

High Beach

A Sandbox Style D&D4e Campaign



My time in High Reach is almost finished. After years of toil, years of risking my life to uncover lost magic, I've finally collected nearly enough blood pips to pay for my release and the trip back to civilization. The things I've seen here, the companions I've lost to the monsters and other hazards; cold though it sounds I won't miss them. I long for life in a city, any city other than this place.

There's some unfinished business before I can settle down and enjoy my hard earned freedom and wealth. I plan to use a small portion of my gains to make sure a certain magistrate gets a taste of real justice. Money changed hands to send me here, money can change hands for another ticket to High Reach, and I don't think the magistrate will be coming back. Then I'll marry his daughter.

Why are you here?

The Player Characters have all been brought to High Reach for different reasons. Many are exiles whether for criminal, political, or other reasons. Others have been ordered here or volunteered on behalf of their liege lords. All are stuck here until they can gather the required price of a ticket home.

Everyone arrives the same way . . . divested of possessions, bound, and escorted aboard an airship run by metal automatons known as gear men. Once on board everyone is kept in a cabin isolated from the outside until arrival. The first sight of the outside world happens at night while being escorted down a ramp from the airship to a wide stone plateau.

In good weather the stars and moon are clearly visible. The thin air is crisp and wisps of cloud pass nearby. Below can barely be seen the dark silhouettes of squat square buildings. The only detectable activity is that of the automatons unloading crates and barrels in the gloom.

The snapping of small arcs of lightning from the keg shaped iron cages attached to the sides of the gondola briefly illuminates the airship lifting away from the ground. It becomes dark and silent again for what seems many minutes.

Shadowy robed figures seem to rise from the ground, soft footsteps giving away the stairs they climb. Bonds are removed and small cloth purses are placed into the palms of hands whose fingers are flexing away the stiffness of having been tightly shackled.

A whisper is followed by the ignition of a lantern, its glow muted to prevent hurting anyone's eyes, but bright enough to reveal flesh and blood people.

Hello, you are at High Reach. In your hands you hold a small bag containing 20 blood pips each. This is the most prized form of currency here. All of us are trying to earn enough of these to buy our trips back home or anywhere away from here. You'll need food, clothing, lodging, and other goods. Precious metals, gemstones, and barter are all good trade here, but you'll find things more expensive unless you are paying in pips. You're going to need a few thousand of those to buy your way out of the Reach and they're the only thing accepted as payment for the trip.

Before anyone gets the idea of stealing other people's pips, think again. There aren't laws as such here, but thieves are quickly dealt with by everyone who wants to be sure they aren't the next victim of theft.

Ways to earn pips varies. Some people set up shops to sell skills or goods. Others try their luck in the wilds, searching the ruins for lost treasures. That is the quickest way out since those lucky enough to survive and bring back ancient magic can sell it to the gear men for a goodly number of blood pips.

Why are we giving you pips? Those aren't ours; we were paid to give those to you.

Now come on, you've got to be getting cold wearing loin cloths and light shifts, and there's warm food and straw sleeping mats waiting below. Don't worry about the crates; those will be taken care of.

Permitted Classes and Races

Ardent	Cleric	Monk	Rogue	Sword-Mage
Avenger	Druid	Multi-class	Rune Priest	Warden
Barbarian	Fighter	Paladin	Seeker	Warlock
Bard	Hybrid	Psion	Shaman	Warlord
Battlemind	Invoker	Ranger	Sorcerer	Wizard

Deva	Eladrin	Gnome	Half-Orc	Minotaur	Shifter, Razorclaw
Dragonborn	Elf	Goliath	Halfling	Shardmind	Tiefling
Dwarf	Githzerai	Half-Elf	Human	Shifter, Longtooth	Wilden

All characters begin at first level with the exception of replacements for higher level characters killed during the game. Players may create a few characters to make it easier for new players to find groups to adventure with.

For example: A new player arrives, yet the starting characters of the earlier players had reached 3rd level. They could accept the risk of death of the new character or all could launch an adventuring group with equal or close to equal level characters. Differences

of more than 2 levels are not permitted. (A 5th level character could not be in the same group as a 2nd level character.)

Backgrounds may be used with appropriate information changes, for example removing references to other campaign settings.

While the campaign may move to a more character focused stage later, don't get too attached to your first characters . . . it's a dangerous world, and death is ever near.

Important Meta-game Concepts

In High Reach there are no magic shops. There may be people present that can sell consumable items such as scrolls and potions occasionally. Characters may also take time and attempt to make items for themselves. Magic items can be sold to other PCs and of course to the gear men.

New arrivals begin literally with nothing, but the 20 blood pips they have been handed and the light shift and loincloth they arrived wearing. There is equipment available to buy, however none of it is magical.

The World at Large

The world is an enormous, fantastical place, and so are the numbers of questions players likely have regarding it. Fear not, you already know the answers for many questions.

You will be helping to build the world as you create characters and play them in the campaign.

Included here is a set of questions to answer about the character's city-state of origin. Answering these questions is a good first step in helping design the world and the future of play, especially once play expands beyond High Reach.

Other questions that might come up include things about divine entities. So tell us, player of a religious character, what type of god does your character worship?

When a question comes up about the world see if you can answer it. Most modern people know very little about the world we live in, even with such conveniences as television, the internet, and rapid international travel being available so go ahead, it is okay if it turns out to be inaccurate.

To get started, here are some questions.

Name the city-state you came from (or nearest to your home):

Name and describe at least one special geographic feature from there:

Name the leader or leaders and give a guess of their age (young, middle, old, special):

Name 2 important factions that affect local society:

What is the primary economic framework like, agrarian, manufacturing, mining, a mix, etc?

What are the top exports and imports?

Describe the racial demographics?

Is the city-state at war or peace? If at peace, when was the last war and was it a win, loss, inconclusive? If at war, is it against internal or external forces? Who? Are they winning, losing, inconclusive?

Where is the city-state located? Which hemisphere – North, South, East, West? Near a pole or the equator? Is it landlocked, coastal, an island, etc?

What is the climate like?

Are there any major/minor religions of importance? What are they like and how do they interact?

List 2 special laws that others might find interesting or worrisome:

Name some cultural habits or quirks a foreigner would notice:

You aren't limited by the space on these pages; it is there for quick notes. Please write it out on other paper.



High Reach in a Nutshell

High Reach is not a well known place. Few people have heard of it by name. Most who have think of it as a myth. Some of you might know a little more than others, and that is something to be determined by a private discussion with the dungeon master, but you will learn ... oh yes, you will learn.

Where did this idea come from?

This is something that developed from a combination of external influences mixing with internal inspiration. Call it sort of an “aha!” moment. Here are a couple of things to help you better appreciate part of the genesis for High Reach.

The core idea has been brewing for years due to longing for a recouped sense of “old school” play, mixed with creative needs that didn’t want to be hemmed in by some players’ need for the world to be well defined at the beginning.

Along the way there was some reading involved which the internet helped immensely by giving far easier access to the combined experiences and ideas of other dungeon masters.

Here is a link to the one that helped put the capstone on the core of High Reach.

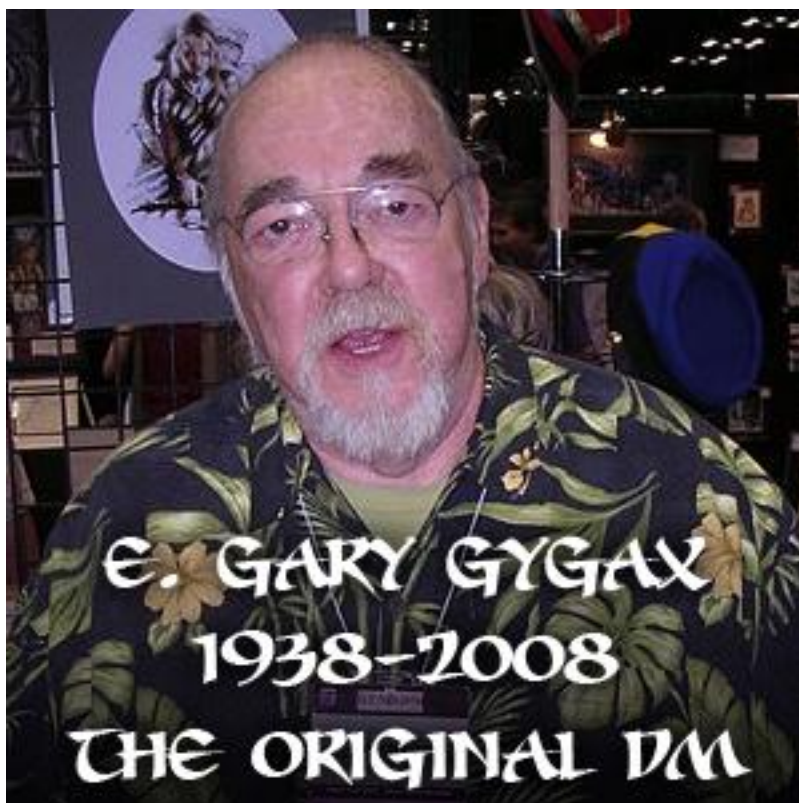
Reading this is highly recommended, but of course is optional.

<http://arsludi.lamemage.com/index.php/78/grand-experiments-west-marches/>

The style of play will be greatly influenced by the West Marches campaign described therein.

Of course the greatest influence is the pair of brilliant thinkers that started the whole thing, Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

There are of course other sources, but a DM shouldn’t divulge all secrets!



The original **+5**
Dungeon Master

We all miss you Gary!



Dave Arneson – Rest in Peace
Ye Master of Blackmoor

You never did tell me the secret of
the **Egg of Coot**.

Roll for initiative!

