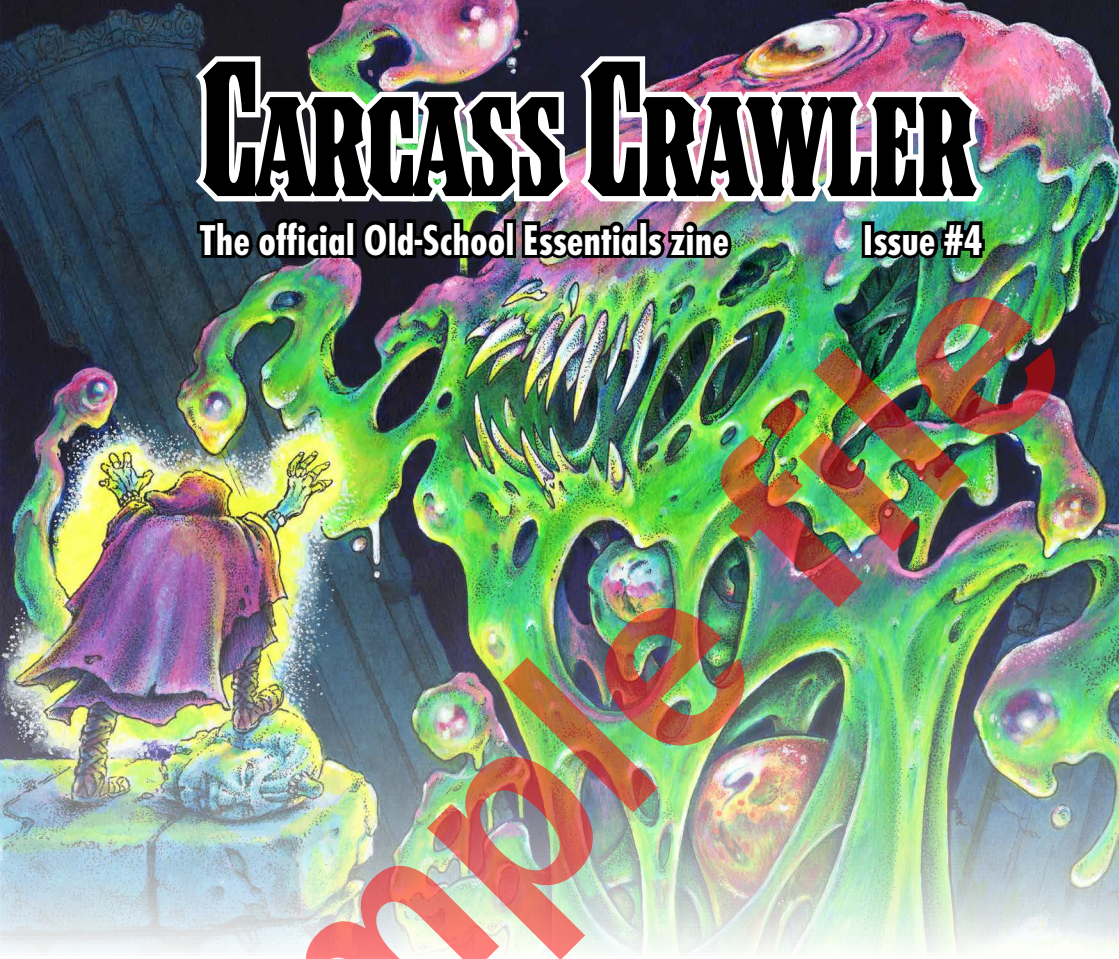


CARCASS CRAWLER

The official Old-School Essentials zine

Issue #4



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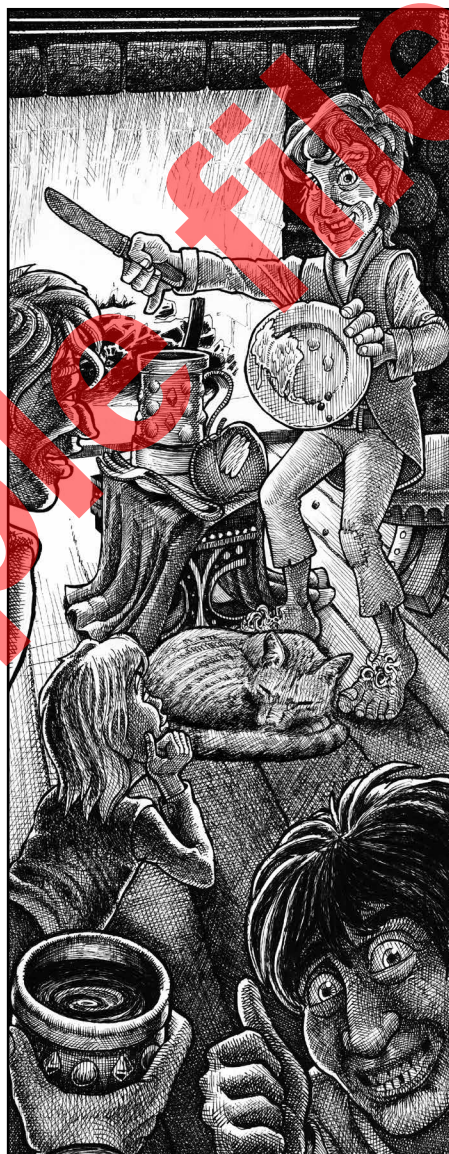
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PHIL LONGMEYER



INTRODUCTION

WELCOME

Welcome to issue 4 of *Carcass Crawler*—the official *Old-School Essentials* zine.

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue features articles by visionaries at the forefront of old-school alchemy: Chance Dudinack, Brad Kerr, Gavin Norman, and James Spahn.

Character Classes

Introduce these new classes as NPCs for player characters to encounter or add them to the roster of character types players can choose from.

Halfling hearthsinger: A demihuman class focused on lore, hearth-side rumormongering, and the fostering of good cheer.

Halfling reeve: A demihuman class inspired by the character Trotter from the early drafts of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Trotter was a halfling ranger who, in the final version of the story, was developed into the human Aragorn.

Arcane bard: An alternative bard class inspired by the jack-of-all-trades bard of *AD&D* 2nd edition. The arcane bard has a selection of useful skills, the ability to wear chainmail, and the ability to cast

arcane spells. The following races may be arcane bards, with level limits as noted: elf (10th), half-elf (12th), human (unlimited).

Deities and Cults

Four example deities favoured by adventurers. Each is described along with details on their cults and the spells and tenets of clerical spell casters in their service.

Terrors of the Dark

Eight new monsters themed around the lightless depths and adventurers' fear of the dark.

The Mage's Grimoire

Ten new spells for magic-users, inspired by classic magicks from *AD&D*, plus a selection of enchanted tomes to tempt arcane spell casters.

Strange Brews

Additional details on brewing, purchasing, sampling, and describing potions.

Noximander's Cave

A short adventure set in the shadow-haunted subterranean lair of an illusionist whose experiments with dark magic went awry.

NEW CHARACTER CLASSES

By JAMES SPAHN AND GAVIN NORMAN

HALFLING HEARTHSINGER

By James
Spahn

Demihuman Class

Requirements: Minimum CHA 9, minimum CON 9, minimum DEX 9

Prime requisite: CHA and CON

Hit Die type: 1d6

Combat aptitude: Martial

Maximum level: 8

Armour: Leather, shields

Weapons: Any appropriate to size

Languages: Alignment, Common, Halfling

Hearthsingers are halflings who specialise in memorising and recalling legends, lore, and local folktales. The desire to learn the truth behind lost legends and forgotten myths often drives them to adventure and they value tomes, journals, and written histories over other treasure.

Prime requisites: A halfling hearthsinger with at least 13 in one prime requisite gains a 5% bonus to experience. If both CHA and CON are 13 or higher, the halfling gets a +10% bonus.

Armour and weapons: Armour must be tailored to halflings' small size. Similarly, they can use any weapon appropriate to their stature (as determined by the referee). They cannot use longbows or two-handed swords.



KYLE PATTERSON

Defensive Bonus

Due to their small size, halfling hearthsingers gain a +2 bonus to Armour Class when attacked by large opponents (greater than human-sized).

Halfling Hearthsinger Skills

Halfling hearthsingers can use the following skills, with the chance of success shown opposite:

- **Foster friendship (FF):** If the hearthsinger tells a story to a willing audience for at least one turn and the performance ends without interruption, a number of persons (see **Persons** under **Monsters** in *Old-School Essentials*) equal to the hearthsinger's level must **save versus spells** or be placed under a friendship effect. Affected persons regard the hearthsinger as a friend and ally and will come to their defence. The effect lasts for 1 hour per level of the hearthsinger.
- **Lore (L):** A hearthsinger has a chance of knowing lore pertaining to monsters, magic items, or heroes of folk-tale or legend. This ability can be used to identify the nature and powers of magic items.

Halfling Heathsinger Level Progression

Level	XP	HD	THACO	Saving Throws				
				D	W	P	B	S
1	0	1	19 [0]	8	9	10	13	12
2	2,000	2	19 [0]	8	9	10	13	12
3	4,000	3	19 [0]	8	9	10	13	12
4	8,000	4	17 [+2]	6	7	8	10	10
5	16,000	5	17 [+2]	6	7	8	10	10
6	32,000	6	17 [+2]	6	7	8	10	10
7	64,000	7	14 [+5]	4	5	6	7	8
8	120,000	8	14 [+5]	4	5	6	7	8

THACO: Attack matrix row to use.
(Ascending AC attack bonus in [].)

D: Death / poison; **W:** Wands;
P: Paralysis / petrify; **B:** Breath attacks;
S: Spells / rods / staves.

► **Read languages (RL):** A hearthsinger can read non-magical text in any language (including dead) or basic codes. If the roll fails, the hearthsinger may not try the same text again before gaining an experience level. The hearthsinger can use this ability to read scrolls containing arcane spells with a chance of success equal to half the listed percentage. Failure results in the spell scroll backfiring and causing some disastrous or dangerous effect.

Listening at Doors

Halfling hearthsingers have a 2-in-6 chance of hearing noises (see *Dungeon Adventuring in Old-School Essentials*).

Rumour Monger

Whenever there is an opportunity to gain relevant information from local rumours within a community, a halfling hearthsinger can learn twice the normal number of rumours allowed by the circumstances if they spend one hour getting to know the local community.

Tavern

Any time a halfling hearthsinger wishes (and has sufficient money), they may build a tavern or pub, which will draw patrons from across the land and provide revenue to the hearthsinger of $1d4 \times 100$ gold pieces per month. $1d4+1$ 1st level halflings will arrive to serve as staff and one 3rd level fighter will arrive to serve as a bouncer.

Hearthsinger Skills Chance of Success

Level	FF	L	RL
1	20	30	35
2	27	35	40
3	35	40	45
4	43	45	55
5	50	55	65
6	58	65	75
7	65	75	85
8	75	85	95

Rolling Skill Checks

All skills are rolled on d%, with a result of less than or equal to the listed percentage indicating success.

HALFLING REEVE

By James
Spahn

Demihuman Class

Requirements: Minimum CON 9, minimum DEX 9, minimum WIS 9

Prime requisite: CON and WIS

Hit Die type: 1d6

Combat aptitude: Martial

Maximum level: 8

Armour: Leather, shields

Weapons: Any appropriate to size

Languages: Alignment, Common, Halfling

Reeves are the sworn protectors of rural halfling communities. They patrol the wilderness surrounding these idyllic villages, forgoing home comforts to ensure that predators and enemies do not endanger their kinsfolk or threaten the simple peace of the little folk.

Prime requisites: A halfling reeve with at least 13 in one prime requisite gains a 5% bonus to experience. If both CON and WIS are 13 or higher, the halfling gets a +10% bonus.

Alignment: As protectors, reeves must be lawful. If a reeve ever changes alignment, they lose all special class abilities and become a halfling of the same level. The character may be able to regain their reeve status by performing a special quest.

Armour and weapons: Armour must be tailored to halflings' small size. Similarly, they can use any weapon appropriate to their stature (as determined by the referee). They cannot use longbows or two-handed swords.

Defensive Bonus

Due to their small size, halfling reeves gain a +2 bonus to Armour Class when attacked by large opponents (greater than human-sized).



KYLE PATTERSON

Divine Magic (4th Level)

See *Magic* in *Old-School Essentials* for full details on divine magic.

Spell casting: From 4th level, due to a deep connection with nature, a reeve gains the ability to cast spells. The power and number of spells available to a reeve are determined by the character's experience level. Reeves have the same spell selection as druids. If not using druid spells, reeves have the same spell selection as clerics, but cannot memorise *cure light wounds* until reaching 6th level.

Foraging and Hunting

A party with a reeve succeeds at foraging with a 2-in-6 chance and finds prey when hunting with a 5-in-6 chance (see *Wilderness Adventuring* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Halfling Reeve Level Progression

Level	XP	HD	THACO	Saving Throws					Spells		
				D	W	P	B	S	1	2	3
1	0	1	19 [0]	8	9	10	13	12	–	–	–
2	2,500	2	19 [0]	8	9	10	13	12	–	–	–
3	5,000	3	19 [0]	8	9	10	13	12	–	–	–
4	10,000	4	17 [+2]	6	7	8	10	10	1	–	–
5	20,000	5	17 [+2]	6	7	8	10	10	2	–	–
6	40,000	6	17 [+2]	6	7	8	10	10	2	1	–
7	80,000	7	14 [+5]	4	5	6	7	8	2	2	–
8	160,000	8	14 [+5]	4	5	6	7	8	3	2	1

THACO: Attack matrix row to use.
(Ascending AC attack bonus in [].)

D: Death / poison; **W:** Wands;
P: Paralysis / petrify; **B:** Breath attacks;
S: Spells / rods / staves.

Goblin Slayer

Reeves receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made against goblins and related creatures (e.g. bugbears and hobgoblins). In campaigns where goblins do not commonly threaten halfling communities, the referee may specify other types of enemies instead.

Limited Possessions

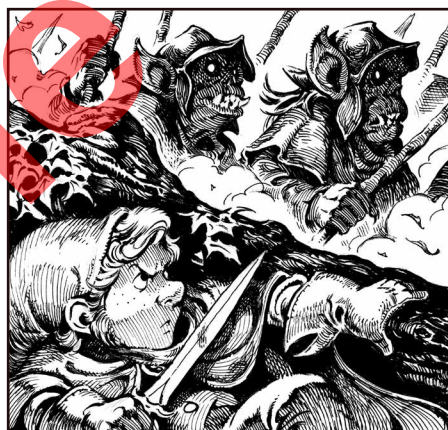
A reeve may only keep wealth and possessions that can be kept on their person or mount. Excess must be donated to a halfling community (not other PCs!).

Listening at Doors

Halfling reeves have a 2-in-6 chance of hearing noises (see *Dungeon Adventuring in Old-School Essentials*).

Stealth

In the wilderness, a reeve has a 5-in-6 chance of hiding and moving silently.



KYLE PATTERSON

Wolf Hunter

Reeves receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made against wolves of all kinds and werewolves.

After Reaching 8th Level

A halfling reeve may build a small cabin or hunting lodge within six miles of a halfling community. They will attract the service of 2d6 1st level halflings and one 3rd level halfling reeve to aid them in patrolling the wilderness and protecting the community.

ARCANE BARD

By Gavin
Norman



Requirements: Minimum INT 9
Prime requisite: CHA and DEX
Hit Die type: 1d6
Combat aptitude: Semi-martial
Maximum level: 14
Armour: Leather, chainmail, no shields
Weapons: Any

Arcane bards are musicians and poets drawn to a life of wandering and adventure. They pick up a wide range of abilities in their travels, becoming jacks-of-all-trades.

Prime requisites: An arcane bard with at least 13 CHA and DEX gains a 5% bonus to experience. An arcane bard with a score of 16 or higher in one prime requisite, and a 13 or higher in the other gains a 10% bonus.

Anti-Charm

While the arcane bard plays music and sings, allies within 30' are immune to song-based magical effects and the beguiling powers of sylvan creatures or fairies. Allies already under the effect of such magic gain another saving throw with a +4 bonus.

Arcane Bard Skills

Arcane bards can use the following skills, with chance of success shown opposite:

- **Climb sheer surfaces (CS):** A roll is required for each 100' to be climbed. If the roll fails, the arcane bard falls at the halfway point, suffering falling damage. This skill cannot be used if the arcane bard is wearing chainmail.
- **Hear noise (HN):** In a quiet environment (e.g. not in combat), an arcane bard can attempt to listen at a door or to hear the sounds of something (e.g. a wandering monster) approaching.

► **Pick pockets (PP):** If the victim is above 5th level, the arcane bard's roll is penalised by 5% for every level above 5th. There is always at least a 1% chance of failure. A roll of more than twice the percentage required for success means that the attempted theft is noticed. The referee should determine the reaction of the victim (possibly using the *Encounters* reaction table, in *Old-School Essentials*).

► **Read languages (RL):** An arcane bard can read non-magical text in any language (including dead) or basic codes. If the roll fails, the arcane bard may not try the same text again before gaining an experience level.

Arcane Magic

See *Magic* in *Old-School Essentials* for full details on arcane magic.

Spell casting: From 2nd level, arcane bards can cast arcane spells, owning a spell book in which the magical formulae for the spells they know are recorded. The level progression table (opposite) shows both the number of spells in the arcane bard's spell book and the number they can memorise, determined by the character's experience level. An arcane bard's spells are selected by the referee (who may allow the player to choose). Arcane bards have the same spell selection as magic-users or illusionists—as the referee wishes.

Using magic items: As spell casters, bards are able to use magic scrolls of spells on their spell list. They can also use items that may only be used by arcane spell casters (e.g. magic wands).

Arcane Bard Level Progression

Level	XP	HD	THACO	Saving Throws					Spells			
				D	W	P	B	S	1	2	3	4
1	0	1	19 [0]	13	14	13	16	15	–	–	–	–
2	2,000	2	19 [0]	13	14	13	16	15	1	–	–	–
3	4,000	3	19 [0]	13	14	13	16	15	2	–	–	–
4	8,000	4	19 [0]	13	14	13	16	15	3	–	–	–
5	16,000	5	17 [+2]	12	13	11	14	13	3	1	–	–
6	32,000	6	17 [+2]	12	13	11	14	13	3	2	–	–
7	64,000	7	17 [+2]	12	13	11	14	13	3	3	–	–
8	120,000	8	17 [+2]	12	13	11	14	13	3	3	1	–
9	240,000	9	14 [+5]	10	11	9	12	10	3	3	2	–
10	360,000	9+2*	14 [+5]	10	11	9	12	10	3	3	3	–
11	480,000	9+4*	14 [+5]	10	11	9	12	10	3	3	3	1
12	600,000	9+6*	14 [+5]	10	11	9	12	10	3	3	3	2
13	720,000	9+8*	12 [+7]	8	9	7	10	8	3	3	3	3
14	840,000	9+10*	12 [+7]	8	9	7	10	8	4	4	3	3

THACO: Attack matrix row to use.

(Ascending AC attack bonus in [].)

*: Modifiers from CON no longer apply.

D: Death / poison; **W:** Wands;

P: Paralysis / petrify; **B:** Breath attacks;

S: Spells / rods / staves.

Lore (2nd Level)

From 2nd level, an arcane bard has a 2-in-6 chance of knowing lore pertaining to monsters, magic items, or heroes of folktale or legend. This ability can be used to identify the nature and powers of magic items.

After Reaching 11th Level

An arcane bard can establish a manor. 2d6 apprentice arcane bards of 1st level will come to study under the character.

Rolling Skill Checks

Hear noise: Is rolled on 1d6 by the referee. If the roll is within the listed range of numbers, the skill succeeds.

Other skills: Are rolled on d%, with a result of less than or equal to the listed percentage indicating success.

Arcane Bard Skills Chance of Success

Level	CS	HN	PP	RL
1	77	1–2	20	40
2	78	1–2	25	50
3	79	1–3	30	60
4	80	1–3	35	70
5	81	1–3	40	80
6	82	1–3	45	82
7	83	1–4	55	84
8	84	1–4	65	86
9	85	1–4	75	88
10	86	1–4	85	90
11	87	1–5	95	90
12	88	1–5	105	90
13	90	1–5	115	90
14	91	1–5	125	90

DEITIES AND CULTS

By CHANCE DUDINACK AND GAVIN NORMAN

AUSTERUS

The Shining One

Deity of redemption and holy light, formerly the fiendish deity of searing radiance, now turned to Order. Seeks to bring all of humanity under one rule.

Depiction: A tall androgyne, with bronze skin, golden eyes, and feathered wings of silver. Crowned with a spherical halo of golden light, wields a flaming sword.

Domain: Phandyne, the golden plains of crystalline radiance.

Alignment: Lawful.

Worshippers

Cults of Austerus seek to construct a gold-clad pyramid-temple in every settlement in the known world, offering redemption to the wicked and balm to the wretched. They ultimately aim to destroy all fiends and to absorb other religions by incorporating their myths and presenting their deities as aspects or servitors of Austerus.

Alignment: Lawful or Neutral.

Holy symbol: Rays of light emanating from a pristinely faceted diamond.

Holy garb: Pure white robes and a golden cape (15gp). Upon gaining the ability to cast 1st level spells, a worshipper may wear a veil of quartz tears (50gp). Upon gaining the ability to cast 3rd level spells, a worshipper may wear a platinum halo that magically hovers above their head (250gp).

Prayer: Worshipers of Austerus can only pray for spells in daylight or within a circle of blessed candles.

Strictures: Worshipers of Austerus must make the sign of the halo and recite holy psalms in the presence of other religions.

Alternative Spells

Order: 2nd level, replaces *speak with animals*.

Halo of protection: 3rd level, replaces *growth of animal*.

Searing radiance: 4th level, replaces *sticks to snakes*.

Redemption: 5th level, replaces *insect plague*.

Marks of Servitude

When a worshipper of Austerus gains the ability to cast spells of a certain level, they also gain an associated trait:

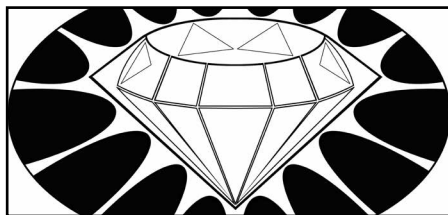
1st level spells: White streak in hair.

2nd level spells: Clear, unblemished skin.

3rd level spells: Lustrous, silver-white hair.

4th level spells: Gold irises.

5th level spells: Heart emanates a warm, golden glow visible through skin.



PHIL LONGMEER