

RAGING SWAN PRESS

GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY:

APRIL 2014



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GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: APRIL 2014

Featuring material from some of Raging Swan Press's newest products as well as classic releases of yesteryear, advice articles and material from Creighton's own *Borderland of Adventure* campaign, the *GM's Monthly Miscellany* series is a terrific free resource for the busy, time-crunched GM.

Design: Alexander Augunas, Creighton Broadhurst, Eric Hindley and Marc Radle

Development: Creighton Broadhurst

Editing: Creighton Broadhurst

Cover Design: Creighton Broadhurst

Layout: Creighton Broadhurst

Interior Art: William McAusland, Matt Morrow, Marc Radle and Tommi Salama. Some artwork copyright William McAusland, used with permission.

Thank you for purchasing *GM's Monthly Miscellany: April 2014*; we hope you enjoy it and that you check out our other fine print and PDF products.

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gatekeeper@ragingswan.com

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SOURCES

As well as new, never seen before material from my own *Borderland of Adventure* campaign, this instalment of *GM's Monthly Miscellany* presents information from several Raging Swan Press products and advice articles including:

- **Village Backdrop: Trickletrek** Alexander Augunas.
- **Dungeon Dressing: Goblin's Pockets** Eric Hindley.
- **The Sunken Pyramid** Creighton Broadhurst and Marc Radle.

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FOREWORD

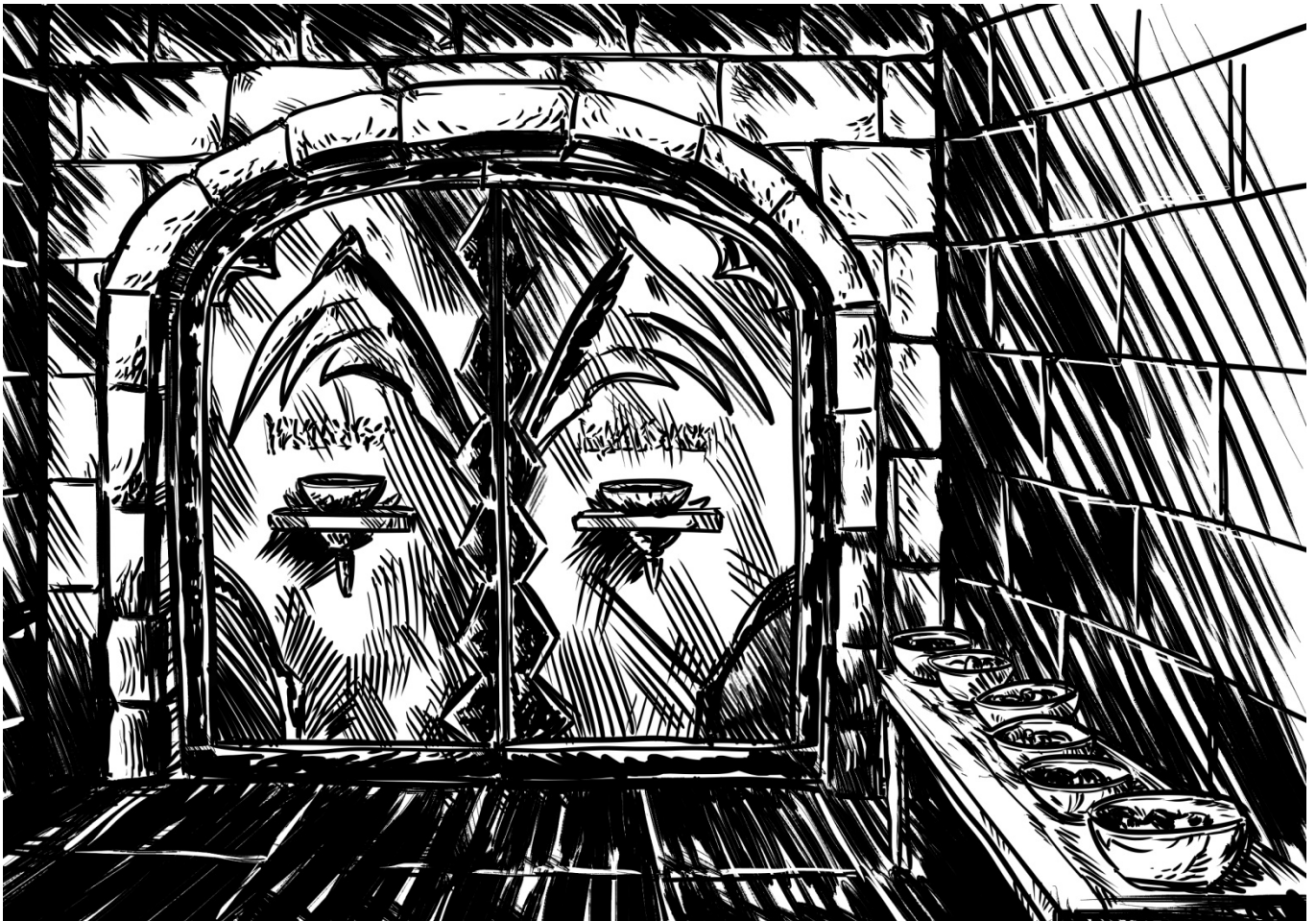
Welcome to the fourth GM's Monthly Miscellany! The urge to write up some April Fools related material was particularly strong this month, but eventually I decided to provide actual useful material instead. (I'd had an idea for a couple of weird hybrid monsters in the vein of the owlbear, but heroically managed to resist writing them up).

March was a busy month for Raging Swan Press. We turned four, had an awesome celebratory sale and released five (!) new print products, including our first hardback editions. Shockingly, it looks like April is going to be as fun. This month, among many other supplements, we release John Bennett's *Against the Cult of the Bat God*. An adventure for 5th-level PCs set on the Lonely Coast the adventure contains a great mix of roleplaying, violence and investigation. The picture below, by Matt Morrow, depicts one encounter area from the adventure. If you like your game with Lovecraftian elements, check it out!

Herein you'll find excerpts from some of Raging Swan's newest products as well as material from a golden oldie – *The*

Sunken Pyramid. I've also included a selection of advice articles from those posted weekly at ragingswan.com/articles as well as material from my Borderland of Adventure campaign. This month, I present two NPCs – one allied with and one enemy of the PCs. The material has been slightly scrubbed to remove the intellectual property of other companies but it is otherwise pretty much as I've used it myself. If you want to keep up with our adventures, you can read weekly session summaries on my blog: raging-swan.livejournal.com.

In any event, I hope you enjoy the material in this GM's Monthly Miscellany, but more importantly I hope you find it useful and that it enhances your campaign. If you've got any comments or questions about Raging Swan Press, I'd love to hear from you. You can contact me at creighton@ragingswan.com.



GM ADVICE: DESIGNING UNIQUE MAGIC ITEMS

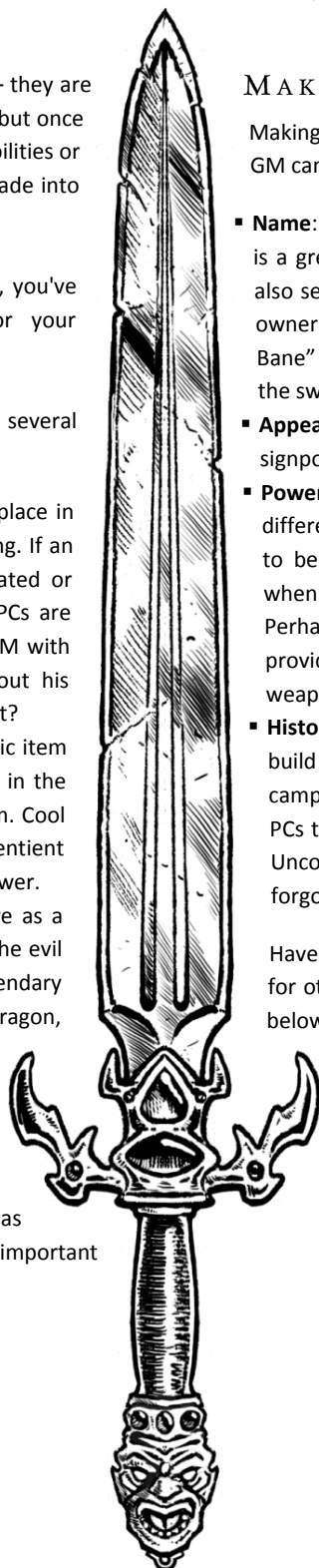
EVERY PLAYER LOVES MAGIC ITEMS. THAT SAID, MAGIC ITEMS CAN ALSO BE QUITE BORING. THE BEST GMS TAKE THE TIME TO MAKE THEIR MAGIC ITEMS UNIQUE AND COMPELLING.

Magic items make PCs stronger and more capable – they are a vital part of the game. Players love getting them, but once their affects have been added to a character's abilities or they've been used a couple of times they tend to fade into the background.

When you've seen one *+1 longsword*, for example, you've seen them all. Designing unique treasures for your campaign is time well spent.

I include unique treasures in my campaign for several reasons:

- **Flavour:** Magic items with a defined history and place in the world are a great way of stealth world building. If an item was present at certain events or was created or wielded by a powerful or legendary figure the PCs are bound to want to know more. This provides a GM with an excellent opportunity to share cool facts about his campaign world. What GM doesn't want to do that?
- **Family Heirloom:** A PC who carries a unique magic item tied directly to his family is much more invested in the item than if it were merely a standard magic item. Cool heirloom items include those that are sentient or those whose powers scale as the PC gains in power.
- **Plot Device:** Often a unique magic item can serve as a plot device. Perhaps the PCs possess something the evil villain covets or they are searching for a legendary weapon that can be used to kill a rampaging dragon, demon or whatever. Hunting for a specific, famed weapon is much more fun than simply buying a bane weapon of the relevant type.
- **Differentiate Hero:** Anyone can own a *+1 spear*, but only one person can wield the *Spear of the North*. Owning such an item marks the hero as someone special – perhaps someone with an important destiny.



MAKING THEM UNIQUE

Making unique items is relatively simple. A time-crunched GM can create a unique item in a matter of minutes.

- **Name:** A unique item must have a name. The item's name is a great way of setting the theme for the item (and can also serve as an introduction to its crafter or most famous owner and so on). For example, a sword named "Arundel's Bane" raises the question of Arundel's identity and why the sword was his bane.
- **Appearance:** Creating a description for an item is a huge signpost to the players that it is different to the norm.
- **Powers:** Giving a standard item other powers differentiates it from the norm. These powers don't have to be amazing and spectacular, but should make sense when viewed in conjunction with the item's main power. Perhaps, for example, a *wand of burning hands* could provide a +2 bonus on saving throws against fire while a weapon could render its wielder less susceptible to fear.
- **History:** Giving the item a history is a great way to world build and to give the item context in regards to the campaign. An item's history is also an opportunity for the PCs to learn about it using their various knowledge skills. Uncovering such information – or even snippets of forgotten lore – further invest the players in the item.

Have you placed a unique magic item in your campaign for other reasons? Share what they are in the comments below and remember you can download this – and every other advice article – for free at ragingswan.com/articles.

TRICKLETREK AT A GLANCE

Surrounded by human towns and villages, the gnomish settlement of Trickletrek has gone by many names throughout its history, as gnomes take particular joy in a good-spirited pun or a particularly clever name. Currently named for the service it provides to travellers, things have quickly gone from bad to worse for the resident of Trickletrek. Local legends claim the gnomes of Trickletrek have dwelled in the forest they call the Great Greens since before the region's human tribes united into the kingdoms that exist today. By far the most successful gnomish settlement in the area, the gnomes of Trickletrek were until recently constructing new neighbourhoods and a bridge of dwarven design.

All this changed when a mysterious asteroid crashed into the waters of the Swishswirl Cove. In the following months, a strange sickness spread across the glades to the north, poisoning its inhabitants and causing an unnatural blight in the gnomes dwelling in Trickletrek. The village is now in a state of emergency. The ghastly illness drains the gnomes of their vibrant colouration, leaving a sickly, otherworldly colour in its wake.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Helga Hedgeman

Government Autocracy

Population 70 (43 gnomes, 24 humans, 8 halflings, 1 dwarf, 1 half-elf)

Alignments N

Languages Common, Gnome

Corruption +0; **Crime** +0; **Economy** -3 **Law** -4; **Lore** +1 **Society** -10

Qualities Rumormongering citizens, strategic location

Danger +20; **Disadvantages** Cursed, hunted

NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the population are nothing more than hardworking peasants. A few, however, are of interest to adventurers:

Cezar Valeborn (location 2; NG male half-elf bard [archaeologist] 5) A lover of forgotten lore and avid studier of paranormal events, Cezar has relocated to Trickletrek from a nearby city.

Dapperfield Daisylocks (location 10; NE male colour-blighted gnome bard [animal speaker] 4) Trickletrek's local orchardist, Dapperfield was ostracized when he showed signs of illness.

Gabber Gygarian (location 9; N male gnome bard 2) Eccentric storyteller and town greeter Gabber is named for his obsession with small talk and local happenings.

Gladius Gnarlbeard (location 6; CE colour-blighted bodak) A renowned dwarven architect, Gladius Gnarlbeard went missing several days after the asteroid crashed into Swishswirl Cove.

Gunter Greatgreen (location 8; NE male colour-blighted gnome druid [blight druid] 8) The caretaker of the Great Greens vanished not long after the asteroid struck Swishswirl Cove.

Helga Hedgeman (location 1; LN female human ranger [urban ranger] 5) The mayor of Trickletrek, Helga has held this position uncontested for 14 years because of gnomish disdain for the monotony of leadership.

Kevennen Jamear (location 2; N male halfling rogue 3) Kevennen is a Swirlside investor who purchased the local inn after its owner perished from colour degradation.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Trickletrek Town House:** This building is generally empty as the Trickletrek gnomes hold a strong disdain for politics.
2. **Jamear's Market:** Gnomes from all over the Great Greens come here to barter and trade tales and baubles.
3. **The Trickletrek:** The path from Trickletrek down to the shores of the Great Trickle is infamously perilous. Most gnomes make their living acting as guides up and down this path.
4. **Insaneta Crossit:** Designed to make the trek across the Great Trickle easier, this incomplete bridge was never finished because of its architect's disappearance.
5. **Swishswirl Cove:** Named for its gentle whirlpool, some gnomes correlate the asteroid that struck the cove to the happenings in Trickletrek.
6. **Swirlside Construction Site:** Intended for new homes to house Trickletrek's growing populace, construction on Swirlside stopped after its architect vanished.
7. **The Rotting Wood:** The northernmost groves of the Great Green reek of a sickness that drains away a person's colour.
8. **Gunter Greatgreen's Grove:** This beloved grove has become quarantined as the bleaching sickness spreads southbound from the Rotting Wood.
9. **Gabber the Greeter's Abode:** Located on the outskirts of Trickletrek, Gabber's cottage is a rest stop for visitors.
10. **The Bleached Ranch:** Located south of the main village, the gnomes of Trickletrek began avoiding the Dapperfield Ranch when the colour started to drain from its owner's complexion.

MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Fruit, guide services, lumber, venison
Base Value 550 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500 gp; **Spellcasting** 3rd;
Minor Items 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** -

When the PCs arrive in Trickletrek, the following items are for sale:

- **Potions & Oils** *barkskin, charm animal, cure moderate wounds, speak with animals*

VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check may know some information about the village. A successful check reveals all the information revealed by a lesser check.

DC 10: Named for the great river that lies west of the village, the gnomes of Trickletrak primarily make their living guiding travellers down the jagged canyon surrounding the Great Trickle.

DC 15: Headed by Gladius Gnarlbeard, a second settlement appropriately sized for “big folk” was slated for construction near Swishswirl Cove, but construction has ceased. Mayor Hedgeman seeks to eventually unite the two settlements into a single town.

DC 20: The nomenclature for the Great Greens and its surrounding regions was chosen by Gunter Greatgreen, a local druid selected to be the region’s warden by the local archdruid.

VILLAGERS

Appearance The residents of Trickletrak prefer vibrant, natural colours in their garb such as vivid greens, pale pinks and blues and rich browns. Person hygiene is emphasized and knickknacks such as small charms are celebrated as symbols of individuality.

Dress The villagers prefer simple garments with cool, vibrant colours. Fancy embroideries and coat-of-arms are popular among the residents, although such garb seldom impedes its wearer’s ability to perform outdoor labour.

Nomenclature Nomenclature is fickle and mercurial.

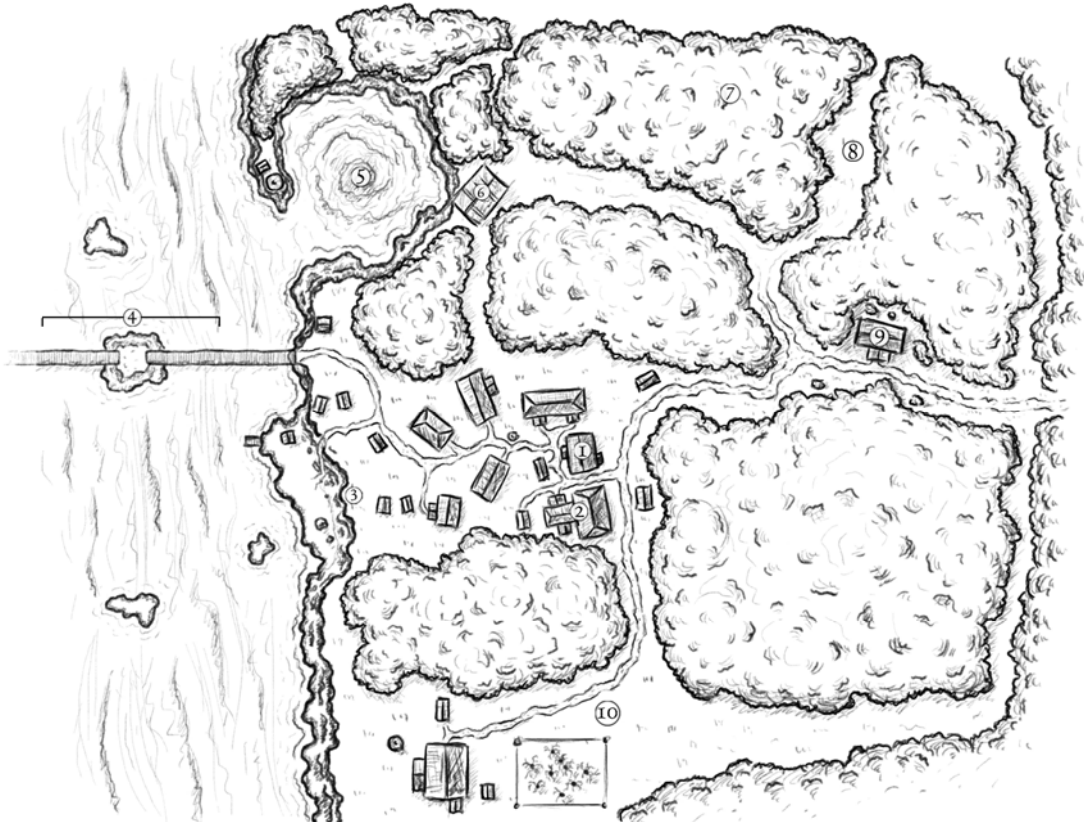
Gnomes are prone to altering their given and family names on personal whim, resulting in few naming trends and a town genealogy that is neigh impossible to fathom.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about the village and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A character exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

D6	RUMOUR
1*	Gunter Greatgreen is inflicting an otherworldly sickness upon the people of Trickletrak for encroaching too far upon the ancient forests of the Great Greens.
2	Cezar Valeborn has taken a fancy for Trickletrak’s mayor.
3*	Gladius Gnarlbeard met a gruesome death in the Great Greens and now haunts his incomplete bridge.
4*	The illness infecting Trickletrak is a direct result of the mayor’s ungnomely leadership practices.
5	Gabber the Greeter wards off illness by drinking a strange tonic he found while wandering in the woods.
6	The Swirlside asteroid impact might be related to the strange illness spreading throughout the Great Greens.

*False rumour



Goblin's Pockets: Broken & Battered

Use this table to generate the broken and battered things a goblin keeps in his pockets.

D%	
01-05	A scratched brass ring, all of the precious stones have been pried from their settings.
06-10	A small silver case has had a hole punched in it, likely from an arrow.
11-12	This small knife, the tip of which has snapped off, is otherwise still sharp.
13-14	A heavily used fork, none of its tines form a straight line.
15-16	An enormous belt buckle with a barely legible inscription reading "Best in the world" atop a two-headed eagle.
17-18	A small ceramic figurine has been crudely repainted enough times it is more paint than clay.
19-20	The finely wrought iron hilt of a dagger.
21-22	The brass ring from a door knocker bears scratches where it was savagely removed from its housing.
23-24	A short length of pewter chain, bent and shorn in places.
25-26	A handful of steel and iron arrowheads, broken pieces of shaft are still attached to some.
27-28	A well-used sling stone shows signs of gnawing.
29-30	A pocket watch rattles with sound of loose springs, cogs and gears; though its arms still turn, they do not keep the proper time.
31-32	A well-used iron key, its teeth have been heavily scratched and chipped.
33-34	A locket has had its painting defaced with a crude moustache.
35-36	A leather holster for a set of lock picks has been filled with bent and broken tools.
37-38	A small harmonica has only three intact reeds, allowing it to produce only a handful of sour notes.
39-40	A decorative pepper shaker, still full of pepper. It is shaped like an exotic cat, though one of its ears has broken off.
41-42	A ripped sack, it has some traces of white powder within.
43-44	A water-logged torch, so damp it will not light.
45-46	The bowl of a large wooden serving ladle, snapped clear of its handle.
47-48	A sharpening stone with a deep groove worn into the centre.
49-50	About 3 feet of tangled string with a small stone tied to one end.
51-52	A small box with hinges, though its lid has been misplaced.
53-54	The shards of a holy symbol of a sun god, collected in a filthy rag.

55-56	A fishing hook has been bent straight and thrust through a rubber ball.
57-58	A crude drawing of a masked face on this compass leaves only half the cardinal face visible.
59-60	A hammer head has surprisingly and impressively had its claws bent into separate directions.
61-62	A signet ring has had rocks strategically glued to it to change the insignia to something more suited to a goblin—an impaled eagle.
63-64	This cheaply-made magnifying glass has a large crack down the centre.
65-66	A small bird statuette has had its eyes gouged out and its wings broken.
67-68	A battered belt buckle displays a heavily scratched bull's head.
69-70	The trigger mechanism from a heavy crossbow; though intact, it is seized completely.
71-72	A small book has had many of its pages torn out and others folded into various animal shapes, which have been crushed between the covers.
73-74	A crumpled and torn wanted poster displaying the uncanny likeness of one of the PCs.
75-76	A wooden handle has come loose from its original utensil, leaving no clue as to its purpose.
77-78	A heavily scratched monocle has come detached from its chain.
79-80	A compass seems to have become completely and irrevocably magnetized—its needle just spins endlessly.
81-82	A leather strap with buckles that seems to have been torn from some article of armour.
83-84	A butterfly net has had a substantial hole torn in it and a wide variety of insect parts tangled in its mesh.
85-86	A battered tin cup has been crushed out of shape. It's handle is crushed flat to the cup itself and is unusable.
87-88	This small scalpel blade has been worn completely dull. Dried bloodstains and rust coat the blade.
89-90	A heavily defaced pendant is cast in the shape of an angel, though its wings have been snapped off leaving ragged stumps.
91-92	A beer stein large enough to serve as a goblin's helmet has eye holes gouged through it.
93-94	A well-worn paintbrush has only three lonely bristles remaining.
95-99	Roll twice on this table, the items have been nailed together.
100	Roll twice on this table, and once on the Shiny Treasures table. All three items have been tied together to form a necklace.

GOBLIN'S POCKETS: YUMMY NIBBLES

Use this table to generate the “yummy nibbles” a goblin keeps in his pockets.

D%	
01-05	A half-eaten pickle on the end of a yellowed piece of string.
06-10	A lump of heavily boiled grey meat shows no clue as which animal it came from.
11-12	A damp brown bag containing three fish heads, all well past their prime.
13-14	A lightly toasted scorpion on the end of a stick; its tail has been bitten off.
15-16	Half an orange has had the majority of its juices squeezed out.
17-18	The stem of a pineapple, bearing numerous tooth marks.
19-20	This quarter of a waffle has been soaked in a foul smelling bluish liquid.
21-22	A half-eaten right shoe soaked in brine. Various root vegetables fill the shoe.
23-24	A hunk of half-melted butter wrapped in a thin slice of rank ham.
25-26	A small jar of pickled elf ears, plus a toe from some enormous humanoid.
27-28	This chunk of thigh bone from a massive bovine still has a few scraps of fresh, raw meat on it.
29-30	A heavily gnawed, rock-hard stale chunk of bread.
31-32	A shuriken with a different insect impaled on each of its tines.
33-34	A chunk of honeycomb still holding the candied bodies of several bees.
35-36	A sack full of stale bread crusts has just started to show signs of mould.
37-38	A jar of brightly-coloured birds soaked in brine.
39-40	A variety of dull feathers congealed in a mass of bright green gelatine. It is lime flavoured.
41-42	An open jar of some kind of grease or rendered fat, its source unclear.
43-44	This hunk of meat still has ruddy brown fur on one side, most likely from some type of canine.
45-46	The ragged gristle from a prime roast, left to age long enough to be chewy.
47-48	A withered hunk of meat soaked in something sticky – a number of still-living flies struggle to escape.
49-50	A shrivelled handful of raisins still on the vine.
51-52	A handful of raw bacon on a string – both the bacon and string are partly chewed.
53-54	A wooden skewer looks like it was once at the heart of a chunk of meat.
55-56	A sack of bird heads, roughly half of them have had their beaks bitten off.

57-58	Half a toad, the missing half is wrapped in greasy leaves, seemingly to keep it fresh. Green ichors stains the leaves.
59-60	A porous sack leaks stinking, harmless greenish ooze, which stains clothes and skin. The sack contains a lumpy, congealed stew.
61-62	An assortment of fish scales, fins and bird wings basted in clotted blood.
63-64	A strip of flesh has been torn from the haunch of an alligator, its hide still attached.
65-66	A green, half-eaten apple contains six half-eaten worms.
67-68	A rotten potato has grown long roots from its eyes, some of which have been woven together.
69-70	A large beetle, dribbling yellowish ichor, still wriggles on the end of a long skewer.
71-72	A small bag of sugar-dusted spiders' legs and rat tails. The whole smells musty.
73-74	A small pie powdered with dirt and filled with reddish clotted blood and giblets.
75-76	A meat pie has traces of whole birds within it—beaks, feathers, bones and so on.
77-78	This half-eaten frog is now just legs and the rear half. It is coated in mustard seeds.
79-80	A mouldy sponge, dripping with bacteria-laden liquids, wrapped in a filthy piece of leather.
81-82	A chunk of chocolate cake has become nearly petrified, seemingly more useful as a weapon than a snack.
83-84	A reddish paste, presumably the remnants of some fruit made into a crude jam, gives off a rancid stench.
85-86	A hunk of cheese is so covered in greenish fuzz it seems as though it may grow legs at any moment and run off.
87-88	A small pouch full of wriggling insects, specially selected for their size and bright colours. They taste strangely tasty.
89-90	Skin strips from the skull of a small stoat has been turned into a crude container for its well-marinated brain.
91-92	A jar of green olives has had the pimentos sucked out of them.
93-94	A sack of dried beans. Hidden within are several strips of beef jerky wrapped in a covering of oiled leaves.
95-99	Roll twice on this table, the items have been put together into a sandwich.
100	Roll thrice on this table; the items have been made into a hearty stew.

THE SUNKEN PYRAMID: SHARKJAW SKELETONS

Unholy creations of sahuagin priests toiling deep in their undersea lairs, sharkjaw skeletons are almost exclusively encountered in places holy to the sahuagin. Dominated by their master's will they are implacable, fearless foes.

SHARKJAW SKELETON CR 3 (XP 800)
Composed of dozens of interlocking shark jaws filled with scores of sharp teeth, this large, bone creature skitters forward

NE Large undead

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0, Sense Motive +0
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; **ACP** 0; Swim +12

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14; **CMD** 19
(+1 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size)

Immune mind-affecting effects, death effects, disease, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, stunning, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical abilities, exhaustion, fatigue, massive damage, any effect requiring a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects or is harmless), cold

Fort +2, **Ref** +2, **Will** +6

hp 26 (4 HD); **DR** bludgeoning/5

Space 10 ft.; **Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +8

Melee bite (reach 10 ft.) +6 (1d8+6 plus grab)

Atk Options grab

Grab (Ex [free]) If it bites a Medium or smaller target, the sharkjaw skeleton can try to start a grapple without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Abilities Str 18, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 14

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Environment aquatic

Organisation any

Treasure none

COMBAT & TACTICS

Sharkjaw skeletons close to attack their enemies as quickly as possible. After a successful bite attack, they use grab to grapple their opponents before savaging them to death.

Sharkjaw skeletons are mindless and do not make use of sophisticated tactics such as flanking.

ECOLOGY & SOCIETY

Sharkjaw skeletons have no society of their own. They are only normally encountered in places holy to the sahuagin. Sahuagin priests create them from fusing together the jaws of their tribe's slain shark servants.

Sharkjaw skeletons often lie among the bones of the tribe's fallen or deep in patches of kelp or seaweed. They follow their

creator's commands to the letter. They never have their own treasure (or carry objects of value), but are often found near to sahuagin treasure caches.

VARIANT SHARKJAW SKELETONS

The stat block herein presents the most commonly encountered type of sharkjaw. Huge versions of the sharkjaw exist and are created using the jaws of dire sharks.

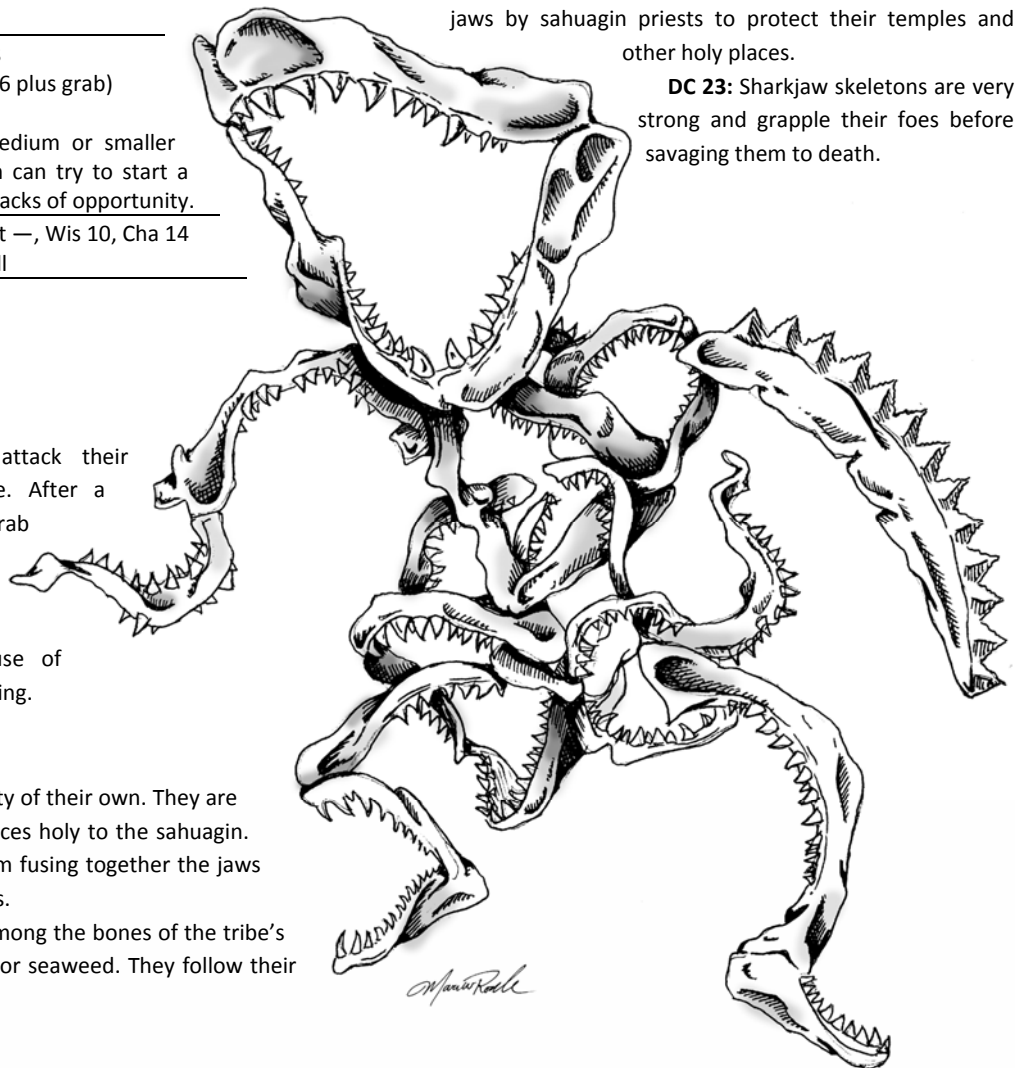
SHARKJAW LORE

A character with ranks in Knowledge (religion) can learn more about a sharkjaw skeleton with a successful skill check. A successful skill check also reveals all information revealed by a lesser check.

DC 13: This is a sharkjaw skeleton, an undead creature. This result also reveals all undead traits.

DC 18: Sharkjaw skeletons are created from dozens of shark jaws by sahuagin priests to protect their temples and other holy places.

DC 23: Sharkjaw skeletons are very strong and grapple their foes before savaging them to death.



THE SUNKEN PYRAMID: NEW MAGIC ITEMS

The Sunken Pyramid features several new magic items. Two of the items are of sahuagin artifice while the third is an ancient merfolk weapon thought lost forever in the ocean's impenetrable depths.

Full descriptions of the relevant items appears below. However, keep in mind that these are powerful items – particularly *The Obsidian Trident* – and that their presence in the campaign could unbalance the party in the long term.

CRYSTAL SAHUAGIN SKULL

These incredibly rare objects were crafted centuries ago by sahuagin seers and mystics. Imbued with a sliver of profane power, the skulls have a faint, mystical connection to all sahuagin and the priests possessing them use them to spy out plots and dissent.

Crystal sahuagin skulls are holy items; any sahuagin seeing one in the possession of a non-sahuagin will do its utmost to retrieve the object.

This crystal skull features an open, toothy maw and large, penetrating eye sockets topped by thick ridges.

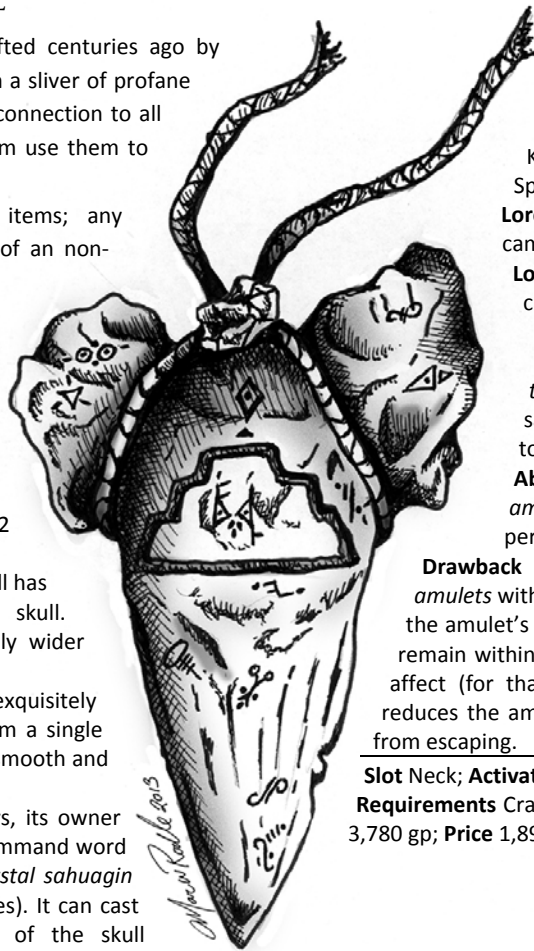
Aura Moderate (divination; DC 19 Knowledge [arcana]) **Identify** DC 22 Spellcraft

Lore (DC 12 Knowledge [nature]) The skull has been carved to depict a sahuagin skull. However, its eye sockets are slightly wider and deeper than normal.

Lore (DC 25 Appraise) The skull is exquisitely carved and seems to be formed from a single piece of crystal. The surface is worn smooth and it is extremely old.

Abilities To command the skull's powers, its owner must grasp it firmly and utter the command word (aquatal). When he does so, the *crystal sahuagin skull* casts *scrying* (DC 16 Will negates). It can cast *scrying* once per day. Possession of the skull increases by one step the level of knowledge the possessor has about any sahuagin and the hardness of the saving throw made to resist the spell's affect. Additionally, the skull counts as having a likeness or picture of any sahuagin sought (increasing the DC to resist the skull's powers by 2).

Slot —; **Activation** Command word (aquatal); **CL** 7th **Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *scrying*; **Cost** 10,080 gp; **Price** 5,404 gp



SHARK'S TOOTH AMULET

Crafted by the sahuagin to allow them to take air breathing captives, *shark tooth amulets* are often hung around the necks of such captives on a woven cord of shark gut. Use of a shark tooth amulet enables captives to reach the sahuagins' sunken lair and to be deposited in an airy chamber or other prison there to await their grizzly fate.

The tooth of a huge shark is suspended from thin cording woven from the gut of some sea creature. The tooth has numerous tiny runes and magic symbols engraved into its surface.

Aura Faint (transmutation; DC 18 Knowledge [arcana]) **Identify** DC 20 Spellcraft

Lore (DC 12 Knowledge [nature]) This tooth came from a shark.

Lore (DC 15 Knowledge [arcana]) The runes carved into the tooth deal with water, magic and air.

Lore (DC 20 Spellcraft) This is a *shark's tooth* amulet. Crafted by powerful sahuagin spellcasters it grants the ability to breath underwater to those nearby.

Abilities On command, a *shark tooth amulet* can cast *water breathing* (CL 5) once per day.

Drawback The sahuagin craft their *shark tooth amulets* with a deliberate drawback. Once affected by the amulet's *water breathing* power, a character must remain within 30 ft. of the amulet. If he does not, the affect (for that character only) ends. This restriction reduces the amulet's price by 30% and keeps prisoners from escaping.

Slot Neck; **Activation** Command word (t'zecal); **CL** 5th **Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *water breathing*; **Cost** 3,780 gp; **Price** 1,890 gp

SWIM-BY ATTACK

The creature can move before and after it makes an attack while swimming.

Prerequisite: Swim speed.

Benefit: When swimming, the creature can take a move action and another standard action at any point during the move. The creature cannot take a second move action during a round it makes a swim-by attack.

Normal: Without this feat, the creature takes a standard action either before or after its move.

FROM MY CAMPAIGN: VILIMZAIR ARALIVAR

A wandering adventurer, Vilimzair assisted the band of heroes destined to become known as the Heroes of the Wood with sacking an orc fortress hidden deep in the southern forests. He played no part in the subsequent battle, however, and his current whereabouts is unknown.

Background: His elven mother died in childbirth and so Vilimzair was brought up by his human father – a wizard/sage of prodigious learning. As a child, he loved lurking in his father's library and reading his many books.

Personality: Fascinated by magic and knowledge of all forms, Vilimzair's mind is always hungry for more. He loves information and "interesting" facts and often provides these to his companions whether they want them or not. He also loves reading and can often be found with his nose in a recently acquired tome.

Brave to a fault, he never willingly enters combat. He far prefers to hang back and support his companions with magic and his bardic abilities.

Mannerisms: Vilimzair often checks his hair, particular when about to meet someone or before giving a performance.

Distinguishing Features: Vilimzair is very handsome; his face is without scarring of any kind. He wears his hair short and he is always clean shaven.

Hooks: Vilimzair is a wanderer and could be encountered almost anywhere. Very aware of his lack of combat skills, though, he never adventures alone. He is most likely to be encountered in a town or village where he could be either waiting for a band of heroes to join or in deep conversation with a learned soul.



VILIMZAIR ARALIVAR

CR 3 (XP 800)

This handsome half-elf man has short black hair and sparkling green eyes.

Male half-elf bard 1/sorcerer (rakshasa) 3

CG Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +9, Sense Motive +4

Speed 30 ft.; **ACP** 0; **Stealth** +6

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; **CMD** 12

(+4 armour (mithral chain shirt), +2 Dex)

Immune *sleep*

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6; +2 vs. enchantments

hp 31 (4 HD)

Space 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +0

Melee mwk rapier +1 (1d6-1/18-20)

Ranged dagger (range 10 ft.) +3 (1d4-1/19-20)

Special Actions bardic performance (7 rounds; countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire courage [+1]), mind reader

Mind Reader (Sp [1/day; standard]) Vilimzair can read minds as a spell-like ability. This ability acts like *detect thoughts* (duration 1 round) and if the target fails a DC 14 Will save Vilimzair gains information as if he had concentrated for 3 rounds.

Bard Spells Known (CL 1st; concentration +4)

1st (2/day)—*cure light wounds*, *hideous laughter* (DC 15)

0—*daze* (DC 14), *message*, *prestidigitation*, *summon instrument*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd; concentration +6)

1st (6/day)—*charm person* (DC 15), *colour spray* (DC 14), *magic missile*, *shield*

0—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *read magic*

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *scroll of invisibility*, *scroll of expeditious retreat*, *scroll of deep slumber and greater magic weapon*, *wand of cure light wounds* (33 chgs.), *wand of magic missiles* (CL 3rd; 14 chgs.), *wand of lightning bolts* (7 chgs.)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 17

SQ bardic knowledge (+1), multitalented (bard, sorcerer)

Feats Arcane Armour Training, Eschew Materials^B, Skill Focus (Bluff)^B, Spell Focus (enchantment)

Skills as above plus Bluff +13 (silver tongue), Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +2, Knowledge (engineering) +2, Knowledge (geography) +2, Knowledge (history) +2, Knowledge (local) +2, Knowledge (nature) +2, Knowledge (nobility) +2, Knowledge (planes) +2, Knowledge (religion) +2, Perform (wind) +7, Spellcraft +5

Silver Tongue (Su [6/day; swift]) Vilimzair gains a +5 bonus to one Bluff check made to convince another of the truth of his words. If a magical effect is used against him to detect lies or force him to speak the truth the user must make a DC 13 caster level check to succeed.

Languages Common, Elven, Orc

Gear as above plus *cloak of resistance +1*, 126 gp, adventuring gear

FROM MY CAMPAIGN: BELAK THE RED

In my campaign, Belak was encountered and slain in a sunken citadel that had fallen into a great crevice many years ago. He was the first minion of the dragon cult encountered by the party. In the battle in which he was slain, he was protected by three half-red dragon human skeletons, whose stat blocks also appear here.

Background: While a child, Belak witnessed a red dragon annihilate his home village. Instead of being terrified by the dragon's awesome might, Belak was fascinated. While the few other survivors fled, Belak headed into the hills in the direction in which the wyrm flew off. After weeks of hard travel, he eventually stumbled upon the dragon's lair.

A small cult of dragon cultists served the dragon in its lair, and Belak quickly fell afoul of their sentries. His quick talking – and obvious fascination with dragons – stayed the cultist's blades and eventually he became one with them. Since then, he has served the cult with devotion.

Personality: Single-minded in his devotion to dragons Belak is a very dangerous individual. Able to justify any action – no matter how depraved or vicious – as long as it benefits himself or the cult, Belak is utterly without conscience. He loves to collect trophies from those he slays and often carries their remains – figure bones, rotting ears and other small, easily severed body parts – in a pouch at his belt.

Mannerisms: Belak rarely blinks; this can be disconcerting for those subjected to his glare.

Distinguishing Features: Belak's grasp of personal hygiene is not good. Beyond a strange, cloying smell that clings to him he often appears dirty and unkempt.

Hooks: Belak serves his draconic overlords with great relish. He is most likely encountered near or in areas of draconic activity. He could be recovering the bones of a fallen wyrm, convincing a dragon to join the dragon cult or simply leading a small group of depraved followers.

BELAK CR 2 (XP 600)
This human wears a tarnished breastplate. He is dirty and unkempt.

Male human cleric 3
NE Medium humanoid (human)
Init -1; **Senses** Perception +3, Sense Motive +9
Speed 20 ft., base speed 30 ft.; **ACP** -3; Acrobatics -4 (-8 jumping)

AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17; **CMD** 12
(+7 armour [+1 breastplate], -1 Dex, +1 shield [mwk light steel])

Fort +3, **Ref** +0, **Will** +6
hp 23 (3 HD)

Space 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +3

Melee mwk flail +4 (1d8+1) or
Melee Touch touch of evil (6/day) +3 (sickened [1 rd.])
Atk Options destructive smite
Destructive Smite (Su [6/day]) Belak deals 1 additional point of damage with his next successful melee attack.
Special Actions channel negative energy (4/day; DC 12 2d6; Selective Turning [1])
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +6 [+10 casting defensively or grappling], Destruction, Evil; spontaneous casting [*inflict* spells])
2nd—*bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds*, *shatter*^D
1st—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*
0—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*
Combat Gear *scroll of cure moderate wounds*, *scroll of silence*, *silversheen*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 8, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 13
Feats Combat Casting, Selective Turning, Toughness^B
Skills as above plus Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Spellcraft +8
Languages Common, Goblin, Infernal

Gear as above plus silver holy symbol, spell component pouch, dragon ring, 36 gp, 57 sp

HALF-RED DRAGON HUMAN SKELETON

CR 1/2 (XP 200)

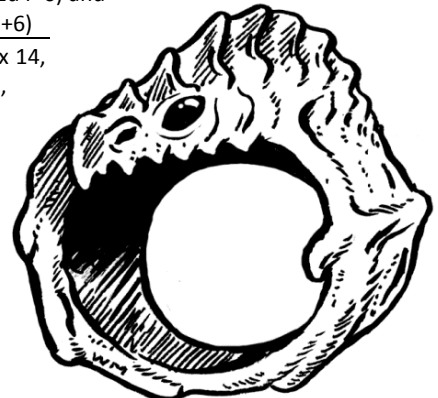
This humanoid skeleton has furled wings of bone jutting from its back and a large maw filled with wickedly sharp fangs. Both arms end in long claws. It wears a rusty chain shirt.

NE Medium undead
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0, Sense Motive +0
Speed 30 ft.; **ACP** -2

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; **CMD** 18
(+2 armour [rusty chain shirt], +2 Dex, +2 natural)
Immune mind-affecting effects, death effects, disease, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, stunning, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical abilities, exhaustion, fatigue, massive damage, any effect requiring a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects or is harmless), cold
Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2
hp 6 (1 HD); **DR** bludgeoning/5

Space 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +6
Melee 2 claws +6 (1d4+6) and
2 claws +6 (1d6+6)

Abilities Str 23, Dex 14,
Con —, Int —,
Wis 10, Cha
12
Feats Improved
Initiative



GM ADVICE: WHY URBAN ADVENTURES ARE DIFFERENT

URBAN ADVENTURES CAN BE INCREDIBLY FUN AND A GREAT CHANGE OF PACE. TO SUCCESSFULLY RUN AN URBAN ADVENTURE, THOUGH, THE GM MUST REALISE THEY ARE FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT TO WILDERNESS OR DUNGEON ADVENTURES.

In my *Borderland of Adventure* – after over two years of game play – we are about to start our first major urban adventure. We've done small, side trek urban adventures before but nothing on the scale the PCs will soon attempt. In preparation for the adventure, I've been considering exactly how urban adventures are different to "normal" adventures. I've come up with the following differences:

- **Law & Order:** Urban settlements almost always have a watch or guard. They always have laws the PCs must follow (or risk getting into serious legal difficulties). Many settlements have laws about citizens wandering about town heavily armed and armoured which affects the combat capabilities of most groups. Murder, theft and arson – features of many dungeon delves – are likely also frowned upon. This means the PCs may have to use different tactics to achieve their goals.
- **Help & Hindrance:** Many vested interests lurk in a town. The thieves' guild may not take kindly to the PCs poking around an abandoned manor while the city watch might welcome any help the PCs can offer in solving a spate of grisly murders. Similarly, a range of faiths and powerful personages may help or hinder the PCs in their quest.
- **Spellcasting & Services:** The PCs have ready access to a range of services they wouldn't normally be able to use in a

dungeon. They will be able to hire spellcasters, shop for items (both magical and mundane) they suddenly need and so on. This is a great boon to the hard-pressed adventurer.

- **Home:** If the adventure takes place in a PC's home town, he'll have much more knowledge of the locality. He'll also likely have a vested interest in completing the adventure. In a home town, the PC will also have a support network of friends and family he can call on. Such individuals can be a source of material aid as well as being excellent sources of information.
- **Go Anywhere:** The PCs can literally go anywhere and visit hundreds of locales. The GM must be far more prepared – or very good at ad-libbing details of places and people.
- **Different Challenges:** Urban adventures are less likely to deal with the traditional types of adventures – the kind of adventures where you kick the door down and kill everyone inside. Instead, they'll probably require more role-playing and investigation to complete successfully. That's not to say there won't be combat – there almost certainly will – but there'll be less than normal.

Do you consider other factors when designing or running an urban adventure? If you do, why not share them in the comments below and remember you can download this – and every other advice article – for free at ragingswan.com/articles.



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