

MONGOOSE PUBLISHING PRESENTS



Signs & Portents

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Roleplayer

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Run in fear, Friend Citizen

Young Kingdoms

Little-known places from the edge of Elric's world

S&P Roleplayer 50

November 2007

MBP 5550R

www.mongoosepublishing.com



Hello and welcome to November. As I write this it's not even November yet and the fireworks are already going off outside as people warm up for the annual celebration of Guy Fawkes day – for the non-Brits among you, that's a festival that takes place every year on the 5th of November where we commemorate some ye olde bloke who totally failed to blow up the houses of parliament. We mark the occasion by stuffing gunpowder into cardboard tubes, adding minerals for colour, then setting fire to the lot and 'retiring to a safe distance' which can mean anywhere between two inches and two miles depending on the amount of gunpowder and the nature of the stuffing. Making fireworks is something of a pastime of schoolchildren over here – at least, it was when I was at school, and I doubt the teenage propensity to make things (especially toilets) burn, explode or otherwise cascade down from the rafters in fragments has diminished in the intervening years.

The perpetrators of the gunpowder plot, whose names escape me but are detailed in this month's World According to Roleplaying – the final one ever, sadly, since it's been canned by the powers that be – were executed in wonderfully gruesome fashion, featuring disembowelment, castration, hanging, audience participation, dismemberment, the display of whatever bits were left* and other wonderful examples of 17th century justice.

* One can only imagine it was a jolly affair, with entrails gaily festooning the gallows and children cheerily playing 'kick the head' in the festering puddles of muck that you can only get by combining good old London dirt** with the contents of the human body, spilled. It's surprising how colourful the inside of the human body is, really – puts a lot of Christmas decorations to shame.

** Good dirt contains organic material. In London, this is mostly rat.

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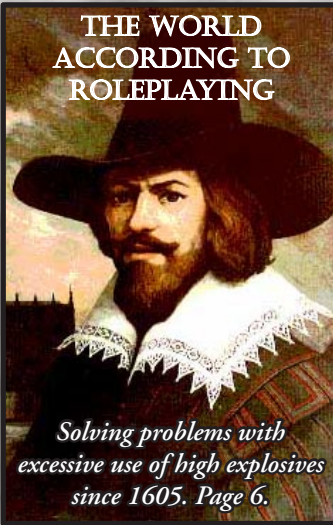
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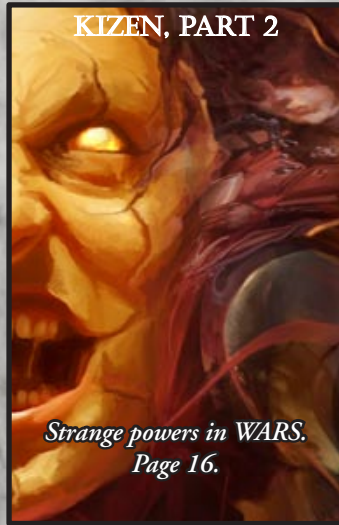
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EYE ON MONGOOSE



Elric: The Elric Companion

The Elric Companion is a boon for all Games Masters who are desirous to send their players off into the hazardous world of Elric. Expanding upon Elric of Melniboné and Bright Shadows, the Elric Companion creates a more vivid experience of the Young Kingdoms and beyond.

New rules, which cover sailing and the vessels that ply the oceans, allow for voyages between major ports and the investigation of mysterious islands. The Eternal Champion travels between the million spheres, and now any party can have the opportunity to visit other planes. The unknown east is described in depth, allowing for adventures in lands never fully revealed within the original stories. Insanity and madness are commonplace in Elric's world, due to the unnatural influence of Chaos and now you can add this new danger to further threaten players. The inhabitants of this world are also not neglected within the Elric Companion. From the heroes in Elric's saga, to foul monsters, strange creatures and the evil of demons, all provide new challenges.

Finally there is a scenario included, involving the sorcerer Tork'aada, whose desire to forge a strong empire could ultimately result in the forces of Kelmain storming the Young Kingdoms and altering this world forever.

Elric: Bright Shadows

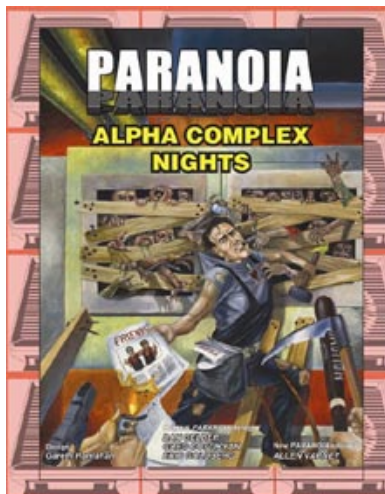
For ten thousand years, the Bright Empire of Melniboné ruled the face of the earth, subjugating the barbarian tribes and using them as slaves. These inhuman folk kept the world in bondage with demon magic and dragon flame. The people of the Dragon Isle rest in their capital city of Imrryr, secure in their place as the undisputed rulers of the world.

But their rule was never truly permanent. Addiction and hubris made them short-sighted, and they refused to see threat before it was too late. Wars were fought and won, but at too great a cost. Now the Empire lies in ruins, a bright shadow of its former glory.

With the coronation of Dragon Prince Elric, the citizens of Melniboné clamour for the Emperor to spearhead an assault on the world, the awaken the sleeping dragons and have their proud Dragon Princes ride the air once more and retake what was once theirs. But the pensive albino merely broods, a victim to this curious emotion called 'conscience', foreign to the alien Melnibonéan mind.

Amongst his court, there are rumored whispers that the Albino Emperor's reign will be a short one and that it will bring profound changes to the Bright Empire. Indeed, there are factions at work to ensure that very thing come to pass.





Paranoia: Alpha Complex Nights

Alpha Complex Nights contains three adventures set in the world of Paranoia.

The first, Spin Control, features the deadly world of sporks, public relations management and the plots of deranged and evil secret societies. The really dangerous part of all this is the public relations part, of course. The brain eating zombies are nothing to worry about at all.

In My First Treason five pregenerated young citizens get to experience their immensely fun childhood in a crèche that specialises in young citizens that have had... problems. As junior citizens they are expected to learn and grow into their future roles as proud foot vat technicians or bot repairmen. However this group of five famously resourceful junior citizens (and their petbot Timmy) are drawn into a series of increasingly jolly adventures.

The final adventure is the Sweep of Unhistory. Due to a series of improbable coincidences the troubleshooters find themselves as the last, final, terminal line of defence for Alpha Complex. Fate has caused them to be the saviours of the computer not once or twice but on many separate occasions. Is not Friend Computer lucky to have such diligent and heroic citizens protecting Alpha Complex?

RuneQuest: Games Master's Handbook

The Games Master's Handbook is an invaluable resource for any RuneQuest game. Inside you will find: notes on character and non-player character creation, with samples of archetypes that can be plugged straight into any campaign; new advanced skills, with the effects of fumbles and criticals with each skill in the game included. Additional information is provided on opposed skill rolls, as well as the Persistence and Resilience skills; the use of magic is also covered, with details on how and when to use it. In addition to dealing with existing magic systems, binding creatures and alchemy are both covered; the effects of alcohol, how the law might work and how to deal with down time between adventures; finally, towns and cities are covered, with information on services and tradesmen that might be found, along with the workings of cults and societies.



THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ROLEPLAYING

5. REMEMBER, REMEMBER

DRAMATIS PERSONAE (THE PCS)

Robert Catesby – plotter and superb swordsman
Thomas Percy – plotter and even more superb swordsman
John Wright – plotter and best swordsman in the country
Guy Fawkes – Yorkshireman with an over fondness for explosives
Sid Scargill – plotter and miner

NPCS

Francis Tresham – plotter and none too bright
John Grant – plotter and also not the brightest button
Lord Monteaule – Peer of the Land
Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Campbell – head of the secret police
His Royal Highness James I of England (and VI of Scotland) – the king
Sir Richard Walsh – High Sheriff of Worcestershire
John Streete – see *Enemy at the Gates?* He's better he is!
Various guards of no consequence.

BACKGROUND

The Protestant faith has taken hold in England and the new monarch, James I (and VI of Scotland), is to continue with the current laws and policies of his predecessor, Elizabeth. The player characters,

as members of the Catholic gentry decide that it is imperative to return the country to the Catholic fold. Unable to get backers abroad they meet to plot treason and rebellion!

PROLOGUE

Disembodied Voice: I see 'Mr Captain Oates' is not here this week.

Another Voice: Honeymoon.

First Voice: Just doesn't take his roleplaying seriously enough. Pass his character sheet.

Second Voice: I'm having that handmade musket. He can have my, um, shovel. Fair swap.

First Voice: Stupid name, give me a pen.

SCENE 1: A MANOR HOUSE IN LAMBETH

The main plotters meet to work on their plan

CATESBY: Gentlemen, we need to end this heretical faith and return the people to the church's grace.

PERCY: Let's storm the palace and put that Scottish backstabber to the sword. Who's with me?

WRIGHT: Isn't that a little bit suicidal? I mean it will be full of guards and nobles. I mean the professional

WHAT HISTORY MIGHT LOOK LIKE IF IT WAS THE RESULT OF A ROLEPLAYING GAME..

BY NICK ROBINSON
AND IAN BARSTOW

guards and soldiers we normally fight seem to be pretty rubbish for some unfathomable reason, but all those nobles?

CATESBY: I have a plan.

PERCY: We enter the palace dressed as choirboys?

CATESBY: No.

WRIGHT: As nuns?

CATESBY: (*sighs*) No. Gentlemen, let me introduce you to Guy Fawkes, a stout Yorkshireman and until recently soldier of the mighty Spanish army.

FAWKES: Aye-ooop!

PERCY: Great, what do we need him for?

CATESBY: Mr Fawkes is a professional soldier...

PERCY: So, that gives him D4 hit points then? He's rubbish he is.

CATESBY: ...with a vast experience of working with explosives

FAWKES: I love the feel of gunpowder against my skin.

PERCY: Are you sure he's all there?

FAWKES: I heard that. You'll not find a better explosives man in all the country.

CATESBY: Quite. Yes I intend to blow up Parliament and all in it, with your help, my friends. Then we shall raise rebellion and sweep the country clear of this evil taint of Protestantism. Deus Vult!

ALL: Deus Vult!

CATESBY: Now all we have to is get the explosives past the guards and the country will be ours!

SCENE 2: A HOUSE, NEAR THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER

CATESBY: This should work marvellously. I bought this house under a false name, no one will be able to find out until too late what we are up to.

WRIGHT: Fawkes, what are you doing to that barrel?

FAWKES: Um, nothing.

CATESBY: Scargill can start digging the mine to under Parliament. Once there we will place the explosives and... boom!

PERCY: Who's Scargill?

CATESBY: New bloke. Just showed up. Shows promise.

SCARGILL: Hi gang...I mean, by 'eck, crikey, etcetera.

WRIGHT: Oh God! When did you get back?

SCARGILL: Just now. Like my masterwork shovel?

CATESBY: He brought cakes... look.

PERCY: Hmm... mini Battenbergs. Not bad. I'll be back in a minute.

Percy leaves.

WRIGHT: He's going to ruin it. Remember the Titanic?

SCARGILL: Nonsense, by 'eck. I'm a changed man, aye-ooop, etcetera.

CATESBY: You can probably ease of the accent now, old man. Get digging.

FAWKES: Me or him?

CATESBY: Actually both of you. This northern drawl might be all well and good for whippet taunting but frankly it just gives me a migraine.

WRIGHT: How about our troops? Have you got them together?

CATESBY: Yes. We have weapons hidden throughout the Midlands. John Grant and Francis Tresham are busy arranging for things, priming people to expect a miracle.

WRIGHT: Can we trust them?

CATESBY: Absolutely. They are more than willing to die for the cause.

Percy enters.

PERCY: Chaps, I've come up with a cunning plan! Why is Scargill digging a hole in the middle of the floor. You know we won't get our deposit back because of that.

FAWKES: Well if all goes to plan there isn't going to be much of a neighbourhood left. I doubt they'll notice one small hole. It will be *beautiful*.

PERCY: Quite. Well I thought of a place to store our gunpowder.

Catesby: Good, nearby I hope?

PERCY: Not really, but I thought that the cellars under the Palace of Westminster, right under where Parliament will be meeting might be a good place to put it all. No one would think of looking there.

CATESBY: Percy, you're a genius. Now we can just put the gunpowder there and not worry about digging our way into the cellars.

SCARGILL: What about my masterwork shovel?

PERCY: Drink it.

SCENE 3: THE CELLARS UNDER PARLIAMENT

Percy, Scargill, Catesby and Fawkes are moving their powder into the cellars, a guard watches, picking his nose. Wright had to go home early, if you're interested.

GUARD: So what's in the barrels?

PERCY: Um. Brandy.

GUARD: So what's this black powder stuff that's everywhere?

PERCY: Oh, err... snuff. And brandy.

Guard pinches some from the ground where it has fallen and snorts it.

GUARD: Wow. That has some kick. And I feel strangely aroused.

FAWKES: I know, the same thing happened to me the first time I tried it.

Scargill hits the guard with his shovel. Spang!

PERCY: Why on earth did you do that?

SCARGILL: Had to use my shovel for something. Anyway, I haven't hit anything all evening.

CATESBY: He knows your name.

Scargill hits the guard with his shovel again. Spang!

SCARGILL: Not any more.

PERCY: You've killed him.

SCARGILL: Technically a *coup de grace*. Think of the XP.

PERCY: He'd have died in the blast anyway.

SCARGILL: Whatever. Stop going on and get plotting. By the way, whatever happened to my masterwork musket?

SCENE 4: THE THRONE ROOM OF KING JAMES

KING JAMES: My dear Cecil, who is this you bring before my throne?

CECIL: Your majesty, may I present Lord Monteaagle. He brings grave news.

KING JAMES: Yes, what is it?

MONTEAGLE: Your majesty, I was sitting down for some supper when a messenger arrived with this strange and cryptic note. Cecil and I were unable to decipher it though.

KING JAMES: Hand it here, perhaps I will be able to make something of it.

Grabs paper.

Dear Monty

Don't turn up to the State Opening of Parliament tomorrow or you'll end up being buried in a very small snuff box. And you will be VERY deaf.

Francis.

PS: don't let anyone else see this letter, it's secret it is. And if you do don't let them know it was I who sent it.

PPS: Give my love to my darling sister, your wife, for me.

PPPS: Thanks for the fondue set you gave us at Christmas. Anne loved it so much.

KING JAMES: (*mockingly*) You really can't understand the letter?

CECIL: Well, I thought it would put a good spin on things if you discovered the plot. Improve your popularity ratings anyway.

KING JAMES: Well, you could always have another letter written that is actually at least a little cryptic and have me decipher that instead.

CECIL: Brilliant your majesty. I'll start at once.

KING JAMES: Monteaagle. You go and get some guards and find out where in the Palace of Westminster they have hidden the explosives.

MONTEAGLE: Yes, Your Majesty.

KING JAMES: No doubt your name will be remembered for generations, and that the highest esteem will be yours forever for snitching on a family member, condemning him to a tortuous death and making your wife mourn such a traitorous brother. Bravo! You sir, are a king amongst snitches.

MONTEAGLE: Thank you, Your Majesty... I think.

KING JAMES: Now go. Cecil, where is that letter?

SCENE 5: THE CELLARS UNDER PARLIAMENT

Fawkes has his arms wrapped around a barrel when Monteaagle and the guard enter.

MONTEAGLE: Halt, who goes there?

FAWKES: Um...

SCARGILL: Quick, tell them some name or other.

FAWKES: Like what?

SCARGILL: I don't know. He asked you.

MONTEAGLE: Would you mind awfully telling me who you are?

SCARGILL: Hang on, be with you in a mo.

FAWKES: I'm Mr John Johnson.

GUARD: No it isn't. I know John Johnson.

FAWKES: Yes? I mean, how are you? Haven't seen you in ages!

GUARD: eh?

MONTEAGLE: And what is this, fellow? A lantern, touch paper, matches, watch and a cheap erotic novel. What is your purpose here, sir? Grab him!

FAWKES: Now you shall feel my blade!

Guard punches Fawkes who falls to the floor, unconscious.

DISEMBODIED VOICE: Stupid D4 hit points.

MONTEAGLE: Just as I thought, gunpowder. Enough to destroy Parliament and all in her twice over. The plot is undone.

GUARD: Where's the other one?

MONTEAGLE: What other one?

SCARGILL: (*thinks*) Hide skill. Gotta love it.

SCENE 5: WINDSOR

WRIGHT: I can't understand how they found out. Everyone was loyal. Either of you have an idea?

GRANT: No.

TRESHAM: Nope. No idea whatsoever. Not an iota. Nil. Zilch. Nothing. Nada.

WRIGHT: So where are these horses?

GRANT: Here we are. You take the first two, Tresham the next two and I will grab the last one.

Wright puts down his gun to grab the reins of the horses.

JOHN STREETE: Oi you. Stop!

GRANT: Leg it!

WRIGHT: Wait a minute, this is Windsor Castle. We're stealing horses from Windsor Castle?

GRANT: Best horses in the county.

WRIGHT: *(Mounting up and riding away)* And the best guarded. What part of the idea that we were to steal some horses covertly did you fail to understand?

TRESHAM: Dumbass. You'll never see me make such a stupid mistake.

WRIGHT: Thank you Francis. Thank heavens some of the hired help is reliable.

SHERIFF WALSH: Did you see who they were?

JOHN STREETE: No, Sir Richard. But they left this rather fine gun behind. I shall raise the guard so we can chase them down. I reckon that they are those traitors we heard about that tried to kill the king.

SHERIFF WALSH: The swine. No true Englishman would ever strike down his monarch. To arms!

SCENE 6: HOLBECHE HOUSE

The plotters, Grant, Tresham and other hirelings huddle around the fire, whilst drying their soaking wet clothes.

CATESBY: I don't understand how they found out.

WRIGHT: Tell me about it.

TRESHAM: Just bad luck. I would guess...

CATESBY: And it's raining. All our gunpowder is wet.

PERCY: But we have our swords. Three of the best swordsmen in England standing side by side. We can still escape to safety. We can take out any number of mooks.

SHERIFF WALSH: You in the house. You are surrounded. Come out unarmed and with your arms in the air.

CATESBY: Oh this is ridiculous. How on earth have they found us already? This adventure is ridiculous!

GM: Shut up and get on with it. I didn't write this, you know.

WRIGHT: Well I have no idea.

GRANT: Don't worry sirs, I will dry the gunpowder out and we will make a fight of it!

Pours gunpowder from his sack onto the floor.

GRANT: The fire will soon dry it out

CATESBY: Nooooooooo!!

<<BANG>>

GRANT: I'm blind!

WRIGHT: What happened?

CATESBY: That fatheaded NPC ignited the powder.

PERCY: Nothing for it. Right men... charge!

The plotters and hirelings still on their feet rush out the main door.

JOHN STREETE: You asked for it.

Bang

PERCY: Argh

CATESBY: Argh too!

SIR RICHARD: Two in one shot. That's quite the gun you have there Streete. Nice. What's it say on the stock?

STREETE: Hmm...'property of LEG Oates'.

SIR RICHARD: 'Leg'?

STREETE: Apparently.

WRIGHT: You'll never take me alive!

STREETE: Oh, sorry. Forgot about you.

SIR RICHARD: Fire at will, men!

Bang, Bang, Bang

WRIGHT: Argh.

With the last of the main plotters shot dead, Tresham and the survivors surrender.

SCENE 7: THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, SOME DAYS LATER.

During a sitting of the house a strange figure emerges amongst the opposition benches, as if from through the floor.

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT: I say, where did you come from?

SCARGILL: Aye-oop. Maintenance, guv. Got this shovel, see?

WONDROUS MATERIALS

Things to make other things out of, by Carl Walmsley

The raw materials available to enchanters and smiths can have a significant impact on the quality of the items that they manufacture. Beyond the normal ores and minerals that they can employ, there are certain rare substances offering unique advantages and challenges. These materials can be far more difficult to acquire and are often available only in specific locations, thus lending a unique flavour to the items forged in different geographical and cultural locations.

Blood Wood

Heart trees, or *bleeding willows* as they are sometimes known, are the most solitary of trees. Growing only in the lonely places of the world where it is barren and rocky, a heart tree stands always alone. Indeed, the hungry roots of this tree are so voracious that the lives of any other plants nearby are extinguished, creating a desolate circle around the tree known as a *blood ring*. No wild animals will venture willingly within this ring, daring only to eat the heart tree fruit which falls beyond its border.

Amongst those weapon-makers who possess the skill and understanding to work blood wood, a heart tree is considered a great prize. From its flesh they can fashion arrow shafts and spears that are not only as sturdy as iron, but will thirstily soak up the blood of any creatures whose body they pierce.

Working with blood wood is not easy. Firstly, the craftsman must be careful not to touch the wood for too long with his exposed skin. Should he accidentally do so, the blood vessels near the point of contact will quickly begin to swell and burst, causing first bruising and then bleeding as the wood tries to draw blood towards itself. A careless blood wood fletcher is often known by his blackened nails and bloodied fingers.

Blood wood is also tougher than oak, and tends to blunt a craftsman's tools very quickly.

Working with blood wood imposes a Craft Skill Modifier of:15%.

Arrows and spears fashioned from blood wood drain an additional 1 Hit Point from the area struck, one round after the target is hit. If the target has been impaled by the weapon, he loses 1 Hit Point each round for 1D6 rounds or until the arrow or spear is removed.

If a Bowman wishes to use a metal arrowhead on a blood wood shaft (to gain the armour-piercing qualities of a bodkin, for instance), he will stifle its blood draining ability unless he uses specially made hollow-tipped arrowheads. These heads contain a channel that allows blood to flow from the victim into the wood. Hollow arrowheads cost twice as much as normal.

Blood wood is not readily available and the opportunities that characters have to purchase or craft items made from this substance should be limited. The Cost Modifier for blood wood is x5.

Heart-seeker

An excellent example of what can be achieved with blood wood, this weapon is a nearly 3 metre long spear wielded by the tusk rider champion Grox Boarback. In addition to the blood drinking qualities of the wood itself, Heart-seeker is an Exquisite, Swift, Penetrating weapon. It therefore confers a +10% bonus to the wielder's Spear skill and opponents suffer a:10% penalty on parry or dodge tests to parry or avoid this weapon.

The theoretical cost to acquire this weapon would be 2500 SP, should it be somehow wrested from its current owner.

Black Steel

This darkly hued metal is far denser and more resilient than normal steel. This makes it excellent for certain functions but quite unsuitable for others. It is mined from the foot of the tallest mountains, where ore has been compacted over thousands of years.

Items forged from this metal have an Encumbrance that is 50% higher than usual.

Weapons made from black steel are fearsome in the hands of a strong opponent, but far more difficult to wield. The minimum STR and DEX scores required to employ such a weapon are increased by 50%. In addition, attempts to Dodge attacks made by the weapon benefit from a +10% bonus. Black Steel weapons can never benefit from the Swift, Parrying or Penetrating weapon effects.

The amount of Damage caused by a black steel weapon is doubled.

Armour crafted from Black steel imposes double the normal Skill Penalty, but has 50% higher AP.

A characters working with black steel has a:25% Craft Skill Modifier. The Cost Modifier is x10.

Ravenblade

This sturdy, black steel longsword is fashioned with the likeness of a raven on its hilt, the eyes picked out with dark green gemstones.

Requiring 15 STR and 11 DEX to use effectively, it is a weapon than demands much from its wielder. The sword is of Exquisite quality and benefits from the Warrior's weapon effect, conferring an overall bonus to the wielder's 1H Sword skill of +15%. It strikes for 2D8 Damage.

The Ravenblade would cost 4000 SP.

Bone Crystal

When certain crystal lies long undisturbed in or around a site of many graves it is able to absorb the very essence of the dead, the energy of the netherworld. In so doing, it acquires several unique abilities.

In appearance, bone crystal resembles milky white quartz that glistens particularly brightly in the moonlight. It is not a popular stone for jewellers, however, as many people find the way that this crystal is created far too macabre. Similarly, bone crystal is too brittle to be used as armour. Where its use in combat is to be found is as a weapon against the dead: or the *nearly* dead.



Undead creatures struck by a bone crystal weapon suffer double the normal amount of damage. This makes bone crystal daggers (only short piercing weapons can be forged from this material) an excellent standby for those expecting to encounter the walking dead.

Bone crystal weapons may also injure spirits, inflicting the weapon's normal Damage. Perhaps just as useful is

the fact that an incorporeal spirit may be reflected, and thereby seen, in the blade of one of these weapons.

Unfortunately, bone crystal weapons are brittle, having only half the usual AP of a standard weapon.

A weaponsmith working with bone crystal suffers no Craft Skill Modifier. However, the Cost Modifier is x10.

SORCERER'S SILVER

This wondrous metal is believed to form only where a significant mystical event has occurred and then the area has been left to settle, the magical afterglow seeping down into the soil and permeating silver ore that lies deep beneath the ground. The result is a metal as hard as steel but with unique, magic-augmenting properties.

Many spellcasters prize weapons made from this metal and they are often willing to pay handsomely to acquire them. They are even more interested in the ore itself, as they may then fashion items to their own specification.

Whenever a character is attempting to place an enchantment upon an item forged from sorcerer's silver, he receives a +20% bonus on his Enchantment Skill Test. The metal's unique affinity for magic makes it far easier to work with: it is as though it *wants* to absorb an enchantment.

Items crafted from sorcerer's silver benefit from an inherent magical enhancement that duplicates the effects of the Spell Enhancer Enchantment (*RuneQuest Companion*, page 41). The amount of POW automatically invested in the item depends upon its size:

Weapon Size

Dagger
Shortsword
Longsword
Halberd

POW Invested in Item

1
2
3
4

Every spell cast through an item made from sorcerer's silver is overcharged by a number of points equal to its POW score.

Sorcerer's silver is far harder to work with than iron, imposing a Craft Skill Modifier of:25%. Its Cost Modifier is a staggering x20.



Elemental Metals

In certain areas, elemental forces exert a strange influence over the minerals and ores lying undiscovered beneath the earth. This fusion of different forces can result in wondrous substances known collectively as elemental metals.

Magmic Iron

Formed where subterranean heat melts and folds ore over countless centuries, this rare metal is prized for its beauty and efficacy in battle. Weapons and armour forged from magmic iron possess a golden sheen, shot through with runnels of burning orange.

Crafting magmic iron is extremely difficult, requiring constant heating and reheating as the mineral's natural heat absorption qualities soak up whatever flame the metal is exposed to. Indeed it is this quality for which the metal is most prized. Armour made from magmic iron offers protection to its wearer against damage from all forms of heat: even spells or a dragon's breath. The armour's AP is always taken into account when determining damage caused by fire or heat.

Weapons crafted from magmic iron may be safely employed against creatures of flame such as salamanders without fear that they may be damaged. In addition, some warriors douse their blades in oil and ignite them before a fight. A weapon set aflame in this way will burn for 2D6 rounds. Foes struck by a burning blade suffer an additional 1D3 fire damage.

Working with magmic iron imposes a:30% Craft Skill Modifier. The Cost Modifier is x10.

ARMOUR OF THE CORE

The most famous suit of armour crafted from magmic iron, this breastplate was a prized possession of the dragon hunter, Leopold the Douser. The Armour of the Core is a Surpassing, Nimble (x3), Bulwark breastplate. It confers 7 AP to the Chest and Abdomen, imposes a:9% Skill Penalty and has 4 Encumbrance.

The cost to purchase such an item is unknown, but would surely amount to many tens of thousands of SP.

Meteoric Bronze

This particular elemental metal is formed when copper and tin fuse together as they plummet from the heavens and are buried deep in the ground. It is most often the case that meteoric bronze is discovered atop mountains and upon remote hillsides.

Perhaps somehow folding in the qualities of the air element as it descends, meteoric bronze is exceptionally light. In colour, it is a white gold, with tiny fragments of sky blue.

A weapon or piece of armour fashioned from meteoric bronze has half the normal Encumbrance. In addition, the Skill Penalty of armour is only three quarters normal.

Meteoric Bronze weapons are exceptionally swift and automatically benefit from the Swift and Penetrating qualities, imposing a:10% penalty on an opponent's attempts to dodge or parry attacks.

Working with meteoric bronze is exceptionally difficult and imposes a:50% Craft Skill Modifier. The Cost Modifier for using this metal is x15.

Lance of the Comet

This Marvellous Item was crafted as an offering for some long forgotten war god by a master artisan who wished to give thanks for his skills. Possessing the Baleful and Warrior's weapon effects it was an impressive gift. Stolen from the temple where it first resided, it has had many masters over the years, some noble, some villainous. In all instances, the weapon has continued to excel as a lethal instrument of war.

The Lance of the Comet provides a +10% bonus to the wielder's Spear skill, inflicts a terrifying 2D10+4

damage, has 2 Encumbrance and imposes a:10% penalty on opponents efforts to parry or dodge.

The value of this item is 30,000 SP.

Oceanic Iron

Deep beneath the ocean currents, where the rippling tides may knead and shape ore with relentless determination, this elemental metal is formed.

A grey-green in colour, but shimmering with currents, like light passing through water, items crafted from oceanic iron have a unique beauty that is all their own.

When weapons fashioned from this metal are struck, they vibrate with a particular sound that calls to mind the depths of the ocean and the great rolling chorus of voices that sound there.

Oceanic Iron is far more elastic than most metal, allowing it to absorb impacts and dissipate force more effectively. Armour and weapons made from this metal have an AP value 1 higher than normal.

Working with this ore imposes a:20% Craft Skill Modifier. The Cost Modifier is x5.



Tundric Silver

Mined only in regions of fierce and unrelenting cold, this precious ore can fashion items that hold an edge like no other. Tundric silver can also be polished to hold a shine as reflective as any mirror, making it a valued metal amongst jewellers, sculptors and other types of craftsmen.

It is particularly difficult to work tundric silver as it requires heat far greater than can be achieved in a normal furnace in order to bring it to melting point. Assuming that this can be achieved, however, the metal can be folded and shaped to craft weapons that require almost no whetting and that are exceptionally sharp.

Offering no particular benefits for armourers, in the field of battle tundric silver is used almost exclusively for cutting and piercing weapons.

Edged weapons forged from this metal both inflict +1 Damage and ignore 1 point of Armour. In addition, tundric silver will not be harmed by exposure to any normal flames: it does not, however, confer this protection upon its wielder.

When fashioning weapons from tundric silver, a Craft Skill Modifier of:20% is applied, along with a Cost Modifier of x10.

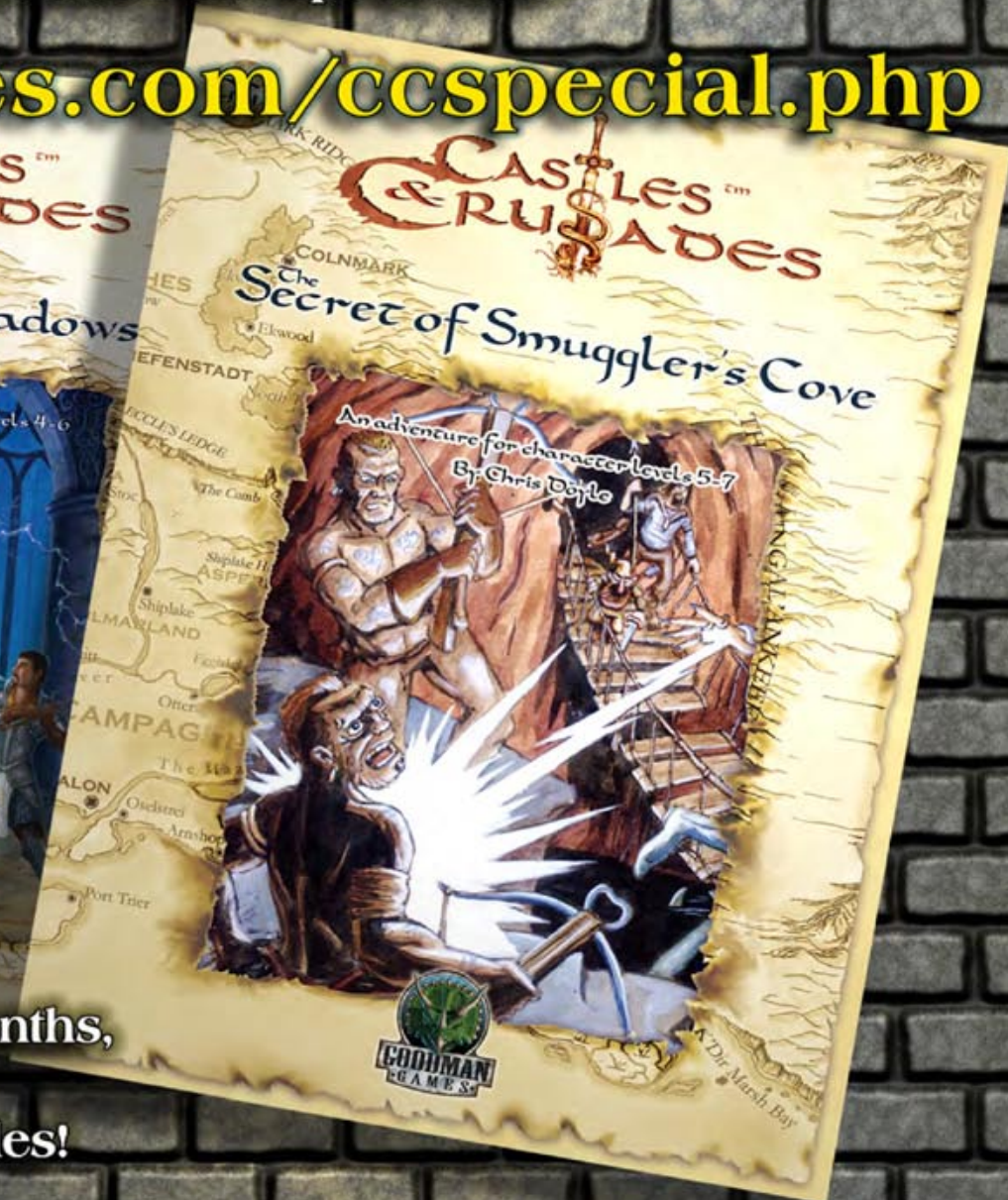
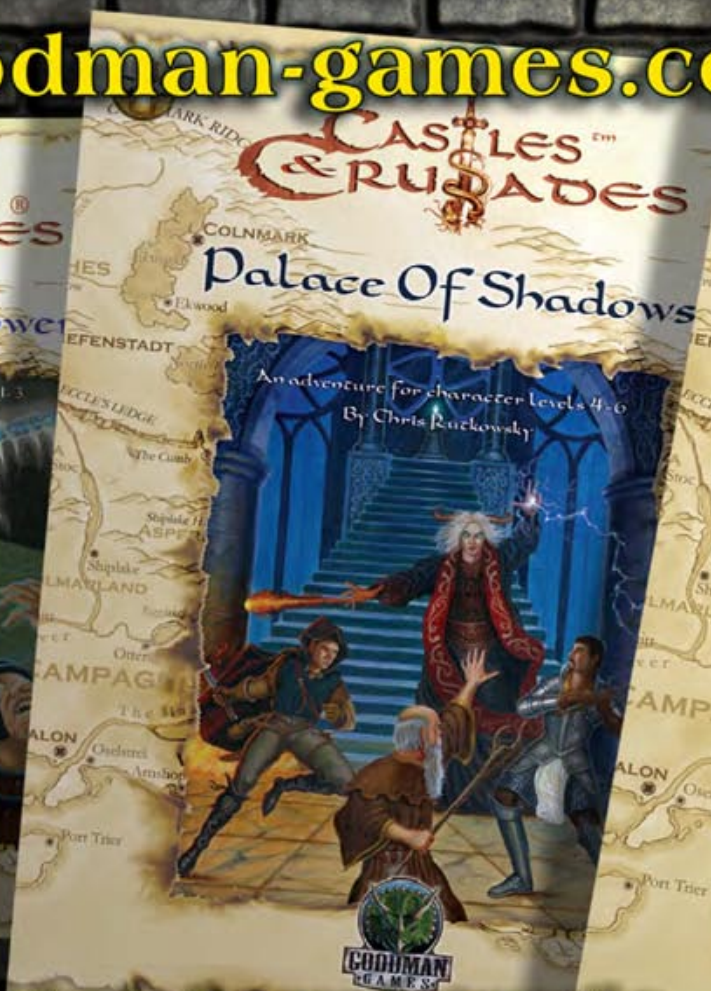


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Email your entries to clonghurst@mongoosepublishing.com with 'Sláine Competition' in the subject line.
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The closing date is the 30th of November. The winner will be announced in January's S&P Roleplayer.

WARS: Kizen, Part 2

Part 12 of the unreleased supplement, Soul and Steel. Written by Greg Lynch

More new kizen powers for WARS.

Magnetic Control

'Honestly, I wish I could just get rid of it. I mean, I can see where it would be useful for some people, but I'm not some Maverick pirate or hired mercenary. I'm the vice president of Public Relations and Media Strategies for the Calisouth branch of Friction Entertainment. For me, it's just a hindrance. I mean, if I let my concentration slip and my mind wander, the next thing I know I've got pens, staplers, picture frames, you name it all flying across the room at me. Just yesterday I was talking to a reporter; when her necklace suddenly snapped off and shot into me—that's where this black eye came from. And considering the issue last week with the computers, well, I'm just glad I still have my job.'

– Irene Ogelsby, first documented kizen to manifest the Magnetic Control tree.

Magnetic Control is a long and useful tree of kizen abilities that is thought to be closely related to Electrical Control, simply because of the physics involved with the two phenomena. However, this remains merely speculation, as kizen with control over one of the trees seem no more or less likely than any other kizen to gain control over the other tree.

Magnetic Control is, simply, the ability to detect, manipulate and use magnetic energy, granting the kizen powers from the trivial, such as the ability to always know the direction of any planet's magnetic pole, to the awe-inspiring, creating a storm of flying metal or even destroying sophisticated electronics with a touch.

Of all the factions, Earthers seem to have the greatest facility with Magnetic Control, which some scientists mark down as pure coincidence, while others point to the fact that, of all the major inhabited planets, Earth has the strongest magnetic field.

Magnetic Sense

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: None
Level: 1
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Wisdom
Point Cost: 4
Action: Standard

This power enables the kizen to detect if there is any magnetic field active in an object, provided the field is within six inches of the area touched. This can be used to determine if a magnetic or electronic lock is engaged, if a gauss weapon is about to fire or

anything else involving the use of magnetic energy. Additionally, when this power is activated, the kizen is always aware of the exact direction of the magnetic pole of whichever planet he is on (if there is one). This aspect of the power can be extremely useful, as once a kizen has begun to learn powers from the Magnetic Control tree, his own body's magnetic aura is enhanced, rendering a compass useless to him. Kizen manifesting this power often generate an even stronger magnetic aura, drawing small, nearby metal objects towards them. Once activated, this power lasts for one plus Wisdom bonus minutes and may be sustained.

Magnetic Manipulation

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Magnetic sense*
Level: 3
Range: Close (8 metres + ½ metre per character level)
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 4
Action: Standard

When this power is activated, the kizen gains the ability to use magnetism to remotely manipulate metal objects. The kizen has an effective Strength of

Magnetic Control Tree

Magnetic Sense (1st level)

Magnetic Manipulation (3rd level)

Increased power I (5th level)

Increased power II (8th level)

Increased power III (11th level)

Increased power IV (15th level)

Increased power V (18th level)

Increased power VI (20th level)

Multiple Manipulation (3rd level)

Multiple Manipulation II (8th level)

Multiple Manipulation III (13th level)

Shrapnel Strike (10th level)

Halo of Shrapnel (15th level)

Metal Swarm (18th level)

Magnetic Bonding (3rd level)

Reverse Polarity (12th level)

Strengthen Bond I (5th level)

Strengthen Bond II (8th level)

Strengthen Bond III (11th level)

Strengthen Bond IV (15th level)

Strengthen Bond V (20th level)

Larger Bond I (5th level)

Larger Bond II (8th level)

Larger Bond III (11th level)

Larger Bond IV (15th level)

Larger Bond V (18th level)

Universal Bond (20th level)

Weaken Field I (5th level)

Weaken Field II (8th level)

Weaken Field III (11th level)

Nullify Field (15th level)

Data Scramble (2nd level)

Disrupting Touch (5th level)

EMP Grasp (12th level)

EMP Bolt (15th level)

EMP Field (20th level)

4 when manipulating the object. Several limits apply to this power:

There is no 'bond' between the object and the kizen – the kizen cannot be tugged or pulled by someone grabbing the object.

The object moves at a maximum speed of two metres per round, plus an additional two metres for each point of Constitution bonus.

This power lasts for one plus Constitution bonus rounds. This power may be sustained.

Increased Power I

Type: Energy (innate)

Favoured: Earther

Tree: Magnetic Control

Prerequisite Power: *Magnetic manipulation*

Level: 5

Range: —

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: —

Point Cost: 6

Action: —

This innate power increases the strength used with *magnetic manipulation* (and all powers derived from it) to eight.

Increased Power II

Type: Energy (innate)

Favoured: Earther

Tree: Magnetic Control

Prerequisite Power: *Increased power I*

Level: 8

Range: —

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: —
Point Cost: 8
Action: —

This innate power increases the strength used with *magnetic manipulation* (and all powers derived from it) to 12.

Increased Power III

Type: Energy (innate)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Increased power II*
Level: 11
Range: —
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: —
Point Cost: 12
Action: —

This innate power increases the strength used with *magnetic manipulation* (and all powers derived from it) to 16.

Increased Power IV

Type: Energy (innate)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Increased power III*
Level: 15
Range: —
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: —
Point Cost: 16
Action: —

This innate power increases the strength used with *magnetic manipulation* (and all powers derived from it) to 20.

Increased Power V

Type: Energy (innate)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Increased power IV*
Level: 18
Range: —
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: —
Point Cost: 18
Action: —

This innate power increases the strength used with *magnetic manipulation* (and all powers derived from it) to 24.

Increased Power VI

Type: Energy (innate)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Increased power V*
Level: 20
Range: —
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: —
Point Cost: 5
Action: —

This innate power increases the strength used with *magnetic manipulation* (and all powers derived from it) to 30.

Multiple Manipulation

Type: Energy (innate)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Magnetic manipulation*
Level: 3
Range: —

Saving Throw: —
Dominant Attribute: —
Point Cost: 6
Action: —

This innate ability allows the kizen to use his *magnetic manipulation* power on two items simultaneously. The total weight of objects must not exceed the maximum weight the kizen's Magnetic Control can lift. Any skill checks required are at -2 and any saving throws gain a +2 bonus because the kizen is somewhat distracted.

Multiple Manipulation II

Type: Energy (innate)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Multiple manipulation*
Level: 8
Range: —
Saving Throw: —
Dominant Attribute: —
Point Cost: 12
Action: —

This is identical to *multiple manipulation*, except that the kizen may manipulate up to three total objects.

Multiple Manipulation III

Type: Energy (innate)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Multiple manipulation II*
Level: 13
Range: —
Saving Throw: —
Dominant Attribute: —
Point Cost: 16
Action: —

This is identical to *multiple manipulation*, except that the kizen may manipulate up to four total objects.

Shrapnel Strike

Type: Energy (active)

Favoured: Earther

Tree: Magnetic Control

Prerequisite Power: *Increased power III, multiple manipulation II*

Level: 10

Range: Close (8 metres + ½ metre per character level)

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Constitution

Point Cost: 8 for 10d6, +6 for each additional d6

Action: Standard

With *shrapnel strike*, instead of exercising fine control over a small number of objects, the kizen can command a vast number of tiny objects. This command is by no means perfect – the kizen cannot set the objects to various tasks. However, he can send them speeding toward a single target with all the force he can muster through the *increased power* abilities. The total weight of all the objects must be equal to or less than the total amount the kizen can lift with *increased power*.

Upon striking the target, the shrapnel falls to the floor and must be manually retrieved by the kizen before it can be used again for this or any other power. Note that the kizen may add his Magnetic Control strength bonus to any damage done with this power – thus, if the kizen has *increased power V* (granting him a Magnetic Control strength of 24), he may increase his total damage with this attack by +7.

Halo of Shrapnel

Type: Energy (active)

Favoured: Earther

Tree: Magnetic Control

Prerequisite Power: *Shrapnel strike*

Level: 15

Range: Self (See Text)

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Constitution

Point Cost: 12 for 10d6, +5 for each additional d6

Action: Standard

By using this power, the kizen creates an aura of spinning, whirling metal shrapnel all around himself. The *halo of shrapnel* has a radius of three metres, measured outward from the kizen's body. The total weight of all the objects in the *halo of shrapnel* must be equal to or less than the total amount the kizen can lift with *increased power*.

Any creature or bot that exposes itself to the *halo of shrapnel* (by making a melee attack against the kizen, for example), will automatically be subject to the damage of this power, with no saving throw. The kizen may also use the *halo of shrapnel* as an offensive force, simply by activating it and walking into a group of enemies. In this case, however, those exposed to the shrapnel may attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage.

While this power is active, the spinning bits of metal also protect the kizen from incoming damage. The kizen enjoys Damage Reduction of energy 5/impact 5 as long as this power is running. Additionally, for every extra d6 of damage the kizen adds to the base damage, he gains an additional Damage Reduction of energy 1/impact 1. For example, a kizen who spent a total of 22 points to bring his damage to 12d6 would have Damage Reduction energy 7/impact 7 for the

duration of the power. *Halo of shrapnel* lasts for a number of rounds equal to the kizen's Constitution bonus +1, and may be sustained.

When the effect ends, the shrapnel falls to the floor and must be manually retrieved by the kizen before it can be used again for this or any other power. Note that the kizen may add his Magnetic Control strength bonus to any damage done with this power – thus, if the kizen has *increased power V* (granting him a Magnetic Control strength of 24), he may increase his total damage with this power by +7.

Metal Swarm

Type: Energy (active)

Favoured: Earther

Tree: Magnetic Control

Prerequisite Power: *Halo of shrapnel*

Level: 18

Range: Close (8 metres + ½ metre per character level)

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Constitution

Point Cost: 18 for 20d6, +8 for each additional d6

Action: Standard

Metal Swarm is essentially a projected and deadlier version of *halo of shrapnel*, but is intended solely to wreak horrible damage on the kizen's enemies. With metal swarm, the kizen creates a zone of flying shrapnel in a 4-metre cube somewhere with range of the power. All creatures and bots within that zone are subject to the damage of the *metal swarm*, though they may make Reflex saving throws to reduce the damage by half. The total weight of all the objects in the *metal swarm* must be equal to or less than the total amount the kizen can lift with *increased power*.

Metal swarm lasts for a number of rounds equal to the kizen's Constitution bonus +1, and may be sustained. The kizen may move the *metal swarm* about freely, at a rate of 16 metres per round. Though it is likely cold comfort for anyone within the zone of this power, those caught within a *metal swarm* do receive Damage Reduction against all incoming attacks from outside the *metal swarm*. The victims enjoy Damage Reduction of energy 6/impact 6 as long as this power is running. Additionally, for every extra d6 of damage the kizen adds to the base damage, they gain an additional Damage Reduction of energy 1/impact 1. For example, a kizen who spent a total of 34 points to bring his damage to 22d6 would grant his victims Damage Reduction energy 8/impact 8 so long as they are within the zone of effect.

When the effect ends, the shrapnel falls to the floor and must be manually retrieved by the kizen before it can be used again for this or any other power. Note that the kizen may add his Magnetic Control strength bonus to any damage done with this power – thus, if the kizen has *increased power V* (granting him a Magnetic Control strength of 24), he may increase his total damage with this power by +7.

Magnetic Bonding

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Magnetic sense*
Level: 3
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 3
Action: Standard

With *magnetic bonding*, the kizen can magnetise a single metallic object of Diminutive size or smaller. The magnetic bond created has a Strength of 5. The item will remain magnetised for a number of minutes equal to the kizen's Constitution modifier +1.

Strengthen Bond I

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Magnetic bonding*
Level: 5
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 5
Action: Standard

Though most often used on an item affected by *magnetic bonding*, *strengthen bond I* can be used to bolster the strength of any magnetic field. *Strengthen bond I* increases the Strength of any magnetic field by 10. *Strengthen bond I* lasts for a number of minutes equal to the kizen's Constitution modifier +1.

Larger Bond I

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Magnetic bonding*
Level: 5
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 5
Action: Standard

Larger bond I allows the kizen to use *magnetic bonding* to magnetise a larger object. With this power, any metallic object of size Tiny or smaller may be magnetised with *magnetic bonding*.

Strengthen Bond II

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Strengthen bond I*
Level: 8
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 7
Action: Standard

As *strengthen bond I*, except the field strength is increased by 15.

Larger Bond II

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Larger bond I*
Level: 8
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 7
Action: Standard

As *larger bond I*, except the kizen may magnetise any metallic object of size Small or smaller.

Strengthen Bond III

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther

Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Strengthen bond II*
Level: 11
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 10
Action: Standard

As *strengthen bond I*, except the field strength is increased by 20.

Larger Bond III

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Larger bond II*
Level: 11
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 11
Action: Standard

As *larger bond I*, except the kizen may magnetise any metallic object of size Medium or smaller.

Strengthen Bond IV

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Strengthen bond III*
Level: 15
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 15
Action: Standard

As *strengthen bond I*, except the field strength is increased by 30.

Larger Bond IV

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Larger bond III*
Level: 15
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 15
Action: Standard

As *larger bond I*, except the kizen may magnetise any metallic object of size Large or smaller.

Strengthen Bond V

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Strengthen bond IV*
Level: 20
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 18
Action: Standard

As *strengthen bond I*, except the field strength is increased by 40.

Larger Bond V

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Larger bond IV*
Level: 18

Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 20
Action: Standard

As *larger bond I*, except the kizen may magnetise any metallic object of size Huge or smaller.

Universal Bond V

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Larger bond V*
Level: 20
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 20
Action: Standard

As *larger bond I*, except the kizen may magnetise any metallic object of any size.

Weaken Field I

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Magnetic bonding*
Level: 5
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 5
Action: Standard

Weaken field I can be used to erode the strength of any magnetic field. *Weaken field I* decreases the Strength

of any magnetic field by 10. *Weaken field I* lasts for a number of minutes equal to the kizen's Constitution modifier +1.

Weaken Field II

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Weaken Field I*
Level: 8
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 8
Action: Standard

As *weaken field I*, except the strength of the field is reduced by 15.

Weaken Field III

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Weaken Field II*
Level: 11
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 11
Action: Standard

As *weaken field I*, except the strength of the field is reduced by 20.

Nullify Field

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control

Prerequisite Power: *Weaken Field II*
Level: 15
Range: Close (8 metres + ½ metre per character level)
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 15 + 2 for every 5 points of field Strength
Action: Standard

Nullify field allows a kizen with this ability to completely shut down a magnetic field for a short period of time. This power is commonly used after one of the *weaken field* powers has been applied, as the exact point cost for *nullify field* is dependent upon the existing Strength of the magnetic field. For example, a magnetic field with a Strength of 30 will require 27 points to shut down (base cost of 15 plus 12 for the field's Strength).

Nullify field lasts for a number of rounds equal to the kizen's Constitution modifier +1.

Reverse Polarity

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Magnetic bonding*
Level: 12
Range: Close (8 metres + ½ metre per character level)
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 15
Action: Standard

A difficult and strenuous power for the kizen manifesting it, *reverse polarity* remains one of the most useful utility powers of the Magnetic Control

tree. With *reverse polarity*, the kizen inverts a magnetic field, causing attraction to become repulsion, or vice versa. The Strength of the magnetic field remains the same, thus, a door locked with a magnetic lock will slam open and will probably be all but impossible to close while this power is in effect.

Reversing the polarity of a magnetic field is no easy task. To successfully use this power, the kizen must not only expend his kizen points, but must also succeed in a magnetic Strength check with the field. For the purposes of this check, the kizen's Strength is not his personal ability score, but rather the strength he has with the Magnetic Control tree, as measured by his familiarity with the *increase power* abilities.

Reverse polarity lasts for a number of rounds equal to the kizen's Constitution modifier +1.

Data Scramble

Type: Energy (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Magnetic Control
Prerequisite Power: *Magnetic sense*
Level: 2
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Wisdom
Point Cost: 3
Action: Standard

The kizen need only touch a computer, datapad or other information-storage device to completely randomise the information held within. This will not destroy data on remote systems, but will destroy local copies, as well as making the machine unusable for any purpose for one plus Wisdom bonus rounds. If the target device is held by an enemy, the kizen must

succeed with a disarm attempt to touch the device and use this power. The kizen may make such an attempt in the same action in which he activates this power, provided the target is within reach.

Disrupting Touch

Type: Energy (active)

Favoured: Earther

Tree: Magnetic Control

Prerequisite Power: *Data scramble*

Level: 5

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Constitution

Point Cost: 5 for 3d6, 5 for each additional d6 (maximum 8d6)

Action: Standard

Disrupting touch is completely harmless to humans, Quay, Shi and any other form of organic life. Against a bot or other piece of machinery, however, it can be quite effective indeed.

Disrupting touch plays havoc with the electrical systems of any machinery, inflicting a base damage of 3d6 electrical damage, which completely bypasses all Damage Reduction. Using *disrupting touch* requires a successful touch attack.

EMP Grasp

Type: Energy (active)

Favoured: Earther

Tree: Magnetic Control

Prerequisite Power: *Disrupting touch*, Kizen Initiate

Level: 12

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: Fortitude (See Text)

Dominant Attribute: Constitution

Point Cost: 15 + 15 for every size greater than Medium

Action: Standard

This power allows a kizen to use his ability with the Magnetic Control tree to channel an electromagnetic pulse through his touch. Using this ability requires a successful touch attack.

EMP grasp will shut down or damage any electrical systems (computers, bots and so forth) that it is directed against. Shielded electronics, such as those on a bot or a ship's computer system, must make a Fortitude saving throw. If successful, they will go off line for 2d6 rounds. If they fail, they are reduced to one hit point (in the case of bots) or destroyed (in the case of computer systems). Unshielded electronics, like a wristcomp, are utterly destroyed if unattended. If the unshielded electronic is attended (a wristcomp being worn on someone's wrist), the device may make a Fortitude save at its user's base chance to avoid destruction. Even if it succeeds, however, it will go off line for 1d6 minutes.

With *EMP grasp*, the kizen may effect any electronic device or bot up to size Medium. For every size category greater than Medium, the kizen must expend an additional 15 points. For example, a kizen wishing to use this ability on a Gargantuan NoBot would have to spend a total of 60 kizen points, as well as succeed in a touch attack.

EMP Bolt

Type: Energy (active)

Favoured: Earther

Tree: Magnetic Control

Prerequisite Power: *EMP grasp*, Kizen Acolyte

Level: 15

Range: Close (8 metres + ½ metre per character level)

Saving Throw: Fortitude (See Text)

Dominant Attribute: Constitution

Point Cost: 20 + 12 for every size greater than Medium

Action: Standard

As *EMP grasp*, except the kizen may fire a single *EMP bolt* against any enemy or object within range of the power.

EMP Field

Type: Energy (active)

Favoured: Earther

Tree: Magnetic Control

Prerequisite Power: *EMP bolt*, Kizen Master

Level: 20

Range: Close (8 metres + ½ metre per character level) radius

Saving Throw: Fortitude (See Text)

Dominant Attribute: Constitution

Point Cost: 25 + 10 for every size greater than Medium

Action: Standard

This devastating power creates an EMP in a zone around the kizen, extending out the full range of the power. Any electronic devices within the zone suffer the effects.

Matter Density Control

'You didn't mention anything about a blast door when I took this job. Do you have any idea how thick and hard those things are? I mean, just look at it. Well, hell. We're here now and I need the money – you know that – so I guess there's nothing for it. But I want a bonus when we're done here. Going through something like that... All right, all right. I'm going. My God, this is going to hurt. How much? Oh, I don't know. Try eating your arm and you might get some idea of what this will feel like.'

– Paedrig 'Breaker' Murphy,
Maverick kizen and thief

Among the most recently discovered of the kizen power trees, unknown even to the Shi and the Quay before the creation of the Mumon Rift, the Matter Density Control tree has sparked significant debate in the ever-growing circle of scientists who make the study of kizen their field of expertise.

Some maintain that this tree should not exist, that it violates the perceived kizen boundary of the impossibility of dynamic mass shifting. Others argue that this tree causes no actual changes in mass, merely in the way that mass is arranged. Most experts are waiting to render their judgement, having marked this tree up as just another of the thousands of puzzles that together comprise the great mystery that is kizen.

Density Sense

Type: Physical (active)

Favoured: Maverick, Shi

Tree: Matter Density Control

Prerequisite Power: None

Level: 1

Matter Density Control

Density Sense (1st level)

Erode Object I (2nd level)

Erode Object II (5th level)

Erode Object III (10th level)

Erode Object IV (15th level)

Destroy Object (20th level)

Harden Object I (2nd level)

Harden Object II (5th level)

Harden Object III (10th level)

Harden Object IV (15th level)

Fuse (18th level)

Pass Through I (3rd level)

Pass Through II (6th level)

Pass Through III (9th level)

Pass Through IV (12th level)

Come as You Are (13th level)

Pass Through V (15th level)

Penetrate (18th level)

Path of Corrosion (7th level)

Path of Frailness (10th level)

Path of Debris (13th level)

Path of Destruction (16th level)

Path of Annihilation (19th level)

Slip (8th level)

Shadow (11th level)

Spirit (14th level)

Phantom (17th level)

Skin of Wood (3rd level)

Skin of Stone (6th level)

Skin of Steel (9th level)

Skin of Diamond (12th level)

Skin of Adamant (15th level)

Skin of Light (18th level)

Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 2
Action: Standard

When the kizen manifests this power and touches an object, he can determine its molecular density and thickness. In game terms, the player of the kizen learns the hardness and hit points of the given object, as well as how thick it is. This power affects only one cubic metre of an object (the volume of the cube cannot be contorted – it is always one metre on each side), thus, if there is a different substance further than one metre inside the object, the kizen cannot sense it, nor can he sense the thickness of an object more than a metre thick (though he will know it is more than a metre).

Erode Object I

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Shi
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Density sense*
Level: 2
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 3 for one kilogram, +2 for each additional kilogram
Action: Standard

This power allows a kizen to manipulate the molecular structure of an object, decreasing its resilience. With *erode object I*, the kizen temporarily decreases the hardness and hit points of an object, lowering them both by 10%.

In order to successfully manifest this power, the kizen must overcome the actual hardness of the object he is

attempting to affect. This is resolved with a Constitution ability check (1d20 plus the kizen's Constitution modifier against a DC equal to the object's hardness). If successful, the kizen successfully manipulates the item. To all appearances, the item seems unchanged – there is no physical manifestation of this power.

Erode object I may not be used on any form of living organic material, be it a human or a tree. However, it may be used on an opponent's armour, or upon a bot. In either of these cases, the efficacy of the armour's DR is reduced by energy 1/impact 1 for the duration of the power.

This power lasts for a number of minutes equal to the kizen's Constitution modifier and may be sustained. Consult the chart below for a listing of the hardnesses and hit points of a variety of common substances.

Substance	Hardness	Hit Points
Ballistic Polymer	15	10/cm of thickness
Glass	1	1/three cm of thickness
Ice	0	1/cm of thickness
Lead	10	5/cm of thickness
Leather or Hide	2	2/cm of thickness
Paper	0	1/two cm of thickness
Shi Composites	30	20/cm of thickness
Steel	20	10/cm of thickness
Stone	8	8/cm of thickness
Titanium Alloy	40	30/cm of thickness
Wood	5	2/cm of thickness

Erode Object II

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Shi
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Erode object I*
Level: 5
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 5 for one kilogram, +4 for each additional kilogram
Action: Standard

This power works exactly like *erode object I*, except the object's hardness and hit points are reduced by 25%. Armour and bots have their DR reduced by energy 2/impact 2.

Erode Object III

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Shi
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Erode object II*
Level: 10
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 8 for one kilogram, +7 for each additional kilogram
Action: Standard

This power works exactly like *erode object I*, except the object's hardness and hit points are reduced by 50%. Armour and bots have their DR reduced by energy 3/impact 3.

Erode Object IV

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Shi
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Erode object III*
Level: 15
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 12 for one kilogram, +10 for each additional kilogram
Action: Standard

This power works exactly like *erode object I*, except the object's hardness and hit points are reduced by 75%. Armour and bots have their DR reduced by energy 4/impact 4.

Destroy Object

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Shi
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Erode object IV*, Kizen Acolyte
Level: 20
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 15 for one kilogram, +12 for each additional kilogram
Action: Standard

When the kizen uses *destroy object*, he causes a complete breakdown of the molecular bonds holding an item together, and it collapses into dust, utterly destroyed. Armour and bots are likewise obliterated by this powerful kizen ability.

Harden Object I

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Shi
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Density sense*
Level: 2
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 3 for one kilogram, +2 for each additional kilogram
Action: Standard

This power allows a kizen to manipulate the molecular structure of an object, increasing its resilience. With *harden object I*, the kizen temporarily increases the hardness and hit points of an object, raising them both by 10%.

In order to successfully manifest this power, the kizen must overcome the actual hardness of the object he is attempting to affect. This is resolved with a Constitution ability check (1d20 plus the kizen's Constitution modifier against a DC equal to the object's hardness). If successful, the kizen successfully manipulates the item. To all appearances, the item seems unchanged – there is no physical manifestation of this power.

Harden object I may not be used on any form of living organic material, be it a human or a tree. However, it may be used on an opponent's armour, or upon a bot. In either of these cases, the efficacy of the armour's DR is increased by energy 1/impact 1 for the duration of the power.

This power lasts for a number of minutes equal to the kizen's Constitution modifier and may be sustained.

Consult the chart above under *erode object I* for a listing of the hardnesses and hit points of a variety of common substances.

Harden Object II

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Shi
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Harden object I*
Level: 5
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 5 for one kilogram, +4 for each additional kilogram
Action: Standard

This power works exactly like *harden object I*, except the object's hardness and hit points are increased by 25%. Armour and bots have their DR increased by energy 2/impact 2.

Harden Object III

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Shi
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Harden object II*
Level: 10
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 8 for one kilogram, +7 for each additional kilogram
Action: Standard

This power works exactly like *harden object I*, except the object's hardness and hit points are increased by

50%. Armour and bots have their DR increased by energy 3/impact 3.

Harden Object IV

Type: Physical (active)

Favoured: Maverick, Shi

Tree: Matter Density Control

Prerequisite Power: *Harden object III*

Level: 15

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Constitution

Point Cost: 12 for one kilogram, +10 for each additional kilogram

Action: Standard

This power works exactly like *harden object I*, except the object's hardness and hit points are increased by 75%. Armour and bots have their DR increased by energy 4/impact 4.

Fuse

Type: Physical (active)

Favoured: Maverick, Shi

Tree: Matter Density Control

Prerequisite Power: *Density sense*, Kizen Initiate

Level: 18

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Constitution

Point Cost: 20 for one kilogram, +10 for each additional kilogram

Action: Standard

This power allows the kizen to permanently bond two items together, effectively making them one single object. The two items must both be solid, and neither of them may be living organic matter.

The new substance will have a hardness and hit points equal to the average of the values of the two individual objects. Thus, if the kizen were to use this ability to combine wood and steel, the new substance would have a hardness of 12 ($20 + 5 = 25$, divided by two) and six hit points per centimetre of thickness ($10 + 2 = 12$ divided by two).

A kizen using *fuse* may bind a portion of a larger object into another. For example, a kizen might wish to *fuse* the head of a temporarily stunned warbot into the stone wall of a mining tunnel on Ganymede. In this case, he need only expend the necessary points as determined by the weight of the bot's head, typically 10% of total body weight.

Pass Through I

Type: Physical (active)

Favoured: Gongen, Maverick

Tree: Matter Density Control

Prerequisite Power: *Density sense*

Level: 3

Range: Personal

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Constitution

Point Cost: 5

Action: Standard

By manipulating the density of the molecules in his own body, the kizen is able to pass through objects of hardness 1 or less without leaving a trace. This could involve anything from reaching his hand through a glass window (hardness 1) to walking through a wall of ice on Europa (hardness 0). However useful this power may be, it is hardly comfortable for the kizen. For every 10 centimetres of thickness he passes through, he takes hit point damage equal to the hardness of the material. Thus, passing through a glass window inflicts one hit point of damage, while

walking through a metre-thick slab of glass would inflict 10 points of damage. Passing through an object with hardness 0 causes no actual damage to the kizen, but it is decidedly unpleasant.

A secondary drawback to this power is the fact that the kizen may only manipulate the density of his own matter to pass through an otherwise solid object – he must leave his equipment behind.

Pass Through II

Type: Physical (active)

Favoured: Gongen, Maverick

Tree: Matter Density Control

Prerequisite Power: *Pass through I*

Level: 6

Range: Personal

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Constitution

Point Cost: 7

Action: Standard

This power is identical to *pass through I*, except the kizen may now pass through objects with a hardness of 5 or less.

Path of Corrosion

Type: Physical (active)

Favoured: Earther, Quay

Tree: Matter Density Control

Prerequisite Power: *Pass through I*

Level: 7

Range: Personal

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Constitution

Point Cost: 8

Action: Standard

Path of corrosion only works when activated in conjunction with one of the *pass through* powers, or with *penetrate*. This ability alters the *pass through* or *penetrate* power in one important way – the kizen leaves a trail. The molecular structure of the object is permanently damaged by the kizen's passage, decreasing both the hardness and the hit points of the object by 10%

Pass Through III

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Gongen, Maverick
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Pass through II*
Level: 9
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 10
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *pass through I*, except the kizen may now pass through objects with a hardness of 10 or less.

Path of Frailness

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Earther, Quay
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Path of corrosion*
Level: 10
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 12
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *path of corrosion*, except the

hardness and hit points of the item are both reduced by 25%.

Pass Through IV

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Gongen, Maverick
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Pass through III*
Level: 12
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 14
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *pass through I*, except the kizen may now pass through objects with a hardness of 15 or less.

Path of Debris

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Earther, Quay
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Path of frailness*
Level: 13
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 15
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *path of corrosion*, except the hardness and hit points of the item are both reduced by 50%.

Come as You Are

Type: Physical (innate)
Favoured: Earther, Quay

Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Pass through IV*
Level: 13
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 5
Action: Standard

Come as you are is the only power in the Matter Density Control tree that is innate. The kizen who wishes to take this power must expend five points from his permanent kizen pool, but gains a remarkable advantage in exchange. The kizen that has this power, whenever he manifests an ability that will allow passage through an object (*pass through I – V*, *path of corrosion*, *path of frailness*, *path of debris*, *path of destruction*, *penetrate*, *slip*, *shadow*, *spirit*, *phantom*), may extend the effect of his molecular manipulation to include his equipment, enabling him to utilise those powers without having to leave all his weapons, armour and sundry other equipment behind.

The kizen using *come as you are* cannot be carrying more equipment than is allowed as a basic load for his Strength (see the *WARS Roleplaying Game* core rulebook).

Pass Through V

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Gongen, Maverick
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Pass through IV*
Level: 15
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 16
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *pass through I*, except the kizen may now pass through objects with a hardness of 20 or less.

Path of Destruction

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Earther, Quay
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Path of debris*, Kizen Acolyte
Level: 16
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 18
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *path of corrosion*, except the hardness and hit points of the item are both reduced by 75%.

Penetrate

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Gongen, Maverick
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Pass through V*, Kizen Acolyte
Level: 18
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 20
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *pass through I*, except the kizen may now pass through objects with a hardness of 40 or less. Further, the kizen no longer takes any damage from passing through objects with a hardness of 15 or less.

Path of Annihilation

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Earther, Quay
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Path of debris*, Kizen Master
Level: 19
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 18
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *path of corrosion*, except the hardness and hit points of the item are both reduced to one.

Slip

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Shi
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Pass through II*
Level: 8
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 8
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *pass through I*, except the kizen takes no damage from passing through objects with a hardness of 1 or 0.

Shadow

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Shi
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Slip*
Level: 11

Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 12
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *slip*, except the kizen takes no damage from passing through objects with a hardness of 5 or less.

Spirit

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Shi
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Shadow*
Level: 14
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 15
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *slip*, except the kizen takes no damage from passing through objects with a hardness of 10 or less.

Phantom

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Shi
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Spirit*, Kizen Acolyte
Level: 17
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 18
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *slip*, except the kizen takes no damage from passing through objects with a hardness of 20 or less.

Skin of Wood

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Density sense*
Level: 3
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 4
Action: Standard

With *skin of wood*, the kizen manipulates the density of his own body, hardening his skin to resist damage. When this power is active, the kizen's skin takes on a rigid, almost artificial look, granting (or in the case of Quay, increasing) the kizen Damage Reduction. While *skin of wood* is active, the kizen gains natural Damage Reduction of energy 1/impact 2. This power may be sustained.

Skin of Stone

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Skin of wood*
Level: 6
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 7
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *skin of wood*, except the Damage Reduction is increased to energy 2/impact 4.

Skin of Steel

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Skin of stone*
Level: 9
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 10
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *skin of wood*, except the Damage Reduction is increased to energy 3/impact 6.

Skin of Diamond

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Skin of steel*, Kizen Initiate
Level: 12
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 14
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *skin of wood*, except the Damage Reduction is increased to energy 4/impact 8.

Skin of Adamant

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Skin of steel*, Kizen Acolyte
Level: 15
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 16
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *skin of wood*, except the Damage Reduction is increased to energy 5/impact 10.

Skin of Light

Type: Physical (active)
Favoured: Earther
Tree: Matter Density Control
Prerequisite Power: *Skin of adamant*, Kizen Master
Level: 18
Range: Personal
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Constitution
Point Cost: 25
Action: Standard

This power is akin to *skin of wood*, but it takes a different tack on protecting the kizen from damage. Rather than increasing his molecular density, the kizen using *skin of light* actually decreases it, allowing incoming damage to pass directly through him. *Skin of light* grants the kizen Damage Reduction of energy 25/impact 25. This power is extremely taxing to the kizen, and it may not be sustained.

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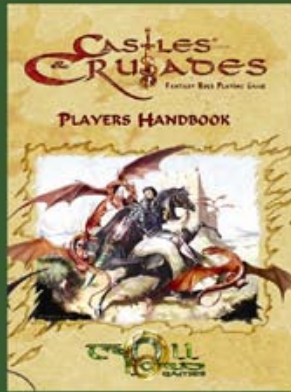


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REINVENTING THE RPG THRU BARE KNUCKLES ROLE PLAYING



THE ELDER WILDS

Aldryami Addendum #2: an elf forest of central Genertela. By Shannon Appelcline.

Elfs: A Guide to the Aldryami describes three different elf realms: the Arstola Forest, the Tallseed Forest, and the Errinoru Jungle. What follows is a description of a fourth elf forest of note to central Genertela in the Imperial Age: the Elder Wilds.

The Elder Forests

I hate them Wilds. They're so raw, so wounded. You could see there was great trees there once, but now you got forests growing amidst stumps from when that troll-man Arkat burned it all. It's like seeing a soldier all broken up after a battle and you know that even with the best sorcery he ain't ever going to fight right again.'

—Gurek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster

The Elder Wilds encompasses the massive swath of land lying in the northwestern crook of the Eastern Rockwoods. Today much of the realm is forested—particularly those lands around and north of the Elf Sea—but the elfin woods are somewhat more scattered. In this vacuum, the human Votanki tribe has grown powerful; the southern Elder Wilds are thus now widely called Votankiland.

(*Glorantha: The Second Age* incorrectly calls the area Balazar, but that appellation doesn't actually come into use until near the end of the Second Age campaign, when the hero Balazar travels to Votankiland.)

The climate of the Elder Wilds is temperate: cold and snowy in Dark Season and parts of Storm Season, warm and dry in Fire Season, wet in Sea Season, pleasant otherwise. The trees that grow here are hardy survivors, including a variety of evergreen trees and deciduous species such as dogwoods and hawthorns; the elves are likewise split between green and brown camps. Since it all burned 500 years ago, the Elder Wilds today is a relatively young growth. Artifacts of the old forest remain, including countless stumps and even some valleys that are still filled with ash and dust, but any live growth is newer.

The Elder Wilds has traditionally been an elf stronghold, but their control of the region was greatly weakened at the end of the First Age, when the warrior Arkat slew all of the Marching Aldryami at the Battle of Travelling Stone, then destroyed much of the forest during The Burn. Wars since then have kept the elves from ever recovering much of their lost lands.

In the present day the Elder Wilds is roughly broken into three growing areas and two pruned areas.

The heart of the elf presence in the Elder Wilds is the Horhoring Wood, which lies east of the Elf Sea. This is where the elves hold their councils and grow their most secret plants. One of the secrets lying within the Horhoring Wood is The Secret Glinting Haven, a home to dryad plottings, as described in *Signs & Portents Roleplayer 49*.

Arch Wood, which contains a mere 10% of the Wild's groves, lies south of the Elf Sea. It is the land from which the elves periodically try and push southward into Votankiland. Arch Wood contains only about 10% of the forest's groves.

The third region of the Wilds is Northern Reach, the massive wood stretching northwest of the Elf Sea. It too contains a mere 10% of the Wilds' groves. Though the forest is immense, the elves have never been able to successfully reclaim much of the land due to the racial tensions of the region since The Burn.

The two pruned lands are the Elf Sea and the Human Reach. The Elf Sea is barren of Aldryami presence in memory of the Great Tree that was lost there. The Human Reach, meanwhile, is that part of the Wilds that was until recently shared with the Votanki. It has been abandoned since the recent increase in hostilities between the Votanki and the elves and now even the elves have taken to calling it Votankiland.

The Warring Races

In the Dawn Age the Elder Wilds was a near paradise. The elder races of the land were already working together to try and restore their destroyed civilizations when The Only Old One, ruler of the Shadow Plateau, brought them together in his World Council. Unfortunately this came to an end when the Second Council broke apart late in the Dawn Age. The dragonewts and trolls left the council while the elves remained.

This led to a war between all of the races of the Elder Wilds. The trolls were driven from the Wilds, but then returned under Arkat's banner during The Burn. Dissension between elf, dwarf, troll, and dragonewt has continued into the Imperial Age. In the last centuries, a final participant entered the wars amidst the races of the Elder Wilds: the Empire of the Wyrms Friends, which had been brought into the Wilds by the human Votanki in 720 and was for a time embraced by the elves. In recent years the EWF has grown more intent on acquiring the worship of its subjects; the Aldryami rebelled against this in 889, and then invaded the Votankiland in 890.

Today the Elder Wilds are split amidst all these forces. The elves continue to war against the troll in the east and north while they are making new war groves in Arch Wood to fight against the EWF and its Votanki and dragonewt allies. The dwarfs, in the Greatway, are

Elder Wilds Forest Magic

Because the Elder Wilds no longer has a Great Tree, Aldryami cannot draw magic from the forest itself. In the days before Arkat came it is said that the Aldryami could draw powers of unity and harmony from their Tree.

somewhat removed from the current hostilities since their defeat at the hands of the EWF in the 740s.

Tolarin Bendpine's Armies

Tolarin Bendpine is the High King Elf of the Elder Wilds and the most respected member of its High Council. His seed sprouted from the ashen plains left after The Burn, growing where nothing could live, and ever since he has continued to be where he should not, doing that which others say is impossible.

Tolarin has arrayed nearly three-quarters of the Marching Aldryami armies of the Elder Wilds in Arch Wood and he continues to make attacks into Votankiland, a realm still officially owned by the elves, but now largely under EWF rule. Many of his councilors ask him to make peace with the Votanki, who have offered to fight trolls in return Votankiland being ceded to them, but Tolarin refuses and instead continues to make raids southward.

Through his refusal to negotiate with the Votanki and his movement of warders out of the Horhoring Wood, Tolarin has left the forest very vulnerable to troll attack, but he feels this is the best of many bad choices.

Hardwood Gathering

The grove of Hardwood Gathering is the worst nightmare of the interloping humans of Votankiland and their EWF allies: an elf stronghold on a war basis.

Located in southernmost Arch Wood, Hardwood Gathering acts as a stronghold against the humans to the south. It is by no means a place of diplomacy and negotiation, such as Womangrove in Arstola and The Golden Grove in Tallseed; instead it is a hard shield against the barbarians to the south, as well as a sally port from which the Marching Aldryami armies of the Elder Wilds might head southward.

Elder Wilds Story Seeds

The following story seeds can be used as the basis of adventures for non-elves who journey into the Elder Wilds.

Weapon Growths: The Elder Wilds Aldryami are growing a new weapon, and the EWF has learned about it. The players are hired to try and infiltrate the Elder Wilds, find the weapon, and bring it back to civilization. However with the entire forest on a war footing, entering the woods will be harder than ever before.

We Just Want to Talk: Perhaps a war with the Elder Wilds is not inevitable. More conservative leaders among the Votanki wish to make peace with their neighbors. The players are hired to take on this mission, which they must keep secret from the EWF itself. However with so much of the Wilds turned toward warfare, convincing the Aldryami that they come in peace will be more difficult than ever.

The Dog Groves: Though the elves have abandoned the Human Reach, there are still groves within the area which hold elf secrets. The players are brought in to clear a wide grove of elfin trees lying within Votankiland. Because it still contains dangerous plants and other elf secrets this task will be both dangerous and difficult.

The total Aldryami count of Hardwood Gathering is just over 100, the usual number for a single Aldryami grove. However, Hardwood Gathering is unusual for the fact that it has been almost entirely given over to

the Marching Aldryami. A full three-quarters of the inhabitants of the grove are warders—most of them Vronkali—who swear allegiance to the High King Elf. The gardeners who make up the remaining members of the grove are also attuned to the war efforts, either growing weapons and armour for the troops, or else tending other plants with military application. Mulch and other such necessities are sent by runners from northern Arch Wood, rather than being grown here themselves.

The population of Hardwood Gathering has been relatively stable over the last few years, except for the yearly transfer of Mreli back and forth to deeper Aldryami lands during the winter months.

1. Thorn Fence: A fence of thorns runs along much of the southern border of Arch Wood. It was grown overnight in 889, when the Aldryami of the Wilds began their present war against the EWF. The exact composition of the fence and its defenses vary from grove to grove in Arch Wood. In some places, particularly on the eastern edges of Arch Wood, the fence has even fallen into disrepair.

In Hardwood Gathering the thorn fence is ten foot tall and a few feet thick. The plants growing there are simple, nonresponsive sharp thorns. An Athletics test is required to climb the fence. Whether it is successful or not, the climber automatically takes 2D6 damage to each hit location, with armor protecting; this may be reduced to 1D6 damage with a Resilience test.

One of the three pods of Aldryami waders at Harwood Gathering is also watching the fence and will spot any climbers unless a Stealth test succeeds opposed by the Perception skills of the Warders (75% on average).

2. Hardwood Gate: The gate to Hardwood Gathering is actually, despite its name, made up of sharp thorns. Unlike the rest of the thorns in Hardwood's fence, these vines are responsive. Any being with Life Sense may cause them to move quickly apart, sliding back into the foliage that makes up the rest of the fence. This opens up an enormous arched entryway, approximately thirty-foot wide and nine-foot tall.

A pod's commander along with his best few warders is usually stationed at the gate. They remain inside, but can use their Life Sense to move aside a small number of the vines to allow conversation through the gate. Though the grove is on a military footing, the elves within are not entirely aggressive. Travelers, even humans, will be allowed in to talk with First Pod Leader Argis Thorntongue if their purpose seems interesting or otherwise helpful to the Aldryami cause.

3. First Pod: The Marching Aldryami of Hardwood Gathering are grouped into three groups of twenty-five elves each. Though they are called 'pods', and each has a single commander, they're actually further subdivided into smaller pods of eight elves each. Unusually, each of the three sub-pods within a Hardwood pod works together with remarkable coordination. The ability for these larger groups of elves to coordinate together in battle is unusual among the Aldryami military, and is one of the ways in which the elves of the Elder Wilds are trying to push the boundaries of their already notable military expertise.

Each pod is housed in a circular domicile open to the sky that's composed of thornless vines called curtain vines. Like the vines at the Hardwood Gate, they are entirely responsive. Any creature with Life Sense can move straight through the vines into the interior of the pod barrack with no more resistance than the lightest touch. However to outsiders the barrack walls are almost impenetrable barriers. The walls also have other properties, including an ability to almost totally muffle sound and a low-level warmth which helps



keep the interior of the barracks warm and dry. The curtain vines are another new growth discovered in Arch Wood; when on the move Hardwood pods carry magical curtain vine seeds which can grow a barrack in minutes and will then disintegrate the next morning.

The interior of each barrack is quite spacious and contains not only sleeping, meeting, and living spaces, but also room to drill and practice—all without any internal divisions or private areas.

The First Pod Leader is Argis Thorntongue. He is a Vronkali who is also a trusted advisor to Tolarin Bendpine. He is not just the leader of the Marching Aldryami at Hardwood Gathering, but also is one of the most trusted voices heard by the other war leaders of Arch Wood.

4. Second Pod: An identical structure to the first pod that holds another group of twenty-five elves. The leader here is another Vronkali, Tytilus Greengrowth. Greengrowth is a reluctant warder who wishes that the Elder Wilds could return to its time of greatness before war descended upon it. He understands the necessity of Taking and will be Argis' fiercest defender in warfare, but he is also a voice of reason when the possibility of peace arises; this is why Argis has picked him as his number two: to provide balance.

5. Third Pod: Another curtain-vine-shrouded barracks housing twenty-five warders. This pod is made up of Mreli, and commanded by a member of the same: Yirdin Newbud. Yirdin has long fought to prove himself in the Vronkali-lead military, and his command of a homogenous group of Mreli is at his insistence. He is more brutal and warlike than the other pod leaders, an outgrowth of his desire to excel in the Marching Aldryami.

This pod is absent, and its pod barrack empty, during the winter months.

6. High King Elf's Garden: Like the other three housing structures in Hardwood Gathering, the garden is protected on all sides by curtain vines. However, whereas the barracks all contain wide open, undifferentiated spaces, the garden instead is a carefully maintained and structured area of rich vegetative cultivation. Herein are grown all the weapons and armour needed by the warders of the grove. The most prized plants of the garden are two ironwood trees, which provide the good quality armor used by the pod leaders, and a small grove of elf bows. A few poison plants are also kept off in a corner of the garden, but of the pod leaders only Yirdin Newbud uses them.

The gardeners have spartan sleeping quarters, eating quarters, and storage areas in the north of the garden. These quarters organically blend into the garden; vines and other outgrowths of some of the garden plants make up some of the living quarters' beds and tables.

The leader of the gardeners is the Vronkali Tirath Sunhead, who is responsible for much of the forward thinking gardening philosophy of the grove, including the pollen fields and the work being done on the acidsap trees. If Arch Wood develops any notable new weapons to use against the humans to the south, it will probably be due to the work of Tirath. Dozens of other groves all carefully consider his words within the web of Life Sense and many of them are attempting to duplicate or expand upon his gardening work.

7. Pollen Fields: These fields represent the Hardwood Gathering elves' attempt to create a widespread vegetative weapon for use against the Votanki and EWFers. Thus far the attempts have been limited by two factors: the

inability of the pollen to retain its potency for more than a few minutes and a continued dependence on the wind for dispersion. As a result pollen fields are currently only useful against invaders attacking the Thorn Wall, and only when the wind is blowing toward the south (which happens about 40% of the time, with light breezes often coming off of the Elf Sea to the north). Under these situations any elf may use his Life Sense to cause the pollen to disperse.

The western pollen field contains ragweed. It induces exaggerated hay fever in any non-plant animals. A Resilience test is required each round to take any action. After a target has succeeded at three tests, he has overcome the fever enough to think clearly and may take actions normally thereafter.

The eastern pollen field is a new growth. It is planted with goldenrod flowers. These plants exude a heavy sticky pollen which cannot become airborne. Instead it is usually carried by animals after it sticks to their fur. The goldenrod poison is a virulent poison. Unfortunately it currently affects both humans and animals (though not other races), thus resulting in most potential carriers being killed before they can spread it.

Goldenrod Pollen Poison

Type: Inhaled

Delay: 1D6 minutes

Potency: 60

Full Effect: 1D3 hit point damage all locations, applies:6 penalty to STR and DEX

Duration: 1D10 minutes

8. Four Stump: A stump that sits in a blackened open space not far from the edge of the forest proper.

Closer examination shows that it is made up of four different types of wood: fir, hawthorn, undersea elm, and dogwood.

These woods represent the four distant portions of the Elder Wilds: the Northern Reach, the Horhoring Wood, the Elf Sea, and the Human Reach. Because the Elder Wilds are split asunder, Life Sense may not be used to communicate between the Elder Wilds' five regions. Here at Four Stump, however, any being with Life Sense can communicate with each of the four forests as if he were in them—though nothing has been heard from the Elf Sea in hundreds of years and from the Human Reach in years.

9. Forest Edge: This is the edge of Arch Wood proper. The pods, gardens, pollen fields, and Four Stump all lie beyond the tree line—primarily to make it easy for the warders to see intruders. From the forest edge northward, however, the area grows quickly more forested.

10. Acidsap Tree: A natural growth. This dogwood tree grew from bad soil left behind after The Burn and its sap is now acidic, burning away all other types of life. A stream of acidsap seeps forth from the tree and flows several yards southward before sinking down into the burnt, dying earth.

The gardeners of Hardwood have been trying to better understand the acidsap in hope of using it as a weapon. Currently, however, it is more dangerous to elves than others. A fist-sized container of the acid does 2D6 damage to vegetative life forms and 1D6 damage to animal life forms.

Though the gardeners have grown a fragile container plant which can safely hold the acidsap, yet breaks on impact, it has not been put into wide usage because of its dangers.

11. Dryad Glade: The dryad of Hardwood Gathering is Tiritia Ironwill; her ironwood tree sits at the center of the Dryad Glade. Tiritia is an elderly, somber, and stern dryad. She disagrees with the extreme militarization that Arch Wood has seen over the last several years, and this has resulted in her being largely banished from Hardwood's councils. Unfortunately this does not bode well for the future of the grove which cannot truly grow without the consensus of all its plants.

12. Wrayfinder Point: To all visual appearances, this is a normal part of the Arch Wood, an open space lying amidst trees. However even humans can feel the tranquility of this location, while anyone with Life Sense gains an implicit understanding of the forest.

After standing here for just a few moments, a character who succeeds at a Life Sense test may thereafter use normal means to successfully travel to any single known location in the Elder Wilds with no chance of becoming lost.





HEALERS AND GLADIATORS

TWO NEW CHARACTER CLASSES FOR CONAN THE ROLEPLAYING GAME, BY STEFEN SCYRSKY



HEALER

Adventures: Called surgeons, sawbones, or blood-letters, in the violent world of Hyboria very little is more valued than a healer and his skills. Healers can always find work in armies, caravans, and the free companies, groups that may need to call upon him at a moment's notice. Nobles also usually keep a healer in their retinue.

Characteristics: Healers are not front-line combatants. Not as skilled in the use of arms and armour as other classes, they serve as back-up fighters only when the need arises. They keep the battle-oriented characters alive and conscious during fights, and serve as a representative when more subtle means are required. However, their knowledge of anatomy makes them deadly opponents in their own right, and they can certainly take up the defence of the injured and dying.

Religion: Healers usually adopt the religion of their homeland. If they have traveled extensively they sometimes take up the worship of foreign deities, especially if these gods are believed to confer some benefit to their art. Mitra and Ibis are natural choices for many healers.

Background: Healers are found in all nations, whether they are Picts working with animal-gut stitches or Aquilonian doctors and their silk threads. Most healers apprentice for several years before striking out on their own. Healers are also highly respected for their knowledge and skills. Because their skills grant healers access to a society's various social strata they tend to acquire knowledge about a place, its people and history. Their intelligence and learning also allows them to become trusted advisors of the powerful and wealthy.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Abilities: Wisdom and Intelligence are a healer's most important characteristics. Wisdom increases the amount of damage a healer can repair in a day, while Intelligence assures he possesses enough skill ranks to effectively utilise his other strength. Dexterity keeps the healer safe during combat. Constitution is important for a healer who might come under attack while practicing his skills, as it will keep him focused.

Hit Die: d8

CLASS SKILLS

The healer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Craft (Herbalism) (Int), Concentration

(Con), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Knowledge (royalty and nobility) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Surgeon) (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight-of-Hand (Dex), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (8 + Int modifier) x 4.


Skill Points as Each Additional Level: 8 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the healer.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A healer is proficient in all simple weapons, light and one-handed martial weapons, and light armour. Note that armour check penalties apply to the Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand, Swim and Tumble skills. Also, Swim checks suffer -1 penalty for every five pounds of armour and equipment the healer carries.





Skilled Healer: A healer's training has made him better at his job. Beginning at 1st level he may add his Wisdom modifier to the number of hit points restored through the Heal skill's short term care.

Battle Surgeon: A healer has practiced saving those near the brink of death. Whenever the healer successfully applies first aid to a dying character the stabilised character also gains an additional 1d4 (plus stabilised character's Constitution modifier) hit points with a successful heal check. This increases to 1d6 at 8th level, and 1d8 at 16th level.

In any case, this ability may only be used on a character a number of times per day equal to that character's Constitution modifier (minimum 1).

Injury Assessment: At 2nd level a healer can determine within a certain range the extent of a creature's physical injuries with a successful Heal check (DC = 1d20 + observed creature's HD). If the creature has lost more than 50% of its hit points the healer can tell that it is heavily wounded. If it has lost less than 50% of its hit points the healer can tell if it is lightly wounded (or completely uninjured).

At 10th level a healer can use this ability to determine if the creature has light wounds, heavy wounds, or grievous wounds, each representing a loss of one third of its hit points.

At 18th level the healer can use this ability to determine the exact number of hit points possessed by a wounded creature.

Inspiring Presence: A healer's allies know they can suffer great wounds and still survive. At 2nd level any unwounded ally within 30 feet of a healer gains a +1 morale

bonus on his initiative rolls, attack rolls and saves against fear, including terror of the unknown, for as long as he remains uninjured. This bonus continues until the ally has taken a total amount of damage in one day equal to at least one-third of his hit points, or lost at least 4 points of an ability score through damage or drain. Even if the injured character is restored to full health he can not gain the benefit of the healer's inspiring presence until the day after he is restored.

At 9th level this bonus to allies increases to +2, +3 at 16th level, and +4 at 20th level.

A healer cannot inspire himself, although he can benefit from the presence of other healers.

Knowledgeable: A healer gains the knowledgeable feat as a bonus feat at 3rd level.

Revive: At 3rd level, when a healer treats a disabled, unconscious character the character has 20% chance of regaining consciousness within an hour.

This chance increases to 30% at 8th level, and 40% at 15th level.

Mobility: The healer learns how to survive on the battlefield while moving to treat wounded comrades. At 3rd level he gains the Mobility feat even if he does not meet the prerequisites.

Ability Damage: At 4th level, through the use of pressure-point massage, stretching, and joint manipulation, a healer can reverse certain types of ability score damage. After ten minutes tending an injured character a healer can restore 2 points of ability damage (total) to Strength, Dexterity, Constitution or some combination of those. This can be performed on any number of individuals

subject to time constraints and the healer's need to rest, eat and sleep, but no single person can have this ability used on them more than once a day.

Skill Focus: At 5th level the healer gains a bonus Skill Focus feat with any one of his class skills.

Respected: At 6th level a healer gains a +2 to his base reputation score. This increases to +4 at 13th level, and +6 at 20th level.

Keep the Troops Moving: From his knowledge of physical processes, anatomy, and nutrition a healer at 6th level can grant number of allies in his presence equal to his Intelligence modifier (minimum 1) a +2 circumstance bonus on their saving throws to avoid non-lethal damage from forced marches or hot and cold environments.

This bonus increases to +3 at 12th level, and to +4 at 18th level.

Staunch the Blood: At 7th level the healer has learned how to quickly repair damage. As a full-round action he may restore 1d4 (plus treated character's Constitution modifier) hit points to any wounded character spending the round in a square adjacent to the healer and undertaking only a single move action during that round. A character may not benefit from this ability a number of times per day greater than his Constitution modifier (minimum 1).

The healer can also save those grievously wounded. If the healer attends a character no later than two rounds after the character failed his saving throw against massive damage or was dropped to -10 hit points or lower with a single attack,

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2	Skilled Healer, Battle Surgeon 1d4
2	+1	+1	+1	+0	+0	+3	+3	Injury Knowledge, Inspiring Presence
3	+2	+1	+1	+0	+1	+3	+3	Mobility, Knowledgeable
4	+3	+2	+2	+1	+1	+4	+4	Ability Damage, Revive 20%
5	+3	+2	+2	+1	+1	+4	+4	Skill Focus
6	+4	+3	+3	+1	+2	+5	+5	Respected +2, Keep the Troops Moving
7	+5	+3	+3	+1	+2	+5	+5	Staunch the Blood
8	+6/+1	+4	+4	+2	+2	+6	+6	Battle Surgeon 1d6, Revive 30%
9	+6/+1	+4	+4	+2	+3	+6	+6	Inspiring Presence +2
10	+7/+2	+5	+5	+2	+3	+7	+7	Bonus Feat, Injury Knowledge
11	+8/+3	+5	+5	+2	+3	+7	+7	Knowledge is Dangerous
12	+9/+4	+6	+6	+3	+4	+8	+8	Keep the Troops Moving
13	+9/+4	+6	+6	+3	+4	+8	+8	Respected +4, Bonus Feat
14	+10/+5	+7	+7	+3	+4	+9	+9	Advanced Battle Surgeon
15	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+3	+5	+9	+9	Revive 40%
16	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+4	+5	+10	+10	Battle Surgeon 1d8, Inspiring Presence +3, Bonus Feat
17	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+4	+5	+10	+10	Back from the Brink
18	+13/+8/+3	+9	+9	+4	+6	+11	+11	Injury Knowledge, Keep the Troops Moving
19	+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+4	+6	+11	+11	Bonus Feat
20	+15/+10/+5	+10	+10	+5	+6	+12	+12	Inspiring Presence +4, Respected +6

the healer can stabilise the character at -9 hit points with a successful heal check (DC = damage inflicted). This can be performed on any individual a maximum of once per day.

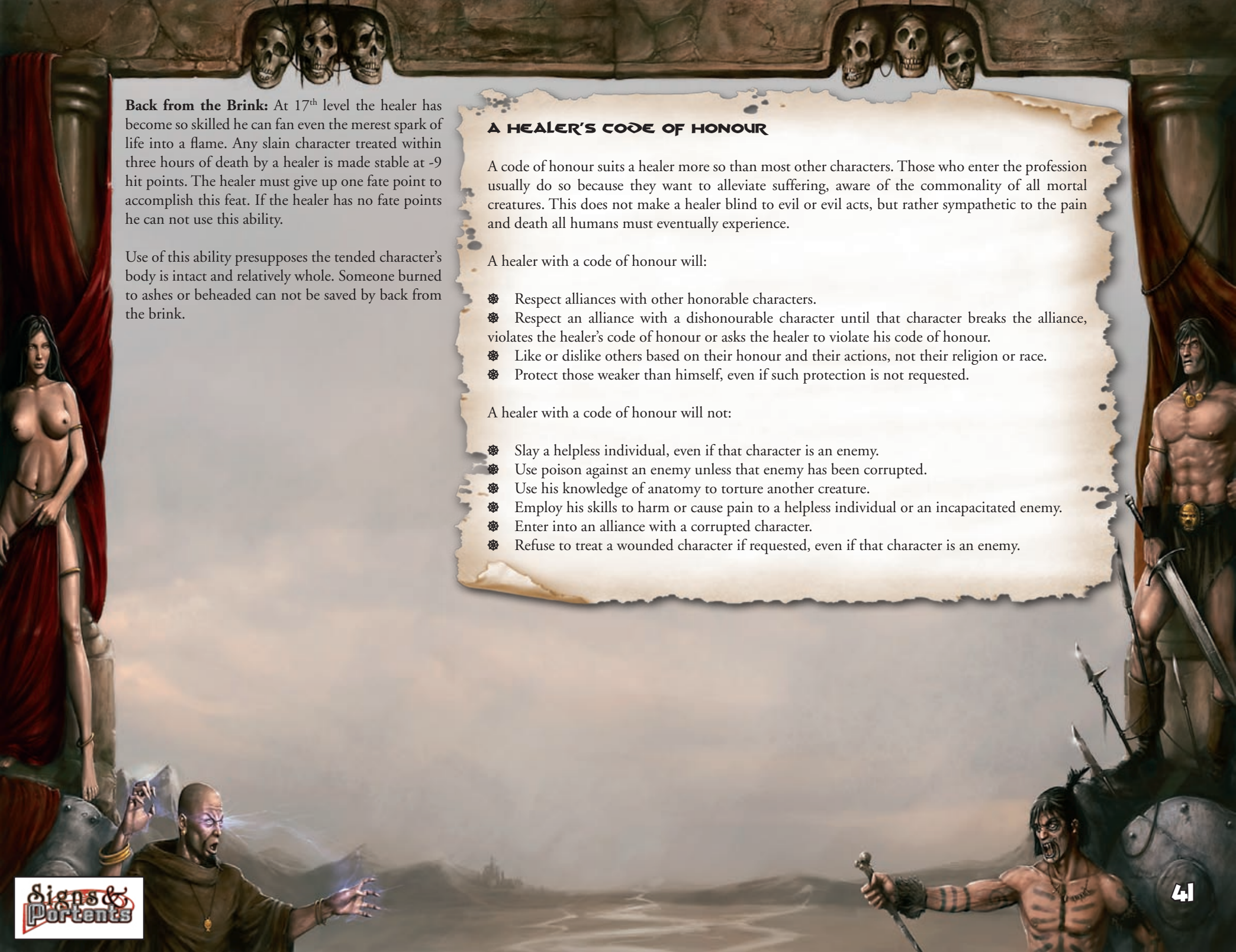
Bonus Feat: At 10th level and every three levels thereafter, the healer gains a bonus feat selected from the following list: Dabbling, Great Fortitude, Investigator,

Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Negotiator, Poison Use, Self-Sufficient and Skill Focus (any). In all cases the healer must meet the usual prerequisites for the feat.

Knowledge is Dangerous: The healer is well-versed in anatomically vulnerable areas. At 11th level the healer's skill extends by 2 the critical threat range of any weapon he wields. This stacks with any Improved Critical feat he might also possess.

The healer also adds one-half of his healer level to the damage roll for a coup de grace.

Advanced Battle Surgeon: At 14th level a healer has advanced his skills. Using short term care only requires five minutes rather than ten, and he is able to stabilise a dying creature with a move action instead of a standard action.



Back from the Brink: At 17th level the healer has become so skilled he can fan even the merest spark of life into a flame. Any slain character treated within three hours of death by a healer is made stable at -9 hit points. The healer must give up one fate point to accomplish this feat. If the healer has no fate points he can not use this ability.

Use of this ability presupposes the tended character's body is intact and relatively whole. Someone burned to ashes or beheaded can not be saved by back from the brink.

A HEALER'S CODE OF HONOUR

A code of honour suits a healer more so than most other characters. Those who enter the profession usually do so because they want to alleviate suffering, aware of the commonality of all mortal creatures. This does not make a healer blind to evil or evil acts, but rather sympathetic to the pain and death all humans must eventually experience.

A healer with a code of honour will:

- ✦ Respect alliances with other honorable characters.
- ✦ Respect an alliance with a dishonourable character until that character breaks the alliance, violates the healer's code of honour or asks the healer to violate his code of honour.
- ✦ Like or dislike others based on their honour and their actions, not their religion or race.
- ✦ Protect those weaker than himself, even if such protection is not requested.

A healer with a code of honour will not:

- ✦ Slay a helpless individual, even if that character is an enemy.
- ✦ Use poison against an enemy unless that enemy has been corrupted.
- ✦ Use his knowledge of anatomy to torture another creature.
- ✦ Employ his skills to harm or cause pain to a helpless individual or an incapacitated enemy.
- ✦ Enter into an alliance with a corrupted character.
- ✦ Refuse to treat a wounded character if requested, even if that character is an enemy.

GLADIATOR

Adventures: Whether a commoner or noble, freeman or slave, the gladiator is revered throughout Hyboria for his deadly skills. Every town and city has at least one arena where regular matches are held. When a gladiator tires of fighting to entertain or simply wants to earn extra silver he can find work as a weapons trainer, bodyguard, mercenary, or hired thug.

Characteristics: The more spectators a gladiator can draw means the more he earns for himself and his owner. Consequently, a gladiator employs a style of combat based on showy, complex techniques. Gladiators also perfect astonishing maneuvers meant to keep the arenas full. A gladiator knows how to quickly disarm an enemy or kill a man at a stroke.

Religion: Gladiators revere the deities of their homeland. This can contrast with the religion around them, as gladiators are usually imports from distant nations. Among the cities of Hyboria it is said gladiators also worship a secret deity known only to them, a god personifying the desperate struggle that is the gladiator's daily experience. Every victory, every strike in the arena is a moment of worship.

Background: Most gladiators begin their lives as slaves, captured in Hyboria's wilder areas and shipped to the western cities. It is not unusual to see Picts, Wazuli or even Hyrkanians battling each other in the arena. Some gladiators are freemen, drawn either to the silver paid to champions, the thrill of the fight or the adulation of the crowd. Some slave-gladiators enjoy the profession enough to remain on the fighting circuit

even after earning their freedom. An eastern exile in the western kingdoms might become a gladiator as a means of support.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Abilities: Strength, Dexterity and Charisma are a gladiator's most important characteristics. He must be able to deal damage to his foes while avoiding their counterattacks. More than any other martial class, Charisma is also an important characteristic. A gladiator that intends to take full advantage of his class's particular abilities must possess a high Charisma.

Hit Die: d10.

CLASS SKILLS

The gladiator's skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Escape Artist (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Perform (acting) (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis), and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the gladiator.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: The gladiator's training makes him proficient in all simple weapons, light and one-handed martial melee weapons, two-weapon combat (gladiators effectively gain the Two-Weapon Combat feat for free) and light armour and shields. Note that armour check penalties apply to the Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight-of-Hand, Swim and Tumble

skills. Also, Swim checks suffer -1 penalty for every five pounds of armour and equipment the gladiator carries.

Exotic Weapons: The spectator nature of gladiatorial combat demands that contestants employ strange and unusual weapons for the crowd's entertainment. At first level the gladiator is also proficient in any two exotic melee weapons.

Dodge: A gladiator excels at fighting single opponents. At first level the gladiator gains the Dodge feat as a bonus feat even if he does not meet the prerequisites for that feat.

Combat Artist: The gladiator impresses the crowd with flashy weapon technique and a flamboyant defense. At 1st level when making a finesse attack he may apply his Charisma modifier instead of his Dexterity modifier to melee attack rolls. He may also add his Charisma modifier to his Dodge Defence instead of his Dexterity modifier.

Animal Bane: Gladiators also fight wild and exotic animals for the crowd's entertainment. This has taught a gladiator an animal's vulnerable areas. At 2nd level a gladiator receives a +1 insight bonus to all damage rolls, Bluff checks, and Sense Motive checks against animals. This bonus increases to +2 at 6th level, +3 at 10th level, +4 at 14th level, and +5 at 18th level.

Combat Expertise: At 3rd level the gladiator gains Combat Expertise as a bonus feat, even if they don't meet the prerequisites.

Celebrity: After a few successful fights, a gladiator earns a certain amount of notoriety. At 3rd level he

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2	+0	Dodge, Exotic Weapons, Combat Artist
2	+2	+1	+1	+0	+3	+3	+0	Animal Bane +2
3	+3	+1	+1	+0	+3	+3	+1	Combat Expertise, Celebrity +2
4	+4	+2	+2	+1	+4	+4	+1	Son of the Arena +1
5	+5	+2	+2	+1	+4	+4	+1	Improved Disarm
6	+6/+1	+3	+3	+1	+5	+5	+2	Animal Bane +4
7	+7/+2	+3	+3	+1	+5	+5	+2	Celebrity +4
8	+8/+3	+4	+4	+2	+6	+6	+2	Son of the Arena +2
9	+9/+7	+4	+4	+2	+6	+6	+3	Combat Trick
10	+10/+5	+5	+5	+2	+7	+7	+3	Animal Bane +6
11	+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+2	+7	+7	+3	Celebrity +6
12	+12/+7/+2	+6	+6	+3	+8	+8	+4	Son of the Arena +3
13	+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+3	+8	+8	+4	Combat Trick
14	+14/+9/+4	+7	+7	+3	+9	+9	+4	Animal Bane +8
15	+15/+10/+5	+7	+7	+3	+9	+9	+5	Celebrity +8
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+8	+8	+4	+10	+10	+5	Son of the Arena +4
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+4	+10	+10	+5	Combat Trick
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+9	+9	+4	+11	+11	+6	Animal Bane +10
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+4	+11	+11	+6	Celebrity +10
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+10	+10	+5	+12	+12	+6	Son of the Arena +5

gains a +2 bonus to his base reputation. This bonus increases to +4 at 7th level, +6 at 11th level, +8 at 15th level, and +10 at 19th level. At the Games Master's discretion this bonus may be reduced or eliminated if the gladiator is far from home, has not been fighting public exhibition matches, or has presented a poor showing in such matches.

A gladiator's reputation frightens opponents even outside the ring. A gladiator adds his Reputation bonus to melee attack rolls made against those who have heard of him. However, the gladiator is so well known, the penalty to Disguise checks based on his reputation is doubled.

Son of the Arena: A gladiator is especially skilled at one-on-one combat. Starting at 4th level, if the gladiator engages a single opponent in melee combat

and no other enemies are within 10 feet of the gladiator, he adds a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls made against this opponent, and a +1 competence bonus to his parry and dodge defence against attacks from the same opponent. This bonus increases to +2 at 8th level, +3 at 12th level, +4 at 16th level and +5 at 20th level.

When the gladiator reaches 12th level he need only maintain a distance of 5 feet from other foes to receive these advantages, although any foe who threatens him – with a reach weapon, for example, negates this bonus.

Improved Disarm: The crowds love it when a gladiator deftly removes an opponent's weapon. At 5th level the gladiator has practiced the maneuver enough to gain the Improved Disarm feat without meeting the prerequisites.

Combat Tricks: Part of a gladiator's job is to impress spectators with expert maneuvers. He spends long hours rehearsing stunts most others do not or would not attempt.

At 9th level the gladiator can perform a Leaping Charge without suffering a -2 penalty to his attack rolls or a -4 penalty to his Defence.

At 13th level the gladiator gains a +4 circumstance bonus to his attack rolls if he successfully employs the Use the Battlefield maneuver.

At 17th level the gladiator may perform a Decapitating Slash against a flat-footed opponent.

In lieu of a combat trick a gladiator may choose a bonus feat from the following list: Acrobatic, Agile, Blind-Fight, Mobility, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Parry, Quick Draw, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Combat, Improved Two-Weapon Defence, Intricate Swordplay, Performer, and Quick Draw. He must meet the prerequisites as usual.

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	AP	Range Increment	Hardness	Hit Points	Weight	Type
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>									
Trident	10 sp	1d10	x3	3	10ft.	7	4	5lb.	P
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>									
Double Spear	10 sp	1d8/1d8	x3	2	10ft.	6	4	5lb.	P
Weighted Chain	100 sp	2d4	x2	2	--	8	6	10lb.	B
<i>Ranged Weapons</i>									
Bolas	25 sp	1d8	x2	2	10ft.	6	6	4lb.	B
Net	60 sp	–	–	–	10ft.	2	3	10lb.	–

Gladiators are often forced to fight with unusual weapons and many adopt a particular implement of death as a signature of sorts. Here are some more sample exotic weapons for gladiators – and other characters – to make use of.

Bolas: This weapon consists of two heavy iron or wooden spheres connected by a chain or cord. They can be swung to do melee damage but their proper use is as a ranged weapon that wraps around an enemy's legs on a successful hit and initiates a trip attempt. The wielder of thrown bolas can not be tripped if this attempt fails

Double Spear: A stout wooden shaft capped on both ends with spear tips. The wielder may choose to fight with both ends as if fighting with two weapons, incurring all applicable penalties as if employing a one-handed weapon and a light weapon.

Net: A net possesses small barbs and a trailing rope to control those caught in it. A thrown net entangles an opponent on a successful ranged touch attack, imposing on them a -2 penalty on attack and defence. They can only move at half-speed while entangled.

By winning an opposed Strength check the net's wielder can use the controlling rope to keep the trapped victim from moving beyond the rope's length.

An entangled person can only cast a spell with a DC 15 Concentration check. They may escape with a DC 20 Escape Artist check or burst it with a DC 25 Strength check. Both are full-round actions.

Only creatures one size category larger than the net's user can be entangled. Other creatures are just too big.

Once thrown the net must be carefully refolded to be effective again. Attacks made with an improperly folded net suffer a -4 penalty. Refolding a net takes 2 rounds for those proficient it is use and 4 rounds for those who are not proficient.

Weighted Chain: A weighted chain is just that, a chain with a steel ball or ring at one end. The weighted chain is a reach weapon that may also be used in grapple attempts against adjacent opponents.

Because it can be wrapped around an enemy's arms or legs, a weighted chain can be used to

make trip and disarm attempts on opponents up to 10 feet away. A wielder may drop the chain to avoid being tripped if he is tripped during his own trip attack.

A weighted chain grants a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an opponent, including the roll to avoid being disarmed if the attempt fails.

The weapon also grants a +2 bonus on grapple checks. If a grapple is successful with a weighted chain the wielder may use it to strangle an opponent, dealing the weapon's damage as non-lethal damage. This damage is not offset by Damage Reduction.

Finesse fighters can use their Dexterity modifier instead their Strength modifier on attacks with a weighted chain even though it is not considered a light weapon.

Trident: The trident can be thrown much like a spear but its heavy front end gives it a shorter range.

An opponent's weapon can be caught in the forks, granting a trident's wielder a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an opponent, including the roll to avoid being disarmed if the attempt fails.

YOUNGER KINGDOMS Explored

By LAWRENCE WHITAKER

The Elric saga has grown in the telling.

Over the years Michael Moorcock has mentioned new lands and cities, new cultures to rival Melniboné, and developed themes focused more on character and myth than on overturning the stock fantasy clichés that were prevalent during the Elric saga's formative years.

This article explores two cities of the Young Kingdoms mentioned in the novel 'The Dreamthief's Daughter' and the short story 'A Portrait in Ivory'. The former, Cesh, is nothing more than a name and a brief reference, which I have expanded here for use in the *Elric of Melniboné* game. The latter, Séred Öma, is more detailed, and offers a new people, the Na'äne, to complement those already present in the Elric canon. There are other lands and places too, such as fabled Xanardwys, and these will be explored in future *Signs and Portents* articles.

Cesh and Séred Öma are both cities of the Young Kingdoms. Cesh is not given a continental location, and so for the purposes of this article I have located it in the far south of Pikarayd, where the lands are relatively unexplored and where the barriers between the Million Spheres are at their weakest. Feel free to

relocate Cesh if it better suits your campaign. Séred Öma is noted as being a small, walled city of the Sighing Desert, which is a useful frame of reference, and I have chosen to locate it well away from Quarzhasaat since it appears to have developed along very different lines to that sand-choked upstart empire that challenged Melniboné.

Both cities are given some history, some detail concerning their people, and some particular game rules regarding developing characters with skills and abilities pertinent to each city's nature.

CESH

Cesh desires to be great. Perhaps it once was; the imposing walls and gates surrounding the city suggest as much but, whatever fortunes Cesh might have had, they have been well and truly squandered by the Cesh and his sprawling, arrogant and greedy family.

The city of Cesh lies in southern Pikarayd, tucked amongst the low hills and scraggy valleys that separate the land from Dorel to the south east. The Bright Empire had little time for this corner of the world, and so Cesh is a very human city; that is, unambitious

in design, with buildings that emulate grandeur but possess little more than a brave façade.

It was formed from the stronghold of a local barbarian chieftain who called himself the Cesh, which means 'Great and Exalted One' in the local patois. The historians of the city claim that the Cesh, preparing to battle the Dharzi which was, at that time, sweeping through the Bright Empire like an avenging angel, fortified his settlement in a matter of weeks, such was the desperation of the people (In truth, it was fortified with the help of a pact with Chaos, but more on this will be told later). In time the boundaries of the settlement expanded and were strengthened with the wooden stockade and halls being replaced with dressed stone. Cesh grew. The goatherds came to trade and never really left. The Cesh raided nearby settlements, frustrated, no doubt, that the expected attack by the Dharzi never happened, and so the population became swollen. The Cesh took many wives and fathered many children. The blood-family became so large that the Cesh decreed that society should be separated into two distinct parts: those of the Cesh bloodline, who were clearly pure of heart and soul, and those who were descended either from the goat herders or slaves from

Moonglum and I had come down out of the hills on the other side of Cesh, following any goat trail we could, having left the employ of the Cesh of Cesh in bad faith. In return for the destruction of a small supernatural army, we had been promised a treasure hoard. The army destroyed, the hoard was found to be two coins, one of them forged. I had left the Cesh on display at the city gates, as a warning to others not to waste our time or our good will. I had been weak before I left the place and in no condition to confront the war party sent to pursue us by the Cesh's blood relatives, duty-bound to kill us.

- The Dreamthief's Daughter

the raided settlements. So it was that Cesh the city was divided into the Blood-Cesh and the Bone-Cesh; but the Great Cesh ruled over them all.

Yet the city remained small. The Great Cesh, terrified of the sorcery that doubtless lingered across the wastes, decreed that the city had all it would ever need close by. The Blood-Cesh believed this because they believed everything the Great Cesh uttered. The Bone-Cesh did not believe it but had no choice. Anyone leaving the city had to renounce all claim to it, regardless of their caste, and, because there was perceived to be nothing beyond the hills, most stayed.

So now Cesh is very much as it has always been. The Blood-Cesh control what little wealth the city has whilst

the Bone-Cesh toil and sweat on their behalf because that is what they have always done. All ambition has been bred out of the Bone-Cesh, and they accept their miserable position in the city because they know nothing else. The Blood-Cesh, on the otherhand, are all descendents of the Great Cesh and constantly fight amongst themselves to inherit the title of the Cesh of Cesh. The different families of the Blood-Cesh savage each other with an intensity Melniboné would truly enjoy, but when it comes to the interests of the city being threatened, especially by interlopers, then they are united in their hatred.

A DOOM FOR THE UNWARY

For Cesh is not without visitors. It is well-hidden, but the intrepid merchants of Filkhar, Argimiliar and Lormyr are quite prepared to seek-out new markets, and so Cesh is known to them. The Blood-Cesh welcome the traders warily, each family vying for favour in a peculiar ceremony whereby the honoured trader (especially if wealthy, or appearing to be so) must witness a parade as each family of the Blood-Cesh capers and dances before the guest, declaiming their illustrious family histories and deeds for many generations, seeking to outdo the others. Fights between families of the Blood-Cesh are common during the declamations because histories and trivial points of familial detail are always disputed. The Blood-Cesh spill their own blood readily to defend their family honour. At the end of the ceremony the guest must choose a family which will act as his sponsor. The chosen family then has the honour of taking the guest into their home, fleecing him of his worldly goods and then throwing him into the lower city of the Bone-Cesh, to become a slave like the rest of the Bones. The lower city has

many such unfortunates amongst it ranks; unwary merchants beguiled by the fawning displays of the Blood-Cesh and then robbed of all they own.

The Bone-Cesh are happy to receive new additions to their ranks. Eager for stories and news of the world beyond the walls of the city the new arrival is forced to talk of everything they know. The hunger for knowledge never stops. And when the unfortunate runs out of things to tell, he is beaten until he speaks again, most likely formulating lies that are taken as the truth by the Bones. Many lose their wits in this way. The only escape is death.

ANCESTOR WORSHIP OF THE CESH

All Cesh: Blood and Bone: worship the Ancestors. Every ruling Cesh pacts his soul with the immortal memory of his predecessors and, upon death, has his soul taken into the Halls of Cesh where it resides in perpetuity to scheme and suffer along with the rest of the miserable souls that, through their greed, may never know solace. The first Cesh, all those years ago, reneged upon a Pact with a minor lord of Chaos who had offered him power. The curse of all of the blood-line is purgatory; not that the ancestor spirits ever reveal this, of course. The soul of the recently dead Cesh joins the twisted souls of his fellows, bound forever into a limbo that hovers between the cracked walls of the prison city and the grey morass that is the other lands, tormented by, and tormenting, the other souls trapped with it, mirroring in death what the folk of Cesh do in life.

For the living Blood-Cesh, the perception is of a glorious ancestor collective that guides wisely and

profoundly. Every Blood-Cesh forms a Pact with the ancestors. They bargain their souls willingly and, like all dutiful worshippers, receive certain gifts for their promise. The Blood-Cesh see the soul sacrifice they make as being a way of securing a route to the post of High Cesh. Thus, the Blood-Cesh enter into 'better than thou' ceremonies where they pledge, for all to hear, more than their fellows. The one who pledges the most, and whose family has pledged the most, ascends to the title of High Cesh, becoming the nominal ruler of the city. In reality it is the family that rules, because



individuals rely so much on the support of their blood kin. And, upon death, when they believe the ancestor paradise beckons, they discover the awful truth: that they have been tricked: and scream their way into limbo.

CESH CHARACTERS

Despite their insular nature, Blood-Cesh do leave their impoverished city, commanded, usually, by the ancestors as part of their Pact. Cesh travellers seek out new cities and new wealthy individuals to dupe into returning with them to the city of Cesh. Others realise that a different life exists and never return. Such exiles live their lives in fear of what the ancestors might do, even though the fear is futile; it is what they would have done anyway. So, exiled Cesh are suspicious, superstitious and fearful, always seeking ways of placating ancestors that are implacable. Cesh stoop to any lengths to please the ancestors in the belief that this is the way of atoning for their exile.

Cesh characters are therefore human and are always Blood-Cesh. Their cultural background is *Barbarian*, as per pages 37 and 38 of the *Elric of Melniboné* rules. Professions available to Blood-Cesh characters are:

Animal Trainer, Bard, Craftsman, Explorer, Goat Herdsman, Hunter, Mercenary, Soldier and Thief.

Cesh characters must also do the following:

- Create the extended Blood Family to which the character belongs. They should invent a list of brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces and so forth. All are hated (because Cesh

truly love only themselves) but all are loved because the family is everything. The list need not be exhaustive or extensive, but a few sibling rivals should be identified, the ones that vie for glory, and whose names are used to invoke both insults and oaths, seal promises and break them.

- Dedicate at least *half* their POW to the Pact (Cesh Ancestors). Gifts and Compulsions are outlined below.
- Decide upon their life path: to lure others back to Cesh, to be fleeced and enslaved; or to never return, but spend their life attempting to placate the Ancestors through duplicitous, selfish means.

Gifts and Compulsions

All Blood-Cesh hold a Pact with the Ancestors. Unlike normal Pacts, Cesh characters gain gifts for every point of POW dedicated that *exceeds* half their starting POW.

Gifts

Animal Familiar, Change Gender, Divine Training, Endurance, Perfection, Slave (in this case, a Slave is not a demonic servant, but a Bone-Cesh slave who acts as a retainer and servant. Create a secondary character, with the Slave background, to act in this capacity)

Compulsions

- Covet clothes (the richer the better)
- Covet jewels
- Covet money
- Covet power
- Develop an increasingly irrational fear of being haunted by the Ancestors



Ocean



THE
LOCATION
OF CESH



- Develop an increasingly irrational fear of being stalked
- Eat only goat; drink only goat's milk
- Fear all sorcery
- Never tell the truth
- Steal, lie and cheat at every opportunity

What Becomes of the City of Cesh?

As the passage from 'The Dreamthief's Daughter' indicates, the Cesh incur the wrath of Elric, having double-crossed him and Moonglum. Here is what happens to incur that fate.

The Cesh lure a sorcerer from Phum into their city and, having paraded themselves before him to select the sponsoring family, try to rob him and cast him to the Bone-Cesh. But the sorcerer, a Knight of Tumburu, and with strong pacts with Chaos, sees through the ruse and, fleeing the city, decides to have his vengeance. Calling upon his patron, Mabelode, he begs for an army to come forth from the swirling morass of Chaos at the world's edge and lay siege to the city of Cesh. Mabelode answers the call, and from the edge of the world, the Kelmain march, Prince Oomai, a warrior priest of Mabelode, at their head. Terrified, several Blood-Cesh are sent out to find aid and one, luckily, finds Elric and Moonglum in a tavern of Ryfel, looking for work.

Elric, having met the Kelmain before in battle, comes to the aid of the city and is promised by the High Cesh the entire treasure-hoard of the royal line if he will rid the city of the siege. Elric and Moonglum go into battle, supported by half-hearted Bone-Cesh warriors

and, with the help of elementals of the earth, defeat Oomai's Kelmain, sending them back to their own plane. When Elric claims his reward, he finds the Cesh has duped him: just as they do with all. There is no hoard of treasure: only a pair of gold coins minted in the early years of the Bright Empire (and one of them is a forgery). The true hoard has been spirited away by the malicious Ancestor spirits. Angered, Elric spends a day and a night in killing the Cesh of Cesh, leaving his eviscerated remains strung above the city gates as a symbol of what happens when Melniboné is denied its rightful pay. And, as the quotation notes, the Blood-Cesh families, enraged, leave their city to pursue the Prince of Ruins.

SÉRED ÖMA AND THE NA'ÄNE

Séred Öma lies north of the mountains that mark the Ilmioran border and check the sweep of the Sighing Desert. Its walls are made from the same sand-coloured brick as its narrow, many-floored buildings and the people of Séred Öma, the Na'äne (pronounced *Nay-yain*) claim it is as old as dreaming Imrryr. Indeed, Séred Öma has passed through many different cycles of prosperity and belief: from its pagan age, when Imrryr was not known by that name and the Bright Empire was being formed, through to an age where gods were rejected, and thence to its clerical age, when all gods, Law and Chaos, were received with equal gladness. In that clerical age the priests built a great university at Séred Öma's heart and it was there that the Arts became prevalent within the Na'äne culture, encouraged by both Chaos and Law (but, perhaps, chiefly by the

former, because Chaos was ever embracing of the act of creation). The university still stands, although its days of learning have faded, as have the priests who founded it, and, once again, Séred Öma has entered a secular age where the Lords of the Higher Powers are not rejected as such, but considered largely irrelevant for the purposes of creativity.

THE NA'ÄNE

The skin of this human-like people carries a golden bloom, reminiscent of the luminous sands of the desert surrounding the city. At one time the Na'äne ruled the entire region between mighty Quazhasaat (lost, now, to the sand) and the great cities of Il'm to the south, but now Séred Öma is all that remains of their peaceful empire of trade. The Na'äne are content with this. They know of the fall of the Bright Empire and are somewhat wistful for Melniboné's fate, but they enjoy strong relations with the Young Kingdoms,

He [Elric] had found a quiet hostelry away from the noisy centre of Séred Öma, this city of tall palms. Here, merchants from all over the Young Kingdoms gathered to trade their goods in return for the region's most valuable produce. This was not the dates or livestock on which Séred Öma's original wealth had been founded, but the extraordinary creations of artists famed everywhere in the lands bordering the Sighing Desert. Their carvings, especially of animals and human portraits, were coveted by kings and princes.

- A Portrait in Ivory

especially with Ilmar, Bakshaan, Karlaak and the other Ilmiroran city states, and can, perhaps, be considered almost as an extension of them.

As a people the Na'äne are tall and naturally slender, with long skulls, long fingers and long limbs. They have an aristocratic bearing that reminds all of their ancient culture. They are sensitive, circumspect, and naturally curious. But what really defines the Na'äne is their innate skill in the arts: everything from dance to music, painting to sculpture, poetry to storytelling. The artistic endeavours come as easily to them as war comes to the Mabden. Every Na'äne is born with an artistic inclination, and the family nurtures the raw talent over many years to the exclusion of almost all other studies.

Na'äne society is caste-based and centred on the great families of the city which once governed the Na'äne Hegemony. Each family governed a House, and the names of the Houses are known to all: Ay'aiö, Ch'yu, Da'ra, Fh're, N'ofd, Th'ee and Sh'nés. Those born to one of the Houses are the pure-strain Na'äne: those whose blood has not been watered by dalliances with the peoples from the south or east. Below them are the Artisans; those who are born of Na'äne but have a sullied lineage. Once, the social divisions between the Houses and Artisans was deep but time has largely healed that rift, and there is little social difference between the two. Those of a House have, perhaps, a more aloof air and bearing, and their position is denoted by the kind of hat they wear: tall, conical and veiled, for women; tall, cylindrical and trimmed with feathers for the men. The Artisans, by contrast, express themselves through their work rather than their headwear, but bear the Houses no ill-will.

Life in Séred Öma

Life revolves around art. Everyone is an artist, and even those who do not practice art to make their living are skilled in one form of art or another, or elevate their chosen profession to the level of art. Constant improvement, experimentation, new experiences, personal expression; these are the creeds of Séred Öma.

But, if the city pursued nothing but art, it would never have survived for this long. Art does not mend a roof or mill flour for bread. So it is that everyone in Séred Öma must be licensed if they wish to make art their living. Only in the oldest quarter of the city, controlled by the House of Th'ee, are artists permitted to pursue their passion unlicensed. Elsewhere, all residents of Séred Öma must prove that their talent (which is always considerable, compared with the rest of the Young Kingdoms) must, at the age of 16, produce one, single example of their chosen art. This piece of work is judged by the heads of the Seven Houses and, if it is deemed good enough, then a license to pursue their art as a profession is granted, and they may trade whatever they create freely.

The streets are as busy as those of Ilmar, Elwher, Dhakos, Raschil or Menii; narrow twists and turns crammed with the stalls and galleries of artists. Stores and taverns are pushed into the alleyways, giving way to the workplaces of the licensed. Between them are the tall, narrow, many-floored dwellings of the Houses where the likes of the melancholy Lady Rai-u Th'ee practice their work in seclusion, pursuing the principle rather than the profit. The city is a throb of bartering and contract, the sound of chisels, the music of instruments such as the nine-stringed *murmerlan* (beloved of the Great King Alo'ofd, who ruled the city

1,000 years ago), and the scrape and scratch of brush and palette knife on swathes of canvas. Merchants from the cities of the Young Kingdoms flock here in search of treasures to be traded in the great markets of the south, and nomads from the Sighing Desert and the distant province of Kwan seek temporary refuge from the unforgiving sands, looking for gifts to take to the khans of their peoples.

There are a few temples venerating both minor nobles of Chaos, such as Mashabak and Haldor'jyn of the Intricate Veil, and the Lords of Law, such as Donblas or Miggea, but following the powers of the other worlds does not figure highly in the lives of the people of Séred Öma. There are no priests any longer, and no desire to cleave to one force or another. Even the great university at the heart of the city has become a market place for artistic endeavour and is where, once a year, the youth of the city comes to seek a license, bringing with them the single piece or concept that will determine the direction of their lives.

SÉRED ÖMA CHARACTERS

Characters from Séred Öma are human but all have the natural, slender grace and golden-tinged skin of their race, the Na'äne. When creating a Séred Öma character, the DEX and POW Characteristics may be increased by 1 if the STR and CON are reduced by a similar amount: otherwise, Characteristics are determined normally.

The cultural background is Civilised, as per page 38 of the *Elric of Melniboné* rules. If the POW Characteristic is 15 or greater, then the character is from one of the noble Houses and takes one of the surnames from

those given above. Otherwise, the caste is Artisan and the character may be named as the player wishes.

All Séred Öma characters have Artistic Expression (see page 50 of the *Elric of Melniboné* rules) as a Basic, rather than Advanced, skill, and gain an automatic +20% to the base value. Every character must choose an artistic pursuit as their personal speciality. Before determining the profession, a simple test should be made against the Artistic Expression skill. If the test is successful, then the character is automatically a licensed Artist (see below). If not, then the profession is chosen from any of those listed for the Civilised background with the exceptions of Bard and Sailor.

Artist Profession

Licensed Artists are permitted to practice anywhere in the city, selling their work for any price they can command. The Artist Profession gives bonuses in the following skills:

Artistic Expression +20%, Evaluate +5%, Influence +5%. Two advanced skills are chosen from: Courtesy, Craft, Dance, Healing, Language, Lore (Million Spheres) or Oratory.

All Artists have a workshop or small gallery from where they work, most likely inherited from their parents or rented from a member of one of the Houses.

Creating Masterpieces

This is an optional rule for *Elric of Melniboné* to assist in creating works of art that transcend the workmanlike, prosaic and merely attractive, becoming true masterpieces.

Na'äne characters may, before making a particular artwork, choose to invest the piece with Magic Points. The MP investment does not make the artwork

magical or sorcerous, but it does make it aesthetically beautiful, thought-provoking and alluring.

The artist can invest 1MP for every 20 full points of Artistic Expression he has. Each total MP invested imbues the finished artwork with one of the following qualities, which can be either chosen by the character as a particular goal, or rolled randomly upon completion.

D10 Artistic Effect

1	Beautiful. The artwork has no equal. Each MP invested increases the potential value of the artwork by 10%.
2	Chaotic. The artwork holds particular significance and attraction for followers of Chaos, but is otherwise mundane in the eyes of everyone else. A worshipper of Chaos may tap the MP invested in the artwork when engaged in ceremonies or practices of Chaos, if he has the artwork within his sight.
3	Disturbing. The artwork might be beautiful, but it has an unsettling quality that is difficult to shake from the mind. Contemplating the artwork causes all skills based on INT to be reduced by an amount equal to the MP invested x3 for 1D6 hours after it has been viewed.
4	Elemental The artwork holds particular significance and attraction for followers of a particular element, but is otherwise mundane in the eyes of everyone else. A worshipper of the element in question may tap the MP invested in the artwork when engaged in ceremonies or practices concerning the element, if he has the artwork within his sight.
5	Enlightening. The beholder sees an absolute truth in the artwork that has a profound effect on the relationship with any forces he worships. He may either increase or reduce the value of one Pact by the number of MP invested in the work.
6	Inspiring. The beholder is immediately inspired to create works of art of their own. Each MP invested in the piece adds a 5% bonus to the owner's Artistic Expression skill.
7	Lawful. The artwork holds particular significance and attraction for followers of Law, but is otherwise mundane in the eyes of everyone else. A worshipper of Law may tap the MP invested in the artwork when engaged in Lawful ceremonies or practices, if he has the artwork within his sight.
8	Mystical. The artwork offers an insight into the workings of the Million Spheres. Each MP invested provides a 5% bonus to the Lore (Million Spheres) skill.
9	Presence. The artwork captures the absolute essential presence of its subject matter, in terms of accuracy and spirit. Contemplating the piece for 1D6 hours gives the beholder one key, accurate insight into the nature of the subject for every MP invested.
10	Thought provoking. The beholder sees in the work all kinds of meaning and metaphor. Contemplating the piece for 1D4 hours gives a 5% bonus to a single Lore skill for every MP invested.

Every MP invested adds a full day to the completion of the artwork, and the end result is, by no means, guaranteed to bind the MP investment successfully. An Artistic Expression test is required at the end of the period of creation and only if this test is successful does the artwork benefit from one of the below effects. If the Artistic Expression test fails, then the MP are lost but are regained as per the rules on page 113 of the *Elric of Melniboné* rules.

THE
LOCATION OF
SÉRED ÖMA



THE TABLE

An everyday piece of furniture or an instrument of terror to be feared and mistrusted?

Introduction

Nothing is always as it seems it Alpha Complex. The simplest and most innocuous items can turn out to be the lynchpin of the most complex and twisted plots that the minds of Commie Mutant Traitors, Secret Societies, Service Groups, High Programmers and/or Friend Computer can come up with. Take for example, this humble blue table...

The Table is designed as a useful (or arbitrary) subplot that can be slotted into a Paranoia campaign or adventure at the Games Master's whim. It is meant to puzzle, infuriate, tempt and possibly lead to the demise of Troubleshooters who come across it. So nothing new there, then.

Players Introduction

You leave your quarters and it is sitting there, right outside your door. A BLUE table slap bang in the middle of a RED corridor. It seems unmarked and very ordinary.

What Does It Look Like?

It is blue. It could seat half a dozen clones around it, at a pinch. It has four legs and a slight wobble ('Did you just touch a BLUE clearance table... Friend Citizen?') and a small dent along one edge. This dent is probably unimportant, unless of course you want it to be.

By Nick Robinson

What to do?

The Troubleshooters might report a lost BLUE clearance table in their corridor. But drawing Friend Computer's attention to the table might backfire 'You are mistaken. BLUE tables do not, ever, get left in RED corridors. A Corridor Maintenance team will be along shortly to ensure the corridor is now correctly identified.'

So the Troubleshooters will then have to prevent their corridor (the one right outside where they live) from being painted BLUE. If they fail to stop this with their creativeness (or with extreme violence) then they will spend several days missing mission briefings or other important events and/or sneaking through a BLUE corridor on a regular basis. Eventually the corridor will be repainted again, but by then Internal Security might be on the look out for the Troubleshooter who contacted Friend Computer in the first place, causing a corridor to be incorrectly repainted by an act of treason!

Blowing it up will not work (the one time the security camera is actually working in the corridor...) as, after the suitable punishments are handed out for destruction of Computer property, the next time the party comes this way it will have been replaced, even down to the wobble and dent. This is not a clever plot device, by the way, just something guaranteed to drive Troubleshooters up the wall. The technical term is 'railroading' for those taking notes.

Of course the best thing to do is to ignore it and hope it will go away. But of course it won't.

The Secret Message

A Troubleshooter's Secret Society has taped a secret message on the underside of the table. If at any point in the main adventure a Troubleshooter contacts his Secret Society he will be told this is where the reply will be. Of course if more than one Troubleshooter tries to contact their society then all the messages will end up taped here, although whenever anyone checks the underside of the table for their message there will be just the one. Not *their* one, mind you. A RED clearance Troubleshooter trying to remove something from the underside of a BLUE clearance table in a busy corridor might just attract some unwanted attention (from nearby citizens, other Troubleshooters, an IntSec patrol that is coincidentally just happening to pass by right at that exact moment, the possibilities are endless). The security camera at the end of the corridor will be deactivated by the Secret Society (or so they will say). Of course a subsequent Secret Society leaving their message might just turn the thing back on, not realizing it has already been deactivated. What fun!

Cool Stuff

A very clever R&D technician that was working on a number of projects accidentally vaporized his last clone, leaving a lot of projects behind (as well as a fine, powdery dust). No one else has a clue what they are or what they do (he was not the best at keeping records). An enterprising young up-and-comer (who was looking for a bigger workspace) suggested an excellent method of clearing the space: simply put the equipment somewhere where eager Troubleshooters might come across it.

R&D has recently found that the numbers of Troubleshooters volunteering to test out their wonderful and innovative new equipment, designed to make life in Alpha Complex even more perfect, has dwindled so much that there is a backlog. However someone noted that Troubleshooters were always trying to grab all sorts of other equipment when no one was looking if they thought it would be useful. Since R&D does not know what any of this gear does anyway they decided to see if they could tempt some Troubleshooters into finding out for them, by leaving a pile of these goodies on a certain BLUE table and then watching the results (from a very safe distance).

This is, of course, an excellent opportunity for any Games Master to unleash upon the Troubleshooters every piece of gear that his players have studiously avoided using in the past. Just have the stuff look slightly different (in case they have any memory worth speaking of) and let nature take its course.

If the Troubleshooters do not take the bait then they are going to have a vengeful R&D technician ('Why can't Troubleshooters do ANYTHING right?!') wanting to ensure that the next time they

get something from R&D it will fail in the most spectacular manner possible. She wanted that workspace really badly!

Another Day, Another Table

The BLUE table has gone. In its place is a GREEN table that looks exactly the same (well,



apart from a scratch instead of a dent. And no wobble). Let the Troubleshooters worry about this for a while, it does not really matter. In a few days the GREEN table has gone and the old BLUE

table has reappeared. Hopefully this will make the Troubleshooters just a little more paranoid and possibly do something foolish.

People Jam

The Troubleshooters are called to an urgent meeting, but can barely squeeze out of their quarters. For some reason a horde of citizens happen to be passing through their corridor, but since the table is sitting in the middle of the corridor there is a real bottleneck. The crush is on, people push, pull, tug, scratch, bite, crawl and otherwise try to get to their destination, whilst other, equally determined citizens try to go the opposite way with as much vigor.

Now the Troubleshooters could try to restore some order. Not a chance. Everyone here is of the same clearance and is not listening anyway (there is quite a din, did we mention that?).

They could try and get some sort of orderly system for getting past the table, with people going in opposite directions using opposite sides of the corridor. Good luck with that.

They could call Friend Computer and try explaining the situation. This might work. If you count having Mike-B-GUN and his crack troops

(motto: 'Nuke 'em all!') turning up and restoring order with extreme prejudice as working, that is.

Or the Troubleshooters could try and go down the center of the corridor. Where the table is. Over it or under it. There will not be any repercussions from accidentally touching the table by acting in such a rash manner. Surely not, no one could be that cruel. Well, maybe...

■ The Removal Men

This time there are two BLUE clearance removal men (someone has to shift this clearance furniture, and bots are not always easily available). They take away the table.

Of course the Troubleshooters should immediately be suspicious of mere removal men being of BLUE Clearance, plus the fact that it looks as though their problem is going away. Watch them squirm as they try to explain to Friend Computer and his loyal IntSec servants why they blasted two Citizens of higher clearance than them for just doing their job.

■ The Owner

The Troubleshooters are awakened by someone banging on their doors and shouting going on outside in the corridor. Watch as they hurriedly stash or destroy all the illegal stuff they have snuck away in their quarters. See the panic turn to dismay when they realize that there was no need to burn all that really cool stuff as it is not an IntSec raid.

The cause of the commotion is the BLUE clearance owner of the table. He wants it back. He demands to know what the Troubleshooters have done with it. He left it here the other day and now it is GONE! He threatens the poor clones with all sorts of terrible things. Go on, let out your vitriol on the players. It is your chance to get them back for the missing slice of pizza incident.

The smart thing for the Troubleshooters is to stay silent about the whole thing, deny ever seeing it. Maybe suggest Friend Computer moved it. Admitting they saw it and did nothing will let the BLUE citizen reach new heights of anger. And then he will start to claim the lost credits back through fines so he can buy a new table.

■ It's Ba-ack!

Yes it is back. If the Troubleshooters are not thoroughly distressed by now, you are not doing a good enough job. Now you can make up for it. Of course the owner will turn up shortly afterwards (before the Troubleshooters can contact him to let him know they have found his property), scream at them some more for not letting him know (or worse, actually hiding it from him), and then really fly off the handle when he discovers the dent. (So we lied when we said it wasn't important).

If your Troubleshooters have not learnt by now that the first rule of Paranoia is to have a scapegoat handy at all times then now it is important to punish them for that mistake.

■ Aftermath

There is no table. It has gone from the Troubleshooters' lives forever once its owner finally takes it away.

Or has it?

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