



**EarthdawnLegends**  
**June 2001**  
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Welcome, friends and travelers. . .

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Contents

- Updates/Announcements
- House Rule or Talent Knack of the Month
- Website of the Month
- The Spotlight is on. . .
- Age of Legends
- Adventure Hooks
- Famous Words

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Updates and Announcements

-1999 EarthdawnLegends are now available as PDF files. Please see our archive page at <http://saria.tripod.com/>

-We are looking for questions to answer as part of the monthly spotlight.

-August is coming up and that is EDL's month of change. If you have ideas that you would like to see in future editions of EDL, email us. If you want to join in an Earthdawn discussion, join us at EDLegends over at YahooGroups.

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## House Rule of the Month

Ambush Initiative-trap initiative

By: Mike Gentile ([Mike@FrontierShowroom.com](mailto:Mike@FrontierShowroom.com))

Cost: 100 Strain: 1 Rank: 7

Ambush Initiative allows a Thief to make a Trap Initiative test in place of his regular initiative when he is being ambushed. The Thief takes 1 strain and makes an Ambush Initiative test. The result is the Thief's initiative. This knack may be used only when the Thief is being ambushed and only in the first round.

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## Website of the Month

I know that the links here haven't been very Earthdawn-related lately, but it's difficult to find Earthdawn sites that are new. Please email us if you have one you'd like to see here.

<http://rpgworld.keenspace.com/> -- RPG World

This site is the home of a hilarious comic.

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The Spotlight is on: Bases of Operation - Part 1 of 4

By: Paul De Bonte

### 1-1 The Village

Villages are small rural areas, typically populated by farmers and the occasional craftsman. Cozy, friendly, and generally beneath the notice of all but the most petty of lords, a village is a good place to keep a low profile while finding your place in the world. General goods and services are available, such as food, rope, blacksmithing (horseshoes and tools, not weapons or armor), and other practical items, including wooden bowls and utensils, beaten metal cups, and perhaps some leather products: bags, vests, and the like. Villages have no political structure, and generally police themselves, though they may request help from nearby towns and cities if wild animals or bandits get out of hand.

As always, exceptions can be made in every area of a village, such as the former weapon smith who retired to a farm, but can be convinced to forge a weapon, or a glassblower who simply likes the countryside better than the city and is willing to risk transporting his goods or hiring someone to deliver them. Adventurers can find odd jobs around a village, especially during planting and harvesting seasons, but also hunting wild animals that damage crops or repairing roofs and similar work.

### 1-2 The Town

Towns are larger than villages, still mostly rural, but with many additional factors. A town will have a small political structure, either a council of elders or a mayor who oversees the daily operation of the area. A group of volunteer guards keep the peace, assembling when needed with whatever old weapons and patchwork armor is available, though they maintain normal jobs. A blacksmith with more general experience will usually be in residence, working full time on plows, wheel rims, and other implements. Other craftsman will often be available, such as coopers, cobblers, and tanners. Towns support themselves with farming as well, but some might also maintain a group of fishermen, or even have fishing as the main trade. Jobs are available assisting the various tradesmen, and adventurers can sometimes hire on with fishing boats. Though not as prevalent, some towns are centered around a mine, collecting precious metals, gems, or raw iron, copper and tin. An occasional whitesmith can be found in a town, working in gold or silver, and jewelers could be present as well. Regardless of the trade, most craftsmen will be unique in a town, perhaps even serving both the town and a nearby village.

### 1-3 The City

Cities vary wildly in size, from just large to huge. Often built on rivers and oceans, as well as large roads, cities are served by merchant caravans and ships. Typically dealing in products rather than materials, a city will most likely receive food from surrounding towns and villages, rather than housing farmers, though large fishing fleets can operate out of the harbor. Inns and taverns dot the roads, and craftsmen are in abundance, often specializing in one area of their trade. A city will be run by an elected council or a lord chosen by the king ruling the country. The city might even be built around the king's castle, allowing him to rule directly. A standing guard, at the least, or perhaps even an army will be kept on permanent retainer, paid for by the taxes gathered from the citizenry. Guilds often operate within the city, maintaining quality of goods and services, whether jewelers and smiths, or less legal trades. Adventurers can find residences where they will likely be lost in the crowd, apprentice to local craftsmen, or even hire on with the city watch. Cities are

also a good place to find information, as travelers and merchants constantly circulate through the area. Work can be found in shops and inns, shipyards, warehouses or even castle staff in royal cities, providing access to a variety of people, equipment, and other resources. Variations are endless, as each city houses its own variety of goods and services, from potters to architects to assassins.

Continued next month...

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## Age of Legends

When the Knot Unravels: The Eternal Mystery

By: J. Anne Mauck

When Rabina took the bag from the cavern, the lights went out: her torch, her lightquartz, everything. There was silence, too, enough for a Thief to be startled by. Knowing that her presence would cause enough of a problem, she grabbed another nearby bag and ran.

Six days later...

"I told you, Max, this is all I got. If this isn't what you needed, I'll gladly go back and try again. I followed your directions to the exact letter. I didn't even open the bag, just as you asked." Rabina sighed and toyed with the ring of water her mug left on the table.

Max was an ork, not pretty by anyone's standards, but perhaps that was why people trusted him. He could be intimidating when it pleased him, and Rabina was already afraid of him. He growled. "You can't try again. The cavern is gone now. It will take me years to find it again." He glared at her, his dark eyes holding hers. "Years that I do not have."

Rabina noticed now that Max was much older than she thought. Of course, by human standards, he wasn't that old, but Rabina had heard from her father how short lived some of the other Namegivers were.

"I should have made you swear an oath, or I should have gone with you. I never should have trusted a Human with something this important." Max

slammed his mug down on the table, causing everyone in the tavern to look in their direction.

"I can do it, Max. I swear. I can find it again." Rabina reached out and put her hand on his. "Let me try at least."

He yanked his hand back. "No, I will find someone else. You can keep the contents of both bags. They are useless to me." He stood up and waved to the barmaid. After paying her for both drinks, he looked at Rabina. "I'm not paying you. Speak to no one of this job, or I will be back to kill you."

Rabina watched him walk out of the tavern. Seeing that people were still watching her, she grabbed her cloak and walked calmly out of the bar. She walked three blocks away and into an alley before putting her cloak on. Hefting the bags, she decided to rent a room for a while to check it out. Better to ruin someone's business than to get caught.

In a room in The Dragon's Breath, one of the most vile dives in town, the one place Rabina would be sure no one would talk about her presence no matter the consequences of her visit. She dumped the contents of the first bag, the one Max had said he wanted, on the bed. It contained several old coins, etched jewels, an elaborate key, and a pendant. Immediately, Rabina estimated the value of the coins and jewels – she could easily get a few gold at the right place. She recognized the etched jewels as Serieen Shields. The key seemed useless, but there was some kind of aura that even Rabina was aware of. This brought her to the pendant.

It was shaped like an elaborate knot, its shape reminding her of eternity. The knot did not end and it did not begin. It was encased in a radiant piece of amber, seeming to glow from a pure yellow to a deep orange depending on the light. No matter which way it was turned, the knot was unending. It was more than magical and Rabina wondered if this wasn't what Max was looking for. Obviously it hadn't been, or he would have kept it.

There was a knock on the door. Rabina was so surprised that she nearly screamed. Stuffing everything back in the bag, she started toward the door when it swung open. Max was standing there. "You have it. You kept it from me. Give me the bag, I know it's there."

Rabina handed him the bag, hoping he would still pay her. His offer had been too much for her to resist, fifteen gold pieces for one job was unheard of. He

opened it and dumped what he did not want on the floor. The pendant was gone. "Give me the other bag, girl."

Again, she did so. And again, the pendant was not to be found. He threw the bag at her. "Where is it? I don't feel it now. What have you done?"

"Max, I don't know what you want. You never told me what I was supposed to retrieve. Tell me and I can help you!" Rabina backed up with each word. By the time she had finished speaking, her back was to the outside wall.

He drew a dagger and stalked toward her. "If I do not have the key, She will be freed. Don't you understand? She will walk the lands again and I will die!" He staggered, his free hand clutching his chest.

Rabina moved over to the window and hopped onto the sill, ready to jump. Max's breath came in gasps. "This isn't over, little girl. They will come for you and She will have you too....."

When he fell, Rabina was afraid to move. She watched him for a little while but soon realized the door was standing open and her newfound treasures were there for all to see. She kicked Max to see if he would respond. When he didn't, she felt safe enough to pick up everything. The pendant, she found, was still inside the bag.

Having already paid for the room, she waited the few remaining hours before dark and climbed out the window. She decided she should ask Zarine to look at the pendant.

Zarine was, of course, sitting in front of her mirror when Rabina arrived. For a Wizard, she was overly obsessed with appearances, namely her own. When she noticed Rabina sitting on the edge of her bed, she turned around. "Passions surround us, Rabina! At least take a bath before you dirty my sheets. There's still some warm water in the tub behind the partition." Zarine turned back to her mirror and began to brush her long black hair. "And hurry. I need my beauty sleep, you know."

Zarine was a few years older than Rabina, but she did not look a day over twenty-five. The decision to trust her had not been an easy one, but at the time, Rabina had no other choices. Zarine had rescued her from a potential execution after being caught sneaking into a rather high-class party. She had looked enough like Zarine, dirty as she was, that she had been claimed as kin by

Zarine. Her haughty manner was convincing enough and the guard had no authority to argue with such a well-born young woman. A few days later, a simple oath made them as good as the kin she had claimed to be.

But no matter how close they seemed to be, Zarine always thought herself better. Rabina didn't care if she had a fancy place to sleep, delicacies to eat, and pretty clothes to wear. Zarine insisted on these things and she pushed them on Rabina when she had the chance. When she got out of the bath, Rabina pulled on one of Zarine's satin robes and returned to her previous place on the bed. She quickly ran Zarine's comb through her finally clean brown hair. She carefully pulled the pendant out and held it so that it could be seen in the mirror.

Zarine turned immediately and ran to kneel in front of her. Her eyes followed the swinging of the pendant which seemed to burn in the now dim firelight. "Oh, Rabina," she whispered, reaching out to touch it with her fingertips. "It's the most divine thing I've ever seen." Her voice was breathy and low, as it was whenever she spoke of things she desired.

When her fingers touched it, it flared yellow. "Where did this come from?" Zarine demanded.

"I found it in a cavern five days travel south from here." Rabina began to feel nervous. "I was hoping you could tell me what it is..."

Zarine visibly relaxed and sat on the mattress next to her. "So no one has seen this?"

"I was supposed to give it to an ork named Max, but he died not four hours ago."

Zarine held out her hand for the pendant. She held it up at eye level. "How did he die and where is the body?"

Rabina shivered. Zarine slipped an arm around her shoulders while she related the strange death and the location. Zarine nodded. "I will have Jared go look into it and clean up anything that needs his special touch. You stay here tonight with me."

Rabina nodded. "There's one other thing I should tell you. The pendant was there, but Max couldn't see it. It stayed in the bag when he emptied it."

The pendant flared again, and Zarine handed it back to her. "Then it belongs to you. Keep it in that bag. I will do some research tomorrow and we will work this out together."

Continued next month in "The Revelation of Death"

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#### Adventure Hook

One of the characters hears at least part of a conversation which they are not supposed to hear concerning another member of the party.

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#### Famous (Last) Words

Death is the liberator of him whom freedom cannot release, the physician of him whom medicine cannot cure, and the comforter of him whom time cannot console.

-- Charles Caleb Colton, "Lacon"

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