



CLAWmarks

March 2017
Now only slightly late

56

Letter from the CLAWthing

Greetings faithful followers and faithless dissidents. This is Darren, your noble and revered Clawthing. I am pleased to be here to address you all and look back fondly at the previous years we have spent in each other's company, thank you all.

But now we must look to the future! We hope to have at least one LARP a month, they're fun events and it's a great way to meet new people. Please participate, first time LARPer's do so for free, paid for by us.

Here at CLAWs we live hoping to bring all role players and board gamers together in harmony and fun, we look forward to your patronage at all our board game evenings!

As my first act as official 2017 CLAWthing is a puzzle series. I have taken it upon myself to develop several puzzles and ciphers for this year leading up to Dragonfire.

This issue of Clawmarks contains three such ciphers and a very interesting grid-shaped puzzle. By solving the first you will receive an important clue to solve the next, the grid itself is an easy ticket to solving the first. After this I will send out one puzzle after another each month until Dragonfire, where once the final puzzle is solved you will receive a phrase which when the first three winners relay it to me will grant you each a free CLAWs mug (and a personal gift from the CLAWthing.)

I hope we can all have fun as ciphers can be very difficult if you don't know what you're even looking at.

May the Elder Gods not show up and eat you before Dragonfire,

Yours in raw, unrelenting nobility

Darren

CLAWthing

Contents

Babies first guide to role playing..... 4

James de Haast

Glass..... 6

Charlotte Hillebrand-Viljoen

The tale of Eric and the Dread Gazebo.....8

Richard Aronson

Krankheid.....10

Darren Louw

Pokrmon BinGO..... 11

Ancient Tower.....12

Steven Mare

Myra is missing..... 13

Warhammer 40K..... 14

The village post..... 15

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Babies first guide to role playing

By James de Haast

Being part of a role playing game for the first time can be a daunting experience, especially if you don't know the other players. This is not really a reason to not start though.

First things first, don't worry about the other players judging you. The first character I played at a CLAWs meeting was an unstable priest, who within minutes had thrown bubbling liquid at a member of another religion. I think my group got a good laugh out of that character, even if they did eventually leave him to be captured and killed. The point in they were having fun, and more importantly I was having fun. No one is going to hold it against you.

Don't be embarrassed when you play, I find playing reactionary characters helps with this. Rather than focusing on motivations and long term goals, playing a character that lives in

the now allows you to always be focused on what is going on. There's little need to make other characters like you, or try to figure out peoples secrets.

Focus on your own story. While I have suggested you play an impulsive character, if you are given the chance to create your character, create one that has a sound motivation for acting the way they do. This is your get out of jail free card. A good

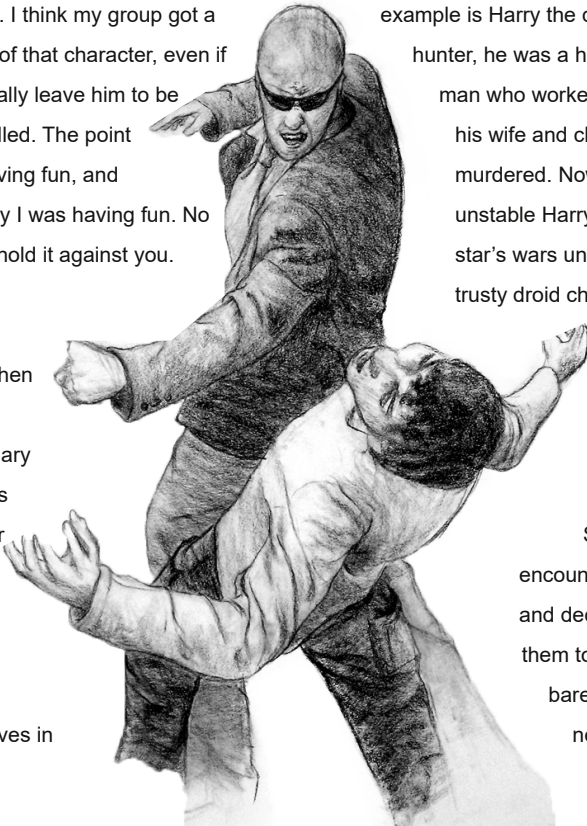
example is Harry the drunken bounty

hunter, he was a happily married man who worked as chef, until his wife and child were murdered. Now an emotionally unstable Harry flies around the star's wars universe with his trusty droid chasing down

bounties, drinking and crying normally all at the same time.

Say Harry

encounters a murderer and decides to beat them to death with his bare hands, all you need to do is point



to your backstory, explain that Harry knows the pain such crimes inflict, and you're in the clear.

Don't get bogged down with the rules. I write this every year, in every context. It's still the most important point. I'm not saying don't read the rules, just don't be intimidated by them. At least half of them won't apply to your character type. Create your backstory, and then work through character creating with that in mind, learning the rules you need as you go. Then once that's done fill in the gaps of knowledge as needed.

Working with pre-generated characters is also a good way to get into role playing. I normally don't play with pre-generated characters as I find it more engaging to have my own backstory and motivations, that doesn't mean you can't have fun with pre-generated characters. Make an effort to

understand them and choose how you are going to play the backstory before the game starts. I once played a pre-generated character who was loved one of the other characters, love in the party can be rather challenging. I chose how I was going to express my love in game before the mission started, in this case I chose blind trust rather than outward affection. It fitted the personality of my character and because I'm not the best at separating player from character made the fact that I was role playing a woman slightly easier.

The most important point is to just bite the bullet and dive straight in. Role playing is really fun in a way that it is hard to explain on paper without sounding a little crazy. Being someone else for a little while is fun, but the fun fades if there are no consequences to your actions, in role

playing there are.



GLASS

By Charlotte Hillebrand-Viljoen

Josie was digging holes out behind the kitchen when Matt found her. She held up something small and wriggly in greeting. "Look, I found an earthworm!"

Matt crouched down beside the hole and leaned forward, balancing himself with one hand. "Nah, I don't think that's an earthworm, Josie. It looks like some kind of larval beetle."

"No, it should be -" she broke off and her face fell. "Glass says it's a rhinoceros beetle larva." She dropped the creature and sighed loudly.

"And you're just going to believe it?"

"Well, it's Glass." She shrugged.

"And what does Glass have to say about this?" Matt frowned and moved his fingers in a flickering pattern that was too complicated for Josie to follow.

"That can't be right." Josie giggled. "Glass says you're a lesser spotted palewing butterfly. Have you filed a bug report?"



Matt looked at her seriously. "Josie, you can see right now that Glass has generated its own bug report."

"What? That can't . . ." she trailed off into silence before standing up and brushing off her hands. "You're just being silly."

"'Course I am." Matt grinned. "But see, Glass isn't always right. Come on, I'll show you another way of looking at it." He stood up and reached forward to press on her temples.

She started back and stared at him. "What have you done?"

"Don't panic. I've just turned Glass off for a bit. I'll put it back as soon as you like, but why don't you come look at your worm for yourself first?" He crouched down and scooped at the larva. "What can your own eyes tell you?"

Josie shrugged, but she stepped around the hole and crouched down beside Matt.

"Look at the colour of this thing. What colour would you say that is?"

There was a silence before Josie answered. "Sort of see-through and greyish, I guess."
"Exactly. Now I happen to know that earthworms are a pinky brown colour, so this can't be an earthworm, can it?"

"We already knew that. It's a rhinoceros beetle larva."

"And I'm a lesser spotted palewing butterfly." He carefully laid the larva on the earth between them. "How do we know it's a rhinoceros beetle larva?"

Josie shrugged again, but she peered at the bug. "It has legs?"

Matt nodded. "That's good. We know it isn't

a worm, since it has legs. So it's pretty likely that it's some kind of larva. Do you want to give me some more details on the colour of it?"

"It's pretty much all squishy and grey." Josie tilted her head, considering. "Well, I guess the one end is a bit browner. It doesn't exactly look like that's just dirt."

"Very good. In fact, that's how we can tell it's a rhinoceros beetle larva. Other creatures wouldn't have that colouration." He grinned and stood up.

"Okay, I guess that was kind of interesting, but you can turn Glass back on now." Josie presented herself to Matt and looked up expectantly. He reached out to her temples and applied a gentle pressure.

"That's better." Josie shook her head slightly to reorient herself. "How did you know all that about rhinoceros beetles anyway?"

This time Matt shrugged. "I asked Glass."

The Tale of Eric and the Dread Gazebo

By Richard Aronson

In the early seventies, Ed Whitchurch ran "his game," and one of the participants was Eric Sorenson. Eric plays something like a computer. When he games he methodically considers each possibility before choosing his preferred option. If given time, he will invariably pick the optimal solution. It has been known to take weeks. He is otherwise, in all respects, a superior gamer. Eric was playing a Neutral Paladin in Ed's game. He was on some lord's lands when the following exchange occurred:

ED: You see a well groomed garden. In the middle, on a small hill, you see a gazebo.

ERIC: A gazebo? What color is it?

ED: (Pause) It's white, Eric.

ERIC: How far away is it?

ED: About 50 yards.

ERIC: How big is it?

ED: (Pause) It's about 30 ft across, 15 ft high, with a pointed top.

ERIC: I use my sword to detect good on it.

ED: It's not good, Eric. It's a gazebo.

ERIC: (Pause) I call out to it.

ED: It won't answer. It's a gazebo.

ERIC: (Pause) I sheathe my sword and draw my bow and arrows. Does it respond in any way?

ED: No, Eric, it's a gazebo!

ERIC: I shoot it with my bow (roll to hit).

What happened?

ED: There is now a gazebo with an arrow sticking out of it.

ERIC: (Pause) Wasn't it wounded?

ED: OF COURSE NOT, ERIC! IT'S A GAZEBO!

ERIC: (Whimper) But that was a +3 arrow!

ED: It's a gazebo, Eric, a GAZEBO! If you really want to try to

destroy it, you could try to chop it with an axe, I suppose, or you

could try to burn it, but I don't know why anybody would even try.

It's a @\$%!! gazebo!

ERIC: (Long pause. He has no axe or fire spells.) I run away.

ED: (Thoroughly frustrated) It's too late.

You've awakened the gazebo.

It catches you and eats you.

ERIC: (Reaching for his dice) Maybe I'll roll up a fire-using mage so

I can avenge my Paladin.

At this point, the increasingly amused fellow party members restored a modicum of order by explaining to Eric what a gazebo is. Thus ends the tale of Eric and the Dread Gazebo.

It could have been worse; at least the gazebo wasn't on a grassy gnoll.

A	C	L	U	E	T	O	T	H	E	C
S	G	I	N	N	I	N	G	I	N	I
E	E	R	A	N	D	T	A	K	O	P
V	B	O	T	H	E	P	R	E	R	H
I	E	R	S	I	R	S	O	S	D	E
G	H	E	I	F	T	T	D	T	E	R
R	T	P	R	E	H	C	U	H	R	T
E	M	M	E	H	P	I	C	R	T	H
H	O	E	N	A	F	O	T	E	O	A
P	R	F	S	P	E	T	S	E	S	T
I	C	H	C	A	E	E	V	L	O	C
T	I	R	E	T	F	A	S	E	M	O

Krankheid

By Darren Louw

It started on the ides of March, the day a king died. War, my brother, was behaving unusual. He no longer trained, ate little (if at all) and he kept going in to speak with Father.

Conquest noticed it first. War had gone for a stroll as usual but he didn't return. At first we paid no attention, until Famine went out to look for him and returned claiming War was gone. He told us not to worry, that War was just fighting a hydra or a colossus. We didn't believe him, for War didn't return.

Conquest took his steed, Glory, and being the most attuned to our power, went searching for War. If War had Ruin with him, Conquest would find him within the day, but he didn't. Chaos was standing next to Mourning and Conquest's search went on for years with no trace of War. He was getting weary, he never slept, ate less than War did and would jump at small noises.

Conquest went missing as well. Famine and I were the last two left. I decided to consult Father. Since he does not tamper in mortal affairs, I was sure he would assist us in our Immortal ones. I was wrong.

He told me War was aware of a powerful traitor amongst the Horsemen, one of us had been disclosing important secrets of the Pact to the Fallen. Father said that his pool's secrets were in danger. I was startled by this and, confronting Famine, I sought answers.

He denied all accusations claiming it was War or Conquest. I laughed at him and told him neither War nor Conquest could have had any part in this as they would have killed each other had they believed one to be the traitor. I would have felt their deaths.

Famine, realising he had been caught, ceased his stammering. He stopped his false accusations, and he laughed a bone-chilling laugh. I watched as his eyes went pale and his ragged clothes turned into a crisp white suit I had long since forgotten.

Pestilence had returned, he was an original, a Revealed Elder and stronger than most of us. I understood why I hadn't felt my siblings die. They were only ill from the power of Plague, Pestilence's steed. He drew a sword from his cane. I drew my scythe, threw on my hood and unleashed my immortal form, pouring power into my weapon I struck, he blocked, he struck, I

parried. Each of our powerful blows
 expelling lightning as they landed.


I tapped into the power of my predecessors
 and poured it into a final blow. I charged and
 swung my scythe, cleaving through his
 raised sword, his body and his soul. I felt his

power enter me as he exploded in a mass of
 black ash. It was done, my siblings returned
 and eternity continued.

This is the darkest moment of our history
 and I hope never to relive it.



If you're a Pokémon Go trainer you'll find UCT is dotted with Pokéstops. This Bingo card contains many of the Pokémon commonly found on campus. Mark off how many you see and catch.

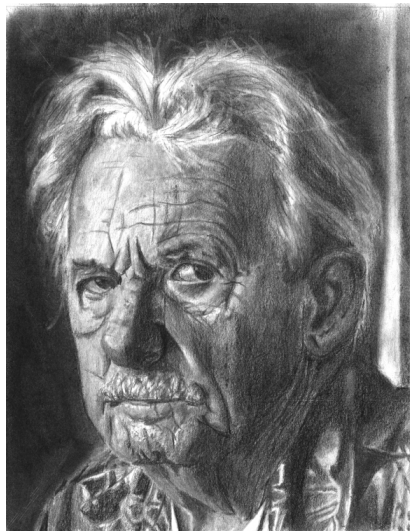
 Caterpie	 Charmander	 Chinchou	 Ekans	 Eevee
 Hoothoot	 Hoppip	 Jigglypuff	 Ledyba	 Machop
 Murkrow	 Natu	 Paras	 Pidgey	 Rattata
 Sentret	 Slowpoke	 Slugma	 Spinarak	 Teddiursa
 Totodile	 Venonat	 Weedle	 Wooper	 Zubat

Wkh nhb wr wkh vhfraq lv wkh vdpv dv wkh iluwv hafnsw wkh iluwv frphv
 odvw zkkuh wkh odvw fdph iluwv

Ancient Tower

Introductory D&D 5e module (est. 3-4hrs)

Created and DM'ed by Steven Maré



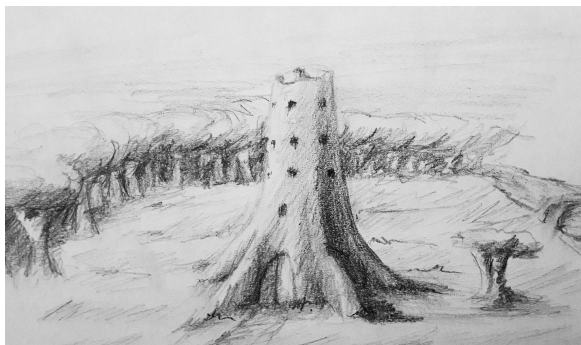
"I hear ya going to the town of Wallowood to deal with them bandits? Well good luck adventurer, those thugs are vicious and hard to find. Their hideout is rumoured to be a tower deep in the Old Wood forest. They say the tower was carved from the massive trunk of an ancient tree by a long-dead conclave of Elves. They also say that the forest around that tower is haunted. Townsfolk have heard strange noises coming from the forest at night and swear that the trees themselves can move.

But surely you don't believe that, brave adventurer?"

This is an introductory, single-session module for first timers and beginners to Dungeons and Dragons 5th Edition.

Pre-generated characters covering a variety of roles will be provided, so just bring yourself, a pencil, and polyhedral dice (if you have). Booking is essential as there will be a max of 5 players.

If there are enough players, the module will run on both Friday 10 March and Tuesday 14 March if there is enough interest.



Questions: steven.d.mare@gmail.com

Myra Is Missing

Attention brave adventurers, fortune seekers and assorted heroes!

Myra Moonleaf of the Moonleaf clan has gone missing from her home in Newport. Her father, Qjithas Moonleaf, patriarch of the Moonleaf clan and owner of the Moonleaf Trading Company, has offered up a reward of *a thousand gold pieces* to whoever can return his daughter to him. She was last seen leaving the Singing Seahorse inn. If you have any information pertaining to her whereabouts or wish to take up this quest, speak to the Moonleaf representative, who can be found at the Tattered Turtle.



This is an introductory, single-session module for first timers and beginners to Dungeons and Dragons 5th Edition. Pre-generated characters covering a variety of roles will be provided, so just bring yourself, a pencil, and polyhedral dice (if you have). Booking is essential as there will be a max of 5 players. (A repeat of the module will be run if there is more interest)

Time & Date: Friday 10 March and Tuesday 14 March

For questions and booking: rossflugel@gmail.com

Dvoo wlmv lm blfi kiltivhh yfg blf ziv mlg wlmv gsv pvb gl gsv gsriw
rh tivzg ufm

Warhammer 40K

"Warhammer 40,000 is a table-top miniature-based war game set in a dystopian future. Although usually played by two players, theoretically any number of players can participate at once.

Players can choose one of a number of factions from within the Warhammer 40,000 universe - examples include, humanity's defenders, the Space Marines and Imperial Guard, the nearly extinct race of Eldar, the all-consuming Tyranids or the corrupted once-human forces of Chaos. Each race also has their own sub-groups and flavours - for example there are Chapters of Space Marines with their own specialisations, whilst a Chaos army that worships the war-god Khorne would look very different to one worshipping the pleasure god Slaanesh. Players select their armies based on the miniatures they own. To ensure balance each miniature is assigned a points value (with the value rising for optional upgrades) and players usually agree a points limit for each army before play. Similarly, players will agree the rules and victory conditions for a specific scenario.

Each turn proceeds in phases covering movement, melee combat, ranged combat and so forth. No game board is used, players make or purchase their own scenery. Physical measurement is used to determine movement and weapon range, with dice used to calculate everything from damage to morale and the effectiveness of psychic powers. Special 'scatter dice' are used to calculate random or quasi-random events such as the movement of a gas cloud or fire.

Games usually last for a specified number of turns, after which the player who has accumulated the most victory points (by achieving pre-set goals and destroying enemy miniatures) is the winner. Expansions and new armies are regularly released for Warhammer 40,000, with new editions of the game itself being released roughly every four years.

Warhammer in Cape town is a small but loyal community, holding tournaments every 2-3 months. Situated around the Battle bunker stores on Claremont, Tyger Valley and Somerset West, "

The Village Board

Deaths

Greg XC

Greg the pheonix went
out in a blaze of glory.
Greg is survived by his
younger brother Peter

A word from the Archbiggot

Roses are red
I hate this place
I'd rhyme but frankly I couldn't care less.

Births

Victory

Mr Blood and Mrs Sweat
welcome, with tears of
joy, the birth of there son
victory.

I despise having to write this every time and I despise
all of you for reading it. Find something better to do with
your worthless time you sheep.

I have a joke for you. Knock, knock, knock yourself out
and jump in a lake.

Greg

Peter welcomes the birth
of his younger brother
Greg.

Two bears walk into a bar and with any luck they'll find
one of you in there.

If I had to choose between writing this and talking to
any of you I would flip a coin and hope it somehow
explodes and kills me.

Lost and found

Priceless needle

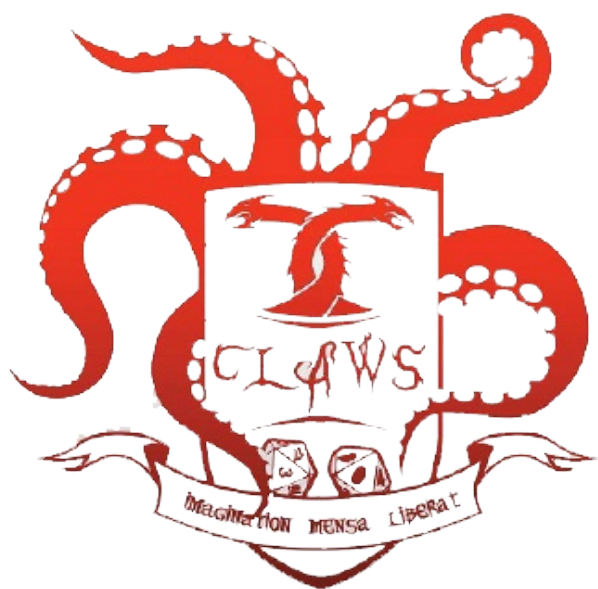
Priceless needle, needed
for weaving the treads of
life. Last seen near a
haysack. If found please
return to owner.

I'm aging like a fine vinegar. Bitter, violent and
dangerously acidic.

Good luck finding something to laugh at you parasitic
sheeple.

Yours sincerely,
The Archbiggot of the Necropolis.

notqg bjatta bq fbhhta sp wboqn uhth yta qnt dty qk qnt jsirtop hbtp wbnbj it



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