



MONGOOSE PUBLISHING PRESENTS



# Signs & Portents

## Roleplayer

# 27

## Hyborian Field Guide

The final instalment covering the ferocious Man-Ape!

## Port Bax

The first part of an article detailing the famed Lone Wolf city!

## Emergency Situation

6 new missions for Starship Troopers players!

Plus... News on B5: Second Edition, Gamers' Symposium, Jeremiah: Suffer the Little Children, Conan: Ghosts of the Deep, Jonny Nexus, Inside the Chainmail Bra and lots, lots more!

S&P Roleplayer 27

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Avast, ye scurvy sons o' th' web!

Welcome to the second on-line edition of the brand spanking new *Signs & Portents Roleplayer* magazine! We've had a slight change of appearance again this month so that the pages will fit better onto a computer screen, plus there have been a few technical tweaks to take advantage of the superior tekernerlogical advances available to a PDF magazine. If any of you out there in readerland have any further suggestions for increasing the magazine's potential, why not drop into the Mongoose Publishing forums at <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com/forum.php> and tell us about it. As ever, we always value your feedback and suggestions.

Of course, it's early days yet for the all-new *Signs & Portents* – however, the first issue seems to have done quite well. There were something like 9,000 downloads of the *Roleplayer* edition alone in the first four days of its availability last month – so I guess there's a whole host of new readers out there (hello, by the way) eager to dip into all the various gaming goodies contained within the pages of Mongoose's finest magazine.

This month, as promised, we've got the first part of a Lone Wolf article about the city of Port Bax, news of developments in the Babylon 5 world, the beginnings of Bob Griffin's truly epic series of Gaming Symposium articles (I've been waiting for months for the space to include these!) as well as lots of stuff for Conan fans and a rare treat for Jeremiah fans, plus more for Starship Troopers. And, of course, there's the regulars; Inside the Chainmail Bra (that must really pinch!) and Jonny Nexus (make the most of him, folks – Jonny's going to be taking a break soon! Bad news for us, but good news for fans of Critical Miss...)

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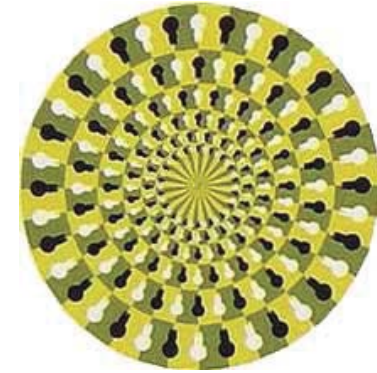
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Mark Quennell



Look into my eyes, look into my eyes, don't look around the eyes, don't look around the eyes, look into my eyes, (clicks fingers) you're under.

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The first part of a massive two-parter for the *Lone Wolf Roleplaying Game*, this article takes a detailed look at some of the characters that inhabit the 'Jewel of Durenor', 50 years prior to Lone Wolf's fateful visit to the city by the sea...

### 16 B52E

It is the dawning of the second edition of the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game*, a last, best hope for peace... Gareth Hanrahan takes a brief look at this work in progress!

### 20 NEW ANGLES ON ADVERSARIES

Gaming Symposium returns – with a vengeance! The first of an epic series of articles for those Games Masters (and Players!) who are bored with facing down all the same old evil creatures in their fantasy games. Why not try using dwarves and elves instead?

### 28 A FIELD GUIDE TO THE CREATURES OF THE HYBOREAN AGE

The deadly Man-Apes have been a mainstay of the savage universe inhabited by *Conan* in all his many incarnations. Continued from last month, this article takes a highly detailed look at these brutal creatures. This month – rules and statistics!

### 36 EMERGENCY SITUATION!

So, you've got your brand spanking new *Starship Troopers Roleplaying Game* rulebook and you've already run the scenario that appeared last month (still available, folks – and still free!). Unfortunately, you haven't the time to write any adventures of your own... Fear not, gentle reader! Signs & Portents Roleplayer has the solution! This article provides half a dozen small 'scenario seeds' for you to use for inspiration for your games sessions!

### 52 SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN

The bleak post 'Big Death' world of the *Jeremiah Roleplaying Game* is hardly the ideal environment to raise children, but there is little choice. Kids reach adulthood at a much younger age, but naturally there is still a little time for them to enjoy their childhood. Greg Smith presents full rules for including child characters in your campaigns. Choose to be a regular kid, or maybe save the day every week by becoming a US telly-style Boy Genius...

### 58 GHOST OF THE DEEP

*Signs & Portents* two most experienced *Conan* scenario scribes, Vincent N. Darlage and Erik K. Rodriguez, present their latest excursion into Robert E. Howard's lethal world of adventure and pirates. The PCs discover yellowed map, marked with an X. Surely that can only mean... TREASURE!

## Regulars

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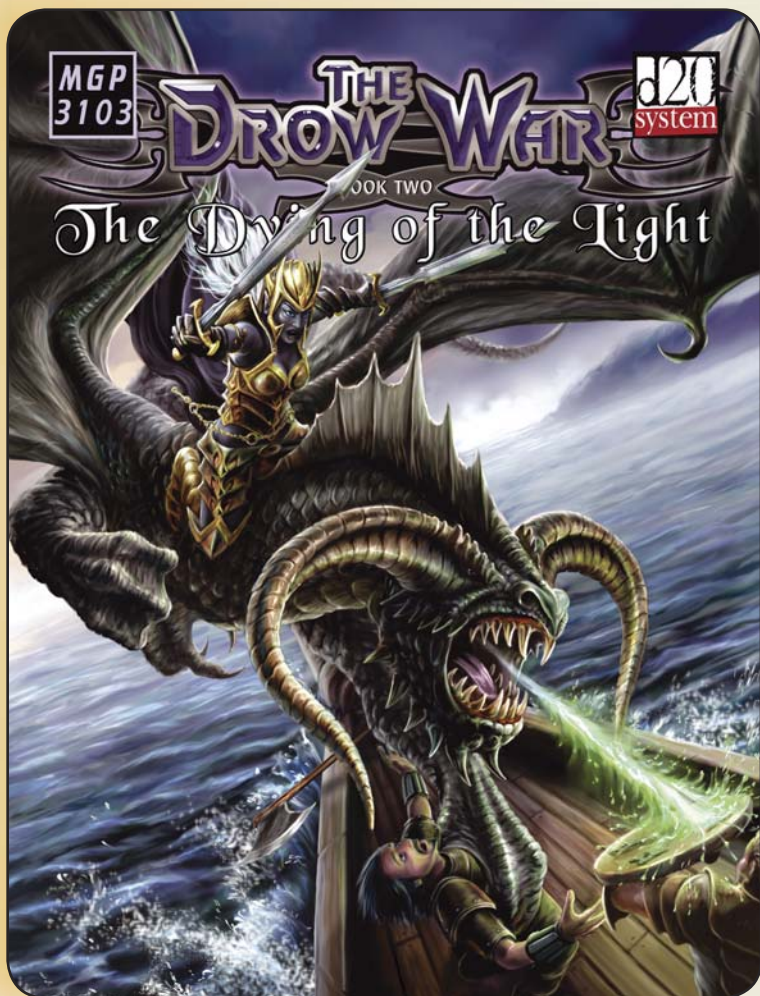
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## EYE ON MONGOOSE

*Forthcoming Releases***DROW WAR II: THE DYING OF THE LIGHT**

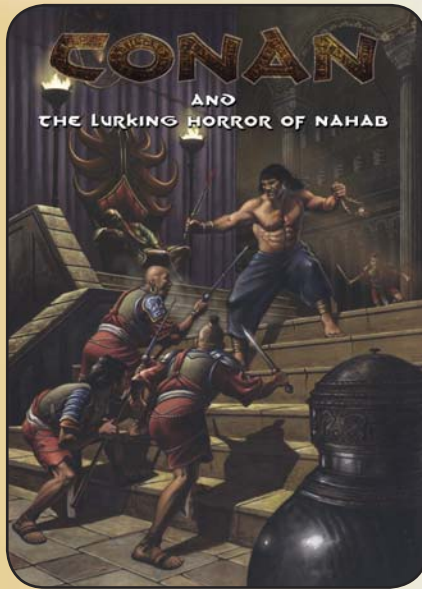
The story of the Drow War continues where it left off, in the aftermath of the war for Caldraza. A mysterious messenger brings the news that the threat of the drow is by no means wiped out. A strike from below will come any day now. Powerful friends wait to aid the Player Characters in the city of Crom Calamar, the unconquered capital of Jehannum, nation of warriors.

The long road to final confrontation with the drow takes the Player Characters to deep, accursed deserts, cities where the memories of the dead walk, mines deep underground where traitors plot and scheme, across and beneath the churning oceans, and ultimately to distant peaks where only dragons dwell.

Somehow, the Player Characters must unite the free nations against the drow, if they have the wit and the will to do so. In this series of adventures, the heroes are doing more than avoiding traps and killing monsters. They must mobilise armies, hold counsel with kings and give the orders that, as every oracle knows, always lead to death. Whether the Player Characters prevail or the Dark conquers all remains to be seen; there are no set endings and no certain answers.

The adventure arc in *The Dying of the Light* is structured to take the Player Characters from 10<sup>th</sup> level to 20<sup>th</sup> level. Naturally, this outcome is not guaranteed!

*The Dying of the Light* is the second in a linked series of three 256-page campaign books. This book continues the vast and immersive storyline initiated in *The Gathering Storm* and finally links on to the last in the series (*The Darkest Hour*). Each one contains a single epic story broken into ten parts, thus making thirty discrete adventures in total, all tied into one overarching saga.

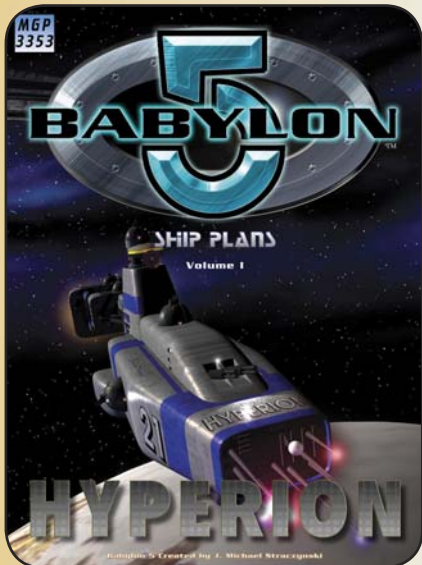


## CONAN AND THE LURKING HORROR OF NAHAB

The Corinthian city of Nahab has suffered greatly under the continued feuding of its noble families in the last decade. *Lurking Horror of Nahab* is a Conan adventure scenario that gives players a break from clearing out ruins of monsters, hunting down treacherous pirates and the like. Unlike most Conan adventure stories, where the answer to any problem is a strong will and stronger steel, a stout punch or quick blade cannot fix *every* problem in Nahab. It will require the players and their characters to take a different approach to the situation unfolding in the city. Moral decisions and hard choices will block the path in this adventure rather than bands of brigands or secret doors.

Yet there will come a time when even the Accord will not be able to stay the hands of Nahab's citizens and the streets will run red with blood. Everyone in Nahab knows and dreads this, some better than others, but when the Nobles' War begins anew, all will suffer under the weight of all these years' worth of building and preparing. The city itself will be hard pressed to survive the maelstrom of revolt.

This Conan adventure is designed for four to six Player Characters of between 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> character level, though since much of it relies on the moral choices of the Player Characters it can be easily adjusted or adapted to accommodate groups of higher or lower character level or attendance.



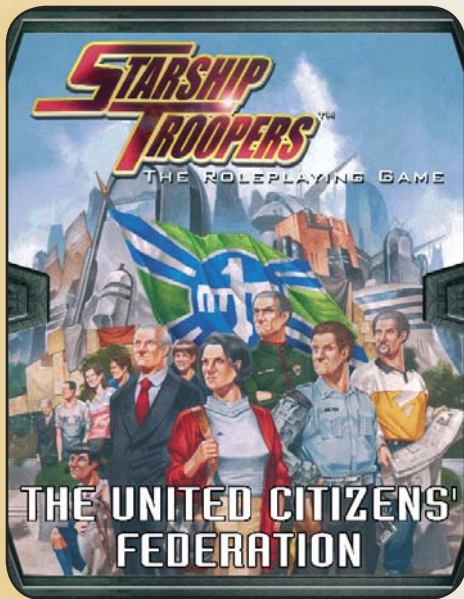
## Babylon 5 Ship Plans: HYPERION

And here you have it – a complete tour of one of the Earth Alliance's finest warships. The magnificent Hyperion-class cruiser, in all its glory: the good, the bad and the not particularly roomy.

While the Hyperion has some of the most cramped conditions reported outside of Narn space, the vessel is an impressive sight both from the inside and out. Not only does the Hyperion look intimidatingly powerful, it houses so many redundant systems and backup controls that it can take the most punishing of poundings and keep fighting.

The Hyperion has been serving for over forty years with distinction. Many of them were sacrificed to turn back the Minbari armada in the Battle of the Line. Many say it was the fierce resistance of ships like the Hyperion that convinced the alien force to surrender in the first place.

*Hyperion Ship Plans* take you through every aspect of this workhorse of the Earth Alliance – every bulkhead, generator, highlight and design flaw. Painstakingly researched from both the B5 canon universe and real-life naval and space vessels, *Hyperion Ship Plans* are an invaluable and comprehensive insight into both the shipboard life and the EA's technical expertise.

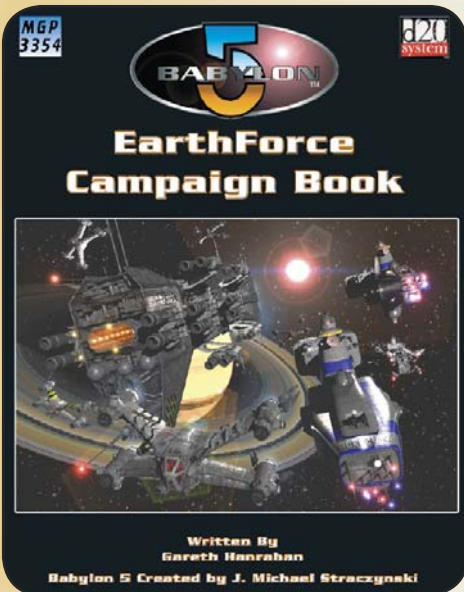


## Starship Troopers, The Roleplaying Game: The United Citizens' Federation

Citizenship brings responsibilities as well as rights, something that every person in the United Citizens' Federation, be they citizen or civilian, knows very well. Citizenship also brings opportunity, the chance to travel and understand the whole of the Federation in a way very few civilians can, a chance to truly see the beauty and immensity of the Federation.

*The United Citizens' Federation*, a supplement to the *Starship Troopers Roleplaying Game*, acts as the reader's tour guide through the Federation, illuminating all aspects of the Federation in unprecedented detail. From the cultures, laws and societies of Earth, to the history of the Federation itself, to an in-depth look at some of humanity's major colonies in space, *The United Citizens' Federation* contains a wealth of information for players and Games Masters alike.

The defining trait of a citizen is the willingness to put the safety of the human race ahead of his own. A wise citizen understands that remaining true to that trait requires more than a decision to enlist in Federal Service, it requires understanding what the Federation truly is, and what it truly means. It requires knowing what he is fighting for.



## Babylon 5: The EarthForce Campaign Book

The Earth Alliance has risen from an obscure minor race to one of the powers of known space, the equals of the old Lion of the Galaxy or the Narn Regime. Even the mighty Minbari failed to defeat the Alliance.

The Alliance's strength is founded on EarthForce. The fleet's Hyperions and Omegas patrol the human colonies, while Explorers push out towards the rim. GROPOS troopers have fought on a hundred alien battlefields to keep humanity safe. Starfuries patrol the space above every world from Ceti Gamma to Sinzar. As the Alliance grows and the alien races grow more jealous of humanity, the need for military strength grows ever greater.

EarthForce needs you.

*The EarthForce Campaign Book* describes the history, deployment and organisation of EarthForce, complete with ranks, regulations, equipment and missions for everyone from the lowliest groundpounder to the Joint Chiefs. It also includes a full campaign structure that can be used as a once-off adventure or a fully-fledged epic campaign centred on EarthForce.

# PORT

# BAX

DARREN 'THE  
WOLF' PEARCE

## THE 'DIAMOND OF DURENOR', A CAMPAIGN SETTING FOR THE LONE WOLF ROLEPLAYING GAME, PART I

Upon the tenth day of his quest Lone Wolf encountered Port Bax in the book 'Fire on the Water'. Such a pivotal location in the books is the perfect place for a series of adventures within the Lone Wolf setting or alternatively to add flavour to an already established campaign. What follows is an overview of key locations within the port, beginning with a look at its physical aspects and moving on to describe important places found in 'Fire on the Water'. This overview is by no means exhaustive and contains several areas that are devised specially for this article. However, in the spirit of Joe Dever's work I have tried to remain as faithful to Lone Wolf as I can.

### THE PORT: OVERVIEW

Port Bax has a population of close to ten thousand people and is considered to be the 'Diamond' of Durenor and the seat of the Sommerlund Consulate. It is also the harbour for the Durenese navy, whose massive war fleet rests upon the glimmering ocean waters that gently lap upon the green velvet shores of the coast.

Port Bax is set into the coast itself and is surrounded by large white-stone walls. The walls are often described as being green-tinted, this is due to the copious amounts of moss that cling to them like barnacles upon a ship's hull.

Many gleaming towers rise into the sky from within the protective stone walls. At night these towers flicker with the fires of many lamps and watch-lights, transforming the city into a place of almost ethereal beauty.

The port city is a sight to behold and has captured the hearts and minds of many a traveller. Its beauty has been immortalised in various compositions by several resident bards. One of the most famous songs is by a notorious song-weaver by the name of Jack Nightingale.



*The Song of White Towers*

*If I were a rover  
my heart would be still  
when I gazed out fondly  
upon castle and hill.*

*If I were a rover  
my feet would be still  
when I rested near waters  
so calm and so chill.*

*Durenor is my lover  
My friend and my foe  
for ere I would wander  
to green shores I would go.*

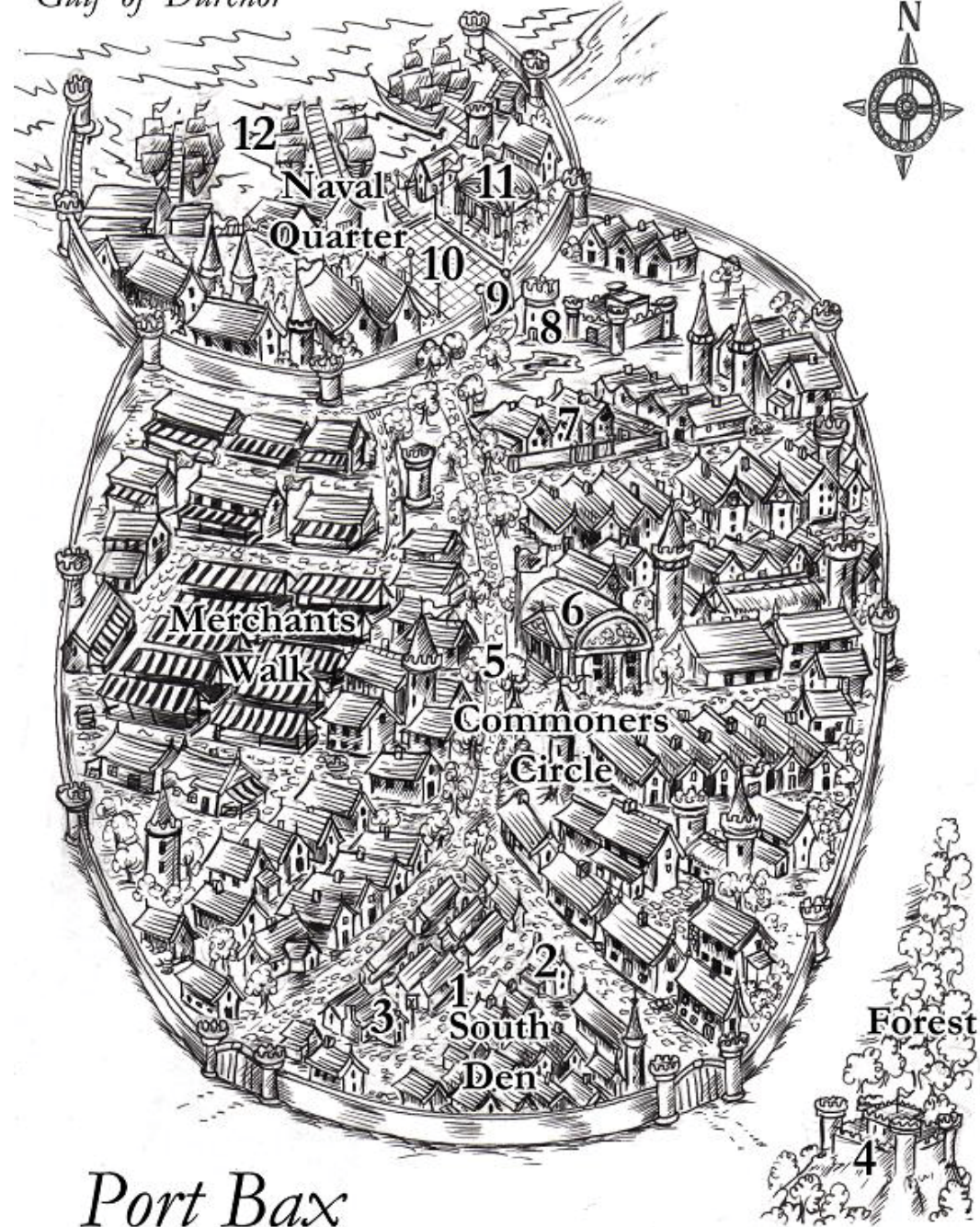
*To see the white towers  
To see the Red Gate,  
To Port Bax and her taverns  
I resign my true fate.*

The mighty forest of Durenor lies outside of Port Bax's far eastern wall. Upon a nearby hill sits a magnificent gleaming castle that seems to loom in watchful guardianship over the city.

## INSIDE THE CITY: QUICK OVERVIEW

When one walks through any several of the gates that lead into the city, the first thing that catches the eye is how pristine most of it looks. This is a clean city with a good spread of well-kept buildings and homes, loosely split into several quarters. Starting from the southernmost areas, the prominent locales of Port Bax include:

**South Den:** Most of the seedier places within Bax are situated within the shadows of the south wall of the port. This is where those citizens who wish to attempt to evade the watchful eyes of the guard can be found.

*Gulf of Durenor**Port Bax*



**Merchant's Walk:** Various shops and stalls are located in this area. It is possible to purchase a wide range of items, ranging from the common to the rare. The walk is linked to the trade thoroughfare at the western part of the port.

**Commoner's Circle:** Most of the common citizens of Port Bax live here. The Watch patrol the area diligently night and day. Its fairly central location means that those who wish to pass through to the Red Gate simply have to follow the Avenue of Trees north and turn right at the end.

**Avenue of Trees:** This central part of the city cuts through Commoner's Circle and winds its way to the Red Gate. The City Hall can be found off to the east midway along the Avenue. Numerous highly priced Taverns and Inns are also located here.

**Alin Square:** This is the naval quarter of the city and is found far to the north beyond the Red Gate. It is often referred to as the noble quarter of the city as various minor lords and ladies dwell here protected by the swords and shields of Port Bax's finest warriors. Alin Square is the location of the Sommerlund Consulate and requires a Red Pass from the Watch to enter.

## THE CITY: GATE ENTRY AREA

There are always those who will act as a guide for a few gleaming gold coins and take the newcomer on a quick spin of the most important places within Port Bax. The Touts Guild maintains a small but functional office in this locale. Only touts with a white tabard and special papers from the Guild are permitted to operate beyond the Red Gate.

All potential customers are directed to 'Tallow Street' where a single storey building with a red

tilled roof can be found. The proprietor is a fellow known as Jabrus Cope, a slightly older man with a shock of dark grey hair and a wispy beard. A slightly faded bronze sign hangs outside the door, written upon it the following:

### MISTER JABRUS COPE'S TOUTS' GUILD

*Do ye require a guide?*

*We provide:*

*Safe and sure tours  
Quick trips to notable locations  
Well-dressed and immaculate Touts  
Come on in!*

Those that deal with Jabrus will discover that he is a fair man and fairly well mannered. However, he can become abrasive with those whom he feels are wasting his time.

Jabrus believes that Touting is a serious and honest trade. His list of prices is non-negotiable, he refuses to barter, bargain or haggle.

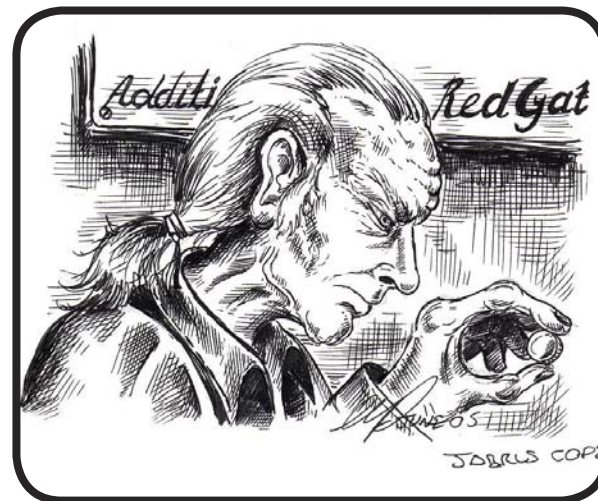
The thin old man eyes the newcomers with a hawk-like expression until they explain that they want assistance in finding the City Hall. His eyes gleam brightly as he points to a wooden sign on the wall. 'Prices are there, no negotiation, flat-rate fair deals... gold up front or no deal.'

The sign reads:

#### Prices for a single Tout

One location:	1 gp per visit
Tour of City:	1 gp per four hours

Additional cost of 10 gp to go beyond the Red Gate.



### Jabrus Cope – Tout Master of Port Bax 5<sup>th</sup> level Commoner (Sommerlunder)

**End Dice:** 5d4+1

**Initiative:** +1 (+1 Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Armour Class:** 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 10

**Base Combat Skill:** +2

**Attack:** Dagger (1d4 melee)

**Full Attack:** N/A

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** N/A

**Special Qualities:** Common Role (City Guide), Excellence +2

**Willpower:** N/A

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 10

**Skills:** Appraise +7, Bluff +4, Craft (Tanner) +5, Gather Information +4, Knowledge (History) +11, Perception +8 Profession (City Guide) +11, Sense Motive +5, Speak Language (Sommerlend)

**Note:** Jabrus adds a +2 for his Excellence bonus and +1 for his Commoner Role to any Profession (City Guide) checks he makes.

**Background:** A young man from Sommerlund, Jabrus' parents thought that he was going to be a

shining star and enter the Halls of the Kai. However, they were wrong; he was a stubborn brat of a child who desired adventure and preferred his own company. At an early age he fulfilled his wishes and left home to follow his own fame and fortune. One day, Jabrus found himself close to Port Bax. Becoming enamoured with City life, he settled down and started to guide folk about town for a few coins here and there. Over time he has formed quite a large Guild within the Port and has now settled back to let others do the work.

**Appearance:** Jabrus is a thin and gangly man, quite emaciated and worn. He appears a lot older than he actually is. However, there is still some strength left in his wiry form. He has thin greying hair and sharp narrow eyes that continually watch and are always narrowed. Overall he has the appearance of an avaricious, pointy-nosed hawk-like bird. His long, thin, spindly fingers are ideally suited for separating coins and examining small objects. He wears simple clothes, a baggy shirt and pants along with a warm woollen cloak.

## THE CITY: SOUTH DEN AREA

The further south one goes within Port Bax the more the quality of the housing and the streets deteriorates. Eventually the unwary may reach the area affectionately known to its denizens as South Den. Ramshackle buildings lie scattered in what appears to be a very haphazard fashion. Eager looking faces scan those who pass by. An obvious money pouch draws attention and generally marks the next potential 'customers'.

### MISHA'S PAWN SHOP

Within a dingy area known as the 'Street of Shales' a little shop lies. Situated a little distance from the open cobbles like a lurking predator, the whole establishment looks as if it might try to bite the unwary.

The shop lies back a little from the rest of the city like an eldritch lurker. The windows glint like beady eye that dare the passer-by to venture closer. While the front door stands invitingly open, there is a feeling of unease that seems to claw at the heart and soul.

The girl known as Misha can be found inside this ramshackle little building. She is the daughter of the head of the Thieves' Guild. Many have questioned the intelligence of placing the guild beneath the shop itself, but as the head of the guild often explains:

*'What better place to hide rancid cheese than in the boots of the guards.'*

Misha acts as a legitimate fence for stolen goods across Port Bax. Outwardly she appears to the citizens of the port as a charming young thing and most folk believe that she is trying her best to make a go of her grandfather's business – after his untimely death a few years ago. However, she is a consummate actress and her appearance is deceiving.

Of course, this tale is a sham, a con that keeps the authorities away from discovering the establishment's true purpose. As a result most do not question the flow of odd strangers day and night that come to visit the girl's shop.

Misha is a bright young thing, perhaps only sixteen summers of age with a crop of short blonde hair and shining blue eyes. She seems eager to help and is a total contrast compared to the spooky exterior and interior of this 'Pawn' shop.

She knows the role her father has set for her and plays the hard-working shopkeeper to the hilt. Misha is an accomplished con artist and will try to find out all she can about anyone that visits her

shop. Any interesting items or facts are reported to her father or a contact afterwards and the Guild may decide to relieve the unfortunate of their belongings.

Misha usually wears pretty dresses with a set of 'working' clothes underneath in case of a quick-getaway.

She sells a number of items and will offer reasonable prices for any goods, stolen or legitimate. Of course, if there is something that catches her eye that she cannot afford, she may well bribe her father to get it for her later.

Visitors can expect to receive around 40% of the items value or 60% if Misha likes them. She tries to give 80% of any item's true worth to trusted members of the Guild.

### Misha Gould

**3<sup>rd</sup> level Expert (Fence) (Native of Port Bax)**

**End Dice:** 3d6

**Initiative:** +2 (+2 Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Armour Class:** 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 10

**Base Combat Skill:** +1

**Attack:** Dagger (1d4 +1 damage, +2 to hit)

**Full Attack:** N/A

**Space/Reach:** 5-ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** N/A

**Special Qualities:** 10 skills are class skills regardless; two must be Craft, Knowledge, Perform or Profession

**Willpower:** N/A

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 16

**Skills:** Appraise +9, Athletics +5, Bluff +7, Disable Device +8, Escape Artist +8, Forgery +9, Gather Information +6, Knowledge: Geography +8, Knowledge: History +8, Perception +10.

**Note:** Misha adds +1 to 3 of her class skills (Appraise, Forgery and Perception)

**Background:** Misha is the devoted daughter of the head of the thieves' guild and has grown up in the shadows of the guild. She was taught the skills of her trade by a number of shadowy individuals. Her combat skill with the dagger is a combination of her own natural talent with a blade and extensive training by an ex-Kai Monk that failed in his teachings (Laughing Fire) who also acts as her impromptu grandfather. Misha enjoys her double life as a fence for her father.

**Appearance:** Misha has short blonde hair and blue eyes that often shine with a mischievous kind of glint. She wears simple clothes, a cloth shirt of dark green material and leggings of brown leather. She appears to be approximately sixteen years of age and cultivates a 'dizzy' kind of demeanour – though people with a good perception might see there is far more to her than meets the eye. Often she will attire herself in a pretty dress of pastel blue or green, all the easier to cultivate the image of the helpless shop owner who is struggling to make ends meet.



## RATTER'S THIEVES GUILD

Vaughn 'Ratter' Gould is the undisputed leader of the Thieves Guild of Port Bax. His lair can be found below Misha's shop. It can be accessed from a trapdoor in the back room of the shop or from the outside, to the right of the shop where a piece of wall can be moved to permit entry.

If the ladder is chosen:

The thief passes through a small wooden trapdoor set in the floor and then climbs down an iron ladder for thirty feet. When he alights from the ladder, his way is lit by a small lamp glimmering with a dim yellow light, which hangs on a nearby wall.

If the outside wall is chosen:

His hand falls onto a small seemingly loose brick that twists slightly in his grip. A small section of the wall grinds out of the way, an old mechanism whispering softly but still fully functioning. He passes through a gap in the wall and down a flight of stone steps, into the darkness below. After a short walk he comes to a passage with a small lantern glimmering with a dim yellow light as it hangs on a nearby wall.

Regardless of the route taken into the Guild area there are many twisting passages and false directions beneath the stone-lined streets of the port. Those that are familiar with the various hidden signs and directions will be able to follow them to their conclusion, Ratter's lair itself.

After following what seems like miles of turning, tightly constructed passages he finds himself before another stone wall. A similar loose brick yields the answer as to how one might open such a facade. The wall slides back and admits him, into the well-lit area beyond.

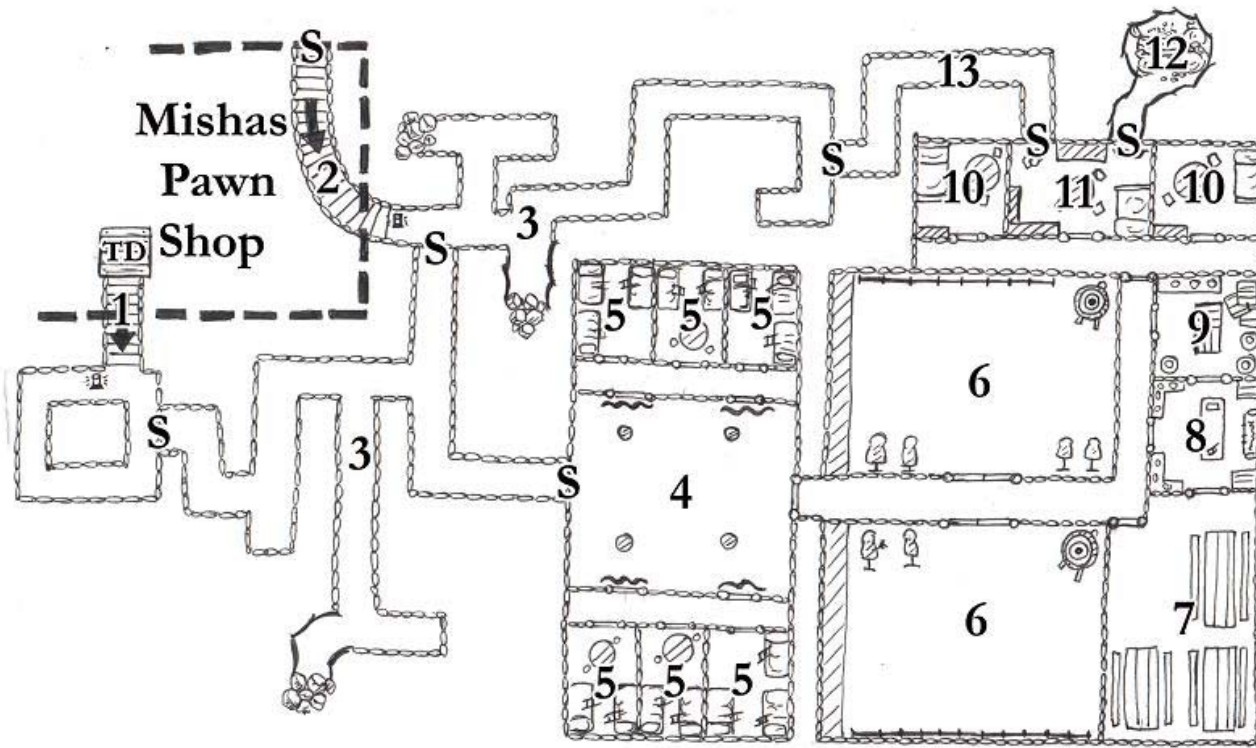
Vaughn's hideout is a Spartan place. There are various rooms for his petty crooks and larger chambers for himself and his henchmen. The Thieves' Guild has areas for the practice of the nefarious arts and weapons training. It also supports a small mess area where fellow members can meet and socialise.

Vaughn himself holds a kind of 'Shadow Court' once a month where grievances can be heard and plans made for the next month's racketeering and so forth. It is during this occasion that the monthly tithe is extracted. The Guild takes a 20% cut of novice thieves' earnings and a mere 10% from more established members.

Vaughn is a thin wiry looking soul, dressed in dark shaded clothing, usually purples and blacks. His one affectation is a large, wide-brimmed floppy hat. He has a fairly friendly if somewhat sly face with flint-grey eyes. He keeps himself cleanly shaven at all times and is underneath the hat his pate is completely bald.

Vaughn's chosen weapons are a pair of ivory-hilted short-swords and he can wield these with some speed if need be.

Vaughn is a thin and wiry, slightly undernourished looking man. But one can't help feeling that this is a ruse. He is dressed in sombre shades of black and purple, his attire a simple shirt and leggings, a pair of white-hilted short-swords at his hips. He wears a large wide-brimmed black hat on his bald head that partially shadows his clean-shaven face. Determined flint-grey eyes gleam as they observe the world about him.



**Space/Reach:** 5-ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** N/A

**Special Qualities:** 10 skills are class skills regardless; two must be Craft, Knowledge, Perform or Profession

**Willpower:** N/A

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +9

**Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 14

**Skills:** Acrobatics +18, Appraise +15, Athletics +11, Climb +13, Craft: (armour-smithing +17), Craft: (weapon-smithing +17) Disable Device +18, Escape Artist +15, Profession (locksmith +13), Profession (Gem Cutter +13), Perception +16, Ride +10, Stealth +18

**Note:** Vaughn adds +1 to 10 of his class skills (Acrobatics, Appraise, Athletics, Climb, Disable Device, Profession: Locksmith, Profession: Gem Cutter, Perception, Stealth, Escape Artist) due to his expertise in them. Vaughn also has the Craft: armour-smithing and Craft: weapon-smithing skills as Class Skills due to his Expert Skill Advancement.

## The Thieves Guild



### Vaughn 'Ratter' Gould

10<sup>th</sup> level Expert (Thieves' Guild Head) (Native of Port Bax)

**End Dice:** 10d6

**Initiative:** +4

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Armour Class:** 16 (+4 Dex, +2 Leather armour), flat-footed 12

**Base Combat Skill:** +5

**Attack:** short sword (1d6+2, +7 to hit)

**Full Attack:** Two short swords (1d6+2, 1d6+2, +7, +3 to hit)

Due to Skill Mastery at 10<sup>th</sup> Level Vaughn can take 10 or 20 with his: Disable Device skill.

**Background:** Ratter is a true native of the Port City who grew up knowing its shadows. He can pick almost any lock; disable most traps even if he is disturbed or unable to concentrate (such as under heavy fire or in combat). His skills seem almost supernatural to those people that know him. He is a devoted father to his only daughter, Misha, and of course in the true nature of such a man, Vaughn has



trained her to one day replace him as the head of the Guild. Ratter has no love for the Darklords as his wife was slain when their caravan was attacked by Helghast.

**Appearance:** Vaughn is a thin man that dresses in darkly shaded attire at all times. He is completely bald and hides his pate under a wide-brimmed floppy hat. He often wears a silk shirt and leather breeches and always wears dark leather bracers on his arms. His face seems fairly friendly although a touch on the sly side. His flint-grey eyes are always watchful and he keeps tabs on everything that is going on around him.

## THE RUSTY CUTLASS

Other areas within the South Den can lead to fame and misfortune. Numerous small taverns are dotted about, each serving their own particular brand of watered-down drink. Other things can be found on the menu, for the right price. One of the most notorious taverns is known as the Rusty Cutlass. It often serves as a good springboard for less civil minded folk to find out all sorts of dark tales and gossip.

A large wooden two-storey construction sits to the right side of a dingy alley. A wooden sign swings back and forth with a slow, ominous creak. It reads: The Rusty Cutlass and its surface depicts a swaggering sailor armed with a rust encrusted blade.

Inside the Cutlass is laid out well and fairly clean (for South Den standards) tavern. The serving staff all carry cudgels and there is always a fresh stain of some kind upon the straw floor. Quite often the stain is blood. Bar room brawls often break out when one of the patrons becomes bored. Usually brawl weaponry consists of fists and whatever the canny combatant can improvise to use as a weapon.

Ratter keeps his eyes and ears on the proceedings and his men often frequent the Cutlass looking for new talent, or people that are trying to avoid paying the Guild their dues.

There are several private wooden-booth style areas set aside for shadier deals and games of chance. These are also good places to avoid the fights that break-out as there is an unwritten rule is that no brawling should reach the customers that frequent these alcoves. To do so is often fatal to the brawler, as the professional types who frequent the booths do not take kindly to being disturbed.

Inside the taproom of the Rusty Cutlass, the low thrum of chatter pauses as each customer enters, then resumes after a few moments. Straw is scattered upon the floor, various strands stained a worrying red in hue. A long wooden bar surrounded by patrons lurks at the far end of the tavern. A few private alcoves are set aside for personal meetings and so forth.

The proprietor, Jeremiah Cove tends bar at the Rusty Cutlass. He is a large former sea captain with a curiously engraved false metal right eye. He

could have picked a normal glass one, but secretly Jeremiah likes the unnerving effect his eye often has on folk.

A large man watches over the proceedings at the bar. By the look of him he used to be a sea captain, possibly some kind of pirate. His right eye is missing and in its place is an orb of polished metal, incised with several odd patterns. He wears a striped pair of pants and a bright red and yellow shirt.

Prices in the Rusty Cutlass vary according to certain factors. If the customer is not a member of Ratter's Guild then they will certainly find that drinks cost a few coins more. This tavern actually serves fairly decent food and drink when compared to the other dives in South Den. As a rule of thumb, add a coin or two to the prices listed in the Lone Wolf RPG book page 123 for food, drink and lodgings.

Nailed to the wall by the bar is a rough price list made from a wooden plank and scribed on with a knife. The words carved into the planks surface have been inked but it is still barely legible. However, Jeremiah is quite proud of his sign and will take serious offence at anyone who is uncomplimentary towards it.

Jeremiah will allow members of Ratter's Guild and a select few others to stay in the rooms on the upper floor. Several of the upper rooms are set aside for card games and other activities.

## Jeremiah Cove

**3<sup>rd</sup> level Warrior (Tavern Keeper) (Ex Seaman)**

**End Dice:** 3d8+4

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Armour Class:** 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 10

**Base Combat Skill:** +7

**Attack:** one-handed axe (1d6+5 damage, +8 to hit)



notorious pirate vessel captained by the vicious Bella Morr – a Shadakai Buccaneer with a foul temper and hair that matched her coal-black heart. She ordered the youth beheaded for his insolence, but in a burst of anger Cove snatched up a weapon and gutted the executioner. This act of foolhardiness impressed the woman enough to let him live. She put out his right eye instead. After all, he had killed one of her crew. The boy grew into a large man and for many years he served on the vessel as pirate alongside his mistress until one day, she gave him command of a ship and sent him on his way. It was the last he ever saw of her. He is now retired and tends the Rusty Cutlass in Port Bax hoping that Bella still lives and sails the seas somewhere.

**Appearance:** Jeramiah is a big man, swarthy and muscular, very little of it is fat. He stands approximately six foot eight inches tall and usually keeps a large one-handed axe close at hand. Locals to the Cutlass have seen him deal with troublemakers using his axe while still continuing to drink at the bar. In place of his missing right eye is an engraved metal orb. Jeramiah wears a pair of striped pants and a bright yellow and red shirt.

## THE CITY: MERCHANT'S WALK

As the traveller moves further north through the city, the homes and housing conditions begin to improve radically. The amount of visible citizens increases along with the sight of armed members of the Watch as they go about their daily (and nightly) duties.

Just before the erstwhile adventurer reaches the Avenue of Trees there is a tiny side street to the west that opens out into a veritable cornucopia of brightly coloured stalls and gaily decorated storefronts.

The area known as Merchant's Walk is a series of highly ordered streets that are almost regimental in their placement. If viewed from the air they would present a grid to the west of the Central area of Port Bax.

There are several trees that provide shade and small benches on which ardent shoppers may rest. Street hawkers mill about trying to sell their wares to those who pass by. As trade is restricted though, traders require a White Pass from the Port Watchtower.

There are many kinds of stalls in the Merchant's Walk area. The following is a list of some of the more interesting stalls within this section of Port Bax. While they are not described in as great detail as the other key locations, they can be used to flesh out the city and add life and colour to a groups adventure if they should choose to go shopping.

**Maggie's Bakery:** Here all kinds of tasty treats from freshly baked cakes and breads to more exotic sugared rolls can be brought. Maggie also sells a number of sweetmeat style delicacies for the more discerning palate.

**The Copper Kettle:** A young Sommerlending fellow called Piper runs this establishment. It is a small and cosy place where people can meet. It is a more refined kind of tavern where there is no alcohol served. Popular dishes include the 'catch of the day' fish and cooked vegetables, along with milk or various kinds of fruit juices. The establishment's primary beverage is a dark kind of tea made with water brewed from a copper kettle. It is this tradition that gives the place its name.

**Full Attack:** N/A

**Space/Reach:** 5-ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** N/A

**Special Qualities:** None

**Willpower:** N/A

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11

**Skills:** Athletics +6, Climb +6, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +3, Knowledge: Nature +4, Knowledge: Warfare +4, Profession: Sailor +3, Ride +4, Survival +3

**Note:** Due to his warrior's weapon of choice, Cove gains a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls with his axe.

**Background:** Jeramiah Cove started life as a whip-thin dockhand in one of the many ports of Magnamund. However, he very quickly found himself on the wrong side of the law and stowed away on board what he thought was a merchant ship. He had actually stowed away on the Broken Heart, a



**Tack and Bits:** This is the place to go for all equestrian needs. A woman by the name of Jenny runs this shop and she knows a great deal about horses. Her knowledge extends from basic horse care to how to treat their ailments. She also sells saddles and various kinds of equipment relating to horse care and riding.

**Shaleen's Silks:** This stall caters for the best in exotic, beautiful silks and fabrics of all kinds. Its proprietors Shaleen and her daughter Asheena are a

couple of exotic-looking women hailing from the Telchos desert. As this means that they are also handy in a fight, it would be most unwise for a would-be thief to attempt to make off with their goods.

**Full Bore:** Another shop with a large store front, the sign above the door is of a particular kind of rifle, one that is often used by the Dwarven Gunners of Bor. This is the place that those with an interest in firearms can buy cleaning tools, equipment and fresh ammunition and so forth and maintained by a Gunner named Karlok. He also sells various rifles that he has customised himself. The basic statistics have not been altered but cosmetically they have been set apart from the stock models.

Karlok possesses the skills necessary to customise weapons and could certainly increase the range increment of a weapon by at least another twenty feet. This is likely to cost at least 50-100 gp depending on the race of the purchaser.

**Bright's Blades:** Run by a swarthy couple of Durenese decent this is a large building that belches smoke into the air during the day. It is a combination of a blacksmith and weapon-smith that share the same location. Adam Bright is part owner and weapon-smith, while his wife Katrina Bright handles the blacksmithing tasks. They have a small selection of weapons and armour for sale and provide a good deal of the steel for the Durenese soldiers within the city. Adam is a retired Captain and employs over sixty metalworkers at this spacious establishment.

**Tanner's Leather Goods:** The failed son of a Sommerlending noble who decided he wanted

nothing to do with the Kai or their ways, Hal Tanner looks after this particular shop. He is a skilled leather-worker and sells all kinds of leather goods, from simple armour to backpacks and sling-bags. Items can be bought as they are or for an extra coin or two he will personalise them to the owner. Hal also repairs and replaces worn scabbards and other items. He also sells all the tools and equipment for the ardent leather worker as well.

Service	Cost
A personal monogrammed name	3sp
Embossing	5sp-8sp
Engraving	5sp-8sp
Repairs	1sp – 1gp depending upon severity and damage

**All and Sundries:** All and Sundries is the best place for an adventurer to restock on equipment and various goods. This stall could be likened to a general market stall and it is always possible to find a curious item or two within the ranks of the mundane. Hostad and Helfstad are two Dwarfs with an eye for a bargain and pride themselves on their stock and quality. They are usually fair about their prices and they do not often short-change a customer or give one trouble unless they themselves have been insulted in some way.

Items from page 118 of the *Lone Wolf Roleplaying Game* can be found here and this is also a good place for the Games Master to seed in new items, or drop in plot hooks as both Dwarves are ardent gossips and love to chatter endlessly.

THE TOUR OF PORT BAX  
CONTINUES... NEXT MONTH



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# B52E

INTRODUCING THE BABYLON 5  
ROLEPLAYING GAME –  
SECOND EDITION

Gareth Hanrahan

*'Because what is built endures, and what is loved endures... and Babylon 5... Babylon 5 endures.'*

The Babylon Project was a dream given form; our last, best hope for good Babylon 5 roleplaying game. It...did quite well actually. B5 has been one of Mongoose's most popular and well-received lines since it was first launched, spawning a line of massively detailed sourcebooks, not to mention the *Call to Arms* wargame. The rules were one of the earliest adaptations of the d20 system, and have held up very well indeed over the years. (Although the promised *Babylon 5 Companion* mutated uncontrollably beyond all recognition 24 hours after it was written, leaving nothing but ethereal shadows that echoed through many of the books for years to come....)

That said, there are a few rough spots in the core rulebook that could do with fixing. Now that the supplement line has covered all five seasons (from *Signs and Portents* to *the Wheel of Fire*) and all major governments (from the Earth Alliance to the Vorlons), it seems like a good time to do a new edition of the core rulebook.

This does **not** invalidate any of the existing sourcebooks. 75% of the Babylon 5 line has been rules-free description of setting elements and episodes, anyway, so that would not be affected even if we went for a radical change of rules engine – and we're not doing that. The basic d20 system is still used in Babylon 5 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (B52E). In many cases, conversions can be done on the fly – the changes are that simple.

What are those changes? Well...

## You're ISA, I'm OGL

The new edition of Babylon 5 will not require the *Player's Handbook*, *Pocket Player's Handbook* or any other rulebook – it is entirely self-contained. The skill system, combat system and so on are contained within the book. It is all you need to run the game. We've trimmed the rules down as much as possible to keep the book from being a reprint of the same rules seen in other products.

## Not Everyone Has To Take Lightning Reflexes

The 1<sup>st</sup> edition of Babylon 5 had a character's Defence Value being based on his Reflex save bonus. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition introduces the concept of a Defence bonus, which increases with level. A character's Defence Value is now 10 + Dexterity Bonus + Defence Bonus, instead of 10 + Reflex Save. The rest of the combat system is just as deadly as ever, but now Soldiers are actually better at not getting shot than Scientists.

*Deleenn, Rising Star*



## New Skills For Old

The skill list has been tweaked. Several skills have been merged – instead of Spot and Listen; a character has a single Notice skill. Acrobatics covers both Balance and Tumble, Stealth combines hiding and moving silently. Other skills have had their function altered: Search, for instance, has been expanded into Investigate, allowing the character to collect clues and examine a scene in detail.

Some of the new skills are designed to emphasise the politics and intrigue of the Babylon 5 setting. Each race now has a Knowledge (culture) associated with it, letting a character learn the customs and traditions of another species. Skills like Intrigue and Subterfuge are tailor-made for double-dealing Centauri and Narn assassins. Other skills are there to reflect the series better – the game now distinguishes between fixing a busted circuit (Technical (electronics)) and locking sensors on a target (Operations (sensors)).

Combining skills means that 2<sup>nd</sup> edition characters will, on average, be slightly more competent than their 1<sup>st</sup> edition counterparts. They'll need it.

### Open Your Thoughts To Me!

The old telepathy rules have been overhauled and updated to be closer to the series. Now, any telepath may attempt to use any telepathic ability! Each



Mr Bester's joke about the short man and the tall blonde woman fails to get a laugh

ability has a required Power. To make a Power check, the telepath rolls 1d6+his P-rating. Get higher than the required Power, and you can make a Telepathy check to use the power properly. Roll lower than the required Power, and you might be able to make up the difference by pushing yourself and taking lots of non-lethal damage. The new rules mean that even a little P5 can try to use, say, Reality Fabrication on an enemy (but will probably exhaust himself doing so), but a mighty P12 like Bester can use low-Power abilities all day long without straining himself.

### The Sky Full Of (Exploding) Stars

With *A Call To Arms* handling mass space combat so adroitly, the roleplaying game is switching over to a most abstract, narrative system instead of the semi-wargame used in 1<sup>st</sup> edition. The new rules are based on the space combat system seen in the *WARS* RPG. Basically, each turn, a ship's pilot or commander

issues a number of orders – *Fire At Will*, *Fire Interceptors*, *Form On My Wing* and so forth – which affect his vessel's ability to blow chunks out of the enemy. The new system involves less mathematics and more dramatics on the part of the players – just pray you never hear your captain shout *Abandon Ship!*

### Influence

The new Influence rules have been lurking in the basement of the Babylon 5 rules since 1<sup>st</sup> edition. Many prestige classes got the ability to draw on the resources of some government or other group. Now, every class gets to pull strings and manipulate people. There are several different categories of Influence

– a Diplomat might have lots of Earth Government and Earth Social Influence, while a Narn General would have lots of Narn Military Influence, and a crime boss would have lots of Criminal and Local Influence. Characters can spend influence to get things done on a massive scale. A Diplomat could get EarthGov to give him diplomatic immunity, or borrow a few thousand credits off the government. With his Social Influence, he could have ISN run a report slandering his rival, or have them send a team of reporters to harass the command crew of Babylon 5.

Characters can even pressure and attack each other's Influences. Just be careful of people offering Shadow Influence...

### We're Not In 2258 Any More...

1<sup>st</sup> edition Babylon 5 was set in the Earth Year 2258, the first year of the series. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition is not so tightly tied to any one timeframe. The chapter describing Season 1 of the series has been removed (but will be showing up in some revised form in the future), and a B5 timeline and character write-ups for significant characters from later in the series have been added. So too has the Ranger class...

### Faith Manages

B52E does not mean the end of the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game* – it's the start of the game's second cycle. We've covered all the obvious supplements, so now the game will be moving on to detail other, more unexpected sections of the setting. The *Ships of the Galaxy* book will describe, well, every ship in the galaxy. There'll be an adventure and GM's screen in the shops around the same time as B52E, and that adventure will lead onto *The Ragged Edge*, a 160 page campaign set in 2258.

After that... who knows? I've been bugging Matt to let me do an IPX book for aages...



# Inside The Chainmail Bra

**Fey Boss**

## Player Attention

**H**ow does a GM get players' attention and then keep it?

It's a trickier question than most players might think. I've been wrangling with it on and off for years; in tabletop games, if I really had to, I could always resort to taking off my shirt, but I've caught bronchitis and my doctor's told me to avoid unnecessary exposure. Plus, this rarely works online without a webcam.

Usually when taking off my shirt fails, focusing in on the characters helps. Plots which focus on a specific character's strengths or weaknesses; on the mysterious dying words of their father; on the not so mysterious bar tab that's left them with a splitting headache and a desperate need to come up with cash in a hurry also works if I'm tapped out otherwise of ideas. But even here, I keep running into problems. Technically and in theory, plots do provide that focus. But...

But.

But too often, players want to be handed the starring role, without doing work for it. Does the glorious hero's ascension mean much if it amounts to nothing more than pulling a sword out of a chunk of rock? If there isn't the risk of failure, does the sweet smell of success have much going for it? I say thee nay.

It's easier when writing fiction, without players involved. You can slap them into line, or just write them out of the story: Bam. A wall fell on him. I think Robert Jordan's done that at least once. But assuming that the GM is dealing with actual players and is neither completely immature or has no reason to worry about players getting upset, this isn't generally an option.



So do you reward lazy players in order to get them to stick around or do you stick to your principles and make them work for it, even knowing more than half will leave in frustration? Thus far as a GM, I've always done the latter. My husband (also a GM) seems to have less problems with this; in tabletop and online, he loses players just the same (except for a certain core following) - it just bothers him less. Maybe it's a guy thing, that they're more inured to rejection. I mean, no one likes to be rejected, but girls do stereotypically seem to have more trouble with rejection than guys.

They just don't seem to think about it as much as we do or internalise it. 'Should I have done X? Was it because I did Y?' 'Was it my hair? Or my perfume? Maybe I should have brought the glitter dice and left the unicorn tea at home.'

However, we're wandering from the point. Getting players' attention isn't the issue. I've done that - countless times, in fact. It's keeping it. So how do you do that without compromising your principles? Frequency of plot activity seems to help, but really, there's a limit to how long you can keep that up without burning out as a GM. Things are always more active when the GM is running actual plot-based scenes. The problem is that people will show up to watch and then disperse, ignoring obvious hints and clues in favour of 'politeness' (even to NPCs), or even refuse to work together.



People like to feel special and important. There does seem to be a peak in interest when they're given a plot that makes them feel more important than other people. Of course, the problem is - once everyone's special, nobody is. It's possible to alternate from player to player; the problem is that too often, when you're focusing on someone else, the remaining people decide it's no longer important to them, since they're not the focus, and they wander off. I'll admit I do find roleplaying more enchanting when I feel my character is making a real impression and difference in things; that it matters that he or she exists within this world in a real way.

But does she have to be the centre of attention? Or just involved? If the player has to be Lilith, the dread queen whom all must worship on pain of certain death (whether or not by the characters as opposed to the players), there's something wrong.

Granted, some of the fault can be on the part of the plot as opposed to the players. There are two kinds of plot: Character driving and plot driving. And while character-driving ones are good for developing individual characters, they really need to be given a bit of a backseat to plot-driving ones that work more to move along greater chunks of the game.

Character driving will get the players involved - one at a time. Making them feel special and involved plays a big part in it. Not to make everyone the lead, but as a GM, they have to be made to feel, very early on, that their characters do matter to the game and play a hand in helping to shape it. I'm not looking to drop blame solely at the GM's feet here. There are plots out there that could involve everyone, the problem just becomes, getting the new players drawn into them before they lose interest. This really is more of a player thing.

Some of it's just the luck of the draw. When you get a group that works well together, you've hit pay dirt - and much bemoaning will occur when schedules fail to line up or real life takes its toll. Sometimes it's inevitable that a group falls apart. Sometimes, that group never meshes. The best way I've found so far to get a group to mesh is a plan so cunning and so secretive that pyramid scheme organisations would pay me money for the privilege of seeing my notes. And now and here, for the first time, I unveil them to public scrutiny.

The secret? Mentoring.

When I get a new player, I assign them a mentor from the established group of players. He doesn't know he's being mentored, of course; but the established player is his buddy. He gets filled in on any details of the game, the plot to date, helped with any stats or character creation, and in short, the mentor is his lifeguard for three to five sessions. At the end of that three to five sessions if he's not already integrated, he's handed off to another established player.

If after two or three players have acted as mentor the new player still hasn't managed to settle in, well, let him sink or swim. Either he'll make it or it just wasn't meant to be. Sometimes that's just the breaks, right?

So who's to blame when a player doesn't get interested, doesn't interact? Is it the GM's fault, or is it the player's responsibility? What do I think?

I think that it's a shared responsibility - but that ultimately, you get from it what you put into it. If players come to the table expecting the GM to sing, dance and put on a show, they're not roleplaying; time to go put on the television instead. Likewise, no GM can expect a player to bring more to the table than the GM.

So ... who's bringing the drinks?



# GAMING SYMPOSIUM

## NEW ANGLES ON ADVERSARIES

### PART ONE: ELDER RACES, ANCIENT THREATS

ROBERT  
GRIFFIN

So, the players have eliminated the last of the rampaging orc tribes that threatened the coast and made short work of the lich who had been manipulating the kingdom from behind the throne for six generations. They are feeling pretty good about themselves right about now. They know that they are stalwart defenders of justice, upholding the common good and saving the righteous. More importantly, they know that they are the good guys and that the bad guys are plainly labelled. So what now? The Games Master has thrown the best *Core Rulebook III* has to offer, crafted a few particularly devilish big nasties of his own devising and they still are not shaken up.

Now it is time to threaten their preconceptions, shake the foundations of their thoughts on right and wrong and hit them where they live. Now let us keep them guessing who is right and who is wrong. If the Games Master does his job right, the players may not be able to answer that one at first glance, second glance or in hindsight.

When sitting down to construct a particularly nefarious villain, most Games Masters stick with the staples: a mad human king, an evil necromancer, orcs, goblins, dark elf and the like. Why not? They

are the archetypal villains of the fantasy genre, but in falling back on them most Games Masters also neglect an important and potentially more rewarding enemy for the players, namely the other Player Character races.

Sure, everybody has done the 'Elven king gone mad' and the 'Evil halfling guildmaster', but again that is obvious and like using the staples of the genre it clearly paints a picture of right and wrong within the game. However, what about the lawful good dwarves under the mountain? What is stopping them from getting a piece of the action? Sure, they are lawful good. So that does not mean they cannot get their licks in too. Like most of the Player Character races from *Core Rulebook I* they tend to fall under the radar of most Games Masters as potential enemies because they are the good guys, right?

Wrong.

Each of the Player Character races from *Core Rulebook I* represents an entire race, culture, society and mindset just waiting to be exploited and used against the players as memorable antagonists. Moreover, if used properly, they can inject an occasional much needed sense of moral ambiguity

often lacking from the standard fantasy game. Keeping the players on their toes in regard to who is right and who is wrong in a given situation can generate some truly interesting role-playing moments as the players have to evaluate their actions in light of the fact that the forces they are competing against are not only not evil, but in all likelihood are their friends, neighbours and allies.

Remember each 'good' race has their own motivations and goals that not only can be brought into play against the players but at times should be. After all, just because the players want to save the world does not mean the elves do not want to as well and the odds are better than average; they believe that have the right, the responsibility and a better way of going about it than some upstart band of adventures.

However, before you can start plumbing the depths of the moral grey areas of the game, you should take a look at the elements that can bring these races into conflict with the players. It is one thing to say 'the dwarves are coming after the party' it is a whole other thing to figure out why. After all, they have had years to homogenise the various player races into one 'they are all good races' package.

Of the core fantasy races, the dwarves, elves, gnomes and halflings tend to fall into this trap the easiest. Mostly because the humans are us, it is easy to imagine them doing evil actions and being at odds with the players. Because of their human heritage corrupting their 'pure' elven half, half-elves fall into the same boat. Half-orcs are also a no-brainer as they are drawn from a normally 'evil' race and from humans, so when push comes to shove, in the eyes of most Games Masters they are obvious fodder for villainy.

The trick here is to make these less obvious candidates step up and pull their weight, put them directly in the path of the party and make them antagonists just as good, memorable and worthy of the players' attentions as any band of marauding dark elf or brain slayer (no relation). All the while remember they are 'antagonists,' not villains. Each race has plenty of wiggle room within their alignment and cultural identity to be a primary foe for any group of adventurers; the Games Master just has to dig a little to find it sometimes.

So let us take a look at the bastions of 'good' in the average fantasy game and figure out what makes them tick and, more importantly, what it takes to tick them off. When everything is said and done, there is nothing more satisfying for a Games Master then to hear the phrase, 'Oh god, not halflings' whispered in the same tone of dread and fear that was previously only reserved for dark elf.

## THE ELDER RACES: THE DWARVES AND ELVES

The mainstays of law, the dwarves, and the sylvan embodiment of good, the elves, are two of the easiest races of the core fantasy races to bring to cross purposes with an average fantasy party. Both are extremely long lived, hail from ancient and grand cultures, and both have an annoying tendency to think they know what is best for anyone that does

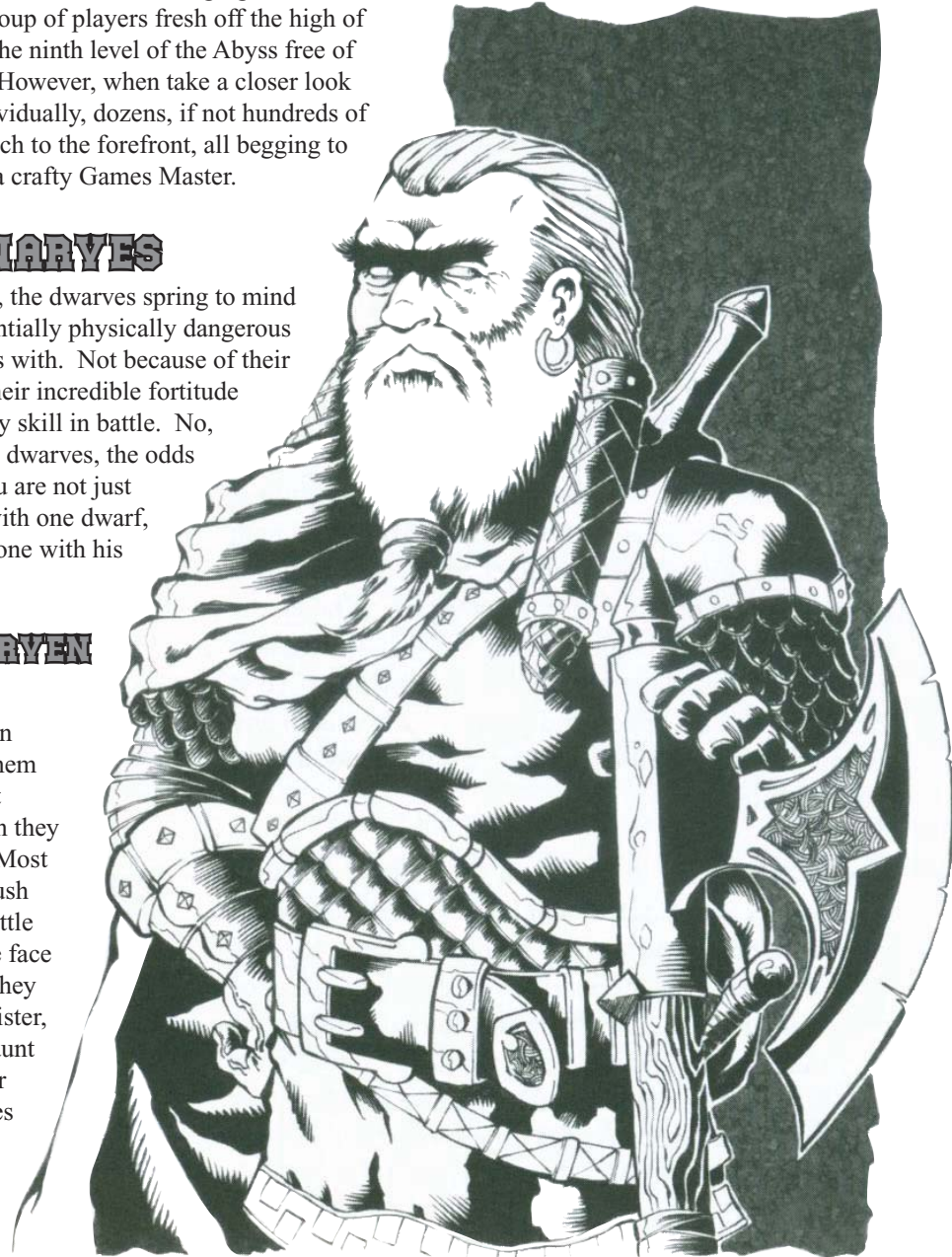
not live quite as long as they do. That by itself could be enough to generate ideas for bringing them to bear against a group of players fresh off the high of having scoured the ninth level of the Abyss free of evil influences. However, when take a closer look at each race individually, dozens, if not hundreds of other reasons lurch to the forefront, all begging to be exploited by a crafty Games Master.

### THE DWARVES

Of the two races, the dwarves spring to mind as the most potentially physically dangerous to come to blows with. Not because of their great strength, their incredible fortitude or their legendary skill in battle. No, because with the dwarves, the odds are good that you are not just picking a fight with one dwarf, you are picking one with his entire family.

### THE DWARVEN MINDSET

The dwarven clan structure gives them a natural support mechanism when they make enemies. Most know they can rush headlong into battle and engage a foe face to face because they have a brother, sister, cousin or great-aunt who has got their back. This makes dealing with an angry dwarf who has sworn vengeance on a hapless



character a family affair more often than not. Dealing with one furious, vengeance driven dwarf is inconvenient, dealing with an entire family can be a sure form of suicide.

Pack mentality can be bad; couple that with the dwarven concept that a dwarf's name is not his own, but he is just 'borrowing' it from an ancestor and have a recipe for conflict. If a dwarf has been slighted he has not just been insulted, he is now running the risk of bringing shame on his name. Since his name is just on loan from his great-great-grandfather, most dwarves are willing to go to any lengths to return it in good condition, if not improved by heaping their own glories and successes on it. Again, more often than not, the clan is willing to lend a hand in helping to deal with some uppity adventurer who is besmirching their clan mate's name.

Society-wise, dwarves hail from an extremely structured homeland. The average dwarf has been living underground, in close proximity to his immediate family and a stone's throw from his extended family. As we have seen, this forms some pretty close bonds. It also creates the need for some fairly structured laws.

Living elbow to elbow with that many family members requires organisation and there is nothing the average dwarf likes more than some good, old-fashioned law and order. It is what helps them get along in the confines of their chosen homes. Most dwarven cities are made up of either one extended clan or several smaller clans, working together toward common goals. With the inherent dangers that lurk around every tunnel bend under the earth, they have to know that they can trust one another and should a conflict arise between fellows that they can be dealt with swiftly, efficiently and justly.

Justice is a major component of the dwarven mindset; it is hardwired into them from birth. Like a love for gold and a weakness for strong ale, most dwarves will pursue justice relentlessly. The important bit to remember here is that the 'justice' the dwarves tend to pursue is justice as defined by their laws and traditions. Moreover, for other races that is where the rub lies. Most dwarves have fairly 'just' laws, but they also tend to be fairly narrow in scope. Mixing a narrow scope with a natural penchant for justice, you will often have dwarves who cross the line from justice into vengeance. When the players are on the receiving end of dwarven justice any number of problems can arise.

For starters, most non-dwarves do not approach things from a dwarven point of view. Dwarves tend toward being honest, straight forward, loyal and a little suspicious. Even other races that are naturally honest do not view honesty in the same light as dwarves do. If a human lies, they may be sinning against their god, disappointing their parents or violating a personal code of ethics. When a dwarf lies, they are lying with the whole weight of tradition behind them. Should that lie be exposed it would dishonour their entire line all the way back to their founder, by their reckoning.

By the same token, being lied to carries the same stigma. When a character lies they are not lying to one dwarf, they are lying to an entire line of them all the way back to the beginning and by proxy they are suggesting that they and their line are too stupid to catch them at it. They tend to look at flattery, dissembling, colouring the truth and any number of social niceties that both human and elves favour in the same light.

Finally, to truly appreciate the potential for conflicts with dwarves, you have to look at an often overlooked aspect of the dwarven psyche - their memory. Dwarves do not forget.

Ever.

A dwarf slighted in one generation has no compunction about handing all that animosity, annoyance and desire for vengeance on to the next. They know the next generation will take care of it for him, carefully nursing that grudge, and if they do not complete the vendetta, then their children will and so on. This can continue for generation after generation if the crime committed against the clan is sizeable enough.

As a side effect of their long lives, dwarves can afford to take their time in building up a good head of steam about an offence. Oh sure, the picture of the easily angered dwarf who blows off steam at a character in a local surface tavern is legendary. However, for every blowhard dwarf, they are two more stewing.

Few creatures can stew like a dwarf. Given the right situation a dwarf can nurse a grudge for decades. Quietly simmering, just below the surface, going over and over the situation in their head, silently carrying around that grudge like it had handles. And when the time comes that he finally boils over, it may have been half a century since the incident that started him off in the first place, but he is angry now and he is going to come looking for the source of his anger and the gods help anyone who gets in his way.

Unfortunately, this can have unintended side effects for the poor character who has riled the dwarf. While the dwarf was building up steam, it is entirely possible the object of his interest has died, been killed, disappeared or had any other multitude of issues remove him from reach. By the same token, it is also possible that the incident in question has passed out of the player's memory and now, in the twilight of his character's life, he has an extremely agitated dwarf showing up on his step looking for blood.

While things can be bad for the target of a dwarf's wrath while they are alive, things can be as bad, if not worse for their family if they are dead. With the dwarven belief in the responsibility of each dwarf to uphold the honour of their clan and name, the son of an enemy who has passed on is just as responsible in the eyes of a dwarf seeking justice as his father. And this can extend even further down the generations if the dwarf was unable to exact his vengeance on his foe, he can easily move to his son, his grandson and on to his great-great-grandson in the blink of an eye, until at least one of them answers for the sins committed by the ancestor.

Okay, so far we have established a number of reasons for the dwarves to come gunning for the



Player Characters but we have neglected one aspect of the dwarven mindset that players playing dwarven rogues use to rationalise the most cut-throat and underhanded of their actions in pursuit of the almighty gold piece: dwarven greed.

Few things are as ingrained in the average dwarf early on, like an all-consuming passion for gold and jewels. There is nothing that can bring a gleam to a dwarf's eye faster than a fat vein of gold, or a rumoured mineral deposit deep in the earth. After all, it is what drives them to burrow into the ground and hollow out mountains all across the planet. It is what they do and what they love.

Their natural predilection for gold and gems will make an otherwise stalwart and steady dwarven paladin take crazy and sometimes seemingly evil, or at least chaotic, actions in the pursuit of them. From the dwarven perspective, they are pursuing the dictates of their gods, they are following an instinct set down in them from the moment the god of the dwarves crafted the first dwarf. It cannot be wrong, it is tradition.

There is not much a dwarf will not do to secure gold and nothing they will not do to protect it. Therein lay dozens of ways and reasons for the party to come directly to loggerheads with a dwarf. If the party is going after treasure and so is a dwarf, or a group of dwarves, there is not much that lawful good band of dwarves is not going to be willing to do to pick up the coin. They will steal it, misdirect, fight and, if necessary, kill to get what they feel is their right to possess. If it is a precious stone or natural mineral, it came out of their earth, and that means they have a right to it.

So putting it all together we can see any number of scenarios that can bring a dwarf

to blows with the party. The same facets of their personality that make them such solid, dependable anchors of the good races also make them incredibly dangerous adversaries. However, it is these traits that under the right circumstances can be turned against the players at a moments notice.

The *Quintessential Dwarf* introduced the idea of Character Concepts; taking a look at just a few we can see how easily they can be turned from being a Player Character tool to a handy excuse to bring a little trouble the players way:

- ⌘ *The Merchant Apprentice* brings the natural dwarven covetousness to a new height injecting a new way to pit him and his race against the party. His unwillingness to part with coin unless absolutely necessary can lead to endless problems if he hires the party to perform a task. As there are guaranteed provisos, loopholes and catches to be found in any agreement he makes so he can lower payment for services rendered due to the party failing to live up to his 'exacting standards'.
- ⌘ *The Oreborn* have a destiny to fulfil and getting in the way of that destiny can be detrimental to the health and well being of any party unfortunate enough to also be pursuing the same goal. An *Oreborn* out to save the world can take a very dim view of 'glory seeking adventurers' looking to steal his destiny.
- ⌘ *The Stonesoul* are the very embodiment of the dwarven memory. If adventurers looted the ruins of the ancient dwarven settlement in the Morningstar Mountains three generations past, they are going to remember it and most likely send someone to recover what was taken.
- ⌘ *The Xenophobe* is probably the easiest to bring to bear on a hapless party that has dropped below ground. As the virtual embodiment of the



natural suspicion of their race it is exceptionally difficult for them not to view any non-dwarf as untrustworthy. If it was a surface race that was responsible for the fate that befell their clan, any members had best steer clear, or risk the xenophobe venting all the pent up rage, frustration and desire for vengeance on the nearest representative of that race.

*The Quintessential Dwarf* also contains several prestige classes that seem tailor made to be thrown in the path of Player Characters:

- ⌘ *The Clan Wisdom*, much like the *Stone Soul*, have the whole of dwarven history at their disposal, they could easily send a band of Dwarves to see vengeance on a party member for the crimes of an ancestor.
- ⌘ As the first line of defence against the enemies of dwarvenkind, the *Deeping Druid* could easily stumble across a subterranean party dungeon-crawling their way through sacred grounds, or revered ruins and be willing to go to any length to stop their trespass or desecration.
- ⌘ *A Forge Mage* seeking a magic item recovered by the party is rife with potential problems. As the party has to deal with an individual who believes he has a claim on an item that was crafted by his master centuries before most of the party was born and has brought family and friends with him to assert his claim.

These are only the tip of the iceberg. Given a little time and preparation virtually the entire *Quintessential Dwarf* can be plumbed for plot hooks, tools, tricks and information to flesh out newly minted dwarven antagonists. With the release of *The Quintessential Dwarf II*, canny Games Masters have a whole new resource at their disposal with which to outfit their players' latest rivals.

## THE ELVES

The direct nature of the dwarves finds its polar opposite in the elves. Where the dwarves are solid and dependable, the elves are fey and mercurial. While both are long lived, the lifespan of the elves outpaces the dwarves by nearly 300 years, giving them a broader perspective and an ability to devote themselves to a task for years. This makes them a formidable and relentless foe, pursuing a goal through the roll of years, their victory as inevitable as the passage of time itself.

## THE ELVEN MINDSET

Assuredness best defines the elves. They are consummately self-assured, having had centuries to develop their sense of self and the knowledge that centuries more await them to explore themselves and their place in the world around. This grants the elves a sense of purpose and inner serenity envied by the most accomplished monk.

However, it is this same inner awareness that makes the elves such devastatingly dangerous enemies. While a dwarf may pursue a party in a sense for justice, an elf that comes to blows with a party will come for vindication and acknowledgement. The elves innately understand their natural superiority; of all the races, they are the oldest, the wisest and most in tune with the natural world. To come into conflict with an elf is to challenge the basic concept that forms the foundation of their lives: that they are superior race.

An elf will never pursue a foe with a desire for vengeance or petty revenge, what they require is a basic acknowledgement of their own superiority on the part of enemy. To deny an elf, to challenge them openly or to stand in their way is an unforgivable insult. It flies in the face of the facts as the elves see them, that they are in fact superior to everyone around them and to say otherwise will bring an elf against you with the full weight of millennia of tradition that says you are wrong.

The elven knowledge that they are most elevated of the gods' creations gives them a confidence that can be frightening to witness as it guides the actions of the elf against their foes. Dwarves plan for victory, humans hope for it, elves expect it. However, this self-assuredness is only part of the equation. Each elf born believes they to be the very embodiment of their race; the shared elven soul reinforces that belief. On a fundamental level, the elves understand that the elven warrior you see standing before you is not just one elf, he is every elf ever born or ever yet to be. This only serves to reinforce their belief in their own pre-eminence.

Coupled with this is the innate understanding that in challenging one elf you have in fact challenged the whole of the race. This understanding grants the elves their calm demeanour and can inspire the heights of courage when facing obviously superior numbers. It also lends them an air of arrogance unmatched by any of the other goodly races. What others choose to view as egotism on the part of the elves, they see simply as self-awareness and with their long lives they are easily able to see the limitations of the other races.

Simply put, no other member of any other race can equal an elf in terms of sheer wisdom, majesty or sense of purpose. This is not condescension from the perspective of the elves. It is simply a fact - an immutable law of the universe, an elven truth. Just ask them. It is this insight that moulds the interactions the elves have with other races. Some have an urge to guide and direct the other races, hoping to impart their wisdom to their younger siblings. While others possess a borderline xenophobic desire to have nothing to do with the other races. The other races are truly not their equals and can never hope to be. This is also an elven truth, just ask them. Unfortunately some races do ask, and depending on the elf they ask, rarely do they like the answers.

Elven society is a seemingly paradoxical mix of love of freedom and an intensely close-knit community. This stems from the shared soul of the elves. Each elf is free to explore and examine the world in his own way, in his own time, exposing the shared soul to new experiences and enriching the whole. The elf is secure in the knowledge that even during the most solitary of pursuits they are never truly alone. This again creates tension between the elves and the other races. When dealing with the elves, even one on one, most races can sense on a subconscious level that they are an outsider, somehow disconnected from a greater whole that they cannot understand or ever hope to join. The elves rarely do anything to alleviate this feeling in non-elves and actively encourage in half-elves.

While this can generate a sense of inferiority in some races, in the elves it only contributes to their confidence and sense that they are the pinnacle of the creation of the gods. It makes it very difficult for them to forge lasting friendships with any of the other races. The elves seem to recognise that while they may form a brief relationship with a non-elf, they will forever be on the outside, unable to truly understand the intimate sense of community that all elves share with one another. Some choose to withdraw from the other races so as to spare them the pain when the non-elf recognises this fact. Others prefer simply to not waste their time in forging friendships that will always be nothing more than a hollow shadow of true elven friendship.

All of these elements combine to give the elves an appearance of aloofness and unflappability that hinders their ability to connect with the other races. The sense of elitism that seems to permeate the elven nature makes them difficult to approach or relate to, and in the eyes of the elves the effort is rarely worth it. This sense of interconnectedness even extends to the elven language, further isolating them from the other races.

The elves ability to insert other meanings into their spoken language by inflection and the use of tone that only the elves can hear due to their superior hearing can often leave non-elven listeners feeling that they are hearing only half a conversation. While elven speakers feel as if they are 'dumbing down' their speech in order to communicate in their native language with non-elves. Most elves despise being forced to excise whole levels of communication due to the other races' inability to understand it. This serves to only reinforce the elven belief that the other races are somehow lacking when compared to the elves themselves.

While the elves often feel distant from other races of the world, the natural world itself has much in common that the elves not only relate to it, but also feel a deep kinship to it. Like the elves themselves, nature will go on existing, growing and living beyond the life spans of even the long lived dwarves and well past the brief sparks of life that human and halflings possess. There is interconnectedness in nature that the elves recognise as mirroring their own shared soul. All things in nature exist in a symbiotic relationship, strengthening and adding to the whole, a fact that the elves feel only they can truly appreciate and recognise. In fact, the inability of the other races to see this very obvious fact frustrates and angers the long-lived elves. In their opinion, if the other races cannot see this plain truth in the world around them, they will never come to recognise it in the elves, adding further credence to the elven belief that they are the only true caretakers of the natural world.



This leads to a sense of responsibility and protectiveness of the natural world that often brings the elves into their most violent conflicts with the other races.

Destroying a forest or hunting an animal to the brink of extinction is both incredibly shortsighted and seen as a direct

and violent challenge to the elven stewardship of the sylvan glades and natural places in the world. The forests are not just their chosen homes; they are in many ways an extension of the elves themselves. Despite their long lives, the elves recognise that in time they too will pass, but the forest will go on and become the



responsibility of another generation in an unending cycle. Disrupting that cycle is an unpardonable offence in the eyes of the elves those that choose to destroy the natural world will be hunted down and destroyed utterly.

The last piece of the puzzle of the elven mindset is their innate patience. What other races tend to view as a lack of drive on the part of the elves is simply eons-honed patience. If can live for upwards of seven hundred years, very few things in life are so pressing that time cannot be taken to examine them from all angles, to attempt to intuit the possible consequences of your actions, and in many cases to simply wait and see how events play out. From their point of view if a problem goes away while one is discussing it, it was not really a problem to begin with.

Most elves are loathe to act until they have a complete understanding of a situation, after all rash action can only make a situation worse, they think. Assume this would preclude the elves from serving as antagonists for the players. If they have to take time to consider all sides of a scenario, they will never act in time to ever really interfere with the players' actions. That is where the elven communal soul comes into play. While the elves desire a thorough understanding of the consequences of their actions, they also have centuries of precedence established waiting to

be recalled at a moments notice via their reverie and ability to communicate with the souls of the elves that have come before them. This can shorten their reaction time considerably, as instead of discussing

the matter in committee an individual elf can consult with the inner soul. In the thousands of years of memory that exists in the collective soul he can find a situation, if not exactly the same, that bears enough of a similarity to provide guidance.

Once a decision has been reached regarding the proper course of action, there are few races that are as determined, dogged and relentless as the elves. They can afford to pursue their quarry for years, planning, watching and interfering with their rivals when it will do the most damage. However, unless it is absolutely unavoidable, most elves will avoid killing a non-evil adversary. The average elf does not want their enemy dead; they want them to acknowledge that they are wrong, and that the elves in their infinite wisdom are correct. In fact, that is what victory truly means to the elves, it is reinforcement that their way was the right way. Enemies defeated in battle, a hunter driven out of the wood, a group of adventurers that return an item of elven history, all carry the same meaning to the elves. It is recognition of the singular truth that is at the heart of the elves, that they are prominent race, and differing to their desires on any issue is a testament to their wisdom and station.

As you can see the combination of all of these elements, when brought together, can make for an enemy that is every bit as tenacious as a vengeance driven dwarf or evil necromancer bent on world domination. The elves fight battles of ideology that come from the very core of the race itself. It is very hard to combat an enemy that knows it is going to win, facing an antagonist that exudes that kind of confidence that can cut a party off at the knees, winning the battle of morale before the physical battle has even begun.

As with *The Quintessential Dwarf*, *The Quintessential Elf* is a treasure-trove of ideas, tricks and tips for inserting elven antagonists into your game. Several of the character concepts introduced

in the *Quintessential Elf* lend themselves very easily to elven foils of all types:

- ⌘ The *Outcast* elf can often be found at cross-purposes with any party, especially if there are any elves in the party itself. Driven out from the company of his race, the *Outcast* is a lonely and isolated being that in time can be driven mad by paradox of his existence. He is forever cut off from his people, yet still intimately connected to them through the elven shared soul. If a player makes an enemy of an *Outcast* they have made a foe that will hunt them until the end of time, willing to take any risk to give purpose to their existence, or in time to end it.
- ⌘ Nothing exemplifies the natural arrogance of the elves like the *Trueblood*. Where the average elf is self-assured, the *Trueblood* is supremely confident. They tend to treat most non-elves as if they were little more than animals and in most instances they would think better of animals. A *Trueblood* will pursue the slightest insult or challenge with vigour, not backing down until their opponent recognises the purity of their form. Moreover, should a non-elf pursue the same goal as a *Trueblood*, they have made a rival for life, especially if they succeed in besting them, as the *Trueblood* will look to orchestrate events that will enable them to even up the score.
- ⌘ The very embodiment of the sheer single-mindedness the elves can bring to bear when motivated, the *Manhunter*, is a focused and determined foe. Their dark and grim nature makes them less than ideal for a party of adventurers, but as a solo operative in pursuit of one of the players for crimes against the elven people, or to finish a more personal vendetta, no enemy is more frightening. Like the rest of their kin, they fight an ideological battle, but in their minds outliving your enemy is the ultimate rebuttal.

There are a number of prestige classes contained within the pages of the *Quintessential Elf*, that make exemplary enemies for either a single player or an entire party:

- ⌘ The *Voice of the Forest* is the bond between the elves and the natural world made manifest, and as such can bring the full fury of the forest against players who violate the confines of the Elven forest. A party that inadvertently destroys part of a forest in a pitched battle with other creatures could very well find selves pursued by the *Voice of the Forest*, looking to exact recompense on behalf of his sylvan home.
- ⌘ As the foundation of Elven tradition and lore, the *Keeper of the Songs*, can serve as an interesting foil for any bard or sage whose reputation has begun to spread. A *Keeper*, potentially interested in taking on an elven player as an apprentice may confront them at every turn, challenging and confounding them with riddles and puzzles, to test them, many times dragging the hapless elves companions along for the ride.
- ⌘ As a non-elven mage gains in notoriety and reputation, they may begin to eventually attract the attention of an *Arcane Delver* out to prove the innate superiority of the elven ways of magic. On the other extreme, an *Arcane Delver* may show up ready to pass judgment on a non-elven mage, gauging their skills, understanding, and more importantly how they use their magic. Should they be found unworthy, the *Arcane Delver* may attempt to take it upon himself to stunt the Player Character's magical growth, deny them resources, or strip them of their magic altogether.

The possibilities for elven foils, rival and antagonists are limitless, both *The Quintessential Elf I* and *II* have numerous other prestige classes and concepts

that will make for an enemy that your players will remember for some time.

## ELDER RACES, ANCIENT THREATS

Throwing an elf or dwarven enemy into the mix can really switch things up for players that have grown complacent fighting wave after wave of goblins or orcs. In addition, they allow the Games Master to make use of the myriad of resources that exist for these two races. The *Quintessential Books* have covered elves and dwarves and are on their second volumes now for both races, giving the Games Master a treasure trove of information, backgrounds and classes to plunder. All need is the motivation for these races to be set against the party, we have outlined a few options above, but there are literally hundreds of possibilities, all allowing them to be solid and unforgettable antagonists, while still keeping them within the alignments of their respective races.

So the next time the Games Master finds himself leafing through *Core Rulebook III* looking for the next evil, scheming, 'big bad', he might just grab *Core Rulebook I* instead and send an insulted dwarven warrior or a condescending elven lord with the best of intentions after the party. Keep the threats close to home and keep your players off guard, the results could surprise. Who knew 'good' could be so devious?

Next Month - Gnomes and Halflings!



# A FIELD GUIDE TO CREATURES OF THE HYBORIAN AGE

## A DETAILED STUDY OF MAN-APES FOR CONAN THE ROLEPLAYING GAME, PART II

**JOSH KAPFER**

### IV. FOR THE GAMES MASTER

*'The beast peering from the scarlet hood was utterly bestial, and yet Murilo realised that Nabonidus spoke truth when he said that Thak was not wholly beast. There was something in the red murky eyes, something in the creatures clumsy posture, something in the whole appearance of the thing that set it apart from the truly animal.'*

*Rogues in the House, Robert E. Howard*

### INCORPORATING MAN-APES INTO YOUR CAMPAIGN

Man-apes can make great additions to your adventure or campaign. They can be encountered singly, in pairs (although this usually only applies to Yahtis) or in family groups. There is little challenge in using them in adventures. The biggest challenge for Game Masters is finding an appropriate way to use them based on the skill and number of Player Characters in the adventuring party. Keep these

points in mind when creating adventures in which man-apes play a role:

Remember, adult male man-apes are no pushovers. For example, in all of his encounters with them, Conan has significant difficulty, not only winning, but surviving, and the same should be true of your Player Characters.

- ✘ Come up with a reason why your Player Characters would encounter man-apes. As a Games Master, try to avoid, what I call, the habit of 'throwing your Player Characters into the meat grinder'. If your Player Characters were attacked by man-apes, why? Were the man-apes hunting them? Were the man-apes protecting their young? Were they acting because of the command of some evil sorcerer who has power over them?
- ✘ Before you include man-apes in your adventure, think about the region where your Player Characters are currently travelling. Do man-apes normally exist here? If not, why would they be present for your Player Characters to run afoul of them?
- ✘ Make use of the Special Attacks, Qualities/Weaknesses and Feats possessed by man-apes (which will be discussed shortly). Man-apes do not just come running straight at an opponent during combat. They ambush prey by jumping out of trees or by throwing boulders down from

mountainous cliffs. Use these skills to make your Player Character's encounter with these critters more interesting.

- ✘ Finally, very few living beings will, of their own accord, fight to the death if escape is an option. If your adventurers get the upper hand in a combat with man-apes, the man-apes may try to flee. This can lead to an exciting chase through the jungles of Kush, or the mountains near Zamora.

Most importantly, be creative and have fun! That is what playing roleplaying games is all about!

### MAN-APES IN GAME TERMS

*'Instantly Thak, on the other side of the chamber, wheeled, glared and charged with a thunderous roar.'*

*-Rogues in the House, Robert E. Howard*

In this chapter, man-apes have been re-vamped using the layout on page 324 of the Conan Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook (Atlantean Edition) as a template. The major differences from that original write-up will be outlined in this section. Here you

will also find mention of all the additional Special Attacks, Qualities/Weaknesses and Feats available only to man-apes. These will add depth, options for creativity, and realism to any man-apes that you choose to include in your adventure.

## DIFFERENCES FROM THE MAN-APES AS DESCRIBED IN THE ATLANTEAN EDITION

There are now several types of man-apes and each one has unique game statistics (Attributes, Skills, HD and so on.) that are different from the man-apes in the Atlantean Edition.

✘ An addition has been made to the DR of these beasts. They still have a natural DR against all weapons (3 in sub-adults and 5 in adults). They now also receive a separate DR against attacks with bludgeoning weapons (6 in sub adults and 10 in adults) due to the robust nature of their skeletons.

✘ Attack statistics have been changed. Now, man-apes accomplish a single attack through the use of the claws rather than a slam (as a new Special Attack option deals with slam attacks), and a full attack consists of two claw attacks and a bite attack.

✘ Feats have changed. In this new version of man-apes, Games Masters have the option to personalise their man-apes (depending on the creature's role in the adventure) by selecting from both old and new feats available to man-apes

described below.

✘ Special Attack/Qualities/Weaknesses have changed. These have also been altered so that Games Masters have the ability to select from several old and new Special Attacks/Qualities described below. The Special Attack Improved Grab is no longer available. Fear not! Several new Special Attacks and feats have been created to take the place of Improved Grab, while giving the Games Master more options for combat.

## FEATS

This section lists, in detail, the types of unique abilities (in the form of special Feats) possessed by man-apes. These Feats have been designed to give man-apes more depth and options for the Games Master when planning encounters with the beasts. Several are not available to Player Characters or normal Non-Player Characters. Feats that have already been described in other Conan RPG sourcebooks will only be mentioned here. For complete descriptions of them, see the source material where they were originally printed.

**Rules for Selecting Your Man-Apes Feats:** As the OGL rules for monster creation states, monsters are allowed 1 (+1 per 3 HD) feats. Therefore, a creature with 2 HD is only allowed 1 feat, a creature with 3 HD is allowed two feats, a creature with 6 HD is allowed three feats and so on. When selecting your man-ape's feats, keep this in mind. The average man-ape, as described below, has 6 HD. It is therefore allowed three feats. Note: Although it is up to the Games Master, it is beneficial for all man-apes to take the feat Grapple (Man-ape Combat), as this gives them more options for attacking. Furthermore, as knowing how to properly grapple is necessary for delivering lethal damage while doing so, this feat is a prerequisite for several of the Special Attacks listed in the next section.



## OLD FEATS STILL AVAILABLE AS OPTIONS FOR MAN-APES

Alertness

Multitattack (teeth and claws)

Power Attack

## NEW MAN-APES SPECIFIC FEATS

### EYES OF NIGHT

Because they shy away from light (both natural and magical), man-apes have learned to adapt to utter darkness and can maneuver quite efficiently in pitch-black conditions, such as the dead of night. This is in addition to the Low-light Vision Special Quality listed on pg. 299 of the Conan Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook (Atlantean Edition).

**Prerequisites:** This Feat is available to all man-apes that are not infants. This Feat is not available to Player Characters or normal human Non-Player Characters. Although Yahtis are not afraid of light, they still have access to this Feat.

**Benefits:** Man-apes receive a +2 to all skill checks performed in absolute darkness. They also receive no penalty for skill checks performed in very low-light conditions (such as torch light).

### GRAPPLE MAN-APE COMBAT

This feat represents the man-apes superior grappling ability.

**Prerequisites:** This Feat is available to all man-apes that are not infants. This Feat is not available to Player Characters or normal human Non-Player Characters.

**Benefits:** With this feat, a man-ape's base grapple attack bonus always equals 1D20 + base attack bonus + Strength modifier + special size modifier (+0 for subadults, +4 for adults) + 5 (special feat bonus). Grapple defence equals 1D20 + base attack bonus + strength modifier + special size modifier + 5 (special feat bonus). All steps for successful grapple attacks (listed on pg 174, Atlantean Ed.) remain the same, except that man-apes with this feat ignore step

one and began at step two when initiating a grapple. Man-apes can initiate a grapple with a successful grapple attack (opposed against an opponent's grapple defence). A successful grapple attack also automatically deals 1D4 damage plus strength modifier and gives man-apes the opportunity to use one of the following Special Attacks listed below: Crush; Rend Limb From Limb; Shatter Bones, Shake the Blood as a Full Attack during the subsequent round after the successful grapple attack. Man-apes also do not receive a -4 penalty on their grapple checks when attempting to deal lethal damage. They also do not suffer a -4 penalty on natural weapon (claw) attacks when grappling. In addition, man-apes can Dodge while grappling. See page 173-175 of Atlantean Edition for normal grappling rules. In addition, this feat is necessary if the Games Master wishes to choose from the following Special Attacks for his/her man-ape: Crush; Rend Limb From Limb; Shatter Bones, Shake the Blood.

*'The mighty arms spread wide as the beast plunged, stupefying quick for all his vast bulk and stunted legs.'*

*Iron Shadows in the Moon,  
Robert E. Howard*

### UNCANNY LEAP

Keeping a man-ape from getting into grappling range is the best way for Player Characters to survive encounters with them. This is incredibly difficult, however, due to their amazing ability to leap long distances at speed. An adventurer may be faced with a man-ape that is 20 feet away one second, and the next may be fighting for his/her life as the beast leaps into an arm's length and is attempting to rip limbs from their sockets.

**Prerequisites:** This Feat is available to all man-apes that are not infants. This Feat is not available to Player Characters or normal human Non-Player Characters.

**Benefits:** When attacking an opponent head-on, a man-ape can leap a distance of up to 25 ft from a standing position as a free action. Man-apes can also leap straight up or down (up to, or down from a tree branch) up to 30 feet even if starting with both feet planted squarely on the ground as a free action. Furthermore, these creatures can automatically jump this distance (whether the jump is parallel, up, or down), and do not need to roll as is described in the Jump Rules on Page 92 of the Conan Core Rule Book (Atlantean Ed). Note: to attempt a 'standing broad jump' type of leap forward at an opponent that is on the same level as the man-ape, an open space between the man-ape and its quarry is necessary.

## SPECIAL ATTACKS, ABILITIES AND QUALITIES

*'Swiftly the terrible strength of the anthropoid overcame the leverage of braced arm and knee. Inexorably Conan's arm bent under the strain; nearer and nearer he was drawn to the slaver's jaws that gaped for his life.'*

*Iron Shadows in the Moon,  
Robert E. Howard*

All monsters have certain Special Attacks/Qualities, and perhaps even Special Weaknesses. Man-apes are no exception. Therefore, in this section you will find both old and new Special Attacks available to Man-apes. No detail is given on the old Special Attacks, as they can be found in the Conan RPG Core Rulebook (Atlantean Ed).

Rules for selecting your man-ape's Special Attacks: The rules in this regard are simple. Sub-adult man-apes (be they black or grey) can have one Special Attack. The average man-ape (be they black or grey)



**CRUSH [EX]**

The description of this Special Attack remains unchanged from that located on Pg. 324 of the Conan Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook (Atlantean Ed).

**Prerequisites:** Grapple (Man-ape Combat) feat.

**Benefits:** Same as listed in Conan RPG Atlantean Ed.

**DISEMBOWELING STRIKE [EX]**

The claws are one of the man-apes most important weapons. When hunting, man-apes use them to quickly incapacitate prey. They are also very effective melee weapons. When attacking an armed individual, most man-apes will use a combination of their claws and dexterity to get close enough to the individual for grappling (where they are very formidable, indeed). When using

their claws, man-apes will often aim for the throat or stomach of their opponent, and have the ability to cause serious damage in one swipe.

**Benefits:** If a man-ape succeeds in delivering a critical strike with its claws, rather than following the normal damage multiplier, roll 1 D20. On a roll of 20, the man-ape disembowels the opponent. If not wearing metal armour, his/her hit points are automatically reduced to zero and they are Disabled (pg. 163, Conan RPG Atlantean Ed.) Furthermore, he/she loses an additional one point/round until healed or dead. NOTE: if the opponent makes a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 17) their hit points are halved rather than reduced to zero. The additional damage per round still applies, however.

is allowed to have two Special Attacks. Dominant male man-apes or females protecting an infant (be they black or grey) are allowed to have three Special Attacks. Note: The Special Attack Improved Grab listed on Pg 324 of the Conan Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook (Atlantean Ed.) is no longer available to these beasts. Fear not, however, for this has been replaced by the feat Grapple (Man-ape Combat), described in the feats section. This new feat allows you greater flexibility and specificity in the type of attack you want your man-ape to most commonly use. Furthermore, that feat is a prerequisite for several Special Attacks listed below.

Spending of a Fate point can reverse the effects of a disembowelling strike whether wearing armour or not.

**FROM WHICH WAY DOES HE COME? [EX]**

Man-apes are masters of stealth and ambush. They use this tactic while hunting and are deadly efficient. Benefits: Man-apes gain a +4 on all Hide and Move Silently skill checks when ambushing prey. If successful, the target being ambushed is Surprised (pg 152, Conan RPG, Atlantean Ed.). Man-apes also gain a +2 to their initiative rolls when engaging in combat in familiar territory.

**Note:** a successful Spot check (opposed vs. the man-apes Hide or Move Silently skill checks) means that the attacked individual is not Surprised.

**LOW-LIGHT VISION**

The description of this Special Ability is unchanged from that on pg. 299 of the Conan Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook (Atlantean Ed).

**REND LIMB FROM LIMB [EX]**

Man-apes possess amazing strength. When engaged in close-quarters grappling, man-apes can utilise this strength to literally rip opponent's arms and legs from their joints, and even twist off their heads. The results of such attacks can leave a would-be attacker maimed or dead.

**Prerequisites:** Grapple (Man-ape Combat) feat

**Benefits:** If a man-ape attempts to grapple with an opponent, and successfully rolls a grapple attack that exceeds the opponents grapple defense by 5, as a full attack the round after the successful grapple attack, he can choose to grab one of the victim's limbs and gain the leverage necessary to maim him/her. Next, 1 D20 is rolled and the following chart is used to determine the result of the attack. Note: the individual being attacked can attempt a Reflex saving throw (DC 20). If successful, the result of the roll to determine the outcome of the man-ape's



grapple attack (on the table below) is reduced by 2. In addition, spending a Fate point can reverse the effects of a 19 or 20 roll on this table.

Roll	Result
1-10	Nothing
11-16	Opponent receives an additional two points of damage
17-18	Opponent receives an additional five points of damage
19	Opponent's weapon arm is popped out of joint. He/she cannot wield their weapon (even if it requires two hands) unless healed with the Heal Bone, Joint and Ligament Damage use of the Heal skill (see below). The pain is unbearable and he/she is at -5 to all skill, saving throws, and attribute checks until healed. Furthermore, he/she receives 5 points of damage and an additional point per round until the damage is healed.
20	The opponent's head is twisted 180 degrees in the wrong direction by the man-ape. Dies instantly with a horrifying look on his/her face.

### SCENT [EX]

The description of this Special Ability is unchanged from that on pg. 299 of the Conan Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook (Atlantean Ed).

### Shatter Bones, Shake the Blood (Ex)

If a successful Grapple (Man-ape Combat) attack occurs, man-apes have the option, as a full attack the round after the successful grapple attack, of slamming their opponent against an object or the ground (if applicable). This object can be a rock, a tree, a piece of furniture, and so on depending on

where the combat is taking place. The man-ape can also use this Special Attack to throw an opponent (10-15 ft, regardless of weight) in any direction, rather than slamming him/her into an object or the ground.

**Prerequisites:** Grapple (Man-ape Combat) feat

**Benefits:** All such slamming or throwing attacks automatically deal four points of damage. The amount of additional damage dealt by the attack, depends on the type of object that the victim is being slammed into or thrown onto. Note: a successful Reflex saving throw by the attacked individual (DC of 17), means that the individual has wriggled free and the attack is negated.

Object Slammed Into	Additional Damage
Water (pond, lake, pool)	None
Soft Ground (loamy, sandy, swampy)	1 point
Hard Ground (rock, compact dirt)	3 points
Furniture (table, chair)	2 points (note: the slam attack obliterates the object, creating pieces too small to cause shrapnel damage)
Large Metal Object (metal door)	3 points
Large Tree Trunk	2 points
Large Stone Object (cliff face)	2 points

### SPECIAL WEAKNESS

*"His kind are creatures of darkness and the silent places, haters of the sun and moon."*

*-Conan, Iron Shadows in the Moon,  
Robert E. Howard*

**Shun the Light:** Because they are more at home in complete darkness, man-apes do not adjust well to light (both natural and artificial). They fear even fire, and may flee from it. Thus, most man-apes presented with fire must make a successful Will saving throw following the rules listed for The Terror of the Unknown on pg. 313 of the Conan Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook (Atlantean Ed.), with the following exception: the DC for this roll is determined on the table listed below. When determining the effects and results of this roll, alpha male man-apes are considered 3<sup>rd</sup> level, while all other man-apes are considered 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> level. These effects, however, are not felt in deep jungles, whether it is day or night, but will take hold if the man-ape happens to wander (or be coaxed) into an area where direct sunlight penetrates the canopy of trees (treat as Dappled Daylight on the table below).

**Note:** Yahtis are more frequently witnessed in lighter conditions and are not affected by this Special Weakness.

Type of Light	DC for Man-ape Will Saving Throw
Broad Daylight	25
Dappled Daylight	20
Magical Fire (Flame Powder, Acheronian Demon-Fire, Kothic Demon-Fire)	15
Bonfire	15
Torchlight	10

## TYPES OF MAN-APES THAT MAY BE ENCOUNTERED

*“Some would call him an ape, but he is almost as different from a real ape as he is different from a real man.”*  
*Rogues in the House, Robert E. Howard*

### SUB-ADULT MAN-APES [BLACK OR GREY VARIETY]

Sub-adult man-apes are individuals that are no longer dependent on their mothers, but have not yet reached sexual maturity. They look similar to adults, only smaller. These individuals are rarely encountered outside of their family group, although anything is possible.

#### Medium Monstrous Humanoid

**Hit Dice:** 4d8 +10 (25 hp)

**Initiative:** +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex, also see From Which Way Does He Come? Special Attack Modifiers when appropriate)

**Speed:** 30 ft (6 squares) climb 30 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 16 (-0 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural)

**DR:** 3 (6 against bludgeoning weapons due to their robust skeletons)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/ (base grapple attack varies depending on feat selection)

**Attack:** Claw + 6 melee (1d8+6)

**Full Attack:** 2 Claws (primary weapon) +6 melee (1d8+6) and bite (secondary weapon) +5 melee (1d10+3), or Special Attack option

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft/ 10 ft (but see Uncanny Leap Feat)

**Special Attacks:** Variable depending on Games Master’s choice. Two can be chosen.

**Special Weaknesses:** Shun The Light

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 20 (+5), Dex 15 (+2), Con 14 (+2), Int 5 (-3), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 7 (-2)

**Skills:** Climb +12, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Spot +5, Perform (mimic) +7, Search +2

**Feats:** Variable depending on Games Master’s choice. Two can be chosen.

**Advancement:** 5 HD (Large)

### AVERAGE MAN-APE [SUBORDINATE INDIVIDUAL, BLACK OR GREY VARIETY, INCLUDING YAHGIS]

These individuals are non-dominant adults, and are an example of what is most likely to be encountered by adventurers. Furthermore, any captive individuals, be they the property of scholars or sorcerers (the purpose of which is probably dastardly), fall into this category.

#### Large Monstrous Humanoid

**Hit Dice:** 6D8+12 (39 hp)

**Initiative:** +8 (+3 Dex, +5 Reflex, also see From Which Way Does He Come? Special Attack Modifiers when appropriate)

**Speed:** 30 ft (6 squares) climb 30 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 16 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +4 natural)

**DR:** 5 (10 against bludgeoning weapons due to their robust skeletons)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +5/ (base grapple attack varies depending on feat selection)

**Attack:** Claw +9 melee (1d8+6)

**Full Attack:** 2 Claws (primary

weapon) +9 melee (1d8+6) and bite (secondary weapon) +8 melee (1d10+3), or Special Attack option

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft/ 10 ft (but see Uncanny Leap Feat)

**Special Attacks:** Variable depending on Games Master’s choice. Two can be chosen.

**Special Qualities/Weaknesses:** Shun The Light

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 20 (+5), Dex 17 (+3), Con 17 (+3), Int 7 (-2), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 7 (-2)

**Skills:** Climb +12, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Spot +5, Perform (mimic) +7, Search +2



**Feats:** Variable depending on Games Master's choice. Two can be chosen.

**Advancement:** 7 - 8 HD (Large)

## ALPHA MALE MAN-APPE OR ANY FEMALE WITH INFANC [BLACK VARIETY]

These individuals represent large alpha males or females during the breeding season. Alpha males are larger and more dominant than average males. They have proven themselves superior to their contemporaries and their statistics reflect this. Females with infants are protecting their young and, thus, more aggressive and formidable than they are under normal conditions. These types of black man-apes are slightly more dexterous (and slightly less powerful), than their grey cousins.

### Large Monstrous Humanoid

**Hit Dice:** 9D8+12 (60 hp)

**Initiative:** +10 (+5 Dex, +5 Reflex, also see From Which Way Does He Come? Special Attack Modifiers when appropriate)

**Speed:** 30 ft (6 squares) climb 30 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 18 (-1 size, +5 Dex, +4 natural)

**DR:** 5 (10 against bludgeoning weapons due to their robust skeletons)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +6/ (base grapple attack varies depending on feat selection)

**Attack:** Claw +10 melee (1d8+6)

**Full Attack:** 2 Claws (primary weapon) +10 melee (1d8+6) and bite (secondary weapon) +9 melee (1d10+3), or Special Attack option

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft/ 10 ft (but see Uncanny Leap Feat)

**Special Attacks:** Variable depending on Games Master's choice. Three can be

chosen.

**Special Qualities/Weaknesses:** Shun The Light

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 21 (+5), Dex 20 (+5), Con 17 (+3), Int 7 (-2), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 7 (-2)

**Skills:** Climb +12, Listen +5, Move Silently +8,

Spot +5, Perform (mimic) +7, Search +2

**Feats:** Variable depending on Games Master's choice. Three can be chosen.

**Advancement:** 9 - 10 HD (Large)

## ALPHA MALE MAN-APPE OR ANY FEMALE WITH INFANC [GREY VARIETY, INCLUDING YAHGIS]

These individuals represent large alpha males or females during the breeding season. Alpha males are larger and more dominant than average males. They have proven themselves superior to their contemporaries and their statistics reflect this. Females with infants are protecting their young and, thus, more aggressive and formidable than they are under normal conditions. These types of grey man-apes are slightly stronger (and slightly less dexterous) than their black cousins.

### Large Monstrous Humanoid

**Hit Dice:** 9D8+12 (68 hp)

**Initiative:** +10 (+5 Dex, +5 Reflex, also see From Which Way Does He Come? Special Attack Modifiers when appropriate)

**Speed:** 30 ft (6 squares) climb 30 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 17 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +4 natural)

**DR:** 5 (10 against bludgeoning weapons due to their robust skeletons)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +6/ (base



grapple attack varies depending on feat selection)  
**Attack:** Claw +11 melee (1d8+6)  
**Full Attack:** 2 Claws (primary weapon) +11 melee (1d8+6) and bite (secondary weapon) +9 melee (1d10+3), or Special Attack option  
**Space/Reach:** 10 ft/ 10 ft (but see Uncanny Leap Feat)  
**Special Attacks:** Variable depending on Games Master's choice. Three can be chosen.  
**Special Qualities/Weaknesses:** Shun The Light\*  
**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3  
**Abilities:** Str 22 (+6), Dex 19 (+4), Con 17 (+3), Int 7 (-2), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 7 (-2)

**Skills:** Climb +17, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Spot +5, Perform (mimic) +7, Search +2  
**Feats:** Variable depending on Games Master's choice. Three can be chosen.  
**Advancement:** 9 - 10 HD (Large)

\* This Special Weakness does not affect Yahtis

## NEW USE OF THE HEAL SKILL FOR PLAYER CHARACTERS

Heal Bone, Joint and Ligament Damage: Below is a table that lists the average DCs associated with Heal Skill checks for repairing bone, joint and ligament damage that may occur during a man-ape encounter. A Heal skill check can be attempted multiple times as long as the 'healer' is calm and not being rushed, although the effects are not cumulative (in other words, either it is successful once or is not). If being rushed, it can only be attempted once. Note: if this damage is left un-repaired, the victim will either die of hit point loss, or (if hit point loss is negated and a second roll is not made to heal the dislocated/broken limb), will be at a severe disadvantage. Any severe damage to the legs (broken bones, dislocated knee, and so on.) that is not healed as stated below will leave the recipient of said damage largely immobile. Their Speed is reduced to 1 ft. and any form of prolonged movement (even walking) causes them to loose 1 hp per round. Severe damage to the arms that goes untreated is no less of an inconvenience. If the damaged limb is their dominant (weapon) arm, for the first week they will be at -30 to any weapon related skill rolls, or strength related rolls that require two hands until the damage is healed. Whether the arm is the dominant one or not (or the Player Character is ambidextrous), he will be at -20 to

all skill and attribute related rolls until the damage is healed. Any strenuous exertion of the damaged limb will result in the loss of 2 hp per round.

Damage Being Healed	DC for Successful Heal Skill Check
The per round damage being received due to such wounds is negated	10
Set a dislocated arm or leg so it may heal properly	15 (Limb cannot be used for 1 week; after one week it can be used at -10 to all skill or attribute rolls involving it; after two weeks it can be used at -5, and after three weeks the damage is completely healed).
Set and splint a broken arm or leg so it may heal properly	20 (Limb cannot be used for 1 week; after one week it can be used at -10 to all skill or attribute rolls involving it; after two weeks it can be used at -5, and after three weeks the damage is completely healed).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# Emergency Situation!

**GREG LYNCH**

**I**t is a situation every Games Master has faced at least once. For some reason, be it pressures from work, from school or something else entirely, he has not had the time he needs to prepare for the roleplaying session. Fortunately for him, *Signs & Portents Roleplayer* has done the work for him. The six Starship Troopers missions detailed below offer the busy Games Master a perfect solution for the night when he needs an adventure and does not have the time to create his own.

These six adventures are designed to fit perfectly into a single roleplaying session, and are created to allow the Games Master to drop them easily into any Starship Troopers campaign. The missions cover a range of character levels, but each can be modified with a minimum of effort on the part of the Games Master to accommodate practically any character level.

Blending fast, furious action, unexpected complications and meant to slip easily into a campaign, these missions also allow a Games Master to insert a few unexpected surprises for his Player Characters, adding a significant jolt of energy to any campaign. Though all these missions are meant to be self-contained, a number of them can easily be expanded and enlarged by an enterprising Games Master who is interested in following the plot threads of any particular mission to its conclusion.

## MINI-SCENARIOS FOR THE STARSHIP TROOPERS ROLEPLAYING GAME



# LIVE CAPTURE

Character Levels: 6<sup>th</sup>

Experience Points: 300 experience points

Mission Type: Drop, clearance, capture, evac

Mission Duration: Twenty minutes

Terrain: Rocky plains, corrosive and toxic atmosphere, high gravity

Special Equipment: Two FedCom SW-402 'Triple GL' Grenade Launchers with any grenades, Wyman Arms CC-176-ER Combat Prod (one per character)

Available Support: Viking Landing Boat for EVAC

**Enemies:** Blaster bug (8), plasma bug (1), tanker bug (2), warrior bugs (30)

**Mission Briefing:** *'Good work, apes. Looks like someone from up high has been watching you and likes what they've seen. What do you get for this? Glad you asked. You get a special assignment. We're about to hit orbit over the nastiest rock this side of hell. The bugs in this place make what you're used to seeing look like ladybugs, but your job here means more than killing. The high foreheads in Special Services want one of them for study, and it's your job to get it for them. Thing is, it has to be alive, and a warrior if possible. We're tracking a swarm moving across the surface now, and we're gonna drop you on top of them. Hit 'em and kill 'em all. Except one. That's what the shock sticks are for.'*

**Mission Breakdown:** If the Player Characters think this looks like the kind of mission where something is bound to go wrong, they are right.

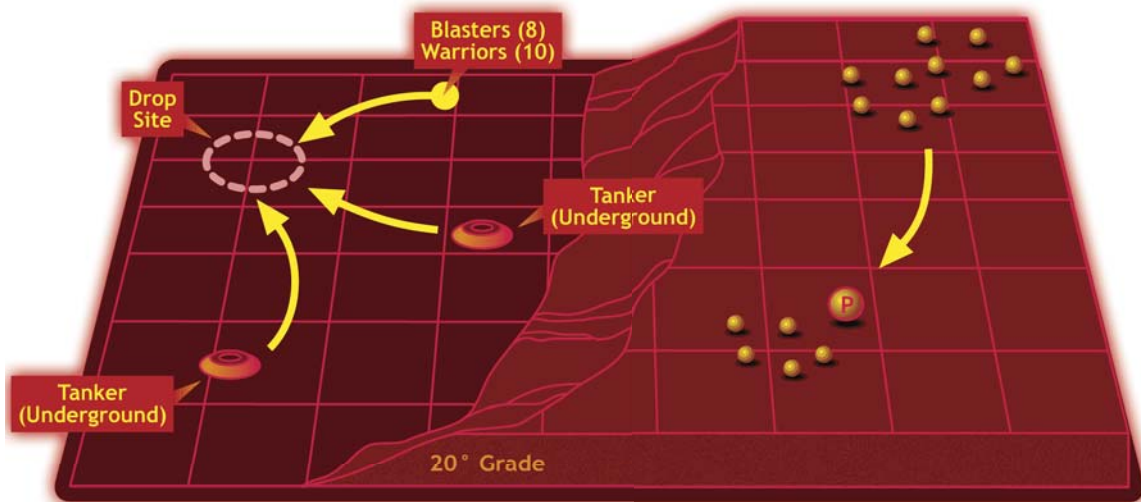
Everything starts out going according to plan. The drop takes the troopers directly into the path of a small group of Arachnids moving southwest, consisting of eight blaster bugs and 15 warrior bugs. From the time the troopers hit ground, they have six rounds until the first Arachnids reach them. Five rounds after the battle begins, a tanker bug bursts from the ground just south of the site of the battle. Four rounds after that, another tanker bug arrives from the west. Presumably, the troopers will choose one of the 15 warriors as their target for capture, and once the remainder of the bugs are dead, they can call for evac.

This is the point where things truly begin to go wrong. The Viking Landing Boat will be hit by the nearby (and heretofore unnoticed) plasma bug as it makes its approach, turning the craft into a fireball of wreckage. The Player Characters then receive a communication from their commanding officer, telling them another lander cannot be dispatched until the plasma bug is destroyed. The plasma bug is nearly half a mile from their position, and time on the mission clock is certainly starting to run out.

Assuming the troopers have already subdued and captured a warrior bug, they have a difficult decision to make. If they leave the bug behind, it will almost certainly recover and vanish before they can return. If they leave some of their men to guard it, they will be reducing their numbers before facing a plasma bug. If they try to take it with them, they will have to carry the unwieldy and extremely heavy (900 pounds on this world) captive up a steep slope and into combat.

Of course, there are some other warriors with the plasma bug, and another group of 10 that attack from the north with three rounds of beginning combat

150'



**RED CARPET**Character Levels: 5<sup>th</sup>**Experience Points:** 500 experience points**Mission Type:** Clearance, take and hold**Mission Duration:** One hour**Terrain:** Arctic desert, low gravity**Special Equipment:** Two GK-12 Geckos, two FedCom SW-404 Javelin missile launchers loaded with M-666C5 HEAT missiles, four FedCom SW-403 'Thud Gun' Rocket Launchers loaded with M-711A1 'Scatterjack' rockets, 17 M-901HE High Explosive grenades.

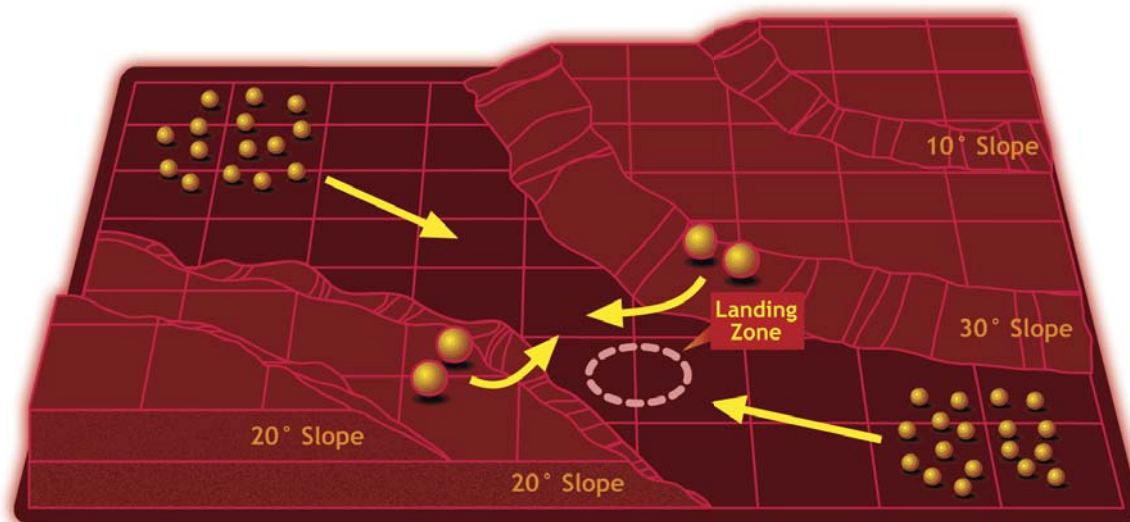
with the plasma bug, but there is no way for the troopers to know this. Once the plasma bug (and all other bugs in the immediate vicinity) have been destroyed, another Viking Landing Boat will come for the Player Characters.

For every two size categories of an Arachnid on this world, the creature's Strength score should be increased by one point (rounding up). For example, a blaster bug would gain +3 to its Strength score, while a plasma bug would gain +4.

**Mission Objectives:** The sole purpose of this mission is the capture of a live Arachnid. So long as the Player Characters accomplish this, they receive full experience for the mission. If they fail, they receive no experience and may be subject to disciplinary action (at the Games Master's discretion).

**Available Support:** Orbital barrage**Enemies:** Plasma bugs (7), tanker bugs (4), warrior bugs (68)

**Mission Briefing:** *'Remember how your History and Moral Philosophy teacher told you the best things in life aren't free? That's a lesson I hope you recall, apes. We finally got some relief coming to us on this rock, but Fleet's targeted landing zone looks like a damn plasma bug convention. If we're gonna have any hope of not getting ground to nothing, we need those reinforcements, and we need 'em now! Fleet's gonna hammer them from orbit, but I think we all know that never gets the job done. I've given you the best gear we got left to us, now I need you to get in there and kill everything that crawls. Clear?'*



**Mission Breakdown:** The landing zone for the reinforcements is a 20 minute drive from the Player Characters' current position. As they approach, they will see the explosions of the Fleet barrage, as well as multiple plasma bursts streaking from the surface into the sky.

The Player Characters enter the map in the northwest corner, in the middle of the valley leading up to the landing zone, which is itself practically uninhabited, save for one plasma bug and five warriors. The hardest part of this mission comes at the beginning.



As the troopers approach the plasma bug, they will come under attack by the Arachnids pouring back into this area after the orbital bombardment (Games Masters should describe the hundreds of Arachnid corpses and dozens of impact craters littering the area). Just before they reach the landing area, the Player Characters come under attack by four tanker bugs burrowing out of the valley walls on either side. Five rounds later, a group of 18 warriors swarms up from the southeast. Of course, the troopers still have a plasma bug and its five warriors to deal with during this time.

There are seven plasma bugs still active at this point, marked on the map with a 'P'. Each of the plasmas has five warriors with it as bodyguards. Each of the plasmas also suffered some damage during the orbital bombardment, losing 25% of its total hit points.

After the troopers have dealt with all the plasma bugs on one side of the valley and are moving across to the other side, they have more unwelcome visitors, in the form of 15 warriors moving in from the north.

The greatest challenge in this mission, aside from the sheer size of the Arachnid forces, is completing it in the time allotted. If even one plasma bug is still alive when the mission time expires (the same time the Fleet landing begins) it will destroy one of the incoming ships with every shot.

**Mission Objectives:** This is an all or nothing mission to SICON. If all the plasma bugs are killed before the landing begins, the Player Characters receive full experience. However, if even one of the incoming ships is destroyed, the Player Characters will be subject to disciplinary action and will receive no experience.

## WARM WELCOME

**Character Levels:** 4<sup>th</sup>

**Experience Points:** 300 experience points

**Mission Type:** Clearance, nuclear deployment

**Mission Duration:** Ninety minutes

**Terrain:** Mountains

**Special Equipment:** Five modified Pee-Wee warheads, demolitions kit, GK-12 Gecko

**Available Support:** Viking Landing Boat for EVAC

**Enemies:** Cliff mites (5), hopper bugs (8), Tanker bug (1), Warrior bugs (24)

**Mission Briefing:** *'Just when you think Fleet's left us high and dry on this pathetic rock, you find out we're even higher and dryer than you suspected. You've been giving the bugs hell, apes, don't think I don't know it, but we got problems inbound like you've never seen. Transport bugs, bringing a whole world of hurt our way. Good thing for us we're a damn sight smarter than them. Special Services reports the trajectory of one of the bugs is gonna bring it right down in our back yard - and there ain't but one place for it to go, the valley on your display. I want you to get in there, kill everything that crawls, and rig the site with these modified Pee-Wees so we can blow the whole valley to hell when the transport bug sets down. Simple enough? Then what are you still doing here?'*

**Mission Breakdown:** This mission is a race against time. The transport bug is on its way, and if it touches down before the Player Characters have finished their work, they will almost certainly die.



100 yards

It will take the Player Characters 45 minutes to reach the valley in the Gecko, as there is only one path the vehicle can take to get there. They will be unmolested along the way – the M.I. has done its job well on this world and cleared out most of the Arachnids (except for those within the mountains).

As the Gecko arrives, it will be greeted by a group of eight warriors and one tanker bug. Once this threat is dealt with (a task made simpler by the Gecko's weapons), the troopers must set about the business of emplacing the five modified Pee-Wees – warheads that have been altered to function as placement charges. The charges should be set at the spots on the map marked with an 'X'. Placing a Pee-Wee and setting it with a detonator requires five minutes and a DC 15 Demolitions check for each device.

Five minutes after the Player Characters arrive in the valley, a group of eight hopper bugs will swoop in to attack, continuing to harass the troopers until they have all been killed. Five minutes later, a group of six warrior bugs will sweep in from the mouth of the valley. Five minutes later, another group of warriors (10) will attack from the same direction.

Once all five warheads are set in place, the troopers can climb back into the Gecko for the short trip to the extraction point. However, they are not out of danger yet. While they were busy fighting bugs and setting warheads, a group of five cliff mites climbed inside the Gecko. Unless the Player Characters posted a sentry at the Gecko, the Games Master should assume the cliff mites slipped aboard undetected. As soon as the Gecko is underway, the

cliff mites will attack. Once they are dealt with, the Player Characters can withdraw to the extraction point and wait for the transport bug to arrive before triggering the detonator.

**Mission Objectives:** SICON judges the success of this mission based on only one criteria – whether or not the transport bug and all its passengers are destroyed upon touching down in the valley. So long as at least three of the Pee-Wees detonate, the mission will be accomplished.



# JAILBREAK

**Character Levels:** 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Experience Points:** 200 experience points

**Mission Type:** Assault, rescue

**Mission Duration:** Three hours

**Terrain:** Caves

**Special Equipment:** Lockpick set, mechanical toolkit (basic), TOAD charges (2)

**Available Support:** Viking Landing Boat for EVAC

**Enemies:** Skinny 1<sup>st</sup> level Raider (10), Skinny 2<sup>nd</sup> level Raider (Gunner) (2), Skinny 2<sup>nd</sup> level Raider

(Leader) (1). Consult the core *Starship Troopers Roleplaying Game* rulebook for exact statistics and equipment.

**Mission Briefing:** *'Well, apes, you get the chance to play hero today. The Skinnies that have been raiding this rock have got themselves some prisoners. Seems they got the drop on Charles' Commandos and managed to take five of their troopers captive. We don't know what the Skinnies do to prisoners, and we don't want the Commandos to find out. They're being kept in a cave just a few clicks from your current position. Hotfoot it in there, get the prisoners and I'll drop a Skyhook on you for evac. One more thing - make sure you do this right - I don't want to have to come after you.'*

**Mission Breakdown:** Fortunately for the Player Characters, the Skinnies have nothing resembling a permanent base on this world, and therefore do not have much in the way of layered defences to prevent an enemy from doing exactly what the Player Characters are about to attempt. The first part of the mission is very simple – a three-mile walk from the troopers' current position to the mouth of the Skinny cave.

The Player Characters have an approximate GPS position for the opening of the Skinny cave, but it is still difficult to notice from the outside, requiring a Perception check (DC 15) to find. Just inside the cave are two Skinny Raiders (1<sup>st</sup> level) acting as guards. This mission is an excellent way of teaching the Player Characters the difference between Arachnids and Skinnies, particularly regarding enemy teamwork. The Games Master should carefully consider each move the Player Characters make – so long as they do not reveal themselves, they have at least some chance of moving through the Skinny caves without facing all the enemies at once. Of course, it is far more likely they will reveal their presence (probably through the sound of gunfire) and end up fighting all the Skinnies in the cave.

If the Skinnies become aware of the Player Characters, they will assume the troopers are there to rescue the prisoners, and will see it as an opportunity to take more prisoners. They will attempt to catch the troopers in a crossfire at one of the intersections, or preferably trap the troopers against the 300 foot deep abyss that runs throughout the caves. The three Skinnies tasked with guarding the prisoners will not abandon their posts to join in any fighting, but that does not prevent the remaining Skinnies from letting the troopers pass by, then engaging them in a crossfire with the three guards.

The large room with the Leader in it has a locked door built into the southern wall of the cave. The



## SHOPPING SPREE

Character Levels: 2<sup>nd</sup>

Experience Points: 200 experience points

Mission Type: Search and report, take and hold

Mission Duration: Three hours

Terrain: Jungle

Special Equipment: Stryker suits

Available Support: Viking Landing Boat for EVAC

**Enemies:** Skinny 1<sup>st</sup> level Raider (6), Skinny 2<sup>nd</sup> level Raider (Leader) (2), Skinny 2<sup>nd</sup> level Raider (Spotter) (6). Consult the core *Starship Troopers Roleplaying Game* rulebook for exact statistics and equipment.

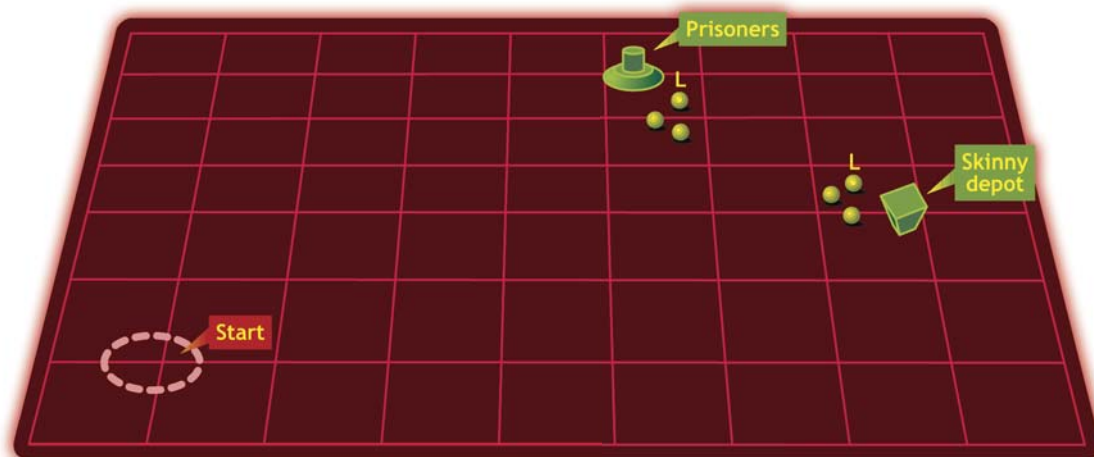


lock can be opened with a successful Sabotage skill check (DC 25) or with a TOAD charge. Inside is the captured equipment of the Commandos, as well as extra Skinny equipment (exactly what kind of equipment is left to the Games Master).

The five prisoners are being kept in a cell at the back of the caves, guarded by two 1<sup>st</sup> level Skinny raiders and one 2<sup>nd</sup> level gunner. Once those enemies are dealt with, the Player Characters can go about freeing the captives. The lock on the cell door can be opened with a successful Sabotage skill check (DC 25) or with a TOAD charge.

**Mission Objectives:** So long as no troopers are left alive in Skinny hands, SICON will be satisfied. If the Player Characters also eliminate every Skinny in the caves, they will receive an additional 50 experience points. If they capture the Skinny equipment stores, they will receive an additional 50 experience points.

1 mile



**Mission Briefing:** 'I think we all know turnabout is fair play, right? Well, today you get your chance to raid some Skinny raiders. Seems one of the psychics in Special Services caught wind of a Skinny supply depot in this jungle. Can't give you an exact location, but I can tell you it's northeast of your current position, and where you find it, you'll find Skinnies. Once you find it, you call in and you hold that ground. The psychic says there's something in that depot besides the usual, something important, I'm guessing, 'cause SICON wants it bad. Under no circumstances are you to use any equipment you find in that depot, apes. You just call in and we'll drop a boat to get you and the goods.'

**Mission Breakdown:** The Skinny depot is one of two Skinny installations hidden in this jungle, the other being a holding pen for civilian prisoners captured by the Skinnies.

The jungle the Skinnies are operating in is tremendously dense, slowing movement rate down to half normal, even with the less bulky Stryker suits issued to the Player Characters. For every 20 minutes of travel time, there is a one in four chance the troopers will be discovered by a Skinny spotter patrolling the jungle. If a Skinny discovers the Player Characters, he will not attack them. Rather, he will hide and send word of the approaching troopers to the other Skinnies. Whether or not the spotter is able to avoid detection depends, of course, on the Games Master and the Perception skills of the Player Characters.

If the spotter is able to avoid detection, he will attempt to bring the other five spotters and two of the 1<sup>st</sup> level raiders to him in order to lay an ambush for the troopers. If successful, they will surround the Player Characters in a ring and open fire simultaneously, with two Skinnies attacking each target. As devastating as this attack may be, if the Player Characters make it through, they will have successfully wiped out almost all opposition for the mission.



As mentioned above, there are two Skinny positions in the jungle, each situated in a small clearing hidden from aerial view by the thick jungle canopies above. The equipment depot is a buried in the ground, a 20-foot by 20-foot box of Skinny polymer with only the top visible. The captive pen is not buried – it is a 15-foot by 15-foot cage of Skinny polymer holding 12 civilian captives. Of the two positions, SICON is vastly more interested in the equipment depot.

Each of the positions is guarded by a Skinny leader and three Skinny raiders. If the Player Characters were ambushed in the jungle, this is reduced to a leader and two raiders. However, if the Player Characters managed to evade an ambush, the leader will be able to call for reinforcements. Five rounds after the leader's call, a Skinny spotter will arrive at the scene. Five rounds later, another will arrive. The remainder will remain in hiding in the jungle, preparing to ambush the Player Characters when they leave their current position.

Once the Player Characters find the stash of equipment and call for evac, a Viking will be dispatched to burn away the jungle above the site and take on the equipment.

**Mission Objectives:** The recovery of the equipment is SICON's greatest concern. So long as it is recovered (and the container is not open), the Player Characters receive full experience. If the container is open, they receive no experience and will be subject to official reprimand.

If the troopers manage to rescue the prisoners as well, they are entitled to an additional 100 experience points.

## PARTY LINE

**Character Levels:** 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Experience Points:** 200 experience points

**Mission Type:** Surgical strike, capture

**Mission Duration:** One hour

**Terrain:** Marshes, high gravity

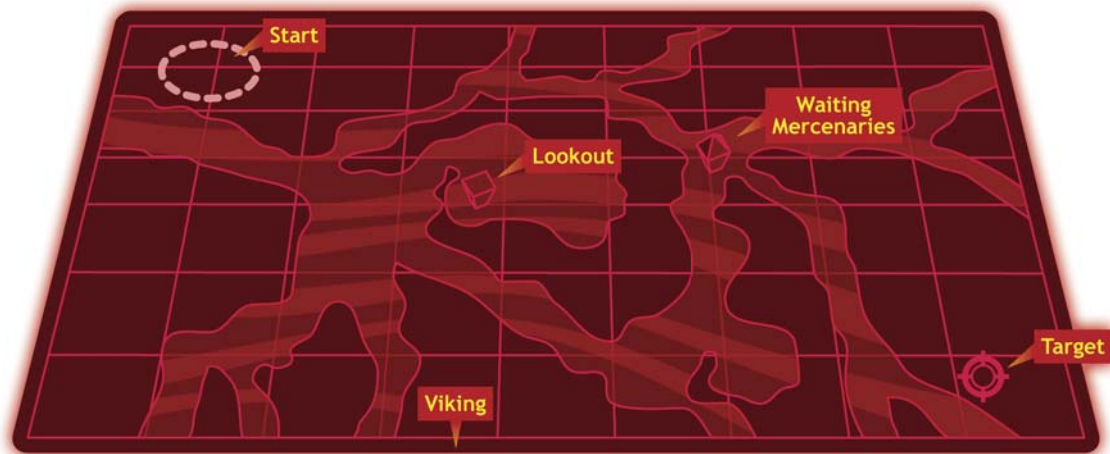
**Special Equipment:** Piranha Combat Jet Ski (one per two characters)

**Available Support:** None

**Enemies:** Black Cross Mercenaries (2<sup>nd</sup> level) (8)

**Mission Briefing:** *'Well, well, guess who's here, apes? The Black Cross, that's who. Now, you may have heard they were just a myth. They ain't. Bunch of genuine traitors, scum making their living as mercenaries. Turns out they're on this very rock right now, negotiating with the colonists - the same ones as don't like us much. Look at your display and you'll see their position pinpointed. I need you to head through the marshes and get those traitors. Kill most of them, but keep at least one alive. Special Services is aching to get their hands on one of them. The rest of the depot prep can wait until you get back. Think of this as a break.'*

**Mission Breakdown:** This mission relies in some part on the Games Master's discretion, as a good deal of the action is taking place in the Player Characters' absence. SICON has a history of underestimating the Black Cross, and this mission is about to prove that nothing has changed. The Black Cross knows the M.I. is on the planet, albeit in limited numbers, and the mercenaries were listening in on the briefing the Player Characters just received.



The mercenaries are aware the M.I. is preparing an equipment depot on the river feeding the marshes (which is exactly what the Player Characters were working on before getting this mission) and are hoping to draw the troopers away from the base long enough for them to raid it and steal some much-needed equipment.

The mercenaries have posted a lookout in the large lake near the centre of the map, hiding in the dense underbrush and watching the waterways for any sign of the Mobile Infantry. The remainder of the mercenaries, who have secured a civilian cargo boat (Spd 200), are waiting for word from the lookout on which way the troopers are coming (the north or south passage). They will then attempt to take the other pass to the lightly-guarded depot the Player Characters just left.

When the Player Characters reach the designated target area, they will find it empty, which should be about the time the mercenaries are attacking the depot. The Games Master should roll a Stealth check (DC 15) for each of the seven mercenaries. If they all succeed, they are able to take the base without an alarm being raised. For every one that fails, there is a 15% chance an alarm will be raised (thus, if four fail, there is a 60% chance). What happens at this point depends largely on the Player Characters. If they spend a great deal of time searching the target area, lying in wait or anything else, it is likely the mercenaries will rob the depot blind in their absence. If they return, there is an excellent chance they will catch the mercenaries in the act.

The mercenaries will spend 10 minutes looting the base. While they do this, the lookout will move to the bank near where the seven mercenaries were waiting at the start of the mission to warn his companions if the troopers are returning.

The mercenaries have a stolen Viking waiting on the bank of the river one mile south of the map's edge, which is exactly where they will go once they are done looting.

The Black Cross is not interested in a toe-to-toe fight with Mobile Infantry troopers. If they are caught before reaching the Viking, they will flee (after dropping a TOAD charge in the midst of their stolen cargo, if possible), going overland to evade pursuit by the Piranhas. Unless the Player Characters are exceptionally clever and resourceful, they will have a difficult time catching the fleeing mercenaries.

**Mission Objectives:** There are many ways this mission can end up being a black mark on a trooper's record.

- ⇒ If the Player Characters manage to capture a mercenary and prevent any loss of materiel from the depot, they receive full experience.
- ⇒ If all the mercenaries are killed, they receive half experience.
- ⇒ For every mercenary that escapes, they are penalised 50 experience points.
- ⇒ If the mercenaries destroy the contents of the depot, the troopers receive no experience.
- ⇒ If the mercenaries succeed with their heist, the troopers receive no experience and are subject to disciplinary action.



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## Be All You Can Be

# The Jonny Nexus Experience

## Goodbye, Doctor Dalton

**Ψ** You know where you are with a standard fantasy game: that which doesn't kill you makes you stronger. Literally. Because if it didn't kill you then you most likely killed it, which means a fistful of experience points and perhaps even a level increase.

But it doesn't work like that when you start messing around with the supernatural; and I know that because we've been playing Call of Cthulhu quite a bit lately. In my last instalment of our Horror on the Orient Express campaign (**warning: there are some minor spoilers in this article**) we'd made it as far as Venice without any major damage to our health and well-being (other than a regrettable incident in which we each lost a little finger).

At that point we took a break to do another campaign. But then, a few weeks ago, we went back to CoC and found that the accumulated effects of too much horror were starting to take their toll on our PCs.

Especially Doctor Dalton.

There were a number of reasons why this was. A strict Scottish Calvinist and teetotaler, with a tendency to sprout lines like, 'The back was made for burden', he'd been a tad strange right from the start. Garnish that with a large and repeated number of horrifying happenings and the poor geezer's sanity was starting to fray at the edges.

And the fact that we made him read all the dodgy occult books we found probably didn't help either.

I should at this point explain how the Call of Cthulhu sanity system works. It is both simple and brutal. Each character starts with an initial sanity score, typically something around 50. Whenever something that might challenge your sanity occurs – a frightful occurrence, witnessing the supernatural, reading a dodgy book – you have to make a sanity check. To do this you make a percentile roll: if you roll equal or under your sanity, you've passed; over it, you've failed. If you fail, you lose sanity; one point for a minor horror, anything up to six points for something more significant. You *can* get sanity points back through rest or therapy. But in extended campaigns there aren't many opportunities for this, so effectively there's only one way for your san score to go.

Downward.

The more astute among you might have realised that there's a nasty mathematical effect hiding behind this rule: failing a san check lowers your sanity, which makes you more likely to fail your next san check, which will lower your sanity even further, etc. etc.

Or to put it another way: the madder you are the madder you'll likely to get.

By time we arrived in Belgrade, both Doctor Dalton and myself – the Honourable Ralph (pronounced 'Rafe') Charles George Halthorpe-Halthorpe (pronounced 'Haltrop-Halthorpe') MP BA DFC – were starting to suffer from the effects of our journey, although in my case this hadn't been helped by starting with a low initial sanity, having taking the option of being a Great War veteran – which gives you extra skill points at the cost of a lower starting san. (Bizarrely, TAFKAC's character, Mr Drake, had managed to avoid all trauma and was still reasonably sane).

It was a little later that I found myself in central Serbia, squabbling over a piece of statue with an animated roof, which turned out to be made of hair, in a hut that turned out to be lined with skulls, being attacked by an old woman who turned out to be a psychotic force of nature who was armed with a baker's shovel that turned out to be really sharp, dammit!

Oh, and the hut was up and walking.

It actually turned out to be a very dodgy combat in which we all damn near died, and by the time myself and Mr Drake threw ourselves out of the doorway we were wounded nearly to the point of coma.

So can you guess what happened when we hit the ground?



Luckily, Doctor Dalton and my NPC mechanic/driver/manservant/valet Jones (as a modern man of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I like to travel light, with just the one servant) were there to carry our unconscious selves away to safety. Unfortunately, Doctor Dalton took some time to look behind him as he did so, and while we're not quite sure what it was he saw, it apparently wasn't good, because by the time we came round – in a cave, in the mountains – he was starting glassy eyed at nothing in particular.

Or to put it in technical terms: having taken such massive san loss in a single day that his sanity was pushed down into the low twenties, he'd developed a specific mental problem – a tendency toward stupefaction when in stressful situations.

And this is where we get to the difference between CoC and a D20 fantasy game, because while in the latter you either get hurt and get better, or get dead, and don't (unless it's our Thursday D20 campaign where 'dead' and 'better' are not mutually exclusive), in CoC you end up unplayable, but still hanging around.

And unplayable is what General Tangent now felt Doctor Dalton was, given that at the first sign of any trouble he'd switch into 'deer in headlights' mode. Now personally, if it was me, I'd have carried on playing. I've made it very clear to everyone that when (and let's be honest, the way we're going it's 'when' not 'if') the honourable Squadron Leader goes gaga, the only way they're retiring him as a PC is if they personally drag him off to a sanatorium – and even then they'd better make damn sure to nail the doors shut before they leave.

But General T felt that a replacement character was needed while Doctor Dalton was still just this side of total gagadom, and that was where the fun started. ('Fun' being a euphemism for, 'the GM spending an entire play session desperately improvising in an attempt to get the new character inserted into the campaign and the plot back on track').

Now inserting a new character is always a bit tricky, and prone to conversations of the, *'There's a guy sitting by a table in the corner of the bar...'* *'Sounds like a loser, I'll pay our bill and head on outside'* type. But in this case things were made worse by the fact that the Squadron Leader was under strict instructions by both the Foreign Office and the Chief Whip to keep a low profile.

Why?

Well apparently, the Fascist<sup>1</sup> authorities in Venice were somewhat upset not only by the mysterious death of three of their colleagues but also by a variety of other assaults and incidents and, for reasons known only to themselves, had decided that these events were connected to a certain well-spoken Englishman who'd been travelling around the city alternately claiming to all and sundry that he was either a war hero or a member of the British Parliament. The Foreign Office had assured them that this 'The Honourable Squadron Leader Ralph Charles George Halthorpe-Halthorpe MP BA DFC' was obviously an impostor since the real Halthorpe-Halthorpe was currently holidaying in India. (And then attempted to contact me, enlisting the help of the Chief Whip in the process).

This took some time, partly because we were travelling and attempting to keep a low profile (there are a bunch of psychotic Turks on the trail of the same item as we are, and we've not only seen what they've done to people, but taken quite significant san loss as a result) and partly because when one is on holiday, the last thing one wants to do is to talk to one's boss.

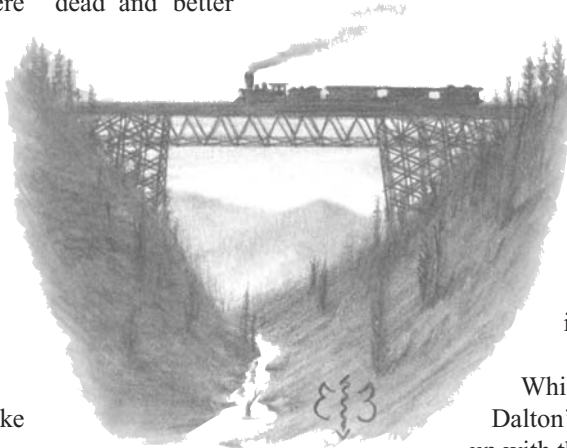
But I was eventually forced to get into contact with the British Embassy in Belgrade (they had the only golf course in the whole of south-east Europe and I had the only clubs) and agreed that I would on my return report that I had spent the whole period in India. (Although some people might wonder why my descriptions of Bombay include canals and gondoliers).

Which is where we come back to the little matter of Doctor Dalton's replacement, one Victor Dalton. Yes, General T had come up with the old 'my brother replaces me' trick. Except that this wasn't like when the actor playing Max, the plumber in Neighbours, had a heart attack, so they just said that he'd gone on holiday and his brother Tom, also a plumber, had come to take over his business – and then gave the new actor the same script and let him read the previous character's lines.

No, this Victor was neither teetotal nor a Doctor. In fact, about the only thing he had in common with his brother was that they were both Scottish. Because this bloke was a London journalist working for the Times newspaper.

Can you see why problems were about to arise?

Hmm... A Conservative Member of Parliament, war hero and rising star, mixed up with an occult conspiracy involving black magic and multiple illegal acts



who's already been warned by both the Foreign Office and his own party (both of whom know only a fraction of what he's involved with) to keep a low profile.

And a journalist.

General Tangent's plan was this: as Doctor Dalton he'd sent a telegram home to his brother saying that he wasn't feeling very well. Victor would then travel out to Belgrade on the Orient Express, talk to Doctor Dalton's friends (that's us), read the Doctor's journal (a.k.a. General Tangent's campaign notes – he'd been preparing for his possible death / retirement for some time) and then join the party.

The first we (in-character) knew of this, and the first (out-of-character) that John and General T realised there might be a problem, was when Victor turned up at the hospital to talk to us about what had happened to his brother and uttered the fateful word, 'journalist', from which point both myself and Mr Drake clammed up totally.

**Victor:** So how did you hurt yourself so badly?

**Myself:** [Speaking with great difficulty] Skiing accident.

**Victor:** Skiing? I didn't know you could ski in Serbia?

**Myself:** That's why we had the accident.

**Victor:** But why's my brother so disturbed?

**Myself:** I don't think he enjoyed the skiing.

Now both myself and Mr Drake realised that it was vital to prevent Victor from discovering what his brother had been involved in, although our room for manoeuvre was somewhat limited due to our both being flat on our backs with multiple injuries sustained during the encounter with the old woman. (I was in hospital for four weeks in all).

Luckily, however, we had Jones, who was also in the hospital, suffering from a broken ankle. He was quickly dispatched to the hotel in search of the journal, but upon arriving found that Doctor Dalton had asked the British Embassy to look after our possessions and then moved out of the hotel into cheaper accommodation. The journal itself was nowhere to be found.

This was something of a blow, but a new possibility arose when I received a visit from one Richard Stewart, a 'deputy cultural attaché' type at the Embassy, who

explained that when they'd heard that a group of British subjects had suffered serious injuries and been taken to hospital, they decided they ought to check to see we were okay. (The fact that we were on a 'special watch list' on account of a complaint by the Italian government might also have had something to do with it).

Myself and Mr Drake realised straight away that Stewart could be a vital ally in our fight against Victor, and enlisted him in the task of obtaining the journal. (I can't remember exactly what I said but there was much use of the word 'chaps', a lot of cryptic rubbing of noses, and a lot of not particularly veiled suggestions that I was a politician going places and that if he wished to have a fruitful career in the diplomatic service, helping me out now could be very advantageous).

Needless to say, the situation was now pretty confused, and I'm not sure that John (the GM) was particularly amused. We had: General T playing his new character, Victor Dalton; John playing General T's old character, Doctor Dalton; me and TAFKAC blanking Victor Dalton when he tried to talk to us; and an MI5 spook from the British Embassy working on our behalf to steal Doctor Dalton's journal.

We had some initial success. Stewart was able to successfully break into Doctor Dalton's hotel room and steal the journal. We were now sure that Victor could be safely told to piss off back to London, secure in the knowledge that he knew nothing. But in all scheming, we'd forgotten one rather important detail.

Doctor Dalton wasn't actually dead.

So he could just tell Victor what had happened. Which was exactly what he did.

And that's the difference between a horror campaign and a fantasy campaign. In a fantasy campaign of adventure and glory you bump into a stout sort of chap (a.k.a. the new PC) in a tavern and invite him to join your righteous quest. In a horror campaign of dark intrigue against occult evil, the incoming PC gets the dirt from the outgoing PC and then proceeds to blackmail his way into the party.

Oh well. Welcome aboard, Victor.

I'm not using the word 'fascist' in the tired, left-wing, cliché way that many people do nowadays when they want to attack the forces of government and law and order. These guys were actually uniformed members of the Fascist party who ruled Italy during that period.



# SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN

## CHILD CHARACTERS FOR THE JEREMIAH ROLEPLAYING GAME

Greg Smith

Children are capable of heroism in real life and in fiction. Enid Blyton's *Famous Five* solved crimes and still had time for lashings of ginger beer, *Oliver Twist* endured the brutalities of the Victorian underworld, Phillip Pullman's *Lyra and Will* changed the universe in the *His Dark Materials* trilogy and Newt survived where highly-trained marines could not in *Aliens*.

The world of Jeremiah is a dangerous and violent one for adults and children alike. It was the children who suffered through the Big Death and all that followed and it is the children who began to rebuild the world. In this post-cataclysmic world, it is the children who are the future and the following article provides rules and suggestions for playing them.

### ADVENTURES FOR CHILDREN

Stories featuring children are not the same as stories for children. That may sound obvious, yet the two can be confused. There is a world of difference between *The Railway Children* and *Oliver Twist*. In many ways scenarios for child characters can be similar to those of adults. Children are just as capable of solving a mystery as adults, for example. The fundamentals of storytelling should not change just because the protagonists are children.

There are, however, significant differences in the way that scenarios for child characters will be played. In many role-playing games the outcome is often dependant on violence but children will generally



be unskilled with weapons and physically weak, so direct confrontations with the opposition will not usually work. In addition, children lack the experience and training of typical Player Character heroes, so the resolution of tasks through skill checks could be problematic and low DCs should be used.

There is a significant difference to the way the adult world reacts to children that should be considered when writing and running games for child characters. Children will be frequently underestimated and often ignored – no leader of a marauder band will ever believe that it was a kid who set fire to his base, unless the kid is caught red-handed. In certain situations, a sneaking child could

be ignored by a sentry who may believe he is seeing kids playing hide and seek.

Another advantage that children have is the parental instincts of adults. While people are unlikely to go out of their way to help strangers, they are likely to try and help children and the most cynical and jaded character can be persuaded by a little girl's smile. Even the worst of men will hesitate to seriously harm or kill a child – for he may find his followers threatening mutiny for such an evil act. Instead the child will be given over to someone who will see that the youngster is kept out of the way. Should the worst arise and children face execution for disrupting a villain's plans, then they may still escape their fate when a more sympathetic henchmen allows them to flee rather than carry out his boss's wishes.

## PLAYING CHILDREN

Many roleplayers prefer to play characters as close to themselves as possible. They dislike playing elves or Centauri and instead choose to play their own heroic ideal – a human fighter. Others are quite happy to play all manner of races, creeds and professions but will not play characters of the opposite sex. We have all been children and roleplaying a child should not be a stretch, should it?

In the world of Jeremiah the situation is rather different from our own childhoods (or at least I hope it is!) Everyone, adults and children alike, face great hardships and so children grow up quicker and shoulder responsibility earlier. Only the youngest children have a great deal of time to play – the older children will have work to do.

Without the experience and training that defines typical characters in a roleplaying game, child characters may seem a little bland. It is easy to decide to play an ex-special forces commando or a caring priest but creating a child character requires an emphasis on personality rather than on class and race.

It would be easy to play a child just as you would play an adult – the background to Jeremiah lends itself to that as described above. Child characters should certainly not be babyish but neither should they be as experienced and knowledgeable as adult characters. The wonder and fear that a child experiences in his encounters in the outside world will be magnified and great fun to play. Children are not as emotionally guarded as adults and their highs and lows can be played to great effect too.

Children are generally more trusting than adults are, having never had reason to disbelieve someone. While playing a naive character can be difficult, especially in a situation where the characters are facing someone who obviously has the worst intentions, it can also be enjoyable. However the post-Big Death world is a brutal one and child characters are quickly going to learn not to take everyone at face value.

## CHILDREN IN JEREMIAH

The Big Death killed every adult on Earth and suddenly the children were left to fend for themselves. It is a testament to the resourcefulness and bravery of the children that the human race survived and that civilisation was not entirely destroyed.

The original survivors of the deadly virus lived in a coddled environment that in no way prepared them to survive. Suddenly their world of television, fast food, lifts in their parents' cars and pocket money was gone. Where their worst problems had been



exams and deciding which girl to take to the dance, suddenly they were faced with the prospect of fending for themselves.

Many could not make that change and did their best to live as they had done but food began to run out and the unburied dead brought disease. Cities became unliveable and only those children who banded together and worked to change their environment stood any chance of living through the cataclysm.

Twelve-year old boys and girls became the leaders of society. They had to find new places to live and see that the bodies of the dead were buried. It became their responsibility to ensure that younger children had food and shelter. They had to learn the skills necessary to persist – farming, cooking, building maintenance, driving, vehicle maintenance, trading, scavenging, healthcare, childcare and a whole lot more.

Modern civilisation collapsed; but society remained thanks to those children. Changes were inevitable, however, and as the survivors formed agrarian communities similar to those of their ancestors of over a century ago, so the strictures of society altered. Marriage became common at an earlier age and women began to bear more children, since the lack of medicine meant that young children had a high mortality rate. Communities governed themselves and while some maintained democracy, others chose their leaders for their intelligence and integrity while tyrants ruled some.

### GROUPS OF ADVENTURING CHILDREN

Children are unlikely to strike out adventuring on their own. The two most common types of groups featuring children are likely to be either abandoned children who have lost their parents through some misfortune or a family group.

If some children have become separated from their adult carers, then they will be required to find their way on their own. Whether their father fell down and broke his leg on a scavenging expedition or marauders wiped out their entire town, the children will suddenly have to become self-sufficient and find their way to safety. This sort of situation lends itself to a travelling adventure where the children have to cross through the countryside, facing dangers both man-made and natural, to get home.

A family group is another good way to include children in a game. A family of wanderers would provide great potential for adventure, with a new situation in each new town. An isolated family home in the wilderness would also give plenty of possibilities for varied scenarios. The key is to keep the family dependant on one another rather than other people.

In a group featuring both children and adults it is possible that the adults will overshadow the children because of their greater skills and abilities. The Games Master should give the child characters something to do on their own or talents that the adults do not possess. Another solution is for players to have an adult and a child character each and play them alternately.

A group of child characters in a town would probably work for a single scenario. If the children uncovered a community leader who had been selling information to local marauders, which would be okay. Once the children start uncovering plots or beating the villains without adult help in every session, it becomes a little silly – ‘I would have succeeded if it wasn’t for you darn kids!’

It is best to avoid having a single child genius among a group of adult characters. This is a situation that invokes irrational ire among even the most easy-going genre fans.

## CHILD CHARACTERS

It is little wonder then that the *Jeremiah Roleplaying Game* states that children become adults at age 12 and may select a 1<sup>st</sup> level Character Class. The following rules are for the creation of child characters up to the age of 11 who have survived the rigours of the post Big Death world.

The process of character creation provided in the *Jeremiah* rulebook is for characters who were born before the Big Death and have backgrounds based on a childhood in the Old World. These rules differ slightly, to allow for the development of characters who were born after the Big Death.

### CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

1. Develop a character concept. This should be done in co-operation with the Games Master and the other players.
2. Roll ability scores.
3. Chose geographic background for you character.
4. Chose whether your character is a Normal Kid or a Smart Kid.
5. Assign and adjust ability scores.
6. Select skills and record them, including benefits and penalties from childhood features and ability scores.
7. Round out you character with demographic information and a background story.

### CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

#### GEOGRAPHY

In the aftermath of the Big Death, the population is gathered into small towns and travel of any distance is highly unusual, so it is unlikely that a group of children come from diverse parts of the country. The players should discuss with the Games Master where his campaign is going to be set and the players should choose a region from the table on page 7 of the *Jeremiah* rulebook for their geographic

background that suits the game and all characters should hail from there. If the characters form part of a family group where one member speaks an additional language, it is likely that they all will speak it.

### UPBRINGING

The nature of existence in the world of Jeremiah means that children must turn their hand at anything to help their parents in the struggle to get by. There are no longer any different socio-economic groups - everyone is desperate, no one is too proud to scavenge and there is no time for education, so players do not roll on either the Upbringing or the Childhood Pastimes table. The characters will have spent their time learning far more useful skills during their childhood.

No roll is made on the Big Death Survival table, either, as child characters will not have lived through the disease, riots and devastation that immediately followed the deadly virus.

### CHILD CHARACTER TYPE

There are two types of child characters: Normal Kid and Smart Kid. Normal Kids are just that, children born with no particular special abilities who learn the skills necessary for living and surviving. A mystery that emerged after the Big Death was the birth of children possessed of incredible intelligence. These Smart Kids often try to learn of Old World technologies in order to improve the lives of their fellows but they can consequently lack the skills necessary for survival in the current world.

These character types are akin to classes but with some differences. There is no table of progression for base attack bonus and saving throw bonuses, as child characters do not advance in the same way normal characters

do. They do include childhood features, which are similar to class features, as well as bonus feats and class skills. For the purpose of determining maximum ranks in class and cross-class skills, a child character is considered to be a level zero character.

### NORMAL KID

These are the ordinary children born to the adults of the New World. Unlike their parents' childhood, their upbringing was difficult and dangerous and so these children have had to be tough.

**Ability Modifiers:** A Normal Kid's abilities are reduced as follows: -3 Str, -1 Dex, -3 Con, -1 Int, -1 Wis, -1 Cha.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +0

**Saving Throws:** all +0



### Class Skills

A Normal Kid's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Balance (Dex), Barter (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (structural) (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (agriculture) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Ride (Dex), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str).

In addition a Normal Kid may select one additional trained skill as a class skill, representing a skill he has learned from a skilled parent or other guardian.

**Skill Points:** A Normal Kid starts with 6 + Int Modifier skill points (this is *not* multiplied by as for 1<sup>st</sup> level characters).

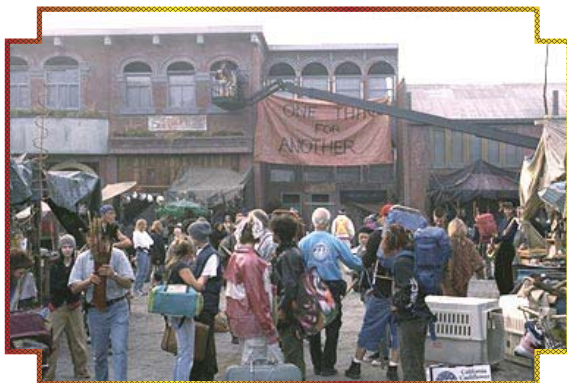
**Starting Feats:** Select two from the following list (the prerequisites must be met): Acrobatic, Alertness, Animal Affinity, Athlete, Confident, Creative, Die Hard, Deceptive, Deft Hands, Dodge, Endurance, Far Shot, Focused, Guide, Haggle, Improved Damage Threshold, Low Profile, Nimble, Pack Rat, Point Blank shot, Run, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Stealthy, Toughness, Track, Trustworthy.

### CHILDHOOD FEATURES

**Adaptable:** Children in the New World are used to facing the diverse hazards of their environment, but unlike adults they have not become set in their ways. Once per day a child may add a +2 bonus to a Saving Throw he is required to make.

**Fate Protects Fools and Little Children:** Normal Kids start with two additional Grace Points, for a total of four.

**Inconsequential:** Adults tend to overlook children. Should an adult spot a child who is not out of place, he is likely to ignore that child. For example, a child could readily approach a



guarded building and sneak a look in the window and be ignored by the guard if there were a number of children playing hide and seek. Should a Games Master need to determine if a child would be ignored in such an instance, assume there is an equal chance that the child is ignored or that action is taken.

However this has a downside – children often need to work harder to convince adults that they are not playing a joke or imagining things. For example, if a town is warned by a child that a band of marauders are on the way, the townsfolk will need extra convincing, particularly if they do not know the child. A child character suffers a –2 penalty to Bluff, Diplomacy and Intimidate checks when trying to persuade adults about unlikely or important matters. The Games Master should determine when to apply this penalty.

**Small:** Children are small and so are difficult to hit in combat and less likely to be spotted when hiding but they cannot run as fast as an adult nor fight as effectively. The following modifiers apply, as described in the Combat chapter of the Jeremiah rulebook: +1 DV, -4 damage for melee and unarmed attacks, -4 DR. A child has a base speed of 20 feet. In addition, because of his diminutive stature, a child receives the following bonuses to skill checks: Balance +2, Hide +1, Move Silently +1.

## Smart Kid

A remarkable phenomenon occurred in the offspring of Big Death survivors – 1 in 10 were born with genius-level intelligence. No one knows why this happened and the medical and scientific infrastructure of the Old World no longer exists to carry out the biological and genetic research to understand it.

These youngsters look no different from regular children and they still have to cope with the rigours of the New World. At the same time their intelligence predisposes them to learn as much as they can of both Old and New World methods and technologies. These children may well be the key to the future of mankind.

**Ability Modifiers:** A Smart Kid receives a +1d8 bonus to his Int score. His other abilities are reduced as follows: -3 Str, -1 Dex, -3 Con, -1 Wis, -1 Cha.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +0

**Saving Throws:** all +0

## Class Skills

A Smart Kid's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Barter (Cha), Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (structural) (Int), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (any) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Perform (Cha), Read/Write (Int), Repair (Int), Speak Language (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str).

In addition a Smart Kid may select three additional trained skill as class skills.

**Skill Points:** A Smart Kid starts with 6 + Int Modifier skill points (this is *not* multiplied by as for 1<sup>st</sup> level characters).

**Starting Feats:** Select one from the following list (the prerequisites must be met): Alertness, Confident, Creative, Deceptive, Deft Hands, Educated, Far Shot, Focused, Gearhead, Guide, Haggle, Low Profile, Meticulous, Nimble, Pack Rat, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Studious, Track, Trustworthy.

## Childhood Features

**Adaptable:** Children in the New World are used to facing the diverse hazards of their environment, but unlike adults they have not become set in their ways. Once per day a child may add a +2 bonus to a Saving Throw he is required to make.

**Fate Protects Fools and (Clever) Little Children:** Smart Kids start with one additional Grace Point, for a total of three.

**Inconsequential:** Adults tend to overlook children. Should an adult spot a child who is not out of place, he is likely to ignore that child. For example, a child could readily approach a guarded building and sneak a look in the window and be ignored by the guard if there were a number of children playing hide and seek. Should a Games Master need to determine if a child would be ignored in such an instance, assume there is an equal chance that the child is ignored or that action is taken.

However this has a downside – children often need to work harder to convince adults that they are not playing a joke or imagining things. For example, if a town is warned by a child that a band of marauders are on the way, the townsfolk will need extra convincing, particularly if they do not know the child. A child character suffers a –2 penalty to Bluff, Diplomacy and Intimidate checks when trying to persuade adults about unlikely or important matters. The Games Master should determine when to apply this penalty.



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## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The simplest way for a child character to develop is to become an adult. If the character is close to twelve years old he can ‘grow up’ into a 1<sup>st</sup> level character and choose a class, provided the Games Master agrees. However, if the character is part of an ongoing campaign that is designed for children, the character can develop to some degree without levelling up into a basic class.

## GROWING UP

When a child character becomes a normal 1<sup>st</sup> level character, the player must choose a class. This class should be chosen based on the actions and motivations of the character in previous adventures. If the youngster’s main goal was to protect his siblings, he should become a Guardian; if he was a Smart Kid who searched for and repaired Old World items, he could be a Scavenger or Brain Boy; a rough and tumble kid could become a Jock and so on.

In the process of growing up the character loses all of his childhood features – he becomes medium sized and forfeits any Grace Points above two. All remaining ability penalties are removed. In addition, any class skills he has that have no ranks assigned to them cease to be class skills. These are skills that the character had chance to learn during childhood but did not and as he becomes an adult, he concentrates on the skills he knows best.

The character then receives all of the skills, feats and class features of his chosen class. Remember that the maximum number of skill ranks for a 1<sup>st</sup> level character is four for class skills and two for cross-class skills. Class skills from childhood that had ranks assigned to them remain as class skills.

The Games Master can treat this sudden gain of abilities in two ways – either consider the maturation into a full character class to be the same as levelling up a regular character or he should include the opportunity for the children to be trained in their new talents. Thunder Mountain is an ideal location for such training.

In this way a character who has progressed from childhood will be a slightly more capable character than one who is created straight from the Jeremiah rulebook, but this is as it should be. Any player who has played through a scenario with a character who suffers from a dearth of skills and weak statistics deserves the reward of having a better-qualified adult character.

## CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

A player whose character is not going to advance to adulthood immediately will still expect his character to learn from the dangers he has encountered. The Child Character Types are not a true class and child characters cannot increase in levels.

The Games Master should award experience points as described on pages 186 - 187 of *Jeremiah – The Roleplaying Game*. For each 5 XPs earned allow the character to gain one of the following options:

- ≈ A single new feat. This may be any feat as long as the character meets the prerequisites.
- ≈ Reduce one ability penalty by 1 point. This may not take an ability over the score initially rolled.
- ≈ Gain 3 + Int modifier skill ranks.

Once one of these options is selected, the 5 XPs are considered spent. Any accumulated XPs that remain when a child character becomes an adult and gains a basic class are lost.





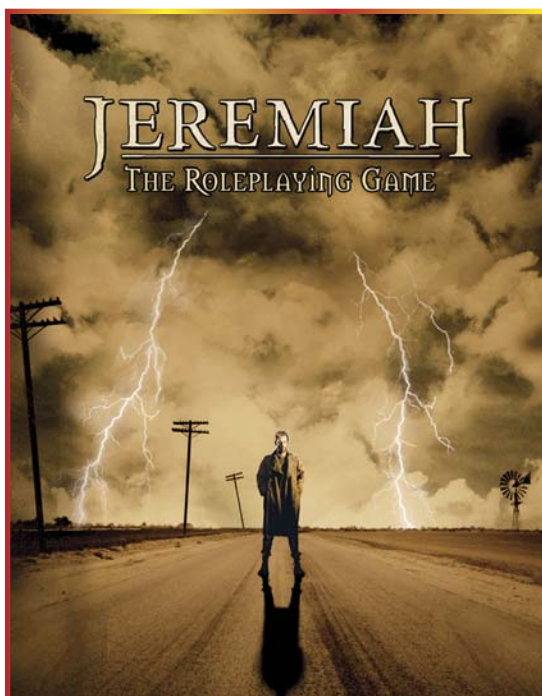
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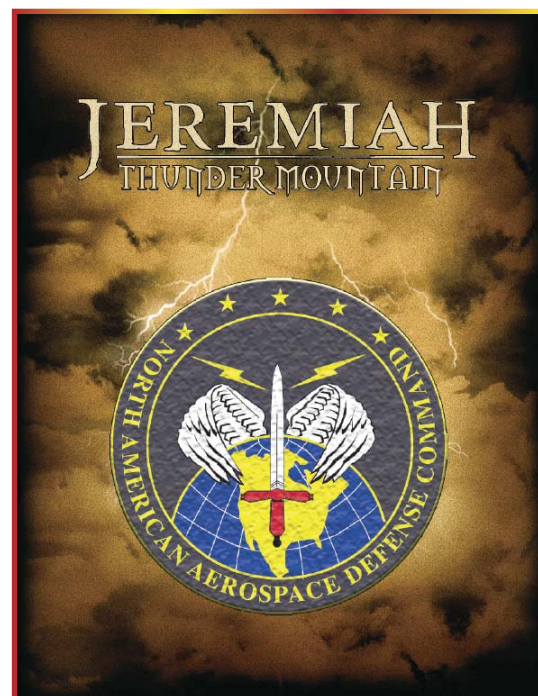
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# Ghost of the Deep

*A Pirate Isles Adventure for Conan the Role-Playing Game*

VINCENT N. DARLAGE AND  
ERIC K. RODRIGUEZ

## OVERVIEW

The Player Characters, onboard a besieged craft, must defend themselves and their ship. They capture a map that leads to a fabulous treasure, a map with a prominent 'X' marked on it, as well as a dark warning. The characters proceed to the island and their ship is damaged or destroyed by a ghost whale. The characters then find danger in the form of a siren and treasure in the form of a glass bowl. The characters also discover a lost pirate stronghold dating back to the founding of the Hyborian nations.

This adventure is designed to introduce players to the ship-to-ship combat, some of the monsters and demons of *Pirate Isles*, as well as give the players a taste of a few of the new spells offered within *Pirate Isles*.



## PREPARATION

Non Player Characters for this adventure are provided in the Appendix, although Games Masters are encouraged to add additional characters of their own for campaign continuity. This would also be a great spot to have a reoccurring antagonist appear and attack the characters or seek to steal the map for themselves.

One character should be made captain of the *Dagon's Valour*. How this is accomplished does not matter, however this might make a separate adventure all on its own. Perhaps the character battled his way to the top. Perhaps he won the ship in a high-stakes game of chance. Perhaps his family owns the ship and asked him to do something worthwhile with it, or use it to bring in some income. Making a Player Character the captain gives the characters more freedom to make choices. However, the Games Master may want to limit the player's freedoms somewhat, taking them 'along for the ride', so to speak. If so, the Games Master will have to create his own captain.

A Games Master will need *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, *Pirate Isles*, and a few players to get full use of the material included in this adventure. A player needs a copy of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, a Games Master and some fellow players.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE WRATH OF THE DRIVING SEAS

*That I followed the road of the restless gull  
As free as a vagrant breeze,  
That I bared my breast to the winds' unrest  
And the wrath of the driving seas*

*Robert E. Howard, The Day That I Die*

The characters begin the game on board a ship known as *Dagon's Valour*, and they are already in the midst of a battle. If one of the characters is not already captain of the ship, then perhaps the captain can be killed in this introductory battle, leaving one of the players in charge thereafter.

The player characters begin this adventure at the onset of combat; for they are engaged in a brutal battle between their craft and the Stygian warship *Pa-Userukhet-enpa-Iumahu-Khesef* (translates roughly from Stygian as *The Wrath of the Driving Seas*). The Games Master should use the narrative combat system introduced in *Pirate Isles*. The ships are already engaged, and Captain Iufenamun has already sent his crew to capture the *Dagon's Valour*. The captain is acting against the wishes of his passenger, Khonsirdais, a priest of Set, but he has his reasons for doing so. The *Dagon's Valour*, long before the players had possession of it, once pirated a ship he served aboard and resulted in a major setback to his career. Sighting it again after all these long years enraged him and he has decided to sink the ship as some form of revenge.

Khonsirdais has hired Captain Iufenamun's ship to take him to a nameless isle. He possesses a map stolen from a sorcerer of the Black Ring and is headed south to find a glass bowl and a

siren plaything. He will bargain for his life if he is afforded the opportunity, hoping to betray the party later if he can manage the services of the siren. He will not warn the characters about the siren, however. He will want to use her as his ace-up-his-sleeve to assure his victory later. Of course, if he is killed during the fighting, none of his knowledge will be available to the player characters.

The player characters are intended to win this battle. They can capture the Stygian craft, sink it, force it to pay a ransom, set it adrift or any other fate they decide for it. One way or another, the Games Master needs to make sure the map falls into the hands of the characters, as well as the hint of treasure.



## CHAPTER TWO: TO REST ON AN UNKNOWN ISLE

*That ever my spirit turned my steps  
To the naked morning lands  
And I came to rest on an unknown isle –  
Jade cliffs and silver sands.*

*Robert E. Howard, The Day That I Die*

Early in the morning on the sixth day, the islands are spotted in the distance. The characters start to make their way through the chain of islands, but unknown to them they have awoken a ghastly guardian. A ghost whale circles the chain of islands, smashing boats that approach. As the characters sail into the waters between the small island marked with an 'X' and the larger island, the whale attacks. The surface of the water is broken in an explosive blast of brutality and violence. The ghost whale will strive to destroy any and all ships that pass too close to the islands – potentially marooning the characters on the island.

### GHOST WHALE

#### Gargantuan Animal

**Hit Dice:** 12d8+8 (141 hp)

**Initiative:** +9 (+1 Dex, +8 Reflex)

**Speed:** Swim 40 ft. (8 squares)

**DV:** 16 (-4 size, +1 Dex, +9 natural)

**DR:** 8

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +9/+33

**Attack:** Bite +17 melee (4d6 +12)

**Full Attack:** Bite +17 melee and tail slap +12 melee (1d8+6)

**Space/Reach:** 20 ft./15 ft.

**Special Attack:** Charging attack

**Special Qualities:** Blindsight 120 ft., hold

breath, low-light vision

**Saves:** Fort +15, Ref +9, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 35, Dex 13, Con 24, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 6

**Skills:** Listen +15, Spot +14, Swim +20

**Feats:** Alertness, Diehard, Endurance, Improved natural attack (bite), Toughness

**Climate/Terrain:** Aquatic

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Advancement:** 13 – 18 Hit Dice (Gargantuan); 19 – 36 Hit Dice (Colossal)



These great white whales once roamed the deepest seas, preying on giant octopi and the great kraken. They grew to be over 60 feet in length. They were wise beyond their means, capable of deep thought and wisdom unknown to the men of their era. Unfortunately, those brought back through necromantic means go mad, turning their intelligence to the destruction of all life.

Ghost whales may be found anywhere in the world, although they are far too large to come close to shore. Like all creatures brought back through necromancy they once served a sorcerer; unlike most revenants summoned back into a semblance of life, their intelligence allowed them to slip the bonds of control long ago. They now rove the seas, searching for and destroying anything that resembles the hated creatures that cursed them with their current, tormented state.

Most sailors panic when they see a ghost whale resting on the water. They regard the creatures as omens of death, pain and imminent destruction. All of these are absolutely true; the ghost whale will stop at nothing to destroy living creatures.

### Combat

Ghost whales are quite intelligent. If they spot a ship they will sink beneath the waves and ram it repeatedly, until they break it into splinters, then pick off the sailors one by one. If chased they will swim for long distances, dragging the target further and further from the shore and help. Then they submerge, loosing the opponent in the uncharted vastness of the sea.

In combat ghost whales may use any of the following abilities:

**Blindsight (Ex):** Ghost whales ‘see’ by emitting high-frequency sounds, inaudible to most other creatures, allowing them to locate objects and creatures within 120 feet. Its normal vision is approximately equivalent to a human.

**Charging Strike (Ex):** If a ghost whale executes a charge attack it strikes with its head, dealing 5d12 blunt damage in addition to its normal bite damage. It cannot effectively use charging strike on a target smaller than itself.

**Hold Breath (Ex):** A ghost whale can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to ten times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

**Skills:** A ghost whale has a +8 racial bonus on

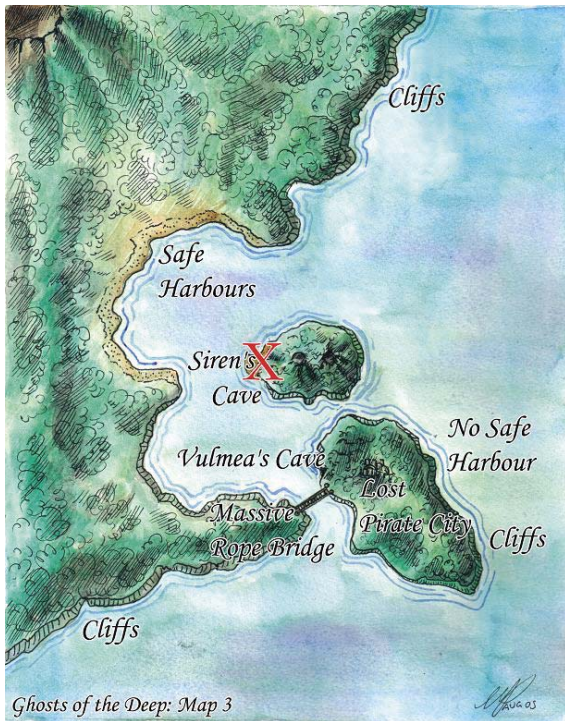


*Ghosts of the Deep: Map 1*

any Swim check. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line. It has a +4 racial bonus to Spot and Listen checks, although this bonus is negated if the ghost whale cannot use its Blindsight.

### HISTORY OF THE GHOST WHALE

The ghost whale of this lonely chain of islands is insane, although it is still quite intelligent, as most of this ancient species are. This particular ghost whale was summoned by an ancient sorcerer not long after the fall of Acheron. History does not record whom the Acheronians were defending their isle against, but the ghost whale remains as a mute testimony to the desperation of the ancient pirates and seamen who once dwelt upon this chain. The whale broke the chains of bondage and smashed the pirate fleet of these renegade Acheronians, dooming those that remained on the island to a slow starvation. The island became ill reputed and eventually passed into



Ghosts of the Deep: Map 3

legend. The ghost whale remains, guarding this territory and killing any who enter into his waters.

Characters will likely have to swim to shore, or they may make their escape from the fury of the ghost whale on small boarding craft. The island the characters are making for are largely rocky, with few safe harbours and beeches. For added challenge, the Games Master may want to introduce sharks in the water, although this will not likely be a need. The players have a choice – to make for the small island marked with an X, or the beech across the harbour on the larger island. The smaller island will be a deadly choice. If players land on this island, proceed to *Chapter Three: The Siren's Call*.

The larger island is mostly deserted. The island is mountainous, and the characters can see a 300-foot long rope bridge spanning a chasm to another island. The anchors of the rope bridge are up high on mountainous ridges. If characters choose to climb the forested ridges to the rope bridge, proceed to *Chapter Four: The Glass Bowl of Nakhtnebef*.

## CHAPTER THREE: THE SIREN'S CALL

*For ever the wind came out of the east  
To beckon me on and on,  
The sunset's lure was my paramour  
And I loved each rose-pale dawn.*

*Robert E. Howard, The Day That I Die*

Along the sandy strip of white beach on the smaller isle (indicated by the X on the treasure map) lies a beached ship of medium size. Several large rock spires rise out of the water near the beach. Behind the white beach rise towering cliffs overgrown with tropical vines and plants, giving them a jade appearance. On this map, however, 'X' does not

mark the site of treasure; it marks the site of danger, a site to be avoided by the mapmaker. Here lurks the siren 'Neshelafi', who seeks the death of all men, save the owner of the *Glass Bowl of Nakhtnebef*.

Perched on a rocky outcropping not far from the beach is a beautiful woman, perfect in shape, voluptuous and pert. Her eyes are lascivious and mocking, triumphant in her knowledge of her overwhelming manner and seductive appearance. Her pale blue skin, seen to be scales up close, is both alluring and wonderful; a realm of softness beckoning to be explored and pursued. Her soft voice is vibrantly intense, a voice that poets might ascribe to a fresh rose or an alluring sunset.

She will use *hypnotism*, *hypnotic suggestion* and *mass hypnotic suggestion* to ensnare the Player Characters and bring them to her oddly cold embrace. With a pixie smile she promises any indiscretion an aroused male may desire even as she lays back with him into the clammy wetness of the ocean, to kiss his breath away as he drowns. One by one she intends to destroy all comers, taking their souls and their bodies as her own diabolic repast. There is one exception – she will obey the possessor of the *Glass Bowl of Nakhtnebef*. The spells that bind her to earth also bind her to serve as the plaything of Nakhtnebef or his successors.

### SIREN

**Medium Outsider (demon)**

**Hit Dice:** 10d8+10 (52)

**Initiative:** +11 (+4 Dex, +7 Reflex)

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares) swim 30 ft.

**DV:** 19 (+4 Dex, +4 natural, +1 Dodge)

**DR:** 6

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +10/+12

**Magic Attack:** +11

**Attack:** Slam +12 melee (1d6+2)

**Full Attack:** Slam +12 melee (1d6+2)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. / 5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** -

**Special Qualities:** Body voice, manifest, waterbreathing

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +11, Will +11

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 18, Cha 22

**Skills:** Bluff +19, Diplomacy +19, Listen +17, Knowledge (arcane) +12, Perform (dance) +19, Spot +17, Sense Motive +17



**Feats:** Adept (hypnotism), Dodge, Archer's Bane

**Climate/Terrain:** Aquatic

**Organisation:** Solitary or coven (2 – 16 sirens)

**Advancement:** 9 – 18 Hit Dice (Medium)

These human-like female demons have light green/blue scales on their skin, slit-like eyes and webbed hands. They come forth to be the playthings of some sorcerers, as well as to protect areas and close off shipping through specific areas. Sirens speak all human languages, as well as Demonic. Without speaking they can easily make their intentions obvious to any male, of whatever race.

All sirens know and can cast any spell from the hypnotism school. They generally use *hypnotism*, *hypnotic suggestion* and *mass hypnotic suggestion* to lure sailors from their ships; clasp them in their clammy embrace; then sink down to the shadowed sea floor to consume them. A single siren can kill off an entire pirate crew if left unchecked; leisurely gathering enough blood and souls to inflame her inhuman passions.

Sorcerers use the *summon demon* spell to summon sirens, just as they summon other creatures from beyond the stars.

Sailors regard the presence of a siren as a sure sign of death to come. They say that a siren never entered the world that did not lust for the blood of men. They speak of crews brought to a watery grave, writhing in pleasure as the breath raced from their lungs. All of these things are true, but often the siren's destruction was not originally intended for the pirates; the command that binds the siren to this world may well be centuries old, a remnant of some forgotten sorcerer's hate.

### Combat

Sirens avoid direct combat unless there is no other alternative. If faced with a target they cannot hypnotise or dominate, they will vanish under the waves, never to be seen again. When cornered, sirens turn to fight, slamming opponents with their frail looking hands.

In combat sirens use the following special powers:

**Body Voice (Su):** Any creature that can see the siren can hear the words that she whispers as she moves. This extends the siren's evil eye range to line of sight.

**Manifest (Su):** As a standard action the siren can either leave Earth and return to its home place or appear on Earth. In either case it manifests at the new location at the end of its action.

**Waterbreathing (Su):** Sirens can breathe water as if it were air.

A dark cave looms behind her, but it is shallow (although that fact cannot be discerned from the beach) and leads nowhere. It was carved out by centuries of pounding tides. The ship beached on the white sands is heavily damaged but can be repaired with enough effort and time. Its name is the *Neferranpet*.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE GLASS BOWL OF NAKHTNEBEF

*Galley's shall break the crimson seas seeking delights for you;*

*With silks and silver fountain gleams I will weave a world that glows and seems*

*A shimmering mist of rainbow dreams, scarlet and white and blue.*

*Robert E. Howard, A Song Out of Midian*

From the beach on the larger island, across from the small island marked with an 'X' on the map, the players can see they are surrounded by jungle. Toward the south, they can also see a forested ridge terminating at a sheer cliff. At the upper terminus of this cliff on the peak of the ridge, a massive rope bridge, at least 300 feet long, extends to a smaller island with another ridge. This smaller island is sheer on all sides – it is the cone of an ancient volcano. A minimum of searching will find both fresh water and a trail. The trail looks as though it was a road thousands of years ago, but the jungle has pretty much overtaken it by now.

The ancient road is dangerous if taken at night. Most of the more aggressive animals hunt in the darkness. During the day, the chattering of monkeys and the cries of the birds are the most likely things to be heard.

The ancient trail winds up the ridge and finally surmounts it. It terminates at the end of the huge rope bridge. The ropes are ancient, but thicker than five men tied around. The wood of the bridge is old, but, for the most part, stable. A Balance check (DC 12) is required to successfully move across in calm, clear weather. The Balance check increases if it is windy and/or raining. Any check that fails

by more than 5 is a complete fall (a board breaks, the character flips over one of the ropes); a failure of less than that means the character is dangling for his life. The fall is a 400-foot drop into shallow and rocky water (the water beneath the bridge is less than five feet deep in most places).

On the other side of the rope bridge, the road continues into the Cave of Vulmea, a carven tunnel through the wall of the ancient volcano. Strange and curious carvings can be seen if a source of light is brought into the dank cavern. During the day, this cavern serves as the lair of a pair of leopards. If the cavern is entered at night, the cave is empty as the leopards are out hunting.

### LEOPARD

#### Medium Animal

**Hit Dice:** 3d8+6 (19 hp)

**Initiative:** +7 (+4 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

**Speed:** 40 ft (8 squares), climb 20 ft.

**DV:** 16 (+4 Dex, +2 natural)

**DR:** 2

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/+5

**Attack:** Bite +6 melee finesse (1d8+3)

**Full Attack:** Bite +6 melee finesse (1d8+3) and 2 claws +1 melee finesse (1d4+1)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft/ 5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, pounce, rake 1d4+1

**Special Qualities:** Low-light vision, scent

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

**Skills:** Balance +12, Climb +11, Hide +8\*, Jump +11, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6

**Feats:** Alertness

**Environment:** Warm and temperate forest/jungle

**Organisation:** Solitary or pair

**Advancement:** 4-5 Hit Dice (Medium)

These jungle cats are about four feet long and weigh about 120 pounds. Leopards are found

anywhere south of Stygia among Kush and the Black Kingdoms and sometimes among the jungle covered islands of the western sea.

#### Combat

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a leopard must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

**Pounce (Ex):** If a leopard charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

**Rake (Ex):** Attack bonus +6 melee, damage 1d4+1.

**Skills:** Leopards have a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks and a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks. Leopards have a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. A leopard can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

At the end of the cave-tunnel the characters come out into the bowl of the ancient volcano. The grand ruins of a fantastic city can be seen beneath the shimmering arc of a rainbow. The tropic humidity keeps the air moist here. Apparently this island used to be a pirate port long, long ago, before the ghost whale ran everyone off.

The staggering city of tall purple towers lies ruined among the encroaching jungle at the centre of the volcanic bowl. This ancient Acheronian pirate city, once a base of operations for renegades preying both upon Acheron and Stygia in the pre-Hyborian eras, is an impressive ruin of overwhelming immensity.

Deep within the crumbling ruin is a prehistoric temple to a primeval god of unwholesome aspect. Within this temple is the *Glass Bowl of Nakhtnebef*. Games Masters should realise that the ruined city can be made into an entire campaign on its own.



The characters could spend weeks searching through the ancient ruins, with the possibility of many encounters. It is up to the Games Master to develop this part of the adventure in more detail if he wishes.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE ARRIVAL OF ANKH-PSAMTEK

*That I drained Life's cup to its blood-red lees  
And it thrilled my every vein,  
But I did not frown when I laid it down  
To lift it never again.*

*Robert E. Howard, The Day That I Die*

Khonsirdais stole the map from a more powerful sorcerer; this dread sorcerer wants it back and has arrived on the island to reclaim it. The Games Master may wish to have Ankh-Psamtek arrive by sorcerous means; however, if the characters have not yet found a means of escape from the island Ankh-Psamtek's small sloop may have escaped notice of the ghost whale and is anchored near the siren's cove.

Ankh-Psamtek's sole purpose is to capture Khonsirdais alive. However, if Khonsirdais has been killed already, then the *Glass Bowl of Nakhtnebef* will suffice. If the characters turn Khonsirdais over to Ankh-Psamtek, he will let them keep the bowl in exchange. Ankh-Psamtek will not befriend the characters or help them in any other way and will leave the island as soon as he has Khonsirdais or at least knows that he is dead. If the characters decide to fight Ankh-Psamtek, they will be facing a dangerous foe with death dealing magic at his disposal. Ankh-Psamtek will fight with every spell at his disposal, but if faced with death or capture, he will flee and seek revenge against the characters at a later time.

This lost city gives the Games Master a unique opportunity to create special encounters or introduce rare and powerful items. At the very least, several days should be spent exploring the ruins and recovering many unique and mysterious items, whether they are magical or not. In addition, this would be a good spot to introduce strange and terrifying creatures that would have been unique to the Acheronian era. Below is an example of a rare and unique creature that might be released from its prison by the unknowing adventures:

### FOAMING BLASPHEMY

**Medium Outsider (demon)**

**Hit Dice:** 8d8+8 (44 hp)

**Initiative:** +11 (+1 Dex, +6 Ref, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Defence Value:** 16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15

**Damage Reduction:** 5 (mutable form)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +8/+10

**Attack:** Claw +10 melee (1d3+2 plus corporeal instability)

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +10 melee (1d3+2 plus corporeal instability)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Corporeal instability, terror (DC 14)

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to critical hits and transformation, mad thing drumming

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

**Skills:** Climb +13, Escape Artist +12, Hide +12, Jump +9, Listen +11, Perform (percussion) +14, Spot +11, Survival +0 (+2 following tracks), Tumble +14, Use Rope +1 (+3 with bindings)

**Feats:** Skill focus (perform-percussion), Improved Initiative, Mobility

**Advancement:** 9–12 Hit Dice (Medium); 13–24 Hit Dice (Large)

The horrific creatures known as foaming blasphemies have mutable, ever-changing forms. A foaming blasphemy's dimensions vary, but it always weighs about 200 pounds. Foaming blasphemies do not speak.

### Combat

For all its fearsome appearances, whether it has claws, fangs, pincers, tentacles or spines, a foaming blasphemy does little physical harm. Regardless of form, the creature seems unable to manage more than two attacks per round. Its continual transmutations prevent the coordination needed to do more.

**Mad Thing Drumming (Su):** With a successful Perform (percussion) check (DC 23), the foaming blasphemy may grant one scholar within range a +1 morale bonus to his Magic Attack rolls plus an additional +1 for every 5 points that the foaming blasphemy exceeds its Perform check. The foaming blasphemy must have a Magical Link to the target scholar if it does not have line of sight to him.

**Corporeal Instability (Su):** A blow from a foaming blasphemy against a living creature can cause a terrible transformation. The creature must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or become a spongy, amorphous mass. Unless the victim manages to control the effect (see below), its shape melts, flows, writhes and boils uncontrollably. The save DC is Constitution-based.

An affected creature is unable to hold or use any item. Clothing, armour, rings and helmets become useless. Large items worn or carried - armour, backpacks, even shirts - hamper more than help, reducing the victim's Dexterity score by 4. Soft or misshapen feet and legs reduce speed to 10 feet or one-quarter normal, whichever is less. Searing pain courses along the nerves, so strong that the victim cannot act coherently. The victim cannot cast spells or use magic items, and it attacks blindly, unable

to distinguish friend from foe (-4 penalty on attack rolls and a 50% miss chance, regardless of the attack roll).

Each round the victim spends in an amorphous state causes 1 point of Wisdom drain from mental shock. If the victim's Wisdom score falls to 0, it becomes a foaming blasphemy.

A victim can regain its own shape by taking a standard action to attempt a Charisma check (DC 15) - this check DC does not vary for a foaming blasphemy with different Hit Dice or ability scores. A success re-establishes the creature's normal form for one minute. On a failure, the victim can still repeat this check each round until successful. Corporeal instability is not a disease or a curse and so is hard to remove. A *Warding* or *Greater Warding* spell removes the affliction.

**Immunity to Transformation (Ex):** No mortal magic can permanently affect or fix a foaming blasphemy's form. Effects such as *Awful Rite of the Were-Beast* force the creature into a new shape, but at the start of its next turn it immediately returns to its mutable form as a free action.

*Neferrenpet* could be repaired with supplies from other destroyed ships and skilled seamen. Perhaps Ankh-Psamtek was killed and his small sloop was found in the sirens cove. If the group found the *Glass Bowl of Nakhtnebef* they could command the siren to pull their ship or summon other aquatic creatures to do the same. Games Masters should provide the characters with several options, but not to make the decisions for them. This is an opportunity for characters to use various skills and abilities that they normally do not use.



## APPENDIX ONE: CHARACTERS

### ANKH-PSAMTEK, SORCERER OF THE BLACK CIRCLE

Medium Stygian (7<sup>th</sup> level Scholar)

**Hit Dice:** 7d6 (25 hp)

**Initiative:** +3

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**DV (Dodge):** 13 (+2 level, +1 Dex)

**DV (Parry):** 11 (+2 level, -1 Str)

**DR:** -

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +5/+4

**Attack:** Akbitanan Dagger +4 melee (1d4-1/19-20/x2/AP 2) or Stygian Bow +7 ranged (1d12/19-20/AP 1)

**Full Attack:** Akbitanan Dagger +4 melee (1d4-1/19-20/x2/AP 2) or Stygian Bow +7 ranged (1d12/19-20/AP 1)

**Special Attacks:** New Sorcery Style (x3), Advanced Spell x5, Bonus Spell x2

**Special Qualities:** Stygian qualities, scholar, lay priest background, knowledge is power

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +12 (+10 vs. Corruption)

**Abilities:** Str 9, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 16

**Skills:** Bluff +13, Concentration +10, Craft (alchemy) +15, Craft (herbalism) +13, Decipher Script +13, Sleight of Hands +9, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcane) +15, Perform (ritual) +18, Profession (priest) +7, Search +13, Sense Motive +12

**Feats:** Exotic weapon proficiency (Stygian bow), Iron Will, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice, Hexer, Skill Focus (perform), No Honour

**Reputation:** 10

**Magical Attack Bonus:** +6/+8 (+3 base, +3 Charisma modifier/+2 when casting Curses)

**Power Points:** 8 (24 max)

**Sorcery Styles:** Prestidigitation, Curses, Counterspells

**Spells Known:** *Conjuring, Lesser Ill Fortune, Telekinesis, Warding, Greater Telekinesis, Ill Fortune, Greater Ill Fortune, Greater Warding, Burst Barrier, Curse of Broken Blood*

### CAPTAIN IUFENAMUN

Medium Humanoid (7<sup>th</sup> level Pirate)

**Hit Dice:** 7d8+7 (42 hp)

**Initiative:** +6 (+1 Dex, +5 Reflex save)

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**DV (Dodge) melee:** 16 (+5 level, +1 Dex)

**DV (Dodge) ranged:** 20 (+5 level, +1 Dex, +4 large shield)

**DV (Parry):** 19 (+3 level, +2 Str, +4 large shield)

**DR:** 3 (quilted jerkin)

**Attack:** Short sword (+7 melee, 1d8+2, 19-20/x2,

## CHAPTER SIX: ESCAPE FROM THE ISLAND

*That I loved the song of the thrumming spars  
And the lift of the plunging prow,  
That I could not bide in the seaport town  
And I could not follow the plow.*

*Robert E. Howard, The Day That I Die*

After surviving the many dangerous encounters and creatures that are on the island, the characters should escape and head back toward the mainland. However several methods are available. The

AP 1) or Stygian Bow +2 (+7 ranged 1d12+2, 19-20/x2, AP 2)

**Full Attack:** Short sword (+7 melee, 1d8+2, 19-20/x2, AP 1) or Stygian Bow +2 (+7 ranged 1d12+2, 19-20/x2, AP 2)

**Special Attacks:** Ferocious Attack (additional attack), To Sail A Road Of Blood And Slaughter, Sneak Attack +2d6, Sneak Subdual

**Special Qualities:** Bite Sword, Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Seamanship +2 (+2 to DV on board ship), Pirate Code (Black Corsair Drums).

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 15

**Skills:** Appraise +13, Climb +7, Balance +11, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (Arcane) +9, Knowledge (geography) +9, Profession (sailor) +11, Use Rope +11

**Feats:** Dabbler, Combat Reflexes, Leadership

**Reputation:** 9

**Leadership:** 9 (7 level, +2 Cha; followers: 12 1<sup>st</sup> level; cohort 4<sup>th</sup> level pirate)

Captain Iufenamun is a pale and terrified lot, since they know that at any moment a priest may appear and demand their services.

## KHONSIROAIS, HIGH PRIEST OF SEC

Medium Stygian (7<sup>th</sup> level Scholar)

**Hit Dice:** 7d6 (25 hp)

**Initiative:** +3

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**DV (Dodge):** 13 (+2 level, +1 Dex)

**DV (Parry):** 11 (+2 level, -1 Str)

**DR:** -

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +5/+4

**Attack:** Akbitanan Dagger +4 melee (1d4-1/19-20/x2/AP 2) or Stygian Bow +7 ranged (1d12/19-20/AP 1)

**Full Attack:** Akbitanan Dagger +4 melee (1d4-1/19-20/x2/AP 2) or Stygian Bow +7 ranged (1d12/19-

20/AP 1)

**Special Attacks:** New Sorcery Style (x3), Advanced Spell x5, Bonus Spell x2

**Special Qualities:** Scholar, Lay Priest, Knowledge is Power

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +12 (+10 vs. Corruption)

**Abilities:** Str 9, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 16

**Skills:** Bluff +13, Concentration +10, Craft (alchemy) +15, Craft (herbalism) +13, Decipher Script +13, Gather Information +7, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcane) +15, Perform (ritual) +15, Profession (priest) +7, Profession (sailor) +7, Search +13, Sense Motive +12

**Feats:** Exotic weapon proficiency (Stygian bow), Iron Will, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice, Sorcerer's Boon, Priest, No Honour

**Reputation:** 10

**Magical Attack Bonus:** +6 (+3 base, +3 Charisma modifier)

**Power Points:** 8 (24 max)

**Sorcery Styles:** Sea Witchery, Divination, Hypnotism

**Spells Known:** *Sense Currents, Astrological Prediction, Entrance, Visions, Mind Reading, Domination, Tentacles of the Deep, Grip of the Deep, Set's Blessings, Psychometry, Rolling Waves*

## APPENDIX TWO: SHIPS

### DAGON'S VALOUR

Large Zingaran Merchant Galley (Value 69,000 sp)

**Dimensions:** 190 ft. long, 28 ft. beam

**Hardness/Hit Points:** 5/400

**Components:** Deep Water Hull, Cargo Hold, Passenger Rooms, Barracks

**Crew:** 8/32 (plus 50 marines)

**Speed (Sail):** 2

**Max Cargo:** 1

**Maintenance:** Profession (sailor) DC 25, 1 Component, 1 Component, 10% Hit Points

### THE NEFERRENPEC

Medium Stygian Merchant Galley (Value 10,700 sp)

*65 ft x 10 ft*

**Crew:** 30/90 with up to 100 slaves on board

**Hardness/HP:** 5/200

**Speed (Rowed):** 3

**Speed (Sail):** 2

**Tactical Movement:** 3

**Modifiers:** -

**Max Cargo:** 2 cargoes of slaves

**Components:** Bank of Oars, Drum, Slave Hold

**Maintenance:** Profession (sailor) DC 25, 1 Component, 1 Component, 10% Hit Points

Sailors recognise the infamous stygian galleys not by their sails, but by the throbbing beat of their slave drums. The galleys carry slaves from all over the world to a short, brutal life of service and sacrifice among the priests and nobles of Stygia. They generally have black sails, stink like the foulest pits and avoid other folk.

### THE WRATH OF THE DRIVING SEAS

Large Stygian Warship (Value 95,000 sp)

**Dimensions:** 185 ft. long, 25 ft. beam

**Hardness/ Hit Points:** 5/380

**Components:** Bank of Oars, Drum, Slave Hold, Barracks, Passenger Rooms

**Crew:** 30/90 with up to 140 slaves on board (30 marines)

**Speed (Sail):** 2

**Tactical Movement:** 2/3

**Modifiers:** -

**Max Cargo:** 2 cargoes of slaves

**Maintenance:** Profession (sailor) DC 25, 1 Component, 1 Component, 10% Hit Points



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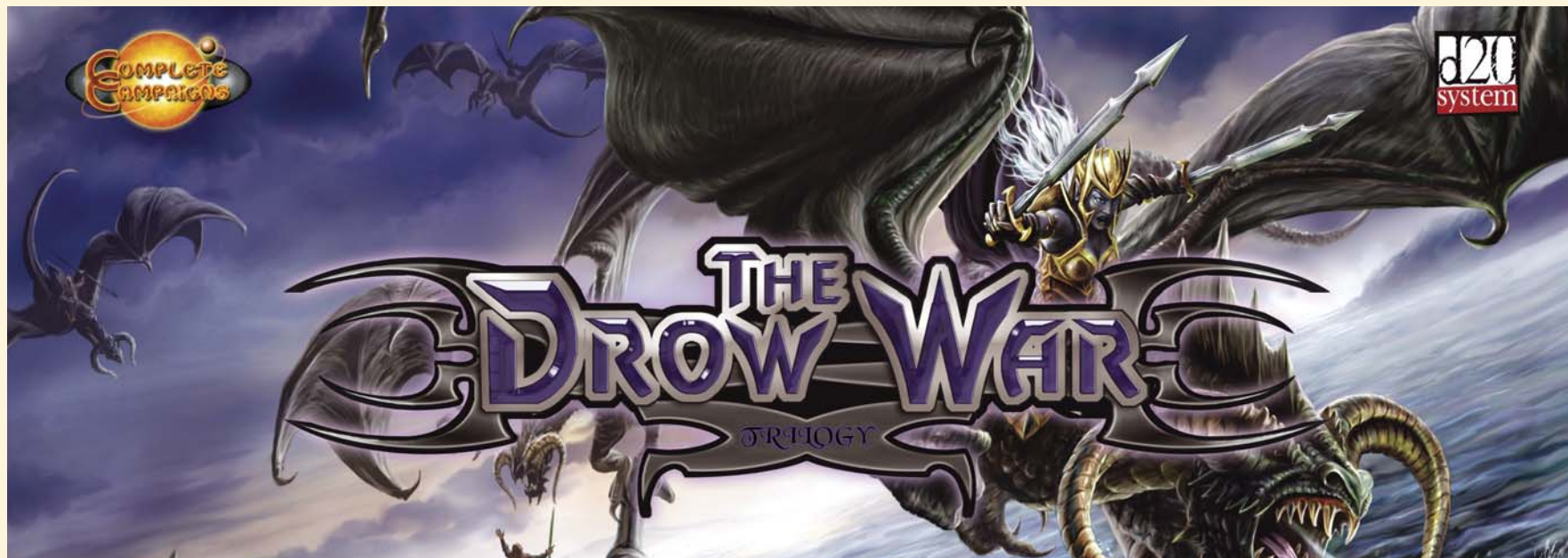
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