

ADVENTURERS CLUB

THE HERO GAMES,
IRON CROWN QUARTERLY

FALL 1987

ISSUE #11

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**DEATH FROM
THE SKIES!**

For Champions,
Super-Agents and
Robot Warriors

**STOLEN STEED
OF THE
SOVEREIGN**

A MERP
Adventure

**CARE AND
FEEDING
OF DEATHTRAPS**

Tom Lyle 1987



SPACEGAMER FantasyGamer IS BACK



Gamer / Fantasy Gamer magazine is returning well in time for Christmas, and with so much to herald, we want to make sure you get the right gift! Space Gamer magazine has been published for eleven years, and has served Science-Fiction and Fantasy gaming fans faithfully through the years. It is a magazine with a long history, an outstanding reputation, and now it's having a glorious rebirth.

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The new Art Director is **Vince DeNardo**, currently Art Director for both *Fire & Movement* and *Computer Gaming World* magazines. Vince is giving **Space Gamer / Fantasy Gamer** a new look, dynamically improved over previous issues, and an advance for all magazines of this genre.

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A DVENTURERS CLUB

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NUFF SAID

BY AARON ALLSTON

It's late fall by the time you read this, but we're all just back from Gen Con — and, oh boy, was that an interesting convention.

In addition to the usual events (new releases, panels and discussions, seeing old friends, gossiping about everyone else), we were witness to the complete reorganization of Hero Games and new plans for the Hero line of products.

It's no secret that Hero products haven't been coming out very fast. This is primarily because of an inefficient setup for the acquisition of manuscripts... but that whole setup has been changed.

The New Arrangement

Starting immediately, the Hero Auxiliary Corps (Keith Hannigan, Marc Blumberg, Mike Malony, and Mitch Gitelman) will be evaluating proposals for supplements to and adventures in the Hero line. You can write them at the address given in the Submissions Policy printed later in this issue. I'll still be editing *Adventurers Club* and receiving submissions for it at my old address.

I met the Hero Auxiliary Corps at Gen Con; they're a talented, energetic, and thoroughly lunatic group of people and Hero submissions should prosper under their care.

New Releases

The next batch of new products upcoming for the Hero line includes: *Magic Items*, a book of magic

treasures and gizmos, for *Fantasy Hero*.

Robot Gladiators, an *Enemies*-style volume of giant robot villains and NPCs, for *Robot Warriors*.

Enemies IV, for *Champions*.

Terror on Skywatch One, a near-space sourcebook and adventure pack for *Champions* and *Danger International*.

But that's not all . . .

Many of you have seen *Robin Hood*, the *Rolemaster/Fantasy Hero/MERP* supplement for outlaw campaigns in medieval England. This product wasn't a one-shot, but was rather the first in a line of such supplements, written equally for both the Hero and ICE fantasy games.

Upcoming in the series are *Age of Heroes* (high-powered characters in Mythic Greece) and *Knights of Camelot* (adventures in the realms of King Arthur and his Table Round). And there are more to come.

Also, rumor has it that a new line of sourcebooks and adventures, originally intended to be an entire world-setting for *Rolemaster*, will be expanded to include stats for *Fantasy Hero* as well. In the not too distant future, *Fantasy Hero* players won't be suffering for lack of supplements.

There is a lot more in the works, plans and ideas which I can't talk about yet. Stay tuned to this column; when I can talk about these plans, you'll hear about them.



Letters

I wanted to offer my opinions on what I would like to see in the Adventurers Club magazine.

I liked the "Gadgets" column very much. I think it will be useful for those GMs who use agents a lot. It's always nice to see my favorite Viper agents get a new weapon or device that can give my campaign heroes some problems.

I also feel the "Crooks and Crusaders" column gives good ideas for adventures using these new characters. Because of this, I feel the idea you proposed in AC # 9, printing miniature Organizations Books in some issues, is good. Something that would give a good basic history and a main villain that can be used over and over again in an ongoing campaign. However, I still like the idea of printing mini adventures for Champions.

In AC #8 you brought up the point of multi-part articles. I don't think that is a very good solution because of the very long time between the arrival of magazines. This lag time takes away from the article as a whole because it is no longer a whole.

Since I am a fan of only Champions and Super Agents, I really don't care much for the Fantasy Hero or MERP adventures and articles. Even though I don't play Justice, Inc. or Danger International, I can use the ideas and theories for my superhero campaign. As in AC #8, the "Sound the Alarm" article can be used for either game system. That along

with the excellent update for Viper made the magazine worth my while.

So my final argument would be to say you should stagger the contents of the magazine. My idea of the perfect rotation would be: Spring Issue, as much Champions and Super Agents material as possible. Summer, Danger International and Justice, Inc. Fall, Fantasy Hero and MERP. Winter, Champions and articles for any other games. I'm sure you could ask anybody his opinion on what his "perfect rotation" would be, and his favorite game would be substituted for Champions in my "rotation."

Ken Tabor
Irvine, CA

Thanks for the commentary, Ken. We're trying our second Organizations Book in this issue, and hope you like it. Your rotation, however, leaves a year between articles on, say, Fantasy Hero. This is hardly what the FH fans in our readership want, so we'll continue trying to place articles for each game in each issue.

I just received my first issue, AC #9. Great! I think your format is excellent and very well-planned. Unfortunately, the one game which I own, Fantasy Hero, was left out! Is this normal? Two columns in your magazine said they pro-

vided information for DI, JI, Champions, and Fantasy Hero, yet the latter was constantly left out! Mr. Sutton's letter in AC #9 had some nice ideas, yet asked that you "spotlight" a game system and have Champions. It's true, most people own Champions, but by the end of two years, all other game systems will have been covered once or twice, with Champions covered eight times! This is very unfair to JI, DI, and FH gamers. A "spotlight" would be fine, but also have a few other articles on the other games.

An increase in size would be fine, though this may mean a decrease in quality. Also, try to keep your almost-

advertisement-free status. The increase in pages was great!

Brendan De Silva
Westfield, NJ

'Fraid you've got that last part backwards. It was, among other things, the increase in the number of advertisers that allowed us to go to more pages. Be nice to our advertisers, now.

No, we're not supposed to short Fantasy Hero in the course of an issue. However, the flow of FH material is still a little slow. Keep reading, though, for it is picking up.

OZZIE'S FEEDBACK

Well, I finally got some space of my own. Whew, when you guys send in feedback cards, they start pouring in. We even got one from Austria! Hero folks certainly are opinionated, but that's how it should be. Keep sending in those feedback cards and letters. This is your magazine; you are the good folks we are trying to please. If you don't let us know what you'd like to see, we can't publish it, can we? And speaking of publishing... we can see definite trends in what you like and don't like. We've decided on a

change that I'm sure will please most everyone! I'd like to tell you...but I can't until next issue. Stay tuned! With all the changes at Hero Games, it's taken us a while to put together Submission Guidelines. They're in this issue - check them out and write to us! We need not only articles for this noble digest, but full-blown Hero modules and sourcebooks as well. Now's your chance! Gotta run... I need to check the mail.

OZZIE NIBS



Traveling Show

Whew! It's hard to believe that the summer is over. For those of you that missed us, I.C.E. put on the "Big Show" this summer, especially at Origins and GENCON.

But first, a few kudos for our tournament winners. At Origins there were three big Hero tournaments provided by the indomitable HAC (Hero Auxillary Corps). Mike Malory and Marc Blumberg ran their 4th (fourth!) tournament using the *Texas Rangers*. The winners were Eric Smith (first) and Chris Laliberty (second). The amazing duo also GMed a knock-down drag-out **JI** tournament, won by Rod Curie (first) and Ed Cook (second). On top of this, Rob Bell (that's me) ran a **DI** tournament based on the popular *Aliens* movie. Big winners were Steve Johnson (first) and Dean F. Edgell (second).

The tournament extravaganza continued at GENCON. Marc and Mike were joined by the original HAC, Keith Hannigan, to run a repeat of their *Texas Rangers* run. The winners this time were Joseph Alford (first) and Chad Brinkley (second). Mike Nystul (first) and Dan Cooper (second) won the expanded **JI** tournament. Rob Bell did a reprise of his **DI** tournament, but the winners names have been lost (send them in

and we'll print them). I also ran the third straight Champions tournament featuring the *Capitol Patrol*. Lucky winners were Edward Gleason (first) and Richard Sheaves (second). Other tournaments included a **DI** tournament GMed by Doug Tabb, a **RPGA Champions** tournament, and **Fantasy Hero** runs GMed by Mike Nystul and James Dorethy. Much congratulations to all our winners.

At GENCON I.C.E. was also fortunate to have the services of Aaron Allston. **AC** readers should recognize the name of our esteemed Editor in Chief (also the author of **JI**, **Superagents**, and much, much more). Aaron was kind enough to answer questions and even host a seminar for the **AC** faithful.

We would also like to thank the underpaid members of the HAC for the long hours they put in at the I.C.E. booth at the con. In addition to the HACs mentioned above, Eric Aldrich, Mitch Gitelman, and Dean Edgell put in long hours. Furthermore, two members of the fledgling Iron Crown club — John Marsischky and Sue "Wench" Wojahn — helped us out. So to all and sundry, we thank you for your assistance, and we hope to see you at future cons.

Rob Bell

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF DEATHTRAPS

"I have you this time, you pathetic mammalian miscreant," cackled the sinister Doctor Sinister. "Not even your vaunted wombat might can escape the patented menace of my Weaselcrusher."

Bruto the Killer Wombat shook his head groggily. He had taken some pretty bad blows in the last fight; his head felt worse than after a weekend in Atlantic City. Through a haze of pain, Bruto saw a giant spiked boot poised above him and realized that he was strapped helplessly beneath it.

"Geez," said Bruto.

"As ever, my rodent rival, your grasp of the situation is astute," sneered Doctor Sinister, pulling the lever. "Fare thee well."

"Geez," said Bruto again as the boot plummeted toward him. Then, with a sudden exertion of mighty wombat muscle, he burst the bonds that held him and rolled aside just as the Weaselcrusher landed where he had been lying. "Geez," he said a third time. Then, rolling a 14, he went berserk and demolished the mechanized boot, then moved on to the control room and made hash of the insidious professor's face.

So much for who stomps whom.

Deathtraps, for those — like Bruto — who need an explanation, are a staple of comics and, by extension, of superhero role-playing games. Deathtraps are, of course, those ingenious devices used by villains and villainous agencies to rid



themselves of those perennial thorns in the side, heroes and superheroes. Villains look upon this not as murder but as pest control. Heroes, of course, are not likely to use deathtraps; instead, they send their captured foes to prisons, which are usually every bit as ineffective.

What Deathtraps Are For

The importance of deathtraps should not be underrated. A lively and innovative deathtrap can add much drama — or, as in the above example, humor — to the

game. Even predictable deathtraps such as crushing walls can force the hero to think fast on his or her feet. The best deathtraps, naturally, are original, nasty, and challenging without being overpowering or lethal.

"Not lethal?" my Vulcan sidekick exclaims at this. "Why then call them deathtraps? And would not a villain design such a trap to be lethal, if all that you have said above is true?" Well, yes, but hero adventures are above all considerations of logic, after all. The villain might well intend a deathtrap to be lethal, but the gamemaster should not; it's not very dramatic to have one's character die in a deathtrap, and certainly a far cry from heroic. Villains too defy conventional logic and there are all sorts of reasons their traps might prove less than deadly to the superhero.

Sometimes the villain is more interested in testing the hero's resourcefulness and powers than in dealing out death, particularly when facing new adversaries. Often heroes will have skills and powers that the villain was simply unaware of or overconfidently forgot. Some villains are, oddly enough, fair-minded, and will always leave the thinking character a way out.

The chief reason for most deathtrap failures, though, is that the villain or agency underestimates the hero. Overconfidence seems to beset the most intelligent supervillains the worst. Villain agencies are likely to have deathtraps fatal only to normal agents, whom they must deal with frequently, and not to heroes or supermen.

The upshot of this is that an avenue of escape should always exist for at least one of the players, who should then have the time and opportunity to free the rest. It is generally best, though, if each hero

can be responsible for his or her own "rescue." Coincidence can play a large part in these escapes, almost as often as villain overconfidence: The power goes out just before the crushing walls can finish their dirty work, the hero suddenly manifests a new power due to the stress, and so on. Naturally, deathtraps will get tougher as players get tougher, but there should still be an "out" in every situation. (Players will often think up escape plans which the GM hadn't planned on but which will work. When this happens, go with it — and consider giving an extra experience point at adventure's end if the solution was especially creative. Good playing and creativity should be rewarded.)

A point to bear in mind is that real life isn't easily analyzed in game terms. In other words, Doctor Sinister knows only that Bruto the Killer Wombat is supernaturally strong, not that he packs a 21D Haymaker and can break through 5 Def, 5 BODY straps with ease. The sinister one has to learn what Bruto can and cannot do only through hard experience, testing, and observation. Even at that, old and well-known nemeses can suddenly come up with new powers or applications of them that can thwart deathtraps — and some memorable play sessions can be built around this fact. Of course, the villain gets to add experience points to his totals, too...

Heroes in Deathtraps

Intelligent as it may seem, villains will never put an unconscious hero through the rigors of a deathtrap. From the villain's perspective, all the fun is in watching the hero sweat, especially when the hero is a royal nuisance. Greedo Goodlox wants Rollo the Kung-Fu Clown to see that sawblade as he rolls

toward it. In other words, villains like mental abuse more than physical.

On the other hand, a villain is also not likely to sit by and let the hero gain back his full END and STUN, let alone BODY, either. Only the most chivalrous and fair-minded villain would do such a thing, and the sadistic types far outnumber these. Heroes who wind up in deathtraps will usually just be recovering from their last (unsuccessful) battle when the deathtrap is sprung, and so they will be considerably weaker than normal. Here's how I recommend handling a hero's "waking up":

Start each hero off with 0 END and STUN and allow him two Recoveries before starting him off on his first active phase in a new TURN (alternatively, you can allow him one Recovery before starting him off at Phase 12; he'll get another Recovery immediately). In superhero and superspy deathtraps, the villain will usually be monitoring the hero and initiate the deathtrap when the hero begins to stir.

Typically, other business will then call the villain away so that he or she will not be able to monitor the hero's "death." But surely, thinks the villain, the idiotic do-gooder will meet his end this time. Therefore, the bad guys won't be very alert when the escaped heroes show up to settle the grudge.

Types of Deathtraps

The best deathtraps, of course, are those the character must think a way out of. Don't, however, expect the player to think as fast as his character should in life-or-death circumstances ("You have ten seconds to figure something out — go!"). Give the player some time to think and assess the situation, and answer any questions the character could glean the

answer to by observation. Don't allow the player hours, but you shouldn't restrict him to mere moments either. When you've put a character in a deathtrap where he really does have to think his way out, you should allow his player several minutes worth of thinking time; this will also allow you to attend to other players, as well.

Some characters, like Bruto, like to think with their fists. As long as smashing a way out is in character, it shouldn't be penalized. But unless the character is a low-to-average Intelligence brick or fighter-type, the player should be expected to do some thinking instead. Most characters are likely to be badly wounded if they try to bull their way out of the average deathtrap. Of course, each situation has to be created and judged individually by the GM.

Deathtraps should be innovative. The old standbys such as sawblades and spiked pits will do in a pinch, but remember: It's hard to be bored and still work up much fear. One of the best ways to improve deathtraps, fortunately, is to give the old standbys new twists. Perhaps a DNPC is also threatened by the crushing walls, or perhaps the sawblade is mounted in the ceiling, slowly cutting through a rope that holds a heavy weight suspended above our helplessly shackled hero. Still too mundane, you say? Not if the bottom of that weight is heated red-hot, or (heh, heh, heh) coated with the hero's Susceptibility-causing substance. A good GM can manufacture any number of interesting twists on familiar deathtraps.

Sources for Deathtraps

If you have a hard time creating original deathtraps, don't forget that there is plenty of source material to fall back on.

Deathtraps abound in movies, hero-cartoons, and superhero comics. In your campaign, it's not necessary for deathtraps to be completely original; it's all right to borrow so long as the deathtrap is new to the players. It's better to borrow a deathtrap not widely known among the players, though. The deathtraps in the James Bond movies, for instance, are usually quite intriguing but much too likely to be known. Of course, it's good if you can come up with something totally original — it's just difficult for many of us.

Game-Mastering Deathtraps

GMs, when playing out deathtraps, do yourselves a favor and resist the temptation to pun. For instance, as the heroes are facing the descent into vats of boiling wax, do not say such things as "It's a hot one!" or "This'll really burn you up!" In combination with mortal peril, these lines will not usually be found amusing by your players and will only put most of them (understandably) in a bad mood. (If the villain who created the deathtrap is an inveterate punster, it may be permissible, but don't give the players the feeling that it's you who are sadistically kicking them when they're down.)

One more caveat: Deathtraps, like trained animals, work best when they're hungry. Once a campaign's deathtraps have tasted blood, they want more. In other words, once a character has died in a deathtrap, the next deathtrap won't cause much fear in the characters unless it, too, kills. Gradually, you'll find that your deathtraps want more and more lives, particularly in campaigns in which killing is standard fare. Don't forget that deathtraps are made to cause the hero to sweat, and think, and worry, but they're no place for a hero truly to die. Each hero

is — or is supposed to be — one of a kind and irreplaceable. So, incidentally, are deathtraps.

Sample Deathtraps

For those GMs who don't mind taking ideas from other sources, here are a few more deathtraps, some original and some derived from generic deathtraps common to the comics, movies, and pulps. Some of these are intended for humorous effect, others for dramatic, but all can give the hero a painful experience.

Fantasy Hero Deathtraps

Fantasy Hero deathtraps tend to be huge, permanent installations or devices, or (at the other end of ingenuity) improvised traps and tricks. The permanent sorts of FH deathtraps include things such as: Old ruins with brilliantly-engineered traps (pitfalls dropping heroes to sliding passages leading to underground rivers, spike-pits, or small cages filled with the skeletons of the previous tomb-robbers who never got out). The favorite means of death and disposal belonging to some tyrant or wealthy lunatic (a torture chamber with a razor-sharp pendulum, a trapdoor into a dank pool occupied by some voracious monster, chains lowering our heroes headfirst into the grisly pit from which no one has ever emerged alive); A labyrinth serving the same purposes, filled (by our tyrant or lunatic) with clever crossbow traps, monster encounters, falling walls, poison needles, drugged water); and A classical favorite, the Lady and the Tiger. The villain presents the hero with two doors, one of which, he promises, leads to the hero's goal, the other to certain death. (Nastier villains stack the odds by having all the doors conceal awful surprises, and lying about the "good stuff.")

Improvised deathtraps are just as much fun for our heroes, of course. When the villains divert a stampede of cattle or carnivorous rabbits or dinosaurs through their camp, the heroes are facing a deathtrap; when the villains lever the big rocks up on the cliff to cause a landslide, the heroes are facing a deathtrap. In these cases, the heroes' agility can be the key to surviving (dodging or riding the herdbeasts, ducking the rockfall); just as often, their brains may get them out (creating a quick firebreak to divert the animals, finding shelter under the largest of the boulders to wait out the rockslide).

Justice, Inc. Deathtraps

In the right parts of the world, your JI heroes can suffer all the types of deathtraps listed above for Fantasy Hero. In addition, you have all the deathtraps that 1930s civilization and criminals can offer, plus all the deathtraps that can be

created from the ahead-of-the-times science of mad scientists and inventors. First, look at the more mundane traps created by the heroes' enemies in organized crime: the heroes step into the elevator, and it immediately begins a 2-story plummet; The hero is knocked cold, his hands tied and hung across a hook hanging from the middle of an abandoned garage; once the gang-leader has a few minutes to sneer at the hero, he leaves and the garage is set on fire; The hero has only minutes to defuse the bomb which has been welded to the frame of the hydrogen-filled Nazi zeppelin; The heroes are left tied in the prospector's shack while, up the valley, the dam is blown and a mighty wave of water bears down on the shack; the heroes, bound and gagged, are placed on a roller-coaster car; near the end of the ride, the rails have been torn up so that the car will leap the tracks and crash into the stand where the Governor will be speaking.

These traps, no challenge to a superhero, are terribly dangerous to the pulp hero, true tests of his intellectual and physical mettle. And then we get to the science-fiction sorts of deathtraps: Being strapped to tables as death-rays inch inexorably toward the heroes' bodies; chained in the pit awaiting the arrival of the hideously mutated flesh-eating monsters, and so on. To create pulp-type science-fiction deathtraps, you can conceive of any deathtrap suited to a modern hero, and then substitute pulp-era trappings. Where the modern deathtrap uses lasers, employ mystery death-rays. Where the modern deathtrap uses sophisticated electronics, the pulp-era trap uses huge, ungainly (but still lethally functional) electrical apparatus (heavy on the vacuum tubes).



Danger International Deathtraps

Modern-era DI deathtraps can include everything listed for the two previous games, and can then range into the field of near-future science. Use murderous robots, particle beam traps, sophisticated time-bombs, minefields, wire-guided killer dogs and tigers, etc. In Super-Agents campaigns, you can make the stretch to Champions-type traps, described below.

Champions Deathtraps

Finally, with Champions deathtraps you have the advantages and disadvantages of:

(a) superpowers which allow the heroes to do all sorts of new things, and

(b) technology which can similarly do anything without eliciting a squawk of protest from your players. Somewhere, somehow, there's a factory which is churning out unlikely and impossible devices which are just dandy for testing your heroes. Some sample Champions-style deathtraps include:

Deadly Flying Nunchaku: This trap is a set of nunchaku, giant-sized, attached to a rotating head that spins at great speed so that the nunchuks hit with tremendous force. It can only be destroyed by smashing the chain (a mere 3 Def, 3 BODY), but just try to reach it. This trap isn't used on heroes with energy projection powers or telekinesis, naturally. Recommended damage is around 6D6 physical, or 2D6 killing; this trap should be painful but not fatal.

The Gas-Filled Balloon: This is a giant balloon in the shape of the hero's worst enemy, painted to look as realistic as possible, and kept in dim light. It confronts the hero with a threat or insult (delivered by tape recorder). One punch or blast that connects with the balloon

bursts it, and gas floods into the immediate area (10" radius or more). The gas can be poison, knockout, laughing gas, or anything else the GM chooses.

The Glass House: The hero is put into a huge glass "jar" that has been sound-proofed and coated with a reflective substance that bounces back the hero's Energy Blast. The glass is only 1 Def and 1 BODY, but it is engineered to completely disintegrate into sharp fragments when broken. The amount of killing attack they do is up to the GM, but it should be sufficient to hurt the toughest brick—use Armor Piercing, Piercing, or any other advantage that will do the trick.

The "Et Tu?" Syndrome: The hero awakens to find himself strapped to a bulls-eye, about to be shot by one of his trusted teammates! Naturally, the teammate has been brainwashed, and the villain is nearby giving the orders. This is a comic-book classic.

The Chains That Bind: The hero is bound in super-flexible cuffs and chains made of some experimental plastic that cannot be broken by any amount of physical strength and will always snap back to its "original" shape. Thus, the hero will be unable to make any effective attacks when danger threatens, and the villain can work him over in complete safety. Every time the hero throws a punch, the plastic yanks his fist back before it can connect, possibly hurting the hero in the process. Optionally, the plastic may be immune to all forms of energy blasts. A clever combination of powers might make the plastic brittle so that the hero can break it; alternatively, heroes will have to escape this trap by overcoming or outwitting the villain and gaining the key.

The Deadly Giant Video/Pinball Game: The GM simply chooses his fa-



vorite video or pinball game and has the villains put the hero(es) through a deadly, giant version of it. This requires a mechanically-inclined villain, or at least hired technicians.

Combat in the Arena: This can take many forms, and needs no real explanation. The exact nature of the conflict is up to the GM. Perhaps half the team has been Mind-Controlled and must fight the other half. Or perhaps the heroes must face, individually or collectively, a frightfully-powerful monster. The basic scenario is standard and much-used, but the variety of situations that can be used is limited only by the GM's imagination. I hope these ideas and suggestions have helped... and, don't forget, there's always that giant mechanized boot.

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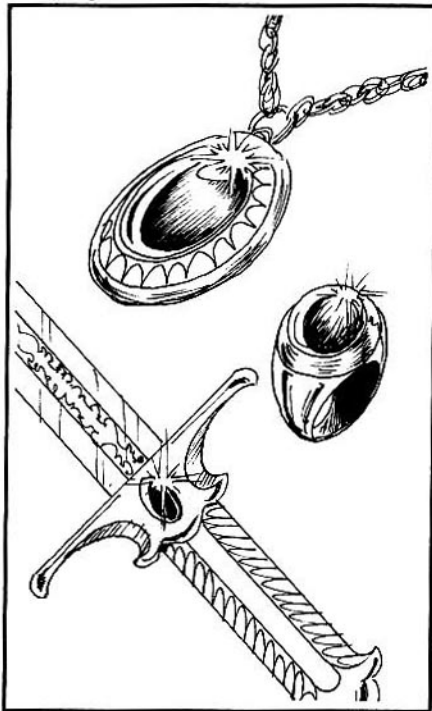
"Treasure Chest" is a potpourri column of Fantasy Hero rules, spells, treasures, monsters, skills, and advice.

Manastones

by Tim W. Brown

Manastones are small gems or semiprecious stones enchanted to act as an Endurance reservoir for magicians. Experienced magicians may have a number of these items, to allow them to cast more powerful spells without the need for assistants with Aid spells; this is especially important when on an adventure or when expecting a battle. Manastones are often set in jewelry, sword hilts, and similar items, which helps the owner keep track of them and makes them less likely to be lost. When drawing the energy from these stones, the mage must touch them.

Manastones are fairly easy to make and are thus a much more common magic item than more sophisticated enchanted objects. (They're still uncommon compared to ordinary treasures.) Even a single stone, however, can double the amount of energy available to a magician, so GMs should take care when introducing them into a campaign!



MANASTONES

Effect: Aid (8D6 END). END: 4. Base Cost: 20.

Advantages: None. Active Cost: 20 (2 to Magic Roll to cast).

Limitations: END Reserve, recharge 1 END/3 Hours (+1); Gestures (+1/2); Independent (+1); Materials (+2 1/4); preparation one day and Gemcutter Skill Roll, inobvious, difficult to find, accessible. Total Bonus: +4 3/4.

Real Cost: 4.

CREATE MANASTONE

Effect: Create. END: 5. Base Cost: 5 (minimum for Create).

Advantages: None. Active Cost: 5.

General Modifiers: None. Modified Cost: 5.

Limitations: Extra END x5 (+2 1/2); Extra Time: One Day (+3); Gestures (+1/2); Incantation (+1/2). Total Bonus: +6 1/2.

Real Cost: 1.



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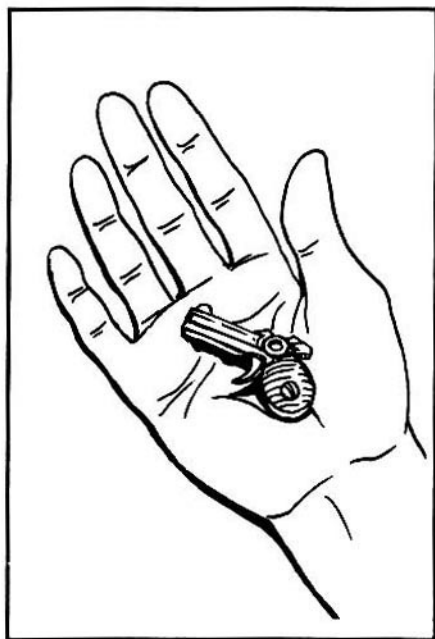
EXOTIC WEAPONS FOR JUSTICE INC.

by Greg Porter

In any game, some players are always looking for an edge, a way to give their characters that added punch when necessary. In Justice, Inc. this takes many forms: Some characters just go for the best overall weapon in the game. Others dig up such oddities as autofire .45s and Mausers, artillery Lugers with stock and snail clips, and other well known developments.

However, when using the Gadget rules, some characters may find their ambitions frustrated by a GM who says that what they want is not possible given the sophistication of the period.

One usually doesn't think of the '20s and '30s as a high tech era. Well, it wasn't. But it wasn't an era of savages with clubs, either. People were just as capable of ingenuity and subtlety of design as they are now. After doing a bit of research, I was surprised at some of the weapons actually designed in and before that period.



Miniature Guns

The Kolibri auto mentioned in the rules is called by some a miniature pistol, but it is huge compared to some of the functioning weapons made by craftsmen. A working pair of pistols exists that uses a plum pit as the case for both of them. Each of them is a bit less than a centimeter long.

That is a bit extreme, but effective firearms can be made smaller than a house key. But what do you do with one of these tiny terrors?

If you're using the Optional Effects of Damage, remember that if a character takes any BODY, he needs to make an EGO roll to be able to make any offensive action on the next phase. If the character shoots his opponent with this low damage weapon and the fellow botches his EGO roll, the tide of battle will have just turned.

More realistically, the gun could be used to startle people, to enhance presence attacks (+1d6 to PRE attacks for violent actions), to hurt and distract people, etc. It's a nuisance weapon that could come in very handy. A typical example of one of these guns is:

| Caliber | OCV | Rng Mod | Damage | STN Mod | STR Min | Shots | SIZ |
|---------|-----|---------|--------|---------|---------|-------|-----|
| .12 | 0 | 2/1" | 1 pip | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Using the Gadget rules, this would cost 2 points, with 1 extra point paying for 60 shots. A gun this size could be carried as a key fob or cufflinks. It is small enough to be concealed under the tongue, and I suppose you could clamp it between your teeth and fire it, though I wouldn't do that to my teeth.

Multi Barrel Revolvers

These aren't too common in the Justice, Inc. period. The heyday for these weapons was in the late 1800s. In theory they are simple. A larger than normal cylinder held staggered rows of shells. One row fired through the upper barrel, the other row through the lower. The shells could be of the same caliber, giving a large capacity, or different calibers, for different damages. Examples of 18 shot revolvers in small calibers were not uncommon. A smaller revolver could be made by using a near standard sized cylinder, and firing only one shot through the secondary barrel. This single shot was usually in a large caliber or small shotgun shell. Many variants are possible, including some designed to fire two rounds at once.

The following example is designed to fire six small shells and one large one, for when you really need to put the target down.

| Caliber | OCV | Rng Mod | Damage | STN Mod | STR Min | Shots | SIZ |
|---------|-----|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|-----|
| .22 | +1 | 1/3" | 1d6-1 | 0 | 7 | 6 | 4 |
| .41 | +1 | 1/3" | 1 1/2d6 | 0 | 12 | 1 | " |

You buy this under the Gadget rules by making it as two gadgets in the same focus. The .22 costs 4 points and is SIZ 1; the .41 costs 8 points and is SIZ 3; they add up to SIZ 4. Each has Activation Roll of 14 (the extra complexity tended to take a toll on reliability). Doing this, the gadget costs 12 points. Ammo cost varies on the type used: .22 ammo is one point for 30 shots, and .41 ammo is one point for 12 shots. The GM may rule that this gadget was sufficiently widespread that the character does not have to pay points for it... he just has to find one of them.

Combination Guns

These are guns that were added to other devices, usually hand to hand weapons. The most common weapon was a revolver and brass knuckle combination, or brass knuckles and a dagger.

A useful version to buy is this: +2d6 normal damage in HtH attacks, a 1/2d6 hand to hand killing attack, and a 1/2d6 ranged killing attack. Each of these has an active cost

of 10 points. It is bought as two Size 0 gadgets attached to a Size 1 gadget (Total SIZ: 1). Total cost is 21 points; 30 rounds of ammunition costs 1 point. The weapon's stats are below.

| Caliber | OCV | RngMod | Damage | STNMod | STRMin | Shots | SIZ |
|---------|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-----|
| .22 | 0 | 1/1" | 1/2d6 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 1 |

| | STR Min | Damage | OCV/DCV | STN | Def/BOD | SIZ |
|----------------|---------|--------|---------|-----|---------|-----|
| Small Knife | 4 | 1/2d6K | 0/0 | 0 | 4/1 | 1 |
| Brass Knuckles | 4 | +2d6N | 0/0 | — | 4/1 | 1 |



Cane Guns

These are fairly common. Usually looking like a normal cane, they either fired a pistol cartridge or a small shot-shell out the bottom. Other examples have small caliber revolvers built into the handle. To use, the handle would be pulled free, exposing a trigger.

Also of interest are air canes, using compressed air to propel a lead ball or small shot charge. These were last made around 1914, though they were available in catalogues until about 1920. Most of these will be like the example given, though some monsters were made that shot a ball of at least 1 1/2d6K, possibly up to 2d6K. If you are skeptical, I quote about one with a .75 inch bore that fired a one and one half ounce projectile. The

cane in question was tested indoors by shooting it at a cast iron fireplace. "The cast iron fireplace was shattered and the walls peppered with fragments of lead. The blast of air had stripped the wallpaper from a large area of the wall, and had blown off the mantleshelf all my bottles and jars." Sounds like 2d6K to me.

The weapons were always single shot, but the air reservoir held enough air for 20 or so shots. The canes usually broke into two pieces for easier storage.

These canes were sold with various attachments that adventurers might find handy, like stocks for long range use, and fishing spears. Another use might be for drugged darts.

The normal (1d6K) canes were fairly quiet when fired, giving only a +1 to Perception rolls to notice the sound. The example below is typical. It costs 10 points, with 20 extra shots per character point.

| Caliber | OCV | RngMod | Damage | STNMod | STRMin | Shots | SIZ |
|---------|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-----|
| .40 | 0 | 1/4" | 1d6K | 0 | 9 | 1 | 7 |

Concealed Guns

Concealed guns have been around as long as there have been guns. They seem to be popular with characters, as they can sometimes be searched for weapons without any being found. Things that guns have already been concealed in include whips, billy clubs, pens, smoking pipes, bicycle handlebars, canes, umbrellas, cigarette cases, purses, shoes, lighters, watches, penknives, and wrenches. There is also the Nazi belt buckle pistol. It held four .32 ACP shells and may be a unique item. The only example known is serial number 1, and it is not known if any others were produced.

Stats for a typical concealed gun, including the belt buckle mentioned, are below. This weapon costs 7 points, and 1 point will get you 25 shots.

| Caliber | OCV | Rng Mod | Damage | STN Mod | STR Min | Shots | SIZ |
|---------|-----|---------|--------|---------|---------|-------|-----|
| .32 | 0 | 1/1" | 1d6-1 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 2 |

Other Weapons

You can see that a lot of other special weapons can be made. Remember this is the pulp era. Anything is possible. Just keep it reasonable.



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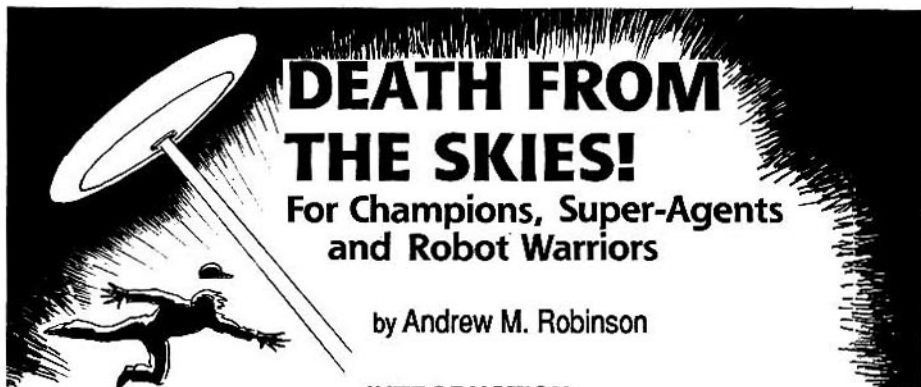
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DEATH FROM THE SKIES!

For Champions, Super-Agents
and Robot Warriors

by Andrew M. Robinson

INTRODUCTION

Upon reading the SuperAgents book by Aaron Allston, I noticed his comment that the presentation of the Near Space Defense agency was in too abbreviated a form to allow immediate campaign play. When I looked the agency over, it seems the only things missing were the alien foes, represented in the book only by their insidious flying saucers. It seemed that an opportunity had presented itself, so the following article presents the background, motives and resources of an alien race, the Vandries, which can be thrown against the Near Space Defense agency or your Champions heroes, or your world-defending Robot Warriors characters. So keep your eyes to the heavens... 'cause something's out there.

THE VANDRIES

The Vandries are an ancient, dwindling humanoid race. Though extremely longlived (thanks to their lifesustaining technology), the Vandries have long been unable to add to their numbers in a normal fashion. Millenia of inbreeding have resulted in a degenerative evolution that results in nearly 100% of all Vandries children being horribly deformed and retarded. The only method of reproduction available to the Vandries is cloning; however, this process is itself growing less and less successful as the race goes through generations of clones, so the Vandries continue to decline.

Most Vandries are not concerned about this, however. The Vandries are for the most part a self-indulgent, narrow-minded lot, thinking only of their own pleasures. Most of the race consists of the partially successful results of the cloning process, the "drones."



drones are physically healthy (by Vandries standards) but lack initiative and motivation; they are quite content to carry out the orders of the "Elite," or True Vandries, the successful clones.

Each Elite lives life as a lord, with many drones to serve and support him. Most have unlimited access to the technology and resources left by their ancestors; many rule supreme within their private domains and estates. As a sign of their rank, they take the title of "Va," or High Lord.

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE EARTH

One Vandrie is determined to resurrect the past glories of his people: Va'dor, self-proclaimed Keeper of the Flame and Marchwarden of the Starways, possesses that rarest Vandrie trait, ambition. But before he can achieve his goals he knows that he and his few supporters must first revitalize the Vandries race.

To do this, Va'dor's drones have begun secret visits to the only planet where he believes he can obtain genetic material close to compatible with that of his race the Earth, of course. With captured humans, brought back to his forward base on Mars, Va'dor began a twofold series of experiments. One series was to "infuse" human DNA chromoplasmic material into living Vandries to give them additional vigor and health; the second was to cross Vandries and human genes in order to vastly increase the success rate of Vandries' cloning.

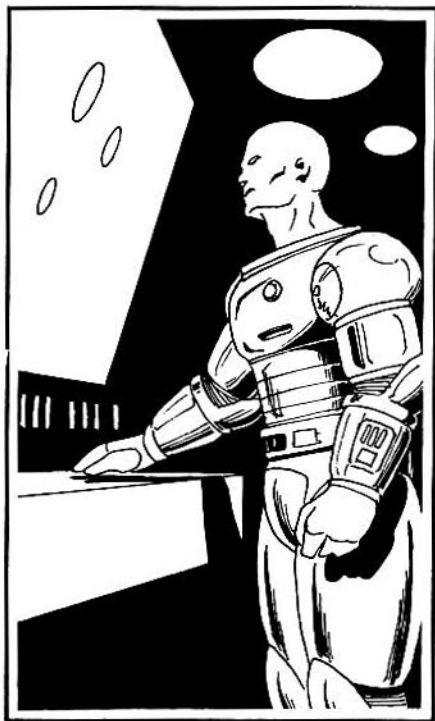
Both lines of experimentation are relatively wasteful of the human resources brought back to the Marsbase. Thus, Va'dor is forced to dispatch his drones repeatedly to the Earth in order to ensure a continuing supply of subjects (at least one flight a month, for one or two subjects at a time).

MARSBASE

The decision to set up a forward base on Mars was an easy one for Va'dor. The vast, dry deserts and the endless, cold desolation remind him of his own ancient, depleted planet. A suitable mountain on the edge of one of the worldplains was selected, an encoded growth crystal embedded into its heart, and within the space of a few Martian days Marsbase was ready for occupation. To equip the base and supply the expeditions to Earth, Va'dor installed one of his few autofactories on Marsbase. These self-directed, entirely self-contained machines can immediately produce a vast number of Vandries devices, requiring nothing but the minerals beneath Marsbase. Large items such as the Vandries' fighting vehicles require much more time... as long as a terrestrial month.

EARTH'S DEFENDERS

Lately, Va'dor's ships have been meeting resistance. Several missions have been turned back or even destroyed. At first Va'dor believed the entire planet to be involved in the resistance. As a result, he started research into various ways of breaking down the Earth's current technological base so that there would be no more trouble. The methods usually involved mass destruction and loss of life on a planetary scale. Some methods involved turning Earthly technology back on itself, such as the attempt to convert Earth's power transmission lines into giant, lethal microwave radiators. Other methods involved exploiting a convenient quirk of nature, such as spraying a heat-absorbent film on Antarctica to melt to the ice and flood most of the Earth's major population centers.



After several failures, investigation showed that most of the resistance to Va'dor's plans came from a very small part of the Earth's population: The player characters, whether they be superheroes, super-agents, or robot pilots. The concept of a duel is something that Va'dor can understand, private conflict between lords and their drones being the only allowable form of warfare among the Vandries for untold thousands of years.

Thus Va'dor began a series of attacks against the small group of defenders, to destroy them and remove an obstacle from the advancement of the Vandries. Since the defending Earthling group fights to protect the lesser, unorganized denizens of the Earth from Vandries assaults, continued attacks against these pawns is deemed as an appropriate weapon in the struggle against the Earth.

VANDRIE RESTRICTIONS

Va'dor's greatest dilemma is that, though (like all the Vandries) he has a thorough understanding of what the awesome Vandrie technology can do, and how to use it, he does not know how it works. Indeed, no Vandrie does. The old sciences had created "perfect" machines which never ran down and required no maintenance, so there was no need to preserve the knowledge to build new ones. To their credit, Va'dor and his colleagues are attempting to revive the concept of the scientist, but currently their results have been hit-and-miss.

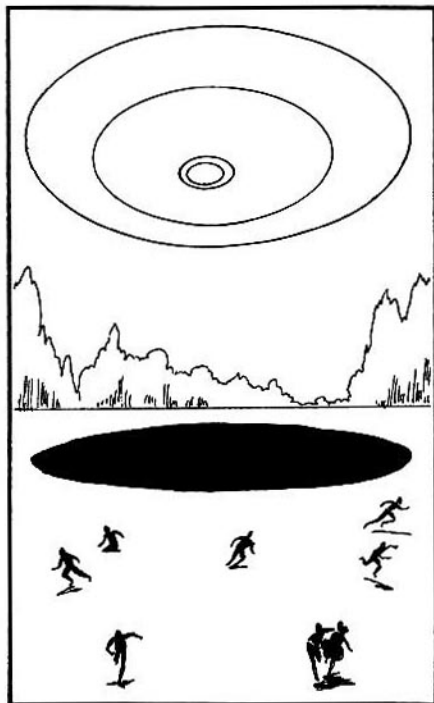
Worse, Va'dor can only use what is available to him. The ancients did not leave behind any weapons of mass destruction, nor plans for their construction. In his attempts to compensate, Va'dor has avoided some obvious methods of mass murder, preferring instead 'finesse' methods which require a minimal amount of resources and a maximum amount of ingenuity. Fortunately for humanity, Va'dor often ends up outwitting himself with his own cleverness, his plans consistently failing due to his underestimating (and sometimes overestimating) his opponents. And as each plan fails, Va'dor refuses to consider trying it again, always preferring something new and different.

The Earth's level of technology is pitifully low by Vandries standards, but clearly advancing. Given time, the Earth will advance to the point where the Vandries can make no progress against them. This fact is clear to Va'dor, but he cannot overcome a deep-rooted sense of contempt for the pathetic, swarming creatures of a primitive planet in order to take the threat seriously. Only those who have opposed him successfully have gained any respect from him, and even that is mixed with a large measure of condescension.

CAMPAIGNING "DEATH FROM THE SKIES!"

The following is a series of Vandries adventures; though they are best suited to a SuperAgents or Robot Warriors campaign, you can, by beefing up the Vandries and their equipment, make this a miniseries in any Champions game.

This is a series of connecting scenarios, starting with the Vandries' first attack against the



Earth; it can be continued up to and including the Battle for Mars, or even the assault on Homeworld, the Vandries' place of origin.

FIRST CONTACT

To start the campaign off, you can describe some interesting events going on now around the Earth: Flying saucers seen, mysterious disappearances, burn marks left in the earth, and so forth.

If yours is a SuperAgents or Robot Warriors campaign, you can start the characters off not knowing that there are aliens or anti-alien defenders at work... then the heroes blunder into a situation, such as the kidnapping of Earthlings by Vandries in the face of covert anti-alien resistance, which introduces the PCs to the cold, hard facts of life.

In a non-Champions campaign, too, you can increase the characters' emotional involvement by having one of the kidnap victims be related to a PC; not a DNPC, but a relative or friend who simply is never seen

again, taken away and used up by the Vandries.

After the initial encounters with the aliens, the player characters not yet allied with the defending agency can be recruited into it, go through difficult training, and in general gear up for their first real crack at the aliens.

DEATH FROM THE SKIES

The Vandries attack an oil research facility in western Texas. Their target is a device which builds up a resonance effect in large underground oil deposits, creating seismic shocks which search crews could use to rapidly locate new oil fields.

But the Vandries' science is capable of utilizing this device to build up energy levels in such oil fields to supercritical levels; enough energy to explode all major oil fields on a global level, for example. Or, it can simply be implanted over a fault line and be sure of causing massive earthquake damage. This would, of course, not only cause death and destruction on a scale never before seen, but also deal a crippling blow to the earth's economy from which it might never recover.

In the attack on the oilfield, use as many Starsaucers, Vandries drones and Warbots as needed to pull the job off. This is a combat-heavy scenario; give the heroes as many dogfights and air skirmishes as they can handle.

Regardless of how much havok they wreak on the Vandries, however, the heroes fail to prevent them from getting the device. If need be, the Vandries could have slipped a few drones into the plant to steal the device while the heroes battle the rest of them outside.

DOOMSDAY MACHINE

In "Doomsday Machine" missions, the Vandries or their operatives set up some infernal device in an out-of-the-way location, grabbing the locals and securing the area against intruders.

The seismic shock device mentioned above is one such object. So have them set up the device in some critical area such as the San Andreas Fault and activate it, then defend it as best they can. Since this is an underground base sort of adventure, not all the heroes' piloting skills can save them (or the millions of Californians waiting to slide into the water); this is an adventure for crack military (or superhero) penetration into an enemy base and then technological defusion of this seismic bomb.

But the Vandries like this particular approach, and are likely to try it again and again, with machines which sterilize grainfields the world over (causing mass starvation), dampen the IQs or human beings (causing massive temporary INT loss the world over), or even rewire the continental telephone network into a telepathic projection which drives phone users into a murderous frenzy. In the course of a Vandries campaign, the heroes will see this particular approach again and again.

KIDNAP MISSIONS

Several adventures can be worked around the theme of Vandries Kidnap Missions.

One kidnap mission could pick up a DNPC of one of the player characters, which could lead to a wild and wooly attempt to retrieve that saucer and rescue the DNPC before the kidnapers return to Marsbase... or even a rescue mission within Marsbase itself.

In another, the Vandries can kidnap a Very Important Person whom the aliens could brain-program and return to the Earth in order to cause major mischief. Such mischief can include a hostile investigation of the characters' team or agency, a plot to begin World War III, a plan to assassinate the President, or anything of the sort.

SUPER-CLONES

Va'dor can have had success with crossbred clones and created a superior drone, one which can live without lifesupport equipment and pass for human. The only drawback is that the drone's life expectancy is only about five years. But such drones can be used to impersonate or replace key Earth personnel.

If the characters belong to an agency, for instance, a key officer of the agency could be replaced, in order to sabotage the characters' machines or just keep them trapped within the HQ while the attacking Vandries pound the facility to pieces.

THE DIRECT APPROACH

Eventually, Va'dor will become frustrated with the player character team or agency and just send a flight of attack craft in to destroy them and their HQ. This is a good excuse for a pounding-match adventure, especially if you add some local color such as the attack occurring during a blinding rainstorm or snowstorm, forcing pilots on both sides to rely on their eyes more than their instruments.



WAR IN THE SKY

"People of Earth, Resistance is useless! I, Va'dor, High Lord of the Vandries Elite, lay claim to the Earth and all of its inhabitants. You will all serve me and the greater Vandries Empire! Unless your Lords one and all swear allegiance to me within ten Earth days, from my base on Mars I shall reach out my hand and destroy your primitive culture: You shall die amid the fire and brimstone of your own legends!"

This is the transmission received by the planet Earth assuming that the campaign war being waged is a public one, or you feel it's time for the rest of Earth to learn about it. Put the player characters in charge of a larger Earth defense force assigned to the protection of one particular city such as Washington, D.C., and then watch them squirm as they find that their fighting and thinking abilities will determine whether thousands of civilians live or die. A fleet of Vandries starsaucers will arrive ten days after Va'dor's message is broadcast, in order to take control of the Earth

in Va'dor's name regardless of whether the leaders of Earth surrendered or not. Without the player characters' help, of course, the saucers will be able to blow most anything mankind can send against them out of the sky; it will be up to the heroes to stop them, either in the air or on the land (as they drop troops in various of the world's major capital cities). The saucers will land in Washington, Moscow, London, Paris and Tokyo, adding a sense of worldwide desperation and unity to the characters' ongoing struggle.

THE BATTLE FOR MARS

Once the characters have discovered that their enemy's beachhead is on Mars, they will eventually wish to go there and finish Va'dor once and for all.

First, of course, they'll need to find transport to the Red Planet, either by travelling under their own power or by scrounging transportation in the way of captured starsaucers, personal spaceships or borrowed agency ships. Don't make it easy on them; a trip to another planet is not something to be taken lightly, even by a group of superheroes. Unless transportation is readily

at hand, make it hard, perhaps forcing them to leave a few people and certainly any extra equipment behind.

Once on Mars, the heroes must locate and invade the Vandries base. Perhaps this will be a desperate bombing mission against the heavily defended Marsbase; perhaps it will be a critically timed adventure in which a ground party must enter the mountain base and destroy its defenses before the main team of anti-Vandries fightercraft can arrive. Either way, it's bound to be a big, brawling fight to the finish. Or maybe not...

The loss of this base would delay the Vandries for months before they could mount another attack. Of course, such a move by the characters would arouse a towering rage in Va'dor, and they can be sure his next attack would be particularly nasty.

CONCLUDING THE CAMPAIGN

Eventually, the players are going to want to see some progress in the campaign. A war campaign should not go on forever; the players and their characters will become tired and depressed of an enemy which just can't be beaten, driven off or befriended. So you have to think in terms of how the characters are doing and how they can eventually end the campaign.

Remember that the threat to the Earth does not arise from an entire alien race but rather a power group within that race. So the player characters can put a stop to the bloodshed by persuading or destroying the faction of the Vandries responsible for the war.

Killing Va'dor will not do it. There are several other Elite Vandries who agreed with Va'dor's plans and are aiding him. And if Va'dor were to die, the other vandries such as Va'lin or Va'ray might not be so "restrained" as Va'dor was when it comes to throwing large asteroids into the Earth's path.

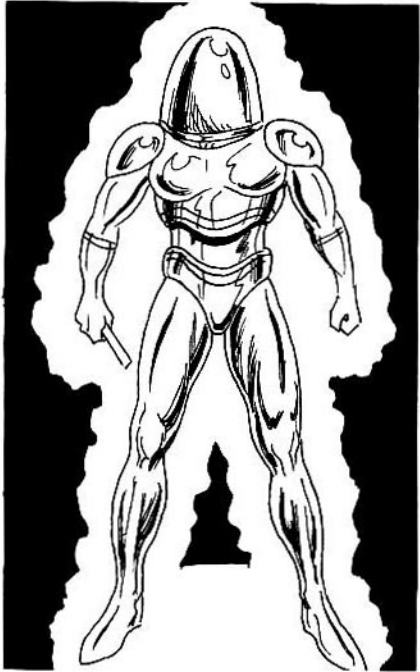
In either case, getting at this faction will eventually require that the characters travel to the Vandries Homeworld... itself a task worthy of a miniseries' worth of episodes. The heroes must first learn the technology to take them across the stars, then get onto Homeworld without being blown out of their boots, then learn enough about Vandries politics to understand who's been harrasing them and why... and then formulate a plan to do something about it.

Getting a hold of Va'dor and talking sense to him might be a way to end to war, if the characters can break past his insufferable contempt for lower lifeforms. If the characters can convince him that the Vandries would be better off cooperating with humanity rather than fighting with it, he might be willing to play along. Keep in mind, though, that if the Vandries' problems go away, Va'dor's next step will be to declare the new Vandries Empire... with Earth as its first likely annexation.

It could be that the end of the war could result from the fall of all Va'dor's faction in a final battle, or from negotiation, or from an allout battle to the death between Earth and the now-revitalized Vandries Homeworld. Whichever way you choose, you can make it an exciting set of conclusive episodes.

And afterwards, who knows? The heroes may have FTL technology and wish to explore this corner of the universe, perhaps running into more peculiar remnants of the science and society of the Vandries' ancestors.

VANDRIES AND THEIR EQUIPMENT

| Vandries Drones | | | | | |
|---|------|------|--|--------------------------------|------|
| VAL | CHA | Cost | Pts | Skills | Roll |
| 8 | STR | -2 | 2 | Familiarity, Vandries weapons | |
| 11 | DEX | 3 | 3 | Mechanics, Vandries technology | 11- |
| 13 | CON | 6 | 1 | English Language (Basic) | |
| 9 | BODY | -2 | 3 | Piloting (Vandries Saucer) | 11- |
| 9 | INT | -1 | 10 | Ultraviolet Vision | |
| 9 | EGO | -2 | 20 | Telepathy, 4d6 | |
| 9 | PRE | -1 | 8 | +1 skill level in combat | |
| 8 | COM | -1 | | | |
| 2 | PD | | | | |
| 3 | ED | | | | |
| 3 | SPD | 9 | | | |
| 2 | REC | -6 | | | |
| 26 | END | | | | |
| 20 | STUN | | | | |
| DISADVANTAGES:PTS. Takes 1d6 damage per phase, including BODY, no defense, if life-support bodysuit removed (all the time, fully) 13 Blind in lower visual wavelengths (reddish colors; infrequent, slight, x1/2) 1 Blind obedience to the will of the Elite Vandries (very common, total) 13 Little initiative or selfmotivation (very common, strong, x1/2) 4 Watched, large group (lord's army), full time (14) 10 Hunted, player characters (small group, special, 11) 9 | | |  | | |
| 3 (CHA Cost) + 47 (Skills Cost) =50 (Total Cost) =Disadvantages Total | | | | | |

Most Vandries encountered in the campaign will be these lesser or "drone" Vandries. For SuperAgents agency rank comparisons, all the drones belong in the lowest three ranks of their "agency," with the vast majority being in the lowest rank.

For those players not possessing Champions: Telepathy allows Vandries to communicate with one another and, theoretically, to read the minds of enemies within their line of sight.

To read someone's mind with Telepathy, the Vandrie must make an attack roll against the character, using a Combat Value based on his Ego rather than his Dexterity. There is no range mod for this attack.

If the attack is successful, the Vandrie rolls his number of dice in Telepathy. If the result is equal to or more than the victim's Intelligence, the Vandrie can read surface thoughts from the victim. If the result is equal to twice or more than the victim's Intelligence, the Vandrie can read hidden thoughts. If the result is equal to three times or more than the victim's Intelligence, the Vandrie can read details from the victim's memory. If the result is equal to four times or more than the victim's Intelligence, the Vandrie can read details from the victim's subconscious.

The power Ultraviolet Vision, also from Champions, allows the Vandrie to see at nighttime as easily as he does in daylight.

Vandries drones carry the following equipment:

Helmet & Visor: Highranged radio apparatus plus 5 points Flash Defense. SIZ 2, Cost 3.

Drone Bodysuit: Life support, provides atmosphere (in Champions, 10 points' worth of Life Support); Armor, +7 physical and +8 energy (activates 14, or covers locations 35, 6, 913, 1618). In SuperAgents, Purpose Concealed when not in use, Two Levels Miniaturization: SIZ 3, Cost 25. This is a full-coverage, tightfitting silvered bodysuit which contains the lifesupport equipment necessary for the drones' survival. The Armor is actually a force field unit, which creates a luminous projection field when the suit's wearer comes under attack.

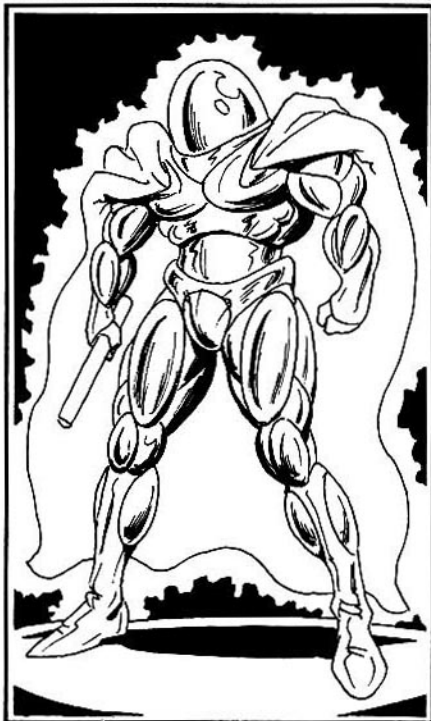
Blastwand: 8d6 Energy Blast, and 2d6 RKA ArmorPiercing (0 range), 16 charges, Two Levels of Miniaturization. Built as a Champions multipower with two slots. SIZ 4, Cost 37. This is a small, silver wand which is the standard hand weapon carried by the drones. The unit projects a destruction field of force which may be dialed from a shortranged blast of energy down to a narrow, footlong field of force which can be used in tight corners or spaceships where ricochets could pose a threat. All drones carry these at all times.

Champions Modifications: The above equipment was for SuperAgents and Robot Warriors campaigns. In Champions, try the following modifications:

Add Scrambler to Helmet & Visor radio.

On the Bodysuit, upgrade the Force Field to 11 Physical and 12 Energy, 0 END, still with a 14 activation, IIF.

On the Blastwand, make the Energy Blast armor piercing but with a range mod of 1/1"; make the RKA 3d6 armor piercing, still 0 range.



| Vandries Elites | | | | |
|-----------------|------|------|-----|--------------------------------------|
| VAL | CHA | Cost | Pts | Skills Roll |
| 15 | STR | 5 | 2 | Familiarity, Vandries weapons |
| 14 | DEX | 12 | 5 | Inventor 14- |
| 13 | CON | 6 | 4 | English Language (Native) |
| 7 | BODY | -6 | 3 | Piloting (Vandries Saucer) 11- |
| 23 | INT | 16 | 10 | Ultraviolet Vision |
| 18 | EGO | 16 | 30 | Telepathy, 6d6 |
| 13 | PRE | 3 | 16 | +2 skill level in combat |
| 6 | COM | -2 | | |
| 3 | PD | | | |
| 3 | ED | | | |
| 4 | SPD | 16 | | |
| 3 | REC | -6 | | |
| 26 | END | | | |
| 22 | STUN | | | |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>DISADVANTAGES: 100+ PTS. Takes 1d6 damage per phase, including BODY, no defense, if life support bodysuit removed (all the time, fully) 13 Blind in lower visual wavelengths (reddish colors; infrequent, slight, x1/2) 1 Blind contempt for lower life-forms (non-Vandries, non-star travellers) 11 Unwilling to cooperate with other Elites...3 Experience Spent (Villain Bonus) 3</p> | |
| <p>60 (CHA Cost) + 70 (Skills Cost) =130 (Total Cost) =Disadvantages Total</p> | |

These are the Elite of the Vandries race. In any scenario, they should be treated as very high-ranking officers of an agency, generally within the top three ranks.

All Elites have a good deal of personal equipment points to spend. The sheet above is the basic sheet upon which they are based; for any individual Elite, you may assign more equipment, more experience, more skills and different characteristics as you please.

Vandries elites carry the following equipment:

Helmet & Visor: Highranged radio apparatus plus 5 points Flash Defense. SIZ 2, Cost 3.

Elite Bodysuit: Life support, atmosphere and gas resistance (in Champions, 15 points' worth of Life Support); Armor, +11 physical and +12 energy (activates 14, or covers locations 35, 6, 913, 1618). In SuperAgents, Purpose Concealed when not in use, Three Levels Miniaturization: SIZ 6, Cost 45. This is a full-coverage, tightfitting gold bodysuit which contains the lifesupport equipment necessary for the elites' survival. Because the elites require more lifesupport equipment, these gold suits are much bulkier than the drones' silver suits. The Armor is actually a force field unit, which creates a luminous projection field when the suit's wearer comes under attack.

Command Scepter: 4d6 EGO Blast (to Telepaths only, use Ego Combat Value to attack) and 8d6 Energy Blast, 1 hex area, 16 charges, Three Levels of Miniaturization. Built as a Champions multipower with two slots. SIZ6, Cost60. This is a large, elaborately carved gold wand, the Elites' sidearm and symbol of rank. In combat, the user fires a small burst of plasma which blasts anything within a chosen target area. The unit also acts as a focus for the Elite's telepathic powers, allowing them to punish other Vandries by the force of their minds. (In SuperAgents and Robot Warriors, this power allows the Vandrie Elite to inflict damage on a telepathic opponent within line of sight, with no range modifier to the attack. The damage rolled on the attack is STUN only; no BODY is done.) No Elite would ever be without his Command Scepter.

Champions Modifications: The above equipment was for SuperAgents and Robot Warriors campaigns. In Champions, try the following modifications:

Add a scrambler to the Helmet & Visor.

In the bodysuit, upgrade the defense of the Force Field to 17 Physical and 18 Energy, 0 END, IIF.

With the Command Sceptre, change the attacks to an 8D6 Ego Blast and a 3D6 RKA, 1 hex area, armor-piercing on 14 or less.

The Vandries' Starsaucer

The Vandries' primary means of travel and attack in this campaign is the Starsaucer, a large, fast flying saucer attack vehicle. This is the classic flying saucer from decades of UFO investigations: Silver, fast, with alien handling characteristics and an alien crew.

Three versions of the Vandries' saucers are given here, one each for SuperAgents, Champions, and Robot Warriors. The different versions are necessary to provide a valid threat for each game. In SuperAgents, all the saucers need do is destroy aircraft and buildings, plus the odd thin-skinned Earth spaceship. In Champions, the saucers need to be able to damage superbeings capable of catching tank shells in their teeth (nearly). For Robot Warriors, the saucers must battle gigantic titans of steel, each armed to the teeth with awesome weapons and loaded with tons of armor.

Each saucer design also conforms to the particular vehicle rules for the game in question; the Robot Warriors design is actually a limbless, flying giant robot.

The SuperAgents Starsaucer: In a SuperAgents campaign, use the flying saucer listed as "Alien UFO" in the "Near Space Defense" section of the SuperAgents rulebook.

The Champions Starsaucer: In a Champions campaign, you again want to use the "Near Space Defense" UFO, but make some modifications to the design (and ignore resulting mass increases and other problems if they get in your way): Increase all armor to Defense 12; add 4 DCV to the saucer at all times, as an effect of its defensive deflection shields; add 2 to the pilot's OCV to reflect computer-assisted aiming equipment.

The Robot Warriors Starsaucer: For maximum devastation, you can use the Robot Warriors version of the saucer, which is given immediately below. (You can also use it in your Champions game if the starsaucer listed above isn't rugged enough for your campaign.) Don't forget to use the Robot Warriors rule which allows a giant robot to fire all of its weapons each phase! Run each weapon as a one hex area attack, save for the main laser battery. You can also make the last couple of modifications noted for the Champions saucer, above, if you want to run your heroes up against tougher pilots. With all these advantages, the Vandries will have a saucer the heroes will truly fear!

Vandries Starsaucer Robot Warriors Version

| Systems | Construction Points |
|--|----------------------------|
| Camouflage vs Radar (-8) | 8 |
| Damage Control, 11 | 11 |
| DEX: 14 | 12 |
| SPD: 4 | 16 |
| Find Weakness for Main Laser Battery, against stationary targets only (+2), 11- | 15 |
| Stabilizer: +3 to Dex Roll | 9 |
| Base Mass: 500 | 200 |
| +Additional: 140 | 14 |
| =Total Mass: 640 Mass Units (Size Class 4) | |
| Total Construction Points: | 285 |

| Hardware | Mass Units |
|--|-------------------|
| Chassis & Power Plant, Cap 1000, BODY 34 | 64 |
| Crew: 2 plus 4 passengers, including longterm life support for all | 18 |
| Armor, Base Defense: 19 -(Size Class) 4 =15 | 250 |
| Special effect: Force screens, carried through thin metal hull of saucer | |

Movement

| | |
|---|------------|
| Air/Space Movement: 20 hexes, not in intense EM fields (+1) | 40 |
| Non-combat move: 400 hexes/phase | |
| FTL (limited to 40 light years/day) | 1 |
| 2-way radio, all bands | 8 |
| 360 degree vision (computer assisted) | 16 |
| Telescopic vision, 1/100,000, not in intense EM fields (disrupts the focusing elements, +1), only in space (+2) | 64 |
| Radar, 1/100,000, same limitations as telescopic vision | 64 |
| Main Laser Battery: 6D6 Autofire (no burnout), activation 14, 1 segment delay, not in intense EM fields, 360 degree arc of fire, x4 range mod, only weapon which may be fired offensively, no knockback | 64 |
| Secondary Laser Battery: 4D6 Autofire (no burnout), 4 pts piercing, activate on 14, 360 degree arc of fire, not in intense EM fields, no knockback | 8 |
| Stasis Ray: 4D6 Nonobscuring Entanglement, not in intense EM fields, front arc only (180), Activation 14- | 8 |
| Excess Weight/Spares: | 35 |
| TOTAL MASS UNITS: | 640 |

Disadvantages

Base Construction Points:200

| | |
|---|----|
| Difficult to operate: Requires aiming maneuvers (Note: cruising in a straight line in space does not count as a maneuver & thus does not force an aiming maneuver roll) | 10 |
| No limbs: Fully limiting, affects all the time | 25 |
| Susceptible to being immersed in water: 3D6 + 15/phase, permanent effect..... | 30 |
| Watched by controlling Vandrie Elite (Va'dor), full time, vehicle may be destroyed at his will | 20 |

Total Construction Points285

The Vandries' Warbot

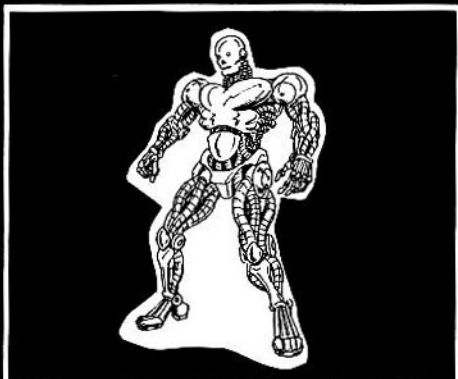
If, in your campaign, you need to give the alien invaders a bit more punch on the individual level, use the War Robot (Warbot). These dreaded assassination machines are always personally controlled by an Elite; they are often used to settle personal duels by the ruling class. Each of two opponents will compete mentally to control the mechanism, with the loser suffering a brutal death. The warbots represent the most dangerous infantry fighting machines in the aliens' extensive arsenals.

| VAL | CHA | Cost | Pts | Powers & Skills | End |
|-----|------|------|-----|---|-----|
| 45 | STR | 25 * | 28 | 2 levels Density, always on, 0 end | 0 |
| 18 | DEX | 24 | 20 | Armor (6 Physical, 6 Energy) (Total, including natural defenses and Density, is | |
| 30 | CON | 20 * | | Armor 12 Physical & 12 Energy, plus 6 PD | |
| 13 | BODY | 2 * | | and 4 ED) | 0 |
| 10 | INT | 0 | 10 | UV vision | 0 |
| 10 | EGO | 0 | 40 | 1D6 HKA (2D6 with strength), with 15 pts | |
| 20 | PRE | 10 | | of Resistant Piercing, OIF (force claws) | 6 |
| 10 | COM | 0 | 18 | SPD +4, IIF (internal power cells), [16 | |
| 6 | PD | 0 | | charges=2 turns], on 14 activation roll | 0 |
| 4 | ED | 0 | 30 | 30 pts life support | 0 |
| 4 | SPD | 12 | 5 | 5 pts Flash Def | 0 |
| 13 | REC | 0 | 40 | 5 skill levels with Combat | 0 |
| 40 | END | 0 | | | |
| 60 | STUN | 21 | | | |

Bonuses for Density Increase Already Added In

DISADVANTAGES: 100+PTS.

| | |
|---|-----|
| Blindly obedient to Vandrie Elite | 20 |
| Cares nothing for personal safety | 20 |
| Mute | 20 |
| 1D6 unluck | 5 |
| Hunted by enemies of Vandrie | 25 |
| 1D6 susceptibility (BODY) to physical killing attacks | 15 |
| Villain Bonus | 105 |



114 (CHA Cost) + 191 (Powers Cost) =305 (Total Cost) =Disadvantages Total

Warbots are large, silver constructs. They are vaguely humanoid, that is Vandroid, in appearance, and have slightly more bulk than a human, though they are considerably greater in mass.

The Warbots are brute force machines, and, if it's more convenient for you, consider them robots and don't assign them STUN damage. Then they must be destroyed by dealing them 13 points of BODY. points. Played this way, Warbots can be momentarily 'stunned' by doing them STUN which exceeds their combined defense and constitution totals, but they cannot be knocked out.

The machines, rugged as they are, are still susceptible to physical assault, the impact of which may jar the sensitive mechanisms protected within the outer metal shells.

MARSBASE

Marsbase has four levels, from Alpha level at the top to Delta level at the bottom. Secluded within the tip of a mountain, the exterior walls are tough to penetrate; once reached, they are Def 8, BODY 50 defenses.

All interior walls are softly glowing translucent crystal, and are exceedingly hard, though quite thin; they are Def 14, BODY 4.

Marsbase doors are made of a tough white metal compound, Def 8, BODY 8, and are opened by mental commands. A telepathic character needs only make an INT roll to discover how to command the doors to open; if no character has telepathy, a Security Systems or Electronics roll will locate the telepathic monitor's presence by the door, and a second roll upon the hidden mechanism will open the door. A character with Electronics skill could build a simple device (like a remote control) which would allow him to make a roll against his skill on each door in order to open it easily.

Two open grav chutes (antigravity elevator chutes), 3" (6 meters) across, run from Delta to Beta levels, with one continuing up to the Alpha level. Each chute has a small landing area and a typical door opening onto the different base levels. Anything within the chute moves one level per three segments. Control is by mental command; if the user is not a telepath, the direction travelled (up or down) is determined by random die roll. If a character enters at the highest or lowest level, travel is automatically toward the other end of the base. Entrance into Alpha level requires a mental code; this can be circumvented in the same way as the usual metal doors.

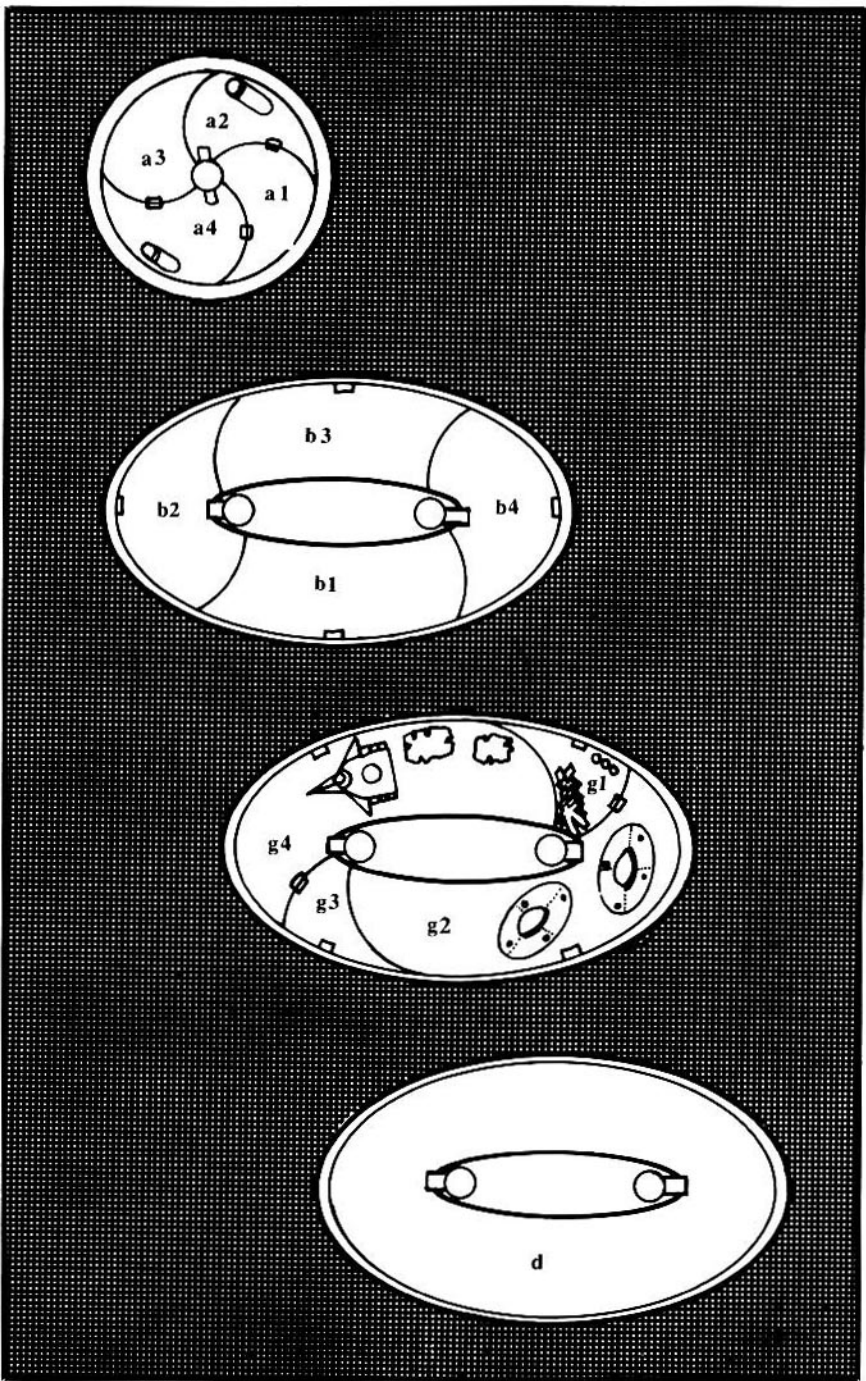
Running through the center of Beta through Delta levels is the solid state power core, which supplies all power to the base and the autofactory. The core is permanently sealed and cannot be entered. If penetrated, it will cease to function until it has repaired itself, at the rate of 1 BODY per Turn (to the observer, it just looks as though it heals and grows itself closed). If the core were to take in excess of 50 BODY, it would be permanently destroyed.

Alpha Level Map Key: Va'dor's Personal Level

(a1): Va'dor's Observation Room. From here, he can witness whatever may be going on anywhere in Marsbase or, for that matter, anywhere else he has ships or bases in the Earth or Vandrie solar systems. Va'dor only visits this room when missions are in progress.

(a2): Va'dor's Living Quarters.

(a3): Va'dor's Life Chamber. This is where he receives regular lifesustaining treatments (as do all Elites) from the servomechanisms within.



(a4): Guest Quarters. Used by Elites when visiting or working with Va'dor.

Beta Level Map Key: Drones' Area

This entire level is surrounded by an external corridor which gives access to every chamber.

(b1): Drones' Living Space. Here the drones reside when not performing their duties. Such nutritive pastes and substances as they consume are also dispensed here.

(b2): Storage Area. Here, the drones' supplies, tools, weapons and other gear is stored.

(b3): Drones' Life Chamber. This chamber is similar to the Elites', but is much less sophisticated, and set up to accommodate numerous drones at the same time.

(b4): Workshop. This is where the drones do what little hand directed assembly work that goes on within

Marsbase. A complete line of power "tools" are here, all of which are mentally directed and use energies invisible to the human eye.

Gamma Level: Main Storage, Hangar, and Work Areas

This level is also surrounded by an external corridor which opens onto every chamber on the level.

(g1): Equipment Room. Marssuits and other large, personal equipment is stored here. Just outside is a large door opening onto a concealed tunnel to the outside of the mountain. The door is 4" across (8 meters), Def 8, BODY 8.

(g2): Hangar Area. This is where the saucers are stored. There are usually at least two saucers present, plus the odd Mars sled (craft like the saucers, but having half the MAX, ACC, and Def of the saucers, with flight not over 5" above the Martian surface, no FTL). A very large metal door, 8" across (16 meters), opens directly into a large cave which in turn opens onto the surface. An area in the floor dilates open to allow materials from the autofactory up into the hangar.

(g3): Control Space. Drones monitor the near vicinity of the planet to watch for intruders. FTLsensitive devices also watch for the arrival of starships into the solar system. A weapons' board controls two large laser cannons (4D6 RKA autofire, limitless charges) at the mountain's summit. These weapons cannot bear on anything within 100" of Marsbase.

(g4): Main Storage Area. All the odds and ends accumulated from the depths of space, Earth and the homeworld are piled here. Such items as discarded matter transmutators, Sherman tanks, and meteors are scattered about in no particular order.

Delta Level: The Factory

This entire level is taken up by the solid-state autofactory, which is permanently sealed off, except for chambers designed to receive finished goods and allow the Vandries access to them. The autofactory, if damaged, will regenerate itself as would the power core, unless destroyed by 50 BODY or more. The grav lift opens into two small rooms from which material requests are input into the factory.

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Crisis at Crusader Citadel

This was one of the first V&V supplements. It is a fairly straightforward adventure, consisting mainly of two fight situations, with a whole lot of non-player character development thrown in for good measure. It contains 12 villains in one group, and six heroes, complete with an elaborate headquarters. Maps and illustrations are very good, easily above industry standards. The writing is clear and concise, and the characters are well-developed in their writeups. In general, the villains are the kind of old-fashioned crazies you love to hate. Their worldviews, while internally consistent, are nonetheless thoroughly warped.

Unfortunately, this supplement contains no conversion advice from V&V to the *Hero System*. Fortunately, the writeups are good enough that you can fake it despite that.

Assassin

This adventure was released later than *Crisis*, but it shows little of the flash and style of the earlier release. The plot has enough twists and turns to keep things moderately interesting, but the players are led around by the nose. Two fight scenes are included, but the villains (all 13 of them) are just ciphers, hardly worth fighting, and essentially indistinguishable.

An elaborate underground villain base is included. The final, two-page adventure seems to have been added at the last moment for no particular reason, and is altogether unexceptional. Maps and illustrations are fair, below industry standard. The writing is adequate, but the characters are poorly developed, and their motivations are weak. No conversion advice is included in this adventure.

Organized Crimes

This scenario is a more complex, convoluted adventure than the previous two, and the players and GM are allowed a measure of flexibility. Also, this adventure can very easily fit into an existing campaign without modification.

None of the characters are cardboard cutouts with interchangeable personalities. Not only are the NPCs well-defined individually, but they also have a very strong, believable web of relationships. This adventure comes with no less than six fight situations (of varying difficulty). Also included are a supervillain ship, a warehouse, and two supervillain bases (one of which is a guaranteed surprise!). Six supervillains and numerous unusual thugs are an added bonus.

Maps and illustrations are very good to excellent, better than in *Crisis*. The writing is again clear and concise, with and the villains, with their divergent goals and personalities, are some of the most interesting I've seen in a long time. Some of these villains, if their SPD and DEX were slightly reduced, would make excellent *Justice, Inc.* or *Danger International* villains, an added bonus. Unfortunately, this supplement also lacks conversion advice.

Honor

This is another convoluted adventure by Ken Cliffe, but this doesn't live up to the high standards of *Organized Crimes*. The villains and other NPCs are, with only two exceptions, uninspired and uninspiring. The adventure comes complete with two to five fight scenes (depending on how successful, and how curious, the heroes are).

The adventure includes one hotel suite, one obligatory supervillain base, and five supervillains. The art and maps are well below the low standards of *Assassin*. The writing is adequate; clear if not too concise; it covers the topic but is hardly inspiring. This adventure includes conversion advice.

Search for the Sensei

This supplement release is a confused adventure. It tries to be a complex scenario, but just doesn't work. Four supervillains and two superheroes are included, yet three more have counters but no character sheets. The maps are good to excellent, but the illustrations range from fair to pathetic. The writing is inadequate, often confusing, and rarely to the point. The adventure does include conversion advice, and some interesting background on the Japanese Yakuza.

Alone Into the Night

Not a single adventure, *Alone Into the Night* is actually three scenarios under a single cover, each designed to be run for a single player. All three adventures deserve a special mention for originality. The first two adventures could be run for *JI* or *DI* groups with a little alteration, and the final adventure could well provide a challenge for a whole group of superheroes.

All three adventures require some deduction on the players' behalf, and are better thought through than punched through. NPCs of all stripes are well thought out (corpses included), and interesting both as individuals and groups.

The package includes one wax museum, one corporate headquarters, and three bases (all for one supervillain!). Six supervillains come with this package, and one superhero(?).

The art and maps are excellent. Pat Zircher did a really fine job on this one. The writing is crisp and clear, and allows considerable flexibility. Unfortunately, this supplement contains no conversion advice.

Super Crooks & Criminals

This package is not an adventure at all; it is a supervillain compendium along the same lines as *Enemies*, only better. The villains (32 of 'em) are original, variable and tremendously useful. Most importantly, they are presented in a flexible format that allows the GM to adapt any or all of them, in whatever order or point in the criminal's career he wishes. Several of these villains could easily and plausibly be created in the midst of a superheroic adventure, and add their own brand of spice to what was just another run.

These villains aren't just ciphers built for a fight; they have solid backgrounds, lives to live when they aren't doing crimes, and enough personality quirks to keep them interesting for a long time. The motivations of the villains (several of whom are only marginally criminals) are varied enough that each can provide a different flavor to a run, from the innercity squalor of the Concrete Savages to the political crimes of FleurdeLys and Stuka to the incredible silliness of Wonder Boy and Garbage Man. Several of the villains could easily provide the basis for a run by themselves. The TerraRizer, in particular, struck my fancy let's face it, there aren't many writers who can successfully combine science fiction and sorcery, but in this case Mr. Cliffe pulls

it off with aplomb.

Additionally, the book includes two supervillain groups: One tightly knit, with almost irreplaceable members, and another that takes a "Villains' Association of the Day" approach to crime. Both work nicely, and there are plenty of opportunities for freelancers to join in on the fun, or even to form groups of their own.

The writing is crisp and clear, consistent and well-organized. The sharp and evocative art of Pat Zircher is a plus. My only complaint is that the supplement doesn't come with conversion advice for *Champions*, although the character writeups are so complete that writing your own is a cinch.

The Great Iridium Con

Last of this lot, *Iridium Con* is a fairly straightforward adventure complete with two rival villain groups and a superhero duo. The adventure contains two fight scenes, one hero headquarters, one villain hideout, and a hotel.

The villains are generally well-developed, and though the heroes are ciphers designed to be unconscious or injured through most of the game, their relationships with the villains are nicely defined. The villains' relationships with one another are also generally well thought-out, and they fall into the "villain you love to hate" category.

The art and maps are excellent, and the writing is easily up to par. This is a good, solid adventure, and a very original scenario. It comes complete with conversion advice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

My recommendation for *Crisis at Crusader Citadel*, *Organized Crimes*, *Alone Into the Night*, and *The Great Iridium Con* is this: If you don't have time to make something up, or if you're looking for something a little different from what you usually run, buy 'em. Buy *Iridium Con* first so you'll have those handy-dandy conversion charts.

As for *Super Crooks & Criminals*: Buy it! Unless you are that rare GM who never runs out of ideas for villains, and never comes up short with an idea for a full adventure, this book will be an invaluable resource. Besides, your players probably haven't looked at it; after all, it's for that other game.

Buy *Assassin* if you're really low on ideas and you already have everything else. Avoid *Honor* and *Sensei* like the plague unless you are desperate to have an adventure with an oriental flavor... but be warned: Both adventures take place in the US.

My final recommendation: FGU needs conversion advice in every book, not just some or, better yet, already converted characters.

ROBOT WARRIORS



CROOKS AND CRUSADERS

"Crooks and Crusaders" is a regular column featuring character designs. Heroes, villains, talented normals and monsters of all varieties from Hero System games will be printed. Readers are encouraged to contribute, but please don't send in every PC and NPC from your campaign to give us a lot to choose from: Send only the most interesting and successful characters you have so far encountered.

—AA

FOSTER O'LEARY

For J1, D1 and Champions

by

J. David George

Origin:

Born in New York (or whatever city is the focus of your campaign) just over fifty years ago, Foster O'Leary grew up as the son of a city beat cop.

Although his father never passed the rank of sergeant in the department, his dedication to justice and the war on crime made a considerable impression on young Foster. Determined to follow in his father's footsteps as a crimefighter, Foster joined the police force at the age of 21, and served faithfully for over a decade.

Then, only two years before his own mandatory retirement, the senior O'Leary arrested mobster Jocko Carciolli on charges of extortion, robbery, and bribery. In the course of his investigation of Carciolli, Sgt. O'Leary had uncovered evidence indicating that several members of O'Leary's own precinct were on the gangster's payroll. Four days before



Carciolli's trial was to begin, Sgt. O'Leary was gunned down, gangland style, while walking his regular beat. Without his testimony, Carciolli was acquitted, and the corruption which O'Leary had discovered remained unproved.

Although police reports attributed the slaying of Sgt. O'Leary to unidentified members of Carciolli's mob, Foster believes to this day that his father was eliminated by the cops he was about to implicate. Unable to continue working for the system that might have killed his father, Foster left the police force and began a career as a private investigator. He has been a private eye for nearly twenty years now.

| VAL | CHA | Cost | Pts | Skill | Roll |
|--|------|------|-----|-----------------------------------|------|
| 10 | STR | | 10 | Boxing | |
| 14 | DEX | 12 | 3 | +1 skill level, uppercut | |
| 13 | CON | 6 | 2 | Familiarity, firearms | |
| 10 | BODY | | 3 | +1 skill level, Colt .38 | |
| 13 | INT | 3 | 3 | Driving | 12- |
| 13 | EGO | 6 | 3 | Lockpicking | 12- |
| 15 | PRE | 5 | 5 | Stealth | 12- |
| 10 | COM | | 5 | Deduction | 12- |
| 6 | PD | 4 | 3 | Streetwise | 11- |
| 3 | ED | | 3 | Interrogation | 11- |
| 3 | SPD | 6 | 2 | KS: Campaign City | 11- |
| 5 | REC | | 2 | KS: Local Criminal Activity | 11- |
| 20 | END | | 2 | KS: Local Police Department | 11- |
| 30 | STUN | 8 | 10 | Danger Sense | |
| | | | 5 | 1d6 Luck | |
| DISADVANTAGES: 75+ PTS. | | | | | |
| Age: 50 3 | | | | | |
| Distinctive Looks: Shabby | | | | | |
| Detective 1 | | | | | |
| Monitored: Local PD | | | | | |
| (Med., full time) 6 | | | | | |
| Hunted: Local Crime Gang | | | | | |
| (Small, 11, agents) 9 | | | | | |
| Overconfident 11 | | | | | |
| Crusader, picks up "causes" | | | | | |
| (x1/2) 4 | | | | | |
| Male Chauvanist (x1/4) 2 | | | | | |
| 50 (CHA Cost) + 61 (Skill Cost) = 111 (Total Cost) = Disadvantages Total | | | | | |



Campaign Notes:

Today, Foster O'Leary has become the archetypal gumshoe, or at least he has tried to. He has the trench coat, the Colt Detective .38 revolver, and the seedy office with the venetian blinds. He has the knowledge of his city and the people in it. He also has an amazing talent for getting in over his head.

In the campaign, Foster will usually be found in the middle of a situation he can't handle. He may be pinned down in a gunfight between rival criminal mobs, or attempting to face down a supervillain. Completely ignorant of the limits of his own abilities, as well as his own mortality, Foster will charge right ahead in his never-ending struggle with the forces of evil. He should be played as a parody of the Sam Spade/Mike Hammer-style detective; though he does have some detective skills, Foster relies more on luck and the aid of his friends than on his skill and instinct. Still, he has several useful talents which the campaign's heroes may not possess themselves, so he will often prove himself useful.

Foster O'Leary is written here as a 75-point hero-level NPC for JI or DI campaigns. He can also be run in a Champions campaign though there you should assign him some Presence Defense. Regardless of the campaign, Foster's tendency to get in over his head and need "rescuing" makes him an excellent candidate for DNPC status in any campaign. Foster's investigations might well even lead to entire adventures, as he inadvertently stumbles across international espionage, mob operations, and the dastardly doings of supervillains.

Skills:

Most of Foster's skills are straightforward JI and DI skills, of obvious utility to a private eye. Where the rules for a specific skill differ between the two games, simply use the version given in the game you're playing.

In a Champions campaign, change Foster's Boxing skill to Martial Arts, with a level in Martial Punch. He has no Martial Kick. If Foster is played as a competent DNPC, reduce his point base from 75 to 50. Take away his Danger Sense, Luck, Deduction, and five points of STUN to make him balance.

Equipment:

The only equipment Foster regularly carries is his Colt Detective revolver and some extra rounds (two speedloaders in DI, twelve rounds in JI). In Champions terms, his revolver is a 1D6 RKA with a Range Mod of 1/2", six uses (shots) per load.

Weaknesses:

Foster is watched closely by both the police department and the Carciolli gang. Neither group knows how much Sgt. O'Leary told Foster about his investigation of Carciolli and his police connections. Carciolli will be only too happy to rub O'Leary out should the private detective's investigations get too close. The corrupt cops would love to come up with a charge to arrest Foster on, but they haven't got anything on him... yet.

Foster's only other significant weaknesses are in his head. Overconfident of his own abilities, he considers himself far more capable than any common thug or street cop, and at least as capable as a godfather or superbeing. Foster is also a bit overzealous, and most of his investigations become personal crusades for justice. He will often pursue an investigation far beyond a client's ability to pay, or even without a client at all. As a result, he is usually weeks or months behind in the rent on his two-room office.

Appearance:

Foster is an average-looking man in his early fifties. He is physically unimpressive, standing a little below average height and carrying a few extra pounds of beer around his middle. His hair is greying, and he dresses in a worn trench coat and hat, a rumpled

suit and a loosened tie. Foster was an amateur boxer in his youth, though, and while he tires quickly, he is still very tough, able to take physical damage as well as dish it out.

Like many of his contemporaries, Foster is a bit of a male chauvanist. He refers to women as "dames," and calls most of them "doll" to their faces. But his chauvanism is not all bad; it prompts him to acts of chivalry, as well as ordinary acts of courtesy such as holding doors for a lady or standing until she's seated. And Foster will never call any proper lady anything other than "Miss" or "Mrs."; the concept, in DI, of "Ms." is totally alien to him.

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GADGETS!

"Gadgets" is the column for gadgetry in the Hero System. We present gadgets and vehicles for Champions, Justice, Inc., Danger International, and Robot Warriors.

If you have a gadget or vehicle that you think is particularly useful, write it up and send it in. If you want to make a gadget for use with several Hero System games, you should include multiple sets of stats if the stats differ from game to game.

THE MAGNABOMB

For Champions and Danger International

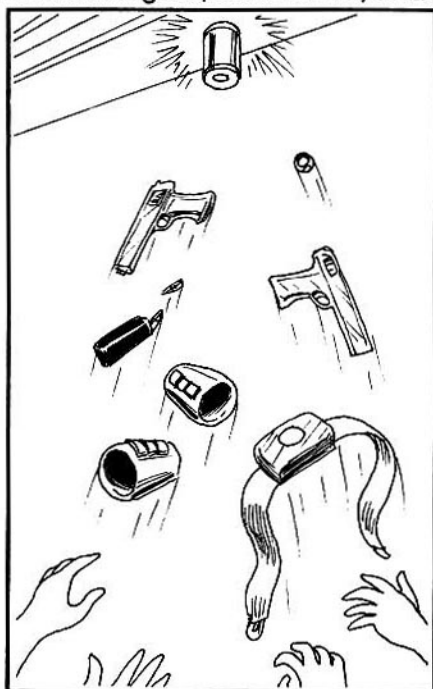
by Greg Porter

This is a grenade sized object. When it impacts on the ground, or when manually activated, this object generates a brief but intensive magnetic pulse, drawing all affected objects toward it. This includes guns, some armor, small vehicles, and other assorted foci.

In certain cases, a STR vs. STR roll is necessary (such as when trying to keep a gun from being torn from your hand). While it is active, the grenade sticks to whatever surface it strikes, so it does not fly towards a more massive object.

A specialized weapon, it is only issued to agents when the agency knows it will be useful against specific enemies or in specific instances. The GM may also allow the grenade to act as a Destruction attack against magnetic data (tapes, disks, etc.) within its field of effect.

The MagnaBomb: 30 STR Telekinesis, Explosive Effect, May Only Pull In Toward Bomb (+1), Only Acts On Ferromagnetic Objects (+1), One Use Per Day (+2), OAF (+1). Real Cost: 7 points. SIZ: 2.



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Traveller: 2300 includes complete rules for science fiction role-playing, a complete full color map of everything within 50 light years of Sol with accompanying stellar data, and an introductory adventure set on mankind's frontier. Be a part of the New Age, with **Traveller: 2300**.

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The Legend of Zagoth

A MERP Scenario

by Steve Fellows

Setting: A tower once belonging to an evil mage.

Requirements: A good sized party with the ability to handle hard fights and tricky traps.

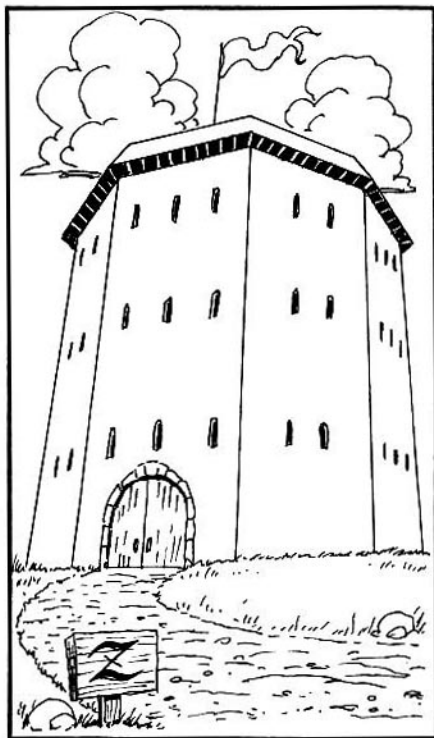
Aids: Good skills in combat and disarming traps.

Reward: The rangers would pay a fair price for information on the inside of the tower and its inhabitants.

THE TALE

Zagoth, an evil mage of renowned powers, long plagued the areas adjacent to the Trollshaws. Even now, almost 100 years after the knights of Gondor killed him, people fear his dark tower. Rumors have spread and legends formed of his return and again the countryside is terrorized by minions believed to serve him.

The knights no longer reside this far north, and the rangers are too weak to stop the raids.

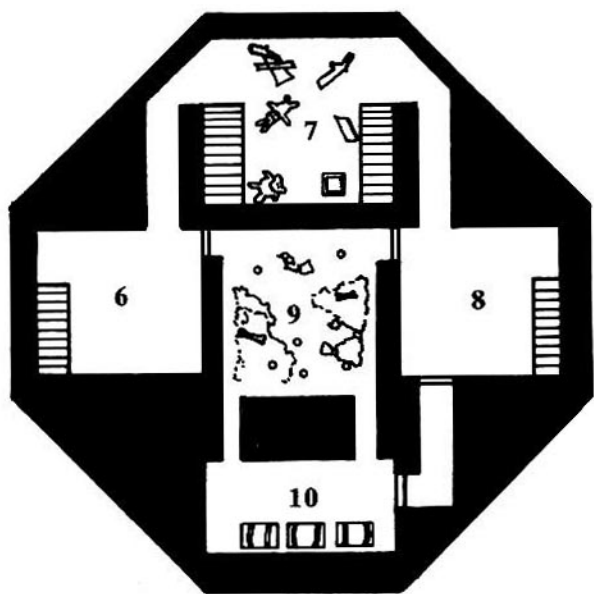
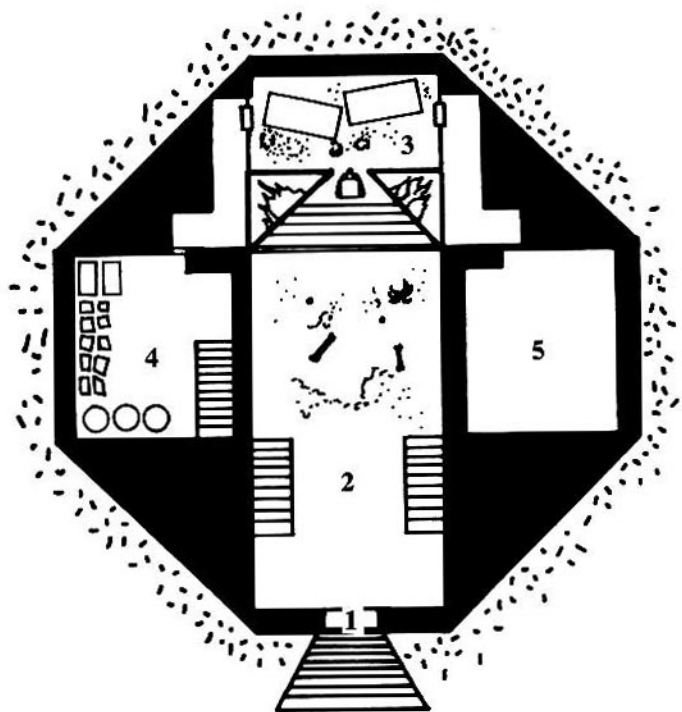


THE TASK

Layout Descriptions:

1. **The Entrance:** Two 4 ft long and 10 ft high iron doors guard the entrance to the main hall. The doors are not locked, but only a combined strength of 250 would force the doors opened. (Only 4 characters may attempt at one time).

2. **The Main Hall:** Two stairways lead up to room #6. A throne sits on a dais in between two fire pits. There is a 50% chance that 4 orcs are here. The orcs will be alerted by the opening of the doors and will surprise the party with a sudden and fierce attack. The secret door behind the throne is easy to detect but its lock is hard (-10) to pick. The floor is covered with bones and debris. 1-4 bronze pieces and a scimitar are scattered about the floor.



3. The Old Guard Room: Old bunks and debris cover the floor. Both doors are unlocked.

4. Storage Room: Food stuffs and ale are packed in this room. The stairs lead down to room 10 but are blocked by a sign which in Black Speech says DANGER!!! (NOTE: in no way will any of the trolls or orcs enter the top- or bottommost levels. Sometimes, however, the troll commander will have some hapless victim thrown down into the dungeon)

5. Guard Post: A normal troll guards the entrance into room #5 at all times. The guard has the keys to room #5.

6. Prison: Three human prisoners are held here. They are stripped of weapons and equipment and have no information on the tower except that a dragon resides on the lowest level. For the sake of knowledge all should be considered as being 1st level warriors with no more than 30 hits each. The lock guarding the door into this room is hard (-10) to pick.

7. Former Trophy Room: Scattered pieces of wood, stuffed animals and a broken trophy case clutter this room. The two stairways lead to room #2.

8. Orc Barracks: Four orcs reside in #7b at all times and four more in #7a if there were none in room 2. Fighting will attract the trolls in room #8 during the first round, the orcs (if any) the next round, and the troll commander the round after that. The orcs and trolls will fight to the death so long as the commanding troll remains alive.

9. Troll lair: Three trolls reside here. Refuse and bones litter the floor and 1-10 silver pieces may be found in the rubble.

10. Commanding Troll: The largest of the trolls and commander of the raiders resides here, along with all of the booty. The room contains three chests.

The first contains: 125 gold pieces.

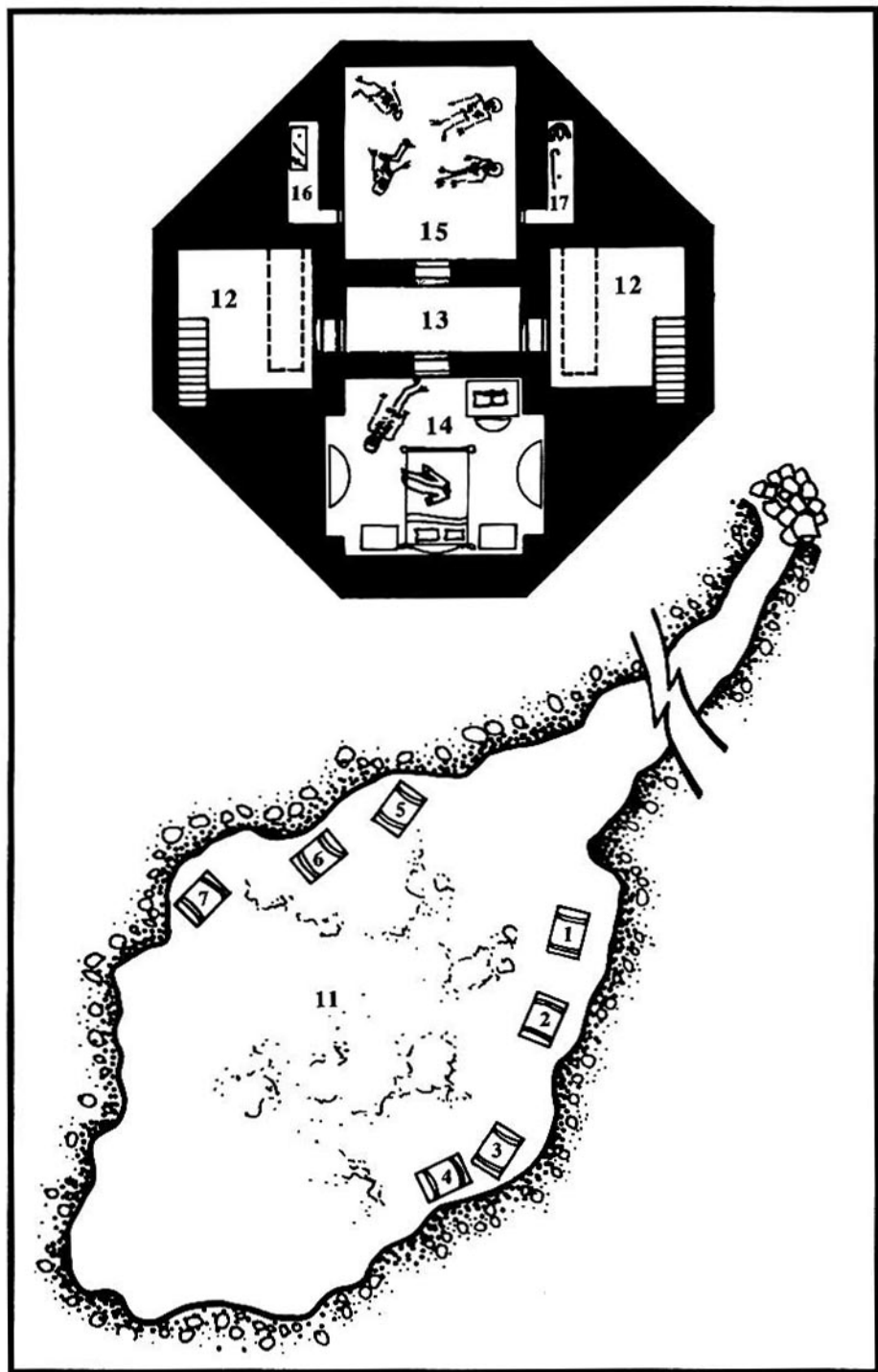
The second contains: +5 soft leather and a +10 dagger.

The third contains: 10 +5 arrows, a helm, and a +10 broadsword. All of the chests are locked and hard (-10) to open. The commanding troll has the keys to all of them.

11. The Dungeon: Zagoth's pet baby fire drake resides here. The dragon survives on victims thrown down to him by the trolls or any creature foolish enough to enter the dungeon. Bones and refuse litter the floor. To the east a passage leads half a mile to a cave entrance. Part of the reason the trolls keep the dragon alive is that he makes a good watch dog! Lying in a large heap is 500 gold pieces, 2100 silver pieces, various gems totaling 700 gold pieces in value, 6000 tin pieces and 50 mithril pieces. Also here are 7 chests.

The first chest is not locked or trapped and contains a wand which acts like a x 2 spell multiplier.

The second chest is locked and its lock is very hard to pick. It is also trapped with a needle which hits when the chest is opened (The trap is easy, +20, to disarm). Victims must make a save vs. a 1st level poison or be at 1/2 normal strength for 1 day per 10 points of failure. The chest contains a +25 singing sword which may sing once per day for 1-10 minutes. For the duration of the song the holder has a +50 bonus to all his resistance rolls.



Chests 3, 4, and 5 all are locked and trapped (as chest 2) and each contains 1000 silver pieces.

Chest 6 is locked and very hard (-20) to pick. A trap which is very hard (-20) to disarm guards the chest. The trap causes 1-100 hits to the victim, but 1/2 damage if victim resists the 5th level poison. The chest contains a suit of +20 plate mail with a white sword carved on it. Upon command (once per day) the sword will animate and can attack by itself. (Offensive Bonus - 100; Hits - 25; Defensive Bonus - 75; save as 10th level and destroyed permanently if more than 25 hits damage are taken.)

Chest 7 is locked and very hard (-20) to pick, but there is no trap on it. The chest contains an amulet which once per day may heal one creature of 1-100 hits damage. The amulet also acts as a +1 spell adder for channeling only.

12. Trapped Halls: These rooms show signs of a fire having taken place within them. Both doors are locked and are extremely hard (-30) to open. Located within the lined off areas is a trap. The trap is very hard (-20) to detect and cannot be disarmed (although those creatures making a perception check will notice that the walkways north of the trap were heavily used). If a character should step within that cornered off area, 1-2 fire bolts (+90) will hit every person in the room.

13. Hall: Both doors in this hall are locked and are sheer folly (-50) to be picked. Both doors are also trapped and hard (-10) to disarm. The north door's trap causes the character to be cursed unless he makes a save vs. a 10th level essence spell. The curse causes the victim to have -30 to all offensive bonuses for 1 day per 10 points of failure. (NOTE: The victims will not know that they are cursed.) The south door is also trapped like the north door, except that the victim's enemies will have +30 to their offensive bonuses.

14. Zagoth's Bedroom: In this room are two large fireplaces. Both are lit and neither fire can be put out. The room is elegantly furnished and, surprisingly, none of the furniture is ruined or decaying. Within this room is a greater skeleton. Also within this room is a book containing all mage base lists. Any mage which studies these books gets a +45 chance the next time he tries for the lists studied. (The bonus is not cumulative.) The room also contains a black robe which protects the wearer as if s/he were wearing plate armor.

15. Statue Hall: This room has 4 statues of skeletons in it. There are also two doors: one east and one west. Neither are locked, but if they are opened, the skeletons will awaken and attack. If the person opening the door is wearing the black robe found in room #13 then the skeletons will not awaken. The statues cannot be injured or harmed in any way until activated.

16. Treasure Room: On a table in this room is 1 wand, 1 ring, and 1 dagger. The wand is a wand of shock bolts with 8 charges. The ring gives a +25 bonus to the wearer's defensive bonus. The dagger is a Númenórean +20 dagger.

17. Treasure Room: In this room is a statuette of a giant bear, a staff, and a ring. The statuette can animate upon command into a giant bear. If the bear is killed, the statuette disappears. The bear cannot be healed. The staff allows the caster to cast any spell on the mage list light up to 10th level. The staff has 25 charges. The ring is a +4 spell adder for essence casters.

MASTER NPC TABLE

| RACE | # | Lvl | Hits | AT | DB | Sh | Melee OB |
|--------------|---|-----|------|----|----|----|------------------|
| Orcs | 8 | 3 | 50 | RL | 30 | Y | 60 sc |
| Trolls | 4 | 7 | 120 | RL | 35 | N | 115 bs |
| Troll Comm | 1 | 12 | 180 | RL | 35 | Y | 150 bs |
| Baby Drake | 1 | 15 | 190 | PL | 40 | N | as Dragon Breath |
| Lesser Skel | 4 | 7 | 100 | No | 30 | Y | 50 bs |
| Greater Skel | 1 | 10 | 135 | No | 40 | N | 95 bs |

Notes: Lesser Skeleton: Fear, Drain 2 Con 5r

Greater Skeleton: Fear, Drain 4 Con 9r

FANTASY HERO



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New York Day

July 1, 1976

SOMETHING UNUSUAL FOUND IN LOS ANGELES

by John Stark, Ace Reporter

Something Unusual happened to me the other day. I was hot on the trail of that criminal mastermind, the Scarlet Claw, when I ran across an unusual hobby shop. I was in Highland Park, near Pasadena, when I walked into a shop called *Something Unusual*. Boy, was it! They carried games, metal figures, radio-control kits, plastic models, paints, tools, and lots more. I could hardly believe my eyes, so I decided to look further.

Going to one rack, I found RPG's... a ton of them, from Fantasy to Science Fiction to 30's Pulp to Superheroes. Impressive. I decided to give the miniatures a once over. I found so many figures from so many companies that it took a twice over.

Okay! But what about wargames? I turned to find a bookcase full of them. Every era from 4000 B.C. to the far future. From companies like Avalon Hill, WRG,

SPI/TSR, Empire Games and more. As I was giving the goods the eye, the Shopkeeper came over and asked if I liked over 15 different rags, ones like *Adventurer's Club*, *Wargaming*, *The Dragon*, *Fine Scale Modeler*, and *Living History*. Plus a selection of books and reference materials.

I asked the Shopkeeper why he had such a broad selection of things. He replied "Here we not only understand the needs of the few, but the needs of the many. Because we game, too. We have a gaming table and are the headquarters of the Western Heroes of America (WHAM)." He was a long winded guy, but helpful and friendly, as was everyone there.

Unfortunately, I was having such a good time, the trail of the Scarlet Claw got cold.

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NO DICE!



A non-random optional spell-acquisition system
for Rolemaster and MERP
by Klaus Morgensen

WHY A NEW SYSTEM?

As those who have played Rolemaster know, skills are bought at each level with development points, at set prices for one, two and sometimes more skill ranks at a time. You pay 'em, you get 'em, right? Nope, not spell lists. For those, you buy *research points*, each equivalent to a 5% *chance* (cumulative) of getting the spell list at the next level. If you fail the percentage roll, well, that's just too bad. Of course you have the same chance next level (the research points aren't lost), but you have in effect lost a level, and as you probably want to buy more research in the list, it will also be more expensive.

Example: *If a pure spelluser wants one spell list at every level, the cheapest way is to buy a 50% chance and then, if the spell acquisition roll fails at the next level, buy the chance up to 100% and at the same time buy a 50% chance at a new list. This will give a cost of 10 research points half the time, and a cost of 20 research points the other half, which gives an average of 15 research points per list. In a campaign I'm playing, a Lay Healer used this strategy, but failed the roll four out of the first five times. Not only did he have to pay the full 20 research points for most of his lists, he only got the first level*

spells from the lists immediately (as always, when you buy 100%), where he would have gotten the whole list section if he had succeeded the roll. This caused him to continually be a spell list behind, as well as not being too good at other things, since he used most of his development points on spell list research. To make things extra galling, a Ranger character in the same campaign bought a 10% chance at a list and got it the very next level.

Now, I don't object to certain random features in character generation and development, but when the random isn't in *what* or *how much* you get, but in *whether or not* you get something (and especially something as important as a spell list), it doesn't seem fair. There is nothing similar for non-spellusers, except to some extent the hit dice (and there you always get something).

THE NEW SYSTEM.

Now for the alternate system I propose. This system has no random features, and is very equivalent to the system for acquiring other skills (more so than the existing system, I believe), in that the more you buy each level, the more expensive (development point-wise) the things you buy get.

In this system, each research point will buy you a percentage of the total price of the list (in the following, when I speak of percentages, I refer to percentages of the price of a list, not to a chance of getting the list unless otherwise stated). You don't get the list until you have bought 100% of the price. The first research point bought at a certain level will get you 20% of the price of a list, the second will buy you 10%, and each additional research point will buy you 5%. Thus, if you buy at least two research points at a level, you get 30% plus 5% times the number of research points over 2 bought. If you buy 16 research points each level, you get a list each level [$100\% = 20+10+(5 \text{ times } 14)$] This is just one research point more than by the above-mentioned strategy for getting a list each level, and I think that many players would prefer to buy 16 research points each level to buying 10 and 20 alternately. If the percentage bought is higher than 100%, the 'spill-over' can be used on a new list.

Example: *If a character has bought 85% of the price of a list, the first research point bought at the next level will bring the total to 105% (85% + 20%). The character will then get the list at the following level (and any first level spells immediately), and the remaining 5% can be used with the rest of the percentages bought as the beginning of a new spell-acquisition. If, say, a total of 5 research points are bought at the level, the percentage paid of the price of the second list will be 30% (20%+10%+3 times 5%, minus the 15% used on the first list).*

The percentage amounts bought with research points (20% for the first, 10% for the second, 5% for each additional) aren't arbitrarily chosen, but are selected to simulate the average of the old system closely. If you buy one research point each level in the new system, you get a spell list every five levels. If you buy a research point per level in the old system, you would have a 5% chance of getting the list in one level, and a 10% chance of getting it at the second level, etc.: adding up to an average of 5.29 levels per list, less than 6% more than by the new system. Buying 4 research points per level will give you two lists every five levels (40% each level) in the new system, in the old system you would get two lists every 5.02 levels in average. As mentioned before, getting a list each level costs about the same in both systems. If you want to automatically buy more than one list per level, the additional lists will cost you 20 research points in both systems.

To illustrate the system, the following table shows a few of the possible strategies for acquiring spells by the new system. The first column shows how many research points you buy each level. Several numbers separated by slashes indicates a cyclic expenditure; 2/3/3, for example, means that 2 research points are bought every third level, and 3 are bought in the remaining (adding up to $30\%+35\%+35\% = 100\%$ for three levels). The second column shows what percentages the research points correspond to, and the third shows how many levels it takes to get a spell list, or a number of spell lists. The last column gives the cost in research points of a list.

| SPELL ACQUISITION STRATEGIES | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Research Points per level: | Percentage per level: | Levels per list(s): | Price per list (research points) |
| 1 | 20 | 5 | 5 |
| 2 | 30 | 10 per 3 | 6.67 |
| 2/3/3 | 30/30/35 | 3 | 8 |
| 2/2/4 | 30/30/40 | 3 | 8 |
| 4 | 40 | 5 per 2 | 10 |
| 6 | 50 | 2 | 12 |
| 8 | 60 | 5 per 3 | 13.33 |
| 11 | 75 | 4 per 3 | 14.67 |
| 12 | 80 | 5 per 4 | 15 |
| 14 | 90 | 10 per 9 | 15.56 |
| 16 | 100 | 1 | 16 |
| 26 | 150 | 2 per 3 | 17.33 |
| 36 | 200 | 1 per 2 | 18 |

NON-SPELL AND SEMI-SPELLUSERS.

A slightly different system will have to be adopted for non-spellusers and semi-spellusers. After all, only a very few non-spellusers would buy five research points in order to get a spell list. The normal strategy by the old system is to buy one or two research points and then wait until luck strikes, on the average this will take 20 or 10 levels, respectively. This is simulated in the new system by allowing non-spelluser and semi-spellusers to buy

fractions of research points. The price-percentages bought for a given number of development points depend on the cost of one whole research point and are given in the following table. Note that only one such 'buy' is allowed each level. You can't, for example, buy the '1dp' portion twice in a level, you would have to buy the '2dp' portion, which is less than half again as large. Note that decimals aren't rounded off.

| Non-spelluser Table | | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Development cost of Percentages of development points spent: | | | | |
| one research point: | 1dp | 2dp | 3dp | 4dp |
| 30 | 3.7 | 5.2 | 6.3 | 7.3 |
| 25 | 4.0 | 5.7 | 6.9 | 8.0 |
| 20 | 4.5 | 6.3 | 7.8 | 8.9 |
| 15 | 5.2 | 7.3 | 8.9 | 10.3 |
| 10 | 6.3 | 8.9 | 11.0 | 12.7 |
| 8 | 7.1 | 10.0 | 12.3 | 14.1 |
| 4 | 10.0 | 14.1 | 17.3 | 20.0 |

Example: *A Thief normally pays 10dp per research point. If, by this system, he pays 1dp each level, he will after 16 levels have 16 times 6.3% + 100.8% of a spell list pick, which means he gets the pick and has the first 0.8% of a second pick (well, it's a start).*

As can be seen, spell lists will generally be a bit more expensive than by the old system, compared to the number of levels to get them. But the expense is spread evenly over all the levels, which should be preferable to paying it all at the beginning. If you or your players don't like this, you might allow characters to buy one research point and get the list exactly twenty levels later, or to buy two points at two consecutive levels and get the list ten levels after the last payment. If non-spellusers (and semi-spellusers) want to buy one (or more) research point(s) per level by the system above for pure spellusers, they are, of course, free to do so.

Even though the table above only goes up to 4dp/level, you should be allowed to spend more, as long as you don't spend more than what a whole research point costs. If a character spends four times as much as in an entry in the table, he would get twice the percentage given on the list. A fighter could pay 8dp (4 times the 2dp entry) and get 12.6% (2 times 6.3%).

THE SYSTEM WITH MERP

The spell-acquisition system in MERP works essentially the same way as in Rolemaster, except that instead of research points you have special spell list development points (sdp hereafter), and that you get a cumulative 20% chance per



sdp. A pure spelluser (Mage or Animist) gets 5sdp per level, the semi-spellusers (Warrior and Scout) don't get any. It is possible to buy sdp from other development point (dp/it), at a cost of 4dp/sdp for Warrior or Scout and 2dp/sdp for others.

With the new system, the first sdp used at a level buys 40% of the spell list, while each of the following buys 20%. Mages and Animists get their lists for 4sdp (40%+3 times 20% = 100%), which leaves them 1sdp for use at either the start of another list or at other skills by transferring the point to another group.

Non-spellusers aren't likely to transfer the 10dp necessary to buy a list this way, but are instead allowed to buy smaller percentages by transferring single development points rather than four at a time. The first point transferred at a given level will buy 20% of a list, the second will buy 10% and each additional will buy 5% (exactly as in the Rolemaster system

Example: *A Warrior, who in the old system could spend four dp at once and get a list five levels later on the average (20% chance per level), now can spend one dp each of five levels and get the list after the fifth. A bit more expensive, but he will have more other skills in his first four levels.*

FINAL NOTES.

“How do I incorporate this system into an existing campaign, where the characters already have bought chances at new lists by the old system?” Well, you might simply let them finish buying these lists by the old system and then require them to buy future lists by the new system. However, this will probably mean that you will have to administrate both systems for some time, which could get confusing. Instead, you might do the following: Examine how many research points (or development points) each character has put into research. Then see what the largest percentage is, that can be bought (in the new system) by any combination of the points spent, spread over the levels in question, and let this be the percentage the character has of the price of the list.

Example: *A Bard has bought (by the old system) four research points at one level, then two each of the following two levels, and then, having gained a 40% chance of getting the list, hasn't bought anything at the latest level. This gives a total of eight research points over four levels, which by 'spreading' to two research points per level gives a total of 120% by the new system. The Bard would get the list at next level, and al-*

ready has paid part of the next list.

Some characters might want to spread the expenditure over more levels (for example a fighter who has just spent 20 development points on a research point), and they should be allowed to do this, provided they don't buy more research until after the extra (future) levels.

If you want to use stat-bonuses on spell-acquisition, you can simply multiply the bonus + 100% by the percentages bought.

Example: *Human Magician with an empathy of 98 (+20% bonus) buys five research points, he would get 54% ($1.2 \times 45\%$) of the price of the list instead of just 45%, and he could get the whole list for 13 research points ($85\% \text{ times } 1.20 = 102\%$).*

With this system you might allow spellusers to research more than one list at a time. This will generally not be a good idea for the spelluser, since he would have to pay the full prices of the lists anyway, so that any investments in a second or third list would only delay the acquisition of the first. However, in some cases it could be useful. Let's say a spelluser has decided only to use 10 development points (equivalent to 70%) each level. It will take him two levels to get a list in any case, so he decides to buy 35% of each of two lists at the first level, so he can postpone the decision of which list to buy first until the next level, where he might know more about his future needs.

Even those who don't want their players to use this new system might want to use it for non-player characters, since it makes their development much easier to plan.

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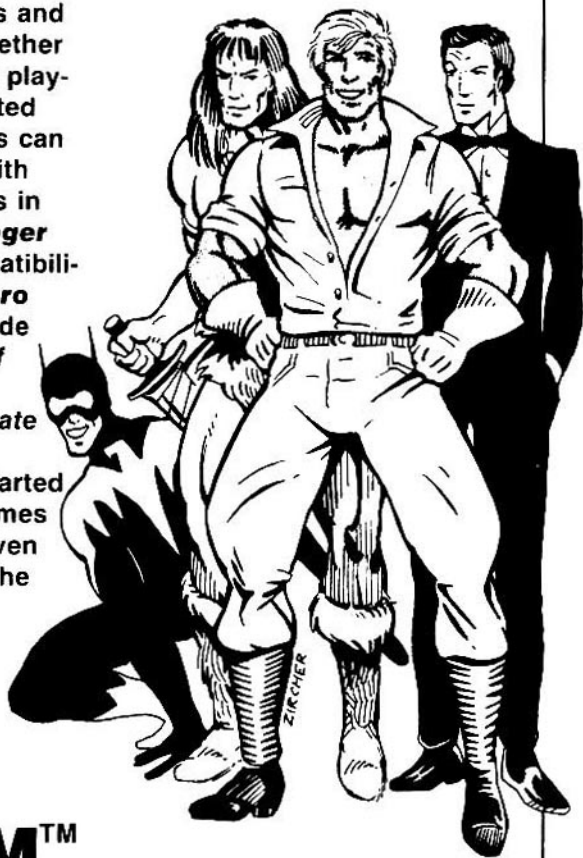
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stolen steed of the SOVEREIGN

An Adventure in the Mark

by Jorge Quinonez

Setting: The foothills of the White Mountains, near the capital city of Rohan, Edoras.

The deeds occur in the first century of the Fourth Age.

Requirements: A group of adventurers on the side of justice.

Aids: An affinity for horses, familiarity with the surrounding lands outside Edoras (i.e., the White Mountains), and a lure of money.

Rewards: 1000 gold pieces from the Royal Treasury of Rohan, the gratitude of the King of the Mark, and any loot the bandit might possess.

THE TALE

Snowshade, a descendant of Shadowfax and Snowmane, is undoubtedly the finest of the Meara horses in the King's stables. And until recently, Elfwine, the nineteenth King of Rohan, was the proud owner of this grand horse. Late one summer night, the horse was taken from his stable by an unknown thief who left a note for the King.

The note stated that he would never see his beloved horse again, except perhaps in the hands of his principal foe, Asagáth, a king of one of the greatest Easterling nations, who resided in the East, by the inland Sea of Rhûn. The purpose of the note was simple: to upset the King Elfwine, perhaps weakening him for the thief's master, Asagáth.

As for Snowshade, the thief was holding her in Dunnish lands, south of the Westfold (west of Edoras, a territory of another of Mark's enemies, the Dunlendings), awaiting the coming of a secret party of Easterlings who would take the Meara to their King. Well aware of the risks of intruding into Dunnish territory with large groups (especially Rohir, who would be dead giveaways), the King Elfwine, preferring more subtle ways, has secretly hired a group of outsiders to rescue his prized horse.

THE ENEMY

Lahwere is an agent and thrall of the Easterling king, Asagáth. Abandoned as a child by his mother for unknown reasons, he was raised by his Dunlending father. During a raid on his village, Lahwere was captured by Easterling horsemen. The Easterlings took Lahwere to their country and gave him as a servant boy to their King, Asagáth. Many years later, after becoming totally subservient to the Easterlings, Lahwere was released from bondage and allowed to return to his homeland in the White Mountains.

One there, he began to serve as the Easterlings' primary agent against Rohan. In no time, Lahwere infiltrated the ranks of the Rohirrim. Once becoming well established in the city of Edoras under the guise of a horse merchant, Lahwere set about on his first mission — to steal the steed of the sovereign.

Lahwere accomplished his task with little complications. He struck the stables in the dark of night and snatched the horse when the guards were not looking. Riding the horse was another matter; Snowshade would not let the thief handle her. The horse only became rideable after Lahwere drugged her with a special Easterling horse-taming herb. Once on the horse he outpaced all pursuers, and took Snowshade to his hideout (near a Dunnish village) in the White Mountains to await the arrival of a party of Easterlings who would take the horse to Asagáth.

THE TASK

The King of Rohan has sent one of his servants to search for the group of adventurers who would like to earn a quick treasure. The servant of the King has met a group of adventurers, namely yours, in one of Edoras' taverns. After some time of talk about this 'adventure,' the servant asks the adventurers to meet with the King (!) for further information. The group agrees and meets with the King Elfwine the following day.

At their meeting, Elfwine informs the party on what is required of them. For the safe return of Snowshade he offers 500 gold pieces and an additional 500 gold pieces for the head of the thief. To aid them in their quest, the King will provide each member of the party with a horse (Medium type), a week's provisions (Trail rations), and for the party, a guide to help them find the location of the horse and the thief.

The party's first encounters will probably be the Dunnish village, unless the GM has something else especially planned. The party should exercise respect and caution when transacting with the leader of the village: the Matriarch. If proper gifts are given (i. e. good steel utensils) and then the question(s) asked concerning the stolen or "lost" horse, the adventurers might then get an answer.

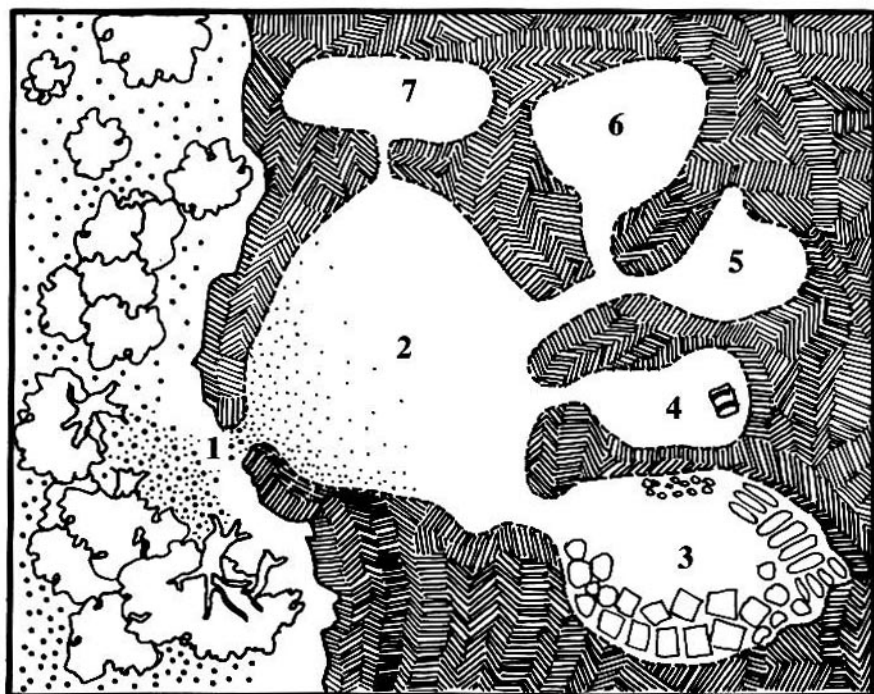
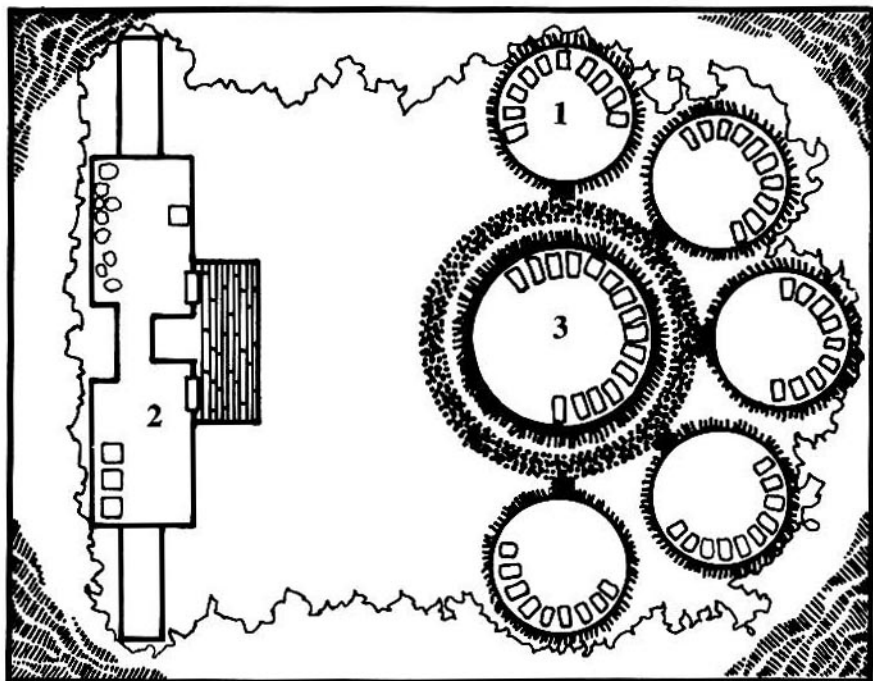
With the general location of the thief's hideout known, the party may then embark to the next step: to reclaim the horse for the King of Rohan. The robber's roost is typical of the caves found on the slopes of the Ered Nimrais. The party will have to get past the henchmen and then Lahwere himself (and possibly his boss, Asagáth!) to successfully liberate the horse from its capture.

The Dunnish Village

The inhabitants of this village number about 50, including warriors and families.

1. Villager's Dwellings: These huts are furnished with the bare essentials, e.g. beds.





They contain enough space to accommodate a family of up to a dozen in size.

2. Stores: These structures, located on the east side of the village, contain all the provisions the small community will need through the winter. Various stores, i.e. foodstuffs, furs, medicines, etc., can be found within.

3. Matriarch's Dwelling: This is the largest hut in the village. The Matriarch and her family reside in this structure. The only thing of note in this hut is her prized collection of rare herbs (GM should decide what type of herbs the Matriarch owns, though the total count should not exceed more than a dozen).



The Hillman's Hideout: The Caves

The grotto has served Lahwere many years, its location is known only to a few people, although the Dunnish villagers know of its existence and have a good idea of where it is found.

1. Entrance: The entrance is not well guarded. There is a 10% chance that two half-orc guards are present.

2. Main Room: The main room is rarely unoccupied. There's a 90% chance that 1-10 half-orcs are present and 50% chance that Lahwere is also present (if not in his own room).

3. Stores Area: This room contains enough supplies to last a man and a dozen half-orcs six months.

4. Lahwere's Cave. This room is always guarded by one of Lahwere's minions (i.e., a half-orc). The room contains

rather ordinary furnishings. The only thing of note is Lahwere's chest, which contains 101gp, 111sp, 221cp, two +10 daggers, and a Ring of Protection (+10 to DB and all resistance rolls).

5. Servant's Cave: When not on the job, twelve half-orcs live in this cave.

6. Same as #5, except it is sometimes used by visiting Easterlings.

7. Snowshade's Cave: The majestic horse of King Elfwine is housed in this cave. The noble steed is chained to the wall. The chain is made of an unknown alloy of steel which is practically unbreakable; not even a troll could break it (although a Balrog would have better luck)! The lock on the chain is magical (Sheer Folly, -50 to pick) and can only be opened by the key that Lahwere has on his person at all times.

VARIATIONS

To spice up the game, the GM could choose to use either Asagáth or Elfwine in the scenario. Thus, Elfwine could accompany the characters in the quest to rescue his horse. And Asagáth would be present at Lahwere's hideout to personally supervise the horse's safe journey to his Easterling kingdom.

MASTERNPC TABLE

| NAME | Lvl | Hits | AT(RM) | DB | Sh | Gr | Melee OB | Missile OB | MM |
|--|-----|------|--------|----|----|-----|-------------|---------------|----|
| Lahwere | 8 | 88 | RL(10) | 50 | Y5 | A/L | 104bs | 85sb | 20 |
| Notes: Hillman Scout. +10 broadsword and +5 rigid leather armor | | | | | | | | | |
| Goons(X12) | 4 | 40 | CH(15) | 15 | Y | A/L | 55sc | 50sb | 15 |
| Notes: Half-orc warriors. There are exactly a dozen goons under Lahwere's employment. | | | | | | | | | |
| Matriarch | 9 | 43 | NO(2) | 45 | NO | — | 59qs | 41sl | 10 |
| Notes: Dunnish Animist. +10 Staff: X2 PP Multiplier. 36 PP Knows all Animist Spell Lists, except Creations and Animal Mastery. 56 years old. | | | | | | | | | |
| Villagers | 3 | 30 | SL(6) | 30 | NO | — | 30cl | 30sl | 15 |
| Notes: Dunnish Warriors. There are eighteen of them present in the village if the Matriarch encounters trouble. | | | | | | | | | |
| Asagáth | 19 | 123 | RL(10) | 65 | NO | A/L | 145sp | 130bo | 20 |
| Notes: Easterling Warrior. +15 spear, +10 bola, and +15 rigid leather armor. 41 years old. | | | | | | | | | |
| Elfwine | 16 | 125 | CH(15) | 35 | Y5 | A/L | 135bs | 115cp | 10 |
| Notes: Rohir Warrior, Nineteenth King of Rohan. +10 weapons & armor. For more information, see <i>Lords of Middle-earth Vol. 2</i> , pages 56 and 58. | | | | | | | | | |
| Snowshade | 13 | 220 | NO(3) | 45 | — | — | 80fi | — | — |
| Notes: Meara 'super' horse. Speed= VF. Size= L. Crit= Reg. | | | | | | | | | |

Note: Lvl=level; Hits = hit points; AT=Merp armor type (NO=no armor, SL=soft leather, RL=rigid leather, CH=chain); RM = Rolemaster armor type; DB = defensive bonus; Sh = shield; Gr = greaves (A=arm greaves, L=leg greaves); Melee OB = melee offensive bonus; Missile OB = missile offensive bonus; MM = movement and maneuver bonus.

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Petty-Dwarf Characters

A New MERP Character Race

by Jorge Quinonez

The MERP rulebook only includes the most common type of Dwarves, the Naugrim in the tongue of the Sindar. But, largely unknown to many players, a lesser known group, albeit a small one, has existed from the early First Age to the present. This rare variety of Dwarves, known as the Noegyth Nibin (S. "Petty-dwarves"), was once related to common Dwarves. This article is an attempt to bring the Petty-dwarves, once thought extinct, back to life for MERP players to use as an additional character race.

HISTORY

"The other day, I believe it was Elenya, our party encountered the oddest of creatures. While travelling in the Trollshaws, our guide, a Ranger, sensed that we were being followed. At first, I thought it was a Hobbit by the way it walked and stalked us, but after we caught it, which is a story unto itself, we noticed that it had a beard; then we knew it was a Dwarf. The small Dwarf spoke and said it was a Petty-dwarf. Our party looked at it in amazement . . ."

An excerpt from a letter, dated Ivaneth 11, 633 [Third Age], by Lord Arfinur Hallatan of Arnor to Master Elrond of Rivendell, on the question of the existence of Petty-dwarves.

After the Eldar departed for the West, and before the appearance of any other intelligent race, a strange race of stunted "speaking people" (later to be called the Petty-dwarves by the elves) appeared in Beleriand in the early First Age. Long ago, the Petty-dwarves, or Noegyth

Nibin, had been banished from great Dwarf-cities in the east. Little time passed before they became diminished in stature and in smith-craft. Leaving the Dwarf-cities behind, they went into the wild to start anew. In order to survive the harsh wilderness, they became adept in the ways of nature, i.e., herbs and growing. Then, using the little knowledge they still retained in the art of stoneworking, they made in the hills of Beleriand. They prospered for a little while, that is, until the arrival of the Elves.



To the Sindar and Green-elves, the Petty-dwarves always had an unpleasant, withered appearance, and spoke a harsh tongue that no one understood. This eventually led to persecution by the Elves and drove the Petty-dwarves into hiding. The Orcs also began to harass the Petty-dwarves; they attacked and pillaged the few Petty-dwarvish hill settlements that existed. As time progressed into the First Age, the Petty-dwarves' problems worsened: other Elves began to intrude into their domain; the Noldor were beginning to settle the lands that 'belonged' to the Petty-dwarves. The Noldor of the House of Finrod took from the Noegyth Nibin the Caves of Narog, which would come to be known as the Nargothrond. The persecution and 'land stealing' by the Elves and harassment by the Orcs led to the Petty-dwarvish hatred of both races, especially the Noldor.

When other Dwarves, who founded Nogrod and Belegost, appeared in East Beleriand, the Elves' persecution stopped. However, this did nothing for the Petty-dwarves; they continued to wane. By the end of the First Age, the population of the Petty-dwarves began to dramatically shrink, near to the brink of extinction. After the War of Wrath and deluge of Beleriand, a few of them managed to cross the Ered Luin (S. "Blue Mountains") into Eriador, where they founded new, well hidden homes. Thus, contrary to the reports of the loremasters, who spoke of the extinction of the Petty-dwarvish race, they still managed to survive well beyond the First Age and perhaps into the Second and Third Age of Middle-earth, as a rare and secretive race.

RACE DESCRIPTION

The following is a general description of the Petty-dwarves.

THE PETTY-DWARVES (Pl. Noegyth Nibin, sing. Nogoth Nibin)

Also known by other Sindarin names:

Nibin-Noeg, Nibin-Nogrim and other variants of the first name. The Petty-dwarves remain a scattered tribe, apart from the original Seven Tribes. The most famous of the Petty-dwarves mentioned (which are only three) in the history of Middle-earth is Mim, from the story of Turin Turambar.

Physical Character

Build: Short and stocky, with bowed shoulders.

Coloring: Dark brown to gray. Ruddy complexion.

Endurance: Exceptional. They carry medium burdens over long distances with little rest.

Height: 3 to 4 feet tall.

Lifespan: 250-400 years.

Resistance: Resistance against flame and ice (+30 bonus versus heat and cold attacks).

Special Abilities: Petty-dwarves see well in the dark. In dim light they can see 50' perfectly, and well to 100'.

Culture

Clothing and Decorations: Beards, hardly ever braided. Unkempt long hair. Medium garb, usually of gray hue, with hooded cloaks.

Fears and Inabilities: Poor swimmers (-35 to Swimming maneuvers).

Lifestyle: Petty-dwarves are secretive; even more so than regular Dwarves. Individual families, and sometimes whole communities, make homes which are cut into hills. Since they are food-gatherers, such homes always near a forest, where they can gather plants, roots, herbs, etc.

Marriage Patterns: Monogamous and for life. In Dwarvish life only one third of the race is female, whereas in Petty-dwarvish life, the number of females roughly equals the males. The line is traced through the male.

Religion: They revere Aulë, the maker of all Dwarves and since nature plays a large role in the lives, they honor the spouse of Aulë, Yavanna.

Other Factors

Demeanor: Quiet, possessive, greedy, suspicious, and often treacherous. In some respects they are weaker than Dwarves, but they make up for this in slyness and cunning. They do not always honor agreements, which they often try to make when their lives are threatened.

Language: When in public or about in the wild, Petty-dwarves speak Westron (Rank 5), the Common Speech, or some Elvish language (Rank 3). Among themselves, they speak Khuzdul (Rank 5), the secret tongue of all Dwarves.

Prejudices: They hate Orcs and Elves, especially the Noldor, who stole their old lands.

Restrictions on Professions: No Petty-dwarven Bards. Unlike other Dwarves, the Petty-dwarves do produce Mages on rare occasions. Petty-Dwarves can cast powerful curse spells (+10 bonus to all curse spells).

Background Options: They get three background points.

DWARF RACE TABLE

When 09-21, the normal roll for Dwarves, is rolled on the first chart of the CGT-3 — RACE TABLE (from the MERP rulebook), substitute the following table to determine if the Dwarf is a normal Dwarf or a Petty-dwarf.

2nd Roll applicable only to Dwarves.

| ROLL | RACE |
|-------|-------------|
| 01-05 | Petty-dwarf |
| 06-00 | Dwarf |

SPECIAL RACIAL MODIFICATIONS TABLE

| | Stat Bonus Modifications | | | | | Resistance Roll Mods | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|----|-----|----|----|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | ST | AG | CO | IG | IT | PR | ESS | CHN | POS | DIS |
| Petty-dwarf | 0 | +5 | +10 | 0 | 0 | -10 | +30 | 0 | +15 | +15 |
| Dwarf | +5 | -5 | +15 | 0 | -5 | -5 | +40 | 0 | +10 | +10 |

Key: ST-Strength; AG-Agility; CO-Constitution; IG-Intelligence; IT-Intuition; PR-Presence; ESS-Essence; CHN-Channeling; POS-Poison; DIS-Disease.

ADOLESCENCE SKILL TABLE

| Petty-Dwarves | Dwarves |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| MOVEMENT AND MANEUVER: | |
| No armor | 1 |
| Soft Leather | 1 |
| Rigid Leather | 1 |
| Chain | 1 |
| WEAPON SKILLS: | |
| 1-H Edged | 0 |
| 1-H Cncsn | 2 |
| 2-Handed | 0 |
| Thrown | 2 |
| Missile | 0 |
| Pole-Arms | 0 |
| GENERAL SKILLS: | |
| Climb | 2 |
| Ride | 0 |
| Swim | 0 |

| | Petty-Dwarves | Dwarves |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------|
| SUBTERFUGE SKILLS: | | |
| Ambush | 1 | 0 |
| Stalk/Hide | 3 | 0 |
| Pick Locks | 1 | 1 |
| Disarm Traps | 1 | 1 |
| MAGICAL SKILLS: | | |
| Reading Runes | 0 | 0 |
| Use Items | 0 | 0 |
| MISCELLANEOUS: | | |
| Body Dvlpment | 2 | 3 |
| Perception | 2 | 2 |
| % CHANCE FOR SPELL LIST: | 10 | 3 |
| # OF ADTNL LANGUAGE RANKS: | 6 | 4 |
| # BACKGROUND POINTS: | 3 | 4 |



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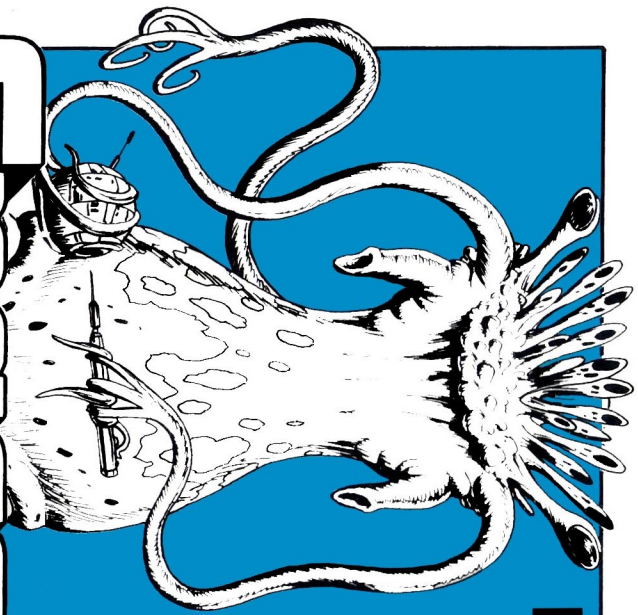
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