



THE HERO GAMES QUARTERLY

# ADVENTURERS AT CLUB™

ISSUE #18

\$3<sup>00</sup>

### In This Issue:

- A Review of *Champions: The Computer Game*
- The House That Jack Built*—A Big Champions Setting/Scenario
- Hack Writing*—A None-too-serious Martial Art
- Paloman: The Cursed King*—By Aaron Allston
- The Black Pearl*—An Empire Club Setting



# THE HERO GAMES QUARTERLY

# ADVENTURERS

# AC CLUB™

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## ISSUE #18, \$3.00

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# NUFF SAID

## A SORT OF HOMECOMING

I've been told "third time's the charm," and sometimes I even believe it. For the third time in as many issues, the AC has new and different editors. My name is Bill Robinson, and my cohort in crime is Bruce Harlick. Bruce is best known for his editorship of both *Champions II* and *Enemies II*, and the creation of the legendary Foxbat. We've both been published in the AC and elsewhere, and have enjoyed long and professionally profitable relationships with Hero Games. We are two of those "die-hards" that JB referred to in issue #17. We've always worked for somebody else and have never had to answer for our sins. Now we have a great deal of truly imaginary power and the responsibility to say that anything that goes wrong is Our Fault. Look at us, we're the editors. Howdy, howdy, howdy.

I'd like to thank JB, Coleman and Monte for helping us with the transition to out-of-house editing. The speed at which these gentlemen helped us pull this issue together was anything but glacial, and the changeover to freelance editorship has gone as smooth as ICE. Submissions, questions, queries and offers of real estate at bargain basement prices are accepted via Bruce's account on GENie (B.HARLICK2), Bruce's Account on Red October (see *Super Hype!* for more details) or by the good old reliable U.S. Mail:

AC Submissions  
P.O. Box 720  
Belmont, CA 94002-0720

## SAME OLD STORY

What could I possibly offer that hasn't been said or joked about already? By rough estimate, this issue is something like five-and-a-half years late. Had the magazine been on time all the years of its existence, you'd be reading Issue #39 instead of #18. Oops, oh well.

I understand that at no time in its history has the AC ever been published in a timely fashion. We're not entirely sure how the galactic continuum would react were we ever to actually succeed in putting out four issues in twelve calendar months. Other editors have tried before us and have failed, disappeared, or continued to live in Austin. The most recent clever commentary on the subject of AC timeliness has been that if the magazine ever did come out four times in one year, the AC would have to go bi-monthly just on principle.

JB offered that he'd try to get the AC, a quarterly magazine, published every quarter. I would certainly like to see the cosmic fireworks next summer when Issue #21 shows up in stores and mailboxes across the country. Do you think that the AC being

truly quarterly is worth the risk of galactic conflagration? What do you think? Drop us a line, pass us a note, or take out a full page ad in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and vent your mind on the subject.

## THEMATIC STRUCTURE AND SYMPATHETIC CHARACTERS

Neither time allotted, nor material submitted allowed for a single-genre dedicated issue. We did come close to publishing this issue with several articles by only one contributor. Can you guess which one? No prizes for you. We are interested in producing more focussed issues wrapped around genres or broad concepts fundamental to Hero gaming. Of course, any such issue is built primarily by submissions of art and articles by you.

We are interested in publishing clusters of articles from single authors or common collaborators. The idea is to give more focus to one line of thinking across many genres for the interest of stylistic continuity. Witness in this issue the diversity of material offered by one author. Talk it up with your group and I'll wager you can come up with more than a few ideas.

Future issues will contain articles having to do with various aspects of the fine art of game mastering. We would appreciate how-to essays, examinations of common problems, tricks of the trade, and so on. I encourage any who are interested in writing such articles to drop us a self-addressed stamped legal-sized envelope for a copy of the Hero Games Writers' Guidelines.

## ROGUE ISSUE

This issue is nearly an Aaron Allston Special. Aaron was generous enough to send us his latest bundle of articles and adventures. We picked out several that we thought you would find interesting and useful. His submissions this issue enhance his own *Mythic Greece* and *Ninja Hero*, his collaborative effort *Justice Inc.*, and add spice to *Fantasy Hero* and *Danger International* as well.

Our other contributors are Scott Heine and Steven Holmes who have collaborated on a superbly witty and diabolically clever scenario called "The House that Jack Built." The adventure is an expansion on part of Scott's *Champions by the Bay*, an upcoming *Champions* supplement.

Finally, we have a review of the *Champions* computer game that will be unveiled at *Origins/GENCON* in Milwaukee this summer (August). At the very least, you might contemplate purchasing the game if only to get the specialized character-building spreadsheet.

Most of the "regular" columns have all but disappeared from the AC for this issue. There's been a rumor floating around our spacious suite of offices that "Foxbat and Fandom" is coming back to haunt us. There is also a planned revival of both "Crooks and Crusaders" and "Between the Lines." There may be columns in future issues dedicated to Hero Math (from the twisted genius of Doctor Grover) and to experimental roleplaying in the Hero System appearing under the heading "Moose Talk."

### STACKING THE RACK

Eighteen in the *Hero System* is usually bad news. An eighteen in a combat to-hit roll is an automatic miss; an eighteen as the result of a skill roll usually had drastic consequences; three sixes in a bleeding check mean your character looks like cannon fodder in a Sam Peckinpah film.

Our eighteen has come up, but on three dice of luck.

*'Nuff said!  
Bill Robinson*

So, you've battled Eurostar in Paris and thwarted Dr. Destroyer in the jungles of Peru. You may have been to the moon or even beyond...and you probably think you've seen it all.

Dream on heroes! There is a land of excitement you have been overlooking—Canada, a land filled with heroes and villains all its own. Head North for adventure, to the realm of the...



# CHAMPIONS of the NORTH

A New Sourcebook for 

Stock # 419

# SUPER HYPE!

Hello. I'm Bruce Harlick, co-editor of this magazine, and this issue's host of **SUPER HYPE!** Don't worry, though. Monte Cook is still the Hero Series Editor. It's just that with Monte's recent move, he didn't have time to get this column done by our deadline. So, here I am, acting as a pinch hitter.

Perhaps the most exciting news is that the *Adventurers Club* is back. That much is evident to those of you who are reading this column. Bill Robinson and myself, two Heroes from the Old Days, have taken over the editorial duties of this magazine. See 'Nuff Said for more information on our goals and plans. But you can help us! We need submissions for the AC. Short scenarios, articles on the **Hero System**, Gadgets, Treasures, Characters—the whole nine yards. We would also like to hear from you, and find out what you think about the AC and the **Hero System** line in general. Send your submissions and letters to:

Bruce Harlick  
Adventurers Club  
P.O. Box 720  
Belmont, CA 94002-0720

By the time you see this, *Champions of the North*, *Cyber Hero*, and *Normals Unbound* will be on the stands. Check them out! *Champions of the North* does for Canada what *Kingdom of Champions* did for Great Britain. *Normals Unbound* contains 96 pages of normals to liven up your campaign. Reporters, cops, girlfriends, invalid aunts—they're all there.

As for new releases, the big one is *Champions Universe*, which will probably be out for GenCon. Exhaustively previewed in *AC#17*, this book collects and integrates all the information from every **Champions** product. Everything you need to run a campaign in the world of Dr. Destroyer, Mechanon, and Foxbat will be there!

*Champions Universe* will contain a listing of every super-powered being ever to appear in a **Champions** product, and where their character sheet can be found. Along with the index will be a timeline for the **Champions** world, and information on how everything fits together.

*Champions Universe* promises to answer all the questions you have about the way the world is, and how it works. Magic, gods and demons, how the world has reacted to superpowered beings—everything you need to know is included. Don't miss this major release.

The new *Hero Bestiary* is scheduled for an September or October release. Prepare yourself for 200+ pages, chocked full of animals and fantastic creatures. A must for every *Fantasy Hero* campaign, the *Hero Bestiary* will also contain information useful for **Champions**, *Star Hero*, and other *Hero System* genres. Need to know the statistics for a guard dog? For a lion? For a wyvern? Get the *Hero Bestiary* and look them up!

Also scheduled for a fall release is *Champions Presents #2*. This book will give you three more **Champions** adventures, in the same style as the first *Champions Presents* book. Give it a try.

As we move into fall, look for *High Tech Enemies*, a collection of gadget and gizmo wielding bad guys, guaranteed to liven up any **Champions** game. Further on, we have the *VIPER Sourcebook*, written by Scott Bennie. Scott tackles VIPER, and answers all of your questions. I've seen samples from the book, and it looks great!

Scott Heine, another member of the **Hero Games Scott Squad**, is working on *Champions by the Bay*, a **Champions** sourcebook about the San Francisco Bay Area. *The House That Jack Built*, found in this issue, is a preview of some of what Scott has in store for you. Scott's got lots of other great ideas for this book, so check it out when you can!

I'd also like to draw your attention to an excellent **Hero System**-based Electronic Bulletin Board System, run by Bob Quinlan. Bob's been kind enough to write a few words about his BBS, **Red October**, and you'll find them at the end of this column. Well, that's it for now. Be a Hero!

Bruce Harlick

# CYBER HERO™

For all of you wanting to play in the cyberpunk genre *a la* the HERO rules, now you can!



The latest in the line of campaign books for the HERO system. In the tradition of *Fantasy Hero* and *Western Hero*, this book is all you need to start a campaign set in the grim, high-tech future. Included within are all the rules, guidelines and information to play in the cyber genre using the HERO System. **Stock #505**

## HERO BY MODEM

The **Red October** BBS is dedicated to supporting Hero gamers. It provides discussions on general role-playing, rules, character design, backgrounds, campaigning, and a lot more, all from the Hero perspective. You will also find information on upcoming products, reviews of new releases, and errata notes for material that's been out for a while. There's even a special section for discussion of the *Adventurer's Club*, presided over by Bruce Harlick.

You can download characters, campaign chronicles, and supplements submitted by **Red October's** users. Don't be surprised to find some familiar names among them; a lot of Hero authors are regular callers. There is usually some preview or playtest material from upcoming products for you try and comment on too. *Ninja Hero*, *Mystic Masters*, and *Fantasy Hero* all went through extensive playtesting on **Red October**.

**Red October** is not an official Hero operation. It is privately owned and operated as a hobby. The board was conceived as a place where Hero gamers could get to know each other, share ideas, and have some fun. After more than three years it has established itself as the primary contact point for a large and active segment of the Hero community. Everyone is welcome.

If you have a 2400, 1200, or 300 baud modem call 512-834-2548 to get either of **Red October's** two lines. If you have a 9600 baud (V.32 or HST) or 14400 baud (V.32bis or HST) modem call 512-834-2593 to make sure you get a high-speed connection. Set your communications program for 8 data bits, no parity, and 1 stop bit.

# WEAPONS COMBAT

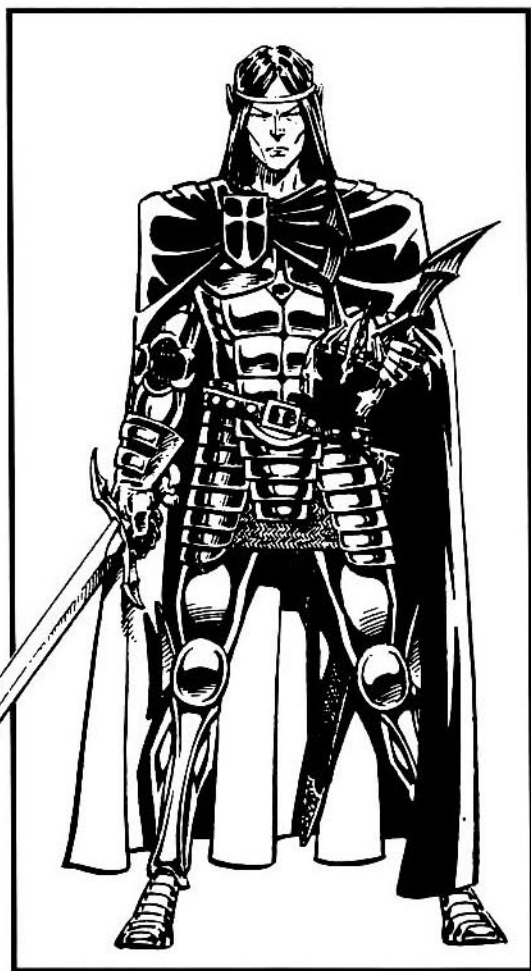
## A MARTIAL ARTS STYLE FOR FANTASY CAMPAIGNS

BY AARON ALLSTON

This article describes, in *Champions* 4th Edition terms, a martial art which simulates European-style melee weapons combat. This art, generically referred to as Weapons Combat, represents European weapon fighting styles from antiquity to the Renaissance. It's the art of the armored warrior, whether he be an 11th-century knight, a 3rd-century Roman centurion, a hoplite from Classical-era Greece, an Achaean juggernaut from the time of the Trojan War, or some fighter Gilgamesh murdered.

Not all characters will have this martial art. This is the art of very well-trained and experienced warriors, not common troops or inexperienced fighters.

When buying Weapons Combat, the character chooses one weapon type (from the list of Weapons elements) with which he can use the maneuvers. That choice is free. Further Weapon Elements, as usual, cost 1 pt each.



### DESCRIPTION OF MANEUVERS

**All-Out:** This is an all-offense attack which sacrifices some of the character's DCV to get an attack in. It does significantly more damage than a more routine attack.

**Attack:** This is a straightforward weapons attack. It is simply an improvement on a character's normal, non-martial attack maneuver.

**Charge:** This maneuver allows the character to make an attack at the end of a full move; it's especially apt for spearmen.

**Defend:** This is the standard Martial Block maneuver.

**Probe:** This is the maneuver used by a character who's still feeling out his opponent's strengths and weaknesses. It doesn't allow the character to do as much damage as other maneuvers, but gives him some additional DCV, appropriate to a cautious fighting approach.

**Resist:** With this maneuver, the character can block incoming attacks; the maneuver has a standard Abort function. The maneuver also allows the character to root himself in place and resist Shove attacks; he gets a +15 STR bonus to resist Shoves. This maneuver is especially appropriate to heroes who play at being one-man shield-walls.

**Shove:** With this maneuver, the character places his weapon up against his opponent and heaves his opponent backwards; the maneuver gives him +15 STR with which to do it. Important Note: This maneuver cannot be performed with a Short weapon, only with Medium and Long weapons.

### NOTES

You won't find Bind, Disarm, or Dodge maneuvers in this art. This is a deliberate choice. These maneuvers just don't seem to belong to the heavy-weapons feel of this art. (Besides, anyone can perform a Disarm or Dodge; everyone automatically has these maneuvers already. The art simply doesn't have martial art versions of them.)

Fighters cannot use flail weapons with the Weapon Elements. The martial art is suited more for rigid weapons of all sorts.

It's very appropriate for the GM to disallow the use of the All-Out and Charge maneuvers in campaigns which steer away from high damage values (characters can still push their strength and use Move-Throughs, after all).



# NEW RELEASE MYTHOLOGY

JULY 1992



MONTH	ST.#	TITLE	PRICE	NOTE
JULY '92	6050	.....Shadow World Master Atlas, 2nd ...	\$24.00	.....2nd Ed., Perfect Bound Softcover
	9050	.....Space Master RPG Book	\$26.00	.....Reprint, Perfect Bound Softcover
	1530	.....Alchemy Companion	\$18.00	..... <i>Rolemaster</i> Sourcebook
	1303	.....Time Riders	\$15.00	..... <i>Rolemaster/Space Master</i> Genre
	925-930	Night Brood Miniatures	\$ 4.00	.....Ships for <i>Silent Death</i>
AUGUST '92	420	.....Normals Unbound	\$13.00	..... <i>Champions</i> NPC Sourcebook
	505	.....Cyber HERO	\$20.00	..... <i>HERO System</i> Genre Book
	4000	.....Northwest Middle-earth	\$30.00	.....Campaign Atlas/Gazetteer- 2 Bks
	1901	.....Rolemaster Companion VI	\$13.00	..... <i>Rolemaster</i> Sourcebook
	7013	.....Night Brood(Boxed)	\$20.00	..... <i>Silent Death</i> Expansion
SEPT. '92	421	.....Champions Universe	\$18.00	..... <i>Champions</i> Sourcebook
OCT. '92	507	.....HERO Bestiary	\$18.00	..... <i>HERO System</i> Sourcebook

THE GAMING GODS HAVE DECREED THAT THIS INFORMATION IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE ALWAYS, FOREVER AND MOST CERTAINLY!

## WEAPONS COMBAT

Maneuver	Pts	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
All-Out	5	+1	-2	Strike +4 DC (+2 DC/K)
Attack	4	+0	+2	Strike +2 DC (+1 DC/K)
Charge	4	+0	-2	Strike +2 DC (+1 DC/K) +v/5, FMove
Defend	4	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Probe	5	+1	+3	Strike
Resist	4	+0	+0	+15 STR to Resist Shove; Block, Abort
Shove	4	+0	+0	+15 STR to Shove
<b>Skills</b>				
WF: Common Melee Weapons (it is mandatory that the character know how to use any weapons for which he's taken the Weapon Element, below)				
WF: Staves				
<b>Elements</b>				
Weapon	+1	Use Art With Axes, Maces, Picks		
	+1	Use Art With Blades (Swords & Daggers)		
	+1	Use Art With Clubs		
	+1	Use Art With Pole Arms		
	+1	Use Art With Shields		
	+1	Use Art With Staves		
<b>Style Disadvantage:</b> -10				
<b>Optional Rules:</b> When the character is using Short weapons, attacks take a 2d6+1 location. When the character is using Medium or Long weapons, attacks take a 3d6 location.				



# CHAMPIONS

THE SUPER ROLE-PLAYING GAME®

## The Computer Game

BY BRUCE HARLICK

Ever since computer role-playing games started to take off, **Champions** players have been looking for a good superhero game for their PC. To date, their wait has been in vain. But good news is here! **Champions**, arguably the best superhero RPG on the market, is going computer. Better yet, the game will be in the stores this summer.

**Champions: The Computer Game** is being created by **Hero Software**, and distributed by **Konami**. **Hero Software** has some familiar names behind it: Steve Peterson and Ray Greer, two of the original Heroes are involved, as are long-time **Hero Games** fans Evan and Nicky Robinson and Ken Zarifes, creators of *Mail-Order Monsters* and *Centurian*. With that much enthusiasm and love for the **Hero System**, you know that the computer game will stay true to the spirit of the paper game.

The game has just gorgeous graphics and artwork. You can check out the cover art, by George

Perez, by looking at the cover of this magazine. The animation art work is even better. **Hero Software** is going out of their way to give us all a beautiful game, as well as a fun one.

**Champions: The Computer Game** can easily be split into two parts: the character generator, and the game. Each of these parts is a robust product, and deserves a closer look. Since writing up characters comes before playing a game, the character generator seems the logical place to start.

This is one great character generator! It will allow you to build *any* hero or villain you can think of! Of course, not all the powers will work with the computer game, but you can use this spreadsheet to build and keep track of all your characters. **Hero Software** claims that the program will print to almost any printer, so you'll be able to use the program to print out your character sheets. No more running out of space! No more math errors, either.

Artwork by  
Eric Blumrich  
Frank Cirocco  
Bruce Nakagawa  
Leonard Robel  
Scott Ruggels  
Don Woo

Music Composition  
Furious Means

Audio Programming  
Mike Freeman

MAKE CHAR	SAVED GAME	NEW GAME
CREDITS	DEMO	QUIT

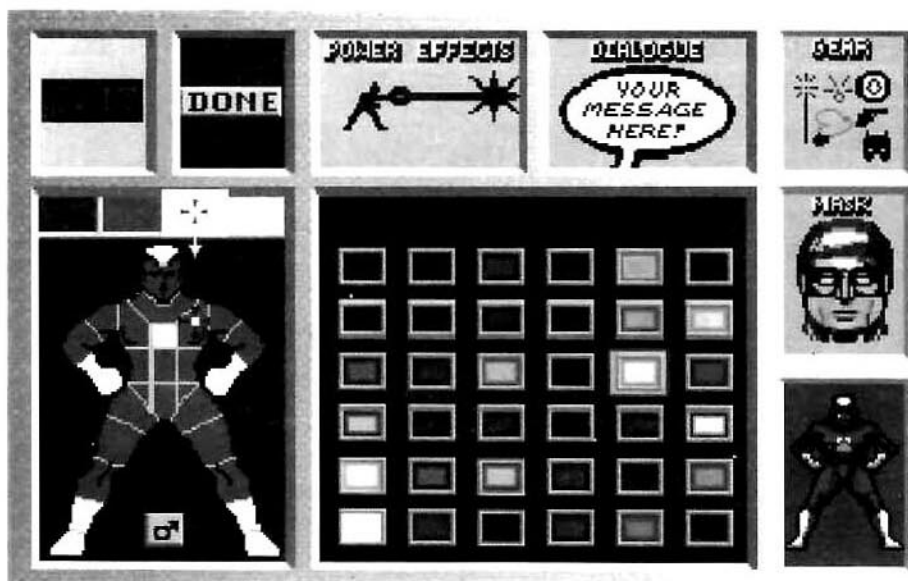
NAME SHRINKER			EXPERIENCE	0	BASE PTS	100		
CHARACTERISTICS			POWERS		DISADVANTAGES	MORE		
VAL	CHAR	PTS	PTS	EFFECT	POWER	DISADVANTAGE	PTS	
10	STR	0	50	4 LVLS	SHRINKING	VULNERABILITY	30	
20	DEX	20	50	100%	ENERGY BLAST	VULNERABILITY	20	
			25	15"	FLIGHT	PSYCH LIM	15	
3	BODY	-2	5	+1	STEALTH	PSYCH LIM	15	
8	INT	-2	5	+3	PS	PSYCH LIM	15	
8	EGO	-4	5		INSTANT CHAN	REPUTATION	5	
20	PRE	10				HUNTED	20	
14	COM					HUNTED	15	
10	PD					SECRET ID	15	
10	ED							
5	SPD	20						
7	REC	0						
50	END	0						
27	STUN	0						
7	OCU							
7	OCU							
3	ECU							
0	R-AD							
0	R-ED							
<b>DISADS TOTAL</b>						<b>150</b>		
<b>BASE PTS</b>						<b>+</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>EXP SPENT</b>						<b>+</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>TOTAL PTS</b>						<b>=</b>	<b>250</b>	
<b>CHA COST</b>		<b>37</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>POWERS COST</b>		<b>= TOTAL COST</b>	<b>237</b>

The character generator is a custom built spreadsheet, designed with your characters in mind. You can raise (or lower) your character's stats, and the cost is figured automatically. Easy to use, but pretty standard stuff, as spreadsheets go. Where this spreadsheet shines is in the powers, talents, perks, and skills department. Every power, every skill, every perk, every talent published is included in the databases. Dr. Sun has an Energy Blast? No problem, just click on powers, click on Energy Blast, select the number of dice, and you're done. If the power has Advantages or Limitations, a few clicks of the mouse will take care of that, as well. And best of all, all of the math is done for you.

Disadvantages are handled the same way. A few clicks of the mouse, a little typing to define those Physiological Limitations or Hunteds, and you're finished. If you plan to use your character in the computer game, you might as well take a Secret ID and at least one DNPC. If you don't, the computer will give you one anyway, when you start the game. This is done to help enforce the soap opera part of the game.

If your campaign includes Powers, Advantages, Limitations, or Disadvantages that are not in the rules, that have been created by you for use in your campaigns, not to worry. The character generator includes places for things that are not in the rules. It's 100% flexible.

NAME SHRINKER			EXPERIENCE	0	BASE PTS	100	
ADD POWER						END	
PTS	LIM	ACT	ADUBASE	EFFECT	POWER	END	
50		50	40	4 LVLS	SHRINKING		
			+1/4		REDUCED ENDURANCE		
50		50	50	100%	ENERGY BLAST		
25		37	30	15"	FLIGHT		
			+1/4		REDUCED ENDURANCE		
5		5	5	+1	STEALTH		
5		5	5	+3	PROFESSIONAL SKILLS		
5		5	5		INSTANT CHANGE		
<b>140</b>		<b>POWERS COST</b>					

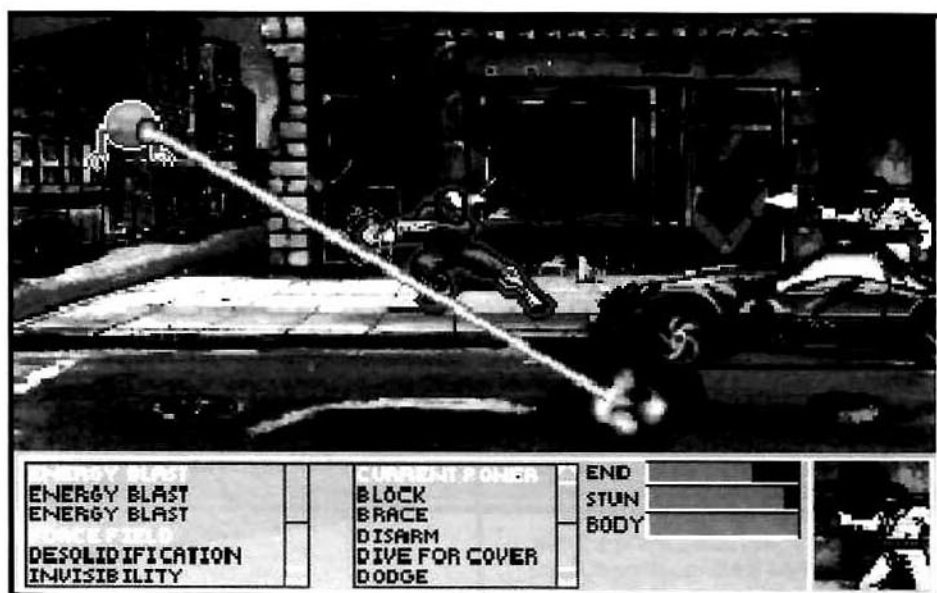


The character generator includes what's been called "a jewel of a feature." (*Computer Gaming World*, April, 1992). Once you've finished with the nuts and bolts of building the character, it's time to customize it. And *Champions: The Mechanon Menace* lets you do just that. Non-artists will be delighted with the costume coloring utility. Once again, a few clicks of the mouse is all you need to create a unique costume for your crime-fighter.

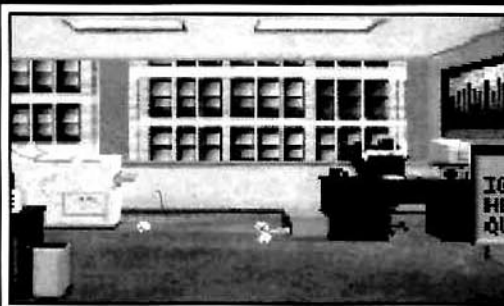
And costumes aren't the only thing you can customize. You can select your hero's power effects, foci (if any), mask type, and even define a standard soliloquy. When you are finished, the computer crunches all of the information down to create a custom hero icon for use in the game. You can even print out the costume if you have access to a color printer. The character generator alone is worth the cost of the game!

Once you are done creating your hero, it's time to play. *Champions: The Computer Game* is a full-featured, robust role-playing game. Designed for replayability, the various scenarios are interlinked, and have the feel of a real campaign. As you proceed through the various stories, you'll be able to see a plot unfold. Best yet, there's more than one plot going on at the same time! Will your hero be able to stop the supervillains?

Combat is handled just like the paper game. This is not an arcade game. To Hit is governed by the standard OCV vs. DCV method, and how often you fire is controlled by your SPD characteristic. Of course, you don't deal with the numbers, or see the dice roll. You interact in a beautifully animated battleground, where you selected your targets and maneuver your hero by using a mouse. It gives the excitement and feel of an arcade-style game, with



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DO YOU  
IGNORE THE ALERT  
HEAD FOR QUEST RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
QUIT

out the frustration of feeling limited by your own reflexes. If you play Seeker, your character will hit and dodge with Seeker's abilities, not your own mundane ones. Best of all, the costume you so carefully designed in the character generator is the costume your hero is wearing in the combat screens.

Combat takes a while to get the hang of, but soon you'll be blasting (or punching) bad guys with the best of them. The game includes a training area to help you get your combat skills up to snuff. The full range of combat actions is available to you. You'll be able to use dodge, haymaker, brace, kick, and all the rest of the maneuvers that gives *Champions* its flexible feel. And you aren't limited to just walking back and forth, like some arcade games. You get full run of the area you are in, in three dimensions. This part of the game really has to be seen to be believed.

But there is more to *Champions* than just combat, and this game covers that aspect as well. All of your Skill checks are done in the background, to further the plot. Say you want to sneak into a warehouse. If you have Stealth Skill, the computer will make your skill roll. If you succeed, you'll be able to sneak unseen into the warehouse. If you blow your roll, or don't have the skill, you might find a reception committee waiting for you. Characteristic checks are handled the same way. You won't know when your skills are being checked, but certain skills will be helping you all along.

**Hero Software** has outdone themselves with the way the game handles character interaction. When you go to talk to someone, a captured prisoner or a policeman, you have the option of setting your attitude towards them. You can choose anything from hostile to servile. Different people



THE DAY'S GONE FROM BAD TO WORSE. YOU LEFT MECHANON AS A SMOLDERING PILE OF JUNK. HE JUST CAN'T BE HERE, BUT HE IS, AND MORE POWERFUL THAN EVER.

THE CUSTOMERS ARE TRAPPED BEHIND COUNTERS OR HAVE FLED, SCREAMING, INTO THE STREETS. TWO POLICEMEN, BRAVE BEYOND WORDS, ARE TRYING TO KEEP MECHANON BUSY WHILE THE REMAINING CITIZENS TRY TO ESCAPE. YOU KNOW THOSE COPS DON'T HAVE A PRAYER UNLESS YOU DO SOMETHING ... RIGHT NOW!



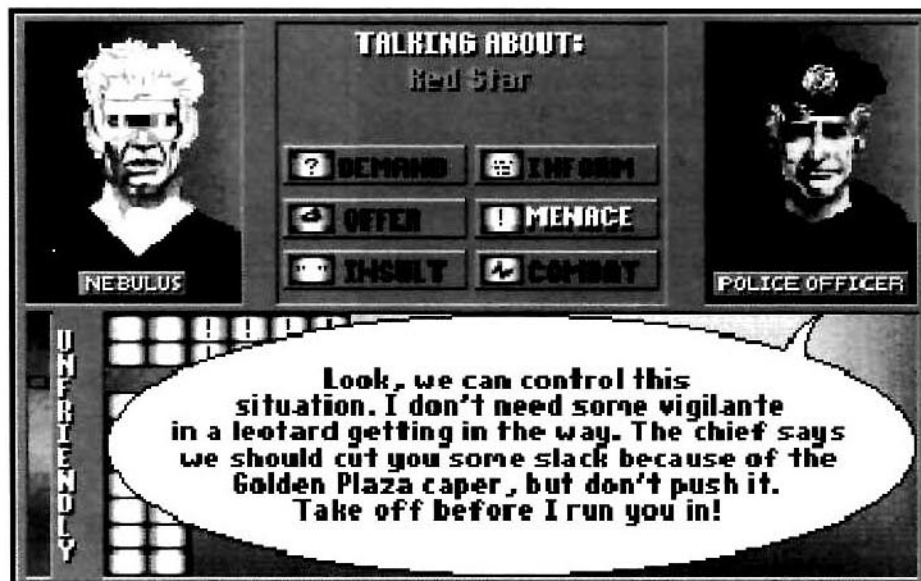
respond best to different attitudes. It's fine to be unfriendly to the thug you just captured, but you'll want to choose a different approach for the police officer. Once you've set your attitude, you'll be given a list of subjects you can ask about. Then, you choose different actions, like explaining the situation (to the cop), or threatening to do bodily harm unless you get the info (to the captured thug.)

You can keep track of your progress visually, at the bottom of the screen. As you make positive progress, icons begin to bridge the screen, from left to right. If you make a mistake, or alienate your would-be informant, those icons will vanish. If you succeeded in building a bridge all the way across the screen, the person you've been talking to will give you the information you asked about. If you fail, or run out of time, they won't give you a thing.

As you interact with the various NPCs, the computer keeps track of your attitude and treatment of

them, much as a GM would. If you are consistently nice to a reporter, or policeman, you may begin to build a rapport with that NPC, and it will be easier to get information from them. If you are inconsistent, or consistently rude or violent with a given NPC, they may not want to talk to you, and it will be much harder to get information from them in the future. And since you'll be running into the same NPCs over and over again, as you would in a regular campaign, it pays to build good relationships with certain NPCs.

No comic book would be complete without a little soap opera, and this game is no exception. As you play the game, you'll find your mundane life interfering with your career as a superhero. You'll have to make tough choices about whether to sleep so you can go to work the next day, or go for one more patrol. If you call in sick too often, you could get fired. And don't forget about your DNPC.



All of these factors combine to give this computer game a feel that is very much like the paper game. The flexibility, the depth, and the fun is all there. Steve Peterson, President of **Hero Software**, has said that disks containing further story lines will be available in the future. So rather than buying a whole new game when you've finished all the stories that come with the base game, you'll be able to continue to enjoy your investment.

Of course **Hero Software** plans to release future products, ones that add new powers and abilities to the game. And new stories, of course. The plan is to eventually have a series of games that will handle all of the **Champions Powers, Talents, Skills, and Perks**. **Hero Software** is planning Amiga and Macintosh versions of the software.

*Champions: The Computer Game* is going to be one of the hottest computer games of the year. And one of the best, to boot. For all of you Heroes out there who have IBM compatible computers, this is a must have. For those of you without a computer, here's another reason to consider buying one. The game will be easy to spot. Just look for the box with the same cover as this *AC*.


*Champions: The Computer Game* will require an IBM-compatible 286 computer or better, 640K memory, MCGA or VGA, and a hard drive. A mouse is recommended. Roland, Soundblaster, and AdLib sound boards will be supported.

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**STOCK # 506**



# PALOMON: THE CURSED KING

AN ENCOUNTER FOR MYTHIC GREECE

BY AARON ALLSTON

In the time of the Age of Heroes, Palomon was the prince of Tathonos, a small island kingdom in the Mediterranean. Tathonos lay southeast of Lemnos and was seldom visited by traders, royal emissaries, supplicants, good weather or wealth.

When the old king, Palomon's father-in-law, died, Palomon came to the throne and vowed to change things. He resolved to become the greatest of kings. He started by gathering his few scraggly warriors, loading them onto the island's sole warship, and raiding a nearby isle that was even smaller and poorer. Once he'd added that island's wealth to his own, sold its surviving women and children as slaves, he decided his decision was a good one.

A year later, he had an impressively savage, if small, pirate fleet under his control. Three years after that, the fleet was no longer small.

But that year, the pirate king sacked a Lemnian city and looted the temple of Hephaestus, Craftsman of the Gods... and patron of Lemnos.

Hephaestus is a thinking man's god. He planned and executed a gruesome revenge.

First, he made a glorious crown and gave it to Aeolus, Lord of the Winds, provided that Aeolus keep all the ships of the island of Tathonos landbound... for five years.

Second, he crafted a wondrous golden horn of plenty for the goddess Demeter, queen of growing things... if only she'd do him a little favor: Cause all plants on Tathonos to die, not to grow again for five hard years.

For Hades, Lord of the Dead, Hephaestus crafted the greatest of the three presents, adamantine doors for the god's palace in the city of Erebus. The doors could only be budged by the mightiest of gods, but would swing open at Hades' command; and, being intelligent, they would announce all visitors. Hades mounted them in his dining hall, and did his favor for Hephaestus: He let the doomed citizens of Tathonos die... and worse... as Hephaestus dictated.

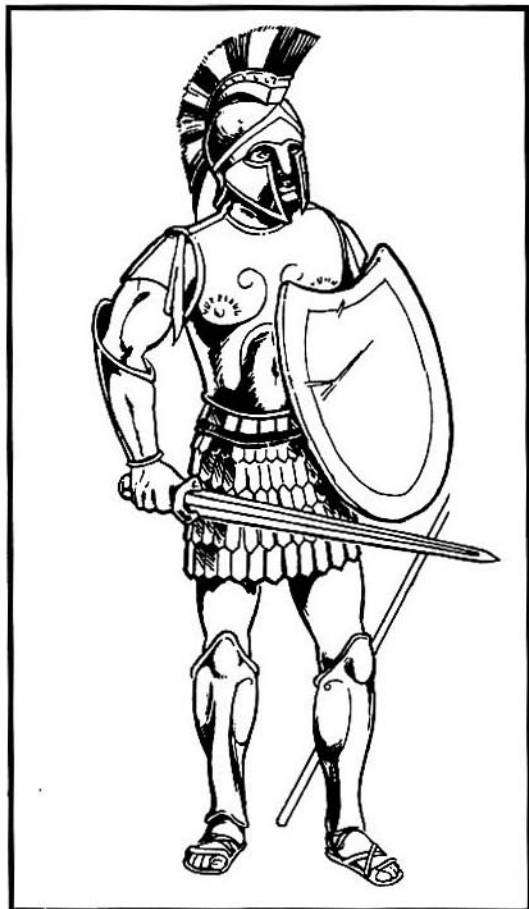
For a period of years, Palomon watched his island perish. The farmers and fishermen who were most faithful to the gods could escape, paddling boats and rafts outside the areas where the winds went mad, but all others—particularly the pirates—were stranded. Winds and storms would throw all escaping water-craft back to Tathonos, smashing them on the rocks or the beaches.

The men of Tathonos had only fish to eat, and could only catch fish from shore or boats straying no more than a few hundred feet from shore. This

wasn't enough. They gradually starved. Palomon, as king, could seize enough food from his subjects to stay healthy... in the beginning, at least.

The citizens perished, but did not exactly die. They shrivelled until they were nearly skeletons... then died... and kept walking, their skin rotting and washing off their bones, until they were skeletons. They no longer heard Palomon's orders; they did nothing but wander the island, murdering fish and birds, ignoring their living king and one another.

In the fifth year, only Palomon still lived, and he was rapidly nearing the end. He returned to his palace from fishing one evening and found a glorious meal laid out for him—and no host or servants in sight. He fell on the meal, devouring golden fruits and roasted meats, drinking heavenly wines... and then he felt Hephaestus' magical meal begin to *change* him.



Mystical substances coursed through his veins, changing the structure and nature of his bones, his organs. Then agonizing heat blasted through him, literally burning his flesh to ash.

When the transformation was done, what was left was a skeleton—but a skeleton unlike all the others, a king of skeletons.

Palomon's bones were all made of gold—real gold, living gold which healed its wounds, gold supported by a superstructure of the magical metal adamantine. And these bones were still, and permanently, superheated: He had only to touch wood to set it afire, and could only rest his weary bones on stone thrones and beds.

His brain, now a crystalline mass, was still partially functional within its gold-and-adamantine casing. But his mind didn't work entirely right. Palomon remembered his name and rank; he knew he hated Hephaestus and now hated all living things; he remembered a little of his battle tactics. But details which were true for him in his last days of life remained as "truth" in his mind even when they were no longer reality. For instance, since the men of Tathonos hadn't been able to leave the island, in his new form he never wondered (and was, in fact, *incapable* of wondering) if he could leave now. He never once tried to leave the island, even years after the five-year curse of his island was past.

But in his new form, at long last, he could talk to his subjects again: Hear their petty clacking complaints, order them to perform their duties—such as patrolling the island, killing all living things encountered, keeping the village and palace in good order, and so forth.

And so, in his new role as king of skeletons, he has existed on the haunted island of Tathonos, seeing to the elimination of all living things which set foot or fin or wing upon his territory, hopelessly trying to think clearly so he can plot revenge on Hephaestus, struggling to remember his life and his ambitions.

## CAMPAIGNING PALOMON

In a fantasy campaign, Palomon and his dead island of Tathonos are supposed to be a challenge for player-characters... but it's up to the GM to decide just what sort of challenge they are. Here are several scenario ideas for using them:

**(1) Divine Cleanup.** Long after the fact, Hephaestus could remember that he left a potentially deadly situation on the island of Tathonos; he would speak to a devout PC in dreams, instructing that PC to take a sturdy crew of heroes to Tathonos and destroy the evil to be found there. Of course, he wouldn't say much more than that; it would be cheating!

**(2) Divine Revenge or Test.** Hephaestus could maintain Tathonos as a killing ground; he'd have made a long-term contract with Aeolus so that only ships specified by Hephaestus could ever reach the island (and, often as not, they'd reach it via a stormy shipwreck). Hephaestus arranges to have ships manned by heroes he doesn't like wreck upon Tathonos' reefs, so that the ships' crews will

be slain by Palomon and his minions. Hephaestus "loans out" the island to other gods for the same purpose. Likewise, Hephaestus' motives for bringing heroes to Tathonos may not be quite that sinister; he may simply wish to test them, hoping to find a hero who will make short work of Palomon, the kind of hero who can undertake great quests for Hephaestus.

**(3) Modern Horror.** Remember the movie *Jason and the Argonauts*, particularly the island where Hephaestus' forge and old treasure were guarded by Talos? Remember the lovely sense of antiquity and danger in that sequence? For a change of pace, use the island as a treasure-hunter's goal in a 1930s or modern campaign... especially a horror campaign. One character, either a treasure-hungry PC or a somewhat cracked NPC, stumbles across a map and a legend. The map shows the approximate location of Tathonos in an off-the-sea-land quadrant of the Mediterranean, and the legend tells of the treasure hidden away there millennia ago... a treasure of a treacherous king's bones encased in gold. So what if those who recorded the legend didn't know all the facts... didn't know that Palomon still walked... But the treasure aspect of the legend could still be true, since gods and nymphs could have stowed their treasure on Tathonos, relying on the protection of the skeletons. Likewise, treasures seized from millennia's worth of hapless travellers could be stuffed into one of the large Mycenaean-era tombs on the island.

## PALOMON'S TACTICS

Palomon, who has some tactical sense left, takes a spider's-web approach to his war on the living.

He stations skeletons at all approaches to the island: On every seaside promontory, on every trail and road. Often, these observer-skeletons are buried up to their necks in sand or midden-trash, built into a wall or sealed into a tomb or cave (with only a skull-sized hole left open), etc.

When they see living intruders, these skeletons need only turn toward the ruined town of Tathonos and speak to their king (a function of Palomon's Mind Link). Humans can't hear this speech, of course, though they may (GM's discretion) feel a cold, creepy wind whenever such things take place. Were they to see a skeleton talking to its king, they'd simply see it facing the ruins and moving its jaw... which, in and of itself, is an eerie scene.

A skeleton discovered by the living will, of course, attack the living... but they're not supposed to be discovered.

No, Palomon has ordered his skeleton minions to wait and continue to report. Once he is satisfied that the human intruders have decided that the island is safe, once they've let their guards down, and especially when night falls, he sends his troops into action.

The skeletons march. They rise from the necropolis outside the walls of the town of Tathonos. First, they fall on the poor dupes who were left behind to guard the boat (or plane or helicopter). Just like in the movies, these deaths usually take



place off-camera... though a PC, or an NPC child or love interest, might survive the attack and make it to the main encampment, giving their friends a spare few moments' warning.

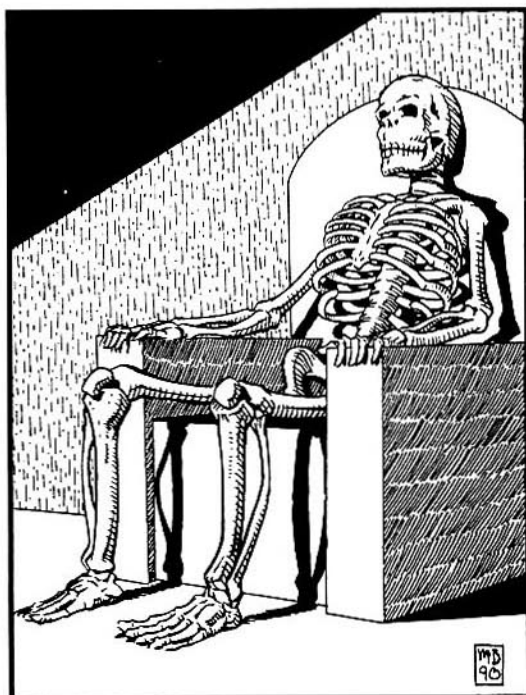
Then, of course, the skeletons, joined by Palomon, circle the area where the humans are and move in on them. Before they move in, though, they announce themselves, banging their arm-bones on their shields in an eerie drum-like rhythm: *Rattle-rattle-rattle, clack-clack-clack; rattle-rattle-rattle, clack-clack-clack...* Imagine that sound coming from dozens or even hundreds of skeleton warriors and you imagine a scary noise indeed.

Finally, the skeletons move in on the human encampment, chopping, biting, murdering. Soon enough, the humans they have slain will join them as dead warriors. Will the heroes destroy them with some clever play? Will the humans break through their perimeter and escape back to the boat/plane/helicopter? Depends on how you've set it up.

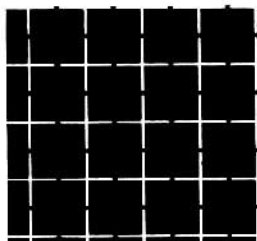
PALOMON				
STR: 30	DEX: 15	CON: 20	BODY: 20	
INT: 15	EGO: 23	PRE: 23	COM: 12	
PD: 10	ED: 10	SPD: 4	REC: 10	
END: 40	STUN: 45			Cost: 145
Cost	Powers	END		
18	A armor, 6 Physical & 6 Energy	0		
30	Characteristic: +30 DEX, Only to Provide +10 DCV vs. Missile Att. (-2)	0		
180	Damage Reduction, 75% Physical, Energy, and Mental	0		
30	Life Support, Full	0		
45	Mind Link, group (skeletons), x128	0		
30	RKA, 2d6, 0 END Persistent, Damage Shield; Always On, Does Not Activate When Weapon Hits Palomon (-1)	0		
9	Transform Corpses to Skeletons, Major, 1d6 Cumulative, Concentrate 0 DCV, Extra Time 1 Turn	2		
Skills				
12	Combat Levels, +2 in H-t-H, +1 OCV Spear			
4	WF: Common Melee, Common Missile			
Perks				
63	Followers 140-pt Skeletons, 128 (+35 pts)			
Equipment				
0	Spear -1 OCV 2d6K STR 13; Shield +3 DCV			
Pts	Disadvantages			
15	Cannot Talk (All the Time, Slightly)			
25	Hates All Living Things (vc, total)			
25	Cannot Think Rationally (vc, total)			
OCV: 5+ DCV: 5+ ECV: 8 Phases: 3,6,9,12				
Costs: Char	Powers	Total	Disad	Base
145	+ 421	= 566	= 65	+ 501

## VARYING THE DETAILS

Naturally, you can alter the whole tone and approach of this adventure. Change it from a barren Mediterranean island to a shadow-haunted ruin of a German castle, make Palomon a free-thinking king of the undead... do whatever works.



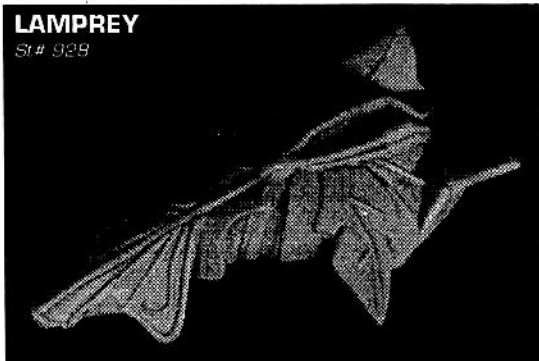
SKELETONS OF TATHONOS				
STR: 10	DEX: 10	CON: 0	BODY: 10	
INT: 10	EGO: -	PRE: 10	COM: 10	
PD: 1	ED: 0	SPD: 3	REC: 2	
END: 0	STUN: -			Cost: -10
Cost	Powers	END		
27	A armor, 3 Physical/3 Energy	0		
90	Automaton: Does Not Bleed, Takes No Stun, Takes Only BODY	0		
30	Characteristic: +30 DEX, Only to Provide +10 DCV vs. Missile Att. (-2)	0		
Skills				
3	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Thrown Spear			
Equipment				
0	Choose One: Spear -1 OCV 2d6K STR 13, or Sword +1 OCV 1d6K STR 10; & Shield +2 DCV			
OCV: 3 DCV: 3 ECV: n/a Phases: 4,8,12				
Costs: Char	Powers	Total	Disad	Base
-10	+ 150	= 160	= 0	+ 140



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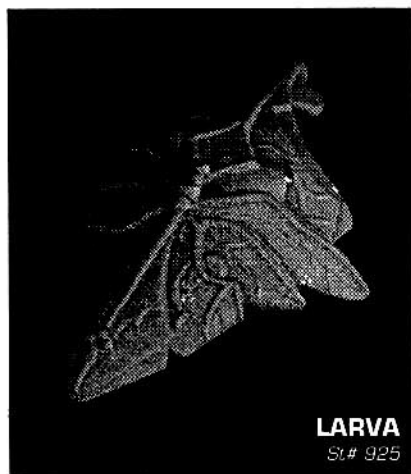
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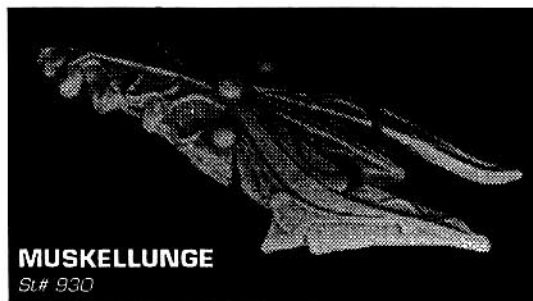


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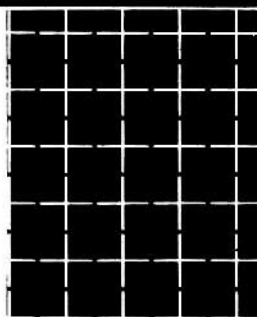
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# THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

BY SCOTT F. HEINE AND STEVEN HOLMES

*"Two things are certain in this world. First, all magic is evil at its very core, despite how benevolent it may attempt to appear.*

*Second, a little bit goes a long way..."*

— from the journal of Dr. Eric Wraith

## BACKGROUND

Jack Crawford's black Mustang sped along the leaf-strewn roadway as its driver hissed in anger. "Unimaginative?! How dare those pompous fools call me unimaginative! I've mastered the hidden arcane secrets of some of the greatest mystical masters, and have even contacted the minions of other planes and commanded them into my service. For twenty years I've woven a web of black artistry that's shaken a thousand men. And they dare to call me 'unimaginative!'"

The car's headlights gleamed off the guardrails as Jack's fists trembled with anger on the steering wheel. Jack Crawford, a dark-haired man in his late forties, was heading home at a furious pace from having been rejected into membership of New York's Circle of Mystics (see *Organization Book One: Circle and METE* or the upcoming *Mystic Enemies*). Since he was a little boy, Jack had been studying the black arts, seeking contact with beings both dark and powerful. Yet his own sorcerous talents were weak, and his motivations were selfish and destructive. Thus, the Circle rejected his requests to join them, and now Jack's temper had pushed him beyond explosive.

Jack's foot pressed the accelerator to the floor as he raced around the twists and turns of the winding road. Long, twisting fingers of the bare trees stretched out as a canopy above the road, and the chilled Autumn air hung heavy in the night. Pale, foreboding mists danced to and fro as if in celebration of what was to come.

Jack barely noticed the warning sign as he hit the hairpin turn at over 85 miles per hour. And the pain of crashing through the dashboard and splintering glass lasted just a moment before it was replaced by cold and darkness. Jack lay still in the thick of the shadowy gloom for what seemed an eternity before the Voice spoke.

"Jack Crawford," it said in a hollow whisper as cold and ominous as the grave. "Welcome to my domain. Just moments ago, your anger brought you into the very clutches of death. Yet I have reached out and saved you from destruction. You owe me your life, Jack Crawford, and I intend to collect what is due me."

Jack's spine tingled with dread at these words. He wanted to run, yet his arms and legs remained motionless, waiting helplessly as soft footsteps shuffled toward him in the shadows. The darkness

slowly peeled away in the faint flicker of a smoky candle and a tall, hooded figure leaned over Jack's body. "Do not be afraid, Jack Crawford. No harm shall come to you as long as you remain my faithful servant. All your life you have sought me as you dabbled with matters black and arcane, and now you see me face to face. I know you well, Jack Crawford. I know the petty lust for power in your heart, and your willingness to forsake all else to gain it. Today I give you that opportunity. For the price of your soul and an eternity of service at my side, I shall teach you the secrets of power beyond your imagination. But know this: one enemy stands against both you and me and he would do all to crush you and keep the power from your grasp. His name is Eric Wraith, and he is known in your world as "the Warlock." You must use the power you acquire to destroy him before he destroys you. Only then will you stand unchallenged among men."

Jack's eyes grew wide as he thought of the power he was being offered, and his lips parted in a wicked smile. "Very good," the Voice chuckled. "Then you shall learn the secrets of tapping power unlimited. Welcome to my service, Jack Crawford."

Jack had no idea how much time had passed as he studied with the Ancient One. But during those days amidst the shadows, the hooded figure showed Jack how to draw magic energy to himself and use it in dark and terrible ways. And when Jack was ready, the Ancient One sent him back to Earth.

---

Again in the land of the living, Jack began to prepare for his battle with Eric Wraith. The Warlock's reputation had already grown strong, and Jack feared he would need all the power he could summon to defeat the traitorous sorcerer. Jack found an abandoned home high in the hills above the San Francisco Bay—a place from which he would launch his terrible assault—and began to weave the spell that would open the gateways to power untold. Standing in the center room of the house, Jack watched as eldritch power was released from his fingertips to form a rip in time and space, opening a gaping maw in the air vomiting forth magical power. As the arcane energies began to trickle into his body, Jack felt a rush of strength and dominance like he had never known. His appetite for power grew as the power filled his form, and he sought to open the gateway to power ever

wider. Soon Jack was amidst a flood of magical power that showed no sign of slowing, and Jack laughed loudly at the thought of confronting his designated foe with such raw, black force.

However, Jack overestimated his own ability. As the flow of power poured ever stronger, Jack began to realize that he was unable to shut it off. Before long, his frail, mortal form was saturated with sorcerous power, yet the magical flow continued to gush forth. The house itself began to fill with arcane energy, and every timber swelled and creaked as the power continued to pour forth. In horror, Jack stretched forth his arms and shouted incantations for the flow to cease. But his flesh began to calcify with the magic, and his bones and skin and hair became like burning stone.

The house itself came to life as the magic continued to pour forth, shifting its shape and design at random. Doors that once led to pantries now opened to other worlds. A staircase which once led to the attic now traveled to other times and places. Shadowy specters were sucked into the house from the Netherworld, and every inch of the building resonated with power and mystery.

---

The magic of the place swirled like some ominous storm over the House, with a funnel of power twisting down from the invisible gate into Jack and his House. Across the bay, Eric Wraith awoke with a start. His senses had picked up on the terrifying swell, and he soon located the source of the danger. With all the wisdom and strength he could muster, the Warlock set himself against the eldritch gate in an attempt to draw it shut. But the flow of power was simply too strong, and all Eric succeeded in doing was slowing the flow and bringing it under control. Eric soon decided to set up residency in the throbbing, shifting House while continuing to seek a means for shutting off the flow of power.

Recently, other sorcerers from around the world have confronted the Warlock and accused him of opening the gateway himself, refusing to believe Eric's explanation of the problem's origin. Thus, Eric has found himself isolated from the community of magicians, struggling alone to keep the House that Jack Built under control.

---

The House is a remarkable place. It's refined Victorian styling seems to deny that anything is odd about the place, yet visitors know differently. The House rises along one ridge of the hills over Berkeley (though the GM may place the House in any appropriate location in

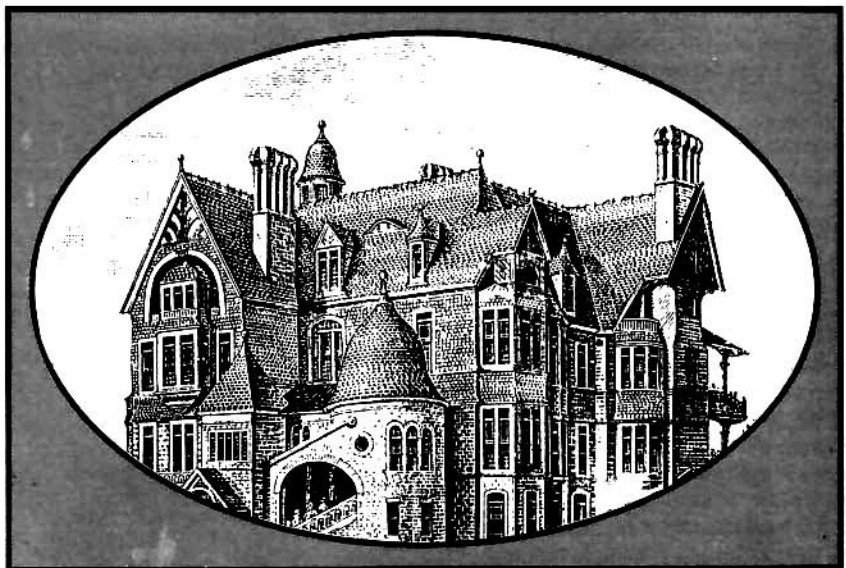
his campaign), standing tall in the shadows of the enormous trees surrounding the structure. A cobblestone road winds up the hill before it, passing through a heavy iron gate before entering the yard. A decaying carriage house is established just to the east of the building, and a huge marble fountain bubbles quietly in the center of the yard. Behind the House are the remains of a once-beautiful garden, though its roses and hedges now grow wild into the woods.

During the day, the House appears as a serene, quiet place. It is only when one concentrates that he realizes that no wildlife will approach the place. At night, the House is a terrifying silhouette against the sky, with flickering lights high in the windows, and haunting sounds heard throughout the grounds.

The interior of the House is overcrowded with ornate, Gothic furniture and Victorian antiques. Velveted wallpapers line the halls, and crystal chandeliers swing heavily above many of the rooms. The place is lit only by candles and roaring fireplaces, and the flickering shadows create an eerie environment. Occasionally sounds such as footsteps and knocking can be heard in the halls. Some of this is the work of the phantoms inhabiting the place, and some is the result of the thinning barrier between this world and shadowy realms beyond.

As the House throbs with the flow of magic, it continues to grow and change shape. Thus, travelers of its labyrinth-like passageways must always be wary lest the room they were just in disappears. Furthermore, doorways throughout the House will occasionally open to other times and places throughout the cosmos, and visitors must always look carefully before they pass through a portal. And somewhere, deep within the bowels of the House, hidden behind secret walls and passageways, is the calcified form of Jack Crawford, his face frozen in a stony expression of terror and helplessness, his eyes burning bright green with hatred and magic.

Though it is impossible to fully map out the ever-expanding and ever-changing House, an example of one possible design is included below.



## LEVEL ONE

**1. Entrance:** Rough stone steps lead up from the front drive to the enormous wooden doors at the front of the House. Large brass knockers, shaped like cruel grinning gargoyles, hang on the doors. The eyes of the knockers seem to stare intently at all who would seek to enter. Just beyond the doors is an ornate entry hall. The floor is covered in black marble, and intricate gold paneling lines the walls. An enormous crystal chandelier swings ominously overhead, illuminated by the flickering candles in brass sconces along the walls. An impressive staircase, covered in plush red velvets, leads up from here. A coat closet and bath are just to the north of the hall.

Along the west wall, between a pair of sconces, stands a heavy full-length mirror. However, the mirror does not always cast the familiar reflection of the one who gazes into it; instead, it shows a true reflection of the person's inner being, and these images are never flattering. For instance, should a murderer look in the mirror, he would see a reflection of himself covered in blood stains. Or if a wealthy, aggressive business man gazed at the mirror, he would see a fat, gluttonous image choking on gold and power. When Eric Wraith peers into the mirror, he sees himself with jet black skin, faintly glowing eyes, and two ivory horns (he has not revealed this to anyone).

**2. Gentlemen's Parlor:** Just off the entry hall is a beautiful, albeit cluttered, parlour. The air always hangs with the heavy scent of rich tobacco, and the candles always burn with excess smoke. The walls are painted with an elaborate mural portraying aging men in fox-hunting uniforms chasing after all sorts of beasts, both earthly and unearthly. Large leather chairs, tiffany lamps, oriental rugs, and a variety of statuary (mostly Hellenistic women) dominate the room.

In the northeast corner of the room is a door leading to a dark-paneled billiard room. If one is standing in the parlour and listening carefully, he can hear the faint sounds of a billiard game coming from behind the door. However, once the door is opened, the room is revealed to be empty, and a thin layer of dust blankets the table.

The small alcove in the southwest corner holds a life-sized statue of an Amazon warrior in full battledress, carrying a stone-tipped spear and dragging the remains of a stuffed boar. Inside the boar's mouth is a hidden switch which opens a secret panel leading into the tower (see below).

**3. The Tower:** The tower, which can be seen clearly from the outside yard, can only be accessed via the hidden door in the Gentlemen's Parlor. The tower itself is five stories high, rising far above the roof of the mansion. Windows throughout the tower are covered by heavy black drapes. Occasionally, from the outside of the House, these drapes are pulled back, and grinning ghouls can be seen peering through the windows to the world outside. However, at these times, no one is known to be in the tower.

A suspended iron staircase runs the full height of the tower, though it leads to no other doors. Climb-

ing the tower leads nowhere. However, if someone were brave enough to close his eyes as he ascended the steps, he would soon find that this staircase is a portal to the Netherworld: a realm of shadows and dread.

**4. Trophy Room:** This chamber off the Gentlemen's Parlor is filled with a menagerie of stuffed and lifeless (?) animals. Included are a white tiger, a huge grizzly, several peacocks, an emu, three large bats, a coiled python, an infant gorilla, and several other beasts.

**5. Ladies' Parlour:** This large room, separated from the Gentlemen's Parlor by sliding panel doors, is decorated in gaudy pinks and oranges. The smell of decaying flowers often fills the air, and a variety of cold spots (below 30°) can be found throughout the room. The furniture is a collage of various eras, including medieval, Edwardian, gothic, and colonial. Shelves and tables throughout the room are cluttered with an infinitude of knickknacks (several of which have been found to possess unusual properties). Enormous iron candelabras stand in each corner, eternally lit with flickering, smoky candles.

When a visitor is alone in this room, he will soon be surrounded by a clamor of mocking laughter and hateful giggling, all from unseen ladies haunting the room. The cruel sounds are enough to inspire panic and insanity should one remain here too long.

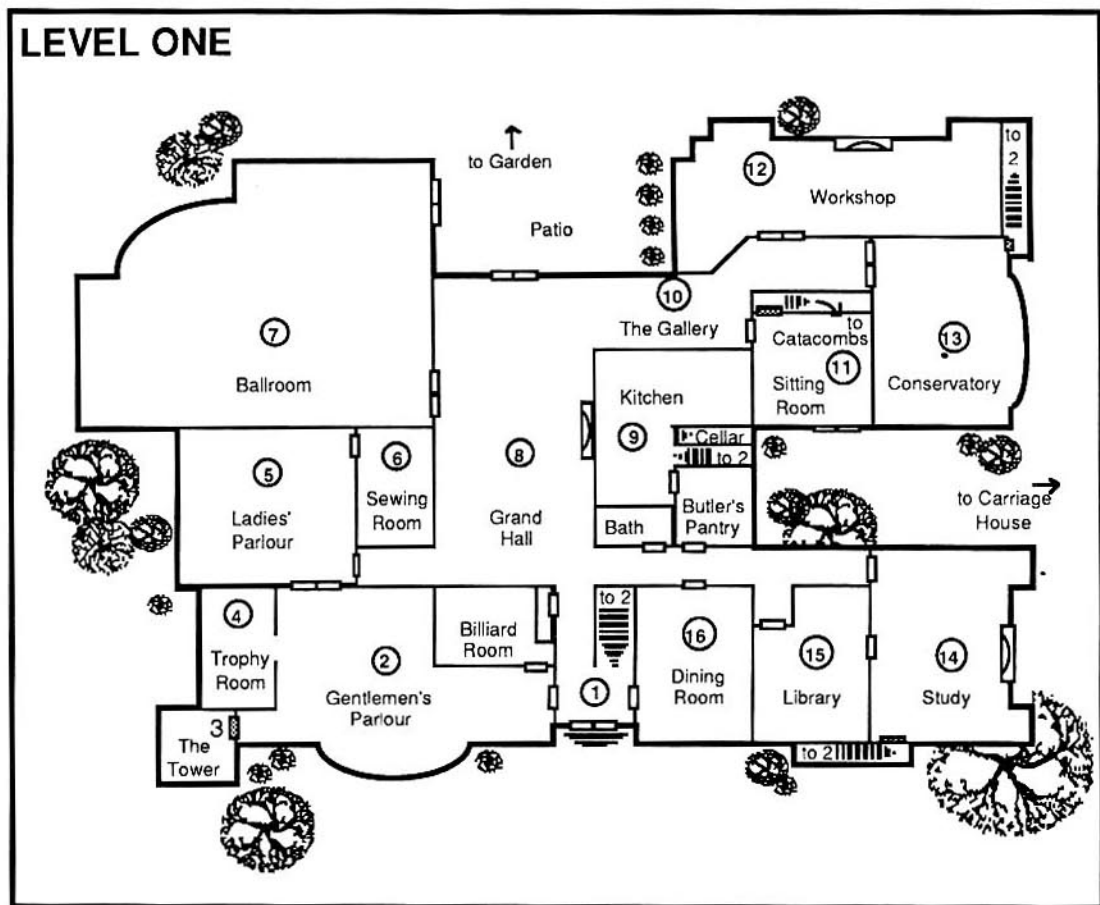
**6. Sewing Room:** Just off the Ladies' Parlour is this Sewing Room. The room is bare in decor; the walls are neither painted nor papered, and the floor is unfinished wood. Standing in the shadows of one corner is an antique spinning wheel, its spindle constantly, slowly dripping with drops of thick, dark blood. No one has remained long in this room, and no attempt has ever been made to learn the story behind the bleeding spinning wheel.

**7. Ballroom:** This floor of this enormous chamber is covered in a beautifully polished parquet. A curved glass window looks out over the hills stretching behind the orchestra stand, and shimmering chandeliers swing merrily overhead. French doors in the northeast corner lead out onto a clay-tiled patio.

This is one of the few cheery rooms in the House. And it has become a favorite haunting place of several ghosts. Each full moon, at the stroke of midnight, shadows began to dance carelessly across the wooden floor, and the faint sounds of big band music can be heard in the night air.

**8. Grand Hall:** Of all the rooms on this level, the Grand Hall is perhaps the most foreboding. Long tapestries depicting violent battles stretch up the walls to the ceiling two stories above. The floor continues the black marble tiling of the entryway, though deep scars mar its surface. A seven-foot tall fireplace dominates the east wall. Standing along every wall are dull, rusting suits of vicious armor, each carrying a battleaxe, spiked mace, wicked sword, or some other deadly weapon. Within the helms of each suit, angry red eyes glow faintly—the glances of warriors from another realm waiting patiently for someone to invite them into our world.

## LEVEL ONE



Characters with magical sensitivity or Danger Sense will always be aware of some looming horror and future evil lying in wait within this chamber.

**9. Kitchen:** The Kitchen is a collage of black and white tiling, dark iron fixtures, and gleaming carving blades hung neatly along one wall. Would-be cooks have learned to avoid this place, for on three separate occasions, the blades and pots and other fixtures in this room have come to life, soaring about and threatening anyone present. Dr. and Mrs. Wraith eat out a lot these days.

A simple butler's pantry lies between the kitchen and the dining room (see below). Narrow stairs along the east wall lead down to a cellar. The cellar itself has a musty smell, and wine racks and pantry shelves line the walls. One wall of the cellar has been bricked shut, and the condition of the mortar hints that the wall was made from the other side. No attempt has yet been made to see what lies behind the bricked wall.

A "servants' staircase" also leads up from here to the second floor.

**10. The Gallery:** To the east of the Grand Hall is the wide hall known as the Gallery. The tall walls are covered with a variety of portraits from the floor to the ceiling. Everyone who has visited the gallery has been able to locate at least one portrait which looks exactly like himself, though in the dress of another era. Several visitors have commented that some paintings' eyes seem to follow them, though this has never been verified.

Occasionally the canvas of a painting will peel away from its frame, revealing yet another, different painting beneath. One time, however, the peeling canvas revealed a window into another era beyond its frame. That particular painting and frame have now been removed and destroyed.

**11. Sitting Room:** The furniture and wallpaper in this room have been replaced on two separate occasions. However, each time the new furniture began to take on a scorched, ruined look just hours after being set in place. Once, Dr. Wraith fell asleep in a chair in this room while waiting to see the odd scorching event take place. He soon awoke from a nightmare of being engulfed in flames as a crowd of robed men chanted around him. Naturally, when he awoke, the furniture was blackened and ruined.

A hidden panel on the north wall leads to a stone staircase descending into the Catacombs far below the House (see below).

**12. The Workshop:** This long room is currently being used as a workshop by the Warlock. Several volumes on mythology and sorcery lay scattered about on benches and tables. Racks along the south wall hold a variety of vials and bottles containing all the weird things one would expect to find in a wizard's workshop.

The doors to this room are always locked, and the windows are boarded over. The Warlock has the only key.

**13. Conservatory:** This beautiful, albeit odd, room is papered in lavender and green velvets. Plush, violet drapes hang on the curved east window, and rich cherrywood furniture fills the room. In the southwest corner is an antique harpsichord.

On rare occasions, a little girl named Gretchen has been seen in this room playing with a ragdoll she calls "Nick." Eric has determined that Gretchen is not a ghost or other-worldly being, though he has never been able to persuade the girl to tell him who she is, where she comes from, how she gets into the room, or where she goes when she's not there.

**14. Study:** In the eastern wing of the House is this large study. An inviting fire usually blazes brightly in the brick fireplace, and a large window looks out across the front grounds. In the center of the room is an antique mahogany desk, covered in clutter. The top drawer contains a sharp, jeweled letter opener that was once used by Adolph Hitler.

This was Jack Crawford's favorite room as he prepared for his great and final incantation. Every morning at sunrise, the faint echoes of Jack's never-ending screams can be heard from beneath the floorboards. Several attempts have been made to determine the source of the agonized cries, though none have been successful.

In the southwest corner of the room stands an ornate grandfather clock. The clock has not worked since Jack's "accident," though bringing the hands to point to midnight will release a hidden door behind the clock. The door opens to narrow stairs to the secret passageways on the 2nd level.

**15. Library:** Just west of the Study is a magnificent Library. Carved gothic shelves cover every wall from floor to ceiling, and sliding ladders can be placed to reach the upper shelves. Books covering subjects such as magic, mythology, criminal psychology, hidden tribes, archaic medicine, toxicology, animal anatomy, and other unusual subjects can be found in abundance. Also included are great works of gothic fiction and other spine-tingling tales. Occasionally, a book will be found with a copyright date from the future (such as a copy of *Heroic Tales From the Wastelands*, dated 2023).

In one corner of the room stands a silver easel holding an obscure, unfinished painting of Francis Bacon. Scribbled on the back of the work in black oil are the words, "He is dead. He must be."

**16. Dining Room:** This formal dining room boasts of decaying elegance and former glory. The wallpaper, once a soft blue velvet pattern, is peeling away. The large oak table is scarred and splitting. Spiders seem to like this room, for it is always draped in whispers of webbing. Food brought into this room spoils quickly, and the Wraiths, when they eat at home, have learned to eat on the patio or in one of the parlours.

Hanging on the east wall is an enormous portrait of Jack Crawford. He is dressed in black and gray renaissance robes, and looks very much like Faustus. His dark eyes seem to follow every movement in the room, and his lips are drawn back in an angry snarl. Dr. Wraith finds the portrait disturbingly intriguing, though he has not yet identified its true subject.

## LEVEL TWO

**17. The Hallway of a Hundred Horrors:** An innocent door leads from the second floor balcony into this seemingly infinite hallway. Stretching far beyond sight, this hallway is wallpapered in a horrible, evil design of ghoulish white faces and skeletal shadows on a deep lavender background. The eerie light which illumines this hallway has no apparent source. Rotting carpet lies underfoot, and the air is heavy with the smell of decaying meat. Whispers can occasionally be heard in the hallway, echoing from some far-off nightmare.

Along each side of this infinite hall are heavy ornate doors covered with a dark wood stain. Each has a brass knocker in some gargoyle-ish design, and an enormous brass handle. Any character with an appropriate Danger Sense will detect imminent doom from behind each door.

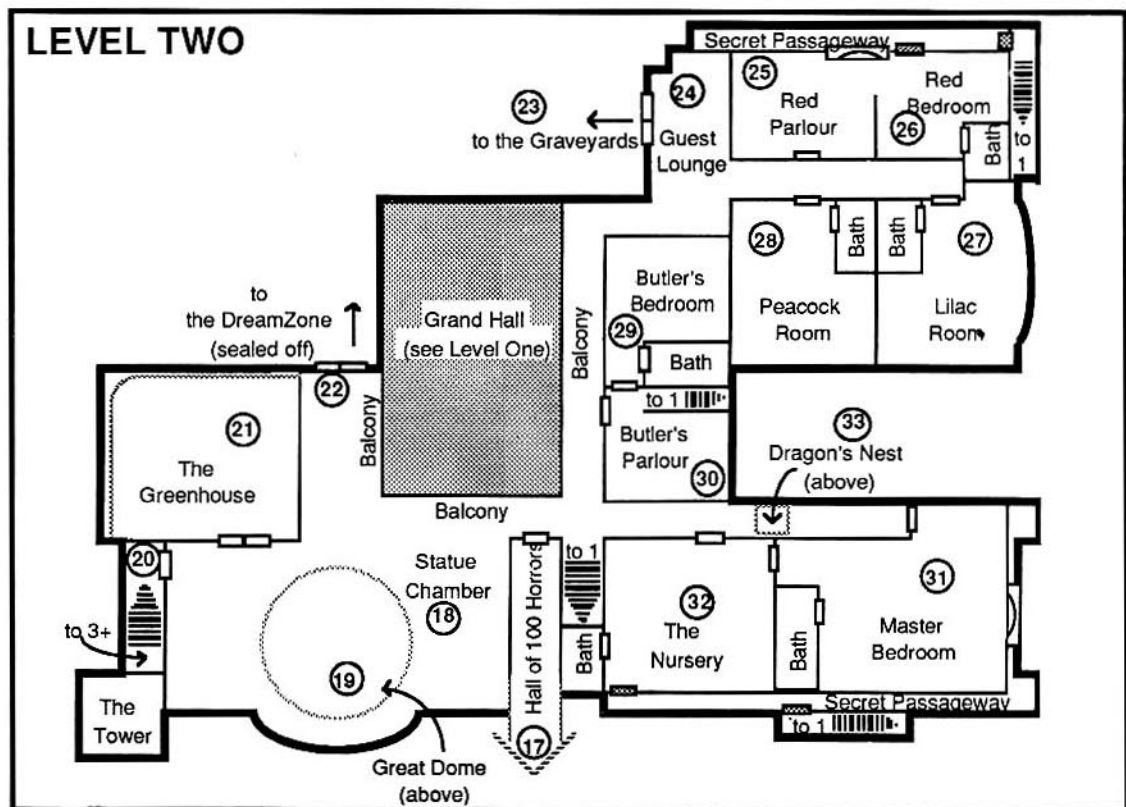
Warlock, sensing the danger, has never opened any of these doors. Thus, it is up to the GM what lurks behind each one. In each case, the GM should create something absolutely horrific and powerful to endanger the heroes (and possibly the world). To make things even more complicated, some important life-saving artifact may be rumored to be behind one of the doors, forcing the heroes to search through the mysterious terrors of this endless hallway.

**18. Statue Chamber:** This large, open vault is illumined from the light of the Great Dome (see #19, below). Its floor is covered with dark marble, and heavy scarlet curtains are draped along the walls. Throughout the room are dozens of marble statues. Each is incredibly realistic, frozen in a pose of absolute terror. None of the statues ever casts a shadow.

Warlock has learned that these statues—of children, adults, animals, etc.—were all once alive. Some insidious magic (actually one of the first spells Jack Crawford mastered) has turned them to stone and brought them to this place. Warlock believes that there must be some trigger to return these victims to normal, and he often ponders the matter in his spare time.

One statue in this room is different from the rest. It is a bronze sculpture of a 6-foot tall warrior, adorned in a flowing cloak and rather nasty-looking spiked armor, and carrying a heavy mace. In actuality, this is the Black Paladin (see *Classic Enemies*), who was defeated by Warlock and entombed in bronze when the Paladin tried to exploit the powers of the House. It is possible, through sorcery, to release the Black Paladin, though it should be noted that his powers will be greatly enhanced while he remains within the House (see the notes on Magical Enhancement, below).

**19. The Great Dome:** High above the Statue Chamber is an huge, vaulted dome. Windows in the dome allow light to pour into the room both by day and by night. Characters with an ability to sense magic will notice that the magical vortex which created and empowers this House cascades into the building at this point.



**20. Mysterious Stairway:** This staircase leads to the third level of the House and beyond. However, from the outside of the House, no third level can be seen. It is beyond this staircase that the House's unpredictable, chaotic nature really runs rampant. On those few occasions when characters have dared to explore above the second level, they have almost always become lost as rooms and hallways shift locations, new chambers appeared and disappeared, and all sense of direction becomes hopelessly confused.

These upper levels are not detailed in this article. They are left to the GM's crafty imagination to design.

**21. The Greenhouse:** The northwest corner of this level is occupied with a sizable, overgrown greenhouse. The north and west walls of its room are made of yellow-tinted glass, allowing the bright light of day to shine in. Shelves and tables are scattered about the room, and everything is covered in heavy mosses, fungus, and mildew. The air is steamy in this room, creating a somewhat tropical feel.

Throughout the room are thousands of rare and unusual plants. Most are growing wild and unkempt, their roots and branches extending outside of their planters and winding about the walkways.

The GM may wish to place here unusual plants which will play a part in some scenario. For instance, in one corner might be the last surviving blossom of the Black Lotus, a plant whose eaten roots are rumored to heal all who are pure of heart and kill all who harbor some unconfessed evil. Or perhaps the vines which dangle from the rafters overhead are of a somewhat...carnivorous...nature.

**22. Sealed Doorway:** The two French doors which lead off from the balcony at this point have been hastily covered with wood planks and iron nails. Several months ago, Warlock discovered that this passageway opened directly into the dimension of dreams known as "the DreamZone" (see *Champions in 3-D*). Since then, this portal has remained shut, not only to keep anyone from accidentally entering the 'Zone, but to also prevent anything from the 'Zone from entering our world.

**23. The Graveyards:** Two more French doors lead from this lounge out into a gloomy landscape. This time, the portal leads to an eternally foggy and shadowy wood. A cobblestone path leads from the doors through the dark, dead trees and on toward a high, spiked, iron gate. The gate hangs loose on its hinges, and enters into an enormous graveyard. Chilling mists cling to the thousands of tombstones, and menacing black ravens fly 'round the mausoleums.

This is a graveyard of the yet-to-die. Occasionally, a wanderer will discover the headstone of someone he knows (or even his own tombstone!), and can note the year in which the person will perish. Of course, as Scrooge once pondered, it is hard to say whether these tombstones represent the dates when people will die, or whether they are warnings of who might die if things don't change. The GM can play with this idea as he wishes.

A truly vicious GM might wish to populate this graveyard with various undead horrors, or make it the home of Death himself (when he's not out reaping, that is).



**24. Guest Lounge:** This small but comfortable lounge is provided for guests staying in the House. It is furnished with an antique loveseat, two end tables, and two silver candlesticks. A shelf on the east wall holds a chiming clock and several old books (mostly Shakespeare). The furniture in this lounge has been known to rearrange itself when no one is present.

**25. Red Parlour:** This first guest room, the largest in the House, is divided into two rooms: the Parlour and the Bedroom (see #26, below). Each of the rooms has been wallpapered with a bright red, textured velvet covering. The carpet is bright red as well. Even the ceilings have been painted a bright red. The effect is dizzying.

This parlour has two large chairs with matching footstools, a small barrister bookcase (which is currently empty), and several small shelves containing a variety of cluttered knickknacks. A small, candle-bearing, crystal chandelier hangs overhead, illuminating the room with sparkling rainbows and glimmers of light.

A secret passageway runs along the north walls of both the Red Parlour and the Red Bedroom. A hidden latch in the bedroom's wardrobe opens a panel to the passageway.

**26. Red Bedroom:** This dismal room is furnished with a large, canopied bed covered with a black and gray quilt. The nightstands, wardrobe, and dresser have all been covered with a black stain. The effect of these dark furnishings in the bright red room is disorienting.

Pity the person spending the night in this room, for it is haunted with spirits of great fear and agony. Each night, the air in this room becomes quite cold, and sobbing can be heard echoing from around the bed. Then, suddenly, the room will grow deadly quiet. Soon a slow rapping will be heard at the door to the room, and the handle and lock will begin to turn, as if something was trying to get into the room. The rapping will become louder and louder as the haunting becomes impatient. Soon the door and room will echo with the clamorous poundings on the door, and any occupants in the room will know that some horrible specter desperately wants into the room. They will also know that they must not let the phantom in; its intentions are surely malevolent.

No one has ever opened the door to see what is causing the pounding and rattling of the lock. And no one outside of the room has ever heard the noise.

**27. Lilac Room:** This guest room is far more pleasant than the Red Room. The room is papered in a soft, lavender covering. Lace and satin cover the furnishings, and everything always smells fresh. A vase on the dresser is always filled with freshly cut lilacs, and these flowers have never been known to wither.

Guests staying in this room are certain to encounter a small white kitten that somehow finds its way into the room (even past locked doors and windows) each night. The kitten will show affection to any woman in the room, but will always raise its fur and hiss at men. Otherwise the kitten is harmless. By sunrise, the kitten will have vanished.

**28. Peacock Room:** This guest room is so garish in its decoration that it would give any occupant a headache. Teal blue paint, stenciled over with bright pink and gold flowers, covers the walls. Tapestries with cunning designs in bold colors hang on the walls. Several pots and vases throughout the room hold an assortment of beautiful peacock feathers. Every shelf, dresser, and nightstand in the room is covered with gaudy clutter and antique costume jewelry. The bed is lumpy and uncomfortable, and the bathroom smells of mildew.

However, unlike the other guest rooms, the Peacock Room is not haunted. Guests must choose whether they want to put up with ghosts or bad taste when they stay in this House.

**29. Butler's Bedroom:** This small and comfortable bedroom is occupied by the Wraithes' butler. Simple walnut furnishings fill the room. A mirrored wardrobe holds a dozen matching tuxedos with hunter green trim. Only two unusual features will be noticed by visitors: First, a strand of garlic hangs over the bed. Secondly, the door to the room has thirteen different locks and bolts, all of which are used at night.

**30. Butler's Parlour:** This quaint sitting room is used by the Butler on his time off in the evenings. A small reading lamp is placed near a large comfortable chair, and the scent of pipe tobacco hangs heavy in the air. Servant's steps lead down from this room to the first level.

**31. Master Bedroom:** This room is magnificently furnished in antiques and intricately woven fabrics. A large canopied bed dominates the room, covered with a gold comforter. Two silver chandeliers hold hundreds of candles, filling the room with soft flickering light. An enormous wardrobe holds the Wraithes' clothing. Maria Wraith also keeps a musical jewelry box here, filled with stylish costume jewelry.

The bathroom off of this room is decorated in salmon-colored marble and mint green linens. A large claw-foot tub forms a centerpiece to the room.

Warlock has gone to great troubles to seal this bedroom from magical mischief and haunting. However, spooks still get in occasionally and dance about the room, moving objects, causing cold spots, and wailing throughout the night.

**32. The Nursery:** This room is currently unused by the Wraithes (though Maria is secretly hoping to change all that). It is decorated in bright yellow and blue, with hundreds of stuffed toys scattered about. A whitewashed crib stands against the south wall. Moving it aside will reveal a hidden panel leading to the secret passageway which runs about this area of the House.

Occasionally, when this room is empty and the doors are closed, the sounds of children laughing will be heard coming from the room. Upon investigation, the stuffed toys will be scattered about as if they were alive and playing with each other prior to the intrusion.

**33. Dragon's Nest:** The ceiling of the hallway has been chewed open at this point. Resting in the rafters above the hallway is a nest made of tattered fabrics, straw, and various shiny bobbles. The bones of dozens of cats, mice, squirrels, and other critters can be found scattered about, picked clean by the Wraithes' pet dragon. If some shiny object is lost in the House (such as an important magic ring or an expensive wristwatch), this is the best place to look for it; the dragon has a habit of collecting important shiny objects. Of course, it's best if the nest is searched while the dragon is out hunting; few things are worse than fighting with the dragon to reclaim something it thinks it now owns.

## OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST

### THE CARRIAGE HOUSE

To the east of the House stands a dilapidated carriage house. Currently the structure serves as a garage for the Warlock's classic black limousine. Hundreds of crows have made nests in the rafters of this building, and can be heard squawking at all hours of the day.

On foggy nights, a ghostly apparition of a horse-drawn carriage can be seen speeding out of this building and into the night. Each time this has happened, someone in the area has become violently ill. Warlock suspects a connection between the carriage and the illnesses, though he has not found a way of destroying the ghostly carriage.

### THE GARDEN

A small pathway leads from the patio north to an overgrown garden. Once beautifully manicured roses now grow wild, their thorns and blossoms becoming tangled in the iron fencing. Several large willows drape lazily over the wild underbrush, and the creaking branches of hundreds of long-dead bushes strangle any plant that would try to grow here.

A stone well stands in the center of the garden. Warlock has detected a magical influence upon the well, though he is uncertain of the well's properties. Is it a Wishing Well? A portal to another world? A yawning black opening to some hidden burial site? Only the GM knows...

### MRS. MCTAVISH'S HOUSE

The nearest neighbor to the Wraithes is Mrs. Myrtle McTavish. Myrtle is now in her early eighties, and is just beginning to lose her grip on things. Living next to a haunted mansion\* doesn't help much.

Hundreds of cats roam Myrtle's house and yards—her only companions in her old age. Each of the cats has a name, and Myrtle treats them as her children. The Wraithes' pet dragon sees the cats as feeding stock, and Myrtle is just sure that "those weird folks up the hill" know something about her "babies'" disappearances.

Myrtle McTavish is a suspicious neighbor, and has a habit of showing up and incredibly inopportune times. For example, if a mob of crazed zombies were to break loose from the graveyards (upstairs) and begin to roam the House, Mrs. McTavish would appear at the front door hoping to borrow a cup of sugar from Maria. Warlock's continued attempts to keep Myrtle from learning about the true nature of the House are a constant source of comedy.

### THE CATACOMBS

A secret door from the Sitting Room (#11, above) leads to a dark, stone stairwell descending into the depths below the House. Whereas the Great Dome (#19, above) serves as the entry point for the magical cascade which floods this House, this stairwell serves as "the drain." The House itself is saturated with enchantments and mystic energy, and the excess, or "waste," flows down this stairwell and into the Catacombs below. To continue the analogy, the Catacombs then serve as a magical sewer or cesspool for the House, and they reek of bad magic and spoiled sorcery.

The Catacombs themselves are an intricate labyrinth of stone passageways stretching off for miles in every direction under the House. There is no light in the Catacombs; visitors must provide their own source of illumination. Occasionally, cryptic writing (mostly magical terms) will be found etched into the walls of the Catacombs, though it is unclear who (or what) made these markings.

It is easy to get lost in the Catacombs. On one occasion, Warlock searched for the final "drain" or exit point of the House's magic down there. He took a scarlet cord and unraveled it after himself, hoping to follow it back to the House once he had finished. After wandering the stone corridors for over an hour, Warlock began to make his way back. However, he soon discovered that his scarlet cord had been chewed clean through just a few hundred feet behind him. He wandered the Catacombs for three days before stumbling upon the stairs leading up.

No one really knows what all the sour magic that floods the Catacombs may have created. Likewise, no one knows who or what inhabits the place. And, to be honest, no one really desires to find out!

Somewhere in these tunnels is a chamber holding the calcified remains of Jack Crawford. Mystical energy continues to pour into his stony flesh, and his horrified eyes stare wide into the darkness. Surely if a way were found to release Jack, he would be one of the most magically powerful individuals who ever lived. He would also be hopelessly insane, and very angry. (Yes, GMs, this is a possible plot hook...)

### THE NETHERWORLD

This colorless dimension of shadows is a domain of evil spirits and restless dead. It is a place of constant torment and despair, and serves as the home for the Ancient One. Fortunately, the Dark Lord cannot leave the Netherworld, and must content himself in meddling with Earth's affairs through emissaries and servants.

## THE HOUSE'S POWERS & MAGICAL ENHANCEMENT

As noted above, the House will occasionally alter its shape and layout to some degree. This occurs mostly on the upper levels, but has been known to happen on the main floor as well. However, the House has never altered the shape of an occupied room. Thus, once a character enters a room, the room he is in will remain stable as long as he is there. However, the hallway outside might be altering itself dramatically, and the character may have quite a surprise (and a difficult time getting his bearings!) once he steps out of the room.

Most of the haunting attributes of the House—the door banging, unusual scents, cold spots, etc.—have been bought as Images that affect most of the senses. This is not to say that real, tangible spooks cannot be used in the House; however, if the GM wishes to have the characters physically interact

with a specter, he is encouraged to design the ghost himself.

One of the most striking features of the House is its effect upon magic-using characters. The tremendous flood of eldritch energy which pours into the House also pours into any magical characters and objects in its presence. This causes all magical powers and items to surge in power. Thus, Warlock's spells are far more powerful while he is in the House. Likewise, if Slug (see *Classic Enemies*) were to enter the House, his "mystic ankh" would also increase in its abilities. And if Black Paladin is ever revived (see the Statue Chamber, #18 above), his armor, shield, and mace, as well as his "magically enhanced characteristics" will all be affected. Treat this as 8d6 of Aid vs. all magical powers and items in the House, adding up to 50 Power Points to the characteristic or power. However, since this increase finds its source in the House, the added points tend to fade quickly once someone leaves the place.

Finally, the mystical nature of the House tends to resist damage. This can have an eerie effect, as heroes try and break through a door to help the screaming victim in the room beyond, only to find that the door is much tougher than it looks. This resistance to damage can also be humorous, as Warlock tries in vain to pound a nail into the wall to hang a picture.

### THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

Val	Char	Cost
5	BODY	3
3	DEF	3
20,000 hexes	Size	34
Cost	Attribute/Ability	
5	Location: Suburb	
100	Extra-Dimensional Movement, any dimension, any time; usable against others (+1), 0 END (+½), not usable on self (-½)	
170	Clairsentience (sight only): precognition, see into other dimensions, maximum range = 9600 inches, no range penalty (+½), 0 END (+½)	
162	Images vs. sight, sound, smell, and touch (rattles, cold spots, phantoms, and other hauntings); -5 to PER Rolls, 16 hex radius (+1), 0 END (+½)	
30	Shape Shift: any floorplan, 0 END (+½)	
123	8d6 Aid to all magically based powers and abilities simultaneously (+2), maximum 50 point increase; narea effect 15,000 hex radius (+4), 0 END (+½), points fade 5 pts./Segment (-½), not usable on self (-½), always on (-½)	
60	75% physical Damage Reduction	
60	75% energy Damage Reduction	
300+	Disadvantages	
20	Distinctive Features (really creepy), not concealable, major reaction	
5	Reputation (haunted), 8-	
20	DNPC: Maria Wraith (normal), 14-	
8	Watched by Warlock, 14-	
10	Hunted by magic-oriented villains, 8-	
387	Points from Jack Crawford (i.e. exploited bonus)	
<b>Costs: Char Powers Total Disadv Base</b>		
40 + 710 = 750 = 450 + 300		

### DR. ERIC WRAITHE, "THE WARLOCK"

**Background:** Eric Wraith, a young soldier from Liverpool, was just nineteen years old when stray shrapnel killed him somewhere in a muddy trench in central Europe. He had been fighting against the Nazis for the way of life he cherished. He felt salty-sweet blood trickle from the wound as everything grew dark. Soon, he was dead.

Or was he?

Eric's eyes opened to a realm of endless, colorless shadows. His nostrils were filled with the foul stench of blood and bile. A silver candlestick, adorned with flickering black candles, barely cut through the gloom with its dancing light. All was deathly silent.

He had been lying there for what seemed an eternity before the Voice spoke. "Eric Wraith," it said with a voice that sounded ancient and foreboding. "You have been chosen as my new apprentice. I have snatched you from the clutches of death, and you will repay me with your endless, loyal service. To disobey me is to suffer untold agony."

Eric shuddered at the horror of his situation. The Voice soon manifested itself as an ancient man, cloaked in crimson and indigo. Shadows clung to the hooded figure like thirsty leeches, and he walked with a slow, deliberate shuffle. His breath was like the stale air in a forgotten tomb, and his clawed touch was that of a corpse.

Eric tried to scream, but his voice failed him. The Evil Creature put its hand across Eric's throat, its jagged nails biting into his flesh. "Eric, my child, it is no use to struggle. I have gone to great lengths to retrieve you from the pool of blood in which you

suffered. And I intend to see you under my rule. Think of it, sweet Eric. I will fill your form with power, and teach you the black secrets of old. The very elements will be yours to command, and all men will come to worship you as their king." The creature loosened its grip on Eric's throat, moving its hand to stroke Eric's hair. "All you see will be yours, sweet Eric, and you and I shall rule all time and space together. Do not resist me, Eric. I am power and and hatred incarnate. I am ancient beyond your imagining. Yet, for you, I shall be purest pleasure and absolute fulfillment of all you desire. So do not struggle against me. Simply rest within my embrace. You will thank me for this, my child. You will see."

At first, Eric resisted the Evil One, struggling to maintain his identity. Yet all Eric's rebellion was returned with painful torture, and soon he learned to tolerate the Ancient One and work hard on his training. The Dark Lord taught Eric the secrets of manipulating reality, drawing black energy from the Netherworld to weave spells and enchantments of great power. The Ancient One hoped to see Eric become his ambassador to the realms of light and life, and so Eric was molded and shaped to be a sorcerer of tremendous power.

But the Ancient One made one mistake. He had trained Eric too well, without fully breaking his spirit. Eric's hatred of injustice and oppression was too great to be seduced by the power he acquired. When Eric learned of the Ancient One's confinement to the Netherworld, he used his magic to pierce the barrier between dimensions and escape to Earth. As he passed through the gate, Eric heard the hollow, malevolent Voice as it swore revenge for the wasted efforts on an "ungrateful and insignificant mortal."

When Eric arrived in the real world, he was blinded by the daylight and disoriented by his surroundings. Soon he discovered that five decades had passed since his abduction. Moreover, he had also moved geographically; he was now near the bustling metropolis of San Francisco. He quickly used his power to alter his appearance, dressing like one of the locals and blending in to the crowd. He knew that he would need money to survive, and he overheard the solution to his problem. Eric decided to use his magics to manipulate the state lottery and make himself the grand prize winner. He never considered the dishonesty of this plan; his many years of imprisonment with the Evil One had distorted his conscience.

With his winnings, Eric purchased a house in San Francisco and began to reorient himself to this new era. He also began to study Parapsychology at a nearby university, hoping to learn of any possible way the Dark Lord might strike back in vengeance. His quick, keen mind hurried him through his studies, and Eric eventually earned a doctorate in psychological research, with an emphasis in parapsychology.

During his training, Eric became aware of the phenomenon of costumed crimefighters pledged to protect their world. Eric reasoned that such powerful people would make suitable allies should the Ruler of Shadows seek to destroy him. And so, Eric

## DR. ERIC WRAITHE, "THE WARLOCK"

Val	Char	Cost	
15	STR	5	
23	DEX	39	
23	CON	16	
15	BODY	10	
18	INT	8	
23	EGO	26	
30	PRE	20	
12	COM	1	
10+	PD	7	
10+	ED	5	
5	SPD	17	
10	REC	4	
50	END	2	
45	STUN	10	

### Cost Powers END

144	<b>Magic Pool</b> (90 pts.)	varies
	0 Phase action to change (+1), requires Magic Roll, pre-approved spells only (-1/4)	
4	Flash Defense (5 pts.), IIF: special contacts*	
10	Mental Defense (15 pts. total)	
42	Armor (14PD/14ED), "Protective Aura"	
30	Full Life Support, "Protective Aura"	
3	Mental Awareness	
4	Ultraviolet Vision, IIF: special contacts	
8	Hi-Range Radio, IIF: concealed communicator	

### Skills, Talents, and Perks

23	3, 3	Magic Skill 23-Scholar; Linguist
9		Arabic, Chinese, & Latin (all idiomatic)
3, 3		Sleight of Hand 14-; Breakfall 14-
2, 8		KS: Magicians 15-; KS: Spells 18-
8		KS: Mystic Artifacts 18-
16		+2 Levels with all combat
30		Danger Sense 15-, out of combat, mystical, over any area, magic only (-1/2)
15		Follower: "The Butler"
10		Follower: "Puff"
60		Base: "The House that Jack Built"

### 100+ Disadvantages

30	1 1/2x	STUN & BODY from physical killing attacks
10		Takes things <i>very</i> seriously (com., mod.)
15		Hesitant to use powers (very com., mod.)
15		Reputation: Super Sorcerer, 14-
10		DNPC: Maria (wife, competent) 11-
8		Watched by rival magicians, 11-
30		Hunted: Minions of the Dark, Ancient One
20		Hunted by MasterMind, 11-
10		Public ID
360		Experience Spent

OCV: 8+ DCV: 8+ ECV: 8+ Phases: 3,5,8,10,12

Costs: Char. Powers Total Disadv Base  
170 + 438 = 608 = 508 + 100

adopted the guise of "the Warlock," joining the fight against deadly criminals and rushing to the defense of the innocent. Eventually, Eric joined a group of champions in forming the West Coast's premier superhero team: the Protectors (see *To Serve and Protect*).

For over eight years the Protectors worked to guard the world from all manner of threats. Eric became a valued, albeit feared, member of the team, risking his life more than once to save his comrades. However, evil pursued him at every turn, and Eric struggled to keep the influences of the Ageless One from his friends. Eventually, Eric decided to go into "retirement," seeking to live out the "normal life" he had been deprived by the Hated Enemy.

During his retirement, Eric met Maria Stewart, an accountant with a large firm in San Francisco. Attracted to her sensibility and almost superhuman courage, Eric fell in love with Maria. Soon they were married.

Shortly after returning from their honeymoon in Australia, Eric encountered the magical flooding of the House in the Berkeley hills. It was decided that he and Maria would take up residence in the House, in hopes that he might discover a way to seal the flooding portal forever.

Eric continues to make infrequent public appearances as the Warlock. When called upon, he will work to defend himself and his household, and can still be convinced to help thwart villains and world-wide disasters on occasion. However, Warlock fears that the use of his powers is only attracting the Dark One's attention, and so his has grown hesitant of wielding his eldritch energy unless confronted with an emergency.

**Personality:** Needless to say, the Warlock's decades of imprisonment in the Netherworld has made him something of a grim and moody individual. He has lost his sense of humor, and is very aware of the ultrapowerful beings that seek to destroy him.

Living in the House has not helped his outlook on life. Everything around him seems to be chaos, and his "retirement" is far from restful. Add to this a wife who sees everything as normal, a Butler who is always one step ahead of him, and a pet dragon that constantly antagonizes him, and Warlock becomes the perfect "straight man," walking head first into humorous chaos, puns, and sarcasm, grimacing stoically through it all.

**Quotes:** "I don't care what Helios told you; I am NOT a monster!"

"Look, being turned pink by a poltergeist is not funny. We must

find a way to return him to his normal color."

"Home Sweet Home? You've got to be kidding."

**Powers/Tactics:** Warlock's mastery of magic is represented by a formidable Power Pool, making his abilities essentially limitless. Whether it be phantom webbing to restrain a foe or a gateway to teleport his teammates or a wall of mystical force to protect him from some hideous enemy, the Warlock can conjure all using his Power Pool. However, he can only use spells which he has spent time researching and practicing. (GMs: This limitation is to prevent him from coming up with "exactly what is needed" to spoil an adventure. The GM should approve a list of potential spells prior to running the character. As a start, and to save space, just use spells from *Fantasy Hero* or *Mystic Masters*.)

**Appearance:** Eric Wraith has brown hair and dark, deep-set brown eyes. He speaks with an enchanting British accent, and often wears normal street clothes, preferring casual slacks and bulky sweaters. As the Warlock, Eric wears a uniform consisting of a deep blue tunic, black leggings and sleeves (with a starry design), and white boots, belt, and cloak. He wears an enormous blue gemstone brooch on his cloak, which some have mistaken to be the source of his powers.



## MARIA WRAITHE

Val	Char	Cost	
10	STR	0	
14	DEX	12	
11	CON	2	
10	BODY	0	
15	INT	5	
14	EGO	8	
10+	PRE	0	
16	COM	3	
2	PD	0	
2	ED	0	
3	SPD	6	
4	REC	0	
22	END	0	
21	STUN	0	

Cost	Powers	END
10	+20 Presence (30 pts. total), defense only	
<b>Skills</b>		
8, 3	PS: Accounting 17-; High Society 12-	
3	Conversation 11-	
3	KS: Berkeley Area 12-	
3	KS: The House that Jack Built	
4	KS: Magic 13-	
6	PS: Cooking 15-	

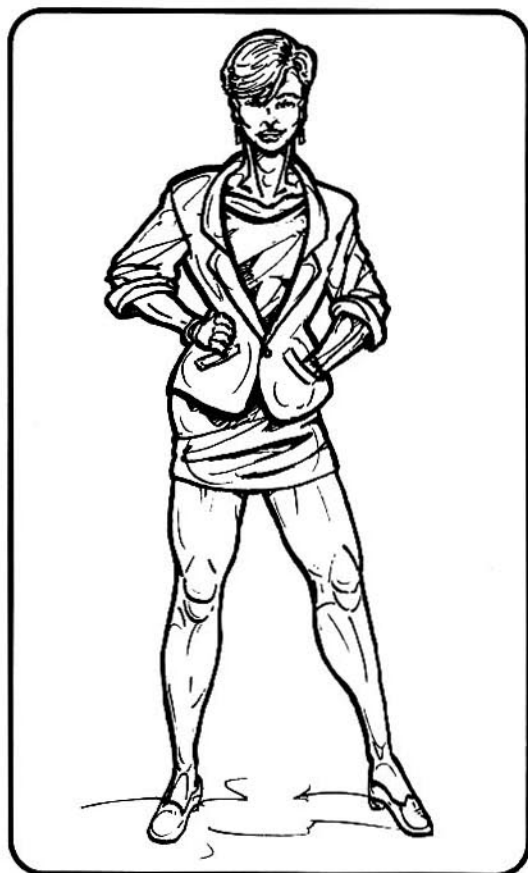
50+	Disadvantages
5	Distinctive Features: bright red hair (easily concealable)
15	Loves Warlock (uncommon, total)
10	Watched by Warlock's enemies and "things from beyond," 8-

<b>OCV:</b> 5	<b>DCV:</b> 5	<b>ECV:</b> 5	<b>Phases:</b> 4,8,12
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Costs:	Char	Powers	Total	Disadv	Base
	35	+ 45	= 80	= 30	+ 50



Today Maria runs the household, tends the dragon, and keeps track of all the all the new rooms in the house. And if a little pandamonium breaks out; she deals with it calmly and methodically. After all, it's only magic.

**Personality:** Maria is staggeringly level headed. In fact, she has never been more than mildly impressed by anything. This has the advantage that she takes all of the Warlock's guests with a certain aplomb. It also has been known to bug the heck out of the heroes and villains who make dramatic entrances into her home, only to be asked if they want cream with their coffee.

**Quote:** "Doctor Destroyer is here for you, dear. And don't forget to take out the trash on your way out."

**Powers/Tactics:** Though she is a skilled accountant and a meticulous housekeeper, Maria is not a great combatant. However, she does know her house well (or, at least, better than anybody else) and can easily lose pursuers within its seemingly endless halls. If she is in trouble and Warlock is not around, there is always Puff. Somehow, though, she and the Butler are always rushing out the door for some innocuous reason moments before any trouble starts.

**Appearance:** Maria is an attractive woman in her early thirties with bright red hair, cut short, and green eyes. She generally dresses quite well, having a legendary collection of clothing ranging from evening dresses to suits.

**Background:** Born into a middle-class family in Omaha, Nebraska, Maria Stewart was an ordinary country girl. She was also smart and ambitious, and when she graduated from high school at the top of her class, she went away to U.N.L. to get her degree in accounting. It didn't take her long afterward to be certified and get a job with one of the big accounting firms in California. As a CPA Maria was extremely successful. However, she was also rather lonely; her career left her little time for anything other than work. That was when Eric Wraith stepped into her life.

Many things attracted Maria to Eric. First, though he was wealthy, his finances were a disaster and in need of her special touch. More importantly, he was... different. She was frustrated with the boredom of her job, and was looking for something adventurous. Eric Wraith provided adventure in spades. After all, didn't skeletal zombies attack them on their first date? Now this guy was something to write home about! Besides, he was kind of cute, in a dangerous sort of way.

## THE BUTLER

Val	Char	Cost			
20	STR	10			
14	DEX	12			
18	CON	16			
20	BODY	20			
15	INT	5			
10	EGO	0			
20	PRE	10			
8	COM	-1			
8	PD	4			
4	ED	0			
3	SPD	6			
8	REC	0			
36	END	0			
39	STUN	0			
Cost		Powers	END		
20	Clairsentience (sight, sound), 0 END Persistent, Always On, Precognition only (-1/2), 10 minutes ahead only (-1/2)				
18	Mental Defense (21 pts. total)				
<b>Skills</b>					
6, 5	PS: Butler 15-; Combat Driving 12-				
3	KS: The House that Jack Built 12-				
6, 3	KS: Bay Area 15-; High Society 13-				
50+		Disadvantages			
20	Irritatingly Helpful (knows what you want before you do) (very common, strong)				
15	Avoids combat (common, strong)				
15	Distinctive Features: tall, bald & very creepy (concealable, major reaction)				
8	Watched by Warlock's enemies and "things from beyond," 8-				
5	Experience spent				
OCV: 5		DCV: 5	ECV: 3	Phases: 4,8,12	
Costs:		Char	Powers	Total	Disadv Base
		72	+ 61	= 133	= 63 + 75

**Background:** Two years ago, Maria Wraith decided that she needed the assistance of a butler to keep up the house. Eric was strongly against it; he had enough trouble keeping Maria and himself out of danger without introducing another bystander to the dangers of the House. However, as Eric and Maria argued, there was a heavy knock at the door. The door creaked open, and there stood a giant of a man—almost seven feet tall—dressed in a green and black tuxedo and carrying two large suitcases. "You have need of a butler," the man said in a deep, monotone voice. "I'll put my things up in the servant's quarters." And with that, the lurching figure marched up the stairs.

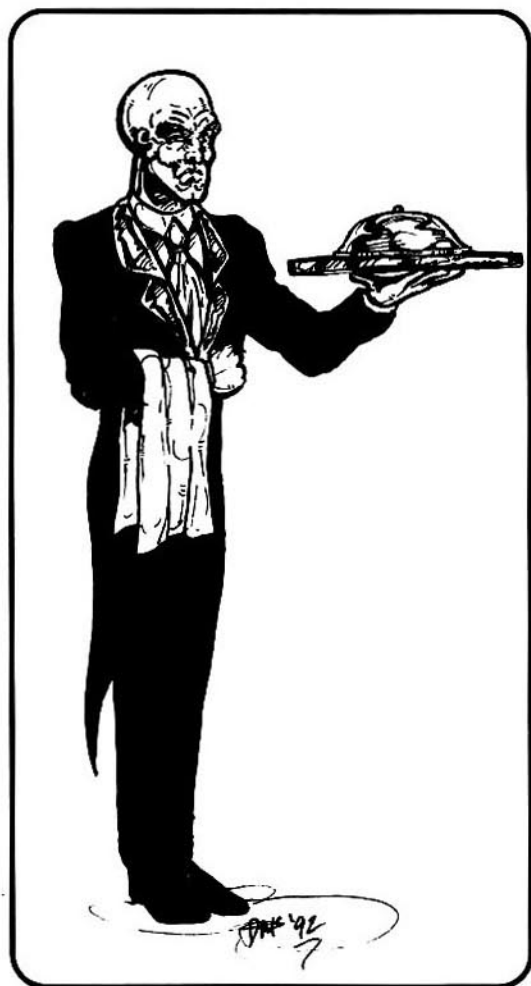
Eric and Maria stared after him, their mouths dropped open in a foolish expression. Eventually coming to their senses, Maria turned to Eric with a playful grin. "You know, dear, we really shouldn't be surprised at anything in this house anymore."

"I guess not," Eric replied. "It seems we have a new butler."

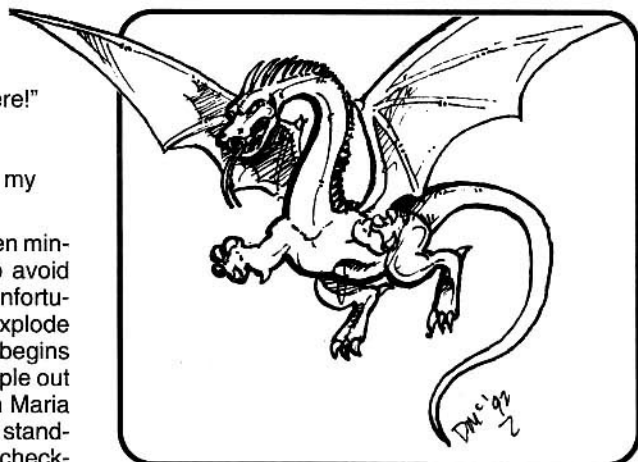
The Butler has been serving the Wraithes faithfully since that day. Eric still has no idea who or what the Butler is, or what he really wants. Eric only knows that the Butler is always around when he needs him (make that before he needs him), is paid well (but only in cash), and seems to know exactly what is going to happen before it does.

A running point of concern in Eric's life is that he does not know the Butler's real name. He's sure that Maria told him once, but now he can't remember. Every time he thinks to ask, the Butler is not around, Maria is busy, or something disastrous happens to interrupt him. This has become a source of comedy in the household.

**Personality:** The Butler is a mysterious gentleman with a commitment to serve the Wraithes to his dying breath. He has an uncanny ability to know exactly what is going to happen just moments before it actually does, and this has a disturbing effect upon those around him. The Butler makes no efforts to reduce the shock caused by his forewarnings. Whether it gives him pleasure to watch people flounder in confusion while he operates in his "advanced reality" is hard to tell, since his expression and tone of voice never change.



**Quote:** "Your cloak, sir."  
 "But I'm not going anywhere..."  
 "I'll start the car, sir."  
 "I told you, I'm not going anywhere!"  
 "The phone, sir."  
 "Wha..." (Ring, ring, ring...)  
 "Hello?... On my way... where's my cloa... Uh, yeah."



**Powers/Tactics:** The Butler actually lives ten minutes in the future, giving him the ability to avoid events, warn others of their coming, etc. Unfortunately, he never just says, "A bomb will explode here in ten minutes." Instead, he simply begins making preparations to leave, ushering people out of the room without any explanation. When Maria decides to go shopping, the Butler is already standing at the front door, holding her coat, the checkbook, and the keys to the limo. Eric might be woken up by the Butler, who holds his uniform and announces, "The Protectors will be summoning you shortly. I've drawn a bath and ironed your cape." The effect is simply bizarre.

**Appearance:** Almost seven feet tall, the cadaverous Butler is always dressed in traditional Butler attire: black and hunter green tuxedos, polished black shoes, and white gloves. His deep-set eyes, pale skin, and deep, monotone voice make him somewhat intimidating, and his assuming attitude makes his every word seem threatening.

### PUFF

**Background:** The Warlock discovered "Puff" while on a cross-dimensional odyssey. Upon charging through a dimensional portal, Eric found himself surrounded by miniature dragons, and prepared for the worst. But the animals seemed more curious than threatening, and one of them even began to follow Eric around. Possessed by a whimsical urge, Eric decided to take the creature home to Maria.

As Warlock sat on a stool in the kitchen, he watched the small dragon (which he now called "Puff") devour six cans of chilli, a couple of hot dogs, and a bag of marshmallows. (Well, how was he to know what dragons like to eat?)

That's when Maria walked in.

The kitchen was a mess. Scorch marks dotted the shelves (from when Puff got too excited), spilled chilli covered the floor, and the smell of burnt marshmallows hung heavy in the air. There was a tense moment of silence as Maria's gaze travelled from the wizard to the dragon and back again. And then...

"I love him!"

And so Puff became the child they never had. In the following months, Maria spoiled Puff terribly, dressing him up in baby clothes, feeding him whatever he desired (and he desired a lot!), and refusing to scold him when he made...messes...in the house. Warlock was frustrated with Maria's lenient attitude toward the beast, and he soon became the one who made Puff sleep out in the Carriage House at night.

### PUFF

Val	Char	Cost	
8	STR	-2	
18	DEX	24	
13	CON	6	
9	BODY	-2	
7	INT	-3	
10	EGO	0	
15	PRE	5	
6	COM	-2	
4+	PD	2	
3+	ED	0	
4	SPD	12	
5	REC	0	
26	END	0	
20	STUN	0	

Cost	Powers	END
10	1/2d6 HKA (1d6 with STR; "bite")	1(2)
33	6d6 Energy Blast ("flame breath"), Area Effect 8" cone, not in water (-1/4), 2x END	12
9	Armor (3PD/3ED) ("scaly hide")	
10	10" Flight, OAF: wings	
5	Ultraviolet Vision	
13	Shrinking (1m long, 12.5 kg, -2 PER Rolls against, +2 DCV, +3 KB), 0 END Persistent, Always On	0
5	Extra Limb: tail	
<b>Skills</b>		
6	+2 Levels OCV with breath weapon	
<b>50+ Disadvantages</b>		
8	Enraged if Maria is harmed 11-, 11-	
20	Protective of Maria (common, total)	
15	Cannot speak (frequent, greatly)	
20	Distinctive Features: dragon (not concealable, major)	
18	Dragon Bonus	
<b>OCV: 6+ DCV: 7 ECV: 3 Phases: 4,8,12</b>		
<b>Costs: Char Powers Total Disadv Base</b>		
40 + 91 = 131 = 81 + 50		



Today, Puff is clearly attached to his mistress while demonstrating a slight antagonism to Warlock. When Eric comes home, Puff hardly stirs (except for a loud snort). But when Maria calls him, better clear the hall!

**Personality:** Puff is an inquisitive creature, cat-like in his personality. To Maria, Puff is absolutely loyal. Eric still insists on treating him like a dog, however, and spends fruitless minutes calling him before walking up and carrying the beast to where he wants it to go. Puff is generally friendly to strangers, unless Maria or Eric seem threatened.

Puff has also developed an insatiable craving for cat meat. This has caused some trouble with Myrtle McTavish, whose pet cats seem to be disappearing one by one.

**Quote:** <SNORT>

**Powers/Tactics:** As a miniature dragon, Puff has all the abilities of his larger cousins. In general, he will use his flaming breath attack against enemies since he is extremely agile and hard to hit at range.

**Appearance:** Puff is a three-foot long winged dragon-like creature with large yellow eyes, scaly green skin, and a long snaky tail. Smoke often pours contentedly from his nostrils as he lounges on the bed in the master bedroom (his favorite spot in the house).

## USING THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Warlock was originally a Player Character in the author's "Protectors' Campaign" since its first adventure nearly a decade ago. The House That Jack Built, Maria, the Butler, and Puff were more recent additions. They are designed to function primarily as the source of all sorts of plot devices. Want to send the heroes back to 1930? Have them hunt for a can of pickled beets in the cellar and stumble across a portal through time. Want some dark, eldritch horror to threaten the city? Perhaps it climbs up from the mysterious realm beneath the garden well. The description for the House is filled with these sorts of plot possibilities, and we recommend that the GM exploit them as he desires.

Warlock himself is something of a gray character. Certainly his intentions are heroic; he is a self-sacrificing individual, dedicating his life and powers for the good of mankind. However, he has been tainted by his long exposure to the Dark Ageless One as well as his continuing use of the black arts, and is currently plagued by all sorts of horrible, magical menaces threatening the world. If your campaign needs a powerful, experienced wizard to aid the heroes, and they don't mind the danger, Warlock should do nicely. Or perhaps Warlock's "darker side" will eventually surface and take over, resulting in a really nasty and powerful villain to torment your heroes.

# "JUST DESSERTS"

AN ENCOUNTER IN  
THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

by Scott F. Heine

## INTRODUCTION

*Just Desserts* is a brief adventure that introduces players to the House That Jack Built and its bizarre inhabitants. Gamers who wish to play in this adventure should stop reading now.

In *Just Desserts*, our heroes will be confronted by a powerful mystic enemy from another dimension. However, this enemy will be trapped in a somewhat humorous form. The heroes will have to suppress their laughter long enough to keep the malevolent monster from threatening the world. Throughout the whole affair, the heroes will be tromping about the House That Jack Built, interacting with its residents (both alive and otherwise). This mini-adventure may then serve as a springboard to other escapades in this mysterious haunted home.

## THE EVIL EMISSARY FROM ELSEWHERE

Beyond our own time and space lies a multiverse of dimensions and alternate realities. Festering in one such otherworld is the hated mystical tyrant known as Tyrannon (see *Mystic Masters* for more information). This devilish despot uses his near-infinite sorcerous power in an obsessive quest for conquest. Life means little to this wicked warlord; Tyrannon has an insatiable thirst for power and dominion, and will delight in crushing anything—and anyone—that might get in his way.

Recently, Tyrannon became aware of a growing source of magical energy on a little world known as Earth. Apparently, some fool had opened a rift in time and space, allowing eldritch power to flood into this tiny world. Tyrannon decided to send one of his evil emissaries to investigate the phenomenon and report on the rift's potential usefulness in conquering that dimension. Tyrannon chose a phantom scout and sent the specter hurtling through the dimensions toward Earth.

Unfortunately, as the ghostly ambassador approached the mystical rift he came to explore, he found himself caught up in the whirling energies as they cascaded into the House That Jack Built. The phantom scout struggled to pull free from the overwhelming current of power, but was eventually sucked into the house along with the surging sorcerous energy. The wave of power slammed the specter through the house, eventually trapping him within its mischievous confines.

## OUR ADVENTURERS ARRIVE AT THE ARCANÉ ABODE

Meanwhile, our heroes are busy doing whatever they do with their spare time. Suddenly, a flash of bright red light blazes in the sky over the hills outside of the city. The crimson light begins to swirl like an enormous tornado, funneling its energy into a large manor house nestled in the hills. The spectacle can be seen for miles as the whirling scarlet light pours forth from the sky. Those who watch the event closely will see what appears to be a face, twisted in torment and frustration, swept away in the torrent. Suddenly, a piercing, shrill scream will echo across the countryside and trail off into a painful moan as the face is washed away into the house. Then, with a sound reminiscent of... well, ... of a flushing toilet, the red hurricane will twist its way into the manor house and disappear completely.

The entire event will take less than a minute, but will leave all onlookers stunned with disbelief for several minutes. Heroes who are outside and witness the event will almost certainly become curious and decide to investigate (along with the police department, fire department, local news crews, a U.F.O. club, and anyone else the GM wishes to involve). Other PCs might catch the event via a live "Special Report" on the news, or might simply be drawn out to see what all the commotion is. The GM is encouraged to creatively do whatever is necessary to interest the heroes in this strange phenomenon.

By the time the heroes arrive at the House That Jack Built, a sizable crowd is gathering outside the grounds. Mrs. McTavish, the Wraithes' suspicious neighbor, is running up and down the street, accusing people of trampling her daffodils. Camera crews and newsmen are setting up for live coverage. Dogs around the neighborhood howl mournfully. Several members of a local U.F.O. club are donning tinfoil caps in an attempt to establish communications with whatever visitors may have just descended to our planet. In short, chaos will be breaking out along the street and outside the iron gate that surrounds the House That Jack Built.

Standing at the front door are the local Fire Chief and a Police Sergeant arguing with a tall, pale man in a black and green tuxedo. The Butler is explaining to the officials that they have no business at the house, and that everything will be under control shortly. As the heroes approach the house, the Butler recognizes them and motions for them to come to the front door. "You see, gentlemen," the Butler says in his deep, monotone voice. "The men I described to you have arrived. They will deal with the situation shortly. I suggest you begin to clear the street; the heroes will need some room to maneuver shortly." The Butler then turns his attention to the heroes. "Please, come in. Tea is waiting for you in the parlour. Mrs. Wraithes will be with you shortly." The Butler ushers the heroes into the Gentlemen's Parlour just off the entryway while the fireman and policeman, frustrated without a warrant or clear instructions from their superiors, move off to disperse the crowd.

## SIZING UP THE SINISTER SITUATION

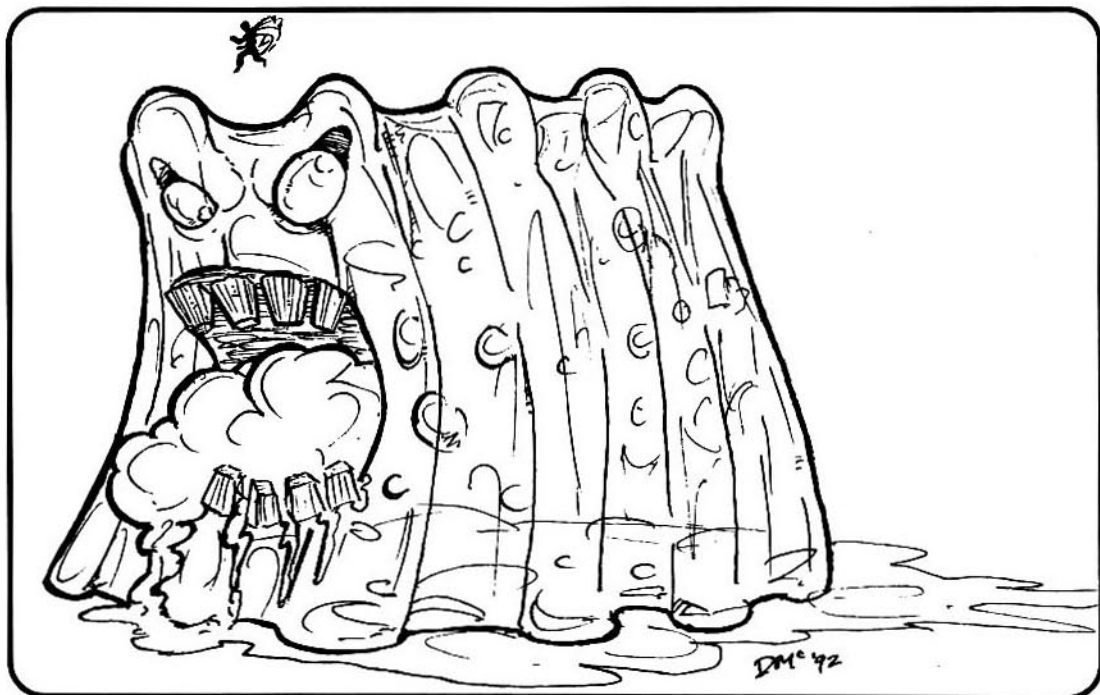
The Butler leads the heroes to the Parlour, where hot tea and biscuits are waiting for them. An observant hero might notice that the Butler has prepared exactly the number of cups necessary, and has pulled up the correct number of chairs as well. The Butler offers to take anyone's cape, and invites the heroes to have a seat. He then begins distributing large bath towels to each hero. Should anyone ask the reason for the towels, the Butler merely replies, "You will be needing them shortly."

Before long, Maria Wraithes enters the room, followed by Puff. The little dragon is puffing smoke merrily as it trails behind its mistress and alights on a nearby lampstand. "Thank you so much for coming," Maria says in a concerned tone. "My husband, the Warlock, went down into the cellar several days ago to search for a screwdriver. He must have gotten lost down there; I haven't heard from him since Monday. And, wouldn't you know it, Murphy's Rule proves true again. While Eric is gone, some malevolent force has entered our home. I'm afraid I need to run out to the store and pick up a few things, and I was hoping you would be able to take care of our little problem while I'm gone." At this point, the Butler will enter the room, dressed in a chauffeur's uniform and carrying Maria's coat. "I really do apologize for rushing off like this. I wish I could stay and chat a while. But you're all such dears for helping us out." As she puts on her coat and rushes out the front door, she points down the hallway. "The trouble seems to be coming from the Kitchen. I think the demon is somewhere in the refrigerator. Thanks again for your help!" And with that, Maria and the Butler are gone, leaving the surprised heroes sitting around the tea table while an impish little dragon watches on.

Hopefully, the heroes will eventually agree to at least look into the problem. The GM should allow the heroes to explore the house in search of the Kitchen (exposing them to some of the bizarre features of this unusual home). Once they've found the Kitchen, the heroes will instantly notice that the refrigerator is trembling violently. Crimson light streams through the cracks of the refrigerator door, and the faint sound of a lion-like roar can be heard rumbling within. X-Ray Vision and the like will reveal nothing unusual within the refrigerator—just the basics: milk, cheese, a bag of oranges, butter, leftover fried chicken, and assorted other staples.

Sooner or later, one of the heroes will have to open the refrigerator door. As soon as they do, something within the appliance spews forth tons of sticky red fluid, covering the heroes with the goop. Puff fetches one of the towels that the Butler had delivered earlier and hands it to a hero. As the heroes dry themselves off, they notice that deep within the refrigerator, hidden behind a carton of sour cream, a small Tupperware™ container quivers and glows with a bright red light.

Moments later, the top of the container blasts off and the contents begin to grow rapidly. It soon becomes apparent where the "demon" Maria mentioned has come to reside—the refrigerator is har-



boring a possessed raspberry gelatin salad! The dessert will swell to an enormous size, nearly filling the room. It stares down at the heroes with little grape eyes, and its mouth opens to a gaping maw, filled with pineapple chunk teeth and frothing with Cool Whip™. Though it is difficult to tell with a gelatin dessert, the heroes get the distinct impression that the raspberry salad has a taste for blood.

## DUELING THE DELICIOUSLY DANGEROUS DESSERT

The raspberry gelatin salad lashes out at the heroes with long, rubbery pseudopods, hoping to envelop them within its tasty tentacles and smother them within its fruity folds. The evil emissary which inhabits the salad is furious and humiliated at its condition, and attacks with all its anger and hatred. Roaring into battle, the dessert tries to overwhelm the heroes quickly and escape the confines of the house to wreak havoc in the city.

Obviously, the heroes must fight to defend themselves and destroy the horrible gelatinous creature. However, battling the diabolical dessert is not as easy as they might think. The salad is quite resilient to all forms of damage; attacks simply bounce off its rubbery hide. What's more, some attacks actually make the creature stronger! Every time the dessert is hit by an energy attack, the creature will absorb some of the energy and use it to grow even larger and stronger.

**Example:** *Quasar soars above the dessert and blasts it with his 12d6 photokinetic Energy Blast. He rolls well; his attack does 46 STUN and 15 BODY. The Diabolical Dessert subtracts its ED (10 points) and applies its 75% Damage Reduction to the rest. Thus, the Dessert takes  $46 - 10 = 36$ , 25% of  $36 = 9$  STUN and  $15 - 10 = 5$ , 25% of  $5 = 1.25$  (rounded down to*

*1) BODY. The gelatin then applies its Absorption power to the energy attack. The Dessert rolls the 6d6 and gets 21, allowing it to apply all 15 of the BODY done by Quasar's attack to its Growth power. The Dessert then grows to 8x its current mass, twice its height and width (and reach!), and adds 15 STR, 3 BODY, and 3 STUN. Quasar is shocked to discover that his attack not only did little to damage the possessed salad, but in some ways actually helped the creature! The Dessert can continue absorbing this kind of power to a maximum of 60 additional points in Growth. The absorbed points will fade at a rate of 5 per day.*

As if this weren't bad enough, the raspberry salad is capable of generating little fruity followers to assist it in its quest. Though technically the dessert could spew forth its followers at will, the GM is encouraged to wait until the salad is attacked by a slicing killing attack, and explosion, or some other special effect that would cause chunks of the salad to fly off and come to life.

**Example:** *Seeker charges at the giant salad, swinging his katana down upon the creature in a deadly slicing attack. Once damage is calculated, Seeker looks up to see that the section of gelatin he just sliced off is coming to life. Suddenly, Seeker finds himself face-to-face with a man-sized raspberry terror, mimicking the threatening actions of its "parent." In panic, Seeker stabs out with his sword once more, carving the Dessertling in half. To his horror, both halves of his opponent slurp about and come to life, each staring at the Aussie hero with the look of death in their little grape eyes.*

The GM can bring to life as many followers as he desires to make the battle challenging, up to a total of 16. These slithering, gurgling desserts can pro-

vide a dangerous threat to almost any band of crimefighters.

As the battle rages on, the giant Diabolical Dessert leads our heroes on an exhausting romp through the House That Jack Built as the possessed raspberry salad seeks a way out of the house (and, preferably, a way back to its home dimension). The GM may wish to awaken any number of mysterious (and possibly dangerous) haunts along the way. Perhaps the Dessert will slither through the Hall of a Hundred Horrors (#17, above), knocking open doors and releasing their contents. Or maybe the creature will find a new doorway in the cellar that leads to Victorian England, resulting in a chase through history as well. Alternately, the giant gelatin could move into a room upstairs, slamming the door behind it. When the heroes arrive and open the door, they find that the house has shifted its floorplan once again, and the room the gelatin escaped to has moved somewhere else. The heroes can then search the house for the Dessert, eventually finding it attacking the U.F.O. club that has snuck into the front yard for a closer look. The GM is encouraged to use his own diabolical imagination to make the battle wild and unpredictable.

Sooner or later, the heroes may discover the Dessert's biggest weakness: it is terrified of being eaten. If the heroes don't discover this on their own, have Puff fly in and take a chomp out of the Dessert's tasty hide while the monster reels and roars in pain. If the battle has moved outside and the gathered crowd catches on to the salad's "Achilles' Heel," they might all join in the fight, trying to gobble down the creature before it can do any more damage (then again, they might soon find themselves caught up and smothered by the fruity beast's sticky body, forcing the heroes to engage in hit-and-run rescue attempts).

## WINDING THINGS UP

If the heroes are having a difficult time defeating the Dessert, the GM can either have help arrive (i.e., Warlock finally wanders out of the Cellar and assists the heroes in bringing this adventure to an end), or allow the creature to escape completely. The latter course of action is recommended in order to give the heroes a second shot at the monster at another time when they are better prepared to face the tasty beast. Perhaps the Dessert could slither down a sewer drain and lose itself in the tunnels under the city, only to resurface later in an attack against a restaurant downtown.

In any case, once the situation is wound up, the heroes will have to offer some sort of explanation to the authorities and press gathered about. Eventually, Maria Wraith and the Butler will return from the market and ask the heroes to help carry in the groceries while they talk. Maria will thank the heroes for their hard work, apologizing once again for bringing them into this mess in the first place. If the GM wishes to expand on this adventure, Maria might ask the heroes to search for her husband in the house, leading to a spooky adventure of dimensional travel (especially if the GM has a copy of *Champions in 3-D!*) and confrontation of whatever twisted schemes the GM can devise.

THE DIABOLICAL DESSERT			
Val	Char	Cost	
70*	STR	0	* Bonuses for original Growth already figured in. These numbers may increase as Absorption causes the active points in the Growth power to increase.
18	DEX	24	
32	CON	44	
22*	BODY	0	
5	INT	-5	
10	EGO	0	
25	PRE	15	
4	COM	-3	
10	PD	8	
10	ED	4	
6	SPD	32	
8	REC	0	
64	END	0	
60*	STUN	17	
Cost		Powers	END
30	Elemental Control: Geletainous Body		
a100	6d6 Entangle, blocks all sound, 0 END, Damage Shield		0
b-90	6d6 NND smothering attack (not vs. Life Support), 0 END, Damage Shield		0
c-30	75% resistant phy. Damage Reduction		
d-30	75% resistant ener. Damage Reduction		
10	Flash Defense (10 pts.)		
30	Mental Defense (33 pts. total)		
80	Growth (11 hexes high, 11 hexes wide; 400,000 kg; -8 DCV; +8 to other's PER Rolls; +8" reach; -12 Knockback), 0 END Persistent, Always On		0
94	6d6 Absorption to Growth (vs. energy attacks), maximum addition of 60 points, points fade 5/day (+1 1/4)		
25	5" Stretching		2
20	Shapeshift: any slurping shape as long as mass remains the same		2
5	Extra Limbs (Gelatainous pseudopods)		
15	Life Supp.: doesn't breathe, sleep or eat		
Skills & Perks			
3, 3	Breakfall 13-; Contortionist 13-		
80	16 Followers: Dessertlings (see listing)		
100+ Disadvantages			
20	2x STUN from fire & heat		
15	Enraged when bitten/chewed 14-, 8-		
15	Protective of Dessertlings (com., strong)		
10	Will flee from eating utensils (uncommon, strong)		
30	Susceptible: 3d6/Segment from being eaten		
25	Distinctive Features: giant Jello Fruit Salad (unconcealable, extreme reaction)		
13	Monitored by Tyrannon the Conqueror		
553	Giant-Possessed-Food-Item Bonus		
OCV: 6		DCV: -2*	ECV: 3
Phases: 2,4,6,8,10,12			
Costs: Char Powers Total Disadv Base			
136 + 645 = 781 = 681 + 100			

**Background:** The Diabolical Dessert is the result of an emissary of Tyrannon the Conqueror getting caught in the magical vortex that surrounds the House That Jack Built. The phantasmal ambassador became trapped in a raspberry gelatin salad in the Wraithes' refrigerator, and now seeks to destroy as much as it can while searching for a way out of its predicament and a passageway back home.

**Personality:** The Dessert is driven by rage and humiliation. It roars menacingly, bearing its pineapple chunk teeth and threatening all who stand in its way with fruit-filled annihilation. It is hopeless to try and calm the creature; contact with mere mortals only reminds it of the sorry state it is in. About the only weakness one can find in the monster is its fear of being eaten or melted; the Dessert will shrink back from heat and flame, and will turn and run from anything resembling an eating utensil.

**Quote:** Rrrrrroooooowwwllllll! (Sluuuuurrrrrp)

**Powers/Tactics:** The Diabolical Dessert is an enormous creature with incredible strength, capable of crushing through cars, flinging opponents across the skyline, and generally wreaking all sorts of havoc. Its sticky, gelatinous body will envelop all it touches, entangling and smothering them within its fruity folds. In combat, the Dessert will lash out with sticky pseudopods, grabbing and squeezing its opponents with its tasty tendrils. It will rarely let go of an opponent once it has lashed on. However, fire-wielding enemies will be swatted aside and thrown as far away as possible.

The Dessert is also capable of summoning smaller Followers to assist in creating mayhem, spewing forth its little children whenever attacked with slicing weapons or explosive powers.

**Appearance:** The Diabolical Dessert is a giant raspberry gelatin salad standing over seventy meters high and glaring down with angry little grape eyes. Bits of citrus fruit and various berries swarm about within its body. Its cavernous mouth is filled with pineapple chunk teeth and frothing with Cool Whip™.

DESSERTLINGS			
Val	Char	Cost	
10	STR	0	
15	DEX	15	
28	CON	36	
16	BODY	12	
5	INT	-5	
10	EGO	0	
15	PRE	5	
4	COM	-3	
10	PD	8	
10	ED	4	
4	SPD	15	
8	REC	0	
56	END	0	
35	STUN	1	
Cost	Powers		END
15	<b>Elemental Control:</b> Geletainous Body		
a-55	3d6 Entangle, blocks all sound, 0 END, Damage Shield		0
b-45	3d6 NND smothering attack (not vs. Life Support), 0 END, Damage Shield		0
c-15	50% resistant physical Damage Reduction		
d-15	50% resistant energy DamageReduction		
10	Flash Defense (10 pts.)		
30	Mental Defense (33 pts. total)		
94	6d6 Absorbion to Growth (vs. energy attacks), maximum addition of 60 points, points fade 5/day (+1 ¼)		
25	5" Stretching		2
20	Shapeshift: any slurping shape as long as mass remains the same		2
5	Extra Limbs (Gelatinous pseudopods)		
15	Life Support: doesn't breathe, sleep or eat		
Skills			
3	Breakfall 13-		
3	Contortionist 13-		
300+ Disadvantages			
20	2x STUN from fire & heat		
15	Enraged when bitten/chewed 14-, 8-		
25	Protective of Diabolical Dessert (very common, total)		
10	Will flee from eating utensils (uncommon, strong)		
30	Susceptible: 3d6/Segment from being eaten		
25	Distinctive Features: giant Jello Fruit Salad (unconcealable, extreme reaction)		
13	Monitored by Diabolical Dessert		
<b>OCV:</b> 5	<b>DCV:</b> 5	<b>ECV:</b> 3	<b>Phases:</b> 3,6,9,12
<b>Costs:</b>	<b>Char</b>	<b>Powers</b>	<b>Total</b>
	88	+ 350	= 438
			= 138 + 300

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# HACK WRITING

## A NONE-TOO-SERIOUS MARTIAL ART

BY AARON ALLSTON  
WITH BOB AND NONIE QUINLAN

I'm not sure how it got started. I believe Bob Quinlan, contributor to *Mystic Masters*, was the first offender—looking up and making the announcement that "Narrative Hook" sounded like a martial arts maneuver. Blame him.

But then Nonie Quinlan, contributor to *Champions in 3-D*, and I got into the spirit of things ... and before anyone could call the Sanity Police, a new martial art was born. Well, perpetrated.

### THE WORLD

The world where Hack Writing is a martial art is a world which has appeared in fiction and film many times. It's a world where seemingly-ordinary professions have mysterious faces they hide away from the outer world. Like the electrician in "House II: The Second Story," with his blasé attitude and interdimensional experience. Like the military secretaries in "I'm Gonna Get You Sucka" with their hand recognition signals and their lethal accuracy with paper-clips flung by rubber bands. Like all the world's lonely bachelors in "The Lonely Guy," who make up a distinct subculture with product lines geared to their specific needs.

To these stellar examples, we add the Hack Writers—or, more properly, the members of the Brotherhood of the Pen.

### HISTORY OF THE HACK WRITERS

The Hack Writers receive their inspiration from the story of Glaucus, messenger of Philip II of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great.

In ancient times, it was not unknown for a king receiving unpleasant news to order the messenger to be killed. Glaucus was the unfortunate soul who had to bear Philip II some bad news about the strength of the allied Athenian and Theban force Philip was soon to face. Philip took the news well, then ordered his men to take the messenger outside and kill him. Infuriated, Glaucus whipped out a stylus and gave Philip a ferocious poke in the nose.

Glaucus was killed, of course, and Philip made sure his nose was well-guarded whenever he ordered a messenger's death thereafter—the first concession ever made to a bearer of news.

Other messengers reasoned that if Glaucus had been a bit more effective with his stylus, he could have slain Philip; they began adapting dagger-fighting techniques to the stylus. As the messengers became more proficient and more radical about not being executed for news that wasn't their fault, more leaders of the ancient world suffered nose injuries and even death.

What resulted was a mass extermination of the messenger profession. The event was actually beneficial, as it forced more rulers of the ancient world to rely on writing for the communication of messages.

However, some messengers survived with knowledge of the new art of stylus-fighting. To keep the art (and their profession) from dying away completely, they went underground, creating a secret society of information brokers.

The stylus gave way to the quill pen as the Brothers found their way into every corner of the world of the Dark Ages. They flourished in the clerical corps of the Catholic Church, but didn't find their true vocations until later in the Middle Ages, at which time the Town Criers appeared.

The Criers were the Brotherhood of the Pen in the guise of city employees whose task it was to wander and spread the news. The Criers were an inoffensive-looking bunch, but the martial art of Hack Writing was making its first great strides of systemization and efficiency. Anyone cruel enough to attack one of these underfed-looking men was surprised to find himself cut down by a skinny man armed only with a quill. The Criers were able to suppress news of most of these encounters—they were, after all, the ones who delivered the news in the first place.



## HACK WRITING

Maneuver	Pts	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
Cut & Paste	3	+2	-1	STR +1d6 Strike; Target Falls
Hack	3	+1	+0	STR +2d6 Strike
Journalistic Probe	5	+1	+3	STR Strike
Judicious Cut	4	-2	+0	1/2d6 HKA (2DC)
Narrative Hook	3	-1	-1	Grab, +10 to STR for holding on
Press	4	+0	+0	STR +4d6 Crush, Must Follow Grab
Protecting Your Source	3	+2	-1	Block, FMove
Pulp	5	-2	+1	STR +4d6 Strike
Scoop	5	+0	+0	Grab Item, +10 STR to Take Item Away
Writer's Block	4	+2	+2	Block, Abort
<b>Skills</b>				
PS: Writer				
WF: Sword				
<b>Elements</b> (Default: Use Art With Pen)				
Weapons	+1	Use Art Barehanded		
	+1	Use Art With Quill Pen		
	+1	Use Art With Sword		
<b>Style Disadvantage</b>	-10			

### HACK WRITERS TODAY

In today's world, the Brotherhood of the Pen dominates the rank-and-file of the print news industry. Unfortunately, they have made fewer inroads in the worlds of radio and television news, whose workers scoff at their old-fashioned customs. It seems that the newspaper press is the last great gathering-hole of the hack writers subculture.

It's not likely that the fighting-art will die out, however, as it has been picked up and refined by generations of fiction writers as well. Notoriously independent, the fiction writers do not swear allegiance to the Order, but band together in small groups and guilds owing allegiance only to themselves. However, they still live much as the other Brothers do—in poverty, beloved only by their writing instruments, sustaining themselves on cheap booze and dreams of wealth and fame. They first appeared in the form of "dime novel" fiction writers of the late 19th century, and now nothing can get rid of them.

It is only in the last century that the term "Hack Writers" has been coined to include both the old-fashioned newspapermen and the new-fangled fiction writers. The two groups remain friendly with one another, inspired perhaps by men such as Ned Buntline, 19th-century journalist and "biographer," who belonged to both the journalistic and fiction-writing camps.

Since the invention of the fountain pen (and, in the 1940s, the ballpoint pen), the hack writers have had a small, disguisable, easily-concealed weapon which they can carry everywhere. The pen, which has displaced both the stylus and quill pen as the weapon of choice, makes well-trained hack writers among the deadliest martial artists in the world.

The hack writers are still very much a secret society, but there was a period when they were nearly revealed to the world. In the 1930s through the 1950s, a group of hack writers settled in Hollywood and began making movies about two-fisted reporters—idealized, fictitious members of their own profession. They weren't trying to expose their secrets; they just wanted to see their own kind venerated instead of mocked. In these films, the writer characters substituted Boxing for the profession's true art, but were still quite adept at battering bad guys; they got the girl; they never died of liver ailments no matter how much they drank. Fortunately, public taste in this type of film waned before anyone really believed there were such things as fighting journalists.

Today, the journalist hack writers belong to the Brotherhood of the Pen, which is a direct continuation of the Brotherhood of the Stylus and the Brothers of Glaucus (of from the ancient world) and the Order of the Quill and the Criers (of the medieval world). The fiction-writer brothers belong to small pocket societies and are normally called Hacks. Many hack writers cross back and forth over the border, writing cheap fiction one day and magazine articles the next.

In spite of the grumbling of old-fashioned members, the Order allows female members—in fact, in spite of early efforts, there's been no way to prevent them.

Collectively, the hack writers keep their martial art a secret, using it only when they defend their lives, right wrongs, get a story, or want to.



## MANEUVER DESCRIPTIONS

**Cut & Paste:** This is traditionally a journalist's maneuver, though with the advent of computer word processors, many fiction writers have been learning it. With this maneuver, the writer cuts his victim's legs out from under him and then pastes him one.

**Hack:** This is a good, old-fashioned hack at the target's body. It has the virtue of being fast and doing the job well enough, even though it's not as good as other maneuvers.

**Journalistic Probe:** This is a light attack against the target, one which gives the writer some protective DCV. Art practitioners have spent many years trying to create a counter-maneuver called the "exposé," but they keep dying in the process.

**Judicious Cut:** This is the least popular of all the Hack Writing maneuvers; many hack writers just sniff and refer to it as an "editor's maneuver." It may only be used barehanded.

**Narrative Hook:** This is one of the most popular of all Hack Writing maneuvers. The writer simply reaches out and grabs his audience—I mean target. Unfortunately, many more writers *think* they know how to perform this maneuver than actually do. This maneuver is only used barehanded.

**Press:** This maneuver originated in the journalistic side of the hack writers' community, but members of both sides use it. Once the writer has used the Hook to get his victim's attention, he uses the Press to, well, press his point home. This maneuver is only used barehanded.

**Protecting Your Source:** With this maneuver, the hack writer leaps in front of his source's body—or the body of anyone he's trying to protect—in order to shield his source. The maneuver was developed by the journalistic side of the hack writers' community.

**Pulp:** This is a simple, powerful blow, designed to get the point across as fast as possible, with no style or subtlety. It was developed by the fiction-writers side of the hack writers' community.



**Scoop:** With this maneuver, the hack writer grabs something in the hand of another character and tries to wrest it away from him. The maneuver was developed by members of the journalistic side of the hack writers' community. It is possible to buy 2-point Combat Skill Levels with this maneuver; they work just as 3-point levels would, but only against other hack writers.

**Writer's Block:** This is the first maneuver taught to hack writers. Some are so skilled with it that it's all they do.

## WEAPONS

*A burly knight confronted a frail-looking Town Crier, drew his sword, and prepared to run the Crier through for an imagined insult. The Crier drew his quill pen, shattered the knight's sword with a single blow, and moments later was triumphantly kneeling over his armored foe.*

*"Truly," said the knight, "thy pen is mightier than my sword."*

*"That's a good line. Mind if I steal it?" the Crier asked, and cut the knight's throat.*

The hack writer's pen is a mighty weapon indeed. Hack writers can't use their martial art with just any pen; they have to use a special pen crafted by special members of the Order. Furthermore, even in a Heroic-level campaign, they have to *pay their own points* for their pen.

The hack writer's pen, whether it be a quill pen, ballpoint pen, or fountain pen, can be built any of three ways:

**Killing Attack** — Hand-to-Hand (HKA): 2d6K; 0 END (+1/2), Increased STUN Multiplier +1 (+1/2); OAF (-1).

**Killing Attack** — Hand-to-Hand (HKA): 2d6K; 0 END (+1/2), Armor-Piercing (+1/2); OAF (-1).

**Killing Attack** — Hand-to-Hand (HKA): 2d6K; 0 END (+1/2), Ranged (i.e., Can Be Thrown); OAF (-1).

The cost for any of the three models is 30 pts, and each Pen has a STR Minimum of 0.

If a hack writer spends his points and later loses his Pen, he can get a new one from the Order or his local guild for a few dollars; he doesn't have to pay extra points for it. It's also possible to buy an irreplaceable Pen, something attuned to the writer's own Muse; add the Independent limitation (-2), and the Pen's cost becomes 15 points. However, if the hack writer loses this pen, he has to spend his own points to replace it.

The Pen also serves as a badge signifying his school and allegiance. On it, he wears the insignia of his branch of the order (for example, "AP"). In it, he carries ink signifying which sort of hack writer he is: Yellow ink for journalists, purple for fiction writers.

## FINAL NOTES

So when you meet that skinny-looking fellow with the press pass, you can deride him, mock him, insult his ethics—he's used to that. It's part of his job. But don't attack him. He might be dangerous.

# EMPIRE CLUB

## HAM-HAND'S — *The Black Pearl*

### A Setting For Justice, Inc. Encounters

BY AARON ALLSTON

*He moved among the tables, stopping here to shake a hand, there to exchange a word with a regular, as hot jazz poured off the stage and washed across the main room. The dim lights were made dimmer still by the cigarette-smoke haze graduating down from the ceiling; slow-turning fans stirred the haze into turbulence.*

*He smiled. Most of his clients liked the lights dim, preferring not to be recognized from more than two tables away. He stopped to trade a joke with Dutch Schultz; a few yards further on, he made sure that Inspector Kinkaid's drink was fresh.*

*One table further on, and he reached the drunks who had the waitress trapped between them in the narrow gap between tables. In the dimness, his shadow couldn't fall across them, but they felt his presence, turned to stare up at the man built like a mountain gorilla. One of the men glanced from his battered face, past the vast expanse of custom-tailored tuxedo, down to the oversized, knobby hands. "H-H-Hello, Ham-Hand," he managed.*

*The man in the tux smiled down at him. "Evening, Mike. Catherine has to work, you know."*

*"Oh. Was, uh, was I, uh—"*

*"Just carried away by a pretty face, sure. Drink'll do that to you. Sounds like you've had enough, though. Catherine, you go tell the doorman to flag down a cab for these two gentlemen."*

*She squeezed past the second man and was immediately lost in the tobacco haze. Ham-Hand smiled benignly at the two. "You two probably ought to wait outside for the cab. Doh't you think?"*

*"Right, Ham-Hand. Good seeing you, Ham-Hand." The two were gone in an instant. Ham-Hand smiled. He hadn't hurt them, hadn't humiliated them, hadn't bounced them; they'd be back.*

*The last notes of the "Bugle Call Rag" rolled off the stage, followed quickly by the musicians, who took the audience's applause as easily as they lugged their instruments off the raised platform which served for a stage. The stage lights went off, and Ham-Hand stood where he was, pulling out his pocket watch to time the stage crew.*

*They charged out of the doors behind the curtain and began fitting the posts into deep slots at the stage's corners; as the posts came upright, the*

*thick ropes stretched between them grew taut. The crew was gone in another second; the announcer slid through the ropes to stand in the center of the stage, and the lights came on again. Ham-Hand peered down at the watch, made out the time: Twenty-five seconds. A little slow, but it was late; the crew was tired.*

*"And now," called the announcer, "ladies and gentlemen—are there any ladies or gentlemen here?" He waited for the quick laughter to fade. "For your enjoyment, we present a battle royal between two notorious fighting-men. In this corner, the man you love to hate, that monster from the steel mills: The Werewolf of Pittsburgh!"*

*Into the ring it climbed, a man even more gorilla-like than Ham-Hand. His face, chest and back were thick with spiky black hair; his pants, his sole garment, were tattered at top and bottom. He turned to the audience, raised his arms and roared to their applause. "And in this corner," the announcer resumed, "that debonair daredevil, that poised punisher, 'Tux' Thompson!" The last man into the ring was of lean and elegant build, dark hair framing a face that was movie-star handsome; his fighting tights were dyed to resemble a tuxedo, down to the tie and cummerbund. Once in the ring, he doffed his top hat and handed it to the glittery blonde who'd accompanied him to the ring; the crowd yelled appreciation for Tux and his companion as well.*

*Ham-Hand grinned, shook his head and turned away from the ring. Wrestling, especially this colorful, silly variety full of fake names and flashy maneuvers, wasn't his sport. But there would be no more boxing tonight.*

*As the Werewolf of Pittsburgh and 'Tux' Thompson met in battle cinematic, Ham-Hand finished his round, making his way back to his own shadowy booth. It was a good night. The booze was flowing, the entertainment was doing its job, and the gangs weren't bringing their trouble into his place.*

*But he didn't see the thin fellow at the bar, the one with the hands so shrivelled they looked like bird's talons, the one with the bright eyes—glowing, literally glowing—hidden under the rim of a battered fedora...*

## HAM-HAND HARRISON: HIS LIFE AND TIMES

Abner Harrison was born in 1895 in Chicago, son of an Irish meat-packer and an ex-teacher of Norwegian descent. His was a big, raucous, affectionate, nearly impoverished family.

Abner was small all through his childhood, and his diminutive size was even more pronounced in his family, where all the children had Irish tempers and Viking physiques. But he was a stubborn son-of-a-gun, too stubborn to remain the whipping-boy of his brothers and their friends.

He learned to fight. He didn't just scrap on the streets; he haunted the gyms, sneaked into boxing matches to see how it was done, and did chores for a retired pugilist in the neighborhood in return for lessons. Before too long, he could beat his younger brothers in fights both fair and foul. Within a couple of years, his older brothers no longer picked on him. By the time he was 17, word on the street was that you didn't annoy the squat, black-haired middle son of that noisy Harrison tribe.

At about that time, when he was contemplating the dreary prospect of choosing between his father's meat-packing plant or life in the ring—and he was smart enough to know he didn't have the size to be a real contender—the miracle happened.

The summer of his 17th year, he hit a growth spurt and shot from 5'6" to an even 6". He looked skeletal and underfed for a year, the year it took him to put on the mass and muscle appropriate to his new height, the year he made his decision and decided that he was going to train for the ring. In 1913, he entered the world of professional boxing as "Killer" Harrison, but was soon named "Ham-Hand" owing to the size and thickness of his "mitts."

He was good. Harrison pounded British boxing great Bombardier Wells into unconsciousness. He fought French champion Georges Carpentier to a standstill. By early 1917, he'd added another inch of height and weighed in at 240 lbs... and heavyweight champion Jess Willard, the "Great White Hope," agreed to fight him in a heavyweight match.

Ham-Hand trained himself to the peak of his form for the upcoming match, which was due to take place in June of 1917. Unfortunately for him and his heavyweight aspirations, the U.S. entered the ongoing European war in April... and a 23-year-old unmarried man in excellent physical condition was expected to enlist. He did.

Ham-Hand was as patriotic as the next guy. Unfortunately, his divisional commander wasn't cut of the same cloth. His commander kept Ham-Hand in behind-the-lines work so that the pugilist would remain safe... safe to continue his boxing career as divisional champion.

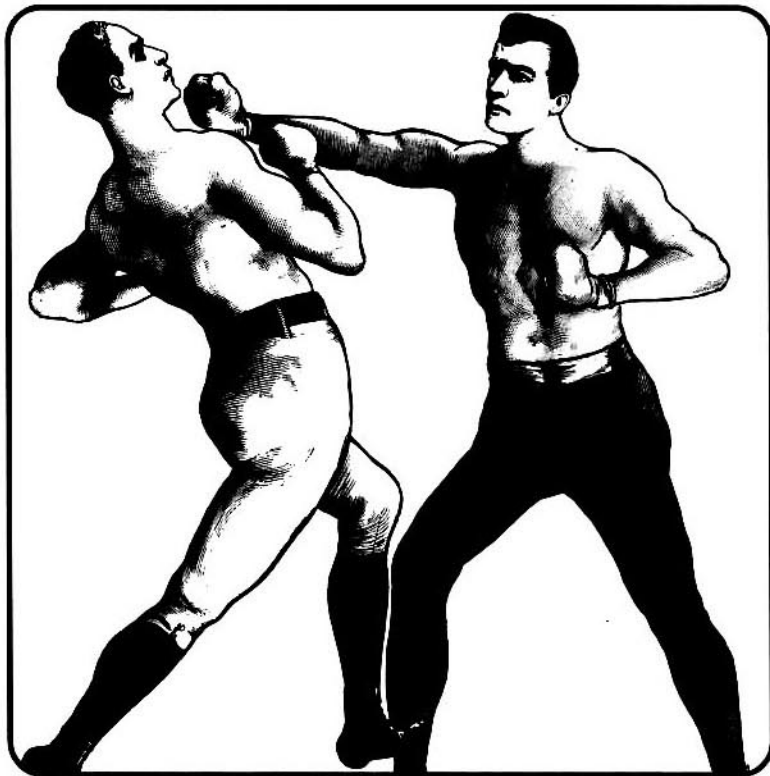
Ham-Hand didn't see eye-to-eye with his loathsome commander, but he did see fist-to-eye with the man. He spent a couple of years in army prison and was granted a dishonorable discharge.

He was a changed man when he emerged: Bitter, feeling betrayed by the government and abandoned by his sport. Boxing had been sullied, dirtied by his commander's actions; Ham-Hand couldn't return to the ring. Instead, he drifted into petty crime. With his size and determination, he made an effective enforcer and thumb-breaker.

Racketeering betrayed him, too. In 1920, Ham-Hand fell in love with Pearl McCloud, a young lady in the neighborhood, a girl outside the world of rackets and mobs. He watched helplessly as Pearl was cut down by a drive-by shooting, an attempted

hit on his employer. He heard the doctors' description of the involved, expensive operation which could restore her ability to walk. And he listened in fury as his employer refused to lend him the money for the operation, telling him it was cheaper to choose a new girl whose parts all worked.

Two days later, Ham-Hand returned to the ring in a desperate attempt to win enough money for the operation. He fought nightly. He won almost every fight. Through intermediaries, he bet half of each night's winnings on himself and increased his take dramatically. He earned the money Pearl needed... too late. She committed suicide rather than face the disappointment of the operation failing, rather than see Ham-Hand get himself beaten to death for her.



He quit the rackets. He did nothing for a year—nothing except drink, and savagely beat the enforcers he used to work with when they suggested he come back to work with them. But his relationship with Pearl had changed him, made him aware of how cruel and impermanent the racketeer's life was; his short return to the ring, his nights of boxing for something that mattered, reawakened his love of the sport.

He spent the small fortune he'd earned for that operation to buy a run-down building near Harlem. He turned most of the building into a gymnasium for street kids. But the basement became his primary source of income: He turned it into a speakeasy, a very unusual one which he named the Black Pearl.

The Black Pearl was a strange place for a number of reasons.

First, it was a classy place—as classy as a basement "speak" could be, anyway. He got good booze—charged an arm and a leg for it, but it was good stuff. He put in a decent kitchen and charged ordinary prices for his food: The booze brought in the profits. He erected a stage for a band and brought in good-quality musical entertainment. He allowed blacks in his establishment, though in the early years (1921-1929) blacks were restricted to one part of the main room, whites to another.

His place began to show a profit early on, even though almost no one called it by its right name: To almost everyone, it was "Ham-Hand's". This profit allowed him to fix the joint up nice and to keep his boxers' gymnasium open during its first lean years.

Gradually, the speakeasy took on its own, unique character. A washed-out boxer friend of Ham-Hand's visited one night and the two kicked the band off the stage for awhile, demonstrating their old moves for the crowd's enjoyment. After that, Ham-Hand had the stage rigged so that it could serve a variety of purposes—including being roped off as a boxing or wrestling ring. Within a few years, Ham-Hand had things set up so that entertainment nights featured a rotating set of amusements, a different set each week. On any one night, visitors might see and hear a jazz band, a boxing match, a tap-dancer, and a classy strip-tease, each appearing two or three times in the night. The next time the customer visited, the entertainment would be a torch singer, a wrestling match, a vaudeville gagman, or a movie projected onto the white screen behind the stage curtain.

Another unique characteristic: Ham-Hand really did keep the peace. He had his own bouncers, but anyone who really offended the management was bounced by Ham-Hand himself. He paid off the police and the mob with good grace but demanded action for his money... and in the long years of Prohibition, The Black Pearl was never raided by the police, nor was it the site of any mob-sanctioned shootings. (Sure, there are always independents willing to violate the rules... but if Ham-Hand didn't get them, the mob did.)

Ironically, Ham-Hand sold his gymnasium in 1926. The boys who were learning there looked up to him as a hero, a role model. This didn't bother Ham-Hand the ex-boxer, but it did worry Ham-Hand the speakeasy owner and ex-convict. He got

out of the business, sold it to an old friend who'd teach the kids and keep the sport pure for them, and pretend it didn't hurt him to let the gym go.

Today, he runs the Black Pearl and maintains its legend. It's not the biggest saloon in New York, nor the trendiest, nor the one with the best food or most notorious clientele. But both Ham-Hand and his saloon maintain their own hard-edged mystique, and Ham-Hand's is rightly called the most neutral saloon in the city—one where rival gang bosses can meet, one where a thumb-breaker, a cop, a priest and an adventurer can get a good drink, one where the entertainment is definitely going to be good and is probably going to be a surprise.

ABNER "HAM-HAND" HARRISON				
<b>Characteristics</b>				
STR	18	DEX	16	CON 18 BODY 13
INT	10	EGO	13	PRE 18 COM 10
PD:	8	ED:	4	SPD 3 REC: 8
END	36	STUN:	41	<b>Cost:</b> 80
<b>Cost Skills</b>				
3, 3	Bureaucratics, 13-; Combat Driving, 12-			
10	Combat Skill Levels: +2 H-t-H			
6	Combat Skill Levels: +2, Boxing			
5, 3	Gambling, 12-; Persuasion, 13-			
3, 3	KS: Boxing, 12-; KS: The Mob, 12-			
4, 3	PS: Saloonkeeper, 13-; Streetwise, 13-			
4, 2	PS: Pro Boxer, 13-; WF: Small Arms			
16	Martial Art —			
	Boxing: Barehanded (Default)			
	<b>Man.</b>	<b>OCV</b>	<b>DCV</b>	<b>Damage/Effects</b>
	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
	Clinch	-1	-1	Grab,
				+10 STR to hold
	Cross	+0	+2	STR +2d6 Strike
	Hook	-2	+1	STR +4d6 Strike
<b>75+ Disadvantages</b>				
10	Distinctive Features: Big, Gorilloid (concealable)			
10	Watched, Mob (more powerful, NCI, watching)			
10	Mistrusts Military Officers and the Mob (uncommon, strong)			
10	Soft-Hearted, But Conceals It (Common)			
10	Reputation: Well-Known Ex-Boxer (11-)			
5	Reputation: Ex-Con (8-)			
15	Bonus (Experience Spent)			
75	Starting Points			
<b>OCV: 5+ DCV: 5+ ECV: 4+ Phases: 4,8,12</b>				
<b>Costs: Char Powers Total Disadv Base</b>				
80 + 65 = 145 = 70 + 75				

Remember, this character sheet is for a Ham-Hand who has been out of the boxing ring for many years. In his fighting prime, he had considerably more END and STUN, a higher DEX and BODY, and an extra point of SPD.

## STAFF AND REGULARS

The Black Pearl has a large staff of bartenders, waiters and waitresses, cooks, and entertainers. It also has a loyal core of regular clients. There's no room to showcase them all, but here are some of the more notable ones:

**Helen Mays (Chanteuse):** Torch singer and regular employee of the Black Pearl. Tall and willowy, blonde with green eyes, high cheekbones and an expression that normally ranges between sulky and woebegone. Eight years ago, at age 17, she came to the Big Apple to make it big on Broadway. She didn't make it that far; she was an utter failure and became a "fallen woman" rather than starve. Four years ago, she was elevated, if that's the word, to the status of gangster's moll when mob lieutenant Joe "Itchy" Antonioni took an interest in her. Since then, she's been his virtual prisoner. Ham-Hand gave her a job as singer at Itchy's request, and was gratified to find out that she's a fine singer. Her predicament lends a lot of authenticity to the torch songs and other moody pieces she sings. PRE 13 COM 16; KS: The Mob 12-, PS: Singer 12-, Streetwise 12-; Psych Lim: Resents Her Situation.

**Nicky George (Piano Player):** Ham-Hand's regular pianist is 33, a native New Yorker and something of an intellectual. He's an excellent piano player, but a moody son of a gun who doesn't get much of anything accomplished: He doesn't write that great score that's dancing its way through his head, doesn't look for a better-paying job more suited to his formidable playing skills, doesn't do anything but show up for work and play, go home to read and drink, and fume at himself for his inactivity. PRE 15 COM 12; KS: Musical Composition 12-, PS: Pianist 14-; Psych Lim: Takes No Actions Not Absolutely Necessary. Medium height, lanky, black hair, thin mustache.

**Lou Kapelos (Chief Bartender):** A big, burly 40-year-old Greek-American who served with Ham-Hand in the Army. He's built like a fullback with a potbelly, is balding, and has a thick gray walrus mustache. His English is thickly accented and he appears to be able to talk for 45 minutes at a stretch without drawing a breath. PRE 18 COM 10; Combat Driving 12-, Languages (English, French, and Arabic Fluent, Japanese and Filipino Basic), PS: Bartender 13-, PS: Cook 12-, PS: Sailor 12-, Weapon Familiarity: Small Arms.

**Antonio Mancuso (Announcer):** Mancuso, 30, is an Italian-American jack-of-all-trades. Most visibly, he's the entertainment announcer for Ham-Hand's: He takes the stage between acts and announces the upcoming entertainment, harangues the crowd, etc.; he's well-known for the expensive tuxedo and his grating, bellowing voice. But he also serves as the entertainment director, hiring and dealing with all the temporary and permanent acts which appear at the Black Pearl. He's the staff manager, hiring and firing the employees, interceding in staff disputes, keeping troublesome entertainers and waiters away from "the girls"—the waitress staff. His cousin Louie keeps the books for Ham-Hand's but

is not technically an employee. PRE 13 COM 12; KS: Conversation 13-, Business Management 13-, Persuasion 12-; Psych Lim: Protective of Female Staff.

**Catherine Hackett (Waitress):** Typical of the waitressing staff is Catherine. She's short, curvy, brunette, and 22, a waitress by night and a secretarial school student by day. She's attractive but in a gum-chewing and nasal-Brooklyn-accented way. Like all the waitresses, she wears an abbreviated uniform heavy on the plunging neckline, microscopic skirt, and dark hose look... but in spite of this racy costume and its occasional effects on customers, she is a "good girl," as are most of the waitresses. PRE 10 COM 14; PS: Waitress 11-, PS: Secretary 8-.

**Mark Scarapulla (Bouncer):** An ex-enforcer for a mob that was destroyed in a gang war, Scarapulla is now head bouncer for Ham-Hand. He doesn't look like a bouncer: He's short, thin, and homely, with a pocked face, a broken nose, and rather ratlike features. But he's bright, effective, and when occasion demands, mean. PRE 13 COM 8; Combat Skill Levels +4 with Hand-to-Hand, KS: The Mob 12-, Martial Arts (Dirty Infighting), Persuasion 13-, PS: Bouncer 13-, Streetwise 12-; Psych Lim: Lecher.

**Joe "Itchy" Antonioni (Regular):** Joe is on his third nickname. When he was just a boy entering the mobs, he was "Rat." Later, when he first embarked on his career as an enforcer and hit man for the Scolaro Mob, he was "Crazy Tony." Later, before he became Angelo Scolaro's chief enforcement lieutenant, he was injured in a car crash and wore two casts for a period of months; his constant itching, and his quickness on the trigger, earned him the moniker of "Itchy." He's tall, thin, pale with black hair, handsome, and nervous. PRE 13 COM 16; Martial Arts: Boxing maneuvers; WF: Blades and Small Arms; Psych Lim: Sadist.

Other regulars can include famous mobsters and lawmen, regular campaign NPCs (and PCs).

## THE SCHEDULE

Ham-Hand's runs on a regular schedule. It opens at 6 p.m. every night (including Sundays) and closes at 5 a.m. The cooks are on duty from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. The entertainment runs from 7 p.m. to 4 a.m.

The joint does not offer the same entertainment every night. There are three types of nights:

**Entertainment Nights:** *Fridays, Saturdays, Wednesdays.* There will typically be four or five types of entertainment offered all night long, in rotation; you can choose the types of entertainment from the list further below.

**Dance Nights:** *Sundays, Tuesdays.* Ten tables are cleared away from the main floor; the open area becomes a dance floor. The only types of entertainment are bands and singers. Ham-Hand doesn't make as much money on these nights: There are fewer tables to generate revenue. But he likes these nights for their own sake, and for the civilized atmosphere and reputation they give his club.



**Music Nights:** *Mondays, Thursdays.* The only types of entertainment showcased on these nights are bands, singers, and dancers—especially tap dancers. The Thursday night gathering for hoofers is especially notorious.

**Choices for the Entertainment Nights**

These are the sorts of entertainments provided on Entertainment Nights. Choose any four or five; each will be repeated several times during the night. (Though the *type* of entertainment may be repeated, the exact act isn't. For example, if the entertainment is Boxing Match, it won't be the same two fighters in each match.)

- Acrobats, Jugglers
- Boxing Match
- Crooner (Singer)
- Gag-Man (Standup Comic), Humorist
- Jazz Band
- Magician, Mesmerist
- Movie (Usually a Two-Reel Comedy)
- Piano Original by Nicky George
- Songs by Helen Mays or Other "Canary"
- Standards Band
- Stripper (High-Class)
- Strongman Demonstration
- Tap Dancer(s)
- Unusual Martial Arts Demonstration
- Vaudeville Dancer/Comedian
- Wrestling Match

**LAYOUT OF THE BLACK PEARL**

Ham-Hand's occupies the entire basement of a medium-sized office building in a run-down part of downtown. The street west of Ham-Hand's is higher than the street east; along the east wall, the speakeasy's floor is actually at street level.

The two floors above Ham-Hand's are the gymnasium once owned by Ham-Hand. The ceiling/floor between the two businesses is thick and not much noise bleeds between them.

There are three types of seating in Ham-Hand's: Dark booths (with thin curtains which can be drawn across the front) which seat four comfortably (and can seat six slender and friendly people), tables (most seat four, while two can seat nine or ten), and high-backed bar stools.

The joint is kept clean. The same can't be said for the air, which is smoke-filled but kept moving by large ceiling fans. (Since this is a 1930s game, this is the norm; characters would never retreat from such a setting.)

The map in this article shows the layout of the Black Pearl. These are the joint's points of interest:

(1) *Sunken Entryway.* The main entrance to Ham-Hand's is below street level on the street to the west. Patrons come down a flight of brick steps to a concrete landing which fronts two featureless doors. Before January 1934, there is no sign to mark the joint's presence; after December 1933, when Prohibition was finally revoked, a single brass sign saying "The Black Pearl" was put up.

(2) *Entrance (Door).* Before January 1934, these are heavy (iron-reinforced) oak doors with a small peephole door in them; a bouncer stood behind each door to look over visitors, and visitors did have to summon up the password for the night in order to gain entrance. (This wasn't too difficult, and some of the regulars were cops.) After that date, these doors were replaced with heavy oak doors with glass panels in them, and the bouncers were no longer required to stand behind them.

(3) *Ham-Hand's Office.* A small, richly appointed office seldom visited by Ham-Hand. Expensive wood desk, thick carpet, leather chairs, several fans. Ham-Hand has a not-very-well-hidden safe

beneath the desk; it contains a few hundred dollars and some innocuous papers. He also has a much-better-hidden safe against the east wall; the safe, behind wood panelling, is actually built into the back of the metal refrigerated storeroom (4c).

(3a) *Ham-Hand's Bath*. A small toilet and sink, and a lavishly oversized bathtub, all in marble.

(3b) *Ham-Hand's Room*. Ham-Hand's actual apartment is elsewhere; this is a room where he can lie down when he feels like it, or where he can stash someone who needs a place to stay. A secret door behind the wood panelling gives him access to a hollowed-out area below the concrete stairs, and from there he can get into the city sewers, should drastic circumstances warrant. Only Ham-Hand knows of this secret door.

(4) *Kitchen*. A large, modern kitchen with several stoves, sinks and ample working room. The menu it offers is not broad, but the food is good.

(4c) *Cold Storage*. This is a modern appliance, a refrigerated storeroom where meats are hung. It's made of metal.

(5) *Alley Door*. The alley on the north face of the building slopes downhill from west to east; consequently, this door, which is on a level with the entry doors at (2), opens right out onto the alley. It is heavily reinforced and kept locked.

(6) *The Bar*. This is a well-stocked bar manned at peak hours by three bartenders, by one during slump hours. Two panels (the areas which have no stools before them) are flipped up for easy entrance and exit by the waiters and waitresses. One of the room's support columns is placed in the center of the barkeeps' area. There are two shotguns underneath the bar.

(7) *Hallway to Bathrooms*. This is usually dark; patrons tend to unscrew the bulb so they will have a dark corner where they can speak unobserved.

(8) *Ladies' Bathroom*. High, inconvenient windows allow athletic patrons uncomfortable access to the alley east of the building. They are normally kept closed and locked.

(9) *Men's Bathroom*. See (8), above.

(10) *Closet*. Supplies for the bathrooms and cleaning wares (brooms, mops, buckets, ammonia, rags, etc.) are kept here.

(11) *Ham-Hand's Booth*. This is no different from any other booth. But, since it is next to the restrooms and the least favorite booth among the patrons, Ham-Hand took it for his own and is usually found here, watching the crowd.

(12) *Ten Tables or Dance Floor*. These ten tables—eight normal and two elongated—are removed and stored beneath the stage on Dance Nights.

(13) *Raised Stage*. This heavily-padded wooden stage is raised four feet above the floor. Extra chairs, tables, supplies, musical instruments (like Nicky's stand-up piano) and props are stored beneath it. The stage top is padded for the occasions when the stage serves as a boxing or wrestling surface.

(14) *Limits of Boxing Ring*. The corners of this square are where the posts are fitted when the

stage is converted into a boxing ring. Ropes are already attached to the posts; when they're set in place, the ropes are taut.

(15) *Curtain*. This is a good-quality velvet curtain which may be drawn open; behind it, however, is no backstage, but only a small white movie screen and two doors leading backstage.

(16) *Stairs From Backstage*. These two sets of stairs make it easier for backstage employees to get backstage.

(17) *Backstage*. The backstage was an after-the-fact addition to Ham-Hand's. It consists of a row of inadequately tiny dressing rooms accessed by a narrow (3'-wide) hallway. Like the stage, backstage is raised about 4' and so the ceiling is about 6'5" high. Illumination is bad and permanent fans barely keep the atmosphere tolerable. Ham-Hand isn't deliberately cruel to his visiting entertainers, but this is all the room he has available.

(17d) *Normal Dressing Room*. The standard dressing room is about 6' square and has one dresser-desk, one chair, a pegboard on the wall, a fan and a hanging light bulb.

(17e) *Dressing Room With Escape Hatch*. This is like the normal dressing room but has a secret hatch that leads to the 4' gap underneath the backstage. From this area, the escapee can get to underneath the stage or through a basement-style window leading to the east alley. In theory, only Ham-Hand and Antonio know of these hatches, but both Nicky and Catherine have (individually) discovered them at various times and kept the information to themselves.

(17f) *Bathroom*. A small bathroom the same size as the dressing rooms.

(17g) *Costumes*. A dressing room which is laden with chests of randomly-accumulated costumes and props.

(17h) *Helen's Dressing Room*. Since Helen Mays is a permanent employee, she rates her own permanent dressing room. Nicky George, who doesn't have the same costuming needs, doesn't have one permanently assigned to him.

(18) *Nicky's Piano*. This is where Nicky George's battered but in-tune standup piano is usually set up.

## CAMPAIGN USE

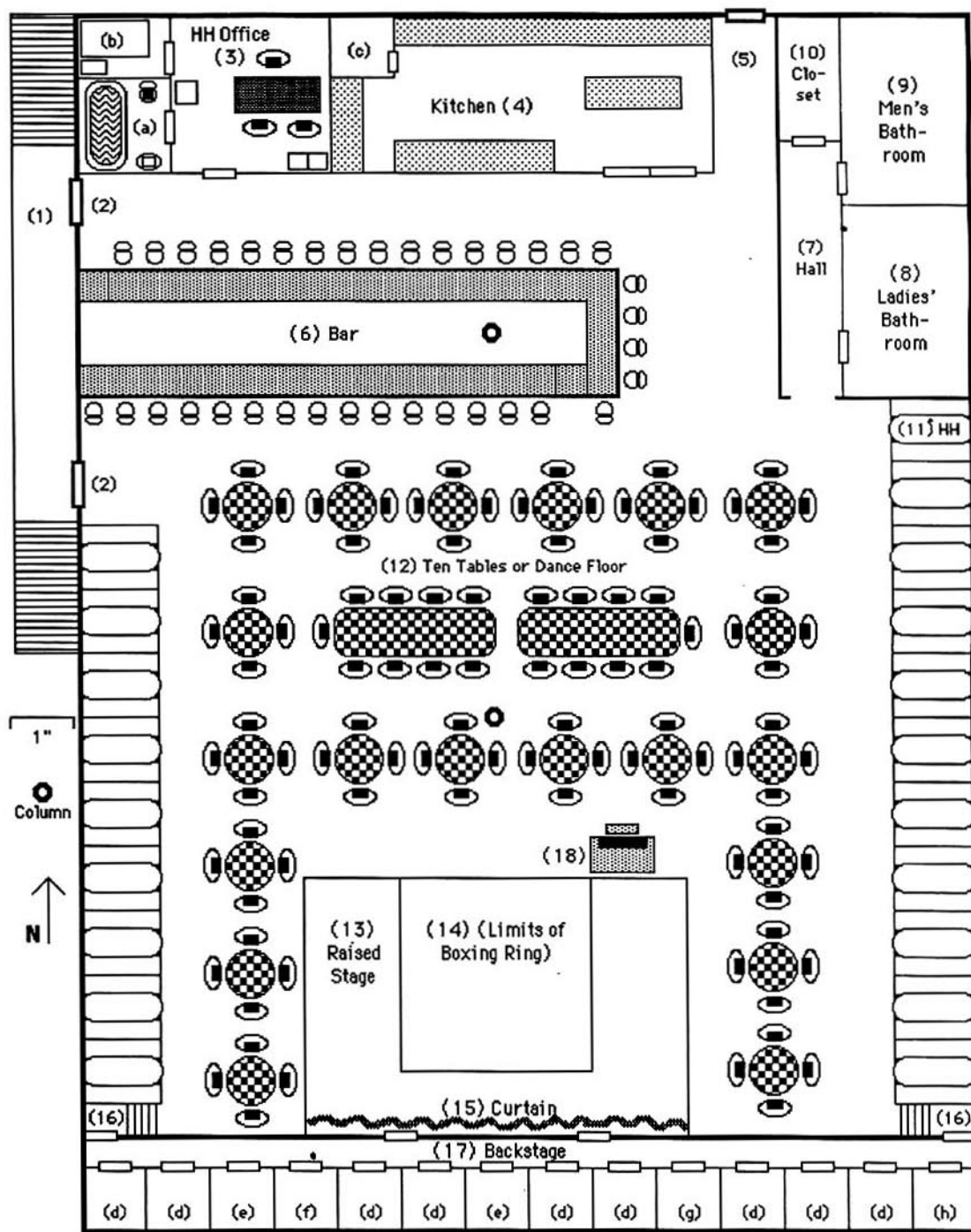
So, you ask, what is Ham-Hand's used for in a campaign?

Basically, it's an enabling device for *Justice, Inc.* campaigns. It's a place you can gradually introduce into a campaign and then have it be a place where adventures start and where encounters take place.

You can start by having a gangster or informer arrange a meeting with the PCs at the Black Pearl. While they talk to the contact, they can enjoy good booze and see the really unusual entertainments.

Later in the campaign, you can have an adventure start out at the place. Have an NPC friend of the characters invite them there for drinks, and have the adventure's events start out there.

Still later, your characters may choose to go there as a regular affair—they may spend every Friday night at Ham-Hand's, for instance, and you



can use that regular contact as an ingredient in your campaign.

In short, Ham-Hand's is just a neat place much like the Empire Club itself, a place where people associate and trouble gets started. Unlike the Empire Club, this is not a place where only the elite gather and where patrons have a common bond of adventure; this gives you a broader range of people to use as story hooks.

Though the early text specified Manhattan, you can place Ham-Hand's in any large, cosmopolitan American city.

After December, 1933, Ham-Hand's becomes a completely legitimate business, but its character—including the quality of its booze and entertainments—remains basically unchanged.



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*Champions of the North* is a sourcebook for *Champions*, completely describing America's northern neighbor and the heroes and villains that live there. Inside you will find dozens of new characters, three fully detailed adventures, and many more adventure ideas. For the GM, there are extensive notes on Canada, its peoples, its history, and detailed descriptions of the cities and locations for your northern adventures. Whether your heroes are just visiting or are settling in for a full scale Canadian campaign, *Champions of the North* is the sourcebook for you (eh?).