

clearer!

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DAMSELS (Update)

It has been suggested by players of my *Damsel* character (*CE/4* for *A&E 8*) that damsels would be a lot more popular if one got something out of rescuing them besides a monster trashing. After all, should not the intrepid expeditioners be rewarded even if the vile damsel-kidnapper gets cold feet at the last minute, and flees with his valuables?

I have been swayed by these arguments, and also by literary history. After all, did not heroes rescuing damsels appear tremendously matured and experienced after said rescue?

First of all, whenever a damsel is legitimately captured and rescued, each player gets 1000 points \times level of damsel. Of course, doing anything to put a damsel in jeopardy immediately threatens alignment chaotic-ward (or Evil-ward if you're a Reformed Gygaxian), and should Neutrals engage in such activities, they will be awarded nothing even if they assist in rescue.

On the other hand, damsel-rescue is worth a plus on alignment (toward Lawful, or Good for the R.G.). A Neutral participating in such a task becomes borderline Lawful, though he would need a full desire to be absorbed to go over, or a second Lawful act (as I play it, anyway).

Now, in line with knights & ladies, if a person declares himself the lady's knight-errant, and goes on a special expedition to *Rescue*, he will be awarded, on successful completion, one experience level (like reading the appropriate manual) and a full plus on alignment (i.e., Neutral \blacklozenge Lawful, Lawful \blacklozenge Paladin). Naturally, I trust the DMs in question will make the character earn all this.

A Neutral verging on Chaotic or a lawful turned Neutral by jeopardizing the damsel can regain original status by participating fully in the expedition, but cannot gain level, or EPs (though the Party can agree to division of treasure with him/her).

While non-eligible males and females can be knight-errants for the *Rescue Expedition*, eligible males should realize they may be expected to marry the lady. This does not apply if the damsel is married or betrothed, or if the knight in question is also married or betrothed (ineligible). However, a *Rescue* is grounds for breaking a betrothal should the character wish. (I do not mean anywhere to limit the free will of the character, only to delineate the Conventions and mores of the world. Many worlds may choose to deliberate flout the Courtly Love Tradition. This is for those who would like to incorporate it in their worlds.)

Finally, to be uncharacteristically (for an Orthodox Gygaxian) clear, *anyone* can be a knight-errant: fighter, mage, cleric, or anti-thief. Clerics and Monks will tend to be more interested in Vestal Virgins, Mages in Enchantresses, etc. (I am working on a combo damsel-anti-thief.)

I notice I have alluded to things above that I have not written up yet, so here goes.

ALIGNMENT (Yes, again)

I have noticed that my conception of alignment is close to some of yours, different from others, and I gather has nothing to do with Gygax's latest views. To be brief, Law = Good, Chaos = Evil, and Neutral is mixed. Non-sentients are unaligned, unless enchanted or created by miracle.

OK, I have noticed a lot of people keep alignment checks fairly broad and approximate. While the Colorado accounting system sounds great, I'm afraid that I like many others prefer not to get involved in still more bookkeeping.

The system I have codified is fairly simple and easy to understand, being analogous to classroom grading. The "grades" possible are Paladin, Law+, Law-, Neutral+, Neutral, Neutral-, Chaotic+, Chaotic, Chaotic-, and anti-paladin. Eldila and bent eldila would be paladin and anti-paladin, though it is not unknown or impossible for an eldil to change alignments (see *Paradise Lost*).

This incorporates the usual warning given to a person that his alignment is endangered (e.g., Law \blacklozenge Law-). It removes a bit of the arbitrariness to assign alignment grades, and may be passed on to the next DM so he knows whether to knock the character over if he is pulling something dicey.

Restoration of paladin (or anti-paladin) status requires clerical dispensation, a *la* damsel, but this time from a Patriarch-level of the same Church/Temple as that of the Paladin (anti-paladin). (No miracles for the day are used up, though.)

I would like to propose the possibility of non-17 Charisma characters *earning* Paladin status for a long series of super-lawful acts plus a patriarchal knighting. And also, I am working on paladin-equivalents for Magic Users (White Mages) and Anti-Thieves (Secret Agents of the Church?). Obviously such status is ridiculous for clerics, damsels, courtesans, monks, assassins and druids. Clerics and monks can aspire to sainthood, though, and damsels are already Charisma characters.

Give me your comments on Paladin status for the others, and I'll incorporate the criticism when I write it up. No, the White Mage would not have "Holy Swords" and magic-resistance. I see him/her as more likely acquiring spell simulating cures (at higher levels than clerics), and perhaps resistance to anti-clerical miracles with appropriate wand/staff (say, Wand of Purity, or Blessed Ring, etc.). Let me know what D&D fandom thinks.



ANTI-THIEF (New Character)

Specs such as abilities and levels the same as for *Thieves* except for the following changes:

Anti-Thief *must* be Lawful. The anti-thief has a special mission *against* thieves. The anti-thief may not steal—*except* from a thief (*Recovery*).

Recovery entitles the anti-thief to the experience points of the gold value of what he has recovered. *Recovery* requires knowledge of the anti-thief that the good is in fact stolen. *Recovery* is valid even if the original owner is unknown or dead intestate (no heir). In that case, the anti-thief acquires ownership of the recovered property as he chooses to dispose it.

The anti-thief can skulk and pick locks, handle magic and read languages as does the regular thief. In addition, the first level anti-thief *must* be able to read and speak Neutral, and may attempt to pass himself off as Neutral or even Chaotic! Only anti-thieves (among Lawfuls) will in general be successful in such disguises.

Sure Strike is often considered unlawful, so it is modified for anti-thieves, esp. anti-thief paladins. It may be used for 1)

Subdual rather than killing 2) *Snatching* back stolen goods. (55% chance for unarmored fist + 20% Sure Strike = 75% on *Snatch*.)

Snatch only works if the object/bag is in the open such as protruding from a pocket or in the hand, and can be used in melee. Otherwise, pocketpicking and such is necessary.

Note that an anti-thief/monk combination character would make a great "secret agent" type, like Modesty Blaise. (In fact, my first anti-thief/monk (female) is called *Blaze*...)

L.A.-area "Experienced Treasure Seekers" may apply to their local cleric of their choice to be converted into anti-thieves. Ex-thieves should take a week out to practice the slight changes in their art to become full anti-thieves. (I don't know about your area, but Long Beach is crawling with thieves who've had their alignments upgraded.)

DRUDGING AND DRAGGING

Twice recently it came to my attention that characters may find themselves playing a game to pass the time, perhaps while camping out in Overland. Of course, games of chance are universally popular, but it occurs to me that as much as our characters reflect our values, they would play something a bit more complex and exotic—from *their* perspective. Here is such a game.

The setting is a world utterly foreign to all our characters. A peculiar type of technology, foreign to both that of the magician and that of the anti-magic user, provides the fabric of this fantasy-setting. The "lore" of *Drudging and Dragging* is one of the basically unknown science (in Gygax-land) of Economics. Imagine a world in which the Primacy of Existence reigns over the Primacy of Consciousness (the opposite of our D&D assumption) and where the mind had no power over matter!

Character-types can be rolled for on "cubes of fortune." Characteristics could be *Endurance*, *Entrepreneurship*, *Imagination*, *Skillfulness*, *Fortitude*, and *Attractiveness*. (Caltechers can roll for Shape [fat, thin, tall, short, etc.] and Comprehension [how fast characters catch on].) One then ascribes careers for the characters such as laborer, businessman, doctor, housewife, politician, and others your character's inspiration can think of. There are the opposing alignments of *Earning* and *Unearning*, and the one of confused premises: *Mixed*. Characters can choose to *earn* their experience and treasure (called *Capital Goods* and *Consumer Goods* to give them a fantasy-flavor), to steal and defraud them, or both. Some character types are limited in alignment: businessmen can be *Earning* or *Mixed* only; pure entrepreneurs must be *Earning* (equivalent in the Real World of Paladins), politicians can only be *Unearning* or *Mixed*; Bureaucrats are *Unearning* only, to give a few extreme examples.

Your characters may have to strain to think of appropriate treasure and adventures, so here's some suggestions to get them thinking.

Treasure: A horseless chariot which requires a regular, fixed quantity of fuel (like for a fire) which must be paid for.

- A position of employment with a high-level entrepreneur (for *Earners*) or high-level politicians (*Unearners*), much like mercenaries or hirelings, but the position carries with it certain fixed benefits called "Fringes."

A "discovery" such as a new way of applying labor, organizing a household, cutting production costs, and so forth, which results in less expenditure of wealth (Money and Time) by your characters' characters (called *Innovation*).

Adventures: Trace what a combination of characters need to survive a day, in competition with those of same and opposing alignments (*Rat Race*).

- Some characters attempt to set up a systematic means of conning other characters from their wealth (*Elections*).

- Some characters (usually with an entrepreneur in charge) set up a grouping of their own to better achieve Money and Time saving in any number of specializations (*Business*).

- A special case of the last where some laborers with high Imagination gather others characters and for an *Earning*, raise their morale (*Entertainment*).

Surely your Characters can take it from here? Oh yes, this game was not invented, but handed down from a fourth-level eld. *Drudging and Dragging* (the latter as in "Drag Strip", by the way) by TANSTAAFL the *Virtue*, available from any branch of the Church of Profit Incarnate for only one g.p. for Old and New Testaments (plus two GPs each for the volumes of the apocrypha).

THE TWELVE NIGHTS IN DUNGEON

(Tune of *The Twelve Days of Christmas*)

On the first night in Dungeon,
A High Priest gave to me,
A non-saving finger of death.
On the second night in Dungeon,
A wizard threw at me,
Two fireballs spinning,
And a non-saving finger of death.
On the third night in Dungeon,
Challenged did I stand
By . . . three anti-heroes,
Two fireballs spinning, and a non-saving finger of death.
On the fourth night in Dungeon,
Behind a secret door,
Stood . . . four mantichora,
Three anti-heroes, two fireballs spinning,
And a non-saving finger of death.
On the fifth night in Dungeon,
My cleric threw on me
Five . . . cure . . . wounds.
Four mantichora, three anti-heroes, two fireballs spinning,
And a non-saving finger of death.
On the sixth night in Dungeon,
I turned around to see,
Six crossbolts coming,
Five cure wounds.
Four mantichora, three anti-heroes, two fireballs spinning,
And a non-saving finger of death.
On the seventh night in Dungeon,
Parried was my blade
By . . . seven swords a-slashing,
Six crossbolts coming,
Five cure wounds.
Four mantichora, three anti-heroes, two fireballs spinning,
And a non-saving finger of death.
On the eighth night in Dungeon,
I stood my ground against
Eight Uruk-hai,
Seven swords a-slashing, six crossbolts coming,
Five cure wounds.
Four mantichora, three anti-heroes, two fireballs spinning,
And a non-saving finger of death.
On the ninth night in Dungeon,
I escaped so narrowly,
Nine pixies charming,
Eight Uruk-Hai,
Seven swords a-slashing, six crossbolts coming,
Five cure wounds.
Four mantichora, three anti-heroes, two fireballs spinning,
And a non-saving finger of death.
On the tenth night in Dungeon,
A sprung trap dropped me down,
To . . . ten trolls a-clawing,
Nine pixies charming, eight Uruk-hai,
Seven swords a-slashing, six crossbolts coming,
Five cure wounds.
Four mantichora, three anti-heroes, two fireballs spinning,
And a non-saving finger of death.
On the eleventh night in Dungeon,
I gave up when I saw
Eleven elves enchanting,
Ten trolls a-clawing, nine pixies charming, eight Uruk-hai,
Seven swords a-slashing, six crossbolts coming,
Five cure wounds.
Four mantichora, three anti-heroes, two fireballs spinning,
And a non-saving finger of death.
On the twelfth night in dungeon,
I got what most I need:
Twelve resurrections . . . (to handle) . . .
Eleven elves enchanting, ten trolls a-clawing,
Nine nixies charming, eight Uruk-hai,
Seven swords a-slashing, six crossbolts coming,
Five cure wounds.
Four mantichora, three anti-heroes, two fireballs spinning,
And a non-saving finger of death.

TALES OF TERRA SUPRA: THE WIRENTHY

[As you will see, an incredible number of incidents happened in this adventure in the fast-paced world of Terra Supra. My memory may be faulty, especially in the earlier melees, so I welcome corrections from the players. All comments on game statistics and players will appear in brackets so as to minimize interference with the relating of the saga.]

At the stroke of midnight Sunday, the mad scientist threw the switch. On the twenty tables, creatures faded in from other worlds. Two elves appeared, a ranger and a magic-user, a Greek Maenad cleric and a dwarf fighter, another mage and fighter, and two "cleric" hobbits of the "Libertarian Church." They appeared on the ten tables to the scientist's right. On his left appeared a thief, giant insects, kobolds, goblins, and a gelatinous cube. The nine lawfuls and one neutral, summoned from various worlds, fought for their lives, and nine of them won. They were the elven fighter-mages Segrith and Wirenth [Sandy McIntosh], Ranger Eiken and Mage Jhaelen [Pat Young], the Maenad Tarentil [Steve McIntosh], the mage Alack and fighter Gandron [Andy Thornton] and the two Swiss banking hobbits, ministers of the First Libertarian Church, Tom and Jerry [Charles Curley].

The nine intrepids formed a hasty compact and confronted the anti-magic user Bendix and his damsel daughter Jolanna. Jolanna soothed their wrath as much as possible, and served them dinner, apologizing for her deranged father. Bendix turned out to be talkative old codger, quite informative and helpful when not in his lab. From the two, the nine learned they were in the Town of Pree in the World of Terra Supra. [See *Clear Ether! 10* in *A&E 12* for a description of this world.]

How could they return? Bendix mentioned the possibility of penetrating the Maze, which he had done himself at much risk (it may have been that which drove him mad). Jolanna suggested that they earn divine aid, and Wirenth, the young elven maiden, asked how that might be done. She was told that she could probably find a mission.

The following morn Jolanna went off into the Lawful section of Pree (on the edge of which they lived) to teach school at the Church of Neo-Aslan. She directed Wirenth, Segrith, and their companions to the Catholic (not of Rome, of course) Church, since Wirenth had a Patriarch friend of a similarly-named faith. Eiken went in when invited by the Curate, but Jhaelen (the Neutral) was barred. The Bishop greeted them and asked what they wanted. Wirenth requested a mission and the Bishop, after praying on that matter, was sure that God or his eldila would answer her. As they left, Wirenth and Eiken donated to the Church. Both noticed a shimmer in the corner of their eyes which seemed to hover somewhere just over their shoulders.

The nine explored the town of Pree, outfitting themselves for adventure. Suddenly, in front of an inn in the Neutral section, Wirenth saw an assassin stab a man. Perhaps that shimmering thing hovering on her shoulder had directed her attention at just the right place to see an Executioner strike. A cleric named John also saw and rushed to help the stricken fighter.

After landing initial blows on the high-level assassin, a fearful melee ensued between Wirenth, John and the Executioner. John was stricken to near-unconsciousness, though the assassin had only a knife, when Wirenth landed the fatal blow on him. They searched his belongings and found a map to a place in the Mountains. The dying victim told them to save his son.

As they left, Mayor Salvo's Neutral police came around. They found out from rumours later that the dead man was a Lord from a lost valley of Neutrals. The Lord had been fighting incognito for the Neutral Army guarding Pree from an Army of Chaos. (They much later found out he was assassinated because his line of the family had inherited the throne of the hidden valley and he could have returned as regent to his son, the Prince.)

Wirenth was sure she had her mission, to aid the endangered son of the Lord. She convinced the rest of the Party to join her, and with John [Pat's new character], they rode out in the morning. Stopped by guards, they found out they were wanted for questioning—so they fled, with crossbolts on their tail.

Bypassing the Maze, they ran into a bandit encampment. Sending in scouts, they observed some anti-clerics holding service for some of the bandits, and attempted to flee. They ran into a small band (thirty) of the bandits on their way Westward.

The party attempted to negotiate with the bandits for safe passage, but the price was too high, so they attempted to flee. As the bandits fired missiles, the higher-level ones on horseback

charged after, and the footmen tromped towards them behind covering the archers, one of their number begin flying. A mage! Then a horse fell to the missiles and they stopped to save their fellow as they became aware of it and fight a pitched battle. A missile dropped the enemy Theurgist before he could zap them and their missiles took a toll. Then the mounted fighters arrived and the mages on the lawfuls' side struck. Segrith fell to a critical hit missile, and Wirenth, berserk, rode through the demoralized footmen throwing her sleep spell and dropping the fleeing grunts. The bandits were wiped out, but not Wirenth's grief at the death of her elder sister.



WIRENTH HOLDING HER STRICKEN, SLAIN SISTER SEGRITH
—Art by Sandy McIntosh

The party encamped between the territory of the bandits and nearby Nomads. (They questioned a captured bandit for the information of where to most safely encamp.)

The hobbits returned to Pree to open an account with the treasure, and encountered a courtesan named Marla [Sandy McIntosh] who accompanied them back. An incident between Jhaelen (who was, it turned out, descended from a demon father) and Alack and Gandron, left the latter fearful and distrustful of the Neutral mage. They stabbed him as he slept, most foully, and were themselves dropped to Neutral in one stroke. Nomads appeared soon after, and they dispatched them, heading North in the early morn to evade the rest of the Nomad band. The party was under great tension, and Alack and Gandron were treated as prisoners. Wirenth attempted interrogate Alack and Gandron and get their confessions of guilt, but they exhibited no remorse. Finally, they were about to stop and have it out separately on top of a foothill in single combat, when Alack saw, up on the side of a mountain, a cave with men walking down to position over a narrow pass they were approaching.

The rest of the party pulled into the pass to await the outcome of the battle/discussion between Alack and Wirenth and the Cave Men prepared to attack from above and on the opposite side in the thicket. Alack traded the information for a chance to fight for his freedom, and the party found boulders coming down at them as they moved with all due haste.

The Courtesan from the South-easterly city of Susopolis (run by dualistic worshippers of Ozmudh and Ahriman) proved her mettle by stabbing a sure-strike on a Cave Man who attempted to rape her, hiding under his body. The mages threw their spells, Gandron and Eiken fought bravely and well, as did the cleric John and Maenad Tarentil. As the spells struck, the Cave Men on the mountainside fled to their cave. Those who had been on the ground in ambush were slept or killed.

As the party entered the Mountains, they were sorely divided. Alack and Gandron were under suspicion, Eiken and John protected Jhaelen's body and watched Alack and Gandron. Wirenth was vexed at Eiken who had made a pass at her during the night, while she was grieving over her sister and was vulnerable [Eney Make-Out Rules]. Marla felt strange with all these non-Dualist aliens, and Tarentil was not at peace with these non-polytheists who knew not of Olympus. Thus did they come upon guards of the conquered castle.

Wirenth showed the map to a guard who had obviously been paid off to let the bearer of the map through. The guards warned the intrepids of mixing it with the anti-clerics on the neighbouring mountains.

Sure enough, the party had barely got halfway around the mountain when a group of berserk warriors from the castle came riding down at them, filled with bloodlust.

The party had stopped to camp for the night. Wirenth had begun to walk off to be on her own, Eiken and John watched Alack and Gandron with suspicion, Marla and Tarentil started setting things up.

The oncoming riders were challenged; then missiles were fired. Mounted lance approached and missed. Tarentil began drinking wine, working herself into a berserk fury, and swept into the Berserker ranks. The heroic party dispatched the enemy without loss, charming one.

The Charmed Berserker informed them that the Temple of Fenris had launched an attack upon the Castle (which had changed hands so many times that no one remembered its name). The fighters had defeated them, but had gone into a berserk frenzy in doing so, and rode down the Mountain attacking anything. The charmed Berserker and a subdued prisoner, now calmed down, agreed to go their way peaceably and head off any more trouble from that direction.

The following day the party got around the mountain with the castle, to find a large saddle between three mountains. There was the path back up from whence they came, a path going up the next mountain where the map directed them, a ledge on a third side, and the fourth direction? Perhaps to the hidden valley.

The party now began bickering about direction. The ranger and the cleric decided to return towards Pree to see if they could resurrect Jhaelen. Wirenth was anxious to follow the path up the mountain, but the rest of the group convinced her that only the Enemy was up there; surely not the Prince whom they sought.

On that mountain from which they turned away, a hoka appeared, monster-summoned. He was convinced he was Merlin the Wise (and White since he had been turned albino on another world in an expedition). Faced with a Wizardess of very high level who had summoned him, he [Steve McIntosh] decided not to fight her though the symbols on her robes spelled Chaos. While the super-sorceress conferred with her Necromancer assistant, Merlin fled, turning himself invisible. Since he was on a high ledge, and it was filled with busy humans, high orcs, dragons, gnomes, ents, etc., he rolled down the mountain side.

Unfortunately, for all concerned, he was smelled by a pair of cockatrices who were flying overhead. The monsters had never smelled such before (hokas are not native to Terra Supra, hence also accounting for Banffa the Wizardess's distraction) so they descended to investigate. And Merlin rolled into the mounted party of Tarentil, Alack and Gandron, Wirenth and Marla. Hearing the commotion, Eiken and John hurried back to join them and assist.

Missiles flew, and Merlin fired a thunderbolt, thus revealing his presence. One cockatrice fell mortally, the second landed in front of the Party and attacked. Again missiles and spells rained upon it, and it fell slain.

So the entire party stayed together for yet a little longer, though they fell into argument, and came upon the shallow-angled drop from the mountains down to the hidden valley. But from the direction of the path between the mountain from which they came [imagine a "Y" crossroads] and the third mountain, came human figures—who shape-changed into their wereboar form.

The lycanthropes had arrived just as the party was about to break into another fight.

Joining forces again, they killed one wereboar and chased the other as he tried to climb the mountain to safety. But not all lycanthropes were slain...

As the whole group descended into the hidden valley, they were approached by a group who appeared to be some sort of monks, being oriental and wearing only robes, but of mixed gender. At least that was the conclusion that Eiken and John jumped to. A parley was set up, and the monks (if that they were) inquired as to the presence of "other" monks from the nearby (top of that third mountain) monastery, which was supposedly lawful and had a lama!). This group began to return to their main band, only to shape change into weretigers! The battle was turned by the hurling of spells by Alack and Merlin, and Tarentil's drunken berserk charge. She rode through them, macing them down.

Searching those who had not escaped, the party found treasure and a map to a lair nearby, which they decided to investigate in the morning. But as they slept, the troubled Wirenth silently got up in the night, abandoning her armor and heavy burdens, and slipped into the night—alone.

TO BE CONTINUED

[Next: The Hidden Valley of H'in-L'in and What Occurred There] TANSTAAFL the Virtue



◆ ANNOUNCEMENT OF SOME IMPORT ◆

The anarchic players of D&D in Long Beach have finally decided (*translate* I finally got sick and tired...) to run at some—at least—fixed times. Specifically, the third apartment of the Anarchovillage will be open to expeditions every other Friday. Thus, those from out-of-town can find us and those from other parts of Southern California can (go slumming) occasionally drop by. There will be a prior announcement of what world will be run for those who wish to prepare, at the previous meetings, and possible the announcement will appear in the *SFALB Bulletin* and the *LASFS* bulletin board.

The first meet is scheduled for September 17, 6:30 P.M., at 1838 E. 7th Street, Apartment 3, Long Beach. Phone inquiry to Sandy McIntosh, (213) 424-3243.