

# Escalation 6!

THE 13TH AGE FANZINE | SPRING 2018

4

GIANTS IN  
THE EARTH

J. MICHAEL  
CYCLOPS  
BESTUL



# IMPERIAL DISPATCH



Art: Patricia Baker

From time to time, I'm reminded that I grew up playing not Dungeons & Dragons, but other role-playing games of the 1980s and '90s. For example, when putting together the latest issue of Escalation, the theme "Giants in the Earth" was announced and referred to occasionally. The article detailing the Cyclops seemed to fit, but I couldn't make a connection to the remaining articles. Thankfully, our ever-knowledgeable editor-in-chief filled me in. It turns out that "Giants in the Earth" is a call back to an old Dragon Magazine series. Sherm can do the topic better justice than I can, so be sure to

check out Back Matter at the end of the issue for further details.

What I loved about this exchange was that it served as a reminder of the different backgrounds 13th Age players bring to the hobby. I grew up on superhero and sci-fi RPGs and was forbidden from playing D&D, whereas I might be seated at a table with someone who played D&D going back to the three original digest-size books, and someone else who only recently discovered RPGs via live streaming. If you'll forgive the cliché, the 13th Age tapestry is richer thanks to the various, vibrant threads running through it.

And that's an appropriate reminder, given the contents of this issue. The topics are grandiose and diverse: an epic dwarven settlement, advice on using icons in your game, powerful magic items, NPCs associated with icons, cyclopes (which I only recently learned is the plural of "cyclops"), Demogorgon, and more. I'm excited to use several of these ideas in my games, and given how many submissions focused on the Prince of Shadows, I foresee his (her?) exploits featuring prominently in future sessions.

I hope this diversity can enrich your game, just as multi-generational players with manifold RPG experiences enhance the 13th Age community. 🎲

Gratefully yours,

Tim Baker

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ALWAYS HAVE A FEW EXTRA PLOT HOOKS .....4

by Seth Stuffer

CYCLOPS..... 7

by J. Michael Bestul

CONVERTING A 13TH AGE CHARACTER.....15

by Are Sørli

CREATURES OF THE EMPIRE:

GELATINOUS DRAGON ..... 22

by John Marvin

CHASM ..... 26

by Clark Olson-Smith

MAGIC ITEMS .....31

by Nelson

ICONIC FEATS ..... 34

by Martin Killmann

13 (CRAZY) OPTIONAL RULES..... 38

by José Luis F. “Tszimiscedracul” Cardoso

CHALLENGING THE STORY .....43

by Lawrence Augustine R. Mingoa

VOICES FROM THE OVERWORLD.....46

SHADOWS OF THE ABYSS .....47

by Nefthalie Nelson Ramos

ESPECIALLY PASTY ..... 50

by Mikhail Bonch-Osmolovskiy

DEMOGORGON ..... 53

by John Marvin



Art: Rick Hershey



# ALWAYS HAVE A FEW EXTRA PLOT HOOKS HIDDEN UP YOUR SLEEVE

BY SETH STAUFFER

**A**s a GM, one valuable piece of advice is always leave yourself an alternative ending. This kind of advance planning was something I had never considered when I first took up GMing. Initially, I thought it was just about knowing the rules inside and out so I never had to look anything up, and this proved to be remarkably false. However, one of the biggest obstacles I've continually faced as a GM is keeping a game running smoothly. At the game table, your PCs may completely derail your plans, but fear not—or at least not like I did the first time this happened to me. Unless you tell them, they won't know it! After this had happened to me a couple of times, I started keeping a little list of ideas I could throw into my stories just in case things didn't go as planned. I was pleasantly surprised to see that it worked, and even when a group of players threw off a game I had planned, I got them back on track by using smaller stories to redirect them back to the larger arc.

While none of this is specific to 13th Age, it is really important in 13th Age because the icon rolls, One Unique Thing, and player character backgrounds can drive a story in ways that no amount of GM planning can adequately prepare for. Imagine for a moment two characters share an icon, but have different relationships. Say two fighters are in the group, one with a positive relationship, and one with a conflicted relationship, and they both roll 6's or 5's on their icon rolls. Now what?

First, if the game takes an unexpected turn, planning out plots offers ways of keeping your players on their toes and engaged. Sometimes the players aren't interested in the material, or don't work their way through it the way you predicted. That's okay. If you design some unexpected events in the story just in case, then it keeps the players a bit off guard. Try having an extra reason problems need to be solved in your game. For example, a despot has taken over in the neighboring kingdom, and the new monarch's ascent is causing a ripple effect of problems. Investigating that could lead the players someplace interesting, and it allows you to develop the story in a way they might not have anticipated.

Second, coming up with twists in the plot is a way of trying to think ahead of the players. Bury the treasure in advance. They may find it or they may not, but it's there regardless. I'm not suggesting that you try to out-maneuver the players in some kind of mental exercise, rather just consider possibilities for how a story might unfold. Then, go back and come up with different outcomes. What would happen if the players lost a key battle and had to retreat? Would that change the story? If so, how? This might be a good place to have an additional storyline lying in wait. By doing this you can prepare yourself for those detours, and no one will know the difference.

Third, and finally, have you ever wondered how a series can endure for years and years? The writers are constantly trying to think up new ways of spinning out different aspects of a narrative to develop its complexity and depth. You should try this as well. In a the game world, everyone should have a reason to exist, even static NPCs.

By considering these things you create a collection of possible scenarios that you can add into your story as needed. Much like introducing readymade NPCs if you need a character to help move a story along, prepped story outlines can be extremely useful. Use these ideas to further your own stories. These suggestions could turn into the next great adventure! 🎲

Art: Pelgrane Press



# CYCLOPS

By J. MICHAEL BESTUL

# CYCLOPS

## ONCE-PROUD GIANTS SHACKLED TO A CHAINED SEA

BY J. MICHAEL BESTUL

### UNSPOKEN BRETHREN

**G**iants have no problem telling any listener, willing or otherwise, of the grandeur of their people — the “original people” of the world, as they like to remind you. Those non-giants who have been able to move amongst giants without being eaten, frozen, or turned into game pieces are a rare lot indeed. If you were among such lucky folk, you might notice that there one topic they don’t talk about very often. What about the cyclopes?

Great builders, the giants will tell you. Dedicated smiths or shepherds. “Why are there so few of them,” you might ask. Most giants will change the subject, mentioning that ask you why there are so few gnomes or why they never see those elves that supposedly live underground. Most historians would tell you to proceed carefully, as many research assistants have been lost to a giant pressed too far. But if you through enough bodies at the problem, you might get one giant to mutter something about “those poor sea-faring bastards.” Which sea? Well, even a giant with loose lips will clam up at that question, and it’s not a topic you want to press even you have a lot of expendable research assistants.

If you took a less direct approach, like sneaking into a storm giant library or a cloud giant repository (only recommended if your “research assistants” have certain skills), you might run across a history of the “sea giants.” Who are the sea giants, and what do they have to do with cyclopes? Possibly nothing, but likely everything.

### THE SEA GIANTS

Before the ascendancy of the Dragon Empire, the sea at the center of the Wizard King’s empire was known as the Stormmaker. It’s waters were tempestuous, and choosing a nautical career was only slightly less dangerous than teasing a terrasque. The one exception to this danger was a small coterie of giants who not only survived the Stormmaker’s deadly chaos, but could navigate the tumultuous tides as though they were placid waters. Rumor was that the ancestors of these “sea giants” made a pact



with the Stormmaker centuries prior, and received a blessing. This gift came in the form of a giant third eye, in the middle of their forehead, the iris of which was a roiling mix of story grays and shimmering blues. This sea eye supposedly allowed these giants to see the eddies and whorls of probability on the waves. Those sea giants with particular focus could even turn this eye upon the whims and magics of fate and determination.

The sea giants were a small but influential part of the pre-First Age world. They were shipwrights without equal, and their giant ships could be guaranteed to carry cargo across the Stormmaker without fail. At the height of the Wizard King's reign, the sea giant families and houses were amongst the most powerful and wealthy in the world. Giants of all stripes would secretly hope that one of their babies might be born with the "Stormmaker's Blessing," which would give them connection to the wealthy merchant houses of the sea giants.

These giants also were steadfastly neutral — they cared nothing for politics, only for coin. When the Wizard King was deposed, this neutrality seemed to serve the sea giants well. No matter the new ruler or rulers, the sea giants would gladly offer their services for a tidy sum. They welcomed the transition with open coffers. What they didn't expect was for the Archmage to level the playing field, and curse the sea giants to the oblivion of history.

## THE CHAINS OF HISTORY

Everything changed for the sea giants when the Emperor and his Archmage bound the Stormmaker, leaving the placid Midland Sea in its stead. But was the effect of this action more than just pacifying the waters and removing the sea giants' unique advantage on its waves? Because the moment that the Stormmaker was chained, the sea giants disappeared from history.

Why? If you dig deep enough into the ancient tales of the giants, you will find references to a great wailing that could be heard across the Empire. Human sages would record it as the last dying wails of the Stormmaker as it was fully bound, but giants tell a darker origin of the sound. They talk of the geas between the sea and its giants. The details are scant, but they all hint at a harrowing transformation. That the wailing was from the throat of giants driven mad with rage and pain. They speak of a new group of giants, those with but one eye in the center of their foreheads — the iris of which was a roiling mix of story grays and shimmering blues. Stories never explicitly mention the part of the face where giants normally have two eyes; the reader is left with the impression that the one-eyes giants clawed, poked, or seared out their other two eyes in agony.

The history of the sea giants ends there. Tales never mentioned where these giants may have gone, aside from "away from the Midland Sea." Some might vaguely reference



retreating to forges and foundries, or to the cyclopean structures on along the coast and islands of the Iron Sea. An astute reader will note that these seem to be the habitats of the modern cyclops; mentioning this to a giant scholar will get you little more than a shrug. Asking a cyclops is inconclusive, as nobody has thought to ask them. Or if they have, they have not survived to pass along the answer.

One final clue may lie in amongst the corpses and wreckage along the Sea Wall. Every so often, wreckage of a massive ship will wash up on the shore. These ships are built with a skill rarely seen in the Dragon Empire, incorporating materials inconceivable to modern shipwrights — while there is some lumber & metal, most of the structure is built from the bone & sinew of krakens and other undiscovered monstrosities of the deep. These ships all bear damage from fights with gargantuan creatures, and sometime contain the bones of its crew — giant humanoids with a single eye socket in the middle of their forehead.

## CYCLOPS SHEPHERD

Large 4th level troop [GIANT]

Initiative: +5

Knobbly staff +8 vs. AC—28 damage

Natural odd hit: The target is also dazed (easy save ends).

Miss: 14 damage.

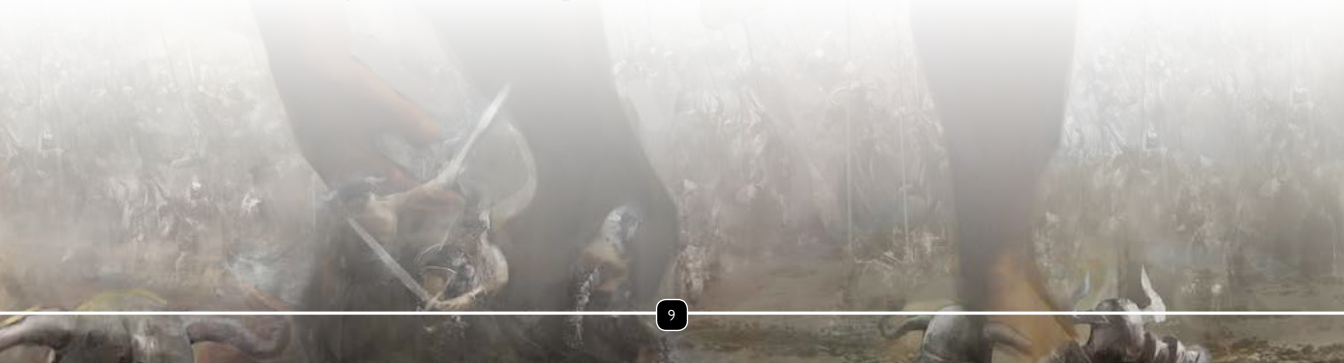
**Cyclopean glare:** As a quick action once per turn, the cyclops can glare at a nearby enemy within sight. Until the start of the cyclops next turn, that creature takes a -2 penalty to all defenses, or to saves (cyclops' choice).

**Temporarily blinded:** If the cyclops shepherd suffers a critical hit, it is dazed until the end of its next turn. While dazed, the cyclops cannot use its cyclopean glare.

### **Nastier Specials**

**Odd escalator:** When the escalation die is odd, the cyclops adds the escalation die to its attack rolls.

**AC 20 PD 19 HP 110 MD 14**



## CYCLOPS SAILOR

Large 7th level troop [GIANT]

Initiative: +8

**Cutlass and dagger** +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—28 damage

Natural even hit or miss: 7 ongoing damage.

R: Jagged harpoon +12 vs. AC—42 damage

Natural roll is above target's Dexterity: The target is stuck (save ends).

**Cyclopean glare:** As a quick action once per turn, the cyclops can glare at a nearby enemy within sight. Until the start of the cyclops next turn, that creature takes a -2 penalty to all defenses, or to saves (cyclops' choice).

**Odd escalator:** When the escalation die is odd, the cyclops adds the escalation die to its attack rolls.

### Nastier Specials

**Stormmaker's fury:** One of the sailors has the misfortune of being a navigator, who still feels & radiates the pain from their missing and oath-bound eye. If both cutlass and dagger attacks miss, 1d4 nearby enemies are weakened until the start of the cyclops' next turn.

**One-eyed commander:** If the ship's captain is part of the fight, it can, as a standard action, command one nearby ally with the odd escalator ability to make a melee attack as a free action.

AC 24 PD 22 HP 220 MD 17



# CYCLOPS SEER

Large 10th level caster [GIANT]

Initiative: +11

**Cyclopean staff** +14 vs. AC—116 damage

**Natural odd hit:** The cyclops can make a cyclopean glare at the target as a free action. If the target is already suffering from cyclopean glare, it is also hampered (save ends).

Miss: 58 damage.

**C: Stormmaker's curse** +13 vs. MD (1d4 nearby enemies)—Target is weakened (save ends)

Attacks hits 3 or more targets: The cyclops seer is also weakened (save ends).

R: Shackled, impotent fury +13 vs. MD (up to 2 targets)—48 psychic damage

**Escalation die is odd:** Whether or not the attack hits, the next time the target makes a d20 roll, they must roll an additional d20, taking the lower result.

**Cyclopean glare:** As a quick action once per turn, the cyclops can glare at a nearby enemy within sight. Until the start of the cyclops next turn, that creature takes a -2 penalty to all defenses, or to saves (cyclops' choice).

**Odd escalator:** When the escalation die is odd, the cyclops adds the escalation die to its attack rolls.

## Nastier Specials

**Oscillating resistance:** When an attack targets this creature, if the attack roll matches the parity (even/odd) of the escalation die, that attack only deals half damage.

AC 27 PD 20 HP 440 MD 25



## BUILDING BATTLES

Cyclopes are solitary creatures. In the rare occasion adventurers come across them, they're often providing support for other creatures, primarily other giants (like the cyclops assistant from The Crown Commands) or occasionally working as mercenaries for an orc warlord. Storm giants of a certain disposition value cyclops seers for their abilities. Beyond that, cyclopes are rarely seen outside the islands and blasted landscapes along the east coast. Many are simple shepherds tending their flocks of dire sheep (use the jotun auroch from the 13th Age Bestiary as a template, or the dire boar from 13 True Ways if you want a dire ram), and often have other dire animals or terratorns as pets or herding animals.

Sometimes cyclopes can be found unexpectedly, such as a seer and her students upon a Koru behemoth, or running into at the crew of one of the giant ships that ply the Iron Sea. There is even a tale amongst denizens of the Bloodwood of an unlikely duo, a pair of hard-traveling heroes made up of a cyclopean seer and his pal, a manticore bard.

## CYCLOPES AND THE ICONS

**The Emperor:** Giants generally have an antipathy towards the Dragon Empire, but cyclopes have a special and specific hatred of the Emperor for what happened to the sea giants. This is tempered by the cyclopes avoidance of the Midland Sea, which is the lifeblood of the Empire. But if you stumble upon a cyclops while wearing your Imperial finery, expect that it'll want to eat you.

**Archmage:** Despite their ancient hatred borne towards the Emperor, it's but a minor squall compared to the rage cyclopes feel towards the Archmage. Any wizard that bears the hallmark of an Imperial education is the first to be put on the spit and roasted over the fire.

**Lich King:** The sea giants of old may not have any care about the Wizard King, but the cyclopes of the current age hate him only slightly less than the Emperor. Driven from the Midland Sea, the nautical ancestors of the cyclopes drifted to the Iron Sea. The cyclopes may not know what the Wizard King did to turn the Iron Sea against land-dwellers, but they've suffered the effects of it for many ages.

**Orc Lord:** Cyclopes don't have any particular interest in the Orc Lord. But he's not a human, and he really seems to want to take down the Emperor. These are stances any cyclops can get behind.

**High Druid:** Of all the puny, unworthy humanoids that infest the world, cyclopes have a genuine respect for the High Druid and her followers. The icon's forces fight against the



horrors erupting from the Iron Sea. They don't scavenge from cyclopean shipwrecks. Oh, and the High Druid wants the Stormmaker loosed from its chains, a huge selling point.

## CYCLOPEAN RUMORS

A child born to giants during a rare storm on the Midland Sea is sometimes touched by the Stormmaker, though this birth is now considered a curse rather than a boon. Nobody knows what happens to these children, though some witnesses report seeing young cyclopes apprenticing at a forge, or studying with a seer. Others report finding the bones of such a child left out on a mountain or sunk in the shallow waters of the sea.

There is supposedly an ancient cyclops seer who lives on the back of a Koru behemoth. She teaches lore to those cyclops who find her or are brought to her, and peers into their fate, directing them on the path the tides hold for them. You can supposedly see this village when the behemoth crosses the Koru Straights, but viewers report a palpable sense of pain and hatred that radiates from this behemoth when it crosses, and very few can stand it long enough to watch.

The cyclopean ships that wreck upon the shore by the Sea Wall never stick around long. Just who scavenges the parts (or corpses) is unknown, but they disappear quickly.

Warriors of the High Druid who fight along the Sea Wall will sometimes tell stories about joining with giant crews on massive ships that sail the Iron Sea in search for prey. Such tales are meant only for the ears of other High Druid devotees. If an outsider asks after the story, the teller simply mentions the “tragedy” of the Midland Sea before changing the subject.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

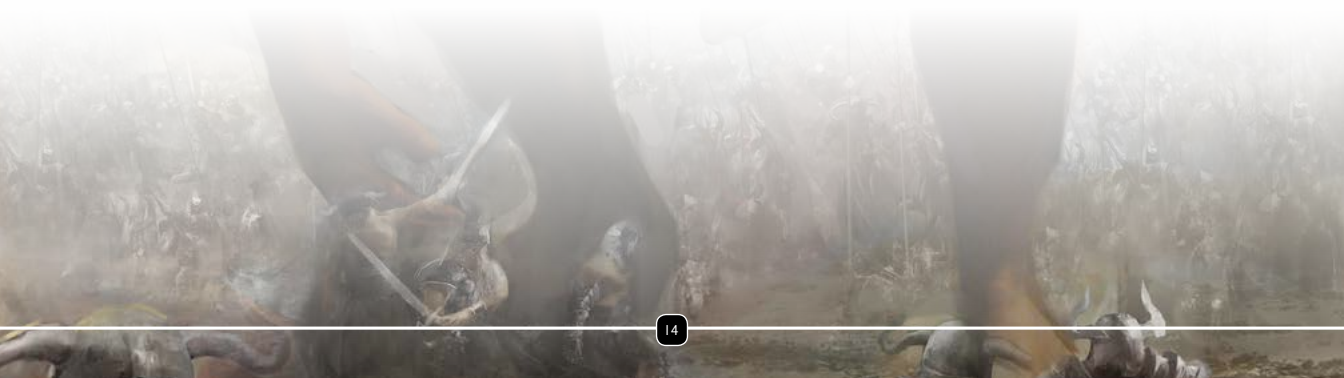
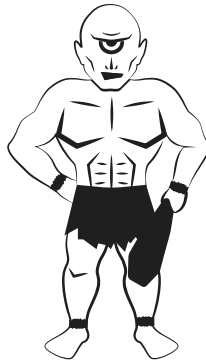
**The Protected Interlocutor**—The city of Newport has come under increasing attacks from the sea, the sewers, or the surrounding forest. One day it's sahuagin, the next it's lizardfolk, troglodytes, or abominations never before seen in the city. PCs track the force influencing these attacks, and it leads back to the Wild Wood. There is a cyclops in a hermitage who is under the protection of the High Druid, but the Empire demands and end to the attacks.

**An Unexpected Odyssey**—After the successful conclusion to a campaign, PCs sail back home only to be caught in a rare storm. They awake to find themselves shipwrecked on a strange island, in the company of a cyclops who is definitely interested how to best season them for dinner. Where are the PCs, what caused the storm, and how do they make it off the dinner table and back home?

**Dedicated Study**—A student in Horizon has been studying the magics used to bind the Stormmaker for her graduate thesis. She has disappeared, along with all her notes and a potent tome that was checked out in her name. What happened to her? Is she acting on her studies, or an unwitting pawn? Which icon knows more than they're saying?

**Cyclopean Prophecy**—Did you hear the ancient prophecy about The Green, the Orc Lord, and the throne without an Emperor? Some may disagree about whether it means freedom for the Stormmaker or the fall of the Grey Towers, but everyone agrees on one thing: that cyclops seer was clear that you are the linchpin to the prophecy's fulfillment or failure. Which is why everyone is gunning for you.

**Iron Sea Reclamation**—You should have left that wreckage alone. But the massive ship washed up next to the Sea Wall had rare components for a ritual that would save the world, so it was okay to plunder it, right? Judging by the fact that your party was shanghaied by cyclopes sailors says otherwise. You don't have much time to dwell upon it, though, as you're being forced to jump down the gullet of a gargantuan sea monster and come out alive with, erm, raw materials. 🐉



# CONVERTING A 13TH AGE CHARACTER INTO AN NPC OR A MONSTER

by Are Sørli

This is a step-by-step guide for converting a 13th Age player character into a non-player character (NPC) or into a monster.

Such a converted NPC/monster can be useful in different situations at your table:

- A GM that runs a campaign with irregular table attendance can have each of the players use this guide to convert their player character (PC) into an NPC. When a player misses a session, the NPC version of the character is ready to be run, in battle, by one of the other players. This relieves the GM of the burden of downscaling the monsters in the battle, and the GM/players of the burden of coming up with a forced story excuse for why the character was missing from the battle.
- If a character, either due to a story twist or to a monster effect, goes mad or otherwise out of control, the GM can temporarily take over the character and run it as a monster.
- If a player either leaves the group or decides to retire the character in favor of playing a new one, the GM can decide to run the character as an NPC, or, based on a story twist, that the character went turncoat, and continue running the character as a (recurring) monster.

## Example

The guide will be followed to convert the following wizard PC into an NPC.

## Stat block

Use the below 13th Age monster stat block template for the converted NPC/monster. Each of the 15 steps to follow in this conversion guide is identified by the number in the stat block template:

[Step 13: Name]

[Step 14: Flavor text]

[Step 1: Level] [Step 2: Role] [Step 3: Type]

Initiative: [Step 4: Initiative]

[Step 9: Main attack]–[Main damage]

Natural even hit: [Special hit effect]

Natural even miss: [Special miss effect]

R: [Step 10: Ranged attack]–[Ranged damage]

C: [Step 11: Close-quarters attack]–[Close-quarters damage]

[Step 12: One-shot special attack] (1/battle)–[One-shot special damage/effects]

Icons

[Step 15: Icon text]

AC: [Step 5: Armor Class]

PD: [Step 6: Physical Defense]      HP: [Step 8: Hit Points]

MD: [Step 7: Mental Defense]



Art: Rick Hershey

## Step 1: Level

The NPC/monster's Level is equal to the character's Level.

Once you have a complete NPC/monster stat block for a converted player character, the stat block should only need to be updated (along with the character sheet) when the character goes up a level.

This means that the NPCs/monster stat block will not benefit from incremental advances. Tough luck!

2nd level

## Step 2: Role

Instead of one of the 13th Age monster roles, use the character's class.

Wizard



### **Step 3: Type**

Instead of one of the 13th Age monster types, use the character's race.

[High Elf]

### **Step 4: Initiative**

The NPC/monster Initiative is equal to the character's Initiative.

Initiative: +3

### **Step 5: Armor Class**

The NPC/monster Armor Class is equal to the character's AC.

AC: 13

### **Step 6: Physical Defense**

The NPC/monster Physical Defense is equal to the character's PD.

PD: 13

### **Step 7: Mental Defense**

The NPC/monster Mental Defense is equal to the character's MD.

MD: 17

### **Step 8: Hit Points**

The NPC/monster Hit Points are equal to the maximum HP of the character, so ignore the current HP tracked on the original character sheet. On the other hand, just like a monster, there are no recoveries or death saves. When HP reaches 0 or below, the NPC/monster is out of the battle.

A character with an absent player is not dead, but is too injured to participate in any other battle this session. Once the player is back, play is resumed as a normal player character with the as-before current Hit Points and current recoveries tracked on the original character sheet, no matter whether the NPC lost none, some or all HP while the player was absent.

A character that went mad or out of control is not dead, but incapacitated for the rest of the battle. Once the battle is over, the player resumes control as above, but the GM may rule that some or all damage taken while mad/out of control will be subtracted from the character's current HP.

A "turncoat" character with no player is dead, unless the GM is using the optional Meaningful Death rule on page 170 of the core rulebook. If that rule is in effect, the "turncoat" character is only dead if death was also on the table for the player characters in that battle. If death was not on the table, the turncoat escapes to make trouble for

the group another day! Note that a “turncoat” character operating alone is not a “named villain” for the purpose of the Meaningful Death rule; a “turncoat” character works better as a henchman to the named villain.

HP: 28

### **Step 9: Main attack**

As the main attack, pick the character’s best (in terms of either high damage or favorable attack roll) attack that is either a melee attack, a ranged attack, an at-will spell or an at-will power (so not a daily or otherwise limited-usage spell/power). Include any always-on attack or damage modifier from other character powers in the attack roll/damage. Compute fixed damage (so no damage roll) by averaging the damage dice of the attack, rounding up (since there will be no miss damage).

For the natural even hit effect of the main attack, pick the character’s most interesting or flavorful (so not necessarily the most powerful) special effect that does not deal any HP damage to the target. This natural even hit effect can be from any of the character’s powers, even limited-usage ones such as class talents, racial powers, feats, per-battle spells/powers, daily spells/powers, flexible attacks or interrupt powers/spells.

For the natural even miss effect of the main attack, pick the character’s most interesting or flavorful (so not necessarily the most powerful) special miss effect that does not deal any HP damage to the target. This natural even miss effect can be from any of the character’s attack powers, even limited-usage ones such as per-battle spells/powers, daily spells/powers, flexible attacks or interrupt powers/spells. If there is no such miss effect among the character’s attack powers, just skip the natural even miss effect altogether.

Give a flavorful name to the main attack. Invent a new name for the attack, or use the name that fits best from among any of the character’s powers.

(An already re-named/re-skinned 13th Age power that fits the character is perfect!)

R: Ray of Frost +6 vs PD–11 cold damage [from best at-will spell]

Natural even hit: Teleport to a nearby location you can see [from racial power]

Natural even miss: You take damage equal to the target’s level [from other spell]

### **Step 10: Ranged attack**

Skip this step if the main attack (step 9) is already a ranged attack, spell or power that provokes opportunity attacks. (So you either do step 10 or step 11.)

As the ranged attack, pick the character’s best (in terms of either high damage or favorable attack roll) ranged weapon attack. Include any always-on attack or damage modifier from other character powers in the attack roll/damage. Compute fixed damage

(so no damage roll) by averaging the damage dice of the attack, rounding up (since there will be no miss damage).

Name the ranged attack after the weapon used.

### **Step 11: Close-quarters attack**

Skip this step if the main attack (step 9) is already a melee attack, close-quarters spell or close-quarters power that does not provoke opportunity attacks. (So you either do step 10 or step 11.)

As the close-quarters attack, pick the character's best (in terms of either high damage or favorable attack roll) melee weapon attack. Include any always-on attack or damage modifier from other character powers in the attack roll/damage. Compute fixed damage (so no damage roll) by averaging the damage dice of the attack, rounding up (since there will be no miss damage).

Name the close-quarters attack after the weapon used.

C: Staff +2 vs AC-7 damage [from best melee attack]

### **Step 12: One-shot special**

For the one-shot special, pick the character's best (in terms of either high damage, favorable attack roll or favorable effect) special power from among the character's limited-usage powers, such as class talents, racial powers, feats, per-battle spells/powers, daily spells/powers, flexible attacks or interrupt powers/spells. The one-shot special can be a defensive power that buffs the character and/or allies. Disregard any condition for triggering the power; it's once per battle, as the only attack during that round. If the special power requires an attack roll, also include any extra damage/effect that triggers off the (natural) result of the attack roll, including any miss damage/effect. If the special power deals HP damage, compute fixed damage (so no damage roll) by averaging the damage dice of the attack, rounding up.

Even though the one-shot special is a limited-usage power, do not track usage on the original character sheet. A returning player should resume play with an as-before character sheet (as-before HP and as-before powers).

Give a flavorful name to the one-shot special. Invent a new name for the special, or use the name that fits best from among any of the character's powers.

(An already re-named/re-skinned 13th Age power that fits the character is perfect!)

R: Acid Arrow (1/battle) +6 vs PD-22 acid damage and 5 ongoing acid damage [from best daily spell]

Miss: 5 ongoing acid damage

At this point, all the mechanical parts of the stat block are in place and ready for combat,

including a main attack, a backup weapon attack and a one-shot power. All that's left to do is the flavor part of the stat block.

The example stat block in this conversion guide is a conversion of this pre-generated 13th Age character:

<http://site.pelgranepress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/High-Elf-Wizard-lvl-2-v3.pdf>

## 2ND LEVEL WIZARD [HIGH ELF]

Initiative: +3

R: Ray of Frost +6 vs PD-11 cold damage

Natural even hit: Teleport to a nearby location you can see

Natural even miss: You take damage equal to the target's level

C: Staff +2 vs AC-7 damage

R: Acid Arrow (1/battle) +6 vs PD-22 acid damage and 5 ongoing acid damage

Miss: 5 ongoing acid damage

AC: 13 PD: 13 HP: 28 MD: 17


### Step 13: Name

Use the character's name to head the NPC/monster stat block.

### Step 14: Flavor text

Below the name, let your creativity shine with flavor text for the NPC/monster that captures the essence of the character. Find inspiration in the One Unique Thing, Backgrounds, Icon Relationships, and the character's powers. A badass quote that the NPC/monster could yell at enemies in battle is perfect!

### Step 15: Icon text

At this point, you're done, and this last step is optional. If the character has a strong Icon Relationship that could affect behavior during combat, feel free to note particulars as icon text in the NPC/monster stat block. 



# FACES OF THE EMPIRE

## TAS GOULDER “FORTUNE TELLER”

BY CHRISTOPHER KIEPER

*This is an NPC I created for my first ever Campaign and she shows up from time to time to give the party direction.*

Known for her distinct Black and White face paint. Rumors say that the paint is really her skin and a “gift” from the Prince of Shadows

Female of undeterminable age

Appears to be a half elf but some people swear they have seen horns under her jet black hair and hood.

**Motivations** | Power (While she is happy playing the role of Fortuneteller she wants for a more prominent role with the Prince of Shadows) Knowledge (always seeking new and more powerful artifacts to study and gain knowledge from)

**Secret** | “I know who the Shadow Prince really is but I am bound never to speak of it.” 🎲

## VOK Z'KHALAT (Crusader)

### VETERAN OF THE “IRON LIGHT” BRIGADE

BY DENIS FAUPEL

**Physical Description:** Male dark elf in a heavily battered but sturdy armor with a few gruesome bite marks on it. He wears it proudly.

**Motivations:** Destruction (lives to fight), provocation (looking for new challenges all day, to defy boredom), pride (loves jousting and won't refuse a duel).

**Secret:** “Demons have to be fought; that's it. If there were no demons, what would we fight? Peace and boredom are for the weak. If there's nothing to do, I will ensure there will be battle ... if no demons arise, I will seek them out.”

**Mannerisms:** Stares shamelessly at people, checks his many weapons way too often, talks with a cold and callous voice. 🎲



# CREATURES OF THE EMPIRE: LARGE GELATINOUS DRAGON & MUTATED MUSK OX

BY JOHN MARVIN

## Large Gelatinous Dragon

Large 6th level blocker [ooze]

Initiative: +5

**Shlup'n'schlorp** +11 vs. PD—38 acid damage, and the dragon engulfs the target (functions like a grab; see below) if it's smaller than the dragon

Miss: The dragon can make a spasms attack as a free action.

[Special trigger] C: Spasms +11 vs. AC (up to 2 attacks, each against a different nearby enemy)—19 damage

**Engulf and dissolve:** Targets engulfed/grabbed (13th Age core book, page 172) by the gelatinous dragon take 38 acid damage at the start of the dragon's turn but are not viable targets for additional attacks by the dragon. Multiple targets can be held within the dragon simultaneously.

Any engulfed creature that is also staggered must begin making last gasp saves (page 200 of core book) or become paralyzed as the dragon's toxins overwhelm it.

Instinctive actions: Gelatinous creatures have no brains, sometimes they just do things. When the escalation die is odd, instead of making an attack or moving, roll a d8 to see what the gelatinous dragon does. If an option is not viable (you roll a 3 but there are no nearby targets), reroll until you get a valid option.

**1. C: Acid splash** +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies in a group)—8 ongoing acid damage

Each failed save: Acid destroys one of the target's non-magical items. The target takes a cumulative -1 attack penalty until the end of the battle (boots fall apart, shield straps snap, etc.).

Miss: 5 ongoing acid damage.



**2. The dragon grows an orifice** that gushes out a liquid glue that floods the area. Each enemy engaged with the dragon is stuck (hard save ends, 16+). Each nearby enemy not engaged with the dragon is stuck (save ends). Each far away enemy is stuck (easy save ends, 6+). The glue has no effect on creatures who are flying or that have some way of avoiding it.

**3. The dragon squirts** a slick slime that targets 1d3 nearby enemies. Until the end of the battle, each target must roll an easy save each time it moves; on a failure, it's hampered until the end of its next turn.

**4. The gelatinous dragon** makes a fire gout attack as it splashes out a gel that ignites in the air and sticks to skin and clothing.

C: Fire gout +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies in a group)—8 ongoing fire damage  
Each failed save: The ongoing damage for all enemies hit by the attack increases by 1.

**5. The dragon sweats acid.** Each enemy engaged with the dragon must roll a normal save; on a failure, it takes 40 acid damage. On a success it takes 20 acid damage.

**6. C: Acid jet** +11 vs. PD (one nearby or far away enemy) —45 acid damage

Miss: 8 ongoing acid damage.

**7. C: Acid geyser** +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies)—30 acid damage, and the dragon is propelled uncontrollably about the area, passing next to each of its enemies. Unlike normal, each enemy can make an opportunity attack against the ooze as it moves this way, but the ooze can make a glomp attack against those who do as a free action as it passes. (Tell the PCs that the ooze will get a counter-attack.)

Glomp +9 vs. PD—10 acid damage, and the dragon engulfs the target if it's smaller than the dragon

**8. The dragon splits into two** baby gelatinous dragons, and each one can act this turn (roll a d4 for the instinctive actions of each one). Divide the dragon's current hit points equally between the two new creatures. You pick which one you're riding.

**AC 21 PD 19 HP 280 MD 16**

### Mutated Musk Ox

Large oth level troop [beast]

**Initiative:** +0

Horns +5 vs. AC—9 damage

**Special:** The mutated beast is vulnerable to everything, expanding the crit range by 2 (normally to 18+).

**AC 13 PD 11 HP 58 MD 6**

Art: Patricia Baker





# FACES OF THE EMPIRE

## YOUNG BARTLEY (Prince of Shadows)

BY KIM MASTON

Balladeer and frequenter of Midway Inn (despite its name, Midway Inn lies far closer to Axis than it does to Horizon - a source of great irritation to the Consociation of Surveyors).

**Renowned for:** Always smiling. A god when it comes to playing the fiddle.

Infamous for: Not knowing all the words to the ballads he sings.

**Physical description:** Lanky, middle-aged male human accustomed to wearing a lavender-scented peruke.

**Motivations:** Validation (“father told me no-one wants to hear my music - but look at me now!”), play (“What good is life if you can’t have a little fun?”).

**Secret:** “In nightly dreams, the Prince of Shadows tells me which words to leave out of my songs for the morrow performance.” 🎲

## JAYSA (Prince of Shadows)

BY MICHAEL PARKER

### Sorceress and Leader of the Black Ring

**Physical description:** Human female, tall and lean. Prefers dark, concealing clothing.

**Motivations:** Arcane knowledge (Jaysa’s Black Ring are a group of thieves and amateur sorcerers who focus on black market magic in Shadow Port. She is an asset to the Prince of Shadows when his plans and sought prizes are of an occult nature.).

**Secret:** “What did the Prince steal from the Archmage and the Blue? What’s it worth to you...? Why don’t you step in here and view my ‘private’ collection for sale.”

**Hook:** Normally opposed to Archmage, Jaysa has been in contact with one of the Archmage’s Magisters. Would she sell out the Prince of Shadows for the right price?





# CHASM

BY CLARK OLSON-SMITH



# CHASM

BY CLARK OLSON-SMITH

This is not an adventure. It is a location, with reasons your player characters might go there—a couple icon-influenced adventure seeds, an NPC sketch or two, a handful of tavern names, a magical item, wondrous item, and a potion. The true nature of the adventure that takes place here is up to you, the GM, and what suits your campaign. You also get to build your own battles.

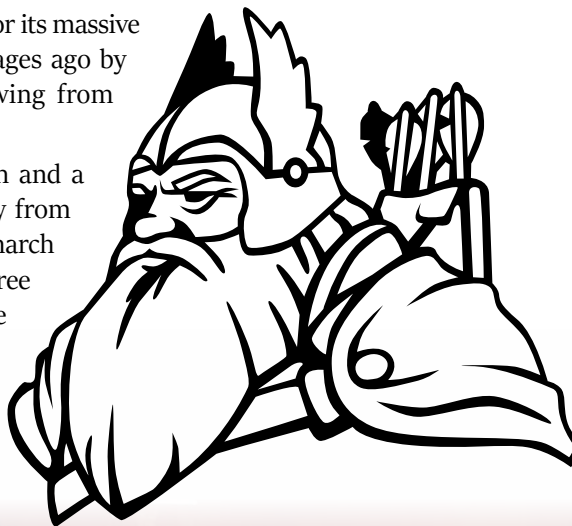
## THE CITY

Chasm is a city of the dwarf kingdom. It lies along the Undermarch, about 75 miles north of Anvil.

In addition to its incredible mines, Chasm is known for its massive waterfall—Chasm Falls. Dwarves created the falls ages ago by diverting water underground from the river flowing from Torin's Glory into Calamity.

Chasm Falls is a sheet of falling water a mile high and a mile wide. It and the chasm itself separate the city from the Undermarch. Those who turn from the Undermarch toward the city pass through the falls at one of three huge stone arches. From the foot of the arches, three gilded stone bridges stretch thousands of feet across the natural rock rift that gives Chasm its name.

The city is carved into the face of the far cliff. Light from fires both natural and magical give the cliff wall a patchwork glow, to a depth of more than a dozen dozen stories. The wealthiest dwarves live closest to the lake below, secluded from the bustling commerce above.



Chasm Taverns	
Name	Clientele
Ale-Forged	forgeborn/dwarf-forged
The King's Ransom	nobility/wealthy
The Golden Vein	mine owners/managers
Pick & Shovel	miners
Seven Glittering Mugs	jewelers/gem-smiths
Treaty House	elves
The Works	metalsmiths

## THE DWARF KING'S TREASURY

Chasm also hosts a mysterious private treasury of Dwarf King. The vault entryway is deep in the chasm, underneath the Undermarch, behind the roaring falls, just above the lake at its base. Otherwise, not much else is known.

On certain dwarven festivals and King's days, Dwarf King treasuries in other cities are open to the public, with ale freely flowing. But not this one. This treasury is shrouded in secrecy, and what the King has hidden here is a matter of eager speculation.

Every dwarf in Chasm has their pet theory. Some say the King is having a new throne constructed inside. Others insist the treasury contains spoils of the ancient war with the elves (all of it illegal, since the Concord Peace Accord required seized treasure be returned). One mad dwarf—who daily prophesies the end of days in the bustling Chasm commercial district—claims the treasury houses a doomsday device: to be activated when orcs finally overrun the kingdom. Astute observers may notice these theories reflect dwarves' anxieties about the future of the kingdom, or perhaps of Chasm itself.

## THE INVITATION

The player characters receive an invitation to Chasm to clear an outbreak of fungus and fungaloids. The outbreak is along the shore of the lake at the bottom of the Chasm Falls, near the entrance to the Dwarf King's Treasury.

Either the characters are personally invited to Chasm, or they invite themselves after hearing about the potential reward: gold, plus a magical item—the Alchemist's Manual for Monstrous Mutation, an ancient tome that allows characters to take the form and powers of certain monsters.

Icon option: Dwarf King



If the Dwarf King is an important icon in this game, then an agent of the King invite the characters to Chasm to clear the fungaloid infestation and promise the Alchemist's Manual—a royal messenger (“Voice of the King”) named, Dwale.

An adventurer's 5 with the Dwarf King provides the perfect opportunity to introduce this adventure—a benefit (the reward) with a complication (the fungaloid quest).

An adventurer's 6 with the Dwarf King works too. But give the characters the additional benefit of the following potion (one per character), awarded by Kalar, captain of the Chasm guard:

Potion of Fungicide: for a single day, this potion reduces by 5 the DCs of fungus-related hazards. Also, in battle, the potion allows characters to deal 2d6 damage as a free action, after fungus monsters hit with attacks against AC or PD.

For a little extra GM-fun, make the potion an ointment—a sticky, putrid ointment—that characters must slather on their skin, clothes, and armor. Consider connecting the complications from fumbles in battle to this foul and uncomfortable ointment.

## NPCS

Dwale is the only gnome Voice of the King. He is young with a floor-length white beard, and his speech has a regal, sing-song quality.

Kalar is tallest dwarf in Chasm with a deep booming voice. His armor is ages-old and has deep battle scars, but, well-polished, it gleams gold and silver. He laughs quickly and heartily, but there's grief in his eyes...and fear.

The stranger in the bar is...well, after you meet her, you can't quite remember anything about her. She was a 'she', right?

### Icon option: Prince of Shadows

If the Prince of Shadows is an important icon in this game, then the characters meet a stranger in a bar who declines to share her name but who describes the outbreak, hinting at scandal.

The outbreak has lasted months, not weeks, as the dwarves insist. And more, the fungaloids broke into the treasury, and the Dwarf King can't defend his own treasures! Or they broke out of it, and something more sinister is going on! (The details are up to you.)

The characters' real mission (hinted at but never spoken, of course) is not fighting fungaloids but learning what the Dwarf King has hidden in the treasury. In this scenario, the agent of the Prince offers the Alchemist's Manual, while the Dwarf King's reward is only gold.

An adventurer's 5 with the Prince gives a good opportunity for inviting the characters to Chasm.



An adventurer's 6 deserves and additional bonus. This limited-use wondrous item, given by the Prince's agent described above, will do the trick.

Ring of Concealment: The constantly-shifting pattern on this intricately carved wooden ring seems to conceal...a figure? a phrase? You can't make it out, if it's there at all.

When you whisper a secret while wearing this ring, it renders you utterly invisible for a single battle or up to 5 minutes.

To use it a second time, make an easy save. For a third use, a normal save. Fourth, hard. After the fourth use—or when you fail a save, whichever comes first—the ring's magic is spent. It becomes a normal, non-magical wooden ring...filled with your secrets.

For additional GM-fun, you might require the whispered secrets relate to the character's One Unique Thing. Also, after the ring becomes inert, let what was hidden in its pattern be revealed! Maybe that happens immediately. Maybe you wait for a 5 or 6 with the Prince of Shadows. Either way, you get to describe the image or message.

## ALCHEMIST'S MANUAL FOR MONSTROUS MUTATION

This warped and water-stained tome contains alchemical instructions for a variety of transmorphifying elixirs, teas, and shortcakes.

Once per day, you (or an ally you share with) may spend a standard action to ingest what you've created and take the form and powers of a monstrous beast. The powers are random: roll 1d4 (champion: 1d6; epic: 1d8). You describe the form.

1. Armor plates: +2 to AC, +1 to PD (Epic: +3 AC, +2 PD)
2. Spiky bits: when an enemy melee attack hits you, deal the enemy damage equal to twice your level (Epic: three times)
3. Carnage: deal miss damage equal to twice your level, three times when staggered (Epic: three and four times, respectively).
4. Poison: your melee attack also deals 5 ongoing poison damage per tier
5. Regeneration: when the escalation die is even, heal HP equal to three times your level at the start of your turn.
6. Fury: while staggered, +2 attack and, on a hit, deal normal damage plus damage equal to twice your level. You also take 2d6 damage at the end of each turn.
7. Raw power: Until you are staggered, roll 2d20 for melee attacks and use the higher roll.
8. Invisibility: The first time you're staggered, you become invisible until end of your next turn
9. The effect lasts for the duration of battle.
10. Quirk: Chameleon-like personality.

# FACES OF THE EMPIRE

## **BARKA** (Prince of Shadows/The Three)

BY J. MICHAEL BESTUL

*The Dapper Scoundrel of Pocket Bay, Captain of the Escapist, and No Longer Welcome in 78 of Santa Cora's Temple*

Barka is probably a human rogue/sorcerer, but descriptions vary. They all describe a disarming smile... a half-smile, really. A jaunty smirk, if you will. Beyond that? It's rare that a witness will catch more than his smile. If they do notice more, it's Barka's tendency to engage in breathtaking derring-do immediately before ghosting.

Those unique few who've had the chance for a second visit usually describe Barka with close-cropped hair, though the shade varies. They differ on the eye color, as well, but all agree Barka is never without a smartly-tailored waistcoat. Bounty hunters claim that you can tell when Barka's been around by the lingering scent of teakwood and burnt incense.

### **Three Things About Barka:**

- Acolytes of the Great Gold Wyrms tell of a child named 'Barka' who had a dragon's head birthmark and was born the exact moment a venerable copper dragon exhaled its final breath. This Barka finds that story pretty darn funny.
- A messenger named Tobias, who runs intel between Glitterhaegen, Axis, and Shadow Port, claims to have evidence Barka is an avatar of, if not the actual, Prince of Shadows. When he heard this, Barka's only response was, "who'd want all that responsibility?"
- Barka doesn't carry himself like a spellcaster, and tends to surprise those who don't know his reputation. Those who've survived such encounters comment that they often cannot tell what is draconic magic and what is sleight-of-hand. 🎩

# MAGIC ITEMS

BY PEPTHALIE NELSON RAMOS

## THE SILENT KISS

The Silent Kiss is a curved shortsword with a handle fashioned into the shape of a beautiful woman. Her abilities are mysterious and deadly. The Silent Kiss is a jealous blade, and while she'll grant you her power, she will see you fall to ruin before sharing you.

**Tier:** 2 (Champion)

**Abilities:** Attacks with the Silent Kiss leave no visible wounds. Also when attacking an unaware target (or when an attack would benefit from a rogue's sneak attack feature), the attack targets the lowest defense of the target. Additionally, you receive a -1 cumulative penalty for every "occupied" chakra.

**Personality:** Promiscuous, jealous, and murderous.

**Quirk:** You lose your ability to hear.



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## THE HANDS OF LIGHT AND DARK

The following magic items were created as a pair, to represent the eternal struggle between the Great Gold Wyrn and the demons from which the Diabolist draws power. That is the romanticized version of the story, however. The Nightcaller and Shadow's Bane each hold a great deal of power but are a cursed pair.

The Nightcaller and Shadow's Bane are each individual magic items, for the purpose of calculating the number of magic items you're attuned to; however, they can both be worn at the same time, taking up the hands chakra. When both are worn at the same time, they become "the Hands of Light and Dark".

## The Hands of Light and Dark

**Tier:** 3 (epic)

**Abilities:** Reduce damage received from 1 attack to zero. Recharge 15+ (this ability does not expend the recharge if used when the escalation die is 5+). However, once worn, the gauntlets cannot be removed, with the exception of a narrative reason/quest contrived by the GM.

**Personality:** Blind, bloodthirsty rage.

**Quirk:** The footsteps left in your wake burn and smolder with hellfire (this quirk always happens in a combat encounter when the escalation die is 5+).



### Nightcaller

**Tier:** 1 (adventurer)

**Abilities:** Reduce damage received from one attack by the value rolled on your recovery dice (e.g., a barbarian would roll 1d10 x level and reduce damage by that amount). This ability can only be used during the night. Recharge 16+. Once worn, the gauntlet can only be removed during the day.

**Personality:** Sneaky, sadistic, and subversive.

**Quirk:** You gain several physical demonic features and are surrounded by a thick, viscous black smoke.

### Shadow's Bane

**Tier:** 1 (adventurer)

**Abilities:** Reduce damage received from one attack by the value rolled on your recovery dice (e.g., a barbarian would roll 1d10 x level and reduce damage by that amount). This ability can only be used during the day. Recharge 16+. Once worn, the gauntlets can only be removed during the night.

**Personality:** Bold, self-sacrificing, and angry.

**Quirk:** You gain several physical draconic features and shed light like a torch. 🔦





# FACES OF THE EMPIRE

## **SŌSHAN** (Great Gold Wyrn/The Three)

BY J. MICHAEL BESTUL

### *Master of Draconic Forms*

Sōshan is a half-orc monk who radiates utter calm, yet terrifying potential power. He is always dressed in a simple outfit whose fibers are interwoven with the whiskers of metallic dragons. His bracers are black- and red-scaled, with poisonous knuckle spikes, and are reinforced with frozen dragon bone fragments. Sōshan wears a sorcephire on a pendant around his neck, and his belt is made from shadow-given-form. If he finds his opponents particularly worthy, he will fight with his “Way of the Lost Dragons” form, which is otherwise only used during grand monastic tournaments.

### **Three Things About Sōshan**

- His vow of nonviolence towards dragons is inviolate. This vow does not extend to dragon-like creatures.
- He has met the Green multiple times, achieved enlightenment in the presence of the Great Gold Wyrn, and the reinforcement in his bracers is rumored to be from the bones of the original White.
- Nobody is sure of his age, and Sōshan declares it an immaterial thing. His spirit will not depart this earth until he has distilled the power of the void dragons into his final, perfect form. 🎲

# Iconic Feats

BY MARTIN KILLMANN

This article presents a list of feats tied to the 13 icons of the Dragon Empire. To take any of these feats, you must have at least one icon relationship point with the related icon. There are no other restrictions. These feats can be taken by any race and any class. You can choose a higher tier feat even if you don't have any of the lower tier feats.

Some of the feats grant a “once per scene” ability. Treat this similar to “once per battle,” except that it also applies to non-combat situations. A scene can be any chunk of game time where the PCs are in one location, dealing with one challenge. It can be an interaction with a group of NPCs, an attempt to solve a riddle, or a journey along one of the old Imperial roads.



Art: Pelgrane Press

## THE ARCHMAGE

**Arcane Dilettante** (Adventurer Tier): Choose a cantrip from the Wizard list for each icon relationship point you have with the Archmage. You can cast these cantrips once per scene.

**Inspired Understanding** (Champion Tier): Once per scene, when you roll a natural even failure on an Intelligence skill check, you can reroll the check.

**Planeswalker** (Epic Tier): You are familiar with the Overworld, its paths, gates, and connections. You can identify gates and their keys, divine their target locations, and open them for travel.

## THE CRUSADER

**Demon Slayer** (Adventurer Tier): Once per battle, when your melee attack against a demon or devil is a natural even miss, you can immediately take psychic damage equal to the creature's level and reroll the attack.

**Scars That Won't Heal** (Champion Tier): You gain a +1 bonus to saves, but permanently lose a recovery.

**Scream of Vengeance** (Epic Tier): Whenever you suffer a critical hit without falling unconscious, increase the escalation die by 1.

## THE DIABOLIST

**Mark of the Diabolist** (Adventurer Tier): You have a visible, physical mark that shows your connection to the diabolist, like red eyes, horns, or a glowing tattoo. When you make a skill check related to demons, reduce the difficulty level by one step (-5 to the DC).

**Foolish Bargain** (Champion Tier): You opened your mind to the Diabolist. Choose a type of spell, power or maneuver that you gained from your class or a talent, and gain an additional one at the highest level available. Your MD is permanently lowered by 1.

**Dibs On Her Favorite** (Epic Tier): For better or worse, the Diabolist has made it absolutely clear that you are her favorite toy, and the joy of killing you will belong to her. If you are knocked out during battle, you are guaranteed that she will intervene. Depending on her mood, she might open a small hell hole to keep your body safe, or send cambion assassins to avenge you. Using a 5 or 6 on an icon relationship ensures a better outcome for you.

## THE DWARF KING

**Hearty as a Dwarf** (Adventurer Tier): When you spend a recovery in battle, increase the dice by one step (d4 to d6 and so on, d12 maximum).

**Treasures of the Forge** (Champion Tier): Add +1 per icon relationship point with the Dwarf King to recharge rolls of true magic items.

**Steady as a Rock** (Epic Tier): When you rally in battle, roll 1d6 and add it to your defenses until the end of your next turn.

## THE ELF QUEEN

**Sparks of Glamour** (Adventurer Tier): Once per scene, when your natural roll on a skill check is even, add your Charisma modifier to the result. If the skill check was Charisma-based, add your Wisdom modifier instead.

**Mantle of the Moon** (Champion Tier): Once per battle, when your natural roll on a save is even, add your Charisma modifier to the result. If you already added your Charisma to the roll for some reason, add your Wisdom instead.

**Guiding Star Light** (Champion Tier): Once per day, when your natural roll on an attack is even, add your Charisma modifier to the result. If the attack was Charisma-based, add your Wisdom modifier instead.

## THE EMPEROR

**Presence of Authority** (Adventurer Tier): You grant nearby allies a +1 bonus to Charisma-based skill checks.

**Rightful Rule** (Champion Tier): If an enemy has taken the ability to use the escalation die away from you, you gain a +1 bonus to hit per icon relationship point with the Emperor.

**Imperial Dignity** (Epic Tier): Once per day, ignore all effects and conditions during your turn. You can use this ability as long as you are conscious, even while stunned.

## THE GREAT GOLD WYRM

**Believer in Truth** (Adventurer Tier): Skill checks to detect lies, deceit or illusions are one difficulty step easier for you (-5 to DC).

**Radiant Presence** (Champion Tier): Enemies take a -1 penalty to disengage from you per icon relationship point with the Great Gold Wyrms.

**Claw of the Exalted One** (Epic Tier): For one battle per day, you can declare that your attacks deal holy damage. Devils and demons vulnerable to these attacks, even if they are not vulnerable to holy.

## THE HIGH DRUID

**Beast Friend** (Adventurer Tier): Once per scene, when a nature-related skill check is a natural even failure, you can reroll the check.

**Voices of the Wild** (Champion Tier): You can speak with animals, as per the Nature Talking class feature of the Druid.

**Wild Walk** (Epic Tier): Choose one animal shape that you can assume once per day. This transformation works like the Shifter druid's scout form ability.

## THE LICH KING

**Souls for the Bone Throne** (Adventurer Tier): When you kill a mook, immediately heal hit points equal to the mook's level. When you kill a non-mook, heal hit points equal to twice the creature's level.

**Medium** (Champion): You can Speak with Dead, as per the Necromancer spell. However, casting the spell is quite exhausting, and you lose a recovery each time.



**Walk Among Servants** (Epic Tier): Out of combat, undead of a lower level than you must succeed at save (one per group) or they are unable to attack you or nearby allies. The save is easy (6+) if you have one relationship point with the Lich King, normal (11+) if you have two and hard (16+) if you have more than two.

## THE ORC LORD

**Appetite for Destruction** (Adventurer Tier): Once per scene, when you make a skill check to break or destroy something, and the check is a natural even failure, reroll the die.

**Savagery** (Champion Tier): When you miss with a melee attack, deal extra damage equal to your Constitution modifier.

**Driven by Pain** (Epic Tier): When you take ongoing damage, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls.

## THE PRIESTESS

**Martyrdom** (Adventurer Tier): Once per battle, when an ally fails a saving throw against an effect, you can choose to suffer the effect instead.

**Blessed Healing** (Champion Tier): Whenever you grant an ally the use of a recovery, that ally adds 1d8 to the hit points healed.

**Gift of Life** (Epic Tier): Once per battle, you or a nearby ally can add 1d8 to a death save after the roll.

## THE SHADOW PRINCE

**Master Thief** (Adventurer Tier): For each icon relationship point with the Shadow Prince, a point to a stealth, thievery or luck-related background you already have. These points can take one of your backgrounds over 5, to a maximum of 6.

**Pure Luck** (Champion Tier): Once per day, reroll any d20 and add +1 for each relationship point with the Shadow Prince to the result.

**Merge with Shadows** (Epic Tier): Once per battle, when an enemy misses you with an attack, you can remove yourself from the battlefield and reappear at a nearby location at the start of your next turn.

## THE THREE

**Dragon Worshipper** (Adventurer Tier): You speak and read the draconic language, and all skill checks related to dragons are one tier easier for you (-5 to DC).

**Dragon Fighter** (Champion Tier): You are immune to fear effects of dragons, and gain a +2 bonus to defenses against dragon breath attacks.

**Flames of the Red** (Epic Tier): Once per day, when you score a critical hit, deal triple damage. The extra damage is fire damage. 🔥

# 13 (CRAZY) OPTIONAL RULES FOR THE ESCALATION DIE

By José Luis F. “Tszimiscedracul” Cardoso

**T**he escalation die was created to represent the momentum and heroism of high-octane fantasy. Let's twist that idea a bit, maybe even opening ways to simulate other kinds of fantasy.

Please note that the rules below can considerably change the pace and nature of 13th Age combat. It's also important to mention that these optional rules weren't created to be used together (not even the Diabolist could handle such chaos). Actually, some can be redundant or don't make sense if used together.

## **Here are a few new terminologies:**

**The Fate Roll** - This is a special save rolled against Fate itself. You roll a d20 against a DC of 10 + the current escalation die. Thus, for example, rolling a Fate Roll when the escalation die is 3 requires a save roll of 13+.

**Take the Die** - A player literally grabs the escalation die and places it in front of his character sheet. This reminds everyone at the table that he's using a special rule regarding the escalation die. Only one player can Take the Die each round. If most of table disapproves, the player can't Take the Die. The escalation die still confers its normal attack bonus to the entire party (and to dangerous monsters, as normal).

**Zero the Escalation Die** - If a rule tells you to “zero” the escalation die, just return it to zero.

## **HOW THESE RULES AND MONSTERS FUSS WITH THE ESCALATION DIE**

If a particular monster interferes with the escalation die, the GM may have to adjudicate some of the rules below. For example, at my table, if a rakshasa steals the escalation die, I wouldn't allow any of the rules below to be activated (especially “No Seat in Valhalla”). But that is just me.

## **I) No Seat in Valhalla**

[Once per game session]

This is a really special use of the escalation die. If the table approves, any player can Zero the Escalation Die to escape death. If his character would otherwise die, the player removes the escalation die and survives. His character is unconscious or out-of-scene and can't be killed in that encounter.

## **II) Calling the Valkyries**

[Once per encounter]

Describe some crazy, glorious, or awesome (but foolhardy) stunt that your character wants to execute. For example, your barbarian wants to jump in the dragon's mouth, attempting to pierce its brain with a spear. Or perhaps your necromancer wants to channel a wraith's negative energy to strengthen his spell. After explaining your intent, choose Attack Roll, AC, MD, PD or Damage. Make a Fate Roll.

If you're successful, you can add the escalation die to the chosen characteristic once, after rolling the dice (or after suffering an effect, if you choose AC, MD or PD). If you choose the Attack Roll, that means you get double the escalation die bonus! If you choose Damage, double the escalation die value at Champion Tier and triple it at Epic Tier.

What if you fail the Fate Roll? Well, then the GM gets to add the escalation die to a chosen characteristic of a monster, after rolling the dice.

## **III) Super Sentai Finisher!**

[Once or twice per encounter, see below]

Before attacking, make a Fate Roll. If you succeed and hit, the next player character to act that round gains a +1 bonus to attack and crit range. These bonuses last until the end of the round. However, the second character can choose to forgo the bonuses and also make a Fate Roll while attacking. If he succeeds at the Fate Roll and hits, he can grant to a third player character a +2 bonus to attack and crit range, and so. The upper limit is the number of player characters (a group of five, for example, could reach a total of +5 to attack and crit range, in addition to the escalation die bonus).

If any character in the chain fails the Fate Roll or misses their attack, the bonuses are lost. Executing a 2nd Super Sentai Finisher Attack in the same encounter requires that the first character spends a quick and a move action to make his Fate Roll (usually waving his arms around and bragging about his special moves). You can't try a third time in the same encounter.

#### **IV) By This Die I Rule!**

[Once per encounter, only works if the player holds the escalation die high while announcing this rule]

Make a Fate Roll before attacking. If you're successful and hit the target, your enemy is crippled by a mighty strike! While crippled, the enemy suffers a penalty to attack rolls equal to the escalation die bonus used (if you crippled your enemy at escalation die +3, he suffers a -3 penalty).

If you fail the Fate Roll, your target gains the escalation die, and you lose it until succeeding at a hard save (16+).

#### **V) The Doom Clock**

This is a special rule for games where the GM wants to stress that battles are dangerous and should be over soon. If the escalation die reaches +6, the Gamemaster adds 1 Doom Point to the table. Each subsequent round adds another Doom Point. Each Doom Point increases ALL crit ranges by +1.

This rule turns groups of mooks that survive that far into dangerous adversaries. This rule can represent gritty or sword & sorcery settings, where life is brutal and cheap (actually, if you're looking for a weird alternative campaign where combat is grim and lethal, you could start adding Doom Points at escalation die +3 or even +1).

#### **VI) Hard Escalation Die**

In this world, life is hard and cruel. Heroes must win through will and blood. The escalation die here only increases if at least half the party (round up) hits their targets. However, if all the player characters hit and at least one of them deal a crit hit, the escalation die goes up by +2. This could be a good variant for a sword & sorcery or dark fantasy game.

#### **VII) Hard Escalation Die (also known as the “Dark Sun” Variant)**

Do you want a truly badass meat grinder variant for truly tough heroes? OK then, but remember: you asked! In the “Dark Sun” variant, the escalation die only begins to increment (escalation die +1) if at least one of the player characters is Staggered. After that, follow the Hard Escalation Die rule above (for a truly merciless variant, add the Doom Clock rule).

#### **VIII) Dreaded Foe**

[Monster Nastier Special]

Dreaded Foes are terrible adversaries, avatars of fear and horror. If a monster is a



Dreaded Foe, then only one player character can use the escalation die each round (let the table decide after rolling initiative).

Heroes, however, are only as formidable as their nemesis. If the Chosen Hero of the round hits the Dreaded Foe, he can choose a second player character to gain the escalation die bonus.

## **IX) The Aggro**

[Monster Nastier Special]

Once hit in combat, the Aggro steals the spotlight. Until defeated the escalation die bonus only works against it. This Nastier was created for a “Super Blocker” type of monster, usually a big demon or aberration that crashes through the battlefield, breaking the heroes’ momentum. Like the Dreaded Foe above, use it sparingly. Following 13th Age transparency, the GM should warn the party that a particular monster has the Aggro Nastier Special.

## **X) Rising Momentum**

This variant is all about high-octane fantasy (but does requires some math). Here, the escalation die is also added to each player character’s initiative total. This means that – as the battle goes on – the player characters will start to rise above their foes. Another option is to grant the Rising Momentum rule as the result of an Icon Relationship roll.

## **XI) Swashbucklers & Flying Warriors**

When the escalation die is in play (ED +1), any player can Take the Die to gains the benefits of the Swashbuckler Talent. However, if he does that, he won’t gain the escalation die bonus to Attack Rolls.

This is a variant for swashbuckling or wuxia games where you really want lots of stunts, chandelier-swinging, and warriors jumping over rooftops. If you use it, maybe the Swashbuckler Talent (from the Rogue) should be removed.

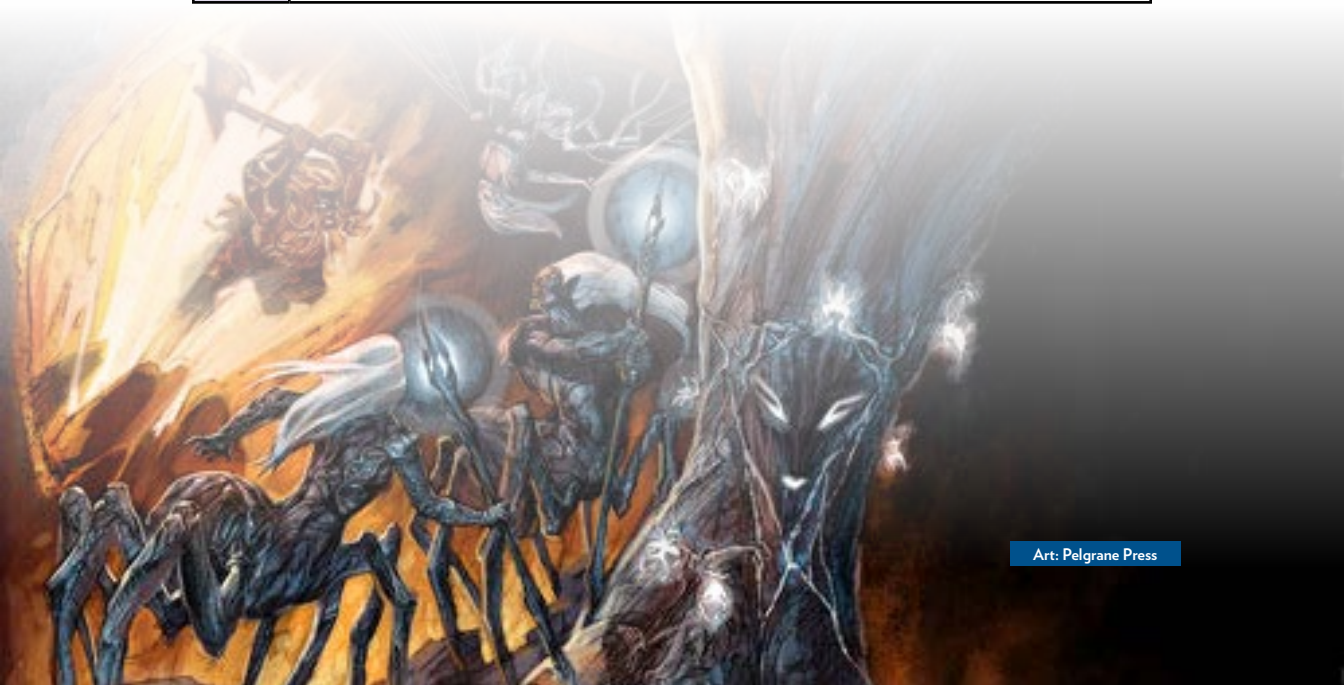
## **XII) The Favor of Fickle Gods**

This is a unique variant better used just once or twice, usually as a result of a quest, divine intervention, or Icon Relationship Roll (from dark, dubious, or mysterious Icons, like the Diabolist, Priestess, or Prince of Shadows). The party gains a boon to defeat a particular adversary or nemesis. During that combat, the escalation die starts at +6 and goes down each round, unless the party scores a crit. If the escalation die reaches 0 and the party’s nemesis is still up, they suffer an automatic campaign loss.

### XIII) Tides of Battle

This is another variant for those that enjoy random tables. In this variant, the GM rolls a d6 at the beginning of the every round of combat and consults the table below.

Roll	Escalation Die
1-2	Follow the normal rules.
3	Instead of an attack bonus, add the escalation die to each player character’s initiative.
4	Instead of an attack bonus, the party gains a pool of d6s to be added to damage rolls (hit or miss). The number of d6s is equal to the current escalation die. Double it for Champion Tier groups and triple it for Epic Tier. For example, if in the last round the escalation die was +2, the party gains 2d6 to spend. If the party was of 5th level, they gain 4d6 instead, and so on. The party must decide who spends the dice in the pool before the escalation die increments.
5	Ask everyone for a Relationship Roll. Unless a “6” shows up, the GM may add a Complication (but no benefit!) to the battle, based on the Icon with the highest number rolled (ties are decided by the GM). For example: if during a battle against goblins the party rolls their Relationship Rolls and no “6” shows up, but the highest number was a “4” for the Lich King, the GM could narrate that the fallen goblins rise as skeletons. If you can’t think of a Complication, the escalation die bonus is granted only to the monsters this round.
6	Ask everyone for a Relationship Roll. Any “6” that shows up gives the party the right to an Icon benefit (just one, choose among the options). If you can’t think of any benefits, let the player characters add the escalation die to their damage rolls (double at Champion Tier, triple at Epic Tier). 🎲



# CHALLENGING THE STORY: SKILL CHALLENGES IN 13TH AGE

BY LAWRENCE AUGUSTINE R. MINCOA

**S**kill challenges are what adventurers need to overcome when blade and sorcery isn't enough; navigating through trap-filled halls, sowing confusion within an enemy's army, and surviving the night at a haunted house with nothing more than a candle at hand are examples of skill challenges.

Originally from the 4th Edition of Dungeons & Dragons, skill challenges allow game masters to better pace what are typically non-combat scenarios. More than just a group of skill checks, a skill challenge makes each skill check push the group's narrative towards a goal. And while failing a skill challenge (by failing three skill checks) usually means that the group still reaches their goals, the end result makes things a lot harder for the players in the long run.

Thanks to how 13th Age is designed, taking this idea from D&D 4E is relatively simple:

- Consider the overarching goal of the skill challenge. For example, the party must travel through Dire Wood, stop a cultist ritual, etc.
- Determine the environment where the skill challenge takes place. This helps determine the environmental DCs that you will use. Scaring off goblins might be an Adventurer Tier environment, while dealing with the merchants of Glitterhaegen might be a Champion Tier challenge, so the DCs of each check would have to fit the chosen environment.
- Divide the skill challenge into multiple phases. The more phases you have within the skill challenge, the more complex it becomes. The simplest skill challenges would have one phase, while the most complex skill challenges can have as many as five or six phases.
- Imagine what sort of checks are best suited for each phase within the skill challenge. These would be your primary checks, although players are highly encouraged to think of their own ways to deal with each phase. For very complex scenarios (or as a reward for very good role-playing), you can have primary checks grant two or more successes, or even offset previous failed checks.
- Establish the expected consequences for succeeding or failing a skill challenge.

Usually, succeeding a skill challenge means you reach the goal without any problems, or even with additional rewards like wealth or magic items. Failing a check could result in a slow spiral towards a campaign loss (or the most sadistic GMs might even consider each failed check as a campaign loss).

### **Simple Example:**

Challenge: Stop a cultist ritual

Tier: Adventurer

Complexity: 1 phase, 3 successes before 3 failures

#### **Description:**

Imagine yourself with your companions, entering a chamber where a ritual is going on. The mayor's daughter is on the sacrificial altar, and she and the head cultist are wrapped in a fiery red aura, surrounded by a dozen other cultists who don't appear armed. The ritual seems almost complete. What do you do?

Possible Skills: A skill involving magic could be used to disrupt the magic surrounding the two; an athlete could charge into the circle; and perhaps a talkative character could provide a distraction while the party's rogue moves to steal the ruby used by the head cultist as part of the ritual.

Success/Failure: The mayor's daughter's life lies in the balance. If the group fails, she dies and the cultists complete the summoning ritual as they'd intended. If the group succeeds after rolling one or two failures, the mayor's daughter is saved, but the head cultist sacrifices himself, and a lesser demon is summoned. If the group succeeds with no failed rolls, the mayor's daughter is saved, and no summoning occurs.

### **Complex Example:**

Challenge: Escape the Red Wastes

Tier: Champion

Complexity: 4 phases, 5-9 successes before dying (see Success/Failure)

#### **Description:**

Phase 1: You find yourselves lost in the middle of nowhere. From the looks of it, you seem to be in the Red Wastes. How do you plan on getting out alive? (1-2 successes)

**Phases 2:** You've found an oasis, but along the waters you see a mangy dire wolf. What do you do? (1-2 successes)



**Phase 3:** You've come across a pilgrimage of kobolds who have come to worship the Red and his righteous fury. They might have extra food and water on them (or they could be food for you, if you're that desperate). What do you do? (2-3 successes)

**Phase 4:** A cool wind hits the party, but this moment of relief suddenly turns for the worse as drops of rain quickly turn into a torrential downpour. How do you get out of this predicament? (1-2 successes)

**Possible skills:** A survivalist could help scour the lands for food and water; a tracker could help find animals that may have discovered ways to survive the lands; and a navigator could try to use the stars and shadows to find their bearings. Specific phases may have their own skills to cater to them.

Success/Failure: Successes may result in extra rations, ultimately leading up to their survival out of the wasteland, and treating them to a moment of lush green and other non-red colors. Each failure would require that they make a normal saving throw, with a bonus to the roll equal to their Constitution modifier; failing the save means they lose two recoveries, while success means they lose only one.

Special note: try to include 1-2 fights between each phase, to make losing recoveries feel more threatening. Additional harshness could be implemented, because this is the Red Wastes we're talking about.

For more information, I find that Matt Colville does an excellent job of explaining skill challenges in his [YouTube video](#).

Have fun! 🎲

# VOICES FROM THE OVERWORLD

A MISCELLANY OF ADVICE

## GM Advice Learned from New World of Darkness

Start with one of the level 2 Organized Play sessions provided by Pelgrane Press. These are the greatest ways to get used to combat and montage scenes in 13th Age.

- One Unique Things can be woven into the campaign gradually; you don't have to do them immediately, or at all.
- Let the players brainstorm ways to use their Icon Rolls of 5's and 6's. In my games, 6's are an automatic pass (story or combat) when the players want to use them. Any 5's are also considered a pass, but with a minor complication or inconvenience (story or combat). Instead of getting past the guard fully unnoticed (a 6), the door creaks loudly behind you (a 5). You get to lock the door behind you, but the alarm sounds, and the guards know you're around somewhere (same 5).
- Use tokens, coins, pebbles, bottle caps, etc. for players to keep visual track of their 5's and 6's from the Icon Rolls.
- When making a story for your adventure/campaign, don't invest too much time on the script. Forcing the players to continue along your scripted path (i.e., railroading) against their will can drag the fun down for everyone. If they go off course, good options are to either a) improvise a side plot to cover this unexpected path, or b) improvise a distraction that will get their interest piqued into exploring your scripted trail again.
- Think of yourself more as a Narrator and less as a Game Master. The players are the actors, and the RPG world/setting is everyone's performance stage. The players want to unravel/create a story just as much as you do.

~Andrew Hebert

## Icon Improvisation Advice

To add some surprise for both your players and yourself, the GM, in your session, use the d12 icon die at the beginning of the game session. Whichever icon symbol comes up, use that during the night's game. For example: one of your players is playing a paladin whose positive icon is the Priestess. They're trying to enter a hellhole to confront its ruler. The paladin says a prayer to his deity and asks for some sort of distraction to help him enter the temple. Because you had previously rolled the icon die, and the Priestess came up, you decide that a flash of holy energy comes down from the heavens and incinerates two guards who were standing watch. Yes, it's a little OP, but the players love it, which is all that really matters.

~Dorian Knight

# THE SHADOWS OF THE ABYSS

## ASSASSIN TROUPE

BY PEFTHALIE NELSON RAMOS

An error in Issue 2 prevented this from being presented in its entirety. Here is the complete article.

### ICON ASSOCIATIONS: DIABOLIST & THE PRINCE OF SHADOWS

A group of mad assassins that are most proficient at removing their targets. They hunt only the targets chosen by their prefects. Blindly obeying orders, believing that they are the agents of a righteous cause, to free people from the tyranny of order.

The method for which the prefects of the shadows of the abyss chose targets vary. Some kill for coin, others choose targets of authority to sow discord and chaos in communities. Others still leave it up to the will of chaos, believing that through discerning some convoluted series of randomness (such as the random artifacting of thread count in a sheet woven by a specific and “magical” loom), that they are given the names of those that must die.

### HOW TO USE THIS FACTION DURING GAMEPLAY

The shadows of the abyss assassin troupes are separated by their prefects, each operating slightly differently from one another. The goal when using any member of these troupes is to “mysteriously or at least without discernible rhyme or reason”, assassinate someone.

As a plot device, consider the unfortunate end of a handful of officials leading inexorably towards civil unrest and (insert evil giggle here) ultimately revolt. This could be a smaller engagement, being the acts of a single assassin & having the players discover the assassin before the escalation of the plot (possibly allowing for the removal of additional “targets”



while the players are trying to stop the assassin). Alternatively this can be a larger story arch and even the seed to an ongoing campaign by having the players both discover and trying to stop an entire troupe of assassins. Possibly tying together several seemingly unrelated aggressive acts (like a tribe of orcs attacking a town at the same moment that towns lead warrior “lost” his son for example) to the assassination of “key people”.

As an icon relationship. There are of course 3 ways this can happen, depending on the nature of your relationship with an icon. Note that the icons this faction are associated with are the Diabolist and the prince of shadows. Depending upon the Prefect of any specific troupe, the icon association may differ. Nemo Haze for example is associated with the Diabolist and the lich.

**Good** – If the players character has the “shadows of the abyss assassin” background, they may be given the name of a target that must be eliminated. Additionally, a character may be able to read the patterns of chaotic events to extract some bonus towards the completion of a task.

**Neutral** – The character has some knowledge of one of the troupes and its prefect. Choosing to associate themselves with that troupe and their actions when it suites them. However doing so is a dangerous game to be playing.

**Bad** – a bad relationship may, well . . . have your name be the one coming up as the target of one of the assassin troupes (good luck).

## THE PREFECT'S OF THE TROUPE

Each troupe of assassins has its own prefect, and the entire troupe may be flavored differently dependent on its prefect. Again, using Nemo Haze as an example, His troupe consists almost entirely of intelligent undead & like their prefect, may also be consummate necromancers/spellcasters. Keep this in mind when designing your own prefects (yes, you can and should create your own prefects to better suite your gaming world). Say for example, that the prefect you create is a dwarf-forged, that prefects troupe might be primarily other dwarf-forged and employ mechanically elaborate devises to achieve their goals. Or simple just be demonically infused machines . . . just saying . . .

## NEW BACKGROUND: SHADOW OF THE ABYSS, ASSASSIN

Predators that stalk prey, waiting patiently to strike, blending with their environment until that one moment where they can reveal their deadly skills.

You are secretly a member of the shadows of the abyss assassin troupe, waiting to be notified by your prefect of a being who's ability to take breath is no longer needed. (You should have a positive icon relationship with either the Diabolist or Prince of Shadows).



You are a defector from the shadows of the abyss assassin troupe, recognizing that your blind servitude to your prefect would bring you to ruin. Every day you draw breath is in defiance to your prefects will & threatens to reveal the troupe, a fact that has you on the run and looking twice at every shadowy place for those that you once killed for. *(You should have a negative relationship with either the Diabolist or the prince of shadows).*

### **Associated skills**

Stealth/misdirection, Tracking, Acrobatics/parkour/free running

Ability to resist or see deception.

Skill with crafting, using and identifying poisons.

Skill with crafting & identifying anti-toxins & poison antidotes.

---

## **YORALIA** (Prefect of the Shadows of the Abyss)

She is the law amongst the lawless, the intent behind the malice, and the lens from which chaos cleanses the world. Born of tainted blood and the influence of the demonic ever flowing through her veins, she is seen as a leader amongst the mad, but she is only one of many.

**Race:** Demon-touched

**Icon association:** Diabolist and the Prince of Shadows

**Faction association:** The Shadows of the Abyss

**Physical description:** A demon-touched with a crooked smile and color shifting eyes.

**Motivations:** Freedom from her shackles. . . the chains that bind and weigh down every creature to walk this world are those of the mind, being so meticulously built, link by link, since birth. Chains of infinite power, as most know not of their binding, their entrapment. She will save all from their enslavement to the illusion of law and order.

**Secret:** Though preaching chaos and seeming totally mad, she meticulously chooses her targets, weighing the pros and cons of her actions. 🎲



# ESPECIALLY PASTY

BY MIKHAIL BONCH-OSMOLOVSKIY

*There's one thing you have going for you when fighting a giant: you can see them coming. Unless, of course, you are dealing with a stormfisher giant. Then your only warning would be your friends disappearing one by one in a flash of lightning, leaving naught but smoking boots behind them.*

## STORMFISHER GIANT

*Huge 9th level wrecker [GIANT]*

**Initiative:** +15

**R: Lightning Spear** + 14 vs AC (nearby or far away enemy) - 100 lightning damage if the target is standing on a cloud, or 150 lightning damage otherwise.

Natural even hit: The target is moved to engage the giant.

**Stomp** +14 vs PD - 75 damage, and the target becomes stuck (see fighting in the clouds, below). If already stuck, the target falls through the cloud.

**Building thunder:** If fighting alongside a storm giant, uses of lightning spear count towards the giant's building thunder.

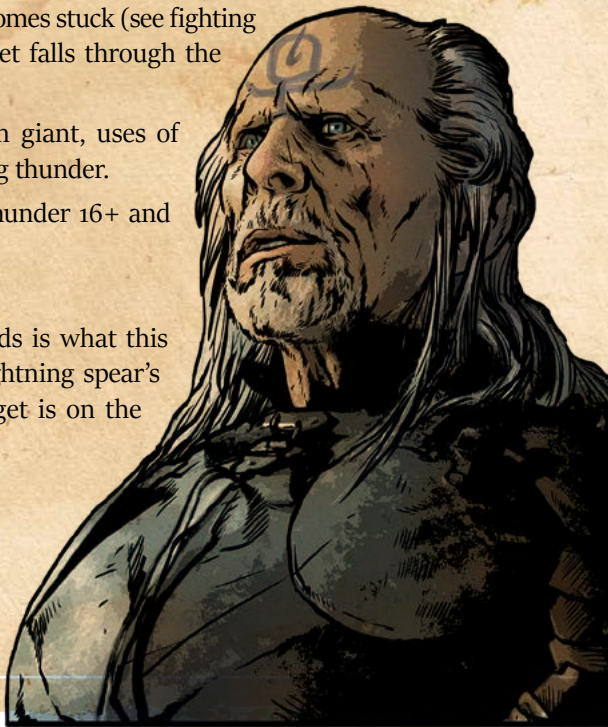
**Storm born:** The stormfisher giant has resist thunder 16+ and resist lightning 16+.

**Nastier specials:**

**Master fisher:** hooking people up into the clouds is what this giant does, it's their cool thing. So let them. Lightning spear's movement effect triggers on any hit if the target is on the ground.

**AC 25 | PD 24 | MD 20 | HP 540**

Art: Rick Hershey





## **Fighting in the clouds**

Storm giant, fishers or otherwise, can walk on the clouds just fine. Other characters, however, sink through. On their turn, characters can make a DC 25 skill check as part of their move action in order to remain on top. If by the end of a character's turn they haven't succeeded on this check, they become stuck.

A character stuck this way can spend a move action to make another DC 25 skill check to climb up. If they're still stuck at the end of their turn, they fall through.

Falling from a cloud causes significant damage - 5d20 sounds about right, though feel free to knock off a die or three for creative solutions players come up with mid-fall. Flapping hands really fast probably doesn't work.

## **Unfair tactics**

Stormfisher giants don't get off their clouds if they can help it. Instead, they're happy to bring you to them. That's how they typically start a fight, way up in the clouds, fishing. Should the "catch" prove too troublesome, they aren't above getting rid of it by stomping it through the clouds and back to the cold hard ground. Catch and release, as it were.

Most importantly, a lone stormfisher giant probably isn't there to kill the party. For some, it's a hobby, leaving charred and splattered bodies all over the countryside to the puzzlement of locals. Others believe sorcerers to be a great cure for a variety of storm giant ailments, the more lightning-related spells they know the better. In a pinch, any spellcaster will do. These sorcerers are to be ground up into a fine dust, of course - unless they can convince the storm giant otherwise. Finally, someone like a bard would make a fine pet for a storm giant's daughter.

If, however, the giants are there to kill the party, stormfisher giant teamed up with a storm giant from the core 13A book make for a horrifyingly effective combination, demolishing the unlucky heroes one at a time. 🎲



# FACES OF THE EMPIRE

## NEMO HAZE (Prefect of the Shadows of the Abyss)

BY ΠΕΤΗΛΙΕ ΠΕΛΣΟΝ ΡΑΜΟΣ

Some men seek fame, others wealth, others still search the world for the secret to eternal youth. Nemo, however, hunts for things that are far greater. He seeks for that which should remain hidden, for things that no language has dared to name. There is no one thing in this mortal world that can satisfy the curiosity of one such as Nemo . . . Only that which the mad consider forbidden . . .

**Race:** Human

**Icon association:** Diabolist and the Lich King

**Faction association:** The Shadows of the Abyss

**Physical description:** Nemo is a spindly man, like flesh tightly wrapped around bone. There is a vicious wound on his face that he hides behind his mask.

**Motivations:** Power. As the Diabolist is the prime example, Nemo delves into magics beyond the veil of sense. Combining the dark art of necromancy with the forbidden, Nemo forges his own expression of power.

**Secret:** Mortals are unpredictable and difficult to control, even ones as fanatical as the Shadows of the Abyss. So unbeknownst to his troupe, through his magics, he has transformed them into intelligent (and controllable) undead.

**Usual Location:** Wherever the forbidden can be found.

**One Unique Thing:** Walks the line between the living and the undead. 🎲





# CREATURES OF THE EMPIRE: DEMOGORGON

BY JOHN MARVIN

Large 15th level caster [demon]

Initiative: +20

**C: Soul blast** +20 vs. MD (1d4 nearby enemies in a group)—140 psychic damage

Natural even hit: The target is weakened (save ends).

Natural odd hit: If the target is already weakened, it's also stunned until end of its next turn.

Natural 3, 6, or 9: The target is confused (save ends).

**C: Barbed Tentacles** +20 vs. AC (one nearby enemy)—80 damage, and the target is pulled to Demogorgon, who engages it.

Natural even miss: 25 damage.

Limited use: 1/round, as a quick action.

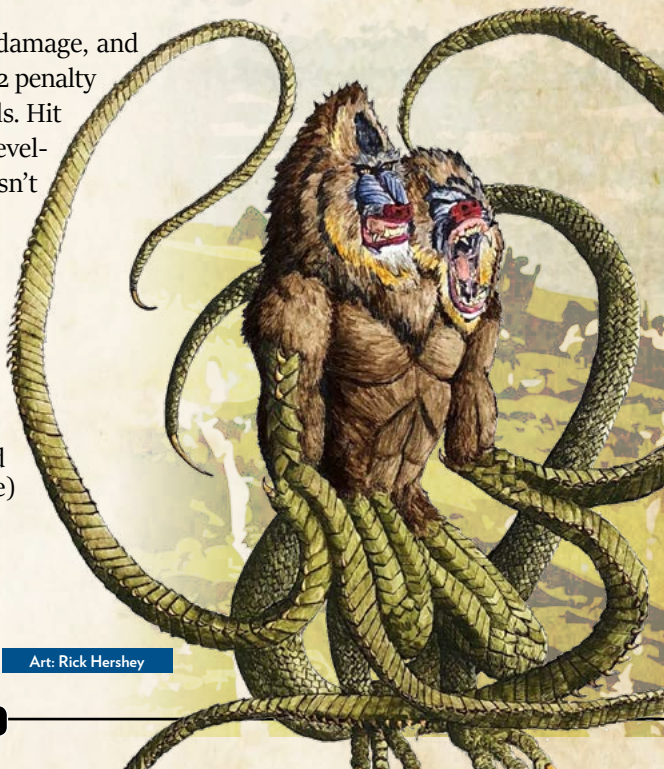
**Fiendish bite** +20 vs. AC (2 attacks)—140 damage, and until the end of the battle the target takes a -2 penalty to attacks, defenses, and level-based d20 rolls. Hit points, feats, weapon damage, and other level-based benefits don't change. (The penalty isn't cumulative.)

## All Demon Abilities

- 1: True seeing
- 2: Resist fire 18+
- 3: Invisibility when first staggered
- 4: Resist energy 12+
- 5: Fear aura less than 200 HP (dazed and do not gain benefit from Escalation Die) vs. engaged creatures
- 6: Teleport 1d3 times each battle
- 7: Demonic speed
- 8: Gate in allied demon (Hook Demon)

AC 30 PD 28 HP 1600 MD 28

Art: Rick Hershey



# BACK MATTER

This one was hard. It took a little longer than we'd planned. To make it up to you we presented an extra large, you might say, giant-sized issue! A giant-sized issue for Giants in the Earth.

If you were an avid Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) player in the late 70's and early 80's you might have read a little magazine called "Dragon." In the magazine there was a fun little series of articles titled, "Giants in the Earth." The articles converted classic characters from fiction and literature into D&D.

Though we did not approach this issue in terms of replicating characters from popular fiction - instead we said, "Hey, cyclops are really big, like giant!" and "Here are interesting characters with big personalities to populate your game," and finally "Man this issue is huge!" And really, just an old man's nostalgia on my part.

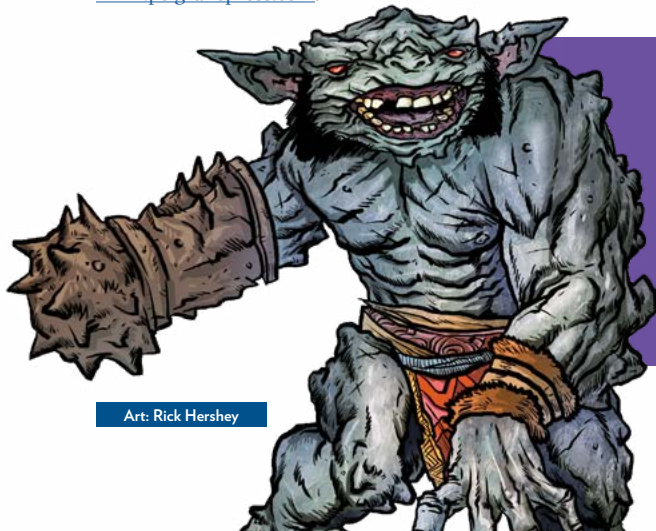
So, what's next? Oh, just look at the last page.

Until next time. 🎲

Sherm Sheftall | April 2018

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Art: Rick Hershey

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# Gods and Icons



# Icons and Conditions



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