

THE ROLE-PLAYING GAMES MONTHLY 95p

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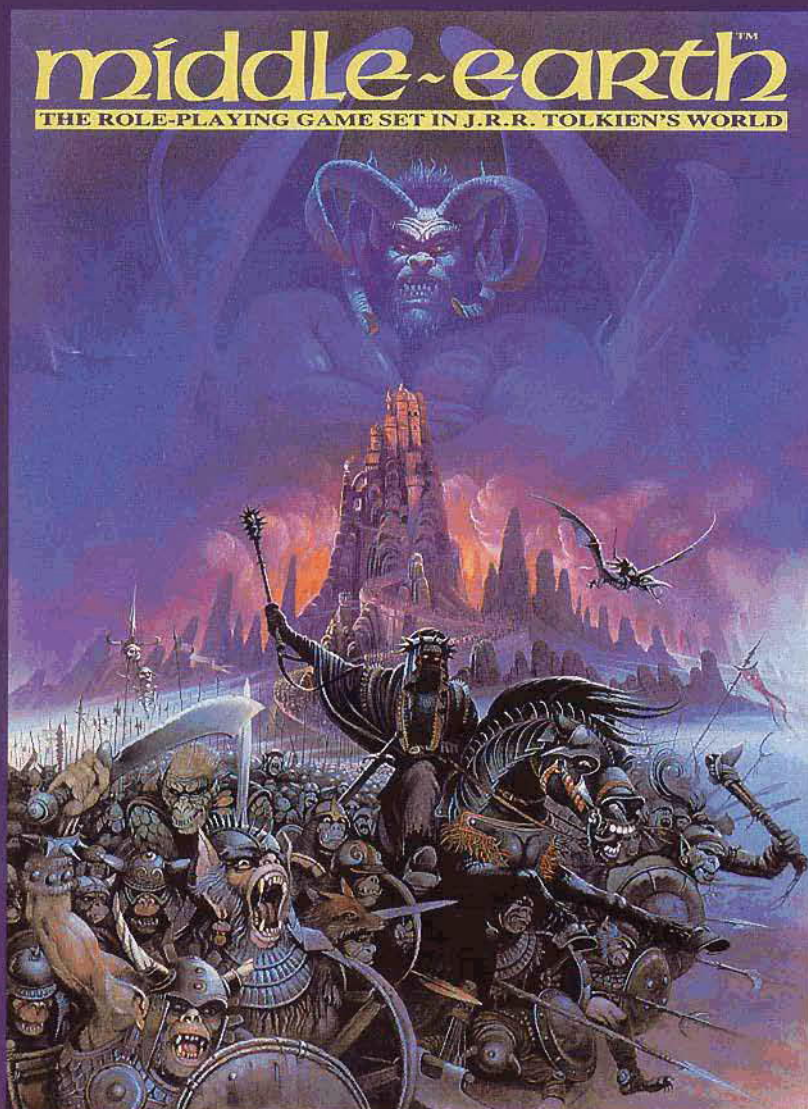


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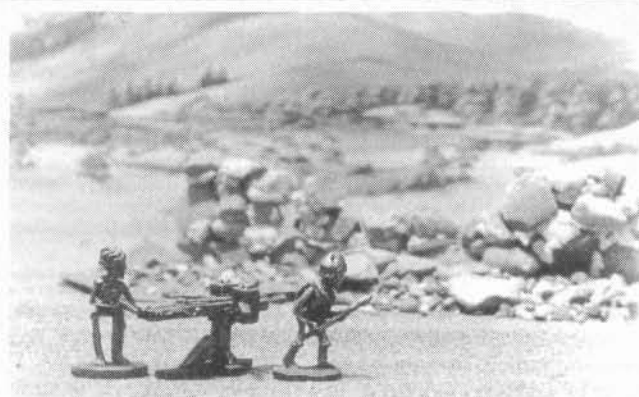
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*Notes:* Please vote for proprietary games only, not classical games such as *Chess*, *Go*, etc.

*Definitions:* *New Games* are any released on or after **Games Day '84**. *Family Games* include any game with general appeal. *Contemporary Games* are any with their background based in the Twentieth Century. A *Fan Magazine* is any magazine produced by amateurs.

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C. Best Contemporary Role-Playing Game:  
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.....

R. Best Fan Magazine:  
.....

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.....

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**GAMES DAY AWARDS FORM**



# WHITE DWARF

Issue 67 July 1985

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After nearly ten years of running a poor second to the USA in the creation of fantasy games, I believe that at long last, Britain is quickly catching up. First came the solo gamebooks pioneered by Steve Jackson and myself in 1982. The quality of British miniatures is outstanding. Take a look at *Citadel's Lord of the Rings* figures. And wait until you see the forthcoming *D&D* figures! As for games, *Talisman* and *Battlecars* have been nominated for awards at *Origins '85*, and no doubt *Golden Heroes* will follow them. And last, but not least, there is *White Dwarf*, but I don't need to tell you how good that is!



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# HAUNTERS OF THE DARK

## Ghosts, a Non-Mythos Adversary for Call of Cthulhu, by Graeme Davis

Ghosts are variously thought to be the disembodied life-forces of dead humans, or entities inadvertently created by events of great psychic tension. They are non-corporeal beings, normally solitary and invisible, and generally haunt areas of past evil or violence, attacking intruders by the use of various telepathic and psychokinetic abilities.

Not all ghosts are malign, and most of the more intelligent spirits will have a reason for their actions. The ghost of a murder victim, for example, may only attack those who remind it of its murderer, or who trespass in the place of its death. This is not to say that there do not exist ghosts which are wholly evil and dedicated to the torment of the living. Each ghost must be treated as an individual, and its actions governed by its personal abilities and past history.

### ATTRIBUTES

Being a non-corporeal entity, a ghost does not possess physical attributes of STR, CON or DEX. SIZ may be generated as a guideline for describing its Visual Materialisations (see below). The main attribute of a ghost is POW, which governs the abilities available to it, and also takes the place of Hit Points. Any damage done to a ghost is deducted from its POW; when this reaches zero the ghost is rendered inactive. INT should be borne in mind when deciding its actions.

### COMBAT

Because of their immaterial state, ghosts may not attack or be attacked by physical means, though they may be attacked with a weapon such as a sword which has been enchanted magically for that very purpose (by using the spell *enchant item*, for example). An enchanted weapon does half normal damage, which is deducted from the ghost's POW as stated above.

Since a ghost is normally invisible, it may only be attacked in this manner when it is Visually Materialised.

### CHARACTERISTICS

	Range	Average
STR	—	—
CON	—	—
SIZ	3d6	10-11
INT	3d6	10-11
POW	4d6	14
DEX	—	—

**Move:** 12

**Weapon:** Abilities only

**Armour:** None

**SAN loss:** Unless otherwise stated under the individual ability description below, SAN point costs are as follows:

Witnessing Minor Manifestation — 1d2;

Witnessing Major Manifestation — 1d4;

Suffering Minor Attack — 1d4+2

Suffering Major Attack — 1d6+2



### GHOST ABILITY DESCRIPTIONS

#### Minor Manifestations

1. *Cold*. Causes intense but harmless cold in a 20' radius. Costs 2 POW for the first 5 rounds, 1 POW per round thereafter.

2. *Dust Devil*. Enables the ghost to cause an unnatural stirring among leaves, dust, papers, etc. Costs 1 POW, and can be maintained for up to 5 rounds.

3. *Gust of Wind*. Can be used to slam doors, extinguish candles, raise quantities of dust into a cloud, etc. Costs 1 POW.

4. *Light*. Creates either a number of small, winking points of light in a 3' radius, or one 10" diameter ball of light, similar to a Will-o-Wisp. Costs 2 POW for the first 5 rounds, 1 POW per round thereafter.

5. *Liquid*. Enables the ghost to manifest itself in pools of

mud, blood, slime, etc. Costs 4 POW; the pools will vanish in 2-20 rounds.

6. *Mist*. Creates a swirling mist in an enclosed area of not more than 10' radius. Costs 2 POW for the first 5 rounds, 1 POW per round thereafter. It will be disrupted by draughts or wind.

7. *Noise*. Generates a noise of the ghost's choosing — moaning, tapping, etc. Costs 1 POW, lasting for up to 5 rounds.

8. *Smell*. Produces a foul atmosphere in a 10' radius. Costs 2 POW for the first 5 rounds, 1 POW per round thereafter. The smell may be disrupted by a strong draught or breeze.

### MAJOR MANIFESTATIONS

1. *Communication*. Permits the ghost to send a message in the form of telepathic images to one living person. Costs 2 POW per message (lasting 1 round), plus 1 POW per 20 SAN of the receiver. If the receiver makes his or her SAN roll, the message will not be received.

2. *Dread*. Creates a general feeling of unease and tension within a 30' radius. Costs 5 POW, and lasts for 10 rounds. Characters within the area of effect must make a SAN roll every round, losing 1 SAN on every failed roll. Any character losing 4 SAN will turn and flee, losing no more SAN but attempting a SAN roll every round in order to throw off the panic.

3. *Extinguish Light*. Costs 1 POW for a candle, oil lamp, etc, 2 POW for a gas light, and 3 POW for an electric light or battery lamp. This POW cost will extinguish the light for 5 rounds, and a further similar expenditure will keep it extinguished for another 10 rounds.

4. *Illusion*. As the Minor Manifestation, Mist, above, but POW costs are doubled. The ghost may create images of any descrip-

### GHOST ABILITIES

#### A. Minor Manifestations

1. Cold
2. Dust Devil
3. Gust of Wind
4. Light\*
5. Liquid
6. Mist\*
7. Noise
8. Smell

#### B. Major Manifestations

1. Communication\*
2. Dread
3. Extinguish Light\*
4. Illusion\*
5. Move Object
6. Shatter
7. Shifting Form\*
8. Visual Materialisation\*

#### C. Minor Attacks

1. Control Small Animals
2. Fascination\*
3. Glimpse\*
4. Hurl Object
5. Influence\*
6. Laceration
7. Push
8. Scream\*

#### D. Major Attacks

1. Aging\*
2. Blindness\*
3. Chill Touch\*
4. Illusory Attack\*
5. Nightmare\*
6. Possession\*
7. Psychic Violence\*
8. Ride\*

\* These abilities are only usable at night.

The number of abilities which a ghost can use is governed by its initial POW (subsequent increases in POW do not bestow additional abilities). Once the number of abilities has been calculated on *Table 1*, they may be diced for randomly or selected by the Keeper. Note that some abilities are prerequisites for others (see the descriptions of the abilities below for full details).

Table 1: Ghost Abilities

Initial POW	Minor Manifestation	Major Manifestation	Minor Attack	Major Attack
4	1	—	—	—
5	1	—	—	—
6	1	—	—	—
7	2	1	—	—
8	2	1	1	—
9	2	1	2	—
10	3	2	2	—
11	3	2	3	—
12	4	3	3	—
13	4	3	3	1
14	5	3	3	1
15	5	3	4	1
16	5	4	4	2
17	6	4	5	2
18	6	5	5	2
19	7	5	6	2
20	7	6	6	3
21	7	6	6	3
22	8	6	7	3
23	8	7	7	3
24	9	8	8	3



tion within the mist. If this is done with the intention of deceiving any onlookers (rather than, say, for communication), the victims are permitted an INT×4 roll to penetrate the illusion.

5. *Move Object*. A minor form of Psychokinesis, which can move any loose object (ie which is not nailed down or otherwise secured) at a speed not exceeding 3mph. Costs 1 POW/10lb of weight, lasts for one round. May be used aggressively.

6. *Shatter*. Causes one object of glass, ceramic or a similar brittle substance to shatter violently, showering shards on any within 5' (or below). Anyone caught in the explosion of shards must make a Luck roll; if this is failed, they have received a number of small cuts and must shake out their coats, shoes, etc, before proceeding. If any character rolls 00, the lacerations are more serious, causing 1-2 points of damage and possibly involving the loss of an eye. This ability costs 4 POW.

7. *Shifting Form*. May only be used in conjunction with Visual Materialisation. Enables the form of the materialisation to shift continually, confusing viewers and adding an extra 1d4 to SAN loss (1 point if SAN roll made). Adds 1 POW per 5 rounds to the cost of materialisation.

8. *Visual Materialisation*. The ghost may become visible in one of two forms: either as in life or as a rotting corpse after 2-3 months' decomposition. Costs 3 POW for the first 5 rounds, 1 POW per 5 rounds thereafter. Viewers' SAN loss is 1d4+2 if the latter form is chosen (1 point if SAN roll is made).

### MINOR ATTACKS

1. *Control Small Animals*. Enables the ghost to direct the actions of up to 100 insects, 50 mice or 20 rats or bats, or similar numbers of other small animals. They may be directed to carry out any action, including attacking up to two characters at any one time. Each attack will inflict 1 point of damage per round, but the ghost must remain within 10' in order to maintain control, and the animals will not be able to overcome any natural aversion such as that of fire. Costs 5 POW, lasts up to 5 rounds.

2. *Fascination*. May only be used in conjunction with a visible manifestation of some kind, and may be directed against one victim per 5 points of the ghost's initial POW. Each victim must make a SAN roll or stand transfixed, gazing at the manifestation. Costs 3 POW per victim; each round after the first each victim is allowed an INT×5 roll to try and break the fascination. By the expenditure of another 1 POW per victim, the ghost may lure them towards the manifestation. As they stumble forward, each victim must make a Luck roll each round at a cumulative 5% penalty to avoid tripping or walking into an obstruction. The ghost may deliberately lead victims into dangerous surroundings. The fascination lasts until broken by the victim, or until the victim is attacked, touched or otherwise brought back to reality, and when the fascination is broken by the first victim the manifestation must also come to an end, regardless of its normal duration. Victims who have succumbed to the fascination lose 1 SAN if the SAN roll is made.

3. *Glimpse*. This is a limited form of Visual Materialisation, and may be used to work on the nerves of one victim. At a cost of 2 POW, the ghost can cause its image to appear fleetingly in mirrors, glass panels or any other reflective surface at which the chosen victim looks, for a period of 10 rounds. The attack may be prolonged for a further 5 rounds only by the expenditure of an additional POW point, but cannot exceed 15 rounds duration. The victim must make a SAN roll each round, losing 1 SAN for every two failed rolls.

4. *Hurl Object*. An object up to 10lb in weight may be hurled at a cost of 1 POW/lb weight. When used to attack, the missile has a 45% chance of hitting the target, and will inflict 1 point of damage per pound of weight.

5. *Influence*. May only be used in conjunction with a successful Communication. The ghost forces one victim into a POW vs POW conflict, and, if successful, may force the victim to perform one fairly simple action which takes no longer than two rounds and which is not homicidal or reckless. Once the action is completed, the victim will have no recollection of the Communication or of having performed the task. This ability costs 1 POW per 10 points of the victim's current SAN.

6. *Laceration*. At a cost of 4 POW, the ghost may cause lacerations such as small scratches and bites to appear on one victim. Each attack inflicts 1 point of damage.

7. *Push*. At a cost of 3 POW, the ghost may attack one target with a psychokinetic blow. The blow will automatically hit the target, and will cause damage as a normal fist attack. The target must also make a DEX×5 roll to avoid being knocked over by the force of the blow. This ability may not be used if the ghost is Visually Materialised.

8. *Scream*. May only be used in conjunction with a Noise manifestation. The ghost may produce a shattering scream, costing a further 3 POW, at the sound of which all within earshot must make a SAN roll or lose SAN as for any other Minor Attack.

### MAJOR ATTACKS

1. *Aging*. This attack is similar to Chill Touch (qv), except that instead of taking physical damage the victim must make a POW×5 roll based on current POW or be aged by d3×10 years. For each 10 years of the aging effect, the victim must make a Luck roll or lose 1 point of STR, DEX or CON (determined randomly). For each attribute point lost by the victim, the ghost gains 1d3 POW from its victim's life energy. This ability costs 5 POW, and may only be used once on any one victim.

2. *Blindness*. At a cost of 4 POW, the ghost may force one victim into a POW vs POW conflict, and if successful the victim is struck blind for a number of hours equal to the ghost's initial POW, and must make a SAN roll every hour or lose 1-2 SAN.

3. *Chill Touch*. May only be used in conjunction with Visual Materialisation. At a further cost of 7 POW, the ghost may cause one of its hands to become semi-material in order to strike once. Attack percentage is as for normal fist attack, and a hit will cause 1d4 damage and require the victim to make a CON×5 roll or suffer a cardiac arrest (a further CON×5 roll to survive, victim is incapacitated for 30-CON days). The semi-material hand may be attacked physically, but its small size and semi-material nature will impose a -25% penalty on any attack rolls against it. Damage is deducted from the ghost's POW. This ability may only be used once per night.

4. *Illusory Attack*. May only be used in conjunction with Visual Materialisation. At a further cost of 4 POW, the ghost may force one victim to make a POW vs POW resistance roll as it makes to attack. If the roll is failed, the attack will cause a cardiac arrest in the same way as Chill Touch (unless a CON×5 roll is made). One attack may be made per materialisation.

5. *Nightmares*. This ability may be used in conjunction with Communication. This ability may be used to intrude upon the dreams of one sleeping victim. If the ghost succeeds in a POW vs POW struggle the victim must make a SAN roll or lose 1d6 SAN. This ability costs an additional 3 POW.

6. *Possession*. In order to possess a victim, a ghost may expend any number of POW points, this number being used in a POW vs POW struggle with the victim. If successful, the ghost occupies the victim's body, which becomes totally subject to its will. The victim may make a POW×5 roll every other round in order to initiate another POW vs POW struggle to throw off the possession. The ghost may withdraw voluntarily at any time, but if the body is killed it must make a POW×5 roll to avoid being destroyed; otherwise it returns to ghost form. When a ghost is driven or withdraws from a possessed body, the victim must make a CON×5 roll to avoid instant death, and a roll against half their SAN to avoid the loss of 1d10 SAN. Even if this latter roll is successful, the victim will lose 1d4 SAN.

7. *Psychic Violence*. At a cost of 6 POW, the ghost may force one victim into a POW vs POW conflict. If successful, the victim will lose SAN equal to half the ghost's current POW; this loss is halved again if a successful SAN roll is made. If the attack fails, the victim must still make a SAN roll or lose 1d4 SAN.

8. *Ride*. This ability may only be used in conjunction with a Visual Manifestation. The ghost may attack one sleeping victim, after the manner of the succubus of folklore, intruding on his or her dreams and 'riding' them until dawn or they are interrupted. The ghost may expend any number of POW points. These are used to calculate a POW vs POW conflict which is diced for every hour of the ride. Each time the ghost is successful, the victim loses 1 POW permanently; this is taken by the ghost and is added to his POW (increasing his maximum POW at the same time). On waking, the victim must make a SAN roll or lose 1d4+2 SAN; if it is successful they must still lose 3 points. If the victim's POW should reach zero he or she is dead, drained of all life by the ghost.

### REGAINING POW

All ghosts regain POW at the rate of 2 points every 24 hours; if a ghost is reduced to zero POW it is temporarily disrupted but not destroyed, though an Exorcism performed under these circumstances has a 100% chance of success with no POW loss for the exorcist. (There will be more on Exorcism, and Clergymen as a profession, in next month's *Crawling Chaos*.)

### SPECIAL GHOST TYPES

The following are a few common types which appear in British



## HAUNTERS OF THE DARK

folklore, treated in terms of the above system. The list is by no means exhaustive, and Keepers should feel free to add to it.

### THE BANSHEE

The Banshee is exclusively a female spirit, and normally haunts a particular building or family. In some cases she is the ghost of a young woman who died violently in the place that is now haunted; in others she may just be the woman of the family who died when young.

For much of the time a Banshee is inactive. She wails as a portent of death for the member of the family to which she is attached, and will often be heard rather than seen. Where Visual Manifestations have been recorded, she takes the form of a young and often beautiful woman, with flowing hair, a pale complexion, and eyes red from continual crying.

A variant form of Banshee is the Bean-Nighe, or 'Little Washer By the Ford', believed to be the spirit of a woman who died in childbirth and doomed to exist as a ghost until the time when she would have passed away from old age had she lived. She is invariably visible, seen apparently washing clothes in a river – the funeral shroud of someone in the family or village she is attached to who is about to die. Her Visual Materialisation normally presents a more matronly appearance than that of a Banshee.

While the manifestation of these spirits is often a portent of death, most commonly through age or disease, they do not seem to be responsible for the deaths and are seldom aggressive, though their lament is highly unsettling. The Keeper

might optionally rule that a person for whom a Banshee appears must make a CON×5 roll on each nightly manifestation in order to survive to the next dawn. Each appearance will reduce the percentage chance of recovery through medicine or other means by an amount equal to the Banshee's POW.

#### Characteristics

	Range	Average
STR	—	—
CON	—	—
SIZ	2d6+3	10
INT	3d6	10-11
POW	1d6+6	9-10
DEX	—	—

#### Abilities:

- A. Noise
  - B. Visual Materialisation
  - C. Scream
- SAN loss:** By abilities used.



### THE BLACK DOG

#### Characteristics

	Range	Average
STR	—	—
CON	—	—
SIZ	2d6+6	13
INT	3d6	10-11
POW	1d6+10	13-14
DEX	—	—

#### Abilities:

- A. None
- B. Visual Manifestation
- C. None
- D. Psychic Violence

**SAN loss:** 1 point for seeing the Black Dog, otherwise none unless attacked. In many cases Black Dogs are mistaken for large, normal dogs.

Black Dogs appear in several parts of the British Isles. The origin of some is unexplained, whilst others appear to be the form taken by certain human spirits. All appear as large black dogs, about the size of a



calf, with a shaggy coat and glowing fiery eyes. On most occasions they will go about their inscrutable business, taking no heed of anyone they encounter. Some have been known to appear as a death omen in the same way as a Banshee, while others guard churchyards, and a few have been known to help people overcome unexpected dangers. One story tells of a traveller who suddenly found himself accompanied by a Black Dog whilst walking through a forest at night, and later learned that certain of his enemies were planning to waylay him but were deterred by the sight of the beast. Another tells of a Black Dog which prevented the crew of a fishing-boat from reaching the harbour as they were about to embark on a night-fishing trip. Towards dawn a sudden storm blew up in which the boat would certainly have been lost had it sailed. Mostly, however, these beings seem content to leave alone and be left alone. Anyone who speaks to them, strikes at them, or otherwise tries to approach or deter them will be summarily attacked with Psychic Violence, and the Black Dog will continue on its way.

### THE POLTERGEIST

The Poltergeist is normally found indoors, and will generally be haunting a particular person (typically an adolescent girl). It appears to be mischievous rather than vicious, and uses a wide range of psychokinetic powers to hurl objects about in any room its victim occupies. Some theories maintain that many, if not all, Poltergeist hauntings are actually uncontrollable bursts of latent telekinetic energy from the victim rather than a true ghostly manifestation; nevertheless, it is treated as a ghost here.

#### Characteristics

	Range	Average
STR	—	—
CON	—	—
SIZ	—	—
INT	2d6	7
POW	2d4+4	9
DEX	—	—

#### Abilities:

- A. Dust Devil, Gust of Wind, Noise
  - B. Move Object, Shatter
  - C. Hurl Object, Push
- Note that not all Poltergeists will have all these abilities.  
**SAN loss:** By the abilities used.



### THE WILL-O-WISP

The Will-o-Wisp invariably haunts wild areas, and shows a marked preference for bogs and wetlands. It manifests itself as a floating ball of light and appears to travellers in an attempt to lead them astray amongst the quicksands and sinkholes. It is rumoured that some may feed on the ebbing life force of a drowning victim, perhaps using a variant on the Ride ability. It may be that these entities do not regain POW in the normal way, but constantly need to replenish it by this other method. This matter is left for the Keeper to decide, as he sees fit. □

#### Characteristics

	Range	Average
STR	—	—
CON	—	—
SIZ	—	—
INT	1d6	3-4
POW	2d4+2	7
DEX	—	—

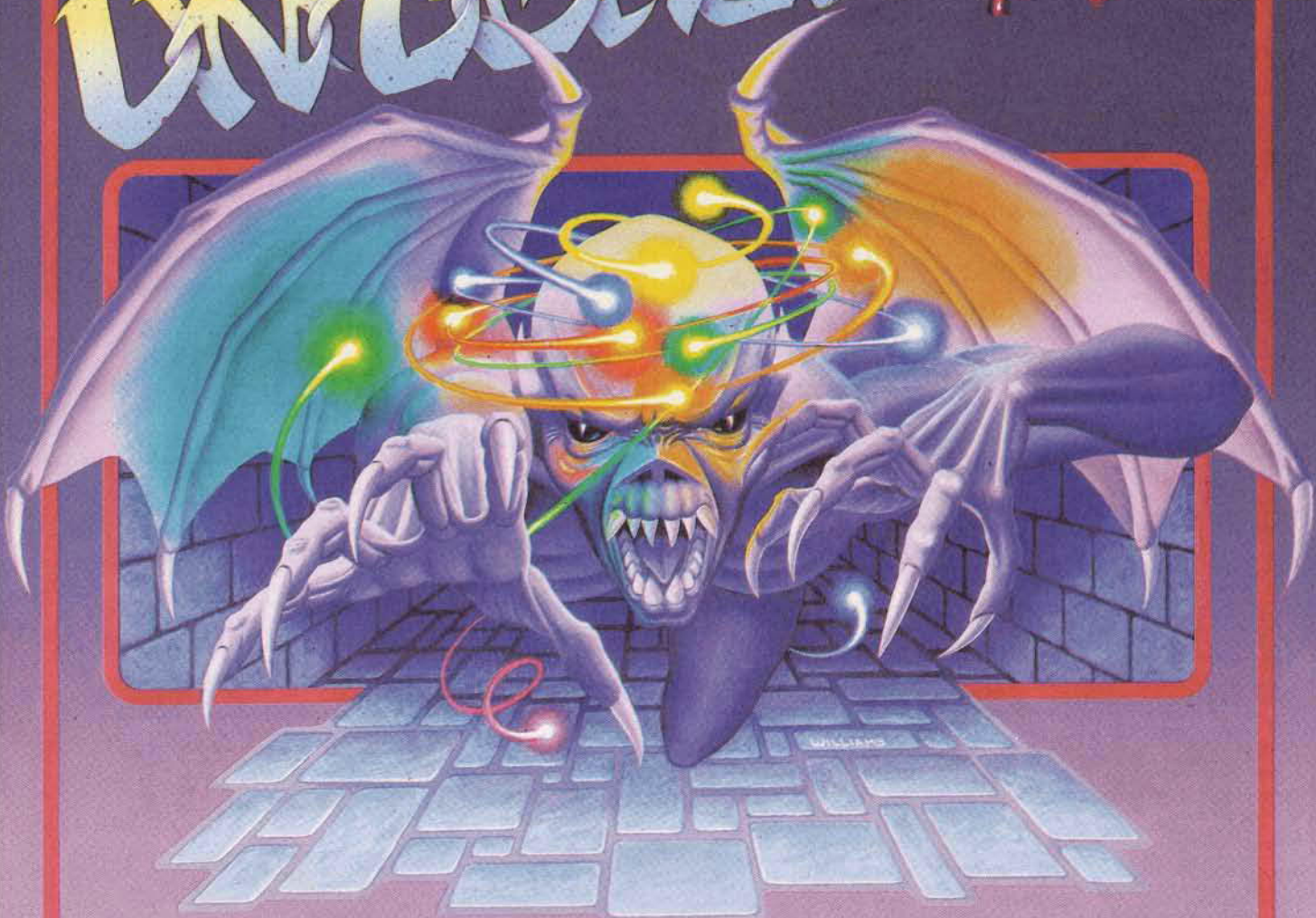
#### Abilities:

- A. Light
  - B. None
  - C. Fascination
  - D. Ride (see above)
- SAN loss:** By abilities used.





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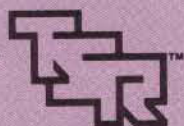
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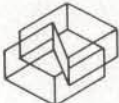


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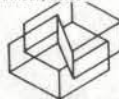
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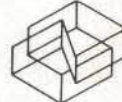
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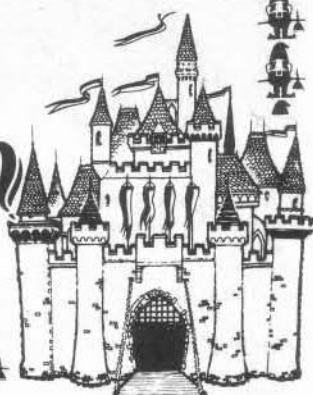
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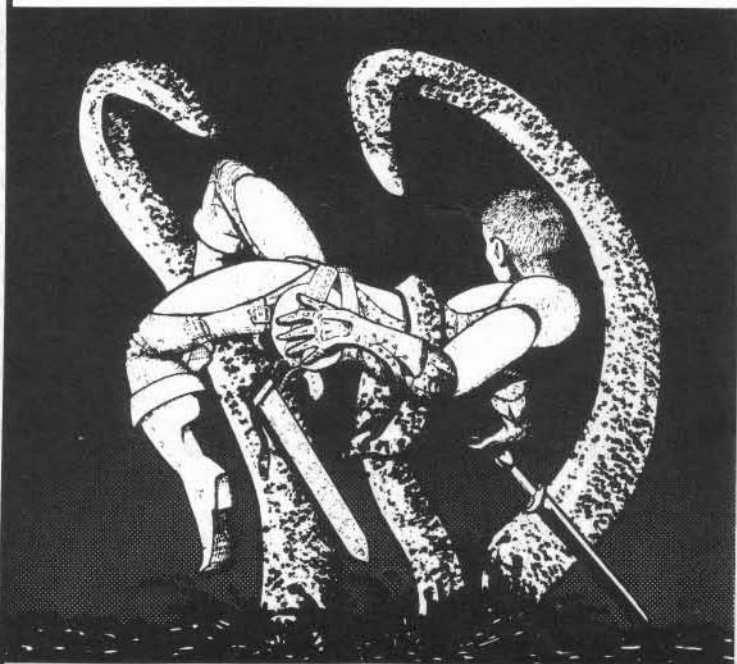
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"The Lost Shrine of Kasar-Khan", from Integrated Games, is the latest release in the Complete Dungeon Master series (unique fantasy gaming modules containing all the floorplans needed to play the scenario, plus a wide range of other accessories). See White Dwarf 66 for a review of "The Halls of the Dwarven Kings", the first set in the series.

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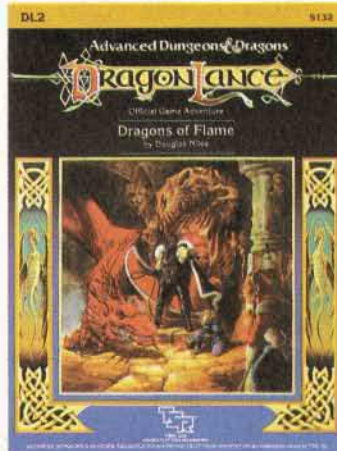
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# OPEN BOX



## STAR ACE Role-Playing Game Pacesetter Games

£16.95

*Star Ace* is a new SFRPG from Pacesetter, the breakaway TSR employees who have already produced *Chill* and *Timemaster*. The box contains a 64-page Basic Training manual, a 32-page Wilderness Briefing Manual, a 16-page scenario, a map of the Wilderness Sector, a sheet of counters, and three ten-sided dice.

The background to the game is a decadent interstellar empire, dominated by Terran-descended humans. A few worlds, the rebel Alliance, are fighting the Empire. This alliance now includes, and is dominated by, Earth. At present there is an uneasy truce between these two powers, but both sides are engaged in espionage and subversion. The Alliance subversion groups are called Star Teams, and all player characters are assumed to be members of such teams. All team members belong to one of four guilds, called Free Orders, which roughly correspond to character classes. The Free Order of Spades are weapons specialists, Hearts are technologists, Clubs are psionics, and Diamonds specialise in deception and stealth. Each order has its own skills and limitations, which can only be improved by promotion through the ranks or by paying for training, and tends to attract members of one of several player races. There is no provision for skill improvement by experience, or for cross-training between orders. It isn't possible to have a multi-classed Club/Diamond psionic thief, for example, but most combat skills, apart from unarmed combat and a few special weapons, can be learned by anyone. Skill levels are related to characteristics, and improvement generally gives an increase in the number of uses per round, rather than an improved chance of success.

All characters start with a starfighter spacecraft, three weapons, a spacesuit, equipment for two skills, and some

money. Some other equipment and a few spacecraft are described, but almost everything is combat-orientated. Some of the weapons are extremely gross; one gun is capable of causing hydrogen fusion in distant objects, igniting a self-sustaining nuclear explosion. This device can destroy almost anything. By comparison, all the spacecraft are curiously weak; a few fighters should be able to take out anything, up to and including an Imperial Dreadnought. The combat rules allow ships to make violent manoeuvres, such as 180° turns, provided the pilot can make a skill roll. As in most SFRPG's, combat is two-dimensional.

The scenario included with the game is *Deuces Wild*, an introductory adventure in which a Star Team is sent to find a missing agent on an Imperial planet. Complications include treachery, a bar-room brawl, and a final space combat. It isn't particularly subtle, but does a reasonably good job of showing most facets of the rules.

While I tried to find something novel or interesting in this game, there just isn't anything special to report. The rules tend to explain things badly, and are biased to give player characters incredible advantages, almost to the extent of the famous *Space Opera* 'player characters may not be killed' doctrine. Related sections of the rules are scattered in a curiously disjointed fashion; for example, the guilds are described on pages 16-19 of the Basic Training Manual, but guild-related skills aren't explained until page 44. The background is a bland mixture of *Star Wars*, *The Last Starfighter*, and other space-opera, and just isn't convincing. All in all, a dull and uninspiring game and I think that Pacesetter should have tried to develop something completely new, rather than re-hashing old themes and producing a disappointing result.

<b>Production:</b>	6	<b>Value:</b>	6
<b>Ease of Use:</b>	6	<b>Complexity:</b>	5
<b>Overall:</b>	5	<b>Marcus L Rowland</b>	



**DL2 DRAGONS OF FLAME** £4.95  
**DL3 DRAGONS OF HOPE** £4.95  
**DL4 DRAGONS OF DESOLATION** £4.95  
**RPG Scenarios**  
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The *DragonLance* series of AD&D modules, conceived by Tracy Hickman, has now developed into something potentially larger than any other linked venture ever produced by TSR. The modules link up with novels, figures, and a plethora of marketing devices all designed around the concept. Modules DL1 (already reviewed here) to DL4 form the first stage in a massive quest-adventure using the same set of characters, which presumably will outstrip even the famous *Giant-Drow* series of modules produced by Gary Gygax.

DL2, *Dragons of Flame* continues the story from DL1. And this is the main idea behind the *DragonLance* series: the characters are telling and reliving a story through predetermined characters. There are various rules changes and hints for GMs to show them how to run this style of adventure (information which is somewhat redundantly repeated in every module), and anyone thinking of running the whole of the *DragonLance* saga should bear in mind the potentially confining feeling that is part and parcel



of this series. The players will have to adapt to fit the characters rather than the other way round, and will have some challenging moments, but the authors have tried to develop the characters in a realistic manner. It is debatable how close this is to the original concept of role-playing: in some ways the characters in *DragonLance* are simply acting out roles cast by the background and the novels etc; but there should be sufficient room for alternative ways of playing. GMs should recognise that there are two ways of looking at the adventures. They may be used by inexperienced players to get involved and experienced in the game (despite the fact that it is somewhat non-standard AD&D), or they represent a detailed world for players of long-standing to immerse themselves in.

Either way I think that the modules are good enough to provide plenty of thrills once players are more settled into their roles. In *Dragons of Flame* the brave Innfellows suffer at the hand of the Draconians and must find some aid in the beleaguered North Lands before setting off to rescue an enslaved population. I must not tell you too much of the plot, but for your money you get around 24 pages of text, an area map and 3 detailed location maps, along with plenty of good art. You also get some repeated information – I don't really see that this is necessary as people are unlikely to buy an odd scenario from the middle of a series as big as this one – and some odd 'extras', such as a song and a poem. These are supposed to be inspirational I imagine, but I doubt that anyone will want to use them. The adventure is very channelled and whilst providing the players with plenty to contend with, does not want them straying off the path the designers envisage. However honest their intentions, the players are treated as idiots if they do anything but the stated actions and though this may be a useful trick for less experienced players, it is extremely frustrating when DMing and players come up with a potentially intelligent suggestion or plan only to have to shoot it down because it 'doesn't fit the story'. I feel that there should have been more options for players to choose between.

*DL3, Dragons of Hope* marked an improvement in the design and we enjoyed this one more. You get a huge map and a smaller version for the DM, plus 2 detailed area maps and the usual art from Keith Parkinson. There is a lot more for the players to contend with here, rather than just bands of marauding Draconians and other attendant nasties. However, much of the action turns on uncontrollable plot devices, with many poorly explained or of dubious value as contributions to the game. Other minor criticisms we had whilst playing were the rather ambiguous detailed area maps and events that were somewhat coerced and did not flow naturally from play – these tended to stick out like sore thumbs amid the generally very high quality of this scenario. Fortunately there are very few 'bugs' as such, and DMs can of course leave out anything that they find anomalous. We particularly liked the free-ranging nature of the scenario rather than the usual confinement of dungeon pathways.

*DL4, Dragons of Desolation* is perhaps one of the most innovative scenarios that TSR have recently produced (however, TSR UK have been a lot more forward-thinking in their ideas of late than their parent company). The scenario is very taxing on DMs, as they have a lot to keep track of. There is plenty of reward though if the scenario can be well-run, with some very interesting encounters and a mapping system that I'm sure I'll want to use elsewhere. Overall I was impressed with the design, and this scenario has the most actual text of all four. However, one of the most intriguing aspects of the scenario is that the main part of the action (a tomb) is essentially not run by the DM at all! In fact, both players and DM are caught up by the action at many points in the adventure and can do no more than take a back seat as the story unfolds. Whilst 'dominating' players might find this a trifle annoying, it is in fact a good opportunity to forget the gaming aspects and concentrate on role-playing. It is a shame that players could not have developed their own characters for the quest, but those provided by now will be familiar enough.

Overall there is plenty of information contained in the modules for DMs to grasp the basic background of Krynn. The scenarios are well worth the money and if you've already finished off some of the better modules around (like the *I* series and the new *UK* ones), then take a deep breath and plunge into the world of Krynn.

	DL2	DL3	DL4
<b>Production:</b>	8	8	8
<b>Value:</b>	7	7	8
<b>Skill:</b>	7	8	8
<b>Complexity:</b>	7	9	9
<b>Overall:</b>	7	8	9

Graham Staplehurst



**MONSTER COLISEUM**  
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The first of the projected *RQ3* supplements continues *Avalon Hill's* high price policy for *RuneQuest*; I predict increasing UK customer resistance, and shudder to think what a campaign like *Vikings* will cost at this rate. For the *Monster Coliseum* box, decorated with another nice Lisa Free illustration, is not exactly overflowing. You get two slimmish booklets (38 and 46 pages), some gam-

ing aids, including examples of the GM's Log (a lack noted in the *RQ3* box), a coliseum floorplan with hex-gridded centre, (big enough for battles with miniature figures), two stiff pairs of race track sections, one semi-oval and one straight, on which there are also twenty chariot markers that can be cut out, and a rangestick marked out in various scales.

The theme of the box is games in the Roman style, essentially gladiatorial and other combats and chariot races. The *Coliseum* Book gives background historical detail on the organisation of coliseums and the games in them (reasonably accurate, to my knowledge), offers ideas on staging such games in a *RQ* world, and then moves on to chariot racing, the rules for which take up almost half the book, with further detail about chariots and their use historically. The rules are worked out in considerable detail and include many innovative features, which could often be applied to other types of racing or other situations (eg the effects of a crash). Basic to the racing are the rules for expenditure of extra fatigue points per melee round to gain speed over the ordinary maximum; some mathematical ability will be needed to make proper use of these, but they offer scope for individual involvement. Also, since this is racing *Ben Hur* style, there are rules on how to foul your opponents; since much risk to all participants is involved, I am not sure how true to reality this is, but it offers an extra twist. Rules for shooting at targets along the course are also provided; for those seeking the ultimate test, I recommend reading the account of the fiendishly complex Sagare race in Tanith Lee's *The Birthgrave*. The booklet finishes with some advice on solo gaming, for which a gladiatorial combat is ideal.

The *Monster Book*, intended for GM's only, first provides stats for historical types of gladiator and other combat opponents of many *RQ* races, including some individualised master gladiators, but nothing that is not in the *RQ3* Creatures Book. It then rather inconsequentially provides a range of encounters for GM's to use, some groups in the *Borderlands* style with individualised leaders and standardised followers, and some individual or grouped monsters, again entirely from the *Creatures* Book, but with specified stats, skills, spells, etc rather than averages. The human and humanoid groups are particularly useful for the indication that they provide of what average encountered NPC's may be expected to be [note the very low spell-casting levels and fatigue points (even negative!) for those in good armour], and are generally very reasonable, though the leaders and a group of experienced adventurers seem exceptionally good.

Unlike a scenario, coliseum combats and chariot races can be staged many times, but despite this, the potential interest of the chariot racing, and the individual features of general use, I cannot see that the high price is fully justified by the contents particularly when so much of the *Monsters* Book essentially repeats what is already available to GM's.

<b>Complexity:</b>	7	<b>Production:</b>	8
<b>Usefulness:</b>	5	<b>Value:</b>	4
<b>Overall:</b>	6	Oliver Dickinson	

Critical Mass is a regular fantasy and science fiction book review column, by Dave Langford.

# ALDISS AT SUNSET

Today I plotted an alarming graph. Extrapolating into 1986 or 1987, the SF/fantasy pouring into this column looks like reaching such levels that after I've listed titles, authors and publication details, there will be approximately one (plus or minus 0.5) word left for each actual review. Rather than classify novels on a standard scale ('brilliant', 'OK', 'mediocre', 'unreadable', or 'Hubbard'), I suspect it's time to write longer reviews of fewer books...

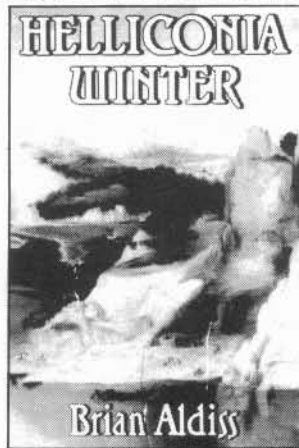
Wish I could spend a whole column on Brian Aldiss' *Helliconia Summer* [Granada 576pp £2.50] and, concluding an impressive trilogy, *Helliconia Winter* [Cape 285pp £8.95]. *Summer's* hardback was covered here in 1983: it's the richest and most lyrical of the set, picturing the lush Renaissance which happens every 2600 years or so as civilisation recovers from the ruin of planet Helliconia's murderous five-century winter. *Winter* is of course more sombre, with autumn declining into the Great Winter: human society is past its peak, political systems are hardening and freezing with the rest of the world, and the alien phagors who rule the winter are coming into their time of power. But although *Winter* ends with the powerfully gloomy day of Myrkwyr, when sunrise immediately becomes sunset, it's not a depressing book. The hero Luterin's saga is a tense, exciting one which ends in defiant hope; there are lovely inventions too, particularly the Egyptian-flavoured Great Wheel. In the heart of a mountain, the devout haul endlessly on chains to turn the huge stone wheel and (by sympathetic magic) pull Helliconia through its dark winter centuries.

The Aldiss password is 'enantiodromia', the cycle of things turning into their opposites. *Winter* contains the hope of spring; the murderous phagors carry the plague which humanity needs to survive Helliconia's seasons. In *Winter*, scenes on Earth and the orbiting Avernus Station (sketchy and less successful than the main narrative) offer two escape routes from cyclic history: enlightenment and extinction. All this and a gripping story too, of battle, murder and plague.

Damon Knight offers *The Man in the Tree*, a quiet, nostalgic novel about a sort of superman. The hero is a literal giant with an odd superpower from Knight's short 'What Rough Beast?': he can twist probability worlds, duplicat-

ing some priceless treasure like (say) *White Dwarf* by borrowing another world's copy. He drifts through life from the 50s to the 80s, pursued by a homicidal loony; appears in such familiar SF settings as carnivals; becomes a low-key messiah in an effort to save the world... Nicely written, but it provokes nagging questions. Why giantism and psychic power when either alone could carry the novel? Why such uninspired use of the hero's special talent (which tends to boil down to routine healings and conjuring)? Why, with an intelligent enemy hot on his trail, does he go on public view as a giant in a carnival? These are deep waters, Watson.

Deeper and more obscure is the selection policy of *Venture SF*, whose third choice has been conveyed to me in a tumbrel: *Hamlyn's Slammers* by David Drake [Hamlyn 274pp £1.95]. *Venture* promises only 'novels of action and adventure—no short stories, no fantasy, no boredom'. Though *Slammers* is in fact an assembly of short stories, the word 'boredom' never crossed my mind; I favoured 'atrocious' and 'unreadable'. The *Slammers* are gun-happy mercenaries, 'the toughest regiment that ever killed for a dollar', whose exploits are celebrated in prose so lumpy that often you need to backtrack and puzzle out what Drake is clumsily trying to say. 'The body ballooned under the cyan impact'—cyan being Drake's favourite word. 'Four pongoes were jumped to Two Star'—pretty pellucid, eh? Such are the lauded military virtues of the *Slammers* that (fearful that chicken-heartedness will prejudice their future contracts) they nobly disobey their own horrified employers' orders to stop slaughtering people and detonating irreplaceable shrines. If you like chainsaw massacres you'll love this.



Unspeakeable nasties infest Barbara Hambly's *The Time of the Dark* [Unicorn 284pp £2.50], which opens poorly with an all too familiar 'eldritch unseen horror'—Lovecraftian shoggoths lurking in the basement, squishily poised to destroy civilisation. There are other familiar ingredients: the 'true names' magic is very Le Guin, and most Tolkien fans will spot something reminiscent about the wizard Ingold Inglorion. That said, the books perk up when the Dark-threatened fantasy world interacts with ours: having crossed over, the hard-bitten American heroine gets into swordplay while her shiftless male acquaintance studies wizardry, both thus doing better than

Inglorion, who on his visit to Earth masters only the ring-pull can. Cleverly anti-romantic touches make this a lot more appealing than you might expect from the cover or the chill news that it's volume 1 of a trilogy. Above average, I suppose.

*Spellbinder* by Stephen Bowkett [Gollancz 120pp £5.95] is a fantasy for 'young adults', whatever that means. The teenage hero has the usual selection of hang-ups; he tries to impress friends with conjuring tricks, only to discover that for him magic actually works. Bowkett's jokey, epigrammatic schoolbook replete is effective—just sufficiently more polished than the real thing to amuse without becoming unbelievable. The other point which gets my thumbs-up is the way in which magic and fantasy do not conveniently depart from the hero's life the moment he's been taught some cheap moral lesson: here the poor sod has to learn to live with a responsibility which is his for the next sixty years. Right on.

David Harvey, author of *The Song of Middle-Earth* [Unwin 143pp £10.95], won International Mastermind with Tolkien as his special subject: sure enough, he shows a terrifying command of factoids in this, the 5,271,009th book about Middle-Earth. The thesis, according to the foreword, is twofold: firstly, that Tolkien's work is much more original and less derivative than critics say, and that critical comparisons are to be distrusted; secondly, that Tolkien was creating a 'Mythology for England', which can be proved by critical comparisons showing how millions of themes from past mythology crop up in Tolkien... From this dodgy start, Harvey waffles on to recount large chunks of Tolkien, with sporadic mentions of mythic parallels. His pudding of fact and paraphrase lacks argumentative thrust and doesn't reach any real conclusion. (For criticism that does, try Tom Shippey's excellent *Road to Middle-Earth*—also from Unwin.) This stodge should appeal to hobbits, who you'll remember 'liked to have books filled with things that they already knew, set out fair and square with no contradictions.'

In brief: *Top Fantasy* ed Josh Pachter [Dent 311pp £9.50] comprises two dozen 'author's choice' stories: most are good, a few are rotten, a couple aren't fantasy. Authors range in fame from Ballard, Bradbury, Disch and Le Guin to obscure folks who presumably had Influence, such as for example Josh Pachter... Bob Shaw's *Orbitsville Departure* [Granada 192pp £1.95] is a taut, compelling sequel to the nifty *Orbitsville*, which appeals despite my utter inability to believe in all-potent alien 'Ultans' who farm universes... I have no intention whatever of reading *V: East Coast Crisis* by Howard Weinstein and A C Crispin [NEL 305pp £2.50], novelization of a certain TV sequel... *Storm Season* ed Robert Asprin [Penguin 220pp £1.95] is more from Thieves' World, the usual mixed bag of fantasy... *A Pictorial History of SF Films* by David Shipman [Hamlyn 172pp £8.95]: lots of stills and erudition, just like other recent pictorial histories of SF films... Vitally important erratum: in my *WD65* column, for '1976' please read '1971' throughout—you know it makes sense. □



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RuneRites is a bi-monthly column for RuneQuest players, edited by Dave Morris.

# LOAM WOLVES

Barbarian Magic  
by Barry Atkins

This month we have an alternative to battle magic among the barbarian tribes. Barry originally designed this system for Glorantha, but points out that it is all the more appropriate now that RQ has 'gone European'.

Also, Oliver Dickinson has kindly obtained some clarifications for RQ3 which are included this issue.

I can also announce a winner for our 'Rites competition that ran way back in February. The copy of Soloquest goes to Peter Lloyd of Nottingham, who correctly identified Robert Dale's spells as the Breath of Llyr, the Key of Annwn, the Cauldron of Annwn and Fimbülwinter. Commiserations to everyone else who entered. -DM.

The possession of standard battle magic spells by barbarians is in fact highly unlikely. The priesthood of a primitive tribe is rarely as idle as their more civilised counterparts—with all the other duties they must perform, the priest could not afford to waste weeks training their lay membership to use spells. Initiates may be worth the effort owing to their guaranteed loyalty to priest and faith.

The following system is designed to add campaign flavour to the barbarian hordes. It even gives you a chance to be macho and go around without a shirt on. (*Liberated rather than macho, in the case of lady players!* -DM.) It is not a radical departure from the essential RQ rules, replacing as it does both the knowledge and focus of battle magic with a Rune drawn in magic earth-loam.

## Use of Barbarian Magic

In order to use the ten Power Runes in this way, a lengthy (1 hour) ritual is needed. This ritual, the Song of Earthpower, summons up the power of the local Earth Goddess (*actually, I would make it the tribe's ruling deity rather than worry about the element involved* -DM) to enchant the magic loam, which is then used to paint the particular runic symbol involved on the character's body. When the character wishes to use the spell, he utters a short prayer to the Goddess and makes a POW×5 roll. If he is successful, the spell activates and he loses POW as per normal battle magic. No clothing may be worn over the battle Runes, and no more than three may

overlap in a given area. One point of earth-loam must be applied for each Rune needed.

## The Song of Earthpower

The Song is a Knowledge skill learnt at a cost of 200/400/800 from the tribal elders. Barbarians born and bred have a basic 30% ability; others begin at 0%. A fumble roll causes a spirit of reprisal to embody (normally as an earth elemental) and attack—the Goddess has been offended by a slip-up in the ritual. A successful skill roll means that the character may sacrifice 2 POW points to obtain a point of earth-loam; this sacrifice is only temporary, but the character must overcome a POW of 10 to 'persuade' the Goddess to enchant the loam. If this roll fails, he has expended his POW for nothing.

The loam, once gained, must be applied within one hour. Its magical potency lasts for 24 hours. It may be applied as any of the ten Power Runes, with these effects:

**Harmony Rune** (drawn on chest). This provides the battle magic spell coordination. Normal POW cost.

**Disorder Rune** (drawn on chest). This gives the effect of a fanaticism spell. Normal POW cost.

**Fertility Rune** (drawn on chest above heart). This provides a healing spell—up to a maximum of healing 4.

**Death Rune** (drawn on both forearms). For a POW cost of 5, this gives a spell which adds 2d4 damage to all successful blows but reduces Parry skill by 40%.

**Stasis Rune** (drawn on chest). This can be stacked up to four points of loam to act as a protection spell. However, the caster must choose between the protection being effective against either cutting or smashing weapons, as the skin takes the characteristics of either granite or malleable clay.

**Movement Rune** (drawn on arms and legs). For each point of earthloam (up to a maximum of 4), this gives a variable spell which adds +5% to Manipulation, Parry and Defence for each POW point used in casting.

**Truth Rune** (drawn on forehead above eyes and down nose). Once the Rune is drawn it can be used as a detect spell by sprinkling a powdered form of the object to be detected (bones of a deceased enemy, metal filings, powdered gems, etc) onto the moist loam. It will only function for one type of detect spell unless a second Rune is applied over the first.

**Illusion Rune** (drawn on face). This useful Rune, when combined with bloodcurdling battle cry, waving of bloodied axe, etc, provides the effects of a demoralize spell—but with a +10% chance of overcoming the enemy's POW.

**Luck Rune** (drawn on chest). This supplies a 2 point spell which replaces the user's Attack and Parry rolls with a (current) POW×5 roll. A missed roll is an automatic fumble, but a successful roll always counts as a slash/crush/impale.

**Fate Rune** (drawn on chest). This Rune leaves a character calm and collected about any fate, unperturbed by fear whether of magical or normal origin, and able to withstand pain and injury to the extent of remaining conscious down to -2HP. The spell costs 2 POW.



(Some of these seem very useful, but I don't think the system is unbalanced. Remember that spells must be paid for twice under these rules—once to enchant the loam, and once when the spell is activated. It cuts down on the use of armour, and I would also apply the restriction that loam can only be enchanted on one's home territory, where one's ruling deity is powerful. -DM.)

## RUNEQUEST 3 CLARIFICATIONS by Oliver Dickinson

Thanks to a prompt response from Greg Stafford and Sandy Petersen, I am able to clear up some points raised in my review (WD64) or in letters to Chaosium.

1. **Encumbrance.** A list of ENC's for common objects will be published, with other errata; meanwhile, remember the rule that 1 ENC=1kg, roughly. Pennies are 100 to an ENC, like Lunars before. Cormac's PC sheet [Players Book p13] shows ENC's for pack, waterskin, and firelighter, though is unreliable otherwise.

2. The p66 definition of the effect of ENC on Sneak ability is to be preferred; even leather padding might creak, according to Sandy.

3. The cost of cult spirit magic. You could either work out the charge the priest would make to cast spell teaching [Gamesmaster Book p30], or name an arbitrary price, perhaps treating the cost charged by a friendly shaman as a base. Cult magic given free to initiates or paid in reward for services ought to be obtainable in a more reliable fashion than through the chances of spirit combat. Perhaps cult spirits will teach spells on command. Cults can supply foci needed to cast spirit magic.

3. All rituals take 1 hour per magic point used, unless otherwise specified.

4. **Warding** should be listed everywhere as a Common spell (it is not in the rules for converting RQ2 characters).

5. Cultural weapons should be omitted from Civilised Farmers' equipment, contrary to my expectation.

6. **Language.** With one's own language, the comments on the chart, that you can say anything you wish at 31%+, ought to apply; those at 30% or less are likely to be pretty dumb or (through lack of POW or APP) totally insignificant, and as a result ignored!

7. Sandy suggests substituting *second sight* for *detect life* in the scenario; this is a 3-point spell, which it would take 15 years to get the entitlement to learn free, but it is available from the Esrola cult, which *detect enemy* is not. □



# THRUD THE BARBARIAN

# THRUD THE DESTROYER

## Part Five

THRUD HAS JOINED A GROUP OF MERCENARIES WHO ARE DEFENDING A SMALL VILLAGE AGAINST THE BLACK CURRANT AND HIS EVIL HORDE. AT THE MOMENT THEY ARE TEACHING SOME OF THE VILLAGERS THEIR SKILLS FOR THE IMPENDING BATTLE!



HERE - TRY THIS!

DIE VUN ALWAYS VOWS DER GIRLS UN DER BRACH!



HMM... MAYBE NOT

KRUMPH!



RIGHT LADIES! IM GOING TO SHOW YOU HOW BEING A WOMAN CAN BE AN ADVANTAGE IN A FIGHT.



YOU TWO MEN - ATTACK ME!



DROP!



OOPS! BUTTERFINGERS! IVE DROPPED MY SWORD!



STOOP!



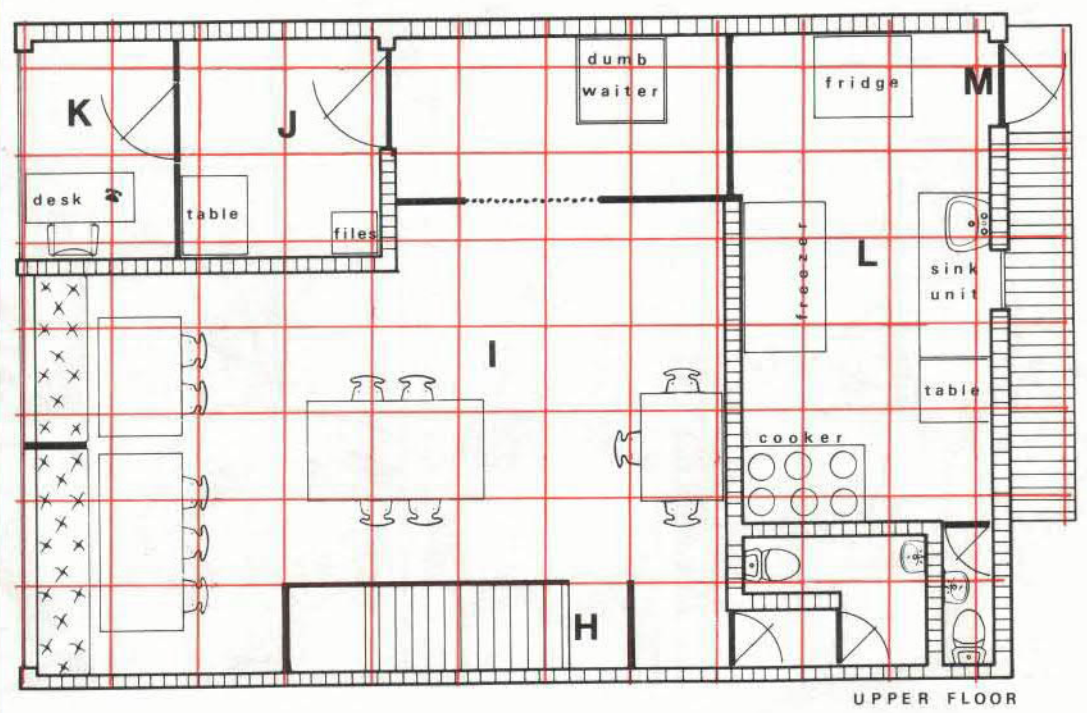
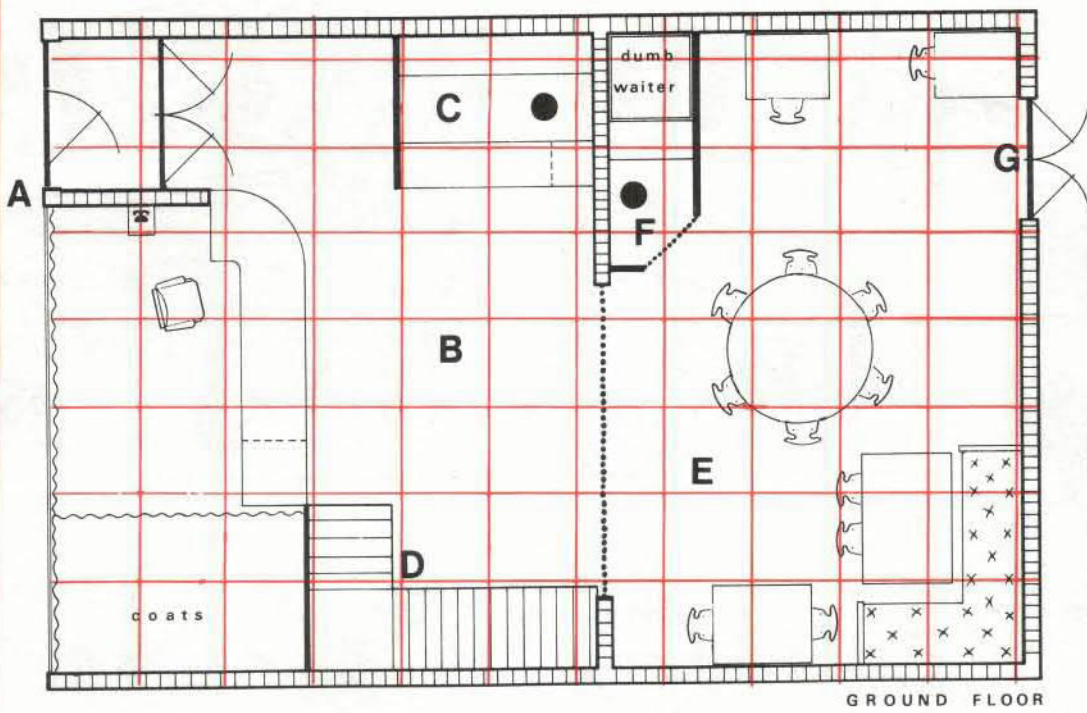
HA - SEXIST SCUM!

ANY QUESTIONS?

ON SECOND THOUGHTS - HOW MANY OF YOU CAN USE A BOW AND ARROW?



# P E K - K G N G D C U C K



- BAMBOO CURTAIN
- TABLE, DESK or COUNTER
- CURTAIN
- WOODEN BARRIER OR PARTITION
- PADDED BENCH (attached to wall)
- BRICK WALL

Character No. (see Table 2)  
Golden Heroes Frames/Round

1 MI 2	2 Waiter 2	3 Waiter 2	4 Chong 2	5 Kang 3	6 Kang Se 3	7 Fred 2	8 Bill 2	9 Jane 2	10 Stew. 2	X Name X
11 Myra 2	12 Tony 2	13 Marco 3	14 Insp. Dalhousie 4	15 Con. Plodd 3	16 Con. Parkins 3	Torpedo 2	Vendetta	The Shadow Dancer	The Pirate	Mr Smash
				Mandala	Skylight	Shale				Champion Character SPD



# A Champions and Golden Heroes Scenario for 3-6 Characters

## by Phil Masters

### INTRODUCTION

*Peking Duck* is a mini-scenario for a small group of moderately able characters. All organisations and groups mentioned can be changed as appropriate for your campaign, and different supervillains can be deployed if desired. A group of three superheroes ('The Outside Line') is given to save time for those who do not wish to use their own creations, but self-designed characters can certainly be used. A number of supervillains are also detailed; the full list should only be used if the superhero group is exceptionally strong.

### BACKGROUND (PLAYERS AND GM)

Our heroes have recently established a contact – a 'normal' with shady connections who has provided them with a certain amount of useful information, partly for payoffs and partly, he claims, out of hatred for the evil effects of certain categories of crime. Now he has come through to them with an urgent tip-off. His story runs as follows.

Certain of the Tongs operating in London's Soho have a 'business centre', through which a fair amount of dubious merchandise passes. This is an eminently respectable high-class Chinese restaurant, the Fo Yen Wok. Normally, this 'drop' is used with such care and discretion that a raid would find nothing, but tonight, a large quantity of refined heroin will be on the premises for some hours. There is only one problem; the Tongs have bought themselves a contact in the Metropolitan Police Drugs Squad – identity unknown – and any tip-offs reaching the authorities will almost certainly cause this individual to warn his paymasters to cancel the operation . . .

The Fo Yen Wok is easily located; it is sited on a street not far from Soho Square. It is a high-class establishment, specialising in Peking cuisine, and it does not provide takeaways. Reconnaissance will also discover its opening hours (6pm to midnight), the fact that it has eating areas on two floors, and the fact that it backs on to a narrow alleyway; fire exits from both floors lead out that way, via an open wrought iron staircase in the case of the upper floor.

### GM'S NOTES

The players know little when they begin this scenario; what they have to discover is that most of what they do know is lies. The truth is complicated.

The Fo Yen Wok is a perfectly respectable establishment, noteworthy only in that the owner pays his protection money tardily if at all. Because of this, the Tongs have decided to use the restaurant in a devious plan. The heroes' contact' is a Tong double agent, set up to distract the superheroes; he will be found to have vanished when the characters next seek him out. While he sets up the heroes, his bosses have quietly informed Antonio (Tony) Rigatoni, a Mafia boss with whom they are having difficult negotiations, that they wish to discuss business over a meal, and they have named the Fo Yen Wok as the place. The idea is to get the restaurant smashed up in a fight, Rigatoni scared and perhaps arrested, and the heroes humiliated – all with no risk to Tong agents.

Two things have gone wrong with this elegant plan. Firstly, and trivially, Tony Rigatoni is a suspicious man, and always has a bodyguard in tow. Secondly, the Northinghouse Corporation, an outwardly respectable multinational combine with some dubious sidelines, has Tong headquarters bugged. They also want to talk to Tony Rigatoni – rather more seriously – and they have decided that the only way to get hold of him is to send a team of supervillains into the confusion and grab him. What they don't know – their bug being rather badly placed – is that the Tongs have now decided to make sure of the heroes' humiliation by tipping off Scotland Yard that a bunch of criminals are demanding protection money in various areas of London, and are about to smash up the Fo Yen Wok as an example. The police are naturally careful about anonymous information, but have a couple of men watching the place, just in case.

Once the action starts, the GM will have to role-play *all* the various factions involved, with proper regard for their objectives. Just remember that, to a normal person, costumed superheroes are very hard to tell apart.

### THE FO YEN WOK

The layout of the Fo Yen Wok is shown in *Fig 1*; the properties of some of the fixtures and fittings are given on *Table 1*. The general style of the decor is austere and elegant, with much use of pine, bamboo, and indirect lighting. Note that bamboo curtains provide no obstacle to movement, or to attacks, but that characters must make a perception roll to notice events happening beyond them. The thin wooden 'fixed screens' can be broken free (for freedom of movement, use of missiles, etc) by an attack that is declared to be for that specific purpose that exceeds their DEF by 2 or better. (*Golden Heroes*: Tear Off.)

The restaurant staff and customers are detailed in *Table 2*. These are essentially normals (apart from the Mafiosi), but they have a variety of skills and talents. All will be curious about supercharacters and averse to combat, although most will fight back if attacked. The proprietor (Mr Chong) will be very unhappy if people start smashing his restaurant

up, and will run around, getting in the way as much as possible. Most interesting is Kang, the cook, who will continue working in the kitchen – assisted by his daughter – no matter what happens outside. He will become slightly interested if strangers come in, and will tell them to get out, but the only thing that concerns him more than cooking is his daughter, Kang Se. He may well berserk if she is threatened, and will *certainly* attack anyone harming her. He fights with a huge Chinese cook's cleaver [1d6 killing attack + 1d6 strength bonus]. (GH; 2-hand penetrative)

**A. Restaurant Front.** The building has a large plate glass 'shop' window, but there is a full, opaque curtain immediately behind this. A small, discreet menu card is on display. Entry to the establishment is through a small porch with two sets of doors, both with patterned glass window panels.

**B. Reception Area.** On the right as diners enter the Fo Yen Wok is a wooden reception counter, with an attendant who checks bookings, takes telephone calls and looks after hats, coats, etc, storing them in a curtained alcove. This area is lit by a central ceiling fixture and a number of small wall units.

**C. Bar.** This is not a full pub-type set up, simply a place where bottles and glasses are kept, and from which a diner's liquid refreshment is dispensed. The stock is on wooden shelving behind a waist-high counter.

**D. Stairs.** These are constructed of light pine, and are open in design; any person on them can be seen, at least partially, from areas of both floors.

**E. Lower Dining Area.** Note the upholstered wall benches in one corner.

**F. Waiters' Cubicle.** A small area where bills can be prepared and orders passed to the kitchens via the 'dumb waiter'. Food and used tableware also move up and down in the latter, which is too small to accommodate a normal-sized person; the mechanism takes about four seconds to move the lift between floors.

**G. Fire Escape.** These are discreet panel doors, opened by a simple push-bar mechanism and leading out to the back alleyway. They are clearly labelled as an emergency exit, and can only be opened from the outside (as opposed to being broken down) by *Telekinesis* (make a 'fine work' roll), Security Systems (still GH: *Locksmith*) (to activate the mechanism by picking its auxiliary lock), or similar. The doors can be firmly bolted when the restaurant is not in use.

**H. Upper Landing.** A discreet notice on the wooden screen marks the presence of the toilets beyond.

**I. Upper Dining Area.** The only windows in this room are 'slits', with immovable frosted glass panes. Even if the glass is smashed away, only a character with at least one level of *Shrinking* in operation could even hope to squeeze through.

**J. Outer Office.** This is where most of the restaurant's paperwork is kept, in one large and ill-organised file cabinet. A character may check for suspicious documents, and will decide that none are to be found after a number of minutes equal to 45 minus his or her INT. (GH: 30 + 1d6 minutes.)

**K. Inner Office.** Business negotiations relating to the restaurant are usually conducted in here. There is some paperwork in the desk, much of it in various dialects of Chinese; a character able to speak some form of this language will conclude that there is nothing suspicious after (25-INT) minutes. (GH: 10 + 1d6 minutes.)

**L. Kitchen.** The unquestioned domain of Kang, the totally brilliant and somewhat crazy cook. All is immaculately clean – and by normal standards – totally disorganised. The refrigerator, freezer, and store-cupboards are packed with foodstuffs, including many weird and wonderful Chinese oddities.

**M. Upper Fire Exit.** This emergency door – clearly signposted from the eating area – has a similar opening mechanism to that downstairs (see G). It leads out to a wrought iron staircase.

### THE SUPERVILLAINS

**The Northinghouse Corporation:** This is an eminently respectable, American-based multinational company with interests in aerospace, electronics, computer hardware, engineering, and the arms trade. So much is all that the world – including 98% of Northinghouse employees – knows. If anyone added that certain senior Northinghouse executives add to company profits (and their own salaries) by exploiting the Corporation's huge resources and great geographical dispersion in pursuit of dealings in any and every illegal drug, in projects to disrupt 'unco-operative' governments and replace them with the company's friends, and in grandiose schemes of world domination, then the result would be a libel prosecution. This would not make the additional statements untrue.

The key to Northinghouse's illicit activities is its 'special projects unit' – AKA the dirty tricks department. Through this, a large force of well-armed mercenaries is paid and equipped, and, in addition, a number of supervillain types are employed on long-term or one-off 'contracts'. For this scenario, a small but very powerful 'strike team' will be sent in to grab Tony Rigatoni, defeat any interfering superheroes, and get out fast.

The supervillains available to the GM are detailed below. Note that the full group should only be employed if the player party is very powerful indeed; in general, it is recommended that villains with a points total about 100 less than the hero party be used (there are quite enough confusing factors to make up the difference). The force should generally involve Torpedo and Vendetta, plus The Shadow Dancer if mental powers are desired; MR SMASH should only be used if the hero group is particularly strong.



### Torpedo (Champions)

Value	CHA	Cost
35*	STR	18
17	DEX	21
14	CON	8
13	BODY	6
10	INT	-
13	EGO	6
15	PRE	5
8	COM	-1
8	PD	1
7	ED	4
4*	SPD	9
10	REC	-
28	END	-
40	STUN	2

Total 79  
+ Powers Cost 96  
175

OCV=6  
DCV=6  
ECV=4

Powers	Pts	Power	End
8	+1 Skill	in all combat	-
23	Armour	+9PD, +12ED*	-
13	Active Sonar*		-
3	Infra-red Vision*		-
2	Radio Hearing*		-
4	6pt Flash Defence*		-

**History:** One of Northinghouse's legitimate American engineering labs once received a contract from the US government to produce a powered sub-aqua suit with offensive capabilities for use in espionage, intrusion, and assault missions. The project was cancelled but Northinghouse, hating to waste such a useful toy, surreptitiously transferred the prototype suit to their Special Projects Unit, who gave it to a loyal herring named James Pinchon. Codenamed Torpedo, Pinchon has served Northinghouse well enough to come to the attention of the CIA.

The Torpedo suit is a lightweight design, built of carbon-fibre reinforced polymers and incorporating such useful gadgets as high-power boot aquajets, artificial senses, and four wrist-mounted, rocket-propelled 'mini warheads' with fragmentation effect. Pinchon can use these and the suit's artificial strength to good effect in battle. The design's main weakness lies in the internal circuitry, which can disrupt violently under certain conditions.

### Vendetta (Champions)

Value	CHA	Cost
16	STR	6
18	DEX	24
28	CON	36
15	BODY	10
6	INT	-4
18	EGO	16
15	PRE	5
8	COM	-1
10	PD	7
7	ED	1
4	SPD	12
10	REC	2
48	END	-4
40	STUN	3

Total 113  
+ Powers Cost 82  
195

OCV=6  
DCV=6  
ECV=6

Powers	Pts	Power	End
32	Martial Arts	+x1 damage (8d6 punch, 9½d6 kick)	3

**History:** Marco DiMaggio was one of the most trusted hoods in Pittsburgh's leading Mafia 'family'. Not too bright, perhaps, but totally loyal and very, very honourable (in Mafia terms). His 'don' knew Marco well, and began to fit him out as a perfect bodyguard; extensive training in unarmed combat was added to a cat-like natural poise and a sixth sense for danger, and a sophisticated lightweight jacket of body armour was purchased for this 'human weapon'. That was just before Pittsburgh's other, smaller 'family' decided to expand - violently. Marco's boss and most of Marco's comrades were wiped out, and Marco was left for dead. All that saved Marco was the care of his kid brother, and his own burning desire for revenge - revenge that was obtained when Marco DiMaggio assumed the black and grey body suit and black head mask of 'Vendetta'. Annihilating dozens of his sworn foes was excellent final training in personal combat; it also brought the attention of one fanatical FBI investigator. Now Vendetta sells his skills to the highest bidder, never breaking his word, and never trusting anyone.

18	2d6 Ranged Killing Att, Explosive, 4 Uses*	-
7	10pt Life Support*	-
18	20" Swimming*	4
-	40END Battery Powers Swimming and 20STR; Normal Recharge Rate.	
*OIF - Armoured Amphibious Battlesuit.		

Disadvantages	Value
Hunted by CIA, 8 or less	20
Extreme Fear of Heights	15
Unlucky (2d)	10
2x All Damage from Magnetic and Gravitational Attacks	20
'Unusual Looks' (Arrogance + Nastiness), 11 or less	10

Total 75

15	3 levels with M/Arts	-
11	Stealth, 16 or less	-
8	Armour; 6PD/6ED, works on or less, OIF	-
10	Danger Sense, 11 or less	-
4	8" Running	2
2	Conversational Italian	-

Disadvantages	Value
Berserks when fighting Pittsburgh Mafiosi (11 or less, recover 11 or less)	15

Dependent NPC (kid brother, comp, involved on 11 or less)	10
Hunted by Pittsburgh Mafia remnants (small agent group) 11 or less	20
Hunted by lone FBI agent (8 or less)	10
Paranoia	15
Always keeps his word	10
Unlucky (2d6)	10
1½x Stun from fear-based attacks	5

Total 95

### The Shadow Dancer (Champions)

Value	CHA	Cost
8	STR	-2
23	DEX	39
23	CON	26
10	BODY	-
14	INT	4
20	EGO	20
15	PRE	5
16	COM	3
8	PD	6
7	ED	2
6	SPD	27
12½	REC	7
38	END	-4
26	STUN	-

Total 133  
+ Powers Cost 122  
255

OCV=8  
DCV=8  
ECV=7

Powers	Pts	Power	End
<i>Elemental Control - Negative Energy</i>			
20	1. 2" Radius Darkness, blocks UV and IR*		6
10	2. Force Field - 20ED at ¼END*		1
10	3. 4d6 END Drain, Usable at Range*		6
<i>Psionic Multipower</i>			
20	30 Point Reserve - All slots at ½ Limit (or worse).		
2	30pt Ultra: 3d6 Ego Attack*		6
1	30pt Ultra: 6d6 Mental Illusions**		6
2	30pt Ultra: 6d6 Mind Scanning***		6
2	30pt Ultra: 6d6 Telepathy†		6
<i>Other Powers</i>			
11	Ego Defence (-14)		-

**History:** Natasha Mallory was a low-power mutant telepath with no great interest in using her powers for good or evil, but an immense streak of nosiness. This did her no harm whatsoever until the day she realised to her horror that the innocuous passer-by she was probing was actually a malevolent extra-dimensional being of phenomenal strength who was not only aware of the intrusion, but resented it. The 'demon' attacked and captured Natasha, and had dragged her halfway to its own dark plane before she somehow found the strength to break free. She almost made it home - but not quite; she was not recaptured, but a part of her body and much of her mind remains in a shadowy realm of 'negative energy'. This is not a total disadvantage, however; Natasha now finds that she can tap strange forces, either to reinforce her mental abilities or for use 'raw' in a variety of ways. This power is available to her as long as she avoids strong light (daylight or powerful searchlights can almost cripple her), but she also seems to have been infected with a little of the amorality of the 'shadow realm', and now Natasha Mallory is the Shadow Dancer, ready to sell her powers to the highest bidder.

The Shadow Dancer wears a simple cream-coloured costume and a short black cape; the observant may also notice that much of her body, and especially her face, appears to be in deeper shadow than can be explained by the ambient illumination.

**Note:** In this scenario, both the restaurant and the street outside can be considered to have shadows present, but deep shadow will only become available if most of the restaurant lights are smashed or switched off. Later in the evening, the level of illumination outside the restaurant may fall enough to generate the same effects outside.

### The Pirate (Champions)

Value	CHA	Cost
20	STR	10
24	DEX	42
18	CON	16
18	BODY	16
7	INT	-3
14	EGO	8
10	PRE	-
14	COM	2
8	PD	4
7	ED	3
4	SPD	16
8	REC	-
36	END	-
41	STUN	4

Total 118  
+ Powers Cost 67  
185

OCV=8  
DCV=8  
ECV=5

Powers	Pts	Power	End
5	Climbing	(13 or less)	-

13	15" Teleport; can concentrate for up to 2 phases to get 4x range†	3(12)
13	Radar Sense***	
6	+4 Sight Perception, -1/6"***	-
7	Stealth, 15 or less	-
5	+1 Skill with Multipower	-

Disadvantages	Value
Hunted by extradimensional 'demons', 8 or less	30
Hunted by Interpol, 11 or less	25
Nauseated by sunlight	15
Fear of 'demons'	10
Hatred of daylight (irrational actions)	20

3d6 Stun from Flash Attacks	15
1d6 Stun from fire and heat	10
2x All damage from lasers	20
1½x Stun from blasters	10

Total 155

\*Do not work in strong light (+½)  
\*\*Must be shadows around (+½), Humanoid forms only produced (+½)  
\*\*\*Must be strong shadows in area surveyed (+½)  
†Both points must be linked by deep shadows (+2)  
‡Becomes 7 in strong light

Disadvantages	Value
Berserks if mocked about anachronism (8 or less, recovers on 11 or less)	10
Hunted by CIA, 8 or less	20
Only one eye	5
Overconfidence	20
Hatred of authority figures	10
Unlucky (1d6)	5
1½x Stun from Energy Attacks	15

Total 85



**History:** Like Northinghouse, the United States Standard Oil Corporation (USSO Corp) maintains a clandestine special projects department, which often exploits the work of USSO's medical products division. One project developed from the ideas of a company psychologist who suggested that many supposedly 'super-powered' individuals merely had the self-confidence and drive to exploit a widespread latent human potential. His employers challenged the researcher to prove this, and found an experimental volunteer one Larry Van Halen, an embittered ex-US navy man who had been invalidated out after an accident cost him one eye. The result of an intensive course of hypnosis, chemically-induced psychosis and brain-washing was moderately successful; Van Halen's personality has now been warped into line with his favourite image of a hero—derived from the old Hollywood pirate movies. USSO have fitted him out with three appropriate weapons; a lightweight, one-shot hand blaster (disguised as a flintlock), a titanium alloy throwing dagger, and a superbly balanced titanium/steel cutlass, which Van Halen carries attached to his wrist by a near-unbreakable metal cable. The Pirate now serves USSO when they need him, and the highest bidder at other times.

**MR SMASH (Champions)**

Value	CHA	Cost
28	STR	3
15	DEX	15
33	CON	16
20	BODY	14
5	INT	-5
18	EGO	16
7	PRE	-3
4	COM	-3
15	PD	-
15	ED	-1
4	SPD	15
18	REC	22
36	END	-
34	STUN	1

Total 90  
+ Powers Cost 185  
275

OCV=7  
DCV=7  
ECV=6

**Powers**

Pts	Power	End
12	One level of Shrinking, always on +	-
41	Three levels of Density Increase, always on (Most of the effects of these two powers are already included in the characteristics and combat values. Others are: -2 on others' Sight PER, 1/2 normal size, normal mass).	-
20	Two Extra Limbs (OCV increase included)	-

**History:** Northinghouse has a robotics division, which once embarked on a project, part funded by the CIA, to produce a Mobile Remote Self-Motivated Automatic Specialist Hunter—MR SMASH for short. The result was not considered a success, being clumsy, inflexible, and vulnerable to various attack modes, and the CIA cancelled their funding. The Special Projects Unit, however, willingly 'appropriated' the prototype, and sent it on a series of missions. In the first, it inflicted a humiliating defeat on the mercenary martial artist known as Green Dragon; in the second, it was photographed in action by a newspaperman, which obliged Northinghouse to tell the CIA that the machine had been stolen...

MR SMASH is a three-foot tall robot, very heavily built, with four arms fitted with fairly sensitive triple claws and a variety of special sensor devices in its head unit. Its experimental robotic brain is mounted within the chest space.

**The Villains: Final Notes**

These, or any other appropriate super-baddies may be used in this scenario; if others are used, bear in mind that much of the combat will be indoors, so avoid powers that only work in large open space. For simplicity, Hunters should not generally appear in the scenario; obviously, the heroes should receive the same privilege.

The Northinghouse Corporation was originated by Tony Green. The Shadow Dancer is based on an idea by Steve Gilham. To both these two, my thanks.

**THE OUTSIDE LINE**

The Outside Line is an informal association of superheroes, gathered together by Mandala to deal with opponents stronger than its individual members can handle alone. If the group has a particular character, it is anarchic, unconventional, and anti-establishment; two of its members are hunted by the authorities. However, the three individuals get on well together, and make a useful fighting team.

This group is about the smallest in size that can be used effectively in this scenario; if it alone is to be used by the players, the villains deployed should be Vendetta, Torpedo, and either Pirate or, if the players are fairly capable, Shadow Dancer.

**Mandala (Champions)**

Value	CHA	Cost
13	STR	3
24	DEX	42
20	CON	20
14	BODY	8
15	INT	5
21	EGO	22
14	PRE	4
14	COM	2
10	PD	7
10	ED	6
5	SPD	16
13	REC	12
30	END	-5
31	STUN	-

Total 142  
+ Powers Cost 93  
235

OCV=8  
DCV=8  
ECV=7

**Powers**

Pts	Power	End
10	Acrobatics, 14 or less	-
5	Luck (1d6)	-
19	Martial Arts (5d6 Punch, 6 1/2d6 Kick)	(3)
5	Stealth, 14 or less	-
12	Passive Sonar—works on 11	-

**History:** Back in 1967, a very large number of hippies went east, looking for gurus to tell them the meaning of life. Andrew Mellish was as naive as any, but he was lucky; his guru was really unusual. In addition, Mellish had the determination and commitment to last out a rigorous and comprehensive course of training for mind and body.

Andrew might have spent the rest of his life in a tiny monastery in the foothills of the Himalayas, but after some years, a letter reached him from an old schoolfriend who needed help. Returning to Britain, Andrew was shocked to find how the old ideals of the 60's had faded and died; the worst symptom he encountered was the corrupt property company that was seeking to bulldoze most of his home town. His old friend had stumbled across some dark secrets when figthing that plan, including a complex web or corruption involving VIPER. Taking on these entrenched powers with his mystically-trained powers took Andrew outside the law, even when he eventually won; the strength of his opponents led him to believe that he should continue this kind of work in other areas preferably with assistance. Now, as Mandala, Andrew Mellish leads the Outside Line.

Mandala wears shoulder-length hair, a headband, and a full beard. He also wears a saffron-yellow cape, grey trousers, and thonged sandals, but always goes bare-chested to display the huge, ornate 'mandala' design tattooed on his chest in a multitude of colours. His only other 'ornamentation' is a pair of hardened steel bracelets, with which he can deflect bullets and other missiles. In general, his training makes him fast, agile, and dextrous, although it was far from complete when he left India; it also gives him more exotic powers. He can attempt to 'read' his surroundings from tiny variations in patterns of sound, and his mental training gives him abilities ranging from telepathy to that of 'disbelieving' the power of non-physical forces to harm his body. In addition, an ascetic, monastical style of life has left him unusually robust and healthy.

**Skylight**

Value	CHA	Cost
10	STR	-
30	DEX	60
13	CON	6
10	BODY	-
15	INT	5
13	EGO	6
10	PRE	-
14	COM	2
6	PD	4
6	ED	3
8	SPD	40
5	REC	-
24	END	-1
22	STUN	-

Total 125  
+ Powers Cost 85  
210

OCV=10  
DCV=10  
ECV= 4

**Powers**

Pts	Power	End
12	Acrobatics, 16 or less	-
6	Magnetic Grips, IIF; Clinging, 20STR, only works on	2

**History:** When UNTIL decided to form a special aerial combat unit, one of their first recruits was an engineering graduate and champion gymnast named Janice Lucenzi. After a few weeks, her instructors were unanimous on two things; Lucenzi was brilliant, and Lucenzi was a hot-

2	or less	-
2	Lack of Weakness (-5) on 11	-
10	or less	-
10	Missile Deflection (Bullets and Thrown Objects), 14 or less; OIF (bracelets).	-
	<i>Psionic Multipower</i>	
20	20pt Reserve	-
2	20pt Ego Defence (-23), fixed slot	-
2	20pt, 4d6 Mind Control, fixed slot	4
2	20pt Telekinesis, fixed slot	4
2	20pt, 4d6 Telepathy, fixed slot	4
2	20pt fixed slot, full damage resistance vs energy attacks	-
	<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>Value</i>
	Hunted by VIPER, 11 or less	30
	Hunted by the Police, 11 or less	25
	Code against killing, total commitment	20
	Disrespect for authority	10
	Dependent NPC (old friend); incompetent, involved on 11 or less	20
	2d6 Stun from mind control attacks	10
	2x Stun from sonic attacks	10
	1 1/2x Stun from poison, chemical, and anaesthetic drug attacks	10
	Total	135
	<i>metallic surfaces</i>	
12	Laser Pistol, OAF; 2d6 ranged killing attack, 8 uses	-
7	Flash Grenades, OAF; 2d6 Flash, 6 uses	-
3	Insulated Suit, OIF; 5pt Power Defence	-
16	'Force Repulsor', IIF; Missile Deflection, all Attack Modes +	-
6	2 Levels in Missile Deflection	-
20	Flying Belt, OIF; 15" Flight on 24END battery	3
	+ 3 1 Level in Flight	
	<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>Value</i>
	Hunted by UNTIL, 11 or less	30
	Hunted by Middle Eastern supervillain group, 11 or less	30
	Enjoys combat	15
	Always breaks under torture	15
	Will always accept challenges to aerial combat (x 1/2)	5
	Secret Identity	15
	Total	110



headed idiot. Before they could decide what to do, however, Janice Lucenzi took matters into her own hands by borrowing her experimental combat gear and flying right into the middle of a particularly complicated situation, involving an embassy, hostages, and a terroristical bunch of supercharacters. Her action having forced their hand, UNTIL followed her in, to discover half of their opponents already down, and two of the hostages with stray bullets in them. The ensuing diplomatic complications were monumental.

Janice Lucenzi blamed herself for all this (rightly), and decided that she had little choice in what followed but to run for cover. She assumed the identity of Jane Fellowes, Electronic Engineer, and also that of Skylight, costumed crimefighter, hoping to redeem herself and prove her real worth. Encountering Mandala during a payroll hold-up that they jointly stopped, she accepted his invitation to join the Outside Line, and she continues to oppose evil at every opportunity—or at least, whenever she remembers that she's not supposed to be enjoying herself.

As Skylight, Janice Lucenzi wears a close-fitting blue jumpsuit—actually a new UNTIL design which protects the wearer from Power Drain attacks. She carries a variety of UNTIL-manufactured devices, many of them non-standard, lightweight gadgets. Of particular interest is the 'repulsor' she wears under her costume on her left wrist, which projects a highly localised force field which will deflect any incoming missile or energy beam she sees and reacts to in time. Skylight has medium-length black hair that she wears in a lop-sided style, held in place by a small silver-coloured circlet.

#### SHALE (Champions)

Value	CHA	Cost
5	STR	-5
20	DEX	30
25	CON	30
16	BODY	12
10	INT	-
10	EGO	-
12	PRE	2
6	COM	-2
8	PD	7
10	ED	5
6	SPD	30
12	REC	12
50	END	-
44	STUN	12
Total		133
+ Powers Cost		67
		200

OCV=7  
DCV=7  
ECV=3

#### Powers

Pts	Power	End
50	Multipower, 50pt reserve (Mud/Rock Powers)	-
5	-50pt Fixed Slot; 4 Levels, Density Increase at 1/2END. (Rock Hardness)	4
1	-20pt Fixed Slot; Darkness, 2" radius, partially obscures, 1 1/2xEND cost. (Mud Spray)	6
1	-14pt Fixed Slot; +7" Running (to 13"). (Mud Slide)	3
10	2" Stretching (4" non-combat)	2

#### Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage	
25	Hunted by the Tongs, 11 or less	
5	Unusual looks, 8 or less	
15	1 1/2x Stun from Energy Attacks	
15	3d6 Stun from Extreme Cold	
15	3d6 Stun from Strong Acids	
15	Dislikes Violence	
10	Uncertainty about own power and ability	
Total		100

**History:** James Vernon was once a very ordinary sort of guy, a junior mining engineer working for a Hong Kong-based oil company that was investigating new methods of extraction based on 'modulated molecular permeability'. Somehow, inexplicably, Vernon annoyed the local Tongs while working at company HQ, and they paid him a visit one night while he was working overtime. The heavies accidentally pushed Vernon into an experimental vat after short-circuiting one of the machines; they were more than a little surprised when the grey, stone-like being who climbed out of the vat attacked them, and didn't stop gaping until he had knocked them all flat.

Vernon's company flew him home to London, where with the aid of various doctors he managed to gain control of his new, variable, molecular structure. This power was to prove useful when the vengeful, tireless Tongs re-appeared, but even so he was once only saved by the aid of Mandala, who invited him to help form the Outside Line. Vernon's consent came as much out of gratitude as enthusiasm; he is still unsure about his heroic potential, and remains less than fond of combat, but he has taken the identity of Shale, due to his appearance, which resembles damp grey rock.

Shale can control his body's molecules, and can absorb silicon and water from his vicinity (usually from dust and vapour in the air) to reinforce it temporarily; somehow, he can even transform himself to a rock-like form. This can compensate for the normal physical weakness of his new body, but concentrating on it prevents him using his 'mud control' for other purposes. His new form is also strikingly quick, responsive, and elastic.

#### GOLDEN HEROES STATISTICS

Since *Champions* and *Golden Heroes* differ widely, the statistics given for *GH* may not accord exactly with the character descriptions given above. However, they provide a working compromise.

#### Torpedo (alias James Pinchon)

Weight: 153lb+22lb suit  
Height: 6'1"  
Handedness: Right  
Strength: 12+18=30  
Ego: 8  
Dexterity: 10  
Vigour: 12  
Damage Bonus: +15  
HTK: 45

HTC: 39  
Defence Class: 4  
Costume: Lightweight armour  
Movement: 6m  
**Powers**  
*Armour 1, Health 1* (suit has own air supply/purifier), *Heightened Senses 2* (radar, infra-red vision), *Strength 1, Weapon Skill 1* (mini-grenades), *Special (Sub-Aqua)*.

**Note:** All Torpedo's powers derive from the armour he wears, which also incorporates a radio receiver. It is powered by a super-compact battery with a rather short life (Torpedo may lose his super strength after a few attacks, at the SS's discretion). *Weapon Skill* applies to 4 suit-mounted 'mini-missiles'; these act as Light Projectiles (1d6+3 HTC, 2d6+3 HTK), but are explosive and can attack up to 4 opponents within 3m of a chosen target point. The suit is equipped for sub-aqua work, allowing Torpedo to 'swim' at 15m per frame (drawing on battery power) and manoeuvre with ease under water.

#### Vendetta (alias Marco DiMaggio)

Weight: 183lb  
Height: 6'3"  
Handedness: Right  
Strength: 13  
Ego: 12  
Dexterity: 12  
Vigour: 8+10=18  
HTK: 63

HTC: 64  
Defence Class: 5  
Costume: Padded  
Movement: 6m  
**Powers**  
*Intuition 1, Martial Arts (Pugilism 2 plus Judo Throw), Skills 1 (Hide in Shadows), Vigour 1.*

**Note:** All Vendetta's powers derive from long experience and hard training, plus fanatical drive.

#### The Shadow Dancer

(alias Natasha Mallory)  
Weight: 111lb  
Height: 5'4"  
Handedness: Left  
Strength: 4  
Ego: 14  
Dexterity: 14  
Vigour: 12  
Damage Bonus: -2  
Dodge Bonus: +1

HTK: 37  
HTC: 41  
Defence Class: 6  
Movement: 6m  
**Powers**  
*Energy Immunity 3* (cold/ice, nuclear, cosmic), *Heightened Senses 1* (radar), *Psi Powers 1* (Hallucinations, Psi Blast, Telepathy), *Skills (Hide in Shadows), Stunner 1, Teleport 1.*

**Note:** Shadow Dancer's powers are a mixture of natural psionic talents enhanced by her mystical experience, and mystical power of 'negative energy' and shadow. *Energy Immunity* requires her to be conscious in deliberately deflecting damaging energies, her 'radar' is awareness of anything happening in nearby darkness, her *Hallucinations* are invariably of shadowy forms, her *Psi Blast* and *Telepathy* both demand the presence of shadow or darkness. Her *Stunner* is actually her mystical ability to drain a victim of energy at range. *Teleport* is her (limited) ability to 'flow' through shadows. She will avoid strong light at all times since she loses her powers in strong illumination.

#### The Pirate (alias Larry Van Halen)

Weight: 143lb  
Height: 5'9"  
Handedness: Right  
Strength: 16  
Ego: 8  
Dexterity: 14  
Vigour: 13  
Damage Bonus: +1  
Dodge Bonus: +1  
HTK: 37

HTC: 51  
Defence Class: 6  
Movement: 7m  
**Powers**  
*Advantageous Background 2, (Training already included in STR and DEX), Weapon Skill 2* (Lightweight Sword, either 1H or 2H penetrative), *Special 2* (Psychoconditioning and minor weapons).

**Note:** The Pirate derives his powers from his complete belief in himself as an archetypal swashbuckler. He can perform any minor feat of agility or skill that is in keeping with this image. He carries two one-use weapons which he can employ at Weapon Class 3; a throwing knife and a blast pistol disguised as a flintlock (2d6 HTK, 4d6 HTC and reduces target's Damage Dividers by 2).

#### MR SMASH (no alias)

Weight: 209lb  
Height: 3'1"  
Strength: 5+16=21  
Ego: 12  
Dexterity: 8  
Vigour: 10  
Damage Bonus: +6  
Strike Bonus: +1  
Dodge Bonus: +1  
HTK: 41  
HTC: 31

Defence Class: 4  
Movement: 4m  
**Powers**  
*Advantageous Background 2 (Special x2; four-armed, three foot tall robot), Cybernetics 1* (computer brain), *Health 3* (disease/radiation immunity, environmental survival anywhere a sealed machine can function, toxin immunity), *Heightened Senses 2* (Enhanced hearing, infra-red vision), *Strength 1, Tough Skin 1.*

**Note:** This robot's small size and multiple well-co-ordinated limbs give it the Dodge and Strike modifiers above, and allow it to climb very easily. Since it is only a simple-minded machine it has some severe sensory limitations (colour blindness, no chemosensors); if it suffers a Scramble Powers hit, it will run amok.

#### THE OUTSIDE LINE

**Mandala** (alias Andrew Mellish)  
Weight: 140lb  
Height: 5'10"  
Handedness: Left  
Strength: 12  
Ego: 12  
Dexterity: 13  
Vigour: 13  
Dodge Bonus: +3  
HTK: 45  
HTC: 45

Defence Class: 6  
Movement: 6m  
**Powers**  
*Advantageous Background 2 (Previous Training x2; increases already included in DEX and EGO), Agility 1, Energy Immunity 1* (heat/flame), *Martial Arts 1 (Oriental Grade 1 plus Judo Throw), PSI Powers (Telepathy as Speciality, Telekinesis, Telepathy), Skills 1 (Hide in Shadows).*



**Note:** All Mandala's powers derive from his physical and mystical training. His immunity to fire is achieved by reminding himself of the illusory nature of such ephemeral forces – an act of will precluding the simultaneous use of his psionic talents.

**Skylight** (alias Janice Lucenzi)

Weight: 115lb  
Height: 5'11"  
Handedness: Right  
Strength: 5  
Ego: 7  
Dexterity: 18  
Vigour: 7  
Damage Bonus: -1  
Strike Bonus: +3  
Dodge Bonus: +3  
HTK: 28  
HTC: 17  
Defence Class: 6  
Movement: 5m

**Powers**

*Advantageous background 1 (Previous Training; increases included in DEX), Cybernetics 2 (2 Specials: Force Deflector and Flash Grenades – see Notes), Flight 1; Reactions 1, Skills 1 (Gymnastics), Wallcrawling 1, Weapons Skill 1 (Laser).*

**Note:** Skylight's natural dexterity and gymnastic skill are phenomenal. Her Force Deflector (a small gadget worn beneath the sleeve of her costume) generates a field effect that can be used against ranged attacks only as if the wielder had *Weapon Skill: Shield* (used defensively), while her Flash Grenades (6 carried) 'detonate' with a dazzling flash – anyone within 4m may be blinded unless their eyes are protected; a character may attempt to protect his eyes (requires successful Dodge vs Weapon Class 3) otherwise blinded for 1d6 Frames. Skylight also uses a short-range flying belt, a set of magnetic 'grippers' providing *Wallcrawling* ability on metal surfaces, and an eight-shot laser (as rules, but used with *Weapon Skill*). She is quick, clever, and a useful ally, but rather too excitable and unused to real pain.

**Shale** (alias James Vernon)

Weight: 133lb  
Height: 6'0"  
Handedness: Right  
Strength: 4+17=21  
Ego: 6  
Dexterity: 13  
Vigour: 15  
Damage Bonus: -2/+16  
Dodge Bonus: +3/0  
HTK: 53

HTC: 56  
Defence Class: 5/4  
Movement: 10-15/5m

**Powers**

*Mass Variation 1, Self 1, Solidify 1, Speed 1, Strength 1, Stretch 1, Tough Skin 1.*

**Note:** Shale can only use his *Strength* and *Tough Skin* powers when his *Mass Variation* is active, and he can only use the latter to increase his mass; furthermore, he can only use his *Speed* and *Stretch* powers when not using his increased mass. When two numbers are given above, the first represents the character with *Speed* and *Stretching* active, the second, Shale's *Strength* and *Tough Skin* functional.

**RUNNING THE SCENARIO**

*Peking Duck* is quite easy to set up; the referee need only place the staff and customers in appropriate positions around the restaurant (with roughly equal numbers upstairs and down, and – preferably – the Mafiosi upstairs), and then ask the players how the heroes propose to go about their investigation. From then on, all the NPCs are essentially reacting to events, although the players may well not believe this. The villains have the building under surveillance, and they will strike the moment that the heroes reveal themselves, arriving within one turn and making straight for Tony Rigatoni. The police also have the restaurant watched, and they will intervene as soon as any violence starts, but unfortunately for them only three men are watching the building. These are a junior CID man who thinks he's Maigret and two constables who work by the book; they will do their best to arrest anyone who seems to be breaking the law; being policemen, they have mixed feelings about people in funny costumes claiming to fight crime.

If the players choose to be so subtle that they fail to trigger any action, things will start happening after one hour, when Tony Rigatoni will decide that his contacts are not going to appear, and so will leave. The villains will therefore be forced to act (make this *prompt*, else the action will shift outside the nice, cluttered confused restaurant), which will in turn force some response from the heroes and police.

A final note; hunters, dependents, etc. should not generally appear on either side in this scenario, unless the GM really enjoys huge, complicated fight scenes. Of course, heroes who are hunted by the Tongs or who have a particular hatred of drugs provide an excuse to run the whole thing, and any who are hunted by the Police will be of interest to Inspector Dalhousie and his men. Unusual Looks, Psychological and Physical Limitations, and Unluck are all highly relevant, however (in *Golden Heroes* terms – consider carefully the heroes' Campaign Ratings).

If the players are using their own characters, an interesting twist is to have the Outside Line appear independently as NPCs following their own leads on Tong plans and quite possibly mistaking less well-known heroes for villains. In any case, have fun with the scenario, and wish the players luck! □

**Table One: Objects and Fittings**

Item	Weight (kg)	Champions		Golden Heroes	
		DEF	BODY	SIZE	HTK
Tumbler	0.25	1	1	0	1
Plate	0.4	1	2	0	1
Bottle	0.6	1	1	0	1
Cutlery	0.2	4	1	0	3
Telephone*	1	2	1	1	2
Stool	10	4	4	2	4
Chair	14	4	4	2	4
Table or Desk	50	4	6	3	6
Wooden Partition	20-50	4	2	3	2
Counter	30-100	5	5	3	5
Curtain**	1	1	1	1	1
Bamboo Curtain	n/a	— obstructs vision only —			
Padded Wall Bench	60	6	4	3	6
Door – Interior	25	2	5	2	4
Exterior	30	4	5	3	5
Washbasin	15	5	3	2	4
Toilet	25	5	4	2	4
Light Fitting***	n/a	1	1	1	1
Fridge/Freezer/	120	5	6	4	8
Cooker***					
Brick Wall	n/a	6	4	—	8

\*If damaged, remains 'live' on 5+ on 1d6; inflicts 1/2d6 killing damage on contact.

\*\*Only damaged by killing attacks (GH: Penetrative attacks).

**Table 2b: 'Normals Appearing'**

(Golden Heroes)	EGO	STR	DEX	VIG	HTK	HTC	Notes, etc
No./Name/Role							
1. Mi (Reception)	4	2	5	3	8	10	
2. Waiter 1	5	5	4	4	14	14	
3. Waiter 2	5	4	4	5	16	18	Oriental M/Arts 1 plus Judo Throw
4. Mr Chong (owner)	3	3	5	4	15	13	
5. Kang (cook)	6	8	6	8	28	30	
6. Kang Se (Kang's daughter)	3	2	8	4	13	13	
7. Fred (Cust)	4	4	4	4	14	14	
8. Bill (Cust)	4	4	4	4	16	12	Gymnastics skill
9. Jane (Cust)	5	3	5	4	11	15	
10. Stewart (Cust)	6	4	4	5	16	20	
11. Myra (Cust)	8	4	4	4	19	14	
12. Tony Rigatoni (Cust/Mafiosi)	5	5	5	5	18	17	Carries a pistol
13. Marco Vennecci	8	8	7	8	26	31	Carries a pistol; WC1 with all comb.
14. Insp Dalhousie (Police)	5	5	6	5	19	16	WC1 with club
15. Con Plodd (Police)	5	6	8	5	20	21	Pugilism 1
16. Con Parkins (Police)	7	7	5	7	23	30	WC1 with club

**Note:** Cust=Customer. Police, Mafiosi, and Kang have 3 frames, all others have 2. All move 3 metres.

**Table 2a 'Normals' Appearing**

(Champions)	STR	DEX	CON	INT	EGO	PRE	COM	PD	ED	SPD	REC	O/DCV	ECV	BODY	END	STUN	SEX
No./Name/Role																	
1. Mi (Receptionist)	6	12	9	11	10	12	20	1	2	3	5	4	3	9	18	18	F
2. Waiter 1	11	10	10	10	10	8	9	2	2	2	4	3	3	10	20	20	M
3. Waiter 2	10	9	12	11	11	10	10	2	2	2	5	3	4	12	24	22	M
4. Mr Chong (Owner)	9	12	9	12	12	12	7	2	2	2	3	4	4	9	18	18	M
5. Kang (Cook)	15	14	17	8	9	15	6	3	6	3	7	5	3	13	34	32	M
6. Kang Se (Cook's daughter)	5	14	8	11	7	6	16	1	2	3	3	5	3	7	16	14	F
7. Fred (Customer)	11	10	10	10	10	10	10	2	2	2	4	3	3	10	20	20	M
8. Bill (Customer)	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	2	2	2	4	3	3	10	20	20	M
9. Jane (Customer)	10	12	10	10	10	10	10	2	2	2	4	3	3	10	20	20	F
10. Stewart (Customer)	10	10	10	5	12	11	10	3	3	3	4	3	3	10	20	20	M
11. Myra (Customer)	9	10	10	10	16	10	8	3	3	2	4	3	3	10	20	20	F
12. Tony Rigatoni (Cust & Mafiosi)	12	12	12	14	14	15	10	3	3	3	4	4	5	10	24	22	M
13. Marco Vennecci (Bodyguard)	15	14	15	8	8	15	6	5	5	4	6	5	3	18	30	35	M
14. Insp Kenneth Dalhousie (Police)	10	10	10	12	16	10	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	11	20	25	M
15. Con Plodd (Policeman)	10	15	9	9	9	9	15	3	3	3	6	5	3	10	20	22	M
16. Con Parkins (Policeman)	13	10	12	8	14	11	10	3	2	2	7	3	5	12	24	25	M

**Notes**

10pts Martial Arts; a peaceable type

8" Running, Acrobatics on 11 or less

Carries a pistol  
Carries a pistol, +2 skill with punch  
Carries a truncheon (+1 skill), detective work (14 or less)  
10pts Martial Arts  
Carries a truncheon





CHAPTER 16: "IT'S NOT OVER YET!"

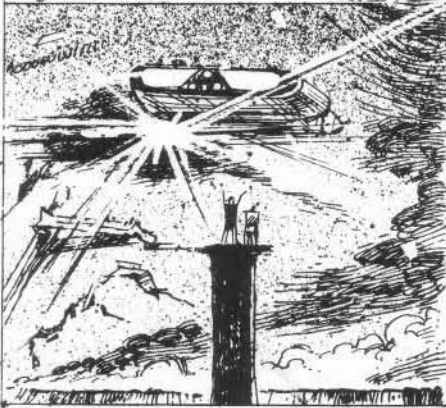


Gavin is the TERMINATOR

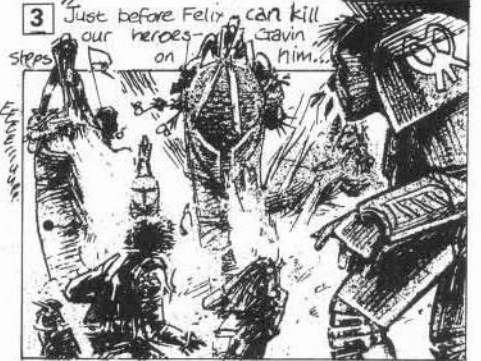
# TRAVELLERS

ROLL YOUR OWN ENDING: Here is your chance to roll the end of *The Travellers*. And remember to modify your die roll ie Hayes' chances of survival: DM-12.

1 "The Prisoner goes crazy doe bonkers and the Patron refuses to pay up so they are left marooned. Flinn strangles Hayes for the whole mess..."



2 "Just as all are arguing about the fee - Felix - fed up of being pushed around, reveals himself to be a Pan-dimensional being and kills all our heroes, after a request from Flinn to strangle Hayes first..."



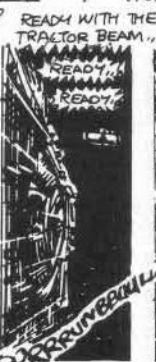
Suddenly they are surrounded by strange men on the backs of huge worms - professing Gavin as their new messiah. The travellers stay for a fruitful life - except Hayes who is banished into the wilderness to become a hermit and come across unconscious young farm hands..."

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4 "Just before Gav is killed messiah, Flinn manages to sell them his entire consignment of vacc-suits for rare spice and becomes immensely rich. All live happily ever after - except Hayes - who after making numerous 'worm' jokes is committed to the ritual 'Pain Phart' - in which he is hacked to pieces with a large garden spade..."



6 "Before any of that happens - the Patron turns out to be the Prisoner's daughter who financed the operation to rescue her father. United at last they plan to start a new life together - but regrets to say she can't pay them, Hayes says "That's alright - your love and reunion is reward enough, and with big grins and gleaming hearts they fly off ... And strangle Hayes..."



HA HA HA HA HA "Yes folks, for those of you who chose a happy ending for the travellers, those adventures who don't know the meaning of fear, No, oubliette, plot or storyline..." THE END.



Starbase is an alternate monthly column for Traveller enthusiasts, edited by Bob McWilliams.

# WORDLY WILES

## Social Customs in Traveller by Anna Prince

There is one rather glaring omission in the *Traveller* rules. They tell you how to generate planets, and the animals which live on them, but nothing is said about the society of the human inhabitants.

True, the characters' most basic questions are answered: Can I carry my gun? Do the inhabitants have anything more powerful?

In the planetary stats, only the government type gives some flavour, but it is so vague that it needs much fleshing out. For instance, a company-owned planet could be a completely open society, where slavers come to trade and anything is permitted; or a closed one, with unlicensed trading forbidden and people arrested for not having green hair.

I fear, though, that the unwritten assumption behind most *Traveller* material is that every society is identical to twentieth century America. (An honourable exception is *Adventure 9, Nomads of the World-Ocean*, but that, unfortunately, will give harried GMs no clue about how to produce un-American societies for themselves.) However, society changes radically even in a few centuries: read a Jane Austen novel to see how much it has altered in the last couple. Despite this, it is easiest to assume that the Imperium matches our society. (A convenience which gives play a recognisable background.) But the Imperium is an abstraction: the worlds within it will vary widely.

Worlds many months' travel apart will inevitably differ from each other more than any two nations do on Earth today.

At this point, the harried GMs I mentioned before will probably be groaning, 'Not another load of irrelevant details to work out before my players get down there and start shooting people!'

Yes and no.

Before going any further, I must make it clear that if you play *Traveller* with a lot of *Mercenary* or *Snapshot*, and little else, then this article may contain little of interest to you, since neither type of game depends on plotting.

Otherwise, yes, I am suggesting GMs spend time working out more details: but no, they are far from irrelevant. They will make creating scenarios easier, as well as giving your players more pleasure.

People enjoy interacting with other people. And that, from the first request for landing permission to the last backward shot, is what *Travellers* will be doing.

Presumably one of the reasons you are all role-playing is that you enjoy the otherness such games make possible; and another is the chance to live-out a novel. A science fiction novel makes possible a special kind of otherness, so that players who move from one bland intergalactic Hilton to another are missing a most enjoyable element of the

game. Starports may be alike, but the worlds on which they are set will not be.

Where are GMs to find all these societies, though? On Earth, of course, since this is the only planet we know.

It will not be necessary to create every world in great detail. If the players will only be passing through, then a brief phrase or even a word may be enough. 'Xenophobic', 'Chinese-type bureaucracy', 'Duelling common', 'Native sophonts kept as slaves', 'Consider it rude to pay compliments'. And so on. You may get ideas here from the planet's stats, as you start asking yourself how certain apparent inconsistencies happened.

On the other hand, you could reverse what the stats seem to be indicating. There is no reason why a high-tech, high law level world should not also have a religion which requires them to eat their leaders. Or even visitors. . . .

As you read this, you may already have had some ideas. But over a whole subsector, even the most fertile imagination begins to feel arid. For a sector, you will certainly need help.

Fortunately, help is available. SF books will be useful. For instance, civilised cannibalism was used in *Stranger In a Strange Land*. But disappointingly, far too many SF books present people who, when the technological gloss is stripped off, are just like us.

Anthropology and history books are much better sources. Of course, it is not good enough just to transport medieval Japan into space and hope for the best. The trick is to mix and match.

The range and variety of the solutions humans have found to the problem of living together in groups, is staggering. But to make an alien world seem as strange as it should be, try joining customs which have never, on Earth, been found together.

This can be done even in the short descriptions. 'Exchange gifts before trading. Discuss money only in church'. Such customs are almost guaranteed to have *Travellers* offending the locals, resulting in many chances for mayhem.

Presented with such challenges, sensible parties will soon begin questioning the starport staff before they meet any natives of the planet, or will seek out library data. Such information will be available, but need not be complete. It might even be deliberately misleading. It is best, though, to give the players enough true information to make them feel confident, while withholding a couple of key facts.

Setting up the worlds on which you intend to place a scenario will be more difficult. The more details you must place on a world, the harder it becomes to keep them consistent. It is very helpful if you can find someone, who does not play in your group, with whom you can

discuss your ideas.

Each important world must have a solid foundation, but it would take hours of work to create a self-consistent, functional society. Fortunately, there is no need to do so. History is littered with examples.

You will probably want to read up on society before you base a world on it. Children's books are best for basic groundwork, and should be available from the library. But remember that they generally avoid discussing sex: an omission which gives a distorted idea of any society.

An example would help.

Let us imagine a world based on classical Athens. It is slave-owning, philosophical, Imperialist, inhabited by warrior-citizens who denigrate women, laud homosexuality, expose unwanted children and have brought art to a high peak. They are mildly contemptuous of foreigners, are polytheistic and live in a democracy.

Add to that list a custom which forbids people to name or refer to the recently dead; imagine that they are rude to their friends while being polite only to enemies, and you already have several scenarios suggesting themselves.

The slaves could be a native life-form an Imperial charity is trying to protect, or might be rebellious androids buying imported guns. Either way, it would be easy to involve the player characters.

Perhaps they have arrived to seek the Only Man Who Knows The Answer. If everyone on the planet thinks he is dead, the players could take a long time to realise why people are uninformative, always polite, and keep attacking them.

So the small effort of drawing the outline of a society has, in return, given rise to a plot and a couple of potential subplots. Clearly then, creating a social background is more than icing the cake: it is, or should be, a vital part of producing a subsector.

Players should spend more time thinking than rolling dice. Who can I trust? How do they manage that? What happened to the last ship which landed here? Where do the Bilg go in the summer? Each scenario should present its players with several problems like those. If it does not, the designer is not making full use of the infinite variety of worlds available in *Traveller*.

One final thought to worry players. Some worlds, outside the Imperium or on its fringes, may have quite highly developed psionic powers. An insult to the wrong person might have any number of painful results. Imagine a cursed ship which, though mechanically sound, has a high chance of misjumping. It could be a long task even reaching a world where the curse might be lifted. Survivors would, if nothing else, have learned to be polite to witchdoctors. □





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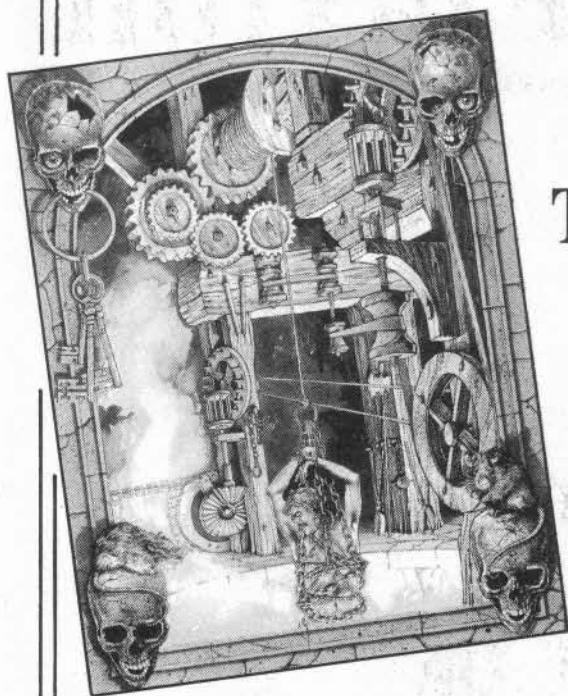
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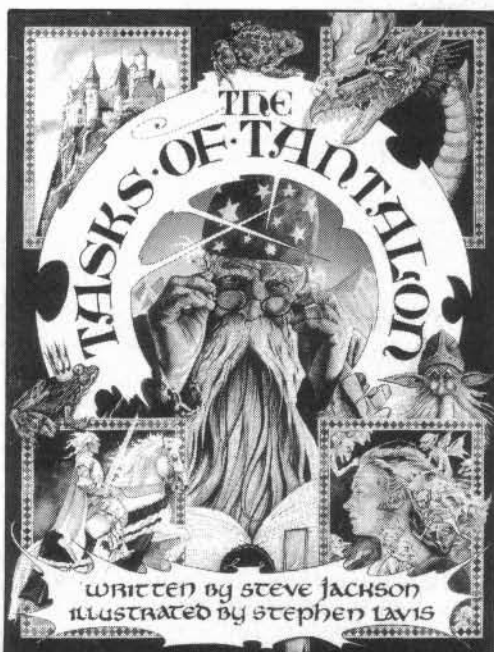


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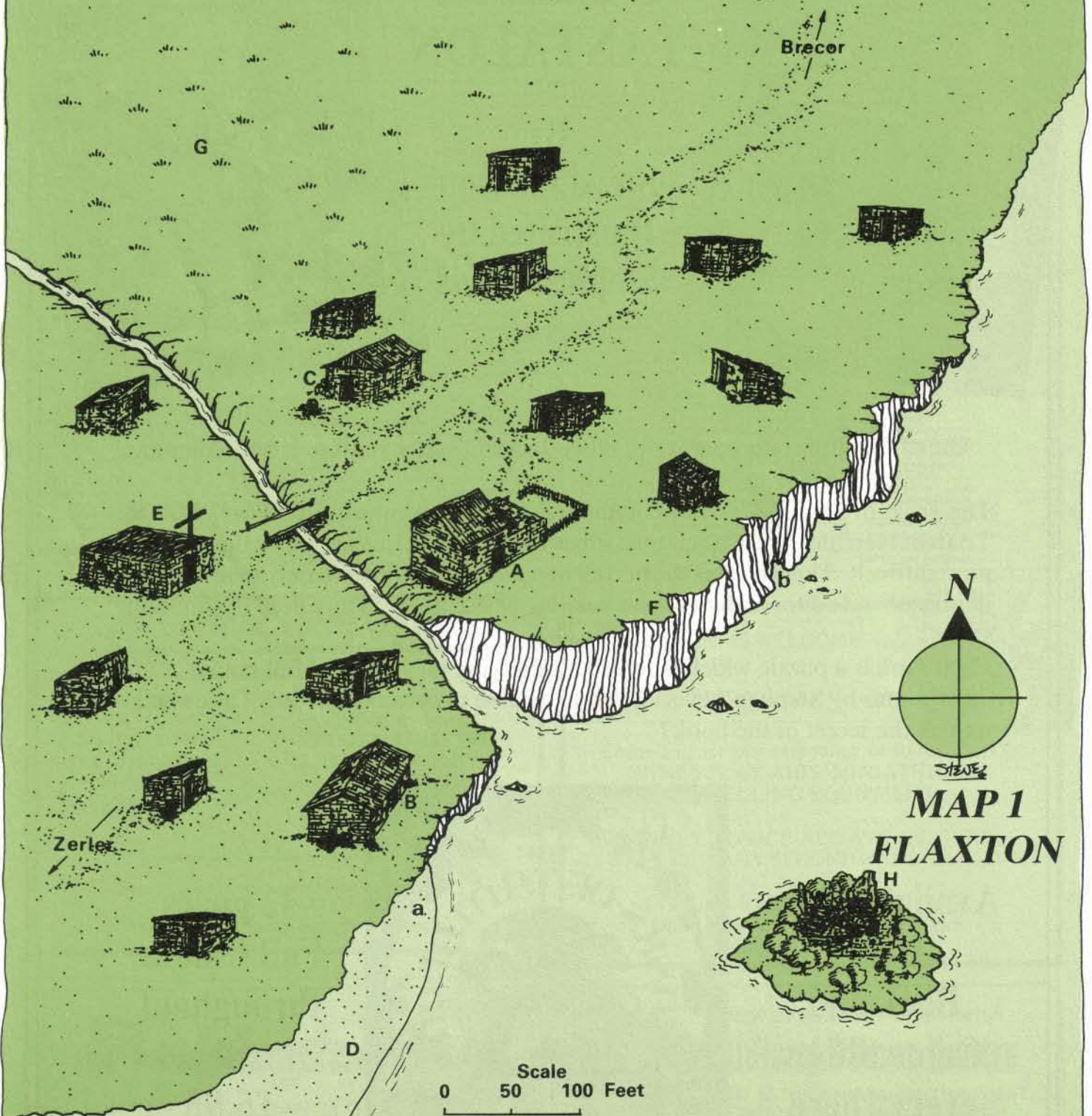
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# A Murder at Flaxton

An AD&D Adventure for Low-Level Characters by Michael Heaton



MAP 1  
FLAXTON

## PLAYERS' INFORMATION

Flaxton is a coastal village 25 miles south of the city of Brecor, your home town. It is a small place consisting of some huts occupied by fishermen, two stores and one inn. The inn, The Black Squid, serves as a stopping place for merchants and travellers between the cities of Brecor and Zerler, 30 miles further south, being approximately one day's journey from each. Thus the inn

flourishes, but the rest of the village is rather run down.

Three weeks ago a body was discovered on the beach at Flaxton. It was that of a customs official, Bar Clorin, who two days earlier had left Brecor to travel on official business to Zerler. His hands were tied behind his back and his throat had been cut.

The sheriff of Brecor sent two constables to Flaxton to investigate. They have

not returned, nor has a third sent three days ago to try to trace them.

The sheriff knows you to be adventurers, and has asked you to pose as travellers 'just passing through' Flaxton, and to find out what is going on. The reward for information leading to Clorin's killer and the whereabouts of the missing constables is 1000gp; the reward for catching the killer dead or alive is 3000gp.



**A MURDER AT FLAXTON**

**DM'S INFORMATION**

Sternn Shortshaft, a dwarf, has been the owner of The Black Squid at Flaxton for 25 years. For the last 24 of those years he has also been a small-time smuggler, and recently he has taken to pressing likely guests at his inn into the service of the Slave Ships of Veridor, a neighbouring country. In both of these activities he is in league with Serida, a pirate from Veridor.

Sternn is currently also aided by a Magic-User, Corbider, and a Fighter, Bertram, both of whom are staying at the inn masquerading as guests. Such associates do not last long; Sternn eventually intends to murder Corbider and pressgang Bertram, recruiting new henchmen to take their place.

Bar Clorin was killed by Sternn, who knew him to be a customs officer and thought (wrongly) that the illicit operations had attracted official attention. He murdered Clorin whilst the latter slept, took the body via the secret passage to the caves, tied the hands together to a heavy stone and threw it into the sea. Unfortunately the stone became detached and the tide washed the body onto the beach. The three constables who came to investigate the death all stayed at the inn and were pressganged, and are tied-up in room 4 of the abbey cellar.

Every Monday morning at 2.00am Corbider watches for a signal from the island, which he can see from his bedroom window. If Serida has any 'goods' she will light a bonfire on the island, which she will extinguish after five minutes. If all is well Corbider will place a burning lantern in his bedroom window as a return signal, and he, Bertram

and Sternn will make their way to the island via the secret passage from the inn. If the return signal is not made, Serida will leave immediately.

Once a month, as well as delivering the contraband, Serida will collect any new 'slaves'. The party should arrive at Flaxton a day or two before the next such collection.

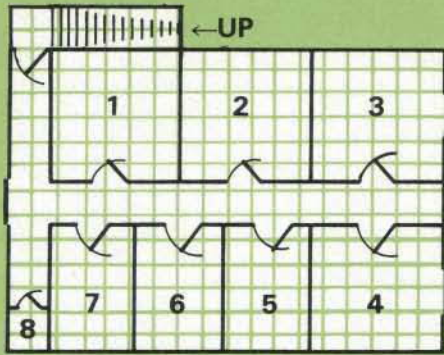
**FLAXTON (Map 1)**

Flaxton is a sleepy fishing village at the mouth of a river estuary. The village is a haphazard arrangement of about 60 huts, although fewer are shown on the map for the sake of clarity. They are single-floor, wattle buildings between 10 and 20 feet square, usually with only one room, a single door, and no windows. They tend to be heated by an open fire in the centre of the room where necessary, and have a small, closable hole in the roof for the smoke to escape. The locals are generally friendly towards strangers, but are a little wary of them after the recent murder.

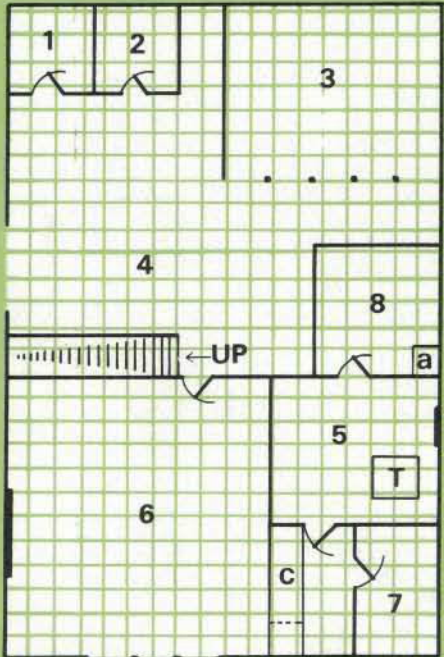
The economy of the village is based entirely on fishing. The fisherman keep some of their catch for their own consumption, but sell the main part at the docksides of Brecor or Zerler. The fishing fleet leaves at between 4.00 and 5.00am every morning, and returns between eight and twelve hours later, depending on the quality of the fishing. Because of the need for an early start, most of the village will be asleep by 9.00pm.

**A. The Black Squid (Map 2)**

This is an old, well-kept inn with attached courtyard. Whatever his faults, Sternn Shortshaft certainly runs a nice hostelry,

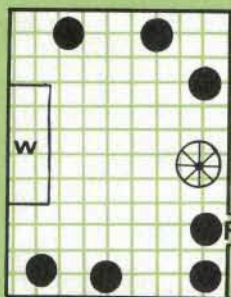


**FIRST FLOOR**



**GROUND FLOOR**

Scale:  
1 square=3 feet



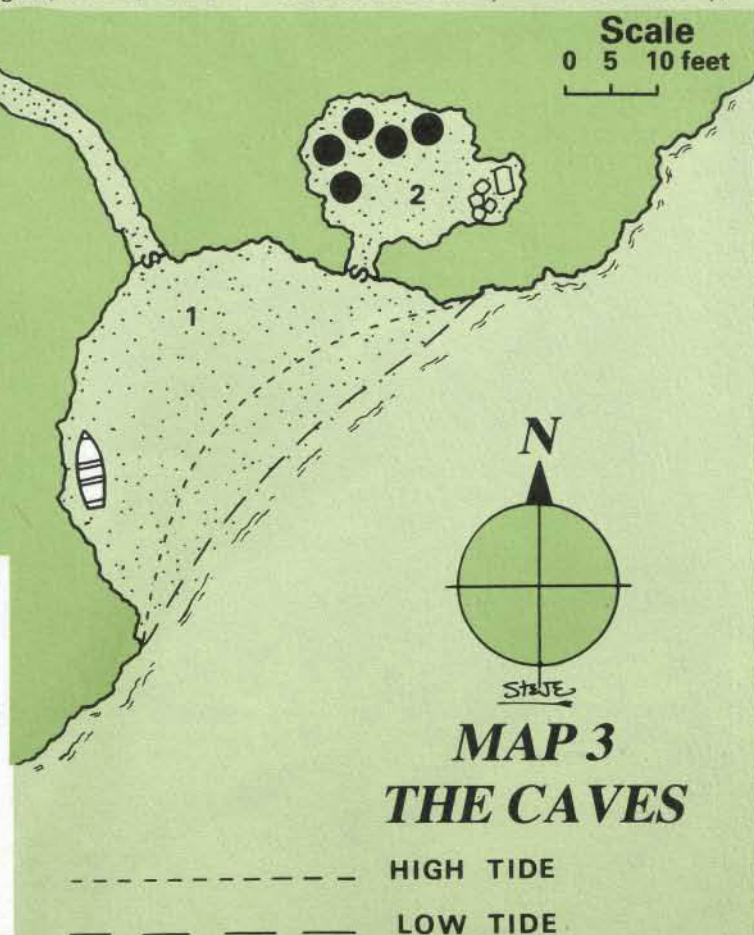
**CELLAR**

**MAP 2  
THE BLACK SQUID**

**KEY**

- |  |                |  |             |
|--|----------------|--|-------------|
|  | SPIRAL STAIRS  |  | TRAP DOOR   |
|  | DOOR           |  | WINDOW      |
|  | TETHERING POST |  | BARREL      |
|  | STAIRS         |  | COUNTER     |
|  | FIREPLACE      |  | WINE RACK   |
|  |                |  | ROWING BOAT |

Scale  
0 5 10 feet



**MAP 3  
THE CAVES**

--- HIGH TIDE

— LOW TIDE



## A MURDER AT FLAXTON

and he is a very popular figure with the locals who do not have the slightest suspicions of his more nefarious activities. All the staff are well-paid and well-treated. Apart from Sternn himself, none of the staff lives on the premises.

Food and drink are of the best quality, and prices are generally as in the *Players Handbook*. Rum is a speciality and costs 5sp per measure. The party should wonder how an inn in such a poor village manages to do so well, even allowing for the regular passing trade.

Charges for full-board accommodation: double room – 4gp; single room – 3gp; stabling (including food) – 10sp per horse per night.

### Ground Floor

1. Male WC.
2. Female WC.
3. Stables. These are 10' high and open along the inward-facing wall,

where there are posts for tethering horses. One carthorse, belonging to the owner, will be tethered here when the party arrives.

4. Courtyard. This is of hard-packed earth. There is a small cart here which belongs to Sternn and is used by Corbider for the disposal of smuggled silk.

5. Kitchen. This room, like the rest of the main building, is 12' high and of stone construction. It contains a fire/stove (as marked), a table, cupboards holding foodstuffs and utensils. Erin Brid will be here at lunchtime and early evening. The trap-door opens onto a spiral stair down to the cellar; it is locked at all times, and Sternn has the key.

6. Public bar. The bar itself runs from the corner formed by the kitchen to the opposite wall, with a flap to allow access to the public area by the bar staff. The bar will be manned as previously indicated, with Sternn helping at very busy

times. The public area is basic but clean, and has a roaring log fire in the winter months. The busiest time is between 6.00 and 8.30pm, when the place is full of locals. Food is available between noon and 2.00pm and 4.00 and 8.00pm daily.

7. Store room. Shelves line the walls of this room, which is used mainly for storage of food. Some bottled drinks are kept here as reserves for the bar, but the main stock is in the cellar.

8. Landlord's living quarters. This room contains a table and chair, an unmade bed, and a safe. The safe is attached to the wall and is indicated by 'a' on the plan, it is made of inch-thick steel with a very strong lock (–20% for a Thief to open).

The safe contains the deeds of the inn, 2 gems (250gp each), 10 gems (100gp each), a bag holding 2500gp, Corbider's spell books and a small stoppered bottle.





## A MURDER AT FLAXTON

In the latter is the drug Sternn uses on his victims.

On the table are the accounts ledger, an ink-stand and some quills.

Sternn will offer to let the party keep any valuables in his safe. They will be secure as long as the party survives, although Corbider will want to study any spell books left there.

### First Floor

Access to this floor is by steps from the courtyard. The door at the top of the steps is normally kept locked, and guests staying at the inn are issued with a key. Bedroom doors are also normally locked; Sternn has duplicate keys to each and the chambermaid will have a key to each room that is let.

Bedroom doors are numbered as on the plan. Rooms 1,2,3 and 4 are double rooms, rooms 5,6 and 7 are single rooms. Rooms 1,2,6 and 7 are available should the party wish to stay at the inn.

Each room contains a bed (single or double), a table (on which there is a pitcher of water, a bowl and a lantern), a chamber-pot (under the bed) and pegs on the wall for clothing.

Room 3 is occupied by Corbider, room 5 by Bertram. Nothing of value, other than a change of clothes and possibly Bertram's armour, will be left in either room when the occupant is absent.

The window in room 4 looks out to sea, as does the one in Corbider's room, and the island can be seen from here. The door to this room has therefore been *wizard-locked* by Corbider. Sternn will claim that the room has been booked by a merchant called Serif Ank who will be arriving shortly with his wife, and will refuse to let it.

Room 8 is a linen closet.

### Cellar

The spiral stair from the kitchen leads down here. The barrels hold beer or rum, the rack holds dozens of bottles of wine, port and sherry. Questioning of the bar staff might reveal that although a drayman brings beer from Zerler ever Wednesday, none of them has ever actually seen any wine or spirits delivered.

The barrel marked F on the plan is false. If the tap mechanism (the whole thing, not just the handle) is turned twice anti-clockwise, the front of the barrel will swing open as a door, and steps lead down from inside the barrel through the floor to the passage 10 feet below. The passage leads to the caves.

### The Caves (Map 3)

The secret passage from The Black Squid is long and meandering, and leads to cave 1. The door is obvious from the passage side, but from the cave both doors are disguised to look like part of the natural rock wall.

1. The cave mouth is barely visible from the water, but the cave opens to a large, dome-like chamber inside. It contains a large rowing boat used to ferry contraband from the island. Bertram also uses the boat once each day to row to the island to feed the dogs in the abbey cellar, the time he does this varies but will always be when there is no risk of being seen by the fishing fleet.

2. This is a temporary storage area for contraband prior to its disposal. It con-

tains 4 bales of silk, each worth 500gp, two barrels of rum worth 100gp each, and three barrels of red wine worth 200gp each. There is also a chest here containing money from which Sternn pays Serida for her wares; it holds two sacks, one of 2000gp and one of 2500sp, but is trapped with a sliding blade which will sever a hand (50% chance if not deactivated). The chest is locked and Sternn has the key.

### B. The Chandler's Store (Map 4)

1. This is the bedroom. It contains a double and a single bed for the chandler, his wife and his son.

2. Living/eating area.

3. The shop. A cashbox on the counter contains 25gp, 50sp and 75cp. Goods for sale include: lanterns, candles, oil, chests, rope, sacks (prices as in *Players Handbook*); large net - 10gp; small net - 6gp; harpoon - 2gp (treat as spear, +1 damage due to barb); hooks - 1gp per box of 20; sail-cloth - 3sp per yard, and oars - 5gp per pair

Ruzo also has three second-hand rowing boats for sail. Each is a 6-man boat:

Boat A, 50gp. Very seaworthy

Boat B, 40gp. Looks good, but leaks a bit. 5% likely to sink per turn afloat.

Boat C, 25gp. This one looks a little shabby. It is very leaky, 25% likely to sink per turn afloat.

Ruzo will inform the party that boats B and C are not guaranteed for safety until he has repaired them. This will be in one and two weeks respectively, and will raise the price to 50gp. The price of each boat includes two sets of oars.

### C. The General Store (Map 4)

1. The bedroom. It contains a double bed. A loose stone under the bed conceals a chest which holds 200gp, 150ep, 200sp.

2. Living/eating area.

3. The shop. Ferdo sells food and drink mainly, but also offered for sale is a selection of ironmongery, hardware, clothes, etc. Prices tend to be expensive. A cashbox on the counter contains 30gp, 15sp, 50cp.

**Note.** Apart from the inn, the stores (B and C) are the only stone buildings in the village. They are both simple, single-storey, structures with no windows and a single door leading outside.

**D. The Beach.** 38 single-masted fishing boats will be moored here when the fleet is not at sea, most of these will be two or three-man craft. When the fleet is out, the younger children of the village use the beach as a play area, although a few men, too old now to fish, will be here repairing nets and sewing sails. The point marked 'a' is where Bar Clorin's body was discovered (by Ruzo Brid).

**E. The Chapel.** This is a simple, single-storey stone building, 30 feet long by 20 feet wide, with no windows and one small wooden door in the centre of the wall facing the road. It is dedicated to Manannan Mac Lir, but is for private worship only, having no resident cleric.

**F. The Cliffs.** The coastline here forms a short but sheer drop to the sea 30 feet below. At the base of these cliffs, at the point marked 'b', is the cave mouth to

which the secret tunnel from The Black Squid leads.

**G. The Pasture.** Most of the soil around Flaxton is too dry and sandy to support livestock or to cultivate. The area known as 'The Pasture' is a little better, and here the womenfolk of the village keep a few goats (for milk) and grow a few vegetables to augment their diet of fish.

### H. The Island and the Abbey (Map 5)

The island is little more than a single hill rising from the sea. On its crown are the remains of a building, so ancient that besides the stone floor only the bases of a few walls and some rubble are left, believed to have once been an abbey. The ruins are rumoured to be haunted, and although there is no truth in this it helps to keep the villagers away.

1. The beach is the only place on the island where a boat can land. The base of the island is covered in dense vegetation, but a narrow, indistinct trail leads through this from the beach to the ruin.

2. The Ruins. The remains of a fire will be found at point A. This will be damp; the fire had been drenched to prevent any smoke being noticed the next day. Rubble at point B covers a loose flooring-stone, which if lifted out reveals a flight of stone stairs leading to 3 (see below).

3. The door to this room is locked; a successful listening roll will reveal snarling and barking behind it. The room contains 4 war dogs, pets of Serida, which will attack any strangers on sight (HD2+2; AC6; HTK12,14,6 and 10).

The dogs are here to protect the main store of contraband. In the room are: 5 bales of silk (600gp each), 5 bales of silk (200gp each), 10 barrels of red wine (200gp each), 15 barrels of white wine (200gp each), 5 barrels of sherry (350gp each) and 5 barrels of rum (1000gp each).

4. The three constables are held prisoner here, awaiting collection by Serida. Their hands and feet are tied together. Also in the room are some chunks of dried meat and a barrel of water, with which the prisoners must nourish themselves as best they can. The water is laced with a small quantity of Sternn's soporific drug, just enough to keep the prisoners quiet.

### THE CAST

**Sternn Shortshaft:** AC7/4; 17HP; LVL3/2; Fighter/Thief; NE; Dwarf; STR:16; INT:11; WIS:9; DEX:17; CON:15; CHA:10. Shortsword and dagger, leather armour and shield when necessary.

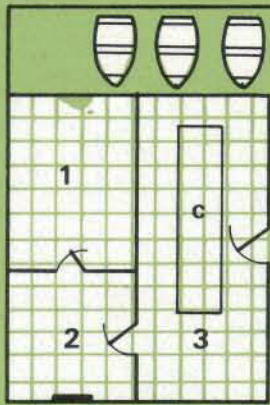
Sternn poses as a retired miner, but is in fact an ex-adventurer who purchased The Black Squid with ill-gotten loot. He appears to be a happy-go-lucky, friendly fellow, very concerned about the well-being and comfort of his guests and customers.

He is always on the lookout for potential pressgang victims. He will attempt to befriend any strong-looking male guest aged below 30 he thinks unlikely to be traced back to the inn (adventurers beware!), and towards the end of the evening will offer a drink 'on the house'. The drink will be laced with a soporific drug, making removal of the body in the early hours of the coming morning

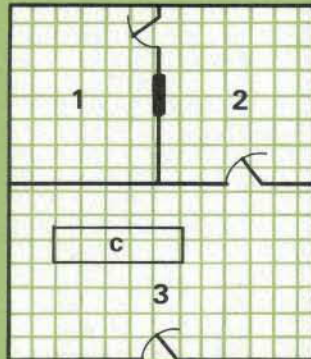


## A MURDER AT FLAXTON

Scale  
0 10 20 Feet

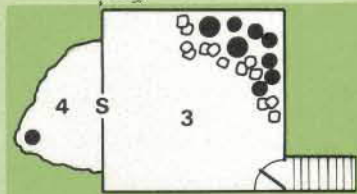


CHANDLERS STORE



GENERAL STORE

## MAP 4 THE STORES



## MAP 5 THE ISLAND

easier. Anybody asking after the guest the next day will be told that he checked-out first thing in the morning.

Sternn will admit that Bar Clorin stayed at the inn, but will say that he stayed only one night and left early the next morning. He will claim to be shocked at the murder and saddened at any disrepute it might bring to the village. He will say that the constables also stayed at the inn, but on both occasions left after one night intending to continue their investigations at Zerler.

**Corbider**; AC10; 9HP; LVL3; MU; NE; Human; STR:10; INT:17; WIS:13; DEX:12; CON:10; CHA:12. Dagger. Spells: *Burning hands, magic missile, web*.

Corbider poses as a silk merchant. He occupies room 3 of the inn but is rarely seen in the bar. His spell books are in Sternn's safe and contain the following spells: (First Level) *Read magic, burning hands, detect magic, magic missile, sleep*; (Second Level) *Knock, web, wizard lock*.

**Bertram**; AC10/4; 13HP; LVL3; Fighter; NE; Human; STR:14; INT:9; WIS:13; DEX:10; CON:13; CHA:12. Bastard sword and dagger, chain mail when necessary.

Bertram poses as Corbider's body-guard and occupies room 5 of the inn. He is handsome in a rugged way, but a bit

of a lecher. Most of his free time is spent in the bar, but Sternn keeps an eye on him and will not let him get too drunk for fear of his becoming overly talkative.

**Serida**; AC4; 36HP; LVL5; Fighter; NE; Human (female); STR:14; INT:14; WIS:10; DEX:13; CON:13; CHA:17. Longsword, dagger, chain mail and shield.

Serida is a very beautiful and very evil pirate. She is a smuggler of fine silks, wines and spirits, and a pressgang agent for the Slave Ships of Veridor. She is involved in many operations other than this and there is a price on her head of 1000gp.

She is always accompanied by her dog, Sting, (war dog; HD2+2; 15HP; AC6), which is savagely loyal to her.

When visiting the island, she is normally alone apart from Sting. When due to collect new slaves, however, she takes two crewmen with her. These will be first level Fighters, AC5, armed with short swords and having 6 hit points each.

**The Constables**. The three constables are imprisoned in room 4 of the abbey. They are first level fighters named Vlik Stin, Baler Carbic and Barn Corister with 5, 3 and 6 hit points respectively. They have no armour or weapons, and although willing to help the party if rescued they will all fight at -2 due to the effect of the soporific drug.

**Innocent Bystanders**. The party will encounter most or all of the following around Flaxton. All are human, zero level, and have 3 hit points.

**Ruzo Brid**. Male, aged 35. A happy, friendly man. Ruzo is the Chandler and is a black-haired, full-bearded, peg-legged ex-fisherman.

**Erin Brid**. Female, aged 33. The wife of the above, Erin works as the cook at The Black Squid. She is a short, fat red-head.

**Ori Brid**. Male, aged 15. The son of Ruzo, Ori works as a fisherman in the morning and helps in the store in the afternoon. He is much like his father as a younger man.

**Ferdo Gruzzler**. Male, aged 60. Ferdo owns and runs the general store. He is short, stout and miserly.

**Karmi Gruzzler**. Female, aged 59. The wife of Ferdo, Karmi also works at the store. She is tall, thin and haughty.

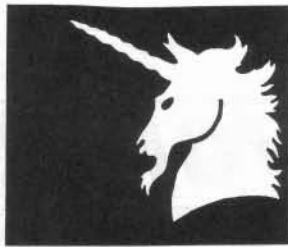
**Dond Skrit**. Male, aged 40. A jolly fellow, Dond is a fisherman by day and the barman of The Black Squid by night.

**Imogen Skrit**. Female, aged 20. The daughter of Dond, Imogen is the evening barmaid at The Black Squid. She is a beautiful flirt, but her father keeps an eye on her.

**Donna Sterin**. Female, aged 25. Donna is chambermaid and day-time barmaid at The Black Squid. She is the daughter of a local fisherman, and is single and rather plain.

In addition to the above, there are about 60 fishermen and their families living in the village. □





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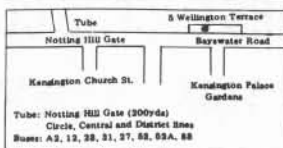
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Killer Penguin



JOHN SHORT

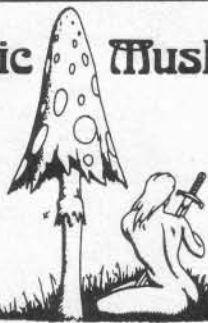
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Dear *WD*,

Although there appears to be some disagreement of late, *WD* reviews are usually quite reasonable in content. Obviously many (or most) people will disagree with the opinions of the reviewer, but there is usually sufficient information included to allow the reader to get a fair idea of what the game is like.

The main thing I want to say about the *Letters Page* is that it should be longer. There are a lot of intelligent, literate people playing games out there in readerland and it is important to create a forum for their views. To David 'D&D is best' Eagles (*WD65*), all I can say is go read *Imagine* (! -Ed). Seriously though, one answer to what he sees as a problem is to feature more 'systemless' articles - possibly less actual scenarios and more ideas that referees can tailor to their own campaigns, for example, and more discursive articles.

The *Traveller* scenario, *Smile Please*, was fun to read, probably fun to write, but could quite possibly suck to play, as these joke scenarios often do.

Finally, *Fiend Factory* should be stopped or hanged immediately. Official and unofficial sources have created thousands of *D&D* monsters, few of which improve the quality of the game. Too many different creatures ruins the 'inner reality' of a world. Present monsters in detail and don't restrict *FF* to *AD&D*.

Yours faithfully,  
Paul Weatherly, Ramsgate.

Dear *WD*,

I am 14 years of age and I have been reading *WD* for the past year and a half, and I really must confess that I've noticed several changes to your magazine which I do not feel are all for the better. Your *Small Ads* and *Newsboard* have increased dramatically and are much more helpful and interesting. *Thrud* gets more side-splitting by the month. However, these are the only improvements that have been made, in my opinion.

*RuneQuest* has been voted *Best RPG* at *Games Day*, yet what does it get from *WD* for its achievement? Less than *AD&D*, and often less than *Traveller*. I even noticed the absence of *RuneRites* in *WD64*. Surely the best game of the year should be treated better? The Superhero games seem to be getting all the credit for the success of *RQ*. Must you remove a good department to make way for every single role-playing game that is released? Next, you'll be scrapping *Fiend Factory* to make way for a column devoted to *Toon*!

That's not all. To sum it up in three words: Wot no *Microview*! Most of my friends who role-play own home computers (including myself). It is supposed to be bi-monthly but seems to have turned bi-yearly! *WD62* and *WD64* should have included a portion of *Microview*. They did not. I should very much like to know the reason for this.

With hope for the future,  
James Badcock, London.

*Our last survey, now completed, has shown a remarkable change in trends. Both Microview and Counterpoint received far from favourable responses and have been discontinued (hence their*

*absence). Similarly, poor old Fiend Factory isn't as popular as it used to be and is going bi-monthly, being open to any system. Its replacement will be a To... (ahem!).*

*In reply to Paul's point about Smile Please, I've had one response along the lines of 'My players almost lynched me at the end of it...' - apparently much fun was had by all. -Ed.*

Dear *WD*,

Please reprint Phil Masters' article on NPCs in Superhero RPGs. I'm sure it is very interesting, but I have no intention of spending several hours ruining my eyesight trying to work out what the text is. You may claim that all of those red spots before the eyes are the result of too many late nights watching the snooker, but I know better.

Yours irritably,  
Pete Tamlyn, Aylesbury.

*And ruin our first Magic Viewer article? Never...! -Ed.*

Dear *WD*,

Instead of having scenarios for one or two game systems, why not have scenario ideas, 'fleshed out' cameos, or scenarios without any stats at all? You could have scenarios for all fantasy, Superhero or science fiction games. Another form of this 'generalisation' can be used in the 'departments' - forget *Treasure Chest*, *Starbase* etc, have fantasy, SF etc. This will make articles more interesting for everyone, thus giving you a larger readership.

You said that *Fiend Factory* will open its mildewed doors to any game system. Have I gone blind...?

I liked *The Dawn of Unlight* - good enough to read without playing it. The plot was very bold if you used *MERP*.

Another *Letters Page* is definitely needed, and people should be encouraged to talk about the hobby, and not just about your magazine.

(Almost) yours,  
Phillip Bacon, Oxford.

Dear *WD*,

The April issue was to my mind the best yet. Two excellent scenarios and two thorough and thought-provoking general interest articles and the start of a SHRPG column. I feel that Marcus Rowland has really surpassed himself this time, and Graham Staplehurst's *Dawn of Unlight* had that rare thing for an *AD&D* plot: Drama and Suspense. Great stuff.

I do think that in recent scenarios,



**CURSES  
FOILED  
AGAIN!**



*Letters Page,*

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however, that there has been an overdose of low-level adventures. Sometimes these have been excellent and contained a wonderful atmosphere, but on other occasions there isn't enough of a challenge or of a well-built plot. I for one feel that the *AD&D*'s aversion to high level adventures is deplorable. High level adventures, if run and designed properly, reflect most accurately the excitement of the Conan and Elric stories, giving more of a purpose to the development of the characters and the campaign world.

Continental greetings,  
Wout Thielemans, Bruges.

Dear *WD*,

I have been reading this magazine since issue 25 and have finally been driven to despair by some of the letters in issue 65. Firstly there was Chris Maltman complaining that 9th level characters have more experience than 8th level ones. This, though being true, is nothing to do with the point that Michael Watkinson brought up in *WD63*. 9th level characters have more experience at killing and pillaging than 8th level ones, not architecture. It doesn't take a great deal of fighting experience to hire an architect and some builders.

Yours sincerely,  
Bruno Giordan, Blackmore, Essex.

Dear *WD*,

I am writing to back up both Nigel Espley (*WD61*) and Christopher Leishman (*WD63*). I read both letters and joined in the universal hatred of the *Dungeons & Dragons* cartoon et al. Then I went to my local games shop and saw... *The Quest for the Dungeon Master* game with the self-same characters that star in the aforementioned cartoon. Then, looking at the scenarios to console myself, my eyes rested on a package entitled *Quest for the Heartstone* and, could that be, no surely not, it is *Strongheart the Paladin*. Crom preserve us. Fleeing from the shop, *WD63* under my arm, I ran all the way home, sat down and armed myself with a cuppa and my favourite magazine. Then, as my weary eyes alighted on *Open Box*, there it was again, *Quest for the Heartstone*. I then fled upstairs, turned on the TV and, without any warning the *Dungeons & Dragons* cartoon was back. Aargh!

Yours,  
Adam Gillogley, Doncaster.

*Adam wins all four D&D Cartoon Show Books for his sob-story! -Ed.*



# PARLOUR GAME

## An Examination of the Arachnid Assassin in AD&D by Stephen Dudley

*Deep in the coolest and most inaccessible of reaches of the caves, hang ranks of neatly-wrapped bodies, whose death-blue faces belie the faint life that still throbs in their hearts. Gems and gold, bright shields and keen axes, glitter in faint glow of the lichens, where they have been built into the tunnel walls. With the faintest of whispers, the hun-*

Fig 1



*dress returns, dragging her shapeless prize beneath her. Her armour glints in the pale light, and her eight eyes shine more brightly than the inedible jewels lining her lair...*

From Shelob to the loathsome monstrosity lurking in the bath, spiders are the very stuff of nightmares, but how often are these fearsome creatures considered 'boring' in game terms, and how rarely do they inspire the awe due to the second most successful creature on the planet? Like man the spider can use and change its habitat to its best advantage – unlike man, the spider has felt little need for major evolutionary change for hundreds of thousands of years. It is, quite simply, a miracle of design. Let us consider its advantages:

Speed for size it can rival, at the sprint, a horse.

Plate armour (unlike mail, providing complete protection) which would make a lord proud to wear.

Complete combat stability, due to low centre of gravity, and multiple legs (try tripping or overbearing a spider!)

A mode of locomotion which retains this stability on the move.

Up to 4 spare legs when at rest!  
Legs highly sensitive to vibration, touch and taste.

Multiple eyes giving wide angle of vision, and near perfect range-finding.

A specialist technological ability which does not have to be learnt by the young spider. (Most are orphans at birth.)

An automatic safety rope, combined with a climbing ability to which there is no natural obstacle.

Immunity to *charm* and *command* spells – does anyone speak 'spiderish'?

Venom which would make an assassin green with envy.

Last, and certainly not least, something to make magic-users sick with frustration: a completely controllable, permanent multi-form web which requires but 1 segment to cast, and needs to be anchored only to the spider. The spider is virtually immune to its own web, and has what amounts to an unlimited supply.

When we consider that this is true of a non-magical, fellow inhabitant of the planet, it is remarkable that the FRP possibilities of this beast are usually so grossly overlooked. Here follows some examples of the awesome capabilities of the spider which DMs, and possibly

Fig 2



referees of other RPGs, might like to bear in mind.

### Spider Silk

This is an incredibly tough protein polymer ejected in liquid form from the spider's spinettes. This hardens immediately on contact with the air to form the distinctive gossamer strands. The silk itself has an incredible tensile strength, and, indeed, this is not merely dependent on the size of the spider: the Asian species, *Nephila* spins a silk that is so tough that natives use it to make fishing nets, yet the female who spins up to 984' of it per day, is only 0.86" in total length, on average. In a milieu of fire-breathing dragons, how much tougher might such silk be?

The varied nozzles on the spinettes (spigots and spools) regulate the size of each strand produced; from a single strong cable to a film of fine strands. To use this varied armoury to best effect, the spider has a claw at the tip of each leg with hairs to guide the silk into it. These hooks allow the silk to be spread out or woven. They also allow the spider

to glide down the silk strand with ease, and enable almost instantaneous braking. The silk can be trailed or gathered in the legs and used to parcel prey. Most strands are not sticky; the sticky strands are formed by a separate spinette, and woven into the strand of silk. The gum oozes out of the centre of these filaments rather like oil in a wire cable, and thus remains effective for a considerable time. The spider does not stick to its own gum because of an oily secretion, with which it covers its legs. Characters might be allowed to discover this for themselves, and avail themselves of a similar organic, fatty coating as a defensive measure when embarking on a spider hunt...

### The Certain Trap

The construction of webs with their amazing silk, is the distinctive trademark of most spiders. Most DMs, rightly enough, discard the idea of using the conventional orb-web on the grounds that it is only effective against aerial creatures, but then forget the many highly serviceable variations which have been sufficiently successful to ensure the survival of the species which developed them.

*Achaeranea Riparia* spins a web solely for crawling morsels, mostly ants, by

Fig 3



joining a very scrappy scaffold web to the ground with highly elastic, tautly stretched wires. These are only weakly attached to the ground, and are coated with an extremely sticky gum. When an insect blunders into this vertical minefield, it becomes stuck fast. Further struggling breaks the weak anchorage of the strands, and the tension whisks the unfortunate tidbit up to the waiting spider (*Figure 1*).

*Atypus*, the purse-web spider, spins a silken tube which hangs out of the end of its vertical burrow. The tube (vaguely resembling a purse) is then camouflaged with detritus, and *Atypus* hangs inside from the ceiling in wait (*Figure 2*). The unwary meal, walking on top of this tube is stabbed through the silk by the long-fanged spider, whose saw-edged fangs are used to slit a hole in the silk, through which the meal is drawn, to be consumed at leisure in the burrow. The silken 'purse' is speedily repaired, ready for the next course.

*Deinopsis*, better-known as the 'Gladiator spider', has distilled the use of a sticky net to entrap prey, to a fine art. It



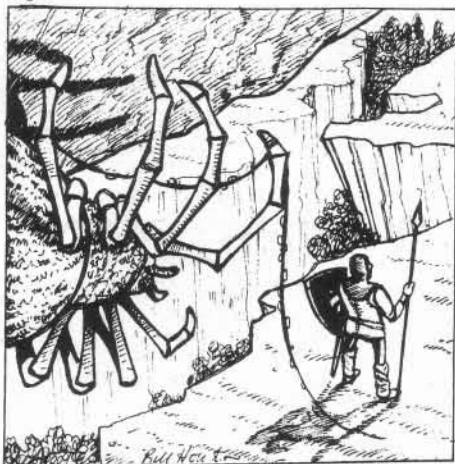
hangs suspended from a minimal web by four legs, holding in the other four a net of highly elastic, and extremely sticky threads. Motionless and unseen, it hangs until a likely target walks underneath, and then straightens out all eight legs, extending the net to several times its original size, and pinning the helplessly trapped prey to the ground, where a swift 'coup de grace' may be administered (Figure 3).

Some African species work together in huge communal webs, hunting in packs and sharing the proceeds. Groups of spiders barely a third of an inch in length have been known to cover several miles of jungle with sheet webs...

The daddy longlegs, *Pholcus*, contents itself with a scant set of almost invisible trip/warning lines, while the fearsome *Drassoles* does not spin a web at all, but trails a sticky straightjacket of strands over the legs of its prey. The enemy thus impeded, one quick envenomed stab, and 'bon appetit!'

Two spiders put their silk and gum to even stranger use; the bolas spider and the spitting spider. The bolas or 'angler' spider swings a short length of gum-coated silk. Anything which touches it immediately becomes stuck fast, and the spider reels it in (Figure 4). Particularly large or strong catches are 'played

Fig 4



in' to exhaustion before the spider will tackle them.

The spitting spider stalks within range and then sprays a stream of gum through its fangs, the oscillation of which throws the gum in a zig-zag pattern over the hapless entrée, and the slow-limbed spider ambles over to dine.

Then there is *Ummidia Nidicoleus*: imagine, if you will, a party of hardy and avaricious adventurers; imagine too their elation at the discovery of a well-concealed subterranean entrance leading to a smooth and well-constructed tunnel which continues for some distance before turning a corner. On turning that corner, imagine their surprise at seeing a large trapdoor spider scurrying out of a concealed niche, and blocking their exit!

**Of Love and Death...**

It is a myth that the female eats the male after mating; if the male is not careful, the female simply eats him...

Out of this stormy relationship are born a multitude of tiny eggs, which the female carefully wraps in silk, and hangs

in a safe place. When the spiderlings eventually hatch, they are exactly like their parents in all but size. From hatchling to adult may require up to six total moultings of the carapace, the spider's armour-like outer casing. A sharp rise in blood pressure splits the casing just below the eyes, and the spider embarks on the long and dangerous process of climbing out of its old skin. It is during this time, when the spider is completely helpless, suspended in a safe place, that the most hardy alchemist and assassin suppliers engage in the extremely perilous, but highly lucrative process of 'tapping' - milking the live spiders of their venom. To be obtained in high concentrations, and in the purest possible state, this venom must be drawn from still living creatures. Just after moulting the spider is at its most vulnerable, and this is the stage where the suppliers attempt to kill the spiders causing the least possible damage in order to obtain not only the whole organs, but also to get at the silk glands. Parts of spiders are used in the enchantment of all items of climbing, and those to do with poison. Spider silk is used in the construction of magical rope, and woven into such rare tapestries as are destined to become enchanted as flying carpets (because of its relative lightness for its strength). Spider's eggs are much prized as narcotic bases for philtres and charms, while phase spider silk is used in the weaving of *Bags of Holding* and similar items. Only the most perfect organs and strands of silk may be used for the purpose of enchantment. (Some spider eggs may be sold for hatching - spiders make excellent area guards if properly contained.)

Spider venom may of two kinds; paralysing, or lethal. Since spiders have no chewing mouthparts they can inject only liquid food - which they prefer warm and pumped by a beating heart. They will thus store living creatures for later consumption if they can't deal with them immediately. When hunting for food they will tend to paralyse and wrap their prey, but if threatened, or greatly outclassed by their prospective supper, will not hesitate to kill outright. Characters save vs paralysis at +1, and once paralysed and stored in the larder may check again every six turns, but at -1 per failure (cumulative). Even if such characters do wake up, they will find themselves firmly wrapped up, and sus-

ended safely away from marauding predators...

A *neutralise poison* spell, followed by a *cure light wounds* will usually be required to help any character formerly belonging to a spider's larder overcome their feelings of cramp and nausea.

The web is clearly the spider's potentially most powerful weapon. Some guidelines for bringing it into play with its proper effectiveness follow - these will help make the humble spider a more formidable opponent.

Allow the spider a base of 50% chance to web a target and modify this as follows:

Spider is smaller than ¼ size of target	-25%
Spider is ½ size of target	-15%
Spider is ⅓ size of target	-5%
Spider is ½ size of target	+15%
Spider is equal in size to target	+15%
Spider is greater in size than target	+25%
Target is also target of bite attack	+15%
Per point of target's DEX above 14	-5%
Target 'held'	+20%
Target already webbed in thrown silk (per cast)	+10%
Target ensnared in full web	+45%
Target encumbered or in narrow area	+15%
Target <i>hasted</i> or high movement rate	-15%

If a spider's cast misses then nearby characters must roll less than their DEX on 4d6 to avoid being caught in the overshooting silk.

To break out of a web, compare the Strength of the victim with the type of web ensnaring him on Table 1 to find the time in rounds to break free.

Table 1 refers only to individuals breaking free alone. With help and weapons the time to cut free is considerably lessened. It is next to impossible for the webbed individual to bring his own weapons to bear and therefore escape is based on pure strength.

Spiders may cast once per round, but their silk casting attack should always have initiative, unless they are completely surprised.

The table is for spiders which are about half the size of the target - adjust strength class up or down by one place per class difference as appropriate.

The DM has an incredibly frightening weapon in the varied capabilities and tactics of the spiders. He should not merely use spiders for stamping on to make up a level!

**Table 1**

Victim's Strength	Time to Break Free (Rounds)		
	Full Web	Thrown Silk*	Parcelling Silk
1-6	**	1d20	**
7-11	**	1d10	**
12-15	**	1d8	3d20
16-17	3d20	1d6	2d20
18	2d20	1d4	1d20
18(01-75)	1d20	1-3	1d10
18(76-99)	1d10	1-2	1d6
18(00)	1d6	1-6 segments	1d4
19+	1d4	1-2 segments	1

\*For the first three successful casts, the target moves to the next lowest Strength category. After this, the target is considered parcelled.

\*\*Not possible.

**Further Reading**

*The World of Spiders* - W S Bristowe. An invaluable, seminal work on the subject, particularly his habits.

*Killers of the Wild* - Michael Chinery. The best general work on all manner of predators and predation, from piracy of the vulture to wolfpack or pride of lions. Invaluable for the DM wishing to give supposedly mundane encounters some realism and spice. Sensationalist and superb.

*Web* - John Wyndham. Brilliant, less famous novel of the *Kraken* and *Triffid* master, some ecological hints for dungeon designers. □



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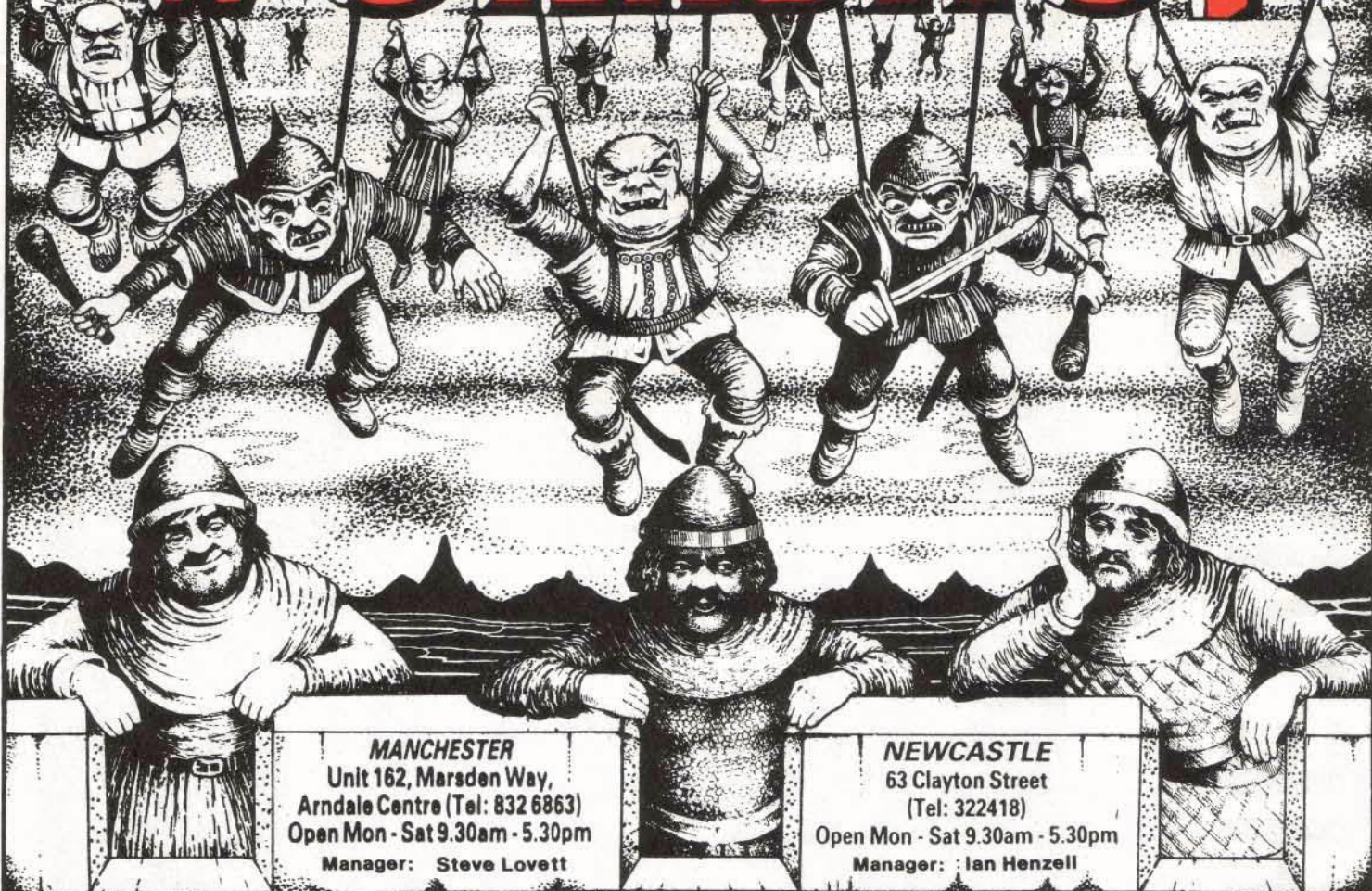
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# THE VIVIMANCER

Spiritual Helpers for AD&D by Steve Palmer



Vivimancers are created from high level characters at the time of their death by a patron deity on the NG plane of Elysium. Their prime object is to aid goodly characters in their struggle against evil. They can operate on all planes except the Prime Material Plane, which is forever barred to them. The nature of the Vivimancer ensures an inimical attitude to undead, devils and demons, but especially Necromancers. Vivimancers are spiritual forms but retain physical appearance, characteristic scores (of which INT must be 17+ and WIS 15+) and weapon proficiency from their original incarnation, but start at first level. For

every fifty years of existence they increase one level, to a maximum of fifteen. After 750 years, or if they are killed, the spirit leaves the body and goes to the plane it would have when the original incarnation died. Each patron deity may only have one Vivimancer at a time.

In combat and for saving throws, Vivimancers are equivalent to Clerics. They are NG, have eleven hit dice, a natural armour class of two (DEX can modify) and may only be hit by +1 or better weapons. Additionally, they have a 50% magic resistance and a detect invisibility chance of 50% +1% per level. The only magic items they may use are weapons

and *Roses* (qv). The moon is of special significance; Vivimancer abilities are tied in to its phase and the crescent moon is their personal symbol.

Most Vivimancers undertake their work as discreetly as possible. Favoured characters (especially those worshipping the patron deity) may receive a *Rose*. In the Elysium home of a Vivimancer it is usual to find a well-stocked library, for they are hoarders of information. These homes are typically large, temple-like structures, surrounded by gardens full of the scent of roses. Within the boundaries of the garden, it will always appear be summer, and the



therapeutic properties *triple* the usual rate of healing of characters staying there.

**Abilities**

All Vivimancers have the following innate abilities:

1. Immunity to all the powers of undead creatures.
2. Telepathic communication with the patron deity.
3. Automatic recognition of other Vivimancers.
4. Knowledge of a creature's or object's alignment unless masked by magic, etc.
5. Turn undead as the following table:

Level of Vivimancer	Equivalent Clerical Level
1-3	6
4-6	7
7-9	8
10-12	9-13
13-15	14+

6. Morphetic Counsel. The ability to give a prophetic or advisory dream to any character on the Prime Material Plane during the period of a crescent moon. The dream is typically accompanied by an overpowering fragrance of roses.

7. Manufacture Rose. A *Rose* is a special magical gem, roseate in shape and about three centimetres in diameter. It glows with a strong light which varies in colour according to the moon's phase – pink at the new moon, through to yellow at the full moon. A *Rose* is usually implanted into the upper arm of the chosen person so that the glow is faintly visible, although especially favoured characters may be allowed to wear a *Rose* on their forehead – this increases CHA by 1d4 (to 18 maximum). A Vivimancer may make one *Rose* for every fifty years of his existence. There are six types:

**Rose of Reincarnation.** Automatically *reincarnates* its wearer three times before losing its magic. Once the initial reincarnation has been made (as acquired ability), the subsequent ones will be exactly the same.

**Rose of Raising.** Automatically *raises* its owner up to three times before losing its magic. One point of CON is lost after the first raising.

**Rose of Plane Locking.** The bearer can resist any non-deitic plane shifting up to five times. Voluntary plane travelling is still permitted.

**Rose of Healing.** This will *heal* its possessor five times, as desired, before losing its potency.

**Rose of Mind Reading.** Duplicates the Vivimancer ability of Mind Reading for five one-hour periods, at the owner's wish.

**Rose of Restoration.** Restores energy levels lost by its owner. The level returns 1-4 hours later and protection is given for five such attacks.

A *Rose* used to its full extent becomes a gem of 4-7000gp value.

**Acquired Abilities**

The following abilities can be selected by a Vivimancer each time he attains a new level. Each one is usable once per day and can be selected only once. They require the patron deity's holy symbol and a crescent moon symbol on the Vivimancer's person in order to be performed.

**Table 1: Number of Abilities per Level**

Level Of Vivimancer	1	2	3	4
1	1	–	–	–
2	2	–	–	–
3	3	–	–	–
4	3	1	–	–
5	3	2	–	–
6	4	2	–	–
7	4	2	1	–
8	5	3	1	–
9	5	3	2	–
10	5	3	2	1
11	6	4	2	1
12	6	4	3	2
13	6	5	4	2
14	7	6	4	3
15	7	7	5	3

**Level 1 Abilities**

**Charm Undead.** Allows the Vivimancer to charm undead (as *charm person*) for 2-12 turns (1-4 turns if a vampire or ghost, 1-8 rounds if a lich).

**Communication.** Enables the Vivimancer to speak and understand any language, no matter how obscure, for one turn per level.

**Cure Disease.** The Vivimancer can cure any form of disease, even leprosy. The patient can resume normal activities after one hour's rest.

**Curing Touch.** By laying his hands on the injured person, 3-12 points of damage can be cured by the Vivimancer.

**Mind Reading.** Similar to ESP, but allows deeper, hidden thoughts to become available to the Vivimancer. Communication must also be used to understand unknown languages. Psionics with *mind bar* can avoid this, and the inherent alignment knowledge of the Vivimancer.

**Return to Adjacent Plane.** Enables one person per level of the Vivimancer, plus the Vivimancer, to travel instantaneously to any adjacent plane bar the Astral, Ethereal and Prime Material planes. The point of arrival can be chosen by the Vivimancer.

**Return to Elysium.** Allows the Vivimancer (only) to return to any point on Elysium.

**Teleport Self.** The Vivimancer may teleport himself, no error, to any point on the plane he is currently on.

**Level 2 Abilities**

**Charm Dead.** Enables dead spirits, animated bodies, etc, to be charmed as the charm person spell. From 1-10 such dead can be charmed, although each is entitled to a save vs magic.

**Cure Blindness.** By touching the victim's eyes, the Vivimancer can cure any blindness, however caused.

**Neutralise Poison.** At a touch, the Vivimancer can neutralise all forms of poison or remove harmful or addictive drugs from a victim's system.

**Polymorph Self.** As the MU spell, except that the form is still spiritual and the Vivimancer keeps special abilities.

**Renewing Touch.** Cures 4-24 points of damage when the Vivimancer lays his hands on the victim.

**Return to Inner Plane.** The Vivimancer, plus one person per level, may travel instantaneously to any of the inner planes, except the Astral, Ethereal and Prime Material planes, from any other plane. The arrival point is at the

DM's discretion.

**Return to Outer Plane.** As for the above ability, except any outer plane can be the destination.

**Teleport Other.** As Teleport Self except others may be teleported. One extra person can be teleported for each additional level of the Vivimancer above fourth.

**Level 3 Abilities**

**Cure Insanity.** The Vivimancer may cure any form of insanity, but cannot alter personality traits (greed, ruthlessness, etc). Psionically induced insanity is only cured temporarily.

**Healing Touch.** Touching the wounded person restores all but 1d6 hit points in 3-6 rounds.

**Polymorph Others.** As the 4th level MU spell.

**Raise Undead.** Similar to the Clerical spell; the recipient can have been dead for a number of days equal to twice the Vivimancer's level. 1-2 days complete rest are required of the raised person.

**Return to Astral Plane.** One recipient plus the Vivimancer can enter the Astral plane from any other at a selected point. Each level above seventh allows the Vivimancer to take one extra person.

**Return to Ethereal Plane.** As above, except that the Ethereal plane can be entered. The Ether Cyclone is always avoided by this method.

**Level 4 Abilities**

**Deitic Word.** On uttering this word, the Vivimancer may cause one of four effects:

- (a) Waves of pain, preventing the victim from performing anything arduous for 1-10 turns, or
- (b) *Slow* (as spell) for 1-8 turns, or
- (c) Paralysis for 1-4 turns, or
- (d) Unconsciousness for 1-2 turns.

There is no save against Deitic Word, and it affects everyone within hearing range: Vivimancers and deities are immune.

**Reincarnate.** As the spell of the same name, but the following table is used to determine the outcome (roll d100):

01-05	Gnome
06-10	Dwarf
11-15	Halfling
16-20	Raven
21-25	Owl (25% giant owl)
26-30	Eagle
31-40	Human
41-50	Half elf
51-60	Elf
61-70	Centaur
71-80	Horse
81-85	Fox
86-90	Good Dragon (4HD)
91-100	Patron deity's animal (if none, roll again)

**Resurrection.** As the Clerical spell, except there is an additional 10% survival chance. The subject can have been dead for a number of years equal to the Vivimancer's level x 20.

**Return to Prime Material Plane.** Enables the Vivimancer to send one person per level to any desired place on the Prime Material Plane, although the Vivimancer may never himself venture onto this plane.

**Note.** The scent of roses typically accompanies the curative and healing powers outlined above. □



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Tabletop Heroes is a regular feature covering aspects of figure modelling, by Joe Dever.

# THE MAGIC FRAME

## The Low-Down on Close-Up Photography Part One: Equipment

Many readers have asked for advice on how to take photographs of their figures without the need for expensive equipment. This issue, therefore, I will be covering the basic equipment you need for the job and in next month's *TTH* I shall be showing you how to use it and how to avoid the many pitfalls of close-up photography.

### The Camera

The 35mm single lens reflex camera (SLR) is ideally suited for the task. Starting at around £40 second-hand, they have useful features such as interchangeable lenses and a built-in light meter [typically through-the-lens (TTL)]. Understanding how to use your camera is important and will only come through practice. The features we require are slow shutter speeds (2 seconds or longer) and small lens apertures (f16 or f22) as opposed to the fast shutter speeds and maximum apertures vaunted by manufacturers.

The standard 50mm lens supplied with the camera is quite adequate for model photography and, when used with extension tubes, gives a performance comparable to purpose-made close-up lenses. Extension tubes don't suffer from the same problems as add-on close-up lenses which generally soften detail and have optical imperfections.

### Accessories

The long exposure times used in model photography require the camera to be well supported to prevent a blurred picture due to 'camera shake'. A tripod and cable shutter release are good investments here and a medium-weight tripod with adjustable legs and centre column makes an ideal all-purpose support. Cheaper, light-weight tripods are much more subject to vibration.

*A selection of the latest releases in Citadel's Lord of the Rings range. Photos by Richard Harcourt.*

### Lighting

Effective lighting is surprisingly cheap: two angle-poise lamps (*Habitat* work-lamps are ideal), some photographic bulbs (photofloods) and some white cards to use as reflectors are all you need. Flash has its limitations if used as the sole source of illumination, although there are two methods of avoiding the problems which I shall cover in *Part Two*.

Direct lighting can produce unwanted glare but this can be easily overcome by diffusing the light through a screen of greaseproof paper.

### Film

The type of film that you load into your camera will have a marked effect on the quality of your photographs. In model photography we require a film that will capture fine detail and 'slow' films are ideal for this purpose. The speed of a film is denoted by its ASA number and the films we require have an ASA of between 20 and 75. Into this bracket fall the following: Colour Print - *Agfacolor CNS-2* (ASA80), *Kodak VR100* (ASA100), *Vericolour II Tungsten* (ASA80); Colour Transparencies - *Agfachrome 64* (ASA64), *Kodal Ektachrome 64* (ASA64), *Kodachrome II Type A Tungsten* (ASA40); Black and White Prints - *Ilford Pan F* (ASA50), *Kodak Panatomic X* (ASA32), all of which are recommended.

Daylight colour films are designed for use in natural lighting and under artificial light (photofloods) you will need a correction filter (Blue 80A) to compensate for the 'yellow cast' of artificial lighting. Tungsten films are specifically designed for use in artificial light.

### Props

Finally, you need some scenic accessories to make the background of your photographs more appealing. Coloured

background papers are effective, cheap and readily available, but avoid light colours or white since they will give a false reading to cameras with TTL metering. The most suitable colours are dark blue, sky blue, light green or black. Good quality photographs of landscapes provide an alternative to one-colour backgrounds but require some foreground dressing to make the scene convincing. Coloured scenic flock, as used by railway modelers, can be used to cover a figure's base and link the foreground with the photographic background. Lichen, twigs, small stones and pebbles, sand and even salt (for snow) can form the basic ingredients of your 'props box' with which you can make attractive settings for your models.

### Equipment Checklist

- 35mm SLR Camera (preferably with TTL metering)
- 50mm Lens (smallest aperture f16 to f22)
- Extension Tube Set
- Tripod (preferably with tilt/pan head)
- Flashgun
- Cable Shutter Release
- 2x Angle-Poise Lamps
- 2x Photoflood Bulbs (try 75W Philips E27s)
- A4 size White Cards (as reflectors)
- Greaseproof Paper (for diffusing light)
- Colour/Black and White Film (slow to medium speed)
- Conversion Filter (Blue 80A for daylight film)
- Coloured Backing Papers
- Frame (to support backing papers)
- Scenic Background Photographs (from brochures, books, etc)
- Scenic Flock (fine grain grey, brown and green)
- Set Dressing (lichen, twigs, pebbles etc)
- Brush and Tweezers (for dusting figures and removing fluff)





**This Month's Pics**

*Fig 1*, shows the incredible *Sven* (star of stage, screen and *Warhammer* scenario!) and a *Citadel Elf* fighter, both painted by Tony Dynarowski. It's interesting to note that although both were finished in the same paints (*Humbrol* enamels), *Sven* appears much brighter to the eye due to his green/yellow base.

The *Jabberwock* featured in *Fig 2*, is one of two variants of this mythical monster currently available from *Citadel*. This one was assembled, painted and based by Jackie Hands, and won her a first prize in the recent *Citadel Open Day* painting competition.

In *Fig 3*, we see a magnificent *Giant Troll* (*Asgard Miniatures*), painted and based by its designer Nick Bibby. Nick achieved the subtle shading and toning of his figure by applying a wash of drawing ink to the basic undercoat, and I hope to examine this technique in greater detail in a future *TTH* feature.

*Fig 4*: Relaxing on the throne of *Barad-dur*, we see *Sauron the Dark Lord* (*ME61*), mega-baddie of the *Citadel Lord of the Rings* range. 'Ol' Big Eye' is supplied in kit form with the whole model standing some 60mm high.

In *Fig 5*, we witness the latest Law vs Chaos diorama by the staff at *Citadel Miniatures*. It features the handiwork of John Blanche, Dave Andrews and Tony Ackland, who claim to have 'knocked it together during a lunch break'. Further examples of their midday modelling, together with some useful painting tips, can be seen in the latest *Citadel Journal* (priced £1.50). □

Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5

Photographs by Joe Dever





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Treasure Chest is a regular column for readers' ideas on AD&D.

# TRAVELLING LIGHT

## Useful Backpacks for AD&D

### BARANTHUM'S BACKPACKS

by Russell May

Baranthum was a powerful Magic-User whose quest for knowledge took him on many an interesting and dangerous adventure. On his travels, he liked to keep in touch with his friends, and also found a need to return the many invaluable items he collected to a safe place. In the later part of his life he fabricated three sets of backpacks to help solve these problems. Although Baranthum has long since passed away, the backpacks still exist and appear from time to time carried by various owners.

#### Common Features

There are two backpacks in each set. They are made from tough brown leather and on each there is a silver 'B' stitched onto the top of the backpack flap. Although the same size as a normal backpack, they are heavier (25gp encumbrance). Each pack is lined with a soft, sparkling black material, the special property of which is to teleport items placed within the pack. The magical nature of each pack causes it to save as leather +3.

#### Messenger Packs

Indistinguishable from each other, these two packs can be identified by platinum buckles and a small pouch on one side. Inside there are two compartments of equal size, separated by a central division. Any item placed in the front compartment will disappear at the rate of 1-4 items per hour: these items reappear in the front compartment of the companion pack wherever it may be. If a pack is bought, it will be empty on purchase, but if found, the front compartment will contain 1-10 random items. Used primarily

for sending written messages, the side pouch is 50% likely to contain quill, ink and parchment.

#### Transfer and Receiver Packs

The *Transfer Pack* is indented by a 'T' embroidered by the 'B' on the top flap: the *Receiver Pack* by an 'R'. Both have silver buckles. Items placed in the *Transfer Pack* disappear at a rate of 1-4 per hour, reappearing in the *Receiver Pack*: if found, the *Receiver Pack* will contain from 1-10 random items. Baranthum typically left the *Receiver Pack* at home so that large, valuable items could be returned safely. The *Transfer Pack* will always be empty when found.

#### Switch Packs

Distinguished from the others by their electrum buckles, these were used by Baranthum for the speedy transfer of items between people whilst adventuring. When found they will contain 1-10 items 50% of the time. Any item placed within either of the packs will remain for at least two hours. Thereafter, everything in the pack will disappear, causing the pack to become noticeably lighter and limp. These items will rematerialise in the other *Switch Pack* (but will obviously return again, unless removed!).

#### Notes

The DM should decide where to place the packs and whether or not the companion pack is currently owned by someone else. Correspondence with an unknown person or creature could prove interesting and there are a number of adventures to be developed out of ownership of a pack. What if a merchant innocently sells the *Transfer*

*Pack* whilst retaining the *Receiver Pack*? Or perhaps a party needs a specific item from their pack and find, at the crucial moment, that it is no longer there!

### STARTING EQUIPMENT

by Stephen Bland

Newcomers to AD&D may be rather bewildered when faced with the extensive equipment lists in the *Players Handbook*. The following 'standard issue' equipment should prove useful for anyone still in a quandry over what they should spend their starting money on.

#### Containers

Backpack; small iron box – in backpack (this is useful for small but valuable objects, for important scrolls that will not be needed in a hurry and such items as a *Scarab of Death* – see DMG); Belt – around waist; 4 flasks – attached to belt; and 2 pouchbelts – attached to belt.

**Flasks.** 2 of oil; 1 of water and 1 of good wine (for bribery).

**Small Iron Box.** As well as the uses outlined above this should contain pen and paper for writing down inscriptions and a sharpening stone and sand in case your nasty DM decides that attack on the iron golem blunted your sword.

**Pouchbelt A.** 2 buds of garlic – one of the anti-vampire materials; 2 sprigs of belladonna – useful against lycanthropy; a bag of flour – thrown over an *invisible* opponent it will negate *invisibility*; ¼lb of salt – useful against giant leeches; 2 holy wafers – must be put in a vampire's cut-off head to insure permanent death (together with a stake through the heart), and various worthless but gaudy gems and trinkets – to bribe low intelligence monsters.

**Pouchbelt B.** 20 spikes – can be used to climb up walls and as a distraction for rust monsters while armour is frantically removed; 1 grapnel – to be used not only in order to get a rope over to the other side of an obstacle but also as a method of pulling tripwires at a safe distance; and a tinderbox with flints and steel.

**Belt.** Padded gloves – can be used to negate poison and electrical attacks but their bulk makes it impossible to do fiddly jobs like opening locks or removing traps with them; and a club – for beating rust monsters to death!

**Backpack (Outside).** Attached to the left side are three torches and a 1' long hollow tube which can be used to breathe underwater. Attached to the right side is 50' of rope – this can be fixed onto more rope and/or the grapple; also on the outside of the backpack will be rods, staves and wands, so placed as to be reached easily from over the shoulder like an arrow from a quiver.

**Backpack (Inside).** Iron rations for one week; most magic items (unless otherwise stated on the character sheet or obviously in a different location).

**Other standard items.** High, hard boots – on feet; robe/cassock – torso; noseplugs – on string around neck – useful against poison gas; earplugs – on string around neck – useful against banshee wails.

The *total cost* of the standard equipment list is 25gp and its approximate weight is 75gp. Added to this, each character must buy a weapon and appropriate armour and shield. □





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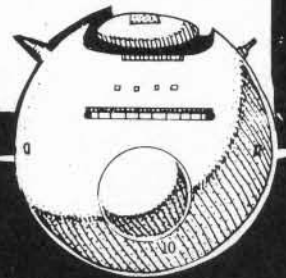
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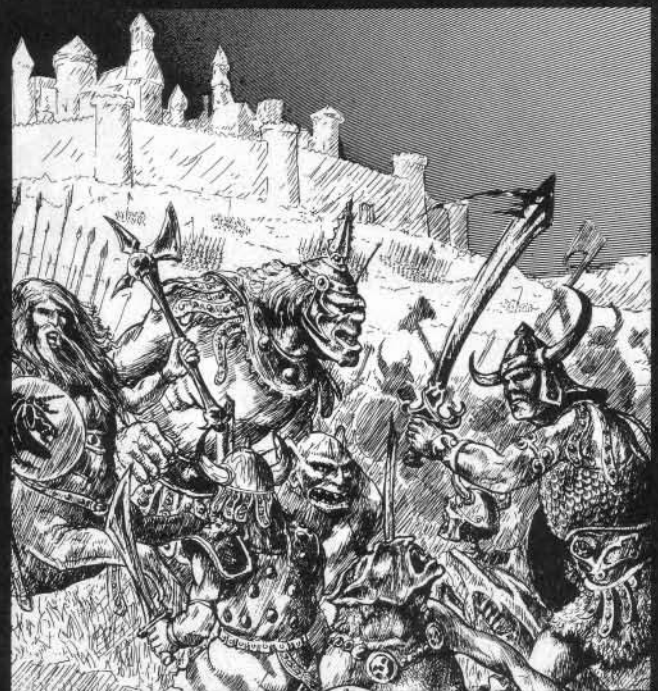
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A monthly market has just begun in Covent Garden's Jubilee Hall, devoted entirely to 'old printeds': old and rare books, prints, maps, comics, magazines, etc. We are considering having a fantasy section in the market so that role-players can buy and sell second-hand games, zines, figures and related material.

Stalls can be rented by individuals or by two or more people sharing a stand. The next two dates are Sunday 7th July and Sunday 4th August. Full details are available from 7 Park Road, Totnes, TQ9 6EF - or you can talk to us at the market itself - or ☎ (0803) 865381 for last-minute stands. Jubilee Hall is right in the Covent Garden piazza itself, above the crafts market. (Three minutes walk down from Covent Garden underground.)

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HELP!

Clubs, contacts and events can be advertised once at no charge up to a maximum of 25 words. Further insertions at the rate of 15p per word (incl VAT).

**RPG Cardiff.** DM needs players for AD&D campaign. If you want to play other games then come along and discuss it, especially if prepared to GM. Contact: William Valance, 9 Colchester Ave, Penylan, Cardiff.

**Wanted Desperately.** WD35 & 36. No (un)reasonable offers refused. Robert MacKenzie, 4 Church Ave, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4JS.

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**14 Year Old** fanzine editor (plays Companion D&D) seeks penfriend who plays Basic/Expert D&D. RQ, Traveller, CW. Jonathan Almond, 12 War Drive, Chelmsford, Essex.

**Newbury.** Are there any clubs in the area which play T&T or RQ? Also penpal wanted. I am 14 and play T&T and am a beginner at RQ. Tony Byrne, Enborne Lodge School, Essex Street, Wash Common, Newbury, Berks RG14 6RL.

**TROLLPAK.** Wanted really urgently. John, ☎ (041) 772 6813 (after 4.30pm).

**Correspondence Invited.** 15 yr old non-role-player seeks correspondence with people of all ages outside the United States. Interests include photography, DX/shortwave radio, letter writing, cats and travel. I'll answer all letters. Daniel Dwyer, 6 Heather Lane, Walpole, MA 02081-3616, USA.

**Is There** anyone else out there who wargames fantasy or space, etc, using 54mm scale figures. I would like to hear from you to exchange information and ideas. Researcher, 65 Walton Court, Woking, Surrey GU21 5EE.

**Matthew Rushton.** Rukin, hobbit extraordinaire, seeks revenge on Silenjax, dwarfen scum. May your beard grow lice and wither, you disgusting relation to Jock the American.

**Grimlord Editor!** Please get in touch, I've lost your address. Philip Page, 21 Addington St, Ramsgate, Kent.

**Chronicle Miniatures** figure catalogues wanted. Any reasonable offer considered. Also, any characters in Trowbridge, Wilts area need an Assassin, then Phelot's your man. Martin, ☎ Trow 68034 (Wed. Only 5pm+). Write: 18 Lydiard Way, Trow.

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**Help!** 14 yr old AD&D/D&D and Traveller player seeks others of either sex, own age. Contact: John Golding, Ackworth Schl, Ackworth WF7 7LT.

**Insane,** experienced DM/player seeks CoC, RQ, D&D, SF players to start club in Hadleigh/Ipswich area. Contact: Simon Price, 24 Cotterferd Close, Hadleigh, Ipswich.

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**Help!** 16 yr old male AD&D DM wants to exchange ideas. Module swapping possible. Contact: Jukka Mäntyjärvi, Hiiltäjäntie 7 A 5, 70200 Kuopio 20, Finland.

**Urgently Required.** DragonQuest (2nd edition), reasonable price paid. Contact: Steve White, 7 Atkinson Street, Harle Syke, Burnley, Lancs BB10 2JE.

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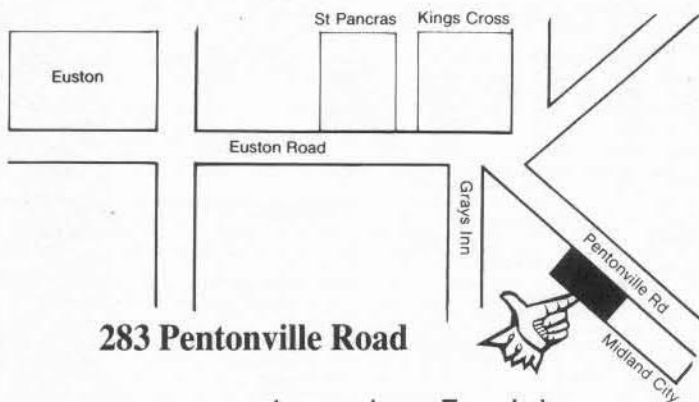
**Moonquest.** Impecunious gamer seeks original Glorantha source books, Borderlands, Trollpak, etc, not necessarily in good condition if legible. O'Neill, Hetherington House, Lower Argyll Road, Exeter.

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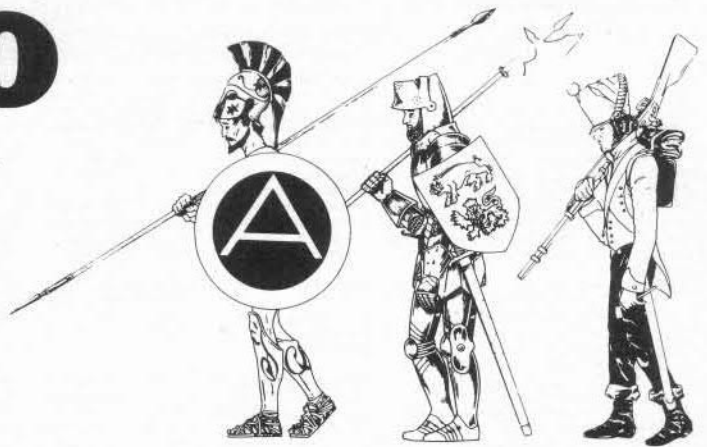


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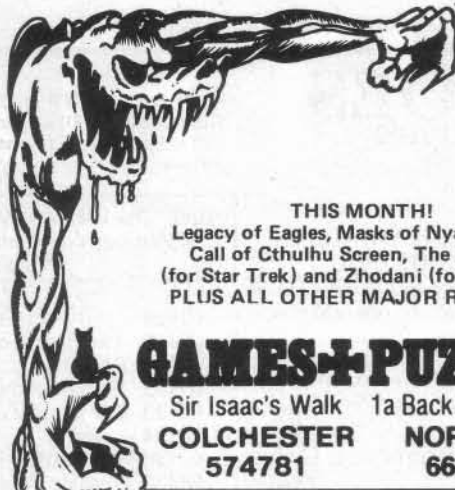
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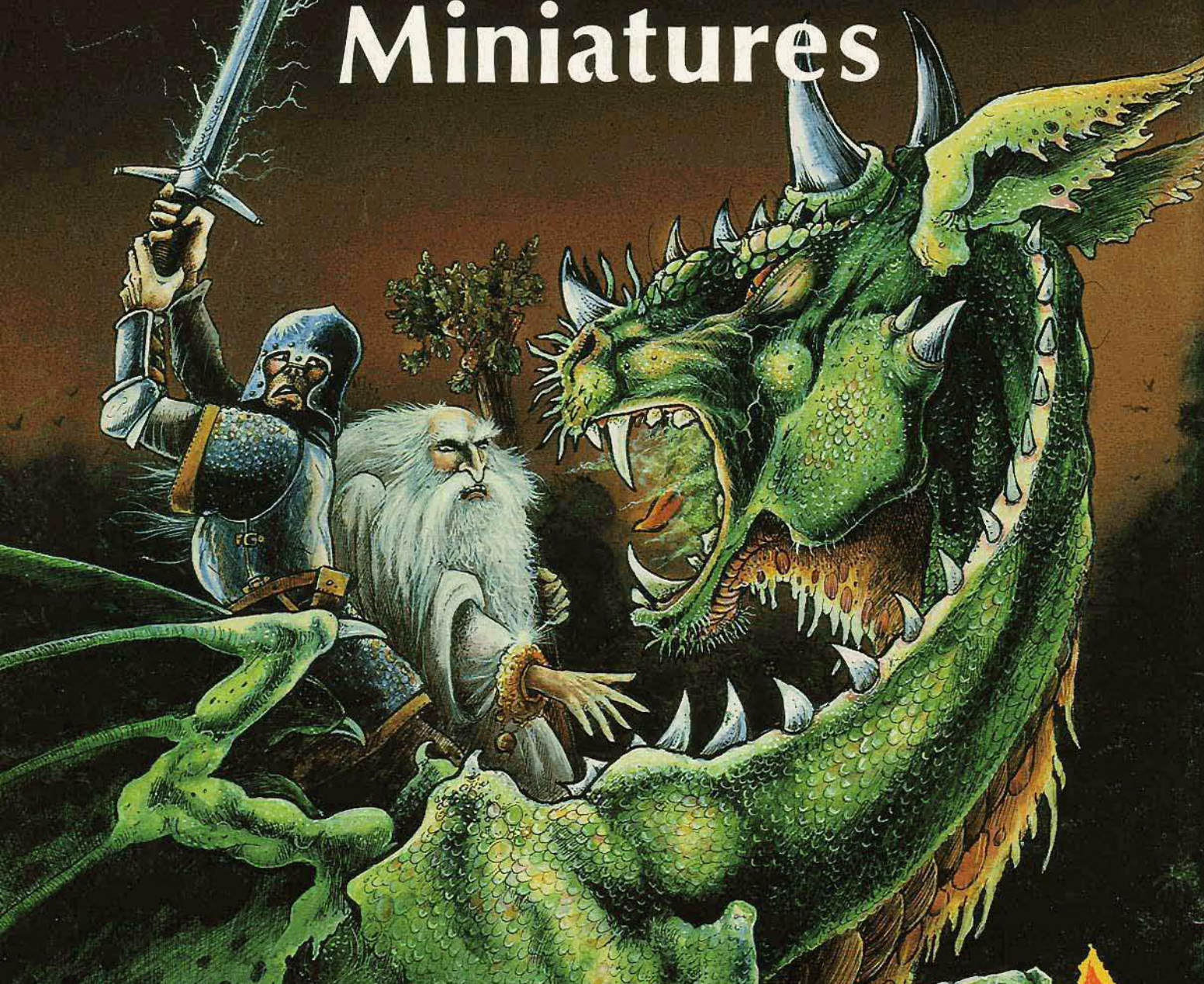
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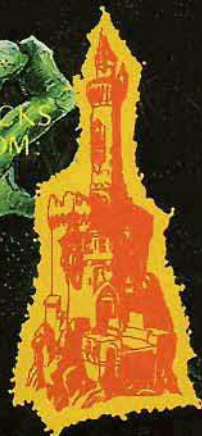


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