

The Seven Deadly Skills of Sir Amoral the Misbegotten



Daniel J. Bishop



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**DCC
RPG**

The Seven Deadly Skills of Sir Amoral the Misbegotten

An adventure for *Dungeon Crawl Classics* characters across multiple levels.

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Introduction

Any role-playing game session can take a left turn at Albuquerque, leaving the poor Game Master wondering what to do next. This is even more true for the dedicated *Dungeon Crawl Classics* judge, who discovers that patron quests, divine disapproval, and the requests of gods to pay back divine favor can make the game take incredible new turns with the roll of a few dice. Add to this the advice urging players to “Quest For It” when they want something unusual for their players, and you have a potent stew for gaming, but also a situation in which the judge may want a short adventure location with strong DCC elements and a minimum of preparation required.

In addition, for various reasons sometimes only a few players were available for a night’s gaming. Each of these areas is short enough to be played through by most groups in only a single session. That doesn’t mean that the value of the area is limited to a single session – each adventure includes notes on “squeezing it dry”...effectively getting the maximum re-use from your investment.

Background

In years long past, Gryffon Keep was a border fortification guarding a somewhat well-used roadway. In that day, the keep was placed in the trust of Sir Harold Amoral, one of the greatest warriors available to the then Lord Duke. Time has changed the land, and brought the keep low, and Sir Amoral has become little more than a figure of fable and children’s story. That the ruins in the forest were those of fabled Gryffon Keep have been forgotten by most, and the area is now known to

locals as the Forest Ruin.

Although history has faded to legend, the ghost of Sir Amoral still haunts the ruined keep. During his lifetime, he sought to hoard his martial knowledge so that it might never be used against him by a mortal foe. Now, after death, he regrets this parsimony, and seeks above all to pass on his skills to those who are worthy.

The catch, of course, is that the ghost believes that only he can determine who is (or is not) worthy – and, of course, his methods for doing this are deadly.

Using this Location

There are four main ways to use this location.

First, it may be discovered by the PCs as part of their travels. **Two-headed wolves** (see **The Seven Deadly Monsters**, below) live in the immediate vicinity, and the Forest Ruin may be a perfect location to stage a battle with them. If characters remain to explore the area, so much the better. They may learn things that cause them to return throughout the campaign.

Second, a warrior (and, to a lesser degree, some members of other classes) may hear of Sir Amoral and come to seek him out as a trainer. This can be due to a rumor, but the judge is encouraged to have the PC encounter someone else who was trained by Sir Amoral. This does not have to be a villain, but it certainly can be a rival.

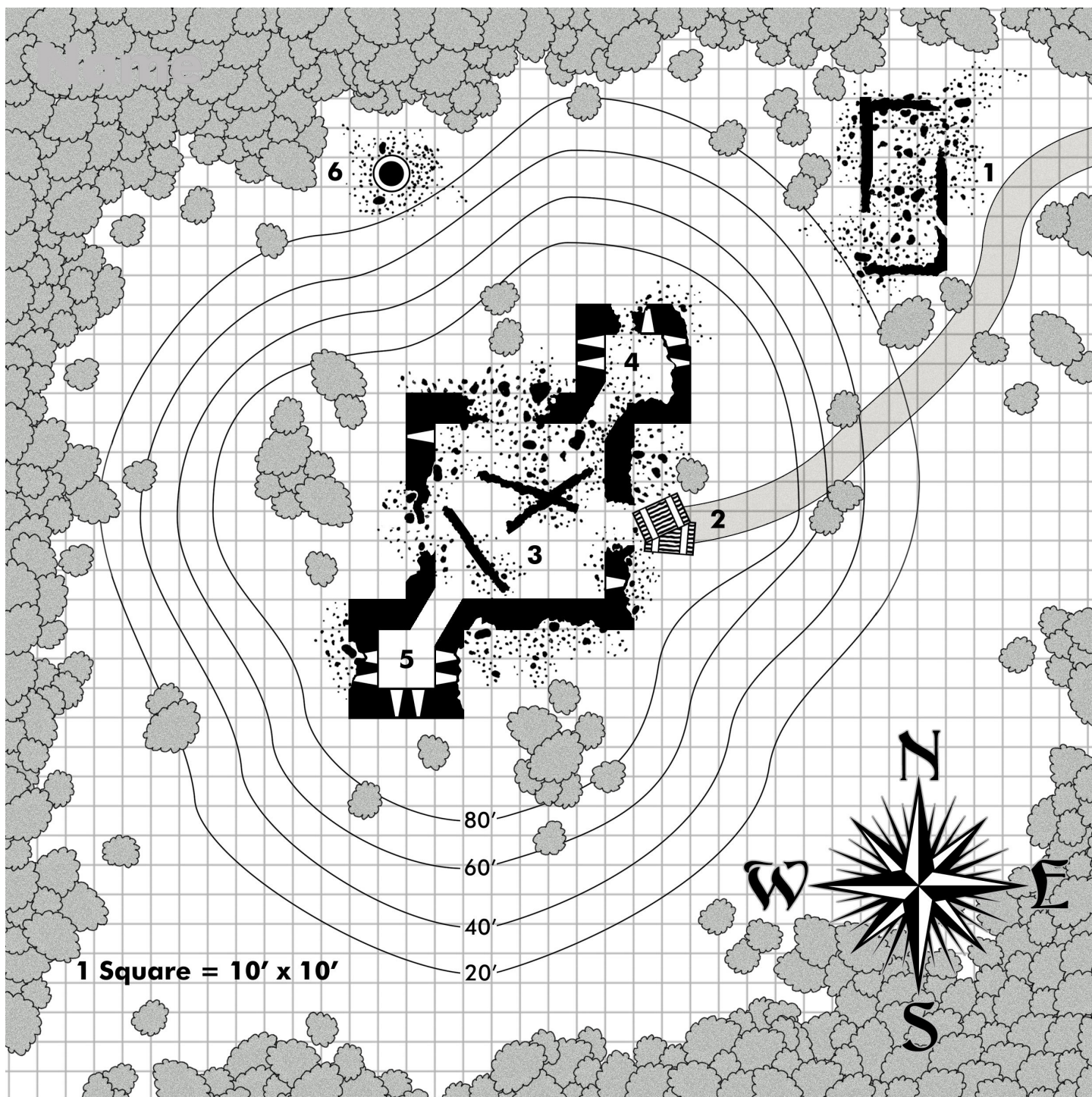
Third, a wizard or elf may wish to consult the **Stone Heads** (see **Area 1**) about a spell. As they answer other questions, they may be sought by any class. Because they tell of those who used them last, the questions themselves might not even be the point of consulting them.

Finally, **Area 6** could be expanded into an entire dungeon to explore, using either a published scenario or one of the judge’s own devising. See **Area 6** for more details.

Seven Deadly Skills of Sir Amoral

Sir Amoral’s special martial training skills are listed below, in order.

The skills Sir Amoral has to teach are not supernatural, but a supernatural geas comes along with learning them. A student can teach only a skill preceding the last skill



he knows on this list. Doing so takes the same amount of time and effort as if Sir Amoral had taught the skill (although the mortal trainer may teach the skill to any he chooses). As soon as a skill is taught, the mortal teacher *forgets* the highest ranked skill he knows. It is as if he had never learned it, and Sir Amoral's ghost shuns students who teach others his secrets. Worse yet, the geas transfers with the teaching, so that the new student can teach nothing unless he is taught two or more of the seven skills, and then loses the higher skill when the other is taught.

Sir Amoral does not provide food, water, or shelter to his students (although Area 5 may offer shelter). The student must see to his own welfare.

These descriptions do not include the cost Sir Amoral demands for teaching his skills...for that see the section entitled "Sir Amoral the Misbegotten", below.

1. Panderson's Disarm: Anyone can potentially learn this, although Sir Amoral will only teach it to warriors of any level. When performing a disarm maneuver using his Mighty Deed, a warrior increases his Deed Die

by 1 step up the dice chain (to a maximum of 1d10). A character without a Deed Die who learns Panderson's Disarm gains a Deed Die, for this maneuver only, of 1d3, which does not add to attack roll or damage. This skill takes 2 weeks to learn, followed by an Intelligence check (DC 10). If the check fails, the warrior cannot learn Panderson's Disarm this level.

2. Brackett's Defense: Any warrior, a dwarf of level 2 or higher, and any other character of level 3 or higher, can potentially learn Brackett's Defense. This skill allows a character to gain an additional bonus to Armor Class equal to +2 or the character's Agility modifier, whichever is higher. Brackett's Defense is only effective for unarmored or lightly armored characters (i.e., if a character's Fumble Die is greater than 8, this is ineffective). This skill takes 4 weeks to learn, followed by an Intelligence check (DC 10). If the check fails, the student cannot learn Brackett's Defense this level.

3. Amerritt's Counterstrike: Any warrior of level 2 or higher, with an Agility of 12 or better, can potentially learn Amerritt's Counterstrike. Once per round, when an opponent makes an attack roll that misses the warrior, she can counter by making a free attack using 1d14. This skill is only effective for unarmored or lightly armored characters (i.e., if a character's Fumble Die is greater than 8, this is ineffective). This skill takes 4 weeks to learn, followed by an Intelligence check (DC 10). If the check fails, the student cannot learn Amerritt's Counterstrike this level.

4. Hagen's Swift Saber: Anyone can potentially learn this skill, which grants a +2 bonus to Initiative rolls. This skill takes four weeks to learn, followed by an Agility check (DC 10). If the check fails, the character must be trained for an additional four weeks to make another check.

5. Edrice's Crippling Blow: This skill can be learned by any warrior, a dwarf or thief of level 2 or higher, or an elf of level 3 or higher. Edrice's Crippling Blow increases the critical range of the character by 1 step (i.e., a warrior who gains a critical effect on a 19-20 now gains a critical effect on 18-20). This skill takes six weeks to learn, followed by an Agility check (DC 15). If the check fails, the character must be trained for an additional four weeks to make another check. Any significant break in training means that the character must start over at six weeks' training. A character who

fails this check three times cannot learn the skill this level.

6. Wellman's Overwhelm: This skill allows a warrior of level 3 or higher to best use strength, speed, and momentum to throw, push, or trip an opponent. When attempting these maneuvers, the warrior increases his Deed Die by *two* steps up the dice chain, to a maximum of 1d10. This skill takes six weeks to learn, followed by both a Strength and Agility check (DC 15 each). If either check fails, the character can try again after an additional four weeks' training. Both checks must then be attempted again. So long as both checks do not fail, the character can keep trying to learn the skill using another four week block of time. Any significant break in training means that the character must start over at six weeks' training time. A character who fails both checks after any block of training cannot learn this skill at his current level.

7. Amoral's Savage Return: This skill can only be learned by a warrior of level 5 or higher. Once per round, when successfully struck by an opponent for 5 or more points of damage, the warrior can make a free attack. So swift is this savage return that the attack can be made even if the damage done by the opponent drops the warrior. Finally, this attack is resolved with critical range extended by 2, so that if the warrior normally caused a critical hit on a natural 18-20, this attack would cause a critical hit on a 16-20. This skill takes 10 weeks to learn, and at the end of this period the warrior must make a successful Agility, Stamina, and Strength check (DC 15 each). So long as all three checks do not fail, the character can keep trying to learn the skill using another six week block of time. Any significant break in training means that the character must start over at ten weeks' training time. A character who fails all three checks after any block of training cannot learn this skill at his current level.

Sir Amoral the Misbegotten

Sir Amoral appears much as he did in life – a powerful middle-aged man with a flowing black beard, dressed in chainmail with a surcoat decorated with a crimson griffin rampant. He has a longsword belted at his side. His exposed flesh is seamed with the scars of many battlewounds, and half of his left ear is missing. Although he appears solid, he is a ghost, and non-magical attacks pass through him. This does not prevent him from touching

Skills & Feats

The Seven Deadly Skills are not intended to be analogous to “feats” in other game systems. While a character obtains a “feat” simply because the player selects it (as a function of gaining a level, or through using some form of point-buy), these skills are intended to be earned by characters in-play. There are no limitations to what a character can quest for, except those which are imposed by the judge, and the success or failure of the quest. Quest benefits are balanced against the difficulty of obtaining them far more than they are against character levels.

The judge is cautioned not to remove the geas which controls how these special skills can be taught to others. If you do, every PC in the campaign will soon possess as many of the seven skills as their class and level permit!

If the judge does allow the PCs to quest for a means to break the geas, these skills will not break the game. They will, however, make some encounters and situations easier to deal with. In this case, the judge should simply allow the PCs to face greater challenges or reduce XP according to the difficulty a challenge presents.

others when he wishes, however!

The ghost of Sir Amoral the Misbegotten is concerned only about two things – passing his knowledge on to each generation, and ensuring that only the “worthy” learn his skills. As a result, Sir Amoral will only hear the petitions of those who pass his first test – climbing to his chamber at the top of **Area 5**.

Once he has heard a petitioner, Sir Amoral must then test the would-be student to determine if he is worthy. The character must wait at **Area 2** until a creature comes, and then the student must fight that creature in single combat and bring Sir Amoral proof of victory. This might be simple enough if left to chance, but Sir Amoral has the power to summon monsters, and he summons specific creatures to challenge those who would seek to learn his skills.

Wily PCs might wish to beat Sir Amoral at his own

game, and release their own creatures to fight, or even allow the petitioner to defeat one of the group. The summoned monster is still coming, though, and it is still looking for a fight.

Even passing this test, the seeker must promise to perform some quest for Sir Amoral once his training is complete, to prove his worthiness. If this promise is not extracted, Sir Amoral will not train the individual. If it is given, but not kept, no further training will ever be given, and future students may well be given a special quest – to hunt down the “false student” and bring his head to Sir Amoral as proof. Otherwise, the judge should use these quests to send the PC (and by extension, the group) on adventures of his choosing.

Remember, however, that Sir Amoral’s goals are to increase the powers of Law and Light. The spirit, although Neutral, views himself as a shining example of knightly grace. Role-play Sir Amoral as though courtly Sir Lancelot were also the “mean drill sergeant” of many an army film, and you will have nailed the character. He is brutal, vicious, and insulting to those he trains or those who petition for training, while being utterly courteous to all others who appear to be of rank.

In combat, Sir Amoral is a challenge for even high-level adventurers. In addition to being the ghost of a powerful warrior, Sir Amoral can use all of the Seven Deadly Skills, and he will immediately begin summoning each of the Seven Deadly Monsters, in order, one per round, as a free action. Sir Amoral can turn invisible at will, returning to visibility on any following round. Because of the Seven Deadly Skills, Sir Amoral potentially gains two extra attacks each round – one against a creature who misses (using 1d14) and one against a creature who hits and does 5 or more points of damage (with a critical range of 15-20). When Sir Amoral causes a critical hit, he uses 1d30 on Table V, unless the roll is a natural “20”, in which case he uses 1d14 on Table U.

A being who delivers the final blow that slays the ghost of Sir Amoral is instantly assaulted with knowledge of all seven skills, and must make a DC 20 Will save to retain them. If that fails, he may make a DC 15 Will save to retain three of his choice. If that fails, he may make a DC 10 Will save to retain one random skill. This character may now teach the Seven Deadly Skills to others without fear of loss, but his students are not so lucky – the same geas applies to any he teaches as did to those

taught by Sir Amoral.

For information on laying the ghost of Sir Amoral to rest, see **Area 2**.

Sir Amoral the Misbegotten (warrior ghost): Init +11; Atk longsword +d10+1 melee (1d8+d10+1); AC 15; HD 9d12; hp 70; MV 30' or fly 40'; Act 2d20; SP un-dead traits, immune to non-magical attacks, non-corporeal, invisibility, summon monsters, deadly skills, Deed Die (d10+1), critical range 17-20, special critical hits; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +8; AL N.

The Seven Deadly Monsters

A character who wishes to learn **Panderson's Disarm** must face the **Satryx** – a goat-horned humanoid creature whose skin is covered with tattoos denoting strength and power. She bears two short swords, which she can use ambidextrously, allowing her to make two attacks each round. Her skin is like iron. If disarmed, she can spend an Action Die to make one of her swords leap back into her hand with a 1 in 3 chance.



Satryx

If both weapons are disarmed, she will surrender immediately, bowing and fading away. Her swords are left behind her as proof of victory, and they function for her victor only as if they had a +1 bonus to attack rolls and damage.

There is only one Satryx. She appears within 1d6 rounds of being summoned by Sir Amoral, and seemingly arrives on foot. She cannot be permanently slain – an attack that would do so simply causes her to fade away (in whatever gory state her body may be in), leaving her swords, to reform the next time she is summoned. Once slain, she cannot be summoned until after the next full moon.

Satryx: Init +2; Atk short sword +2 melee (1d6); AC 18; HD 2d6; hp 12; MV 30'; Act 1d20 or 2d16; SP ambidexterity, return disarmed sword 1 in 3, cannot be permanently slain; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; AL N.

A character who wishes to learn **Brackett's Defense** must face a **two-headed wolf**, which arrives through natural means within 2d6 rounds of being summoned by Sir Amoral. If he himself is locked in combat, Sir Amoral can summon 2d3-1 of these things. They roam the area in which the Forest Ruin is located, and the judge is encouraged to use them in other local adventures!

If a two-headed wolf hits the same target with both its bite attacks, the target must make a DC 10 Reflex save or be knocked prone.

Two-headed wolf: Init +3; Atk bite +2 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 2d6; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP knock prone; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +2; AL L.

A warrior wishing to learn **Ameritt's Counterstrike** must face the deadly **faceless gray horror**. This creature appears to be a strangely-muscled humanoid with a blank face, bearing two short scything blades. It has three fingers on each hand, and three broad toes comprise each foot. When summoned, the gray horror arises from the well in Area 6 after 1d7 rounds, and then must approach the area it is summoned to on foot at its normal speed.

If personally threatened, Sir Amoral can summon 1d6 faceless gray horrors. If each of these are killed, he can summon 1d5. If they are killed, he can summon 1d4,



Faceless Horror

then 1d3, then 1, and then he cannot summon any more until a month has passed.

Although these alien horrors have no faces, they can detect the presence of other creatures within 120', even if they are silent or invisible. If a creature attacks a faceless horror and misses, the horror may make an extra free attack once each round at that creature.

See Area 6 for more details on these horrors.

Faceless gray horror: Init +2; Atk sickle-scythe +3 melee (1d6+2) or fist +1 melee (1d3); AC 14; HD 2d6; MV 30' or climb 20' or swim 20'; Act 2d20; SP detect creatures 120'; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +8; AL C.

A character who wishes to learn **Hagan's Swift Saber** is challenged by a six-foot long **draconic scorpion** of terrible speed. This creature attacks with two claws, a bite, and a deadly sting. If both claws hit, it may make a free attack with its sting.

In addition to damage, the sting has a fierce poison (Fort

DC 15) that causes 1d6 points of Strength damage on a failed save and 1d3 points of Strength damage if the save succeeds. This sting can be eliminated with a successful Mighty Deed.

The draconic scorpion appears to scuttle out from rubble 2d6 rounds after it is summoned, but it actually arrives from another plane of existence. Sir Amoral can summon no more than seven of these in a week, and if attacked, he can summon 1d7 as an action until his allotment is filled.

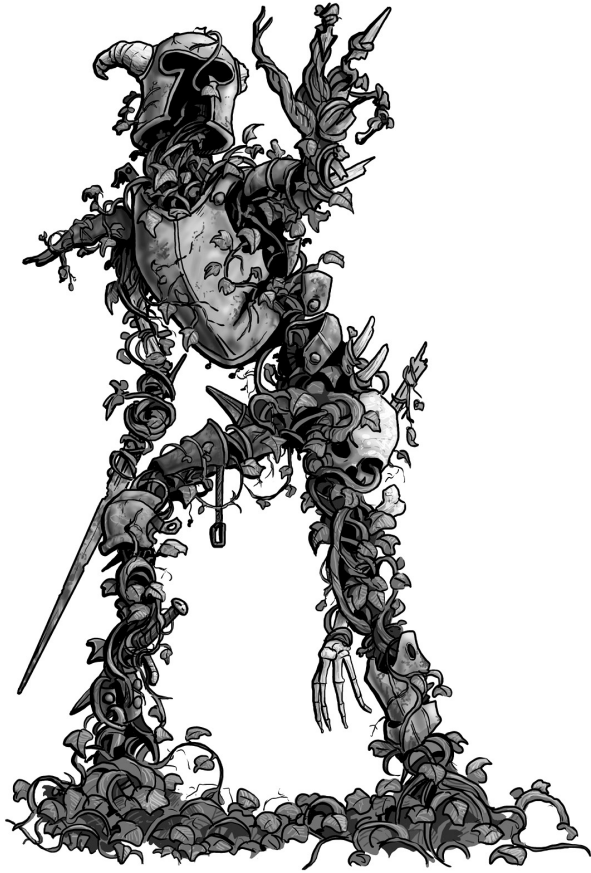
Draconic scorpion: Init +8; Atk claw +3 melee (1d6+2) or bite +2 melee (1d8+2) or sting +0 melee (1d3 + poison); AC 16; HD 4d6; MV 50' or climb 20'; Act 2d20; SP poison; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +0; AL C.

Those who wish to learn **Edrice's Crippling Blow** must face a **vine warrior**. The plants which fed upon the forces Sir Amoral once led have gained sentience of a sort, and the skill the of the fighting men they consumed. Appearing like vaguely humanoid conglomerations of vine, mixed with the bones and equipment of the dead, a vine warrior wields a short sword and wears bits and pieces of the former fighter's armor.

Sir Amoral has a limited number of vine warriors that he can summon – unless changed by campaign events, there are 243 vine warriors in the vicinity of the Forest Ruin. These are dormant unless called by Sir Amoral. Each pushes up from a shallow grave, or comes from the forest, arriving 2d6 minutes after being summoned. Sir Amoral can summon up to 4d6 with an action.

Vine warriors have an extended critical range (19-20), but are themselves immune to critical hits. They are immune to mind-affecting spells and effects, except the summons of Sir Amoral. Vine warriors are not un-dead. Anyone slain by a vine warrior becomes a new vine warrior, adding to those Sir Amoral can summon. This transformation takes 1d3 years, as the new plants grow. They use 1d10 on Table III for critical hits.

The gear used by vine warriors is typically bent, rusted, and pitted, but there is a 1 in 16 chance that some piece of equipment used by a vine warrior is still generally serviceable.



Vine Warrior

Vine warrior: Init +2; Atk short sword +2 melee (1d6); AC 14; HD 5d6; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 2d20; SP extended critical range (19-20), immune to critical hits and mind-affecting; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +0; AL N.

A warrior who wishes to learn **Wellman's Overwhelm** must first defeat a **Tabattax marshal** – a seven-foot-tall humanoid tiger-man with bat-like wings, whose species hails from a distant plane (see front of product). Long ago, when Sir Amoral was still young and alive, the Tabattax made a truce to send aid when he called. Little did they know that their obligations would last beyond the knight's death, and they now grow weary of being summoned for so paltry a reason as to fight against a potential student.

Because of this weariness, the marshal will grant mercy any opponent who clearly surrenders. This ennui is also the source of the marshal's low Initiative modifier. At the judge's discretion, it may also make him easier to trick by wily characters.

The Tabattax marshal is extremely strong (+6 bonus) and knocks an opponent prone with any successful attack (DC 10 Strength check to resist). If the strength check fails by 5 or more, the opponent is also knocked back 5 feet and takes an additional 1d3 points of damage. If slain, the marshal's head gains the power of prophesy, and will speak occasional truths in various languages until it has rotted down to a skull. This takes about 1d3+3 months, but some character occupations might be able to preserve the head longer. The judge should roll 1d100 using the Wizard column of Appendix L (page 440-441 of the core rulebook) to determine what language any given prophecy is spoken in. The judge may use these prophecies to foreshadow campaign events or to supply adventure hooks.

The Tabattax appears in the air after 1d6+3 minutes, at a distance of (1d6+3) x 100'. If Sir Amoral is attacked, the Tabattax marshal brings with him a squad of 20 Tabattax troopers. While the marshal is armed with an enormous falchion sword, the troopers are armed with spears. These weapons are too large for most characters to use, and even a large man would need a 17 or greater Strength. The troopers do not have the knockdown ability of the marshal.

The Tabattax cannot be summoned more than once every year, in accordance with their agreement with Sir Amoral.

Tabattax marshal: Init -4; Atk large falchion +9 melee (1d10+6) or bite +6 melee (1d6); AC 16; HD 8d8; hp 50; MV 30' or fly 50'; Act 2d20; SP knockdown; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +3; AL L.

Tabattax trooper: Init +2; Atk large spear +6 melee (1d8+4) or bite +3 melee (1d4); AC 14; HD 3d8; hp 12 each; MV 30' or fly 50'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; AL L.

A character who wishes to learn **Amoral's Savage Return** must face the **Eye of Uburtois**, a powerful creature from one of the Hell planes. This strange creature looks like a floating ball protected by a stony shell. Four eyestalks protrude from this shell, each armed with a single amber eye, allowing it to see all around it, and into other planes of existence, including some slight awareness of possible future events.

This eye allows it a 1 in 3 chance to avoid any special effect (apart from damage) from a critical hit or Mighty Deed. A successful Deed of 3+ that is not avoided can sever an eyestalk, but all four stalks must be severed to negate this ability.

When its fang-laden mouth opens, a larger fifth eye is revealed, glaring outward from within its maw. Any creature meeting this eye's gaze must make a DC 10 Will save or lose 1d3 points of Personality. As the character loses Personality, his features and equipment become less personalized and more generic. If the target reaches 0 Personality, the Eye has consumed his soul, leaving an empty shell for another being to inhabit. Otherwise, the Personality loss is healed normally. This eye can be blinded with a successful Mighty Deed of 5+, eliminating this danger.

The Eye is also able to extrude up to five fleshy tendrils from its softer base, which can reach targets as far as 10' away. These tendrils form rigid hooks and blades to damage opponents. Extrusion, attack, and withdrawal are all part of the same action. This softer base can be hit with a Deed of 3+ and a successful attack against AC 12, but this uses the Deed, and can be negated on a 1 in 3 chance so long as any eyestalk remains. In this case, the strike must hit the Eye's base AC, and gains no special effect. A tendril may be severed with a Mighty Deed of 4+.

There is only one Eye of Uburtosis, and Sir Amoral can summon it only once every three years. If it is slain, Sir Amoral's ghost disappears after training the student, and does not reappear until 10d5 months have passed. During this time, Sir Amoral wanders far in strange planes, seeking out a new creature (of the judge's choice or devising) to take the place of the Eye.

Eye of Uburtosis: Init +4; Atk tendril +7 melee (1d6+3) or bite +5 melee (2d6) or slam +3 melee (1d6+2); AC 18; HD 10d8+20; hp 60; MV fly 40'; Act 4d20; SP avoid critical/deed 1 in 3, Personality loss; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +10; AL C.

Eye of Uburtosis



Personal Combat

One of the great things about *Dungeon Crawl Classics* is that even complex battles are resolved relatively quickly. For this reason, judges should not be afraid of allowing one-on-one combats to occur within an adventure. The other players need not wait too long for the issue to be resolved. They can place bets on champions, and, should their comrade fall, roll over the body or supply magical healing to save the unfortunate warrior's life!

Encounter Areas

1. The Stone Heads: *This ruined building was perhaps once a chapel, for the deep cuts of long, narrow windows gash what remains of the walls. None of these windows comes to an apex, because the walls simply do not extend that far. Tumbledown beams and a rubble of worked and fallen masonry fill the building interior and are scattered around the general area.*

This was once a chapel dedicated to Gorhan, the Helmed Vengeance, god of valor and chivalry. The ruined stone in the interior makes it difficult to walk here, and snakes hide in the rubble. There is a 1 in 6 chance of startling a snake here, and a 1 in 7 chance that any snake startled is a poisonous wood viper. Lawful clerics and worshipers of Gorhan are never bit by these snakes, however, unless they attack them first.

Wood viper: Init +3; Atk bite +3 melee (1d3 plus poison); AC 14; HD 1d6; MV 20' or climb 20' or swim 20'; Act 1d20; SP poison (1d3 Stamina; Fort DC 16 or half is permanent); SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0; AL N.

A cleric of Gorhan who meditates here for 1 hour can remove 1 point of disapproval (to a minimum of 1). A warrior healed within the chapel ruins gains +1d of healing on any successful Lay on Hands check. A Chaotic cleric who wishes to enter this space must succeed in a DC 12 Will save, or he is barred from entry for 24 hours.

The rubble to the northwest of the building contains a jumble of arch keystones, each carved with an image of a young nobleman. Many of these have had part of their faces removed with a heavy hammer, so as to eliminate mouth and chin. When this area is first encountered, seven are intact, and there are signs of blood having been smeared on their lips.

If a character spills blood equivalent to 1 point of Spellburn on the lips of an intact stone face, the face will animate and speak, "What is it you seek?"

Each mouth can answer up to 10 questions that can be answered with Yes or No, or has a percentage chance equal to 12 minus spell level of being able to supply the missing information to allow a wizard or elf to learn a single given spell.

When a stone head has answered questions or been asked about a spell, it tells of the last person who activated before returning to inanimate stone. For instance, "I was last asked about dangers along the route to Harper's Mill by the travelling tinker, Emil Thon, who hides a large ruby in the heel of his left boot." or "I was last asked about the spell, *detect magic*, by the Purple Wizard of Marrjon, who now carries the *Strange of Elvenor*, though he seeks to hide it for fear of rival wizards." The judge is encouraged to use this feature to foreshadow campaign events, and to place seeds for other adventures.

When a PC uses a stone head, it in turn identifies who used it to the next being to activate it, and tells that being something that the PC would rather others did not know. The only way to prevent this is to smash the mouth of the head, using a large hammer or equivalent. *Mending* can restore the head, but not the magic that animates it. At the judge's discretion, a combination of *mending*, *breathe life*, and *consult spirit* may restore a damaged head.

Once the party has encountered the stone heads and left this area for one week or more, 1d3-1 heads are destroyed between each visit until all the heads are destroyed. This represents the actions of NPCs who, having consulted a stone head, wish to keep their secrets undisclosed.

2. Gates of Gryffon Keep: *The weed-lined, worn path leads up the hill to the fallen gates of a small keep. You can see a partially collapsed tower to the northeast and another tower, still seemingly standing 30 feet high to the southwest. The iron-bound doors that once guarded the keep are lie face-down before it, two massive slabs of rusted metal and thick weathered oak.*

The doors are eaten by worms and ants, and normal fungi grow upon them, but they are still solid at their core. The doors are very heavy, requiring a Strength check (DC 15, up to 4 characters can work together) to flip over. Each door must be flipped with its own check. If this is done, though, two bronze crests are revealed – one on each door. These show a griffon rampant – the sigil of Gryffon Keep. The ancient bronze crests can be sold for 15 gp each locally, but to the right buyer they might be worth considerably more.

If these crests ever hang again from Gryffon Keep, Sir Amoral's ghost will be laid to rest. However, removing

them again will cause the ghost to return in 3d6 months. On a natural “3” the ghost returns in 3d6 days; on a natural “18” in 3d6 years.

3. The Courtyard: *Beyond the gateway is a ruined courtyard, choked with rubble, fallen beams, and rank weeds. The ceiling is long gone, and the beams you can see are charred, as though there had been a fire here long ago. A few patches of wildflowers manage to find purchase on soil that has built up over the cracked flagstones, and thick vines grow in strangling lines here and there upon the walls. You can see a passage to the southwest, and a rubble-choked passage to the northeast.*

Searching here uncovers animal scat, a few fragments of bone (human and animal), rusted shards of weapons or armor, and little more. The human bone fragments are very old, being from the fall of Gryffon Keep.

4. Ruined Tower: This tower is difficult to enter due to rubble and debris blocking the passage. A character who attempts this must roll both a DC 10 Reflex save and a DC 10 Luck check. If either fail, the character hurts his foot or ankle, reducing movement by 5' for 1d6 hours. If both fail, the character also loses 1d3 Agility, and the speed reduction lasts until the Agility damage is healed.

The interior of this tower is only about 20 feet high, the upper parts of the walls having collapsed. Although bits of wooden beam still cling precariously to the inner parts of the wall, it is easy enough to see the sky.

Anyone foolish enough to throw a grapple at a beam and start climbing suffers 1d6 damage from the fall when the damaged beam comes loose. They must then succeed in a DC 15 Reflex save or be hit by the falling wood for 1d4 damage. Testing the grapple loosens the beam, which can be avoided in this case with a DC 10 save.

There is nothing of value here.

5. Haunt of Sir Amoral: *This tower is relatively intact, with two floors and a roof surviving. Ladders embedded into the north wall give access to the upper floors. There are trapdoors, still intact, between the floors.*

When a character seeks to enter this passage, two vine warriors push up from the ground to bar the way. Any who seek Sir Amoral must first deal with these guardians. This is not a single combat – a warrior is not

penalized for having aid. These vine warriors, and their replacements if these are slain, are part of the total number Sir Amoral has to draw on.

Vine warriors (2): Init +2; Atk short sword +2 melee (1d6); AC 14; HD 5d6; hp 15, 12; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 2d20; SP extended critical range (19-20), immune to critical hits and mind-affecting; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +0; AL N.

5a: Ground Floor: *The passage leads into a 20-foot square chamber, the base of a tower. Although old and grey, the boards and beams of a floor above this one seem solid enough. A rusty iron ladder embedded in the north wall leads to a trapdoor in the ceiling. Dried animal feces and nesting material show that this area is not always unoccupied. The 15-foot high ceiling is thickly cobwebbed and the floor is of broken flagstones.*

The vine warriors described above do not seek to stop non-humanoid life from entering this chamber.

An elf climbing the iron rungs is severely discomfited; so much so that he is at -1d to all rolls for 10 minutes thereafter unless he makes a DC 10 Fort save. 0-level elves may be even more strongly affected, at the judge's discretion.

A dwarf can smell copper (from the barrel hoops) up above.

5b: Upper Floor: *Beyond the trapdoor is another chamber, also 20 feet square, and about 15 feet high. The chamber is furnished with the ruined remains of a cot, and some barrels that are now nothing more than dusty wooden staves and bits of green-colored copper banding. To the right of the trapdoor on the north wall, another iron ladder is set into the wall, leading to another trapdoor overhead. This trapdoor is open, showing the sky above. It has been open for some time, if the accumulated detritus on the floor, the water stains, and the rusted iron rungs are any indication.*

Sir Amoral waits here invisibly, to observe those who enter this chamber. If he sees a promising warrior-type (which can be a non-warrior character for some of his skills), he will appear and, depending upon their reaction, introduce himself and possibly even offer training. The judge is encouraged to print off and allow the players to read the Seven Deadly Skills. Sir Amoral makes it clear that he will expect first a proof of worthiness, and

then a service in payment for his training, whether the student succeeds in learning a skill or not.

Unless the group is very powerful, Sir Amoral feels himself in no real danger from them, and takes pains to make it obvious that he doesn't view the group as worthy opponents. See also the introductory section, **Sir Amoral the Misbegotten**, for notes on role-playing Sir Amoral. Sir Amoral should be a character that is, potentially, an ally and mentor (of sorts), as well as a giver of quests, but who the players should have both affection for and hatred of. Eventually being able to defeat Sir Amoral should drive some characters, at least, to greatness.

As before, an elf climbing the iron rungs is severely discomfited; so much so that he is at -1d to all rolls for 10 minutes thereafter unless he makes a DC 10 Fort save. 0-level elves may be even more strongly affected, at the judge's discretion.

A dwarf can faintly smell gold from above.

5c: Roof: *Beyond the trapdoor is the tower roof...20 feet square and protected by crenellations whose merlons reach 6 feet in height. Leaves have fallen here over the years, creating a soil in which moss, weeds, and even young saplings have taken root.*

Under moss and leaves, a simple gold ring can be found (Luck DC 20 if a character searches, or dwarf's ability to smell gold locates). Although unadorned, this ring is worth 15 gp for its metal content. If worn constantly, however, it acts as a **lucky charm**.

After the ring has been worn for 24 hours, and so long as it is not removed, the wearer may recover 1 point of Luck spent each day. A character may spend any number of points of Luck, but only 1 point spent in a given day is ever recovered by the ring. If worn by a thief or halfling, the ring simply increases Luck recovered by 1 point spent each day. i.e., if a thief spent 3 points on one day, and no points on the next, then the thief would recover an extra 1 point after the first day only.

6. The Well of Despair: *Rubble surrounds a deep hole in the ground here, almost 6 feet in diameter, with a two-foot wide lip of worked stone around it, a foot high. Water can be glimpsed at the bottom of the well, almost 80 feet down. The stone of the well looks natural after the first 20 feet. It is seamed and uneven, with disturbing shadows that hint at*

dark paths into the stone.

The **faceless gray horrors** (see **The Seven Deadly Monsters**, above) emerge from this well. At the judge's discretion, this area may be developed into a full dungeon, occupied by the gray horrors and other creatures, or the seeming-passages may only be where the horrors appear as they traverse from another plane. The judge can have the well be a nexus leading to many other, distant adventure sites, with each dark crack leading somewhere new.

Squeezing it Dry

The judge is encouraged to use the creatures presented herein in other contexts. Perhaps the PCs journey to the home plane of the Tabattax, or encounter two-headed wolves being used as guards and hunting animals by a local orc tribe. The Satryx might have information about the correct ritual to use *patron bond* with the King of Elfland, and be sought out for her knowledge.

The judge may choose to spice up some of his NPC warriors with one or more of the Seven Deadly Skills. This may, in fact, be how the players first learn of Sir Amoral.

The stone heads at **Area 2** can be used to offer adventure hooks, as they tell about their last user, and the well at **Area 6** can lead directly to other adventures. As an oracle, **Area 2** merits repeat visits, and as a nexus, **Area 6** can be used both as a starting location and as an unexpected terminus of some narrow passage hundreds of miles away. This also offers the judge a reason to toss one or more faceless gray horrors into any adventure(s) she desires.

The quests of Sir Amoral may be anything the judge desires, but the judge should consider having the PCs hunt down a character trained by Sir Amoral, but who refused to perform his "payment". A character may find himself in the same position, with Sir Amoral's newest student hunting him down at the ghost's behest.

Finally, the judge may place a buried treasure in this location. Beneath **Area 1** or **Area 4** would require the most work from the players. Beneath **Area 5** or hidden in the well at **Area 6** could also offer some amusement to players and judge. A treasure map that indicates "great wealth for a man of valor" might refer to Sir Amoral himself.

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Purple Duck Note: I can't imagine what Daniel has for us next in *CE 5 - Silent Nightfall*.

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