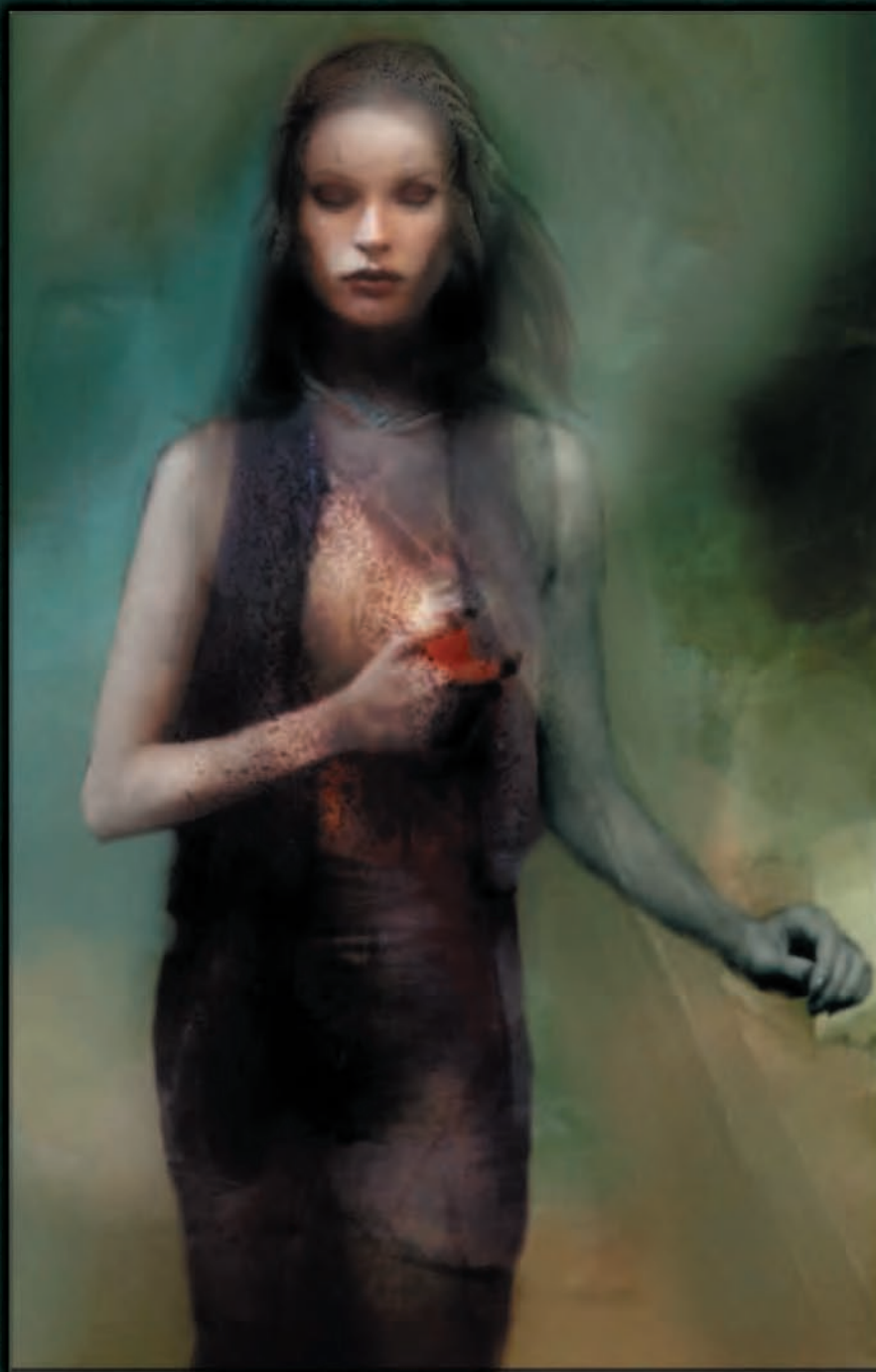




*Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook.
This product utilizes updated material from the v.3.5 revision.*

DM's Idea Pipeline

2004 Collection



RONIN ARTS



by Michael Hammes and Philip Reed

DM's Idea Pipeline

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Published by Ronin Arts

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Introduction

This collection of the *DM's Idea Pipeline* features the material that was e-mailed to subscribers from June through December of 2004. To learn more about the *DM's Idea Pipeline* please visit www.roninarts.com.

The items, characters, rumors, and just plain *stuff* found in this book are designed to be used in your games as you see fit. A lot of the material is created with adventure hooks in mind and DMs will no doubt have ideas of their own as they read through this book. For even more stuff visit www.roninarts.com or www.rpgnow.com.

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Feats

The more than two dozens feats that follow were designed to both fill openings in the current feat choices and to create new character concepts. DMs can use these feats to personalize important NPCs. Players, of course, will also want to peruse the feats described herein.

Arcane-Charged Power Attack *[General]*

You can channel arcane energy to improve the damage inflicted by your power attack.

Prerequisites: Power Attack, ability to cast 3rd-level arcane spells.

Benefit: When you make a melee attack using your power attack, you may activate this feat as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The damage of your power attack is boosted by your arcane energy.

To use this feat, you must sacrifice one of your spells for the day (of 1st-level or higher). The damage inflicted by the power attack is increased by a number of points equal to the level of the sacrificed spell.

Arcane Rage [General]

You can channel arcane energy to extend your rage.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 3rd-level arcane spells, ability to rage.

Benefit: At the beginning of a rage, as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity, you can channel arcane energy to extend your rage duration. By sacrificing one of your spells for the day (of 1st-level or higher), your rage duration is extended. The extension is for a number of rounds equal to the level of the sacrificed spell.

Armored Caster [General]

You are skilled at casting spells while wearing armor.

Prerequisite: Armor Proficiency (of the armor type worn).

Benefit: Your chance of arcane spell failure when wearing armor is reduced by 5%.

Special: You may select this feat multiple times. Each time you must select a different type of armor that you are proficient in.

Artist [General]

You are especially talented in artistic expression.

Benefit: Pick any two Perform skills. You get a +2 bonus on all checks with those skills.

Special: You can select this feat multiple times. Each time, you select two new Perform skills.

Bane of Evil [Paladin]

You are the ultimate bane of all evil, capable of inflicting catastrophic damage in a single blow.

Prerequisite: Greater Smite Evil

Benefit: Each use of your smite evil ability forces the target to succeed a Will save (DC 10 + your paladin level) or become stunned for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma bonus (if any – minimum of 1 round).

Special: Blackguards may take a similar feat, Bane of Good, with the effect applied to good-aligned characters and creatures.

Blessed Touch [Divine]

Your touch instills the target with a dash of holy power.

Prerequisite: Ability to lay on hands

Benefit: At the cost of 10 hit points of lay on hands, your touch grants one good-aligned character or creature a +4 morale bonus on attack rolls and on saving throws against fear attacks for a number of rounds equal to your character level. You may not use this ability on yourself.

Burning Arrow [General]

You are able to enhance arrows with arcane flame.

Prerequisite: Enhance Arrow as a class feature.

Benefit: When enhancing arrows you may choose to imbue magical fire into the arrow instead of an enhancement bonus. In place of your normal enhancement bonus the arrow deals 1d4 points of fire damage in addition to its regular damage.

Channel Divine Healing [Divine]

You act as a channel for your god's divine power; your lay on hands ability carries significantly more divine power.

Prerequisite: Lay on hands, any good alignment

Benefit: Your lay on hands supernatural ability may heal an extra 10 hit points per day.

Special: The paladin's ability to deal damage to undead is not increased by this feat.

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GENERAL FEATS

Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Arcane-Charged Power Attack	Power Attack, ability to cast 3rd-level arcane spells	Use arcane energy to increase melee damage
Arcane Rage	Ability to cast 3rd-level arcane spells, ability to rage	Extend rage duration by sacrificing spell slots.
Armored Caster	Armor Proficiency	Reduce arcane spell failure percentage.
Artist	-	+2 bonus to two chosen Profession skills.
Burning Arrow	Enhance Arrow as a class feature	Forsake enhancement bonus to imbue an arrow with fire damage.
Crafter	-	+2 bonus to two chosen Craft skills.
Creature Knowledge	-	+2 bonus to a select set of skills when interacting with a selected creature type.
Deadly Accuracy	Point Blank Shot, Far Shot, Precise Shot, sneak attack ability	Ranged sneak attacks extends to 60 ft.
Disease Resistance	Con 13.	+2 bonus on checks against disease.
Exceptional Strength	Str 15	Double your Strength modifier for a limited time each day.
Improved Spirit Shield	Spirit Touched, Spirit Shield	Bonus and duration of spirit shield is increased.
Plague Carrier	Diseases resistance, Con 15	Transmit diseases.
Scholar	-	+2 bonus to two chosen Knowledge skills.
Spirit Shield	Spirit Touched	Call a shield of spirits to protect you once per day.
Spirit Sight	Spirit Touched	<i>See invisibility</i> as a free action.
Spirit Touched	Sufered damage from an incorporeal creature	+2 bonus on Will saves, <i>speak with dead</i> once per week.
Split Shot	Manyslot	Divide attacks with multiple arrows in a single attack against multiple targets.
Strength from Within	Improved Turning	Turn or rebuke undead at +3 class levels.
The Ear that Sees	Improved Precise Shot, Listen 8 ranks	Ranged attacks ignore cover or concealment and you may attack through obstacles.
Touched by the Dead	Recovered from less than 0 hit points or brought back from the dead	Blend in with undead.
Urban Experience	-	+2 bonus on a select set of skills when in an urban environment.
Urban Predator	Urban Experience, Urban Tracking	+2 bonus to selected skills that stack with Urban Experience bonus.

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DIVINE FEATS

Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Blessed Touch	Ability to lay on hands	Grant morale bonus on attack and saving throws in place of healing.
Channel Divine Healing	Ability to lay on hands, any good alignment	Lay on hands heals an extra 10 hit points per day.
Divine Toughness	Ability to turn undead, able to cast 3rd-level divine spells.	+3 hit points and damage reduction against evil.
Holy Champion	Ability to cast 3rd-level spells, any good alignment	+1 sacred bonus on attack and damage rolls against evil creatures.
Sacred Armor	Ability to turn undead, any good alignment	Wrap yourself in holy power that forms a suit of armor.
Unholy Burst	Ability to rebuke undead, able to cast 6th-level divine spells	Unleash a blast of negative energy in place of a rebuke undead attempt.

METAMAGIC FEATS

Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Destructive Spell	Heighten Spell, Int 15	Increase damage cap of spells by one and one-half.

PALADIN FEATS

Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Bane of Evil	Greater Smite Evil	Opponents must succeed a Will save or be stunned by your smite evil attack.
Greater Smite Evil	Smite Evil 2/day	Inflict extra damage with your smite evil ability.

Crafter [General]

You are especially talented in working with your hands.

Benefit: Pick any two Craft skills. You get a +2 bonus on all checks with those skills.

Special: You can select this feat multiple times. Each time, you select two new Craft skills.

Creature Knowledge [General]

You have in-depth knowledge of the behavior, attitudes, and culture of certain kinds of creatures.

Benefit: Pick a type of creature from the table below. You get a +2 bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against creatures of this type.

Special: You can select this feat multiple times. Each time, you select a new type of creature from the list at right.

Type (Subtype)

Aberration

Animal

Construct

Dragon

Elemental

Fey

Giant

Humanoid (aquatic)

Humanoid (dwarf)

Humanoid (elf)

Humanoid (goblinoid)

Humanoid (gnoll)

Humanoid (gnome)

Humanoid (halfling)

Humanoid (human)

Humanoid (orc)

Type (Subtype)

Humanoid (reptilian)

Magical beast

Monstrous humanoid

Ooze

Outsider (air)

Outsider (chaotic)

Outsider (earth)

Outsider (evil)

Outsider (fire)

Outsider (good)

Outsider (lawful)

Outsider (native)

Outsider (water)

Plant

Undead

Vermin

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The bonuses provided by this feat stack with those provided by the Ranger's favored enemy special ability.

Deadly Accuracy [General]

Your mastery of the bow is so great that you may strike with deadly accuracy when using the weapon.

Prerequisites: Point Blank Shot, Far Shot, Precise Shot, sneak attack ability.

Benefit: Your ranged sneak attack is extended from 30 ft. to 60 ft.

Destructive Spell [Metamagic]

As you increase in experience, your damage-dealing spells advance to further heights of destructive ability than they do for most others.

Prerequisites: Heighten Spell, Int 15.

Benefit: Spells with damage caps have their cap increased by one and one-half (round up) of the spell's original limit. This increase either applies to the maximum number of dice of damage rolled – for spells that increase in damage by a number of dice per level – or it applies to the number of damage-inflicting items created by the spell – such as the number of missiles created by magic missile. A destructive spell uses up a spell slot two levels higher than the spell's actual level.

Examples: A destructive fireball has a maximum damage of 15d6 (a 15th-level caster) and takes up a 5th-level spell slot. A destructive magic missile, cast by a 15th-level spellcaster, unleashes a total of 8 missiles and takes up a 3rd-level spell slot.

Disease Resistance [General]

You have a natural resistance to diseases.

Prerequisite: Con 13.

Benefit: You receive a +2 unnamed bonus on all checks to resist or overcome the effects of any disease.

Divine Toughness [Divine]

Your body is hardened by your faith.

Prerequisites: Ability to turn undead, able to cast 3rd-level divine spells.

Benefit: You gain +3 hit points and damage reduction against evil. Subtract 2 from the damage the character takes each time he is dealt damage of any type by an evil character or creature. This ability can reduce damage to 0 but not below 0.

Exceptional Strength [General]

You are capable of great feats of strength and can draw upon an inner energy during extreme circumstances.

Prerequisite: Str 15.

Benefit: Your Strength modifier is doubled for a number of rounds equal to one-half your unmodified Strength modifier (round down). You may use this feat,

as a free action, a number of times per day equal to your unmodified Strength modifier.

Special: This feat may only be chosen at first level.

Greater Smite Evil [Paladin]

Your smite evil ability is even more potent.

Prerequisite: Smite evil 2/day

Benefit: Once per day your smite evil supernatural ability inflicts an additional point of damage per paladin level.

Holy Champion [Divine]

You are a chosen one of your deity and charged with destroying evil.

Prerequisite: Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells, any good alignment

Benefit: You are forever empowered by your deity and have a +1 sacred bonus to all attack and damage rolls against evil characters and creatures.

Special: This feat may be taken multiple times and its effects stack.

Evil characters may take a similar feat, Unholy Champion, gaining a +2 profane bonus instead of a sacred bonus.

Improved Spirit Shield [General]

Your powerful connection to the spirit realms better protects you from harm.

Prerequisites: Spirit Touched, Spirit Shield.

Benefit: Your spirit shield's bonus is increased to +8 and the duration is equal to your character level –2.

Plague Carrier

Though you have a natural resistance to disease, you also have a tendency of spreading diseases that you come into contact with.

Prerequisite: Disease resistance, Con 15.

Benefit: Any time you must make a Fortitude check due to a disease, even if you succeed that check, you become a carrier of that disease. Any disease, no matter its normal means of infection, becomes a contact disease once you have encountered it.

Anyone coming into contact with you for as long as the disease remains in your system (see below) must make a successful Fortitude save – DC = to one-half the disease's normal DC, rounded down – or suffer the effects of the disease.

You carry a disease for a number of days equal to one-half the disease's DC (rounded down).

Sacred Armor [Divine]

You are able to sheath yourself in a radiant suit of holy armor for a short period of time.

Prerequisite: Ability to turn undead, any good alignment



Benefit: Once per day, as a free action and by sacrificing a turn attempt for the day, you wrap yourself in holy power that takes on the form of a suit of translucent plate armor. This armor grants you damage reduction (2) and lasts for a number of rounds equal to one-half your caster level (round down).

Special: Evil characters may select a similar feat – Profane Armor – that has the same effect but uses a rebuke undead attempt and is unholy in nature.

Scholar [General]

You are especially knowledgeable in certain fields of study.

Benefit: Pick any two Knowledge skills. You get a +2 bonus on all checks with those skills.

Special: You can select this feat multiple times. Each time, you select two new Knowledge skills.

Spirit Shield [General]

You may call to the spirit realms for protection.

Prerequisite: Spirit touched.

Benefit: Once per day you may call a spirit shield. This shield, appearing as a gaseous mass of screaming, moaning creatures, extends out in all directions a number of feet equal to your character level. The spirit shield grants you – and all others within its borders – a +6 shield bonus to AC. Additionally, all those who

touch the spirit shield – by passing through it, for example – must make a Will save (DC 15 + your character level) or be shaken for 2d4 rounds. Designated allies – selected at the time of calling this shield – need not make the Will save if they touch the shield.

A spirit shield's duration is equal to one-half the character's level (round down, minimum 1).

Spirit Sight [General]

You may channel your connection to the spirit realms in order to see what others cannot.

Prerequisite: Spirit Touched.

Benefit: A number of times per day equal to one-third your character level (round down, minimum 1), you may use *see invisibility* as a 6th level spellcaster. This is a free action.

Spirit Touched [General]

You are attuned to the spirit realms and may speak with the dead.

Prerequisite: Must have suffered damage from an incorporeal creature.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Will saving throws.

Once per week you may cast *speak with dead* as a 10th level cleric.

Split Shot [General]

When firing multiple arrows at once you may target more than one opponent.

Prerequisite: Manyshot.

Benefit: When firing two or more arrows in one attack you may divide your arrows amongst as many different opponents as arrows fired, provided that the targeted opponents are in adjacent squares.

Special: A fighter may select Split Shot as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Strength From Within [General]

You are able to summon an unnatural amount of divine power from within yourself.

Prerequisite: Improved Turning.

Benefit: You turn or rebuke creatures as if you were three levels higher than you are in the class that grants you the ability. This increase replaces, and does not stack with, the bonus from Improved Turning.

The Ear that Sees [General]

Your skill with the bow, in conjunction with your practiced sense of hearing, enables you to fire arrows and bolts through cover . . . granted your attack inflicts enough damage to pierce the cover.

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Prerequisite: Improved Precise Shot, Listen 8 ranks.

Benefit: Your ranged attacks ignore the AC bonus to targets granted by any degree of cover or concealment. Additionally, your precision is so masterful that your ranged attacks reduce the hardness of any one obstacle between you and your target by 50% (round down).

Example: If firing at an opponent on the other side of strong wooden door the door's hardness is reduced to 2 (5 divided by 2 and rounded down). This feat is in all other ways identical to Improved Precise Shot.

Touched by the Dead [General]

You have been touched by death and are both cursed and blessed by a near-death experience.

Prerequisite: Recovered from less than zero hit points or returned to life.

NEW SKILL

Speak Language (Trailsign)

The Trailsign language is not a spoken language, but rather consists of symbols and arrangements of common materials (usually stones and twigs) to convey simple messages such as “Danger”, “Water this way”, “Shelter this way”, “We are moving east”, etc.

Because of its use of natural materials, and the fact that only speakers know the likely locations where such messages would be kept (at the foot of a tree, under a bush, under the largest rock in the glade, etc.), most travelers never realize that such messages even exist. In fact, even if they are looking right at a message, most people don't realize that the rocks and twigs they are seeing convey a message.

If necessary, the DM should determine just what kind of messages can be left using the Trailsign language. Keeping in mind that each word or concept has to be represented by a symbol and/or arrangement of material so that a long message will be more easily noticed.

In general, simple concepts such as “danger”, “shelter”, “food”, “water”, etc. can be conveyed, as can numbers and direction. Ideas such as color, specific species of creatures, etc. would probably not be able to be conveyed.

The language is in use among rangers and druids and the DM can choose to have it be secret, so that only members of those classes know it (or perhaps it is limited within those classes to members of a specific order), or open to anyone with an interest in learning it.

Benefit: You are shrouded in the smell of death and get a -2 penalty on all Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or other social interaction skills. You are able to blend in with the undead; undead creatures see you as one of their own and will not interfere with you unless you attack one of their kind at which point they recognize you as one of the living.

Unholy Burst [Divine]

You can channel negative energy into a single, powerful blast of negative energy that inflicts permanent damage on your enemies.

Prerequisites: Ability to rebuke undead, able to cast 6th-level divine spells.

Benefit: You can spend a rebuke undead attempt as a free action to unleash a visible burst of negative energy. This energy burst appears as a black, thick cloud that completely surrounds you. All good-aligned characters or creatures within 10 ft. (+2 ft./character level) suffer 10 points of [death] damage per character level. Those affected by this burst of negative energy may attempt a Will save (DC 15 + Wisdom modifier of the character releasing the energy) – on a successful Will save the target suffers half-damage.

Special: Good-aligned characters may take a variant of this feat that affects evil-aligned characters and creatures. Holy Burst is otherwise identical to Unholy Burst.

Urban Experience [General]

Your experience in large cities has granted you the ability to find your way through unfamiliar streets and alleys – and the ability to hide within those same streets and alleys.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Disguise, Hide, Move Silently, and Spot checks made when in urban areas of a small city size or larger.

Special: This feat may only be selected at 1st-level and only by a character that comes from a city.

Urban Predator [General]

You've spent so much time in city environments that any city you enter feels like home. You're especially skilled at tracking opponents within an urban environment.

Prerequisites: Urban Experience, Urban Tracking.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on all Disguise, Gather Information, Hide, Move Silently, and Spot checks made when in urban areas of a small city size or larger. If you fail a Gather Information check you can retry after 30 minutes of questioning/social interaction.

Special: This bonus stacks with Urban Experience.

Variant Classes and Specialty Priests

While the classes presented in the *Player's Handbook* are suitable for almost any fantasy campaign imaginable, many players and DMs enjoy using customized classes that are designed for purposes far more specific than, for example, the standard cleric. It is for the use of those players and DMs that the variant core classes and speciality priests have been included in this book.

Variant classes include one or more of the following entries:

Alignment: Changes to the class's alignment restrictions.

Hit Die: Changes to the class's Hit Die.

Base Attack Bonus: If the class uses a different base attack bonus, this entry gives the column to use (good, average, or poor).

Base Save Bonuses: If the class has a different mix of good and poor saves, this entry gives the appropriate column for each save.

Class Skills: Additions or subtractions from the class skill list, and/or changes to the number of skill points gained per level.

Class Features: Changes, additions, or subtractions to the class's special features, including spellcasting.

Specialty priests are presented following the standards for domain clerics. Unless otherwise noted, a specialty priest is identical to a typical cleric.

ROGUE VARIANT: HIGHWAY BANDIT

Highway bandits are brutish, slow-witted rogues who make their living accosting merchants and travelers on the roads between cities. Tougher than most rogues, and more skilled in combat, highway bandits are often used as muscle in most thieves guilds.

Many highway bandits die at an early age, and those that do survive are hunted by the law until they either retire or are captured by the law. Many highway bandits find themselves connected with adventuring companies when they're forced to flee their usual area of operations.

Alignment: A highway bandit must be of any evil alignment; most highway bandits are neutral evil.

Hit Die: The highway bandit uses a d8 for his Hit Die (and has hit points at 1st level equal to 8 + Con modifier).

Base Attack Bonus: The highway bandit's training means that he uses the good base attack bonus.

Class Features

The highway bandit has all the standard rogue class features, except as noted below.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The highway bandit is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. Highway bandits are proficient with light armor, but not with shields.

Sneak Attack: The highway bandit, since his method of operation involves the direct approach, does not have the rogue's sneak attack ability.

Trapfinding and Trap Sense: The highway bandit does not have either of these abilities.

Bonus Feats: At 1st level, a highway bandit gets a bonus combat-oriented feat in addition to the feat that any 1st-level character gets and the bonus feat granted to a human character. The highway bandit gains an additional bonus feat at 2nd level and every two rogue levels thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 18th, and 20th). These bonus feats must be drawn from the feats noted as fighter bonus feats. A highway bandit must still meet all prerequisites for a bonus feat, including ability score and base attack bonus minimums.

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These bonus feats are in addition to the feat that a character of any class gets from advancing levels. A highway bandit is not limited to the list of fighter bonus feats when choosing these feats.

PRIEST OF AIR

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Priests of air gain no additional proficiency in any weapon or armor.

Favored Domain: The effects of air domain spells cast by a priest of air are treated as if the priest were of one level higher than his actual caster level.

Forbidden Domain: In addition to domain restrictions due to alignment, priests of air may not cast earth domain spells.

Bonus Domain Spells: Priests of air have access to one bonus spell slot for each level they can cast. This bonus spell slot may only be used to prepare an air domain spell.

Granted Powers

Turn or Destroy Earth Creatures (Su): Starting at 1st level, a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier, a priest of air can turn or destroy earth creatures as a good cleric turns undead.

Rebuke, Command, or Bolster Air Creatures (Su): Starting at 1st level, a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier, a priest of air can rebuke, command, or bolster air creatures as an evil cleric rebukes undead.

Reduced Spellcasting: Starting at 2nd level, priests of air increase in spellcasting ability at a lower speed than pure clerics. Spells per day for a priest of air are determined as if the priest of air were of one level lower than his actual caster level.

Blast of Wind (Su): Beginning at 3rd level, priests of air may channel their divine power into a sudden, focused blast of wind. By making a successful ranged touch attack the priest of air may strike a target within range (10 ft/caster level), leaving that target staggered for a number of rounds equal to the caster's Wisdom modifier. This supernatural ability may be used a number of times per day equal to one-half the caster's level (round down). Targets that succeed a Reflex save (DC 10 + caster's level) are staggered for only one round no matter the caster's Wisdom modifier.

Spontaneous Casting: Beginning at 5th level, a priest of air can channel stored spell energy into [Air] domain spells that the cleric did not prepare ahead of time. The cleric can "lose" any prepared spell in order to cast any [Air] domain spell of the same spell level or lower.

Gaseous Form (Sp): Beginning at 8th level, once per day, a priest of air may turn gaseous as per the

spell of the same name for a number of minutes equal to his caster level. This is a free action.

Assume Elemental Form: Starting at 10th level, a priest of air may transform himself into a medium-sized air elemental taking on all of the abilities of such a creature (though retaining his own hit points, base attack bonus, and save bonuses). While in elemental form a priest of air may still cast spells and retains all weapons, armor, and. This ability may be used once per week and lasts for a number of rounds equal to the priest of air's caster level + his Charisma modifier.

PRIEST OF DEATH

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Priests of death prefer the use of the scythe in combat and gain the Weapon Focus feat for that weapon as a bonus feat. They gain no additional proficiency with any other weapon or any armor.

Favored Domain: The effects of death domain spells cast by a priest of death are treated as if the priest were of one level higher than his actual caster level.

Forbidden Domains: Other than alignment restrictions (see the *Player's Handbook*), a priest of death has no restrictions on spell selection.

Bonus Domain Spells: Priests of death have access to one bonus spell slot for each level they can cast. This bonus spell slot may only be used to prepare a death domain spell.

Granted Powers

Greater Command Undead (Su): Beginning at 1st level, evil death priests with the ability to rebuke undead do so as if their caster level were of two levels higher than it actually is.

Death Touch (Su): Starting at 1st level, a priest of death may use death touch once per day. The priest must succeed on a melee touch attack against a living creature (using the rules for touch spells). On a successful touch, roll 1d6 per cleric level the priest of death possess. If the total at least equals the creature's current hit points, it dies (no save).

Unnatural Immunity to Disease (Su): Beginning at 3rd level, priests of death are immune to all natural diseases. In addition, they receive a +2 circumstance bonus when resisting the effects of supernatural and magical diseases.

Reduced Spellcasting: Starting at 4th level, priests of death increase in spellcasting ability at a lower speed than pure clerics. Spells per day for a priest of death are determined as if the priest of death were of one level lower than his actual caster level.

Spontaneous Casting: Beginning at 5th level, a priest of death can channel stored spell energy into

CLASS FEATURE VARIANT: UNCONTROLLABLE RAGE

This variant must be selected when the character is created. A barbarian character that selects this rage variant follows these rules and may not use the normal rage ability. Swapping this version of rage for the normal version requires DM approval.

A barbarian with this variant form of rage becomes more powerful (see below) but has no control over his chosen targets – the barbarian immediately attacks the closest target and continues attacking until the target is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points or the rage use expires. If more than one creature is equidistant from the barbarian when his rage begins check randomly to see which creature the barbarian attacks. Once a target is reduced to 0 hit points the barbarian immediately directs his attack to the next closest creature.

A barbarian using uncontrollable rage will go to any length to destroy his target, using every ability and weapon and his disposal and refusing to retreat.

The barbarian temporarily gains a +6 bonus to Strength, a +6 bonus to Constitution, and a +4 morale bonus on Will saves, but he takes a –4 penalty to Armor Class, a –6 penalty to Intelligence, and a –4 penalty to Wisdom. (Ability scores may not be reduced below 1 by this class feature). Uncontrollable rage is otherwise identical to normal rage. Once the rage is over the barbarian suffers the normal penalties as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

A barbarian under uncontrollable rage may not make a 5-foot-step or a withdraw action.

[Death] domain spells that the cleric did not prepare ahead of time. The cleric can “lose” any prepared spell in order to cast any [Death] domain spell of the same spell level or lower.

Animate Dead (Sp): Starting at 7th level, priests of death may cast *animate dead* once per day as a caster of twice their actual caster level.

Corpse Touch (Su): Beginning at 9th level, a priest of death may use corpse touch once per day. The priest must succeed on a melee touch attack against a living creature (using the rules for touch

spells). On a successful touch, roll 2d6 per cleric level the priest of death possess. If the total at least equals the creature's current hit points, it dies (no save).

Enhanced Undead (Ex): Starting at 10th level, undead created by a priest of death (using either their supernatural ability animate dead or a spell) gain a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength and Dexterity and two additional hit points per hit die. This ability does not affect the number of hit dice of animated creatures that the priest of death can create or control.

PRIEST OF DESTRUCTION

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Priests of destruction gain proficiency with all martial weapons. They do not gain additional proficiency with armor.

Favored Domain: The effects of destruction domain spells cast by a priest of destruction are treated as if the priest were of one level higher than his actual caster level.

Forbidden Domains: Other than alignment restrictions (see the *Player's Handbook*), a priest of destruction has no restrictions on spell selection.

Bonus Domain Spells: Priests of destruction have access to one bonus spell slot for each level they can cast. This bonus spell slot may only be used to prepare a destruction domain spell.

Granted Powers

Smite (Su): Starting at 1st level, priests of destruction gain the smite power, the ability to make a single melee attack with a +4 bonus on attack rolls and a bonus on damage rolls equal to their cleric level. The priest must declare the smite before making the attack. This ability is usable once per day.

Spontaneous Casting: Beginning at 2nd level, a destruction priest can channel stored spell energy into [Destruction] domain spells that the cleric did not prepare ahead of time. The cleric can “lose” any prepared spell in order to cast any [Destruction] domain spell of the same spell level or lower.

Devastating Prayer (Su): Starting at 4th level, once per day, a priest of destruction may sacrifice prepared spells in order to activate this supernatural ability. For every level of spell sacrificed the priest's devastating prayer inflicts 1d6 points of damage (maximum 10d6) to any chosen target within 10 ft./caster level of the priest. Using this ability is a full-round action.

Enhanced War Domain Spells (Ex): Beginning at 8th level, the effects of war domain spells cast by a priest of destruction are treated as if the priest were of one level higher than his actual caster level.

PRIEST OF EARTH

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Earth priests gain no additional proficiency in any weapon or armor.

Favored Domain: The effects of earth domain spells cast by an earth priest are treated as if the priest were of one level higher than his actual caster level.

Forbidden Domain: In addition to domain restrictions due to alignment, earth priests may not cast air domain spells.

Bonus Domain Spells: Earth priests have access to one bonus spell slot for each level they can cast. This bonus spell slot may only be used to prepare an earth domain spell.

Granted Powers

Turn or Destroy Air Creatures (Su): Starting at first level, a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier, an earth priest can turn or destroy air creatures as a good cleric turns undead.

Rebuke, Command, or Bolster Earth Creatures (Su): Starting at 1st level, a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier, an earth priest can rebuke, command, or bolster earth creatures as an evil cleric rebukes undead.

Spontaneous Casting: Beginning at 3rd level, an earth priest can channel stored spell energy into [Earth] domain spells that the cleric did not prepare ahead of time. The cleric can "lose" any prepared spell in order to cast any [Earth] domain spell of one-half level or lower than the "lost" spell.

Reduced Spellcasting: Starting at 5th level, earth priests increase in spellcasting ability at a lower speed than pure clerics. Spells per day for an earth priest are determined as if the priest of law were of one level lower than his actual caster level.

Assume Elemental Form: Starting at 8th level, an earth priest may transform himself into a medium-sized earth elemental taking on all of the abilities of such a creature (though

retaining his own hit points, base attack bonus, and save bonuses). While in elemental form an earth priest may still cast spells and retains all weapons, armor, and equipment. This ability may be used once per week and lasts for a number of rounds equal to the earth priest's caster level + his Charisma modifier.

PRIEST OF EVIL

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Priests of evil gain no additional proficiency in any weapon or armor.

Favored Domain: The effects of evil domain spells cast by a priest of evil are treated as if the priest were of one level higher than his actual caster level.

Forbidden Domains: Other than alignment restrictions (see the *Player's Handbook*), a priest of evil has no restrictions on spell selection.



Bonus Domain Spells: Priests of evil have access to one bonus spell slot for each level they can cast. This bonus spell slot may only be used to prepare an evil domain spell.

Granted Powers

Spontaneous Casting: Beginning at 1st level, a priest of evil can channel stored spell energy into [Evil] domain spells that the cleric did not prepare ahead of time. The cleric can “lose” any prepared spell in order to cast any [Evil] domain spell of the same spell level or lower.

Detect Good (Sp): Beginning at 1st level, a priest of evil can detect good (as the spell) as a spell-like ability at will.

Favored Son of Evil (Su): At 2nd level, a priest of evil gains a bonus equal to one-half his caster level on all saving throws.

Enhanced Evil Domain Spells (Ex): Beginning at 4th level, the effects of evil domain spells cast by a priest of evil are treated as if the priest were of one level higher than his actual caster level.

Smite Good (Su): Starting at 5th level, priests of evil gain the smite good power, the ability to make a single melee attack against any good-aligned creature or character with a +4 bonus on attack rolls and a bonus on damage rolls equal to their cleric level. The priest must declare the smite good before making the attack. This ability is usable once per day at 5th level, twice per day at 10th level, and three times per day at 20th level.

PRIEST OF FIRE

For those using the clerical domain/granted power rules (see the *Player's Handbook*), it can make the character more interesting if the selected domain has more of an impact on the overall character than the *Player's Handbook* currently sets forward.

This variant “specialty priest,” expands upon the fire domain cleric. I’m still working on this specific idea and, if I can get the balance right, plan to do all of the domains presented in the SRD. I’m also considering approaching these “specialty priests” as variant core classes. While I feel the approach taken for this domain is suitable to play, I’m still testing things. I’d love feedback on this. (I know this is a change for the Pipeline . . . I’m just trying to keep things interesting for us all. If you’d rather I stick to the usual material please let me know.)

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Priests of fire gain no additional proficiency in any weapon or armor.

Favored Domain: The effects of fire domain spells cast by a priest of fire are treated as if the priest were of one level higher than his actual caster level.

Forbidden Domain: In addition to domain restrictions due to alignment, priests of fire may not cast water domain spells.

Bonus Domain Spells: Priests of fire have access to one bonus spell slot for each level they can cast. This bonus spell slot may only be used to prepare a fire domain spell.

Granted Powers

Turn or Destroy Water Creatures (Su): Starting at first level, a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier, a priest of fire may turn or destroy water creatures as a good cleric turns undead.

Rebuke, Command, or Bolster Fire Creatures (Su): Starting at first level, a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier, a priest of fire can rebuke, command, or bolster fire creatures as an evil cleric rebukes undead.

Spontaneous Casting: Beginning at 3rd level, a priest of fire can channel stored spell energy into [Fire] domain spells that the cleric did not prepare ahead of time. The cleric can “lose” any prepared spell in order to cast any [Fire] domain spell of any level lower than the “lost” spell.

Reduced Spellcasting: Starting at 6th level, priests of fire increase in spellcasting ability at a lower speed than pure clerics. Spells per day for a priest of fire are determined as if the priest of law were of one level lower than his actual caster level.

Assume Elemental Form: Starting at 10th level, a priest of fire may transform himself into a medium-sized fire elemental taking on all of the abilities of such a creature (though retaining his own hit points, base attack bonus, and save bonuses). While in elemental form a priest of fire may still cast spells and retains all weapons, armor, and equipment all of which are magically protected from the fire. This ability may be used once per week and lasts for a number of rounds equal to the priest of fire’s caster level + his Charisma modifier.

PRIEST OF THE SUN

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Priests of the sun gain no additional proficiency in any weapon or armor.

Favored Domain: The effects of sun domain spells cast by a priest of the sun are treated as if the priest were of one level higher than his actual caster level.

Forbidden Domains: Other than alignment restrictions (see the *Player's Handbook*), a priest of the sun has no restrictions on spell selection.

Bonus Domain Spells: Priests of the sun have access to one bonus spell slot for each level they can cast. This bonus spell slot may only be used to prepare a sun domain spell.

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Inability to Rebuke Undead: No matter the alignment of a priest of the sun, they may not rebuke undead.

Granted Powers

Greater Turning (Su): Starting at 1st level, once per day a priest of the sun can perform a greater turning against undead in place of a regular turning. The greater turning is like a normal turning except that the undead creatures that would be turned are destroyed instead.

Spontaneous Casting: Starting at 2nd level, a priest of the sun can channel stored spell energy into [Sun] domain spells that the cleric did not prepare ahead of time. The cleric can "lose" any prepared spell in order to cast any [Sun] domain spell of a lower level than the "lost" prepared spell.

Sun Burst (Su): Beginning at 4th level, once per day, a priest of the sun may release a powerful blast of sunlight, inflicting 2d6 points of damage on all undead within 20 ft./caster level of the priest. Using this sun burst ability physically drains the cleric, temporarily reducing his Strength and Constitution scores by 1 point each. These lost points are recovered after 24 hours.

Reduced Spellcasting: Starting at 5th level, priests of the sun increase in spellcasting ability at a lower speed than pure clerics. Spells per day for a priest of the sun are determined as if the priest of law were of one level lower than his actual caster level.

Enhanced Sun Burst (Su): Beginning at 10th level a priest of the sun may use sun burst twice per day, each usage inflicting 4d6 points of damage on all undead within 20 ft./caster level of the priest. The sun burst's ability drain remains the same.

PRIEST OF WAR

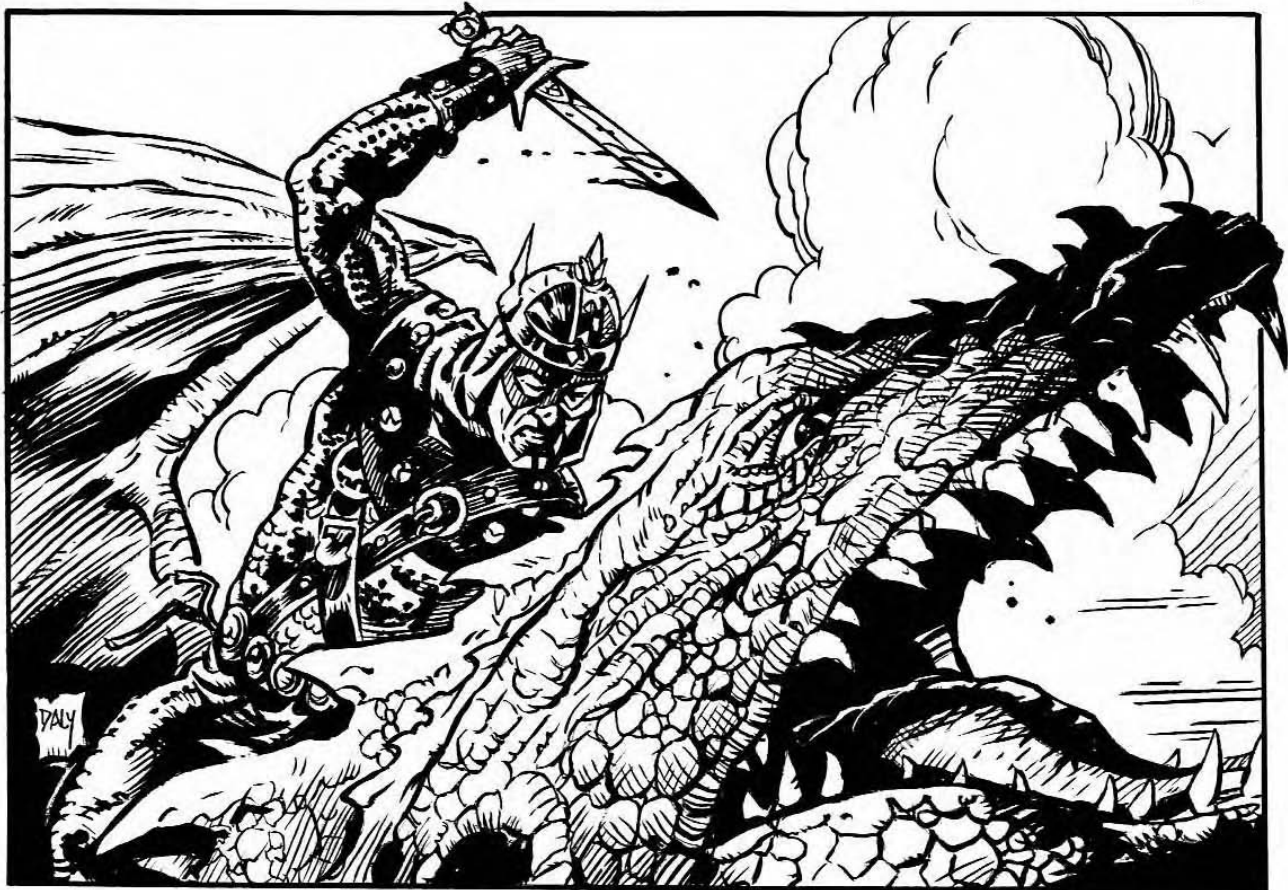
Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Priests of war gain proficiency with all martial weapons and proficiency with tower shields. Priests of war may select one weapon with which they gain the Weapon Focus feat for that weapon as a bonus feat. They gain no additional proficiency with any other weapons, armors, or shields.

Favored Domain: The effects of war domain spells cast by a priest of war are treated as if the priest were of one level higher than his actual caster level.

Forbidden Domains: In addition to domain restrictions due to alignment, a priest of war must select two domains from the following list: air, animal, earth, healing, knowledge, plant, travel, and trickery. He may not cast spells of the selected domains.

Bonus Domain Spells: Priests of war have access to one bonus spell slot for each level they can cast. This bonus spell slot may only be used to prepare a war domain spell.

Bonus Hit Points: A priest of war, at first level, automatically gains +2 hit points.



Granted Powers

Spontaneous Casting: Beginning at 2nd level, a war priest can channel stored spell energy into [War] domain spells that the cleric did not prepare ahead of time. The cleric can “lose” any prepared spell in order to cast any [War] domain spell of the same spell level or lower.

Bonus Feats: Starting at 4th level, a priest of war gets a bonus combat-oriented feat. The priest of war gains an additional bonus feat at 8th level and every four cleric levels thereafter (12th, 16th, and 20th). These bonus feats must be drawn from the feats noted as fighter bonus feats. A priest of war must still meet all prerequisites for a bonus feat, including ability score and base attack bonus minimums.

These bonus feats are in addition to the feat that a character of any class gets from advancing levels. A priest of war is not limited to the list of fighter bonus feats when choosing these feats.

Enhanced Destruction Domain Spells (Ex): Beginning at 5th level, the effects of destruction domain spells cast by a priest of war are treated as if the priest were of one level higher than his actual caster level.

Rage (Ex): Beginning at 8th level, a priest of war can fly into a rage a certain number of times per day. In a rage, a priest of war temporarily gains a +4 bonus to Strength, a +4 bonus to Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but he takes a –2 penalty to Armor Class. The increase in Constitution increases the priest of war’s hit points by 2 points per level, but these hit points go away at the end of the rage when his Constitution score drops back to normal. (These extra hit points are not lost first the way temporary hit points are.) While raging, a priest of war cannot use any Charisma-, Dexterity-, or Intelligence-based skills (except for Balance, Escape Artist, Intimidate, and Ride), the Concentration skill, or any abilities that require patience or concentration, nor can he cast spells or activate magic items that require a command word, a spell trigger (such as a wand), or spell completion (such as a scroll) to function. He can use any feat he has except Combat Expertise, item creation feats, and metamagic feats. A fit of rage lasts for a number of rounds equal to 3 + the character’s (newly improved) Constitution modifier. A priest of war may prematurely end his rage. At the end of the rage, the priest of war loses the rage modifiers and restrictions and becomes fatigued (–2 penalty to Strength, –2 penalty to Dexterity, can’t charge or run) for the duration of the current encounter.

A priest of war can fly into a rage only once per encounter. At 8th level he can use his rage ability once per day. At 14th level – and again at 20th level – he can use it one additional time per day (to a maximum of three times per day at 20th level). Entering a rage takes no time itself, but a priest of war can do it only during his action, not in response to someone else’s action.

PRIEST OF WATER

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Water priests gain no additional proficiency in any weapon or armor.

Favored Domain: The effects of water domain spells cast by a water priest are treated as if the priest were of one level higher than his actual caster level.

Forbidden Domain: In addition to domain restrictions due to alignment, water priests may not cast fire domain spells.

Bonus Domain Spells: Priests of water have access to one bonus spell slot for each level they can cast. This bonus spell slot may only be used to prepare a water domain spell.

Granted Powers

Turn or Destroy Fire Creatures (Su): Starting at 1st level, a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier, water priests may turn or destroy fire creatures as a good cleric turns undead.

Rebuke, Command, or Bolster Water Creatures (Su): Starting at 1st level, a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier, water priests may rebuke, command, or bolster water creatures as an evil cleric rebukes undead.

Spontaneous Casting: Beginning at 3rd level, a priest of water can channel stored spell energy into [Water] domain spells that the cleric did not prepare ahead of time. The cleric can “lose” any prepared spell in order to cast any [Water] domain spell of the same spell level or lower.

Torrential Assault (Su): Beginning at 5th level, once per day, water priests may call down a torrent of hard, freezing rain that forces all within the area of effect to make a Reflex save (DC 10 + caster level) or be staggered for the duration of this supernatural ability. This rain covers a 10-ft./level radius centered on the water priest for a number of rounds equal to the priest’s caster level. A priest of water using this ability is not affected by its effects.

Reduced Spellcasting: Starting at 8th level, water priests increase in spellcasting ability at a lower speed than pure clerics. Spells per day for a water priest are determined as if the priest of law were of one level lower than his actual caster level.

Assume Elemental Form: Starting at 10th level, a priest of water may transform himself into a medium-sized water elemental taking on all of the abilities of such a creature (though retaining his own hit points, base attack bonus, and save bonuses). While in elemental form a priest of water may still cast spells and retains all weapons, armor, and equipment all of which are magically protected from the water. This ability may be used once per week and lasts for a number of rounds equal to the priest of water’s caster level + his Charisma modifier.

Prestige Classes

The following prestige classes were written to provide the DM with some unusual ideas for NPCs and opponents. While they could be used by PCs, the DM should keep in mind that these classes will have a more lasting impression if they are first introduced to the campaign through an opponent of the party.

BONDED HERO

As adventurers work together, they grow to anticipate the moves and desires of their companions, slowly building an intangible bond that is stronger than anything that can be put into words. At times, the most powerful of these companions slowly forge an unbreakable, magical bond that forever connects them. Individually they are deadly opponents in battle but, when together, they are virtually unstoppable.

Requirements

To qualify to become a bonded hero, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Spells: Ability to cast arcane or divine spells of any level.

Special: A close companion that selects this class at the same time – two (or more) characters must elect to become bonded heroes when all are eligible to gain a new level.

Class Skills

The bonded hero's class skills (and the key ability for each) remain identical to those of any one previous class the character has already taken. The character must make this choice when he first becomes a bonded hero and he may not alter his choice at a later date.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the bonded hero prestige class.

Table: The Bonded Hero

Level	Base				Special
	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	
1st	+1	+0	+0	+2	Improved Aid Another, Bonus Feat Heroes' Blast Heroes' Healing
2nd	+2	+0	+0	+3	
3rd	+3	+1	+1	+3	

Improved Aid Another (Ex): At any time a bonded hero aids another (as per the Player's Handbook) of his fellow bonded heroes, both characters gain a +4 synergy bonus to the necessary die rolls. (The character aiding gains a +4 bonus to the check to aid and, if successful, the aided character gains a +4 bonus.)

Bonus Feat: At 1st level, a bonded hero gets a bonus feat in addition to any feats the character would normally gain. This bonus feat may be any feat of the player's choice as long as the character meets all of the necessary prerequisites.

Heroes' Blast (Su): Beginning at 2nd level, a number of times per day equal to his bonded hero level, a bonded hero that is adjacent to a fellow bonded hero may, as a full attack, unleash a cone-shaped, magical blast of energy that has a range of 60 ft. This blast inflicts 1d6 points of damage per bonded hero level +an additional 1d4 points of damage for each bonded hero level of an adjacent companion. If more than one bonded hero is adjacent the damage effect stacks.

Heroes' Healing (Su): At 3rd-level, a bonded hero may, as a free action, release a burst of energy that heals all allies within 20 ft. Each ally, including the bonded hero, recovers 1d4 hit points per bonded hero level of the hero activating this ability. The healing is increased by 1d6 points for each bonded hero companion within the affected area. A bonded hero may use this ability once per day.

DEVOTEE OF FIRE

This prestige class is designed for characters that are not clerics or paladins. The devotee of fire is one that has embraced the teachings of a god of fire – or any deity that includes fire amongst his domains – but is not fully touched by the deity's power.

Table: Devotee of Fire

Level	Base				Special
	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	
1	+0	+0	+2	+0	Bless Water, Wreathed in Flames
2	+1	+0	+3	+0	Turn or Destroy Water Creatures
3	+2	+1	+3	+1	Weapon of Divine Fire

The devotee of fire prestige class is a manner in which one may prove his loyalty to his chosen deity and is not designed as a full prestige class. This three-level class exists only to enable a character to focus his energy on developing a minor connection with his chosen deity and, in fact, is better taken at lower character levels.

Hit Die: d8.

Requirements

To qualify to become a devotee of fire, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 2 ranks.

Special: The character must be a follower of a deity that includes fire amongst his domains. The character must not possess any levels as a cleric or paladin.

The Destruction of Water: In order to be accepted as a devotee of fire, a character that meets the listed requirements must pass the Destruction of Water. The character must confront and defeat a small-sized water elemental without any assistance. The battle must be witnessed by a bard or a priest of fire of 10th or higher level and that witness must then pass on his account of the battle to the temple elders.

Class Skills

The devotee of fire's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Profession (Wis), Spellcraft (Int) and any two class skills from a previous class or classes.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the devotee of fire prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Devotees of fire gain no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

Bless Water (Sp): Starting at first level a devotee of fire may cast bless water a number of times per day equal to 1 + his devotee of fire class level.

Wreathed in Flames (Sp): Starting at first level, a devotee of fire is able to shield his body in divine flames. Once per day, as a free action, a devotee of fire may shield his body in flames that protect him from fire-based attacks and deal damage to attackers.

Any creature striking you with its body or a hand-held weapon deals normal damage but, at the same time, takes a number of points of damage equal to 2 + one-half your character level (round down). This damage is fire-based and if the attacker has spell resistance it applies to this ability. Creatures wielding weapons with exceptional reach, such as longswords, are not subject to this damage if they attack you.

Fire-based attacks directed against you, magical or mundane, deal only half damage. If the attack allows a Reflex save for half damage, you take no damage on a successful save.

This ability persists for a number of rounds equal to 2 + your Charisma modifier or until willingly dispelled. One-half the devotee of fire's character levels (round down) is considered his caster level for purposes of spell resistance.

Turn or Destroy Water Creatures (Su): Starting at second level, a devotee of fire has the power to turn or destroy water subtype creatures by channeling the power of his faith through his holy (or unholy) symbol.

A devotee of fire may attempt to turn or destroy water creatures a number of times per day equal to 1 + his one-half Charisma modifier (round down). A devotee of fire with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (religion) gets a +2 bonus on turning checks against water creatures.

This class feature is otherwise identical to a good cleric's turn undead ability. See the *Player's Handbook* for complete information on turning creatures.

Weapon of Divine Fire (Su): Beginning at third level, as a free action, a devotee of fire has the power to envelope any carried melee weapon in a blazing, divine flame. The affected gains an enhancement bonus of +2 to attack and damage rolls and deals an additional 1d8 + one-half character level (round down) points of fire damage.

A devotee of fire may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 2 + his Charisma modifier. The weapon remains sheathed in flame for a number of rounds equal to 2 + one-half the character's level (round down). At any time before its normal expiration, and as a free action, the devotee of fire may extinguish the divine fire.

Restrictions and Expectations

All of the following are restrictions and expectations of the devotee of fire.

Armor and Clothing Colors: Devotees of fire may only wear clothing or armor that is red, orange, or yellow in color. While it is admitted that some flames, especially magical flames, may be blue or green in color a devotee of fire shuns these colors as unholy and will never willingly choose to wear any item that is not red, orange, or yellow in color.

Associates: While devotees of fire have no alignment restrictions with which they choose to adventure with, they may not maintain friendships or acquaintances with any individual that uses water-based magic or special abilities.

Mutilation: Upon completing the Destruction of Water, a devotee of fire must undergo a purification ritual in which he is permanently scarred by magical flame (the character permanently loses 1 hit point). This 24-hour ritual may only be conducted by a priest of fire at a recognized temple to the character's chosen god of fire.

Water-Based Magic: A devotee of fire may not use any spells or magic items associated with water and loses all class abilities if he ever willingly utilizes water-based magic of any sort.

Water Consumption and Use: A devotee of fire may drink or bathe in water but only water that has been boiled and then blessed either the devotee of fire or by a priest or paladin of fire (through use of the *bless water* spell). In extreme circumstances a devotee of fire may interact with "unclean" water (either drinking, bathing, or falling into a river or being caught in a rainstorm) but he must atone for his action within 48-hours or lose access to all class abilities until he completes a *lesser geas* placed upon him by a priest of fire. To atone a devotee of fire must use his *wreathed in flames* class feature in a non-combat situation and light a small fire over which he must pray for 1 hour without interruption.

Ex-Devotees of Fire

A devotee of fire that willingly breaks any of the above restrictions, or fails to meet any of the stated expectations, loses all of his class abilities. The character may not progress as a devotee of fire until he atones for his violations (as per the *atonement* spell) as appropriate.

Divine Vessel

	Base					
	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will		
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special	Spells per Day
1	+0	+2	+0	+0	Bonus divine feat	-
2	+1	+3	+0	+0	Bonus divine feat	+1 level of existing class
3	+1	+3	+1	+1	Bonus divine feat	-
4	+2	+4	+1	+1	Bonus divine feat	+1 level of existing class
5	+2	+4	+1	+1	Bonus divine feat	-

DIVINE VESSEL

The power of a deity sometimes consumes a cleric or paladin, that overwhelming divine energy permanently transforming the individual into a weapon of divine strength. Divine vessels willingly accept and utilize this divine energy, striving to serve their god in any way demanded or imaginable.

This prestige class' one benefit is that the character rapidly gains [Divine] feats.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a divine vessel, a character must fulfill all of the following:

Spells: Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells.

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Feats: Any two [Divine] feats

Class Skills

The divine vessel's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Heal (Wis), Knowledge (Religion) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at each level: 2 + Intelligence modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the divine vessels prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Divine vessels gain no additional proficiency with any weapon or armor.

Spells per Day: At every second level gained as a divine vessel, the character gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained, except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. If a character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a divine vessel, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day.

Bonus Divine Feat: At each level, a divine vessel gains a new [Divine] feat. These bonus feats must be from those marked as [Divine] feats.

Table: The Harmonic Archer

Level	Base				Special
	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	
1st	+1	+0	+2	+2	Infuse Arrow with Song, <i>Whistling Distraction</i>
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+3	<i>Singing Sting</i>
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+3	Enhance arrow +1, <i>Deafening Dirge</i>
4th	+4	+1	+4	+4	Shattering Harmonics
5th	+5	+1	+4	+4	Enhance arrow +2, <i>Overwhelming Chorus</i>

HARMONIC ARCHER

Master of song and archery, the harmonic archer melds bardic talent with a steady bow and exceptional aim. In battle, the harmonic archer moves quickly beyond the sword strikes of his foes as he unleashes blast of song after blast of song. Each arrow carries with it a fraction of the harmonic archer's arcane and musical talent and sails on an audible current of music.

Harmonic archers are rarely encountered, few bards taking the time from their musical training and quest for knowledge to devote energy to mastering the art of blending archery with music. Those that do exist, however, are legends in their time, gathering knowledge as they journey with powerful adventuring groups.

Requirements

To qualify to become a harmonic archer, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (any bow)

Spells: Ability to cast 2nd-level arcane spells.

Special: Bardic music ability.

Class Skills

The harmonic archer's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the harmonic archer prestige class.

Infuse Arrow with Song: A number of times per day equal to the harmonic archer's level + his one-half Charisma modifier (round down), a harmonic archer may infuse an arrow with song. Each use of this ability replaces one *bardic music* ability use for that day.

Using this ability is a free action and instantaneous effect. At each new level the gains a new "song" that he may meld to an arrow. These "songs" are:

Whistling Distraction (Sp): Beginning at 1st level, a harmonic archer may use a song arrow to distract all characters and creatures within the arrow's path. This song arrow affects a cone-shaped area that starts with the harmonic archer and ends at the song arrow's target – the effect stops at the intended target even if the arrow misses.

Characters and creatures within the affected area must succeed a Concentration check (DC 15 + harmonic archer level) or be dazed for a number of rounds equal to one-half the harmonic archer's level (round down, minimum of one).

Singing Sting (Sp): At 2nd level, the harmonic archer may infuse song arrows with a terrible sting. The arrows gains an enhancement bonus to damage equal to the archer's Charisma modifier.

Deafening Dirge (Sp): At 3rd level, a harmonic archer may infuse a song arrow with an extremely loud sound that deafens all those within the arrow's path. This song arrow affects a cone-shaped area that starts with the harmonic archer and ends at the song arrow's target – the effect stops at the intended target even if the arrow misses. Characters and creatures within the affected area must make a Fortitude save (DC 20 + the harmonic archer's level) or be deafened for 2d4 rounds. If the check fails by 10 or more the affected character or creature is permanently deafened. A *restoration*, *wish*, *miracle*, or *remove blindness/deafness* spell restores hearing.

Shattering Harmonics (Sp): At 4th level, the harmonic archer's song arrow may be used to unleash a destructive wave of inaudible sound that carries beneath the audible song of the arrow. This song arrow affects a cone-shaped area that starts with the harmonic archer and ends at the song arrow's target – the effect stops at the intended target even if the arrow misses. All characters and creatures within the affected area suffer 2d6 points of damage (+1 point per harmonic archer level). A successful DC 15 Reflex save reduces the damage to one-half (round down).

Overwhelming Chorus (Sp): At 5th level, the harmonic archer's song arrow may carry a chorus of voices that brings characters and creatures in the arrow's path to their knees. This song arrow affects a cone-shaped area that starts with the harmonic archer and ends at the song arrow's target – the effect stops at the intended target even if the arrow misses. All characters and creatures within the affected area are knocked prone and are stunned for a number of rounds equal to the harmonic archer's Charisma modifier.

Enhance Arrow (Su): At 3rd level, every nonmagical arrow fired by a harmonic archer becomes magical, gaining a +1 enhancement bonus when released. These magical arrows are not crafted through the usual means – the harmonic archer need not expend gold or experience points – but are, instead, a supernatural ability. This bonus increases to +2 at 5th level. This bonus stacks with bonuses gained through the harmonic archer's *infuse arrow with song* ability.

Spells

Here are over a dozen new spells that can be dropped into your campaign today.

Accelerated Arrow

Transmutation [Force]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: Fifty projectiles, all of which must be in contact with each other at the time of casting

Duration: 10 min./level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You imbue ammunition (such as arrows, bolts, shuriken, and stones) with force energy, causing it to travel faster and strike harder. Each piece of ammunition doubles the range increment of the weapon it is fired from (i.e. an *accelerated arrow* fired from a shortbow travels 120 feet) and, due to the increased force, adds an additional die of damage (i.e. an *accelerated arrow* fired from a shortbow causes 2d6 points of damage).

Accelerated Arrow, Greater

Transmutation [Force]

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: Fifty projectiles, all of which must be in contact with each other at the time of casting

Duration: 10 min./level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You imbue ammunition (such as arrows, bolts, shuriken, and stones) with force energy, causing it to travel faster and strike harder. Each piece of ammunition triples the range increment of the weapon it is fired from (i.e. a *greater accelerated arrow* fired from a shortbow travels 180 feet). The increased force adds an additional two dies of damage to the projectile (i.e. an *accelerated arrow* fired from a shortbow causes 3d6 points of damage).

Acid Spray

Evocation [Acid]

Level: Destruction 1, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 15 ft.

Area: Cone-shaped burst

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: Yes

A cone of hissing acid shoots from your fingertips. Any creature and object in the area of the acid takes 1d4 points of acid damage per caster level (maximum 5d4). *Acid spray* can be used to dissolve objects.

Acid Hammer

Evocation [Acid]

Level: Clr 2, Destruction 2

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 0 ft.

Effect: Hammer-like glob

Duration: 1 min./level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

A 2-foot-long, oozing blob of green, bubbling acid springs forth from your hand. You wield this blob as if it were a warhammer. Attacks with the *acid hammer* are melee touch attacks. The hammer deals 1d8 points of acid damage +1 point per two caster levels (maximum +10). Since the hammer is immaterial, your Strength modifier does not apply to the damage. An *acid hammer* can be held against objects to dissolve them; the hammer does 8 + 1 point per two caster levels of damage per round of continued contact in this case.

Acid Whip

Evocation [Acid]

Level: Clr 3, Destruction 3

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 0 ft.

Effect: Whip-like strand

Duration: 1 min./level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

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A 15 foot-long, oozing strand of green, bubbling acid springs forth from your hand. You wield this strand as if it were a whip. Attacks with the *acid whip* are melee touch attacks. The whip deals 2d6 points of acid damage +1 point per two caster levels (maximum +10).

Since the whip is immaterial, your Strength modifier does not apply to the damage nor can you make trip or disarm attacks. An *acid whip* has a 15 reach and you can attack foes anywhere within the whip's reach including adjacent foes. Because it is a spell, using the *acid whip* does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

An *acid whip* can be held against objects to dissolve them; the whip does 12 + 1 point per two caster levels of damage per round of continued contact in this case.

Animal Call

Illusion (Figment)

Level: Brd 0, Rgr 1

Components: V, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Effect: Animal sound

Duration: 1 min. (D)

Saving Throw: Will disbelief (if interacted with)

Spell Resistance: No

You can make your voice sound like that of an animal, magical beast, or vermin. Although you can make imitate the call of any such a creature, you are still only capable of producing a level of volume based on your size. Thus, while this spell allows a human to produce the type of sound a lion makes, he would not be able to produce the volume of sound a lion is capable of producing.

Attempting to produce the sound of a creature larger than yourself, such as a human trying to produce the roar of a lion, grants the listener a +4 circumstance bonus to his Will save for every size the creature being imitated is larger than the caster (so a human trying to imitate the challenging bellow of a bulette would grant a +8 circumstance bonus to any listeners); there is no penalty for producing the sound of a creature of your size or smaller.

This spell does not allow the caster to imitate intelligible speech of any kind.

With respect to such sounds, anyone who hears the sound and rolls a successful save recognizes it as illusory (but still hears it).

Focus: A piece of feather, fur, flesh, etc. from the animal to be imitated.

Bone Armor, Greater

Necromancy

Level: Clr 4, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Caster

Effect: Protect caster

Duration: 15 minutes/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell wraps the caster's body in bone plates and spikes. The effect is to provide the caster with DR10 against all physical forms of attack. The armor is destroyed by the attacks that it absorbs; when the armor has absorbed a number of points of damage equal to the caster's normal maximum hit points +10, the armor crumbles to dust and disappears.

Material Component: The skull of a humanoid slain by the caster.

Call Starfire

Evocation [Fire]

Level: Clr 4, Drd 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Area: 20-ft.-radius burst centered on any one point within range

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: Yes

Immediately after casting, a blast of fire shoots from the sky, burning everything within the targeted area. The burst of fire rips through the air like thunder, dealing 1d6 points of damage per caster level (maximum 12d6) to everything within the affected area. Affected creatures that succeed a Reflex save suffer only half damage (round down). All affected characters, even those that succeed their saving throw, are stunned for 1d4+1 rounds.

All characters and creatures within 20 ft. of the spell's affected area must succeed a DC 20 Fortitude save or be permanently deafened. A *restoration*, *wish*, *miracle*, or *remove blindness/deafness* spell restores hearing.

Material Component: A fragment of a meteorite.

Caltrops

Transmutation

Level: Earth 0, Sor/Wiz 0

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Area: Ground in a 5-ft. square

Duration: 1 min./level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You turn a handful of pebbles into sharp caltrops that cover an area 5 feet square. Each time a creature moves

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into the area covered by the caltrops (or spends a round fighting while standing in such an area), it might step on one. The caltrops make an attack roll (base attack bonus +0) against the creature. For this attack, the creature's shield, armor, and deflection bonuses do not count. If the creature is wearing shoes or other footwear, it gets a +2 armor bonus to AC. If the caltrops succeed on the attack, the creature has stepped on one. The caltrop deals 1 point of damage, and the creature's speed is reduced by one-half because its foot is wounded. This movement penalty lasts for 24 hours, or until the creature is successfully treated with a DC 15 Heal check, or until it receives at least 1 point of magical curing. A charging or running creature must immediately stop if it steps on a caltrop. Any creature moving at half speed or slower can pick its way through a bed of caltrops with no trouble.

Caltrops may not be effective against unusual opponents.

Material Component: a handful of pebbles.

Death Knell, Mass

Necromancy [Death, Evil]

Level: Clr 6, Death 6

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

Duration: Instantaneous/10 minutes per HD of subject; see text

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell functions like *death knell*, except that it affects multiple creatures. Note that the benefits stack, so if three dying creatures die as a result of this spell you gain 3d8 temporary hit points, a +6 bonus to Strength, and your effective caster level goes up by +3.

Devolve

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 9

Components: V, S, XP

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: One creature modified by an acquired template, see text.

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This powerful spell reverses the effects of any one acquired template on a creature, reverting the creature to its base form. This is an instantaneous effect and the tar-

geted creature is thrown to the ground, prone, and comatose for a number of rounds equal to the Intelligence modifier of the caster +2d6.

This spell affects creatures of a number of Hit Dice equal to the caster's level + Intelligence modifier.

XP Cost: 4,000 XP.

Dragon's Fear

Evocation

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: Caster

Duration: 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: No

This spell wraps the caster in an aura of supernatural fear that closely duplicates the frightful presence of a dragon. Once cast, all opponents within 10 feet who have fewer levels than the caster must make a saving throw. Character that fails his save is shaken, taking a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saves, and skill checks for a number of rounds equal to 2d4 + the caster's level.

On a successful save indicates the targeted character is immune to the caster's use of this spell for 24 hours (even if the caster recasts the spell). Creatures with an intelligence of 3 or lower are unaffected by this spell, as are all dragons.

Faerie Light

Evocation [Light]

Level: Drd 4, Sun 4

Components: V, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: 6-inch diameter floating sphere of light

Duration: 10 min./level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell causes a small floating sphere of pure light to come into existence at the spot designated by the caster. The sphere can give off a variable amount of light (in 5-foot increments) that is equivalent to everything from candlelight to that produced by a *daylight* spell as seen in the chart on the next page.

The caster designates the initial amount of light given off by the sphere at the time of the spell's casting and can change the amount of light any time as a free action.

The light can travel at up to 30 feet per round (300 feet per minute) in any direction the caster chooses. Directing the movement of the sphere is a move-equivalent action.

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Bright	Shadowy	Equivalent
0 ft.	5 ft.	candlelight
5 ft.	10 ft.	
10 ft.	20 ft.	
15 ft.	30 ft.	common lamp
20 ft.	40 ft.	torch, <i>continual flame</i>
25 ft.	50 ft.	
30 ft.	60 ft.	hooded lantern, <i>sunrod</i>
35 ft.	70 ft.	
40 ft.	80 ft.	
45 ft.	90 ft.	
50 ft.	100 ft.	
55 ft.	110 ft.	
60 ft.*	120 ft.	<i>daylight</i>

*Creatures that take penalties in bright light also take them while within the bright radius of this magical light; the light is not the equivalent of daylight for the purposes of creatures that are damaged or destroyed by bright light.

Because it is a sphere of light, it has no physical form and thus cannot be covered up, grabbed, etc. Furthermore, it can pass through any opening, no matter how small (although it cannot pass through solid objects).

Flesh to Stone, Lesser

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One humanoid creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The subject, along with all its carried gear, turns into a mindless, inert statue. If the statue resulting from this spell is broken or damaged, the subject (if ever returned to its original state) has similar damage or deformities. The creature is not dead, but it does not seem to be alive either when viewed with spells such as *deathwatch*.

Only humanoid creatures made of flesh are affected by this spell.

Material Component: Lime, water, and earth.

Ground Trap

Transmutation

Level: Brd 1, Earth 1, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S, F/DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One creature of Medium size or smaller

Duration: 1 round/level (D); see text

Saving Throw: Reflex negates; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

The ground beneath one of the target's feet rises up to envelop its foot and leg up to the knee, effectively trapping the target. The target receives a Reflex saving throw to avoid the ground's grasp. Failure means that the target is trapped and unable to move from its spot for the duration of the spell while success means that the target has avoided or twisted free of the ground's grasp and the spell fails.

A trapped target cannot free itself with a Strength or Escape Artist check, but it and/or its friends can break the ground off (the DM will have to determine the exact composition of the ground holding the creature; a handy example is a hardness of 5 with 5 hit points) by striking at it (careful, or you'll injure the trapped person).

Note that the trapped target is still free to take any actions, including casting spells, while it's foot is trapped.

This spell applies to any surface earthen or stone surface that a creature is standing on (so that a spider climbing along a cavern ceiling could be entrapped). The spell does not affect a surface made of wood or metal.

Arcane Focus: A small piece of clay.

Inescapable Pain/Pleasure

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Brd 2, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One humanoid creature; see text

Duration: 1 round/level (D); see text

Saving Throw: Will negates; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell afflicts the subject with either tremendous pain or tremendous pleasure. In either case, the subject collapses, falling prone and becoming helpless to the feeling (either screaming out in pain or pleasure). The subject is completely helpless and can take no actions while under the influence of the spell. Each round on its turn, the subject may attempt a new saving throw to end the effect. (This is a full-round action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.)

Arcane Focus: A bramble for pain, a pussy willow for pleasure.

Twinge

Necromancy

Level: Sor/Wiz 0

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous

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Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

You point your finger at a target of up to Large size and afflict it with a surprising jolt of pain, causing the target to drop anything it holds in its hands unless it succeeds at a Fortitude save. The pain is instantaneous and has no further effect beyond startling the target.

Animals, such as horses, targeted by still spell may bolt or rear if they fail their saving throw.

Wasting Touch

Necromancy [Evil]

Level: Clr 4, Destruction 4

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

Your touch inflicts the target with a horrible, supernatural wasting disease. The saving throw against this disease is the same as for a normal spell (10 + spell level + Wis modifier). The disease has an incubation period of 1 minute and causes 1d6 points of Con and 1d6 points of Str damage.

Because it is a supernatural disease, once a target is infected with *wasting touch* the disease continues to afflict the victim until the victim reaches Constitution 0 (and dies). Attempts to cast any conjuration (healing) spell (including all manner of *cure* spells) on a creature afflicted with *wasting touch* must succeed on a caster level check. The DC for this check is 10 + the caster level of the caster that afflicted the creature (i.e. if an 11th level cleric cast the *wasting touch*, then the DC is 21).



Treasures

For over two years now Ronin Arts has been known for providing DMs with interesting and unusual treasures. It is only fitting that the *DM's Idea Pipeline* would feature new treasure items almost every week.

Jewelry

Crown of the Elements

Appearance: A heavy crown constructed of steel, stone, and embedded with twelve blue gemstones, this headgear is larger and more impressive looking than most crowns worn by kings. An inscription along the inside of the crown reads "earth, fire, water, air" in an ancient human tongue. The stone has chipped in places.

Appraise Information: DC 20. The crown is of masterwork quality, constructed 1,000 years ago by the goblin craftslaves of a subrace of man long extinct. The gemstones are speckled azure stones, a rare gemstone found only in the deepest caverns of the underdark. The crown is of significant historical and monetary value.

Value: 5,600 gp (200 gp for each gemstone, 2,000 gp for the craftsmanship and materials used in the crown's construction, and 1,200 gp for the historical and collectible value).

Special Rules: Wearing the crown for any length of time is tiring and puts a great deal of strain on the wearer's neck. After an hour, all Strength and Constitution checks suffer a -2 circumstance penalty. This penalty increases by -1 for every additional hour that the crown is worn, to a maximum of -10.

Crown of the Forgotten

Appearance: This small, light crown is black in color and shows a dull gray in places where the black has been rubbed away. Made completely of metal and without any decorative elements, the only distinguishing feature of this simple crown is a circle inscribed inside the band.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This crown is made of painted iron and is several centuries old. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (history) check enables the appraiser to uncover the crown's background.

The crown was fashioned by the hands of a fire giant and given to a now extinct human tribe that lived in the high mountains of the north. The tribe was destroyed many years ago by an unusual swarm of arctic slime that consumed all of the tribe's members. Artifacts appear from time to time and are more of a curiosity than real articles of value.

Value: 15 gp. 25 gp if the crown's history is determined.

Special Rules: None.

Encephalon Medallion

Appearance: This round medallion, constructed of a heavy, black metal and attached to a length of leather, is adorned with a dozen small red gems and a central black gemstone. Inscribed on the back of the medallion are a series of runes and arcane symbols that encircle the edge of the jewelry.

Appraise Information: DC 20. The steel used in the construction of this medallion has been enriched with the powdered bones of an encephalon gorger, a humanoid creature better known as a cranial vampire. The red stones are garnets and the black stone is a black opal. The leather is made from the flesh of a goblin.

Value: 7,550 gp (400 gp for each garnet, 1,000 gp for the black opal, 1,500 gp for the medallion's special ability, and 250 gp for the materials and craftsmanship of the medallion).

Special Rules: The wearer of this medallion is protected by a mental barrier that functions like the encephalon gorger's mind screen special ability. Anyone attempting to affect the wearer with a mind-affecting effect, telepathy, or psionic mind-affecting effect or attack must succeed a Will save (DC 20) or be driven permanently insane (as by an *insanity* spell, caster level 15).

Holly Brooch

Appearance: This fist-sized tarnished brass brooch is fashioned in the shape of a holly sprig with three berries and three leaves.

Appraise Information: DC 13. A rather simple almost crude design of the type of brooch used to pin together cloaks and other large items of clothing, the value is further reduced by its peasant theme (what lady in her right mind would wear a brooch in the shape of a holly sprig this season?) and poor condition.

Value: 7 sp (3 sp for the brass, 4 sp for the workmanship)

Special Rules: Such items are commonly used as a means of identification among nature-focused orders

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and organizations. In magic heavy campaigns, such an item is usually marked with minor magic such as *arcane mark*, *magic aura*, or such to prevent counterfeiting.

Status Bracelets

Appearance: This pair of bracelets is identical in every way except that one is made of silver and the other is made of gold. Each is inscribed with the phrase “Together Forever” on the interior of the band.

Appraise Information: DC 11. Typical of the sort of jeweled items given by lovers all over the world, especially just before one of them has to go off to sea, or war, or some other adventure, these bracelets are really quite plain and ordinary.

Value: 11 gp (1 gp for the silver bracelet, 10 gp for the gold bracelet).

Special Rules: *Status bracelets* are at minimum a set of two and can be more (up to a total of 6 if the creator is of 18th level or higher). Each bracelet in the set must be made of a different material (i.e. one of gold, one of silver, one of bronze, one of iron, one of jade, etc.) and once a set is created, no more can be added to that set; thus if someone created a set of three *status bracelets*, then a fourth could not later be added to that set.

Status bracelets allow the individual wearing one of the bracelets in a set to monitor the condition of individuals wearing any of the others from that same set simply by concentrating on his or her own bracelet; concentrating on a *status bracelet* is a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

The bracelet reveals the status of the creature wearing each of the other bracelets as well as the distance and direction to that creature. Possible statuses include: unharmed, wounded, disabled, staggered, unconscious, dying, nauseated, panicked, stunned, poisoned, diseased, *confused*, or the like.

For example, in a set of three *bracelets*, one each of silver, gold, and ivory, a bard wearing the silver bracelet concentrates on her bracelet to determine the status of the creatures wearing the other two bracelets. Her bracelet communicates back to her that the creature wearing the gold bracelet is unharmed, but the creature wearing the ivory bracelet is staggered. Since she knows that the fighter was wearing the gold bracelet and the wizard the ivory, the bard knows that the wizard is in trouble.

Note that a *status bracelet* communicates only the status of the creature, not the actual identity of the creature. So if the fighter was killed by an ogre who now is wearing the gold *status bracelet*, the status the gold bracelet would communicate is that of the ogre, not the fighter.

Status bracelets work only as long as at least two of the same set are on the same plane of existence.

Faint Divination; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item,

status; Price 2,000 gp; Weight <1 lb.

Faint Divination; CL 6th; Craft Wondrous Item, *status*; Price 4,000 gp; Weight <1 lb.

Faint Divination; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *status*; Price 6,000 gp; Weight <1 lb.

Faint Divination; CL 12th; Craft Wondrous Item, *status*; Price 8,000 gp; Weight <1 lb.

Faint Divination; CL 15th; Craft Wondrous Item, *status*; Price 10,000 gp; Weight <1 lb.

Faint Divination; CL 18th; Craft Wondrous Item, *status*; Price 12,000 gp; Weight <1 lb.

Clothing

Calico and Leather Garnache

Appearance: This white and red checkered garnache – a type of supertunic left open at the sides and secured with a belt – is made of smooth, velvet-like leather and covered in calico squares. It's comfortable to wear, the leather side worn against the wearer's skin or an undertunic, and quite fashionable. Calico, a soft cotton imported from foreign lands, is typically such an expensive fabric that it can only be afforded by the wealthy. The embroidery and stitching of the garment is of masterwork quality.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The leather is made from the underbelly skin of a hydra, carefully scraped until it is soft and pliable. Initials embroidered upon the left breasts, HA, are those of Halvern Augustus, a legendary lawyer who died twenty years ago.

Value: 55 gp (5 gp for the tunic, 25 gp for the hydraskin leather, 15 gp for the calico, and 10 gp for the workmanship). The value may be slightly higher – 5-10 gp – to someone who is a collector of fine garments or a fan of Augustus.

Special Rules: The leather used in the manufacture of this fabric is of armor quality – treat the garnache as leather armor but any strikes to the wearer immediately ruin the garment's value as an elegant supertunic. Repairing this garment would be an expensive proposition requiring a master tailor and replacement materials.

Cloak of the Gibbering Moulder

Appearance: This dark-colored cloak is waist-length and joins at the neck with a simple chain and clasp. The cloak is covered in numerous eyes and mouths and is lined with a dull, gray-colored fur. When worn, this heavy cloak hangs like a weight, eventually tiring the wearer's neck and shoulder muscles.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The cloak is manufactured from the hide of a gibbering moulder. It is a

masterwork-quality garment, handsomely stitched and lined with the hide of a long-dead wolf of the northlands. The chain and clasp are constructed of silver and, upon closer inspection, bear the markings of the great dwarvish silversmith Ruskettle. Ruskettle is not known to have participated in the creation of articles of clothing so how the cloakmaker came in possession of the chain is unknown – as is the identity of the maker of this odd, evil-looking cloak.

Value: 558 gp (8 gp for the cloak, 100 gp for the masterwork craftsmanship, 350 gp for the gibbering moulder flesh used in the cloak's creation, 75 gp for the chain and clasp, and 25 gp for the wolf hide).

Special Rules: Wearing the cloak for any extended length of time is tiring and stresses the wearer's neck and shoulder muscles; after an hour, all Strength and Constitution checks suffer a –1 circumstance penalty.

The cloak is a terrifying sight; the wearer gains a +2 equipment bonus on all Intimidate checks.

The heaviness of the cloak grants the wearer a +2 circumstance bonus to Fortitude saves vs. [cold].

Cloak of Sleep

Appearance: This greenish-brown cloak is constructed of leaves that are stitched to a thin, black fabric. The leaves are slowly dropping from the cloak, the entire garment rotting due to the effects of age.

Appraise Information: DC 18. The leaves used in the creation of this cloak come from the sleeping willow, a magical plant with limited intelligence. Skilled assassins have been known to create these cloaks and then have them presented to their targets as valuable gifts. A cloak of sleep will function for only 1d4+2 days before the leaves completely die and the cloak becomes nothing more than a worthless scrap of cloth.

Value: 45 gp.

Special Rules: One wearing a cloak of sleep for one hour must succeed a DC 18 Fortitude save or temporarily lose 1 point of Constitution. This Constitution loss continues at the rate of 1 point/hour as long as the target continues to wear the cloak.

If worn in a wooded environment, the wearer gains +2 equipment bonus to hide checks.

Both special features of the cloak of sleep only function as long as the cloak has not completely decomposed (see above).

Fear Guard's Cloak

Appearance: This tattered cloak is a dark gray in color and, in dim lighting, almost appears translucent and cloud-like. It's an entirely material object but has an unearthly, haunting feeling that unsettles animals and most people. Putting the cloak on forces the wearer to make a successful DC 25 Will save or suffer the effects of *fear* as if cast by a 6h-level spellcaster.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This cloak is sometimes all that remains when a fear guard – an incorporeal undead that spreads fear and suffering – is destroyed. Some unknown force causes the slain fear guard to manifest as a worthless-looking cloak.

Value: 1,000 gp.

Special Rules: In addition to the fear effect, anyone wearing the cloak is granted the supernatural ability Fear Aura. Anyone within 20 feet of the character wearing the cloak must make a successful DC 16 Will save or be affected by a fear spell as if cast by an 8th-level spellcaster. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the cloak's fear aura ability for a 24-hour period. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Gentleman's Shoes

Appearance: This pair of crimson peaked shoes features a raised flat heel some three inches high. The shoes are made of leather and buffed to a high shine.

Appraise Information: DC 13. Currently the latest in haute couture for the well-to-do gentleman, and a must-have for anyone attending court, a pair of such shoes can be worn only by those with extensive leisure time as they are utterly useless for anything resembling work. Of course, those who can afford such a pair of shoes obviously don't need to work.

Value: 20 gp (1 gp for the leather, 1 gp for the coloring, 18 gp for the workmanship).

Special Rules: The heel is a flat one, so walking normally in such a pair of shoes does not present much difficulty once one gets used to them. However, anything beyond a leisurely walk requires a Balance check (DC 10 to hustle, DC 15 to run) to avoid stumbling or twisting one's ankle. Furthermore, due to the awkward construction of the shoes, the movement rate of the person wearing the shoes is reduced by 5 ft. (i.e. from 30 ft. to 25 ft. or from 20 ft. to 15 ft.).

Kidnapper's Hat/Snatch Cap

Appearance: This light blue woolen cap is of the type worn by northern sailors to keep the chill off their heads as they ply the frigid waters of the Bleak Sea.

Appraise Information: DC 12. Although of a good, tight knit, the cap is an otherwise unremarkable woolen cap that can be bought in any shop catering to sailors.

Value: 5 sp (5 sp for the cap).

Special Rules: A *kidnapper's hat* is outwardly unremarkable and shows no evidence of its magic until it is doffed and the command word is spoken. Although a magical hat of this sort can take almost any form, the most prevalent is that of the wool knit cap so often worn by sailors (in which case it is often called a "snatch cap").

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Once the command word is spoken, the *hat* is active and the next time it is placed on or pulled over a creature's head (including its owner's), the *hat* will expand and engulf the creature, binding it and making it unable to move.

Attempting to place the hat on a creature is an unarmed touch attack that provokes an attack of opportunity from your target, including an unarmed target (this is different from the normal unarmed attack situation where the target must be armed in order to receive the attack of opportunity). Since, if the attack of opportunity hits, you automatically fail to place the *hat* over your target's head and waste that attack, it is wise to attempt to catch your target flat-footed or otherwise unaware.

If the *hat* is successfully placed on or over the target's head, the target receives a Reflex saving throw (DC 13). If the target fails, the *hat* completely captures the creature by engulfing it from head to toe. A captured creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 20, full-round action) or can burst the *hat* with a successful Strength check (DC 25, full-round action); bursting the *hat* destroys it.

If the target succeeds at its Reflex saving throw it has reacted quickly enough to prevent being completely engulfed by the *hat*. In this case the *hat* continues to try and capture the target, grappling as a creature of its size (i.e. a hat for a Medium creature grapples as a Medium creature) with a +3 bonus to its Grapple Check as seen in the chart below:

Hat size	Grapple Check
Tiny	-5
Small	-1
Medium	+3
Large	+7

The hat can be damaged either through grappling with the target, or having someone other than the target cut the target free (Hardness 0, hit points 5).

A hat can only capture a creature of its own size or smaller; that is, a hat made for a Medium size creature can capture a creature of Medium size or smaller.

The hat can be deactivated through a second use of the command word, in which case it releases any creature it has captured and can be safely placed back on its owner's head.

Faint Conjuration; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *web*; Price 1,800 gp; Weight <1 lb.

Rat Cloak

Appearance: This raggedy-looking thin fur cloak looks to have been made of many small bits of white and gray fur.

Appraise Information: DC 12. The reason for this cloak's patchy appearance is that it is made from rat fur. While this is off-putting to many, this is the result of people's prejudice against the rat (is a rat really so different from a rabbit?) and has nothing whatsoever to do with the efficacy of the cloak. Of course, this particular specimen has seen plenty of ill use and is very patchy in places, but it's better than nothing.

Value: 2 gp (2 gp when new)

Special Rules: While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with using rat fur for a cloak, if it is recognized as such its owner is likely to get some very strange looks.

Robe of the Lingerin Arcane

Appearance: This black and blue robe is filthy, covered in grime and soot and tattered along the edges. It appears to be nothing more than trash.

Appraise Information: DC 18. This soiled, tattered robe was stripped from a slain lingering arcane, an undead spellcaster rarely encountered. The robes have little value except to an arcane spellcaster – the robes of these creatures can be used in spellcasting to amplify the effects of any spell. (See below.)

Value: 350 gp. Worthless to those that do not know the value as a spell component.

Special Rules: An arcane spellcaster that chooses to use this robe when casting a spell increases the spell's casting time by 2 rounds. Once cast, the spell may be amplified by any metamagic feat of the caster's choice, even if the caster does not possess the feat. The robe is consumed in the casting.

Ronus Cloak

Appearance: This thick-furred cloak hangs to the wearer's knees and fastens at the neck with a thick, gold chain. The fur is a deep brown in color with traces of silver scattered throughout. The cloak is lined with a black velvet and trimmed with red-colored leather.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This cloak is made from the fur of a ronus, a four-legged beast that looks like a falcon-headed wolf with a razor-sharp silver beak. The leather trim and velvet lining – and the exquisite craftsmanship of the cloak – indicate that it was manufactured for a member of royalty or extremely wealthy noble. The chain, gold-plated iron links, is a heavy, valuable item with a construction worthy of the finest of dwarven craftsmen.

Value: 187 gp (2 gp for the cloak, 15 gp for the gold chain, 20 gp for the leather and velvet, and 150 gp for the ronus fur).

Special Rules: This thick cloak provides the wearer with a +2 circumstance bonus to Fortitude saves vs. [cold].

Tear-Away Clothes

Appearance: This looks to be an ordinary set of peasant clothing with a loose shirt and worn breeches.

Appraise Information: DC 11. It's a set of obviously used peasant clothing, what else?

Value: 5 cp (5 cp for the complete outfit).

Special Rules: Only close inspection, or a Craft (tailoring) check (DC 12), will reveal that the seams on these clothes have been selectively removed and weakened. As a result, the items tear apart quite easily, especially under a sudden strain such as a tug or pull (a heavily muscled individual or large individual might tear the clothes just by moving in them).

The owner, who desired precisely this sort of effect, did this on purpose; if grabbed by the shirt or pants, a quick tug would free him. Although it can be assumed that this sort of an outfit works automatically when someone grabs hold of a sleeve, pant leg, etc., most people want hard and fast rules, so here they are:

For game purposes, assume that tear-away clothing grants a +10 circumstance bonus to the wearer's first grapple check to avoid being placed in a hold after being successfully grabbed.

Example: Myllina, a gnomish pickpocket, is caught in the act by a human merchant. Grabbing her ill-gotten gains, she makes a dash for it even as the merchant's bodyguard attempts to grab her. He reaches out and succeeds in his melee touch attack to grab her, snatching her by the collar. They roll opposed grapple checks. Myllina's shirt collar tears as planned and she receives a +10 circumstance bonus to her roll, which is enough to push her grapple check past the bodyguard's grapple check by four.

The GM describes the action in this way: "Just as the bodyguard grabs hold of the gnome by the shirt, the collar tears in his hand and the gnome takes off running, heading into the crowd as the surprised bodyguard, shirt scrap in hand, looks after her."

Any set of clothing can be turned into tear-away clothing.

Tree Cloak

Appearance: This ordinary heavy wool cloak is of strong, if simple weave.

Appraise Information: DC 10. A cloak of this sort is one of the most common, and valuable, items among those that spend a significant time out of doors. The cloak is nearly waterproof due to the natural oils of sheep wool used (although this does make it difficult to clean) and often doubles as a bedroll. Soldiers, adventurers, rangers, druids, woodsmen, hunters; the list of those that make use of such a cloak is almost unlimited.

Value: 1 gp (1 gp for the cloak)

Special Rules: A *tree cloak* allows its wearer to assume the form of a Large living tree or shrub or a Large dead tree trunk with a small number of limbs upon command. The closest inspection cannot reveal that the tree in question is actually a magically concealed creature. To all normal tests the wearer is, in fact, a tree or shrub, although a *detect magic* spell reveals a faint transmutation on the tree. While in tree form, the wearer can observe all that transpires around her just as if she were in her normal form; her hit points and save bonuses remain unaffected. The wearer gains a +10 natural armor bonus to AC but has an effective Dexterity score of 0 and a speed of 0 feet; the wearer is immune to critical hits while in tree form. All clothing and gear carried or worn changes with the wearer.

Faint transmutation; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *tree shape*; Price 2,500 gp; Weight 2 lb.

Armors

Ceremonial Hauberk

Appearance: This knee-length coat of chainmail, a deep blue in color, is in pristine condition and decorated with the image of a gold hydra. The image, painted on the hauberk's chest, is slightly faded but still easily seen and recognized. The hauberk has half-sleeves constructed of the same blue-colored metal and four black leather straps that go around the wearer's chest and waist; these straps are attached to the hauberk with small steel rings.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The metal used in the chain coat's construction is known as "azure silver" and is mined by the dwarves of the southern mountains. It is a highly prized metal that is used primarily in the construction of jewelry. Some dwarves use coins made of this metal – known commonly as "blue chips" – in trade (each azure silver piece is worth three regular silver pieces). The armor was constructed for Verabald Millerson, commander of the now-destroyed Gold Hydra mercenary company. This hauberk was last seen with Millerson 87 years ago when his company set off on the ill-fated Naurakanian campaign.

Value: 300 gp (100 gp for the chain shirt, 150 gp for the azure silver used in the hauberk's construction, and 50 gp for its value to a collector).

Special Rules: Identical to a chain shirt (see the *Player's Handbook*) except that the armor bonus is +2 due to the weaker metal used in the construction of the hauberk.

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Crazdock's Visored Helm

Appearance: This heavy helmet, red in color and with a red gemstone on each side of the visor, has an open eye painted on one side. The grill-design of this visor is quite common though this particular helmet is especially heavy. Padding inside the helmet, and straps, make the helmet comfortable and easy to wear.

Appraise Information: DC 12. This helmet is constructed of a steel and electrum mixture and has been

painted red. The jewels on the sides of the visor are small, flawless rubies. The human warrior Crazdock the Thirsty wore this helmet some 50 years ago.

Value: 185 gp (25 gp for the helmet, 50 gp for each ruby, and 60 gp for historical value).

Special Rules: This heavy helmet increases all Spot and Listen DCs by three.



Cadaverskin Armor

Appearance: This suit of leather-like armor resembles a rotting corpse. Pieces of skin and muscle hang from the armor, flaking off bit by bit as it is handled. The armor is secured to the wearer with straps of braided flesh and hair and the suit is foul smelling and makes the wearer – from a distance – appear to be a creature of the undead.

Appraise Information: DC 15. These evil suits are made from the remains of the cadaver, a monstrous undead raised from the remains of one who was buried improperly (either in an unmarked grave or in a mass grave, for example). Necromancers and their slaves craft these suits for themselves and those in their employ. Good-aligned creatures shun these terrible suits and all those who would wear them.

Value: 150 gp (25 gp for the armor and 125 gp for the construction and materials).

Special Rules: The suit is bulky and cumbersome: +5 maximum dex bonus, -1 armor check penalty, 15% arcane spell failure chance, and the weight is doubled. The suit is otherwise identical to leather armor.

Variant: Diseased Cadaverskin Armor. Sometimes, the necromancers create a suit from a fresh cadaver. Such suits spread filth fever – both to the wearer and anyone the wearer touches within 1d4+1 days of the suit's creation – which has a Fortitude save DC 11, incubation period of 1d3 days, and damage of 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The suit is otherwise identical to a standard suit of cadaverskin armor.

Cerulean Armor

Appearance: This suit of armor appears to be made of thick, hard plates that are an unusual shade of blue. The suit has been burnished to a high gloss.

Appraise Information: DC 20. Made from the chitinous plates of the thankfully rare Cerulean Ankheg, this armor protects as well as banded mail and is much sought after for its rarity and its ease of maintenance; it never needs oiling nor does it rust.

Value: 650 gp (500 gp for the material cost, 150 gp for masterwork quality)

Special Rules: A suit of cerulean armor is always a masterwork item. It has the following statistics:

Armor Type: Heavy

Armor Bonus: +6

Max Dex Bonus: +1

Armor Check Penalty: -5

Arcane Spell Failure: 35%

Weight: 35 lb.

Doomweaver Gauntlets

Appearance: These “mitten” style gauntlets are a purple-black in color and wrapped in red velvet. Anyone touching the gauntlets must check for

Constitution damage (see below). There are no identifying marks or features.

Appraise Information: DC 16. These gauntlets are constructed from the hide of an adult doomweaver, a four-legged insect found deep underground. The gauntlets are of masterwork quality and are quite dangerous to handle without gloves or some type of protection. Over 150 years ago, a master craftsman living amongst the drow constructed numerous shields, suits of armor, and other protective items from the shells of doomweavers. Many of these items are still lost somewhere in dungeons the world over and most have lost their decaying ability. There's a 90% chance that any doomweaver equipment found will not feature the decay ability (described below).

Value: 2,258 gp (8 gp for the gauntlets, 150 gp for the masterwork construction, 600 gp for the doomweaver shell used in the construction of the gauntlets, and 1,500 gp for the still-functioning decay ability).

Special Rules: The gauntlets are infused with the doomweaver's decaying ability, allowing the wearer to deal Constitution damage to any opponent touched. On a successful touch attack, the creature touched must succeed on a DC 11 Fortitude save or suffer 1d4 points of Constitution damage. The “mitten” style of the gauntlets forces a -4 circumstance penalty on all Dexterity checks.

Draconid Plate Shield

Appearance: This large, heavily plated tower shield is a bright green in color. The surface of the shield is rough and uneven, fashioned from overlapping plates of natural armor that are mounted to a wooden backing. Leather straps are used to hold the shield.

Appraise Information: DC 16. Made from the plates of the draconid, a huge creature that looks like a cross between a giant spider and a dragon, this shield is a rare and unusual piece of work. The masterwork quality construction, and obscurity and durability of draconid plates, make this a particularly valuable tower shield.

Value: 880 gp (30 gp for the shield, 150 gp for masterwork construction, and 700 gp for the draconid plates).

Special Rules: The strength of the construction of this shield, and the natural durability of the draconic plates, gives this tower shield an armor bonus of +8. The shield cannot be destroyed by any power lesser than a deity.

Giant Carapace Shield

Appearance: This black, shiny shield is taller than a human's height. Two handles of dried sinew have been attached through holes in the shell and serve as handles. The shield is surprisingly light.

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Appraise Information: DC 17. The shield is actually the carapace of the giant stag beetle found in the deep jungles. There, tribesmen use these shields to protect their shaman in battle; the shaman steps out from the shield's protection to cast his or her spell and then steps back behind the shield for protection.

Value: N/A (giant stag beetle carapaces are usually not for sale)

Special Rules: None.

Haklaa Pavise (Shield)

Appearance: This form of tower shield, larger than the typical tower shield, is constructed entirely of a blue-black material that, while as strong as iron, feels entirely organic – almost like the shell of a beetle. A groove runs down the center of the shield, on the inside, and two heavy chains – known as guiges – inside the shield are used to wear the shield on the character's back.

Appraise Information: DC 16. The shield is constructed from the shell of a haklaa, a 10 ft. tall bipedal beast that resembles a giant, aberrant beetle. The creature's arms end in massive, natural blades. The shell of a haklaa is extremely durable and many armorsmiths craft high-quality armor from the creature's heavy, blue-black shell. This shield is reinforced with strips of iron that run vertically along the inside of the massive shield.

Value: 530 gp (30 gp for the tower shield, 150 gp for masterwork construction, and 350 gp for the haklaa shell used in the shield's construction).

Special Rules: While a pavise, like a tower shield, may be used as total cover, its true purpose is to protect archers during battle. The groove running along the inside of the shield is used, along with a stake, to secure the shield in front of the archer during battle. Removing the pavise from the character's back, and positioning the shield and stake, requires a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. Once positioned, the shield provides the bowman with total cover, though the protected character's attacks are unaffected by the shield. A pavise is otherwise identical to a tower shield.

Swarmsuit

Appearance: When found this is a small, steel vial filled with a greenish paste. When encountered in use, a swarmsuit appears as a mass of insects swarming over the wearer's body. A swarmsuit makes a constant, buzzing hum that can be heard up to 50 ft. away.

Appraise Information: DC 25. This paste is made of ground up ranzeptera, a type of vermin that carry a blood-burning toxin. Swarmsuits are very rare and valuable.

Value: 950 gp.

Special Rules: A typical vial of the substance is good for 1d4+1 applications. It takes 2d6+5 rounds for a significant number of ranzeptera to swarm over the user's body into a cloud thick enough to function as a swarmsuit – until that time has past, the swarmsuit's armor check and arcane spell failure penalties are in effect but it does not grant an armor bonus. There is a 25% chance that a significant number of insects will not be within range of the paste's odor for an effective swarmsuit to form.

A swarmsuit remains functional until the wearer suffers 30 points of damage at which point the insects scatter. The suit will dissipate and cease to exist one hour after its formation. When the insects scatter, they inflict 1d4 points of damage to the wearer.

Anyone making a successful melee attack against a swarmsuit wearer suffers 1 point of damage and is subjected to burning fever: Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 hour, damage 1d3 Constitution and 1d3 Wisdom.

Other than already mentioned effects, a swarmsuit is statistically identical to leather armor.

Verminous Helmet

Appearance: Shaped like the head of a spider, this steel helmet is inscribed with dark elf runes and is highly polished. The interior of the helmet is lined in padded velvet and the dark leather straps that secure the helmet to the wearer's head are in perfect condition as are the metal buckles of the straps.

Appraise Information: This ceremonial helmet is commonly worn by drow warriors during initiation rituals and religious ceremonies. The leather used in the straps is fashioned from the hide of an underdark creature with mandibles and an almost insect-like head while the buckles and metal of the helmet itself is deepstone steel.

Value: 380 gp (10 gp for the helmet, 20 gp worth of velvet, 150 gp for the deepstone steel, and 200 gp for the artistry of the helmet).

Special Rules: If worn, the weight of this helmet forces the wearer to struggle to maintain balance, strength, and even stamina. All Dexterity, Strength, and Constitution checks suffer a –4 circumstance penalty when the helmet is worn. *Weight:* 12 lbs.

Weapons

Assassin's Strap Crossbow

Appearance: This small crossbow is worn on a leather strap about the wrist. Its needle-like bolts and lightweight allow it to be hidden beneath a sleeve. The weapon, while inflicting very little damage, is the perfect delivery vehicle for poisons. This particular strap crossbow is black in color and the strap includes

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smaller straps that hold up to twelve needle-like bolts. A white eye is painted on the back of the leather strap (and cannot be seen when the weapon is worn).

Appraise Information: DC 14. This strap crossbow was popular with the assassin's guild of the Port City of Arcanesoak – the eye symbol is one of the marks of that long-dead guild. Strap crossbows are rarely encountered and are prized by rogues and assassins.

Value: 50 gp (35 gp for the weapon, 15 gp for its historical value).

Special Rules: A strap crossbow can be fired as a free action and, because of its small size, firing the weapon does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Reloading the weapon is a full-round action. The strap crossbow is an exotic weapon.

Damage: 1d2.

Critical: –.

Range Increment: 10 ft.

Weight: 1 lb.

Type: Piercing.

Spotting the weapon on an enemy requires a DC 15 Spot check (+5 for every 10 ft. away from the wearer of the weapon). If searching someone, a DC 10 Search check locates the weapon. The DC of both Spot and Search checks is increased by +10 if the weapon is hidden by long sleeves.

Dyrvanian War Club

Appearance: This wicked looking weapon appears to be made out of the mandible of a giant insect which has been fitted to a stout wooden handle and tied in place using a leather thong.

Appraise Information: DC 17. The mandible is that of a cerulean ankhg, a much more dangerous cousin to the common ankhg. A club such as this is a sign of a true warrior of the Dyrvanian clans, one that has single-handedly defeated such a monster. As such, the bearer of such a weapon is accorded high respect.

Value: 300 gp (300 gp for collector's value)

Special Rules: A dyrvanian war club has the following statistics:

Weapon Type: Exotic, one-handed melee

Cost: N/A (must be earned)

Dmg (M): 1d8

Critical: x3

Weight: 7 lb.

Type: Bludgeoning and piercing

Greatsword of Azure Despair

Appearance: This heavy greatsword is constructed of a rich, blue metal. The sword's hilt and guard are silver in color and the weapon is perfectly balanced, feeling like a powerful sword to any skilled swordsman. An open eye is painted on the hilt.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The weapon is made entirely of azure steel, a rare metal imported from a distant land. Azure steel is more durable than standard steel and it is said that the great warrior Crazdock the Thirsty commissioned a set of weapons and armors – to be made by the special metal – before he was slain. The open eye on the hilt is Crazdock's symbol. This is a masterwork weapon.

Second Appraise Check Information: A second appraise check – DC 25 – reveals that this weapon, while valuable, is a forgery – it was not created for Crazdock as it is too new.

Value: 370 gp (50 gp for the sword, 300 gp for the metal, and 20 gp for the historical value – reduce the value by 20 gp if the ruse is discovered).

Special Rules: +2 enhancement bonus to attack rolls (+1 masterwork, +1 azure steel). Weight: 8 lbs.

Jeweled Dagger

Appearance: The blade of this dagger is curved in the desert style while the hilt and pommel are covered with jewels.

Appraise Information: DC 15. Such daggers are the most valuable items the Bedouin own. Awarded upon reaching adulthood, each dagger is crafted in a style peculiar to the tribe the member belongs to. This particular dagger belongs to an adult member of the Al-Wahamin tribe. Judging by the value of the jewels and the quality of the dagger, the individual was simply a tribesman as, obviously, the more important and/or powerful the individual is, the more impressive the dagger.

Value: 52 gp (2 gp for the dagger, 50 gp for the jewels)

Special Rules: Such a dagger is the greatest gift that the Bedouin bestow upon outsiders and its possession signifies great respect among the members of the tribe it was given to. Conversely, those coming by such a dagger dishonestly (theft, murder, etc.) are considered the vilest of criminals and the Bedouin will stop at nothing to end their existence.

Miscellaneous

Bottomless Mug

Appearance: This large ceramic mug with a tin top is quite heavy. The ceramic body is decorated with paintings depicting dwarven agricultural scenes during the four seasons (dwarves planting during spring, dwarves tending during summer, dwarves harvesting during fall, and dwarves walking among snow-covered fields). The tin top features intricate, flowing patterns of hops and barley stalks.

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Appraise Information: DC 14. This is a very fine mug indeed, typical of the kind of personal mugs owned by dwarves the world over. While some dwarves carry such mugs on their belt, most are kept in the local bar or tavern that the dwarf frequents.

Value: 9 gp (4 gp for the mug, 5 gp for the artistry)

Special Rules: Upon command, a *bottomless mug* fills with one gallon of ale or other such beverage (the brand is specified at the time of the *mug's* creation). The *mug* cannot be refilled until it is completely empty. Although called *bottomless*, the *mug* cannot produce more than 2 gallons in a 24-hour period per level of the creator (although there are *mugs* that purportedly can flow forever).

Faint conjuration; CL 1st+; Craft Wondrous Item, *create water*, a gallon of the type of ale the magic item is to dispense; Price 500 gp/per creator level; Weight 3 lb.

Chieftain's Bridle

Appearance: This horse bridle is made of strong stitched leather and decorated with engraved symbols surrounded by polished pieces of jade.

Appraise Information: DC 16. Although chiefly having a barter and trade economy where a person's wealth is based on the number of horses he or she owns, the steppe nomad clans are not above displays of wealth. Of course, unlike the more "civilized" lands where wealth is often spent on purely decorative objects, the nomads display their wealth on everyday objects such as this bridle.

Although probably not made for an actual clan chieftain, this bridle is nevertheless of the quality and type that would not be out of place on the favored horse of a nomadic chieftain. The fine workmanship, the great detail, and of course the jade, make for a compelling and valuable piece.

Value: 660 gp (5 gp for the leather, 100 gp for the craftsmanship and artistry, 555 gp for the jade)

Special Rules: Possession of such a bridle can have a couple of effects. Merely being in possession of a fancy bridle of any kind immediately marks an outsider as wealthy among the steppe nomads (for those of you that like rules, grant a +2 bonus on any Diplomacy checks to meet with the head of a clan or otherwise garner respect from the steppe nomads).

The other possibility is that this was indeed some clan chieftain's possession and, once recognized by his kinsmen, marks the bridle's new owner as a blood enemy.

Demon's Tusk

Appearance: This gnarled black tusk is about the length of a human forearm. It feels surprisingly heavy and solid and the faint odor of sulfur is evident.

Appraise Information: DC 21. Although it is easily mistaken for a large, ordinary tusk, the tusk is in fact that

of a demon as revealed by a successful Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 20). The specific type of demon, a Nafelshnee, is harder to identify, requiring a successful Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 30).

Value: 1,000 gp (1,000 gp raw material value)

Special Rules: The demon's tusk may be fashioned into a weapon. This requires the Craft Magic Arms and Armor feat and the resulting weapon is a curved, slashing blade much like a small scimitar that causes 1d6 points of damage, has a critical threat range of 18-20, and has the *unholy* special ability.

Doctor Sagus' Magical Elven Elixir

Appearance: This small bottle is filled with a brownish-greenish liquid of a rather bitter odor. Looking closer at the liquid, you can see small dark flecks and bits floating about.

Appraise Information: Typical of the kind of questionable concoctions pushed by quacks the world over, this "magical elixir" is nothing more than a rather bitter brew of herbs and spices that does nothing at all substantive.

Value: 5 sp (5 sp normally, but for you, it's 3 sp!)

Special Rules: Although "Doctor Sagus' Magical Elven Elixir" is very bitter (requiring a Fortitude save (DC 13) to be able to swallow the contents of the bottle), it is completely harmless and ineffectual; it is a placebo.

However, that is not to say that it does not have some effect. Someone that believes Doctor Sagus' pitch (perhaps someone that fails a Sense Motive check against the good doctor's Bluff) can build themselves up enough to where they feel that they truly do get some benefit (i.e. feel more vigorous, can feel it stimulate the scalp or improve digestion, etc.). Naturally, this does not have any in-game effect.

A particularly generous DM might allow a +1 bonus to rolls, checks, saves, etc. based on the elixir as a result of the drinker convincing themselves of the elixir's beneficial nature.

Example: "This is great for improving your memory! It's a regular brain tonic!" A person that truly believes this pitch might actually receive a +1 bonus to all Intelligence-based rolls and checks for a duration (perhaps an hour or so) of the elixir (at least long enough for Doctor Sagus to make his getaway). Of course, this has nothing to do with any properties of the elixir, but rather with the drinker's ability to put him- or herself into the proper frame of mind.

Ear Wax

Appearance: You can see where fingers from this small blob of soft wax have torn several pieces.

Appraise Information: This is a blob of soft wax that is used to plug ones ears with; simply tear off a piece, warm it in your hands, and push it into your ear, being careful to fill in the helix.

Value: 1 cp (1 cp for a block of wax that is enough to plug 10 pairs of ears)

Special Rules: You can put enough wax into your ear to make yourself deaf and thus immune to any (you fail all Listen checks, take a -4 penalty to initiative and has a 20% chance to miscast and lose any spell with a verbal component or to fail an attempt at bardic music). On the other hand, you are immune to any effects that are language-dependent (such as *command* or *suggestion* or a harpy's song).

Alternately, you can partially block out sounds to where you receive a -4 circumstance penalty to all Listen checks, but receive a +4 circumstance bonus to save against such effects.

Elf Hide Satchel

Appearance: This gruesome satchel is manufactured from patches of skin that have been stitched together. The satchel has a foul, evil smell that's almost overpowering. Inside are several scalps.

Appraise Information: DC 12. The skin patches are from elves of various subraces. The satchel was manufactured several decades ago by a goblin shaman (who used it as his spell component bag). The scalps are human, elf, and halfling.

Value: None. This is a disgusting item. It's possible some evil, terrible creature would offer gold for it.

Special Rules: None.

Gentleman's Pocketbook

Appearance: This leather pocketbook is brown in color and opens up to be roughly 12" by 6". When closed, the pocketbook is held secure by two belts and buckles and wraps tightly shut so that none of its contents may accidentally be dropped. Inside, the pocketbook has several small pouches and is currently filled with a few loose coins and several folded parchment sheets of varying sizes and colors.

Appraise Information: DC 16. The pocketbook itself has little value. The papers inside, on the other hand, contain a few stocks, a bank note worth 20 gp, and an investment promissory note (see box).

Value: 1 gp for the pocketbook to someone who does not understand the value of the papers inside. A successful Decipher Script check (DC 14) reveals the true worth of the papers within the pocketbook (20 gp for the bank note, a variable rate for each stock found, and 100 gp for the investment note if the investment proves profitable).

Special Rules: For rules on stocks please see *A Dozen Documents and Papers*. For more about investments please see the box at right.

Gentleman's Rain Umbrella

Appearance: Made from burnished light wood and oiled white paper, this utilitarian appearing umbrella is large enough to protect one individual.

Investments for the Gentleman

Gentlemen frequently invest some portion of their funds into some risky venture or other, playing a sort of game with life. Investment promissory notes are sold to investors with the note stating the exact venture to be undertaken, how much the investor is putting into the project, and what percentage of the profit the investor is to be paid.

Investments can be for something as simple as clearing the northern dungeon of all creatures and treasures or as convoluted as a new invention or device designed to make the mail run faster. A minimum investment is typically 10 gp while some larger, more dangerous ventures require a minimum of 1,000 gp – the DM determines the exact amount required.

Players may choose to set up their own investment ventures and to secure funds from NPCs in the campaign world. DMs need to watch such arrangements carefully since it is frequently all too easy for an investment to be little more than a scam to relieve others of their funds and players are likely to see the advantage of such a scheme and to attempt it for themselves. To show players that this course of action is dangerous you could present them with a small adventure in which they are paid a bounty to return the head of one who pulled just such a scheme.

Appraise Information: DC 15. You see so very few of these items, but that is because their use is reserved for the aristocracy and the clergy. Of course, even if it wasn't, few ordinary people can afford such luxury, or the servant that usually holds it up for his master or mistress.

This particular umbrella is a rain umbrella of good quality and probably belongs to a lower member of the clergy, rather than a nobleman, as there is no family crest upon the item. That it is a gentleman's umbrella, rather than a lady's, is evident from the rather practical construction of the piece; ladies' umbrellas tend to have pretty patterns, frills, etc.

There are sun umbrellas as well. Sun umbrellas tend to be made of fine linen or even silk and are considered almost exclusively a lady's accessory, although one will spot the occasional dandy with one. Naturally, in the brutally hot climates of the south this is not the case.

Value: 25 gp (20 gp for the paper, 1 gp for the wood, 4 gp for the workmanship).

Special Rules: An umbrella is a sign of status and privilege; not just anyone can own or even make use of one. By law the use of an umbrella is reserved strictly for the clergy and landed nobility; even a landless knight is not allowed to make use of one.

Anyone using an umbrella that is not entitled to its use can expect to have the umbrella confiscated and to serve a week in the stocks. Repeated offenses carry subsequently more severe penalties.

Golden Disk

Appearance: This palm-sized disk of gold has a stylized image of the sun with thick rays embossed upon it.

Appraise Information: DC 10. This thin disk of gold weighs about one pound. A Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (geography) check (DC 17) reveals that the image is that of the sun god Thota-am. A disk such as this serves as both money and holy symbol in the Holy See of Thota-am.

Value: 52 gp (50 gp for the gold, 2 gp for the stamped image).

Special Rules: In addition to being used as a holy symbol, at the DM's option a disk such as this (or any object made out of at least one pound of gold and dedicated to a deity) amplifies the power of the sun.

When used as a focus for any spell involving the sun and light (i.e. *continual flame*, *dancing lights*, *daylight*, *faerie fire*, *flare*, *light*, *searing light*, *sunbeam*, *sunburst*) it affects the spell as if the Maximize Spell feat had been applied.

The DM might want to limit this power to clerics and druids if he or she wishes to retain the religious symbolism. For clerics, using such a power can either require one of their daily turning attempts or is the equivalent of spontaneous casting except that instead of casting a healing/harm spell, the spontaneous casting surrenders a spell of the equivalent level as to the one being maximized (i.e. maximizing *searing light* requires surrendering a 3rd level spell slot). Druids must use the spontaneous casting option.

Golden Potato

Appearance: This is a large piece of gold that has been sculpted into the shape of a potato. Judging by the tremendous weight, it is a solid piece of gold.

Appraise Information: DC 18. An item such as this is very difficult to appraise; the value definitely lies in the fact that it is made of solid gold and not in its artistry.

Value: 501 gp (500 gp for 10 lbs. of gold, 1 gp for the artistry)

Special Rules: The Golden Potato is awarded each year during the Potato Festival to the grower of the largest and heaviest potato.

Leather Pouch of Gemstones

Appearance: This brown leather pouch, held closed by a length of twine, contains seven cloudy gemstones, each perfectly cut. The stones and pouch appear completely ordinary.

Appraise Information: DC 20. The gemstones are cut from the claws of a crystal reflector, a bipedal magical beast with the ability to harness and channel sunlight. These extremely rare creatures are typically found in forests and are prized by wizards and sorcerers – the crystal claws and crystals growing from the creature's back may be used as spell components (see below). These stones are valuable for both their beauty and magical properties.

Value: 175 gp (no value for the pouch, 25 gp for each gemstone).

Special Rules: The stones may be used as a material component in the casting of spells with the light descriptor. Doing so empowers the spell (as the metamagic feat).

Luminescent Ink

Appearance: This tin inkwell has a glow emanating from its opening; the glow is the result of the ink in the vial.

Appraise Information: DC 18. The ink contained in this vial is a rust-orange in color and quite luminescent. Luminescent ink is an alchemical concoction of standard ink mixed with the fluid of giant fire beetle glands.

Value: 18 gp (18 gp for one ounce)

Special Rules: Manufacturing luminescent ink requires at least one giant fire beetle gland and a successful Craft (alchemy) check (DC 28). The alchemical process fixes the luminescence to the ink, slowing its degradation; a vial of luminescent ink remains luminescent for 1d6 months after its creation.

While luminescent ink does not shed any significant light, it is perfectly readable in the dark.

Although it is more of a novelty (invitations or announcements written with luminous ink are especially eye-catching), clever adventurers have found other uses for it (i.e. marking their way through large caverns).

Miniature Ziggurat

Appearance: This clay ziggurat is about the length of a human forearm. It is covered in hieroglyphics, most of which have been worn away by time.

Appraise Information: DC 19. Ziggurats such as this were once used by certain ancient religions for prayer focus. The prayers were inscribed onto the ziggurat and, when it came time for the priest(ess) to gather him- or herself for the day, they would intone the prayers while placing their fingers upon the hieroglyphics. With the fading of the old gods, these are becoming harder and harder to find.

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Value: 750 gp (750 gp for historic value)

Special Rules: A number of things are possible for such an item. A ziggurat such as this can act as a scroll, or a magic item that grants the use of a specific spell once every 24 hours (requiring spell completion to activate), it can hold directions to a lost tomb, or it can be the key to translating some long-lost language that was discovered in a forgotten tomb.

Mistletoe Sprig

Appearance: This is a sprig of a plant containing a pair of white berries. The stems end in lozenge-shaped deep green leaves.

Appraise Information: DC 10. A Knowledge (nature) check (DC 13) will reveal this sprig to be a sprig of mistletoe.

Value: N/A (anyone can pick mistletoe in the wild, but stay away from druid groves).

Special Rules: Mistletoe is one of the most magical of plants, at least according to the druids. At the DM's option, a sprig of properly harvested mistletoe (one stroke of a gold sickle on Midsummer's Day or any time the moon is six days old) can grant any or all of the following benefits:

When worn or carried, it provides a constant +1 luck bonus.

When placed beneath a pillow or hung at the headboard, it ensures a peaceful night's rest and prevents the functioning of the spell *dream* and any other dream-based magic.

Burning a sprig of mistletoe creates a magic circle against evil effect for 10 minutes.

Mistletoe Wood Ring

Appearance: This simple thin wooden band has been carefully smoothed and polished, but is otherwise completely unremarkable.

Appraise Information: DC 10. This is a plain ring carved from wood, nothing more. A Knowledge (nature) check (DC 18) will reveal the wood to be mistletoe wood.

Value: 1 cp (1 cp for the work involved, but it's really just a wooden ring).

Special Rules: Mistletoe is one of the most magical of plants, at least according to the druids. A ring made of mistletoe is worn to ward off sickness. At the DM's option, such a ring cut from properly harvested mistletoe (one stroke of a gold sickle on Midsummer's Day or any time the moon is six days old) grants a +4 resistance bonuses to Fortitude saves against disease.

Paper, Verminous

Appearance: This paper looks like gray parchment with spots of black, red, green gold, and countless other colors. The paper's texture is quite rough and it is slightly heavier than average parchment.

Appraise Information: DC 15. By blending the ground remains of insects with a special fungus found in the Underdark, slaves of the drow create verminous paper for their masters. Drow wizards prefer the use of verminous paper when creating scrolls or spellbooks due to the paper's special, natural ability.

Value: 5 gp.

Special Rules: The DC of copying a spell to a spellbook made of verminous paper, or of the crafting of a scroll, is reduced by 2.

Poisons, Dusts, and Toxins

Cerulean Dust

Appearance: This dull blue powder has a faintly acrid smell.

Appraise Information: DC 20. The blue powder is cerulean dust, a potent poison made from boiling select parts of the cerulean ankheg together. The recipe is a closely guarded secret of those few nomad shaman that know how to make it.

Value: 1,600 gp (1,600 gp for one dose of cerulean dust)

Special Rules: Cerulean dust is a potent poison that is an alchemical concoction requiring a Craft (alchemy) check (DC 28) to produce. The basic recipe consists of ground bits of cerulean ankheg shell brewed with the ankheg's acid in a large pot filled with the ankheg's blood and gall bladder. The entire process

Type: Inhaled DC 17

Initial Damage: 1d6 Con

Secondary Damage: 2d6 Con

Price: 1,600 gp

Dragon's Tongue

Appearance: This vial contains a thick, pasty, substance that smells heavily of naphtha.

Appraise Information: DC 16. A relative of alchemist's fire, dragon's tongue finds many uses among weapon-wielders of all stripes.

Value: 25 gp (25 gp per flask).

Special Rules: Dragon's tongue is an alchemically altered very viscous oil that is designed to burn long and hot once lit; its chief purpose is to serve as a weapon coating.

It is wise to apply dragon's tongue to the weapon prior to engaging in combat. Once applied, the oil retains its effectiveness for 24 hours. After this time, the oil has begun to dry significantly and loses 10 minutes of burn time for every additional hour.

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Dragon's tongue must be lit from an external source, most commonly a torch using a miscellaneous standard action, although certain Evocation [Fire] spells will do nicely as well. Flint and steel can be used, but this requires at least a full-round action.

Once lit, dragon's tongue burns for up to one hour (subject to drying time), causing an additional 1d6 points of fire damage with every hit.

Dragon's tongue is useless as a splash weapon as it is much too viscous. However, a direct hit with a vial coats the target in the oil. If the dragon's tongue is then lit, it burns for the stated one hour, causing 1d6 points of damage per round unless it is put out (i.e. smothered, jumping into water, rolled out, etc.).

Dragon Toxin

This thick, dark red liquid is made by mixing the blood of a dragon with the crushed leaves of the himaskus tree (a hardwood that grows in the snow-covered mountains of the north). The two substances slowly meld until, after three weeks, dragon toxin remains. The poison is used to coat blades or, sometimes, hidden inside food and drink.

The initial effect of the poison is to weaken the victim. The secondary effect, more dangerous, eats away at the victim's body from within.

A more vile version of this poison, dark dragon toxin, is made by adding the blood of a demon to dragon toxin. This new substance must be buried in a shallow grave with one who has recently died and, after 30 days, the poison may be recovered from the grave.

Type: Injury/Ingested

Craft DC: 25/40 (dark dragon toxin)

Save DC: 30/45 (dark dragon toxin)

Initial Damage: 1d6 Con/2d4+1 Con (dark dragon toxin)

Secondary Damage: 2d6 hit points and 2d4 Con/3d6 hit points and 2d6 Con (dark dragon toxin)

Price: 4,500 gp/8,250 gp (dark dragon toxin)

Dust of Poison Detection

Appearance: This small wax paper packet is filled with about an ounce of rather chalky, white, and odorless powder.

Appraise Information: DC 17. Any number of individuals can find a use for *dust of poison detection*. From healers to adventurers, from the wealthy and powerful to the paranoid, there is no shortage of possible customers for such an item.

Value: 25 gp (25 gp per packet).

Special Rules: A packet of *dust of poison detection* can be sprinkled on a creature, object, or area to determine whether it has been poisoned or is poisonous. The dust changes color whenever poison is present and the exact type of poison can be determined from the col-

oration with a Wisdom or Craft (alchemy) check (DC 20).

The price listed below is the price for a single packet.

Faint Divination; CL 1st; Craft Wondrous Item, *detect poison*; Price 25 gp; Weight <1 lb.

Sand of Sleep

Appearance: This small wax paper packet is filled with about an ounce of sand that upon close inspection has small flecks of crystal in it.

Appraise Information: DC 18. This is a favorite of bards and rogues who carry the sand as a last resort, although almost anyone can make use of the sand.

Value: 25 gp (25 gp per packet).

Special Rules: A packet of *sand of sleep* is usually blown into someone's face after being held in the hand. This attack has a five-foot range (you can only use it against a target in an adjacent square) and automatically hits; it does not require a ranged touch attack or anything else. Only a creature of 4 HD or less can be affected.

Obviously, such an action provokes an attack of opportunity, which if it succeeds, means the *dust* is knocked from the hand and is lost (although it could also end up in the face of anyone else close by). Thus, *dust of sleep* is best used when the target is flat-footed or otherwise not prepared for the attack (such as when an angry audience member is grabbing you by the collar).

The target must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 11) or fall asleep for 1 minute.

The price listed below is the price for a single packet.

Faint Enchantment; CL 1st; Craft Wondrous Item, *sleep*; Price 25 gp; Weight <1 lb.

Succubus Essence

Appearance: This small, earthen vial is sealed with a lead stopper. Closer examination shows that the lead stopper has a symbol on it (the exact symbol is that of a campaign-appropriate good-aligned deity). Inside is a very sticky, faintly warm crimson liquid that smells of burnt cinnamon.

Appraise Information: DC 26. While the fact that the liquid is magical is easily recognized, the exact nature of the liquid in this vial is virtually impossible to identify unless one has encountered succubus previously.

Value: 500 gp (500 gp raw material value)

Special Rules: Succubus essence can be distilled into a potent mind-influencing spell component. This requires the Brew Potion feat. The result is a dried, crimson powder that retains its faint burn cinnamon smell. If a pinch (a distilled vial provides five pinches) is used as a material spell component in a Enchantment spell with the [Mind-Affecting] descriptor it increases the spell's DC by 4.

Books and Scrolls

Book of the Spider's Eggs

Appearance: This is a silver-encased book of 90 parchment sheets, the cover manufactured of metal and featuring a locking clasp that requires a small key. The key cannot be found. The cover is a pure, glistening sheet of silver that is near-reflective. If not carefully protected, the cover quickly acquires numerous small scratches and blemishes and will rapidly lose its pristine appearance.

If the book is opened (Open Lock DC 30), the pages inside are all written in a large, scratchy hand. Every page is filled and anyone looking closely will notice that several margins bear additional writings by a different hand. The main text is written in the drow language while the notes in the margins are in Undercommon.

The cover bears the symbol – etched into the silver – of the patron goddess of the drow, the Spider Queen.

Appraise Information: DC 18. Anyone capable of reading the drow language will identify the book by the title page which reads, “Book of the Spider's Eggs, a Treatise on Spider Magic, Secrets of the Spider Queen, and Thoughts of a Powerful One.” The title page proclaims the book's author to be Rezzym. A *Knowledge (History)* or *Spellcraft* check (DC 20) is required to reveal that Rezzym is also the author of Dre'Rezzym, a magic tome covered in the flesh of a human.

The pages of this book are cheap, common parchment found anywhere in the Underdark or a common bookseller's shop. The book's true value is in its beautiful silver cover (steel wrapped in a thin layer of silver) and as a historical, collectible book. The book has no magical abilities though it does reveal the secret behind many power components utilized by drow spellcasters.

Value: 745 gp (blank spellbook 15 gp, 50 gp custom silver cover, good lock 80 gp, 100 gp for the item's historical value and an additional 500 gp to a wizard or collector of rarities).

Special Rules: This book details a few dozen supplementary spell components and their uses. See *101 Arcane Spell Components*.

The Book of Demiplanes

Appearance: Within the pages of this massive book, written in elvish, are discussions on the properties of four demiplanes – the Bone Field, the Clockwork-Driven Lighthouse, the Radiant Tower, and the Tower of Despair. The covers of the book are constructed of a heavy, silver-colored metal that has been polished and features a strong lock (Open Lock

DC 30) that keeps the book closed tight. The cover is plain and unmarked.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The covers, made of mithral, are valuable but it is the information on the four demiplanes that is truly valuable. Each demiplane description includes not only details about the plane but also instructions to visit the plane. The planes are:

The Bone Field: A negative energy demiplane made of bones and inhabited by hundreds of skeletons.

The Clockwork-Driven Lighthouse: A weapon of the forces of law used to combat chaotic characters and creatures.

The Radiant Temple: A giant temple of healing and good where powerful clerics bring those suffering from disease and poison.

The Tower of Despair: A demiplane of fear and terror.

Value: 4,515 gp (15 gp for the blank book, 500 gp for the mithral covers, and 4,000 gp for the book's valuable information).

Special Rules: None.



New Skill: Knowledge (Necrology)

This skill represents a character's entire knowledge of the realms of undeath and the utilization of negative energy. It may be used to identify specific undead or manifestations of negative energy and predict their possible threat or abilities, as well as in more regular studies.

DC 10: Telling the difference between a zombie and a ghoul .

DC 15: Recognizing a vampire as it manifests its powers .

DC 30: Recalling the history and lore of a famous lich .

Craft Necromantic Machine [Item Creation]

The character can create a special type of magic item, necromantic machines.

Prerequisites: Any evil alignment, Craft Wondrous Item, ability to cast necromancy school spells.

Benefit: The character can create any necromantic machine whose prerequisites the character meet. Enchanting a necromantic machine takes 2 days for each 1,000 gp in its price. To enchant a necromantic machine, the spellcaster must spend 1/25 of the item's price in XP and use up raw materials costing half of this price.

Necromantic machines, once damaged, cannot be mended or repaired.

Some necromantic machines incur extra costs in material components or XP as noted in their descriptions. These costs are in addition to those derived from the item's base price. The character must pay such a cost to create the chosen machine.

DMs who feel that the prerequisites for Craft Necromantic Machine aren't restrictive enough should make the feat rare. After all, some feats are meant to be powerful secrets known only to a few. If you do not allow the PCs in your game to select feats freely you can hide the secrets of necromantic machines in a massive tome that must be found and studied.

Necromantic Engineering and Construction Techniques

Appearance: This black book is about three feet tall and two feet wide. It is constructed from the bones of men, each bone polished to a bright white. The bones are secured together with silver bolts and each is engraved with evil runes. Sheets of human flesh that has been

died black is stretched across the bones and secured to the book's frame with braided human hair. The pages inside are sewn to the book and each page is a sheet of human flesh that has been magically preserved. Page after page of writing and illustrations instruct the reader in the construction of dozens of evil machines.

Special Rules: This book holds the secrets of the feat Craft Necromantic Machine. Anyone meeting the prerequisites of the feat that studies this book for one month may select this feat (if he has an available feat). The character may do nothing during this month of study other than eat and sleep. Any interruption before the month is through totally destroys any insight the character may have made into the book's teachings and the study period must be started over.

At the end of the month the character must make a Knowledge (Necrology) check against DC 25. On a successful check the character has gained the feat Craft Necromantic Machine. If the character does not have a feat slot available at the time of reading he gains the feat immediately the next time that he is eligible to gain a new feat.

On a failed check the character does not gain the feat. This does not use a feat slot and the character may again attempt to learn the secrets of this evil tome after he has achieved a new level.

The Robin and the Kestrel

Appearance: This large sheet of vellum contains musical notes and verse written out in a careful, scripted hand. The piece is entitled "The Robin and The Kestrel" by Antonius Grimaldi.

Appraise Information: A rather common little ditty that is unoriginal and surprising only in the fact that the composer bothered to write it down, and on vellum no less.

The piece is obviously satirical, the birds taking the place of actual people, and is precisely the kind of thing that those that enjoy vulgar entertainments can be heard whistling as they go down the street.

Value: 2 gp (2 gp for the vellum)

Special Rules: The piece is indeed satirical, with the robin representing a nobleman's (or other person of wealth or power) wife and the kestrel her secret lover. While Antonius thought it was awfully clever, Duke Leonidus, the cuckold about whom the piece is about, found it less than amusing and had Antonius imprisoned and the song banned. Woe to those that perform the song, or are even heard whistling the tune, in the Duke's presence.

The Spider Queen's Blessing

Appearance: This small book, merely one-hand width wide and tall and 20 pages in length, is a book of short quotes and fables attributed to the goddess and her priestesses. The book is made of a black, hard

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leather and battered vellum pages. Written, in both Undercommon and the drow tongue, is the book's title along the spine.

Appraise Information: DC 12. This is but one of many, many copies of this book. Slaves of the drow, when first captured, are frequently forced to make a copy of this book so that they may grow to fear the Spider Queen and her followers. Ignorant or illiterate captives are forced to copy the book, even though they don't understand it, and for each mistake made are severely punished (mutilation is a favorite technique of the dark elves). A slave that successfully makes a copy of this book is well rewarded with water, dry bread, and a mild beating.

Literate slaves that prove themselves may be taken to a drow city and put to work copying other drow tomes.

Value: 35 gp (blank book 15 gp, 20 gp for the contents and collector's value of the book).

Special Rules: None.

Tome of the Leech

Appearance: This book, quite large and heavy, is a grayish color and feels as if it were the cracked, aged skin of some strange fish. The pages, as well as the cover, are made of this odd material and emit a wet, near fish-like odor. The writing is very difficult

to see on the pages until the book is submerged under water at which point it brightens on the pages. The covers has no marks or writing of any kind.

Appraise Information: DC 25. It takes careful studying, and an experience with creatures of the Underdark to correctly identify the material used in the manufacture of this vile book. Made entirely of the skin of the monstrous leech, this foul-smelling book's pages and cover are all made from the creature's flesh. Gargantuan creatures are harvested, their rough flesh stripped away and molded for the covers while the skin of the smaller varieties are used for the pages. This book was written, many years ago, by Master Ti'lizz, a fate weaver and servant to the Spider Queen.

This book when properly studied, enhances the reader's creature-affecting spells.

Value: 465 gp (blank book 15 gp, 250 gp for the monstrous leech skin, and 200 gp for the book's valuable information).

Special Rules: After two weeks of study, and on a successful DC 20 *Spellcraft* check, an arcane spellcaster gains a +1 competence bonus to caster level when determining the effects of any creature-affecting spell. If the check failed, the reader may not retry until he has gained another rank of *Spellcraft*.



Rumors

The rumors in this section may be sprinkled liberally in a campaign either as written or modified by the DM. DMs should always be prepared for the situations, characters, and locations discussed in any rumor to leap to the forefront of the game session; you never know what bit of information the players will grab and run with.

When in any tavern, inn, coffeehouse, or similar establishment where men and women gather, select a rumor (or two or three) from this book – or *A Dozen Troubling Rumors* or *A Dozen Disturbing Rumors* – and have each player make a *Gather Information* check and then check the roll against the chosen rumor(s).

Each rumor follows the format:

Rumor Heading (*Gather Information DC*)

Failed *Gather Information* Check: If the check is failed this is what the PCs hear. A section of this entry is to be read aloud to the players though many DMs will choose to paraphrase the information (especially if any of it needs to be tweaked to better fit the campaign). This entry also discloses the source of the rumor.

Successful *Gather Information* Check: If the check succeeds this is what the PCs hear. Again, this entry is intended to be read aloud and gives the source of the rumor.

Follow Up: If the PCs choose to investigate the rumor this information will help the DM to prepare for what could happen.

THE RUMORS

The Faeries Dance on the Hill at Night (DC 15)

Failed *Gather Information* Check: “I seen ‘em. Who? The little folk! I was coming back from Willighby where I was visiting my sick brother. I was heading by the hill when I suddenly spotted a bright light coming from the trees and I could hear some faint singing.

What beautiful singing! Despite my best intentions, I couldn’t help but be drawn towards the trees and I soon stumbled into the glade. There they were, hundreds of ‘em, most no bigger than my hand, singing and dancing about a big bonfire. That’s when they saw me. We stared at each other for a moment, and I could feel hundreds of little eyes boring into me, and I sud-

denly realized that I wasn’t supposed to be there. But it was too late. I suddenly felt sleepy, faerie magic no doubt, and that’s all I remember.

The next morning I woke up at the side of the road, no faeries in sight. “

Source: Angus McConnell [**male human, Com 3, hp 7**], a local farmer and acknowledged teller of tales and craver of attention. While it is true that Angus did go to visit his brother, he made up the entire story about the faeries in order to cover the fact that he and his not-sick brother got roaring drunk. Angus had to sleep it off and didn’t make it out of his brother’s house until late the next morning. He made up the story to not only cover things with his wife, but also because it would get him extra attention.

Successful *Gather Information* Check: “That Angus is full of it! He never went to the faerie ring in all his life, not even in his dreams! None of us have; we’ve got better sense than to disturb the faeries.

What do you mean there’s no faeries? Of course there are. I’ve seen the lights myself this past week! Don’t tell me there’s no faeries!”

Source: Sandra McConnell [**female human, Com 3, hp 8**], wife of Angus. She knows her husband just made up the whole story because he likes attention and was trying to cover for his roistering. She is telling the truth, however, when she says she has seen the lights.

Follow Up: The hill in question is called the Syxlingham Faerie Ring and does indeed have a faerie ring in a glade surrounded by oak trees. However, this is all pure coincidence and it is only the superstitions of the villagers of Syxlingham that make the grove out to be something mysterious.

PCs with the Knowledge (religion) skill can succeed at a DC 20 check to note that on the day in question, no significant holiday of any nature-based religion was occurring. Druids, or those familiar with the druidic religion, automatically realize this fact.

PCs that decide to see whether there are faeries about will find a large bonfire, but no trace of the little folk. In fact, they are very likely to discover several sets of human-sized boot marks left there by the bandits that occasionally use the hill as a base to oper-

ate out of. Whether the bandits are in residence at the time of the PCs' visit, or when they will return, is up to the GM.

There's Jade in Them thar Hills! **(DC 15)**

Failed Gather Information Check: “There I was in Tantalus for the first time with my cartload of iron pots, pans, etc. when up walks this nomad looking to buy a pot. So I showed him a couple of examples and he finally settled on one. When it came time to pay, he pulls out this leather pouch from his shirt and opens it up. And what do you think spilled out into his hand? Jade, and lots of it, some as big as my thumb! Now, I'm not a jeweler or anything like that, but I know wealth when I see it and this nomad was loaded! And what was funny was, he wasn't some chieftain or anything like that, just a regular guy like you and me. And he wasn't the only one! I tell you, if I was a couple of years younger, I'd grab me an axe and go digging for gems. As it was, I was ready to hand him my whole wagonload right then and there and throw in the horses for free.”

Source: Thorvald Svenson [**male human, Exp 5, hp 16**], a merchant in the employ of his home city's Ironworker's Guild. This was Thorvald's first trip to Tantalus and, although not prejudicial by nature (since it interferes with business), he wasn't expecting the nomads to pay for things with jade. Naturally, this completely blew his mind and he has been dreaming of riches ever since and has every intention of returning next year to do more business.

Successful Gather Information Check: “The nomads find it amusing that the foreign merchants put so much value on a pretty little rock. Don't get me wrong, the nomads like the look of jade, but the fact is that it doesn't have any real value to them; for them, it's horses, horses, and more horses. But don't think you can go out there and just dig around in their land; the places where the jade comes from are firmly in nomad territory and they don't like it when someone digs around “

Source: Travor the Tall [**male human, Exp 4, hp 11**], merchant. Travor is one of the few foreigners that spend the entire year in Tantalus. An independent merchant, Travor is well versed in the ways of the nomads and knows that while the nomads can be very open and friendly, they have little tolerance for those that do not respect their rules or way of life.

Follow Up: PCs that insist on picking up a pick and heading for the jade deposits on their will find out very quickly that the nomads do not appreciate strangers upon their lands. At a minimum, they will be captured and brought before a clan chieftain for judgment. But it is just as likely that the nomads will shoot first and ask questions later.

That Sheriff Jasper is a Mean One **(DC 15)**

Failed Gather Information Check: “There I was in Westham, mindin' me own business and trying to sell my wares, when up comes his high-and-mighty self Sheriff Jasper and asks me what I'm doin' there. So I tells him that I'm just selling, like everyone else. Then he says “You're not from around here, are you?”. And I replies “No, sir, I'm not. But what does that have to do with anything.” Then he says “It's five silver to sell for the day and a tax of 20 percent”. I told him I didn't have the five silver, so he and his boys confiscate all my goods and toss me out on my ear! Can you believe what kind of a crook that man is? Someone should do something about him.”

Source: James Tanner [**male human, Exp 4, hp 13**], a conman and swindler. While James was in Westham and was asked to leave by Sheriff Jasper, the events as he relates them aren't exactly correct. In fact, it is completely James' fault that he was forcibly ejected from the town as he tried to pass off watered-down wine at the farmer's market and was caught in the act by Sheriff Jasper. Since that time, James bears the lawman a grudge and does what he can to blacken the man's name as a means of getting even.

Successful Gather Information Check: “Oh yeah, I remember that guy. Saw him arguing with the Sheriff before ol' Jasper tossed him out on his ear and confiscated his stuff. Although I don't know what the argument was about, I know Sheriff Jasper enough to know he had a good reason.”

Source: Alana Moss [**female human, Exp 3, hp 9**], spirit seller. Alana helps support her family's through the operation of a small distillation business. While it is true Sheriff Jasper caught James Tanner selling watered-down wine, it was her that alerted the Sheriff to Tanner's activities because he was undercutting her prices and taking from her business and she figured he had to be dishonest. Not that she will admit this to the PCs; no one wants to be known as a snitch and gossip.

Follow Up: The rumor should hit the PCs ears prior to meeting Sheriff Jasper, or even better, before entering Hamstead County or Westham itself.

If they believe James Tanner, they may take a rather suspicious view of the honest Sheriff, which could lead to some serious misunderstandings, especially if they try to investigate on their own or bring the Sheriff's supposed transgression before Baron Westham.

While Tanner does nothing more than run off at the mouth, the criminal syndicate that sponsors Tanner and others like him may take a more dim view of having their goods destroyed. They will probably have a “conversation” with Tanner, but they may also try to teach Sheriff Jasper a lesson.

The Borders are to be Closed (DC 16)

Failed Gather Information Check: “Didja hear, son? The king’s done ordered the country closed so he can catch that scoundrel that done stole his gold. I knew that thief Whittaker was in town.”

Source: Paul the Fixer [male human, Exp2, hp 6], an older man who makes his living as a door-to-door tinker (one who fixes small devices and objects). Paul the Fixer walks with a limp, is blind in one eye, and smells quite awful. He lives behind a local inn where he gets by on scraps and the generosity of those staying at the inn. Almost all of the money Paul makes fixing things goes to feed his alcohol and gambling habits.

Successful Gather Information Check: “Yes, my friends, it is true. The raids along the border have become practically unbearable and the vote has decided that we shall indeed close our borders – if only for a short time. I recommend buying supplies before the prices become staggeringly high.”

Source: Representative Arthur Weakker [male human, Exp3/Com2, hp 16], an aging human male, bald and with dull blue eyes, Weakker can usually be found at the governmental offices in the city or a local tavern.

Follow Up: A series of raids by a neighboring country have left many small villages devastated and the government has closed the borders and set patrols to keep people out – and in. Only those with the proper papers, if they attempt to cross the border and are caught by the patrols, will be allowed to pass freely. All others will be fined 100 gp and thrown into jail for a single night – unless they appear dangerous or threaten the patrol in which case they’ll either be hung or tossed in the dungeon for life.

Representative Weakker is correct and prices will rise swiftly once word gets out that the borders are closed. Within one day of the order merchants will start to raise the prices of all goods that are imported into the city, with the rate climbing daily until the crisis has passed. The government is offering a 25 gp bounty on the head of each enemy soldier – dead or alive – and the crisis will last for at least 3d6 days if the player characters do not intervene in any way.

Players and DMs with an interest in negotiation and politics could use this as an opportunity to conduct a diplomatic game. Other types of players will, of course, attempt to find ways to exploit the unrest the events cause.

A Foul Creature Roams the Sewers (DC 17)

Failed Gather Information Check: “I seen it out near the river, thrashin’ about and moanin’. It was long and dark, almost like a snake with legs. It had a head like a man and was crying out in some horrible, foul language. Cherry Jack, he’s that sewermonger what sells

his finds in the open market, was with me and he said it were a wizard’s pet loose. We saw it swim up through the grate and into the sewers.”

Source: Adam Durand [male human, Com2, hp 5], a barber known more for his practice of blood letting than cutting hair. Durand is a tall, wiry fellow with reddish-colored muttonchops and a mass of thick, red hair. Durand owns his own barbershop on Green Lane and spends his evening’s in any on of the local taverns. The man loves to talk and befriends anyone willing to buy him a drink.

Successful Gather Information Check: “Yep, I heard the tales those drunks have been tellin’. The only thing loose in those sewers is a bleedin’ kobold what’s workin’ his way to gettin’ killed. I got that bugger locked off behind the east flood gate and soon’s I get the main pipe clear I’m goin’ in after him.”

Source: Cockroach Coldbath [male human, Com4, hp 8], a sewer worker with one arm and a constant smile of broken teeth. Cockroach spends most of his time cleaning the sewers and, when not below ground wandering through things best left unmentioned, lives in a small cellar beneath the Rusted Key. Cockroach knows just about everything that happens in the sewers.

Follow Up: If the player characters don’t interfere the rumor of the “monster in the sewers” will grow until, after a few weeks, the town guard is ordered in to slay the beast. Cockroach is killed by the beast days later and the guard continues to hunt – without any luck. Eventually, the town raises a reward of 100 gold to any man that slays the beast and brings proof to the surface. If the PCs enter the sewers, kill the kobold, and bring the corpse to the surface no one will believe it is the beast. How they go about earning the reward for killing a monster that isn’t there is left as an exercise in creativity for the players.

Another Foul Creature Roams the Sewers (DC 18)

Failed Gather Information Check: “I tell ye, the walking dead are stalking the graveyard. I saw ‘em the other night as I was coming back from the Pig and Whistle. Three of ‘em, all pale with rags and skin hangin’ off ‘em. One of ‘em almost got me, but I was too fast for ‘em. You believe me, don’t you?”

Source: Jim Lamper [male human, Com3, hp 6], farmer and town drunk. Jim is a pretty fair farmer, but his fondness of drink gets him into trouble and his family is worse off than it ought to be; if it wasn’t for his wife Agnes [female human, Com 3, hp 5] the whole farm would have gone under by now.

Successful Gather Information Check: “O! Jim’s been spreading his tales again, I see. He’s a fair farmer, but better with a bottle, if you know what I mean. There’s no undead in that graveyard and if there was, I’d know about it. I mean, I’m the undertaker, ain’t I?”

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Source: Bill Carder [**male human, Com4, hp 8**], laborer and local undertaker. Bill is a jack-of-all-trades that earns his keep by working for the towns farmers during harvest time and doing odd projects in between. He is the local undertaker, a part-time position in a town so small, because no one else wants the job. Unfortunately, he is also a renowned drinker.

Follow Up: There is indeed activity in the graveyard, but it isn't the undead. Jim isn't the only one with problems; Artis Treskant, the idle son of the wealthiest farmer in town, is a passionate gambler. Recently, he had a string of bad luck (he actually ran into a traveling professional gambler) and lost a large amount of money. His father, having heard of this, cut off the lout's allowance. Needing money to gamble, Artis seized upon what he felt was a brilliant scheme.

He and two of his fellow layabouts, also sons of wealthy farmers, decided that they could fund their ventures by robbing graves. Dressing up as rough approximations of zombies (they lack the disguise skill and don't have any idea what zombies really look like), they pilfer the various graves looking for valuables that they can hawk in the nearby city. They only do this on average about once a week and always make sure that Bill Carder is deep in his cups before commencing. The fact that Jim Lamper happened to spot one of them was sheer luck.

If the PCs investigate they find evidence of freshly turned earth on half-a-dozen graves; it is a testament to Bill Carder's usual state of mind that he has failed to notice these so far. They can stake the place out, but it will be 1d8 days before Artis and his boys show up, dressed as zombies. Once caught, Artis confesses all. Confronted with his son's behavior, his father disowns him and the PCs have potentially made an enemy for life.

The Temple is Full of Crooks (DC 18)

Failed Gather Information Check: "I've been saying it all along. Them do-gooder's at the Temple have been busy stealing from the collection box and, what with all them women running about, they aren't exactly spending their days in prayer, if you know what I mean."

Source: Tomas [**male human, Com1, hp 4**], a young never-do-well who spends most of his time chasing skirts and bumming drinks from his friends at the Tapped Keg. Although he is apprenticed to be a tanner, his master has trouble getting a good day's work out of him and it is beginning to dawn on Tomas that he may soon lose his apprenticeship and be cast out on to the streets.

Successful Gather Information Check: "I can't believe it. I've never met a more kindly man in all my life than Father Avrahan and his acolytes are just as kind and helpful."

Source: Marea [**female human, Com2, hp 5**], a middle-aged washerwoman who is married to Rudolf, a tailor who likes a bit too much of drink. Although she is ashamed to reveal it, she recently had to ask Father Avrahan for help in paying some bills after her husband had drank away all their money.

Follow Up: The rumor is completely untrue and was started by Rudwig [**male human, Exp 5, hp 18**], an agent of the baron. The baron has had his eye on the Temple for some time, having noticed that it has grown quite successful under the leadership of Father Avrahan [**male human, Clr 6 (LG deity), hp 23**]. It is Rudwig's job to turn public opinion against the Temple by spreading vicious rumors and fabricating incidents in order to give the baron an excuse to arrest the clerics and impound their temple and monies.

Rudwig is a clever man who is a master at manipulating words. He prefers to hint at the activities going on in the Temple to those, like Tomas, he knows will draw the implied conclusion and go around spreading the rumor among the townspeople. Tomas picked up the rumor about the collection box from Rudwig in the Tapped Keg and has been gleefully spreading it about town, adding the bit about the women, in a spiteful attempt to make life as miserable for others as it is for him.

Rudwig will continue to spread subtle rumors in an ongoing attempt to blacken the reputation of the Temple and keep an eye out for anything that could be twisted to the baron's ends (a woman seeking alms becomes a prostitute servicing the clerics, a doddering old man is forced into a "donation", etc.).

Although initially gaining no traction, the fact that Father Avrahan refuses to respond to the rumors (he firmly believes that the people are not so easily fooled and that the Temple's good deeds will speak for themselves) eventually begins to change the tide. Demonstrating the principle that, if you hear something often enough you come to believe it, the townspeople start seeing the activities of the Temple in a different, more sinister light.

If the characters do not intervene, sooner or later the citizenry will be apathetic, or even hostile, enough to the Temple and its clergy that the baron will finally have the excuse he needs.

The Coins are Counterfeit (DC 20)

Failed Gather Information Check: "Alark Gonzales tried to pass one 'a them fake silvers on me last night. Dirty bugger woulda gottin' away wit it if I hadn't already heard from Missy Malone about them fake silvers. I got his knife in payment instead and sent him packin' with that fake coin. You lookin' to maybe buy a knife . . . or a fun romp out back?'"

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Source: Harriet (the Whore) [female human, Com 1, 1 hp], an ugly young woman who works the streets as a prostitute. Harriet had a bad night just a few days ago and bears bruises and a scar on her face.

Successful Gather Information Check: "No, those are just foul rumors started by the ignorant. You see, a southern caravan that passed through last week had nothing but foreign coin to spend on provisions so we took them at a 2 to 1 exchange rate. If you happen to have any of those foreign coins I'll take them off of your hands at that same rate of exchange."

Source: Victor Bottleby, [male human, Exp 3, 6 hp], a moneychanger that works in the market. Bottleby is in his early 30s, has red hair and gray eyes, and is slightly overweight. He dresses the part of a gentleman but lives in the backroom of a local washing woman's house.

Follow Up: The coins are valid currency – the silver and gold used in their manufacture are valuable – but many in the area consider them forged coin simply because they don't recognize the stamps on either side of the coin. The moneychangers are attempting to get back as much as the foreign coin as possible – an apprentice accidentally let it get into circulation – so that they can melt it down to form bars which will be much easier to trade.

The Drow Take No Prisoners (DC 20)

Failed Gather Information Check: "Everyone knows they were lost to those dark elves, all of them slain and their parts used in evil rituals. Who? The missing watch patrol. They set out to investigate reports of dark elves near the woods and haven't been seen since, I heard that there's no possibility that they've been taken as hostages – the drow always kill and never take prisoners."

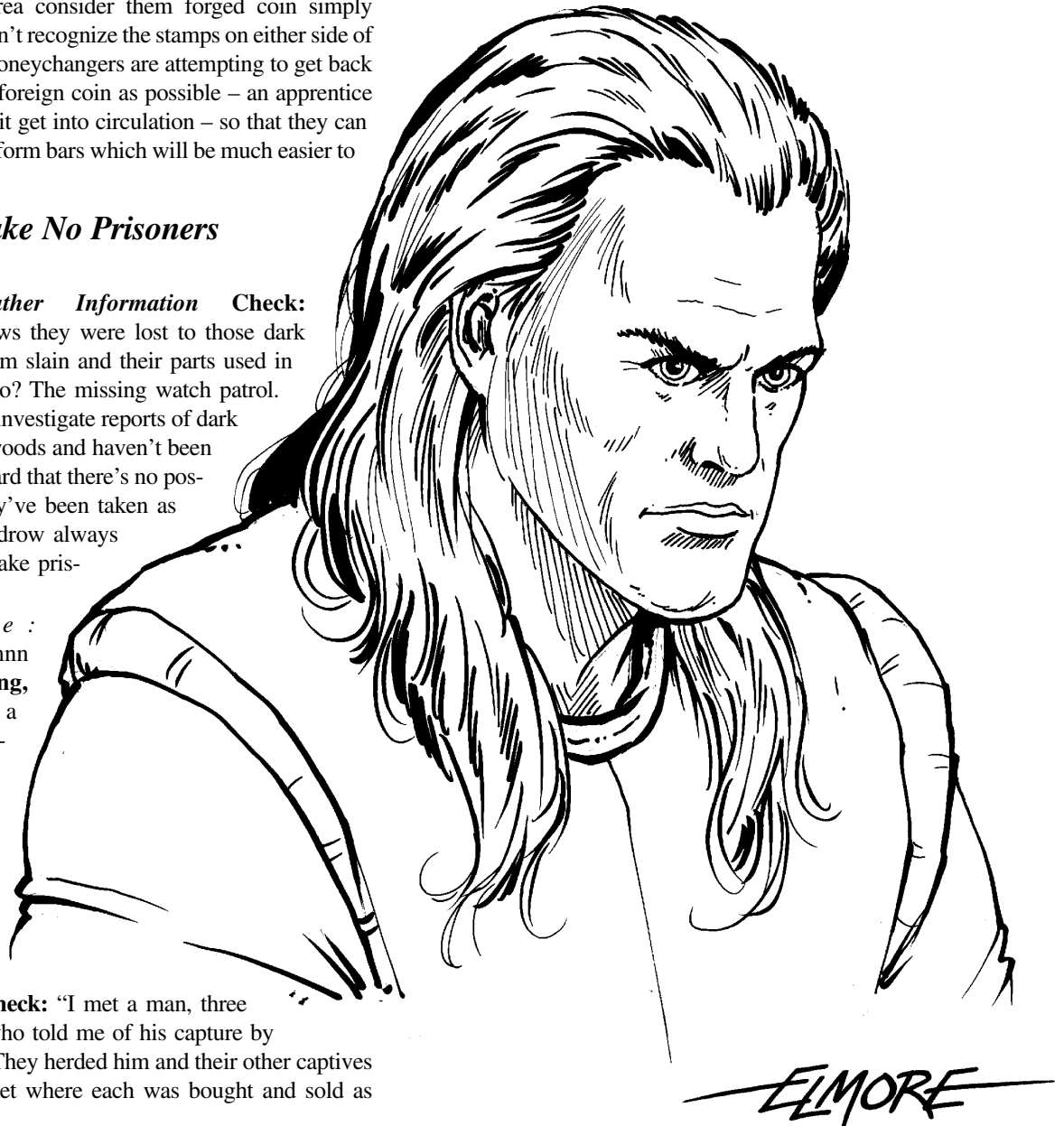
Source: Henrietta Samn [female halfling, Com1, 2 hp], a thin, frail-looking halfling woman dressed in a dark linen robe and red leather skirt.

Successful Gather Information Check: "I met a man, three winters back, who told me of his capture by the dark elves. They herded him and their other captives to a large market where each was bought and sold as

slaves. It's my knowledge that, where possible, the drow prefer to take others alive so that they may force them into slavery. Dwarves, humans, orcs, halflings . . . the drow care not of the race. Why, I've even heard whispers of them taking other dark elves as slaves. Yes, it's for certain that the patrol is even now slaving for the drow."

Source: Michael the Bloodless [male half-elf, Clr2, 11 hp], adventurous cleric of war. Reddish hair, fair complexion, dressed in robes and armed with a mace.

Follow Up: The missing watch patrol did not, in fact, encounter drow. If the PCs investigate they stumble upon three members of the eight member patrol. These three have abandoned their duty and, while trying to go AWOL, killed the remaining members of the patrol. They are now hiding in the forest, trying to decide on their next course of action.



Contacts and NPCs

This system codifies the phenomenon commonplace in most long-term campaigns: the friendly bartender, gruff weaponsmith, or absent-minded sage who points the PCs in the right direction, passes along important clues, or offers unusual skills and knowledge.

With this variant, the PCs have one or more unnamed contacts marked on their character sheets for later use. A player can define a contact for his character at any point during the game, giving the PC access to a friendly NPC. This variant is particularly appropriate in campaigns that feature mysteries, intrigue, and lots of character interaction. It's especially effective in the hands of a DM who doesn't mind improvising new NPCs on the spur of the moment (though the selection of NPC contacts provided in this book should assist the DM in the creation of new NPC contacts).

For example, when a character needs an inscription translated from the Pranatese language, an invitation to the Lord's Pageant, or the services of a master in Craft (gemcutting), the player tells the DM that he wants to define one of his character's contacts for the purpose. Then the DM describes how the contact came about, from the character's point of view: "You buy your lute strings from Otto Garrelbench, who is the husband of a Pranatese woman, Ku'vatha. She remembers you as one of the musicians who performed at their wedding feast, and is happy to do you a favor." In game terms, Ku'vatha has a friendly attitude toward the PC that continues unless the character does something to change the relationship. She is willing to translate the inscription, and she may perform a similar service on other occasions as time goes on. The player notes on the character sheet that one of his character's contacts has been defined as Ku'vatha Garrelbench, a speaker and writer of the Pranatese language.

NPCs AND CONTACTS

While all defined contacts are friendly NPCs, that doesn't mean that all friendly NPCs are defined contacts. The contact variant is intended to supplement, not replace, other social interactions with noncombat NPCs. It gives a player a chance to insert a minor character into the ongoing drama.

Defined contacts should be among the campaign's most stable characters. Unless the characters are completely obtuse or have remarkable misfortune, the minor character's they define as contacts aren't going any-

where. They're generally available wherever they happen to live, and they usually have the time and inclination to help their friend the PC. Major NPC characters – those defined entirely by the DM – are off limits as contacts. A player can't just say, "I want to define the queen as a contact."

A contact won't risk life or livelihood on the PC's say-so, but a contact makes some sacrifices for a friend. For example, a contact will burn the midnight oil translating an ancient text or sneak the key to the pantry out of the castle (as long as it's back by morning).

There's an inverse relationship between the contact's importance in the ongoing campaign and the amount of help she can provide. In other words, if you choose the mayor as your contact, sometimes he's too busy to see you at a moment's notice, but he's very helpful when you get an audience. Beppo the cobbler, on the other hand, practically lives in his shop on Water Street – making him available day or night – but the ways in which he can aid you are more limited.

TYPES OF CONTACTS

Contacts can come in three varieties: information contacts, influence contacts, and skill contacts.

Information Contacts

Information contacts are useful for what they know. They're the ones who hear all the rumors – and they can discern which ones are true. Some just have an uncanny sense of what's going on in their neighborhood or town, such as the grumpy bartender, the talkative fruit merchant, and the watch captain who has seen it all. Other information contacts have more focused interests, such as the army sergeant who knows all about troop movements, the fence who is privy to every major theft in the city, or the scribe assigned to write down every utterance of the high cleric-prophets.

An information contact is generally a commoner or an expert with one-third the class levels of his PC friend. It's okay to give such a character a few levels in another class such as wizard, rogue, or fighter if it's reasonable for someone in the contact's position to have this experience. Most information contacts spend

CONTACT-RELATED FEATS

Introducing the contact variant to your campaign opens the door to a few new feats that are specifically related to contacts.

Extra Contact [General]

You have one extra contact.

Benefit: You have one new contact slot. Just like the normal rules for adding a contact you need not determine the details of the contact when this feat is taken but must simply note what type (information, influence, or skill) of contact it is.

Normal: A character gains contacts based on his class and level and, other than bards, the acquisition of new contacts is a very slow process.

Special: You may take this feat multiple times, each time adding another new contact.

Powerful Friend [General]

One of your contacts is more powerful than usual.

Prerequisite: An undefined contact slot of any type.

Benefit: When you finally fill in the details about your contact the character's class level is 1d6 levels higher than your own *and* one-third of the contact's levels will be in an adventuring class.

Normal: Contacts are of a lower level than the PC.

Special: You may take this feat multiple times, though only once for each undefined contact.

Wealthy Friend [General]

One of your contacts is quite wealthy.

Prerequisite: An undefined contact slot of any type.

Benefit: Your contact has 10x the usual amount of wealth as one of his profession or social rank.

Normal: The wealth level of a contact is average for one of his profession and social rank.

Special: You may take this feat multiple times, though only once for each undefined contact.

their skill points on interaction skills such as *Diplomacy*, *Gather Information*, and *Sense Motive*.

Influence Contacts

Influence contacts are useful because of who they know or who they are associated with. While a player can't define the queen as his character's contact, he can define one of her chambermaids as a contact. The maid doesn't have a broad store of information, and she doesn't have any skills the PCs might need. But she might be able to put in a good word with the queen, and she can certainly make introductions between the PC and the rest of the queen's domestic staff. The purpose of an influence contact is to enable and smooth talks with important, but less friendly, NPCs.

An influence contact has one-quarter the class levels of his PC friend, almost always in an NPC class (adept, aristocrat, commoner, expert, or warrior) unless the character is in an environment such as a wizard's academy where almost everyone has specific class levels.

Skill Contacts

Skill contacts are useful for what they do. Some skills – especially categories of Craft, Profession, and Knowledge – are rarely possessed by PCs. Skill contacts have those skills in abundance, so they're useful when characters need a smith to repair a lance, an honest broker to appraise a giant pearl, or a herald who can identify the helmed knight displaying a two-headed wyvern on her standard. A special category of the skill contact is the linguist, who can tell you what "Bree-Yark!" means in Goblin.

A skill contact is generally an expert with half as many levels as his PC friend. He has maximum ranks in the skill he is best at, and his highest ability score is the key ability for the skill in question. A skill contact always has the Skill Focus feat related to his field of specialty.

OBTAINING CONTACTS

Player characters automatically gain contacts as they rise in level; see the table below. When a PC obtains a new potential contact, he must select what type of contact it is (information, influence, or skill), but doesn't define it further until it's needed.

A multiclass character gains contacts according to his class level in each of his classes, regardless of what his character level is. For example, a 3rd-level bard/2nd-level barbarian gains a new contact when he reaches 6th level if he takes 4th level in bard, but not if he takes 3rd level in barbarian.

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Table: Contacts

Level	A ¹	B ²	C ³	D ⁴
1st	–	–	–	–
2nd	1st	–	–	–
3rd	–	1st	–	–
4th	2nd	–	1st	–
5th	–	–	–	1st
6th	3rd	2nd	–	–
7th	–	–	–	–
8th	4th	–	2nd	–
9th	–	3rd	–	–
10th	5th	–	–	2nd
11th	–	–	–	–
12th	6th	4th	3rd	–
13th	–	–	–	–
14th	7th	–	–	–
15th	–	5th	–	3rd
16th	8th	–	4th	–
17th	–	–	–	–
18th	9th	6th	–	–
19th	–	–	–	–
20th	10th	–	5th	4th

1: Use column A for bard levels.

2: Use column B for cleric, paladin, and rogue levels.

3: Use column C for fighter and sorcerer levels.

4: Use column D for barbarian, druid, monk, ranger, and wizard levels.

SAMPLE CONTACTS

Now that you know what contacts are, and how player characters acquire them, it's time to present a selection of NPCs that can be used as contacts. These NPCs have been written so that they can be dropped into a campaign without too much work. While these sample NPCs will assist the DM they should not be the only contacts used in a campaign; the creation of new NPCs – including contacts – is an enjoyable process that DMs should undertake on occasion in order to improve their skills as a DM and storyteller and so that there is always something unique and original in each and every campaign.

Something to keep in mind is that these sample characters don't even have to be used as contacts. A DM could, if none of them suit his idea of a contact, just use them as NPCs in order to add some additional background detail to his campaign. Even then the rule that "NPC characters – those defined entirely by the DM – are off limits as contacts" should be ignored if the DM feels that an existing NPC would make an excellent contact for a PC. In fact, allowing a player to "work at" making an NPC a contact – attending social functions with the NPC, offering support both financial and non, and anything else a friend would do – is an excellent roleplaying opportunity for the DM and players.

Angus Taber, Dock Worker

"It's up to you. You can pay the standard guild fees, and we'll do the job, or you can pay a little extra and we'll do a good job."

Although he began his working life as a seaman, Angus has worked as a stevedore on the docks some seven years now, ever since returning as the sole survivor of the ill-fated merchantman *Burnet of Seaport*. He has never spoken of exactly what happened on that voyage, and no one presses him on the issue anymore.

Angus resides in a modest room in Widow Breaker's boarding house where he is a quiet tenant who pays his bill on time and never gives any problems. Although he will occasionally join his fellow stevedores in a round of drinks at the Barrel and Crate, he is more likely to be at the Temple of the Sea God praying for hours or quietly in his room working on scrimshaw.

Although a very private man, Angus is also a very observant one and little happens on the docks without his knowing about it, either from a fellow stevedore or through his own eyes. However, while most stevedores will share what they know with anyone for the price of a pint of ale, Angus will only give information to those who gain his trust.

Weather permitting, one day per month Angus sets up a blanket in the marketplace and sells his finished scrimshaw works to supplement his income, a sizable portion of which is donated to the Temple of the Sea God.

Angus Taber: Male Human Exp 4; CR 3; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 4d6+4; hp 19; Init +0; Spd 30; AC 10 (touch 10, flat-footed 10); Atk +5 unarmed (1d2+2/x2, unarmed strike) or +5 melee (1d4+2/x2, gaff hook); AL LG; Fort +7*, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Craft (scrimshaw) +11, Gather Information +3, Jump +6, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (religion) +4, Profession (sailor) +3, Profession (stevedore) +8, Swim +9, Use Rope +7; Endurance, Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Craft (scrimshaw)).

*Angus' good save is Fortitude rather than Will.

Christopher Cox, Gentleman and Diplomat

"You were most wise to bring this terrible predicament to my attention, sir. It is of the utmost import that you assist me in setting this foul wrong right."

Mr. Cox is a human male, 30 years of age, with thin, bony shoulders and wiry hair the color of rich cocoa. Cox dresses in the finest of clothing, frequently

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casting aside perfectly serviceable outfits due to some minor tear or stain. He is an agitated, wordy man who never misses an opportunity to preach whatever he believes most strongly in at that exact moment in time.

Cox is a widower, his wife dying just weeks after their marriage. He now takes a room in The Shattered Goat, a fine inn located deep in the heart of the city. Cox has, in fact, two rooms – one that is his private domain and the second that he uses as a receiving room and office. Christopher Cox is a diplomat for hire, servicing the wealthy and the powerful in the city (and kingdom) and acting on their behalf. Cox has aspirations of a political future and is careful maneuvering his contacts and acquaintances to assist him in his planned rise to power.

Christopher Cox: Male Human EXP1; CR 0.5; Medium-size humanoid; HD 1d6; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30; AC 10 (touch 10, flat-footed 10); Atk +0 (1d6/X2, club); AL N; Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +2, Knowledge (Laws and Customs) +4, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +4, Profession (Diplomat) +6, Sense Motive +4, Speak Language +2; Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Focus (Profession (Diplomat)).

Doctor Sagus, Huckster

“Step right up, ladies and gentlemen, and bear witness to the amazing powers of Doctor Sagus’ elven elixir!”

Doctor Sagus is actually Torsten Denby, a minor wizard and huckster on the rise that makes his living traveling from town to town, peddling suspect tonics, potions, elixirs, and medicines of all kinds.

Torsten began life as a wizard, but did not find the rigors of pursuing that discipline to his liking and has instead begun focusing on using his natural charm and exotic good looks to rook the common people out of their money.

Always impeccably dressed in the latest fashions to help lend an air of authority, “Doctor Sagus” follows the classic example of other hucksters before him. He begins his spiel by playing heavily to the crowd with exaggerated promises of what his elixir can do (it restores hair! gives an old man the vitality of youth!).

He follows that up by asking a person from the audience who is obviously suffering some form of malady or ailment to step forth (unlike other hucksters, who work with a steady shill partner, Torsten prefers to use his *charm person* spell and natural charm to persuade a local to go along with the performance in exchange for money, favors, etc.).

The demonstration thus successful, the people rush forth to buy “Doctor Sagus’ elven elixir” and by the time

they realize they have been duped, the good doctor is long gone (one way he forestalls the people from drinking the elixir while he is still around is to tell them that, since it is an elven elixir, it only works at night, during a full moon, etc.).

Torsten is schooled enough in the use of medicinal herbs, magic, and potion brewing to be able to create natural stimulants and other minor concoctions that give people the sensation of something beneficial occurring. Combining that with the subjects’ expectations of effects from “Doctor Sagus” sales pitch and you have a very strong placebo effect.

Doctor Sagus (Torsten Denby): Male half-elf, Exp 2/Wiz 3; CR 4; Medium-size humanoid (half-elf); HD 2d6 plus 3d4; hp 13; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +2 (1d4/x2, dagger); SQ half-elf traits, AL CN; Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Concentration +3, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +5, Gather Information +7, Heal +3, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +2, Profession (huckster) +6, Search +3, Sense Motive +1, Sleight of Hand +3, Spellcraft +4, Spot +2; Brew Potion, Run, Scribe Scroll

Spells Memorized (5/3/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 0 - *detect magic, message, prestidigitation, touch of fatigue* x2; 1st - *charm person* x2, *sleep*; 2nd - *mirror image, rope trick*.

Possessions: Dagger, spellbook (with additional DM-determined spells), 5-foot piece of rope, 1d3 potions (DM determined).

Ian, Town Crier

“Hear ye! Hear ye! By order of the city council it is decreed that this Thursday shall take place the trial of Eward the Baker. All interested parties are to report by 10 of the clock to the courtroom.”

The voice of Ian is familiar to everyone within the city. He became the town crier after the previous town crier retired when his voice grew too weak. Ian has been town crier some thirty-six years now and, although he is slowing down a bit with age, his voice is as strong as ever.

Ian lives in a comfortable house near city hall along with his wife Eda. Every morning Ian heads to city hall where he gathers the morning’s announcements and then proceeds to walk through the city, stopping in the squares of each of the city’s districts to read them out. He returns to his home by lunch and then heads back to city hall to gather the afternoon’s announcements. After making his afternoon rounds, he heads home for the day sometime near evening.

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Although officially in the city's employ, it is a widely known fact that Ian supplements his income by adding private announcements to those of the city offices. Since he continues to complete his rounds on time and puts city announcements first, the city looks the other way.

Anyone wishing to have Ian call out an announcement can do so in two ways. The first is to write it on a piece of paper and hand it to Ian at any time he is on his rounds. The second, used mainly by those who cannot write, is to visit Ian at his home during lunch where Eda will be glad to write the announcement on a piece of paper.

Ian charges standard rates for an announcement based on how long the announcement is and how many times he announces it:

1 line = 1 cp

2 lines = 2 cp

3 lines = 3 cp (he will not read a longer announcement)

1 square = included in price of lines

1 district = 1 sp

Entire city = 10 sp

Ian always carefully screens any announcements and will not read those that he feels will cause problems, be controversial, are blatantly dishonest or libelous, etc. This is also true when it comes to revealing things he has learned on his rounds or while in city hall. While he will gladly share official information or common factual knowledge with anyone for free, he keeps any gossip or inside information to himself lest he lose the trust of the citizens or even his job.

Ian: Male Human Com 5; CR 4; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 5d4; hp 7; Init -1; Spd 30; AC 9 (touch 9, flat-footed 10); Atk +2 unarmed (1d2/x2, unarmed strike) or +2 melee (1d2/x2, large bell); AL LG; Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 8, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills* and Feats: Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +8, Knowledge (local) +11, Perform (sing) +2, Profession (town crier) +10, Sense Motive +12; Skill Focus (Gather Information), Skill Focus (Knowledge (local)), Skill Focus (Sense Motive)

*The listed skills are Ian's class skills rather than those standard for commoners.

Izzat Igbal, Desert Guide

"Ah, sir, you will not regret your choice for I am truly the finest guide in all of Zalid!"

Izzat Igbal is a desert guide working out of the port of Zalid, which borders the Great Desert. When not leading a caravan across the desert, Izzat can be found in the Alley of Guides near the East Gate lounging around with other members of his profession.

His dark, almost black skin, and short stature mark him as a member of the Bedouin tribes that migrate across the wastes of the Great Desert from oasis to oasis with the seasons. His weather-marked face and squinting eyes tell of many days spent under the sun, but also make it difficult to place his exact age (he is in his early 40's). Izzat is invariably dressed in the loose, white robes of his people and carries the traditional jeweled dagger on a crimson sash that marks him as an adult member of the Khaffadah tribe.

Izzat is indeed a very competent guide (he claims to be the best, but everyone in the Alley of Guides says that about themselves). He has led several score caravans across the Great Desert and is regularly employed by the merchants of House of Al-Hammoud to lead their annual trade caravans into the Bedouin lands.

Like most Bedouins, Izzat is a gregarious and affable fellow who enjoys telling, and hearing tales. Of course, like many of his kinsmen, he is also prone to a bit of exaggeration and enjoys speaking in parables, so anyone dealing with him is best to take what he says with a grain of salt (especially foreigners from lands where the people are more direct and plainspoken are prone to misunderstanding or misinterpreting what Izzat is saying).

Of course, Izzat retains the common sense and survival instincts his people are known for and does not suffer fools gladly; the caravans he guides are welcome to take his advice or leave it and he will aid them beyond this in reasonable ways (he will not risk his life unless escape is not an option). However, if the caravans choose to ignore his advice, engage in obviously foolish or suicidal behavior, are rude or disrespectful, or insist on Izzat performing jobs that are not part of his guide duties or are demeaning, dangerous, or just plain stupid, Izzat has no trouble leaving them to their fate.

Izzat Igbal: Male human, Exp 5/War 2; CR 6; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 5d6+5 plus 2d8+2; hp 28; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +5 melee (1d4+1/x2, dagger) or +6 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); AL LN; Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +5, Handle Animal +7, Heal +5, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (local) +4, Listen +9, Ride +7, Spot +9, Sense Motive +7, Survival +10*; Alertness, Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Track.

*includes synergy bonus to keep from getting lost or to avoid natural hazards

Possessions: Jeweled dagger, shortbow, 20 arrows.

Mary Potts, Conwoman*"Buy me a drink?"*

Mary is a small-time conwoman who has spent the better part of her life swindling people out of their money. Her preferred targets are newcomers to the Capitol, especially those from the countryside as they are often very naive about life in the big city. She also looks for traveling merchants and others who are simply passing through.

Her favorite con is to make advances to a man, or get the man to make advances to her, with the intention of finding a proper moment to relieve him of cash. Usually this takes the form of an eventual invitation to a tryst, as often made by the unwitting man as by Mary, at the end of which the man usually ends up without his cash and his clothes (to hinder possible pursuit).

Of course, occasionally a victim insists on romance, so Mary will gladly ask for gifts, clothes, etc. as the man tries to woo her. If the subject of matrimony arises, Mary will gladly say yes, although on the wedding day she will not be found.

Mary also does some business selling watered-down perfumes from a temporary stand; such perfumes last but an hour or so after being applied whereas normal perfumes last anywhere from 12 to 24 hours.

Although she is in her late thirties, Mary knows how to dress for effect and enhances her assets while hiding her flaws. Only a practiced eye can tell that she is not as young, or as good-looking, as she appears to be. Consider this a use of Mary's Disguise skill with a +5 Disguise check modifier for minor details (see Disguise skill) opposed by the subjects Spot skill. She is also quite adept at imitating everything from a peasant girl to a noblewoman.

Mary has been working her cons for some time and is quite good at recognizing when things are not going to work out; she will back off if things look to be going bad or if she senses trouble (this is a use of her Sense Motive check); her philosophy is if this one doesn't work out, there's always the next one.

Although Mary has some acquaintances that she does business with, she usually prefers to work alone as she does not enjoy having to rely on other people. As she is fond of saying "If I wanted to rely on someone else, I would have gotten married."

If Mary manages to find someone particularly useful and easy to dupe, she will string him along in order to try and maximize her gains. As a result, Mary usually has one or two burly male friends she keeps on a leash to discourage those she has duped from seeking revenge, as well as an honest businessman who enjoys buying presents for his lady and keeping her in style.

Mary lives by herself in various locations depending on her funds, and dupes, at the time. She usually tries to reside in respectable boarding houses and often has the funds to live in a good inn or other accommodations more suitable to being a noblewoman (these accommodations often being paid for by one of her suitors). Of course, on occasion she has been forced to seek less lofty accommodations, but she has always managed to con her way out of such situations.

Mary Potts: Female Human Exp 7; CR 6; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 7d6; hp 21; Init +1; Spd 30; AC 11 (touch 10, flat-footed 11); Atk +5 melee (1d3/18-20, razor hidden in shoe); AL CN; Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +3, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +17*, Forgery +3, Gather Information +12, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +6, Listen +6, Perform (act) +6, Search +8, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +9; Alertness, Deceitful, Investigator, Persuasive

*includes Bluff synergy bonus for being observed

Equipment: Razor blade, one vial of oil of taggit (Ingested, DC 15, 0/Unconsciousness).

Mellina, Entertainer/Pick Pocket/Opportunist/Free Spirit*"Oops, I forgot about that. Here you are sir."*

Mellina is a true free spirit who enjoys seeing where the road will take her. She wanders from town to town, staying a while in those places that call to her, and quickly leaving those that don't; she is as likely to be on a caravan heading across the Great Desert as she is to be in the middle of the Capitol or wandering the back roads of farm country.

Mellina is a cheerful sort, always smiling and happy. She has few concerns and has found that life has a way of taking care of itself as long as one is open to opportunities. It does not matter to her if a given day ends with her eating a fine meal and sleeping under down sheets or crawling into a makeshift shelter and eating scraps. As long as she is free to come and go as she pleases, life is perfect.

Of course, no one likes to starve, and even someone as unconnected to conventional life as Mellina is recognizes the fact that it is better to have money than to be poor. After all, when one's basic needs are taken care of (something that usually requires money), one has more time to pursue other diversions.

Thus the gnome supports herself as a street entertainer, performing minor tricks and diversions in whatever place will hold a crowd. Given her Sleight of Hand skill, her inborn magical talents, and a penchant for comedy, Mellina is capable of putting together a solid show.

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Of course, every once in a while her impulses get the better of her and she lightens a pocket or two, usually as part of her act (so that she can always pretend it was part of her act and give the item right back), but occasionally just because she craves the challenge and excitement.

The gnome is also a prankster that enjoys playing harmless (non-damaging) jokes on those around her. Indeed, as she likes to say, “With Myllina around, there is rarely a dull moment to be found”.

Myllina: Female Gnome Exp 5; CR 4; Small-size humanoid (gnome); HD 5d6+5; hp 23; Init +7; Spd 20; AC 14 (touch 14, flat-footed 11); Atk +3 melee (1d6-1/19-20, dagger) or +7 ranged (1d6-1/19-20, dagger); AL CN; Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +1*; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

*Myllina's good save is Reflex instead of Will

Skills and Feats: Appraise +1, Balance +5, Bluff +6, Climb -1, Diplomacy +1, Escape Artist +10 Gather Information +1, Hide +9, Jump +1, Knowledge (local) +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +5, Perform (comedy) +6, Search +7, Sense Motive +0, Sleight of Hand +15, Spot +5, Swim -1, Tumble +7, Use Rope +4; Improved Initiative, Deft Hands

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound*, *prestidigitation*, *speak with animals* (burrowing mammal only, duration 1 minute). Caster level 1st; save DC 11 + spell level.

Equipment: Tear-away performer's outfit.

Nakhu the Wealthy, Trader

“You say you're in need of a horse? Step right this way sir, for I have the finest horses anywhere.”

Nakhu the Wealthy is a well-known trader in Tantalus and an influential elder of Clan Horsetrader who, like the rest of his clansmen, lives in Tantalus year-round.

Unlike some of his kinsmen who have built houses and truly given up the nomadic lifestyle, Nakhu, even though he owns a couple of very fine inns, prefers to live in a small compound of tents and honor the ways of his ancestors. Or, at least, that is the impression that he likes to give. The fact is that Nakhu only keeps up this appearance for business sake; he has found it beneficial to be seen as being true to the old ways for it is the clans, not the trade guilds, which rule the steppe upon which Tantalus sits.

In reality, Nakhu the Wealthy enjoys both the nomad and “civilized” world equally and is at home in either; like many of Clan Horsetrader, Nakhu recognizes that both worlds have their good and bad points and that the balance can shift at a moment's notice. And Nakhu is very nimble when it comes to finding the right side of the fence to be on.

To those fresh from the steppes that are referred to as Nakhu, he comes across as a friendly and trustworthy uncle, only to glad to be a guide to the strange world of houses and cultures that is Tantalus. To those from the “civilized” lands, Nakhu comes across as a witty and cultured individual with keen insights into the opportunities to be had in Tantalus and the steppe beyond.

That is not to say that Nakhu is universally loved, or even trusted. Sadly, there is still much distrust among the different peoples and cultures in Tantalus and even someone as charismatic and intelligent as Nakhu cannot escape prejudice.

There are those among the nomads who see Nakhu, or anyone with the “foreign” taint upon them, as traitors to the old ways. And there are those foreigners that cannot get past Nakhu's skin and appearance and assume that they are dealing with a “barbarian” that is trying to rise above his station.

Nakhu the Wealthy: Male human, Ari 5/War 3; CR 7; Medium-size humanoid (halfling); HD 5d8+5 plus 3d10+3; hp 47; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +7 (1d4+1/x2, dagger); AL LN; Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +4, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +11, Gather Information +5, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +9, Jump +4, Ride +8, Sense Motive +8, Survival +6; Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Negotiator, Persuasive.

Possessions: Dagger.

Old Reynolds, Jailer

“You shoulda seen him ‘ang from the rope, boy. That villain ‘ill never harm another innocent again. It done me good to lead that rascal from his cell to the ‘angman.”

Old Reynolds, going on seventy but still as active as ever, works in the local jail where he feeds and treats the prisoners (and sometimes abuses those he feels are most deserving of some additional punishment). Reynolds wears the uniform of the town watch but hasn't served on patrol in over twenty years.

Reynolds lives in the barracks where he has a small, private room. Many of the younger members of the town watch look up to the old jailer and Reynolds isn't against using his influence – in the jail and with the watch – to help friends from time to time.

When not in the jail or the barracks Reynolds can be found in The Soldier's Arm, a tavern visited primarily by soldiers and mercenaries. Once a night the tavern pits warriors against each other in battles to first blood and Reynolds loves watching the fights and, when he has the loose coin or two, betting on the outcome of the fights.

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Old Reynolds: Male Human WAR3; CR 2; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8; hp 14; Init +0; Spd 30; AC 10 (touch 10, flat-footed 10); Atk +3 (1d6/X2, club); AL N; Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +6, Listen +3, Search +5, Sense Motive +1, Spot +3; Alertness, Improved Unarmed Strike, Skill Focus (Search).

Oressu Iromin, Demonologist

“Does the demon have its horns turned to the front, or the back?”

It is inevitable that as great a source of knowledge as the Library of Delios would attract large numbers of scholars to the city. One such scholar is Oressu Iromin, a lady of indeterminate age that is an expert in demonology (the study of evil outsiders).

Oressu maintains a small two-story residence in Delios' Scholar Quarter; she sees clients on the ground floor and lives on the second floor. Like all scholars, she uses a sign on the door that lets the public know whether she is receiving any visitors or not (in Oressu's case, she hangs out a ceramic demonic face with a wide-open mouth).

Oressu herself is a small, plain woman with a permanent stoop to her back from the countless hours she has spent poring over books. Her manner is quiet and retiring, but if someone comes to her with a subject of interest (chiefly demons and devils), her face comes alive with interest and her eyes glint with eagerness.

Oressu is an expert on all things relating to demons, devils, and other evil outsiders including their powers, habits, and histories. Although Oressu does not see many clients, those she sees are always highly motivated (and she charges accordingly).

While Oressu keeps a small personal library of books on the first and second floors (and an even smaller cache of valuable books locked in a trunk that has been bolted to the floor from the inside and magically warded), most of her research is conducted at the Library of Delios itself, where she is known to all the librarians (she passes on the cost of any research there on to her customers); her petitions to the Council of Librarians always receive prompt attention (largely because she doesn't seek one unless there is grave danger).

Oressu Iromin: Female human, Exp 7; CR 6; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 6d6+6; hp 24; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (touch 10, flat-footed 10); Atk +4 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); AL LG; Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Decipher Script +11^a, Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (religion) +8, Knowledge (the

planes) +15, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +12, Speak Language (Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal), Spot +13, Use Magic Device +11; Alertness, Creature Knowledge (outsider (evil))^b, Scholar (arcana, the planes)^b, Skill Focus (Knowledge (arcana))

^a+2 synergy bonus on Use Magic Device checks involving scrolls

^bnew Feat

Possessions: Dagger

Sheriff Jasper, Hamstead County Sheriff

“Now see here, Alvar, you know that I can't have you lounging about in the street like this.”

Sheriff Jasper is the head of law enforcement in Hamstead County, having been appointed to the post by Baron Westham upon the retirement of the previous sheriff. Although there were a couple of individuals more senior to the then Sergeant Jasper, Baron Westham rightly judged him to be the best choice based on temperament and ability.

A former officer in the baronial guard, Sheriff Jasper still carries his military demeanor and fastidiousness with him. His uniform, arms, and armor are always polished and maintained to a parade-ground level and he gives off the constant air of someone used to giving orders and being obeyed.

While he often comes across as intimidating upon first meeting someone, especially strangers, the Sheriff is a man that long ago learned that you can't always go by the book when it comes to life in the military, and subsequently, enforcing the law; rather than a strict interpretation of the law, Sheriff Jasper prefers to weigh each case on its own merits.

Of course, this lenience largely applies to residents of the county; Sheriff Jasper has no problem dealing as harshly as the law allows with troublemakers (i.e. strangers and adventurers “not from around here”) in order to send that message that troublemakers are not welcome in Westham.

As a result, the Sheriff is quite popular and well thought of by the good people in Westham and can count on the support of the majority of citizens nearby in cases of emergency.

Most days the sheriff and his five deputies concern themselves with solving petty arguments, policing the area of the usual troublemakers (drunkards, known persons of ill-character, etc.), and keeping eyes and ears open for greater trouble (which is very rare).

Although not bucolic, life in Westham County is in general very predictable and orderly and that's just the way Sheriff Jasper likes it and intends to keep it, by gum.

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Sheriff Jasper: Male Human, Ari 3/Ftr 4; CR 6; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 3d8+3 plus 4d10+4; hp 41; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 11, flat-footed 12); Atk +8/+3 (1d8+2/x2, heavy mace); AL CG; Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 12.

7 Feats

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Climb +3, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +6, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +4, Jump +7, Knowledge (local) +3, Listen +3, Ride +10, Search +3, Sense Motive +3, Spot +6, Swim +3, Tumble +3; Alertness, Animal Affinity, Power Attack, Cleave, Investigator, Mounted Combat, Ride-by Attack.

Possessions: Leather armor, heavy mace, dagger.

Timothy of Oxney, Minstrel

“What do the common people know of art?”

Timothy of Oxney is a well-known (at least among those that matter) halfling minstrel that travels the countryside during the amenable months (traveling from the south to the north and back again from mid-spring to mid-autumn) before taking residence at some wealthy patron's court or home for the colder months.

Timothy is a true minstrel, a troubadour in the traditional style. He strolls from castle to castle and wealthy home to wealthy home providing an evening's entertainment through poetry and song for the wealthy and powerful; Timothy does not give public performances or play on the streets, leaving that to the common “street groaners” as he refers to them.

Timothy is haughty, arrogant, and elitist and looks down with contempt on any that do not occupy such lofty station (pretty much anyone that doesn't have a lot of money); the halfling avoids contact with the common element whenever possible, often stopping his playing when going through villages.

But while he treats those of lower station with disdain, he outright hates those who would call themselves minstrels or troubadours and entertain on the streets. Timothy feels that their mean talents bring shame to his chosen profession, their vulgar oratories and antics reducing the noble art of the minstrel to a freak show. Not that he does anything other than pass by with a withering glare whenever he sees such performances; he is a lover, not a fighter after all. Interestingly, his arrogant attitude continues even when among the nobility or wealthy.

It has been the halfling's experience that the wealthy and powerful like it when he shows some attitude (“to get respect, you have to demand it”). Thus, whereas a commoner (which Timothy ultimately is) would bow down for the lord of land, the halfling only inclines his head. While the peasant may profusely thank and bless the wealthy man for every scrap that comes his way, the halfling accepts the money and accolades given to him

as no less than his due; after all, with his talent, there are always others clamoring for his presence.

Timothy of Oxney: Male halfling, Exp 7; CR 6; Small-size humanoid (halfling); HD 7d6; hp 22; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 11); Atk +6 (1d4/x2, dagger); AL LN; Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +10, Jump +2, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +4, Perform (act) +13, Perform (dance) +13, Perform (oratory) +13, Perform (string instrument) +16, Perform (sing) +16, Sense Motive +8; Negotiator, Skill Focus (Perform (sing)), Skill Focus (Perform (string instrument)).

Possessions: Masterwork lute, dagger.

“Tin” Culver, Tinker

“Yes, I think that pot will do nicely. Oh, and did you hear about what happened to the tax collector at Jeb Hansen's farm?”

Everyone knows “Tin” Culver, and his dog Kettle. One of the countryside's most colorful personalities, the tinker is a welcome guest most anywhere as, in addition to the quality guild ironwork he peddles, he is always ready to share the latest news and gossip.

“Tin” is a short, wiry man with seemingly boundless energy who looks much too young to have been walking the countryside some four decades. His tanned and weathered face is always broken by a bright smile and he is thoroughly pleasant to deal with, being extremely polite and good-natured. While his pleasant attitude is a true reflection of his personality (something any Sense Motive check will verify), “Tin” is wise enough to know that even on days when he isn't feeling so chipper, it pays to put on a happy face; after all, people would much rather buy from a happy person than an unhappy one.

“Tin” is always accompanied by Kettle, his draft dog (his fifth canine companion by that name), who pulls the small dogcart loaded with ironware, the portable grindstone, and a stool for sitting. Although a large black dog, Kettle is as pleasant as his master and just as kind to people (except for those who would do his master harm).

“Tin” announces his presence by banging on one of the half-dozen pots strapped to his pack as he approaches town. This inevitably draws any children within earshot to the tinker, followed by their parents. Having everyone's attention, “Tin” heads for the center of town (or the nearest inn if the weather is unpleasant), sets up his grindstone, and goes to work selling, sharpening, mending, and exchanging news and gossip. Once done with the day's work, he spends the night in someone's barn (often as a family guest) and sets off again the next morning to the next village.

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"Tin" usually covers two villages a day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and his circuit takes him back to the city every ninth day. There he replenishes his stock and, after allowing himself a day or two of rest (depending on how good business was on the last go-round), he heads out again.

"Tin" Culver: Male Human Exp 7; CR 6; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 7d4; hp 15; Init -1; Spd 30; AC 10 (touch 10, flat-footed 10); Atk +5 melee (1d6/x2, quarterstaff); AL LG; Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +3, Craft (minor repairs) +11, Diplomacy +12, Gather Information +15, Handle Animal +9, Heal +10, Knowledge (local) +11, Profession (tinker) +15, Sense Motive +13, Survival +10; Animal Affinity, Negotiator, Self-Sufficient, Skill Focus (Profession (tinker)).

Kettle: Riding dog; CR 1; Medium-size animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 40; AC 16 (touch 12, flat-footed 14); Atk +3 melee (1d6+3/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5ft./5ft.; AL N; SA -; SQ Low-light vision, scent; Fort +5,

Ref +5, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Jump +8, Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +3, Survival +1*; Alertness, Track.

Kettle has a +4 racial bonus on Jump checks.

*Kettle has a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Kettle knows the following tricks: Come, Guard, Heel, Perform, Stay, Work

William Nickells, Forester

"Mmm."

William makes his home in a single-room cabin near a small stream at the town-side edge of the ducal forest and spends his days in the duke's service, patrolling and husbanding the forest.

His chief day-to-day duties are to patrol the forest for poachers and trespassers, ensure the health of the duke's herd of deer that freely roam the forest (by culling the weak or diseased, providing food in winter, etc.), and to ensure the continuing health of the forest by felling dead trees, keeping a watch out for fires, etc.



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William also serves as the duke's guide whenever the duke goes on a hunt, a role at which the forester excels, and the only thing having to do with people that he enjoys doing.

William lives alone in the cabin except for Rufus, a wolf/dog crossbreed that only William appears to be able to control (Rufus receives a +4 circumstance bonus to any saving throws or skill checks to resist someone else's control). Rufus never strays from William's side, and the two always make their daily rounds together; each views the other as the only company he needs.

William Nickells is a weathered man of medium height and medium build who looks like nothing so much as a piece of tough leather. He is a terse individual, saying as little as possible, who is clearly uncomfortable out of his forest home (William suffers a -4 competence penalty to any Charisma-based skill checks when dealing with people; i.e. Diplomacy, Gather Information, etc.).

His only regular contact with the outside world is with Ferdinand Grimsby, the owner of Grimsby's Trading Post. Here William trades in the woodcarvings he makes to supplement his income for needed supplies, although even Ferdinand will tell you that he never exchanges more than a sentence or two with the forester.

William Nickells: Male Human Exp 6; CR 5; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 6d6+18; hp 39; Init +0; Spd 30; AC 12 (touch 10, flat-footed 12); Atk +5 melee (1d6+1/x2, quarterstaff) or +4 ranged (1d8+1/x3, composite (Str 13) longbow); AL CG; Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Craft (wood carver) +4, Handle Animal +5, Heal +8, Hide +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +6, Spot +8, Survival +10*; Alertness, Great Fortitude, Self-Sufficient, Track

*includes synergy bonus for above ground environments

Equipment: Leather armor, quarterstaff, hand axe, knife, composite (Str 13) longbow, quiver w/ 20 arrows.

Rufus: Wolf/Dog Crossbreed (Wolfhound); CR 1; Medium-size animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +2; Spd 50; AC 15 (touch 12, flat-footed 13); Atk +4 melee (1d6+2/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5ft./5ft.; AL N; SA -; SQ Low-light vision, scent; Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Jump +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +3, Spot +5, Survival +1*; Alertness, Track, Weapon Focus (bite).

Rufus has a +2 racial bonus on Jump checks.

*Rufus has a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Rufus knows the following tricks: Attack, Come, Defend, Down, Guard, Track

Yvan Kozkov, Ankheg Hunter And Guide

"Mmm, ankheg sign."

The Dyrvanian steppes are dangerous at the best of times. The nomad clans that roam across this vast sea of grass are hostile to each other and occasionally to strangers (the nomad theory at times is that if you aren't their friend, you must be their enemy). Add to that the presence of a dangerous cousin of the common ankheg, the cerulean ankheg, and you have all the makings of one of the most challenging places to live in the world.

But, as is so often the case, where there is great danger, there is also great opportunity. And few people know this better than Yvan Kozkov. The son of a Karztovyan merchant who did brisk business selling arms to various nomad tribes before he fell prey to a cerulean ankheg, Yvan is at home on the steppes. Although not a nomad, Yvan is respected by all the nomad tribes because Yvan rides like the nomads, knows the land like the nomads, and fights like the nomads. And yet, because he is not a nomad, Yvan can do things the nomads can't, like move from clan territory to clan territory.

Which is why Yvan is often hired both by merchants and those that seek the challenge of hunting a cerulean ankheg. While Yvan takes the merchants for the steady money they provide, he prefers to take the hunters, for that is where is true passion (some say obsession) lies.

To Yvan, the only good cerulean ankheg is a dead cerulean ankheg and he has vowed not to rest until he has cleansed the steppe of every one of the creatures. At least that is what he tells those he guides through the steppes. His true goal is actually to rid the steppe of one particular cerulean ankheg, the one that killed his father, the one that still carries the tip of his father's spear in its side. One day Yvan will find that ankheg, and then it will either be Yvan or the ankheg.

Aside from this one obsession, Yvan is a very professional and reliable guide whose best assets are that he knows the land and is known by the locals.

Yvan Kozkov: Male human, Exp 6; CR 6; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 6d6+6; hp 24; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (touch 12, flat-footed 12); Atk +7 melee (1d8+3/x3, longspear) or +4 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); AL LN; Fort +4, Ref +6*, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 12.

*Yvan has a strong Reflex save instead of the standard Will save

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +6, Hide +7, Jump +10, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen +10, Move Silently +7, Ride +13, Spot +10, Survival +10*, Tumble +9; Alertness, Mounted Combat, Ride-by Attack, Track.

*includes synergy bonus from Knowledge (nature)

Possessions: Leather armor, longspear, handaxe, shortbow, 20 arrows.

Locations

These shops and locations can be introduced into almost any fantasy campaign. The described locations can, with work, become a central focus of your campaign or, if the players so desire, a usual watering hole or personal headquarters.

ALLEY OF GUIDES

Located in the desert port of Zalid, the Alley of Guides is a narrow passageway located at the edge of the Foreign Quarter that parallels the Street of Foreign Traders.

The alley itself is bordered by two and three-story merchant homes and the alley itself is constantly cast in shadow except for when the sun is directly overhead. While this does keep the alley relatively cool, it can also create a very ominous atmosphere.

At any given time there are between 11 and 30 guides in residence in the alley (1d20+10) as well as a handful of food and drink vendors that cater to their needs.

Upon arrival, each guide stakes out a spot on the floor for a rug or blanket, organizes his (or her) personal belongings, and awaits potential customers. Since the guides all know each other (they are without exception Bedouins; the alley is considered neutral ground and no blood or tribal feuds may be resolved or begun here), the alley is very much a fluid community unto itself, with old friends and rivals being greeted upon arrival and being wished luck upon their departure.

To pass the time between customers, the guides tell of their most recent exploits, share stories, and play games of chance and strategy while sipping on coffee, smoking from hookah pipes, or having a bite to eat.

The guides remain in the alley even at night, huddling around oil lamps or small cooking fires and exchanging stories until deep into the night when they seek the comfort of their rugs and blankets.

When a customer arrives, the guides quickly rush up from their blankets, each shouting their qualifications and experience at the clients and often grabbing at their clothing to try and get their attention. This can be especially intimidating and overwhelming to a first time foreigner who is not used to this sort of behavior and more than one misunderstanding has resulted because of a difference in cultures. Once a guide (or guides) has been picked, the remainder return to their rugs and blankets just as swiftly as they rushed up.

The quality of guides varies tremendously, with

everything from young nomads looking to join their first caravan to trail veterans of a hundred or more caravans. Furthermore, the honesty and reliability of the guides also varies tremendously. There are guides that will do everything short of sacrificing their lives to ensure their caravans survive and others that are waiting to lead the unsuspecting into the waiting arms of their tribesmen to be robbed, kidnapped, or sold into slavery.

Of course, the guides themselves know who is a veteran and who is not, as well as who is honest and who is not, but will never divulge that information to anyone; in their view, the wise client will choose the right guide while the unwise will get what they deserve.

BONELLI'S WINE SHOP

This shop is built over the remains of a house that had been gutted in a terrible fire. When Harold Bonelli [male human, Exp 3, 10 hp] purchased the land and decided to open a wine shop on the spot, he worked with the contractors to design a shop that would lie mostly underground, occupying the area of the destroyed house's cellar. The roof of the new shop, when construction was completed, was covered in a thin layer of soil and sod was placed over the building and encouraged to grow. After a few seasons the only sign that a shop lies below ground is the small shed-like building within which are stairs that lead below ground.

The shop remains cool and comfortable in even the hottest days and Bonelli, along with his wife, live in this subterranean shop that is lined with rack after rack of common and exotic wines. The area above the shop, covered in grass, is adorned with small garden tables and chairs, each with an umbrella, and the Bonelli's host wine tasting parties in this small park-like area.

Bonelli and his wife dress in matching, threadbare supertunics that were, at one time, quite elegant. Bonelli also wears a pair of dark breeches with leather-soled booties while his wife tends to wear nothing but the long supertunic. For social events both will wear their finest clothing that, even then, shows signs of age.

Once every few weeks a new shipment wine arrives and is carted down to the shop by local boys that Bonelli pays a few copper pieces to for their help.

Services and Prices

Bottles of wine frequently sell for anywhere between 5 and 25 pieces of gold and while more expensive wines are sometimes available in the shop Bonelli prefers to not stock the highly expensive wines.

Once a month the Bonelli's wine tasting party is the social event of the town and admission costs 5 gold pieces for which the guest is given taste after taste of wine and small cubes of various cheeses. The wealthy of the city often attend these parties and many business deals are instigated or complete over a sampling of wine and a bite of cheese.

GRIMSBY'S TRADING POST

Need a backpack? You come see Grimsby. Need a lantern? Grimsby's your man. Iron pot? Grimsby. In fact, everyone in town sooner or later comes to Grimsby's Trading Post because he is the only one who has the stuff that people need to run their households.

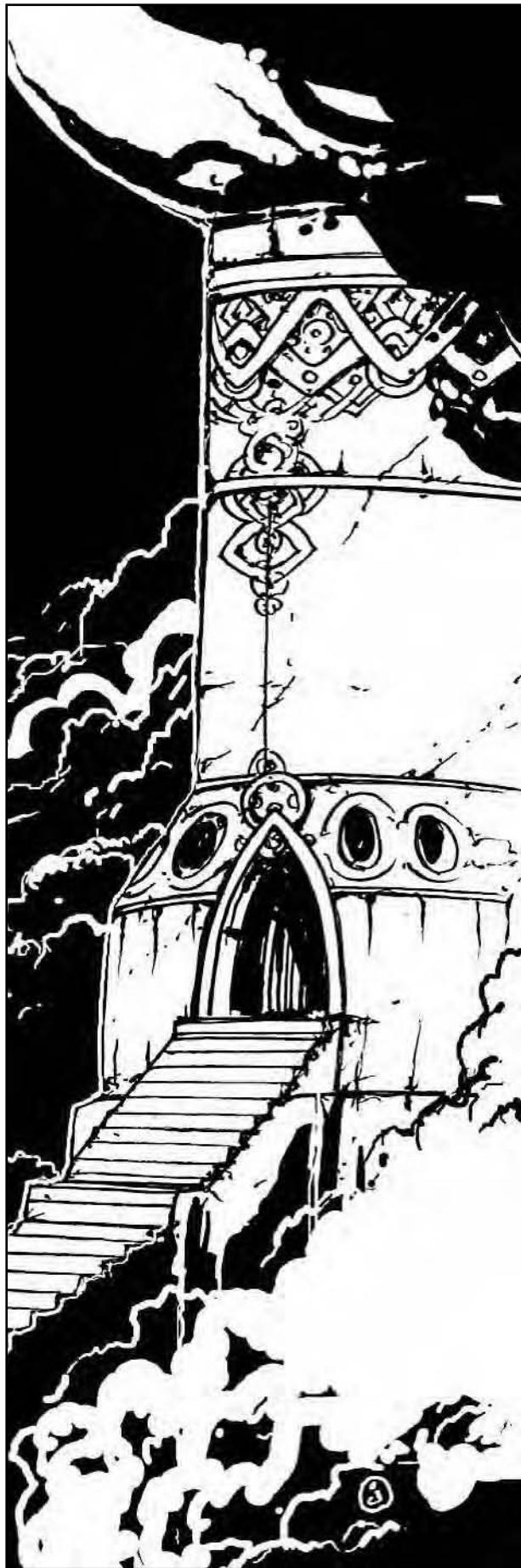
The trading post is a single-story building that, with the exception of the church, is the largest building in town. The store occupies the front half and the family quarters, two bedrooms and a common room, sit in the rear.

The place is actually a general store selling everything from farm implements to starter seed to furniture, but the owner, Ferdinand Grimsby, calls the place Grimsby's Trading Post because most of his transactions are at least partially based on trade (a dozen eggs and five copper pieces for a score of candles, a rasher of bacon for some rope, etc.).

Grimsby (male human, Com 5, hp. 12) is a haughty man with the arrogant manner that comes from being one of the wealthiest men in the community, a fact relished by his wife Lucy who lords it over the other townspeople ("dirt-diggers" as she calls them behind their back) whenever she can; the fact that they are big fishes in a very small pond never enters their mind.

The Grimsby's run the post, assisted by three of their four children: Angela, Andrew, and Deborah. The Grimsby's oldest child, Jasper, works at the duke's castle as the castellan's assistant (a source of extreme pride for his parents; Ferdinand spent many years coying up to the castellan to get his son into the position).

While the Grimsby's act superior and often condescending to the locals, they are only too happy to cower to those with more power and wealth than they.



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Thus, depending on how they look, strangers who visit the Grimsbys' store will either be fawned upon (if they appear well-heeled), or treated like potential thieves (if they appear poor).

Services and Prices

Grimsby sells many of the items listed as "Adventuring Gear" in the equipment list found in the standard rules; the DM can assume he has an item in stock as long as a townspeople could use the item (i.e. lanterns, barrels, etc.). This means he doesn't stock such items as caltrops, manacles, or higher-quality locks, although he does have the proverbial 10' pole, three of which he keeps on pegs near the ceiling behind the counter.

Because the town is remote, and because Grimsby is the only game in town, his prices are 50% higher on these items. He never carries any Special Substances and Items, Tools and Skill Kits, Clothing, Food, or Animals; with the exception of Special Substances and Items, there are ways to get these items in town from others.

There is a 25% chance of him having a human-sized suit of leather armor available, and a 5% chance of having a suit of studded leather available; he never carries any other kind of armor or shields, nor does he carry any other kind of sizes. He never stocks any weapons. If he does have the armor available, it too is priced 50% higher than list price.

Grimsby is supplied by a merchant from the city who visits him every other week to replenish his stock, so if someone has a special request, Grimsby can have the item at the store in 1d4+1 weeks (and for a 75% mark-up). Note that a special request means a mundane item, such as a weapon, manacles, or a skill kit; he cannot get hold of special substances (such as tanglefoot bags), or anything masterwork or magical.

JAKE'S SMOKED EEL SHOPPE

"Jake's" is not really a shop, but rather a wooden stand located right on the wharf that serves smoked eel. The owners/proprietors of "Jake's" are Jake Halfbitter (male human, Exp 4/Com 2) and his wife Lila Halfbitter (female human, Com 3) and they have been in business some thirty winters serving smoked eel with a side of tall tales and advice.

Jake himself is a gruff old sea hand who keeps an endless supply of tall tales on hand (whether any of them are true or not is up to the GM) while Lila is a saucy and chubby woman who everyone on the wharf considers to be "one of the guys". The couple has four children, all of whom are grown; the two boys are sailors and the two girls marrying the same.

The duo are beloved by virtually everyone on the wharf and anyone making trouble for them will very quickly find themselves face to face with a large group of burly dockworkers (as one poor soul from the Thieves' Guild found out when he attempted to shake the couple down for protection money).

There is not much to "Jake's". There is a counter for customers to stand at, a crate or two of fresh eels that Jake has either caught or purchased that morning, a large grill that Jake keeps continuously full and that sends its smoke across the waterfront, and two stools for the proprietors. But what "Jake's" lacks in comfort it more than makes up for in atmosphere.

"Jake's" is open from mid-morning to mid-afternoon and is a mainstay for dockworkers who fill it with boisterous talk of their day's work and bawdy jokes, usually at each other's expense. Virtually nothing goes on along the wharf without it being mentioned at Jake's at some point and anyone with a keen ear can learn all manner of things, although someone hanging around not wearing boots and knit caps will get suspicious looks from the regulars.

Services and Prices

The menu is as simple as one would think:

Smoked eel - 2 cp

The eel is served in a bowl and one picks the meat off with one's pocketknife or hands.

THE LIBRARY OF DALIOS

Located at the edge of the Great Desert in the independent city of Dalios, the Library of Dalios is one of the world's great repositories of knowledge.

Founded by the renowned sage Esemirus, the library takes advantage not only Dalio's very dry climate (which aids in warding off moisture, one of the great threats to books) but also the fact that Dalios is a trading hub where individuals from virtually every nation in the world can be found.

The library itself, located in the government quarter, is not particularly impressive; it is dwarfed by the sultan's palace as well as a number of other government buildings and is often missed by first-time visitors as its sand-colored stucco exterior bears no identifying mark.

Anyone is welcome to do research at the library, assuming they can pay the required fee (the fee should be set by the GM to fit his or her campaign and to keep out the riff-raff). Paying the fee provides access to the three stories of above ground public archives. The more rare and valuable books (especially any magical tomes) are kept below ground in the heavily guarded (and warded) private archives.

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Entrance to the private archives is possible only by successfully petitioning the Council of Librarians. It can take months for a petition to be heard (although the process can be speeded up significantly in cases of true emergencies; magic is used to determine the truth of any emergency petitions prior to being placed before the Council). Permission is never granted to groups, only to individuals, and all individuals must be accompanied by a Master Librarian (to keep an eye out on things) and a Master Scribe (the individual is not allowed to do his or her own copying).

Prior to entering the private archives, individuals have to remove all weapons and items (magic or otherwise, including spell components). They are then taken to a private room that is under an anti-magic effect and all books will be brought to and taken from the room by the Master Librarian.

Under no circumstances are books ever allowed to leave the library (the books are ensorcelled so that no known mortal magic can remove them from the library proper; any attempt simply results in the book vanishing from the would-be thief and reappearing in its proper place on the shelf); if one wants to copy relevant passages from books in the public archives, quills, ink, and parchment may be purchased (or may be brought) or one can hire a scribe for a nominal fee.

THE MOON'S Candles

A small, single story shop that is actually little more than a brick hut with a thatch roof, The Moon's Candles is the small candle shop run by Roger Hunt [**male human, Exp6, 21 hp**]. Hunt is tall, lean, and in his 40s. He dresses well for a man of middle class and is a widower. Hunt is a great lover of wine and frequently attends wine tasting parties throughout the city (and is a frequent customer of Denis Andreev's wine shop (see p. 00)). When he talks, Hunt frequently waves his arms about himself and is quite energetic in everything that he does.

During the day – weather permitting – Hunt keeps the door to the shop open and stands several samples of his work on small display tables that he places around the open door both in and out of the shop. Alec, a human boy of about 10, watches the door and is polite and friendly though always watchful for thieves. Alex has bright red hair and a warm, welcoming smile. The boy lives with his mother just a few blocks from the candle shop and is here at sunup and goes home at sundown.

The shop often has customers and Hunt takes great pride in crafting candles before the eyes of those customers willing to wait and watch the chandler at work. The few tables and chairs in the shop are always packed with gossips and the curious and Hunt learned very quickly that selling day-old biscuits and cheap ale greatly improves his shop's meager intake of coin.

The Moon's Candles, due to the number of people that can usually be found in the shop, is an excellent source of rumors.

Services and Prices

Hunt's prices for candles are 1 copper piece (exactly what the *Player's Handbook* lists) for a simple, common candle. Hunt also offers slower burning candles (burn for 2 hours) for 5 copper pieces and brighter burning candles (dimly illuminate a 10-foot radius for 1 hour) for 1 silver piece. Brighter burning, longer lasting candles are crafted on request and cost 2 silver pieces each. It takes Hunt roughly a day to craft a new batch of candles (3d6 candles in a batch). At any time he has several dozen silver pieces worth of candles readily available.

Ornate, decorative candles can also be purchased from the shop. These cost between 5 and 10x the cost of a normal candle and have no effect other than their pleasing appearance.

The biscuits and ale offered at the shop cost a few copper pieces each. Hunt frequently runs out of both biscuits and ale and will send a local boy to a nearby tavern or bakery to purchase more food and drink.

PEGASUS' WINGS MESSENGER SERVICE

Throughout the land, in the larger cities and towns and even a few of the smaller villages, small, one-room huts are the center of activity for anyone wishing to send a message but who cannot afford the expense of magical means of communications. Pegasus' Wings Messenger Service, a type of mail delivery service, prides itself in usually always getting a message through to the intended recipient.

Each small station is run by a single individual who employs a few youngsters with horses. When a message needs to be delivered it is carried by horseback to the next nearest station where the messenger is paid a small fee and the message is carried on by another person. Messages can take quite a long time to go great distances and can be very expensive but for those who cannot afford magic – or those who wish to avoid the chance of discovery – this service is ideal.

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Messengers travel light and will do everything they can – short of suicide – to protect a message.

Services and Prices

The delivery of a message typically costs 3 gold pieces for each day of travel – on horseback – that the messenger must undergo to reach the intended recipient. Guards can be hired to protect the rider and message though the cost is usually so outrageous that it would be cheaper to enlist the aid of hired mercenaries than to pay the service.

A messenger service such as this one could have catastrophic effects on a campaign if the DM is not careful. The rise of hired messengers in the real world had profound effects on everything from politics to finance and there is no doubt similar effects would be felt by any fantasy campaign that suddenly finds itself with such a service available to citizens.

QUICKFINGER'S CONSERVATORY

Located near the Greenwold, a small wood in the Otterwey valley, the Conservatory is the place where many an aspiring musician or bard comes to learn about music. Teaching everything from the fundamentals of music to what makes a great performance (it's more than just talent on the instrument), Quickfinger's Conservatory is the place to go if you are serious about music.

The conservatory is run by Will Quickfingers (male, half-elf, Brd 12, hp. 60) who also chairs the Otterwey Valley Music Society, which puts on a well-received annual music contest.

Although he is known mostly as a mandolin player, Will is an accomplished artist on everything from the bladder pipe to the zither, can sing with the best of them, and is a gifted poet and orator.

Will opened this small school some twenty-seven years ago after having earned enough from his minstrel days to spend the rest of his life pursuing music for music's sake.

He quickly found that simply writing music bored him and decided to share his knowledge and expertise with others. Using his connections from his minstrel days, the bard lined up a number of wealthy patrons to help him fund the conservatory, and it has been a smashing success (in producing musicians, not in making money).

The conservatory consists of three buildings plus the well-manicured grounds; there is a dormitory for students, a recital hall with half a dozen practice rooms, and Will's home. At any given time there are 2d10+7 students in attendance and it is not unusual for one of the conservatory's patrons or former students to drop by for a visit.

Of course, Will can't teach everyone personally at all times and so he always has a couple of his more accomplished students (male or female, any race, Brd 2 or Exp 2) help out with basic instruction. Unlike the rest of the students, these students reside with Will in the main house.

The students of the conservatory give weekly concerts, which are always well attended by people from the surrounding villages. Such concerts are intimate affairs with the various students performing a piece or two.

Twice annually the conservatory brings all its students together to perform as an orchestra; this is the time when Will often premieres new pieces. These semiannual events are well attended by not only the villagers but also the conservatory's patrons and often see former students returning.

Students are chosen for the conservatory by Will himself (no one else has a say in this, not even the conservatory's patrons) based upon their talent, promise, and an extensive interview; it is more important for the bard to find someone that he can teach and who will fit in to the conservatory than to have someone that is wildly talented but headstrong.

The students are expected to pay for their attendance at the conservatory and are responsible for purchasing their own supplies and instruments. Many students have sponsors, or are the children of the wealthy, but Will never turns away someone for lack of money if he or she has the talent and desire to succeed (he has scholarships of various kinds from wealthy patrons at his disposal for just such a purpose).

Once finished with their time at the school (basically when they feel confident or when Will feels they are ready), the conservatory's students are expected to make their way in the world. Some become court musicians at the homes of their patrons while others become traveling musicians and still others take up the mantle of the bard and follow the path of adventure. Of course, no matter where they go or what they do, the conservatory's graduates are always welcome to return (and can even stay for free in the dormitory if there is room) to tell tales of their exploits, perform new pieces, and teach what they have learned.

SOLOMON'S BOOKBINDING AND PUBLISHING

Archibald Solomon [male human, Exp5/Adp1, 22 hp], runs this small bookbinding and publishing shop where his many apprentices author and craft books for their master to sell. Each book is painstakingly written and bound by hand, many of

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them taking several days to complete. Solomon's apprentices specialize in the writing and crafting of small political and religious pamphlets, each no more than a few dozen pages in length.

The shop is quite expansive, a large building roughly forty feet to a side and the main room that is open to the public fills most of that space. Within this large room sit the apprentices, usually a dozen of them, each either writing a new pamphlet or copying an existing one. The walls of the shop are lined with shelf after shelf of books that Solomon sells not only to visitors to his shop but also – once a year – at market in one of the large port cities of the land.

The shop buys and sells books and Solomon is always interested in unique, ancient books. He does not deal in spellbooks but does sometimes obtain the occasional magical book.

Solomon is a pear-shaped, aged man with an Adam's apple that constantly bobs as he talks. His hands, long and delicate, are a sharp contrast to his rather elephantine frame and his blue eyes twinkle with a shine that cannot conceal his analytical mind.

Customers are always welcome but those who do not buy or sell a book while in the shop are frowned upon and treated with an air of indifference. Anyone actually purchasing a book suddenly finds himself a long-lost friend of the shop's owner and asked to stay for some cookies and a small mug of harsh, bitter coffee.

Services and Prices

It's hard to list the price of every book the shop has for sale. Most books are a few gold pieces to purchase and Solomon will never offer more than half of the value for books that he buys. DMs in need of a wide number of mundane books with which to stock the shelves of Solomon's shop are encouraged to either devise books of their own title and appearance or to peruse *101 Spellbooks, Tomes of Knowledge, and Forbidden Grimoires*, a PDF that is available now.

TANTALIS HORSE MARKET

This collection of inns, houses, and nomad tents sitting at the foot of the Marlor mountains at the edge of the Great Plain comes alive from late spring to early fall when the trading season begins. That is when the tribes of nomadic horsemen come to trade their furs and horses for the things that the more "civilized" world offers.

The headman of Tantalus is Ambaghai (male, human, War 6/Ari 7, hp 73), chief of Clan Horsetrader and the great great grandson of the

founder of Tantalus. Now facing his 52nd winter, Ambaghai has been largely responsible for the growth of Tantalus from small trading outpost to a full-fledged, albeit rough, village. In the process Ambaghai has made Clan Horsetrader very wealthy (at least in "civilized" terms) by managing to cement Tantalus as a place that is respected by both the nomads and the "civilized" traders as neutral ground and a good place to do business in.

That's not to say that Tantalus is a peaceful place, far from it. As is inevitable, bringing so many cultures into direct contact brings problems. From rival nomad clans trying to settle old scores to dishonest merchants and the inevitable misunderstandings that arise between different ways of life, Tantalus is often a rough place. Insults, pushing, and the occasional drawn blade are nothing unusual, although real violence is rare (at least within Tantalus itself).

The policing of Tantalus is accomplished both by the clans, who control their own and function according to customary laws, and the Council of Trade, which is composed of the representatives of the various trade guilds that do business with the nomads. Keeping an orderly city is in the best interests of everyone and even though they may not see eye to eye on most things, on this one thing they can agree on.

Making all of this work requires tireless and insightful politicking, as well as some behind-the-scenes bribery of the right people. Ambaghai is a master of judiciously playing one side against another in order to ensure a positive trading environment. The heads of the clans and trade guilds are aware of what he is doing, but since everyone can participate and it is obvious that ultimately the headman has the best interest of everyone in hand, they all play along. In fact, most of the major participants view Tantalus as a giant game board where they get to match wits with their opponents and take temporary gains or losses in stride.

Thus Tantalus is one of the great places for embarking upon adventure. Despite its small size, as a crossroad of cultures, the opportunities for excitement and adventure in Tantalus are far greater than in many places ten times its size. Whether it is a nomad meeting "civilization" for the first time, or a merchant trying to expand his market into the steppes, coming to Tantalus simply fills one with a sense of possibility and adventure.

Events

These events can be an excellent way to introduce non-combat role-playing opportunities into your campaign. Just remember that even at the most proper of social occasions blades can be drawn and blood shed.

SKYFALL

Description: Once a year, every ten years, this festival marks the world's passage through a great meteor shower. For the entire day of this holiday debris from space strikes the world, tearing through houses, fields, and whatever structures stand in the path of the falling meteors.

Events: The celebrations are not quite festive in nature but, rather, chants and prayers to the gods begging for survival and the end of the skyfall reign. The day after skyfall is a day of collecting debris as peasants, sages, nobles, and adventurers all race to locate the meteor fragments – a few lucky peasants manage to locate large enough pieces that they can sell and live comfortably until the next skyfall.

Game Effects: For the entire day of skyfall meteors strike the surface world. Cruel DMs will destroy the property of the PCs and, if the PCs are foolish enough to go outside during the event, possibly strike one of them with a meteor (damage is at least 3d6 points and can go to unimaginable extremes depending upon on the exact size of the meteor).

Variations: Variations will depend largely upon the culture and education level of the setting.

1. A highly educated society will properly prepare for the day and possibly spend it indoors feasting and celebrating the “gifts from the gods.” Meteors can be used in spellcasting, the metals stripped out to fashion masterwork items, and any number of other uses created by the DM.
2. A society with little education will not prepare for the event and, in fact, it's likely that many citizens will forget about the upcoming meteor shower completely. In these worlds it's possible for this day to witness many, many dead and an inordinate amount of suffering and destruction.

THE PRESS GANG

The simplest definition of a press gang is: A company of men under an officer detailed to force men into military or naval service.

In Great Britain, a press gang was usually an organized gang of toughs hired by the local Royal Navy officer in charge of impressment to fulfill his quotas. Backed by the full legal power of the crown, the gang was then sent out to search the surrounding area for suitable recruits. The gang members were paid money for travel and a bonus for every man pressed.

Obviously press gangs, while legal, were not very popular and many things were done to avoid the press gang, from pretending to be unfit, to hiding, to pitched battles where a man's friends would try to free him from the clutches of a press gang. Need I say that the orders empowering the impressment of men were rather vague as to the necessary qualifications of the men and how many should be taken; one could interpret the orders in any number of ways.

A press gang makes an excellent source of adventures for a DM. While press gangs are usually associated with the navy, they can apply to any branch of the service. Here are a couple of reasons:

1. The local lord needs to fill out the ranks of his troops (for a war, or because service is lousy and people keep deserting, etc.) and orders an impressment.
2. Due to the hazards of a particular endeavor (seafaring, mining, etc.), the government orders an impressment of able-bodied men to fill in for those who have died, deserted, etc.

Adventurers can be involved with press gangs in a number of ways:

1. They can be the target of a press gang.
2. They can themselves be hired on as a press gang (if they choose not to do the job, then they'll get to be impressed).
3. A friend or vital contact of the PCs is caught by a press gang. If the PCs want to save him, they'd better do something quick.

Keep in mind that press gangs usually have the backing of the local authority (the baron, the king, etc.) and, as such, evading one, or helping someone evade, is a crime (although if the PCs don't view the local government as legitimate, they probably won't care).

THE DUKE'S HUNT

Description: Once every month or so the duke will host a hunt in his private forest. This is an invitation-only affair during which time the duke invites a number of people over to hunt with him for the weekend.

Events: Each morning the men, their adult sons, and their attendants set out on foot into the duke's forest. There they meet with William Nickels, who serves as the party's guide, and his wolfhound Rufus; no other dogs are allowed on the hunt.

The men spend the day hunting, with William leading the party to likely locations for deer and Rufus flushing out game such as quail and pheasant.

The use of magic of any kind during the hunt, whether spell, weapon, or other item, is frowned upon, and anyone who employs it (or is caught doing so) need not wait to be invited again.

Come early afternoon the hunting party returns, the attendants bearing the day's kill, which will be cooked for the evening's feast. Once they return, the men spend the rest of the day relaxing and talking politics and business.

While the men hunt, their wives spend the time in women's work as well as exchanging the latest bits of information, while their children spend time playing around the duke's castle.

Game Effects: Although the hunt is ostensibly a means for the powerful and wealthy friends of the duke to relax and enjoy friendly competition, it is really a thinly disguised political event where every kill has meaning and more than one enemy has been made with too much success in hunting; new participants should be especially wary of showing up their "betters".

The duke never invites anyone without a purpose in mind; invited guests are either allies or potential allies that the duke wants to strengthen or maintain ties with, or they are enemies or potential enemies that the duke wishes to evaluate and keep an eye on.

He will also use the hunt to invite non-nobles, as both reward and to strengthen their allegiance to him. This is usually done with an eye toward gaining political influence, such as with the mayor of a powerful city, or with business, such as a powerful trader or merchant.

Furthermore, while the women may be engaged in "women's work", they politic just as much, if not more, than their husbands do; more embarrassing events and devastating secrets have been revealed over needlepoint than while traipsing through the forest.

Variations: The hunt varies in the types of animals hunted:

1. Boar Hunt - participants wear leather armor and use longswords. William tracks the animal, Rufus brings it to bay, and the party kills it with its spears. The boar belongs to whoever is judged to have struck the killing blow.

2. Bird Hunt - participants may bring a missile weapon of their choice; crossbows are the favorite because of their greater range, but bows also have their place (no one has brought a sling yet). William leads the party to a likely location, such as a meadow with tall grass, and Rufus flushes out the birds. The kill is claimed by whose arrow or bolt, as determined by the fletching, struck the killing blow.

Deer Hunt - participants bring a missile weapon. This hunt requires stealth and relies the heaviest on the tracking talents of William and Rufus. As with the bird hunt, the fletching determines who struck the killing blow.

WESTHAM FARMERS' MARKET

Description: Come rain or shine, this event is held weekly in Hamstead County from mid-spring to late fall. Here the farmers from the surrounding communities and farmsteads congregate in the village of Westham (the county seat) to buy and sell their wares. Everything from fresh produce to tools to house wares to hand-made items of all kinds is available and the event is a highlight for most of the county's residence.

Events: The market takes place on Westham Common, a large slice of green that is cleared of livestock (although not necessarily the livestock's byproducts, the night before).

Starting at dawn, those who have come to sell begin to stake out a place on the grass. As there are no permanent stalls on the common and selling is done anywhere from a blanket spread out on the grass, to a simple awning, directly from the cart, or from under a fancy tent.

In addition to sellers, on most days there are also the food and drink vendors, the entertainers (acrobats, jugglers, fire breathers, musicians, etc.), and, of course, the occasional conmen and swindlers.

The buyers consist of everyone from the simple farmer come to have his plow sharpened or buy a replacement for a cooking pot to the wealthy burgher's wife looking to buy a new dress to members of Baron Westham's family and court.

Keeping an eye on all this activity is the county's sheriff and his deputies who patrol the Commons throughout the day, keeping a sharp lookout for pickpockets and mediating the not infrequent arguments.

Game Effects: As the Westham Farmers' Market is the place to be at on a weekly basis in Hamstead County, it is the place to find out about events, gossip, and other happenings (including employment opportunities for adventurers) in Hamstead County (although any given rumor is as likely to be false or exaggerated as it is to be on the mark).

GUILD: THE CIRCLE OF SHADOWS

In response to the increasing intensity of the frigid winds of the night-cycle, Samnage Nyskstar pulled the cloak tighter to his body. The slender human, barely 20 rotations of age and already scarred from untold experiences, pushed back deeper into the still shadows that enveloped the towering wall. A flickering torch, protected from the harsh winds by some arcane incantation, fought back the shadows closest to the locked gate.

Samnage peered deeper into the darkness stretched out below the wall, searching for the guard he had spotted moments earlier. As he often did during the night-cycle, Samnage wished he had been born an elf so that his sight could pierce the shadows that now hid the guard.

Suddenly, a flash of metal gleamed in the torchlight. Within seconds the guard strode from the shadows to the gate.

"There he is," Samnage muttered to himself as he crouched lower and slowly drew his black, obsidian dagger. The masterfully-constructed weapon pushed back the dim shadows with a dark, arcane shadow of its own that was unnaturally black and hung like a thick fog. "Veraugha," Samnage hissed the ancient word. The command word activated the magical dagger and released a deep, arcane fog that crawled slowly across the ground.

Skilled thieves and practiced assassins, members of the society known throughout the lands as the Circle of Shadows have operated in the largest cities of the realms for decades now, their activities rarely disrupted or halted. With an unknown number of members and an undiscovered base of operations, the Circle of Shadows is one of the most successful illicit guilds known to exist. Most cities offer 200 gold for the capture of any member of the guild - alive - and it is a sign of the guild's power that this reward has been claimed only twice in the last three decades.

Membership Requirements, Story: To join the guild an applicant must be sponsored by a current member in good standing and pay a 500 gp "gift" to the guild's leader.

Membership Requirements, Mechanical: Reflex save +4, sneak attack ability, Move Silently 6 ranks.

Benefits: The following are benefits of membership in the Circle of Shadows.

Network of Informants: A member of the Circle of Shadows gains a bonus to all Gather Information checks. This bonus is equal to the character's character level.

Access to Stolen Goods: A member may purchase weapons, armor, or other equipment at 50% of the listed prices. Masterwork items may be purchased at 75% of the listed prices. Magic items are only available at the standard prices.

Naturally, given the large numbers of people that congregate on the town, plenty of interesting events are possible. Everything from pick-pockets to conmen selling shoddy goods tries to slip in among the respectable citizenry and, although the sheriff and his deputies do patrol the area, they cannot be everywhere at once.

The flea market nature of the Farmers' Market also makes it an ideal place for the DM to introduce small items of interest to the party (such as items from Ronin Arts' various mundane treasure collections, Forbidden Arcana or Dozen series) that, naturally, come with adventure hooks.

Variations: All farmers' markets are pretty much the same in terms of how events transpire:

1. Regional variations - certain regions are known for certain things and a farmer's market would reflect that regional bias. For instance, a market in a wine-growing region would feature lots of wine while one in an area renowned for its livestock would be heavy on the beef and mutton.
2. Flea markets - although not likely to be weekly, except in the largest cities, such markets are devoted to the maxim that one man's trash is another man's treasure.
3. Permanent markets - large cities have permanent farmers' markets. Real farmers have little to do with such markets as the people selling goods from permanent stalls on a daily basis are much more likely to be middle-men such as grocers or factors.

OTTERWEY VALLEY MUSIC CONTEST

Description: Hosted annually during mid-summer in the Otterwey valley, this weeklong music contest and open-air festival is open to one-and-all and draws dozens of musicians and thousands of spectators into the otherwise sleepy valley.

Events: The entire event is organized by the Otterwey Valley Music Society, which is currently chaired by the famous half-elven bard Will Quickfingers (a renowned mandolin player in his own right).

Put on by the six villages located in the valley, the event takes place in the aptly named Music Meadow, a large clearing in the Greenwold (the small forest whose borders the six villages encircle) that is situated no more than two-and-one-half miles from any of the neighboring villages.

TAXES?

You could easily institute a taxation policy in your campaign world, with each town or city having different tax laws. Anything can be taxed in a town – marriages, entrance to the town, a night in an inn – but what we're really concerned about right now is the taxation of goods and services.

Taxes: Flat Tax or Percentage?

The first question – and likely the most important – is to ask the question: Are taxes a set amount no matter the purchase or are taxes based on the cost of the item sold/purchased?

Flat Tax: In this case, the tax is the same no matter the cost of the item. A weapons tax – 5 sp is a good starting point – is applied to the cost of any weapon sold in the town. A food tax – 1 cp is about all this should ever be – is applied to food purchased *outside* of a dining establishment . . . food eaten in an inn or restaurant may be subject to the restaurant tax (double the food tax is an appropriate amount). A flat tax is much easier to implement and maintain in a game.

Percentage: A percentage tax simple means that the exact amount of tax paid is based completely on the cost of the item bought. The more expensive the item, the higher the taxes paid.

The following table presents the DM with a listing of possible tax categories and amounts for either a flat tax or percentage tax. These numbers are suggestions only and should be modified as the DM sees fit. Additionally, the DM should add any categories he feels necessary to his campaign.

Amount	Amount	
Tax Category	Flat Tax	Percentage
Adventuring	2 gp	8%*
Armor	1 gp	6%
City Admittance, per . . .		
Person	1 cp	NA
Beast	1 sp	NA
Cart/Wagon	1 gp	NA
Food 1 cp	1%	
General Goods	5 cp	2%
Livestock	5 sp	3%
Moneylending/changing	1 gp	5%
Restaurant/Inn	2 cp	2%
Skilled Services	2 gp	8%
Spellcasting	20 gp	10%
Weapons	5 sp	5%

* Of whatever treasures are recovered and sold in town. An adventuring tax would involve a campaign in which the government regulates armed parties and charges a fee. Those who pay the fee are granted an official document giving them permission to travel together for a set period of time. Only the most advanced of towns/governments would have an adventuring tax.

Taxes: Who Collects Them and When?

The tax collector is an employee of the government benefiting from taxation. In most campaigns the tax collector will be a low-level NPC the players rarely – if ever – have any interaction with.

The tax collector can visit people on a weekly, monthly, or yearly basis. Monthly is best in a large city since it gives the tax collector time to visit every shop over the course of the month and it gives the town a constant revenue stream.

How is Tax Money Used?

There are really only a few ways in which the use of taxes can affect a campaign.

Taxes used to improve the town, its citizens, and surrounding countryside will slowly advance the social conditions of the area.

Taxes used to finance an army hint at an upcoming military campaign that could have serious effects on the player characters' actions.

Taxes collected by a dictator – and spent only to improve the dictator's condition – create an opportunity for revolution in the area.



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Each village sets up two stages, a smaller one for individuals or duets and a larger one for trios and quartets; larger acts are rare and have to make due. The stages are always sponsored by businesses from the local village, usually inns or brewers or other businesses that make good money from the visitors.

During the mornings, which are usually sparsely attended as most people are still sleeping off the previous night's revelry, anyone can use these stages. This often leads to impromptu duets, trios, and even larger ensembles as various musicians share the stage and their music; more than one group has been formed from a number of strangers that have found themselves up on stage together.

While the morning is freeform, the afternoon is given over to scheduled acts and minor contests.

The scheduled acts are invariably ones that have been well received during previous festivals, or are already known, and that the sponsor is confident will draw the audience and thus the customers (most sponsors also serve as vendors, with the brewers setting up ale tents and the inns serving food, most of it spit-cooked meat of various kinds).

The contests are open to everyone, provided that they sign up with the stage's sponsor prior to the contest. The contests are usually limited in the type of piece performed (ballads, dance music, peasant tunes, original piece, traditional piece, etc.) and/or the instrument used and/or the size of the group (string, wind, song, single, duo, trio, etc.). The winners of such contests are decided by audience applause and receive a small cash prize (usually 5 gp or thereabouts) from the sponsor as well as money from the (hopefully) appreciative crowd (use a Perform check to determine the amount of money, disregarding city size).

Come evening, all attention turns towards the Grand Stage. This is the largest stage and is cooperatively sponsored by all six villages. For the first six days the Grand Stage hosts scheduled acts (acts with at least a regional reputation) and on the final night it hosts the final contest of the competition, which is known simply as the Finale.

The Finale is a single contest open to any musical form, instrument selection, and group size. However, it is invitation only, the invitations being extended by the Otterwey Valley Music Society based on performances during the week (and also geared toward variety). While the major scheduled acts are always invited, about half the slots go to the minor invited acts or newcomers. The winner of the Finale receives 500 gp and a medallion naming them master of music.

Game Effects: This is a good place for those with musical talent, i.e. proficiency in the Perform (keyboard instruments, percussion instruments, string instruments, wind instruments, or sing), to not only make some money and share songs with others of their inclination (as well as to catch up on the latest news), but also build a reputation.

As the contest draws many wealthy patrons, from nobility to merchants, a series of solid performances (not to mention winning a contest or two) can ensure a musician or group a year's worth of earnings; more than one performer has made a career out of winning the Finale.

Variations: Obviously, such contests don't have to be limited to music:

1. Art Contests - these are contests for those who create art (paintings, sculptures, etc.).
2. Acting/Oration Contests - those who excel in Perform (act, comedy, dance, and oratory) can strut their stuff here.
3. Crafts Contests - rather than pure art, these are exhibitions for craftsmen (furniture makers, clockmakers, armorsmiths, weaponsmiths, etc.) to display their wares, skills, and make some sales.
4. Livestock - Moooooo!

THE POTATO FESTIVAL

Description: Taking place in dwarven realms in mid-fall when the potato harvest is completed, the Potato Festival celebrates the importance of this most vital of dwarven staple crops.

Events: The Potato Festival is essentially a county fair with the potato as a focus. As a result, every event during the festival concerns itself with potatoes. While these events vary from festival to festival, the following are some of the more common:

Potato Sack Races - Contestants step into burlap potato sacks and hop down a course. This is a fairly popular event and draws many entrants; there is little that beats the comedy value of watching several score dwarves attempt to hop and push their way to the finish line.

Potato Fight - This is carried out using the rotten and/or diseased potatoes gathered during the harvest. It's a spirited free-for-all that results in a grand mess and the occasional bruise or even bloody nose.

Cooking Contests - A staple of every fair where everyone parades their best potato dishes before a panel of judges.

Eating Contest - The object is simple: eat the most cooked potatoes you can in a given time (usually five minutes).

Prize Potato - Perhaps the most eagerly anticipated event among the farmers, when it is determined who grew the biggest and heaviest potato.

Potato Hunt - A children's game where a number of potatoes are hidden in a field. The winner is the child that finds the most potatoes.

The Great Feast - Held to close out the festival, it is a glorious feast filled with every potato dish imaginable.

Potato Nose - This is a purely subjective contest where the dwarf with the nose that most resembles a potato is crowned King of the Potato Festival.

Game Effects: The usual things that happen when people get together and celebrate. The Potato Festival is meant to provide some light-hearted relief for players and to show the softer side of the dwarves (if you want to take this over the top, have the dwarves wear hats that look like potatoes).

Variations: Festivals for any number of other agricultural products can be held and can vary in their tone from harvest festival to solemn religious occasion.

Monsters

While the DM's Idea Pipeline doesn't include monsters on a regular basis, we do sometimes like to toss in a new beastie or two.

CERULEAN ANKHEG

The cerulean ankheg is a heavier, stronger, and far more dangerous cousin to the standard ankheg. Found only in the Dyrvanian Steppes, where it is the terror of the nomad tribesmen, it is thankfully rare.

	Large Magical Beast
Hit Dice:	8d10+48 (103 hp)
Initiative:	+0
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares), burrow 20 ft.
Armor Class:	21 (-1 size, +12 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 21
Base Attack/Grapple:	+8/+19
Attack:	Bite +14 melee (2d6+12 plus 1d8 acid)
Full Attack:	Bite +14/+9 melee (2d6+12 plus 1d8 acid)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Improved grab, spit acid
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.
Saves:	Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 25, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 1, Wis 13, Cha 6
Skills:	Climb +12, Listen +8, Spot +4
Feats:	Alertness, Awesome Blow, Toughness
Environment:	Warm plains
Organization:	Solitary or cluster (2-4)
Challenge Rating:	8
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	9-10 HD (Large); 11-15 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment:	—

A cerulean ankheg is a bright blue ankheg. Like its less dangerous cousin, it is a burrowing monster with a taste for fresh meat, in the case of the cerulean ankheg, fresh horsemeat. Although not longer than its thinner cousin at about 10 feet long, it is much broader and heavier and the typical specimen weighs about 1,400 pounds.

A cerulean ankheg burrows with legs and mandibles. A burrowing cerulean ankheg usually does not make a usable tunnel, but can construct a tunnel; it burrows at half speed when it does so. It often digs a winding tunnel up to 40 feet below the surface in the rich soil of the steppe. The tunnel is 5 feet tall and wide, and from 60 to 150 feet long ([1d10 + 5] x 10).

Combat

A cerulean ankheg usually lies 5 to 10 feet below the surface until its antennae detect the approach of prey. It then burrows up to attack (treat this as a charge, even though the ankheg does not need to move 10 feet before attacking). A cerulean ankheg is much quicker and ferocious than its smaller cousin and quite willing to fight to the death.

Clusters of cerulean ankhegs are mercifully rare and usually consist of a mother and 1 to 3 offspring that have survived their mother's occasionally cannibalistic tendencies (treat the offspring as a standard ankheg). Although related, they lack the intelligence to cooperate.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a cerulean ankheg must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. Whether a cerulean ankheg is damaged after grabbing its prey or not, it always retreats backward down its tunnel at its land speed (not its burrow speed), dragging the victim with it so that it may enjoy its meal in peace.

Spit Acid (Ex): 30-ft. line, once every 6 hours; damage 4d8 acid, Reflex DC 18 half. One such attack depletes the cerulean ankheg's acid supply for 6 hours. It cannot spit acid or deal acid damage during this time. The save DC is Constitution-based.

A cerulean ankheg does not use this ability unless it is desperate or frustrated. It most often spits acid when reduced to fewer than half its full normal hit points or when it has not successfully grabbed an opponent.

NECROMANTIC SLIME (CR 5)

This type of slime is extremely rare and normally encountered in cemeteries and tombs. Necromantic slime comes into existence when normal, non-destructive slime seeps into a space occupied by the remains of a deceased character or creature. As the slime oozes over the corpse or skeleton of the deceased, it slowly drips to the ground as a black, thick sludge. There is a percentage chance equal to the character level or CR of the deceased that this resulting slime will be of the necromantic variety. If this d% roll does not indicate that the slime has been changed to necromantic in nature the material decomposes and fades away over the next 24-hours.

Necromantic slime behaves much like green slime in that it clings to walls, floors, and ceilings, and drops down to feast when it detects movement.

A single 5-foot square of necromantic slime bestows one temporary negative level when it first touches a character or creature. Each subsequent round that the slime remains in contact with its victim it deals 2d6 points of damage. On the first round of contact, the slime can be scraped off but after that it must be frozen, burned, or cut away (dealing damage to the victim as well). Anything that deals cold or fire damage, or a *remove disease* spell destroys a patch of necromantic slime. Necromantic slime has no effect on wood, metal, or stone.

Full Attack:	Swarm (3d6 fire plus burn)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks:	Burn, distraction
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., immune to weapon damage, immunity to fire, swarm traits, vermin traits, vulnerability to cold.
Saves:	Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +4
Abilities:	Str 1, Dex 22, Con 14, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2
Skills:	Listen +4, Spot +4
Feats:	—
Environment:	Elemental Plane of Fire or any fire-based demiplane
Organization:	Solitary, cloud (2–7 swarms), or plague (11–20 swarms)
Challenge Rating:	7
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	None
Level Adjustment:	—

An individual firefly appears much as its Prime Material Plane counterpart, except that its body is bright orange or yellow in color and its abdomen is continuously alight with a bright blue to purple flame.

A swarm of fireflies is a brilliant sight, a shimmering mass of blue and purple lights dancing here and there.

Combat

A firefly swarm surrounds anything of interest it encounters. A swarm deals 3d6 points of fire damage to any creature whose space it occupies at the end of its move.

Burn (Ex): Any creature within the firefly swarm's space suffers 3d6 points of fire damage from the intense heat given off by the insects. In addition, such creatures must also succeed at a Reflex save (DC 18) or catch on fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds. A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Creatures attacking the swarm with natural weapons or unarmed attacks (which are ineffective in any case) also catch on fire unless they succeed on a Reflex save.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a firefly swarm in its space must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: A firefly swarm has a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

FIREFLY SWARM

Not to be confused with the fireflies found on the Material Plane, a firefly swarm is a mass of flying insects from the Elemental Plane of Fire that sets ignites anything flammable, including creatures, in its path.

Diminutive Vermin (Extraplanar, Fire)

Hit Dice:	12d8+24 (78 hp)
Initiative:	+6
Speed:	5 ft. (1 square), fly 30 ft.
Armor Class:	20 (+4 size, +6 Dex), touch 20, flat-footed 14
Base Attack/Grapple:	+9/-
Attack:	Swarm (3d6 fire plus burn)

LIGHTNING BUG

Lightning bugs are large, magical insects that have the ability to produce electricity through their bodies.

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice:	5d10+10 (37 hp)
Initiative:	+5
Speed:	20 ft. (4 squares), fly 60 ft. (good)
Armor Class:	14 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 13
Base Attack/Grapple:	+5/+13
Attack:	—
Full Attack:	—
Space/Reach:	10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Electric discharge
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity, low-light vision.
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 18, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 11
Skills:	Listen +7, Spot +15, Survival +1*
Feats:	Alertness, Improved Initiative
Environment:	Any tropical outdoors
Organization:	Solitary, swarm (2–5 swarms), or next (11–20)
Challenge Rating:	3
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	6-8 HD (Large); 9-15 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment:	—

A lightning bug is a large, bulbous insect with a blue head and thorax and a translucent torso the interior of which is constantly lit with sparks. A faint hum can constantly be heard emanating from its abdomen.

Combat

Lightning bugs are curious vegetarian creatures that prefer to flee rather than fight.

Electric discharge (Ex): Due to its electrical nature, any creature that comes within 15 feet of a lightning bug receives a *lightning bolt* like-discharge from the bug's abdomen that causes 3d6 points of electricity damage. The creature may attempt a Reflex save (DC 14) to take only half damage. The saving throw DC is Constitution-based.

In addition, any creature hitting the lightning bug with a metal melee weapon, natural weapons, or unarmed attacks takes 3d6 points of electricity dam-

age; the creature may make a Reflex save (DC 14) for half damage.

A lightning bug cannot turn off its electric discharge ability.

Skills: A lightning bug has a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks. It also receives a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks to orient itself.

TORMENTOR SCORPION

Said to have been created by a vengeful djinni as revenge against the desert people that banished him, a tormentor scorpion is a dreaded sight anywhere within the Great Desert.

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice:	6d10+24 (57 hp)
Initiative:	+2
Speed:	50 ft. (10 squares)
Armor Class:	18 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple:	+6/+15
Attack:	Claw +10 melee (2d4+5) or 6 poison spikes +8 ranged (1d8+2/19-20 plus poison)
Full Attack:	2 claws +10 melee (2d4+5) or 6 poison spikes +8 ranged (1d8+2/19-20 plus poison)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Constrict 2d4+5, improved grab, poison spikes
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.
Saves:	Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 20, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 9
Skills:	Climb +9, Hide +2, Spot +11, Survival +1
Feats:	Alertness, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (poisoned spikes)
Environment:	Desert
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	6
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	7-16 HD (Large); 17-18 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment:	+3 (cohort)

An efreit scorpion is about 10 feet long and weighs about 900 pounds. Instead of a stinger at the end of its segmented tail, it has

OLD GRISTLY

Old Gristly is the oldest, biggest, and wisest boar in the duke's forest and it is the duke's stated goal to mount the boar's head over his fireplace. However, to this day the wily old boar has evaded the duke and his hunting partners every time. Common wisdom, and the duke's own thought, is that the boar is simply too clever to be caught by a bunch of nobles trampling through the forest. But there are some who whisper knowingly that the boar owes his continuing life to William Nickells. After all, the forester is an excellent tracker and the duke's forest isn't that big.

I've included three versions of "Old Gristly". The first version has him simply as a large, ordinary boar, which is the way the above information envisions him.

The second version has the wily boar as a dire boar. This is for those DMs who wish to use the boar as part of a hunt but want to be able to give a stronger party a challenge (remember, there is no magic of any kind allowed on the hunt).

The third version has been included just because it can be. It makes "Old Gristly" a true terror: a fiendish dire boar of the largest size. Obviously, to hunt such an animal without the aid of magic is suicide, but if it could be done . . .

"Old Gristly": Boar; CR 2; Medium-size animal; HD 5d8+15+3; hp 45; Init +0; Spd 40; AC 16 (touch 10, flat-footed 16); Atk +4 melee

(1d8+3/x2, gore); Space/Reach 5ft./5ft.; AL N; SA Ferocity; SQ Low-light vision, scent; Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 15, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +7; Alertness, Toughness.

"Old Gristly": Dire boar; CR 5; Large-size animal; HD 10d8+30; hp 78; Init +0; Spd 40; AC 15 (touch 9, flat-footed 15); Atk +14 melee (2d6+12/x2, gore); Space/Reach 10 ft./5ft.; AL N; SA Ferocity; SQ Low-light vision, scent; Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +11; Str 27, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +11, Spot +10; Alertness, Endurance, Improved Natural Attack, Iron Will.

"Old Gristly": Fiendish dire boar; CR 11; Large-size magical beast; HD 21d8+105; hp 201; Init -1; Spd 40; AC 18 (touch 8, flat-footed 18); Atk +26 melee (3d6+18/x2, gore); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; AL N; SA Ferocity, smite good; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., damage reduction 10/magic, low-light vision, resistance to cold and fire 10, scent, SR 25; Fort +17, Ref +10, Will +9; Str 35, Dex 8, Con 21, Int 6, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +16, Spot +16; Alertness, Awesome Blow, Endurance, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Natural Armor, Improved Natural Attack, Iron Will, Power Attack.

Combat

An efreet scorpion begins most attacks with a volley of poisoned spikes, then closes on opponents in an attempt to catch them in its claws.

Poison Spikes (Ex): With a snap of its tail, an efreet scorpion can loose a volley of six spikes as a standard action (make an attack roll for each spike). This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 feet of each other. The creature can launch only twenty-four spikes in any 24-hour period.

The spikes are poisonous (DC 14, 1d4 Con/1d4 Con). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Constrict (Ex): An efreet scorpion deals automatic claw damage on a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an efreet scorpion must hit with a claw attack.

Skills: Efreet scorpions have a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide, and Spot checks.

Also from Ronin Arts

