ENCOUNTER

2

CREDITS

"A common mistake most DMs make is to rely too much on random die rolls. An entire evening can be spoiled if an unplanned wilderness encounter on the way to the dungeon goes badly for the players. The DM must use good judgment in addition to random tables."

D&D® Expert Rules (1981)

A fanzine dedicated to the Classic D&D® Game!

ENCOUNTER

Issue 2 • June 2010

FROM THE EDITOR

From little things big things (hopefully) grow

ESTABLISHING a fanzine, I have discovered, has many similarities to starting a new campaign. Before the release of the first issue, or the opening session in a new campaign, a great deal of prior preparation work must take place behind the scenes; researching, writing, editing, the creation of maps and the completion of other ancillary tasks need to be undertaken before the fanzine's premiere issue can hit the 'shelves' or a single dice can hit the table. And, as I've found when preparing for a new campaign, I am no professional writer or game designer therefore much of this work can be a struggle, rewarding though it is.

Another similarity between setting up a fanzine and developing a new campaign is deciding on what's going to be in and what's going to be out. Choices have to be made and decisions justified. One key choice I made in relation to *Encounter* was for the Classic D&D® Game to be the 'zine's default system rather than *Labyrinth Lord*™. The reason for this was simple; I wanted *Encounter* to be unambiguously a fan magazine not only for the classic edition rules, which *LL* does a fantastic job of replicating, but also for the old, original products created by the multitude of talented game designers and writers working for TSR back in the day.

Something else that establishing a fanzine has in common with building a campaign is starting off small and letting things grow and develop naturally. Instead of trying to plan out every last detail of an infant campaign it is often better to let things evolve at their own pace. This is how I've approached the development of *Encounter*; while I have ideas on future directions of the 'zine, I hope to let it evolve in response to its readers.

Whether or not *Encounter* does continue to grow and develop into something bigger and grander will largely depend on the community it's emerged from. Only time will tell. It's here to serve, in its own small free-fanzine-sort-of-way, to support the classic edition of D&D® and its dedicated legion of players.

Jesse Walker

REVIEW: ADVANCED EDITION COMPANION

Adding options to the *Labyrinth Lord*™ RPG

By **Daniel Proctor, Goblinoid Games** • Review by **Allen Gwynne**

ONE OF THE GREAT STRENGTHS of the classic D&D® game is its inherent simplicity. But for some gamers its lack of choices, particularly in regards to class/race, can feel somewhat limiting. For those who would like the elegant simplicity of the 'classic' rules but with the greater set of choices from the 'advanced' game, the *Advanced Edition Companion* (AEC) from Goblinoid Games should fit the bill nicely. Although created for use with the *Labyrinth Lord*™ (LL) role playing game, the AEC is naturally compatible with the classic D&D® rules.

The 160 page AEC book is available both in print and as a complementary (art free) download. The print book looks great, with one of Steve Zieser's best illustrations on the cover. My perfect bound copy of the book appeared to be sturdy and up to the rigours of the game table. The interior is neatly laid out, if a little too plainly for my taste (a very minor quibble), and is also interspersed with excellent old-school style black and white artwork by a number of artists.

The first two section of the book cover the new race and class options (including half-orcs and assassins) from the advanced edition game. These new options can be played along side the regular classes from the LL core rules without any difficulty at all. (At this point it should be noted that the AEC is not a stand alone product; the LL core rules are required to use this book).

The AEC also details other options from the advanced edition game, including sections covering the advanced edition alignment system, PC languages, age, saving throws, multi-classing, character inheritance, treasure, spells, magical items, monsters, and other new rules.

The monster section, which runs to 38 pages, is quite comprehensive and faithful to the original advanced edition game, covering all the old favourites from Aerial Servant to Yeti. The spell section, together with the expanded list of magical items, is similarly exhaustive.

Rounding out the book is a good if brief new rules section, (covering topics including new combat options, poison, humanoid spell casting, and the advanced edition's cosmology), and a list of random tables.

All in all the AEC is a fantastic product that for the first time brings together the simple utility of the *Labyrinth Lord*™ classic edition rules with the myriad of choices present in the more voluminous advanced game.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TREASURE CHEST

Take a peak at some recent Old School releases
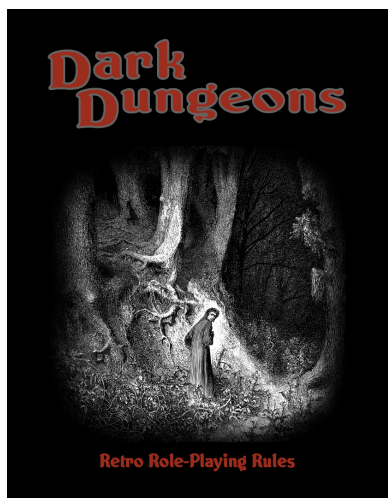
A game in the style of old-school 1980's and 1990's RPGs, *Dark Dungeons* harks back to the days when rogues were thieves, races were classes, and you could start your adventuring career exploring a few basic dungeons and end up travelling the planes as an immortal being! The 340 plus page rule book contains the entire game in a single work, so there is no need to cross-reference between multiple rule books and supplements. Print copies of *Dark Dungeons* can be purchased from lulu.com or download as a free PDF from darkdungeonsblog.wordpress.com

New from Pacesetter Games and Simulations is a First Edition Advanced Game Module designed for 4-6 characters of 3rd to 5th level. Evil is afoot in this murder mystery. A wedding, a distant keep, a murderous vampire and a furious winter storm combine to set the backdrop for a twisting mystery. This is a fast-paced adventure with dozens of NPCs who serve as both victims and villains. And the player characters may just be next! To learn more visit www.pacesettergames.com
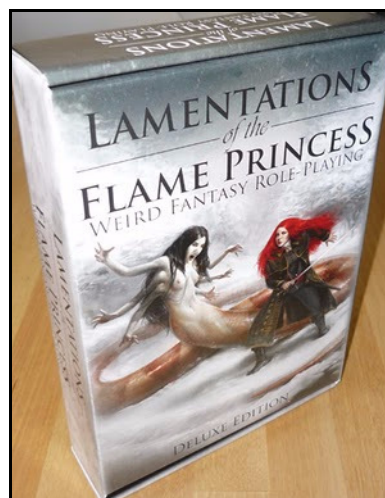
Due for release in late July is the much anticipated *Lamentations of the Flame Princess: Weird Fantasy Role-Playing* game, a new in-house retro-clone by James Raggi. The lavish boxed set will be absolutely stuffed full of old-school goodies, including Tutorial, Rules, Magic, and Referee books; an introductory dungeon adventure, *Tower of the Stargazer;* an introductory wilderness adventure, *Weird New World*; a recommended reading pamphlet, dice, pencil, PC sheets and more! For the latest news about LotFP or the new boxed set visit www.lotfp.com/rpg
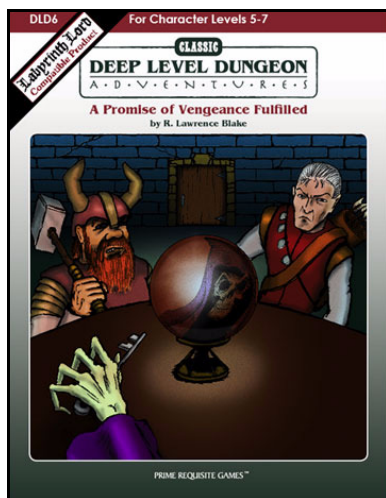
From Prime Requisite Games comes of DLD6: *A Promise of Vengeance Fulfilled*, an expert level adventure module for use with *Labyrinth Lord* ™ or other Basic/Expert RPG systems. An evil warlord, facing betrayal from his own family, swore revenge with his dying breath. Ten years later, his vengeance has come to pass with the murder of one and the promise of more death to follow. Has the warlord raised from a decade of unrest to fulfill his bloodthirsty oath? Can the characters stop him before more fall prey to his vengeance? For more about the adventure visit primerequisitegames.blogspot.com

In the mutated post-apocalypse, a man with a laser gun can win an argument. A man with two killer attack robots, though, can rule a whole town—and that's just what Boss Jarvis does, dominating the little fortified settlement called Xitnine. When Jarvis needs someone to fetch new batteries for his mechanical henchmen, his jaded eye falls on the strangers in town ... and that's you. New from Faster Monkey Games is *Re-Energizers*, a compact adventure module for beginning characters in a post-apocalyptic roleplaying game such as *Mutant Future*™. For more information visit www.fastermonkeygames.com
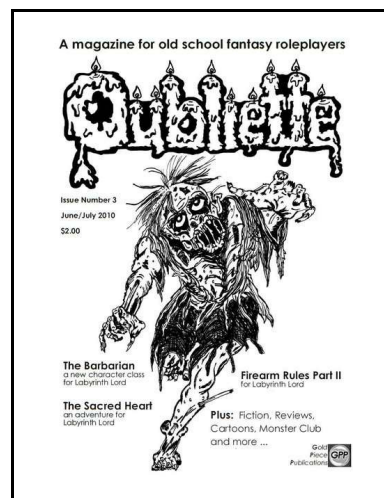
April saw the laying of yet another solid foundation stone in the classic edition game's resurgence with the release of the first issue of *Oubliette*, a new fanzine for the *Labyrinth Lord* ™ RPG! Issue #3 contains a fantastic array of new material for classic edition games, including an adventure, a new character class, firearm rules, reviews and much more! If you would like to read all the latest news about the ezine visit oubliettemagazine.blogspot.com or to purchase copies of issues #1 to #3 visit www.rpgnow.com

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

A Classic D&D® Game adventure for 3-6 characters, Levels 1-3

By **Jesse Walker** • Illustrations and Cartography by **Jesse Walker**

OUT OF THE SHADOWS is a short Classic DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Game adventure designed for 3 to 6 characters of 1st to 3rd level (about 6 total levels). The numbers and strength of the NPCs and creatures can of course be adjusted to the relative strength or weakness of the party. The following adventure takes place near the small hamlet of Cembridge at the long abandoned Shrine of Oriana. This is a generic scenario tied to no particular setting and could be adapted for use in any campaign.

Background

For over two weeks the inhabitants of the sleepy hamlet of Cembridge had been hearing persistent rumours of mysterious activity deep within the nearby forest—someone, or something, had been seen visiting the long abandoned Shrine of Oriana. Jena, an adventurous young local woman, went to investigate. That was over two days ago now, and her father has become worried.

Jena had unwittingly stumbled upon an evil magic-user, named Karaas, and his search for a powerful magical item called the *shadowgem*. This large black jewel contains a trapped creature called a Shadow, which upon command can be released to obey the wielder of the gem. Karaas had learnt that the *shadowgem*, which is reputed to have once belonged to the infamous magic-user, Galandar, was hidden within the caves beneath the abandoned shrine. With the hired help of a small band of greedy kobolds, Karaas had been secretly excavating within the caves to find the precious item when Jena arrived.

Upon entering the ruin, Jena was immediately captured and imprisoned by the kobolds, and still remains trapped within the shrine's catacombs while Karaas decides what to do with her.

Beginning the Adventure

The adventure begins as the heroes are travelling through the small hamlet of Cembridge. The exact detail of how the heroes become involved in the adventure is left the DM to best suit his campaign. Perhaps the rumours of mysterious activity in the forest peaks the party's interest, or perhaps they are asked (or hired) by Jena's father to find his daughter. However the party becomes involved the PCs find themselves on their way to the Shrine of Oriana. Although the path to the abandoned shrine is not well travelled Jena's father or any of the locals can point the party in the right direction if necessary.

The PCs discover that the way through the light woods along the old disused path is relatively easy going and it is not long before the heroes find the crumbling place of worship (presuming the DM has not introduced any random encounters). As the PCs reach the clearing in which the Shrine of Oriana stands, read or paraphrase the following:

As you step from the cool shade of the forest you see a small stone building standing at the centre of an overgrown clearing. The shrine, which once must have been very beautiful — judging by the intricate stone carvings that can be seen under the tangle of vines and creepers — now lies ruined and derelict.

The shrine was once indeed very beautiful with ornate and delicate sculptures covering the building's exterior walls. Now, however, the ancient stone structure is a mere shadow of its once former glory. Closer inspection of the crumbling exterior walls reveals that the carvings depict the Five Miracles of the Immortal Oriana.

Shrine of Oriana (Map 1)

1. Cottage Ruins. Lying hidden in the tangle of undergrowth, about 50 feet from the shrine, are the remains of a small single roomed cottage. The cottage once belonged to Palleme, the last cleric who tended the shrine many centuries ago. If the PCs make a thorough search of the cottage ruins they find an ancient brass statuette (about 3" high) that once stood inside the shrine. The statuette (of a doe and her calf) is non magical, but of exceptional quality, and would fetch up to 20 gp to the right buyer.

2. Ancient Well. Further behind the shrine lies an abandoned well. The stone lined well is home to a giant toad which is lying in wait for prey. If a PC looks down into the well, the toad, which is clinging to the well's interior wall, takes its chance and attacks the unfortunate hero.

Giant Toad: AC 7; HD 2+2 (M); hp 9; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 15; Dmg 1d4+1; Save as F1; ML 6; INT 2; AL N; XP 25; Treasure Nil.

3. Shrine. When the PCs are ready to enter read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Standing before the entrance of the crumbling shrine you can now see just how magnificent it once must have been. Up close, however, the sad state of the shrine is all to obvious. Its two, once bright ornate brass doors lie broken and hanging from their hinges.

The entrance to the shrine has not been trapped, however any PCs not being careful (at the DM's discretion) as they pass through the entrance cause the heavy doors to finally fall off their hinges with a loud crash. Any PCs in the doorway must make a successful *Dexterity* check or be struck by the falling doors, resulting in 1d4 points of damage.

As the PCs enter the shrine read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> You see a chamber roughly 25' by 25' in size. The interior of the shrine, in stark contrast to its exterior, is plain and undecorated. Like the exterior, however, it is also in a poor state of repair. The roof has fallen in and the walls are overgrown with vines and creepers. At the far end of the room is a dais and a large niche in the wall where a symbol of devotion, no doubt, once stood.

The interior of the shrine was once decorated with elaborate and colourful tapestries and wall hangings, which have long since rotted away, but now the walls are bare except for the creepers and vines that are slowly reclaiming the shrine for the forest. In the centre of the chamber is the secret trapdoor entrance to the shrine's crypt. The heroes will have to

The Shrine of Oriana (Map 1)

1 square = 5 feet

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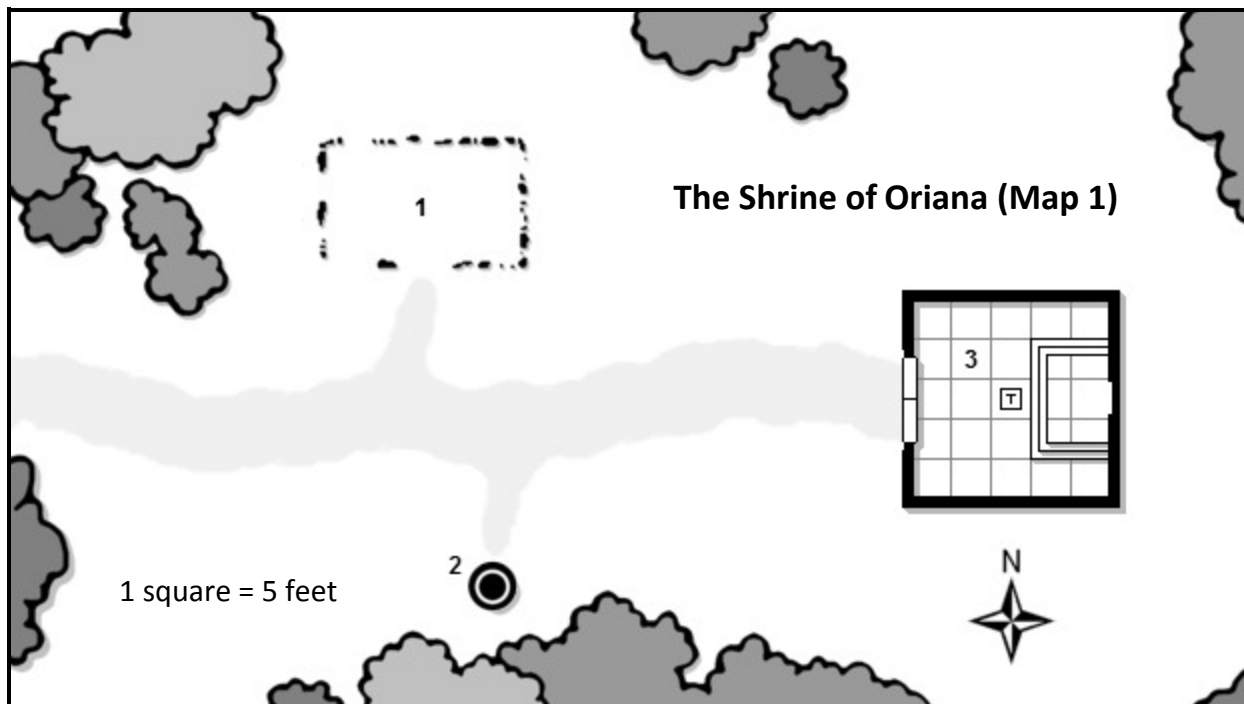
successfully search or detect for secret doors to find the trapdoor. The trapdoor takes the form of a large stone slab. To stop further unwanted guests, Karaas has placed a trap on the crypt's entrance. The trap releases a cloud of poisonous gas when the stone slab is lifted. Each PC within the shrine must make a Saving Throw vs. Poison or suffer 1d4 points of damage.

Apart from the stone trapdoor there is little of any note within the shrine. Laying open to the elements for centuries, the ruin is occasionally used as a temporary shelter by hunters and forest animals alike. If the PCs search around they find some evidence of old campfires but nothing else. Once the heavy slab has been removed the heroes can see carefully crafted stone steps leading down into the darkness.

The Crypt (Map 2)

1. Chamber of Tombs. Under the stone floor lies the crypt of the clerics who once tended the ancient shrine. As the heroes enter read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> As you proceed cautiously down the steps your eyes slowly adjust to the dimness of the light. You see a neat stone chamber about 15' by 30' in size. Along each wall are cut deep alcoves, which contain ancient human remains.

The crypt has a dry musty smell, but the recent coming and goings of Karaas and the kobolds has allowed fresh air to circulate improving this a little. Although there is no lighting in this chamber the light from the crypt's entrance is sufficient for PCs without infravision to see clearly. The skeletons are draped in faded clerical robes which crumble away to dust if touched. If the PCs examine the skeletons further they find nothing more of any interest.

To further deter visitors, the stone floor immediately at the foot of the stairs has been magic-ally trapped. When stepped upon, this area of floor causes *fear* (as per the clerical spell) unless a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells is made.

At the eastern end of the crypt, the PCs see the first real sign of the activity that has been going on beneath the shrine. A large hole, about 5' is size, has been smashed in the floor of the chamber. The hole reveals a 4' diameter shaft which drops 25' into the darkness. The shaft leads to a series of natural caves beneath the shrine. The caves, which were discovered by the clerics when the crypt was being

built, were later used to extend the crypt when the upper level became full. Whoever hid the *shadowgem* within the catacomb below had sealed up the entrance so as to appear as identical to the rest of the flagstone floor.

2. Mausoleum. If the PCs successfully search the crypt for secret doors they find an undiscovered hidden stone door in the eastern wall. Behind the door is a short flight of steps leading down to a small, unlit stone chamber. If the PCs decide to investigate, read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is about 20' by 15' feet in size. At its centre, lying on a delicately carved solid stone pyre, are the skeletal remains of a large armoured man. Laying across his chest, clasped by his ancient bony hands, is a magnificent warhammer.

This is the secret mausoleum of one of the cleric's most revered brethren, a mighty cleric named Mon-Rath. Unfortunately for the heroes, however, three giant rats have also made this chamber their home, burrowing down from the surface above (which could be an alternative entry into the ruin for the PCs). The rats have their nest hidden on the far side of the solid stone pyre. As the PCs enter the mausoleum each rat lunges at a PC.

Giant Rats (3): AC 7; HD ½; hp 3 each; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d4 + disease; Save as Normal Man; ML 8; INT 2; AL C; XP 5 each; Treasure Nil.

Mon-Rath's armour is badly corroded and of little value. However, the magnificent weapon laying across his chest is a *warhammer +1*. On Mon-Rath's bony fingers are two non-magical rings worth about 35 gp each.

The Catacomb (Map 3)

1. Entrance. An old, crudely made wooden ladder leads down the 25' deep shaft. If the PCs decide to climb down the ladder read or paraphrase the following to the players:

As you travel down the ladder you hear the muffled sounds of digging growing louder the further you descend. When you reach the bottom you find yourselves at the start of a roughly hewn tunnel. A faint, flickering light is coming from the direction of the sounds of digging.

If the PCs continue down the tunnel read the following:

As you move down the tunnel towards the light, the sounds of digging grow louder.

The Crypt (Map 2)

↑ To the surface

N

1 square = 5 feet

The Catacomb (Map 3)

1 square = 5 feet
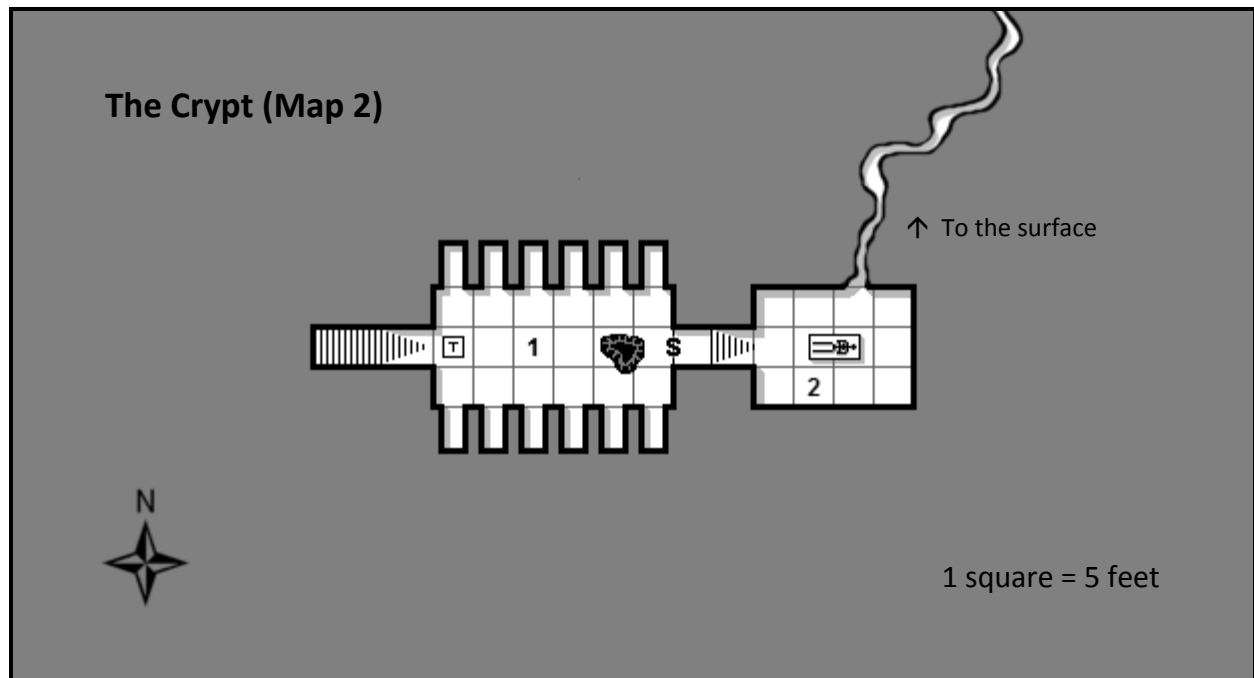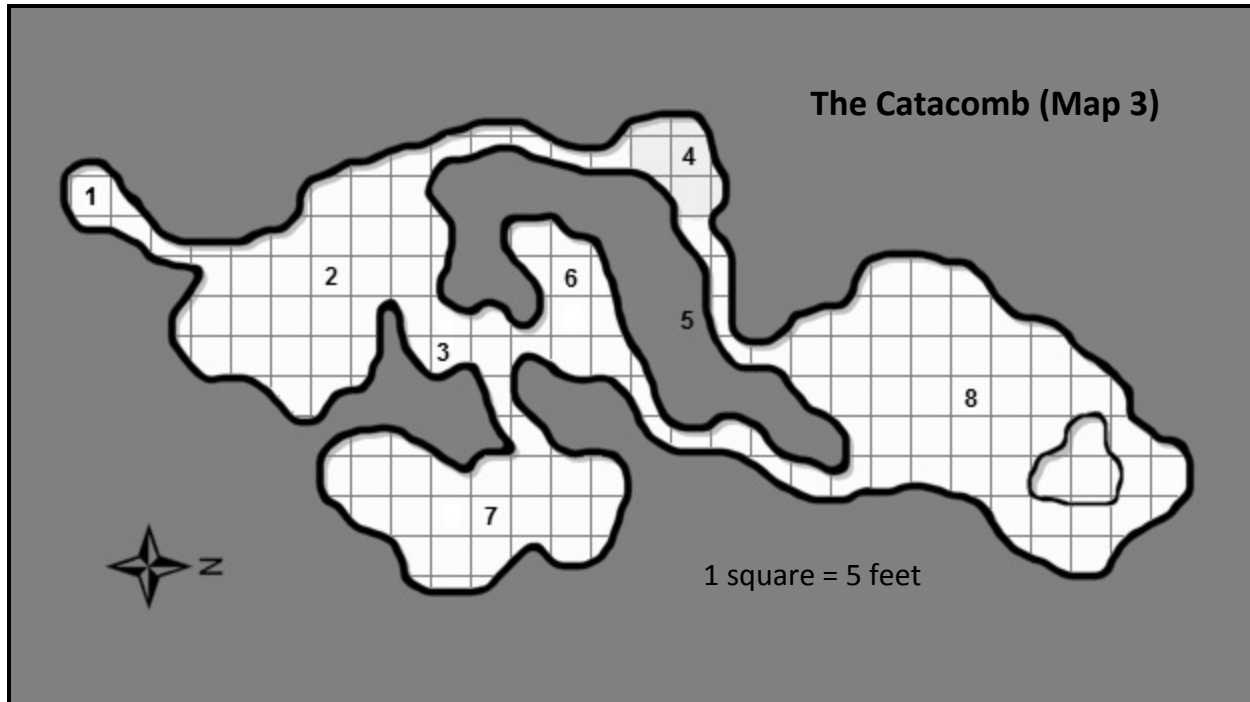
The catacomb is a series of natural caves which were roughly levelled with flagstones by the ancient clerics. Lighting through-out the caves is provided by a handful of flickering torches. The loud sounds of the kobolds digging for the *shadowgem* echo through the rough stone chambers and so effectively mask the sounds of the heroes movement (or combat).

As the PCs enter the catacomb Karaas is on the verge of uncovering the *shadowgem*. The DM may decide whether or not the time taken by the heroes to search through the remaining chambers effects the final outcome of the adventure. If the party moves through the caves quickly the DM may decide that Karaas has failed to uncover the *shadowgem* before the PCs meet him in the final confrontation (see 8. Main Chamber for further details).

2. Living Quarters.

> You can now see a rough natural cave about 20' by 35' in size. The chamber contains a number of simple pieces of furniture, including a cot, a small table and a small wooden chest, which all stand at the southern end of the cave. Two other entrances lead out of this chamber.

As the PCs enter, three scruffy-looking kobolds appear from the entrance leading from 3. Tunnel. Astonished to find yet more uninvited intruders in the catacomb the kobolds attack the PCs on sight.

Kobolds (3): AC 7; HD ½; hp 4 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6 (spear); Save as Normal Man; ML 6; INT 9; AL N; XP 5 each; Treasure Nil.

This room is where Karaas sleeps and eats, and where he spends most of his time when not overseeing the digging in the main chamber. In the southern corner of the cave, next to the cot and table, stands a trapped chest which belongs to Karaas. The chest is locked and the catch is protected by a tiny needle which when activated injects a painful poison into anyone opening the chest. Effected PCs must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Paralysis or be paralysed for 2d4 turns.

The chest contains a scroll, Karaas' spell book, 225 silver pieces (the kobolds' pay), two *potions of healing*, and a *potion of animal control*. The DM is free to fill the spell book with whatever spells he thinks is appropriate. The scroll contains an incantation for the spell *fear*.

Lying on top of the small table is a badly damaged scrap of

parchment. The parchment contains the details to the location of the *shadowgem* which led Karaas to the shrine. The scroll appears to have been badly damage by fire and so much of the writing is illegible. However, the heroes can just make out the following passages:

> *...the ancient shrine of Our Mother the Eternal Oriana... lying north... forest clearing... deep, is hidden... bones... is buried the gem of shadows...*

3. Tunnel. This tunnel, leading from the living quarters, is muddy and slippery. As the PCs enter they must make a successful *Dexterity* check or fall, suffering 1-2 points of damage. Movement rates are reduced by half while in the tunnel.

4. Flooded Chamber.

> The dim flickering light from a single torch reveals a small natural chamber about 10' by 15' in size, which has been flooded by water seeping from a crack in the wall. Floating in the dark pool is a bloated body, greenish white from decay. Suspended above the water, in a large hastily rigged net, is a young woman – bound, gagged and sobbing in fear.

The large net is suspended from a heavy beam that has been wedged across the chamber some twenty or so feet above the water. The net itself hangs about 10 feet above the water.

Recent rain has flooded the chamber (to a depth of 4' at the deepest point), which has attracted a large and unwelcome visitor. If the PCs enter into the water read or paraphrase the following:

> A huge black spider emerges from behind the corpse to attack, its yellow fangs gleaming in the torch light!

Giant Spider: AC 7; HD 2*; hp 14; MV 60' (20'); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d8 + poison; Save as F1; ML 7; INT 0; AL N; XP 25.

In addition to regular damage, any PCs bitten by the giant spider must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison (+2 bonus) or otherwise die in 1d4 turns.

If the PCs manage to get Jena down from the net the young woman will be extremely pleased to see the PCs, and more than happy to answer any of their questions. If the PCs ask Jena if she knows what the kobolds are up to, she tells the heroes that the kobolds are working for a magic-user named Karaas, and that they are digging for something in the next

chamber. If the PCs ask what they are searching for, Jena does not know exactly, but she did overhear a couple of kobolds talking about something called the 'shadowgem'.

Jena: AC 7; Normal Human (female); hp 4; MV 120 (40'); #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 20; Dmg by weapon type; DEX 16; Save as Normal Man; ML 9; AL L.

Jena had a short sword, however, this was taken by the kobolds. She wears no armour; her low AC is due to her high *Dexterity*.

5. Bone Tunnel.

> All around you lie piles of ancient human bones, crumbling away with age. As you move along the tunnel your feet crunch on the bones with every step.

When Karaas first entered the caves he ordered the kobolds to collect all the skeletons buried throughout the caves and to unceremoniously dump them in this tunnel. If the heroes carefully search the tunnel they find a
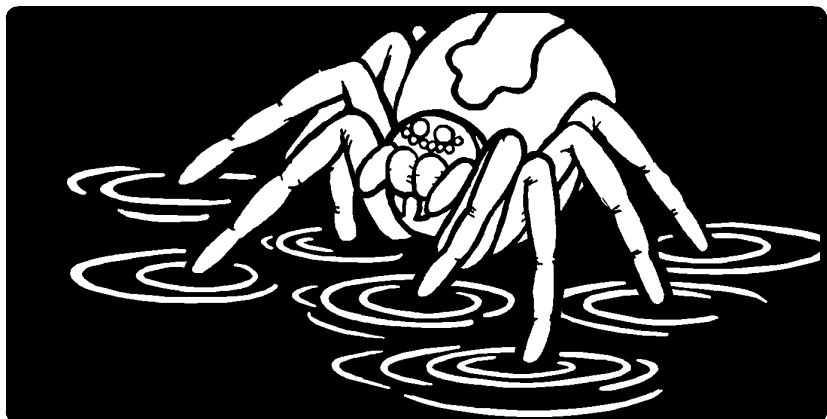
tarnished silver ring on the hand of one of the skeletons. If a PC tries to remove the ring from the skeletal hand, the bones beneath the party's feet stir and a skeleton forms from the pile of bones. The skeleton attacks the PC who removed the ring from its hand, using a large leg bone as a club.

The ring is a magical ring of *spell turning,* which reflects 1d6 spells back to the caster, so the wearer is not affected. Only spells are reflected, not spell-like powers.

Skeleton: AC 7; HD 1 (M); hp 5; MV 60' (20'); #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d4 (bone club); Save as F1; ML 12; INT 1; AL C; XP 10; Treasure Nil.

6. Storeroom. This chamber is used by Karaas as a storeroom. The chamber contains a number of boxes of supplies; food, digging equipment, candles etc. Most of the supplies of food and ale are generally of poor, but, acceptable quality. These are intended for the kobolds. However, two boxes contain supplies for Karaas and so have much better quality foodstuffs.

7. Sleeping Chamber.

You see a smelly chamber about 20' by 25' feet in size, which is illuminated by a single flickering torch. The chamber contains several small sleeping cots covered in dirty old rags and blankets.

When the PCs enter the chamber they also see two nasty looking kobolds sitting on the floor playing dice. The kobolds attack on sight, cursing and spluttering obscenities at the party as they enter into battle.

Kobolds (2): AC 7; HD ½; hp 3 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT1 weapon; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6 (spear); Save as Normal Man; ML 6; INT 9; AL N; XP 5 each; Treasure Nil.

8. Main Chamber.

The badly flickering torch light reveals a large chamber about 40' by 25' in size. At the northern end of the chamber you see a gaping hole, which has been dug into the floor. Three kobolds stand at its

edge looking down into the hole as though they are watching something. At the southern end of the chamber there is a large pile of rubble.

Although the room is reasonably well lit in comparison to the other chambers, the badly flickering torches are casting wild shadows all around the room. The hole in the floor is where the kobolds have been digging for the *shadowgem*. The hole is some 15' deep and a ladder is provided to reach the bottom. The large pile of rubble is from the excavations.

When the party enters there are three kobolds standing at the edge of the pit. Karaas is at the bottom of the hole examining the small locked chest containing the *shadowgem*, which the kobolds have just uncovered.

The kobolds attack the PCs first and if things seem to be going badly only then will Karaas enter the battle by using the trapped shadow within the *shadowgem*. If the PCs haven't faced the two kobolds in the Sleeping Chamber (see area 7) the kobolds will join the fight in three rounds.

The DM could decide that the heroes should only face Karaas and the handful of kobolds, and forgo a battle with the particularly dangerous shadow contained in the *shadowgem*. Simply determine that Karaas was unable to unlock the small chest in time to use the gem against the PCs.

If, as discussed earlier, the heroes have moved quickly

The Shadowgem

Description: The *shadowgem* is a large black jewel about the size of a small child's fist. The item can only be used by an elf or a magic-user of Chaotic alignment. When activated by a command word a shadow emerges from the gem and attacks the gem wielder's opponents to the best of its ability until either he or she commands that the attacks cease, the gem is destroyed, or the shadow is slain.

History: The exact history of the *shadowgem* is unclear. Some scholars believe that it was created by an infamous magic-user, named Galander, but how and when it passed from his malign ownership no one is certain. The *shadowgem* had been thought lost to history until Karaas came across the badly damaged scroll hinting that it was hidden deep beneath the Shrine of Oriana, centuries after the structure had been abandoned. Why the gem was hidden, and by whom, remains a mystery.

Shadow: AC 7; HD 2+2*; hp 15; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d4 + special (see below); Save as F2; ML 12; INT 4; AL C; XP 35; Treasure Nil.

As with others of its kind, the 'tamed' shadow can only be harmed by magical weapons. The creature looks like real shadows and can alter its shape slightly making it hard to see and therefore it usually gains surprise (1-5 on 1d6). If the shadow scores a hit, it will drain 1 point of Strength in addition to doing normal damage. This weakness will last for 8 turns. Any of the heroes whose Strength is reduced to zero becomes a shadow immediately. Shadows are not affected by *sleep* or *charm* spells, but they are not undead and cannot be turned by clerics.

through the catacomb, an alternative may simply be that the *shadowgem* is yet to be uncovered. If this is the case, Karaas stands overseeing the digging on the far side of the hole to the heroes when the PCs enter, one kobold is in the hole whilst the other two are dumping rubble. Proceed with the rest of the encounter as outlined in the options above.

Kobolds (3): AC 7; HD ½; hp 4 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6 (spear); Save as Normal Man; ML 6; INT 9; AL C; XP 5 each; Treasure Nil.

Karaas: 3rd-level Magic-User; AC 9; hp 9; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); S11, I13, W10, D9, Co11, Ch9; ML 9; AL C; Spells *Magic Missile, Shield* and *Web*; dagger.

Karaas is a tall, severe looking man in his early thirties. He has a neatly trimmed black beard and is dressed in a simple midnight blue robe, which is held at the waist by a wide embroidered belt. Unaccustomed to failure, Karaas is as ambitious as he is ruthless. Karaas' ambition is second only to his arrogance, a trait for which he is widely known.

Concluding the Adventure

Jena warmly thanks the heroes if they are successful in rescuing her from Karaas and the kobolds. If the PCs became involved in the adventure through Jena's father, he is more than willing to pay them any reward that they might have negotiated with him before the adventure began. In addition, the people of Cembridge will be impressed by the PCs' actions and exaggerated tales of their exploits will proceed them when travelling in the surrounding area.

The PCs might decide to keep digging for the *shadowgem* if they faced Karaas before the item was uncovered. The DM could also easily add other interesting items buried with the *shadowgem*, which could lead to further adventures.

If Karaas manages to escape with the *shadowgem*, additional scenarios to track down Karaas are left up to the DM. One possible adventure idea might be that a note is found amongst Karaas' possessions outlining his intention to use the *shadowgem* to fulfil a contract to assassinate an important figure. What might the heroes decide to do in order to protect the target? ◖

THE MOUNTEBANK

A rakish new class for the *Labyrinth Lord*™ RPG

By **Chris Kutalik** • Illustration by **Rembrandt van Rijn**

Requirements: INT 13, DEX 13, CHR 13
Prime Requisite: CHR
Hit Dice: 1d4
Maximum Level: None

The mountebank is the consummate con artist of the medieval-fantasy world. By use of smooth talk, sleight of hand, and magical illusion the mountebank stays one step of the law—and earns a decent living in the mean time. Because of their specialized skill set they are often also employed as spies.

As a sub-class of the thief, they are allowed to wear leather armor and use any weapon. They are also allowed to pick pockets, move silently, hide in shadows, listen at doors, and back stab as per a thief of the equivalent level. They can further use disguises as per the assassin class. All saving and combat throws are made on the thief table.

They are also able to use a new skill, *sleight-of-hand*, at the level they can pick pocket—plus an additional 15 percent. Sleight of hand allows the mountebank to move, switch out, or otherwise manipulate without being noticed a hand-sized object.

Upon earning second level, mountebanks can cast illusionist spells. They learn and memorize spells as per the standard rules for illusionists and magic users. They are restricted however to only using magic items open to

thieves until ninth level at which time they can also begin to use items available to illusionists.

At first level, a mountebank can use their special *flim-flam* powers to cast a limited Charm Person-like effect (1-4 hours in duration) once a day. At seventh level they can additionally cast a

Mountebank Level Progression

Experience	Level	Hit Dice **
0	1	1
2,501	2	2
5,001	3	3
10,001	4	4
20,001	5	5
40,001	6	6
80,001	7	7
160,001	8	8
310,001	9	9
460,001	10	+1 hp only *
610,001	11	+2 hp only *
760,001	12	+3 hp only *
910,001	13	+4 hp only *
1,060,001	14	+5 hp only *
1,210,001	15	+6 hp only *
1,360,001	16	+7 hp only *
1,510,001	17	+8 hp only *
1,660,001	18	+9 hp only *
1,810,001	19	+10 hp only *
1,960,001	20	+11 hp only *

*Hit point modifiers from constitution are ignored.
**1d4 or d6 if using 1st edition optional rules.

limited duration Charm Monster spell once a day (again 1-4 hours). At ninth level, the mountebank attracts a crew of 2d6 grifters, con-men, and other ne'er do wells (1st level mountebanks) as followers.

Mountebanks cannot be lawful or "good" in alignment. ⛊

Mountebank Spell Progression

	Spell Level						
Level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	1	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
3	2	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
4	2	1	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
5	2	2	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
6	2	2	1	◆	◆	◆	◆
7	2	2	2	◆	◆	◆	◆
8	3	2	2	◆	◆	◆	◆
9	3	3	2	1	◆	◆	◆
10	3	3	3	2	◆	◆	◆
11	3	3	3	2	◆	◆	◆
12	4	3	3	3	2	◆	◆
13	4	4	3	3	2	1	◆
14	4	4	4	3	3	2	◆
15	4	4	4	4	3	2	1
16	5	4	4	4	4	3	2
17	5	5	4	4	4	3	2
18	5	5	5	4	4	4	3
19	5	5	5	5	4	4	3
20	6	5	5	5	5	4	4

The Mountebank (1635)

FIELDS OF BATTLE

Make battlefields more than a mark on the map

By **Jeff Carrington** • Illustration by **Jesse Walker**

MANY Classic D&D® maps contain a familiar crossed swords symbol to identify the location of a past battle. Such a symbol might not be given a second thought by DMs, other than as an interesting historical note or perhaps even as nothing more than map filler. However battlefields can have a rich and interesting legacy with physical remains that could be visible many centuries later. In 9 AD three Roman legions under the command of Publius Quinctilius Varus were massacred by Germanic tribes at the Battle of Teutoburg Forest. According to the Roman historian Tacitus, when Germanicus (nephew of Emperor Tiberius) returned with an army to avenge the humiliating defeat five years later they found piles of bleached bones and severed skulls nailed to trees within the forest, which they gathered and buried in mass graves. Two thousand years later burial pits have been found by archeologists in Germany which match Tacitus' description!

If a party stumbles upon a great battlefield when travelling through the wilderness what can they expect to find? The answer could only be an empty field, or maybe they will come across something much more interesting. The following article discusses just some of the things they might discover.

Ancient battlefields

As noted above, even after many centuries great conflicts can leave their mark on the landscape. Although grass and trees can grow again to cover a battlefield's dead and churned earth, small tell tale signs (or other greater monuments) could be left behind. In a fantastical D&D® setting the options are boundless:

Legends

Before PCs step on to an ancient battlefield the site may be subject to many rumours, myths and legends in the local region. Small communities have long memories and tales would likely be told and retold about a great battle that took place nearby. The location of the conflict might even have a name reflecting this history (e.g. "Bloody Vale" or "Battlebridge"). Over the centuries the stories could become more fantastical with each telling. Tales of a battle involving legendary heroes, a long lost civilisation, a powerful race or even the immortals themselves may easily become important myths and legends. In a D&D® campaign it's even more likely that these tales are true (like the Trojan War, for example) rather than simply the result of the over active imaginations of a few excitable locals.

Burials

The most obvious physical evidence of a great battle will be the dead bodies of fallen warriors. The number of casualties resulting from a particularly bloody battle could run in to the tens of thousands. PCs coming across a battlefield may find bones scattered across the surface or among the undergrowth, or perhaps more grisly remains of desecrated bodies, like those found after the Battle of Teutoburg Forest. If there was time to dispose of the dead after the battle and the bodies were not simply left to rot on the surface, they will have usually been be buried in mass graves because individual burials will simply not be possible in the circumstances. Another possibility, particularly in a Classic D&D®
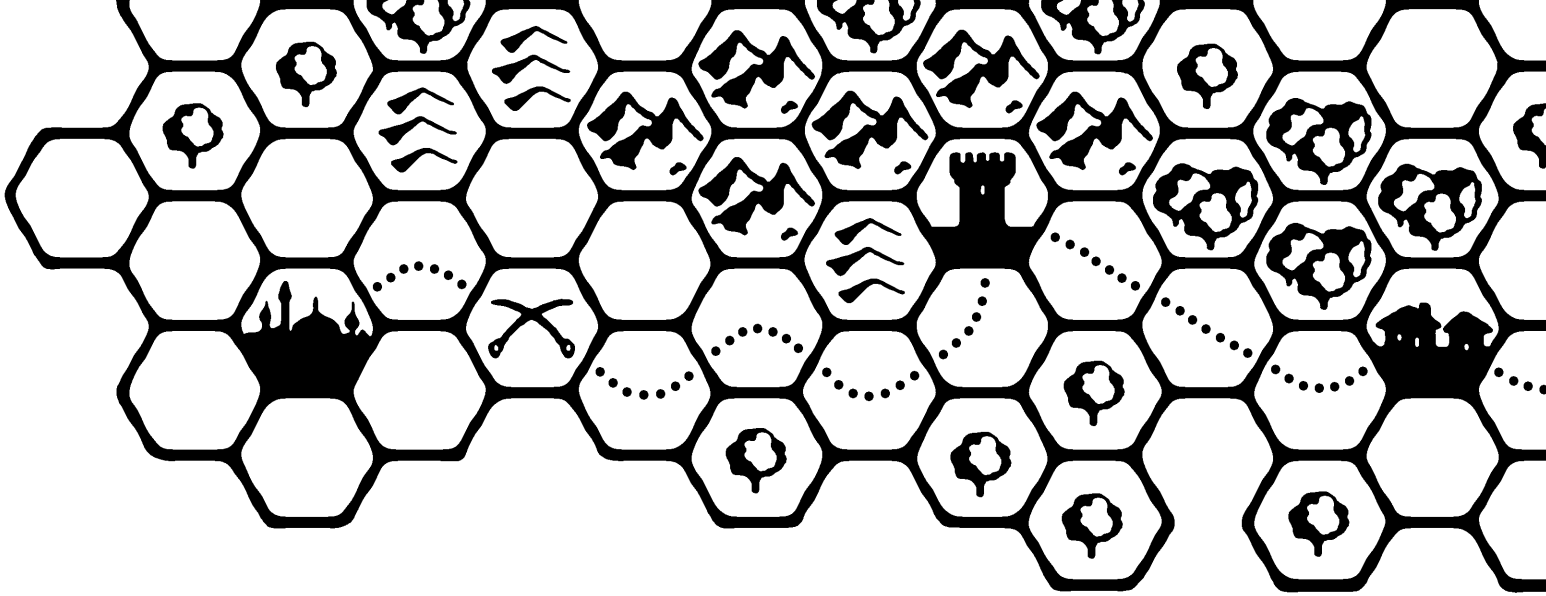
campaign, is that the bodies were disposed of in a natural feature below the battlefield like a network of caves or perhaps a dwarven mine.

Weapons and treasure

After casualties, the most obvious tell tale remains of a battle will be the detritus of war: weapons, broken pieces of armour, sling stones, and arrows as well as other personal effects like boots, helmets and barding. Although there may not be anything visible above ground any longer, lying just beneath the surface could be many artifacts from an ancient battle (even if the field of battle was picked over by scavengers). While much of the armour and ordinary weapons will be ruined, magical weapons and other treasure, including precious jewelry and coins, might all still be found scattered across a battlefield many centuries later.

If a battlefield is farmed then it is likely the locals will have stumbled across many of these items when tilling the soil or tending to their fields. The PCs first clue that a battlefield is

located nearby may be farmers and village folk reusing old bits of armour to repair every day objects (e.g. ploughs or spades) or maybe a local trying to sell the PCs old weapons, bits of armour or other artifacts they've found.

Broken magical items

In a Classic D&D® game, among the broken pieces of equipment, could also be forgotten magical items and artifacts, lost on the field of battle or perhaps still lying with the victim where they fell (and missed by scavengers). The PCs might in fact be in search of a lost battlefield to locate such items. Another possibility is that the magical items are no longer working correctly and have begun to malfunction. This may lead to lots of opportunity for adventure, with the locals refusing go into a field or forest because strange things happen as a result of the misfiring magic.

Ghosts and zombies

An ancient D&D® battlefield wouldn't be complete without an army of zombies or ghosts of the slain warriors. An obvious example from literature is the

battlefield of Dagorlad from the *Lord of the Rings* where the spirits of dead elves, men and orcs lay trapped in the Dead Marches. The spirits of the slain could roam the battlefield at night to forever reenact their last terrible battle. Perhaps zombies patrol the battlefield to guard their fallen comrades or maybe arise from their graves to defend the site if it is disturbed by anyone who dares desecrate the blood soaked soil (i.e. searching for items among the fallen).

Monuments

Victors (and occasionally the vanquished) will erect great monuments to commemorate a notable battle. Sometimes these will be in a nation or empire's capital, like the monumental arches erected in ancient Roman cities or the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. Sometimes these monuments will be erected on the battlefield itself, such as the Lion's Mound—a great man made hill raised to commemorate the victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo. In a Classic D&D® campaign the monument could be a great 'dungeon' or

tower full of adventure. Perhaps the monument may even have magical properties to infuse visitors with awe and respect. Alternatively, the vanquished might mark the spot with a memorial to the fallen, as has been done right across the globe following the two World Wars of the 20th Century.

Shrines and Temples

Important battles can gather a greater significance to the participants than simple victory or defeat. Battles can come to represent a heroic triumph against the odds, the affirmation of the victors' faith, the birth of a nation, confirmation of the pretender's claim to the throne, a shameful beating or a stoic defeat. On these historic sites a great temple or shrine dedicated to the victor's patron deity or god of war, for example, could be built as alternative to a simple victory monument. Maybe a temple dedicated to a deified king or a victorious general might be built on the battlefield, or a shrine devoted to the god of peace and harmony, with priests left to pray that another terrible conflict of its like never happens again. Perhaps even the bones of the fallen may have been used to construct a makeshift altar or

permanent shrine. An even darker alternative could be the construction of a temple by an evil cult that thrives on death and disorder, which is tended to and defended by the skeletal slaves of the defeated slain.

Ruined City

Not all battles happen in an open field or forest; some of the most terrible battles have been fought over a great city. Usually cities will be rebuilt after large battles but occasionally a settlement might be abandoned and over time eventually lost and forgotten, with only a memory of the battle remaining. Sometimes the city may have even been deliberately destroyed, quite literally dismantled brick by brick by a vengeful victor or simply to send an unmistakable message that armed resistance will result in total annihilation. When Rome defeated Carthage and took the city in 146 BC she raised Carthage to the ground. Legend has it that Rome then salted the surrounding countryside so Carthage could never rise as a power again.

Characters happening upon the remnants of a city battlefield might find nothing more than an open field or forest, or perhaps a broken wasteland with little

evidence that a city once stood there. However just beneath the surface could be a dangerous network of cellars and sewers of the forgotten city populated by the battle's slain victims.

Curses

The site of a terrible battle may be subject to all sorts of taboos, real and imagined. In a Classic D&D® campaign the curses can of course be very real. Perhaps visitors become witness to an illusion of the battle unfolding before them, or even believe themselves to be participants in the battle. Maybe visitors who desecrate the graves or remove artifacts from the battlefield could be possessed by the spirit of a fallen warrior or suffer some other terrible curse. A curse might even single out a D&D® race (e.g. elves or dwarves) as revenge for an ancient defeat.

Earthworks

A great battle could also leave scars on the landscape to be found many centuries later. Not only might a battle leave ruins in its wake, but monumental defensive (or other earthworks) may be left behind. When Julius Caesar besieged the Gaulish *oppidum* of Alesia in 52 BC his legions constructed several miles
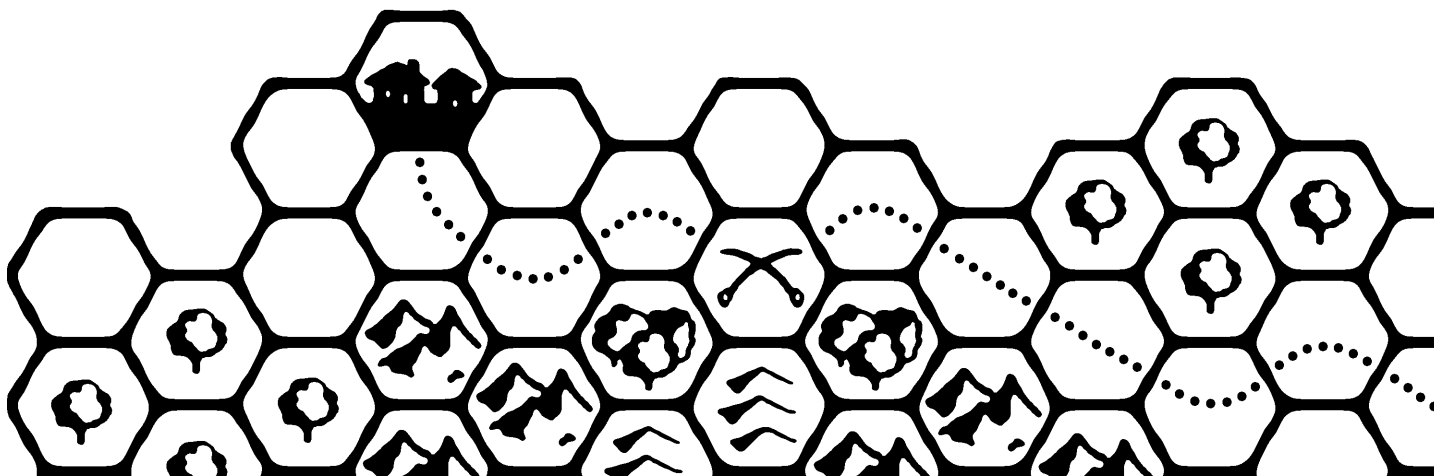
of ramparts to encircle the hill fort, which were created to both to defend against attack from Alesia's barbarian defenders and from a Gaulish relief force. At Masada, more than a century later in 73 AD, the Roman besiegers constructed a ramp up the side of a mountain to gain access to the fortified palace. The remains of the enormous ramp are still visible to this day. In a Classic D&D® campaign PCs might discover the remnants of fortifications or siege works from a similar battle or perhaps they could discover the remains of other massive and fantastical structures and earthworks created by magic or even by giants.

Recent battlefields

Although it is reasonable to assume that battles marked on D&D® maps took place long ago, there is no reason why this assumption has to always be the case. If PCs stumble upon or travel to the site of a recent battle there will also be lots to see. Apart from the obvious signs of mass combat, such as dead bodies and broken equipment, there may be the remnants of the victor's army as well as other activity. Even if the bulk of an army has moved on, there could still be field surgeons tending to the wounded, or soldiers guarding slaves, noblemen held for ransom, or other prisoners of war captured on the field of battle. A detachment of soldiers (or captured prisoners) might be digging mass graves for the dead or creating great funeral pyres to piously dispose of the fallen. A more grisly activity could be executing prisoners, as has happened after particularly bloodthirsty battles in history.

Hovering above a recent battlefield may be carrion birds, like crows and vultures, or other opportunistic feeders such as wolves or rats might be present. In a Classic D&D® game other fantastical creatures (e.g. Carrion Crawlers or even Rust Monsters!) could also be lurking on the battlefield ready to attack those who cross their path.

In addition to creatures who have come to take advantage of the feast of misery on offer there might also be local scavengers (or soldiers) combing the battlefield in search of useful or valuable personal effects, such as cygnet rings, unbroken weapons or unsoiled clothing. In a Classic D&D® campaign necromancers or evil cultists could also use the battlefield as a useful site of undead recruitment!

Battlefields, ancient or recent, need not be nothing more than a mark on a map. They can be fascinating and dangerous places to visit with innumerable opportunities for adventure! ⛊
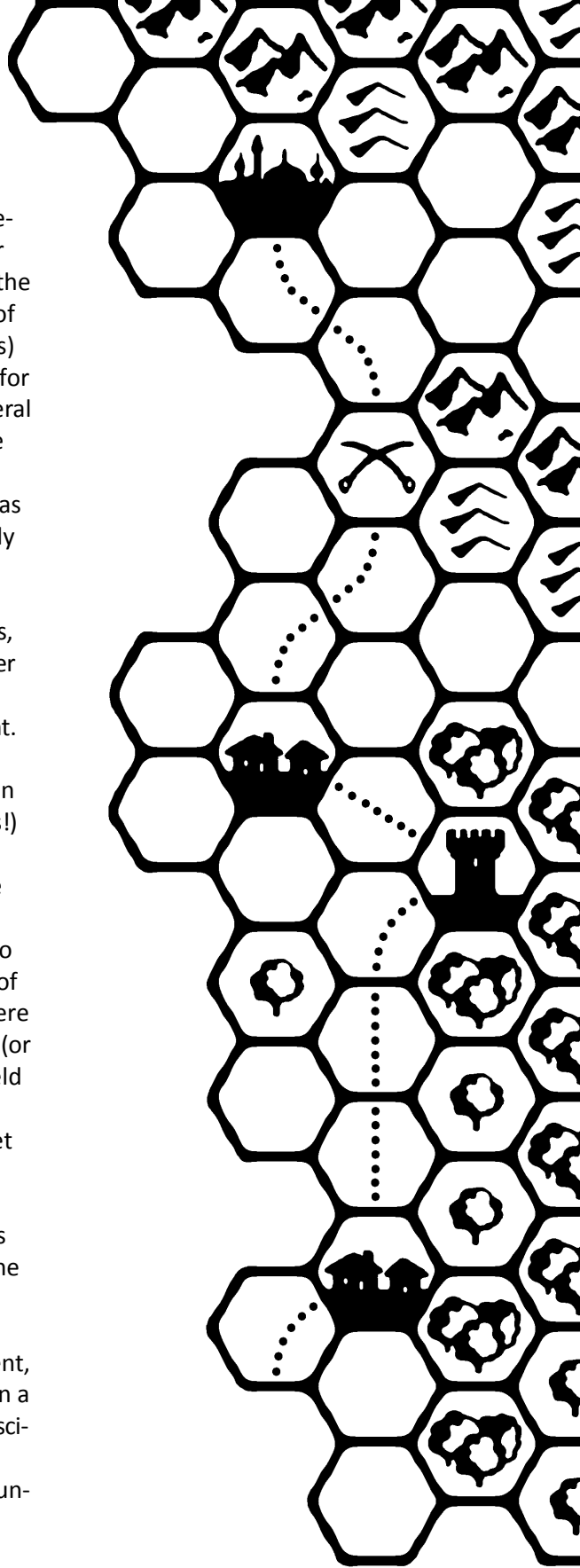
DM'S TOOL BOX: ON THE ROAD

Three short encounters for your Classic D&D® game

By **Andrew Baker** • Illustration by **Scott Purdy**

AS A WELCOME change of pace from random encounter tables, here are three short wilderness encounters to throw against your players in order to enliven a long journey between locations.

Bear Trap

As the PCs pass through a dark, densely wooded forest they hear the faint sounds of whimpering coming from a sunlit clearing ahead. If the characters choose to investigate they see a small brown bear with its paw caught in a particularly vicious looking trap, which had been concealed by a large amount of leaf litter.

The trapped bear is in fact a she-elf called Alabastra who has taken the form of a bear with the use of a *polymorph self* spell. Alabastra often transforms herself into animal form in order to experience the forest through the eyes of the wild creatures of the wood. She stumbled upon the trap, which was set by the local Reeve who was concerned about reports of bear sightings in the area, and has been unable to transform back into her natural state due to the pain of the rusty metal teeth digging into her elven flesh. A small clue to Alabastra's true nature is an oak leaf shaped pendant about her neck.

If the PCs help Alabastra free from the trap (while still in her bear form) she will quickly revert to her former self once the immediate pain of the trap has abated. Alabastra will be most grateful for the PCs' assistance and will ask them to name a fair reward, which she will provide if she is able. If Alabastra dies while in bear form she will also quickly revert back to her natural state.

On the other hand, if it is discovered by Alabastra's clan that the PCs harmed the she-elf they will tirelessly seek out the party to wreak their revenge by cursing the PC who committed the deed (even if the party harmed Alabastra when they thought she was simply a bear). A PC so cursed must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells or be permanently transformed into a brown bear.

Alabastra: AC 9; E7; hp 35; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; THAC0 15; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); S 9 I 16 W 14 D 10 C 9 CH 9; AL N.

Spells: *1st - shield*, *light, sleep; 2nd - detect evil, mirror image, web*; 3rd - *hold person*, *haste*; 4th - *polymorph self*.

Fool's Gold

While travelling along a lonely road between two villages the PCs encounter a heavy ox cart driven by four men. As the characters approach, the men on the cart eye the PCs cautiously. Although they will talk to the PCs if spoken to, the men seem unusually nervous and ill at ease.

Hidden in the cart is 10,000 gold pieces which have been stolen by the small band of high-waymen from a detachment of the King's Chancellery. To make good their escape the cutthroats have now disguised themselves as peasants and loaded the cart with vegetables to hide several

bags of gold coins (which are marked with a Royal Cipher). Little do the thieves know that the entire consignment of gold coins has been specially minted to commemorate the King's recent victory over a rival kingdom. Each coin has been struck with a crown surmounting a stylised eagle.

If the characters are paying attention they will notice that the 'peasants' are wearing short swords beneath their cloaks. The cutthroats are not spoiling for a fight, but will defend their newly won treasure if necessary.

The local authorities are on the look out for anyone found with the coins. If the PCs take the gold for themselves they will soon discover that no one wants to accept the money and may find themselves accused of the band of brigands' numerous crimes!

Brigands (3): AC 10; HD 1; hp 6 each; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; THAC0 20; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); Save as F1; ML 8; AL C; XP 10 each; Treasure 10,000 gp.

Feyberry Bush

The PCs come across a tiny, ramshackle hut standing only a few feet from the side of a road. The structure, made of rough stone with a thatched roof, is home to an eccentric hermit known to all in the area as Egrin (Normal Human). If the PCs venture inside Egrin's home, they find it crowded with all manner of odds and ends, which have been collected by the hermit from passers by.

Egrin is the custodian of a magical plant that grows beside the hut. The bush is roughly 10' by 15' in size and is covered in blue, raspberry-like berries. It is said that the berries can heal, but few in the local area will risk eating from the enchanted plant because of its famed unpredictable results.

The crazy hermit has a long, wispy grey beard and wears a tattered brown robe woven from wool. If the PCs speak to Egrin he is friendly, but not entirely lucid. Questions about the properties of the bush will be ambiguous at best. ◖

If a PC eats from the enchanted plant they must roll 1d6. A result of 1-4 heals the PC's injuries as per the *Cure Light Wounds* spell. A result of 5-6 causes a random magical effect. Roll 1d20 for the result on the following table:

Roll	Result
1	PC changes gender
2	-2 to all rolls (2 days)
3	PC is 10 years younger
4	+2 saving throws (1 day)
5	PC doubles in size
6	Permanent -2 to WIS
7	-2 hit points
8	Turns invisible (2 days)
9	PC shrinks by half
10	+2 hit points
11	Falls asleep (1 day)
12	Tongue turns green
13	PC blinded (2 days)
14	Polymorphs randomly
15	+2 to all rolls (2 days)
16	PC ages 10 years
17	Permanent +2 to WIS
18	Grows a tail
19	-2 saving throws (1 day)
20	PC instantly levels up

A TOUR OF CAEDESSA

Take a stroll around the frontier town of Caedessa

By **Jesse Walker** • Cartography by **Jesse Walker**

EVERY BAND OF HEROES needs a home to rest and recuperate! The following provides a brief overview of a generic town to use in any Classic D&D® campaign.

Caedessa

Situated upon the west bank of the broad Savine River is the frontier community of Caedessa. Built around riverside docks and a town square, Caedessa's collection of stone and wooden buildings can trace their history back to the glory days of the Old Empire. As the region's main market town, Caedessa is also surrounded by numerous farms and outlying villages. Further to the west lies the Great Woods and the Ironstone Ranges.

Caedessa was up until recent years an important military centre. Goods and Imperial troops flowed through the town along the Savine on their way to the Laun Frontier, making Caedessa the largest town in area.

But with the warming of relations with the neighbouring kingdom and the near abandonment of the frontier, Caedessa's population has significantly declined as the flow of soldiers, on which much of the town's prosperity was built, has dwindled to the occasional trickle.

While Caedessa has seen better days the future for the old town is not all doom and gloom. The region's once lucrative wool trade is beginning to flourish again and trade with the kingdom of Laun has increased with the opening up of the border.

Town Government

Although Caedessa has a mayor named Ethas Alistain (a weak but well-meaning man) and a small council of elected aldermen, real authority rests with the Imperial garrison's Commander—a dour veteran soldier named Aleus Brutian (8th-level Fighter). And although day to day running of Caedessa is left to the mayor and aldermen Brutian retains the final veto. His authority is tempered, however, by the reduction in the size of the town's garrison under his command.

With the retreat of the legions has come a corresponding level of lawlessness. Although the Imperial Code is strictly enforced, (even more so as law and order in the town and surrounding countryside is weakening), many town residents have resorted to taking justice into their own hands. A set of rigid laws, the Imperial Code decides important matters of law in the Arena.

A tour of Caedessa

Like many other old towns in the Empire, the streets of Caedessa are narrow, dirty and run down. While the frontier community contains too many places to be described here, the following is just a few notable sites to be explored:
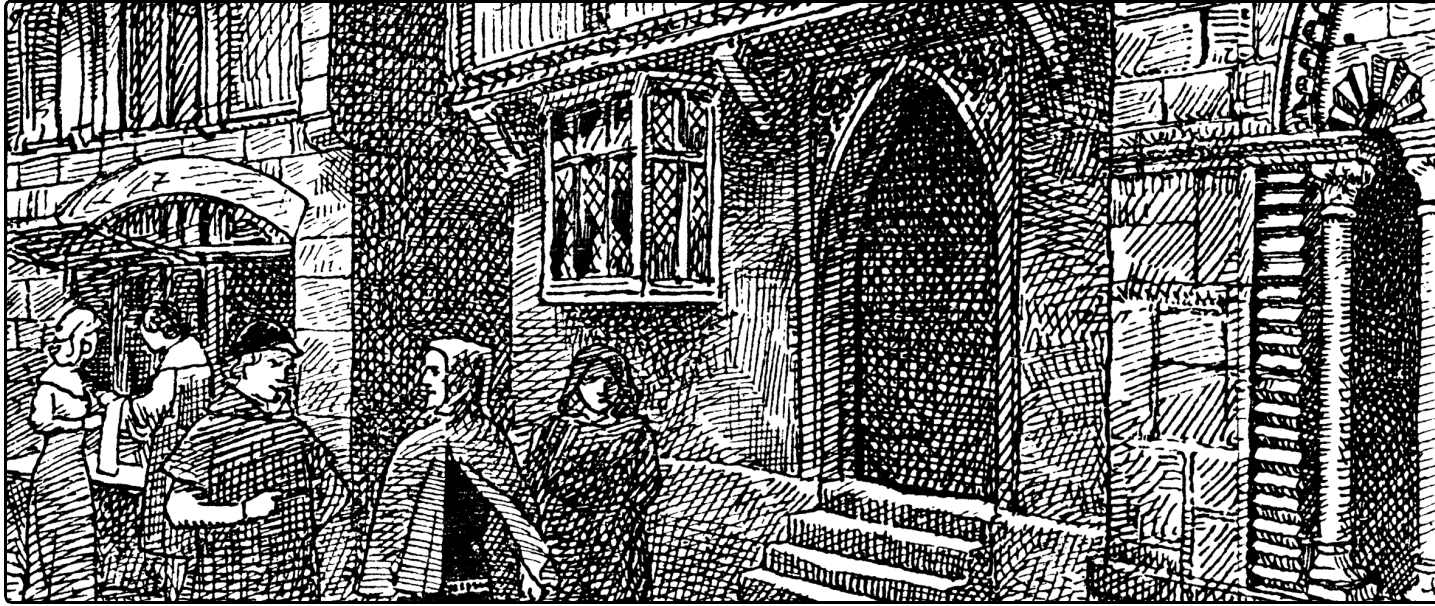
1) Imperial Garrison: With the weakening of the Laun Frontier to the south, the town's garrison (which once boasted hundreds of Imperial soldiers) has been reduced to a skeleton of just fifty or so men and a handful of officers. The soldiers that do remain are low on morale and discipline, with some rumoured to be in league with the local thieves guild.

2) The Emperor's Crown: One of the more popular public houses in Caedessa, the ironically named Emperor's Crown is known to turn a blind eye to visitors who don't want any questions asked, as long as they don't attract the attention of the town's guard.

3) The Arena: As the largest town in the region, Caedessa boasts a small arena. This is the town's formal courtroom—the place where all important cases are decided by trial by combat under the watchful eye of Brutian. Due to Caedessa's population woes, finding a champion to fight on one's behalf has become increasingly difficult. Rumours also persist that mysterious ruins have been found beneath the arena.

4) West Quarter: As the main residential area of the town, the West Quarter is home to much of Caedessa's middle class. The Quarter's dwellings range from modest single story cottages to some of the grander houses of wealthy merchants and a handful of the lesser nobility. Many of the residents have become rich pickings for local thieves and bandits, leading some to hire private watchmen to guard their homes or seek retribution.

5) Town Hall: This old building serves as the administrative heart of Caedessa. The Hall is also home to a large library containing many ancient and rare manuscripts.

6) Temple of Unor: This imposing circular building, topped by a enormous bronze dome, is an important centre for worshippers of the King of Immortals. Although technically free to do so, demi-races are not encouraged to enter by the temple's band of priests.

7) Shrine of Amnis: Caedessa boasts a number of smaller temples dedicated various other deities dotted around the town. One such place of worship is an ancient shrine dedicated to Amnis Life-giver. Long abandoned, the shrine has been recently reoccupied by a priestess named Alserra (5th-level Cleric) and her male follower Kesh (3rd-level Fighter).

8) Telgran's Smithy: Off the main road is the forge of Telgran, a dwarf from the distant Ironstone Mountains. He is a careful craftsman and the strength of his work is quite famous locally.

9) The Dragon's Rest: Travellers looking for accommodation in the wharf district are often directed to the lively Dragon's Rest Inn where the rates are reasonable and the beds are soft. The inn is run by a friendly couple by the name of Henga and Uthgar Rallering, who love to be regaled by tales of daring do.

10) Town Square: The heart of Caedessa comes alive each day with the sound of merchants selling their wares in the Town Square. The market's many stalls and small shops provide a variety of merchandise: cloth, food, spices, luxurious imported goods, and other curiosities from the Empire and beyond.

Caedessa

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N
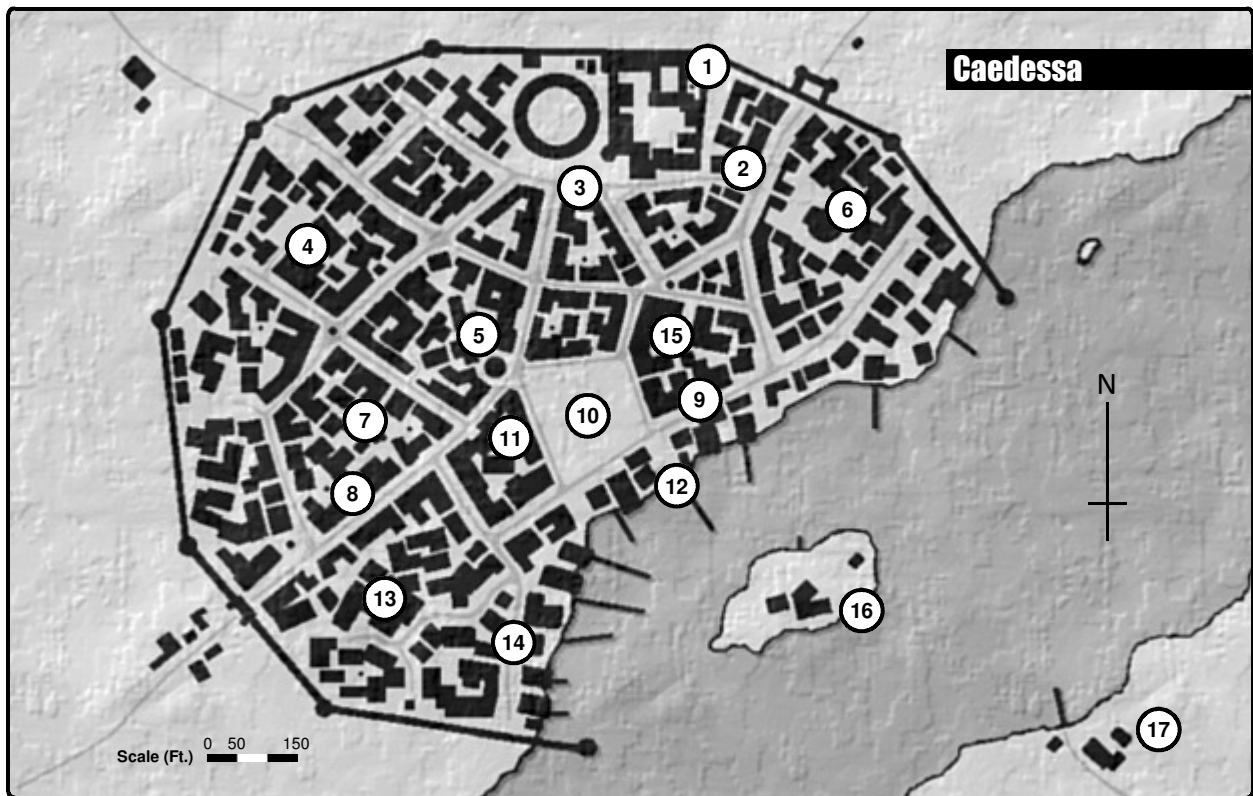
11) Guild Hall: One of the most important buildings in Caedessa is the Guild Hall. The Hall is the local home of the powerful Guild of Merchants, which controls all trade in the town with an iron fist. It is from here that much of the buying and selling of commodities takes place, and probably a many more shady deals besides.

12) The Docks: The warehouses of the river-front are a ramshackle collection of wooden buildings constructed close to the docks. The district is irregularly patrolled by guardsmen and private watchmen are sometimes hired in the local taverns to guard particularly valuable cargoes.

13) South Quarter: As a result of the population decline, much of of Caedessa's southern district

has been abandoned (although a handful of locals still brave its run-down streets). A haven for undesirables of all types, few of the South Quarter's inhabitants dare venture out after dark.

14) Beda's Emporium: Located in the South Quarter is the shop of Anlaf Beda, a local merchant of ancient artifacts and curios. Beda's shop is cluttered with items of almost every description; old oil lamps, mechanical devices, scrolls, antique weapons, faded tapestries, and boxes of broken who knows what. Visitors with a good eye are sure to pick up a bargain.

15. Maskmakers Lane: Irregularly raided by the town's authorities, Maskmakers Lane is known to house a number of established, but unauthorised, gambling dens and other houses of vice.

16) Theras Island: Now only the site of a handful of decrepit buildings, Theras Island was once used as Caedessa's secure storehouse. Protected from the town's residents by the surrounding river, the island housed food and weapon supplies. Today the buildings are in a ruinous state. Rumours persist of strange happenings on the isle, with smugglers (or worse) using the island for their misdeeds.

17) Bargemaster's House: Without a bridge, the only way to cross the Savine is by boat. This traffic is strictly controlled by the Merchant Guild, which employs a bargemaster to ferry travellers from one side to the other. The bargemaster's home also doubles as an inn for travellers caught on the wrong side of the river after the day's last barge has sailed. ◗

TRUESIGHT

Views from the Old School blogosphere

EACH issue *Encounter* will take a quick stroll around the world wide web and bring back a sprinkling of comments and opinions from the lively Old School blogosphere...

Playing with the Sword-and-Board Fighter

trollsmyth.blogspot.com

"[W]hen you're rolling the dice, you're not playing the game. Dice rolls are what happens when the game stops and we wait to see what sort of curveball randomness is going to throw us. People think dice rolls are the game because that's mostly what we see in the books. But games are about making choices, not rolling dice; the game of craps is in the betting; rolling of the dice only tells you who won."

Rules as Written

www.lordkilgore.com

"I think that the biggest advantage of playing by the book is that people outside your group can sit down and play without missing a beat. If my group plays chess with loads of house rules, I can't just go play my game at a chess tournament and I can't just invite anyone to sit at my board and play.

Unfortunately, I'm a non-stop tinkerer and feel the need to fix things I've always seen as broken and tweak things to better suite my vision of the game. The biggest advantage of house ruling, of course, is that it allows you to play the game you want to play the way you want to play it."

I Thought You Said You Cleaned This Place

dndwithp*rnstars.blogspot.com

"My favorite kind of encounters aren't all surprises—they're the ones where the PCs know what they're getting into (mostly) and you get to watch them scheme before taking the plunge. Re-doing a dungeon over a few levels later gives you plenty of chances for exactly that."

On swords, sorcery, dungeons, dragons

jrients.blogspot.com

"In actual day-to-day life I have no problem describing D&D to a newbie as something like "You play Conan, I play Gandalf. We team up to fight Dracula." On the other hand, ascribing any genre to such a wide-sweeping vehicle as D&D makes about as much sense as declaring that a clarinet *is* a jazz instrument. Sure, you can get a crapload of Dixieland out of the thing, but it can also play a zillion other kinds of music. I mean, have you seen the entirely awesome new pdf *Terminal Space*? It's friggin' OD&D in outer space, man. And you roll a new 3d6 stat for your PC called Tech Level. If you roll low enough you get to play a **cave man in outer space**! Put *that* in your genre and smoke it!"

Spells and Creativity

rolesrules.blogspot.com

"The magic system is probably the thing that's the least to my liking in older editions of D&D. After, all what attracts me to the old school ways is the emphasis on player creativity and problem solving. Then I face the prospect of a spell system that almost seems designed to smother creativity. It's just perverse to force pre-memorization of spells, from a list where one or two each level stand out as clearly optimal in combat, at the same time you are encouraging players to come up with crazy solutions in every other area using ropes, spikes, mules, catnip and what have you." ◖

COVER ARTIST

Scott Purdy's atmospheric image of an undead warrior emerging from the
turbid mists heralds the arrival of danger and excitement for a hardy band of
heroes! To view more of Scott Purdy's artwork visit www.scottpurdy.net