

# CREDITS

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# AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

Well... Fourth Edition.

They're not words I'd ever have thought to hear, when I first picked up a red cardboard box with a green dragon on the cover back in 1983. And even as recently as a year or so ago, they're not words I'd have thought to hear any time soon.

But you know what? I'm glad I did. I *like* Fourth Edition. I like the rules. I like the feel of it. I even, both despite and because of some fundamental changes, really like the flavor. It's interesting to read and inspiring to play—something that, I have to admit, I felt was sometimes a bit lacking during the 3E era.

That said, though, there are a few things missing. Some of the classic races and classes, a few interesting options, aren't available. Oh, they *will* be, or at least many of them will. But they're not yet.

Perhaps more to the point, though, Fourth Edition has a very different aesthetic than First Edition did. Times have changed, and the rules and the mood of the game have changed with them. That's just fine, for the most part. But there's certainly a portion of the market that prefers the classic feel. And even as much as I like the mood and flavor of 4E, there are frequent times when I want to return to my roots, to play a game that feels and runs more like the sessions of old.

So when Clark Peterson came to me and asked me to be a guiding part of the *Advanced Player's Guide* for Necromancer Games—to help fill in the current gaps, to help the transition from “3rd Edition Rules, 1st Edition Feel” to “4th Edition Rules, 1st Edition Feel,” there was no possible way I could refuse.

It was certainly a *unique* experience. See, I had access to the rules before Clark did, and I wasn't allowed to share them. So a lot of the development of this book consisted of exchanges much like this:

**Clark:** I'd really like us to include X.

**Me (thinking):** Sure, I'd love to include that. **Or:** Nope, that's not going to work under the 4E rules. **Or:** I'm already doing that. **Or:** That's actually already in the *PHB*. **Or...**

**Me (speaking):** Yeah, that'd be cool.

I literally had to develop and write my portions of this book knowing what Clark wanted, but not being able to share with him the specifics of what I was doing, or even tell him how many of his goals I'd be able to meet.

Nor was that the only difficulty. I've got a pretty good grasp of the 4E rules, but let's be honest: It is a new system, with its own quirks. There were a few things that I wanted to do that I simply couldn't, since I didn't know how to balance them under the new rules—and I don't want to break the game quite this early in the process. (We'll save that for later.)

But lest you think I'm being negative, I need to stress that it's all worked out. Despite the unusual hurdles, I'm *thrilled* with the way the book turned out. I think the classes, the races, the paragon paths, and the rituals all go a very long way toward adding fun and interesting options to 4E, and carrying forward much of the flavor of the 1E days. Even without the difficulties early in the process, I honestly don't think it could have turned out any better; heck, it's possible the material is *better* for the organic nature of its birth.

And for a while, I didn't think any of you were going to get to see it. See, for various business and legal reasons, Clark decided that Necromancer Games wasn't going to convert to 4E as rapidly as he thought. He *could* have sat on the manuscript and waited, but he was kind enough to return it to me, and let me sell it elsewhere, rather than letting it linger in limbo.

It took barely a few hours after he announced this fact for Joe Browning to contact me about the book, and mere seconds after I got the e-mail to decide that they were the right match.

I've known Joe and Suzi for several years now, and we've been looking for the opportunity to work together, but the timing never worked out. Well, this time it did, and I couldn't be happier.

So what have Expeditious Retreat Press and I got for you? Well, a few racial options for one. If the current gnome isn't quite to your liking, take a gander at the earth gnome, a variant species that might more closely resemble what you remember from prior editions. There are the orc-blooded, for those of you who can't get enough of big, strong, mean halfbreeds. And of course, we've got the shire halfling, another variant on a core race. He's an older fashioned halfling, not the lithe athlete of modern editions but the portly, comfort-loving, hairy-footed hobbi... er, little guy of fantasy's most classic roots.

The core of the game, of course, has always been classes. 4E provides an excellent array, but if your old favorites haven't made an appearance yet, we've got you covered. From raging savages to mystic martial artists, inspiring heralds to priests of nature, they're all making their 4E debuts in the *APG*. Heck, we've even called an old friend off the bench, but don't believe anything you see or hear when he's around; he's a tricky fellow, that one.

There's more, of course, as I mentioned above—new paragon paths, new rituals, new feats—but the races and classes represent the true beating heart of the *Advanced Player's Guide*, the reason for its existence. I hope you're at least half as excited to play them, moving into the game's new era, as I was to design them.

Ari “Mouseferatu” Marmell  
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