

GARY'S APPENDIX

A THOUGHTFUL ZINE FOR USE

1

DESIGNED FOR USE WITH

**OLD-SCHOOL
ESSENTIALS**

GARY'S APPENDIX

A THOUGHTFUL ZINE FOR OSE

1

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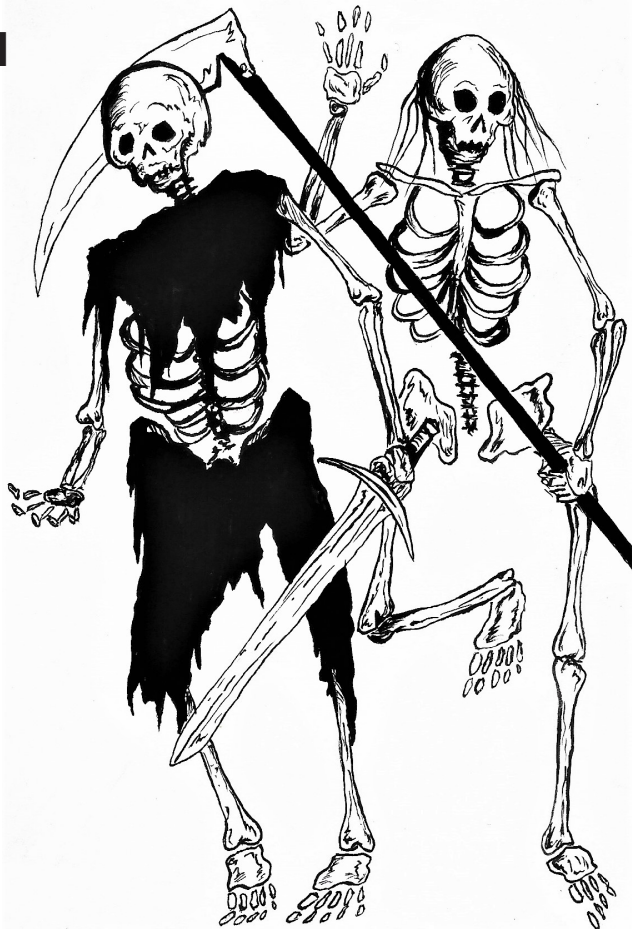
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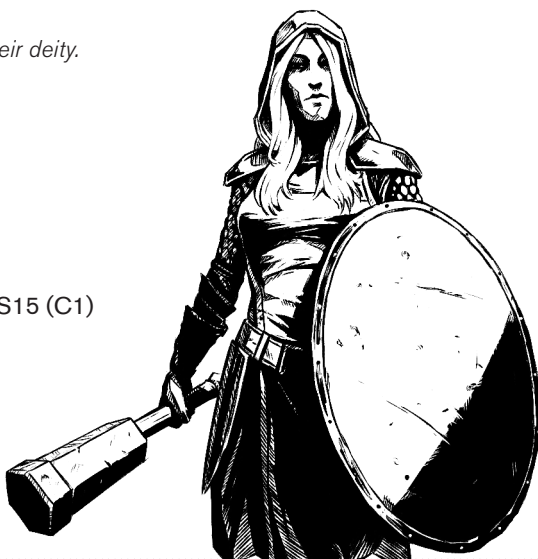
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ACOLYTE

1st level clerics on a quest for their deity.

AC	2 [17]
HD	1 (4hp)
ATT	1 × mace (1d6)
THACO	19 [0]
MV	60' (20')
SV	D11 W12 P14 B16 S15 (C1)
ML	7
AL	Any
XP	10
NA	1d8 (1d20)
TT	U



SPECIAL

- **Leader:** Groups of 4+ are led by a higher level cleric (1d10: 1–4: 2nd level, 5–7: 3rd level, 8–9: 4th level, 10: 5th level). Choose or roll the leader's spells.

INTRODUCTION

Acolytes are lower-ranking members of a religion with an organizational structure and hierarchy.

They are people (including demi-humans) who commit their lives to serving their god and to living out the dictates of their religion.

While people differ by degrees of loyalty and motivations, these acolytes serve their religions with complete dedication. They follow obediently, and without reservation, the dictates of their religion and the commands of their religion's superiors.

THEY ARE ON A MISSION

NPC clerics do not wander around the countryside looking for adventure and fortune. Their presence in the wilderness, dungeon, or remote area indicates that they are on a dangerous mission that is important enough for them to be armed and well-supplied by their superiors.

THEY ARE READY FOR CONFLICT.

Acolytes will employ violence, without hesitation, if they deem it necessary to complete their mission. This holds true for all Acolytes encountered, even ones deemed good or lawful

USES FOR AN ACOLYTE:

1. TO OPPOSE

Opposition means that the acolytes and the adventurers are vying for different outcomes and the stakes are high.

The threat of social and physical conflict creates an interesting complication to the lives of the player characters. Force the characters into making hard choices and pave their road to success with messy ethical quandaries or unforeseen and future political ramifications.

It is more interesting if the acolytes are not the servants of evil and are normally allies or friends.

- **The acolytes and the adventurers are after the same goal, but it is impossible for them both to have that object.** Rather than being an abstract, or general objective (kill the litch, or throw a magical ring in a volcano), both parties seek a physical goal that is not divisible. This includes such items as the Silver Sword, a kidnapped merchant, etc.)
- **If the acolytes' mission succeeds, the adventurers' mission fails.** And vice versa. Some examples include keeping the characters from entering a dungeon, stopping the party from killing an evil opponent, or sabotaging the rescue of a rich merchant or beloved noble. The acolytes motives are not apparent to the player characters.

2. TO ASSIST

The acolytes have both the desire and the means to assist the characters. This support can take many forms, such as providing information, protecting the party while they rest or providing healing through potions.

For added fun, give the acolytes an alignment that is the opposite of the party's. Note, the acolytes will not act if it violates their commission.

3. TO JOIN

- **They share the same objective as the party.** The acolytes join the characters for the rest of the adventure.
- **The acolytes do not share the same goal as the adventurers.** They do assist in what ways they are able, such as providing healing.

For added drama, have the acolytes serve a god of Chaos. Despite how "good" the adventurers' mission is, or how positive the result, the servants of Chaos corrupt that good deed with an evil outcome.

4. TO ATTACK

This is the least interesting outcome for an encounter unless the acolytes serve a deity of Law and the adventuring group sees themselves as "good."

The sudden assault by servants of Law causes the players to wonder the reason behind the attack. Was it a case of mistaken identity? Have they committed an act that unknowingly drew the ire of the acolytes' sect?

SPOOR: Tracks left by shod horses, multiple extinguished campfires.

APE, WHITE

White gorilla-like apes that live in ancient ruins.

AC	6 [13]
HD	4 (18 hp)
ATT	2 × claw (1d4) or 1 × thrown rock (1d6)
THACO	16 [+3]
MV	120' (40')
ST	D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2)
ML	7
AL	Neutral
XP	75
NA	1d6 (2d4)
TT	None



SPECIAL

- **Territorial:** Defend their lair with threats and, if this is ignored, violence.

INTRODUCTION:

The white apes are an ancient race that built an expansive empire during a primordial age. Over the millennia, except for a few decaying monuments and crumbling buildings that still dot remote areas in deep jungles and ancient forests, the sands of time buried evidence of their dominance. These locations beckon adventures from afar seeking vast riches. Stories abound of vaults filled with gold and idols encrusted with valuable jewels.

APPEARANCE

These preternatural creatures have a physical frame that is an amalgamation of a human and a gorilla. They bear a human countenance with yellowish, malevolent eyes.

There are two types of white ape. The first are called the “rememberers.”

These apes retain the intelligence of their ancestors. The second type is the “forgetters” because their intelligence has declined over the centuries making them more ape-like in their ways of thinking and more impulsive.

AN EMPIRE EXTINCT

Two aeons ago, the white apes ruled the lands now dominated by humans. In their species' infancy, they developed advanced engineering and a mastery of the arcane arts. This superiority gave them a military edge and they placed the neighboring sentient races into cruel subjugation. Enslaving others allowed them to build majestic cities, erect massive monuments and delve deep into sorcerous sciences.

For a millennia they held absolute rule and remained unchallenged. But, over time, social and moral decay took root in their souls and they slumped into apathy and ostentatious decadence.

Eventually, neighboring kingdoms arose and challenged their rule, forcing them to embroil their armies in protracted conflicts that sapped their resources and their resolve. Seeing the time was right for revolution, the slaves rose up and threw off their shackles. In a matter of a few short years their vast empire collapsed leaving pocket enclaves of white apes dotting the landscape.

USES

PRISONERS TO THE PAST

The remaining white ape live in the collapsing ruins of their past empire.

They remain as guardians and caretakers for a civilization that will never return. Even the forgetters, who lack the understanding of their history, instinctively protect the ancient crumbling structures.

Because they lack the desire to venture into the greater world, any encounter with a white ape means that the ruins of their people are nearby.

ADD VILLAGERS

Small villages dot the region around the white apes' ruins. These villages venerate and fear the white apes and provide them offerings of food. Several of the villagers speak the white ape language and, if compensated, will travel with the adventurers to be their guide and translator.

MALICIOUS

They are hateful and deceitful creatures. Upon meeting adventurers, they may put on a friendly front, offering help or assistance. White apes do this to gain the trust of the party to betray them later. They desire to capture the characters, torture them and then eat them alive.

POSSIBLE SCENARIOS:

1. A glimpse into the past: An enclave of white apes rules a small village through the magic dominance of the people. The villages lack any free will, and they obey every order from their masters without question. In addition to labor, the white apes also use the villagers as a food source. The white apes show great interest in having the adventurers join the village.

2. Eldritch Master. The white ape that leads an enclave is a powerful wizard seeking the services of the characters. Because the wizard will not stray far from the ruins, it offers them a large sum of money for their services.

3. Inter-tribal War. One tribe of white apes is at war with another, and the characters can tip the balance. Are they willing take sides, especially with the promise of gold and jewels? Or will they play both sides hoping they two tribes destroy each other.

SPOOR: Loud, deep and echoing cries, large, "hand like" footprints, a consumed antelope corpse that died from a broken neck.

BANDIT

NPC thieves who live by robbery.

AC	6 [13]
HD	1 (4hp)
ATT	1 × weapon (1d6 or by weapon)
THACO	19 [0]
MV	120' (40')
SV	D13 W14 P13 B16 S15 (T1)
ML	8
AL	Neutral or Chaotic
XP	10
NA.	1d8 (3d10)
TT	U (A)



SPECIAL:

- **Trickery:** Use disguise or trickery to surprise victims.
- **Leader:** May have a leader of 2nd level or higher (any human class).
- **Hoard:** Only have treasure type A when encountered in their wilderness lair.

INTRODUCTION

Bandits are an organized group of people that survive by robbing people in isolated or lawless areas. This is a dangerous occupation because the neighboring cities or nations place large bounties on these outlaws. If the bandits become too large of an issue, governments send out soldiers to hunt down and eliminate them.

REASON FOR EXISTENCE

1. They are an oppressed group.

Because of their class, race, or religion, they cannot rise above a subsistence level of existence. Faced with stark poverty, the bandits target those of greater means, to distribute some of the stolen wealth to their people. Because the bandits come from the lower ranks of society, and steal from the upper ranks, the commoners protect them and provide occasional aid and help.

2. They are a rebellious group. These bandits are members of a cadre seeking to overthrow the status quo. Successful rebellions require large amounts of funding. It is their mission to raise the funds necessary to stage a coup, fund an army, or bribe an emperor. Sometimes the bandits seek to install a noble of their choosing. Sometime they want to overthrow the entire government. Such groups have a myopic view of morality, believing the ends justify the means.

3. They are displaced soldiers. Without a war, soldiers find themselves without employment. Perhaps they refuse to return to their previous mundane lives. Perhaps they cannot give up the feeling of power. Regardless of the reason, they choose extorting money from others through the threat of violence.

4. They are a desperate people. These people need a sizable amount of cash to get them out of a desperate situation and use banditry to solve their problem. Their goal can vary from funding the release of a kidnapped noble to paying off a malevolent warlord. Such bandits do not operate in their home region and travel to other regions to carry out their crimes.

5. They are a disruptive force. A neighboring kingdom wants to destabilize its neighbor, but committing to an open war is not feasible. Encouraging bandits to make incursions safe way to inflict harm and maintain deniability. Contentious nations provide support and secret harbor to these traveling marauders.

BANDIT GROUPS:

1. Children make up the entire gang. There are no adults in this band. This raises the question of how they came into this situation. Maybe they are orphans who came to banditry as a means of survival? Perhaps they were members of a large bandit group where all the adults are arrested or dead?

2. Women make up the entire band. They have their reasons. Perhaps they are a disenfranchised group that has few alternatives? Perhaps they were members of a large bandit group whose “working members” are arrested or dead? Or perhaps they tire of their mundane duties and desire a life filled with excitement?

3. Non-humans make up the entire band. We normally think of bandits being human, but why not make them a group of dwarves, elves, or even innocuous halflings?

4. Extorted people make up the band. The people are not bandits by choice. The bandit leaders hold a threat over their head to keep them in the gang. Once somebody removes that leverage, the bandits will return to their former lives.

5. Undead make up the band. Why should skeletons be relegated only to the depths of the dungeon and open graveyards? The leaders have discovered a means to control undead, or at least the ones that comprise their particular band.

SPOOR: Broken branches, doused camp fires, multitude of hoof prints.

BASILISK

10' long, serpentine lizards. Unintelligent, but highly magical. Dwell in caverns and twisted brambles.

AC	4 [15]
HD	6+1** (28hp)
ATT	1 × bite (1d10 + petrif.), 1 × gaze (petrif.)
THACO	13 [+6]
MV	60' (20')
ST	D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (6)
ML	9
AL	Neutral
XP	950
NA	1d6 (1d6)
TT	F



SPECIAL

- **Surprise:** Characters surprised by a basilisk meet its gaze. ✕
- **Mirrors:** The reflection of a basilisk is harmless. Fighting by looking in a mirror incurs a -1 penalty to attack. If a basilisk sees its own reflection (2-in-6 chance), it must save or be petrified.
- **Venomous Bite:** Anyone bitten must make a save vs death or die.
- **Deadly Gaze:** Anyone meeting a basilisk's gaze is stuck dead (save vs death). Unless averting eyes or using a mirror, characters in melee are affected each round they are in combat.
- **Toxic Blood:** If a creature makes a killing blow against a basilisk using a melee weapon, they must save vs death or die.
- **Toxic Breath:** Those in melee range must make a save vs death or die.
- **Death Touch:** Any successful attack by the basilisk requires the victim to make a save vs death or die. Any creature touching a basilisk must also make a saving throw or die.
- **Fire Breath:** Those in melee range take 3d6 damage from fire. Save against breath for half.
- **Death by Extension:** Per Death Touch, but it affects anybody touching something that touches a basilisk (such as a sword, pole, armor or shield)

INTRODUCTION.

Named the “Kings of Serpents” because they resemble monstrous serpents molded and twisted by an ancient evil. As an embodiment of malice, they revel in the meaningless destruction of flora and fauna but their greatest joy is terrorizing people. Towns and cities plagued by this evil live in constant fear, helpless to rid themselves of these wicked monsters.

DEADLY FOES

Their size, combined with their ability to dispatch opponents with their gaze, makes them a deadly threat to any adventuring party. Anybody with a modicum of wisdom will avoid a hasty confrontation with basilisks.

Below is a table to randomize the creature to confound the players' meta knowledge. To determine the powers of a particular basilisk, roll 4d6 and consult the following list. If any of the dice provide a duplicate result, ignore it.

1. Venomous Bite, 2. Toxic Blood, 3. Toxic Breath or Fire Breath, 4. Death Touch, 5. Death Stare, 6. Death by Extension (touching a thing that is touching a basilisk: sword, armor, etc.)

REWARDS.

- **Renown:** The killing of a basilisk is a monumental task. Successful adventurers are lavishly celebrated by nearby communities.
- **Potent Poison:** The blood/poison/venom is potent enough to kill mythical beings. Extracting a basilisk's venom makes a good MacGuffin for characters needing to kill a legendary creature such as a dragon or a fey ruler.

- **Alchemy:** The blood of the basilisk, in the hands of an alchemist, has the power to turn copper into gold. The blood of a slain creature suffices to turn 1,000 copper pieces into gold.

STRANGE FACTS

Size: Often basilisks of legend were tiny creatures, and, in that light, their enmity with weasels makes more sense.

Even if basilisks in your setting are large creatures, their enmity with weasels is an interesting angle to explore, especially their immunity to the effects of the basilisk's toxin and death attacks.

Weasel Urine: Legends state that weasels are able to kill a basilisk. Stories purport that the smell of weasel urine will kill a basilisk.

For a more mundane effect have a basilisk struck with a flask of weasel urine suffer a -2 on all their attacks.

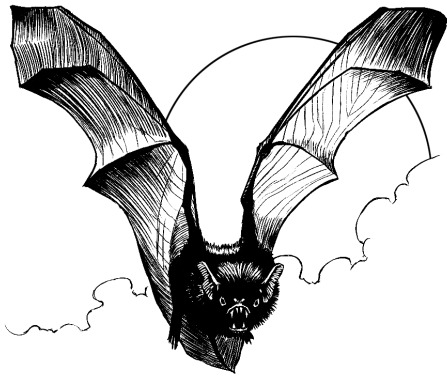
Mortal Enemies: While it may be a logical stretch for a weasel to kill a large-sized basilisk, they are natural enemies and will always attack each other over any other creatures.

Rue: The bundles of rue have a repelling effect on basilisks. Waving a bundle in front of the creature forces it to make a morale check.

Anti-toxin: A potion made from rue extract has a 2-in-6 chance of neutralizing the toxin of a basilisk. It must be administered within 2 rounds of a failed save.

SPOOR: Large swaths of dead vegetation, an acidic miasma, poisoned water supply.

BATS



Historically, people believe bats to be nefarious creatures worthy of their fear and loathing. Why shouldn't people be suspicious of these creatures? They live in dark caves and come out only at night. They also bear a strange visages that unsettles people.

They have a long history in mythology and modern fiction depicting them as creatures under the control of vampires.

Rather than follow this common narrative, lets take these creatures in a different direction. Because bats inhabit caves, it follows that the sentient creatures that also inhabit those spaces would domesticate them for their use.

GIANT BAT

Carnivorous bats that may attack adventurers, if hungry. 1-in-20 groups of giant bats are vampiric (see Giant Vampire Bat).

AC	6 [13]
HD	2 (9 hp)
ATT	1 × bite (1d4)
THACO	18 [+1]
MV	30' (10') /180' (60') flying
SV	D12 W13 P14 B15S16 (1)
ML	8
AL	Neutral
XP	20
NA	1d10 (1d10)
TT	None

SPECIAL

- **Echolocation:** Unaffected by effects that impair, modify, or rely on sight. Blinded by magical silence.

USES

Mounts: Giant bats make excellent flying mounts for intelligent species that are small enough to ride them. Flight ability makes weak opponents, such as goblins, more formidable opponents.

Vampire Chief: for a memorable encounter, make the bat-riding leader vampiric. For example, a goblin-queen vampire will change how the party deals with the normally mundane threat.

Kidnappers: Giant bats target characters to grab and fly away with. Perhaps they are taking the characters to their masters or perhaps they plan to drop the characters to their deaths from a great height.

GIANT VAMPIRE BAT

AC	6 [13]
HD	2 (9 hp)
ATT	1 × bite (1d4 + unconsciousness)
THACO	18 [+1]
MV	30' (10') / 180' (60') flying
SV	D12W13 P14 B15 S16 (1)
ML	8
AL	Neutral
XP	20
NA	1d10 (1d10)
TT	None

SPECIAL

- **Echolocation:** Unaffected by effects that impair, modify, or rely on sight. Blinded by magical silence.
- **Unconsciousness:** For 1d10 rounds (save versus paralysis).
- **Blood drain:** A vampire bat may drain blood from an unconscious victim: 1d4 hit points automatic damage per round. A victim killed by blood drain becomes undead (possibly a vampire) after 24 hours (save vs spells).
- **Vampire disease:** Instead of vampire bats turning people into undead creatures of the night, treat the vampirism as a disease that those bitten must save vs. disease or become infected with an illness that requires them to consume the blood of other sentient creatures (of your choice).

Failure to consume a pint of blood per day causes the character to take a -2 penalty for all combat rolls and ability checks. The only way to eliminate the penalty is to consume 1d6 pints of human blood. Casting a *cure disease* spell permanently removes the illness from infected creature. .

NORMAL BAT

AC	6 [13]
HD	1hp
ATT	1 × swarm (confusion)
THACO	20 [-1]
MV	9' (3') / 120' (40') flying
SV	D14 W15 P16 B17 S18 (NH)
ML	6
AL	Neutral
XP	5
NA	1d100 (1d100)
TT	None

SPECIAL

- **Echolocation:** Unaffected by effects that impair, modify, or rely on sight. Blinded by magical silence.
- **Swarm:** 10 bats swarm around a target's head, causing confusion: -2 to attack rolls and saves; spell casters are unable to cast spells.
- **Attacks:** As normal human.
- **Flighty:** Unless magically summoned or controlled, normal bats check morale every round.

USES

Alarm: Normal bats may act as natural sentries. If something spooks them, they take flight with a flurry. The noise they make alerts others to the presence of intruders.

SPOOR: Accumulation of guano, animals drained of blood (vampire bats), high-pitched shrieking.

BEAR

BLACK BEAR

6' tall; favor eating berries and roots.

AC	6 [13]
HD	4 (18 hp)
ATT	2 × claw (1d3), 1 × bite (1d6)
THACO	16 [+3]
MV	120' (40')
SV	D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2)
ML	7
AL	Neutral
XP	75
NA	1d4(1d4)
TT	U

SPECIAL

- **Bear hug:** If a victim is hit by both paws in the same round, the bear hugs for an extra 2d8 automatic damage.
- **Defensive:** Adults will protect their young with their lives, but otherwise only attack if cornered.
- **Camp raids:** Sometimes they raid camps, for food (especially fish and sweet treats).

USAGE

Feed the wildlife: Black bears are curious but normally harmless creatures. If offered food (2 rations per bear) their reaction improves.

Sacred: Unnecessary killing of black bears raises the ire of the Spirit of the Wilderness. For the rest of the adventure, roll a d4 instead of d6 to determine if a random encounter occurs while in wilderness. Monsters and creatures encountered during this time will be hostile.

CAVE BEAR

Ferocious, 15' tall grizzly bears found in caves and Lost World settings. Omnivorous, but prefer meat, including humans.

AC	5 [14]
HD	7 (31 hp)
ATT	2 × claw (1d8), 1 × bite (2d6)
THACO	13 [+6]
MV	120' (40')
SV	D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (3)
ML	9
AL	Neutral
XP	450
NA	1d2 (1d2)
TT	V

SPECIAL

- **Bear hug:** If a victim is hit by both paws in the same round, the bear hugs for an extra 2d8 automatic damage.
- **Sense of smell:** Poor eyesight, but keen sense of smell. When hungry, will follow a track of blood by scent.

USAGE

Cave bears are capable of wiping out an entire party. Here are some thoughts on handling their lethality:

- Give plenty of clues regarding the presence this murderous machine before they actually meet it. E.g. claw marks on trees, 15 feet in the air, massive piles of droppings, or even warnings from guides.
- It is more interested in eating than murdering. After killing two or three people, the cave bear wants to eat its freshly killed meal rather than continuing to fight.

GRIZZLY BEAR

Aggressive, 9' tall. Silver-tipped fur, brown or reddish brown in color. Live in forests and mountains. Favors eating meat.

AC	6 [13]
HD	5 (22hp)
ATT	2 × claw (1d4), 1 × bite (1d8)
THACO	15 [+4]
MV	120' (40')
SV	D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2)
ML	8
AL	Neutral
XP	175
NA	1 (1d4)
TT	U

SPECIAL

- **Bear hug:** If a victim is hit by both paws in the same round, the bear hugs for an extra 2d8 automatic damage.

USAGE

- **Judgment:** The bear is a manifestation of the forest god who is enacting judgment on those who profane the sacred ways or who damage the forest.
- **A sure bond:** A skilled practitioner of shamanic magic can fashion the sinews of an adult grizzly into a chord that is ten feet long and is nearly unbreakable.
- **Resurrection:** Legend states that in the winter, if the body of a person recently deceased is placed into the den of a hibernating grizzly, that person resurrects in the spring. Character's results may vary.

POLAR BEAR

Aggressive, white-furred bears that stand 11' tall and live in cold regions. Favors eating fish.

AC	6 [13]
HD	6 (27 hp)
ATT	2 × claw (1d6), 1 × bite (1d10)
THACO	14 [+5]
MV	120' (40')
ST	D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (3)
ML	8
AL	Neutral
XP	275
NA	1(1d2)
TT	U

SPECIAL

- **Bear hug:** If a victim is hit by both paws in the same round, the bear hugs for an extra 2d8 automatic damage.
- **Swimming:** Excellent swimmers.
- **Snow walk:** Wide paws allow running on the surface of snow without sinking.

USAGE

- The dwellers of the North advise strangers to carry a basket of fish with them. Should they draw the attention of a wandering polar bear, tossing the basket may distract the bear from eating them.
- Enshrouding oneself in a new cloak fashioned from a polar bear pelt makes the wearer undetectable in snowy environments. This includes animals detecting the wearer's scent and magic scrying.

BEETLE

While magic may cause these insects to grow to large sizes, they are part the natural ecosystem and exhibit normal insect behavior.



GOBLINS OF THE DEEP

Goblins for Hire: A tribe of goblins has tamed fire beetle and hire out their services to those traveling through the sunless lands.

- Use the **Retainer Hiring Reaction Table** to determine the result of the character's offer.
- Base pay is 2 gp per month.

Glow Grenades: Some subterranean species mix the essence of the gland with alcohol and place that concoction into a flask that they throw at their unsuspecting enemies.

* A successful hit splashes luminescent fluid on their target. The glowing fluid makes it impossible for the target to hide as they remain aglow for 1-6 days.

FIRE BEETLE

2½' long. Commonly found underground.

AC	4 [15]
HD	1+2 (6hp)
ATT	1 × bite (2d4)
THACO	18 [+1]
MV	120' (40')
ST	D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1)
ML	7
AL	Neutral
XP	15
NA.	1d8 (2d6)
TT	None

SPECIAL

- **Glowing nodules:** Three glowing glands (two above the eyes, one on the abdomen) cast light in a 10' radius. If removed, keep glowing for 1d6 days.

USAGE

- **Illumination:** Those delving into the underworld treasure fire beetle glands for their power to illuminate their paths in the dark caverns. It is easier to carry a single gland for lighting one's way than it is carrying a satchel full of torches.
- **Glow blobs:** Many subterranean species mix the glowing essence with alcohol and pour it into a jar. When ready for use, they fish out a sopping ball of fabric and lob it at their opponents. An effective hit splashes the target with glowing paint that makes them easy to see and to track.

OIL BEETLE

3' long, burrowing beetles sometimes encountered below ground.

AC	4 [15]
HD	2* (9hp)
ATT	1 × bite (1d6)
THACO	18 [+1]
MV	120' (40')
SV	D12 W13 P14B15 S16 (1)
ML	8
AL	Neutral
XP	25
NA	1d8 (2d6)
TT	None

SPECIAL

- **Oil spray:** Use when attacked. Targets one opponent within 5'. A hit causes painful blistering: -2 to attack rolls for 24 hours. Cure light wounds cures this, instead of restoring hit points.

USAGE

- **Weapons:** Many subterranean species use the oil from this beetle to reduce the effectiveness of their opponent's ability to fight. They pour the oil into a sopping-ball and, with great care, they lob it at their targets.
These are 2gp each if a character finds a person selling flasks.
- **Food:** The meat of an oil beetle is not only edible, but also tasty and nutritious. Because of the danger and unpleasantness associated with the harvesting this beetle, its meat is worth 25 gp.

TIGER BEETLE

4' long, tiger-striped with powerful mandibles. Hunt robber flies, but sometimes eat humans.

AC	3 [16]
HD	3+1 (14hp)
ATT	1 × bite (2d6)
THACO	16 [+3]
MV	150' (50')
SV	D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1)
ML	9
AL	Neutral
XP	50
NA	1d6 (2d4)
TT	None

SPECIAL:

None

USAGE

- **Armor:** A practiced artisan can make the carapace of these beetles into plate mail for 250 gp. It takes them a month to prepare the carapace and fashion the armor.
- **Where there is smoke...** The next random encounter that the characters stumble upon will be robber flies.
- **Infestation:** If near civilization, there are 4d6 beetles. They are heading to the nearest farms or village and will attack any humanoids. Can the adventurers keep the people safe?

SPOOR: Shed exoskeletons, patches of dead vegetation, tree rubbings low to the ground, oily slicks on the ground.

BERSERKER

Fighters who enter a rage in battle. They never take prisoners.

AC	7 [12]
HD	1+1* (5hp)
ATT	1 × weapon (1d8 or by weapon)
THACO	18 [+1]
MV	120' (40')
SV	D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1)
ML	12
AL	Neutral
XP	19
NA.	1d6 (3d10)
TT	P (B)



SPECIAL

- **Battle rage:** +2 to hit humans and similar humanoids (e.g. orcs, goblins). Rage sometimes makes them attack their allies.
- **Hoard:** Only have treasure type B when encountered in the wilderness.
- **For hire:** Encountered berserkers, they are likely to be looking for employment (1-4 on a d6). If they are looking for work, treat a roll of 6-8 on the Retainer Hiring Reactions table as "offer accepted" rather than "roll again."
- **Friend killer:** When in battle, a berserker has a 1-in-6 chance of attacking a non-berserker ally if that ally moves adjacent to the berserker. After a battle the surviving berserkers have a 1-in-6 chance of wanting the battle to continue and will attack any non-berserkers.

INTRODUCTION

Berserkers are fighters who seek to enter into an ecstatic mental state that allows them to enter into battles with wild abandon that makes them effective and fearsome warriors. They achieve this through meditation, prayer, totems, self-mutilation or animal sacrifice.

While they are not clerics, many enter into spiritual communion with a god, infernal being, or a great animal spirit. That being, while in partial possession of the berserker, gains the ability to experience the physical savagery of the fight. The fighter becomes a terrifying implement of death.

Possession has its risks because the possessing being has no feelings of duty, friendship, or honor. It hungers for the fury of battle. While the fighter may have compunctions against the killing of friends and allies, the possessing being does not. Those who fight alongside the berserker give them wide berth in battle because they are incapable of discriminating between friend and foe.

Many wandering berserkers love battle and seek opportunities to shed blood. They leave their homes seeking conflicts and war to feed that desire. They do not concern themselves with the morality of a fight. They seek blood and silver.

The religion of some remote societies centers around primal spirits and their warriors follow the way of the berserker.

BERSERKER PATRON

1. **Seekers of Naagolog:** Wearing the pelts of predators and emulating the behavior of their totem animals, they relish the sensations of animalistic savagery. They eschew heavy armor and often go naked into battle.

They seek the indwelling of the ancient primal spirit, Naagolog who poured savagery into all animals “red in tooth and claw.”

These berserkers often come from remote settlements and have a spiritual connection to the land.

2. **The Disciples of Vermilion:** These are adherents to the concept of war. They travel with large bands of mercenaries seeking to participate in great battles and they decorate their items with the symbols of war.

3. **League of the Heptagon:** These are disciples of the demon Zeg, who feeds upon suffering. Members of the League recite an elaborate incantation that summons an aspect of Zen within their souls. They bear the symbol of the Heptagon, tattooed on their faces.

4. **The Blood Dancers:** These warriors attempt to enter into a state of mind where they transcend both fear and pain. Through dancing and chanting they achieve a link to the goddess, Adoan. For them, the dance of battle is the highest form of worship and provides spiritual transcendence.

5. **Those Who Seize by Might:** These warriors dedicate themselves to their dread god Gorum, who blesses their forays of destruction.

They travel in longboats to pillage villages near and far and thereby increase the wealth of their people. Gorum rewards the courageous and blesses them with a spirit of destruction to demonstrate to the world the power of his hand.

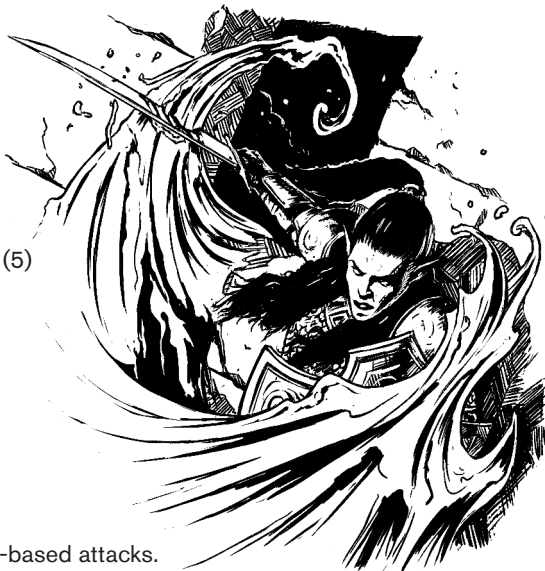
6. **The Order of the Grey Wolf:** Bands of wandering fighters vow to protect travelers from the dangers of bandits, brigands and savage animals. While their cause seems noble, they are too easily provoked to violence.

It is not uncommon for them to make demands of those they protect to provide food, lodging and support. Some people see them as being more of a problem than the dangers they are being “protected” from.

BLACK PUDDING

Huge (5'–30' across), mindless blobs of amorphous black jelly. Driven by a continuous and ravenous hunger.

AC	6 [13]
HD	10* (45hp)
ATT	1 × Touch (3d8)
THACO	11 [+8]
MV	60' (20')
SV	D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (5)
ML	12
AL	Neutral
XP	1,600
NA.	1 (0)
TT	None



SPECIAL

- **Immunity:** Only harmed by fire-based attacks.
- **Division:** Non-fire attacks (including spells) cause the pudding to divide. Each hit creates a 2HD pudding that does 1d8 damage.
- **Erode wood and metal:** Can dissolve wood or metal in one turn.
- **Cling:** Can move across walls and ceilings.
- **Seep:** Can squeeze through small holes and cracks.

INTRODUCTION

Black puddings enter into reality by seeping through fissures that erupt between the realms of existence. These fissures seep, like bodily wounds, allowing bits of Chaos to flow through. Scholars debate whether black puddings are creatures that inhabit the Chaos (like fish in the sea) or they are fluidic drops of Chaos that congeal into existence upon exposure to a reality.

DEADLY FOES

Adventurers delving into deep dungeons and remote areas fear and avoid black puddings. The being's dark color and their ability to move along walls and ceilings makes them difficult to detect. Their amorphous ability allows them to stretch themselves thin and cover entire surfaces; from statues, to thrones to entire ceilings; allowing them to set up perfect ambushes.

ITS HUNGER

As an essence of Chaos, this being seeks to disassemble matter. It derives no nutrients from inorganic material and only dissolve it so that it may get to its real desire, the flesh of living creatures.

Their alien physiology enables them to wait motionless for centuries in a dungeon, leaving the contents of the dungeon untouched. Once a sentient creature draws near, the black pudding greedily seeks them out, burning through clothing and armor greedily seeking warm living flesh.

ITS PRESENCE MEANS:

1. **An infernal creature (devil or demon) entered this world.** The fell creature's passage between the realms tore open a Chaos fissure from which a black pudding seeped through. This infernal creature is bent on causing trouble. How much time has passed since the hellish being slipped into this realm? Roll 1d6 (1. Minutes, 2. Hours, 3. Days, 4. Weeks, 5. months, 6. Years)
2. **A Chaos fissure is nearby and remains open.**
 - **In dungeons**, the adventuring party needs to close the fissure immediately or risk being overrun with black puddings.
 - **In the wilderness**, where the adventures can readily run away, it threatens nearby villages. To make the problem more pressing, the fissure continues to grow. This threatens the entire region and, eventually, the entire world.

3. Time is dilated in its presence.

As a manifestation of Chaos, the characters experience a dilation of time. When they are near the black pudding time does not flow properly and it slows down. Once characters leave the affected area, determine how much real-world time has passed (1. Hours, 2. Days, 3. Weeks, 4. Months, 5. Years, 6. Centuries)

4. **Gibbering Mouthers.** Once a black pudding consumes enough creatures, it discharges a gibbering moulder from its being. The gibbering moulder is the amalgamation of all the creatures it consumed until now. Add the pleading cries of people that the characters once knew to make that scene even more dramatic.

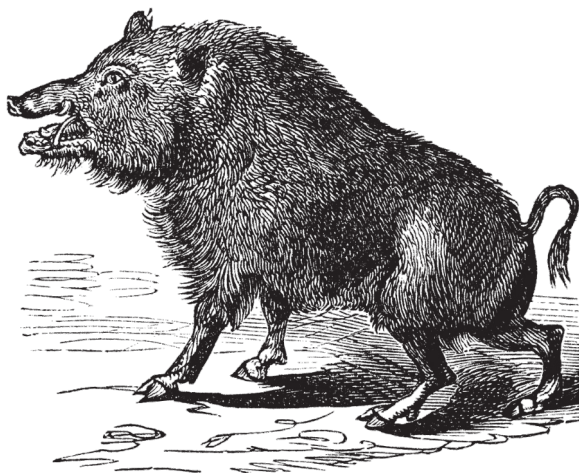
Many describe this creature as a black pudding, but this is a misleading moniker as it is neither a food made of swine's blood or some other culinary treat. Indeed, such a creature is not edible and, with the exception of the late Dangar the Glutton, nobody has attempted to consume such a creature. Regardless of how one attempts to prepare such a creature for consumption, it will never be a repast for mortals.

SPOOR: Random body parts, clouds moving at odd speeds, sound of distant shrill flutes, a sensation of cold.

BOAR

Omnivorous wild boars that dwell primarily in forests. Can be irascible and dangerous, if disturbed.

AC	7 [12]
HD	3 (13hp)
ATT	1 × tusk (2d4)
THACO	17 [+2]
MV	150' (50')
SV	D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2)
ML	9
AL	Neutral
XP	35
NA	1d6 (1d6)
TT	C



INTRODUCTION:

Boars embody various virtues in real-world historical cultures. Some of those cultures represented boars as symbols of ferocity, loyalty and courage. Others associated them with virility.

In our world, people commonly believed that eating the flesh of a boar brought one health and strength. Consuming a creature's flesh transferred an animal's positive characteristics to the eater.

Male pigs aren't the only ones venerated in ancient societies. People saw sows as symbols of fertility, good mothering, and defending the home.

USES FOR BOARS:

1. **Public Service:** A singular is damaging the community's fields. Attempts to drive off the beasts led to the death and injury of several farmers. The locals offer a reward for killing or driving the singular away. The community leader presents the party with what they can muster: 2d6 x 10 gp.
2. **Holy Hogs:** These boars bear the mark of Goddess of the Hunt. Anyone harming these animals suffers the wrath of the goddess. Upon the first strike, a strong wind blows, and dark, menacing clouds darken the sky. The perpetrator must gain absolution before the next new moon or become the prey for the goddess' next hunt.

3. **Guardians of the Glade:** The singular are spiritual protectors of the woods, tasked with driving out evil or invasive encroachment from their domain. They allow people to hunt and to gather but resist the large scale harm to the forest or attempts at deforestation. They attack characters of Chaotic alignment without hesitation.
4. **Legendary Creature:** A pack of 6 boars is led by the legendary boar, Baddadden. Baddadden is a 5 HD creature with maximum Hit Points and does 2d6 damage with its tusks. It also has an AC of 3 [16] and a morale of 10. Those capable of cleanly killing the boar in solo melee combat demonstrate their worthiness to take its tusks. The victor can take one of the boar's tusks to an artisan to fashion into a weapon handle. The handle makes it a +1 weapon and the weapon remains magical while the victor lives. The second tusk, however, must be planted in order for Baddadden to rise again. Failure to do so places the victor under a curse, and that person will transform into Baddadden at the next full moon.
5. **Nosy Neighbors:** The boars are adept at finding purple truffles, which are famous for their healing properties. The adventurers find a group of boars near a patch of 3d6 truffles. They heal 1 hp each. Five purple truffles will neutralize poison. The truffles must be consumed within of week of harvesting or they lose their healing properties.
6. **Unexpected Conversation:** The lead boar is possessed by Shila, local nature spirit who inhabits these woods. It has maximum Hit Points and speaks with the characters. It provides useful information to travelers of good intent but warnings for those whom it judges to be troublesome.
7. **Blessing of Fuljon:** The lead boar bears the blessed mark of Fuljon, the god of bounty. Feasting upon the roasted flesh of the lead boar restores any lost Hit Points. The repast also provides a +1 Str modifier for one week to those consuming the meal.
8. **Blessing of Denk-len-ja:** The lead boar bears the blessed mark of Denk-len-ja, goddess of courage. Those wearing a cloak made from this beast's hide gain a +1 loyalty modifier with hirelings.
9. **Sow in Danger:** The party comes across a sow defending her litter from a predator (bear, lion, etc). If the party chooses to defend the sow, the god Fuljon appears and provides a blessing of fertility upon the party. Siring and conceiving (and bearing) children are easy for the party members and they, if they choose, can have a large progeny.

The lead boar is the creature that leads a singular (which is the term for a group of boars). The lead boar is the one that has highest amount of a Hit Points in the singular.

UNSETTLING DEVOTIONS

JEFFREY JONES

SEEKERS OF NAAGOLOG

THE LEGEND

In the beginning, the world birthed eleven primordial powers; including Naagolog. She entered the world clawing from the earth with savage appetites and feral passions. She differed radically from her siblings and they could offer neither kinship nor companionship. She found no succor in her existence.

She wandered the land and found no means to ease her compulsion. Finally, the longing for the hunt became irrepressible, leaving her body curled on the ground, shaking uncontrollably.

Jorga the wise (the seventh-born), saw her sister's suffering and concluded that murder was the only path for Naagolog's deliverance.

On a moon-lit night, she pierced her sister's heart with a thrust of her hand. As Naagolog fell, her spirit and her blood spilt on the earth, still bristling with residual cosmic energies. From that perfidious and sanguinary act, the animals of the hunt emerged: both great and small, predator and prey.

The soroicide brought ruin to her physical form, but it freed her restless spirit. Liberated from her body, it is now free to roam the world to inhabit her children who celebrate the chaotic savagery of nature. She inhabits the hunter and the hunted, savoring the emotions of each.



HER FOLLOWERS

Naagolog has few worshipers in the cities and towns. She is a common deity in rural areas with people regularly uttering prayers and provide token sacrifices before a hunt, hoping to gain her blessing.

The druids, the woodsmen and those dwelling in remote areas are among her most ardent worshipers. Regardless of character class, they devote their lives to the art of stalking their prey, setting traps, and killing with ruthless efficiency. They see the act of hunting as a sacred rite, and pray for Naagolog's spirit to possess them while they enter the wood and field to hunt. She fills those she chooses with an overwhelming feral fervor that drives out all distracting thoughts and emotions and allows them to fully embrace the emotion and the fury of the chase.

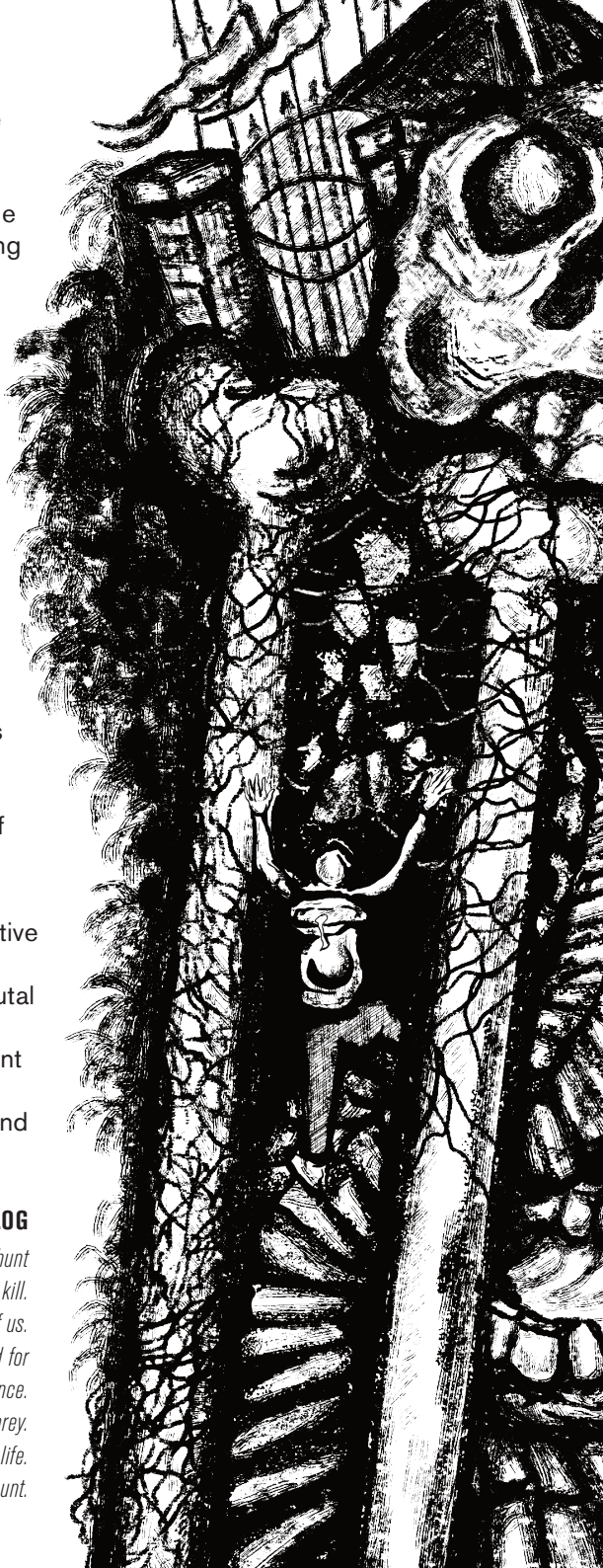
Some depraved soldiers worship Naagolog to make themselves effective hunters and killers of men. These berserkers are nefarious for their brutal tactics and their willingness to kill without mercy. Naagolog is indifferent to the nature of the hunter and the hunted; she rejoices in the chase and in its final consummation—death.

THE SONG OF NAAGOLOG

*She is filled with fury and anger, and revels in the hunt
and the kill.*

*She is the essence of the hunter in all of us.
She is desire and lust, and the primal need for
sustenance.*

*She is the predator who stalks and devours her prey.
She is the ever moving taker of life.
She is the very essence of the hunt.*



THE DISCIPLES OF VERMILION



THEIR BELIEFS

These soldiers do not restrict their devotion to a single god of war. Instead, they worship war itself and seek communion with all the known gods of that touch upon this domain.

They believe that, while amid the throes of battle, one can transcend their spiritual imperfections. The act of combat, upon a field of battle, is a spiritual act. For them, this is the highest form of worship.

Perfection's path is revealed to those who thirst for life like one does for water, but drink death like it is wine. Courage, in the face of danger, is the purging fire that spiritually separates the dross from their souls.

They are not self-absorbed in their spiritual pursuit. Their presence in battle also provides that same opportunity of perfection for their opponents. While they may be mortal enemies at the moment, they share a spiritual bond that, if they follow the cleansing path, will reunite them as brothers and sisters for the Final Battle.

Their courage and sacrifice in this life will carry forth into the next. The cycle continues with each reincarnation until their souls reach ultimate perfection. Then, the Tender of Souls will usher them into the Hall of Stuller. There they wait until the inevitable Aeonic War to fight in the war that will determine the fate of the universe.

THEIR LIVES

The Disciples of Vermilion quest after glorious battles near and far. They launch themselves into the fray without any hesitation.

They learn to use any kind of weapon, from combat knives to massive broadswords, so long as it can cleave through flesh and bone. Whether it be with a mace or with a rapier, they slice their way through hordes of foes without a care for their own personal safety, trusting in their own abilities to protect them or for their demise to purify their souls.

Tarantra's Maxim

*There is no greater honor than to die in battle.
There is no greater shame than dying in one's own bed.*

JUNTRA

Juntra, a deity of Law, is known across many realms for her unwavering defense of reality against the defiling touch of Chaos. People give her reverence because she stands between life and death, warmth and cold, order and disorder. She will not rest until she purges the last vestiges of Chaos from the realms and is unflinching in her approach to winning the war against the encroaching Chaos.

FOLLOWERS

Likewise, her followers devote their lives to the holy act of purging the land of the aberrations of Chaos, and they are single-minded in their approach. Their devotion to Law does not make them “good” people. In their view, the war against Chaos is the highest path, and any deed that furthers that sacred cause is acceptable, regardless of any collateral harm.

They seem ruthless to outsiders, but they view themselves as the only ones capable of making the hard choices necessary to win this war. The stakes are too high to allow sentiment to cloud one’s judgment in this cosmic conflict.

While they do not intentionally inflict casualties among civilians, the welfare of civilians never figures into their plans.

ICONOGRAPHY

Popular iconography represents her left hand holding a sword that gleams with the light of the sun, which represents her might.

In her right hand, she holds a golden bolt of lightning, which signifies the purity of her cause.

An arrow pierces her heart, showing the cost of the path.

She has a spectral eye floating above her head, which is fixed on the distant city, where Chaos reigns.

Juntra the Victorious Defeating Chaos

*Juntra is not the daughter of the Sun,
she is the light that burns away the Darkness.*

Her sword will never be broken.

Her spells will never be undone.

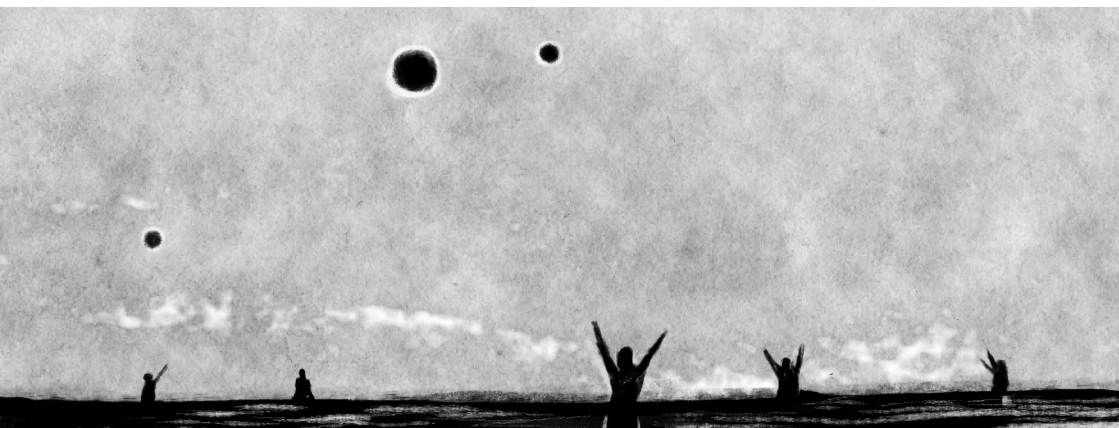
The Abominations of Chaos Quake

before her and run from her,

but Juntra will not let them flee.

She is the Victorious Over Chaos

and she will hunt down every last one of them.



LEAGUE OF THE HEPTAGON

THE DEMON

The demon Zeg, gains strength through the suffering of others. While this fell creature finds the pain of even the smallest of creatures soothing, it is the torment of people that this malicious being finds its greatest joy. Fortunately for the mortal realms, this demon is trapped in its hellish demesne, unable to venture forth physically.

THE BARGAIN

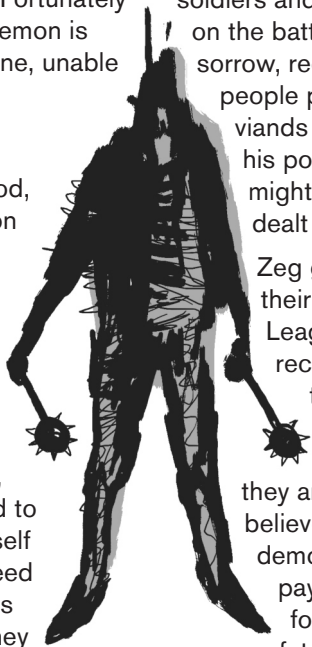
During the third era, Sunimod, a member of the Silver Moon Society and secret practitioner of the dark arts, sought an audience with Zeg for the purpose of making a contract with the infernal being. In exchange for the dolorous demon providing them aid in battle, the warrior-disciples agreed to let this foul being to bind itself spiritually to them. Zeg agreed and Sunimod called forth his 27 greatest warriors, and they bowed their knees in allegiance to Zeg, allowing him to mark them with a spiritual brand. That day, the soldierly band arose and formed the League of the Heptagon.

In the following decades, Sunimod died under suspicious circumstances, as have many that took on the mantle of leadership. Their membership numbers are increasing, but with each year, the leadership has a harder time maintaining control of the League. There are several upstarts, all seeking to gain the scepter of leadership.

THE PRESENT

Zeg is pleased by the suffering inflicted on this world by the League. It isn't the deaths caused by battle that nourish the demon's dark heart: it is the concomitant anguish of the surviving soldiers and civilians. Physical suffering on the battlefield is but an instant, but sorrow, regret, and illness inflicted on people provide a steady stream of viands that nourish Zed, increasing his power. This foul demon is now mightier than when Sunimond dealt with it centuries ago.

Zeg grows less satisfied with their meager offerings, and the League knows that a day of reckoning is approaching and the foul demon will come to claim its due. The Heptagon members realize they are playing with fire, but they believe that the power of the demon is worth the price they pay. They enjoy their victories for now and ignore the dark future that lies before them.



THE MEMBERS

The League members do not hide their identities. They walk the streets boldly, bearing the symbol of the League tattooed on their faces. Commoners, fearful of the League demonic alliance, avoid them if possible. A cloud of dread follows these tainted soldiers; death and destruction follow in their wake.

Powerful members, relentless in their quest for power, continue to grow their sphere of influence, spreading across the land like a cancer.



CHAOS: AN ANATOMY OF FUN ENCOUNTERS

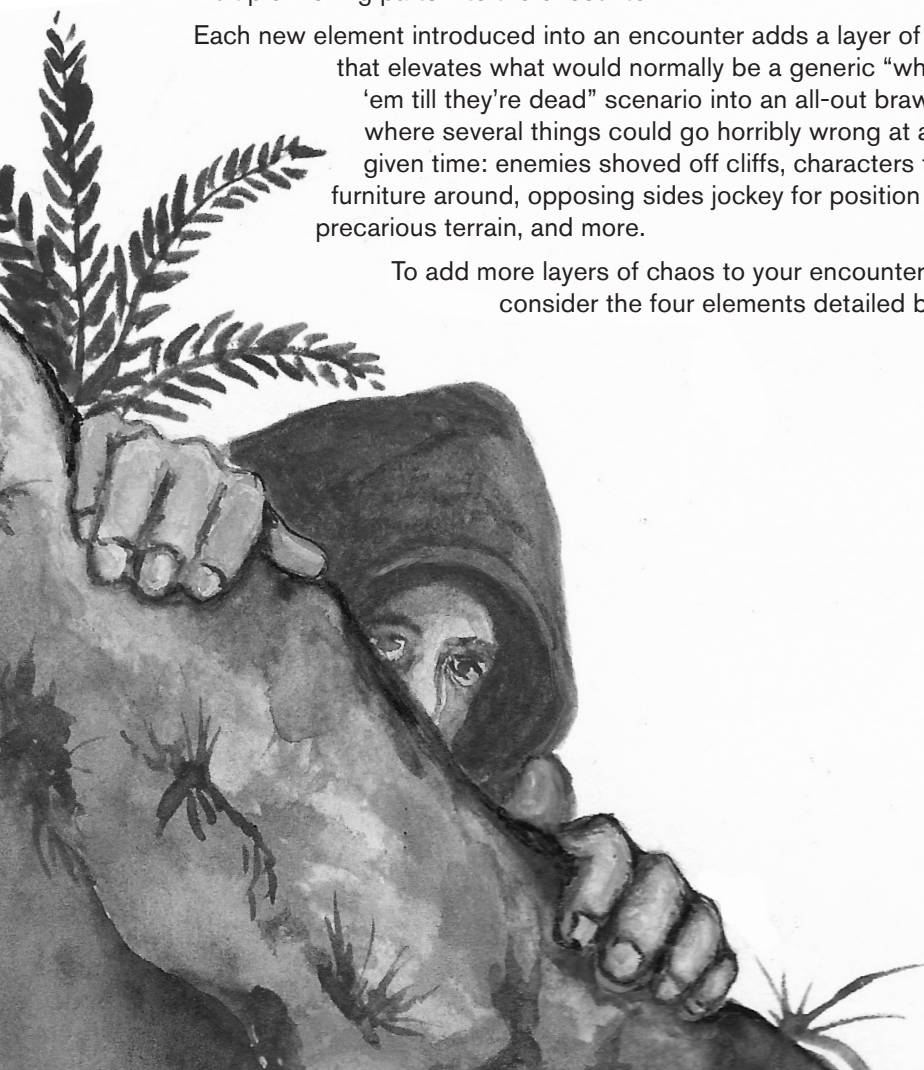
ANDREW JASON TRYON

INTRODUCTION

What is the anatomy of a fun encounter? This, of course, is a question with a very wide range of possible answers (none of which are necessarily wrong), but one approach is to find ways to introduce multiple moving parts into the encounter.

Each new element introduced into an encounter adds a layer of chaos that elevates what would normally be a generic “whack ‘em till they’re dead” scenario into an all-out brawl where several things could go horribly wrong at any given time: enemies shoved off cliffs, characters toss furniture around, opposing sides jockey for position on precarious terrain, and more.

To add more layers of chaos to your encounters, consider the four elements detailed below.



1. SETTING

The setting is where your encounter takes place (obviously). In many cases, it's a room in a dungeon, but there are countless other possibilities as well. Cliffs, mountain trails, bridges, boats, glaciers, are all settings that inject an element of peril into an encounter.

These types of settings make things a little more precarious, pushing players to think about their environment and plan accordingly.

The following settings are ways to set the ground work for thrilling scenarios.

1d12	Setting
1	Boat or raft, potentially on turbulent waters
2	An abandoned tower with plenty of access points
3	A sheer surface with winding switchbacks and places to climb
4	Castle walls with many places of cover and sheer drops
5	A bridge over waters (or bottomless depths)
6	Floating magic platforms that rise and fall at random
7	The inside of a great tree
8	An inverted pyramid
9	A giant creature's nest
10	Inside a giant clockwork mechanism
11	Roll 2d10 and combine the results
12	Roll 3d10 and combine the results

While some of the above are somewhat locale-specific, they can be adapted to places in dungeons as well. A sheer wall, for instance, qualifies as either a cliff face in a wilderness area or a wall inside a tomb with a hidden area at the top.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Environmental factors are distinct from setting. While setting is the overall location (boat, cliff face, parapets, etc.), the environment involves whatever conditions the players are currently facing. It often takes the shape of weather (fog, rain, snow, etc.), but it also frequently involves other elements.

Examples include a steep slant in the ground or spilled grease on the floor, making it easy for characters (and monsters!) to stumble.

Certain monsters also qualify, such as a giant millipede that charges through the room every d4 rounds and tramples anything in its path.

Environmental factors are usually elements that can't be fought directly. With the exception of the millipede, they don't have hit points (and the millipede is here and gone in a couple seconds anyway). They're simply additional elements of the chaos introduced to the setting.

To spice up your encounters, introduce any of the following environmental elements:

d10	Environmental Factors
1	Fog or smoke
2	Sleet, ice, or spilled grease
3	Shifting sands, gravel, or dust
4	Lava
5	Millipede, train, mine cart, etc. that barrels through every so often
6	Floor slanted at 30 degrees
7	Explosive gasses, fluids, or containers
8	Rushing water
9	High powered winds
10	Crumbling floors, walls, etc.
11	Roll 2d10 and combine the results
12	Roll 3d10 and combine the results

The more environmental hazards you add to your encounters, the more hectic the encounters will be. Of course, take into account your own mental bandwidth—it's easy to lose track of hazards if you have too many at play.

3. MONSTER ACTIONS

Monster actions, as detailed here, are actions taken by enemies that add variety to the way they function in an encounter. Goblins grapple onto a boat at sea, kobolds drop down from dark holes in the ceiling to ambush the intruders, ogres hurl chunks of stone at passersby, and so forth.

In some cases, these actions help flesh out a monster's motives. A band of orcs heckling travelers may not be immediately combative, which leaves room for players to come up with ideas on how to approach the situation without risking death in a fight.

The following monster actions are great ways to add variety to your next encounter. Add them during the planning stages, or roll for them on the fly.

1d10	Monster Actions
1	Grappling, rappelling
2	Heckling, harassing
3	Throwing, hurling
4	Flying, hovering
5	Retreating
6	Jumping, dropping
7	Robbing
8	Digging, mining
9	Eating
10	Kidnapping
11	Roll 2d10 and combine the results
12	Roll 3d10 and combine the results

Sometimes the results may seem nonsensical, but that very nonsense serves as inspiration for additional elements in the scenario. For example, flying goblins could be using hang gliders, flung from catapults, or tossed by ogres. Some environmental element might make it look like they're flying for a reason yet to be disclosed. Use it to feed your creativity and see what you come up with!

4. SET TOYS

Finally, set toys include random objects available for players and monsters to use to their advantage. Furniture, chandeliers, barrels, rocks, pottery, and more all fulfill this role, and they introduce possibilities that wouldn't be available (or at the very least, obvious) in an empty 30'x30' room.



The following items are fun to jump over, hide behind, or toss around.

1d10	Toys
1	Furniture, intact or otherwise
2	Rubble, possibly stacked in loose piles
3	Barrels, buckets, or other containers
4	Small animals, easily thrown
5	Hanging lanterns or standing candelabras
6	Hanging roots or branches
7	Curtains, rugs, or wall hangings
8	Pottery, valuable or otherwise
9	Meat pile, possibly rotten
10	Cooking or crafting equipment lining the walls
11	Roll 2d10 and combine the results
12	Roll 3d10 and combine the results

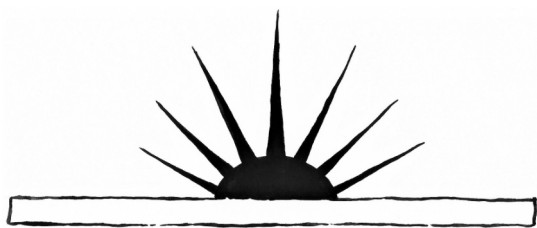
Set toys are a simple way to add some tactical interest as well as make places feel more lived in. If your players have trouble grasping the use of objects in their environment, lead out by having monsters use those objects in fun ways. A party that starts a fight only to have a dining table thrown at them is likely to start taking a closer look at their surroundings.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Note that none of the above suggestions tells you what monsters to use or what mechanics to employ. They serve as points of inspiration to elevate the level of variety in a game.

Roll on each table once. Combine the elements in a way that seems sensible and exciting, and then stat things out as necessary. Alternatively, select items you like or use these tables as inspiration for your own chaotic elements in upcoming encounters.

Above all, have fun sowing chaos! Navigating the complete mayhem that chaotic encounters provide makes for engaging game play and fond memories.



WONDERING ABOUT WANDERING MONSTERS

TRAVIS MILLER

INTRODUCTION

There has long been a debate by game masters about the value of wandering monsters. Some referees insist that the wandering monster is a procedure essential to the classic fantasy adventure gaming experience. Others don't like it and choose to omit it from their games.

Detractors argue that wandering monsters are a distraction from the main action, an unfair resource drain on characters, and can result in pointless character deaths. Even Gary Gygax claims that the wandering monster rules are not always amenable to a good time. He wrote in the introduction to the AD&D Dungeon Master's Guide:

"For example, the rules call for wandering monsters, but these can be not only irritating - if not deadly - but the appearance of such can actually spoil a game by interfering with an orderly expedition."

Gary does have a valid point. You can spoil a game by ill use of any procedure or rule.

That said, the basic concept of wandering monsters is sound. The way they are applied is often what makes them unenjoyable.

Wandering monsters add interest to the game if you follow the procedures and put some thought into the encounters.

REASONS TO USE WANDERING MONSTERS.

Wandering monsters are a dilemma for players. Challenging the player's skills through interesting dilemmas are what classic fantasy adventure games are all about. Wandering monsters are a possible problem that players must take into account.

Do we hire extra henchmen? They have a cost, but they improve our survival.

Do we leave the dungeon or do we stay? We're running low on spells, and the fighter is down to 15 hit points.

There is probably a good treasure further down this passage. If we have to fight and spend too many resources, we could be vulnerable to a wandering monster on the way out.

NOT EVERY "MONSTER" IS A MONSTER.

The "monster" listings in OSE include humans, humanoids, benevolent supernatural beings, and animals.

These creatures should be on your tables along with dangerous foes. The inclusion of friendly NPCs and benevolent beings create possible allies and opportunities for social encounters.

WANDERING MONSTERS CONVEY INFORMATION.

Everything characters interact with in the game world carries information. The mere presence of a particular creature tells players something about the milieu. Well designed random monster encounters provide players with information beyond “here be monsters.”

ENHANCES IMMERSION AND BELIEVABILITY.

I always use wandering monster procedures in a dynamic adventuring locations where there are factions in conflict. Warring tribes and monsters seeking to drive out rivals are active in the dungeon or wilderness between lairs. PCs are going to come across these monsters during their exploration.

Monsters having a conflict before the adventurers show up create a sense that the players are inhabiting a believable world. The players can involve their characters in that fight as a way to achieve their own objectives.

CONVEY INFORMATION

I use wandering monsters to provide exposition to players. Uniforms on humanoid monsters, something odd about their appearance, some unusual coinage they are carrying, a battle cry, and so on are information players can use when deciding their next move. Random monsters can be used to convey adventure hooks, or clues to what's going on in the dungeon. Players are going to infer something when they encounter a monster, so you might as well provide them with the knowledge they need to progress in the dungeon.

NOVELTY FOR THE REFEREE

The referee wants to have fun too. Random encounters can result in unexpected and entertaining outcomes. Player shenanigans in response to random encounters have been some of the most memorable events I've had in gaming. One of my favorites is when a wizard PC obliterated the party's magic carpet in an encounter with zombie ravens. He misjudged a fireball spell and caught the carpet, and the party, in its blast radius.



HOW TO USE WANDERING MONSTERS

Now that I've established the reasons to use wandering monsters, you need to know how to use them effectively.

Monster encounters can be neutral or even beneficial to player characters.

Clever players will employ many different tactics to turn a bad situation into an opportunity for gain. Give the players a chance to do that by using random monsters for something other than a hit point and resource tax.

LET THE MECHANISMS DO THE WORK.

Following the procedure helps the player characters to avoid fights.

THE OLD SCHOOL ESSENTIALS ENCOUNTER SEQUENCE.

Surprise: The referee rolls for surprise, if applicable.

Encounter distance: The referee determines how far away the monsters are from the PCs.

Initiative: Any sides that are not surprised roll initiative to determine who acts first.

Actions: Any sides that are not surprised decide how they will respond to the encounter. The encounter is played out accordingly.

Conclusion: One turn has passed.

ROLL FOR DISTANCE!

While surprise and short encounter distance rolls can make for a dire situation, it is rare to get both in the same encounter. In most situations, PCs will have an opportunity to avoid combat because the distance between them and the monster is large enough to provide space to parley, run, or use magic before the creatures can get into melee range.

- **In the wilderness,** encounter distance is $4D6 \times 10$ yards. The most likely result on $4D6$ is "14" which yields a distance of 140 yards. That's far enough that either party can get away before the melee occurs.
- **In the dungeon** the mostly likely result is 70 feet. ($2D6 \times 10$ feet) That provides the characters at least one or two rounds of actions before melee begins.

LET'S MAKE A DEAL!

If I haven't predetermined the monster's disposition as aggressively violent, then I make a $2D6$ reaction roll to see how they respond to adventurers.

- *On a neutral roll,* the monsters try to avoid a fight.
- *On a positive roll,* the monsters initiate a parley.



In the action phase of the encounter sequence, players have the option to parley. If the monster is sentient, the players have a reasonable chance of making a deal.

The only result on a 2D6 reaction roll that indicates the monsters immediately attack is 02. The most likely roll is a 7; a neutral reaction. An offer of parley by a PC should almost always succeed to delay a fight if not avoid it.

I assume sentient monsters want to continue their existence, gain advantages over their enemies, and secure their own desires.

If the PCs negotiate something the monsters think is in their own self interest, a bargain can be achieved. Both sides might be playing each other in the short term. Shifting alliances and betrayals add to the fun and color of the game.

FREQUENCY OF ENCOUNTER ROLLS.

The frequency of wandering monster checks has a direct effect on the danger level of an adventure location. These are my standard intervals for monster checks.

- **In a borderland area or civilized area**, check *once per day*.
- **In wilderness areas**, check for encounters four times per day. Roll *once for every six hour period*.

- **In a dungeon**, roll *once per hour* for the typical dungeon and *once per turn* for the more heavily populated dungeons.

I find that random encounters can slow progress through the dungeon more than I like. There is no hard and fast rule that makes sense in every case. The original game calls for a check once per turn. Dr. Holmes variant calls for a check every 3 turns.

ADJUST FOR THE LEVEL OF DANGER

If I want a particular area to be highly dangerous, make your encounter checks more frequently.

If the area is heavily patrolled or traveled, previously cleared by the party, or an area where monsters simply are not common, then the rolls will be less often or with a lower probability.

ADJUST FOR PLAYER'S CAUTION

I am a fan of making encounter rolls a consequence of players being sloppy or incautious. Characters arguing, lingering in high traffic areas, or making noise gets an extra encounter check.

ADJUST FOR MONSTERS ALERT LEVEL

If the monsters are anticipating an attack, aware that there are adventurers in their domains, or have some other reason to be active, the frequency of wandering monster checks increases.



WHY MAKE CUSTOM TABLES?

I rarely use the standard tables in core rule books. I exclude certain monsters from my campaigns, create my own monsters, or have specific encounters I want to include in the table.

PREFERENCE FOR A NORMAL DISTRIBUTION

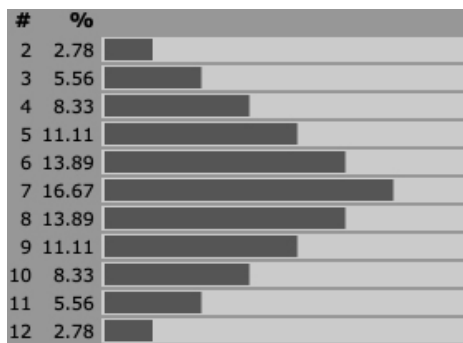


Chart from Anydice.com

The standard tables produce a linear distribution with an equal chance to encounter any monster on the table. You are just as likely to get a white dragon as you are a yeti or a party of berserkers. I prefer to have a bell curve distribution to my tables. I want certain encounters to be more likely. A 2D6 table with the most encounters occupying the 06,07,08 slots is easy for the DM to build.

The structure of most of my 2D6 random encounter tables is as follows. A result of 02 is the most dangerous encounter in the area. A result of 12 is the least dangerous or a favorable encounter. A result of 07 is the most common monster and, while dangerous, it is easily defeated if the party decides to make a stand and fight.

The most dangerous encounter isn't necessarily a single monster. It could be a large number of monsters common to the area. One zombie isn't a challenge. 100 zombies is, however, another matter.

I vary the monsters and numbers appearing based on terrain, region, or current events in the campaign. In borderland or civilized areas, a number of results will be favorable or neutral. That can be friendly merchants who invite the party to travel with them for mutual security. It could be the local lord out hunting with his men. It could be a small group of low level fighting men looking for work.

I also use monster rarity rather than lethality/favorability. A nixie is a rare encounter and can be either negative or positive. She might appear in either the 02/12 spot on my table.

If I need a large number of random encounters, I make nested tables. Instead of each row on the 2D6 table producing a specific encounter, it will reference another table of encounters. This is good for hex crawls or campaigns that has large areas of similar terrain.

ADD IMPORTANT DETAILS

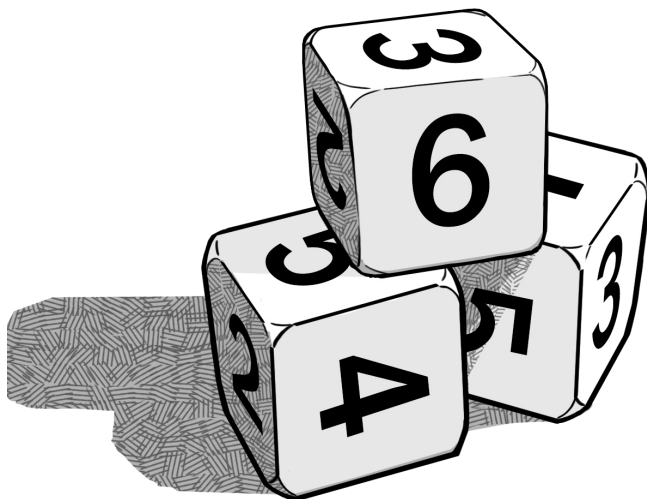
Standard tables provide no details but the monster and number appearing. They don't tell me why the monster is there, what it is doing, or anything else that might be useful. A skilled referee can just wing it. I find it helpful to create detailed encounters.

When I have nothing but the name and stat block on the table, my players will parley with the monster and start asking questions that I have to improvise. I can usually come up with a better encounter if I work it out beforehand.

The monsters could provide a hook to another encounter or adventure location. They can provide information about an NPC. They could be part of a larger scheme the players are trying to thwart. The monsters may be in a faction the PCs are trying to contact. There is a lot you can do with a random encounter that standard encounter tables don't provide.

CONCLUSION

1. Wandering monster tables have a far greater range of applications than many referees realize. You can get a lot of great adventuring and surprising outcomes from random monsters.
2. Follow the encounter procedure. Modulate the frequency of checks. Prepare interesting encounters and use them as a way to provide a tiny bit of exposition about the game world.
3. Your players will learn that wandering monsters are potential opportunities for adventure and discovery, not just time and hit point sinks.



THE COSTS OF SAGE ADVICE

ZAC GOINS

A CASE FOR SAGES

The 1st edition of the *Dungeon Masters Guide* offered thirteen examples for expert hirelings.

Ten years later, in the release of 2nd edition, the list had been whittled down to three (the assassin, the spy, and the sage), and a remark was added that these experts, "...require special treatment [for they] can affect the direction and content of an on-going adventure." Humorously, the book also stated, "All the sage does is conduct research and answer questions."

But Gary had an altogether higher opinion of these experts. He said, "Sages are a very special case indeed, for they are the encyclopedias, computers, expert opinions, and sort of demi-oracles of the milieu all rolled into one." Acquiring the services of a demi-oracle must certainly be expensive - an expense no doubt deemed gratuitous by many a deceased adventuring party - but where else can inquiring minds delve the absolute depths of nigh-immortal knowledge?

The adventuring company would do well to discreetly inquire about local sages each time they are tasked with a quest or opportunity of import. Unfortunately, few now know the sort of value a sage can provide, for the services are now regulated to footnotes

or left out altogether. Here then is a more rounded presentation of this particular expert hireling.

SAGES ARE VALUABLE

Adventurers are certainly not a breed known for their wisdom or intelligence. Even the most insightful or powerful of mages is still dull enough to stick their nose all too frequently into dungeons, catacombs, and the occasional lair.

Sages, on the other hand, know better, and their caution allows them to often live long and prosperous lives. While an adventurer will certainly have more need for an understanding of how to avoid the barbed tail of the mantichore, the sage is far more likely to know how to best pacify the beast so that the fight is unnecessary and may even be able to provide an antidote recipe just in case the characters' situation takes a turn for the worse.

By methodical research and accumulation, the compendium of sages knows a great deal about local incidents, historical persons and events, beasts both bizarre and dangerous, and the comings and goings of elementals, devils, deities, and other planar beings.

What's more, their collective knowledge of the natural world, the arcane, and the despised will often rival that of the most learned of druids, mages, and warlocks.

There is also a natural symbiosis between sages and magic-users. The research required for spells and other magical subjects is time consuming, and magic-users are seldom known for their patience, nor are players. While the currency cost of magical research cannot be avoided, the enterprising mage may find it convenient to offload a large portion of the time investment. In turn, only a few sages are also fluent in the arcane and may have a strong desire for spell casting services.

SAGES ARE EXPENSIVE

Like a dragon with its hoard, a sage is loath to give away their knowledge once they have accumulated it. Indeed, you are far more likely to find a wyrm willing to distribute rubies, than a sage who is willing to part with a single tome. It has often been said that knowledge always comes with a price, and the right information at the right time can be worth vast sums of money to the right buyer. Talk may be cheap but wisdom seldom is.

Additionally, just because a person is a sage does not mean that they have fathomless knowledge on all topics, nor does it mean that their libraries are akashic. Each sage has a specialization and a level of experience, and the further the desired information strays from that specialization and experience, the more unlikely it is to be known.

FINDING & EMPLOYING A SAGE

Whenever the party wishes to consult a sage in an urban area, consult the table below, rolling a d6 to determine the lead sage's highest level of experience. The likelihood of finding an experienced sage varies by population density. Once the sage is found, continue to the next section.

Level of Experience	Daily Cost	Monthly Cost	Base Modifier	Village / Small Town	Large Town / Stronghold	City
Graduate	50 gp	1000 gp	-2	1-4	1-2	-
Intellect	75 gp	1500 gp	-1	5-6	3-4	1
Savant	100 gp	2000 gp	0	-	5	2-4
Master	150 gp	3000 gp	+1	-	6	5-6

OBTAINING INFORMATION

Each day the sage is employed, determine the obscurity level of the information desired, roll 1d20 + the sage's Base Modifier, and consult the below table. Each level has two success ranges. Rolling a standard success grants general knowledge on the topic, while rolling a greater success allows for specific, though not necessarily exhaustive, information.

Information's Obscurity	Standard Success	Greater Success	Monster Details	Other Examples
Uncommon	4-14	15-20	Regional monsters	Monastery locations, reagents, faction details, curses, rituals, local rulers
Unusual	8-16	17-20	Distant monsters	Ley lines, magic artifacts, cult activities, summoning sites, distant rulers, magic-users
Archaic	12-18	19-20	Planar monsters	Dynastic ruins, holy relics, lycanthrope cure, dragon hoards, planar figures
Forgotten	18-19	20	Unique monsters	Sunken cities, old divinities, planar gates, command words for artifacts, secret entrances
Completely Unknown	20	-	-	Primordial pits, sealed dimensions, location of ioun stones, phylacteries, sentient swordcraft



ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS

While the game master is welcome to modify the above tables as desired based upon narrative outcomes and the party successfully completing thematically-appropriate quests, the tables may also be modified as the party interacts with a particular sage.

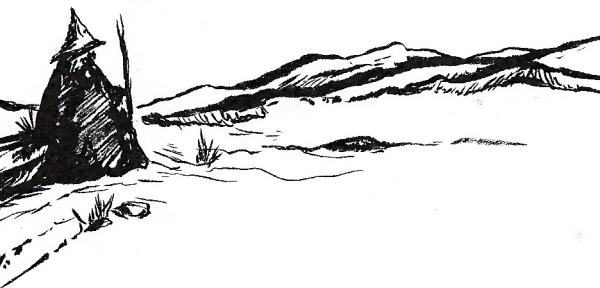
Positive Modifiers:

- If the sage specializes in the exact type of information requested, the daily roll has a minimum result of 8. A non-exhaustive specialization list is as follows: alchemy, arcane rituals, art, astrology, botany, cryptography, demonology, druidic practices, engineering, regional folklore, geography, empirical history, law, medicine, music, physics, planar biology, theology, and zoology.
- The sage will task their own hirelings on your query for an additional 50% in daily pay. This provides a modifier of +1 to the daily roll.
- Procuring desirable items for the sage encourages them to work extended hours.

- This allows a modifier of +2 to the daily roll. A non-exhaustive desirable items list is as follows: arcane scrolls, delectable treats, exotic quills and inks, fine garments, rare books, special vellums and parchments, unique or hard to find reagents, and useful magic items.

Negative Modifiers:

- If the sage has no real interest in the subject matter, reduce the daily roll result by 1. The GM may determine the interests of each sage, or, if the subject matter is outside the area of the sage's specialization, roll 1d6. On a 1-4, the sage is uninterested.
- Hagglng, coercing, or threatening a sage results in less focused work. Reduce the daily roll result by -2. In extreme cases, reduce the roll by 3 or even 4 instead.



SAGES ARE PARTICULAR

Not all sages are available for hire, but they may be persuaded to take side employment if they are offered goods and services that their patron cannot or will not provide. The below table suggests alternative interests to a bag of gold.

d6	Coin Alternatives	Examples
1	Private collections	Steal from a rival sage or to guarded religious texts
2	Exclusive access	Copying magic-user's spellbook, magical tomes
3	Share of treasure	Owns all texts recovered, discounts on party treasure
4	Spell services	Dispelling curses, placing wards of protection
5	Planar contacts	Contacting the divine or other-worldly beings
6	Special materials	Lich parchment, black pudding inks, treant paper
7	Archaic books	Rare or forgotten books
8	Exotic luxuries	Fine silks, gems, jewelry, fine liquor, furs.

QUICK-BUILD SAGES

Use this table if you want to drop-in a sage, but you don't want to mess with all the intricacies above. You will still need to use the "Obtaining Information" section.

d6	Sage's Name	Base	Areas of Knowledge	Daily Cost	Alternative Cost
1	Barnabus	0	Folklore, Myconology, Zoology	100 gp	Copying spellbook
2	Ellaina	0	Geography, Music, Theology	100 gp	Questioning the divine
3	Grimwurm	+1	Alchemy, Arcane Rituals, Botany, Chemistry, Zoology	150 gp	Procuring magical tomes
4	Jasper	-1	History, Languages, Theology	75 gp	Access to guarded religious texts
5	Silk	+1	Astrology, Cryptography, Folklore, Metaphysics	150 gp	Exotic Luxuries
6	Theodor	-2	Genealogy, Heraldry, Law	50gp	Dispelling curses



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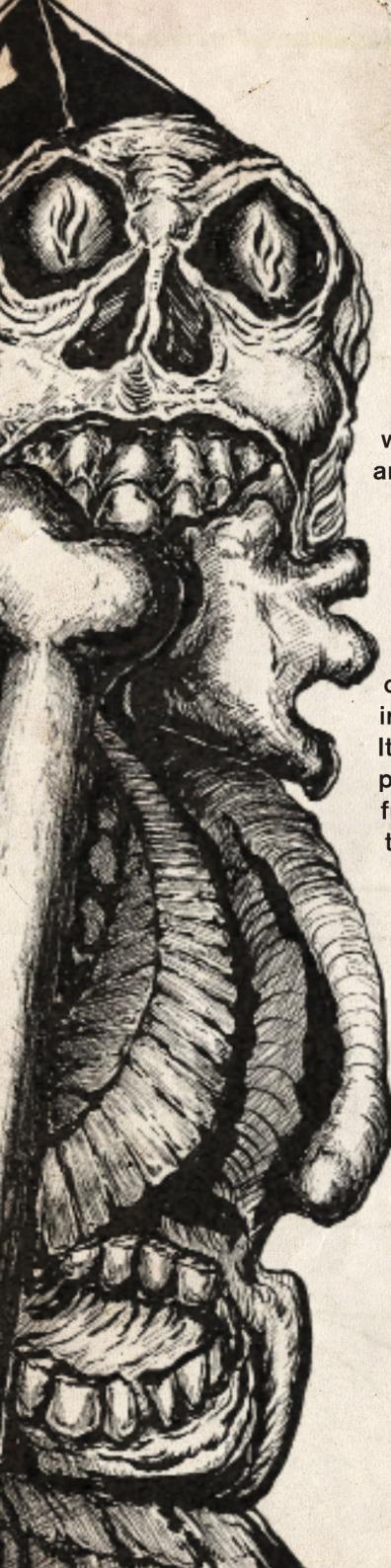
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Gary's Appendix is a collective effort by a creative menagerie to create a memorable zine for fantasy gamers. This is a first in a series of zines that explores the curious and fascinating parts of our beloved hobby in a way that is thought-provoking and useful.

The inspiration for this zine is the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons Dungeon Masters Guide. Gary wrote and collected a vast amount of information, rules, and guidance. Its haphazard nature and perplexing subjects makes it as fresh today as when he penned the work almost fifty years ago.

We do not have the audacity to believe that we can produce a work that matches that evergreen classic. We are partakers of the past who seek to share our works, our journey and our excitement about the hobby.

