

# SP Signs & Portents

Scenarios for Traveller and RuneQuest • Plus Victory at Sea, Paranoia and more •



3... 2... 1... Lift Off!

## Noble Armada: Blasts Into the Heavens

# COMING THIS ISSUE

□ □ □	Mongoose News	4
□ □ □	Convention Diary	5
□ □ □	Featurettes	6
□ □ □	New Releases	8
□ □ □	Shamanism for Fun and Prophets	14
□ □ □	The Clock's Ticking	24
□ □ □	A Friend in Need	28
□ □ □	New Ships for the US Navy	30
□ □ □	The Thing in the Pit	40
□ □ □	R&D - A Clone's Best Friend	46
□ □ □	Armes of Battel: Part II	50
□ □ □	Children of the Zodiac	54
□ □ □	Xiombarg's Children	58
□ □ □	The City of Lof: Uncovered	64
□ □ □	Petty Lords and Bandit Kings	72
□ □ □	Bestiary	76
□ □ □	The Initiation	78
□ □ □	Ships of the Noble Houses	85
□ □ □	Submissions and Feedback	

- □ □ Mongoose
- □ □ Features
- □ □ Traveller
- □ □ Lone Wolf
- □ □ Conventions
- □ □ Miniatures
- □ □ RuneQuest
- □ □ Paranoia
- □ □ Flaming Cobra
- □ □ Information
- □ □ Miscellaneous

# Editorial



February. A wonderful month with many great people being born during its passage. Most notably myself, of course. I do hope I get the presents I want. I've not had a really good supply of nuclear weaponry for some time and enough is enough, I mean I'm falling behind the North Koreans, for mercy's sake. I can't possibly allow this state of affairs to continue.

As for this issue, well once again it is jam-packed full of gaming goodness. This month sees an in depth look at spirit magic in the RuneQuest II roleplaying game. An absolute must for shamans everywhere.

An old favourite also returns to these pages this month, with some shiny new warships for the Victory at Sea game.

For Paranoia fans there are a number of brilliant and totally non-dangerous/deathtrap R&D items for Troubleshooters to have fun/die screaming with. Dredd-heads have a nice little trip to a construction site to look forward to, as those horrid Democrats are up to no good again.

There are adventures for both Traveller and RuneQuest, some new foes for Elric, minor states for Wraith Recon operatives to operate within, alien creatures, the city of Lof receives some love for Lone Wolf players and gamesmasters, I could go on and on.

And, indeed, I appear to have done so...

Nick

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# Mongoose News

By Nick Robinson

## Noble Armada is Here!

After months of playtesting the launch of noble Armada is upon us this month. The latest version of the popular A Call to Arms space combat game should be making intergalactic admirals everywhere smile with joy as they can, at last, crush their enemies into so much space dust!

## Flowers in Her Hair

The latest Living Glorantha scenario is now available online. A foul kidnap threatens an important Orlanthe ceremony - can the heroes save the maiden and save her world?

You can download this adventure, with the others, here:

<http://www.mongoosepublishing.com/living-glorantha.php>

## Vapnartak

We will be off to York racecourse this month, bringing Mongoose goodness to the masses. Who knows, we may even sell a copy or several of Vikings there....

## Flying Bases Back in Stock

Our detachable plastic flying bases are back!

Supplied with two different stems, allowing you to choose the height of your flying models, each base also comes with a ball and socket joint, designed to avoid those annoying breakages.

The ball and socket joint allows you to alter the angle of your model, so you can set it at dramatic or jaunty angles - climbing hard after a strafing attack perhaps, or maybe banking to avoid enemy fire.

This ball and socket joint also allows you to unplug the model from the base for easier and safer storage and transportation. Simply pop the model off the base, lay it flat in a carry case, and then click it back on when you are ready for play.

## Next Issue

The second parts of both Lof: Uncovered and Shamanism for Fun and Prophets will both feature in March's Signs and Portents and kick off another packed issue.

A new scenario for Deus Vult from creator Gareth Hanrahan will have the Hieromonks dealing with dastardly doings in Normandy.

And the craziness continues with more Paranoia dangers.

Additional material for RuneQuest, Dredd and Traveller will all be included for another bumper issue!



# Convention Diary

## RolePlaying Conventions 2011

### Concrete Cow

19<sup>th</sup> March

The Old Bath House, Milton Keynes

[www.mk-rpg.org.uk/Concrete\\_Cow\\_games](http://www.mk-rpg.org.uk/Concrete_Cow_games)

### Compulsion

25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> March

Teviot Row Student Union, Edinburgh

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

### Con-Quest

30<sup>th</sup> April

Derby Assembly Rooms, Derby

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

### UK Games Expo \*

3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> June

Clarendon Suites, Edgbaston, Birmingham

[www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk](http://www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk)

## Wargaming Conventions 2011

### Vapnartak \*

6<sup>th</sup> February

York Racecourse, York

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

### Cavalier

27<sup>th</sup> February

The Angel Centre, Tonbridge

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

### Salute \*

16<sup>th</sup> April

Excel Exhibition Centre, London

[www.salute.co.uk](http://www.salute.co.uk)

### Triples

21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> May

English Institute of Sport, Sheffield

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

### Campaign

4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> June

Thecentre:mk, Milton Keynes

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

Events marked with an asterisk Mongoose Publishing will be attending.

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 Gods

- Wakboth. Bwahahahaha.
- Arioeh. Foremost of the Lords of Chaos.
- Loki the Trickster. Frankly, I think he got a bum rap.
- Crom. But only in an Austrian accent.
- Issek the Jug. Drunk shaven barbarian for the win!



You nuke your arch-enemy and the focus of your campaign!



He gets up.

# GRUESOME

# The Timeline

A guide to get your tails wagging for future Mongoose releases

March: The Zhodani make their entrance

April: Animals and Starports for Traveller

May: Monster Isla

TRAVELLER

TRAVELLER

Run

# Quote of the Month

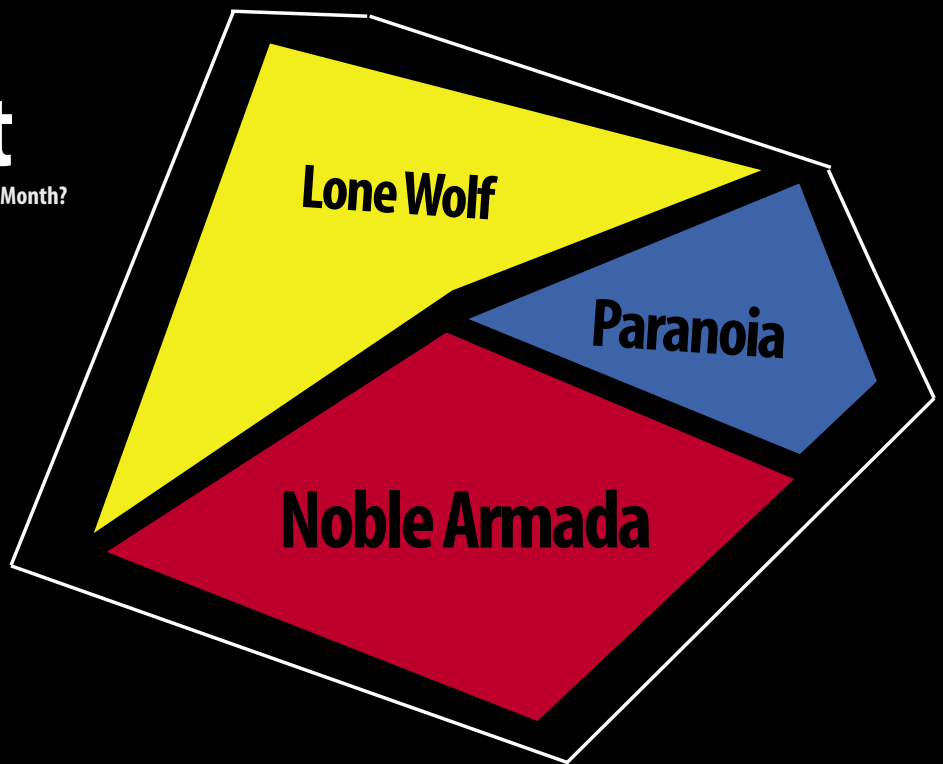
Which phrases have been flying around the office more than the dog's ball?

'You are charged with the genocide of a planet!'  
'Humm. Which one?'

**K**at's opening statement in her character's defence at her trial is somewhat unusual...

## The Time Chart

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



and. With extra Monsters!

June: Paranoia - Fun and games... OUTSIDE!

July: Carmania Conquers!



# February 11 Releases



The popular space fleet combat miniatures game, A Call to Arms is back, in a brand new guise – drawn from the detailed background of the Fading Suns RPG, A Call to Arms: Noble Armada is a fast to learn, hard to master space combat game involving fleets drawn from the Royal Houses.

Players must learn how to knock down or bypass the shields protecting enemy vessels, and then launch assaults on ships with an all new boarding mechanic. With full campaign rules and support for tournaments, A Call to Arms is back as you have never seen it before.

This hardback rulebook includes full fleet lists for the five main Royal Houses, new rules for boarding actions, fighters, scenarios, and a complete campaign that can be played with any fleet. Everything you need to start waging war among the stars!

*Noble Armada*  
Price: \$29.99  
Format: Hardback (140 pages)

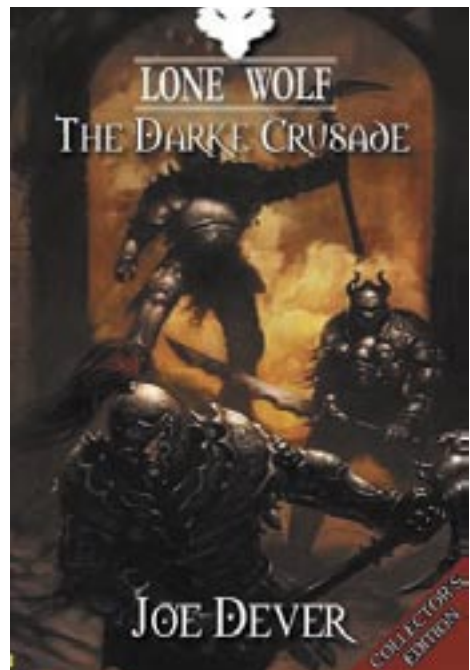
**Pre Order Now**

*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**





The secrets of the Magnakai will open before you once you read this book. Providing all the rules you will need for high level 'epic' play for the Lone Wolf Multiplayer Gamebook, the Book of the Magnakai details all new disciplines not just for accomplished Kai Lords, but for every new class introduced in Heroes of Magnamund as well.

Using the rules provided in this book, your characters will be able to face the greatest of the Darklords with a chance of survival, halt the progress of entire wars and have a powerful effect upon Magnamund.

*Book of the Magnakai*

Price: \$19.99

Format: Softback (128 pages)

**Pre Order Now**

*Premier volume d'une série de Compendiums, ce livre regroupe les articles les plus populaires qui ont été publiés dans Signs & Portents au cours des dernières années et les propose pour le jeu de rôle !*

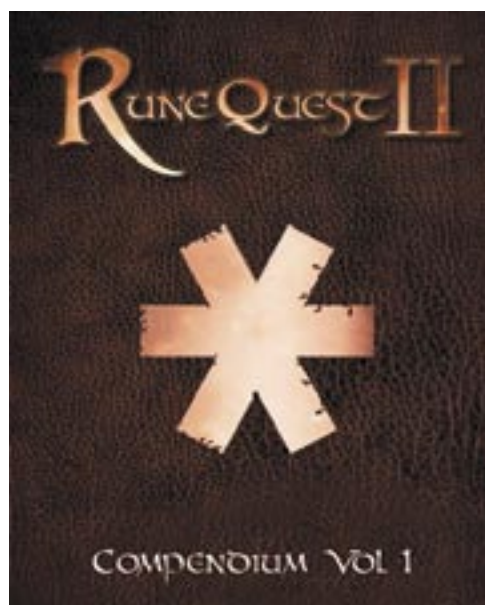
*À l'intérieur vous trouverez de nouvelles magies, un traité approfondi sur les Aldryami, de nouveaux monstres, des objets magiques, des personnages issus de l'univers de Glorantha – et des règles pour passer du bon temps dans une taverne !*

*Ce premier Compendium est compatible avec tous les univers de RuneQuest II.*

*RuneQuest Compendium Volume 1*

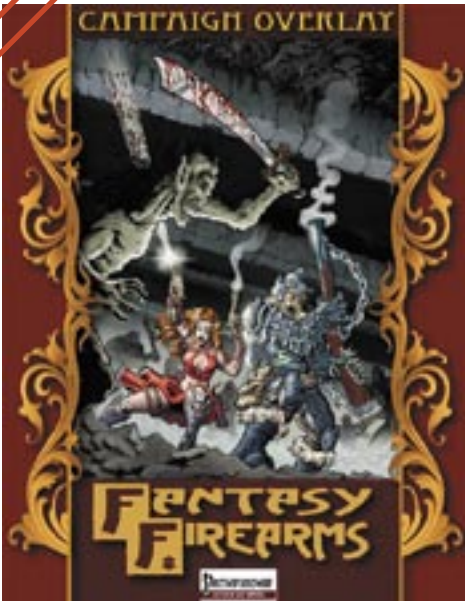
Price: \$34.99

Format: Softback (96 pages)



**Pre Order Now**

# February 11 Releases



## For the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

Campaign Overlay: Fantasy Firearms  
Price: \$24.99  
Format: Softback (96 pages)

Introducing firearms into a fantasy setting requires more than just gunpowder used by Orcs and Elves. Draksmoke adds that fantasy element to the simple discovery that charcoal, sulfur and saltpeter go BOOM when you mix and ignite them.

Draksmoke is fantasy gunpowder. Made from the burning liquid dragons use to make their deadly flames, Draksmoke is a dragons breath weapon in powdered form. Few alchemists know the secret to producing true Draksmoke; and they guard it with their lives. Rich and powerful guilds have risen up around those that know the secrets. The Black Brotherhood, the Armigers and the Monopolist Consortium all trade in mundane gunpowder, powerful Draksmoke and newly-forged firearms; each pursuing their own ends.

To make use of such a powerful substance, new weapons have been hammered out on the forges of the world. Only the finest steel tempered in the blood of dragons can withstand the power expended by Draksmoke. Naturally, new magicks have been conceived to protect warriors, kings, and knaves alike.

Everything you need to bring real firepower to your fantasy campaign!

**Pre Order Now**

*The Mind is the key to unlock your shackles. Greed has left half a world bleeding and broken beneath the weight of poverty, conflict, and slavery. Only we can lead the oppressed beyond the horrors of the Corporate age. Trust in us, and we will set you free.*

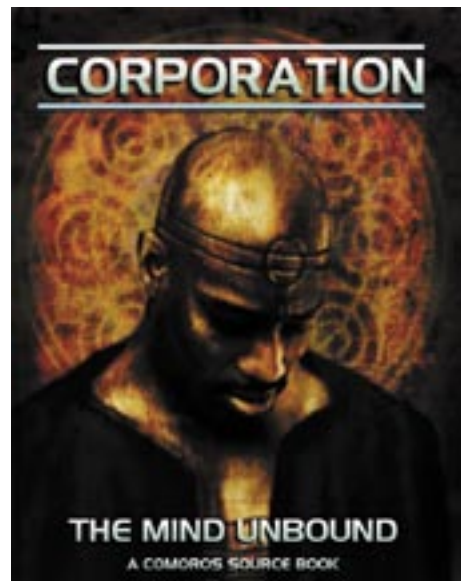
*The Mind is the weapon to rout your enemies. Fear has left our rivals struggling to comprehend the power we command, scrambling to blunt it. Only we can shepherd the defenceless in a world full of predators. Trust in us, and we will protect you.*

*The Mind is the tool to change your world. War has left society on the brink of the abyss, held in a fragile balance of bitter rivals and capricious powers. Only we can guide the innocent through a second darkness and back into light. Trust in us, and we will bring you to a new age of peace... no matter the cost.*

*Unbound, the Mind grants strength and understanding beyond petty morals or the judgements of a fallen civilisation; the strength to do what must be done for the greater good.*

*Welcome, Agent, to the Comoros Corporation.*

*The Mind Unbound*  
Price: \$29.99  
Format: Softback (158 pages)



**Pre Order Now**



*In its earliest days, House Hawkwood was the leading house but a consortium of other houses, led by Decados, brought it crashing down, almost to the point of extinction. One member managed to revive its fortunes and within generations it once again became one of the greatest houses, until the first barbarian invasion broke through at Delphi and devastated Hawkwood's holdings. Other catastrophes have come and gone, but House Hawkwood endures...*

*This box set contains everything a House Hawkwood player needs for A Call to Arms: Noble Armada, with a full set of ships ranging in size from explorers and raiders to destroyers and carriers.*

*Includes:*

- 1 Malcolm-class Light Carrier*
- 2 Griffin-class Destroyers*
- 2 Darius-class Galliot*
- 4 Hornet-class Frigates*
- 2 Wayfarer-class Explorers*
- 4 Fitzhugh-class Light Fighters*
- 4 Kestrel-class Torpedo Bombers*

*Enough to start playing in a campaign!*

*House Hawkwood Fleet Set*  
Price: \$29.99

**Pre Order Now**

*House Decados is one of the most influential, if least trusted, of the Royal Houses, and it remains an insurmountable barrier to anyone with democratic ideals. Its spies and assassins roam the Known Worlds, and Decados leaders have an uncanny ability to discover the darkest secrets of their enemies. The Decados have mastered the arts of body manipulation and alteration, and their Jakovian spies are said to be able to pass as anyone they desire, even changing their appearance while on assignment.*

*This box set contains everything a House Decados player needs for A Call to Arms: Noble Armada, with a full set of ships ranging in size from explorers and raiders to destroyers and carriers.*

*Includes:*

- 1 Hiram-class Light Carrier*
- 2 Tupok'ta-class Destroyers*
- 2 Lucretzia-class Galliot*
- 4 Mantis-class Frigates*
- 2 Reaper-class Raiders*
- 4 Subiaco-class Light Fighters*
- 4 Rodrigo-class Torpedo Bombers*

*Enough to start playing in a campaign!*

*House Decados Fleet Set*  
Price: \$29.99



**Pre Order Now**

# February 11 Releases



House al-Malik maintains strong ties with the Merchant League, and there are rumours that it bought its position as a Royal House from its banking and trade interests. Nonetheless, House al-Malik can usually count on League support in its ventures, and their mansions are filled with technological wonders. Some even carry personal think machines, which they cryptically call 'computers'.

This box set contains everything a House al-Malik player needs for *A Call to Arms: Noble Armada*, with a full set of ships ranging in size from explorers and raiders to destroyers and carriers.

Includes:

- 1 Asim-class Light Carrier
- 2 Efreet-class Destroyers
- 2 Rahimat-class Galliot
- 4 Spider-class Frigates
- 2 Odyssey-class Explorer
- 4 Zubayr-class Light Fighters
- 4 Mumit-class Torpedo Bombers

Enough to start playing in a campaign!

House al-Malik Fleet Set  
Price: \$29.99

**Pre Order Now**

The Hazat have rarely been subtle and rely on force of arms to achieve their goals. They turned the army against House Chauki but in turn found themselves beholden to the military, who have found their influence among the Hazat grow over time. House Hazat can now not curtail their military build up, even if they wanted to. Almost all young Hazat go through military training throughout their childhood, and are prepared for positions of command – it is not unusual to find a 12 year old Hazat knight leading forces of hardened veterans.

This box set contains everything a House Hazat player needs for *A Call to Arms: Noble Armada*, with a full set of ships ranging in size from explorers and raiders to destroyers and carriers.

Includes:

- 1 Trafalgar-class Carrier
- 1 Manticore-class Destroyer
- 2 Xerses-class Galliot
- 4 Scorpion-class Frigates
- 2 Stalker-class Explorer
- 4 Dagger-class Light Fighters
- 4 Harpy-class Torpedo Bombers

Enough to start playing in a campaign!

**Pre Order Now**

House Hazat Fleet Set  
Price: \$29.99





Once buried in a sordid past, renowned for debauchery among nobles and cruelty towards subjects, House Li Halan could have once put Decados to shame. However, during the Barbarian Invasions, House Li Halan found the Pancreator and the entire family converted overnight, with several prominent family members dispatched to monasteries, never to be seen again. Since then, the family has been at the height of orthodoxy, battling heresy and even blocking attempts at change within the Church itself.

This box set contains everything a House Li Halan player needs for A Call to Arms: Noble Armada, with a full set of ships ranging in size from explorers and raiders to destroyers and carriers.

Includes:

- 1 Ijiri-class Light Carrier
- 2 Dragon-class Destroyers
- 2 Cardano-class Galliot
- 4 Iskati-class Frigates
- 2 Slayer-class Raiders
- 4 Mishima-class Light Fighters
- 4 Peregrine-class Torpedo Bombers

Enough to start playing in a campaign!

House Li Halan Fleet Set  
Price: \$29.99

**Pre Order Now**

# Shamanism for Fun and Prophets

By Bruce Mason, Gary Goldman and Pete Nash

*"My songs are paths" said a shaman, "Some take me a short way — some take me a long way. I make them straight and I walk down them. I look about me as I go — not a thing escapes my notice. I call but I stay on the path."*

— (Townsend, Graham. Song Paths, The Ways and Means of Yaminahua Shamanic Knowledge, L'Homme, 1993: 33:p454)

*I'll tell you what shamanism's all about. It's the quickest way to get your brains scrambled short of falling off a cliff.*

— Praghos the Cursed.

*RuneQuest II* introduces a new, free-form system of Spirit Magic mixing a blend of academic realism and fantasy. The rules provide a toolkit of ideas that can be used to create many different kind of **animistic** traditions but the openness of the system can make it hard to know where to start or how to fit spirit magic into your own campaign. This article provides answers to questions that have been asked and tools to help bring spirit worship to life in any campaign. This is the first of two articles: the second will expand upon the range of spirits and spirit encounters available to spirit worshippers.

Animism is the broadest term for a worldview in which the world is infused by spirits, and shamanism is just one type of animism. *RuneQuest II* focuses on shamanism but the rules can accommodate most forms of animism. For example, Shinto or 'folk Hinduism' can be seen as animistic practices as can ancestor worship among the Romans and ancient Greeks. And, as can be seen in any bookshop, many new age beliefs are fundamentally animistic. *RuneQuest II* spirit magic is as applicable to the modern world as it is to the ancient.

## Spirit Cults & Traditions

Although most spirit worshippers will be a member of a cult, the organisation is unlikely to be anywhere near as formal as a divine cult or sorcery school. Spirit cults are

more likely to be loose affiliations or may simply consist of members of single family or clan or **tradition** of veneration of spirits. Such traditions share one simple insight: the world is alive. Each rock, plant, animal and each cloud, pool and storm has its own spirit. Such spirits themselves, especially the spirits of ancestors, may also be members of a tradition or be friendly towards a particular tradition. Other spirits may simply have no interest in the mundane world. Some may be actively hostile to members of a particular tradition.

Because there are so many ways to approach spirit worship, cults tend to be diverse but as a rule of thumb each spirit cult tends to have access to five or six types of spirit with whom it is friendly and when added up, these spirits will usually offer 7-12 different benefits. Smaller spirit cults have access to fewer friendly spirits.

Nearly all cults will have access to ancestors and guardian spirits plus a number of nature spirits depending on the cult's background. Cults with particular elemental affiliations will have access to elemental spirits. Curse and bane spirits are not usually part of a tradition and any spirit magician attempting to bind them into service is taking a serious risk.

## Defining Spirits

The denizens of the spirit plane are varied and diverse. Spirit magic allows practitioners to approach spirits in two ways: as beings with which they can communicate and as entities which can be bound to service. A spirit magician's most frequent interaction with spirits will be through the use of the Spirit Walking skill to communicate with them. In this respect spirits are non player characters who can be interacted with during game sessions. Spirit Binding is the skill of persuading or forcing a spirit into service or protecting oneself from harmful spirits. *RuneQuest II* provides a basic breakdown of spirit types and how to quantify what benefits a bound spirit might provide. The two key elements

anyone wishing to bind a spirit needs to know about it are its **Intensity** and its **attitude** towards the spirit mage.

## Intensity

Intensity is an **attribute** of spirits. When it comes to Spirit Magic, the Intensity of a spirit measures the benefit it can give to the spirit's controller as well as how difficult it is to command. The greater a spirit's POW, the greater its Intensity. A spirit's Intensity can be calculated from the following table.

Spirit Intensity Table

Intensity	POW	POW Range	Typical POW
1	1D6+6	7-12	10
2	1D6+12	13-18	16
3	1D6+18	19-24	22
+1	+6	+6	+6

You do not always need to know a spirit's Intensity to know the scale of its effects but the attribute is always there and is also used to measure how much it 'costs' to bind a spirit.

Occasionally spirits can be found which for mythical or historical reasons break the rules. The system here is simply a default covering most normal cases. Exceptions will always occur.

## Attitude

Each spirit has an attitude towards magicians who approach it. Some will be friendly, others neutral and some hostile. Spirits belonging to the magician's *tradition* will most likely be friendly. Neutral spirits consist of both those belonging to traditions which are not hostile to the shaman as well as those not considered part of any tradition. Hostile spirits are those belonging to enemy traditions or are inherently antagonistic due to mythic, runic or elemental oppositions. For example, Bane spirits are hostile to almost all non-Chaotic traditions while a tradition

with wolf spirits will find that most prey animal spirits are distinctly hostile to it. The attitude of a spirit towards a spirit magician affects how it will react to being approached, to being bound and what it might do if it ever escapes a binding.

## Binding Spirits

The *RuneQuest II* rules leave it up to the players and Games Master in any campaign to determine the precise procedures for gaining spirits with the assumption each campaign will generate its own guidelines. There are, however, some common elements that are likely to underlie most Spirit Magic traditions.

Worshippers of a spirit cult gain spirits through undertaking a ritual in collaboration with a shaman to bind a spirit into a *fetish*. The shaman searches the spirit plane for a suitable spirit for the supplicant, defeats it in spirit combat and then binds it to a fetish that has been prepared by both shaman and supplicant. While the shaman journeys, the supplicant fasts and mediates, purifying himself in preparation for the gift of the spirit. The bound spirit counts against the owner's limit, not the shaman's. Although there is nothing stopping a non-shaman undertaking the search and binding a spirit by himself, the task is dangerous and would be frowned on by other members of the community.

Shamans will usually only provide spirits to members of the same tradition or in recompense for great favours and they will only bind friendly spirits associated with their cult in this manner. The fetish costs the recipient one Improvement Roll per point of Intensity of the spirit. This cost represents the time and personal development needed for a spirit worshipper to make themselves worthy of the gift. The ritual usually takes a week and at the end of the week the player should roll the spirit's characteristics randomly based on the spirit's Intensity. It is possible the spirit gained may be too powerful for the adventurer to control.

Spirits with an Intensity of 5 or more are likely to have a POW of over 30 and a

spectral combat skill of 150% or more meaning that only the greatest of the High Shamans can defeat them in spirit combat unless several shamans join together in a Concert (See *Spellcom*). Such actions should be played out rather than relegated to Down Time.

Once bound to the mundane plane in a fetish a spirit can no longer regenerate Magic Points nor can it perceive the world around it so the spirit lies quiescent until either temporarily released or the fetish is broken. In previous editions of **RuneQuest**, magic items featured spirits being used as Magic Point batteries, spell storage repositories and spell casters. These items were generally an aspect of game balance and do not feature in spirit magic in *RuneQuest II*. Clearly though you can reintroduce them to your own games as you see fit.



### Thorgeld's saga

*Thorgeld The Bold has approached the clan shaman, Four Tooth, and respectfully requested his help to gain some wolf magic: in this case the "track by scent" trait. A simple trait like this merely requires an Intensity One spirit: a good job because Thorgeld's Spirit Binding is only 32%. Four Tooth agrees to help so Thorgeld's player marks off one Improvement Roll and gifts Four Tooth with a wolf hide that has been treated to be used as a drum skin. He decides the fetish will be a highly polished piece of wolf jaw Thorgeld keeps in a medicine bag hung around his neck. The Games Master has ruled there are several weeks of game time between sessions so Thorgeld has plenty of time to journey to a sacred precipice and undertake the purification and rituals needed under Four Tooth's guidance. The shaman binds the wolf spirit into the fetish and dedicates it to Thorgeld, thus the spirit counts against Thorgeld's limit and not the Shaman's. Thorgeld's player then rolls the spirit's characteristics. It turns out to have a POW of 8 with the INT and CHA of an average wolf.*

An adventurer may 'upgrade' the spirit in a fetish to a more powerful spirit of the same type by paying the difference in Improvement Rolls. For example an adventurer with a fetish containing an Intensity 2 Nature spirit can upgrade it to an Intensity 3 Nature Spirit by paying 1 Improvement Roll. They can also replace the spirit with the same type of spirit of the same Intensity if they wish and they can persuade a shaman.

Remember shamans are not magic item factories. Each shaman is a combination of priest, doctor, teacher, lawyer, undertaker and spiritual border guard for their community. Most of their time is taken up with mundane affairs and they have very little time for the extensive work required for creating fetishes. Most community members may gain a fetish as an adulthood ritual and maybe at one other rite-de-passage. Shamans have more important things to do than provide magic items for wandering adventurers.

## Using fetishes

A bound spirit must be *released* from its fetish in order to use its ability. To release the spirit the magician simply spends a single Combat Action: this does not

# Shamanism for Fun and Prophets

cost any Magic Points and automatically succeeds without any skill test required. *Commanding* a released spirit is more difficult. The spirit magician must use a *free action*, spend one 1 Magic Point and succeed at a Spirit Binding skill test in order to make a successful *Spirit Command Test*. The Magic Point is spent regardless of whether or not the Spirit Binding skill roll is a success. A free action is an action that can be performed at the same time as a regular Combat Action. Generally, one free action can be performed per Combat Action. Therefore a spirit magician can spend 1 Combat Action to release the spirit and, as part of the same action, try to Command the spirit. This is how a spirit magician normally attempts to control their spirits because a spirit released from a fetish without being commanded can act as it sees fit until it is brought under control. If the spirit is a hostile one, such as a curse spirit, it may take the chance to immediately attack the owner of the fetish.

A critical success when trying to Command a spirit means the attempt costs no Magic Points. A failed attempt to Command the spirit means that the spirit magician must wait until their next Combat Action to try again. While a spirit is under the owner's control it will perform its orders to the best of its abilities but if the owner wishes it to perform a new action, he will have to make a new Spirit Command Test. There is always the possibility of losing control of a spirit and the more powerful a spirit is, the more dangerous it is likely to be if the owner loses control.

Commanding a spirit currently under its owner's control to return to its fetish automatically succeeds and does not cost any Magic Points; this is an effect of the binding ritual. If however the owner *does not have control of the spirit* he will have to make a successful Spirit Command Test to order the spirit back into its fetish. Given the potential risk of uncontrolled spirits it is no surprise shamans will only provide their followers with friendly, easy to control spirits.

A fetish created by a spirit magician can only be used with the Spirit Binding skill. Should someone come into possession of a fetish but not have the Spirit Binding skill then they will not be able to use the fetish. However he could take the risk of breaking the fetish and hoping that the spirit will be grateful. As an optional rule it is possible to release a spirit from a fetish by spending 1 Magic Point. This does not naturally give any control over the spirit but fans of Sinbad tales may see ways to utilise this rule creatively. The supplement *Spellcom* also presents some options for enchantments that hold spirits which can be used alongside these rules in your game.

A fetish holding a spirit will take on some of the spirit's essence over time. So a bear tooth holding a bear spirit may seem dozy in winter or take on bearish odour. Fetishes holding curse or sickness spirits may emit a miasma inducing minor symptoms in the holder, making such fetishes extremely unpleasant. On the other hand, a stone holding a Salamander Spirit will be warm to the touch, which may occasionally be useful.

Breaking a fetish immediately frees the spirit it contains and allows it to return to the spirit plane. A freed spirit may attempt to flee back to the spirit plane or, if hostile, possibly attempt to attack the owner who imprisoned it. Malicious shamans sometimes trap places with easily broken fetishes containing dangerous spirits. Disease masters in Glorantha have been known to throw rotting logs binding disease spirits into wells or lakes and let nature take its course.

The visual effects of using a fetish will vary depending on the setting. In a pseudo-historical setting the spirit's effects would be invisible to the naked eye. In fantasy setting the magician might take on certain visual cues or the shadow might change. In an epic fantasy campaign perhaps the snarling figure of a wolf might surround the magician, seeming to lash out at enemies. Your Fetish Will Vary.

## Thorgeld's saga

*Realising he risks losing the trail of the foreigner responsible for the death of his family, Thorgeld holds his fetish to the air and calls on the aid of the spirit. As part of the Combat Action he spends 1 Magic Point and attempts to use his Spirit Binding skill of 32%. The spirit is released but the skill roll fails. Thorgeld's player marks off 1 Magic Point and Thorgeld realises he has not managed to control the spirit. He has not used his Spirit Walking skill so he cannot see the spirit but at least it does not seem to be attacking him. Unsure what to do, he spends another Combat Action trying to control it, deducts another Magic Point and fails his Spirit Binding again. Realising this may not end well, Thorgeld's player states that he will 'take 10 times as long as normal' in order to get +60% to his skill (RuneQuest II Rulebook p31). Normally it takes 1 Free Action to make the roll but as an adventurer can only take one Free Action per Combat Action, it takes Thorgeld 10 Combat Actions worth of concentration. Closing his eyes, he contemplates the lessons Four Tooth taught him for the best part of 30 seconds and makes his roll successfully. When he opens his eyes he realises he can almost taste the scent of his quarry. The hunt is resumed! As he runs off he does not notice the nearby lake reflects the image of a wolf rather than his own body.*

## Shamans and spirits

The previous section looked at how to gain and use a fetish provided by a shaman. This section examines how a shaman can gain spirits by journeying to the spirit plane and binding spirits to service. Using Intensity as a measure of a spirit's power, the table below shows what the shaman's required minimum skill in spirit binding along with the cost in Improvement Rolls to bind a spirit.



### Spirit Hunting Table

Intensity	Spirit Binding Skill minimum requirement	IRs
1	61%	1
2	81%	2
3	121%	3
4	141%	4

For friendly spirits, the minimum skill requirement is reduced by 20%. In addition, a shaman may pay 1 additional Improvement Roll for friendly or neutral spirits in order to reduce the minimum spirit binding skill requirement by another 20%. So, a shaman spending 4 Improvement Rolls and approaching a friendly spirit of Intensity 3 needs a minimum spirit binding skill of 81% rather than the usual 121%. These figures are based on shamans acquiring spirits during Down Time and represent a minimum of risk and maximum guarantee of success. It takes 1D6 days

of Down Time to find and bind a friendly spirit, 2D6 days to find a neutral spirit and 2D6+6 days of careful planning to safely find a hostile spirit that can be bound.

The Spirit Binding Skill requirement to find a spirit on the spirit plane and defeat it in spirit combat is not the same as the requirement needed to control a spirit already bound into a fetish. A spirit magician with a Spirit Binding skill of 40% is able to control a bound spirit of up to POW 12. However that same spirit will probably have a spectral combat skill of 60% (POW\*5%) and would be likely to defeat the magician if he attacked it in spirit combat. It takes a higher skill to find and bind a spirit than it does to merely control one already bound in a fetish.

Of course players can have their shaman characters undertake quests to find spirits during play sessions. In this case there is no

Improvement Roll cost involved and they can tackle more dangerous spirits with help from allies. Such sessions are full of roleplaying opportunities.

### The Shaman's Fetch

Not every Shamanic tradition features fetches and those that do vary in the nature of the fetch. In some traditions the fetch is the awakened "other half" of the shaman. In this case the fetch and shaman are two sides of the same soul with the fetch perceiving the Spirit Plane while the shaman exists on the mundane plane. In other traditions the fetch is a spirit (often an animal guide) who is drawn to the shaman to become their spiritual partner. In both cases the prospective shaman must undertake a successful **Vision Quest** in order to gain the fetch. As the *RuneQuest II* Rulebook notes (page 139) this is a dangerous ritual, and it may cripple or kill the shaman if he fails to complete it successfully.

The precise abilities of a fetch vary widely between traditions. The *RuneQuest II* Rulebook (pages 144-45) provides a list of the most common abilities but many more exist. In cases where the fetch is the shaman's other half the fetch often provides the shaman with the ability to shapechange (see *Vikings for RuneQuest II* as an example). If the fetch is an animal guide then the shaman may gain the ability to communicate with such animals, control them or gain traits of the animal; this is commonly the case with the animal nomad shamans in Glorantha.

A fetch is never bound into a fetish. In some cases a shaman may create an item referred to as a fetish, which is used to focus their relationship with their fetch but this is generally a matter of tradition and does not usually have a game effect.

*Spellcom* also introduces the notion of concerts and states that it is possible for a shaman and their fetch to form a concert. This is potentially a huge advantage and Games Masters will have to decide whether concerts exist in their campaign and how easy it is to find a teacher for the



# Shamanism for Fun and Prophets

Concert skill. By default it is rare skill and it is recommended you do not introduce it into a game until you feel comfortable with spirit magic.

## Spirit Allies

Over time a shaman gradually makes contact with many spirits. Rather than binding them all to service, most Shamans attempt to strike bargains; they provide something the spirit wants and the spirit undertakes some service. In game terms, such spirits are effectively *contacts* and act as non player characters. Some spirits are willing to enter into a more formal arrangement by providing the Shaman with their *name*, becoming an *ally* of the shaman. In response the Shaman agrees to undertake some sort of repeating task or to uphold a geas or compulsion. On the most abstract level assume the task will cost the shaman one Improvement Roll per year to represent the service or inconvenience.

Summoning a spirit contact or ally requires the shaman to make a Spirit Walking skill test and spend 1 Magic Point; this takes a single Combat Action and the Magic Point is spent even if the skill test fails. It will usually take 1D6 minutes before the spirit arrives. If the spirit is a contact then the shaman must succeed at the Spirit Walking skill test or else the spirit does not appear. If it is an ally it will appear regardless of the skill result unless the Shaman fumbles. In either case, if the skill test is a critical success the spirit will appear at the end of the Combat Round.

Some allies may be willing to undertake tasks for the magician or even fight for him by discorporating an enemy but this should be a relationship that unfolds over time in play. Most spirits are no more capable of interacting with the mundane world than mortals are capable of interacting with the spirit world. A shaman can however use their Spirit Walking skill to summon a consenting spirit to the mundane world. A High Shaman can use their Spirit Walking skill to forcibly drag a spirit to the mundane plane if he overcomes the spirit's Persistence.

## Spirit Powers

There are four ways in which a spirit magician can use a spirit's powers. The simplest and safest way is the **augmentation** provided by nature and guardian spirits. The spirit gives the magician a benefit by impressing itself upon the magician's soul and is easily returned to a fetish. Elemental spirits however require **embodiment**, a harder and more demanding act. A weak magician who incautiously embodies an elemental spirit risks being consumed by it. Finally, ancestor spirits **possess** the magician, taking complete control. Should an ancestor not wish to depart there is little the unfortunate magician can do. Finally some spirits such as curse and sickness spirits are **freed** to attack a victim. The danger in this act is that if the magician is weak the spirit may turn on him instead.

## Ancestor Spirits

Unlike the other spirits which are generally bound for their abilities, ancestors are venerated by spirit magicians and their aid is requested. If the ancestor agrees to aid it possesses the spirit magician's body. As the spirit magician's body is the link to the mundane plane no fetish is required, instead there must be a blood link between the host and the ancestor. The ancestor may agree to inhabit the body of a willing third party provided a blood link exists.

Some ancestors are prepared to temporarily inhabit an item of great significance to the ancestor in order to be manifested for some purpose. The item might be an altar, family sword, a crown or even a significant place such as a tree in a secret grove. The ancestor will voluntarily enter the item as if it were a fetish and wait to be released when it will perform one agreed upon service. Being bound in this way is extremely unpleasant so the expectation is that this will only last a few hours. Any longer and the spirit may extract penance at the first possibility. Regardless of whether the ancestor is inhabiting a body or object it counts against the number of spirits able to be controlled by a spirit magician.

Although ancestor spirits of Intensity 1 exist they tend to be too weak and too little known to be venerated outside of maybe a small family shrine. All venerable ancestors tend to be Intensity 2 or greater and were notable heroes in their time. Since they died, the veneration they have received is likely to have further enhanced their POW. The *RuneQuest II* rulebook gives examples for an Intensity 2 ancestral spirit so we will present a simple system for designing ancestor spirits of any Intensity.

All ancestor spirits know the Lore and Culture skills of their people and region at 90% plus their POW. They also know Persistence at POWx4%, and Spectral Combat at POWx5%. In addition, for each level of Intensity an ancestor spirit can choose one additional skill which it knows at 90% plus its POW and pick twice from the following list:

- another skill at 90% plus POW;
- Discorporate skill at POW\*5%;
- one Heroic ability;
- one Common Magic spell at the maximum Magnitude it can memorise (as well as Common Magic skill at 90% plus POW if it is not already known);
- has a fetch. (The ancestor is a shaman. The Fetch's characteristics are equal to the ancestor's +1D6-1D6. For example an ancestor with a POW of 20 has a fetch with a POW of 20-1D6+1D6.)
- has a spirit ally of one less Intensity than the ancestor which will appear within 1D3 Combat Rounds of being summoned by the ancestor through use of the Spirit Walking Skill. These allies will not themselves usually bring allies. That said, ancestors of Intensity 6 or greater may control a whole army of spirits.

These abilities will cover most options but, of course, players and Games Masters should feel free to be as creative as they want in designing ancestor spirits to fit the needs of their campaign. Remember as well that the most common interaction with ancestors is likely to be the use of Spirit

Walking to talk with them or request aid other than possession. Over the period of a campaign, some ancestors may become recurring non player characters, with their own agendas.

### Thorgeld's saga

*Realising that his quest to find the seven fingered man will founder unless he can find some way to break into a heavily guarded tower he decides to journey to his clan's holiest ground to quest for inspiration. The sacred pool provides +40% to his Spirit Walking skill and Thorgeld's player asks if the Games Master if he can find an ancestor who can help. The Games Master says that if he makes his Spirit Walking test he can find Uncle Spider, an ancestor who can find his way into any building (and does not mention that he just invented Uncle Spider on the spot). Uncle Spider is an Intensity 2 POW 14 spirit knowing Athletics 104%, Perception 104%, Stealth 104%, the spells Bandit's Cloak and Coordination at Magnitude 5 and the heroic ability Wall Leaping. Thorgeld's Spirit Binding is still only 51% so he would struggle to prove his worthiness so the GM Games Master asks Thorgeld's player to make a Culture roll for his clan. When he succeeds, he tells him that Uncle Spider loves gem stones and witchy bugs. Bringing some of both will provide +20% to his Spirit Binding. It still will not be easy but Thorgeld's player decides to give it a go.*

Pavis Rises uses **ancestral intensity** to measure the power of ancestor spirits which reflects the fact the longer an ancestor has been venerated, the more powerful it becomes. The two systems are broadly similar as the four bands of ancestral intensity are roughly equivalent to spirits of Intensity one through four.

### Curse, Sickness and Bane spirits

Although these spirits can be bound for later use they are never used to augment the spirit magician, rather they are sent

against an enemy. They are hostile to all traditions save those perverse enough to revere them. The Intensity of Curse & Sickness spirits measures the number and severity of the conditions they can inflict on a target once they have possessed the victim. Each condition requires one or more points of Intensity, so an Intensity 2 Curse spirit can inflict two Intensity one conditions or one Intensity two condition. Diseases tend to be a package of conditions so you can assess the Intensity of the Disease spirit carrying a particular disease by looking at the conditions it causes.

- Intensity 1: Blindness, Confusion, Contagious, Deafness, Dumbness, Exhaustion, Fever, Hallucination, Maiming, Mania, Nausea, Unconsciousness.
- Intensity 2: Agony, Bleeding, Paralysis, Sapping.
- Intensity 3: Asphyxiation, Death.

See *RuneQuest II* (page 56) for a description of the effects of each condition. Unlike 'normal' diseases, conditions caused by spirits do not recover naturally even with application of healing skills. Some Higher Magic spells may work for a while if their Magnitude is greater than the spirit's Intensity. Thus a Divine Spell to cure blindness of higher Magnitude than the possessing spirit's Intensity will work but unless the spirit is driven out, the effects will gradually return.

### Elemental Spirits

The differences between the elementals summoned by priests and wizards and the elemental spirits bound by Shamans are subtle but significant. An elemental is summoned to the mundane plane and embodied within the appropriate source. A shaman is capable of **embodying** an elemental spirit, which means that shaman's body itself becomes the elemental. While elementals are dumb fragments of the elemental rune from which they derive, elemental spirits of high POW are often intelligent and self-willed. As with any spirit, the potency of the embodied elemental spirit depends on its Intensity.

A Spirit Magician can bind an elemental spirit into a fetish in the normal manner but the fetish must be chosen carefully for even while bound some of the elemental spirit's power is manifested. A Salamander spirit must be bound into a fetish capable of withstanding heat while an Undine spirit's fetish will become damp and clammy.

When the spirit magician releases an elemental spirit from a fetish it does not need any source material but while uncontrolled it will gravitate to the nearest source of its element within range of the binding object. By itself it is just a spirit and has no significant effect on the mundane plane. The spirit's power does not truly manifest until the spirit magic controls and *embodies* it through use of the Spirit Binding Skill. As with any control attempt, the spirit magician must succeed at the skill and spend 1 Magic Point as a Free Action. If the spirit magician succeeds, their body itself becomes the elemental. A spirit magician embodying a sylph transforms into a vortex of buffeting winds while a one embodying a gnome will sink into the ground as if they were some type of earthen whirlpool.

While embodying an elemental spirit, the spirit magician cannot turn off or dampen the effects. Furthermore, returning the elemental spirit to the fetish is far more difficult than for other spirits as the magician must make a successful Command Roll in order to successfully force the spirit back into the fetish. Finally, while in his elemental form, the spirit magician is vulnerable to opposing elements just as an elemental is. For all these reasons, embodying a powerful elemental spirit is never lightly undertaken.

A spirit magician embodying an elemental spirit essentially becomes an elemental of size based on the spirit's Intensity as outlined on the table on the next page.

# Shamanism for Fun and Prophets

## Elemental Spirit Size Table

Spirit Intensity	Elemental Size
1	1 cubic metre
2	3 cubic metres
3	6 cubic metres
4	10 cubic metres
5	15 cubic metres
+1	+6, +7 and so on cubic metres

### [[[Box text]]]

This table produces more powerful elemental spirits than the *RuneQuest II* rulebook (page 144). This is a deliberate change as there were some inconsistencies between elementals and elemental spirits. Games Masters wishing weaker spirits should stick to giving spirits 1 cubic metre per point of Intensity.

### [[[End text box]]]

The magician's STR, DEX and Hit Points are replaced by the spirit's values (which are rolled as normal for an elemental of its SIZ when first encountered) and he gains all the abilities (including its weaknesses) of the elemental. When the elemental spirit is returned to the fetish, any damage done to the magician while embodying the spirit is divided evenly between all his Hit Locations (rounding up as usual). For example if a human took 23 points of damage while in elemental form then he would take 4 points of damage to each of his 7 locations once he returned to human form.

Shamans forming concerts to control huge elemental spirits face particular problems. Although a concert with 300% in Spirit Binding could theoretically control a bound elemental spirit of 90 POW the leader of the concert would have to embody an elemental of some 120 cubic metres. Remember that all concert members need to be within a few metres of each other, which means they risk being incinerated, drowned or otherwise affected due to the sheer scale of the elemental. Furthermore, if the concert breaks down as well as the potential backlash the shaman embodying the elemental spirit will no longer be able to control it.

Although embodying an elemental spirit can be extremely impressive it also opens the magician up to new problems. Like an elemental, a magician embodying an elemental spirit will take double damage from the opposing element and can be neutralized by an opposing elemental of the same size or bigger in cubic metres. Reducing the magician to 0 Hit Points while embodying the elemental spirit instantly breaks the fetish and frees the spirit, possibly also killing the magician in the process. Spells able to dismiss elementals (such as the divine spell Dismiss Elemental or the sorcery spell Banish) will free the elemental and destroy the fetish if the effect is great enough to affect an elemental of the appropriate size or POW.

A common optional rule is to allow elementals to mutually annihilate each other. Generally Fire and water cancel each other out while Earth and Air also oppose each other. Different settings have different elemental cosmologies, for example Glorantha is unusual in having Darkness as an element. Opposed elementals can annihilate each other by inflicting damage equal to their Hit Points directly to each other. Alternately any attacks launched by an elemental inflict double damage to their opposed element. For example, a sylph with 21 Hit Points is grabbed by a gnome with 32 Hit Points. The sylph takes 32 Hit Points damage and is dispersed while the gnome suffers 21 Hit Points damage; it has been severely knocked about by the sylph but still standing.

## Nature Spirits

These spirits *augment* the spirit magician's abilities exactly as described. It is possible to augment Combat Actions but that requires a minimum Intensity of 2, giving +1 Combat Action per point of Intensity after the first (so an Intensity 3 spirit gives +2 Combat Actions). Magicians cannot command their spirits to augment others' abilities: it is the bond between magician and spirit that allows the augmentation.

When designing Nature and Guardian spirits for non player characters there is no need to determine all its skills and

characteristics in advance as they can always be figured out on the fly. Usually it is enough to write something like: Armour Points +2 (Bear spirit, Intensity 2, POW 14).

Finally, nature spirits do not have to be bound to be useful. Higher Intensity spirits will be fully sapient and can be negotiated with to undertake tasks, gather information or come to the spirit magician's aid.

## Spirit Combat

Spirit combat occurs only on the spirit plane and requires both participants to be there. High Shamans can disincorporate corporeal beings through spending one Magic Point and pitting their Spirit Walking skill against the target's Persistence as a Combat Action. The target has to be within range of the skill (the Shaman's POW in metres). Spirits using the Disincorporate skill likewise must spend one Magic Point and a Combat Action to disincorporate a corporeal being whose soul they can perceive and who is within their POW in



metres on the spirit plane. Naturally they can keep trying for as long as they have Magic Points but if the target successfully resists with a critical then it is reasonable to assume the target is immune to being disincorporated by that particular shaman or spirit for at least a week. As disincorporation is an extremely powerful ability then one option is to increase the cost for multiple attempts against the same person by one Magic Point each time. So the first attempt at disincorporation costs 1 Magic Point, the second costs two, the third costs three and so on. This will prevent spirits from simply trying over and over again until they succeed.

Once both participants are on the spirit plane Spirit Combat may continue until one side has been reduced to zero Magic Points. At that point the winner may perform various actions as listed in the *RuneQuest II* Rulebook (page 142). The winner does not have to take advantage of the loser and it is important to remember that spirit combat can represent any kind of contest from a battle of wits to an artistic performance; it does not always have to be a grim battle to the end. The same mechanic is used but how it plays out depends on the beings involved.

### Spirit Combat and bound spirits

Spirit combat happens on the spirit plane and a fetish (or other binding object) binds a spirit to the mundane plane so it follows logically that a spirit bound in a fetish cannot be commanded to attack an opponent in the spirit plane. A spirit magician wishing to use a curse, sickness or even bane spirit this way must therefore free the spirit by breaking the fetish. Of course, breaking the fetish frees the spirit from the magician's control so there is no obligation for the spirit to do what the magician wants. Indeed there is now nothing stopping the spirit from turning on the person who freed it. Generally the procedure is that the magician points the fetish at the victim and promises the spirit freedom if it attacks the target. Usually it will agree because its nature is to attack and possess corporeal beings and also because usually the magician who bound it is more

powerful than the spirit. If, however, the owner is weaker than the spirit the spirit is completely free to attack its owner instead. This is yet another reason shamans are reluctant to provide these types of spirits to worshippers in their tradition.

In game terms, assume that a spirit with a lower POW than the magician will attack the intended target. Optionally, call for a Spirit Binding roll opposed by the spirit's Spectral Combat Skill. If the magician fails to win, the spirit simply departs. If the magician fumbles, or if he fails while the spirit succeeds and the spirit is of greater POW than the magician, it will turn on him instead.

Generally a spirit magician does not bind an aggressive spirit like a curse spirit to a fetish as the risks are high and the fetish is unpleasant to handle. Instead, if the magician wishes to send such a spirit against an enemy the usual procedure is to journey to the spirit plane and defeat the appropriate spirit; once defeated the shaman can compel the spirit to one service. A possession or part of the target is burnt or otherwise consumed in order to identify the target. Once the spirit has regained its Magic Points it will journey to the target and attack it. Alternately the shaman may command the defeated spirit to perform one service in the future. Such a spirit will act like a spirit contact and come within 1d6 minutes of a successful Spirit Walking skill test to attack an opponent.

The most fearsome shamans are those from traditions with friendly curse and sickness spirits. Such spirits may become allies and willingly attack victims nominated by the shaman. Once the victim is dead, the ally will return to the shaman to beg for more victims.

If spirit combat happens on the spirit plane, what does it look like back on the mundane plane? The answer to that depends on the victim's Spirit Walking skill. Someone with no ability in the skill has no way of controlling their physical body while they are on the spirit plane so when they are attacked they might writhe around and show symptoms of the attack. Someone

being attacked by a sickness spirit might break out in boils and cold sweats or might vomit endlessly depending on the conditions they are fighting against. Someone who has training in Spirit Walking may be able to mostly control their body showing just small signs of stress. A shaman with a Fetch will be able to sit serenely, their body undisturbed while on the spirit plane the struggle ensues.

In campaigns with a lot of spirit combat various questions come up about how exactly fights occur and whether it is possible for one side to flee. Generally speaking, if a spirit magician is looking for a spirit to bind he must hunt the spirit, sneaking close enough to it to be able to attack it. Spirit walking corporeal beings as well as natural spirits can attack anyone within their POW in metres. While adjacent the combat looks like two enemies exchanging blows while enemies distant from each other appear to aim missiles or simply leap at each other. Like normal combat, spirit combat can generate Combat Manoeuvres although many will be effectively meaningless. The Change Range manoeuvre (or action) can be used to disengage and flee. If the fleeing spirit has a higher POW than the other spirit then once it has successfully performed a Range Change it can flee automatically. If the other spirit has a higher POW then it will be able to hunt down the fleeing spirit, though that might take some time. As a rule of thumb spirits and spirit walking mortals travel at a speed equal to their POW on the spirit plane. Unfortunates on the spirit plane without any kind of spirit walking skill are virtually trapped as they can move but can not follow a direction so they tend to drift aimlessly. Such characters trying to defend themselves in spirit combat through using half their Persistence skill (*RuneQuest II* page 142) are also unable to gain Combat Manoeuvres.

Characters who have Dedicated a large amount of their POW can be very vulnerable to spirit combat. One option is to rule the cost to disincorporate a character with Dedicated POW is one Magic Point plus one Magic Point for each point of Dedicated POW of the target. A spirit wishing to

# Shamanism for Fun and Prophets

discorporate a character who has 4 points of Dedicated POW would have to spend 5 Magic Points to make the attempt. This represents the difficulty of transferring the Dedicated element of a person's soul to the spirit plane. Discorporating a character with a large amount of Dedicated POW may also draw the attention of spiritual guardians tasked to protect the faithful.

One of the primary tasks for shamans is to exorcise spirits possessing the faithful. The most common technique is to use Spirit Walking to find the spirit within its body. At this point a High Shaman can use their Spirit Walking skill to forcibly discorporate the spirit and then either he or his fetch can battle it on the spirit plane. More junior shamans will have to rely on their fetch to discorporate the spirit. In both cases it is usually the fetch that battles the spirit, leaving the shaman free to perform physical actions acting as a complementary skill for the fetch's combat skill. Usually this will be the use of the Healing skill but it may also include drumming, singing, dancing, burning of herbs to make the spirit drowsy and so on. That said, once the spirit has been discorporated it may attempt to flee if the shaman or his fetch clearly overmatches it so it is often up to the shaman as to whether he wishes to pursue it.

A spirit possessing a body is trapped on the mundane plane and therefore cannot regenerate Magic Points. This is why spirits tend to possess people who are already weakened and cannot adequately fight back because it minimises the risk of the spirit losing Magic Points. Like any predator, spirits tend not to attack healthy, dangerous victims. If you wish spirits to be able to regenerate Magic Points while possessing a host then allow them to leech off the host's life force and regenerate Magic Points at a slower than normal rate, such as 1 Magic Point per 10 hours. A person with all of their POW dedicated to another entity cannot be leeches in this way.

## Spirits & Society

In societies where Spirit Magic is the main form of spirituality, spirits and fetishes are ever-present and a shaman fulfils the same role as a priest. It can be easy to forget that spirits are not just "power ups" or resources to be used, unless of course you are a God Learner. The spirits are not tools, however, they are part of the society. Most people will have a shrine to revered ancestors, a fetish holding a totem spirit and will take part in ceremonies of remembrance and revitalisation. In general, animists regard spirits in one of three ways.

- they *revere* their honoured ancestors and totem spirits;
- they *respect* the power of the spirits of the world around them;
- and they *fear* the malevolent spirits of their enemies.

Player characters who walk the spirit plane, binding spirits against their will and generally treating them as weapons and armour will soon gain a poor reputation both in the mundane world and on the spirit plane.

Most members of the society will know enough Spirit Walking to see the spirits around them when they meditate and enough Spirit Binding to use their fetishes properly provided they take time. It is highly unlikely they will ever engage in a life and death battle on the spirit plane (that is what the shaman is for) so for them the Binding skill represents the proper means of address, the proper visualisation and proper state of mind needed to invoke the power of the spirit within the Fetish.

The shaman is the bridge between the mortal world and the spirit world. He lives a life in two worlds and with the shaman's help, the members of the tribe can pass through to the spirit world to converse with those who have gone before. Naturally a powerful shaman tends to attract attention on the spirit plane. When viewed on the spirit plane, the shaman's soul echo is often at the centre of many spirits eager for attention. This can be highly distracting and may attract the attention of predators

but a powerful shaman should have built a strong enough web of allies that most predators would rather hunt less powerful prey. Player character shamans, however, should expect occasional very unpleasant surprises....

## Trapped Spirits

Some spirits occasionally get accidentally bound to the mundane plane and become *Haunts*. The spirits of the dead who did not receive the proper funeral rites or who have died violently may be incapable of leaving the mundane plane. Other mortals may have been cursed or may have died before an important vow was completed or died full of hatred and rage and become bound to the mundane world. Such spirits may be bound to the bones of their corpse, a tree from which they were hung or maybe a cliff from which they jumped to commit suicide. By definition Haunts are trapped on the mundane plane and cannot discorporate victims in an attempt to possess them. In fact most such spirits can do little but bewail their fate. Some, though, may have acquired certain powers. The list should be limited only by your creativity but some include.

- Telekinesis: the spirit has a STR equal to its Intensity, which it can use to move items around.
- Miasma: the spirit can induce feelings of dread and despair, maybe even fear and terror. The Magnitude of the effect depends on the spirit's Intensity. An Intensity 4 Haunt may be able to induce a level of Fear that is potentially lethal.
- Wraith form: the spirit is able to physically damage corporeal beings. The spirit can physically attack with a skill equal to its POW\*3% doing Hit Point damage equal to its usual Spirit Damage ignoring all physical armour. For example a spirit with a POW of 18 usually has a spectral combat skill of 90% meaning that it normally does 1D10 damage to Magic Points. When attacking physically it attacks at a skill of 54% and does 1D10 damage to Hit Points in a location ignoring all physical armour. Magical

armour such as Protection still works however.

- Glamour: the spirit can engender illusions, which are experienced by all within a range of the spirit's POW in metres of the item the spirit. This glamour is a mental illusion that works in a similar way to the sorcery spell Phantom (Sense). See the *RuneQuest II* Rulebook page 134.
- Cast magic. Becoming a Haunt usually severs the spirit from any form of higher magic but some may retain the ability to cast Common Magic. An awful lot of Haunts consist of spirits casting magic such as Befuddle, Disruption, Demoralise, Fanaticism and so on.

Like bound spirits, Haunts cannot regenerate Magic Points normally but they are able to *tap* Magic Points from the natural world around them, a process that inevitably creates an unsettling area shunned by animals and where the plants are stunted and withered. A Haunt can tap the POW of any animal or plant with lower POW than the Haunt's Intensity to provide it with Magic Points up to the limit of its normal POW. Generally most Haunts must manifest in order to use any of their abilities. While a Haunt is manifested it becomes vulnerable to magical damage, however destroying it with damage simply drives it back to its binding until it has regained Magic Points through tapping its surroundings.

Dealing with a Haunt is not easy. Spirit Walking or magical senses may reveal the location of the binding object. Sometimes destroying the binding object is enough to release the Haunt but usually any attempt to release the Haunt requires determining why the spirit became bound in the first place and undoing the effects.

The supplement *Necromantic Arts* provides several additional options that can be used for Haunts. It is recommended, however, that you do not allow spirits trapped on the mundane plane to attempt to possess corporeal beings.



### Fighting Wraiths

A manifested Wraith Spirit has only one hit location and it has a number of Hit Points equal to its POW. Reducing its Hit Points to zero will temporarily drive the Wraith back to its binding for 24 hours, after which its Hit Points will be fully regenerated. The weapon the spirit uses depends on its Intensity. Each point of Intensity counts as one rank of Size and Reach so an Intensity 3 spirit could use a spectral weapon with a Size of Large and Reach of Medium. As the spirit is intangible parrying the attack has no effect normally but if a weapon is affected

by some form of weapon enhancing magic then it can usually block 1 size equivalent for each point of Magnitude. As with any kind of combat both participants can generate Combat Manoeuvres where they are appropriate; being impaled by a spectral dagger is every bit as nasty as being impaled by a real one.

With that cheery thought in mind, read the second part of this article next month for a bestiary of spirits, quests and traditions.

# The Clock's Ticking

By John R White

A short investigation for a patrol of Judges.

## Control

++Item++  
++Condition RED++  
++Terrorist Alert++

Two suspects reported by local peeper unit as entering construction workers site on Graham Norton cul-du-sac. One identified by PSU as Kevin Smith aka 'Red Kev'. Site Security droid not responding. Units respond.

The judges will be at the location in minutes. Smith's details can be requested for transfer to their bike screens.

## Kevin 'Red Kev' Smith Age 33

Ten separate convictions for public order offences and possession and distribution of proscribed literature. Several known associates are Democratic activists now serving prison sentences.

## The Compound

The area is a reclamation site and comprises of an old block's foundations that are being thoroughly cleared and inspected prior to a rebuilding project.

The locking units holding the fence panels appear intact. A large Industrial-mek stands unmoving; another droid in the compound near the fence remains inert. It is a security bot with traces of smoke coming out of its top casing. Judges must try to climb over a 3m tall mesh or open one of the security level 2 locks holding the fence panels closed. The work hut is still locked and the droid is destroyed. Examining the droid shows a small hollow charge explosive charge has destroyed its computer brain.

Judges patrolling around the site making an Investigate 4+ roll should locate an area surrounded by rubble walls and cleared of debris exposing a manhole cover. The locking mechanism seems open and

shorted out. If the judges fail an Investigate roll, Control can be requested to flag up details of subterranean civic features for the location which should pinpoint the entry hole. The cover is over an old maintenance shaft for sewer inspectors. A couple of sets of footprints are discernable. Also a couple of lifting hooks are nearby and removing the cover shows a set of inset rungs leading down a shaft from which a foul smell arises.

## Going Underground

After descending 50 metres, the Judges will find that some luminous dots of yellow aerosol paint have been used to mark a trail through the maze of stairs, walkways and ramps. It is pitch black, none of the tunnel's lighting works.

A foul mess stirs below and alongside them as stagnant water and vile flotsam is stirred by distant currents from other channels. The judges proceed for half a kilometre till they encounter a door hatch. This has clearly had the lock destroyed by a small explosion. An Electronics 6+ roll determines an alarm was deactivated first. On the other side the maze of sewers and storm drains continues.

As the judges proceed onwards roll Recon 6+. If a judge makes it they fleetingly see a bestial scowling green face eerily illuminated some 10 metres above them and to their right. If the roll was 8+ they heard whispers and giggles and thought they detected other figures. This is Grindfang and his friends passing opposite

an open doorway who all failed to notice the judges. See 'The Red Blades' below.

By this stage of the judges journey making any brief communication with Control will require a Comms roll of 10+. The gurgling and lapping of the turgid waters is occasionally interspersed with oddly muffled echoes.

## Trail-Blazers for Democracy

Ahead of the judges are two men on a deadly mission. Both have donned bright orange helmets and waterproof overalls. Smith is currently armed with a spit carbine and a spray can. He has taped a flashlight to his gun and both helmets also have a torch attached. He accompanies Alec Lloyd Moore, a Democrat terrorist specializing in explosives. Moore has already picked or blown apart several locks tonight and also disabled the security droid with a magnon pulsar before permanently destroying it with a small bomb. He has kept his largest bomb for his next grand gesture against the Justice Department. Moore plans to locate an important foundation pillar, the destruction of which will bring about the spectacular demolition of one of the Justice Department's storage depots.

## 'Say Good Night, not Good Day'

The terrorists have located the pillar they are seeking. It sprouts out of a huge support block that forms a small circular island in the middle of a T-junction of







sewer channel. The pair then waded out to the island, the foul water coming up to their chests. They clamber onto the narrow walk way formed by the concrete support block standing a metre above the water level. Moore tapes up a spare torch to shine over the intended location where he will place his bomb and puts his magnon pulsar carbine on the ledge beside him. However, unknown to Moore, he is in the hunting territory of 'Malicioso', a solitary sewer-gator.

Moore is priming the bomb when he suddenly senses something. As he turns he is attacked by Malicioso, whose head materializes out of the stygian water and tears off Moore's hand and forearm along with the bomb he was holding. The reptile gulps down the morsel as it circles away and approaches from another angle. At this point the bomb is lodged firmly in the 'gator's digestive tract and the audio setting is knocked to the maximum. A loud ticking sound reverberates through Malicioso, though rather than frighten him, it sends him temporarily berserk. Screaming futilely Moore is caught in the beast's jaws and is soon crushed and drowned.

Red Kev lets lose a salvo of shots to no effect in the darkness and it is not long before the gator's has dragged him below the surface of the water where he meets a similar fate to Moore.

## The Remains of the Day

Spasmodically, through the other noises of the tunnels, the judges will here snatches of screaming and gunfire. By the time they arrive at the pillar, Malicioso has gone. The mangled remains of a body in bright clothing tossed onto the walkway like a broken doll is easy to locate. Given time a positive ID can be made from his DNA. A Judge rolling Education 10+ might manage to recognise the disfigured features of the notorious democratic terrorist, Alan Lloyd Moore. A Life Sciences (Biology) roll of 6+ will deduce the wounds as coming from a sewer-gator's attacks. An Investigate roll of 4+ will identify the tattered remains of a folded map in a torn, blood drenched pocket. Examining the map and making a Geography (Mega City One) roll of 8+ will determine the storage depot on the city surface was the target.

A torch is taped to shine at the base of a huge metal pillar. A magnon pulsar shoulder- arm, its indicator showing it has two charges remaining, is on the ledge. The judges only get to spend a few minutes at the scene before excited cries echo across through the tunnels.

### Alec Lloyd Moore Age 42

Residence – Whereabouts unknown  
Political activist, with sympathies for proscribed pro-democracy groups. Moore is suspected of undertaking terrorist bombing against Justice Department locations. 2 Justice Personnel killed and 15 injured. Damage to property put at 13.4 million Credits. His bombs are improvised affairs always incorporating Brit-Cit clocks and a tartan patterned thermos flask.

## The 'Red Blades'

'The Red Blades' are a small group of hobbyists in their late teens and early twenties who are members of the Latex Equipped Player's Association (known as 'LEPAs' for short). Recently, whilst 'adventuring' in a ruined city site, they found a rusty door behind which was a set of stairs leading into the ground. Tonight they have decided to explore what lies beyond this tantalising portal.

After sharing a couple of mega-skunk cigarettes and building up their courage the dope happy LEPAs continue along their quest, forgetting to spray tag their route as they proceed. After travelling along a few passages, Marvax 'the Mighty' happens to notice a gap in a wall panel. Examining the panel the group find that it is loose and a City-Def ammo crate is on a ledge inside an alcove. Excitedly they open it to discover that it apparently contains nothing but sweets, though presumably ones with sugar content. They greedily eat their fill of what is a stash of an Uncle Ump's Umpty derivative and bottles of pills that are powerful hallucinogenic drugs. This cocktail produces a communal delusion that the Red Blades truly are adventures in a fantasy world and they interpret their surroundings accordingly. Generally the first person to describe what he thinks a person or object is will be believed by the others.

Proceeding onwards they enter into a sewer complex where they wander for 20 minutes getting bored until Grindfang fleetingly spots a sewer-gator. He imagines it is a dragon and tells his comrades. Enthused by the prospect of heroic battle and a fabulous horde they blunder through the ducts and tunnels trying to find their quarry. They hear the sound of conflict which excites them further and spurs them onwards.

# The Clock's Ticking

**Walter Hickey / 'Hakk the Slayer':** Str 7 (+0), Dex 8 (+0), End 6 (+0), Int 7 (+0), Edu 7 (+0), Soc 6 (+0)

**Desperation:** -8 (Normally 0)

**Skills:** Computer 1

**Weapons:** Latex sword with opaque blade and flexible green tinted LED strip in core.

**Armour:** Equivalent to pad armour: 4 points (against Melee attacks only)

**Equipment:** 10 metres of nylon rope, ten foot pole, cigarette papers, lighter.

Over his armour of synthi-leather, foam and ring pulls, Walter is wearing a green cape he has made from his mother's curtains (the floral pattern tends to spoil the image, though).

**Justin Snee / 'Marvax the Mighty':** Str 5(-1), Dex 7 (+0), End 6 (+0), Int 8 (+0), Edu 8 (+0), Soc 6 (+0)

**Desperation:** -8 (Normally 0)

**Skills:** Computer 1

**Weapon:** Latex staff. The staff has an LED set into its top operated by a button and which can shine through the latex.

**Equipment:** Backpack, Smoke bomb, bag of flour, can of Boing, spray paint can (red), grotpot

He wears a false beard, a wizard's pointed hat and grey robes.

**Mavis Toddle / 'Siren':** Str 5(-1), Dex 6 (+0), End 6 (+0), Int 7 (+0), Edu 6 (+0) Soc 6 (+0)

**Desperation:** -8 (Normally 0)

**Skills:** Computer 1

**Weapons:** Latex sword and a weak bow (would only do 1D6+1 damage if firing an arrow)

**Equipment:** Backpack, rape-alarm, grotpot

Mavis is wearing very little except thigh high boots, a skimpy t-shirt, miniskirt and a lot of goose bumps.

**Billie Prince / 'Prince William of Nanna':** Str 6 (+0), Dex 7 (+0), End 7 (+0), Int 7 (+0), Edu 7 (+0), Soc 8 (+0)

**Desperation:** -8 (Normally 0)

**Skills:** Computer 1

**Weapon:** Latex sword.

**Armour:** Set of fake plate armour equivalent to Sports Armour: 6 points (against Melee attacks only) and lightweight shield

**Equipment:** Back pack, grotpot

**Chico Fernandez / 'Grindfang the Nasty':** Str 7 (+0), Dex 6 (+0), End 8 (+0), Int 7 (+0), Edu 6 (+0), Soc 5 (-1)

**Desperation:** -8 (Normally 0)

**Skill:** Computer 1

**Weapons:** Latex spiked mace

**Armour:** Leathereen tunic and mock fur: 3 points (against Melee attacks only) and shield.

**Equipment:** Latex orc mask with an inbuilt infra red visor, green body paint on exposed skin. Canvas haversack with a torch inside.

In their chemically altered mind state the LEPAs receive a -1 on any roll connected with Intelligence or Education. The latex weapons cannot do any damage but will irritate a judge (or giant sewer-gator) when bouncing off their head!

## The Stomm Hits the Fan!

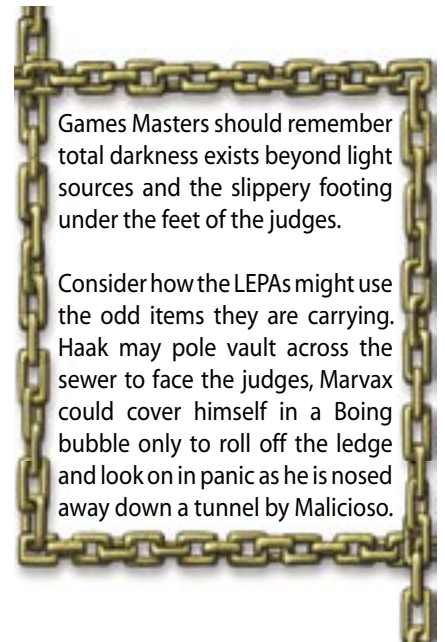
After the brief fight at the support pillar Malicioso starts to swim off to a nearby lair with the body of Red Kev, but after a few turns of his progress through the maze of waterways he suddenly receives a blow to his snout. The Red Blades on a nearby walkway have spotted the 'dragon' in the 'eldritch glow' from Hakk's sword and Marvax's staff. Siren has just loosed an arrow which has ricocheted off the monster's scales. Dropping the carcass he was lugging, Malicioso bellows his defiance and hurls himself at his tormentors.

The judges will be alerted to the confrontation and presumably try to follow the noises they hear. The only way to the conflict though is to wade through a section of the sewer flow leading under an overhang. Emerging into another junction they will spy the strange sight of the Red Blades on a ledge opposite about a metre above the water level. Malicioso has heard their arrival and has retired a short distance to gage the new threat. Possibly the Judges have just had time to see him snatch one of the LEPAs from the ledge if the Games Master wants to whittle them down!

The judges will be able to hear the ticking

sound carrying through the darkness. If a light source touches the abandoned corpse of Red Kev, this will be conspicuous in its bright overalls.

The Red Blades immediately recognise the dark, helmeted figures emerging from the tunnel entrance as pitiless guards of the Dark Lord and hurl insults and challenges at their sworn enemies as they prepare to fight them. Irritated beyond his natural caution, Malicioso decides to rid himself of all these noisy interlopers who have dared to challenge him. Battle is joined!



Games Masters should remember total darkness exists beyond light sources and the slippery footing under the feet of the judges.

Consider how the LEPAs might use the odd items they are carrying. Haak may pole vault across the sewer to face the judges, Marvax could cover himself in a Boing bubble only to roll off the ledge and look on in panic as he is nosed away down a tunnel by Malicioso.

**'Malicioso' Sewer Gator:** Str 18 (+4), Dex 10 (+1), End 16 (+3), Int 3 (-2)

**Skills:** Athletics (strength) 4, Melee (natural weapons) 3, Survival 3, Tactics 2

**Armour:** 4 points of white scales and hide

**Traits:** Blind

**Weapons:** Bite 2D6+6, Tail Lash 2D6-1

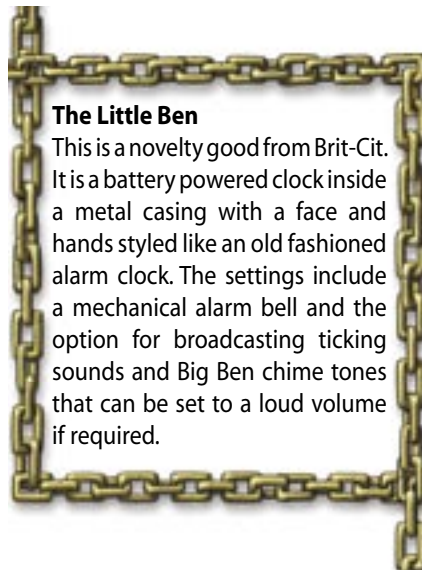
This huge bull gator is a cunning veteran who has survived for decades in the sewers and disused waterways of the Mega-City. He is an urban legend amongst some of the city bottom vagrants who call him 'Malicioso'. Normally he ambushes his prey and hides from groups of humans or sanitation droids. The loud noise resounding from his stomach however is making him confused and bad tempered enough to



take his anger out on any humans. He will still prefer to ambush, using the various tunnels and ducts he knows to swim into an attack from the blind side of prey.

The damaged bomb is in danger of being detonated under the following conditions~

- If a hit from a missile weapon penetrates armour and causes damage then the bomb will explode if a double was rolled to hit.
- A High-explosive hit dealing 6 points of damage to the gator will trigger the bomb.
- If burst or auto fire from a gun injures the sewer-gator the Games Master rolls 2D6, if the number is equal or under the number of rounds used against the sewer-gator the bomb explodes.
- If a magnon pulser beam hits an odd total to hit will detonate the bomb an even roll will destroy the timer and the audio function.
- The Games Master can decide if the creature suffers 1D6 rounds dying convulsions which might trigger the bomb in any case!



### The Little Ben

This is a novelty good from Brit-Cit. It is a battery powered clock inside a metal casing with a face and hands styled like an old fashioned alarm clock. The settings include a mechanical alarm bell and the option for broadcasting ticking sounds and Big Ben chime tones that can be set to a loud volume if required.

The exploding bomb will instantly kill the sewer-gator and acts as a Hi-Ex Pack (4D6/3D6/2D6 Blast Radius 12m)

## COUNTING THE COST

Presumably 'med and meat' will be required when the conflict ceases. Judges making a Med 4+ roll will realize that it would be a good idea to clean any wounds with med kits to avoid infection. The effects of the drugs the LEPAs are suffering will wear off

after another 1D3 hours for each individual after which they will be tired and complain of migraines. (Mavis Toddle will be suffering from hypothermia in a fraction of this time). As the last of the Red Blades are led off into captivity one of them, even if rousing from unconsciousness, turns to look for his or her comrades and asks "How much XP do we get for all of that?"

## Expanding the Adventure

This scenario can be expanded if the Games Master wants to add extra complications. Any or all of the following might be added

- More terrorists are in Moore's group. During Malicioso's attack some of them flee unhinged with terror into the darkness to be hunted simultaneously by Malicioso and the judges. Others are elsewhere planting more bombs, though fortunately the map on Moore's corpse shows their locations.
- The investigation into tracing the original owner of the stash of contraband used by the LEPAs.
- The owner of the contraband discovers that his stash has been taken a short while after the LEPAs moved from into the sewers. Worried, but wanting vengeance, the criminal follows their trail.
- During the hectic confrontation with Malicioso one or more of the LEPAs gets flushed down a storm drain after an old grate gives way. The judges must travel into the Undercity and brave its dangers to rescue them.

Energy Weapon						
Weapon	Range	Damage	Auto	Recoil	Mass (kg)	Magazine
Magnon Pulser	Ranged (Shotgun)	Special	No	—	7	3

**Notes**  
5d6 against robots and stuns humans (End 10+ to avoid unconsciousness). No effect against vehicles.

# A Friend In Need

By August Hahn

## Patrons for Traveller

The galaxy is really big. There are hundreds upon thousands of known worlds, many of them explored to some degree or other. From balls of rock to gas giants, corporate colonies to toxic jungle worlds, they all have one thing in common. No matter where people go they always have needs. Some are small and easily handled. For the bigger tasks a helping hand is sometimes required. Need and conflict are the driving forces behind adventure. Conflict creates itself once players get involved.

Need is what patrons are for. A patron is anyone or anything with a direct need and the means to both communicate that desire to others and a way to reward them for the task's completion. This can be as simple as a gourmand ordering a meal and paying for it or as complex as a distraught noble hiring freelance operatives to infiltrate a war zone and rescue his captured son from an enemy stronghold. Patrons provide both the source of an adventure and the benefit for undertaking it.

This article series will more patrons in future issues, providing all the background needed to incorporate them into an existing campaign and the details required to use them in several different ways. Patrons may not always be forthright or even honest in their dealings with players but in every case they serve to get the ball rolling on a great adventure!

## Ashton Ramsey, Human Scientist/Researcher

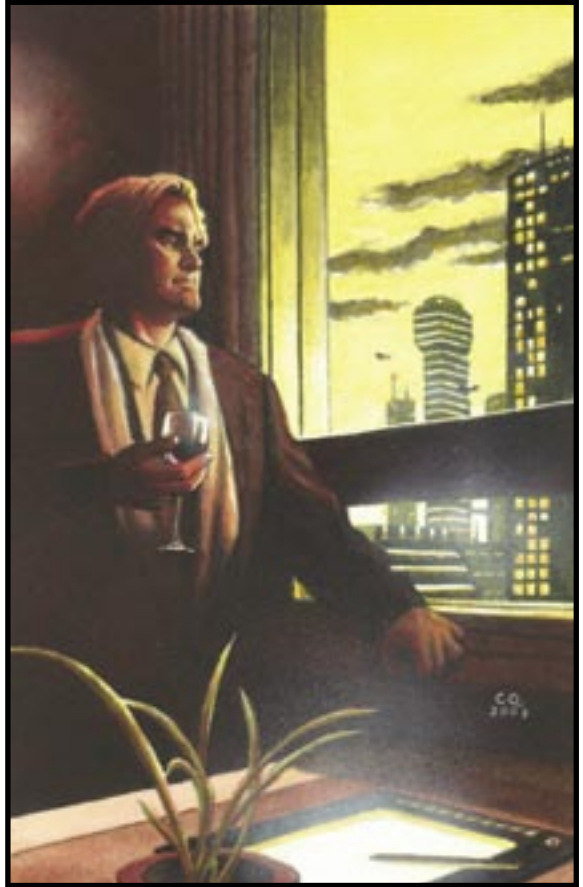
**Requires:** Life Sciences (any), Space Sciences (xenology), Sensors, Personal ship

**Rewards:** Cr. 10,000 + 1,000 per new life form catalogued and accepted. This is the limit of Ashton's grant. He is useless at bargaining so his initial offer is also his highest and final offer.

**Player's Information:** When the players meet Ashton they are not likely to be terribly impressed. His clothes, while decent, look lived in and hard worn. His pleasant face is haggard from intensity and lack of sleep. He is down to his last few personal credits and desperate enough to seek help from just about anyone – even the players themselves.

His first mission for the players is fairly straightforward. He seeks passage to a mostly uncharted system and physical support while he catalogues the life present on that system's seven worlds. He has been here before and had his funding cut, forcing his withdrawal. He has managed to convince his superiors to pay for a new expedition. All he needs is a crew willing to take him to the New Eden system and provide back up if any of the indigenous species prove dangerous.

His sales pitch may be less than enthralling but his money is good and his backers are beyond reproach. He works for one of the most advanced and influential scientific centres in the known galaxy (the specific organization, be it a university, agency or corporation, is entirely up to the Referee). Their reputation is golden and if they agree to pay, that is a promise that can literally be taken to the bank. The job may be rough but there is guaranteed reward in exchange for their hard work and success.



**Referee's Information:** Ashton Ramsey is a xenologist with a mission. One might go so far as to call it an obsession. His backers pulled support for his last trip into space after his ship's command staff, what was left of them, expressed reservations over the escalating slaughter of the crew by Ashton's ever-more 'aggressive' discoveries. Forced to abandon his field work early, Doctor Ramsey has been consumed by the need to go back to New Eden and finish what he started.

On the surface, Ashton Ramsey seems like a driven but very competent scientist and his mission has clear terms and set rewards. Of course, what would life be without some complications?

## d6 Result    **Complication**

- 1 In this case, life would be simple, professional and profitable. There are no hidden directive and no private agenda. The players may spend the entire time wondering what the catch is but in this case, the catch is that suspicion and panic might be the most dangerous elements of the entire mission. Making one's patron nervous is one thing. Making him nervous while he is working out how to contain a dozen ravenous blood-lizards for transport is quite another..
- 2 Ashton Ramsey may be honest and forthcoming but his backers are not. While they do have a reputation for honesty and integrity, that public image is one they have bought with years of black operations, wet work and the best image firms credits can buy. During this mission, they do not have a hidden agenda but their liaison, Ramsey's assistant Marya, is a covert agent with orders to judge the players for future 'possibilities'.
- 3 On Ashton's first trip to New Eden, the most dangerous life form he discovered was a reptilian killing machine, called a Riptalon by the mission's survivors. While he considers the discovery files closed on Riptalons, his backers and their military contacts feel otherwise. After reaching New Eden, the nominal leader of the players is approached via private communication with an offer. Bring back a breeding pair of Riptalons and earn 10,000 additional credits. The only condition is that Doctor Ramsey cannot know anything of this side operation.
- 4 Ashton's an honest man but the players are not the first group he has approached with this offer. The last crew, dishonest and mercenary to the core, has been watching the good Doctor since they turned him down. They do not want anything to do with his pointless mission but they *do* want his extremely expensive scientific equipment. When he goes to transport it onto the players' ship, they will be there, weapons in hand.
- 5 Doctor Ramsey is just a little more unstable than anyone suspected. Once the players arrive in New Eden, he will begin his work as normal. Hyper-sensitive to any sign that the players might be considering abandoning the mission, he is not above taking a more direct hand in ensuring that their ship does not leave the system. Just how 'direct' is entirely based on how the players have behaved and how they have treated him up until his little psychotic break.
- 6 Unbeknownst to anyone, even the scientists of Doctor Ramsey's home organization, one of the worlds of New Eden is inhabited by a sentient species. That race managed to remain hidden during his first visit but his presence was extremely distressing to them. Mistaking his scientific investigation as scouting for an alien hostile force, they have spent the entire time since he left preparing for a possible invasion. This should make for a rude surprise when the players arrive...

### THE RIPTALON

(as excepted from Traveller: Animal Encounters)

Behaviour and Diet	Preferred Habitat	Movement Mode(s)	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Intimidator, Carnivore	Forest, Jungle	Walker	18	15	14	2	12	3
Skills:	Persuade 0, Deception 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Athletics (endurance) 1, Recon 2, Melee (claw) 2							
Attacks:	Teeth and Claws (2d6)	Armour:	Scales and Hide (3)		Number Encountered:		1d6	

As brilliant as they are deadly, Riptalons are a fully reptilian, larger analogue of the velociraptor. As far as behaviour is concerned, their intelligence makes them hard to classify. They are technically intimidators only because it is their preferred method of 'hunting' to let others do the hard work of downing prey and then driving them away from their meals. This is only a generalization, however. They are fiercely intelligent, have been known to kill for pleasure and enjoy chasing prey before a kill.

# New Ships for the US Navy

By David Manley

## Priority Levels

The Priority Levels for these new ships are as follows:

### Priority Level: Patrol

Evarts class destroyer escort  
APD class attack transport  
Somers class destroyer  
Benson/Gleaves class destroyer  
Sims class destroyer  
Wickes class destroyer  
Mahan class destroyer  
Farragut class destroyer  
Allen M Sumner class destroyer  
Gearing class destroyer  
Bagley / Benham class destroyer

### Priority Level: Skirmish

Charger / Avenger class escort carrier

### Priority Level: Raid

St Louis class light cruiser  
Wichita class heavy cruiser

### Priority Level: Battle

Colorado class battleship (modified)  
South Dakota class battleship (modified)  
Midway class aircraft carrier

## Evarts-Class destroyer escort

The Evarts class is representative of the six classes of destroyer escort built for the US Navy during the war. All were built along similar lines, with the main variation being in the ship's propulsion systems. Based in concept on the Royal Navy's "Hunt" class destroyer escort the DE types formed the mainstay of the USN's anti-submarine force. They were extensively modified during the war; the armament listed is typical of a 1942 ship.

**Speed:** 4"      **Armour:** 2+      **Special Traits:** Agile, Sub Hunter, Radar  
**Turning:** 2      **Damage:** 3/1      **In Service:** 1942+  
**Target:** 6+      **Crew:** 5/1



Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Hedgehog	4	4	4	Slow Loading, Super AP
Secondary Armament	8	1	1	Weak
AA	5	1	—	—
Depth Charges	3	4	2	Slow-Loading

**Length:** 289 ft.

**Displacement:** 1,360 tons

**Speed:** 20 kts.

**Crew:** 107

## “APD”-Class Attack Transport

Several classes of ships were adapted to become small, fast attack transports, or APDs. The first, USS Manley (APD 1), was a converted 4-stacker and other ships of this type were used. Another common APD conversion, and the subject of this stat entry, were the DE Type destroyer escorts. Ships converted to the APD role landed most of their ASW armament, although they retained a basic fit and could act as ASW escorts to their amphibious groups if necessary. Instead they carried two LCPV landing craft and accommodation for a company of troops or specialists. They were often used to deploy raiding teams and specialist beach clearance teams.



**Speed:** 4"  
**Turning:** 2  
**Target:** 6+  
**Armour:** 2+  
**Damage:** 3/1  
**Crew:** 5/1  
**Special Traits:** Agile, Radar  
**In Service:** 1942+

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Secondary Armament	8	1	1	Weak
AA	5	1	—	—
Depth Charges	3	2	2	Slow-Loading

**Length:** 289 ft.      **Displacement:** 1,360 tons      **Speed:** 20 kts.      **Crew:** 107

## Somers-Class Destroyer

**Ships of this class:** Somers, Warrington, Sampson, Davis, Jouett

The Sampson class were a modification of the Porter design. They lost one funnel and carried an extra set of torpedo tubes, giving them the heaviest torpedo broadside of any US warship at the time. Warrington was the only war loss, sunk in 1944.



**Speed:** 7"  
**Turning:** 2  
**Target:** 6+  
**Armour:** 2+  
**Damage:** 3/1  
**Crew:** 12/3  
**Special Traits:** Agile, Radar  
**In Service:** 1937 (1942, as shown)

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Secondary Armament	12	2	1	Weak
AA	5	1	—	—
Port/Starboard Torpedoes	10	6	4	AP, One-Shot
Depth Charges	3	3	2	Slow-Loading

**Length:** 381 ft.      **Displacement:** 2,767 tons      **Speed:** 37 kts.      **Crew:** 294

# New Ships for the US Navy

## Benson/Gleaves-Class Destroyer

**Ships of this class:** Benson, Mayo, Gleaves, Niblack, Gwin, Monssen, Meredith +

Two classes of destroyer outwardly very similar, they were the last class of "small" US destroyer before the much larger "Fletcher" class joined the fleet. There were several variations in armament, most notably the removal of one bank of torpedo tubes and their replacement with increased AA armament.



**Speed:** 7"  
**Turning:** 2  
**Target:** 6+

**Armour:** 2+  
**Damage:** 3/1  
**Crew:** 9/3

**Special Traits:** Agile  
**In Service:** 1939

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Secondary Armament	12	1	1	Weak
AA	7	2	—	—
Port/Starboard Torpedoes	10	5	4	AP, One-Shot
Depth Charges	3	4	2	Slow-Loading

**Length:** 348 ft.

**Displacement:** 2,395 tons

**Speed:** 35 kts.

**Crew:** 208

## Sims-Class Destroyer

**Ships of this class:** Sims, Hughes, Anderson, Hammann, Mustin, Russell, O'Brein, Walke, Morris, Roe, Wainwright, Buck

The forerunners of the Benson / Gleaves class, the Sims were generally regarded as unsuccessful and overweight. They were initially built with twelve torpedo tubes, but excessive topweight led to the removal of four tubes before the outbreak of war (the removed tubes were used on the first of the Atlanta class cruisers). Despite their obvious design problems the modified ships served with distinction in all theatres of the war.



**Speed:** 7"  
**Turning:** 2  
**Target:** 6+

**Armour:** 2+  
**Damage:** 3/1  
**Crew:** 8/3

**Special Traits:** Agile  
**In Service:** 1939

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Secondary Armament	12	1	1	Weak
AA	7	2	—	—
Port/Starboard Torpedoes	10	4	4	AP, One-Shot
Depth Charges	3	4	2	Slow-Loading

**Length:** 348 ft.

**Displacement:** 2,313 tons

**Speed:** 35 kts.

**Crew:** 192



## Wickes-Class Destroyer

The predecessors of the Clemson class destroyer, the Wickes class suffered from a less-than-desired cruising range, an issue leading to the design of the Clemsons. They also suffered from excessive wetness in heavy seas and machinery problems. Many were scrapped between the wars but some were transferred to the RN under lend-lease, whilst others were sold for commercial duties and disarmed.

**Speed:** 7"  
**Turning:** 2  
**Target:** 6+  
**Armour:** 2+  
**Damage:** 3/1  
**Crew:** 5/1  
**Special Traits:** Agile  
**In Service:** 1917



Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Secondary Armament	8	1	1	Weak
AA	4	1	—	—
Port Torpedoes	10	3	4	AP, One-Shot
Starboard Torpedoes	10	3	4	AP, One-Shot
Depth Charges	1	2	2	Slow-Loading

**Length:** 314 ft.      **Displacement:** 1,650 tons      **Speed:** 35 kts.      **Crew:** 130

## Mahan-Class Destroyer

**Ships of this class:** Mahan, Cummings, Drayton, Lamson, Flusser, Reid, Case, Conyngham, Shaw, Cassin, Tucker, Downes, Cushing, Perkins, Smith, Preston, Dunlap, Fanning

The Mahan class introduced advanced boiler design into the US Navy's destroyer fleet and were initially designed with a heavy torpedo armament. In common with many US destroyers they were extensively refitted with heavy AA armament later in the war. Cassin and Downes were severely damaged during the attack on Pearl Harbor; they also featured a modified torpedo arrangement using only centreline tubes.



**Speed:** 7"  
**Turning:** 2  
**Target:** 6+  
**Armour:** 2+  
**Damage:** 3/1  
**Crew:** 6/2  
**Special Traits:** Agile  
**In Service:** 1937

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Secondary Armament	12	1	1	Weak
AA	5	1	—	—
Port Torpedoes	10	2	4	AP, One-Shot
Starboard Torpedoes	10	2	4	AP, One-Shot
Port/Starboard Torpedoes	10	2	4	AP, One-Shot
Depth Charges	3	3	2	Slow-Loading

**USS Cassin, USS Downes alternate armament:**

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Secondary Armament	12	1	1	Weak
AA	5	1	—	—
Port/Starboard Torpedoes	10	4	4	AP, One-Shot
Depth Charges	3	3	2	Slow-Loading

**Length:** 341 ft.      **Displacement:** 2,103 tons      **Speed:** 36.5 kts.      **Crew:** 158

# New Ships for the US Navy

## Farragut-Class Destroyer

**Ships of this class:** Farragut, Dewey, Hull, Macdonough, Worden, Hull, Dale, Monaghan, Aylwin

The eight destroyers of the Farragut class set the "design style" for post First World War US destroyers. They were handsome ships but, in common with several classes built after them, they suffered from poor stability. Two ships of the class capsized and sank during the appalling weather of "Halsey's Typhoon"; a third only survived when her funnel collapsed whilst close to turning over.



**Speed:** 7"  
**Turning:** 2  
**Target:** 6+

**Armour:** 2+  
**Damage:** 3/1  
**Crew:** 7/2

**Special Traits:** Agile, Radar  
**In Service:** 1934, (1942, as shown)

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Secondary Armament	12	1	1	Weak
AA	5	1	—	—
Port/Starboard Torpedoes	10	4	4	AP, One-Shot
Depth Charges	3	3	2	Slow-Loading

**Length:** 341 ft.

**Displacement:** 2,064 tons

**Speed:** 37 kts.

**Crew:** 160

## Allen M. Sumner/Gearing-Class Destroyer

**Ships of this class:** Allen M. Sumner, Moale, Ingraham, Cooper, English, Charles S. Sperry, Ault, Waldron, Gearing, Eugene A. Greene, Gyatt, Kenneth D. Bailey, William R. Rush, William M. Wood, Wiltsie, Theodore E. Chandler

Originally proposed as an improvement to the Fletcher-class destroyer, the Allen M. Sumner-class bore little resemblance to the Fletcher, whose hull and machinery they were built around. The Sumner-class hull was almost identical to the Fletcher except for a 1' wider beam and having twin rudders, yet the topside of the vessels differed considerably. The five single 5-inch guns were replaced three twin 5-inch gun mounts. The Sumner also had a larger bridge area, which included, for the first time in a US Navy destroyer, a Combat Information Centre (CIC), and a heavier anti-aircraft battery. All this added weight cost the Sumner approximately 3 knots on their top speed. They also did not meet the Navy specifications for operational range.



Despite these deficiencies, 70 Sumner's were completed while the Navy's Bureau of Ships' designers sought a fix. The fix came in the form of the "addition" of a fourteen-foot section to the mid-ship to accommodate increased bunker oil storage. The result was the Gearing-class destroyer, of which the no less than 98 were constructed.

**Speed:** 7"  
**Turning:** 2  
**Target:** 6+

**Armour:** 2+  
**Damage:** 3/1  
**Crew:** 13/4

**Special Traits:** Agile, Sub-Hunter, Radar  
**In Service:** 1944

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Secondary Armament	12	2	1	Weak
AA	5	4	—	—
Port/Starboard Torpedoes	10	5	4	AP, One-Shot
Depth Charges	3	6	2	Slow-Loading

**Length:** 383 ft.

**Displacement:** 3,460 tons

**Speed:** 36.5 kts.

**Crew:** 336

## Charger\Avenger-Class Escort Carrier

**Ships of this class:** Charger, HMS Avenger, HMS Biter, HMS Dasher

The Charger\Avenger class of escort carriers were slightly improved version of the Long Island/Archer class. Like the earlier escort carriers they were conversions of standard "Liberty" type merchant freighters. However, unlike the earlier conversions, these conversions were made before the base ships had been completed as merchantmen. All four were delivered into service with the Royal Navy, but one, Charger, was returned not long after delivery and taken into USN service. Avenger was lost to a U-Boat torpedo, while Dasher was lost to an internal explosion. Biter was used primarily used as a transport while the American Charger was largely used for training.



The values in parenthesis are for the British Avenger-class unless otherwise noted.

**Speed:** 3"      **Armour:** 2+      **Special Traits:** Carrier  
**Turning:** 2      **Damage:** 16/5 (15/5)      **In Service:** 1942  
**Target:** 5+      **Crew:** 34/11 (22/7)      **Aircraft:** Three flights of Grumman Hellcats, two flights of Grumman Avengers

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Secondary Armament	12 (14)	1	1	Weak, (Slow Loading - Charger)
AA	8 (4)	2	—	—

**Length:** 492 ft.      **Displacement:** 16,000 (15,120) tons      **Speed:** 16.5 kts.      **Crew:** 856 (555)

## Colorado-Class Battleship (modified)

**Ships of this class:** Colorado, Maryland, West Virginia

Because Colorado was not present at the attack at Pearl Harbour and Maryland was only slightly damaged, these two ships saw minimal refits early in the war in order to maintain fleet strength. West Virginia, on the other hand, was heavily damaged at Pearl Harbour and saw an extensive rebuild keeping her from service until 1944. Interestingly, following Kamikaze damage in 1945, Maryland was rebuilt on the lines of West Virginia. The statistics provided in the original rules are for the Colorado and Maryland in 1942. Use the following statistics for the West Virginia and also for Maryland in 1944+.



**Speed:** 4"      **Armour:** 5+      **Special Traits:** Aircraft 3, Torpedo Belt, Radar  
**Turning:** 1      **Damage:** 41/13      **In Service:** 1944  
**Target:** 4+      **Crew:** 84/28

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
A Turret (2 x 16 in)	32	2	3	Super AP
B Turret (2 x 16 in)	32	2	3	Super AP
X Turret (2 x 16 in)	32	2	3	Super AP
Y Turret (2 x 16 in)	32	2	3	Super AP
Secondary Armament	12	5	1	Weak
AA	8	13	—	—

**Length:** 624 ft.      **Displacement:** 39,400 tons      **Speed:** 21 kts.      **Crew:** 2,100

# New Ships for the US Navy

## Bagley/Benham-Class Destroyer

**Ships of this class:** Bagley, Blue, Helm, Mugford, Ralph Talbot, Henley, Patterson, Jarvis, Benham, Ellet, Lang, Mayrant, Trippe, Rhind, Rowan, Stack, Sterett, Wilson



The Gridley class pioneered the next advance in machinery while retaining the basic hull of the Mahan class but featuring a single stack. The Bagleys and the following Gridleys and Benhams mounted 16 torpedo tubes, the heaviest battery ever among American destroyers, reflecting an increased emphasis on torpedo tactics in vogue at the time they were designed. They carried these in four quadruple mounts—two on each side of the weather deck, fitted abaft the stack—but to do so, they sacrificed the mid-ships 5-inch gun of the Mahan and Farragut classes, leaving a total of only four. What set the Gridley and the following classes apart from preceding classes was their advanced power-plant, with enlarged turbines operating at greater pressure. This gave them some of the highest speeds ever recorded for an American destroyer.

Their stability and hull strength were concerns throughout their careers, however. Modifications could not be made without trade-offs, and even as danger grew from suicide air attack, many had their torpedoes systematically stripped out for added anti-aircraft weapons.

**Speed:** 8"  
**Turning:** 2  
**Target:** 6+

**Armour:** 2+  
**Damage:** 3/1  
**Crew:** 6/2

**Special Traits:** Agile  
**In Service:** 1937

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Secondary Armament	12	1	1	Weak
AA	5	1	—	—
Port Torpedoes	10	4	4	AP, One-Shot
Starboard Torpedoes	10	4	4	AP, One-Shot
Depth Charges	3	3	2	Slow-Loading

**Length:** 334 ft.

**Displacement:** 2,245 tons

**Speed:** 38.5 kts.

**Crew:** 158

## St. Louis-Class Light Cruiser

**Ships of this class:** St. Louis, Helena

Although ordered as Brooklyn class light cruisers, the final two cruisers of that series were built to a modified design. The secondary armament of eight, single 5-inch/25's was replaced with the improved eight, 5-inch/38's in twin turreted which provided better range and a faster rate of fire. Anti-aircraft weapons were also improved with 40 mm and 20 mm weapons. Still considered by most as Brooklyn-class light cruisers, they are presented here as their own class. Make the following changes to Brooklyn class light cruiser statistics provided in Victory at Sea for these ships.



**Damage:** 13/4

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Secondary Armament	12	2	1	Weak
AA	8	6	—	—

**Displacement:** 13,300 tons

## South Dakota-Class Battleship (Modified)

### **Ships of this class: South Dakota**

The South Dakota class battleships carried twenty 5-inch guns in 10 dual turrets backed by a heavy anti-aircraft armament of 40 mm and 20 mm guns. However, the USS South Dakota carried only sixteen 5-inch guns because she was fitted as a Force Flagship with a larger conning tower, the weight of which necessitated the deletion of two twin 5in mountings. As the first of the class her heavy AA defence lagged that of her younger siblings. The statistics provided in the original rules are for Indiana, Massachusetts and Alabama. Use the following statistics for South Dakota.



**Speed:** 5"      **Armour:** 6+      **Special Traits:** Aircraft 3, Armoured Deck, Radar, Torpedo Belt  
**Turning:** 1      **Damage:** 42/14      **In Service:** 1942  
**Target:** 5+      **Crew:** 90/30

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
A Turret (2 x 16 in)	36	3	3	Super AP
B Turret (2 x 16 in)	36	3	3	Super AP
X Turret (2 x 16 in)	36	3	3	Super AP
Secondary Armament	12	5	1	Weak
AA	8	11	—	—

**Length:** 666 ft.      **Displacement:** 46,218 tons      **Speed:** 27.5 kts.  
**Crew:** 2,257

## Wichita-Class Heavy Cruiser

### **Ships of this class: Wichita**

The single Wichita was the bridge between the pre-war cruisers and those built during the war. It was also the connection between the Light and Heavy pre-war cruisers. Originally intended as another Brooklyn class ship, she was altered to receive a new model 5-inch dual-purpose guns in single enclosed mounts as well as new model 8-inch guns.



Wichita spent most of her time in the Atlantic Ocean, participating in the Neutrality Patrol and several "Showing-the-Flag" missions to South America. Early in war she patrolled the Denmark Strait against German raiders and escorted convoys. Later she supported the North Africa landings, where she was damaged by a French coastal gun. Reassigned to the Pacific, the Wichita bombarded island positions and escorted the carrier fleet. At Leyte, she was one of the two cruisers involved in the sinking of carrier Chiyoda and the destroyer Hatsuzuki.

The Wichita statistics are essentially identical to the **Portland-class** provided in *Victory at Sea*. The only statistical changes are as follows:

**Damage:** 13/4      **Crew:** 37/12      **In Service:** 1939 (1942, as shown)

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Secondary Armament	12	2	1	Weak
AA	7	3	—	—

**Length:** 600 ft.      **Displacement:** 13,015 tons      **Speed:** 33 kts.      **Crew:** 929

# New Ships for the US Navy

## Midway-Class Aircraft Carrier

**Ships of this class:** Midway, Franklin D Roosevelt, Coral Sea

The Midway class aircraft carrier was one of the longest lived carrier designs in history. First commissioned in late 1945, the lead ship of the class, USS Midway was not decommissioned until 1992, shortly after service in Operation Desert Storm in 1991

**Speed:** 7"  
**Turning:** 1  
**Target:** 4+

**Armour:** 3+  
**Damage:** 40/13  
**Crew:** 160/53

**Special Traits:** Carrier  
**In Service:** 1945  
**Aircraft:** Six flights of Grumman Hellcats, six flights of Curtis Helldivers and 6 flights of Grumman Avengers

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
Secondary Armament	12	4	1	Weak
AA	8	10	—	—

**Length:** 968 ft.

**Displacement:** 45,000 tons

**Speed:** 33 kts.

**Crew:** 4,000

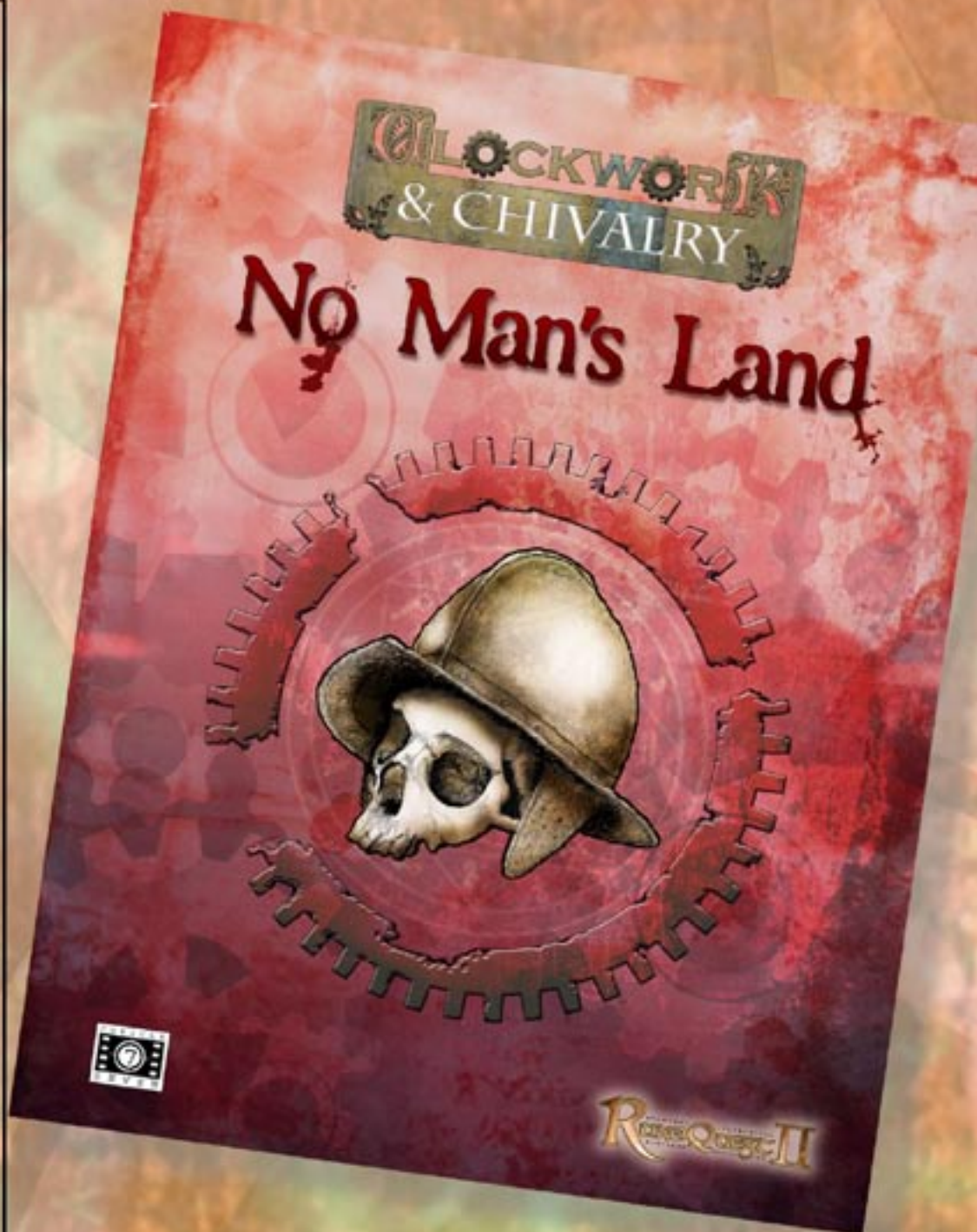


**Volume III of the epic  
Kingdom &  
Commonwealth  
Campaign**

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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# The Thing in the Pit

By Alex Greene

## Introduction

The characters confront an unthinkable ancient menace, and one character may be forced to choose between his life, and that of his shipmates and of an entire world.

### Source of Inspiration

This scenario is loosely based on a famous BBC television show, *Quatermass and The Pit*, by the late Nigel Kneale. Also, many thanks to the online Interactive Traveller Atlas.

## Shalimar – A World In The Beyond

The scenario takes place on Shalimar, a human world located in a remote sector called 'The Beyond':

Shalimar is a backwoods, with slow, simple electronic computers weighing tons and a primitive telephone network. The population rely upon broadcast television and radio for information. The police are beginning to use handheld radio 'walkie-talkies,' superseding the archaic blue telephone boxes, which are still found on street corners.

The Shalimarans have built their own spaceport and are experimenting with rocketry. They allow outsiders to contact them, but they restrict high technology, accepting items of no more than TL 8. The high law level forbids all but police and the military from owning firearms.

The planet is on the cusp of achieving TL 8 thanks to a genius, Professor Bars Katzl of the Shalimar Aeronautics and

Rocketry Association (SARA), whom the characters have befriended. Professor Katzl proposed 20 years ago that a network of orbiting satellites in synchronous orbit could provide an effective global communications network. For this insight, he was hailed as a visionary.

Not long afterwards, contact was made with starfarers. Professor Katzl was appointed the spokesman to lead all diplomatic contacts with offworlders. Professor Katzl has befriended the characters at the time of this scenario.

## The Nightmare Begins

### Guests of Professor Katzl

The characters are here to trade TL 8 electronics and to offer their ship's services in launching several Shalimaran communications satellites and a handful of unmanned probes to several of the system's worlds. Professor Katzl is in charge of this mission, and his government backs his plan with good, hard currency and a cargo hold full of lucrative goods for the characters as a reward for their generosity.

Business is routine: characters may indulge in trade with the locals as usual, with a +2 DM to all speculative trade transactions. Throughout this story they have no physical access to their vessel – it is being prepared for the satellite mission. The characters are temporarily marooned on Shalimar.

While they are here, they are interviewed for television by a pretty television news anchor, Lonia Vasco, who grills them on their offworld activities. What wonders have they seen? And what do they think of the Shalimarans?

The characters are staying Professor Katzl's mansion outside the capital as his guests. Behind an unlocked door in, the characters discover his pride and joy: a prototech TL9 Model 2 ship's computer, connected to computers in academic faculties all over Shalimar through trunk landlines.

### Called Away

One night, a telephone call interrupts a cordial dinner. Professor Katzl reveals he has been urgently summoned to the capital. As he speaks, a military helicopter lands on the lawn. The characters may request to board the helicopter, but two stern Shalimaran soldiers block them.

The only thing the characters can do while they wait is watch the news. And there is plenty. Since the characters arrived, tensions have begun building up with sporadic rioting, domestic violence is rising and arrests for disorderly conduct, public drug taking and lewd behaviour are all showing a sudden, sharp increase.

### Urgent Request

The telephone rings again. It is for the characters.

*It is Professor Katzl on the line. 'Ah, there you are,' he says. 'I believe we are in further need of your services. You see, the construction workers on the Vexhill Line extension have dug up something, and I wonder if you have seen anything like it in your travels. I've sent transportation to bring you to the capital.'*

The ground cars and escort vehicles arrive outside within minutes. The looks on the soldiers' faces hint that refusal to come with them is not an option.

Shalimar The Beyond Subsector A 0105 B86764A-7 Ag Ni Ri

Professor Bars Katzl	Career Path	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Education	Social Standing
Age 45	Scholar (scientist) 6 terms	5	7	7	D	D	9
Admin-0, Computers-2, Diplomat-0, Engineer (rocketry)-2, Engineer (electronics)-3, Science (physics)-2, Physics (electronics)-1							



## Unearthed

The characters arrive at Vehill, just as a squad of bomb squad officers emerge from the entrance to an excavation wearing hazmat suits, gesturing all is clear. A television crew stands nearby, recording the extraordinary scene unfolding.

*Professor Katzl emerges from the entrance following the bomb squad officers. Gently, he rebuffs a television reporter with 'Not now, Lonia. Save it for the press conference.' He looks irritated - and also frightened.*

*'I'm so glad you're here,' he tells you. 'Come with me. This is extraordinary.' Behind the wire link fence cordon, the entrance to the underground construction site seems like a darkened maw.*

*He leads you through the dark tunnels to the site.*

*'Construction workers unearthed the object at dawn,' Professor Katzl says. 'They thought it was a bomb dating back to a civil war several decades ago, so they brought in the bomb squad. The problem is, we have no idea what it is, save to say that it's likely old. Very old.'*

*You reach the site of the dig. Hurricane lanterns and flashlights illuminate the darkness as soldiers struggle to hook up electric lights in the site to with power cables from a large generator you passed just outside.*

*A makeshift wooden platform rings the interior perimeter of the pit, which is about thirty metres across. In the centre of the chamber, half buried in the soft mud, a smooth, rounded conical shape juts out at a slight angle. The shape appears to be of some sort of dark metallic blue material. It is cold to the touch. Very, very cold.*

The characters may run a series of tests on the object's surface, attempting to determine its material composition.

*Education, Engineer or Physical Science (chemistry), 1 – 6 hours, Formidable (-6).*

## The Inexplicable Artefact

The object's shell defies analysis with the equipment available at TL 7. It resists diamond drills and oxyacetylene torches without so much as a scratch or a heat scar. The metal appears to be not only beyond Shalimar's Tech Level: it may be beyond the characters'. However, one simple test – striking it with a hammer – reveals a curious fact. The object is hollow.

At one point, an exhausted Professor Katzl gives up and heads back home to consult with fellow academics across Shalimar on what to do next. The characters are escorted from the site, and an armed guard assigned to protect the dig. Another armed guard escorts the cavalcade back to the estate: a food riot is in progress. The characters smell the smoke from nearby fires, and hear the angry screaming.

The characters get a good night's rest. It is their last one, for a while.

## Unusual Events

### Strange Forces Stir

The excavation proceeds over 3D6 days, but progress is slow. Roll 3D6 each day, adding a cumulative +1 DM. Then roll the dice indicated to determine whether or not the incident happens with the characters as direct witnesses. Otherwise, it is reported on TV.

Referees wishing to add some spice for characters who wish for opportunities to engage in combat can give them the opportunity to confront rioters or cultists who may be attempting to storm the dig or suspect the characters of being involved in 'the conspiracy'.



# The Thing in the Pit

## Unusual Events

3D6	Events
3-6	Demonstration (roll 1D6 twice)
7-8	Riot (roll 2D6)
9-10	Hysteria (roll 2D6)
11-14	Vektism (roll 2D6)
15	Disappearance (roll 2D6)
16	Visions (roll 3D6)
17	Writing (roll 3D6)
18	Incident At The Dig

**Demonstrations:** A protest march takes place. 4+, it is in the capital. Second roll: 6, the march turns into a riot.

**Riot:** A riot takes place in one of the cities on Shalimar. 10+, the riot takes place in the capital, and the characters witness it first hand.

**Hysteria:** Scenes of mass hysteria and public mourning. A fair amount of public nudity and licentious behaviour as Vektists and ordinary people proclaim the end of the world. Roll 2d6 and add the DM. On 8+, the characters witness such hysteria for themselves.

**Vektism:** The characters see Vektists marching through the street chanting and burning incense, or catch a news report of a police raid breaking up a Vektist sect. On 10+, the characters witness a Vektist march.

**Disappearance:** People are disappearing inexplicably, suddenly. Often in mid-sentence. Sometimes they leave their clothes behind. On 6+, an accident happens – a motorist vanishes at the wheel, a doctor disappears in surgery. On 10+, the disappearance happens to a non player character the characters have had contact with – though not to Professor Katzl or to themselves.

**Visions:** The characters hear a first hand account of a vision of some sort of 'demonic entity' the witness encountered in a dream. On 11+, one of the characters has the vision.

**Writing:** People report strange writing appearing everywhere. On 11+, the characters witness the writing. They can take photographs of this strange, alien script. It is no hallucination. The ephemeral writing is *real*, though the substance vanishes before they can take a sample of it for analysis.

**Incident at the Dig:** The characters bear witness to an incident at the dig site involving the Artefact. Choose from the following, but apply each incident only once.

- **Gatecrasher:** A young Shalimaran, dressed in a Vektist robe, sneaks into the dig site. She brandishes a leather book at the Artefact, chants at it and attempts to touch the side of the object before security forces take her away.
- **Fainting Spell:** Everyone in and around the dig site suddenly feels dizzy. Roll End 8+: a failing character loses consciousness for 10 – 60 minutes, and awakes with vivid dreams of strange, hopping demons with leathery wings in his head. This phenomenon will have extended for 2d6 x 100 metres around the site, even above ground.
- **Violence:** One of the researchers explodes with anger for no reason, and attacks the characters.
- **Insanity:** One of the researchers, a guard or a bystander goes insane and babbles about demons.
- **Hallucination:** The characters experience hallucinations of strange, small, hopping winged creatures out of the corner of their eye. This unnerves and distracts them, putting a DM of -2 on all rolls based on Int or Edu for that day. They are not alone: other people they meet occasionally appear similarly distracted, sometimes inexplicably hostile to them.

- **Vanished:** Someone enters the site in a daze. She approaches the Artefact, touches it ... and silently disappears in a swirling nimbus of blue light.

When the dig is complete, move on to the following scene.

## A Shocking Conclusion

If the characters have not worked out by now that the Artefact is responsible for these phenomena, have Professor Katzl suggest it to them at the dig, or have the player of the smartest character roll Int 7+ to figure it out.

Professor Katzl points out that Shalimar possesses a nuclear capability in the hands of an increasingly apocalyptic, hysterical population. If the characters do nothing, this planet could go up in flames - and take them with it!

## An Aperture!

Someone shouts out. There is a huge bang and a yell. A worker has slipped on the near-frictionless shell and fallen, badly injuring himself. As he is stretchered away, someone notices that an aperture has opened, close to the ground. It was not there before.

Whatever is inside, it stinks like an open grave.

## Research

The characters need to pursue research into the various phenomena plaguing Shalimar's population. Fortunately, they have an edge: Professor Katzl's prototype internet connection, linking Shalimar's university libraries together. *Education*, 1 – 6 days, Routine (+2). *Without Professor Katzl's computer*, Difficult (-2).

## Vektism

Vektism is a belief on Shalimar in the existence of **Vekt**, a kind of Devil figure. Vektists believe that by indulging in sins, they can appease Vekt and thus protect the rest of the population from Vekt's wrath.

Belief in Vektism dates back, in fact, to the beginning of written Shalimaran history. Characters who read up on Vektism discover that it is, in fact, the planet's dominant religion – virtually every Shalimaran household has a small shrine to Vekt somewhere. Even Professor Katzl, the great rationalist, is not immune from the fear of Vekt, and proudly shows the characters his shrine if asked.

On an Exceptional Success, the characters learn that Vektism has always had its strongest presence in the capital. Historical research turns up a number of small shrines based in and around the district of Vexhill over the centuries.

## Disappearances

Historical records reveal a curious fact. One night during the war, a large chunk of the population of Vexhill is said to have mysteriously disappeared overnight. Police and the military feared a bomb had destroyed the site, but when they arrived they saw abandoned houses and deserted streets. Hot food sat cooling on kitchen tables; televisions and old-style radios were on, unattended; beds lay unmade; even loose piles of clothing lay about here and there, as though people had divested themselves of their clothes and were running around naked somewhere.

By the time Vexhill was earmarked for the extension, fifteen years later, the plans went unopposed because nobody had returned to the district to repopulate it. Nobody had wanted to.

## Visions

Research reveals that visions of strange, demonic entities have been part of Shalimaran lore since the dawn of their recorded history, fifteen thousand years ago. People have experienced strange hallucinations of short, demonic creatures with leathery skin, bulbous heads, huge black almond eyes and leathery wings since at least then.

If the characters took photographs of the strange writings earlier, they realise this

writing has appeared before, in some of the oldest documents the Shalimarans own. This is their earliest writing system, and it resembles no written alphabet on record – not even in the characters' computerised ship's library.

Again, Vexhill comes up in research: more sightings of this strange writing and the demonic creatures have occurred in Vexhill than anywhere else. In fact, the name 'Vexhill' is itself a corruption of an even older name. *Vekt's Hill*.

## Vexhill

At night, nobody comes to Vexhill. Not even vandals, morbid Vektists or animals. Characters may observe locals shuddering and blessing themselves as they pass by the dark, rotting terraced houses, their windows still mostly intact, rows of black squares staring at them like empty eyes.

## Escalation

### Public Disappearance

Plucky television news reporter Lonia Vascu has been following the characters for the duration of their visit. Her face has become a familiar one to the characters.

Tonight, she is presenting a live TV report from the dig, interviewing Professor Katzl and the characters.

*'What do you think of these inexplicable events?' Lonia asks the characters, as they gather outside the site. This is an off the cuff comment, with the microphones and TV off.*

*With the discovery of the aperture, nobody is allowed in, except for Professor Katzl and his team who wanted to go inside the Artefact first. Non-essential personnel are not allowed in, and that includes the characters.*

*'I've been all around the world,' Lonia says. 'And I've never seen anything like this before. I was told by the government to try and keep people calm, but basically if your ship was working I'd be out of here on the next flight.'*

At this point, the TV camera is switched back on, and pointed at Lonia. The soundman tests the microphone for sound levels and Lonia is ready to begin.

As she launches into the latest live report, everybody suddenly hears a strange, rising whine coming from the site. It rises into a wailing screech, more animal than machine. All activities are at a –4 DM due to the distraction.

As the sound reaches a crescendo, Lonia suddenly clutches her stomach. She screams. Before a live TV audience, she vanishes in a nimbus of swirling blue light.

## Global Panic

Word of the incident spreads everywhere there is a telephone connection. Some people had recorded the incident on their home video recorders and within hours panic flares up across the globe.

## Back At The Dig

In the aftermath, everyone gets up. Almost everyone is now fleeing the site. Only Professor Katzl and the soundman remain. Professor Katzl looks distraught at losing Lonia. The soundman, however, looks puzzled.

If the characters do not ask, Professor Katzl listens to the playback and then plays it to the characters.

The tape did not pick up the rising scream that disabled everyone and preceded Lonia's disappearance. Other sounds were recorded but not that one.

The characters may now attempt two separate rolls, based on what skills they possess. The skills are: Life Science, with a speciality in Psionics; and Engineer, with a speciality in Screens.

To determine the nature of that scream: *Intelligence, Life Science (psionics), Difficult (-2)*. To determine the cause of the disappearances: *Education, Engineer (screens), Difficult (-2)*.

# The Thing in the Pit

**Referee:** The reason why the scream was not picked up by the tape was that it was not a physical sound at all, but rather a psionic projection similar to a telepathic *assault*. Those nearest the Artefact suffered the most; the characters will need to investigate this matter further. This means entering the Artefact.

A character who has had experience of operating nuclear dampers will recognise the blue flare as the burst of Cerenkov radiation produced by unstable nuclei when a nuclear damper beam is played across them. He may recall rumours nuclear dampers exist of a more advanced type, capable of disintegrating stable matter too; as well as rumours the Imperial Navy had a vessel with that capability at one time.

## Exploring the Artefact

The ground has been dug around The Artefact, and the scaffolding now goes down a number of tiers. The Artefact is about 20 metres in diameter at the base; judging by the curvature of the surface, Professor Katzl theorises its shape is that of a flattened sphere with a parabolic curvature and a possible maximum diameter of around 100 metres.

The interior surface of the Artefact is almost as frictionless as the exterior. The characters are tethered together with ropes, and gently lowered through the aperture.

The first chamber they enter is spherical, with another circular aperture at the far end. *Negotiating the Interior: Athletics, Dexterity, Difficult (-2)*. Beyond that aperture lies a short cylindrical corridor leading downwards at an angle; the smell of rot comes from there. At the far end is a spherical chamber and, at its base, a four meter wide shaft.

This chamber and the shaft lie on the centre line of the Artefact. The shaft appears bottomless. However, the walls of the chamber at the top of this shaft bear writings similar to those found recently,

Translating the writings so far proves impossible without a reference.

## Descent

The shaft goes down several hundred metres. Characters discover more apertures leading from the central shaft. Each aperture leads to a short cylindrical corridor and to a spherical chamber. These chambers seem to be placed about the Artefact randomly, without rhyme or reason.

## Sepulchre

Some of these chambers contain bones. Some look like human bones, others are

smaller and more brittle, the hollow bones of an avian creature, and strange, almond-shaped skulls.

## Base of The Shaft

At the foot of the shaft are more bones, and a solid floor. Part of the base of one of the lower chambers has been cut off, and there is solid rock underneath.

It looks as if, at some time, there had been more to the Artefact, but that somehow a huge spherical bite had been taken out of the base of it.



## Revelations And A Hard Choice

If the players have not worked out yet what The Artefact is, have the smartest characters make an Education check on 8+. If they succeed, they realise what the Artefact is.

It is a ship. Specifically, an Ancient ship, and a big one.

### The Ship Speaks

The characters have no time to react to their discovery before they find themselves elsewhere. They have been teleported into a featureless spherical chamber not reachable from the shaft. They are now all piled together at the bottom of this chamber.

This is the vessel's Bridge.

A light plays over the characters for a moment. Then a voice speaks to each of them in Anglic, saying the following words: *One must choose.*

The ship now gives them time to decide: but first, it explains what it wants, and why.

### The Ship's Story

*I travelled far with my cargo in the service of Yaskoydray. My cargo was precious – a colony of humans of the Yaskoydri and their caretakers. I was assigned to the Long Journey to the galactic core, when a mishap destroyed my drives. Helpless, I drifted here. I deployed my cargo onto the surface, before falling here. Over time, I sank into the mud, forgotten, in pain. I have waited for so long for salvation. Please. One of you must help me.*

The players may deduce that the Shalimarans are, in fact, descendants of the original colony. Somehow, the ship managed to teleport surviving human stock onto the surface before it crashed and killed whoever remained on board. The ship has remained alive and in pain all this time. The strange sightings of Vekt over the generations were the computer's unconscious telepathic projections of the ship's Droyne crew, distorted and clouded by dementia, and the writings are Ancient script saying, basically, *Please help me to die.*

All this time the ship has sought to contact someone who can do that.

### The Hard Choice

The self-destruct can only be activated from within the chamber. It can only be activated manually, and whoever remains to trigger the self-destruct must therefore die along with the ship.

The ship's computer presents this choice with profound apologies. To show good faith, it returns all the characters to the surface. Whoever makes the choice, all they have to do is touch the surface – it will read their intent and return them instantly to the chamber.

If the characters do not choose, Professor Katzl will. Lonia's death had robbed him of someone precious to him. With nothing left for him to do, all his challenges met and nobody to share his victories, he decides he can do this one last thing for his world.

### Act of Compassion

Whoever makes the choice, the moment they touch the side of the ship, they vanish into the interior. A deep rumble warns everyone to get clear. They barely have time

to evacuate when the ship, the dig site and an area 200 metres in diameter vanishes in a ball of blue light that rises, screaming, into the sky and then dissipates.

Silence falls on a stunned Shalimar. The fear is over. The rioting, the religious mania, fade as the ship's mental influence ceases to affect the Shalimarans.

## Aftermath

The characters receive an award for their troubles. A rushed ceremony at the starport sees the survivors given the Shalimaran Medal of Honour. If Professor Katzl sacrificed himself, a shrine to his name is set up on the grounds of his home and the characters still get the medal, as well as promises they will want for nothing next time they visit.

With the ship ready to pick them up and go about its mission to lay those satellites, and its cargo hold full, the characters barely have time to say their goodbyes before heading off to their next adventure.

### The Ancients

**Referee:** 300,000 years ago, the Ancients evolved from the aliens now known as Droyne. Possessing unimaginable technology, they uprooted entire species and genetically uplifted them for slave labour or, sometimes, amusement. One debate rages among academics that humans are among those species transplanted, which is why so many humans can be found across the Galaxy.

Among the marvels developed by the Ancients, it is rumoured, are sentient computers and weapons capable of disintegrating matter with a thought.

# R&D - A Clone's Best Friend

By Jonathan Gwilliams

It may be treasonous to say it, but only a tiny fraction of Alpha Complex's R&D department staff could be described as scientists, if you were being especially generous in assessing their capabilities. Truth be told these heroic pioneers of knowledge should be described as con-artists who think it's a cushy job or woefully miscast individuals desperately trying to bluff their way through because anything is safer than telling Friend Computer it's made a mistake and you're working in the wrong department. As a result, almost all of the gadgets and gizmos they produce are faulty, useless or outright deadly, but somebody still has to test them to find out precisely *how* faulty, useless or deadly they are. Guess who that is?

To round out the already-bulging file of failed scientific experiments hidden away in the R&D department, here are a few innovative and totally non-dangerous devices to round out your Paranoia game. Citizens who volunteer to field-test prototype equipment are usually in line for cash rewards, commendations and medals, well their clones normally are, so jump to it Troubleshooters! Fame and glory awaits!

## BZ435-Mangonel Matter Transporter

The 'scientist', Victor-B-MAD-4, who created this device will be very happy to explain the function of a basic matter transporter device. "Your body," he will cheerfully relate, "will be split into hundreds of tiny pieces and sent whizzing through the air to our secondary teleport station in the next sector where the 'receiver' device will swiftly reassemble you again, good as new!" That's about as technical as he's likely to get, and with good reason since the device consists of a soundproof cubicle, a series of circular saws and a large catapult. The technician who designed it reads too many (illegal and seditious) old world sci-fi novels but doesn't understand the first thing about science.

It's safe to say that any poor Troubleshooters who agree to test this device are not going to survive the process. They will be diced in very short order. The pieces will then be fastidiously collected by a series of automated dustpans (with a mop and bucket for the blood) and loaded into the catapult's

waiting arms. The whole assemblage is then hoisted through the ceiling via a pneumatic lift into the Outside and aimed roughly in the direction of the receiver station's gigantic shrimp net. There, an advanced doc bot is waiting to reassemble the various body parts it receives.

If anyone is crazy enough to climb into the matter transporter they can kiss their clone goodbye. They're rendered to kibble and scattered across the length and breadth of the countryside above Alpha Complex. If they're lucky one or two morsels of flesh might reach the target area, giving the waiting technicians useful research data (or at least a bit of a chuckle). They will however be highly commended for this selfless act, and their next-of-Clone will receive a 500 cred payment, a complimentary basket of beverages and a half-hour of compassionate leave (or just enough time to spend their reward). There's no need to tell the other Troubleshooters what happened of course. That information is classified. Simply have the new clone sent to meet them at the receiver station.

This is a great device to introduce if your planned adventure involves going Outside, since the players will occasionally come across pieces of their former compatriot hanging from trees, hidden under bushes or smeared across the walls of ruins. This makes for excellent (if morbid) comic relief if handled carefully; try to get bits of test pilot to turn up at the most unlikely and unexpected times. It might also be fun to arrange for the surviving Troubleshooters to witness a teleportation from the outside, so they can see just how their erstwhile companion went 'whizzing through the air in hundreds of tiny pieces'.



**Our staff are keen for you to try one of many excellent new inventions!**

## Rover Mark 2 Companion Bot

This cheery little dog-shaped robot is about the size and general shape of a small dog in shiny chrome. It's intended to replace the current Sparky model dogbot, which has a nasty habit of exploding when getting over excited. Unfortunately it tends to get over excited in the presence of High Clearance citizens, precisely the kind of client you don't want being blown to bits by your product. Unlike its predecessor, which was merely programmed to act like a dog, Rover uses a cloned canine brain\* skilfully linked to the robot brain that controls its mechanical body, meaning it can act almost exactly like its flesh-and-blood forebears.

Rover is a combination of companion and guard dog, the two modes being switched via stroking the hackles on the back of the neck. There's no need to tell the Troubleshooters this, let them work it out for themselves. In companion mode its eye-lights are yellow and it will yap playfully, fawn over his owner and play games like fetch with all the gusto of a genuine canine. In attack mode the eyes

are red and it will viciously savage anybody that gets too close to its owner using razor-sharp teeth that retract into the jaw when not in use to prevent any nasty accidents. Rover has Agility and Unarmed Combat skills at 10 each, but cannot use weapons since it lacks hands. Its bite has a damage of S3K.

Whenever somebody pets Rover it's an excuse for the Gamesmaster to have the mechanical dog switch modes and do something unpredictable, like biting the unfortunate clone who patted it. There's also a small chance it will switch modes on its own due to a malfunction. The Gamesmaster may roll for malfunctions when Rover is given a direct command, or at dramatically inappropriate times, or if he gets bored. Rover malfunctions on a roll of 1 or 2 on a D20. Naturally the troubleshooter in charge of the bot will be held responsible for any injuries or damage caused regardless of whose fault it was. The bot isn't exactly safe in Companion mode either. Its canine brain may direct it to perform such pranks as fawning over enemies it should be attacking, trying to 'interface' with older series dogbots, or bringing back that live hand grenade you so kindly threw for it.



**Woof!**

Speaking of hand grenades, Rover Mark 2 tends to explode when it gets over excited, what constitutes a state of over excitement is, of course, entirely at the discretion of the Gamesmaster. Treat it like a grenade with W3K Impact damage.

\*Where did the R&D scientists get the dog brain to clone in the first place? What's your security clearance, citizen?

## Ambidextrous Laser Pistol

The techs are very excited about this cleverly designed laser pistol model. It's fully symmetrical, with the handle exactly vertical in the centre. This means it can easily be fired in the left or right hand. There's even a trigger on the front and back of the handle in case you want to fire backwards over your shoulder. What's more, it uses a unique cooling mechanism that makes replacing the barrel completely unnecessary. Air flows in through a hole at the back of the barrel and a motor spins the barrel rapidly on its axis after each shot to vent extra heat. This laser will fire and fire until the batteries run out.

What, you can't tell which end the laser comes out of because the cooling hole looks just like the muzzle? Well, that's a bit of a poser and no mistake. I'll pass your comments and feedback on to the boffins and we'll make sure that bug gets fixed in the next release. In the meantime, just test the other features as best you can. You should take at least two shots with each hand if possible. Friend Computer has authorised a 10 credit bonus for each shot fired with the pistol (100 cred maximum award).

This pistol is extremely powerful for a laser its size, sporting a damage of W2K, but you can't tell whether it's pointed at you or the enemy. This can make staring down the sights somewhat nerve-wracking, since it means you're potentially staring down the barrel too. Worse, after each shot the barrel spins on its axis like a roulette wheel so even after the first attack you can't be sure which end is which. Whenever the pistol is fired, flip a coin. Heads it functions as usual. Tails and the welder is basically targeting himself

# R&D - Your Clone's Best Friend

and will be hit by the blast if the attack roll fails. It's like playing a more dangerous version of Russian Roulette.\*

There are plenty of ways the wielder could try and get around this problem, and pretty much all of them will result in demerits from friend Computer except for manfully firing the thing and praying the laser comes out of the end currently pointed at the enemy. Here are a few suggestions:

- Drawing an arrow on the barrel is Defacing R&D Property. This results in the issue of a 20cr fine and a scrubbot speeds to the location to clean the offending graffiti from the device. That's assuming the team Hygiene Officer doesn't leap to it first, smelling an obvious means of currying favour.
- Firing from the hip, meaning the blast will go into your arm instead of your head if it misfires, is allowed. The wielder suffers a -2 penalty to the attack, but the weapon's damage is likewise reduced to W4D. Shooting backwards over your shoulder is also fine as that's one of the things the gun was designed for. Firing by any other method, such as tying it to a stick and pulling the trigger with a piece of string, is Unsafe Discharge of a Laser Weapon and causes O3M treason damage. Attempting to fire backwards over your shoulder when the gun is actually pointing forwards is also Unsafe Discharge, but at least it's not an unsafe discharge into the middle of your face!
- Attempting to work out which end is which by detailed examination of the weapon is unwise since the weapon's inner workings are classified as clearance level Blue, with an appropriate penalty for poking your nose into them. The usual penalty for this can be found in the table on page 86 of the Paranoia core rulebook.
- Jamming the rotation mechanism to stop the barrel spinning after each shot would be Illegal Tampering with Assigned Equipment, worth treason damage of P3C. Furthermore, with

the cooling mechanism jammed, the pistol has exactly the same stats and functions in exactly the same way as a regular laser pistol except you can't change the barrel. Sooner or later it's going to blow up in your hand from the excess build-up of heat. Full rules for this are on page 170 of the Paranoia core rulebook.

\*Yes, we are aware Russian Roulette\*\* is dangerous. Comparatively, it is a walk in the park compared to this groundbreaking R&D prototype!

\*\*If any of the players mentions Russian Roulette, have their clone executed for being a Commie spy.

## Personal Funband

This portable music device is being trialled as a possible alternative to some of the milder medications. A small pair of speakers strap to the owner's belt and a narrow headband goes around the forehead, the both being connected via copious wiring to a small control panel that clips to the clothing. The headband is quite complex, and can only be safely removed using an Electronic or Mechanical Engineering roll. The control panel contains only a round dial bearing the numbers 1 to 11. Once fitted and activated the device plays music appropriate to the wearer's current mental condition, thus making them feel more important and keeping them in the right mood.

When the wearer is happy, jaunty music will play. Sadness is accompanied by melancholy violins. Stirring action music starts up the

instant that battle is joined, and suspenseful music when the wearer is being stealthy. It all works beautifully, except you can't turn it off or change the volume. The dial on the control panel is actually for adjusting the sensitivity of the headband and has no effect on the loudness of the music blaring from its speakers. The bearer is likely to discover this the first time he wants to sneak past something quietly, only to be caught out thanks to the dramatic 'stealth' music erupting from his belt.

If the stealth-ruining aspects of the personal soundtrack weren't bad enough, the team's Happiness Officer is likely to put two and two together and work out sad music plays when the wearer is feeling sad, and the device will make it nearly impossible for him to lie as the sneaky music instantly starts up the second anything misleading passes his lips. What's more, the higher the sensitivity dial is turned, the more likely it is that the device will produce inappropriate music. Whenever the Gamesmaster feels like it, preferably no more than once per scene, he can roll a D20. If the result is less than or equal to the machine's current sensitivity (as measured by the dial) it malfunctions. Roll on the table below to find out what music it plays. Conversely, a character with Machine Empathy can use his mutant ability to make the device play anything he wants it to.

This gadget works especially well if you have access to a sound system and can periodically play appropriate music. Don't worry about getting the exact tracks mentioned here, so long as the music conveys the right atmosphere.

Roll	Emotion	Example Music
1-5	Happy	'Happiness' by Ken Dodd
6-9	Sad	'Gloomy Sunday' by Billie Holiday
10-14	Aggressive	'Ride of the Valkyries' by Wagner
15-19	Sneaky	'Mysterioso' by Frank Zappa
20	Treasonous*	'Song of the Volga Boatmen' (in Russian)

\*The device can't actually detect treasonous thoughts, but it can play the music accidentally if it malfunctions. If other players recognise 'Song of the Volga Boatmen' as being 'communist' they are going to have to explain how they know. Also, the troubleshooter responsible may be arrested for spreading communist propaganda if that particular tune plays.





# RuneQuest II

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# Armes of Battel Part II

By Colin Chapman

## Weapons and Armour in Clockwork & Chivalry

### Ranged Combat Weapons

While **Daggers** and **Hatchets** (*Runequest II*, pages 68-73) may be thrown, and a rare few peasants still make use of a **Sling** (*Runequest II*, pages 73-74) or **Short Bow** (*Runequest II*, pages 73-74), the modern battlefield belongs to the firearm, though a few militia and irregular combatants still bear bows.

**Donderbus:** The “Thundergun” was invented in the German states, but was quickly adopted by gunsmiths in the Dutch Republic where it became far better known and appreciated. Available in matchlock and flintlock versions, this short, brass-barrelled musket has a distinctive flared muzzle, and fires 12-15 musket balls in a single shot. This sprays a target at close range, making it a devastating weapon, and the flared barrel makes it easier to load. A few harquebusiers carry donderbuses instead of carbines but it remains a very rare battlefield weapon. Although it can fire assorted scrap in an emergency, doing so can quickly and easily shred or otherwise damage the barrel. In the future, this weapon’s name will be corrupted, becoming *Blunderbus*.

The damage rolled is divided up equally (round fractions normally) among 1D6 hit locations on a target.

**Rules:** See below.

**Flintlock Carbine:** Flintlock carbines are more common among Parliamentary cavalry than Royalist ones, but even there are scarce compared to the more commonplace wheellock carbine.

**Rules:** Flintlock Carbine, *Clockwork & Chivalry*, page 96

**Flintlock Duelling Pistol:** Very much a weapon of the nobility, the duelling

### Matchlocks, Wheellocks, and Flintlocks

Matchlock muskets are by far the most common muskets throughout Europe, and feature robust, simple mechanisms that are relatively cheap to produce. Unfortunately, the matchcord (a length of flax) is a serious downside to the weapon. For the weapon to fire, the slow-burning matchcord must have been lit, and so many musketeers spend a great deal of time, effort, and attention keeping their matchcord burning. At least one or two musketeers in a given band always maintain a burning matchcord to rapidly light their fellows’ when necessity dictates it. This means the amount of matchcord needed can be a burden in terms of supply and weight; it is not unusual for a musketeer to burn through several metres a day, in battle or out. Furthermore, matchcord is notoriously susceptible to the weather and will not light if damp or wet, so keeping it dry is also a constant concern and effort. Even strong winds have an impact, making it more difficult to light and maintain. Finally, the ember glow of lit matchcord is highly visible in darkness or at night, and has ruined many an audacious plan.

Compared to the matchlock, the wheellock is far less problematic; it will spark regardless of damp and does not require matchcord supplies. Its downside is it is a very complex and expensive mechanism to craft and requires frequent maintenance. Despite this, it is the most common mechanism in carbines and pistols at present.

The flintlock mechanism has all of the benefits of the wheellock, but is also a simpler mechanism to produce, making it ultimately cheaper and easier to manufacture and far less prone to malfunction or serious upkeep. In *Clockwork & Chivalry*, flintlocks are relatively new and thus for the moment artificially expensive, though this fact will change rapidly. The most common flintlock mechanisms in England and the Dutch Republic at this moment are the *English Lock* and the *Doglock*, a flintlock featuring an external safety catch preventing the mechanism going off half-cocked.

#### Rules:

- Matchlocks require a Combat Action to light the flax above the trigger before they can be used. If the matchcord is not already lit, lighting it also requires a Combat Action. If neither is lit, then two Combat Actions are needed.
- Wheellocks require a Combat Action to tension the mainspring ready for firing, using a special spanner to engage it, but this can be done outside of combat making the wheellock ready to fire when needed.
- Flintlocks do not require extra Combat Actions to make ready.

pistol is finely crafted and balanced, with a long barrel and appropriate decorative embellishment.

**Rules:** Duelling Pistol, *Clockwork & Chivalry*, page 96

**Flintlock Musket:** Seldom encountered outside of a few Royalist units, flintlock muskets are most often used by artillery

guards because the mechanism is much safer to bear near quantities of blackpowder than matchlocks are.

**Rules:** Flintlock Musket, *Clockwork & Chivalry*, page 96

**Flintlock Pistol:** Like its musket counterpart, the flintlock pistol is not altogether common yet, but is likely

to eclipse the wheellock pistol in use within a few years.

**Rules:** Flintlock Pistol, *Clockwork & Chivalry*, page 96

**Grenado:** Very rare weapons, grenados are hollow iron spheres big enough to sit comfortably in the hand, filled with gunpowder and fitted with a short piece of matchcord. In decades to come they will be renamed *Grenades*.

**Rules:** Grenade, *Clockwork & Chivalry*, page 96

**Long Bow:** Despite its antiquity, the yew long bow still sees some use in battle, primarily among some Royalist troops and Highlander mercenaries.

**Rules:** Long Bow, *Runequest II*, page 73

**Matchlock Arquebus:** A weapon now almost completely abandoned by European armies in favour of the Musket, the arquebus is still used by some irregular forces in mainland Europe, such as the Hungarian Hajduks. Lightweight, simple, and short compared to a matchlock musket, it doesn't require a rest but is comparatively low-powered and lacking in range.

**Rules:** See below.

**Matchlock Carbine:** Far less common than the wheellock carbine, the matchlock carbine is now only commonly found in use with Royalist dragoons.

**Rules:** See below.

**Matchlock Musket:** The standard weapon of the musketeer throughout Europe, the matchlock musket dominates the battlefield despite its relative shortcomings. Although many models are cumbersome and have overlong barrels requiring rests to fire accurately, recent matchlock muskets are lighter and shorter, removing any necessity for a rest to be carried.

**Rules:** Matchlock Musket, *Clockwork & Chivalry*, page 96

**Matchlock Pistol:** The matchlock pistol is exceptionally rare simply due to the fact that it was never very popular anyway, and has all but completely been replaced by wheellock and flintlock pistols.

**Rules:** Matchlock Pistol, *Clockwork & Chivalry*, page 96

**Recurve Bow:** The recurve bow is almost only ever found in the hands of Eastern European irregular troops such as mounted Tatars and Croats, making it almost unknown within the British Isles.

**Rules:** Recurve Bow, *Runequest II*, pages 73-74

**Wheellock Duelling Pistol:** The wheellock duelling pistol is identical to the flintlock duelling pistol in every regard save mechanism and being more frequently encountered.

**Rules:** Duelling Pistol, *Clockwork & Chivalry*, page 96

**Note:** Cost 130 SP

**Wheellock Carbine:** The wheellock carbine is the standard musket of harquebusier cavalry throughout Europe, and has an average barrel length of 76cm.

**Rules:** Flintlock Carbine, *Clockwork & Chivalry*, page 96

**Note:** Cost 150 SP

**Wheellock Musket:** Although more common than the flintlock musket, the wheellock musket is still a distant second to the matchlock musket in terms of widespread use. It is most commonly issued to dragoons, especially on the Parliamentary side, mounted infantry who would otherwise find a matchlock musket impossible to deal with in the saddle. Unfortunately, Royalist dragoons have had incredible difficulty procuring wheellock muskets, and most have to make do with matchlock carbines instead.

**Rules:** Flintlock Musket, *Clockwork & Chivalry*, page 96

**Note:** Cost 150 SP

**Wheellock Pistol:** Carried in pairs by most cuirassiers and harquebusiers, the wheellock pistol is by far the most common pistol on the battlefield and in use throughout Europe.

**Rules:** Flintlock Pistol, *Clockwork & Chivalry*, page 96

**Note:** Cost 110 SP



## Ranged Combat Weapons

Weapon	Damage as gun	Damage as club	Range	Load	STR/DEX	Size <sup>1</sup>	ENC	AP/HP	Cost
Flintlock Donderbus	4D6	1D6-1	5m	3	10/9	M	2	4/6	130 SP
Matchlock Arquebus	2D6	1D6-1	10m	6	10/9	M	2	4/6	75 SP
Matchlock Carbine	2D6+1	1D6-1	12m	5	10/9	M	2	4/6	100 SP
Wheellock Donderbus	4D6	1D6-1	5m	3	10/9	M	2	4/6	100 SP

<sup>1</sup> This is the size of the weapon itself when used as a melee weapon, not the "size" of the ammunition.

# Armes of Battel Part II

## Ammunition and Accessories

**Ammunition Bandoleer:** Musketeers and dragoons alike are almost invariably equipped with ammunition bandoleers, leather baldrics from which small wooden, pottery, or tin containers are suspended used for containing pre-measured charges of blackpowder. 8-15 containers may be found on a bandoleer, but the most common number is 12, nicknamed the "Twelve Apostles".

**Notes:** Cost 4 SP (not inclusive of gunpowder), ENC 1.

**Gunpowder Flask:** A treated leather bag or flask containing enough gunpowder for 12 shots.

**Notes:** Cost 12 SP, ENC 1

**Lead Shot:** A cloth pouch of 24 lead balls suitable for a musket or pistol.

**Notes:** Cost 12 CP, ENC 1.

**Matchcord:** Slow-burning matchcord, sold by the metre. Assume for simplicity that someone maintaining a burning matchcord consumes half a metre for every hour of appropriate readiness, or 4m per day on average in battle or on guard duty.

**Notes:** Cost 2 CP per metre, ENC 1 per 4m



## Weapon Modifications

### Combination Melee Weapon and Pistol:

Since viable alternatives to matchlocks began to surface, inventive craftsmen have combined the mechanisms of flintlock and wheellock pistols with various melee weapons. Grossly inaccurate and costly, this has not prevented such combination weapons from becoming popular with well-heeled individuals, in particular the combination of wheellock or flintlock pistol and hanger sword for use when hunting. Due to the imbalance inherent in such a combination weapon, use of the pistol suffers a -10% penalty.

**Notes:** Combine the cost of the melee weapon and desired pistol, then increase the final cost by 50% (round up to nearest 5 SP). For example, a hanger sword (150 SP) combined with a flintlock pistol (130 SP) costs 420 SP (280 SP + 50%). ENC and AP/HP are as per the largest/heaviest weapon in the combination.

**Hidden Knife:** Some melee weapons, particularly swords such as rapiers, have the ends of their handles hollowed out so as to fit a knife within. This concealed knife usually has the pommel of the sword as part of its own handle, and takes a Combat Action to remove. It is almost impossible to spot or discover short of someone actively checking the pommel and handle.

**Rules:** Knife, *Runequest II*, page 70

**Notes:** Cost 50 SP (inclusive of knife). The ENC and AP/HP of the principle weapon are unchanged.

**Rifling:** Some muskets and pistols are rifled, but these are rare, expensive weapons, not favoured in warfare due to how readily blackpowder fouls a rifled barrel if it

is not meticulously and frequently cleaned. Of the few rifled arms available, the most common is the rifled wheellock musket, though rifled flintlock muskets are also being produced. These rifles are commonly called *Fowling Pieces*, and are primarily used by hunters and gamekeepers. Such individuals are sometimes employed by Parliamentarian and Royalist forces as marksmen in siege situations, tasked with picking off officers and artillery crew at range. Rifling cannot be applied to a donderbus.

**Rules:** Increase the Range of the gun to 8m (Pistol), 15m (Duelling Pistol), 18m (Carbine), or 45m (Musket)

**Notes:** Increase the Cost of the gun by 50%.

## Armour

On the battlefields of Europe, armour can be easily broken down in to two types: leather and plate. Many wearers paint their plate armour pieces with lampblack to protect them against corrosion.

### Period Plate Pricing

With the improvements in period manufacturing, and the common use of plate armour items on the battlefield in the mid-1600s, the per location cost in *Runequest II* for plate armour is far too high to represent the reality. If Gamesmasters want plate armour to be relatively more realistic in cost, they should lower it to 200 SP per location. Soft leather, such as that used in buff coats, was generally about a quarter of the cost of plate armour, so its cost of 50 SP per location remains unchanged.

For Gamesmasters using the adjusted plate cost, the adjusted values are presented to the right of the slash while the normal *Runequest II* values are presented to the left.

**Breastplate & Backplate:** Also called a *Cuirass* or *Corslet*, this armour is worn by harquebusiers, cuirassiers, husaria, pikemen, halberdiers, bucklermen and siege engineers. Often sold as being bullet proof, though this is seldom the case, and many supposed test bullet dents are actually made with the end of a ball-tipped hammer. Husaria have their breastplates polished and decorated with brass fittings. Many cavalymen, especially cuirassiers, and nearly all infantrymen of the types mentioned above, have breastplates with tassets attached (see below), though the tassets are discarded in the case of most infantrymen except siege engineers.

**Hit Locations Covered:** Chest

**AP:** 6

**ENC:** 3

**Cost:** 1,200/200 SP

**Bridle Gauntlet:** An articulated cavalry gauntlet that covers the hand and entire forearm up to the elbow, the bridle gauntlet is worn on the left arm of a few harquebusiers, leaving the right hand unimpeded for easier pistol use. Polish husaria wear a pair of similar gauntlets on both arms called *Karvash*.

**Hit Locations Covered:** Arm (Bridle Gauntlet), Arms (Karvash)

**AP:** 6

**ENC:** 3 (Bridle Gauntlet), 6 (Karvash)

**Cost:** 1,200/200 SP (Bridle Gauntlet), 2,400/400 SP (Karvash)

**Buff Coat:** A shortened version of *Buffalo* despite being made from cowhide, the buff coat is a treated leather coat, skirted and often sleeved too. It is durable and provides some protection, but most importantly provides freedom of movement. All harquebusiers are equipped with sleeved buff coats, while a rare few infantry officers and musketeer units have sleeveless buff coats, principally the Trained Bands of London. The biggest drawback of the buff coat is the fact that it quickly soaks up water and rain and can take days to dry out.

**Hit Locations Covered:** Chest, Abdomen (and Arms if sleeved)

**AP:** 1 (Soft Leather)

**ENC:** 2 (Sleeveless), 4 (Sleeved)

**Cost:** 100 SP (Sleeveless), 200 SP (Sleeved)

**Helmet:** Helmets of many types can be found among the soldiery of Europe. Harquebusiers, Polish husaria, siege engineers, and some cuirassiers make use of *Capeline* helmets, frequently called *Lobster Pots*, but called *Zischägge* in German and *Szyszak* in Polish. This is a pot helmet with a fixed peak, cheek guards, articulated aventail, and nasal bar or tri-bar visor (the latter especially common in England). Cuirassiers also make use of *Close Helms*, knightly helms that fully enclose the head and featured hinged visors. Pikemen, halberdiers, bucklermen and the musketeers of the Trained London Bands are most commonly equipped with *Morion* helmets, a style of helmet widely used by the Spanish *conquistadors* and distinguished by its front and rear pointed peaks and reinforcing top comb. Other helmets frequently used by Pikemen include the *Cabasett*, a tall-crowned helmet with a narrow brim, *Birnhelm*, almost identical to the morion but with a smaller comb and narrower brim, and *Burgonet*, a domed helmet with fitted peak, tail, reinforcing crest, and cheek guards. Some cuirassiers also make use of the *burgonet*, usually with a falling buffe visor. The rarest, and certainly most distinctive, helmet is the *Metal Hat*, literally a wide-brimmed civilian hat, but crafted from metal plate and fitted with a sliding nasal guard. This strange helmet is exclusively the domain of the noble and wealthy, as can be testified by the fact that the late King Charles had one.

**Hit Locations Covered:** Head

**AP:** 6

**ENC:** 3

**Cost:** 1,200/200 SP (Cabasett, Morion), 1,300/220 SP (Burgonet), 1,400/240 SP (Close Helm), 1,500/250 SP (Metal Hat)

**Secrete:** The only dedicated type of armour encountered in use among the otherwise unarmoured musketeers and dragoons, the *secrete* is still uncommon, a metal skullcap that can be easily worn unnoticed beneath a hat or cap. It provides little serious protection as it is so form-fitting, light,

and only covers the top of the head, but is favoured by those soldiers and officers who want to remain unencumbered, or simply prefer the appeal of wearing a fashionable hat rather than a helmet.

**Hit Locations Covered:** Head

**AP:** 2

**ENC:** 1

**Cost:** 150 SP

**Tassets:** Two types of tassets are currently worn: *Short Tassets* and *Long Tassets*. Short tassets are essentially plate skirts attached to the front of many breastplates with hinges to protect the abdomen and groin. Long tassets are worn by cuirassiers and attach the same way, but are articulated pieces that extend from the waist down the front of each leg to the knee where they are secured, giving protection to both the abdomen and both legs. Neither type can be worn without a supporting breastplate.

**Hit Locations Covered:** Abdomen (Short Tassets), Abdomen and Legs (Long Tassets)

**AP:** 6

**ENC:** 3 (Short Tassets), 9 (Long Tassets)

**Cost:** 1,200/200 SP (Short Tassets), 3,600/600 SP (Long Tassets)

**Thigh-Length Cavalry Boots:** The thick thigh-length boots worn by many cavalry, especially harquebusiers, and some dragoons, provide some protection to the legs but are commonly turned down outside of combat.

**Hit Locations Covered:** Legs

**AP:** 1

**ENC:** 2 (Pair of Boots)

**Cost:** 100 SP (Pair of Boots)

**Vambrace:** Now only worn by cuirassiers, a vambrace is an articulated plate sleeve formed of a combination of pauldron, rerebrace, couter, and vambrace.

**Hit Locations Covered:** Arms

**AP:** 6

**ENC:** 6 (Pair of Vambrace)

**Cost:** 2,400 SP/400 (Pair of Vambrace)

# Children of the Zodiac

By Matthew Keevil

## Aries & Taurus Alumni

*Education is not filling a pail but the lighting of a fire.*

– William Butler Yeats

The Comoros corporation is responsible for the management almost all educational establishments on Earth and its orbitals. Innumerable institutions of learning fall under their auspices, ranging from Old City schoolhouses policed by their own internal security force and operated practically like prison complexes to prestigious private schools with age-old traditions and long sponsor lists. Towering above them all, however, are the twin institutions of Aries and Taurus, part of an ambitious project on Comoros' behalf which is overturning the previously defined limits of human potential.

Project Zodiac was formed to create a new, better breed of human being through a combination of genetic engineering and rigorously controlled upbringing. The result being adults who possessed confidence, self-knowledge and ambition, along with the raw talent to back it up, and at the same time being divested of their more human foibles of corruptibility, moral weakness and greed. In so doing they will benefit Comoros' ultimate goal of a new, transfigured humanity. Only time will tell how successful the project and its two schools will be, but there is no denying the effectiveness of their methods in creating consistently brilliant experts in their chosen fields.

Enrolment in the Aries and Taurus academies frequently takes place before the child's conception, with parents tailoring their child's genome to the career that they are expected to take up and the academy ensuring that they will excel at it. For those who take this route, the academy will usually suggest adding their own cocktail of improvements that virtually guarantee the child will be a genius in their field. The augmentations are different for each academy and tuition stream but both give the recipient the ability to absorb direct neural patterning

to a much higher degree than a normal person and increases their receptivity to certain nootropic (intelligence augmenting) drugs. Students undertake their education for the majority of their formative years, right up into adulthood, with most beginning their schooling at the age of 3. For the next 22 years their only contact with the outside world will be infrequent parental visits and educational field trips, but when they graduate, and assuming they survive – pre-emptive political assassinations of these gifted youths are regrettably common – they are virtually guaranteed a place among the elite.

### New Trainings

#### Aries Alumnus

Intelligence or Presence 8+, Attitude, Science, Computers & A.I. or Psychology as Profession. Character Creation Only  
You are one of the rare and fiercely head-hunted graduates of the Aries Institute, trained to be a political mastermind or scientific genius from a young age. Apply the Aries Graduate modifications to your character. In addition you may take special trainings only available to Aries graduates.

#### Taurus Alumnus

Perception or Agility 8+, Attitude or any combat skill as Profession. Character Creation Only  
You are one of the rare and feared graduates of the Taurus Academy, literally born and raised to be one of the finest soldiers or military leaders the world has ever seen. Apply the Taurus Graduate modifications to your character. In addition you may take special trainings only available to Taurus graduates.

## The Aries Institute

Motto: Ex Scientia Mutatio

Translation: From knowledge, change

Operating in Sandhurst, England, former site of the Royal Military Academy, the Aries Institute does no less than train the next generation of political and scientific geniuses. Its alumni have steered the course of the future since

the Institute's inception through their contributions to human knowledge and world relations. Students are divided by subject, with those destined for high-paid R&D positions segregated from those tutored in socioanalysis and group psychology. For the 22 years they spend at the institute they will live and breathe their future profession, with subtle psychological conditioning inducing them to enjoy their studies as well as merely excel in them.

Studies are highly demanding, with a great deal of peer pressure placed upon the students to excel or face ridicule and even potential expulsion. Aries students have been driven to overdosing on nootropics and losing sleep over their studies just to stay ahead. There have even been several instances of failing students committing or attempting suicide rather than face poor grades and some of the only recorded instances of children succumbing to Karoshi syndrome, sudden death from overwork and stress, something that normally only effects corporate executives.

Graduates from the Institute tend to have many personality traits in common as a result of the heavy use of direct neural patterning and their highly disciplined and regimented upbringing. Scientific-stream graduates often seem socially distant and vaguely disinterested in most things outside their specialised field, yet can be incredibly focused and enthusiastic when at work and stretching the limits of their minds. Political-stream graduates are almost the exact opposite, being incredibly charismatic and so astute in their ability to judge a person's character and motivations that they can seem almost telepathic but prefer to leave technical problems up to other people, though they can usually find the best person for the job. Both types of graduate are happiest when they have a problem to solve and quickly grow restless if not presented with one. Aries alumni also rarely use narcotics or imbibe real alcohol so as to avoid damaging their sensitive and painstakingly designed neural architecture.

## Aries Graduate Modifications

Graduates of the Aries Institute gain the following modifications. Aries graduates are not legally considered metahumans or subject to the laws regarding metahumans due to the relatively minor nature of their genetic augmentations. Choose between the Political and Scientific stream modifications;

### Augmented Attributes

Two decades of chemically accelerated neural growth, psychological conditioning and highly demanding tuition expands an Aries alumni's potential along desired paths.

#### Political

+1 Presence, minimum base Presence of 7 (to a minimum base starting Presence of 8). Maximum base unaugmented Presence raised to 11.

#### Scientific

+1 Intelligence, minimum base Intelligence of 7 (to a minimum base starting Intelligence of 8). Maximum base unaugmented Intelligence raised to 11.

### Accelerated Learning

The alumni's education never truly ends, their genetic and psychological propensity for learning allows them to pick up new aspects of their field of expertise much faster than normal.

#### Political

Any Trainings with either Attitude or Psychology skills as a prerequisite cost 6XP instead of the usual 10.

#### Scientific

Any Trainings with Science, Mechtronics or Computers & A.I. as a prerequisite cost 6 XP instead of the usual 10.

### Conditioning Flaws

While effective at achieving their intended result of amplifying the subject's abilities in a particular area, the conditioning does have some unavoidable side-effects.

#### Political

Political-stream Aries alumni are quickly bored by technical problems. They may not spend Conviction points on Assess Tech, Mechtronics, Science or Computers & A.I. rolls.

#### Scientific

Scientific-stream students find social interaction dull, unintuitive and annoying. They may not spend Conviction points on Attitude, Looking Good, Lying & Acting or Psychology rolls.

## The Taurus Academy

Motto: Victoria Fortis Vocat

Translation: Victory calls the bold

Formed after the success of Aries, the Taurus Academy in Osaka, Japan, was formed for the express purpose of training a new generation of soldiers and generals without equal. While it may seem strange for a parent to choose this life for their child, many career soldiers and retired Agents wish to see their legacy continued and Taurus provides ample guarantee that it will. Graduates of the Taurus Academy have gone on to become world-class security experts, UIG peacekeeping commissioners and even master assassins of peerless skill. From an early age its students are instructed in the myriad forms of war, ranging from squad-level command tactics and personal combat to strategic level operations and military logistics. Eventually the students are divided between those to be trained in the Officer program and those to be trained in the Operative program. Officer-stream students are taught the finer points of command and leadership designed to make them expert leaders in combat situations while those in the Operative-stream program learn more in depth personal combat techniques, honing them into flawless killers.

Tuition at Taurus is, if anything, even more demanding than it is at Aries, and it is certainly more brutal. By the time they graduate a Taurus student will at a bare minimum know the tactics and training methods of all major world factions, how to use multiple classes of weapon, guerrilla combat tactics and how to resist torture and interrogation. Many also study the Academy's highly demanding signature martial art of Sagittar (see Incorporated Volume 1). Out of the initial selection group of 20, up to 8 are expected to die, either in training accidents or assassination. However, unlike their fellows in Aries, Taurus students are more than able to defend themselves and there has been

more than one case of an attempted hit resulting in the would-be assassin's death at the hands of their young target. Students who successfully defend themselves in a real combat situation receive high accolades and are added to the Academy's honour roll.

Taurus graduates almost invariably share some personality traits in common thanks to a combination of shared formative experience and extensive neural patterning. Taurus graduates often seem coldly detached, always basing their decisions on a clinical cost / benefit analysis rather than emotion. If they must kill a hundred to save a thousand they will not even hesitate to make a decision. They can kill without remorse or grief, and have often done so many times already by the time they graduate. Despite this they are not psychopaths and are often far more mentally balanced than most ordinary people; they are simply better able to ignore unproductive emotions than others. Anxiety, guilt and depression serve no useful purpose to a soldier and can impede their operational effectiveness and so have no place in their psychology.

*You ever meet Aleksei Grachev? Meanest son of a bitch I ever did see. Hitman for Eurasian Inc., got promoted into the Foxhunt, black ops, blacker than usual, anyway. Decided he wanted an heir, 'cept Aleksei didn't believe in luck and wasn't going to take a chance on a ticket at the genetic lottery in the hope he'd end up with a kid as mean as he was. So he spent a sizeable amount of dough, much of it appropriated from the Foxhunt resource budget, to tailor and enrol his kid in Taurus.*

*'Course, Aleksei being who he was, just a regular Taurus kid wasn't enough for him, so he sent some of his Foxhunt assassins to take the kid out, hoping that his progeny would waste them and get on the honour roll. Well, long story short is the kid did kill the assassins, but then died of his wounds afterwards, so that didn't exactly work out as planned. But good 'ol Aleksei, he just shrugged, decided to get the most out of his money and had the tyke reanimated as a Dead Soldier! Shit, figure dying ought to at least get you a sick-day off school...*

# Children of the Zodiac

## Taurus Graduate Modifications

Graduates of the Taurus Academy gain the following modifications. Taurus graduates are not legally considered metahumans or subject to the laws regarding metahumans due to the relatively minor nature of their genetic augmentations. Choose between the Officer and Operative stream modifications;

## Augmented Attributes

Brutal training and extensive neural augmentation fundamentally changes the student's potential, expanding it beyond normal human limits in certain areas;

### Officer

+1 Perception, minimum base Perception of 7 (to a minimum base starting Perception of 8). Maximum base unaugmented Perception raised to 11.

### Operative

+1 Agility, minimum base Agility of 7 (to a minimum base starting Agility of 8). Maximum base unaugmented Agility raised to 11.

## Accelerated Learning

The alumni's education never truly ends, their genetic and psychological propensity for learning allows them to pick up new aspects of their field of expertise much faster than normal.

### Officer

Officers may purchase the Advanced Command Training. This is functionally identical to the Advanced Command ability possessed by the Shandian Shuai (Dragon Awoken, pg. 31), it is reprinted below for convenience. In addition, so comfortable are they with command positions that they may use this Training once per session without spending a Conviction point.

### Operative

Operatives may purchase Trainings that have Stealth, Close Combat and one other weapon skill of their choice as a prerequisite at a cost of 6XP each, instead of the usual 10XP. Choose this weapons skill at character creation.

## Conditioning Flaws

While effective at achieving their intended result of amplifying the subject's abilities in a particular area, the conditioning does have some unavoidable side-effects.

### Officer

In combat an Officer's calm and calculating manner is reassuring, outside combat it is off-putting and slightly disturbing. Officers may not spend Conviction points on any Presence related roll that is not focused on command or intimidation.

### Operative

Operatives are trained to blend in, be invisible and draw as little attention to themselves as possible. Their maximum base Presence score is reduced to 8.

## Advanced Education Trainings

These Trainings are the result of the sophisticated nervous architecture and intense training that Aries and Taurus students undergo and may not ordinarily be selected by non-alumni without GM permission.





## Advanced Command

Taurus Officer

The Officer may spend a Conviction point and make a 'Presence + Attitude' roll as a full action. If successful their XS on the roll is converted into temporary Conviction points that may be divided among any allied troops (including Agents) within earshot. You may not personally benefit from any Conviction generated in this way. Unspent temporary Conviction is lost at the end of the scene.

## Zodiac Child

Aries or Taurus Alumni, Character Creation Only

You are an unparalleled success of Project Zodiac. Your conditioning took exceptionally well, allowing you to accept more varied training and making you even closer to perfection than your fellow graduates. You gain both Accelerated Learning traits of your school. However, any Rank Point losses you suffer are increased by -5, great things are expected of you but that draws more attention to your failures, and people are much less willing to forgive them given their higher expectations of your abilities.

## Genius

Aries or Taurus Alumni

Select one skill apart from your Professional skill, you are now considered to be Professional in that skill as well. This Training may only be taken once.

## Omniglot

Aries or Taurus Alumni, Knowledge of at least 5 Languages

You have studied languages and the similarities between linguistic groups to the point where you can quickly decipher the underlying syntactical structure, allowing you to make, albeit disjointed, conversation with almost anyone. You may communicate with people who you do not share a language with, but take a -2 on all Presence rolls while doing so. At the GM's discretion, people speaking particularly rare languages or who

speak one which is merely uncommon but have been isolated long enough to develop a completely alien dialect may still require a successful 'Intelligence + Arts & Culture' roll to communicate with.

## Perfect Killer

Aries Operative, Assassinate Training

You may use the Assassinate Training against an opponent on the first round of combat, even if they are aware of your presence, providing you win initiative against them. You must select the target of the Assassination attempt before rolling initiative.

## Psychoanalyse

Aries Political-stream, Psychology 8

Your highly developed empathic sense makes other people an open book to you, with enough information on a person's character you can accurately predict how they will react under any imaginable circumstance. Providing you can either engage the subject in a fairly lengthy relaxed conversation, about an hour is sufficient, or have access to detailed dossiers of their movements and psyche profile, you can determine exactly what circumstances would be necessary to make them take a certain course of action. This requires a successful 'Perception + Psychology' roll, modified by the level of detail in the information you have. A failure on the roll means that you cannot yet determine the course of action necessary to cause the desired outcome. A Critical Failure results in an outcome which is actively misleading. Obviously this training requires some adjudication by the GM.

## Pure Science

Aries Scientific-stream, Science 8, Assess Tech 6

No physical principle is beyond your understanding, you even understand quantum strangeness at an instinctual level. When dealing with Xeno, Archon or other rare and unusual technology or science, any penalties you take associated with understanding or modifying it are reduced by -4.

## Socioanalyse

Aries Political-stream, Psychology 10, Corp. Knowledge 8

You can correctly determine the general sociopolitical ramifications of any event. This can be on a local level, affecting a small community such as a village or city block, or on a geopolitical level. You can even work backwards from a desired sociopolitical outcome to determine exactly what would be necessary to achieve it. Of course this also means you know exactly how far you can go before causing a political incident... Very few Aries alumni are this skilled and they are alternatively looked to for guidance and watched carefully as they have the potential to manipulate world events like puppet masters. Using this Training requires 8 hours of rumination and a successful 'Intelligence + Corp. Knowledge' roll with a penalty depending on the size of the social group in question;

Very Small -0  
e.g. Single corporate office, small company, hamlet.

Small -2  
e.g. Whole corporate department, UIG area HQ, village.

Large -4  
e.g. Minor corporation, old-city or Spire.

Very Large -8  
e.g. Major corporation, the Order of the True Faith, UIG.

A failure on the roll means that you cannot yet determine the course of action necessary to cause the desired outcome. A Critical Failure results in an outcome which is actively misleading.

## Undivided Focus

Aries and Taurus students are one of the few groups who can select the Undivided Focus Training. (The Mind Unbound, page 42).

# Xiombarg's Children

By John R White

*A tribe of Alofian hermaphrodites at his heels, the man rode east-wards towards the Dakwinski steppe, hoping to reach fabled Xanardwys before the snows blocked pass.*

– *The Black Blade's Summoning*

## Alofians

Few travellers in the Young Kingdoms find any compelling reasons to visit the barbarous 'half-men' of Alofia. Yet a few resolute traders are prepared to pass through their realm on the trail towards the remote and distant city of Xanardwys.

Centuries ago, small communities of outcasts and adventurers from Tarkesh maintained a precarious existence along the upper reaches of Northern Continent. This region is made habitable by the presence of meagre soil and the warmth of the landscape's volcanic features, which prevent the land and sea from becoming covered in ice throughout the entire year. Few womenfolk were amongst the original migrants, and in consequence kidnappings, feuds and bloodshed were constantly erupting amongst those men who were desperate to acquire wives or lovers. Eventually, as the dwindling and fractious communities faced total collapse, some of the patriarchs and their supporters took to piracy and the occasional wrecking of passing vessels. Female slaves became especially valued pieces of plunder and became important symbols of status for pirate chieftains.

Some three hundred years ago, one of the pirate chieftains acquired a beautiful female slave named Alof. Unknown to her captor, Alof was a favoured servant of the Chaos Goddess Xiombarg. Over the next two winters she proceeded to covertly gain converts to her Goddess from amongst the downtrodden women of the hold. Eventually she felt ready to turn her secret cult of slaves against their loutish masters. During a single night, whilst most of the men folk were in a drunken stupor, the women slew all of them as sacrifices to

Xiombarg. After the carnage the Goddess herself was invoked and listened to her worshipers pleas. The liberated women asked their Goddess to ensure they were forever protected against becoming the victims of men's lust and power. The Goddess proved happy to oblige and granted their boon, but she chose to do so in an unforeseen fashion. Her worshippers were all transmuted to hermaphrodites who potentially would have no further need of men. Subsequently the new race called themselves Alofians and proceeded to overrun and sacrifice or enslave the folk of the neighbouring steadings. The victorious Alofians found they had no skills sufficient to use the boats of the settlements and in consequence these were dismantled for use as building materials or fuel.

Currently, some dozen Alofian communities exist, each a short distance from the cold, sea-lashed, shoreline of dark rock and obsidian. The buildings are typically squat, crude low towers of un-mortared black stone roofed with turf. Slaves maintain small fields of oats which supplement the usual meat and kelp diet of the Alofians. All the settlements are located near to thermal springs and geysers and are usually cloaked by a constant mist of steam. During the long winters, most of the Dakwinski Steppe land is a bleak mass of blizzard lashed snow. As the new seasons arrive the lands to the east briefly transform into vast flat tundra of soil, scrub and wetland.

Alofians uniformly have lithe builds, long limbs and androgynous faces with perfectly symmetrical features. Although they lack facial and body hair their scalps grow dense manes of hair. These locks are typically allowed to grow long and are braided to personal taste, typically incorporating small bones and ornaments from defeated foes. Likewise, various other trophy items of jewellery and adornment from slain opponents are sported about their person by Alofians. Their voices are unbroken but are beautifully melodic. Both male and female reproductive organs are

present in an individual, though these are underdeveloped in comparison to normal humans.

Clothing is generally of crude coats, cloaks and leggings of furs and hides. The garments worn in the cold wilderness are bulky but provide efficient and vital insulation. When at ease inside their settlements, assorted clothes gained through trade or as booty are utilized.

## Special Characteristics

Alofian Characteristics are adjusted as follows:

STR -1, SIZ -1, DEX +1, CHA +1

Alofians are either from a Barbarian culture or the Slave profession, if the latter they qualify as initiates for the Alofian's Xiombarg cult.

Due to their curious biology, neither the Man nor the Woman Rune will take effect against an Alofian unless the two Runes are stacked together.

Once maturity is reached Alofians age at a slower rate than humans, some live for a century and a half, though given their bloodthirsty culture few attain such a venerable lifespan. Alofians characters only have to test for aging effects on alternative years after reaching 40 and the penalty to Resilience and Persistence aging tests for years over 40 is halved.

## Customs

No gender specific terms or titles are ever used by the Alofian's when referring to each other. They have no sexual discrimination and always judge men and women entirely on their individual merits. Alofians suffer from low rates of fertility, both amongst themselves or when mating with men and women. Offspring are rare, and only an quarter are born as true biological Alofians, the other children being kept as favoured slaves. Most slaves,

whatever their origin, are generally well treated, though they are not allowed to show acknowledgment of any deity but Xiombarg and only a small number are allowed to take training with arms. Any slaves who try to escape, or otherwise fall foul of their owners, are usually sent to fight in the arena. Most slaves aspire to undergo metamorphosis into true Aloffians through reaching full initiation into the cult of Xiombarg.

The Aloffians trade occasionally with outsiders; these are usually whalers who visit the coastline. Goods of steel or iron are especially prized by Aloffians and are bartered for furs, jet and amber. The customs of the Aloffians are always explained to any traders along with a warning that their freedom and all their goods are forfeit if they break any of these strictures. The neighbouring Kardik nomads generally shun and stay away from the Aloffians, hunting down and slaying any who presume to hunt game or men in areas the nomads are using. Any Kardik falling into Aloffian hands are slaughtered on the spot or else sent straight to the sacred arenas. Most Aloffians seem wary of the Pale Sea and, although slaves are allowed to scavenge and fish for the bounty of the shoreline, no boats are ever allowed to be built. Horses are rare in Aloffian society, though a few of the greatest warriors own prized Bastaan steeds captured from the Kardik nomads.

Prowess of arms is a skill all true Aloffians cherish. Most disputes are typically resolved through combat. Disagreements between steadings frequently degenerate into armed conflict, though this is

conducted in a ritualized manner. Usually combats between steadings are a series of duels to first blood, though warriors can agree to fight each other with the loser's freedom becoming forfeit. Given the small, aggressive populations and low birth rates of Aloffian society these traditions avoid constant blood baths that would threaten the existence of the entire race.

### Weapons and Armour

When hunting or raiding, purpose made armour is rarely worn, though winter-proof garments provide the equivalent of soft leather armour. Some seasoned warriors wear enough trinkets in their braids to provide protection comparative to a soft leather hood. In the settlements themselves, an assortment of mismatched captured armour can be worn if needed and a few shields are also available.

Knives of steel or flint are worn by most warriors. Obsidian bladed spears and javelins are usually carried when hunting and slings are used to cast stones at game or when ritual combat is impractical against human foes. Each warrior however uses a kain-ghahn or a kain-ghahn-mor when engaged in battle, ceremonies or ritual contest.

### Offensive Combat Manoeuvre

**Rip (Aloffian Serrated Weapons)** - The attacker seeks to deepen a wound from a blow they have just landed by drawing back their serrated weapon in an action which deepens the wound and tears at sinews and organs. If an attack has overcome the Armour Points of a target and caused an injury, the attacker may roll all weapon damage dice twice and then take the highest result.

### Kain-Ghanh

This weapon is a hybrid weapon which combines a wooden club with a primitive sword. The two bladed sides of the weapon are formed by securing precisely knapped pieces of obsidian in a spaced row, using a groove cut into the weapon and an adhesive substance. Although the 'teeth' of the weapon are easily blunted or broken it can create horrific injuries by being dragged backwards through a wound it has inflicted. Aloffian warriors usually carry spare pieces of obsidian for undertaking repairs. These weapons are of important sacred significance to an Aloffian warrior and are the token of their compact with Xiombarg. The name given this weapon means 'Teeth of the Ghanh'. The Ghanh is a shark-like monstrosity from a plane of Xiombarg's and is one of her most favoured creatures.

### Kain-Ghanh-mor

A larger version of the kain-ghahn, some can reach up to two metres in length. The 'Great-Teeth of the Ghahn' is used with two hands.

### Fighting Style

#### The Teeth of the Ghanh ( Kain-Ghanh and Kain-Ghanh-Mor )

This style is practised by the Aloffian warriors of the Northern Continent when using the different sized sacred blades of their cult. The weapons are quite versatile, and foes marked for capture are often rendered helpless by blows from the heavy blunt tip of the weapon. The weapons edges, which are tipped with pieces of razor sharp obsidian, can be used to inflict cuts on a foe, which are made more grievous when

Weapon	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	Size	Reach	Combat Manoeuvres	ENC	AP/HP
Kain-Ghanh (club) (sword)*	1D6 1D8	7/- 9/7	M	M	Stun Bleed, Rip	2	4/4
Kain-Ghanh-Mor (club) (sword)*	2D4 2D6	9/9	H	L	Stun Bleed, Rip	3	4/10

\*When used as a sword, rather than a club, this weapon suffers a -5% to hit and -1 damage penalty for each hit point lost from the weapon.

# Xiombarg's Children

the blade's wielder man manages to sweep back the blade and saw a deeper welt into flesh. Use of the blade however is sparing at times as the inserted shards soon lose their edge against armour or other weapons.

## The Cauldron of Xiombarg

Each settlement has an arena that is a steam shrouded natural amphitheatre in which alcoves for spectators and sets of stairs have been worked into the green black obsidian walls. Here challenges are resolved between Alofians who use their personal blades. Fights are usually to first blood or surrender, but occasionally are fought to the death. Sometimes captured and goaded beasts are used as opponents. Hard soled sandals are worn but no armour is permitted, save for tribal battle-braids. Prisoners or slaves are used for the sacred duels where they are expected to fight to the death against an Alofian opponent. Even should a prisoner win, the head priest will interpret Xiombarg's will as to whether the slave has won freedom or must face other contests. Blood shed in the arenas is held especially sacred to Xiombarg and a dripping blade which has just been used to kill an opponent can be examined by an Alofian skilled in divination.

The arena floor is exceptionally hazardous as besides sharp outcrops of jagged obsidian that jut into the combat area, large boulders of the same material have been rolled onto the arena floor. Small geysers sporadically pump out a scalding spurt of water and enveloping, hissing clouds of steam that temporarily obscure the combatants. A combatant who falls heavily onto a boulder of obsidian will suffer 1D4 damage to a location. A geyser

erupting under a creature attempting to jump over it causes 1D3 points of damage to each location and ignores any armour protection worn. This is also treated as a Bash attack from a SIZ 40 opponent with the target hurled in a random direction. Within a metre of a bursting geyser 1D6 random locations are hit for 1 point of scalding damage each, again ignoring worn armour (if a location is rolled more than once it does not inflict any extra damage). The imminent eruption of a geyser can be detected with a Lore (Home Region) roll by an Alofian, other individual's needing to roll POW as a percentage.

## Alofian Adventurers

Most Alofians are from a barbaric culture. Professions available are Champion, Craftsman, Hunter, Priest, Warrior and Tracker. Adventurers may be slaves from other cultures, but must have achieved Initiate level in Xiombarg's cult and the gift of Xiombarg's Blessing.

## Worship of the Sword Queen

The Cult has no ties with other Sword Ruler cults or Pan Tang. Xiombarg is usually portrayed as a hermaphrodite in the primitive representations the Alohians carved from bone or drift wood. The titles taken by cult members are different to those of other Xiombarg cults:

Kain-Ghanh Bearer (Lay Member)  
Kain-Ghanh Weilder (Initiate)  
Kain-Ghanh Singer (Acolyte)  
Kain-Ghahm Blessor (Priest)  
Kain-Ghahn Champion (Champion)

## Cult Gifts

### Xiombarg's Blessing

The Adventurer becomes a true hermaphrodite Alofian and adjusts their Characteristics accordingly. This costs 1 point of power for every 10 years of the cultist's age (rounded up) and must be taken by any man or woman undergoing initiation into the cult.

### Cult Skills

The 'Teeth of Ghanh' Combat Style is the only weapon skill taught as a Cult Skill.

### Cult Runes

The Darkness rune is not taught but the Air rune is instead.

### Cult Summonings

Summon Devil Dog of the Dharzi is replaced with Summon Ghahn.

### Summon Ghanh

**Magic Point Cost:** 12pts

**Requisites/components:** Pact (Xiombarg), Rune of Air, Rune of Chaos

This unique creature is a favoured pet of Xiombarg. In consequence the chance to summon it can never exceed the summoner's own Pact (Xiombarg). Any individual who slays the beast will be marked out for vengeance by Xiombarg. In addition, the Goddess will not be kindly disposed towards one of her worshippers if she feels the Ghanh came to any significant harm through their stupidity or rashness. This fearsome creature is believed to be an air spirit from the plane of Xerlenes that has been corrupted and transmuted by chaos.

## The Ghahn

*It flew upon billowing crimson wings and its grinning face was like a shark. It looked like something which should have inhabited the sea rather than the air, and this was confirmed by the way it flew - with slow, undulating wings as if through liquid. Row upon row of sharp fangs filled its red mouth and its body was the size of a large bull, its wing-span nearly thirty feet.*

*Out of the frightful pit it came, its jaws opening and closing as it already anticipated its feast. Its golden eyes burned with hunger and with rage*

– The Queen of Swords

This huge, shark-like demon leads Queen Xiombarg's Chaos packs into battle on other plains of the Million Spheres. It is incapable of speech and has a vulnerable soft area of hide on top of its head.

It is apparently unique, though it appears to have been killed on at least two occasions by different aspects of the Eternal Champion.



## The Ghahn

		D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	50	1–2	Tail	6/18
CON	36	3–6	Hindbody	6/19
SIZ	50	7–11	Forebody	6/20
INT	8	12–13	Right Wing	5/17
POW	16	14–15	Left Wing	5/17
DEX	19	16	Right Fin	6/13
CHA	—	17	Left Fin	6/13
		18–19	Head	6/18
		20	Head	1/1
<i>Combat Actions</i>	3	<i>Typical Armour</i>	Hide. No armour penalty	
<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+2D12	<i>Traits</i>	Flying	
<i>Magic Points</i>	16	<i>Skills</i>	Athletics 71%, Brawn 104%, Perception 75%, Persistence 43%, Resilience 95%	
<i>Movement</i>	20m	<i>Combat Styles</i>	Bite 90%, Crush 70%	
<i>Strike Rank</i>	+14			

## Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	L	T	1D10+2D12	As for Head

The Ghahn can choose to grapple an opponent or object of Size 21 to Size 100 using its Crush skill which involves it using both its wings. The Ghahn cannot bite a foe or object it is grappling in this manner.

# Xiombarg's Children

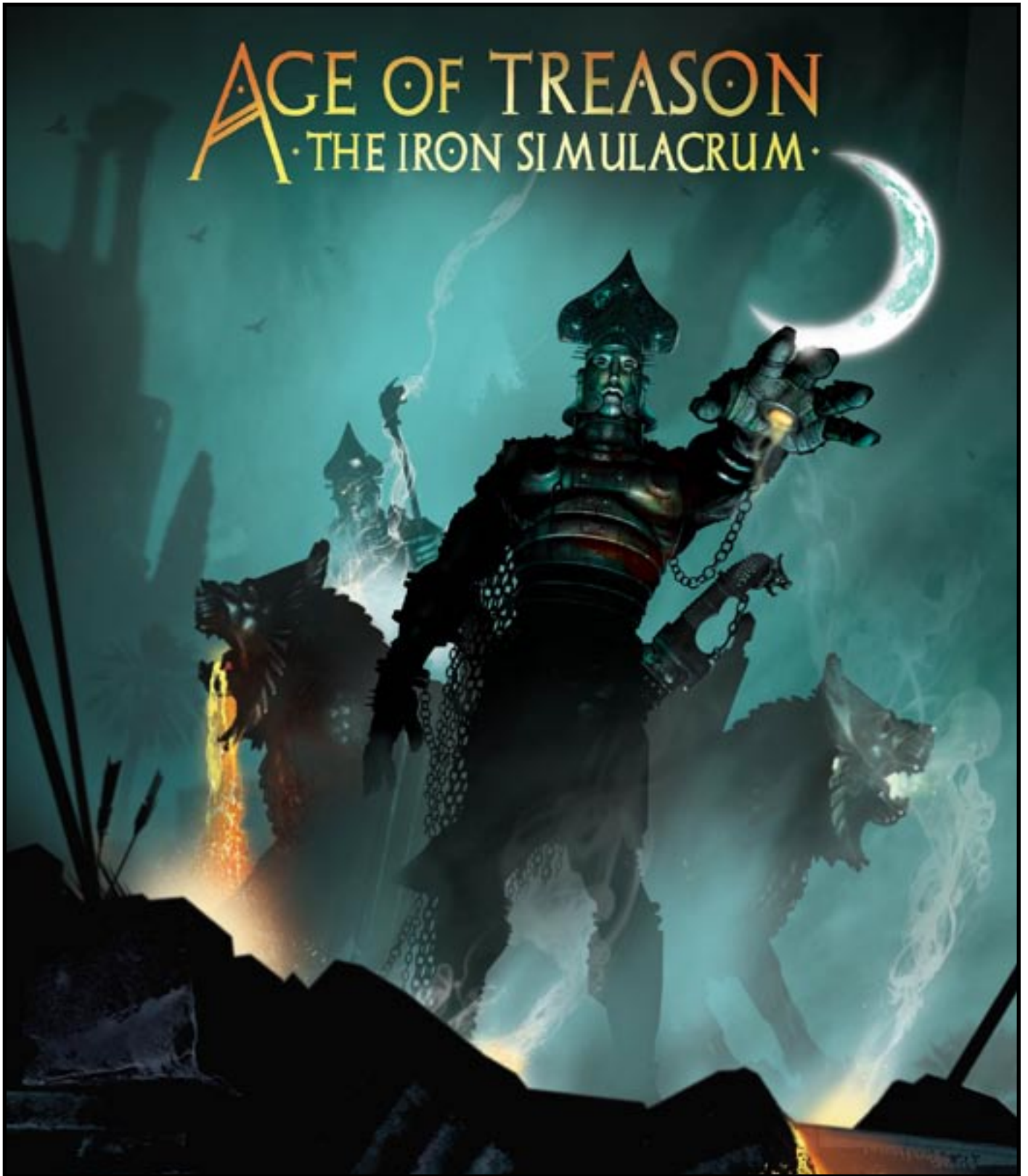
## Where Ice and Fire Meet

### - Questing to Alofia

Despite the fearsome legends of the men-women of this inhospitable shore a few individuals have an interest in visiting this remote realm.

- Lans Dralis is a young bastard son of a Jarl who made a drunken oath to avenge some of his ancestors who were amongst the men folk slaughtered by Alof and her followers centuries ago. Although he deeply regretted his impetuosity the following morning, Lans made the oath in a feast hall before the local nobility and feels compelled to see his quest through. He has a longship but only the most desperate of the area's raiders have decided to accompany his expedition. In consequence he is looking for freebooters who are prepared to join his crew for a share of the plunder he hopes to win.
- Sarnad T'alaan is a Pan Tangian sorcerer with a powerful rival in Hwamgaarl. Sarnad has divined his enemy cannot be killed by *'man nor woman, nor beast or demon either!*' He has decided that this obstacle can be overcome by obtaining the services of an Alofian assassin. As he means to keep his plot a secret from his countrymen until its resolution, he decides to recruit the services of foreign hirelings. He needs his foreign lackeys to accompany him to Alofia where he will try to hire a suitable warrior. Should this fail he will be prepared to use his arcane powers and his expendable pawns to kidnap an Alofian who he will then try to subvert to his will through drugs and sorcery. Should he complete this initial stage of his scheme he will secretly return to Pan Tang. From here he may well decide the assassin's mission would benefit from the support of the adventurers in his service.





**Coming to RuneQuest this year!**

# The City of Lof: Uncovered

By Jason Gaerke

*This may be our only chance to unshackle Magnamund, Ulnar. My fellow Durenese – we shall hold the line; take the Sun-Sword and plunge it into Vashna...deliver the vengeance of our alliance into his black heart!*

— Last recorded words of Clan Chief Rainer Lof, Annals of the Battle of Moytura Pass, MS 3799.

## HISTORY OF LOF

The city and associated lands known as Lof in the Kingdom of Durenor are a territorial holding codified by the Old Council Treaty of Rymerift in MS 2837. With the Trelsk Annexation of MS 4000, the area of Lof reached its present size. Consisting of the largest governed province in the kingdom, Lof is great in both land and sea holdings. Being a waypoint for merchants headed to other ports, the City of Lof serves as the focal point for virtually all trade in the Kingdom north-west of Hammerdal.

Local historians assert the area of Lof and the Northland Marches was once a portion of the ancient Realm of Cynx, and a few sharp-eyed locals are able to point out certain stones bearing the unmistakable marks of dragon blast-fire. Other specialised historians point to sparse ruins about the Northland Marches bearing marks of the Elder Magi and these were likely outposts during their golden era. Other archaeological remnants from ancient Herbalish posts near Lof are evident when being recycled for use in modern construction. The City of Lof itself is believed to be built on the ruins of an ancient Shianti settlement. Such places, if local historians and common-talk are to be believed, were likely influenced by the warmer climate earlier in history, when the Moonstone was on Magnamund. Nowadays, the land to the north of Lof is less populous because of the harsh weather, but this has assisted in preserving evidence of the prior inhabitants.

In MS 2830 The Clan Lof, fresh from their landfall at Bolde, migrated north and settled in the area north and west of

the Hammerdal Range. Their travelling companions – Clans Trelsk and Durwood – settled along the way on the Durenese east coast and staked land claims overlapping each other. During this expansionary period of Durenese history, there was no common law but rather ‘Kin Rule’ – each clan had its own rules and laws, and often a mindset where ‘the actions of one clan member speak for the actions of all our clan’. The resulting small land claims of individuals quickly became matters of internecine conflict between the clans.

The years MS 2830 to MS 2837 were bloodied by constant internal warfare between the clans. The entire coastline of Durenor was awash in blood with small scale maritime raids complementing greater battles inland over the boundaries between the coast and Hammerdal Range. Clan Trelsk was sandwiched tightly between Lof and Durwood and aggressively fought both, trying to expand towards the Hammerdal Range.

In light of such turmoil, High Chief Margaux Lof in MS 2831 ordered the construction of a fortified coastal city bearing his clan name on top of the ruins of an ancient Shianti outpost. Apart from having an excellent defensive location, the city served as a staging area for Lof’s war effort. Margaux Lof was intent upon claiming the overland land route to the north, as ownership of such a large tract of territory would confirm Lof as the pre-eminent Durenese clan.

The MS 2832 Treaty of Oeheme between Lof, Trelsk, and Durwood made progress in establishing recognised boundaries for each of the three clans and was ratified. The treaty placed obelisks at the extent of each clan’s land, and proclaimed ‘*a righteous, generous, peaceable, and most reasonable marking of ground belonging to each clan, from now to the end of Magnamund.*’ The warrior-lords of Durwood and Trelsk were satisfied with the apparent concessions of land made to them in exchange for peace and set about building their own cities in MS 2832. They were deceived.

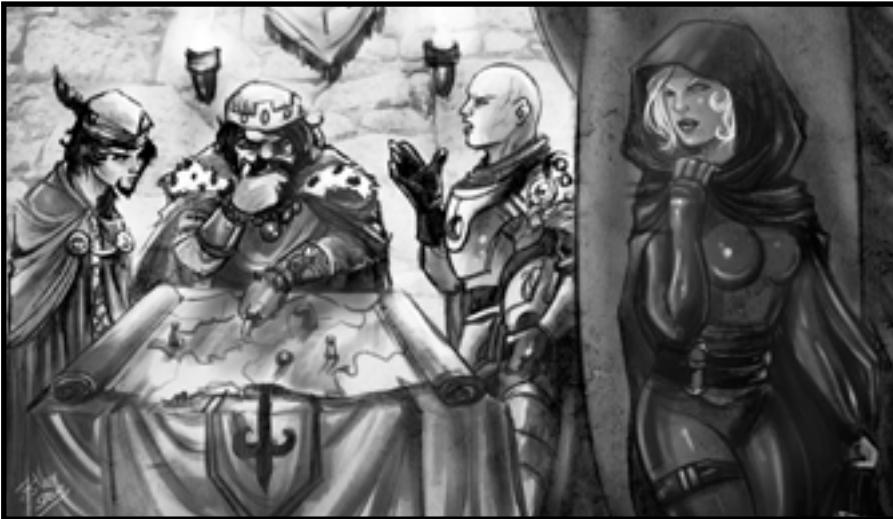
Unbeknownst to Trelsk and Durwood, Lof simultaneously had envoys discussing a similar treaty with the clans Bax and Blave to ensure his southern borders were secure. Immediately after the southern border agreement was inked, couriers were dispatched and the Trelsk and Durwood envoys were murdered as Lof forces rapidly swept into the lands of their rivals. Such a devious plan caught Trelsk and Durwood off guard; within a year Margaux Lof had taken huge swaths of land east of the Hammerdal Range and was laying siege to the Trelsk and Durwood cities. Success would have all but given Lof control of the entire northern half of Durenor.

Spies from Trelsk infiltrated the court of Lof and found evidence that, upon the conclusion of the Northland Marches campaign, Margaux Lof intended to swing around south of the Hammerdal range and attack both Verlik and Bolde. The evidence was astounding – in the early expansionary years of Durenor, maps of the continent were sparse and inaccurate. Yet the spies discovered a surveyed map clearly showing the critical details of the Durenese peninsula and, more importantly, Lof’s battle plans for the coming year.

Late in MS 2833 clan chiefs Aldaine Trelsk, Bruyere Durwood, and Gildas Bolde quietly formed an alliance and sent forces to the southern Hammerdal range forests to set up an ambush and the Lof invasion force was wiped out. Once word of success arrived back at the alliance clan chiefs, the war lords suddenly and unexpectedly mounted an all out attack on Lof, moving past Oeheme and sacking the City of Lof. Unable to rally his troops quickly enough away from the siege of Durwood and Trelsk, Margaux Lof was trapped between the unyielding northern coast and the united forces of his enemies to his south.

Margaux Lof was desperate and ordered his cousin, who bore a close resemblance, to hoist the parlay flag. Upon questioning the





order, the clan chief muttered, 'My dearest cousin, you mean the world to me, but until now, I never realised just how much the world was worth...' and beheaded him with a single stroke. After wrapping the head and switching uniforms, Margaux Lof parlayed to end the conflict and offered the head as proof of the change in leadership. In disguise, Margaux offered his 'own' head in exchange for a peaceable settlement and an end to the fighting. Deception is a game in which few Durenese excel – Margaux Lof was a notable exception.

The head of Alban Lof still sits in the battle posts of Tak as a trophy and bears the name of Margaux. Some claim to hear his death scream and see an apparition of him on full moon nights on the anniversary of his demise.

Two years later, Margaux Lof came out of hiding in the Northlands and led an assault in MS 2836 to reclaim the City of Lof and nearby Sentry Island from Trellsk occupation. Common folk said the ghost of Margaux Lof had arisen to reclaim all that had been lost. The jaws of the other clan chiefs dropped when the 'ghost' appeared at the MS 2837 Treaty of the Rymerift, which fixed clan boundaries and finally brought peace.

With military expansion now beyond his capabilities, Margaux Lof focused on economic expansion with gusto. Port Bax was established in MS 2837 and was a threat

to the commercial interests of Lof. The now aging clan chief ordered the City of Lof rebuilt, with 'accommodations any sailor of the seas would envy,' and so in 2839 the port city was rededicated. The temperate weather and sheltered docks assisted in making Lof a competitive port on the western shores of Durenor. Roads initially built for conquest proved equally valuable for mercantile interests, guaranteeing control of the major overland traffic and trade to the Northlands. The region of Lof flourished for well over a century.

The influence and power of Lof grew until MS 3004 when the weather and Kaltersee suddenly and inexplicably grew colder and windier, and snow covered the City of Lof in the winter months. Some sages suggest this is when the Shianti departed and took the Moonstone with them. Regardless of the reason, Lof and the northlands suffered a tremendous population decline and a weakened economy. Over several decades a significant exodus occurred as sea trade shifted predominantly to the warmer Ports of Bax and Ryme. For the next half-century, Lof struggled to find a purpose as a city.

In MS 3072 the Darklords appeared in the far west and ushered in the Age of the Black Moon with their War of Desecration. Partially from foresight and partly from whim, Lof found a new purpose when clan Chief Onesimus Lof declared in MS 3079 that the city was to establish a formal naval force and allotted a portion of the

city for military purposes. Despite voices of opposition decrying this wasteful venture, the decree stood, and was followed in earnest. With word of the rise of Darklord Vashna in MS 3192, a later ruler ordered the construction of the Great Kaltersee Wall of Lof. Using the ruins of an abandoned Herbalist temple near the village of Romvar, Romvar Quarry was created and had the added benefit of providing a source of iron ore, copper and superb quality limestone.

By MS 3350 the great wall surrounded the city and extending impressively into the Kaltersee giving a safe harbour for commercial and military ship alike. Near the end of the century, the merchant and public outcry against the taxes of the clan lords reached a crescendo. All were silenced in MS 3400 when a patrol of never-before-seen winged beasts flew over much of Durenor and bizarre, enormous fanged wolves began appearing in the forests, later identified as scouting Kraan and Doomwolves from the Darklands. A panic ensued in Durenor for which the disjointed clan lords had no answers. All believed the Darklords would eventually extend their claws to the peninsula of Durenor; their scouts were already making the initial reconnaissance. In this time of uncertainty, the divided clans of Durenor ceased calling themselves Ulnarians. A sense of unity and mutual defence was fostered. Henceforth, they called themselves after their adopted land; they no longer referred to their Ulnarian blood clans; they now called themselves by one common name: Durenese.

In MS 3434 a fisherman noticed an unusual fleet of ships further out in the Kaltersee and signalled them. These people clearly were not of Ulnarian blood, but were sociable and spoke a similar language. The ships made landfall near the city of Lof, and Clan Lord Anslem Lof greeted them eagerly. The newcomers called themselves 'Sommlending,' and after staying ashore for a short while, virtually all left for lands further west. Despite the warnings of the dangers, the Sommlending seemed to be on a holy calling. Other tales detail the legends of how the Darklords were driven

# The City of Lof: Uncovered

back by King Kian to their foul domain and the birth of Sommerlund.

With the eventual discovery of the Vale of Hammerdal and its lush interior, the political rule shifted to Hammerdal with the construction of the Hammerdal Range Tunnels in MS 3460 to MS 3501. Trade in Lof increased a little, but clearly the lack of any easy access route to political representation from the northern reaches indicated the reduced standing of Lof and the northlands.

During the First Vassa-Durenese war of MS 3511 to 3513, Lof supplied a significant number of warships and served as a troop deployment centre. A common complaint was the uneven representation of clans in the war – Lof supplied a great many

ships and soldiers for the common good but many other Durenese regions did not. An increased sense of disagreement in the Durenese Grand Council prevailed, which continued for several decades until the growing aggression of Darklord Vashna made it clear that the council was becoming ineffective with competing agendas. Each region was concerned about the ever growing reach of the Darklords, but no one clan would step forth and commit to supporting Sommerlund in any other manner but mercantile trade.

Some 250 years later, on the eve of war, the Durenese Grand Council was dissolved and Alin chosen as the first High King of Durenor in MS 3797. Under the new crown, King Alin in MS 3798 ordered the formation of a coast guard, lighthouse

and aviary communiqué organization, which Lof was tasked with creating and coordinating. Such a demanding scope of work improved the mood of the people of Lof; long neglected and ignored by the political systems in the nation, the people were given a greater purpose and reason for being. Now the people were not simply plying their daily chores in an endless and unrecognised grind, now the common citizen of Lof was tasked individually with the mutual defence and protection of their fellow Durenese citizen; none were excluded. Any person of any background could grab a stone and mortar and assist in building a great network of lighthouses and look with pride on the intent and result their craft. Any person with the intellect and tenacity to learn the defence communication system could elevate their position and perform a highly demanding calling. Commoners with a natural kinship with animals intermingled with nobles to utilize the aviary mews to speed military communications across the nation.

The alliance with Sommerlund against the Darklords came at great cost. Many Durenese who departed through the gates of Lof never returned. At the Battle of Moytura in MS 3799, all known heirs to the Clan Lof died leaving the lands without a hereditary leader and instead a 'temporary' government took over, led by merchant guilds, but became mired in mediocrity and meaningless legislation.

The Clans of Trelsk and Durwood, renowned for their exceptional warrior skills and fighting with distinction at the Battle of Moytura, were singled out for revenge and annihilated by the trickery of Darkland agents two-hundred years later in MS 4000. This ultimately doubled the lands administered by Lof, as both Trelsk and Durwood were reduced in population to a mere 10% of their original numbers and enormous tracts of land, by decree of the king, were annexed to the management of Lof. Land last controlled by Clan Chief Margaux Lof over 1,000 years previously was now returned to Lof by royal decree.



After the Great War had passed, Lof returned to normalcy, and stagnation was unfortunately the result. The city received a jolt of new life by MS 3952 when the Kalte outpost of Ljuk was constructed with significant investment by several merchants from Lof. The influx of rare furs and precious gems from the icy wasteland of Kalte briefly made the City of Lof an eminent port city once again; if one wanted the best furs and gems, Lof is where one went. Unfortunately, a fracture in the trade agreement splintered the Ljuk Trading Company founding merchants among Sommerlund, Ragadorn and other Durenese ports.

In later years, any Durenese wartime event of significance involved the City of Lof through either naval or transport functions on behalf of all Durenor. Such events included:

MS 4111-4118	Durenese Peninsula War
MS 4201-4202	The First Ice War (against Kalte)
MS 4221-4222	The Second Ice War (against Kalte)
MS 4219	The Kirlundin War
MS 4432-4434	First Vassa-Sommlending War
MS 4040	Defense of Ragadorn from Jenghi invasion
MS 4514	King commissions Naval Academy of Lof
MS 4866-4867	The Lastlands War
MS 4975-4979	Second Vassa-Sommlending War (Sommerlund and Durenor)
MS 5040	Kalte Incursion
MS 5050	Sommerlund-Darkland War
MS 5070	Gnaag Darkland War

## Physical Description

Standing on the Kaltersee shoreline with white limestone harbour walls, the City of Lof is a welcome sight for ship captains, with Signal Point Lighthouse guiding them to the nearest available dock. Some captains claim the waters near the port of Lof were

blessed by Ishir and are unnaturally calm. Surrounding the city are walls of limestone construction, with two massive gates of blessed Durenese Oak. Eleven blockhouses dispersed through the perimeter wall monitor the Central Durenese Plain and surrounding territory.

City of Lof sports a functional design supporting the overland traffic along the Durenese coast but is primarily a port of call for Durenese Military and merchant ships. The enormous docks are elaborate, consisting of many commercial and military quays of colossal size and a commensurate support system. The docks are the primary source of income for the city, with local fishing and farming produce exported from here.

A large Durenese flag flies from the traditional Lof Clan house in the centre of the city. It flies the Royal Arms of Durenor, the Clan Lof and, beneath it, several other flags of ally nations.

The city layout is rather simple. For those wanting to pass strait through Lof using the overland roads, it does not take long to traverse the city and reach the opposing gates. Some merchants complain travelling through the city is too easy; visitors do not look at their wares long enough. The main overland road through the city has a wide thoroughfare with several major roads leading to the docks and there are many merchant houses along its length.

Travelling through the city is a display of unsettling contrasts; one side of the street displays the exacting military neatness of the West Residential District and the other side the opulence of the West Noble District. Further along the main road, richly adorned merchant houses compete for attention from the historic and pristine Grounds of the Clan Lord, while further down the Residential District gradually degrades as one heads further north into the Slums. Some have suggested a bypass be installed detouring visitors through other parts of the city instead of forcing travellers to pass through the Warehouse and Slum Districts.

The city is bustling with activity during daylight, especially when sunlight penetrates the near perpetual cloud cover over the city. During the evening the city becomes for the most part a ghost town with little activity in the main streets; life diverts to the smaller alleyways and thoroughfares.

During the night, the docks are lit up by rows of permanent lanterns on quay; the night watchmen are assigned the task of lighting them. The city sits in quiet serenity as it gears up for another busy day. Many military ship launches occur at night, guided by the secret code lights of Sentry Island; likewise many commercial ships arrive at night guided by Signal Point Island.

Surrounding the City of Lof are wide plains giving the city wall blockhouses commanding view of the terrain. The area north of Lof, known as the Northland Marches, consists of cold and windy flatlands interspersed with isolated farm smallholdings. The region of Lof has several smaller hamlets, the majority existing along the Great Northern Coast Road

## Population

Nearly 10,000 people make up the population of the city of Lof; the majority being Durenese of the clan Lof bloodline. Since it is a port city the exact numbers vary from season to season with the warmer summer months bringing an influx of merchants and foreign sailors. The city expands to 13,000 people during peak summer times and shrinks to 8,000 in the cold winter months. During the winter nights, some have described the city streets as a virtual ghost town as the populace huddle in the warmth of their homes.

The province of Lof has an additional 4,000 people scattered through various hamlets, small settlements and isolated homesteads. The total population of the Lof Lands constitutes 15% of people of Durenor. Despite reasonably fertile soil, the cold and blustery Kaltersee winds of the area north of Lof make it sparsely

# The City of Lof: Uncovered

populated except for intermittent farms growing cold tolerant crops and grazing animals, mostly goats and sheep.

## Culture

After sundown, the city grows quiet. Although it is easy to find paying jobs, the people here are dourer than their countrymen. This is partly from the periodic invasions from Kalte and ongoing toll of heavy taxes to pay for the military. People from Lof also tend to scapegoat Kalte Ice Barbarians for everything from the weather to the stalemated city politics.

The city celebrates the feast days Knights Maern on Perthro 1<sup>st</sup>, and Ishirana on Ansus 19<sup>th</sup>. During Knights Maern, Knights of the White Mountain renew their oaths of fealty to the Royal House of Durenor and a service is held at the Gate of the Honoured in the West Residential District to remember the sacrifices of their soldiers. During Ishirana, the temple conducts a parade through the city, blessing the docks and gates of the city along the way.

Molo is a popular game in the taverns of Lof and onboard Durenese warships. It involves throwing coins across the ship deck or tavern floor at a wall or seat of a wooden bench. Contestants stand about seven meters from the wall and try to throw the coins as close to the base of the wall as possible without touching it. Coins touching the wall are forfeited to the opposing player(s).

## Society

The death of the Lof clan lords at the Battle of Moytura caused a vacuum in the city's social and ruling structure. The higher social circle consists of the ruling City Guild aldermen, lesser nobles, City Guild merchants and navy officers. The middle class forms a secondary group, who are taxed heavily to support the military establishment and infrastructure and lacks a viable means to argue against their taxation. Inhabitants of the slums are

largely untaxed as they rarely, if ever, have anything worth taking.

## Ruling City Aldermen

Originally intended as a temporary government to limit changes until the Clan Lords of Lof returned from Vashna's Black Muster War, all the hereditary ruling members of Clan Lof died at the battle of Moytura in MS 3799. The arrangement has continued since then and some fundamental administrative decisions are often made late, not at all, or rescinded unexpectedly.

The City of Lof is governed by a council consisting of 10 nobles, typically merchants, who pass laws from the Great Hall of the Clan House Lof. There is a lack of unity in the council; often issues are hotly debated with votes split fairly evenly. As governing the city and territories of Lof involves balancing support of the merchants, military and other territory around the city (in that order), difficult decisions must be made. The council often stays late into the evening hours arguing the merits of improved access to the city or expanding the commercial docks. The debates often break down to smaller self-interest groups to resolve the disputes; if at least four votes are made in favour of a measure, further discussion is warranted in subcommittee. If enough compromises are made and seven affirmative votes are achieved, a decision is made to vote to make any changes official. Proposed legislation with less than four votes is considered dropped. Fortunately, the King of Durenor makes the call as to when to go to war and simply commands the navy and military forces of Lof and the council is out of the loop.

Selection to the council occurs when an individual, usually too infirm to meet a minimum quota of attendance and participation standards, is quietly requested to step down. Nominations are accepted for a period from within the council for new members and a rigorous voting process begins to admit a new member, typically from the merchant class or a high ranking naval officer.

## Nobles and City Guild Merchants

The various merchant and craftsmen guilds wield considerable power in the city and attempt to influence the actions of the aldermen. Apart from this, the nobles and guild merchants focus on conducting business, as one would expect in a Durenese port city.

To escape the frigid winters Lof must endure, many Durenese nobles and merchants relocate elsewhere in Durenor for a few months, leaving the noble district of the city sparsely populated in the colder months.

## Lof Naval Officers

Lof Naval Officers strive to ensure their portion of the city operates smoothly, navy ships are well stocked, discipline maintained and battle readiness guaranteed. By virtue of their defender status, they are treated with respect commensurate to a noble. Many officers have aspirations to join the ruling council and seek to establish mutually beneficial relationships with merchants and guilds. Lower ranking officers and common sailors typically live in the West Residential District and live a decent life. Higher ranking officers might reside in the Noble District instead.

## Middle Class

Comprising the bulk of the city populace, they do average jobs for average pay and labour with above-average taxes. They are well-maintained and functionally dressed. The middle class of Lof take good care of the things they own, but do not have much else to spare.

## Lof City Watch

Under the command of Agmemnar Kimmon, the Lof City Guard provides basic law to the city. The 50 city guards are a grim lot, working long hours at low pay. They guard the city gates and various city wall blockhouses and walk the streets, but often turn a blind eye to many incidents. The confusing law structures of the city encourage them to have vapid enforcement. Unless it is really important, it is usually unclear to them what law to

apply, and even if they did intervene on a small matter, they would probably be overruled later anyway. One basic rule applies that should be understood: if you do not mess with them they are likely to return the favour.

### Slum Leaders

The names of the sectional leaders of the slums are not publicly known. If one spends enough time in the slums, the names Basile Acton, Gildas Codray and Aulden Verdier would be whispered, but it would take a considerable amount of effort to infiltrate the upper echelons of these gang-like organizations. The 'Reliance District' leaders wield considerable power in their respective areas and a peaceable balance of power exists. In contrast to the red tape of city government, slum politics are quick and easy to understand. The slum lords keep the peace and forcibly eject troublemakers of significance in the 'Reliance District' they have taken 'ownership' of.

### Government and Law

The official published City Law is recognized in the Noble, Merchant and Residential districts, and usually ignored in the Slums and Navy districts.

The Navy District (including parts of the West Residential District) falls under the jurisdiction of statutes of Durenese Maritime Naval Law. It is important to note several capital offences committed in the Navy District or portions of the West Residential District are punished by public flogging or hanging.

No published laws exist in the Slums district, as they might change from one street or alley to the next. If one can buy or barter through a situation, the 'law' might bend favourably. Generally, laws in the slums uphold basic principles of justice and goodwill.

Government and Law in Lof are a tangled mess of internal disputes. Often more time is spent arguing over whose jurisdiction has authority than the merits of the crime.



Depending on the circumstances, Durenese Maritime Naval Law might overrule Lof City Law, or Slum Law may de facto override both. If an incident were to occur in the West Residential District, clearly Maritime Naval Law would govern. Unless the same incident was to happen one street over in the Merchant District, in which case City Law certainly would apply. Unless the incident in the Merchant District involved a naval officer, in which case Maritime Law is eminent. However, if the naval officer is friends with or has business dealings with nobility or a judge of the City Law, an injunction could be lodged in the Maritime court citing 'sphere of influence' and the 'context of law' outweighing Maritime Law. Meanwhile, the naval officer's ship

leaves port and the accused hides onboard; this means the issue will simply have to be resolved once the ship returns to port, if it was important enough.

If this same incident were to happen in the slums, then Slum Law would likely override Maritime and City laws, because justice there is much quicker. The residents believe this is probably for the better since it does not involve lawyers.

### Economy

The Durenese Gold Crown is the official currency of the land and primary measure of wealth. With a shrinking portion of the maritime trade and a high tax levy

# The City of Lof: Uncovered

supporting the various military installations, Lof does not attract many new merchants.

Lof imports common goods from Sommerlund and Dessi and elsewhere, and exports limestone, lumber, copper, fish and locally grown agricultural products.

The slums have an economy of their own based on paper 'Scripts'. Gold is the ultimate currency there but, since residents of this area generally do not have any, barter prevails. Housing and house repair materials, food and craftsmanship skills are held in high esteem when bartering in the slums.

## International/Regional Relations

Lof maintains reasonably good relations with other regions of Durenor. Merchants from Lof are welcome in virtually all parts of the world and especially well received in Sommerlund and Dessi.

In military conflicts Lof has a fairly well trained infantry militia and some basic cavalry capabilities. In naval conflicts representing the interests of the crown, Lof deploys an impressive fleet of warships.

## Secrets

### Lady Victoria

Born of a Lencian captive and a Drakkarim commander, Lady Victoria is the highest ranking Darklord espionage agent in the Durenor region. Under the guise of an adventurer and relic collector, she has ample ability to coordinate Darkland intelligence and infiltration efforts in the area prior to the MS 5050 invasion of Sommerlund. Her

key objective is to undermine the political relationship between the two nations and further demoralize the Durenese into not risking an engagement against Darkland forces. She has an entourage of seven Helghasts and a Daemonak at her command, spread out in various posts in Durenor.

The primary purpose of the mercantile house of Veagle and Delmantle is to provide a cover for her espionage operations as it allows her to travel abroad and provides political connections, though her subordinates in the company are completely unaware of her true loyalties. She truly has an affinity for relics and antiquities and combines work with pleasure. She has collected what she believes to be two Scattershards of the Moonstone but is not fully aware of their powers. One, which she wears constantly, provides a resistance to aging.

Following the failure of other Darkland agents to stop the fledgling Lone Wolf in MS 5050, she directed her Helghasts to make an emergency blockade of the Tarnalin highway to prevent his entry to Hammerdal. After this failure, she has spent considerable time rebuilding her spy network.

### Catacombs of Lof / Abandoned Shianti Outpost

The known entrance to the city catacombs is through the lower levels of the High Grounds of the Lof Clan House; however a little known entrance exists through the Temple of Ishir. It is said that a hidden chamber in the catacombs have either treasure or a genealogical book that could re-establish a clan heir to Margaux Lof.

### Reliance District Militia

Each of the three sectional leaders of the slums can field a reasonably well organized fighting force of street fighters, thieves/infiltrators and archers as a means to maintain the territorial integrity of each area. Open skirmishes occur occasionally in the slums to test boundaries, but rarely involve innocent bystanders. In time of crisis the three leaders would not hesitate to unite forces.

### Lof Spice Company

In addition to rare spices, this company secretly transports a small but significant stream of Adgana herb to their various other branch offices in Magnamund. Owner Ramsden Nathar has killed in the past to keep this a secret.

### Ljuk Trading Company

This company is notorious for vigorously defending its stake by boarding to 'inspect' non-associated company ships in the northern Kaltersee. The company actively monitors - through official and unofficial information sources - for evidence of short-sighted merchants transporting to Kalte banned substances, notably cold resistant agricultural seeds. If Kalte were ever to become agriculturally self-sufficient the company would be ruined. Ships transporting such materials tend to mysteriously disappear or sink.

### Althemar's Apothecary

Owner Hengist Althemar has secretly been making repeated trips into the Catacombs of Lof searching for something. If one were to befriend him he could be a useful tour guide to the area.

# News Extra

# SALE!

## Out of Print Items

Here at Mongoose we are planning oodles of new miniatures games for a 2011 release - and that means it is time to clear the warehouse of lots of boxes of older, now out of print goodies.

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Prices start from just 99p!

**New Items Added!**

# Petty Lords and Bandit Kings

By Nick Robinson

Within the world of Nuera there are many noblemen who try to improve their position as a member of the first estate in the established kingdoms of Lorn and Dardarrick. However there are also many others who are rulers of their own independent lands, no matter how small these petty kingdoms may be. Their existence is precarious, at any time one of the larger empires might turn their attention to these holdings and have their armies sweep all before them, adding to their domains. Yet many of the statelets continue to exist, through luck, diplomacy, disproportionate power or through paying tribute to their more powerful neighbours. This article details several of these tiny realms, explaining their place in the larger world and how they have managed to continue to survive.



## Nef, the Hidden Kingdom

High up in the Claws there is rumoured to be a small kingdom, protected from spying through ancient magics dating from before the rise of Lorn and Dardarrick. Indeed when the mists form in the mountains locals fear the coming of the Nef Riders, a fierce group of raiders who have plagued the region since time immemorial. The Riders always seem to know when and where to strike, avoiding the garrisons and sorcerers occasionally sent into the mountain holdings of Dardarrick to prevent their depredations and hunt them down.

Nef itself is no more than a few small bandit clans hidden in high valleys. These tough mountain men have sure footed ponies able to traverse the steepest of slopes while carrying a man (or perhaps two, as the Riders often take their dead and injured with them on those occasions when they encounter resistance). Even with their mounts able to climb almost sheer cliffs to reach their homes they

would have been found out long ago if it were not for the constant low cloud concealing their homes from above and the ancient magic protecting them from mystical observation.

The valleys themselves have a pleasant climate, although it is very rarely sunny here. Rainfall is high and on the terraces where the clans grow their crops the soil is supernaturally rich, ensuring bumper crops of vegetables and grain. However life is hard and the Nefites resort to raiding to get the luxuries they require (metal items are especially prized, from the most exquisite war sword to common pots and pans).

## Wraith Recon's Interest

The Nef Riders have been a headache for far too long and it has been decided to deal with them once and for all. A team has been sent into the area surreptitiously and is due to observe and look out for signs of these enigmatic raiders. Sooner or later the Nef Riders will sally forth in raiding season and with strong garrisons in most of their traditional raiding areas it is almost inevitable they will be coming in the Wraiths' direction. This time it is up to the Wraiths to follow them back to their stronghold and then act with extreme prejudice, ending their threat once and for all!



## The League of Seven

Several centuries ago a group of petty kingdoms realised they would become victims in the wars between their expansionist neighbours. Although each was relatively strong despite their size none could hope to hold off either Lorn or Dardarrick alone and so the League of Seven was born. These petty lands now number just six after one of their number was suspected of coming too closely allied

to its Lornish neighbours and was rapidly absorbed by the other lands for breaking their covenant.

The people here are fiercely independent and do pay tribute to both their neighbours. This is enough to turn aside the threat of their armies (or has been until now). In all things the league is even-handed in its dealings, it will not favour one of its stronger neighbours over the other. All able bodied men and women are well drilled in the arts of war, making the cost of invasion seem too high. Also the League has made it known to both kingdoms that if one should attack then all the people here will unite and willingly ally with the other in order to ensure the status quo remains, despite the risks such an action entails.

So far neither Lorn nor Dardarrick has tempted fate. The League is an effective buffer state between the two, its defences enough to prevent armies sweeping through easily into the lands beyond.

## Wraith Recon's Interest

There are rumours one of the local rulers is getting too close to his Lornish neighbours. This evidence comes from a ruler more sympathetic to Dardarrick. The League's Covenant forbids this and if this can be proven the ruler in question will find his power removed, there is even the chance the Dardarrick-friendly noble will get some of his lands if the League of Seven becomes Five. Wraith Recon will need to get proof of this perfidy by infiltrating one of the lord's fortresses and stealing any relevant papers. If they do so then the lord will be disgraced and the Lornish influence ended.

Of course all might not be what it seems. The papers might be faked or even planted by a third party who wishes to make the lord in question a patsy for their own misbehaviour. The friendly nobleman may even be using the Wraiths to remove a rival in order to push forward his own selfish interests.





The land itself is bountiful and there are plenty of minerals within its hills. As such the people here have prosperous lives, and look on with pity at the conflicts beyond their borders.

### Wraith Recon's Interest

Mishami is a potential thorn in the side of Dardarrick and how to deal with the problems it poses has been one of those at the forefront of strategic thinking for many years, especially since the tiny state occupies rich land providing easy access around some heavily fortified Lornish positions.

Wraith Recon agents occasionally enter Mishami to perform reconnaissance and as a handy entry point into Lornish territory, although heavy patrolling on the border between Lorn and Mishami recently has made this hazardous. One idea being seriously considered is to kidnap some children from the area and then raise them as loyal Dardarrick mages. This would be a long-term project, but could provide real results allowing a successful conquest at some point in the future. Such a mission against a highly magical independent state with no magical support for themselves would be extremely hazardous for any Wraiths assigned to it, in addition to any ethical issues around the kidnapping of children.



### Barony of Plenthe

Baron Shill Merkesson is his own man. He is also poor, as his tiny realm. The only reason no other nation has absorbed his territory is that it is too impoverished to be worth their while and it is in an out of the way location with no strategic value. While he avoids having to pay any tribute this is only because he and his subjects are unable to afford one. His fortress was built using a horde recovered from the Wildlands by a distant ancestor, the fortune has long since been spent. Shill is an unimportant nobleman from an unimportant land.

### Wraith Recon's Interest

Merkesson is trying to raise some revenues in any way he can. The harsh lands he rules are resource poor but are a perfect training ground for troops needing somewhere to hone their skills. Unfortunately he has allowed (for a fee) Lornish soldiers to use the eastern part of his lands for some serious battle training. Unfortunately news of all this military activity has reached Dardarrick. Now the Wraiths must discover just what is going on in this godforsaken corner of Nuera and why is it suddenly full of Lornish regiments?

### Mishami

The Archduke of Mishami leads his kingdom with an air of indifference towards his far larger neighbours. Not for him dreams of conquest and the clash of arms. His people are safe in knowledge the larger nations will not attack, for neither would dare!

There is an ancient magic at work in these lands, one which prevents all magic from being cast except for those born within its boundaries. As such the Mishami Magicians Guild is rumoured to rival even those of Dardarrick in its resources, for it is here most of the money for defence of the land goes. Mishami can boast a significant number of sorcerers, many of whom are considered to be masters of their arts. If Mishami was to be assaulted then its attackers would pay dearly.

There are a number of fortifications scattered around the lands of the duchy, allowing the people to flee to safety if an invading army should come their way. These ancient strongholds are maintained by magic and can hold off an assault until help, in the form of the Magicians Guild, can relieve any siege.



### Torrelton

Another minor statelet, Torrelton is one of the smallest in terms of area, consisting of only a few square miles of land around the free town of the same name. It is an affluent place, able to pay both its mighty neighbours the tribute they demand, although neither considers conquering the town as it is far more than a significant source of revenue.

# Petty Lords and Bandit Kings

Torrelton survives as it is one of the few places where Lornish and Dardarrick merchants can easily and openly trade with one another. The profits from the market can be huge, although most items bought and sold here tend to be luxury ones, not the standard fare a town the size of Torrelton would normally provide.

## Wraith Recon's Interest

Torrelton is a hive of intrigue as well as business enterprise. With so many merchants coming and going the town is crawling with spies, and not just those from Lorn and Dardarrick. Other interests (not least the Torrelton Guild Council) have their own agendas.

A Wraith Recon team could be sent in to hunt down an enemy spy, assassinate an enemy merchant, discover the fate of one of their countrymen or any other activity where their firepower is needed to enhance or aid espionage activity.



## The Hightower

If Torrelton is small there can be little doubt it dwarfs the 'state' of The Hightower. This single building is a unique landmark in the Wildlands, just across the border. The sorcerer living there has made it clear he does not wish to join with Dardarrick and wishes to be left alone. Occasional foolish tribe of humanoids sometimes will try their luck and attempt to loot the place if nothing is heard from the mage for some time (years, or even decades). This is always a mistake as their screams can be heard clearly from the Dardarrick side of the border, several miles away.

Hightower is 'only' five stories high, although there is nothing comparable elsewhere in the Wildlands. There is no doubt the sorcerer within is both ancient and powerful. Who he (or she or it) is and what he is doing within his abode is anybody's guess.

## Wraith Recon's Interest

A powerful sorcerer who is not friendly is someone to keep an eye on. If Wraith Recon were able to infiltrate the place who knows what might be found there, from unknown magics to ancient treasures. Hightower acts like a beacon, almost demanding to be investigated.



## Brac

A small client state just inside the Lornish border, Lord Brac is a loyal ally to the Lornish crown, as his predecessors were. In fact, if it was not for their devotion they would almost certainly have been annexed many years ago.

Brac is a dismal place, its rulers have always been harsh masters, even by the

standards of recent history elsewhere. The downtrodden peasants grow crops for the elite Brac Guard, as vicious a formation as you can find anywhere on Nuera. These elite shock troops have provided excellent service in the name of Lorn, just like their Lords. With such service there seems no reason for Lorn not to allow the current state of affairs to continue.

## Wraith Recon's Interest

The Brac Guard are an elite force and are therefore a worthwhile target for Wraith Recon to weaken or eliminate, if possible. If evidence could be found (or fabricated) indicating the loyalty of Brac should be questioned then it is possible conflict could ensue. The loss of an elite unit and staunch servant to the Lornish cause can only be beneficial in the long run, in addition the losses caused by any resulting warfare would weaken Lorn further.



TRAVELLER

# THE THIRD IMPERIUM



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## By Roger Moore

### Springers

Springers (also called cave spiders, spider-cats and shrew-spiders) are eight-limbed quasi-mammalian carnivores. Their origin world is not known but they are found throughout the coreward regions of the Imperium. Although spread widely by the mysterious Ancients, the range of the springer was increased considerably by the colonists of the first Imperium, as a means for biological pest control. Massing between 250 and 500 grams, springers average 15 centimeters in length.

For reasons not completely understood, springers evolved from a four-limbed form. Each limb evolved into two, the upper portions shortening almost into non-existence. The silk is excreted by glands in the upper chest area, which is hairless to prevent tangling. Two modified "thumbs" are used to draw the silk from the glands and manipulate the web. The silk produced is adhesive only when excreted, drying rapidly as a thick rope. Webs woven of it are coarse networks which signal the existence and location of prey. The powerful hind legs are adapted to leaping and the remaining limbs are used for clinging to the prey while the poison (from two glands in the mouth) is injected into the prey.

Springers are hermaphroditic. Young are born live at any season, in litters of 3 to 5. Since most of their "milk" glands have

evolved into silk producing organs, the springers supplement their cubs' diet with regurgitated, partially digested food.

Springers normally inhabit caves, dense forests and rock crevices, but can often be found inhabiting piles of rubble and deserted buildings. Springers are not normally dangerous to humans but the bite can be painful, and the venom can cause death due to allergic reaction in some individuals.

### Kian

Kians are herbivore grazers of large size, originally from Prilissa in the Trin's Veil subsector. Due to their hardy nature, they were exported to a number of worlds as beasts of burden and are common sight in the coreward reaches, both in the wild and in captivity. They are plains dwellers, traveling in herds of 10 to 60 individuals, feeding upon grasses, leaves, or similar plant matter.

Externally, the Kian is a large bipedal creature with a long neck, short tail, and no other limbs (the remains of an atrophied pair of fore-limbs can be found in some species. Kians are thickly furred, their coats showing distinctive color patterns of brown, gold, lemon yellow and black. A kian's legs are powerfully muscled for fast movement over long distances. The sturdiness of their frames has made them

a frequent choice for use as mounts and pack animals on the planets where they occur. Kian's hearing and eyesight are extremely good, reflecting their predator laden world of origin.

Internally, the Kian is unremarkable. It has a closed circulatory system and an overall high metabolism which requires that it be fed 30 to 50 kilograms of vegetable matter daily. The kian digestive system consists of two stomachs, which allows the animal to break down the toughest plant matter into digestible form. The kian has a thick layer of fat which provides insulation in cooler climates and a degree of protection from the venomous bites or stings of some small animals. The skeleton is strong and heavy, and is structurally not unlike that of the moa and other prehistoric terran flightless birds.

When attacked or frightened kians will usually flee but if cornered are capable of delivering deadly kicks with either of their hoofed feet. The large claws projecting from the backs of the feet are only present in the male and seem to be used solely for combat between males prior to mating.

Kians can carry up to 250 kilos comfortably, and will refuse to move if overloaded. Kians cannot tolerate thin atmospheres and require a special filter/muzzle (Cr. 50) for tainted atmospheres.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Springer							
Pouncer (carnivore)	Forest, Hills	1	4	1	1	9	0
Recon 2, Athletics (co-ordination) 2, Stealth 1, Melee (bite) 1, Survival 0							
Teeth (1d6), Hide (1). Number Encountered: 1							

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Kian							
Grazer (herbivore)	Plains	16	7	18	0	11	16
Recon 0, Athletics (endurance) 1, Athletics (strength) 1, Melee (kick) 0, Survival 1							
Kick (2d6), Hide (2). Number Encountered: 10-60							



LONE WOLF

# MULTIPLAYER GAME BOOK



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# The Initiation

By Ken Walton

This is intended as an introductory adventure for new RuneQuest characters, who will play young members of an Orlanthi tribe. The adventure can be run with only the core rulebook, though those wishing more details of the cultures involved may wish to refer to *Glorantha: The Second Age*. Text in italics is meant to be read to the players, where appropriate.

## Players' Introduction

*It is Midsummer's Eve, the middle of the Fire Season. Summer heat beats down, warming the crops and the cattle grazing in the meadows of Sky End Stead, by the Solthi River in the land of Kathaela.*

*It is the time when the young people of the clan are initiated as warriors. Today, you will set off with your childhood friends and the old priest Forgo on the two day trek to the ancient stone circle in the Trollwood. There you will enter the Hero Plane and re-enact one of the myths of your people. If you are brave and do what is right, you will return with magical rewards and the acclaim of your kin. If you fail, it will be another year before you can try again.*

## Trek to Trollwood

*It is a whole day's journey to the Trollwood from Sky End Stead. Your anxious parents stand at the gate of the stead and wave you off as you cross the River Solthi at the ford. The journey takes you through pasture lands and on into wild heathery moorland, under a blue sky. You come to the shadowy borders of the Trollwood late in the evening, though it never gets really dark on Midsummer's Eve. In the shade of the trees you build a fire, and Forgo tells you the story of Odayla and the Manticore. Then he tells you that tomorrow you will go into the Trollwood, to the old holy place, where you will pass into the Hero Plane and re-enact the myth. You should all try to get some sleep, though someone should stay on watch. He snugs down under his blankets and leaves you to it.*

## Odayla and the Manticore

The myth that Forgo has chosen for the Adventurers to re-enact is as follows:

*Once upon a time, the clan house of Orlanth the Storm God was troubled by a manticore. Every night the great beast, a terrible lion with the face of a man and the tail of a scorpion, attacked the settlement, killing many and eating others alive. After three nights of terror, Orlanth decided something must be done – the manticore had to be tracked to its lair and killed before it could strike again. Immediately, Orlanth's son, Odayla the Hunting God, stood up. "I will hunt the beast!" he said. "Who will follow me?"*

*There was a silence in the hall. All the warriors looked down and would not meet each other's eyes. They were scared of the creature. Finally, a youth stood up. "I am not yet a warrior," he said. "But if you will arm me, I will go with you and hunt the manticore." Immediately some of his friends stood up too. "We will join you," they said.*

*"See how the young people shame their fathers!" said Orlanth. "So be it." And Orlanth armed the young people with his own hands. Then Odayla and his young band set off running through the winter snows, up into the mountains, following the tracks of the dreadful beast.*

*For a whole day they ran, quenching their thirst with handfuls of snow. Finally, they came to a great cave in the hillside. The entrance was strewn with bones and rotting flesh, and a terrible stench wafted out on a cold wind.*

*Striking a light, Odayla led his young band into the cavern. There was the beast, its eyes glimmering red in the dimness. It leaped at the Hunting God, its poisonous stinging tail stabbing at him. But Odayla rolled aside and escaped it. Then all the hunters attacked it, stabbing with their spears while it slashed*

*with its mighty claws and stabbed with its tail. Finally, the beast was worn out by its injuries and a mighty blow finished it off.*

*Then Odayla took the creature's head and they returned to Orlanth's hall. There, all the people gathered, and Odayla was praised as a great hunter. But the most praise went to the young people who had helped him. "Today," said Orlanth, "you became mighty warriors. You are children no more." And he gave them gifts, and they feasted long into the night.*

## Trollkin!

In the middle of the night, have whoever is on watch make an opposed test using their *Perception* against the trollkins' *Stealth* skill of 40%. If the character wins, he will spot a number of trollkin sneaking out of the woods to attack the Adventurers. If the watchman loses the opposed test, there will be no warning before the trollkin are upon them. There should be one trollkin for each of the Adventurers.

Forgo is too old to fight well and will need to be protected. Or at least, that is the impression he likes to give – if the Adventurers get in real trouble, he will come out fighting with his short sword. But it is the Adventurers' initiation, after all, not his!

If any of the trollkin are captured alive, they will say that they are getting revenge for the humans' attack of the previous night. It will become apparent that someone else is in the Trollwood apart from the Adventurers.

## The Holy Place

The following morning, Forgo will lead the Adventurers deep into the Trollwood. This is a dark and spooky place, cold and shadowy even on a summer's day. There are strange sinister bird calls in the distance and mysterious rustlings with no apparent source. The day will get darker



and there will be a rumble of thunder with heavy drops of rain starting to fall through the trees.

Eventually the Adventurers will get to a clearing, in which is a ring of standing stones. The blue sky of yesterday is lost behind heavy storm clouds, and there is lightning in the distance. Forgo says this is a good omen, for are they not members of the Storm Tribe?

Have the Adventurers make a *Perception* roll at the stone circle. If anyone makes it, they will see footprints within the circle of boots with heels – the prints of civilised people, not barbarians or trollkin. (If the Adventurers all fail the roll Forgo will point out the tracks).

Forgo is a little worried at strangers sneaking around an Orlanthi holy place but says

they are here now and should complete their initiation.

*Forgo positions you in a circle within the standing stones. He stands outside the ring and begins chanting. The summer storm has been getting heavier, the rain lashing down, and a cold wind is rising. Visibility closes in until you cannot see even the standing stones, only the dim silhouettes of your friends. The cold rain turns to sleet, then snow. Then, with a last icy blast, the snow whirls away and you can see again.*

*You are no longer standing in a stone circle. Instead, you are in an open space before a wooden clan hall, its roof golden, its eaves carved and painted with warriors, dragons and monsters. Other wooden houses surround you, and beyond is a palisade. Snow lies on the ground, churned up and bloodstained in places. Somewhere, you can*

*hear a woman sobbing, and from within the clan house come angry shouts.*

The Adventurers are standing outside the clan house of Orlanth himself, in the aftermath of an attack by the mantichore. The HeroQuest has begun.

## The HeroQuest

The important thing for the Adventurers when performing a HeroQuest is to stay on the plot of the myth – at least until it starts to go wrong. If they do the wrong thing for more than a few rounds, they will find themselves ejected from the myth and standing back in the stone circle in the Trollwood. Forgo will be very disappointed with them, and there will be no feast when they get back to Sky End Stead.

## The First Station: The Hall of Orlanth

Have each Adventurer make a *Perception* skill test to notice they are no longer carrying their weapons, which are nowhere to be seen. The Adventurers should be able to figure out from the myth they heard that it is their job to go into the clan hall and volunteer their services to Odayla. They will find themselves in the warm smoky dimness of the clan hall. Orlanth, a mighty bearded warrior, sits at the head of a long trestle table; various other warriors, including Odayla, are sitting round the table, and many others are sitting at other long tables. The Adventurers will notice faces they recognise – warriors of their clan who have been killed in battle, dead grandparents and other relatives. The room is in an uproar and nobody pays them much attention, except some warriors gestures them to a place at one of the benches. They seem to be arguing about who should have been on watch and how well the warriors were prepared to defend the stead against the mantichore. Some have lost loved ones to the creature and are visibly upset.

*Suddenly, Orlanth slams his fist on the table and shouts "Quiet!" with a voice literally like thunder. His shout is accompanied by*

# The Initiation

*a flash of lightning from outside. Everyone immediately shuts up. "We have lost enough people to this beast," he says. "Someone must track the creature to its lair and kill it before it strikes again!"*

*A tall, heavily-muscled warrior stands up. You immediately recognise him as Odayla the Hunting God. "I will hunt the beast! Who will follow me?"*

*A deeper silence falls over the hall. The warriors do not meet each others' eyes, but stare at the table in front of them.*

If the Adventurers volunteer, Orlanth will take weapons down from the wall and give them to the Adventurers. These will appear more or less the same as the weapons they had in the real world, but for each Adventurer, their favoured weapon will be enchanted, adding +5% to weapon skill and +1 to damage.

As soon as they have weapons, the scene will fade away – go to *The Second Station: Hunting*. If the Adventurers do not volunteer, there will be an awkward silence, Orlanth will shake his head sorrowfully, the scene will fade away and the Adventurers will find themselves back at the stone circle.

It is possible the Adventurers might decide to follow the sound of sobbing at the beginning of this scene. It so, they will come across Chalana Arroy, the goddess of healing, tending a woman who has had a leg bitten off by the mantichore. As the Adventurers watch, the leg will regrow before their very eyes. Then Chalana Arroy will turn to them and tell them they have better things to do than watching her work – should they not be with Orlanth in the clan hall? If they still hang around, the scene will fade and they will be back in the stone circle.

## Second Station: Hunting

*You are running uphill through snowy mountains. Ahead of you, Odayla keeps up a punishing pace. Every now and then he will stop to look at tracks on the ground, but*

*before you have time to catch your breath, he is off again.*

The Adventurers will be running for 20 minutes without a rest through snow. Use the Fatigue rules (*RuneQuest Core Rulebook* page 61) to see how this affects the characters. If any character stops to have a rest, they will drop out of the HeroQuest and be back in the stone circle. Characters will need to make four rolls at a medium level of activity, although the most fatigued a character can get is the wearied level of fatigue.

Eventually the Adventurers will see a dark cave in a rocky cliff-face ahead of them. Move straight on to the Third Station.

## The Third Station: Meeting the Mantichore

*You stand outside a large cave entrance. The ground is littered with bones, still partly covered with rotting flesh. A foetid wind blows out of the cave, carrying the stench of decay. You have reached the lair of the mantichore.*

Let the Adventurers decide what they are doing. Do they have materials on them for making a light? If anyone thought to mention it earlier in the HeroQuest (knowing from the myth that they would be going into a cave) they find they have torches and tinderboxes. If not, Odayla will have a torch in his pack.





Adventurers may also want to rest to reduce their Fatigue before entering the cave. This would require a long rest, but Adventurers may use First Aid skill to recover by one level of Fatigue. Allow the Adventurers 10 minutes to get ready to go into the cave, then spring the Surprise Attack on them. If they look like going into the cave without a rest spring the Surprise Attack on them earlier just before they enter.

## Surprise Attack

*As you are about to enter the cave, there is sudden flurry of arrows from behind some rocks to the left of the cave. One of them strikes Odayla solidly in the chest and he goes down. Four warriors in furs spring from behind the rocks, swords drawn, and rush at you. There is something wrong about them. They should not be here!*

The four warriors are God Learner adventurers; their leader, the sorcerer Baylis who brought them into the Hero Plane, is hiding behind the rocks. The party are now, of course, in combat. Odayla is not dead, but has a Serious chest wound.

Keep track of where the combat is in relation to the body, as Baylis will attempt to run out and loot Odayla's body for the god's weapons if he gets the chance. If he succeeds in getting the god's famous hunting bow his own HeroQuest is over, and he and his warriors will fade away.

Allow the Adventurers a couple of rounds of combat with the warriors, then read or paraphrase the following:

*Suddenly, above the clashing of swords, you hear a terrible roar! With a mighty leap, the manticore bounds out of the cave, and is upon you. Its body is that of a maned and tawny lion: its face is that of a cruel and ferocious man, with sharp pointed teeth in an oversized mouth. The sinister stinging tail of a scorpion arches above its back.*

At this point the God Learners will retreat, leaving the fight to the Adventurers, though Baylis will continue to try to snatch Odayla's weapons if given the chance. This should be a difficult fight, and if this is the players' first game you may need to remind them about their Hero Points! If the manticore manages to get to the body of Odayla, it will begin trying to devour it, while holding off the Adventurers with its stinging tail.

Eventually, the Adventurers should be triumphant, though probably somewhat bloody. Odayla will need healing and the arrow removing before he regains consciousness. He will praise the Adventurers for their heroism in killing the manticore, and will insist on removing its head to take back to the stead. If questioned about the God Learners, he will be dismissive, claiming they were probably mountain bandits. They were not part of the myth and so not really within his understanding. He will lift the manticore's head and say "Come. We must return home. There will be feasting in Orlanth's hall tonight!"

The scene will fade, and the Adventurers will go onto the Fourth Station.

## The Fourth Station: The Feast

*You are back in Orlanth's clan hall, and the mood is very different from what it was the last time you were here. There is food and drink, laughter and singing. The head of the manticore is hung on the wall at the end of the hall and everyone is joyful. Orlanth bangs on the table, and raises his goblet to you. "To the Manticore Band!" he shouts. "The heroes of the day! They went out children and came back adults. The Manticore Band!" Everyone raises the goblets to you and cheers.*

Then Odayla stands up and says "I have gifts for the heroes." He reaches out and touches each of the characters on the

forehead, and they can feel his power course through them..

Every character will become runetouched at this point, some will receive the benefit of an Earth Rune, others the benefit of a Beast Rune, as best suits the Adventurers, at Games Master's discretion. Once these have been given, the HeroQuest fades, and the Adventurers are back in the Trollwood.

## Aftermath

Once the Adventurers return to the real world, they will find the storm is over. Any wounds taken in the HeroQuest are healed, their magical weapons are no longer magical and they each are runetouched in recognition of their driving off the Godlearners in addition to facing down the manticore.

Forgo appears not to be around at first, but he will come out from hiding up a tree. It seems the remaining God Learners (those not killed by the Adventurers) came through the stone circle some time ago and headed off southward. The Adventurers may wish to follow – this would be a whole new adventure, possibly the beginning of a campaign, as the Adventurers track the God Learners and try to get back any items they stole from Odayla, which would become holy relics of the tribe. But Forgo will discourage them, saying they have been heroic enough for one day, and urge them to return to Sky End Stead.

The return home will be uneventful, and the Adventurers, assuming they performed properly in the HeroQuest, will be asked to tell their stories. Then they will be hailed as new adults of the clan, and known forever after as the Manticore Band, after their exploits in defeating both the manticore and the God Learners. There will be much feasting at Sky End Stead that night.

# The Initiation

## Non Player Characters

### Forlo (God Speaker of Sky End Stead)

Forlo is getting old, though his thin, sinewy body is still strong. He often travels about Kethaela, keeping alive the old ways of the Orlanthi in the face of new beliefs such as the dragon worship of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends, but always returns to Sky End Stead for the Fire Season (summer) initiation ceremony.

Quote: *What would Orlanth do?*

Forlo, Acolyte of Orlanth Adventurous

		<b>D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>
STR	12	1–3	Right Leg	0/5
CON	11	4–6	Left Leg	0/5
SIZ	10	7–9	Abdomen	0/6
INT	15	10–12	Chest	0/7
POW	12 (15)	13–15	Right Arm	0/4
DEX	14	16–18	Left Arm	0/4
CHA	14	19–20	Head	0/5
<i>Combat Actions</i>	3	<i>Typical Armour</i>	None	
<i>Damage Modifier</i>	0	<i>Traits</i>	—	
<i>Magic Points</i>	12 (15)	<i>Skills</i>	Athletics 53%, Evade 46%, Evaluate 34%, Healing 53%, Influence 54%, Lore (Orlanth) 68%, Lore (World) 45%, Perception 61%, Persistence 47%, Resilience 36%, Survival 38%, Unarmed 45%	
<i>Movement</i>	8m	<i>Combat Styles</i>	Sword 67%	
<i>Strike Rank</i>	+15	<i>Equipment</i>	Short Sword, Healer's Kit, Bedroll	
		<i>Common Magic 58%</i>	Bladesharp 3, Mobility 2, Thunder's Voice 3	
		<i>Divine Magic</i>	Pact (Orlanth Adventurous) 41%; Dismiss Magic, Flight, Elemental Summoning (sylph)	

### Weapons

<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Reach</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>AP/HP</i>
Short Sword	M	S	1D6	6/8

## The Trollkin

A ragged band of wild trollkin looking to avenge themselves on the humans who attacked their homes earlier. They are like most of their kin, weak in combat and cowardly.

Quote: *Please don't hurt me. I good enlo.*

STR	7	<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>
CON	11	1-3	Right Leg	1/5
SIZ	10	4-6	Left Leg	1/5
INT	10	7-9	Abdomen	1/6
POW	11	10-12	Chest	1/7
DEX	14	13-15	Right Arm	1/4
CHA	7	16-18	Left Arm	1/4
		19-20	Head	1/5
<i>Combat Actions</i>	2	<i>Typical Armour</i>	Thick skin (AP 1)	
<i>Damage Modifier</i>	-1D2	<i>Traits</i>	Darksense, Dark Sight	
<i>Magic Points</i>	11	<i>Skills</i>	Athletics 42%, Evade 42%, Perception 40%, Persistence 43%, Resilience 43%, Stealth 40%, Survival 35%	
<i>Movement</i>	8m	<i>Combat Styles</i>	Club 35%, Spear and Shield 33%, Sling 30%	
<i>Strike Rank</i>	+12			

## Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP	Range
Club	M	S	1D6-1D2	4/4	—
Shortspear	M	L	1D8+1-1D2	4/5	—
Buckler	M	S	1D3-1D2	6/8	—
Sling	L	—	1D8-1D2	1/2	200m

## The Manticore

A beast of legend it is highly aggressive, giving no quarter in battle.

Quote: *Roar!*

	<b>Dice</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>
STR	4D6+12	26	1-2	Right Hind Leg	3/10
CON	4D6+6	20	3-4	Left Hind Leg	3/10
SIZ	4D6+12	26	5-6	Tail	3/10
INT	7	7	7-9	Hindquarters	3/11
POW	3D6	11	10-12	Forequarters	3/11
DEX	3D6	11	13-14	Right Front Leg	3/11
			15-16	Left Front Leg	3/10
			17-20	Head	3/10
<i>Combat Actions</i>	3	<i>Typical Armour</i>	Tough Hide. No Armour Penalty		
<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+1D12	<i>Traits</i>	Night Sight, Poison Sting		
<i>Magic Points</i>	11	<i>Skills</i>	Athletics 60%, Evade 45%, Perception 55%, Persistence 43%, Resilience 70%, Stealth 40%, Survival 40%, Track 40%		
<i>Movement</i>	10m	<i>Combat Styles</i>	Claw 70%, Gore 50%, Sting 40%		
<i>Strike Rank</i>	+13				

## Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP	Range
Claw	M	M	1D6+1D12	As for Leg	—
Gore (tusks)	M	T	1D8+1D12	As for Head	—
Sting	M	VL	1D6+1D12+Posion	As for Tail	—

# The Initiation

## Baylis (God Learner Sorcerer)

Baylis is an ambitious young sorcerer, determined to rob other cultures' myths of their magic for his own personal power. He is quite handsome and charming, but there is a ruthless look in his eyes. He is also quite cowardly, this being one of his first forays into HeroQuesting, and as such he will not risk his life by bringing attention to himself. He will just stand at the back and attempt to steal Odayla's weapons if he gets the opportunity.

Quote: *Odayla is just a semi-sentient manifestation of a primal hunting rune currently unknown to God Learner science.*

		<b>D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>
STR	8	1-3	Right Leg	0/5
CON	11	4-6	Left Leg	0/5
SIZ	10	7-9	Abdomen	3/6
INT	15	10-12	Chest	3/7
POW	14	13-15	Right Arm	3/4
DEX	13	16-18	Left Arm	3/4
CHA	11	19-20	Head	0/5
<i>Combat Actions</i>	3	<i>Typical Armour</i>	Malkioni Armour of Faith (3 AP Abdomen, Chest, Arms)	
<i>Damage Modifier</i>	-1D2	<i>Traits</i>	—	
<i>Magic Points</i>	14	<i>Skills</i>	Athletics 34%, Evade 46%, Evaluate 44%, Influence 36%, Lore (Malkioni Theology) 68%, Lore (World) 55%, Perception 40%, Persistence 58%, Resilience 46%, Survival 32%	
<i>Movement</i>	8m	<i>Combat Styles</i>	Rapier 38%	
<i>Strike Rank</i>	+11 (+14)	<i>Equipment</i>	Jrustelan Rapier, Malkioni Armour of Faith, 4D6 silver, 2D6x10 copper	
		<i>Sorcery</i>	Manipulation 35%, Lost Truths Grimoire 58%: Cast Back, Palsy	

## Weapons

<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Reach</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>AP/HP</i>
Jrustelan Rapier	M	L	1D8-1D2	5/8



## God Learner “Mountain Bandits”

These ruffians like to think of themselves as Knowledge Questers for the Middle Sea Empire, but they are merely hired toughs, providing the muscle for Baylis's plundering of other people's myths.

Quote: *Shall we kill 'em, boss?*

		<b>D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>
STR	13	1–3	Right Leg	1/5
CON	12	4–6	Left Leg	1/5
SIZ	11	7–9	Abdomen	1/6
INT	12	10–12	Chest	1/7
POW	10	13–15	Right Arm	1/4
DEX	10	16–18	Left Arm	1/4
CHA	10	19–20	Head	0/5
<i>Combat Actions</i>	2	<i>Typical Armour</i>	Soft Leather (AP 1, all locations except Head)	
<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+0	<i>Traits</i>	—	
<i>Magic Points</i>	10	<i>Skills</i>	Athletics 38%, Disguise 30%, Evade 39%, Evaluate 33%, Lore (World) 50%, Perception 35%, Persistence 38%, Resilience 32%, Riding 36%, Stealth 35%, Survival 45%, Unarmed 53%	
<i>Movement</i>	8m	<i>Combat Styles</i>	Sword 48%, Bow 45%	
<i>Strike Rank</i>	+9 (+11)	<i>Equipment</i>	War Sword, Leather Shirt & Trews, 3D6 silver	

## Weapons

<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Reach</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>AP/HP</i>	<i>Range</i>
War sword	M	M	1D8	6/10	—
Short Bow	L	—	1D6	4/4	80m

# SHIPS OF THE NOBLE HOUSES

By Matthew Sprange

## A Closer Look at Some of the Vessels in Noble Armada

This month sees the release of the latest version of A Call to Arms – Noble Armada. Set in the universe of Fading Suns, this space combat game is quick and easy to play, but features a ton of options and tactical challenges to get your brain thinking!

Over the past few months, we have been labouring to fill out the fleets so every basic ship option is available to you upon starting. Here, we take a closer look at some of the brand new ships to grace the skies of Noble Armada.

### Al Malik Moriah-class Cruiser

Currently the largest fleet in the al Malik fleet, the Moriah is a solid vessel forming the backbone of any expedition it is assigned to. Though it lacks the weapons and tonnage of a larger dreadnought, its typical role is to serve as a flagship for a fleet and lend its firepower to the traditional al Malik bombardment of rockets and missiles. In this it reigns supreme, being the only common vessel among the Noble Houses to sport torpedo launchers. These immense weapons are mounted in massive turrets, ensuring no enemy can approach without taking a huge amount of punishment as the projectiles pass right through its shields.

The Moriah is unusual for an al Malik ship in that it carries Marauders on board, and these elite troops often give a would-be boarder a nasty surprise if they manage to close range, fight their way past the hail of rockets and torpedoes and then avoid the attentions of the gatling lasers.

### Hazat Trafalgar-class Carrier

House Hazat takes a different approach to fighter support than other fleets. While most concentrate their efforts on a larger number of light carriers (not withstanding the immense Hawkwood Osprey), Hazat prefers to use a smaller number of larger carriers, reasoning that the concentration of a larger number of craft is always advantageous.

Loaded, as with all Hazat warships, with an inordinate number of troops, the Trafalgar is fully capable of taking on any smaller vessel and winning, not always an obvious trait with carriers. It carries a load of twelve craft, a mixture of Dagger fighters and Harpy torpedo bombers, and has powerful heavy blasters in both turrets and gun decks. This gives a Hazat fleet some much needed long-ranged support as they close in to board an enemy, and a Trafalgar rarely needs to engage an opponent directly – its fighters and heavy blasters are usually all that is required for victory.



Al Malik Moriah-class Cruiser



Hazat Trafalgar-class Carrier

### Hazat Harpy-class Torpedo Bomber

In size rivalling explorer grade ships the Harpy trades armour, endurance and survivability for speed, banking everything on getting close to a target where it can unleash its weapons.

Escorted by Dagger fighters, the Harpy is rarely troubled by enemy fighters by the simple virtue that its carrier can launch far more craft than most enemy fleets. The Harpy is slightly faster and better armoured than its main counterpart, the Hawkwood Kestrel, though it does not carry so many micro-torpedoes. This deficiency is covered by the number of Harpy bombers likely to be stationed with a fleet, and a full salvo is a fearsome thing to behold, fully capable of crippling even a cruiser.



Hazat Harpy-class Torpedo Bomber

### Decados Subiaco-class Fighter

The Subiaco lacks the raw speed and agility of some other fighters it encounters in space, but it makes up for this with superior onboard systems that allow it to retain an edge in dogfights and, more importantly, it carries heavier firepower than most.

A screen of Subiaco fighters is sufficient to safeguard any Decados fleet but they are also capable of turning their attention to smaller ships when the skies have cleared, preying on any vessel that has had its shields stripped by the fleet to launch a multitude of attacks. As any Subiaco pilot knows, enough stings will bring down even the largest beast.



Decados Subiaco-class Fighter

### Decados Rodrigo-class Heavy Fighter

Backing up the Subiaco is the heavy fighter of House Decados, the Rodrigo. Eschewing the micro-torpedoes of Hawkwood and Hazat, the Rodrigo instead carries meson tubes. While not as accurate, these weapons are fully capable of stripping a warship's shields when used en masse, and cause devastating damage when impacting upon a hull, wrecking havoc on vital systems throughout the ship.

Slow by the standards of other fighters, the Rodrigo nonetheless bears heavy armour allowing it to endure massive punishment before being blasted out of the void – long enough to deliver its vicious attack.



Decados Rodrigo-class Squadron

### Li Halan Ijiri-class Light Carrier

Designed to function as the centre of a fleet, the Ijiri carries command and control systems of a grade normally seen on the dreadnoughts of other fleets. Agile and bearing a healthy amount of medium lasers, the Ijiri can take part in a front line assault but its place is to co-ordinate attacks, lend fighter support and only engage enemies with its gun decks if directly threatened. Its speed and superior sensors make this a relatively easy task for an admiral.



Li Halan Ijiri-class Light Carrier

### Al Malik Matachin-class Stealthship

One of only two fleets that are able to support stealthships, al Malik is justifiably proud of this technological achievement. The Matachin is fast and manoeuvrable, and carries enough troops on board to cause even a Hazat captain some concern.

Like the Decados stealthship, the Matachin is forced to sacrifice armour for its stealth, so its captains tend to be picked for their cunning and killer instinct – a Matachin led by an impatient captain is likely to become only so much space dust within minutes of a battle starting. Instead, Matachin captains pride themselves on finding the perfect assault, often spending an entire battle carefully advancing towards an enemy, tracking them through space and taking advantage of debris as they close in, undetected. Multiple rocket launchers are replaced with several grapple guns, ensuring when the ship launches its attack, it will not fail. With enough troops to overwhelm even a large cruiser, the Matachin is fast becoming a vital component to the al Malik fleet.



Al Malik Matachin-class Stealthship

### Asim-class Light Carrier

The Asim fulfils a similar role in the al Malik fleet as does the Ijiri for Li Halan – both are intended to be fleet control vessels as much as light carriers. Lacking the speed of the Ijiri, the Asim instead relies on being able to burrow its way into the al Malik fleet as a whole, appearing as just another ship contributing to the constant bombardment of rockets, missiles and torpedoes.

The weight of firepower the Asim is able to add is not overwhelming as, like all light carriers, it effectively gives up a gun deck to be used as hangars and launch facilities. Because of this, it concentrates on rocket launchers, weapons that, while inaccurate, are capable of launching a veritable barrage able to completely bypasses enemy shields. However, given the capabilities of the Mishima and Peregrine fighters it carries, this is a more than worthwhile trade.



Asim-class Light Carrier

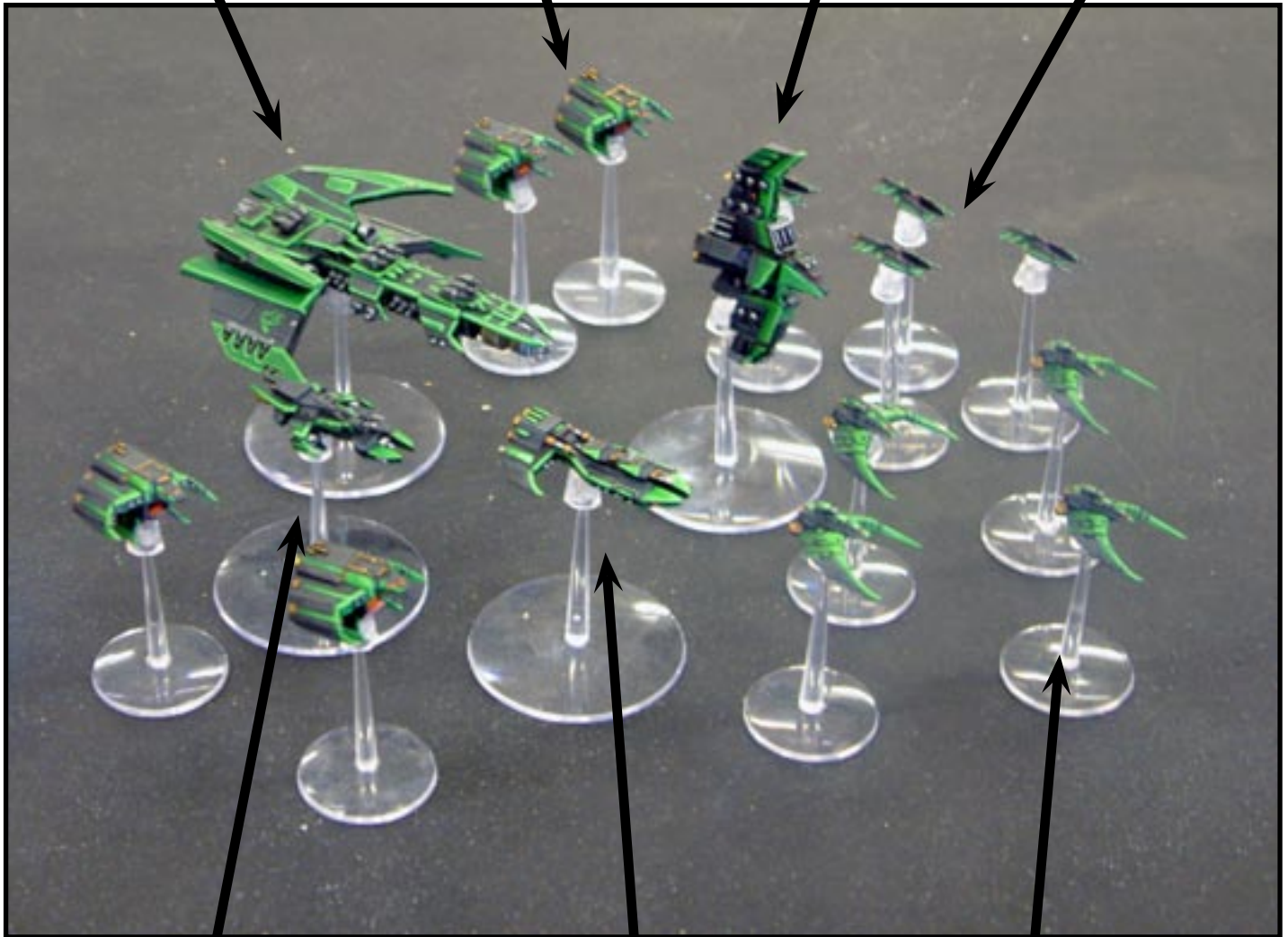
# HOUSE DECADOS FLEET

**Anikrunta Dreadnought**  
The pride of the Decados fleet.

**Lucretia Galliot**  
Loaded with marines, dedicated boarding vessel.

**Grigori Cruiser**  
Turreted meson cannon combined with laser and blaster gundecks makes for a devastating ship.

**Reaper Raider**  
Fastest ship in the fleet, suited for lightning assaults.



**Defiler Assault Lander**  
<<<Classified>>>

**Tupok'ta Destroyer**  
First dedicated warship, a solid attack vessel.

**Mantis Frigate**  
Most common ship in fleet, fast, agile and lethal.



The cover art depicts a chaotic space battle. In the center, a large blue and white battleship is being attacked by a green and brown assault carrier. Explosions and smaller ships are scattered around. The background features a green planet on the left and a red planet on the right. The title 'NOBLE ARMADA' is written in a large, stylized, metallic font at the top, with 'A CALL TO ARMS' in a smaller, hand-drawn font below it. The author's name 'MATTHEW SPRANGE' is at the bottom.

# NOBLE ARMADA

A CALL TO ARMS

CORE RULEBOOK

MATTHEW SPRANGE

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