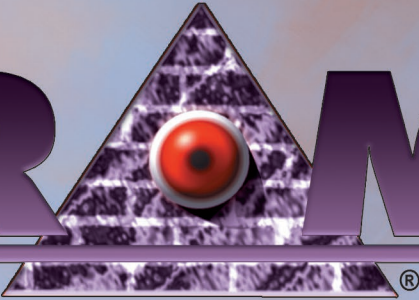


PYRAMID[®]



Issue 3/95 September '16

OVERLAND ADVENTURES



THE EMERALD HELL
by Timothy Ponce

MONSTER CARAVAN
by David L. Pulver

LOW-TECH TRANSPORTATION
by Christopher R. Rice

THE VILLAGE GREEN
by Jon Black

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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CONTENTS

FROM THE EDITOR 3

THE EMERALD HELL 4
by Timothy Ponce

LOW-TECH TRANSPORTATION 13
by Christopher R. Rice

EIDETIC MEMORY: MONSTER CARAVAN 21
by David L. Pulver

THE VILLAGE GREEN 30
by Jon Black

RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE:
KEEPING REINS ON THE WILDS 37
by Steven Marsh, Pyramid Editor

ABOUT GURPS 39

IN THIS ISSUE

Some people take “Get lost!” as an insult. Heroes take it as a challenge to find adventure! This issue of *Pyramid* is devoted to various aspects of overland adventuring in low-tech settings.

Heroes often feel ready for anything, but are they truly prepared to survive if they find themselves in *The Emerald Hell*? This mini-supplement brings jungles to life in your **GURPS** campaign. Learn about travel within a rain forest, survival therein, and dangers waiting to claim the lives of the unwary. It even includes ideas for how to get explorers into the thick of this verdant wilderness.

Trade seems like an easy way to make a lot of money in a low-tech world, until you start running the numbers involved with *Low-Tech Transportation*. Christopher R. Rice – co-author of **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 19: Incantation Magic** – breaks it all down for you to show you exactly how much money and supplies it takes to haul cargo long distances via various methods, including transport by cart, ship, or horse.

If you travel the roads of a fantasy world, watch out for the *Monster Caravan*. This month’s Eidetic Memory offering from **GURPS Banestorm: Abydos** author David L. Pulver details a ready-to-use group of enterprising creatures bringing their ill-gotten goods with them on the road. Discover 10 different inhabitants of the caravan (complete with **GURPS** stats) and the full contents of its five-car train.

Not every encounter along the winding path is waiting to kill you; sometimes you find yourself standing in tranquil contentment amid *The Village Green*. Learn about what makes a village, who and what can be found there, and how these kinds of settlements may vary between different tech levels.

This issue also features a Random Thought Table that offers some ideas for how to keep control over the seemingly infinite expanse of wilderness open to heroes. With this installment of *Pyramid*, the larger world suddenly became both more inviting and more dangerous . . . and it’s never been a better time to *get lost!*

ARTICLE COLORS

Each article is color-coded to help you find your favorite sections.

Pale Blue: In This Issue

Brown: In Every Issue

Green: Columnist

Dark Blue: **GURPS** Features

Purple: Systemless Features

COVER

Abrar Ajmal

There is no place to go, and so we travel! You and I, and what for, just to imagine that we could go somewhere else.

– Edward Dahlberg

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FROM THE EDITOR

THE CALL OF THE GREAT OUTDOORS

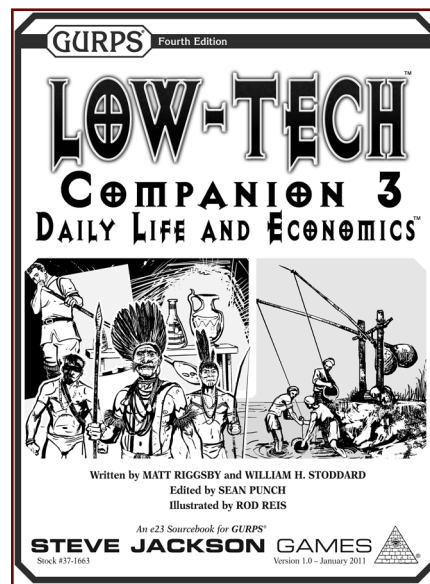
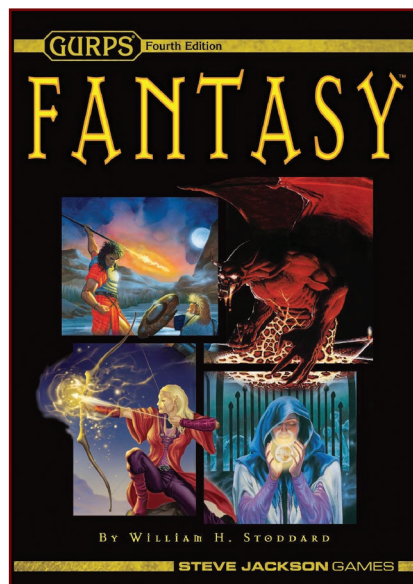
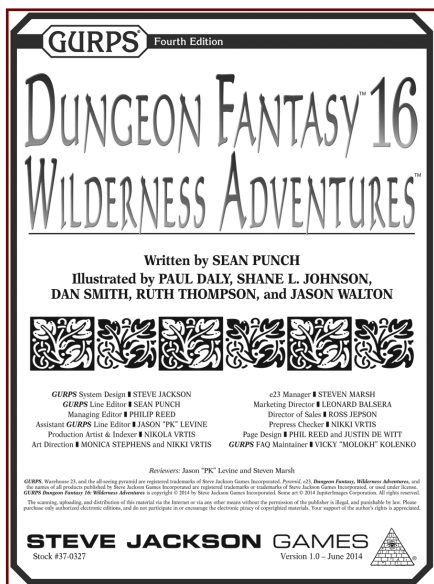
As I type this, the Kickstarter for the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* is still underway, having just funded. When I first conceived of this issue – many, many moons ago – it was inspired in part by the recently released *GURPS Dungeons Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures*. So *Dungeon Fantasy* fever is thick in the air here.

Although this issue focuses on the low-tech side of overland adventures, what's interesting from my point of view is that it's one of those topics that's applicable to just about any campaign or genre. Modern-era action/cliffhangers-type adventures can certainly get a lot of use out of an exciting jungle locale (pp. 4-12), as could any science-fiction setting looking to conjure a planet of peril. Similarly, I'm pretty sure *Stargate SG-1* and *Star Trek* both stopped by their respective "central castings" to create interesting premodern villages (pp. 29-36) for heroes to interact with. And, of course, what low-tech fantasy setting *couldn't* use a caravan of monsters (pp. 20-28)?

The idea of humanity-against-nature has been a part of our species' experience since the beginning, and the idea of attempting to tame the wilds – or at least survive – has permeated our art from the beginning. Whether you're looking for in-depth but usable realism that arguably makes *GURPS* unique, or the pick-up-and-play fun that has made the *Dungeon Fantasy* experience a hit with fans, hopefully there's something in this issue that will inspire you to "take it outside."

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

This issue of *Pyramid* has a smaller number of articles than usual, but are either more in-depth or meatier than many we've done in the past. So what do you think? Did you find something here that inspires you to go on your own outdoor adventures? Or did something here feel a little lost? Let us know privately via the digital gremlins at pyramid@sjgames.com, or join our virtual path-forging community at forums.sjgames.com.



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THE EMERALD HELL

BY TIMOTHY PONCE

Arguably the most impenetrable environment in the world is the tropical rain forest – or jungle. With its wicked wildlife, deleterious diseases, mangled margins, hellish heat, and perpetual precipitation, it's a wonder anyone can survive there. Indeed, for the unprepared traveler, venturing

into the heart of darkness is merely a creative form of suicide. This article gives rules for the terrors lurking beneath the canopy and examines just how to navigate and survive this unforgiving environment.

The situation was different in the jungle. Every inch of ground had to be earned, and was done so through much exertion with the blade.

– Tahir Shah, *House of the Tiger King*

JUNGLE DEFINED

Just what is a jungle? If you said, “hot and wet,” you’d be correct, but a more specific definition would be that of an ecosystem with average monthly temperatures exceeding 64°F year round and average annual rainfalls of at least 66”, no single month of which averages less than 1/25 of total annual rainfall. To be clear, 66” – 5.5’ – of rain is the *minimum*; it’s not unheard of for a jungle to receive more than 390” – 32.5’! This hot, wet environment fosters thick and exotic vegetation that, in turn, provides for a bewildering assortment of inhabitants. And it’s that impenetrable, alien verdure and dangerous, exotic wildlife that screams “jungle” to outsiders everywhere.

There are several types of jungles. Lowland jungles receive fairly even rainfall year round; seasonal or monsoon jungles have more pronounced wet and dry seasons – even if “dry” is a relative term. Jungle can and does overlap with mountainous terrain (cloud forests form at elevations between 5,000’ and 10,000’) or swamplands (flooded forests are permanently waterlogged and epitomize the mix of jungle and swamp).

Regardless of type, all jungles are built like a layer cake of greenery. At the very top, the emergent layer consists of the tallest trees in the forest whose branches peak above the canopy into the dazzling tropical sunlight. This layer usually occurs 150’ to 260’ above the forest floor. Below it spreads the forest’s primary layer and roof – the canopy. Usually between 100’ and 150’ above the forest floor, it provides homes to the vast majority of plants and animals including flowers, mosses, vines, bats, birds, monkeys, snakes, tree frogs, other small animals, and myriad insects. Below lies the understory, home to shrubs, small trees, vines, small mammals, lizards, birds, and predators; it rarely grows higher than 30’. The jungle’s foundation is the forest floor. Only 2% of sunlight reaches this far down, making for a relatively vegetation-free expanse suitable to larger animals like antelopes, gorillas, rhinos, and tapirs.

Jungles vs. Woodlands

Jungles and woodlands often share much similarity. Both have thick canopies, have sparse undergrowth with thick margins, and may overlap mountain or swampland terrain types, but jungles differ in both their perpetual heat and their constant rainfall. Woodlands have pronounced seasons with much less precipitation overall. Consequently, while most of these rules apply to woodlands, those related to climate and weather don’t.

JUNGLE OPERATION

Anyone embarking on adventures in the jungle will encounter a host of concerns unique to that environment.

TRAVEL

Tactical *and* long-distance movement in the jungle is taxing and difficult. Cloying branches grab clothing and armor; impenetrable undergrowth enfolds clearings and streams; rugged terrain and winding roots trip feet; and the soft, slippery, rotting vegetation of the forest floor makes footing difficult in the best of circumstances.

Jungle terrain lacking proper trails counts as Very Bad ($\times 0.2$), and blazed trails, clearings, or light jungle are Bad ($\times 0.5$) terrain. Multiply this by $\times 0.5$ anytime the underlying terrain grows rugged or mountainous. Rain further inhibits travel (see *Random Weather*, p. 9).

Hoofing It

Hikers often encounter unstable terrain: uneven ground and exposed roots, rain-slick rocks and dirt, mud, and slippery rotting leaves on the jungle floor, any of which count as treacherous terrain (p. B387), costing +1 movement point per hex (or halving movement speed). Attack rolls are at -2 and defense rolls are at -1 on all such surfaces. All full-body DX-based skills, like Acrobatics, Dancing, Jumping, etc., are also at -2. See the *Undergrowth Table* (p. 6) for further movement constraints.

Terrain Adaptation (Jungle) eliminates all of these penalties for *jungle environments*. Sure-Footed (Slippery) removes penalties for operating on wet roots, muddy branches, and slick, rotting jungle floors, not to mention water-slicked rapids or wet river rocks. Sure-Footed (Uneven) does the same for negotiating exposed roots, rugged terrain, inclines, gullies, etc.

While tactical and normal combat follow the rules above, base daily travel speed equals half Move, modified for encumbrance. Mounted travelers figure move based on half their mount's *encumbered* Move modified for any Enhanced Move. Do not round.

Riding in Style

Expeditions into the jungle sometimes employ land vehicles. Vehicles with tracks or legs are designed for navigating difficult terrain; they use these rules as-is. Those with wheels halve their effective Top Speed; if also road-bound, use the *lower* of (Top Speed)/2 or Acceleration $\times 2$.

Boat on the River

While boats generally ignore the effects of jungle terrain, they carry other risks. They generally ignore the effects of jungle terrain, but carry other risks. Make sure to add the speed of any currents to Top Speed when traveling down river, but subtract them when headed upriver (see *The Wild Rippling Water*, below). The latter can result in a negative speed – that means you are still getting washed downstream! Avoid this by either towing the bow via lines (“lining”) or carrying the boat up the coast (“portage”).

Modifying for Skill

Anyone experienced at traveling may attempt a skill roll to speed up their journey based on their mode of transportation – Bicycling for bicyclers, Driving for motor vehicles, Hiking for foot travel, Riding when mounted, and Teamster for carts and wagons. Success increases Move by 10%; failure reduces it by as much. Critical failure decreases Move by 20% or triggers an encounter of some kind.

THE WILD RIPPLING WATER

River speeds are measured in flow rates – how many cubic feet of water flows through a cross section of the river per second. Unfortunately, this varies based on elevation change, the amount of runoff into the river, the river's width, etc. The GM can randomly determine a river's speed in miles per hour at a given location by rolling 1d-1 and applying the following modifiers as appropriate.

Rain: Runoff from recent rains will cause any river to swell and grow faster. Increase speed by 1d-2 for Bad weather or 1d for Hellacious weather (see *Random Weather*, p. 9). Reduce this modifier by 1 mph per day transpired since unusually heavy rain.

Rapids: If the GM wants to find the current within rapids, he should add anywhere from 1 (for mild rapids) to 6 (for deadly rapids) to the above roll. Determine this randomly by rolling 1d.

Seasons: Snow on high mountain peaks may melt, or monsoons may bring extra regional rainfall. During wet seasons or in spring near mountains, increase river speed by 1, but decrease it 1 mph during any dry seasons.

Terrain: Greater changes in altitude result in faster rivers. In mountainous terrain, add 2 to river speeds, and in hilly or uneven areas, add 1. Plains, swamps, or other flat terrain do not affect the roll.

These may combine to create terrifying rapids or extremely placid waters. Both are completely realistic and may exist in the same river: The Congo River begins amid a confluence of turbulent rivers and peaceful lakes that grow until they reach Boyoma Falls, where the river widens greatly and calms. Eventually, it reaches Chenal, where the river grows deeper, narrower, and *faster*. It later splits into a delta and empties into the Atlantic Ocean.

Tying It All Together

Find travel speed by first applying any terrain multiplier(s) to Move, then summing all percentile modifiers and applying the result to modified Move. This yields the traveler's average speed in miles per hour.

It's possible to obtain negative travel speeds through failed skill rolls and from bad weather. Treat these as progress lost to circling, backtracking, etc.

Find estimated travel times by dividing the distance you wish to traverse by your average travel speed. Determine the distance covered during a hike by multiplying your average travel speed by the number of hours spent hiking. Always remember to assess FP costs for hiking (see *A Cruel Climate*, p. 9).

Trailblazing

While the jungle floor is dense with tree trunks, ferns, fallen trees, vines, and other shrubs, it is relatively open and free of obstruction as compared to anywhere breaks in the canopy allow sunlight to reach the ground. In open jungle floors, plants and trees can be negotiated quickly enough to avoid reduced Move speeds beyond the ubiquitous halving for bad terrain, but thick undergrowth requires travelers to hack their way through.

Clearing enough foliage for a person to squeeze through requires inflicting HP of *injury* per yard (see the *Undergrowth Table*, below); remember that plants are Homogenous (see *Injury to Unliving, Homogenous, and Diffuse Things*, p. B380). Once it's cleared, traversing the yard takes the usual amount of time; see p. 5. Roll 6d×3 seconds for approximate time required per yard of Impenetrable undergrowth. Completely clearing a one-yard-wide path that is easily passable requires inflicting 2×HP of injury instead.

Normal daily travel includes small amounts of trailblazing, but carving a path through the jungle requires extensive hacking and clearing: multiply daily travel speed by ×0.1, and assess hourly FP costs as if the trailblazer just fought a battle (p. B426). Remember that *both* hot weather and heavy clothing or armor add 1 FP to this cost!

Climbing

The jungle offers many opportunities for climbing, although it's only crucial for locomotion when traversing hilly or mountainous jungles. Treat sloping ground as an ordinary mountain, or in tactical combat as the equivalent of stairs up or down. Wet or unstable slopes give an additional -2 to Climbing.

If adventurers want to climb trees, they roll against Climbing, usually with +5 for trees with low-hanging branches or at no bonus for those without. Climbers often rely on presecured ropes, which allow roping up and roping down (see the table on p. B349 for modifiers and climbing speed). A slick rope imposes an additional -2.

Right . . . so to prove your sanity you go tromping through the jungle. Alone. Well done.

– Charlie, in *Lost* #1.10

NAVIGATION

The jungle presents interesting challenges to navigation. Because the dense canopy blocks out the sky, celestial navigation is impossible. Travelers attempting Navigation (Land) rolls must rely on compasses and dead reckoning, and if they lack equipment *or* time for careful measurements, the rolls are at -5. Those with Absolute Direction ignore this penalty. The only alternative to dead reckoning is navigation by landmarks; in *familiar* stretches of jungle, roll against an appropriate specialty of Area Knowledge.

Success means the party stays on course throughout the day and makes normal time. A critical success means the party follows a *very* efficient route through the trees; increase travel speed for the day by 10%!

Failure means the party circles on itself, gets lost briefly and backtracks, etc.; reduce travel speed for the day by 10%. Critical failure results in the adventurers getting *very* lost. They make no progress toward their destination but may otherwise operate normally, including foraging or hunting for food, pitching and breaking camp, etc. The following day, they can roll against IQ for Eidetic Memory, an appropriate Area Knowledge specialty, Navigation (Land), or Tracking to retrace their steps. Success allows them to continue their journey normally, but *any* failure means another day wasted.

Sometimes adventurers may want to use Area Knowledge or Navigation (Land) to determine where they are in relation to a known point. If they are following existing paths – even overgrown ones – roll at +2 to decide which direction to go in an unbranching path, at +1 to decide among three to five branches, or at no bonus for more than five or if they're making their own path. Trying to find an unknown location is at an additional -4 to skill. Success points the adventurers in the right direction, but failure leads them astray.

Undergrowth Table

Vegetation*	HP per Hex	Vision Increment	Hearing Penalty	Movement
Sparse	0	11+	-1	No effect on movement.
Normal	25	6-10	-2	While running, roll against the better of DX or DX-based Running every 100 yards to avoid falling.
Dense	40	3-5	-3	While walking, roll against DX or DX-based Hiking every 50 yards to avoid minor mishaps. Roll as per Normal, but at -2 while running.
Impenetrable	65	2 or less	-5	Vegetation is thick enough to prevent any movement.

* Creatures of SM -1 or SM -2 treat vegetation as a step lower; at SM-3, they treat it as two steps lower; at SM -4, they treat all vegetation as Sparse. Creatures of SM +1 or larger treat all vegetation as one step higher.

SENSES

More than any other type of terrain, jungle environments limit senses. The abundance of natural sounds, density of vegetation, and constant barrage of odors – pleasant and foul – all work to cloud an adventurer’s ability to accurately perceive his surroundings.

Vision

Little more than 1% of sunlight penetrates the dense canopy and reaches the jungle floor. This imposes an additional -3 in darkness penalties to Vision rolls beyond any resulting weather, twilight, night, lunar, or celestial light. For example, at dusk (-2 to Vision), those on the jungle floor would suffer -5 to Vision (-2 plus -3).

Additionally, vegetation and tree trunks obscure distant objects in a similar way to fog and rain. Treat these as having a range increment based the vegetation’s thickness; see the *Undergrowth Table* (p. 6).

Finally, jungles are rain forests, and “rain” isn’t in the name without reason! Nearly two-thirds of days have some form of precipitation – usually rain. Rainfall comes in six general categories described on the *Precipitation Penalties Table*, below. Other common forms of precipitation include fog and haze.

As always, once Vision penalties from any *one* source reach or exceed -10, no Perception roll is necessary – the object cannot be seen.

Precipitation Penalties Table

Condition	Range Increment
Fog and Haze	
Haze	200-550 yards
Mist	100-200 yards
Fog	70-100 yards
Dense Fog	45-70 yards
Very Low Visibility	11 yards or less
Rainfall*	
Light Drizzle	90 yards or more
Drizzle	45-90 yards
Heavy Drizzle	25-45 yards
Light Rain	15-25 yards
Rain	8-15 yards
Heavy Rain	8 yards or less

* Use these figures for clearings, rivers, and anywhere there is a break in the canopy. Double them while beneath the canopy – only about half of all rain reaches the jungle floor!

Hearing

The density of vegetation in a jungle dampens sound propagation, and the continuous ambient noises mask them further. Use the normal rules for *Hearing* (p. B358) but further modify Hearing rolls based on ambient noise and vegetation. Ambient jungle noise imposes -4, regardless of the time of day or season; rainfall adds an additional -1 to -2. Lastly, vegetation scatters and reduces sounds, giving a penalty based on its density. Look up the thickness of the undergrowth where the sound originated on the *Undergrowth Table* (p. 6).

Smell

The scents and odors of the jungle are thick and pervasive. As always, Smell rolls are at -1 per yard from the source, but the strength of Nature’s perfume often clouds the senses and gives -1 to -5 on this roll. The GM may set this penalty or determine it randomly by rolling 1d-1, minimum -1. Particularly artificial or strong scents may give a bonus to this roll.

But you’re going to be staying in the middle of a jungle, miles away from the nearest phone, hours from the nearest hospital. You could be bitten by a poisonous spider, or a poisonous snake. I looked it up. Toucans are extremely aggressive this time of year.

– Richard Castle, in *Castle* #5.24

JUNGLE COMBAT

Jungle paths often grow tight and cluttered with bushes, and tree trunks stand like unordered stone columns. Both of these inhibit swinging attacks. Whenever a PC makes such attacks, he needs clearance equal to the weapon’s longest Reach in yards in at least two directions. Insufficient room results in the same penalties as fighting in close combat. Missed attacks just as easily represent weapons catching on vines or hitting saplings as actually missing an opponent.

Cover abounds in the jungle. From ferns, leaves, and branches to entire trees, any number of things might provide cover against ranged attacks – so much so that it’s not practical to track every possible bit of intervening cover and the DR it provides. Instead, only track large tree trunks that provide substantial cover DR and apply a general damage reduction equal to 10% × Vision penalty from obscured vision at that range. Thus, an arrow fired at a target 15 yards away in dense vegetation (three-yard increment) has its damage reduced by 50%. Attempting to fire through the cover so that your shot doesn’t hit anything requires an attack roll at -4.

DISEASE AND INFECTION

The jungle is home to a variety of diseases and afflictions. Water carries parasites, biting insects transmit fevers, and a mere scratch can result in septicemia or worse! Make sure to enforce *Infection* (p. B444), and remember that jungles are *known* for their special infections (see *Jungle Fever*, p. 8) – HT rolls are at -3!

Jungle water is often rife with parasites and disease. Anyone who drinks tainted water without first boiling it for at least 10 minutes must roll to avoid contracting any number of illnesses chosen by the GM or determined randomly (see *Jungle Fever*, p. 8).

JUNGLE FEVER

Jungles are known for their strange and horrific diseases. Below are two generic maladies intended to represent the wide and varied infections that plague unprepared travelers.

Special Infections

Sepsis and gangrene are common jungle infections and often occur together. Use the following statistics for sepsis.

Vector: Blood Agent.

Resistance Roll: HT-3.

Delay: 6d hours.

Damage: 1d-1 toxic.

Cycles: 14 (daily cycles).

Symptoms: Absent-Mindedness and Low Pain Threshold after losing 1/3 HP. Confused (12) after losing 1/2 HP.

Confused (9) upon losing 2/3 HP.

Contagiousness: Mildly contagious.

Gangrene is similar except it has 16 eight-hour cycles and works its way through the body; damage taken applies to the injured hit location first until it's "dismembered," moving to neighboring hit locations from there. Repeat this process until the victim dies or overcomes the infection. Its symptoms include a sweetly rancid odor and

distinct blackish-green color; the victim gains Bad Smell and Distinctive Features after losing 1/3 HP. Gangrene often leads to sepsis.

Waterborne Illnesses

Water in the jungle is home to a variety of bacterial and parasitic infections. Most of these have similar symptoms, except that where bacterial infections cause prolific diarrhea resulting in fatigue damage with the Dehydration modifier, parasitic infections result in Starvation instead.

Vector: Ingested.

Resistance Roll: HT+3 minus 1d (HT-3 to HT+2).

Delay: 1d-1 days.

Damage: 1d-1 fatigue dehydration.

Cycles: 2d+5 (daily cycles).

Symptoms: Nausea occurs immediately, with retching on any critically failed resistance roll or one failed by 5+.

Bad Smell and Susceptible 2 (Ingested Diseases) after losing 1/3 FP. Once HP loss begins, any critical failure results in a seizure (p. B429) lasting (20 - HT) minutes.

At negative HP, any critical failure instead results in a coma (p. B429).

Contagiousness: Mildly contagious.

While the threat of contracting malaria, yellow fever, dengue fever, and the like can add danger to a game, not all groups find this fun. The GM may thus wish to skip random contagion checks and afflict the PCs only when it furthers the plot.

SURVIVAL

Surviving in the jungle requires the Survival (Jungle) skill, which identifies good places to camp, building materials for makeshift shelter, edible plants, potential dangers – like snakes, spiders, and predators – and food and drinkable water. The bare requirements for survival are food, water, and shelter to escape the rain. A fire for cooking and drying waterlogged supplies helps increase the party's comfort, but it is not necessary for survival – the jungle is not a cold place, after all!

Finding Food and Water

Adventurers can make the normal Survival (Jungle) or Naturalist rolls to forage and range weapon skill or Fishing rolls to find food while traveling (p. B427), or stop and take an hour to make any one of these rolls. Hikers can only attempt the latter option up to five times in an area before it is depleted; they must spend at least another five hours hiking to new foraging or hunting grounds before trying again.

Even with ample food, people must have water, and in the jungle heat, they need more than usual (see *A Cruel Climate*, p. 9). Fortunately, water abounds in the jungle. Unfortunately, much of it carries diseases and parasites (see *Disease and Infection*, pp. 7-8). A successful Survival (Jungle)

roll provides enough *safe* drinking water – from rain, water vines, etc. – for one person for a day without slowing travel. If more water is needed, up to five additional Survival (Jungle) rolls can be attempted within an area. Adventurers who want to know if a water source is safe roll against Survival (Jungle) or Naturalist-2.

Burn, Baby, Burn!

One other element is generally needed for efficient survival in the jungle, although it isn't *absolutely* essential. Fire can kill harmful parasites and illnesses infesting food or water. It also makes those unidentified rodents hunted earlier taste a *lot* better! But starting a fire in such a wet environment is exceedingly difficult. If it has rained that day, most kindling is too damp to use (see *GURPS Low-Tech*, p. 35). If it only rained the day before, kindling will be a little damp, giving -5 to the Survival roll to start a fire, and if it hasn't rained for longer, dry kindling is readily available. A person can attempt to dry kindling by keeping it next to his body for 1d+1 hours; success reduces the penalty for damp kindling to -2 and allows a Survivalist-5 to use wet kindling.

Whenever attempting to start a fire, make a Survival (Jungle) roll to locate the best possible kindling. On a success by 0 to 4, the searcher finds typical kindling available given the recent rainfall (see above); success by 5 or more *or* a critical success yields kindling one degree drier. Failure results in kindling one degree wetter, and a critical failure gives nothing usable regardless of weather conditions. If any gear for fire-starting is damp – a likely situation in the jungle – all times are doubled! (For times and methods, see *GURPS Low-Tech*, p. 35.)

Gimme Shelter

Jungle survival really requires some level of shelter from the elements, or foot rot and sickness will fell even the mightiest warrior. Make a Survival (Jungle) roll to pitch a good campsite, at -2 without group basics. Critical success yields a comfortable, concealed campsite with good lines of sight on any approaches. Success gives two of these benefits, failure gives only one, and critical failure yields none!

Camping without comfort means everyone gets bug bitten, wet, and a bad night's sleep; they lose 1 FP per night spent without comfort. To recover lost FP, PCs must sleep a night in a comfortable campsite or in proper permanent shelter. This assumes the campers have at least bedrolls or hammocks; lacking these makes comfort count as *two* benefits.

Concealed encampments enjoy natural camouflage in addition to anything the adventurers do to hide their temporary lodging. Make any Camouflage rolls at +2 to conceal the campsite.

A campsite that has good lines of sight offers fewer concealed approaches to the camp. Watchers gain +2 to their Vision or Observation rolls to spot an approaching enemy.

While location is important, the most critical aspect of any campsite is the shelter it provides. Without any, campers lose an additional FP as if the site lacked comfort. Tents provide shelter for a number of campers up to their capacity. A successful Prospecting-2 roll – or Prospecting if the jungle can also count as mountainous terrain – can locate a dry cave, rock overhang, etc. Success yields such a cave, failure doesn't, and critical failure locates a natural shelter already claimed by hostile inhabitants. In a pinch, adventurers can make their own improvised lean-tos (see *Low-Tech*, p. 32).

Comfortable campsites that regularly include a fire (see *Burn, Baby, Burn!* on p. 8) and shelter give +2 to HT rolls to resist jungle diseases (see *Disease and Infection*, pp. 7-8). Moreover, those that include water jugs (*Low-Tech*, p. 33) grant +1 to Survival (Jungle) rolls to avoid *Heat Stroke* (see p. B434).

JUNGLE DANGERS

The jungle is home to a variety of hazards. Adventurer would do well to remain wary of their environment.

A CRUEL CLIMATE

The jungle's climate is hot and humid, to say the least. Daytime temperatures are in the upper 80s to low 90s, with daily highs regularly above 90°F in the summer. Nighttime temperatures hover in the low 70s, dipping into the mid-60s during the winter.

Because of the high daily temperatures, adventurers active during the day must roll against the better of HT or HT-based Survival (Jungle), at a penalty equal to encumbrance level, every 20 minutes – because of the high humidity – for heat stroke (see p. B434). An adventurer also must consume a minimum of *three* quarts of water per day – not two – because of the high, persistent heat.

Because highs often exceed 91°F in the summer, both heat stroke and dehydration result in an additional loss of 1 FP beyond the normal amount.

Random Weather

Planning daily weather can become burdensome for a GM, but two options exist to reduce this workload. Either treat all terrain as Very Bad (×0.2 travel speed modifier) and ignore the effects of rain – assume it's just *always* raining, because, well, it pretty much is! – or roll 3d on the following table daily, at +1 for the rainy season or -1 if it's the "dry" season.

2-5 – Perfect. The jungle relents temporarily. It's not as hot as usual, *and* an entire day passes without any rain! Increase travel speed by 10%, and any Survival or Tracking rolls are at +1.

6-9 – Good. It is *either* hot *or* wet. On good days when the rain falls, it is only a drizzle (see *Precipitation Penalties Table*, p. 7), and the heat doesn't climb above 90°F. On hot days, precipitation takes the form of fog or haze (see *Precipitation*

Penalties Table, p. 7). This has no effect on travel times or skills, but it may impact fatigue or camping choices.

10-13 – Typical. It is hot and wet. The rain falls without fail – usually light rain or rain on the *Precipitation Penalties Table* (p. 7) – and temperatures regularly exceed 90°F. Travel speed is reduced by 50%, but skills remain unmodified. It does impact fatigue and camping conditions.

14-16 – Bad. Severe thunderstorms wrack the jungle. Inordinate amounts of heavy rain (see *Precipitation Penalties Table*, p. 7), strong winds, and cracks of lightning harry the PCs. Travel speed is reduced by 75%, and any Survival or Tracking rolls are at -1. It is extremely hard to find a dry camping site, and starting an unsheltered fire is nearly impossible.

17-19 – Hellacious. Hurricanes are blowing, and rivers are overflowing. The PCs have little choice but to hunker down for extended periods of time, decreasing travel speed by 90%. The driving heavy rains (*Precipitation Penalties Table*, p. 7) and wind make Survival and Tracking difficult; both are at -2.

Paddy Foot

Tropical immersion foot, or "paddy foot," results from the continuous immersion of feet in warm water or mud. Prevention is as simple as regularly drying footwear, cleaning and drying feet, and sleeping barefoot; failure to do so for HT-8 days results in painful ulcers: -3 to rolls to avoid falling, Move is at 80%, and -1 to Dodge. Roll daily for gangrene (see *Special Infections*, p. 8).

NATURAL HAZARDS

Whether angry natives, rebel armies, and any manner of supernatural threats exist, the jungle itself is always willing to provide its own challenges to survival, too!

Fearsome Fauna

While beasts should be handled with random encounter tables, swarms of mundane insects pose a reasonable threat to adventurers who walk into beehives, trip into termite mounds, etc. Spotting such dangers in advance takes a Per-based Naturalist or Survival (Jungle) roll. Failure results in one swarm pursuing whoever disturbs the nest, and critical failure produces 1d additional swarms that attack the victim's allies at random.

Flash Floods

These hazards are slow building, but their rapid waters can easily wash away large animals – let alone mere travelers. A roll against Per-5, Survival (Jungle), or Per-based Weather Sense identifies building waters as a flash flood. A second against Per-based Prospecting or Survival can locate a safe high ground – if there is one. Fast-moving waters hamper movement without Terrain Adaptation (Water); halve speed and -2 to DX and whole-body DX-based rolls.

If no high haven exists and the party cannot escape the path of the flood, their best bet is to jump in a boat. Even this isn't safe, however. The boat handler must roll against Boating at -3 or Seamanship at -3. Remember to apply the boat's Handling, along with any darkness penalty. Failure by no more than the Stability Rating usually means the group is washed in an inconvenient direction or loses some gear. A worse failure may wreck the boat; read on!

If the boat capsizes, breaks up after an impact, or otherwise sinks – or if anyone gets knocked overboard – people will get wet. Entering the water in this manner requires an immediate roll against Swimming at -3 for swift flowing waters (see *Swimming*, p. B354). Diving overboard before disaster strikes gives +3 for entering the water intentionally. Similarly, anyone attempting to ride out the flood in the water must make the normal Swimming roll for assessing fatigue costs, but at -3 for swift moving waters. Waters typically flow about 6 mph – three yards per second; remember to subtract this speed from swim Move whenever attempting to fight the current.

Floods of this nature last *hours* and can sweep a party miles out of the way – as much as 6 mph of flood duration. Simply resume travel wherever the party ends up once floodwaters subside. This may require *Navigation* (p. 6) to find out where they are and determine a new heading to get back on track.

Murderous Mudslides

Jungles on and around mountains may suffer periodic mudslides, especially during severe rain storms. Adventurers in such areas can make a Per-based Prospecting or Survival (Mountain) roll to recognize the danger and attempt to avoid it. If caught in a mudslide, everyone may roll against Per-5, Per-based Prospecting, or Survival (Jungle or Mountains) to locate safe cover; getting to the sanctuary in time can be simplified to a DX roll, if the GM desires. Anyone who doesn't reach safety suffers 1d *dice* of crushing damage (1d to 6d cr) and is buried.

Extricating a buried comrade (or oneself) requires digging (p. B350). If the GM is feeling generous, he may rule that the person is only partially buried; ignore the possibility of suffocation, and allow the victim to attempt a Quick Contest of ST

vs. the crushing damage he suffered to pull himself free. His allies can make similar contests on his behalf, or work with him by making complimentary rolls against their ST.

Traversing an area affected by a mudslide halves travel speed.

Poisonous Plants

As if falling trees, raging wildfires, flash floods, mudslides, stinging swarms, and hungry predators weren't enough, even the *plants* are dangerous in the jungle! Roll against Per-based Herb Lore or Naturalist, or Survival (Jungle) to spot toxic thorns, sap, bark, etc. in time. Failure results in accidental exposure – often when the unlucky explorer least expects it. Victims roll against HT at up to -5 with failure resulting in up to -30% worth of irritants (see *Affliction*, pp. B35-36), and critical failure bringing either -100% in irritants or incapacitation or anaphylactic shock for 1d HP of injury.

GURPS Dungeon

Fantasy 16: Wilderness
Adventures offers other details on adventuring in hostile environments.

Toppling Trees

Rotten, fire-weakened, or otherwise precariously perched trees randomly collapse throughout the jungle daily. This is sufficiently loud and slow to permit Dodge at -2; success on a Per-based Naturalist or Survival (Jungle) roll permits full Dodge. Failure results in 1d *dice* of crushing damage (1d to 6d cr), being knocked down, and getting pinned beneath heavy branches or the trunk. The victim or his allies may attempt a Quick Contest of ST against rolled damage to pull him free. Alternatively, they can use tools to cut him free; assume they must chop through DR equal to the number of damage dice and HP equal to rolled damage.

Wicked Wildfires

Forest fires are the life-giving destroyers that help new growth spread throughout the jungle. They are also horrific calamities that must be circumvented by travelers. Adventurers roll against Per-based Naturalist or Survival (Jungle), plus any levels of Acute Smell/Taste, to spot forest fires in time. Success means they can attempt to get around the fire, which may add any distance the GM feels fit to the route. Randomly determine this distance, in miles, by rolling 1d.

Failure means last-minute discovery and narrow avoidance. Everyone who breathes takes 1d-3 HP of injury from smoke inhalation, and vision-based activities are at -4. Critical failure results in the group stumbling *into* the fire or it overtaking them. Effects are as for a failure, plus 1d fire damage and check for *Toppling Trees* (above).

Attempts to cross a fire directly are suicidal without at least DR 6 against burning or fire, Temperature Tolerance 140 or Immunity to Fire/Heat, *and* one of Doesn't Breathe, Filter Lungs, or Immunity to Smoke. If the adventurers insist on entering a forest fire, the GM should remember to use *Heat* (p. B434) as well as *Flame* (p. B433) – forest fires typically burn around 1,470°F!

NOT-SO-NATURAL HAZARDS

Sometimes it's not just the jungle trying to kill you! Most jungle traps come in one of two flavors: modified deadfalls and triggered weapons. Jungle traps are spotted with a successful Quick Contest between the victim's Perception and the trapper's Camouflage skill.

Pit Traps

Pit traps (*GURPS Low-Tech*, p. 122) involve a camouflaged hole or pit of some sort into which the victim unwittingly falls. The hazards may range in size from as little as 1' deep to elephant-sized pits. Most are augmented with various spikes, wheels, and levers powered by the victim's body weight; damage is based on his ST.

Clamp Trap. A pit, either foot-sized or man-sized, with two spiked levers connected by a net or cloth. Stepping in the trap results in the two levers swinging spike-first into the leg or torso while the victim falls into the pit. Damage is swinging impaling to the trapped limb or torso, depending on the design.

Foot Trap. A small pit 1'to 2' deep. Victims take thrusting damage to the foot that falls in. Damage type is crushing for

simple pits or impaling for spiked ones. Particularly cruel foot traps, called funnel traps, include additional downward-pointing spikes that trap the foot within the pit. Safely removing the foot requires one minute and a successful DX roll; failure results in thrust damage to the trapped foot – again! The rules for *Time Spent* (p. B346) apply.

Meat Grinder. This nonconventional pit trap is more than just spiked – it incorporates a pair of rotating spiked drums into its sides. As the victim falls in, his body grinds through the free-spinning blades where he is stabbed and sliced repeatedly before getting dumped out the other side. The victim suffers 1d attacks to his body, starting with his legs and moving upward, each of which inflicts thrust impaling damage. A roll against DX-2 lets him catch himself on the drums, avoiding a number of attacks equal to margin of success. If successful, a Climbing or DX-5 roll to get out of the trap is permitted; failure means he finishes falling through, and a critical failure results in thrust impaling damage to both hands, too! Treat the pit below the meat grinder as a normal pit trap.

Inviting Infection. Any cutting or impaling trap can be caked with feces, rotting meat, or other unpleasant substances to increase the ubiquitous threat of infection. Victims of such traps roll against HT-5 – *not* HT-3! – or suffer sepsis, gangrene, or a similar infection. See *Disease and Infection* (pp. 7-8) for details.

Other Traps

Other common jungle traps include caltrops (*Low-Tech*, p. 123), deadfalls (*Low-Tech*, p. 122), and tripwires (*Low-Tech*, p. 123), the last of which often lurk in murky water or exist to trip the unwitting into other traps. Some are even strung high in trees to thwart fliers!

But there was that which had raised him far above his fellows of the jungle – that little spark which spells the whole vast difference between man and brute – Reason. This it was which saved him from death beneath the iron muscles and tearing fangs of Terkoz.

– Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Tarzan of the Apes*

JUNGLE CAMPAIGNS

Jungles can serve as backdrops, obstacles, or even antagonists in many different campaigns.

Jungle Action!

From *Rambo* to *Predator* to *Congo*, Hollywood flicks regularly find reasons to set action in the jungle, and similar games can, too! War games set in southeast Asia, black ops missions in the Amazon, archaeological expeditions into the Congolese rain forest, and similar locales can all use these rules as written. Of course, better technology means the horrors of the

jungle are somewhat mitigated, but only slightly, and better tech also means the guerrillas can plant even nastier booby-traps. There's a reason such places earn names like Heart of Darkness, after all . . .

Jungle Dungeons

GURPS Dungeon Fantasy games in the jungle rely heavily on *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures*. However, its rules override those presented here wherever they overlap – these rules are too complex for such games.

Still, *Trailblazing* (p. 6), *Senses* (p. 7), *Jungle Combat* (p. 7), and *Disease and Infection* (pp. 7-8) give jungles their feel, and it's never hurts to have more *Not-So-Natural Hazards* (p. 11). Lastly, *In the Jungle* (from *Pyramid* #3/41: *Fantasy World-Building*) provides some excellent ideas for crafting dungeons out of jungles.

Jungle Exploration

Even today, much of the world's jungles remain unexplored. An exploration game about penetrating the jungle and discovering its secrets treats the jungle itself as the antagonist. Its inhabitants act on its behalf, but the real dangers dwell in the relentlessly inclement conditions that wear down the most stalwart survivalists. Play up environmental dangers, and track resources ruthlessly! Missed sleep combined with perpetual heat and continual risk of disease should present a monumental challenge.

Jungle Fantasy

Fantasy campaigns of all kinds can incorporate jungles as backdrops or an exotic locations. Fantasy jungles harbor a variety of magical creatures and supernatural hazards, including truly diabolical weather, angry spirits, and forgotten civilizations. The GM should emphasize wondrous elements of the jungle – enormous trees, exotic plants and animals, etc. Magic in the adventurer's hands can mitigate many jungle threats, but track FP expenditures vigilantly. Jungles wear down intruders' endurance until they can't continue, and that will greatly impact a mage's FP reserves!

Jungle Horror

Horror fits naturally with any jungle campaign. The environment isolates and threatens the vic- . . . um . . . PCs, and its inhabitants (who often believe in similarly alien gods and

spirits) appear strange to outsiders. Who's to say they aren't right? **GURPS Horror** gives many great suggestions for such games, but *Fear of Nature* (**Horror**, p. 60) and *Fear of the Unnatural* (**Horror**, p. 77) – specifically *The Natural Unnatural* (**Horror**, p. 81) – all apply most directly. Such games should use the jungle to create an atmosphere of unknowns and anxiety, as resources dwindle and the nature of the antagonist slowly reveals itself.

Jungle Hunters

Jungles can serve as excellent backdrops for **GURPS Monster Hunters** adventures. Home to countless cryptids and spirits, jungles provide room for hunters to cut loose; far from society, there just aren't many authorities who go poking about – or to help. Use these rules as written to build suspense and wear down the champions while they trail their quarry. The environment also poses interesting challenges to combat typically absent from settled lands, and the Enemy should mercilessly use that against PCs. It's th Enemy's home after all!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

While Timothy "Humabout" Ponce never spent time in the jungle, he grew up in the pine woods of Orlando where he fostered an early affinity for climbing Things Man Was Not Meant To Climb. He now studies aerospace engineering at the University of Central Florida and serves as a staff writer for the UCF chapter of the AIAA. In his free time, he fences, games, and tries to squeeze in time for sleep. He would like to thank his loving and supportive girlfriend, Julia, whose patience knows no bounds, and Calum Donaldson, Christian Gelacio, Tai Parry, Christopher R. Rice, and David Ripton for gaming in a jungle for months.

GURPS Fourth Edition



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LOW-TECH TRANSPORTATION

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

Getting from one place to another can be an adventure unto itself, and transporting goods has historically been a great way to get rich – or lose everything. What more could an adventurer ask for? Whether you're a mere pilgrim or a merchant prince importing rare spices, it's vital to know the costs of travel. This article gives advice for plausible costs and rates for various forms of transportation from TL0 to TL4. *GURPS Low-Tech*, *GURPS Low-Tech Companion 2: Weapons and Warriors*, and *GURPS Low-Tech Companion 3: Daily Life and Economics* will prove useful, but are not needed. *Medieval Sea Trade* and *Purveyors of the Priceless* from *Pyramid #3/87: Low-Tech III* also offer additional ideas.

carried! The GM may wish to *charge* a cost for water. If so, \$4/gallon is not too outlandish. Alternatively, use 2/3 the cost of a good bottle of liquor per gallon (see p. B265).

The GM can adjust these rates to match real-world examples if it suits his campaign – since the following information could prove ahistorical in some cases. For example, the Pony Express could achieve about 70-80 miles each day of flat-out travel, changing horses every 10 to 20 miles. Riders could weigh no more than 125 lbs. (the horse would be carrying at *most* around 165 lbs.). Note that realistically, even *that* is probably too high! Home stations were 90-120 miles apart where riders would change and rest before doing it all over again.

TRANSPORTATION COSTS

All travel rates assume that GM is using the *Realistic Foot Travel* rules from *Low-Tech Companion 2*, p. 32, and eight hours of travel per day. Those looking for more cinematic rates should use the *Basic Set* assumption of 16-hour days for *Hiking* (p. B351). Unless otherwise noted, assume maximum TL is 4 – this may change times and costs for lower TLs, if appropriate. See *Low-Tech Companion 3*, p. 45, for income multipliers for lower TLs. Moreover, costs do not include *markups*, something that transporters often do to increase their profit. Common markups range from 25% to 50%, but if the ultimate purchasers will pay more, the sky's the limit . . . In all cases, don't forget to *decrease* range per day for bad terrain, weather, or lack of roads. This *doesn't* decrease the cost! Conversely, established trade routes offer protection, food, water, etc. and may *decrease* cost by up to a factor of 50 (this is especially true of river routes for barges). This cost decrease may be offset with tolls or taxes for using such well-protected, proven routes.

The GM should assume that all transporters have about 10 lbs. of gear (e.g., clothing, personal effects, backpacks, mess kit, etc.) unless noted otherwise. Arctic or other special environments that necessitate clothing or other equipment (e.g., snowshoes) adds another 5 lbs. of weight to personal carried gear.

It's also assumed that water is easy to come by in most environments and doesn't need to be brought along (see *Dehydration*, p. B426). Desert and other dry climates *require* water be

MAINTENANCE COSTS

Wagons, barges, sailing ships, and other vehicles all need to be kept in working order for them to function at peak efficiency. The cost to maintain such vessels is $\$0.0006 \times$ the vehicle's cost, per day of use (multiply by 7 for weekly use and by 30 for monthly use). Note that this is only when the vehicle is actually being used – wagons that are "garaged" or ships that are moored don't count those hours for maintenance costs. Alternatively, the GM can require that those hours *do* count and charge a cost equal to 1/10th the normal rate while garaged. For example, the cost to maintain a 60' hulk (*Low-Tech Companion 3*, p. 41) is \$102 per day and includes things like careening, fixing torn sails, plugging leaks, and other similar tasks.

The cost to provide for beasts of burden is their food cost *plus* maintenance amount, which is $\$0.0006 \times$ the beast's cost (see pp. B459-460 for prices). For example, the cost to maintain a draft horse is \$1.20 per day and includes things like shoeing, replacing old or worn saddlery, grooming, veterinary expenses, and so forth. Stabling fees may also be included or be separate all together.

Whenever maintenance costs are referenced below, it assumes the use of these rules.

Transportation Costs by Foot

People may carry goods, if the items are lightweight or if beasts of burden are rare, expensive, or restricted to certain social classes. The cost is prohibitive unless the merchandise has a high margin. The minimum requirements for being a porter (*Low-Tech Companion 3*, p. 48) are ST 10, HT 10, and Savoir-Faire (Servant)-10.

Porter Transportation Summary

The total weight available assumes a ST (or Lifting ST) of 10. Porters with higher levels are available for +25% increase in cost *per point* above ST 10. For example, a ST 14 porter could carry 117 lbs., but the cost *doubles*. Porters who are willing to haul heavier loads (up to Heavy encumbrance) are also available, but this adds +100% to the final cost (in addition to any increase for better ST) and reduces travel time to 9 miles/day or 1 mph for temperate climates and good terrain. This becomes 4 miles/day and 0.5 mph for arctic or desert climates with Bad terrain (1.6 miles/day and 0.2 mph in deep snow or soft sand).

	Arctic	Desert/Dry	Temperate
Weight for Personal Gear	15 lbs.	10 lbs.	10 lbs.
Required Food Weight per Day	1.5 lbs.	1.5 lbs.	1.5 lbs.
Required Water Weight per Day	–	4 lbs.	–
Total Weight Available	60 lbs.	60 lbs.	60 lbs.
Daily Travel Rate	6 miles*	6 miles*	12 miles
Hourly Travel Rate	0.75 mile*	0.75 mile*	1.5 miles
Cost per Day of Travel†	\$12.40	\$12.40	\$12.40

* These rates assume Bad terrain (p. B351) that is moderate to light snow or sand; very deep snow or soft sand reduces these times to 2.4 miles/day and 0.3 mph.

† Porters make \$160/month (*Low-Tech Companion 3*, p. 48); thus, each day of work is \$6.40. Food is \$6 per day.

OPTIONAL RULES FOR RIDING

The GM may assign a fatigue cost to trips: 1 FP per 10 miles over good roads, 1 FP per 5 miles off-road or in bad weather, and 1 FP per 3 miles if off-road and bad weather. Riding without a saddle *doubles* these values! A higher quality saddle lowers the *final* fatigue cost by its quality bonus (e.g., a good quality saddle reduces final FP cost by 1). Those with an appropriate Riding at DX+1 reduce the FP cost by 1, while those who have skill at DX+2 reduce cost by 2 FP.

A horse or similar riding animal that is not properly cared for might develop *equine laminitis*, commonly called “foundering.” This is a painful inflammatory condition that compresses the bones in a horse’s hoof. The exact cause of foundering isn’t well understood; it can come on when a horse grazes too long or eats rich food (e.g., sweets or apples), is ridden too hard for too long, or is suffering from any systemic infection.

To simulate this, roll the horse’s HT if any of these circumstances occur. (Horse stats can be found on pp. B459-460.) Add -1 if the horse lost more than half his FP from riding or -3 if he went below 1/3 FP! Assess a further -1 if the rider let the horse graze too long or overeat (make an IQ-based Riding roll at +4 to avoid this). Finally, add *half* the penalty from any illness the horse is suffering from; round up. For example, a mild cold might inflict -1, while equine Cushing’s disease might give -3! The GM may give +2 to +4 to mules or donkeys (or similar beasts in a fictional setting) as they are much less prone to such complications.

Failure by 0-1 means the horse is in Moderate Pain and cannot be ridden; failure by 2-3 results in Moderate Pain and the Lamé disadvantage (p. B141); failure by 4-5 is Severe Pain and Lamé; failure by 6 or more or critical failure results in Terrible Pain and Lamé.

To recover, make an HT roll with the previous penalties once every 12 hours. Three consecutive successes means the horse recovers fully, but requires another 1d days of rest. Three consecutive failures means the horse is permanently lame (and should likely be put out of his misery barring things like supernatural healing). Those with Animal Handling (Equines), Riding (Horses), or Veterinary can make a skill roll to give any horse in their care +1 to their HT roll (+2 on a critical success). This takes at least an hour per roll and often involves things like using painkillers, “icing” the hooves and legs, moving the horse to softer ground, and/or padding the hooves.

If long-distance transportation via person is typical, switching Savoir-Faire for Hiking at 10+ or Lifting ST 10+ would be fair. Stronger porters capable of carrying more goods may be available at a higher price; see the table above.

As a baseline, assume porters will carry up to Medium encumbrance, which (assuming Basic Move 5) gives them an adjusted Move of 3; one porter can transport approximately 60 lbs. and go up to 12 miles/day on a road during good weather. Since one meal of traveler’s rations costs \$2 and weighs 0.5 lb., each day of anticipated travel will require 1.5 lbs. worth of food, for an added \$6 to the final transportation cost. Porters getting food elsewhere – for example, from way stations along an established route – ignore the added weight, but not the cost. In deserts and similar dry climates, extra water must *also* be carried; the minimum is two quarts per day of anticipated travel, which translates to another 4 lbs. of weight and may incur a cost of \$4 per gallon in areas where refilling containers is difficult or restricted.

Example

A group of five porters traveling one-way on a 120-mile journey across roads and in a temperate climate take 10 days and cost \$620. They travel at 12 miles/day. They need to carry 75 lbs. of food between them, leaving 175 lbs. available for merchandise. Base cost is \$6.40 (daily pay) × 5 (number of porters) = \$32. Adding in the cost of food raises this to \$62/day. Since the group can carry 175 lbs. of gear between them, the cost translates to approximately \$1 per 3.5 lbs. of merchandise.

Transportation Costs by Beast

Beasts of burden are a far more common method of getting goods from one place to another. Since even the average draft horse has ST 25 and Basic Move 6, they can haul 375 lbs. at Medium encumbrance . . . over six times as much as what a porter could carry! The GM may wish to restrict the ST of a typical horse due to technology level (see *Low-Tech Companion 3*, p. 15); this *substantially* reduces the travel rate and maximum capacity.

Basic gear for a horse weighs 30 lbs. (bridle and bit, horse-shoes, saddle, saddlebags, and stirrups), allowing another 345 lbs. to be carried. Someone who never intends to ride a horse only needs a packsaddle (40 lbs.) and a lead line! A packsaddle gives the standard benefits of a riding saddle (reduces FP loss from weight) and allows cargo to be carried. Unless the scene necessitates speed, assume that a muleteer takes the maximum possible time for Packing rolls (about 30 minutes per animal) to garner +5 to the skill.

A packhorse can only travel as fast as the person leading it; if being led by someone (who is unencumbered) on foot, that's 20 miles/day on a decent road, in good weather. If being led by a rider on another horse, Medium encumbrance means they move approximately 28.8 miles/day of fair weather and good roads.

Horses that can graze and be watered at the end of the ride – or during the trip – need a mere 0.75 lbs. of grain (\$1/lb.) per day. Traveling through lands without suitable pasture or grazing requires 3.5 lbs. of grain *plus* another 10 lbs. of hay (\$0.25/lb.) per day. In dry climates, water also must

be carried; the minimum is five gallons, which translates to another 40 lbs. of weight. Thus, food and water comes to 0.75 lbs. of weight per day of travel along routes with good grazing (40.75 lbs. in a dry climate) or 13.5 lbs. along routes with no pasture (53.5 lbs. in a dry climate).

Donkeys carry less (they have a ST 15 and thus a Basic Lift of 45 lbs.), but are cheaper . . . if somewhat intractable. Mules are more likely to stop working than to continue to the point of foundering (see *Optional Rules for Riding*, p. 14); when overloaded or overtired, they may simply refuse to move until unloaded. Large mules cost the same as draft horses, but have a ST of 22.

Merchants have no country. The mere spot they stand on does not constitute so strong an attachment as that from which they draw their gains.

–Thomas Jefferson

Transportation by Beast Summary

This information assumes a run-of-the-mill draft horse (p. B459). Adjust these rates appropriately for other animals.

	<i>Arctic</i>	<i>Desert/Dry</i>	<i>Temperate</i>
Weight for Saddlery (ridden)	30 lbs.	30 lbs.	30 lbs.
Weight for Saddlery (led)	40 lbs.	40 lbs.	40 lbs.
Required Food Weight per Day (grazing)	0.75 lb.	0.75 lb.	0.75 lb.
Required Food Weight per Day (no grazing)	13.5 lbs.	13.5 lbs.	13.5 lbs.
Required Water Weight per Day	–	40 lbs.	–
Total Weight Available*†	375 lbs.	375 lbs.	375 lbs.
Daily Travel Rate (ridden)	14.4 miles‡	14.4 miles‡	28.8 miles
Daily Travel Rate (led)	10 miles‡	10 miles‡	20 miles
Hourly Travel Rate (ridden)	1.8 miles‡	1.8 miles‡	3.6 miles
Hourly Travel Rate (led)	1.25 miles‡	1.25 miles‡	2.5 miles
Cost per Day of Travel (grazing)§	\$22.75	\$22.75	\$22.75
Cost per Day of Travel (no grazing)§	\$28	\$28	\$28

* If ridden, reduce by rider's weight. Assume 145 lbs. for an average ST 10 rider. For led animals, this assumes the handler is unencumbered and moving at his maximum rate.

† This assumes only one beast. Multiple beasts can carry more, but are more difficult to handle. To figure the maximum number of beasts a muleteer can control, subtract his Animal Handling skill from 10 and then consult the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (p. B550). Read this number in the *Speed/Range* column and look over to the *Linear Measurement* column to determine the maximum number of animals one level larger than he is that he can handle. Multiply total number by 2 for animals with the same Size Modifier as the muleteer or by 4 for his SM-1. For example, a SM 0 muleteer with Animal Handling of 14 could handle at most 10 animals of his SM +1, 20 animals of his SM, or 40 animals of his SM -1. Additionally, *stronger* beasts cost more (and thus cost more to maintain), but can carry more. See p. B459 for more details on buying animals with higher ST values.

‡ This rate assumes Bad terrain (p. B351) that is moderate to light snow or sand; *very* deep snow or soft sand reduces these times to 2.4 miles/day or 0.3 mph if led and 2.4 miles/day and 0.3 mph if ridden.

§ This cost is total for beast and handler and uses the food requirements for porters (p. 14) for the handler. Muleteers (p. 18) make \$400/month, thus each day of work is \$16.

Camels also carry less (they have ST 22 and thus a Basic Lift of 97 lbs.), but can go without water for up to *four* days, after which they need 20 gallons of water (160 lbs.) to restore themselves. For llamas, use the stats for a camel, but reduce ST to 17.

Maintenance costs for animals equals $\$0.0006 \times$ the beast's cost (see pp. B459-460 for prices).

Since muleteers (p. 18) make \$400 a month, each day of required travel costs \$16 *plus* the cost of food and maintenance for the horse, along with food for its handler. Handlers with a skill level higher than 10 also charge an additional (10% \times skill level), to reflect their greater experience with animals. Use the rules for foot transportation to determine the additional costs required for the beast's handler.

*Some see private enterprise
as a predatory target to be
shot, others as a cow to be
milked, but few are those
who see it as a sturdy horse
pulling the wagon.*

– Winston Churchill

Example

A muleteer riding a horse and leading three packhorses on a 120-mile journey across good grazing land takes five days and cost \$165. They travel at a rate of 28.8 miles/day and need to carry 67.5 lbs. of food for both handler and beasts. Since the lead horse requires saddlery (30 lbs.) and the packhorses need packsaddles (40 lbs. each), this leaves

1,154.5 lbs. available for merchandise. Base cost for the handler would be \$16 (daily pay) \times 1.2 (for a skill 12 muleteer) or \$19.20/day, while the maintenance cost per horse would add \$1.20. Adding in the cost of food raises this another \$6/day for the handler and \$3/day for the horses. Since the mule train can carry 1,282.5 lbs. of gear between them, the cost translates to approximately \$1 per 8 lbs. of merchandise.

Transportation by Cart or Wagon

This is probably the most ubiquitous method of transportation for goods other than by ship (see pp. 18-19). At TL1, an oxcart can travel at a Move of 1 and carry 1,200 lbs. This means it can move up to 1.2 mph and 9.6 miles/day on roads and in fair weather – a glacial crawl compared to most other methods.

At TL3, the horse-drawn wagon becomes available, allowing a Move of 8 and carrying up to 1,000 lbs. Thus, a horse-drawn wagon can move up to 4 mph and 32 miles/day on roads and in fair weather. Transportation by cart or wagon can't negotiate Bad or Very Bad terrain.

Since both draft horses and oxen have FP 12, they can travel up to eight hours at a stretch before they must rest for 1.3 hours to regain their FP. Note, FP values and movement rates assume a animals at full gallop (maximum Base Move). Most owners won't go higher than $\times 0.4$ to $\times 0.6$ (a "trot") and many choose to simply go at around $\times 0.2$ Move (a steady, brisk walk). As an optional rule, the GM may *halve* fatigue loss for animals at trot when assessing FP lost to travel (p. B426) or ignore it for those moving at a walk.

Oxen, like most bovines, are inefficient grazers, needing good pasture to maintain their health. This means that they must be fed grain on the road, and they require 7 lbs. of grain (\$1/lb.) per day. In areas without good grazing, they also need another 14 lbs. (\$0.75/lb.) of hay per day. For horse-drawn wagons, figure the cost of needed meals as for *Transportation Costs by Beast* (p. 15-16).

In dry climates, water also must be carried; the minimum is five gallons, which adds another 40 lbs. of weight. The teamster needs meals and water as per porters; see p. 14 for details.

Transportation by Cart or Wagon Summary

	Horse-Drawn	Oxen-Team
Required Food Weight per Day (grazing)	0.75 lb.	7 lbs.
Required Food Weight per Day (no grazing)	13.5 lbs.	21 lbs.
Required Water Weight per Day*	40 lbs.	40 lbs.
Total Weight Available†	1,000 lbs.	1,200 lbs.
Daily Travel Rate	32 miles	9.6 miles
Hourly Travel Rate	4 miles	1.2 miles
Cost per Day of Travel (grazing)‡	\$33.60	\$29
Cost per Day of Travel (no grazing)‡	\$34.01	\$45.80

* This is for dry climates only.

† This assumes only one yoke of two animals. Adding additional yokes add another 47 lbs. of weight and only marginally increase the maintenance cost (\$0.04 for both oxen and horses per yoke). Additional yokes permit the load to be spread more evenly, allowing the whole team to move faster; see *Low-Tech*, p. 9, for details on adjusting encumbrance and movement rates for additional animals. Likewise, *stronger* beasts cost more (and thus cost more to maintain), but can carry more. See p. B459 for more details on buying animals with higher ST values. Use the rules for muleteers (p. 18) for the maximum number of animals.

‡ This cost is *total* for beast and handler (including maintenance costs) and uses the food requirements for porters (p. 14) for the teamster. Teamsters (p. 18) make \$400/month; thus, each day of work is \$16.

EXOTIC METHODS OF TRANSPORTATION

The GM designing a new campaign may choose other ways to transport goods that best fit the setting. Here are two examples.

Dogsled

Most sled dogs can survive on scrap meat (\$1/lb.) and need at least 2 lbs. of meat every day to stay healthy. Their water requirements are the same as humans, though most mushers rarely stock up on water – they can melt the snow around them to drink! (Note that this *does* require both fuel and a fire.) *Mushers* use the same job description as teamsters and specialize in Dogs for required skills. A dogsled team can achieve 24 miles/day in ankle-deep snow (3 mph). Thanks to the design, sleds treat snowy terrain as if it were “good terrain” for overland movement. Sleds can carry up to 135 lbs. of cargo other than the musher. These numbers assume 14 dogs are pulling it. Total cost per day of transportation is \$54.28: \$1.08 (maintenance) + \$19.20 (musher pay) + \$34 (food).

Elephant

Though more valuable in warfare, elephants could be used for the transportation of goods. Elephants can

carry up to 620 lbs. of cargo in a *howdah* (which weighs 450 lbs.) along with the rider. An elephant needs to eat approximately 400 lbs. of vegetable matter per *day* and another 22 gallons of water (though adult males can drink up to 40 gallons in just under five minutes!). Since elephants take so long to feed, it's not feasible for them to eat on the road – though the handler could cut down local vegetation for them. An elephant needs 370 lbs. of hay (\$0.25/lb.) per day, 20 lbs. of fruit or vegetables (\$2/lb.), and another 10 lbs. of miscellaneous vegetable matter (often tree branches, grasses, and other plants they can find while along the trail).

Pahan (or *mahout*) use the same job description as muleteers, but specialize in Elephants for required skills. A elephant and its handler can achieve 19.2 miles/day (2.4 mph). Elephants eat a *lot*. Because of the weight of their feed, it quickly becomes impractical to go more than short distances unless the handler lets their beast(s) forage along the way, which would reduce time traveled to four hours (9.6 miles) a day. Total cost per day of transportation is \$154.91: \$6.41 (maintenance) + \$16 (pahan pay) + \$132.5 (food required without foraging).

Since teamsters (p. 18) make \$400 a month, each day of required travel costs \$28 *plus* the cost of food and maintenance for the animals, food for teamster, and maintenance cost of the cart or wagon. Ox carts have a base cost of \$340, while wagons have a base cost of \$680; thus maintenance costs (p. 13) are \$0.20 and \$0.41 per day of use. A yoke costs \$56 and has a maintenance cost of \$0.03. Maintenance costs for animals equals \$0.0006 × the beast's cost (see pp. B459-460 for prices).

This brings the total to \$56.30 for oxen or \$34.01 for horses per team per day. In areas with good grazing, the cost becomes \$45.80 for oxen or \$33.60 for horses instead.

Example

A teamster leading a team of four oxen on a 120-mile journey down the Appian Way takes 10 days and cost \$539.40. They travel at a rate of 12.8 miles/day (1.6 mph) and need to carry 295 lbs. of food for both teamster and beasts, plus another 10 lbs. of personal effects for the handler. Since each cart can haul 1,200 lbs., this leaves 905 lbs. available for merchandise. Base cost for the teamster is \$16 (daily pay), while maintenance cost (p. 13) for the oxen team and cart adds \$3.87, or $(\$340 \times 1 \text{ cart}) + (\$1,500 \times 4 \text{ oxen}) + (\$56 \times 2 \text{ yokes}) \times 0.0006$.

Adding in the cost of food raises this to \$6/day (for the handler) and \$28/day (for the oxen). Since the cart can carry about 905 lbs. after accounting for food the cost translates to approximately \$1 per 1.5 lbs. of merchandise.

Transportation by Boat

Transportation by river usually requires that a barge or boat be poled downriver or pulled upriver, though very large

rivers might be capable of supporting sailing vessels with deep drafts. Boats that can be sailed use the rules for ships (pp. 18-19). As early as TL1, beasts of burden or other boats can pull river barges.

The Top Speed of boats that are drifting downstream is the current of the river in miles per hour; halve that number to get its Top Speed in yards per second (see p. B463). For those vessels being poled, the base rate is (number of crew × average Basic Lift × 0.005) in yards/second, or about $0.4 \times \text{Basic Move}$. Double this rate if oars are being used instead. Acceleration is equal to $(\text{Top Speed} \times 100 / \text{LWt.})$; this cannot exceed Top Speed. For a ship pulled downstream (generally only in waterways with little or no current), simply use the animal's Move.

Vehicles going upstream must be poled or paddled, or pulled by beasts of burden who walk on the shore. For poling or paddling, reduce the base rate (determined above) by the river's current in yards per second. For being towed upriver, the rate is the animal team's Move minus the current of the river (if any) measured in yards per second. Additionally, the vessel is treated as a load for the beast, which modifies effective Move.

Poling and paddling costs 1 FP per hour. Poling requires the river be shallow enough for the poles to touch bottom, but paddling does not.

Most boats and barges can travel 24 hours/day, or at least 96 miles/day. Assume the ferrymen who are poling or paddling have FP 10 and work in two shifts (while the others rest). This means that each team can travel up to six hours at a stretch before they must rest for an hour to regain their FP while the other team takes over. For details on how long animals can pull a boat before needing to rest, see *Transportation by Cart or Wagon* (p. 16).

Barges being towed upriver divide total weight by 8 for rafts or squared-off barges, 10 for round lines, and 12 for anything with long lines. For a fully loaded river barge, this means a total weight of 1,050 lbs., which would require at least three draft horses (or oxen) or four large mules to pull it. Figure cost for towing by adding the cost of the muleteer team (see *Transportation by Beast*, pp. 15-16) to the barge crew's cost.

Ferryman make \$429/month (\$17.16/daily), just like sailors (*Low-Tech Companion 3*, p. 48). Additionally, each crew-person needs a minimum of 1.5 lbs. of rations and 4 lbs. of water per day (8 lbs. of water in hot climates). Maintenance costs (p. 13) depend on what sort of boat is being crewed; see *Low-Tech Companion 3*, p. 41. Divide the total cost by the

total weight of cargo (not including provisions) that the vessel can carry to get the minimum per-pound price that a merchant can expect to pay. If a single merchant wants the barge to travel partially empty, the vessel's owner will charge full operation costs. If the boat is being pulled by animals, use the details under *Transportation Costs by Beast* (pp. 15-16) to determine the fee associated with that service.

Transporting livestock or similar animals increases costs by the amount of food and care they'll need. Assume that the additional cost to transport and care for them is equal to 1% of their total value per day.

Example

A group of four sailors poling cargo down the Nile at a 120-mile stretch take 17 hours; the trip costs \$116.40. Since the speed of the Nile averages about 5.25 mph, this increases the barge's move to 7.25 mph, or 174 miles/day. They need to carry 157.5 lbs. of food for the crew, plus another 40 lbs. of their personal effects. Since a river barge can haul 5,600 lbs., this leaves 5,402.5 lbs. available for merchandise. Base cost for the four sailors (which includes the "captain") is \$85.80 (daily pay), while the maintenance cost (p. 13) for river barge adds \$7.20. Cost for food is \$24/day. Since the barge can carry about 5,402.5 lbs. after accounting for food, the cost translates to approximately \$1 per 47 lbs. of merchandise.

Transportation by Ship

Transportation by sea allows a vessel to sail 24 hour/day, and due to economies of scale, can be the most efficient form of travel . . . until a landmass gets in the way, of course. The average Top Speed of most TL3 cargo ships is 4 (6 for the *baghlah* and 3 for the *badan* – see *Low-Tech Companion 3*, p. 41), though this is affected by wind speeds. Favorable winds allow a ship to sail at or near Top Speed, but ships usually average about half this. Thus, most ocean-going cargo ships can travel 24 hours/day at a speed of 4 mph – at least 96 miles/day.

Figure maintenance costs (p. 13) normally, which depends on what sort of ship is being crewed; see *Low-Tech* and *Low-Tech Companion 3* for examples. Sailors make \$429/month (\$17.16/daily). Additionally, each sailor needs a minimum of 1.5 lbs. of rations and 4 lbs. of water per day at sea (8 lbs. of water in hot climates). Divide the total cost by the total weight of cargo (not including provisions) that the vessel can carry to get the minimum per-pound price that a merchant can expect to pay. If a single merchant wants the barge to travel partially empty, the vessel's owner will charge full operation costs.

Optionally, "live" cargo (including passengers) can book passage by either occupying a cabin or sleeping in a section of the hold. This is much more expensive than normal cargo space and is at least \$5 per person per day (each passenger needs around one ton of space).

See *Medieval Sea Trade* from *Pyramid* #3/87: *Low-Tech III* for an alternate pricing scheme.

Example

The *Cat's Flicker Swish* is a 60' hulk (*Low-Tech Companion 3*, p. 41) that requires a minimum of 18 hands to sail it. It needs to sail 120 miles to reach its destination, which takes 30 hours and costs \$700.05. Since it'll have good days and bad, use *half* its base Move, but because it's always under sail, the ship more than makes up for that.

NEW JOBS

The following new jobs use the format from *Occupations* (*Low-Tech Companion 3*, pp. 45-49).

Merchant Trader (TL0)

Trade and commerce are the lifeblood of any society. TL0 trading is effectively bartering, while higher TLs allow for more intricate systems.

Prerequisite: Merchant at 14+.

Job Roll: Prerequisite skill. On critical failure, lose 1d-3 (minimum one) month's income due to spoiled merchandise, unlucky deals, etc.

Monthly Pay: \$60 × prerequisite skill. Adjust for margin of success or failure.

Wealth Level: Average. Supports Status 0.

Muleteer (TL1)

The *arriero*, *tragner*, and *muleskinner* are all names for the same profession: the muleteer. This person is a professional handler of beasts of burden used for transporting goods (usually one or two, though more skilled muleteers can handle more, see p. 15).

Prerequisite: Animal Handling, Packing, and Riding at 10+.

Job Roll: Best prerequisite skill. On a critical failure, take 1d crushing damage to a random hit location due to being kicked or bitten by the animals.

Monthly Pay: \$400.

Wealth Level: Struggling. Supports Status -1.

Teamster (TL4)

Like the muleteer, but dealing with a team of beasts pulling a cart, wagon, or sled.

Prerequisite: Animal Handling, Packing, and Teamster at 12+.

Job Roll: Best prerequisite skill. On critical failure, take 1d crushing damage to a random hit location due to being kicked or bitten by the animals.

Monthly Pay: \$400.

Wealth Level: Struggling. Supports Status -1.

You see, there are millions upon millions of worlds in the universe, each one filled with too much of one thing and not enough of another. And the Great Continuum flows through them all, like a mighty river, from “have” to “want” and back again. And if we navigate the Continuum with skill and grace, our ship will be filled with everything our hearts desire.

– Nog, in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* #7.6

Thus, it travels at about 4 mph, or 96 miles daily. The crew needs to carry 189 lbs. of food, 1,008 lbs. of water, and another 180 lbs. of personal effects for the sailors. Since the *Cat's Flicker Swish* can haul 150,000 lbs., this leaves 148,623 lbs. available for merchandise. Base cost for the 18 sailors (which includes the “captain”) is \$326.04 (daily pay), while maintenance cost (p. 13) for the ship adds \$120. Cost for food is \$114/day. Since the ship can carry about 74.3 tons after accounting for food, the total cost translates to approximately \$1 per 212 lbs. of merchandise.

about *GURPS*, he's blogging about it. Visit his site “Ravens N' Pennies” (www.ravensnpennies.com) for more *GURPS* goodies. He wishes to thank L.A. and his gaming group, the Headhunters; Beth “Archangel” McCoy, the “Sith Editrix”; David Pulver; Onno Meyer; Emily “Bruno” Smirle; and Elizabeth Platt Hamblin, for being most excellent sounding boards. He especially wishes to thank Shawn Fisher and Travis Foster for their heroic efforts at the eleventh hour.

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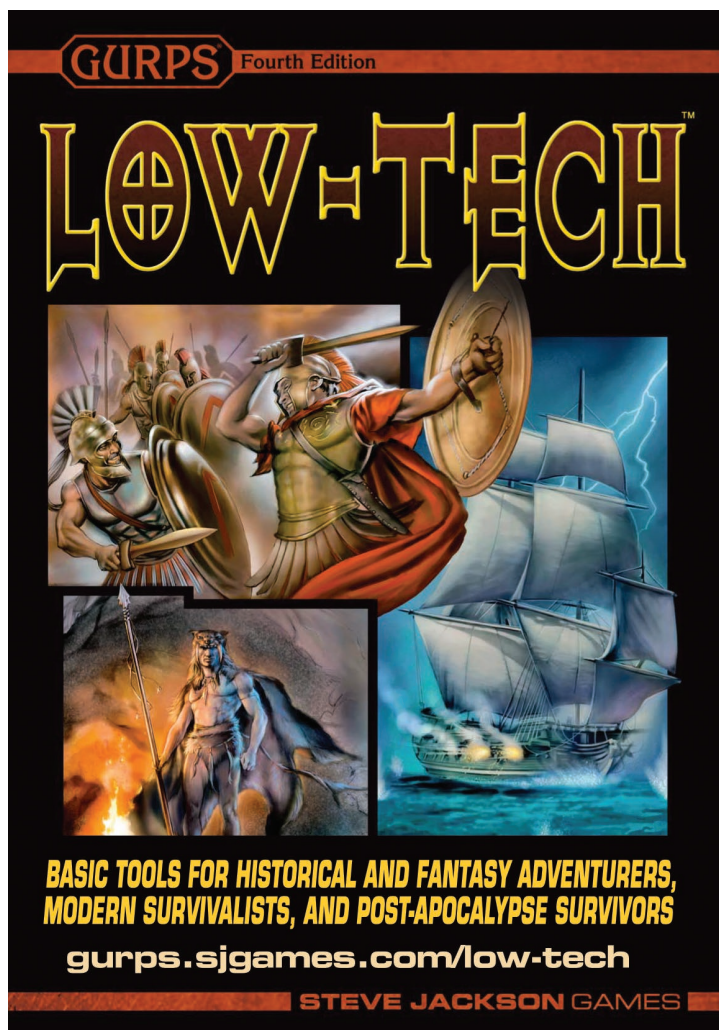
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Christopher R. Rice has a cat-drawn war carriage he borrowed from his girlfriend. It can't carry much – but it's awesome, and that's all that matters. From Portsmouth, Virginia, he's eking a living out of writing (somehow). Of course, if he's not writing



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EIDETIC MEMORY

MONSTER CARAVAN

BY DAVID L. PULVER

The usual types of dungeon fantasy wilderness adventures are road trips on the way to the next subterranean labyrinth, “hedge maze” sandbox adventures searching for outdoor monster lairs, or missions to escort important travelers or merchant trains. But here’s another type of wilderness encounter, a moving target that might be worthy of an entire adventure in its own right: a caravan of monsters carrying their ill-gotten loot!

Some monster caravans, like the orc wagon train described here, will follow a semi-regular schedule. Rumors in taverns or inns, or interrogations of captured monsters, may lead to adventurers hearing of a particular monster caravan and the treasure it transports. If so, much like Robin Hood’s band or Age of Sail privateers planning their attack on a Spanish treasure fleet, the heroes may do their best to gather information on its route and craft a cunning plan to ambush and loot it.

It’s also possible that adventurers may simply stumble upon a monster caravan while they are on their way to another location. This is very dangerous for the party, since they probably won’t be expecting a large, organized group of monsters on the road! Monster caravans often move at night, so such an accidental encounter may occur as the caravan’s scouts come upon the party’s campsite. If the adventurers were not diligent about setting watches, they may be ambushed themselves, for monster caravans are often eager to capture a few more slaves . . . or worse, extra food! Alternatively, a more alert party may spot the caravan first, and either avoid it or shadow it to later attack it during the day.

Consider what monsters would travel together, and why they are doing it.

When creating a monster caravan, the GM should first consider who the monsters are and why they’re traveling through the wilderness in an organized body (bringing their treasure with them). Perhaps the caravan is a regular shipment of tribute (loot, slaves, etc.) from a monster lieutenant or sub-chief to an evil overlord; one such ready-to-use monster caravan

is described here. However, that doesn’t have to be the only explanation. A caravan might be a band of nomadic monsters who live out of their wagons, raiding human or demi-human settlements but having no fixed lair themselves. Or perhaps it is even a mass monster migration “moving house” from one dungeon (that was raided too often . . .) to another more distant and secure lair!

GHORAK ONE-FANG’S ORC WAGON TRAIN

Ghorak One-Fang is an ambitious and greedy orcish warlord with a stronghold in the lawless wilderness on the edge of human civilization. In his younger days, he conquered several other goblin, orc, and hobgoblin lairs, and forced them to acknowledge him as their overlord. Now content to squat like a toad in his underground stronghold, Ghorak insists each of these scattered goblin-kin bands – each separated by several day’s overland journey – render him regular tribute, a quarter-share of all the portable loot and useful slaves they have captured in the previous year. If any fail to pony up with the treasure, Ghorak sends his killers to take the tribute by force, along with their heads.

Ghorak does not control a significant amount of territory on the surface world. The orc bands who acknowledge him as warlord dwell in dungeons or hill-caves within a disputed border region, often raiding human and other villages or merchants before retreating underground to their subterranean lairs. As such, tribute sent back from these dungeons to his own fastness must often cross dangerous lands infested by human and demi-human adventurers and rival monsters who don’t owe him any allegiance.

After one incident where 30 halfling slaves and the dozen orcs guarding them were devoured by a flock of hungry gryphons, and another where a band of terrified goblin brigands straggled in penniless to tell him that human and elven rangers had ambushed them and taken the chests of copper and silver pieces they were bringing him, the greedy Ghorak decided he needed a better system. Having himself raided several well-guarded human and dwarf merchant caravans in his bloody past, Ghorak decided such a convoy would be instituted.

Now, once or twice a year, Ghorak dispatches a heavily escorted wagon train, led by one of his relatives and guarded by a band of trusted warriors and outriders. The orc caravan visits the dungeons or lairs under their master's rule. After intimidating any reluctant vassal-chiefs into paying up, the orc wagons are piled with his share of the season's best booty and captives. Traveling only by night, the wagons and their guards then make their journey back to his stronghold. Each leg requires about 60 miles travel over winding forest tracks, hills, and old dirt roads. The trips take four to six nights each, depending on the season, weather conditions, and how heavily laden with treasure the wagon train is.

Ghorak's orcish wagon trains often carries a rich haul of coins and other loot taken from both the dungeon treasures and orc raids, sometimes a few choice magic items, and human or demi-human slaves bound for forced labor (or worse) in Ghorak's fastness. To protect this tribute, the wagons are well-guarded. A typical force consists of 20-30 warriors and teamsters plus their mounts. The goblin-kin are more comfortable in a dungeon than in the wild, but most are fierce fighters more afraid of failing their brutal overlord than dying bloodily in battle. Moving only at night on back roads, the orc wagon train expects to elude most human encounters, even when passing through the outskirts of human or elven domains. By day, the orcs pull the wagons off the road, circle them for defense, and set up a system of watches. This is probably the best time to attack, but the treasure caravan is strong enough to fend off most bandits, rival monsters, or beasts. Can they stop a party of determined dungeon adventurers?

THE ORC WAGON TRAIN

The composition of Ghorak's orc wagon trains varies from year to year. This is a typical train, consisting of five wagons, three mules, and several slave-bearers, under the able command of Shazogh Beard-Cutter, one of Ghorak's sub-chiefs. The train is a rich prize, but is protected by two score goblin-kin warriors and their mounts. The majority of the goblin-kin – the orc teamsters, archers, and wolf-riders – are sword-fodder, but a few are fierce "boss monsters." There are also a couple of surprises for unwary adventurers: a half-orc witch, some berserker ogres, and a hobgoblin ghost!

In addition to guards, teamsters, and beasts of burden, the train includes a couple of caged prisoners riding in the wagons, some of whom are bound for slavery, and others who may be used as food for monsters.

Guards and Teamsters

- Shazogh Beard-Cutter, orc sub-chief and caravan master, in the command wagon.
- Norikoni, a half-orc witch, in the command wagon.
- Trasha and Brutok, two ogre bodyguards, marching alongside the command wagon.
- Seven orc teamsters (five driving the wagons; two supervising mules and slaves).
 - 10 orc archers (marching on foot, beside the wagons).
 - Rhazbolg, on foot, a hobgoblin standard-bearer whose flag hides a ghost.
 - 10 hobgoblin guards, marching on foot, behind the wagons.
 - Eight barbarian goblin wolf-riders on dire wolves, scouting ahead.

Beasts of Burden

- 10 draft lizards (pulling wagons).
- Three mules (walking alongside the train).
- 15 human slaves (on foot in slave coffle, behind the wagons with the hobgoblins).

THE WAGONS

There are five wagons in this particular train, traveling in the following order: command wagon, coin wagon, treasure wagon, cage wagon, and supply wagon. Other than the wagon's drivers, most of the monster caravan walk on foot rather than riding. Injured fighters who might recover will be transported. Those who *don't* look like they'll get better are fed to the draft lizards or dire wolves. . . (Someone tracking the wagon team may have an easy time of it due to the combination of wagon ruts and wolf and lizard dung.)

The wagons – except as noted – are ordinary four-wheeled covered wagons (see p. B464: \$680, 680 lbs., empty, carries up to 1,000 lbs., SM +2, HP 35, DR 2). They are painted black for better concealment in the dark. Each wagon is pulled by two draft lizards; the reptiles also act as additional sentinels when the wagon train is parked. The wagons' coverings are used as tent shelters during bad weather.

When the caravan is parked, the wagons are circled for protection, latrines are dug, and basic watch discipline is established. They usually won't set a fire. The circled wagons, with a few yards between each one, are 30 yards in circumference, enclosing an area just under 10 yards in diameter. The draft lizards usually rest or sleep in the gaps, with the orcs using them as pillows. The caravan will make camp and have supper, then set up a system of two four-hour watches, half on, half off.

While camped during the daytime, the teamsters and slaves rest, while the other caravan members take shifts sleeping or on watch; even during a fight, at least three hobgoblins are always at the treasure wagon, and the coin wagon always has a guard as well. Otherwise, most of the defenders are inside the wagon circle or stationed behind the wagons, the wolf-riders who are on duty are out sniffing about the area within 200 yards of the camp. While on the road the orcs, goblins, etc. sleep in their armor with weapons at hand; they'll be up in a few seconds.

Wagon 1: Command Wagon

This wagon is driven by the boss of the orc teamsters, an oily fellow named Luzbog. Caravan Master Shazogh and Norikoni the Witch ride in it when not inspecting their followers.

There are a few useful personal effects:

- Map of the region, showing the locations of several orc lairs and dungeons (\$25, 0.1 lb.)
- Medical supplies: 40 cloth bandages (\$400, 40 lbs.); four first aid kits (\$200, 8 lbs.); six litters (\$300, 150 lbs.); one set of surgical instruments (\$300, 15 lbs.).
- Group basics (\$50, 20 lbs.).
- A five-gallon barrel of water (\$65, 40 lbs.).
- A locked iron strong box (DR 12, HP 10, \$250, 15 lbs.) with 30 bloodstones worth \$500 each (\$15,000, 0.3 lbs.).
- One five-gallon barrel of orcish fire-brand (200, 40 lbs.).

Wagon 2: Supply Wagon

The wagon is driven by one orc teamster, who also doubles as the cook. This holds food, water, and other supplies for the caravan:

- Six sacks holding a total of 480 meals worth of orc rations (dried rat, spider jelly, various fungi, etc.; \$960, 240 lbs.).
- 10 five-gallon barrels of water (each \$65, 40 lbs.).
- 10 group basics (\$500, 200 lbs.) for 30-80 people.
- 300 bodkin-point arrows (\$60, 30 lbs.).
- Barrel of pickled dwarf feet (\$200, 40 lbs.).
- Coil of 60 yards of 3/8-inch rope (\$45, 9 lbs.).
- Three shovels (\$12, 6 lbs. each).
- An armory tool kit (\$600, 20 lbs.).
- A carpentry tool kit (\$600, 20 lbs.).

Hajji Baba: What has happened to you? Where is your caravan?

Akim: Captured in the Great Pass on the short route to Nashed.

– The Adventures of Hajji Baba

Wagon 3: Coin Wagon

The wagon is driven by one orc teamster. However, when the caravan is camped, one hobgoblin is always assigned as a guard.

This wagon is laden with mundane but valuable tribute, chiefly copper and silver:

- Three wooden chests (each: DR 2, HP 14, \$200, 40 lbs.): one has 9,200 copper pieces (\$9,200, 184 lbs.); one holds 105,000 silver pieces (\$105,000, 105 lbs.); one holds 12 five-pound silver bars (\$60,000, 60 lbs.).
- Six salted reptile-man tails (each: \$100, 10 lbs.).
- A barrel with 200 doses of stinking toxic, monster drool (\$8,000, 100 lbs.).

Wagon 4: Treasure Wagon

This wagon is reinforced with a fully enclosed body and extra shields and iron plates bolted onto it, giving DR 5 protection. There are four arrow slits. It is driven by one orc teamster, but a hobgoblin also rides shotgun due to the value of loot it holds. When the caravan is camped, there are always at least three hobgoblins stationed outside, specifically assigned. The treasure wagon's payload is halved due to the extra armor, but it carries gold and exotic gifts to please warlord Ghorak. They include:

- A wooden chest (see wagon #3) with 66,000 silver pieces (\$66,000, 66 lbs.) and 300 gold pieces (\$120,000, 6 lbs.).
- An iron strong box (DR 12, HP 10, \$250, 15 lbs.) with 10 lbs. of gold dust (\$200,000, 10 lbs.).
- A Dwarven Axe of Durability (\$8,200, 4 lbs.).
- A fine Rapier of Penetration (\$7,000, 2.75 lbs.).

- An iron strong box (as above) holding a beautiful feather that glows magically (two-yard radius illumination) and, over a two-yard radius, radiates a feeling of hope and joy (+3 to Will to resist Fright Checks, as per Fearlessness, and to control rolls for negative disadvantages like Bloodlust or Bad Temper). It belonged to an angel.

- A wooden box containing what appears to be an ant farm. However, all the ants resemble tiny humanoids, albeit with the minds and behavior of ants. They were the inhabitants of a human village cursed by a chaos demigod for their mindless conformity. Power 20 magic. (\$10,000 as a curiosity to a scholar or wizard, 10 lbs.).

- A great helm of enchanted meteoric iron, with decorative wings, trimmed with gold and silver, taken from the tomb of a forgotten king. Inside the helmet is a mark of legendary dwarf smith, Rhoin Hammerheart, who lived centuries ago but whose work remains famous. It has DR 10 (face, skull). \$12,000, 6 lbs.

- An iron strong box (as above) holding a transparent crystal sphere, cold to the touch, 5" in diameter. It is actually a strange phase of essential ice that melts only if exposed to very high temperatures (e.g., essential fire, a fireball, or a smith's forge). Embedded in the center of the sphere is strange, ugly, bony fish with a huge head and giant eyes and jaws. The sphere is a holy relic sacred to a sea god and is effectively a Blessed holy symbol. \$12,000 (worth twice as much at a sea god's temple), 2 lbs.

- A cloth wrapped around a 6'-long object. Inside is a green, 6'-long, scaly limb ending in three-fingered claw. It was cut from a half demon, Dhazmak the Destroyer, Lord of Slaughter. He still lives, somewhere, and he and his cult would like the arm back (he has five others). Anyone touching the arm with a bare hand must make a Will-4 roll or gain Bloodlust (12) as a disadvantage for hours equal to the margin of failure. \$20,000 to scholars or evil cultists, 10 lbs.

- A sack containing an iron statue of a naked woman, 18" tall, modestly posed, hands covering her nudity. It is deactivated, but is actually a miniature iron golem, except SM -4 with 1/5 normal ST and HP. If given a set of doll-sized clothes, it awakens and obeys the person who dressed it, remaining loyal until their death, after which it returns to sleep. Its name is Matilda, the creation of a long-dead wizard called Gull the Doll-Forger, and records of it may be found in ancient lore. \$400 (as a statue) or \$50,000 if its secret is discovered; 10 lbs.

Wagon 5: Cage Wagon

This wagon is driven by a single teamster. The wagon bed houses an iron cage holding captives of various races dubbed too unruly for the coffle. All captives are at 1/3 FP or less due to hunger and thirst and unless noted are down 2 HP due to abuse. The cage has a heavy lock (-2 to pick); the teamster has the key.

The cage floor is lined with straw (to protect the wagon) but is filthy and stinking. The prisoners are fed and watered only once per day, and whipped if they cause trouble. If supplies ever run short, they'll be eaten. The captives are:

Erin Scarlet, clad in tattered finery, is a swashbuckling warrior and a survivor of the Rune-Delvers, a party of dungeon adventurers who were wiped out or captured by the orcs.

The orcs killed the badly wounded as well as the party's mage. She wants revenge! Also, she'd like her magic rapier back. Erin has a nasty gash on her head and is at 2/3 HP. She is the daughter of a local baron, who would pay a \$10,000 reward if she is brought back home.

Nim Lightfingers, a thief, crouched in agony in the corner of one cage. Another survivor of the Rune-Delvers, he was caught trying to pick the cage's lock. Nim is down to 1/3 HP and suffering from severe pain, for all the fingers on both of his hands were broken and the one was severed by Shazogh as punishment for his escape attempt, and have been left untreated. His severed right finger (and the magic ring it wore) are in the orc's train.

Young Syd, a teenage torchbearer who was with Erin's party; good with a dagger, if he has the chance. He wishes he'd never signed on with a party! His father is a well-off innkeeper (perhaps the PCs have met him) who will be grateful for his boy's return – adventurers need never pay for drinks again should they return the youth.

Derrin and Lena, two ordinary human traveling tinkers who had the misfortune to cross the path of the orc wagon train and were caught and captured by the goblin wolf-riders. Their mules were eaten by the ogres. They have each lost 1 HP.

Jurak the Barbarian, a handsome, muscular axe-wielding dungeon adventurer from a savage land. Down to half HP, he was knocked out during a fight. He wants his axe back.

welcome new owners who will treat them kindly. The mules each have saddlebags. (The names are those assigned by the orc teamsters.)

Mule #1 (Fly Swisher): Saddlebags hold 2,500 copper pieces (\$2,500, 50 lbs.) and 600 silver pieces (\$12,000, 12 lbs.).

Mule #2 (Ass Biter): Saddlebags hold 15 10-lb. silver bars (\$150,000, 150 lbs.).

Mule #3 (Goblin Kicker): Saddlebags hold 7,200 copper pieces (\$7,200, 144 lbs.) and, somehow mixed in, a human finger wearing a thin gold ring decorated with flame images (\$2,500, neg.). The ring magically grants DR 10 to resist fire, but only for the wearer's hand, not the rest of the body (\$10,000 if identified).

Slave Coffles

This pitiful sight consists of 15 dispirited human captives (eight men, seven women), dressed in rags, aged 14-55 (elderly and children were killed or died en route). They are farmers and craftspeople captured by goblin-kin raids on local villages near their lairs. They all wear wrist shackles and collars and are chained one in front of the other.

All are half FP and most have lost 1-3 HP from whippings. Each has a heavy pack tied onto their back, loaded down with sacks holding 500-600 copper pieces (each sack: \$500-600, 25-30 lbs.). If rescued, most want to return to their villages, though a few may have lost all their family and prefer to seek employment with PCs (e.g., as torchbearers). It's also possible that a local lord will reward the adventurers for freeing these folk.

SURPRISES AND TRAITORS

The attack on the orc wagon train can be a straight-up assault to kill the orcs and take their stuff. Alternatively, the GM can add some extra intrigue!

Treacherous Orcs: Nagzog, an orc sub-chief, doesn't like having to turn over a quarter of his war band's loot to his overlord. To betray his boss, he'll leak the route, timing, and approximate defenses of the wagon the train in exchange for a cut of the loot, perhaps sending a few of his orcs along with the PCs to help with the raid. This works well if the party has some reason to work with orcs, e.g., they include some goblin-kin, thieves, or other shady characters. Of course, Nagzog may have plans of his own – perhaps after the party has attacked the wagon train, he'll have a hidden band of his warriors ambush them to steal it all!

Treacherous Humans: A corrupt local lord or village leader knows the monster wagon train is passing through his domain at night, but he has been bribed or intimidated by the orc warlord into letting them do so. However, one of his retainers can't stomach that (especially as he's heard the orc wagon train has human slaves) and leaks the information of the train's route to the party!

NPCs AND MONSTERS

Statistics are provided for the orc caravan's forces. The shackled slaves and caged prisoners are unlikely to be involved in any battle (in a fight they would either run or try to help each other into the nearest cover); the GM may stat them out as necessary.

Shazogh Beard-Cutter

Shazogh, a large and muscular orc in full mail, is the sub-chief who commands the monster caravan. He is a brother-in-law of Ghorak One-Fang. When he was a young orc, Shazogh was taken captive by dwarves and put to work as a slave in an underground gold mine. He later led a slave revolt and escaped, but boasts that his time in the mines strengthened his muscles far beyond that of the average orc. Any dwarves he captures he enjoys humiliating, though he would rather enslave them than kill them; he has a belt with a gold buckle made of dwarf-beards, tightly woven from those of eight dwarfs he has personally defeated.

The Mule Train

Goblin-kin do not get along well with mules. However, there are three dispirited, hungry (-3 FP) mules in the wagon train, their bodies covered with sores and whip marks (-3 HP). They are dungeon-trained beasts who were captured from an earlier party of adventurers. They would eagerly

ST: 17
DX: 13
IQ: 11
HT: 13

Dodge: 9

HP: 19
Will: 14
Per: 12
FP: 13

Parry: 11

Speed: 6.50
Move: 5
Weight: 200 lbs.
SM: 0

DR: 5/3

Broadsword (14): 3d cutting or 1d+3 crushing. Reach 1. Only used if he loses his morningstar.

Morningstar (17): 3d+2 crushing. Reach 1.

Punch (14): 1d+2 crushing. Reach C.

Traits: Acute Hearing 2; Appearance (Ugly); Bully (12); Combat Reflexes; Infravision; Intolerance (Dwarves); Rapid Healing; Resistant to Disease (+3); Resistant to Poison (+3); Social Stigma (Savage).

Skills: Brawling-14; Broadsword-14; Flail-16; Intimidation-12; Knife-13; Leadership-13; Mining-12; Shortsword-15; Stealth-11; Tactics-11.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Move and Dodge with Light encumbrance. Notable equipment includes:

- Morningstar “dwarf beater” (fine), \$240, 6 lbs.
- Boots (covering feet), \$80, 2 lbs.
- Broadsword, \$500, 3 lbs.
- Double mail hauberk (covering torso and groin), \$520, 44 lbs.
- Large knife, \$40, 1 lb.
- Medium shield (DB 2), further enchanted to provide its wielder with Magic Resistance 3, \$60, 15 lbs.
- Mail leggings (covering legs, DR 4/2), \$110, 15 lbs.
- Mail sleeves (covering arms, DR 4/2), \$70, 9 lbs.
- Barrel helm (covering skull and face, DR 6), \$240, 10 lbs.
- Belt (eight dwarf beards) with \$500 gold buckle shaped like a snarling wolf.
- Belt pouch holds 50 gold pieces.

*If your desires be endless, your
cares and fear will be so too.*

– Thomas Fuller

Trasha and Brutok (“The Terrible Twins”)

The orc caravan has two hulking ogres, Trasha and her twin brother Brutok, who serve as the leader’s bodyguards. They are sworn blood-siblings of Shazogh, who helped them escape the dwarf mines. In a fight, they’re used as assault troops to break the enemy line. Otherwise, they are detailed to help pull the heavy war wagons and to serve as super teamsters if wagons are stuck in the mud, break axles, etc. When the orcs relax (e.g., in friendly territory), the ogres also act as goalies for brutal football games (usually played with the heads of former foes). The other goblin-kin think it’s great fun to threaten captives with having the ogres “play ball” with them. The ogre twins mostly communicate in orc cave-man style (“ugh – Trasha will squash little armored man!”). They fight with flails fashioned by orc smiths from the chains they once wore as mine slaves.

ST: 20	HP: 20	Speed: 5.75
DX: 11	Will: 10	Move: 4
IQ: 7	Per: 9	Weight: 800 lbs.
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: +1
Dodge: 8	Parry: 10	DR: 2 (DR 6 on skull)

Bite (13): 2d-1 cutting. Reach C.

Flail (14): 3d+7 crushing. *Does not* become unready, due to ST. Reach 1, 2*.

Kick (11): 2d+1 crushing. Reach C, 1.

Punch (13): 2d crushing. Reach C, 1.

Traits: Appearance (Hideous); Fearlessness 3; High Pain Threshold; Magic Resistance 2; Night Vision 5; Odious Racial Habit (Eats other sapient beings, -3 reactions); Resistant to Disease (+3); Resistant to Poison (+3).

Skills: Brawling-14; Flail-14; Two-Handed Axe/Mace-12.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Notable equipment includes:

- Flail, \$100, 8 lbs.
- Oversized pot-helm, \$400, 12 lbs.
- Brutok has a sack on his belt with a collection of seven children’s dolls and similar toys (taken from children he has eaten).
- Trasha has a sack on her belt with 20 “shiny rocks” (zircons, bits of jade, and other semi-precious stones, \$300) and a wind-up music box she likes to play; \$100, 0.5 lbs.

Hobgoblin Guards

The elite of the caravan’s guards are 10 unusually fierce boar-tusked hobgoblin warriors armed with heavy curved scimitars (effectively broadswords). They carry shields, and wear helms and full mail. Their round shields are emblazoned with their tribal symbol: a yellow horned skull with a single fang against a sable field.

Six form a ready strike force under their leader Rhazbolg Melt-Face. Another three are usually stationed to guard the treasure wagon, and one acts a guard at the coin wagon.

ST: 14	HP: 17	Speed: 5.75
DX: 11	Will: 10	Move: 4
IQ: 8	Per: 10	Weight: 170-270 lbs.
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: 0

Dodge: 7 **Parry:** 10 **DR:** 4/2

Broadsword (14): 2d+1 cutting or 1d+1 crushing. Reach 1.

Punch (13): 1d crushing. Reach C.

Shield Bash (12): 1d crushing. Reach 1.

Traits: Appearance (Ugly); Bad Temper (12); Infravision; Rapid Healing; Resistant to Disease (+3); Resistant to Poison (+3); Social Stigma (Savage).

Skills: Brawling-13; Broadsword-14; Intimidation-12; Knife-12; Shield-12; Stealth-11.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Move and Dodge assume Light encumbrance. Each carries 3d × \$5 in silver coins in addition to their gear. Other notable equipment includes:

- Broadsword, \$500, 3 lbs.
- Boots (covering feet), \$80, 2 lbs.
- Large knife, \$40, 1 lb.
- Mail shirt (covering torso), \$150, 16 lbs.
- Medium shield (DB 2), \$60, 15 lbs.
- Studded leather skirt (covering legs, groin, DR 3/2), \$60, 4 lbs.
- Mail sleeves (covering arms, DR 4/2), \$70, 9 lbs.
- Pot-helm (covering skull, DR 4), \$100, 5 lbs.

Rhazbolg Melt-Face

The chief's lieutenant and the biggest of the hobgoblins is Rhazbolg Melt-Face, a berserker who bears the tribal standard. Rhazbolg has the same gear as the other hobgoblins, except he normally wields the tribal standard instead of his sword. He wears a wolf-visage bronze war mask that disguises his horribly burned countenance (from a run-in with a flame-jet-wielding mage). He hates and fears fire-users and mages. If the orcs or hobgoblins are wavering, Rhazbolg unleashes the ghost (see below), then throws the standard into the enemy ranks and urge his followers into a manic charge to retrieve it. Rhazbolg normally fights alongside Shazogh.

ST: 15 **HP:** 17 **Speed:** 6.00
DX: 12 **Will:** 12 **Move:** 4
IQ: 9 **Per:** 11 **Weight:** 265 lbs.
HT: 12 **FP:** 12 **SM:** 0
Dodge: 8 **Parry:** 9 **DR:** 4/2

Bite (13): 1d+1 impaling. Reach C.

Broadsword (13): 2d+2 cutting. Reach 1.

Punch (13): 1d+1 crushing. Reach C.

Spear (13): 1d+4 impaling. Reach 1* (one hand) or 1, 2* (two hands).

Traits: Appearance (Hideous); Bad Temper (12); Berserk (12) (Battle Rage); Fearlessness 2; Infravision; Intolerance (Mages); Pyrophobia (12); Rapid Healing; Resistant to Disease (+3); Resistant to Poison (+3); Social Stigma (Savage); Teeth (Fangs).

Skills: Brawling-13; Broadsword-13; Knife-12; Intimidation-12; Leadership-11; Shield-12; Spear-14; Stealth-11; Tactics-9.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Move and Dodge with Light encumbrance. He carries a pouch with 40 silver pieces (\$800) in addition to his gear. Other notable equipment includes:

- Broadsword, \$500, 3 lbs.
- Fine spear (\$160, 4 lbs.) with war-standard attached (\$200, 4 lbs.) The standard is a one-fanged hobgoblin skull with a spear sticking through it, with three shrunken heads (an elf, dwarf, and human) dangling from it.
- Mail shirt (covering torso), \$150, 16 lbs.
- Large knife, \$40, 1 lb.
- Medium shield (DB 2), \$60, 15 lbs.
- Studded leather skirt (covering legs, groin, DR 3/2), \$60, 4 lbs.
- Mail sleeves (covering arms, DR 4/2), \$70, 9 lbs.
- Pot-helm (covering skull, DR 4), \$100, 5 lbs.
- Face mask (covers face, DR 4), \$100, 5 lbs.

Ghost of Ugrok Zharn

The ghost of a hobgoblin hero who died under a pile of 20 elven warriors, his skull is bound into the war standard carried by Rhazbolg! If the goblin-kin are in a bad way, Ugrok's ghost will flow out of the standard and fight alongside them, manifesting as a ghostly semi-solid hobgoblin in a mail shirt and helm, with long flowing hair and a blue glow. The ghost's gear vanishes when he's slain.

ST: 13 **HP:** 15 **Speed:** 6.50
DX: 13 **Will:** 15 **Move:** 6
IQ: 8 **Per:** 11 **Weight:** 230 lbs.
HT: 13 **FP:** 13 **SM:** 0
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 12 **DR:** 4/2

Punch (14): 1d crushing. Reach C.

Glaive (18): 2d+2 (2) cutting or 1d+4 (2) impaling. Icy weapon adds +2 to penetrating injury. Reach 2, 3*.

Traits: Appearance (Ugly); Bad Temper (12); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Infravision; Insubstantiality (Affect Substantial; Usually On); Intolerance (Other races); Rapid Healing; Social Stigma (Savage); Signature Gear (Glaive); Teeth (Fangs); Temperature Tolerance 10.

Skills: Brawling-14; Intimidation-14; Polearm-18.

Class: Undead.

Notes: Notable equipment includes:

- Spirit glaive, a blue-glowing polearm that manifests along with him; this is a fine glaive, with a (2) armor divisor and Icy Weapon enchantment. 6 lbs.
- Mail shirt (covering torso), 16 lbs.
- Pot-helm (covering skull, DR 4), 5 lbs.
- Boots (covering feet, DR 2), 2 lbs.

He who would travel happily must travel light.

– Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Norikoni the Witch

A half-orc witch with staring violet eyes, pig ears, and a wild mane of waist length hair died green and red, into which is braided metal barbs, bits of bone and teeth, and spider webs. She negotiated a treaty with the goblin wolf-riders.

ST: 11 **HP:** 13 **Speed:** 5.00
DX: 10 **Will:** 13 **Move:** 4
IQ: 13 **Per:** 13 **Weight:** 160 lbs.
HT: 10 **FP:** 10 **SM:** 0
Dodge: 7 **Parry:** 10 **DR:** 2

Staff (11): 1d+1 crushing. Reach 1, 2.

Traits: Acute Hearing 2; Appearance (Unattractive); Cast-Iron Stomach; Charisma 3; Disturbing Voice; Energy Reserve 2 (Magical); Magery 3; Night Vision 5; Rapid Healing; Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+3); Social Stigma (Savage).

Skills: Alchemy-13; Animal Handling-13; Bard-14; Diplomacy-13; Fast-Talk-12; Musical Instrument (Drums)-12; Riding-12; Poisons-13; Singing-12; Staff-11; Throwing-12.

Spells: Agonize-15; Air Jet-15; Apportation-15; Armor-15; Continual Light-15; Create Air-15; Hush-15; Ignite Fire-15; Itch-15; Lend Energy-15; Levitation-15; Light-15; Mage-Stealth-15; Missile Shield-15; Pain-15; Purify Air-15; Recover Energy-15; Seek Earth-15; Sensitize-15; Shape Air-15; Shape Earth-15; Shape Fire-15; Shield-15; Silence-15; Sound-15; Spasm-15; Stun-15.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Move and Dodge with Light encumbrance. Notable equipment includes:

- Leather armor (covering all locations except the face), \$340, 19.5 lbs.
- Veil of giant-spider silk (covers face; DR 1), \$1,000, 0.1 lbs.
- Power item (elf baby skull with ruby eyes), provides 4 FP; \$440, 0.5 lb.
- Flash nageteppo, thrown, 10-yard radius; roll vs. HT or suffer Blindness (Vision-based Affliction); roll HT to recover each turn; \$40, 0.2 lbs.
- Staff, \$10, 4 lbs.
- Drum, human-skin, \$80, 2 lbs.
- Two spider-silk bandages, +1 First Aid skill; \$160, neg.
- Three doses of orcish energy brew (restore 1d/2 FP, drinkers lacking Cast-Iron Stomach roll nauseated for 1d minutes on failed HT roll); each: \$45, 1 lb.
- Pouch with 30 gold pieces and a skeleton of a hummingbird.

Orc Teamsters

These seven orcs are responsible for driving the wagons and mules, supervising their loading, and, due to their pain-taking skill with whips, urging on the coffle of slaves. The head teamster, Luzbog, has IQ 10.

ST: 11 **HP:** 13 **Speed:** 5.50
DX: 11 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 4
IQ: 9 **Per:** 10 **Weight:** 190 lbs.
HT: 11 **FP:** 11 **SM:** 0
Dodge: 7 **Parry:** 9 **DR:** 2

Punch (12): 1d crushing. Reach C

Shortsword (13): 1d cutting or 1d-1 impaling. Reach 1.

Whip (13): 1d-1(0.5) crushing. Reach 1-2.

Traits: Acute Hearing 2; Appearance (Ugly); Bully (12); Infravision; Rapid Healing; Resistant to Disease (+3); Resistant to Poison (+3); Social Stigma (Savage).

Skills: Animal Handling-10; Brawling-12; Intimidation-12; Shortsword-11; Teamster-11; Whip-13.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Move and Dodge with Light encumbrance. Notable equipment includes:

- Cheap shortsword, \$160, 2 lbs.
- Leather armor (covering all locations except the face), \$340, 19.5 lbs.
- Whip, 2-yard, \$40, 4 lbs.
- Belt pouch with 4d silver pieces; hidden inside their boots or otherwise hidden on their body, another 1d-1 gold pieces (they have opportunity to loot the wagons).

Orc Archers

The balance of the orc force consists of 10 pig-eared orcish bowmen. When the train is on the move, they flank it, half on the right and half on the left. When camped, they fight using the circled wagons as cover. Although trained as archers they're quite willing to drop their bows and fight hand to hand if foes close or are too heavily armored for their arrows to

penetrate. They're armed with regular bows and axes and wear leather armor.

ST: 11 **HP:** 13 **Speed:** 5.50
DX: 11 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 4
IQ: 9 **Per:** 10 **Weight:** 140 lbs.
HT: 11 **FP:** 11 **SM:** 0
Dodge: 7 **Parry:** 9 **DR:** 2

Axe (12): 1d+3 cutting. Reach 1.

Bow (13): 1d impaling. Range 180/240. Bodkin arrows do 1d(2) pi instead. Arrows are poisoned with monster drool adding follow-up damage: 2 points toxic (HT to resist).

Punch (12): 1d crushing. Reach C

Traits: Acute Hearing 2; Appearance (Ugly); Bully (12); Infravision; Rapid Healing; Resistant to Disease (+3); Resistant to Poison (+3); Social Stigma (Savage).

Skills: Axe/Mace-12; Bow-13; Brawling-12; Knife-11; Poisons-10; Stealth-11.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Move and Dodge with Light encumbrance. Each carries 1d-1 × \$5 in coins in addition to their gear. Other notable equipment includes:

- Axe, \$50, 4 lbs.
- Leather armor (covering all locations except the face), \$340, 19.5 lbs.
- Regular bow, \$100, 2 lbs.
- Large knife, \$40, 1 lb.
- Quiver of 20 bodkin point arrows (poisoned), \$440 (including the poison), 2 lbs.

Cannibal Goblin Wolf-Riders

The orc caravan's scouting force consists of eight goblins from a barbaric tribe who ride pony-sized dire wolves. They dress in barbaric furs and feathers; their captain is Grazi Wolfsister, a cunning goblin scout with a keen sense of self preservation, and unusual degree of Animal Empathy. Abandoned in the wild as goblin pups, Grazi's ancestors were raised by dire wolves and formed an alliance with them, learning their language and secrets. They may be the source of rumors of goblin-kin riding wolves! The goblins and wolves consider themselves a single pack; over generations, the goblin wolf-riders have gained larger wolf-like ears and sharper fangs than ordinary goblins, and are bit less timid.

When the caravan is on the road, Grazi's wolf-riders scout a half mile or so ahead of it, getting the lay of the land and reporting on any hazards. Goblins are not the bravest fighters in the world, which makes them good scouts: If they run into anything that looks too tough, they'll high-tail it back to the caravan to sound the alert. During a full-scale fight, the wolf-riders try to outflank opponents and attack any lightly armored foes such as enemy mages; the dire wolves prefer to bite at legs or feet.

ST: 11 **HP:** 10 **Speed:** 6.00
DX: 11 **Will:** 11 **Move:** 6
IQ: 10 **Per:** 11 **Weight:** 120 lbs.
HT: 12 **FP:** 12 **SM:** 0
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 9 **DR:** 2

Bite (11): 1d-1 cutting. Reach C.
Punch (11): 1d-1 crushing. Reach C
Shortsword (11): 1d-2 impaling or 1d+1 cutting. Reach 1.
Spear (11): 1d impaling. Reach 1* (one hand) or 1, 2* (two hands).
Thrown Spear (12): 1d+1 impaling. Range 9/13.

Traits: Acute Hearing 2; Animal Empathy; Appearance (Ugly); Cowardice (9); Infravision; Rapid Healing; Resistance to Disease (+3); Resistant to Poison (+3); Odious Personal Habit (Cannibalize other goblins); Social Stigma (Savage).
Skills: Animal Handling-13; Observation-11; Riding-12; Shortsword-11; Spear-11; Stealth-12; Thrown Weapon (Spear)-12; Tracking-10. Grazi has Animal Handling-16.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: The mounts are dire wolves (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: The Dungeon*, p. 22). The wolves will fight along with their riders, taking special pleasure in biting legs and ravaging the bodies of injured or fallen falls. Those who lose their riders continue to fight. Each goblin rider carries 2d-2 x \$5 in silver coins in addition to their gear. Other notable equipment includes:

- Spear, \$40, 4 lbs.
- Cheap shortsword, \$160, 2 lbs.
- Fur tunic (covering torso, DR 1), \$25, 2 lbs.
- Studded leather skirt (covering groin and legs, DR 3/2), \$60, 4 lbs.
- Small shield (DB 1), \$40, 8 lbs.
- Leather cap (covering skull, DR 1), \$32, neg.

Draft Lizards

These 10 domesticated monsters are sturdy, long-legged subterranean lizards with pale albino scales, large black eyes, flickering red tongues, sharp claws, and long tails. They were bred by a forgotten underground race for food. They are omnivorous and capable of eating almost anything with gusto. They

are obedient if fed regularly, but have a mean temperament and will often snap at new handlers; orcs like them (“spirited beasts”). They hate the smell of horses, often starting fights with them (and vice versa); regular Animal Handling rolls may be needed to avoid trouble. They dislike daylight and taste like a spicy chicken with an unpleasant harsh, metallic aftertaste.

ST: 24	HP: 24	Speed: 5.25
DX: 10	Will: 10	Move: 10
IQ: 4	Per: 9	Weight: 800 lbs.
HT: 11	FP: 11	SM: +2
Dodge: 8	Parry: N/A	DR: 2

Claws (10): 2d+1 cutting. Reach C, 1.

Teeth (10): 2d+1 cutting. A successful bite counts as a grapple, even if no damage penetrates DR. Reach C, 1.

Traits: Bad Temper (12); Cast-Iron Stomach; Domestic Animal; Infravision; Nictitating Membrane 2; Quadruped; Temperature Tolerance 1 (Heat).

Skills: None.

Class: Animal.

Notes: Scaled hides can fetch \$200.

ABOUT THE COLUMNIST

David L. Pulver is a Canadian freelance author. An avid science-fiction fan, he began roleplaying in junior high with the newly released *Basic Dungeons & Dragons*. Upon graduating from university, he decided to become a game designer. Since then, David has written over 70 roleplaying game books, and he has worked as a staff writer, editor, and line developer for Steve Jackson Games and Guardians of Order. He is best known for creating *Transhuman Space*, co-authoring the *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* anime RPG, and writing countless *GURPS* books, including the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*, *GURPS Ultra-Tech*, and the *GURPS Spaceships* series.

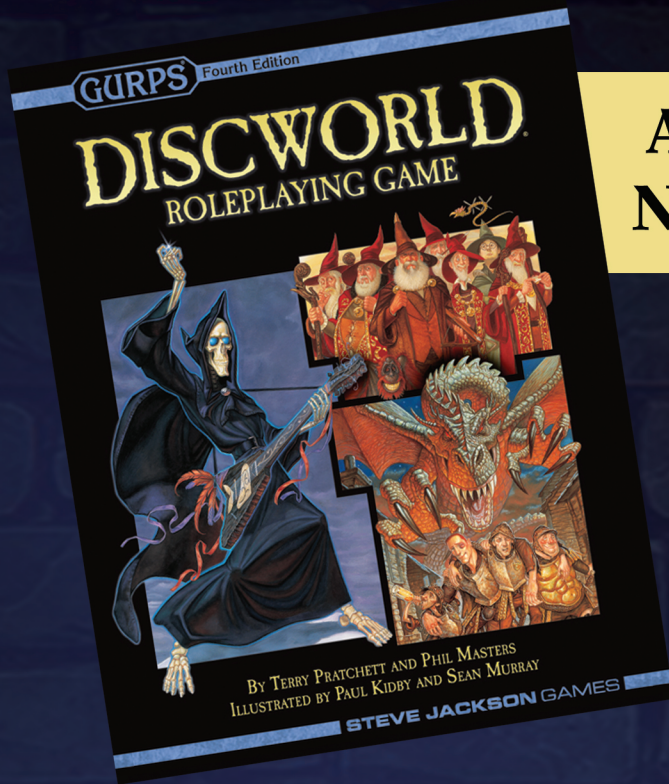
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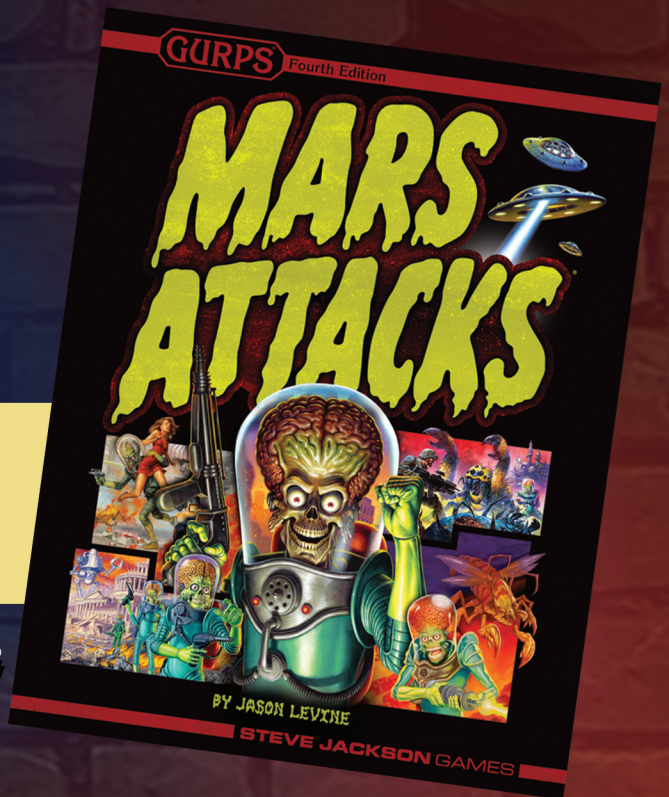
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THE VILLAGE GREEN

BY JON BLACK

The village is a common feature of historical and fantasy roleplaying. Often, such communities serve as scenery or are seldom more developed than “okay, the party spends the night at the village inn.” This article provides resources for building unique, detailed villages to serve as locations for adventure, challenge, and opportunity in their own right. While not required, *GURPS Fantasy* and the *GURPS Low-Tech* series can help the GM and players alike get the most from their village experience. Additionally, the information here can be inspired by – and even flesh out certain aspects of – places from the *GURPS Locations* series, including *St. George’s Cathedral*, *Tower of Octavius*, and *Worminghall*.

This article uses the TL3 English village as its default for two reasons. First, it is a close approximation of many fantasy villages (intentionally so, in Tolkien’s case). Second, it is the best documented.

DEFINING A VILLAGE

Historically, definitions of “village” are vague, change over time, and often overlap with other settlement types. Ultimately, “village” is less a question of population than of having certain characteristics (admittedly, a community of much over 2,000 people possessing these attributes stretches believability), which, for roleplaying purposes, create a certain atmosphere. A historic village features the following aspects.

Homogenous

Villages tend to be unified in culture, language, and religion. Where exceptions exist, they likely reflect a class or caste difference resulting from political change (as with Danish or Norman overlords of English villages).

Self-Contained

The combination of *self-sufficiency* (below) and medieval social structures means many residents never leave their village’s territory. Most others have been only one village over. The well-traveled have seen the nearest market town. Pilgrims or those serving as peasant levies in wars are exceptions.

Self-Sufficient

The classic village is nearly self-sufficient. Its lands contain most resources necessary for survival (building

materials, cropland, firewood or other fuel, pasturage, water, etc.). Villagers grow food and make clothes, furniture, and other necessities of daily life. Typically, iron and salt are the only significant commodities brought in from outside (usually bartered for with surplus grain or livestock). Late in TL3, wool and cloth become export items for many villages. Even villages producing a trade commodity must be as self-sufficient as possible. Whatever surplus they create is typically needed to address shortcoming in local food production or other materials. Consult *At Play in the Fields* in *Pyramid* #3/33: *Low-Tech* for expanded rules on agricultural production.

Fantasy Villages

Villages in fantasy literature and gaming often flout one or more of these characteristics. *Homogenous* is the most frequently targeted; fantasy villages are often culturally, racially, and religiously diverse. *Self-contained* and *self-sufficient* are also commonly diluted or ignored. As long as the atmosphere is right, it remains a village for gaming purposes.

Small-Scale

Every village resident knows every other. Except in the (uncommon) case of recent arrivals, villagers know each other’s business intimately. The static nature of village populations means such familiarities stretch back generations. Villagers know stories, anecdotes, and rumors about each other’s ancestors as far back as living memory. Feuds and vague reputations may endure even longer.

Static

Most villages have lengthy pedigrees, encompassing hundreds or even thousands of years. Few people move into or out of a village. Positions of authority and specialized trades are typically inherited (village priest is a common exception), minimizing social mobility. Such insularity often breeds distrust of the novel. Even reoccurring strangers like tinkers, traveling merchants, and performers may be regarded with suspicion. Unknown outsiders may be greeted with outright hostility.

Transportable

This may appear contradictory with *static* but is not. While villages as a whole endure for centuries, component parts are temporary and portable. Excepting church and manor, most structures can be torn down and rebuilt elsewhere nearby. Dwellings may be moved due to environmental changes or close to newly productive land. Lands are rotated between agriculture, grazing, and waste. Paths and roads shift with changing land use and trade.

A QUICK TOUR

The following village features are nearly ubiquitous. Terminology is borrowed from TL3 Europe. In other settings, villages may use alternate terminology and feature slight variations.

Church

Along with the manor, the church is typically one of two permanent village structures, built from the best materials available and decorated as elaborately as means allow. Villages can typically support only a single priest (perhaps with an acolyte or apprentice).

In polytheistic societies, a church may be consecrated to the entire pantheon or only the village's patron deity. Where centralization is weak or where clergy come from the village they serve, heterodox local religious practices may develop.

Typically, an adjacent *churtyard* provides a communal cemetery. In worlds where the dead don't rest easily, cemeteries may be located outside the village (and possibly walled).

Common

This is an open, undeveloped area accessible to all residents. Such spaces serve multiple purposes, including communal celebrations, markets, and a place to muster villagers in time of war.

Manor House

The village ruler's fortified residence. While the manor house is a distinctly TL3 European phenomenon, most villages have an equivalent. The manor is the center of jurisprudence, governance, and village high culture. It also provides refuge and defense in time of war or crisis. At TL3 or lower, the manor is more fortification than a dwelling. With each TL above 3, it becomes more showpiece and less stronghold.

Market

Every village has a location where informal trade occurs at least weekly. The *common* and *church* exterior often double as marketplaces. Most exchange is via barter; actual coin is less common.

Mill

Watermills and windmills are TL1 technology. Any TL1+ village with suitable geography likely has such a structure. Mills are typically owned or operated on behalf of the lord of the manor, who takes a cut of all grain milled. Mining villages may utilize mills to crush ore.

Public House

A common location for drinking (or local equivalent) and socializing is universal. Even the smallest community typically has a brewer, even if not a specialized one. The public house is often a brewer's home, where locals gather to drink. That fantasy staple, the tavern, is historically limited to villages that are affluent, larger, or well-traveled.

Water

Villages require a water supply. This might involve access to a lake, stream, or river. It could also be a spring, well, or (at TL4+) pump. Water sources are common locations for socializing and exchanging information.

*You've got to remember
that these are just simple farmers.
These are people of the land.
The common clay of the new West.
— The Waco Kid,
in **Blazing Saddles***

VARIANT VILLAGES

While agriculture is the primary activity of most villages, communities based around other economic activities exist. Many of these activities are sufficiently rare and important that such communities often become towns or cities. A village engaging in such an activity may be young and growing, too remote and inhospitable for larger settlements, or simply have marginal resources.

Boom

This is shorthand for any village growing through outside settlement. Depending on the catalyst for growth, boom villages often qualify as another type of village. Historical examples include recent mining strikes, new villages created through political changes or royal charter, and villages swelled by refugees. It also includes the classic adventuring village, a community created or expanded to support an influx of adventurers and the wealth they bring.

Because of the rapid influx of outsiders (who may arrive from multiple locations and differ from current inhabitants), boom villages may dilute many aspects detailed in *Defining a Village* (pp. 30-31).

Defensive

A defensive village is selected primarily for its defendable characteristics or used to maintain a military feature or encampment. Celtic hillforts and Roman settlements supporting Hadrian's Wall are historic examples. Highly defensible locations are seldom optimal for food production. Therefore, most defensive villages are part of a polity large enough to provide surplus food and other materials.

Market

Unlike informal village markets, regular markets serving multiple villages are uncommon and may require a royal charter. At certain times, the presence of a chartered market is the key distinction between town and village. Market villages tend to be the largest and most affluent village in their area. Market villages are usually also trade villages (below).

Mining

Resource extraction, while inefficient at TL3, is vital and rulers pay careful attention to mining communities. With high transportation costs, ore crushing and smelting are typically conducted on-site.

Where mines remain productive for long periods (like Cornwall and Devon), miners may be as sedentary as other villagers, building relationships with particular mines lasting generations or centuries. However, unlike most groups, miners often have freedom of movement. It is one of the few perks for what, even by medieval standards, is brutal and deadly work. At other times and places, where population and social organization permit, mining is frequently conducted by convicts or slave labor.

Fishing

Any village adjacent to a body of water will take whatever fish and shellfish it can. Others build stock ponds for aquaculture. True fishing villages, however, are primarily a coastal phenomenon. Depending on geography and history, fishing villages may be even more isolated than others. While TL6, Lovecraft's Innsmouth illustrates the roleplaying opportunities of such communities.

Pilgrimage

Religious journeys are a major industry at TL3. Any significant holy site draws devoted travelers and wealth, which quickly elevate it beyond a village. Pilgrimage villages, therefore, typically possess minor relics or are devoted to figures of local or regional significance. Such a community may also qualify as religious village (see below).

Salt

These villages mine solid salt or they practice open-pan salt making by evaporating naturally occurring brine. Given the value of salt to the medieval economy, such communities often achieve town status. Salt villages are likely to be marginal sites for regional production.

Religious

These villages support a nearby religious institution (abbey, convent, monastery, etc.). This institution plays the same role in the religious village that the manor does in other villages. Beyond that substitution, religious villages may have few differences with their secular counterparts.

Textiles

Flax- and wool-producing villages provide raw materials for medieval cloth. As with mining, transportation costs mean processing is handled locally. An exception is high quality

wool, exported to Flanders or Italy (or, perhaps, their fantasy world equivalents).

Fuller's earth is the preferred medium for processing wool. For a campaign that exposes adventurers to medieval life's less seemly aspects, vats of stale urine also can be mentioned.

Economies of scale were sometimes applied to wool production. Neighboring villages often pooled pasturage and collaborated on shearing and processing.

Trade

If market villages are nodes in the economic system, trade villages mark its pathways, servicing trade and travel between capitals, cities, and towns. This creates the steady stream of visitors necessary to sustain the defining characteristic of a trade village: the inn or coaching inn. Identical to the taverns of fantasy roleplaying, inns provide lodging and stables for travelers, and food and drink to visitors and locals alike. These villagers have greater access to information about the outside world and *may* be more tolerant of strangers and their ways. Trade villages are not necessarily market villages. For several examples of fantasy inns, see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 10: Taverns*.

Determine a village's wider affiliation and the potential encounters that could happen there.

LITTLE VILLAGE, BIG WORLD

For a village to be useful for roleplaying, it must be part of a wider world. This requires two things. First, the GM must decide what adventure seeds and potential encounters a village holds. Second, the community's wider affiliation, or lack thereof, must be determined.

Adventures

Many village adventure seeds are of the "storm in a tea cup" variety. That does not mean they need lack danger (rescuing villagers from a flood), tension (procuring essential resources under emergency conditions), or choices (defend villagers from a greedy lord *or* take the lord's coin to enforce his edicts). Some gaming groups may embrace villages' potential for socially driven adventures sans physical risk or material reward (hosting a visiting baron and his entourage or besting neighboring villages by holding a grander solstice festival).

It is unlikely a dangerous animal or monster could maintain a prolonged presence in a village's territory. Residents (and, if necessary, the lord's liege) would marshal forces to deal with the threat. If that fails, beyond a point, it is more practical to move the village than subject it to ongoing predation and disruption of production. Of course, a creature that has only recently taken up residence near a village is not only possible, it is a gaming cliché.

Outsiders with a sustained presence in village territory will be slow to violence or easily avoidable. Hermits (wise, crazed, or both) and (mostly) peaceful outlaws may lurk in the hinterland. Ghosts, land spirits, and various fey creatures are examples of nonhumans that might be encountered in village territory.

Allegiance

Most villages are part of larger sociopolitical units. That broad statement covers a multitude of situations. External control over a village may be strong or weak, deep or shallow. While primary identification is almost always with the village, residents may be supportive of higher authority. Or they may be disdainful, subverting it at every turn. Attitudes might be somewhere in between, circumventing onerous obligations but rallying around their monarch in time of crisis. Every village resident need not have identical attitudes toward central authority.

Free Villages

Free villages owe no allegiance to a larger, external entity. While exceptional, historical examples exist. Such communities are situated in inhospitable terrain, remote from centers of power, or both (like the mountain villages of Anatolia, the Balkans, and the Mezzogiorno or TL4-5 pirate communities). Conversely, the fantasy genre is filled with villages owing allegiance to no outside entity.

Whether historic or fantastical, the GM should define a free village's approach to defense, economy, social organization, and attitude toward the outside world.

THE VILLAGE PEOPLE

Colorful, well-developed residents make or break villages in roleplaying.

As NPCs, villagers' point values will fluctuate wildly based on campaign. In bleakly historic settings, the combination of poor nutrition, nonexistent prenatal care, and endemic disease could give the average villager 9 in each attribute. In Tolkien-esque high fantasy, villages may be full of sturdy yeomen with high ST and DX and loaded with advantages and virtuous disadvantages. Optimistic historical games or low fantasy might settle for averages of 10 in each attribute, with an occasional surprising skill or trait.

Because of this variability, treatments below provide general information while suggesting essential or useful traits and skills and discussing possible variants.

Some archetypes – such as druid, mage, and ranger – are appropriate primarily for fantasy or magical villages. Because they are extensively detailed in other *GURPS* supplements, they are not reviewed here.

Average Villagers

A typical village resident, most likely a farmer, housewife, or teenage child. Except in cinematic, grittily historic, high-fantasy, or mythic games, attributes are probably average. Points are concentrated in Farming or Housekeeping, with the remainder spread across other skills necessarily for daily life. This Common Traits list can also be used to round out other village archetypes.

Essential Traits: Average attributes, plus Farming or Housekeeping.

Common Traits: Increased FP, illiteracy, Sense of Duty (Village), Animal Handling, Bow (or appropriate missile weapon), Brawling, Carousing, Carpentry, Fishing, Knife (and other melee weapons as appropriate), Leatherworking, Scrounging, Sewing, Survival, Weather Sense, and Wrestling.

Entertainment is provided through Carousing, Dancing, Gambling, Games, Public Speaking (for storytelling), and Singing.

Variant: For villages with a primary economic activity other than agriculture, replace Farming with an appropriate skill. Where climate and terrain allow, such villagers also maintain small vegetable gardens (suggesting a point or two in Gardening).

THE VILLAGE CAMPAIGN

It is possible to center an entire campaign on a single village. Such a game would not be for everyone. For the right group, however, such a concept campaign could be incredibly rewarding.

All the challenges of site-based campaigns will be present to an enhanced degree. Key villagers, regular visitors, and PCs' families all require at least minimal development. A detailed village history must be created (perhaps collaboratively between GM and players). Within a few square miles, the GM is tasked with creating and populating an environment as rich as any epic continent-spanning campaign.

Many adventures will feature non-standard plots: betrothals, feuds, natural disasters, strangers in the village, or going to market. Lest characters (and players) grow overly comfortable in their pastoral setting, traditional challenges (marauding bands, monsters, etc.) may make occasional appearances.

Such a campaign need not have a low point value (though that is an option). From Middle Earth to Yrth, fantasy is filled with tiny communities of potent individuals.

Blacksmith

In most locations, metal was a scarce commodity until TL4-5 but essential to maintain quality of life. This made the blacksmith an important, and often hereditary, village position.

Essential Traits: Average ST and HT, plus Smith (Iron).

Common Traits: Above average ST, IQ, and HT; extra FP, High Pain Threshold, Status 0, Wealth, Merchant, Metallurgy, and Smith (other).

Variants: Affluent or military-minded lords may maintain their own blacksmith in addition to the village blacksmith. Such individuals likely have points in one or more Armoury specialties. Some cultures regard metalworking with supernatural awe, imparting smiths with Social Regard (Respected or Venerated). In fantasy or magical campaigns, actual magic may bolster their craft.

Craftspeople and Tradespeople

Bakers, butchers, brewers, carpenters, masons, millers, miners, thatchers, tinkers, and weavers are some examples of occupations under this heading. Not every village will have all of them. The larger and more affluent the community, the more likely it supports specialized craftspeople. A village's primary economic activity may dictate the presence of certain occupations (a mining village, of course, always has miners).

While geared toward larger communities, information in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 17: Guilds* can be applied to village craftspeople as well.

Essential Traits: Average relevant attributes and governing skill.

Common Traits: Above average relevant attributes, appropriate Talents, Status 0, Wealth, Merchant, and useful secondary skills.

Variants: Like blacksmiths, in fantasy or magic campaigns, magic may enhance crafting ability. In illuminated games, practicing certain crafts may involve esoteric knowledge or secret agendas.

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

One trait and one skill merit special examination for village roleplaying.

Intolerance (Outsiders)

This is a common disadvantage for historical villagers, often complimented with Xenophobia. Point value is governed by the frequency of outsiders in a particular village. For communities along a major road, trade route, or otherwise receiving visitors daily, -5 is appropriate. In settlements seeing unfamiliar faces once a year or less, such disdain is a -1 quirk. Outsiders experiencing such Intolerance may have only moderate reaction penalties to intolerant residents. Travelers are unlikely to be heavily invested in villagers' opinions and, anyway, won't have to deal with them for long.

Area Knowledge

Aside from lords or priests, villagers with Area Knowledge specialties other than Neighborhood or Village would be rare. Area Knowledge (Neighborhood or Village), however, should be universal. IQ+2 is a realistic *minimum* for locals and could go much higher.

Optional Rule: Using Area Knowledge for information about larger areas, the *Geographical and Temporal Scope* (p. B176) modifiers give -2 for each Area Class above the character's specialization. The insular and isolated nature of the medieval village, and scarcity of available information, would be almost incompressible to a modern human. To model that reality, increasing this penalty to -3 or even -4 is not unrealistic.

Healer/Herbalist

TL3 medicine is limited (and often terrifying). Nevertheless, it has some efficacy. Even tiny communities have someone with basic medical knowledge and familiarity with local herbs.

Essential Traits: Average IQ, plus Herbalism or First Aid.

Common Traits: Empathy or Sensitive, the other of Herbalism or First Aid, and other medical skills (including

Veterinary). While no theoretical framework yet exists, a good healer might have practical knowledge of Psychology.

Variants: The *midwife* is a ubiquitous healer variation. In some settings, healer/herbalists may have access to Healing, Esoteric Medicine, or Herb Lore. A morally ambiguous healer/herbalist could use his art for unscrupulous or malevolent ends.

Lord of the Manor

In TL3 Europe, most villages are ruled by hereditary nobles swearing fealty to a powerful liege. Responsibilities to his liege include raising military forces and forwarding a considerable portion of taxes raised from the village. A lord might be the biggest bully in the neighborhood, high-minded champion of justice, incompetent sycophant, cultured person of learning, or some combination of those. See *Lord of the Manor* in *Pyramid #3/52: Low-Tech II* for more details on this essential villager.

Essential Traits: Legal Enforcement Powers, Military Rank, and Status 1. Lords subject to higher authority have Duty (Liege).

Common Traits: Increased attributes, Allies (Men-at-arms), Charisma, Legal Immunity, Literacy, Sense of Duty (Villagers), Wealth, Animal Handling, Combat Skills, Diplomacy, Law (Polity), Leadership, Riding, and Tactics.

Variants: Village leaders in highly centralized and bureaucratic polities may have Administration and Politics. Fantasy or magical lords may have magic items or Arthurian-style powers derived from their connection with the land. In one plausible fantasy variety, mages rather than warriors dominate the hereditary ruling class. In this case, Magery and spells are essential, while physical combat capability may be reduced.

Priest

Along with the lord, the priest is the most influential villager, and likely to be its best educated, informed, and traveled. Historically, for villages with capricious, incompetent, or tyrannical lords, the priest is their best source of redress. (Conversely, where the priest is greedy, lecherous, or a zealot, villagers hope for a just lord.)

Priests are intimately involved with villagers' lives, participating in every rite of passage from birth to death.

Essential Traits: Clerical Investment and Duty (Church). Religious Ritual and Theology.

Common Traits: High IQ, Status 0 or 1, Charisma, Disciplines of Faith, Literacy, Religious Rank, Social Regard (Respected or Revered), Sense of Duty (Congregation), and social skills.

Variants: In fantasy or magical games, clergy may have Blessed, Oracle, Power Investiture, and True Faith. Abilities may come with the Pact or Accessibility limitations.

OTHER TIMES, OTHER PLACES

While this article focuses on the TL3 English village (the one most often useful for most gamers), a summary of villages in other contexts is helpful.

Different Cultures

Treating the permutations of villages in every human culture would challenge a full-length scholarly tome. The GM and players are encouraged to do their own research and apply it to the models here. However, two of the most universal character questions (“Who’s in charge?” and “What’s there to do here?”) deserve a brief examination.

The identity of village rulers varies considerably. Instead of hereditary lords, many civilizations entrust governance to officials appointed by the central government. Such officials are often predisposed to side with the central authority over villagers.

In different cultures, public houses (noteworthy as the preferred hang-outs for traveling adventurers) may be replaced with an equivalent institution, like a coffee house, a tea house, or an opium den.

Other Tech Levels

Characteristics introduced in *Defining a Village* (pp. 30-31) apply, to a greater or lesser degree, to villages regardless of TL. But technological and social differences have significant implications for non-TL3 villages.

Tech Level 0

The Stone Age village is smaller, more transportable, and even more homogenous than its successors. It focuses on subsistence production but remains plugged into trading networks for essential materials like flint and luxury goods from exotic foodstuffs to precious stones. Because diet is supplemented through hunting and gathering, TL0 villagers may be healthier than TL3 ones. They may also be more widely traveled.

Some late Neolithic villages are better modeled as TL1-2 villages with TL0 material culture.

Tech Levels 1-2

For those running historical games, it is worth noting that some TL1-2 villages feel more modern than their TL3 equivalents. The great Bronze and Iron Age empires maintained a level of economic integration, political control, and record-keeping over their villages that the compilers of the *Domesday Book* never imagined.

Tech Level 4

Technological and social changes begin eroding the characteristics presented under *Defining a Village* (pp. 30-31). Information becomes more readily available. Communities are increasingly tied to larger economic systems. The frequency and variety of visitors grows. Governance of villages gradually passes from hereditary lords to local officials. Nevertheless, for TL4 villages, changes are of degree rather than kind.

Tech Levels 5-6

Changes beginning at TL4 accelerate exponentially. As villages are increasingly integrated into the world, villagers identify more strongly with larger sociopolitical units. But old habits die hard. As late as TL6, essential village traits remain, albeit in diluted form. Villagers know each other and everybody’s business. Community loyalty remains strong while

outsiders retain a taint of suspicion. Isolated communities with some of these aspects may exist at TL7+, but are increasingly outliers.

Nonhumans

A fundamental axiom of fantasy is that other races do things differently than humans. This applies to villages. The following discussion of nonhuman villages, based on literary and roleplaying conventions, is applicable to any well-developed fantasy setting, such as *GURPS Banestorm*. A campaign with different assumptions or wanting to throw adventurers a curveball should disregard anything not fitting the setting’s needs.

Dwarves

While dwarves prefer larger communities, dwarven villages may exist as remote outposts or trading communities. Whether above or below ground, villages use the race’s favorite material, stone (perhaps carved directly from rock). Like larger dwarven settlements, villages are built to be defensible.

Elves

Elven villages occupy remote places of great beauty and are constructed to work with their environment rather than against it. Depending on how magical or fey the elves of a world are, their villages may transcend many practical considerations of historical villages.

Gnomes

Where gnomes follow their fairytale roots, their villages may be similar to elven ones. A different convention – where gnomes are gifted artisans, craftsmen, or mages – may see gnomish villages with elevated TL in one or more areas. Villages inspired by the “tinker gnome” archetype might possess clockpunk or steampunk aesthetics.

Halflings

Halfling villages, like those of Tolkien’s Shire, traditionally resemble idyllic, diminutive versions of their historical human counterparts.

Orcs

Along with elves, orcish villages are commonly the most removed from the calculations of historic villages. Typically optimized for defense, questions about how they meet other requirements of daily life are often vaguely explained by “raiding” or “captives.” There is nothing wrong with that, especially if orcs serve as the campaign’s faceless thugs. An orc village reflecting careful thought about how they address practical concerns of village life would, however, provide unusual opportunities for roleplaying.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The Classic: Adventures are hired to dispose of a large predator or monster preying on villagers and their stock. For an entertaining dénouement, the reward comes in the form of cloth, grain, or some other bulk commodity the party must figure out how to transport.

Taskmaster Planning: The group is approached by an orc chief with an unusual proposition. He wants to recruit them to reorganize economic activity in his village along human lines. Adventurers will likely be curious as to his motive. The presence of any non-orc captives in the village presents protagonists with an ethical conundrum. Resentment, from other influential orcs in the village or nearby non-orcs displeased by the modernization campaign, could create additional complications.

The Strike: For as long as anyone remembers, the village has relied upon a tribe of diminutive, industrious local fairies to make shoes, mend clothes, and sweep houses. Now, the fairies have walked off the job. They won't say what, if any, transgression occurred. Perhaps someone can discover what happened and make amends.

Turned Into a Newt: A village has suffered a rash of unexplained deaths. Fingers are being pointed at the local wise-woman. The party is present as mob justice prepares to run its course. If they intervene and save her, they may gain an Ally or Favor (whether the wise woman is innocent is another question).

Very Odd Fellows: The village priest, currently spearheading construction of an extravagant new church, has gone power mad and squeezes his flock into poverty. The village lord is unwilling or unable to do anything. The stonecutters helping build the church, however, seem especially concerned about the villagers' plight, enlisting the heroes' aid. If they perform well and virtuously, the stonecutters may invite them to a special, secret meeting.

Wool Over Their Eyes: Adventurers are recruited by a wool-producing village to steal a breeding pair of sheep from their more successful neighbors (renowned for unique and valuable wool). The neighboring village jealously guards its stock and the local lord won't fuss if would-be rustlers go missing. For a twist, the secret of the fine wool might be something other than the breed of sheep (grazing on a magical herbs, a secret processing technique, boost from a local druid or mage, etc.).

RESOURCES

Coulton, G.G. *The Medieval Village* (Cambridge University, 1925). Drier and more academic than the Gies and Morgan texts below. Some of Coulton's commentary is jarring to modern readers, but his book digs deeply into economic, legal, and social factors of village life.

Gies, Frances and Gies, Joseph. *Life in a Medieval Village* (Harper Perennial, 2016). Recently reissued, this highly readable work has been the definitive social history of medieval village life for a quarter century. It is filled with touches perfect for bringing villages to life in roleplaying.

Morgan, Gwyneth. *Life in a Medieval Village* (Cambridge University Press, 1975). Like the identically titled Gies book, an excellent and readable social history of village life. Out of print, but used copies are available.

Muir, Richard. *The English Village* (Thames & Hudson, 1980). Combines enjoyable prose with information on village social structure, physical layout, and daily life. It is an invaluable resource for detailed, realistic villages.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jon Black is your basic absinthe and BBQ guy from Austin. He works as a ghostwriter, freelance journalist, and music journalist. He has been gaming for over 30 years, playing *GURPS* for more than 20 of them.

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RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE

KEEPING REINS ON THE WILDS

BY STEVEN MARSH, *PYRAMID* EDITOR

Like many folks, one of the earliest dungeon-adventure memories I have is of *The Keep on the Borderlands*. This is due no small part to the fact that it came included with the *Dungeons & Dragons Basic Set*, a collection I abused to within an inch of its life. The thing that I remember most about that adventure was its nonlinear nature, with the players encouraged to explore whatever dungeon network struck their fancy (a method I'm surprised isn't used more in other adventures).

Similarly, my earliest *wilderness-exploring* memories were . . . okay, that was *The Keep on the Borderlands*, too. Looking through it again, I see there's a whole wilderness section that I'd mostly forgotten about; I recall 10-year-old me finding it roughly as uninteresting at the time as well.

My *other* earliest wilderness-exploring memory was *The Isle of Dread*, which was included as part of the *Dungeons & Dragons Expert Set*. One of the aspects that stuck with me most about that adventure was the inclusion of the player's map, which provided a full image of the titular island's shape, along with details about its coast; the rest was blank. The adventure offered the in-game explanation that the mapmakers sailed around the island and noted what they could, but it was too dangerous to land.

At the risk of sounding like clickbait, this one simple trick helped resolve one of the biggest challenges I frequently have with wilderness adventures: How do you keep it bounded?

THE CHALLENGE OF BOUNDING THE UNKNOWN

Often, when I'm devising or playing adventures that take place outdoors, the challenge I have is trying to figure out how to make the adventure open-ended without making it so open-ended that the heroes feel aimless or confused. I mean, I could hand the heroes a drawing of the solar system with Earth circled and call it a treasure map, but it doesn't give much to go on, and the potential to go off the rails is high.

Looking again at *The Keep on the Borderlands*, I think my fears regarding wilderness adventures were justified.

Its wilderness map shows the titular keep, a road leading right by the highly detailed Caves of Chaos, and . . . not much else. Its wilderness map is over six square miles, and it has *four* other encounters: some lizard men, some spiders, a raider camp, and a mad hermit. (Oh, SPOILER ALERT on a 35-year-old adventure, I guess.) That's an awful lot of wandering around, *not* adventuring, to subject players to.

Even worse, there's not much on paper to keep the heroes from wandering off the edge of the map. Two of those encounters are deep in the forest, but they could just as easily dwell miles in a random direction further away, and there's an enticing river that runs through the middle of the map that can presumably be followed as long as the explorers want. The adventure *does* provide some helpful advice to keep folks from getting *too* far afield: "If the party attempts to move off the map, have a sign, a wandering stranger, a friendly talking magpie, or some other 'helper' tell them that they are moving in the wrong direction." Oh, well, what was I worried about? "SQUAWK! You're at the edge of the map! <whistle> Cracker?"

In contrast, by setting the bulk of the action on one island, *The Isle of Dread* kept the expectations entirely contained. Plus, its mostly empty player map with the edges filled in gave the heroes another bit of error-correction; if you've wandered off the edge of the predrawn map and you're suddenly getting very wet from salt water, you have exited the parameters of the adventure.

Here, then, are some ideas for how to keep your wilderness under control, in the name of good gaming.

X MARKS THE SPOT

I suppose the first method I should mention is having a wilderness locale with a clearly defined goal. You're trying to get to the Castle Aaargh, or the Dungeons of Direct Deposit, or whatever. It's on the map, you know roughly where it is, and you're on your way. There may be other encounters along the route (in fact, there probably should be!), but the destination is a foregone conclusion.

It's a fine way to develop an adventure and is a common method. However, it can also feel padded if not done correctly.

If the adventure doesn't "really" begin until the heroes reach the Temple of Elemental Veal (home of the stench kow!), then why not skip over the journey between there and their last adventure and simply have the heroes begin outside that meaty manse? What is the wilderness adding to the experience?

In some cases, there are good reasons! One or more of the players may enjoy the potential wilderness encounters, especially if their character's profession shines outdoors, like a druid or a barbarian.

Otherwise, the GM might either want to fast-forward to the destination in question, or else give wilderness encounters more weight or reason for being there. Maybe the GM wants a scene or two to set the mood, explaining why the destination is what it is. "Why haven't others attacked the Tower of Grey Skull to end its evil? Oh, maybe because of the tribe of ogres in the area, or that sorceress with the chicken-legged hut, or the 10'-long worm-fish."

Or maybe the threats they face on the way can give the heroes insight or resources to defeat the threat they're traveling to. For example, if the destination has lycanthropes, maybe one of the wilderness encounters provides them with silver weapons.

CHECKPOINT!

I stumbled across the *Dragon Age* video-game series earlier this year, and I quite enjoyed the first two games of the series. (I haven't gotten around to the third one yet.) Its world is fairly grim and realistic . . . at least, as realistic as a world with magic, world-threatening dragons, and enemies that spewed enough gore when hit that at times I feared I was fighting blood-filled water balloons.

However, there was one design decision I didn't think I would like at first, but quickly grew to love. Whenever the game gives you a quest, it marks on your map where that quest can be furthered or resolved. So if you accept a quest that's called something like "The Bandit Problem," then helpfully on an overland map is a spot marked "The Bandit Problem." That marker appears even if you haven't explored that area yet, hovering in the inky void, waiting for you to find it.

I didn't think I would like it because, obviously, it's not very realistic. ("We need you to track down the hidden bandit problem. They've been utterly elusive." "Okie-doke." "Great! We've marked on the map where they are." "Umm . . .?") But from a game-play standpoint, it was wonderful. It was one of the only computer roleplaying games I've ever experienced where I wasn't ever stuck guessing, "Am I going the right way? Am I missing something? Should I explore every square inch of all creation, hoping I don't overlook the vital pixel that will allow the adventure to continue?"

In a tabletop game, this exact same technique can be used. *The Keep on the Borderlands* becomes much more manageable if you just hand them a blank piece of paper with the keep on there and the four wilderness encounters numbered or labeled. What's there is for the heroes to determine (through

the usual means of exploration), but at least the *players* don't need to worry that they're spending their entire game night wandering in a vector that leads them off the edge of the map or away from anything useful.

Similarly, looking at the map for *The Isle of Dread*, I'm not seeing anything that's really lost by handing the players a version of the blank map with all the encounters numbered and labeled. If the heroes want to make their way to that enticing #15 in the center of the island, great! Once the heroes resolve encounter #22, they know that the entire northwest peninsula of the island no longer has anything of non-random interest.

Whereas the first idea assumes the heroes have one spot on their map that they're trudging to, this idea assumes there are *lots* of spots on their map . . . all of which may be worthy of investigation. And, of course, the first two ideas can be combined: If the heroes are looking for the infamous Tomb Waddy Diddydum Diddydoo, then it's much more mysterious if there are a dozen numbered encounters on the overland map, all of which *could* be the dungeon they seek . . .

HERE THERE BE DRAGONS AND WHITE SPACE

Another way to limit the possibilities of the heroes wandering fruitlessly in less-than-fun wilderness environs is to constrict the parameters. This can be straightforward to do geographically; an island is the obvious example, but the locale could also be a hidden valley, a peninsula, or a mountain range (with progressively more challenging encounters as the heroes go higher up).

The location can also be geographically unbound, but still obvious if the explorers start straying from the path. For example, the heroes may not know the exact boundaries of the Forest Eryoung, but if there suddenly aren't any trees around, then they can be pretty sure that they're at the limits of the adventure.

Or perhaps there are *unnatural* limits that keep the heroes from going too far astray. Perhaps there are pillars every 100 yards at the edge of the Desert T'Ping's realm, providing a clue that the heroes have found the region they seek *and* warning them when they're in danger of leaving it again.

Or maybe the terrain of the Glen of the Firegrass is varying shades of red, and when the crimson tinge of the turf underfoot fades back to a more-normal green, the explorers know that they are nearing the edge of their adventuring region.

And if all that fails, just have a friendly talking magpie berate the heroes until they're back on track.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Steven Marsh is a freelance writer and editor. He has contributed to roleplaying game releases from Green Ronin, West End Games, White Wolf, Hogshead Publishing, and others. He has been editing *Pyramid* for over 10 years; during that time, he has won four Origins awards. He lives in Indiana with his wife, Nikola Vrtis, and their son.

*Wealth I ask not, hope nor
love
Nor a friend to know me;
All I seek, the heaven above
And the road below me.
— Robert Louis Stevenson*

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