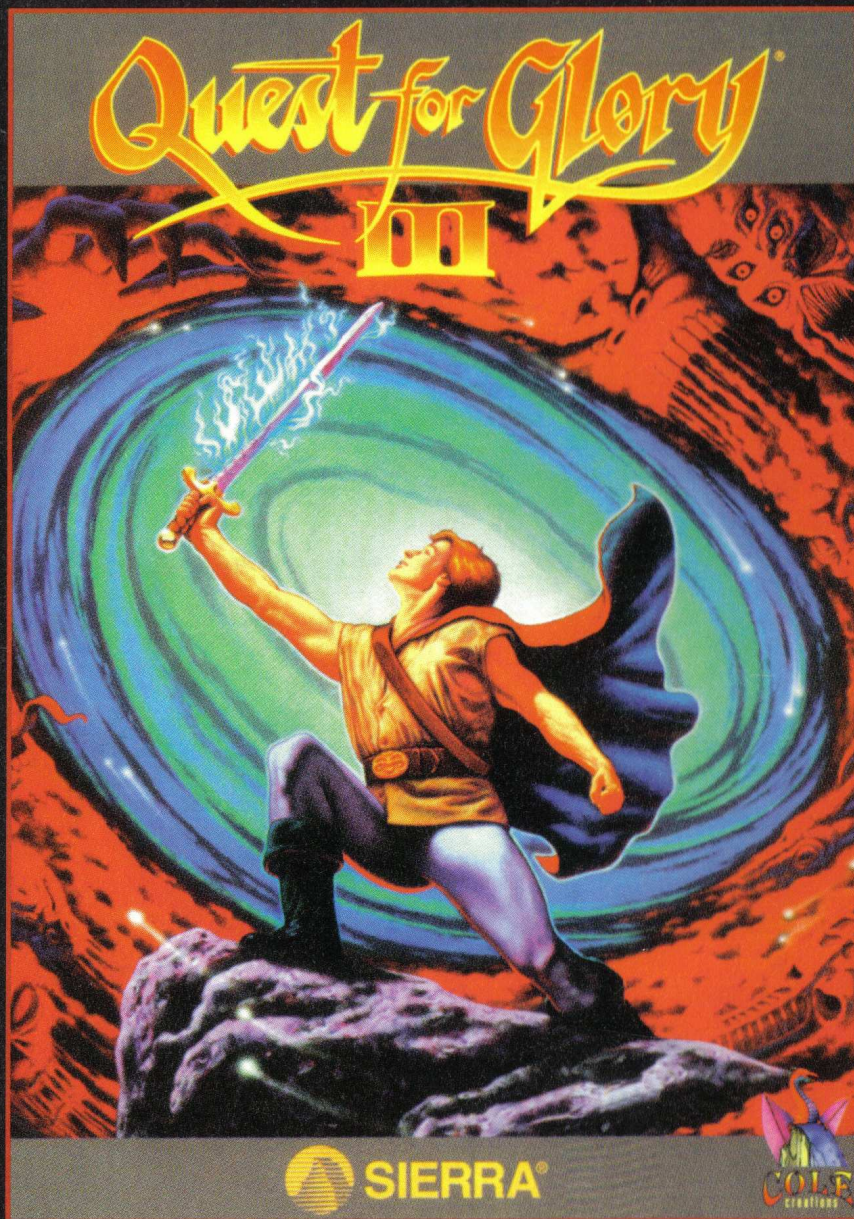


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The Journal of General Job Adjusting

HERO

ISSUE IV
3 CROWNS

HOW TO
IMPROVE
YOUR CAREER
AS A HERO
FOR HIRE!

SPECIAL
Halloween
ISSUE

Hey Hero-type Dudes and Dudettes!

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HERO

THE JOURNAL OF GENERAL JOB ADJUSTING

Special Hallowe'en Issue!

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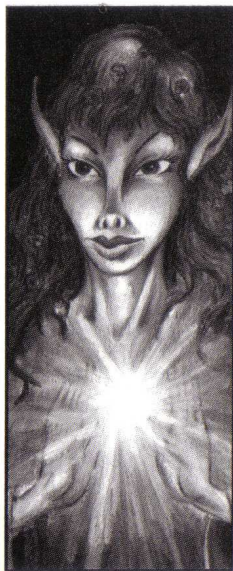
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The Hero as an Artform

by
Fish Crawdad

"Ze Greatest Hero in Ze World"

Time was when anyone with a sword or a spell could go around calling himself a Hero. All you had to do was fight a dragon or two, rescue a princess maybe, and you were set for life. Well, we've come a long way since those days and being a Hero in today's monster-eat-monster environment means more than just swinging a weapon and hitting your target. In this essay, I'll explore what it takes to be the best you can be in the Hero business.

To Be or Not To Be

Why did you ever want to be a Hero in the first place? To have endless opportunities to wade through monster guts and goo,



sweating through sweltering swamps, and hacking through hordes of horrific hobgoblins to receive no more than a pat on the back and a hearty "Well Done!" as rewards? Or perhaps you saw yourself surrounded by bodacious babes or handsome hunks who swoon over your masterly muscles and bulging biceps? How about having mysterious mystical maids or men marveling over your mastery of magic?

Would you believe you wanted to sneak silently into the Sultan's Harem or Military Barracks after visiting hours?

If your idea of Heroism is more than mere gore and a handshake, then you will have to go beyond the average Studly Doright, Mickey Mage, or Sneaky Feetie. You'll have to prove to the world you are not just another mediocre good guy. It's no longer a matter of what you do, but of how you do it, and what you look like doing it.

State of the Art

We've all heard that sad story about Herbert the Hero who fought his way through millions of murderous minions, climbed the outside of the Tower of Indomitable Circumstance one-handed during a hurricane, defeated the evil vile wizard Mor-decai the Mad, banished the invincible Demon Asmodeus to the netherworld and rescued a stray cat only to be passed up for promotion when raise time came around. It happens all too often in our profession.

What it comes down to is this -- Who would believe "Herbert the Hero"? Hercules the Hero, certainly, Heimdall the Hero, naturally, but Herbert?

You can't just be the Hero part, you've got to look and sound the Hero as well. So, develop those deltoids as well as your back-swing, practice magical gestures in the mirror to improve your mysterious moody manner, and learn how to disarm deadly devious traps while smiling nonchalantly and juggling your spare lockpicks in your other hand. If you are going to do something, do it with panache.

Oh, yeah, and change your name while you're at it.



BUN BUILDING FOR THE VERY BUFF

by Carl Atlas

So you say you are a hot fighter, a swell swinger of swords and basher of monster brains? You've got muscles that strain the limits of your chainmail and you can out-arm-wrestle an Ogre. You've practiced your weaponry and defense until you can fight Trolls with your eyes closed. You've reached the limits of human development and the only way you could possibly improve your beefy bod would be with certain illegal alchemical derivatives of animal hormones which might ruin your health. Does that match your description?

Guess again.

If you are a typical fighting man, you've honed your fighting skills

and really built up all of your upper body muscles. However, how much time and energy have you devoted to developing your legs and thighs? There's nothing more pathetic than the burly, bulging, bicep-bound beefcake falling over at the first snap of a Dragon's tail because his legs were too scrawny to sustain his balance. Many a gallant gladiator has met an untimely defeat for lack of developing his feet. Don't let this happen to you.

Climbing mountains and stairs can give your legs a start at true muscle making, but it takes something more to build the



you'll discover bulges you never believed could be developed. When this is combined with a daily regimen of running and monster mashing, your fine physique will practically pulsate with power. Your strength will skyrocket and your stamina will stretch until you surge from halfway hardy hunkitude to sensational super stud.

So order one for your local gymnasium or Adventurers' Guild

gorgeous gluteus maximus and definitive deltoids of a real hunk. If you want to reach the apex of athletic accomplishment, you need to use my "Atlas High Thigh Stair Stepper and Levered Leg Lifter™".

today and check it out. You won't regret it. In just seven days, it won't just make you a man, it'll make you into a mammoth.

After working out just a few minutes each day and gradually increasing the amount of weight on your "Atlas High Thigh Stair Stepper and Levered Leg Lifter™",

ASK MR. MANNERLY --



The Paladin's Answerperson
by **Magnifico Mannerly, P. D.**

Dear Mr. Mannerly,

I am one tough dude. My favorite sports are Dragon Erasing and Barbarian Bashing. I'm a card-carrying member of the E.O.F (Eternal Order of Fighters) and a three-time winner of the annual Village Pillage belt. I'm listed in "Who's Who in Mercenaries, Freebooters, and Fortune Hunters". I'm always ready and willing to rescue a maiden or save a city, providing the price is right.

So if I decided to pursue a career as a Paladin, what's in it for me?

-- **Hands Sollo**

My Dear Mr. Sollo,

There are many advantages to becoming a Paladin. The ability to sense danger and emotional currents gives a Paladin a real edge in avoiding embarrassing accidents. The magical aura of the "Flaming Paladin Sword" can affect even the most ethereal of enemies, once you have received such a sword from another qualified Paladin. "Healing Hands" will frequently be useful in the event of serious injury, although it does draw upon your stamina to use them. "Protection from Magic" will aid you against those nasty offensive spells when you have built up enough Paladin Points to use it. And there's no doubt that "Honor Shield" will help you deflect the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune when you have gained enough honor to use it. Once again, the Paladin earns the ability to use these spells through the exhibition and accrual of honor and can just as easily lose them through dishonorable acts.

However, I'm not certain that pursuing a career in Paladinhood is the ideal profession for you. Considering the fact that a Paladin must be trustworthy, helpful, truthful, cheerful, thoughtful, lawful, honest, pure, and brave, you might find it difficult giving up your scoundrel status. Plus, since a Paladin does good deeds from

the goodness of his or her heart rather than for the monetary reward, your income level would drop significantly. You are probably better suited for pursuing a profession as a Politician rather than as a Paladin.

Dear Mr. Mannerly,

I am a damsel in distress. I have fallen in love with Persifal, a young Paladin. He's cute and very sweet, but he's forever breaking dates to go off and banish demons or restore the true heirs to various thrones, or so he says. What's more, the last time we went to the Harvest Ball together, he caused a terrible scandal and much gossip by dancing with the widow of the exiled ex-ruler of this land. As I'm sure you realize, it is forbidden to even speak with her, let alone dance, and besides, she looked positively ghastly in her old dress. I thought Paladins were never supposed to break laws and have to always be good! Instead, he disobeyed the new king's edict and embarrassed me in front of everyone, just because he thought the law was unfair and the widow looked unhappy. (She looked repulsive, actually.) Does this mean Percy isn't a real Paladin, and has been lying to me all this time about his "good" deeds?

-- **Bothered and Bewildered**

Dear Miss Bewildered,

Allow me to reassure you, Percy sounds like the perfect Paladin. Many people are confused by the "Paladin Code of Ethics".

A Paladin is bound by Honor to do what is Good rather than what is lawful. If the Laws of the Land interfere with the Rights of the Individual, it is the Paladin's duty to support the Individual's inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And who better to judge this than the True Paladin?

However, life with a Paladin is not an easy thing. If an Ogre family moves into the neighborhood, your boyfriend will be there first with the welcome wagon. After all, you can't judge an individual by racial stereotypes. You'll be continually surprised at just what gets invited to dinner at a Paladin's house. Paladins are forever being called away in the middle of the night on house calls to cure the ills of neighboring kingdoms. And Paladins are forever giving away their allowances to charity. All in all, if you want someone who is a good provider, dependable, there when you need him, and socially acceptable, you are better off marrying the garbage collector than a Paladin.

Who's Who in the Wizard's World:

AN INTERVIEW WITH ERASMUS AND FENRIS

In the world of wizardry, Erasmus and his familiar, Fenris the rat, are widely recognized as the greatest magical team since Merlin and Archimedes the owl. Best known for his invention of the "Razzle Dazzle" spell and his sponsorship of "Erasmus' Rootin' Tootin' Root Beer", Erasmus has his summer home on Zauberberg Mountain in Spielberg Valley. He and Fenris spend their winters in their modest Wizard Tower in Silmaria. He is always ready to lend a helping hand (or a guiding light) to aspiring Wizards.



JGJA: Other than yourself, of course, who do you think are the most influential members of the magical community?

Erasmus: Well, of course, when one thinks about magic, one could hardly do better (after my own all-too-modest self) than to think of Erana. Prior to her unfortunate disappear-

ance some years ago, Erana made quite a reputation for herself by creating areas of safety in many lands. Mind you, going around making magical gardens and things is a little trivial for a major mage, don't you think?

Fenris: As opposed to making Root Beer?

Erasmus: It takes real skill to make good Root Beer -- you have to keep the little bubbles from getting loose. At any rate, Erana was supposed to be half Faerie Folk, which explains her extraordinary magical talent. She never did settle down in a typical Wizard tower, but instead wandered around helping people and doing spells of great wonder and beauty. Rumor has it she died trying to drive a Dark One back to its own world. Pity.

On the other hand, for future promise, there's the young man I sponsored into the Wizards' Institute of Technocery a while ago. He has distinguished himself through Heroism and clever use of spells in lands ranging from Spielberg to Shapeir and Tarna. But let's wait and see how he continues to develop his skills before naming any names.

Fenris: Making certain he has made a real name for himself before you start dropping it, eh?

JGJA: But what about the so-called "dark side" of magic? Are there any Evil Sorcerers of particular note?

Erasmus: Well, one of the most promising (in a foul, unappetizing way) was Ad Avis, the sorcerer who brought Raseir to its knees. But he was in fact defeated, and nothing has been seen of him since. Perhaps of more concern is Ad Avis's mysterious "Dark Master", who was cast out of WIT for summoning nameless horrors and performing unspeakable rites. Since they are, in fact, quite unspeakable, I may say no more.

Fenris: Say no more, then.

JGJA: And where is this "Dark Master" now?

Erasmus: Well, nobody knows for sure, but rumor has it that the Dark Master is currently holed up in an abandoned castle somewhere in the Land of Mordavia. It might be best for tourists to avoid that area this year.

JGJA: A sound suggestion, indeed! Speaking of things to avoid, what should one of our readers do should he come face-to-face with a spell-resistant monster?

Erasmus: My best advice is to be prepared and know one's enemies. It's poor strategy to try

to Calm an Undead creature, for example -- there's nothing quite so relaxed as an opponent that's already dead! Wet and slimy monsters aren't much bothered by flame, and creatures that use chilling attacks generally don't mind being frozen in return.

Fenris: You can't roast a ghost or cool a ghoul, so to speak.

Erasmus: Most importantly, always be ready to improvise! Sometimes a situation arises in which the normal combat spells just won't suffice. When that happens, be prepared to use normally peaceful spells in unusual ways. Sometimes having access to the right Magical Staff will provide additional options to a cornered Wizard. When in doubt, run away and live to cast another day!

JGJA: That advice should ensure that a few more of our readers survive to renew their subscriptions! In closing, what's the single most important piece of advice you would give to an aspiring Archmage?

Erasmus: The most important thing is to always practice one's spelling. It can be very embarrassing to come up to the final encounter against an evil Demon

Wizard and then accidentally cast a "Lame Art" spell instead of a "Flame Dart".

Fenris: You only made that mistake once.

Erasmus: I did not! It was a "Lost Sight" rather than a "Frost Bite". And I was only blinded for a few seconds. But, seriously, practice makes perfect, or at least a lot better. Every time a trained Magic User casts a spell, he or she gains a little more proficiency with that spell. In addition, casting any spell helps build one's magical talent and intelligence.

Fenris: More spell tries make for swell guys?

Erasmus: I prefer to put it, "He who casts fast lasts best."

Basic Spellbinding:

What's Hot and What's Not

Magic is a skill which requires brains and common sense as well as talent. Knowing what to cast and when to cast it is the mark of a true mage. Researching your spells thoroughly to know their weaknesses and strengths will vastly improve your chance of survival when casting magic in critical situations. Here is a guide to some of the most common spells and how best to use them.



FLAME DART (Offensive Spell) This is the Magic User's Main Flame. Useful for immolating monsters, it uses few mana points and is useful in and out of close combat. On the other hand, ethereal creatures such as ghosts, and slimy things such as slugs, are relatively immune.

ZAP (Offensive Spell) This underrated little spell must be cast upon a weapon and then the weapon must be used in close combat to release the magical charge, which means it isn't very popular with the "Stay Away" Mage. On the other hand, Zap can do damage to creatures

normally unaffected by normal weapons. Try casting it on your weapon before you go into combat, and you'll always have an extra spark to short circuit a Spectre or jolt a Giant.

LIGHTNING BALL (Offensive Spell) This is slightly less cost-effective than Flame Dart, but can be built up to cause greater damage with a lot of practice. Lightning Ball is most useful when attacking creatures that resist fire damage.

FORCE BOLT (Offensive Spell) This spell does use up the mana points, but if you need to cast a spell with some punch to it, this

is the one for you. As long as a monster is corporeal, this spell can knock its block in. A Force Bolt can be used to push or knock over an object at a distance, so you can also use it to knock down loose branches from tree tops and to perform other useful chores.

WHIRLWIND (Offensive Spell) This very impressive spell creates a powerful tornado effect at the targetted location. With advanced skill in the spell, this becomes one of the most powerful forces to the Magic User. Whirlwind requires such a great expenditure of Mana that few Wizards can cast it without the aid of a magical staff.

FROST BITE (Offensive Spell, Area Affect) This is the only combat spell that can effect more than one creature at a time, assuming the monsters are close to one another. It is particularly useful against fiery creatures such as Fire Lizards. However, it doesn't work well against things which are unnaturally cold, so don't try it against a Frost Giant or the Undead.

DAZZLE (Offensive Spell, Area Affect) If the beast you are fighting has eyes, "Erasmus's Razzle Dazzle" can blind it and put it temporarily out of action. This can be used in both distance and close combat. However, many magical creatures are not affected, so don't even think of Dazzling a Demon.

REVERSAL (Defensive Spell) This spell is great against magic-using monsters and Evil Wizards. It will reflect a spell cast at you and send it back to the spellcaster. However, don't think this will protect you completely in a magical battle. Area affect spells are not reflected, since they are not targetted directly at you.

CALM (Defensive Spell, Area Affect) The Calm spell will take the aggression out of even the most fearsome of creatures, as long as it's alive and at a distance. As long as the spell is active, and you don't attack, the monster will contemplate its navel rather than fighting. Don't even think of casting it in close combat though. Even the calmest creatures get hungry.

AURA (Defensive Spell) This spell protects you against the dreaded Undead. While Ghosts and Ghouls can still harm you, you will be shielded from their special attacks (such as those which drain your strength). If you absolutely, positively can't avoid the Undead, don't leave home without this spell.

HIDE (Defensive Spell) This is the spell to cast when you are being chased by a monster and really need to get away. When you Hide, as long as you don't move, most monsters won't even know you are there. It doesn't work against the Undead though.

PROTECTION (Defensive Spell) This acts as a magical shield in combat, and can really help reduce

damage from wicked, sharp claws and teeth. If you can't get out of a fight, make certain you go into it with this spell.

RESISTANCE (Defensive Spell) This spell reduces the damage you take from element-based magical attacks such as fire, lightning, and cold. It can also protect you somewhat from the actual elements in nature. Learn this spell; it's irresistible!

LEVITATE (General Spell) This spell allows you to rise to the occasion. You'll float weightlessly in the air, able to go up or down at will. However, levitation takes true concentration, and while you can grab onto something near you, you will not be able to perform more complicated actions (such as casting other spells). Also, don't forget, this spell uses Mana points continually, so don't leave yourself suspended over a monster when your magic runs out.

DETECT MAGIC (General Spell) This allows you to detect magical objects and things which have spells cast upon them. Many a magically hidden item has been found by the wise Mage who knows how useful this spell can be.

FETCH (General Spell) This spell retrieves any small, unattached object you can see. Your magical lasso can pick up objects from dangerous places where you'd rather not go.

OPEN (General Spell) This is another versatile spell that will

unlock and open a door, chest, or similar closed object, setting off any traps in the process. As long as you aren't next to the trap you set off, you won't be hurt. However, the Open spell does not affect magically locked doors or those bolted on the other side.

TRIGGER (General Spell) This spell is most useful when used with the Detect Magic spell. Magical spells cast on items can be set off by casting this spell upon them. This is particularly useful against magical traps, but don't forget, many magic users like to set up secret spells for special occasions. You never know just what you might discover when you Trigger another Mage's spells.

JUGGLING LIGHTS (General Spell) This spell creates a light display which will illuminate the darkest situation, but only for a few moments.

SUMMON STAFF (General Spell) For the Magic User with an enchanted Staff, this is an invaluable spell. Your Magical Staff will only appear when you need it; otherwise, your Staff is safely hidden away from those nasty Trigger spells and other attacks.

GLIDE (General Spell) This spell operates when you step upon a liquid surface. You will be able to skate around upon water as if it were solid ice. While it does use up mana points rapidly, it beats having to swim across rivers or burn your feet on hot lava.

Confessions of a Master Thief

by Matt "The Cat" MacMaster

Okay, so you want to be a Master Thief like me, yeah, sure, I know, I heard it a thousand times before. So you work on your climbing, your sneaking, even your lockpicking, and think you're really hot to trot. You practice the Thief Sign until you can do it in your sleep. You got your lockpick kit and your oil for greasing squeaks, your rope and grapnel for getting up steep walls, and figure you got everything you need. That's what you think.

Let's get this straight. I'm a real Master Thief, and I know a lot more than punk kids like you. So clean out your ears, sit down, and shut up while I'm talking.

First of all, there's your lockpick kit. What's going to happen to you the first time you try to pick a lock that has a trap on it? You're right. Poison traps get the rookie every time. You need to get yourself an Acme Mark II Toolkit with the Trap Disarming Tools. It takes some practice to learn how to find and disarm traps without seriously killing yourself, so visit your local Thieves' Guild and spend some time trying out their traps first. If you survive, you'll be a better Thief for it.

Next on the list of things you got to do well is Acrobatics. You never know when a flip and a twirl will save your life. Whether you're trying

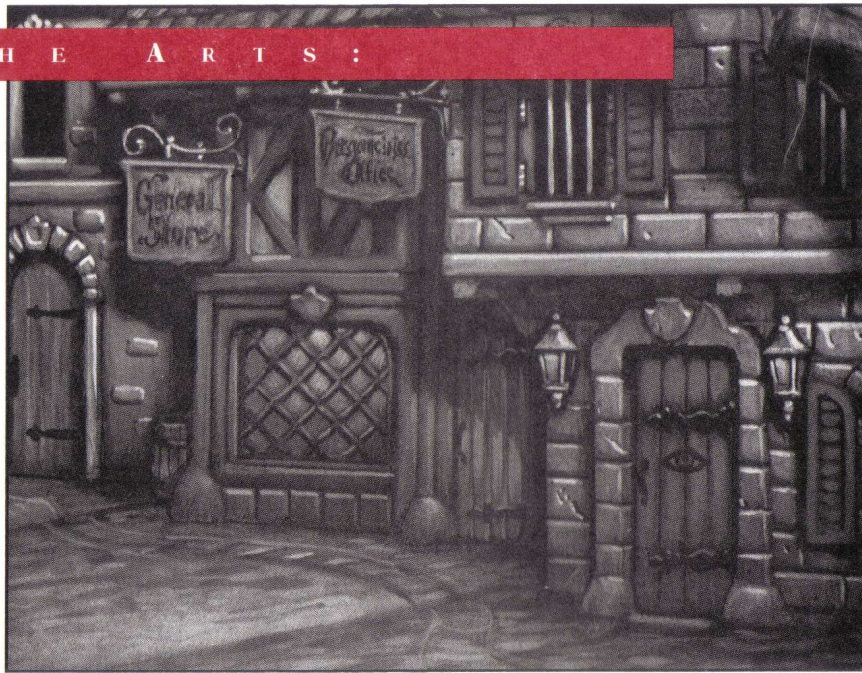
to cross a burning tightrope, or to leap an alley between building tops as you run away from the coppers, Acrobatics is something you can't do without.

Then there's Thief Marks. Those are the things a smart crook uses to communicate with fellow members of his profession, seeing as how most of you can't read. Those are the scratches made in the wall and the floor which warn you to look out for things. If you don't look for them, you won't know what you missed.

Finally, there's pickpocketing. Howsoever, seeing as how I could write a whole article on that subject, I'm going to do so. That way I make more money, see? So you are going to have to get the next issue to find out more about that.

Don't forget, Thieving is not just having a good body and slippery fingers. It takes real brains, too. That's why I'm hot and you're not. I use the muscles between my ears for more than holding up my hat. If you know what's good for you, you will, too.





Signs of the Crimes



THIEF MARKS

by Dick "the Slick" Millhouse

So you got caught and thrown in prison, locked away for the rest of your natural born life. Your only consolation is that no one yet knows that you have brought shame and dishonor to your family, will cause your father to enter an early grave and then turn somersaults in the tomb for eternity, and set yourself up for your mother to blame all the misfortunes, bad luck, ill weather, sisters-not-marrying-a-doctor, brother-failing-to-pass-the-bar-exam sort of problems that are going to happen to your relatives.

Don't lose hope. After all, there isn't a prison that some other thief has not done time in. Look around you. See that scratch on the wall? That, kid, is your key to getting out of here. Assuming of course, you can figure out what it means.

Thief Marks are a good Thief's way of letting other guys know he was here first. That

way, he can let others know about dangerous situations or information they should know, and at the same time say, "Ha, Ha, I was here before you, neener, neener, neener!" It lets them feel superior while performing a useful service for others.

What to Look for in a Thief Mark

Thief Marks are usually scratched into the wall, table, floor, ceiling, safe, or whatever, using the point of the dagger. Works of Art they ain't. Still, crude as they are, they can save your life, so don't knock 'em.

There are certain standard conventions to making Marks. If it is a symbol in a box, it probably represents something in the room. Numbers imply something needs to be done in a certain order. Things on top of other things imply a relationship between the parts. Lots of blood indicates someone got careless making his Mark.

So if you see some writing on the wall (or the floor, or the ceiling), take another look. It could be someone's way of telling you, "Watch out, schmuck!"

A PICTORIAL PRESENTATION OF SOME TYPICAL THIEF MARKS



– something up



– Danger



– something down



– Trap



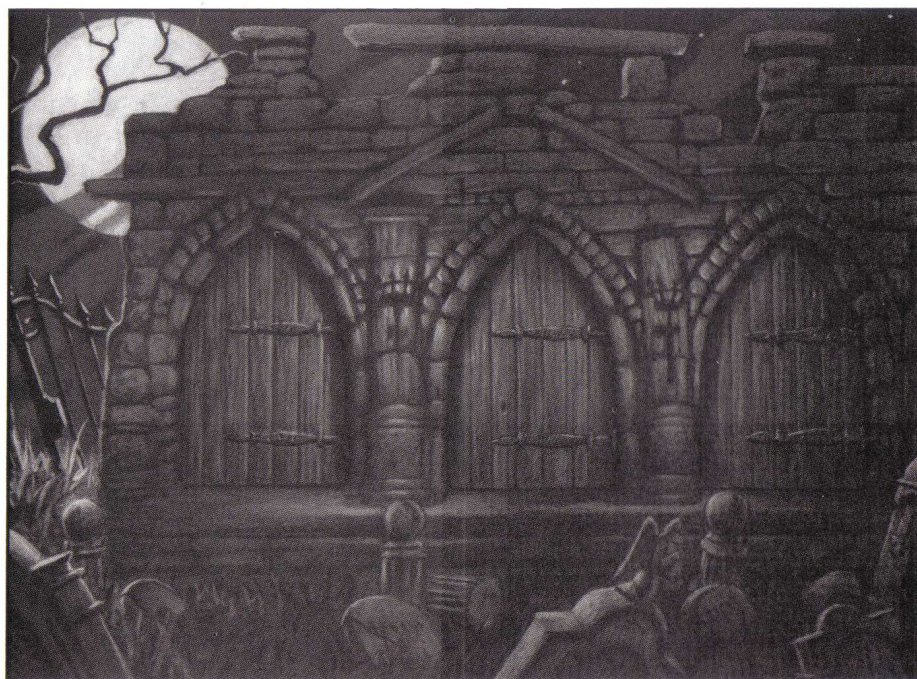
– Thieves' Guild



– Look

Mordavian Nights

by October Derleth



Have you been nervous lately? Having trouble sleeping because of strange, skittering noises in the walls and voices gibbering unpronounceable words in the middle of the night? Self-conscious because people seem to be staring suspiciously at you everywhere you go? Feel like you need a nice, long stay in a clean,

well-padded room, or at least a vacation? Well, then, don't go to Mordavia.

Mordavia is a small valley nestled amidst the Malignant Mountains to the south, the Carpathologic Mountains to the west, the Aphotic Alps to the north, and the Heinous Hills to the east. There

is but one pathway to this valley and as it is currently cut off by a mephitic and quagmire-filled swamp, entrance to Mordavia is rather difficult. This isolation, though, creates an atmosphere of fear and mistrust that will add immensely to the emotional state you will experience here.

From the abandoned Castle Borgov, whose last inhabitant disappeared under, shall we say, mysterious and suspicious circumstances, to the malevolent Monastery of the Mad Monk, to the uncanny and horrific Mouth of the Dark One, Mordavia has everything to put that spine-tingling chill in your blood and the delirium of incipient madness into your mind.

The town of Mordavia, too, has much to offer. You will be most welcomed at the Hotel Mordavia. Such a lovely place. The garlic hanging from the eaves gives this inn a festive appearance, as if every day were Hallowe'en. You'll meet the colorful natives, who will greet you with such apprehensive stares and furtive glances that they will soon have you feeling right at home among them. Be sure to visit the local Mad Scientist. You're sure to have an electrifying and illuminating experience there.

On the sightseeing tour, there is nothing quite like seeing the cemetery by moonlight. You never know whom you might run into there, after all. If you are very fortunate, you may catch a glimpse of various inhabitants rising from their graves to greet the darkness. Do not attempt to feed the Undead, for they rapidly develop a taste for human flesh, and that does wreak havoc upon the Tourist Trade.

All in all, you won't find a more interesting or exciting vacation paradise than the Land of Mordavia. Be thankful for small favors.

Visit the Gardens of Erana!

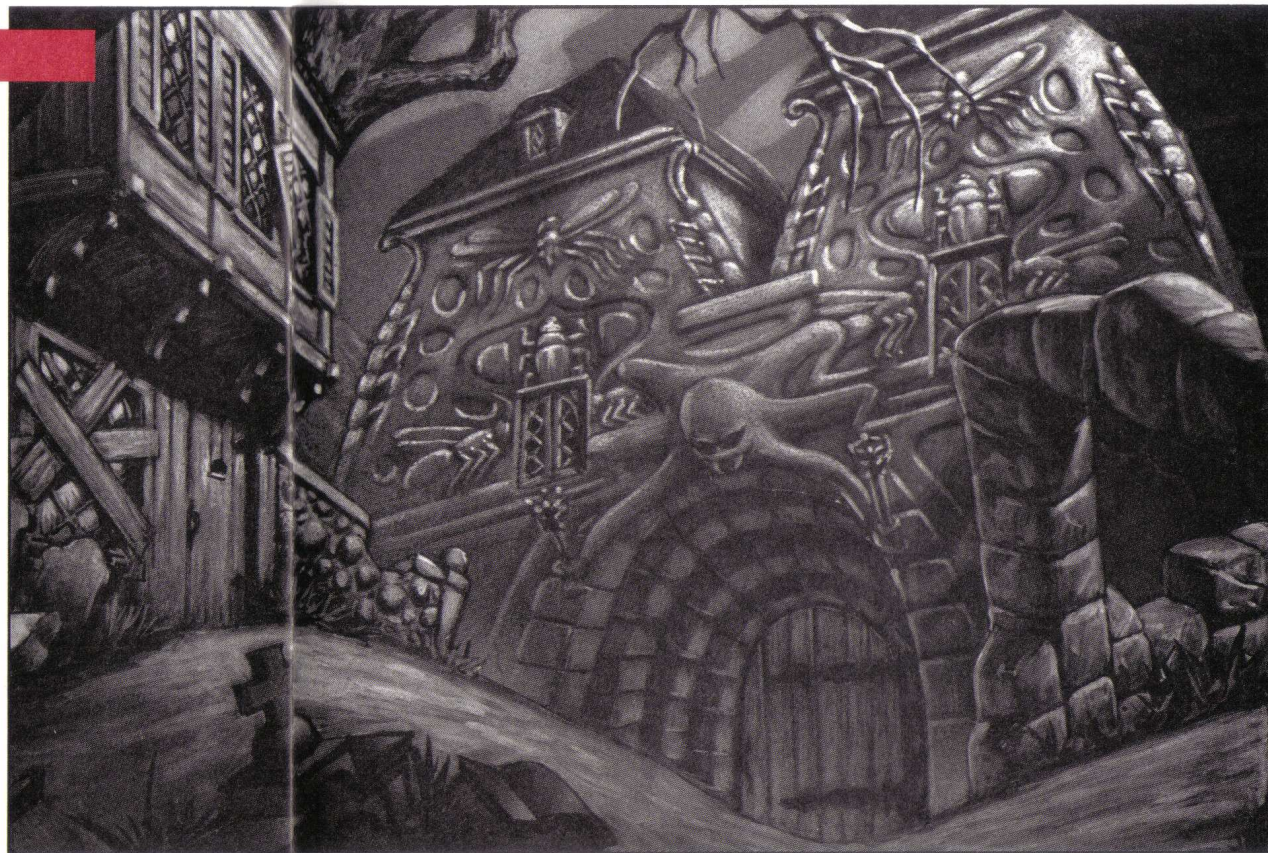


See the labs of Dr. Cranium!



Call of Avoozl and the Cult of Amon Tillado

by P. H. Craftlove



**When Aeons pass where the Dark Things Lurk,
And Mindless Servants do meaningless work,
The ancient men will develop a quirk,
And Everyone else will just look like a jerk,
Then shall Avoozl arise from the Murk!**

THE NECROPHILICON

Of all the so-called Dark Ones, Avoozl is certainly one of the darkest. "Ye shall know Avoozl cometh when the very sun itself doth fear to show its face, and the Shadows of Darkness covereth the earth," or so wrote the notorious Mad Monk, Amon Tillado, before his

unfortunate demise when he choked on a piece of cuttlefish. The study of the Cult of Amon Tillado is a object lesson of the fact that some things are better left unsaid, some deeds better left undone and some articles best left unwritten.

Amon Tillado was first heard of when he founded a Monastery in the faraway village of Mordavia hidden away in the valley of Mordavia. Little did the peaceful residents of this quaint little town realize the monstrous magnitude of the effect this malefic menage of morbid monks would make upon their fragile lives. For Amon Tillado drew into his hideous halls the myriad kooks and crackpots who seek desperately for someone to tell them what to think and do.

And so they gathered like famished vultures around rotten carrion to worship unmentionable things and perform unsanitary rites.

Even the Boyar of the land was drawn into this maelstrom of monstrosity. For Barishnikov Vasiliovitch Borgov (or "Barney" as he was known to close acquaintances) was a most ambitious man. He thought that by encouraging the cult, he could draw many a curious and wealthy stranger

into Mordavia, thereby sending real estate prices skyrocketing, and he would thus accrue a tidy profit from "Location, location, location." Little did Barney realize that he, too, would be drawn into a horror only the criminally insane or writers whose names end in King could ever comprehend.

For one dark, drear day in the dire month of October, Amon Tillado croaked.

The Monks were thrown into chaos. Without the Mad Monk himself to lead them, they had no one to tell them what to do. Then did Barney comprehend the magnitude of disaster looming over his brilliant schemes of land development and urban renewal. Thus did Barney become High Priest of this unnatural and unwholesome cult.

So came the accursed, atrocious, and acrimonious moment when Barney heard the Call of Avoozl, and answered it!

The sun did hide behind black, foreboding clouds and the wind did wail with the caterwauling of cacophonous cries the day the cult began the vile and hopelessly sinister summoning to draw Avoozl into this world. Muttering unspeakably muffled shibboleths, the insane and misguided monks approached



Mount Malign, a tall promontory south of town. Entering a small cave in the side of this mountain, they began the horrid rituals to evoke Avoozl's arrival. Heedless of the potential disaster and destruction of this world as we know it, the Monks prepared to do the deed of dire doings. Avoozl waited... and the mountain top writhed in anxious anticipation.

Then did the Mage Erana come, accompanied by the Paladin Piotyr and righteous armies of the surrounding areas. Drawn by the maelstrom of malevolent magic, summoned by the sound of sordid speeches, beckoned by the

baneful and brackish blackness that besmirched the sky, these daring and undaunted do-gooders were determined to drive the Dark One back to its distant abode.

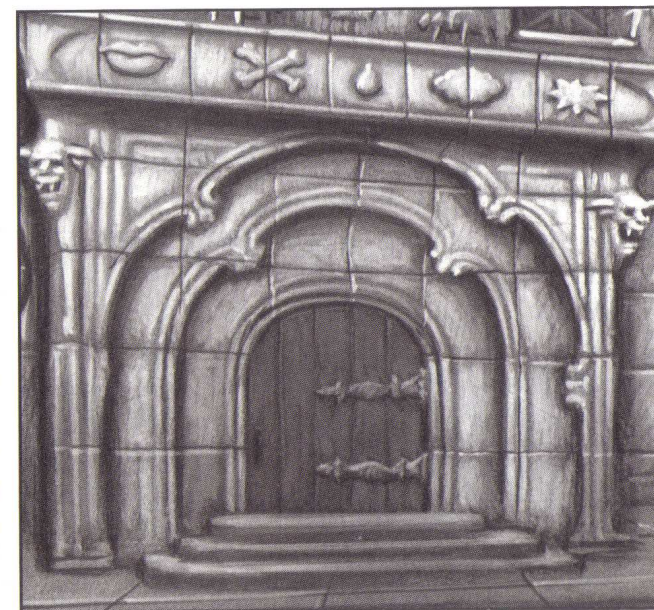
But they arrived too late. Already the cave was altering, mutating into the awful aspect of Avoozl. The armies met with the maddened monks who too were changed by the rituals. What were once humans, albeit rather moronic and hopelessly malleable ones, now had become creatures of such horrible appearance that even the sturdiest of the stalwart soldiers lost their lunches and blew chunks.

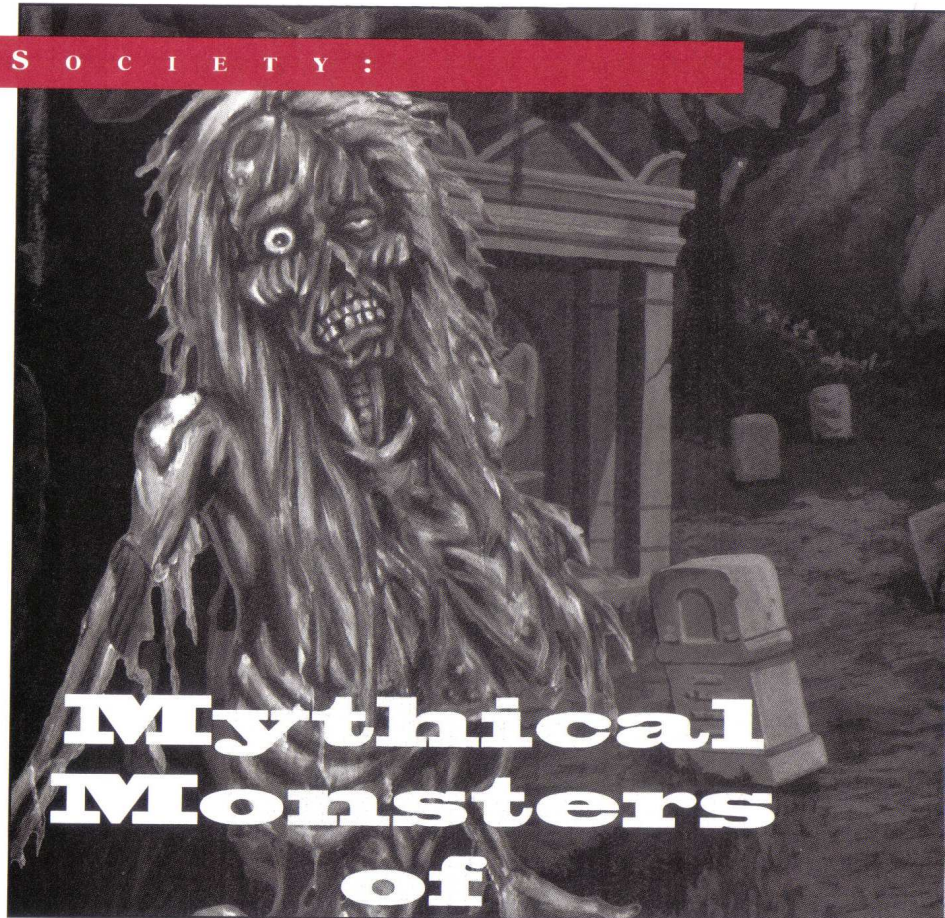
Hopelessly outnumbered and unmanned, yet did the good guys face the horrendous odds. The Mage Erana herself battled with the very essence of Avoozl. On and on into the endless night did the combatants contend, while the world awaited the outcome in flustered frustration.

At long last, the feeble rays of a hesitant sun broke over the eastern mountains. From the cave mouth of

the Dark One, a single man came crawling, bearing a Wizard's Staff. Piotyr the Paladin returned with all that remained of Erana.

To this day, when the moon is dark, and the winds are still, strange things can be seen near the Cave of the Dark One. Forms and shapes of things that were once human still lurk in the vicinity, whispering in the night strange tales of a High Priest that did not die, but waits within the dark confines of the cavern, guarding a ritual that will someday again be used to summon the very shadows of darkness themselves. For is it not written, "In his vacation resort at Club Dead, Avoozl lies twitching"?





Mythical Monsters of Mordavia

FOLK TALE OR FALLACY?

by Robber Graves

Since the days when the Cult of Amon Tillado first raised dark powers above the Land of Mordavia, the area has been overrun with hideous hordes of aberrant abominations. This actually makes it easy to recommend a strategy for dealing with Mordavian monsters -- **stay out of Mordavia!**



However, for those unfortunates who find themselves lost in that dark land, here are some tips for surviving the inevitable onslaught of ornery antagonists. So as to reduce the incidence of fatal strokes among the more timid of our readers, we've arranged the writeup to start with the mildly mischievous, work its way up through the moderately malevolent, and finish with the most massively murderous of the Mordavian monsters.

DOMOVoi

This Slavic house spirit inhabits many family residences in this region. Harmless and occasionally helpful, Domovoi are seldom seen or heard. Should you actually meet a Domovoi, you will do well to follow any advice it gives you.

LESHY

This spirit of the forest has a very mischievous nature and is quick to play tricks upon the unwary traveler. Leshy are renowned for their love of riddles, and can be helpful to those who guess the right answers. Never let a Leshy make you mad!

RUSALKA

This spirit of a young woman who died drowning swims in the waters that became her grave. She tries to lure others with her obvious charms to share her fate. While the charms are plentiful, the fate is unpleasant. There is supposed to be a way to release a Rusalka to her proper rest, but the method is lost in legend.



FAERIE FOLK

These magical beings remain aloof from mankind, and dwell in remote areas. However, they have been known to interact with humans, providing they want something. Faerie Folk are often powerful magic users, especially in spells of illusion.

HEXAPODS

These strange octopus-like creatures are extremely rare, always hungry, and frequently dangerous. Recognize a Hexapod by its six tentacles and try not to become one's lunch!

VORPAL BUNNIES

These seemingly cute and innocent little furry animals have nasty, sharp teeth and a taste for blood. Also known as Killer Rabbits, Leaping Lepuses, and Hares having a bad hair day.

BADDERS

These weird creatures look like bats crossed with spiders; they are small, fast and come in

flocks. They are relatively easy to kill, assuming you can hit them. Their bite is poisonous, and they attack by swooping by their prey and biting them in passing. After their prey falls, they all land on the corpse to feed.

ANTWERPS

These bizarre and absurd creatures are far too ridiculous to describe. Whatever you do, don't attack one with a sharp or pointed object -- the results will be explosive to say the least!

REVENANTS

These are low-power Vampires. They are undead creatures that have no memory of what they were before they died. They only know the hunger for living flesh that drives them out of their graves at night. They may look like walking corpses, but they're far more vicious and bloodthirsty than any mere Zombie.

WYVERNS

Wyverns are relatives of Dragons. They are smaller and do not have hind legs. Their bodies are long and snake-like, the wings bat-like. They attack with their teeth, claws, and the poisonous sting at the end of their tail. Their poison can quickly weaken even the strongest Hero, so be sure to have a Poison Cure potion on hand.

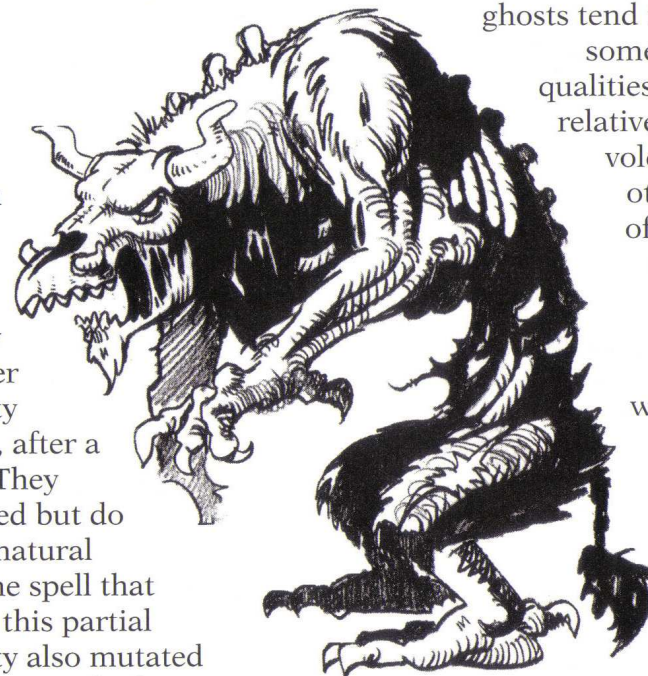
CHERNOVY

These were once the human followers of the Dark One. They sought after immortality (and got it, after a fashion). They can be killed but do not die of natural causes. The spell that gave them this partial immortality also mutated them. They now look basically human but with twisted, mutated features reminiscent of insects, spiders, and octopods. They wear the remnants of their ritual robes and are powerful spellcasters.

GHOSTS

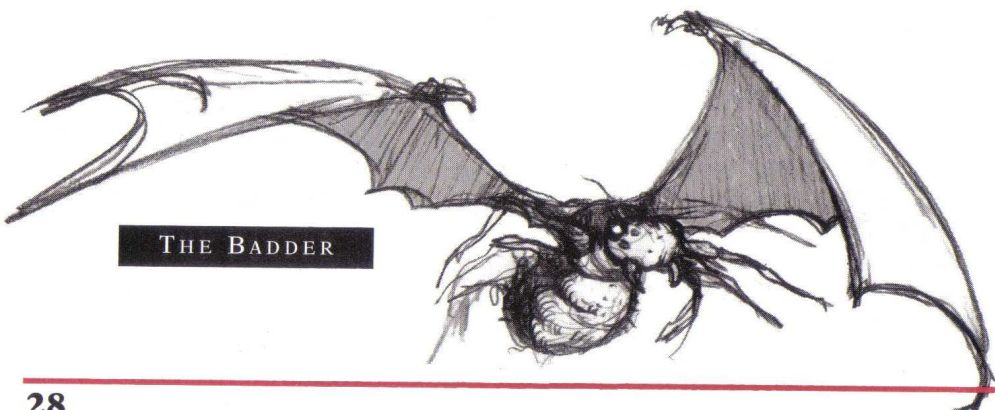
Eldritch creatures of indefinite, insubstantial form. Ghosts hang around graveyards or near where a person died. A person becomes a ghost on dying if he/she has substantial "unfinished business" in this world (such as an unfulfilled vow or loved ones left behind), and if the death was sudden and unexpected. These ghosts tend to retain

some human qualities and are relatively benevolent. The other type of ghost is that of a mean-spirited person who "died hard" and whose

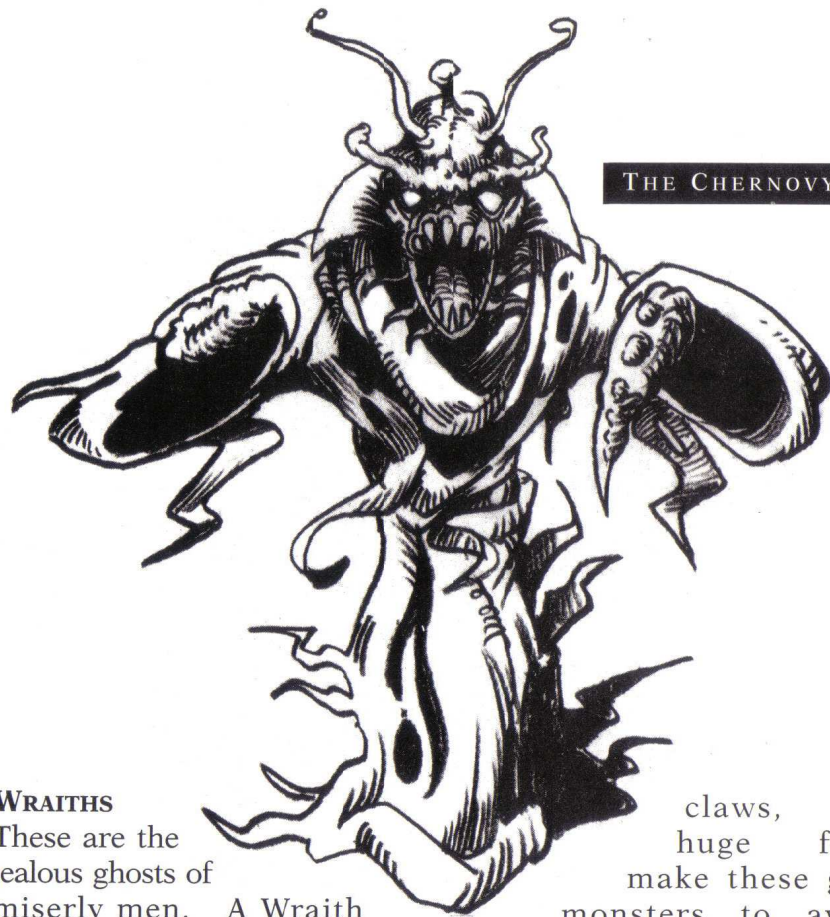


THE NECROTAUR

passions and emotions refused to settle in the grave. This type of ghost wants nothing more than to bring others down in death just as it was brought down. You'll live longer if you can distinguish between the two types!



THE BADDER



THE CHERNOVY

WRAITHS

These are the jealous ghosts of miserly men. A Wraith always hovers near the site of its death, guarding some item of value. These undead spirits are powerful and can cast magical spells. They also have the innate ability to drain the health of anyone who ventures too near them. Unless you have magical protection, avoid Wraiths!

NECROTAURS

These fierce monsters look like a cross between a Rottweiler and a bear that has been dead for a very long while. The nasty temper, razor-sharp

claws, and huge fangs make these good monsters to avoid.

Despite their appearance, Necrotaur are not actually Undead creatures. They are alive and vicious.

WEREWOLVES

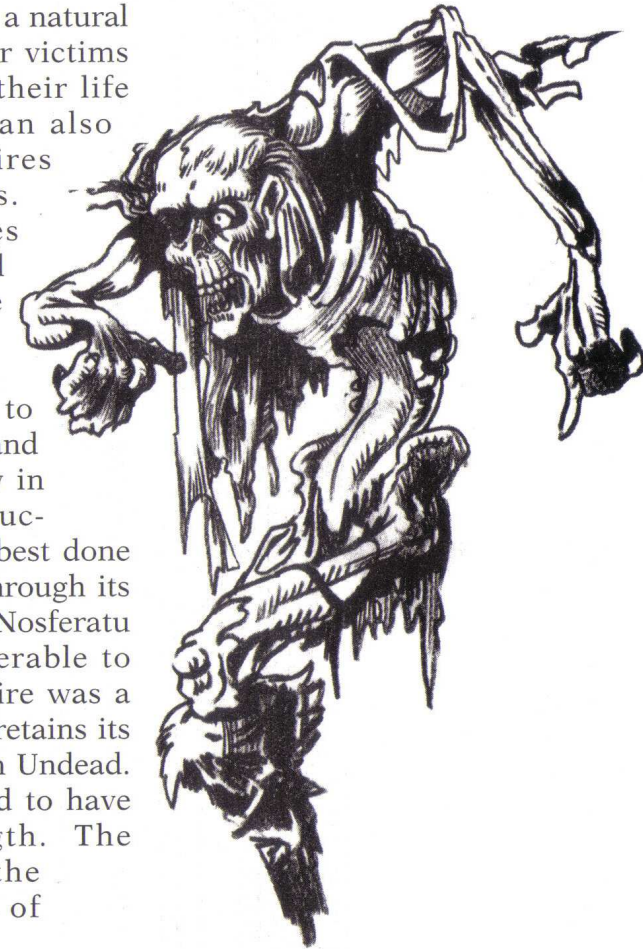
Legends say these are the victims of a terrible curse which manifests when the moon is full. The victim is transformed into a wolf-like animal with a vicious attitude and a taste for human blood. Only silver or magic can affect the monster in Werewolf form. Werewolves are frequently associated with Gypsies.

VAMPIRES

Most feared of the Living Undead, the Nosferatu are also the most powerful. They drink the blood of the living to maintain their unnatural existence. They have a natural ability to charm their victims before sucking out their life blood. Vampires can also create other Vampires from their victims. These new Vampires are slaves to the will of their Vampire creators.

Vampires are forced to flee the light of day, and must sleep helplessly in their coffins. Destruction of a Vampire is best done with a stake driven through its heart. At night, the Nosferatu are virtually invulnerable to attack. If the Vampire was a Magic User in life, it retains its magical abilities as an Undead. They are also reputed to have superhuman strength. The Vampire is truly the most dangerous of monsters!

Remember the Successful Surviving Adventurer's Rule #1: When in doubt, run away! There's a lot of room for doubt when it comes to the Monsters of Mordavia.



THE REVENANT

Need a Hint?



See your local oracle for a bit of future gazing, or get our handy hintbook at your local software dealer.

Shadows of Darkness



Hintbook