



Phelantar's Guide

to

Monsters of the Forgotten Sagas part 3

for

The 13th Age Roleplaying Game



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Introduction

The first two parts of Monsters of the Forgotten Sagas were a lot of fun to write. I got a lot of feedback regarding both the monsters themselves as well as the “designers commentary” bits, with many of you enjoying both parts. I really enjoyed being able to revisit those designs, discuss what was going through my mind when I created them, and examine what I could have done now with the benefit of both hindsight and more experience creating monsters.

Part one covered the first 17 sessions of Forgotten Sagas of the 13th which was roughly the first third of the campaign. This second part covered the next 24 sessions before the party found themselves in Forge. This part covers the final part of the campaign, the last 16 or so sessions up to the grand finale. The creatures in this part tend to follow much of the same pattern as part two, as the plot was really pretty focused when the party arrived in Forge. Cultists, duergar, and their allies were the main foes to be found here. However, this part also ventures into Champion Tier with at least one creature topping out at level 7.

If you're interested in watching the campaign for yourself, maybe as you read about the monsters as I'm using and seeing how they worked back then, you can find it on Youtube [here](#) and if you'd like to see the campaign on Obsidian Portal you can find it [here](#).

If you are interested in following along with my current campaign (Dark Lantern's Light) as it plays out, you can find it on Youtube [here](#) and on Obsidian Portal [here](#) with livestreams taking place every two weeks on Wednesdays at 5pm PST/8pm EST on Google Hangouts. Stop by the stream as we're playing and you can comment, ask questions, or otherwise participate as we play!

Renegade Dwarves

Dwarven Assassin

Level 4 Archer (Humanoid)

Init: +9

R: Autocrossbow +9 vs AC - 6 damage and 4 ongoing poison damage

Natural Even Hit - Make another attack at a -2 to the attack roll (max 3 attacks)

Natural 16+ Hit - Target is Hampered (save ends)

Bayonet +8 vs AC - 13 Fire Damage

Natural 16+ Hit - Immediately make one Autocrossbow attack against the target

Miss - 4 damage

Evasion - On a missed attack against the Dwarf Assassin, it may immediately pop free from all engaged targets.

AC 19

PD 18 **HP 52**

MD 15

Corrupt Guardsman

Level 4 Trooper (Humanoid)

Init: +6

Mancatcher +10 vs AC - 12 damage and the target is Stuck (Save Ends)

Natural Even Hit - Target is also Hampered (Save Ends)

R: Gas Bag +8 vs PD vs 1d3 nearby enemies - 8 poison damage and the target is Dazed (Save Ends)

Shield Drill - Allies engaged with the same target as the Corrupt Guardsman gain a +2 to AC and PD.

AC 21

PD 18 **HP 60**

MD 13

Dwarven Thug

Level 3 Mook (Humanoid)

Init: +6

Spiked Club +8 vs AC - 6 damage

Miss - 3 damage

Brute - Dwarven Thugs crit on a 19+

Scarred and Tough - Ignore the first 6 damage done to the mob of Dwarven Thugs each turn

AC 19

PD 17 **HP 13 (Mook)**

MD 13

Mook: Remove 1 Dwarven Thug for every 13 points of damage done to the mob

Designer's Notes

Although the players to this point were mostly dealing with duergar, they were aware that there was at least one legitimate Dwarven clan working with the renegades. The players had never fought this clan, but that wouldn't last. The Ambershard clan was taken from the Penny Arcade Acquisitions Inc. play sessions and I'd actually intended to bring in the Acquisitions Inc. characters in as NPCs, but the situation never played out that way. But nevertheless, the Ambershards were a part of the campaign. They had considerable power in Forge and eventually started working against the players directly, so I needed some dwarven brutes to throw at the heroes along with the duergar and void cultists.

The assassin was a mainstay for the rest of the campaign. Because frankly he's lives up to his name. With some good rolls, he can ruin a character or a party. I dropped his ranged damage slightly in this version. In the original, he did about 4 more damage (at least) on an autocrossbow hit and I think that I didn't really correctly account for either the multiple attacks or the ongoing poison damage. As written here, this is still a beast, but I'd feel more comfortable using this one in greater numbers than I did the original. This could also represent some sort of hunter or elven sharpshooter as well

The corrupt guardsman is one of my favorite designs. Which means, of course, that I only got to use it I think once in the campaign. I think mechanically it fits the idea of a guardsman very well, catching and keeping people from moving or fighting effectively. It's an enemy which synergizes well with the assassin up above, forcing players into some really hard tactical decisions. Scaled down (or up) it could probably represent any kind of city guard or militia member or possibly even like a bounty hunter or somesuch. Imagine the heroes pissing off some powerful person and having them send some of the assassins and corrupt guardsmen to take them dead or alive.

For the Dwarven thugs, they're really not all that special. I hate to talk about one of my own designs, but it's true. These are perfectly functional, beefy and dangerous with good rolls. They will also last a little bit longer than other mooks, but not so much as to make them frustrating. Really, they're just a meat and potato design that can serve pretty well as any kind of thief or bandit or alley mugger. They work well in a fight, but aren't going to set the world on fire. And sometimes that's okay. As a designer, sometimes I have a tendency to make things more complicated than they necessarily need to be. Sometimes you just need a hammer. Not a hammer with built in stud-finder, accelerometer, and laser sight. And these are a good hammer, to go with other more complicated monster tools.

Troupe of the Dark King

Role Player (Original)

Level 3 Mook (Humanoid)

Init: +8

Stage Weapon +8 vs AC - 6 damage and pop free

Miss - 3 damage

Flynnning +7 vs MD - Once per turn as a quick action. Next ally to attack this target has a +2 to attack and damage

Troupe Tactics - +1 to all defenses as long as half of the mob is still alive

AC 18

PD 15 **HP 10 (Mook)**

MD 16

Mook: Remove 1 Role Player for every 10 points of damage done to the mob

Role Player (Revised)

Level 3 Mook (Humanoid)

Init: +7

Stage Weapon +8 vs AC - 6 damage and pop free

Background Player - Ranged attacks against the Role Player must roll 2d20 and take the lower of the two rolls if a visible Star Bard or Illusionist is nearby.

Troupe Tactics - +1 to all defenses as long as half of the mob is still alive

AC 18

PD 15 **HP 10 (Mook)**

MD 16

Mook: Remove 1 Role Player for every 10 points of damage done to the mob

Stage Hand

Level 3 Trooper (Humanoid)

Init: +5

Toolkit +8 vs AC - 10 damage

Natural 16+ Hit - +5 damage

Miss - +1 to all attacks for the rest of battle (Max: +3)

Patch it Together - Quick Action 1/turn. Heal an ally for 9 HP. Ally is -2 to attacks until their next turn.

Supporting Player - Allies engaged with the same target deal +2 damage

AC 17

PD 14 **HP 60**

MD 10

Illusionist

Level 3 Spoiler (Humanoid)

Init: +6

R: Phantasmal Bolt +8 vs MD - 9 damage

Natural Even Hit - Deal 5 damage to a different nearby enemy.

Sleight of Hand Stab +8 vs AC - 8 damage

Fireworks - Quick action, 2 times per battle. Turn invisible until the start of the next turn or until an attack is made.

From The Darkness - Enemies hit by the Illusionist while invisible take a -2 to attacks until the start of the Illusionist's next turn.

AC 18

PD 15 **HP 10 (Mook)**

MD 16

Star Bard

Level 4 Spoiler (Humanoid)

Init: +9

Razor-Sharp Wit (and Rapier) +8 vs MD - 10 damage and the target is Dazed until the start of the Star Bard's next turn.

Natural Even Miss - Make a second attack at a -2 to the roll

R: Song of Discord +7 vs MD - 10 damage and the target is Vulnerable (Save Ends)

Natural 16+ Hit - Target is Confused (Save Ends) instead of Vulnerable

Miss - 5 damage

Slippery Star - The Star Bard takes no miss damage

One-Liner - Twice per battle as a free action, make up a witty or cheesy line from the Star Bard. If half or more of the players laugh or groan at this line, gain +2 to attack and +4 to damage until the start of the next turn. If the next attack after the One-Liner reduces a hero to 0 HP, this bonus remains for the rest of battle. This effect stacks up to twice.

AC 19

PD 15 HP 50

MD 17

Designer's Notes

Not entirely what you might have expected here, I imagine. In the middle of political intrigue, cultist actions, and corrupted dwarves fighting for power, a troupe of actors seems out of place. The story behind this is that these actors are inspired by the idea of the play *The King In Yellow*. These actors are secretly cultists who are using their play, which is actually a magical ritual, to damage sanity and erode reality to allow the rebirth of the dead gods more easily. I think it was a fun concept and the idea of entertainers as enemies is one that transplants surprisingly well elsewhere.

The role player is an example of a monster I overbuilt. As a mook, giving it an attack (with miss damage), a quick attack that makes other enemies better, *and* a trait on top of it was too much. I think it wasn't a bad monster... had it not been a mook. The idea of having 5 or more of these running around in a fight would be a nightmare for players. In my campaign they were trashed before they could do much, but I recognise that they were a problem. The revised version is IMO still just as thematic but more balanced. I like the idea that it's harder to attack these background people when someone who is a bigger star is around. I might refluff them as some sort of shadowy or sneaky mob, like a group of thieves or assassin apprentices.

The stage hand is a pretty classic supporting player. He makes others around him better, either by healing (with a cost) or making them do more damage. And in case the players decide to

eliminate him first to keep him from healing, he's got enough HP to keep him around for a while and he can dish out some damage as well. Reflavored, he'd make a decent cleric, especially for a god or goddess of pain or suffering.

The nice thing, I expect, about being a performer in a fantasy land like this is being able to use magic and illusions for entertainment. Forget CGI, puppets, or costumes. Just hire a wizard to be able to do all of your special effects right then and there, more realistic than any kind of movie effect. Also useful when you need to blast pesky heroes who come around investigating why people have gone insane after going to see your performances. Mechanically speaking, the Illusionist is a ranged attacker who can spread the damage around and cause a lot of trouble by going invisible to avoid any reprisals a couple of times per battle. However, disappearing could leave any role players around a bit more vulnerable, so as a GM you have to consider the consequences your timing.

Then we have the Star Bard. The focus point, very likely, in any fight with these actors and entertainers. Not just because it's the highest level creature here and thus cable of doing the most damage, but because the one-liner ability kind of forces the GM to *make* it the focus in order to get that bonus. I really like those "meta" abilities where what the players do, not the characters, has an effect on the battle. Especially if the one-liner ends up dropping a character, turning it into a Bond or Anrie-style comment and making the bard better for the whole battle. The status effects that the star bard can inflict, both melee and range, really can mess with a party and their plans. Not sure how I'd re flavor this into something different. It's pretty focused, mechanically. It could be some sort of shadow dancer, minion of chaos, or stylish musical spy.

Cult of the Void and allies

Void Preacher

Level 5 Leader (Humanoid)

Init: +8

Flaming Brand +11 vs AC - 18 fire damage

Natural Even Hit - Target takes a -2 to defenses until the start of the Void Preacher's next turn

R: Unspeakable Words +9 vs MD - 13 damage and all allies deal +5 damage to the target (Save Ends)

Natural 1-5 Miss - Allies deal +5 damage to the target until the start of the Void Preacher's next turn.

Natural 16+ Hit - Attack a second nearby enemy. No enemy may be attacked more than once this way.

Aura of the Divine Dead - Allies ignore the first 5 points of damage until the Void Preacher is Staggered. Once Staggered, allies instead gain a +2 to crit range.

Blessing of Endings - Quick Action once per turn. Up to 2 non-mook allies gain +2 to their next attack roll. If that attack hits, that ally regains 10 HP

AC 21

PD 16 HP 75

MD 18

Tormach?

Level 6 Wrecker (Humanoid)

Init: +13

Precision Strike +13 vs AC - 21 damage.

This damage crits on an 18+.

Natural Even Miss - Attack again at a -4 to attack and -6 to damage.

Quick Kick +10 vs PD - 10 damage and the target pops free. Usable once per turn as a quick action.

Smoke Bomb - Immediate interrupt. Become invisible until the start of the next turn. Increase the crit range by 2 for the next attack.

Poisoned Dagger - Twice per battle, add 3d6 poison damage to any attack, even if that attack misses.

AC 22

PD 19 HP 85

MD 17

Deathstalker

Level 4 Mook (Humanoid)

Init: +10

Dread Claws +8 vs AC - 7 damage

Miss - 4 damage

Enemy of Life - Enemies who end their turn engaged with the Deathstalker take 4 damage

Void Blast - Upon reaching 0 HP, deal 2 damage to 3 nearby enemies.

AC 18

PD 18 **HP 17 (Mook)**

MD 16

Mook: Remove 1 Deathstalker for every 17 points of damage done to the mob

Void Zealot

Level 5 Mook (Humanoid)

Init: +10

Furious Swings +10 vs AC - 9 damage

Nat Odd Hit or Miss - +1 to attack and damage for the rest of battle (Max: +3 to each)

Martyr of Unlife - On death, one non-mook ally heals 9 HP and gains +1 to damage for the rest of battle.

AC 19

PD 17 **HP 16 (Mook)**

MD 19

Mook: Remove 1 Void Zealot for every 16 points of damage done to the mob

Corrupted Ambershard

Level 5 Trooper (Humanoid)

Init: +8

Waraxe +10 vs AC - 16 damage and the target pops free

Miss - 7 damage

Charge - Deal 8 additional damage on a hit if the corrupted Ambershard moves before attacking.

Dirty Fighting - Enemies who end their turn engaged with the corrupted Ambershard take 5 damage

AC 21

PD 19 **HP 68**

MD 15

Ambershard Commander

Level 5 Leader (Humanoid)

Init: +9

Warstaff +10 vs AC - 18 damage.

Natural 16+ Hit - Make a second attack at a -2.

Crossbow +9 vs AC - 10 damage and an engaged ally may immediately make an attack

Get A Move On! - One nearby ally may immediately move or disengage with a +2 bonus. Usable once per turn as a quick action.

Commanding Presence - Nearby allies gain a +2 to saving throws

AC 22

PD 19 **HP 85**

MD 17

Designer's Notes

More cultists of the dead gods, their Ambershard allies, and an unusual addition to their forces. Because disturbing cults devoted to deceased divine beings are fun for the whole family. As is obvious, these are creeping into champion tier. It was about this time I was taking it a lot less easy on the players as they were making comments about how they were killing everything and having no problems.

The void preacher looks nasty. And he is. He's a pseudo-boss of sorts, which is why he has so many abilities. I always pictured this one as a classic preacher out of a Western movie, hat and all, with a disturbing smile on his face as he swings a book in one hand a flaming brand in the other. Admonishing the heroes the whole time for not giving in to the inevitability and embrace of nothingness. In terms of powers, yes, he's more overbuilt than I might otherwise create a monster. I wanted him to be an engine of the heroes destruction, either directly or indirectly. He makes allies better, makes heroes worse, and should be the biggest target on the battlefield. As a GM, you have to keep him protected, even as dangerous as he can be. If I were to re flavor him for another situation, I wouldn't stray from the roots. I'd make him a priest or cleric of a dark god. I would probably remove some of his stat block as well, dropping one of his attacks and probably one of his traits. He's just got a bit too much going on for an enemy that you're going to use pretty often.

Then there's Tormach? And yes, the question mark is important. One of the characters, Tormach, had a lot of clones running around. What the player didn't know is that he was a component in a ritual that would have brought unraveled the world and released the dead gods. He was a vortex of chaotic energy that would be released at the apex of the ritual. A number of different clones were made because the ritual was still being developed and they needed a few of them around to sacrifice. This particular clone decided that he hated being a clone and made a deal that would give him power once the world was uncreated and recreated by the dead gods. As a result, it meant that he needed to stop the PC Tormach, which would have the added bonus of removing another clone from the world. Mechanically? Tormach? is a crit machine. Turn invisible, shank someone, then kick them away. A couple of times per battle, bump up the damage even if there's a miss. He's an assassin, more or less. Which is how I would re flavor him, if I needed to. Alternatively to the poison damage like that, I would give him a dose of different poison from my earlier Patreon project dealing with poisons. That way a PC would have an ongoing problem even if the assassin was killed. In fact, I might run an encounter where the assassin is the only enemy in a sea of innocent NPCs and the assassin just wants to get one good (critical) stab to release a debilitating poison before fleeing. The players have to get from one side of the map to the other while this is going on, maybe protecting an NPC. Fun times.

Then we have two cultist mooks. The Deathstalker is a living human who has a shard of void energy within them and they're more or less a walking weapon. Attacking, dying, or just being engaged, they deal out damage. And since there's probably at least 5 of them around, it really

really adds up. Which is the point. These things are dangerous and need to be killed as far away from the group as possible. The Void Zealot is similar in that it still does something on death, but instead of hurting the PCs, it helps its allies. As I mentioned before, I do tend to overly use the “mooks do something on death” trick. My tendency to recycle mechanics I like, such as that one, is something of a crutch. That doesn’t mean that these mechanics are bad, but if you do something too often then it becomes a lot less interesting or unique. In this particular case I am somewhat more okay with it because the two on-death effects are almost opposites of one another. One blows up and hurts enemies, the other heals and helps allies. They’re not quite different sides of the same coin, but close enough for my tastes here.

Then we have the Corrupted Ambershard. This creature’s schtick is pretty obvious. Charge in, clobber someone, and smack them across the battlefield before doing it again the next turn. When it gets to do this, it’s a hell of a wrecking ball. It’s especially dangerous when it gets past the more heavily armored or touch party members and into the squishier characters. To say nothing of the fact that popping free can mean that the corrupted Ambershard could be kicking characters into pits, into fires, off to engage with other enemies, or or something else. When it gets locked down or isn’t hitting, it’s still a dangerous enemy but not nearly the same kind of threat.

The Ambershard Commander is the sort of enemy that players will learn to hate if they don’t get to it quickly. If it can stay back and take potshots with the crossbow, directing other allies to move and protect it, it’s an enemy that is more dangerous than its stat block suggests. It works especially well with the Corrupted Ambershard, who can benefit from the additional movement if it misses an attack. Using the intercept rule is important when fighting with these because otherwise savvy players will get to it as soon as possible and make it less effective.

Reflavoring the Ambershards for another task is probably simple. Soldiers, legionaries, bandits, other adventurers, mercenaries, or any kind of martial combatant would work just fine.

Church of the Fallen Gods

Fallen Paladin

Level 6 Trooper (Undead)

Init: +9

Holy Strike +11 vs AC - 21 holy damage

Natural 16+ Hit - An additional 9 damage

Miss - +2 to the next attack roll. Stacks up to +6

Shield Bash +9 vs PD - 11 damage and the target takes a -2 to their next attack. Usable as a quick action once per turn.

Warrior of the Fallen Gods - Resist 12+ Holy and ignore all miss damage

AC 22

PD 20 **HP 80**

MD 18

Cleric of the Fallen

Level 7 Leader (Undead)

Init: +11

Scythe of Lost Fate +12 vs AC - 20 damage and the target is Vulnerable (Save ends)

Natural 16+ Hit - The save vs Vulnerable is a hard (16+) save.

R: Touch of the Fallen +11 vs MD - 14 psychic damage and one nearby non-mook ally heals 15 HP.

Miss - One non-mook ally heals 10 HP

Unholy Blessing - One ally gains +1 to all defenses until the start of the Cleric's next turn. If the blessed ally is hit, the attacker takes 7 damage. Usable once per turn as a quick action

AC 22

PD 18 **HP 112**

MD 21

Divine Fragment

Level 4 Spoiler (Undead)

Init: +12

Shadow Grasp +9 vs PD - 14 damage

Miss - Target takes a -2 to all saving throws and disengage checks

Natural 16+ hit - Attackers must roll an easy (6+) saving throw to attack the Divine Fragment next turn

C: Essence of the Divine - The Divine Fragment takes 10 damage and the target is Stunned (Save Ends)

AC 20

PD 14 **HP 55**

MD 18

Shadow of the Fallen Gods

Huge Level 7 Wrecker (Undead)

Init: +13

Touch of Corruption +13 vs AC - 42 damage and 14 ongoing damage

Natural Even Hit - The ongoing damage is 28 damage

Miss - 14 ongoing damage

C: Pain of Unlife +11 vs MD against 2 targets - 56 damage and the target is Vulnerable for the rest of the battle

Natural 16+ Hit - Target is also Dazed until the start of the Shadow's next turn

C: Tendril of Shadow +12 vs AC - 28 damage. Usable twice per turn as a quick action.

Miss - Target is moved to a nearby location of the Shadow's choice.

Divine Aura - The Shadow of the Fallen Gods uses the Escalation die. In addition, all Nearby enemies must make a saving throw (11+) at the start of their turn. If they fail, they may either choose not to use the Escalation Die or take 10 damage to use it.

Font of Death - The Shadow of the Fallen Gods heals 14 HP each time a creature dies or fails a death save

AC 23

PD 18 **HP 305**

MD 21

Designer's Notes

So, here it is. The monsters that lead up to the grand finale as the heroes attempted to save the Dwarf King from being sacrificed as part of a ritual to unmake the world and allow the fallen gods to resume their place in the universe. I bumped up the difficulty more here, including dropping mooks in favor of lower level regular enemies. The effect isn't quite the same and perhaps I might have been better suited to making the Divine Fragments double strength mooks, but I think it turned out reasonably in practice.

I've always liked the idea of enemy paladins and evil paladins. Not blackguards or anti-paladins, but actual paladins who are fighting for dark or evil gods. They are fully as righteous and holy and justified in their actions as other paladins, they're just fighting for the "wrong side" so to speak. The Fallen Paladin is one of my attempts at emulating this idea. This is a paladin of the fallen gods from back when they were still living divinities, brought back to undeath to help bring their beloved gods back to the world. Now once we've gotten past the theme, you can see that I've recycled the shield bash mechanic that I used with other creatures in Part 2. I really like that one, what can I say. Realistically I should either use it far less or change it to a standard action so that one enemy isn't benefitting as much. For here though, I think it's worth leaving there

because this is supposed to be a more difficult enemy. If I did it over again, I would drop that attack for a “harming hands” sort of attack as a standard action against PD, probably forcing the hero to lose a recovery or maybe spend a recovery and *lose* that many HP.

Ah hell. Here’s the power if you want to use it.

Hands of the Fallen +8 vs PD - The target loses one recovery. This attack cannot crit.

Natural 16+ Hit - The target spends a recovery and loses that HP. Talents or feats like Strong Recovery are ignored for purposes of this attack.

The Cleric of the Fallen, must like the Fallen Paladin, is a long dead follower of the dead gods before they were actually dead. And boy must he be ticked off because he is a brute. Honestly, he’s more of a Wrecker than a Leader, but I left the designation in because 1.) it doesn’t make too much difference either way and 2.) he still makes other enemies more dangerous through his actions. Up close, he makes characters much more likely to take big hunks of damage and at range he heals allies and regardless of the range he makes allies more risky targets to attack. Good times, huh?

The Divine Fragment is a tiny part of the fallen gods which has leaked back into the world and is controlled by either void cultists or the fallen clerics. In other circumstances, I would have made them as a mook, but as discussed earlier I decided to just drop the level a bit and make them standard enemies. I think they’re a bit better this way because now they can use Essence of the Divine more often without hurting the other the others in the group. It’s also a good “screw you” power when you know that particular Fragment is going to die soon.

Lastly, we have the “final boss” of Forgotten Sagas, the Shadow of the Fallen Gods. It’s there to ruin the heroes day. Plain and simple. On a good turn, it can attack three times, forces heroes to decide whether damage is worth using the escalation die, and heals whenever anything dies. In practice, it has some of the same issues that many giant/powerful creatures have in games like this. It’s such a focal point for player attention that they will often unload *all* of their best attacks on this thing. And although it has more than 300 HP, that won’t necessarily last in the face of a full party dropping the motherlode on it. So, as with many powerful creatures that can influence a battle, it has to be escorted and protected by other creatures. *As a GM, the intercept rules are your friend.* I’ve said it before, in this document no less, but it’s still very true. In order to get the most out of your big bad powerful monsters, you need to keep the heroes from piling on. I didn’t do that as well as I could have when I used this monster, so it was not quite the climactic fight I was hoping for. But I still think the design itself is solid enough and really dangerous.

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