

Welcome to Gloamhold! I hope this book is the foundation of many happy, memorable years of gaming.

So what's Gloamhold? Simply put, Gloamhold is an old-school sandbox style megadungeon. Since the first years of my love affair with role-playing games I've yearned to design and run a "proper" megadungeon. Gloamhold is my attempt to do just that—a "proper" megadungeon laced with a strong dash of cosmic terror and doom (because—after all—everything is better with tentacles).

While Gloamhold is my (sinister, warped) baby I've not done all the work myself. Chief amongst my co-conspirators is Tommi Salama who has drawn the achingly beautiful maps for the place. I wish I could draw like Tommi, but given I can't I'm delighted he's on-board.

This book is merely the first of many Gloamhold releases Raging Swan Press will be hurling into the world. This is a scene-setter, a primer. From this book, all other material will flow. As such, I've indulged myself and included several essays laying out a lot of my "behind the curtain" style thoughts on megadungeon design and play.

WHAT'S IN THE CAMPAIGN GUIDE

I've broken the *Gloamhold Campaign Guide* down into three distinct sections.

1. **Design Notes:** In the first short section, I discuss some of my design decisions that drove and shaped Gloamhold's design. While the concept of old-school gaming has grown increasingly popular in recent times, I think it's important to state what I mean when I say "old-school." After all, my "old-school" could be your "ancient-school" or "new-school" depending on when your gaming career began.
2. **The Duchy of Ashlar:** Part two presents a brief overview of the nearest civilised state to the Gloamhold's doom-shrouded halls. Ashlar provides a general setting for the campaign and provides opportunities for other adventures, if a change of pace is desired.
3. **Gloamhold:** The final section of the Campaign Guide comprises an overview of Gloamhold itself. Each major section of the dungeon gets a two-page spread. These bare-bones should be enough to get any GM's creative juices flowing (or gushing like a raging torrent!)

WHY SYSTEM NEUTRAL?

Why is this book system neutral? How can you have a dungeon without any stats?!

When I was live designing Gloamhold on my blog (creightonbroadhurst.com), I did so with the assumption I'd be using the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game (after all that's what I use in my own campaign). However, during the design process it became increasingly obvious that a sizeable chunk of the people reading and commenting on Gloamhold used other game systems. It seemed madness, therefore, to clutter up this book with stats and game mechanics that many readers wouldn't use. It also occurred to me that if I stripped out the bulk of the "rules stuff", I could include lots more lovely flavour; the individual GM can deal with the crunch.

This book, therefore, is designed to be compatible with most fantasy roleplaying games. Of course, it's impossible to create a truly system neutral book, and some generic game terms—wizard, fighter, human, elf and so on—lurk within. These generic terms—almost all found in the core books of the first edition of the world's most popular roleplaying game—are easily modified to the GM's system of choice. After all, I think everyone should be able to work out "rogue" means "thief" and vice versa...

WHY OLD-SCHOOL?

The short answer is, "because I like old-school-style play."

The long answer is somewhat more complex. Over the last few years I've become increasingly frustrated with modern dungeon design—you know the dungeons I mean: small maps, every room occupied by a monster that needs killing, no wandering monsters, all the challenges level appropriate and so on. I want to play in the gloriously vast, rambling dungeons of yore. I want to face tremendously easy and (avoid) tremendously hard encounters. I want to be able to poke about in empty parts of the dungeon. I want to encounter wandering monsters. I want to enjoy skilful play—instead of simply whacking things until they fall over and die or achieving victory through (magic item) shopping. But most of all, I want to play in a sandbox dungeon in which the players decide their goals and objectives. I want them to drive the story and to tread their own path, not follow a narrow railroad to a pre-determined ending.

I think this is a good place to point out that if you don't like the old-school style of play, Gloamhold—at least in the incarnation presented here—might not be for you. But I hope it is and I hope you have an epic time exploring Gloamhold. Let me know how it goes!

