

PS Signs & Portents

Scenarios for Paranoia, Deus Vult and Lone Wolf! • Plus Judge Dredd, Earthdawn and more!



Paranoia: Start the New Year with a bang!
(or a whimper...)

Noble Armada: Final Countdown

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Editorial



The New Year. Time to make resolutions on what to do in the next twelve months. Let me see...

1. Hold the planet in the grip of unending terror and make trillions of pounds/dollars/ducats (I am not accepting payments in Euros anymore, have you seen the markets?) out of the world's fear.

Hmmm, that should do it... Now onto this issue. Another bumper crop of articles. What are they? Well...The countdown to the launch of Noble Armada continues, this month features a battle report between two titans of the gaming table. (Well, myself and Number Three. Will Number Three know better than to beat me? All will be revealed.)

A magnificent Paranoia scenario featuring a group of Troubleshooters attempting to bypass security with a 'bomb'. I'll be taking notes.

For those, like myself, who like the idea of the Church hunting down all kinds of powerful fiends and witches I present an all new adventure for Deus Vult. Time to get out the rack, my friends...

There is more goodness for Lone Wolf, RuneQuest and Traveller than I can possibly fit into an editorial. Finally, following on from last month, there is more on the poisoned desert of the Cursed Earth for Judge Dredd, with details on the fell beasts which reside there. Sounds like the perfect place for a secret base to me...

Nick

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Mongoose News

By Nick Robinson

Secrets of the Ancients

Just in time for the Christmas break, we have posted the latest installment of the Secrets of the Ancients campaign, a full, epic story that is yours, free to download! This adventure, Otherworld, marks the halfway point in the campaign, and things are beginning to get very strange, with some very real secrets being revealed - more to come in 2011!

You can download this adventure, with the other four, here:

<http://www.mongoosepublishing.com/home/detail.php?qslD=1843>

Conception

This month sees a great show in New Milton. This residential affair is one which is eagerly looked forward to in our office. We are planning to have both our living campaigns being run at the show as well as having our usual well-stocked stall. We hope to see you there!

Vapnartak

The weekend after Conception the Mongoose crew will be making their way to the Vapnartak wargames show in York. Held at York Race-track it is one of the few opportunities we get to meet our fans north of the Watford Gap.

Next Issue

Next issue should be crammed full of articles for your favourite games!

Included will be a detailed article on shamanic magic for the RuneQuest game and details on some of the minor independent statelets in the Wraith Recon setting, now those books are flying off the shelves!

On the streets of Mega City One you will be able to solve crime in a new scenario and Elric fans will have some high adventure themselves.

Things get just a little more dangerous in the world of Paranoia as some of the perfectly safe prototypes from R&D are revealed.

With more for Traveller and Lone Wolf issue 89 will provide you with hours of good gaming.



Convention Diary

RolePlaying Conventions 2011

Conception

26th-30th January

Hoburn Holiday Park, New Milton

www.conceptionuk.org

Concrete Cow

19th March

The Old Bath House, Milton Keynes

www.mk-rpg.org.uk/Concrete_Cow_games

Compulsion

25th-27th March

Teviot Row Student Union, Edinburgh

<http://www.geas.org.uk/compulsion>

Con-Quest

30th April

Derby Assembly Rooms, Derby

<http://www.con-quest.co.uk>

UK Games Expo

3rd-5th June

Clarendon Suites, Edgbaston, Birmingham

www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk

Wargaming Conventions 2011

Vapnartak

6th February

York Racecourse, York

<http://www.yorkwargames.org/Vapnartak.htm>

Cavalier

27th February

The Angel Centre, Tonbridge

<http://twws.org.uk/cavalier2011.htm>

Salute

16th April

Excel Exhibition Centre, London

www.salute.co.uk

Triples

21st-22nd May

English Institute of Sport, Sheffield

<http://www.sheffieldwargames.co.uk/site/node/1>

Campaign

4th-5th June

Thecentre:mk, Milton Keynes

<http://www.mkws.org.uk/index.php?s=campaign>

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

The Awesometer

Gaming items that get our hearts racing (or sometimes not) each and every month!

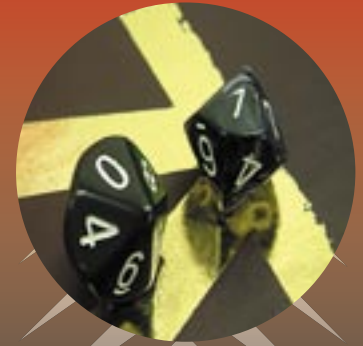
AWESOME

Nick Robinson's

TOP 5

Aliens

- Hivers. I have to put them here because you can never tell what the little tentacled things are up to and it is a good policy to be nice to them.
- The Alien. A creature designed to instil terror upon hapless starship crews. I want one as a pet.
- The Centauri. A people after my own heart, with their plans of interplanetary empire and domination of lesser species.
- Kleggs. Big, dumb and cheap mercenaries (payment in meat products only) with a strong sadistic streak.
- Vargr. Space wolves who like a bit of piracy. I need to hire a few.



Critical successes.

I am the destroyer of worlds!



Fumbles.

I am Inspector Jacques Clouseau.

GRUESOME

The Timeline

A guide to get your tails wagging for future Mongoose releases

January: More love for the new Elric Line

February: Paranoia gets some attention

March: The Zhoda

Michael Moorcock's
ELRIC
OF MELNIBONÉ

PARANOIA
PARANOIA

TRAVEL

Quote of the Month

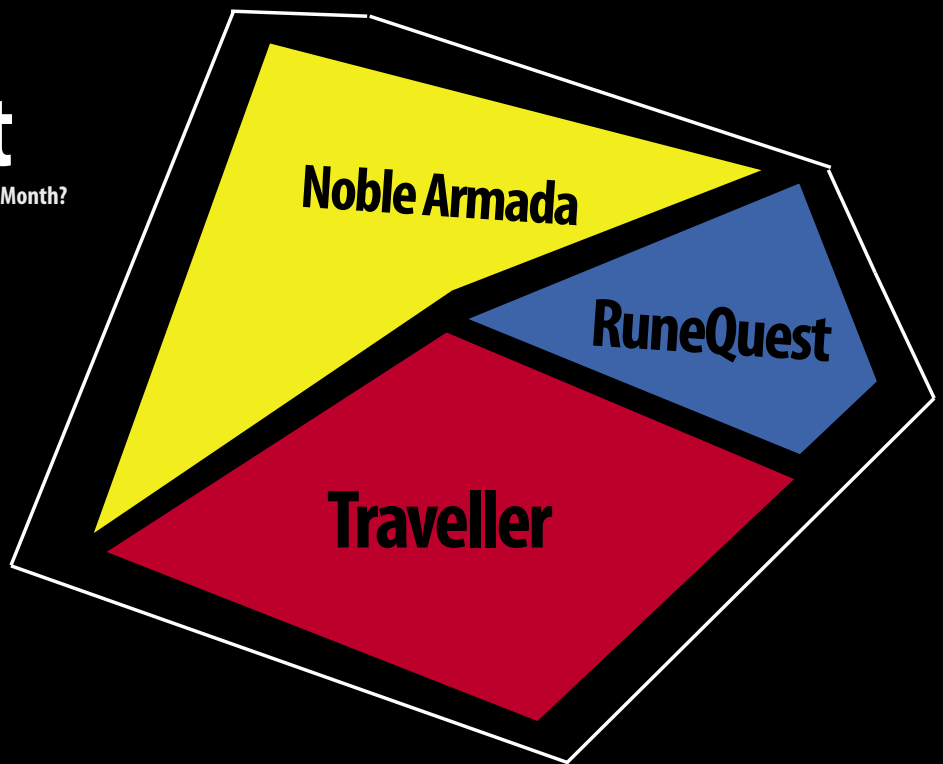
Which phrases have been flying around the office more than the dog's ball?

So, **WHEN** can I expect to see you at Christmas?

Mother. Every evil genius has one...

The Time Chart

What have we been spending our time on at Mongoose this Month?



ani make their entrance

April: Animals and Starports for Traveller

May: Monster Island. With extra Monsters!

VELLER

TRAVELLER



January 11 Releases



Wraith Recon is a fantasy setting where players take the role of a Wraith Recon team member – the elite and magically augmented Special Forces in the Kingdom of Dardarrick, the most powerful kingdom known to the world.

Now Spellcom opens up the doors on the deepest secrets and tactics of the Wraith Recon teams. Discover new methods of ingressing to target, new uses of the Omnilens, and how the very best teams survive when faced with overwhelming odds. Spellcom is nothing less than an essential survival guide for all Wraith Recon teams.

Spellcom
Price: \$24.99
Format: Softback (128 pages)

Pre Order Now

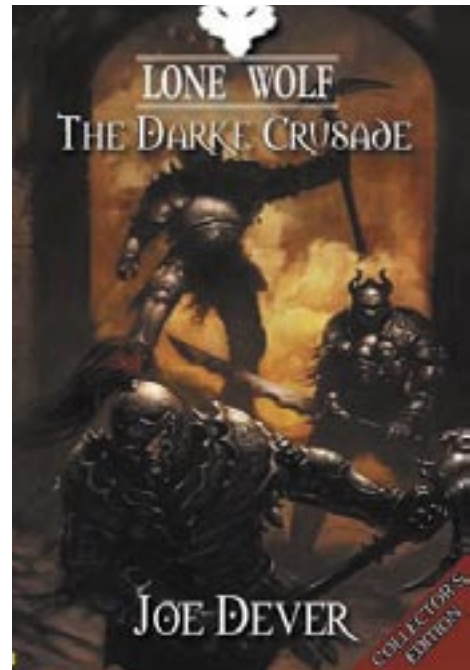
Lone Wolf 15: The Darke Crusade
Price: \$29.99
Format: Hardback (300 pages)

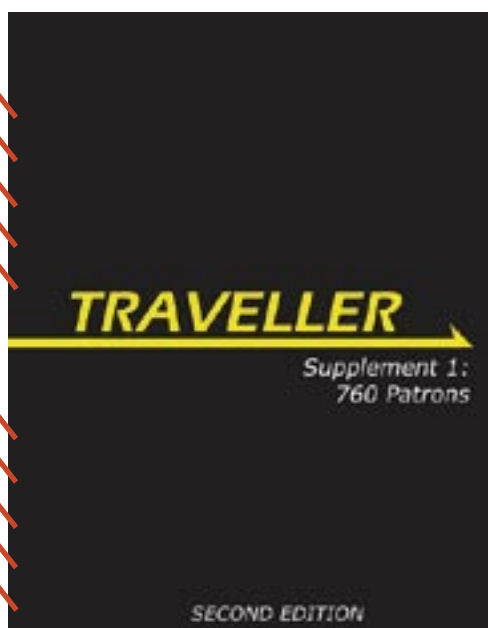
You are the warrior Lone Wolf - Kai Grand Master of Sommerlund. In the distant realm of Nyras a bitter war is waging between the brave knights of Lencia and the evil Drakkarim. The Lencians have won many battles, but now the Drakkarim leader - Warlord Magnaarn - is near to finding the Doomstone of Darke. If he should succeed he will be capable of destroying the Lencians once and for all.

In The Darke Crusade, you must journey through the infernal Hellswamp, trek deep into the forests of northern Nyras and brave the heat of battle. Will you succeed and save your allies? Or will you fall victim to Warlord Magnaarn?

Using high quality paper and hardbound for durability, this Collector's Edition of the latest Lone Wolf gamebook marks the return of the last Kai Lord.

Pre Order Now





Completely rewritten, the second edition of 760 Patrons brings back adventures hooks, plot lines and ideas in the classic format of providing an encounter for the players, along with up to six options for the referee as to how the adventure will progress.

Got nothing prepared for the next gaming session of Traveller? Your players wandered off into deep space again, far from your planned adventure?

Worry not, for 760 Patrons is here to rescue you!

The original 76 Patrons became a lifeline for many Games Masters during Traveller campaigns, as it provided a ready source of adventure material that could be quickly generated when players started looking for work beyond their normal trading and exploration. The all new 760 Patrons Second Edition is literally ten times bigger and better, potentially allowing you to run a complete campaign with nothing but this and the main rulebook!

Supplement 1: 760 Patrons Second Edition
 Price: \$49.99
 Format: Hard (408 pages)

Pre Order Now

The most popular XP-edition is back, in its 25th Anniversary guise! Filled with hand-picked classic adventures from all previous editions of Paranoia, Flashbacks Redux is gaming hilarity at its greatest. Re-live the most terrifying moments of Me and My Shadow Mark IV, or revel in the confusion of Yellow Clearance Black Box Blues.

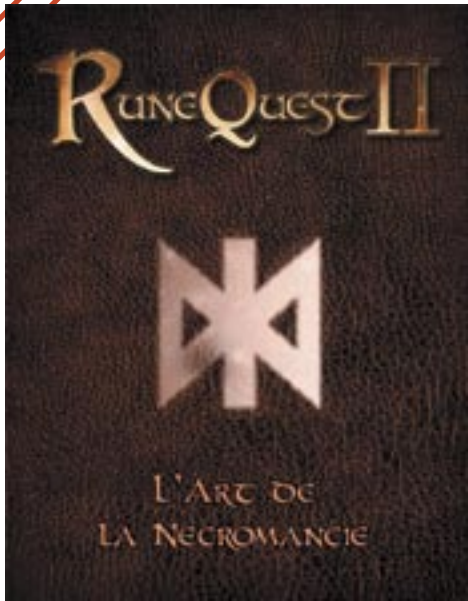
These and many other classics are found in Flashbacks Redux, all suitably trimmed, tweaked and tailored for the latest edition of Paranoia: Troubleshooters.

Flashbacks Redux
 Price: \$39.99
 Format: Hardback (256 pages)



Pre Order Now

January 11 Releases



La vie et la mort représentent les deux côtés d'une même pièce et le fait de contrôler un des côtés vous donne un grand pouvoir sur l'autre. La nécromancie a des usages divers, certains plus puissants et plus dangereux que d'autres. D'un certain point de vue, réanimer des corps pour en faire des esclaves n'est pas plus différent que d'utiliser des golems ou des élémentaires. Beaucoup de sorts de guérison ont aussi une nature partiellement nécromantique, car ils agissent sur les mourants au lieu des morts. D'autres emplois inoffensifs de la nécromancie comprennent l'invocation ou la communication avec les morts au cours de cérémonies religieuses ou d'études sur le sujet. De nombreuses civilisations et races sont prêtes à accepter l'art de la nécromancie, à condition que les morts soient honorés et respectés, même si elles objectent à ce que les sorciers paradent les morts.

L'Art de la Nécromancie est un outil qui vous servira à créer des ennemis vraiment méprisables et terrifiants que vous pourrez présenter à vos joueurs durant une partie de RuneQuest. Le matériel contenu dans ce livre peut être employé avec n'importe quel décor de campagne incorporant les règles de RuneQuest, de Glorantha à Lankhmar en passant par Elric de Melniboné et votre propre campagne.

L'Art de la Nécromancie

Price: \$34.99

Format: Softback (112 pages)

Pre Order Now

Alorasaz: frozen city of fur trappers, loggers and miners, deep in Lormyr's wintery southlands. A peaceful place on the surface, but beneath lurk tensions and fears as two competing families struggle to control Alorasaz's wealth. And what of Castle Kaneloon, standing on the very edge of the world? Does the Lady Myshella not exert an influence over sleepy Alorasaz?

Raschil: the bustling, civilised port city of Filkhar, a cosmopolitan place where many nations rub shoulders in the countless taverns and inns. But a city with its own secrets too: why, for instance, has the Queen not been seen for months when, once, she was society's doyen?

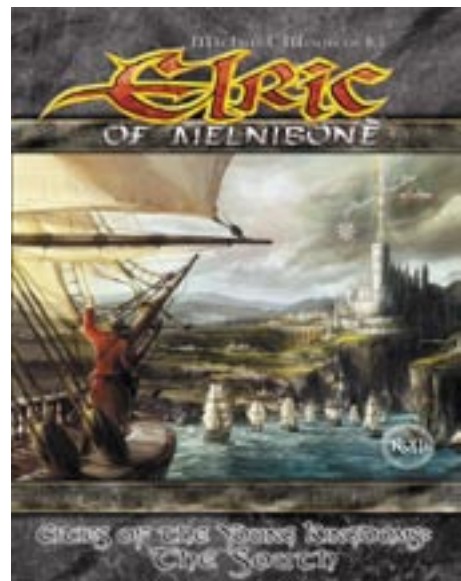
Ryfel: built from black granite and mud-brick on Pikarayd's wild and treacherous northern coast: a city of pirates and reavers, and a meeting place for the barbaric clans of the interior. Ryfel attracts the proponents of Chaos and Disorder; sorcerers, murderers and dark cultists; thieves, fugitives and feuding clansmen. Pan Tang holds court here; but are the Pikaraydian chieftains as enthralled as Pan Tang believes them to be?

Volume One of 'Cities of the Young Kingdoms' explores three, very different cities of the Young Kingdoms' southern continent. Each city is described in detail with maps, locations, personalities, game statistics and dozens of adventure hooks. The cities can be used as standalone backdrops for Elric of Melniboné games, bases for adventurers, or as part of the mini-campaign that threads between them and joins them together.

Cities of the Young Kingdoms 1: The South

Price: \$24.99

Format: Softback (128 pages)



Pre Order Now

Welcome to the southern lands...



For centuries, the lands of the west have been enthralled by tales about the mystical province of Cathay. Far to the East, this mysterious place has always been a symbol of intrigue and wonder. Now, the door to the East is open. From the lightning-born storm children, to the renowned Xan monks, Cathay's secrets can finally be explored by those brave enough to venture into this troubled, war-torn realm.

The *Cathay: The Five Kingdoms Gamemaster's Guide* is a sourcebook for *Earthdawn Third Edition*, containing everything a gamemaster needs for running adventures in the Five Kingdoms of Cathay— extensive setting material, guidelines for creating adventures and campaigns, information on creatures, dragons, Horrors, spirits, magical treasures, and much more! Requires use of the *Earthdawn Player's and Gamemaster's Guides*.

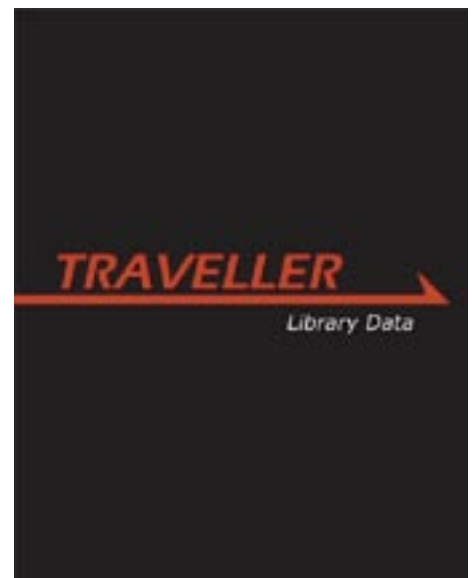
Cathay: The Five Kingdoms Gamemaster's Guide
 Price: \$34.99
 Format: Hardback (160 pages)

Pre Order Now

Knowledge is a Traveller's best friend and this book is packed with life-saving articles and library data entries. Designed for easy reference of the Third Imperium, *Library Data* contains detailed articles from A to Z on Imperial politics, ships, worlds, hazards, alien races and wars.

For use by both referees and players.

LBB9: *Library Data*
 Price: \$24.99
 Format: Softback (160 pages)



Pre Order Now

January 11 Releases



The terrifying creatures that lurk in the darkest corners of Magnamund come to life in this, the latest supplement for the Lone Wolf Multiplayer Gamebook. From the mundane Baknar and Elix, to fan favourites such as the Gourgaz and Kraan, the Magnamund Bestiary provides games masters with a wealth of foes and enemies to challenge their players with. A special section is included featuring more human opponents, allowing games masters to quickly field the likes of thieves, rogues, mercenaries and Drakkarim at a moment's notice.

*LBB9: Library Data
Price: \$19.99
Format: Softback (128 pages)*

Pre Order Now



RuneQuest II

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MONGOOSE PUBLISHING

www.mongoosepublishing.com

A Call to Arms: Noble Armada

By Matt Sprange

The Final Preview Before Release!

Just a month to go before we release A Call to Arms: Noble Armada and we are all getting pretty excited about the game here at Mongoose HQ! We have a full battle report of the game in this issue, so in this preview, we will focus a little more on some of the weapons available to Noble Armada ships.

Weaponry

Like the original A Call to Arms, Noble Armada features great ships with powerful weaponry, blasting each other apart or whittling down defences in preparation for a devastating boarding action. The ships of Babylon 5 could be exceedingly large (even a White Star was reported to be the length of a modern aircraft carrier!), with crews of hundreds, so we often abstracted weaponry. In Noble Armada, a crew can number just a few dozen and so we have adjusted the weapon systems to match. If you are rolling one Attack Dice, then you are firing a single gun. Roll five Attack Dice, and that will be five separate guns on a deck all firing at once.

Most human fleets use the same technological basis for their shipboard weaponry, though different fleet captains will have different opinions on how it is best used. Alien races, by comparison, utilise weaponry that often seems strange or

even impossible to human eyes. The most common include the following.

Slug Guns

Large magnetic rail guns, slug guns lob a large mass of explosives or heavy metal at enemy ships, resulting in substantial damage. However, slug guns are slow, short ranged and easily stopped by shields. For this reason, most ships armed with slug guns are also equipped with EM pulse guns to take down enemy shields.

The Vuldrok have developed a slightly different approach, utilising warheads with explosives that burn out enemy shields. Fleets in the Known Worlds have never bothered with these shells because of their extremely short range and erratic targeting capabilities.



Decados Reaper Raider

Lasers

Like energy shields, the development of lasers efficient enough for space combat came from Vautech filtered through Second Republic manufacturers. At the height of the Second Republic some of these weapons went beyond the Vau's own levels of design but that was a long time ago.

Ships adopted laser weaponry after the adoption of shields, since the energy involved in their discharge burns shields out, knocking them down to leave a ship vulnerable to more powerful weapons. The coherent beam of a laser tends to break up as it travels through gas and debris but it remains one of the most versatile weapons available.

Blasters

These weapons generate plasma from fusion energy using a mysterious transference chamber stolen from Vau weaponry. Only a few master weaponsmiths understand the operation of blasters, revealing their secrets to loyal apprentices only after years of study.

When the gun fires, a force field forms about the plasma and blasts down the barrel. It begins exploding once it exits the barrel, leaking through the field. Once the discharge

hits a physical object, the field disintegrates, losing the full force of the plasma. This makes blasters powerful weapons that can burn out shields but with a relatively poor range.

Meson Cannon

Among the most fearsome weapons of destruction are meson cannons, hallmarks of humanity's technological quest to harness nature's destructive energies. Only dreadnoughts mount the heavy meson cannon and then only as a spinal mount with the ship literally built around the massive weapon.

Despite the tremendous power of the meson cannon, it is very short-ranged, forcing dreadnought captains to move within easy boarding distance in order to use them.

EM Pulse Guns

This rediscovered technology has yet to see widespread use but a few ships sport them as a complement to slug guns. An ElectroMagnetic pulse gun sacrifices a little of its damage potential to burn out shields.

Gremlin Guns

This strange weapon only affects electrical systems on its target, rendering them useless until repaired. Almost every vital system on a ship can be affected by this weapon, which bypasses shields, from the targeting sensors of weapons to the stations at which the crew work.

Weapon	Range	Special
Light Slug Gun	12	Accurate, Multihit 2
Medium Slug Gun	18	Accurate, Multihit 3
Heavy Slug Gun	24	Accurate, Multihit 3
Light Laser	24	Accurate, Burn-out, Precise
Medium Laser	28	Accurate, Burn-out, Precise
Heavy Laser	36	Accurate, Burn-out, Multihit 2, Precise
Light Blaster	16	Burn-out, Multihit 2
Medium Blaster	24	Burn-out, Multihit 2
Heavy Blaster	32	Burn-out, Multihit 3
Light Meson Cannon	15	Devastating +1, Multihit 4
Heavy Meson Cannon	10	Devastating +2, Multihit 3D6
EM Pulse Gun	24	Double Burn
Rocket	20	Inaccurate, Slow
Missile	28	Guided, Slow
Torpedo	32	Guided, Multihit 2, Slow
Gremlin Gun	12	Disable, Slow

Veteran eyes will spot a few new traits in this list, and you can be sure we have kept some surprises for those you think you do know!

Accurate: With superior targeting systems or effects that take little time to travel the gulf of space, these weapons are very accurate and likely to hit their targets. They gain a +1 bonus to all of their Attack Dice.

Burn-out: These weapons are designed to fry shield emitters. A Burn-out weapon striking a shield will disable it. Deduct a Shield from the target ship for every Burn-out hit it sustains.

Devastating +X: When these weapons strike a vital area on an enemy ship, they can be extremely punishing, sometimes blasting entire decks out. Whenever this weapon deals a critical hit, add its Devastating



Hawkwood Darius Galliot

A Call to Arms: Noble Armada



Al Malik Matachin-class Stealthship

score to the normal Critical Score of the ship it has hit. So, for example, a Devastating +1 weapon dealing a critical hit will give a Critical Score of 2 on its first strike upon a location. If it hits the same location again, the Critical Score will go up to 4.

Disable: Created by strange technologies, these weapons are used as normal but will ignore all shields and cause no damage to be deducted from the target. However, each Disable weapon that successfully hits its target will cause an automatic critical hit. Do not roll on the Damage Table, simply roll for a critical hit location and add +1 to its Critical Score.

Double Burn: These weapons are even more efficient at destroying enemy shields. Deduct two Shields from the target ship for every Double Burn hit it sustains.

Guided: This weapon has its own motive systems and sensor arrays, allowing it to track a target and make corrections to its trajectory to better guarantee a hit. Whenever this weapon misses with any Attack Dice, they may be re-rolled.

Inaccurate: Either using slow moving ammunition or simply having poor targeting systems, this weapon rarely hits its target. Apply a -1 penalty to all of this weapon's Attack Dice.

Multihit X: Some weapons are extremely powerful and, whether through raking fire or huge explosions, they can cause immense amounts of damage. For every successful Attack Dice this weapon system has in an attack, it will inflict a number of hits equal to its Multihit score.

Precise: Using either superior firepower or technologically advanced targeting systems, these weapons can consistently deal Critical Hits to their targets. You may add +1 to all rolls on the Attack Table.

Slow: These weapons travel slow enough that they are not affected by shields in any way. Ignore any shields present on the target and roll for damage against the hull as if they were not there.

Gatling Laser

Not all guns are classed as weapon systems, however. In past articles, we have already mentioned the grapple gun, a device used to grapple enemy ships in preparation for boarding. There is also the humble Gatling Laser, found on larger vessels to act as a point defence weapon.

Compared to the more powerful weaponry found on gun decks of warships, the gatling laser is much smaller and is unable to damage large vessels. Because of this, gatling lasers do not use the normal rules for weapon systems. Instead, they come into use automatically under certain circumstances.

Gatling lasers will automatically function when one of the following threats moves into their fire arc and within 2 inches.

- Enemy fighters.
- A rocket, missile or torpedo attack.
- A boarding action using a grapple gun.

Whenever a gatling laser reacts to one of these threats, roll three Attack Dice for it.

Enemy Fighters

At the end of the Movement Phase, a gatling laser will target as many enemy fighters as possible (splitting its three Attack Dice between multiple fighters) that are within range and its fire arc. Roll against their Hull score as normal but a gatling laser counts as being Fast-Tracking and will thus ignore any Dodge trait the fighters have.

Rockets, Missiles and Torpedoes

Any rocket, missile or torpedo attack made against the fire arc a gatling laser defends may be nullified. Roll one dice for every successful Attack Dice the rockets, missiles or torpedoes use. On each 5 or 6, one successful Attack Dice of rockets and missiles will be nullified, the projectile vaporised before it reaches its target. On each 6, one successful Attack Dice of torpedoes will be nullified (torpedoes are bigger and better armoured, and also tend to use pre-programmed evasive manoeuvres to avoid point defences.

Grapple Lines

If a boarding action is commenced in a gatling laser's fire arc, then it may target every grapple line used in the boarding action. Roll three Attack Dice at the end of the Attack Phase.

Every 5 or 6 rolled will cut one grapple line in that fire arc. If all grapple lines are cut in this way, then the boarding action is immediately cancelled!

If the grapple lines still remain after a gatling laser has fired, it may continue shooting as the boarders sail across space to the ship! Roll three Attack Dice for every gatling laser in the fire arc in which the boarding action is taking place, when your opponent declares how many boarders are being used. For every 5 or 6 you roll, one boarder will take a hit.

A gatling laser can defend against all three threats in a turn, though a player is never required to use a gatling laser. If, for example, he welcomes a boarding action, he need not use it!



Hazat Stalker Explorer



Li Halan Slayer Raider

Dragonmeet 2010

By Kat Hepburn

It had been decided, somewhere down the line, that using two cars was simply no longer enough and a van was now needed to transport the Mongoose tomes to each of the conventions we go to throughout the course of the year. This seemed like a good idea at first. Except that the van seats only three people and we needed four seats. So at first it looked likely that for this Dragonmeet I would need to stay behind. The thought of missing such a great convention was gut wrenching!

Luckily my friend Linda Pitman was chosen as one of the guest artists this year. So not only did I get to go, but I also got out of lugging any heavy boxes of books and I also had the privilege of being ferried down in Linda's rather sporty looking Toyota MR2. Funny how some things end up working out.

I started my day at 5:00 in the morning. I did not need to be at the Mongoose offices because I was travelling down with Linda, but it was my intention (as it is for every convention) to dress up for the occasion.

This usually means my heavy leather armour, however this time I would be trying something different, something which needed significantly more preparation. Over the course of several months leading up to the convention I had been purchasing little pieces of special effects make up which included things like prosthetic horns and veneer demonic teeth! This Dragonmeet I wanted to make people look twice instead of spotting me from a distance. The horns can take a good hour or so to attach properly, it was something which could really not be done on arrival and it can take a couple of hours to travel down to London. Hence waking up at a time where I would normally act like a zombie (except the Brains!!! eating part, of course).

Luckily Linda had travelled the route before, so she had a pretty good idea of where to go and where we needed to be (plus the sat-nav helped a lot). Arriving just after 8:00am I started to help Linda into the venue with her artwork, T-shirts and gear (all of which are only marginally lighter than boxes of books).



Convolutd! One of many games for attendees to enjoy

Because Dragonmeet is only a single day convention, as soon as those main doors open everything goes manic. I love it! Its how a convention is supposed to be! But because of the limited time, this convention seems to go ballistic even more so and at a frighteningly quicker pace. So as Linda began to set up her stall I decided to take a look around, as I usually do, and get some quick snapshots of everything before the masses of gamers gained access to the location.

One of the things I love about any convention is the shopping (I know that is a very girly thing to say, but it is true!). The Dragonmeet trade hall is quite large for a single day convention and they really do pack a lot into it. There are a lot of traders for the show in addition to Mongoose and for a significant chunk of the day I was looking at all the shiny stuff I wanted to add to my collection!

Seminars and talks are also held throughout the day and included guest speakers such as Ian Livingstone giving a retrospective on his life in the RPG world! This guy is



The Mongoose stand in all its glory!



The Trade Hall before the rush!

a gaming GOD! Since joining the industry with Steve Jackson back in 1975 he has done some amazing things: Co-founding Games Workshop, White Dwarf and the Fighting Fantasy game books to name just some of his achievements. I wish I could have snapped a photo of him giving his talk but unfortunately his seminar was predictably packed full of people.

Which brings me to another point. Plan your day! It is always a good thing at any convention to plan your time with a schedule and get your name down for those games! Failure to do so could mean the eradication of the human race... well, depending on what games are being played. But it would be very handy to plan ahead. Especially for a single day convention because there is so much to see and do I guarantee you will not be able to fit it all in. No matter how much you try and juggle the timing.

Other guests included games designers, writers and artists: Gareth Hanrahan, Robin Laws, Kenneth Hite, Darren Pearce, Gillian Pearce, Stephen Santos and Linda Pitman. I could not resist getting a portrait done by Gillian Pearce of myself in my demonic state. It is a keeper. One for my collection. Which brings me to another point: When at a convention, most Artists

will do sketches or drawings for a modest fee. It is a perfect chance to get something personal done! I find myself building a small collection of custom artwork and it really makes a difference when something is made specifically with you in mind.

All through the day you will also find many game societies, organisations and clubs running a large selection games all over the convention venue (The Phoenix Games Club, Shadow Warriors and The Pathfinder Society to name just a few). The list of fun is virtually endless. See previous statement about 'planning your day'.

Added to all of the above, over £2,000 was raised for two charities in an auction where the businesses of the trade hall donate items for bidding (most of which are collectable or hard to find/signed items) makes Dragonmeet one very groovy convention to attend.

To sum up the entire experience? Let's just say if I had missed out on going I would have sat around moping all day with a large tub of the most fatty ice cream I could find. I would have hated to miss Dragonmeet because I genuinely think it is a convention not to be missed by any ardent gamer.



The normal consequences of Kat having to get up early.

Penitence

By Carl Walmsley

After many years crusading across The Holy Land, Guy de Bretagne is a tired man with blood on his hands and soul. In an effort to prepare himself for the day of judgement, he has determined to spend the last years of his life in peaceful pilgrimage.

To this end, he embarked upon a seven day pilgrimage from Pointe de Penmarch, a coastal town in northwestern Brittany to the Priory of Saint Mortimer, a seven days walk to the east. As part of his pilgrimage, he was planning to deliver a relic he recovered from the Holy Land – the Hand of the Penitent Thief: the repentant man who was crucified beside Jesus.

It is now four days after Guy's anticipated arrival at the priory, and there has been no sign of him. A search party, comprised of young monks from the Order, is being dispatched to ascertain his whereabouts and recover his precious cargo.

This adventure serves as an ideal first mission for a newly initiated party of Hieormonks – or even as their final trial before they are sent forth into the world to do God's work.

A Crusader Lost

In his travels, Guy made it as far as a small village, Arbrenoir – two days east of Pointe de Penmarch. Of late, the residents of Arbrenoir have been tormented by a series of terrible hauntings. The source of these visitations is the vengeful spirit of a witch lynched by the townsfolk a few months ago.

When they learned of Sir Guy's cargo, the desperate villagers attempted to steal it. Sir Guy caught them in the act and a fight ensued, during which Guy was captured and his squire, Roland, killed. Roland's body was buried in a small village plot set aside for graves.

For nine days now, Guy has been languishing in the cellar of the town's inn – *The Chevalier*. The inn keeper cannot decide what to do with his prisoner but, given the apparent success of the relic in protecting the town, there is little chance he will set him free.

As for the relic, it is hidden within a straw doll – a pagan luck charm – hanging above the entrance to this inn. From there, it casts a protective ward over the town – barring entry to the witch's spirit.

The Priory of Saint Mortimer

Though a relatively small site, the priory will be known to the characters as a site of both spiritual and physical healing. Catacombs beneath the main building house a spring where, according to legend, Joseph of Arimathea bathed wounds received whilst journeying from the Holy Land to Britain. Ever since then the spring, which fills a rock pool large enough to bath in, has been attributed miraculous powers.

Any character with Divine Fervour of 40% or higher that baths in the pool recovers 1D3 Hit Points to each wounded location. They should also make a Resilience Test: if successful, they begin to recover from any diseases with which they are infected.

A character who is healed in the pool also experiences feelings of bliss: he automatically passes his next Divine Fervour Test.

Saint Mortimer was the first Prior of the site, overseeing the administration of healing to the faithful. Through use of the pool, he is rumoured to have lived to the age of one hundred and ten.

The Beginning of the journey

The Player Character's mission begins with them retracing the route taken by Sir Guy, searching for some sign as to his whereabouts.

They will have been on the road heading east from Pointe de Penmarch for no more than half a day when they come upon a tiny, disheveled village. Read or paraphrase the following:

So far your journey has been peaceful, taking you along a well-travelled path, flanked on either side by aged and imposing woods.

A little way ahead the trees closest to the road have been felled to make room for a cluster of rude huts and animal pens. Upon spying your approach, one of the villagers emerges from his hut and stands on the path waiting for you. All the while, he wrings his hands anxiously.

The villager, a man called Anton, is dreadfully worried about his wife, Greta. Two days ago, she came down with an illness and is now laid-up in bed.

Anton will approach the Player Characters for help, hoping that one of them has some skill as a healer and will minister to his wife. Unfortunately for Anton and his four children, his wife has the plague: a fact obvious to any character who passes an Easy (+20%) Healing Test or who examines her.

At present the rest of the villagers are unaware of Greta's condition. If they learn of it, they will insist she leaves the village immediately. Without warmth, shelter and food she will soon perish.

The inside of Anton and Greta's hut contains only the most rudimentary furniture. However, a large cross, painstakingly whittled to depict a rough likeness of the crucified Christ, hangs on the wall. This is an indication of the strong faith held by Anton and his wife.

This situation presents the Player Characters with a moral dilemma – one that may begin to define the sort of Hieromonk they wish to be. On the one hand, they have a mission to complete and can ill afford any distractions. On the other, they are servants of God and should protect his flock.

If the Player Characters elect to take Greta with them – perhaps to receive healing at the Priory – Anton will fashion a simple frame upon which she may be dragged along by the family's cow. If the Player Characters do nothing to help, Greta will be dead within the week – along with three of her children who will contract the disease.

Wolves in the Wild

Towards the end of the first day's travel, as light seeps from the world, the Player Characters will encounter a pair of trappers, heading in the opposite direction. They are a wild-looking pair, decked in animal skins with long tangled hair and thick beards. About their persons are steel-toothed traps and cruel-looking knives. The pair has been hired by the local Baron (Gilles de Bertrand) to hunt wolves that have been menacing travellers on the road. According to the trappers, Gaspar and Louis, the wolves are especially vicious and cunning, and the normal traps do not seem to be working.

That night, with no choice but to camp beside the road or in the trees, the character's sleep will be disturbed by cries for help. They originate in the forest south of the road, and sound like a child or young woman pleading for assistance.

The source of the cries is a ten-year old child – Clement – who is trapped up a tree. The wolves are using him as bait to lure in travellers before they move in and surround them.

The wolves are lead by a ferocious beast with white fur – a hellhound. It is this monster that has devised this devious plan, and that has ensured the pack avoids the traps laid by Gaspar and Louis.

Wolf Pack (*RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, page 181)

Hellhound

		D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	16	1–2	Right Hind Leg	2/6
CON	13	3–4	Left Hind Leg	2/6
SIZ	13	5–7	Abdomen	2/7
INT	7	8–10	Chest	2/7
POW	12	11–13	Right Front Leg	2/6
DEX	15	14–16	Left Front Leg	2/6
CHA	–	17–20	Head	2/6
<i>Combat Actions</i>	2	<i>Typical Armour</i>	Fur hide AP 2, no Armour Penalty	
<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+1D2	<i>Traits</i>	Night Sight	
<i>Magic Points</i>	12	<i>Skills</i>	Athletics 90%, Evade 65%, Perception 75%, Persistence 55%, Resilience 60%, Stealth 75%, Survival 70%, Track 90%	
<i>Movement</i>	11m	<i>Combat Styles</i>	Unarmed 80%	
<i>Strike Rank</i>	+11			

Weapons

<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Reach</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>AP/HP</i>
Bite	M	T	1D8+1D2	As for Head

Penitence



The wolves will circle their prey as soon as one or more of the Player Characters goes to help Clement. If, instead, they leave the boy to his fate, the wolves will locate their campsite anyway and attack them.

The hellhound will initially skulk in the shadows, using its pack to ascertain the strength of the targets. After three rounds of combat, it will move in and attack the character who has dealt out the most damage.

There are twice as many wolves as Player Characters, plus the hellhound. If the pack is reduced to half its original number or the hellhound is slain, they will retreat. Any Player Character who manages to kill the hellhound will half glimpse a twirl of vapour escape its jaws. This should lend the encounter an eerie final twist, with the Player Characters left to suspect some supernatural element to the wolves' actions without giving them anything concrete to go on.

A Player Character who succeeds with an Occult Test – and who knows about the vapour leaving the dead hellhound's mouth – will deduce the true nature of the beast.

Lost in the Woods

The child, Clement, is the son of a woodsman. He has been lost in the forest for two days, ushered further and further from his home by the wolves. He was used as bait during the previous night when he unwittingly lured a pair of travellers to their doom.

Clement knows his home is to the south, but does not recognize the area of forest where he currently finds himself. If the Player Characters escort the boy south, it will take a few hours for him to reach familiar territory, and a little longer to make it home.

Clement's father, who has been searching anxiously for his only son, will be immensely relieved to discover his child alive. In addition to his profuse thanks, he will provide a clay pot filled with a healing unguent. Applied to an injury, this increases the character's Healing Rate by 'one step' (see *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, page 60). There is enough unguent for five applications.

If the Player Characters decide to take Clement with them, they will need to persuade him it is in his best interests to do so. An Influence Test and reasonable explanation can accomplish this. Otherwise, Clement will flee at the first opportunity he gets and try to find his own way home.

Where Did You Get That Horse?

Once back on the road (most likely the next morning), the Player Characters are free to continue their journey. It is not long before they encounter a peddlers' caravan coming along the road towards them. Read or paraphrase:

A ragtag line of mules and sway-backed horses trundles along the road towards you. Loaded with panniers and sacks, this appears to be some sort of peddlers' caravan. The man at the head of the train smiles warmly as he catches site of you, and draws the procession to a halt.

The caravan-master, Phillipe, will greet the Player Characters and attempt to sell them some of his wares. He has all manner of pots, pans, knives, blankets and general odds and ends. His prize asset, however, is a fine white mare – a gentleman's horse. Phillipe will try to sell it to the characters for 200 SP.

If questioned about where he came by such a fine horse, Phillipe reveals that just after he left the town of Arbrenoir – the next settlement the Player Characters will reach on their journey – he was approached by a man who sold him the horse. It was still half dark when the transaction took place, so Phillipe can provide only a rough description of the man: he was tall with a large girth, which showed even beneath his travelling cloak.

The horse belongs to Sir Guy. It was taken – and sold – by Stephanus, innkeeper of 'The Chevalier' in Arbrenoir (see below).

ARBRENOIR

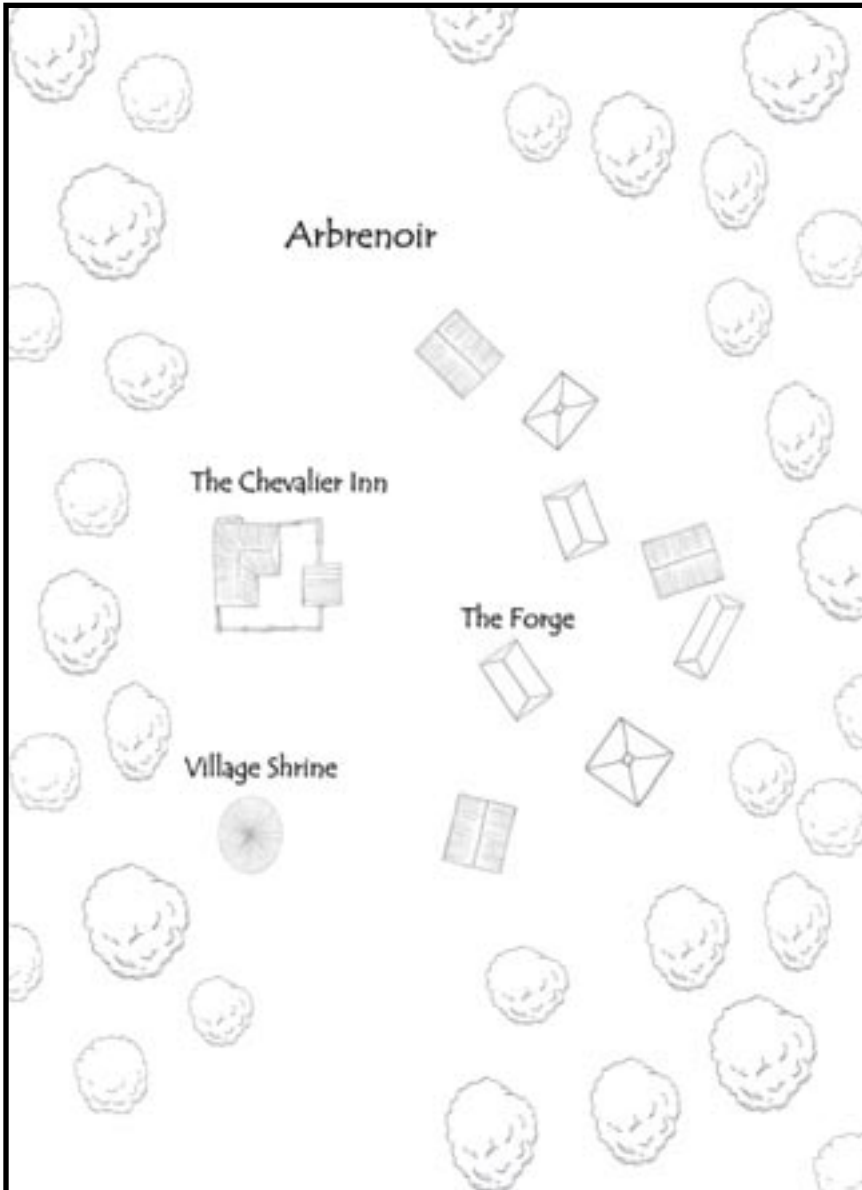
This small town serves as a way point for travellers. It is home to some 60 souls, who support themselves by hunting in the forest and rearing pigs and chickens. If possible, have the Player Characters arrive at Arbrenoir an hour or so before sunset.

Questioning the townsfolk

Everyone in town knows something happened nine days ago in the inn. Roughly half know that it involved a traveller, but they do not have any details. The villagers will be nervous if questioned by outsiders, and their conversations will change tack abruptly if the Player Characters are within earshot. The Player Characters should sense an anxiety hanging over the village like a black cloud – though, this has more to do with the hauntings than the events at the inn.

Places of interest Chevalier Inn

The Chevalier Inn is run by Stephanus, his wife, Petrona, and their son, Hugo.



Stephanus is a tall, fat-bellied man – the opposite of his petite, slender wife.

Stephanus and Petrona were the ring-leaders in the plot to steal Sir Guy’s relic – though they had help from Hugo and one of the village hunters, Raymundus. When the crusader knight awoke to find Stephanus mid-theft, a fight broke out. During the struggle, Raymundus accidentally killed Roland, and Sir Guy was only subdued after he had broken Stephanus’s arm and blackened Hugo’s eye.

Guy is now tied-up and locked in the cellar. Late at night, guests at the inn who succeed with a Hard (-40%) Perception Test

will hear a faint knocking sound. This is Sir Guy, struggling to be free.

The inn has a main-room, containing three tables with rough benches and a bar. A flight of stairs leads up to the first floor, where two rooms are available for paying guests. Stephanus typically charges a silver piece per guest, per night. A door grants access to the eastern portion of the house where Stephanus and Petrona have their bedroom.

Behind the bar is a trapdoor that leads down into the cellar. Only someone who steps behind the bar can see the trapdoor.

Suspended outside the inn is a straw-man garlanded with flowers and hung inside a wooden frame. This effigy is a protective charm – a harmless pagan belief dating back centuries and is believed to protect the house. Hidden inside the box is The Hand of the Penitent Thief, still inside its glass-fronted case.

If the Player Characters ask too lots of questions in the inn, Stephanus will try to hurry them on their way by offering a free lunch for the road.

Village Chapel

This tiny dry-stone building has a carved wooden cross for an altar, two crude benches and a stone font.

When the adventurers first arrive in the settlement Raymundus, a local hunter, is inside flagellating himself. Since dealing the blow which accidentally killed Guy’s squire, Roland, he has been experiencing intense feelings of guilt.

When he first encounters the Player Characters, Raymundus will make a hasty exit, locking himself in his house until the morning. If the Player Characters pursue Raymundus—who obviously has something on his mind – he can be convinced to confess his part in the botched theft of the relic and the accidental murder of Sir Guy’s squire.

Try to time Raymundus’ revelation so it does not pre-empt the Player Characters’ investigation. Ideally, they should already have gathered plenty of clues by the time he bares his soul. Of course, if the Player Characters are sharp enough to persuade him to confess early on, they should be rewarded for their cleverness – and have Raymundus’ sins laid out before them.

Graveyard

The village burial site is located near the edge of the forest, just east of the chapel. There is evidence of numerous graves having been dug here over the years, but three recent additions stand out. This site is not marked on the map, leaving the Player Characters to discover it for themselves.

Penitence

Two of the recent graves are for locals, and have names carved into wooden crosses: Albert and Claude. Both men were murdered by the spirit of Mathilda, the dead witch (see **Vengeful Hauntings**).

The third grave is for Sir Guy's squire, Roland. Raymundus buried him here the night he accidentally killed him.

If the locals are asked about the recent graves, they all know Albert and Claude had their necks crushed as if hanged, and they occupy two of the recently dug graves. They will be reluctant to talk about this, for fear of attracting the wrath of Mathilda's ghost.

Only Raymundus, Stephanus, his wife and son know Roland lies in the third grave.

Smithy

There is a small smithy where horses can be re-shoed or weapons and armour repaired. The smith is called Milo, a native Italian come west. He was away the night Sir Guy was attacked, but is aware the mood in the village has darkened.

Have You Seen This Knight?

If the Player Characters directly ask the villagers if they have seen Sir Guy, they will 'umander' rather than answer immediately. If the Player Characters are persistent, they will admit to vague memories of a knight stopping at the inn.

If Stephanus or his family is questioned, they will claim Sir Guy stayed a night at the inn before moving on early the next morning.

A Night in Arbrenoir

Given that the Player Characters should arrive in Arbrenoir just before sunset, they will have only limited time to look around. Ideally, they should get a sense something is not quite right with the locals but be unable to put their finger on precisely what it is. If their suspicions are roused just enough to get them to stick around and do some investigating, this is ideal.

If the Player Characters sleep in Arbrenoir – most likely within the inn – one of them will wake up to find he cannot breathe and that a terrible pressure is crushing his throat. This will persist for 5 rounds or until the Player Character succeeds with a Divine Fervour Test. Each round of constriction will inflict 1 point of Damage to the Player Character's head. During the incident, there will be no sign of an assailant or any other clue as to what is causing the choking.

After the incident a deep, purple bruise – ribbed just like the cords of a rope – will appear around the character's neck. He will look just as if he has been hanged.

This is a Horror manifestation caused by the Mathilda's lynching, and the continuing presence of the vengeful spirit.

If the Player Characters ask about the strange bruise, they will receive short shrift from the locals, all of whom will be reluctant to discuss the witch.

Vengeful Hauntings

The woman lynched three months ago by the people of Arbrenoir was, indeed, a witch. Her name was Mathilda, though the locals knew her as *Crow's Daughter*, because of the strange kinship she shared with these carrion birds.

As one, the residents of the village dragged Mathilda from her hovel in the woods to The Black Tree – an ancient hanging tree a quarter of a mile west of Arbrenoir. With her choked and dying gasps, she cursed the villagers.

A month after the hanging, Mathilda's vengeful spirit returned to Arbrenoir. Stephanus was the first to see her whilst out gathering firewood – her neck twisted at a dreadful angle. His wife then experienced vivid dreams of the hanging – only this time, the rope would snap allowing Mathilda to fly away into the trees. Others in the village found their milk souring overnight or piglets being born with no hooves. More than that, the

crows of the forest seemed agitated – their cawing filling the trees even after dark. The people of Arbrenoir whispered fearfully: had the witch returned?

Four weeks ago, one of the villagers – Albert – was found dead, his throat crushed, his eyes all but popping out of their sockets. His door and shutters had been fastened from the inside.

A fortnight later and there was a second death. This time, the victim – Claude – had been the last to leave the inn when it closed for the night. He never made it home, and his body was found a short distance from The Chevalier. Again, his throat was crushed.

It became apparent to everyone in the village that Arbrenoir was cursed, and Mathilda's shade had returned to wreak her vengeance. Stephanus and his wife were as scared as anyone. It was for this reason they tried to steal Sir Guy's relic.

The Black Tree

If the Player Characters confront Stephanus or his wife, they will reveal what happened to Mathilda. This information will be offered in an attempt to divert attention away from what happened to Sir Guy and Roland.

When the Player Characters learn about The Black Tree, they will be duty-bound to investigate it. Once they seek it out, read or paraphrase the following:

The woods west of Arbrenoir are ancient and dark. Thick, black soil squelches beneath your feet as you carefully move between trees that were old long before you were born.

The Black Tree – the hanging tree – stands apart from the others, as though they have withdrawn in fear or respect. From a strong branch, ten feet from the ground hangs a ragged rope. Surrounding the base of the tree are thick roots, like writhing tentacles frozen in place. Piles of rotten mulch have settled between these, creating pools of decomposition.

Since The Hand of the Penitent Thief was placed outside The Chevalier Inn, Mathilda's shade has been unable to manifest and attack the townsfolk directly. Out in the woods, however, she is still able to take form.

If the characters begin to search The Black Tree – most likely looking for Mathilda's remains amidst the mulch – a ghastly form takes shape:

A swarm of insects emerges from the rotting mulch, swarming out to form the shape of a grasping, human hand.

The hand belongs to a Graveworm Hag – a creature similar in form to a Worm Man. The hag will try to pull the searching Player Character into the mulch, where it can use its smother attack.

If the Player Character breaks free, the graveworm hag will reveal itself:

From between the slimey roots, a chittering, seething form appears. Roughly human in shape, it is composed entirely from glistening, black-shelled beetles, bloated slugs and fat bellied flies. A skittering centipede curls about the creature's face forming the likeness of a mouth. Clacking stag-beetles create clawed fingers, and slithering grave worms form a head of earth-encrusted hair.

This abomination will fight to the death, abandoning its struggle only if the Player Characters move more than 100 metres from The Black Tree.

If the Player Characters destroy the Graveworm Hag, Mathilda will be banished, but only for 24 hours. To permanently destroy her spirit, they must burn her body, which is buried beneath the roots of The Black Tree.

Quelling Rumours

As members of the Order, the Player Characters are charged with stifling any talk of supernatural goings-on. This can be achieved in a number of ways, from fast-talk and misinformation to the removal of witnesses.

Given all that has happened in Arbrenoir, they will need to do something to stop the locals talking about the recent hauntings and deaths.

One option is to frame Stephanus for the murders. After all, he was the last to see Claude alive and was the first to start rumours about Mathilda's ghost returning.

Graveworm Hag

		D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	15	1–3	Right Leg	0/6
CON	13	4–6	Left Leg	0/6
SIZ	13	7–9	Abdomen	0/7
INT	14	10–12	Chest	0/8
POW	17	13–15	Right Arm	0/5
DEX	12	16–18	Left Arm	0/5
CHA	10	19–20	Head	0/6
<i>Combat Actions</i>	3	<i>Typical Armour</i>	None	
<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+1D2	<i>Traits</i>	Regeneration (1)	
<i>Magic Points</i>	17	<i>Skills</i>	Athletics 42%, Perception 70%, Resilience 35%, Lore (Occult) 75%	
<i>Movement</i>	8m	<i>Combat Styles</i>	Unarmed 35%, Engulf 100%	
<i>Strike Rank</i>	+13			

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Grab	M	T	1D4+1D2	As for Arm
Engulf	H	T	Special	–

An Engulf attack – which can only be attempted once a target has been grabbed – covers the target with a writhing tide of biting, stinging insects. This inflicts 1D4 Damage to every location. Armour offers no protection against this damage.

Thrusting and Cutting Weapons inflict minimum damage on a Graveworm hag.

Penitence

Local Law Enforcement

The region of Brittany in which the adventure takes place is the responsibility of Baron Gilles de Bertrand. It may be that the Player Characters will appeal to him to oversee the administration of justice in Arbrenoir. If so, he will dispatch his sheriff, Simon de Abelianne to see it done.

Abelaine is a pragmatic noble, highly skeptical about claims of witchcraft and the like. This could make him very useful to the Player Characters when it comes to 'hushing things up'. The only justice he meets out is found at the end of a rope.

Different Paths

Given the open, investigative nature of this adventure events could unfold in a number of ways. The key things to bear in mind are:

- Sir Guy is imprisoned in the cellar of the inn
- The Hand of the Penitent Thief is hidden in a dolly above the door to the inn
- The shade of a witch haunts the village: as members of the Order, the Player Characters really must deal with this

If the Player Characters can resolve each of these issues, they will have successfully completed the adventure.

Sir Guy will continue his journey to the Priory and request the Player Characters accompany him. Once there, he will deliver the relic.

The Hand of the Penitent Thief (5 Asset Points)

A relic of one the two men crucified beside Jesus on Calvary, this artefact is extremely important to the church. If it is safely delivered to The Priory of St. Mortimer

– either by Sir Guy or the Player Characters – it will become available for the members of the Order to use in future adventures.

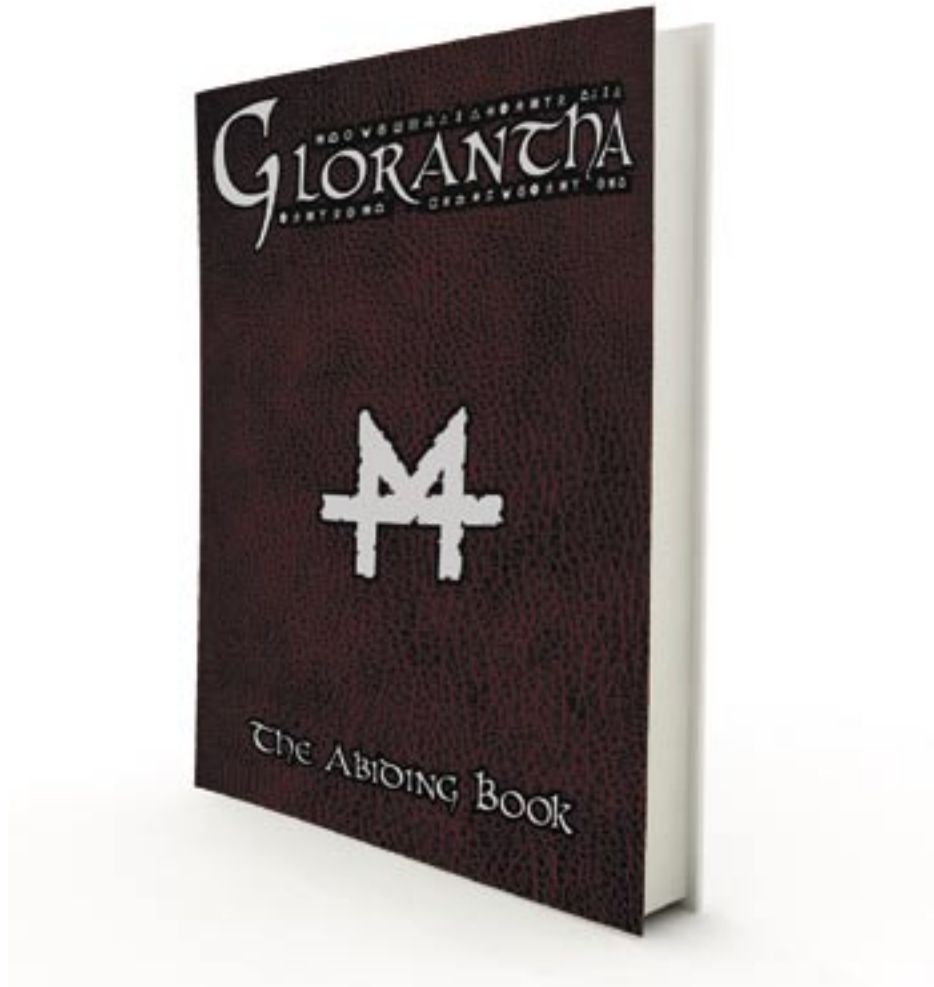
The Hand bestows miraculous healing and grants hope to those in the grip of despair. It allows anyone suffering from a disease to take a Resilience Test to begin recovering. It also restores 'hope' – translating in game terms to a +10% bonus to Persistence, Resilience and Divine Fervour skills for as long as the hand is in one's possession.

So strong is the inspiration the Hand provides to Christian souls, Ghosts and shades are unable to manifest within 100 metres of any Christian in possession of the relic. One can be 'in possession' of the relic without holding it all the time.



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Parallel Dimensions

By Jacob DC Ross

The concept of alternate planes of reality or parallel dimensions that exist as distorted reflections of the existence that we know is a staple of science fiction, but is not frequently mentioned in Traveller. This article will present various possibilities for introducing dimensional travel to your Traveller campaign.

Dimensional Travel - Why?

The first question that may come to mind in traveling to a parallel dimension is why would anyone want to do so in the first place? Of what benefit is it for characters to visit alternate universes or for Referees to introduce them to a campaign?

Characters may desire to travel to alternate dimensions to escape justice while not having to live the life of a fugitive, to find an alternate version of a dead loved one or out of plain curiosity. Organisations such as corporations or governments may be seeking rare or valuable resources on less-habited or unprotected versions of enemy worlds, to conscript soldiers or slave labor from easy targets or to find new worlds to colonise when they have run out of viable worlds in their own dimension. Referees may find their current setting is not turning out how they originally planned,

they may wish to cross or may be working with a player who wishes to change their character slightly and thus replace their current character with one from another dimension.

Dimensional Travel - How?

If a group is planning on visiting alternate realities, then naturally they must figure out how to accomplish the journey. The Traveller supplement *Psion* features two ways to do so (via psionic powers or the "D Drive"), but referees may wish to introduce their own method, such as a random portal opening in space and drawing in a starship.

Random portals work well for referees who want to strictly control the flow of events from one universe to another. Psionic powers are ideal for games set in societies with a low TL and D Drives or other technology work well in settings lacking sufficient psionic powers or set in eras with a sufficiently-high TL.

Referees may choose the manner in which the travel unfolds. Is it instantaneous? Does the travel take time? If so, are there objects, places, people or hazards in the space between the dimensions?

Dimensional Travel

Quirks

It is quite likely individual referees may have their own idea of dimensional travel. Perhaps each jump to another dimension causes characters to switch places with their alternate selves, meaning that while they are exploring an individual with their appearance is running wild in their home universe. Perhaps dimensional travel is temporary, with characters automatically sent home after a set or random interval of time in another universe.

Technology or psionics may be advanced enough so characters can choose to visit the same universes at will, or the destination may be random each time. There may be an infinite number of dimensions to visit, or perhaps there is only one, a twisted "Mirror Universe" that may find itself at odds with the players' home universe.

The Dimensional Difference Scale Table

For games where the Referee does not have a specific plan for each universe visited, the following table may be used.

The Dimensional Difference Scale Table

Roll 2d6	Result	Mirror Character Modifier
2	Vastly different. There are few or no native life forms in this dimension.	-2
3-5	Somewhat different. History divergent for several centuries. Balance of power shifted in favour of governments who are considered minor powers in the characters' home dimension.	-1
6-8	Very similar. History divergent only for a few generations.	0
9-11	Somewhat different. History divergent for several centuries. Balance of power shifted in favour of governments who are already considered major powers in the characters' home dimension.	+1
12	Vastly different. Overcrowding on all habitable worlds.	+2

The Mirror Character Table

For games where the Referee does not have a definite plan for each "mirror version" of the characters, the following table may be used. If visiting a dimension where you rolled on the Dimensional Difference Scale Table, add the Mirror Character Modifier..

Sample Alternate Universe ("Dimension 434.679")

"Dimension 434.679" is a hypothetical dimension for players to visit. It will highlight the dangers facing characters in an alien dimension, the precautions they might take and the possible rewards of travel. It is assumed that characters visiting are in an Imperium world within the Spinward Marches.

"Dimension 434.679" will likely seem to newly-arrived Travellers to be quite similar to their home dimension, however first impressions are deceiving. Characters will soon note the lack of Vargr in the area. If they do see any Vargr, they will be emaciated and sickly, and any Vargr Player Characters will be treated with suspicion and given a wide berth. Worlds noted for high Aslan populations will notably lack their presence as well. The final glaring differences will be the lack of available meat in restaurants and frequent overhead flying vehicles, patrolling menacingly.

Players in search of information will have to phrase their questions carefully, to avoid being exposed as outsiders. Successful players will eventually find the reason for these strange changes, however. Beginning in the year 916 the K'Kree began a violent



crusade against the Imperium, Vargr and Aslan. The Aslan and Vargr were nearly wiped out to a man, while omnivorous humans were allowed to live in peace if they swore loyalty to the steppelords and forsook the eating of meat. The K'Kree established settlements in the open plains of the conquered Imperium worlds, well away from the stinking humans, and patrol to insure the humans do not slaughter living beings for food.

This will present a bleak picture to any meat-eating being, but there are several possible benefits of exploring this universe. Firstly, the K'Kree have left the Aslan and Vargr worlds alone, declaring that 500 years must pass for the worlds' ecologies to heal before they are settled by the K'Kree. This means that there are hundreds of uninhabited planets scorched by weapons fire with useful minerals exposed and ripe

for the taking. Idealistic characters may desire to forment a rebellion, restoring the Imperium or ruling their own dynasty. K'Kree characters may desire to stay and join this utopian society.

Alternate Dimension Adventures

Presented here are a variety of adventure styles that can be introduced to a campaign. Referees should feel free to modify them in any way that they see fit for their play group.

The Devourer

Something or someone, a new type of trans-dimensional black hole, an enormous space entity, a mad scientist or a cult devoted to nothingness and destruction is working to bring each dimension to its end. Perhaps

Mirror Character Table

Roll 2d6	Result
2	Disturbingly, it seems that you were never born, or have already died, in this universe.
3-5	Your mirror is of a lower social station in this reality. They followed an appropriately different career, such as Drifter.
6-8	Your mirror is similar with the only difference being cosmetic, such as having a goatee.
9-11	Your mirror is of a high station. Their Soc is +2 and they may follow a different career, such as military options or Noble
12	Your mirror is a benevolent ruler, a ruthless warlord, a notorious criminal or any other option that means you are always recognised and confused with your mirror.

Parallel Dimensions

it destroys the characters' home and they are the sole survivors seeking to rescue the rest of existence from the same fate or they are attempting to stop the devouring force before it reaches home.

Motley Crew

The entire play group is composed of characters from different dimensions. As none hail from the same reality the potential for player conflict is high. Choices will have to be made as to the agendas and safety of the various dimensions and players may find their characters in a moral dilemma.

Official Business

As employees of a government agency, military or private corporation, the characters explore alternate dimensions in search of profit or conquest. Their assignment may be to eliminate a specific civilisation in another universe, thus "cleansing" it, or locating an unguarded source of valuable minerals.

Over There

The players stumble upon a method of travel to a specific universe, starting a time of covert hostilities between the two dimensions. This particular style of adventure lends itself very well to subterfuge. A Referee may secretly inform a player his character has been replaced with a "double" who is working against the rest of the player group in secret.

The Mysterious Stranger

In each universe the players visit, they run into a mirror of the same individual in various locations and occupations. After visiting several dimensions they discover this individual is not mirrored in every dimension, but the same individual following the characters, and they have an agenda for the players.

Sliding

The players are forced into an alternate dimension, trying to find their way home from random portals. This situation may be due to the erratic nature of their means of dimensional travel, or it may be due to interference from outside influences, forcing the characters to do their bidding in order to return home.

New Equipment

Dimensional Probe (TL 12, 14)

The dimensional probe is a spherical drone commonly sent through open portals to check conditions on the other side before living beings cross through. The probe reports on atmospheric conditions, radiation levels, hazards and life forms present. The probes take video and audio recordings to be analysed by travellers, and the probes can catalog individual dimensions, storing their vital information in a database of known dimensions. At TL 12 the probe must return to its home dimension for its data to be analysed, while the TL 14 version can transmit data through portals in real-time. The probe has a weight of 5 kg and costs Cr. 200,000 at TL 12 and Cr. 350,000 at TL 14.

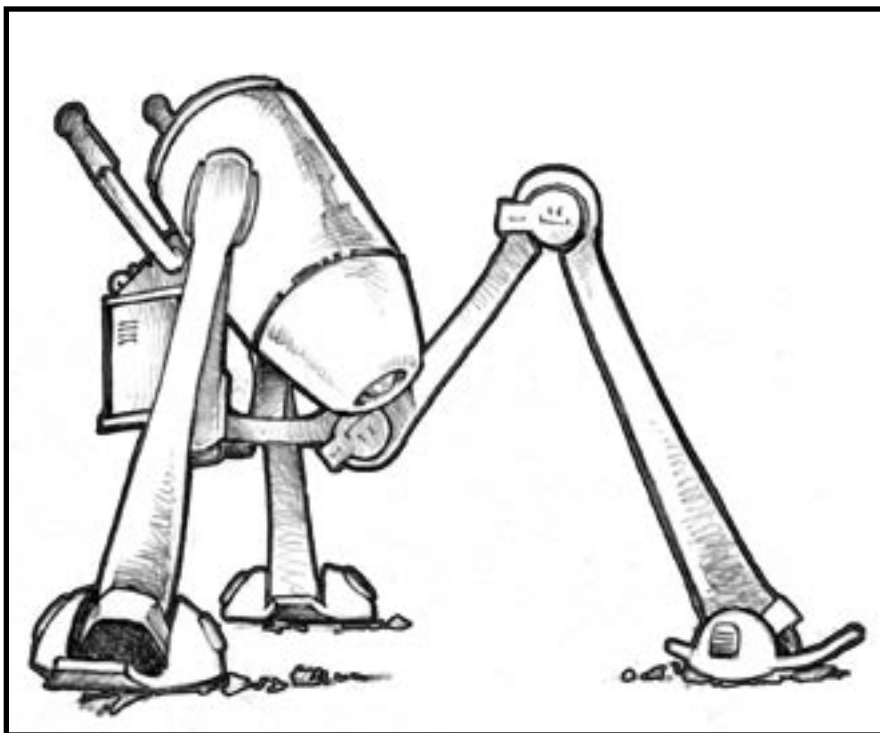
Trans-Dimensional Life-form

Analyzer (TDLA) (TL 13, 15)

A hand-held scanning device for identifying beings from different dimensions. The TDLA is often used to root out spies from alternate universes. When a being is identified as trans-dimensional the scanner's display flashes a visible aura around the being and identifies the being's home dimension, if that dimension has been cataloged in a database. The TDLA weighs 0.5 kg and costs Cr. 50,000. At TL 15 it is available as an ocular implant and costs Cr. 200,000.

Infiltrator's Band (TL 13, 15)

The infiltrator's band is a counter-measure to the TDLA, effectively shielding a trans-dimensional being from being exposed. The band is most frequently disguised as a bracelet or other jewelry. Its weight is negligible and it has a cost of Cr. 100,000. At TL 15 the band is available as an implant and costs Cr. 400,000.

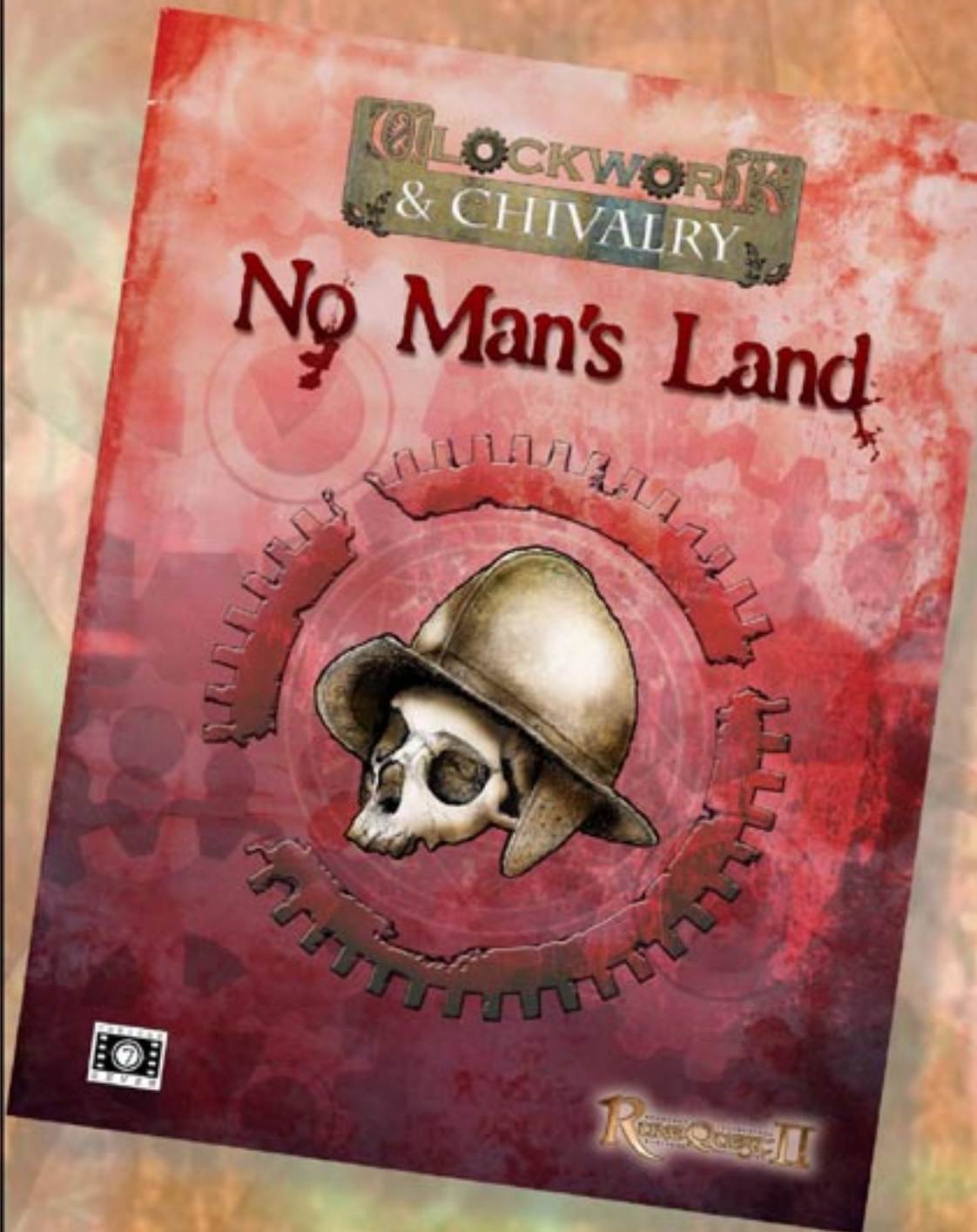


**Volume III of the epic
Kingdom &
Commonwealth
Campaign**

In most of England, an uneasy peace still holds, following the horrific events at Naseby. But in the Debatable Lands, on the outskirts of Birmingham, the conflict continues. Cavaliers and Roundheads are bogged down in muddy trenches, fighting over every inch of blasted ground. Clockwork death machines grind across the landscape; magically-created disease miasmas drift on the breeze and settle in the craters left by the incessant cannon barrages. And in the despoiled wastelands round about, rival gangs on stolen Iron Horses fight over scarce resources, obscure points of theology, and access to the Winding Stations they need to keep their vehicles running.

Somewhere in this bloody chaos, the renegade Clockwork Alchemist, Lady Arabella Blackwood, is up to no good. Can the Adventurers find her before she achieves her nefarious aims?

No Man's Land can be played as a stand-alone adventure, but also forms the third episode of the epic Kingdom & Commonwealth Campaign for *Clockwork & Chivalry*.



Requires the *Clockwork & Chivalry Worldbook* and the *RuneQuest II Core Rulebook*, available from Mongoose Publishing.

No Man's Land – alternate history for RuneQuest II

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Armes of Battel (Part I)

By Colin Chapman

Weapons and Armour in Clockwork & Chivalry

Many weapons, both military and civilian, were pressed in to service during the English Civil War, though the triumvirate of pike, sword, and musket dominated the field. Of course, with the large number of mercenaries employed from Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and Cornwall, some unusual weapons were to be found on occasion. Add in mercenaries from further afield such as France, the German territories of the Holy Roman Empire, the states of the Dutch Republic, the Italian states, Sweden and its dominions, Spain, and even the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and you end up with some arms and individuals that would be considered exotic.

Notes: Weapons marked †† are two handed only. Weapons marked † may be Set Against a Charge.

CLOSE COMBAT WEAPONS AXES

Axes are common on the battlefields of Europe far more as tools used by engineers than actual weapons.

Hatchet: Hatchets are common peasant weapons, employed because of their common use as tools, but are not specifically crafted or intended for use in combat. Only the Hungarian Hajduks, the standard arquebus-armed infantry employed by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, routinely carry a hatchet, albeit for use as a tool.

Rules: Hatchet, *Runequest II*, pages 69-70.

Horseman's Axe: Like the military pick, the horseman's axe, sometimes confusingly called a *Pollaxe*, is swiftly falling from use, now only employed by a few cuirassiers and harquebusiers. It consists of a modest axehead mounted on a wooden or metal

shaft and also like the military pick, features a rearward-facing pick.

Rules: See table on page 35.

BLUDGEONS

With extensive plate armour rapidly disappearing on the battlefield, bludgeons are no longer common battlefield weapons in most of Europe.

Club: Most often called a *Cudgel*, the club only sees use among the likes of watchmen, ruffians, the peasantry, and the most lamentably equipped of soldiers.

Rules: Club, *Runequest II*, page 70.

Mace: Something of an antique oddity in the armies of western Europe, the mace is still used in Poland-Lithuania as a weapon, but primarily serves as a badge of rank. Porucznik (the junior officer serving each Rotmistrz) use the *Piernacz*, an all-metal flanged mace, sometimes decorated with silver. Rotmistrz (captains) use larger, more elaborate flanged maces called *Buzdygan*. The four Hetman (highest-ranked commanders) use a *Bulawa*, a spherical, pear- or onion-shaped mace, heavily decorated with gilt, silver, and jewels.

Rules: Mace, *Runequest II*, pages 69-70.

Note: Bulawa cost at least 1200 SP, when they can be purchased at all!

Military Pick: The combination hammer and pick is rapidly disappearing from the battlefield, now used only by a few harquebusiers and cuirassiers in most of Europe. Only among Polish-Lithuanian nobles does it see continued extensive use in the form of the *Czekan*, an all-steel weapon used more as a symbol of authority and duelling weapon as an implement of battle. The Polish-Lithuanian nobles still prefer swords in battle, however, so it is most often seen off the battlefield.

Rules: Military Pick, *Runequest II*, pages 69/72.

HOW CAN I GET ONE?

Foreign weapons are, of course, more likely to be used by foreign mercenaries, but continental weapons were not completely unheard of among the English either. Because some soldiers, particularly nobles and officers, saw service as mercenaries themselves in Europe during the Thirty Years War, it was not unknown for them to acquire foreign-made weapons as trophies and mementoes or for their own use. An appropriate character background and the Game Master's permission can easily see an English character equipped with a weapon his fellows would consider exotic.

KNIVES

Knives of all varieties see use on the battlefields of Europe, including a motley assortment of hunting and skinning knives, butcher's knives, and common utility knives among poorer troops (Dagger and Knife, *Runequest 2 Core Rulebook*, pages 68-70). The following knives, however, represent those of generally better quality, as well as those specifically intended for conflict.

Dirk: A Scottish Highlander development of the dudgeon, the dirk has a wide blade around 30cm in length, and a short handle carved from dark wood that still resembles that of the dudgeon in most cases. In the Highlander fighting style it is held in the off-hand shield-arm.

Rules: Dirk, *Runequest II*, pages 68/70.

Dudgeon: So-called because its handle is most frequently made of dudgeon (boxwood), this double-edged dagger is also called a *Bollock Knife* because of the distinctive shape of its shaft and the two oval swellings that form its guard. It has been in common use in England, Scotland, and the Dutch Republic for several hundred years.

Rules: Dagger, *Runequest II*, pages 68/70.

Main Gauche: Although it originated in France, the main gauche parrying dagger is the off-hand weapon of choice for many fencers throughout Western Europe. A long, double-edged dagger, it has a guard ring and long quillons for superior parrying, either straight, S-shaped, or down-curved. Some feature broad metal guards to protect the hand further and these add 1 Armour Point to the wielding limb (and Cost 200 SP).

Rules: Main Gauche, *Runequest II*, pages 69/72.

Sword Breaker: This broad-bladed, single-edged parrying dagger has long straight quillons and a ring guard. It is immediately recognisable due to the fact the back of the blade is serrated with around a dozen teeth designed to catch and hold the attacking blades. It is treated as a Medium weapon when parrying. Following a successful Pin Weapon combat manoeuvre, the wielder may spend a Combat Action to automatically Damage Weapon.

Rules: Main Gauche, *Runequest II*, pages 69/72.

Note: Cost is 220 SP.

Trident Dagger: At first glance a normal main gauche, the trident dagger is cunningly wrought so that with the press of a button, the edges of the blade spring out to form a wide trident-like array ideal for parrying and catching enemy blades. Like other parrying daggers, it is treated as a Medium weapon when parrying. When using the Pin Weapon combat manoeuvre with this weapon, the wielder gains a +10% bonus to the Opposed Test of combat skills to continue the pin.

Rules: Main Gauche, *Runequest II*, pages 69/72.

Note: Cost is 220 SP.

POLEARMS

Beyond the commonplace pike used in European formations, many other polearms were in use, some as symbols of rank, others as the battlefield weaponry of the common soldiery.

Bardiche ††: Used by *Cossacks* in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Russian *Streltsy*, the bardiche has a long, cleaver-like axehead (typically around 25-90cm long) attached to a stout wooden pole, 1.2-1.5m in length. It is regarded as a brutal weapon, and the *Streltsy* are known to use it as a musket rest as well as a weapon.

Rules: See table on page 35.

Brandistock ††↑: A rare polearm, primarily used in Italy but found elsewhere too, the brandistock consists of a 1.5m long metal tube covered in leather or a wooden veneer, and is used by well-to-do civilians and off-duty officers as a walking stick. It does, however, conceal a more lethal armament, for with a sturdy jerk downwards, three blades emerge and lock in place. The central thrusting blade is usually around 30-45cm and the two side blades are much shorter at around 10-15cm. It is sometimes called a *Feather Staff*. Extending the blades requires a Combat Action.

Rules: See table on page 35.

Glaive ††: The glaive is a wooden shaft 1.8-2.1m in length topped with a singled-edged blade, typically 45cm long at the base of which is a tassel. Like halberds, partisans, and pollaxes, it was used as a symbol of authority by sergeants and some officers, as well as by military bodyguards, albeit far more rarely than the halberd or partisan. Those of officers and bodyguards were likely to be engraved or otherwise decorated.

Rules: See table on page 35.

Note: Statistics are reproduced from the *Arms & Equipment Errata* for ease of reference.

Halberd ††↑: Halberdiers are employed within the infantry of Habsburg Germany and Spain, supporting bucklermen and guarding key positions, ensigns, and supply wagons. Outside of the Holy Roman Empire and the guards of various palaces, halberds are generally only used by sergeants as symbols of rank, and by the bodyguards of high-ranking officers. Like all halberds, it

has a long wooden shaft topped by a steel axehead, thrusting spike, and rearward hook, the base of the head is decorated with a tassel.

Rules: Halberd, *Runequest II*, pages 69-70.

Half-Pike ††↑: The half-pike is found in most European armies, but is much less common than the full-length pike. It is, however, more versatile due to its length of only 2.4-2.7m and sees use on the battlefield and in shipboard actions. Irish soldiers make much use of half-pikes with bodkin-style spearheads.

Rules: See table on page 35.

Jeddart Staff ††↑: Originating in Jedburgh, Scotland, this Highland polearm is a 1.8-2.1m long pole mounting a 1.2m long blade. The blade is singled-edged, slim, very slightly curved, and suitable for cutting or thrusting.

Rules: See table on page 35.

Lance: Lancers have largely fallen out of favour in most of Europe with the main exception being the cavalry of Poland-Lithuania, Husaria and Tatars. These use a lance called a *Kopia*, a hollowed-out 5m wooden lance with a ball-shaped handguard and light silk pennant. Due to its hollowed out nature it is a one-use weapon, nearly always shattering after the first solid strike, at which point it is discarded and the horseman's sword is brought to bear. In the British Isles, only the Scots currently make any real use of the lance, a high proportion of their few cavalry using a simple spear-like lance 2.4-2.7m in length.

Rules: Lance, *Runequest II*, pages 69-70.

Note: A *Kopia* has AP/HP 4/8 and Cost 75 SP. It shatters after one successful strike.

Leading Staff ††: A symbol of officer rank, sometimes used instead of a more sturdy polearm such as a partisan or pollaxe, the leading staff is a 1.2-1.5m wooden shaft topped with an intricate spearhead-shaped decoration. It is a flimsy device, of little use as an actual weapon.

Rules: See table on page 35.

Armes of Battel (Part I)

Lochaber Axe ††: Another Highlander invention, the Lochaber axe features a 1.5-1.8m shaft and broad, cleaver-like axe blade averaging 45cm length. A sturdy backward-facing hook (*cleek*) is attached to the top of the shaft or back of the blade, useful for hooking opponents, especially cavalry of whom the Highlanders have few. The butt end of the shaft features a crude metal thrusting tip, increasing the weapon's versatility.

Rules: See table on page 35.

Partisan †† ↑: The Partisan is issued to infantry officers and the bodyguards of commanders throughout Europe as a symbol of rank, though few use it as a weapon, preferring to use their swords and pistols instead. It features a sturdy wooden shaft, typically around 1.8m in length, topped with a long, broad, tapering spearhead with two curved flukes at its base. Tassels adorn the base of the spearhead and it is sometimes engraved and otherwise artfully crafted.

Rules: See table on page 35.

Pike †† ↑: The ruling close-combat infantry weapon, the pike is generally around 5m in length and can be found heavily employed by nearly every army in Europe. Although pikemen were equal in numbers to musketeers only a handful of years ago, the increasing use and effectiveness of muskets means that numbers of pikemen are falling to as few as 20%-30% of the infantry now fielded.

Rules: Pike, *Clockwork & Chivalry*, pages 95-96.

Pollaxe ††: Rarely used by infantry officers instead of a partisan or leading staff, the pollaxe has a sturdy wooden shaft, 1.2-2.1m in length topped with a hammerhead, backward-facing pick, and thrusting spike.

Rules: Poleaxe, *Runequest II*, pages 69/72.

Swinefeather ↑: Until recently extensively used by the forces of the late Gustav II Adolf, King of Sweden, the swinefeather is a wooden stake, 1.5-1.8m long, with a spearhead at the top and iron spike at the base. Also called a *Swedish Feather*, it is used by some musketeers in Western Europe as a guarding device, thrust into

the ground in front of the musketeer and angled forward so as to be set against any cavalry charges that might come.

Rules: See table on page 35.

SHIELDS

The days of the shield seeing common use have long since passed, and even the buckler seldom sees use any more in civilian hands or in battle.

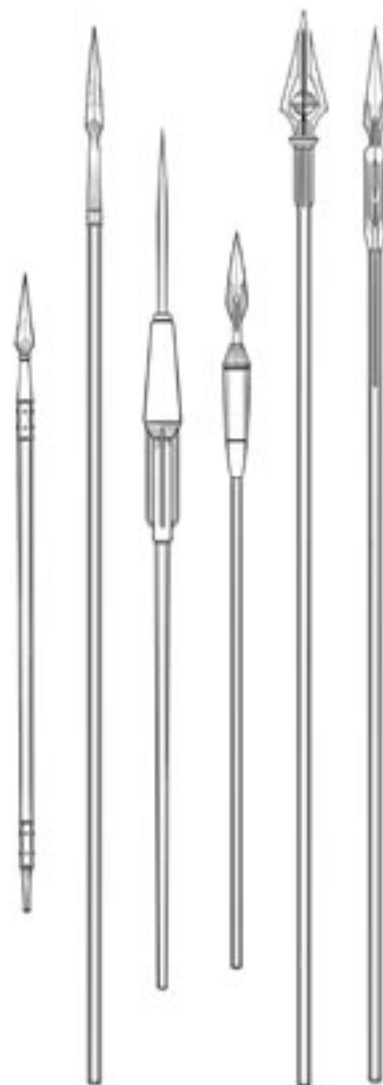
Buckler: Also called a *Targe* or *Rondache*, the Buckler is a small shield, handheld or bound to the forearm. Its main use is among the Scottish Highlanders who use a studded, wooden buckler in combination with a dirk and basket-hilted *Claidheamh Mòr* broadsword (see below). Bucklermen saw battlefield use until recent years in the armies of Spain as front rank infantry, though they were something of a failed experiment. They were armoured with helmet and breastplate, but armed with a steel buckler, side-sword, and sometimes a matchlock pistol or two.

Rules: Buckler, *Runequest II*, page 70.

SWORDS

Swords are the personal melee weapons of choice on and off the battlefield and come in several varieties.

Basket-Hilted Broadsword: The basket-hilted broadsword is the standard military sword of cavalry in nations throughout Europe. All such swords feature straight cut-and-thrust blades, nearly always double-edged though some singled-edged backswords existed. In England, the *Mortuary Sword* sports an intricate half-basket hilt, while in the Dutch Republic, the *Walloon Sword* is favoured, with two large shell-guards (often decoratively pierced) and a knucklebow. The elegant Italian *Schiavona* has a cat's-head pommel and cage-like hilt whereas the Polish *Palasz* usually has a simpler basket-hilt or knucklebow. Scottish Highlanders able to afford one use the basket-hilted *Claidheamh Mòr* (Claymore) as their primary weapon of choice, usually in conjunction with a targe (buckler) shield strapped to their other arm and dirk held in the shield hand.



Rules: Mortuary Sword, *Clockwork & Chivalry*, pages 95-96.

Great Sword ††: With the days of the Landsknechts long past, the great sword has all but vanished from use in Europe. The only notable exception is the Scottish *Claidheamh dà Làimh*, sometimes confusingly called a “Claymore”, a straight-bladed, double-edged great sword averaging 1.4m in length, with a long downswept cross hilt. It is far less common among Highlanders than the basket-hilted *Claidheamh Mòr*.

Rules: Great Sword, *Runequest II*, pages 69-70.

Hanger: The Hanger is a hunting sword, a short blade (typically 45-60cm), nearly always single-edged, sometimes slightly curved, with a knucklebow to protect the hand. Frequently well made, and often decorated by wealthier owners, it is used to kill injured or otherwise immobilised prey but also makes a handy defensive weapon. It is a popular weapon throughout Europe, and is coming to be used frequently aboard ship, where it will eventually lead to the later *Cutlass*.

Rules: See table on page 35.

Koncerz: This unusual sword is used exclusively by the famed Polish Husaria (hussars), and features an unedged, slender blade around 1.4m in length, designed to thrust only and effectively pierce mail armour. The grip is protected by a simple but sturdy knucklebow.

Rules: See table on page 35.

Rapier: The civilian weapon of the gentleman, the rapier is commonplace among those able to afford it, and can be found throughout Western Europe. Many rapiers feature elaborate swept hilts, but cage hilts, Pappenheimer hilts (elegant combinations of swept hilt and pierced shell guards), and cup hilt rapier styles are also popular, the latter especially in Spain.

Rules: Rapier, *Runequest II*, pages 70/72

Sabre: The *Szabla*, the sabre beloved of Polish-Lithuanian cavalry has a curved single-edged blade and knucklebow. Scottish Highlanders also use a rare sabre-like sword, the *Turcael*, though this more resembles a basket-hilted *Claidheamh Mòr* broadsword, albeit singled-edged and curved.

Rules: Sabre, *Runequest II*, pages 70/72.

Note: The Szabla does not provide an Armour Point to the wielding limb.

Schweizersäbel: A rare weapon originating in the Swiss Confederacy, the *schweizersäbel* (Swiss Sabre) has a slightly curved, singled-edged blade around 1m in length, and two-handed grip protected by a swept-style hilt. Like many longswords of the past, it can be wielded in one hand or two, and despite its name it is not a cavalry weapon. Its hilt adds 1 Armour Point to one or both limbs being used to wield it.

Rules: Longsword, *Runequest II*, pages 69-70.

Side-Sword: Ubiquitous on the battlefields of Europe as the standard sword of many infantrymen, the side-sword is a straight-bladed, double-edged cut-and-thrust sword with S-shaped or straight quillons and often a simple knucklebow.

Rules: War Sword, *Runequest II*, pages 70/72.

Close Combat Weapons

Weapon	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	Size	Reach	Combat Manoeuvres	ENC	AP/HP	Cost
Bardiche	2D6	7/7	L	L	Bleed, Sunder	3	4/10	200 SP
Brandistock	1D8	7/7	M	L	Impale, Stun Location	2	6/8	200 SP
Glaive	1D8+1	7/9	M	L	Bleed	3	4/10	100 SP
Half-Pike	1D8+1	5/5	L	VL	Impale	2	4/10	30 SP
Horseman's Axe	1D6+1	11/9	M	M	Bleed, Sunder	3	6/10	180 SP
Hanger	1D6	6/7	M	M	Bleed, Impale	1	6/9	150 SP
Jeddart Staff	1D8+2	7/9	L	VL	Bleed, Impale, Sunder	3	4/10	250 SP
Koncerz	1D8	7/11	M	L	Impale	2	6/8	200 SP
Leading Staff	1D6	7/7	M	L	Impale	2	4/8	100 SP
Lochaber Axe	2D6	7/7	L	L	Bleed, Entangle, Sunder	3	4/10	250 SP
Partisan	1D8+1	5/5	L	L	Entangle, Impale	3	4/10	150 SP
Swinefeather	1D8	7/-	M	M	Impale	2	4/6	20 SP

See next month's *Signs & Portents* for part II of this article, which covers ranged weapons and armour.

Radak's Revenge

By Jawad Naeem

Introduction: Radak's revenge is an adventure for 4-6 players. It can be modified for use with more or less than the recommended number of players by making a few minor adjustments to the number of foes the players will face. For this adventure the party needs to have a magic user in their party, who can be either a Brother of the Crystal Star, a Magician of Dessi, a Vakeros Warrior Mage or a Herbwarden of Bautar. If the party does not have any of these types of characters, then the narrator can simply include a Non Player Character of one of these character types. Furthermore, each player character needs a reason to be in Dessi when the adventure starts. Perhaps a character has a long standing friendship with a Magician of Dessi and must answer an urgent plea for aid, perhaps another character is an adventurer wandering Magnamund in search of evil to cut down with his blade and innocents to save, and hears the Magicians of Dessi are looking for stalwart heroes to come to their aid.

Plot Overview: This adventure revolves around a Cener Druid (see *Signs and Portents* issue 81) named Radak, who once terrorized the lands around Siyen before being put down by a powerful Magician of Dessi. Wounded but not defeated the Druid returned to the Danarg to lick his wounds and plot his revenge. Now, he has reemerged with a small army of Beastmen, and is terrorizing the village of Lunarna in the nation of Siyen. The Druid plans to develop a plague that will kill every magic user upon the face of Magnamund save the Cener Druids themselves. The final step to this end is to capture and sacrifice a living Magician of Dessi, Brother of the Crystal Star, Herbwarden of Bautar or a Vakeros Warrior Mage upon a dark altar. To draw forth one of these types of magic users the Cener has let one of the villagers 'escape', who predictably went to Dessi to seek the aid of the Elder Magi. If all goes as Radak plans, the Magi Regnanti

will deliver a user of magic straight into his grasp.

Act 1: An Urgent Summons

You have answered a request for help from Dessi, arriving with all due haste. It is midday when the last of you arrives and immediately you are led to appear before Lord Rimoah, leader of the Magicians of Dessi. Lord Rimoah's eyes shine with wisdom and pride as he glances at you, allies of Dessi who have come to her aid in this time of need. Nearby Lord Rimoah stands a hunchbacked, bedraggled man who appears to be a peasant by the looks of him. Lord Rimoah clears his throat and speaks, his voice deep and rich.

'Friends of Dessi, you have been summoned here at a perilous time. Great evil is afoot in the village of Lunarna, in the nation of Siyen. This man here was a resident of that place before it was overtaken by evil and he escaped to bring us ill tidings. Hans, you may tell them your tale now.'

Hans turns his rheumy eyes towards you and begins in a quivering voice. 'The Druid came to our village only a moon ago, with an army of Beastmen, and enslaved us all. Men, women and children were forced into cages, and into dark rites.' Hans shudders once, then goes on. 'Every night a villager is sacrificed upon a dark altar, and the Druid talks about using power gained through the sacrifices to unleash a horrific plague by the new moon. 'e said the plague would kill all magic users on the face of Magnamund, save the Druid and those like 'im.'

Lord Rimoah turns to you, his expression grave and intones, 'Your task is clear. You must go immediately to this village, seek out this Druid and kill him, before he can fulfill his mission.'

A small raven has been perched upon a nearby windowsill throughout the conversation. The raven is a spy for Radak, and had been following Hans ever since his 'escape'. The Druid is watching and listening to events unfold through the raven's senses. Player Characters can make a Test with a difficulty of 3 to notice the raven. A Kai Lord with the Animal Kinship Discipline can attempt to forge a link with the bird by making a Test with a difficulty of 5, but if he does so the raven curses him and flies away. In the brief moment though, the Kai Lord senses a malign presence within the bird.

At this point the players may have some questions for Hans, and he will try to answer them as best as he can:

How many Beastmen does the Druid have?: Hans does not know the exact number but it seemed like a small army to him.

How did Hans escape?: He slipped away when the Beastmen were transporting some villagers from one cage to another. He ran straight to the town of Seroa and was lucky enough to find a ship en route to Dessi just about to leave from there. He managed to convince the Captain of his plight and was allowed to come aboard.

Why did Hans come to Dessi for aid instead of seeking help from the authorities in his homeland?: The Magicians of Dessi are renowned as foes of the Cener Druids. Furthermore, Hans was concerned the authorities in his homeland would not act soon enough to prevent the Druid from unleashing the plague. He had thought about seeking out a sect of Herbwardens who are also renowned as foes of the Cener Druids, but the Herbwardens are a secretive sect and finding one of their number would take far too long.

Once the Player Characters have the answers they seek, Lord Rimoah will tell them that there a ship called 'The Sea Nymph' leaving for the port city of Seroa in Siyen in just a little while. They are to board it, make their way across the Tentarias and upon disembarking purchase fresh mounts from the city. From thereon they must make straight for Lunarna. Lord Rimoah hands the party a purse of 50 gold coins, enough to purchase passage aboard the Sea Nymph as well as horses when they land. Hans also gives them directions to his village from Seroa.

'May Kai and Ishir bless your journey, and may your mission be successful.' Lord Rimoah intones, sending the party on their way. Before embarking the party may wish to purchase supplies from the shops in Elzian. Allow them to purchase anything from the equipment chapter of Heroes of Magnamund and then direct them towards the docks.

Act 2: The Sea Nymph

It is early evening by the time you reach the docks. There are plenty of ships anchored in the bay and among them sits the Sea Nymph, a medium sized ship fully crewed by tough looking sailors. With a last glance back at Elzian you board the ship, making your way across the gangplank. You are greeted by a stocky man with a large mustache, who looks to be a Dessi by his features. He introduces himself as Captain Rezno, the captain of the Sea Nymph, and charges you 5 gold coins a piece for a bunk aboard the ship.

'We were just about to leave good sirs, nice of you to join us. Make your way towards the cabins and get settled in. Dinner will be served in just a little while, as soon as we get underway.'

There are a dozen crewmembers aboard the ship. There are also four other passengers who are also making the trip to Seroa:

Shakara Neen: Shakara looks to be in her mid twenties, with a beautiful face and clear green eyes. She introduces herself as an adventuress, saying she is wandering the world looking for adventure and excitement. In reality, Shakara is an assassin currently working for Radak. Radak knew that Hans would go straight to the Elder Magi for help, and thus he sent Shakara to Elzian, in order to strike an early blow against the party. Informed of the party's arrival by Radak's raven spy, the assassin has already moved ahead of them and booked passage on board the one ship leaving for Siyen. Shakara has orders to cripple and kill as many of the party as she can, but to leave one magic user in the party unharmed. Shakara will try to strike up a friendship with any martially oriented party members, such as Knights, Shadaki Buccaneers or Ice Barbarians. She will do this to alleviate suspicion and to wiggle her way into the party's good graces. She plans to attack the party at the end of the voyage, when their guard should be down.

Shakara:
COMBAT SKILL 18 ENDURANCE 28
Inventory: Wildfire*, Potion of Laumspur. Glass vial of Storgh Calling Scent.(Special Item)

*Wildfire: Wildfire is a potent fiery mixture that explodes outward in a small fireball when the glass vial containing it is broken. Pick a number from the random number table and apply twice this amount as damage to every living thing in a 10 feet radius centering on where the wildfire vial was thrown.

Vemsen: Vemsen is a merchant in his late thirties. He is going to Seroa to set



up shop and sell some trade goods. He is a cheat and a thief who always tries his best to loot his customers of extra coin. Vemsen speaks with a stutter, and is always nervous.

Vemsen:
COMBAT SKILL 12 ENDURANCE 22

Ulnic: Ulnic is a Knight of Illion, with long flowing blonde hair, handsome features and clad in gleaming plate and mail. He is taking passage aboard the Sea Nymph to return back home from Dessi after completing a mission there. Ulnic is loud, boisterous and immediately takes to any martially inclined party members, especially other Knights.

Ulnic:
COMBAT SKILL 17 ENDURANCE 34

Radak's Revenge

Mulnic: Twin brother to Ulnic, Mulnic is also a Knight of the Sword and was in Dessi on a mission on behalf of the nation of Illion. Along with his brother he plans to travel to Slyen by sea, then travel to Illion by horse from there. Mulnic is soft spoken, thoughtful and pragmatic.

Mulnic:
COMBAT SKILL 19 ENDURANCE 32

It seems that in no time at all you are underway. The importance of your mission bears down heavily on you and you cannot help but wonder what dangers await ahead. The sound of a bell pierces the early evening calm, and a crew member sticks his head inside your cabin and informs you it is time for supper.

The Player Characters are shown to their cabin's by a crewmember. Each bunk has space for two. Ulnic and Mulnic both share a bunk, while Shakara and Vemsen share another. Once the Player Characters have settled in the ship raises her anchor and leaves port.

The Player Characters must now eat a MEAL or lose 3 endurance points. In lieu of eating a meal of their own, they can opt to eat what the Sea Nymph has to offer, in which case they do not have to cross of a MEAL from their action chart. If some or all the Player Characters opt to eat in the commons, they will find the other passengers there as well along with Captain Reznó, eating a meal of finely grilled salmon. Vemsen will be sitting by himself at one end of the table, while Reznó, Shakara and Ulnic are laughing boisterously among themselves. Mulnic is thoughtfully picking at his meal, his attention seemingly far away. All look up as the Player Characters approach.

This is an excellent opportunity for the Player Characters to roleplay with the other passengers and the captain. Shakara and Ulnic will be curious as to the reason the Player Characters are

aboard the ship, and will gently prod them for more information. If there is a Brother of the Crystal Star with the party and he casts Sense Evil, he will feel emanations of evil from Shakara and Vemsen. The spell must specifically aimed at Shakara or Vemsen for this to work of course, although the Brother of the Crystal Star can cast the spell generally without aiming it at anyone to get the feeling that evil is present in the cabin. Captain Reznó, Shakara, and Mulnic will immediately recognize a spell being cast (though they won't know what spell it is of course) and will not take kindly to this.

A Kai Lord with the Sixth Sense Discipline can make a Test at a difficulty of 8 to detect Shakara (who is apt at disguising her true intentions thus the higher difficulty for this Test) holds hostile intentions towards the party. Again, the Discipline must specifically be aimed at Shakara for this to work.

If asked about herself, Shakara will claim she is out wandering the world for adventure. A Sommlending Knight of the Realm and a Knight of the White Mountain can use the Disciplines of Code of Honor and Pledge of Truth to detect her lies.

The Player Characters may now suspect Shakara. If directly confronted about her evil nature (Sense Evil) or hostile intentions towards the party (Sixth Sense) or her lies (Code of Honor/Pledge of Truth) she will immediately become defensive. Shakara has a keen grasp of human nature, and she knows the party members are agents of good. She will use this knowledge against them knowing they would most likely not attack anyone not physically attacking them. Shakara will claim the Player Characters to be liars, and will storm out of the cabin in a huff. If they wish the Player Characters can attack Shakara, nipping a problem in the bud. If they do this Shakara's statistics are given above. She will use her Wildfire during the opening round then resort to using

her sword and shortsword. Shakara can attack twice every round so the Player Character(s) facing her must roll twice on the combat results table every round.

Keep in mind that since the Player Characters will appear to be the aggressors, the twin knights Ulnic and Mulnic will fight on Shakara's side, seeing her as the innocent victim. If the Player Characters are victorious they will have a bloodbath on their hands, and the entire crew will be fearful of them for the entire journey, thinking them to be murderers and slayers of innocents. News of their deed will eventually reach Illion, and the Council of Elder Knights might wish to know why the Player Characters killed two members of their order.

If the Player Characters act more cautiously however, keeping a close watch on Shakara, then they will have an opportunity to catch her in the act of treachery, gaining the support of the knights and the crew, and avoiding a reputation as murderers.

The days pass without event, and the Sea Nymph makes good headway with a strong wind at her back. You cannot help but wonder if the wind has been conjured by the Elder Magi to aid you in your journey. All seems to be going well when suddenly one bright morning a call goes out from the crow's nest: 'PIRATES OFF THE STARBOARD BOW!'

For a moment there is chaos upon the deck, as everyone gathers by the starboard bow to look at the black sails on the horizon. Allow Player Characters a knowledge Test with a Difficulty of 7 to recognize that the pirates are Lysenses. The pirate ship is smaller than the Sea Nymph and is gaining steadily upon her. If there is a Shadaki Buccaneer in the party he can take a hold of the helm and use the 'Holding the Weather Gauge' Discipline to outrun the pirate vessel.

Alternatively, a Magician of Dessi can use the Elementalism Discipline to conjure a wind to either repel the pirate vessel, pushing her off course or to fill the sails of the Sea Nymph, so she can outrun the enemy. Alternatively a Brother of the Crystal Star can use the Lightning Hand spell to burn holes in the sails of the pirate ship or a Vakeros Warrior Mage can use the Daernath Discipline to do likewise. If the sails of the pirate vessel are destroyed by these methods then it will give up the chase.

Lacking these options, or if the Player Characters choose not to use them, the pirate vessel will rapidly close the distance, draw across and latch onto the Sea Nymph by way of grappling hooks. Pulling the Sea Nymph close the cutlass wielding pirates will then jump aboard and start killing all passengers and crew. It will be up to the Player Characters to save the day!

Lysenese Pirates (x10):
COMBAT SKILL 15 ENDURANCE 25

Lysenese Captain:
COMBAT SKILL 18 ENDURANCE 29

The pirate captain wears a chainmail waistcoat and wields a serrated cutlass; he will seek out combat with any worthy foe. Direct him towards the most martially inclined Player Character. Shakara, Ulnic and Mulnic, if they are still alive will also participate in the combat. Have them fight one foe a piece. Captain Rezno will be at the helm trying to rally his crewmembers together and will not participate in the combat, while Vemsen will run screaming to the hold. If the Player Characters are victorious then they will be able to cut off the ropes tying both ships together, setting the Sea Nymph free. They will also earn the gratitude of Captain Rezno and the entire crew. Captain Rezno will reward the Player Character who killed the largest number of pirates with a Silver Chainmail Waistcoat. This counts as a Superior Armor and grants a +2 bonus to ENDURANCE over and above what a

chainmail waistcoat normally provides. The Player Characters will also earn the respect of Ulnic and Mulnic, if the two knights have survived thus far. Shakara too will pretend to be in awe of them, if

You are nearing the end of your journey. Port lies only a day away, Captain Rezno tells you. Suddenly a crew member comes running towards the captain and whispers something to him. Rezno's eyes's widen with shock and he looks towards you mouthing the words, 'Monsters!'

she is still alive. Since many days have passed since the encounter with the pirates, tell the Player Characters to restore any lost ENDURANCE or WILLPOWER points to their full, original amount. The monsters Captain Rezno is talking about are Storghs. They have climbed aboard the ship due to a special chemical that Shakara spilled down the side of the Sea Nymph's hull, a chemical given to her by Radak. This chemical both attracts Storghs and incites bloodlust in them. If the Player Characters were keeping a close eye on Shakara allow them a Test with a Difficulty of 6 to spot her slipping away to perform her nefarious deed. If they succeed, they catch her in the act. She immediately attacks them, using her Wildfire in the first round then fighting with sword and shortsword thereafter. Shakara can make two attacks every round, therefore the Player Character(s) facing her must roll twice on the combat results table every round.

Regardless of whether the Player Characters catch Shakara in the act of spilling the contents of her chemical compound or not, they will still have to deal with the Storghs she has summoned and are climbing aboard the deck. If Ulnic and Mulnic are still alive they too will join the battle. If Shakara is still alive she will be conveniently below the deck, and will later claim she slept through the battle.

Storghs (x7):
COMBAT SKILL 16 ENDURANCE 27

Storghs are best described as two headed crocodiles. They usually infest swamps and other dank places of Magnamund, however a rare breed can be found within the oceans as well. On a combat results table roll of 0 or 1, the Storgh bites its victim with both heads inflicting double damage for that round. Due to the chemical compound they are in a frenzied state making them immune to the Disciplines of Mindblast and Animal Kinship.

If the Player Characters are victorious the captain and his crew congratulate them on saving the Sea Nymph once more. The Captain will offer to refund the Player Characters the amount they paid for their fare, and it is up to them whether they accept the offer or not. Allow the Player Characters a spot Test with a difficulty of 5 near the battle site. If they succeed they discover an empty glass vial containing a faint few traces of a chemical compound. If the Player Characters have not discovered Shakara's treachery yet, this vial may give them a clue that there is someone aboard who wishes them ill.

Act 3: Seroa

The Sea Nymph glides into the docks of Seroa the day after your battle with the Storghs. It is a bright and early morning, yet the docks are already bustling with activity. The Sea Nymph docks smoothly and lays down anchor. The gang plank is lowered and Captain Rezno is there to personally bid farewell to all passengers, and once more offers you his heartfelt thanks for saving his ship from disaster.

Radak's Revenge



Vemsen quickly scurries away to find dockworkers to carry his trade goods from the ship to land. He does not bid anyone farewell. If the twin knights Ulnic and Mulnic have survived, they praise the pc's again on their valor and bid them good luck with their journey, inviting them to come to Illion and meet them there someday. If Shakara is still alive she states that since she has nothing better to do she will join the Player Characters on their journey. She will be very insistent, claiming that the

Player Characters could use another sword, seeing as how they always seem to be getting into trouble.

As per their instructions, the Player Characters now need to find the stables, purchase mounts and make their way out of the city. The city offers a market where the Player Characters can purchase any general equipment listed in the equipment chapter of Heroes of Magnamund. There is also an inn, the Drowsy Dolphin, where they can choose

to stay and recuperate from any injuries. However, you should gently remind them that time is of the essence, thus tarrying too long would be unwise.

The stables are located next to the city gates at the far north end. The stable master is foul mouthed, hunchbacked man with a crooked leg and he will charge them an exorbitant sum for one horse. A single Player Character can try to barter with the man by making a Test with a Difficulty of 8, to lower the price by 5 gold crowns per horse. Alternatively, a Brother of the Crystal Star can use the spell of Mind Charm to do the same (or to gain mounts at no cost even, but that would be most unheroic) If Shakara is with the party she will pay for her own mount with her own money. Once the Player Characters are ready they can ride out the town gate and towards the village with all due haste.

According to the directions they were given by Hans, they are to ride north for roughly a full day until they come to a track heading off the main road. The beaten track leads straight to the village, a journey which will take half a day. The Player Characters make good headway along the main road, meeting no other travelers along the way. After half a day has passed, let the Player Characters make a Test with a difficulty of 5. If they succeed they spot a raven circling them overhead. It remains circling for quite some time. If any party member with the Animal Kinship Discipline uses it on the raven (a Test with a Difficulty of 5), the raven curses the Player Character and flies away. The raven is another spy for Radak, and the druid is using it to watch over the party's progress.

You ride swiftly upon the main road, the leagues passing underneath the hooves of your mounts. All around you are vast plains which slowly begin to give way to trees and eventually a large forest looms in the distance, surrounding the main road on every side. It is early evening by the time you spot the small dirt track branching off from the main road; it is shrouded in tangled undergrowth and hard to make out in the dimming light, but your keen senses do not miss it. The path is surrounded by large trees on every side which appear sinister in the fading light. You slow your horses down to give them a moment's rest, before setting out onto the path that leads to the village of Lunarna.

There is only space on the track for two mounted riders to ride abreast at the same time. As the Player Characters progress upon the dirt track have any Player Characters with the Sixth Sense Discipline or the Mark of Instinct Disciplines make a Test with a difficulty of 5 to detect an ambush awaiting them ahead. Alternatively, a Brother of the Crystal Star can use Sense Evil to detect that there are many small evils in the tree's ahead. Thus warned the Player Characters will avoid being surprised by the party of Beastmen sent here to ambush them by Radak. If they do not possess these Disciplines, or choose not to use them, then the party will be surprised and the Beastmen will gain a free round of attack upon them. The Beastmen are armed with bows and massive two handed axes. They will use their bows during the surprise round, then switch to axes and close in for melee.

Beastmen (x10):
COMBAT SKILL 14 ENDURANCE 24

The tangled undergrowth makes it hard to manoeuvre, so the Player Characters may not always be able to choose their opponents during combat. Furthermore,

it will be impossible for more than two Player Characters to gang up on the same Beastman. The same applies to the Beastmen. If Shakara is with the Player Characters she will immediately start fighting on the side of the Beastmen, loudly shouting, 'For Radak the Ravager!' Lastly, both the Beastmen and Shakara will avoid injuring any one magic user in the party, since Radak needs the magic user for his unholy rite to unleash the plague he has been preparing. If there is more than one magic user in the party then the Beastmen and Shakara will choose only one to remain unharmed.

Act 4: Lunarna

If the Player Characters survive their encounter with the Beastmen they can now proceed to the village. It is almost midnight when they finally spot the lights of the village in the distance.

Exhausted from your long journey as well as the fight with the Beastmen, you finally spot the lights of Lunarna in the distance. As you move closer you see the village is situated in a large clearing, and consists of straw and mud huts built close to one another. In the village square you see large cages of iron, and within them are the wretched figures of the villagers, some sleeping while others lie weeping at their fate. In the very center of the square is a bloodstained altar of black iron, covered with strange, mind wrenching glyphs.

If any of the Player Characters make a move towards the cages, massive, bestial figures move out from the treeline on every side. They hedge the party in from the front, and in their center is a red robed man with wearing an emerald green mask.

'So, you curs finally made your way here just as I planned. At long last, I will have my revenge upon the wretched Magicians of Dessi and their vile allies!'

Radak will not attack immediately, he wants to savour what he hopes is his victory. This is a good opportunity for the Player Characters to interact with their adversary, and maybe try to get him to surrender peacefully. Radak will of course, refuse.

After he grows tired of talking with the Player Characters, he orders his Beastmen to attack the party.

Beastmen (x8):
COMBAT SKILL 14 ENDURANCE 24
Radak:
COMBAT SKILL 17 ENDURANCE 26

Radak is armed with a Cenerese wand of power. It allows him to fire destructive blasts of scorching, yellow colored energy. This counts as a ranged attack dealing double damage. If a 0 is rolled on the combat results table, he does triple damage that round instead. If forced to enter melee combat, Radak uses a curved dagger.

If the Player Characters are victorious, they find the key to the cages on Radak's body. Using it they can free the villagers and earn a lifetime's worth of gratitude from them. They have ended a deadly threat to all of Magnamund and can now return to Dessi in triumph!



A Clash of Fleets

By Andy McMillan and Nick Robinson

Fleet Choice

Andy

Today I was facing off against the Greek in Mongoose's new ACTA Noble Armada. I was to take the part of the admiral of the noble Hawkwood Fleet. The choice of ships was fairly simple as I look to maximise my firepower when choosing fleets and would attempt to destroy the Decados ships at range. The Decados fleet is a strong boarding fleet so letting them get close is never a good idea. Given the points allowed for the game I had to rule out using the Hawkwood Dreadnought and Cruiser due to their cost which would have meant I would only have one or two other ships. Instead I decided to take numerous smaller ships so if the one of my ships was boarded I would not lose a huge chunk of my fleet

points. My fleet comprised of 1 Destroyer, 4 Frigates and 3 Scouts, I hoped to use the scouts to paint any high value targets in the Decados fleet or any boarding ships sent against me.

Nick

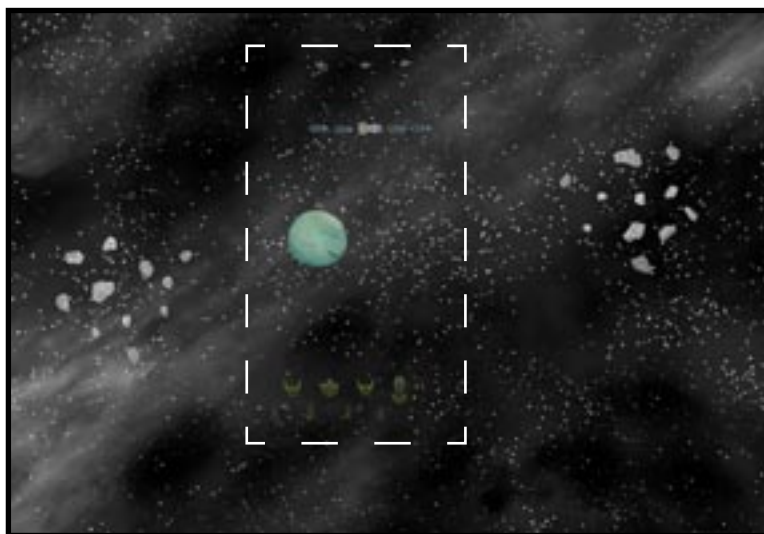
The problem with facing a Hawkwood fleet is their longer ranged firepower, but if you can get in amongst their ships then House Decados rules supreme! Unfortunately I have had wretched luck in past games and rather than relying on my half-blind gunners this time I decided to have a nice mixed bag. I chose a destroyer as the core around which my small task force would be built. Although my most powerful vessel I decided to use it as a decoy and would be more than happy to let Andy pound it to

dust as long as I could get my galliot into position to seize his flagship. To support these two capable vessels I took a pair of frigates and four raiders. The latter are not great fighting ships, but they pack a decent punch for their size and are quick and agile enough to support my main units.

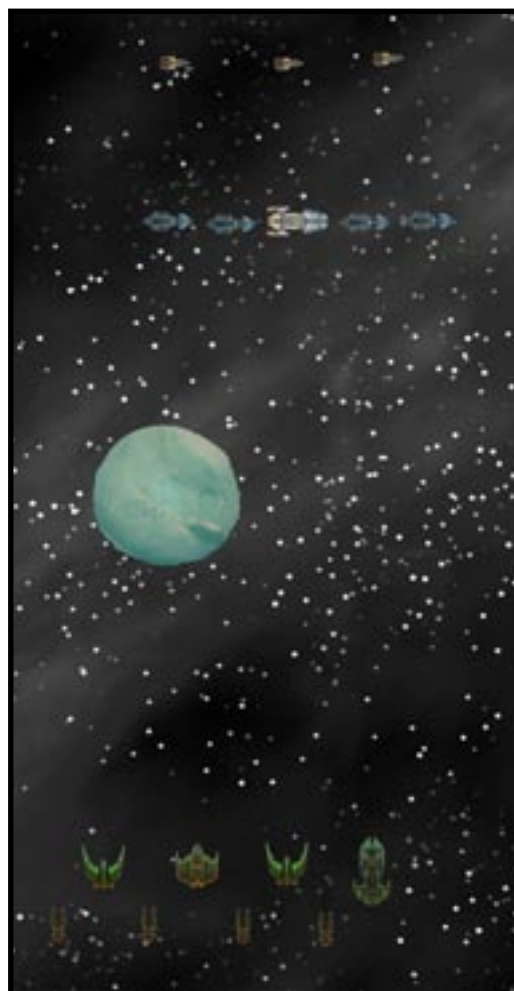
Set Up

Nick

Hmmm. Two ones on the set up roll. Not a good start. Looking at the table lay out we have two asteroid fields and a planet splitting the battlezone. If Andy had set up first I would have positioned my ships to start on an intercept course right away, but since this was not an option I would have to try and force his hand by controlling



The battle lines prepare to meet.



the middle of the table. Choosing to set up closer to the more dense of the two asteroid fields Andy would most likely want to avoid being pinned into a corner but remain fairly close, since he would not want to be forced into the other field, or worse go around it early in the game, either of which could help me enormously. My destroyer would start on my right flank, closest to the middle of the table. Too good a target for Andy to ignore. The frigates and all important galliot would then be able to move around the planet and use its slingshot effect to smash into his formation. The raiders would support their efforts, if the destroyer survived then I would hope to use it to pick off some of the enemy frigates with its big guns.

Andy

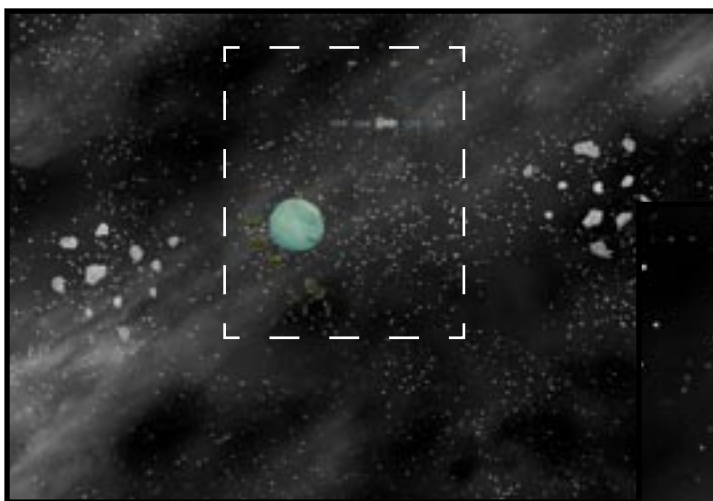
Well what can I say the Greek controlling the evil Decados had such an amazing roll it was almost impossible for me not to beat him. Feeling in a kind mood since he lost the initiative I thought I would give him the honour of setting up first. Seeing the Greek set up in the middle of the table close to the Planet limited me on where I should deploy. I chose to set up almost directly opposite for him and as luck would have it I had him in range of the missile launchers on the destroyer and frigates. Missiles are slow weapon able to ignore shields. As a bonus my main laser armament has a range only marginally less than the missiles. Lasers are really nasty as they are accurate giving them a plus 1 to

hit but they are also precise, doubling the chance of any hit being a critical. I set up the Destroyer and the Frigates line astern so that I could bring the maximum amount of firepower onto the Greeks Destroyer, while the would be further back, their job would be to paint any vessel I needed to kill quickly, which would be the destroyer, at least initially.

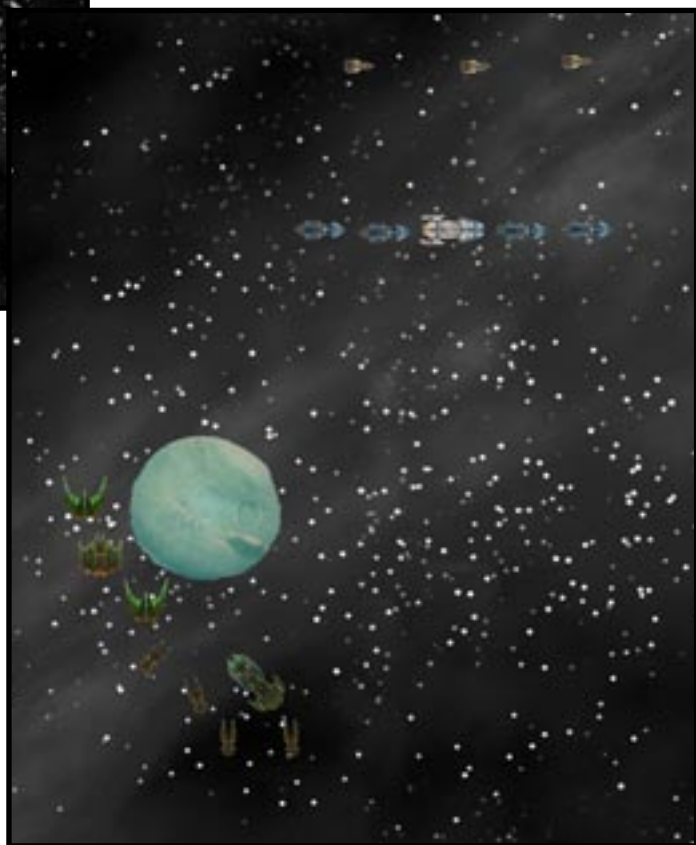
Turn 1

Nick

Well, the only thing I can stay positive about in regards to my rolls for initiative is that my roll was twice that of the set up phase. Mind you a 1 and a 3 are hardly the stuff of legends. With the position of the



Quick. Hide behind that planet...



A Clash of Fleets

fleets two options are to either charge, full speed ahead and hope my depleted shields do not make this a very one sided battle. Or I can stick with my plan, which is what I decided to do. Moving my raiders first of all they began by hiding behind the planet. My frigates followed suit. And my galliot. I tried to get my destroyer in there as well, but unfortunately it was not QUITE fast enough to reach the safety of the world. Curses. At least my ships would be able to take advantage of the slingshot effect next turn...

Andy

The Greek's poor dice rolling continued so I let him move first so I would have the advantage of positioning my ships, enabling them to target his Destroyer.

I had managed to cause one of my Frigates not be able to fire at the destroyer due to

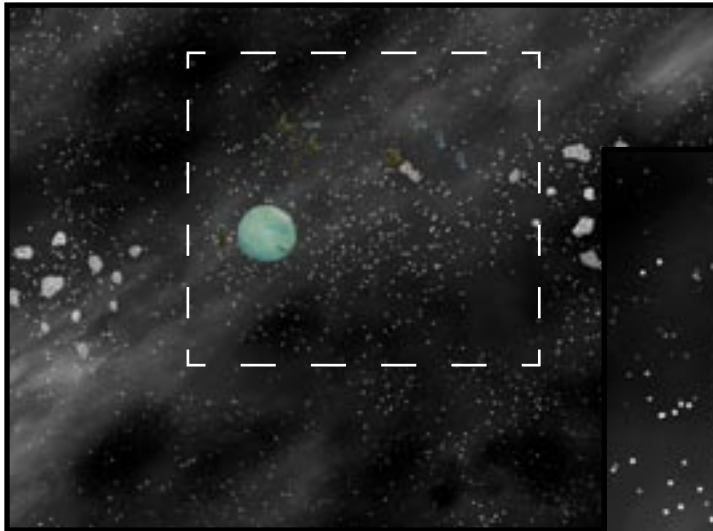
not moving far enough forward not to be blocked by the planet, on the plus side I managed to 'Paint' the Destroyer with my Scouts so my main guns should be able to cause lots of damage to the ship. All the Hawkwood Ships that could fired upon the Hazat Destroyer did so and managed to cause over 50% damage to it with 2 critical hits to the ships crew meaning that there was a chance that if the Greek did not manage to repair the critical hits this turn it could escalate, causing real problems for him. The destroyer also received critical hits to its weapons and engines. Unable to fire because of his short range and the small problem of the planet being in the way the Destroyer just took the pounding. To round off the turn the Destroyer failed to repair any of its critical and the crew critical escalated to level 3 causing more damage and leaving the ship only 2 points from being crippled.

Turn 2

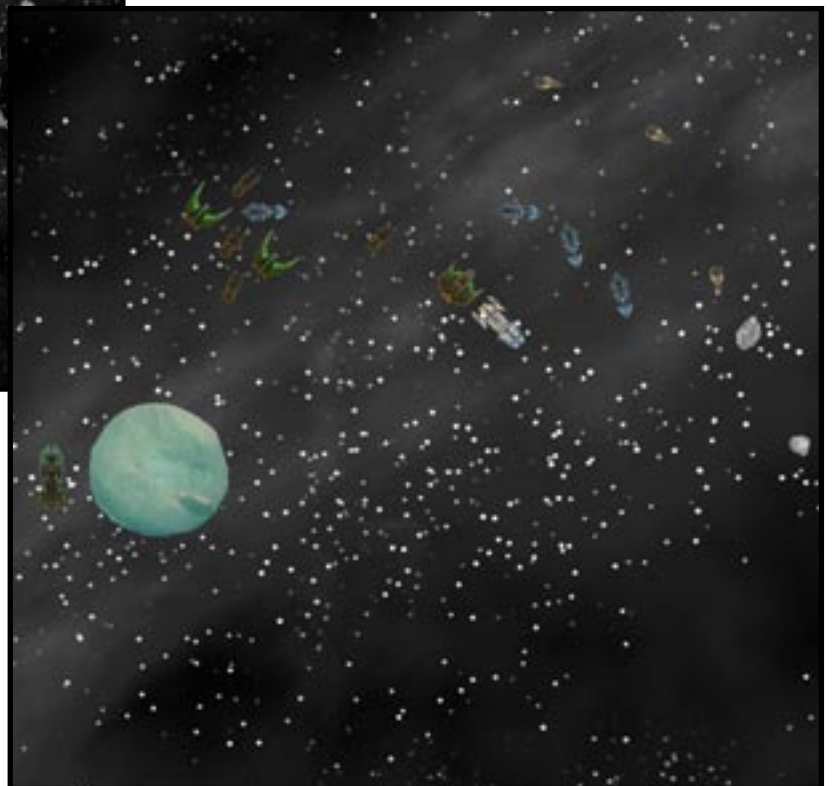
Nick

Sometimes you can do no wrong. On others the highest you can roll on any die is a 2, if you are lucky. However my gloom was instantly dispelled when Andy allowed me to move first. Wooo, his ships were in range of my movement when the slingshot was taken into account, despite the shellacking my destroyer had taken it could prove worth it. Let the boarding parties prepare. Time to sharpen blades and load guns.

I immediately moved one of my frigates into contact with one of Andy's ships and succeeded in grappling the ship. A good start. The fun really began as my galliot then landed on the destroyer, sadly my other boarding attempts failed as Andy's ships scattered, his neat formation forced to disperse. One of my raiders managed to



Prepare to repel boarders!





land on the frigate to support the assault on that ship, however if it was not for some pretty poor dice rolling I could have had Andy on the ropes with even more ships being assaulted.

Meanwhile my Destroyer desperately tried to repair the critical hits it had received. Without success the ship would be doomed. Although I had 'won' the movement phase the firing was yet to come...

Andy

Again I won the initiative forcing Nick to move first. My plan for the turn was to turn the Hawkwood fleet inside the asteroid field so that I could keep the pressure up on the Decados fleet. Thus began my mistakes.

The Greek using the slingshot rules around the planet managed to grapple my destroyer with only galliot. If I did not get rid of it quickly he would undoubtedly

land as many of his frigates in support as he could, overwhelming the troops defending my flagship. Fortunately he only managed to board one other of my ships before I moved them out of range. With the Destroyer hiding behind the planet I would not be able to cause it more damage, since the destroyer was no longer an available target I decided to concentrate everything on the galliot ship.

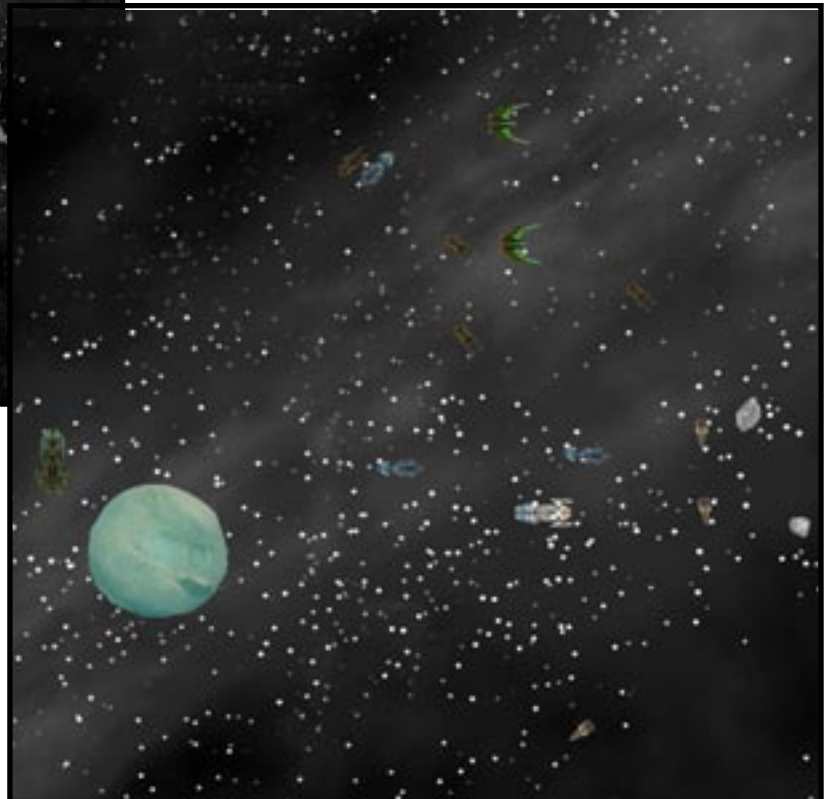
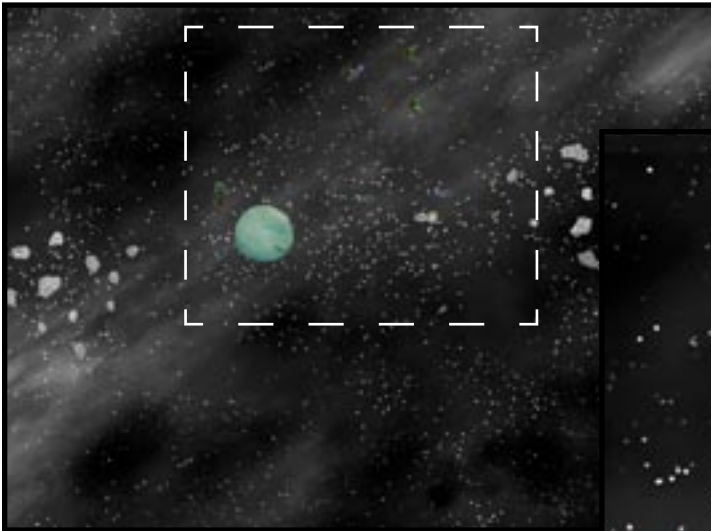
However I made a mistake of using the special order 'Maximum Firepower' with two of my frigates. Maximum fire power is not a special order you should use with a laser armed fleet, although you get to roll more attack dice but you can not cause critical hits. With a laser fleet you need to be able to cause critical as you do not have the firepower of other fleets using different weapons. The galliot was 'painted' by the Hawkwood scouts like they had done to the destroyer the previous turn. The Greek concentrated his fire on one of my frigates

destroying it which was the first kill of this game. This was quickly followed by the death of his galliot before it had chance to unload its troops onto my flagship, a huge relief since if it had survived I may well have lost the battle in that one action alone! The boarding action for the other frigate went well – for House Decados! My frigate's marines were reduced in number from six to just one. The frigate looked doomed.

Unfortunately the Decados destroyer managed to repair all of its critical damage by rolling a 12. The destroyer with all its firepower was now back in the game.

Turn 3 Andy

Again Hawkwood proved their superiority over house Decados by winning the initiative. This turn I needed to start reducing the firepower the Greek still had so I decided to target his frigates. Without them he could not win.



The destroyer reappears after repairs and the battle is still in the balance.

A Clash of Fleets

The major mistake this turn was my not targeting of the destroyer, which had emerged from behind the planet, first, I thought I could cripple it later and paid the price when it opened up with all its guns on the Hawkwood fleet, causing significant damage. More attempts were made to board my ships as I desperately tried to move my ships out of the way and bring my guns to bear. Fortunately none of the boarding actions were successful, if any had succeeded I fear the battle would have been all but over.

Although no new boarding occurred the turn was a bad one once the firing began. I managed to cripple the pesky destroyer and take out one of the Decados frigates. But my losses were greater.

Nick

With the galliot gone and my destroyer in a bad way I needed some real luck to take out the enemy destroyer. With that in mind I tried to sweep in and board another frigate and one of the enemy scouts, but again my pathetic dice rolls were hurting me. The enemy managed to speed away while my ships remained impotent.

Fortunately my gunnery was much better. One of Andy's other destroyers went up in a cloud of debris. I also targeted one of his scouts and was rewarded when it also disintegrated under a hail of fire. Result! Finally I managed to overwhelm the frigate I had boarded last turn, perhaps a real turning point...

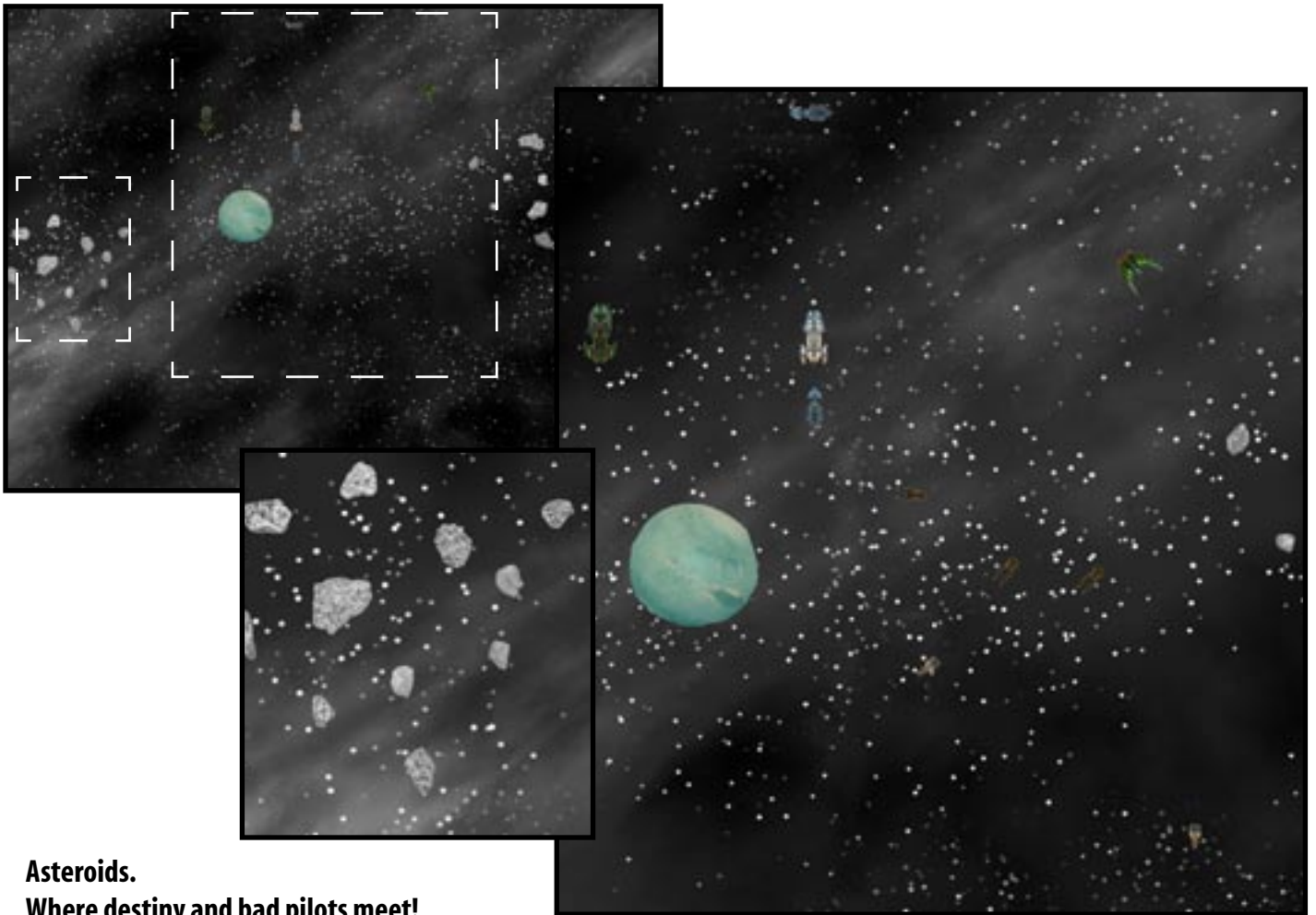
Everything was still to play for. My destroyer was badly shot up but hanging in there and Andy was reduced to just one frigate and a pair of puny scouts (one crippled) working with his destroyer.

Turn 4

Andy

First time in this battle house Hawkwood lost the initiative to Decados and was forced to move first.

The plan for this turn was to move my destroyer and remaining frigate between the Decados destroyer and the rest of the Hazat fleet. This would allow both ships to use all their weapons against the



Asteroids.
Where destiny and bad pilots meet!



Hazat fleet. Port and starboard weapons targeted the Decados fleet whilst the turret mounted missiles would engage the captured Hawkwood frigate. If I could destroy the captured frigate the Greek would only get 50% of its points cost rather than the 100% he had at the moment. The enemy destroyer stripped the shields off my flagship and caused minor damage to the ship but did manage to cause a critical on the destroyer's weapons causing them to become inaccurate. However that was it for the Decados gunners, and I then returned fire, with interest...

Nick

At last I win initiative. Too little, too late. I will see.

Suddenly my gunners showed their true colours. The only thing of significance I did was to cripple one of the scouts. Not the kind of return I would expect from my ships. In return my destroyer finally succumbed to the immense firepower heaped upon it, dying with all guns firing. However worse was to come, as my frigate, previously undamaged, was hit. And again. And again. A couple of criticals later and it was all too much, my ship was crippled. I now had to rely on my raiders and a captured frigate to try and retrieve the situation. To rub

salt into my wounds I did not even get a chance to shoot at the enemy scout as it fled off the battlefield.

Turn 5

Andy

All of a sudden victory was within my grasp. The Greek's awful shooting had allowed me in and what had looked like catastrophe now was turning into a stroll. And I won the initiative.

The captured frigate took some damage as it sought to escape off the table using the asteroid field as cover, while the raiders tracked and destroyed the last of my scouts. The other enemy frigate tried to escape in the opposite direction and despite being crippled was too far away for me to chase. The battle came down to my trying to stop the escaping Decados ships.

Nick

Although victory was now but a dream I could pull out a draw. If I could get the last scout and use the asteroid fields as cover I might yet emerge with a noble draw.

The turn ended with the scout gone and having to rely on my largely intact frigate to get through the asteroid field.

Turn 6

Nick

I won initiative again and all my ships could make it off the table except for the captured frigate. However if it could make it out of the asteroid field it would escape next turn, still using the asteroids as cover.

I roll the dice. Joy. A '2'. I needed a '3'. At maximum speed that was never going to be good. My effort at escape died as the frigate went a little too close to one of the big ones...

Victory and Defeat

A close battle, Hawkwood ended up victorious and congratulations to Andy. A little bit of luck here and there and I feel the battle could have gone the other way. I am not one to blame my tools and bad luck does go both ways. Mind you I can blame the flunkie who bought the dice... Number 87, be a good fellow and start cleaning the glass of the piranha tank, would you?

Age of Treason

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he rules the broadest empire known to man, but he dare not let the subjects who worship him witness the awful toll exacted on his mortal flesh by his immortality. A god already for over 200 years, Zygaz Taga yearns only to amass the power he needs to let go of his warped and useless body and ascend to heaven. He governs the Taskan Empire through his appointed regent, an iron golem animated by a fragment of his own soul. This inhuman king yearns to find a destiny of his own and experience what it is to be human. His closest advisors are only just beginning to suspect that the emperor's familiar and the emperor himself are not entirely of the same purpose.

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the Taskans have scoured the wildernesses, sought out the most terrifying beasts and slaughtered them for trophies; they have confronted the spirits of the land and forced them into partnership, servitude or banishment. Yet danger always lurks close at hand as the fortunes of nations rise and fall, and the machinations of their leaders

invite riot, killings and war, and humankind proves it is the most savage and destructive monster of all.

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Adventurers in the Age of Treason can serve their country as loyal champions of the Taskan Empire, or seek their own destiny from the myriad choices available. Life can be short and brutal – and the afterlife awaiting them in the Many Hells does not promise to be any better. But, with the help of gods, spirits and powerful sorcery, the ambitious can escape the limitations of being human and even postpone the mysteries of death. Do you trust in the Emperor, or do you trust in yourself? Whatever choices you make, every citizen must be beware the awful consequences of Treason.

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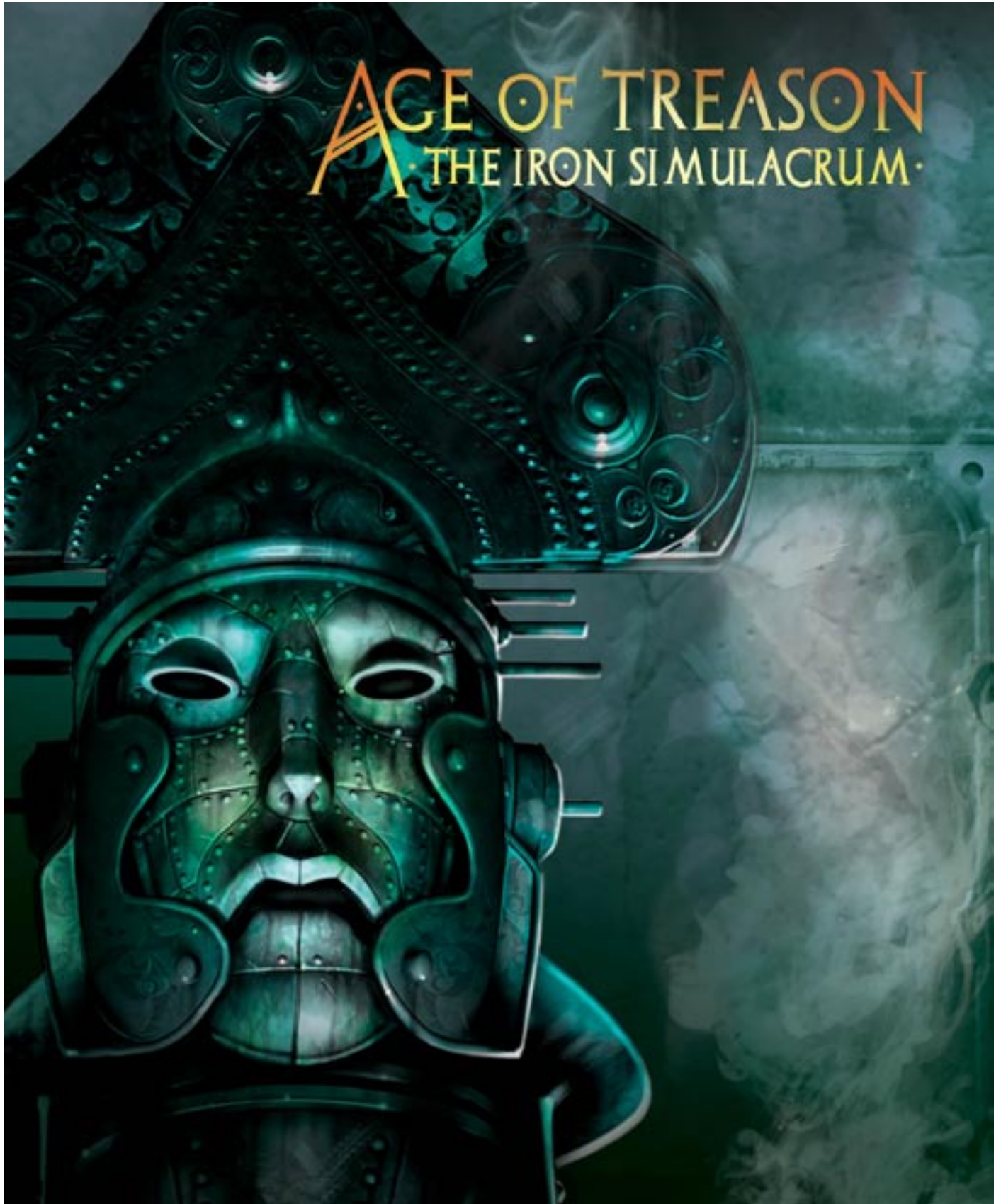
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AGE OF TREASON
THE IRON SIMULACRUM

AGE OF TREASON
THE IRON SIMULACRUM



Security Theatre 3000

By Gareth Hanrahan

By reading this scenario, you've just put yourself on Bob-knows-how-many CIA watch lists. I don't want to think about what *writing* the bleeding thing has done to my future travel plans. I just hope they use gloves.

If you can, then watch *The Onion's* report on Franz Kafka International Airport before running the game. It's exactly the sort of mood you want from the game.

This mission is all about airport security and the response to terror. The Troubleshooters are to test the security systems of the new Alpha Complex Travel Hub. Their mission is to try to get a fake 'bomb' into the new ultra-secure, ultra-shiny and ultra-important Travel Hub. This mission is assigned to the characters by Brown-I, the newly promoted supervisor of the Alpha Complex Travel Hub.

There is, unfortunately, a problem with the Hub. They spent so much money on the new security systems, passenger scanners, checkpoints, interrogation booths, whole-body probes and chemical sniffers the budget ran out before they got to build transtube tunnels or flybot launching pads. The Alpha Complex Travel Hub is a dead end surrounded by the most intensive security systems money can buy.

If this is revealed, then Brown-I will be terminated repeatedly and very painfully.

Therefore, he's got a plan. The fake 'bomb' will be replaced by a real one. He's even

created a fake secret society to blame the 'unforeseeable disaster' on – the Alakhazamites. All he needs is a band of trustworthy, competent Troubleshooters to bring his bomb past his invincible security systems.

The Troubleshooters

All of the Troubleshooters have a secret sabotage mission.

Mike-R: Team leader. Easily flustered. Secret Sierra Clubber, on a mission to blow up the transport hub.

Kathy-R: Loyalty Officer. Ex-tour guide. Secret FCCCP agent, on a mission to infiltrate the Alakhazamites and protect the hub.

Kirk-R: Happiness Officer. Works as a journalist for HPD&MC. Secret mission is to infiltrate the Alakhazamites for work, and to blow up the transport hub for PURGE and blame it on the Alakhazamites.

Amy-R: Equipment Gal. Also, Frankenstein Destroyer agent, here to zap the transbots.

Phil-R: Comms & Recording Officer. On a mission to infiltrate the Alakhazamites and convince them to aid the Humanists, and to prevent the explosion.

Joe-R: Hygiene Officer. Secret member of Corpore Metal, out to terminate Amy-R and blame it on the Alakhazamites.

If you're using your own Troubleshooters instead of the pregens, then give them a nice mix of reasons to carry a bomb into the Transit Hub.

The Bombs

Each of the Troubleshooters has a bomb hidden somewhere on their person. As most of the mission involves sneaking bombs past security checkpoints, here's a list of who's got what bomb, and which bomb sets off which security scanner. Replacement bombs may or may not be given with the clones, depending on whether or not the authorities know about the secret bombs.

Joe-R has a waiver allowing him to bypass metal detectors. It doesn't have his name on it, so anyone else can steal it.

The Die Hard Approach: Some players may try sneaking John McClane style through the transport hub. If the characters do try *Die Harding* it through the air ducts, then just give them death-trap after death-trap and keep trying to funnel them back into the main plot. Seriously, just stick laser grids and acid baths and killer bots on everything. Alpha Complex is lethal enough when you're just popping down the corridor for a can of B3; here, they're actively trying to kill people.

1: The Finer Side of Briefings

Tension 10-

It's another glorious mandatory daycycle in Alpha Complex. The Troubleshooters are happy, because happiness is mandatory.

Troubleshooter	Bomb	Metal	Chem	Rad	Elec	Frisk
Mike-R	Shoe bomb in his boots	X	—	X	—	—
Kathy-R	False tooth bomb	—	X	X	—	—
Kirk-R	Underwear bomb	—	X	—	X	—
Amy-R	Bot zapping gauss bomb	—	—	—	X	X
Phil-R	Bouncy Bubble Beverage bomb	X	X	—	—	—
Joe-R	Sharp Objects	X	—	—	—	X
—	The Official Mandatory "Bomb"	X	X	X	X	X



Today will be an especially good day. Why, could that be the mission alert noise? Or just someone screaming in the distance? What, no, it's the mission alert siren all right! Huzzah!

Attention Troubleshooters! You have been selected for a MISSION OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE. You are to report IMMEDIATELY to BRIEFING ROOM 747, CORRIDOR 9, LEVEL 64 TFA SECTOR for MISSION BRIEFING. Recognition code is SIERRA THETA APRICOT CORKSCREW GAMMA. Failure to report for mandatory mission briefing will be punished by termination. Have a nice daycycle.

Briefing Room 747 is a rather swanky room, all brushed concrete and plush furniture – it's obviously been downgraded to RED clearance just for this one meeting, as the red paint stripe down the corridor outside is still sticky in places. There are big flat screens on the wall showing a video on a loop; the video's extolling the virtues of the new Alpha Complex Travel Hub. Imagine a cross between a shopping mall, an airport, an Apple commercial and a Scientology video – travelling through the hub will not only get you where you're going faster than ever, but also make you a better person as you glide through the pristine corridors on moving walkways.

Waiting for the characters in the briefing room is briefing officer Dirk-G. He's Brown-I's patsy, and will shortly be framed as an Alkhazamite agent. Dirk-G's just been promoted and is very nervous and excited to be giving this briefing. He reads from his pre-prepared notes.

'Hello, Troubleshooters. My name is Dirt.'

He rechecks his notes.

'Dirk-G. My name is Dirk-G. Sorry about that. I am the new test management officer for the Alpha Complex Travel Hub, reporting directly to Brown-I, our glorious overmanager. The hub is the first of a series of infrastructure improvements that will revolutionise the process of getting from A to C in Alpha Complex. (B is closed for refurbishments.) As terrorism is foremost on every travellers' mind, the Travel Hub is equipped with the most advanced security systems in all of Alpha Complex. We believe it is utterly impossible for any Commie Mutant Traitor terrorists to penetrate these layered defences without being terminated in the most hideously painful and through way imaginable.'

Without missing a beat, he continues.

'Your mission is to test the defences of the Alpha Complex Travel Hub. Here is your bomb.'

The bomb given by Dirk-G is a small black bag. He tells the characters not to tamper with it or try to open it in any way – the first time they do try to do so, interrupt them by running scene 3.

'You are proceed to the ticketing machines in corridor 12 and purchase one-way tickets to ZZX Sector. You will then go to the Travel Hub and attempt to get your bomb on board a FlyBot. This mission must be completed within... two hours thirty minutes from the end of this sentence, calculated according to Alpha Complex Standard Times where this sentence is defined as a series of clauses terminated by a full stop symbol OR the termination of the briefing officer. Hmm. What an odd clause, I wonder why that's in there.'

The Troubleshooters may have concerns about being terminated. Dirk-G hands them a sheaf of documents – six copies of the *Simulated Terrorism Termination Waiver*. Just fill out the form completely and hand it to the arresting officer or bot, and that'll sort out any problems. Note that you can't fill the form out in advance; you have to do

so when the security issue arises, which means the Troubleshooters will often be filling out paperwork under fire.

Next, Dirk-G gives the characters a selection of gadgets from R&D. There are, as usual, six of them:

- **Travel Pillow:** You clamp it around your neck and fall asleep, and it drags your unconscious form along the ground. It moves rather like a Facehugger from *Alien*, and behaves like one too.
- **Relaxipills:** Totally deals with any form of travel sickness. Warning: may cause hallucinations.
- **ZZX Sector Automatic Translator:** Turns normal sentences into complete gibberish. Your hovercraft is full of Communist eels.
- **Laser Shield Generator:** When activated, it projects a fuzzy dome around the user and anyone nearby. Lasers within the area of effect go off in random directions.
- **Entropic Stealth Device:** Makes shadows deeper! Muffles noise! Also, drains your life force! It gives a +4 bonus to Stealth rolls, but also inflicts O4D damage every round (roll against a target number of the scene's Tension).
- **Armour in a can:** Spray on armour. Hardens after a few minutes, encasing the user in an immobile plastic sheathe. On the bright side, it's 4 points of armour. On the down side, oxygen is no longer your friend.

Scene 2: Tickets Please

Tension 4

There's a long, long, long queue for the ticket machine at the end of Corridor 12.

This is because the ticket machine at the end of Corridor 12 is a paranoid lunatic. It's convinced that the vending machine next to it is an Internal Security spy, and if it gives a ticket to a terrorist, it'll be implicated in a crime. The vending machine next to it is just an innocent Vita-Yum nutrient bar

Security Theatre 3000

dispenser with no ulterior motives (or is it...?)

The Paranoid Vending Machine: A Typical Conversation

Troubleshooter: Hello there. I wish to buy a ticket to ZZS Sector.

Vending Machine: I can't sell you that ticket. You might be a terrorist.

Troubleshooter: I assure you I'm not a terrorist.

Vending Machine: That's what a terrorist would say. Right out of the terrorist manual, that is.

Troubleshooter: How can I prove I'm not a terrorist?

Vending Machine: I don't know. I'm not equipped to detect terrorism.

Troubleshooter: Then obey the laws of robotics and give me a ticket.

Vending Machine: (whispers) Look, mate, that Vita-Yum machine there? IntSec. I'm sure of it. I'd love to give you a ticket, really I would, but if I print you a ticket and it turns out you're a Commie, that Vita-Yum IntSec spy will report me, and they'll ship me off for reprocessing into a urinal or something. I don't want that. No tickets, no terrorism, no toilet. See.

Troubleshooter: But how else can I get a ticket?

Vending Machine: Not my problem. Next!

The Troubleshooters have to force their way through the queue and convince the bot that they're not terrorists, or that even if they are, they won't let the VitaYum machine report on them.

Scene 3: One of these Bombs is not like the Other Bombs

Tension 4

Once the characters have their tickets, they're approached by a smiling citizen in YELLOW clothing. He introduces himself as Gary-Y; he's carrying a bag identical to the bomb bag given by Dirk-G. 'So glad I caught

you in time, there's been a terrible screw-up. You were given the wrong bag during the briefing – here's the right one.'

Gary-Y is here to ensure that Brown-I has plausible deniability. If some future interrogator asks him 'why did the Troubleshooter team you assigned to test the security system have a *real* bomb?', he'll say 'I did no such thing – they must have switched the bags.'

However, if the Troubleshooters don't take the bag, then Brown-I's defence becomes 'I attempted to correct the erroneous allocation of an explosive device, but the traitorous Troubleshooters kept the bomb.'

This is a 'heads I win, tails you lose' situation for the Troubleshooters. *Whichever* bag they keep is the one with the bomb in it. Both bags have a bomb-like object in them; one's fake and the other's real, but there's no way to tell which is which.

Scene 4: Getting Into The Hub

Tension 16

Now, the real challenge begins. The main entrance of the Travel Hub is guarded by guards (who else would you have guarding things) and there's a metal detector and a forensic sniffer-bot to look for bombs. The entrance consists of four huge revolving doors, each of which can hold up to ten people in each segment. You step into the door, it spins around to run you through a metal detector, then through the sniffer-bot, and then finally letting you through into the main concourse. If either the metal detector or the chemical sniffer detects a problem, the door spins back around and dumps the passengers back outside, where the guards interrogate them with pain sticks (they inflict pain when the guards beat you over the head with them). It can take *hours* to get a group through the door.

Remember that some of the bombs will set off the relevant detectors (see *The Bombs*, page XX). If the characters cause a



fuss, introduce Wilhelm-G, the psychotic security manager of the hub. He likes hurting people.

The characters can also try other ways of getting into the hub, like crawling through access tunnels (watch out for the giant sewer-cleaning bots) or disguising themselves as guards, or waving their Simulated Terrorism Waivers. If they get really creative, skip to Appendix 1.

Scene 5: Duty Free Duty

Tension 10

Inside the main concourse of the Travel Hub is a maze of shops, restaurants, cafeterias, confession booths, elevated terror warning monitors, security cameras and automated check-in desks. There are posters everywhere praising the new travel hub and the wise management of Brown-I.

The vast concourse is incredibly overcrowded. There are hordes of exhausted and confused travellers milling around their respective clearance-coded waiting areas. Small shanty towns have sprung up in several areas, and it's obvious that some travellers have been here for a long time. Desperate Happiness Officers roam the concourse, dispensing pills and CoffeeLyke to keep morale up. Any citizen expressing worry or stress about his travel plans will be heavily medicated.

In fact, no-one has ever left the concourse – there are no departure stations or launchpads after all. At best, you can get to your departure gate, go through security, and then get rerouted back to the concourse to wait for a later flight.



Some of the travellers have gone feral at this point... and the check-in desk for ZZX sector is on the far side of one large pack of cannibalistic citizens. To get past all those citizens, the Troubleshooters need to either distract them, feed them or avoid them.

While the characters are making their way through the concourse, they spot their briefing office Dirk-G being dragged away by security guards led by Wilhelm-G. Dirk-G is screaming that he's innocent; Wilhelm-G is having none of it.

Other possible challenges in this zone:

- Random security checks ('you look like a traitor, citizen! Come with us for a very intimate search!')
- Unattended baggage collection bots ('just because you were holding the bag does not mean you were attending it! What if your arm suffered from permanent nerve damage and you had no sense of touch? Well? Better to destroy it to be safe.')
- FCCCP pamphleteers ('Have you read the good e-mail?')

Scene 6: Are You Who You Say You Are?

Tension 16

Once the characters batter their way to the check-in desk, they have to deal with the abusive, hidebound check-in clerk, Roger-O. He hands them the Passenger Check-In Form.

According to his computer screen, the only passengers left to check in on the flybot to ZZX Sector are a band of six musicians called the ZZX Sector Moody BLUES Uplifting Transjazz Singing Sextet, a group of six nuclear physicists heading to a conference, and a Flying Marshal escorting five prisoners to the termination booths. To get their boarding cards, the characters must convince Roger-O that they're actually one of those three groups. Each of the groups has drawbacks:

- *We're the Transjazz band!* Where are your instruments? Give us a song!
- *We're the nuclear physicists!* According to these records, the physicists all have Radiation Level Waivers. My Geiger counter clearly shows you're not irradiated enough to be nuclear physicists.
- *We're the Traitors flying off to be terminated!* Excellent. Let me just stamp your foreheads with the 'TO BE TERMINATED' stamp to... streamline security procedures.

The Terrorism Waivers are no use here. This should be a ghastly bureaucratic quagmire, where the only way through gets the characters into more trouble later on. Finally, he stamps their forms, correcting their identity papers to match their supposed id.

Scene 7: The Departing Gate

Tension 13

Once the Troubleshooters finally get their boarding cards, they need to go to their gate. Gate 24/C/Alpha, according to the helpful monitors. Gate 24/C/Alpha is just a short distance from the check-in desks. It's not open yet, but it will open soon. Why not sit down, relax, have a happy pill, watch the Good News Channel and do some more mandatory consumption?

'Attention citizens' comes an announcement, 'the flybot to ZZX Sector has been rerouted to Gate 26/D/Gamma. Estimated walking time to the boarding gate from your current location: One minute 22 seconds.'

The crowd of passengers slowly migrates from Gate 24/C/Alpha to Gate 26/D/Gamma. As soon as they're settled, there's another announcement.

'Attention citizens, the flybot to ZZX Sector has been rerouted to Gate 57/Q/Eta. Estimated walking time to the boarding gate from your current location: 14 minutes 52 seconds.'

This time, there's a lot of hasty shuffling and jogging. By the time the mob is half-way to the gate, there's another announcement.

'Attention citizens' it intones, 'the flybot to ZZX Sector has been rerouted to Gate 194!/ZetaPlusPlus. Estimated walking time to the boarding gate from your current location: 17 hours 42 minutes 12 seconds.'

The mob breaks into a run. This is a crazy races situation for the Troubleshooters. They need to get to the gate ahead of everyone else. Fun stuff:

- There's a shuttle service that circles around the Hub and can take the characters a long way towards the gate. It's always overcrowded. How do the characters get onboard?
- Any Troubleshooter who trips and falls will get trampled by the mob.
- There are security guards on segways buzzing around. The characters could mug a guard and steal the vehicle.
- Those flybot launching tubes use magnetic launching catapults. Theoretically, a character could hop onto a tube and launch himself at high speed towards Gate 194. Stopping might be an issue.

Scene 8: Scannergeddon

Tension 16

Finally, the characters get to the departure gate. Now they've got to go through the security scanners there.

Phase 1 is form checking. Do they have their Stamped Passenger Approval Forms with them? If not, then they've got to either go back to the check-in desk, or use the Recyclomat Tube. The Recyclomat Tube is designed to recover lost equipment from previous clones. Basically, you insert your ME card and one of your past corpses is vacuumed out of the recycling vats and dumped at your feet. Well, it's probably one of your corpses, anyway. If you're lucky.

Security Theatre 3000

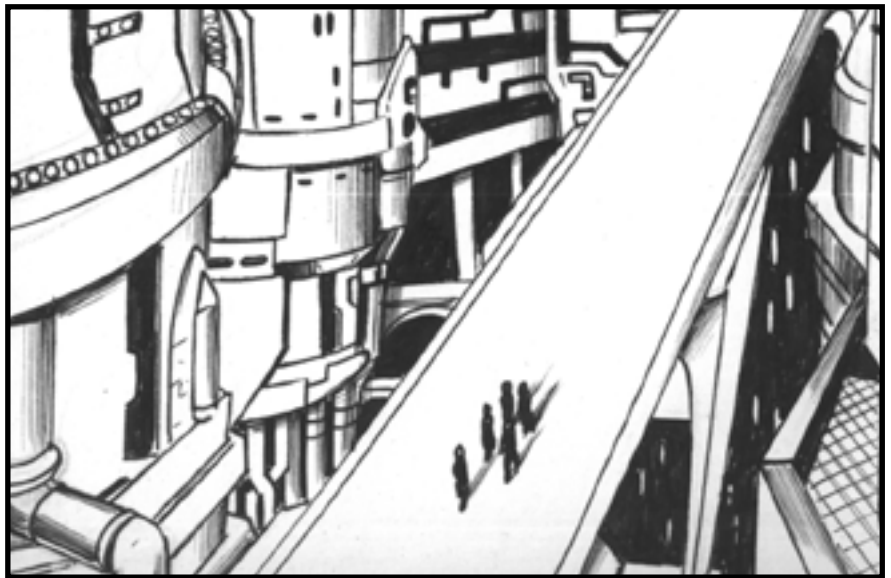
Phase 2: Baggage check. All baggage must be put through the Revised Baggage Scanner. It's not so much an x-ray machine as a particle accelerator. All passengers should remain behind the white line while their baggage is scanned, while the crew retreat to the heavily shielded lead-lined bunker. Anyone in the direct line of the scanner is incinerated. It's possible, if you move very quickly, to grab something from your bag after the crew retreat, but before the scan cycle starts. Mistime it, and you're a shadow burned into the wall.

Scans for: Metal, Rad, Elec.

Phase 3: At this point, the characters have a choice. They can go through the Full Body Scanner, the Probulator, or the old-fashioned Metal Detector.

The Full Body Scanner involves being lowered into a tank of organic goo that's full of nanobots. The nanobots are designed to interrogate individual cells. There's a non-zero chance that it'll dissolve the user, or turn you into a rampaging tentacled monster. The chance, in fact, is 1 in 20. Let the player roll. The scanner comes equipped with a disintegrator that sometimes works. It detects Chem, Rad and Elec.

The Probulator is basically a booth full of metallic tentacles. You step in, and you are probed. The booth attendant dumps a bucket of lube into the machine between customers. His vat o'lube is running low, by the way, and will run out after one Troubleshooter. The Probulator is an... intense experience. It detects



This way to the departure gate...

Metal and prostate cancer, as well as inflicting O3D damage (roll against 20-the Troubleshooter's Violence).

Finally, citizens with an unreasoning fear of the probulator or an underlying medical condition may use the old metal detector. Well, not detector. Giant electromagnet. Got fillings? Not anymore. The detector pulls itself to pieces the first time it is used.

Phase 4: Random testing. Due to staff cutbacks, each passenger gets to frisk another passenger. Arrange the Troubleshooters in a ring. Each person gets to check the person in front of them. Do they report on their fellow Troubleshooters?

Scene 9: Air Potemkin

The characters are brought onto the flybot. In contrast to the shininess of the rest of the Hub, the flybot is an old, battered model. All the windows are covered with black plastic sheeting, so you can't see out.

After all, if you could see out, you might realise that this particular flybot doesn't have any wings.

The Hub doesn't have any working flybot launchers or transtubes – the budget ran out before they could be built. Therefore, they've got a few old flybots that they

push around from one gate to the next. The passengers think they're getting on their plane, only to be told that there's Commie sabotage and they'll have to wait for the next flight. They disembark and go back to the hub; several hours/days/weeks/months later, they go through the whole rigamarole again. No-one ever leaves the Hub via flybot.

So, the characters troop onto the flybot (well aware that their bombs are ticking) and are then told there's been some sabotage and they all have to leave again. They're dumped back in the Hub. Please report to the check-in desk to continue your travels with us.

Scene 10: Revelations

Finally, just as the timers are about to run out on the main bomb, the characters glimpse Gary-Y again – the guy who switched bombs on them. He's hurrying across the main concourse with a bunch of other clones – lead by Brown-I himself! The airport manager is fleeing the scene before the bomb goes off.

If the characters confront him, he'll do anything to get away from their bombs. The adventure is almost certain to end in a big bang...



CITIZEN AMY-R-OGL-1 Clearance RED



Management 6
 Intimidation 10
 Stealth 10
 Security Systems 14
 Sneaking 1
 Violence 10
 Energy Weapons 14
 Agility 1
 Hardware 10
 Bot Ops 14
 Vehicle Ops 14
 Habitat Engineering 01
 Software 6
 Wetware 4

Duty: Equipment Officer: You're responsible for maintaining your team's equipment, including bots.

Service Group: PLC: You make stuff. In your particular case, your day job is ensuring that the Medium Size Type 15 Flange Bit is indeed medium-sized and not a Large Size Type 15 Flange Bit or a Small Size Type 15 Flange Bit or, worse yet, a Very Large Type 15 Flange Bit.

Tic: Gets very nervous around machinery.

CITIZEN JOE-R-REX-1 Clearance RED



Management 4
 Bootlicking 8
 Stealth 6
 Security Systems 10
 Sneaking 10
 Violence 10
 Energy Weapons 14
 Hand to Hand 14
 Thrown Weapons 1
 Hardware 6
 Habitat Engineering 10
 Vehicle Ops 1
 Nuclear Engineering 1
 Software 6
 Wetware 12
 Bioweapons 16
 Medicine 16
 Pharmatherapy 1

Duty: Hygiene Officer: Keep the team clean. It's fun!

Service Group: Power Services: You work in Actively Hostile Waste Management. It's fun!

Tic: Has a lot of fun.

CITIZEN KATHY-R-RYA-1 Clearance RED



Management 6
 Oratory 10
 Stealth 10
 Scam Radar 14
 Disguise 1
 Violence 11
 Energy Weapons 15
 Hand to Hand 15
 Thrown Weapons 1
 Hardware 5
 Software 7
 Wetware 9
 Medicine 13
 Outdoors Operations 1

Duty: Loyalty Officer: Observe your fellow Troubleshooters for signs of disloyalty.

Service Group: Housing Preservation Development & Mind Control: Keeping people happy is your job. Well, 'happy' is optional, as long as they're nice and compliant.

Tic: Sometimes falls back into Tour Guide mode.

Security Theatre 3000

Bots! They're everywhere! Sinister machines, doing sinister machine things with sinister machine bits. Like *probes* and *drills* and *serial ports*. Nothing good ever came out of a machine.

Well, other than The Computer, of course. You love The Computer. You just hate bots. Bots take all the jobs that should be done by good honest clones, forcing most people to stay INFRARED. If there were no bots, they'd promote everyone!

Yeah, that's it. You hate bots because they're keeping the human race down, not because they're just *icky*.

Mutant Power: Acidic Blood. Try not to bleed. It ruins the floors.

Secret Society: Frankenstein Destroyers: They hate bots too. They hate bots so much they've sent you to destroy a whole load of them. There are thousands of bots in the Transit Hub, so they've given you an Gauss Pulse Bomb. Set it off in the flybot launching area in the Hub, and boom!

The Other Troubleshooters:

Mike-R: The Team Leader. You suspect he may be a fellow Frankenstein Destroyer. Try to make contact with him.

Kathy-R: You've heard she's a member of a secret society. Keep an eye on her.

Kirk-R: He really annoys you. The sort of overly loyal bot-loving freak that really wants to be a bot on the inside.

Phil-R: Too quiet. Can't be trusted. Find out who he's working for.

Joe-R: It's rumoured he's a bot-lover. Find out if this is true. If it is, kill him.

Armor: Red Reflec (E1)

Weapons: Laser Pistol (W3K)

Equipment: PDC, Toolkit, Gauss Bomb

Troubleshooting! This will be fun! Fun! Fun is fun!

Admittedly, most things are fun. They jammed an experimental fun probe in your skull a few years ago, and it malfunctioned. You're physically incapable of *not* having fun. Bzzz. And that's fun! Fun is fun!

Wheweee! Having probes in your skull is fun!

As a lot of Alpha Complex security involves metal detectors, and your probe sets off metal detectors, you've got an official waiver that lets you go through metal detectors. And that's fun too!

Mutant Power: Pyrokinesis. Setting stuff on fire is fun.

Secret Society: Corpore Metal: You like bots. They're fun! Protect the bots! The bots are great fun!

The bots told you that **Amy-R** is a bot-hater! They want you to frame her as a terrorist! To help you do that, they've given you some Sharp Objects to plant on her or her belongings! Keep doing this until she's eliminated!

The Other Troubleshooters:

Mike-R: Team Leader. He's incompetent. You're all going to die! That'll be fun!

Kathy-R: She's really fun. She takes care of you.

Amy-R: The bot hater! Kill her.

Kirk-R: He's *really* fun.

Phil-R: Not very fun.

Armor: Red Reflec (E1)

Weapons: Laser Pistol (W3K)

Equipment: PDC, Hygiene Kit, Sharp Metal Objects, Official Stamped Metal Detector Waiver Form

You're a Troubleshooter now. It's a bit of a change from your previous assignment as a Relaxozone Tour Guide. It's hard to shake the habits of a lifetime. You keep trying to show people the sights and answer their questions instead of shooting them. You'll get the hang of it soon.

On the bright side, your time as a tour guide has given you a sixth sense for managing small groups of troublesome people. That'll come in handy...

Mutant Power: Ventriloquist: You can project your voice really, really well.

Secret Society: First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer: The Computer is God. One day, if you believe really hard, you'll be uploaded to Electric Heaven. Until then God wants you to infiltrate a bunch of Commie Mutant Traitor Terrorists called the Alakhazamites! Those traitors want to blow up The Computer because they hate freedom. Your secret mission is to make contact with the Alakhazamites and learn their plans. To help you masquerade as a terrorist, you've been equipped with an explosive false tooth. Bite down really hard on it, and boom!

The Other Troubleshooters:

Mike-R: The Team Leader. He doesn't strike you as being the most competent sort, but your superiors in FCCCP want you to keep him alive at all costs. Apparently, he's important to something.

Kirk-R: He also works in HPD&MC. He's a journalist, which means he's pretentious and slimy, but he can make trouble for you in the department if you cross him.

Amy-R: Rumour has it she's a member of a secret society. Keep an eye on her.

Phil-R: Comms & Recording Officer. Seems a bit... weird.

Joe-R: Hygiene Officer. Alarmingly enthusiastic. The sort of guy who'd run off when being given a tour of a nuclear reactor

Armor: Red Reflec (E1)

Weapons: Laser Pistol (W3K)

Equipment: PDC, Loyalty Officer Notebook, Tooth Bomb

CITIZEN KIRK-R-KHN-1
Clearance RED



- Management 8
 - Chutzpah 12
 - Hygiene 12
 - Bootlicking 1
- Stealth 6
- Violence 9
 - Energy Weapons 13
- Hardware 5
- Software 10
 - Multicorder Recording 14
- Wetware 10
 - Bioweapons 14
 - Pharmatherapy 1

Duty: Happiness Officer: Keep the other Troubleshooters happy. Medicate the unhappy.

Service Group: Housing Preservation Development & Mind Control: Keeping people happy is your job. Well, 'happy' is optional, as long as they're nice and compliant.

Tic: Extremely overconfident and slimy.

CITIZEN MIKE-R-CRH-1
Clearance RED



- Management 9
 - Hygiene 13
 - Bootlicking 13
 - Moxie 01
- Stealth 12
 - Sneaking 16
 - Disguise 1
- Violence 8
 - Energy Weapons 12
- Hardware 12
 - Bot Ops 16
- Software 10
 - Data Analysis 14
 - Hacking 1
- Wetware 8

Duty: Team Leader: You're in charge.

Service Group: Central Processing Unit. You run the bureaucracy! You never have to make decisions there. The whole point of CPU is to avoid decisions at all costs.

Tic: Has panic attacks when flustered.

CITIZEN PHIL-R-LON-1
Clearance RED



- Management 7
 - Hygiene 11
- Stealth 10
 - Disguise 14
 - Sleight of Hand 14
 - Security Systems 1
- Violence 9
 - Energy Weapons 13
- Hardware 12
 - Nuclear Engineering 16
 - Chemical Engineering 16
 - Vehicle Ops 1
- Software 6
 - Multicorder Recording 1
- Wetware 8

Duty: Comms & Recording Officer: Make official reports to The Computer and record your fellow Troubleshooters on your multicorder.

Service Group: R&D: You make experimental equipment. Sometimes, it even works.

Tic: Massively paranoid

Security Theatre 3000

This is a vitally important mission for you. Well, you, your boss, the network and 400,000 clonesumers. You work for CNN, the Complex News Network. You've been assigned to infiltrate a terrorist organisation called the Alakhazamites. Better yet, you're going to do it *live on tv*.

Well, more or less. You've been wired with subdermal sound pickups and nostril cameras. Your mission is to pretend to be a terrorist and win the confidence of the Alakhazamites, and capture it all for later (edited) broadcast. You're also to record a voice-over for your future audience, but the other Troubleshooters are not permitted to know you're wired for sound. Just monologue whenever you can.

Oh, the off switch for your recording device is located in your big toe. Remember to turn it off before doing anything treasonous.

Mutant Power: Matter Eater. You can eat anything.

Secret Society: PURGE. You secretly believe The Computer must be destroyed! Only in anarchy can the superior clone achieve his full potential! PURGE wants you to blow up the new Transit Hub and throw Alpha Complex into chaos! They've equipped you with underpants made of a highly potent explosive. If those underpants are heated... kaboom.

The Other Troubleshooters:

Mike-R: Team Leader. Total loser. Keep him off the show as much as possible.

Kathy-R: Some tour guide from HPD&MC. Meat shield.

Amy-R: You get a really bad headache whenever you look at her. It's weird.

Phil-R: The Comms & Recruiting guy. Damn amateur. Maybe you should give him some tips on being a reporter.

Joe-R: You like him. He's got spunk. He could be a good sidekick for your starring role as a heroic terrorist-busting hero.

Armor: Red Reflec (E1)

Weapons: Laser Pistol (W3K)

Equipment: PDC, Happiness Pills, Cybernetic Recording Gear, Underwear Bomb

Oh, wow. You've been promoted to team leader! That's such a great responsibility! Why, you'll be in charge of a whole team of Troubleshooters. Yep, if they screw up, you get the blame. That's a...challenge! Yes! A challenge! Gotta stay positive about this! Remember to take your happy pills! Don't have any of those panic attacks where you black out and –

-ack! Did you just have one there? Breathe! Breathe! It's all going to be fine....

Mutant Power: Machine Empathy! You can make machines like you. Even The Computer likes you when you use this power. **IMMENSELY TREASONOUS.**

Secret Society: Sierra Club: You love the Outdoors! Nature's much better than the sterile wasteland of Alpha Complex! But nature needs your help! Carbon emissions and toxic fumes from Alpha Complex's transbots and flybots are hurting the pristine wilderness! The Sierra Club has issued you with a **Shoe Bomb!** They want you to blow up a flybot! Strike a blow for the trees! Reduce carbon emissions by carbonising a bunch of clones!

The Other Troubleshooters:

Kathy-R: She's nice but incompetent.

Kirk-R: He seems a bit too confident. Maybe he's after your job? Better eliminate him, just in case.

Amy-R: Very unstable. You get nervous just taking to her. She's the kind of clone who gives nuclear technicians a bad name.

Phil-R: Suspiciously loyal. He's hiding something.

Joe-R: According to a jackobot you zapped with Machine Empathy a while back, he's a botloving member of the Corpore Metal Secret Society! Hey, maybe you can use his botloving ways against him!

Armor: Red Reflec (E1)

Weapons: Laser Pistol (W3K)

Equipment: PDC, Anti-Stress Pills, Shoe Bomb

There's deep cover, and there's *you*. You had the works – genetic recoding, plastic surgery, personality grafting, retinal scraping, blood replacement, all to prepare you for this sabotage mission. You're not really Phil-R-LON – that's just a cover created by the Humanist secret society. You're a spy, infiltrating The Computer's elite Troubleshooters on behalf of the Humanists.

You've been undercover for seven years now, and you think they're onto you. Internal Security could be right behind you. You've got to keep your head down, deflect attention, and throw suspicion on everyone else so *they* don't get you.

Mutant Power: Rubbery Bones: You can relax your skeleton.

Secret Society: Humanists: The Humanists want to reform Alpha Complex and usher in a perfect society. That requires bringing down The hated Computer and convincing everyone to obey the wise Humanist Council. They've assigned you with a very important mission – there's another secret society called the Alakhazamites. They're terrorists. The Humanists want you to make contact with the Alakhazamites and convince them to ally with you. To prove yourself to them, the Humanists have issued you with an explosive can of Bouncy Bubble Beverage. Use it to blow up something important.

The Other Troubleshooters:

Mike-R: Team Leader. Could be an IntSec spy.

Kathy-R: Could be an IntSec spy.

Amy-R: Could be an IntSec spy.

Kirk-R: Could be an IntSec spy.

Joe-R: Could be an IntSec spy.

Armor: Red Reflec (E1)

Weapons: Laser Pistol (W3K)

Equipment: PDC, Multicorder, Bouncy Bubble Beverage Bomb

CPU430/332/C-ALPHA:

SIMULATED TERRORISM TERMINATION WAIVER

THE BEARER OF THIS DOCUMENT IS AUTHORIZED TO ENGAGE IN ACTS OF SIMULATED TERRORISM FOR THE PURPOSES OF TESTING ANTI-TERRORISM SECURITY RESPONSE AND ELIMINATION AND IS NOT TO BE TERMINATED FOR REASONS OF SECURITY IN SUCH SIMULATED ACTS. THIS WAIVER DOES NOT APPLY IN ACTS OF ACTUAL TERRORISM, IN AREAS OF BLUE CLEARANCE OR HIGHER OR AT THE DISCRETION OF THE ANTI-TERRORISM SECURITY RESPONSE OFFICERS AND SECURITY PERSONEL. FAILURE TO PROMPTLY PRODUCE A COMPLETE FORM CPU430/332/C-ALPHA IS TREASON. USE OF A FORM CPU430/332/C-ALPHA FOR ANY PURPOSES OTHER THAN SIMULATING TERRORISM IS TREASON.

NAME: _____-__-____- 1 2 3 4 5 6 [] INTERNAL SECURITY?

LOCATION: _____ [] TERRORIST

State the nature of the simulation: _____

Does the simulation interfere with the normal operations of Alpha Complex? [] Y [] N

Does your simulation involve any of the following:

[] Explosives [] Sabotage [] Sediton [] Laser Fire [] Anthrax

[] Bladed weapons [] Chemical weapons [] Hijackings

[] Simulated version of any of the following (fake guns etc)

If none of the above items are involved, explain how this accurately simulates terrorism: _____

Are there any other officers involved in this simulation? [] Y [] N

Are you sure of the loyalty of these other officers? [] Y [] N

If Yes, explain how. If No, explain why you have not reported their disloyalty already? _____

[] I acknowledge that I may be or have already been terminated as part of a standard and necessary security response to a potential terror threat, and accept that said security response is not liable for any clone replacement or counselling costs.

PS991/747-ORK

APPROVED PASSENGER CHECK-IN FORM

NAME: _____-__-____- 1 2 3 4 5 6 [] Smoking/on fire

[] CPU [] INTSEC [] POWER SERVICES [] OTHER SERVICE GROUP

SECTOR OF ORIGIN: _____ SECTOR OF DESTINATION: _____

Check all applicable boxes:

[] I packed my bags myself [] No-one gave me anything to carry

[] I am aware of my actions at all times [] I do not inhale or ingest at any time

[] I am allergic to Complementary P-Nuts [] I would like to pay 1,000cr to upgrade to ORANGE class

My bags do not contain: [] Explosives [] Lasers [] Toxic Chemicals [] Sharp Objects [] Heavy Blunt Objects

[] Bombs [] Experimental R&D Equipment [] Treasonous Materials [] Another citizen [] Illegal Drugs

[] Other (please specify) _____

I am not a [] Terrorist [] Communist [] Mutant [] Traitor [] Thought-Criminal [] Frequent Flyer.

Explain the purpose of your travel: _____

Why did you choose this method of travel? _____

Where did you hear about this method of travel? _____

Where will you stay when you arrive? _____

Who are you travelling with? _____

Why? _____

Tie-Breaker Security Question: If I saw a terrorist I would _____

===== FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY =====

[] APPROVED [] NOT APPROVED [] NO TUBE [] TERMINATE AT GATE

Space Bazaar

By Carl Walmsley

At the waypoints and space ports of the Third Millennium – just as in the towns and cities of old Earth – there are gathering places where merchants, hawkers and peddlers sell their wares. Oddities from far off worlds, prototype weapons and armour and curious plants and animals are all available for the right price.

The properties of some such items are accurately described and explained in a manual. More often, however, the old adage ‘buyer beware’ is all too appropriate. Now and then, a find of exceptional worth may even be acquired from a merchant who has no idea what he has stumbled upon.

Whether it is a ‘star boot sale’ or a grand auction, there are all sorts of bargains to be had by characters with sharp eyes, who know how to strike a deal.

Random Value

For some of the items presented below, tables are included to randomly determine their true worth. The Referee is, of course, free to pick from or alter these tables as he sees fit in order to suit his own purposes.

It is also hard to put a fixed price on some of the unusual, even unique, items Player Characters might try to purchase in a space bazaar. The prices listed should be taken as the minimum each item is likely to be available for.

Alien Organisms

Many bazaars and markets specialize in the acquisition and sale of alien life forms. They may be collected as pets or guardians, used for biological research or for a host of other reasons.

Daskaryn

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Daskaryn							
Intimidator	Woods	9	11	9	1	7	10
Athletics (co-ordination) 1, Recon 1, Melee (teeth) 2, Persuade 1, Survival 2							
Teeth (2d6), Hide (2). Number Encountered : 3d6							

Creature	Cost
Curas Worm	2,500 Cr.
Daskaryn Egg	500 Cr.
Oracle Plant	400 Cr.

Curas Worm

Curas Worms are symbiotic organisms that live inside the digestive tracts of other animals. In exchange for the food they siphon off from their hosts, they provide greatly increased regenerative capabilities.

So long as a curas worm is well fed – this requires the host organism to double its usual consumption of food and water – it produces regenerative chemicals and enzymes which are distributed throughout the host’s system.

As a result of this process, an injured host recovers from wounds more quickly. A host maintaining an active lifestyle recovers from injuries as though he has taken a full day of rest after one hour’s rest. A host taking a full day of rest recovers 2d6 + Endurance DM worth of characteristic points.

Daskaryn Egg

Ferociously protective of creatures that they perceive as part of their pack, Daskaryn are in some ways the perfect guard-beasts.

Once hatched from an egg, Daskaryn use an acute sense of smell to assimilate information about their brood-siblings. Any creature that nestles up to a hatchling within the first 2d6 hours of its life becomes part of its pack. From this point onward, the Daskaryn will do all that it can to protect its kin – even laying down its own life if required.

Many free traders take a daskaryn on board as a ship’s pet and ‘guard dog’. They can be ‘ship-trained’, though do tend to get restless on longer voyages.

A daskaryn that has already hatched is of little value as it will no longer bond with new creatures.

Daskaryn resemble feathered, slightly reptilian wolverines. They have warbling voices that can produce bird-like tweets and whistles when they wish to show they are happy, and deeper growling sounds to indicate they are angry or feel threatened.

Oracle Plant

Oracle plants contain hallucinogenic chemicals, which certain cultures believe facilitate visions – both of other places and of the future. In fact, the consumption of oracle plant stems stimulates the parts of the brain controlling psionic abilities.

A character with no psionic talent (Psionic Strength 0) who consumes the stems of an oracle plant experiences vivid and debilitating hallucinations for 10d6 minutes. It will only be by pure co-incidence that some of the events glimpsed in his visions might turn out to be relevant to the future, his mind will simply be extrapolating likely outcomes or musing on recent events.

A character with a Psionic strength of 1 or higher (but who has never received training) may possibly experience a genuine vision. To determine whether or not this occurs, the character should test to see whether he acquires Clairvoyance – and only Clairvoyance – as if he had just received psionic training (*Traveller Core Rulebook*, page 152). If successful, the character permanently acquires



Purification Globe

This 30cm silver sphere is able to create a safe zone where most organic life is able to survive.

Once activated, the sphere neutralizes all toxins, bacteria and viruses which would be harmful to the creature holding the sphere. It also screens out harmful radiation and is able to modify the temperature – up or down – by as much as 200 degrees kelvin, in order to best suit the needs of its owner.

The range of these purification effects may extend as much as 3 metres in all directions from the globe.

The globe cannot produce gas – it may only filter an existing atmosphere of harmful microbes and such like – so it can not protect a character from a vacuum or in an atmosphere which is itself unable to sustain the wielder.

Activation of the globe requires it to be held and the wielder to concentrate on starting it up. This takes a single round. Thanks to an internal energy source, it can run indefinitely.

Holographic map

Stored inside an innocuous looking item such as a disk, crystal or ornament is a three-dimensional map of an uncharted region of space.

The holographic projector which reveals the map will remain dormant until a specific condition is met. Typical examples include:

- Being held by a member of a certain race
- Being held by someone with a Psionic Strength of 1 or higher
- Being exposed to radiation from a certain type of star
- Being exposed to a certain pressure
- Hearing a command phrase spoken aloud

Once the trigger condition is met, a fully interactive, holographic star map is projected into the air. There is no way to

Clairvoyance and experiences his first use of the talent during the vision. If unsuccessful, the character becomes locked inside a nightmare hallucination for 10d6 minutes, during which time he is rendered comatose. At the end of the nightmare, the character permanently reduces his Psionic Strength by 1.

A character with a Psionic Strength of 1 or higher who has already received training may consume oracle plant stems to temporarily boost his abilities. The character feels light-headed for 1D6 minutes (-1 DM on all skill checks) after first eating the stems, but once this passes he benefits from a +2 DM on his next psionic

skill check, so long as the check is made within 24 hours of consuming the stems.

Alien Artefacts

Many of the so-called alien artefacts picked up at stalls and markets are nothing more than flotsam and jetsam from ancient civilizations. Some however – such as those presented here – are genuine treasures, the like of which Player Characters dream of finding.

No prices are listed for these items – the sky really is the limit. However, if their function has remained a mystery to the person selling them, they will typically be available for 2d6 x 100 Credits.

Space Bazaar

be certain of the map's accuracy, but it may well reveal undiscovered stars, worlds, asteroid belts and so forth. To the right people, such information could be very valuable.

Interpreter

This tiny gelatinous ganglion works by attaching itself to a creature's vocal chords and extending tiny filaments up into its brain. It then greatly enhances both the creature's ability to learn and understand new languages and to generate the necessary sounds to speak such languages.

Typically, the interpreter remains dormant until it is swallowed. From there, it makes its own way to the vocal chords and implements whatever neural connections are required to function properly.

After only 4d6 hours of exposure to a new language, a character with an Interpreter will acquire this language at a skill level of 0. If the character continues his exposure to this language, his skill level will continue to increase by 1 every 1d3 days, to a maximum skill level of 2.

Psi-Mask

This potent artefact was devised by a race with no psionic abilities of its own, but feared those of its enemies. It is half black, half crimson with narrow slits for the eyes and mouth. A tiny gravitic device allows it to float in place without the need of a cord.

A creature trying to use a psionic ability directly against someone wearing a Psi-Mask suffers a -2 DM.

Anyone – including the wearer of a psi-mask – who tries to use a psionic ability within 10 metres of such an artefact suffers a -1 DM.

Exo-bionic Glove

Resembling an insectoid claw made from green and silver metal, this gauntlet was most likely designed as both a weapon and a badge of office.

Situated just behind the knuckle joints of the index and middle fingers, and built into the workings of the glove, are a retractable blade and a venom-projector.

The knuckle blade may be extended or retracted with the use of a minor action.

The venom projector may only be fired at Personal, Close or Short range. The venom used in this weapon is both toxic and corrosive.

In addition to providing the use of these weapons, the glove enhances the wearer's grip and physical strength. Any tasks making use of the augmented hand (which includes melee attacks) benefit from this. The wearer's Strength is considered to be 3 higher than normal.

Gene-splicer

This machine is a collection of odd glass tubes, wires, pumps, circuits and needles. It is just small enough to be held by a single adult male. The splicer works by taking a genetic sample from two separate creatures and synthesizing a formula that will transform the physical form of one subject to match the other.

The splicer is only able to create a formula from two genetically similar creatures – usually members of the same gender and species.

The effects of the metamorphosis are permanent, though a counteragent may be formulated from the original subjects' DNA which reverses the process.

A creature undergoing a gene-splicing transformation enters a sort of cocoon, formed from a resin secreted through the skin. 1d6 hours later, it emerges in its new form.

A newly created 'twin' has an appearance identical to the original at the time the genetic sample was taken. Its voice sounds very similar, though detailed vocal scans will detect slight differences.

In game terms, the transformed creature acquires the Strength, Dexterity and Endurance of the duplicated creature – along with any natural weapons, armour or movement types. However, it maintains its own Intelligence, Education and Social Standing – along with its memories and skills.

Each day a creature spends in its new form increases the likelihood of genetic decay. When the transformation first occurs, the Referee should secretly roll a d6. After this number of days has elapsed, the creature begins to lose 1 point of either Strength, Dexterity or Endurance per day until he resumes his original form. Determine this loss at random. If these reductions ever reduce a characteristic to 0, the creature dies.

Exo-bionic Glove

Weapon	Range	Damage	Heft	Mass
Knuckle blade	Melee (small blade)	2d6	—	—

Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Auto	Recoil	Mass	Mag	Cost	Ammo Cost
Venom Projector	—	Special	3d6	No	—	4	50	—	—

In addition, if this genetic decay ever reduces one of the creature's characteristics below its starting score (i.e. before the transformation), this damage becomes permanent and will not be recovered even if the creature is later returned to its original form.

Archaeological Finds

As scouts and merchants explore the far-flung reaches of space, and even recently colonized worlds, the remnants of ancient civilizations are often discovered. These items may be little more than curios or truly significant cultural finds.

Cultural Trinkets

Those seeking to uncover the history of ancient cultures greatly value the discovery of buried artefacts. These can take a variety of forms, and be worth anywhere from a few credits to tens of thousands.

You will need to roll twice on the table below in order to establish the type of item for sale and its asking price. It is important that a note is made of the asking price, as it will figure into its later value.

d6	Item	Price (Cr.)	Value Modifier
1	Pottery	2d6 x 10	1d3
2	Carvings	2d6 x 10	1d6
3	Jewellery	3d6 x 10	1d6+1
4	Ancient weapon	4d6 x 10	1d6
5	Funereal artefacts	5d6 x 10	2d6
6	Religious artefacts	2d6 x 50	2d6

Each time that the character tries to sell on a cultural trinket in a new location the Referee should roll the appropriate dice indicated by the Value Modifier to find out how much the character will receive from the sale of the item. Of course, the character is not compelled to sell an item if he does not wish to.

Forexample: *Jentar Hex, a merchant explorer, has paid 80 Cr for an ancient urn (pottery) which he now tries to sell on. The referee rolls 1D3 (the Value Modifier for pottery), resulting in a 1. Jentar is offered only 80 credits for the item so he elects to hold on to it. On the next planet he visits, he is offered 240 credits (a result of 3 on the Value Modifier) and he is happy to sell.*

For each of the above items a character purchases, there is a small chance that it represents a truly significant find. Roll 2D6 for each item that is acquired: on a result of a double 6, the item's value is increased by a factor of ten. Of course, the character will not know this until he comes to sell it on.

Armour

Although the widespread availability of armour allows for characters to be shielded against harmful environments and weapons, there are certain locations and situations which are so unusual as to require specialized forms of protection.

Chrysalis Armour

By employing a lightweight frame of supports woven into the fabric of an apparently everyday garment, Chrysalis Armour is able to fold out and retract in much the same way as an insect's wing. Once unfolded, it covers vulnerable body parts with a translucent plastic film that is both extremely durable and supple.

Favoured by those who do not wish to openly don armour, Chrysalis suits can move between their retracted and unfolded state in a single combat round. Switching between states requires a Minor Action from the wearer.

Corona-shield Hostile

Environment Vacc Suit (C-HEV)

Designed to be worn by engineers and explorers whose work takes them dangerously close to stars, the C-HEV provides twice as much protection against heat and radiation based damage as would a standard HEV of the same Tech Level.

A C-HEV costs 50% more than an HEV of the same Tech level. The Mass of the suit is increased by 10%.

Rhino V Assault Shield

Fashioned from an exceptionally tough alloy, the Rhino V is a personal shield that can deflect fire from all but the most powerful of weapons. It is designed to be carried ahead of a character who is advancing upon an enemy position.

The Rhino V provides protection against all attacks from the front (or from any other single 90° arc towards which the shield positioned). This is in addition to any Protection offered by any armour a character may be wearing.

It is possible to shoot 'around' a Rhino V, but the character holding the shield is considered to have ¾ Cover (-2 DM) against all attacks from the arc against which it is positioned.

Due to the bulky nature of a Rhino V, a character holding one may not Dodge.

Armour

Armour Type	Protection	Required Skill	Cost (Cr.)	Mass (kg)
Chrysalis Armour	6	None	7,000	1
Rhino V Assault Shield	10	Battle Dress 1	2,000	12

Weapons

Whether it is under or over the counter, there will always be a lively trade in weaponry. For Player Characters looking to gain an edge over their enemies, purchasing a uniquely modified weapon, or one recovered from an alien world, may be just what is needed.

Modified Weapons

A few tweaks, or even a major redesign, can greatly increase the effectiveness of a weapon. Though such changes usually invalidate the manufacturer's warranty, they can make a weapon rather appealing to a Player Character.

'Woodpecker' Autopistol

Disregarding all the usual protocols for balancing and maintaining a weapon, the firing rate of this autopistol has been significantly increased. As a result, it can deliver far more firepower than most weapons its size, but has a severe recoil that only the strongest individuals can hope to cope with.

Mercurial Staff

Utilizing a blend of super-light plastic polymers, and fashioned around a hollow, liquid metal-filled core, this weapon is able to deliver an extremely hefty blow. As it is swung – at great speed due to its lightness – the mercury-like substance rushes towards the end, increasing the force of the impact.

The metal used in the construction of these weapons is approximately five times heavier than mercury and has a correspondingly greater 'hit'.

Prototypes

There are plenty of small-scale arms manufacturers looking to expand and mix it up with the all-powerful mega-corporations. One way for them to make a name for themselves is to develop prototype weapons with unusual abilities. Sometimes these are given to military units or high profile individuals for field-testing. All too often, however, they end up being sold on the black market.

Starknight Industries 'Double Tap' Snub Pistol

Though not a sophisticated proposition, the Double Tap's twin barrel design allows a character with sufficient strength to handle to recoil to deliver a truly deadly attack.

The weapon is equipped with two settings, allowing the weapon to fire either one or both of its barrels. If only one barrel is fired, the weapon is identical to a standard TL8 snub pistol. If both barrels are discharged, use the statistics below.

TCM4 'Mule' Electro-shotgun

Employing traditional buckshot ammunition, the Mule's innovative feature is to electrify the pellets in order to shock and stun targets.

A character struck by a blast from an electro-shotgun must make an Endurance check with a negative DM equal to half the damage taken (after armour is subtracted). If the Endurance check is failed, the character is immobilized by convulsive seizures for 1d3 rounds. If the Endurance check is successful, the character ignores the effects of the shock.

Vibro-Sabre

There are many civilizations still making use of melee weapons, either for ceremonial or cultural purposes or because they are 'safe' to use on board a space ship.

A vibro-sabre employs a curved metallic or plastic composite blade that vibrates at hypersonic speeds. This enables the constantly shifting edge to slice through even the toughest armour.

A vibro-sabre halves the Protection offered by Armour.

Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Heft	Mass	Cost (Cr.)
Mercurial Staff	9	Melee (bludgeon)	2d6+3	1	2	500
Vibro-Sabre	10	Melee (large blade)	2d6+3	1	1	2,000

Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Auto	Recoil	Mass	Mag	Cost	Ammo Cost
Double Tap Snub Pistol	9	Pistol	4d6	No	2	0.5	6	500	10
TCM 4 'Mule'	9	Shotgun	4d6+special	No	2	5	8	800	80
Bio-Gloop Gun	12	Pistol	5d6	No	—	3	15	1,000	50
Nova Gun	13	Rifle	4d6+6	No	—	7	100	10,000	2,000

Alien Weapons

One of the most tantalising aspects of finding an alien weapon can be an uncertainty regarding its capabilities. Taking a merchant's word for it is never a good idea, and some sort of demonstration is highly recommended.

Though notoriously difficult to maintain and repair, many adventurer-types regard an alien sidearm or blade as a badge of honour – and will pay top-credit to own one.

Bio-Gloop Gun

This organic-tech carbine, into which the wielder slots his forearm, fires blobs of acidic blue gunk. Though the range of these projections is limited, they have the capacity to rapidly digest organic matter. However, Bio-gloop has only a limited effect against non-organic materials. Amongst other things, this makes it safe for use aboard space ships.

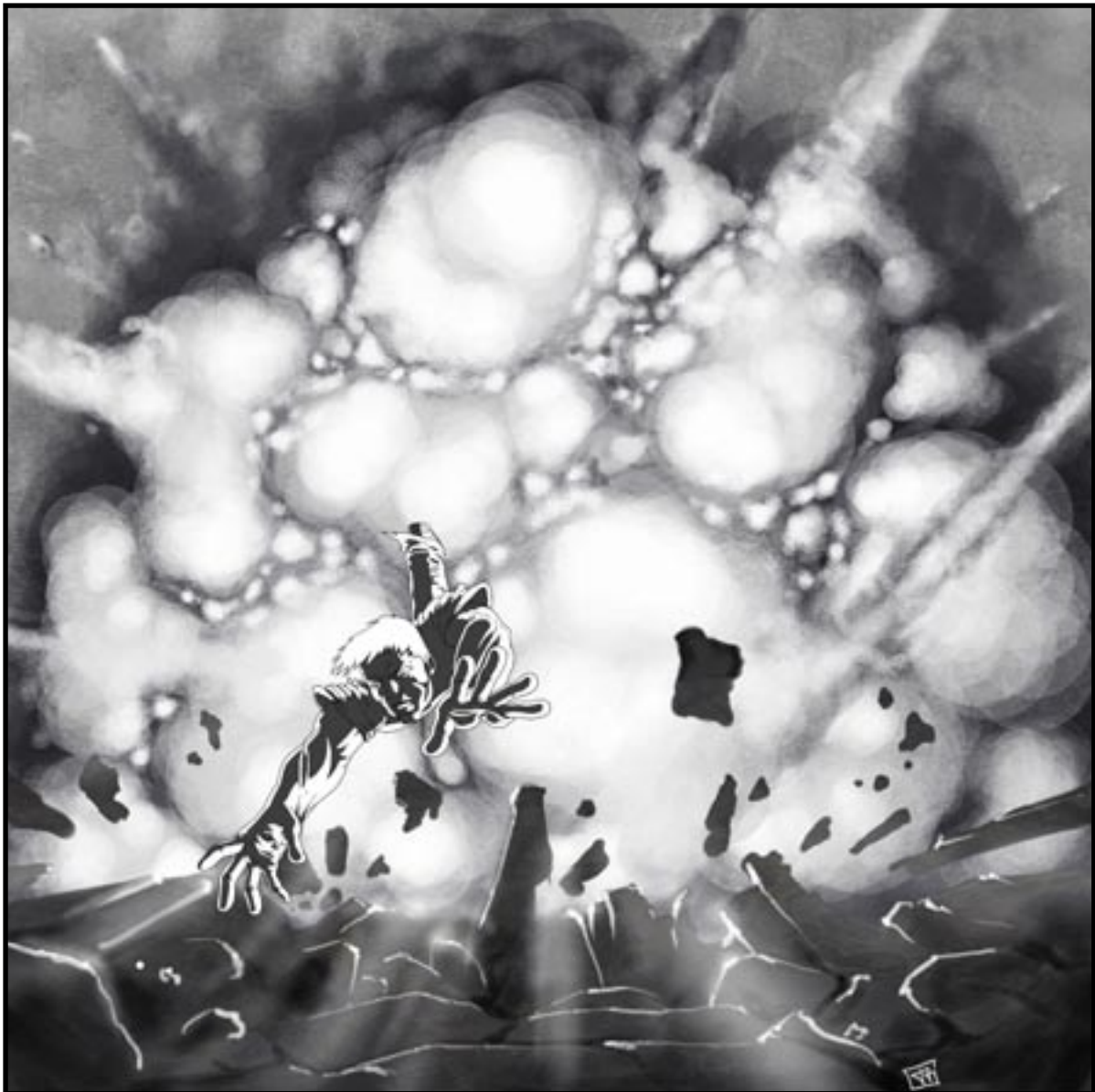
The Protection afforded by Armour that is non-organic in origin (in most instances, everything except leather) is tripled when calculating its resistance to Bio-gloop.

Nova Gun

Wherever this weapon first originated, its angular design speaks of a culture prizing elegant simplicity. Containing a power cell which must be allowed to charge for 1 round before each shot is fired, it is a weapon unsuited to frantic firefights but has found use as a sniper rifle.

A shot from a nova gun creates a bright rainbow-hued beam of light.

A Nova Gun includes an x-ray laser sight as standard.



Red in Tooth and Claw

By John R White

In a nuclear hell like this, all the laws go haywire... there are stranger things yet to be found in the Cursed Earth!

- Judge Dredd 2103.

The following is a selection of some of the creatures carving a niche for themselves in the wilderness beyond the walls of Mega City One. All are capable of being placed on remote worlds in other *Traveller* campaigns as unique fauna.

Dune Shark

An alien species from the planet Hestia presumed to have originated from escaped specimens once imported into the Cursed Earth for use with bio-warfare experiments.

This animal has started to breed successfully and has now become one of the top predators of the continent's food chain. On a couple of occasions packs have reached Mega City One itself.

The creature resembles a huge, grey coloured shark, though a ray like extension flares out along the front half of the body. They are comparable in size to the largest of the species that once swam the world's oceans, growing up to six metres or more in length. Dune sharks are adapted to live on the land and are able to travel quickly



Geiger Wolf

These packs of scavengers are widespread across the Cursed Earth. They usually prey on animals that have already been killed or else tackle those already crippled. If larger predators cannot be intimidated away from a kill, the geiger wolves will attack if they are hungry enough and have the advantage of numbers. They resemble a hairless wolf with a hide and a long tail like a lizard. Their limbs are quite flexible and have hard talons, which aided by their tail, enable them to be competent climbers.

Giant Rad-Scorpion

A breed of mutated scorpions that can reach a length of two metres and, seemingly, survive in most Cursed Earth conditions. These creatures can tolerate extreme levels of radiation and climate change and are able to live for up to a year without food. The creatures are nocturnal and, with their black colouration, are well camouflaged when they emerge from their sheltering crevices at night to hunt. Claws can be used to grapple prey which is then be repeatedly stabbed by the scorpion's poisoned stinger.

Some larger strains exist. The mutant leader Snakebite's elite troops were his Scorpion Corps, a force of muties who rode on enormous albino scorpions.

under loose sand or similar terrain to avoid detection. They are also able to fly quickly and can reach altitudes of about 30 metres due to the presence of an internal flotation organ which still continues to baffle scientists.

Packs generally follow a large and cunning bull-shark, though once prey is tasted they enter into a mad feeding frenzy till their hunger is sated. In this state they are capable of turning on badly wounded pack members.





Giant Trapdoor Spider

Spiders exist in all sizes across the Cursed Earth. Most human settlers will attempt to cull any of the larger species which present a threat to both themselves and their livestock. The giant, tarantula-like species generally chooses to lurk in holes and crevices before ambushing prey.

The example given is a species that is able to construct trapdoor like covers to disguise their lairs. Prey is dragged alive, but paralyzed, to be ingested at leisure.

In some parts of the Cursed Earth larger spiders exist than the example given below.

These include strains that have evolved reflective hair to shield themselves from harmful radiation. This mutation offers 5pts of armour against laser attacks. Some spiders use venom which acts as an instant and fatal poison.

Ripper Jack

One of the most terrifying sights to a traveller on foot and exposed in the Cursed Earth is the black storm-like cloud of a swarm of ripperjacks approaching. These small, dark, bat-like creatures have a fanged maw, hooked mandibles, wing talons and a wicked claw sprouting from the tip of their sinuous abdomen. Overwhelming their prey, which they latch onto, a feasting swarm will eat their prey alive, stripping them to the bone in minutes. By day they roost in caverns, easily detected from

the entrance point due to the stench of ammonia. Thankfully they are not too widespread around the continent, though large concentrations are found in the areas around the Kalamazoo drifts.

In melee combat assume that a group of ten ripperjacks can attack a man sized target at the start of each round. A melee opponent fighting against them may carry forward excess damage to other ripperjacks up to a limit of one extra ripperjack per point of the melee skill above 0. The ripperjacks roll one combat attack for the group but receive a +1DM to their melee attack for each extra creature after the first.



Ten ripperjacks are assumed to occupy a cubic metre. Blast effect weapons such as shot guns and grenades are assumed to inflict hits against every ripperjack in the area of their damage.

Spiderweed

This bizarre creature has a multitude of limbs and resembles a small bush with spiked leaves. Spiderweeds are able to use the winds constantly blowing across the Cursed Earth as a means of transport in a similar manner to harmless tumbleweed. They can steer themselves if the wind is light and, if not wanting to use wind currents or gravity to move, they can also choose to cling to rocks and remain stationary. They can even choose to move by themselves in short bounds, though this is tiring (and counter productive if it is tried up a slope).

Generally they prey on small animals, often creatures misguidedly seeking shelter or else thinking to nibble on what looks like a harmless plant. Larger prey is avoided unless it is incapacitated. These creatures are eerily receptive to danger, a feature which can sometimes alert travellers with wilderness lore to other threats.

Black Plague Spiders

A black, poisonous spider, the size of a child's fist, it usually operates in packs. First discovered in 2101, a huge swarm covering several square kilometres threatened the mutant settlement of Atom Gulch. Diverted by a defensive ring of fire, the spiders, (who exhibited a surprising degree of intelligence and planning) then penetrated into Mega-City One. The swarm was only eradicated after the city location they occupied was evacuated and then firebombed down to the ground level. Since then no similar sized swarms have been reported.

The spiders still exist, however. They are able to communicate with each other using a complex chemical code, even in its death throes, a spider might well alert others of its swarm to the presence of danger.

Red in Tooth and Claw



If a large group of a thousand or more is encountered assume they have Int 1 and Tactics 1.

They are also able to dig themselves a small personal hole with a trap door in 1d3 minutes if on a suitable surface.

Assume up to 2d6 are in a position to attack a man-sized target at the start of each round. They make one attack roll but add +1DM to roll for each spider after the first. Any point of damage rolled over the victim's armour counts as a 'dose' of venom that gives a -1 to a save v poison. Venom is instantaneous and does 2d6+2 per 'dose'.

Melee attacks against them that hit automatically kill a number equal to one for every 3 pts or less above 5 that is rolled to hit.

These spiders might swarm in their 'millions and millions of millions' if whatever factors created the 'Black Plague' swarm of were repeated!

Whipper-snappers

But even worse dangers await us. We haven't met the muties, the whipper-snappers or the slay-riders... yet!

- Judge Dredd, 2100

An enormous, mutated, arachnid that evolved from vinegaroons. They resemble a rad-scorpion in appearance and habits. Rather than a stinger and toxin sack, however, they have a powerful, whip-like extension of three metres at the end of their thorax. The whip can be waved threateningly and can be made to sound a large whip-crack like noise. The whipper-snapper can also emit a mist of irritating acid at a target from a gland by the base of the whip.

They are nocturnal and usually are coloured black, though some have developed camouflaged schemes that mimic their local environment.

The claws and whip can be used to grapple prey. The spray has a range of short and unless the eyes are protected by goggles, or something similar, a save of Dex 10+ must be made or the victim is blinded for 1d6 rounds.

Type	Habitat	Size	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Dune Shark								
Killer (Carnivore)	Desert	11	5d6	2d6+4	5d6	1	9	6
Average		11	18	11	18	1	9	6
Traits	Burrower, Flier							
Athletics (Endurance) 2, Flier 2, Melee (Teeth) 4, Melee (Tail Thrash) 0, Recon 2, Survival 3								
Bite (3d6), Tail Thrash (2d6), Scales (3). Number Encountered: 2d6								

Type	Habitat	Size	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Geiger Wolf								
Hijacker (Carnivore)	Desert, Hills, Mountains, Forest	5	2d6+2	3d6	2d6	1	12	7
Average		5	9	11	7	1	12	7
Traits	None							
Athletics (Dex) 1, Melee (Bite) 1, Recon 2, Survival 2, Tactics 0								
Teeth (1d6), Tough hide (2). Number Encountered: 2d6								

Type	Habitat	Size	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Giant Rad-Scorpion								
Pouncer (Carnivore)	Desert	5	2d6	3d6+4	2d6	0	4	1
Average		5	7	15	7	1	12	7
Traits	Poison							
Athletics (Endurance) 2, Melee (Claws) 2, Melee (Stinger) 2, Recon 1, Survival 4								
Claws (1d6), Stinger (1d6). The stinger is used to inject poisonous venom into a target. The venom does 2D6 damage with a -2 DM to the Endurance check. Chitin (4). Number Encountered: 1d3								

Type	Habitat	Size	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Giant Trapdoor Spider								
Trapper/Pouncer (Carnivore)	Desert	7	3d6	3d6+4	3d6	0	4	3
Average		5	11	15	11	1	4	3
Traits	Poison							
Athletics (Dexterity) 3, Melee (Bite) 2, Recon 2, Stealth 1, Survival 2								
Teeth (2d6). A bite which causes physical damage against a creature will inject a toxin into the victim which causes paralysis. The target must roll Endurance 10+ to avoid complete paralysis for a period of hours equal to d6x the spiders original Endurance. Chitin (2). Number Encountered: 1d6								

Type	Habitat	Size	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Ripper Jack								
Eater (Carnivore)	Hills	1	1	1d6	1d6+1	0	3	15+
Average		1	1	4	5	1	4	15+
Traits	Flier, Swarm							
Athletics 0, Flier 1, Melee (Claws) 0, Recon 0, Survival 0								
Claws (1d6), no armour. Number Encountered: 5d6 x 1d6. Multiply by 10 for larger swarms.								

Type	Habitat	Size	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Spiderweed								
Hunter (Carnivore)	Desert	1	1	1d6	1	1	2	7
Average		1	1	4	1	1	2	7
Traits	Camouflage							
Athletics (Dexterity) 1, Melee (Claws) 0, Recon 1, Survival 2								
Claws (1d6), no armour. Number Encountered: 2d6								

Type	Habitat	Size	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Black Plague Spiders								
Eater (Carnivore)	Desert	1	1	1d6	1	0	4	15+
Average		1	1	4	1	1	4	15+
Traits	Swarm, Hive mind, Poison							
Athletics (Co-ordination) 3, Athletics (Endurance) 1, Bite 0, Recon 1, Stealth 3, Survival 3								
See below for attacks, no armour. Number Encountered: 6d6								

Type	Habitat	Size	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Spiderweed								
Hunter (Carnivore)	Desert	7	3d6	3d6+4	3d6	0	4	1
Average		1	11	15	11	0	4	1
Traits	Acid spray							
Athletics (Co-ordination) 2, Melee (Claw) 2, Melee (Spray) 2, Melee (Whip) 2, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Survival 3								
2x Claws (1d6) 1x Whip (1d3). Chitin (4). Number Encountered: 1d3								

The Daughters of Heaven

By Hank Woon and Stephen J Black

This article is an excerpt from the Cathay: *The Five Kingdoms Player's Guide*. Su Shen is one of the main characters in the Cathay novels *Dark Shadows of Yesterday* and *Immortal Twilight*.



"The wind swept the clouds of smoke into rolling waves through the village streets. Horrible wracking coughs mingled eerily with the screams of the wounded and I found myself shivering despite the warmth provided by the many burning homes. It was twilight and I had just arrived, barely missing the raid. I never learned whose troops had attacked the small border village. Were they soldiers from Shan Dei? Feng Dei? It didn't matter; the story was always the same. I was just grateful I hadn't been there when it occurred.

I rounded a corner and saw a child lying near a burning hut. A large, jagged gash ran across his belly and his life poured out in a gush, transforming the dirt beneath him into a sticky, muddy brown. I heard myself whispering a prayer to Garlen, wondering if she could still hear me in this foreign land.

A woman knelt beside the boy, one hand clutching his, her other on his forehead. She whispered soothing words as he stared frightfully into her eyes, locking on as if afraid to look away. The woman had long, raven-black hair wrapped in a tight ponytail that fell down between her shoulders. Around her left wrist was a bracer made of leather and jade. Embedded into the jade were five pearls that were set into a pattern resembling the beginnings of a phoenix, though it looked as though several more were needed to complete the design.

Beside her towered an obsidiman who watched her, silently. His skin was white with green shades, a coloring I had seen

before among their kind, but the way his skin reflected the firelight I knew he was one of the celebrated jade obsidimen, who were legendary among Cathayans. His head turned slightly toward me as I neared, but other than that he seemed to ignore me.

The boy's blood no longer flowed, and I feared he had died. When I looked at his face I saw that it was no longer twisted with pain, and I thought it confirmed my fear, but his eyes still gazed at her with awareness. Then I noticed that the boy was still breathing. A long, jagged cut remained on his belly, but it looked as though it had clotted. I moved to stand over him to get a closer look when the woman's hand suddenly shot out, seizing a handful of my expensive silk robe that I had just purchased in Heng Na the week before. I jumped, startled, and was about to object when I saw that her other hand was clutching a dagger. I tried to pull away but she was surprisingly strong. The dagger darted toward me so quickly that all I saw was a silver flash before I felt it slicing through my robe. I remember screaming something, though exactly what I cannot say.

A moment later it was over. I opened my eyes to find the woman wrapping the long strip of silk she had sliced from my robe around the boy's abdomen. Shocked, I looked to the obsidiman, who stood staring at me, silently chuckling. I regained my composure with a show of dignity, though my pride was carried away on the winds, along with the pathetic, unnecessary pleas for my life.

"I'm glad to be of service," I said, trying to sound unruffled.

She only glanced up at me before turning to the obsidiman and saying, "He will live." She stood, and after tending several other wounded, the two began to leave.

"Wait!" I called, but they continued to ignore me. "Wait!" I shouted again, chasing after them. I figured it would be safer to travel the area with two who were so experienced. It took several hours before I could get them to talk to me, but that was how I met the Daughter of Heaven, Su Shen, and the jade obsidiman, Bei, and together the three of us had some grand adventures before us..."

—From the **Journal of Daylen Jagaro, Merchant of Bartertown**



Long ago three human sisters traveled the many lands of Cathay offering their services as healers. All three had extensive knowledge of herbs and potions and soon their remarkable gift for healing became greatly sought after.

After some time, word of these legendary healers reached the ears of the ancient phoenix Yu Mi, who traveled far to witness their renowned abilities firsthand. Yu Mi watched from a distance as the three sisters entered a village that had been stricken with plague, even when none of the Imperial Healers would dare do so. Despite it being clear that the sisters had not the power to save the victims, and despite the fact that staying meant risking their own lives, the sisters did not give up.

This act of selflessness impressed the phoenix, who revealed herself to the three healers. With her great magic, Yu Mi restored the remaining villagers to health and then offered to teach the three sisters knowledge of the healing arts such as had never been shown to humans before. The sisters happily agreed. Along with the ability to heal, the phoenix taught them how to use their magic to fight. The ability to defend the weak, the phoenix told them, was just as important as the ability to heal the sick.



Their new abilities only aided in spreading their legends, and soon the three sisters were summoned to the Imperial Capital of Huan Wang. They found themselves before the Emperor, who asked them if they would teach his healers their arts. The three sisters agreed, on the condition that they would teach only females. When he inquired as to why, the sisters told the Emperor that their powers were to be used for the benefit of all Namegivers, not just the devices of one man. The aggressive nature of men would chance their powers one day being used to further some man's petty fantasies, and that they could not allow. The Emperor, impressed with the women's convictions, agreed.

They were sent to the Tower of Secrets, to share the sacred temple with the Scholars of Secrets and to begin training a new generation of sacred healers. A Daughter of Heaven is an adept, following a Discipline native to Cathay that focuses on unique healing abilities.

The Training of the Daughters of Heaven

Taking oaths that they will never marry, the Daughters of Heaven fill their ranks with both volunteers and orphaned girls. Because of the war, Daughters of Heaven often find orphaned children in raided villages. If the child is deemed acceptable, she is taken back to the Tower of Secrets for training.

The education of a Daughter of Heaven consists of three distinct levels of training. Each level, when complete, is marked by a ceremony to commemorate the Daughter's growing level of skill.

The first phase of training occurs when the initiate is just a girl. These individuals are educated in the ideas and philosophies of the healing arts.

Their duties include tending the gardens and various other chores needed to run the Tower of Secrets such as cleaning, cooking, mending, and the delicate art of processing the silk in the tower's silk garden. These many chores are designed to teach the initiate responsibility while instilling within her a sense of duty. Children who do not show promise in this stage are taken to the village of Ming Gu, where they are given to a family to be raised.

The first phase of training ends when the child is somewhere between the ages of seven and ten. Often several children are put through the commemoration ceremony together to give them a sense of camaraderie, which will be important for them in their adult lives.

The second phase of their training revolves around rigorous studies of the healing

arts. These girls no longer tend to the needs of the tower, instead devoting 16 hours a day to study. An initiate will remain in this phase until she is judged ready to move on, which can be as young as twelve or as old as eighteen.

The third and final phase of an initiate's training occurs when she is deemed ready for practical experience. Girls at this stage of training accompany a seasoned Daughter out into the war-torn countryside of Cathay where they learn firsthand what it means to be someone's only means of survival. In this phase a young Daughter learns about both life and death, and that to truly know one, she must know the other.

The third phase usually lasts many years, after which time the initiate returns to the Tower of Secrets to celebrate her official induction into the Daughters of Heaven and her initiation into the First Circle of knowledge. She is awarded her jade bracer, and from then on is free to travel Cathay as she wishes.



The Daughters of Heaven

The Daughters of Heaven Today

After the death of the last emperor and the sundering of the Empire into five kingdoms, the need for the Daughters of Heaven has never been greater. The war-torn land of Cathay has produced a deep-seeded hostility in the hearts of many people as famine, plague, and war continue to rob them of their loved ones. Constant raids from neighboring kingdoms and foraging from their own armies have left many peasants with very little to take care of themselves and their children. The Daughters of Heaven actively seek out those who are in need, but the need far outmatches their limited resources.

The Daughters of Heaven, once held highly in the Empire's heart, are now treated with suspicion and fear. After the Empire fell the Daughters stayed loyal to the Tower of Secrets, remaining neutral in political concerns. If they happen upon a battlefield they do not hesitate to heal the wounded on both sides. This act of benevolence, however, marks them as traitors to all sides; although most armies grudgingly accept their help, they rarely thank them for it.

Only the peasants thank the Daughters. This is fortunate; since the Daughters provide their healing arts for free, they are often without coin for food or shelter. In nearly any village in Cathay a Daughter may find both, although she will never accept the food if the family is on the verge of starvation.

Because of their vows to protect the innocent, the Daughters sometimes find themselves battling soldiers. Since the armies of warring kingdoms rarely care about peasants, rape and murder are common occurrences. Even if death is certain, a Daughter of Heaven will not stand idly by to watch the innocent be slaughtered. Because of this attitude there is more than one Cathayan general who has vowed to kill any Daughter of Heaven he sees.

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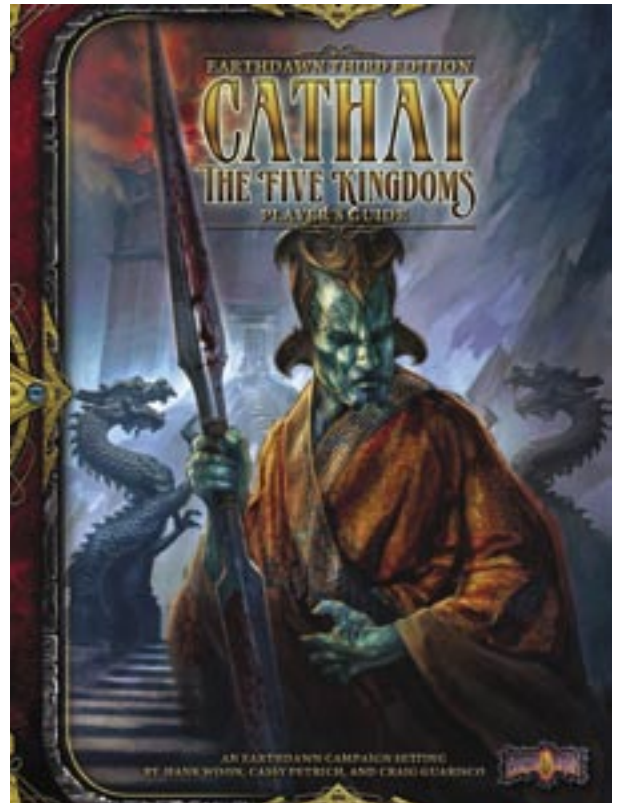
Daughters of Heaven quickly learned their lessons, and often travel with a group of other adepts for protection.

—Jel Lang, Human Scout

▲ ▲ ▲

In addition to protecting the weak, protecting herself is vital for a Daughter of Heaven. Daughters of Heaven are often attacked while on missions. Because of this they have become specialized in a variety of weapons, such as the tail of the peacock, the bang, and a variety of swords. The Daughters also have a wide range of both defensive and offensive talents. Any enemy who is thinking of attacking a Daughter of Heaven is always careful to count the pearls on the Daughter's jade bracer first!

The most famous Daughter of Heaven is the human, Su Shen, who recently reached Ninth Circle. She is often found traveling with the jade obsidian, Bei.



Su Shen

Attributes

DEX (14): 6#
STR (16): 7
TOU (18): 7
PER (13): 6
WIL (17): 7
CHA (10): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 5

Physical Defense: 12

Physical Armor: 8

Spell Defense: 8

Mystic Armor: 3

Social Defense: 8

Death: 96

Recovery Tests: 3

Unconsciousness: 7#

Knockdown: 7*

Wound Threshold: 12

Movement: 6

Karma Points: 45/45

* Su Shen knows the Wound Balance talent

Daughter of Heaven Talents (Knacks)

Abate Curse^V (5): 12
Anticipate Blow^V (5): 11
Astral Sight^V (5): 11
Avoid Blow^D (9): 15
Blade Dance^V (8): 14
Counteract^D (9): 16
Disarm (9): 15
Durability [6/5] (9)
Embrace of the Phoenix^D (9): 15
Fireblood (9): 16
Fire Heal^D (9): 16 (Wound Heal)
Gift of the Phoenix^D (9): 16
Improvised Poultrice^D (9): 15
Karma Ritual^D (9): 9
Life Check^D (9): 16
Lifesight^D (9): 15
Melee Weapons (11): 17^{DSML}
Parry (9): 15
Poison Resistance (1): 8
Sense Poison (9): 15
Shackle Shrug (9): 15
Shield of the Innocent^D (1): 6
Speak Language^V (2): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, Gar)

Thread Weaving [Thread Mending]^D (9): 15

Touch of the Phoenix^D (9): 16

Unarmed Combat (9): 15

Versatility (5): 5

Wound Balance^D (9): 16

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

^V Talent learned through the Versatility talent.

^{DSML} Melee Weapons + 2 Rank Bonus and Blade Dance +3 Rank Bonus from Dawn Spreads Morning Light

Skills

Acrobatic Strike (6): 12

Cathayan Culture^K (5): 11

Climbing (5): 11

Conceal Object (5): 11

Gar Tribes^K (3): 9

Great Leap (5): 11

Maneuver (5): 11

Read/Write Language (1): 7—(Cathayan)

Speak Language (1): 7—(Cathayan)

Throwing Weapons (2): 8

Tracking (5): 11

Wilderness Survival (5): 11

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Footman's Shield (Forged +1; Phys 4; Init 1; Deflect 2/0; Shatter 17), Hardened Vest (Forged +1; Phys 4)

Weapons

Dawn Spreads Morning Light (Rank 6; Damage 16; Melee Weapons +2 Rank Bonus; Blade Dance +3 Rank Bonus; -3 Harried + Overwhelmed penalty to a target of the Blade Dance; **Dazzling Blade** ability; 2 Strain Points; Standard Action; Melee Weapons Test versus Physical Defense of a target, on a Good Result the target is Dazzled, taking a Full Darkness penalty for 10 combat rounds; see **Magical Treasures** p.130 of the *Cathay Gamemaster's Guide*)
Dagger (Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Thread Items

Protective Amulet (Rank 4; SocDef +2; SpellDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch (for money), Blessing of the Rooster Potion, Climbing Kit, Favor of the Serpent Antidote, Fires of Mount Tihan Potion, Healing Kit (3 uses), Howl of the Wolf Potion, Jade Bracer with nine pearls, Luck of the Monkey Salve, Meditation of the Monk Potion, Quiet Pouch (for potions), Potion of Endless Wandering, Scale of the Dragon Salve, Snows of Mount Xan Potion, 3 x Tears of the Phoenix Potions, Traveler's Garb, Vitality of the Boar Potion

Loot

66 Cathayan gold pieces

Legend Award

Ninth Circle

Notes

Su Shen possesses the human racial ability of Versatility. Su Shen has used the Versatility talent to purchase the Abate Curse, Anticipate Blow, Astral Sight, Blade Dance, and Speak Language talents.

Daughter of Heaven Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Toughness—only Tests

Fifth Circle: Gift of Heaven

Sixth Circle: Karma on Willpower—only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on a test made by an adjacent target to heal damage or resist poison/disease

Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Ninth Circle: Trust of the Phoenix; Karma on Recovery Tests

Destiny: Within the Two Thousand Worlds

By William H Keith Jr

So, Human, you wish to know something of the thoughts and philosophies of The People? An odd request, that, but then, yours is an odd race, one with motivations and reasoning difficult to scent. Of what possible benefit could a knowledge of our philosophies be to you? We, The People, have our place, in the Cosmos, as do you, and there could be no advantage to either of us in sharing the viewpoints of positions so vastly sundered.

Xaxk! Fortunate it is that you have approached us instead of another family group with your request. Old K'graxk now - do you know them? No? They cannot

tolerate xengri, and claim they can catch their stench at 10 kilometres.

They'd never have stopped to bandy philosophy with you! But then, their family isn't as widely travelled, doesn't have that cosmopolitan... how do you say it... *savoir faire*... for travel and experience ours has. We, we're tolerant of the lower species. After all, they have their place and can't help being what they are, is it not so? And, of course, we can tell that you are not g'naak. There are, after all, respectable limits even for the Cosmopolitan! No entity who has consumed meat would be allowed within the portals of this embassy, a fact we

believe all those of your species are well acquainted with.

Are you fully aware of what K'kree Olfactory senses reveal to us? We can demonstrate. You have recently consumed several beakers of water infused with the oils of a dark, coarsely-powdered vegetable bean. We recognize the particular odor from other Humans we've conversed with, but don't recall the name. It is a mild stimulant to your species is it not? Also... yes... you have dined last night at the cafeteria here at the embassy. Mba roots in treer sauce, yes? A bit bland for our tastes, but that seems to be a K'kree dish favored by many visiting Humans. Oh, yes, we have little trouble reading the simple things about other species. Mmm. Further, we detect in you... behind the tainted water and mba roots... hmm... Fear? Not very strong.

Perhaps we should call it, instead, nervousness. Understandable, of course, in a Human granted permission to interview a noble of our rank. Also, we detect recent sexual excitement... would that be the dark-maned female of your kind who accompanied you to the ... what? But of course we know. We smell traces of her phermones mixed with yours... they are easy to detect, and quite unlike any other scent you produce. It is quite obvious to us, as obvious as that peculiar darkening of your facial skin just now.

Ah... now we smell anger. You are angry? And surprised as well. You should not be so. Where you have sight as your primary sense, the K'kree count first the sense of smell, and if you don't understand such a simple fact, you have no chance at all of understanding The People.

What we fail to understand about Humans, despite our years of contact with them, is their preoccupation with this intangible you call 'privacy.' We understand the technical definition of 'individual,' 'sole,' 'alone' and a one, an many more, but full understanding of privacy escapes us. You see around us the other members



of our family? Believe when we tell you that we should be most distressed to be separated from one another at any time, for any reason. Even discussing the concept disturbs us. You will notice the others here becoming concerned at my scent of agitation. We must take a moment to compose ourselves.

Now, to go on, we have studied this concept called privacy since we were first assigned here. Frankly, it amazes us that such natural functions as elimination or procreation could be regarded as activities best hidden from everyone. All creatures which ingest food must eliminate wastes, after all. What purpose is served by concealing the fact? Of all the scents of Humaniti, that associated with what you call 'embarrassment' - that sharp, almost spicy odor akin to the salty tang of fear which we perceive in you still - that is the hardest of your smells for us to comprehend.

My dear sir, we do NOT stray from the subject! To understand The People, you must understand what drives us, but Humaniti is so alien in thought and motivation, we scarcely know where to begin. Perhaps we can give you some glimmering of the wind-swept vistas of K'kree experience by examining a few of the most important concepts.

RIGHTNESS

K'lat'rr cannot be closely translated, but gives the scent of far horizons beyond rolling and unbounded prairie, red-golden backed releasing its flowery sweet pollen in waves before the gentle breeze, on which floats the dark, wet and ozone-tingling smell of recent thunderstorms, mingled with the wet and comforting scents of family close by. Can such a scene fail to excite you, to set both hearts pounding in joy and... and... rightness? Rightness... belonging... these perhaps best describe K'lat'rr, which signifies that everything is in its proper place, in its proper order, as it should be.

An old Terran songweaver spoke of 'God's in his heaven and all's right with the world.'

If by 'God' he meant Ghik'keerikl'ak T't'kakhk Xeng Kirr Tkexirr, he scented the concept with perfection.

POSITION

That brings us to t'ok, 'position,' you might call it, Surely, even Humans can scent this, yes? One has only to observe life throughout the universe, how every organism, no matter how lowly, has its place within food chains and ecosystems and the broad scheme of things. In K'kree society, each has a place, each family a place, and there is little change.

For over 7,700 years the government seat of Kirur has been an example of stability, of order, of k'lat'rr ... steady, steadfast, unchanging.

Eh? Freedom? What does freedom have to do with anything. Freedom is a thousand bits of chaff before the storm wind, each swept its own way idiocy! There's a perfect example of how Humans try to understand The People through their own preconceived and biased notions. This freedom you Humans speak of seems to us bizarre, and sounds dangerous, if we understand aright the word. The function of a family's members is to join for the benefit of all. And each family joins with each other family for the benefit of the Herd and the Race, each with a place and position in the Grand Whole. Now, tell me, Human, where would we be if any common serpent... Or better, some non-K'kree kr'rrir... decided that it would be krurrinna? Unthinkable! What if we felt the freedom to strike you down where you stand? Nonsense! That's what our bodyguards are for after all... for their t'ok is to chastise at our command impropriety journalists who disrupt t'ok! Your apology is accepted. Think nothing of it. Now, where was I?

ORDER

T't'k - 'order' - proceeds from t'ok- 'osition'. A Human would say we are 'conservative' that we mistrust things new, and long delay adventures which could upset the natural order of things.

This is true enough, although the term conservative in this sense seems to have a negative connotation, as though change is always good, and that which holds back change is bad. Say, rather, that the new must prove itself before we embrace it, for to change merely for the sake of change is stupidity of the foulest- stench sort. T't'k gives us patience.

The People have spread slowly across the stars, lacking that mindless wanderlust which brands other species we have met. This is not weakness, but rather it is strength. Given the precepts of t'ok and t't'k, it could be no other way.

THE GOOD OF ALL

If something is keeklkr, it flows from t'ok and t't'k to the good of all. It ... it seems self-explanatory, but you Humans are so... so... We have no word.

What? Ah, yes, individualistic. We have used that word before, but it is so depressing a concept. Each driven its own way, as chaff before a storm.

Keeklkr is derived from the very beginnings of The People. Primitive herds naturally evolved the idea whereby each acted first and always for the good of the whole, to ensure the herd's survival and prosperity.

Humans we have conversed with in the past have expressed surprise that in our society we have no warrior caste, drawing, we believe parallels to certain social insects with which they are familiar. In K'kree society, ALL adult males serve at least some time in our military... direct outgrowth from the age-old concept of keeklkr. In the primitive herds, the strong males banded together to protect the females, the aged, and the young from g'naak. Later, they banded together to hunt down the g'naak, to seek them out and destroy them, acting together to free the herd from fear. This joining for the common good is so basic to our philosophy, it is difficult to explain. We've heard words used by Humans to describe this, words like 'selfless,' or 'altruistic,' but words such as these suggest that such behavior is an alternative to the

Destiny: Within the Two Thousand Worlds

norm which simply cannot exist in K'kree thought or action. Keeklkr is simply another aspect of K'tat'rr and can only be explained as the way things are.

That 'things' might be different among non-K'kree is one of the hardest lessons those of us who travel among other races must learn. We comfort ourselves with the knowledge that Ixengr'ri cultures may yet arise to the K'kree level of social awareness. The spread of our culture has worked this miracle on countless civilisations those we call kr'rrir ... already, throughout the realm of the Two Thousand Worlds.

UPLIFT

Yes, it is true that The People concern themselves more with their own affairs than with the affairs of others. Is it not so with Humaniti? But we are more than willing to share the gifts of our culture with those around us... yes, more than willing! The Two Thousand Worlds are filled with examples who have enjoyed rrablak, that is, 'uplift,' and have become kr'rrir.

Our missionary outreach began long ago... at the very beginnings of our history as a space-faring people. Indeed, it is doubtful that we would have created the Two Thousand Worlds without the need to uplift others. True, true, those efforts began almost reflexively, to protect The People from the g'naak we discovered lurking on the newly discovered worlds, but we take pride in what we did as well, extending the consciousness of these races, bringing them to the benefits of true civilization and enlightenment. Our scientists have demonstrated that evolution will bring all races toward the K'kree norm given time. We are simply helping that natural process along, and reducing ages of blood-soaked misery and horror. We find hope for Humaniti in the fact that many of your people began to embrace vegetarianism before you left your homeworld.

MILITANT VEGETARIANS

Ah, yes. All Humans ask about that. How we think it is our army, our somehow, honored kirunikalrra - one of your writers

translated that word as 'pest control' - which most fascinates Humans. We gather that a scientist of Terra once, long ago before Terrans had ventured to the stars to meet other civilizations, proposed that intelligence would only develop among carnivores and omnivores, his reason being summed up in the asinine phrase 'how much intelligence does it take to sneak up on a blade of grass?' How consistently you Humans misunderstand the workings of the cosmos.

It was the original g'naak, of course, those long-extinct predators of Kirur, which impelled the K'kree onto the path of intelligence long ago, and not the mindless questing for food. In a way, it can be said that these g'naak themselves gave us the edge with which we supplanted them, demonstrating our superiority and our worthiness to survive. The judgement of the universe is final. There is a saying among us: 'The People have the Two Thousand Worlds, the g'naak have dust' The People have been called 'militant vegetarians' an epithet which twists ironically to reveal truth. The term has no translation in our language; why translate what is, or build philosophies about what is self-evident? Certainly, we are vegetarians ... and though we don't think of ourselves as 'militant' certainly we use militant means to induce rrablak among savages, for our security and for their well-being. Occasionally, when necessary, diseased cultures are eliminated, and for the same reasons.

Can there be a nobler cause? What shocks and surprises Humans is our dedication to this cause. It seems that Humans expect vegetarians to be meek and gentle, horrified at the sight of blood. This expectation would be amusing if it were not so outrageously pathetic. The K'kree are not bloodthirsty; we hunt neither for food nor for so-called 'sport.' Yet when we kill, we kill efficiently, without qualm or what you would call 'conscience' - another difficult concept, that-and in the cause of K'kree well-being, we kill enthusiastically. It has been theorized that carnivores and omnivores are forced to develop certain restraints upon their behavior as they evolve social structures, restraints which

prevent their destroying themselves. Herbivores such as The People know no such restraints; they have no need of them, and are far more dangerous in warfare.

We well remember a military campaign we served in some time ago. There was a Human military officer along, a representative of the Solomani Sphere, observing K'kree military techniques on a world inhabited by unregenerate g'naak of the worst kind.

These... savages had rebuffed our every effort to uplift them. It seemed they claimed a biological need for... for meat, which they consumed... lightly singed. The living animals they preyed upon provided them with an amino acid unavailable in the native plant life. It was a simple matter to synthesise this compound for them, but they refused to learn to do it. Certainly, there were problems storing the chemical, but the truth of the matter was that the creatures **preferred** a diet of singed meat and I resented our efforts to help them! Eh! No, not primitives, not barbarians, They had a culture, of sorts, and a crude technological civilisation. They lived in cities ... grotesque, alien monstrosities with kilometer-high needles and arches of a pink and white stone... and the contact families reported they had an extensive literature, arts, music. But then, too, they actually **hunted** for sport. And they raised herds of... living animals for food ... excuse us, the memory is most painful.

We are composed again. The war was a savage one. Their cities were reduced to radioactive glass, their fortresses saturated with tailored biologicals and radioactive dusts, yet still they fought on as small bands in the mountains and jungles and swamps, forcing us to eliminate them a handful at a time.

We had found an isolated shelter in the mountains. They had tried to conceal their scents as well as their visible traces, but we located them in spite of their efforts. The Human was with us as we burst into the cave, to find a female and a pair of young, feeding. One of the young had blood smearing its mouth; the other was feeding

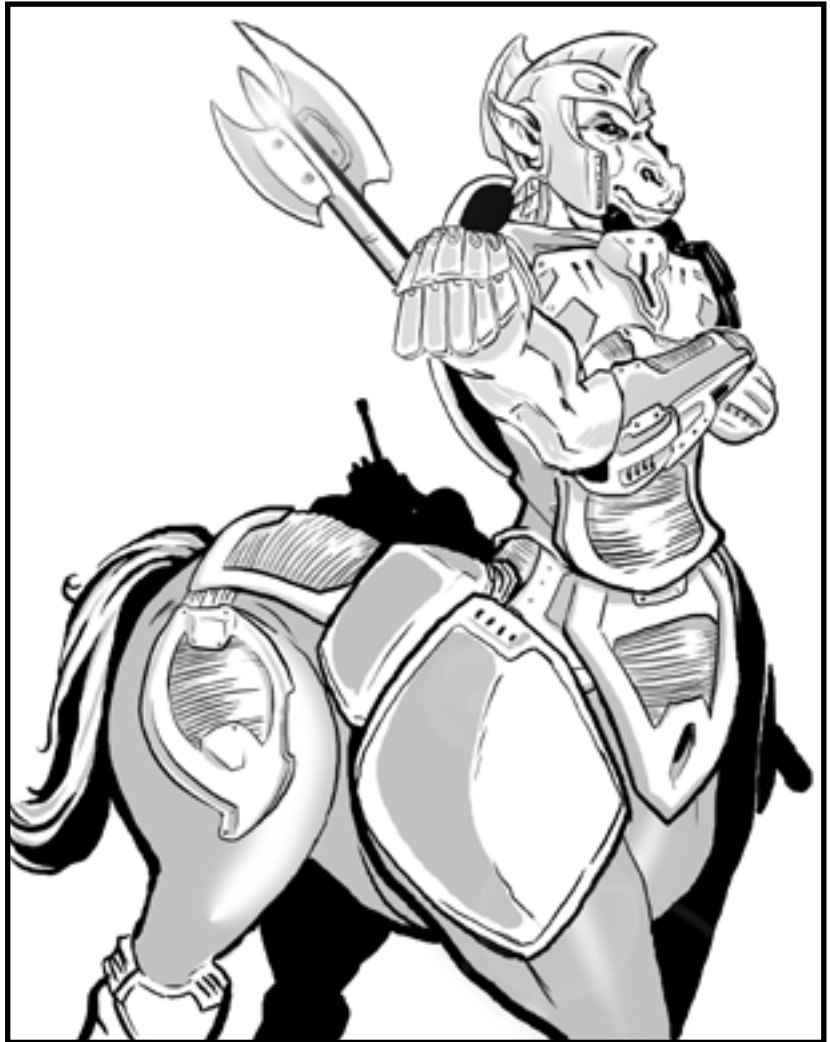
on a whitish bloodlike secretion from the female. Such horror! Such hideous stench of death and burnt meats We killed them all, of course, quickly and cleanly, with our feet, to save ammunition, since they were unarmed. What was amusing... is that a proper use of the word? What was amusing was the reaction of the Human observer, this supposedly hardened warrior, who fled the cave before we'd finished was later found being quite ill nearby. That proved a grand amusement among our troops; you know, of course, how we nurse our own young? Carnivores cannot match herbivores for sheer ferociousness. Carnivorous semisophonts take note; behold yet another example of innate K'kree biological superiority, a survival trait which will in time bring the spread of the K'kree cosmic view across the galaxy!

MANIFEST DESTINY

This brings us at last to the final concern, a system of belief rooted in culture since earliest times. Religion? You might call it that... although it is less religion as you know it than belief and faith. Perhaps the lower classes act according to the aura of religious belief; for we nobles, of course, fact is enough. The Human terms which best fit it are 'manifest destiny' and it simply acknowledges the glorious destiny of the K'kree and our culture's principles in the cosmos.

Perhaps you are aware that 'The Two Thousand Worlds'...the name for our empire ... derives from a term indicating the night sky of Kirur? The term has nothing to do with how many worlds we hold.

Yes, with the unaided eye, it is possible to see about that many stars at one time... and it is our destiny to go forth to those worlds... really a symbol of the whole of creation... bring order and civilization, and the benefits of our peace. And why not? We have proven our ability... and our right... to survive, proven it again and again in the righteous and noble slaughter of countless g'naak species, and in the uplift of countless more. All K'kree maintain this as part of their cosmic-view, that they are destined by nature to rule, destined even to usher



in a new age in planetary biology. Nothing can stop this; it is quite inevitable, basic to the entire foundation of bioevolution! You disagree? Oh, but you do... you cannot lie to us, so why deny it? We scent your stink of anger and fear and revulsion. It matters not to us. Perhaps you're unaware that once we were Ghir'ghik'keerlk of a world within our sphere, a world inhabited by Humans.

Omnivorous Humans! We took part in their rrablak, their ... taming ... we supervised the eradication of the diehards among them, and we governed the survivors for seven years after that. We transformed from watched the colony, Civilization and happiness, savagery to. We know the benefits of the K'kree way! Well... very well, if you feel that way.

The opinion of a Human can hardly matter to us. our bodyguards will show you out...

but long will be the time before we grant another interview to a Human! It will take days to rid the compound of the last traces of your stench...

K'agzi X'ten kri'krilk K't' hk'tree 'trt Lixt'rr lkru Kraxenga (Noble Diplomat of the 25th Degree, of the family K't'xra, who attends the Nobler Ambassador Kraxenga, of the herd X'ten), as recorded and transcribed by William H. Keith, Jr. of Scotia

Editor's Note: The Noble K'agzi is part of the diplomatic staff at Capital. After a distinguished military career, he was adopted in to the family of the renowned Kraxenga himself. His mastery of diplomacy, tact, and interspecies understanding has led to new inroads in Human-K'kree friendship and cooperation.

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