

# HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN



Ardaia Grimoire III

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# House Of The Rising Sun Arduin Grimoire III

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## Abbreviations

AC . . . . Armour Class  
AF . . . . Attack Factor  
AGIL . . . AGILity  
BF . . . . Battle Factor  
CF . . . . Coordination Factor  
CHAR . . . CHARisma  
CON . . . . CONstitution  
CP . . . . Copper Penny (1 oz)  
DEX . . . . DEXterity  
DF . . . . Defense Factor  
EL . . . . Experience Level  
FRP . . . . Fantasy Role Play  
GM . . . . Game Master

GP . . . . Gold Piece  
GS . . . . Gold Sovereign (1 oz)  
HP . . . . Hit Points  
INT . . . . INTelligence  
MRS . . . . Magic Resistance % Save  
OP . . . . Order of Power (Magik)  
RCH . . . . Random Critical Hit  
RF . . . . Reasoning Factor  
(average of INT and WIS)  
SP . . . . Silver Penny (1 oz)  
STR . . . . STRength  
WIS . . . . WISdom

# The House Of The Rising Sun

Arduin Grimoire Vol VI

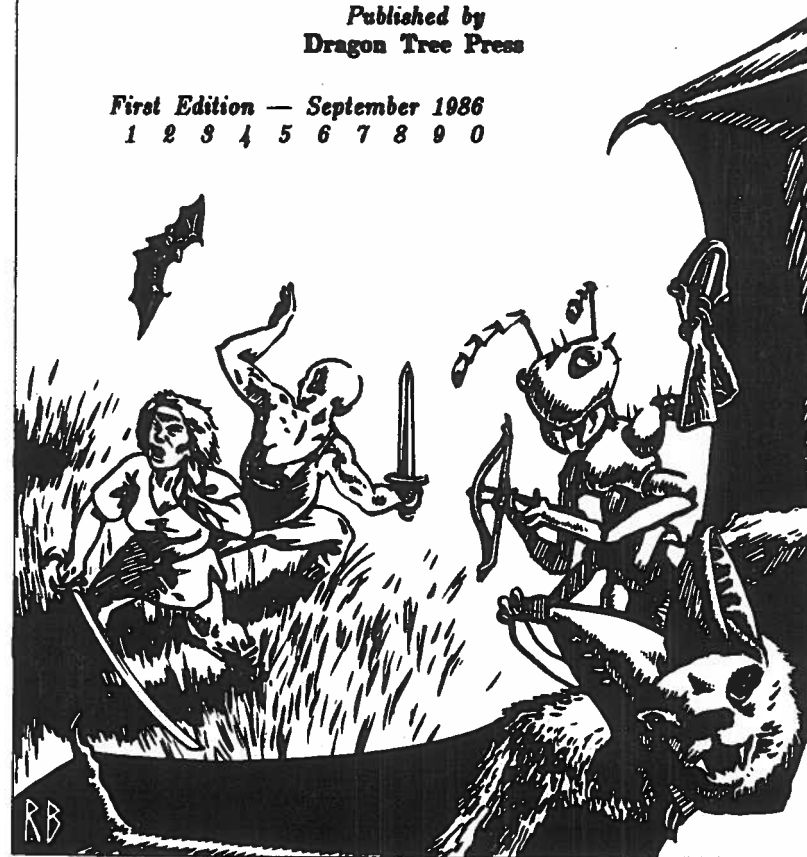
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Roland Brown

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## Foreword

Nigh on to ten years has passed between the volume you now hold and the very first Arduin Grimoire (I). Much has changed twixt then and now, most for the good, a small bit for the bad or not so good. But the one constant, for me, has always been Arduin. Friends and acquaintances (as well as two marriages) have come and gone but the mythic world of my dreams has ever glimmered upon the far horizons of my soul — always waiting, ever ready for whatever was needed of/from it. And not just for me. No, countless thousands have talked and/or written to me — all to tell me that, for them, it too was "always there".

I am proud of Arduin, of my role in its telling and of a select few brave hearts that were as touched by it all as I. For me, for us, Arduin lives . . . it always will.

Where it will finally end, I cannot truly say — nor even hazard a guess. But rest assured that wherever (and whenever) the "end" comes it will be appropriate and right. But, till that mist shrouded future leaps upon me and tells me in no uncertain terms to "*Cease!*", why I guess I'll just have to keep on telling you all about my travels there. As long as you need Arduin, I'll keep on writing and that wondrous land will "be there" for us all . . .

### Dedication

This, the 6th Arduin Grimoire, is sincerely dedicated to those very few true and loyal friends, shieldmates all, who have stood by my side regardless of the consequences or onslaught. Through the storms and battles of my life, these few have stood between me and "the dragon" on more than one occasion. To those believers, those fearless few, I can only offer my awestruck gratitude and love. You know who you are and I shall never forget . . . ever remember. My humblest thanks.

### Undedication

This is a giant raspberry and thumb to my nose at the even fewer still who, when the going got rough, cut and ran. Cowards all . . . you shall not be missed. And know too that the ebon gates of Arduin are evermore denied to you.

### Special Thanks

To Dragon Tree Press (*Ben & Mary!*) for their goodwill, good vibes and continued forbearance during a particularly trying time in my life. Thank you most sincerely.

Dave Hargrave — 1986 — *El Sobrante, California*

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## The Adventurer

### A New Character Class

This class of character is rather difficult to define as it incorporates many concepts from several other, already extant player character types. Thief, Warrior and Magician are the three (3) main components of this class though you'll surely recognize small bits from such diverse others as: Alchemist, Sage, Assassin and even, at times, the Courtesan! Each is a part of the new class, yet none of them is what it really is. Read on . . .

This class of character is created *only* through a long, arduous process of intensive individual training (*and uncommon dedication*). But, above all, the character *must* have such a strong curiosity, such a pressing need "to know/see" things that it is the one *dominant* driving force in their life. They are an ever-restless breed who travel simply for the sake of doing so. It doesn't matter where . . . just "to go" is the thing.

Each city and most large towns will have a Chapter House of The Adventurers' Guild but few "common folk" are ever aware of this. Even members of other guilds tend to be unaware of this odd "brother guild".

From time to time, the head of the Chapter House will recruit a new member (*usually someone sponsored or recommended by another Guild Member*). Such Chapters, by Guild Law, never have more than thirteen (13) members: ten "active" members, two semi-retired "House Counsels" and the Chapter leader — called the Proconsuler. This last fellow (*or lady*) is usually very old or too physically incapacitated to "go a'roving". Even with the limit on membership, there are seldom more than five or six living members in each chapter . . . even in the largest of cities — thus the fairly continual recruitment.

Each recruit will be from 10-15 years of age, of no particular race, gender or other generalization other than: "*they be sound of body and mind and more curious than a bag full of kittens!*" They recruit the candidate by laying out what is called a "curiosity line" (*i.e. trap*) for the previously-observed possible new member (*in secret, of course*). The base "riddle" of the "line" is usually quite clear to the person it is "laid" for. The test is in seeing if the candidate will perceive, solve and then follow the riddle/curiosity line to its "trap". Then they must figure their way out of it!

Should they do *all* this (*and only 20-30% are thus successful*), then and only then are they offered training in this secretive guild. Surprise! Gotcha! Should they fail the test or decline the offer (*about half decline*), they will *never* be bothered again. Ever! Those who accept simply (*and immediately*) disappear for a minimum of seven (7) years. This is their "basic" training time and it is *always* conducted in a city/town as far from their original one as is possible.

Do remember that the official credo of the Guild is: "Adventure is our business"; and their unofficial motto is: "All life is an adventure". And they die trying to live up to these sayings. Frequently!

The training is very serious and strenuous, much akin to the ancient Chinese or Japanese martial monastery/schools of the 15th-17th centuries (A.D.). However, as the training is of such wide scope and generalized nature, it precludes the class from ever *seriously* competing with the actual "class types" who do only that one thing. As an example: an Arduinian Guided Thief would *always* be more proficient in such "thiefly matters" than an Adventurer (*who would know only the basic concepts of some of these skills*).

The Adventurer will have several basic skills from several different other class types but are *never* "expert" in any degree — nor are they expected to be. Remember that, by Arduinian law, an Adventurer cannot take thiefly contracts, work professionally as an Assassin, Courtesan, Alchemist, etc. because they are not trained members of those Guilds or Colleges. To defy the law is to court disaster. Remember this.

By training as well as personal inclination, the Adventurer will prefer speed and mobility over armour protection. Thus, 95% of the time, they will wear *no armour of any kind (save for light leather gloves)*. And, the 5% of the time one does so, it is *always* soft, half-leather with soft-leather gauntlets. *Never* do they use helmet, shield, bracers, etc.

Weapons-wise, Adventurers use rapiers (*and main-gauche usually*), throwing knives or the very rare (5% chance) broadswords of the light, narrow-bladed type. Even rarer will you see a garotte (1% chance) and *never (!)* do they wield sling or bow. However, upon rare (5% chance) occasions, you'll see one with a light (*only!*) crossbow. The GM should adhere strictly to these percentages. Some cultural variance may be allowed but only sparingly and where necessary! Speed, not firepower, is their forte.

The Adventurer is *sometimes* referred to as "Jack" or "Rogue" in other lands but is most often called "Rover" outside of Arduin. In any

case, all are "free spirits" filled with insatiable wanderlust and driving curiosity. Thus Sages hire them frequently to search out and acquire items of interest.

They have few close friends but those they do take to heart, they will be fiercely loyal to. Even unto death — for their honor and their word is their pride and their pride is what fuels their life.

They are most often Human (90% chance), Amazon (5%), Hobbit (3%), half-Elf (1%) and other "odd bits" making up the remainder. Only a roll of 01 on a d100 will allow a racial type not listed above (or following) to be an Adventurer. Note: the following racial types are never of this class: Phraint; any Orc-kind; any Goblin-kind or any Saurig-type. Note further that all Elven-types will be, of necessity, only those born and raised in a city/town for it is only there can they be recruited. Thus, no "woody" or "High" Elf-types ever become Adventurers. Sorry...

Remember too that, regardless of race or gender, the Adventurer is a child of the city, wise in its wiles and ways and roof-top runner and alley skulker second in ability only to the street urchins themselves. Play them accordingly.

Remember as well that they can be convinced to go haring off on just about any rattle-brained scheme, regardless of how stupid (or dangerous) it may sound. After all, as they are wont to say, "do you want to live forever!?"

An Adventurer will brave any peril, undergo any hardship or do without any creature comforts so long as he is "on adventure" — but he/she is, at heart, a city folk who, between adventures, wants all the comforts of civilization. A soft bed, hot food, good drink and entertainment are what they crave! And that high style of living requires money — so it's adventuring they will go to get it!

Here are a few "musts" for players of this new class — read and heed!

- 1) An Adventurer prefers not to fight. After all, "he, today, who runs away, t'will adventure again some other time!" It's called "showing heels" and is frequently done. Do note, however, that they will fight to protect friends and companions they like ... but they won't like it.
- 2) They never stay in one place long unless they've "made their stake" and can afford to return to their "parent" Chapter House to live it up. There they'll stay (or in a nearby Inn) 'till the money runs out.
- 3) They never acquire wealth or property for "future times" as none ever expect to live long enough to spend/use it! So cash really flows through their hands rapidly. Gifts to friends, charities, favorite courtesans and temples consume 60-80% of all an Adventurer makes. Another 5% always goes to the Chapter House (first).
- 4) They can read basic "magik" runes/writing and even write it to some (very!) small extent but, though they could read a magik scroll (and use its powers), they could not create one. Ever.
- 5) They will know the following languages: Arduinian, their own racial-type (where applicable) and one (+) more per each RF point more than fifteen (15) the character has. This is grade-school level reading and writing — nothing fancy.
- 6) At/by graduation day, they will have learned one(1) only (!) First Order of Power magik spell or conjuration (never a ritual). Thereafter, each five (+5) EL's gained will add one (+1) more spell or conjuration if available (i.e. found tome, taught by magician friend, etc). The magik they may learn may never exceed OP 5 and whatever they know may never be used more than once per each 25 hours. However, the usage is always without regard to mana cost though the effect produced is (always) the basic (lesser) level allowed. As an example, an EL 13 Adventurer would know one OP 1 magik and have had the capability of learning up to two (+2) more magiks (to OP 5). Thus, if he had learned two more, he then could use three (3) magiks (one of each) every 25 hour day. Simple.
- 7) By graduation day, they will have learned at least one (1) basic Thievery skill. If they have an RF of 12 or less, it's one; 13-15 is



two (2) such skills; 16-18 is three (3) and an RF of 19+ is four (4) Thievery skills. Note, however, that no skills other than "basic" ones can be learned (i.e. no "intermediate" or "advanced", etc). Use the appropriate skills lists from Arduin, Bloody Arduin or elsewhere.

- 8) As well as the arcane/thievery skills, the Adventurer will also have learned one (1) basic skill from either the Alchemist, Courtesan or Assassin lists. Choose one only!
- 9) The beginning Adventurer is plus one (+1) with any two (2) weapons (not classes of same) and "even on" with ten (10) more — not including those proscribed to him. In the BF system, the +1 is equal to plus five (+5) BF. These abilities cannot be increased by further training. However, through experience, the Adventurer may add +1 (+5 to BF) to any single weapons type (not class) for each five ELs gained beyond EL Four (4). Thus, at EL 9, they could add a "plus" to their battle prowess with one (1) of their weapons ... or add another weapon to their "even on" list: player's choice.
- 10) Remember! Beginning Adventurers begin play at Zero EL and must gain their first (EL 1) through experience!
- 11) Each 5% of their normal life span, they will have learned one (1) new language to a maximum number equal to their RF score.
- 12) Adventurers can and do lie but will never, never, never break their word. Once given, an Adventurer's word is "to die for".
- 13) Adventurers add +2 to their CON scores; +1 to their DEX (or AGIL — their choice) and +1 to their INT score, after all basic rolls for the character are made.

The following is an advancement chart for those who still like to use experience points for EL advancement. Elsewise, consider Adventurers as Brigands/Highwaymen for such purposes.

### Adventurer Advancement Chart

Experience Points Needed	Thief Skills Add <sup>1</sup>	Other Adds And Bonuses For Experience
EL 1st 2,500	+1	<u>One</u> (1) other skill from available types <sup>2</sup>
2nd 5,500		
3rd 12,500	+2	+1 to knife attack <sup>3</sup>
4th 17,500	+3	Add one (1) basic Martial Arts skill
5th 22,500		
6th 30,000	+4	Able to use magik wands <sup>4</sup>
7th 37,500		Add one (1) basic Alchemical skill
8th 45,000	+5	
9th 55,000	+6	
10th 65,000	+7	Add +1 to knife attack <sup>3</sup>
11th 75,000		Add one (1) basic Courtesan skill
12th 85,000		Add +1 to rapier or broadsword attack
13th 100,000	+8	Add <u>second</u> basic Alchemical skill
14th 130,000	+9	Add <u>second</u> Martial Arts skill
15th 180,000		Add <u>second</u> Courtesan skill
20th 255,000	+10	Able to use magik rods and staves <sup>4</sup>
21-30 +26,500 <sup>5</sup>	No	Hereafter only GM adjudication will give
31-40 +27,500 <sup>5</sup>	more	"other" skills to the Adventurer. We
41-50 +28,500 <sup>5</sup>	may	recommend a <u>sparing</u> give out and only
51-60 +29,000 <sup>5</sup>	be	those who have <u>earned</u> them by dint of
61-70 +29,500 <sup>5</sup>	learned	perseverance, skill (and luck) in
71-80 +30,000 <sup>5</sup>	here-	adventuring.
81-90 +30,500 <sup>5</sup>	after	
91-99 +31,000 <sup>5</sup>		
100 +40,000 and +50,000 each additional EL above EL 100		

1) Adds are progressive, not cumulative — example: at EL 13, the Adventurer will have a total of 8 Thief skills, not eight more. (f22) GM's choice. 3) Any single knife-type weapon attack (+5 BF). 4) 70% for successful use plus two percent (2%) per each three (3) ELs hereafter to 95% maximum. 5) per experience level — example: you need 550,000 EP to reach EL50 as an Adventurer.

## The Street Urchins of Arduin

Over the years there has been considerable speculation by the players (and readers) about many aspects of Arduin life and custom(s). One of the most asked about areas of my campaign is the "Street Urchin" child gangs which populate every city, town and hamlet of my world. The following is a general overview of this subject and, combined with the very popular "Black Rabbits" writeup in *Dark Dreams* (Arduin Grimoire V), everyone should now have more than enough information concerning these unique denizens of the Arduinian mythos. Please, read on . . .

To begin with, one must understand the three (3) most basic things about the "street urchins". These are:

- 1) They are "Guild Recognized" as a legitimate "affiliated organization" of the (in)famous Thieves Guild. Being such also requires them to follow all the pertinent laws and rules which govern their "parent" guild in order to maintain their legal status. They are not "wild" children running rampant but highly organized, well disciplined (and trained) groups of very efficient folks. Nobody to deliberately mess with.
- 2) They are the main recruitment (and basic training) arm of the extremely powerful Thieves Guild, though semi-autonomous and a "power" in their own right.
- 3) Remembering that (as in #1) they are not packs of feral children running amok like demented midgets (!), one must also remember that, training and discipline aside, when all is said and done, they are still "just kids".

If you can keep these oddly opposed yet conjoined ideas straight, then all the rest will follow easily. For instance, each and every inhabited area of Arduin, from smallest hamlet to largest metropolis, is divided into "kipes" (areas of control). In a few of the tiniest hamlets, there is only one such kipe (the whole hamlet) but, more often than not, it is many kipes per town or city. Each kipe is the sole responsibility of the "gang" (or "kin mob") which inhabits its well-defined boundaries. And you'd better believe that these gangs are extremely territorial and dislike any other kipes members trespassing on their turf! The actual boundaries/area/size of each kipe depends on several factors — such as:

- A) The number of gang members. More urchins require larger operating territories.
- B) The wealth of the neighborhood in question. The poorest and richest areas, oddly enough, have the fewest gang members (but not necessarily the smallest areas) but, for obviously different reasons. The middle-class and trades tend to be the most contested areas (and have the largest gangs).
- C) How much "squeal" (i.e. influence) the "King Rat" of an individual gang has with the Guild, local constabulary and/or even the local inhabitants. As they say in Arduin: "the louder the squeal, the sweeter the milk".
- D) How much actual wealth/money an individual gang has (the more they have, the more "squeal" they can buy). Money equals power in most places in Arduin.

The average big city gang will consist of: one (1) "King Rat" (i.e. leader); his (or her) two (2) "hands" (naturally called "left" and "right") which are the enforcers and "generals"; and about sixty (60) or so "mice" (members). While not always the oldest, the "King" is definitely the toughest and the smartest of the bunch. They maintain their "rule" through ability (fighting and otherwise) and fear. Such a gang will, on the average, have sway of an area about one-quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) mile square (i.e. 3 to 4 city blocks on a side). This is for a crowded middle class area, of course.

Each city, town, etc has an "Arch-King" who is "elected" by the "Council Of The Kings" (pretentious little tykes, aren't they?) for a one-year period (15 Arduinian months). This election varies in form from town to city to hamlet but is never an easy affair and always includes some trial or ordeal of considerable difficulty and danger. As the individual Kings' word is law in their own kipes, so too is the word of the Arch-King to all kipes and Kings in the city or town of his (or her) elected territory. The Arch-King also acts as the urchins "face" when dealing with folks who may be of importance outside of the Thieves Guild.

From amongst the Arch-Kings comes the single "Over-King" who rules all of Arduin's urchins. The trials needed to be passed (or survived) for this "honor" are purely lethal and only the bravest, strongest and most cunning make it. Thus an Over-King comes seldom, stays as long as he likes or until another passes "the trials" (and he/she decides not to go through them again to reprove his/her

worth). Should two (or very rarely, three) manage to pass the test at the same time, then it becomes a duel to the death to see who shall assume the "Urchin Throne". Kids they may be but timid they are not.

The "Council" arbitrates all matters of (blood) feud and finance, politics and diplomacy and "all things needful that cannot be handled by the King Rats". The Over-King has no rules or laws as he (or she) is the law and all that they do is right and correct.

Most urchins are officially inducted into a Kin Mob about age five (5) and leave at about age 12 (to 14). A median age would be around 9 years. About 60-65% of the urchins are male, 35-40% female. As an urchin's life is hard (and dangerous), about 3 of ten never live to reach their "retirement" age.

The urchins do everything from acting as guides, procurers, nightwatch, fellow-spies and even babysit — all for a price. When they leave their kin mob, they most often (95%) go directly into the Thieves Guild apprenticeship for another 4 to 6 years of specialized training. The few who don't become thieves, most often become Traders — which, it seems to me, is rather appropriate! Very rarely will one become anything else.

The Kings, by urchin "law" must resign by age twenty (20), though the Council can (though seldom does) make special exceptions on a year to year basis beyond that. And under no circumstances can any king be older than twenty-five (25) as that is the absolute maximum age allowed, even with "Council exception".

Note that urchins do practice thievery, usually of a petty "snatch and run" variety but never in their own kipes. They always go outside their kipes to do this sort of stuff and, as it is their "job" to prevent other urchins from doing that very same thing inside their kipes, you can see the constant "raid & warfare" situation that results. A successful raid into an "enemy" kipe is like counting coup and has much prestige amongst their peers. These raids are called "downruns" and go on pretty much continuously in large cities.

Note also that, should other urchins catch them out of their home kipes without a "traveler's pass", they will be beaten severely and, if they are caught stealing by the law/militia/etc, they suffer exactly the same punishment as a real, Guilded Thief would. All in all, a dangerous (but exciting) life!

Urchins normally do not fight to kill but will do so if cornered and their own life is threatened. As they say: "Dead men buy no bread".

However, if one of their own has been murdered (for no good reason), then beware "the Howling", a sort of street urchin variation on the "wild hunt". Frequently other neighboring kipes will put rivalries aside to "howl down" (i.e. hunt down) the perpetrator. And it won't be quick and easy death once they are caught. Know as well that almost never will the local authorities intervene in such a "Howling" figuring the murderer is getting their own deserved rough justice.

Most urchins fight "honorably" (i.e. one on one) and never gang up on another kipes member(s). However, they do form "tripleks" (i.e. a circle) around their enemies and send in one urchin at a time, time after time, until he can no longer stand.

As a last bit, here's an example of one city's urchin fold — Talismondé capitol of Arduin. With a population which varies seasonally between 600,000+ to well over 750,000 people and an area roughly equal in size to San Francisco on our world, Talismondé has an estimated 1900 active, full-time street urchins. These are divided, currently, into thirty-one (31) kipes of varying size. The most powerful, called the "Brass Nose Mob" has 140 active members and controls all of the Gold, Silver and other "precious metals" working areas — a rich and politically powerful area. The smallest, the "Cobble-Foxes" with only twenty-two members, is relegated to an area out near the East Hill cemetery (and one street of stone cutters/grave diggers), a relatively sparsely populated and poor area.

As a last note, don't figure that 1,900 (or so) urchins are a lot; after all, our own Los Angeles has over 40,000 known members of street gangs! So, as you can see, the street urchins are actually a pretty elite bunch of kids.



## The Beggars Guild

(And New Character Class?)

Another group frequently asked about are the numerous and, occasionally, obnoxious street beggars that seem to be just about everywhere you go in Arduin. Well, these seemingly "poor" folks are actually one of the oldest and (*believe it or not*) most respected of the Arduinian Guilds.

Anyone, regardless of race, creed or color, etc. can become a beggar but only if they have at least one real deformity or handicap — the more gruesome the better. There is no age limit (*up or down*) but all new beggars go through a three (3) year apprenticeship and training program. After that, they work the streets for another four (4) years strictly as beggars. Then, seven years after they began, they are given an additional 1-3 years of specialized training, depending on their abilities and intelligence.

This last bit of training is what makes a beggar much more than he (*or she*) seems. For, you see, Arduinian beggars are also information brokers and have "watchers" (*or "gutter-eyes"*) practically everywhere. They also hire out, usually to thieves, as lookouts and "bagmen" (*to move loot secretly around a city or out of it*).

However, their main income source always has been and always will be that oldest of professions: begging. They also receive a large amount directly into each city's Guild House (called "*The Gilded Hole*") on a monthly basis from business establishments who pay them not to hang about pestering/driving off customers. This payment is called "spitting silver" or "tossing out".

Most weddings and other such public or semi-private events require that a stiff "Gold Bowl Fee" be paid so that whole hordes of foul-smelling beggars won't show up to ruin the affair.

Many beggars will self-mutilate themselves to increase their ability to elicit money from passers-by. The vernacular for this terrible custom is "eating a finger". Disgusting! But very effective.

Members of the this Guild have more detailed information on any given city, town, etc than any other character class in play. If they don't know about something (*at least in a general enough way to tell you where to find more precise information*) and/or if they can't find out, then no one can!

With their close working relationship with both the Thieves Guild

and the street urchins, the beggars have "long arms" as they say in Arduin. Many Guilded Thieves (*and the very rare Assassin*) will also be a Guilded member of the beggars ... as a perfect cover for their sort of work.

For game play, we suggest that beggars be given three (3) picks/choices from the basic thieves' skills. GMs should not allow any of these chosen skills to be of a combative or strenuous physical nature. We recommend such skills as: "Sleight of Hand"; "Perfunctory Goods Appraisal" and "Concealment". At EL Four (4), they acquire another Thievery skill (*as above*) and once again (*and lastly*) at EL Eight (8). Thus they can have up to five (5) basic skills which thieves use. Note also that all beggars have a 75% base chance of successfully "escaping & evading" in their own personal section of town (*i.e. their "lay", where they do their begging*) and a 55% chance anywhere in their hometown. Each increases at a rate of +3% per each EL gained, to a maximum success chance of 99% at ELs 9 and 16 respectively.

GMs should remember the beggar's thievery skills and affiliations but should never allow them to be played as real thieves. This they definitely are not nor do they wish to be.

If used as a player character, do remember that they never leave their home cities except on vacation and then they go dressed as "normal folk". So they are really only playable in very specialized campaigns or areas of play. However, they make excellent guides into the (in)famous "undercities" and terrific "color" as non-player characters interacting with the players.

Favorite "brands" (*i.e. deformities*) of beggars are: clubfoot/lame, hunchback, blindness, missing legs or any non-contagious affliction such as "swampshakes"; "green drip"; "blue spot" or any of the other, more "colorful", though generally harmless diseases.

Note! Beggars hate fakes and, when they catch someone pretending to be handicapped, they ... well, let's just say the culprit soon becomes really handicapped. This punishment is called, appropriately, "chopping" and beggars who've "been chopped" tend to be disliked by their "honest" brethren.

Beggars live in the worst, most-tumble-down sections of town — usually in houses (*or even ruins*) that appear to be real dumps. Actually, they are, more often than not, quite sumptuous and richly "done up" inside. After all, on an average day, any moderately successful beggar can earn at least 25 SP(!) or the equivalent. This translates to about 37 GS per month (*or more than twice what a poor*

farmer earns in a whole year!). They do live well...

Beggar earn experience like Traders, i.e. by how much money they earn. Each GS gets them 5 EP (or one (1) EP per each 4 SP earned). However, a beggar can never gain more than three (3) ELs in any given year (15 months) regardless of how much money they may earn. Beggars also begin play at Zero EL and must earn their way to EL 1! After the character is rolled up, the GM must adjudicate what *minuses* to apply to their CHAR score because of their disability/ailment. This can be a permanent loss, as in the case of missing limbs, burn scars, etc, or temporary, as in the case of a disease which is, for health reasons, periodically cured. Many beggars have pets, most often of the rat variety. Some even manage to train them well enough to do simple tricks or tasks. GM adjudication is also needed here. That's about it, so enjoy the new Player Character class and remember: "Alms for the poor and afflicted, alms for the less fortunate, alms from the kindness of thy heart ... May the gods bless thee, sir!"



## Beggar Advancement Chart

Experience		Newly Acquired Skills, Bonuses & Other "Goodies"
EL	Points	
1st	1,200	Add +1, permanent, to character's CON score
2nd	2,500	+5% to daily "earning" capability
3rd	4,000	Add ability for basic disguise and "training" rats
4th	6,000	Add ability to fight with cane, staff or crutch
5th	8,500	
6th	10,000	Add +5% to daily earning capability
7th	12,500	
8th	15,000	Add +1, permanent, to character's CON score
9th	18,000	
10th	21,500	Add +5% to earnings, <u>advanced</u> disguise skill
11-20	+3,500*	Add +1% earnings at <u>each</u> EL (11-20) gained
21-30	+4,500*	From this point on, any new skills will be GM
31-40	+5,000*	adjudicated based on each individual character
41-50	+5,500*	and their environment. It is <u>strongly</u>
51-60	+6,000*	recommended that such adds be few and far
61-70	+6,500*	between!
71-80	+7,000*	
81-90	+7,500*	
91-100	+8,250*	
101+	+9,000*	

\* per experience level

Note: The EP listed above are a linear progression, not cumulative. For example: a beggar character only needs 2,500 additional EP to go from EL 6 to EL 7 (i.e. from 10,000 EP to 12,500 EP). Thus, an EL 100 Beggar would have 559,000 EP!!! Needless to say, few beggars ever get beyond EL 20 or so.

## The Assassins Of Arduin

The following section will give players and GMs a bit more information on that most secretive of all player classes: The Assassin. For more info, please see Grimoire Game release of Arduin, Bloody Arduin. To begin with, here is a typical Assassins Guild "checklist" which must be used each time their services have been requested. If the Assassin cannot answer with an unqualified "Yes" to each question, then the proposed "hit" is not sanctionable and thus may not be accepted. The checklist questions are:

- 1) Was the job properly requested through the Assassins Guild?
- 2) Is the person(s) requesting these services economically able to pay the official rate without undue harm to their own life? (*i.e. can they afford it?*)
- 3) Are there sufficient grounds, under Arduin Law, for "Redress By Assassination"? See Arduin Law (*Arduin Grimoires I, II, III*) for guidelines.
- 4) Is the reason for the request (*see #3 above*) verifiable?
- 5) Is the target/intended victim(s) accessible through the means normally employed by the Assassins Guild?
- 6) Is it absolutely certain (*verifiably so*) that the "hit" is in no way politically motivated?
- 7) Is there absolute certainty that, even though not politically motivated, the "hit" will not cause lasting political harm/upheaval within Arduin?
- 8) Are you, the Assassin assigned to the hit, of sufficient expertise to do the job properly? If not, is one of such expertise available?
- 9) After all of the above, is there anything that causes you, the Assassin, to have even the slightest bit of doubt concerning the proposed hit?

Remember! Even one (1) "No" to any of the above questions is grounds for not accepting the proposed hit. In fact, you, the Assassin, are required to deny the request and to report the refusal immediately to the Guild Council. Failure to adhere to this strong rule will result in the Assassin being "Black-Listed" by the Guild. This, of course, is a death sentence as any other Guild Assassin is required to "terminate with extreme prejudice" the black-listed fellow on sight. So, be warned! Be wary! Be right, before you act!

## Arduin Law And Redress By Assassination

There are certain circumstances, under Arduin Law, where assassination may be legally employed by anyone with the means to hire a Guilded Assassin. Here are the best known/used of these reasons:

- 1) Where forcible rape has been committed against a family member.
- 2) Where illegal torture and/or maiming has occurred.
- 3) Whenever a person's reputation (*and thus livelihood*) has been deliberately and maliciously destroyed with the full intent of wrecking the victim's life in as many ways as possible and where no truths have been used. Do note, however, the fine line between hardnosed business competition/tactics and deliberate destruction of one's reputation. Take great care with this one . . .
- 4) Whenever abduction for the purpose of slavery has been done. Note the real problem with the fact that such slavery, whilst illegal in Arduin, tends to be legal most everywhere else. Be careful here as well.
- 5) Whenever cold-blooded murder has been done for pleasure, during robbery or other illegal act or for any other non-legal, non-sanctioned reason.
- 6) Whenever there has been theft of some "great treasure or artifact". This one is intended solely to cover the theft of such items as Royal Crowns, a noble family's Patent of Nobility or Homestone, etc. It does not cover the "normal" theft of huge amounts of money, personal jewelry, etc — this is legal in the sense that it is not punishable by death and the Thieves Guild is a legal operation (*just don't get caught!*). Really careful GM adjudication is required here — particularly where powerful magicians' "one of a kind" artifacts are concerned. Most Assassins tend to refuse these jobs outright.
- 7) Any "black-listed" Guild or College (*etc*) member or "any others deemed outcast, pariah and under edict" by any legally constituted organization (*i.e. Guild, religion, etc*) may be targeted — by anyone willing to pay.

As you can see, it's not a long list and great care must be taken so that you do not make an "unclean kill". To do that means all sorts of legal hassles, "blood money" to be paid and so on. No fun at all.

The next "section" will tell you a lot about some of the weapons that are unique to Arduin's Assassins. Although just about any kind of normal mundane sort of weapon can (and will) be used from time to time, most prefer to use the cultural "surprises" only Arduin can provide. Do note, though, that these devices are rare enough so that many Guild members never see some of them and almost no non-Guild member ever does. Does and lives, that is ...

#### Strankhus (Aka: Hands of Prayer)

This device looks like a pair of life-sized cast/carved metal hands, most often bronze, iron or steel. They are joined together at the wrist and have an attachment at the wrists' base where a 20'-30' braided wire (or, rarely, spidersilk line) is attached. The hands are "spring-loaded" and require an STR score of 16+ to "cock" in an open, grasping position. Thus set, they are whirled around and around, then "cast" at a victim's throat. On contact, they slam shut (like a beartrap), strangling/crushing the victim's windpipe. Victims slain in this manner have "hand marks" on their throats as if a real person's hands had actually strangled them. It is also used to grab a victim's sword arm, snatch a leg from under a person and so on and so forth. As this weapon is somewhat archaic and outmoded, it is seldom encountered anymore. Oh, even though a 16 STR can cock it, in "strangle mode", figure a 17+ STR is needed to pull it off.

#### Scorpion (Aka: The Stinger)

This is most often a glove or, sometimes, gauntlet that has a wrist-mounted, needle-thin blade of spring steel some 13 1/2" long and of triangular cross-section (i.e. it has three edges). The blade is spring-loaded and requires an STR score of 16+ to cock. Note that a special cocking rod with a clamp to hold the blade's end is required so one's hand is not sliced by its razor edges (usually envenomed). The firing mechanism is a palmed pull-ring triggered by the little finger. When fired, it will stab forward from its concealed position underneath the Assassin's "full cut" and voluminous sleeve. It has a "reach" of 8 1/2" beyond the Assassin's clenched fist and packs enough punch to penetrate up to light chainmail armour.

Once thrust home, the Assassin simply twists his hand/wrist counter-clockwise and the blade is detached from the wrist unit. The whole attack, unlock and hand withdrawal is one single motion (i.e. one CF action segment). Because it is fast, efficient and not prone to goof-ups, it is still the "weapon of choice" of most beginners in the Arduinian Assassins Guild. However, most more experienced assassins don't use it because they prefer not to have to get that close (i.e. punching range) of their intended victims. As a last note, the deep, triangular-shaped wound (and the usually left-behind blade) is one of the commonest "signatures" of the Assassins of Arduin — at least in the everyday "common" hits ...

#### Arbaletta (Aka: Arrowhand)

This device is nothing more than a miniature wrist/forearm mounted crossbow that uses a compound pulley-system to give incredible velocity for such a small item. It is fired from a hidden position underneath a "full cut" sleeve with a special firing slit worked right into its pattern/construction. The 4"-long, spiral-finned darts have a maximum effective range of 50 yards; a standard/best effective range of 21-40 yards and a point-blank range of 5 yards or less. Of course, 6-20 yards would be short range and 41-50 yards would be long to extreme range. For penetration purposes, figure it as effective as a light crossbow. Note that, due to its complicated cocking mechanism (STR of 15+ required), it takes three (3) full minutes minutes to reload and recock. Thus, it is considered a one-shot weapon. Even so, it is still very popular with middle-ranked Assassins — especially with poisoned darts.

#### Jakusa (Aka: Sawenake)

A variation of the strangler's garotte/throwing noose, this device is a bit more gruesome in its effectiveness. Made of two very thin spidersilk lines braided together with shark's teeth protruding from the coil end (only!) forming the noose. Most often about 33' long and with about 30 shark's teeth in a typical noose. Note: the teeth face inward along the inside circumference of the looped end. And, while not always shark's teeth (sometimes other critter's teeth are substituted), they are those usually seen (88%) and, in almost every case, those teeth are envenomed.

Simply put, it is tossed/dropped etc over a victim's head, then instantly tightened into a slicing, strangle-hold on their neck/throat - all in a single, fluid motion (i.e. in only one CF action segment). Once tight, it is savagely "whipsawed" back and forth, simultaneously practically beheading them whilst strangling them! However, as both great skill and a modicum of strength are required to use this ancient assassins weapon, it is not now often seen/encountered.

#### Brissaga (Aka: Razorhand)

Usually a soft leather glove of good but rather common looks, concealed within each finger are  $1\frac{5}{8}$ "-long, razor-sharp, steel "claws". These "spring-loaded" surprises pop out when the hand is clenched into a fist and then, suddenly, unclenched. Some models have detachable claws that come off in a victim but this is fairly rare. Even rarer is the "naked death" model made of real human skin that, when worn, is almost impossible to detect without a close examination. Needless to say, that type is exceedingly costly. All usually have envenomed claws. At any rate, this gloved style of attack is the current "popular" way for low to middle-level Assassins to make their strike. Those who like to get in close, that is ...

#### Glissande' (Aka: Deathflower)

This odd and relatively rare weapon resembles nothing so much as a large, five-bladed, shaken or "throwing star" when completely unfolded. In its "folded" mode, it is either a cloak clasp, belt buckle or even a brooch "pin". Some are worn around the neck as "amulets" or in a lady's hair as a barrette! All are, therefore, usually silver or gold-gilt (*over fine steel*) and enamelled, inlaid or even set with gems and jewels. But, push the hidden release and, with a quick wrist flip, snap it open and you have a device capable of being thrown 40% further than a standard throwing knife. And, of course, it is probably poisoned to boot ... The Glissande' is probably the most popular "weapon of choice" in Arduin's middle to upper levels of the Assassin's Guild. However, they are not easy to make properly and, with so few craftsmen who can make them, in very short supply.

#### Kharkuu (Aka: Dragon's Foot)

A "trick" boot of fine make but common appearance, this has a (big) toe-triggered set of three "claws". These tri-edged, razor-sharp blades snap out some  $4\frac{7}{8}$ " and have a very slight downward curve the last 20% of their length. As it takes a strength of 17+ (and a special "push tool" to reset them), they are frequently (80%) made to detach by a second toe-activated sequence/movement. Most are poisoned and some (15%) have reservoirs/sacs with extra-toxic "good stuff" for the claws. This is a relatively popular device amongst the beginners in the Guild but requires a form of combat ability akin to 'savat'.

#### Attu-Attu (Aka: Red Nails or Demon's Teeth)

These small ( $2\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter) and seemingly harmless brass spheroids are the main stock and trade of nearly all (95%) Arduinian Assassins. When stepped on, they "erupt" with four (4) steel, barbed (*like fishhooks*) "nails", each about  $1\frac{3}{8}$ " long. Poisoned, of course ... This device only recently (*the past 30 years*) replaced the poisoned caltrops formerly used. And, as they are safer to handle and allow their poison to "keep" longer, they are exceedingly popular (*even though they cost much more than caltrops*). You'll see these used in almost every instance a "get-away" is necessary (i.e. to block pursuit).

#### Assassin's Weapons Availability & Cost

Weapon	Cost (GS)	Availability	Outside Arduin?
Strankhus	51-150	Readily available	No
Scorpion	31-80	Readily available	Occasionally
Arbaletta	101-200	Generally available	Occasionally
Jakusa	451-550*	Generally available	No
Brissaga	65-1000	Not generally available	Infrequently
Glissande'	1000*	Hard to get	No
Kharkuu	105-300	Generally available	Occasionally
Attu-Attu	1-3 each	Readily available	Frequently

\* an average

## How To Pronounce The Darn Words

Arbaletta : are-BAH-lettuh    Jakusa : JA-koosa  
 Attu-Attu : a-TWO, a-TWO    Kharkuu : CAR-coo  
 Brissaga : BREE-saw-gah    Scorpion : score-PEE-own  
 Glissande' : GLEE-san-day    Strankhus : stuh-rank-US

## Arduinian Assassin's Weapons Chart

Weapon	Attack	Base %	Base %	Weapon
Type	Plus*	RCH	Impale	Damage Type of Damage
Arbaletta	+3	9%	12%	8-15 HP deep puncture
Attu-Attu	N/A	n/a	20% <sup>1</sup>	1 HP shallow puncture
Brissaga	+1	n/a	1%	1-5 HP slashes, punctures
Glissande'	+2	7%	3%	5-9 HP stabbing slashes
Jakusa	+4	15% <sup>2</sup>	n/a	6 HP <sup>3</sup> slashing strangulation
Kharkuu	+2	2%	3%	3-7 HP deep tearing slashes
Scorpion	+3	6%	6%	6-10 HP deep puncture
Strankhus				
(closed)	+1	1%	n/a	1-5 HP bruising bash
(open)	+3	n/a	n/a	1 HP <sup>3</sup> crushing, strangulation

- 1) If impalement does occur, no roll on impalement chart is allowed - it simply does double damage.
  - 2) This RCH is rolled for at the start (CF30/top of the count) each and every melee round it is on the victim. If successful, it means "Throat cut, ... etc".
  - 3) per melee round (continuing)
- \* The "attack pluses" are used only in non-BF systems and not with the Battle Factor system.

## Poisons Of Arduinian Assassins

As each world mythos has its own stable of (in)famous, legendary and fantastical poisons, so too does Arduin. These then are some of the better known and/or notable ones. The names given are translations of the most-used appellations.

## BLOODYMOUTH

Derived from a pair of very rare plants; the (Black) Lily of the Night and the Red Lotus, this potent poison is most often encountered in powdered form. It is identifiable by its brick-red color, talcum powder texture and readily notable odor of "lilys in full bloom". It also has a very strong "herbal tea" flavor (and *that is how it is frequently administered to its victims*). Its "trademark" is its nasty "side effect" on its victims: the stomach lining ulcerates and causes internal bleeding which is often spit/coughed up by the poor wretch who is in definite trouble after taking it. The more the severe stomach cramps cause him to cough up, the more his esophagus (throat) also ulcerates and bleeds. The pain is intense, constant and nearly mind-numbing in its intensity.

The ulceration and bleeding does 6-10 HP of internal damage each 101-120 minutes for 6-8 hours per each one (1) ounce dose used. Note too that said dose also does 3d8 HP of initial "blood poison" damage. As time passes\*, the victim's entire throat lining shreds away and the frothy blood is constantly coming from the "bloody mouth" of the victim!

Speech, then, is quite literally impossible. The only known antidote for this stuff is a concoction of ground wolf-bone and powdered bumbleberry leaves brewed into a hot "tea". It must be used "ounce for ounce" to have any effect (i.e. *one ounce of BloodyMouth needs one ounce of "Blood-Stop Tea"*). As fairly large amounts of the poison are needed to kill and due to its strong taste/odor, it is being used less and less frequently in Arduin. Even so, each ounce has a cost of 345 GS on the open market.

\* In 51-100 seconds, the unfortunate wretch is usually unable to speak.



### MADBLACK

A terrible nerve agent, Madblack is derived from an exceedingly rare toadstool (called "The Madcap") and the juice from crushed "Black Grass" seeds (found only in certain very secret locations in the "Great Grass Forever"). The result is a sticky mass of blackish, gluey substance with a potency of 3d8 per each tenth ( $\frac{1}{10}$ ) of an ounce! It has a very faint "grassy" smell when newly made but, over time, it takes on its more characteristic "crushed violets" odor (which is very strong).

Madblack has a taste somewhat akin to new-mown hay at all times and is not easy to "keep" in its full potency. Each two (2) days exposure to air dries it out a bit and reduces its potency by 5% — thus, after 20 days, it is completely harmless (but still strong smelling).

Madblack is called this due to its hallucinogenic side effects which last for 1d100 minutes\* less two (2) minutes per each CON point of the victim. Its effect is to cause acute paranoia, fear and schizophrenia in all up to 35HP in size per each  $\frac{1}{10}$  ounce used. Each three (3) minutes of said side-effect which a victim undergoes also causes 1d8HP additional internal damage. Used primarily to coat assassins' weapons, it will, when used thusly, take full effect in 1d6 seconds. There is no known non-magikal antidote for this frequently used poison but its high cost (885 GS per tenth ounce) keeps it from being "common" (thank the gods!).

\* Victims of a size larger than the dosage used was designed for, still suffer lesser hallucinogenic (if not damaging) effects at the GM's discretion.

### SHAKESTOP

This subtle but deadly nerve poison is an alchemically-produced derivative of the strange (and exceedingly rare) plant/animal called "Crawlthorn". This oddity is only found in the most inaccessible (and secret) places in the Mountains of Madness. It is extremely difficult to find in any significant amounts and even more difficult to "harvest". Due to this and to the long, involved alchemical process needed to make it, Shakesstop has a phenomenal price of 5,552 GS per  $\frac{1}{20}$  ounce!!! But it is well worth it to an assassin as each  $\frac{1}{20}$  ounce has a potency of 11-20 HP! Thus a full ounce, aside from costing 111,040 GS, would do

an incredible 202-400 HP of damage (essentially a roll of 2d100 plus 800 HP)! Few living things could survive such a wallop — even with a "successful save" vs poison. It also has a 100% neutral smell/taste so it can be used with/in anything (it is non-reactive) without detection.

Each  $\frac{1}{20}$  ounce will cause paralysis in creatures up to 50 HP in size and lasting for 200 minutes less ten (10) minutes per CON point of the victim but always having a minimum 100 minute duration! The effect of the paralysis is for 51-100% of all bodily functions. Any percentage in the 98-100% range would be lethal as both heart and lungs would cease to function. Brain death would follow in 2-3 minutes (GM's discretion). This paralysis effect needs one (1) second per each ten (10) HP in size of the victim to go into (full) effect.

Though rare in the extreme, Shakesstop is still used from time to time by the top 5% of Arduin's Assassins. Oh, it derives its name from the pained shaking and vibrating its victims uncontrollably go into as the paralysis takes effect. This stops, usually, only at the poor wretches' death. There is no known non-magikal antidote for this awful stuff.

### CAT'S PAW

This most common poison in use is derived from a variety of cattail stalk and only costs  $4\frac{1}{2}$  GS per one (1) ounce liquid dose. Said dose is 1d8 in potency, green in color, has a sharp licorice smell/flavor and can be neutralized by drinking goat's milk on a 10:1 basis. It is the "starting out" poison of almost all beginner Assassins and has no side effects.

## The Commercial Medicines of Arduin

Well! You've seen the poisons, now here are a few of the "medical wonders" available, over the counter, from any Arduinian Apothecary Shop.

Item Name	Cost	Basic Usage	(effectiveness)
Amundie	9 CP/dry oz.*	fevers, flu, common cold	65%
Bluefoot	5 CP/3 fl.oz.	athlete's foot, rash, etc	98%
Caladorque	7 SP/fl.oz.	ringworm, mumps, measles	90%
King's Spit	4 CP/6 fl.oz.	for sore, tired eyes	90%
Moragrym	4 CP/10 fl.oz.	nausea, seasickness, etc	90%
Mortyndahl	1 SP/dry oz.	lesser venereal infections	99%
Qwendle	7 CP/10 fl.oz.	a natural antiseptic	88%
Silverquill	2 SP/fl.oz.	epileptic seizures	99%
Skudge	5 CP/4 oz.	minor burns/scrapes/sunburn	75%
Terra	5 CP/dozen	headache /toothache/etc	85%
Yorpe'	5 CP/8 oz.	constipation (powerful)	100%
Zaladark	12 CP/dry oz.*	hay fever, asthma, etc	85%
Zam Zam	1 GS/2 fl.oz.	sunstroke, dehydration, etc	98%

\* equivalent to 10 cups dry measure

Please note that, wherever possible, an English translation from the Arduinian has been used for the names.

Also remember that the listed effectiveness is for fresh medicine and, the older/staler it is, the less effective it will be. Other factors that could also affect such medicines are: humidity, water (*damage*), drying out (*excess heat*) and so on. GM adjudication is needed in all cases.

None of the preceding medicines are "miracle cures" and none have instantaneous effects. No, just like our own store-bought remedies, they will take from several minutes (*say, 21-40 minutes at a minimum*) to several hours (*say, 3-8 hours*) to work. Just like home ... and, just like home, they will help but usually not do away with 100% of whatever ails you. They do, however, bring much relief and, after all, isn't that what a medicine's supposed to do?

As a final note, I'd like to remind the GMs that they should invent their own medicines, specific to their own world and campaign. The list I have given you is no more than a small sampling from Arduin.

Earth Equivalent	Comments
herbal teas	named for the grey-green moss it comes from
calamine lotion	from its staining propensities
no analog	named after the small fish it is taken out of
eye washes	use by nobles to hide "red eye" after carousing
antiacids	named after the weed it is derived from
penicillen	aka "Purple Prong" — <u>long lasting</u> stains
iodine, etc	named after the sea urchin it is squeezed from
modern drugs	named for source, a desert flower, and metallic hue
petroleum jelly	a derogatory nickname based on its feel/taste/etc
aspirin, etc	named after the blue flower it is derived from
laxatives	named after the cactus it comes from
herbal teas	from the leafy, tobacco-like plant it is derived from
no analog	herbal, originating in desert province of same name

## Arduinian Food

Well! Now that you've read about those things that'll kill you and those that will make you well, how about a little information on that which'll do both (*or so some claim!*)? Arduinian food is as mundane and as unique as any different country's and, all bizarre "undercity eateries" (*and their menus — see The Lost Grimoire*) aside, there are still enough gastronomical oddities indigenous to Arduin to give the unaccustomed diner quite a shock. All are normal "bills of fare" just about anywhere in the land and all will be encountered in inns, frequently. So, take a seat, grab your fork and enjoy!

### (Black) Bones (Aka: Sticks)

These fairly large (12"-16" long by 2½"-2½" wide and ¾"-1½" thick) rib bones are taken from a aquatic mammal. Called, erroneously, a "rattlefish" due to the odd sounds it makes, it is actually a relative of our earthly manatee or dugong. At any rate, the ribs are "barbecued" in a pungent-smelling, sweet, black-bean sauce for 30-50 hours. Thus, they end up resembling carbonized sticks of wood. Be that as it may, they are quite tasty, actually very tender (*and succulent*) and each rib renders at least a quarter point of meat. Two to four do nicely for most people and, at a mere 4-6 CP per rib (*depending on size and availability*), they are a bargain.

### (Fried Fish) Lips (Aka: Kissers)

You got it! Fish lips! These tasty morsels are the lip/mouth section of an extremely large (*up to 10' long*) bass-like lake fish. Each fully-cooked lip will be 10"-15" long and weigh in at 10-20 ounces. Deep fried in peanut oil, they are most often served wrapped in an edible rice-paper "cone", liberally doused with a (*spicey hot!*) red chili vinegar and rolled in coarse rocksalt. Figure either two or four such lips in each 15"-20" tall cone and a cost ranging from 6-10 CP, depending on availability and size. Remember though, even being a quite popular "fast food" (*especially in the fishing villages*), it is a taste one must acquire. The lips are "rubbery" and have an extremely strong "fishy" smell/flavor which no amount of seasoning can disguise.

## Rat-tail Stew

Actually made from the whole rat (*cleaned and gutted however*), this is one of the most common "poor folks" foods in Arduin. The stew is *only* made from three (3) specific rat types and no others: the Grey Roof Rat; the Red Wharf Rat and the Silver-Tailed Woods Rat. Each individual type will have the following nicknames (*respectively*): "Highboy"; "Wharft" and "Silverswill". In all cases, the rat is chopped up real well but *not* de-boned. However, the tails are always left intact — thus the generic name. Usually a dark grey, reddish-brown or silvery-grey in color, the thick stew also contains: turnips, leeks, barley, carrots and, if available, black olives! Contrary to popular belief, there are no potatoes in this fairly good tasting goo. Served, more often than not, in lowly One-Star Inns and other such places, it is still a favorite of many who can afford much better. Its unique (*and pungent*) aroma can be smelled on just about any street in any town in Arduin. And the cost? A mere 2-4 CP for a goodly sized bowl — enough to feed any man.

### Dead Men's Eyes (Aka: Peepers)

As unappetizing sounding a name as you'll ever hear, to be sure, but one that labels a very tasty food indeed! These are a soft, golfball-sized (*when fresh*) fungus related to our earthly truffle. Dug up from the cool, moist loam of the deep woods, they are first washed, then marinated in plum wine for two weeks. They are then steamed and served with a thick, cinnamon-plum sauce and, when first seen, will look just like human eyeballs on a plate! Even the sauce resembles blood. But, of course, closer examination will dissuade even the most squeamish as to their true nature. And the flavor! It can not be described, only experienced! Pure heaven. Each "pair" (*and it takes 6-8 to feed a grown man*) cost a whopping 1-3 SP depending on season but, even though not a poor man's fare, they will still be encountered in Three-Star or better inns — most often as a surprise holiday dish.

### Candied Rock Lizard

Very akin to our earthly Iguana, these 18"-30" long and ¾"-1½" lb lizards are a common sight in every market place in Arduin. Deep fried (*or oven roasted*), then covered with a crunchy, shellac-like

molasses-based glaze, they are always sold by the pound weight. At 1 SP per pound, they aren't cheap but it is one of the best liked dishes in the land and encountered in great quantities. Supposedly tasting like chicken, a good sized rock lizard will easily feed two people.

### Chunt (Bug)

Certainly one of your odder culinary delights, this "food" is actually a very large semi-aquatic beetle! Fishermen go into the marshes and use pork-rind baited unbarbed hooks (*on lines, of course*) to catch them. Relatively slow moving, except for their "ambush lunge", these *carnivorous* insects are still dangerous to catch. They have a bite capable of slicing a bullfrog or trout completely in twain (*or a hand/finger!*). At any rate, they are steamed and served "as is" with diners cracking the hard shells open themselves. The succulent, lobster-tasting, "meat" is then forked out and dipped into a peculiar sauce made from ground pine-nuts, pond snails and the juice of licorice-tasting cattail. Each individual Chunt will weigh in at 2½-4 lbs fully cooked and cost anywhere from 15 CP to 2 SP per pound. And, as they burrow into the mud and hibernate during the winter, they are only available in the spring, summer and early fall. Saurigs love 'em.

### Pepperwood Soup (Aka: Hotsy)

Nothing more than it says, a soup made from the bark of the Pepperwood tree, it is served cold, like gazpacho, and generally has goodies like hazelnuts, beet slices and wild onion in it. It is extremely "spicy-hot" and takes much getting used to. Hobbits usually hate it and many Orcs just love it (*Humans too*). A good, meal-sized bowl will set you back a mere 5 CP and the stuff is available year round. It is mostly served in Two (*or Three*) Star inns and by street vendors. Remember though that "hot" chili peppers are "cool" in comparison to this stuff. Be warned! Even its "steam" will make your eyes water!

## And Beverages

So, you've seen some of our odder cuisine, well, the following will give you all a little "taste" of what Arduinians drink *besides* alcoholic beverages. All are quite common and, more often than not, drunk in preference to booze.

### Skimmer (Aka: Dwarfmilk)

A thick, murky-white liquid topped by an ash-grey foam and with an aroma of "sourness", it is served at room temperature out of small (6 oz.) brass bowls which are held in both hands. Its ingredients include: mare's milk, essence of rose, nutmeg, rag-flower pollen and several other "lesser items". Though it sounds "yucky", it is actually fairly tasty ... that is, once you've acquired a taste for it! Of dwarven origins, it has since come to be used for ceremonial purposes, the sealing of bargains/deals, marriages and for the successful conclusion of most any undertaking. Thus, it is a frequent drink of traders and tradesmen of all types. Oh, the cost is 2-4 CP per bowl. Cheap.

### Klog (Aka: Fishpit)

A very thick, brownish-black liquid with a consistency resembling maple syrup (*or a "thinned" honey*), this is served warm, in pint jacks, at a cost of 2-3 CP each. During "high winter", the cost doubles due to its scarcity. Klog is the most commonly imbibed non-alcoholic drink of the sailors, fishermen and river-folk of Arduin. It is made from "Rose of the Sea" (*a pink-colored kelp*); bitterberry juice; brown sugar; ground dillseed and "several spices". There is also a goodly portion of non-fermented rye "mash" and not a little hops as well. Altogether quite a "strong and bracing" drink and one requiring a person to acquire a taste for it.

### Bhandersnatch (Aka: Stingers)

The only readily identifiable ingredients in its "secret recipe" are cloves, cardemon and, *perhaps*, peppermint oil. However, it is the "drink of choice" of all Arduinian soldiers, mercenaries and most Amazons (*oddly enough*). A very astringent and pungent drink with strong color and flavor but, all in all, of quite a pleasing aspect. Its bright blue color frequently attracts courtesans (*and noble ladies*) to

the drink and, in the southern border villages, it has also become "the drink" of coachmen and muleskinners. Quite a popular drink. It is served as cold as possible in tiny (3 1/2 oz.) porcelain cups (*sort of like sake cups*) at a cost of 3-5 SP each. It is not inexpensive but popularity usually wins over finances.

#### Dubble (Aka: Brown Bess\*)

A foamy, brownish-gold liquid served piping hot in half-pint ceramic mugs (*at 2-4 CP a shot*), Dubble is concocted of winterberry and cranberry juices; blackstrap molasses; barley and "several spices". This is Arduin's version of the "morning cup of coffee". Practically everyone in Arduin drinks it, usually every day.

\* Hobbits frequently substitute raw honey for the molasses and call their version: "Blonde Bess" or "Blondie".

## The Natural Benizens Of Arduin

Many folks have asked me about Arduin's "non-monster" creatures over the years, so here, for the first time, are many for your perusal. As the centerpiece of the country, so to speak, is the huge fresh-water lake (*or inland sea*) called: "The Misty Sea", we will deal first with water creatures. But, before doing so, you need more information on this huge area. To begin with, it is constantly replenished by seven (7) great rivers, any of which would be in a class equal to the Nile or Mississippi rivers of our own world. How deep it truly is, no one can say for certain though there is hard evidence to indicate it is at least 4,000' deep in some area (*and shallow swamp in others*). With such a diverse ecological range, it is no wonder that it supports all manner of lifeforms from cold, oceanlike depths to mud flats and volcanically-warmed shallows, from marsh and bog to waters clear as the finest crystal. Thus, the whole panorama of aquatic habitats are here (*even areas "salty" from mineral deposits*). And, as could (*should*) be expected, there is the whole gamut of creatures from microscopic to gargantuan which live in the lake/sea; the rivers themselves and in the myriads of creeks and streams which feed them.

All names are translated into English from Arduinian for your convenience.

Name	Size	Weight	Earth Equivalent
Leg Taker or Long Jaws*	8 to 20'	35 lbs/foot	Sturgeon
Pale grey to snow white overall, coal black jaws and ruby red eyes			
Needlenose or Long Biter*	5 to 12'	15 lbs/foot	Pike
Blue-grey overall with white belly and pale blue eyes			
Silver Hump*	2 to 4'	10 to 60 lbs	Salmon (chinook)
Silver-grey uppermost, pearl-white belly, bright red fins & orange eyes			
Blue Jumps or Jump Ups*	18 to 40"	3 to 15 lbs	Lake Trout
Royal blue overall, spotted with gold along its back, red eyes			
Fireback	14 to 36"	2 to 10 lbs	Arctic Greyling
Steel grey overall, long "fire red" dorsal fin, gold tail and pectorals			
Pennyfish*	9 to 16"	1 to 6 lbs	Lake Perch
Silvery-blue overall, purple mouth and bright yellow fins all round			
Tigermouth or Stripers*	15 to 45"	8 to 40 lbs	Lake Bass
Black & yellow (or white) stripes everywhere, one each black & white eye			
Gulpers*	8 to 12'		Deep Sea Bass
Grey-green overall, purple-black mouth to lips, white eyes			
Hidebites or Toe Takers*	4" to 4'	4 oz to 18 lbs	Grayfish
Like a chameleon, changes color to match its surroundings			
Coalers*	2x5" to 15x35"	2 oz to 6 lbs	Clam
The color and irregular shape of a lump of coal			

\* indicates commercially usable (i.e. edible or used for furs, hides, etc)

Name	Size	Weight	Earth Equivalent
Mossbacks*	10 to 39"	20 oz to 20 lbs	Freshwater Crab
Blue-green top, yellow belly, red claws and legs			
Mudders*	3 to 30'	2 to 80 lbs	Eel
Range from tan to black overall with lighter belly			
Rock Tops or Foot Takers	18" to 5'	6 to 400 lbs	Snapping Turtle
Slate grey shell top, jade green legs, head and tail, lavender belly			
Tarbabys*	3 to 12"	15 to 1500 lbs	Sea Turtle
Black shell top, brown-black legs, tail & head, grey belly			
Glitternips*	1 to 18"	1 oz to 2 lbs	Oyster
Opalescent "glittery" overall			
Rustbumps*	4x9" to 8x20"	2 to 6 lbs	Abalone
Copper-bronze shell and snow-white "foot"			
Smilers or Shellbiters*	2 to 8"	5 to 50 lbs	Sea Otter
Honey-gold to coal black fur, tan to brown face & "hands"			
Slapbacks*	2 to 6"	5 to 80 lbs	Beaver
Black tail, "hands" and "mask", dark to light brown fur			
Pogies or Mudspitters	8 to 13"	4 to 16 oz	Swamp Prairie Dog
Grey-green overall with ruby red eyes			

1) across shell 2) including tail

\* indicates commercially usable (i.e. edible or used for furs, hides, etc)



Name	Size	Weight	Earth Equivalent
Silverbacks or Slyfeet*	15 to 40" not including tail		Possum/Muskrat cross
Silver-grey fur overall, pinkish hands and tail			
Mud Pigs*	18"x8" to twice this size		Capybara
Dark brown with light belly & silver coin-sized/colored spots along back and sides			Nile crocodile
Undertaker or Old Man River*	15 to 55'		
Grey-green overall, yellow-white belly, amber-gold eyes			
Eighter or Squirrel Serpent	11 to 100' across arms		Octopus
Normally grey-white, rapid chameleon color change			
Wigglebells	10 to 6" 1 to 300+ lbs		Nautilus
Red, white and blue banded shell, lavender head to tentacles			
Rattlefish or Seacow*	6 to 15'		Manatee or Dugong
Grey-white overall with pale green eyes			
1) across shell			

\* indicates commercially usable (i.e. edible or used for furs, hides, etc)

## Arduinian Avians

Here, for your enjoyment, are some of the more common avians (birds) Arduinians use as pets, messengers and for war (or other purposes). Enjoy.

### RED-WINGED FALCON

This 11"-15" tall (36"-48" wingspan) raptor is used almost exclusively as a courier/message carrier. It has a near 100% accurate "homing instinct" with a "range" of over 1,000 miles. Beyond this, its accuracy drops about 5% each additional 150-200 miles or so. The falcon normally carries a pair of waterproof message cylinders (one per leg) 3"x1 1/2" diameter. It can easily carry up to four (4) ounces any distance, eight (8) ounces for "hundreds of miles" and up to sixteen (16) ounces over short distances (20 miles or less). Capable of speeds in excess of 105 mph in level flight, these falcons "cruise" (over long distances) at approximately 65 mph! They maintain this cruising speed for 8-9 hours per day for up to three days in a row. Then they must rest. They are exceptional fighters for their size and use their awesome 255+ mph dives to great effect and for evasion.

Dark brown overall, they have bright scarlet upper-wing surfaces (pale red underneath) and brick-red feet and beak. They also have large, emerald eyes. Fiercely loyal to their Beastmaster (or Falconmaster), they are downright unfriendly to all strangers. However, any stranger with a proper "scent bag", if circumspect and gentle, will be allowed to unload/load the message cylinders.

They are never trained as straight hunting or warbirds and practically impossible to buy if one is not a licensed falconer or Beast Master and, even for them, each young (trainable) bird/chick will cost 7 1/2 to 15 GS or more and some "champion" lines run will run up to 100 GS!

They have a lifespan, after reaching maturity (in a year), of 15-17 years and are legendary for their dogged perseverance in getting messages through ... even if they have to walk!

### (Great) OWLHAWK

These 21"-30" tall raptors have wingspans ranging from 66"-100"+. Pale to dark grey overall, with light blue feet, beak and eyes, they are

very beautiful birds. They are, indeed, a crossbreeding of hawk and owl and have, pretty much, the best traits of both species. They are fiercely loyal to their masters, even unto death, and virtually know no fear. They are used, believe it or not, as sort of "winged watchdogs". Because of their exceptionally fine day/night vision; reasonable hearing ability and their manner of sitting, absolutely motionless for hours (if need be), they are well suited to such a role.

Although only capable of level, in-flight speeds of 48-52 mph (90-115 mph in dives), when "keyed/set" to guard certain specific areas, this is no handicap at all. These birds are absolutely "loyal" to their handler/master and anyone else he specifically "keys" as a "friend". Once thus "keyed", nothing and no one may pass these birds without being attacked. No one not keyed as a friend, that is. Their first swoop and strike is always totally silent but, thereafter, they raise a continual racket that sounds, strangely enough, like a dull saw cutting hardwood. This "battle/alarm" noise is loud enough to awaken anyone within a 100 yard radius!

Sold almost exclusively in life-mated pairs (at a cost\* of 180-250 GS), these stalwart avians will live up to 45 years.

\* Each "keyed" friend or area to be guarded will add 50 GS to their cost.

### BATTLEHAWK

These very fierce raptors average 24" in height and usually span some 55" or so from wingtip to wingtip. Their color ranges from steel-grey to coal-black overall save for silvery-blue beak and claws (and golden eyes). They are capable of level-flight speeds in excess of 120 mph and of diving speeds of 195-200 mph. Highly maneuverable, no-quarter fierce and resiliently tough, these birds are admirably suited to war duties. They love to fight.

No one other than their Hawkmaster (or Beastmaster) may ever safely approach them. Not ever. So loyal are they that whenever their master dies, they too must be put to death as they can never "bend anew to another's will".

They usually have steel "razors" affixed to their talons or ankles and are trained, as follows, for battle situations:

- a) Attack warhorses' eyes/head.
- b) Attack men/riders/warriors eyes/head.

- c) Tangle and strike bows (or other specifically trained for weapons) from enemy hands.
- d) Carry, and drop, incendiaries and other designated objects on enemy forces. They can tote up to 8 ounces nearly a mile (lesser weights further) to do so.
- e) Attack and sever/cut the traces/reins of mounts/wagons etc.
- f) Intercept and retrieve enemy messenger birds.
- g) Intercept and kill enemy war birds.

As you can see, these warbirds can do much more than just "dive & peck"! Thus even a young, untrained chick would cost 45-60GS and, of course, already trained ones simply cannot be sold. Even so, they will live 16-20 years and give good service the entire time.

### JACKDAW

Essentially a huge, red-eyed, coal-black Rook/Raven with amber feet and beak, they stand 13"-17" high and span 30"-36". Very intelligent, they can be taught to mimic (80-90% perfectly) 101-200 words, in both a high falsetto or low baritone "voice"! They live 30-40 years, are easily trained and moderately loyal to their "teacher". New owners receive considerably less loyalty and/or obedience.

They are capable of level-flight speeds close to 70 mph and dives at about 100 mph. Very agile (and cunning), these tricky flyers are downright difficult to catch.

They are most often trained by Beastmasters attached to the Thieves Guild. This is for two reasons: first, if not raised "from egg to wing", they are considerably more difficult to train/trust. Second, they are most often used to swoop down and snatch items (winged thieves) from an apple off a vendor's cart to a valuable necklace from a noble lady's throat. Swoosh! Snatch! Gone! They are also trained to fly into towers (etc), rooms through open windows and retrieve objects they've seen a "likeness" of (i.e. a picture or other representation). They can carry 5-8 ounces many miles and twice that for short distances (a mile or so). Needless to say, these birds are quite well known in Arduin and aren't particularly well liked either. If, and that's a big "if", you could purchase one of these already trained, you could expect to pay 100 GS or more. An untrained chick, however, would only run you some 10-20 GS but many towns have laws against their ownership.

## SNOW (Ice) KITE

These arctic/high mountain raptors are rare birds indeed. Standing only 10"-14" tall and spanning a fantastic (*for their size*) 39"-48", these snow-white flyers are true beauties. From eyes as blue as sapphire to beak and talons of "crystalline ice", there are surely none to match them.

Capable of speeds in excess of 75 mph in level flight and up to 196 mph in dives, they are also one of the most agile flyers known. They have been seen flying more than six (6) miles up and witnesses claim they can "turn inside an attacking Battle-Hawk!"

They are the "most favored" companions of the Shamen/Medicine Men of the fabled Blue Barbarians as well as being highly coveted in the noble courts of the world. It is also rumored that many of them are "the eyes of the Mages of the Northern Ice". This gives good reason (*if true*) for their very real immunity (100%) to all forms of non-magikal cold and for the respect most hold for them.

They are trainable only if raised "from the egg" and difficult to keep loyal even after their four (4) years or so of training. They have a desire to be free as fierce as the cold North winds they ride upon! But, with luck, they will stay with their trainer/master for the remaining sixteen plus years of their lifespan.

They are the best scout flyers in all the world as they have eidetic (*photographic*) memory and can bring actual images of what they've seen to the surface of their eyes (*at will or upon command*)! Needless to say, a trained snow kite would cost at least 1,000 GS (*or more*)! Untrained chicks still cost 350 GS or more. Do note, however, that these rare avians tend to "fixate" upon only one person for their entire lives. This is usually (75% chance) their initial trainer.

## EMERALD EAGLE

Generally thought of as a "Southern" or "hot lands" raptor, this striking bird is, none-the-less, still encountered as far north as Arduin itself (*in summertime*). Some say they migrate even further north in their yearly mating flights but there is no proof of this.

They stand 28"-36" tall and have a wingspan of 56"-80". Now that's a big bird! Emerald green overall, from beak to claws to feathers, these are, indeed, colorful avians to behold and, being of a generally pugnacious, belligerent and aggressive nature, they are rather hard to miss — especially when one's trying its best to "eat your face"! These

strong predators love nothing more than a good fight! Just for the hell of it! And they don't care how big the opponent is — from mouse to mountain-sized dragon! Now, this is not to imply that they win such, uh...lopsided battles, nope but they sure don't mind losing (*even if they do get killed in the process*). The fight's the thing, you see...

They are capable of level-flight speeds in excess of 88 mph and of 166 mph dives. They've also been noted "cruising" at 45-50 mph way out to sea (*300 miles and more from land*). It is said that these soaring birds can cross thousands of miles of ocean — at heights up to 5 miles and more and, as they have a world-side range of habitat, well, who can gainsay this?

If trained from hatching (*an Emerald Eagle more than four days old is 100% untrainable*), they make wondrous long-range carriers. Capable of toting two (2) six (6) ounce canisters (*half that is more usual*) any distance or up to 18 ounces in 500 mile (*or less*) ranges, they are true "world class messengers of the air". Such training takes 3-4 years and the eagle will live another 21-25 years after that. And, wonder of wonders (!), they will follow very exact and detailed verbal orders and can (*and do!*) "read" maps! Some kind of smart birds, yes? However, there is a 1d5% chance, each six (6) flights that they will "go wild" and never return. Even so, the lease of such a trained bird would be at least 500 GS annually. They are never sold outright to anyone, once trained. Never. However, an (*untrained*) egg — guaranteed "live" — would only cost a minuscule 350 GS or so.

## TIGERHAWK

A sparrow-sized raptor (9"-5" tall and 8"-12" wingspan) of most colorful mein ranging from black and gold to stark black and white, these small avians are always "tiger-striped" in pattern. Even their beaks and legs! Combined with their unusual violet eyes, they are beauteous to behold indeed!

They are able to fly in excess of 130 mph in level flight and to dive at an amazing 220+ mph. Their favorite "game" (*and meal*) is bagging hummingbirds in flight! And as only the hummingbird, among all other birds known, is more maneuverable than they (*but slower*), it is an "even" matchup. For game purposes, this equates to +5 (+25 BF) to their attack/defense in combat situations. They are definitely very hard to hit.

Fierce, courageous and with a "do or die" attitude, these little

raptors will engage all "foes" which trespass into their airspace. There is no middle ground for them and thus they make excellent hunting or even "war" birds.

Even when raised from the egg, they are damned difficult to train and even more so to retain. Each order given them has only a 15% chance that they'll obey and a 60% chance they'll simply leave - reverting back to the wild. This percentage changes by +5% and -5% respectively each year of their 10-12 year lifespan. None-the-less, they seem to strike a "sympatico" chord in the hearts of many Arduinians and they are quite popular pets for those who can afford them. A "live" egg costs  $1\frac{1}{2}$ - $2\frac{1}{2}$  GS; a live (*untrained*) chick would go from 11-20 GS and a "trained" one for as much as 50 GS. Do note, however, that when a trained bird is sold/given to a new owner, it has a 45% chance (-5% per year in age more than two) of simply ignoring its new master. Thus, said master would have to, literally, retrain the damn thing all over again!

#### End Notes On Avians

So! There you have them, some of the unique avians of Arduin and its environs. What follows is a chart to help you use them in melee/combat situations.

#### Special Avian Attack Chart

Avian	AC Range	HP Range	Attacks By Type & Damage
Red-Winged Falcon	7-6	9-13	2 claws for 1 to 1-2 HP each; 1 beak for 1-2 to 1-3 HP; 1d8 wing buffets for no damage but minus 1d6 (-1d6) on victim's next attack if within 8 CF counts.
Great Owl Hawk	6	13-20	2 claws for 1-2 to 2-3 HP each; 1 beak for 2-4 to 3-5 HP; 1d4 wing buffets for $\frac{1}{2}$ HP damage each; minus 4 for victim's next attack, etc.
Battle Hawk	6-5	15-18	2 claws for 1-2 to 2-3 HP each; 1 beak for 1-3 to 2-4 HP; 1d6 wing buffets ( <i>usually wearing steel "spurs"</i> ) for 1 HP damage each ( <i>also effective vs armor</i> ); if "spurs" absent, see Owl Hawk.
Jackdaw	8	7-9	2 claws for 1 HP each; 1 beak for 1 HP; 1d6 wing buffets as per Red-Winged Falcon.
Snow (Ice) Ekte	7-6	11-14	2 claws for 1-2 HP each; 1 beak for 1-2 to 1-3 HP; 1d8 wing buffets as per Red-Wing Falcon
Emerald Eagle	6-5	19-24	2 claws for 2-3 to 3-4 HP each; 1 beak for 3-5 to 4-6 HP; 1d4 wing buffets at 1 HP each; see Red-Wing Falcon for victim's battle minuses.
Tiger Hawk	7	8-11*	2 claws for 1 HP each; 1 beak for 1-2 HP; 4-11 wing buffets as per Red-Winged Falcon.

\* indicates their difficulty as a target, not their true size or real HP (about 5).

## The Special Pets Of Arduin

In keeping with the preceding, here now is a section devoted to more uniquely Arduinian fauna. But, this time as "pets", they should add an interesting new twist for possible campaign play. Who knows perhaps even such a jaded reader as yourself might be interested in acquiring one, hmmmmmm?

### TWYLBAN SPYDER MONKEY

Not actually a simian at all, though definitely a mammal, these coal-black (*furred*) and softball-sized spheroids are unique in having six (6) 10"-14" long "arms" arranged symmetrically about its body. Its four (4) tiny amber eyes are almost hidden by its plush fur and its 3½"-4" wide mouth is not detectable until it opens. Each arm, by the way, is both hand and foot (3 fingers, 1 thumb). A herbivore (*plant eater*) by nature, it prefers such goodies as: carrots, beets, turnips, parsnips and cucumbers, though it will eat most any fruit or vegetable. They are slow moving (*like our earthly sloths*) and very docile/gentle. When they are softly stroked, they "purr" like a cat but with a sound more reminiscent of a cooing dove than a feline. Arduinian ladies just love these little suckers, so much so that they'll pay from 21-40 GS for a young and healthy one. With a 21-30 year lifespan, they are a good investment even at that high price.

Being from hot southern jungle areas, they cannot tolerate cold becoming torpid at 65° fahrenheit and actually dying at 30-35°. Their one real "fear" is canines (*dogs*) which seem to love to "tree" them at every opportunity. Other than that, little else excites these timid pets.

### ZUKKIE

What can I say? These are nothing more (*or less!*) than large, ugly land crustaceans (*crabs*)! They vary in color from bright rose-pink to deepest purple overall with yellow-white undersides and bright blue eyestalks. Their size ranges from about 6" across the shell to 9" or more (*a few "oldsters" get more than 12" across!*). Do note that their left (*fighting*) claw is always of a size/length equal to 2/3's their shell width, the other claw only 1/4 that size.

They are ill-tempered (*i.e. downright aggressively hostile*), smell bad (*like rotten fish*) and are so bad tasting as to be utterly inedible by just

about anything. Orcs have been known to spit this meat out! Bleech!

But, as nasty, ugly and unpleasant as they may be, they seem to have struck some chord in the Arduinian psyche. So, most kids (*in the smaller villages, not in the cities*) either want one (*badly*) or have one. And, as a Zukkie can live 40, 50, even 60 years, they are frequently handed down, generation after generation, older kid to younger as sort of "family heirlooms"!

Where their stupid name comes from — or even its origins — is no longer known. It's what they've always been called and that's just the way it is ... Pronounced ZOO-kee, by the way.

Though hatched in the shallow, swampy northeastern area of the Misty Sea, at about 18 months of age, they come up to dry land where they stay for the rest of their lives save for those 6-8 day periods each mid-summer when their "breeding urge" smites them and they go back into the water.

Omnivorous and capable of eating anything from a leather boot to an unwary person's finger, they do prefer such delicacies as frog, rat and water beetle but, as they are too slow to catch 'em (*except by ambush*), it will eat whatever is handy. Figure their base cost as about 15-18 CP for a young one, decreasing by 2-3 CP per each five years of age or so.

### KINGSGUARD (*Snake*)

A relatively small serpent (12"-18" long) and one colored a bright "royal purple" (*with tiny golden eyes*). Extremely rare, at least in Arduin, they are none-the-less highly prized by royalty/nobility and others in "high risk" occupations. Why? Easy! They are virtually immune (90%) to all forms of poison, venom or alchemical toxicity! Not only that but they are also a direct indicator of such substances in that the serpent turns a deep "rose-red" within 60 seconds of "tasting" any such stuff! So, people fearing poison in their food or drink simply hold the snake close to same and, being inquisitive, the little guy will "tongue taste" it. Simple, safe, effective (*nearly foolproof*) and with no risk of a professional food-taster dying (*necessitating "blood money" payments*).

One of these snakes will live 13-15 years if kept warm (*i.e. no colder than 65°*) and properly fed — they eat insects mostly (*beetles, centipedes, etc.*). Cold of 50° fahrenheit or less will cause them to die in 1d8 hours (*they are native only to the terribly hot "Green Hell" jungles far to the south*). Oh, the snake, itself, is non-venomous.

Rarity means they cost at least 1,000 GS but more like four or five times that is the usual price, however.

### End Notes

There are, of course, many other kinds of pets in Arduin: cats, dogs, rats, birds, snakes, turtles, monkeys, fish and too many others to list — so, use your imagination! Spice up a character's life! Give him a pet ... say, I've got a real nice tarantula I could let you have real cheap. Only slightly "used" too! Whaddaya say?!?

For the drawbacks involved in owning some pets, see *The Delta Book Of The Dead* from Dragon Tree Press.



## More Monsters of Arduin

### AKHU-RHATT

**TYPE:** Mutated Mammal **AC:** 7 **CF:** 15-20 **MRS:** 5% **MOVE:** 200' per M/R (ground), 120' per M/R (water) **HP:** 21-26 **SIZE:** Stands 3'6"-4'3" tall and has a tail equal to  $\frac{2}{3}$ 's its height. They weigh from 41-60 lbs on the average. **COLOR:** Anything from white to black, grey being the usual, with yellow, orange or red eyes and a brownish-yellow (hairless) tail, palms & soles of feet.

**DESCRIPTION:** essentially a very large rat with a physiognomy more humanoid than usual (i.e. it can move easily erect or on all fours). The hands are very human-like and their fur is much shorter than "normal" for rat-kind.

**SPECIAL POWERS:** Of near human intelligence (7-10 INT), they also have the ability to communicate telepathically amongst themselves (only). This is, at times, akin to a "group mind" with all individuals of any given clan-pack totally submerged into one driving/controlling entity. This is only done in emergencies and/or war situations and the limits/range of it are not yet clearly known. However, there is strong evidence it has worked at ranges of at least six miles.

**ATTACK:** By weapon type (95%) or bite for 1-3 to 1-8 HP (5%).

**SPECIAL NOTES:** Highly social and becoming more "civilized" each passing year, these rat-people live in vast underground tunnel complexes very like phraint hives. Confined to the desert and semi-desert areas of only one continent (*the 5th*), they are still relatively unknown to most folks and, as they are culturally more apt to trade than fight, there are great hopes for these new "people". They are known for their herbal lore/mastery and ever increasing alchemical expertise. However, until now, they have tended to specialize in poisons (and antidotes), both natural and unnatural. They use such stuff in hunting and will almost always have their hand-thrown light darts (and kukri-like knives) coated with same.

**GM NOTE:** Due to the group-mind effect, it is strongly advised that these folks not be played as characters but used only as "monsters"/NPCs.



## BLISTERLINGS

**TYPE:** Insect **AC:** 8 **CF:** 18-21 **MRS:** 1% **MOVE:** 660' per M/R (air), 33' per M/R (ground) **HP:** 1 **SIZE:** individuals range from 1/16"-1/12" long but a typical swarm (of some 10,000) will fill a spherical area roughly 30'-40' across **COLOR:** bright purple overall with yellow wings & eyes

**DESCRIPTION:** tiny beetle-like (ladybug) flying insects.

**SPECIAL POWERS:** Each bug exudes a very caustic chemical hormone that will: char wood; carbonize paper (etc) and fabrics; turn leather into a spongy/sticky goo and render acid-like burns to bare flesh. Individually, they only do 1/2 HP of damage but each "swarm pass" will have 1d100 bugs hit a victim for tremendous potential damage. Do note, however, that the caustic effect is not instantaneous but takes one (1) M/R per each 11-20 HP of damage done to commence its effect. Thus, say 41 HP of damage as an example, would effect the victim at the rate of half during M/R two and half during M/R three (prorated, of course). If neutralized by flushing with wine or any other alcoholic liquid, the damage can be reduced or rendered harmless at the GM's discretion.

**SPECIAL NOTES:** These bugs are not aggressive, just attracted to body warmth and "sweat" (which they "eat"). Thankfully, these dangerous bugs are only found in the (in)famous jungles of the Green Hell.

## UNITAUR

**TYPE:** mythic **AC:** 3 (body) 2 (head) **CF:** 19-24 **MRS:** 13% **MOVE:** 480' (700' at charge) per M/R **HP:** 120-130 **SIZE:** 9'-10' tall and 400-600 lbs **COLOR:** Tawny golden-tan overall with bright (sapphire) blue eyes, silver horn & hooves and black teeth, lips and fingernails.

**DESCRIPTION:** Essentially a sort of unicorn-headed version of the mythic "Minotaur".

**SPECIAL POWERS:** Highly magikal themselves, all arcane impingement (from spoken spells to device magiks) have a base 75% chance of having absolutely no effect upon them. They can, each M/R, absorb any single mystik attack/force directed at them and then redirect it as they choose on their next CF action segment! This is without regard as to the magik's origin, kind or potency.

**ATTACKS:** Magikal (see below) by preference or by one kick for 11-16 to 12-19 HP and one horn for 11-20 to 13-24 HP (slashing attack) or 17-24 to 21-30 HP (impale attack). They seldom "impale" (10%) as they are afraid of "getting stuck" in a head-down/vulnerable position.

**SPECIAL NOTES:** They are, themselves, extremely intelligent (RF in the 20+ range) and powerful wielders of magik. Most (75%) are equivalent to EL 13 Masters of Illusion; some (15%) are equal to EL 20 Shamen/Medicine Men and a few (10%) equate to EL 25 Rune Weavers. The Unitaur has a special hatred of those things undead and/or evil. They can "sense" either within 120' of themselves at a 96% success rate. They also "see those things invisible or ethereal" on a 75% chance (rolled for every three seconds). Do note as well that any such undead or evil thing struck by these intrinsically "good" beings will suffer double listed damage.

**HISTORICAL NOTES:** These rarest of rare beings are only mentioned, for certain, three times in known history: 100,000, 45,000 and 11,000 years ago. Each time, one (only!) appeared "during an age of great evil", to aide "the forces of good". It is not clear how (or why) they did so, just that they did do so. Also unclear is whether it was the same Unitaur each time or three separate entities. And, as a final legendary aside, it is said that "a Unitaur can heal any wound, save any mad mind and raise the very dead should they be deserving..." How they do/did this is unknown.

**GM NOTE:** Unitaur(s) are never, never, never, never, never used as player characters. Got it? Never!

## VEXER

**TYPE:** Marsupial **AC:** 6 **CF:** 18-23 **MRS:** 5% **MOVE:** 270-345' per M/R (ground), 80-120' per M/R (water) **HP:** 7-12 **SIZE:** 28"-35" long (not including a 13"-18" tail) & 17-20 lbs **COLOR:** Dark grey overall, somewhat lighter in shade along the underside with beady violet eyes and a (long) bright green tongue. The "hands" and "feet" can be used as either and as a pale pink in color, with green nails.

**DESCRIPTION:** A very close relative to the earthly opossum but with chimpanzee-like "thumbed" hands/feet, they also have an anteater-like (i.e. sticky) tongue half-again longer than their body (a 20" body equals a 30" tongue).

**TEMPERMENT:** Very curious (*aggressively so*), peaky, bothersome, persistent, cunning and, in general, a sneaky, thieving little bother.

**ATTACK:** They prefer to run away but, if cornered, can bite for 1-3 to 2-4 HP damage. Said bite is also toxic for a 1d8 to 1d10 HP potency. The venom is renowned for its ability to make most (95% *chance regardless of HP/Size*) human(oid)s nauseous, "shakey" and unable to keep anything in their stomach for 1d8 hours after being bitten.

**SPECIAL NOTES:** They are nearly as intelligent as a chimpanzee and are almost always encountered as a mated pair or in a family group (*up to six "kits"*). Their habitat range covers the entire world save for the worst arctic/anarctic wastes. Do remember too that these pests just love to hang around (*by their prehensile tails usually*) towns and other "settled" areas just so they can "poke about". This poking about runs the gamut from simple theft of food and "pretties" to tormenting dogs (*by tossing rotten fruit/twigs/etc at them*) and even deliberately making messes (*especially in nice, neat kitchens*). Innkeepers (*and dogs*) hate vexers with a near berserk relentlessness — something the little thieves seem to find vastly amusing. And, as a final note: *Ya*, they can be "domesticated". Well, partially anyway. It seems that nothing can keep them from being curious little thieves!

### YELKIE

**TYPE:** plant/animal cross mutation **AC:** 6 **CF:** 21-24 (in water), 16-19 (on land) **MRS:** 10% **MOVE:** 600' per M/R (water), 120' per M/R (land) **HP:** 30-39 **SIZE:** 4'6" to 4'11" tall and 60-80 lbs **COLOR:** Pale green overall with blue-green eyes (*pupil-less*) and translucent emerald green hair, nails and teeth.

**DESCRIPTION:** Small humanoids that strongly resemble "faerie folk" though they are not related in any way.

**ATTACKS:** Magikal (*illusion usually*) but, if physically cornered, they wield tiny, stiletto-like thorns from the river rose plant as daggers. These "daggers" are coated in a very toxic (*1d8 potency*) fish-based poison. Called "River Thorn", it is also a paralytic of unknown potency.

**SPECIAL NOTES:** Most are the equivalent of EL 9-13 Masters of Illusion though a few (3%) are magicians who use only "water magik". These very intelligent, though somewhat malevolent beings, are

physically and psychically tied to their "birth water". This could be a pond, spring, creek, waterfall or even some specific spot in a large lake or river. But it must be fresh (*not salt*) water and a minimum of 3' deep — preferably much deeper (*41'-60' is their preferred depth*). They can breathe air but, should they stay away from the water (*or get more than a mile from their "birth waters"*), they will sicken and die in 101-200 minutes. Horribly! These beings are hermaphrodite (*i.e. both male and female simultaneously*), very chaotic & unpredictable and tend to be quite cruel and malicious. They hate all goblin-kind!

**END NOTES:** Yelkies have the ability to mimic, nearly perfectly (*99% chance to fool anyone*), any voice or animal (*or other*) sound they hear. Their vocal range runs from sounds only dogs can hear to basso rumbles just like distant thunder! They can also "throw" these voices/sounds 100' or more. Combined with their mastery of arcane illusion, this makes them quite "tricksy" indeed. Remember! Their idea of "fun" is to lure someone to a watery death and to watch the panicked victim perish. However, their habitat range is limited only to the most temperate areas of the third continent so, thankfully, encounters with them are rare. Lastly, being long lived (*3,000 or more years is normal for a Yelkie*), they are veritable fountains of (*local*) legends, lore, song (*they love music/singing*), riddles and so on. They could tell much, had they a pressing reason for doing so ... GMs! Never, never let them be used as player-characters. Never!

### YARMALUK (Aka: Snow Ghoul)

**TYPE:** undead **AC:** 3 **CF:** 13-18 **MRS:** 13% **MOVE:** 150-200' per M/R (ground), 75-100 per M/R (*through snow*) **HP:** 41-50 **SIZE:** 6'-7' tall and 150-250 lbs **COLOR:** Snow-white overall with "blue ice" talons, fangs & eyes.

**DESCRIPTION:** A shaggily-furred anthropoid with a man-like face, double thumbed hands and arms 150% longer than would seem "normal". Its feet are akin to its hands and may be used for same but with only 85% of the hand's manipulative capability.

**ATTACKS:** Two clawed hands for 7-12 HP damage each, or it can bite for 6-10 HP. Said bite is envenomed with a sleep-inducing effect. It works on living creatures of 50 HP size or less. Those 51+ HP, while not put into the deep, trance-like sleep, are none-the-less caused to be

able to only move at half ( $1/2$ ) their normal speed and CF. This effect lasts 6-10 M/R plus 1 M/R per each 1 HP in size less than 100. All above 100 HP are not affected in any way. All 50 HP or less will immediately (1-3 seconds after the bite) fall into the "ice-sleep" for 10d100 minutes less 1d10 minutes per each CON point. Note that those thus "asleep" will remain so, even while being eaten alive - which is just how the snow ghoul likes it! Do remember that a successful "save" versus poison/venom will cause victims of 51+ HP size to be totally unaffected and those of 50 HP or less to only suffer the "slowing" effect.

**SPECIAL NOTES:** Yarmalukes are 100% immune to all forms of cold, arcane or natural. They cannot be confused, frightened or caused to run away (except by a successful priestly "Turn Away"). They can see "all things ethereal" and, once each 13 hours, travel safely to or from that plane. They hate "warm things/hot life" and are themselves, highly susceptible to harm from fire or heat of any kind (suffering double damage from it). Snow Elves are their greatest enemies.

#### **ZEEK-ZEEK (Aka: Ghost Mouse)**

**TYPE:** mammal **AC:** 8 **CF:** 21-25 **MRS:** 33% **MOVE:** 315-375' per M/R **HP:** 2-4 **SIZE:** 3"-5" long not including a  $4\frac{1}{2}$ "- $7\frac{1}{2}$ " tail **COLOR:** A translucent, smokey-grey overall with turquoise blue eyes and black tail, feet, nose.

**DESCRIPTION:** Small mice with oversized, pointed ears (3x normal)

**SPECIAL POWERS:** They can teleport, at will, from 103' to 303' with 100% safety and accuracy. They can also adhere to and move on any real surface (i.e. ceilings, etc) at full, normal speed. They also have the ability to vibrate their own bodies in such a manner so as to become "tuned/in resonance" with any solid object. Once thus "tuned", they can freely move through it but only at one quarter ( $1/4$ ) normal speed. However, this tires them out so much that they can only do this three (3) times every 25 hours and for no more than 60 seconds each time. "Tuning" takes 1-3 M/R, depending on the density of the substance.

**ATTACKS:** 1 bite for  $1/2$  HP damage but which also causes any living thing thus hit (to 100 HP in size) to have to successfully save or

"Spoken Magik" or find themselves teleported away in a random direction for 1d100! Instantly! A successful "save" means the victim is not affected (nor are those 101 HP or larger).

**END NOTES:** Zeek-zeeks are very shy and timid, sometimes fleeing from their own shadows! However, as they eat silver (!), they are a real, and costly, pest. Each one will consume its own body weight, each day, in this precious metal. Especially in the warmer parts of the eastern lands on the third continent. There they are hunted by "professionals" out to claim the 10 SP ( $1/2$  GS) per head bounty on the little blighters! And, finally, though it is not known if these small creatures can be "domesticated", undoubtedly, someone will try. Sooner or later. Good luck to you!

## New Magiks

### NOEL'S TALL WALKERS (Spell)

This 1st Order of Power spell requires a single (1) word and the expenditure of a mere half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) mana point to use! Its startling effect, which is quite immediate ( $\frac{1}{20}$ th second), is to create 3' tall "stilts" of mana-energy under each (two) foot of the caster. Going up! Of course, they will move with the magician so things such as acid pools, etc, may be safely waded through. The dark blue "stilts" have a base duration of 30 seconds (five M/R) and are, themselves (only!) 100% impervious to heat, cold, etc. Either their height or duration may be extended thusly: add another 18" in height or 3 M/R duration per each additional half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) mana point expended during the original spellcasting. Requiring an easy fourteen (14) hours of study and a 3 GS expenditure to learn, this spell may be the "best buy" in all of magikal lore! As an end note, the basic spell only supports a weight of 222 lbs (or less. To increase their load capacity, simply use an additional half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) mana point (expended specifically for this) per each extra 100 lbs of weight you want it to support.

### JIMATHON'S FLARE SPELL

This OP1 spell also only requires a half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) mana point to use in its basic form. The single word firing order ( $\frac{1}{100}$ th second delay) causes an intensely bright, yellow-white "spark" to zip from the tip of the caster's middle finger (left hand). This spark moves at 300' per second to a distance of (you guessed it!) 300'. There it "bursts" into a brilliant but utterly harmless/cool radiance some 6' in diameter. This radiance casts the equivalent of half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) daylight in a 180' radius around itself. For an additional 60' beyond that, there is a quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) daylight equivalent "glow". This heatless light will slowly drift downwards (its usually shot straight up) at the rate of 30' per second (i.e. 10 seconds from 300' to ground). At the end of ten seconds or if it hits a solid object, it immediately goes out. However, during the initial firing (only!), out to 300' total distance, it can and does ricochet off of any solid/real surface. Only after it has "ignited" is it subject to going out on contact with solid objects/surfaces. This highly useful magik is not expandable by any known means. It requires 45 hours of moderate study and a cost of 10 GS for materials to learn.

## XARF'S HIGHLIFTER SPELL

This OP 2 spell has a two (2) mana point "firing cost" and only a  $\frac{1}{100}$ th second delay in its effect. Said effect is to cause any aimed at target (man, beast or object) to rise up into the air a full 13' (takes another  $\frac{1}{100}$ th second). Its basic range is 33' and it can thus lift up to 300 lbs (which stays up for 1 M/R). Each additional (+1) mana point used during the initial spell casting can either (your choice): extend the duration aloft by two (+2) M/R or increase the range another 33'. However, for each additional 100 lbs you want lifted, only half (+ $\frac{1}{2}$ ) a mana point is needed. There is currently no known way to increase the altitude lifted beyond 13'. This interesting low-order magik needs only 15 GS in materials and 50 hours of light study to properly master.

## New Bruidical Magik

### ATAZYM'S CONJURATION OF HIGH GREEN

This OP 1 conjuration needs an expenditure of one (1) mana point and two (2) seconds of time per each 10' square area to be affected. Range is 60' from the tip of the caster's left little (pinky) finger. The results are simple: all "grass" (from rye to wheat to rice to crabgrass, etc) will immediately commence growing at a rate of 1' in height per second. This growth spurt lasts 1d100 seconds with a minimum of one (1) second per each EL of the conjurer. No other forms of plants (except "grasses") are effected. Once growth is stopped, it will remain at its new size for a period of time equal to the conjurer's EL times 1 M/R. Thus an EL 10 Druid would have a duration of 10 M/R (60 seconds). At the end of this time, it will, unless "fixed", commence to shrink back to its normal size/height at the same rate of speed it grew. Note, however, that the conjurer can "fix" the grasses at their new height by expending an additional three (+3) mana points per each 10' square area affected. Areas thus fixed, remain so for one (1) hour times the EL of the Druid. This new conjuration needs thirteen hours of rigorous study and 28 SP to learn. It is a favorite defensive magik of Druids and Shamen.

## YOLLY'S WONDEROUS WAFER CONJURATION

This OP 3 conjuration simply converts "mana-energy" into 100% edible food! The food thus conjured is in the form of warm, snow-white "wafers" with golden-brown edges. Each bread-like wafer is crunchy and of a flavor akin to sourdough French bread. Each single (1) mana point used will conjure ten (10) of the 5" diameter, 1" thick (3 oz) wafers. Each such wafer has enough "food value" to feed one (1) normal-sized human adult for one (1) day. However, as this "food" is not 100% vitamin efficient, eating only these for more than 6 days in a row can (and will) cause physical problems ranging from headache, dizziness and "tiredness" all the way to loss of night vision and "the shakes". But, as a stopgap emergency ration, they are very fine indeed. This nice to know piece of magik needs 75 hours of moderate study and an expenditure of 88 GS to learn.

## BOITANO'S SNOWBALL

This OP5 conjuration needs three (3) seconds time and four (4) mana points to work but what it does it "create" a hardpacked "snowball" in the conjurer's cupped right hand. The 3"-4" diameter half-pound ball can then be thrown at the conjurer's next CF action segment. As it leaves the throwing hand, it immediately commences to grow in both size and weight. Three foot from the hand, it is already 12" in diameter and some 24 ounces in weight. Each additional foot traveled beyond that (to its maximum 60' range), it will increase in size/weight by 6" diameter and 10 lb respectively. Thus, at its full 60' range, it will be 24 1/2" in diameter and some 57 1/2 lbs weight! That's a lot of snow traveling at the velocity it was thrown at (whatever that was). Now, certainly with a normal humanoid throwing it, its damage potential is definitely limited (GM adjudication). But, boy, does it ever block doorways and bowl over massed opponents! There are no known ways to "power up" this magik in any way. Yet. It needs 445 GS in materials and eight days of hard study to learn.

## New Priestly Magik

## MACDAVE'S MYSTIK RITUAL OF MONETARY SUCCOR

This OP2 ritual needs no (none! nada! zip!) mana to use but does require 13 hours of complicated/difficult rituals and prayers to pull off. Essentially what happens is the priest seeks "divine intervention" on behalf of some specific person other than himself. The requested succor is for monetary aid only and, if granted, will take the form that is most convenient/handy for the God. A huge pearl (lots of small ones?), a gem or even a pile of coins may be "found" by the person prayed for. The "finding" is always within 1d100 hours of the completion of this ritual. However, there are a few restrictions which can never be broken or "gotten around". They are:

- a) The person must be of the same religion as the Priest.
- b) The person must never know that the ritual was done for them — for what the gods giveth, they can also take away. Be warned!
- c) Although the priest may do one (1) of these rituals (only! per year (455 days), the recipient may only have it done for them but once in their entire lifetime — regardless of how long they live.
- d) Anyone "out of favor" with their patron deity is not eligible.
- e) The person to be so "blest" must be within one (1) mile of the ritual to work.
- f) The amount the god(s) grant is GM adjudicated but will never exceed an amount equal to 1,000 GS per EL of the Priest doing the ritual!

NOTE! This ritual causes the Priest great distress; physically through exhaustion requiring 11-20 hours of immediate sleep and 6-10 days of real rest thereafter as well as distressing them with their God. The God will have a base 25% chance (plus 8% per EL of the Priest) of granting the request but also a 13% chance of chastising the Priest (GM's adjudication as to how) for making such a request. This can get down right nasty at times. Note as well that only the most pious can ever learn this ritual and, even for such, it takes 100 days of difficult study and fasting to do so (13% failure chance). And you get only one try at learning it.

### PONSHONA'S SPELL OF (THE) INVISIBLE SLING

This OP 2 spell needs only a half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) mana point to use but it *also* needs a real stone, sling bullet (*etc*) as well (*not to exceed 1" diameter or 1 oz weight*). Simply put, the priest holds the small rock in the palm of his right (*opened*) hand and uses the spell. The object immediately zips off towards whatever target the hand was aimed at. Consider it a real sling for game/attack purposes. Base attack chance in the BF system is 55% plus 3% per two ELs of the Priest. In non-BF systems, just give it a +5 sling attack value. This newly researched spell is still practically unknown to everyone but is sure to become a "standard" in the years to come. It requires 18 GS and 60 hours to learn.

### HARGROND'S HEAVY HAND OF RETRIBUTION

This OP 3 magik is both a 66 minute/7 mana point ritual and a 1 mana point/single firing word spell of instant effect. The ritual may be done at any time up to 13 days before the spell's use but, after 13 days it must be redone. The spell, when used, causes a life-sized pair of silvery-blue "ghostly" hands to shoot outwards from the caster's own hands. Whatever they are aimed at, up to 100' distant, will be attacked with a strangulation attempt as if they were the Priest's own hands (*i.e. they'll have the caster's STR/CF scores*). The actual strangulation (*and damage potential*) lasts 3 M/R plus one (+1) M/R per each three (3) ELs of the Priest beyond the EL at which this spell was learned. Base attack chance is: 75 under the BF system and is +7 mace attack under other systems. If it misses, it just keeps trying each CF action segment it can until it either succeeds or time runs out. Note! Only those things "ethereal" may attempt to counter grapple/pull them off. This awful magik is under ban/edict in Arduin and many other, more civilized nations. However, for those with the "right connections", it will require 60 days of difficult study and a cost of 1,100 GS to learn.

### New Runesinger Magik

#### JHERZEE'S FIREDANCE

This OP 2 runesong requires an expenditure of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mana points per melee round to function properly. However, what it does is awesome: complete and total control of all non-magikal flame, fire, heat, etc within a 30' radius of the singer! This radius is *naturally* increased by +10' per each EL above EL 4. The controlled fire can be formed into walls, balls, and shapes of all kinds and sizes (*consistent with the amount available*). Literally, it can be made to "dance" to the Runesinger's tune! But, do note, the singer is in *no* way protected from the fire they control. This terrible (*and dangerous*) power needs not only 999 GS and 66 days of arduous training to learn but requires the runesinger to expend a further 100 GS (*and 100 hours of practice*) each year in order to maintain their new-learned control. Failure to do so will, literally, "burn" the Runesinger who's not careful!

#### DHORN'S SONG OF WING & AIR

An OP 4 runemagik requiring four (4) mana points per M/R to perform and allows the singer to "fly upon the very airs". As long as the song continues, *uninterrupted*, so too does the flight — at any speed from a motionless hover up to 1000' per M/R may be maintained. At the higher velocities, though, it becomes difficult to sing/maintain due to the rush of air. Figure a 3% chance of screwing up (*i.e. falling*) at each 100' per M/R velocity above 500' per M/R — thus, a maximum 15% chance of goofing it up. This runesong needs 42 days of hard study and 1,875 GS to learn. Further, the singer must practice 40 hours and expend a further 75 GS each year in order to keep in perfect practice — else they run a strong risk of falling at the most inopportune time.

#### GAMALON'S GLOW

An OP 7 runesong requiring six (6) mana points per M/R to function, in use it causes a "golden aura", 45' in diameter, to radiate from the singer. This "glow" is equal to a full sun/daylight at "high summer noon". Any undead/demonic kind entering the radiance suffer a "turning away" akin to the Priestly sort.



### Gamelon's Turn Away Chart Other Effects

Size	Turn Away	
01-20 HP	100%	35% "discorporate" chance for <u>all</u> undead kind
21-40 HP	95%	25% as above
41-80 HP	85%	15% as above
81-120 HP	65%	5% as above
121-150 HP	45%	none
151-200 HP	25%	none
Larger	zero	none

Note: the Turn Away percentage is increased by three percent (3%) per each EL of the Runesinger above EL 4.

This ancient song was, as legends tell us, first sung more than 600,000 years ago during the great rebellion against the awful Kith Overlords. It is still a major weapon in the arsenal of "Light and Law" and needs 100 days of hard study and some 6,000 GS to learn. Each year, a further 150 hours of practice and 240 GS must be expended in order to maintain proficiency in this runesong.

### New Magik Of Illusion

#### PINDORA'S SPELL OF (The) SPITEFUL MITES

An illusion (*spell*) of OP 3 that requires an expenditure of two (2) mana points to use, its effects are instantaneous and have a 90' range. What appears is a 13' diameter "swarm" of swirling, glowing blue "mites" (*bugs?*). The swarm has a 36-second (6 M/R) base duration and all caught within its area suffer a -4 (-20 BF) in attack/defense. This is due to their "thousands" of mosquito-like "bites", their getting into eyes, mouth, ears, nose, etc and, simply put, being absolute pests. There is no real damage, just itching, irritation, and a total inability to get away from the little buggers. No real wind will blow them away, swats etc pass through them and, of course (!), the swarm will follow whomever it was first conjured upon/around. At up to 150' per M/R! Only a *Dispell!* can affect the illusory thingies, nothing else seems to bother 'em. Eight (8) days of moderate study and a cost of 400 GS is needed to learn this spell. It is not increasable in any known manner.

#### SUSPATCH'S STUPENDOUS SPIT SPELL

An OP 3 Illusion that requires three (3) mana points to use. The Master of Illusion says the single (1) firing word and then "spits". What leaves his mouth is an ever expanding torrent/tidal wave of mucus green "water". Three foot from his mouth, it is 3 1/2' wide by 3' tall and moving 5 mph; at 6' it is 9' wide by 8' high and at 15 mph; at 9' distance it is 18' wide by 15' high and moving along at 30 mph. It will thereafter increase by 18" in width and 1' in height (and by 3 mph) each 3' it travels. It will travel 180' and then "break" (i.e. like a wave "crashing upon the shore") and dissipate. All who fail their "save" versus illusion will, at GM's adjudication, be bowled over, rolled along, etc (and damaged) as if they'd really been struck by such a "wave". Of course size, weight, etc of the victims will modify the wave's effect just as it would in real life. This nasty surprise needs 77 hours of difficult study and an expenditure of 550 GS to learn. It is not increasable in any known manner.

## Dragon Magik

The following section deals with those extremely few spoken magiks non-dragonkind have managed to identify as to specifics. As they are most puissant arcane Forces, little understood by any save Dragonkind and their usage by others is so rare as to be practically non-existent. And, of course, only those thoroughly fluent in the ancient form of the "High Dragon Tongue" (and who also read said language) may even attempt its use. Any non-dragon who wields such forces will always have a base 13% failure chance. This is regardless of their EL or knowledge. Non-dragons simply do not have the "proper" aura/soul/mind needed to safely wield such power. You have been warned!

**Editors' Note:** Dragon Spells have also been reported in The Dragon Tree Spell Book from Dragon Tree Press and additional Dragon Magiks may be found therein.

### WURMFOLD

An OP 13 ritual that requires 13 M/R and 20 mana points to use (in its *basic form*). Once done, the *doer\** is: "folded out of his/her present time-space continuum into another" — hopefully the one they "targeted" during the ritual. It is used to instantly span trans-galactic (or *dimensional*) distances but, in so doing it also, always, involves shifts in time (to a lesser or greater degree).

\* Actually it is everything in a 13' radius, to a maximum of thirteen (13) tons that is "moved"! Each additional 3' of radius and 3,000 lb weight needs another five (+5) mana point expenditure during the ritual. The range is theoretically limited only by the user-magician's pre-knowledge of the chosen destination. I.e. if you don't know where/when it is, you can't get there. But if you do, then time, dimension and distance has no meaning — you will arrive! But, as noted earlier, there is a "time problem" in its usage. All non-dragonkind who travel this way end up either in their own past or future. GM adjudication is required here, but the usual "time differential" is 1,000 years less 10 years per EL of the user. Sometimes (13% chance) it is even greater (1000 and 100 years)! 10,000 GS worth of materials and 1,000 days of arduous study are needed to learn this awesome magik and there is a 7% chance of the person trying to

do so being permanently "lost in non-time", nevermore to be known of again. Never.

### SUNDERTONGUE

The OP 15 spell has a 28 mana point cost to use and is instantaneous in its effect. The effect is to cause all solid material (from *flesh to steel*) to, literally, "come apart at the molecular level"! Material thus affected becomes either a talc-like dust (if *dry*) or slimey ooze (if *wet*). Ultrahard materials like adamantium do not turn to powder, but do become clay-like, dry and brittle (*very crumbly-breakable*). The area of effect is a cone of polychromatic "energy" emanating from the spell caster's mouth. Its dimensions are: 60' long by 33' in diameter at its farthest reach. It effects 2,000 tons of dirt/earth; 200 tons of rock; 20 tons of iron and 2 tons of adamantium. Adding five (+5) more mana points the caster can increase both the size/area of effect and the amount of material affected. Note that wielding this terrible power (if you are a non-dragon), you have a +7% chance (i.e. 20% total) of it backfiring and utterly destroying you. Forever. This is without regard to your own EL or knowledge. It is not magik lightly trifled with. To learn it one must spend 13,000 GS and study very hard for 666 days. During this learning process there is a 13% chance the student will "utterly destroy himself, forever". Yeah, and 2-3 city blocks along with him!!! KAZAM! Gone!

### DRAGONWIND

This OP 18 conjuration needs the expenditure of 33 mana points over a one (1) minute (10 M/R) time period in order to work. Once done, the conjurer has "summoned" a howling, raging wind of typhoon-like force. It comes into being around the conjurer and, at start, is 600' in diameter! But it will expand its size at the rate of 30' radius each and every single (1) second over the entire 13 minute duration of its conjuration! Thus, 13 minutes after its summoning, it has reached the terrifying size of 47,400' in diameter! Nearly nine (9) miles!! All without losing any of its force or fury. With a wind velocity of 75-94 mph (*rolled for*), plus 2 mph per each EL of the conjurer above EL 8, it is powerful enough to overturn wagons, uproot trees, capsize sailing ships, destroy houses and so on and so forth. There will also be "local gusts" some 20% stronger than the steady velocity conjured forth. Note as well that there is no "eye" or calm spot in the

center of the storm, so the conjurer too will feel its full effects. This awesome arcane force cannot be increased in any known way, save as noted above. Finally, there is a +5% chance (18% total) that it simply will not work each time any non-dragon attempts its use. It takes 446 days of difficult study and a cost of 14,850 GS to learn.

### DRAGON DREAMS (Aka: DARK DREAMS)

An OP 20 ritual with a forty (40!) mana point cost, expended over one (1) hour of preparation and three (3) minutes of actual "magiking". Once done, the magician is in a total trance state from which he cannot be wakened without arcane aid. This state will last thirteen (13) hours or until he has "accomplished his mission", whichever occurs first. In this trance state (i.e. *Dark Dreams*) the magician enters the mind/dreams of any other single (1) entity then asleep that he has "pre-targeted". The target must be sentient and be within a 30 mile radius of the "sleeper". The target only has a 1% chance (rolled for) of "saving" versus this intrusion and thus "locking out" the intruder. But, if the Dark Dreamer does get in, they may do anything they wish within the dream. However, should they manage to "kill" (in the dream) the person whose dream they are in, why then that person really dies! Instantly. GM adjudication is definitely required here. And remember too that the Dark Dreamer themselves may also be "dream slain" and thus truly killed as well. After all, anything is possible in a dream! This is truly a deadly and awesome power.

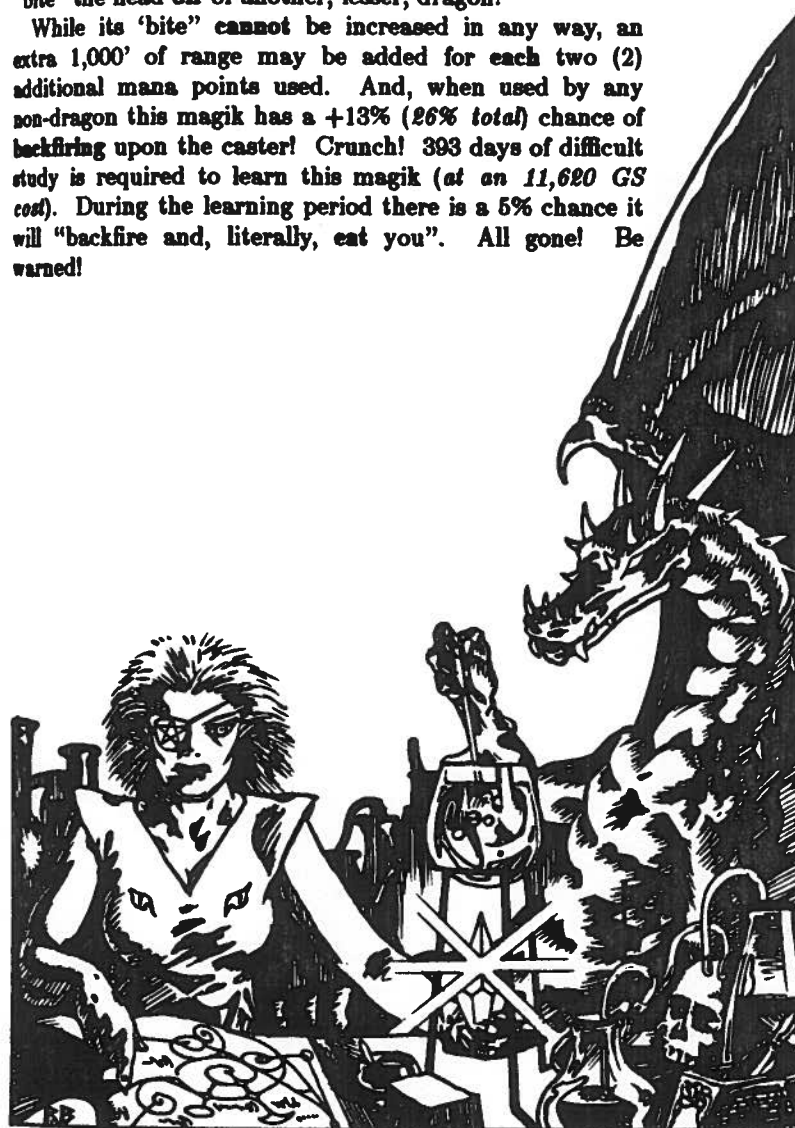
All non-dragons using this terrible power have a 20% (33% total) of becoming forever "lost amidst the dreamlands". Their body would slowly waste away (*starvation/dehydration*) and the Dark Dreamer would ever after just be "a dream"! Be warned! Oblivion stalks the dreamlands for those unwary enough to think they are its masters! Spend 1,000 days and 28,750 GS to learn this dread power. If you dare ...

### MOONBITER

This OP 20 spell costs 39 mana points to wield and has a fantastic 10,000' range! Once spoken its effect is as if the chosen target (*must be visible to the caster*) has been bitten by a real dragon! Chomp! The bite is equal, size-wise, to that of an "ancient dragon's jaws" and does a whopping 3d100 HP worth of damage! It has been used in such diverse ways as: biting a tireme in half; utterly crushing a huge catapult upon

a high citadel wall; pulverizing an (evil) idol of black jade; and to "bite" the head off of another, lesser, dragon!

While its 'bite' cannot be increased in any way, an extra 1,000' of range may be added for each two (2) additional mana points used. And, when used by any non-dragon this magik has a +13% (26% total) chance of backfiring upon the caster! Crunch! 393 days of difficult study is required to learn this magik (at an 11,620 GS cost). During the learning period there is a 5% chance it will "backfire and, literally, eat you". All gone! Be warned!



Here are a list of other Dragon Magiks "known of", but not known how to be "worked" by any non-dragonkind:

- 1) **HELLSGATE** — Opens a gateway into a "hell" and summons demons. OP 13?
- 2) **DRAGON'S VOICE** — A sonic "roar" capable of pulverizing mountains. OP 18?
- 3) **SUNFALL** — A "calling down" of sun flame hot enough to roast cities. OP 25?
- 4) **WURMSCOURGE** — A "summoning" of tens of thousands of carnivorous worms! OP 6? 8?
- 5) **THE BLACK BREATH** — A way to "breathe out black miasmatic fogs of horror and death". OP 9?
- 6) **SERPENT'S SONG** — As per Wurmscourage, but for venomous vipers etc. OP 9? 10?
- 7) **DRAGON DOME** — A "prismatic" dome-shaped protective energy shield. Very strong. OP 10?
- 8) **SHADOW'S DANCE** — None have ever survived its awesome onslaught, thus no description. OP 20?
- 9) **BECOMING** — Literally "becoming" whatever shape or size. Many dragons use it to take human form! OP 23?
- 10) **DRAGON BOLTS** — Dragon-sized "mystik darts". Capable of knocking down castle walls. OP 7? 8?
- 11) **DRAGON MADNESS** — The causing of absolute "madness" within people in a large area. OP 12?
- 12) **WINDOWS** — Being able to see anywhere, any time, at will. Some versions can be "stepped/reached" through. OP 5? 6?
- 13) **THE SUMMONING** — Wherein all the dead in a "many miles" radius are, literally, raised up into an army at the dragon's beck and call. OP 25?

#### END NOTES

Remember! Few are aware of dragon magik, fewer still capable of understanding it, and almost none able to perform it. And it is always dangerous to use. Adjudicate accordingly.

## More Arduinian Alchemical Goodies

### MOSHARON'S EMERGENCY HABITAT SPHERES

These metallic grey spheroids come in sizes ranging from that of a golf ball to nearly basket-ball sized. Weight ranges from 1-40 lbs. All have the somewhat "tacky" feel (*and consistency*) of raw rubber. They are hard, difficult to cut (*AC 4*) and will float.

They are a variation of "Colibri's Fantastic Aerial Transport Spheres" (*see Arduin Grimoire V*). What they do, when "kneaded quite vigorously for 60 seconds", is to suddenly inflate into flat-bottomed hemispheres (*sort of igloo-like*). These odd "structures" are actually emergency shelters! The smallest ones become 10' across by 5' high and have a 3 1/2' x 3' door with internal tie-down/closure flap. The largest ones become 100' across by 50' high and have a doorway 15' wide by 10' high, complete with two (*i.e.* "split") closure/flaps that tie down from the inside. Each has 1 to 10 "windows" (*usually 4'x36" square*) which are, in reality, no more than translucent patches on the structure. These allow light in but are too "murky" to allow vision through.

All, regardless of size, have internal 2"-6" thick floors (*seamless*) and vents in the roof to allow airflow. Each floor has a brick red central area ranging in size from 1' to 10' in diameter which is fireproof enough to allow campfires safely. When opened or closed (*as each situation demands*), this structure will either cool the interior by 35 degrees Fahrenheit or warm it by 45 degrees Fahrenheit. Needless to say these shelters are in great demand by world travelers.

However, for each 10' in diameter, it has a production cost of 1,250 GS and takes three (3) days to make. Once thus produced they will store forever if properly handled (*or until used*) but, once used/opened, they can never be recomacted. Once "up" each will last about four (4) years, depending upon climate. Because they are so difficult, time-consuming and expensive to make, fewer alchemists elect to make them each year and, thus, they are now quite rare and very, very expensive (*figure 2,000-2,500 GS per each 10' in diameter*). Perhaps in a few years no more will ever be made again ... Still, to learn requires 11 months of hard study and an expenditure of 6,000 GS (*and you must be at least EL 4 to even try*!).

### MARYZEHL'S ELIXIR OF RESTORATIVE GOODNESS

This pale violet liquid, smelling faintly of lemon blossoms, is drunk in **single (4 oz) doses only**. Each dose will cause any living being (up to **50 HP size**) to **immediately** begin to "cast off" all their tiredness and exhaustion. All fatigue, sleepiness and physical weakness (*caused normally, not by wounds*) is **utterly banished** over a time period equal to one (1) second per each (1) HP in size they are. It doesn't give extra strength, stamina or in any way increase a living creature's own natural ability to function. However, it does allow them to become as if they had just awakened from a good night's rest/sleep. But if used more than once in a 25-hour period there is a 20% cumulative chance the drinker will collapse into a catatonic unconscious state lasting 1d100+10 hours. You dare to use it too often, you take the risk!

Made from uncommon materials (*at a 98 GS per dose production cost*) it has nonetheless been the "pick-me-up" of choice (*for over 2,000 years!*) of everyone from military men to magicians — if they could afford it.

Batches of any size can be made, it **always** takes 18 hours to make, regardless of amount involved. And, once concocted, it has an **indefinite shelf life** if kept in **airtight** containers of the purest silver. Should you wish to learn how to do this, it takes 7 months of hard study and a cost of 4,500 GS to do so. And only those EL 3 and above are experienced enough to try.

### YANG'S MYSTIC POTION OF MASSIVE GROWTH

An amber colored, apple blossom fragrant liquid that costs 235 GS per each ten (10) ounce dose to produce. The alchemical process takes 40 hours of **closely supervised** work to complete, but amounts of any quantity may thus be made. Any **living but non-sentient** thing that is bathed in this potion (*or even sprinkled with it*) will grow by 81-100% in size and mass. The growth begins 1d6 seconds after the potion's use and takes a further 1d6 seconds to complete. It can be used on anything from trees to mosquitoes and, regardless of their size/mass, one full dose **must** be expended. Then again, it affects any sized living thing, so it's a trade off, smaller to greater as it were. The growth effect lasts 11-20 minutes and this duration **cannot** be increased in any manner. The more doses used will, indeed, cause more growth, but still will not increase duration. As an example: three (3) doses will cause a growth of 243-300%, but the duration is still 11-20 minutes.

But because of the systemic shock involved in such massive and rapid growth, no living thing can have this done more than once per every 100 hours. Thus if you used, say, 4 doses on a critter, then waited for its full growth to see how big it got, you couldn't then use more to increase its size. Not even 30 seconds later! To do so simply causes the creature/thing to **immediately** collapse back to its original size and become catatonic (where applicable) for 1d100 minutes and "woozy and disoriented" for another 6-10 hours thereafter. This powerful stuff requires the Alchemist to be of at least EL 6 and to take ten months (*and 10,000 GS*) to learn. Once done though, you can create "mile high trees" or "twenty foot long ladybugs" if you like. Oh, it has a 100-month shelf life after being concocted, so long as it is kept sealed in airtight, brass containers. Got it? Good!

### HUNZAGGER'S POTENT POTION OF INESTIMABLE POWER

This syrupy and semi-viscous liquid has a "salmon-pink" color and an aroma of strong, hot coffee. Each, potent, one (1) ounce dose requires an intricate, 100-day long production process which costs 4,798 GS! Amounts of any size may be thus made but, as the cost is so high, little of this stuff is ever made. Its shelf life, if stored in airtight containers of the purest silver (*the only substance it cannot affect*), is **indefinite**. What it does is rather startling: any, repeat: **ANY**, solid material spread with the liquid becomes (*in 13 seconds*) "totally ethereal and passable by any who dares!" Each ounce affects a 1 square foot area up to 13" deep/thick. Any substance. From flesh to adamantium. **Only silver** is immune to this effect. The duration of the "ethereal effect" is variable depending upon the individual substance's hardness and density. As an example: wood (*say, hard oak*) will stay "ethereal" for 101-200 minutes but a dense metal such as gold will only do so for 2-11 minutes, adamantium for only 21-40 **makee rounds** (*about 3-4 minutes*) and so on. To affect a wider area more liquid is needed. To affect a thicker/deeper area simply spread more over the same area. Two (2) oz in a 1' square area would affect material up to 26" deep/thick and so on. So, GM adjudication may be required but not much and nothing common sense can't handle. Rare and highly prized (*especially by Thieves and Assassins — for obvious reasons*), to learn how to make this stuff an alchemist **must** be, to begin with (!) at least EL 10. Then, two solid years of experimentation and an expenditure of 13,500 GS is mandatory. And, during this period, there is a base 20%

chance (less 1% per each EL above EL 10 the alchemist is) that, sometime during the trials, the experimenter has "become permanently, irrevocably ethereal themselves!" Those thus afflicted become "blown away into the ethereal plane by the winds of limbo, never more to be known of again!" Never. Be warned . . . .

### SANCHUU'S SERENDIPITIOUS LIQUID OF POTENT ALLURE

A clear, though somewhat sticky liquid with an odd smell of crushed violets and oregano! Each single one (1) ounce dose needs 40 hours and materials worth 450 GS to produce. However batches of any size may be made. Once finished it has a shelf life of 600 years if properly stored in airtight ceramic containers. What this stuff does is to attract and compel\* any and all (all!) "warm blooded animal life". It will do this over about a 100' radius or downwind for up to a mile (or more!) and without any regard as to type, kind, number or size involved. Everything from ground squirrels to buffalo herds will respond! Birds, bats, mice, all the area has to "offer" will show up! The base chance of it doing so (rolled for each animal kind in the area separately) is 35%. This increases by +5% (and +10' radius of effect, etc) per each additional 1 oz dose employed. Thus ten (10) doses would have a 190' radius of effect (probably close to two miles downwind!) and a base 80% chance of effectiveness. That's one hell of a lot of critters showing up in one small area! And, once in the area, they will remain for 30 minutes less one (-1) minute per each 10 HP more than 50 HP they are. As an example: a 70 HP bear would stay about 28 minutes.

The duration of this stuff's "allure" is 101-200 minutes but rain or other such factors will reduce this (and its range/effectiveness) drastically. While prized very highly by poachers it is truly hated by foresters, woods elves, entkynen and others attuned to/with "life in the wilds" who tend to be rather "harsh" to users of the stuff.

It takes an EL 5 (or better) alchemist 4,850 GS in materials and six months of rather difficult study to learn this alchemical process.

\* The compulsion is to "find the source of the aroma — and stay with it."

### CALIMAHE'S PUISSANT POTION OF DRAGON REPELLING

A bright cherry red liquid, this has a consistency (and taste) like "cough syrup". It even smells like the stuff and, when imbibed (drunk), it will cause said drinker to acquire (taking 1-20 minutes to do so) a "smell so repugnant to all dragonkind that they cannot stand to even be close to it!" To a human nose the aroma is sort of a cross between rancid butter and old sewage sludge (Phew!). It has a duration of 100 hours less one (-1) hour per each 5 HP more than 45 HP the drinker is. Note that even after it has stopped its effect the aroma will linger for days in the person's clothes etc. Of course it will have a much reduced effectiveness (GM adjudicated), but every little bit helps as they say! So effective is the potion that all dragonkind approaching to within a 21'-30' radius of the drinker, will immediately (and reflexively — no "save") "pull up short; clamp their jaws shut; squinch their nostrils as closed as possible and retreat away as fast as possible!" It also causes their eyes to water and their stomachs to "heave and boil" with instant nausea! Look out! Dragon vomit (33% chance — rolled for each M/R!) Dragonkind simply cannot tolerate the smell this stuff produces from a humanoid being after being drunk. However how each individual dragon will handle such an encounter is as varied as they are. A scorching blast of dragon's flame to "cleanse the area"; a quick, whirling tail smash to bat the "offending object" as far away as possible; even a very hasty retreat could result. The only certainty is that they won't get close (or downwind!) from such "smelly" folks! And, as noted above, such an odor is not exactly "sweet" to human(oid)s either. Still, if you're afraid of dragons . . . .

This potent stuff requires 450 GS of relatively common ingredients to produce (during a 30-hour alchemical process). Any amount can be made and it has a shelf life of 100 years or thereabouts. It can be stored in any non-porous container except glass. Glass ruins it rather quickly. To learn the process requires an Alchemist be at least EL 3 and spend 1,450 GS during a relatively easy 100 days of study/experimentation.

### KARATORQUE'S KALAMITY KOINS

Each of these has the exact look, size and weight of any type of coin the maker wishes but this is because a corresponding amount of each metal is used in the Alchemical process that produces them. As an example: if the alchemist wants a dozen Gold Sovereign look-alikes he'll



have to use 12 oz of gold in the process (as well as all else needed. And so on . . . .

What these "koin" really are, are deadly assassins' tools which are (under death-penalty edict) banned in Arduin (and in many other places!). On the other hand, the Assassin's Guild prize them very highly and will pay premium prices for them, the law be damned!

What the "koin" do is rather diabolical; 1-3 seconds after they touch bare flesh, they suddenly glow "an unearthly blue" (for .01 second) and disappear! Actually they have just been absorbed into the flesh touching them! Too fast for the human (and most others) eye to follow. Gone . . . . Then, .05 seconds later it converts into a highly potent blood poison of 10d10 HD (10-100 HP) toxicity! But their real danger lies in the fact that, in "koin" form, they do not register as toxic/poison by any known means (mystik or scientific) because, until absorption/change, they are nothing more than real coins! You can see the very deadly potential here. Only alchemists of EL 18 or greater may learn to make them, a process that takes thirty-one (31) months and an expenditure of 27,000 GS. Each "koin" (and they may only be made separately/singly) requires 1,245 GS\* worth of materials and a complicated, 13-hour process to manufacture. Once made they "keep" forever . . . or until touched by bare flesh.

The market value of these things is never less than ten times (10 X) its production cost — frequently twice that (i.e. 20 X).

\* Plus the value of the coins' metal content.

#### SPECIAL ALCHEMIST'S NOTE

There is, from time to time, some debate as to how best to "handle" the Alchemist in a *non-player* (i.e. NPC) role — such as when player characters enter an alchemist's shop to buy something. Well, as I am of the strong opinion that all sapient beings are individuals, each different from the other, I cannot really give you any hard/fast "one rule" by which to play them. On the other hand I can give you a small "chart" to help you individualize each character and encounter. Simply roll, as appropriate, each time your players meet a new alchemist but be sure to take notes so you will ever after have "fleshed out" NPCs at that location. That way, over time, you can "populate" your campaign's hamlets and cities with alchemist shops and their proprietors.

#### Alchemists Character Individualization Chart

Die Roll	Alignment	Basic Character Attitudes, etc
01-05	True Law	Irascible, grumpy, easily angered, not willing to listen to others.
06-10	Lawful Good	Somewhat "touchy", a gruff, typical "curmudgeon".
11-15	Marginally Lawful	Arrogant, distant, "snooty" and difficult to communicate with.
16-20	Lawful Evil	Easy to talk to, very affable, communicative and "helpful".
21-25	True Neutral	Voluble, talks constantly, "slick", somewhat "oily" character. Too friendly.
26-30	Neutral Good	Oddly appealing, shy and friendly but somewhat "distracted", helpful.
31-40	Neutral Evil	Overly solicitous, "fawning", a real "behind kisser" and sleaze. Yecchh!
41-45	Marginally Neutral	Taciturn, non-talkative, abrupt, coldly distant, "preoccupied". Unfriendly.
46-50	True Chaotic	Gleeful, "bubbly", oddball and practical joker — a Puck follower?
51-70	True Law	Secretive, talks in brusque "riddles", uninformative, almost nasty.
71-90	True Neutral	Very talkative, friendly, says a whole lot . . . none of it informative.
91-95	Lawful Evil	Openly nasty, arrogant, mean (even brutal) and obviously "dangerous".
96-98	Lawful Good	The classic "Goody Two Shoes", sickeningly nice and too helpful. Bleah!
99	Chaotic Evil	Drastically changes personality each visit. Roll on this chart. Cuckoo bird.
100	GM's Choice	As it says, GM's choice.

Note: if you noticed that only two (2) listings were "chaotic" then congratulations! You have good eyes! This was done quite deliberately because, you see, people who are truly chaotic tend to do unpredictable things and, in the ordered and relatively consistent processes used in alchemy, such actions are usually lethal. Alchemy is the epitome of order and chaos does not long survive in such an environment. Be warned!

## More Orrish Alchemical Mayhem

### Quagga's Puissant Potion Of Regenerative Properties

This pale, "flesh" colored liquid has a consistency akin to "warm glue", an aroma reminiscent of a well used midden (*that's "out house" to you, dummy!*) and reputedly tastes like "chocolate covered ants wrapped in burnt leather"! An altogether unappealing concoction! Each 16 oz dose must be drunk rapidly (*all within 10 seconds*) to work properly. What it does is to cause all missing flesh, limbs or other organs (*from toes to eyes*), to begin to regenerate/regrow. It will do so at a rate of 1 HP per hour until all has been regrown or its 35 HP (per dose) limit has been reached. Yes! It does regrow such large limbs as entire arm/hand(s) and/or feet/legs. Bone, blood vessels, nerves and all, all reconnected properly and fully functional. Its sole drawback (*besides taste!*) is that it cannot regrow anything lost more than six (6) hours prior to drinking it. So it must be used relatively soon after such a loss. Note also that if a person has suffered an RCH (*Rolled Critical Hit*) that, say, lopped off a leg, and is bleeding to death, this stuff works too slow to stop the death from occurring. And once dead, all regrowth etc stops. Still, as it is one of the few "after the fact" regenerative magiks, it is highly prized and much sought after/coveted by Orc-kind (*and others*). Orcs never willingly let non-orcs have it.

It can be made in any amounts desired in a process that takes 20 hours of constantly-watched work to complete. Each dose has a production cost of 998 GS (*and has a market value at least ten times (10 X) that!*). Its shelf life is up to 60 years if properly stored and proper storage is in a blue (*only!*) basalt-carved jar, sealed/shut up (*airtight!*) by beeswax. Any other way of storage will result in it "going bad" and becoming useless in very short order. It takes 130 days of hard study and an expenditure of some 888 GS worth of materials to learn but, as most of the ingredients are fairly uncommon (*and known only to Orc-kind*), non-Orcs have little chance (2%) of so learning.

### Yhu-Hahr's Fabulous Paints

Essentially an "alchemical paint" of any color desired which always has the extremely strong odor of "rotted roses mixed with horse manure!" Phew! Anything painted with this stuff becomes  $\frac{1}{100}$ th of its normal weight as soon as the paint dries (*31-60 minutes!*) Sort of as

"anti-gravity paint"! Note that the paint is not particularly "sturdy" or weather-resistant. So even with careful handling during everyday usage, it will wear off at the rate of 2% per day after the first thirty (30) days. As an example: A 100 pound cast iron anvil is totally painted (*all surfaces, even the bottom*); when it dries, that 100 pounds has been reduced to a mere one pound (1 lb)! By day 31 it is back up to 3 lbs (*+2% of 100 lbs is +2 lbs*). By day 32 it would be 5 lbs; day 33 equals 7 lbs and so on until it's all worn off and the weight is back to its original 100 pounds (*about 79-80 days after it was first painted*).

So closely has the secret of this stuff been guarded by Orc-kind's shamen and medicine men over the centuries that frequently only one (1) such in only one tribe/clan may know the secret and, with its secret ingredients so rare, a single pint costs 5,000 GS to produce (*during a 84-day process of great complexity and difficulty!*) Thus very little is ever made, perhaps a gallon or so in the whole world. Still, each pint will cover an area 10' square and that's one heck of a lot of "lift".

Learning the process by which this unusual paint is made requires 15 months of arduous study and the expenditure of 9,500 GS worth of experimental materials.

### Pruhgnuhts' Potent Bug-Killer

When exposed to air, this emerald green liquid will instantly (.15 second) billow into a dark green "cloud" of gas/mist. It will be approximately 9' in diameter (*wind allowing*) per each four (4) ounces used/exposed. The liquid and the cloud both have a very strong odor of rancid butter-fat and fried red onions. Quite a stomach-churning stench for most folks! It will disperse in a "zero wind" condition at the rate of 11-20% per M/R until it has totally disapated into nothingness. However, while still in existence it is a very potent insect specific "bug fumigator"! A typical 9' cloud has the capacity to kill, instantly, up to 26 HP worth of any single kind of insect it was made to destroy. As it disperses, it loses as much damage potential each melee round as it loses of its size/substance (*i.e. 11-20% per M/R*). Note I said it is fully potent each and every melee round any of it remains (*in whatever percentage/potency*) but it only affects the bug-kind it is "keyed" for.

Any bugs not killed outright (5% chance) will still become "spastic, disoriented and totally incapable of any sort of controlled function." When used versus "larger bugs" (*i.e. Phraints, Spigas, etc*), the degree of loss of functional control is equal to the damage they've suffered

from the cloud. As an example: A 30 HP Phraint is hit by a 25 HP cloud so will suffer about 83% damage and motor/mental loss of control. Note, however, that while tiny bugs (*gnats, bees, mosquitoes etc*) get no "save" versus poison, larger ones, like Phraints do. Adjudicate accordingly. Originally intended as a "fumigant" to rid huts and villages of ticks, fleas and other such pests, the stuff was soon discovered to be equally effective against other, "large" insects (*such as Phraints*). Oddly enough, however, it was also discovered that scorpions, spigas and arachnids (*spiders*) only suffered half as bad as more conventional six-legged insects.

The liquid will only "keep" in thick glass containers of a dark brown or dark blue color (to keep sunlight out). In such it lasts about 4 years. Direct sunlight will rapidly (*11-20 minutes*) turn it into a sticky, smelly but utterly harmless/ineffective goo.

It can be made in any sized batches in an 11 hour process of some considerable danger (*i.e. it tends to explode(!) on about a 15% chance if "over-cooked"*). Each 4 oz costs about 15 GS (*using rather common, for orcs, materials*) to make, thus it is one of the most widely used of all Orc alchemical concoctions. They even sell it to non-Orcs (*at about 25 GS a 4 oz "pop"*) in its "small bug" form but never sell their "anti-Phraint" or other "big bug" stuff to non-Orcs. As it is totally nontoxic/reactive to anything and everything except bugs, it is extremely safe to use ... if you can stand the smell.

Phraints have a standing 500 GS bounty out on anyone who even carries the "anti-phraint" version and a 5,000 GS one on those who make it! Collectable through any Phraint hive so long as you've the proper proof. They hate this stuff!

#### Blughar's Good Stuff

An ochre colored paste that smells like a "garbage dump at high noon on a hot summer's day". Supposedly it tastes worse than it smells — if that is possible(!). It is produced from some of the commonest and most available (*to Orcs*) ingredients around. Each one (1) oz dose costs about 2½ GS (*50 SP*) and takes six days to concoct. But no more than 100 doses may be thus made at any one time. Once made, it will last up to seven (7) years in any container so long as its temperature is never allowed to reach 100° fahrenheit (*or more*). About an hour's worth of such heat renders the alchemical stuff utterly ineffective and worthless.

So what does the "good stuff" really do? Oh, nothing very spectacular or eye-grabbing. No, it just renders any stiff and/or hard (*non-metal*) substance, like wood for instance, as pliable and flexible as soft leather of equal thickness! Just paint onto anything (*one (1) ounce will "work" up to 15 square inches of material no more than 1" thick*). More area or greater thickness simply means you use the appropriate amount of "good stuff", more as required. The pliability lasts 101-200 minutes but heat (*i.e. drying out*) reduces this time drastically.

This is commonly used, by Orcs, to "shape" wood into useful (*or fecidful*) shapes. Said shapes being permanently "set" once the "good stuff" dries.

This is another of the few alchemical goodies that Orcs will sell to non-Orcs, though at a dear price! And even so, no non-Orc has ever managed to replicate its many (*rare!*) ingredients. Some 88 days of difficult study and a cost of 945 GS is needed to learn this useful knowledge.

#### Jamma's Orc-Guzzle

Well, heh, heh ... what's to say about this one? Orcs eat it, but few other folk care to! A sort of alchemical "trail mix", super-condensed down into a thick, blue-black "paste". It smells like a 10-day old corpse and tastes so bad (*to non-Orcs*) that no words could ever do the stuff justice! Bleeecch! Ptooie! Yuk! A single four (4) oz portion of the noxious goop will keep a full-grown Orc "full" and going strong for one (1) whole day (*25 hours*). It has all vitamins essential to an Orc's health and is a very complete "food". Actually it will feed most humanoids just as ably but few can stomach it (*or keep it down*).

It will "keep" about a year (*15 months*) if kept reasonably cool (*under 90°*) and dry. Higher heat (*or high humidity*) reduces its shelf life drastically and heat of 130°F or more cause it to rot in a very short time (*4-6 hours*). Orc-Guzzle thus spoiled becomes poisonous to a potency equal to 1d8 per each 4 oz.

Each 4 oz portion costs a paltry 15 CP to make and all ingredients are easily obtainable ... by any Orc ... It requires 16 hours to "cook" each batch and can be thus made in any amount desired.

The process only takes 101-200 minutes to learn and at the laughably tiny cost in materials of 8-11 CP!

## Farglaag's Glow Goo

A cheery brick red color and play-dough-like consistency are the trademarks of this smelly stuff. Its "burnt pig fat" odor is another unmistakable hall-mark of this Orcish alchemical light-casting substance. Each pound of it has a glow equal to one quarter ( $1/4$ ) full day light intensity in a 13' radius around itself. A pound of it is, by the way, about the size of a tennis ball.

It will glow merrily for about two (2) Arduinian years (901-1000 days) if not allowed to dry out. Treat it like modeling clay to keep this from happening. Made of the cheapest materials available to Orc-kind, it only costs about 30 CP per pound to concoct. The process to do it takes about four (4) days from start to finish. However after the first hour's mixing, it can safely be left unattended as it "sets" during the next 99 hours. Batches of any size may be made.

The stuff is used as "torches" (on the end of a stick) or to light Orcish hovels like "lanterns". So commonplace is it, that many non-Orc alchemists acquire large amounts of it each year but, so far, none have been able to duplicate the "Glow Goo" satisfactorily so the Orcs retain its monopoly and sell, literally, tons of it each spring.

Notes! Adding to the mass does not increase the intensity of the light, it just increases the area thus illuminated (*dimly*).

As a final caution, read the entry entitled "Xudoe's Crawling Horror" (The Lost Grimoire, Arduin Grimoire IV) and see what can happen when a non-Orc attempts to copy this "simple" concoction!

About 100 hours of study and an expenditure of 105 GS are required to learn how to make this interesting alchemical stuff.

## Skussbukhett's Stupendous Elixir Of Ineffable Value

This very beautiful alchemical elixer looks like quicksilver with gold dust suspended throughout its mass. Oooo! Pretty! But, oboy(!), what a stench! Peeyaarg! The odor is so terrible that unsuspecting Elves have been known to actually pass out (*go unconscious*) when unexpectedly exposed to it! The nasty-smelling liquid is, however, quite useful (*though badly misnamed*).

For each full hour (60 minutes) any living creature lies fully submerged in the stuff, their natural AC will increase by plus one (+1) to a maximum of AC 2+7. Said AC increase has a 25-hour duration which is not extendable in any manner save for additional submersions. For each hour more than ten (10) the submergence lasts, add another

ten (+10) hours of duration for the AC increase. Of course the submerged being must wear nose clips, keep their eyes closed (*and ears plugged*) as they breathe through a hollow tube or reed.

Also note that for each hour a "soaker" spends submerged, they (*themselves*) will stink for 100 hours ... and that stink is enough to "peg a maggot" as they say! Most humans, elves and other such types getting a whiff of the soaked ones smell will have a base 75% of immediately becoming ill/nauseous enough to puke uncontrollably for 1d100 M/R! Really, it's that bad — though Orcs don't seem to notice in the least! So, they (*Orcs*) use it before battle as an "advantage".

Expensive to make, each 100 gallons (*enough to fully submerge/soak a full-sized orc*) costs a big 7,850 GS! Not only are the materials hard to come by, even for Orcs, but the twelve (12) day long manufacturing process needs constant supervision and "hands on" fussing about to work properly and, once made (*in any amount*), it must be used within 60 hours or it will become inert and totally useless. And no, I don't know why an Orc (*or anyone else*) lying down in it will stop it from spoiling. What can I say? It's magik!

It takes 180 days of difficult study and the spending of 13,000 GS to master this Alchemical process.

See also *Orc Alchemy* and the Non-Orc "Swallow" Chart in *Dark Dreams, Arduin Grimoire V* from Dragon Tree Press.

## New Mystik Artifacts And Treasures

### (The) PLANETARY PLUME (Aka: Chypander's Pen)

**VALUE:** 13,000 GS minimum **SIZE:** Always 13" long, 13 oz weight  
**COLOR:** Variable **DESCRIPTION:** An arcanelly created writing quill/plume-pen much like a peacock feather in general looks.

**MAGIKAL POWERS:** Whenever physically touched by anyone who can "naturally generate" raw magikal (or Priestly) "mana", it will automatically commence "mapping". The map drawn will be 51-100% accurate and concern the area immediately around the pen (1 mile radius). It can thus "map" once each thirteen (13) hours. However, each time it must be "fed" one (1) raw mana point by the individual touching it. No mana, no map. The map requires 1d12 + 1 minutes to be drawn and must be so done on papyrus, paper, etc provided for it. Nothing to write/draw upon means no map. The ink is indelible (waterproof) and "glows" with a very faint silvery sheen in the dark.

**SPECIAL NOTES:** It requires the combined efforts of both an Alchemist and a Runeweaver to make one of these items. And both needs must be EL 10 or greater. The process required to build these plumes requires both builders to study very hard for 300 days and expend 2,500 GS (each). The pens themselves require a combined ritual three (3) days in duration to complete. The cost of doing so is never less than 7,500 GS. All factors considered, they are exceedingly rare items.

### WARD STICKS (Aka: Silent Sentries)

**VALUE:** 1,300-13,000 GS per set of four **SIZE:** either 7", 11" or 13" tall and 4, 7 or 9 oz weight **COMPOSITION:** Anything from wood to iron, usually runically inlaid in silver. **DESCRIPTION:** Triple edged "tent peg-like" stakes inlaid with "runes of power".

**MAGIKAL POWERS:** All are designed as "wards/guardians" of specific areas. The lesser ones work against small critters from insects to mice (9 HP or less) and will keep them out of the warded area. Intermediate ones do the same versus critters up to 20 HP in size. Major ward sticks work on those beasts up to 50 HP in size. They are also the first order of ward stick to also so effect "lesser undead" (sombies, skeletons, ghouls, etc). Greater ward sticks work on

monsters to 100 HP in size and keep out "greater undead" (to include wraiths, spectres and vampyrs). Penultimate ward sticks keep out huge beasts up to 200 HP in size and effect all "undead kind" regardless of their power or type. This ward is the only one to also affect "demonic entities" but only at the GM's discretion (i.e. not often and not for long).

**SPECIAL NOTES:** All ward sticks will affect the critter size listed regardless of how many there may be. As an example, a major warded area could keep out an infinite number of critters, 50 HP or less in size. All stick sets (4 sticks) are designed to ward/protect an area 13' in diameter, so are placed/set equidistant around such an area. Even though the wards will affect sentient (i.e. intelligent) undead/demon-kind, generally speaking they do not affect any creature or being considered intelligent. Some GM adjudication may be required on this point.

**END NOTE:** These wards should be "worked on" so as to fit each individual world/campaign as all I have given you here are general guidelines. Finally I strongly recommend different types for Magicians and Priests. Similar but definitely different.

### SORIAN SPARKLER(S)

**VALUE:** 100 GS base plus 45 GS per each extra 100 minutes of function beyond the initial/base 150 minutes. **SIZE:** 13" long by 1" diameter and 7 oz weight. Each additional 100 minutes adds 7" in length (etc) and 3 oz weight. **COMPOSITION:** "Fire iron" granules on a wooden stick. **COLOR:** Dull grey (and wood) overall.

**DESCRIPTION:** When the mystik (spoken) "ignition command" is given, the tip bursts into radiant "sparkles" of harmless, heatless light. They resemble our Earthly 4th of July sparklers, but without the fire danger. The 18"-21" corona of "sparkles" casts a 10' radius torchlight-equivalent illumination. Remember, NO HEAT!

**SPECIAL NOTES:** Frequently mistaken for alchemical magik (they're not), these relatively common "miner's lights" are made in large quantities by low EL Dwarven Mages for that race's mining efforts. However only Dwarven Smith-Mages know the secret to making them, so only from them can any be had in substantial numbers.

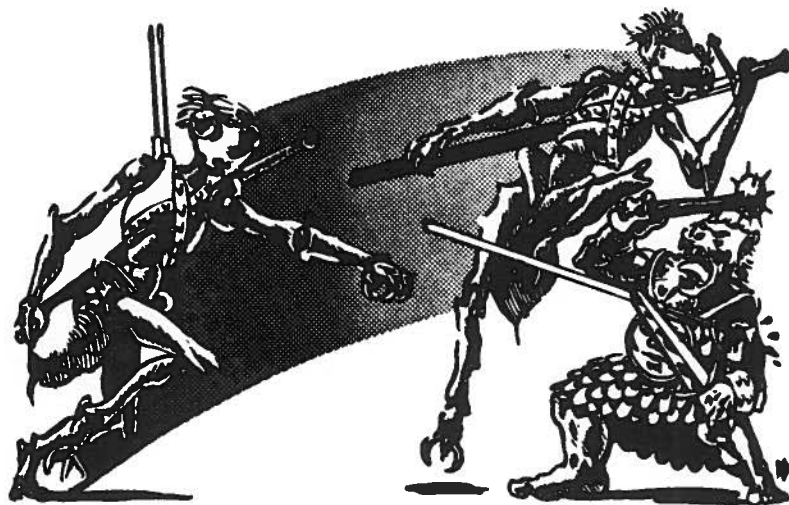
**BROOM ZOOM (RING)**

**VALUE:** 7,750 GS **SIZE:** about 2" in diameter and 1½ oz weight  
**COMPOSITION:** Usually carved Pegasus or Gryffyn bone. **COLOR:** Dull yellow-white overall.

**DESCRIPTION:** A runic carved ring designed to slip over a broomstick's haft (*not over a finger*)! Brooms thus affixed can fly as follows: **Max Speed:** 770' per M/R; **Ceiling:** 7,700'; **Max Payload** (Lb Capability): 3,000 lbs; **Flight Duration** (Daily): 77 minutes.

**SPECIAL NOTES:** All performance figures listed are based upon a 300 lb payload. Each additional 300 lbs reduces each capability by ten percent (-10%) — thus, carrying 900 lbs it could only perform at 80% of listed capabilities (i.e. at 616' per M/R to 6,160' ceiling and only for a 61.6 minute duration). The load bearing ability of the individual broom handle (i.e. wood breaks, you know!) is also a consideration.

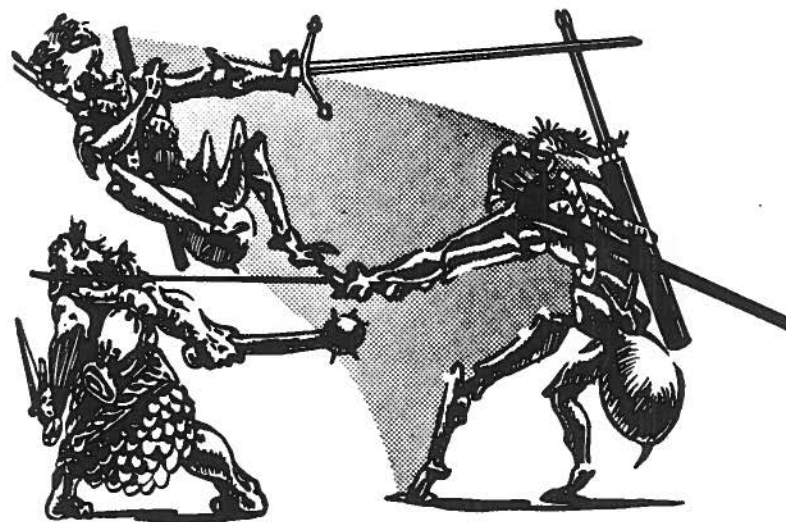
**FINAL NOTES:** Due to the rarity of availability of the bone used in their manufacture, these items are quite rare and the necessary procedures to do so, should bone be available, are now, known only to a select few dark and evil magicians of Dread Marmachand.

**BUG-BAG (Aka: Pest Pouch)**

**VALUE:** Variable according to culture/buyer. **SIZE:** Most any size but 18" tall by 11" in diameter (and a hefty 3½ lbs) is the average.  
**COMPOSITION:** Common spyder silk for both bag and drawstring.  
**COLOR:** Variable.

**DESCRIPTION:** Whenever it is opened it "releases" hundreds (up to 1,000!) of normal sized insects. These will be of the non-lethal varieties like gnats, mosquitoes, midges, beetles, grasshoppers, moths, butterflies, slugs and even non-toxic varieties of spiders, centipedes, etc. It takes a full M/R (6 seconds) for the bag to fully empty and, once done, it needs to be tied shut for thirteen (13) hours in order to refill. Shut for lesser time means it has fewer bugs inside when next opened/used.

**SPECIAL NOTES:** As only one (1) such bag currently exists and the legends of others in the past are very vague, it is still not known how to make one of these. Or, indeed, who (*or what*) already so obviously has. The last known whereabouts of this oddity was in the possession of a reclusive "Medicine Man" named Andriguez of Berk. And that was some years ago . . .





## Bardic Oddities Of Arduin

Along with analogues to most of our earthly musical instruments there are, in Arduin, several that are unique to that world alone. Though most are fairly rare, even now (from time to time) they are occasionally encountered, usually in the hands of a well-established Bard.

### HOURLANGOUR ("Hum-Happy-Hum")

Sort of a cross between a harmonica and ocarina. It is usually a  $4\frac{1}{2}$ "-8" long, crescent-shaped instrument built from silver, ebony-wood and ivory (*all three together*). The sound it produces encompasses nearly the entire range of a large harmonica and all the low to middle ranges of an ocarina. In combination, the weirdly melodic "humming moan" is at once both familiar, yet eerily different. It is a favorite of the Bards of the southern lands, in particular of the nomadic tribes of the Great Sand Sea and its environs. An average one would cost about 15 GS whilst the finer, more inlaid ones cost as much as 600 GS (*if made by a "name" instrument craftsman*). It is uncommon everywhere except in the south where it can be heard daily (*from inn to market places*).

### DELDYLLION ("Song Toucher")

Resembling, somewhat, a sort of guitar soundbox with one side set with "wooden keys", the other with strings. Usually octagonal in shape and 20"-30" tall by 15"-25" wide, the seven (7) keys and seven (7) strings are played like a xylophone (*i.e. with a pair of "puff"-ended sticks*). The sounds it produces are a sort of combination between piano, harpsichord and xylophone. However with only a total of 14 keys/strings the range of the instrument is nowhere near that of any of the afore mentioned instruments it, somewhat, sounds like. A very rare version of this instrument, called a "MAHANG" (*which means "Great One"*) is about twice the usual size, has thirteen (13) each strings and keys and a much greater musical range but it is very rare indeed. Both types are, originally, of Elven origins, but are now occasionally seen in the hands of other races.

Constructed, most often, of either cherry or maple wood, it has silver strings and keys (*as well as inlay and "fittings"*). An average one still

costs about 25-30 GS and one made by a "name" Elven instrument maker could run as much as 800 GS or more. They are currently quite popular in Arduin's "noble society".

### WYCKZYNCK ("Singing Tail")

A really "odd" item, it resembles nothing so much as a martial artist's "triple irons" (*nunchakku*)! Each of the three (3) main parts (*called "bars"*) are 10"-15" long, copper or bronze tubes with 9 to 30 vari-sized holes in each. They are joined together by 3"-7" chains, also of copper or bronze. Thus one of these weird instruments may be from 36" to 59" long and is played by whirling one, two or even all three of the hollow tubes (*called "Flinging The Song" if all three are thus used*). The sounds it produces will depend upon: direction of spin; velocity of spin and the number of "bars" in action. Altogether a difficult and, at times, dangerous musical style to master. Still, the "haunting" sounds it makes are able to affect nearly all that hear its key and bizarre music. Said music being, well, indescribable. You have to hear/experience it to understand what I am trying to convey here. Originated by the Centaur clans of The Great Grass Forever, few besides them have ever managed to master the "Singing Tail". In fact the last non-Centaur to do so was a bizarre 3-armed human(oid) weirdling from Ghorfar, over 300 years ago!

One of these costs, on the average, about 18 GS, though "name" maker variations (*usually gold-leaf covered*) have brought as much as 280 GS at auction.

### ATELOS ("Star")

An exceedingly rare musical instrument of, believe it or not(!), Deodanth origin! It resembles a pure-white to blue-white crystalline "star" of seven (7) to ten (10) "points". It is usually from  $10\frac{1}{2}$ " to 16" across, point to point, and asymmetrical (*i.e. not all the arms/points are of the same length*). It is played by running ones fingers/hand along the "flats" of the star's arms (*at variable speeds and in variable patterns*) but carefully as its edges are razor sharp. The sound thus produced is bell-like in clarity and tone and resembles everything from wind chimes to a brass gong. No two ever sound just alike and no non-Deodanth has ever truly mastered the "play" of one — though many do try. And, as only a very select few (*and extremely secretive*) Deodanths can make them (*how, no one knows*), their prices

are quite fabulous indeed (6,000 GS and up)! But few Bards who have heard the rare and beautiful music a Star produces can ever forget, nor can they not want to own one for themselves . . .

### CHOUAINE ("Wind Wings")

A sort of "vee shaped double harp" of a size a normal person could sit between (the "vee", that is). The 56 strings, 28 to a side, are the tendons from the wings of a Pegasus and the frame is most often carved ivory from the awfully rare red-tusked arctic whale. The "foot" or base must be of purest silver and the finger picks (eight plus two more for the thumbs) must be of mithril! The sound it produces is "like unto birds awing in glorious, singing flight" — "like butterflies and other aerial denizens all aflutter in songs of glee and joy". Mushy, eh? Well, tis the only way to describe its fantastic sound.

Though originally an Amazon creation, a few Elven versions now exist although no more than a dozen or so, all total, are believed to exist in all the world. And most of those are very ancient as no one now knows how to make one. Thus as much as 50,000 GS has been paid for one of these rare musical instruments.

### End Notes

The preceding were but a few of the more unique and odd musical instruments in the Arduinian mythos. Feel free to add your own versions as Arduin has room enough for all.

## Rare And Legendary Gems And Jewels

This section concerns some of the rarest of the Arduinian gems and jewels. Most have never been seen in more than three (3) examples, many only as single, one of a kind, gem stones. Most have legends accrued to them and monetary values all out of proportion to their actual physical value.

### (THE) BLUE CYRDOLXY

A brilliant, sky-blue gem about the size and shape of a man's thumb (from joint to tip). Slightly harder (+15%) than common diamond and about the same mass/weight, it is, however, extremely resistant to fire and heat. Legends say that even adamantium would melt in the "furnaces of the crydolyx's creation" — whatever that means. It was originally discovered in the southern coastal area of Viruelandia known as "The Coast of Crimson Skulls" by a shipwrecked pirate crew, some 1,600 years ago and has passed through many hands since that time. Though nicely polished, it remains uncut and irregular in shape. Aside from its being "one of a kind", there are many, undocumented, legends that speak of the gem "warning" its owner of "danger" somehow. Its last known purchase price was a handsome 18,500 GS but its whereabouts, these last 70 years, remains unknown.

### THE FOXFIRE TRIPLETS

Three (3) beautifully cut and faceted gems that, literally, "glow in the dark" with a "fiery orange" color. In daylight the walnut-sized stones are a ruby red color. The legends give each stone the brightness of "a large beeswax taper" and a warmth commensurate to that. First "mentioned" some 3,900 years ago in an alchemical text, the trio are supposedly usable (only) by "Dwarven Kings" in some secret and powerful manner. Many dwarves have tried to acquire these gems in the past but all have failed for one reason or another. Worth 15,000 GS apiece, all three together would bring (easily) 70,000 GS or more from "collectors". What the dwarven kings would pay (or do to get them) is anyone's guess.

## GHOZER'S EYE

An incredibly ancient (*at least 100,000 years old!*) gem about the size of a large grapefruit, it is considerably harder (+30%) than black diamond and has a bright "lemon yellow" color except for the center, which "glows" with a red like "dawn at sea". It weighs an incredible twenty-one (*21!*) pounds, is a nearly perfect sphere polished "smooth and glossy". And, oddly, it "vibrates" faintly at all times — how and why, no one knows. The legends say it was "The Eye of Ghozer" (*a long-forgotten goddess*) and also speak of other, strange powers and odd happenings relating to this gem. It last sold for 250,000 GS some 600 years ago but "disappeared" during an earthquake in Ithalos some 80 years ago. Where is it now?

## (THE) GREENLINGS

This pair of "sea green" gems (*with gold flecks suspended throughout their finely cut\* and faceted\* shapes*) first appeared 400 years ago, found by a party of "adventurers" in an old temple's ruins somewhere in the dread jungles of Green Hell. One is about the size of a (*whole*) man's big toe, the other approximately two thirds that. Because they are as "soft" as a pearl, there is strong suspicion that these two "gems" may, actually, be organic (!) instead of mineral in nature. But what is known as the real "truth" concerning them is this: when in direct, bare skin, contact it is virtually impossible (99.9%) for said person to become ill or sick. Not sea-sickness, the common cold, nor even such horrors as the "Black Plague" seem to bother the owner/"wearer". Last in the possession of the Elven Prince Sorquanohr Shadowbranch (*who paid 21,000 GS for them*), they were, however, *stolen* from him about 40 years ago. Their current location is unknown.

\* How these soft items were so meticulously cut and faceted is unknown but it was a truly masterful job! They're beautiful!

## (THE) YABANDERSTONE

A unique, "one of a kind", diamond which is composed of equal parts of: red, blue, yellow, green, black and white diamond segments. Each is, in some way, seamlessly fused/joined together with the others in such a manner as to appear to be one, single-solid stone! This arcane creation is cut with "ten thousand facets" and is one of the most beautiful jewels in all the known world. Of a size equal to "a large man's fist", its origins are shrouded in mystery and conjecture. Legend has it that the god-like magician, Phandelume, created it more than a million years ago, but for no recorded reason. Whatever, it has figured in hundreds of stories and legends for several hundred thousand years. The primary legend says it has "the power to mesmerize any and all dragons/dragonkind." There is considerable evidence to support this. The last price paid for it was some 780,000 GS by a forgotten Prince of some "small Eastern Satrapy". Since then (*about 16,000 years!*) it has passed from legend to legend by theft, murder and arcanelly mysterious circumstances. Where it now may be is open to conjecture but, so says one legend, "a dragon took the stone into his great horde". All some 450-500 years ago and, again according to that one legend, "somewhere in the high reaches of the Mountains of Madness".

## PAMALON'S EYE

A single, cantaloupe-sized gem of a golden yellow color and "harder than adamantium", Pamalon's Eye was first noted as the "eye" in some minor godling's idol in a long-forgotten (*and buried*) altar room. This room was raided some 1,400 years ago by a band of dwarves exploring the infamous Starfang Mountain of fable and legend. Just as that entire discovering party were all "doomed" and lost soon after, so too has every owner(s) since then been beset by all manner of calamity, death and destruction. Murder and mayhem follow this "evil eye" as surely as night follows day. Still, many lust after its great beauty and, legendary, power as a "conjure crystal of a range, clarity and ability second to none ever known". It is also believed that it can be used to "see into time: past, present (*in other 'realities'*) and future." The last amount paid for this haunted jewel was an awesome 986,500 GS by the half-elf Sage Khomer of Merkhaz, some 140 years ago. Unfortunately he was "hideously slain, mysteriously and within his own locked vaults" a month after acquiring it. The jewel disappeared at that time and has not been noted since . . . .

**(THE) CRUEXALON**

A "plus" shaped (+) stone of some steel-hard, violet-blue substance 13" arm to arm and weighing 13 lbs, the Cruexalon was first discovered entangled in a fisherman's net off the Dreaming Isles some 110 years ago. It has had a chequered history since then. Apparently (*there is no documentation*), it has the power to "hold any demonic being regardless of kind or power, in immobile impotence"! No demon, so the reports go, can resist its touch, and all seem to be "very adverse" to even approaching it very closely (*i.e. to within about a 13' radius of it*).

Not really a "jewel" but more jade-like in appearance — it is, none-the-less, included here because it has commanded as much as 250,000 GS when sold! But be warned! Most who have owned it have, indeed, met their ends at the "hands" of some demon or other.

The Stone was last known to be in the possession of the High Mage of Tharkalla but, as that was 11 years ago and he is still alive — well, most figure he no longer has it. After all none have survived its acquisition by more than 3 years before . . . .

**(THE) ORACLE'S ORBS**

This pair of perfectly-matched, walnut-sized black diamonds were "the orbs of the Great Oracle of Arduin". First heard of a short 13 years ago as "receptacles of potent arcane power", they were only recently reported stolen by the infamous thief, "Mad Michellene of Napona" after she cold-bloodedly murdered their owner (*by stabbing him repeatedly through the heart*). Where she, and they, are now is unknown.

Their value and powers are not certain as yet but most likely are quite high (*for both*).

**Old Legends Of Arduin**

This chapter tells a little about some of Arduin's old, legendary "boogie men" or "night-time horrors". None today can gainsay their veracity or their reality and yet none can prove they actually happened/existed either. Just as well, for some things are best left unknown . . . .

**SHAGALU (THE SLUG MOTHER)**

Supposedly a witch who reneged on a deal with one of the greater demon lords, As punishment she was turned half-way into a giant, slime-coated slug. She is supposed to still be creeping about near Vorhnyas looking for "pretty boys" to father her hideous slug-children. Oh, she devours her lovers after the act of connubial "bliss". Supposedly she has hypnotic powers that enable her to appear as a beautiful woman to her chosen "husband of the night". Yukka . . .

**JONKHOR THE HEADLESS**

This is reputedly the "restless spirit" of one Jonkhor of Nythaarna who was betrayed by his wife and beheaded in his sleep by her lover. He is now supposed to roam the back alleyways of that city each night of high solstice or equinox in search of his head. It is further said that "seeing" a "loving couple" together infuriates him so much that he rushes upon them and "tears their heads from their bodies and flings them into limbo!". Red-headed women in particular seem to "set him off".

**QUABBAH-QUABBAH!**

Little is known of the "thing" except the odd sound it makes (*see title*) and the fact that, whenever it is heard, people disappear forever. A legend peculiar to the under-mountain dwarf-holds in the rocky Mickleback Mountains, it is nonetheless fairly well known Arduin-wide. It is considered a "thing" as a distorted, misshapen "shadow" has occasionally been connected with this terror. Many a doughty dwarf has vanished to the mournful bellow of: "Quabbah! Quabbah!"

### THE BURNING WOMAN

This eerie legend comes from "The Quarries" area and concerns the ghostly apparition of a woman of great beauty whose entire left side is wreathed in brilliant crimson flames. Her pitiful wails and screams can be heard at times (*it is said*) for miles. She reputedly appears only prior to someone's death so seems to fulfill much the same function as the Beansidhe (*Banshee*) does on our own world.

### THE GREAT T'CHOON

This ancient legend speaks of a huge frog-headed man (*or ogre*) some 10' tall or so. He was (*is?*) the "terror" of the swampy area in Arduin called "The Creep". Those it "takes" are said to have "gone to see the frog" and are, of course, never seen again.

No official investigation has ever found the thing, nor any real evidence of its existence. Yet the peasants know he is "in there someplace" and travelers along the king's road (*which passes by its "lair"*) do tend to disappear from time to time.

### The Old Gods

#### *Not Really Gone, And Not Really Forgotten*

Essentially this is a section listing, briefly, some of the "older" deities and beliefs from the Arduinian Mythos. Most would, more properly, fit into the demigod category as they are (*generally*) quite a bit lesser in power than the majority of the deities extant today but, even so they are more potent than any Demon Lord and still wield considerable power. Though little worshiped nowadays, all still have followings of devout worshipers in little cult enclaves, here and there, in the odd nooks and crannies of the world.

Each "pantheon" is, in general, indigenous to a particular continent and time/age, so will be presented in that manner.

### The Old Gods Of Continent Five

#### PHAORDION (*The Star Lion*)

The "Overlord" of the 5th Continent's pantheon of deities, the "FatherGod" ruled by wielding the "Power of the Stars" and is described as a 60' tall man-like humanoid with golden mane and fur; a lion's head and tail; claws and fangs "of sparkling adamantium" and "eyes of Star Flame". Quite an imposing figure. He is occasionally referred to as "The Lawgiver" but is most remembered for his terrible roar whose very vibration, it is said, could "sunder the very stars in the heavens, into tiny fragments." Finally, in the later, end times of his "glory days" he also assumed the role of patron deity of all felines and cat folk. It is the latter who still, by and large, worship him.

#### SHADAZZRA (*The Golden Light*)

Wife and co-ruler of/with Phoardian, and "keeper of the life force of all", she is described as being 55' tall and wreathed in a golden radiance "too bright for mortals to bear". Her beauty and wisdom are her "legendary attributes" as is her fondness of/kindness towards all children. "Lawful Good" in the truest sense, she was said to be able to "focus" her radiant life-force and "cast it across the heavens" in a bolt that "nothing of evil may endure against". Healers and some Druidical types still revere and pray to her as she remains a "mighty force for good".

**JURAKK** (*The Demon Horse*)

The patron deity of all centaurs and equines and for many of the nomadic "horse peoples" over the eons, it is noted that only Shadazzrha could ever "tame his wild heart" and ride him. Jurakk is described as a coal black "horse" with a "breath of Flame" and hooves of "sparkling silver", whose "fiery blue eyes" could freeze any adversary into solid ice with but a single glance. 120' long (and proportionate), this huge equine's most notable feature is its total, unremitting hatred of all humanoids (save for Shadazzrha). It is truly "free-spirited" and the embodiment of all that is "chaotic" in the Multiverse. Many centaur clans still worship the "Demon Horse".

**ZOZEKK** (*The Emerald Architect*)

A huge scarab-type beetle some 118' long by 35' wide and, seemingly, consisting of beautiful, translucent "living emerald", Zozeck is the Patron Deity of all architects, builders, miners and others of similar talent. Zozeck is the epitome of "True Law" and scientific knowledge and, though "cold and emotionless" itself, still has many fervent and loyal followers — particularly in certain dwarven areas.

**PYGAHR** (*The Fallen One*)

An exceedingly "beautiful" humanoid of hermaphroditic gender(s); with silky blonde and ringletted hair; dazzling sapphire-blue eyes; rosy complected cheeks and a pair of white feathered "angel's wings" upon his/her upper back/shoulders. However, looks are deceptive as he/she is all that is corrupt, vile and evil! Amorality is the creed not only of this deity but of its fanatical devotees (who are still numerous in certain dark corners of the world). He/she lusts for Shadazzrha with a desire so strong as to be "unholy". She in return loathes and despises Pygahr. Thus he/she has sworn to "slay Phoardion and take Shadazzrha as my own!" Phoardion just ignores the sleazy deity (which enrages Pygahr even more). "The Corruptor" (as Pygahr is also known) also loves to slyly trick young children into vile and degrading situations and into "doing evil". This is definitely not one of the "nice ones".

Finally, The Fallen One is noted for the ability to "engender lust and frenzy" in unsuspecting people and to "cause those, caught unwary and

armed, to become debauched, depraved maniacs bent only upon self-gratification." The thief "Mad Michellene of Napona" is one of his/her more (in)famous followers.

**HODARK** (*The Destroyer*)

Essentially the "bringer of death" of this pantheon; lord of the "netherworld" and "ruler of all dead souls", Hodark is described as a skeletal humanoid "eternally wrapped in the black mists of despair". Thankfully these mists usually conceal its hideous visage. The 60' tall deity wields a 40' "bar of ebon entropy" which, legends say, "can slay even the gods themselves." However, this utterly "neutral" god can never "take those whose fates have yet to come unbound" (i.e. not before "their time"). Little else can be told of this grim deity save that, even now, a few followers still chant his name during night's darkest hour . . . somewhere in the world.

**YRGZZA** (*The Tentacled One*)

Yrgzza is an evil deity of obscure origins, aims and description — save for its "writhing ropes of inky black, its tentacles of terror, which none may escape once enmeshed within their coils". In all "matters of evil and darkness", this god will always intervene if given any chance to do so . . . and always to aid evil. The worshipers of this horror, those of whom the god particularly approves anyway, tend to be matched away by those tentacles of "radiant darkness" and, it is guessed, devoured. Some reward for faithful service to a deity! Still, there are some who even now play the mad tunes upon silver pipes and dance the old way in worship of this deadly god.

**WINGALON** (*The Demon Wind*)

The formless deity of the "winds of the world", controller of the very air, conjurer of rain and storm, sender of cyclone and hail, Wingalon is, in short, "The Wind" itself. Most dawntime "berserkers" followed this god as it epitomizes pure, chaotic fury as well as ordered calm and serenity and some barbarians still do. And, though many are they who consider(ed) this god "evil", if the truth be known, simply "childlike and unpredictable" would be truer to the mark. Just as are its remaining followers.



**MOLODAHR** (*The Demon Troll*)

Originally a sort of "secondary war-god" and patron deity of Troll/Orc-kind, later many of the Goblin races would also follow the bloody path of worship this god requires. Some 48' tall and generally humanoid in shape, it is nonetheless a thing "all claws and fangs, scaled hide and scorpion stingered tail." Its huge "bat wing-like" ears, "smouldering scarlet eyes" and mismiac stench are also well known traits of this truly evil entity. Even today, in remote caves and dank swamp-bound temples the loathsome visage of this god's likeness may be found along with vile and dangerous worshipers. Truly ugly stuff.

**SINDRA** (*The Dark Dancer*)

The amoral goddess of lust, debauchery and "all delights, sensual and perverted", Sindra is also the goddess of sleep and dreams. In later years some would even form a bizarre fertility cult based on her worship! Though able to assume any guise of flesh desired, from 6" to 60' tall, from male to female and all "between", this deity most often appears as a voluptuous naked woman of dusky hue with silky black hair falling to her ankles (*long hair!*). She is the paramour (*lover!*) of Rhaum (*see next entry*) and the only deity who can safely approach him. Her kiss is said to "take away or to give life at her whim and fancy". She is definitely not a "nice lady" and very chaotic in her ways but she certainly keeps her followers "happy"!

**RHAUM** (*God Stalker — God Slayer*)

A "lawful evil" deity, probably mad, who spends eternity hunting down and trying to kill (*with occasional success*) other gods! He is usually seen only as an 80' tall "armoured humanoid with four (4) arms and four (4) eyes all set equidistant about his torso/head". He is most often described astride his companion, Akigon, the "Death Horse" (*see next entry*). Most theologians consider this god to be totally insane, totally destructive and, perhaps, the most dangerous of all in this old pantheon. Certainly he has been known, in the past, to "lay waste whole regions and flatten entire cities" simply to vent his pent-up rage.

**AKIGON** (*The Death Horse*)

Although not technically a "god", Akigon is so closely linked to Rhaum that it must be considered as part of the pantheon. Akigon is described as a huge (280' long) equine creature with six (6) legs, three (3) eyes and a hide of "iron". Its dragon-like teeth, ruby red cloven hooves, pupil-less eyes of "dead white" and its ability to breathe streamers of crimson fire are also trademarks of this probably Demonic (*Greater?*) creature. A few legends also tell of it "spitting acid and exhaling noxious and poisonous fumes." Only semi-sentient, it is nonetheless extremely cunning, thoroughly evil and totally chaotic in thought, word and deed. As a last note, it is known that it savors the raw flesh of "elven kind" above all other "food" and will go to great lengths to obtain it.

**AZYNYLNX** (*The Scribe of Fate*)

The epitome of fate, karma, destiny, etc in/of/by/for the old pantheon, Azynlynx is said to be "the writer of all men's lives" and the keeper of "The Tome Of All Time". Generally considered "truly lawful", this once very popular deity is described as a normal-sized human male of "ancient mein", all dressed in robes of formless grey. He also carries the (*rainbow*) diamond-tipped "Quill Of What Is To Be" and is prone to write, upon proper request, individual "Scrolls Of One Man's Destiny" and, as all knew, whatever he wrote, always came to pass. Rhaum hates this deity most of all but for no discernable reason. At any rate many followers still abide by Azynlynx's simple rituals in those far away places one never travels to.

## The Old Gods Of Continent Three

### BHAR-KANIS (Aka: Heaven Hound or Star Wolf)

Bhar-Kanis is the "True Neutral" god of all canine and lupine creatures/folk (*all were-wolves and other similar kind also worship him*)\*. Once a very major deity worldwide, Bhar-Kanis is now relegated to a pitiful few rag-tag cults in dreary, out of the way spots. Described as a 40' (or more) tall humanoid with a wolf's head, lightly furred (grey) body and two emerald green eyes that "blazed like miniature suns", occasionally Bar-Kanis appears as a 33' long (not including tail) wolf of silvery-grey hue and with those same, radiant, eyes. In both shapes the legends tell of those eyes emitting "bursts of emerald green light, veritable small stars" which were capable of "leveling mountains or incinerating whole cities." He is the arch-enemy of the feline Gods Baast and B'Rah-Haar (*see next entry*) and will to out of his way to "make mischief" for them and theirs. About the only places, oddly enough, where one can still encounter this religion in significant ways is along the eastern coast of the Fourth continent. Odd....

\* The Demon lord Tyl-Raen is the "left hand of the Wolf God" (*see Arduin, Bloody Arduin*).

### B'RAH-HAAR (Aka: The Lion of the Skies)

A "young" deity (as deities go), the "Lord of Lions and Felines" is very similar to the Fifth continent's Phoardion in most ways. Described as either a 60' long, golden-furred Lion with "eagle's" wings and as a 50' tall, lion-headed humanoid, both shapes have "flaming eyes" and are able to command/control vast quantities of fire etc. He also breathes fire (*like a dragon*), emits "heat rays" from his eyes and can "envelope himself in raging fires" at will. In one legend he "turned a huge forest to ashes in an eye-blink" and, in another, "turned night into day with his fiery presence". His relationship with Baast, while none too clear, seems to be fairly "friendly" but many problems have arisen because of the two deities' similarities — problems amongst the priests and followers at any rate. Still, they (and he) are strongly "of law". Fairly strong in the Third Continent's southern areas, a few Khorellian space-farers have also been noted as recent converts (*they liked the wings!*).



## SUNSAGORA

(Aka: Dune Singer, Morning Glory, The Lady of the Sands, etc)

Though few in actual numbers, the followers of this once quite popular female deity are to be found worldwide. Most any place there's sand (*preferably a desert*), you'll probably find an enclave of her followers. This "Lawful Evil" cult is believed to be an "import" from another multiverse and is fairly "recent" as far as the "ancient gods" go — arriving/appearing near the end of the olden days of glory for this pantheon.

Sunsagora is described as a 33' tall female of "desert blossom beauty" and "full of the radiance of the morning" — whatever that means. Supposedly "cloaked in light and fire" and with the very air around her "dancing" with heat-induced mirages, she isn't all that easy to get a clear look at. Hot too (400°F or more)! Her primary "weapon" seems to be her ability to, literally, draw all the moisture out of any area, object, or person by either touch, glance or gesture. Reputedly she once turned "a whole village into desiccated, dried up, dead mummies" in the blink of an eye and at over a mile range... just because they'd stoned one (1) of her priestesses! Another legend tells of her "drawing the water of life" out of one of her enemies over a very painful eight day long period. Vicious lady....

Her followers (85% *female*) have a nasty habit of waylaying travelers (*preferably male*, which they castrate), then burning them. Needless to say, the cult is usually banned in most places. Still, some of the smaller island "city states" in the Ceruellean Sea allow her open worship but those piratical folks have a reputation of fey and unnatural behavior anyway.

TAMARETH (Aka: Dark Dreamer, Dream Snake, Dark Lady, etc)

The goddess of "dreams and nightmares" and "empress of the lands of sleep", Tamareth is described as a "generally female" shape, enshrouded in a sheath of kaleidoscopic colors, intermixed with writhing shadows of utmost ebon. Phew! About 35' tall, "she" can (*at will*) appear in/as any shape from darkest nightmare to sweetest dream but her favorite is of a "vasty serpent, all the colors of the rainbow, save for the enshadowed and hidden, head". Reputedly it is 300' long and capable of "crushing all things it can encompass/enwrap". All her forms are also able to emit (*from mouth, eyes, hands, etc*) "streamers of kaleidoscopically colored energy". This energy is, apparently, of a

"positive" nature and able to: heal wounds, raise the slain, repair broken stone (*mend torn metal*) and so on. Or she can emit "writhing streamers of nightmare and shadow force" which can burst castles (*and mountains*) asunder, turn the largest ship to splinters, bind/crush/trap and hold as she wishes. It is, obviously, a "negative" force.

In the "realm of dreams" there is *nothing* she cannot accomplish, nothing she cannot do if she so wills it. Nothing....

Though the main force of this religion died when the Great Circle Mages were shattered/obliterated in the great war of "the heavens against the earth", there are still a few (*widely scattered*) enclaves remaining. In fact, in the last 400 years or so it has been making somewhat of a (*modest*) "comeback" and may continue to do so in the future. Common in the northwestern and western coastal areas of the Third continent, it has, recently, also become the state (*official*) religion in the Dreaming Isles. As an aside, the mysterious and legendary Tamra Shadowfire, holder of Shadowguard Keep, is reputedly a "child" of this deity! Finally, she is considered to be "two faced" — i.e. both "chaotic" and "lawful"!

GORBRAGNA (Aka: The Eater of Hearts)

Gorbragna is an Orc deity, the most often invoked (*by their kind*) and still quite strong worldwide — unlike most other of the "Old Gods". It is the "father God" of the Orc-believers' pantheon (*and there are a bewildering array of them!*), described as a 40' tall, 8-armed humanoid of foul and gruesome appearance and all accoutered in brazen armour. It normally wields spiked maul, axe, greatsword, 8-headed flail, round shields (two), and two javelins — all of iron of an odd reddish hue. Crackling yellow flames (*and grey-green smoke*) blaze forth from the star-shaped (5-pointed) view slits of his octagonal silver helm and "the very grass withers and dies under his steel spiked feet". Even bare ground is left "charred and smoking" by his footsteps but whether this is a function of acid or heat (*or both*) isn't clear. Nasty!

This "Amoral Evil" deity has the ability to "cause his weapons to glow with a horrific yellow-green ambience and all who are touched by them die as blackened cinders and crumbled ashes!"

Purportedly a "mad God" who has fought on/for both sides (*i.e. good and evil*) during the terrible "God Wars", Gorbragna is thus not trusted by any other of the gods of this pantheon. Irrational, continually angry and ever-hungry for blood sacrifice describe him

perfectly but, remember, this is a powerful religion among Orc-kind and thus the followers wield considerable political "clout" in some areas of the world. Still the most worshipped of the "Old Gods".

**AZAERAWA** (Aka: Love Goddess, Queen of Lust, Amoranna, etc)

Sort of like the Fifth continent's Sindra, this "goddess" too is one who personifies lust, abandon, perversion, carnal pleasures and other such "related" things and is described as a "stunningly beautiful female (*choice of race*) of such fantastic form, grace, and, and, and ..." You get the idea — everyman's ideal — but, to women, "she" is a he — "stunningly handsome, incredibly endowed" and so on and so forth. "To each, as each desires" is the main prayer of/to this deity and so "beautiful" is the deity that "whole cities, entire armies have gone berserk with abandonment and lustful insanity" simply by being in his/her presence! Pheromones or something ....

She also wields "awesome rune magiks and blackest illusion" to get her way ... which is usually the seduction/corruption of "some pure soul". There is strong evidence that the offspring of such unions (*with mortals*) result in the "birthing" of incubi/succubi! Evil is as evil does they say. Though the main bastion of this religion is the Third continent, the still popular cult has many converts worldwide (*in particular the Rainbow Isles and Arduin*) and the orgasmic "services" are very handy in keeping the "faithful", faithful. Fun and games ...

**SKONCHUNE'** (Aka: Moonfather, The Glory)

According to many legends this "Moon God" is the progenitor of the currently popular Silver Moon Goddess (*Arduin's main religion*). It is not doubted he was the first "moon god" of record, going back to Kthoi times and is arguably the oldest known deity/religion in the world — the original "lawgiver"! He is described as a 50' tall, "impossibly thin" (*male*) humanoid with chalk-white complexion, silver (*pupil-less*) eyes and bald pate. He most often appears wearing a cowed and flowing robe of "spun moonbeams" and holding a crescent moon-shaped lantern "upon a chain of stars". Occasionally he pops up as a vari-heighted (*13' to 3 miles!*) column of "scintillating moonlight". This column, 7' to 3,000' in diameter, is so cold (*absolute zero actually*) that all encompassed by it are immediately frozen solid! From the grass (*and ground*) to complete cities. Instant freeze! He can

also emit rays/beams of this same "cold moonlight" from his eyes and hands.

With very few followers now, and only one (1) operating temple (*in Arduin*) still going, the religion seems destined to die out someday soon. It has "outlived" the sinking of the fabled Sixth continent (*where it originated and was strongest*) and now just "drifts towards history ..."

**WALKUREEN** (Aka: The War Witch)

One of the very few female "War Gods" and one still strong amongst the non-civilized "barbarian Amazon" clans of the northern wastes, she is described as a 35'-tall female humanoid in black iron scale armor with a 12'-tall oval adamantium(!) shield called "Bar". She wields three (3) weapons: a 40' spear of ash and iron called "Snake"; a greatsword with a 9 3/4'-long black mithril blade called "Scorpion"; and a glittering silver (*oak-hafted*) spike-headed maul called "Breaker". An eldritch purple glow emanates from the cross-shaped vision slits of her helm which is shaped like a 12-sided die. None have ever seen her face. Not mortal nor fellow god(ess). Legends give her the ability to "wield thunder and lightning" as weapons and the ability to cause "winter-hail strong enough to batter an army flat" to erupt from the dies about her. The lightning is, in legend, "strong enough to shatter the moon, hot enough to fry a hundred dragons before they can flee." Now that's some firepower! Other than the barbarian Amazons, few still follow this "True Neutral" War Goddess, save for a small handful on one mountain top in the dreaded Mountains of Madness.

## The Noble Families Of Arduin

In response to requests too numerous to count (*for more in-depth background information about Arduin, its people, politics, etc.*), herewith is a sampling of some of the better-known "Noble Houses" currently active in Arduin.

### THE HOUSE OF THE STORM CROW

Headed by Duke Peotyr (*age 70*) and Duchess Madrina (*age 71*), the family Druskalla has indeed become a power in the land. They are staunch supporters of the current Elven ruler, Lord Elric of Dragon Tower, and were instrumental in providing him troops to aid in the overthrow of the demented Royal House of Margalen, a few years ago.

This human house (*Druskalla*) is one of the oldest landed noble families in Arduin, tracing their roots back some 920 years or so. They have three children: the Baronet Micah (*age 64*); Lady Kadrina (*age 62*) who is married into the House of the Rising Star (*see later entry*) and Baronet Lareth (*age 59*) who is married to Beordigal, the oldest daughter of the House of the Black Lillies' (*see later entry*). Micah's wife, the Lady Sedwina (*age 61*) is from The House of the Grey Roses, a major power in the land of Ithalos. The main holt of this family is in the city of Vorlnyaas but they have a summer residence in the small town of Pearlhouse as well. Their many grandchildren are very active in both the military and politics of Arduin.

### THE HOUSE OF THE SILVER MOUNTAIN

Headed by Duke Orodardigan (*age 69*) and Duchess Yasmyndahl (*age 56*), the family of Kozohra is probably the second most powerful human house in Arduin (*after The House of the Storm Crow*). They were very strong supporters of The Margalen Royal House for decades, however, and during the "great cleansing" they held neutral when presented with overwhelming evidence of that king's involvement with the Dark Gods and human sacrifice. They lost much political clout in their unflinching support of that king up until the last instant as they were themselves thus under suspicion of "evil doings". Still in the few years since that time, they have worked steadily to make their political come-back. The old Duke and Duchess of the House still live though retired and in infirm health. They are: Dardigan (*age 95*) and Helja

(*age 92*), an Amazon from the Misty Isles (*formerly named Helja-La*). Their other six children still live and are: Duchess Fajia (*age 76*) who is married to Duke Ponen of Ghorfar; Lady Peridonna (*age 71*), the wife of the famous Morvaenian general: Hurtog and Orocadigan's twin sister the dowager Baroness Dardijia (*age 69*). They have many grandchildren, many of whom are active in trade, politics and military matters. Their primary residence is in Talismonde', with a summer villa in Leiberton.

### THE HOUSE OF THE BURNING ROSE

The most powerful elven house in Arduin (*next to the King's*) is headed by Duke Alwyn Starhammer (*age 356*) and Duchess Khorynda (*age 351*). They have two children: Baron Maldrado (*age 129*), a Senior Captain in the King's Royal Guard and Baroness Tara (*age 129*), still single. She too is in the Arduinian military but as a Senior Lieutenant in the Alchemical Corps. This house is one instrumental in bringing the majority of the elves in Arduin over to Elric's cause.

For this and for their emity towards the elven traitor Jothar (*of The House of the Rising Sun*), they have waxed powerful in the land. Many feel too powerful ... Their main residence is in Mistwood, with their "main offices and town residence" in the city of Melkalund.

### THE HOUSE OF THE BREAKING WAVE

This transplanted Amazon house is an oddity, even for Arduin, as it maintains all of the cultural idiosyncrasies relevant to their race. Its head is the Duchess Hari-La Swiftsword (*age 47*) who has three (3) "Ducal Consorts"! They are Padowyn, a human (*age 45*); Dolbi, a half-elf (*half-human*) of uncertain age (*and lineage*) and Chorge' another human (*age 31*). She has five children by these consorts, all legal heirs. They are: Soru-La (*age 12*); Kimu-La (*age 10*); Xala-La (*age 9*) and the twins Daro and Kwed (*ages 6*). These last two are males and ordinarily they would not be heirs. However as a concession to Arduinian law, they are heirs though last in line after their older sisters. Hari-La is an old traveling/battle companion of the current King (*Elric*) and is thus more of a "power" in the eland than her house's size and wealth would ordinarily warrant. Trade, especially with the Amazon lands, is the primary concern of this ducal house, consequently they have a residence in Charpa (*a port in the Misty Isles*) as well as in the city of Melkalund. It is rumoured that this



house was one of Lord Elric's primary clandestine sources of funds for many years.

### THE HOUSE OF THE GOLDEN LION

This ducal house has had many ups and downs in the past 40 years, mainly due to its unswerving loyalty to the crown through the Mad Queen's Uprising and the Fall of the House of Margalen but their loyalty was honor-based and due to love of Arduin, so Lord Elric has allowed them their rank and privileges, unstained and unreduced. Still their power is, apparently, on the wane at this time. Their main residence is in Nythaarna but is in sore need of repair (*the Margalen episode caused it to be stormed and burned out a few years back*). So they "make do" in their summer villa just outside Wachtown. Duke Mardonix (age 62) and Duchess Yoshi (age 50) rule the Korohnel family and house. The aged (*and very infirm*) former Duke Cardrigr (age 85) still lives in the family's main estate in retirement. His other children: Baroness Sorinda (age 60), wife of the head of The Baronial House of the Red Dragon (*see later entry*); Kherwyn (age 58), a senior captain in the border guard; Rahm (age 54), a senior captain in the Arduinian Aerial Guards and Kai (age 51), a priest in the service of the Lady of the Silver Moon Goddess are all politically active (as are many of their children). The future of this House is not yet clear.

### Handed Baronies

#### THE HOUSE OF THE BLACK LILY

Famous for its many magicians, The House of the Black Lily is a leading human supporter of the Elven cause in Arduin and is located in Khurahaen. Headed by Baron Tagge (age 75). Of the ancient La-Loren blood line, they are best known for their archers.

#### THE HOUSE OF THE RED DRAGON

Baron Valdemahr (age 44) is the head of this Talismonde'-based house which is famous for its military leaders/officers. Of the Kuzos bloodline, they are a renown family of horsebreeders.

### THE HOUSE OF THE CRESCENT MOON

The young widow, Baroness Wilhelyra (age 28), of the Thaendahr line, runs this primarily trade-oriented house headquartered in Easterly. She has four young children: Pami (age 10) and Tweena (age 7), both girls, and Zwaldo (age 6) and Khurt (age 4), both boys. Court gossip has her "head-hunting" for a suitable father for her children but as she is known to be a strong-willed and acid-tongued (*though handsome*) woman, there are few interested enough to really "get serious". As she lost her husband, the Baron Gwillam, under mysterious circumstances (*connected with the deposed Margalen family*) there is also much suspicion that this is one noble house that may not be long in existence.

### THE HOUSE OF THE STAR BEAR

Baron Thaddarq (age 40) rules this odd house which, by the by, is mainly made up of half-hobbits/half-humans, fleshy warriors all! Headquartered in Hillhaven, they are known for a particularly doughty breed of pony (*eminently war-trainable*) as well as their war dogs. Their people fill a definite niche in Arduin's border patrols and the ancient bloodline of Havonde' always will...

### THE HOUSE OF THE GOLDEN GAUNTLET

A human baronial house located in High Bridge, it is well known for its warriors (*usually individuals — not military types*). It is headed by Baron Tarzule Vondragon (age 44) who is, himself, somewhat of a legend in Arduin because of his "mechanical" metal left arm/hand, all gilded in 24 carat gold! He's also (in)famous as a "ladies' man".

### THE HOUSE OF THE CROWN OF THORNS

A powerful but highly unpopular baronial house located in the city of Talismonde' as they are "Christian" and very vocal about their religion. Baron Landruh Yaboe (age 48) and his two sons Pohl (age 24) and Jahk (age 21) are all Paladins of this particular faith. Though loyal and true Arduinians, their heavy-handed proselytizing and general arrogance have made them numerous enemies — perhaps too many for them to survive. Still, they breed mighty destriers, much prized by all.



### THE HOUSE OF THE BLACK SUN

Baron Bardolyn Bardalla (*age 46*) heads this human house based in Athelton. It is renowned for its many Masters of Illusion as well as for its beautiful women-folk (*tall, ebony-complected and lithe of build*). It is powerful due to its political connections in the College of Magik.

### THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN ARROWS

Another human house, this one based in Rumbletown, is a "power" due to its leaders' personal friendship with the current king of Arduin. Baron Corwyn De Khorwythe (*age undetermined*) is an old battle/traveling companion of Lord Elric and is, so the legend goes, the one who taught the King how to "Hell-Ride".

### THE HOUSE OF THE SILVER SWORD

Baron Khade-Kahde (*age 68*) rules this half-elfen/half-human house with a well-known "iron fist". He, as were all his forebearers, is a reserve general (*and a good one, too*) in Arduin's military forces. During Elric's taking of the throne, the Baron marched his household troops from Lowbridge (*his home*) to Melkalund to take command of that huge city's garrison and to then declare himself (*and them*) for Lord Elric. The new king has not forgotten.

### Major/Important Landed Siege Lords

**Castle Karrig**, commanded by Sir John Iron Hand, a human.

**Red Tower**, commanded by Lady Norynna Rose-Hair, a half-elf/half-Amazon magician of major power (*and friendship to the King*).

**Gadrungar Keep**, commanded by Sir Arthur Gundragar IV, a human. Also known for its really good ale brewery.

**The Castle In The Clouds**, commanded by Sir Daodorin Fairhair, a sylvan elf, formerly an active forester and companion of Lord Elric.

**Thunder Keep**, commanded by Sir Wedgerond Swiftsword, a half-elf/half-human. Also famous for its halberdiers.

**The Castle Of A Thousand Tears**, commanded by Sir Tahr Zarkos, also known as "The Mighty", a renowned wrestler and boxer.

**The Tower Of Night**, commanded by Sir (also Admiral) Brandobus Wall-Breaker, a half-human / half-dwarf seaman of great renown.

**Mist Wall**, commanded by Sir Vanrax Silver Eye, a Deodanth with one mystik "eye" of some silvery colored substance. Another of Lord Elric's old battle/travel companions. Also called "The Torturer".

**Castle Mamalahr**, commanded by Sir Gorwade the Grim, a human Paladin of the War God Meaalon and a general in Arduin's military.

**Star Hole**, commanded by Sir Wilamuth Tanglefoot the semi-legendary Hobbitt Sky Sailor — another of Elric's old friends.

**Vord's Roost**, commanded by Sir Noel Roundabout, noted human explorer (*now semi-retired*) and known for its surrounding hedge-maze.

**Hammerhome**, commanded by Sir Miklos Wildwood, human Sage and dabbler in things horticultural. The "inventor" of red tangleberries.

**Darkspike**, commanded by (*thief*) Lord Kalyndyth Nightbird (*age 40*), a half-elf renowned in his Guild. Rumor has it that he provided Elric with a "hidey hole" as/when needed over the years.

These few are just a sampling of the many and varied Noble Houses of Arduin. Feel free to use them as templates for your own campaign.

## Super Heroes And Sword Swingers

With the great popularity of "Super Hero" RPGs, it was only a matter of time (*minutes probably!*) before somebody tried to cross over from one style of game to the other. Generally, from the myriads of comments I've heard, this resulted in chaos, problems, and in some cases, the total collapse of one campaign or another. Well! I can tell you that all the foofaraw was not necessary! We have used "cross-over characters" for years and have had no major glitches because of it. Here's how you too can do it, just follow these few simple guidelines:

- 1) Be sure the character ("Hero" or "Swordswinger") is not one of those already so powerful that they can (*and do!*) laugh at dragons (*or nuclear weapons*). The character should be of a reasonable power and have weaknesses — just like any other new (*i.e. beginning*) character.
- 2) There must be a rationale/reason for the character to have made the transition from one world to mythos to the other. And, once in the new world their primary concern should (*90% of the time*) be in "getting home!" As powerful as that magician might be, he'd hate a place like New York City! And that superhero would surely miss all the prerequisites of civilization (*i.e. TV, fast food, flush/indoor toilets*) while in some basically medieval world. They'd surely want to go home! Fast!
- 3) Play the "intruder" character just as he is: out of place (*and probably out of his/her "time"*); unable to speak the language; unaware of the custom(s); unable to eat that particular world's version of food and so on. In short: Culture Shock. This keeps them from becoming omnipotent destroyers of all adversaries.
- 4) Make them "ready beacons" to all who would desire to control their new powers/potential. After all, not only does "power attract power" hold true but so too the old axiom: "there's one born every minute"! Just think of Elmer the country bumpkin in the big city, flashing a wad of cash big enough to choke an ox and you'll get the picture.
- 5) Have a "safety valve" if necessary. That is, some sort of automatic "call back" of the character to their own time/mythos. If all else fails, send 'em packing! You can always try again with someone less hard to handle.

That's it. Short and sweet, and it works! Try it.

## Final Note

That's it for this time around, thanks for journeying to/through Ardain with me once more. We will await your return at the Great Gates upon the Plateau of Forever. Till next we meet, my friend, may whatever deity(s) you believe in protect and guide you and point you once again our way.

David A. Hargrave  
Talismonde;  
Ardaunit  
The year of The Dragon

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