

# EXPLOSIVE TUNES

ISSUE  
23

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF WWW.RPGCROSSING.COM

## NEWS

A ROUNDUP OF THE HAPPENINGS OF THE YEAR FROM RPGX

## SHORT STORIES

BY GENET, SAMIBB8 AND MORE

## GAMING TOOLS

MAGIC ITEMS, RESOURCES AND EXCLUSIVE ROLLING TABLES FROM STILL \_ POND

## AND AN ADVENTURE

BY CEREAL NOMMER



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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## EDITOR-IN-CHIEF-BOTTLE-WASHER

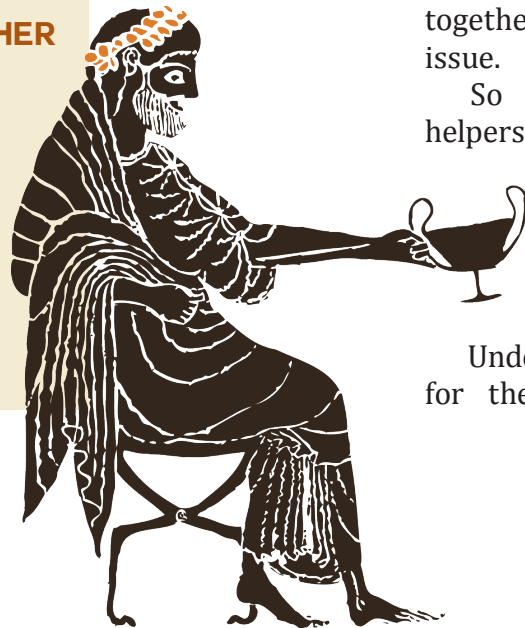
Dirkoth

## BEHIND-THE-SCENE ELVES

Godrosen, Lizard42069, Undeadrajib, Grogg Tree, Avner

## COVER ART

Undeadrajib



Welcome to the twenty-third issue of Explosive Runes!

A new year is upon us, and with it, comes a VERY new look to Explosive Runes. You can thank Undeadrajib for that, as we leaned heavily on his graphic artist talents to give us a new design. Aside from his creative efforts in redesigning the look of the issue, Undeadrajib also did a lot of the hard work of putting together the content of this issue.

So too did our other helpers, including Godrosen for all his efforts, and Lizard42069 for artwork. I'd also like to point out that the aforementioned

Undeadrajib did our cover for the issue, and Jeffkevler

did the cartoons that grace our pages. I'll also toss out a "thank you" to our long gone, but never forgotten friend Arucard, for the bad jokes behind those cartoons.

We hope you enjoy the material and features, and that they help by expanding your RPG possibilities and introducing some new gaming ideas to help our community grow.

Now get out there and have fun!

~Dirkoth

*Are you looking to get a writing or art gig? Want to help make RPG Crossing a very special place? Then get your work put in Explosive Runes and enjoy the satisfaction that comes with a job well done. For more information about this, please contact me through the website. I am almost always there!*



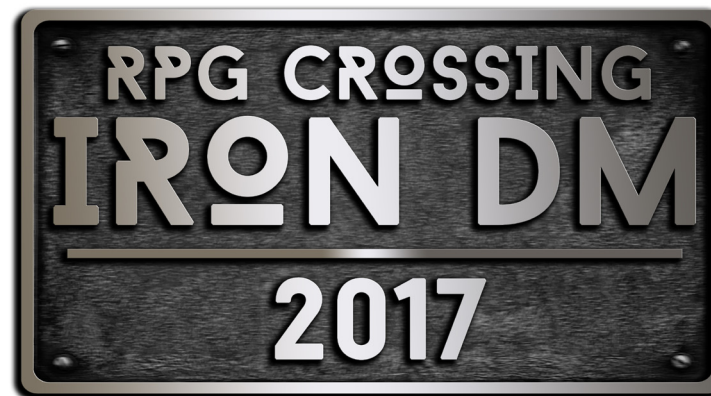
# THE TROPHY CASE



WITH A CRASH of thunder, the clash of blades faded, the heavy breaths of exhausted combatants could be heard where the mutters of pain and fear once lingered. The battle was over, their energy spent, and now, finally, the time for the ultimate judgement was to be had.

Khelbiros, The Pouncing Challenger, had performed well throughout the competition, biting and clawing through her foes, knocking over those who would stand before her. There was a moment when the former Iron DM looked ready to be taken down - but that was not to be Khelbiros' path. For Inem rose up stronger than before, and gathering a score of 51.3, claims the title of Iron

DM 2017 - for the first time in history, defending the title successfully against the arena of challengers! Congratulations!



And well done to each and every other participant this year - all the challengers and hopefuls, all the judges, and all the audience! Continue to write, run, and participate in great adventures over the next year, and stay tuned for next year's competition, where a thoroughly exhausted Inem will have to battle his way through yet another arena of hopefuls and challengers, each intent on claiming the crown, and becoming the Iron DM!





It's the 8th annual season of OUTPLAY for RPG Crossing! It starts with a huge group of strong competitors, but it always ends up the same way! Over the course of a summer of grueling competition, the winners advance, and face stiffer and stiffer competition, until at last, only one can remain. This year, we shipwrecked the players who wrote some of the toughest competition and best writing to date, and the judges sweated each round of the competition! Over the brutal summer, the field of

play was whittled down until only the best remained.

The Final Three players competing in RPGX OUTPLAY Season 8 were:

**D&D 5e:** Wynamoinen playing *Syarafina*  
**Mutants & Masterminds:** JackinIrons playing *Wanderer*

**Pathfinder:** Blackfyre playing *Kavax the Magnificent*

These four excellent competitors duked it out, until only one was left standing. And that one was the final winner of Outplay of 2017:

**Wynamoinen's Princess Syarafina!**

Congratulations to ALL the players who entered the arena and special thanks to the judges and volunteers who make it all possible.

# POST OF THE MONTH

The Post of The Month competition is still running strong on RPG Crossing, and it continues to highlight some of the finest work by site members on a monthly basis.

## THE 2017 WINNERS

Date	Winner	Link
Jan 17	Morathor	<a href="#">here</a>
Feb 17	Huhart	<a href="#">here</a>
Mar 17	Eleven Sided Die	<a href="#">here</a>
Apr 17	Alcyone	<a href="#">here</a>
May 17	Adorios	<a href="#">here</a>
Jun 17	Tilal	<a href="#">here</a>
Jul 17	Khelbiros	<a href="#">here</a>
Aug 17	Gallupsmirror	<a href="#">here</a>
Sep 17	LittleBlueNA	<a href="#">here</a>
Oct 17	JackinIrons	<a href="#">here</a>
Nov 17	Kjellldon	<a href="#">here</a>
Dec 17	Wynamoinen	<a href="#">here</a>



# SHORT STORY COMPETITION

In the library lives a monthly challenge to write a short story started by the wonderful Klazzform a few years ago and more recently picked up by Aethera. Each month a theme is posted, along with three additional elements that are optional, just for the challenge of incorporating random items into your story. We have great stories submitted each month, so come visit us on the [forum](#)! Here are your winning entries for this year.

## JANUARY 2017

### Lost and Found

by GeneT

## APRIL 2017

### Dream Walker

by Seravok

## MAY 2017

### Here Lies Happily Ever After

by Zany

## JUNE 2017

### A Turn of Events

by Wynamoinen

## JULY 2017

### Library Connection

by Captain Devonin

## SEPTEMBER 2017

### Ladyfingers

by Samibb8

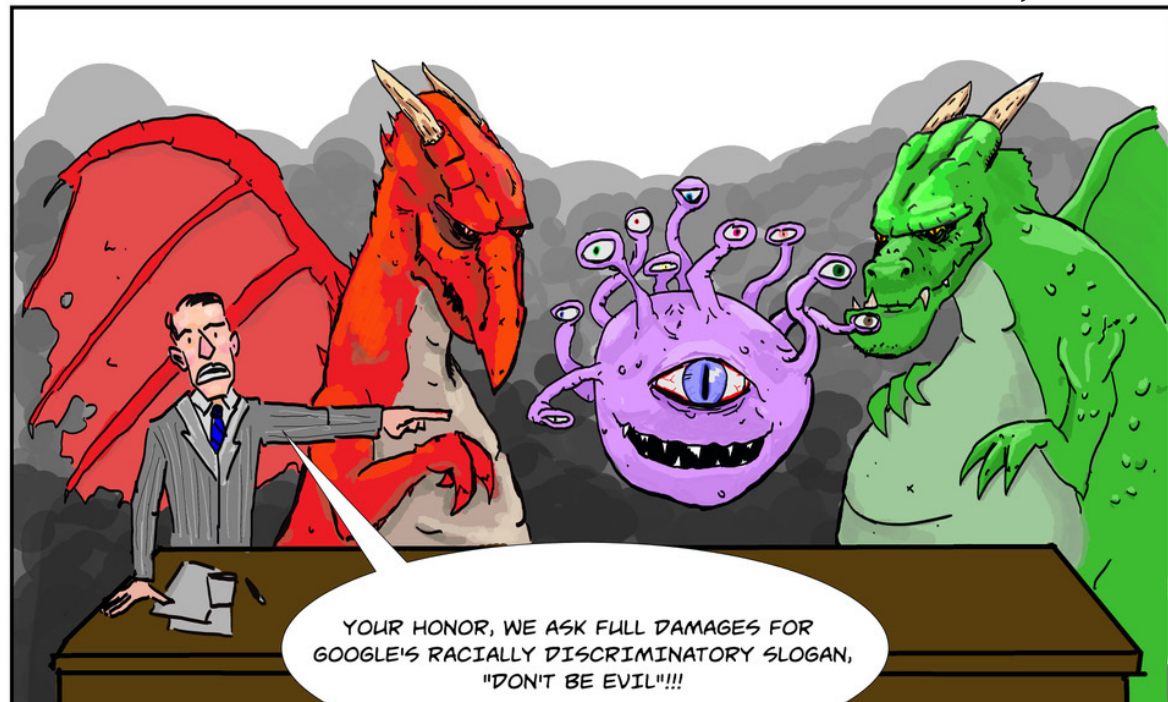
## OCTOBER 2017

### The Voyage of the ISS Gratitude

by Undeadrajib

## JEFF TOONS

Words: Arucard Art: Jeffkevlar







SHORT STORY  
**LOST  
AND  
FOUND**

*by GeneT*



I was glad it was winter and that I lived in Wisconsin. Even now, there is no real winter in Florida or South Carolina, no matter what anyone says. You can argue that these places don't really exist any longer, at least under those names, but I'd still be right. Sure, it may rain and the temperature may be cooler, but it's not the cold of a Wisconsin Winter. And, as long as my feet touch ground, there still is a Wisconsin and it still is damn cold. I know the cold. And so do my people. We have been here since the Muskrat saved us and the Great Hare rebuilt our house. But it doesn't matter. Nothing matters. There are no heroes, no transformations, no animal spirits. As it always has been, there is just us and them. Which is why I'm happy for the cold. It let's me hide the steel cap I've fashioned to fit against my shaved head under a knit beanie and the hood of my coat. I don't remember making it and the steel never warms against my skin but I don't mind. I'd rather shiver than have them take me.



**SHE WHISPERED,  
HER WORDS  
SEETHING STEAM  
LET FREE IN  
AIRY BURSTS  
ACROSS HER LIPS**

At first, when they slipped into our spaces and more and more of us acted erratically, it was a disease, or a virus, or inequality, Fascisms, religious extremisms, and because of 'the degeneration of our society' from the principles of its founding. But that was a load of crap. People are stupid and terrified people even more so. Explanations don't need to be reasonable when day after day more and more are taken and turn murderously on those left. It was only a matter of time until the

whole thing man had made came crumbling down and we returned to the wolf and rabbit, the strong versus the weak. And there were few, if any, wolves who had good spirits and shining coats in those days. It was the year of the mean and ugly.

The first few weeks were the worst. The collapse wasn't gradual or slow. It was like a nuclear ballistic missile that scorched the ground

for miles and shuddered the heavens until burning rain sizzled against exposed flesh. It was an abrupt and bloody scream. Society didn't go waltzing into the dark. It consumed itself, neighbor to neighbor, city to city, nation to nation. By the time we realized the truth, that they were here, it was much too late. By then, none of us were brothers and sisters.

We fought and fell unconnected or in small groups which sacrificed the weakest for a few more days of breathing, letting them take more of our lives and land while we dwindled until there was only solitary rabid ones like me left. Too smart to die and stupid enough to believe I could last it out. Hide from them. Resist despair. Feed myself. Find some woman and restart mankind. That sort of schizoid dreaming.

In the end, I was alone and I tried not to move out in the open much, but I had to scavenge and hunt to stockpile stores or starve. I had to be careful. A steel cap didn't make me Superman. They would know I was not one of them even if they saw me from a distance. I think they somehow shared their thoughts or were linked like those Borg people on Star Trek. I imagine that's how they took our minds, stole our persons, bore into our souls and hollowed them out so they

could take up residence. The steel cap protected me. As did the fact that we weren't made to scavenge and hunt in the dark and luckily neither were they. Perhaps because when they stole our skin they suffered some of our limitations, which is why they weren't physically stronger or faster and could be killed just like us with a hatchet or even a heavy stone if one was caught unaware while taking a sh\*\* behind a burned out gas station. I think things would have ended different if I had had my hatchet close or found a large piece of brick when she found me. But probably not, as I preferred to run. Besides, all I had was a little bit of paper.

She appeared suddenly, vaulting over the remains of the cinder block wall and crouched low, hiding, breathing hard through her nose trying to make little noise. I was as quiet as I could possibly be, but my efforts were fresh and the smell gave me away quickly. Her arms made a small arc as she scrambled away

from me and brought the end of a small pistol even with my head. There didn't seem much left to do and I didn't really favor dying dirty with my pants down. I started to clean up figuring my ride was about to end.

She whispered, her words seething steam let free in airy bursts across her lips.

"Quiet. They'll hear us," she said.

I went rigid against the cinder blocks, naked butt peaking from the edge of my shirt, pants bunched up around my ankles, my legs eventually starting to shake from the effort and the freezing cold. After a while, she glanced over the edge of the blocks looking for them and then stood while backing away from me, keeping the gun's mouth at my eyes. She didn't speak at first, so I didn't ask and pulled up my pants.

"Slowly."

I nodded my head. She

## WE ARE LIKE ISLANDS IN THE SEA, SEPARATE ON THE SURFACE BUT CONNECTED IN THE DEEP.

sighed and peaked over her shoulder, doubt flickering across her forehead in wavy lines that pulled her eyebrows together. I knew she couldn't kill me, at least with the gun. It would be too loud and they would find us. So I stayed put as there was no reason to force the issue and waited for her to make a decision, one way or another.

"Where's your stuff," she said after a while.

I pointed around the corner where I'd left my pack. She edged past me in a wide circle, gun unwavering. After putting my pack across her shoulders, she picked up

my hatchet and, after a short moment of consideration, during which I held my breath, secured it in a loop of her belt.

"Where's your hiding place?"

I nodded east and she mimicked the motion with a flick of the gun. I started walking and she kept a usable distance between us. After a while, she asked for my name. I pretended not to hear and kept walking. She didn't ask it of me again. I think my name didn't really matter.

We are like islands in the sea, separate on the surface but connected in the deep.

I didn't take her to one of my temporary hiding places. I took her home. A place I rarely went unless scared or tired or sad. I don't really know why because it is a sacred place. My sacred place. A place I had not visit more than three times in the last month. I had stocked it with tins of cat food and beans. A few boxes of crackers, some

**I EASED BACK MY HOOD AND REMOVED MY BEANIE WITH ONE HAND. MY STEEL SKULL CAP GLEAMED EVEN IN THE DARK AND HER EYES WIDENED IN FEAR.**

flimsy and wafer thin, others thick and seedy, lined a single wall. I had wrapped them in any plastic I could find so that they stayed dry, or mostly so. It was dark in my place as little light filtered in from above through the piled remains of what had been civilization and past the grimy back window of a school bus that was buried nose end deep into the silt of our collapse. We had to crawl thru a warren of debris to reach it, layer upon layer of twisted rusting refuse and damp crawl spaces.

It was safe. Even if they had seen us enter, the path was impossible. Living on a thread made one's sense acute. Our eyes had accustomed to the dark quickly just as our noses had accustomed to this life. We could see easily enough and she still held the gun high, level and steady. She kept her distance, sitting precariously on the back of a bench

row in the middle of the bus while I laid in the rotting driver's seat. The gun eventually wavered as she ate, the smell of cat food permeating the half-light, the sound of our teeth breaking crackers a pleasant staccato to our breathing. I lit no candles. Even here, deep in my place, we feared them finding us despite the impossibility. We attended any sound, even small, with exquisite attention, halting our chewing until sure it was something natural, something safe, something that did not clutter the sound of our eating and breathing. The days and weeks of our heartbeats had taught us such things, such vigilance, such skittishness.

She watched me as she ate, green eyes hidden in tight narrow folds of skin. Once she had eaten her fill, her eyes were worse on me, brighter and difficult to weather. I pretended to scrape the last bits from my tin with a broken plastic spoon and picked crumbs from my beard. Anything to avoid looking into them, those green eyes; bright, narrow, soft, understanding, probing.

"What's that? Under your hood," she said.

The gun came up, wary and smart, watchful. She rose up on her legs and braced herself straddling the seat. I shrugged trying to change the subject but a shadow crossed

her face and her eyes flashed as she scanned for the exits of my place.

"Show me," she said.

"Now."

I eased back my hood and removed my beanie with one hand. My steel skull cap gleamed even in the dark and her eyes widened in fear.

"You're one of them," she said straightening her arm rigid as if the gun were a shield.

It had been a long time since I had seen another person. I couldn't remember the last time I was so close to one let alone have one speak and share a meal. But I knew the danger of company well enough. I had come across its remains in the past. There is a point that survival dictates the availability of compassion. And from what I had found, compassion had died out with the weak. I showed her the palms if my hands and



waited. There was little that prevented her from letting the gun speak. Down here, in my place, the sound would echo indistinctly and fade away as my blood leaked out. Even they wouldn't be able to pinpoint its origin.

"Take your clothes off. All of them. Slowly," she said.

I was never good with people anyway, which is probably why I had survived as long as I had. I didn't understand them most times. They confused me. I found their words often at odds with their bodies; the angle of their eyebrows, the smoothness of their cheeks, what their shoulders and hands had to say, the brief, tiny, nearly imperceptible twitches of their lips that ghosted their words. But I understood her in that moment. She was looking for something. Something I was not. So I undressed, slowly, with the gun as a voyeur.

With each layer that I

discarded, the Wisconsin cold eased closer to my skin. It was nearly a nuisance after a while, especially after I discovered what was left of me. It was as if I had been remade, cobbled back together like some old car from donor parts scavenge in a junk yard. My skin was a field of mismatched pieces varying in color and composition. Pale white skin bordering irregular areas of dark brown. Skin peppered with tiny hairs, peach fuzz mixed into animal fur and plastic. A glint of metal over the sharp point of my joints. Nothing real. Nothing me. After a while, I looked back up at her and waited until I watched a flicker of change on the wisps of the corner of her lips. She wasn't aware of it, but I was even as I was struggled with the revelation and the lies I had told myself - of what I really was. That I was one of them. Another voice inside me woke.

"Get dressed. We're leaving," she said.

It would have been simpler if I had lunged at her. Defining. But whatever change had been amended in my mind was not in charge and, with each layer that covered what I was as I put my clothes back on, I remembered who I had been. I regained the calm assurance that not everything I wanted to do was what I wanted and that I had a choice. As if the shock of the discovery unhinged the

door shutting my memories away, I found it hard to breathe and harder to look into her green eyes. I had shut and locked that door long ago. A defense against that other who I wished was not part of me, but was there none the less. I shivered under

**I WAS NEVER GOOD WITH PEOPLE ANYWAY, WHICH IS PROBABLY WHY I HAD SURVIVED AS LONG AS I HAD. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THEM MOST TIMES. THEY CONFUSED ME.**

its sudden freedom and striving after such a long dormancy. Seeing myself, the parts me of that were not flesh and blood, but were none the less part of what I was, began to let loose everything inside the whole of me that I had denied.

I led the way out of my special place. She followed, crawling a suitable distance behind me, gun held tight in one hand. Part of me knew that the gun was useless.

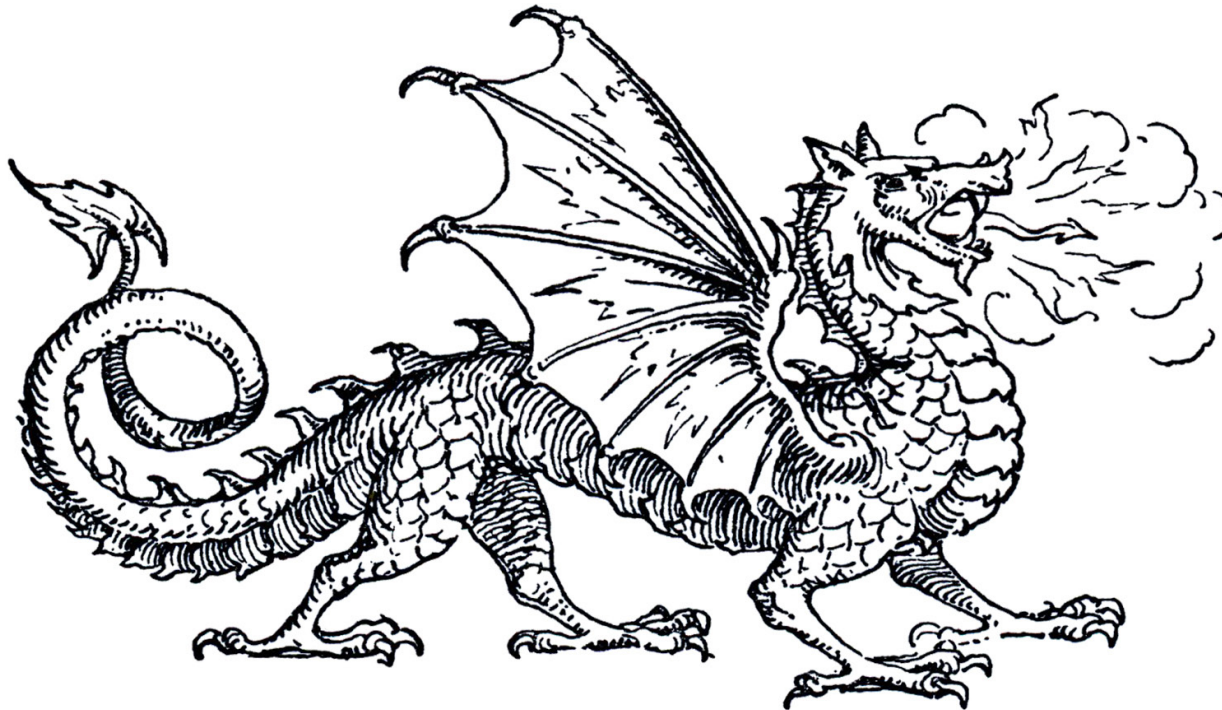


# A VISIT FROM HESTABY

*by Imveros*

Twas the night before Christmas,  
and all through The Sprawl  
Not a being was stirring,  
even for a pub crawl;  
Security systems and traps  
were set with great care,  
In the hopes this year the  
Halloweeners just wouldn't dare;

The runners were nestled  
all snug in their beds,  
While visions of milk runs  
danced in their heads.  
Our decker in the Matrix,  
and I with my scotch,  
Had just settled in for the  
midnight shift watch.



When out on the street,  
there was such a boom,  
I slipped from my chair and  
scuttled cross the room.  
Upside of the window, I  
crept with my gun,  
Maybe tonight, I would  
have some fun.

The moon glared harshly on  
the street's greyish slush  
Uncomfortably resembling a  
certain brand of Soy Mush,  
When, what to my enhanced  
eyes should appear,  
But a crashed DocWagon truck  
and eight confused Shasta Deer,



A scarred up old rigger, a  
dwarf short and stout,  
Easily identified as  
Angus O. Clout.  
Faster than than ghouls, his  
drones leapt from the rig.  
Each marked with the logo  
of a grunting hell pig.

"Now Crusher! Now Crasher!  
Now, Fixer and Flows!  
Round those deer back up  
before the old wiz wyrm shows!  
Put them back in the  
truck! Do it now, Sport!  
We've got to get this to the  
Tir ship at the port!"

As scraps of trash in the  
light breeze do shift,  
Those drones rounded the deer  
up, they did it quite swift.  
Back into the truck, they  
were tightly packed,  
While back in the cab, a  
shotgun Angus racked.

'Twas but a second, but  
something landed above,  
With weight enough to  
give the ceiling a shove,

I tried not to sneeze, as  
plascrete dust flew,  
When outside the window  
Hestaby's face came into view.

With scales of copper,  
teeth bared with intent,  
The walls of our structure  
her talons did rend,  
Launch herself, she did  
towards the street,  
That stupid dwarf smuggler  
was definitely dead meat.

His drones he did launch!  
His grin it was manic!  
Mere seconds later it  
turned into panic!  
The drones they were  
crushed, he fired his gun!  
For once, no one fired  
back from the slum.

The stump of his arm still  
hung out from the door,  
As the dragon let out a  
window-rattling roar.  
To our BTL-chipping  
decker, it was but a puff,  
Our oblivious shaman? He'd  
smoked the good stuff.

The dragon settled down  
next to the van,  
And out from the back  
the deer then ran.  
One by one she checked  
on her herd,  
Finding them safe, one  
might say she purred.

With a flick of her claws,  
signal she did,  
And back into the vehicle  
the deer went and hid.  
She gripped the truck tight and  
lifted up from the ground,  
I'd known from the start the  
dwarf would lose this round.

Up into the sky, the  
dragon she rose,  
Clutching her prize with  
her taloned toes,  
I heard her exclaim, as  
she flew out of sight,  
"Steal from me and you won't  
live through the night."





SHORT STORY

# LADYFINGERS

by Samibb8



Sukhanya tossed the red flannel sheets off and rolled over on her back. Waves of heat boiled up from within as sweat coated her body. She turned over on her side pulling the pillow out from under her and wrapped it over her head. Frustrated, Sukhanya rolled over in the other direction, this time facing Kish. Kish was sleeping like a baby, not a care in the world. Sukhanya snuggled up to him, listening to the rhythm of his heart hoping it would lull her into the same sleep. I have got to get to sleep. She gnashed her teeth and tightened her eyelids refusing to let them come

open. A few minutes passed. Kish snored. Sukhanya squirmed. "This is not working," she murmured.

Grumbling, Sukhanya stumbled out of bed and walked over to the dressing table. Dipping her hands into cold water, she splashed it on her face. Feeling around she located her ring, shiny and silvery. She slipped it onto her gnarly finger wincing. She picked up her mirror and glanced at the reflection. Gone was her youth. Gone in that blasted mirror. The



stranger staring back at her shared only her copper eyes. Her lustrous ebony hair had turned salty. Her once glowing cinnamon skin looked more like weathered papyrus now. She sighed and set the mirror down. Perhaps it would have been better not to look.

She picked up her cloak and wrapped it around herself as she tiptoed down the rickety wooden stairs. Downstairs the guests for today's party were sprawled out on bedrolls atop a wooden plank floor

**HER ONCE  
GLOWING  
CINNAMON SKIN  
LOOKED MORE  
LIKE WEATHERED  
PAPYRUS NOW.  
SHE SIGHED  
AND SET THE  
MIRROR DOWN.**

with woolen blankets heaped over them. The fire was still burning in the hearth. "Should be fine till dawn," thought Sukhanya.

She looked at the clock standing in the sitting room. Two AM.

She moaned. It had been the same for the last two weeks. Every night she tucked herself under the covers

and somehow sleep evaded her. Tonight had been no different. But today, today was a big day. Sidd had completed his training for the Raj's Elven Guard. Today was his graduation day, and a proud day for the entire family. Few withstood the grueling training. To have withstood this and have been selected to serve the Raj was among the greatest of honors.

Sidd was everything his mother was not. Tall, proud, outspoken and athletic, very much like Kish. Sukhanya on the other hand was short, soft spoken and a potionmaker by trade with a penchant for baking. Despite these differences, Sukhanya and Sidd had always been able to find common ground. Usually over a piece of one of Sukhanya's fine cakes. Every birthday from the age of one had been marked by one of her fine creations. Which was why today's cake had to be perfect.

The cake. Sukhanya's mind jolted onto high alert. Did she have enough eggs? Was there enough butter from last week's churning? Should it be a coconut cake or a chocolate one? Which one was Sidd's current favorite? What about the fillings? Would there be enough time for it to cool after baking before the frosting needed be spread? And what color for the frosting?

Sukhanya's heart pounded and she began to sweat anew. Her hands were suddenly cold and she felt nauseous.

She closed her eyes, willing away the list of questions. For two weeks she had been obsessing over this. Each question mulled over a hundred times, but still being asked over and over again.

Outside the cry of a mourning dove announced the coming of dawn. Graduation Day. Sukhanya jumped up. Time to get started. Walking into the kitchen, she grabbed some eggs out of a basket and cracked them into a bowl. Then taking out a fork she whipped them up to a foamy consistency and slowly added sugar butter and flour. Finally she heated the fine chocolate she had purchased at the market and poured it into the mix. She tested the taste and texture of the mix. She smiled, just right.

Next she poured the cake into pans, filling them exactly





## MAGIC ITEM IDEAS

# STAVES FOR YOU

From our members, we present to you some very special magical Staves. Feel free to use these in your world building! And remember, if your game doesn't use Magical Staves, you can repurpose these quickly as a Chronocharm, a laptop program, an E1-230 ACM, or a Transflux Metaducer, as needed.

### STAFF OF KEYS

This otherwise plain wooden staff is engraved with a small closed lock at one end. When the staff's magic is used, the "lock" opens for 1 minute. This staff allows use of the following powers:

- Open/close (1 charge)
- Battering ram (1 charge)
- Knock (1 charge)
- Unbinding (4 charges)

**Caster Level:** 17th

**Prereq's:** Craft Staff, battering ram, knock, open/close, unbinding

**Market Price:** 63,527 gp

**Cost to Create:** 31,876 gp

*Created by: Orcbane*

### STAFF OF LOCKS

This otherwise plain wooden staff is engraved with a small open lock at one end. When the staff's magic is used, the "lock" closes for one minute. This staff allows use of the following powers:

- Open/close (1 charge)
- Arcane lock (1 charge)
- Earth lock (1 charge)
- Imprisonment (4 charges)

**Caster Level:** 17th

**Prereq's:** Craft Staff, arcane lock, earth lock, imprisonment, open/close

**Market Price:** 71,252 gp

**Cost to Create:** 35,626 gp

*Created by: Orcbane*

### RING STAFF

This is a highly polished quarterstaff of dark wood, with 5 circular indentations along the length. Any ring can be placed on the staff, and the unique magic of the staff allows those rings to function normally for the bearer, however, only one at any given time. It's a standard action to activate the ring, and it will only work while the staff is held or carried by the user. The user can deactivate a ring as a free action.

No other rings can be worn by the owner of the staff however. Only the ones on the staff will work when the staff is carried. The staff is a +2 quarterstaff for all other purposes.

**Caster Level:** 20th

**Market Price:** minor artifact



## STAFF OF MAGIC DETECTION

This is a highly polished, lightweight blue steel staff, marked with engraved runes along the length. This staff will ring like a chime whenever it touches a magical spell, magic item, etc., or when such items touch the staff. This applies to area of effect spells as well. In all other aspects, it is a +1 quarterstaff.

## STAFF OF RUST

This +1 metal quarterstaff looks rusted and pitted but is actually quite powerful. Once per day, it can affect an object as if it were a rust monster (ie, a rusting grasp spell). It also completely protects the wearer and her gear from rust (magical or otherwise), including the attack of a rust monster.

## STAFF OF FARSTRIKING

+1 Quarterstaff that can strike enemies from afar.

Three times per day, as a free action, this ability can be activated to cause the next attack to strike an opponent within 30' with normal melee attack and damage. This does not change the type of damage, just the range for the single attack. This can be used as part of a full attack action, having one or more of the attacks use this ability. This does not increase the area threatened. Only one end of the staff can be used to Farstrike.

**Caster Level:** 7th;

**Prereq's:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, telekinesis.

**Price:** 4600 gold (+1 quarterstaff/Farstrike one end only), 6600 (+1 quarterstaff both ends, Farstrike one end).

*Initially created by JJ\_Wolven*

## BARBED STAFF

A barbed weapon has wicked barbs all over it so that it deals more damage on a critical hit. A barbed weapon's critical damage increases by 1 (e.g. x2 -> x3 -> x4, etc.)

**Caster Level:** 10th

**Prereq's:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, keen edge

**Price:** +1 bonus (thus, 4600 gold (+1 quarterstaff/Barbed one end only), 6600 (+1 quarterstaff both ends, Barbed on one end).

*by Maxxrox*

STAFF OF FARSTRIKING

BARBED STAFF

STAFF OF MAGIC DETECTION

STAFF OF RUST







SHORT STORY

# THE VOYAGE OF THE ISS GRATITUDE

*by Undeadrajib*

**E**veryone remembers the day the gods descended to earth from the heavens. A Tuesday, it was. They came upon golden chariots, clad in vestments of gold, silver, and platinum; bedecked with diamonds and rubies. In fact, the gods seemed to have a real thing for jewelry. Only slightly taller than a tallish human, the gods were multi-armed, some multi-headed. The chief among them had four heads, looking to four directions. They called him Brahma. There were several others. A smiling one atop a giant eagle-like craft, for instance. There was the one whose face shone brighter than the sun, riding on a chariot pulled by seven mechanical horses. And one with the head of an elephant, riding what can only be described as a tiny mouse. The Hindus were overjoyed of course. For a while. For the gods who came down to earth looked at humanity and said, "Tsk".



"Have you perfected interstellar travel?", the gods asked.

"Uh, no", humanity answered.

"Have you moved past scarcity and formed an egalitarian world government?", they implored.

Two humans with funny haircuts looked to each other and intoned, "No!"

"You at least know what 42 means, right?"

Silence. Then a wheezy voice from the back cried out, "The answer to life, the universe, and everything?"

"OK, I'll give you that one."

"Look, here's the deal", the four-headed one continued. "We are an ascended race originally from a planet around what you call the Cygnus X-1 star. We have expanded to many other star systems of course. We belong to a galactic

council of superior civilizations, known as the 'Galactic Council of Superior Civilizations'. We help fledgling cultures evolve and reach the limit of their growth. Like, I am sure you are not fully satisfied with your life, are you? Think about how much more you can achieve. I mean, if you would just awaken your potential, it would fill the void and help you reach the place you deserve. All in return for twenty percent of your resources. Hmm.

Anyway, we came to your world fifty thousand years ago and gave you the tools to develop your culture. We expected that by now you would have developed enough to shoulder some responsibility yourselves. You know, go to a new world and sow the seeds of enlightenment. A pay it forward sort of a deal. Turns out you are a bunch of lazy bums." The god/alien/alien-god sighed loudly, flattening a couple of buildings in the process. "Oh well, we are here already, aren't we? Let's just get this over with. We'll give you FTL and cybernetics and genehack. All the good stuff. You need to send a ship to this here location. And you know,

spread the wealth and stuff."

"One other thing", the god with the elephant head stepped forward and said, "Last time we were here, your cave-dwelling ancestors had something called dogs as pets. Real cute. You still have them, right? Get me one of those." And so a dog, of the beagle variety, was hastily furnished. The god-alien, known as Ganesha, patted the dog on its head and fed it a sweetmeat. It then turned to the gathered humans and said, "You have to take this guy with you on your trip."

Humanity shrugged its shoulders and said, "Okay. We guess."

.....

And so here we are, two earth days away from the end of our three-week journey. Using the new gifts, an expedition was set up within the year. Some of the best scientific and technical minds of the world were gathered and sent off on a mission to Chion 20, roughly twenty light years away. In the spirit of 'pay-it-forward', they named the ship Gratitude. Although Sergei thinks it should have been called the ISS Obligation instead.

Chion, they told us, is populated by

AND SO  
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two species of nearly equivalent intelligence level. Which could be a challenge. Both were currently in what can be considered their bronze age. One was a species of extremely long-necked triped creatures about three meters tall, while the others were ferret like bushy-tailed four-legged burrowers. They would likely have to choose between one or the other. The ferrets are reportedly way cuter than the giraffes. I wonder if that would sway the decision. "Heeey buddy! Who wants a belly rub?" Yup. It probably will. It's Steve the Stupid. "Woof!", I reply, despite myself.

When the elephant-headed god fed me that sweet, I ingested a concentrated cocktail of neuro-stimulators and genetic de-inhibitors that rapidly enhanced my intelligence to a level of their pets, which is a couple of rungs up the ladder from humans. They did not trust the humans to fulfill the mission on their own. So they sent me to keep things on track.

I have been gently nudging

IN THE SPIRIT  
OF 'WE ARE  
HERE ALREADY,  
AREN'T WE?', THE  
HUMANS DECIDED  
TO GO FORTH  
WITH THE PLAN.

things here and there since then, to make sure things are under control. It is difficult though. Because while my mind was elevated, my body, my limbs, and my voice box are still that of a dog. I believe no one on the ship has even caught on to the fact that I am smarter than them. "Whose a good boy! Whose a good boy!", Steve persists. "Woof woof!" That's Anil over there, preoccupied with a piece of pizza. "Grruff!" This is futile. Damn it!

.....

Two days later, the Gratitude enters the Chionian atmosphere, ready to make final approach. Preliminary scans revealed that the

'gods' made another miscalculation. The natives of Chion have progressed a little further than the bronze age and were presently in pre-industrial middle-ages kind of situation. In the spirit of 'we are here already, aren't we?', the humans decided to go forth with the plan. However, whereas it would have been bestowing of gifts before, now there would be a negotiation.

The Gratitude lands outside what looked like the biggest ferret city. As the forward hatch opens in a blast of blue lights and steam, a group of humans descends, with a beagle in front of the party. Ahead of them, a detachment of the ferret army has taken up positions, armed with spears and shields, some riding beasts that look like boars. The leader of the humans, a stern-faced diplomat called Brown steps forward. She looks at the one who

seems to be the king and starts speaking her well-rehearsed lines.

"Greetings. We come in peace. We have come here from a planet known as earth with a very exciting opportunity. Would you like to unlock your full potential? Do you think you are living up to all your dreams right now? Aren't you all tired of the day to day drudgery? Who here would like to spend more time with family instead of, you know, doing wars and stuff? In each one of you is a being capable of conquering the galaxy. By conquering, of course, I mean with intellect..."

As the woman spoke, for some reason the spiel sounds familiar. I know I am colorblind, but I can still see red flags go up. I wrack my enhanced brains, going through the database put there by the gods to try and identify where it is from. Brown carries on.

"...So all it would take is for you to register with us. We will mentor you all the way. While giving you all the space you need, of course. We will take twenty percent of your resources. But in about ten upto fifty thousand years time, you will be ready to spread the wealth elsewhere. So this small investment will pay for itself..."

'Bloody hell. It's a bloody pyramid scheme!'

The Ferret king listens patiently until said

patience runs out. He (She? It? Let's go with it) raises a hand and Brown falls silent. It then proceeds to speak, in a mix of whistles and grunts. Thankfully, the gods gave us translators. "You have our gratitude for coming all the way here. But we are already spoken for. We had another group of aliens come by not a long time back. With the same offer. We have already done this registration with them. So... sorry?"

"Oh. What about the giraffes? You know, the other ones?"

"You might try. But someone got to them as well I think. Good luck at the next planet, I suppose."

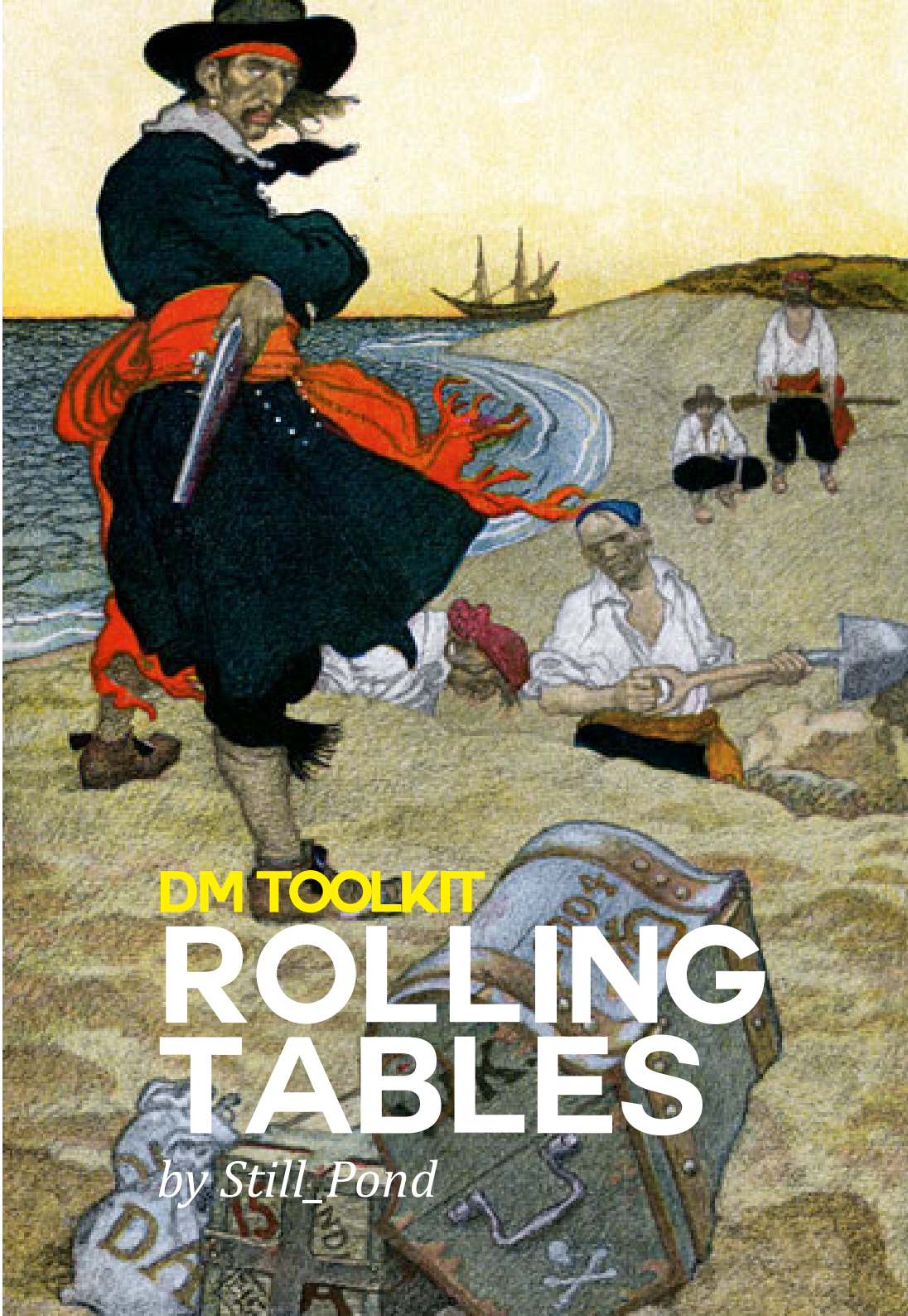
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DM TOOLKIT

# ROLLING TABLES

by Still\_Pond

## ROLLING

TABLES CAN BE a useful tool in a DM's toolbox. Rollmaster is well known for using random tables for all sorts of things and is a great game to look at (and borrow from) when building your own tables. Tables can be for just about anything. You need a villain but you are not feeling particularly inspired? Roll on the random villain generator! (see Table #1 below) You can add or modify the table to suit your needs. Need a name for a weapon, roll one up! (see table #2 below). What about a meal or a book title, you can whip up a table for those too. (See tables #3 and #4) Once you take the time to build a table, you can use it many times, refining it as you do.

Adding tables to a game can create the illusion that the player's fate is in their hands instead of the DM's. The players fail a skill check of some sort? Instead of just telling them what happens, allow them to roll on a table of possible failure options. One option should mitigate the failure a little, (perhaps entirely), and one option should be pretty interesting or nasty. The DM controls the options so nothing game breaking is even on the rolling table, but the player can't blame the DM

**YOU NEED A VILLAIN BUT YOU ARE NOT FEELING PARTICULARLY INSPIRED? ROLL ON THE RANDOM VILLAIN GENERATOR!**

if they roll a 1 on the table and suddenly find themselves within a swarm of angry bees! It can be fun for a DM to come



up with exactly how an event plays out, so I keep my table options a little vague. "Angry bees" might be the result that I can then flesh out. Maybe they are giant bees, or maybe the bees are so bad they block the way so the PCs are forced someplace more interesting, or maybe "Bees" is an orcish gang name. It is also fun to read a table, and just imagine what the other outcomes a different roll might have wrought. Sometimes one result can lead to another roll on yet ANOTHER fun table. Maybe instead of "angry bees"

the result was "angry swarm : roll on the swarm table to see what kind". So...they roll another 1. Damn their luck, it is a swarm of flying rust monster larvae! (20 might be a swarm of fuzzy bunnies).

I find it quite enjoyable to build these tables. Coming up with various nasty fates for my PCs AND getting to share them is quite fun. You can toss in things that you'd "never do" and actually get to do them! And nobody can blame you! There is no reason good ideas can't be used on another table

at another time either, if you are particularly proud of them. "You catch fire" is a classic that fits more situations than you

## SOMETIMES ONE RESULT CAN LEAD TO ANOTHER ROLL ON YET ANOTHER FUN TABLE.

might expect. Another nice thing about using such tables on RPGCrossing is that we use virtual dice, so a die can have

any number of "sides" (or is it faces?). These tables are not for official publication, so who cares if they only have 89 things instead of 100. Roll a D89 then. Sometimes you want more of a bell curve to your outcomes. In that case, roll multiple dice (like 3d4 instead of 1d12). If you want help with visualizing the probability spread, Anydice.com is a great tool. Like any tool, one could over use random tables, but there are times where they can breathe a little freshness into a game. I encourage any DM to give them a try.

## IN-GAME EXAMPLE

Players are trying to find their way through a forest back to a major road. One of them takes the lead and the others follow.

Behind the DM screen, my impulse is to have them get lost on a failure, so I pad the table with various 'become lost' outcomes, some worse than others. I toss in the 'loose a boot' thing because maybe one of them has magic boots and I want a way to reduce their items or weaken them in a specific way. Maybe fate will allow

this to happen. I also want to give them a chance to succeed a little, so I put in options for them to find the road, but it just takes longer. I assume that they'll find the road on a roll of 16 and above, one way or another. On a twenty, they can negate the original skill failure all together, but note - if I really want them to become lost I can still do this and stay true to the table result. I mention this because a random table doesn't really take the control from the DM, it just looks like it does.

DM says, "I need a survival roll, DC12. If you fail, roll a D20 on the following table:"

ROLL	OUTCOME
1	You become lost, hurt badly and separated.
2	You become lost and hurt badly.
3	You become lost, and hurt a little.
4	You become lost one person is hurt badly.
5	You become lost and one person is hurt a little.
6	You become lost.
7	You are hurt badly.
8	You are hurt a little.
9	one person is hurt badly.
10	One person is hurt a little.
11	You each lose a boot.
12	You each lose both boots.
13	You all get wet.
14	Everyone gets many bug bites, and are wet, and lose one boot.
15	It gets dark and you make little progress.
16	It gets dark, but you see the road.
17	You make the road by sunset.
18	You get very muddy.
19	You get twigs in your hair.
20	Not so much as a scratch.

The player fails the check and rolls a 5 on the table. "You become lost and one person is hurt a little" I then chose to use another table to expand upon the results of the previous outcome. I roll a D5 to pick which PC gets hurt and then a D20 to see how they get hurt, hoping for a 14.

ROLL	PC	ROLL	HAZARD
1	PC 2	1	Thorns!
2	PC 2	2	Low branch!
3	PC 3	3	Trippy Roots!
4	PC 4	4	Trippy Shrooms!
5	PC 5	5	Falling branch!
		6	Hole!
		7	Cliff!
		8	Angry Bees!
		9	Angry Hornets!
		10	Angry Birds!
		11	Angry Owl!
		12	Entangling vines!
		13	Quicksand
		14	Sharp stick when you sit down!
		15	Loose Rock!
		16	Falling Rock!
		17	Aggressive fungi!
		18	Domino Fall!
		19	Grabbed the wrong plant!
		20	FIRE!

# RANDOM VILLAIN GENERATOR

Roll 5d100 on the following table:

Roll	Title/quality	Roll	Name	Roll	The Quality	Roll	Profession	Roll	of what
1	Bald	1	Ace	1	the angry	1	absorber	1	of all things beautiful
2	Bearded	2	Adam	2	the bastard	2	ambusher	2	of all things good
3	Big	3	Arther	3	the beautiful	3	attacker	3	of all things holy
4	Black	4	Ash	4	the beguiling	4	bandit	4	of all things honest
5	Bloodthirsty	5	Bezliza	5	the betraying	5	basher	5	of authority
6	Bloody	6	Bronto	6	the brooding	6	beater	6	of babies
7	Clean	7	Bruhilda	7	the calculating	7	benefactor	7	of beasts
8	Clockwork	8	Cleo	8	the careful	8	breaker	8	of blood
9	Cold	9	Cranx	9	the chain-dragging	9	breeder	9	of bodies
10	Crooked	10	Desman	10	the childish	10	burner	10	of body parts
11	Cruel	11	Dick	11	the Connected	11	burrier	11	of bones
12	Crusty	12	Dig	12	the contagious	12	buyer	12	of bowls
13	Cursed	13	Doctor	13	the cowardly	13	collector	13	of chaos
14	Dancing	14	Dog	14	the crazy	14	consumer	14	of children
15	Dark	15	Dread	15	the creepy	15	corruptor	15	of contracts
16	Deformed	16	Ed	16	the Dark	16	crusher	16	of corpses
17	Devil	17	Emmitt	17	the deadly	17	cutter	17	of darkness
18	Dirty	18	Erasmus	18	the deliberate	18	deceiver	18	of death
19	Dread pirate	19	Eve	19	the depraved	19	defiler	19	of Deepthings
20	Drunk	20	Gloria	20	the Despicable	20	destroyer	20	of dragons
21	Duke	21	Grim	21	the destructive	21	digester	21	of dreams
22	Fabulous	22	Grub	22	the diseased	22	digger	22	of entrails
23	Fast-talking	23	Gurgleheimer	23	the dishonest	23	dissolver	23	of everything
24	Fat	24	Gwen	24	the disorganized	24	distributor	24	of farmers
25	Filthy	25	Hanable	25	the entitled	25	drinker	25	of fate



26	Flatulent	26	Hang	26	the fake	26	drowner	26	of finance
27	Foul	27	HikHak	27	the feared	27	eater	27	of fingers
28	Gaunt	28	Isabell	28	the feral	28	embezzler	28	of fire
29	General	29	Jack	29	the firebreathing	29	enslaver	29	of fishermen
30	Giant	30	Janis	30	the formal	30	entangler	30	of flesh
31	Gleeful	31	Jason	31	the fornicating	31	flayer	31	of fluids
32	Golden	32	Jaws	32	the ghostly	32	fondler	32	of genitals
33	Gory	33	Jill	33	the gifted	33	fool	33	of gods
34	Great	34	Joe	34	the gnarled	34	freezer	34	of health
35	Green	35	Josh	35	the greedy	35	giver	35	of heroes
36	Grouchy	36	Kahn	36	the grotesque	36	Grinder	36	of heroes
37	Handsome	37	Kate	37	the gruesome	37	harvester	37	of history
38	Hard	38	Kimberly	38	the hag-master	38	Hater	38	of homes
39	Hated	39	Kruger	39	the hooded	39	hoarder	39	of hope
40	High	40	Lacy	40	the illustrious	40	Hunter	40	of Ice
41	Hooded	41	Lemar	41	the inappropriate	41	Infector	41	of innocents
42	Horrid	42	Leroy	42	the insane	42	informer	42	of knowledge
43	Hot	43	Lex	43	the invisible	43	keeper	43	of law
44	Hurtful	44	Lien	44	the Jealous	44	lamenter	44	of liberty
45	Infamous	45	Logar	45	the lecherous	45	lasher	45	of lies
46	Iron	46	Mal	46	the lowly	46	Licker	46	of life
47	Languid	47	Malcolm	47	the lying	47	lord	47	of limbs
48	Laughing	48	MangTroll	48	the Mad	48	manipulator	48	of livestock
49	Lean	49	Marge	49	the mechanical	49	melter	49	of magic
50	Lecherous	50	Maw	50	the mighty	50	mincer	50	of meddlers
51	Legendary	51	Mithilda	51	the misguided	51	monster	51	of men
52	Limping	52	Mother	52	the misunderstood	52	obliterator	52	of misery
53	Lord	53	Muhun	53	the Mysterious	53	organizer	53	of monsters
54	Loud	54	Nanbot	54	the nauseating	54	overseer	54	of nature

55	Miserable	55	Nancy	55	the oozing	55	peeler	55	of nobility
56	Miserly	56	Ned	56	the original	56	perverter	56	of orbs
57	Moody	57	Neil	57	the parasitic	57	poisoner	57	of organs
58	Nasty	58	Noose	58	the petty	58	pretender	58	of orphans
59	Nervous	59	Oswald	59	the plane-jumping	59	professor	59	of pain
60	Odd	60	OthLoth	60	the Polite	60	provider	60	of peace
61	Oily	61	Oxalia	61	the popular	61	puller	61	of power
62	Ol'	62	Quinn	62	the powerful	62	raper	62	of purity
63	One-armed	63	Rake	63	the pragmatic	63	reaper	63	of reality
64	One-eyed	64	Richard	64	the prickly	64	remover	64	of sanity
65	Pale	65	Robert	65	the primitive	65	render	65	of Secrets
66	Peg-legged	66	Robin	66	the raging	66	ripper	66	of skin
67	Pock-marked	67	Rog	67	the remarkable	67	rotter	67	of Skins
68	Racist	68	Roofus	68	the rotund	68	ruiner	68	of skulls
69	Rank	69	Root	69	the ruined	69	ruler	69	of souls
70	Raunchy	70	Rose	70	the ruthless	70	scorcher	70	of spines
71	Raw	71	Rothgar	71	the Sadistic	71	scourge	71	of spirits
72	Reborn	72	Rothmire	72	the Secretive	72	shatterer	72	of swarms
73	Red	73	Roy	73	the self-destructive	73	shaver	73	of the forgotten
74	Red-eyed	74	Ruby	74	the selfish	74	shriveler	74	of the few
75	Righteous	75	Saglust	75	the mutant	75	slayer	75	of the goblins
76	Rude	76	Sakiths	76	the short	76	slicer	76	of the jungle
77	Sad	77	Sam	77	the sick	77	smasher	77	of the many
78	Scaled	78	Sanders	78	the silver-tongued	78	smoker	78	of the masses
79	Scared	79	Sarah	79	the Singing	79	smotherer	79	of the nine hells
80	Scorched	80	Sister	80	the slimy	80	squisher	80	of the orcs
81	Sexist	81	Skinard	81	the slithering	81	stainer	81	of the planes
82	Sharp	82	Snape	82	the soulless	82	stalker	82	of the roads
83	Shifty	83	Spit-tooth	83	the Spiteful	83	stitcher	83	of the shadows

84	Silent	84	Steve	84	the starving	84	strangler	84	of the swamps
85	Sir	85	Stitch	85	the thuggish	85	stripper	85	of the Tribe
86	Slick	86	Terry	86	the time-walking	86	taker	86	of the underworld
87	Slow	87	ThornKing	87	the unchallenged	87	thief	87	of time
88	Smelly	88	Tiberius	88	the uncivilized	88	tormentor	88	of tongues
89	Stony	89	Tirell	89	the Undying	89	toucher	89	of treasure
90	Strong	90	Tony	90	the unholy	90	trader	90	of truth
91	Stuttering	91	Travis	91	the unoriginal	91	trapper	91	of undead
92	Tall	92	TrollBeard	92	the unrelenting	92	twister	92	of underthings
93	Tender	93	Tyris	93	the unresting	93	tyrant	93	of vermin
94	Toothy	94	Ungthar	94	the unstoppable	94	unraveler	94	of villages
95	Tough	95	Vadler	95	the vengeful	95	villain	95	of virgins
96	Trusted	96	Vipor	96	the venomus	96	violator	96	of wealth
97	Twitchy	97	Widow	97	the vile	97	wearer	97	of weapons
98	Vulgar	98	Winthorn	98	the violent	98	weaver	98	of women
99	White	99	Worm	99	the wealthy	99	worshiper	99	of worlds
100	Wretched	100	Xorloth	100	the worshiped	100	wretch	100	of zealots





## OPTIONAL VILLAIN DETAIL GENERATOR

Roll 3d20 on the following table:

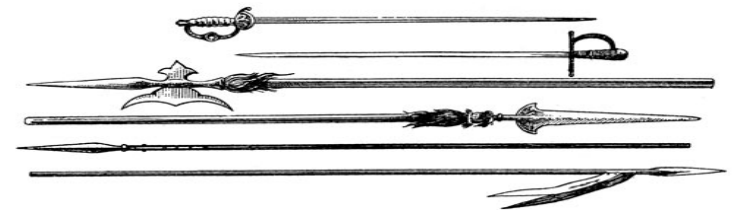
Roll	Weakness	Roll	Secret Super Power	Roll	Escape plan
1	has daddy issues	1	breath weapon	1	not really there - they are some kind of copy
2	afraid of spiders/heights/ tight places/ etc...	2	can summon a thing or group of things	2	can teleport to a pre-determined location
3	is OCD	3	scrys liberally and knows much	3	giant explosion as a distraction
4	minions ready to revolt	4	has an evil twin	4	secret get away hatch
5	spread too thin	5	has an experimental gnomish weapon	5	grappling goon to run interference
6	relies too much on spy network	6	has a beholder-like eye in their chest	6	can open a rip to another plane
7	overconfident in secret weapon	7	can lie perfectly, and can likewise detect lies flawlessly	7	NPC Good guys show up to arrest the villain....again...because he keeps escaping.
8	overconfident	8	well connected with ruling elite	8	has foreseen the events and has secretly prepared a trap
9	paranoid	9	unlimited wealth	9	dies, but is not really dead (it's a trick!)
10	blind	10	liberally uses human shields	10	grovels for mercy
11	very frail	11	has an extra life	11	reveals secret leverage, like a hostage princess
12	plagued by visions	12	can since everything around them	12	can run REALLY fast
13	haunted by spirits	13	immune to something like magic/damage types/charms/ ect..	13	had made a deal with a dragon who now shows up to the party.
14	addicted to a drug	14	can turn into something else.	14	makes the PCs think this is all a dream.
15	dependent on a parasite	15	spreads disease at will in an area around them	15	swaps places with a minion who is in a safer position
16	always in extreme pain	16	unlimited minions	16	takes over the body of whoever "kills" them
17	inferiority complex	17	can call on one favor from a god-like entity or group of entities	17	acts afraid of a thing that is really a good thing (please don't throw me into the briar patch!)
18	overcompensates	18	possess all forms of movement (burrow, fly, swim, etc)	18	secret invisible airship with a rope ladder.
19	blindly obeys a higher power	19	protected by a remote device	19	earthquake or cave-in forces geographic separation.
20	turns to stone during sleep cycle.	20	hasted at will	20	PCs suddenly and inexplicitly ignite on fire! (or freeze or sink into the sand or some other such thing)

# WEAPON NAME GENERATOR

Roll	Noun	Roll	Verb
1	Insert race/species here	1	Bane
2	Aberration	2	Annoyer
3	Aggressive	3	Bile Bringer
4	Animal	4	Biter
5	Antagonist	5	Bludgeoner
6	Arse	6	Breaker
7	Authority	7	Bringer
8	Avenging	8	Bruiser
9	Beast	9	Carver
10	Blood	10	Chewer
11	Bone	11	Compressor
12	Bowel	12	Corer
13	Brain	13	Cracker
14	Brute	14	Cripler
15	Chump	15	Cruncher
16	Confidence	16	Crusher
17	Construct	17	Tabl
w	Crotch	18	Cutteruper
19	Darkness	19	Defiler
20	Death	20	Demolisher
21	Devil	21	Demoralizer
22	Dismal	22	Destroyer
23	Dragon	23	Dicer
24	Ear	24	Digger
25	Enemy	25	Disassembler

26	Extremity	26	Dislocator
27	Eyeball	27	Distributor
28	Face	28	Divider
29	Fey	29	Emptier
30	Finger	30	Ender
31	Flesh	31	Eruptor
32	Foe	32	Eviscerator
33	Genitalia	33	Exploder
34	Giant	34	Flattener
35	Gleeful	35	Flayer
36	Glory	36	Fragmentor
37	Goblin	37	Gasher
38	Goblinoid	38	Thrower
39	Groin	39	Grinder
40	Harmonious	40	Gusher
41	Heart	41	Gutter
42	Heavy	42	Hacker
43	Hole	43	Harmer
44	Hope	44	Hitter
45	Horn	45	Juicer
46	Howling	46	Killer
47	Human	47	Lacerator
48	Hungry	48	Macerator
49	Impact	49	Maker
50	Impetuous	50	Mangler
51	Jaw	51	Masher
52	Joint	52	Mess Maker

53	Life	53	Mincer
54	Limb	54	Misery
55	Lover's	55	Nipper
56	Lung	56	Peeler
57	Magical Beast	57	Shaver
58	Maw	58	Piercer
59	Meat	59	Plucker
60	Minion	60	Poker
61	Monster	61	Popper
62	Monstrous Humanoid	62	Pounder
63	Mountain	63	Pruner
64	Mourning	64	Pulverizer
65	Neck	65	Rammer
66	Neighbor	66	Raper
67	Nightmare	67	Reaper
68	Nostril	68	Rearranger
69	Offspring	69	Remover
70	Ogre	70	Remover
71	Ooze	71	Render



72	Outsider	72	Ripper
73	Plant	73	Screamer
74	Poop	74	Separator
75	Pure	75	Shaker
76	Racist	76	Shredder
77	Raging	77	Silencer
78	Reaping	78	Skinner
79	Rump	79	Slapper
80	Savage	80	Slasher
81	Scalp	81	Smasher
82	Sinew	82	Splatterer
83	Skin	83	Splitter
84	Skull	84	Squisher
85	Slippery	85	Stabber
86	Soul	86	Stainer
87	Target	87	Striker
88	Tissue	88	slaughterer
89	Toe	89	Stripper
90	Tooth	90	Stuffer
91	Tranquil	91	Sucker
92	Undead	92	Tainter
93	Unfettered	93	Taster
94	Urine	94	Teacher
95	Vermin	95	Tickler
96	Villain	96	Tormentor
97	Vulgar	97	Trimmer
98	Widow	98	Twister
99	Wife	99	Wedge
100	Wound	100	Wrecker

## RESTAURANT MENU ITEMS



Roll	Cooking method	Roll food	Roll	Garnish
1	fried	1 ham	1	with lemon and capers
2	baked	2 salmon	2	with cranberry sauce
3	simmered	3 pheasant	3	with cheese medley
4	dried	4 venison	4	with sprig of thyme
5	preserved	5 chicken	5	with sugar glaze
6	smoked	6 dog	6	with nut crumble
7	pickled	7 horse	7	with tomatoes
8	broiled	8 goat	8	with onions
9	roasted	9 fish	9	with port reduction
10	raw	10 rabbit	10	with a white truffle sauce
11	brazed	11 cabbage	11	with sardines
12	boiled	12 mushrooms	12	with a selection of fine olives
13	steamed	13 sea-weed	13	with wild rice
14	stewed	14 insects	14	with sweet and sour sauce
15	canned	15 beef	15	with blood sausage
16	salted	16 bear	16	with fresh fruit
17	deep-fat-fried	17 game	17	with toast
18	spit-roasted	18 potatoes	18	with beans
19	sun-dried	19 squash	19	with garlic butter
20	cured	20 turkey	20	with salt and pepper



## BOOK TITLES/DESCRIPTIONS

Roll	Adjective	Roll	Book Type	Roll	Subject
1	Curious	1	Rituals of	1	Deep Lake Trout
2	Vulgar	2	Observations Regarding	2	An Artist
3	Comprehensive	3	Series of	3	The Rocs
4	First Hand	4	Songs of	4	Hair Styles
5	Laboratory	5	Musings of	5	Ship Knots
6	Scribbled	6	Notes about	6	Spores, Molds, and Fungus
7	Translated	7	Reference of	7	Draconic Grammar
8	Compiled	8	Poetry of	8	Weapon Smiting
9	Complicated	9	Guide To	9	Chickens
10	Erotic	10	Criticism of	10	Anatomy
11	Blood Splattered	11	Review Of	11	Leather Working
12	Fantastic	12	Response to	12	Cooking with peppers!
13	Personal	13	Letters Regarding	13	Magic!
14	Sacred	14	Journal of	14	Divine lore.

15	Lost	15	Novel about	15	Animal tracks
16	Illustrated	16	Ravings about	16	Woodworking
17	Children's	17	Accounts of	17	Language
18	Handwritten	18	Thoughts on	18	History
19	Partly Burned	19	Multi-Volume Series about	19	Royalty
20	Incomplete	20	Text on	20	Famous battles
21	Sailor's	21	Compendium of	21	Heroic Fiction
22	Beginner's	22	Bible of	22	Gnomish Machines
23	Hidden	23	Pamphlet about	23	Cabbage Farming
24	Damaged	24	Drawings of	24	Animal Training
25	Unorganized	25	Etchings of	25	Brewing
26	Inappropriate	26	Wood-Block Prints of	26	Geography
27	Complete	27	List of	27	Healing with Leaches
28	Forbidden	28	Tome about	28	Alchemy
29	Unfinished	29	Scroll on	29	Jokes
30	Gold Bound	30	Binder full of notes on	30	Women.



# CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVEN TURE

by Jeffkevlar



**I** SUPPOSE THAT FOR a lot of people their first introduction to fantasy fiction would have been via movies, TV shows or comic books. For me, however, back in the late eighties, the first time I encountered dragons and knights, evil magicians and brave young boys and girls finding themselves swept up in adventure was in my elementary school library.

There, when teachers didn't feel like teaching, or during our weekly scheduled library visit, we had free run of the room.

A lot of the kids ran for the stacks of *Tin Tin* and *Asterix and Obelix* comics but I always headed for the choose your own adventure books. I had so much fun carefully picking my way towards victory or (more often) a grisly demise.

After finding this site where I got to re-immers myself in my old love of role playing, I found myself thinking about those old, fun books and wondered if there was a way to do that here, but with more people involved. So I threw up the first page as a test. Let's see if anyone else remembers this and feels like joining in. And there were people who did! You can find the game thread here.

Now, once or twice a week I throw up a drawing telling the tale of Nertz the Goblin and his search for shineys, pose some possible next steps and let



the community vote on them. Then I draw what they decided and so on. The readers get to participate in the story telling and re-live their own glory days of flipping pages in a book.

Please feel free to come by, join in and help send Nertz through even more dangerous adventure looking for more shineys!



# DM TOOLKIT RESOURCES

Every GM needs a bit of help or assistance at times, whether it's statting up a monster or big bad evil guy, or designing the interior of the little tavern at the crossroads that everyone comes upon late at night. Here at RPGX, we scoured our own helpful GM's, to present

some of the best tools that they use and recommend, to help you outfit your world, and fill in the details.

**From Creed**, A medieval City generator:

[Go here](#)

**From Pruney**, a link to the 3d

Version of that generator:

[Go here](#)

**GM Digorig** offers his skills at map-making, to those in need:

[Go here](#)

**Avner** points out that Maptools is a free map making program available through Drive-thru RPG:

[Go here](#)

**Mipui** created an online, collaborative map making tool.

[Go here](#)

**JJWolven** recommends roll20.net for a quick and easy map maker.

**Zany** offers up an excel spreadsheet for keeping track of party members, and their resources, in a single table.

[Go here](#)

We hope these little tools can be of use to you in your gaming!

## JEFF TOONS

Words: Arucard Art: Jeffkevlar



# THE IRONCLAD EYE

## AN ADVENTURE

by Cereal Nommer

### INTRODUCTION

"They're up to no good!" "They're vampires!" "They're ghouls!" "They can't be ghouls", "Well maybe not ghouls, but graverobbers at least" "I say they're swindlers!" "They got no business doin' business here!" The Iron Clad Eye, Citizen's Watch Members clamor and complain as the PCs join them for a prearranged meeting. A group of surly dwarven merchants and community leaders banded together to maintain the peaceful dignity of their fair city. Apparently a pair of tailors who recently arrived are causing quite a commotion.

The tailors have been selling exquisite, iridescent turquoise garments to the nobility and bourgeois among the dwarven settlement. The problem is it's cutting into the established businesses' profits, and they may be robbing graves for burial gems. They may also be

vampires, maybe. A few influential members of the Iron Clad Eye have put up bounties and calls for adventures.

### THE HOOK

- Ghalen Stoutkeg, the leader of the merchant's guild wants these independent foreigners run out of town or at least out of business. He'll offer 100gp on behalf of the guild to anyone willing to oust them without running afoul of the law, or bringing the honor of the merchant's guild into question.
- Young Chaumi Ironroot thinks she recognized some of the jewels adorning one of the outfits the tailors sold as the family jewels buried with her great grandfather. They were worn down to a dull matte finish and somewhat smaller than she remembered, but she almost sure they must be robbing tombs of

noble clans for ornamentations. She has 100gp for whoever can prove they've entered the sealed mausoleums, or show definitively that their supplies are coming from somewhere else.

- Vargus Brassring, a local priest, is sure they can't get into the sacred crypts because they're vampires! He claims the wards placed on the cemetery plots would keep them out, and besides they intend to feed on the living. There have been numerous cases of mysterious puncture marks and blood loss symptoms among members of his congregation since the creepy ashen-skinned tailor brothers showed up. He offers 100gp to anyone who can put a stop to the nocturnal blood drainings.

The party may have been contacted by one of them to meet through religious, business or political associations.

## THE CROOKS

The tailor shop in question is situated in the darkest corner of an underground town, right outside the graveyard. The sign reads Boggis and Bolger's Fine Clothing, and hangs above a drab lackluster building. The torches that illuminate most shops and public buildings at the corners and doorways are extinguished and it's not even clear whether the shop is even open.

The windows are dusty, inside and out and other than a few bright turquoise suits hung on racks not much can be seen through them. Upon opening the door a bell rings, but nobody seems to respond. Everything inside is a dull grey except for the outfits on display.

Dull grey counters and racks, bare floors and walls and no furnishings leaves little to look at other than a small sturdy door behind the counter and fabulous iridescent turquoise clothing. The pieces on display are fitted with a few small worn matte gemstones as accents, and are clearly of excellent craftsmanship and quality.

A gruff looking duergar wearing a fine but dusty bespoke suit of the same fabric enters through the backroom door shortly

after hearing the bell. He glares around the room while locking the door behind him. "Well, whad'ya want?" he asks in a tone indicating he couldn't care less.

He'll gladly sell them exorbitantly priced clothing. And explain that their stock is designed to fit the opulent lifestyles of the upper crust.

### +1 AC Iridescent turquoise outfit

**Cost:** 600gp

**AC:** 11 + Dex modifier

**Weight:** 6 lb.

It becomes dull grey and loses its enhancement bonus and monetary value if it's exposed to sunlight for an hour or longer.

### Dull grey Duergar-made outfit

**Cost:** 6gp

**AC:** 11 + Dex modifier

**Weight:** 6 lb.

It's a little better than a padded armor suit even after being degraded. It doesn't impose disadvantage on stealth checks and it's a little lighter, but not something worth the exorbitant price that would be charged for the original.

If questioned Bolger claims that any and all accusations are false, and that he and his brother are merely victims of prejudice and

intolerance. He refuses however to show anyone the backroom or records. He will permit looking at the standard permits and legal documents he has behind the counter, but that's as far as his cooperation extends.

"We didn' do nothin'. You want to snoop around, come back with a warrant!" he tells would-be investigators.

### The brothers are equivalent to the Monster Manual duergar entry, except for

**Armor Class:** 13 (turquoise suit)

**DEX:** 12 (+1)

**Instead of war pick and javelin attacks they use:** Scissors. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5', one target. Hit: 7 (2d4 + 2) (or 9 (3d4 + 2) while enlarged) piercing or slashing damage.

They will use invisibility to retreat, and get the local guards if they haven't been exposed as villains. They won't use Enlarge unless they have no choice or are affected by Courage. If the PCs try to break in, before the backroom door can be opened Bolger will summon Guards who'll try taking everyone involved into custody. If the PCs did anything illegal they're made to stand trial, but unless they did something particularly heinous the magistrate won't even bother to show up. They'll be released after standing in the courtroom in shackles for a while.



## BY THE BOOK

Trying to get official sanction for an investigation won't be easy. Any of the contacts in the Iron Clad Eye can direct the party to the chief magistrate, known for his impressive impartiality, who issued the permits. He refuses to rescind authorization without evidence, or issue a search or arrest warrant without substantial evidence. By which he mean something of substance, not just an overwhelming amount. Without hard physical evidence of wrong doing, or an affidavit in the form of a Blood Oath, he won't do anything about the complaints. He won't even approve an exhumation without extensive evidence.

However any mortal witness can submit sworn testimony, by signing in their own blood using an Erinyes' feather pen, under penalty of losing their soul to the quill's original owner. A bloodsworn statement of personal knowledge about a serious crime would stand as evidence until rebutted. Though anyone bearing false witness is signing their soul over to a devil.

## THE JUDGE

*Dwarven Magistrate Medium humanoid, lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 15 (breastplate)

**Hit Points** 25 (4d8+8)

**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12(+1)	10(+0)	14(+2)	12(+2)	15(+2)	14(+2)

**Skills:** Insight +6, Perception +4,

**Senses:** passive Perception 14

**Condition Immunities:** charmed, frightened

**Languages:** Common, Dwarvish

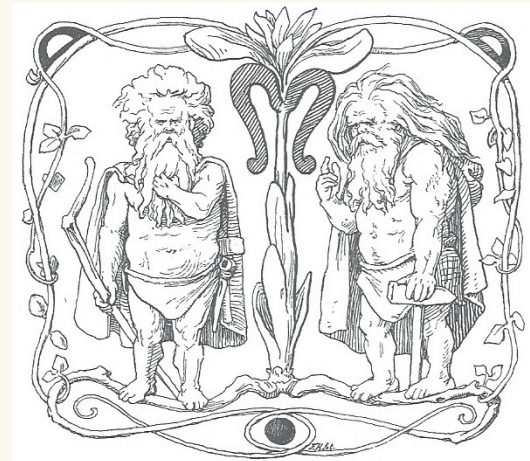
**Challenge:** 1/4 (50 XP)

## ACTIONS

**Gavel.** Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

**Lethargic Impartiality.** The magistrate is immune to being charmed or frightened, and Charisma checks to influence him are made with disadvantage.

The magistrate has all Hill Dwarf racial traits. He is usually in the company of several Officers of the Court.



## TAKE A LOOK

The tailors are indeed up to no good. They tunneled into a nearby mausoleum and smuggled a graverobber spider into the tomb. It consumes the thick, dwarven bones to spin its iridescent turquoise web, which it decorates with trinkets and jewelry it finds on bodies it desecrates.

The brothers try to dump the gravel and dust from their tunneling, but find it hard to maintain the invisibility they need to drug and bleed the townsfolk in order to keep their spider fed and happy. They always leave a wineskin full of blood when they harvest the web and it's shiny contents, and they plan to gradually extend the tunnels into the Underdark in order to open up a slave trade route.

Boggis kept detailed notes on his taming and care of the graverobber spider, and how best to bleed someone for its regular feeding. He drugs his victims with spider venom and drains the with a bloodletter's kit.

## GRAVEROBBER SPIDER

A graverobber spider consumes the bones of the dead in order to spin ornate webs it uses to lure grief-stricken mourners

## GRAVEROBBER SPIDER

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 52 (8d10 + 8)

**Speed** 30ft., climb 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16(+3)	14(+2)	12(+1)	4(-3)	12(+1)	4(-3)

**Saves** CON +3, CHA -1

**Skills** Stealth +4, Intimidate +1

**Senses** tremorsense 30 ft., darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 11

**Damage Vulnerabilities** piercing

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, necrotic

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** frightened, poisoned

**Languages** understands

Undercommon but cannot speak

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

to an early grave. It decorates its web with things it thinks seem most cherished. It usually lives in tombs and crypts where it can find an ample supply of bones to ingest. It prefers the blood of woe-begotten

**Spider Climb.** The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the spider has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Undead Guise.** A graverobber spider appears to be undead to a casual observer. A DC 15 Int (Religion/Arcana) reveals it's camouflage.

**Web Sense.** While in contact with a web, the spider knows the location of any creature in contact that web.

**Web Walker.** The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

humanoids above all other sustenance. Its hard carapace has a skeletal appearance, leaving it vulnerable to attacks that avoid the bony plates of chitin and pierce through to gruesome, gory looking inner organs.

## ACTIONS

**Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

**Web (Recharge 5-6).** Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 30'/60', one creature. Hit: The target is restrained by iridescent turquoise webbing. This attack cannot recharge

unless the spider regularly consumes a creature's bones. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

## LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the spider can take a lair action to cause (one of) the following effect(s); the spider can't use an effect again until it finishes a short or long rest:

- The spider leaves a trail of web. Each square it crosses during its next turn is considered difficult terrain until the web is removed.

The spider is living in a mausoleum under the effect of a *Hallow* spell with *Everlasting Rest*. The spider's lair is decorated with shiny trinkets and mementos to lure living victims. Spectacles or rings on a line, lockets and bands.

There is an adjoining mausoleum connected by a crude tunnel under the effect of a *Hallow* spell with *Courage* effecting only dwarves. The tailors are tunneling it out deeper in hopes of creating a slave trade route.

## EPILOGUE

If the PCs can complete the any of the conditions they were given they can claim their bounties, the tailors also have a bit of money from their business but much has gone into mining expenses and spider care. Though the tombs may still have some valuables that haven't been dulled and worn away to hide their origins. The tunnel could be almost finished or lead to further tunnels or tombs and more adventure. If any PCs swore false testimony their souls could be forfeit to a devil, which could be a further adventure in it's own right.





# SPICE UP YOUR GAME

by Dirkoth

ONCE AGAIN, let us explore the rich lexicon of the English language, and pick out some long forgotten words to bring anew, and spice up our posts. This group was selected, as always, to be malleable enough to use in many types of game posts. Enjoy!

## GROAK/GROAKING

To silently watch someone while they are eating, hoping to be invited to join them.

Tomas sat by the window, groaking the souls inside, hoping for a pittance or scap out of pity.

## HUGGER-MUGGER

To act in a secretive manner.

I'm sick of all these sneaky types, creeping around and hugger-mugging the whole time.

## CRAPULOUS

To feel ill because of excessive eating/drinking.

After the celebration last night, everyone in the party felt particularly crapulous.

## GRUMPISH

Sullen. An alternative to grumpy.

"Yeah, Merry holidays", said the grumpish dwarf, as he turned his axe over, and honed the other edge.

## SNOWBROTH

Freshly melted snow.

Yesterday we woke up to a perfect carpet of white, but now it's just snowbroth.

## JARGOGLE

To confuse, bamboozle.

Despite paying keen attention to the jongleur's hands, the man continued to jargogle the crowd in keeping the pea hidden under the walnut shells.

## APRICITY

The sun's warmth on a cold winter's day.

Pulling her cloak tighter around her shoulders, Vicken appreciated the scant apricity provided by the fading sun.

## TWATTLE

To gossip, or talk idly.

"Cease your prattle and twattle!", the school teacher shouted, "and focus on your lessons!"

**ELFLOCKS,**

Tangled hair, as if matted by elves.

Vicken struggled to pull the comb through her elflock tresses.

**GORGONIZE,**

To have a paralyzing or mesmerizing effect on someone.

It might not have been love at first sight, but for Tomas, he was gorgonized by Vicken at their first meeting.

**COCKALORUM,**

A little man with a high opinion of himself.

Vicken, meanwhile, felt that Tomas was a cockalorum, and not at all a snuotfair.

**SNUOTFAIR,**

A good-looking person.

Vicken, meanwhile, felt that Tomas was a cockalorum, and not at all a snuotfair.

**JOLLUX,**

Slang term for a fat person.

Of the three men in the bar, Tomas felt the jollux was more likely an easy mark, as the other two had a hard edged look about them.

**CURGLAFF,**

The shock one feels upon first plunging into cold water.

Vicken stepped her horse into the water, still not prepared for the curglaff she felt when the water soaked her boots.

**BRABBLE,**

To argue loudly about something inconsequential.

The admins brabble daily about the site, which was far preferential to them actually working.

**TWITTER, LIGHT,**

An alternative to twilight.

Twitter-light was a horrible series of books and movies.

**LUNT,**

Walking while smoking a pipe, usually in peaceful introspection or relaxation.

While out on his evening lunt, Tomas almost broke his neck stumbling on a root.

**BEEF, WITTED,**

Stupid, imbecilic.

You beef-witted dunderhead, Vicken said, when she heard the story.

**MONSTERFUL,**

Wonderful and extraordinary.

Vicken eyed the treasure room with avarice and glee, the monsterful sight bringing a small tear of joy to her eye.

**CALLIPYGIAN,**

Having beautifully shaped buttocks.

Bet you thought I would say that Vicken had a Callipygian body, didn't you?

**FUZZLE,**

To make drunk, intoxicate.

Never try to fuzzle a dwarf. They will win every time.

**SLUBERDEGULLION,**

A slovenly, slobbering person.

Vicken thought Tomas a complete sluberdegullion.

**CURMURING,**

A low rumbling sound produced by the bowels.

The curmuring noise Tomas produced after a heavy meal proved her correct in her assumptions.

**LUMMING,**

Heavy rain.

Thunder crashed, as the skies opened and a lumming broke upon the earth below.