

RAGING SWAN PRESS

GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY:

MAY 2017





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GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: MAY 2017

Featuring material from some of Raging Swan Press's newest products as well as classic releases of yesteryear, advice articles and material from Creighton's own Borderland of Adventure campaign, the GM's Monthly Miscellany series is a terrific free resource for the busy, time-crunched GM.

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SOURCES

As well as new, never seen before material from my own Borderland of Adventure campaign, this instalment of GM's Monthly Miscellany presents information from several Raging Swan Press products and advice articles including:

- **20 Things #14: Hill Giants Hall** Creighton Broadhurst.
- **Town Backdrop: Dunstone** John Bennett.
- **Village Backdrop: Quey's Glade** Mike Welham.

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FOREWORD

Toward the end of April Raging Swan Press had some great news. Just a week ago, we hit our next Patreon milestone target. This is epic! I am beyond delighted.

This means, through our patrons' generosity and support, we can increase the page count of our shorter lines such as *Village Backdrop* and *Places of Power*. From this summer, we'll be increasing the contents of

each instalment by 40%. I've long hankered after providing more awesomeness in the two lines, and now we can! I can't wait to start sharing bigger books with you all!

In any event, herein you'll find excerpts from some of Raging Swan's newest products including *Village Backdrop: Quey's Glade*, *20 Things #14: Hill Giant Steading* (along with some stat blocks from my own campaign) and *Town Backdrop: Dunstone*. I've also included a recent article I wrote about how I loathe the concept of the dump stat with the burning passion of 1,000 fiery

suns. As you can guess, it's an issue close to my heart.

You can read the article—and scores more as well as my campaign summaries—at creightonbroadhurst.com.

PATREON

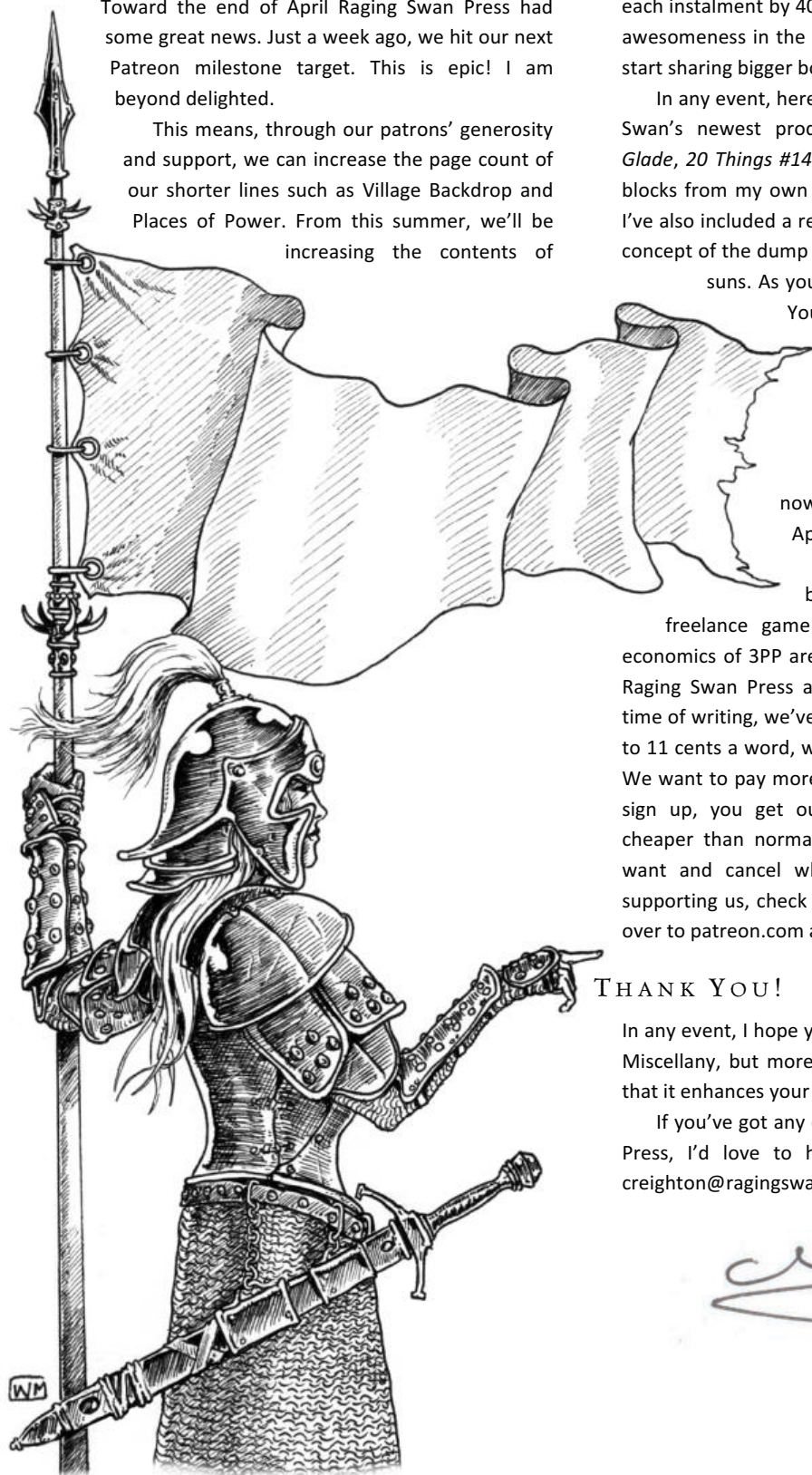
You might be aware Raging Swan Press is now on Patreon. We signed up at the start of April 2015, and it's going rather marvellously.

The thrust of our Patreon campaign is to be able to afford better rates of pay for our freelance game designers. As I'm sure you know, the economics of 3PP are notoriously tight, but Patreon gives us at Raging Swan Press a way to increase our freelancer rates. At time of writing, we've already massively increased our word rate to 11 cents a word, which gives me a warm, fuzzy feeling inside. We want to pay more, but to do that we need your help! If you sign up, you get our supplements earlier than normal and cheaper than normal. Even better, you can pledge what you want and cancel when you want. If you are interested in supporting us, check out patreon.com/ragingswanpress or head over to patreon.com and search for Raging Swan!

THANK YOU!

In any event, I hope you enjoy the material in this GM's Monthly Miscellany, but more importantly I hope you find it useful and that it enhances your campaign.

If you've got any comments or questions about Raging Swan Press, I'd love to hear from you. You can contact me at creighton@ragingswan.com.



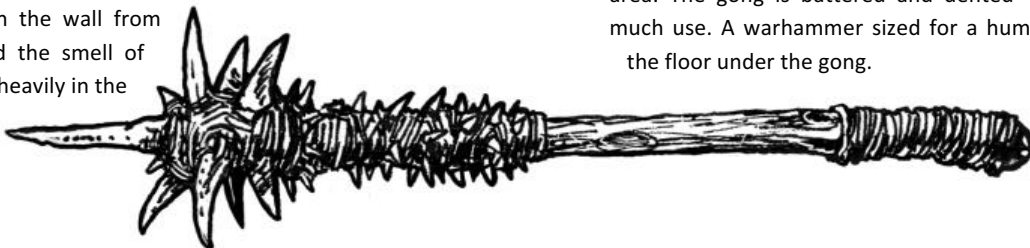
20 PIECES OF HILL GIANT STEADING DRESSING

Hill giants dwell in huge, rough-hewn timber strongholds hidden deep within rugged hill and mountain ranges. Selfish, violent raiders they constantly hunt and forage through the surrounding territory.

A hill giant steading is unlike any other dungeon. Consequently, the steading's minor features of note or interest should be different to normal dungeon dressing. The giants, their pets and slaves leave a mark on the steading and the clever GM uses such signs to breathe life and verisimilitude into the PCs' explorations.

Use the table below, to generate minor points of interest the PCs discover during their exploration of a hill giant steading.

1. The ceiling is particularly poorly constructed; water drips down from above to form a puddle on the floor.
2. A large brown bear skin is nailed to the wall. Its open jaws are easily ten-foot above the ground (and make a good place for a giant to hide some small trinket).
3. A discarded, frayed giant's bag lies in one corner. It holds a wheel of hard, mouldy cheese and a mangy (worthless) wolf pelt.
4. A haphazardly stacked pile of firewood stands against one wall. The large logs are the thickness of a human's torso and could be used as missiles by nearby giants. Rats infest the pile.
5. A faded and filthy tapestry covers one wall. Clearly not of giant artifice it depicts a range of majestic, jagged hills rising into the distance. The tapestry is roughly ten-foot square and now worthless.
6. Three torches—nothing more than hacked tree branches wrapped with cloth—burn here. The atmosphere is foul and overly warm; smoke coils about the ceiling.
7. Trophies—mainly comprising skulls and rotting heads of humans, dwarves and bears—hang from pegs driven deeply into the walls. Perceptive PCs notice one of the rotting heads still wears a small silver stud earring (worth 5 gp).
8. Splotches along with a thick smear of dried blood decorate the ground. They lead toward the giants' kitchen.
9. A large crudely-crafted bench sized for giants stands against one wall. Its surface is pockmarked with many gouge marks likely made by bored giants.
10. Here, the wood of one wall is dripping wet and rotten. Water runs down the wall from above and the smell of rot hangs heavily in the air.



11. A gigantic longspear—perhaps 20-foot long—leans in one corner. Examination reveals the haft is particularly thick and the spear's point comprises a short sword whose handle has been wedged into a notch cut at the top of the spear's haft.
12. Wolf, bear and other hides of more exotic nature as well as a half-dozen blue wyvern scales decorate the walls. One of the larger hides obscures a small (currently unoccupied) cubby hole or guard post.
13. A set of knucklebones, three dice and four empty flagons lie abandoned on the floor. Nearby a large (empty) wineskin hangs from a badly dressed branch protruding from the wall. It seems the gamblers have now departed—perhaps in search of more booze!
14. The smell of wet wolf fur and excrement fills this area. An impressively large pile of relatively fresh wolf droppings decorate the floor near one wall.
15. Shadows and cobwebs heavy with dust cluster thickly about the rafters high above the PCs' heads. The walls of undressed logs make accessing this area relatively easy. PCs exploring the rafters discover a carefully concealed route through the cobwebs which leads to a small niche cut into the wall. Two empty wine flasks lie in the niche.
16. Pegs driven into the walls hold a variety of bags, cloaks and other soiled pieces of giant-sized clothing. Several cloaks hang all the way to the floor and could make excellent impromptu hiding places. Most of the bags are empty, but one holds a 100-foot-long coil of very strong, thick hemp rope.
17. A rough map of the surrounding area hangs on one wall. The crude map is etched into the back of a gigantic mouldering bear skin. The map shows the steading, several nearby human settlements and a cave mouth over which the words, "Cavern of Whispered Death" is written.
18. The smell of cooking meat wafts through the air.
19. An orc slave slumps unconscious in a shadowy corner. Beaten near to death by its hill giant master for some transgression, the orc will die unless healed. If healed, the orc—Bargesh—is wary, but if offered his freedom happily tells the PCs anything they want to know about the hated giants. Bargesh isn't suicidal, however, and has no interest in fighting giants.
20. A large brass gong hangs from its stand in the centre of this area. The gong is battered and dented—it has clearly seen much use. A warhammer sized for a human or dwarf lies on the floor under the gong.

QUEY'S GLADE AT A GLANCE

Ruler Nevirl Thimblewrought

Government Autocracy

Population 112 (39 humans, 1 dryad, 17 elves, 9 gnomes, 23 half-elves, 3 half-orcs, 12 halflings, 3 nymphs, 4 pixies, 1 treant)

Alignments NG, CG, N, CN

Languages Common, Druidic, Sylvan

Corruption -1; **Crime** -2; **Economy** -4; **Law** -4; **Lore** -1; **Society** -5

Qualities Insular, prosperous

Danger 20; **Disadvantages** Hunted

Quey's Glade is an ancient place, and its original purpose has almost been lost to time. Originally a fey outpost when fey first crossed over from their primal realms to the physical world, the village and its surrounding woods enjoyed protection thanks to portals created by the eponymous satyr noble Quey. The portals shunted non-fey to the opposite side of the forest, giving the illusion of travelling uninterrupted through the woods, albeit more quickly than expected. Quey's Glade eventually became a haven for fey as Quey seeded the world with portals, keyed to negative (but not destructive) emotions. Therefore, a resident who felt fear or sadness could simply approach a portal and be whisked back to the village.

Quey, along with other faerie arcanists, added another layer of protection by having the village and its surrounds translocate on a random basis to prevent discovery. The village changes its appearance to mesh with its new environment, allowing it to blend in with tropical jungles, temperate deciduous forests, alpine forests and frozen taigas.

As fey integrated more fully into the world, Quey's Glade fell into relative disuse, but still the portals remained active. While their ability to detect fey waned, they maintained their reaction to strong negative emotions. Thereafter, the portals swept up people who ran through them in terror or passed by them with a feeling of profound sorrow, as well as those who otherwise felt out of place in the world. Due to the strange flow of time carried over from the fey's primal world, visitors can age as they wish, so siblings aged only a couple years apart when they arrived can have wildly diverging ages after a lifetime spent here.

Most of those who stumbled into the portals and activated them were children who more openly expressed their fears, sadness and anxieties. These negative emotions have drawn terrible creatures to the woods surrounding Quey's Glade. Most of the protections have held, but incursions have destroyed the trees in the northeast part of the village and all villagers are aware of the dangers beyond the Warped Wood. Every now and then, the villagers need outsiders to deal with the threats, so scouts leave the village to seek out heroes to drive back or destroy the lurking terrors.

VILLAGERS

Appearance Residents are cheerful and friendly to visitors.

Dress Garb is in hues of green, brown or brighter colours to blend in with the surrounding forest.

Nomenclature *male* Gar, Nevirl, Zan; *female* Danae, Pella, Thistle; *family* Kastiv, Martinsong, Volk, Weatherford.

MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Plant-derived alchemicals and sanctuary
Base Value 550 gp; **Purchase Limit** 3,750 gp; **Spellcasting** 3rd;
Minor Items 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** -

When the PCs arrive, the following items are for sale:

- **Potions & Oils** *barkskin* (300 gp), *endure elements* (50 gp)
- **Scroll (Divine)** *control weather* (2,275 gp), *plant growth* (375 gp), *summon nature's ally I/II* (25/150 gp)

VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check may know something about Quey's Glade. A successful check gains all the information revealed by a lesser result.

DC 25: Quey's Glade is accessible through negative emotions, but a resident can lead newcomers to the village.

DC 30: The village is a sanctuary for the lost and frightened.

DC 35: Terrible creatures, some borne of the fears driving people to the village, lurk in the woods surrounding it.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Quey's Glade and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A PC exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

D6	RUMOUR
1	A flash of lightning struck one of the trees and split it in half. The hunters must have penetrated the defences.
2*	Bastionbark is unhappy with Nevirl's leadership and plans to take control of the village.
3	Molly's brother, Vallyn, wants to return to the world, but Molly has made a show of being upset by his decision.
4	Some of the fey were talking about returning the village to its original home in the primal world.
5*	Karja is acting strange. I'm worried one of the evil spirits from the woods possessed her.
6	Ced has begun training a replacement watchman.

*False rumour

NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the population are nothing more than hardworking peasants. A few, however, are of interest to adventurers:

Bastionbark (location 10; NG treant druid 2) Bastionbark is the oldest living inhabitant of Quey's Glade.

Ced Queywarden (location 4; CG male half-orc ranger 5) Abandoned by his tribe, Ced found his way to Quey's Glade, where he takes his job as lookout very seriously.

Karja Weatherford (location 7; N female half-elf druid 4) Karja tends the gardens and plans the rotation of plants to ensure continued good yields.

Molly Kastiv (location 2; NG female young human adept 1) Molly has lived in the village for 12 years but apparently hasn't aged beyond ten. She has learned some healing skills and uses that to help visitors and animals alike.

Nevirl Thimblewrought (location 5; CN male gnome expert 3) Descended from the Quey line, Nevirl became village leader after his predecessor was killed.

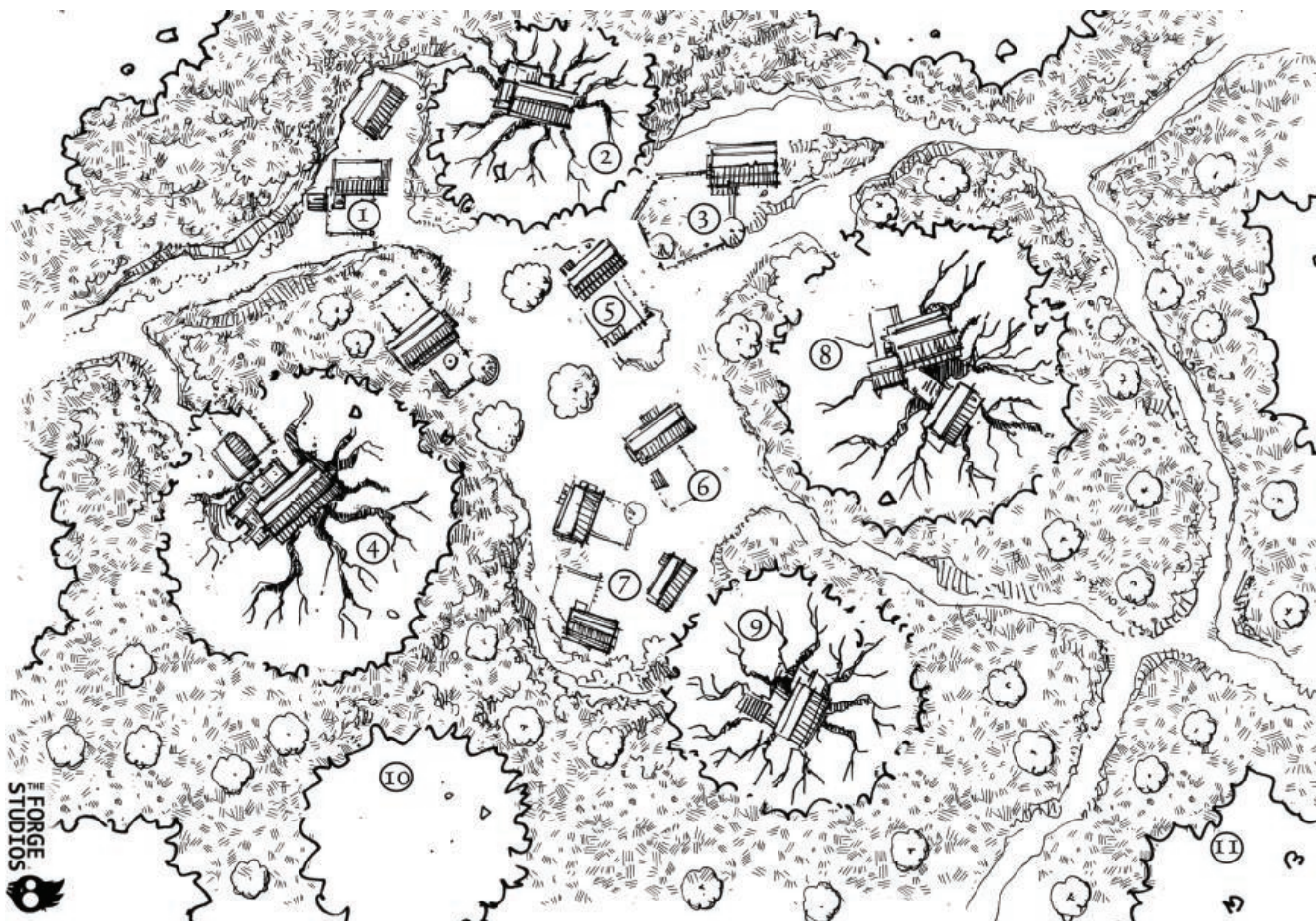
Pipperil (location 8; NG male pixie rogue 3) Pipperil spends very little time in Feyhome as he typically joins representatives from the village to the outside world.

Valathrax (location 6; N female awakened porcupine fighter 4) Val Indra died valiantly protecting children from raiding orcs; moments thereafter her spirit awoke a nearby porcupine.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Pasture:** Cows and sheep graze in the village's remotest farm, so the stench does not bother most villagers.
2. **Sanctuary:** This arboreal building houses the village healer and small shrines for a variety of nature deities.
3. **Respite:** This building and fenced-in area acts as an inn and a place where new arrivals can rest.
4. **Lookout:** The tallest tree in Quey's Glade allows panoramic views of the surrounding forest.
5. **Village Hall:** The village's seat of government.
6. **Garrison:** Valathrax drills residents who have agreed to fight the terrors surrounding Quey's Glade.
7. **Gardens:** Here, villagers grow staple vegetables and tubers.
8. **Feyhome:** This tree shelters resident and visiting fey.
9. **Thicket of Rare Plants:** Druids in this location tend plants harvested to endangerment or extinction in the larger world.
10. **The Old Oak:** Here stands the ancient treant Bastionbark.
11. **Warped Wood:** The northeast border marks the burgeoning intrusion from the fell creatures inhabiting the woods outside.



DUNSTONE AT A GLANCE

Ruler Benjam Oksanen

Government Overlord

Population 3,574 (3,493 humans, 18 dwarves, 4 elves, 5 half-elves, 11 half-orcs, 33 halflings, 10 gnomes)

Alignments LG, NG, N, LN, LE, NE

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven

Corruption +2; **Crime** -3; **Economy** +1; **Law** +4; **Lore** +2; **Society** -3

Qualities Insular, rumormongering, tourist attraction

Danger 5

The town of Dunstone hunches under the menacing gaze of the nearby Mottled Spire's, granitic bulk. A crumbling 12 ft. wall of granite encircles the original town, also protected by an old, moss covered fortress. The fort watches over sagging row houses meandering across a low hill towards the Selka River. Here surly guardsmen oversee a rickety wooden bridge spanning the river and the path towards the Mottled Spire. In bygone days, monsters crawled out of Gloamhold and down from the Mottled Spire to die against Dunstone's walls and formidable moat. Now the moat is a grassy slope where pigs graze and children play.

The last bastion of civilization before the Mottled Spire, the townsfolk are a resilient and hardy folk. Often cut off from the rest of the Duchy of Ashlar during the deep winter, locals trade whispers and gossip amongst themselves. A tightknit community, strangers are treated with suspicion until they prove themselves to be honest and hardworking folk like the Dunstonians. The townspeople engage in farming, raising livestock and crafting trade goods. Except for traveling merchants, few from Dunstone travel into the larger world, though an occasional brash youth dares the hardships of the Mottled Spire. All remember the failed expedition of Greystone.

Lord Benjam Oksanen rules Dunstone fairly though he is approaching the end of his years. His young grandson, Aavo, will inherit, Aavo's father having perished long ago in the Mottled Spire. Aavo seeks to revitalize Dunstone's sagging fortunes by granting tax incentives for merchants to carry Dunstone's goods throughout Ashlar. He also wishes to bolster the meagre forces of the Knights of the Eternal Watch, a knighthood with ties to the local Temple of Darlen, and mount further expeditions into the Mottled Spire. Finally, Aavo eagerly seeks promising adventurers to map the many canyons and trails crawling through the granite behemoth to Gloamhold itself. An influx of wealth might just break the lethargy hanging over a town clinging to its old ways. Yet, even Aavo is not aware of the growing threat in Dunstone. Something sinister crawled up from the depths of Gloamhold, a creature with a malign alien intelligence seeking to integrate itself into the town.

TOWNSFOLK

Appearance Dunstonians have fair skin and sandy hair with brown or hazel eyes. Men grow thick beards and women wear their hair long in braids. Both sexes tend to be stout.

Dress Both sexes prefer heavy dyed woollen tunics with fleece lined jackets in the winter. Jewellery is often simple, consisting of rings, brooches and necklaces.

Nomenclature *male* Hannu, Kalervo, Ralf, Osmo; *female* Ilma, Minja, Sirpa Tehri; *family* Jussila, Laasko, Pihlaja, Soro.

MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Brewing, farming, hunting and livestock
Base Value 2,400gp; **Purchase Limit** 10,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 5th;
Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 2d4; **Major Items** 1d4

When the PCs arrive, the following items are for sale:

- **Potions & Oils** *disguise self* (50 gp), *enlarge person* (50 gp)
- **Scrolls (Arcane)** *hold portal* (25 gp), *locate object* (200 gp)
- **Scrolls (Divine)** *sanctuary* (25 gp), *shield other* (200 gp)

TOWN LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check may know some information about Dunstone. A successful check gains all the information revealed by a lesser result.

DC 10: Dunstone lies near the Mottled Spire.

DC 15: Dunstone seeks to create new trading partnerships with other towns and villages.

DC 20: The Darlenites in Dunstone guard an ancient relic.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Dunstone and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A PC exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below, to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

D6	RUMOUR
1	Lately, Father Mattila spends most of his time sequestered in the tower with his knights.
2*	Soili Kotka is a witch who takes the form of a demoness at night to lay with men and women.
3*	The Rekolos are demon worshippers. Anyone who goes near their home is captured and sacrificed to evil gods.
4	Lately, there's been a rash of break-ins in people's homes.
5	Kildann's Cuts has a special menu for discreet customers.
6*	Aavo murdered his grandfather and took over the town. He's enacting all sorts of new, crazy laws and taxes!

*False rumour

NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the population are nothing more than hardworking peasants. A few, however, are of interest to adventurers:

Aavo Lahti (location 1; LN male human fighter 2/bard 4) A young idealist, Aavo help to turn Dunstone around.

Benjam Lahti (location 1; LN old male human fighter 5) The ancient lord rules Dunstone and is resistant to change.

Dulannis Fisfelond (location 9; LG male elf fighter 6) Dulannis has lived in Dunstone for decades and makes high-quality weapons.

Joonas Mattila (location 2; LG old male human cleric [Darlen] 5) Joonas is high priest of the local Temple of Darlen and leads the Knights of the Eternal Watch stationed therein.

Mari Parviainen (location 11; NG female half-elf expert 2) Mari works closely with Aavo in revitalizing Dunstone.

Marjo Oiva (location 3; NG old female human cleric [Conn] 4) The aging priestess of Conn, Marjo works with the town's newest generation.

Roosa Lajunen (location 4; CG female gnome wizard [illusionist] 3) An inn keep and amateur magician, Roosa is often plagued by strange dreams.

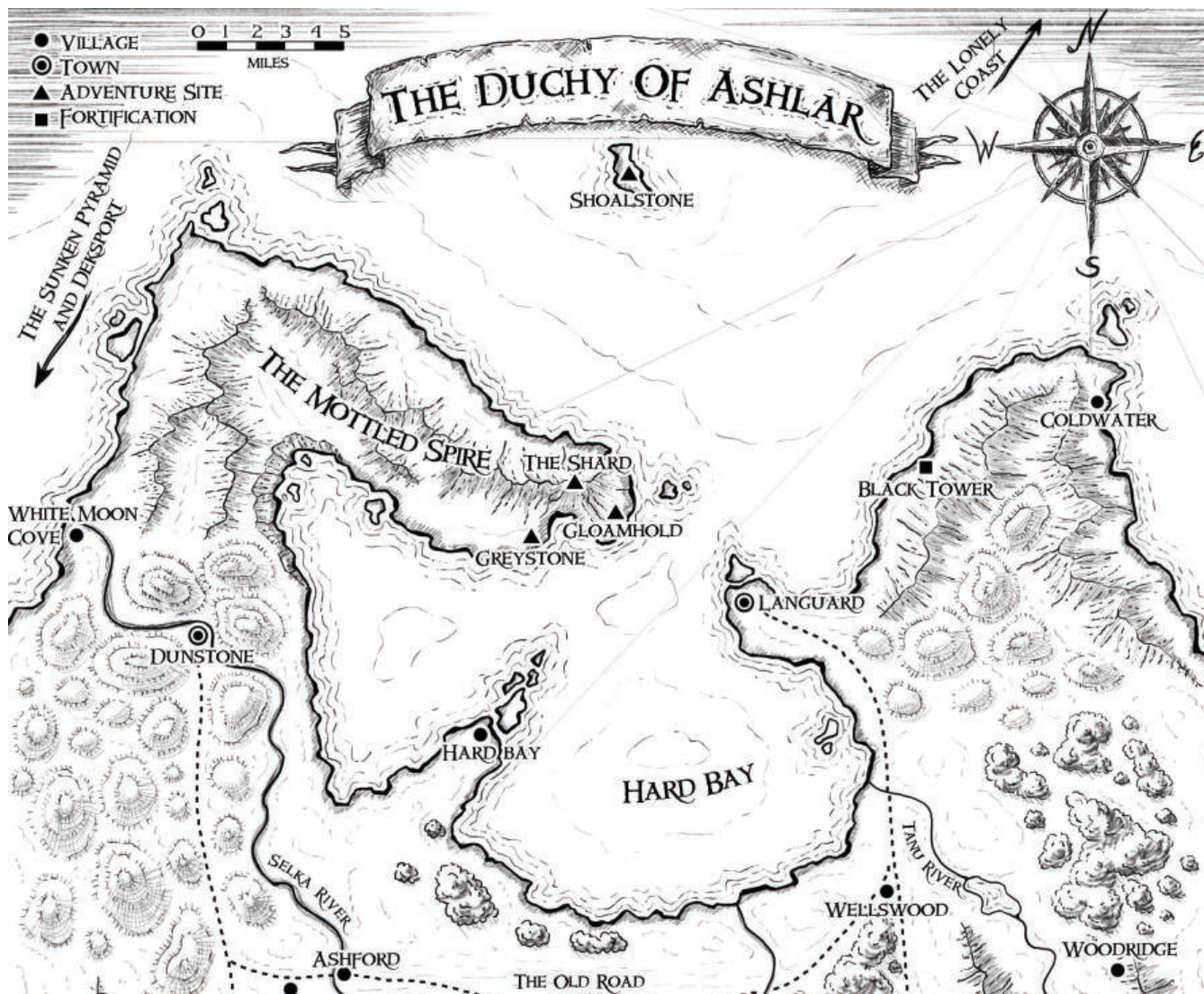
Soili Kotka (location 10; LG female human expert 2) Soili organizes and plans the frequent farmer's markets and is the town's biggest gossip.

Thrayxix/Jyrki Klemetti (location 5; CE intellect devourer) Thrayxix poses as a businessman while creating a secret thieves' guild and plotting Dunstone's ruination.

Verna Brandybottle (location 8; NG female halfling expert 2) Verna hails from the Lonely Coast. She runs the Brandybottle Distillery and heads the Brewery Guild.

Vieno Rekola (location 7; N old male human wizard [universalist] 4) A feeble old wizard, Vieno laments his family's decline in the magical arts as he seeks new items and spells.

Whurkus Kildann (location 6; LE male dwarf rogue 4) Wanted in his native lands, Whurkus heads the Butcher's Guild and is known for his exotic meats.



NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN BRIEF

Most of Dunstone comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

12. **Dunstone Keep:** Home to the Oksanen family, rulers of Dunstone, the keep serves as a bastion against predators emerging from the Mottled Spire. The lord's grandson, Aavo, has taken over the duties of rulership in hopes of reinvigorating the town.
13. **Tower of the Sword:** This stout tower houses the local church of Darlen and a sacred relic of the Father. A garrison of the Knights of the Eternal Watch also headquarter here, charged with the task of keeping the town safe.
14. **Bastion of Peace:** Worshippers of Conn gather here, a place that is the heart and soul of the community.
15. **Sheep Knuckles:** This strange inn sticks out in Dunstone but is a beloved drinking spot for the locals. Various forms of entertainment take place here nightly.
16. **The Gilded Swan:** One of Dunstone's most prominent inns, it has secretly been taken over by an intellect devourer. Various hedonistic delights can be had here for a price.
17. **Kildann's Cuts:** Renowned for its quality meats, its owner, a wanted fugitive, also offers a special menu comprising the flesh of exotic creatures.
18. **Rekola Manor:** Once a wizarding school, the manor and family have fallen into decay. Its current patriarch seeks to repair the family's fortunes.
19. **Brandybottle Distillery:** This halfling-owned distillery is known for its fine spirits. Its owner, Verna Brandybottle single-handedly started a brewing revival in Dunstone.
20. **Fisfelond's Smithy:** An inconspicuous smithy, its aging elven weaponsmith makes renowned weapons for the true of heart or for Dunstone's protection.
21. **Farmer's Market:** The local farmers congregate here to sell produce in a festival-like atmosphere with lively music and fresh beer.
22. **Trade Market:** The trade market allows various guilds to sell their wares and intermingle. Special events occur frequently to showcase a particular guild or business's wares.

STREET NAMES

Listed here are some of Dunstone's more famed streets. Most are unpaved, comprising little more than packed mud.

- **Beacon Street:** An old, ruined tower currently undergoing renovation dominates this simple street. In olden times, it held a beacon fire to warn of monsters coming down from the Mottled Spire.
- **Brewer's Row:** Most of Dunstone's beer brewers operate from long wooden buildings on this popular street.
- **Butcher Street:** Well-constructed wood and stone shops line both sides of this busy, tree-lined street.
- **Dunstone Boulevard:** Home to Dunstone's administrative buildings, it also features a small public park.
- **Durgan's Alley:** Most of Dunstone's dwarves live in stone buildings along this shaded alley, making a living as gemcutters, jewellers and smiths. A small bar here serves Durgan's Dwarven Delight (a potent dwarven liquor).
- **Fae Way:** This winding road leads past simple cottages. Local rumour states fey creatures lived here once. Now, it's home to a large colony of stray cats.
- **Falcon's Aerie:** Located near the top of this hill, the businesses here raise falcons and other birds of prey as well as messenger pigeons and ravens.
- **Gate Course:** Gate Course starts at Dunstone's eastern gate and is home to several stables and small inns. Several shops also sell simple equipment and riding gear.
- **Hillview:** Located near the top of the hill, Hillview boasts scenic views of the surrounding countryside and is popular with couples.
- **Lotti's Avenue:** Dedicated to a hero of Dunstone, supposedly a shepherd who felled an ogre chieftain, the Wool Guild makes its home here in her honour.
- **Memorial Boulevard:** This small square contains a granite memorial enshrining the names of Dunstone's heroes and those who have given their lives in defence of the town. Worn with age, a new, large one has been commissioned.
- **Oksanen Avenue:** Named after the current ruling family, this street of upper class homes features a stern granite statue of the first Oksanen lord, Havro Oksanen.
- **Rauni Road:** This narrow street was once the site of worship for an ancient fertility goddess. Many small shrines lie between the buildings where Dunstone's midwives and apothecaries practice. It's not uncommon to see small twig dolls and other fetishes hanging in the windows during spring.
- **Selka Street:** Named after the nearby river, most of the shops here sell fishing and survival gear.
- **Trader's Street:** One of Dunstone's few paved roads, Trader Street runs through the heart of Dunstone, containing many shops and crafters. At night, shopkeepers light small lanterns. Wealthier shopkeepers add an alchemical compound to the lanterns, transforming the light into colourful shades.



HILL GIANTS APLENTY

In my Borderland of Adventure campaign, the PCs will shortly be battling hill giants and their minions. To celebrate, I made some stat blocks! I hope you find them useful in your own campaign. You'll note none of the giants below have class levels. As the PCs levels rise, I'm trying to keep things behind the screen relatively simple, and this is my solution.

HILL GIANT TRIBAL ELDER CR 6 (XP 2,400)

This hunched and brutish giant is clad in filthy furs and carries a huge wooden club.

Old hill giant

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init -3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +7, Sense Motive +1

Speed 30 ft., base speed 40 ft.; **ACP** -3; Climb +9, Stealth -10

AC 19, touch 5, flat-footed 19; **CMD** 21; rock catching (+4 armour [hide], -3 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)

Rock Catching (Ex; free) Once per round, if the hill giant would be hit with a thrown rock (or similar object) of which it is aware, it can make a Reflex save (15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium rock and 25 for a Large rock) to catch it.

Fort +10, **Ref** +0, **Will** +4

hp 75 (10 HD)

Space 10 ft.; **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +14

Melee greatclub (reach 10 ft.; Power Attack [-2/+6]) +13/+8 (2d8+9) or

Melee 2 slams (reach 10 ft.; Power Attack [-2/+4]) +12 (1d8+6)

Ranged rock (range 120 ft.; rock throwing) +4 (1d8+9)

Atk Options Cleave

Abilities Str 22, Dex 5, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 10

Feats Cleave, Intimidating Prowess, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greatclub), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub)

Skills as above plus Intimidate +13

Languages Giant

Gear as above plus large sack

HILL GIANT CHILD CR 6 (XP 2,400)

This hunched and brutish giant is clad in filthy furs and carries a wooden club.

Young hill giant

CE Medium humanoid (giant)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +6, Sense Motive +0

Speed 30 ft., base speed 40 ft.; **ACP** -3; Climb +8, Stealth -2

AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21; **CMD** 23; rock catching (+4 armour [hide], +1 Dex, +7 natural)

Rock Catching (Ex; free) Once per round, if the hill giant would be hit with a thrown rock (or similar object) of which it is aware, it can make a Reflex save (15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium rock and 25 for a Large rock) to catch it.

Fort +9, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3

hp 65 (10 HD)

Space 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +12

Melee greatclub (Power Attack [-2/+6]) +13/+8 (1d10+7+10) or

Melee 2 slams (Power Attack [-2/+4]) +12 (1d6+5)

Ranged rock (range 120 ft.; rock throwing) +9 (1d6+7)

Atk Options Cleave

Abilities Str 21, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7

Feats Cleave, Intimidating Prowess, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greatclub), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub)

Skills as above plus Intimidate +10

Languages Giant

Gear as above plus large sack

HILL GIANT CR 7 (XP 3,200)

This hunched and brutish giant is clad in filthy furs and carries a huge wooden club.

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init -1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +6, Sense Motive +0

Speed 30 ft., base speed 40 ft.; **ACP** -3; Climb +10, Stealth -8

AC 21, touch 8, flat-footed 21; **CMD** 24; rock catching (+4 armour [hide], -1 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)

Rock Catching (Ex; free) Once per round, if the hill giant would be hit with a thrown rock (or similar object) of which it is aware, it can make a Reflex save (15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium rock and 25 for a Large rock) to catch it.

Fort +11, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3

hp 85 (10 HD)

Space 10 ft.; **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +15

Melee greatclub (reach 10 ft.; Power Attack [-2/+6]) +14/+9 (2d8+10) or

Melee 2 slams (reach 10 ft.; Power Attack [-2/+4]) +13 (1d8+7)

Ranged rock (range 120 ft.; rock throwing) +6 (1d8+10)

Atk Options Cleave

Abilities Str 25, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7

Feats Cleave, Intimidating Prowess, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greatclub), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub)

Skills as above plus Intimidate +12

Languages Giant

Gear as above plus large sack

HILL GIANT CHAMPION CR 8 (XP 4,800)

This hunched and brutish giant is clad in filthy furs and carries a huge wooden club.

Advanced hill giant

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +12, Sense Motive +2

Speed 30 ft., base speed 40 ft.; **ACP** -3; Climb +12, Stealth -6

AC 25, touch 10, flat-footed 24; **CMD** 24; rock catching (+4 armour [hide], +1 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

Rock Catching (Ex; free) Once per round, if the hill giant would be hit with a thrown rock (or similar object) of which it is aware, it can make a Reflex save (15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium rock and 25 for a Large rock) to catch it.

Fort +13, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5

hp 105 (10 HD)

Space 10 ft.; **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +15

Melee greatclub (reach 10 ft.; Power Attack [-2/+6]) +16/+11 (2d8+13) or

Melee longspear (reach 20 ft.; Power Attack [-2/+6]) +15/+10 (2d6+13) or

Melee 2 slams (reach 10 ft.; Power Attack [-2/+4]) +15 (1d8+9)

Ranged rock (range 120 ft.; rock throwing) +8 (1d8+13)

Atk Options Cleave

Abilities Str 29, Dex 12, Con 23, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 11

Feats Cleave, Intimidating Prowess, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greatclub), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub)

Skills as above plus Intimidate +22

Languages Giant

Gear as above plus large sack

GIGANTIC HILL GIANT CR 8 (XP 4,800)

This hunched and brutish giant is clad in filthy furs and carries a huge wooden club.

Giant hill giant

CE Huge humanoid (giant)

Init -2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +6, Sense Motive +0

Speed 30 ft., base speed 40 ft.; **ACP** -3; **Climb** +12, **Stealth** -13

AC 22, touch 6, flat-footed 22; **CMD** 26; rock catching

(+4 armour [hide], -2 Dex, +12 natural, -2 size)

Rock Catching (Ex; free) Once per round, if the hill giant would be hit with a thrown rock (or similar object) of which it is aware, it can make a Reflex save (15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium rock and 25 for a Large rock) to catch it.

Fort +13, **Ref** +1, **Will** +3

hp 105 (10 HD)

Space 15 ft.; **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +18

Melee greatclub (reach 15 ft.; Power Attack [-2/+6]) +15/+10 (3d8+13) or

Melee 2 slams (reach 15 ft.; Power Attack [-2/+4]) +14 (2d6+9)

Ranged rock (range 120 ft.; rock throwing) +6 (2d6+13)

Atk Options Cleave

Abilities Str 29, Dex 6, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7

Feats Cleave, Intimidating Prowess, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greatclub), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub)

Skills as above plus Intimidate +14

Languages Giant

Gear as above plus large sack

GIGANTIC HILL GIANT CHAMPION CR 9 (XP 6,400)

This hunched and brutish giant is clad in filthy furs and carries a huge wooden club.

Advanced giant hill giant

CE Huge humanoid (giant)

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +12, Sense Motive +0

Speed 30 ft., base speed 40 ft.; **ACP** -3; **Climb** +14, **Stealth** -11

AC 26, touch 8, flat-footed 26; **CMD** 30; rock catching

(+4 armour [hide], +14 natural, -2 size)

Rock Catching (Ex; free) Once per round, if the hill giant would be hit with a thrown rock (or similar object) of which it is aware, it can make a Reflex save (15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium rock and 25 for a Large rock) to catch it.

Fort +15, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

hp 125 (10 HD)

Space 15 ft.; **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +20

Melee greatclub (reach 15 ft.; Power Attack [-2/+6]) +17/+12 (3d8+16) or

Melee longspear (reach 25 ft.; Power Attack [-2/+6]) +16/+11 (3d6+16) or

Melee 2 slams (reach 15 ft.; Power Attack [-2/+4]) +16 (2d6+11)

Ranged rock (range 120 ft.; rock throwing) +6 (2d6+16)

Atk Options Cleave

Abilities Str 33, Dex 10, Con 27, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 11

Feats Cleave, Intimidating Prowess, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greatclub), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub)

Skills as above plus Intimidate +24

Languages Giant

Gear as above plus large sack



DOWN WITH POINT BUY AND DUMP STATS!

I hate the concept of the dump stat with the blazing passion of a thousand fiery suns. To me, it smacks of this new-fangled concept of character design, min/maxing and our obsession with the game's mechanical aspects.

I much prefer the old-fangled method of rolling dice to determine my character's stats. True, rolling dice puts my fate in the hands of the capricious gods of chance. I might not get the stats I need to play the character I want to play. Such is life. I'll struggle through.

And in any event, part of the joy of gaming is the creativity it sparks. Didn't get the stats I wanted? Can't play the character I'd planned? What shall I do? Deploy my creativity!

What I'm surprised at (outside organised play) is the rise of the point buy system. I get that people want to play the character they want to play. That's human nature. But I think designing every aspect of your character ironically can stifle creativity.

I also think the rise of point buy is to do with min/maxing. Since 3.0, it seems the game has moved toward being more of a skirmish game. We have become obsessed with making our characters as "hard" as possible. We forget they are actually people. If I see another clumsy cleric, ugly fighter or impressively weak wizard, I'll scream!

HOW I LIKE TO DO IT

It's pretty simple. Roll 4d6 and list the stats in the order rolled on the character sheet. Decide on a race and apply racial modifiers accordingly.

This method often creates an interesting mix of stats that forces me to be creative both in terms of the character's mechanics and its history, personality and future development.

BOB THE WIZARD

To illustrate my point, here's a character. I rolled the following stats:

- 14, 18, 12, 15, 10, 9

That set of rolls screams rogue or wizard. Given I love playing spellcasters, I'm going with wizard. I shall call him Bob.

Behold, Bob if I assign the stats in the order I rolled them:

- **Bob #1:** Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 17 (includes human's +2 stat modifier), Wis 10, Cha 9

Now here's Bob if I assign my rolls as I see fit:

- **Bob #2:** Str 9, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 20 (includes human's +2 stat modifier), Wis 12, Cha 10

Sure, the second version is "better" in that I've got higher modifiers in the stats that are important for a wizard. However, I'd argue (voraciously and at great length) that the first character (the "sub-optimal" one) looks more interesting. Blimey—Bob's a strong, dextrous fellow! Why? That simple question forces me to think about his background, upbringing and proclivities. If Bob is better "qualified" to be a rogue, why didn't he go down that route instead?

As I ponder these questions, Bob becomes more than a set of statistics; I'm beginning to see him as a person and not just a killing machine. Elements of his background might already be emerging in my fevered brain. Already, he is beginning to become more distinct than the last wizard I ran.

In this particularly instance (where for me I rolled insanely well—typically there was no one around to witness the actual rolls) I also get some unexpected benefits. Turns out, Bob is pretty good with ranged weapons and can hit pretty hard if he must. He can even carry more in his backpack than his spellbook! Perhaps I'll even multi-class if his experiences warrant it. We'll see.

COMPROMISE METHOD

If you like this in no way revolutionary idea, but really want a bit of flexibility, here's a compromise. Roll the stats and assign them in the order you rolled. Then, swap one pair. This gives us a slightly different version of Bob:

- **Bob #3:** Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 20 (includes human's +2 stat modifier), Wis 10, Cha 9

As you can see, I elected to swap Dexterity and Intelligence. He's still dextrous and strong, but now he's a mental colossus!

(This compromise method also helps the creation of the so-called balanced party, which is rather handy for D&D and Pathfinder groups and enables players who absolutely must play a certain class to fulfil their dark desire).

THE FINAL WORD

While Bob #1 may be less great at casting spells than his designed alter-ego he is already more distinct to me. And, if he's already more distinct to me—and assuming I roleplay—he'll be more memorable and fun to play at the table.

To me, that's the point of the game.

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