

# Escalation!

A 13TH AGE FANZINE | SUMMER 2017

ONE

in this issue

**ASH**

**TIEFLING  
HELLBREEDS**

**LAW**

**MISCELLANY**



# IMPERIAL DISPATCH

I'm so excited to see the first issue of Escalation go out to 13<sup>th</sup> Age fans! The community pulled together to produce amazing content, and I'm proud to have played a small role. This effort reminds me of the summer of 2012, when 13<sup>th</sup> Age was an unformatted, art-free playtest document, iterating through its Escalation Editions. The community actively pulled together to share experiences, make suggestions, and describe how they made the game their own. Now, some of these same fans, plus new friends we've added in the subsequent five years, have taken the time to contribute to Escalation.

This first issue of Escalation is dedicated to miscellany. Considering there's no canonical Dragon Empire, that the icons' morality varies based on how your table defines them, that organized play adventures offer rumors that may or may not be true, that *13 True Ways* offers a half dozen versions of notable locations in the Empire, and that monsters have a range of possible origins and icon relationships, miscellany feels right for Issue 1.

I leave you with an illustration my wife created for our characters. It shows the mixture of various things – the miscellany – that this incredible game offers.

Gratefully yours,  
Tim Baker



Art: Patricia Baker

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# THE GAME OF ICONS

BY LAWRENCE AUGUSTINE R. MINGOA



**F**or the uninitiated, icons are the movers and shakers of the world, who are in the position to help adventurers, but despite their power and influence actually need the adventurers in an effort to tip the world power in their favor. From my point of view, this is because they're not the sole power within the world, and at any point in time even supposed allies could take advantage of moments of weakness to push their own agendas forward.

I would thus use icon relationship dice in my games as a way to tell the story behind the main story, where the adventurers are being used by some icons to pursue their own goals, while other icons end up foiling them (intentionally or otherwise) as they pursue **their** own goals:

Using ideas from the September 2012 issue of *Page XX* (specifically Bedlamdan's *When Icons Interfere* and Wade Rockett's *Playing 13th Age with Rob Heinsoo*), I imagine what sort of influences each icon can have in the world and in a scene, and use that imagery to think up what scenes would look like. Rolled a 6 with the Dwarf King and a 5 with the Emperor? Perhaps the traveling party wandered into a set of ruins, with the wizard sensing a magical item in the ruins, guarded by the spirit of a royal guard from a past Age, or they could be ambushed a group of bandits who had just stolen a dwarven merchant's caravan; maybe they stumble upon a stone golem, who requires the seal of



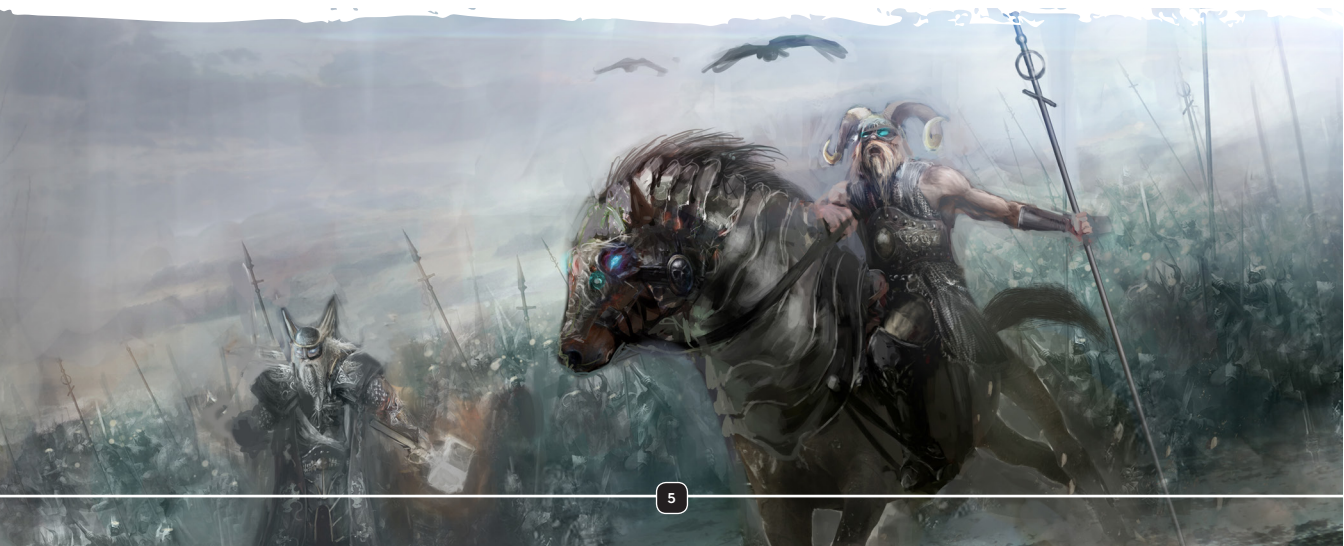


the Emperor from the Fifth Age to allow passage, or maybe a tower where the lost crown of the fifth generation of Dwarven Kings is hidden away in.

Once a scene is created using the icons that are in play, the players continue on their journey as they encounter monsters and other perils. When the characters are in danger, and the players feel the need to call for help, I give them the option to call on their allies/enemy's enemies, in the form of having them roll their Icon Relationship Dice. If they succeed, then something happens in the scene, that turns the situation in their favor – an NPC comes to the rescue in the nick of time, the enemy suffers an unfortunate “accident,” that sort of heaven-sent intervention. On a 5 however, that usually means that the adventurers are now indebted to the icon they called upon, which means something will be coming up soon and it would be unwise to turn down the favor being called.

If any icon relationship dice roll fails, instead of just saying “nothing happens,” I use the Random Icon Influence to determine why your icon failed to help you. Perhaps the griffins that were sent to save you were eaten by stray wyverns (as a result of failing an Archmage relationship die roll and getting a The Three as a random icon influence); perhaps the rock that was supposed to hit the enemy, hit a nearby cage instead, releasing a new monster into the fray.

Regardless if the Random Icon Influence roll is cosmetic or an additional challenge to the scene, it still shows that the world is alive, that every icon is trying to one up the other in their own ways. And I feel that icon relationship dice can be a great way to not only connect your players' characters with the world, but also help you practice your improvisation skills, by giving you more opportunities to do so (instead of having to wait for a player to put you into that situation farther down the road).





# QUICK TIP TO FUN ENCOUNTERS

BY PATRYK 'RUEMERE' ADAMSKI

**H**ere's a quick tip how to find out if the encounter is going to be fun.

- Open your favorite spreadsheet application.
- Put the total hit points (HP) of all opponents in the first cell.
- Put the average number of damage your party does per round (ignore the escalation die).
- If the opposition HP total divided by average party damage is 5 or more, you're in for a drag (or a fight that is suitable for an epic finale).
- If the division result is 3 or less, you're in for a quick and decent combat.
- Otherwise, consider adjusting the encounter toward 3. Or toward 5 for climactic endboss fights.

## FAQ TIME.

Why 3 is Good and 5 is Bad  
(except for the final fight)?

3 indicates a fight that is likely to take up to 3 rounds plus 1 round for mopping

up. Most in-combat abilities will have an opportunity to fire up, the enemies will have a chance to use at least one of their specials spicing the game. After the fight you'll have plenty of time during the session to do investigation, puzzle solving, socializing or whatever else you would like to do.

5 means that your characters will have to use dailies (abilities restricted once per day use), that a lot more resource management will have to be done (should I save this ability for later or not), or possibly, worst of all, a Bag-of-HP-type of opponent sneaked into your game.

**NOTE: "Bag-of-HP" is a monster that takes a lots of whacks to put down and whose attacks are boring.**

## WHY USE A SPREADSHEET FOR THIS?

It's the Easy Way to Find Party Average Damage:

- 0.75 - chance to hit per round
- 4.5 - average weapon damage
- 5/10/20 - damage bonus for adventurer/champion/epic

The Formula:

$\text{Number\_of\_characters} \times 0.75 \times$   
 $(\text{party\_level} \times 4.5 + \text{damage\_bonus})$

## WHERE DOES THE FORMULA COME FROM AND IS IT TRUE FOR EVERY PARTY?

It comes from my experience, and yes, sometimes it needs to be adjusted.

Specifically:

[0.75] The assumption that a character hits three quarters of the time is just an informed assumption. There are people with abnormal luck, there are people who prefer to create characters that are not proficient in combat and there are also these guys who know how to squeeze every little attack bonus they can from the system. However, these folks are usually exceptions that are balanced by others, by nights where no dice rolls OK, and finally, opponents who are harder than usual. So, use 0.75 initially, and then adjust if you find that a different number is more suited to your case.

[4.5] Average weapon damage assumes that a character relies on reasonable defenses (shield, ranged damage, taking a breather to use a recovery). Please leave this value alone... for super competent and for the unlucky guys, stick to chance to hit per round as a method to make the adjustments.

[5/10/20] The damage bonus is somewhat based on the default character build: 18 (or more) in primary attack stat, +1 tool (weapon, device, etc.) for inflicting punishment. This makes a 5 for an adventurer. For a champion, it's double this plus improved tool. The improvement of a damage stat is somewhat negligible, as its going to be +2 damage at most, and also this can be balanced by a lack of a +2 weapon. The +20 damage adjustment for an epic character followed similar path of reasoning: triple times 6 for damage modifier, and +2 for weapon, with potential difference offset by lower damage ability.



Art: Terrasaur (drawing) / Melody Haren Anderson (colorist)



# ESPECIALLY PASTY

BY MIKHAIL BOPCH-OSMOLOVSKIY



**B**ulettes are deadly, no doubt about it. But at least you can hide from them in tall towers and sturdy castles. You can avoid drawing their attention by not ever touching the ground. This won't help you against a phased bulette.

Phased bulettes don't come at you from below the ground. They roam below the skin of the world itself, just outside the reality as we know it. They only breach into our physical space to feed, to drag the unfortunate victim under, leaving behind naught but a few drops of blood.

Fortunately, they are extremely rare. The best working theory of their origin, according to the Archmage, is a regular bulette digging into a magic circle in the middle of a summoning or teleportation ritual and becoming the focus for the dimensional energies.

## PHASED BULETTE

The bulette is definitely not here. The air ripples from the creature not rushing forward. The wall remains standing because the bulette doesn't pass through it. The raised shield meets no resistance as the bulette doesn't bite through it. Why, then, do you bleed?

*Large 6th level wrecker*

Initiative: +10

**Roam +11 vs PD** (only while it is phased out and no enemy is, 1d3 random nearby creatures) - 22 damage and the bulette phases in engaged with the last target (see *Phased Out*, below)

*Hit on the last attack:* The target is grabbed.

**Thrash +11 vs PD** (*grabbed enemy, phased out enemy, or an enemy within a magic circle*) - 45 damage and if the target is not phased out, it makes a normal save. On failure, both it and the bulette phase out. An unconscious creature automatically fails this save.

*Miss:* 22 damage

*Submerge:* The bulette can phase out as a move action, as long as it doesn't have anyone grabbed. This action provokes opportunity attacks, but those who take one have to make an easy save or phase out.



*Dimensional instability:* The bulette struggles to remain in the material world for long. If not phased out, it makes a normal save whenever it takes damage from an attack, phasing out if it succeeds. If it had a creature grabbed when it was forced to phase out, the creature makes an easy save or phases out as well, still grabbed. Force attacks and opportunity attacks don't trigger this ability.

### **Nastier Specials**

Not really there: while not phased out, the bulette gains Resist non-force damage 16+.

*Predator:* This one isn't so much an ability as a behavior. The bulette isn't there to fight, it's after a meal. If it kills a creature, it phases out with the body. This could be an orc the party was fighting - the bulette picks its targets at random and really doesn't care. If it's a PC, recovering the body is all but impossible. In either case, the bulette leaves the combat with its prey. Having found a hunting ground, it is likely to decide to follow the party, striking again and again when spilled blood attracts it. There are few things quite as disheartening as knowing you're being hunted, seeing the occasional ripple in the air, and wondering when the beast will strike next. Cue the *Jaws* theme. Or the *Stranger Things* theme.

**AC 22   PD 22   MD 14   HP 180**

### **Phased Out**

This isn't an alternate dimension or a separate plane of existence. It's not even a separate space as such. It's the underside of the world. To phased out creatures, everything seems just a bit blurry, just a bit muted. Their limbs don't pass through objects, instead they simply never reach them, even if standing right next to them. It's a deeply disconcerting experience, to be certain. Fortunately, you'll be too busy fighting for your life to give it much thought. Perhaps "fortunately" wasn't the right word.

Phased out creatures cannot interact or be interacted with by creatures in the real world. They are only seen as a ripple in the air. The phased bulette, adjusted to its new habitat, has no trouble moving through objects or attacking creatures in the real world. In here, it adds the escalation die to its attacks, while no other phased out creature does.

Phased out creatures may try to phase in by making a hard save as a standard action. The save becomes easy if they are engaged with a phased bulette, but this action does provoke opportunity attacks.

Finally, a creature may choose to automatically fail a save against being phased out by the bulette, letting it drag them away.



# TIEFLING HELLBREEDS

BY ASH LAW



## HELLBREEDS

**N**ot all tieflings are born equal. True they all have an infernal heritage, but some come from bloodlines out of very specific hells.

Unlike 'standard' tieflings these hellbreeds do not always have horns, instead having their own unique demonic appearances—though none of them can pass for human or hide their demonic heritage for long.

## NEW RACIAL POWERS

Each tiefling hellbreed has two or more associated racial powers, one of which is a major combat-focused power. Each hellbreed can use its minor racial power once every five minutes (or once each combat as a quick action), unless otherwise noted.

The major racial powers can be used in half of the combats each day. For example: if a luxirian uses seductive gaze in one combat they can use curse of chaos in the next combat, and must wait until the third combat of that day to use seductive gaze again, the fourth combat they can use curse of chaos, and so on alternating throughout the adventuring day.

Some tieflings hellbreeds have different racial ability score adjustments from standard tieflings.



Art: ASH LAW



ARDEnti

## Larger Than Life

Ardenti are descended from demons of gluttony, doing everything to excess. If an ardenti is eating it will stuff itself until it is full, and keep eating until normal mortals would be ill—if you dine with an ardenti keep your limbs clear of their sharp-toothed mouths. Ardenti don't just eat to excess—they throw themselves into all activities with great gusto, once they become obsessed with a thing they'll overdo it good taste or common sense be damned. Ardenti are also obsessive collectors: some collect small figurines, others collect books, others hoard small polished stones—the value of the collection is unimportant, what matters is the act of collecting and its associated ritual behaviors.

Ardenti are either huge and corpulent, or skinny with skin hanging off them, depending on how recently they have feasted. All ardenti have black shark-like unblinking eyes, sharp triangular teeth, and pale blue-grey complexions.

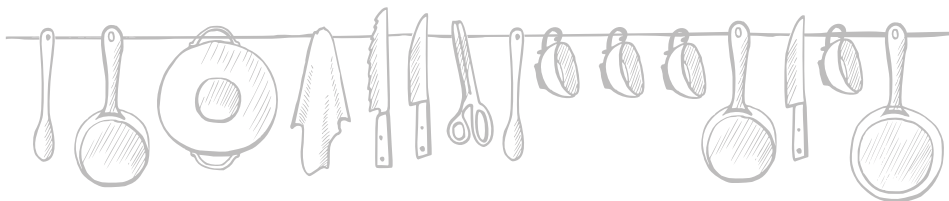
Ardenti prefer wearing comfortable clothing in browns and oranges, especially if it will hide food stains and they can let out their belt a few notches after a meal. An ardenti would laugh at the fussy and impractical clothing of a luxirian or superbian (if they weren't too busy eating to laugh). If an ardenti does decide to dress up fancy they'll probably go overboard—huge feathered hats and over- voluminous dresses with far too much makeup.

Ardenti can easily become obsessed with an idea or activity, not knowing the meaning of the phrase ‘enough is enough’. If the player of an ardenti rolls a 1 they can claim that their mind wasn’t on the task—their stomach was rumbling, or they were busy planning how to add to their collection.

Ardenti adventurers are likely to be rangers—they like eating new and interesting animals, and can become easily obsessed with a hunt, tracking their quarry for days. Of course, an ardenti who becomes obsessed in the right setting might end up something like a cleric or sorcerer.

## DIFFERENT RACE ABILITY SCORE ADJUSTMENTS

Ardenti get either +2 Con or +2 Int.



## DAGGER TEETH (MINOR RACIAL POWER)

Your teeth are as sharp and strong as dagger tips, enabling you to chew through wood and compacted dirt (at about the same rate that you could saw or shovel them). You are immune to ingested poisons—any poison you eat or drink you can either digest or it passes harmlessly through your system. You can't digest things like the nails from a wooden plank or pebbles, but you can eat them without harm and pass them later.

Your ability to digest things that others would get sick from eating doesn't protect you from airborne poisons, venoms injected into you, or diseases from handling dead orcs (in short poison damage from attacks). However, if it goes in your mouth you are safe.

Your bite counts as a small one-handed weapon (most character classes roll d4s for the damage of such weapons). You still need to use one hand when you attack to pull enemies close enough to bite.

This power is an always-on power; you can use it at will instead of once every five minutes.

**Adventurer Feat:** Your bite radius is wide enough that your bite counts as a light two-handed weapon (most classes roll d8s for damage), though to use your bite this way you need both your hands free to stuff enemies into your mouth.

**Champion Feat:** Given enough time you can bite through metal and stone, though you still can't digest non-organic things. This doesn't confer any extra advantage in combat, but does allow you to chew your way out of jail or through locked doors at about the same rate that working with a pickaxe or metal file would get the job done.

## OBSESSION (MINOR RACIAL POWER)

Ardenti can become obsessed with even minor things. When you fail a skill check you can try again with a -2 penalty, and if you fail again you may try again with a -4 penalty, then a -8 penalty, -16, -32, and so on... until you succeed or give up.

Each failure on an obsession reroll makes the situation somehow progressively worse, even if you eventually succeed your obsession doesn't let you pay attention to the consequences until after the fact.

**Champion Feat:** Once per day when you fail so badly the penalty becomes -32 you can fail forward and make the bad stuff happen to somebody else.

## GLUTTON'S MAW (MAJOR RACIAL POWER)

Ardenti can make good use of their boundless appetite and sharp teeth in battle—the first time each battle you deal miss damage against an enemy engaged with you, you heal hit points equal to twice your level OR twice the escalation die value, whichever is higher (champion: twice your level OR three times the escalation die value; epic: twice your level OR four times the escalation die value).

**Champion Feat:** Once per day, if you have already eaten and healed hp using glutton's maw this battle, you can keep using your glutton's maw racial power each time you miss until the end of the battle but you gain temporary hp instead of healing.

## IRAI

### Hell's Avengers

The irai are descended from demons of wrath, and as such are quick to anger. Irritation, rage, and hatred come easily to an irai. The irai can hold grudges for years, sometimes generations, and feuds are common. Thankfully most irai choose to turn their anger to good causes, becoming paladins, hunters of dangerous creatures, or campaigners and activists. Some irai turn to work like breaking rocks or forging metal to work out their frustrations peacefully. Irai can of course be gentle, but as they never really escape their natures even the gentlest among them tend to lack patience.

Irai have skin that ranges from deep crimson to light pink or yellow, and have deep yellow eyes. Irai tend to be physically strong, with either bulging muscles or iron-hard sinews (irai with low physical attributes tend to be suffering from health problems caused by stress). Irai lean toward androgyny, it is hard to tell one gender apart from another with these tieflings.

Irai like wearing blacks and reds, joking that the blood of their enemies doesn't show up. Irai like tough armor-like clothing, with canvas and leather being common. Spikes and chains are frequent motifs on irai jewelry.

Irai players who roll a natural 1 on a skill check can explain it by saying that their character became angry and stormed off in the middle of whatever they were attempting.

Adventuring irai are almost always barbarians, paladins, or fighters. Those irai who bother to learn magic usually concentrate on big explosions.





## BUBBLING RAGE (MINOR RACIAL POWER)

You add 1 to skill checks in situations where anger might help—intimidation for example, or strength-based skill checks.

**Adventurer Feat:** When you get angry your blood glows, brightly enough that your skin acts like a nightlight and your eyes glow like lanterns. You can see in the dark if you are mad about something (and irai can always find something to be angry about).

**Champion Feat:** The bonus to skill checks becomes +2 if the situation would be helped by whatever you are holding bursting into flame. Oh yeah, if you get angry enough the heat from your skin can ignite paper and cause wood to smolder, so watch out for that.

## BURNING FURY (MAJOR RACIAL POWER)

Once per battle when you deal damage with a metal melee weapon or your bare hands (hit or miss) add 1d10 fire damage (champion: 2d10; epic: 4d10).

**Champion feat:** Your damage dice for burning fury are now d12s instead of d10s.

# LUXIRIANS

## Sensual Hedonists

A luxirian would say “Why bother living if you aren’t going to enjoy everything life has to offer?”, for luxirians are descended from demons of lust. Luxirians go beyond mere carnality to fully embrace every experience possible—a luxirian tiefling is as likely to be found admiring wildflowers as in a pit of debauchery, if not more so. That’s not to say that luxirians don’t have a reputation for excess, but often it is unearned.

Luxirians are always beautiful (low Charisma luxirians either have an unearthly beauty others find disconcerting, or are pretty but are vapid or cruel). Luxirians leave genderless androgyny to the irai, luxirians are exemplars of both genders simultaneously (though their racial ability means that for them gender is pretty much a matter of choice on a moment to moment basis). Most luxirians have pink or purple hair, something that they can’t change with their yearnshape racial power.

Given a choice a luxirian will mix satins and lace with leather and velvet—whatever looks and feels best. Luxirians like pink and purple, shiny things (especially if they can see their own reflections), and clothing that lets them show off their perfect bodies.

Luxirian clothing isn’t always the most comfortable: high heels, stiff collars, corsets,

powdered wigs... looking good sometimes is worth a little sacrifice (then again pain and pleasure are close cousins for some luxirians). Luxirian armor is a sight to behold.

Luxirians are either rushing impatiently towards the next delight, or are lingering to savor something while those around them just want to get on with things.

Players of luxirians who roll 1s on skill checks can explain their failure by saying that their character was distracted by something that they found momentarily too enchanting to look away from.

Luxirian adventurers are almost always magic users of some sort, usually bards or wizards or chaos mages. Luxirian warriors prefer classes where light form-fitting armor is an option (warrior druid or shape-changing druid), or where they can dress in silks (monk).

## DIFFERENT RACE ABILITY SCORE ADJUSTMENTS

Luxirians get either +2 Int or +2 Cha.

## AUREOLE (MINOR RACIAL POWER)

When the mood takes you, you become surrounded by a glowing pinkish-purplish aureole. The soft light from your aureole is enough to see in the dark by. Exhibiting your aureole or dousing it is a free action.

This power is an always-on power; you can use it at will instead of once every five minutes.

**Adventurer Feat:** The aureole is composed of magical pheromones; if you have a chance to talk to a living creature for five minutes with your aureole active the difficulty for social skill checks involving them is lowered by 2 for you for the next five minutes. You don't have to use this power if you don't want to—targets aren't affected unless you pitch your voice just so. The creature doesn't have to understand you for your aureole to take effect.

**Champion Feat:** Once per battle lower the MD of a nearby enemy by 2, save ends. Each time the enemy fails their save their MD is lowered by a further 1, until they save when their MD resets to what it would be without the influence of this champion feat.

**Special Champion Feat:** If you are NOT a luxirian you may spend a champion feat to get a glowing aureole in a color suitable for your hellbreed, but cannot get the associated MD lowering feats which are for luxirians only.

## YEARNSHAPE (MINOR RACIAL POWER)

You can shift your form to become more muscular or more delicate, more buxom or more athletic, more feminine or more masculine, or other cosmetic changes as the situation or the whims of your vanity demands. This is worth a +2 bonus on a skill roll if you can explain how a purely cosmetic change helps—beyond the obvious, maybe becoming skinnier lets you slip through a narrow space or increasing your body fat increases your buoyancy. While you can change things like hair length and facial features you remain recognizably you, yearnshape is no good as a disguise on its own.

**Adventurer feat:** You can warp your flesh, producing spikes, claws, crab-like pincers, etc—using them as small one-handed weapons (equivalent to a dagger), and can form tentacles to reach around corners or into tight spaces.

**Champion Feat:** Twice per day you can use your yearnshape racial ability as though it were a 5th level disguise self wizard spell, even changing your normally immutable hair color.

## SEDUCTIVE GAZE (MAJOR RACIAL POWER)

Once per battle when an enemy moves into engagement with you, roll a save—on an 11+ the enemy becomes confused until the end of their turn. This only works on humanoid enemies, devils and demons, and other creatures that might find a luxirian attractive—a gelatinous octahedron is unlikely to be magically confounded by your unearthly beauty no matter how attractive you are.

**Champion Feat:** If you roll a 1-10 your power is not expended, and you get a cumulative +1 to your next use of the power this battle (to a maximum of +4).

**Champion Feat:** Once per day use your seductive gaze ability on a nearby or far away enemy that can see you and that you can see.

## AVARITIANS

### Driven By Desire

Avaritians are descended from demons of avarice and greed. Constantly on a quest for ever greater material possessions Avaritians are hoarders, manipulators, and tricksters. Avaritians have a hard time thinking of another's needs when profit is on the line. That's not to say all avaritians are dishonest, many are pillars of the community (with an uncanny ability to make money). Unlike the ardenti, avaritians can disengage from



their obsessions long enough to recognize that sometimes you must spend money to make money.

Physically avaritians have sharp appearances, long narrow features with silvery-sheened skin, and golden hair. Avaritians prefer clothing of a simple cut in restrained colors like grey or white—however, no avaritian can resist showing off their success a little and so wear expensive jewelry or display their wealth by wearing pearlescent silks.

Avaritians have problems not trying to turn a profit. If the player of an avaritian rolls a 1 in a social situation they can launch into an inappropriate business pitch or simply try to pick the pocket of the person that they are talking to.

An avaritian adventurer could end up a cleric of a god of money, a highly paid mercenary fighter, or a rogue specializing in robbing unguarded tombs.

### NOSE FOR PROFIT (MINOR RACIAL POWER)

When you roll icon dice, count any 4s as though they were 5s, but you must use them to advance a business interest or get something for free.

Unlike other tiefling hellbreed minor racial powers you can't use this once every five minutes, instead using it every time you roll icon dice.

**Adventurer Feat:** You can smell gold, silver, and other precious metals. The metal must be within arm's reach for you to sniff it out without a skill roll, but if you get close enough you can scent which locked box has gold in, which has silver, and which has neither.

**Champion Feat:** Count 4s as 6s where profit is involved.

### ALL THAT GLISTENS (MAJOR RACIAL POWER)

When you roll a natural 1 attack roll against an armed or armored enemy that you are engaged with, or they roll a 1 on an attack roll against any target or roll a 1 on a save, you roll a save—on an 11+ you snatch away their weapon or a piece of their armor, giving them a -1 to all their attacks, all their saves, and all their defenses until the end of the battle.

**Champion Feat:** The save becomes 6+.



## SUPERBIANS

### Pride And Hubris

Superbians are a conceited lot, not surprising considering that they descend from demons of pride. Naturally superbians say that pride is the father of all the other sins—their associated sin must be seen to be the best.

Superbians believe that they are inherently better than others, and put themselves and their own desires above the welfare of all others. Superbians extend their feeling of superiority to groups that they are part of (their family is the best family in town, their town is the best town in the realm, their realm is the best realm, and so on). Superbians are constantly trying to prove that they (and groups that they are a part of or identify with) are the best, and so work hard to improve the lot of others when they are part of the same group.

Superbians make careful use of cosmetics, always try to appear graceful, and while they have no preference for clothing style (beyond liking gloves so they don't have to touch anything that is beneath their station) it must always be better than the clothing of others. Superbians prefer colors associated with nobility—royal blues and purples. Superbians tend toward builds that are stick thin and tall, and they enhance their height with tall hairstyles or big (yet stylish) hats.

A superbian whose player rolls a natural 1 on a skill check—well, they meant to do that, right? Superbians can rarely outright admit failure.

Superbian adventurers tend to be something unusual—chaos mages, necromancers, or clerics of obscure yet powerful gods. If a superbian adventurer is a common class they'll find some way to be better than others, perhaps multi-classing in an unusual combination.

### SIMPLY THE BEST (MINOR RACIAL POWER)

It's only natural that icons would pay more attention to somebody as naturally superior and exceptional as you. Replace one of your icon relationship dice with a d8, treating 7s and 8s as 6s.

Unlike other tiefling hellbreed minor racial powers you can't use this once every five minutes, instead using it every time you roll icon dice.

If you have this power, you cannot also have best of the best. Pick one.

## BEST OF THE BEST (MINOR RACIAL POWER)

You really are exceptional. If you are a multi-class character add 1 to your multiclass key modifier.

This power is an always-on power: you don't need to worry about applying the +1 to your key modifier sometimes and not other times, it is always there as a baked-in bonus.

If you have this power, you cannot also have simply the best. Pick one.

**Champion Feat:** You also have the racial ability simply the best. You are no longer restricted to just picking one of the two superbian minor racial powers.

## BETTER THAN YOU (MAJOR RACIAL POWER)

The first time each battle an enemy rolls higher than one of your defenses, after the triggering attack is resolved that defense rises until it is 1 higher than the triggering attack roll until the end of your next turn.

**Champion Feat:** Once per day use your better than you racial power twice in a battle.

## INVIDIANS

### Ambitious To A Fault

Invidians are never satisfied, as suits the tiefling hellbreed descended from envy demons. They want what others have, taking joy in the misfortunes of their enemies and grief at their enemies' prosperity. Invidians are always pushing themselves to do better, to out-compete others. They number among the greatest philosophers, athletes, artists... and thieves.

Invidians live strict lives, rising earlier than others to study and exercise, constantly looking out for opportunities to advance and prove themselves superior to others. Physically and mentally invidians push themselves to the limits (if you have low attributes in one area it is because you've been concentrating on improving other aspects of your life), and it is rare for an invidian to be either under or overweight (unlike the ardenti), too beautiful (unlike the luxirians), or over-muscled (unlike the irai)—they strive to be perfect in all areas without going to extremes.

One thing that strikes everyone that sees an invidian is their green hair, pale green complexion, and look of perpetual longing. Those that know invidians better know that it isn't longing—they are apprising you, seeing what you have that they want.

Invidians keep up with the latest fashions, striving to be neither too behind the times

nor too ahead of the curve—the ideal invidian outfit is one that is trend-setting without being outrageous. Invidians like whatever color clothing everybody else likes, in whatever cut the best people are wearing. However, given a choice invidians invariably opt for something green. Green is the color of envy, after all.

An invidian player who rolls a 1 should go ahead and make up an excuse about how it's some other character's fault and use their strive harder minor racial power.

Invidian adventurers are almost always rogues, taking the shortest route to wealth by simply taking what belongs to others. An invidian magic user is likely to be a sorcerer with stolen power. Even invidian fighters are more in it for the loot than the actual fighting.

### **STRIVE HARDER (MINOR RACIAL POWER)**

When you roll a 1 on a skill check reroll the skill check and take the better result. If you get two 1s in a row something astoundingly bad has happened because of the failed skill check.

**Champion Feat:** If you spend a recovery you can change your skill check result to a 1, triggering your reroll. Why spend a recovery? Stress.

### **I WANT THAT! (MAJOR RACIAL POWER)**

Once per battle use an ally's racial power. If that isn't possible (you are the only PC involved in a fight, for example) use curse of chaos even if you used it last battle, and next battle you get to use your I want that! racial power.

**Champion feat:** You can now use I want that! up to twice per battle, picking a different ally to copy the racial power of each time.

## **ACEDIANS**

### **Aloof Sages**

Acedians are a tiefling hellbreed line descended from demons of sloth, a bloodline that is disinclined to do much of anything. That's not to say that acedians just lay about all day, they work very hard to ensure themselves an easy life. An acedian will spend days working on an intricate system to automatically cook their breakfasts than face cooking breakfasts in the future. Acedian homes are either exemplars of low-tech automation filled with strings and pulleys, or the household works hard enough to afford servants so they don't have to work. That may seem paradoxical to non-acedians, but acedians



take the long view—they'd rather put in an hour's work now to get a day of leisure later. Physically acedians are nothing special—they take good enough care of their bodies to head off problems later, but not enough that they become exemplars of physicality (if you play an acedian with high physical attributes then it is just good genetics rather than hard work that got you there). It is in the realms of the mind that acedians excel, wither it be sagacious contemplation or games of skill and chance.

Acedian clothing tends to be comfortable, in restful shades of blue (to contrast with their brown-red skin), and is often multi-layered so that the preoccupied (or lazy) acedian can take off a layer or put one on rather than get up to open a window or stoke a fire.

Acedian players who roll a natural 1 can explain their failure by saying that their character just couldn't be bothered.

Acedians love curling up with a good book, so acedian adventurers gravitate to classes that emphasize lots of sitting about and reading over those where physical exertion is required—wizards for example. Acedian wizards make good use of the mage hand cantrip to fetch themselves things without getting up. Acedians who are members of more physical classes didn't train to get good (no true acedian will work if they don't have to), instead relying on natural talent.

## PREPLANNING (MINOR RACIAL POWER)

When an acedian is faced with a skill check that they could have anticipated and had time to prepare for they gain a +2 bonus to the skill check.

**Champion Feat:** When you rest in comfort you may maximize one recovery roll or gain a +5 bonus to a recharge roll. It is up to you to plan ahead to make sure that you are comfortable.

## ENNUI (MAJOR RACIAL POWER)

Acedians can extend their slothful nature to others, infecting them with sudden apathy. Once per battle force an enemy you can see to reroll a d20 roll and take the second result.

**Champion Feat:** If the second result is higher than the first, your once per battle use of ennui isn't expended.

# VOICES FROM THE OVERWORLD

A MISCELLANY OF ADVICE

When I run my games the biggest trouble I have with my players is the icons. Icon relationship dice are supposed to be used to push the narrative whether it be a magic item, to influence somebody related to your icon for information, ect. However, as most of us who play 13th age know, if you roll that nasty little 5 for an icon relationship it can have some gnarly negative effects on the player when he decides to cash it in. Something I have done, I looked at the dark-side, light-side portion of Star Wars to get this idea, is when a player rolls a 5 I write it down and I claim that 5 as mine. It is now my 5 to use when ever I want to complicate narrative and story. Now I know your thinking that is unruly and fair, but the trade off is that when I use the 5 the player gets a 6 in replacement. The reason I have done this is players seem to neglect or refuse to use 5's and sometimes that can really effect the mood of the game. Those hefty dice can sometimes make the story so interesting and I have decided to use my

dice this way to make my players feel less intimidated by the 5.

Also, a 5 always has a good and bad outcome and the way I play with that idea is giving a player a 6 in return for letting me mess with them. It works out too mentally because at first they have a heart attack when they see it, but they know its out of there control so there seems to be less stress. When the player has the choice of setting themselves up for failure with a 5 such as, "I need to pick lock the door silently, I want to use my 5 with the Prince of Shadows to have a better chance at lock picking. The roll is a success as the doors makes a loud creaking sound as the lock unlatches on the other side. The guards turn to face you." There is a lot of stress that goes into making a decision like that when using a 5 icon dice. Less stress and more fun that's the way I like to run my games.

-Benjamin Witunsky (Balamast)

# BACK MATTER

## MISCELLANY

*plural* miscellanies

- 1 a miscellanies *plural* : separate writings collected in one volume
- b : a collection of writings on various subjects
- 2 : a mixture of various things

**H**ello! Well, that was the first issue of the 13th Age fanzine, *Escalation*. I know it was a long time coming. First, let me express gratitude to James Done for starting up the fanzine and gathering all the great articles for our first couple of issues. I'd also like to thank Tim Baker for all his help keeping the fire of *Escalation* lit and getting this first issue into the wild.

In this issue we presented a variety of things—a miscellany. From unique ways to view icons to a new tiefling subspecies brought to you by the renowned ASH LAW. In future issues, we will present similar diverse articles, but we will also focus down on specific themes. So, look forward to issues dedicated to horror, pirates, dungeons and more.

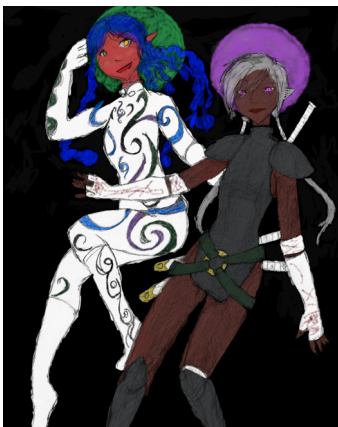
Let's escalate this!

-Sherm Sheftall

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next issue

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**THE WARLOCK**  

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**PRUITT**