



Signs & Portents

B5 - THE NEXT EPISODE OF THE LEGACY OF WAR - A 14 PART CAMPAIGN FOR
UNIVERSE OF B5
TRAVELLER - PART TWO OF THE LEVALL AFFAIR
HAMMER'S SLAMMERS PREVIEW
CRITICAL HITS FOR DRAGON WARRIORS
CONAN - MANLY GAMES AND FESTIVALS
ALSO VICTORY AT SEA, SPYCRAFT,
RUNEQUEST, CORPORATION,
AND MUCH MUCH MORE!!!

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Hammer's Slammers. Hammer's Slammers. Hammer's Slammers.

...and that about sums my month completely! Yes this full colour, full pressure, full stress project has monopolised my time for months and this month marked the final push to turn it from several folders worth of text files and Jpegs, into a stunning full colour book.

So finally I can breathe a small sigh of relief and ... plough straight on with the next book! Still, the sigh was nice while it lasted! Be sure to check out the Hammer's Slammers preview on our website and we have also included a sneaky look at some of the fantastic artwork in this issue.

Other than that it only remains to wish you all a good month... hopefully we will see many of you at Dragonmeet Southwest.

Charlie

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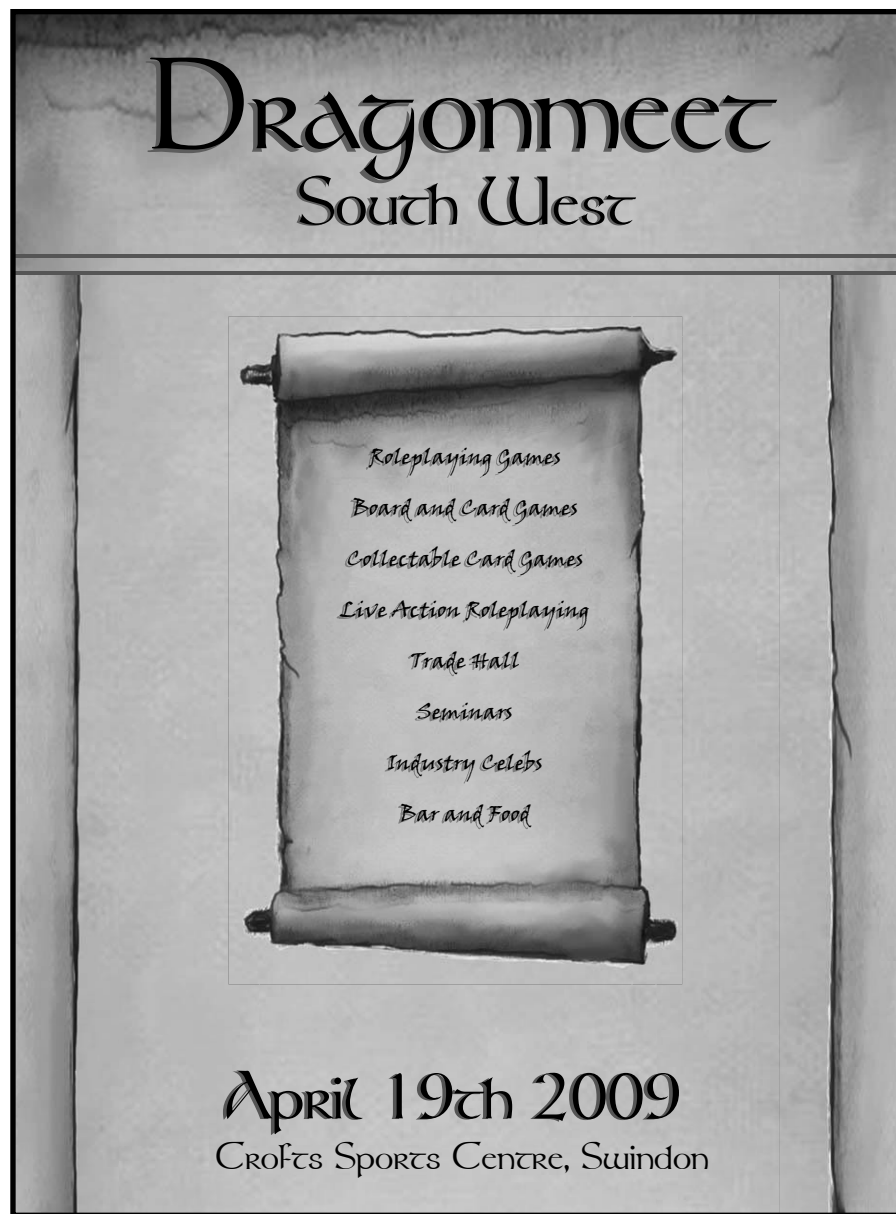
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Convention and Events Diary

Dragonmeet Southwest
The Croft Sports Centre,
Swindon, Wiltshire, UK
Sun 19th April 2009
www.mongoosepublishing.com



Dragonmeet
South West

Roleplaying Games
Board and Card Games
Collectable Card Games
Live Action Roleplaying
Trade Hall
Seminars
Industry Celebs
Bar and Food

April 19th 2009
Crofts Sports Centre, Swindon



Tentacles 2009

Castle Stahleck, Bacharach, Germany
Fri 28th May - Mon 1st June 2009
www.tentacles-convention.de

UK GAME EXPO 2009


The Clarendon Suites, Stirling Road,
Edgbaston, Birmingham, UK
Sat 6th - Sun 7th June 2009
www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk

AmberCon UK '09

Harben House, Newport Pagnell,
Buckinghamshire, UK
Fri 10th - Sun 12th July 2009
www.ambercon.org.uk

Yog-Sothoth.CON 2009

University of Bradford, Student's Union,
Bradford, UK
Fri 10th - Sun 12th July 2009
www.yog-sothoth.com



Constitution 2009

New Hall Cambridge, UK
Fri 31st July - Sun 2nd August 2009
www.constitution-con.org.uk

Gen Con UK 2009

University of Reading, Berkshire, UK
Wed 2nd - Sun 6th September 2009
www.horsemenevents.com

Furnace 2009

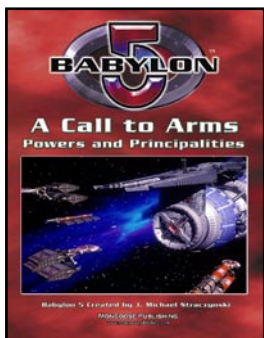
The Garrison Hotel, Sheffield, UK
Sat 10th - Sun 11th Oct 2009
www.rpgfurnace.com

Ludicrus '09

Kesgrave Community Centre, Ipswich, UK
Sat 5th - Sun 6th Dec 2009
www.ludicrus.org

More events will be added to this list on a
monthly basis as they are confirmed

April 2009 Releases



Powers and Principalities, A Call to Arms, Babylon 5, MGP 3403, \$19.95

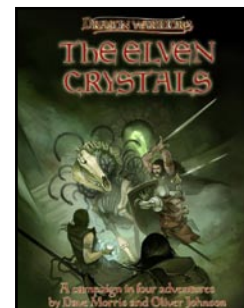
The latest supplement for Babylon 5: A Call to Arms, the game of fleet combat, Powers & Principalities expands all fleets and races in the game. With new ship variants, admirals, scenarios and fleet lists, this book also includes the much discussed Fleet Command chapter, granting each race truly unique capabilities, such as the Drazi Attack Run, Shadow Merging and Abbai Minelaying!

As an additional bonus, Powers & Principalities also includes never-before-published background notes on the Earth-Minbari War and the mighty Narn war machines, along with optional rules suggested on our forums.

The Elven Crystals, Dragon Warriors, \$19.95

The Elven Crystals is a short campaign of four linked adventures: a quest across the kingdom of Ereworn to find four shards of an ancient crystal that forms a gateway to another world. But were they originally split up to stop anyone leaving this world... or to prevent something from getting in?

Along the way they will find themselves searching for a kidnapped girl in a forest populated by dark and supernatural beings; hunting a corrupted nobleman through his terrifying castle; a desperate chase through a coastal village where a recent shipwreck has brought an ancient cult to light; and a battle to halt the invasion of a force of darkness and shadow.



The Eastern Bank, Corporation, \$24.95

There is a place where three titanic Corporations are forced to exist in fatal proximity, locked in a bitter struggle for territory, resources, and dominance. Where uncertain allies and lethal enemies battle from darkened boardrooms to bloodstained streets. Where the balance of power lies upon the edge of a knife. Where the sound of a single gunshot could ignite the fires of war across the entire world.

There is a place where the vestiges of government, desperate to retain control, have forced through devastating new laws that will see you dead for the slightest transgression. Where barely-human killing machines stalk the streets as judge, jury, and executioner. Where there is no appeal, and where you are always being watched.

Signs & Portents



Shadows of Cthulhu, \$24.95

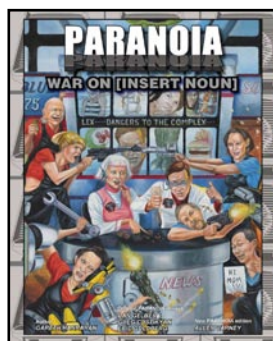
There are no monsters beneath the bed, nothing waiting in the darkness. But for others, there is the maddening truth; unimaginable horrors lurk in dark places beyond the world we know, horrific things who regard humanity as little more than cattle; insignificant creatures to be used and cast aside at their whim. Ever watchful, they seek to pry open the gates to this realm, to reclaim that which was once theirs.

Other so-called enlightened individuals choose travel the dark paths, seeking to gain knowledge never intended for human eyes, seeking arcane tomes and malefic artifacts in hopes of knowing the unknowable, even at the cost of their sanity. Indeed, at the cost of their very lives. For you, the choice is clear, the imperative undeniable. Seek out that which should not be. Stand ever vigilant against the horrors lurking in the dark. Walk in the shadows of Cthulhu, and perhaps, if you're lucky, you may survive, may even make a difference, though the cost might be more than you're prepared to pay...

Lone Wolf 10 - The Dungeons of Torgar, Lone Wolf, MGP 1270, \$21.95

You are Lone Wolf – the last Kai Master of Sommerlund. Your search for the mystical lorestones of your ancestors leads to the grim city fortress of Torgar; a stronghold of the Darklords.

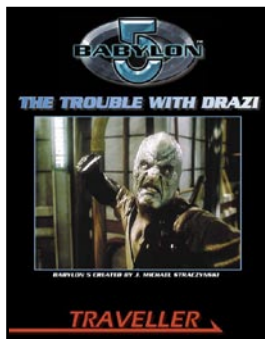
In THE DUNGEONS OF TORGAR, your mission is to recapture the last remaining lorestones from the clutches of your enemy – the evil Darklord Gnaag. But be warned! Every turn of the page presents a new and deadly challenge as you battle through the depths of a fantastic and terrifying fortress in search of your destiny... or your doom!



War On [insert noun], Paranoia, MGP 6654, \$9.95

The Computer, in its gracious wisdom, has decided that the citizens of Alpha Complex are at their mandatory happiest when terrified! A new wave of threats is sweeping Alpha Complex, and the Troubleshooters will have their work cut out for them in battling these dangers. War on Commies! War on Mutants! War on Poorly Serviced Food Vats!





Trouble With Drazi, Traveller/Babylon 5, MGP 3815, \$9.95

Of all the races in the galaxy, the Drazi may be the most underestimated. Though the Drazi are accounted by all the races as relentless, skilled warriors, in the eyes of most other races the accolades stop there. The Drazi are a pugnacious race, aggressive and quick to anger. They have an innate love of fighting and will be happy to resolve any dispute among themselves with either single combats or massed brawls – to a Drazi they are much the same thing and they are not held back by the same concept of honour that restricts many other races.

Supplement 3: Fighting Ships, Traveller, MGP 3807, \$24.95

Detailing the largest and most powerful vessels ever to ply the space lanes, Fighting Ships contains the full history, design elements and deck plans of mighty warships.

From the most agile high-technology fighters to immense leviathan-like dreadnoughts, there are enough warships in this book to start your own war. No longer will players simply have to avoid local system patrol boats - they will soon find themselves running from cruisers and their escorts, equipped with the heaviest spinal mounts and massed batteries.



Book 4: Psion, Traveller, \$24.95

Concentrating on Psion characters and psionic powers, this addition to the Traveller range will literally open your mind to new possibilities. Whether you are looking to introduce psionics to the Third Imperium, add new abilities to members of the Psi Corps, or flesh out psion organisations of your own creation, this book has everything you need. Including new talents, equipment and survival techniques, it is the essential companion for every Psion.



Press Play

DVD Reviews for Gamers

By Bryan Steele

Welcome to this month's edition of *Press Play*, DVD reviews for gamers by a movie fanatic game designer! This month we take a look at some interesting movies; one that was a random choice at the video store because of an actor, one modern remake of a classic Spanish horror film, a sequel to a cult favourite that

I picked up in the bargain bin and the single best movie adaptation of a Gloranthan player species.

Game playing or designing requires us to come up with new plots and ideas to bring to the table and movies often help me to get a hold on many of mine. I hope that by reading these DVD reviews you might find a few new ideas of your own, whether or not you agree with me.

The object of his search turns out to be a strange pseudo-science engine of sorts that projects wavelengths of energy that was originally used by the Third Reich to try to create superhuman Nazi soldiers. Much to the chagrin of these battle-hardened mercenaries... the engine worked back in the 40s. It just did not work the way that the Nazis had planned it.

The Press Play Gamer Rating System

1d4 – Not a DVD I enjoyed or recommend; definitely not a worthwhile rental.

1d6 – A rather negative experience with a few shining moments; rent it if you are bored.

1d8 – The average movie-watching event. Rent it, watch it, and buy if you like it...but probably do not buy it without watching it first.

1d10 – I liked it and found it inspiring in some way for my gaming; an overall enjoyable experience. You should really go out and rent this DVD if you are fan of the genre.

1d20 – This was a great movie and I highly recommend it to anyone reading this column. You may as well go out and buy it, because I think you probably will after you see it anyway.

1d100 – Why are you still reading this? Go and get this movie!!!

Outpost

Black Camel Pictures

A 2008 release of a rather interesting plotline, *Outpost* grabbed my attention because of a talented actor on the cover of the DVD at the video store. Looking further into the film I found that it had a lot of the things that I enjoy to see on-screen – undead and Nazis. Mix the two together? I figured that this movie could not be all bad!

It was not bad at all, in fact. Similar in style to one of my favourite movies of all time, *Dog Soldiers*, this movie is based around a multi-national mercenary company in the wilderness. Led by the hard-edged 'DC' (played by *Rome*'s Ray Stevenson), these mercs are hired by an eccentric scientist to accompany him to a rural WWII outpost where he is searching for 'something'.



The majority of the movie is based around DC's mercenaries slowly getting picked off, one by one, by the ubermentchen – ghostly, zombie Nazis that have a penchant for terrible, torturous murders – while the scientist tries to get the engine started to 'kill' them. Of course this is all theory for him and we have to sit back and watch while he tries desperately to get it done.

The most interesting part of the movie to me is how many members of the mercenary unit simply do not care that they might be fighting the undead. Most of them do not believe it, some refuse to admit it is even possible and at least one does not let it faze him at all. Although I will not say which mercenary it is to avoid spoiling it, one of them is ballsy enough to get into a knife and fist fight with a supernatural, unkillable uber-Nazi!

Although I do not think that the exact scenario would make for a good roleplaying experience, I can see how the mercenary unit could easily be duplicated by Player Characters. In games like *Traveller* or *Fading Suns*, creating a mixed mercenary unit is easy. Sending them off to the middle of nowhere as an escort is just as easy. Creating a set of terrible monsters (or aliens, if you prefer) to pin them down and make their lives hell; that might be a little more sadistic than some Games Masters want to be but *Outpost* could certainly be the inspiration that they require to do so.

Gamer Rating: 1d8



Quarantine

Andale Pictures

Released in 2008, this American-made remake of the Spanish film *Rec* (short for 'Record', as in the button you hit on a camera) was something that I wanted to actually see in the theatres but never managed to. Grabbing it on

DVD as soon as it was available, I really enjoyed *Quarantine*. Having never seen *Rec*, I did not know what I was in store for other than what the trailers had shown, which was enough to spark my interest. It looked like a reality-style zombie flick and I have a thing for zombies. There, I said it.

The movie is based around a late-night media woman Angela Vidal (played by *Dexter*'s Jennifer Carpenter) and her cameraman Scott Percival (*The Practice*'s Steve Harris) as they do a cliché expose on the firefighters of their city, the unsung heroes if you will. The beginning of the movie is funny and easy character development for the main characters as they run through the interviews and such. They are even hoping to 'get a call' so they can see some action. When the call comes in and Angela and Scott join the firefighters on their ride over to an 'unknown emergency', they have no idea what they are getting into.

The call turns out to be a medical run into an apartment building, so of course the camera-folk follow them inside to get the story on film. Once inside, things begin to get dark and scary as one victim turns into two, two into four and so on. The victims are deranged, erratic and seem to crave human flesh; a real nightmare to have to deal with when you thought you were just recording firefighters.

Things get a whole lot worse for everyone inside the building, including the rescue folk, when the Centre for Disease Control locks down the building under full...well...quarantine. From then on out the movie is more about the peoples' escape – if they can avoid getting infected or eaten along the way.

The thing that really makes *Quarantine* stand out for me is not the cinematography, the special effects (for which there are actually quite few) or the 'zombies' themselves. It was how the movie really made it seem like what was happening was semi-feasible. I will not give it away here but it is not a comet or rage-diseased monkeys that bring about the horrors that plague the building.

Quarantine has a good cross-section of interesting characters and I think the movie is a good way of gathering these sorts of random characters together in one place. There have been many times in my roleplaying game history where you have to just ask, 'How the hell do these characters get together?' and a setting like *Quarantine* could really pull it off. Make the characters, drop them into one building, seal it up...then make them get along or die. Sounds good to me.

Gamer Rating: 1d10

Screamers: The Hunting

Pope Productions

The 2009 sequel to the original *Screamers* (a real cult classic), a movie about automated robots designed to kill indiscriminately, this new version slid into my hand at the video store unexpectedly. I liked the original but



not necessarily enough to keep an eye out for a sequel. Luckily for me, *Screamers: The Hunting* was better than I had anticipated – and inspiring to me on a *Traveller* level.

The movie is set several years in the future from the first film, long after the original 'screamers' (automated death-bots) were said to have shut down and the mining planet that they were on declared dead, Sirius 6-B. This movie starts up with human survivors on that

planet having to deal with what look like new breeds of screamers. It is a strange thing for robots to 'breed' and evolve but so is going on homicidal rampages...which we forgave in the first movie...so, we accept it.

The 'Company' receives an SOS from Sirius 6-B, knowing that they have to check it out – as the planet was supposed to be devoid of life or active screamers. Enough time had passed that it should have been safe. The megacorporation/government sends a team of soldiers to the planet to see how the signal was sent.

They arrive to find human survivors, apparently from the first screamer malfunction, of which the initial contact is less than civil. After a bloody and brutally short exchange interrupted by new and improved screamer chassis, the soldiers are informed about the strange evolution of things on Sirius 6-B.

It seems that the years turned the first generation of screamers in on themselves, rebuilding themselves into various new varieties. These new types of screamers were supposed to be more advanced and powerful – and fighting one another for spare parts. The latest versions of the screamers, as the survivors tell, can even look like *people*.

Screamers: The Hunting is not terribly thick with Hollywood stars or famous faces,



although one of the survivalists on the planet, Orslow, is played by the ever-popular science fiction actor Lance Henriksen. Despite the cast of rookie actors and medium-quality special effects, the movie was very enjoyable and WAY better than I had believed it would be when I grabbed it off the shelf. Hell, I went out and bought a copy for myself.

Considering I was working on the robots, drones and cybernetics section of the *Traveller: Central Supply Catalogue* at the time that I saw this movie...you can guess how I feel it can relate to gaming. Or at least, you will be able to guess when you pick up that book.

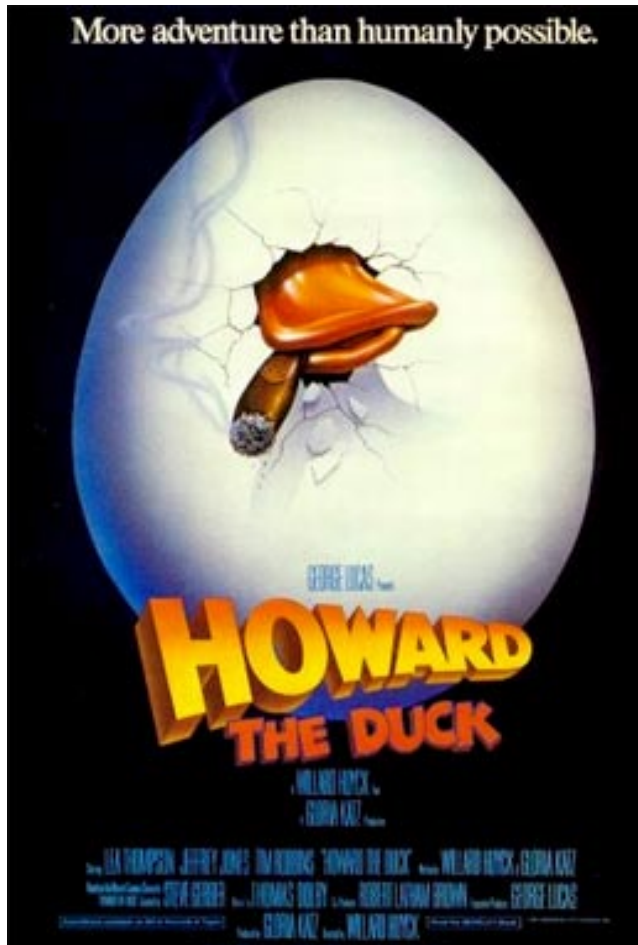
Gamer Rating: 1d10

Howard the Duck

Lucasfilm/Universal Pictures

Not exactly what most gamers would ever consider a classic movie, the 1986 adult-ish comedy *Howard the Duck* is not a 'good' movie...it is fun, silly and ultimately worth the price of admission. For what it's worth, I believe this movie is the best depiction of what a Gloranthan duck could be like in real life. He may not be as curmudgeon-like, cynical or ill-fated as the Gloranthans but Howard has just as hard a time as they do.

The movie is a fun tale about a strange and powerful device that accidentally rips Howard from his all-duck planet on the other end of the universe and deposits him in the middle of present-day (for 1986) Cleveland, Ohio. He gets ambushed by thugs, knocked around by city life and even ends up in the arms of a bar-room rock band member named Beverly Switzler (played by the ever-attractive 80s



starlet Lea Thompson). Howard is caught up in a world similar to his own in shape but he is a stranger in a very strange place and he really wants to get home.

Getting home is the least of his worries, though. You see, Howard was not the only entity to come into the human world when the device malfunctioned. Something called a 'Dark Overlord' came over and possessed one of the device's creators, Dr. Walter Jennings

(played by *Ravenous* and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off's* Jeffrey Jones) and it plans to bring the rest of his superpowered evil space-god brethren to earth. Kind of a semi-comedic tale of the Great Old Ones, the Dark Overlords are extremely powerful demon-things that live in another dimension – and it is up to Howard, Beverly and their friend Phil Blumhardt (played by *The Shawshank Redemption's* Tim Robbins) to stop the end of the world from happening.

It might be odd for me to be writing about a movie just because its main character shares an anthropomorphic species-type with a race that I wrote a sourcebook for but *Howard the Duck* was just re-released onto DVD for the first time in a Special Edition format and with a bunch of new special features. Personally, although it might not be the greatest film of all time, I believe that *Howard the Duck* should be required watching for anyone about to portray a member of the Durulz in Glorantha.

It might not help them get their myths or acting right...I just think they should see the plights of their Hollywood cousin!

Gamer Rating: 1d10





The Legacy of War Episode 5: Searching The Abyss (part 1)

TRAVELLER

TRAVELLER

by Simon Beal

Episode Date: January 4th 2267

“Every man, woman and child of Earth will be dead. Unless they can find a cure.”

John Sheridan “A Call to Arms”

News Reports

Give the players the Universe Today handout, which allows them to catch up with current events during their R & R time. This Universe Today extract provides details of the Drakh plague and the latest on the Ghost of Hyperspace story.

Background

A thousand years ago as Ikarra VII fell victim to countless invasions, it also fell victim to a far greater enemy. Fear. It was this fear that made them develop biological weapons and organic technology (with help from the Shadows of course).

The fear was also the instrument of their social conditioning that ultimately led to their destruction. The ideology behind the “pure Ikarran” was to unite the people against the invaders, to make them strong in order to defend

their world. In the beginning this worked to their advantage as the entire world fought together against their many invaders.

However, seeing how effective this was in controlling their society, the government began their propaganda campaign. As time went on their fear evolved into xenophobia, which then influenced people’s behaviour to a point where certain words or actions would be judged as Ikarran or not. Even thinking a certain way could be deemed “Not Ikarran”.

However, although most people did succumb to this fear and propaganda, a small portion did not. The free thinkers of society looked on in horror as their world fell prey to a sickness that had spread from its very heart. This forbidden organisation became known as the Separatists. They grew slowly but steadily for a few years, even though the government had outlawed any involvement with such people who they saw as trying to undermine the very basis of Ikarran society.

When the Kandarrans attacked, the Ikarrans retaliated with their first use of biological weapons, which resulted in the extinction of the Kandarran race. Although this saved their planet from yet another invader, it was the catalyst that drove a wedge into

their society. Public outcry resulted as many Ikarrans woke up to what their society had become.

Many of these people now sympathised with the Separatists, who were no longer freaks or traitors but simply people with a more ethical outlook on life. As the group’s support grew, so did their numbers and resources. The Separatists knew that the government saw them as a threat and the two factions could never co-exist, so they formulated plans to leave the Ikarra system forever. They slowly amassed a fleet of ships and sent some out to find a remote but habitable world where they could settle.

Once the Ikarran warriors were let loose upon the world, the Separatists were already prepared to leave and most of them managed to escape to their new home. As they set sail, Ikarra was left behind until it became nothing more than a myth used to scare their children at night.

Mission Briefing

After a few weeks R & R, Mr Garibaldi will arrive on Babylon 5 to discuss the Star Dancer’s crew’s new mandate. The crew will assemble in Chen’s meeting room, where Garibaldi addresses them:



Universe Today

Babylon 5 Edition

4th January 2267

5 Years to Find a Cure

The biogenetic virus released during the recent attack on Earth has infected people on every continent. The “Drakh Plague” is believed to have been originally created by the Shadows, an ancient race that left our galaxy seven years ago.



Although, many have been infected, scientists say it could take up to five years before the virus actually takes effect. The virus is genetic in nature and evidence suggests that the Drakh were unable to modify it to the human genome before it was released into the Earth atmosphere. The five year time frame is how long it will take to mutate fully to human biology, at which point it will become fatal.

The new Victory class vessel, Excalibur, lead by Captain Gideon has been tasked with finding a cure. The ISA has also pledged to help and sources indicate the Rangers will be active in the search.

Drakh Responsible for Disappearances?

Officials now suspect that the Drakh may be involved with the disappearance of the IPX vessel Columbus and other missing ships out near the rim. If this does prove to be the case then it is unlikely that any of the forty seven crew would have survived.

The Independent Trade Union say that Earthforce are now just using the Drakh as scapegoats and are insisting that their “Ghost of Hyperspace” is unrelated and represents a new threat to trade and commerce on the outer worlds. Although resources are limited since the recent invasion, Earthforce have agreed to dispatch a vessel to search for the Columbus. This will determine if there is indeed a new threat in hyperspace or out near the rim.

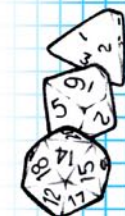
Life on Earth

What is life like on Earth with a planetary wide quarantine in effect and what are the long-term issues that may arise from this confinement?

Our experts give you the low down on the day to day life and the psychological effects of a planetary lockdown.

Full details: Page A7

Quarantine Survival Guide: Page A9



Signs & Portents

“As you know, we have about five years until the Drakh plague kills everyone on Earth. Now there’s gotta be something out there, maybe some Shadow tech, that can help the scientists to create a cure, we just need to find it.

Although the Excalibur has been given this task, it is only one ship and being an Earthforce vessel they have to do things officially, by the book. So, your new mandate is to help find a cure for the plague. Think of yourselves as the unofficial mission. You can go places the Excalibur cannot, places that require subtlety rather than force.

The Drakh are still out there and will no doubt try to stop our efforts to find a cure. So for your own safety, as well as Earth’s, the work you do for me must remain secret.

The original deal is still in effect, so any tech you find must be handed over to me but your priority is finding a cure. Are there any questions?”

Possible Questions:

- Are we officially working for Earthforce or the ISA?
“No, you are working independently and have do not represent any organisations or governments.”
- Doesn’t Earthforce have its own ships for this?
“Earthforce lost a lot of its ships in the battle and they still have to defend Earth space.”
- Surely there are other people that can do this?
“Yes, the Rangers are helping but we need all the help we can get and your crew has proven very resourceful.”

Once any questions have been answered, Chen will then explain their new mission:

“OK, this is what we know at the moment. It has become accepted knowledge that the Ikarrans were influenced by the Shadows and that many of their advances in technology had come from their masters (whether they realised it or not). It is therefore a reasonable assumption that the plagues used by the Ikarrans have the same origins as the Drakh plague.

We have retrieved some data from the organic data scanner found on Ikarra VII. A lot of the data has been lost or corrupted due to the damage the device sustained, however some journal entries have been translated which could be very important.”

Give the players the journal entries handout and allow them to discuss its content. Chen will then continue.

“I know this information is 1,000 years old but if this person did devote his life to finding cures using Shadow-based organic technology, I don’t think it is something we can ignore.

The journey will be long and risky but I think we would be foolish not to follow up on this lead.”

Possible Questions:

- Can we have some kind of backup?
“We do not want to draw attention to this so it is best if just one ship makes the journey. The Star Dancer is reasonably well armed so the danger from attack is minimal.”
- How long will it take to get there?
“It’s difficult to say. The journal indicates it took them several months to find it so a direct journey would be quicker.”
- How come no-one else has found this hidden gate?
“No-one would ever go that far off the beacon unless they knew there was another beacon they could lock on to.”



Handout - Journal Entries

<corrupted data> ...started when I joined the bio-weapons program. I'm not even sure why I joined, I guess I just believed the propaganda and wanted to do my bit. Anyway I ... <corrupted data> ...how could I have been so foolish?

Entry 4

The first tests were the worst and they will haunt me until the day I die. The... <corrupted data> ...counter attack repelled the first wave as the plagues spread amongst them with devastating effect. As they fled back through the gate, I tried not to imagine what horrors we had visited... <corrupted data>

Entry 11

...word has spread that our plagues had indeed wiped out the invaders. Our race had committed genocide and one of those plagues was my creation. The enormity of what I had done only hit me at that moment and I cried.

Entry 12

After I had come to terms with what I had done, I decided to start this journal. More importantly, I wanted to find out more about these separatists I had heard of. The government denied... <corrupted data> ...planning to find a new home... <corrupted data> ...ship had been sent through the gate.

Entry 19

It was many months until the ship returned but the news was good. They had found a suitable planet and the preparations began for our exodus. The journey would just take several months... <corrupted data> ... risky but can be found. As you go through our gate there is only one beacon signal. You must travel away from this signal so it is directly behind. As the beacon fades you should pick up a new beacon. Follow this beacon to the gate. When you exit the gate you will see a cloud in the distance. Head towards this cloud. This part of the journey is the longest. Once through the cloud, you will see the solar system that will be our new ...<corrupted data>

Entry 23

<corrupted data> ...what to do with my new life. Since I have inflicted so much pain on the world, I feel I must dedicate the rest of my life to finding cures. With organic technology... <corrupted data> ...they seem much more advanced than the technology I am familiar with. Where did... <corrupted data> ...my last entry in this journal. I will leave it behind in the hope that one day it is found by the right person at the right time. Maybe some good will come out of it. Our world is on fire. These monsters we have created cannot be stopped and are destroying everything. Who would have thought that 12 machines could destroy a world? If it wasn't for our planning and foresight we would no doubt have shared the same fate...<corrupted data>



Preparation

The players are about to depart for an expedition into the unknown. They will need provisions for several months in space. In addition to this they will need entertainment and distractions if they are to endure such a long time on the ship.

This is a dangerous mission and the players will most likely be gone for several months, so Mr Garibaldi and Chen will be quite accommodating to any needs that the players may have.

The planetary conditions of their destination are largely unknown. All that they do know is that 1,000 years ago it was deemed habitable for the Ikarrans.

The Journey

The players must first travel to the jump gate in the Ikarra system, which takes four days. Once they are at the jump gate they must find the hidden gate.

Finding the Beacon

The Star Dancer must travel into hyperspace directly away from the beacon. This requires an Astrogation check (DM -1). For some added tension, do not let your players know what the DM is so that they do not know if they are heading in the right direction or not.

As they move further into hyperspace, the beacon will start to fade. After a few minutes the beacon gets so weak that it will not be long until the signal is lost. This should be a nerve racking moment for the players as they need to have faith that they will pick up the new beacon before they lose the old one.

Just at the last possible moment, their sensors will pick up a new beacon signal. As they breathe a sigh of relief, the old signal will be lost. However, now they have a new beacon signal that they can head towards the hidden jump gate.

The players are now in an uncharted area of hyperspace. No-one has travelled this route for 1,000 years. After a day's travel, the Star Dancer will finally arrive at the jump gate.

Exiting the Jump Gate

Once they exit the gate they will be in an empty region of space. Distant stars can be seen and to their left as they come out of the gate they will see a distant nebula (this is the "cloud" referred to in the journal).

Why a jump gate was built here is something of a mystery but it does have the same construction as the jump gate in the Ikarran system. Maybe it was part of the Shadow's plans for them or maybe it was used by their servants – at this point the players can only guess its purpose.

A sensor scan of the region will reveal nothing except for an asteroid belt, which is a few days travel directly out of the jump gate. This could be a natural phenomenon or maybe it is the remains of an ancient planet, another victim of the Shadows?

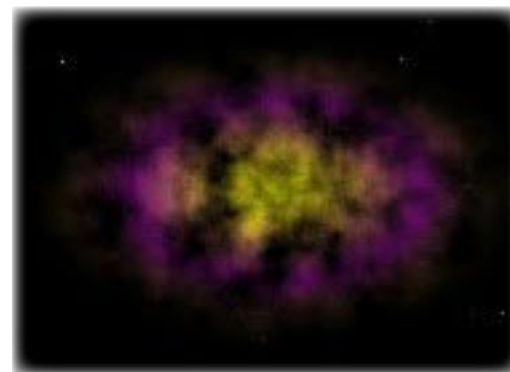
The Long Road

The journey to the nebula will take about three weeks so the players will have a lot of time on their hands. Since this region of space is uncharted, the journey will be uneventful and probably quite boring. If any of the players have any personal

projects, this would be a good time to work on them, if not then the time will pass without incident.

Navigating the Nebula

Eventually, the Star Dancer will reach the nebula and they will need to travel through it. The nebula is vast and it will take nearly three days to pass through to the other side.



Navigating through a nebula is not easy due to the sensor interference caused by energy surges as the nebula gas sparks. An Astrogation check (DM -2) and a Pilot check (DM -2) must be made for each full day in the nebula. If either roll failed, the amount that they failed by is the number of additional hours it takes to navigate through the nebula.

If more than 12 hours were added to the journey, the Star Dancer will exit the nebula at the wrong place. Although they will see distant stars, the lack of a nearby solar system will be enough indication that they took a wrong turn. They will need to recalculate their position with an Astrogation check (DM -1) and try again, spending another three days navigating the nebula.



The Last Leg

When the Star Dancer emerges at the correct exit point they will be greeted by the sight of a solar system in the distance. They are close enough to be able to make out several planets.

The journey is nearly over and it will only take another four days to reach the outer planet. However, the players still need to find the actual planet as that information was corrupted in the journal.

The solar system consists of four planets. The outermost planet is too far away from the sun to support life. The extreme cold conditions have resulted in the planet being covered entirely in ice. The two inner planets both have extremely hot and hostile conditions due to their proximity to the sun.

By a process of elimination, the players are left with only one viable planet to search. The third planet is a good distance from the sun to be able to support life. Due to its orbit around the sun, the players will take another four days to reach it.

As they near their destination, they will see that it is very similar in appearance to Earth. Any human might think that they have arrived home, except for the two moons in orbit around the planet.

At this distance, sensor readings will also indicate life signs, which appear to be spread over several settlements. The players have found the lost colonists from Ikarra VII.

Arraki III

When the colonists first arrived in the new solar system, they named it the Arraki system. Since the planet that they settled on was the third from the sun, it is simply known as Arraki III. Although the original colony has grown and spread into many settlements, they still only occupy one continent in the northern hemisphere.



Planetary Conditions

The planet is very similar to Earth but is smaller in size. It has icy Polar Regions and 12 continents separated by vast oceans. Atmosphere and gravity are also very similar to Earth conditions so most humans would not notice much difference.

The lands are very fertile, making it perfect for farming and the frequent rain in the wet seasons keeps the soil

moist and nourished. As one would expect from such a fruitful land there is a good variety of wildlife and vegetation, which enrich the colonists' diet.

A solar year on Arraki III is equivalent to 11 months on Earth and a lunar month consists of 33 days. There are only 10 months in a year but a day here is the same as on Earth.

History

Having learned from their predecessors, the colonists formed a new government whose first decision was to limit their use of technology as much as possible and return to a simpler and safer way of life.

Life was hard to begin with as they began to establish themselves. Wooden shelters were erected



and many of the colonists turned their hands to farming the lands and animals. The colonists soon became used to doing a hard day's work in order for their community to survive.

As they settled into their new lifestyle, the initial settlement grew to accommodate more advanced structures and housing but they continued to build with wood as it gave a natural and down-to-earth feeling to their prospering city.

Over generations, the population grew and eventually people left the city to form new settlements. Some went toward the mountains to mine for resources, whilst others relocated near to the sea, forming fishing communities. Trade routes were quickly established between the settlements as they bartered and exchanged a variety of goods and foods.

True to their ideals, they refrained from using technology, except for medical applications. Dr Ikulo, the author of the journals found on Ikarra VII, also stayed true to his word and devoted his life to finding cures. There were many new diseases that their physiologies were unable to fight when they first arrived here and Ikulo's work was a large factor in their initial survival.

Life was peaceful and the colonists led a simple and happy life but then things began to change.

Abductions

Once the colony had settled and the population began to grow, some individuals started to experience memory loss and would wake up in unfamiliar places. Only a few cases were reported to begin with but over the years the numbers increased.

Concerned that the old paranoia was returning, the new government tried to keep a lid on it as much as they could. With no evidence to back up the claims, the government managed to dispel the rumours and for many generations it became nothing more than a local legend.

In the last 100 years, numerous people have described their abductions, claiming to have been taken away on space craft and experimented upon by aliens. Everyone who recalls their abduction experience tells the same story, including descriptions of the aliens as little grey men with large black eyes.

The government still deny that there is any truth to these claims and so the paranoia progressed to various conspiracy theories. Some say the government are working with the aliens and others say it is a cover up for a secret military project experimenting with technology.

Secretly, the government do know that something is going on but they are as much in the dark as the abductees. Although they do suspect aliens, they have no way of knowing for sure unless they start using technology to discover what is happening to their civilians.

Although the details of their ancestors are little more than a legend, the lessons remain and the technology restrictions are an important part of their society. The government are reluctant to abandon their ideals just to stop the small number of abductions and so they continue to deny the existence of aliens in order to keep the status quo.

The truth of the matter is that the Zener have been taking people and experimenting on them in

their hidden space station that orbits Arraki III. Further details on this are given later on.

The Arraki

Over the last 1,000 years the colonists have grown from their Ikarran roots. Although they have not changed physically, the social and lifestyle changes they have undergone has effectively created a new race. They now refer to themselves as the Arraki, using the same name they gave to their new home.

Personality

The Arraki tend to be very friendly and cooperative due to their community-based lifestyle. However, due to the abduction stories and conspiracy theories, many of them have become suspicious of the government and its officials. Even though many share this paranoia, they still go about their lives as they place a high value on the community and their role within it.

Since their society has not encountered any outsiders for a 1,000 years, they will be wary of any visitors, especially those who believe in the abductions.

Physical Description

Arraki have a similar build to most humans but the resemblance ends there. They have no facial or body hair except on the very top of their heads and this never grows more than an inch in length. Their dark, leathery skin is covered in lighter vein-like patterns.



Beliefs

The old Ikarran beliefs were abandoned when they left that world behind. Having lost their faith in their Gods, the Arraki started believing in themselves for they had learnt that externalising their responsibilities led only to destruction.

They do not believe in an afterlife other than what they pass on to their children. When they die, they are cremated and their ashes spread on the ground where they lived and worked.

Society

The Arraki lead a simple life, most of their time is spent working in order to provide the essentials required by their civilisation. Due to their restriction on the use of technology, their equipment, architecture and clothing styles are very similar to the Iron Age period of Earth.

There is a strong community spirit in the Arraki settlements, as they depend on one another for various food and items. Everyone has their role in the community in order for it to survive. The same cooperation exists between settlements too as they each produce things their neighbours need.

Produce and Trade

The main produce of each settlement depends on its location:

- The coastal settlements are all fishing communities.
- Settlements located near the mountains are mining communities.
- Settlements near forests specialise in crafting and construction.
- All other settlements provide the bulk of the farming workforce.

Settlements of a particular type will always have other related trades in their settlements, so a farming community will have butchers and bakers, a mining settlement will have blacksmiths and so on.

Generations of trade has created a road network between the settlements. Most settlements are less than a week's walk to their neighbours, although most traders use riding animals and wagons that allow them to make the journey in half the time.

They do not use currency, preferring a simple barter system instead. Each settlement is dependent on others for various produce so no food or item has more or less value than another.

Government and Law

The main government body is the Council of Seven, located in the capital. These seven officials all have equal voice; there is no one person that has authority over the others. The purpose of the Council is to represent their society so it always has members of varying age and sex.

Many of the larger settlements also have a mayor, an official representative who is elected locally as the voice for that settlement. The Council of Seven and all appointed mayors meet on a monthly basis to discuss any issues or needs that they may have.

Due to the interdependency of the settlements, most people get along with each other. However, the larger settlements have found it necessary to introduce some law enforcement to settle any disagreements that tend to arise in higher populated areas. It is not uncommon for these disagreements to progress to a punch up but they rarely lead to anything more serious.

Serious crimes are virtually unheard of as there is little or no motive to commit them. The Arraki provide for each other and understand the importance they each have within their society.

Vegetation

Arraki III is rich with plant life from the flowers that grow on the plains to the fruits and berries of the forests. A large part of the Arraki's diet is made up of fruit and vegetables.

These foods are usually harvested as needed from their natural environment but some of the more popular and exotic ones are farmed near the settlements.

There are also a wide variety of herbs which are used for cooking and also for medicinal purposes, when prepared by a herbalist or doctor. These mixtures are used naturally where possible but sometimes they need to be prepared with the aid of technology.

There are very few poisonous plants and those that do exist are extremely unpleasant to taste, so no-one has ever eaten enough to be affected by the poisons that they contain. The only plant that people are mindful of is Mountain Grass.

Mountain Grass

This unusual grass grows all along the base of the mountain ranges on this world. The grass grows up to 1m in height and is almost yellow in colour. Mountain Grass looks as if it is covered in permanent dew but this clear liquid is actually a toxin produced by the grass. The amount in a single blade has little effect but if someone walks through a patch and enough of it comes into contact with



their skin (e.g. by touching their ankles or hands) the toxin will begin to take effect.

If a person has been exposed, they must make an Endurance check. The DM will depend on their exposure to the toxin and ranges from 0 to -3 at the GMs discretion. If they fail, then the toxin will take effect. Within a few minutes the person will get blurred vision giving them a -1 penalty to any action involving sight.

After 10 minutes they will start to feel nauseous and light headed giving them a -1 penalty to any action (if the action also involves sight then both penalties are applied). At this point the experience is getting very unpleasant.

After 20 minutes, the toxin will affect their motor control giving them -4 to any physical action in addition to the other penalties described above. This will last for 1D4 + 3 hours and there is no known treatment so the unfortunate victim will just have to last it out.

Creatures

Creatures can be found in nearly every region of the planet. Only the mountainous regions are devoid of animal life due to the Mountain Grass (see panel above) that forms a natural barrier.

Strangely, there are no birds here. Maybe they never evolved or perhaps a natural disaster or plague wiped them out. No-one really knows and it has remained a mystery since the colonists first settled here 1,000 years ago.

Most of the creatures can be likened to those found on other planets but usually differ in some way. The most common ones include:

- Bear – See panel opposite.
- Boar – See panel below.
- Horse – The horses of this world have a similar build to those on Earth but have a tough leathery hide instead of fur. They have been domesticated for use as riding and pack animals and very few are found in the wild.
- Oxen – These bovine creatures have small heads and a humped back. They have a docile temperament and are commonly farmed for meat and milk.

Bear

Str: 14 (+2), **Dex:** 8 (0), **End:** 14 (+2), **Int:** 4 (-1), **Ins:** 10 (+1), **Pac:** 2 (-2)

Skills: Athletics (Strength) 2, Melee (Natural Weapons) 3, Recon 1, Survival 3

Weapons: Claws (3D6)

Information: The bears of this world occupy the woodland areas. They are territorial and will attack anyone or anything that enters their domain.

Boar

Str: 11 (+1), **Dex:** 8 (0), **End:** 11 (+1), **Int:** 4 (-1), **Ins:** 8 (0), **Pac:** 10 (+1)

Skills: Athletics (Strength) 1, Melee (Natural Weapons) 2, Recon 2, Survival 3

Weapons: Horns (2D6)

Armour: 3 (tough hide)

Information: The Arraki boar stands about four feet high and has horns instead of tusks. Boars are a popular meat but due to their aggressive nature they are difficult to farm, so they are hunted in their natural habitat. Although their tough hide makes them harder to kill, their meat is surprisingly tender and succulent.

Boars roam the plains in packs and will attack anything they see as a threat (such as the players).

A pack usually consists of 6 to 8 boars but only 2 or 3 of those will break off and attack. Boar hunting is a specialised and dangerous profession; hunting groups usually consist of 4 to 5 people.

First Contact

Until now, the players have only investigated dead worlds or known locations. They are now a long way from home in an uncharted region of space. They will be the first people the Arraki have seen since they left Ikarra VII a thousand years ago.

Communication

The Arraki only speak their native language of Ikarra and none of the Star Dancer crew will know that language.

1. Determine the DM, which can range from 0 to -4 depending on the complexity of the concept being communicated. For example, a simple greeting would have a DM of 0, explaining they are looking for a cure to a plague would be DM -2, detailing the history of the colony would be DM -4.
2. A cumulative +1 DM is gained for the following actions: using hands to express an idea, drawing diagrams, pointing at something as they say that word, familiarity (communicating for several hours).
3. If a character was involved in the translation of the data scanner found in the previous episode, they gain a further +1 DM.
4. Make a Social Sciences (Linguistics) check and if successful, the concept has been communicated.

Making first contact with an alien race is both challenging and dangerous. There are several options available to the players when they arrive at Arraki III:



- Scanning the continent – an orbital scan will provide important information which may help them decide how to approach the situation.
- Making contact – since the Arraki do not use technology, contacting anyone prior to landing is not possible.
- The stealthy approach – the crew land the ship out of sight to either covertly assess the situation or attempt to make contact.
- Landing near a settlement – they simply land near a settlement and stroll into town.

Scanning the Continent

Scanning the continent from orbit will reveal the following information:

- There are 17 settlements, of varying size.
- The largest settlement (the capital) has a population of 5,000 inhabitants.
- Most of the settlements near the capital have a population of around 1,500 to 2,000 people.
- The outer settlements have populations of 500 to 1,000 inhabitants.
- There are no energy sources or transmissions, indicating no technology.

The Stealthy Approach

If the players decide to find out more information before making contact, they will need to land their ship a reasonable distance from any of the settlements and then sneak into one of them.

If the players observe a settlement from a distance (using the appropriate equipment), they will get a good view of what the Arraki look like. If they watch for long enough they will also get an idea of their lifestyle and their level of technology.

Entering a Settlement

If the players wish to enter a settlement without being noticed, they will need to disguise themselves. This could be anything from wearing a hooded cloak to using makeup (if available) to paint their skin. They could also enter the settlement at night and use the cover of darkness to further hide their true identity.

No matter how good their disguise is, there is still be a chance they will be discovered. If the character(s) enter at night time there is a 25% chance someone will see them, during daylight hours there is a 75% chance. If an Arraki does see them, they make an Investigate check to see if they realise the character(s) are not Arraki. The base DM is 0 with the following modifiers:

- +1 if the target's clothing looks out of place.
- -1 if the target is wearing a hood.
- -1 to -2 if the target is wearing makeup.
- -2 if it is night time or the target is in shadow.

Landing Near a Settlement

This will probably be the method of arrival if the players have not given any thought to the situation. Landing the Star Dancer near any settlement will draw the immediate attention of its inhabitants. The reception the crew get will depend on the type of settlement they land near to.

The outermost settlements tend to be smaller in size and do not have much official representation or law enforcement, so landing here will mean that the civilians will be running the show. Landing near the capital or a larger settlement will also have a chance of drawing the attention of the local law enforcement.

If the players made no effort to keep the Star Dancer out of sight then the Arraki will already be alerted to their presence and a group of them will go out to the ship to investigate. If this is one of the larger settlements then the local law enforcement will be the ones to go, otherwise it will just be a group of citizens.

Encountering the

Arraki

Ultimately, the players will encounter the Arraki. Although the initial contact may vary, the end result will be the same.

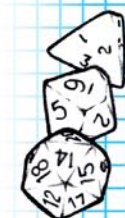
The players will be met by stunned locals who will just stop and stare to begin with. Eventually some of the citizens will start to shout at them (e.g. "It's the aliens.", "They have come for us.") but the players will have no idea what they are saying.

As the crowd grows in size, they will begin to get angry, eventually getting violent and attacking the players by beating them.

Arraki Civilian

Str: 8 (0), **Dex:** 8 (0), **End:** 9 (+1), **Int:** 9 (+1), **Edu:** 7 (0), **Soc:** 11 (+1)
Skills: Investigate 0, Melee 0, Survival 1
Equipment: Most citizens are unarmed but some will use improvised weapons.

If this takes place in one of the larger settlements, then the law enforcement will try to take control of the situation but it results in a small scale riot as the angry civilians finally have proof about the alien abductions.



Signs & Portents

Arraki Law Enforcement

Str: 11 (+1), **Dex:** 10 (+1), **End:** 10 (+1), **Int:** 9 (+1), **Edu:** 7 (0), **Soc:** 9 (+1)

Skills: Investigate 1, Melee (Bludgeon) 1, Recon 1, Survival 1

Equipment: Club.

The law enforcement and rioters will deal non-lethal damage in this combat. If the players deal lethal damage or kill anyone it will make things more difficult for them later on. The players will be heavily outnumbered here and the mob will most likely overpower.

If they lose the fight, most of the party will end up unconscious and any that are not will have sacks thrown over their heads as they are taken to a new location to be studied and interrogated.

When the players wake up or have the bags removed, they will find themselves in the following situation:

You are locked and bound in a small wooden barn. Straw covers the floor and the smell of manure fills the air. You have a few bruises but there is no serious damage. You have been stripped of all your possessions but you are still clothed.

Through the wooden slats of the barn walls, you see the outline of several guards.

After a while, the doors are opened and a group of five Arraki walk in armed with axes and clubs. Although they are armed, thankfully they do seem to have calmed down a bit.

Following in behind the group of armed men, another man enters. He is unarmed and says something to the others, they respond by backing away from the players a little. He is clearly in charge here. He takes some time to look at you all before he speaks but you do not understand his language.

Alternative Outcome

If the players manage to flee or things get out of hand Amur (see below) will step in and attempt to help the players. He can be hiding in an alley and beckon them over or he can try and calm the crowd down and escort the players to safety. Events will then unfold as detailed above except the players will not be prisoners.

Amur

Str: 7 (0), **Dex:** 6 (0), **End:** 11 (+1), **Int:** 9 (+1), **Edu:** 10 (+1), **Soc:** 12 (+2)

Skills: Broker 1, Investigate 1, Melee 0, Persuade 1, Social Sciences (History) 2

Information: Amur has been abducted several times. He is a strong and well known voice for abduction victims.

Now the players must try to communicate with Amur. If the players gesture to have their hands untied, Amur will get one of his men to untie the player (or NPC) but he will only allow one to be unbound at a time. Use the communication guidelines to determine how successful they are. The following questions and answers can be given at the GMs discretion:

- His name is Amur.
- He wants to know why the aliens keep taking people from this world.

- He wants to know why they have now shown themselves.
- He wants to know if the council are involved.
- His people call themselves the Arraki.
- Yes, they are the descendants from Ikarra VII.

It will take some convincing before he believes that the players are not responsible for the abductions. However, if they explain how and why they are here it will go a long way toward gaining his trust.

If the players have communicated that they are searching for a cure to a plague, this will resonate with Amur as he is well versed on his people's history. If the players also reveal that the plague was created by the Shadows and spread by the Drakh, Amur will realise the importance of this too as it was suspected that much of his ancestors' advancements came from an ancient and powerful race.

Eventually, when the players have communicated enough of their story to Amur, he will realise that although aliens may have abducted his people, the players are not responsible. He will suggest that he sets up a meeting with the council to discuss the matter further. If the players told him about the plague he will want to help in an attempt to atone for the actions of his ancestors.

Next Time in the Legacy of War

The story continues in the next episode as the players try to find the cure and solve the abduction mystery. During their investigations they will discover a Zener space station orbiting Arraki III and the Equinox makes another appearance.



The Malady

Written and Illustrated by Carl Walmsley



When an unexplained illness strikes and a savage monster becomes trapped inside a mine, the people of Sicklemede turn for help to an approaching band of intrepid adventurers.

A Time of Plague and Fear

Over the years, the isolated village of Sicklemede has had to contend with more than its fair share of woes – drought and famine, incursions of beasts from the nearby forest and most recently, several unexplained plagues. One such bout of sickness robbed Anton, the village wheelwright, of his eldest son.

Distraught and fearful that other members of his family might be the next to succumb to disease, Anton embarked upon a journey to find a witch called Malyce. According to local legend, this witch dwells in the surrounding woods and will grant aid to those determined enough to earn her favour. After several days in the wilderness, half starved and near death, Anton found Malyce. In exchange for a promise to protect his family,

Anton agreed to do whatever the witch demanded. True to her name, Malyce contrived a cruel spell that transformed Anton into a monstrous, semi-sentient plant. He now dwells in the earth beneath Sicklemede – close to his family but unable to communicate with them.

Malyce's reasons for helping Anton – and her magic does indeed now shield the settlement from sickness – were far from altruistic. The spell she cast – which requires a willing victim – transformed the wheelwright into a *pestilential plant* that drains the life force of other creatures. By means of the enchantment, this life energy is transferred directly to Malyce both prolonging her life and allowing her to cast more powerful spells. In his new form, Anton's tendrils are spread throughout the village, creating a series of siphons that are draining the locals' life force. Ironically, all that can be seen above ground are beautiful purple flowers – each one attached to Anton's roots. The life drain has manifested as another apparent illness – complete with ugly sores and debilitating weakness.

Anton has retained enough of his memories to know that he must keep his tendrils and flowers away from his family's home if they are not to suffer. Everyone else in the village, however, has started to succumb to this latest 'plague'.

Monstrous Side Effects

Shortly before the start of the adventure, a Minotaur – wandering out of the forest in search of food – came across the village. Seeing this as an opportunity to spare some of the locals, Anton moved his tendrils towards the creature and started to drain its life force. Exposed to such a focused energy drain, the Minotaur immediately began to suffer plague-like symptoms as its vital energy ebbed away. Weakened and disorientated, the creature stumbled into the village mine and became trapped. A panic ensued amongst the locals and some began to speculate that this strangely sick-looking monster might be the cause of the latest illness. Accordingly, some of the braver men in Sicklemede went into the mine to deal with the beast. When the PC's arrive in the settlement, they are in the process of beating a hasty retreat...



A Village in Need

The PCs may come across Sicklemede any time that they are out in the wilds, either seeking adventure or searching for a place to rest.

When you are ready to begin, read or paraphrase the following:

Ahead of you, the dense forest gives way to an open expanse of grassland and a patchwork of cultivated fields. In the centre of this large clearing are a score of buildings, mostly small farmsteads and simple hovels.

To the East, a group of people are huddled around a hole in the ground which, from the wooden frame erected above it, looks like a horizontal mine shaft. Even as you watch, a platform is cranked into view bearing several men. There are cries of alarm and it is clear that at least one of the men is injured.

The men on the platform are four of the village's best fighters, who ventured into the mine to kill the monster. One man now lies at the point of death, having been gored by the beast. Two others have minor wounds.

If the PCs ask about what is happening, the frantic villagers will talk excitedly of the 'plague-beast' and the 'horned giant' and the brave men who went into the mine to slay it. Requests for healing will also be forthcoming – otherwise Athelmore, the critically injured man, is not long for this world. There are also mutterings about the fate of Gothryn – one of the fighters who went into the mine but became separated from his companions.

If the PCs are reluctant to investigate or to offer their assistance, they are quickly approached by some of the townsfolk – especially if they are obviously adventuring types. The village is unofficially governed by a pair of aged sisters, Cranna and Harga and they will be the ones to do the talking. Sicklemede has little in the way of wealth, though Cranna is an alchemist and will offer to trade a selection of balms and potions for the PC's help in killing the monster. If the characters continue to be reluctant, Harga will offer her necklace – the only item of real worth in the village. This gold chain is studded with sun gems – a sort of local ruby – and is worth 140 SP.

A Plea Answered

Once the PCs have agreed to help, the villagers will urge them to venture into the mine as soon as possible, stating that it can only be a matter of time before Gothryn is slain by the horned beast. If the PCs are willing to do this, proceed straight to **The Caged Beast**. It is quite possible however, that they will want to ask some questions and learn a little more about Sicklemede. Indeed, even if they do not do so now, it is likely that they will as events unfold later in the adventure.

Sicklemede

A little over 100 souls dwell in this small village, isolated from the outside world by a large forest. The sisters Cranna and Harga have overseen the occasional local disputes for more than 20 years. Before this, Harga's husband was – *at least officially* – in charge.

The fields and forest provide just enough food to support a stable population and though there is no stream, a deep well provides a ready supply of water. The town mine is a remnant of a bygone age. The mostly exhausted seams of coal still surrender enough fuel to help the locals but not enough for trade. A system of barter is used for most local transactions, with the only coinage coming from travellers who purchase animal pelts or some of Cranna's potions.

There is no inn or tavern in Sicklemede but a central structure – the Roundhouse – serves as both a town meeting place and a shelter for travellers.

When the PCs first explore the town, read or paraphrase the following:

This small village has a sort of rustic charm, enhanced by the smell of field and forest and the murmurous buzz of insects. The buildings lack finesse but are sturdily constructed from local stone, adorned with creepers and newly budding purple flowers.

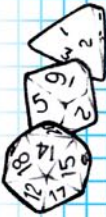
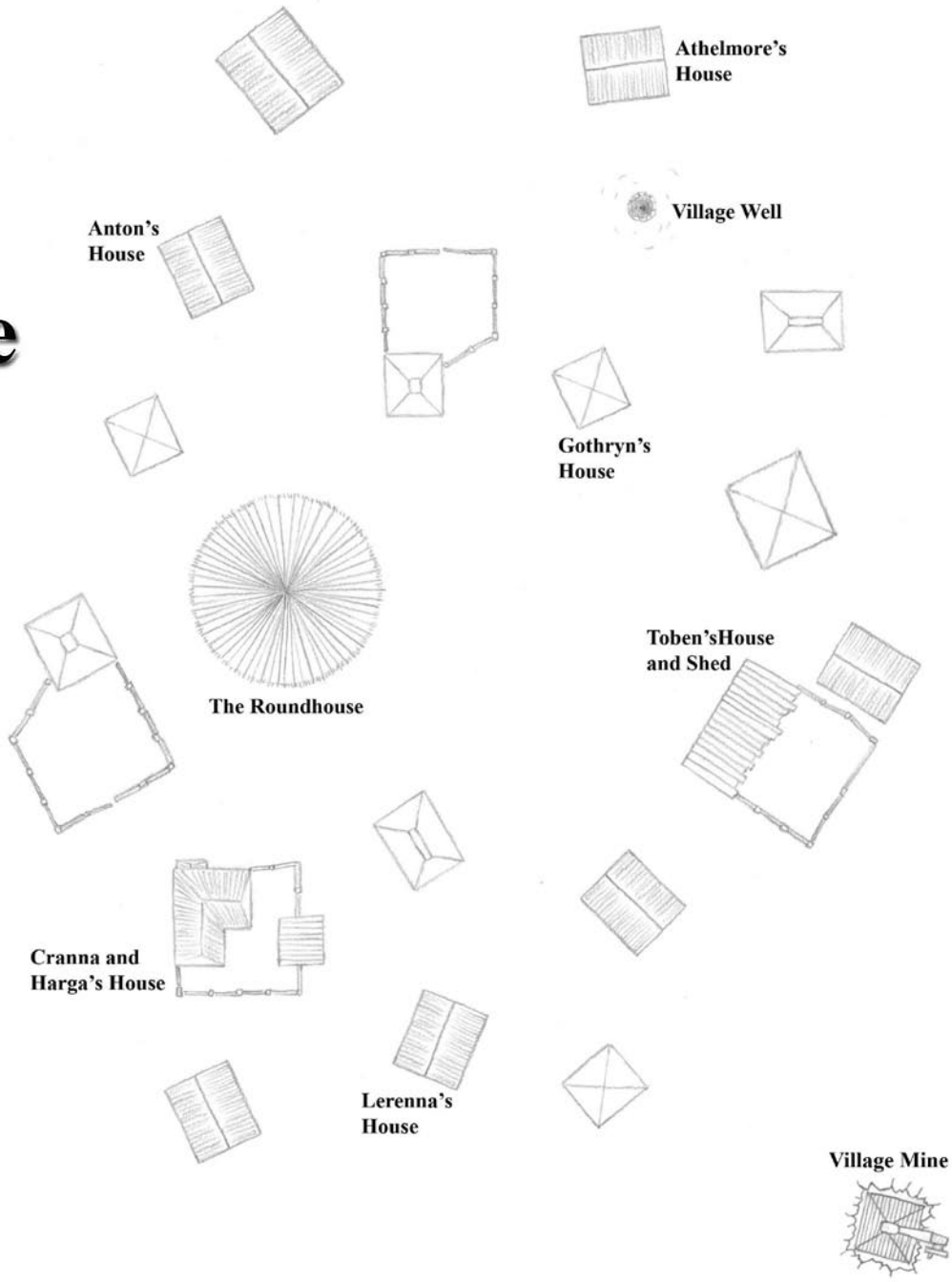
Should any of the PCs ever enquire about the purple flowers that grow in abundance in and around the village, they will learn that they have only recently started to appear.

Alchemist's Wares

From the home where she and her sister live, Cranna brews, trades and sells a variety of alchemical concoctions. In exchange for helping deal with the monster, Cranna will provide each character with 100 SP worth of credit to purchase her wares.



Sicklemede



Item	Cost	Effect
Potion of Earth	100 SP	+5 STR for 5 minutes
Potion of Animal Kin	100 SP	Ability to speak with animals for 5 minutes
Potion of Fertility	100 SP	SIZE increases by 5 for 5 minutes
Healing Balm	50 SP	Body part treated recover 3 HP
Fortune's Brew	50 SP	+30% bonus on next Skill Test
Black PowderFlask	100 SP	See below

A black powder flask is a rudimentary explosive. It has a fuse that, once lit, ignites the powder in 1d3 Combat Rounds. The subsequent explosion inflicts 1D4 wounds, each for 1D6 Damage, on all creatures within 3m.

It is entirely up to you how many doses of each potion or balm Cranna has available. Remember, however, that hers is – literally – a cottage industry and she is unable to mass produce her wares.

Recent History and Town Gossip

By talking with the locals, the PCs can receive more or less spiced up versions of the following tales:

- In the last 10 years, the people of Sicklemede have struggled against a number of contagions. There has been speculation that something evil lurks in the forest spreading disease.
- Only a few months ago, Anton the wheelwright lost his eldest son, Joven, to the plague. Since then, he has disappeared and his family has struggled to tend their fields.

- A witch holds sway over portions of the forest, accepting offerings from the animals and beasts in a sort of 'wild court'.
- A number of the locals have been feeling under the weather lately, though this specific malady is, as yet, unidentified.

If the PCs ask specifically about the horned beast and the mine, they can learn the following:

- One of the village children saw the minotaur 'jump' into the mine. The girl, Lerenna, describes the beast as a 'giant with horns and with rotting fur and ugly spots.'
- Of the men who ventured into the mine, none got a good look at the beast but all can confirm the creature is head and shoulders taller than a man. They also tell of the beast's stench – like putrescent flesh.
- The mine was once the hiding place of a bandit prince who hid his treasure within a chest made of black oak.

The Caged Beast

Since falling into the mine, the Minotaur has wandered the tunnels seeking food and a way out. It is weakened by its sickness and the injury it suffered to its leg when it toppled down the shaft.

If the PCs enter the mine no more than an hour after the failed attempt to oust the beast, they may yet save Gothryn: he is hiding in one of the tunnels. If they wait any longer than this, the Minotaur will have found him – and the food it has been looking for.

Mine Locations

The mine smells of the deep earth and rotting meat. The closer the PCs get to the Minotaur, the stronger this foul stench will become.

In its fury, the Minotaur has bludgeoned the walls of the mine, weakening the stonework and the wooden frames installed for support. As a result, the mine has become unstable. Any explosives or concussive spells have a 2 in 6 chance of causing a cave-in. This will seal a tunnel and inflict 1D4 hits of 1D8 Damage on any creature nearby.

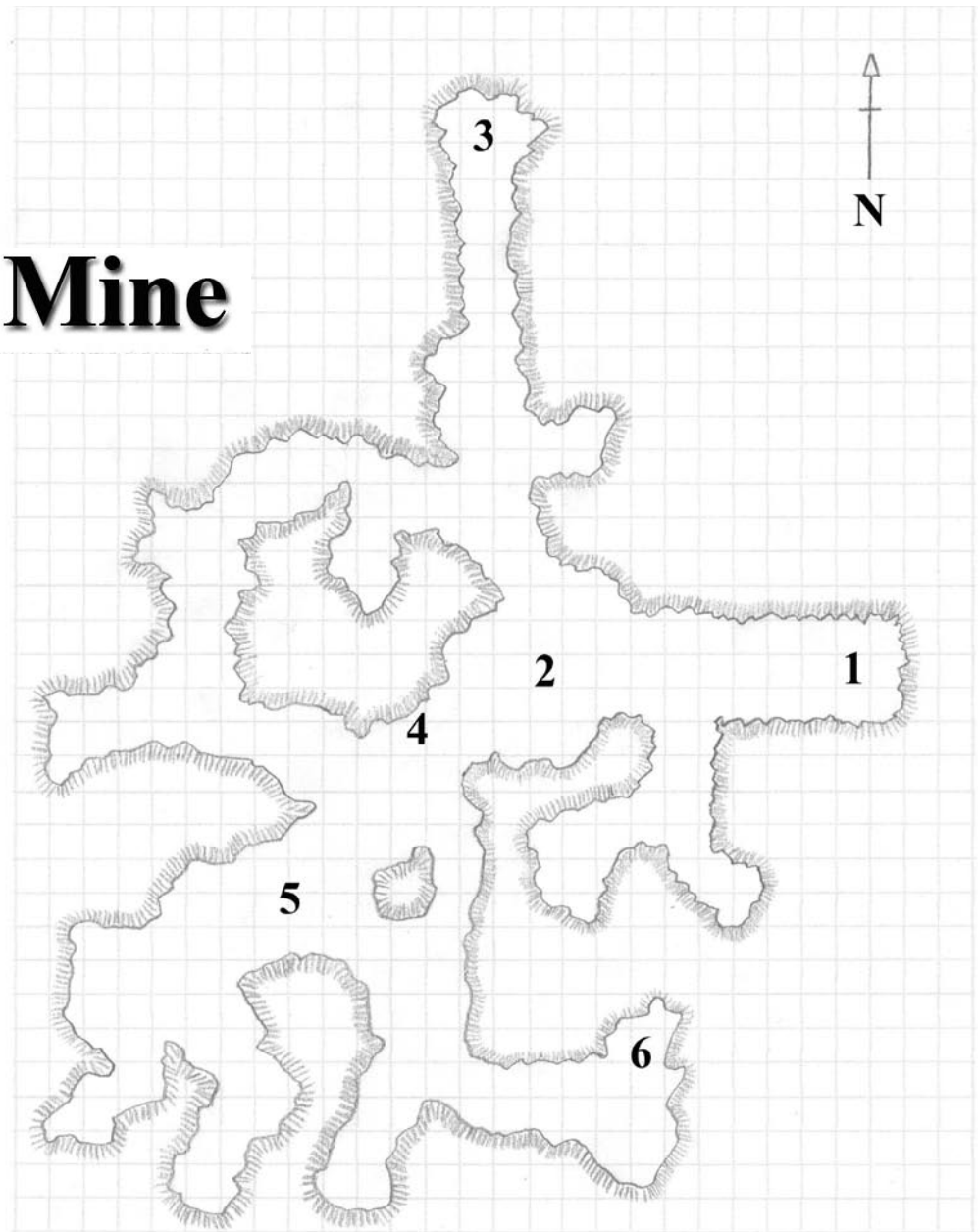
1 – Mine Entrance. This is a vertical shaft, 30 feet deep. The rickety lift platform is the only practical way in or out. It can only be operated using a winch at the top. Raising or lowering the platform takes 4 rounds.

2 – Battle site. The red of battle stains the rock where the village bravos encountered the beast. A trail leads into the northern tunnel (location 3)

3 – Gothryn's Hiding Place. If the PCs arrive at this point within an hour of the original assault on the mine, they will find Gothryn cowering at the end of this tunnel. His legs are both broken and he cannot stand but is not in any immediate danger of bleeding to death. If the PCs arrive any



The Village Mine



later than this, the Minotaur will have eaten him. In fact, it will spend a few hours in here doing just that.

4 – Tendrils. A number of snaking roots emerge from the earth into the tunnel at this point. Any character who succeeds with a Perception Test will notice that they move slightly and retract if the PCs draw near. For the time being, Anton is focusing on draining life force from the Minotaur and will try to spare anyone else.

5 – Wandering Area. If not busy devouring Gothryn, the Minotaur will be searching the western tunnels looking for a way out. It makes so much noise – and smells so rank – that there is no chance of it surprising the PCs.

Diseased Minotaur

STR	3D6+12 (20)*	
CON	1D6+12 (13)*	
DEX	3D6	(10)*
SIZE	3D6+12 (25)	
INT	2D6	(7)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6	(4)*

Minotaur Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	3/4**
4-6	Left Leg	3/8
7-9	Abdomen	3/9
10-12	Chest	3/10
13-15	Right Arm	3/7
16-18	Left Arm	3/7
19-20	Head	5/8

WEAPONS

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage/AP
Spiked Mace	42%	2D6+1D8
Head Butt	51%	1D6+1D10

SPECIAL RULES

Combat Actions: 1
Strike Rank: +8
Movement: 4m

Skills: Athletics 55%, Perception 30%, Resilience 50%, Survival 35%, Tracking 35%

Armour: Horns (AP 5, Head only), Hide (AP 3, all other locations, no skill penalty)

*These Characteristics have been reduced by Anton's life drain

** The Minotaur injured its right leg falling into the mine.

This is a fully grown bull-minotaur, of prodigious strength and size. Luckily for the PCs it has been weakened by exposure to Anton's plant tendrils.

When the PCs get a good look at the Minotaur, read or paraphrase the following:

The creature stands well over seven feet tall, with broad hairy shoulders, cloven hooves and the head of a bull. Its bulging eyes shine with madness and a foam of yellow bile flecks its lips. All over the creature's body are sores and pustules, many of which emit streams of bloody puss. More repellent even than its physical appearance is the beast's smell – corruption and decay hang about its rotting form like a pestilential cloak.

Some of the PCs may correctly deduce that the Minotaur – which is so obviously suffering from the effects of a disease – is unlikely to be the primary carrier. For the time being at least, that will not be something the villagers want to hear.

6 – Narrow Opening. The floor of the mine is split by a fracture less than a metre wide. Beneath it, a jagged and twisting channel descends into the gloom. Any character wishing to traverse this must succeed with two Athletics (Climbing) Skill Tests. Failure of either test results in the character losing his footing and slithering painfully over the sharp rocks into the chamber below. The fall inflicts D8 Damage to a random location.

The chamber, some 10 metres below the mine, contains a black oak chest, left here by an outlaw many years ago. The lock is rusted, brittle and thick cobwebs cover the lid. Within the chest is a pouch of 130 SP, assorted items of pilfered jewellery worth a further 160 SP and a mouldering book. Most of the pages have rotted away to nothing but one is still readable – see Player Handout One.



The Beast is Dead!

Assuming that the PCs succeed with their attempts to slay the monster they will be greeted as heroes by the anxious villagers. A celebration will be arranged in their honour, with a feast prepared involving a ready supply of ale. Encourage the PCs to enjoy their celebrity and the fruits of their success.

The Sickness Worsens

The following morning – or sooner if for some reason the PCs are unwilling to stick around for the feast – some of the village folk will begin to sicken. No longer able to focus his life draining powers on the Minotaur, Anton has had to re-focus them on the villagers.

Each PC must succeed with a Resilience Test or succumb to the feelings of sickness. To begin with this manifests as a slight grogginess, imposing a -2 penalty to Strike Rank. After a day this will worsen, imposing a -1 penalty on STR, DEX and CON.

PCs that overindulged at the feast are almost certain to feel a little the worse for wear – and may think that they have a particularly nasty dose of the sickness.

Once again the villagers will turn to the PCs for aid. Many had hoped that the diseased Minotaur was the cause of the recent illness but it will now be apparent that that was not the case. Encourage the PCs to investigate the town and question the locals – if necessary playing on the players' fears that their characters might now be infected with some sort of mysterious disease.

Anton's Family

It is quite possible that the PCs will have learned about the death of Anton's son and Anton's own subsequent disappearance. They may even have linked this to the witch in the woods. If they visit the home of Anton's wife, Merinda and her four surviving children, they will learn that though the house resides under a cloud of gloom, there have been no illnesses there for several weeks. Merinda – who feels her family has had more than its share of bad luck – believes that her husband's soul is looking over them. She is quite certain that he is dead. He was, she states with certainty, a devoted father who would do anything to protect his family – so there is no chance he would simply have left.

Spreading Tendrils

Once the PCs have had a chance to investigate the sickness, they will either discover – or be told by the villagers – that something strange is happening in the Toben's cow shed. Toben is one

of the settlement's many farmers, relying on half a dozen milk cows for his living.

When the PCs arrive they will find Toben in the process of moving his milkers out of their shed. He is visibly shaken by the sudden appearance of enormous roots that have forced their way out of the ground and into his shed. This is another attempt by Anton to spare the villagers, reasoning that the cows are expendable.

Any PC who succeeds with a Difficult (-20%) Perception Test will notice that there is an inordinate number of purple flowers around the shed.

Toben will ask the PCs for their help in destroying the roots – and intends to try himself even if they will not assist him. The roots are extremely tough and thanks to a moist sap within, will not burn. Nevertheless, a concerted effort with axe and blade can eventually sever them. Once the PCs have inflicted a significant amount of damage on the roots, they will animate and slither away underground.

And Again...

No sooner have the PCs dealt with the roots in Toben's shed than more will appear – this time surrounding the Roundhouse where the PCs are sleeping. Anton can, on some level, sense that the PCs are outsiders and would rather drain their life force than the villagers.

These roots can be dealt with in the same way as before.



The Root of the Problem

As soon as the PCs have dealt with the second outbreak of roots, matters will come to a head. Read or paraphrase the following:

The ground trembles as if with an earthquake. Tiny geizers of soil erupt from the ground, spewing dirty clouds into the air. A thunderous crack follows and the ground is torn by a terrible ruction. Earth tumbles away into an expanding hole and then, out of this cascading soil, something enormous emerges. A huge root ball – like a tangled pulp of flesh – is lifted high on tendrils that move as legs. Several of these root-limbs end in tattered stumps.

Driven into a murderous rage by the damage to his ‘limbs’ Anton will now attack the PCs directly, seeking to drag them down into his nest where he can ‘feast’ on them. He bursts from the ground in the open area east of the roundhouse.

Anton – Pestilential Plant

STR	2D6 +15	(22)
CON	1D6+20	(23)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZE	2D6+30	(37)
INT	1D6+3	(7)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6	(7)

Pestilential Plant Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Tendril One	3/10
3-4	Tendril Two	3/10
5-6	Tendril Three	3/10
7-8	Tendril Four	3/10
9-10	Tendril Five	3/10
11-12	Tendril Six	3/10
13-20	Root Body	3/20

WEAPONS

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage/AP
Tendril Grab	50%	-
Tendril Lash	40%	1d4+1D6*

*Despite its enormous STR and SIZE, the pestilential plant cannot bring its full force to bear in any single attack.

With each Combat Action, the pestilential plant may attack with two of its tendrils.

If it hits with its Tendril Grab, a Grapple is established. This occupies only the tendril involved – the rest of the plant may continue to act independently. A character grappled in this way suffers 1 Damage to a random location each Round as his energies are drained.

SPECIAL RULES

Combat Actions: 2

Strike Rank: +9

Movement: 4m

Skills: Perception 50%, Resilience 60%

Armour: Thick Skin (3 points, no skill penalty)

If the pestilential plant loses the use of four of its tendrils – a Serious Wound immobilizes a tendril – then it immediately retreats into its hole.

The fight will continue until either the PCs or pestilential plant is slain or the plant retreats into its nest. If necessary, it will make a last stand there.

If the plant is slain, the root ball immediately begins to decompose. Within a minute or so, Anton’s body – which was trapped inside the ball – is revealed. Merinda will be able to give her husband a proper burial but she will forever more be regarded with suspicion by the other villagers.



Anton's Nest

Though he lost much of himself to Malyce's spell, Anton maintained a semblance of his humanity. The nest that he burrowed for himself – which is essentially just a hollowed out space beneath the village – contains the items that he had with him when he quested for the witch – and some others he recovered surreptitiously from his home after returning.

Inside the nest are an old scroll (Player handout Two), a longsword, a wooden shield, a water skin, a blanket and Anton's wedding ring. These clues should go a long way towards allowing the characters to piece together what happened.

Tying Up Loose Ends

If the PCs have rid the village of the pestilential plant they will have done the villagers a great service. Accordingly, they will always be welcome in Sicklemede. Cranna may even reward the PCs with some extra potions.

It is almost certain that the PCs will now know of the existence of Malyce. Perhaps they will even wish to test themselves against this foul witch. That, however, is a tale for another time...

Player Handout One

Whatever it be that stirs so the woods against me, I will not risk my fortune. This chest is carved of stoutest wood, the lock of truest steel. Let it lie here and into it I will pour my wealth, beginning now with these trifles that I have to hand. It will take some time to gather all my spoils – so carefully secreted away are they.

Of equal import be my reputation. Therefore, I will set down my daring exploits lest future generations forget the name of...[Here the text becomes indecipherable]

Player Handout Two

For those valiant and determined enough to seek her out, Malyce is said to grant great favour. Not without cost, though, are her charms acquired. Some speak of terrible burdens that must be accepted and others still of cruel betrayals bestowing the petitioner's wish but twisting his hopes beyond recognition. Full careful must he be who seeks out this witch and calls upon her favour.



The Levall Affair – Part Two

A Traveller Adventure by Paul A. Dutton

TRAVELLER

Act Three

After leaving Eca IV, to continue the pursuit of Elliot Powell, the PCs must follow the heavy freighter Tregarn through jump space to the industrial planet of Balfor.

Balfor UWP X484510-9

Port X, no starport; **Size** 4, small (5,700 km); **Atmosphere** 8, dense, 1.55ATM; **Hydrographics** 4, wet world 44%; **Population** 5, (322,000); **Government** 1, corporate, power-sharing assembly; **Law** 0, no law; **Tech Level** 9 (early stellar).

Viewed from space Balfor appears burnt orange in colour. Its entire economy revolves around the corporate owned industrial townships. Townships are established on high plateaus where humans may breathe unassisted. In contrast, the lowlands and sandstone canyons suffer from a dense, humid atmosphere and its oceans are shrouded by warm, humid cloud. Balfor's government is a multi-corporate assembly in which seats are obtained by the purchase of shares, not the polling of votes. Balfor offers the ideal solution to corporations looking to avoid the heavy tax tariffs of polity worlds. It can prove far more profitable to produce goods on a world which you own.

The Tregarn

If the PCs follow the Tregarn through jump space they will discover her in orbit around Balfor. The Tregarn's shuttle is in the lengthy process of ferrying ore and minerals down to the Metallia Corporation's refineries on the planet surface. Powell is still on board the Tregarn. He does not get to jump ship until the last of the cargo is off loaded. Once alongside the Tregarn it is a relatively simple act to retrieve him.

TRAVELLER

If the PCs hail the Tregarn, Captain Angela del Schaff will open comms. She is a confident captain but is fully aware that she is in no position to stave off the determined assault of a pirate ship; which is initially what she will assume the PCs to be. PCs need to convince del Schaff that she is harbouring a dangerous criminal, *Persuade* check (10+). Once convinced she will gladly be rid of Powell who is endangering her crew just by his very presence. If PCs convinced del Schaff on the first or second attempt at the persuade check, then she will agree to the PCs docking with the Tregarn and boarding to collect Powell who she will hand over without a fuss. Docking requires a *Pilot* check (6+) taking 1d6 minutes. If it took more than two persuade checks or if warning shots were fired across the Tregarn's bow, del Schaff will not have enough trust in the PCs to allow them to board. Instead she will have her crew subdue Powell, force him into a vacc suit and flush him out of the air lock. Powell is now free-floating in space. To rescue Powell from space, a PC will need to don a vacc suit and thruster pack from the ship's locker and go for a 'spacewalk'. A task chain of three *Zero-G* (8+) checks (or (6+) if the PC has the *Vacc Suit* skill) is required to successfully retrieve Powell. Failure to succeed within six checks may signify the PC has got into trouble and will need rescuing too.

The Tregarn - Heavy Freighter – 1,000 tons

Hull 20, **Structure** 20; **Armour** none; **Jump** Drive H, jump 2; **Manoeuvre** Drive E, Thrust 1; **Power Plant** H (rating/2); **Bridge: Computer** model/2 (rating 10); **Electronics** standard sensors, -4 DM; **Fuel** 216 tons (1xjump-2 – 2 weeks of ops); **Cargo** 552 tons; **Staterooms** 8; **Extras:** shuttle (95 tons), **Software:** manoeuvre/0, library; jump control/2; **Weapons Systems:** 2 Hardpoints: #1 and #2 double turrets (sandcaster x1/ pulse laser x1); **Crew** 10; **Crew Skill** Green +0 DM; *Based on the heavy freighter on core rule book p125.*

Refueling on Balfor

Should PCs descend to Balfor a *Pilot* check (6+) is required to ride some choppy weather in its heavy atmosphere. A failed check results in overheating and systems damage requiring an *Engineering* check (8+) and 1d6 hours to repair. If PCs need to refuel they may scoop from an open body of water beneath the lower cloud level. To scoop requires a vessel capable of hovering in gravity and four successful *Pilot* checks (8+) to complete the operation. Each attempted check signifies one hour of time. Scooping is not welcomed by the corporate government. PCs will eventually be detected on sensors (within 1d6 hours of arrival) at which time a pair of government fighter drones will be despatched to investigate. This means that PCs may complete the operation in time; otherwise the amount of water scooped for hydrogen separation is reduced proportionately. Drones will engage the PCs to chase them off but will not pursue beyond near orbit. Engagement begins at short range. To avoid confrontation, PCs may purchase fuel legitimately. A *Comms* check (8+) receives permission to enter Balfor airspace and land at a township to purchase refined fuel at an extortionate 600 Cr per ton. A *Broker* check (8+) can reduce this to 500 Cr. Despite the humble landing pad being the height of sophistication for receiving starcraft, Balfor has many refineries and refined fuel is always available.

Drone Fighters (x2) – 20 tons

Hull 0, **Structure** 1; streamlined, Stealth; **Armour** crystaliron 6; **Manoeuvre** Drive sK Thrust 10; **Power Plant** sK (rating 10); **Drone Command Unit** TL12: **Computer** model/2 (rating 10); **Electronics** military sensors +0 DM; **Fuel** 1 ton (1 week of ops); **Software:** manoeuvre/0, evade/1; fire control/2; **Weapons Systems:** Fixed Mount railgun; Missile Mount 3x basic missiles; **Ammunition** railgun rounds x20; **Remote Operation** DM+1; *Based on the Assault Fighter - Traders and Gunboats p24.*

Railgun fires bursts of ferrous bullets; optimum range is short, (damage 2d6). **Basic Missiles** thrust/5, endurance 10 turns, (damage 1d6).

Powell's pleas of innocence

Elliot Powell is living on the edge of his nerves. Despite the reputation given to him by Levall's authorities, he is not violent and poses no

danger whatever. He knows that a life on the run would mean there will always be bounty hunters on his trail. He cannot keep on running and he misses his family very much. He makes a plea to the PCs: he is an innocent man and they are taking him back to face a death sentence for a crime that he did not commit. He desperately hopes that they might help him prove his innocence. A *Deception* check (6+) is enough for a wary PC to be convinced that Powell may be telling the truth.

Powell's Story

After finishing his work shift, he and a colleague named Arran Kitzler headed to the bus terminus to catch transport home. Whilst passing by another warehouse they heard a scuffle. After a few moments of daring each other to investigate, Powell looked into the warehouse to find the warehouse owner, Amba Lazarczuk, lying face down in a pool of blood. Powell bent down and turned him over. There was a knife in his chest. Without thinking, Powell removed the knife - he was trying to help. The next thing Powell knows is the sound of approaching footsteps. The police had arrived on scene and they arrested him. He was later convicted of murder. The knife, with his fingerprints, was submitted in evidence, as were the witness statements of the police officers who found him leaning over the body, knife in hand.

A Moral decision

The PCs have three choices. They can let Powell go, in which case he will eventually be tracked down by other bounty hunters. They can simply hand Powell over to the authorities on Levall and collect their bounty. Or they can sympathise with Powell's plight and forge ahead with an attempt to prove his innocence.

Act Four

What to do with Powell?

Once back on Levall, PCs need to decide what to do with Powell. If they decide to sneak him into Dassas then PCs are required to make

a task chain of three successful *Stealth* checks (6+), this abstracts the PCs' efforts to sneak Powell through the starport. A failed check brings discovery but security officers will initially assume that the PCs have brought Powell back to claim the bounty. However, if Powell is not restrained or if the PCs were caught in suspicious circumstances, then it will require a very convincing story and a *Persuade* check (10+) to alleviate any suspicions that spaceport security may have. If security is suitably convinced, Chief Round will be informed of the PCs' arrival and their success in bringing back Powell but if security officers remain suspicious they will attempt to arrest the PCs - see *Trouble at the Starport*.

If PCs hand Powell over, whether voluntarily or after failing to sneak him through the starport, Round will take him into custody and pay the bounty to the PCs (as long as they are not wanted fugitives now). The PCs now have just three days until Powell's execution to solve the murder and prove his innocence. The 50,000 Cr bounty is paid over in Chief Round's office at the Police Bureau. He will inform the PCs that their temporary status as agents of law is now revoked and they should hand their credentials to his secretary before leaving the building. The PCs must pass through the adjoining secretary's office on the way out. If, when the secretary requests the PCs to return their credentials, a PC tries to keep his credentials back, a *Deception* check (8+) is enough to convince her that the PC was never issued with credentials in the first place. She will still expect at least PC to have a set of credentials to be returned.

Trouble at the Starport

If things go wrong, port security will attempt to arrest the PCs. If PCs escape the port they will become wanted fugitives. Chief Round will be panicked if he hears that the PCs are helping Powell and will issue a 'shoot to kill' policy against the PCs - a very harsh and unusual step, even by Levall's standards. If PCs decide to continue to conduct an investigation to prove Powell's innocence (and their

own) then from now on they will have to keep a low profile and avoid the authorities. The Referee is encouraged to complicate investigations as appropriate. If arrested, the PCs' fate is sealed. There will be no charges and no trial. To protect himself, Round will have them killed.

The following stat block may be used at the Referee's discretion for Security Officers and Police alike throughout the remainder of this adventure.

Security and Police Officers


Str 6, **Dex** 6, **End** 7, **Int** 8, **Edu** 8, **Soc** 7; Admin 0; Comms 0; Drive 0; Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1; Investigate 0; Melee (bludgeon) 1; Recon 1; **Gear:** auto pistol (3d6-3) or ACR Advanced Combat Rifle (3d6), stunstick (1d6 normal + 2d6 non lethal), cloth armour (5), comm, wrist restraints;

Investigations

If PCs intend to prove Powell's innocence, they need to solve the crime for which he has been wrongly convicted. The starting points for investigations should be apparent -the crime scene and the victim. If the PCs are struggling, a benevolent Referee may call for Intelligence checks to help guide the PCs.

Ambas Lazarczuk

The murder of Ambas Lazarczuk took place two months prior to Powell's trial. Lazarczuk had just been forced to take in yet another shipment of drugs that had been smuggled through Dassas Starport. Over the last two years Lazarczuk had cheated on his tax payments. When legal proceedings were imminent, Chief Round offered him a deal. Round could arrange for the debts to be expunged and the evidence of tax evasion erased. This established Round's hold over Lazarczuk. Lazarczuk grew tired of being used and tried to force his way out of Round's influence with a foolish attempt at blackmail; threatening to expose Round to his superiors. An indignant Round stabbed Lazarczuk to silence him.



Home Lazarczuk lived alone and his former home has been emptied and is now for sale. There is nothing at Lazarczuku's home for PCs to find.


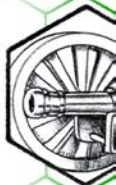

If PCs check the background of Amba Lazarczuk they may find evidence of the proceedings against him for tax evasion and the subsequent dropping of those charges from one of three sources: media archives, legal records or locals who knew him.

Media Archives are public and can be accessed from any computer, a *Computer* check (6+) locates the relevant detail – a column containing a story on Lazarczuk being charged with tax evasion offences. An *Investigate* check (8+) notices many stories of citizens who break the law and their subsequent sentencing is always sensationalised. Such coverage is encouraged by the Levall Forum in order to show the lower classes that they cannot get away with crime. Oddly, there is no follow up media story to explain why Lazarczuk's case never came to trial.

Legal Records are held at forum offices and are confidential. Making subtle enquiries and a successful *Admin* or *Advocate* check (8+) locates the correct offices. PCs cannot access the offices, not even with credentials. A few hours of surveillance outside the offices confirms that bypassing the building's security is nigh on impossible. PCs can, however, attempt to hack into the forum computer system. Three successive *Computer* checks (10+) taking 1d6 hours gains remote access to all relevant files. Failure to complete the checks within six attempts results in the PC's hack being detected and security software locks the PCs out. The attempted hack will be traced to the remote computer used. PCs can later try the hack again but now the checks are (12+). If the PCs are successful they can learn on an *Admin* or *Advocate* (6+) that Lazarczuk was being taken to trial for cheating 40,000 Cr from the Levall tax office. The proceedings against him were halted just before his trial, the case file finishes with the words "*Evidence: Deleted. Charges: Dismissed. Case File: Closed - Chief J. Round*".


Locals *Streetwise* checks close to Lazarczuk's business or home reveal locals knew all about his impending trial but for some unknown reason all charges were dropped just days before the trial was due. "*It's a rare thing indeed for a low class citizen to escape criminal prosecution*".

Crime Scene - Lazarczuk Storage



If the PCs did not visit here before departure to Eca IV, the description remains the same, a small warehouse still sealed off as a crime scene as per Round's orders. The place is empty, all goods have gone and all business records confiscated from the warehouse office. This time, PCs may enter undisturbed. An *Investigate* (8+) discovers a small sack of grain that has slipped into the cavity between the outer wall and a low, inner storage wall. If PCs remove the sack from the cavity for a closer look, grain will begin to spill from a tear in the sack, closely followed by several small, sealed packets containing a grey powder. These are Round's drugs, smuggled through Dassas Starport in sacks of basic consumables. The sack has a label sown onto it which gives basic information on the origin of the shipment. This information allows the cargo to be traced to a ship's manifest. The information includes world of origin (Referee's choice) and a batch number. If the PCs still have credentials they can gain free access to the Starport's manifest records, an *Admin* check (8+) and 1d6 hours traces the cargo to a vessel named the Autumn Star; registered to a free lance merchant, 'Captain' Royce Caine. The cargo of 40 tons of grain, was brought in to Dassas Starport just over two months ago, the week before Lazarczuk was murdered in fact. The Autumn Star has not returned to Levall since but records show that it visits Levall on a fairly regular basis, once every three to four months. The drug is a highly addictive narcotic called Berrozine – colloquially known as 'grey'. It has a street value of 150,000 Cr a ton. Each 40 ton grain cargo potentially includes a hidden cache of 2 tons of grey.

Lazarczuk's warehouse is one of several on a site. Call for a *Recon* check (not if the PCs are here prior to bringing back Powell) to notice that the warehouse opposite has security cameras. PCs may, with a



Persuade check (automatic if the PCs still have credentials), gain access to recorded footage from the day of the murder. PCs will find footage of Round entering the warehouse just five minutes before Powell and Arran Kitzler walk by. Round is then seen exiting a side door as Powell goes in through the front. Seconds later Round is seen directing his two senior officers, Dugarry and Dawns, into the building. The two officers re-emerge with Powell in restraints. Minutes later a crowd has gathered and more officers arrive, Kitzler can be seen giving a statement and finally a police vehicle arrives to take Powell into custody.

The Streets of Dassas

Streetwise checks will locate street dealers of black market goods and drugs in Dassas's more deprived districts. If PCs have sample drugs, any drug pusher, if bribed or threatened, will identify the substance as 'grey'. Many of the street dealers are under the thumb of corrupt police, especially of Round and his senior officers. Every crook is aware of the consequences of ratting on their police handlers. If interrogated, it takes more than simple threat to make a street dealer talk. PCs will need to get physical and inflict sufficient injury plus a *Persuade* check (10+) or *Interrogation* check (8+) to force a dealer to talk. A dealer will then inform PCs that he is provided the drugs by "Chief Round and his buddies" and forced to sell them.

Bank Records

Investigating Round's bank account is not easy. The bank will not knowingly give out any personal information. Good role play, the showing of credentials and a successful *Persuade* check (10+) might convince the bank manager that the PCs are agents of law conducting an official investigation. If PCs can access Round's account details, all is found to be in good order. Round does not launder his dirty money through his personal bank account.

Round's Home and Offices

The easiest way to find Round's home address, should PCs decide to go there, is to follow Round home. The Referee may call for *Stealth*

checks to successfully tail Round. The house can be searched once there is nobody home. The only clue to be found is a discarded envelope. The letter it contained is missing but the envelope itself has a printed address on its reverse side: *M. Round Accountancy, 19 City Offices, Sector 4, Dassas*. If PCs break into Chief Round's office at the Police Bureau (a much harder task) the referee may decide that the PCs discover the envelope there instead.

Round's Accountant

Miles Round is the elder brother of Julius. He is a crooked accountant with the expertise to launder his brother's dirty money. The money is channelled into a dozen different accounts in the name of fictitious off-world businesses. Miles keeps records of all his client's accounts on his personal computer. A task chain of three skill checks (8+) in *Admin* and/or *Computer* at 1 hour per attempted check is enough to locate the pertinent accounts. PCs can break into the offices at night or blatantly threaten Miles in the day. If Miles is confronted he will warn his brother. If the PCs weren't fugitives already, then they are now and Chief Round issues a shoot to kill policy on the PCs.

Going to the Authorities

Round's immediate superior is Mayor Joran Parkes. Despite being part of the privileged classes, Mayor Parkes is a decent man. If PCs approach him without evidence, the PCs will be told that making serious allegations against a senior police officer without proof is a very dangerous thing and he will advise that the PCs should keep quiet and maybe leave Levall before they get themselves into big trouble.

The PCs need to gather evidence to substantiate their claims against Round and his officers. An *Advocate* (6+) check is enough to know when the evidence collected is enough to take to the Mayor's Office. In the face of overwhelming evidence the Mayor will eventually be forced to act. With corruption at such a senior level he will be unsure of who exactly to trust amongst the ranks of police. Not wanting to

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alert Round, it is best to keep regular police out of the equation and the Mayor will ask the PCs to form part of the arresting team.

The Mayor has a small contingent of four Forum Agents who are attached to the Mayor's Office and remain separate from the Police Bureau. These may be the only agents of law he can trust at the moment. The PCs are sworn in as temporary agents to augment the Mayor's circle of trustees. Each PC will earn a retainer of 5,000 Cr from the Mayor's Office for their temporary employ. If PCs have no weapons of their own, the Mayor's Office will issue some basic firearms on loan. Forum Agent Jack Silas is placed in charge of the operation to arrest Chief Julius Round and his accomplices.

Development: If PCs do not voluntarily go to the authorities (most likely because of issues with not knowing who to trust), have Agent Silas contact the PCs surreptitiously. The Mayor's Office may already have a distrust of Chief Round and having been alerted to the PCs investigations are looking to use any evidence discovered to bring down corruption in the Police Bureau.

The Arrest of Julius Round

Agent Silas decides upon a plan to catch Chief Round, red handed if possible. He assigns three agents to follow Dawns and Dugarry. Silas himself remains with the PCs who will keep Chief Round and the Police Bureau building under surveillance. Within a few hours Silas receives a report from his agents that Dawns has been shadowed to an apartment in District 9. The apartment checks out as a listed safe house sometimes used by Dassas police. Dawns is seen leaving the apartment with a carry case and is followed back to the Dassas Police Bureau by a single agent; two agents remaining behind to check out the apartment. By the time Dawns arrives back at the Bureau, the two agents have entered the apartment and confirmed the find of a drugs haul.

The PCs are informed by comms that Dawns is being followed back to the Bureau and he has a carry case. A few minutes later Dawns comes into view of the PCs. He parks his car (wheeled road vehicle) and enters the Bureau, he leaves the case locked in the car. Silas instructs the PCs to wait. Half an hour later Chief Round, Dawns and Dugarry exit the Bureau and get into the car, Dawns is in the driver's seat.

As Round and his officers drive away, Agent Silas and the PCs follow. Dawns drives to District 11, a deprived and over crowded hive of the lower classes. The Referee may call for a *Drive (wheeled)* (6+) check for a PC to successfully shadow Dawns in the traffic without being detected. If the check fails the PCs are spotted and a car chase and vehicle shoot out may develop.

At District 11, when Dawns parks the car, he and Dugarry will get out, Round stays in the car. The two officers cross the street and approach a street dealer, Dawns is carrying the case. Their intentions are to enter the dealer's nearby building to collect cash from previous drug sales and supply him with the next cache of grey. If PCs have not leapt into action already, Agent Silas now gives them the go ahead. Its time to apprehend Round and his senior officers.

Julius Round

Str 7, **Dex** 8, **End** 10, **Int** 10, **Edu** 11, **Soc** 11; Admin 0; Advocate 2; Deception 2; Drive 0; Gun Combat (slug pistol) 2; Flyer (grav) 1; Recon 1; Stealth 1; Streetwise 1; **Gear:** auto pistol (3d6-3), armour -cloth (5), credentials, comm., 800 Cr;

Senior Officers (Robert Dawns and Piers Dugarry)

Str 8, **Dex** 9, **End** 9, **Int** 8, **Edu** 9, **Soc** 9; Athletics 0; Drive 0; Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1; Melee 0; Recon 1; Stealth 1; Streetwise 2; **Gear:** auto pistol (3d6-3), armour -cloth (5), credentials, wrist restraints, comm., 220 Cr; Dawns has a carry case containing 12 x 0.5kg of packets of grey.

Street Dealer

Str 8, **Dex** 7, **End** 8, **Int** 6, **Edu** 5, **Soc** 5; Gun Combat 0; Melee (blade) 1; Recon 1; Stealth 1; Streetwise 3; **Gear:** auto pistol (3d6-3), knife (2d6);

Agent Jack Silas

Str 8, **Dex** 8, **End** 9, **Int** 9, **Edu** 8, **Soc** 9; Athletics 0; Drive 0; Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1; Investigate 2; Recon 1; Persuade 2; Stealth 1; Streetwise 1; **Gear:** auto pistol (3d6-3), credentials, wrist restraints; comm.;

Tactics Dawns and Dugarry will slug it out in the street whilst Round attempts to make his escape. Round is sat in the car when combat begins but it will take him two rounds to move into the driver seat before he can attempt to drive away. Round is finished on Levall; his only chance of escaping justice is to get off world. Round and his officers will fight it out until dead or incapacitated. If there is large party of PCs then the referee may wish to add the street dealer and maybe one or two petty thugs who are part of the street dealer's gang to the combat.

Conclusion

Afterwards, the PCs will receive thanks from the Mayor's Office. If still alive, Julius Round, Robert Dawns and Piers Dugarry all face a bleak future. The accountant, Miles Round will be arrested, as will Captain Caine when the Autumn Star next lands at Dassas Starport. Elliot Powell will be freed. On some worlds Powell might hope for some compensation, on Levall he must instead console himself with the fact that he is the first low class citizen ever to have a death sentence revoked and conviction quashed. Elliot and his family will have eternal gratitude toward the PCs for what they have done. The PCs reward is their promised payment from the Mayor's Office and the stern request that they leave Levall with all haste. The Levall Forum needs to sweep this incident under the carpet as soon as possible and under no circumstance can they allow the PCs to remain as role models for the lower classes.

Scouting and Spotting: Introducing the Fog of War to Victory at Sea



By David Manley

One of the major challenges in the war at sea is the correct identification of the enemy. Naval history is replete with examples of misidentification leading to fateful decisions being made. One theory regarding the battle of the River Plate is that Langsdorff mistook the single-funnelled cruisers AJAX and ACHILLES for Royal Navy destroyers, whilst the author remembers taking part in an exercise at sea in the 1990s during which the ship on which he was sea-riding stalked what was initially identified visually as the carrier HMS INVINCIBLE (which was known to be at sea) only to find sometime later that the target ship was in fact a neutral merchant vessel! These rules are intended to recreate a little of that “fog of war”, removing the certainty of misidentification

and allowing for an increased opportunity for realistic confusion and mayhem. They are aimed at campaign or “pick up” games and are not really suitable for tournament play.

All ships are initially represented on the table by markers. All ships use the same type of marker so that their size and type is not distinguishable. Each marker must be specifically linked to a real ship in the players force. The marker must be manoeuvred in the same way as the ship it represents.

If a marker is successfully detected by radar the size of the ship, or rather its Target Number is revealed. However, the identity of the ship is not

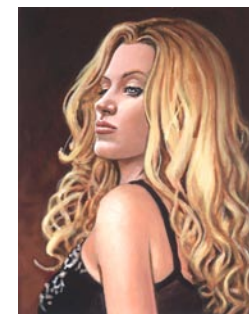
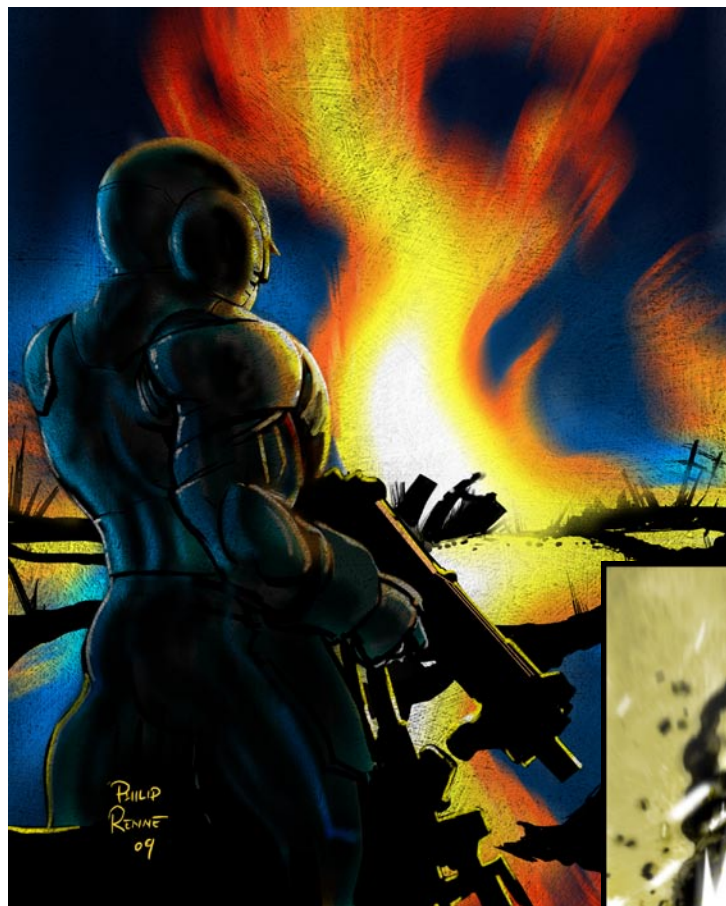
revealed until a visual sighting is made and even then this is not automatic.

If a marker comes within spotting range of an enemy ship or aircraft roll a d6. The identity of the ship that is represented by the marker is revealed on a roll of 1-5. On a 6 the type of ship is revealed (e.g. battleship, carrier, submarine) but not the class. One attempt can be made per spotting ship or aircraft flight per turn. For simplicity players may assume that any ship spotted by more than 2 enemy ships and/or aircraft flights is automatically identified.



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Manly Games & Festivals

Entertainment & Diversions in Hyrkania

CONAN Written by Vincent N. Darlage **CONAN**

Illustrated by Furman

Social activities are important even in the vast steppes of Hyrkania. Games are played and contests are regularly engaged in. The 'three manly sports' are played often, consisting of archery contests, horse-races and wrestling. Hunting is both a pastime and a military exercise. The final section of this chapter details some of the festivals common in Hyrkania.

The Three Manly Sports

Archery contests, horse racing and wrestling are considered the three manliest sports by the Hyrkanians.

Archery Contests

Although archery contests are considered one of the three manly sports, there is always a women's round. The archers who are organised in teams of 12 during the Festival of Naadam but organised in any manner convenient at other times, walk to the shooting line and launch four arrows at each target. The targets are a row of 10 leather cylinders lying on the ground with the openings facing skyward. The shooting line is traditionally 246 feet from the targets for men, 196 feet for women. For children, the distance is about ten feet per year of age.

Any archer failing less than 15 hits (13 for women) is out of the competition.

During the Festival of Naadam archers born in the year of the tiger shoot first because the tiger is a symbol of strength and marksmanship among the Hyrkanians. Any Hyrkanian participating in the Naadam archery contests are awarded the title of *mergen* (which means sharpshooter); depending how well the participant does, this title is given additional epithets, such as 'young and improving', 'diligent' and so on. The winner of the Naadam archery contests is given the epithet 'national' to his title.



Used arrows are usually picked up by people born in the year of the mouse. The mouse symbolises diligence and industry. People born in the year of the dragon are expected to sing praises in honour of the archers because a dragon symbolises eloquence.

Horse Racing

Hyrkanians love to race horses. The largest horse race is during the Festival of Naadam as one of the manly sports. Horses to be raced in Naadam are chosen a month beforehand and separated from the herd for special training and better feeding. Mares are divided into four categories



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based on age: two; four; five; and over five years old categories. Stallions have their own category and are not divided by age. During the Festival of Naadam, the riders are usually older than five years. The horses run a race across the steppe, a race that varies between 9 and 20 miles, depending on the age category of the horses. The most popular races are held just with unbroken horses.

At the start of a race, the horsemen ride around the start point three times giving their tribal war-cry. When the horses are all behind the start point, an official gives a command to start and the racers take off.

When the race is over, the winner is given the honorary title of “Forehead of Ten Thousand Horses” and a medal. The five runner-ups are also awarded with medals. The six winners do three laps in front of the audience and then ride up to the official, who gives them a large bowl of fermented mare’s milk. Each rider takes a drink and then pours some on his horse’s rump. When the final rider comes in, he is not treated with derision but is led up to the official who rewards and honours the loser, who must display a shameful face. The spectators shout encouragement and the official recites a special speech to the loser, expressing the Khan’s faith in him for future successes and not to let this one poor performance guide his destiny.



The winner of the horse race earns a +2 bonus to Reputation; the five runners-up earn a +1 bonus to their Reputation.

Racing Check: The first check is an endurance check, since the race is not only a race of speed but of endurance. The horse and the rider must each make a Con check DC 18. Those who fail are considered out of the race. Since movement rates are all constant by rate, determine the winner by taking every contestant with the fastest land speed who passed both endurance checks and rolling Dexterity checks (or Ride for a horse race) for each against a DC of 10. The largest margin of success wins the race. Lower scores finish in descending order.

For a more complex race, give the race course a series of check points. At the first check point, make the Racing Check to determine the order the racers are now in. Also make a DC 10 Constitution check or the horse must stop running for 1 minute. At succeeding check points, make additional Racing Checks in comparison to racers in front of and behind each racer to determine if the racer moves forward or backward in the race, working backwards. For example, compare the racing check of the two people in first and second place. The highest margin roller is now in first place. Compare then the second and third place spots. Again, the highest margin roller is in second place. Compare third to fourth, fourth to fifth and so on. It is easy to fall back with this method but hard to move forward. If the first place runner has a lower margin than the second place runner, he moves to second place. If his margin is lower than the third place runner, he drops back to third place until his margin is better than someone’s. Essentially, he stumbled and was passed up by several runners until he came out of the stumble and continued with the race. Also, at each check

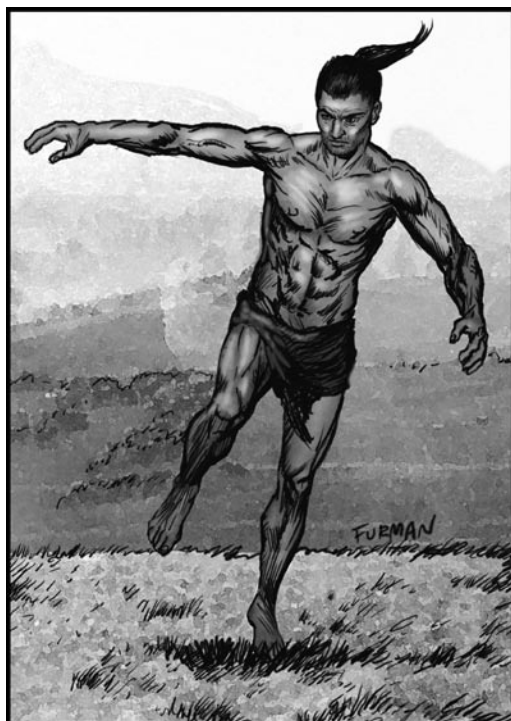


point, the horse must make a Constitution check at DC 13 or stop running. Each check point increases the DC by +3.

If horses are forced to run past the point they would naturally stop running, treat the horses as if they are on a forced march for non-lethal damage (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*).

Wrestling

Wrestling is a common past-time among the Hyrkanians and is considered one of the many sports. There are no weight divisions and there is no time limit. Some matches even allow for short breaks. Ultimately, the winner is the Hyrkanian who manages to get his opponent to fall to the ground, touching his elbow and knee to the



ground. This is handled through grapple checks and trip checks (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for rules on grappling and tripping).

Tournament Wrestling

The wrestlers enter the match imitating an eagle, flapping their arms, leaping in the air and performing a stylised dance. Each wrestler has a second who functions as a herald. Once the match is over, the loser walks beneath the raised arms of the winner as a show of respect. The loser unties his vest as the winner prances over the field, again imitating an eagle, going around a flag in the centre of the field. The winner is awarded food as a symbolic price. Once he tastes the food, he offers it to his second and then to the spectators.

Losing a single round eliminates the wrestler from the rest of the tournament. Winning a certain number of matches earns the victor an honorary title according to the table, Wrestling Titles. The winner of all the matches is the absolute winner. If the absolute winner of one tournament also wins a second, he earns more titles and the title expands for every time he wins subsequently.

Wrestling Titles

Number of Wins	Title	Meaning of Title	Reputation Bonus
5	Nachin	Falcon	+1
7	Zaan	Elephant	+1
All Matches	Arslan	Lion	+1
All Matches twice	Avarga	Giant	+2
All Matches thrice		Invincible Giant	+3
All Matches four times		Invincible Giant to be Remembered by All	+4

In an official match, performed during the Festival of Naadam, the 1,028 wrestlers wear a tight-fitting loin-cloth, a pointed cap and an open-chested, tight jacket that covers the arms. The jacket is open-chested to prove that the wrestler is not a woman.

Games & Bones

As far as toys go, puzzles are popular in Hyrkania. Other games include archery contests, horse racing, wrestling, bone games and guessing games.

Bones of animals make up many games in Hyrkania. If the game does not entirely consist of bones, then bones are used somewhere in the game. Even archery contests sometimes use animal bones as targets.

Bone Games

The Hyrkanians use the ankle bones of sheep and/or goats for several different children's games.



Match the Bones

Using at least 20 ankle bones decorated to represent different animals, such as sheep, goats, horses and camels on various sides, the first player throws them on a flat surface. The player looks for pairs of matching bones. He chooses one and flicks it to hit the other matching bone. If the flicked bone strikes any other bone but its match, the play moves to the next player, who picks up all the bones and throws them down for his turn. If the flicked bone hits its match without striking any other bone, then the player picks up both bones and goes again. The game continues until all the bones are picked up and the winner is the one with the most matched pairs of bones.

Who has the Most Horses?

Using at least twenty bones, the players try to get the most bones with the 'horse' side up. The first player throws all the bones on a flat surface. Without touching the other bones, he picks out all the bones that landed horse-side up. The next player does the same and so on until all the bones are picked up. The one with the most bones wins.

Khorol

Khorol is a type of domino game. The pieces are cut from wood and have pictures of lunar animals on them.

Guessing Games

A common guessing game among children is to take a pile of bones and guess how many bones are in the pile.

Puzzles

The most common puzzle game played in Hyrkania is called *Tonosh*, a puzzle designed to help young people develop logic and observational skills. The game consists of two wire loops shaped like a Greek Omega letter chained together. A movable loop is in the centre part of the chain. The trick is to take the movable loop out of the chain and then put it back, all without twisting or distorting the wire loops at the end.

Hunting

Hunting among the Hyrkanians is both necessary to gather food and to practice for war. Hunting is considered a military exercise in every way, used to train warriors in the techniques of hunting men.



A Falcon on the Wrist,

Wind in the Hair

Hyrkanian nobility hunt small game with hawks and falcons. Hyrkanian nobles train with their birds to hunt in tandem with them. A large part of the thrill of falconry is establishing a bond with a wild bird of prey. Larger game, such as antelope, fox or wolf, is often hunted with eagles. The eagles fly around the animal and beat the air furiously with their wings, confusing the game animal, keeping it occupied until the hunters are able to shoot it full of arrows.

The Great Hunt

The Hyrkanians use hunts as military training. The Great Hunt is a large scale hunt to train for large scale military actions. The Hyrkanians arrange themselves in a large circle around the chosen hunting ground, then they begin to close the circle, driving any animals (or people) before them. When the ring reaches a certain size, the killing begins.

Ancient Festivals

Bituun

Bituun is the last dinner of the old year and is essentially a new year's eve festival, performed the night before Tsagaan Sar. The preparations begin at noon, when the wife cleans the ger, making it spotless. The fattest sheep is killed and the lower back and tail of that sheep is boiled for the evening meal. Food is prepared and laid out on the table; all the food is to be eaten before the stars come out. Incense and candles burn in the ger and strong tea is made. The first drinking bowl of this tea is sprinkled to the four parts of the globe. The



next drinking bowl is presented to the host, after which all of the guests can drink.

Tsagaan Sar

Tsagaan Sar is the new year festival of the Hyrkanians, celebrated every January/March (exactly when depends on when the phase of the moon falls). The tribes gather together in certain spots in Hyrkania, forming huge collections of tribes, all singing, eating, dancing and drinking. Relatives and acquaintances from other tribes are met with fondness and new Hyrkanian family members introduced. Many people meet their future spouses during the New Year festival of Tsagaan Sar.

Tsagaan Sar begins with a pre-sunrise awakening by everyone so they may ritually greet the sun as

it rises. After the sun is greeted, everyone takes their ritual 'first steps of the New Year.' Everyone then goes back into their ger and greet each other in order of age, eldest to youngest. Gifts are exchanged; the value of the gift is unimportant – even some rocks will do, as it is only ritual. Scarves are common gifts. The host serves everyone a drink and when each receives his cup, he stands and sings a song. The song is then supported by everyone present. It is extremely rude to refuse to sing. Food is then served and the hostess continually serves and cleans as visitors come and go throughout the day.

Often trips to ovoo, piles of stones raised on a hill, are made to honour nature. People also play games. The holiday can last up to fifteen days in some areas as people move around to meet and greet as many people as possible.

Naadam

Naadam is the festival of mid-summer, a celebration of the 'three manly games.' The three manly games of the Hyrkanians are horse-racing, wrestling and archery (although the archery contests always have a women's round). All day the games would play and in the evening the Hyrkanians feast and tell stories of great horses, great deeds and great winners of the past Naadam games. The games are so important in Hyrkania that it is almost inevitable that when people meet in their travels the talk eventually turns to the last Naadam games. The Naadam festival often takes a week or more to fully complete; often the wrestling matches take seven days to complete.



Evil to the C.O.R.E.

Survival Horror for Spycraft 2.0

By DT Butchino



Survival Horror

Survival horror involves more intrigue and action than its parent genre. Characters are commonly more heroic and not as easily shaken by the terrifying things they may see or fight. They are better equipped and more prepared to act and others tend to look to them for help.

Survival horror also differs from horror in that it is not as much about fear as it is about thinking quickly and dealing with the shock of the situation. Characters are often thrust into the action without warning or explanation, leaving them to slowly uncover the truth. Dread is a constant enemy, staved off through teamwork, learning about the enemy and beating the odds. Many genre conventions used in apocalyptic campaigns fit well here, most notably the cruel and unforgiving nature of a world at its end.

As might be expected, survival is a predominant theme. Staying alive is the root of most adventures, with the characters regularly fleeing swarming hordes and running into seemingly overwhelming situations. Despite this, hope should always linger — ways to escape or win the day should always be available, even if they are not immediately obvious. Blasting through the beasties is fun and cathartic but shaking it up with scenes where violence clearly cannot win the day will keep the game fresh and interesting. This is, of course, one of the greatest challenges of adventure building for a survival horror campaign, as it demands intimate knowledge of the team and their strengths and the creativity to build challenges that they can overcome, even if they do not know it yet.

Just as important is finding ways to keep the players engaged. Especially in a game where the team is consistently on the defensive, where the odds are stacked so highly in the enemy's favour, it is critical to ensure that the characters have something to strive for, and even better if they have something worth living for. Subplots are great for this: a Romance or

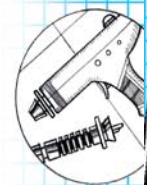
Personal Mission, for example, can drive a character through hell and back. So can a way to stop the madness, which leads to the other predominant theme of the subgenre: discovery.

It is common in survival horror for the characters to gradually gain insight about their new environment and enemies and over time this insight can lead to new tactics and objectives, driving encounters and perhaps even the campaign. New weapons can be developed (or found), alliances can be forged, territory can be won back and day by day the horror can be overcome. Ultimately, that is one of the most critical components in the subgenre — the chance, however slim, of victory.

Campaign Qualities

The following campaign qualities may apply in survival horror games, The GC may alter this list if he desires a less traditional version of the game.

- *Bleak*: Characters must often fend for themselves and learn quickly that one wrong move could be their last.
- *Hybrid*: Some or all the characters might belong to organizations, especially if the backdrop assumes some degree of (perhaps secret) knowledge of apocalyptic events. Even so, it is likely that the team will run into freelancers and civilians, both using the Freelance rules.
- *Paranoid*: Never knowing who or what may jump out at them, characters tend to be a bit jumpy.
- *Tense*: It is easy to crack under the pressure of seemingly unbearable odds and unfathomable creatures behind every door.
- *Thriller*: The path to victory is often less than obvious and always fraught with danger.
- *Violent*: Enemy weaknesses are often violent (the classic brain trauma for zombies, for example).



Common Classes

The following class options are especially appropriate for a survival horror game.

- *Intruder*: Locked doors and inaccessible rooms can get people killed. Fortunately, the Intruder has just the right skills and abilities for these situations.
- *Pointman*: A natural leader and jack-of-all-trades, the Pointman can become the cool head prevailing in moments of panic and terror.
- *Scientist*: All too frequently, the chaos driving the plot is the result of abused science. A Scientist can be the key to identifying what happened – and maybe how to reverse it.
- *Sleuth*: Finding clues is difficult at a blind run. Enter the Sleuth, whose investigative skills can help decipher the often puzzling circumstances facing the team.
- *Soldier*: Keeping a cool head and picking up on important details are all well and good but when the team's at the receiving end of a bloody onslaught, the Soldier's steady hands and scads of ammo can be the proverbial ace in the hole.

Common Objectives

Beyond staying alive, a survival horror game should have a direction. The characters might be trying to contain an outbreak, find a way to reverse it, trying to save innocents or working toward dozens of other goals. On a smaller scale, here are some of the most common objectives they might face.

- *Capture*: It is not uncommon to see corrupt agencies and companies behind a monstrous outbreak. When a project goes awry, these groups might send in a specialized team to capture specimens for further study. Alternately, characters unexpectedly caught in an outbreak might take this objective on themselves, seeking answers to their predicament.
- *Destroy*: The groups behind the outbreak may decide it is time to pull the plug, assigning the characters as a "cleansing squad" to wipe out any evidence of their involvement. Characters caught in the violence are unlikely to see this as an option unless they are heavily armed, have lots of help or think the enemy is much weaker than it looks (and likely is).
- *Discover*: Finding the source of the outbreak is valuable to anyone, especially those looking to exploit, manipulate or spark future epidemics. This objective is rarely sponsored by a group that helped to make the enemy (unless they were somehow duped or surprised by current events).

To characters in the thick of it all, though, discovery is a driving goal.

- *Rescue*: Innocents are invariably at stake. Whether the backdrop is a closed environment (like a lab) or an open one (like a city), someone always needs help. Civilian agencies like police, fire-fighters, FEMA and the Red Cross may be spearheading this objective but they are destined to quickly lose control (if they ever gain it in the first place).

Recommended Inspirations

Alien (M), *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* (RPG), *Alone in the Dark* (CG, M), *Clock Tower series* (CG), *Dead Rising* (CG), *Dead Space* (CG), *Dino Crisis series* (CG), *Evil Dead series* (CB, CG, M), *Fatal Frame series* (CG), *F.E.A.R.* (CG), *The Grudge 1 & 2* (M), *Last Night on Earth* (BG), *Parasite Eve* (CG), *Pitch Black* (M), *Resident Evil series* (B,CG, M), *The Ring 1 & 2* (M), *Shaun of the Dead* (M), *Shutter* (M), *Silent Hill series* (CG, M), *The Thing* (CG, M), *The Walking Dead* (CB), *Zombies!!!* (BG)

C.O.R.E. Concepts

Goals: 4 (Enlightened Evolution, Greed, Megalomania, Visionaries)

A forefather of evolutionary study, C.O.R.E. Concepts works consistently with other organizations to evolve mankind. The company has positioned itself to reap any potential rewards, leaving allies to suffer any shameful fallout.

History: 4 (Allies, Persecuted, Prophecy, Rise from the Ashes)

C.O.R.E. Concepts' testing methods have been labelled 'monstrous,' twice pushing the company to the brink of bankruptcy. However, thanks to recent upswings in research and some talented spin from friendly government agencies, it is now restructured and stronger than ever.

Image: 6 (Secretive Goals, Secretive Methods, Prominent Leaders, Secretive Members, Mysterious Sites)

Publicly, C.O.R.E. Concepts is engineering new medicine breakthroughs, including next-gen artificial organs. In reality, it works with government contractors to develop new bio-weapons and advanced soldiers. During business hours, C.O.R.E. Concepts has staff dedicated to its cover identity, unaware that others work on secret projects nearby.

Sites: 9 (Advanced Lab, Airstrip, Armory, Cloning Lab, Hospital, Hot Lab, Motor Pool, Records Office, Satellite Network)

C.O.R.E. Concepts keeps labs on both coasts in the United States and has additional labs in Africa, South America, and India. Its headquarters is located in Colorado, with a central projects lab in the Rockies.

Tools: 5 (E — IV, G — III, R — II, S — IV, T — V, V — III, W — III)

To ensure that its projects remain secret C.O.R.E. Concepts equips its security forces with state-of-the-art gear and the best training money can buy. Sadly, it will not be enough...

The Romero-13 Virus

Created by Dr. Gilbert Jensen (former Head of C.O.R.E. R&D), Romero-13 was originally devised as a cure for necrotic limb paralysis. In theory, it would repair and rejuvenate dead cells. Unfortunately, after twelve previous test viruses failed, leaving Dr. Jensen in danger of losing his funding, he desperately cobbled together a new batch and pushed it through to live testing at one of C.O.R.E.'s research facilities.

Initial testing went well but the experiment slowly fell apart as subjects began exhibiting physical mutations and explosive rage. Containment quickly became an issue and within a week all communication was lost with the facility.

Table 1: The Romero-13 Virus (Complexity 70/+9)

Phase	Onset Time	Fort Save DC	Damage/Effect
Primary	2d12 hours	16	1d6 Con
Secondary	2d4 rounds	18	1d8 Con *

* This attribute damage is permanent and, upon death, the infected may return as one of the creatures in this article (GC's choice). The virus mutates rapidly and the GC is encouraged to use the NPC system to create new mutations and introduce them regularly.

Mission Short: Hyde and Seek

ShoreComm is a small company with ties to C.O.R.E. Concepts. It's been implicated in a technology smuggling ring and the agents are sent in to investigate. Of course, C.O.R.E. has sent in its own team with shadowy orders...

Location

Wharf area (any large city)

Threat Level: 5

Briefing

"As of 13:08 this afternoon, information was obtained connecting the shipping company ShoreComm with a technology smuggling ring tied to the black market. ShoreComm's Regional Director, Ms. Gildy Fenton, has been observed making regular trips to the wharf and boarding the cargo ship Hestia, which is suspected to be one of the smuggling vessels. She's expected to be aboard this evening. Proceed to the ship, determine whether ShoreComm is up to no good, and if so, bring Ms. Fenton in for questioning."

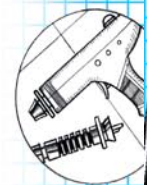
Mission Objectives

- Find evidence that ShoreComm is working the black market
- If evidence is found, take Gildy Fenton into custody
- Survive

Recommended Classes: Intruder, Pointman, Scout, Sleuth, Soldier

Scene One

Read the following aloud as the agents arrive at the scene.



The wharf is quiet, the large cargo vessel “Hestia” parked at the dock. A few workers hoist piles of cargo on board and three large men stand near the gangplank, all dressed in fashionable black suits and sporting stylish sunglasses. Above them on the ship’s deck is another suited man talking into a cell phone.

Sneaking onto the boat may be a bit difficult but not impossible. The easiest way to get on board without causing a ruckus is to hide in the cargo. All that is required is a successful Blend check against the guards’ Notice. With success, the team soon finds itself aboard the vessel (and if they wait long enough, in the cargo hold). Failing this, they can just take the guards out — they are Hired Guns carrying backup pistols (*see pages 453 and 253 of the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook*).

Scene Two

Once the agents are aboard, read the following aloud.

Quite a few people mill about the huge ship but it is still pretty easy to sneak around. The main deck is treaded steel and stacked high with crates, many emblazoned with the ShoreComm logo. Several doors lead below decks and more men with sunglasses patrol between the stacks.

The agents might try to Blend in to avoid the suited guards or Disguise themselves to look like them. They might even take one or more out as they make their way below decks. Searching for Ms. Fenton takes a bit of time but with a successful Search check (DC 18) they find her in one of the cabins arguing with a man. As they approach, read the following.

Peering into the cabin you see a man in his late 30s with black, thinning hair, a moustache, and a beard, wearing a turtleneck and jeans. His voice is deep and hoarse as he argues with Fenton, an attractive woman with shoulder-length strawberry blonde hair dressed in a blue power-suit. Under different circumstances you might find her voice pleasant but here she’s aggressive, forceful.

Before you get a grasp of the argument the sound of gunfire rattles through the ship. It is coming from outside and you hear a helicopter as well. Screams follow, then the muted thunder of heavy marching on the decks above. It sounds like a small war has broken out up above!

Any agents who rush outside (or those who stayed behind) see the heavies rushing toward three intruders – hulking figures that quickly tear through

the guards on their way toward the below-decks doors. Unknown to the agents, these are C.O.R.E. Concepts’ Hyde troops and their target is Gildy Fenton.

Scene Three

Getting Fenton out before might have seemed sticky but now it probably seems downright impossible. She has no desire to be taken anywhere and initially orders the man with her (the ship’s captain, Fellows) to deal with the intruders. When it becomes obvious that the newcomers are after her (and more importantly, that they are scarcely human and ripping through her guards like mincemeat), she agrees to take her chances with the team. There are three likely ways to escape the Hydes, though the agents may devise more and the GC should be prepared to indulge cunning plans.

Run

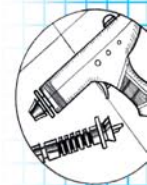
The Hydes are pretty fast for their size and not much gets in their way. Running prompts a chase through the decks (*see the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook, page 364*). If the agents win they make it to their vehicle or Fenton’s SUV and peel out, only to have one of the Hydes leap-frog the car, landing in their path. With a successful Drive check (DC 20), they outmanoeuvre him and speed away; otherwise the car skids into a wall and the Hyde starts pulling them through windows and batting them aside until they take him down or he is left alone with Fenton.

The Hydes are only interested in Fenton but they defend themselves by heaping violence on any agents who attack them. A couple agents can use this behaviour to distract the Hydes while the others ferry Fenton away. Of course, this becomes much harder if the Hydes win the chase as all three will be present...

Fight

Agents who prefer to face the creatures may be able to find some helpful items by searching the smuggled cargo. With a successful full action team Search check (DC 15), the agents find an item listed on Table 2: Searching the Crates. Firearms and rocket launchers are found near loads of ammunition and an agent may spend 1 half action grabbing up to 3 full loads for any weapon found.

Taking the Hydes on is no simple task. The beasts are ludicrously strong and gladly beat agents to a pulp or throw them against scenery. They are



also nigh-impossible to put down, meaning that even with the best weaponry the agents are likely outgunned in a direct confrontation. Fortunately, the Hydres are Large, letting the agents evade them by slipping into narrow spaces (like between fallen crates and other debris). They are also somewhat slow and prone to irrational rages that the team might be able to use to its advantage.

Table 2: Searching the Crates

Result	Item Found
Page Reference	
15–20	IMI Micro-Uzi light submachine gun
257	
21–25	RSA AKS-74 assault rifle
260	
26–30	Browning Auto-5 semi-automatic shotgun (12 gauge)
266	
31–35	1d6 thermite grenades in a satchel
252	
36–40	Large propane tank (with a firearm hit, it operates like 1 full lb. of thermite)
269	
41+	Bofors AT4 CS HE rocket launcher
271	

Distract

The Hydres' slow intellect means they can also be tricked. A female (or effeminate male) agent might be able to disguise themselves as Fenton to get the Hydres' attention, leading them away from the others or perhaps into a trap.

Finale

Assuming the agents escape with Fenton she is more than happy to cooperate with their superiors. She does not know what the Hydres are but she has a pretty good idea who sent them and why. This might lead to future adventures as the team follows leads she provides to help their

organization bring down her former employers at C.O.R.E. Concepts.

Hydes

“Target... Acquired...”

Description: Hydres are the least human of Romero-13 test subjects. Monstrous in form and function, their bodies are warped engines of destruction, their skin and muscle transformed into thick hide-like armour, their fingers twisted into vicious claws and their mouths become angry, jagged maws.

Motivations: C.O.R.E. reinforces the Hydres' natural aggression with shock therapy and conditions them to direct their rage at the company's enemies. A few, like those seen in this encounter, are still aware enough to accept simple overriding orders (“fetch this woman,” for instance) and they perform these tasks unto their destruction.

Hydes (Special NPCs — 90 XP): Init III; Atk VII; Defense VI; Res VII; v/wp IX; Comp I; Skills: None; Weapons Bite II (dmg 1d8 lethal + Romero-13 virus, error 1–2, threat 18–20), claw IV (dmg 1d10 lethal, error —, threat 19–20); Gear: None; Qualities: *Construct, damage reduction 4, feral, horrific, hulking (Large 2 × 2), inferior attribute (Int 5), superior attribute (Str 18)*

Mission Short: Death's Row

Something is not right in the old mines of Caribou, Colorado. Folks have reportedly gone missing and strange sightings have made the back pages of local papers. Most write it off as part of

the ghost town's mystique but a rare few suspect something more...

Location

C.O.R.E. Concepts Mountain Research Facility, Caribou CO

Threat Level: 3

Briefing

“Strange lights were spotted this evening in the long-abandoned town of Caribou, CO. They were initially believed to be caused by kids playing with fireworks but now two state police officers who responded to the reports have failed to report in. According to local authorities these are not the first disappearances in the area — a pair of hikers on vacation from Maine and a few teenagers known to party in the local mine — but until now there's been no reason to suspect foul play. The Governor has asked for assistance in getting to the bottom of the situation.”

Mission Objectives

- Discover the source of the disappearances
- Rescue any survivors
- Survive

Recommended Classes: Pointman, Scout, Soldier; potentially Explorer, Intruder, Scientist

Scene One

Arriving in Caribou, the agents find little besides hills, a few ruined buildings, and a long-closed mine. Deputy Lewis meets them at the edge of town and explains that the area is pretty much a ghost town, though it is a favourite of tourists and rowdy kids. As the agents poke around, they can make a team Search check for additional clues (*see*

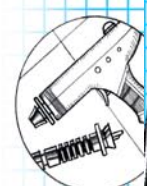


Table 3: Investigating Caribou).

Table 3: Investigating Caribou

DC	Result
15	A few spent handgun bullet casings are found in the dirt.
20	White rubber (potentially from a shoe's sole) is found lodged in the cracks of some rocks at the edge of a steep incline.
25	A human tooth is found at the bottom of a stair in one of the ghost town's buildings. It's whole but cracked.
30	A bent carabineer is found in a dried bush. Dried blood is visible on the rusty steel.

The GC should also make a team Notice check (DC 18). With success, the agents spot a light reflected off a wall deep in the mine (they would not have noticed it at all except that it is flickering). The light comes from behind an interweaving veil of petrified tree roots which the agents quickly discover is the false front of a hidden door. The root veil can swing aside, revealing a modern tunnel, one of the bulbs lighting its length in need of changing. It is clear the tunnel's construction is much more recent than the mine's last use in its original capacity. The tunnel ends in a heavy metal door with no apparent locking mechanism.

A well placed explosive could knock out the door's supports or the agents could feel around the door and with a successful Search check (DC 20), find a hidden control panel. Hotwiring the door requires a successful Security check (DC 20). Either way, read the following aloud as they open the door.

Beyond the door you find a sleek, sterile corridor painted pale blue and bathed in soft fluorescent light. A string of small orange bulbs high on the right wall blink in sequence. You hear a clunk, something sliding (perhaps another door opening) and movement from deeper in the complex.

If the agents approach or wait for the newcomers, read them the following.

Two people come into view, both wearing shredded police uniforms. They look gruesome, the rips gouging past their clothes and deep into their flesh. They lurch toward you, their arms swinging at their sides like a shaken rag doll's limbs. Their milky eyes lack focus and drool seeps from their gray lips but as you come into their lines of sight they tense and slow. They gaze at you and their eyes sharpen, then they leap forward, breaking into a dead run...

These are, of course, the missing state police officers, who were killed by some of C.O.R.E. Concepts' test subjects while investigating the town. They fell victim to the Romero-13 virus and rose as Rabid Dead, zombies whose bodies have not decomposed enough to slow their movement. Fortunately for the agents, there are only two of them, so the combat should be brief. The former officers try to grab and/or bite anyone they can, driven by a biological need to spread the virus.

Searching the officers, the agents find a pair of .38 Special Colt Police Positive service revolvers with 3d10 rounds, 2 nightsticks (which operate like light clubs) and 2 sets of handcuffs with keys.

The strain of the Romero-13 virus that infected the officers is fast-acting, the Primary Onset Time taking minutes instead of hours, so any agents who were bitten in the fight may show signs of turning more quickly than expected, particularly if the agents previously played through Hyde and Seek. The agents may believe that an antidote to the virus could be located deeper in the complex. They would be right.

Scene Two

As the agents move deeper into the complex, read the following aloud.

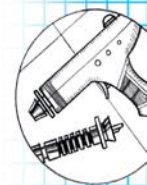
Safety posters and biohazard signs decorate the walls further along the corridors and soon you come to a large metal door with thin windows that have been smashed out. People (or things that used to be people) jerk about inside.

Agents who dare to peek through the windows see a lab and with a successful Notice check (DC 15), perhaps more (see Table 4: The Lab).

Table 4: The Lab

DC	Result
15	The occupants all share the officers' gruesome characteristics but they're further decayed and amble with less purpose. They wear the remnants of white lab coats and identification badges are still visible around one or two of their necks.
20	A large refrigeration unit containing vials of red and green liquid is located at the far wall. Pasted to its reinforced glass doors are the stencilled words "In Case of Emergency Infection — Antidote" and instructions that cannot be read at this distance.
25	Near the refrigeration unit is a large gas tank. If the agents' eyes are to be believed at this distance, it is half full.

The team has some decisions to make. A well-placed explosive will detonate the tank and more than likely take out everything in the shaft (plus collapse any outlying tunnels) but if anyone is infected the agents may need the antidote. Burying the complex may also destroy any proof of what is going on.



Twelve Shambling Dead mill about the room, along with another six Rabid Dead that are currently out of the agents' lines of sight (these are the hikers and kids that recently went missing). The Shamblers immediately attack anyone who enters the lab, drawing the attention of the Rabid Dead 1d4 rounds later. All are driven by the same biological need to spread the virus that plagued the officers.

The refrigeration unit is locked but may be smashed open with a successful Athletics check (DC 18) or any attack that inflicts at least 6 points of damage. Should the agents sweep the lab, a successful Search check (DC 20) yields a laptop bearing the C.O.R.E. Concepts logo. Decrypting its password protection will take longer than the agents have in this scene but their friends in R&D can crack it, revealing a wealth of information about C.O.R.E. Concepts and its latest viral enterprise.

The tank can be ignited with any explosion or attack that inflicts at least 15 points of damage. The resulting detonation inflicts 10d6 explosive fire damage and destroys the refrigeration unit and most of the lab and as expected it also weakens the support structure holding up the ceiling. The lab collapses over the next 5 rounds, during which time the agents must make a Complex Athletics check (3 Challenges, each DC 15) to escape. Failure brings the mine down on top of the hapless agent(s), who suffer 8d6 lethal and stress damage and are *buried* under 1d3 tons of rubble. In both cases – the initial explosion and the burial – an agent may reduce the damage to 1/2 (rounded down) with a successful Reflex save (DC 20).

One last effect of the explosion is that only half the surviving Dead perish in the explosion; the rest emerge from the destruction as the ceiling is

coming down – and they are on fire! They suffer 1d6 fire damage each round but their hits and successful grapples also inflict the same damage. It is just one more thing for the agents to deal with as they flee the mine.

Finale

Agents that make it out of the mine can administer the antidote (if they have it) and regroup. Deputy Lewis meets them outside and after some questions about what happened, offers any assistance that he can. Conveniently, he was in his patrol car while the agents explored the town and missed the fun, which is probably for the best. The agents can beat a hasty retreat and report back to the home office, perhaps with the laptop to help answer the inevitable string of questions to follow.

What comes next? Depends on whether you'd like C.O.R.E. Concepts to make another appearance in your game. Data found on the laptop or in the ruins of the complex may lead to new test sites, offer new information about the company's experiments or perhaps even name some of those responsible.

The Rabid Dead

Description: Those killed by the Caribou strain of the Romero-13 virus first become Rabid Dead, zombies that retain a good deal of their original freedom of movement and show no signs of fatigue. As their muscles and other tissues continue to atrophy, they eventually become Shambling Dead. Rabid Dead are identified by gray skin, purple lips and sunken cheeks and eyes.

Motivations: Both versions of the Caribou zombie are driven by a single all-consuming compulsion: to spread the virus raging through their decaying

systems. As the virus is transmitted by bite, this usually exhibits in an irresistible urge to feed on flesh of the uninfected.

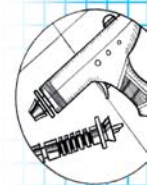
The Rabid Dead (Standard NPCs — 49 XP): Init II; Atk V; Defense II; Res IV; DS VII; Comp I; Skills: None; Weapons Bite I (dmg 1d6 lethal + Romero-13 virus, error 1–2, threat 18–20); Gear: None; Qualities: *All thumbs, clumsy, construct, damage reduction 2, fearsome, unnerving*

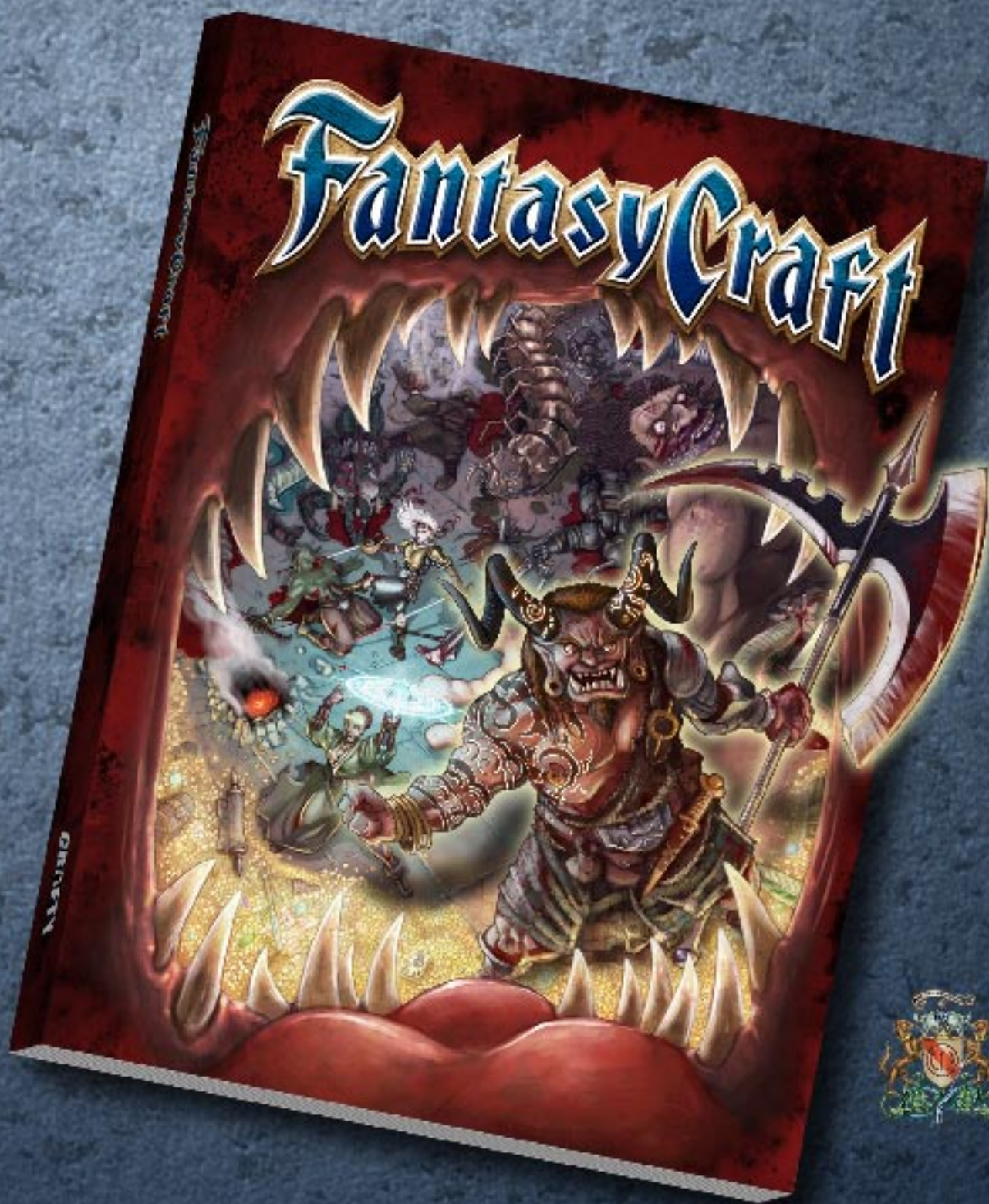
The Shambling Dead

Description: As Rabid Dead decompose they lose full control of their motor functions, becoming dry, lurching husks of their former selves. Their range of movement is small, letting agile agents slip past them with ease but they can still be extremely dangerous in large numbers.

Motivations: Both versions of the Caribou zombie are driven by a single all-consuming compulsion: to spread the virus raging through their decaying systems. As the virus is transmitted by bite, this usually exhibits in an irresistible urge to feed on flesh of the uninfected.

The Shambling Dead (Standard NPCs — 42 XP): Init II; Atk V; Defense II; Res IV; DS VII; Comp I; Skills: None; Weapons Bite I (dmg 1d6 lethal + Romero-13 virus, error 1–2, threat 18–20); Gear: None; Qualities: *All thumbs, clumsy, construct, damage reduction 2, fearsome, sluggish (20 ft. Speed)*





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Dragon Warriors Critical Hits

By Carl Walmsley

Adding descriptions of specific injuries and blows is a great way to bring battles to life. The *Dragon Warriors* rulebook, whilst providing simple rules for critical hits, suggests that players consider inventing their own tables to determine the consequences of specific wounds. If you want to know exactly what that arrow in the ogre's chest has done or that mace-strike on an opponent's knee, then look no further! Presented here is a complete set of critical hit tables, covering just about anything that your PC might choose to pick up and use as a weapon.

Weapon Categories

The type of weapon that you are using to smite your enemy will determine the sort of critical hit that you are likely to inflict. Weapons that rely on brute force are more likely to smash an opponent from his feet, where those that

benefit from a sharp edge will leave him with deep cuts and lacerations. To represent these differences between weapons, three separate critical hit tables are provided. These cover Crushing, Edged and Piercing weapons. Character armed with weapons capable of inflicting different types of wound may choose which part of the weapon they wish to use before each attack. For instance a halberd has both an axe-head and a spear point enabling it to inflict both Edged and Piercing wounds.

Note that, as explained in *Dragon Warriors* (page 66), a critical hit is scored whenever an attack rolls comes up '1'. Such an attack always strikes the target and always avoids Armour. The effects described in the tables below are in addition to these benefits, and are determined simply by rolling 1d10 whenever a critical hit is achieved and consulting the relevant table.

Crushing Weapons

This category includes maces, hammers, an ogre's fist and any other bludgeoning attacks.

D10

Critical Effect

- | D10 | Critical Effect |
|-----|---|
| 1 | Finger Grind! Your attack smashes your target's fingers. He must roll under his REFLEXES score or drop any item held in that hand. The defender may choose which hand is struck. |
| 2 | Knee Bash! Your attack thuds against your opponent's knee joint, inflicting an additional point of damage and reducing his movement by half for 1d4 Combat Rounds. |
| 3 | Staggered! Your blow sends your enemy lurching back 1d4 metres. He must roll under his REFLEXES or fall prone. |
| 4 | Funny Bone! The tip of your weapon strikes a nerve, sending a tremor of pain through one of your target's limbs. The attacker may select which limb is struck. It is incapacitated for 1d3 Combat Rounds and any items held are dropped. |
| 5 | Shattered Nose! With a crack of cartilage and a splatter of blood, your blow flattens the target's nose. He may not attack for 1d2 Combat Rounds and during this time his Defence is reduced by 2. His LOOKS characteristic is permanently reduced by 1. |
| 6 | Dead Leg! A Heavy blow to the leg numbs the limb, incapacitating it for 1d6 Combat Rounds. During this time, the target's movement is halved and his DEFENCE is lowered by 2. The attacker may choose which leg is struck. |



- 7 **Echoing Blow!** The thud of impact sets your opponent's ears ringing. He is rendered deaf for 1d10 minutes. No spellcasting is possible during this time.
- 8 **Flattened!** Your attack forces your enemy to the ground and inflicts an extra point of damage. A mounted foe is unhorsed.
- 9 **Skull Tap!** A savage blow to the head concusses your target. He must roll under his STRENGTH or lose consciousness for 1d20 minutes. He suffers double damage and his ATTACK and DEFENCE are reduced by 1 until he is fully healed.
- 10 **Heart Hammer!** Your attack pummels your foe's breastbone, causing his heart to skip a beat. The target must roll under his STRENGTH or die. Damage from the attack is doubled.

Edged Weapons

This category includes slashing swords, axe-blades, razor sharp talons and anything else that will slice through an enemy.

D10

Critical Effect

- 1 **Clash!** Your weapon smashes against an item held by your opponent, forcing it aside. The item cannot be used for the remainder of the Combat Round. The target may choose which item is knocked aside.
- 2 **Skinned Knuckles!** Your attack slices skin from the opponent's hand. He must roll under his REFLEXES score or drop any item held in that hand. The attacker may choose which hand is struck.
- 3 **Ringling blow!** Your blow clatters against the target forcing him to drop an item that he is holding. The target may choose what he drops. If no item is held, the target suffers an extra point of damage.
- 4 **Sever Strap!** Your blows slices clean through your opponent's shield or armour straps. If the target's shield is struck, it falls to the ground and cannot be used again until repaired. If his armour is struck, it starts to fall away: its AF is reduced by 1 until repaired. The target may choose whether his shield or armour is struck. If the target has neither shield nor armour, an extra point of damage is inflicted.
- 5 **Bone Grind!** Your blow cuts right through to the bone inflicting an extra 2 points of damage.
- 6 **Bleeder!** Your blow hacks through an artery, drenching you and the target in blood. Until the flow of blood is staunched, the target must roll under his STRENGTH each Combat Round or lose an additional Health Point.
- 7 **Gashed Brow!** A bleeding wound is opened above the target's eyes. Until this is tended, his vision is impaired. This reduces his ATTACK, DEFENCE and all vision-related characteristics by 2.
- 8 **Tendon Ripper!** One of the target's tendons is shredded, rendering one of his limbs useless until he is restored to full Health Points. The attacker may choose which limb to strike. An incapacitated leg halves the target's movement. An incapacitated arm cannot be used to hold anything.
- 9 **Splintering Strike!** Your blow cleaves through an item held by the target, destroying it. The target may choose which item is destroyed. If no items are held, this blow severs a limb instead! This inflicts double the normal amount of damage and the target must roll under his STRENGTH or lose consciousness for 1d6 Rounds. He loses 1 Health Point each Round until he dies or receives healing. The attacker may choose which limb is removed.
- 10 **Throat Slash!** A deep wound is opened in the target's neck that gushes blood. Damage from the attack is doubled. The target loses a Health Point each Combat Round until he either dies or receives magical healing.

Piercing Weapons

The category covers all impaling weapons such as spears, arrows and thrown daggers.

D10 Critical Effect

- 1 **Foot Pin!** Your weapon impales the target's foot. He may not move at all during this Combat Round and his movement is halved for 1d4 Combat Rounds.
- 2 **Bicep Poke!** One of your opponent's arms is pierced, forcing him to drop anything he is holding in the adjoining hand. The attacker may choose which arm is struck.
- 3 **Cheek Gouge!** Your blow ricochets from the target's cheekbone, tearing open the flesh. The target's LOOKS characteristic is permanently reduced by 1.
- 4 **Groin Stab!** The point of your weapon jabs your opponent's most sensitive area. He must forfeit his next attack.
- 5 **Impaled!** Your weapon passes all the way through your opponent's body. Damage from the attack is increased by 2.
- 6 **Kebab!** Your attack pins one part of the target's body to another. He must spend 1d3 Combat Rounds freeing himself or recovering from the shock. He may defend as normal during this time but cannot take any actions.
- 7 **Caught Between the Ribs!** Your weapon is snagged inside your opponent's ribcage. You must roll under your STRENGTH to pull it free. Doing so inflicts 4 points of damage.
- 8 **Deep Cut!** Blood gushes from a wound as you slice open an artery. The opponent loses 1 Health Point each Combat Rounds until he dies or receives magical healing.
- 9 **Eye Pierced!** Your attack destroys one of the target's eyes. His ATTACK is reduced by 2, and damage from the attack is doubled. Magical healing will regenerate the damaged eye.
- 10 **Heart Thrust!** The tip of your weapon pierces the target's heart. Damage from the attack is doubled. The target loses 1 Health Point each Combat Round until he dies or receives magical healing.

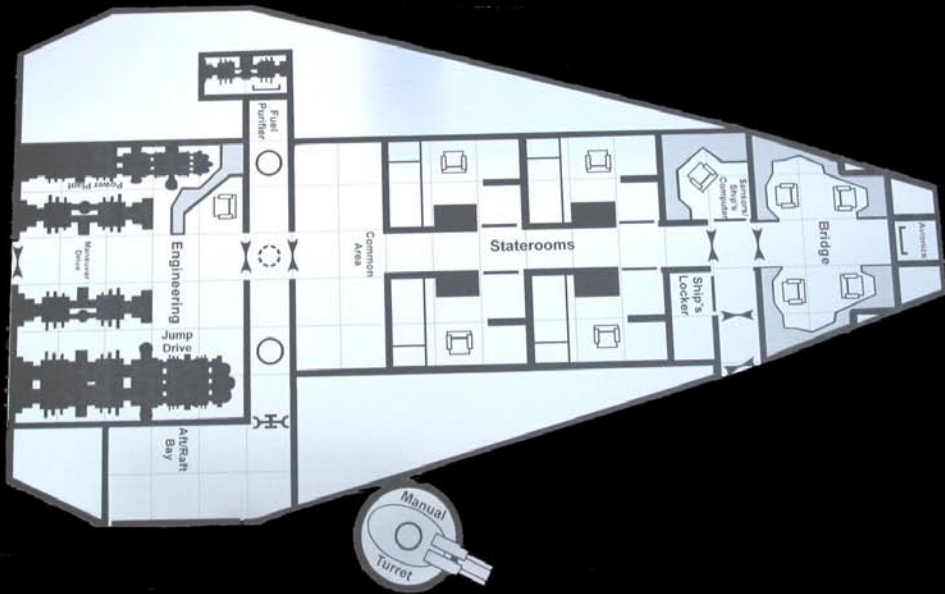


DRAGONFIRE

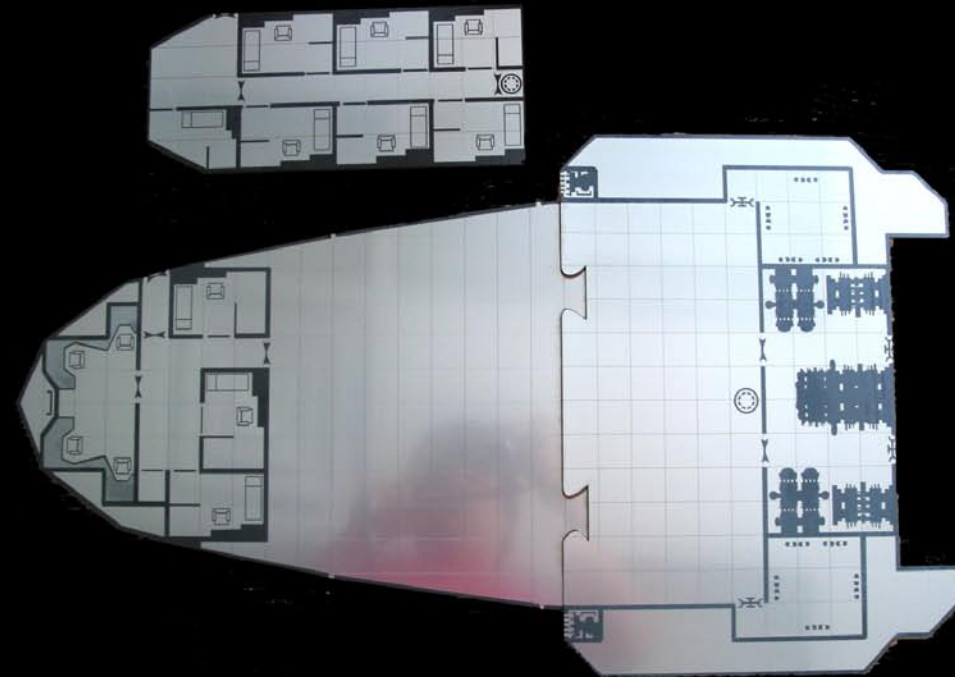
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The Making of an Agent

CORPORATION

Matthew Keevil

CORPORATION

It bears commenting on that an overwhelming number of corporate Agents are recruited from outside the spires. Given the genetic fine-tuning and vast educational opportunities open to the average spire citizen, this might strike a casual observer as rather odd. What could the grubby and diseased life of an Old City dweller impart on a potential Agent that could not be gained by a reputable citizen following a course of weapons and espionage training? Several possible reasons behind this trend spring to mind; the deliberate integration of organic weakness into the equation to maintain tactical flexibility and the increased psychological resilience that comes with an operative already used to a life of brutality are two of the foremost. However, even after considering these hypotheses it is worth baring in mind that those who are most used to destitution are also those most likely to react to elevation from their lowly position with shows of extreme gratitude. With this in mind, it would certainly be in the interests of the corporations to ensure that the Old Cities remain far separated from social aid that might lessen their inhabitant's lust for the privileged slavery of the Agent program.

- Excerpt from 'The New Mamluks, a study of Corporate Agents' by UIG anthropologist Horace Kleisner

Agent Origins

The five great corporations between them provide over 90% of the legitimate jobs in the world. Every day, corporate employees work at vast array of occupations, everything from research scientists, to bureaucrats to janitors. However, more than any other, one form of corporate employment has come to be a symbol of the age; the corporate Agent.

Part corporate executive, part project trouble-shooter and part super-soldier, Agents have come to mean many different things to different people. In the spire-cities where the corporations rule they occupy a position in the popular consciousness, somewhere between a beat-cop and a celebrity. In the Old Cities they are both admired and feared, many Old City-dwellers having found a way out of the gutter by becoming Agents only to become monsters willing to kill just to preserve their master's stock-prices. To the UIG they are amoral shells of the Corporations, scarcely better than the criminals and terrorists they help prosecute. Ultimately, though, all Agents are humans and thus no two are exactly alike.

Becoming an Agent entails a great deal of potentially negative consequences, most notably the fact that Agents are, for all intents and purposes, corporate property.

Joining the Agent program is more than just signing up as a highly-paid mercenary; it involves literally signing away your freedom. Creating an Agent involves a significant investment of capital and no corporation is willing to spend several hundred thousand credits training, equipping and augmenting an Agent without some degree of legal insurance that they will do the job intended of them. From the moment their name is on the dotted line and their chip data scanned into the Agent database, the only human rights an Agent possesses are those their corporation chooses to grant. That said, a satisfied employee is a productive employee and while no corporation wants their Agents off the leash neither do they want them mistreated and resentful. Consequentially, Agents often live extraordinarily lavish lifestyles by the standards of most people and are well rewarded for the work that they do, with disciplinary actions for failure and insubordination being harsh but fair; a state of affairs maintained by the fact that most Mission Officers are former Agents themselves. Agents also invariably have to contend with entering situations of extreme danger and violence. The comparison to a soldier is an utterly invalid one to convey the scope of the danger an Agent's work takes them on, many soldiers go their entire term of service in the reasonable expectation that



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they probably will not be called on to enter a full-blown fire fight. Agent Divisions, on the other hand, regularly rack up bills for enough ammunition to outfit an entire infantry platoon during the course of a single mission.

Given all this, what sort of people become Agents? Painted in broad strokes, many Agents fall into one or more of the following categories;

The Desperate

Sometimes the corporations get wind of an individual who possesses great talents, who is living in dire need of something outside their grasp. The genius computer hacker imprisoned for robbing electronic banks to pay for a relative's medical bills, the ace hit man; raised on the streets who knows no other trade than death, the former UIG cop whose family was murdered but cannot seek revenge due to regulations; all are potential Agent material. The desperate become Agents to get something they could never have otherwise, be it comfort, freedom, knowledge, vengeance or something else entirely. Individuals fitting this mould are often highly driven but need to be watched very carefully, if kept from pursuing their own personal agendas for too long they can become intractable.

The Beast

This point cannot be understated; many Agents are pathologically unstable. By the very nature of the skills required of an Agent they are often recruited from amongst those who have a long relationship with brutality. Serial killers, disturbed war veterans and sadistic torturers have all found succour

under the Agent program where their talents and predilections are not only sheltered but valued. From time to time the corporations have need of individuals willing to commit atrocities, the nature of their work is gruesome, bloody and terrifying and that is exactly the point. Agents in this category are living terror-weapons, monsters wearing human faces whose sole purpose is to act as gore-splattered messengers of contempt to enemies of the corporation.

The Mercenary

A lot of Agents are just in it for the money. In fact, with the exception of the employees of the Comoros Alliance, this type makes up the majority of all corporate Agents. To this type of individual, being an Agent is just another high-risk/high-pay job, no different from asteroid mining or orbital construction. Agents with this attitude have the advantage that as long as they are supplied with regular pay they rarely ask questions and their moral qualms are similarly negotiable. On the downside, from the perspective of a Mission Officer, they have little loyalty to the corporation and are always potential defectors to whoever is offering a better price.

The True Believer

In an age where they have come to replace the positions once held in people's lives by country, political ideology and even religion, Corporations with strong philosophies such as Comoros, Shi Yukiro and the Western Federation can sometimes instil a powerful fervour in those who believe in the principles they stand for. The Agents of

the Comoros Corporation, in particular, are often fanatical in their devotion to the aims of their corporation. However, True Believers are found in every Corporation and even Eurasian Inc. possesses Agents devoted to the principles of total market freedom to a quasi-mystical degree. True Believers are unflinchingly loyal to the corporation but are rarely stable individuals and situations that lead them to question their worldview can often have disastrous consequences.

The Dilettante

Finally, there are those who become Agents out of dissatisfaction with their lives. A great many spire-born Agents fall into this category. When faced with a lifetime of nameless banality in an office cubicle or assembly-line, the days of your life passing you by under a phosphor strip light with three weeks unpaid vacation a year as your only solace the life of an Agent, with all its glamour and excitement, looks highly tempting... and providing you can pass the tests, it could all be yours. Strangely, Agents in this category are often some of the best, they add unusual skills to a division that can be its saving grace in terms of tactical diversity and are highly earnest and driven. Their sole glaring failing is that few possess the same degree of field experience other Agent candidates do, and even if they have great skills they'll always be 'book-learned'.

'It is difficult but not impossible to conduct strictly honest business. What is true is that honesty is incompatible with the amassing of a large fortune.'

- Mohandas Gandhi, 1948



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Dirty work, done for large sums of cash
The roles that Agents play in their corporation are many and varied but ultimately they all amount to making sure that the corporation continues to make a profit. Every Agent is a person that was already exceptional in some way, be it physical, mental or psychological, then elevated to a whole new level by the science of the Corporations, as such, Agent divisions are expected to be capable of dealing with a wide variety of situations. And as the most trusted of all corporate personnel, Agents are the ones who are usually called in to do the work that the Corporation would rather remain secret. The type of work an Agent division is likely to be called upon will vary slightly depending on the skills of its members (a division containing no scientific consultant, for example, is unlikely to be called on to inspect a laboratory installation) but common missions might include the following;

Cleanup

When evidence has to be destroyed, when the UIG inspectors are on their way to the illegal BIO lab installation, when someone knows more than they should do about corporate affairs, it's time to call in the Agents. Cleanup operations are about making sure that potentially damaging scandals never see the light of day, if that means silencing someone or obstructing the course of justice, then so be it.

Extermination

Agents aren't cybernetically enhanced just so they can stand around looking good; they are to turn them into nigh-unstoppable walking death machines. When an installation, mining colony, public building

or other corporate asset has been taken over by hostiles the first response is typically to send in an Agent division to deal with the 'infestation'. A division of green Agents is generally considered more than sufficient for dealing with outlaws and small-scale terrorist groups, more experienced Agents might be called on to lead strikes on cells of the Cult of Machina.

Extraction

Rescue of important corporate employees from dangerous situations is a common Agent duty, as is kidnapping valuable personnel from rival corporations. Often, enemy Agent divisions will find themselves coming to blows while both on Extraction missions - one division performing the kidnapping and the other attempting rescue.

Mediation

As unlikely as it sounds, Agents are the foremost ambassadors for their Corporation. Many of them are selected not for their skill at arms but for their finesse in social situations and when an agreement must be met, particularly under hostile circumstances such as negotiating with enemy corporations or violent terrorists such as the Cult, they are the obvious choice to oversee the arrangements. Of course, no Agent is entirely harmless and sending an Agent mediator is not only a shrewd personnel choice, it is also a subtle means of intimidation.

'Back before I got my enhancements there was this cyberneticist, can't quite remember her name, but just before I went under she came up and jabbed a surgical lancet right in my arm. Well, naturally, I yelled like a girl and

demanded to know what that was all about. She told me "Remember what that feels like, keep it in your memory forever."

When I asked why, she replied "Because it's the last time you're going to feel pain ever again."

- Agent Trevor Mallard, Eurasian Incorporated

On Being Posthuman

It is impossible to understate the degree to which their upgrades affect an Agent's life. A newly created Agent emerges from the augmentation vats a new, better, breed of human, bullets and blades no longer holding the same terror they once did. The technology suffusing an Agent's body is what sets them apart from the rest of humanity, every cell in their body is a host for ICE nanites that allow them to function unhindered with wounds that would cripple a normal man and neural stabilisers enable them to recover even from severe head trauma without impairment of memory or skills.

To a normal human this incredible resilience, coupled with their inability to feel pain, can make Agents seem terrifying, laughing off hails of bullets and rising to their feet like revenant ghosts after taking wounds that should have left them dead. As they advance in their career most Agents acquire even more cyberware and biological enhancement, further widening the gap between them and baseline humanity. Modern studies have found that the old quandary of the ship of Theseus is a fallacious one. With the exception of the few rare people suffering from the pathological memetic ideology of the Cult of Machina, the transition from human to more-than-human rarely causes any



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degree of existential break in the augmented individual. Quite to the contrary, people with cybernetics are often more mentally healthy and self-confident than those without, losing part of one's biological vulnerability and gaining new abilities to boot seems to be highly beneficial to the human psyche.

Nevertheless, pushing the boundaries of human ability is not all sunshine and task-chips; it comes with some serious ramifications. All that energy-intensive cyberware laced throughout an Agent's body needs to be powered and that power comes directly from their metabolic processes. A few different internal power sources for cybernetics have been tried but all failed in some way; batteries require constant recharging, making them a liability when Agents are in an area where access to mains-power is difficult and nuclear decay cells have unfortunate effects on an Agent's DNA which incur even more medical costs. In lieu of internal power, Agent cybernetics take their energy from metabolic powerplants that draw off the body's energy from thermal induction and bioelectric capacitance.

Unfortunately, a normal human body does not produce sufficient output to power high-performance cybernetics so Agents have to be provided with accelerated metabolisms through gene-modification. That enhanced metabolism does not come cheap; to support it an Agent of average bodyweight with just their standard-issue enhancements will have to consume around 4-8,000 kilocalories a day or begin to starve rapidly. Deprived of adequate nutrition an Agent's body will shut down their cybernetics in sequence just

before the point where their body consumes the layer of body fat necessary for nervous insulation. To help support them, specialised nutrient bars have been developed that allow Agents and other heavily augmented individuals to survive for long periods of time. These range in quality from chalky, enriched glucose-blocks to high-grade synthetics that are moderately palatable but all are capable of maintaining an Agent's systems for about a day of activity and are easily portable for when they must be separated from civilisation. The rest of the time, high-calorie food in large quantities is the order of the day.

'Old age is always fifteen years older than I am.'

-Bernard Baruch, 1955

Anagathics

For the privileged of the 26th century aging is a lifestyle choice, not inevitability. Agents fall into this category. Modern anagathic techniques such as telomeric restoration, antiprion therapy and nanite cell-surgery have left no upper-limit on the human lifespan. Some high-ranking Agents have been members of their respective corporations since almost the time of their founding and more still are able to remember first-hand the horrors of the corporate wars. Life extending technology is reliable, effective and well within the budget of most Agents of Lieutenant rank or above. The effective immortality available to them can make some Agents highly future-minded, seeking to safeguard their interests not just a few years ahead but a few centuries ahead.

As their interests tend to coincide with those of the corporation that employs them, most are glad to subsidise their Agent's anagathic treatments, it being far more cost-effective to pay to retain the services of an established and effective operative than create and train a new, green recruit. Agent Oyanagi Kameko* of the Shi Yukiro and founder of Takata laser systems, stands as the oldest Agent currently retaining a public image at 416 years old, 400 of which have been spent in the service of Shi Yukiro.

*Featured in the Machines of War corporation sourcebook.

Optional Mission Reward - Anagathic Subsidy

Corporate Agents granted this job perk receive a discount of 5% multiplied by their rank for purchases of 'Krieg-Mikuro Anagathic Nanite Implants', paid for by the corporation to retain their services indefinitely.

Advanced Agent Upgrades

The standard Agent enhancements listed in the core rule book represent only the current instantiation of the Agent cybernetics suite. Like all forms of technology, Agent enhancements have evolved over time, becoming more refined as time goes by. The following are experimental or prototype Agent cybernetics that are either works-in-progress or pending review before being implemented as a standard part of the basic Agent enhancement package. Agents in the field might be called upon to test these cybernetics as part of their mission and report on their effectiveness or may acquire them through internal contacts.



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Overdrive Net

Installation Complex, 2 days
Cost 20,000¢
Prerequisites ICE Technology

The Overdrive Net is a mesh of superconductive nano-active threads laced throughout the patient's musculature and nervous system that deliberately abuses the biological re-routing capabilities of the patient's ICE to allow their body to function beyond its safe limits. While the temporary gains of this ability are impressive, the injuries resulting from dislocated joints and torn muscle-fibres and tendons are commensurately appalling.

System

The patient may increase their Strength and Agility stats by 5 points for one scene. However, at the end of the scene, both these

stats drop by 3 points below their original values. Providing the user possesses R-Drug, as all Agents should, the lost stats will heal naturally, though at a slow rate due to the widespread nature of the injuries, recovering at a rate of 1 stat point every 2 days. Treatment at a cybernetics lab or good (E.I. level) hospital can heal this damage more quickly at a cost of 500¢ per point.

Psicomm

Installation Complex, 5 hours
Cost 26,000¢
Prerequisites Telepathy training

This evolution of the sub vocal communicator has unfortunately outpaced human evolution and as such can only be used by a select group of Agents - namely, Telepaths. Psicomm technology uses focused Psion waves instead of radio waves to transmit data. Psicomm communications are thus

impossible to hack by conventional means, and the technology is so new and obscure that very few telepaths have the ability to intercept Psicomm transmissions either. Psicomm transmissions have a few other advantages and limitations over more conventional sub vocal comms as well; Psicomm messages can be sent to anyone within the user's line of sight, regardless of whether they have a Psicomm themselves, unless they are blocked from telepathic contact, typically by being in psi-cuffs. However, outside of visual contact, only other Psicomm users can be contacted, and only if they are tuned in to each other's correct telepathic frequency. On the upside there is effectively unlimited range. A pair of psicomm users could engage in unbroken realtime conversation while one of them was standing on the moon, mars, or halfway across the galaxy; lag isn't an issue due to the subjective timeframe that psion radiation operates in. Psicomms require telepathic energy to function, costing the user 1 TE per turn of use.



RuneQuest Elf Monsters



Aldryami Addendum #6



Written by Shannon Appelcline

Illustrated by Furman

Glorantha is a world full of strange creatures. Many of them have already been detailed in *RuneQuest Monsters* and *RuneQuest Monsters II*. However, particularly in the hidden realms of the Aldryami, there are even stranger creatures still to be found.

This article offers a comprehensive reference for the things that might be found in the forests, jungles and swamps of the elves. It includes additional information on monsters detailed in existing books as well as eight brand-new creatures.

Elf lands are not homogeneous and different creatures might appear in different regions. The following categories of elf lands have been used throughout this piece:

- Forests: These are deciduous or evergreen forests controlled by brown or green elves. The majority of the elf lands in Genertela fall into this category, as do the western forests in Pamaletela.
- Jungles: These are the humid homes of the yellow elves. The best known are the Errinoru jungles in Pamaletela but there are also jungles in southeastern Genertela.
- Swamps: There are swamps all across Glorantha. Among the largest are Sodal Marsh in Ralios, Trachodon Marsh in Ramalia and

the great marshes of western Pamaletela. These are the traditional home of the red elves, who may also be found in much smaller swamp lands.

- Undersea: Much of Glorantha is underwater but the blue elves tend to live in the shallower coastal areas.

The nearby chart lists the frequency of encounters for the most ubiquitous creatures that might be found in elf lands.

Forest and Jungle

Encounters

Common

Animals

Uncommon

Elfs*

Runners

Rare

Dryads

Elementals*

Elemental Archetypes

Snake Vines

Sprites

War Trees or Branchsteeds*

* Increase frequency of encounter by one level when forest or jungle is on a war footing.

When referring to existing books, RQM is *RuneQuest Monsters*, RQM2 is *RuneQuest Monsters II*, Elfs is my own *Elfs: A Guide to the Aldryami* and CG2 is *Cults of Glorantha: Volume 2*.

Animals

Habitat: All elf lands have animals of some sort.

Source: *RQM*, p.14 (baboon); *RQM*, p.16 (brown bear); *RQM*, pp.19-20 (behemoth); *RQM*, p.27 (chimpanzee); *RQM2*, pp.37-38 (clouded leopard); *RQM*, pp.29-30; (crocodile) *RQM*, p.32 (deer); *RQM*, pp.32-39 (dinosaurs); *RQM2* pp.42-45 (more dinosaurs); *RQM*, p.61 (elephant); *RQM2*, p.61 (elk); *RQM*, p.72 (grampus); *RQM*, pp.83-84 (insect swarm); *RQM2*, pp.89-90 (leaping bear); *RQM2*, pp.93-94 (megalodon); *RQM2*, pp.94-95 (megatherium); *RQM2*, pp.99-100 (mraloting); *RQM*, p.100 (octopus); *RQM2*, pp.107-108; *RQM*, pp.102-103 (panther); *RQM*, p. 16 (polar bears); *RQM*, pp.105 (rhinoceros), *RQM*, p.114 (shark); *RQM*, pp.118-119 (snake), *RQM*, pp.131 (tiger)

Even in elf forests, the primary inhabitants are not elves but instead animals of all sorts. Encounters with such will usually be fleeting, as animals are





most likely to flee – unless characters have the misfortune to meet a bear or giant cat in his hunting ground.

Elfs will usually not have meaningful relationships with the animals of their forest – and thus they are unlikely to be encountered together. Elfs may try and deter animals from harming specific trees but other than that, they do not care much about these “red races.” The Errinoru jungles seem to be the exception. The hero Errinoru has raised up armies of jungle animals to fight against the God Learners in Pamaleta in the past and he may do so again in the future.

The different types of elf lands each include different animals:

Forests: brown bears, chimpanzees, deer, elk, leaping bears, panthers (specifically, cougars or mountain lions) and snakes (most of

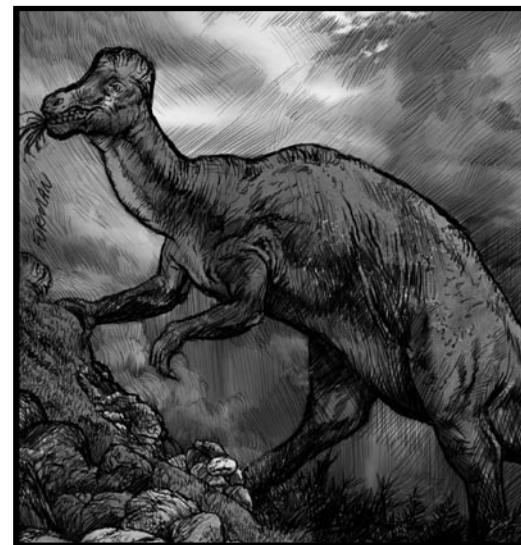
which will be harmless but some of which will be poisonous “vipers”, such as pit vipers, puff adders and rattlesnakes).

- Dinosaurs appear in no known forests but the elfs of Tarinwood train trachodons (another name for the hadrosaur, RQM p.35) in the nearby marsh. There are also other dinosaurs in that swampland.
- The strange mraloting appear in the forests around Ralios, including Ballid, Erontree and Tarinwood.
- The polar bear appears only in cold, primarily evergreen forests, specifically Winterwood, in northwestern Fronela and the Bright Green Kingdom, in Erigia.

Jungles: baboons (but not the giant, intelligent baboons of Prax), behemoth, elephants, grampus, panthers (specifically leopards and lions), rhinoceros, snakes (including non-venomous snakes, pythons and vipers alike in endless varieties; there tend to be more vipers—such as cobras and mambas—in the jungles of southeastern Genertela and more pythons—such as anacondas and boas—in Pamaltela) and tigers.

- Besides being notable for their proliferation of very venomous vipers, the jungles of southeastern Genertela also include some other unique species, including the clouded leopard and the panda bear.
- Swamps: crocodile, dinosaurs (of all sorts), snakes (of all sorts but with an emphasis on vipers, including cottonmouths, copperheads and rattlesnakes).

Underwater: megalodon, octopus, shark.



Branchsteed

Habitat: Forests containing Vronkali.

Certain Genertelan elf forests contain groups of Vronkali known as the “branch warders.” They are elite elfin cavalry units, who ride into battle upon “branchsteeds,” which are plant creations prepared by gardeners then animated by “Create Branchsteed,” a variant of the “Create War Tree” (CG2, p.76) spell that is used to awaken a branchsteed and prepare it for battle. Though a branchsteed is not quite as fierce as a war tree, a trained elf mounted upon one can cause considerable havoc.

Rune Spell: Create Branchsteed

Duration 6 hours, Magnitude 3, Ranged
Runes: *Plant*, Earth, Fertility

This spell awakens a specially grown branchsteed plant, preparing it for use by an elf in battle.



The branchsteed will carry out the caster's instructions.

A branchsteed appears as an overgrown bush in the vague form of a horse. Thorns and spurs cover its hooves, while thorns also form the sharp teeth within its mouth. Seen inanimate, a branchsteed *might* be confused for a normal bush but in motion there is no doubt that they are anything but mobile war machines.

Characteristics

STR	2D6+12	(19)
CON	3D6+12	(23)
DEX	2D6+3	(10)
SIZ	2D6+18	(25)
INT	5	(5)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	1	(1)

Branchsteed Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Right Hind Leg	2/10
3-4	Left Hind Leg	2/10
5-7	Hindquarters	2/11
8-10	Forequarters	2/11
11-13	Right Front Leg	2/10
14-16	Left Front Leg	2/10
17-20	Head	2/10

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage
Bite	35%	1D10+1D8
Hoof	45%	1D6+1D8

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +8
Movement: 5m
Traits: Life Sense

Typical Armour: Wood and vines (AP 2, no Skill Penalty)

Dryad

Habitat: Any elf land.

Source: *RQM2*, pp.49-50.

Each grove of trees in an elf forest will tend to have one dryad. They are fierce defenders of the forests and though their physical combat skills are meager, the most powerful dryads will have integrated runes (particularly earth and plant) and may know divine magic as well.

The stats in *RQM2* are the correct ones to use for Gloranthan dryads, not those found in the original *RQM*, which detail a more generic dryad.

Elementals

Habitat: Any elf land.

Source: *RQM2*, pp.51-52 (barren); *RQM2*, pp.52-54 (boreal); *RQM*, pp.51-53 (gnome); *RQM2*, pp.54-55 (lume); *RQM*, pp.54-55 (salamander); *RQM*, pp.55-56 (shade); *RQM*, pp.58-61 (undine).

There are six categories of elementals that might be employed by Aldryami intent on protecting their lands. The elementals of the three Protectors are the most likely to be utilized by the elf people. These are watery undines, earthen gnomes and lumes of light.

The elementals of the Taker are less common, since they may only be called upon by dark elves; however, dark elves will sometimes use their connections to darkness, stone and the forces of Iri to help protect their lands. The elementals they can call upon are

the stone barren, the dark shade and the shattered elementals of Iri, including the cold boreal, the dusty drift and the fiery salamander.

The drift is detailed here for the first time. It follows all the general rules for elementals, as discussed in *RQM*, p. 51& 60. As with the other Iri elementals, it can be destroyed in conflict with a cleansing undine.

Elemental, Drift

Habitat: Any land with dark elves, particularly the Redwood Forest and the Tallseed Forest (see *Elfs*, pp.47-52).

A drift is an elemental of dust. It is water that has been emptied of its very essence, leaving behind only a dry, lifeless residue. It represents a force that lays in opposition to all the forces of life; it clogs lungs, tears at skin and darkens light. Just as water represents healing, the drift's dust represents the wounding opposite.

A drift appears as a man-like creature composed entirely of dust or sand. They are every bit as fluid and beautiful as undines but they are even more deeply dangerous than their kin.

Abilities

A drift can drain away water that it is touching, turning it into lifeless dust. Each round, it can thus ruin an amount of water equal to its volume, to an ultimate radius of its POW in meters. Doing so heals the drift a number of hit points equal to its volume.

Though a drift has a compact, man-like body, dust, dirt and sand spin around it in a much wider



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radius. Any creatures within a radius of a drift's POW is partially blinded, taking a -20% penalty to any skills requiring sight (including combat). This penalty may be ignored by creatures with Earth Sense (but not Night Sight or other special vision types).

Anyone within that radius also takes 1d2 damage each round to each location. Armour protects normally. This damage may not be healed while the drift is alive and within POW meters.

Combat

A drift may use one of two different forms of attacks.

It may try to suffocate its victim, much like an undine does. It must try to force its gritty body into its victim's lungs. It does so by succeeding at an opposed Athletics test with its victim. After that the victim must make a Resilience test each round, with a cumulative -10% penalty. If he fails, he takes 1D4 damage from the clogging dust. There is no limit to how large of a creature the drift can suffocate but while it is doing so it may take no other action.

Alternatively, it may concentrate its rapidly swirling dust and damage a specific individual. This "Stinging Dust" is listed as a normal attack, below. This damage may also not be healed while the drift is alive and within POW meters.

Characteristics & Attributes

All characters except DEX are based on a drift's size. Each cubic meter the drift possesses gives it 1D6 STR, 2D6 POW, 1 point of fixed INT, half a point of CHA and 1D6 hit points. All drifts have a DEX of 4D6. A drift's Damage Modifier

is computed using the drift's POW, rather than STR + SIZ.

Sample Drifts

Characteristics

STR	1D6	(4)
DEX	4D6	(14)
SIZ	1 cubic metre	
INT	1	(1)
POW	2D6	(7)
CHA	1	(1)
HP	1D6	(4)

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Stinging Dust	40%	1D6-1D6
Suffocate	opposed athletics (30%)	suffocation

Special Rules

<i>Damage Modifier:</i>	-1D6
<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+8
<i>Movement:</i>	10m
<i>Skills:</i>	Athletics 30%, Perception 30%

Characteristics

STR	3D6	(11)
DEX	4D6	(14)
SIZ	3 cubic metres	
INT	3	(3)
POW	6D6	(21)
CHA	2	(2)
HP	3D6	(11)

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Stinging Dust	45%	1D6
Suffocate	opposed athletics (40%)	suffocation

Special Rules

<i>Damage Modifier:</i>	+0
<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+9
<i>Movement:</i>	10m
<i>Skills:</i>	Athletics 40%, Perception 45%

Characteristics

STR	5D6	(18)
DEX	4D6	(14)
SIZ	5 cubic metres	
INT	5	(5)
POW	10D6	(35)
CHA	3	(3)
HP	5D6	(18)

Weapons

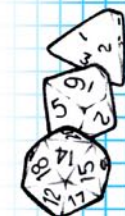
Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Stinging Dust	50%	1D6+1D4
Suffocate	opposed athletics (50%)	suffocation

Special Rules

<i>Damage Modifier:</i>	+1D4
<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+10
<i>Movement:</i>	10m
<i>Skills:</i>	Athletics 50%, Perception 60%

Characteristics

STR	10D6	(35)
DEX	4D6	(14)
SIZ	10 cubic metres	
INT	10	(10)
POW	20D6	(70)
CHA	5	(5)
HP	10D6	(35)



Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Stinging Dust	65%	1D6+2D6
Suffocate	opposed athletics (75%)	suffocation

Special Rules

Damage Modifier:	+2D6
Combat Actions:	3
Strike Rank:	+12
Movement:	10m
Skills:	Athletics 75%, Perception 90%

Elemental Archetypes

Habitat: Various.

Elementals represent the forces of nature in their purest forms. They are inherently magical and as such their bodies are often only partially material. It is a rare true elemental, such as the boreal, which can physically attack its opponents.

Elemental archetypes are something different. They are still made entirely of an element and can be controlled by the appropriate Command Elemental spell. However, they have been formed into a very specific archetype—a physical form that gives them more substantiality in the world.

The origins of elemental archetypes are quite varied. Some are the gifts of the gods, others the creations of sorcerers. Some are naturally formed in certain terrains, while others appear entirely sporadically.

For the elves, most elemental archetypes are either gifts of the three Protectors (Eron, Gata and Halamalao) or else appear naturally at a certain place within a forest. An example of one appears below

Elemental Archetype,

Earth Protector

Habitat: Forest or jungle.

Gata was the great Protector of the Mreli. It was she who raised up the earth to embrace the surviving Shen Shenae in the Black Age and she who saw them reborn as the brown elves after the Dawn. Gata also protected brown elves in other ways, one of which was through the creation of the earth protectors, an elemental archetype dedicated to defending the inhabitants of Mreli forests.

Earth protectors look like giant bears but they are entirely made out of earth. Most Mreli forests tend to have a couple of them. They usually slumber in caves that lie beneath the forests but when danger rises Gata priestesses will waken them.

Though they are not plants, earth protectors can be commanded through Life Sense. On their own, they will defend Aldryami and attack those pursuing them.

Characteristics

STR	4D6+20 (34)
CON	4D6+10 (24)
DEX	2D6 (7)
SIZ	4D6+20 (34)
INT	3
POW	3D6 (10)
CHA	1

Earth Protector Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Right Rear Leg	5/12
3-4	Left Rear Leg	5/12
5-7	Hindquarters	5/13
8-10	Chest	5/14
11-13	Right Front Leg	5/11
14-16	Left Front Leg	5/11
17-20	Head	5/12

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage
Bite	65%	2D6+1D12
Claw	55%	2D4+1D12

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2
 Strike Rank: +5
 Movement: 4m
 Traits: Burrower, Earth Sense, Life Sense
 Skills: Persistence 55%, Resilience 80%
 Typical Armour: Earth and stones (AP 5, no Skill Penalty)

Elfs

Habitat: Forests (Mreli and Vronkali); Fresh-Water Lakes (Alim); Jungles (Embyli); The Sea (Gentari and Makisanti); Western Plains (Fey Elfs); The Vale of Flowers (Halani).

Source: *RQM2*, pp.56-59.

Any visitor to an elf land will ultimately have to deal with its protectors. The Aldryami are not shy but instead will announce their presence as is required. Though a few elf lands are entirely xenophobic, most will allow other races some



access to their forests, provided that they show the appropriate respect to the land.

RQM2 contains all the correct stats for Gloranthan elves; they should be used rather than the world-generic stats found in *RQM*. There are a few subspecies of elves that only appear in very specific locales, including the wild elves of western Genertela and the flower elves of the eastern Rockwoods. They are detailed below.

Elf, Fey (Wild Elf)

Habitat: Maniria, Ralios

Much has been written of the rootless elves, who have broken their connections to the elfin song and left their forests. They are not true elves, for they no longer possess Life Sense and thus no longer enjoy an elf's connection to the world.

Much less has been written about the fey elves or the wild elves. Sometimes other elves refer to them as semi-rooted, because they still retain connections to Seyotel but those connections have been weakened.

The fey elves originated in the southern Guardian Forest, the land that is today called Tarinwood. In those ancient times, the elves of that land had connections to many of the primal humans of the area, such as the Damali, the Mraloti, the Pralori and the Galanini. During the Red Age, a Shen Senae hero named Porath Woodsoul led a group of elves that left the Forest without leaving the embrace of the earth. By truly embracing the Balance, they became a red race, losing some of their connection to Aldrya but at the same time gaining a better understanding of Glorantha herself.

Today most of the primitive humans of the west are gone, with just a few living on as thralls to the God Learners. However, the fey elf survive. They live as a few dozen groups of no more than a dozen elves each, which drift from place to place, hiding and living upon the land. They consider themselves the last beacons of the cultures that once dwelled in Ralios and Maniria—cultures that understood the Balance and the Cycle much better than the current interlopers on the land.

The fey elf act as avengers of the land and its ancient people. They are openly hostile to God Learners, though not suicidally so. They maintain a cold cordiality with Tarinwood that involves limited trade. As of yet, they do not know what to make of the EWF; it appears to them that it might be yet another case of an ancient culture being destroyed by new ways.

Characteristics

STR	2D6+3	(10)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	3D6+6	(17)
SIZ	2D6+6	(13)
INT	4D6	(14)
POW	3D6+6	(17)
CHA	3D6+1	(12)

Fey Elf Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	2/5
4-6	Left Leg	2/5
7-9	Abdomen	3/6
10-12	Chest	3/7
13-15	Right Arm	2/4
16-18	Left Arm	2/4
19-20	Head	0/5

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Longbow	70%	2D8 / 3
Shortspear	60%	1D8 / 2

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3

Strike Rank: +16

Movement: 4m

Traits: Life Sense*

Skills: Acrobatics 55%, Athletics 65%, Dodge 60%, Lore (Plant) 30%, Lore (Regional: Ralios or Maniria) 45%, Perception 65%, Persistence 70%, Resilience 65%, Sing 35%, Stealth 55%, Tracking 55%

Typical Armour: Wood armour, greaves and treads.

* Fey elves take a -20% penalty whenever using Life Sense.

Elf, Halani (Flower Elf)

Habitat: The Vale of Flowers.

Dryads are associated with groves, elves with trees and runners with shrubs and sprites with flowers. This is the way of the world. However, Glorantha is a land of unique and strange entities and thus for every rule there is an exception.

The Halani are a unique type of elf found only in the Eastern Rockwoods. Halani trace their saplines to flowers rather than trees – specifically the gigantic blossoms of the Vale of Flowers.

This bright heritage is reflected in the Halani's physical appearance. They tend to be much lighter skinned than their woody kin and are even said to faintly glow in the brightest sunlight. Finally, their heads are typically covered with the blossoms of their saplines – blossoms which open up to display beautiful flowers on just a few days each year.





Halani are also naïve and innocent—even more so than the quiet Mreli or the hidden Alim. They are always interested in exploring new things and discovering how the world works. As a result the other elves of the Vale of Flowers (who live in the Flower Woods to the northwest) do their best to hide the Halani from the rest of the world. Nevertheless, once or twice in a generation a Halani refuses their beneficent tutelage and instead travels forth into the wider world.

Characteristics

STR	2D6	(7)
CON	2D6+2	(9)
DEX	3D6+6	(17)
SIZ	2D6+6	(13)
INT	3D6+3	(14)
POW	2D6+6	(13)

CHA 3D6+3 (14)

Flower Elf Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-15
4-6	Left Leg	-15
7-9	Abdomen	-16
10-12	Chest	-17
13-15	Right Arm	-14
16-18	Left Arm	-14
19-20	Head	-15

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Quarterstaff	25%	1D8-1D2 / 3
Sling	20%	1D6

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3

Strike Rank: +16

Movement: 4m

Traits: Life Sense

Skills: Acrobatics 40%, Athletics 45%, Dance 40%, Dodge 50%, Influence 30%, Lore (Regional: Vale of Flowers) 75%, Lore (World) 0%, Perception 60%, Persistence 25%, Resilience 25%, Sing 50%, Survival 45%, Tracking 30%

Typical Armour: None

Runners

Habitat: Forests and jungles (Runners); The Sea (Blue Runners).

Source: *RQM2*, pp.113-114.

There are several species of runners, just as there are several species of elves. The description given

in *RQM2* applies to the runners that are found in forests and jungles, amidst green, brown and yellow elves. There are no known runners dwelling in swamps but beneath the sea a unique species – the so-called blue runner – lives.

Though runners are relatively common in elf forests, they are not typically aggressive unless threatened.

Runner, Blue

Habitat: Underwater.

Of all the plant creatures that live beneath the waves, the blue runners are among the most likely to be seen in coastal surf, where Magasta's wave kiss the beaches of Glorantha. This is because they often become tangled and tied up with the kelp and other seaweed that drifts toward the shore.

Much like their land-based kin, blue runners are small ape-like beings. In Kethaela, many fishermen call them "sea monkeys." They are typically shrouded in heavy coats of seaweed, making it almost impossible to distinguish their true shape. As their name suggests, this seaweed is usually tinged blue (though it might also be yellow or green in various parts of Glorantha). Rather than legs blue runners have long, thin tails which help them to propel themselves through the sea or alternatively to slither along a beach.

Blue runners are quite fearless. They will often work right beside human beings, pushing kelp back into the sea or otherwise cleaning the local environment without paying any attention to them. They are also known to grow very angry



Signs & Portents



for no reason – reflecting the generally harsher temperament of many creatures from the sea. Because they have been known to thus attack for no good reason, people are advised to steer clear of them in areas where blue runners regularly appear.

Characteristics

STR	2D6+2	(9)
CON	2D6+9	(16)
DEX	2D6+6	(13)
SIZ	1D6+3	(7)
INT	2D6	(7)
POW	2D6+6	(13)
CHA	2D6-1	(6)

Blue Runner Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-6	Tail	-/10
7-9	Abdomen	-/6
10-12	Chest	-/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Bite	45%	1D6-1D2
Claw	35%	1D4-1D2

A blue runner can both bite and claw in the same Close Combat Attack.

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3
 Strike Rank: +10
 Movement: 3m, 5m when swimming
 Traits: Excellent Swimmer, Life Sense
 Skills: Acrobatics 65%, Athletics 75%, Dodge 60%, Lore (Plant) 50%, Perception 50%, Persistence 23%, Resilience 45%, Survival 50%
 Typical Armour: None

Snake Vine

Habitats: Forests, Jungles

Through their careful gardening, elves have created many amazing plants. One of the most unique is the snake vine, a semi-sentient creature that literally grows on the vine.

Snake vines take great effort to grow. They are usually planted in Sea Season. Afterward an elf

gardener must devote at least 1 or 2 hours a week to the plant for an entire year. In the process, he calls down the blessings of Larayse, the spirit that gives elves the ability to move.

When a vine is fully grown it appears as a single long strand of ivy sticking up out of the ground. In the next Fire Season the vine will “blossom.” The ivy will detach itself from its roots and begin to slither about as a mobile, self-sufficient entity. Its roots will then decay away, returning to the Cycle.

Snake vines are used as scouts by elf warders. The vines can slither about almost entirely undetected and an elf can use its Life Sense to see what the vine sees. Vines can also assist their masters in combat.

Some humans presume that snake vines are elf pets but this is not entirely true because it implies an emotional connection that does not exist. A warder would happily sacrifice his snake vine for the good of the forest—but then he would sacrifice his own life as well.

A few chronicles tell of snake vines being used as awesome weapons against invaders: the attackers were lured into a grove full of immature snake vines and then a series of Accelerate Growth spells (CG2, p.72) were cast to immediately bloom the snake vines. Absent the careful tending of a gardener, these magically matured vines can only live for a few days but in a war this can be an eternity.



Signs & Portents

Characteristics

STR	3D6+6 (17)
CON	3D6 (11)
DEX	2D6+12 (19)
SIZ	2D6 (11)
INT	2 (2)
POW	2D6 (7)
CHA	3 (3)

Snake Vine Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-14	Body	2/8
15-20	Head	2/5

Weapons

Thorn Strike 65% 1D6+1D2

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 4

Strike Rank: +11

Movement: 5m

Traits: Life Sense, Night Sight, Poison Immunity, Wall Walking

Skills: Athletics 80%, Dodge 65%, Stealth 85%

Typical Armour: Thorns and branches (AP 2, no Skill Penalty)

Spore Cloud

Habitats: Swamps.

Spores are the means by which red elf species propagate their species. After a red elf dies and is planted, its spores lift up to the winds, where they are carried far and wide and produce new Slorifings.

However, the Thoggari species of red elf uses spores for a different purpose. They can use their Life Sense to shape and control clouds of spores, which may be used for both offensive and defensive purposes. The Thoggari are not found in all swamps but when they are present, they will often wield spore clouds for the good of their community.

In red elf lands, a Thoggari can gather 1 cubic metre of spore cloud each day; elsewhere, it requires a week for each cubic metre. In order to tell a spore cloud to engage in a new action, the Thoggari must make a Life Sense roll with a penalty equal to 10 times the spore cloud's SIZ (in cubic metres). If this roll is failed, the spore cloud will continue with its old instructions unless it is attacked, in which case it will respond in kind.

Spore Clouds are in some ways similar to elementals. They lack CON and represent their SIZ as cubic metres. They always have INT and CHA of 1 and each other stat is 1D6 per cubic metre.

Abilities

A spore cloud can choose to disperse. Doing so saturates a circle with a radius equal to its POW with fertile spores. These spores will grow into fully mature ferns and other plants within 1D6 weeks.

An accidental dispersal (due to lose of HP) does not have this magical effect but ferns and other plants may grow there naturally from the spores that fall upon the area.

Combat

A spore cloud has two potential combat attacks, neither of which requires a normal attack roll.

It can *choke* an opponent with its cloying spores. This gives the opponent a -20% to all tasks but does the spore cloud 1 point of damage each round, as its spores are inhaled or blown away.

Alternatively it can *seed* an opponent, embedding fertile spores deep within its opponent's airways. This acts as a poison:

Seeding Spores Poison

Type: Inhaled

Delay: 1D3 Combat Rounds

Potency: 50

Full Effect: 1 Hit Ppoint to all locations

Duration: 1D6 hours

When a spore cloud seeds an opponent, it takes 1D6 damage itself.

Sample Spore Clouds

Characteristics

STR	1D6	(4)
DEX	1D6	(4)
SIZ	1 cubic metre	
INT	1	(1)
POW	1D6	(4)
CHA	1	(1)
HP	1D6	(4)

Damage Modifier: -1D6

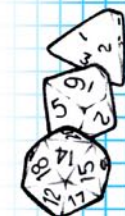
Combat Actions: 1

Strike Rank: +3

Movement: 5m

Traits: Life Sense

Skills: Perception 75%



Sprite

Habitats: Forests, jungles and gardens.

Source: *RQM2*, pp.128-129.

Sprites are a unique and odd growth, found only in elf forests and jungles. There are no analogues either undersea or in swamps. Though they are omnipresent in elf forests, sprites are infrequently encountered. Sometimes they are shy and simply watch and spy. Other times, they may play impish tricks.

If sprites see damage being done to a plant, they will likely call upon the elf protectors of the area –and may even aid them in the forest's defence if their help appears to be required.

War Tree

Habitats: Forests, jungles.

Source: *CG2*, p.76,95.

War trees are special trees that are carefully tended by elf gardeners and then awoken by an Aldrya priest with the Create War Tree spell. They are used to defend elf forests and jungles and are thus grown at strategically important places. Since war trees only stay awake for the duration of the spell (6 hours of more), they will not typically be found wandering the elf lands (except in a few unusual cases when a war tree has not gone back to sleep after a casting) but will definitely be present in times of danger to the forest.

The Create War Tree spell is unique to Aldrya; there are no specific equivalents in swamps or under the sea (though red elves and blue elves have their own plant defenders).

Sample Spore Clouds

Characteristics

STR	3D6	(11)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	3cubic metres	
INT	1	(1)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	1	(1)
HP	3D6	(11)

Damage Modifier: +0

Combat Actions: 2

Strike Rank: +6

Movement: 5m

Traits: Life Sense

Skills: Perception 75%



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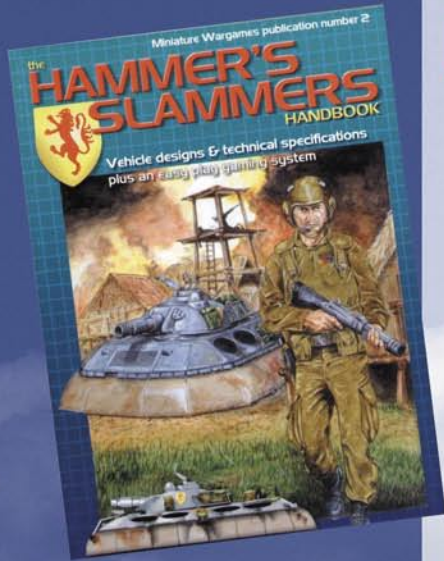
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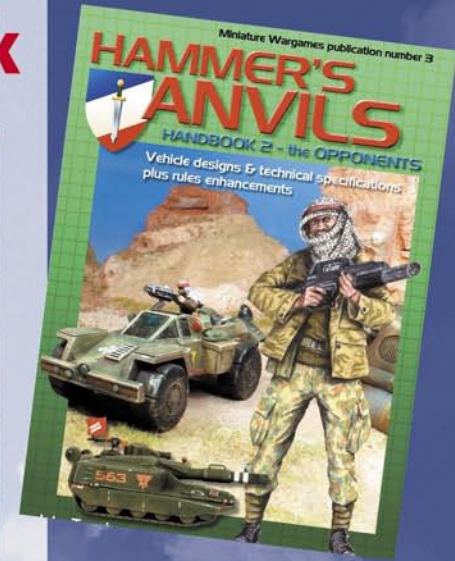
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