to the gnome’s wrist, with a daggerlike blade jutting out where the gnome’s fingers should be.

The gnome tortoise blade also functions as a buckler, granting a +1 armor bonus, inflicting a -1 armor check penalty, and incurring a 5% arcane spell failure chance.
Miscellaneous Mishaps:

Roads & Rivers

Dawn Ibach

Table 1: Road Encounters

| 01 | Merchant with cart* |
| 02 | Merchant with wagon* |
| 03 | Merchant with several wagons* |
| 04 | Merchant with laden pack animals |
| 05 | Merchant, foreign |
| 06 | Craftsman with wares |
| 07 | Healer or herbalist and wagon |
| 08 | Charlatan healer and wagon |
| 09 | Trapper with skins |
| 10 | Hunter with game |
| 11 | Hunter without game |
| 12 | Fisherman with catch |
| 13 | Fisherman without catch |
| 14 | Tinker |
| 15 | Circus |
| 16 | Acting troupe |
| 17 | Pedestrian with pet |
| 18 | Pedestrian, lost |
| 19 | Pedestrian, foreign |
| 20 | Gypsies |
| 21 | Right of way dispute |
| 22 | Horse thieves |
| 23 | Horse merchant with wares |
| 24 | Cattle rustlers |
| 25 | Hangman's tree with occupant(s) |
| 26 | Post with hanging cage(s) |
| 27 | Adventurers, on foot |
| 28 | Adventurers, mounted |
| 29 | Farmers |
| 30 | Herdsmen |
| 31 | Military patrol |
| 32 | Road sign |
| 33 | Road sign, incorrect |
| 34 | Bridge, stone |
| 35 | Bridge, wooden |
| 36 | Logging wagons |
| 37 | Foot races |
| 38 | Young apprentice on errand |
| 39 | Messenger |
| 40 | Messenger, mounted |
| 41 | Children playing game |
| 42 | Dog tied to tree, friendly or mean |
| 43 | Laborers on foot |
| 44 | Wagon of laborers |
| 45 | Toll collector, legitimate |
| 46 | Toll collector, false |
| 47 | Woman with basket of berries, fruit, vegetables, or flowers |
| 48 | Famous adventurer's, mounted |
| 49 | Refugees |
| 50 | Family moving |
| 51 | Abandoned wagon |
| 52 | Wagon with broken wheel |
| 53 | Wagon with lame draft animal |
| 54 | Wagon with stubborn draft animal* |
| 55 | Religious pilgrims |
| 56 | Ceremony to god of travel |
| 57 | Slave wagon |
| 58 | Prisoner wagon |
| 59 | Outlaw(s) |
| 60 | Fire wagon |
| 61 | Prospectors |
| 62 | Humankind tracks |
| 63 | Monster tracks |
| 64 | Funeral procession |
| 65 | Wedding procession |
| 66 | Local hero's homecoming |
| 67 | Enamored couple, strolling |
| 68 | Enamored couple, riding |
| 69 | Enamored couple, eloping |
| 70 | Bounty hunter |
| 71 | Construction crew |
| 72 | Domestic animal, blocking road |
| 73 | Domestic herd, blocking road |
| 74 | Bandits |
| 75 | Lone woman, cowled |
| 76 | Mercenary |
| 77 | Humanoid outcast |
| 78 | Monk with cart or wagon* |
| 79 | Young boy with cart or wagon* |
| 80 | Adventurers with cart or wagon* |
| 81 | Canal |
| 82 | Border patrol tower |
| 83 | Hayride |
| 84 | Warning sign |
| 85 | Patch of Wildflowers |

* See Subtables A and B for contents.
Table 2: River Encounters

| 01  | Barge with cargo and guards* |
| 02  | Barge with crew and no cargo |
| 03  | Barge with pirates*         |
| 04  | Barge abandoned             |
| 05  | Barge wrecked               |
| 06  | Sailing ship with cargo*    |
| 07  | Sailing ship with passengers|
| 08  | Sailing ship partially sunk |
| 09  | Rowboat with fisherman      |
| 10  | Rowboat with adventurers    |
| 11  | Rowboat with smugglers*     |
| 12  | Rowboat overturned          |
| 13  | Rowboat hidden in bushes    |
| 14  | Raft, crude                 |
| 15  | Raft, with rudder and poles |
| 16  | Ferry, humanoid laborers    |
| 17  | Ferry, aquatic creature    |
| 18  | Ferry, abandoned            |
| 19  | Children, picking reeds for |

| 20  | Ford of shallow water       |
| 21  | Ford of sand                |
| 22  | Ford of rocks               |
| 23  | Bridge, stone               |
| 24  | Bridge, wooden              |
| 25  | Bridge, rope                |
| 26  | Bridge, unsafe              |
| 27  | Animal trapped on floating tree |
| 28  | Animal trapped on island    |
| 29  | Fisherman on bank           |
| 30  | Fisherman in water, with net or spear |
| 31  | Frog or crayfish hunter(s)  |
| 32  | Clam diggers(s)             |
| 33  | Batter(s)                   |
| 34  | Swimmer(s)                  |
| 35  | Women washing clothes       |
| 36  | Corpse                      |
| 37  | Water fowl                  |
| 38  | Beaver dam                  |
| 39  | Freshwater dolphins         |
| 40  | Wild animal or creature drinking |
| 41  | Wild animal or creature crossing |
| 42  | Wild animal or creature fishing |
| 43  | Herdsman with animals, drinking |
| 44  | Herdsman with animals, crossing |
| 45  | Women and children, picking berries |
| 46  | Travelers collecting water  |
| 47  | Travelers watering mounts   |
| 48  | Refuse, organic             |
| 49  | School of fish              |
| 50  | Turtles on log              |
| 51  | Animal or monster tracks on bank |
| 52  | Monster fishing             |
| 53  | Monster drinking            |
| 54  | Rapids                      |
| 55  | Spindler                    |
| 56  | Boulder(s)                  |
| 57  | Sharpened poles under water |
| 58  | Frenzied fish               |
| 59  | Spooning                    |
| 60  | Raspberry bushes           |
| 61  | Fisherman, sleeping         |
| 62  | Tree swing over river       |
| 63  | Rope pulley and carriage    |
| 64  | Shallow bank                |
| 65  | Eroded banks                |
| 66  | Hunting party               |
| 67  | Hunting hounds and master, drinking |
| 68  | Sylvan race, bathing or fishing |
| 69  | Travelers building raft     |
| 70  | Travelers in magical boat   |
| 71  | Druid picking up litter     |
| 72  | Runaway or stowaway         |
| 73  | Bridge, destroyed           |
| 74  | Logs or log jam            |
| 75  | Barrels, full or empty      |
| 76  | Camp with fish cooking on bank |
| 77  | Logger cabin or camp on bank |
| 78  | Rope or chain across river  |
| 79  | Toll collector, false or legitimate |
| 80  | River section choked with plants |
| 81  | Fallen tree blocking river  |
| 82  | Huge corpse blocking river  |
| 83  | Crumbled cliff face blocking river |
| 84  | Playful giant otter or beaver |
| 85  | Tread stuck on small island |
| 86  | Floating fish and turtles, dead |
| 87  | Sunken village on banks     |
| 88  | Swolein section of river    |
| 89  | Fog                         |
| 90  | Fireflies                   |
| 91  | Pier, fishing or boat       |
| 92  | Banks hidden by tall reeds  |
| 93  | Hot springs, water steams   |
| 94  | Muddy water                 |
| 95  | Playful creatures            |
| 96  | Carnivorous lily pads       |
| 97  | Small cliff with partially submerged cave filled with bats |
| 98  | Two ships or boats in combat |
| 99  | Ship with flag of noble house |
| 100 | Ship with flag of royal house and escort |
Carrying a shield painted with the image of a bloody skull can reveal a great deal about someone and what they stand for. No kingdom, great hero, or even common foot soldier should be without an emblem to fight behind. This article will help you add this important and fun visual element to your campaigns.

You don't need to be an artist to create heraldic symbols. Don't worry about drawing crests with calligraphy and decorative panels detailing a personal history. You can leave that sort of design to verbal description. All you need is a group of basic symbols.

When a kingdom requires hundreds of shields with their emblem, the king probably won't have skilled artists painting each of them. If the symbol you have in mind cannot be redrawn by a squire or blacksmith, it's too complicated. These symbols must also be simple enough to be read on a flag or war banner from a distance so that troops can be easily identified.

When creating an image to represent a kingdom or city, an idea might jump to mind easily. However, especially when you require many at once, you might want a little help. To create your own icons for these kingdoms, you should begin by deciding on an appropriate symbol for their location. Below are a few tables to help you get started. If you're in a hurry, roll a die to generate the key element of the heraldry.

Combine two or more of the suggested symbols for more variety.

An emblem should give viewers an idea of the nature of the kingdom. While images that denote location are fairly easy to create, depicting alignment because it is an abstract concept becomes a little harder. As a solution to this problem you can use animals that have good or evil reputations. Tables A and B have fantastic creatures that can conjure up the feeling of both good and evil. Since animals can be used to represent location (a camel for a desert), you should choose a creature that makes sense in both regards (a scorpion for a desert and evil). Some creatures, like dragons, have no boundaries, while some have reputations that supersede their location, such as lions. Deciding which animal is right for your kingdom has many variables, but the choice should be a simple one once you put it into the context of your game.

After that, or even instead of that, you might wish to illustrate the kingdom's uniqueness. A town is principally defined by its business and exports. Table 3 contains a list of possible icons for these services and skills.

To create a symbol for a hero, the system is much the same. If the hero is associated with a particular area (such as a ranger who looks over a forest) you can use a location. For the most part, adventurers tend to be wanderers and explorers. Instead of using a location, you might want an icon that represents their favored activity or class. This is quite simple when you show a fighter's longsword or warhammer, but when you need to represent magic or thievery it becomes more abstract. Some suggestions for magic and thieving icons are listed below on Tables 4 and 5.

You might find that you want another image that more personally represents the character. It would be impossible to list all the various possibilities, so here are a few suggestions: The character might have a favored skill that could be represented, such as a rope for the Use Rope skill, or a gem for Profession (jeweller). Important moments from a person's past are often used in heraldry. Possibilities include: a defeated foe (represented with a sword through him), the freeing of kidnapped people (broken shackles), or the recovery of an important item (depicted by an image of the item).

Whether you are creating an emblem for a town, person, or an entire kingdom, these tables should give you a good start. There are many more familiar icons, such as crowns, tears, and skulls, which are not mentioned below but have their own obvious connotations. Remember that heraldry is a visual language, so it is okay to reuse symbols in different contexts. If you use the symbols regularly, your PCs will come to know whether the symbol of the wyvern and crescent moon should invoke fear, respect, or derision.
**Aquatic**
For aquatic elves, sea-side kingdoms, sakugin, locathah, or mer-folk.

**War**
For warriors, adventurers, soldiers, conquering armies, or defenders of a kingdom.

**Magic**
Wizards, sorcerers, magic guilds, alchemists, or lands rich in magic might use icons like these.

**Giants**
The giant's type is often a factor in such simple designs: hill giants, stone giants, frost giants, and cloud giants.

**Aerial**
Not only flying creatures but also those who make their homes in the sky might use such emblems.

**Elves**
Elven symbols are also useful for druids, rangers, and other characters associated with the wild.
### Location

**Table 1A: Forest (roll 1d10)**  
1. Berries  
2. Forest animal  
3. Leaf  
4. Log  
5. Maple key  
6. Mushroom  
7. Nuts  
8. Pine cone  
9. Tree  
10. Wicflower

**Table 1B: Desert (roll 1d10)**  
1. Cactus  
2. Crescent moon  
3. Desert animal  
4. Joshua tree

**Table 1C: Marsh (roll 1d16)**  
1. Cattails  
2. Fallen log  
3. Lily pad  
4. Marsh animal  
5. Muddy water  
6. Willow tree

**Table 1D: Port town (roll 1d10)**  
1. Anchor

### Alignment

**Table 2A: Evil (roll 1d20)**  
1. Alligator (savage)  
2. Bat (nocturnal)  
3. Behir (territorial)  
4. Bulette (ferocious)  
5. Dragon (powerful)  
6. Hydra (multiple centers of power)  
7. Wasp (strong in numbers)  
8. Jackal (sneaky)  
9. Lizard (quick)  
10. Octopus (hands on everything)  
11. Rat (sneaky)  
12. Scorpion (deadly)  
13. Shark (vicious)  
14. Snake (deadly)  
15. Spider (scheming)  
16. Toad (sturdy)  
17. Vulture (opportunist)  
18. Wolverine (ferocious)  
19. Worm (subterranean)  
20. Wyvern (powerful)

**Table 2B: Good (roll 1d20)**  
1. Badger (courageous)  
2. Bear (strong)  
3. Bull (strong willed)  
4. Butterfly (kind)  
5. Cat (agile)  
6. Dragon (powerful)

### Town, Rogues, and Magic

**Table 3: Town (roll 1d20)**  
1. Anvil  
2. Barrel  
3. Bellows  
4. Book  
5. Bottle  
6. Fish  
7. Gems  
8. Gold  
9. Hammer  
10. Horseshoe  
11. Instrument  
12. Jewelry  
13. Lumber  
14. Mining cart  
15. Ore  
16. Pick  
17. Scythe  
18. Sickle  
19. Trident  
20. Wheat sheaf

**Table 4: Rogues (roll 1d20)**  
1. Bag of loot  
2. Bottle of poison  
3. Broken lock  
4. Crescent moon  
5. Cut money purse  
6. Dagger  
7. Door  
8. Ear  
9. Eye  
10. Grappling hook  
11. Hand taking jewelry  
12. Jewels  
13. Key  
14. Lockpick  
15. Man's shadow  
16. Nocturnal animal  
17. Poisonous animal  
18. Stars  
19. Treasure chest  
20. Web

**Table 5: Magic (roll 1d20)**  
1. Book  
2. Candle  
3. Caudron  
4. Conical hat  
5. Crystal ball  
6. Eye  
7. Fireball  
8. Hand  
9. Jar  
10. Key  
11. Lightning bolt  
12. Mortar and pestle  
13. Moon  
14. Potion  
15. Quill  
16. Ring  
17. Spiral  
18. Stars  
19. Wand  
20. Wishbone
Dwarves
Mountains and minerals are obvious symbols for dwarves, and earth-tones and black are common colors.

Orcs
Images of violence and death are prominent in orc heraldry.

Necromancers
Death imagery works for demons and devils as well as evil spellcasters and intelligent undead.

Minotaurs
If your campaign includes unusual races like the bull-headed minotaurs, include them in your heraldic devices.

Fire
The other three elements—water, earth, and air—can also make good heraldic symbols in a fantasy world.

Drow
Creatures associated with a particular race—as spiders are with the drow—make good symbols.
The origins of European heraldry have been disputed for several hundred years. Some scholars said that the first crusaders brought the Byzantine, or possibly Muslim, custom back to Europe. Others insisted that the Greeks and Romans carried family and military crests on their shields, thus setting the heraldic precedent. Still others pointed to the symbols of barbarians and 10th-century Germano-Scandinavia as the origin of Western European heraldry.

Today, we know that sometime between the late 11th century and the first quarter of the 12th century, warriors started identifying themselves by symbols and colors painted on their shields. By the early 14th century, nearly every facet of Western European life—from corporation to church, from common peasant to nobility—had been influenced by heraldry. Arms symbolized countries, noble families, and the armies of men who fought for them, filling test halls and churches with the colors of their secular and ecclesiastic sponsors.

Tinctures

Arms are represented by three main groups of tinctures: colors, metals, and furs. These tinctures are used to describe all elements depicted on a coat of arms; however, the actual hue of tincture is up to the artist depicting the blazon. This is a tradition that has continued since the time of Medieval heralds, who had to hand mix paints, thus making it nearly impossible to match colors between heralds.

Until recently, it was not practical to render arms in full color, so heralds across Europe used varying techniques to depict colors in black and white. To remedy this, a group of engravers in Antwerp during the early 17th century perfected a method called hatching, by which tinctures could be universally represented in black and white drawings and engravings. Another technique used in later years was tricking, where the abbreviations of the colors were either positioned in the area of tincture or they were placed outside the arms and tied into the area by a line. A practice developed in 1414 by King Alphonse V of the Two Sicilies, also known as the Sicily Herald, tied the tinctures to gemstones and the planets. This secondary blazonry stipulated that dukes, earls, and barons were to have their arms blazoned by gemstones, and planets were to be used for princes, kings and emperors.

The Rule of Tinctures

There is one basic rule for the use of tinctures. A color, metal, or fur can be combined with another tincture of the remaining two categories, but not with another from the same category. This rule developed because tinctures are not easily distinguishable from one another at a distance.

There are five distinct exceptions to this convention. First, if good heraldry would result in spite of "illegal" combinations of tinctures, the arms might be allowed. Second, the rule of tinctures does not extend to chiefs, cantons, or borecures. Third, some fields, such as vair or parted fields like barry, bendy, and checky (see Partition Lines below), are considered "neutral" and can therefore take charges of tincture. Fourth, a charge can be described as being blazoned in its naturally occurring or proper coloration. For example, a sword could retain its natural steel color on an argent background. The last exception occurs when parts of an animal charge (tongue, claws, teeth, and so on) are given a different tincture than their bodies.

In the cases of marshalling, differencing, augmentation, or abatement, when colors or metals touch one another, the charges are sometimes limniated or divided by a thin line of tincture to separate two metals or two colors.
**Colors**

- Azure (Blue)
  - Tricking: Az or B
  - Symbolism: Loyalty and truth
  - Gem: Sapphire
  - Planet: Jupiter
- Gules (Red)
  - Tricking: Gu
  - Symbolism: Military fortitude and magnanimity
  - Gem: Ruby
  - Planet: Mars
- Sable (Black)
  - Tricking: Sa
  - Symbolism: Constancy, sometimes grief
  - Gem: Diamond
  - Planet: Saturn
- Vert (Green)
  - Tricking: Vt or Sin (France)
  - Symbolism: Hope, joy, and sometimes loyalty in love
  - Gem: Emerald
  - Planet: Venus
- Purpure (Purple)
  - Tricking: Purp
  - Symbolism: Royal majesty, sovereignty and justice
  - Gem: Amethyst
  - Planet: Mercury
- Tanné or Tawny (Orange-Red)
  - (seldom used except in abatements)
  - Symbolism: Worthy ambition
  - Gem: Jacinth
  - Planet: the Dragon's Head (point of eclipse with the sun disappearing, thought to have been caused by a dragon)
- Sanguine (Purple-Red)
  - (seldom used except in abatements)
  - Symbolism: Not hasty in battle, yet a victor
  - Gem: Sardonyx
  - Planet: the Dragon's Tail (point of eclipse with the sun emerging)

**Points of the Shield**

- **Field**: the surface of the shield
- **Chief**: the upper third of the shield
- **Fess**: the middle third of the shield
- **Base**: the lower third of the shield
- **Dexter**: the left side of the shield (right from wielder's perspective)
- **Sinister**: the right side of the shield (left from wielder's perspective)

Three points are used for accurate positioning of the elements used in blazoning. They are:
- **Fess**: This point is at the center of the shield, halfway between the chief (top) and base (bottom) at the centerline of the shield.
- **Honour**: The honour point sits between the top and bottom of the chief on the centerline of the field.
- **NOMBRIL**: The point is halfway between the the top and bottom of the base, on the centerline of the field.

**Metals**

- **Or** (Gold or Yellow)
  - Tricking: Or
  - Symbolism: Generosity
  - Gem: Topaz
  - Planet: Sol (Sun)
- **Argent** (Silver or White)
  - Tricking: Ag
  - Symbolism: Peace and sincerity
  - Gem: Pearl
  - Planet: Luna (Moon)

**Furs**

There are two main types of furs used in heraldry: ermine and vair.

- **Ermine**: Ermine represents the fur of the creature of the same name, a relative of the weasel.
- **Vair**: Vair originated from the use of the skins of the blue-gray squirrel.

**Heraldry Glossary**

- **Abatement**: a change to a coat of arms indicating a shameful act or crime
- **Augmentation**: a change to a coat of arms granted to mark a notable or heroic deed
- **Bordure**: a band that occupies the border of a shield
- **Cadency**: changes made to a family's coat of arms to indicate different descendants
- **Charge**: a shape, character, creature, or object on the field of a shield
- **Canton**: a block that occupies a third of the area of the shield, normally placed in the dexter or chief corner
- **Dexter**: the left side of a coat of arms
- **Differencing**
  - a term used to refer to the various forms of cadency
- **Field**: the background of a coat of arms, depicted as white to represent the metal of a shield
- **Marshall**: combining the coats of arms of two families after a marriage
- **Ordinary**: a shape on the field of arms, a type of charge
THE ARMS

The items on a coat of arms can be divided into one of a few groups: points, partition lines, ordinaries, and charges.

Partition Lines

The lines used to partition the shield are given specific names. If these lines are used to simply divide a shield, it is blazoned "party per" then the division. If used as a charge themselves, they are known as ordinaries.

Ornamental Lines

Partition lines do not have to be straight to retain their name or symbolism. They can instead take on additional meaning with the added decoration.

Ordinaries

Ordinaries are shapes on the field of arms named according to their position and direction they take. Ordinaries are divided into three groups: honorable ordinaries, ordinaries, and subordinaries. These divisions are based on the area of the field the ordinaries cover. Narrower forms, called diminutives, are half or less than the normal width and usually occur in groups. Diminutives must show the field on either side and between each other.

Honorable Ordinaries

The honorable ordinaries are said to have originated with the fastenings, buckles, and clamps of the shield. They normally occupy up to a third of the surface area of the shield. They are blazoned immediately after the field is described.

Ordinaries

This is the "catch-all" category of ordinaries which consists of those shapes that do not fall into the honorable ordinary or subordinary categories. Ordinaries cover about a fifth of the field. Some of the most common ordinaries are detailed below.

Subordinaries

Scholars do not agree upon the division between ordinaries and subordinaries. Some say that the subordinaries must use less than one fifth of the field's area. Regardless of the disputed qualifications, many heraldic authorities do agree that the items below are to be considered subordinaries. Subordinaries usually do not have diminutives.
Charges

Charges is a term for anything that appears on a shield. Ordinary charges are a sub-classification of charges themselves.

If a charge is placed on an ordinary or another charge, it is depicted upright. When a charge is placed on a bend, it is positioned at the same angle as the bend. A field that is decorated by a regular pattern of charges is known as a semy of or ployalty of that charge.

Beasts

Animals decorated on shields long before rules of heraldry were devised, so it is not surprising that they have been a central part of heraldry since the beginning.

When describing an animal charge, start with the posture, add the head position (if it differs from the norm), tail characteristics (if any), and finally any additional attributes.

Postures:

Ambulant - walking
Aspect - the position that an animal occupies with respect to the viewer. It might be full aspect (full faced looking at the viewer), passant (with its side to the viewer), or trian aspect (between the two).
Bicorporate - having two bodies, with one set of forepaws and one head
Gouchant - laying down with the head raised
Descending - facing the base
Descent - coming down from the chief as if leaping downward
Dormant - sleeping
Effaire - rearing out of rage or fear
Engrafted - leaping
Furiosoant - enraged or furious, especially when referring to a bull
Guardant - looking at the observer
Genuant - kneeling
Jessant - springing or shooting up
Naissant - coming out of an ordinary
Natant - represented horizontally, as if swimming
Passant - walking with the Dexter paw raised
Pose - walking with all four feet on the ground (also statant)
Preying - in a position for devouing prey
Rampant - beasts of prey with forepaws raised, and the rear dexter leg higher than the sinister, facing dexter
Rangent - enraged or furious, especially when referring to a bull
Repassant - walking toward the sinister side of the shield
Salient - leaping, forepaws in the dexter chief, hind feet in the sinister base
Seajant - beasts of prey sitting
Seajant affronte - sitting with forepaws extended, facing dexter
Springing - beasts of the hunt leaping (like salient)
Statant - standing with all four feet on the ground (also pose)
Therant - showing the back
Triant - facing between affronte and guardant
Trippant - a beast of the hunt walking with the dexter paw raised (like passant)
Vigilant - as if looking for prey

Postures of two or more animals:

Accosted - two animals proceeding side by side
Addorsed - two animals placed back to back
Affronte - two animals facing each other
Coambulant - animals walking together
Combatant - animals facing each other as if fighting
Confronte - two animals face to face

BEASTS

Boar
Symbolism: ferocity when protecting kindred
Beaver
Symbolism: perseverance and industriousness

Boar
Symbolism: a fierce combatant who causes fighting only at death
Buff, Buffalo, and Ox
Symbolism: valor and nobility

Camel
Symbolism: localism, patience, and indefatigable perseverance
Cat, Catamount, Cat-A-Mountain, Mauze, and Wild Cat
Symbolism: liberty, vigilance, foresight, and courage
Dolphin
Symbolism: same as for fish (see below)

Porcupine towards children, the Crown Prince of France
Elephant
Symbolism: courage and strength
Fish and Whales
Although the type of fish is not always blazoned, the position on the arms is. The common heraldic fish include herring, eel, salmon, barbel, pike, perch, roach, and trout. Whales are rarely used.

Variants: naissant (horizontal), rampant

Goat
Symbolism: emblem of the martial man who achieves victory by policy rather than valor
Hedgehog, Urchin, and Urcheon
Symbolism: provident provider

Horse
Variants: barbored (in harness or armor), enraged (like salient), free (on the field), furnished (bridled, saddled, and equipped), prancing (tearing), laird (a gray horse)

Bayard (a bay horse), reared (rears of a different tenure than the body)
Symbolism: readiness for all tasks for king and country
Hound, Greyhound, Mastiff, Aardvark, and Talbot
Variants: rampant (jumping or salient)
Symbolism: courage, vigilance, and loyal fidelity
**Enury** - eight animals serving as a bordure

**Issuant** - a beast coming out of another (typically from the mouth)

**Respectant** - two animals face to face

**Retracted** - one beast shorter than another

**Succedant** - following one another

**Vorant** - when an animal is shown eating another (also devouring)

**Head Position:**

**At Gaze** - a beast of the chase looking at the observer

**Bicapped** - having two heads

**Contourne** - facing to the sinister (counter)

**Gardant** - looking at the observer

**Regardant** - facing backward

**Spectant** - looking toward the dexter chief (nose bendwise)

**Suspectant** - looking upward (also spectant)

**Tail Characteristics:**

**Coward** - tail between the legs

**Defamed** - without its tail

**Double Queued** - having two tails

**Extended** - straight out horizontal

**Nowed** - a knotted tail

**Queued** - a tail of a different tincture than the body

**Attributes:**

**Accolé** - having a crown on its head or a collar around its neck

**Allume** - having red or sparkling eyes

**Anime** - being of a different tincture than natural when animals are breathing fire out their mouths

**Armed** - teeth and claws of a different tincture than the body

**Bitted** - When a horse's bit is colored different than the body, is said to be bitted of that tincture

**Crowned** - horns of a different tincture than the body

**Crined** - with hair of a different tincture than natural

**Crowned** - wearing a crown (a lion may be crowned ducally, wearing a duke's crown; or crowned royally, wearing a king's crown)

**Cuppa** - fur of any color and metal (potent-counter-potent)

**Disarmed** - without claws, teeth, or beak

**Eared** - ears of a different tincture than the body

**Embayed** - with a bloody mouth

**Embernosed** - with horns and hoofs of a different tincture than the body

**Incensed** - fire shooting out of the eyes

**Gorged** - with a crown or collar about its neck (emblazoned gorged with a crown or gorged with a collar)

**Horned** - with horns of a different tincture than the body

**Inflamed** - burning

**Langued** - having the tongue visible and of a different tincture than the body

**Marbled** - having the lower body of a fish

**Morne** - without a tongue, teeth, or claws

**Muzzled** - wearing a muzzle

**Reflect** - pierced by an arrow (also transfixt)

**Rosette** - hood of a different tincture than the body

**Sutiled** - hooves of a different tincture than the body

**Wounded** - wounded

**Wounding** - the act of wounding
Methods of describing parts of animals:
- Coupled - cut off from the body in a clean, straight line
- Coupled close - when referring to the head, cut so that no neck shows
- Demi - when only half an animal is displayed
- Erased - cut off or torn from the body, leaving jagged ends
- Gamb - a foreleg coupled or erased at the "shoulder"
- Mask - the face-on head of a fox or badger
- Paw - a foreleg coupled or erased at the "elbow"
- Queue - the tail

Birds
When describing a bird, charge, start with the posture, add the wing position (if it differs from that in the posture), and then any additional attributes if any are present.

Postures:
- Au vol - on the wing (volant)
- Descending - facing the base
- Displayed - wings and legs fully expanded, especially when referring to an eagle
- Eyriant - nested birds
- Perched - as if perched on an object
- Preying - in a position for devouring prey
- Rising - rising into flight (also rousant or surgent)
- Sourant - flying upwards
- Trussed - standing with wings folded closed to the body (also closed)
- Volant - flying horizontally

Wing Position:
- Addorsed - placed back to back
- Closed - standing with wings folded close to the body
- Disclosed - wings open with the tips pointing downward
- Displayed wings inverted - as displayed with wing tips pointing down
- Elevated - wings upright and extended

Inverted - wing tips pointing downward
- Ouvert - wings half open as if about to leap into flight
- Spread eagle - wings fully expanded, especially when referring to an eagle

Attributes:
- Aquilate - to adorn with eagles' heads
- Aspectant - two birds facing one another
- Armed - claws of a different tincture than the body
- Beaked - when the beak is of a different color than the body (also called beque)
- Belled - when a hawk or falcon has bells attached to its legs
- Bicapiolated - having two heads
- Decked - when the edge of the feathers are a different tincture than the body
- Disarmed - without claws, and beak
- Dismembered - not having legs or feet
- Enalurion - eight birds serving as a bordure
- Hooded - a bird of prey with a hood on
- Infamed - burning
- Langued - having the tongue visible and of a different tincture than the body
- Legged - legs of a different tincture than the body (also membered)
- Pride - displaying the tail in a circular shape
- Vulned - wounded
- Vuling - the act of wounding
- Winged - wings of a different tincture than the body

INSECTS

Astr
- Symbolism: man of great labor, wisdom, and providence.

Bee
- Variants: volans (been from above with wings expanded)
- Symbolism: focused industriousness

Grasshopper
- Symbolism: wisdom and nobility

SCARAB
- Symbolism: deliberation and perseverance

SEAL
- Symbolism: wisdom, labor, and providence in all affairs

MYTHICAL BEASTS

Albatross
- A mythical eagle without a beak or feet, drawn with its wings expanded, tips pointing downward
- Symbolism: a vanquished and
**Mythical Beasts**

Monsters, like mundane beasts, have adorned shields since heraldry began. The symbolism of such creatures is seldom consistent. Each tends to represent the coat of arms possessors rather than a specific concept or ideal. When describing a monster charge, use the beast or bird attributes that best fit the creature's characteristics, keeping with the beast blazon structure.

**Attributes:**
- **Averdant** - covered with green heritage
- **Bladed** - when the stalk of a grain is incurved differently than the ear
- **Blasted** - a leafless tree
- **Blighted** - a leafless tree
- **Enveloped** - referring to an object vegetation has entwined
- **Eradiated** - an uprooted tree
- **Fructed** - bearing fruit
- **Hurst** - a small group of trees
- **Jessant** - springing or shooting up
- **Mooted** - uprooted
- **Slashed** - torn from the stalk or trunk

**Inanimate Objects**

Nearly every object of everyday life has been used as a charge on a coat of arms.

**Abatements**

Since a grant of arms could not be easily revoked, the abatement was devised. This served the same purpose as augmentation, to advertise the actions of the bearer, but abatements were a charge to a coat of arms that symbolized a shameful act or crime. The most widely used abatement is that of treason, usually displayed leading up to and during the accused arrainger's execution.

---

**Symbols and Meanings:**
- **Dragon**: a most valiant defender of treasure
- **Griffin**: a valorous soldier whose magnanimity is such that he will dare all dangers, and even death itself, rather than become captive
- **Harpy**: ferocity under provocation
- **Hydra**: the conquest of a very powerful enemy
- **Mermaid, Merman, Triton**: elegance, grace, and beauty
- **Pegasus**: symbolism of exceeding activity and energy of mind
- **Phoenix**: resurrection and rebirth
- **Sphinx**: omniscience and secrecy
- **Unicorn**: extreme courage
- **Wyvern**: valiant defender of treasure

**HUMAN FIGURE**

- **Arm**: a part (an arm cut off at the elbow; elbowed (whole arm, bent at the elbow; fist upward)
- **Eye**: a laborious and industrious person
- **Foot**
- **Hand**: a spume (showing the palm); aversant or dorse (turned away, showing)
- **Head**: a mark of a baronet
- **Heart**: a red hand on a carton, escutcheon, or quarter
- **Herald**: the head of an adversary, is used to depict a specific event or battle
- **Heraldry**: honor or victory over a specific enemy
- **Heart**: charity, sincerity

---

**Symbols and Meanings:**
- **Defeated Imperialist**: one who has been naimed in war or prevented from fully asserting his power
- **Angel, Cherub, and Seraph**: drawn as winged people and children
- **Centaur**: variants - sagari (carrying a bow and arrow)
- **Chimera**: symbolic emblem in the field
- **Cockatrice**: a terror to all beholders
- **Dartor, Drakon, Dragon, Excalibur, Gorgon, Hydra, Kraken, Lizard, Wyvern, Zephyr**

---

**Attributes:**
- **Averdant** - covered with green heritage
- **Bladed** - when the stalk of a grain is incurved differently than the ear
- **Blasted** - a leafless tree
- **Blighted** - a leafless tree
- **Enveloped** - referring to an object vegetation has entwined
- **Eradiated** - an uprooted tree
- **Fructed** - bearing fruit
- **Hurst** - a small group of trees
- **Jessant** - springing or shooting up
- **Mooted** - uprooted
- **Slashed** - torn from the stalk or trunk

**Inanimate Objects**

Nearly every object of everyday life has been used as a charge on a coat of arms.

**Abatement**

Since a grant of arms could not be easily revoked, the abatement was devised. This served the same purpose as augmentation, to advertise the actions of the bearer, but abatements were a charge to a coat of arms that symbolized a shameful act or crime. The most widely used abatement is that of treason, usually displayed leading up to and during the accused arrainger's execution.
AUGMENTATIONS

When royalty felt it necessary to reward someone’s notable or heroic deeds, they might be granted the right to bear arms. If the recipient was already an armiger, then the college of arms was commissioned to make an augmentation to their existing arms. This practice was notably cheaper than granting a piece of land or monetary reward, and politically safer than granting a royal title or membership to an order of chivalry.

The augmentation often took the form of a charge inserted into existing arms, or a bordure, canton, flaunches, or inescutcheon was added bearing a symbolic charge. Occasionally, an entirely new coat of arms was granted, alluding to the actions of the recipient. In some rarer cases, an escutcheon or quarter-bearing the royal arms was granted.

Abatements, continued

- Cowardice
- Lying to your commander
- Drunkenness
- Lasciviousness, adultery
- Revocation of a challenge, broken promise

Flora

- Fleur-de-lis: First used by King Louis VII (perhaps the name means “Lily of Louis”), the fleur-de-lis has been drawn many different ways over the centuries, but is usually depicted by a lily (or lilies) drawn distinctly different than the fleur-de-lis. Symbolism: most commonly represents France.
- Leaf: Common leaves are elm, hazel, oak, and strawberry, depicted in trilobate, quatrefoil, and chequered arrangements.
- Rose: The English heraldic dog rose is generally used, bearing five leaves, thorns, and seeds. Variants: seeded (seeded as a different tincture than the petals); barbed and seeded proper (green barbs and a gold center); slipped and leaved proper (green stem and leaves). Rose of Lancaster (red rose), Rose of York (white rose), Tudor rose (combined York and Lancaster roses in a double row of petals). Symbolism: the seventh son, the Tudor royal family.
- Thistle: Symbolism: badge of the Scottish sovereign.
- Tree Trunk: Oak, unless otherwise specified. Variants: nubbed (trunk), coniferous (trunk of a different tincture than the branches), acorned (having acorns).
- Symbolism: worthy of veneration.

Objects

- Anchor: Symbolism: great help when needed most; Christian symbol of hope.
- Amulet or Finger Ring: Symbolism: fidelity.
- Antlers: Variants: attires (antlers of a stag); massacre (when attached to a skullcap). Symbolism: strength and fortitude.
- Arrows and Arrowheads: Variants: feathered (when the feathers are a different tincture than the shaft). Symbolism: martial readiness.
- Axe: Symbolism: execution of military duty.
- Beacons or Crescents: Symbolism: one who defends the commonwealth or who gave the signal in time of danger.
Differencing and Cadency

When branches of a family, or two armigers, had identical arms, they needed to make them different from one another to avoid confusion. To achieve this, the heralds made changes to the arms to distinguish the separate parties. Similarly, the sons of the arms bearer, by order of birth, marked their personal arms to distinguish them from their father’s. Cadency, as this differentiation was called, often became the differing used between the families of the sons of an armiger.

The cadency marks for the first nine sons are as follows:
- LABEL [first son] (removed after the father’s death; a label argent was reserved for the Crown Prince)
- CRESCENT [second son]
- MOLET [third son]
- MARTLET [fourth son] (a bird with feathers for feet; see the first illustration in the sidebar on page 57)
- ANNULET [fifth son]
- FLEUR-DE-LIS [sixth son] (see the second illustration in the sidebar on page 59)
- ROSE [seventh son] (see the third illustration in the sidebar on page 59)
- CROSS MOLINE [eighth son]
- DOUBLE QUATREFOIL [ninth son] (not illustrated; eight leaf-shapes arranged in a circle, tips outward)

Marshalling

When arms bearing families intermarried, they usually wanted to retain their arms while also displaying the arms of their spouse. This was done by arranging, or marshalling, the arms on one shield.

In early times, all the elements were taken from both arms and combined into a new shield. Due to confusion and the lack of family identities being carried on, this was replaced by diminution—cutting the two arms in half and joining the man’s dexter portion with the woman’s sinister portion. This caused problems, however, when distinguishing half a bend from half a chevron (among other difficulties). This practice was later changed to impalement, which used the entire arms compressed into one half of the final coat of arms.

The most popular method used today is called quartering, where a shield is initially divided into four quadrants (party per cross) and the complete arms are distributed among the quarters. The quadrants are numbered, from left to right: first and second in the chief, and third and fourth in the base. The man’s arms normally was placed in the first and fourth quarters, with the woman’s in the second and third. Today, marshalling is performed in one of two ways, either through impalement or quartering.
**EXAMPLE**

Imagine your cleric or paladin serves a king in a holy war and distinguishes himself by nearly single-handedly defending a great temple. He is granted nobility and a coat of arms blazoned like this:

- per pale
- to represent his military actions
- argent
- to show his wish for peace
- and sable
- representing his grief for those who lost their lives in the war
- a bend sinister
- symbolizing his defense of the innocent (those taking refuge in the temple)
- counter-changed
- this describes how the pale and the field switch tincture across the party per pale line
- two Catherine wheels or symbolizing his willingness to sacrifice and suffer for his faith
- and two Catherine wheels gules
- to represent what he has already suffered for his faith in battle

A coat of arms can be granted during play (as in the example above) or your character could carry one that has been held by her family for generations. In either case, heraldry is a great way to lend a sense of history and detail to any campaign.

**FURTHER READING (BIBLIOGRAPHY):**

Hooked 10 Ways for Players to Drive the Story

by Robin D. Laws

After playing a few D&D sessions, you’re used to the relationship between the players and the DM. The DM controls the setting and the general direction of the story, you and the other players follow her lead. A couple of times, the campaign looked like it was going to go in a direction you really liked. But instead those plot threads went ignored, and you were a little disappointed. Not enough to complain, mind you—you know that your DM works hard to prepare each week’s game sessions, and you wouldn’t dream of criticizing. You certainly don’t feel ready to take over her responsibilities—at least, not for now—so you’ve got to accept that the story isn’t always going to go the way you really want it to.

Or do you? Chances are, your DM would love some direction from the players as to where to take the story. After all, she wants you all to have a good time or she wouldn’t be putting in the work. She likes it when you take the story in a direction that surprises her. After all, she knows all the secrets, so the only suspense she gets to feel is when the PCs do something unexpected. She probably wishes you’d take a more active role in shaping the story.

Without stepping outside of your role as a player character, you can create characters, or add detail to existing ones, in ways that show the DM where you want the story to go. By creating a backstory, or hook, for your character, you suggest a conflict that can be developed through the course of the story.

The Quest

You have a specific task to fulfill. This might have been assigned to you by a powerful NPC, such as a political leader, a religious figure, a revered high-level adventurer, the head of a guild, or a wealthy patron. You might even have received a divine vision from your god, commanding you to complete the task. In one classic variant of the quest, the hero must perform a test, or a series of tests, to win the hand of a lovely bride, usually a princess. (Since the role of the sexes is less restrictive in most D&D worlds than in the medieval period, you could just as well play a warrior woman seeking the hand of a princely bachelor.) Alternatively, you could play a character hoping to earn status as a nobleman, join an august organization of mighty heroes, or bring attention to a social or political cause. Perhaps the task at hand is a famous one that many previous heroes have unsuccessfully attempted; without taking orders from anyone, you aim to win fame and fortune by doing what no one else could.

The classic quest for this purpose is the attempt to find a legendary, lost item. This justifies your delving into one dungeon after another. Every time you crawl down into an underground complex, encounter vine-shrouded ruins in the wilderness, or storm an enemy keep, you’re thinking that the item you’ve long sought might lie within.

Useful Jargon

“Backstory” and “hook” are jargon terms used by screenwriters and other creators of genre fiction. A character’s backstory is the collection of important events that happened to the character before the story began. In a TV show or movie, we can only learn the character’s backstory through dialogue or flashbacks. In dialogue, a character tells us what happened in the character’s past. In a flashback, we see it happen. In a novel or short story, we can learn the character’s backstory by following the character’s thoughts. (This is called an internal monologue.)

In a roleplaying game, the DM and other players can really learn your backstory only if you talk about it during play. You can write up pages of backstory and hand them out for everyone to read, but how fun is that? How would the other PCs know all that stuff, anyway? If you do like to write extensive character backgrounds, you might want to check back over them now and then to see how much of the material has actually made a difference in play. Make sure you’re not going overboard with the backstory.

The most memorable characters are simple characters. The simple idea that keeps the character doing things and moving each episode of a continuing series forward is called the hook. In a D&D game, every character comes with a pre-existing hook: She wants to improve herself by accumulating experience, most often in a dungeon environment. You can make your PC stand out from the pack by adopting a second hook, such as one of those suggested here or a special one of your own creation.
By describing the nature of the item, you're telling the DM what kind of fabulous treasure you'd like your PC to find when he's done enough adventuring to deserve one. In exchange for some entertaining roleplaying, you get input into the sort of loot you'll eventually acquire.

This is not the only possible quest, though. You might be hunting for a piece of information vital to the survival of your people, searching for a long-lost person, or tracking a legendary monster you intend to slay. Mythology's classic series of quests, the twelve labors of Hercules, required him to slay 4 monsters, capture another 5 fabulous or fearsome beasts, steal 2 magic items from their divine owners, and—just for a change of pace—clean up the leftovers of a stable full of magical rams. If your PC must, like Hercules, complete a number of tasks, he enters dungeons in hopes of finding the relics and monsters he's looking for. He might also go into the dungeon to improve himself enough to begin completing his tasks.

**Nemesis**

Your destiny is inextricably meshed with that of a powerful and resourceful enemy. You search tirelessly for a way to thwart his foe. Maybe you simply want to become powerful enough to challenge him to a one-on-one battle. Perhaps you need to recruit heroes and followers for a major assault on his stronghold. More likely, he fled the scene of his crimes, forcing you to hunt for him. You've joined an adventuring band in hopes of finding clues that will lead you to your foe. You think he might be hiding out in a dungeon, or perhaps you know that he's searching for an item of great evil that he intends to use to conquer a kingdom or flood the world with unholy energies. Maybe your adversary is recruiting monsters and bandits to serve his cause. At any rate, you pick up his trail wherever you can find it. Sometimes you find and clash with your nemesis, who displays an infuriating talent for last-minute escapes. On other occasions, you get captured but manage to escape from your foe's clutches in turn.

Your backstory might include a scene in which the enemy did something terrible to you, or perhaps you bear a sense of responsibility for your foe's actions. Maybe he was once a close friend or relative of your character. If you have an appetite for really thorny complications—and a true devotion to time-honored action-adventure clichés—he could even be your PC's evil twin.

**Getting DM Approval**

When you create your hook and backstory, you'll inevitably find yourself making up details of the DM's world. For example, if you want your character to burn with the ambition to head a college of magic, you might have to invent that college. You probably also want to name and describe the officious wizard who refused to let you sit for the entrance exam. That scene also suggests the operational details of the college—it has entrance exams, for example. Since the creation of institutions, NPCs, and world details are all the province of the DM, you need to get approval for your backstory. You might want to consult her before you start; she might have already done your work for you by inventing a college of magic that would suit you just fine. She might ask you to incorporate certain details that dovetail your backstory with her pre-existing plans for a big plotline, or you might have to abandon particular ideas altogether. Maybe she's decided that magic is not openly encouraged in this corner of her world, and that the college of magic was forcibly disbanded years ago. Your DM always has final say in such matters. Still, she'll probably work with you to alter your original idea to fit her setting.
Keeping it Fresh

The DM’s challenge is to add a new twist to the story each time she brings your character hook into a session. Let’s go back to the evil twin example. The first time he appears, it’s enough to have him show up and wreak havoc, surprising everybody with the fact that you even have an evil twin. The next time, the twin must do something different.

The DM needs a twist. Perhaps the twin’s in trouble, and the PCs find that they have to extricate him from it in order to achieve their own goals. The third time the twin appears, the twist might be an alliance with a villain from another PCs’ hook. The two troublemakers have banded together to harass the party. For this reason, you should keep your backstory as simple and open as possible. The less detail you establish from the start, the more room the DM has to surprise you with new variations on your basic idea.

Your relations with fellow party members might suffer when your enemy takes one of them hostage in order to lure you into a trap. They might come to hate your name as much as you do and share your passionate belief that he ought to be dead, and soon. Or they might just want to get away from him.

Because this hook can so easily cause problems for other PCs, make sure that your fellow players aren’t annoyed by it. If your DM focuses on your character, perceive you and thinks you’re dead.

You know that there must be a countermeasure to the curse out there somewhere. Maybe the creature or magician who cursed you told you so, having hidden the cure in an undisclosed location. Even more likely, you know that the dungeons of the world contain all manner of mysterious things, and that somewhere in one of them there must be a way to reverse the curse. A wish might do the trick if nothing else does.

THE MORE DEAD ADVENTURERS WHO ONCE TROD
THE PATH TO A PARTICULAR SITE, THE BETTER.

and his hook to the exclusion of the others, do what you can to draw them into the story. If you can’t suggest to the DM that you take a break from your storyline to explore theirs, or simply devote a few sessions to simple exploration.

3 The Curse

Your character is the victim of a terrible curse. The curse might be centered on you as an individual: You might have suffered a terrible disfigurement or lost your ability to speak; you might lose control of your actions for prolonged periods; you might even turn into a monster under certain conditions. (You’ll have to work out the details of this last choice with your DM. She’ll make sure that you don’t create a curse that gives you extra cool powers to outdo your fellow players.) Alternatively, the curse might center on your community or loved ones: Perhaps your beloved lies in a wretched sleep, your home village stands frozen in time under a magic dome, or your family can no longer

Don’t Hog the Spotlight

Don’t expect your chosen character hook to come into play every session. Most of the time, you’ll be engaging in the standard adventurer activity for your DM’s campaign—probably dungeon exploration. Your hook comes into play only every so often, as a change of pace that heightens the excitement of the game. Look at the Fox Mulder character on The X-Files TV show; his hook is that he’s looking for his kidnapped sister. (It falls into the category we call “The Mission.”) During most episodes he engages in his standard activity: the investigation of unconnected paranormal events. Only once or twice a season does Mulder’s sister come into the story. Likewise, if you have an evil twin, he’d get boring awfully fast if he popped up in every single adventure. Each of his appearances should come as a surprise to you and the other players. Also, because there is more than one PC, every player should patiently wait for his character hook to come into play. The PCs should all be willing to help their friends follow their motivations. The group might help Orthon the Wise lobby for the chancellor’s post one day, and join together to track down the gnome who killed Athaladriel’s parents the next.

of pure concentration, in which the danger of imminent death focuses the mind entirely on the present, are still too few and far between. Most of the time, you can’t help but brood. You forever revisit the fateful moment that drove you to abandon your home and pursue a life of reckless adventure.

You might have been spurred by your true love. Maybe you endured a shameful condition, such as slavery. Perhaps you were publicly humiliated in some way—beaten by a rival in full view of your community. Perhaps you were betrayed by someone you thought you could trust. A business partner might have cheated you out of your life savings, or the leader you valiantly fought for turned out to be a coward or a villain.

Whatever the cause of your present embittered attitude, you can’t go back and undo the past events. Maybe you took revenge on the one who wronged you, but found it wasn’t enough. Perhaps there was no way to make things right without doing a greater wrong.

Others forget by drowning themselves in ale or wandering. You tried those methods, and they didn’t work. Only the repeated threat of death was enough to allow you to forget, even for an instant, so you became an adventurer.

Still, your old life periodically comes back to haunt you. Sometimes you find yourself in situations that echo the great traumatic event that sent you on the road. You might encounter a woman who bears a striking resemblance to the lover who wronged you, or see that the partner who betrayed you has expanded
his mercantile empire even to the fringes of your homeland. When these things happen, you can't help but be drawn in despite yourself, as you're driven by the vain hope that you can reverse and replay the fateful moment that changed your life forever.

3 To Restore Your Reputation
You have been falsely accused of a shameful act. Everyone at home thinks you're a criminal or coward. You've tried to directly disprove the charges against you, to no avail. Instead, by establishing a reputation as a great hero, you mean to show them how wrong they were about you. Then they'll have no choice but to look at the things they said, and compare them against your grand and glorious deeds. Only then will you be able to hold your head up high among the family members who raised you and the community that gave you a home.

You weigh the danger of any dungeon against its potential for winning you fame and admiration. Little kobold warrens out in the middle of nowhere mean nothing to you. You want to storm the most feared, notorious crypts and strongholds in the realm. The more dead adventurers who once trod the path to a particular site, the better. The bolder your actions, the more quickly you'll erase the untrue taint that is now attached to your name.

3 Lost Love
You fell in love with an adventurer and now seek her in the dungeons and wilderness. Maybe you're adventuring to reach her level of power, so as to be a true match for her when you make your pledge of eternal love. Perhaps she's gone missing, and you hope against hope to find her in a prison cell or magical trap. You might or might not know how she feels about you. Maybe she returned your love, but duty prevented her from staying at your side. It’s also possible that your feelings for her are completely unrequited. But one thing is certain: The only way to find out for sure is to find her again, and do whatever is necessary to be with her forever.

3 Disinherited
You were the heir to a great fortune, vast tract of land, hereditary title, or family business. Maybe you were a sorcerer’s favored apprentice, sure to inherit his secret spellbooks and trove of relics. Perhaps you expected to take over a gang of thieves when the boss you faithfully served met his final reward. Whatever you expected, you didn’t get it. Someone else stepped in to snatch the prize from you. Maybe the father or mentor you thought you’d inherit everything from cast you out. Maybe you deserved to be cut off, and maybe not. Whatever the situation, you now have nothing to show for your years of faithful waiting.

You became an adventurer because you saw no other way to build a substitute for the thing you expected to receive. You wanted the life mapped out for you, and you are willing to risk death or injury to get it. You’ll find enough treasure to eclipse your hereditary fortune, buy an estate twice as big as the one you expected, or set up a firm to rival the family enterprise, driving it into the ground. You’ll discover twice as many obscure spells as your former master had in his spellbook or equip yourself with enough magic weapons to fight off your old gang singlehandedly.

Even if you do recreate the thing you lost, you might then find that it’s easier to build an empire than to keep it. At least you’ll have become the man you were always meant to be.

3 Ambition
You want to rule over others. This is not necessarily an ignoble ambition; you might become a good king who brings light to a kingdom that suffers from dark oppression. You might enact laws that usher in a new standard for justice and freedom. You could save your people from the enemies that threaten them. You could erect temples to the gods of virtue, found universities to serve as beacons of knowledge, and foster trade between nations, lifting your people from miserable poverty.

First you’ll have to prove yourself. You’ll need money to finance your regime and a record of great deeds to compensate for your rustic background. Before you can command many, you must learn to lead a few. You’ll go adventuring in search of loot, a legend, and a ragtag band of followers you can build into the kernel of an army.

This character hook can keep you going for years of adventure before the DM must deal with your political ambitions. It forms a great basis for high-level play. Other PCs, as members of your inner circle, will find plenty to do while you build your power base. Still, as they work to make you king, they’ll have time to pursue the character hooks that drive them.

LOOK AT THE FOX MULDER CHARACTER ON THE X-FILES TV SHOW: HIS HOOK IS THAT HE'S LOOKING FOR HIS KIDNAPPED SISTER.

Creating a Hook in Mid-Game
You don't have to start out with a character hook. Sometimes you'll have more fun if you let one develop during play. The advantage of a hook developed during play is that the DM doesn't have to work to fit your idea into hers. Take an idea she introduces and build on it.

For example, your PC might become obsessed with researching the past of an interesting magic item he discovers in a dungeon. He might talk incessantly about his find, making it the thing most people associate with him. His desire to find out more about the item gives him a motivation that your DM can build adventures around. Perhaps, in the course of his research, he finds out that a great hero once owned the item. He could even rename himself after the hero. By doing this, you're saying to your DM that you want adventures that revolve around your magic item. Consequently, your DM might have evildoers steal your item, motivating a quest to get it back. Or maybe the legendary hero after whom you’ve named yourself comes back and isn’t flattered by your adoption of his name....
The Definitive D&D Soundtrack
by Mike Selinker

One by one, the tremulous adventurers hazard the nitty bridge of bones to the lair of Azathor the Lichlord. Fearing eldritch blasted of necromantic magic, the party brandishes steel and sorcery as they approach the door on the other side. Crashing through, they awaken a legion of vampires whose fangs glint with blood. And at this moment of terror, over the radio comes:

"If you wanna be my lover,
You gotta get with my friends...."

Wait, wait. You can't have that. This is DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, not Swords & Spice Girls! If you want music in the background for your game, you need to put some effort into it. The right music makes the mood of your game, but the wrong music breaks it.

This article covers a wide range of music that can enliven your D&D game. While some of it will be familiar, you might need to scour the record stores to find the others. All of it can give your roleplaying session that added edge.

First, trim your CD collection down to the essentials. For D&D mood-setting, you can remove all swing, pre-60s rock 'n roll, Christmas, country and western, R&B, reggae, and bubblegum pop albums. Not that those are bad albums, mind you, but D&D doesn't handle those sounds too well. (Of course, this is only my opinion, and like all opinions, it should be weighed against your own before being followed. If you want Lawrence Welk's Pick-A-Polka filtering through your game session, have at it.)

The basics of a D&D soundtrack should come from five categories of music: rock, Celtic melodies, instruments, classical, and the all-important soundtrack albums.

Special thanks to:

Rock Music

Starting in the late '60s, rock rediscovered the sounds of medieval days and bent them to its will. The combination works well to back up any D&D game.

The first and best rock albums to capture a medieval theme came from Led Zeppelin. When Robert Plant sings of "the darkness depths of Mordor" or Jimmy Page dives into the hypnotic guitar signature of "Kashmir," your scene is set. The middle two discs of the remastered Led Zeppelin box set are sure bets, as is any album from III to Houses of the Holy.

Once down this road, you'll want to sample Emerson, Lake, and Palmer, especially their takes on classical tunes (but you're better off with the originals, as we'll discuss later). Queen produced some good music for a D&D game; many players swear by the Highlander and Flash Gordon soundtracks, for example. Jethro Tull is also good if you don't mind the background music being a bit trippy. Elio for The Alan Parsons Project.

Stevie Nicks isn't called the White Witch for nothing. Her solo albums such as Bella Donna and Enchanted, as well as certain Fleetwood Mac songs like "Rhiannon," make for a good, if possibly
too familiar, backdrop for magical scenarios.

When things get violent, very little beats carefully selected heavy metal. Most heavy metal devolves into salacious subject matter, and that's probably not what you're looking for in your game, but Queensryche's 'Empire' and Operation Mindcrime stick to the good stuff: powerful rock and roll with themes of violence and chaos—you know, like your game.

Blue Oyster Cult hits some of the fantasy genre high notes, especially on the Michael Moorcock-penned "Black Blade" (based on Moorcock's Elric of Melnibone series). Ozzy Osbourne, both with Black Sabbath and the Blizzard of Ozz, explored some fairly dark subject matter in songs like "Paranoid" and "Iron Man." In the same vein, you might also play some Judas Priest or Alice Cooper.

I'm more likely to play some thunderous alternative rock, though. White Zombie, Korn, Rage Against the Machine, Ministry, and Limp Bizkit all have the straight-ahead power of heavy metal, but with more of a razor edge. There's little in their lyrics that contributes to the D&D mood, but chances are you can't understand the lyrics anyway.

On the other hand, you might want more of a sense of loss and desperation in your D&D music. In that case, Nine Inch Nails' pounding Pretty Hate Machine might be a good choice. Also excellent for creepy adventures is The Cure's Disintegration, featuring disturbing lyrics like "On candy-striped legs, the spider-man comes ..." If that mood thrills you, you can go deeper into Goth and dark wave with Switchblade Symphony, the Cocteau Twins, Faith and the Muse, and Lycia. All of these give your game a morbid theme of uncertainty.

It's not perfect for all groups, but I'm partial to the occasional rap album to back up a particularly high-power game. The Wu-Tang Clan's Wu-Tang Forever has some strong language throughout, but the album powers ahead and gets your blood pumping. Besides, the band members turn into swarms of bees in one video, and who wouldn't want that?

Lastly, I must recommend the goofy thrash of GWAR, just about the best band of roleplaying game fanatics there is. GWAR dresses in oversized armor that even 3rd Edition fighters couldn't wear, fires multihued liquids out among their fans, and sings about mayhem, mayhem, and more mayhem. If there ever was a band that came from D&D, it's GWAR.

**Celtic Melodies**

Shifting gears entirely, I find that some of the best music for a fantasy game evokes the magical environments in which the game takes place. For that, you can do better than folk-rock bands and ethereal voice singers, many influenced by Celtic music.

My favorite such music is that of Fairport Convention, a legendary English folk-rock group featuring guitar virtuoso Richard Thompson. Their jangly, rocking versions of centuries-old tunes like "Matty Groves" and "Reynardine" make Memory of Trees has lyrics like "I walk the maze of moments/but everywhere I turn to/begins a new beginning/but cannot find a finish"—perfect for when your characters are trapped in a labyrinthine dungeon. Along these lines, pick up Clannad's Anam, Capercaille's Beautiful Wasteland, and the Celtic Moons series.

But let's say you've set your game in a little more rough and tumble environment than Enya might call for. Then you need The Pogues. Singer Shane McGowan's raspy voice contrasts with singers Caitlin O'Riordan and Kirsty McColl on now-classic albums Red Roses for Me and If I Should Fall From Grace With God. Play the latter album's track "Turkish Song of the Damned" if you

---

**The first and best rock albums to capture a medieval theme came from Led Zeppelin.**

---

want to terrify your players with a fate worse than death.

To conjure a medieval marketplace, you'll want just a singer or duo performing songs of the era. My favorite such duo is Molly & The Tinker. You'll have trouble finding their albums, but it's worth the effort. On the one hand you get rambunctious musicians like "Bosun's Bouncing Boy," and on the other you get heartfelt melodies like "Go Lassie Go." If you can't find their albums, don't fret, because there are as many such singers as there are Renaissance fairs.

Then, of course, there's the music from the Riverdance show. It's good Irish tinged music, but you might not want your players tapping their feet that much ...

**Instrumentals**

You might find that the best rock music to weave into your game is instrumental. A few albums keep the mood alive without the distracting vocals.

Acoustic guitar instrumentals à la Andres Segovia are particularly good for evoking medieval life. For electric guitars, I'm partial to the stylings of Joe Satriani. Hard-driving chase sequences can easily be filled out by his sci-fi influenced rock.
Nearly any Tangerine Dream album is also good for this purpose. So ambient they’re almost subliminal, Tangerine Dream frequently explores fantasy themes on albums like Le Parc and Hyperborea. On Gobin’s Club, for example, there are songs with titles like “Elf June and the Midnight Patrol” and “Sad Merin’s Sunday.”

Enigma combines pseudo-Gregorian chanting with synthesizer music to create an airy soundtrack perfect for elf stronghold and cloud giant kingdoms. The album MCMXC A.D. gives your players a chance to journey amid “The Rivers of Belief” — assuming they don’t mind being led there by a songwriter named Curly M.C.

A surprising source for great background instrumentals is video and computer games.

In a woodland or jungle setting, playing the Deep Forest albums will both get your players in the mood and put them on edge. Yes, it’s relaxing, but the message that there are other denizens in the green will not be lost on the interlopers.

Composer Philip Glass makes music that is anything but relaxing, but somehow tempo-challenged tone poems like “Koyaanisqatsi” make for haunting D&D scores. For that matter, you might wish to bypass music entirely and seek out those old K-Tel albums of nothing but scary sounds when you run your next haunted house adventure.

Even better is the industrial/dark ambient movement, especially records by Delerium. Their early albums such as Morpheus are good for creating an otherworldly mood, though the more lyrical albums like Karma also hold up. If this works for you, try Frontline Assembly, Synaesthesia, and KMFDM.

Along the same line, the “band” Eisstürzende Nibelungen’s albums make a perfect soundtrack if your PGs enter a dwarven mine or artificer’s lab. That’s because Nibelungen pounds on various metal implements with various other metal implements to make a clanging cacophony. Their work is oddly melodic. (A less headache-inspiring sound for such settings might be the Art of Noise’s early maxi-singles, such as “Close to the Exit.”)

A surprising source for great background instrumentals is video and computer games. Set up Diablo on your PlayStation and pause it. The creepy background track will play over and over, perfect for putting your players in the mindset that they’re in the dungeon. (Obviously, this is especially good when you play the D&D/Diablo crossover adventures, such as Diablo II: The Awakening.) Other electronic games with great background music for D&D are Warcraft, Age of Empires, and not surprisingly, Baldur’s Gate.

When you want to focus on knights and tournaments, little compares to Carl Orff’s Carmina Burana (otherwise known as the cool music from Excalibur). Lots of grand choruses, martial drums, and chanting in foreign languages makes for a stately backdrop to your game.

Similarly, Austrian composer Franz von Suppé gives the perfect call to war in his “Light Cavalry March.” Aaron Copland’s “Fanfare for the Common Man” can serve a similar purpose, but it is probably too familiar to work in most campaigns.

If you’ve ever wondered where the Klingons get their soundtrack, you should put on The Planets by Gustav Holst. The “Mars, the Bringer of War” portion works especially well to evoke the perils and triumphs of combat and exploration. Don’t turn the CD off there, though, because the “Uranus, the Magician” section is both sprightly and dark enough to conjure images of a mage trying with dangerous forces.

When your game enters a quieter phase, both Igor Stravinsky’s The Rite of Spring and Antonio Vivaldi’s The Four Seasons tell your players that everything is all right—at first. Both get a lot more chaotic, which is often how adventures go: first the calm, then the storm.

Gregorian chants are not everyone’s cup of gruel, but if you set an adventure in a monastery or temple, you should play the Benedictine Monks of Santo de Silos’ Chant in the background. Chant evokes feelings of reverence in your players, if nothing else.

For an adventure involving genies and magic, try Scheherazade, a symphonic suite by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Based on the Arabian Nights story of the harem girl who regales her sultan with tales so that he spares her life, the bedouin-influenced Scheherazade dances around many moods, and each is good to use for an encounter.

Finally, there’s Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Nearly anything by Mozart can supplement a D&D game, but the most purposeful is his Requiem. If you ever want to convince your players that things are bleaker than they think they are, this is the music for you.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Pretty much any classical music—Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, you name it—makes for good subliminal noise for a D&D game. That’s why they call it classical.

The King Kong of all D&D campaign scores is Richard Wagner’s Ring of the Nibelung, the most bombastic music ever composed. When “Flight of the Valkyries” plays, everyone knows it’s combat time. You can hear the dwarves, giants, barbarians, and gods clash with every note. Besides, at four full dramas, it’s about the only soundtrack that could last for an all-night session of Against the Giants. Just don’t be surprised if your players start singing “Kill k’wabbit, kill k’wabbit...” (Don’t stop with Ring of the Nibelung, though; Tristan and Isolde and Faust, among others, are operas that are just as appropriate for the gaming table.)

Close behind Wagner for D&D relevance is Modest Moussorgsky’s “Night on Bald Mountain.” As in the climactic demon-raising in Fantasia, “Night on Bald Mountain” is perfect for building tension around horrors from the outer planes. Play this, and the characters won’t summon anything cavalierly. Quite often, this piece is coupled with his Pictures at an Exhibition, which evokes a dank, old castle and wars of state in Russia at the time of Baba Yaga.

SOUNDTRACKS

This is the motherlode. TV and movie soundtracks are perfect for D&D scores, as they often have a beginning, middle, and an end. I’d avoid soundtracks with lots of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Recommended Work</th>
<th>Battle</th>
<th>Dungeon</th>
<th>Sorcery</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Laboratory</th>
<th>Temple</th>
<th>Wilderness</th>
<th>Hell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC/DC</td>
<td>Highway to Hell, Back in Black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Empires</td>
<td>Game sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Parsons Project</td>
<td>Eye in the Sky, Turn of a Friendly Card</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alien</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apollo 13</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arlington Road</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army of Darkness</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art of Noise</td>
<td>Who's Afraid of? (The Art of Noise)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baldur's Gate</td>
<td>Game sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batman</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benedictine Monks of Santo de Silos</td>
<td>Chant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birdy</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Sabbath</td>
<td>Paranoid, Black Sabbath</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blade Runner</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Oyster Cult</td>
<td>Species, Agents of Fortune</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bram Stoker's Dracula</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braveheart</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capercaille</td>
<td>Beautiful Wasteland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celtic Moods</td>
<td>Celtic Moods I &amp; II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chieftains</td>
<td>Best of the Chieftains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clemrod</td>
<td>Anam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocteau Twins</td>
<td>Treasure, The CD Single Box Set</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conan the Barbarian</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper, Alice</td>
<td>Love It to Death, Welcome to my Nightmare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copland, Aaron</td>
<td>&quot;Fanfare for the Common Man&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimson Tide</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Crow</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Method</td>
<td>Vegas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cure</td>
<td>Disintegration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darkman</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Forest</td>
<td>Deep Forest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deletium</td>
<td>Karma, Morphheus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diablo</td>
<td>Game sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Einstürzende Neubauern</td>
<td>Five on the Open-Ended Richter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerson, Lake, and Palmer</td>
<td>Brain-Salad Surgery, Pictures at an Exhibition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enigma</td>
<td>McMHC A.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enya</td>
<td>The Memory of Trees, Shepherd Moons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Exorcist</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferris Convention</td>
<td>Legs and Lief, Unhallowbricking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith and the Muse</td>
<td>Elyria, Annwyr Baneath the Waves</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasia</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleetwood Mac</td>
<td>Rumours, Task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Line Assembly</td>
<td>Total Terror</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghost in the Shell</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladiator</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass, Philip</td>
<td>Kyaamisqatsi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glory</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWAR</td>
<td>Scoundrels of the Universe, We Kill Everything</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamlet</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Metal</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiatus, Gustav</td>
<td>The Planets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hunt for Red October</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview with the Vampire</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jethro Tull</td>
<td>Aqualung, Thick as a Brick, Songs from the Wood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judas Priest</td>
<td>Screaming for Vengeance, Hell Bent for Leather</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurassic Park</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KMFDM</td>
<td>Virus, Money</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korn</td>
<td>Follow the Leader, Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krull</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labyrinth</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Led Zeppelin</td>
<td>Houses of the Holy, III, Physical Graffiti</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legend</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lump Bucket</td>
<td>Significant Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maybe the best D&D music ever comes from Basil Poledouris's soundtrack for Conan the Barbarian.

A sampler of D&D-related classical music can be found on the Fantasia soundtrack. Our association of Paul Dukas's "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" with animated broomsticks is so deeply rooted that playing the soundtrack might get the wizards in your group casting spells left and right. From the centaurs in Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony" to the aforementioned demon of "Night on Bald Mountain," this soundtrack evokes the film's images that are burned into your players' brains.

When you want to convince your players that things just aren't right, put on the Aliens soundtrack, which is great music for a dungeoncrawling. Along with Aliens, many other James Horner soundtracks make solid adventure music. Braveheart, Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan, The Mask of Zorro, Willow, Patriot Games, Something Wicked This Way Comes, Sneakers, Glory, The Rocketeer, and even Titanic (minus the grating Celine Dion song) work well here.

When composer and Oingo Boingo leader Danny Elfman isn't being kooky, he can create a very involving soundtrack. His instrumental scores for Batman, Darkman, and especially Army of Darkness all create moods of being both playful and frightening.

Don't use Chariots of Fire unless you want lots of running in your game, but another Vangelis soundtrack is great for your game. Like the original film, Vangelis' Blade Runner has overdone narration, but it's still both beautiful and creepy.

Speaking of creepy, maybe no soundtrack is more unsettling than Angelo Badalamenti's score for the TV show Twin Peaks. Even though it sounds light and airy, almost every minor chord suggests that something is very, very wrong.

Similarly, there's an eerie yet soothing sensibility to Joe Hisaishi's soundtracks for various anime films such as Princess Mononoke, Nausicaä, Porco Rosso, and My Neighbor Totoro. The D&D player can't relate to that.


More Than Just Background

Of course, you can always do more than just play albums as background music. Here are some ideas on integrating CDs into your game:

1. You can play cuts off a Loreena McKennitt album to simulate an NPC bard's bewitching singing. Any player who goes for the lyric sheet should automatically blow his PC's saving throw.

2. Singing monsters like harpies and sirens can be conjured by turning on Capercaillie.

3. A noble with a rod of splendor might resound with Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man" whenever he enters a room.

4. An album of sea chanteys can be played to warn seaborne PCs that a pirate ship is approaching. Start with the volume very low, and gradually adjust it upward till the pirates swashbuckle over and raid the PCs' ship.

5. Even tuneless monsters could sing while they fight. Imagine how much scarier a troop of hill giants might be if they sang GWAR tunes as they hurled boulders at the heroes.

If you allow it, your players can bring their own music to the gaming table. I'd certainly permit them to do so—at least until one decided that his character's theme song was the Spice Girls' "Wannabe."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Recommended Work</th>
<th>Battle</th>
<th>Dungeon</th>
<th>Sorcery</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Laboratory</th>
<th>Temple</th>
<th>Wilderness</th>
<th>Hell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lycia</td>
<td>Burning Circle and Then Dust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mask of Zorro</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Matrix</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKennitt, Loreena</td>
<td>The Book of Secrets, Parallel Dreams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Midsummer Night's Dream</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry</td>
<td>The Mind is a Terrible Thing to Taste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission: Impossible</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly Dr the Tinker</td>
<td>Stormin' the Castle, Live From Callahan's</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortal Kombat</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moussorgsky,</td>
<td>&quot;Night on Bald Mountain&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modest</td>
<td>Pictures at an Exhibition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus</td>
<td>Requiem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Neighbor Totoro</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausicaa</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Christy Minstrels</td>
<td>Very Best of, Definitive New Christy Minstrels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicks, Stevie</td>
<td>Bella Donna, Enchanted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine Inch Nails</td>
<td>Pretty Hate Machine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orff, Carl</td>
<td>Carmina Burana (Excalibur soundtrack)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osborne, Ozzy</td>
<td>Blizzard of Ozz, Diary of a Madman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriot Games</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pri</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink Floyd</td>
<td>Dark Side of the Moon, The Wall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pogues</td>
<td>If I Should Fall From Grace With God</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porco Rosso</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Mononoke</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen</td>
<td>Highlander, Flash Gordon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen'sryche</td>
<td>Empire, Operation Mindcrime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rage Against the Machine</td>
<td>Evil Empire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravel, Maurice</td>
<td>Boléro, Daphnis and Chloe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Replacement</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killers</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolai</td>
<td>Scheherazade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverdance</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rock</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rocketeer</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run Lola Run</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Saëns, Camille</td>
<td>Danse Macabre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanzio, Joe</td>
<td>Surfing with the Alien</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segovia, Andrés</td>
<td>Legendary Segovia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silly Wizard</td>
<td>Kiss the Tears Away</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sneakers</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something Wicked This Way Comes</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star Trek</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star Trek II</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star Wars</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stargate</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stravinsky, Igor</td>
<td>The Rite of Spring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switchblade Symphony</td>
<td>Bread and Jam for Frances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synaesthesia</td>
<td>Desideratum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangerine Dream</td>
<td>Dream Sequence, Rubycon, Green Desert</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminator 2: Judgment Day</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thief</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 13th Warrior</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titanic</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin Peaks</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Usual Suspects</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivaldi, Antonio</td>
<td>The Four Seasons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Von Suppe, Franz</td>
<td>&quot;Light Cavalry March&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagner, Richard</td>
<td>Ring Cycle, Tristan and Isolde, Faust, Lohengrin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warcraft</td>
<td>Game sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Zombie</td>
<td>Astrocreep 2000, La Sexorcisto</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu-Tang Clan</td>
<td>Wu-Tang Forever</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Relayer, Fragile, Close to the Edge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To catch the most elusive magic, Reinaldo must choose between two worlds.

SONGBIRDS

BY KRISTINE KATHRYN RUSCH

ILLUSTRATED BY R. WARD SHIPMAN

THE RAIN WAS HARD AND COLD, THE VILLAGE A WELCOME SIGHT. REINALDO HAD BEEN riding for days without seeing any signs of civilization, and he had thought that good. If he were to find the Songbirds, he believed he would find them in this wilderness at the very edge of the kingdom.

But even the best hunter welcomed a respite after days of unrelenting rain. The village was as dismal as the weather: small hovels with little more than a door, the occasional house, and finally, at the end of town, an inn that looked like it had seen better days.

At least it had a stable. He dismounted and looked for a stablehand. Seeing none, he led Cara to the only stall.

He would have tended her himself even if there had been a stablehand. She was the only pure white horse in the kingdom. He never let anyone else touch her—only his brushstroke cleaned her coat, only his hand fed her, and he cherished the small nuzzle she would give his shoulder, or her soft sighs of contentment. They were his best reward, and his only real joy.

His life was bleak—had been since he was a boy—but he knew no way of improving it. He already lived in the palace, and he was the best in his field. He wasn’t sure he had the capacity for love. Even if he did, he wasn’t sure it would improve his life. The kingdom was a gloomy place, but he’d heard of none better.

He’d seen better only in his dreams—dreams he could barely remember.

The hay in the stalls was fresh. There was good food, several buckets of rainwater, and surprisingly, a few apples. He gave Cara one—a thank-you for carrying him so far—and then he stroked her velvet nose.

"If the stablehand shows up and gives you trouble," he said, "call for me. You know I’ll hear you."

She whickered and nudged him, as if urging him to go inside the inn and take care of himself.

He hated to leave her, but he really wanted a warm meal and a soft bed. If there was no room, he’d sleep in the hay. Cara wouldn’t like it; she wanted privacy at night. But he would rest easier, knowing she was all right.

She nudged him a second time, and he smiled. "All right, I’ll go. Sleep well."

But she wasn’t looking at him any longer. Her head was bowed, and she was drinking from one of the buckets he’d set near her. When he walked back into the rain, it seemed as if she had forgotten all about him.
THE INN HAD ONE ROOM LEFT, so small that to call it a closet would be to give it dignity. He'd left it almost immediately and headed into the tavern. Locals clustered around the wooden tables, drinking the watered-down ale.

He picked a table in the back corner, close enough to the fire to get warm, but far enough away that no one would notice him. One of his best skills was his ability to disappear into his surroundings, to make those around him comfortable with his quiet.

"We have mutton tonight," the serving wench said. She had noticed him more quickly than he liked. He looked up at her with surprise. He hadn't even heard her approach.

She was young and thin, barely big enough to carry trays.

"Mutton is fine," he said.

She nodded and went away. He leaned back in his chair, legs stretched out before him, ankles crossed. His dark pants, tucked into his scuffed boots, were wet and mud-covered. Only his shirt remained dry, except on the shoulders, where his long black hair dripped.

The tavern was clearly where the innkeeper made his money. Only a handful of the locals were eating, and once his food came he knew why. The mutton was old and gray, leaving a pool of grease in the broth, and the bread had mold on the corners.

Because he hadn't eaten in two days, he picked off the mold and chowed down the bread, but the mutton wasn't worth his time. He sent it back with a request for cheese and some more bread.

It took the serving wench only a few moments to bring him a new plate. The food on this one looked appetizing. The bread was still warm. The cheese was a perfect white, soft to the touch. Obviously, the innkeeper here had two kinds of food: the cheap horrible stuff for travelers, and the good food for regulars. By complaining, Reynaldo had put himself in a new category.

He thanked the girl and sighed as she walked away. He wished she were plump and world-wise. He would have loved someone warm in his bed tonight. The road had given him a chill. He hadn't expected to have been traveling for so long.

Prince Tadeo had his heart set on a Songbird for the coronation. He had seen Reynaldo—and no one else—after it. Reynaldo was the best magic hunter in the kingdom, and this trip was meant as an honor—or perhaps a chance at humiliation.

He knew that the other magic hunters had sneaked away surreptitiously, hoping to beat him at the profession he had invented. But they would not. In their entire careers, they found only the easy, obvious creatures. It took Reynaldo's patience, his determination, and his skill in bringing the truly elusive ones out of hiding.

That, and his ability to find the remote places where the creatures lived in the first place. He had been the only one of Tadeo's hunters to capture creatures like unicorns and sea witches. His triumphs gave him a room in the palace, a favored position at Tadeo's table, and a bit of gold, but not enough to last him through the long dry spells between Tadeo's whim.

Songbirds were proving the most elusive of the magic that Reynaldo had ever sought. Reynaldo had hoped that Tadeo wouldn't learn of them, but he did a year ago when a storyteller visited court. The storyteller told an ancient tale about the Songbirds and the days when their magic filled the kingdom. Then they had served the king and, more than once, saved his crown.

Things had changed in the centuries since. For reasons the storyteller did not explain, the Songbirds rebelled. Most were slaughtered, and the remainder, it was said, went into hiding.

No one had seen a Songbird in nearly a thousand years.

Reynaldo had tried to tell Tadeo that, but of course the Prince didn't listen. Tadeo had been a magic collector since childhood, and to get a magical creature thought extinct only increased the allure. Tadeo thought it perfect for his coronation, half a year away. He wanted to reveal the greatest magic of all on that day.

Reynaldo sighed and ate the thick warm bread. It had a freshness that was foreign to his tongue. Not even the bread at the palace was this good. His second mug of ale was not diluted this time, and the cheese was the best he had ever tasted.

He was nearly done eating when the serving wench climbed on a stool in front of the fireplace. Conversation ceased, and Reynaldo pushed back his chair. The girl seemed too young to be the entertainment, but she wrapped her hands around her knees as if she were accustomed to sitting in front of a crowd. She surveyed everyone before her gaze met his. She had very old eyes.

She leaned her head back and began to sing without accompaniment. The husk in the room grew. Her voice had a richness and depth that he had never heard in a human voice before. It had overtones, undertones, and harmonics all its own.

Her first song had no words, and neither did her second. By the third, he no longer listened for words, only for tonalities and phrasing. The sound of her voice sent shivers through him. The place seemed brighter, the fire warmer, and the girl prettier.

He found himself wondering if he'd had too much to drink and knowing he hadn't. He was listening to a Songbird.

He had completed his quest.

REYNALDO KNEW BETTER than to capture her in public. He had some research to do. He needed to find out if the girl's family were all Songbirds and if the rest of the village knew it. The girl, young as she was, might not be the best choice for Tadeo's collection. An older Songbird might serve better and not be as hard to hold.

Magic, Reynaldo knew, was always hard to hold, especially for those who had none. He had captured magic countless times using only his intelligence and his strength. Underestimating magic was always the worst thing a hunter could do.

Reynaldo listened until the girl finished her miraculous performance. The local crowd applauded, then went back to their ale as if the girl had done nothing unusual. He allowed himself to be shocked and pleased, made a point of complimenting her on the beauty of her voice, and got a blush in return as well as a free mug of ale. But he asked no questions, sought no answers, just paid his table with one of his last coins and took the stairs to his tiny room.

There he collapsed on the bed, determined to have a plan by morning.
REYNALDO DREAMED OF COLORS so bright that they hurt his eyes, scents so pure that they cleared his head, and fabrics so soft that they soothed his skin. He'd had dreams like this before. He believed they were moments when he actually touched magic, when he was allowed to enter a world where life was more vivid, each sensation more profound than the one before. He knew if he stayed here long, he would never want to leave. But he also knew that he could not stay.

The colors faded first, then the scents, and finally the softness. He was cold and damp, and the bed smelled of swamp water. He stirred, realized that his face was wet, and opened his eyes.

He was lying face-down in a rut on a muddy road. It was raining so hard that the rut was filling with water. If he'd dreamed much longer, he would have drowned.

Reynaldo sat up and wiped the mud from his face. He was wearing his cloak and boots, even though he had taken them off for bed. The cloak had been stolen from a water elf, and kept his torso dry, but his pants and boots were wet as they had been the night before.

He was in a clearing, and the road continued north into a forest of trees. The same forest he had seen the night before at the edge of the village.

But the village itself was gone. There were no hovels, no small houses, no inn. And no stable.

Cara. He felt his breath catch. He scanned the area, looking for her, hoping she was grazing beneath a tree. He should have seen her white coat even if she were miles away, but he saw nothing except the dark trees, mud, and the greenish gray grass.

She was gone. They had taken her, his prize possession, his heart, and his companion.

It was almost as an afterthought that he parted his cloak, feeling for his purse, humble as it was, and couldn't find that either.

The great magic hunter had been robbed by his quarry. They had known from the beginning who he was and what he wanted, and they had toyed with him all night. Then they had left him here, alone, to die.

Although that wasn't accurate. He had clearly been at their mercy. They let him live as a warning, perhaps to Tadeo, or perhaps to himself.

But they had taken Cara, and no one did that. He had to find her. He couldn't imagine being without her.

Rain splattered around him. The puddle grew deeper, the mud thicker. He got up and shook his hair free of his cloak, then studied the area, looking for signs of magic.

The clearing was an unnatural one, with paths that branched off the road and then stopped. Large patches of dead grass, and even larger patches of mud covered the ground. He saw bits of hay and horse manure where the stable had recently stood.

The village had been here, just as the inn had been here, just as the stable had been here. But it was all gone now.

The wind came up, cold and biting, pushing Reynaldo back toward the palace. He stood his ground.

In the past, he had eaten fairy food and had awakened hungry. He was not hungry now. He had slept the sleep of the enchanted and awakened exhausted. He was not exhausted now.

Obviously his meal and dreams had been as real as they had always been. During his sleep, the Songbirds had taken their village and left him behind.

If Reynaldo went back to the palace for help, he would have to admit his failure. His failure would please Tadeo almost as much as success. Tadeo had been giving Reynaldo tougher and tougher assignments, hoping for this day when his great magic hunter would falter.

But Tadeo did not realize that success was all Reynaldo had. No family, no real friends, no wealth, and no home of his own. Since Reynaldo had been forced into this cursed life by his even more accursed talent, he had lost everything except himself.

Now he faced losing even that.

He would not ride back to Tadeo in shame. He would retrieve his horse, at the very least. At the very best, he would clip the wings of a Songbird and carry it home to its own large, beautiful, gilded cage.

SIX DAYS OF TRACKING on foot. It rained the entire time, although the rain varied from a downpour to a drippy mist. The forest seemed empty of life except for Reynaldo, downed branches, and fallen leaves. He managed to scrounge berries, roots, and bark. That and rainwater kept him sated. But he never had a fire, and his feet were never dry.

The rain, he knew, was not natural. Nor was the stillness of the forest. He had to strain to hear his own feet moving through the mud.

And as he walked, he reviewed what the stories had told him about Songbirds.

Songbirds looked human but lacked all human kindness, all human warmth. Their magic lived in their songs. As long as a Songbird sang the same piece—without starting over—it could create a world with that music. Or it could persuade, captivate, or change a long-held opinion. Some even said that a Songbird's song could make a heartless man fall in love.

On the seventh day Reynaldo found the village beside a raging river. The village looked the same as before. The houses were in the same order, and the road went through the center with paths coming off to the sides. The inn was at the north end, and the stable was beside it.

He knew that he had found the place because they wanted him to. If they could move the village, they could have kept it hidden from him forever. They finally wanted to see him—for reasons he was sure he would soon discover.

Reynaldo went directly to the stable and pulled open the wooden doors. Lamps hung from pegs on the wall, shedding a soft light on the straw-covered floor. Cara was in the last stall. She whickered when she saw Reynaldo, and his heart leapt. He had missed her; part of him had thought he would never see her again.

He stepped inside, for the first time in a week, water did not hit him in the face. He was cold and numb, unable to absorb the heat.

He started toward Cara when a melodious voice said, "Stop." Reynaldo sighed. He had known that it wouldn't be this easy.

"Give me my horse and my money," he said, "and I will leave you in peace."

"Of course you will," the voice mocked him. "Until you remember your promise to clip our wings."

The phrase was not metaphorical. Songbirds had wings, so the stories said, invisible wings that, if clipped properly, would forever trap them in the hand that maimed them.
"You seem to know a lot about me," Reynaldo was still watching Cara. The horse was not nervous around the Songbird. Magical creatures usually made Cara skittish.

"Dreams reveal much about the dreamer." So they had peered into his sleep. The Songbirds had a greater magic than he had originally thought.

But dreams do not reveal all," Reynaldo said. "I did not promise Tadeo that I would clip your wings. I promised him a Songbird for his coronation."

"For his collection.

Slowly Reynaldo turned, hands out, showing that he meant no harm. Tadeo always wants magic for his collection. What he does with the magic I bring back is his choice. I was instructed to bring back a Songbird for the coronation, nothing else."

He could not see the Songbird, but there were shadows near the door that hadn't been there before.

"You tell pretty lies," the Songbird said. "Is that how you capture your prey?"

"No."

"Pity. It would seem the logical thing."

The Songbird stepped out of the shadows. It was the girl, the one who had waited on him, who had sung to him. Only she was not a girl. That had been an illusion. She was a small woman whose hair, skin, and eyes were brown. She wore a brown cape over brown clothing. The only spots of color on her were her red lips and rosy cheeks. She held herself like a human woman would. He had thought Songbirds would move differently to protect their invisible wings.

"My horse," he said softly, "and my money. Then I will leave."

She smiled. "You're exhausted and weak. You haven't eaten properly in a week. We can give you food and shelter."

"Like you did the last time?" he said. "I nearly drowned."

"The food was real enough, and the bed, too. You spent half the night in it. You let me know what you were."

"It took you long enough to figure that out."

I knew the moment you sat on that stool."

"And you did nothing. That's hard to believe." She crossed her arms. Her cloak bunched slightly, unnaturally, in the back.

"You watched me that first time, peered into my dreams when I slept in the forest; then let me find you." He glanced at Cara. She seemed to be watching with great interest.

The Songbird did not answer his question, but he saw the truth in it in her eyes. That was the only way they would have known his identity. He hunted infrequently, and never the same creatures twice.

"That still doesn't explain," he said into her silence, "why you're treating me this way. You could have killed me that night. Or better, you could have ignored me. There was no reason to let me see your village. But you want something. What is it?"

"We want to give you your life back," she said.

He felt his shoulders stiffen. "My life has never left me. Or are you telling me that I'm dead?"

"You're not dead." Her voice was soft. "You just haven't lived for years."

"I don't sing pretty songs and laugh as much as some think I should. But I live."

"In service to a boy who believes that beauty should be caged."

Reynaldo took a deep breath. Some of the tension slipped away. "So that's it. You want me to renounce my work."

"More than that," she said. "We want you to free the creatures that Tadeo holds."

"We?" he said. "Do you speak for yourself or your people?"

"The Songbirds listen to me."

"And they want me to destroy Prince Tadeo's collection."

"Yes."

"Why would I do that?"

"Because of your dreams. She took a step toward him. Her voice was mesmerizing, warm, and rich. "I can let you live in the world of your dreams."

He recognized charm when he heard it. Of course Songbirds could entice. Magic lived in their voices. "Live in the world of my dreams." He made it sound like it was tempted and, if he told himself the truth, he was. "The lush beautiful magical world that I see whenever I'm near something unusual?"

She nodded.

"You want me to risk everything, including my life, for a place where the food tastes better and the colors are brighter? A world I can barely remember when I'm awake? A world I'm not even sure exists?"

"Those eyes held him. "Are you sure this one exists?"

"He laughed. "I am not a philosopher. Questions like that are better contemplated by smarter men than I."

"There are few men smarter than you are," she said. "You simply have chosen a poor way to use your intelligence."

He crossed his arms. "The creatures I've given to Prince Tadeo live in complete luxury."

"An emotion flashed across her face too quickly for him to read it. Disgust? Amusement? He wasn't sure."

"You must decide what you want." The vibrancy had left her voice.

"What if I don't do what you want?"

"Then you'll wander the forest until you decide to return empty-handed. You will lose your status as the greatest magic hunter; but you will have your life. Or you could choose to make a new life away from the kingdom. You do not have to do what we want."

The tension spread through him again. "If I do what you ask, Prince Tadeo will have me killed."

"You chose to come after us."

"There are others who are after you."

"Her eyes glittered. "But there is only one who can free Tadeo's prisoners."

He was silent for a moment, weighing her words. Then he said, "What if I don't want to live in the land of my dreams? If I do what you ask, what will you give me instead?"

"A miracle," she said quietly.

He had seen miracles all his life—and had captured them for his prince.

"I'll do as you ask," he said.
AN INSTANT LATER he was in the rain, on Cara's back, heading toward the palace. A week of riding vanished in a single moment. It felt good to touch her. Part of him thought he had lost her forever. He touched her mane for reassurance, and she grunted, as if he had disturbed her rhythm somehow.

The rain seemed even colder, the wind harsher. The drops stung his cheeks. Cara's hooves threw mud on him, and only the horse's innate grace prevented them from slipping on the washed-out roads.

It had rained here too, rained like he had never seen. Tadeo would be displeased. He hated rain, always longing for sun or snow.

And now Reynaldo was returning without his prize. He had thought he would have time to come up with a story, but he had nothing. It was the same as having failed.

The palace stood alone at the edge of the Great Wood. The Royal City was several miles to the south. The palace, built a thousand years ago, was purposely isolated; the land itself was seen as a protection against rebels who would attack a king. But for nearly ten years, there had been no king to attack. Tadeo's father had died of a wasting disease. Tadeo's mother, his father's fifth wife and the only one to bear a child, had become Queen Mother, but the kingdom's laws prevented her from ruling despite her son's youth. Since he was eleven, Tadeo had acted as king. On his twenty-first birthday, he would become king officially.

The coronation would be his greatest triumph, or so he hoped.

Reynaldo reached the palace gates where the guards recognized him and opened the way. He headed straight for the stables. Once Cara was groomed and fed and placed in a comfortable stall, Reynaldo tended to his own needs.

His rooms were large and well furnished. The main room had carved wooden cabinets that were centuries old, couches embroidered by ladies in waiting to nearly two dozen different queens.

Reynaldo did not even look into the bedroom or the small dining room. Instead he ordered a bath, then went to the wardrobe to choose the proper clothes for an audience with Tadeo.

With the bath came food, and a summons from Tadeo.

The bath was heaven, the steaming water soothing to his cold limbs. He felt as if he hadn't been warm in a year; he ate grapes and small cakes, and drank the cool artesian water.

When he was through, he dressed in silk robes over a white shirt, and a pair of velvet riding trousers that he tucked into polished black boots. The outfit was a mixture of court dress and his usual clothing. He was the only member of the court who did not follow Tadeo's strict dress codes.

Reynaldo hated looking tame.

He took back corridors and a secret passage that led to Tadeo's private audience room. Although Reynaldo was not keeping his return a secret, he did not want the news of it to spread too quickly either.

He had the beginnings of a plan. He knocked on the hidden door, and Tadeo himself opened it. The prince was slight, dark-haired, and smooth-skinneled.

"I have not heard of any great triumph," Tadeo said as he stepped aside, allowing Reynaldo into the room. "Where's my Songbird?"

"Elusive," Reynaldo said.

"Elusive or not, you were supposed to find one," Tadeo crossed the hand-woven carpet to the gilt chair that he used only when speaking business. "Have you?"

"I have been following myth, legend, and rumor for weeks." Reynaldo took a simple wooden chair and sat across from Tadeo. "I found a village at the very edge of the kingdom which led me to believe that some of what I heard is true, and some is not. What is clear is that Songbirds are more powerful than the stories let on. That the kingdom held them in thrall once seems miraculous to me."

Tadeo waved a hand in dismissal. He did not care about the past, only the present. "If you were close, I don't understand why you came back."

"To offer you a choice."

"The room was too warm." A fire burned high, probably to ward off the damp. The windows were shuttered against the rain, but Reynaldo could hear it, beating against the walls as if it were trying to break in.

Tadeo raised his eyebrows. "A choice? There is no choice, Reynaldo. You are to bring me a Songbird."

"At any cost?"

"Yes, at any cost." And then Tadeo frowned. "What aren't you telling me?"

"The price," Reynaldo said. "But if you don't want to hear it..."

"You know that I will not pay you more than we have already agreed." Tadeo crossed his arms. He was getting angry.

"The cost is yours, not mine."

"Whatever does that mean?"

"It means," Reynaldo said, "that magic is powerful, and sometimes not worth the price of capture."

"Nonsense," Tadeo said. "We haven't paid a price before."

Reynaldo stared at him for a moment. Tadeo was so young that his skin was still soft and lined with baby fat. He had no idea how life exacted a price.

"Well, then," Reynaldo said, pushing himself out of the chair. "If you are unconcerned, I will go about my business."

He had almost made it to the door when Tadeo said, "You've never approached me about a price before. What has changed this time?"

Reynaldo did not turn around. Instead, he smiled. He had maneuvered Tadeo where he wanted him. "The only way I can catch a Songbird is to open the cages of your collection."

"My collection!" Tadeo sounded stunned.

Reynaldo slowly faced him. The boy's cheeks were red. He didn't like the idea. He would now have to choose between all his toys and a single great prize.

"Are you certain you will be able to capture a Songbird with this method?" Tadeo asked.

"Yes," Reynaldo said. Tadeo leaned back in his chair. It was still too large for him. He looked like a child trying to act like an adult. All except his eyes. They were too cold to be a child's. "Can you recapture my collection?"

"Of course, Sire. They have my marks. They should be easier to find this time."

"How do I know that you're not doing this just to create more work for yourself?"

Reynaldo smiled. "Because there is still so much work to do. You only possess a fraction of the magic that exists in this kingdom. If you want a complete collection, you must
hire two others who are as good as I am—and we both know there are none—and then the three of us must capture a magical creature once a month."

Tadeo sighed. "Quite a risk you're taking, Reynaldo. I will kill you if you fail."

"My life is not worth the price of your collection."

"True."

Tadeo stood. He took a deep breath. He was clearly uneasy about the decision, but he had made it, as Reynaldo wanted him to. That way, if Tadeo was dissatisfied with the Songbird, he had no one to blame but himself. "You have my permission."

Reynaldo bowed once. "Thank you, Sire," he said, and let himself out.

THE COLLECTION WAS HOUSED in its own tower on the palace grounds. Tadeo had the tower built after Reynaldo had caught his first creature. The tower was designed so that the nobles could view the collection, perhaps even see a bit of magic, without harm or fear that the creatures would escape. Tadeo had dismissed the guards. The rest of the staff had been ordered not to interfere with Reynaldo.

He was dressed all in black. His boots were silver, his gloves so thick that nothing could touch him. His heart pounded hard. He had caught fifteen creatures, but he had never freed one before. On this day, he would free everything, even the creatures caught by his imitators.

Reynaldo carried a bucket filled with sea water and went to the fresh water grotto in the basement to see sea witch, water elf, and mermaid. The grotto was large and deep. The walls and ceiling were made of rock so that they looked like a natural cave. The humid air smelled of dampness and despair.

They hid, as they always did when he came, but he lured them with the salt water's scent. The sea witch rose first, her magnificent face—once the gray of a stormy ocean, now so pale as to be nearly clear—fleeting with anger.

"What more can you do to us?" she asked, and as she did, he splashed her with the salt water. She sputtered, shocked, and then the gray returned to her face.

"This is a trick," she said.

He shook his head.

She snapped her fingers, rousing her companions, then she cursed Reynaldo and vanished, leaving a small water tunnel in her wake. As the water elf rose to the surface, Reynaldo splashed him as well, and then the mermaid. They didn't vanish like the sea witch. The water elf flew away on a rain cloud, and the mermaid climbed to the side of the grotto. She stood for a moment, naked, legs in place of her tail, and then she approached him.

"May you live as I have these past eight years," she said in her throaty voice. Then she slapped him, took his cloak, wrapped it around herself, and walked out of the room.

Reynaldo stared at the fresh water grotto for a moment, stunned at how easy it was to free its prisoners. It had taken him weeks to catch the mermaid; months to capture the water elf; and nearly a year to find the sea witch, let alone outsmart her. All that work, gone, in the space of a few moments.

He poured the remaining sea water out of the bucket. He cleaned the bucket thoroughly and filled it with fresh water. Then he went to the salt water pool to free the nymphae Those who sprit es.

By mid-morning, half his prizes were gone. He felt their losses as if the collection belonged to him, not Tadeo. For the first time, Reynaldo wondered at the wisdom of his plan.

But he did not stop. He led the troll to the grotto's bridge, gave gold to the dragon, and pocketed the scissors from the life-weaver's room. He placed the mushroom elf on loamy ground and gave the griffin its tail. He went through every room, reversing each capture spell until he found himself alone in the tower.

The room was round and made of stone. There was no furniture here, no windows, nothing except a pair of gold-flecked wings in a case made of glass.

He stared at them for the longest time, remembering that summer afternoon in the forest, not far from here. He had been a young man then, so young he had not known a woman and had never dreamed of love. He sat in the glade and waited for days, until the call of his soul was answered.

This was what he had feared most—this room, this reversal. And he hadn't even admitted it to himself.

He opened the case and removed the wings. They were as soft as he remembered, and they smelled faintly of lavender, just as they had all those years ago. He brought them to his face, leaned his cheek into them, remembering that moment, that fleeting moment, when he thought the world could belong to him.

But of course it didn't. Magic was like a sparkle, something that could be ruined by prolonged close contact. And yet, being close was all he had ever wanted.

He sighed, set the bucket down, and tucked the wings under his arm. He went down the circular staircase to the main floor of the empty tower, and let himself out.

The raindrops seemed fatter than before, colder, almost ice. The sky was black. Sometimes, when it rained like this, it felt as if the sun would never shine again.

He crossed the muddy grounds to the stable. The grooms were gone, as he had ordered.

Cara watched him approach. She was strangely motionless. He would have thought that she would have been pacing the stall in anticipation. But her blue eyes were wide, her white coat trembling, her nose quivering. Those were the only things that revealed her emotions. No one else would have seen it, but no one else knew what Reynaldo held in his hands.

There was nothing he could say—and neither could Cara. She had lost the art of speech long ago. It had been the second thing to go after he took her wings. First her horn, then her speech, and finally the unusual intelligence in those blue eyes.

He opened the stall door and placed the wings on her back, careful to put them on the proper sides. For a moment, he thought it had been too long, that they wouldn't take. Then they slipped into her skin as if they had never left her.

Her eyes grew darker, her coat gained a sprinkling of gold, and with a twist of light, her horn returned. The air sparkled around her, as it had when she had first come to him in the glade all those years ago.

He pulled the stall door back and stood aside. She turned her head toward him. She was beautiful again, her eyes so
alive that he wondered how he had ever been satisfied with what he had made her.

She brushed his face with the tip of her horn. It was soft and warm, and he could feel the magic sloughing off it. The magic burned him, like sparks from a campfire.

"In spite of myself, I am fond of you," she said, her voice as deep and rich as the Songbird's.

He stepped back so that she could not touch him. "You've been with me all this time. You know what I've become."

"But I remember what you were," she tossed her mane. More magic fell around him, burning when it touched his skin. Then she walked out of the stall and disappeared in the rain.

She did not look back, and he could not stop staring after her. It had been an impulse, the first time, a hunch. Somehow she had known that if he took her wings, she would be his forever. She had come to him, and he wanted to tell his friends about it. But he knew that, if he returned to his friends without her, they wouldn't have believed him. They would have laughed. He brought her to prove to them that he had touched magic.

Then Tadea saw her and demanded one of his own. But Reynaldo had lied. He had said that he was building a reputation and would not waste his time capturing the same type of creature twice.

For a decade, he had lived up to that vow. Now Cara was gone, walking away as if they had not spent the last ten years together. He had thought her his only remaining friend.

He had been wrong.

"I did not think you would live up to the bargain," The Songbird was in the stall with him. She seemed brighter too—shots of gold in her brown hair, a light behind her dark eyes.

Reynaldo slipped his hand in his pocket, his fingers trembling.

"I didn't live up to it," he said, grabbing her and pulling her close. He wrapped one arm around her tiny little neck and held her tightly.

He could feel her heart beating rapidly and knew he felt her fright. His fingers closed on the handle of the scissors as he took them out of his pocket and held them over her right shoulder—the very spot where her coat had bunched a few nights before.

Prince Tadeo let me use his collection to catch you," Reynaldo could hear her breath rasping, feel the fragility of her small bones against his.

"If you clip my wings," she said, "you destroy more than you can imagine."

He could feel the wings now, fluttering against him. Their feathers were sharp, scratching him.

"It's a risk I will take," he said, opening the scissors.

"You'll start the war all over again. This time, your people will know they lost."

His hand was still trembling. It took all of his strength to hold her and keep the scissors open. "What do you mean?"

"You have always been wrong," Her voice wobbled. "You have a magic. It's a bit of vision, nothing more. You can see edges, corners, things that are usually hidden from your people. That was how you hunted. That was how you knew how to cripple Cara."

He flinched at the phrase. It wasn't accurate. Cara had her wings again. She wasn't permanently damaged.

Before he spoke, he made sure his voice held no emotion. "So?"

"So you dream," she said, "and see what is."

His hand slipped and he nicked her. She cried out. A spot of blood welled in the air an inch above her right shoulder. "What does that matter?"

"You're not the first. Your people's powers have been growing."

"Be clearer," he said softly, "or I will cut your wing off."

"Your people's new powers threaten us."

He tightened his grip on her. Her bones felt more fragile than any bones he had ever touched. "We have always threatened you. The fact that we grow stronger should make no difference."

She laughed. The sound was bitter. "Think. How could we, with all our magic, lose a battle against humans?"

"The rebellion?" he asked. "The Songbirds against the king? Are you saying you won?"

"We create worlds with our song. As long as we never repeat a phrase, the world holds. This one has held for a thousand years."

He gripped the scissors tighter. "I always knew the rain wasn't natural. There hasn't been enough sun."

"You noticed that, but almost no one else did. They just complained."

"Why did you create such a dismal place?"

"Because you deserved it. She stirred in his arms. "There is no rain now."

He strengthened his hold on her, fearing it was a trick. Then he peered beyond her through the open stable door. Weak sunlight illuminated the mud and the standing water. Cara's hoofprints, leading away from the stable, glittered like gold.

"What's changed?" he asked.

"The magic you captured is now free."

"Why would that make a difference?"

"You held it in thrall, diminishing it."

"So I was defeating you all by myself." He brought the scissors down again. "I could have destroyed you."

"Only the illusion," she whispered.

"And once the illusion disappeared, we would have had a chance to fight you again."

She was silent.

"The battle must have been close," he said. "You won by a small margin, or you would not imprison us like this. We barely remembered your existence. You would have kept us ignorant forever if you could."

A shiver ran through her.

"What happens now?" he asked. "What if I clip your wings?"

She opened her mouth and sang a song so clear and pure that the hairs on the back of his neck rose. Around him, the stable melted away. He was standing in the middle of a clearing, very much like the one in which he had found Cara.

The air was fresh and smelled of spring, the grass was greener than any he had ever seen, the sunlight so brilliant that it hurt his eyes. He hadn't realized how diminished his world had been.

There were creatures all around him—in the sky, on the ferns by his feet, on the flowers blooming beneath the trees. In front of him, three Songbirds—a man and two women—stood with their arms around each other. They sang in perfect harmony. Another Songbird approached, another man. For a
moment, his song blended with theirs, and then one of the
women bowed her head, excusing herself, and walked away.
The man took her place.
"This is a trick," Reynaldo whispered.
"I wish it were," his Songbird said. "But now that you see,
I can't blind you again."
"If I let you go, you'll let me live here."
"Yes," she said.
"And what of my people? They'll stay in the darkness and
rain, prisoners who have no idea that they're imprisoned."
"They aren't unhappy," she said.
"Are you so sure?" he asked. "If I dream of this place,
what's to say others don't as well?"
He felt her stiffen beneath him. So others did dream. He
wasn't the only threat.
"Your people started the war," the Songbird said softly.
"That was a thousand years ago. He was growing cold.
None of the people who harmed you live any longer."
"But you collect us as if we were trophies," she said. "We're
not."
"No," he said. "We are the trophies now."
She shuddered once and then went very still. Her heartbeat
was just as rapid, just as frightened. It was the only thing
that gave her away.
"I have the power to change everything, don't I?" he asked.
"To bend our worlds the way they were before."
"You're not ready to live with us again," she said.
"I think we are. Your world is leaking into ours. I have
powers I should not have, and your world bleeds into my
dreams. Does ours bleed into yours?"
She was leaning against him as if she were having trouble
standing on her own. "If you stay here and do not bring the
others, you will have more magic than you ever dreamed of,
riches beyond your power to imagine, beautiful women—
anything. Anything at all."
"His hand was no longer trembling. "And if I refuse?"
"You will stand in both worlds, and live in neither."
"I will control both worlds," he said, "any time I threaten
your music. It's a stalemate. One could end with two snips of
these shears."
"Please, don't. The war—"
"Won't happen. My people will be too confused, too awed by this new world.
They've never seen real beauty. They won't know what it is. And because of
that, your people will gain power. They won't have to sing all the time, won't have
to expand the magic to create an illusion. We—all of us—might move forward."
"We might slaughter each other again."
"Her blood, warm and sticky, was flowing onto the arm he used to hold her.
End your illusion," he said, "and keep your wings."
"I'll be chaos."
"Yes," she said softly.
The other Songbirds were watching as if they knew that
everything rested on this moment. She closed her eyes. He
could feel her wings pressing against his chest.
"Stop singing," she whispered.
Faces turned toward her; faces she hadn't seen before. Grass
eelves looked up from their perches on long blades, flower
sprites from their petals, acorn fairies from their leaves.
"What?" a thousand voices whispered, as faint as the wind
in trees.
She sighed, then said again, "Stop singing."
The Songbirds stared at her as if she had lost her mind. She
was pressing against Reynaldo harder now, and he realized
that she was growing weaker.
"Stop singing," he said, "or I'll let her die. What does it take?
The loss of one wing? Or both? And if you lose her magic, you
lose all, don't you? She's more powerful than all the creatures
I captured combined."
The male Songbird closed his mouth. The harmony faded,
and then the female Songbird stopped, then the other male.
Gradually the music vanished.
Reynaldo's ears rang. He hadn't heard silence before—not
once in his entire life.
Then the silence ended. He heard screams, shouts, and a
bellow that he recognized. Tadeo stood a few yards away and
screamed Reynaldo's name.
Reynaldo did not answer. He didn't have to. In this place,
there was no kingdom, and Tadeo was simply a young, spoiled
boy.
The Songbird let out a small sigh. Her heartbeat wasn't as
rapid. Reynaldo scooped her in his arms and carried her to the
other Songbirds.
He handed her to them, and one of them carried her away
through the tall grass. Reynaldo looked toward the trees and
saw Cara staring at him, her eyes filled with tears. Her beauty
took his breath away. He had tried to capture that beauty and
failed. Holding her had nearly destroyed her.
Just as the world he'd been living in had nearly destroyed
him.
He reached for her, but she vanished into the trees. He
could pursue her, but to what end? She deserved a life, a free
life, just like he did.
Tadeo had reached his side. His face was red with the strain
of walking, his skin sheened with sweat.
"Reynaldo," he said, "what is the meaning of this?"
"We've lost our home, Tadeo. We're in the world we've
always dreamed of."
"I never dreamed of this," Tadeo said.
But Reynaldo had. A world so bright and vivid that it
threatened to overwhelm him. He had been right. His people
would be weaker here while they learned to accept the
changes. But they would learn—if the right person taught them.
"What do we do now?" Tadeo asked.
Reynaldo gazed at him for a moment—the boy who finally
knew how it felt to lose everything. Tadeo couldn't lead them
here. He lacked the understanding. He lacked the vision.
He lacked the magic.
But Reynaldo had the magic, the vision, and the
understanding. As well as the willingness to use it. He just
didn't have to use it in service to Tadeo any more.
Reynaldo could make choices that benefitted his people
instead of harmed them.
The world had changed, in more ways than one.
MasterMaze™
The Ultimate 3-D Dungeon System for Miniatures

- Every piece comes fully hand-painted!
- Amazingly detailed and cast in durable resin!
- Huge variety of sets and accessories to choose from!

MasterMaze™ is an interlocking, interchangeable dungeon system meticulously sculpted, cast in durable resin, and then painted by skilled artisans. No other company offers such magnificent accessories for 25-28mm miniature gaming ready to use right out of the box. Dwarven Forge has expanded its extensive product line again to bring you the cavern set, dungeon accessories, medieval furniture, narrow passages and, the first of its miniatures series, lizardmen! Everything comes fully hand-painted so you can spend more time gaming.

For a FREE color catalog write: Dwarven Forge, 306 E 51 St., NY, NY 10022
Or visit us on the web at: www.dwarvenforge.com
E-Mail: dwarvenforge@cs.com Fax: (212) 759-6540
Nodwick in: WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

I think we're finally getting close to the ones behind those giant attacks underground.

Good! This adventure is starting to get routine.

You're bored? I'll let you get turned into a goldfish next time!

Ooh! How will we get past that?

How, indeed?

Tunneling under the front door isn't taking long.

Guys, my muscles work best when I'm lifting, not shoveling! I'm pooped!

Fine, let a real man show you how to do it!

There's something you don't see everyday, Chunky.

What's that, Edgar?

Moles with metalworking skills.

The Underdark presents an unusual sight.

What a beautiful place!

It's so... tranquil.

It's an illusion.

How did you know?

Bitter experience and hunches, intuition!

Drain out, Puffin! How long is that purgatory spell going to last?

Ahh, prepare for eternal slumber!

You will taste the deadly kiss of the succubus you weak-

Lovable man! What a darling nose you have!

Um, sausage? What are you doing?

I'm sorry, Bel losers. I choose my lovers for their mighty noses, and I'm afraid he's got you beat!

Pep! How should I save Nodwick from that demoness?

I thank Nodwick may save here! She may be right, but Nodwick has found a way into her heart! Maybe his good-natured ways can turn her alien from a life of naughtiness and many wrong deeds.

Um, can I get a succubus, too?

Okay, so what do we do with vampire boy here?

Leave! I've already had a strange driven through my heart!

I'll write you, Bel losers!

Surprise, you will...

So, do you need any exorcism advice?

That, and a "do-it-yourself" exorcism kit...
BEHOLD, MORTALS!
THE PASSAGE TO THE
WOLVES OF THE DROW
GUARD BY THE
DARK TOWER!

I DON'T KNOW IF
THAT'S THE WORD
I'D CHOOSE.

I GUESS
WE HAVE TO GO IN.

OUR HEROES ARE GIVEN A LESSON IN DROW LAW...

YOU MUST WEAR
LIME GREEN CLOAKS
AT ALL TIMES, IF YOU REFUSE, YOU WILL BE KILLED.

YOU MUST NOT
HIDE THE AMUSING
TEXT EMBOSSED ON THE BACK. IF YOU DO, YOU WILL BE KILLED.

I LOOK AT MY LARGENOSED LOLE: THIS IS THE LESSER TEMPLE.
BEHIND LUNCH LIES THE UNHOLIEST OF DROW PLACES!

I THINK A PLAN MAY BE IN ORDER, FOLKS.

AND THEN TRAVEL TO THE HEART OF THE VAULT.

LATER:
I CAN PUT SOME
BITH POPS DOWN.
I SHOULDN'T TAKE THE CARE OF AN
STRAIGHT.

I WONDER IF HE COULD SPIN YOUR
BOOTS WHILE HE'S AT IT.

YOU'RE LUCKY
THAT YOUR GRANDFATHER IS HERE!

FINALLY, THE GREATEST EVIL OF THE UNDERDAK IS REVEALED: LOLTH!

LOLTH! THIS IS
LOLTHRIAN FROM EPHIA-
GAMMA-GAMMA SORORITY
AT ABYSS U! WE'RE SORORITY
SISTERS! I DIDN'T KNOW SHE SHORTENED HER NAME AND BECAME A GODDES!

OH, MAMA! YOU
KNOW HOW I'M...

YOU'RE LUCKY
THAT YOUR GRANDFATHER IS HERE!

SO WHO ARE
YOUR FRIENDS? YOU MUST INTRODUCE ME!

WELL, THAT'S
NERO, MY BOY-
FRIEND. HE'S

YOU'RE DATING
A GEMMAHAN? HOW EMBARRASSING!

HE'S A GEMMA-
MAN? REALLY?

OH, SURE, IT'S
SO OBVIOUS...

I'M SORRY, NERDIX, BUT I HAVE AN INFERNAL
REPUTATION TO KEEP UP. I'LL WRITE YOU

SURREN'T YOU WILL.

IT LOOKS LIKE WE CAN EITHER FOLLOW THEM TO LOLTH'S
LAIR IN THE ABYSS, OR...

WE CAN GO BACK TO THE
SURFACE, RIGHT THROUGH ALL OF THE
DROW, KURD-DAR AND GIANTS.

I WAS TRYING
TO CREATIVELY SHOW MY
CONTROVERSY FOR
THEIR EVIL WAYS.

BESIDES, I HEAR THAT
THE JAWS IS LOWCHED
 THIS TIME OF YEAR.
Arcane Lore

Alister's Augmentation's
by Owen K.C. Stephens • illustration by Anthony Waters

Young adventurers are often inspired by tales of heroes from ages past, but few hear stories of Alister Honorrolla, a long-deceased half-elfen wizard. This omission might seem odd, given the many accomplishmets of Honorrolla, for stories place him in the center of many important battles over the past 150 years. Despite Alister's obvious experience and power, the warriors traveling with him are the ones who usually become immortalized in song and legend. Only wizened sages note that these warriors' greatest victories occurred while Alister was nearby, and that most of them faded into insignificance after parting his company.

The recent discovery of several of Alister's spellbooks sheds light on this mystery. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Alister felt that the best use of a spellcaster's power was not a flashy fretful conjuration. Instead, he believed that it was important for all types of spellcasters to augment the abilities and talents of those around him.

Alister's spellbooks reflect this philosophy and are filled with magics designed to enhance the effectiveness of others. Many of these spells are unique to Alister's books and are presumably the product of his own research. Three of these books, Alister's Book of Battle, Alister's Book of Honor, and the Book of War have recently been found, and copies of the spells within them have begun to circulate. The books themselves never seem to remain with a particular owner for long, and they are often lost in battle or stolen shortly after their acquisition.

Alister's Book of Battle and Alister's Book of Honor are described as being similar in appearance. Both are large tomes 3 feet high, 1 foot wide, and 4 inches thick. Their covers are made of thin sheets of hammered steel. The Book of Battle bears the image of etched swords and the Book of Honor, etched crowns. Heavy steel rings bind the covers to pages of fine linen, with the lettering brushed on in colored paints. Although many wizards who have studied these books believe the coloring is some kind of code, no one has deciphered it yet.

The Book of War is reportedly a much smaller book, measuring only 6 inches high, 4 inches wide, and 2 inches thick. Although also covered in steel plates and bound by steel rings, the Book of War shows none of the etching or colored lettering of the other tomes. It is a simple and utilitarian book covered with dents and rusted scars on the cover that suggest it has seen much hard use. The alven word *medlath* is written in tiny letters on one of the steel binding rings. *Medlath* means "war dancer," and it is impossible to open the Book of War without first saying the vord in either elven or common.

The spells in Alister's Book of Battle are fairly common and include *cats grace, courage, dethnision, dispel magic, endurance, enlarge, haste, jump, keen edge, mage armor, magic weapon, minor glob of invulnerability, phantom steed, protection from arrows, stoneskin, and bull's strength.*

Alister's Book of Honor contains a collection of spells unknown from any other source and thus are presumed to be Alister's own creations. These include *brittle, diamond-stone, dolorous blow, hurl, lesser spell immunity, shieldbasher, and weapon shift.*

The Book of War contains the unique spell *battle hymn, burning sword, heroics, mass strength, rapid strike, and indomitable.* All the unique spells found in this work are detailed below.
Mass Strength

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)
Target or Targets: Up to one creature per 2 levels, all within a 30-foot radius
Duration: 10 minutes/level
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (Harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (Harmless)

This spell grants additional Strength to one creature per 2 levels of the caster. The affected creatures gain +1 Strength, adding the usual benefits to melee attack rolls, melee damage rolls, Strength-related skill checks, and so on.

Material component: A few hairs from any kind of giant.

Burning Sword

Evocation
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Weapon touched
Duration: 2 minutes/level (D)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

A weapon enchanted with a burning sword spell is engulfed in flickering blue flames that shed azure light out to 30 feet. These flames do not harm the weapon or its wielder, but for the duration of the spell it delivers fire damage in addition to its normal damage.

The enchanted weapon deals +1d6 points of fire damage on a successful hit. Also, on a critical hit, the weapon inflicts additional fire damage based on the weapon's critical hit multiplier:

- Critical Hit Multiplier
  - x2
  - x3
  - x4
  - +d6
  - +2d6
  - +3d6

This spell may be cast on arrows and crossbow bolts. Upon a successful hit, the arrow or bolt inflicts its fire damage as appropriate, then loses its enchantment.

Weapon Shift

Transmutation
Level: Brd 2, Sor/Wiz 1
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: One weapon
Duration: 5 minutes/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

The weapon shift spell allows the caster to temporarily transform any one nonmagical melee weapon (of up to Large size) into a different melee weapon of the same size or smaller. Thus, a greatsword could be transformed into a great-axe, or a light pick into a morning star. Magic, ranged, improvised, and huge or larger weapons cannot be targeted or created with this spell.

Material component: a piece of parchment folded into the shape of the weapon type desired.

Rapid Strikes

Transmutation
Level: Brd 2, Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S
Casting Time: One action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (Harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (Harmless)

A creature targeted by rapid strikes performs more quickly in combat. This gives the target one extra partial action each round that can only be used to perform a single melee attack at the attacker's best attack bonus. Unlike the spell haste, the extra action can be used only to attack; there is no increase in speed, AC, or additional non-attack actions.

Diamondsteel

Transmutation
Level: Brd 4, Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Touch
Target: Suit of metal armor touched
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

Diamondsteel enhances the strength of one suit of metal armor. This adds a +1 hardness bonus to the AC of light and medium metal armor (such as chain shirt, scale mail, chainmail, or a breastplate), as well as increasing the armor's own hardness value by 2. See the section on attacking objects in the combat chapter of the Player's Handbook (page 135). All heavy metal armors (such as splint mail, banded mail, half-plate, and full plate) gain a +2 hardness bonus to AC and have their own hardness values increased by 3.

Material component: diamond dust worth at least 100 gp.
NEW SPELLS

1ST-LEVEL
Trans  Shieldbearer  Animates a shield to hover near and protect one creature.
Trans  Weapon Shift  Temporarily transforms one type of weapon into another.

2ND-LEVEL
Trans  Brittle  Causes one suit of armor to grow spikes.
Abjur  Lesser Spell Immunity  Protects recipient from one spell.
Trans  Hurt  Grants a weapon the power to return once thrown.
Trans  Rapid Strikes  Increases the recipient’s attack actions in battle.

3RD-LEVEL
Ench  Battle Hymn  Creates a martial song that inspires the caster’s allies.
Trans  Diamondsteel  Temporarily hardens one suit of armor.

4TH-LEVEL
Trans  Burning Sword  Transforms one weapon into a flaming burst weapon.
Trans  Dolorous Blow  Increases the power of one weapon’s critical hits.
Trans  Heroics  Grants a fighter temporary use of an additional heroic feat.

5TH-LEVEL
Abjur  Indomitable  Allows the recipient to delay the effect of one incapacitating blow.

6TH-LEVEL
Trans  Mass Strength  Greatly increases the Strength of several creatures for a short time.

Lesser Spell Immunity
Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: One action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (Harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (Harmless)

A weaker version of spell immunity, this spell protects one creature from a single 1st- or 2nd-level spell. The creature effectively has unbeatable Spell Resistance regarding the chosen spell. Lesser spell immunity can’t protect a creature from a spell to which Spell Resistance doesn’t apply. This spell works against other spells, spell-like effects, and innate spell-like abilities. It does not protect against supernatural or extraordinary abilities, such as breath weapons or gaze attacks. Only a particular spell can be protected against, not a sphere of spells or a group of spells with similar effects; thus, a creature given immunity to magic missile is still vulnerable to Melf’s acid arrow.

A creature can have only one lesser spell immunity or spell immunity in effect at a time.

Heroics
Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: One action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 10 minutes/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

The heroics spell temporarily grants a fighter a feat from the fighter’s bonus feat list. For the duration of the heroics spell, the fighter can use the feat as if it were one of those she had selected. Only a character with at least one fighter class level can be the recipient of this spell. All prerequisites for the feat must be met by the target of this spell.

A fighter can be the target of only one heroics spell at a time.

Material component: a bit of a weapon or armor that has been used in combat by a fighter of at least 15th level.
**Battle Hymn**
Enchantment (Charm) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Brd 3, Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 ft.
Targets: All allies within 30 ft.
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (Harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (Harmless)

This spell brings forth a stirring martial tune that inspires all creatures within the area who are friendly to the caster. These creatures gain a +2 morale bonus to all Will saving throws for the duration of the spell. The caster gains no bonus from his own battle hymn, even if he is within the area of effect.

**Dolorous Blow**
Transmutation
Level: Brd 4, Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Weapon touched
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

A weapon affected by dolorous blow glows with a dull red aura. For the duration of the spell, the weapon’s threat range is doubled, and its critical hits automatically succeed (no confirmation roll is required).

**Bristle**
Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Suit of armor touched
Duration: 1 minute/level (D)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

The bristle spell temporarily enchant one suit of armor, causing it to grow long hard spikes that stick out in all directions. This spell does not work on clothing other than armor, but it does function with armor that already has spikes built in. The spikes are flexible enough not to hamper the creature wearing the armor. Each round the first time the armor wearer attacks a target in melee, it deals damage as if it had been struck with an improvised weapon or a weapon not designed for throwing. The thrown weapon returns to the wielder at the beginning of his next action. The weapon only returns to its wielder if thrown; it doesn’t automatically fly back if dropped or seized by another creature. (An improvised weapon or a weapon not designed for throwing has a range increment of 10 feet.) Only weapons of up to Large size can be targeted by this spell. Thus, a greatsword could not be enchanted by hurl, but the spell has no effect on a ballista bolt or a huge boulder.

**Indomitability**
Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes (Harmless)

The indomitability spell protects its recipient from the first incapacitating attack he suffers during the spell’s duration. An incapacitating attack is one that would reduce the recipient to less than 1 hp. The attack must be one that deals damage; the staying spell offers no protection from non-damaging effects or attacks that kill or destroy without dealing any damage, such as the disintegrate or slay living spell. Regardless of how much damage the attack deals, the recipient of the indomitability spell takes only enough damage to be reduced to 1 hp. The remaining damage from the attack is delayed until the end of the spell’s duration. The recipient can be healed before the spell ends, but nothing short of a wish or miracle spell can prevent the delayed damage from being dealt when the indomitability spell expires.

**Hurl**
Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S, M (F)
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Weapon touched
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

The hurl spell enchant one melee weapon so that it will return to the thrower after being thrown. For the duration of the spell, when thrown, the weapon returns to its wielder at the beginning of his next action. The weapon returns whether it hit or missed its target. On its return, the thrown weapon hovers for 1 round next to the wielder and can then be seized and thrown again. After 1 round, the weapon falls to the ground. The weapon only returns to its wielder if thrown; it doesn’t automatically fly back if dropped or seized by another creature. (An improvised weapon or a weapon not designed for throwing has a range increment of 10 feet.) Only weapons of up to Large size can be targeted by this spell. Thus, a greatsword could be enchanted by hurl, but the spell has no effect on a ballista bolt or a huge boulder.

**Material component:** a bit of wood or leather from a throwing axe or spear.
Armadillo of Virtue
by Johnathan M. Richards • illustrated by Arnie Swekel

There's no doubt that a holy avenger is a paladin's greatest weapon. Such a weapon has special powers available only to members of the paladin class. Many previous works provide paladin characters with new holy swords, but the paladin’s staunchest ally is often overlooked.

A paladin is expected to be on the front line in battle and therefore will need the very best armor she can obtain. Most of the suits of armor described below have special powers available only to paladins, but any PC whose class allows her to wear armor should derive at least some benefit from them. However, each of these suits of armor was created for a specific order of paladins, and any “unauthorized” PC caught wearing one might find herself the target of retribution.

The DM can insert these suits of armor into a campaign by several means. The armor might belong to a PC's church and be loaned out to members of the order for a worthy occasion (granting a paladin the Drachensgaard armor when she is sent out to slay a dragon, for instance). Maybe a paladin wearing the armor was out on a quest and hasn’t been heard from since. The PCs could be sent to investigate the paladin’s disappearance with instructions to obtain the armor and return it to the church. Perhaps the holy armor is worn by someone unable to employ (or unaware of) its true power. The PCs’ first encounter with a suit of holy armor could be when they face that person in combat.

Finally, a paladin’s order might be planning to bestow a suit of the holy armor upon one of its members. Through the successful completion of a series of quests, a high-level paladin could “earn” one of the suits of armor and become one of the few in the history of the order to prove worthy of such an honor.

However the armor is introduced into the campaign, it’s unlikely that it would show up as a treasure in some creature’s lair. The orders for which they were created keep a close eye on the whereabouts of such powerful items.

Drachensgaard
Drachensgaard is a suit of +1 full plate. It has been enchanted to provide the following additional powers to paladins:

- Grants a +2 resistance bonus against dragons' breath weapons that require a Reflex save.
- Allows the wearer to understand and speak Draconic while worn.
- When the wearer utters a command word, cramps project from the boots of the armor to aid the wearer in climbing the rocky cliffs and icy mountains where many dragons lair. The magic cramps grant the paladin a +2 competence bonus to his Climb skill checks.

Drachensgaard has often been worn by paladins who devoted their lives to the destruction of evil dragons. It was created by the wizard Thurgas "Dragondoom" Dorn for his companion and fellow dragontamer Justinian Graevus. Since Justinian’s death at the claws of an ancient red dragon, Drachensgaard has been passed down to various paladins of his order, but the armor works perfectly well for any paladin.

Caster Level: 5th; Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, endure elements, tongues; Market Price: 11,000; Cost to create: 5,500 gp + 440 XP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Armor</th>
<th>Armor Bonus</th>
<th>Maximum Dex Bonus</th>
<th>Armor Check Penalty</th>
<th>Arcane Spell Failure</th>
<th>Speed (30 ft.)</th>
<th>(20 ft.)</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drachensgaard</td>
<td>+1 Full plate</td>
<td>+9</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20 ft.</td>
<td>15 ft.</td>
<td>50 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellsheld</td>
<td>+3 Full plate</td>
<td>+11</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20 ft.</td>
<td>15 ft.</td>
<td>50 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humillianth</td>
<td>+3 Leather and bardings</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30 ft.</td>
<td>20 ft.</td>
<td>15 lb./30 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preseidium Luminata</td>
<td>+1 Full plate</td>
<td>+9</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20 ft.</td>
<td>15 ft.</td>
<td>50 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spellcapse</td>
<td>+1 Full plate</td>
<td>+9</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20 ft.</td>
<td>15 ft.</td>
<td>50 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truedeath</td>
<td>+1 Full plate</td>
<td>+9</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20 ft.</td>
<td>15 ft.</td>
<td>50 lb.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Hellshield**

Hellshield is a suit of *+3* full plate that was crafted to allow a paladin to bring the war against the fiends to their home ground.

- Hellshield provides its wearer with the ability to exist unharmed in extreme environments. A paladin so outfitted is granted fire resistance 25 and cold resistance 25.
- The wearer gains a +4 insight bonus to Sense Motive checks versus evil Outsiders. This power allows the paladin to better ignore the gibb lies, silken seductions, and false promises of the evil creatures he has been sent to destroy.

Hellshield was crafted by the wizard Armadane for the paladin Cornelius Borugon, a devout follower of Heironymous who dedicated his life to the destruction of fiends. Cornelius was slain by the blade of a beautiful assassin in the service of a demon lord; while he readily saw the evils of the demonic and diabolic races, he often turned a blind eye to the evil members of his own race.

*Caster Level: 9th; Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, detect thoughts, protection from elements; Market Price: 25,000; Cost to Create: 12,500 gp + 1,000 XP.*

**Humillianth**

Because of the strong ties between a paladin and his bonded mount, a special type of armor was developed for both. Collectively known as Humillianth (“The Armor-Bond between Horse and Master” in Elven), it consists of a suit of armor for the paladin and a set of barding for the mount. The barding has a saddle built into its design. Both pieces were created at the same time by the elven sorcerer Aelleana for her brother, the paladin Caldeith, and his warhorse, Silverhooves. This is one of the few examples of leather holy armor.

Humillianth is a suit of *+3* leather armor for the rider and *+3* leather barding for the horse. Details on barding can be found on page 112 of the *Player’s Handbook*.

Using a move-equivalent action the paladin can teleport onto his mount and be ready for battle. There are restrictions to this power:

- The teleportation occurs only if both horse and rider are wearing their armor.
- The mount cannot be carrying someone else in the saddle.
- The teleport without error power functions only for a paladin and his bonded mount, but a normal mount or non-paladin PC can still gain the benefit of the armor’s magical protection.
- The paladin cannot use Humillianth to teleport off of his mount.

If either the paladin’s armor or the mount’s barding is destroyed, the remaining half of the set loses its teleport without error power (although it still functions as *+3* leather armor or *+3* leather barding). Damaged or destroyed Humillianth barding cannot be replaced with new barding; a completely new set of both barding and armor would have to be fashioned.

Because of its light weight, Humillianth can be placed upon any large-sized aerial steed such as a pegasus, griffon, or hippoc. A paladin with a flying mount and Humillianth can leap from his saddle in midair, knock an enemy rider from his flying mount, and then teleport to the safety of his own saddle while his enemy hurtles to the ground below.

*Caster Level: 13th; Prerequisites: Enchant arms and armor; teleport without error; Market Price: 21,000; Cost to Create: 10,500 gp + 840 XP.*
Praesidium Luminata

This suit of +1 full plate glows with a holy light when worn by a paladin. This light is a manifestation of the purity and goodness inherent in the paladin and her deity. It provides illumination as bright as daylight within a 30-foot radius and has the following additional magical effects:

- All good-aligned creatures within 30 feet of the paladin gain a +1 morale bonus to their attack rolls.
- All evil-aligned beings within 30 feet of the paladin suffer a -1 morale penalty to their attack rolls.
- Creatures with the light sensitivity special quality suffer a -1 circumstance penalty to hit while within the radius of illumination.
- The light reveals all invisible creatures within 30 feet of the paladin. Such creatures become visible to anyone, not just the paladin.
- The light reveals all forms of magical shapeshifting by superimposing an image, visible to anyone, of the shapeshifting creature's original form over its current guise. While the creature is within 30 feet of the paladin, both its original and current form are visible in a kind of double image. This double image vanishes once the creature attacks or is attacked by someone within the light's range. Note that the power of the armor's light does not force a physical change in the shapeshifter; it merely allows everyone to see the creature as it really is. Furthermore, as soon as the creature exits the radius of illumination, the image of its original form vanishes.

In addition, a magical power makes the armor easier to don. By placing the helm upon her head and invoking the name of Heironeous while mentally willing the action, the paladin can teleport the rest of Praesidium Luminata onto her body. The teleporting power can only be used if the armor is within 10 feet of the paladin. Summoning the armor is a standard action.

The Praesidium Luminata was crafted by the wizard Bombulio for the paladin Shiorna Ravenstorm after she saved his life and his tower from a magical assault by the forces of Hextor. A non-paladin wearing Praesidium Luminata cannot activate any of its magical powers, though the armor still functions as +1 full plate.

Caster Level: 9th; Prerequisites: Create Magic Arms and Armor, teleport without error, prayer, bless, daylight, true seeing; Market Price: 24,000 gp; Cost to Create: 12,000 gp + 960 XP.

Spelcause

This armor is an invaluable tool in the fight against evil spellcasters. Spelcause is a suit of +1 full plate.

- It automatically absorbs 1D4+2x10 spell levels of “evil” magic. Evil magic is defined as baneful spells and magical effects cast by spellcasters of evil alignment. Thus, Spelcause absorbs magic missile or charm person spells cast by an evil wizard, but not a detect magic spell cast by the same wizard. Similarly, it does not absorb spells cast by spellcasters of non-evil alignment.
- Spelcause has a final power accessible only to paladins: regardless of level, the wearer can cast the holy sword spell once per day.

Spelcause was created by Volifume Phormeidul, a wizard long associated with various paladin orders. It has been rumored that Volifume also crafted the holy swords Truefang, Helmsplitter, and Demongriev. Mounted into the chestpiece of the armor in a “V” pattern are five ellipsoid gemstones. Each gem is a deep
purple and glows with an internal power of its own.

When the armor absorbs its full limit of spell levels, the five stones burn out and the armor is unable to absorb further evil magic (although it remains +1 full plate). Volturno was able to "recharge" the Spellcease armor by replacing the stones; unfortunately, that process was lost when the wizard died. If he left any notes detailing the process, they have yet to be found; therefore, Spellcease cannot be recharged, but it can be used by any PC allowed to wear armor.

_Caster Level:_ 13th, plus a 15th-level paladin; _Prerequisites:_ Create Magic Arms and Armor, Create Wondrous Item, greater spell immunity, holy sword; _Market Price:_ 40,000; _Cost to Create:_ 20,000 gp + 1,600 XP.

**Truedearth**

This armor was designed for Sir Michael Pellingrove of Battlerow, a paladin dedicated to the destruction of all forms of undead, by the wizard Vhandal Deathbane, who shared his calling. A set of +1 full plate, Truedearth has the symbol of Sir Michael's order sculpted on the chest plate.

- When the armor is worn, this symbol glows in the presence of undead, alerting the paladin when such a creature is within 50 feet. The paladin can use the symbol to turn undead. This is not automatic, and requires the paladin's complete concentration, just as if the paladin was using his holy symbol to make a normal turning attempt. A paladin using this power turns undead as a cleric of one level lower than his own, rather than two levels lower as is normally the case.

- Truedearth was magically bonded to a font of holy water at Sir Michael's church. As long as the font remains filled, any corporeal undead creature coming in contact with the magic armor is affected as if doused with holy water: The foul being suffers 2d4 points of damage as its flesh (or bone) burns where the contact was made. When this occurs, the holy water in the font at the church boils and bubbles. After 1d4+4 such uses, the holy water must be replenished in the font, or this power stops functioning, and remains dormant until the font is refilled.

- The wearer of Truedearth is immune to magical aging effects from undead attacks.

Because each of the various paladin orders have different symbols, Truedearth is fully useful only to a member of the order for which it was made. The undead detection ability works only for an active believer of the order's faith, so a cleric from the same faith can wear it and use all of the armor's benefits (including turning at one level higher than normal), but a fighter from another faith (even a different lawful good religion) or a paladin of a different god gains only the protection from the magical aging powers of undead and the caustic holy water effect for as long as the font stays filled. The DM should determine the specific paladin order to which Sir Michael belonged.

The name "Truedearth" refers to the laying to rest of the tortured souls that have become undead, many against their will. Sir Michael Pellingrove had compassion for those unfortunate who had entered such a state unwillingly; for those like the Ich, who meticulously planned and orchestrated their own undead, he had nothing but the edge of his blade and the burning power of his god's fury.

_Caster Level:_ 5th; _Prerequisites:_ Create Magic Arms and Armor, detect undead, bless water; _Market Price:_ 25,000; _Cost to Create:_ 13,000 gp + 1,040 XP.
The Adventures of VOLO the Crumbling Stair
by Ed Greenwood • illustrated by Barbara Barion

Volothamp Geddarm at your service, gentles, setting truths of the Realms before you like hot buttered snails steaming in green Valyrian wine! This day I write of a ruin of the Sword Coast North many have heard of, but few know about beyond the impression of mystery and desecration imparted by the Waterdhavian expression “as curious as the Crumbling Stair.”

What All Know And The Eye Beholds
Well-learned folk know the Stair to be a ruin that stands in what some call “the Sword Hills,” a lawless, brigand-infested hill country east of Waterdeep, between Ardeep Forest and Uluvin.

Some in the City of Splendors and places nearby (such as Amphail) can also recall fanciful nursery tales of elves dancing with unicorns and pegasi in the air by night around a glowing ruined stone stair in the wooded wilderness. Some might have also heard tales of the humans foolish enough to join the dance who were spirited away and changed in wits and powers, to be human no more.

Merchants, drovers, adventurers, and a few brigands know it to be a broken marble staircase that rises in a grand, curving sweep up out of treacherous, pit-filled ground that’s obviously the overgrown foundation of a once magnificent building. A mansion of the Fallen Kingdom, most folk think—and most also believe that the Stair is haunted.

I can now report that I have seen this ghost with my own eyes and can swear to the utter truth of this belief. At night, the spirit of a slain knight strikes at those who try to camp near, ascend, or descend the staircase. Sometimes, this apparition is a phantom sword, floating alone, or a helm, or an actual ghost. Whatever its true nature or powers, it always glows, flickers in and out of visibility, and its inessential “touch” always brings a sickening sensation of weakness and utter, bone-chilling cold (though such contact seems to do no damage to the flesh). The ghost slays some, is never seen by others, and menaces those who venture near the Stair until they withdraw in fear or exasperation. Its origin remains mysterious, although many claim that it is the remains of this or that mage-cursed warrior or suchlike.

Know that I, Volothamp, have parted many curtains of mystery and folk-falsehood to lay bare for all readers many truths of this beautiful wilderland site.

THE GHOST OF A SLAIN KNIGHT STRIKES AT THOSE WHO TRY TO CAMP NEAR, ASCEND, OR DESCEND THE STAIRCASE. SOMETIMES, THIS APPARITION IS A PHANTOM SWORD...

The History of the Stair
This ruin was once the site of Taeros, a grand mansion adorned with many turrets, set in wooded gardens adorned with fountains and pools stocked with jewelfish. The house sprawled along a curving ridge in the heart of the region known as Loravatha, in the realm sages now call the Fallen Kingdom, and was home to the human sorceress Yuritha. She spent her late husband’s merchant fortune building the mansion and founded a school for young lasses who

ELMINSTER’S NOTES
1. Ye would say “fickly” instead of “curious” here. American English and isn’t that an oxymoron? Is such an amusing tongue, if rather overly steeped in sarcasm?
2. Such romantic tales are based on a true incident involving humans intruding on a service of worship to Lupa. I’m not at liberty to say what became of the humans, but I will reveal to ye that they live yet, for beyond their normal lifespan, and now regret nothing of their boldness, though their fate was regarded at the time of infliction, by both themselves and the worshippers, as a punishment.
3. Ahem: our diligent scribe somehow neglects to inform ye readers that his eyes were protruding in utter terror from his backside at the time, as he fled (with a swiftness that would do credit to a roused stag) in the general direction of the Sea of Swords. Had several dozen trees of Ardeep Forest not stood in his path, he might well have found the waiting waves of that handy ocean. Let it never be forgotten that our Volothamp is a brave man. We’ve no doubt for doing so, given the frequency with which he reminds us of this. Suffice it unto the common need, indeed.
4. Volothamp stumbles into being correct. The chill does no physical harm and has actually warned sleeping sentinels to defend themselves against stealthy-approaching brigands or goblin raiding bands. It might spur nightmares to trouble the dreams of some sleepers and has a more lasting effect on some. Contact with this phantom, which
The House of Tintern had a many-pillared central hall with a lofty, domed ceiling. This tower was called "Tintern Hall" because it was hung with two Tinternalls.

The popular waterfall sculptures once decorated the walls of Tintern Hall, admired by thousands of visitors. Gemstones were carved in mullion, in intricate and hanging designs. Few of these pieces survived today, hidden in rooms of eleven and three on every floor.

THE STAIR RISES SIX OR SO STEPS INTO A DARK HOLE.

The empty air, its other end descends into a dark hole.
for their beauty, the component gems are worth staggering amounts. The most valuable frozenfalls are ensorcelled to chime softly and musically when touched, on contact with the rising sun or moonlight, or with any other general or specific magical enchantments.

The surviving Stair is thought to be one of Echafall’s three grand ascending staircases, kept aloft in its precarious and decaying state because of the many until the kingdom failed and the land became wilderness overrun by a succession of goblinkin’ raiders.

The Stair Today
Adventurers today will find no trace of the grand mansion except for the bit of staircase atop a curving ridge in broken lands overgrown with scrub woods. The Crumbling Stair is a length of weathered, green-veined white marble and curving grandly to where the main floor of Echafall once was (very close to present-day ground level, though the paving slabs of the hall were carried away long ago for use in less grand homes). The other end descends below ground, leading into a long corridor and a few attached rooms of what were quite extensive cellars before the battle and the ravages of time caused most of the underways to collapse.

A WILL-O’-WISP HOVERS AROUND THE STAIR ON MOST NIGHTS, SO THAT IT CAN BE EASILY LOCATED FROM AFAR.

supportive spells practiced upon it by Yynthie’s students.

After twenty-odd seasons of peace, the mansion was attacked one night by unknown mages bent on seizing what magic they could. In the fierce spell-battle that ensued, the house was torn apart, destroying Yynthie and most of her apprentices. A trap (or perhaps a contingency spell linked to her death) blew apart most of the ridge soon after, taking the attacking wizards with it. Fearful elves who dwelt in the forests nearby kept the curious (and magick-hungry) away from Taeris for years that rises unheralded out of uneven turf to reach six or so steps into the empty air. Its other end descends into a dark hole.

The Stair is obviously held up and preserved by (falling) magics, but these enchantments lead to nothing above-ground. (Many adventuring bands have tried levitating and flying at various heights above or near the stair, fruitlessly seeking invisible chambers or portals there.) A will-o’-wisp hovers around the stair on most nights, so that it can be easily located from afar.

The lower end of the Stair splits, one end curving grandly to where the main floor of Echafall once was (very close to present-day ground level, though the paving slabs of the hall were carried away long ago for use in less grand homes). The other end descends below ground, leading into a long corridor and a few attached rooms of what were quite extensive cellars before the battle and the ravages of time caused most of the underways to collapse.

Adventurers who have penetrated into these depths speak of a giant slug or similar creature that leaves glowing slime-trails on the walls, floor, and ceiling, as well as ghosts or haunts (quite separate from the one that sometimes lurks aboveground) that manifest near the base of the stair and lure certain intruders into deadly traps. Other times these spectres glide along and simply watch visitors or ignore them altogether.

These apparitions include a disembodied human hand cupping a glowing selection of (sometimes whirling) gems; a dark, shadowy, cowled human figure that

guiding. An adventurer should not be surprised to feel observed or listened to when in the presence of such a sculpture—and should speak accordingly (many enjoy conversation, if one knows the right elven tongue).

Those who seek to pluck gems from a frozenfall, or damage its surroundings, should be aware that many frozenfalls can unleash spells as deadly as those of many a living mage.

Even “unadorned” frozenfalls often include gems that store or can be made to emit magics, if one touches them and knows how to call forth their energies.

7. The word “goblinkin’” refers collectively to goblins, orcs, kobolds, and related humanoid creatures—the brutish predators that bedevil civilized Faerum.

8. Unknown to Volo, that is, I can reveal that all of these manifestations have a single source: a now-disused shrine of sentiment belonging to one of Yynthie’s students, the would-be sorceress Anathitha. A bad-tempered and strangely ambitious lass, Anathitha habitually defied Yynthie’s rulings and teachings, boldly and rashly experimenting on her own and plotting to someday seize all of Yynthie’s power for herself. She’d just put some of her own flesh (the smallest joint of her left little finger) into the pommelette of a blade and created a magical link between her body and its sharpened part (enabling her to see and speak out of the pommelette crystal), when the spell-battle that destroyed her occurred. Somehow her sentence was hurled through or drawn along the collapsing link into the pommelette, where she remained, able to see and speak, but do nothing else.

94 September 2000
glides along in swift, eerie silence, pointing, beckoning, or gesturing with a drawn sword, and a wild-eyed and finery-gowned elven lady in chains, who screams soundlessly and gestures imploringly to be rescued or released. Their origins and purposes are unknown.

Over the years, various adventurers have reported finding all sorts of strange objects in the cellars (most of to wealthy Waterdhavian collectors or hopeful mages everywhere.

Another phantom has also been reported by several survivors of forays into the ruins. When the door of a certain empty cellar is opened, the apparition of a young woman appears floating upright with eyes closed, her bare feet well clear of the floor. She then opens her eyes, screams piercingly, and rushes forward to fade away.

ADVENTURERS ARE FURTHER WARNED THAT SOME OF THE WALLS AND CEILINGS OF THE CELLARS ARE UNSTABLE.

which they carried out as booty and examined elsewhere). These include staffs, footstools, and cloaks bearing weird magic, that can be assumed to be unfinished student projects stored in the isolated underground chambers where the spellcasters-in-training attempted their most delicate or powerful castings. Judging by past reports, their powers might or might not function properly, or (lacking any instructions) might simply be inexplicable to finders of today. For those who can dare the dangers, of course, magic treasures are always worth recovering—if only to sell

Anyone she passes through suffers the effects of a chaotic onslaught of wild magics."

"Bare of all but fell magic and roaming monsters" is how the Bold Axe of Beregost, a recently-whelmed band of a dozen young bravos from up and down the Sword Coast, described the labyrinth at the bottom of the Stair. Others have stressed that although many visitors have scoured the chambers closest to the steps, few or none have reached every distant corner. Treasures might yet lie waiting to be discovered, especially to those who have a means of

Finally, the chaos of the spell-battle still lurks fitfully along the ridge. Any spells cast on the Stair, in the cellars, or in the immediate vicinity are apt to go wild, unleashing unintended and uncontrolled effects rather than the desired and expected results.

Trapped in the cellar with the shrouded, buried blade, Aralethia went mad. The blade's twisted magic powered her ghostly manifestations (the beautiful elf she saw how she saw herself, though in her human and solitary appearance, she seemed to all intruders as entertainment, luring them and exciting in their misfortunes.

If anyone finds the blade, however, she'll be seized with hope and try to caress the new weapon into carrying the weapon along, promising to guide the unfortunate to treasure, watch over the individual's slumber, and so on—so long

as the person wears the blade and allows Aralethia to see the world. She'll not tell the truth about herself (and indeed will spin grand tales about godly purposes for the blade and the adventurer who's found it), and her insanity dooms to failure all attempts to magically read, influence, or control her mind—and endangers the sanity of those trying such contacts.

Corectly, as it happens. Adventurers should be aware that some such projects still survive, though some of them were magically twisted in the wild discharges of the spell-battle. All of them have at least three magical powers or properties (one of which is almost always the ability to either sow the wind to a fae fire spell or to levitate upon command). Many have six or more, though these will always be minor magic, useful as weapons or sources of profit only to the resourceful.

10. This has nothing to do with Aralethia, who ignores it, and I believe it to be the last remnant of another student, Jalisara Blumfar, who was in a magical trance when the battle erupted. She no doubt perished just as her phantom records.
Class Acts

The Duelist

by Monte Cook • illustration by Greg Baker

In a world with heavily armored knights on huge, galloping chargers and powerful mages wielding mind-churning spells, there's no place for the daring swashbuckler who relies on his wits and reflexes to survive. Right? Wrong. The duelist proves that precision and skill are viable alternatives to massive weapons, and agility is a viable alternative to heavy armor.

The duelist is a nimble, intelligent fighter trained in making precise attacks with light weapons, such as the rapier. Also known as the swashbuckler, the duelist always takes full advantage of his quick reflexes and wits in a fight. Rather than wearing bulky armor, duelists feel the best way to protect themselves is to avoid getting hit in the first place.

Most duelists are fighters, rangers, rogues, or bards. Wizards, sorcerers, and monks make surprisingly good duelists due to their lack of reliance on armor. They also benefit greatly from the weapon skills the duelist offers. Paladins and barbarians who deviate a good deal from their archetypes might be duelists. Elves are more likely to become duelists than dwarves, and halfling and gnome duelists are not uncommon. Half-orc duelists are very rare.

NPC duelists are usually loners looking for adventure or a get-rich-quick scheme. Occasionally they work in very small, tight-knit groups, fighting with team-based tactics.

### THE DUELIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lvl</th>
<th>Attack Bonus</th>
<th>Fort. Save</th>
<th>Ref. Save</th>
<th>Will Save</th>
<th>Special</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+0</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+0</td>
<td>Canny Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+0</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+0</td>
<td>Precise Strike +1d6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>Enhanced Mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>Grace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>Acrobatic Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Precise Strike +2d6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Elaborate Parry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>+8</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Improved Reflexes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>+9</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>Deflect Arrows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>Precise Strike +3d6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ATTACK** The dueller's attack bonus, added to the character's normal attack bonus.

**FORT.** The save bonus on Fortitude saving throws.

**REF.** The save bonus on Reflex saving throws.

**WILL** The save bonus on Will saving throws, added to the character's normal save bonus.

**SPECIAL** Level-dependent class features.

### REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a duellist, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

- **Base Attack** +6.
- **Bonus**
- **Skills** Perform 3 ranks, Tumble 5 ranks.
- **Feats** Dodge, Weapon Proficiency (rapier), Ambidexterity, Mobility.

### CLASS SKILLS

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

The duellist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

- **Balance** (Dex)
- **Bluff** (Cha)
- **Escape Artist** (Dex)
- **Innuendo** (Wis)
- **Intuit Danger** (Wis, exclusive skill)
- **Jump** (Str)
- **Listen** (Wis)
- **Perform** (Cha)
- **Sense Motive** (Wis)
- **Spot** (Wis)
- **Tumble** (Dex)

See the Player's Handbook, Chapter 4, for skill descriptions.
THE DUELIST ALWAYS TAKES FULL ADVANTAGE OF HIS QUICK REFLEXES AND WITS IN A FIGHT.

CLASS FEATURES

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The duelist is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, but no type of armor or shield.

Camouflage: When not wearing armor, duelist add their Intelligence bonus to their Dexterity bonus to modify Armor Class while wielding a weapon. As with normal Dexterity AC modifications, positive modifiers are lost when the duelist is caught flat-footed.

Precise Strike: At 2nd level, the duelist gains the extraordinary ability to strike precisely with a light piercing weapon, gaining a bonus +1d6 points of damage added to her normal damage roll. When making a precise strike, the duelist cannot attack with a weapon in her other hand, although she can defend with it (or, if she has the proficiency, a shield). Like critical hits and sneak attacks, Precise Strike is ineffective against constructs, undead, oozes, and fortified armor. Every four duelist levels gained thereafter, she increases the extra damage by +1d6. If the duelist also has the rogue's sneak attack ability, the precise strike damage stacks with the sneak attack damage.

Enhanced Mobility: When not wearing armor, the duelist gains an additional +4 dodge bonus to AC against attacks of opportunity caused when he moves out of or within a threatened area.

Grace: At 4th level, the duelist gains an additional +2 competence bonus to all Reflex saving throws. This ability functions for the duelist only when wearing no armor.

Acrobatic Attack: At 5th level, if the duelist attacks by jumping at least 5 feet into his opponent, jumping down at least 5 feet onto his opponent, or swinging on a rope or similar object into his opponent, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to attack and damage rolls. This is an extraordinary ability.

Elaborate Parry: At 7th level, if the duelist chooses to fight defensively or uses the full defense action in combat, she gains an additional +1 dodge bonus to her AC for each class level of duelist she has. This is an extraordinary ability.

Improved Reaction: At 8th level, the duelist gains a +2 competence bonus to initiative rolls. This ability stacks with Improved Initiative.

Deflect Arrows: The duelist gains the Deflect Arrows feat (see page 8 of the Player's Handbook) only when he uses his one-handed piercing weapon.
The eggs started to hatch in complete darkness. This was no surprise, for the subterranean cavern had never before seen the light of day, had never felt the warmth of the sun’s rays. In this pitch-black world, a small clutch of leathery gray eggs began warping and buckling as the squirming larvae inside struggled for release. Finally tearing through the membranes of its shadowy prison, the first of the small, sluggish creatures squirmed out into the eternal gloom permeating the Underdark. Its black hide glistening with the slime of its egg, it instinctively crawled away from the other hatchlings, making its way alone into this new world of darkness and gloom. As it inched along, it scraped the ground with its rasp-tongued, tentatively probing for the drab mosses and lichens that would support it during its few short months as a grub.*

*Behind the departing grub, others of its kind began hatching. Each slowly inched its way across the cold, damp stone, making its solitary trek in a random direction through a world that knew no light.

“Barkeep, another round!” called Ardorak heartily, slamming his now-empty mug down on the table. On either side of him, Thorvin and Haaj swigged down the last of their ale and did likewise, sighing gustily and wiping their beards with the backs of their hands.

Across the table from them, Federico and his cousin, Javorik the Bold, Illusionist Extraordinaire, did their best to keep up. Federico practically inhaled his drink. Rivulets of ale cascaded down either side of his chin as he drank, but he didn't stop until his mug was empty and he could slam it on the table with as much force as his dwarven companions. Blasted if he was going to let a bunch of dwarves one-up him in a drinking contest! Javorik wasn’t in quite as much of a desperate hurry; he drank quickly, but not so quickly as to spill any of the ale, wanting to savor its unique taste.

Shandrilla, meanwhile, quietly sipped her mug of dwarven ale and winced at the strong, unfamiliar flavor. She peered distrustingly down at the liquid, as if expecting to find something vile floating in her mug. This was her first time in a dwarven bar, her first sampling of dwarven spirits. Had it been up to her, she would have gone straight back to her room in the inn, maybe indulging in a hot bath. The dwarves, however, had insisted on treating their new-found friends to a few rounds at their favorite watering hole, and she didn’t want to offend them by refusing their hospitality.

The barkeep, a retired dwarven adventurer whose face carried a wealth of battle-won scars, strolled over to their table with a tray of heavy mugs balanced on one meaty hand. "Who’re yer friends, then, Ardorak?" he asked, squinting at Shandrilla and her gnomish companions as he plunked the tray down on the table.

"These here’re our new best pals: Federico, Javorik, and Shandrilla," replied Ardorak, grabbing up a new mug and quaffing down a large swallow. "Ran into a bit o’ bother with a carrion crawler or two, we did, an’ these three gave us a bit o’ needed ‘distance.’ Wouldn’t be here to tell the tale if it weren’t for them! The dwarf clapped Javorik heartily on the shoulder as he finished, nearly spilling the little gnome onto the floor.

"Shandrilla here rassled one to the ground, she did, all by herself!" offered Haaj, grabbing up a second mug himself. The bartender looked in disbelief at the slim woman, trying to imagine her in hand-to-hand combat with a carrion crawler. He couldn’t do it. Shandrilla just...

---

1. Darkmantles are highly developed gastropods, believed by some to have evolved from the common periclorin as a classic monster from earlier editions of the D&D game—and, incidentally, the first creature ever covered in an “Ecology” article. They are found almost exclusively underground, living in subterranean caverns.

2. Darkmantles are hemaphroditic, each creature having both male and female reproductive organs. After mating, each darkmante goes its separate way and lays a clutch of 6-8 eggs in a secluded crevasse, afterward abandoning them forever. A darkmante egg is about the size of a chicken’s, but with a soft, grayish shell that allows it to blend in against stone surfaces.

3. A darkmante grub begins life as a herbivore, devouring mosses, lichen, and fungus with its radula—a tongue-like organ covered in rows and rows of tiny teeth that scrape away minute particles of edible fiber from the surrounding stone. Only after developing into its adult form does a darkmante become carnivorous.

---

98 September 2000
smiled at him in embarrassment and shrugged. "'Strew!' insisted Haaj.
"This I gotta hear fer meself!' said the barkeep, grabbing up a stool from a nearby table and making himself at home. He scooped up Shandrilas's second mug of ale without thinking and claimed it as his own. As Shandrilas had yet to finish even half of her first mug of the stuff, she said nothing.

The grub had grown during its first few months of life, not just in size but in form as well. Now a full foot in length and as wide as a human wrist, it crawled along the walls of a gloomy cavern near its birthplace, probing the stone ahead for edible plant fibers with its protentacles. The grub's tonguelike radula had split in two a week after the creature's birth, then split again, and one final time, leaving a ring of eight writhing appendages wriggling from around the grub's lamprey-like mouth. The tips of each of the protentacles were still covered in hundreds of tiny teeth, and each housed the creature's sense of taste. As it used its single foot-muscle to crawl along the cold stone, its protentacles darted about, tasting the stone ahead of it for any morsels of vegetable matter.

As had happened several times already during its wanderings, the grub detected one of its own clutchmates clinging to the cavern wall a short distance away. Suddenly, from out of the darkness of the cave scurred a tenebrous worm, its wicked mandibles wide open in hunger. As its clutchmate was silently devoured by the giant caterpillar-beast, the grub instinctively flattened itself into a narrow crack in the wall of the cavern, vanishing from view. Peeking out of the crevice, the grub watched as the tenebrous worm finished its meal and crawled off, finding its way out among the many branching corridors that led to other caverns and other prey. The grub remained safely inside its hidden niche until hunger once again forced it out in search of food.

"So when I find I kin finally move again, there's Shandrilas wearin' two of our packs, and she's got the critter's head pinned to the ground," said Ardorrah. "An' this one—pointing a thumb at Javorik—he's carving its guts out with his dagger. I tell you, it was a sight to see!" There was a roar of laughter as the assembled dwarves pictured the image in their minds.

Shandrilas noticed that several other dwarves had gathered around their table during Ardorrah's tale. She looked around at a sea of bearded dwarven faces, all gazing at her with looks of admiration and respect. Nervous at all the attention, she focused her gaze on her mug of dwarven ale and drained it dry.

"Ah, now that was nothing," said Javorik, looking over at his fluttered human companion with a mischievous twinkle in his eye. "You should have seen how she took care of these two puddings we ran into one time." Seating that all eyes were upon him, Javorik began the tale.

"We were down in this tunnel network, the first time either of us had been in the Underdark, looking for some squimmerall. Anybody ever have squimmerall tea? No? Good stuff. Anyway, so Shanny and I are walking down this tunnel, when we see what at first we think is a pool of oil, coozing right at us..." Embarrassed, Shandrilas reached for another mug of ale.

The creature, now in its full adult form, was ready for the next big step in its life. It hung suspended from the cavern roof by its muscular foot, hidden among the many stalactites reaching down toward the floor below. Despite its precarious hold it had an excellent sense of balance, thanks to an organ barely hidden underneath the front of its shell.

In the half-light streaming in from the cavern entrance, it would be nearly impossible to distinguish the darkmantle from the stalactites. The creature kept its eight tentacles pressed together in a ring, so that they tapered to a point below it. Its eyespots were now spaced evenly about its body, but they provided little more than a vague awareness of the sunlight streaming into the far side of the cavern. As always, the creature's sonic binoculars provided it with an excellent "view" of the surrounding

---

4. Darkmantles, both in grub and adult stages, have blindvision, a form of echolocation that uses high-frequency sound-pulses that are completely invisible to most other creatures. These pulses provide a sonarlike "sight" to a maximum range of 30 feet. A magical silence effect negates the darkmantle's blindvision and effectively blinds the creature. With its blindvision, a darkmantle is able to detect the presence of invisible objects or beings.

5. Darkmantle eyespots are vestigial, providing the creature with only the slightest differentiation between light and dark—just enough to realize when it has wandered out into the sunlight. (Since their blindsight sensor allows them to "see" only out to a go-foot range, darkmantles tend to be arophobic; they prefer the cramped quarters of the Underdark to the open spaces of the surface world.) The eyespots do not provide the darkmantle with any sort of true vision.

Darkmantle eyespots can replace bat's fur as a substrate material component for the arcane version of the darkness spell.
territory. The shell that had grown from the creature's back was itself the color and texture of limestone, serving as excellent camouflage on the cavern ceiling. Even without the ever-present shadows that served to cloak the creature from view, the darkmantle's skin color shifted to blend in with nearly any stone surface; to any casual observer, there was no difference between the darkmantle and the stalactites among which it hung.

Then it dropped from the ceiling. Instinctively, the darkmantle spread wide its tentacles. Doing so spread the tough membranes that had formed of the bar; it must be getting late, for the crowd around her table had dispersed, leaving her two gnomish companions and their three new dwarven buddies to drink and talk quietly amongst themselves. Shaking her head to clear it, Shandrilla realized there was a drone of voices coming from her table. Looking bleary-eyed at Javorik, she saw that he was speaking. She focused her attention on him and caught him in mid-sentence.

"...never told us what you guys had been doing down there," he said.

"Spinin', mostly," replied Thorvin, tripping heavily over his tongue. "Foun' us a way into this secret temple Ardorrik. "There was this big old statue carved right outta the stone—some kinda snake-god thingy with glowing red eyes this big around!" He held his hands out, cupping an imaginary circle some four inches in diameter.

"Rubies, I betcha," suggested Thorvin, scratching absently at his beard.

"Rubies, I betcha too," added Haaj.

"Why'd you leave them?" asked Javorik.

"Couldn't get up there!" replied Ardorrik. "They musta been, oh, I dunno—maybe thirty, forty feet up. We tried climbing the stupid statue, but none o' us is much for climbing!"

Javorik scowled at himself forward across the table until he was face-to-face with Ardorrik. "Shanny could do it," he said quietly.

"Huh?" said Shandrilla, perking to attention at the sound of her name.

"You could climb a forty-foot statue, couldn't you, Shanny?" he asked. "A big, strong human like you?"

"Sure," agreed Shandrilla wuzzily. "No platform—prollim—kee hee hee hee heel!" She giggled at her tongue's sudden rebellion.

"All right then!" said Ardorrik, eyes shining wildly with the thought of retrieving the one piece of obvious treasure the dwarven trio had left behind.

"No. Prob. Lem," enunciated Shandrilla carefully. When finished, she smiled in triumph at her success and immediately passed out onto the table, much to the amusement of the dwarves.

The darkmantle crawled slowly across the cavern ceiling on its gastropod foot. Its tentacles dangled below it, tasting the moisture of a rainy night as it made its deliberate path away from the cave opening leading to the outside world.

As it crawled along the ceiling, the darkmantle suddenly sensed a flurry of motion below it. It was a flock of bats, preparing for a night seeking prey on

---

5. The statocyst is a small, baglike organ common in many gastropods. It contains numerous small, sandlike grain particles suspended in liquid, and it acts the darkmantle's sense of balance. In that respect, the statocyst is equivalent to a human's inner ear.

6. The darkmantle's shell begins growing at about the same time as the creature's protruberances grew long enough to account for half of the creature's total body length. The shell results from mineral intake as the darkmantle's radula scrapes rock surfaces in search of food. Mineral secretions from the pores of the darkmantle's dorsal area gradually build up to form a hardened shell, which continues to grow and thicken as the darkmantle ages and the mineral buildup continues.

7. In its full adult form, the darkmantle's appearance becomes similar to that of an octopus: the narrow body, the long tentacles surrounding the mouth, and the flaps of skin between the tentacles all give the creature a cephalopod look. However, an adult darkmantle retains its larval-like mouth.

In addition, the flaps of skin connecting the tentacles reach two-thirds of the length of the tentacles. The darkmantle spreads its tentacles and can use the skin-flaps as primitive wings.
IN FUNCTION, THE DARKMANTLE COMBINES FEATURES OF MANY ANIMAL SPECIES—OCTOPI, SNAILS, AND EVEN FLYING SQUIRRELS.

the surface world. Without hesitation, the darkmantle released the grip of its suction-foot and swooped down upon an unsuspecting bat.

As the two creatures collided in midair, the darkmantle wrapped its tentacles around the hapless bat and squeezed tightly. Immediately, both creatures began plummeting toward the ground. The darkmantle didn’t seem to notice, however, refusing to loosen its grip upon its prey even as both creatures struck the hard cavern floor. Absorbing the impact with its rubbery tentacles, the darkmantle concentrated completely on its goal: crushing the life out of the bat it had captured. Only after the bat was dead did the darkmantle release its vicelike grip and transfer the carcass to its circular mouth, filled with many sharp, tiny teeth.

"I agreed to this?" asked Shandril for what must have been the tenth time, as she travailed through the underground cavern network once again.

"You were very insistent," agreed Javorik, holding out a torch and hurrying to keep up with the others. Up ahead, the three dwarven fighters marched at full speed through the roughly-hewn tunnel, eager to get to the secret temple they’d discovered and let their new human companion get about the business at hand—namely, prying the giant rubies from the statue of the weird snake-god they’d uncovered. Fedenico marched right along with them, determined not to let a bunch of dwarves show him up. If any of the four were feeling any after-effects from their night of heavy drinking, they didn’t show it. Javorik
didn’t seem particularly affected, either, come to think about it. Only Shandrilla seemed to carry a reminder of the previous night with her: a throbbing headache that wouldn’t go away and a mouth that felt like it was filled with old socks. She’d had some tea in the morning, and that had seemed to help for awhile, but not by much, and not for long.

“I don’t believe it,” muttered Shandrilla to herself, for what must have also been the tenth time. “No more dwarven ale for me, Javonik, ever again!”

“Whatever you say, Shanny.”

Since moving deeper into the subterranean passageways, the darkmante had discovered that it was prey as often as it was predator. In a burst of frantic energy, it flapped its tentacles-tentings, lifting it into the stale air and up to the top of the cavern ceiling, where it hoped it would be safe from the large, multi-legged predator that had stumbled across it. No such luck: The carrion crawler merely altered its course, walking up the wall of the Underdark cavern on its way to the ceiling, its tentacles writhing hungrily before it.

As the worm-monster closed the gap, the darkmante dropped from the ceiling, gliding a short distance before landing back on the floor. The carrion crawler was again forced to change course, diverting to the wall to once more reach the floor. The darkmante took the opportunity to crawl down a narrow corridor and out of sight. It couldn’t keep running for long; its only hope lay in camouflage.

Temporarily out of the carrion crawler’s view, it flapped to the ceiling again, snagged a stalactite with a tentacle, and found a quick perch on the ceiling. Getting a good grip with its gastropod foot, it spread its tentacles wide around it in all directions, covering its body with its skin-flaps. Tucked inside itself in this fashion, the darkmante looked like nothing so much as a slight bulge in the rock of the ceiling. Using only quick pulses of sonar to gain an idea of any movement around it, it watched as the carrion crawler entered the cavern, wandered around aimlessly for a short time, and exited by another passageway. The danger was over for now; it had managed to elude its hunter. Nonetheless, it rested motionlessly on the cavern ceiling for several hours, replenishing its energy and making sure that all potential danger was gone before uncoiling its tentacles and exploring the newly tunnel network in which it now found itself.

“There it be,” said Ardorrrak proudly.

“IT’S BEAUTIFUL,” SHE WHISPERED.

“DO YOU REALLY THINK IT’S RIGHT TO PRY OUT ITS EYES?

IT SEEMS—WELL, SACRILEGIOUS.”

Shandrilla looked up at the stone carving in appreciation of its fine craftsmanship, but she also noticed that the scale patterns on the serpent god would make suitable hand- and footholds during the climbing process. The red eyes of the stone beast glowed softly as if with an inner light.

“It’s beautiful,” she whispered. “Do you really think it’s right to pry out its eyes? It seems—well, sacrilegious.”

“Don’t worry about it,” responded Ardorrrak. Then, in a louder voice he called out: “Hey! Snake-god! We’re gonna pull them eyeballs outta yer face, less’n you give us a sign!”

The six adventurers stood silently as the echoes of Ardorrrak’s last sentence reverberated around the huge cavern. Shandrilla looked up at the statue, as if awaiting a cue. It stood, silent and unmoving, gazing out across the cavern.

“I reckon it’s okay with him, then,” replied Ardorrrak matter-of-factly.


“No problem,” replied the young woman, smiling to herself as she half-remembered tripping over the simple phrase the night before. She took a deep breath to clear her head and then got down to business. Removing her pack, she started unloading its contents and distributing what she’d need into various pockets and loops on her belt. She checked that her dagger and short sword were in their sheaths; a small hammer went into her belt; a number of short spikes went into a pile on the floor.

“Light ‘em up,” she commanded Javonik, and the diminutive gnome bent to comply.

The darkmante had slowly learned its way around these deeper caverns, far away from the world of sun and rain. In many ways these caves were different from those near the surface, but in all of the important ways they were the same. The stone passageways housed abundant life: bats, spiders, insects, lizards. There were stalactites among which to hide, pools of cold, clear water from which to drink, endless passageways and corridors in which to explore. Life was good; food was plentiful: the darkmante was content.

Then it met up with an entirely new type of food.

Shandrilla paused in her ascent up the stone statue. Pulling one of the small spikes from between her lips with her left hand, she positioned it between her
IN THIS CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT, THIS CAPTURED DARKMANTLE DEMONSTRATES ITS LASHING TECHNIQUE.

thumand foerfinger while gripping a jutting stone scale with the rest of her hand. Reaching down for her hammer with her right hand, she tapped the spike into place. The light spell that Javorik had cast upon the spike heads illuminated the side of the statue for twenty feet in all directions. There was another such spike down at the bottom of the statue, where she'd hammered it firmly into place before beginning her dangerous ascent.

She looked up: less than halfway left to go. Returning the hammer to its loop on her belt, she found a good handhold and continued her climb, the last two remaining glowing spikes protruding from her mouth.

The darkmantle crawled slowly along the ceiling, curiously investigating the steady stream of air blowing its way.

Sure enough, along the edge of the cavern wall was a one-foot-tall gap, twice again as long as it was tall, from which emanated a steady current of air. The darkmantle squeezed its body into the gap, crawling along upside-down on its gastropod foot and probing ahead with its tentacles.

There were voices coming from the narrow gap. The darkmantle did not recognize them as voices, merely as sounds made by some other creature; the concept of a language was beyond its animal intelligence. It scurried forward, through the gap and into a large chamber. Oddly, there was some sort of light source at work in the chamber; even the darkmantle's weak eyespots could detect the illumination.

Puzzled, the darkmantle crept forward.

15. Short bursts of flight not only allow the darkmantle to move faster than it can travel on its tentacle-tips but also breaks up its scent-trail. Many Underearth predators hunt by scent; these creatures often give up when the scent-trail suddenly ends.

16. This is the second form of camouflage employed by the darkmantle (the first, of course, being its stalacite "disguise"). Darkmantles usually cover themselves up with their skin-flaps when actively hiding from predators; naturally, the stalacite disguise works only when the creature is among other stalacites, whereas looking like a lump of rock works just about anywhere.

When sleeping, or during the many months of hibernation, a darkmantle prefers hanging from the ceiling disguised as a stalacite, as it requires less effort for the darkmantle to hang from its foot than to find comfortable holds for each of its eight tentacles. Darkmantles also passively "hunt" in this fashion, hanging motionlessly from the cavern ceiling and then dropping down upon unsuspecting prey that passes beneath.

When actively "disguised," either as a stalacite or a lump of rock, darkmantles have a +4 bonus to Hide skill checks.
Shandrilla pulled herself up onto the snake-god’s head, using its carved teeth as a convenient foothold. Then, straddling the statue’s broad snout, she hammered the last remaining light spike into its forehead, right between its red-glowing eyes. “I’m up!” she called down to her companions.

“Are they rubies?” called back Ardorak.

“Yes, looks like it! Big ones!” replied Shandrilla.

“I knew they were rubies!” chuckled Thorvin, rubbing his hands together in greed and grinning at the thought of how much money a pair of four-inch rubies would fetch.

Up on the snake-god’s head, Shandrilla pulled out a large iron spike and proceeded to anchor it into the statue’s muzzle. This spike had a hole near the top, through which the young thief secured her thin coil of silken rope. After all, climbing up was one thing; she could see where she was putting her hands on the way up. Climbing down would be harder; she’d have to feel for each foothold in turn, and there and forth of her slim blade, she felt the gem begin to give way.

Then the world went black.9

Shandrilla shrieked in surprise, then tightened her grip on the snake-god’s muzzle with her legs, afraid of falling off now that she could no longer see. Her first thought was that Javorik had mistimed the duration of his light spells. As she opened her mouth to berate her gnomish companion about his spellcasting skills, she felt something solid strike the back of her head and wrap several rosy appendages around her face, preventing her from making a sound.10

Panic overtook Shandrilla. In the back of her mind she realized that she was balanced forty feet up in the air and that any sudden movements could potentially push her off the statue’s head to a messy death below. Still, it was hard not to squirm around as she struggled to get free. She could feel separate bands of rubbery appendages wrapped around her head and throat, squeezing tightly; instinctively, she stabbed backward with her dagger in an attempt to dislodge the creature from the back of her head.

SHE COULD FEEL SEPARATE BANDS OF RUBBERY APPENDAGES WRAPPED AROUND HER HEAD AND THROAT, SQUEEZING TIGHTLY.

was no guarantee that she’d be back down on the ground when Javorik’s light spells ran their course. Shandrilla didn’t plan on being plunged into sudden darkness halfway down a forty-foot statue.

Satisfied that her line was secure, she scooted her way back up to the first of the snake-god’s eyes. Pulling out her trusty dagger, she ran its blade along the bottom surface of the gem, trying to pry it from the stone. With a few grunts of exertion and some frantic wiggling back and forth of her slim blade, she felt the gem begin to give way.

Then the world went black.9

Shandrilla shrieked in surprise, then tightened her grip on the snake-god’s muzzle with her legs, afraid of falling off now that she could no longer see. Her first thought was that Javorik had mistimed the duration of his light spells. As she opened her mouth to berate her gnomish companion about his spellcasting skills, she felt something solid strike the back of her head and wrap several rosy appendages around her face, preventing her from making a sound.10

Panic overtook Shandrilla. In the back of her mind she realized that she was balanced forty feet up in the air and that any sudden movements could potentially push her off the statue’s head to a messy death below. Still, it was hard not to squirm around as she struggled to get free. She could feel separate bands of rubbery appendages wrapped around her head and throat, squeezing tightly; instinctively, she stabbed backward with her dagger in an attempt to dislodge the creature from the back of her head.

Down below, the sudden lack of illumination up at the top of the statue hadn’t gone unnoticed by the dwarves and gnomes. “What’s that silly human girl up to now?” muttered Federico under his breath.

“Shamy? You okay up there?” called out Javorik, worry in his voice.

No answer.

“Shamy?” he called out again.

As if in response, an object came hurtling down from above, clattering to the stone floor with a metallic clang. The little illusionist rushed over to it. “It’s her dagger! She’s in trouble!” he cried out.

The dwarves all whipped out their weapons—warhammer, short sword, and battleaxe—and looked helplessly up at the statue, its serpentine head now sheathed in total darkness. Federico had his short sword in hand as well, but he was hard-pressed to figure out anything to do with it. “We gotta get up there to help her!” he cried, approaching the base of the statue and attempting to climb it, to no avail.

Javorik, meanwhile, was mentally reaing a magic missle spell, but he knew that without being able to see a suitable target, the spell was useless. He had no magical means of flying, levitating, or even spider climbing. Gnashing his teeth in helpless frustration, he cried, “Shamy!” at the top of his lungs.

Up on the head of the snake god, Shandrilla was starting to black out. She had lost her dagger in the struggle with the gods-only-knew-what, and in her panic had completely forgotten about the short sword strapped at her left hip. Blindly grasping around for a weapon—any weapon—her fingers brushed the multifaceted orb of the snake-god’s left eye, which she had been prying loose with her dagger before the attack.

Grasping it with all her might, she tugged and felt its solid weight fall into her hand. Without further thought, she swung it at the creature adhering to her face. There was a solid thunk as it hit something hard; pleased at the result, Shandrilla repeated the action and noticed the grip of the tentacles loosening up somewhat.

Then the ruby slipped from her fingers, to bounce off the side of the snake-god’s head and plummet toward her companions, forty feet below.

The darkmantle was surprised at the initial ferocity of this new type of food. After stealthily creeping up to its intended meal along the cavern ceiling, it

---

9. Given its flight abilities, a darkmantle can travel over quite a wide area. For this reason, darkmantle infestations might seem to spring up overnight, as the creatures cover many miles of territory in their search for food.

10. Unlike most gastropods, darkmantles have an excellent sense of hearing. Their "ears" take the form of numerous tiny grooves or pits spaced evenly through the outer surfaces of their tentacles. As a result, darkmantles have a +4 racial bonus to Listen skill checks, as well as a rank in the Listen skill for a total bonus of +9.

11. Darkmantles can cast the equivalent of a darkness spell once per day, cast as if by a 5th-level sorcerer, giving the sphere of darkness a 20-foot radius and a duration of 5 minutes.

12. Darkmantles habitually employ their darkness ability immediately before attacking. Like the spell of the same name, the darkmantle's darkness must be cast upon an object touched by the creature. Depending upon circumstances, the darkmantle either casts its darkness on a hanging stalactite (in low caverns where the
triggered its magical darkness on a hanging stalactite and then pounced to the attack. Gliding to its prey on widespread tentacle-wings, it landed smack on target and enveloped the victim's head in its crushing grip.

Then, without warning, the darkmantle's flesh was suddenly being ripped and torn. It was apparently some type of claw, but it tasted of metal when it bit deep into the darkmantle's tentacle. A quick brush sent the strange claw flying away.

Then, just as suddenly, solid blows were striking the darkmantle's shell, hard enough for it to begin cracking. The darkmantle winced in silent pain, but kept gripping its prey. Surely, the creature would tire before long!

Then, apparently, it did just that; slumping to the left, the victim slid off the side of its perch and fell toward the ground below.

Shandrilla felt the world start to spin and realized she was mere seconds away from blacking out. Her left hand brushed against her coil of silken rope; acting on little more than instinct, she grabbed it from somewhere in the middle, wound it around her wrist a few times, and leapt from the snake-god's head.

Her consciousness left her at some point on the way down.

Javorik saw her emerge from the inky blackness like a falling rock, some sort of bag over her head. It wasn't until she suddenly stopped her descent and crashed sideways into the statue that he realized she was hanging suspended from her thin line. She dangled by her left wrist, her toes some ten feet above the ground.

The bag was moving, tightening its grip around Shandrilla's head. "Hands!" yelled Javorik at the dwarves, interlocking his fingers to demonstrate what he wanted, then spouting off the words to his magic missile spell. Ardorokk and Thorvin dropped

their weapons and locked hands, while shafts of magical energy struck the grayish "bag" on Shandrilla's head.

"Up!" yelled Javorik, as he raced toward the two dwarves and placed his right foot in their interlocked hands. They straightened their posture and threw their hands up over their heads, flinging the gnomish illusionist high into the air.

Javorik landed on the back of Shandrilla's legs and climbed his way up to her shoulders. On the way up he slipped her short sword from its scabbard and stabbed the creature that happened? What was—that—thing?"

"Beats me," admitted the little illusionist. Some kind of weird tentacle monster. It's dead, though. You sure you're okay?"

"Fine," rasped Shandrilla in response, swallowing hard. Her throat felt raw; it was difficult to get the words out.

"You think you can move, then? We're ready to go, if you are."

"Ruby?" croaked Shandrilla, casting her gaze up at the snake-god statue. Its head was still sheathed in darkness.

Ardorokk approached with a handful of tinted shards. The silvers glinted red

THE DARKMANTLE WINGED IN SILENT PAIN, BUT KEPT GRIPPING ITS PREY. SURELY, THE CREATURE WOULD TIRE BEFORE LONG!

was even now tightening its grip around her neck.

The results were as Javorik had hoped. The monster released its grip on the human to better deal with this new threat; Javorik pierced it under its hardened shell with the sword and flipped it, sword and all, off of his friend and into the air.

The darkmantle found itself unable to fly with a metal sword poking out from the side of its body; it plummeted to the ground and struck hard. Reacting quickly, it rolled up onto its tentacle-tips, ready to scurry away—only to be cut in half by a single stroke of Haaj's battleaxe.

Shandrilla awoke on the ground, surrounded by five worried faces. There was a throbbing pain in her left shoulder, and the skin on her left wrist felt raw.

"Shammy? You okay?" asked Javorik, worry in his voice.


"Then—let's—go," gasped Shandrilla, pulling herself up to her feet. She cradled her left arm against her stomach, thinking she had probably dislocated her shoulder from the sudden lurch at the end of her descent.

Ardorokk picked up his torch and silently led the others back the way they had come. Javorik and Federico flanked Shandrilla protectively on either side, ready to catch her if she stumbled.

As they exited the forgotten temple, Shandrilla took one last look back at the giant statue. As if on cue, the darkness spell expired, and the snake-god seemed to wink at Shandrilla with its one good eye, glowing a faint red in the shadows. Shandrilla shivered and turned away.
Where there's one goblin, there are probably ten more around the corner. Goblins, kobolds, and other low Hit Dice creatures are individually weak, but they make up for that with traps and tactics that rely on indirect attacks or overwhelming foes with superior numbers. A low-level party of adventurers can find themselves drawn out, disorganized, and possibly depleted of their full power through constant small-scale skirmishes.

If you know your character is fated to fight goblins, decisions you make while creating your character (and advancing in level) are important.

**Cleave & Great Cleave:** The Cleave feat (prerequisite: Power Attack) seems specifically designed to allow you to plow through weak humanoid foes. Whenever you down one, you have the chance to down another one immediately. Goblins hate that.

**Whirlwind Attack:** Like cleave, Whirlwind Attack is ideal against a host of foes. Unfortunately, it has many prerequisites, and you won’t be able to get Whirlwind Attack right off. But, once taken, it’s perfect for downing low-level humanoids. If facing two or more adjacent foes with poor AC and who are generally weak a Whirlwind Attack is always a good idea. Since you can attack all adjacent foes within 5 feet, being surrounded by goblins before you let this rip is sure to bring goblins woe — unless the goblins flanking you hide a rogue or two in their midst, in which case you had better extricate yourself from your flanked position immediately.

**MAXIMIZE SPELL:** Your spellcaster will find this feat nice for many reasons, but it’s particularly useful against goblins when coupled with, say, the sleep spell. Maximize Spell maximizes all numerical values of a spell. The sleep spell can affect up to 2d4 HD of creatures, which, in conjunction with Maximize Spell, is a cool 8 HD. Goblins, kobolds, and creatures of similar ilk are known for their low HD. Thus, a Maximized sleep can potentially affect an entire gang of goblins who fail their saving throws.

**PREPARATION**

Setting up your character is only half the battle. The tactics you use to take on your goblin or kobold foes can decide whether you die or live to fight another day.

**Don’t get drawn out:** A typical goblin warren is arranged so that you’ll likely have several smaller encounters on the outskirts, while the goblins’ real strength waits at the warren’s heart. If your party has exhausted half or more of its replenishable (spells, potions, hit points, ammo, and so on) through several small skirmishes, take stock of the situation. If you know you are close to the heart of the warren, back off to defendable position and rest. The heart of the warren is always the toughest and most dearly defended. In the meantime, some of the areas you cleared out might remain goblin strongholds, but in so doing the goblins are merely rearranging their forces, bleeding off strength in other areas. Eventually, they’ll exhaust their reinforcements.

**Root out the fortifications:** Low HD creatures know they are fragile, and if they have time to prepare, they will set themselves up behind barriers or walls, or on top of ledges, in order to rain ranged attacks on advancing enemies. You could bull right up and over the wall or barrier, taking fire all the while, and finally engage your foes directly, but at the price of a lot of extra damage. Sometimes, this is the only choice. Alternatively, you can loft alchemist fire over the wall or onto the ledge holding your goblin foes. The round after breachage is the round when stuck or splashed foes catch fire, unless they somehow scrape off the fluid. This is your chance to charge the wall and draw less fire.

**Don’t let them flank you:** Goblins, with their superior numbers, often attempt to flank lone foes. You can minimize this risk by always standing adjacent to one or more of your allies, or if alone, along a wall. Don’t pass up your opportunities to move into flanking positions on overextended goblins, especially if you are a rogue, or just as importantly, if you can set a rogue up for a good flanking position. Sneak attacks go through goblins like a heated dagger through clotted cream.

**VS. Goblins Tips**

- Favor multiple attacks
- Stock plenty of ammunition
- Conserve your power
- Watch your back
- Prepare to overcome cover
Give Your Game The Edge

With the Official Dungeons & Dragons Magazines!

Dragon Magazine
Roleplaying Strategy
Dungeon Master Advice
New D&D Rules

New Adventures for the NEW D&D!
For ALL Levels of Play
Essential Game Accessories

Dungeon Magazine
Fantastic D&D Modules
Maps of Mystery
Side Treks—One-Night Adventures

Free Poster Map Inside!

1-800-395-7760 dragon@pcspublink.com and dungeon @ pcspublink.com
Order online at www.wizards.com/dragon/dungeon

*Dragon, Dungeon, Dungeons & Dragons, and D&D are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast. © 2000 Wizards of the Coast.*
The sixty-four monsters hidden below like to suggest they have nothing in common, but they're wrong. The monsters are hidden word search-style (horizontally, vertically, and diagonally). But where any two or more creatures intersect, the common letter has been removed, leaving only those letters that are in one entry. You must fill in the crossing letters and fill out the word list. When you're done, each space in the grid will contain one letter and no letter will go unused. All monsters must at least one letter to be filled in. Remember, if you put in a letter, it must be in two or more monsters.
I'm an Umberjack, and I'm ok...

"Adventurers! We're dead meat. I mean, even more so."

"For the thousandth time: no, I don't have any captive princesses, chieftain's daughters, or even a lousy milkmaid! Go hire a dating service or something, you loser!"
One World. Many Games.

Be a part of the largest roleplaying adventure in the world. The RPGA® Network is an international organization dedicated to bringing exciting roleplaying opportunities to gamers everywhere. Our members even represent their home countries in the Living Greyhawk® global campaign. Each region on earth has a corresponding region in Oerth. Your actions define the events of Greyhawk. We gather together at conventions, local game stores, and member-sponsored Game Days—even online. The RPGA Network is open to all, and a Guild-level membership brings the full range of benefits to your table.

Make new friends. See the world. Join the RPGA Network.

RPGA®

Network

North American Branch
P.O. Box 707
Renton, WA 98057-0707
Rpgenq@wizards.com

European Branch
PB 2031
2600 Berchem
Belgium
rpga@wizards.be

Asia-Pacific Branch
P.O. Box 3391, BMDC
ACT 2617
Australia
ves@dynmite.com.au

United Kingdom Branch
P.O. Box 61
Maidenhead, Berkshire
SL6 1FX
United Kingdom
rpga@uk.wizards.com

Germany/Austria Branch
Amigo Spiel + Freizeit
GmbH
Waldstr. 23/D5
63128 Dietzenbach
Germany
rpga@amigo-spiele.de

Questions?
Go to <www.wizards.com/rpga>
or call (800) 324-5496.

All trademarks are property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©2000 Wizards.
In a word: Appalled

Over the past six months or so, I have been seeing and hearing various references to the upcoming 3rd Edition of D&D. In general, I was not particularly concerned, because I expected it to be something on the order of the revisions that were made ten years ago for the 2nd Edition. Those changes, while broad, generally simplified and improved the game, and did not make any fundamental alterations to the basic system. I did not lose any sleep over the new edition because I expected more of the same.

This new edition is not AD&D. I don’t know what it is, but I know what it is not.

This weekend I visited my local game store and discovered the handy “conversion guide” Wizards of the Coast has been distributing. In only a few minutes, I realized just how wrong I was.

I am, in a word, appalled.

AD&D might be an “old school” gaming system. It might not have a lot of flashy, crowd-pleasing elements. It might be cluttered with restrictions that players who want their characters to achieve instant godhood find frustrating. But the fundamentals of the system promote game balance and long-term campaign health, and it has survived largely unchanged since the late ‘70s, while dozens of other systems have faded away into obscurity.

Now I discover that Wizards of the Coast has taken it upon itself to inject critical hit systems, level-based ability increases, and a whole host of other elements that essentially dynamite twenty-five years of tradition. Spells, character classes, and magic items, familiar elements that have been with us from the beginning, have had their names changed for no apparent reason. The entire combat and saving throw system has been tossed into the trash. What is left appears to be little more than a cobbled-together mishmash, tacked up to give it a superficial resemblance to the old.

And for what? I would like to believe that Wizards of the Coast is composed of people who truly enjoy gaming and have some respect for its traditions, and who would not do something like this simply to fatten their wallets. But I have a hard time coming up with an alternate explanation. The only other reason I can think of is that AD&D has been taken over by people who prefer other game systems. But if that’s the case, why buy the system at all? Why not leave it alone for the millions of gamers who like it the way it is?

I realize that we live in a capitalist society. I realize that corporations have to make decisions that ensure their long-term health. I have watched, over the last ten or fifteen years, as industries like video rental, book sales, and Internet access have gradually been taken over by large conglomerates that remake them in an effort to maximize their profitability. Perhaps it was naïve of me to think that this would never happen to AD&D. Naïve, perhaps, to think of AD&D as a tradition and institution, one that would never be destroyed by the hard realities of economics. Naïve to think the love of millions of gamers would be enough to sustain it forever.

It seems that I was wrong.

This new edition is not AD&D. I don’t know what it is, but I know what it is not. It is not a game I wish to play.

I am thirty-three, and I have been playing AD&D for almost twenty years now. I have sometimes wondered if I would be doing this the rest of my life. At times, I thought that I might one day drift away, distracted by the responsibilities of career and family. What I never expected was that I would feel as if I had been stabbed in the back by the game itself.

I’m going to miss it. Have fun with your new toys, Wizards of the Coast.

Thomas W. Overton • Aliso Viejo, CA

In a word: Saliva

First off, let me get the requisite gushing over the new edition done with. I am ecstatic about seeing the new edition in all its glory once it is released. So far, all the rule and class previews have driven the salivary glands into overdrive. I’ve always strived to play characters or NPCs who were not of the generic mold that most of the classes are designed for. With the new rules, almost any character can be created and played. The almost total freedom to play whatever you want (besides a
As a little aside now that my main trade is over, I have some comments on clerical magic and damage values, issues that were brought up in "Forum" in issue #372.

The ability of clerics to now trade their spells for healing ability does not in any way over-emphasize the role of support person or the "heals on wheels" characters that most people malign clerics to be. The new system allows clerics to retain their integral ability to heal or damage creatures while carrying a large assortment of spells with which they can aid the party in other ways. In effect, it is meant to diminish the feeling that all a cleric is good for is healing the warrior and scaring off skeletons.

Damage values were different for the different sizes for at least one logical reason that I can see. It's a matter of percentages. A large creature such as a giant has more hit points than a lowly goblin. A longsword might do only 180 points to a goblin because of size. You stick a goblin with a longsword, and after the first 8-10 inches, you're out the back side and no matter how much more steel you thrust through, the only difference it will make is how much you have to draw back out of the corpse. Whereas if you stick a giant or an elephant with a longsword, most likely you will not run it through. Since the whole blade can be inside the creature, it will do more damage. But since the giant has 8-10 times as many hit points as the goblin, even with the added damage dice values you aren't doing the same percentage of damage to its life total. So while it looks like an advantage in taking on the large creatures out there, the increased damage values for weapon effects are more a tool to balance combat and give players a little edge when taking on a much larger opponent.

Lastly, on the issue of arrows vs. bolts. Arrows and crossbow bolts should do around the same amount of damage to rigid (plate) armor. The biggest reason the French hated the English longbow was the fact that it could penetrate plate armor from a significant distance. Only the largest crossbows could compare to basic bows because their range and accuracy were slightly better. When it comes to a short bow archer vs. a crossbowman with a light crossbow, all other things being equal, always bet on the archer. His rate of fire will almost always best the crossbow's slightly better accuracy and the little bit of "oomph" it gives the bolt over the arrow. It's like comparing a semi-automatic pistol to a slingshot.

**If 3rd Edition is really successful, players will be so wrapped up in the adventure that they won't be paying attention to the supporting rules.**

Unless the guy with the slingshot is very good and very lucky to hit with his first shot, the guy with the pistol will hit him as he tries to reload his ball bearing.

Christopher Chung • Corvallis, OR

---

**The Sound of Inevitability**

Let's face it: The new edition is coming whether we want it or not. Most of the fears I’ve heard have come from people worried about their own campaign settings or the fact that Wizards of the Coast is not going to support their setting. This has worried me, but I have come up with a few plans.

1. **See what is in the Conversion Manual and use what I can of that.**
2. **Use the Web pages, hoping that they can supply rules for us to use.**
3. **Hope Wizards of the Coast reprints some of the books I need.**
4. **Convert the rules myself.**

Each has its flaws. I doubt that the conversion book will offer all the material to convert Masque of the Red Death rules or Chronomancer (yes I have, and use, that book). The Web pages will be a collective work a long time coming, but Chronomancer is a book worthy of a conversion and reprint. (So to those at Wizards of the Coast, I hope you pay attention.) That leaves my personal favorite:

Converting official works will need the mechanics of the Conversion Manual and will take you awhile, but no pain, no gain.

Are the psionics rules going to
consolidate into one system and have the full range of and Edition, material? We can only hope so. At least if the new edition gets bogged down, we will still have “Forum” to argue over where Wizards of the Coast went wrong.

Andrew Brown • UK

It’s All About the Classics
Both Dungeon Magazine and the Wizards of the Coast website have done a great job of informing gamers about the upcoming D&D game. The free Conversion Manual on the website is especially helpful. I hope Wizards of the Coast will be supporting the new edition with more classic adventures.

When it comes to drumming up a game, Dungeon Masters can’t interest potential new players by saying, “I have an adventure that introduces new rules.” It’s the challenge of the diabolical wizard, the great dragon, or the black knight that lure new players to the table. If the new edition is really successful, players will be so wrapped up in the adventure that they won’t pay attention to the supporting rules.

For the 2nd Edition game, it seemed like there was an increasing focus on new character classes, new monsters, endless details about campaign settings, and new rules. I like all of these in moderation, but it’s the adventures that are the lifeblood of a campaign. It doesn’t seem like Wizards of the Coast publishes as many adventures these days, and many of the recent adventures have been pretty esoteric. For example, the Undermountain adventures were more of a funhouse than a classic adventure. How about a return to the bread-and-butter adventures like thwart the pirates or slay the vampires? How about some series built around a classic adventure premise (like the old Desert of Desolation series)? How about shorter introductions to campaign settings that focus on adventure opportunities?

Here’s hoping the new D&D game is a springboard back to classic adventure gaming, and that it doesn’t get strangled with rules and trivia.

Jeff Herrin • Sacramento, CA

Do You Understand?
In issue #472, Mr. Roberts struck on a few issues about D&D that really hit a nerve with me and probably other gamers. I have only had about three to five pages of house rules my whole time gaming. These were then discussed with the rest of the party before being put into effect. It sounds to me like he has almost rewritten the game.

I must agree with him on the 496 for character generation. My group and I have used it for years.

On the subject of gnomes and halflings, I don’t believe Mr. Roberts has ever had a player that really understood the two races. I’ve had players and have played both races myself on several occasions. The gnome might not be very adventurous, but he can be a lot of fun if the attitude is right (mischievous). All of the players who have ever played a halfling in my campaign use the curiosity of the race to add to the fun of gaming.

Also, on the subject of dwarf elves, they appeared long before the Forgotten Realms setting was officially published. They also appear in the Fiend Folio (1981).

When Mr. Gygax was not working with TSR, they needed a world to replace Greyhawk. The Realms were perfect. Nobody ever said that a DM has to use the Forgotten Realms for their campaign. Until just recently, I used my own world for DMing, but because of confusion amongst the players when we changed DMs, I decided to use the Realms.

As a player that began in the ’70s, I’ve seen all of the changes. I wasn’t happy to hear about the new edition but from what I’ve read it keeps up with the tradition of high quality gaming fun. A little confusing in some places, but still good.

Russ Junkin • Mannheim, Germany
rjunkin@bluewin.de

The Unspeakable Oaf
by John Kovalic

Machen Sie jetzt Ihren
EVERY IMAGE
EVERY ARTICLE
EVERY STAT

Every *Dragon* Magazine – Issues 1 through 250 – completely searchable on multiple compact discs.

Discover the Ultimate Hoard

Visit our website at www.wizards.com

DRAGON MAGAZINE ARCHIVE - 25 YEARS OF DRAGON MAGAZINE ON CD-ROM
REDEFINING THE ARCHETYPES

Dungeons and Dragons has always drawn strength from archetypes. One could argue that they are the basis for character classes. Previous editions of D&D have given certain archetypes strong visual identities to reinforce their roles in the game. The plate-armored paladin and the gray-bearded wizard are familiar to D&D players the world over.

Now, with the new edition of Dungeons & Dragons, old assumptions are being scrutinized. One of the watchwords of the new edition was “options.” Rather than say “no swords for wizards,” the new rules give you the freedom to customize your character. Now there will be consequences if you equip your wizard with a sword, but you can do it if you want to. This has a rather interesting side effect on the game’s visual identity, which carries over to miniatures. Simply put, you can no longer pigeonhole people and characters just by looking at them. The rules are so flexible that even the sword-armed guy in full plate could be an arcane spell caster. He’d have a small chance of actually getting off a spell, but when he did it would be a big surprise.

The great thing about this new flexibility is the way it affects DMs. In previous editions, players could learn monsters stats chapter and verse and quickly size up any threat. One glance at the opposition is not enough anymore. That scrappy looking orc could be a rooth-level fighter for all the players know. This is a big help when spinning out a story, since it ensures your players share the same uncertainty as their characters.

With all this in mind, let’s take a look at some of the new miniatures. If you read the Player’s Handbook, you’ve no doubt seen the illustrations of the iconic characters like Dahir the half-elf bard and Tordek the dwarf fighter. Our first releases include most of the iconic characters. This gives those who use the miniature packages for their character a miniature that fits that PC exactly. However, just because we say a figure is of a particular class, there’s no reason you can’t use the miniature for something else entirely. With the new rules to work with, it’s a snap.

Let’s start with the Regular miniature, the classic human fighter. He’s got scale mail, a shield, a longsword, and a dagger. With any fighter miniature, it’s easy enough to use them as a paladin or ranger instead. However, Redgar could also be a cleric, as both Ehoine and Eshnina favor the use of the longsword. A cleric of Ehoine who chooses the War domain receives the Martial Weapon Proficiency and Weapon Focus (longsword) for free. A cleric of Eshnina has to spend one of his feats to get the longsword proficiency, but this is easy to do.

Then there’s Hemet, the human sorcerer. First, you’ll need to decide why he has the extreme buckle fetish, but that’s a roleplaying detail. You’ll note that he’s armed with two common Simple Weapons: the spear and the crossbow. This makes Hemet useful for nearly any class. He could be a barbarian, a bard, a fighter, a monk, or a wizard. Monks don’t begin the game knowing how to use spears, which means you’d either have to take a Martial Weapon Proficiency feat or clip off the spearhead to make it a staff. He could also be a half-orc cleric of Gruumsh who strongly favors his human ancestry.

Finally, there’s Lidda, the halfling rogue. She’s wearing leather armor and wields a short sword and a dagger. If not a rogue, Lidda is screaming to be a ranger. Since she’s only wearing light armor, she can wield her sword and dagger as if she had the Two-Weapon Fighting and Ambidexterity feats—sweet! Another option is the cleric of Yondalla, whose favored weapon is the short sword.

But wait, I hear the DMs cry, what about us? Don’t worry, we’ve saved something special for you. As you probably know, the Monster Manual won’t be out until next month. While the “2000 Survival Kit” in the back of your Player’s Handbook will get you started, you still lack stats for many of the monsters we’ve made figures for. Clearly this will not do! While we can’t give you all the stats you need, we can give you a teaser of what’s to come. Say hello to the new gnoll. He actually looks like he’s over y feet tall, doesn’t he? Now let’s see what he can do.

If you take a look at the miniature, you’ll see he’s holding a big old axe. We could simply call this a greataxe and be done with it, but if you look closely you’ll see the haft has a spearhead on it. This makes the weapon an unruish, a nasty piece of business associated with dwarves.
FAZGUL, Gnoll Fighter

FTRz
Medium humanoid
HD 2d8 (gnoll)+2d10+4 (fighter)
hp 23
Init +6
(+2 Dex, Improved Initiative)
Spd 20 ft.
AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 scale mail)
Atk urgrosh +3 melee
(d18+2/crit x3 with axe head, d16+2/crit x3 with spear head)
SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +1
AL CE
Str 15, Dex 15, Con 13,
Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Exotic Weapon (Urgrosh), Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Skills: Climb +2, Jump +3,
Listen +3, Spot +3.

but sometimes used by other races. This
is not the weapon of a common gnoll,
but that's quite all right. The new rules
allow us to give monsters classes and
levels, so we can easily make this gnoll a
proper heavy.

The urgrosh is an Exotic Weapon,
which means you must spend a feat
to learn how to use it. Since it's also
a double-weapon, it really helps
if you have some other feats to
increase your ability to use it. To
get everything we need, we'll have
to make this gnoll a 2nd-level fighter
(which makes him a 4th-level character
altogether). This lets us take the feats
Ambidexterity, Exotic Weapon (Urgrosh),
Improved Initiative, and Two-Weapon
Fighting. Now the gnoll can use both
heads of the weapon with a +2 penalty,
and his Improved Initiative will help him
get the drop on his enemies.

You wouldn't want to throw a bunch
of gnolls like Fazgul here at a 1st-level
party, but he'd make a great leader for
evil humanoids. Note that he gets only
+3 to hit because of the penalties asso-
ciated with fighting with two weapons,
but he does get the all-important
double attack.
Does someone who reads a weapon against a charge get his Strength modifier to attack and damage?
Yes. Attacking a charging opponent with a readied weapon is a melee attack, and all the rules for melee attacks apply.

Can someone who charges get an attack of opportunity if someone moves through his threatened area later that round?
Yes. Charging imposes an Armor Class penalty, but it doesn’t keep you from threatening an area or making attacks of opportunity.

Can someone who has been tripped or is otherwise prone get an attack of opportunity if someone moves through his threatened area?
Being prone doesn’t prevent you from threatening the area around you or making attacks of opportunity. Any attacks of opportunity a prone creature makes suffer the -4 attack penalty for being prone.

Can someone take an action and then ready an action to move instead of moving right after the action? A typical use for this would be the wizard who casts her spell and then readsies an action to run away if someone comes after her.

You can ready any partial action. You can’t take a standard action, such as casting a spell, and also ready an action. (Readying is a standard action all by itself.) Note that you can take a move after any standard action, so you can cast a spell and then move away. So, in the above example, you’ve got to get the heck out of Dodge right after you finish the spell.

Can you ready an action to perform a coup de grace?
No. A coup de grace is a full round action, and you can ready only partial actions.

Just how much temporary ability damage can a character heal in a day?
Suppose your character has fought a battle with a couple of shadows and has been poisoned a few times. The character has suffered 4 points of Strength damage, 3 points of Constitution damage, and 1 point of Wisdom damage. The character regains 5 points of ability damage per day, so what do the character’s ability scores look like after 1 day? If my character gets bed rest and regains 2 points of ability damage, what happens then?

In one day of light activity (no combat or spellcasting), the character heals 1 point of damage in each ability. After one day of bed rest, the character heals 2 points of damage in each ability.

What happens when a character who has received a freedom of movement spell jumps or falls into water? My DM seems to think that the character falls straight through the water and goes “splat” on the bottom. My DM explains that the spell eliminates all water resistance, which prevents the character from swimming or floating.

While the DM is always right, he’s followed a faulty line of reasoning here. “Sage Advice” has always warned against using scientific—or pseudo-scientific—reasoning to adjudicate spells. In this case, your DM has erroneously supposed that water resistance has something to do with buoyancy. Buoyancy depends on the water literally pushing something up toward the surface, and a freedom of movement spell doesn’t prevent that any more than it prevents a floor from pushing up against a character’s feet and keeping him from falling through it. (You might not be in the habit of thinking of floors as “pushing” anything, but that is the way modern physics describes any object or body resting on any surface; the object pushes down and the surface pushes back with equal force.)

In any case, the freedom of movement...
spell (and its cousin from earlier editions, the *free action* spell) has nothing to do with eliminating water resistance or friction; it allows normal movement and attacks even under conditions in which normal movement and attacks are not possible, such as underwater or when webbed, held, or entangled.

Exactly how the spell accomplishes that is unrevealed—that's what makes it magic. Your DM would have been on firmer ground (as it were) if he had claimed that failing is a form of "normal movement" that water usually prevents.

That, however, is not the case. "Normal movement" in water is swimming or walking along the bottom. When a character under a *freedom of movement* effect enters water, he makes a Swim check; if he fails, he cannot move, and he sinks if he fails by 5 or more. Note that failing to make progress or sinking are both "normal movement" in this instance.

I have a multiclassed character with the uncanny dodge class ability and the Deflect Arrows feat. Can she deflect arrows on a surprise round if she's the one surprised?

No, you're flat footed when you're surprised, and you can't deflect arrows when you're flat footed. Uncanny dodge lets you use your Dexterity bonus while flat footed, but it doesn't keep you from becoming flat footed. Note that uncanny dodge also does not allow you to make attacks of opportunity while flat footed.

If my PC spots a mold that causes damage, what is the DC for me to figure out what kind of mold it is? Would it be Wilderness Lore or Knowledge (nature)? What is the difference between these two skills? It seems that anything Wilderness Lore can do, Knowledge (nature) can do better, since it's such a broader field to reference. With Wilderness Lore, you can avoid getting lost—but it seems that with Knowledge (Nature), you would know what the procedure is for getting out of trouble in a natural setting.

Neither Wilderness Lore nor Knowledge (nature) lets you recognize monsters. At one time, the D&D design team discussed adding a Knowledge (monsters) skill, but we decided not to. Some DMs like their players to "play dumb" when their characters encounter a new monster, but others consider such pretense to be a nuisance, so the game doesn't have rules for recognizing monsters (which would imply rules for being ignorant about monsters).

In any case, Wilderness Lore might let you recognize the area containing the mold as hazardous (by spotting bones or by noticing that the local animals seem to avoid it). The Wilderness Lore DC for recognizing such a hazard is 15, and the mold would have to be in a wilderness setting for the Wilderness Lore skill to be of any use in recognizing the mold as a hazard.

It's possible that a character with the Knowledge (nature) skill might happen to know something about a killer mold. Noting a killer mold (or any other harmful creature that is not obviously dangerous) has a DC in the 20 to 30 range—the rarer the creature, the higher the DC.

Knowledge (nature) is not a substitute for the Wilderness Lore skill. Indeed, even today the great outdoors is sprinkled with the broken, frozen, starved, or dehydrated bodies of folks who thought they knew what they were doing outside, but really didn't. A character with the Knowledge (nature) skill might have some book learning that suggests the proper course of action in a wilderness setting, but a Knowledge skill does not impart much in the way of practical know-how. (See the next question.) At best, five ranks of Knowledge (nature) will grant a +2 synergy bonus to Wilderness Lore checks.

What are the differences between a Craft skill, a Profession skill, and a Knowledge skill?

A Craft skill involves a character making something with her hands (usually also with tools, but not always). The relevant ability for a Craft skill is Intelligence, mostly because one must remember the right materials, procedures, and techniques, as well as apply them in the proper manner.

A Profession skill also involves specialized knowledge, and techniques, but usually does not involve the character working with his hands. The relevant ability for a Profession skill is Wisdom, because it usually requires the character to apply her skills in an abstract, indirect, or speculative manner. Stonemasonry is a Craft, but architecture is a Profession. A Profession skill also implies a broader, less concrete knowledge than a Craft skill does. A stonemason can build a stone house, but not a wooden one. An architect can design a house made of almost anything. Note that the Wilderness Lore skill could be called Profession (outdoorsman), but the design team decided to break it out into its own skill because it was much more likely to see use in play than other Profession skills.

A Knowledge skill involves academic learning, usually with little practical training. The relevant ability for a Knowledge skill is Intelligence, because it involves the memorization and recall of facts. A character with Knowledge (geology) knows her stones, but she would be hard pressed to carve a statue, build a stone bridge, or dig a mine. A Knowledge skill allows a character to recall facts that might be relevant in a particular time and place but does not impart any special ability to put those facts to practical use. For example, a character lost in the woods might use a Knowledge (nature) skill to recall that moss often grows the thickest on the north sides of trees. But Knowledge (nature) probably will not reveal when moss does not grow thickest on the north sides of trees (which is most of the time, actually). Nor will the Knowledge (nature) skill help the character remember the direction to the nearest settlement or allow the character to make sure she walks in a straight line when moving cross country.
Ranged attack spells + Point blank shot + Precise shot + Weapon focus...

Any spell that involves a ranged attack roll (flame arrow, magic stone, produce flame, and so on) benefits from the Point Blank Shot and Precise Shot feats. If you don't take them, you're losing an additional 5% to 25% of spells of this type to simple misses. If you use a lot of ray spells, Weapon Focus (ray) is another must-have feat.

Does death touch, the granted power of the Death domain, have a saving throw? No, it does not. The power is similar to the power word, kill spell—your hit points are effectively your saving throw.

Why would a fighter ever take the Quickdraw feat?
So he can draw a weapon quickly. Actually, this feat is particularly useful to fighters of 6th level or higher because the feat makes drawing a weapon a free action. That means the fighter can draw a weapon and still make a full attack action.

I plan on playing a multiclassed character. Does it matter which class I pick first?
No, really, but the class you start with strongly affects the character's hit points and skills. For example, a character gets the maximum result for her first Hit Die, so it's advisable to make that first die as large as possible, especially if you plan to have the character fight often. (A few extra hit points also makes it more likely that the character will live to see 2nd level.) On the other hand, a character's initial allotment of skill points is quadrupled for his first character level, so if you're interested in having a lot of skills, put the class that has the most skill points first.

Consider these two versions of a human 1st-level fighter/1st-level rogue: Assuming the character has Intelligence and Constitution scores of 12, the character would have 21 skill points and 13 to 18 hit points (average of 15-16) if he was a fighter first. If the same character began play as a rogue, he would have 44 skill points and 9 to 18 hit points (average of 13-14).

If one of your character's classes is paladin or monk, you'll face multiclassing restrictions. Once you quit the paladin or monk class, you can't go back. Don't put the paladin or monk class first unless you're willing to either waste the class goodby or stick with it for a good while. (Either option is slightly easier with a human character.)

Are elves treated differently than the other races when it comes to raise dead and resurrection spells?
No. In previous versions of the D&D game, elves were harder to bring back from the dead, but that is no longer the case. Note that spells such as raise dead can now bring any living creature back from the dead, not just humans and humanlike creatures.

Can a paralyzed person voluntarily stop breathing to avoid drowning if submerged?
Yes. A paralyzed creature is unable to move or take physical actions, but holding one's breath is not a physical action for game purposes.

Most touch-range spells have instantaneous durations. So how do they work?
Is the action that you use to cast the spell the same action that you use to touch someone? The chill touch spell is particularly hard to use. If it has an instantaneous duration, there is no way the caster could get multiple attacks; however, it is obvious that you are supposed to get more than one touch with it because of the number of targets. In the case of touch-range spells, the duration refers to how long the magic lasts once you touch the target (though there are one or two oddballs, such as shaking grasp, which are described in a slightly different way). When you cast a spell with touch range, you can try to touch a recipient on the same round you cast the spell. See Touch Spells in Combat on page 125 of the Player's Handbook.

If you do not touch a recipient on the round you cast the spell, you hold the charge until you do touch a recipient or until you cast another spell. See Touch Spells and Holding the Charge on page 157 of the Player's Handbook.

In the case of the chill touch spell, the spell remains until you make your allowed number of touches (you lose one charge each time you touch something) or until you cast another spell.

If the duration of a chill touch spell is instantaneous, how long does the damage and Strength loss from the spell last?
The effects of a chill touch spell are instantaneous, but they have lasting consequences. There are many such examples in the rules. A fireball spell, for example, creates an instantaneous burst of fire, but the damage it causes remains behind after the spell's magical effect is gone. Normal damage from a chill touch (or fireball) spell remains until healed or cured. The Strength damage heals at the rate of 1-2 points each day or until restored, just like any other kind of temporary ability damage. See Healing Ability Damage on page 129 of the Player's Handbook, as well as the question on healing ability damage above.

If I'm caught in a web spell, but I'm at the edge of the area of effect, can someone else outside the web engage in melee combat with me without getting entangled? What if they stick a spear at me? Does the spear get caught automatically, or just if it misses me? I'm assuming that by the "edge" of a web effect, you mean that there is not 5 or more feet of webbing between you and your opponent, leaving you sort of embedded in one side of the mass of webbing. In this situation, you are subject to attack, you get no cover from the webbing, and you are entangled (with a -4 penalty to your effective Dexterity score).

Only creatures that are in the spell's area of effect when the web is cast can become stuck, and then only if they fail their Reflex saving throws. Creatures moving into the area of effect after the spell is cast must still make Strength checks to move through the webbing. The Strength checks are full-round actions, so your opponents probably won't cut through the web to attack you, but they can do so without fear of getting stuck themselves.

You're poisoned with something that causes ability loss, then you're healed by a heal spell. Since all the poison does is cause ability damage, was the poison cured by the heal or will it continue to cause damage, since heal doesn't cure poison? Actually, a heal spell does remove poison; see the third sentence in the spell description. Poison, however, deals damage until its onset time (usually 1 minute) is over or the poison is removed, even when all the damage from the poison is
Can a monster's spell-like ability counterspell a character's spell? A spell-like ability cannot be counterspelled, nor can it be used as a counterspell.

According to the text of the new version of the *sepiasnake* spell, I can write the spell and read it myself. The "snake" will then attack the nearest creature, right? Wrong. The letter of the current spell description is on your side, but the text is incorrect. Replace the first two sentences of the spell description with the following:

```
When you cast *sepiasnake*, a small symbol appears in the text of a written work such as a book, scroll, or map.
The spell's contents must be at least 25 words long. When anyone reads the text containing the symbol, the *sepiasnake* springs into being and strikes the reader, providing there is line of effect between the symbol and the reader. Simply seeing the ensnared text is not sufficient to trigger the spell. The subject must deliberately read the text.
```

This piece of errata is official.

The description of the *Summon Monster* spell states that in the last round of the duration of the spell, the monster "acts normally." Does this mean that the monster acts normally for the type of monster it is? (That is, as if it were no longer under the control of the summoner.)

No, it means that there are no special limits on what the creature can do during the last round of the spell. It takes a normal round's worth of actions, then disappears.

If my character has a robe of the archmage and is in the area of effect of a *holy aura* spell, does my character now have a 50% spell resistance? No. The general rule against stacking similar effects applies here; the character gets only the best spell resistance. Against most effects, the character uses the spell resistance of 17 that the robe of the archmage provides. Against evil spells or effects of evil opponents, the character uses the spell resistance of 15 provided by the *holy aura* spell.
Welcome back, folks! If you've been following along for the last twenty installments of "Dungeoncraft" (and if you haven't, fire up your Internet browser already and do something about it!), you know that we've covered a lot of ground over the last couple years. This month, I'm going to give you an opportunity to take stock of exactly what you've learned.

That's right—get ready for the first ever Dungeoncraft Pop Quiz! Now that you've completed the first game session of your new campaign, you can think of it as a sort of midterm examination. In the time-honored tradition of such exams, I'll present a series of true-false, multiple choice, and short answer questions. Some of these questions are drawn from previous installments of "Dungeoncraft"; others call upon you to apply what you've learned to entirely new situations. At the end of the column, I present some answers and a brief discussion of each question. It's important to note that my own answers aren't necessarily the right answers. If there's one thing you've probably learned from these columns so far, it's that dungeoncraft is not an exact science. In fact, I'm sort of hoping that a few of these questions will spark off some intense debate. If you happen to think that my answers deserve a failing grade, don't be afraid to say so and send me your own thoughts. Maybe I'll revisit the pop quiz in a future installment and present alternative answers.

Anyway, with that out of the way, it's time to sharpen your pencils and begin. This is an open book test; though you probably won't need any of the rulebooks to answer these questions. You are welcome to use calculators, computers, cheat sheets, or anything else you might have available, although you won't need any of these things either.

True or False
1. It's a good idea to allow each player to create and run multiple PCs.
2. Hercules is not a good name for a player character.
3. You should draw a detailed map of your campaign before beginning your campaign.
4. As a DM, feel free to "cheat" on your dice rolls if you like.
5. Since you're the DM, you should be familiar with all of the official rulebooks published by Wizards of the Coast, just in case one of your players wants to use a new character class or rule from a new supplement.
6. You should never roll your dice in view of the players.
7. It's okay to "borrow" rules from other roleplaying games and incorporate them into your D&D campaign.
8. You should allow the players to discover at least one "secret" about your campaign world during each session.
9. Drawing the map is the first step in designing any adventure.
10. When introducing a new NPC to your campaign, it's not always important to spend time creating all the NPC's game statistics.
11. You should hold a separate session for the sole purpose of allowing the players to create their characters before beginning your new campaign.
12. You should draw all your maps on hex paper.

Multiple Choice
1. When designing a town that will act as the players' base of operations, which of these structures should you almost always make sure to place on the map?
   A) A castle.
   B) An inn.
   C) A magic shop.
   D) A secret monster lair.
   E) An armory.
2. Which of these is not necessarily a characteristic of a well-designed adventure?
   A) Challenging the players.
   B) Rewarding the players.
   C) Challenging the players' characters.
   D) Forcing the players to solve puzzles.
   E) Presenting the players with a variety of options.
3. Which of these items should you not allow the players to use during play?
   A) The Dungeon Master's Guide.
   B) Spell description "cheat sheets."
   D) Old issues of Dragon Magazine.
   E) A class handbook (such as The Fighter/Monk Handbook).
4. The first outdoor map you draw for your campaign should cover a radius of approximately...
   A) One mile.
   B) One hundred miles.
   C) Sixty miles.
   D) Five hundred miles.
   E) One thousand miles.
5. When designing the first adventure for your campaign, which of the following should you try especially hard to provide?
   A) A way to introduce new PCs.
   B) Foreshadowing for some of your campaign secrets.
   C) A reusable location.

Send your questions and anecdotes about running D&D adventures to:

“Dungeoncraft” c/o DRAGON Magazine
100 Lind Avenue N.W.
Renton, WA 98055
Send email to:
scalene@wizards.com
D) A recurring enemy for the PCs.
E) A situation that challenges the players.

6. When should you invent a new secret for your campaign world?
A) When you create a major detail about the world.
B) Once per game session.
C) When your players ask you to.
D) When you design a new adventure.
E) When any of the player characters advance a level.

7. Which of the following is a good reason to keep your players confined to a single, small area of your campaign world for the first few months of play? (Mark as many as apply.)
A) It takes a long time to develop appropriately detailed maps, and keeping the players confined means you'll only have to draw one map for the first several months of the campaign.
B) Such a small map will leave the players with no choice as to what they should explore next, making it easy for you to prod them into undertaking the adventures that you design.
C) Keeping the players in a relatively small area gives them an opportunity to become intimately familiar with that area, making it easier for the campaign world to develop a life of its own in the players' imaginations.
D) A and B.
E) A and C.

8. Which of the following is not an advantage of the "third-person" style of play?
A) It's easier for shy players to participate.
B) Third-person games tend to progress faster than first-person games.
C) Third-person games make it easy for the players to convey their characters' mannerisms and attitudes.
D) Third-person games tend to emphasize the plot or storyline.
E) Third-person games make it easier for the players to communicate what their characters are thinking or feeling.

9. Which of the following is an acceptable "roleplaying hook" for an NPC?
A) The NPC is hard of hearing and regularly forces everyone who speaks to him to repeat themselves.
B) The NPC hopes to one day save enough riches to open his own tavern, in order to prove to his father that he is not a failure.
C) The NPC has mysterious, homicidal nightmares.
D) The NPC is secretly jealous of his older, better-looking brother.
E) Due to an unfortunate encounter in early childhood, the NPC is particularly afraid of dragons.

10. Of the following, which is the most important skill for a Dungeon Master to develop?
A) Knowing the rules.
B) Providing good descriptions.
C) Drawing good maps.
D) Creating interesting puzzles.
E) Developing a distinct voice for each NPC.

Short Answer
1. What's the one work of fiction that every DM should keep on the bookshelf next to his rulebooks?
   Suppose you've designed an adventure that climaxes with an evil wizard dropping a large gem into a vat of oil in order to complete a diabolical spell. The spell will summon forth a large tidal wave capable of destroying the armada of the holy army opposing the wizard. Once the gem is dropped into the vat, the oils start furiously boiling. To defeat the wizard's scheme, a particularly brave adventurer must reach the vat in time and thrust a hand into the boiling oils to retrieve the gem before the spell is complete. What game mechanic should you use to determine whether or not a PC who attempts such a task has the mettle to successfully complete it?
2. Why is it a good idea to leave notepads and pencils on the game table within reach of the players?
3. How many players should you gather together for an ideal D&D campaign?
4. Why should you insist that all the players fill out their entire character sheets before beginning play?
5. After the rulebooks and dice, what is the DM's most indispensable tool?
6. Why are giant spiders not particularly well suited to adventures designed for 1st-level characters?

7. True. It's okay to borrow rules, plots, names, or ideas from anywhere. Inventing details is one of the hardest tasks you face as a DM, and purloining the occasional concept from outside sources makes the burden considerably easier to bear.
8. False. If the players discovered one secret each and every session, you'd probably run out of secrets rather quickly. Allowing the players to uncover one secret per complete
adventure is a decent goal to shoot for, but you can certainly get away
with an even slower pace. The only real rule is that you should reveal
your secrets fast enough to keep the
players interested in the game.

9. False. Drawing the map is almost
never the first step in designing an
adventure. Usually, the best way to
begin the design process is to care-
fully develop the overall concept for
the adventure. That way, you can
determine the key locations you'll need
before you start drawing the map,
giving you an opportunity to make
sure you include them.

10. True. Again, remember the First Rule of Dungeoncraft. You'll rarely need
all of an NPC's game statistics for
play. In fact, it's usually best to gen-
erate only those statistics that are
unusually above or below average.

11. False. Holding a special session
before you start the real game only
gives your players an opportunity
to lose interest and drop out prema-
turely. The best way to keep your
players interested in what you're
doing is to let them play and keep them playing.

12. False. Hex paper makes it extremely
easy to judge distances, but all those
right angles typically found in dun-
geon passages make such envi-
nronments difficult to map on hexes.
Use hex paper when drawing wilder-
ness maps and standard graph paper
when mapping dungeons.

Multiple Choice

1. B, an inn. A good "rumor mill" is an
essential component of a base of
operations. Without such a structure,
it will be difficult to get the players
interested in your adventures. Much
more often than not, the ideal rumor
mill is an inn. While each of the other
structures cited might be interesting
components of a D&D town, none of
them are essential.

2. D, forcing the players to solve
puzzles. Remember that the Fourth
Rule of Dungeoncraft states that
"Good adventures always challenge
the players and challenge their char-
acters." Solving puzzles is only one
strategy for challenging the players—
there are others you can employ
instead (such as forcing the players to
make tough decisions). Each of the
other listed choices is indispensable to
a well-designed adventure.

3. A, the Dungeon Master's Guide.
It's best to prohibit the players from
using the Dungeon Master's Guide
and the Monster Manual during play.
This prevents them from looking up
monster statistics and magic item
descriptions right in the middle of a
game session, providing them with an
unfair (and unfun) advantage.

4. C, sixty miles. Remember, the first
map you draw should concentrate on
detailing that portion of the world the
player characters are familiar with, as
well as providing a bit more that they
can explore. A scale of greater than
sixty miles forces you to do unneces-
sary work since it's unlikely your
players will be in a position to stray so
far from home for a few full months
of play. A smaller scale doesn't give
the players enough freedom and runs
the risk that they will want to travel to
a region you haven't prepared.

5. D, a recurring enemy for PCs.
A recurring enemy can be nice to
have but is certainly not essential,
particularly for a first adventure. In
fact, it's usually a good idea to plan
for a particular monster or NPC to
become a recurring enemy before you
run an adventure. Once you've
become wedded to such a notion you
might find yourself "steering" the
players in order to guarantee that
your favored villain survives to fight
another day. Instead, you're much
better off allowing your recurring
enemies to arise naturally from the
results of your adventures. It's also
worth noting that each of the
remaining four choices are positively
insubstantial to a first adventure.

6. A, whenever you create a major
detail about the world. This is the
First Rule of Dungeoncraft. Creating
a new secret once per adventure
will force you to create your secrets
much faster than the players can
ever uncover them. Creating a new
secret whenever you design an
adventure will leave you with too
few secrets early in your campaign,
and too many later. C and E are
obviously inappropriate choices.

7. E, A, and C. Choice B is not appro-
riate. If your map is so confining that
the players never have any choice but
to visit the areas you designate, you're
probably making them feel like they
are being manipulated.

8. C, third-person games make it easy
for the players to convey their char-
acters' mannerisms and attitudes. All
of the other choices are characteris-
tics of the third-person play style.
First person, with its funny voices and
hammer speeches, gives the players a
much better opportunity to express
their characters' mannerisms.

9. A, the NPC is hard of hearing and
regularly forces everyone who
speaks to him to repeat themselves.
While any of the other choices might
be interesting facets of an NPC, they
are all too ephemeral to serve as
effective roleplaying "hooks." You can
reinforce the hard-of-hearing shlock
every time you play the NPC, but you
won't find nearly as many opportuni-
ties to employ any of the other
possibilities.

10. B, providing good descriptions.
Remember, Dungeoncraft breaks
down into three basic fundamentals:
providing descriptions, resolving
actions, and deciding when to reveal
information. While each of the other
listed skills are extremely useful,
there are strategies you can use to
compensate for a shortcoming in any of
them. Effectively DM'ing without
providing good descriptions is almost
impossible.

Short Answer

1. J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the
Rings. While D&D was influenced by
a wide variety of myths, legends, and
fantasy creations, there is no better
summary of the game's basic spirit
than Tolkien's trilogy. Plus, there are
lots of practical benefits for keeping
the book handy—not only is it the
series a fantastic source of character
names, but Tolkien's lengthy appendices
are a great source of inspiration for
myths that you can sprinkle across your
own campaign world.

2. A Fortitude saving throw. You might
be tempted to call for a Constitution
ability check, but a character's expe-
rience level should certainly

Catch up on past installments of Dungeoncraft at http://www.wizards.com/dragon/Welcome.asp
influence his or her chance to perform such a dramatic and heroic feat, necessitating the save.

3. **So you and the players can occasionally pass each other secret notes.** Sometimes you'll want to pass information to a particular player out of earshot of his colleagues. Suppose, for instance, that an adventurer scouting ahead of the others is silently ambushed and captured by goblins. There's no way the rest of the party should be aware of their comrade's peril until they reach the ambush site themselves—the goblins should receive a fair chance to ambush the rest of the party as well. Similarly, one of your players will occasionally want to signal you with his intention to undertake a secret action.

4. **I believe that the ideal number of players in a D&D campaign ranges between six and twelve.** (Others, including my esteemed editor, disagree.) If you have fewer than six players, you run the risk of placing the adventuring party in undue peril because key roles have been left unfilled. If you have more than twelve players, it starts to prove difficult to handle all the action and keep the group under control.

5. **To speed play,** filling out the entire character sheet will guarantee that the players will precalculate all of their various bonuses, saving throws, and such. This will save a lot of time once the game starts moving. After play begins, it's a good idea to avoid interrupting the action for rules consultation as much as possible.

6. **A DM's screen.** Note that you don't necessarily need the official "store bought" screen, but it's very difficult to play the game without some sort of screen to hide your notes and maps. As long as you must have something propped up in front of your face, you might as well use it to house all the charts and tables you use frequently.

7. **Because poison can kill an adventurer with a single dice roll.** A weapon this potent should always be used sparingly and should never be employed against 1st-level adventurers. High-level adventurers tend to accumulate all sorts of spells, magic items, and abilities that will leave them with a few options even if a party member succumbs to the poison. First-level adventurers do not have access to any of these tools and consequently, a poison attack is likely to frustrate your players. Note that the new D&D game solves this problem by having most poisons inflict additional hit point damage or ability score damage.

8. **Because the wizard is almost certainly much, much smarter.** Failing to allow a monster or villain to take full advantage of all its abilities is one of the most common mistakes made by beginning DMs. A wizard, even a low-level one, is likely to employ all sorts of tricks, traps, and other clever means to repel intruders, while the ogre won't do much more than swing away with a club.

9. **Roughly once a week.** Usually, the longer the time that elapses between game sessions, the greater the likelihood that one or more players will lose interest. Playing less frequently than once a week is too great a risk that the game will start to fall apart due to inactivity. Playing more often than once a week is possible, of course, but few DMs have that sort of spare time available.

10. **The Third Rule of Dungeoncraft instructs you to roll a d6; 1-3 the action succeeds, 4-6 the action fails.** When you're absolutely stuck, just flip a coin (or perform the die rolling equivalent), and move on. You're bound to find that this ersatz system is "good enough" so long as you keep the action moving.
Five Things Stolen from Icewind Dale

by Johnny Wilson

A n icy premise, an avalanche of action, and a glacial proportion of evil are the key ingredients to Icewind Dale, Interplay's latest Dungeons & Dragons adventure.

Book Learning
If I were going to compile a list of "Five Things DMs Should Steal from Computer Games," one of the top items would be the cinematic introduction and cut-scene. I know that some producers don't care about such features because so many gamers click right past both the introduction and the cut-scene sequences, but well-designed expositions can have significant impact.

Theft #1: Introductions
Use short introductions and transitions with impact to advance the story within your campaign. In-game expositions are best (if they don't take too long) and should always be designed to motivate your group onward. Printed exposition is also welcome because the party can read it on their own time without disrupting the flow of the game.

Character Over Caricature
Once Icewind Dale begins, the magic starts to occur. The character generator not only lets you design accurate and Edition Dungeons & Dragons characters and customize their appearance, but it also allows you to select the voices of your characters from an assortment of sound samples. Fortunately, that isn't the limit of what Icewind Dale does with your character. As in Baldur's Gate, the game pays attention to the race of the lead character and her attributes whenever non-player characters are encountered. A dwarf in a hamlet where dwarves are not often seen can be viewed as a threat. A character with a high Charisma ability score might elicit more cooperation from NPCs. In one encounter, placing my bard as leader was the key to communicating with a siren. In another, it was the singing of this same bard that allowed the party to get both experience and a better deal at the local emporium. In addition, the game rewards certain efforts at diplomacy, even if the particular negotiation isn't successful.

Theft #2: Dump Stat Scenarios
Design scenarios to utilize the full slate of character abilities. Many gamers strip points off Wisdom, Charisma, and Intelligence to beef up their combat skills because combat is almost all there is to a campaign. Encounters requiring bluffing, diplomacy, empathy, or problem-solving can inspire your gaming group to build more rounded characters. Make sure that you reward non-combat actions with experience points to reinforce this idea.

Dark Shadows
Another interesting aspect of Icewind Dale is the use of reduced vision. In the crypts of the Vale of Shadows, lesser shadows literally flow out of shadowy nooks while ghouls and other undead wait in deadly ambush in dark corners. Potions of intravision placed strategically about the crypt provide some tactical advantage, but you need to use them at the right time (probably when you reach the final tomb in the first chapter). The blue-tinted nighttime hours in Kuldaar Pass were also...
interesting, as goblins and wolves were more likely to ambush you during those hours in the white, snowy daytime.

**Theft #3: Terrain**

Use the terrain conditions. If sight is limited, surprise the adventurers with occasional ambushes. With miniatures, hidden movement can be handled via the paper cup strategy described in "Pop-Up Terrain" in the "Role Models" column of *Dragon* magazine #265. Another way to add suspense to limited vision is to place a STRATEGIC piece, domino or chess piece to represent each tree, rock, or bush where someone or something might be hiding. Assign a monster, NPC or "No Encounter" to each board-game piece and allow the party to choose their path through the darkened terrain by picking a given number of game pieces. When encounters are triggered, roll for surprise and resolve the encounter normally.

**Design for Depth**

Suspended disbelief increases with the amount of detail provided for the imaginary world. In *Icwind Dale*, you'll find a temple that celebrates rituals like the "Song of the Sword," "Feast of Heroes," and "Song for the Fallen." In another locale, you'll discover the secrets of the druids of Sivanas. At a local emporium, you can purchase the multi-part *History of the North* books to assist you in knowing more about the world in which you are adventuring. Such collateral material makes it much more interesting to interact with the imaginary world. You never know what detail might help you in your quest, so you continue your journey of discovery.

**Theft #4: Miscellaneous Culture**

Use new maps, diagrams, torn pages from books, messages, and encounters to fill in the gaps surrounding your culture. Closing down a shop for a holiday the adventurers aren't used to celebrating, having the party eavesdrop on a religious ritual, or filling the party's ears with political propaganda from a drunken civic leader are interesting ways to supplement the imaginary world-view of your campaign.

**You've Got to Move It**

The fact that there are various speeds in every adventuring party (armor being the most common factor in making some PCs slower than others) means there has to be close coordination among the party characters. In *Icwind Dale*, faster characters often rush ahead of slower-moving characters— to their doom sometimes as they pass through an entryway and are attacked before the heavier- armored characters.

The lesson to be learned from this is that it's important for everyone to arrive at the battle at the same time, if possible, and use speed to your maneuvering advantage—not as a way to rush into combat. A fast character can use speed to flank a monster or chase down ones that might otherwise get away.

In *Icwind Dale*, there is no way for two mages to cast a spell on a target simultaneously during combat. However, in the D&D game, if two mages are operating at the same place in the initiative track and having the same Dexterity, both cast spells; their spells might be considered by the DM to occur simultaneously. Those DMs need to be prepared to adjudicate simultaneous spell effects.

**Theft #5: Moving Combat**

Keep the combat moving. Make sure everyone gets a fair shot at the bad guys, but don't wait an inordinate amount of time for a person to consider what they're doing. Be creative! When simultaneous spells are cast on the same target, don't be afraid to use your imagination to create a unique synergy that can occur randomly. (If it always occurred, the party would grow to depend on it.) What if a priest was casting *magic stone* at the same time a wizard was casting *Vampiric Touch*? Could the wizard gain the damage from the *magic stone* as well as his spell? Might the wizard lose the points from the *magic stone* off his extra hit points generated from his spell? Such unexpected synergy could keep things interesting.

---

**TOPOGRAPHICAL WRAP**

As in computer games, maps can not only speed up play for your party, but they add to the sense of suspended disbelief for your world.

**MARCH OF CRIME**

The AI sometimes does its job too well. As pictured here, you can set the marching order with your strongest and best armored warriors in the lead, but when you go through the door, you may discover your faster and less protected adventurers have run ahead.
Hi! Today we're introducing a new class of character: the anti-fighter.

Yup, just give peace a chance.

So you're a pacifist?

Correct, I think there's too much fighting in gaming; it sets a bad example for real life.

Okay—so let's see how you deal with a belligerent fighter.

Make war no more.

Well, hi! Surely we can all get along asellow travellers here on spaceship Earth. We could all sing a song.

Give me treasure.

Ah ha ha ha! That's the spirit! Say, how'd you like to work for me? We have a generous profit-sharing plan, and...

Smak!

Whoa! With an attitude like that you must have some real issues about your parents. Want to talk about it, Big Guy?

Give me treasure.

In all fairness, I should mention that I have an incredibly infectious cold and...

Give me treasure.

In any point to this?

You won't believe the experience points I got for playing in character.

Wham Wham Wham

www.studiofoglio.com
WHAT’S THIS GUY’S STORY?

You belong to the Empire. You have been trained to crush the Rebellion.
You will keep order. Even if it kills someone.

Sleek and streamlined, the new Star Wars roleplaying game holds a
universe of possibilities for fans of every era. The D20 system captures
all of the action and heroism of the classic trilogy and paves
the way for new adventures set in Episode I.

More depth. More skills and feats.

STAR WARS
ROLEPLAYING GAME

The Official Star Wars Web Site
www.starwars.com
Wizards of the Coast Web Site
www.wizards.com/starwars

Star Wars is a registered trademark of Lucasfilm Ltd. ©2004 Lucasfilm Ltd. All rights reserved.
WIZARDS OF THE COAST is a registered trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©2004 Wizards.
GIVE US A PIECE.

Check out these August events!

August 4, 6:00 PM (PDT)
Death of a Dragon
With author Ed Greenwood

August 8, 6:00 PM (PDT)
Magic® Deck Deconstruction
Deconstructing Worlds Decks
With former Pro Tour player Randy Buehler

August 18, 6:00 PM (PDT)
The D&D® Adventure Game
With designers Jonathan Tweet and Jason Carl

August 22, 6:00 PM (PDT)
Wizards Profiles
With Wizards CEO Peter Adkison

August 25, 6:00 PM (PDT)
Pokémon TCG Gym: Heroes
With R&D's Mike Elliott

August 27, 6:00 PM (PDT)
Sage Advice Live!
D&D Conversion Issues
With Dragon's
Skip "The Sage" Williams

Give us a piece of your mind.
Or all of it.
Say a lot. Say a little.
Ask questions. Get answers.
Pick the brains of people that make our games great.

Wizards.com/Community
Speak up: www.wizards.com/chat