

d12 Monthly

Issue 4

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ARCANE MAGIC
ISSUE

MATERIAL SPELL COMPONENTS

AN EASY WAY TO TRACK
SPELL COMPONENTS

AUGMENTING SPELLS

USING EXOTIC COMPONENTS
TO ENHANCE SPELLS

BRACHARIAN
BEASTS FROM
BEYOND!

Location: We move to the town of Riverbend

DEAN SPENCER

D12 Monthly is a helpful resource for fantasy roleplayers.

The Arcane Magic Issue

Wizards have always captured my attention.

Whether it was playing an illusionist in AD&D back when I was a kid, or playing wizards in later editions whenever I actually got to play D&D (instead of DMing all the time).

So, this issue is one I have been looking forward to publishing.

However, sometimes life gets in the way, and even mighty wizards cannot stop you from having health problems (after all, that's the clerics domain).

So, this issue didn't come out in August as it was initially slated, but I had a short window to get it out a little later (for September), and it isn't exactly what I had planned.

But given you are reading this now, it has been published and I am pretty happy with how it turned out, given the circumstances.

But I didn't do this alone.

I had some magical help from three article contributors, plus the amazing artistic talents of two amazing artists (see the Acknowledgements section on the next page for details).

You will quickly notice the first two articles are on material components. This has always been hotly debated in D&D circles and it seems that most just hand-wave material components these days, not wanting to burden their players with keeping track of them.

But, given I do think resource management is the missing fourth pillar in D&D, I wanted to bring back tracking material components, but in a way that is manageable.

This also allows you to introduce more exotic components to augment a wizard's spells. At the very least, it gives you something to consider.

And, as always, happy gaming!

- Russ from YUMDM

<https://yumdm.com/>

https://twitter.com/yum_dm

About Me

I have been roleplaying for over 30 years and DMing for most of those. I have played over 50 different roleplaying games, but my first love is fantasy - it's like coming home.

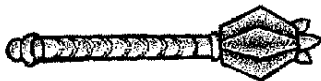
Want to support this zine? I have a Patreon account: <https://www.patreon.com/yumdm>

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<https://twitter.com/Geekoholick>

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Articles

Alternate Creature article by RJD20:

<https://twitter.com/RJD20Writes>

Bhakashal article by Black Dragon Games:

<https://twitter.com/BlackDragonCan>

Magical Mishaps Charts by BrokeAF

Games: <https://twitter.com/brokeafgames1>

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Keeping Track of Spell Components

Take the Tediousness Out of Tracking Spell Components

Tracking material components tend to be so onerous to most players and DMs that they have been conveniently forgotten.

I feel like material spell components are still important to track for a number of reasons:

1. Limiting spellcasting in certain situations
2. Keeping to the spirit of D&D
3. Keeping resource management in the game

I see this as an either/or proposition: if you want to keep material components, then track them, if not, then just ignore them.

If you want to track them, what follows is a simple way to track material components for spellcasters.

Each material component is grouped into one of four categories, based on rarity.

- Common
- Uncommon
- Rare
- Very Rare

You will need to group each material component for each spell the spellcasters have access to, but this shouldn't take too long. And some examples are listed below.

Tracking Material Components

Once you know which rarity category a material component sits in, it is time to figure out how much of this particular component the spellcaster has.

This is determined not by individual items, but by the rarity category.

When a spell that uses a material component from the Uncommon category, for example, you would check to see if a portion of that category is used up.

This way you don't need to track every material component - just four overarching categories.

Material Amounts

Each rarity category has a die assigned to it. And the type of die may change throughout the campaign.

The die types are as follows:

D12 > D10 > D8 > D6 > D4 > D3 > None left

Checking a Category

Each time a spellcaster casts a spell that uses a material component, simply roll the appropriate die (the one associated with that category) and if a 1 or 2 comes up, enough of that material component category is used up to drop it down to the next die type.

For example, if a spellcaster had a D10 in their Uncommon category, and rolls a 1 when checking for use, then their Uncommon category drops to a D8.

Material Components Amounts

Characters start with a certain amount, plus there are several ways to gain more spell components during play.

Starting Characters

Starting spellcasters have the following die types for each category (although this can be modified by DM or campaign).

Common - D8

Uncommon - D6

Rare - D4

Very Rare - D3

These can be lowered by using them, or increased by shopping for or foraging for new material components.

When purchasing new components, you can follow the below guidelines (changed to suit your campaign and also by location within your campaign as some components may be more or less common in some areas of your campaign world).

Purchasing Material Components

A spellcaster may buy new components during downtime or when shopping.

Below is a list of costs for each rarity category. Each amount spent increases the die type by one - from D4 to D6, for example (to a maximum of D12).

Common - 1 SP per die type

Uncommon - 1 GP per die type

Rare - 10 GP per die type*

Very Rare - 100 GP per die type*

DMs can also restrict rare and very rare component categories based on where the spellcaster is shopping. Say, a rural village, for example.

Foraging for Components

A spellcaster with the appropriate proficiency or skill can forage for some material components as well. This takes time and skill instead of money.

Components that can be foraged would be naturally occurring items. Anything that needs to be processed or not occurring in nature, will need to be bought.

Below is a list of the time it takes to forage material components by rarity category.

Common - 1 hour per die type

Uncommon - 1 day per die type

Rare - 1 week per die type

Very Rare - 1 month per die type

Difficulty Level

When foraging for material components, the spellcaster needs to make a check with an appropriate skill or proficiency (as determined by the DM).

Common - Forage DC: easy

Uncommon - Forage DC: moderate

Rare - Forage DC: difficult*

Very Rare - Forage DC: very difficult*

Each successful forage check increases the die type by one.

* You could create mini-adventures to gather the components needed instead.

Focus Items

Some spells in various editions of the game use a focus - a reusable item that is needed to cast the spell. For these I would follow the same rules as above, but using them doesn't require a roll after the spell is cast.

Unique Items

You can still track unique or expensive items individually, having them sit outside these rules. An example of this would be the pearl used in the *Identify* spell.

Spell Examples

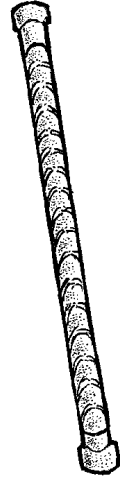
| Spell | Components | Category |
|----------------|--|-----------|
| Sleep | A pinch of fine sand, rose petals, or a live cricket | Common |
| Colour Spray | A pinch each of powder or sand that is colored red, yellow, and blue | Uncommon |
| Enlarge Person | A pinch of powdered iron | Rare |
| Displacement | A small strip of leather made from displacer beast hide | Very Rare |

Weapon Spotlight: Quarterstaff

Quarterstaves, or just staves, refer to a shaft of hardwood from 6 to 9 feet long, sometimes with a metal tip.

Throughout the various editions, the staff seems to be a second-tier weapon, only used by wizards or monks.

But if you look at the way staves were used throughout our own history, and at various fighting styles, the humble staff can have some more versatility.



Weapon Versatility

A quarterstaff can be used in two ways:

1. As a double weapon, using both ends of the shaft; and
2. As a weapon with reach, allowing the user one attack but with a range of 10ft

Quarterstaff

| Weapon | Damage |
|--------------|--------------|
| Quarterstaff | D6/D6 or D8* |

* The damage will depend on whether the staff is being used as a double weapon or as a reach weapon, respectively.

Augmenting Spells

Exotic and Rare Components to Make Your Spells Better

A spellcaster can augment their spell with exotic or exceptional components. The spellcaster does this by replacing a material component to a spell that requires one, with a more exotic ingredient.

When they do this, the spellcaster can augment one or more types of effects on the spell cast.

For example, the DM rules that a wizard who casts the Enlarge Person spell using powdered iron from a meteorite (instead of regular iron) would be able to extend the duration as though an Extend metamagic effect was applied to the spell (see below).

The DM has the final say on whether a substitute material component is effective for a particular spell as noted below.

Limitations for Augmented Components

The following is a guideline on what ingredients can be used for augmenting spells:

1. The original spell must have required a material component.
2. Augmented components must have some relation to the base component listed under the spell.

3. The augmented component must be rare or difficult to find or acquire.

This applies to any focus that is used as well.

Types of Augmentations

Augmentations take the form of metamagic effects as listed below. The GM can apply one (or more) of these to the spell cast.

Empowered

Any spell with a random variable increases this variable by 50%. This includes spells that cause damage or affect a random number of targets.

Enlarged

You double the range of any spell with a range greater than touch or self.

Extended

You double the duration of any spell with a duration greater than instantaneous. Any spell with a duration of permanent is not affected.

Heightened

You cast the spell as though you were one level higher than you are. This could be an increase to spell level, depending on the edition of the game you are playing.

Maximised

Any spell with a random variable has that value maximised, meaning one of the following are at their maximum effect: damage, hit points healed, number affected, or similar.

Quickened

You cast the spell as a free action instead of a standard action. Limits on the number of spells cast per round still apply.

Silenced

You may cast the spell without a Verbal component. Spells already without a Verbal component are not affected.

Stilled

You may cast the spell without a Somatic component. Spells already without a Somatic component are not affected.

Widened

Any spell with an area of effect has it doubled.

How it Works

When a spellcaster wants to substitute a regular component with an augmented one, the DM can simply apply one (or more) of the above types of augmentation to the spell being cast.

Prepared Casting

If the spellcaster lets the DM know ahead of time (using some downtime researching between adventures, which would equal one day per spell level) what augmented component they will use for a particular spell, then there is no chance of the spell cast failing when using the new augmented component.

Unprepared Casting

If the spellcaster wants to use an augmented spell component without spending time researching, then there is a

chance the spell will go awry. The chance is equal to 10% plus the spell level, minus the caster's level.

If the spellcasting fails, then use an appropriate wild magic or spell failure table to find what happens, or just say the spell fails.

For example, Xain, a 5th level wizard, collects some web from a Drider and then wants to use it to cast an augmented Web spell (a second level spell) in the next encounter (before he has had a chance to research it) then the chance of miscasting the spell is 7% (10 + 2 - 5).

Note that it is possible for a high level wizard to have no chance of spell failure.

Most augmented components generally only apply one of the augmentations listed above, but the DM can rule that a particularly rare ingredient may apply more than one type of augmentation.

For example, a wizard wants to cast the Sleep spell and uses a pinch of blessed sand from a Sandman (instead of regular sand), and the DM rules that because the ingredient is both blessed and from a Sandman creature, it will augment the spell twice: empowered and extended.

This means the spell would affect 50% more targets and those affected will be asleep twice as long.



Aging Potions

What Happens When the PCs Drink an Ancient Potion



Characters find old potions laying all over the place in dusty old tombs, ancient crypts, monster-riddled dungeons, and other forgotten places.

But not all potions are made equal. What if those potions deteriorated with age? Or perhaps age well like a fine wine?

You could argue that the magic keeps them fresh, but for a twist on potion-finding, or if you wanted to have magic decay (or enhance) over time, you could use these easy rules to simulate a potion's life span.

Simply roll on the table to discover if a potion has aged well or gone bad.

These rules are for potions that have been created in ages past. Potions that have been created recently would work as normal.

Potion Aging Table

| 2D6 | Potion has... |
|-------|---|
| 2 | Gone bad. Ingested poison, save or die |
| 3 | Unstable and explodes when opened! Everyone in a 15ft radius takes 3D4 damage. |
| 4 | Expired. Mild poison. Save or take D6 damage. No effect. |
| 5-6 | Spoiled. Some tingling but potion has become ineffective |
| 7 | Been diluted. It works about half as well. (DM is encouraged to come up with suitable effects)* |
| 8 | Lost some of its effect. Lasts only half as long. |
| 9 | Has aged fairly well. Duration lasts twice as long. |
| 10-11 | Has improved and causes not only intended effect, but also another beneficial effect as well (roll on potion table again) |
| 12 | Aged like fine wine! The potion has increased duration and effect. |

* For example, an invisibility potion only makes the imbiber invisible every other round.

It is up to the DM to decide a potion's age.

You can adjust these tables to suit your own campaign.



Alternate Creature

Bracharian Beasts from Beyond

By RJD20

Horrifying outsiders often invade our worlds. They pillage green earth, gather frightened prisoners, and spread corruption far and wide. One outsider entity in particular haunts far fewer adventures than it should: **the slaadi**.

Slaadi are batrachian terrors who stalk the plane of chaos, hopping from chunks of swirling stone into pits of churning tar. Their abilities are deadly and their minds alien, but their narrative presence lacks interest or depth.

Why are slaadi rare foes?

It is because they are uninteresting - nothing greater than frog-like beasts from beyond who abhor order and inspire chaos. However, in your campaign world, this need not be true.

Alternative Slaadi Origins

The origins of slaadi are a tad boring as they currently stand. Fortunately, we can radically alter them in our own realms. Bolden these beasts with one of the following appalling origins:

1. Slaadi emerged from the pools of conception, leftover matter from the creation of the progenitor species.
2. A maddened archmage named Slag Distas permanently transformed a giant toad into a mixture of man and amphibian

with an epic spell, then spewed it into the plane of chaos. Slaadi are its descendents.

3. Slaadi arrived from a starless void on the edge of the known universe. Alongside appeared a prophecy detailing the sun's imminent doom.

4. The brackish demon lord Atod'grof birthed slaadi in the trenches of the Abyss after consuming a god of chaos. Sparked with a shred of the eaten god, the slaadi voyaged to the realm of chaos and claimed it as their birthright.

Chaotic Slaadi Motives

Like a tadpole undergoes metamorphosis and becomes a frog, the slaadi's motivations should change from chaos and spread to something more evolved. Here are six ideas:

1. The vessel for the first slaad god lurks in a mortal body. Slaadi scour the world for it, spawning hundreds of their kind in the process.
2. Resources grow scarce in the realm of chaos. Slaadi invade mortal lands not for blood or chaos, but survival.
3. Deadly horrors chase slaadi from their soupy world. They seek refuge in a world other than their own.
4. Slaadi prophets foresee the destruction of their world and the mortal one. The batrachian beings need a new home, and are willing to ally with others to find it.

5. The arrival of a new breed of slaadi shatters the balance of already-chaotic slaadi society. Its leaders wish to destroy the latest evolution, but many fled to the mortal world.

6. A powerful devil duke captures and enslaves a clutch of slaadi. They will do anything to be free of his sinister command.

New Slaadi Abilities

Deepened with original genesis and unique motivations, our slaadi are more interesting foes. What if we went a step further and enhanced them with new abilities?

When your players encounter a slaad, roll a d6:

1. **Tongue Wrap.** The slaad's sticky tongue is immense and can be used to grapple or restrain the target.
2. **Force Chaos.** With chaos energy, the slaad can radically alter the appearance of creatures, objects, and the environment around it.
3. **Void Leap.** The slaad can teleport up to 60' away in a burst of chaotic magic.
4. **Metamorphosis.** For a short time, the slaad can evolve to grow twice its size, gain a tail, a set of wings, and another clawed arm. Every time the slaad uses this ability, there is a 5% chance it stays in this form until it dies.

5. **Slime Spit.** The slaad spits a ball of gooey slime that slows and corrodes its target.
6. **Chaotic Croak.** The slaad lets out a great croak, drawing 1d4 other slaadi from the realm of chaos to its side.

A Slaadi Villain: Scurtalag the Revived

Scurtalag the Revived (*Slaadi M CN; Survival, Abominable, Driven*) is a permanently metamorphosed slaad whose close-knit clutch scattered after losing a battle against a plane-shifting dragon. Alongside six other slaadi, he walks the mortal world polymorphed into a human, desperately seeking a new home and a chance to avenge his slain bracharian companions. Whispers in his mind urge him to incapacitate the dragon and implant a tadpole into his dying body, creating the first slaadi dragon.

Conclusion

Together, these ideas expand slaadi in our worlds. No longer are slaadi creatures with boring origins. Gone are the days of slaadi incurring chaos and only yearning to implant mortals with their spawn. And with their enhanced story elements as foundational pillars, our slaadi gained interesting abilities. Surely, our players will be perplexed!

Implement a few of these ideas in your world, you will not regret it.

Magical Mishaps Charts

Three new charts for different campaign genres

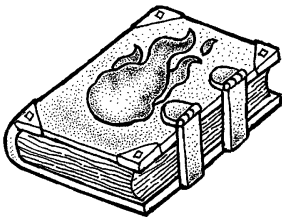
Sometimes various RPGs just don't hit the mark in what you envisioned with their magical mishaps. Below are two new magical mishap charts that can be applied to specific campaign genres.

Horror Spell Mishap Table

| D12 | Mishap |
|-----|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Evil Spirit birthed |
| 2 | Crossing joining realms 1d10 hrs |
| 3 | Caster poisoned by magic energy |
| 4 | Caster wounded 1d6/spell level |
| 5 | Caster Marked: hair loss, boils, cuts |
| 6 | Nearest corpse possessed |
| 7 | Caster Stunned 1 rnd |
| 8 | Spell targets wrong person |
| 9 | Draw attention of entity |
| 10 | Whispers distract caster's casting |
| 11 | Unattended items move around |
| 12 | Spell works, effect invokes fear |

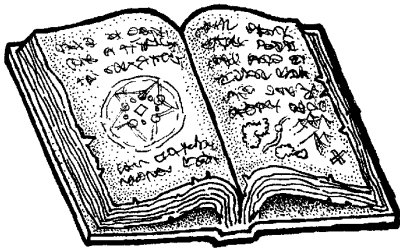
Faerie Spell Mishap Table

| D12 | Mishap |
|-----|--|
| 1 | Caster develops permanent compulsion |
| 2 | Target becomes invisible instead |
| 3 | Caster becomes intangible for 1 minute |
| 4 | Caster suffers endless moderate curse |
| 5 | Target changes form into beast |
| 6 | Spell works if Caster makes fey pact |
| 7 | Caster fey marked |
| 8 | Fey ring grows spell effects all in area |
| 9 | Caster blind to all but magic & auras |
| 10 | Mundane item becomes magic & cursed |
| 11 | Target befuddled by patterns |
| 12 | Target's imagination becomes reality |



Primordial Spell Mishap Table

| D12 | Mishap |
|-----|--|
| 1 | Caster Vomits forth a new infant beast |
| 2 | A magic spirit escapes from the caster |
| 3 | Caster draws the ire of the elements |
| 4 | Caster wounded 1d6/spell level |
| 5 | Nearest effigy gains life (1hr) |
| 6 | The caster's eyes glow with inner light |
| 7 | Any growth withers and animals die within 20ft |
| 8 | Target is cursed |
| 9 | Spirit joins the caster who gains extra shadow |
| 10 | All animals in 1 mile flee |
| 11 | Spell comes to life as a creature |
| 12 | Target gain enchanted aura |



Bhakashal: New Campaign World

This campaign world is the brainchild of Black Dragon Games



Bhakashal is a retroclone of 1e AD&D and a setting along the lines of Tekumel or Blackmoor. It will be broadly compatible

with any early edition of D&D or any OSR style game.

Bhakashal will be about 30% mechanics and 70% setting, so even if you are using a completely different rule set, there will be plenty of material here to mine.

The Setting

The setting is a hybrid of Vance, Zelazny, Leiber and Howard, set billions of years in the future when the sun in the sky has turned red, Bhakashal exists at the end of time, one of the last of the great cities of Earth.

“Civilization” has risen and fallen thousands of times before, humans ruled the Earth, then they fell, later frog-people created the next civilization, it fell, and so on...

Twelve “playable groups” live within the walls of the city of Prophecy, Humans, Chitin (insect people), Garudin (bird people), Jugyi (turtle people), Kutya (dog people), Malu (fish people), Rakasta (cat people), Saan (lizard people), Togmu (frog people), Vodnik (castor people), Wythir (lion-people) and Yalan (snake people).

There are 20 playable classes in Bhakashal: Beastials (druids), Cavarals (monk/magic-users), Chimerists (warlock specialist - alteration magic), Conjurers (warlock specialist - conjuration magic), Gyres (“generic” magic), Jinxes (thief/druids), Justiciars (paladins), Mercenaries (fighters), Myrmidons (fighter/magic-users), Necromancers (warlock specialist - necromantic magic), Phantasmists (Illusionists), Seers (priests), Slayers (ranger/assassins), Spartans (monks), Spellbinders (druid/magic-users), Spiders (thieves), Thaumaturges (thief/magic-users), Theurgists (fighter/illusionists), Voxes (bards) and Warlocks (magic-users).

There are no “barbarian hordes” in the setting, no “uncivilized” peoples pressing against the edges of civilization. There is the city, and the surrounding agricultural lands, but there are no savages waiting to bring down the walls of society.

Nor are there any “inherently evil” humanoid groups. Evil lives in the heart, not in collectives.



The Geography

Bhakashal is a city, located on an island in a river, surrounded by marshlands. The weather is tropical, hot all year round, rain happens daily, moreso in certain seasons, and the animal and plant life are typical of hot, tropical environments.

Hundreds of years ago the lands surrounding the city were the location of a vast civilization ruled by venal sorcerers and corrupted priests, they created powerful items of magic and spawned strange, twisted creatures that survived them and multiplied in the marshes for centuries. Their towers and temples are long sunken into the swamp and hold treasures.

The marshlands closest to the city are the home of a large population of Saan (lizard people) who ride black dragons. The marshes are also filled with farmers and fishermen, thousands of small saan and togmu villages dot the marshes.

The Rulers

The city of Bhakashal is ruled by 54 Noble Houses, each one ruled by Lords (warriors) and Warlocks (magicians). Each Noble House vies with each other for power and prestige.

In Bhakashal, *repute* reigns supreme, honor, courage, martial skill. Honor duels are common, arena fights *moreso*. There is a mechanical system for *repute* in the game that impacts how the PCs interact with others in the setting. Most groups will find a patron when they begin their time in Bhakashal, and their patron will enmesh them in the factions that rule the city.

The Secret

Unbeknownst to the majority of the city's inhabitants, Bhakashal is built over the body of the slumbering god Iallus, god of animals, plants, the Moon and creativity. The presence of Iallus draws the most creative, the most skilled practitioners of all of the arts to the city like moths to the flame.

City Life

Bhakashal is a delight for the senses. The presence of Iallus under the city also fuels life, the marshes are teeming with creatures fantastic and natural, so much so that the city hunt is never sated. Not only

that, but the city itself is overgrown with plant life, so much so that salt is spread on the roads daily to keep the plants from overgrowing them, and canopies of multicolored plants hang between many of the hundreds of rooftop gardens, a series of elevated bridges known to many an adventurous local.



Technology & Magic

Technology is late Renaissance level, spy glasses exist alongside swords and bows. Firearms are also present, but their spread and use is tightly controlled by the Warlocks who rule the city Houses, only Warlocks have guns, and very few of them.

Magic is also tightly controlled by the city Houses, each House ruled by a Magus Warlock and a Ur Lord. Magic is not 'common' in Bhakashal, there are no "magic shops", no "magic garbage disposals" or "magic street lights", magic is power and *repute*, and it is guarded greedily by the warlocks who wield it.

Religion

The Gods of Bhakashal were once AI, created millions of years in the past. These AI evolved to the next level of existence, and disappeared for millions of years, only to return to the setting several hundred years ago for unknown reasons. The gods of Bhakashal are inscrutable and strange and they walk the Earth like mortals, dwelling

in the most remote places, though on occasion they set foot in the city.

The Game

Bhakashal will contain a custom city map, rules for prophetic dreams, a system for generating building types and NPCs, custom rules for levelling, random encounter tables for the city and the marshes, examples of prominent NPCs, details of the factions that populate the city, rules for repute, rumor tables, information on flora and fauna, a unique pantheon of gods, details on the city watch and hunt, 8 sample scenarios, rules for patrons and parties, descriptions of customs (fashion, hairstyles, weddings, funerals and festivals), a list of ghosts found in the city, detailed descriptions of the 12 playable groups and 20 classes, dozens of new monsters, more than 100 new magic items, 400 new spells, new weapons, new rules for combat and weapon criticals, location of hit tables, and a custom initiative system that makes combat exciting, fast and handles large groups with ease.

You can find out more about Bhakashal by visiting Black Dragon Games on Twitter, where he posts a lot of interesting information about the setting.

<https://twitter.com/BlackDragonCan>

An example of the magic that will be contained within Bhakashal is listed on the right.



Illusion Spell from Bhakashal

The Haunting Inversion of Kahb Rune

(*Illusion/Phantasm*)

Level: 3

Range: 0

Duration: 1 turn

Area of Effect: 2" (20ft) radius sphere per level

Components: S,M

Casting Time: 3 segments (1 action)

Saving throw: none

This spell causes light and dark, shadows and light to switch or invert in the area of effect. All shadows become bright and all lighted areas become pitch black. This leads to several effects:

- Anyone hiding in shadows is instantly revealed
- Anyone in a lighted area (e.g. under the area of a torch, in open daylight) is plunged into darkness with the appropriate combat penalties
- All light spells become darkness, and vice versa

For the duration of the spell all attacks are at -1 due to disorientation (the caster and one person per level can be exempted from this).

Any invisible opponents in the area of effect appear as a glowing outline and can be attacked without a "to hit" penalty.

The material component of this spell is a white feather and a black stone.

Location, Location, Location!

This month we will take a look at Riverbend.

Town of Riverbend

Riverbend is a town located along the Snowmelt River, south-west of Dolfar (see *Issue 2*) where the road from the south meets the river.

Places of Interest

Riverbend is a town known for two things: “Brandy Floats” and an island prison.

Brandy Floats

Several brandy makers have banded together to form a co-op and use the Snowmelt River to transport their barrels of brandy to markets further south.

Crazy Float-Riders steer these floats, which are no more than several barrels strapped together, down the river and make sure they get into the right hands.

Unfortunately, there is a bandit gang - the Lob Gang (See *The Lob Gang's Hideout* below) - who operate along the Snowmelt River and attempt to hijack the brandy.

Island Prison

The prison is located on the smaller of the two river islands that make up part of the town and houses prisoners from miles around.

The militia presence, known locally as the Red Bands, is significant and tends to be heavy handed. This is due to a simmering

civil war between the militia and a local thieves guild.

Thieves' Guild

The Thieves' Guild focus their efforts on two areas: supplying prisoners with contraband, and smuggling brandy and other illicit substances out of, and into, the town.

The Thieves' Guild have partnered with a deranged Druid - by the name of Wyst - who is befriending and controlling rats - both normal and giant - to deliver contraband and information into the prison, as well as packages into and out of the town.

Personalities of Riverbend

The following are NPCs who live in, or near, Riverbend.

Jarob (*Hu M Druid NG; Nature, Young, Stubborn*) is the local druid who was born in Riverbend but has vowed never to step foot in it (or any other town) again. He lives near a tor on the edge of Ashwood Forest, a day's walk south of Riverbend.

Vass Handlemaker (*Hu M Expert LG; Safety, Broad-shoulders; Genuine*) is the local carpenter and cooper. He has the exclusive right to make barrels for the brandy floats.

Wyst (*Hu M Druid CE; Power, Disheveled, Frenzied*) is an evil druid who has moved in with, and partnered with the local thieves' guild, befriending the local rat population for the guild's, and his own, evil purposes.

Shorthand Your NPCs

From Issue 0

A handy trick when creating NPCs is to use what I call the MAP method:

Motivation

Appearance

Personality

When creating an NPC, give them a short description for each of these descriptors.

For example, a cleric could have:

Motivation: Parishioners

Appearance: Overweight

Personality: Gregarious

Instantly you have an idea about how this NPC looks, acts, and what motivates them. And, in turn, as you roleplay them, so too will your players.

Harlk Rutnose (*Hu M Rogue NE; Wealth, Broken Nose, Distrustful*) is the head of the Thieves' Guild in Riverbend and commands two dozen or so members of the guild. He is an expert smuggler and leader.

Godniir Headsman (*Hu M Fighter LN; Town safety, Piercing eyes, Determined*) is the current head of the town militia and is determined to rid the town of the Thieves' Guild. And he believes the end justifies any means.

The Lob Gang's Hideout

The Lob Gang is a small group of bandits, thieves, and thugs who have banded together with the express purpose of stealing the brandy floats that come down the Snowmelt River from Riverbend.

There are 35 bandits - a combination of humans and halflings - housed in the rural hideout, which used to be a walled orchard, before the original owners were killed by marauding Gnolls who used the hideout for a time before being cleared out by a group of adventurers.

The Gang is ruled over by **Medina Shinkicker** (*Halfling F Rogue; Carousing, Shaggy Curly Hair, Gruff*), who was part of the Thieves' Guild in town but left after an altercation with Harlk.

She is supported by her right-hand man, **Rashik Bloodfist** (*Hu M Fighter; Violence, Bald, Crude*).

Modus Operandi

The Gang have informants in Riverbend who send word when a brandy float is being sent, as well as scouts who signal once they see the floats coming down the river.

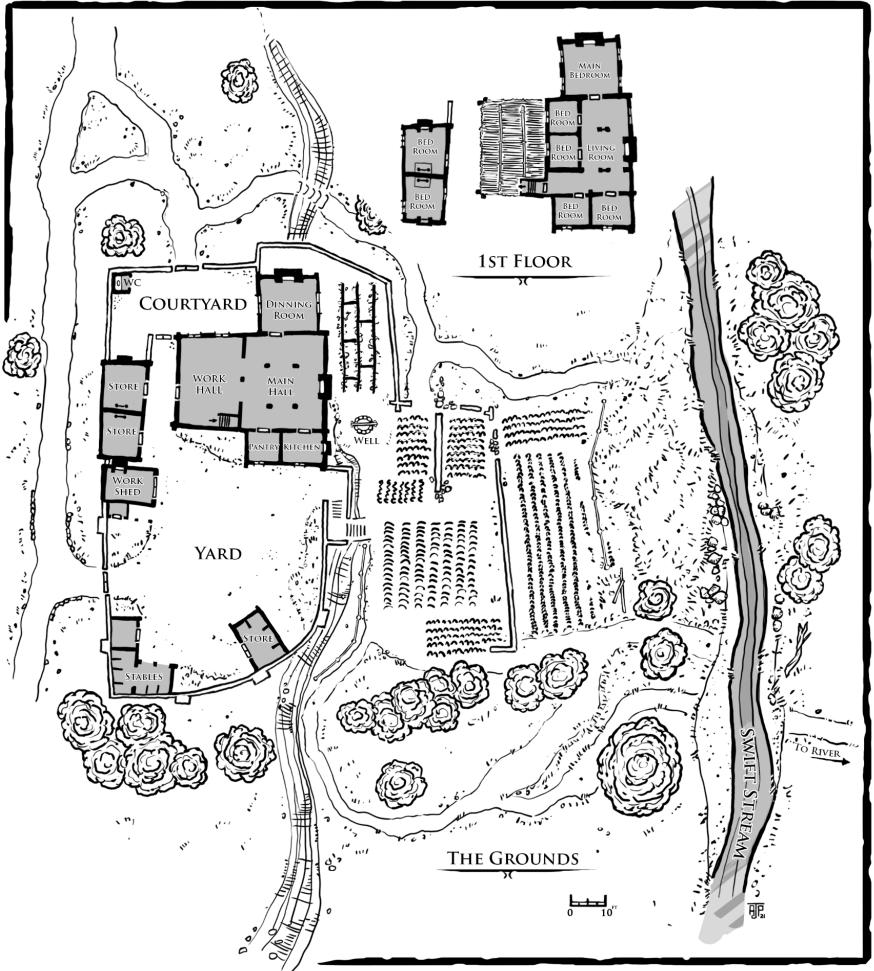
Once they are within range, a willing halfling member of the gang is flung into the air and hopefully onto the float from one of the supple trees that line the bank of the river.

The tree is usually pulled back by two human bandits (two strong individuals are required to pull the tree back enough to launch an individual).

Once on the float, the bandit kills the Float-Rider and any guards and steers the

float to the bank and the waiting Gang members who load the barrels onto a cart and head back to their hideout.

Any halfling bandits who miss their targets (which is most of them) simply swim to shore and perhaps try again if there is time.



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