



MONGOOSE PUBLISHING PRESENTS



Signs & Portents

Handling the Lady

Can your characters deal with Ivanova?

Mek Fury!

Armageddon 2089 Battle Report inside

Conan the Barbarian

The ultimate Hyborian character class exposed

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Babylon 5 created by J. Michael Straczynski

Contents

Features

10 THE QUINTESSENTIAL MONGOOSE

Mark Charke shows you how to play this exciting new character. Take this seriously at your own peril.

14 THE BLOODY GRIMOIRE

Blood, blood, glorious blood...Ian Sturrock fills his boots with this update for **Encyclopaedia Arcane: Blood Magic**.

20 HOW GOOD IS LAWFUL GOOD?

Matthew Sprange, with helpful interjections from yours truly, struggles with the conscience of his paladin, Sir Agamar. . . as he tells us how he approaches the limitations of being Lawful Good.

24 DATAFILE: 2089 - THE MOORE LTD. 'MARSHAL'

Datafile: 2089 brings you the first in a new series of WarMeks with helpful hints from Max Gonzalez of *Which WarMek?* magazine.

28 HANDLING THE LADY

Can you sort out Ivanova, or will you trash the story arc? Crucial guidelines from Lizard for the Babylon 5 ice maiden.

32 BATTLING DRAGONS

First sneak preview from the forthcoming *Book of Dragons*. Learn how to fight dragons and run away quickly.

38 HOT ON THE STREETS

Equipment for the Judge Dredd RPG that DeMarco says you must have at once. Best do what she says...

42 ULTIMATE GAMEPLAY - COOKING... FOR MAYHEM AND PROFIT

Andrew Boswell shows you how to be roleplaying's answer to Fanny Cradock.

44 THE COMING OF CONAN

This month we take a look at the Barbarian character class. Hey, it's Conan. What else would you expect?

48 AMBUSH!

Ian Sturrock provides a demonstration of WarMek combat in *Armageddon: 2089*.

54 THE QUINTESSENTIAL HALF-ORC

Check out our preview of this much-needed addition to the Quintessential series.

57 DESIGNER'S NOTES - THE FIERY TRIAL

Bruce Graw reveals just what he was thinking when he produced the first Babylon 5 story arc.

60 WHITE QUEEN'S GAMBIT

Fed up with dungeon hackfests? Gather up your pawns and head out on this chess-based adventure.



Judge DeMarco clearly has all the equipment she will ever need. If your Dredd characters aren't so lucky, you could always try page 38

Regulars

Eye on Mongoose This month's essential releases **2**
Q&A You ask, we tell **4** **Tales from Mongoose**
Hall More from the Old Bear **6** **Write for the**
Mongoose A guide for potential contributors **9**
Update Revised Interceptor rules **17** **Jonny**
Nexus Duck monks! **18** **PDF Collection**
 Ted Chang has things to tell you **58** **Caption**
Competition Win a copy of *Book of Dragons* **69**
Product List Everything we do, we do for you **70**
Subscriptions Get your copy of S&P delivered for a
 year, and save some cash into the bargain! **72**



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HELLO...AGAIN,

It doesn't seem like two minutes since I was writing the editorial to Issue 1 and here I am doing it all over again. Time really does fly when you are having fun.

Producing this magazine has without doubt been the most satisfying work experience of my life. To see one's efforts in print and then to actually read and hear people say nice things about them is pretty damned good.

So, what's in this issue, I hear you ask. Go on, humour me. Well, I managed to get a picture of Claudia Christian on the front cover. This would be reason enough to buy it, in my opinion, but I'm a generous sort of guy. Inside you will find the first of a series of features by the enigmatic Lizard on incorporating the major TV characters from *Babylon 5* into your games without breaking the story arc. In our game my personal aim is to marry her, but I don't see it happening. Marcus Kaide will probably beat me to it. If you have no idea what I am talking about go instantly to Tales from Mongoose Hall and all will be revealed.

There is also an informative battle report by Ian Sturrock for *Armageddon: 2089* which should provide enlightenment to those of you wondering just how roleplaying and WarMeks mesh. I for one had little experience with mecha-style gaming until now, but even I feel confident of handling my machine now without falling on my butt too often.

You will also find another advanced look at the forthcoming Conan RPG, with provisional rules on the Barbarian character class. As a huge devotee of the sombre Cimmerian, I was fascinated to see how his own basic class would look on paper.

Sadly, the price of the magazine has had to increase from the introductory issue. This has been unavoidable, and we have kept it to the bare minimum needed to produce the magazine to its already high standard. The subscription page has also been amended following feedback from our US customers, so now you can see an all-inclusive price for a year's supply of what I hope will become your favourite gaming journal. It still works out at two issues absolutely free, which can't be bad.

As for me, what little time I have spare has been spent swotting up on the great d20 3.5 update. Certainly some interesting changes to take in. My bard, for one, is happy now that he can strut around in light armour and still power off spells comfortably. There are some nice new spells as well to supplement those that I use from our own Quintessential Bard, which will be a relief to our gaming group as it will make a change from me using *Silver Voice* - there are only so many times 'these are not the droids you are looking for' can be considered either original or funny.

Dan

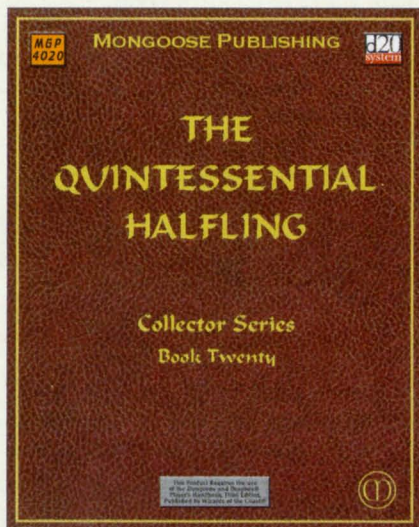
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Babylon 5 created by J. Michael Straczynski

EYE ON MONGOOSE

NEW RELEASES THIS MONTH



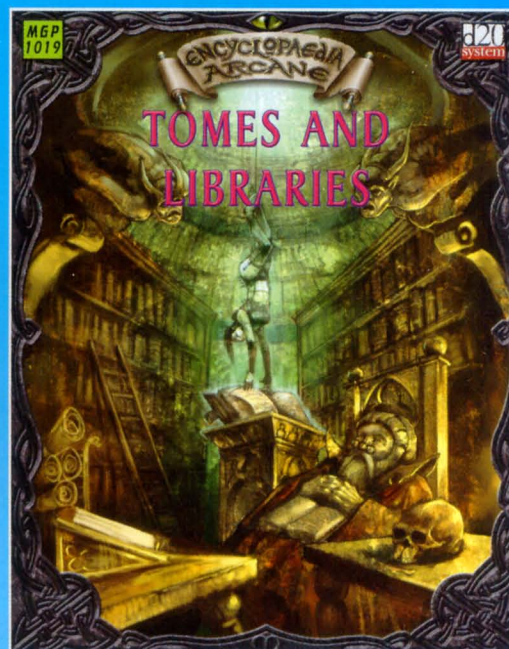
All you ever wanted to know about playing one of the little people is enclosed within the pages of the latest release in the acclaimed Quintessential series.

Unlike many of the other fantasy races, the halflings are not a composite from built from different mythologies, but spring from a small handful of clear sources. Halflings therefore have a rich, coherent background to draw from, but lack the varied breadth of others.

The Quintessential Halfling attempts to rectify this by building on those sources and introducing new varieties and breeds of halfling. Every halfling adventurer, regardless of class, will find their place in this book. The naïve but determined adventurer, the beguiling trickster, the lethal assassin, the cryptic fortune teller, the master chef, the wise old crone, the undetectable thief – all these halfling archetypes and more can be found within these pages.

Although wizards and libraries are so often connected, very little time has been spent on exploring the function and powers of books. Libraries usually turn up as scenic backdrops or repositories for purely magical resources, whereas there are more potentially useful books in a library than there are supplies in an adventuring gear shop. We will therefore be taking a long overdue stroll down the library aisles and finding out how to use its stored wisdom to our best advantage. Magic-using characters, who have more of a natural inclination towards reading than characters of other classes, will find an abundance of new ways to apply the knowledge set down in their books – and a whole lot of new books to go searching for!

Players of any class who prefer to use their brains as well as their sword arms will find new roles to play and new ways to tackle the challenges they encounter. Strength can see you through a tough battle, health can keep you standing when you are wounded and luck can sometimes get you out of trouble; but knowledge can trump any of these, because knowledge can find ways of applying strength more efficiently, avoiding wounds in the first place and substituting a blind trust in fate with advance planning. You will never look at a library in the same way again.

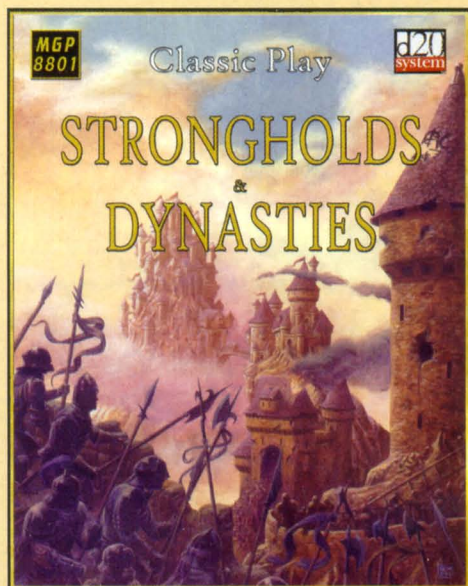
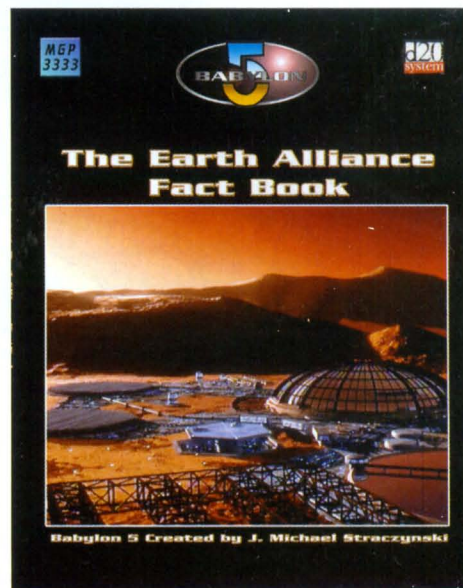


ON THE HORIZON...

CONAN

The Earth Alliance is one of the youngest spacefaring nations in the known Galaxy, yet it is also one of the largest and most influential. A hundred years ago, Humanity was on the verge of destroying itself in a global civil war when first contact was made with intelligent alien life. Since then, Man has spread throughout local space to occupy more than a dozen additional systems, fought and won two major wars and several smaller ones, and established diplomatic connections with virtually every race within a hundred light-years.

This book details the Earth Alliance in its entirety. From the homeworld of Earth to the colonies of Mars, Proxima, Orion, and more, every part of the Alliance can be found in these pages. Vehicles, weapons, equipment, characters, and more are examined in complete detail within this 200-page, full colour, hardback volume. The roleplaying possibilities are endless!



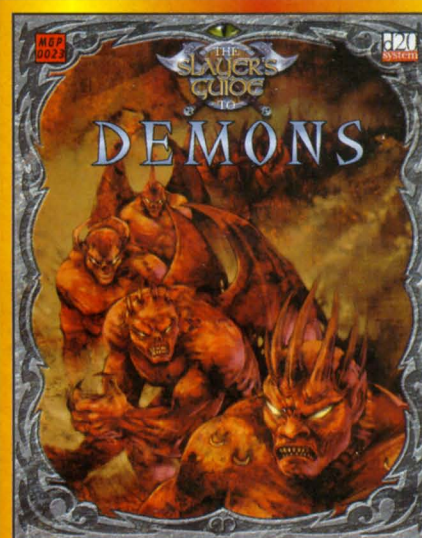
This is not just another book about castles.

All too often, the word 'stronghold' means only one thing, namely the typical stone keep on top of a hill, complete with crenellations and arrow slits in the wall. It is an enduring image from fantasy literature and cinema, from Excalibur to Monty Python. However, it is not often explored in depth. Thought is rarely given to what the stronghold is for, how it achieves its intended purpose or how it could be improved.

Here, we intend to change all that. We are looking not just at the stronghold but at the whole process of building, quite literally from the ground up. You will be able to choose the level of detail that suits you, depending on how immersive you want your game to be. Either supervise the laying of every flagstone and the siting of every spiral staircase, or have a package deal stronghold assembled for you and simply pay the bill.

Here you will find not only the castles of lore, but dozens of other strongholds and other buildings, enough to build all the major features of a city. Everything from the humblest farmhouse to the mightiest palace is covered between these covers. Also included within the 256-page hardback book is version 2 of the Open Mass Combat System and full rules for running a dominion or empire.

With the Book of Strongholds your characters can finally live your dreams to the very pinnacle of their ambitions.



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This is what demons embody. As malignant as a necromancer or a demonologist may become, they are still no match for the limitless evil of the lowest dretch. There is no redemption for these outsiders, as they seek only the destruction and corruption of all that exists.

Go on! Get your hands on 128 pages-worth of the Big Evil . . . you know you want to.

Q&A

The Mongoose Q&A is a monthly column collecting together queries, errata and clarifications for all our product lines. This month we focus on Armageddon: 2089.



Q:

1. In the Mek design chapter, is it hard points/structure points listed in the chassis table, in that order?
2. I take it the wargames rules were dropped at the last minute? They only seem to be mentioned in the last section of the Mek combat rules.
3. If that is the case, any chance these would see the light of day either on the site or in another book?
4. Is the max spotting distance for a small/medium/large Mek 1,000m or 10,000m? The book has it as the former, but the latter makes more sense. Just trying get things sorted out here.

A:

1) Yes. For example, a 25-ton chassis would have 5 hardpoints and 9 structure points in the torso.

2) & 3) This was something we changed right at the last moment - A2089 was indeed to have a whole chapter on wargaming. However it was dropped because a) we ran out of space and b) it very quickly became clear that it could use a hardback all of its own.

4) 10,000m for Small Meks. It's an obvious typo if you look at the progression of the table. Medium and Large Meks should be read on the line below as they preface treetop and factory roof.

Q:

For the WarMeks that require gunners and those where a gunner is optional, is there any benefit for having a gunner? Does that allow for more weapons to be fired? Also, is it possible at all for a Mek that has a crew of 2 listed to be piloted by just one person? By that, I mean to have the pilot have some capability to fire weapons, even if at a penalty.

A:

The main benefit of having a gunner is that one or other character can concentrate on something other than just attacking with every weapon. Typically, one will use artillery, or sniping style attacks, or ECM, while the other fires any weapons not used by the first.

There's certainly no problem with a character piloting a two-person Mek solo, though – he could still use all the weaponry.

Q:

The advanced visual scanner gives the pilot lowlight vision out to a certain distance - how does this function in the game mechanics? I.e. how does it affect visual spotting at night? Should it just give a circumstance bonus out to that distance on the modified spotting distance? Or does it negate the penalty from being at night but leave the distances modified, etc?

A:

It would work the same way as IR. Use the daylight spotting distances up to the range of the lowlight and then switch to the darkness DCs beyond that.

Q:

Regarding the Payload of a Mek chassis, and the Mass equipment takes up: Does the Payload rating of any particular Mek chassis (say a chassis with a Mass of 15, having a Payload of 9), equal the maximum amount of mass that equipment can take up in that particular Mek?

A:

Payload is the maximum mass of equipment that may be added to the Mek. Each location mass is limited by the available number of hardpoints and limits for armour based on chassis size. The total payload is added to the chassis mass and compared to the power plant rating to determine speed.

Q:

How long does it take to enter and start up a Mek?
How long does it take to leave a Mek without using an ejection system? Does it make a difference if you have waldo or manual controls?

A:

Mounting/ exiting Mek – assume a full round action to (dis)engage the motive control systems.
Standard action if you just need comms or sensor data. One round per size category to climb in/ out. If a ladder or gantry is set up, half that time.

Q:

With regard to the Scanner Focus feat, what type of scanner is an EED (p219)? Electromagnetic?

A:

Electronic Emissions Detector - radar signature.

Q:

What's the range increment for ATIROS (p218/220)? 15km (as in the description) or 7km (table)?

A:

ATIROS – 7km.

Q:

Does the Infrared Scanning System (p220) use the target's IR signature for DC or, because it's an active system, does it work like the UV scanner and use 10 + size + range? (Why does it matter how hot a target is if you can only see things you 'paint' with the IR spotlight?)

A:

ISS - as UV. The target's heat sink is not used because the ISS is tuned to detect a specific IR wavelength, not heat in general.



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Tales from Mongoose Hall

by Ian Barstow

Last month we saw how the party came together to begin playing the all-new *Fiery Trial* campaign and made their way to their intended mission - working for the sinister Roland Anderson of McGee Industries. With a fight against renegade Llor in the balance, come with me again to the Babylon 5 universe and see for yourself whether we can mob-handedly wreck all J Michael Straczynski's good work...

My Babylon 5 Diary.

Week 3

So, did Lizzy kill one of the scientists? Does he care? Hell, no! He legs it in the hope that nobody will remember what he looked like. Heraldo meanwhile pulls himself together and bumbles into the cockpit, where he gets held up by a Llor cunningly concealing itself as a door. Kaide is nowhere to be seen and Dan, the world's worst psychic, is with him. So, it's down to me to save Heraldo, which I do by lobbing a stun grenade into the cockpit and knocking out everybody inside. Gotta love those natural 20's...

About this time Lizzy shows up and we debate murdering Heraldo whilst he is out cold. I decide I'd rather shoot Kaide whilst he's wide awake, so we bring the dopey Centauri round and I shoot up the cockpit for good measure - don't want this thing taking off again, do we?

Going back to find Kaide pawing the only-wounded scientist, she comes round just in time to accuse Lizzy of trying to murder her. We then spend a fun ten minutes digging ourselves out of this hole. Oh, I forgot. About this time I decided to start the engines, which I hadn't trashed as badly as

I thought. What sort of mind leaps from blowing up a ship to starting it is open to debate, but there you go. Anyway, there's this sort of clunking noise which Lizzy, who has been next to me during this procedure, points out is probably the pack of grenades he popped into the engine as a booby trap... Anyway, one small 'boom' later this tub definitely ain't going anywhere.

With nothing else to go on about, we relapse back to our various normal states. Namely, Heraldo is smoothing up to everything in sight, Lizzy and me are convinced that Anderson, McGee Industries, archaeologists and pretty much everybody in general are villains, whilst it would take a divine being to spot if Kaide and Daniel are actually alive.

Suffice to say that for a change we don't try and kill the pilot and eventually take off back for B5 with our cargo and a shed load of LLort firepower. Did I mention that I'm an undercover agent working for Michael Garibaldi? No? Purely an oversight, I assure you. Anyway, I'm not that thrilled with all this excess firepower becoming available to Anderson and his grubby pals, so retaining my cover, I decide to

smuggle the lot into B5 in a holdall. OK, not the greatest plan, but the best I can come up with at short notice. Everyone looks at me aghast as I tell them I have a 'lucky feeling'. The looks change to uncontrolled hilarity as I set off all the alarms and get arrested for gun smuggling. But I'm not worried. One call to 'Giuseppe', my erstwhile employer at the bar (really Big Mike, of course) will see me out in a few hours.

Two weeks later, without anything more than confirmation that Anderson is up to no good and to keep an eye on him, I'm released. What can I say? Clearly gun smuggling is quite serious on B5. I have had some visitors though. Lizzy has been in regularly as he at least is now fully convinced of my cover as a mindless thug. We discuss Anderson and getting information on him (although I don't think Lizzy's intentions are quite as honourable as mine) Based on one of the selection of news stories usefully pumped out to us by Paul, we determine that the female scientist we previously shot would be an ideal candidate to 'go missing'. I see the opportunity for a spot of interrogation, whilst Lizzy leers a lot...think Jon Voight.

Ian's Top Roleplaying Tips

#666

Don't Appear Smug To The Games Master

You know what I mean. You have this secret up your sleeve that the two of you have discussed and you wish the rest of the group could know it but they can't so you decide to do something smugly risky to impress them. This is guaranteed to backfire. Games Masters are notorious in their retribution seeking. Make sure it is somebody else, not you.

I put this to Heraldo on his visit, but this Centauri suddenly develops unexpected scruples. The other two, who can't be bothered to visit me, are also against the idea. Oh well, can't be helped. Eventually I get bailed out with 300 credits back pay in my pocket, but no weapon – thanks, Garibaldi! We then get summoned to another meeting with Anderson who has another juicy job for us. Nothing serious, just a jailbreak from a planet in the middle of nowhere. It seems some more of Anderson's 'people' have got themselves into trouble and need breaking out. This seems to be a regular occurrence and I thoughtfully advise Anderson to pick up some Risk Management insurance for his people. Obviously I'm keen to go, though – it's my job, after all. Why the others are so eager I don't know. We aren't exactly the sort of crew one would immediately think of for a job like this. To be fair, we aren't exactly the sort of crew that you would think of for any job outside of circus entertainment.

Having agreed 2,250 credits a man plus expenses, we get what meagre details we can out of tight-lipped Anderson before heading off. With less than 24 hours notice there isn't much time for securing equipment, but with Heraldo intent on getting legless again, Lizzy attempting to perform illegal acts with dock workers and Kaide doing...well, whatever Kaide does when he isn't being an international man of mystery, nobody seems too bothered. You will notice by now that I am hard pressed to even mention Daniel – there is only so much living death that one can be bothered with, after all. Instead, I spend my time coming up with a cunning plan to pass us off as a documentary film crew. This is met is met with a solid wall of apathy. So I decide to bung in a ridiculous inventory in the hope of getting something or other. Four flak jackets and a pair of used pliers later, we are ready to head out for the stars once more.

At this point I hear my mother calling, so it's time to head home...

Week 4

The stars beckon, although one has the sneaking suspicion that if it were something visible it would be vaguely obscene. I have managed to convince the rest of the party that we don't need Anderson's support people on this job – deniability, as Heraldo tells him. I pilot the shuttle out to our waiting transport, romantically named *Liberty's Fortune* (that banging about was due to me not having spacecraft proficiency (oops!)). Anyway, another natch 20 bails me out and we dock with the star system's roughest and least welcoming 'cruise liner'. Travelling in style again...

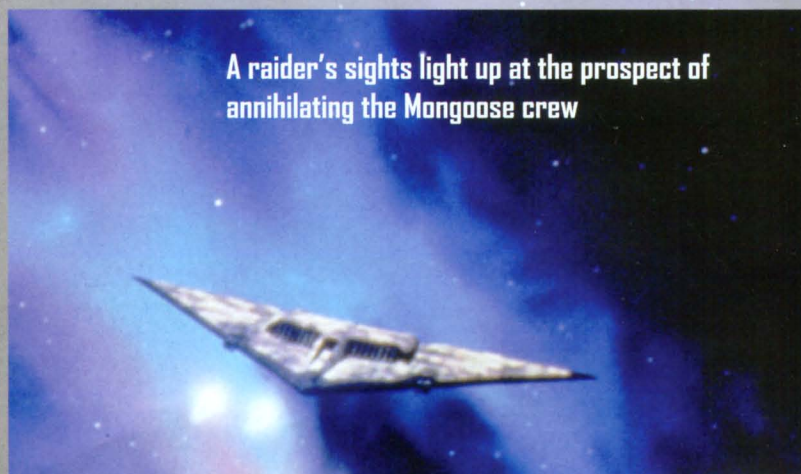
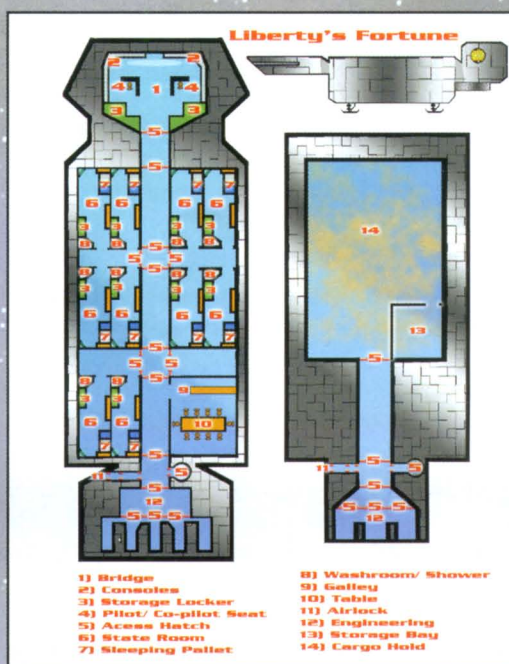
We are greeted by some geezer who may or may not have been the captain telling us to mind our own business and stay in our cabins. With Heraldo on board this is like asking Daniel to speak to people. Anyway, we mooch around for a bit, grabbing the decent bunks and leaving Kaide standing looking at the bunk with no

pillow. He throws his weight about for a bit before going off to look for a pillow. How are the mighty fallen? I clean the weapons because it seems the sort of thing I should do. Heraldo gets plastered, so nothing new there. Lizzy goes off to lurk a bit, and discovers that this 'cruise ship' has fighters on board. You don't get that with Cunard, I can tell you.

All in all we spend a pleasant day or so hanging around the ship, waiting for the inevitable to happen...

Then the alarms start sounding. This for me is never a good sign. Acting once more in harmony, Lizzy and I head for the shuttle making ready to escape; Heraldo leaves the area altogether, half-cut and heading for the bridge, whilst Dan and Marcus Kaide stand around for a bit before I

call Dan inside and tell him to keep in contact with Heraldo. Looking back out we see Kaide begin to open the air locks...! Then he stops and puts on a pressure suit, so we all



decide this would be a good idea before locking Kaide out of the shuttle. Lizzy votes for lighting up the engines and turning Kaide into a sauté kipper. Works for me.

Meanwhile, Heraldo has blundered up to the bridge, offended the captain and been locked out. People are running about everywhere talking about meltdown in the engine room, so where does he go? Engineering, obviously. Getting there, he blags his way in, clearly coming up against the thickest space mercenaries ever seen. Did I forget to mention that? Looks like we are on board a mercenary/ pirate ship which Mr Anderson uses as a 'convenient' transport for his totally above-board operations. Once inside, picking up a fire extinguisher he convinces the crew he is an expert Centauri fire-fighter and proceeds to spray the whole area with a variety of chemicals.

Back at the shuttle, we are on the inside watching Kaide's increasingly bizarre behaviour. He needs to get up high to operate the exit doors manually so he uses some sort of electronic lifting gear, requiring the concerted and effective use of a three-button control box.

Having lifted himself into the air, Kaide discovers that he is far too weedy to use the manual override. Over-confident in his pressure suit, he decides to make use of his PPG to blast the lock open. In the shuttle we are mouthing the words 'No! Don't do it!' repeatedly, but needless to say Kaide is not looking. One badly placed shot later, Kaide has blown a small hole in the hull. This turns out to not be altogether a good thing as our favourite *wunderscientist* forgets how to lower himself and gets sucked towards the vortex, conveniently blocking the hole with his backside.

Things are going from bad to worse for us at this point. Instead of helping out, Heraldo's unique brand of Centauri firefighting has distracted the crew to the point where a reactor meltdown is more likely than Daniel

Ian's Top Roleplaying Tips

#63

Remember What You Just Did

OK, so it is rather easy to get carried away laughing about something and forget what you just did. This sort of behaviour can come back to bite you on the backside, however. Games Masters are notoriously unforgiving of players who break off a scene to throw out a quick gag and then forget who they are and what they should be doing.

winning the Psi Corps' sponsored silence contest. Sure enough, all sorts of flashing lights and alarms go off all over the place. This is of no consequence to *Marcus Kaide*, who has just been sucked out into space – sadly, not entirely intact, due to the fact that the exit hole did not quite match his waist size. Never mind, eh?

The rest of us have little time to be smug, as it turns out. My inept piloting skills come home to roost with a natural one finally showing up as I fail to recall just where the Start button is. As meltdown kicks in we leave this mortal coil, not with a bang...actually, with rather a large bang.

So ends one of the Mongoose team's playtest of the Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game. Elsewhere, imaginative and dedicated playtesters have soldiered along making sure that the balance of the game is just so. The important word in this is, of course, *elsewhere*, although it is fair to say that if you ever need to work out how to suck a scientist out of a starship, you can drop me a line. After all, I was there...



Where To Next?

So, having caused carnage in the Babylon 5 universe, where will the dreaded Mongoose team head next? The answer is *The Forgotten Realms*.

Yes, indeed, stay sharp and wait with baited breath for the arrival of Bulwer the psychotic barbarian, Casper the pacifist halfling, Cresendo the strangely-overpowered elf and the rest of their party.

What excitement awaits them in the frozen north?

Be patient, you only have to wait a month...



Write for the Mongoose

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We will need a brief synopsis of your intended article, no more than one page long. Also include a paragraph or two of your actual writing style, so we can see whether you have what it takes and any samples of previously published work. If we like what we see, we will commission a first draft from you and you will be on your way to becoming a Mongoose contributing writer. And every article we publish will be paid for...which is nice.

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Supply articles via email or on disc. We can read most formats, although MS Word is always a safe bet. You will be provided with a style guide when we commission your article. Make sure you read it!

Subject Matter

First and foremost, the article has to be based on one of our product lines. That is not as limiting as it sounds, however. The d20 fantasy family alone should give you plenty of scope. Think of all our various products, like the Quintessential series and the Slayer's Guides. With more than 80 fantasy-based books to choose from...well, you get the idea. But don't stop there. Think Babylon 5, Judge Dredd, Slaine, Armageddon 2089, not to mention the barrage of forthcoming games that we have coming. If you have ideas for any of our games we want to hear them.

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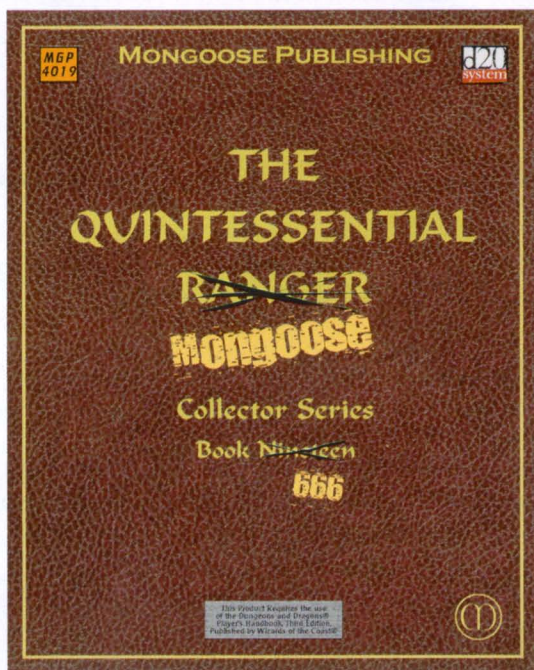
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By Mark Charke

THE MONGOOSE RACE

Personality: Mongooses are curious, playful creatures who get along well with others but lack any sort of discipline. Mongooses are bound to their instinct, which is to mate and build a family, care for it and protect it. They play whenever they have free time.

Physical Description: Mongooses are small, carnivorous mammals ranging in colour from yellow to brown with stripes, spots and other coloration. They live between 8-13 years (in captivity) and weight about 2 lb. There are 38 species of Mongoose including the meerkat. Mongooses eat insects, snakes, rodents and frogs as well as eggs, fruits, seeds and nuts. They are native to Africa, Europe, Asia, Caribbean and Hawaii. They are well known for eating snakes, although they do not go out of their way to hunt snakes and will avoid a confrontation if able. They eat the head and poison glands of a snake which helps make them build up a resistance to the venom.

Relations: Mongooses get along well with

Alignment: Mongooses are neutral.

Mongoose Lands: Mongooses have no complex culture. They live in the wild in small family groups.

Languages: Mongoose cannot speak beyond simple sounds which do not constitute a language. Those in captivity learn a limited understanding of the language of their keepers, usually common and one other language. Player character mongooses make us of the traits listed below.

Adventures: Mongooses may be a little reckless about their lives. Their curiosity and innocent nature often lead them into dangers that only their quick reflexes save them from. The mongoose is the least likely member of the group to voice protest against a reckless course of action.

Mongoose Traits

- † -6 Str, +4 Dex, -8 Int, +2 Wis, -6 Cha
- † Tiny: As Tiny creatures mongooses enjoy a +2 bonus to AC and attack due to their size.
- † Mongoose base speed is 20 feet.
- † Climb 20ft. (Mongooses can climb as fast as they can move.)
- † Lowlight vision.

Now is the time to settle your tongue firmly in your cheek, sit back, light your pipe and generally allow yourself to have a laugh.

S&P is proud to present a brand new race for use in all good d20 worlds.

If you find yourself sitting bolt upright, shouting 'this is totally broken!' then you need therapy.

- † Automatic languages: Common.
- Bonus Languages: Any.
- † Favoured Class: Rogue.

Mongoose Skills

Animal Empathy: This skill is useful in handling hostile mongooses. There are no special difficulties in applying this skill to mongooses.

Handle Animal: Mongooses make great pets when trained and familiar with the race that will be keeping them. Mongooses do not usually learn tricks such as 'sit' or 'come', as a dog might, but they can be encouraged to pick up a trick or two eventually. In this aspect they are much like cats—independent—but they will defend their family from snakes and larger predators without being trained to do so.

Knowledge (nature): As an animal this is the appropriate skill to check when asking questions about the mongoose. This includes questions about unusual types of mongoose such as the celestial and dire versions.

MONGOOSE FEATS

Aloha Spirit Mongoose (General)

You can summon a mongoose animal companion.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 1st level arcane or divine spells.

Benefits: You can summon a mongoose who will stay with you as long as you treat it well and care for it. The mongoose gains the abilities of a familiar as if you were a sorcerer of your character level. You can release the mongoose at any time and summon another after 7 days. Once you take this feat, you may never harm a mongoose or you lose the benefit of the feat, however mongooses will never attack or harm you.

Leap of the Mongoose (General)

You can leap like a mongoose.

Prerequisites: Str 13+, Dex 13+

Benefits: You gain a +5 mongoose bonus to your Jump checks. Jump is always a class skill for you.

Mongoose Charm (General)

Mongooses are cute and you benefit from this.

Prerequisites: Cha 10+

Benefits: As long as you have a mongoose, which is obviously yours but may be lent out for petting and such, you gain a +2 bonus to any Charisma-based checks. Cold hearted or truly evil persons, undead and non-humanoids are unaffected by this bonus.

Mongoose Publisher (General)

You can scribe with the speed of the mongoose.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+

Benefits: You can write twice as fast as usual. This includes the creation of magical texts. It takes you ½ day plus ½ day per spell level to write a spell into a spellbook. If you have the Scribe Scroll feat, it takes you only ½ day per 1000gp value to write a spell scroll.

Normal: It takes 1 day plus 1 day per spell level to write a spell into a spellbook. It takes 1 day per 1000gp to write a spell scroll.

Speed of the Mongoose (General)

You can use your speed to avoid poison.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+

Benefits: You may substitute your Reflex saving throw in place of your Fortitude saving throw against all poisons.



Survival of the Fittest (General)

You gain bonuses for surviving encounters.

Prerequisites: None

Benefits: If you survive an encounter, you can add a +1 circumstance bonus to either your Armour Class, attack bonus, one saving throw bonus or skill check for the next 24 hours. This ability stacks with itself. (The Games Master may void this ability for unchallenging encounters.)

EXCLUSIVE MONGOOSE PRESTIGE CLASS!

The Loyal Mongoose

'Snake killer, defender, seeker of wrong doers, I am the loyal mongoose.'

The Loyal Mongoose

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Power Special	Spells per Day			
						1	2	3	4
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Aura of courage, animal companion	0	-	-	-
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Detect poison	1	-	-	-
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Resist poison	1	0	-	-
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Dexterity bonus +2	1	1	-	-
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Remove poison	1	1	0	-
6	+6	+5	+2	+5		1	1	1	-
7	+7	+5	+2	+5		2	1	1	0
8	+8	+6	+2	+6	Dexterity bonus +2	2	1	1	1
9	+9	+6	+3	+6		2	2	1	1
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	Mystery feat	2	2	2	1

The loyal mongoose emulates the finest qualities of his namesake. He defends family and friends. He shows no fear in the face of adversity. He makes use of speed in defence of himself. He apprehends those who wrong society. He is the paladin-ranger, a soldier of the people and a creature of the wilderness. He even builds up a strong resistance to poisons, a trait the mongoose is famous for.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify for the loyal mongoose a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Alignment: Lawful Good.

Base Attack Bonus: +5 or greater.

Skills: Animal Empathy 4 ranks, Handle Animal 4 ranks.

Class Skills

The loyal mongoose's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Ride (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All the following are class features of the loyal mongoose prestige class.

Spells per day: The loyal mongoose can cast a small number of divine spells. His spells are based on Wisdom, so casting any given spell requires a Wisdom score of at least 10 + the spell's level. The DC for saving throws against these spells is 10 + spell level + the loyal mongoose's Wisdom modifier. When the table indicates that the loyal mongoose is entitled to 0 spells of a given level (such as 0 1st-level spells at 1st level), he gets only those bonus spells that his Wisdom score allows. A loyal mongoose prepares and casts spells just like a ranger, choosing his spells from the ranger spell list.

Animal Companion (Ex): The loyal mongoose gains an animal companion. This animal is one the loyal mongoose has befriended with the spell *animal friendship*. As such, it can have no more than 2 Hit Dice. The loyal mongoose can have more than one animal companion, provided the animals' total Hit Dice do not exceed 2. The loyal mongoose can also cast *animal friendship* on other animals during play. (The animal companion does not have to be a mongoose. As mongooses have ½ HD the loyal mongoose could have 4 mongoose animal companions.)

Aura of Courage (Ex/Su): The loyal mongoose is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of the loyal mongoose gain a +4 moral bonus on saving throws against fear effects. Granting the moral bonus to allies is a supernatural ability.

Detect Poison (Sp): At 2nd level, once per day per prestige class level, the loyal mongoose can *detect poison* as per the spell, as a sorcerer of the same level.

Resist Poison (Ex): At 3rd level, the loyal mongoose adds his prestige class level to Fortitude saving throws against poison.

Dexterity Bonus (Ex): At 4th and 8th levels, the loyal mongoose adds a permanent +2 enhancement bonus to his Dexterity score.

Remove Poison (Sp): At 5th level, once per day per prestige class level, the loyal mongoose can *remove poison* as per the spell, as a sorcerer of the same level.

Code of Conduct: The loyal mongoose must be of lawful good alignment and loses all special class abilities if he ever willingly commits an act of evil. Additionally, the loyal mongoose's code requires that he respect legitimate authority, act with honour (not lying, not cheating, not using poison, etc.), help those who need help (provided they do

not use the help for evil or chaotic ends), and punish those that harm or threaten innocents.

Further, it is the role of the loyal mongoose to use his abilities to detect, delay and remove poisons wherever he can. He must defend the family (mothers and children) first and foremost. Finally, the loyal mongoose must honour his namesake. He may never harm another mongoose.

Associates: While he may adventure with characters of any good or neutral alignment, the loyal mongoose will never knowingly associate with evil characters. The loyal mongoose will not continue an association with someone who consistently offends his moral code. The loyal mongoose may only hire henchmen or accept followers who are lawful good.

Mongoose Familiar

The mongoose familiar grants its master a +4 bonus to Fortitude saves vs poison.

Mongoose Familiar: CR 1; Tiny magical beast; HD 1, hp ½ master's; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 15; Atk +4 melee (1d3-4, bite); Face/Reach 2 ½ ft. by 2 ½ ft./0 ft.; SA Attach; SQ Scent, poison resistance; grant Alertness, improved evasion, share spells, empathic link, +4 to Fortitude saves vs poison; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 5, Cha 6. *Skills and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +11, Hide +13, Move Silently +9, Spot +4; *Weapon Finesse* (bite).

(These statistics are for the mongoose familiar of a 1st level wizard and include the +1 bonus to Armour Class.)

The Magical Mongoose

Cape of the Mongoose: This mongoose hide cape grants its wearer an enhancement bonus of +2 to Balance, Climb, Hide, Move Silently and Spot while in the wilderness.

Caster Level: 6th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item; *Market Price:* 15,100gp; *Weight:* 1lb.

Mongoose Spells

Blessing of the Mongoose Goddess

Abjuration

Level: Druid 2, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25ft./ + 5 ft./ 2 levels)

Area of Effect: 20ft. radius

Duration: 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw: None (Harmless)

Spell Resistance: No

All mongooses in the area of effect gain damage reduction 10/- and energy resistance 10. This applies to acid, cold, heat, lightning, negative, positive and sonic energy.

Material Component: A 100gp food offering to the goddess.

Fortitude of the Mongoose

Abjuration

Level: Sor/Wiz 1

Components: S, F

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: None (Harmless)

Spell Resistance: No

You give the subject, who may be you, the internal fortitude of a mongoose, granting him a +4 bonus to Fortitude saving throws against all poisons.

Focus: A bit of fur from a mongoose,

or a mongoose itself (this does not harm the mongoose).

Fury of the Mongoose

Transmutation

Level: Druid 1, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 action

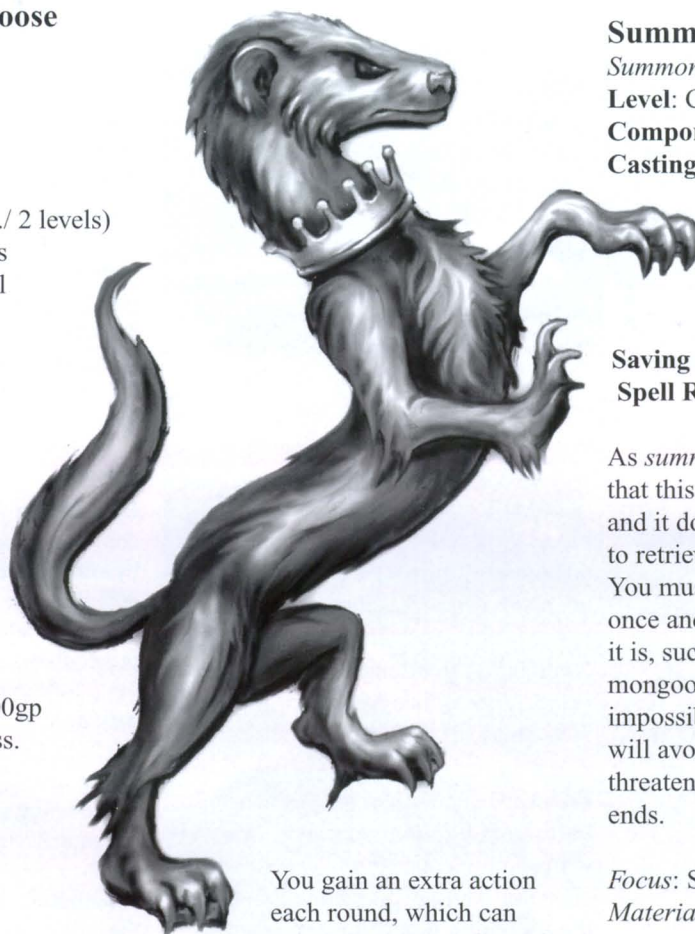
Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No



You gain an extra action each round, which can only be used to make a bite attack. In effect you gain a bite attack which inflicts 1d4 damage. This is a *haste* bonus and does not stack with *haste*.

Focus: A bit of fur from a mongoose, or a mongoose itself (this does not harm the mongoose).

Skill of the Mongoose

Divination

Level: Ranger 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: None (Harmless)

Spell Resistance: No

You gain an additional favoured enemy which must be snakes. This increases the bonus on all your other favoured enemies as if you had gained another favoured enemy. (You cannot use this spell more than once, because you may only choose snakes.)

Summon the Thief

Summoning

Level: Cleric 2, Sor/wiz 2

Components: S, F, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: One summoned creature

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

As *summon nature's ally I*, except that this spell summons a mongoose and it does not attack but attempts to retrieve an object of your choice. You must have seen the object at least once and have a general idea where it is, such as within a house. The mongoose will not perform obviously impossible or dangerous tasks and will avoid combat. If its life is threatened it vanishes and the spell ends.

Focus: Some fur from a mongoose.

Material component: Food for the mongoose.



So, all fired up to break it to your Games Master that your new character is going to be a mongoose? If, for some bizarre reason you actually do this, drop S&P a line. Anything suitably amusing is liable to get published...

The Bloody Grimoire

By Ian Sturrock

Encyclopaedia Arcane: Blood Magic presented a set of rules for blood sacrifices and other gruesome practices. This article gives a character concept (as introduced in the Quintessential series of sourcebooks) to allow characters to start their careers as blood magicians, rather than having to find a teacher. In addition, a new prestige class is available, the blood patriarch.

Blood Magic Character Concept: Blood Magus

Some magicians get an early exposure to blood magic, either by being brought up in a tribe in which blood magic is a dominant spiritual tradition or being apprenticed to a wizard who is highly knowledgeable about the bloody art. Only a sorcerer or wizard can elect to begin the game as a blood magus.

Adventuring: A blood magus will be in demand wherever primitive tribes still adhere to the old ways of blood and sacrifice, and many will adventure in that context, travelling with small groups of warriors on quests and other tribal business. The more civilised blood magus will also need to adventure regularly, both to seek out the half-forgotten lore of long-dead blood magicians and often to escape the persecution of those who regard blood magic as heretical or just plain evil.

Roleplaying: The blood magus is likely to have been somewhat odd, somewhat detached from society from a very early age. He may have been fascinated with death, scars and wounds, and been highly superstitious and obsessed with magical power. Even in a tribal society that values blood magic, these traits will have been sufficient to ensure his tribe regarded him as set outside the norm, though they will have respected and feared his clear power and ensured he was sent to an experienced tribal sorcerer to properly learn the ways of magic. From this point on he will have forged a powerful grip of terror on the rest of his tribe. A blood magus who grew up in a more advanced culture will likely have been still more detached, perhaps to the point of paranoia, in sharp contrast to the often charismatic and powerful presence of the primitive blood magus.

Bonuses: The blood magus has had basic training in blood magic. He gains Knowledge (blood magic) as a class skill, and begins play knowing the following bloodrite: *lesser creature of blood*.

Penalties: The blood magus learned how to create blood creatures as a replacement for summoning a more permanent familiar and has less time to devote to the latter practice. He does not gain Summon Familiar as a class feature until 2nd level, and always treats his class level as one level lower than usual for purposes of determining his familiar's game statistics.

Blood Magic in the Sláine RPG

As readers who own both the *Sláine RPG* and *Encyclopaedia Arcane: Blood Magic* will be aware, much of the material in the Blood Sacrifices chapter of the latter book is fairly compatible with the Sláine rules and setting. The Blood Sacrifice feat is equivalent to the Ritual Sacrifice feat in Sláine, and the Tortured Sacrifice feat equates to Sláine's Blood Eagle feat. The Bleed Dry feat is very similar to the identically-named class feature of the witch character class in Sláine, and the Opportunistic Sacrifice feat to the war-witch class feature too. More or less all the bloodrites from this chapter and from the Bonds of Blood chapter can be used as they are by any witch, war-witch or (at the Games Master's discretion) drune, if the Games Master decides to allow blood magic into his game at all. Likewise those classes should have Knowledge (blood magic) as class skills.

Note that any direct-damage bloodrites (or spells for that matter) should probably be banned to remain in keeping with the Sláine mythos. Specific notes for incorporating aspects of the Bonds of Blood and Blood Sacrifices chapter are given below.

Blood Magic Spells: These can be converted to standard Sláine spells by simply doubling the spell level to determine the EP cost. The Games Master should consider adding specific prerequisites more appropriate to Sláine, too – for example, some of the spells may be available only to worshippers of Crom-Cruach or Morrigu. A more Sláine-specific version of the Blood Summoning spell can be found in the adventure *The Invulnerable King*.

Bloodrites: Prerequisites that require the casting of arcane spells can safely be ignored for *Sláine RPG* purposes. The *bloody calling* bloodrite can be used with any Summoning spell rather than the specific arcane spells listed. *Blood contract* is banned, given the minimal literacy of Tir Nan Og.

Festivals of Sacrifice: The cost in Sláine terms is 1,000 sêts for the main ritualist, 500 for each assistant, and 5 sêts for each victim. The semi-permanent *gate* use of the festival, and the direct-damage use, are both banned from Sláine games.

New Prestige Class: Blood Patriarch

Blood patriarchs are arcane spellcasters who build up a 'blood family' around themselves, setting themselves up as the head of a clan of blood-empowered descendants. Many are quite elderly, as they must already have a sizable family, from whom they derive their power. They gain enormous magical power from their family in a variety of ways, from boosting his spells by calling upon them to open a vein, to outright sacrifice.

Blood patriarchs are more common among wizards than sorcerers, though not by much. Sorcerous blood patriarchs are usually found at the head of primitive, highly inbred clans, far smaller even than most tribes. Wizardly blood patriarchs have usually happened upon the practice through independent research.

Hit Die: d4.

Requirements

To qualify to become a blood patriarch, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any evil.

Feats: Blood Sacrifice, Blood of Power.

Skills: Bluff 8 ranks, Knowledge (blood magic) 10 ranks.

Bloodrites: *Bloody chalice*.

Spellcasting: Ability to cast 4th level arcane spells.

Special: Must have at least ten living descendants.

Class Skills

The blood patriarch's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (blood magic) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int). See *Core Rulebook I* for skill descriptions.

Skill points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the blood patriarch prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency:

The blood patriarch gains no new proficiency with weapons or armour of any kind. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble.

Spells: For each level gained in this prestige class, the blood patriarch gains an additional level of arcane spellcasting ability. To determine the number of spells the blood patriarch can cast and his caster level, add his levels in this prestige class to his levels in his other arcane spellcasting class. For example, a 6th level sorcerer/4th level blood patriarch prepares and casts spells as a 10th level sorcerer.

Power in the Blood: Blood patriarchs are able to pass on a measure of their magical power to their descendants. Every direct descendant of a blood patriarch gains the Blood of Power feat for free. This is an extraordinary ability.

Family Bond: At 2nd level, a blood patriarch gains the ability to call on the magical power inherent in his descendants' blood. He may communicate telepathically with all his descendants, as though by a permanently effective *telepathic bond*. Furthermore, as a full-round action, he may call upon them to spill their own blood for his benefit, however distant they are from him. Each of his descendants may make a Will saving throw (DC 10 + blood patriarch's class level + blood patriarch's Charisma modifier). Any who fail immediately spill 1d6 hit points' worth of their own blood. So long as a total of at least 20 hit points' worth of blood is spilled, the blood patriarch gains a +1 bonus to his caster level for the next 24 hours.

From 4th level, the blood patriarch can gain a +2 bonus to caster level so long as 40 hit points' worth of blood is spilled. This increases to +3 for 60 hit points at 6th level, +4 for 80 hit points at 8th level, and +5 for 100 hit points at 10th level. In any case, if sufficient hit points are not spilled for the maximum caster level increase, the blood patriarch may gain a reduced caster level increase according to the amount of blood that was spilled – for example, a 10th level blood patriarch whose descendants spilled only 73 hit points' worth of blood would gain only a +3 caster level increase. This is a supernatural ability.

Improved Bloody Chalice: All blood patriarchs of 3rd level or above can cast the *bloody chalice* bloodrite at no XP cost, so long as all the targets are related to him by blood or are his spouses. Furthermore, all its effects are increased as follows when cast in this way:

- The bonus to attack rolls is +1 per three class levels of blood patriarch.
- The penalty to Sense Motive checks made to oppose the blood patriarch's Bluff checks is increased to -1 per class level of blood patriarch.
- The penalty to saving throws made against the blood patriarch's spells, bloodrites, or supernatural abilities is increased to -1 per two class levels of blood patriarch.
- If a second *bloody chalice* is cast targeting the same targets before the duration of the first has expired, the blood patriarch's effective class level is doubled for purposes of Sense Motive and saving throw penalties.

Note that the duration of the bloodrite is unaffected. This is a supernatural ability.

Ultimate Sacrifice: From 5th level, any time the blood patriarch sacrifices one of his descendants, he immediately gains 1d6 temporary hit points per class level of the victim, in addition to any other benefits of the sacrifice. These temporary hit points last for one hour per class level of the victim. This is a supernatural ability.

Bonus Blood Magic Feat: At 7th level, the blood patriarch gains a bonus feat, to be chosen from any of the new feats given in *Encyclopaedia Arcane: Blood Magic*. He must meet the prerequisites for the feat as usual.

Red Reincarnation: A blood patriarch of 9th level or above may, if killed, pass on his spirit into the body of one of his descendants, possessing them utterly. Attempting to possess a descendant body is a free action. It is blocked by protection from evil or a similar ward. The blood patriarch possesses the body, totally absorbing his descendant soul into his own,

unless the subject succeeds at a Will save (DC 10 + blood patriarch class level + blood patriarch Cha bonus). Failure to take over the host allows the blood patriarch to attempt the same again on another descendant. He may keep trying to possess different descendants until he succeeds or has attempted to possess each of his descendants. He may not attempt to possess the same descendant twice, and if all his descendants successfully save, his own soul is destroyed forever.

If successful, the character's life force occupies the host body, and the host life force absorbed within his own forever. The character keeps most mental abilities and gains some physical abilities, as with polymorph other (except that the character gets the descendant actual physical abilities, not average ones). This is a supernatural ability.



The Blood Patriarch

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells/day
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Power in the Blood	+1 level of existing class
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Family Bond +1	+1 level of existing class
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Improved Bloody Chalice	+1 level of existing class
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Family Bond +2	+1 level of existing class
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Ultimate Sacrifice	+1 level of existing class
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	Family Bond +3	+1 level of existing class
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Bonus Blood Magic Feat	+1 level of existing class
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Family Bond +4	+1 level of existing class
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Red Reincarnation	+1 level of existing class
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Family Bond +5	+1 level of existing class

Revised Interceptor Rules

Shadow agents, in an attempt to ensure the Shadows' superiority excised the information on interceptors from the Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game and Fact Book. After an exhaustive and intrepid search by Minbari Rangers, we have now been able to recover the rules and present them below.

Interceptors, Mk I

The Mk I interceptors developed by the Earth Alliance are used primarily to intercept and defeat incoming fire during battle, though they can also serve as a ready means of point defence against fighters. Interceptors may be fired in one of three modes.

✚ Using the standard Direct Fire Mode, the interceptor may be used as an ordinary spacecraft weapon, usually done when targeting fighters or other small vessels.

✚ Interceptors may also be used to target incoming attacks in Interception Mode. To do this, the

interceptor's operator must ready an action to react whenever his own spacecraft is attacked by a ranged weapon. When this occurs, he must make an attack roll, adding the interceptor's bonus for its targeting computer. If he beats the attack roll of the incoming attack, it is completely nullified, without damaging its target. The interceptor may be used in Interception Mode as many times in a round as the operator has attacks – it may not be rapid-fired in this mode, as all of its firepower is used in nullifying attacks.

Interceptors may only be used to target attacks aimed at the vessel they are mounted on, and may only be used against the following types of weaponry: antimatter, antiproton, interceptors, particle, plasma, pulse and guided weapons. Other weapons may not be targeted by an interceptor in Interception Mode.

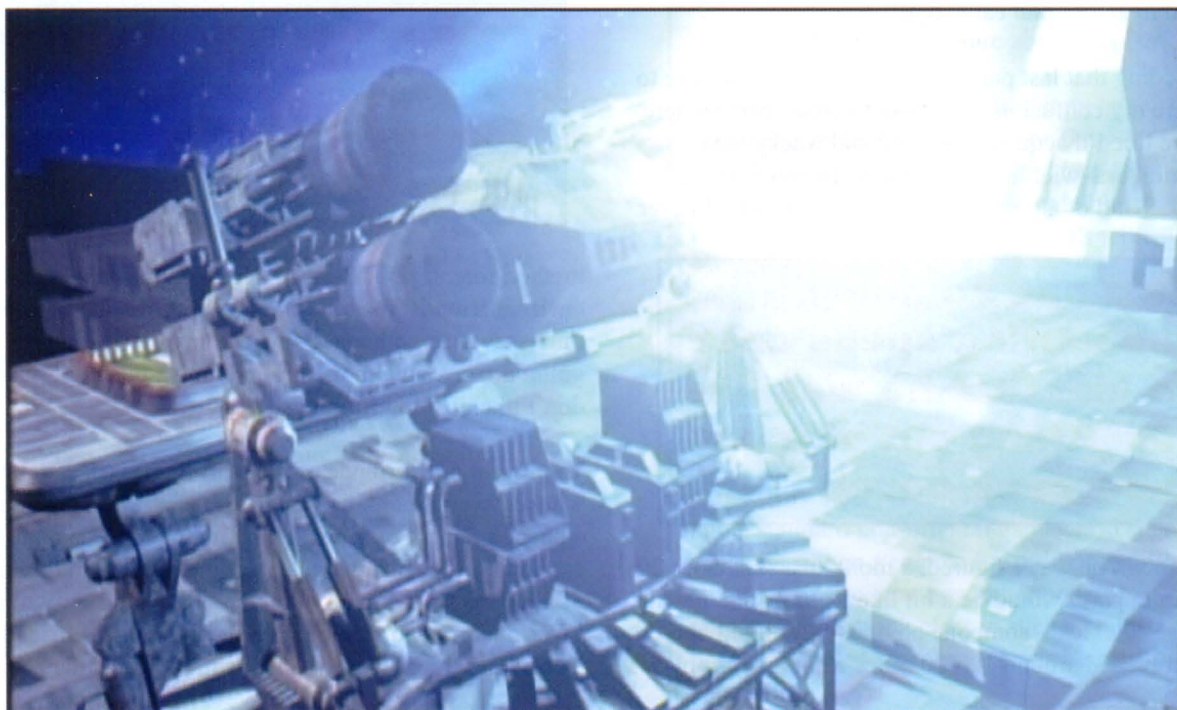
✚ Lastly, interceptors may fire in Matrix Mode, creating an invisible energy web designed to deflect the worst effects of energy based weapons that cannot otherwise be



targeted. These include all laser-based weapons. No attack roll is necessary, and the defending spacecraft receives a +30 bonus to its Damage Reduction against any attacks made within the fire arc of the interceptor. Every additional interceptor using Matrix Mode in the same facing grants an additional +5 bonus to the spacecraft's Damage Reduction score.

Interceptors, Mk II

These interceptors are a development of the Mk I. Though far more effective in defending the spacecraft they are mounted on, they draw much more power and so can only be mounted upon the largest vessels. In all ways they operate in an identical manner to Mk I interceptors. When in Matrix Mode, Mk II interceptors grant a +40 bonus to Damage Reduction, granting a further bonus of +10 for every additional interceptor using this mode in the same fire arc.



Why I Hate Monks

By Jonny Nexus

Now when I say I hate monks I should make it clear that I'm not talking about the guys in orange with shaved heads chanting 'hare krishna', although to be honest they do get on my tits a bit. Nor am I talking about the guys with the bald spots and brown robes who took a right pasting from the Vikings at Lindisfarne in 793. I actually have considerable sympathy for them, although with the benefit of hindsight it's clear that when establishing a community consisting entirely of wealthy pacifists, it's not the brightest of ideas to locate it right next to the North Sea, within easy commuting distance of any Nordic nutter with a longboat.

I'm not talking about real monks, because this is an RPG magazine, and in d20 real monks are clerics not monks. Confused? Well I was.

Now I've never had much contact with d20 monks before. I've never played one. I've never wanted to play one. Actually, that's not quite true, because it's not that I don't like eastern themes. I've always said I'd love to play in an Oriental Adventures campaign. Quite frankly, I find pseudo-European settings a bit boring. But that's all I've ever played, so I've never played a monk. Or a ninja, or a samurai, or a bloke with a headband shouting 'tora, tora, tora' and diving out of the sky – whatever classes might be found in an oriental campaign¹.

After reading that last paragraph you might be starting to see where my confusion was about to arise. Somewhere along the line I'd acquired the wild and wacky idea that martial arts-wielding monks were in some way... Oriental. Kind of Chinese, like. Which was why I never

He'd had so many enchanting spells cast on him that he was like something out of a bad cyberpunk novel.

played one. The way I figured, a monk in a standard d20 adventuring party would be a bit like Robin Hood having a Chinese sidekick – someone obviously foreign, who'd clearly travelled around 10,000 miles from his birthplace.



The editor's current character, Casper the halfling monk, in all his glory. Oops...

Which just never grabbed me as a character concept. Then one day we were starting a new d20 campaign, after the failure of a previous one due to various reasons which included, perhaps ironically, a horrifically over-munchkined monk. He'd had so many enchanting spells cast on him that he was like something out of a bad cyberpunk novel, and he never said anything, he just killed people. Which meant that my assumption that he was from the 'Chinese' end of the Forgotten Realms was never challenged².

Let's fast forward to the start of the replacement campaign. It's predecessor had finally ground to a halt amid general apathy and moans from me – a bit of a

'But I'm a hippie, non-materialistic, environmentalist ranger with enough gold pieces to buy thirty-seven town houses – what's my motivation?'

method roleplayer: 'But I'm a hippie, non-materialistic, environmentalist ranger with enough gold pieces to buy thirty-seven town houses – what's my motivation for going down a hole in the ground with a bunch of people I don't like, just to kill things?'

To prevent a recurrence of this, the Games Master – Mark, whose psycho monk had killed the previous campaign – spent a fair bit of time helping me work out a plausible explanation for my character finding himself in the middle of nowhere with a random bunch of guys. But by now I was on a roll, so I immediately pointed at my friend Bubba and said: 'Well what's his motivation then?'

And since Bubba was playing a monk, this is where I got to learn all about this class.

I didn't like what I learned, and the more they talked the less I liked it.

First they dropped the 'not from the east bombshell' on me: Monks aren't from an oriental land to the east. They were born in the same land, and of the same race, as all the other characters. Then, while I was still reeling from that, they followed in with bombshell number two: Monks aren't necessarily religious. Which god – if any – to follow is a personal decision that has nothing to do with their 'monkhood'.

By this point I was up and ranting. How in the name of all that's apparently not holy can a monk not be religious? Hell, the dictionary definition (Collins Reference English Dictionary) is: 'Monk: One of a religious community of men bound by vows of poverty etc.'

The only difference between a European monastery and a Chinese one was that if the Vikings had tried to raid a Chinese monastery they'd probably have taken a damn good slapping.

First, I tried to explain what I'd thought was the concept behind the d20 monk. I could go into a load of detail here, but it's quicker to just say 'Kane from Kung Fu' and leave it at that. The point being that Chinese monasteries were pretty much the same as European ones. In both cases, the monks were very much part of the local community. They worshipped the same god as their neighbours, granting spiritual, educational and medical support to those living around them. The only difference between a European monastery and a Chinese one was that if the Vikings had tried to raid a Chinese monastery they'd probably have taken a damn good slapping.

But the d20 monk they described to me is very different from anything we (or the Chinese) would call a monk.³ His (or her, since I don't believe anyone's done a d20 Nun core class yet) monastery is not part of the local community. It will most likely be a secret community in an out of the way location. It will have little or no interaction with the surrounding local people. They are simply not his concern. If the locals need spiritual, emotional or medical support then they should call a cleric because the monks, quite frankly, couldn't give a stuff.

His monastery is not concerned with the pursuit of religion. Religion is a private matter that also is not his concern.

His monastery exists for one purpose. To teach the 'secret knowledge' of martial arts and associated body control techniques to those who belong to it. This knowledge is for them and them alone. It is to be jealously guarded and controlled, not for any higher purpose – because they have none – but simply for power's sake.

Now, when I heard this, I wasn't much impressed. I told Bubba that as far as I could see his character Quan⁴ (and if he wasn't oriental then why the oriental sounding name?) was basically just some kind of narcissistic Californian health freak, obsessed with his own physical and mental perfection, and not giving a damn about the rest of the world.

I think they were a bit taken about by that. My 'what's my motivation rants' don't usually get that aggressive. Remember Mr Miyagi from the film 'The Karate kid'? Well forget him, and remember the blond Nazi teacher shouting 'No mercy!' – because that's exactly what a d20 monk is like.

So in the end, what is a d20 monk? Well I'll give you a five word summary:

A freemason with martial arts.

But in the end, as I ranted down to an exhausted halt, they gave me the *actual* answer to the mysterious conundrum that is the d20 monk:

Martial arts are cool.



¹ Actually, I'm not quite sure about that last class.

² It was never discussed. When someone has an AC (naked) of 32, can't be flat-footed, has an initiative of 24 and can do 1d10 + 9d6 + 12 damage in a single blow, you're not going to say: 'Hey, what's with the slanted eyes?'

³ Strictly speaking, what I'm about to say contradicts what *Core Rulebook I* says about monks. What you have to remember is that *Core Rulebook I* describes a generic monk in a world where there are monks. What my fellow players were describing was how the monk apparently (according to them) fits into a standard non-oriental gameworld such as the *Forgotten Realms*. It would probably be interesting to hear how other people rationalise the monk class in such a context.

⁴ I always called him Quat. I was being a bit childish.

How Good is Lawful Good?

by Matthew Sprange

OR

What Can My Paladin Get Away With?



Sir Agamar leads a mighty army in search of Glory... shortly before waking up.

THE SINGLE MOST CONTENTIOUS ISSUE IN FANTASY GAMING MAY WELL BE KEEPING PALADINS LAWFUL GOOD. HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU LOOKED ACROSS AT THE GUY PLAYING THE PALADIN IN YOUR PARTY AND WONDERED JUST HOW THE GAMES MASTER LETS HIM GET AWAY WITH IT?

IN THIS REVEALING ARTICLE, MONGOOSE HEAD HONCHO MATTHEW SPRANGE DISCUSSES THE MOTIVATIONS OF HIS 'WORLDLY' PALADIN, SIR AGAMAR OF THE YELLOW-STAINED ARMOUR.

CONTROVERSIAL? MAYBE. ENTERTAINING? FOR SURE!

a great deal and, given the chance, would always play them. My current paladin is a noble and knighted elf, Sir Agamar. He is currently 7th level, has acquired a great deal of gold and magical items and has been gifted with an incredible weapon (a custos) by his deity. Agamar is one of the original members of the party (he has survived since 1st level, unlike many others), has fought alongside his comrades in every major battle and has been responsible for the vanquishing of many evils. Yet he has something of a reputation problem with the other members of the party. They say he is greedy, vain, impious – and the word 'maniac' is often used to describe him. I have also had 'words' from the Games Master who has given several warnings (!) about Agamar's conduct, with the threat of stripping the paladin of his divine abilities [*this might have something to do with a certain 'death list' – Ed*].

Whether we either love 'em or hate 'em. The paladin, the noblest of characters – the one class designed, from the outset, to be a true hero. Yet all too often people are put off playing them by the knowledge that it takes but a Games Master's whim to decide they are acting in a decidedly un-paladin-like manner and either suspend or remove their divinely gifted abilities. Unless you are keen to explore the Blackguard route or take a long quest to seek repentance (possibly for something you did not believe was wrong in the first place), this can effectively be the end of a character.

Why should things be this way? Why should players be put off playing a real hero by a perception of draconian rules governing their every action? I have even seen someone suggest on an Internet forum that a paladin should not be allowed to drink alcohol, as that can lead to chaotic acts. What??? A paladin not drinking wine? Never heard anything so ridiculous!

Let me tell you about my character for a moment. Now, I like paladins

Sir Agamar will quite happily break the laws of the land...

I refute it all! Being Lawful Good does not mean there is only one kind of personality to play, nor does it mean you will only ever

do one thing in any given situation. It does not even mean you have to be nice to people.

Sir Agamar will quite happily break the laws of the land (and has been

hauled up into court before now), for two reasons – first, he comes from a region several thousand miles away and is not completely familiar with the local laws (not that he is much bothered by them) and second, he has his own, very strictly defined, code of conduct. The latter he follows with absolute diligence. This, I believe, serves the Lawful side of his alignment very well – there may be plenty of people in his world who do not agree with Agamar's views and attitudes but he pursues his own code without variation. Most of the party seem to, grudgingly, accept this explanation.

relative to his. He is naturally haughty, superior and utterly self-confident in his own abilities – can you begin to see why some people might presume him to be far from nice? Not that he is a complete ass. Agamar comes from a martial order of knights and so a 'commoner' distinguishing himself in combat may well elevate himself in the paladin's eyes.

The trouble comes with the Good part of the alignment.

The trouble comes with the Good part of the alignment. They argue that Good is an absolute. I venture it is subjective – furthermore, I also suggest that the greatest of heroes are never perfect. How boring would they be if they could never do anything wrong? In fact, the original King Arthur stories are based around this exact principle, portraying knights who forever try to do the right thing and yet discovering they are fundamentally human and so prone to making mistakes and poor decisions from time to time. Sir Lancelot was the greatest knight of them all, but look what he ended up doing. . .

I make no apologies for Agamar's personality. He is a product of his race and culture. Born into a noble elven family, he was privileged from birth and taught that while it was the place of the nobles to always protect and aid their commoners, a division between the two existed nonetheless. So, Agamar will treat with suspicion (or even outright ignore) anyone who does not fit his idea of nobility. When confronted with a noble, his reaction will be based on their perceived rank

of a love for gold. It has got to a point where even his custos keeps reminding him that 'greed is bad'. This, in turn, has led to Agamar telling his custos to 'shut up'. All this stemmed from the time when Agamar was entrusted with looking after the party funds (what we call the 'flash money') as who better to trust than a paladin, right? The trouble was, Agamar always seemed to have more money (as in thousands of gold pieces more) than anyone else in the party, and so suspicious eyes began to eye up the weight of the party funds. I swear that Agamar never touched a single gold piece that he was not entitled to – he just had more money to begin with and made some very canny choices of magic items when they were discovered. However, I confess he does indeed have a love of gold. The thing is, Agamar comes from a noble background, one of privilege and absolute wealth. The thousands of gold pieces he has since managed to acquire on his travels do not represent *real* wealth to Agamar. This is just pin money that he has to 'make do' with until his inheritance



'Forgive me, for I have sinned. . . again.'

has been realised. The fact that he is walking around in enchanted mithral full plate armour, to the envy of, well, pretty much anyone who meets him, is beneath his notice [*not to mention what happened to his original armour, eh, Matt?- Ed*]. He truly believes it is his place in the world to be one of riches and splendour. And, let's face it, he has stolen nothing – all this money was actually earned. . .

He also pursues his knightly code of conduct vigorously and here people

His major problem here is probably that he has survived.

level the charge of 'maniac' at him. You see, Agamar's code lists ten knightly virtues, in order – this makes the decision process of what he considers right and wrong relatively easy. In any given situation, I just start at the top of the list and work



'Look at my new sword everybody!'

downwards, until I hit the virtue that will dictate his actions. Easy.

To give some perspective, Charity is somewhere around seven or eight in this list.

My fellow party members have pointed out that, for a paladin, Glory should not be the first virtue. To give some perspective, Charity is somewhere around seven or eight in this list.

I disagree. Glory is the principle virtue that is driving Agamar on as a knight *[this is news, as the rest of us thought it was Loot – Ed]*. It has meant he has never given up and never backed down from any challenge. It has resulted in him challenging the most powerful enemies, ensuring other party members only have to fight mooks. It has meant that when a party member

drops to the ground on negative hit points, Agamar has charged across the battlefield, sustaining multiple attacks of opportunity, simply to lay on hands and stabilise his comrade. He has even thrown himself down on top of a magical grenade in order to spare the party further damage *[some of this seems strangely hard to remember. . . – Ed]*.

His major problem here is probably that he has survived. Agamar is eager to face the enemy – maybe a little too eager. When other members of the party have wanted to retreat, to heal and rearm, Agamar has encouraged them forward. And, sadly, some of them were not up to the task and died. The evil we faced, however, was vanquished – so surely the balance is on the side of Good? *[Ask him about Green dragons, go on – Ed.]*

Sir Agamar, the elven noble knight, is something of a cad. He is vain, hungry for wealth (and probably power as he gains levels), and in combat utterly without regard for his own life or, truth be told, those of his comrades. He is focussed, arrogant and believes himself superior to all others.

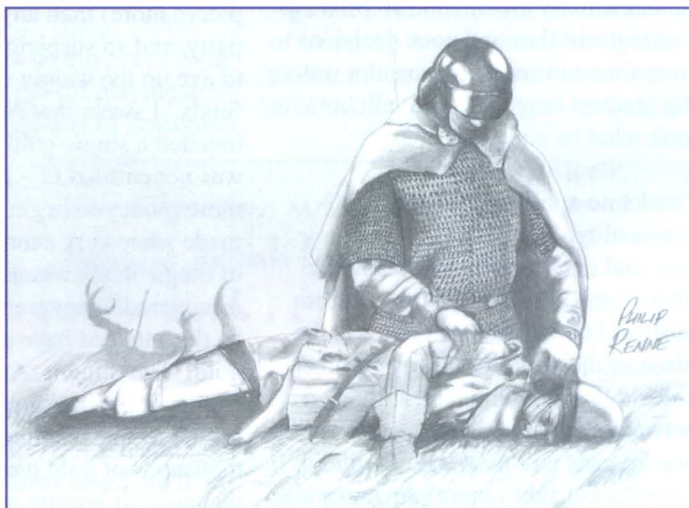
But he is still Lawful and he is still Good – he is just not

everyone's perception of what Lawful Good is meant to be. That is all to the betterment of roleplaying as far as I am concerned. How often have you heard the phrase 'Lawful Good means Lawful Stupid'? There are as many different personalities available with Lawful Good characters as there are amongst all the Neutral Goods, Chaotic Neutrals, etc. . . You just have to come up with a suitable rationale.

I'll leave you with one last thought – this is what some people regard as the ultimate test for a paladin, the situation where he will be caught in a web of his good intentions and thus rendered incapable of doing the truly 'good' thing.

Imagine your paladin has fought his way through the fortress of evil to rescue the fair (and purely innocent) princess from the clutches of the latest Big Bad. All the mooks are dead and he enters the final chamber at the top of the tower for the final confrontation.

He is confronted by the Big Bad holding the princess at the window. Seeing the paladin approach he pushes the princess out while making his own escape through a secret passage. What does the paladin do? Acting quickly, he can save the life of the princess but that would leave



'Hmm. . . think I'll just take that.'

the Big Bad to escape, allowing him to inflict further evils on the world. He could prevent this by pursuing the Big Bad but then the princess falls to her death.

The idea in this example is that whatever the paladin does, he will permit evil to occur by his own actions, thus putting him in a moral quandary. I disagree – the paladin need not be dictated to purely by the alignment of Lawful Good. He has his own personality, opinions and views to draw upon as well. If, for instance, the princess was his betrothed, he may well automatically

find himself reaching for her, swearing that he will pursue and be victorious over the Big Bad another day. No breach of the paladin's code there.

Agamar, though, would not hesitate – he would go for the Big Bad and let the Princess go splat. In determining the best course of action for this situation, we run straight into the Number One virtue: Glory. There has to be way more glory in slaying a Big Bad than saving some strumpet of a princess. . .



Agamar, though, would not hesitate – he would go for the Big Bad and let the Princess go splat.

Controversial? Let us know whether you agree with Matthew's analysis of the paladin class or perhaps you think that he's more suited to being a Blackguard? Either way, we'd like to know.



"I'm not asleep so keep your hands away from my wallet."

The Rulesmasters Are Here!

How many times have you found yourself needing the answer to a gaming question? Just about every day, we expect. After all, no matter how much you know about a system, you are never going to be able to get inside the mind of the designer himself. Here at Mongoose we understand this and so we have set up The Rulesmasters.

But who are The Rulesmasters? They are a select group of Mongoose staffers who have unparalleled access to the complexities of all that is Mongoose and a fair few other things besides. They cannot tell you if your future mother-in-law is going to be a nastier proposition than meeting a Devourer in a darkened dungeon, but they can tell you anything you need to know about gaming, so if you have a gaming question, why not give The Rulesmasters a call?

You can e-mail The Rulesmasters at rulesmasters@mongoosepublishing.com.

DATAFILE: 2089 - MEK OF THE MONTH #1

MOORE LTD. 'MARSHAL' ADVANCED COMMS/ASSAULT WARMEK

by Joseph Miller



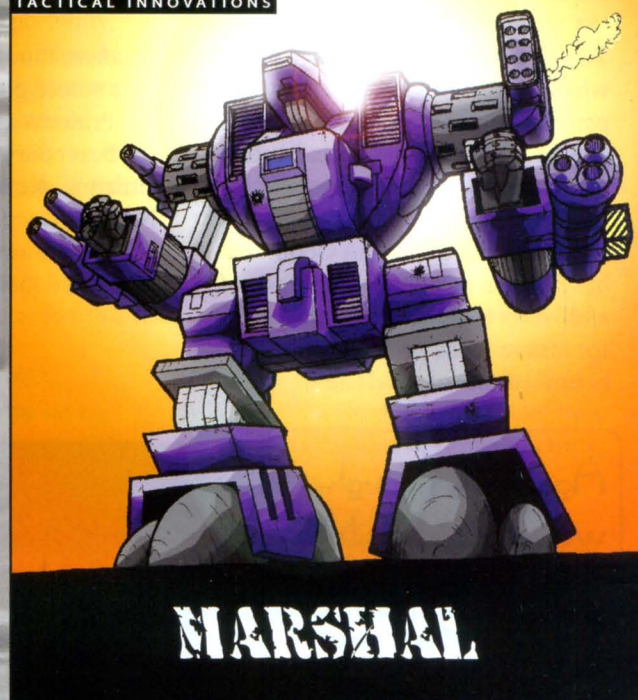
The Mek of the Month series will bring new, interesting and sometimes bizarre Mek designs to the attention of the public at large. Users should bear in mind that these are models designed for production line output. We take no responsibility if you crash and burn.

The Marshal is a WarMek built for commanders *by* commanders.

Flexibility on the electronic and tactical battlefields is what the Marshal promises and it delivers in spades! This is the ultimate in command WarMeks with a full electronics suite second to none in its ability to intercept and interrupt the enemy's communications, while keeping yours out of your enemy's hands. The Marshal also employs an array of emissions detectors for early warning and a wide range of anti-detection measures to preserve the element of surprise. In fact, the Marshal has one of the coolest infrared signatures in its weight class, the seismic disturbance of a medium WarMek, and the radar signature of an ordinary man! *

The Marshal, however is much more than just its electronics suite, scanner arrays and anti-detection equipment. It has an impressive amount of armour and array of weapons as well! From its 140mm Electrothermal Canon to its Gatling Laser, the Marshal has enough firepower to handle most WarMeks, while sporting enough ARES armour to outlast the slings and arrows of its enemies, both on the ground and in the air. That's right! The Marshal is also equipped to deal with aerial threats with its Shuriken Missile system and its air tracking radar with diamond radar chips.

The Marshal has a twin cockpit as well allowing the Mek to make full use of its electronics and its weapons even while moving at its cruising speed of 30km per hour!



First promotional ad from Moore Ltd. for the Marshal
- reproduced by permission *Which WarMek?* magazine

*Manufacture's Note: This data was gathered by an independent testing firm, while the Marshal's Stealth Mode was activated and is only applicable to the Marshal's 90° front arc.

MOORE LTD. 'MARSHAL'

HUGE WARMEK

Chassis: 85 tons, Spun Diamond

Total Mass: 166

Defence Value: 8

Crew: 1 pilot, 1 gunner

Base Speed: 20m

Handling: -2

Armour Type: Composite ARES, Multicloak™ Coating

Cost: 180,041,500

Power Plant: Tokamak Q

Power Points: 105

POWER POINTS

ACTION OR SYSTEM	Power Point Cost	Range Increment
Move at Base Speed (up to 25m)	16	—
Move at Double Speed (up to 50m)	32	—
Run or Charge (up to 100m)	80	—
Use Weapon	As Listed for Weapon Type	As Listed for Weapon Type
Stand from Prone	16	—
Advanced Comms Processor	2	*
Anti-Interception Minimal Power System	-1	—
Hopmaster Megahop Frequency Hop System	+2	—
Advanced Radio Warfare System	5	1km
Electromagnetic Emissions Detector	1	250m
Ground Surveillance Radar	3	200m
Identify Friend or Foe System	1	—
Impulse Radar	4	250m
Infrared Advanced Scanner	1	200m/2km
Magnetic Scanner	5	300m
Minimal Air Tracking Radar (Diamond Radar Chips)	2	5km
Seismic Tracking System	5	500m
Stealth Mode	10	—
Strategic Communicator	2	—
Twin Escape Cocoon	3	—
Visual Scanner	1	—
Wideband Autonomous Jammer	1	5km

EMISSIONS

Infrared Signature: 32 (42 in 90° front arc)

Magnetic Signature: 17

Radar Signature: 16 (26 in 90° front arc)

Seismic Signature: 7 (11 in Stealth Mode)

'Damn! That's right. Damn! That was my first thought when I saw the spec sheet Moore sent to us and I haven't much changed my mind since. This beast marks Moore's attempt to corner the entire market in one machine – with a price tag to match. For a start this ain't no hot rod. Sure, it will burn off a Heavy Mek, but that doesn't count for much. As for the 'radar sig of an ordinary man' blurb, this guy has to be wearing an industrial strength dustbin coated in a new radar-attracting paint. Still, nobody ever said Moore's PR department wasn't creative.

Tactically, only a pea-brain relies on a Comms machine that has to wade into the front line. Sure, you look cool, up until the time somebody accelerates your ass into orbit. The average crew might be wiser to burn the bucks on a pair of cheaper Meks and signing up a new pilot to drive one. Nobody expects the quarterback to scramble on every play, but with this beast it's a waste if you don't – and you're wasted if you do.

On the positive side, the Marshal certainly packs a lot of equipment. The trouble is, if I turned everything on at once the insides would melt. It might be a good time to point out that there was no independent seating for a proper quadraphonic music system, a bugbear of mine that many of the manufacturers are still taking no notice of. So, in closing, how do I assess the Marshal? Basically, if you are the sort of Merc crew who already have it all, then this baby is for you. Then again, if you already have it all, an offshore bank account might be the place to go.'

– Max Gonzalez, from the 'Max Knows Meks' column of Which WarMek? Magazine

WEAPONS

Weapon	Power Points	Range Increment	Damage	Critical	IR	Type
20mm Autocannon	1	150m	1d4	x2	38	Rapid Fire Projectile
140mm Electrothermal Canon	14	600m	5d8	x3	5	Projectile
Laser Gatling	18	300m	2d8	19-20/x2	5	Rapid Fire Energy
Shuriken Missiles, 8 pack	1	*	1d6	x2	13*	Projectile
Sonic Weapons Package	4/2/1	As Listed for Weapon Type	As Listed for Weapon Type	—	—	Sonic
WarMek Punch	32*	—	1d4+4	19-20/x2	—	Bludgeoning
WarMek Kick	32*	—	1d6+4	x2	—	Bludgeoning

FEATURES

Location	SP	AP/Rear	HP	Equipment	Cargo
Head	6	33/16	0.5	Twin Escape Cocoon; Advanced Comms Processor; Anti-Interception Minimal Power System; Hopmaster Megahop Frequency Hop System; Advanced Radio Warfare System; Advanced Targeting System; Identify Friend or Foe System; Improved Wind Sensor; Infrared Advanced Scanner; Strategic Communicator; Visual Scanner	0
Torso	33	220/110	0	Tokamak Q; Stealth Mode	0
Left Arm	9	55/27	0	Electromagnetic Emissions Detector; Minimal Air Tracking Radar (Diamond Radar Chips); Laser Gatling; Shuriken Missiles (8 pack)	0
Right Arm	9	55/27	0	20mm Autocannon; 140mm Electrothermal Cannon	0
Left Leg	10	88/44	1	Ground Surveillance Radar; Impulse Radar; Magnetic Scanner; Sonic Weapons Package	0
Right Leg	10	88/44	1	Seismic Tracking System; Wideband Autonomous Jammer	0

More from Datafile: 2089 next issue





Who do you want to hack today?

Handling The Lady

by Lizard

Incorporating Babylon Five Characters into Your Campaign

It is difficult to imagine a campaign set on the Babylon 5 station where the player characters never encounter Ivanova, G'Kar, or Garibaldi at some point in their lives. A significant part of the fun in playing in a licensed universe is being able to interact with the primary figures from that universe, even as your characters carve out their own saga. Problems can arise, however. What happens if Ivanova joins the player characters in a firefight and ends up being fatally shot? Can the player characters do anything but sit back and watch if Garibaldi decides to take a personal interest in solving a crime in Downbelow?

This series will address each of the major figures in Babylon 5, discussing how to use them without upstaging the player characters, how to keep them alive without too much Games Master interference, hooks which can bring them into the plot without having them become the central focus of it, and suggestions for roleplaying them at various stages of their careers.

Lt Commander Susan Ivanova

Given the nature of most player characters, it is likely Ivanova will be, if not an enemy, at least not a close ally. Ivanova does her best to maintain order on the station and dislikes anything which adds more work to her already overloaded schedule, and the antics of typical player characters are antithetical to this.

Ivanova is a great believer in rules – for other people. She will demand strict compliance with protocol, and especially, with *her* authority in most issues – however, she also has an attitude that rules do not apply to her when it so suits. Player characters who attempt to use rules and regulations against Ivanova are very likely to be hoist with their own

petard, especially since the main authorities on the station – Garibaldi

'Who am I? I'm Susan Ivanova, Commander, daughter of Andrei and Sofie Ivanov. I am the right hand of vengeance, and the boot that is gonna kick your sorry ass all the way back to Earth, sweetheart. I'm death incarnate and the last living thing that you're ever going to see. God sent me.'

and Sinclair/Sheridan – are likely to use any personal discretion in the interpretation of any regulation to favour Ivanova.

For this reason, among others, it is advisable to stay on her good side.

There are two practical ways to do this.

Firstly, be invisible. Anyone who does not add to her overwhelming list of tasks is someone she does not have any reason to dislike. Anyone who makes more work for Ivanova is going to be remembered, and not fondly.

The second way is to actually assist her. This can be directly, if the character is in the chain of command under her and is following her orders or, if not,



indirectly. If there happens to be a rogue faction of Red Drazis causing trouble amongst the Purples and the Greens, making sure Ivanova knows about it before it gets out of hand will definitely earn the player characters kudos. Do they have influence in the Dock Workers' Guild? If so, making sure they are well behaved when a new alien race is coming aboard for the first time can be a way of attracting positive attention. Anyone with influence or connections in Command and Control can find out what Ivanova is currently engaged in, and find ways to ease her workload.

Cunning players may actually seek to sideline Ivanova by complicating her workload, effectively distracting her from their operations. If there is no way Ivanova would *ever* approve of the players' current schemes, keeping her busy with other things is an excellent way to keep her out of their hair. This can be important to maintaining the plot – if the players are asking, metagame, 'How are we going to keep Ivanova from interfering?' it is best to have a thread of the plot set up to keep her away, and to make sure the player characters set that thread unravelling.



One very important thing to do is to preserve Ivanova's competence and status on the station. By this, it is meant that she should never become directly aware of the player characters

actions, desire to stop those actions, and yet be unable to do so – at least not until the player characters are very high level, with power and resources to match hers. Sneaking around the periphery of her dominion is the best that player characters working contrary to her interests should hope for. She is not easily fooled, intimidated, or stopped. This can cause some conflicts; players do not like 'uber Non-Player Characters' as a matter of course and, when the characters are low level, Babylon 5 is filled with them. Player characters

'I can only conclude that I'm paying off karma at a vastly accelerated rate.'

should learn early on to tread lightly around any of the major series characters, until their own power bases are secured. Even then,

the Games Master should always keep the overall story arc in mind when the varied ideas of intended megalomania arrive in front of him.

Ivanova As Ally/Patron

The fact Ivanova believes rules do not apply to her, and the fact she is in such a high profile position, means she might well seek out player characters she *really* trusts to take on tasks she is unable to undertake herself. She cannot openly help

a blip (rogue telepath) avoid the Psi Cops, at least not in the early years of the story arc, but she can get the player characters to contact him and get him off the station. Doing such favours sets up the opportunity for favours to be asked

in turn. Ivanova is fair, but she is most certainly not stupid and player characters who try to blackmail her only guarantee they will have an enemy who is dangerous, highly

placed and has powerful and skilled friends.

If any of the player characters are directly under Ivanova's command, she may well delegate duties to them which she does not have the time or desire to do herself. This may allow the player characters to actually take over some of the things she accomplished in the series, if the activities in question could be done by anyone, at least in theory, that is. It might be interesting to see how a group of player characters would deal with some of the tasks she had to face herself and measure the results accordingly. Once again, though – remember and respect the story arc. It makes the B5 world go round and you tamper with it at your own peril. Luckily, many players will also be B5 nuts and will have an ingrained respect for conventions which will probably rub off on the less zealous party members.

One danger to having Ivanova work too closely with players, especially when they are low level, is having

'You are going to resist, I hope.'

them basically end up as a Greek chorus while she does all the work. Thus, as with Ivanova as an obstacle, it is best to keep her somewhat in the background, as an impetus to action or as a source of orders and advice, but not a direct participant.

Preserving The Arc

While it is perfectly acceptable, in some campaigns, for player characters to totally disrupt the existing B5 story arc, it is more likely to be the case that the threads of the player characters' story weave in and out of the main B5 arc, adding depth and richness but not changing the overall picture. As such, there are several things that must, or must not, happen to Ivanova.

Firstly, she cannot die. She is alive 20 years after the main story ends,

and apparently healthy, happy and sane – though this does not mandate anything about how her life might have been in-between, 'The Deconstruction of Falling Stars' and 'Sleeping in Light' being obvious episodes in this context. This series presumes the player characters are not hell-bent on destroying the story via metagame knowledge or just to be jerks, i.e., no one is going to just say 'I strap grenades to myself and run into C&C and kill everyone! The Shadows win! Yay!' However, Ivanova is not protected by a magical shield or a suit of plate armour and the normal course of adventures can be risky, especially since characters in the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game* are much less capable of surviving injury than are characters

in most other d20 System games. So, how do you go about keeping the lady alive?

First, she should not be found marching side-by-side with the player characters into lethal situations. She is likely to move in very different circles to those the players frequent, at least at low

Even if she is operating solo or had to 'meet with some friends', the other command staff might be suspicious – especially Garibaldi – and be tracking her. If trouble brews, a security squad may appear much more rapidly than anyone might expect – never forget the EarthForce wrist link she

invariably has with her.

She is important – she makes a better hostage than a corpse.

Almost any enemy will recognise that while killing Ivanova will bring an incredible amount of fury down on them, kidnapping and holding her will give them a chance of negotiation, albeit a slim one.

'She'll make it...just barely.' In the worst of all possible cases, Ivanova simply freezes at -9 hit points, no matter how much damage she took. She might be in intensive care

for weeks, but she *will* live. (And, if she was in the company of the player characters when she was injured, her friends *will* want to know *all* the details.)



There is also her greatest secret to bear in mind – namely, that she is a latent telepath, albeit a very, very, low powered one – and this must not be exposed, unless the leaked information is certain never to reach the likes of Mr Bester and his Psi Corps cronies. Should that information leak the consequences would certainly destabilise the story arc and protecting Ivanova from Bester during the early seasons, if he somehow found out her secret, would be nigh impossible without grossly violating Earth Alliance law. At the very least, Ivanova would be forced to be a 'blip' and with it the entire arc goes straight down the tubes.

'I swear, if we'll live through this, someone is going to find their automatic shower-preferences reprogrammed for ice-water.'

Thus, there must be no opportunity for the player characters to know she is a telepath. Accidental flesh-to-flesh contact might reveal this, especially if this fear is foremost in her mind – as it might be upon meeting a member of Psi-Corps, or even a telepath from an alien race. It might also be that a player character telepath who is looking for other information might stumble across this secret as well. Thus, such opportunities should not

'Mr. Garibaldi, you are sitting in my station, using my equipment. Is there a reason for this, or to save time should I just go ahead and snap your hands off at the wrist?'



levels, and she is unlikely to simply wander into Downbelow with them to get mugged. If she does directly enter the adventure, particularly a lethal segment, then a few tricks and options are available.

arise, and it is relatively easy to make sure they do not, if you are aware of them.

Worst Case Scenario

Despite your best efforts Ivanova ended up dead or forced off the station somehow. What then? J. Michael Straczynski, the creator of the series, has stated he had a 'trap door' for every major character, in case one of the actors got hit by a truck or thought they had a movie career. In the event 'something happens' to Ivanova, and the arc is still to be preserved, someone must take her place — not just her place in the command structure of Babylon 5, but in the story arc. Someone else is going to need to see President Clarke's damning communication when tied into the great machine, someone else must make contact with the First Ones near Sigma 957, someone else must make peace between the Purple and Green Drazi. These tasks must all be performed by someone, either one new person or several other characters. Perhaps it is a promoted Corwin who meets with the First Ones, and Sheridan who sees Clarke's conversation. Alternatively, all of these can be given to a single new character, who can be either a minor series character newly promoted and moved into the spotlight, or a Non-Player Character made up from the whole cloth. Perhaps Lockley, who *did* replace Ivanova in Season 5, can be brought in.

Finally, remember, if you are the Games master and you are hell bent on moulding B5 into your own image, at least treat the whole with respect. It is invariably tempting to try to improve on the work of others, but not every science fiction saga has been as carefully constructed as Babylon 5.



Next Issue: Londo Mollari

Babylon 5 created by J. Michael Straczynski

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER SUSAN IVANOVA

Game Stats and Biography (Season 2)

8th Level Human Officer (fleet)

Hit Points: 22

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 14 (+4 Reflex)

Attacks: +8/+3 melee or +10/+5 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (fleet), Rallying Call, Way of Command

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff +12, Computer Use +10, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +8, Drive +3, Intimidate +7, Medical +4, Pilot +12, Sense Motive +9, Technical

(space travel) +9

Feats: Data Access, Improved Initiative, Latent Telepath, Spacecraft Proficiency, Weapon Focus (uni-pulse cannon), Weapon Proficiency (spacecraft weapons)

Standard Equipment: EarthForce wrist link.

Susan Ivanova has enjoyed a successful military career within EarthForce and has gained her current position as Babylon 5's first officer through hard work and loyalty, without the help of a patron or being forced to compromise her high ideals and morals. She is proud of serving within EarthForce and distinguished herself while serving on Io. It is her role to supervise all the day-to-day operations of the station, a job she performs with utmost efficiency. Her quirky sense of humour keeps the spirits high of all her colleagues, though strangers often mistake it for pessimism.

Born on August 30th 2230 in St. Petersburg, though educated overseas, Ivanova has had to cope with many tragedies in her life. Her mother, a telepath forced to take sleeper drugs, committed suicide when she was just a child and her brother, Ganya, was killed during the Earth/Minbari War where he served as a Starfury pilot. She joined EarthForce to follow in Ganya's footsteps, despite having been forbidden to do so by her father. Ivanova is now estranged from her father, her only remaining family, but this has given her incredible focus for her current position. Raised as a Russian Jew, Ivanova is proud to consider herself as both, though her dedication to career has left little time to reflect on either.

Ivanova has little time for any real personal life and, aside from associating with her colleagues during off-duty hours, rarely socialises much. Hating to show any kind of weakness, every officer who has served with Ivanova knows her to be loyal, honourable and extremely capable.



BATTLING DRAGONS

Dragons glory in battles. It is the ultimate test of their strength and skill, and therefore the proof of their superiority. It is undeniably dangerous to engage in combat, even for dragons, so they devote much of their time to plotting strategies and countermeasures for suspected and hypothetical opponents. Dragons are always thinking three steps ahead, but fury often overcomes thought and their overconfidence sometimes leads to defeat.

That said, it takes a singularly keen blade or deadly spell to take advantage of that overconfidence; when one's only chance is that your foe is *too* sure of victory, it hardly inspires hope.

Dragons against Adventurers

Adventuring parties are one of the greatest threats to a dragon. From the wyrm's perspective, a party is a six-headed beast that is enormously resilient - each of its constituent parts must be slain separately - and able to make many attacks at the same time. The party has tough, powerful claws, which cut at the dragon in the shape of sharp swords and rage-fuelled axes. It spits two or more spells at the dragon each round, and often greatly exceeds the dragon's grasp of magic. It often has all sorts of strange skills, from bardic music to monk or roguish agility to the command of nature. The party can heal with terrifying speed, even while in the midst of combat. The adventuring party is indeed a terrible and fearsome beast, a malformed but lethally effective chimera-thing, all legs and limbs and armour.

General Tactics

The age and abilities of a dragon determine what precise tactics it employs, but some general tactics are usable by hatchlings and great wyrms alike. These are presented more or less in order of use.

Forewarned is Forearmed

Even a little knowledge about the adventuring party can mean the difference between victory and defeat. The dragon should employ scouts, spies and *scrying* to observe the party, paying particular attention to their items and abilities. Sacrificing a pawn to observe the party in action is a common tactic. If the dragon is sure that the party intends to attack, it should attack them first, preferably when they are already engaged in combat or similarly distracted.

Parlaying with the group can give the dragon a little lead time to prepare itself if caught unaware.

Attack from Above

A grounded dragon is often a dead dragon. Most characters can deal much more damage with their melee weapons, so the longer the dragon stays out of range of melee, the better. The most common attack pattern begins with the dragon flying over the party (triggering the creature's Frightful Presence) and breathing (targeting those unaffected by fear, or any obvious mages or clerics). The dragon should then either cast spells from above, or else dive down and *briefly* engage in melee. The goal here is to destroy the party's capacity to attack at range, and to heal. Therefore, the dragon should target (in order) clerics, wizards,

The forthcoming *Book of Dragons* will tell you everything you ever needed to know about dragons, and some things you would probably rather not know. Still, what we all really want to find out about is how to knock them down and keep them there. . . what do you mean, you're a pacifist? Give me a break!

Ten great combat feats for dragons

1. **Hover.** Two extra claw attacks and automatically blinds opponents.
2. **Fly-by Attack:** Lets dragons use melee attacks without getting bogged down in brawls with fighters.
3. **Multiattack:** +3 to all claw attacks.
4. **Lightning Reflexes:** Without Dexterity bonuses, any increase to a dragon's Reflex save can help.
5. **Quick Breath:** Faster breath attacks keep the enemy under pressure.
6. **Snatch:** Claw and grab the enemy, then fly away.
7. **Lingering Breath:** Cleans up weaker foes and forces Concentration checks.
8. **Sunder:** A warrior without a weapon is far less damaging, especially since dragons have Damage Resistance.
9. **Power Attack:** With an excellent Base Attack Bonus and huge Strength, it makes sense...
10. **Cleave:** ...to squish the fighter after Power Attacking the sorcerer.

sorcerers and those with bows or the ability to fly. If the dragon has the Fly-by Attack feat, it should swoop down and attack without landing; otherwise, it should stay well away from the party's fighters and barbarians while chewing and clawing the more vulnerable mages and other spellcasters.

Divide and Conquer

While the adventuring party as a whole is more than a match for the dragon, its individual portions are easily defeated. Dragons are excellent grapplers, and the Snatch feat allows them to do damage and grapple in the same round. If a dragon can grab an enemy (ideally, using Fly-by Attack to minimise its exposure to attacks, and targeting clerics above all others), it can fly away and carry its victim off. In single combat, the dragon should be able to quickly dispatch the character (especially with feats like Quintilateral Rend). Clerics are favoured for this fate; they are tough enough to survive area attacks like dragon breath, they can boost their combat abilities enough to be a threat in concert with fighters, but most importantly of all, they can heal the rest of the party. Denying the party healing allows the dragon to outlast the weaker mortals – with careful tactics, the dragon can inflict damage on the party faster than the party can damage it, but the presence of a cleric counters this.

If the cleric cannot be abducted, then any other party member will do. Spellcasters are the best choice; the protective and enhancing spells cast on the party will wear off eventually, and killing the wizards, sorcerers and bards will reduce the abilities of the fighters and barbarians.

A dragon need not simply devour the character it abducts; once the victim has been beaten into submission, it should be interrogated or even pressed into service. When the dragon is running short of

time, it can just fly straight up after grabbing a target and let go after a round or two. A 400-foot drop will put a dent in the finest armour (and probably reduce the contents of the armour to paste).

Finally, where flying is not an option, *wall* spells and similar effects should be used to split the party up, letting the dragon tackle enemies individually.

Five poor combat feats for dragons

1. **Combat Reflexes:** No Dexterity bonus means no extra attacks.
2. **Spring Attack:** Flying is a much better option than walking.
3. **Quicken Spell-like Ability:** Not *always* a poor choice, but a lot of dragon special abilities are not worth using in combat.
4. **Combat Casting:** With that much Constitution and lots of skill points, spellcasting is rarely a problem.
5. **Toughness:** Just...no.

Overwhelm and Maim

If forced into melee, the dragon should attempt to scatter its foes by charging headlong into them. Bringing wizards and other rear-line combatants (like archers) within reach allows the dragon to make attacks of opportunity against the more vulnerable characters. Melee attacks should be concentrated on one character at a time, to eliminate each one as quickly as possible. Breath attacks should be used on the area just in front of the dragon (this is where the Sinuous Neck feat comes in handy), clearing its path. Downed

or unconscious opponents should be stepped on, doing claw damage for Large or smaller dragons, and Crush damage for Huge or bigger dragons. This ensures that the enemy stays down and prevents a pesky cleric from healing a defeated fighter.

Dragons against Slayers

While the adventuring party against the dragon is the most common encounter in fantasy roleplaying games, it is the single dragonslayer versus the beast that dominates myth and legend. Sigurd, Beowulf, St. George – the lone warrior or knight-errant pitting valour and lance against talon and fire.

Dragons almost invariably have the upper hand in such battles. Many of the tactics described above for fighting whole parties are based on the concept that the dragon should split the party up because it can defeat any single opponent easily. Here, there is always but a single foe. Therefore, the dragon should simply concentrate its attacks on the enemy, circling and breathing or meeting the slayer head-on.

If a puny mortal is willing to fight a dragon single-handedly, he must have some advantage or hidden weapon. Dragons are much more willing to trade flattery and insults with a single foe than with a group; it gives the wyrm more time to observe this foe and to determine if he is brave or merely suicidal. Noble dragonslayers such as paladins often fall for this trap, pausing to give the wyrm a moral lecture or a last chance to repent; more pragmatic slayers sneak up on the dragon, hoping to catch it sleeping or to attack from ambush.

Stealth and determination are the two best weapons for a dragonslayer. A lone warrior can stay out of sight much more easily than a whole party, and the dragon will be more fearful of a single brave knight than a whole gang of thieves.



So it all goes wrong...for the dragon

If the unthinkable happens and the dragon is losing the battle, it does not wait for the killing blow to fall. All but the youngest and most foolish dragons have a whole series of contingency plans to deal with unexpected defeat. Options include:

- **Retreat:** Take to the skies, fly back to the lair, retreat to the refuge – anything but stay in the fight. Dragons have long memories, and can deal with their enemies later. Even if the attackers can fly, dragons fly faster than anything short of an air elemental.
- **Call for Help:** Servitors or summoned creatures nearby can be called to aid the dragon. Even calling on non-existent allies can stall attackers for a round.
- **Parlay:** Dragons do so love the sound of their own voices. Engaging the party in conversation can stall a combat for a few rounds, giving the dragon's breath weapon time to recharge and spell durations to expire. The topic of conversation can be anything, from suggesting an end to hostilities to observations about the party's impressive tactics and skills.
- **Lie:** Sow doubts in the minds of enemies – if the party are barely winning, whisper to them that they were sent to die at the dragon's claws, and it is only their own heroism that saved their lives. If the party easily defeated the dragon, suggest that their whole quest is just a distraction, and some other interest or holding of theirs is under attack at this very moment.
- **Bargain:** Offer the party treasure, magic, blood, service, eggs, anything to get them to stop attacking. Bargains can be broken and oaths twisted if necessary (dragons with a sense of honour will keep their word, but are not above using cunning diplomacy and word-play to weasel out of a seemingly binding promise). One of the nastiest tricks is to offer the enemy their pick from the dragon's hoard; the dragon then accompanies them back to its lair, and ambushes them when they reach the killing ground.
- **Feign Death:** The sheer toughness of dragons makes it remarkable easy for one to pretend to be dead. Their internal fires always take several hours to die, so even a dead dragon is warm and bubbling for some time. All the dragon needs to do is let a spear pierce its flank in some unimportant area (behind the wingmount, where all it will do is scrape off the ribs), let out a pained roar, and fall down 'dead'. Most attackers will head for the hoard instead of butchering the corpse.
- **Surrender:** If all else fails, it is better to live as a worm than die as a wyrm. Dragons can be subdued or captured by threatening them with death. At the very least, the dragon will outlive its captors, and can rebuild later.

Dragons against Armies

Dragons are essentially the ultimate weapons on the battlefield. While an adventuring party has the experience (not to mention the saving throws and hit points) to survive a dragon attack, most armies are made up of low-level warriors and fighters. A single dragon swooping over the front lines could panic hundreds of soldiers by its presence alone. Breath weapons are just as good as *fireballs* for clearing away troop formations, but unlike wizards or sorcerers, dragons are not restricted to a limited number of breath weapon attacks per day.

When fighting an army, the dragon's first priority should be to identify those few individuals or war machines that actually pose a threat to it, such as high-level characters, wizards, or ballistae. The dragon's first attacks can target these threats, while still shattering the rest of the army – area attacks do considerable amounts of collateral damage, and the dragon's frightful presence can be triggered while targeting enemies that are immune to it. Breathe on the enemy general, and the foot troops are panicked just as much as if the dragon had breathed on them instead.

Archers firing en masse are unlikely to be able to bring the dragon down, but they can be an irritation. Flight allows the dragon to easily avoid any defensive formations of pikemen or foot soldiers in front of the archers and blast them from above.

In short, the only thing that can stop a dragon on the battlefield is magic, powerful characters, or another flying monster. Any army comprised entirely of low-level warriors without access to powerful, accurate, ranged attacks is doomed, no matter how big it is. Swarm tactics cannot defeat dragons – as long as they can take to the sky and breath, the wyrms rule the battlefield.

Sieges

Conventional castles are relatively easy for a dragon to defeat. The

monster need only fly up and burn the defenders from the walls, or fly over the battlements, smash down the gates of the keep, and set fire to the heart of the castle. Towers are much better suited to defending against dragons – if the chief defensive tactic is to keep a wall between the defenders and the besiegers, then the dragon can just fly over it. Towers or other sealed keeps can barricade their windows against a dragon's fly-by assaults, preventing the monster from just exhaling its way to victory. Of course, without a curtain wall, the besiegers can easily approach the walls of the tower and have sappers collapse the defences. The best design for anti-dragon fortifications is a concentric network of narrow buildings – essentially, walls thick enough to contain passageways and arrow-slits in the centre. The dragon cannot breath on the defenders, as they are not standing exposed on the battlements, nor can it land without facing fighters who sally forth from the walls to attack it with spears or polearms.

The problem with this defensive system is cost; building walls that thick and strong costs three times as much as a normal curtain wall.

The dwarven tactic, which is much more effective against dragons, is just to build the castle inside a mountain and be done with it. Dragons hate besieging this kind of fortification; the only options are to starve the defenders, or smash down the doors and try to storm the keep by crawling in. Starving is often more of a problem for the dragon than for the dwarves; sitting watch on the gates of the dwarven citadel leaves little time for the dragon to hunt, and that assumes that the dwarves even need to leave their mountain home and do not have mushroom farms or massive food stockpiles. Storming the mountain is the usual approach, but that means *extremely* close-quarter fighting. More dragons fall to dwarven portcullis traps and stern pikemen than to human knights-errant in shining armour.

So it all goes wrong...for the party

Battling a dragon should be one of the most terrifying and dangerous activities possible for a character; the ultimate test of skill, nerve and tactics, a feat worthy of song and renown. It is a dance of death, no quarter asked or given. Either the beast is brought down, or more skulls adorn its lair; there can be no other outcomes.

At least, that is the idea and certainly an unprepared party deserve to get slaughtered by a dragon. However, a string of unlucky dice rolls or a particular effective breath weapon blast can lead to the players losing when they have done everything right. Rather than let the game end because the dragon is about to wipe out the entire party, the Games Master could...

- 'Fudge' (secretly alter) the attack and damage rolls of the dragon. The breath attack only did 39 points of damage to your 30hp mage, not 40; the bite missed the fighter this round. One clever trick is to call for saving throws against the breath *before* announcing how much damage is done; if all the vulnerable characters made their save for half damage, the rolled damage can be used, but if some failed the save, the Games Master can tone the damage down so that not everyone dies. Fudging should only be used sparingly – some players really dislike it. Give the characters a one-round grace period of fudged rolls, and if they are still in combat with the dragon after being given this chance to regroup or retreat, let them have it.
- Have the dragon parlay with the characters. Dragons have goals and desires, just like the player characters. Have the beast offer to employ them and send them off on a quest to bring it more treasure. If the party is accompanied by Non-Player Characters such as hirelings or cohorts (or, better yet, familiars or bonded mounts), the dragon can keep hostages. Similarly, the dragon can demand a tribute of treasure instead of just killing everyone.
- Dragons have enemies and rivals. If the party have inflicted significant damage on the dragon, one of its rivals could suddenly show up to deliver the finishing blow. This can either be a *deus ex machina* rescue for the party (Sir Ortheo the Dragonslayer rides up to save the day) or a rather nasty plot twist (a bigger dragon suddenly swoops down and attacks the one the party were fighting; the new dragon quickly defeats the first one, claims it as a vassal, then turns to the party...).
- If the party have access to *resurrection* magic (or if the Games Master just wants to keep one character alive, to keep long-term campaign plots going and to serve as the nucleus of a replacement group of characters), then let the dragon kill all but one of the characters (usually the cleric). The survivor is spared because the dragon wishes to interrogate him, or else feed him alive to the hatchlings. This unfortunate survivor is stripped of equipment, and must escape the dragon's lair before *raising* his friends or forming a new party.

The Games Master is, of course, under no obligation to spare the players. Dragon-slaying is supposed to be dangerous.

Well, now you know all there is to know about fighting dragons. No? Better sit tight and wait for the book then. Happy hunting.



Mongoose Pub

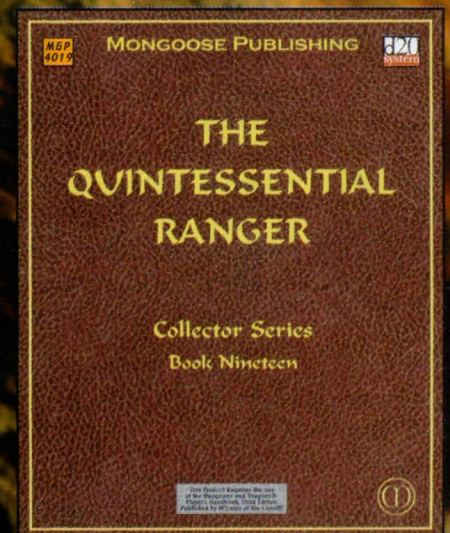
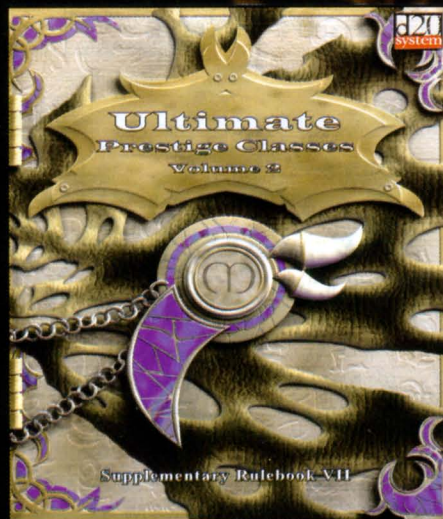
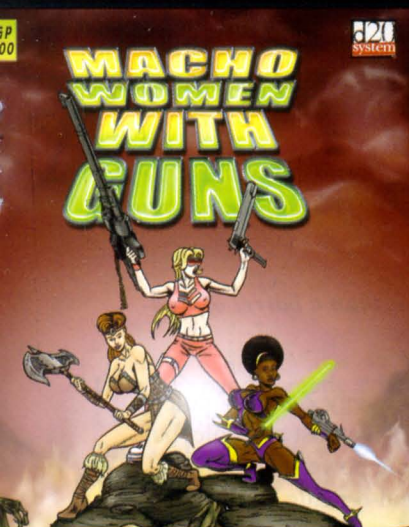
For All Y

ARMAGEDDON:2089
TOTAL WAR



Polishing

our Gaming Needs...



Hot On The Streets

The **JUDGE DREDD** Roleplaying Game

Dentist Dan's Denture Kit

'Make your smile truly unique – use Dentist Dan's Denture Kit!'

'Colour 'em, cleanse 'em, tattoo 'em or simply change 'em – Dentist Dan.'

'Dentist Dan – why face-change, when all you need to be memorable is a new set of teeth?'

Yeah, an ugly is too expensive, the blob look is passé, and don't even get us started on big noses. So how can you stand out today in the city of tomorrow? It's easy! Just use Dentist Dan's Denture Kit! Don't have the same boring old smile that everyone has – create your own, and be unique!

Dentist Dan offers you a product that can completely renovate your mouth. Old age cits – need a new set of gnashers for that juicy munceburger? Get 'em cheap with Dentist Dan's! Service workers – worried those ugly teeth stains will cost you customers? Clean 'em cheap with Dentist Dan's! Juvies – the options are endless! Teeth knocked out? Fit new ones with Dentist Dan's! Going to a jetball game? Paint your teeth your team colours! Got a favourite saying? Type it permanently before the tip of your tongue! The kit comes complete with

a 'how to' book on tooth building and tattooing, over 1,000 stencils you can mix and match, and enough plaster to fill your mouth ten times over! Buy a kit today!

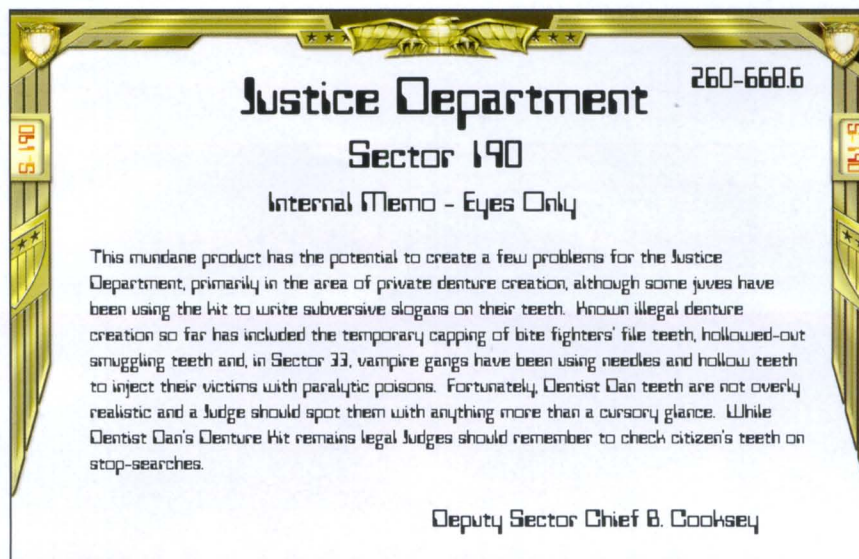
hollow teeth for smuggling, DC 20. An opposed check is made to determine whether the viewer realises the teeth are fake.

Item: Dentist Dan's Denture Kit

Cost: 200 cr.

Black Market: N/A

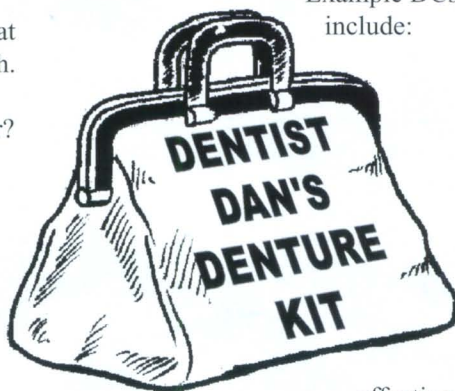
Weight: 6 lb.



'A buddy ragged me on using Dentist Dan's, but I sez: bite me! Dentist Dan's kit gave me that little extra style I need to really get noticed in a drek-hole like MCII!'
– Virgil the Vamp

There is enough ink in one kit to completely colour or clean a set of teeth 5 times and enough plaster to create 200 normal-sized teeth. Using the kit requires a Disguise check.

Example DCs include:



effective cosmetic change, DC10 (DC 6 when done on someone else); making teeth, DC 15; making

Zuggy Z Zuggs' Expand-o-matic Pole-a-tron

'Expand Your Horizons with a Pole-a-tron!'

'When you absolutely, positively need a 50-foot pole you can keep in your pocket!'

'More Fun than a barrel of Rad-Chimps!'

New from Zuggy Z Zuggs' pole emporium. Not just any pole, but an extending power-pole! The new Expand-o-matic Pole-a-tron is a precision-machined piece of equipment for the discerning pole

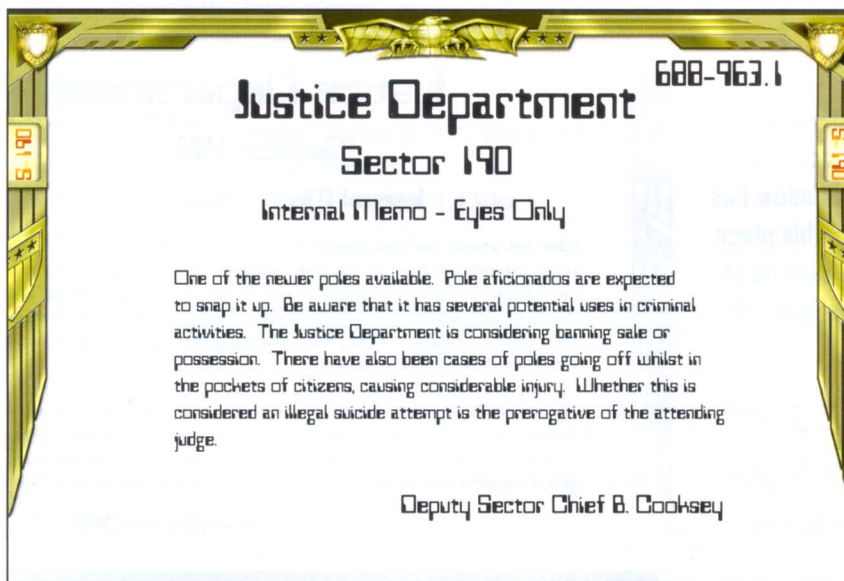
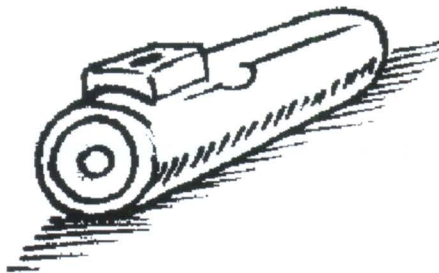
buyer. Able to expand from less than 2 inches in length up to 50 feet long in less than 15 seconds. No longer will you have to put up with a measly 5-foot pole, or a sectional pole that takes precious time to assemble. A simple flick of the switch and you have 50 feet of prime pole at your command.

An expanding pole capable of growing from a simple 1-inch diameter, 2-inch long cylinder to a 50-foot-long pole. The pole is powered by precision made Boing™ miracle plastic springs and expands very rapidly, reaching full length in 3 turns. The expansion is fairly rapid, and requires a DC 15 Reflex saving throw to avoid. Failure results in 2d4 points of damage and the possibility of being propelled along by the moving pole. The expanding pole has an effective Strength of 20 for all strength tests to lift, break or push objects, but needs to be braced against a solid object.

The pole will support up to 500 lb., has a DC of 20 to break and a hardness of 10. Five points of damage are sufficient to break it. When broken, the tightly compacted Boing™ will burst out, filling a 15-foot-radius with sticky Boing™. Escaping from this requires a DC 20 Strength test.

Item: Expand-o-matic Pole-a-tron
Cost: 800cr.
Black Market: N/A
Weight: 0.5 lb.

'One of the finest poles I have ever owned. The action is smooth and silky and the extension is perfectly smooth. A man could not want for a finer pole.' – Lazlo Largo, Dickie Attenborough Block, Pole Appreciation Society Chairman.



Flashball 700 from Tanbard

'Zap them before they zap you!'

'Find out once and for all who is the best with a laser – believe that!!!!'

'Always wanted to find out how good a shot you are? Then check it out.'

The FlashBall series has been

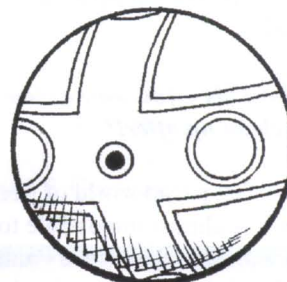
going for 20 years and the new 700 just shows that there's another 20 years left in the series yet. What is FlashBall? The answer is easy – it's laser tag game. You, the player, wear a suit of sensors with an attached laser gun. Your opponent is a flying ball called a FlashBall. There are 6 small, disc-like sensors on the outside of the ball, each roughly the size of a tennis ball. In between these are laser nozzles.

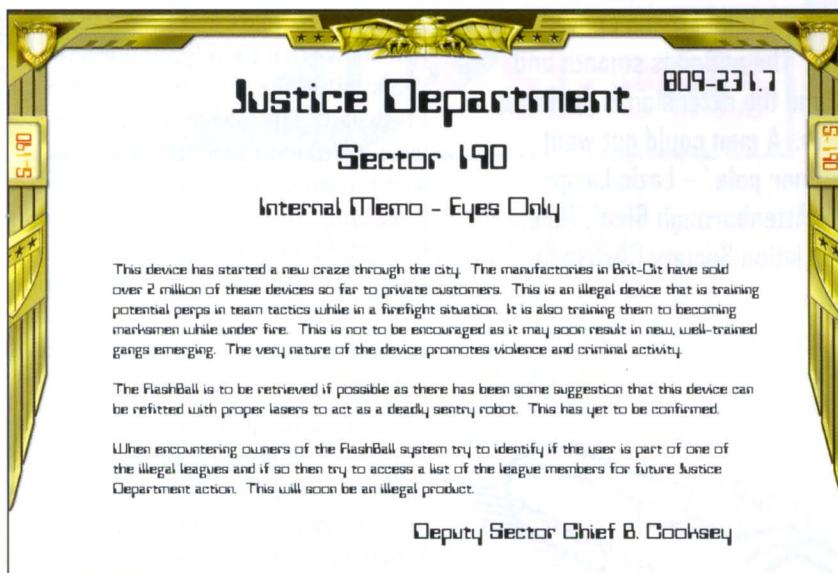
The aim of the game is to hit the sensors without being hit by laser shots from the FlashBall which will fire on any detected movement. When a player is hit the sensors will begin flashing and their laser weapon will stop working. You can play this on your own, with friends or against them as you wish, and you can include as many FlashBalls as you want. If you need to recall your FlashBall we provide – at no extra

cost – a callback button with the suit. If you think you are good enough you can join one of the many leagues starting up to support this game. It's going to be a future great. Believe that!

The system is sold as one FlashBall with a player's body suit covering the torso and shoulders which has an attached laser gun that can be holstered on either side of the body suit when required. The

FlashBall is specially rigged to auto-disable if detached from the body suit, negating its value as an illegal





street weapon, although the Justice Department still has considerable reservations about it.

Item: FlashBall 700

Cost: 300cr.

Black Market: Not quite yet...

Weight: 16 lb.

'Man, when we blew the Furies off the league table it was so cool. It was like atomic. My man Shadow has got a custom-built sight on his piece – it's so cool. No one can beat us at FlashBall. – 'Hazz' Darren Matts of the Pain Rats.

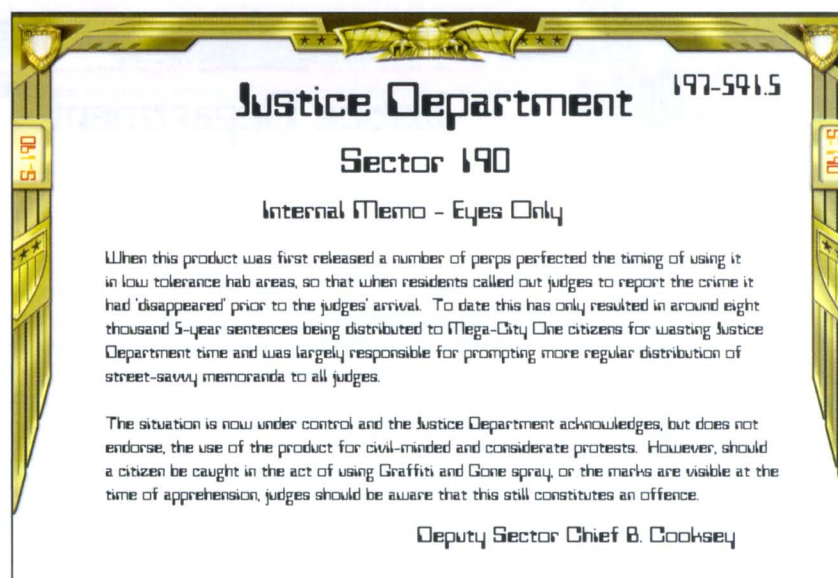
**Insides Out Technology®
Graffiti and Gone spray
paint.**

'Quick and easy experimentation with today's designer colours that you won't have to put up with tomorrow!'

'Great for kids – you won't even have to clean up after!'

In today's fast paced world of trends and fads it is almost impossible to keep up with the latest craze – until now. A breakthrough in molecular technology that has only now been

released for public use has allowed Insides Out Technology® to design a paint compound that degenerates in around one standard day. This means that with the already familiar quick



and easy-to-use spray-can technology even a décor dunce can produce dazzling results, from new, every day.

Available in an ever-expanding range of scintillating designer colours, current top sellers include Tequila Sunset, Wavy Rainbow and Swirling Mist.

Note that Insides Out Technology® does not recommend that those suffering from, or with a family history of heart, lung, brain or kidney disorders use this product and will not be held accountable for side

effects induced by ignoring this recommendation.

This spray paint comes in a wild variety of colours including colours that move, albeit slowly, if used appropriately they may grant a circumstance modifier of up to +5, at the Games Master's discretion to hide/camouflage checks. The effects fade in 20+1D4 hours.

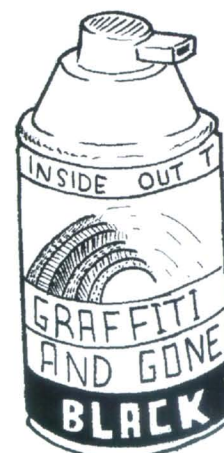
Item: Graffiti and Gone spray paint

Cost: 50cr.

Black Market: N/A

Weight: 1 lb.

'Oh yes, I always use Graffiti and gone spray paint they're faaabulous, they give an artist such flexibility and freedom...' – Gerard Pontois, the designer formerly known as Pince.



Bang! B-X72 Miracle Spray

'Get more BANG! with your Boing!'

'Bored with Boing™? Bounce bigger and better with BANG!'

By spraying Bang! on a citizen encased in Boing™, a mysterious chemical change takes place on the surface of the Boing™ ball, coating it with an amazing contact explosive! With every surface the Boinger hits, an explosive detonation propels the ball away, far more powerfully than any mere elastic collision! With skill and training, a Boinger can hit near-supersonic speeds!

(For use only within the Palais-de-Boing™ structurally reinforced Bang! parlours. Justice Department regulations state that the use of Boing™ and/or Bang! outside of the Palais-de-Boing™ carries a 20-year mandatory sentence.)

Bang! comes in aerosol cans that are identical to Boing™ cans, save for the logo.

While the use of Bang! is legally restricted to the Palais-de-Boing's™ Bang! parlours, various thrill-seekers occasionally use it on the pedways and skyways of Mega-City One. A ball sprayed with Bang! is treated as a Boing™ ball for movement purposes, and will cause normal Boing™ ball damage plus an additional 2d10 explosive damage, with damage halved for a successful Reflex save. Further, the speed of the ball is increased by 2d4 x 10 mph.

The Boing™ boffins have not completely eradicated the problem of Boing™

consistency change due to extreme heat. A Bang!-sprayed ball is usually good for 1d6 bounces before adhering to whatever it next hits, inflicting quarter-normal collision damage due to the now-malleable nature of the ball, with no explosive damage.

If a Bang!-sprayed ball is hit with an incendiary or explosive weapon (for example, a frag grenade or a HE or Incendiary Lawgiver round), or is exposed to fire, its entire surface will erupt in flame. The burning ball will adhere to whatever it next hits and will be considered a Medium-size chemical fire for purposes of extinguishing or spreading. Note that it is the coating which is burning, not the Boing™ itself. The person within will be impervious to harm due to their Boing™ casing, though this may be of little comfort if a burning building collapses on them.

Note that Bang! cannot be used without an accomplice, as it must be applied from outside the Boing™ ball.

Item: Bang! B-X72 Miracle Spray

Cost: N/A

Black Market: 1,150cr.

Weight: 0.5 lb.

'For skill, subtlety and precision, you want Boing™. For the rush, the speed, the sheer exhilaration – it's gotta be Bang!' – Tommy Who?, Cal-Hab PinBoing™ Wizard.



Justice Department		627-541.7
Sector 190		
Internal Memo - Eyes Only		
While Boinging™ in public remains a significant public nuisance, use of Bang! is considered far more dangerous and constitutes a major threat to life, property and order. Perps apprehended for this crime should be held fully responsible for any damage caused to public and private property. Deaths resulting from use of Bang! should be considered manslaughter resulting from culpable negligence, and perps should be sentenced accordingly.		
Note that the highly flammable nature of the Bang!-treated ball means that extra caution must be taken in apprehending perps. Generally, however, the risk of a localised fire is preferable to the damage caused by a Boing™ Banger. The Justice Department has designated this a high priority all-Sectors target.		
Deputy Sector Chief B. Cooksey		

ULTIMATE GAMEPLAY

Cooking... For Mayhem and Profit

By Andrew Boswell

Have you ever felt that your time around the camp fire following a day of hard adventuring is something of a let down, especially if you happen to be connoisseurs of social eating, like gnomes and halflings?

Walk this way...

Many cultures and races are noteworthy for their devotion to cooking.

Their creations are famous, and sought out by those who understand that food concerns more than just eating something digestible. Leaving aside the recipes, much can be learnt from these peoples.

Iron pots, and cooking equipment in general, are usually thought to have only one use. In places where it is considered safe, adventurers drag out these heavy objects to prepare meals. Thoughtful members of the party make provision for this by including a pot since, without it, every meal is spit roast, raw, or bowel punishing dried rations. Before descending into caverns chock-full of monsters, far-sighted adventurers stash these items, along with anything else that would weigh them down and inhibit movement.

While both of these strategies are sensible, they fail to make use of the full range of possibilities offered by the humble pot.



More Than Just a Five-Pound Inconvenience...

If pressed, anyone can pick up a pot and swing it. When used in this way it counts as a simple weapon, doing d6 damage. To have any chance of succeeding in this action, the swinger must have at least five feet above and around them.

Applying a little more thought to the problem, the following actions are also available:

The lid can be thrown like a discus. Again, there has to be room to allow the thrower to get a swing up. But five clear feet to one side of the thrower are all that is necessary. In visualising this, imagine the circular pot lid thrown in the Greek military style: palm on top, arm drawn back and then flicked forward in one

motion. There is no room to do the Olympic competition multiple rotations before release. Trying to throw it like a Frisbee will only send it a short distance. When used in this way, the Pot Lid-Discus is a Martial Weapon, inflicting d6 bludgeoning damage, with a range increment of 15 feet, and a critical factor of x2.

For the more bloodthirsty, the pot lid can be sharpened, and this changes the damage type to be both bludgeoning and slashing. Caution must be exercised when pursuing this path, however. After all, you don't want to cut yourself when cooking.

Setting aside the military applications, the under, concave, side of a lid can be polished. This is a labour-intensive activity, requiring at least five hours the first time and an hour to bring back the shine after it has been used in cooking. Once a bright sheen has been achieved the lid now forms a focusing mirror. A candle or other source of light held before it can be directed in a beam. As a rule of thumb this concave mirror will magnify the intensity, but not the range, of the light source by a factor of five.

The top can be polished as well with the same effort. Often there is a handle on the top of a pot lid, and this will interfere with the image, but in general what has been created is a convex mirror. It can now be used to

Dor'en Caudron Sai (The Way of the Pot) (General)

Gnomes love to cook. The endless subtlety of combining different flavours, almost to the level of producing a work of art, is sublime to the gnomish soul. What is less well known is that, along with the other martial arts styles that gnomes have devised to capitalise on their size, they have evolved a system of combat using iron pots.

The Whirling Pot Dance is one element of this rich martial arts style. In it, the nimble practitioner takes a pot (often one in each hand) and swings it in an oblique circle over his head. When two are used they cross in front of the dancer's body, creating an intimidating meat-tenderiser. This awesome display is often accompanied by a terrifying cry, giving rise to the nickname 'two-pot screamer'.

In a normal ten-foot-wide corridor, any Small character can use the two-pot Whirling Pot Dance. Medium-size characters can only use a single pot in the same space. Gnomes may take this feat as a racial benefit. Other adventurers may learn it from an accomplished gnome practitioner.

Prerequisites: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Expertise, Con 13+, Dex 13+, Two-weapon Fighting (if the two-pot version is used).

Benefits: You receive a +2 bonus to Initiative when in melee. If two pots are used, then the Combat Reflex Feat may be applied twice (i.e., your attacks of opportunity are doubled). In addition, the Intimidate skill gains a +2 bonus while dancing.

look around corners and gain a false-perspective image of an entire room. Always keep in mind the blind spot in the handle, and the fact that distances will be distorted.

Cooking Up A Storm

Dwarfs are notorious for their unappetising food. Decades ago one particular Dwarf suffered banishment because of his twin passions for the magical and culinary arts. Determined to prove that dwarven cuisine could stand up with the best, he created a spell. Sadly, the effect was not as he expected, and he was killed in the attempt. His notes survived, however, and from these the spell can be recreated. The effects add nothing to the art of cooking, but much to the art of defence.

The Claymore Crockpot

Evocation

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25ft. + 5ft./2 levels)

Area: 20ft.-radius spread

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: No

Take an ordinary cooking pot. Add at least one organic component (potatoes are common, though a leg of rabbit is also traditional). Add various inorganic ingredients such as gravel, nails, glass shards, buttons and salt to taste, until pot is full to the brim. Cover pot with a layer of mud or wax. Position pot so that the top faces in the desired direction. On saying the command word, the contents detonate, spraying the target area with shrapnel. This deals 1d6 points of damage per caster level (maximum 10d6) to all creatures within the area. The damage is purely physical; there are no attendant magical elements.

This spell can be combined with a *magic mouth* to create a static mine, detonated by a creature setting off the *magic mouth* spell, in turn setting off the *claymore crockpot*. Similarly, the

mine can be detonated remotely by using spells such as *ventriloquism*.

Infamous Camp Ovens

The Pot O' Doom: This blackened pot is engraved with the images of bones. For every half-pound of humanoid body parts that are placed inside, noxious black fumes are emitted. These fumes spread out at a rate of 50feet per round, to a maximum of 250feet. Undead of all descriptions are drawn to the source of the fumes, travelling at their best pace, unless they save against the *control undead* spell. Once within sight, the creatures are under the command of the person feeding the pot, as per the *control undead* spell. This control lasts as long as the pot is fed with body parts. The pot consumes the grisly components at a rate of a half-pound/round. When the pot stops emitting its fumes, the *control undead* spell is immediately broken.

The pot can also be used to prepare food, if non-humanoid ingredients are used. The product of this cooking is poisonous, and in every way conforms to the description for dark reaver powder in *Core Rulebook II*. Anyone dying from this poison rises in 24 hours as a zombie.

Caster Level: 13th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *control undead*; **Market Price:** 40,000 gp; **Weight:** 5lb.

Pot Portage: This ordinary-looking pot is actually a mini transportation device. Non-magical items placed inside it are instantly transported to where the lid was left, up to 100 miles distant. A command word is engraved on the inside of the lid. Transportation is 95% reliable. Magical articles and those that fail the reliability test are lost into ethereal space. Limbs placed in the pot when the command word is spoken are severed. Ordinary meals can be cooked in the pot, with no ill effects to the consumer.

Caster Level: 9th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *teleportation*; **Market Price:** 13,000 gp; **Weight:** 5lb.



The Coming of



Roleplaying in the Hyborian Age

Character Classes

At this time it is looking like there will be eight core character classes: barbarian, forester, nomad, noble, pirate, scholar, soldier and thief. The only one that will have access to magic, at least at the beginning, will be the scholar. This means that the other classes share certain inevitable points of similarity. I have handled this with class feature trees similar to the way Uncanny Dodge works in the usual d20 system – that is, if you gain the Mobility class feature from levels in both the pirate character class and the barbarian character class, you will not lose out by taking levels in both, but will gain Improved Mobility, so the two classes work well together. As ever this is derived from the stories – it's clear that in d20 terms Conan was a heavily multiclassed character, with levels in barbarian, soldier, thief, pirate, and later probably even nomad and noble too.

All the classes are a little more powerful than their core d20 System equivalents. Again this reflects a setting in which permanent, personally owned magic items are scarce, and in which characters are

defined by their own capabilities rather than by their possessions. So, without further ado, here's the *Conan RPG* version of the barbarian.

Barbarian

Adventures: The Hyborian Age is a time of great opportunity for barbarians. The civilised nations that have developed across most of the Western world from the old Hyborian tribes are largely decadent, and there are plenty of chances for a canny barbarian to steal from them – or even conquer them. Beyond the borders of

Conan was as much a part of this wilderness as Balthus was alien to it. The Cimmerian might have spent years among the great cities of the world; he might have walked with the rulers of civilisation; he might even achieve his wild whim some day and rule as king of a civilised nation; stranger things had happened. But he was no less a barbarian. He was concerned only with the naked fundamentals of life. The warm intimacies of small, kindly things, the sentiments and delicious trivialities that make up so much of civilised men's lives were meaningless to him. A wolf was no less a wolf because a whim of chance caused him to run with the watchdogs. Bloodshed and violence and savagery were the natural elements of the life Conan knew; he could not, he would never, understand the little things that are so dear to civilised men and women.

R. E. Howard, Beyond the Black River

the Hyborian lands lie many forgotten cities and ancient tombs, and once more the barbarian is ideally suited to exploring or plundering such lands.

straightforward worship of Crom and his kin popular in Cimmeria, the grim faith of the Nordheimr, the savage and sacrifice-hungry gods of the Picts, or the witch-doctor's juju

Last month Ian Sturrock introduced us to the work he is doing on the highly anticipated Conan Roleplaying Game.

This issue he focuses on the very essence of Conan himself, the Barbarian character class.

We think he has really captured the feel of playing a Hyborian barbarian - see if you agree.

Characteristics: Barbarians have a fast and highly versatile combat style. In all-round, no-holds-barred fighting, few can hope to defeat them, though a soldier from a more civilised nation may have the edge in a formal duel or mass battle. Barbarians also have excellent reflexes, as well as

the ability to turn fear into anger, slicing through supernatural foes in a red fury where other characters would flee in terror.

Religion: Barbarians usually follow the religion of their native land, whether this is the

and mysterious deities of the Black Kingdoms.

Background: Barbarians may come from almost any non-civilised land, though in the deserts and steppes nomads are more usual. Likewise they may follow almost any profession except for some of the more esoteric civilised trades – a Cimmerian might be the son of a blacksmith or warrior chief, a Pict could be a young hunter or shaman's apprentice, while an Afghuli hillman has almost certainly spent much of his life raiding Vendhya and other civilised lands.

Game Rule Information

Abilities: Strength, Dexterity and Constitution are all crucial for the barbarian. He must be capable of hitting hard and fast, dodging most enemy blows, and simply taking blows that do get past his guard. Furthermore, Charisma can be useful if he plans to be a great leader of men; Wisdom to ensure his senses are as keen as possible and Intelligence so that he gains plenty of skills.

Hit Die: d12

Class Skills

The barbarian's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (herbalism) (Int), Craft (any mundane) (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis) and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (3 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 3 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the barbarian.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency:

A barbarian is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, two-weapon combat, light and medium armour, and shields. Note that armour check penalties for wearing medium or heavy armour apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a –1 penalty for every 5 lb of armour and equipment carried.



Fast Movement: The barbarian has a speed faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet when wearing no armour, light armour, or medium armour (and not carrying a heavy load).

Fearless: The barbarian gains a +2 resistance bonus to all Will saves against any fear type of effect, including Terror.

Track: At 1st level the barbarian gains the Track feat for free. This is an extraordinary ability. If he already has the Track feat, he instead gains the Skill Focus (Survival) feat.

Bite Sword: The barbarian often finds it useful to carry his sword in his teeth, when suddenly plunged into icy water, clutching at a crumbling cliff-face, or leaping a palisade. There would be no time to replace the

blade in its scabbard, but he can hold it in his strong jaw in an instant. Up to once per round, as a free action, a barbarian of 2nd level or higher can place any light weapon or any one-handed slashing weapon in his mouth and carry it securely there for up to 3 + Strength modifier rounds (3 + Strength modifier minutes if it is a light weapon), before taking it back into his hand as a free action once more. While carrying his

weapon in his mouth in this manner, the barbarian can act normally, though he may not attack with the weapon in his mouth. This is an extraordinary ability.

Versatility: Barbarians have little time for the niceties of civilised swordplay, but their unorthodox fighting style allows them to pick up and wield almost any weapon with ease, or turn an everyday object such as a heavy bench or treasure chest into a deadly improvised weapon. All barbarians suffer only a –2 penalty when using a weapon with which they are not proficient, including both exotic weapons and improvised weapons. This is an extraordinary ability.

From 4th level onwards, the barbarian suffers no penalty at all when using weapons with which he is not proficient, whether they are exotic weapons or improvised weapons. Furthermore, he gains a +1 damage bonus to all melee attacks, including simple, martial, exotic and improvised weapons, as well as unarmed attacks and grapples. At 8th level, this damage bonus increases to +2 and at 12th level to +3.

At 16th level, the barbarian doubles the threat range when wielding any melee weapon, including simple, martial, exotic and improvised weapons, as well as unarmed attacks and grapples. At 20th level this threat range is tripled.

Crimson Mist: Any time a barbarian of 2nd level or higher succeeds in a Will saving throw against terror, he flies into a furious anger instead of becoming terrified. This is treated in all respects as the Cimmerian's Fighting-madness including the restriction that it may only occur once per day. A Cimmerian who is also a barbarian of 2nd level or higher however may voluntarily go into a Fighting-madness once per day due to his race, as well as entering a Crimson Mist once per day if he succeeds in a Will save against terror. This is an extraordinary ability.

From 11th level onwards, the barbarian's Crimson Mist is more powerful, with the bonuses to Strength and Constitution increasing to +6, and the bonus to Will saves increasing to +3. Note that if the barbarian is also a Cimmerian, this improved Crimson Mist has no effect on his Fighting-madness.

The sight of that awful shape alone might have frozen the Cimmerian with fear. In juxtaposition to his girl, the sight sent a red wave of murderous fury through Conan's brain. In a crimson mist he smote the monster.

R. E. Howard, The Slithering Shadow

Trap Sense: At 3rd level, the barbarian gains a +1 bonus to Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks by traps. Every three levels thereafter, these bonuses increase by +1. Trap Sense bonuses gained from different classes stack. This is an extraordinary ability.

Endurance: At 3rd level, the barbarian gains Endurance as a bonus feat. If he already has Endurance, he instead gains Diehard.

Uncanny Dodge: From 4th level and above, the barbarian retains his

'You are more fit to inflict torture than to endure it,' said Conan tranquilly. 'I hung there on a cross as you are hanging, and I lived, thanks to circumstances and a stamina peculiar to barbarians. But you civilised men are soft; your lives are not nailed to your spines as are ours. Your fortitude consists mainly in inflicting torment, not in enduring it. You will be dead before sundown.'

R. E. Howard, A Witch Shall Be Born

Dexterity bonus to Defence Value (if any) if caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. If the barbarian already has Uncanny Dodge from some other source (such as from already being a 4th level pirate) he instead gains Improved Uncanny Dodge (see below). This is an extraordinary ability.

Mobility: From 5th level onwards the barbarian gets a +4 dodge bonus to Armour Class against attacks of opportunity caused when he moves out of or within a threatened area. If the barbarian already has Mobility from some other source (such as from already being a 5th level nomad) he instead gains Improved Mobility (see below). Note that mobility does not apply if the barbarian is mounted. This is an extraordinary ability.

Improved Uncanny Dodge: At 8th level, the barbarian can no longer be flanked, except that a thief or pirate at least four levels higher than him can still flank him.

Diehard: At 6th level the barbarian gains Diehard as a bonus feat. If he already has Diehard, he instead gains Toughness.

Improved Mobility: From 10th level onwards the barbarian never provokes attacks of opportunity, whatever he does, so long as he moves at least 10 feet during that combat round. If the barbarian somehow already has Improved Mobility (such as for already having had Mobility from another source

before reaching 5th level, and so gaining Improved Mobility at 5th level instead of Mobility) he instead gains Greater Mobility (see below). Note that improved mobility does not apply if the barbarian is mounted. This is an extraordinary ability.

Wheel of Death: From 14th level, the barbarian gains a bonus attack at his highest attack bonus on any round

in which he has no allies within five feet and at least three opponents within five feet. This is an extraordinary ability.



Greater Mobility: From 15th level onwards the barbarian may move

up to his speed as part of a full attack action, rather than merely taking a five-foot step. He may move and attack in any order, so he might, for example, move five feet, attack once, move fifteen feet, attack twice more, and then move again for the remaining twenty feet of his movement. Note that greater mobility does not apply if the barbarian is

mounted or is wearing heavy armour. This is an extraordinary ability.

Unconquerable: A barbarian of 17th level or higher who is reduced to below 0 hit points (but still alive) no longer takes a point of damage for performing a standard action, as he usually would according to the Diehard feat. Furthermore, he does not die until reduced to a number of negative hit points equal to his class level, and may continue to perform either a move action or a standard action each round until that point. This is an extraordinary ability.

The Barbarian

Conan put his back against the wall and lifted his axe. He stood like an image of the unconquerable primordial – legs braced far apart, head thrust forward, one hand clutching the wall for support, the other gripping the axe on high, with the great corded muscles standing out in iron ridges, and his features frozen in a death snarl of fury – his eyes blazing terribly through the mist of blood which veiled them. The men faltered – wild, criminal and dissolute though they were, yet they came from a breed men called civilised, with a civilised background; here was the barbarian – the natural killer. They shrank back – the dying tiger could still deal death.

Conan sensed their uncertainty and grinned mirthlessly and ferociously.

‘Who dies first?’ he mumbled through smashed and bloody lips.

R. E. Howard, The Phoenix on the Sword

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Defence Bonus*	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+1	+0	+2	+2	+0	Fast Movement, Track, Fearless, Versatility
2	+2	+2	+0	+3	+3	+0	Bite Sword, Crimson Mist
3	+3	+3	+0	+3	+3	+1	Trap Sense +1, Endurance
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	+4	+1	Uncanny Dodge, Versatility (+1 damage)
5	+5	+5	+1	+4	+4	+1	Mobility
6	+6	+6	+1	+5	+5	+2	Trap Sense +2, Diehard
7	+7	+7	+1	+5	+5	+2	Damage Reduction 1/-
8	+8	+8	+2	+6	+6	+2	Improved Uncanny Dodge, Versatility (+2 damage)
9	+9	+9	+2	+6	+6	+3	Trap Sense +3
10	+10	+10	+2	+7	+7	+3	Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 2/-
11	+11	+11	+2	+7	+7	+3	Greater Crimson Mist
12	+12	+12	+3	+8	+8	+4	Trap Sense +4, Versatility (+3 damage)
13	+13	+13	+3	+8	+8	+4	Damage Reduction 3/-
14	+14	+14	+3	+9	+9	+4	Wheel of Death
15	+15	+15	+3	+9	+9	+5	Greater Mobility, Trap Sense +5
16	+16	+16	+4	+10	+10	+5	Damage Reduction 4/-, Versatility (double threat range)
17	+17	+17	+4	+10	+10	+5	Unconquerable
18	+18	+18	+4	+11	+11	+6	Trap Sense +6
19	+19	+19	+4	+11	+11	+6	Damage Reduction 5/-
20	+20	+20	+5	+12	+12	+6	Versatility (triple threat range)

MORE CONAN NEXT MONTH!





VolksMecha Werner 1B

AMBUSH

By Ian Sturrock

A BATTLE REPORT FOR ARMAGEDDON: 2089



Moore Ltd. Maverick



Strategic Battlefield View

This detailed example of play illustrates many of the basics of Armageddon: 2089 play, from first contact between two WarMek forces to the final defeat of one. The situation is somewhat unusual, as it takes place from ambush and at very close range between two quite unequal forces – three light assault WarMeks against a more expensive and better-piloted medium support WarMek. They will have to try to wear down its superior armour as rapidly as possible, but are only armed with light rockets themselves.

The example of play also includes sufficient game statistics and local information to allow for use (with a little work) as a mini-encounter, as well as offering a couple of new items of equipment.

The two forces are a lone Moore Ltd. Maverick, piloted by Wayne Broderick, and three far lighter VolksMecha WarMeks piloted by local guerrilla forces, a Werner 1A (Andrew McGregor), Werner 1B (Hamish Macmillan) and an experimental variant of the Gunther (Bill Scrimger). This last has been designated as the 'Gunther X-Bow' by the guerrilla scientists who developed it.

The Maverick is the last surviving member of its squad, sent into hostile territory in Scotland to destroy a suspected guerrilla base but attacked en route by a variety of light WarMeks, infantry and converted vehicles. It is now seeking an alternate route back to safety, but is about to be ambushed once again by three guerrilla WarMeks who have circled around it to set up among pre-prepared earthworks on and around a wooded hilltop.

Wayne Broderick

5th level field officer

Melee Weapon: Knife

Ranged Weapon: PDW-25 Machine Pistol

Ammunition: 2 magazines

Hit Dice: 5d8+10 (36 hp)

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dex)

Speed: 10m.

DV: 17 (+4 size, +3 Dex)

Attacks: Knife +5 melee; or PDW-25 +8 ranged

Damage: Knife 1d6; or PDW-25 2d6

Mek Attacks: Small laser +8 ranged, and 140mm electrothermal cannon +8 ranged; or 155mm howitzer +3 ranged; or WarMek punch +8 melee; or WarMek kick +8 melee

Mek Damage: Small laser 1d8, and 140mm electrothermal cannon 5d8; or 155mm howitzer 3d6; or WarMek punch 1d4+3; or WarMek kick 1d6+3

Face/Reach: 1.5m x 1.5m/1.5m

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +3

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 12

Skills: Mek Pilot +13, Drive +11, Scan +9,

Computer Use +9, Concentration +12, Spot +7

Feats: Iron Will, Nerves of Steel, Vehicle Dodge (WarMek), Dodge, Defensive Reflexes, Combat Reflexes (WarMek)



Guerrilla WarMek Pilots: *Andrew McGregor, Hamish Macmillan and Bill Scrimger* 1st level assault officers

Melee Weapon: Knife

Ranged Weapon: AZ-1010 Automatic Pistol

Ammunition: 2 magazines

Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (9 hp)

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dex)

Speed: 10m.

DV: 17 (+4 size, +3 Dex)

Attacks: Knife +1 melee; or AZ-1010 +4 ranged

Damage: Knife 1d6; or AZ-1010 2d6

Mek Attacks (McGregor): Medium laser +4 ranged, and 80mm rockets +1 (+ number of rockets fired) ranged; or WarMek kick +4 melee

Mek Attacks (Macmillan): 80mm rockets +1 (+ number of rockets fired) ranged; or WarMek kick +4 melee

Mek Attacks (Scrimger): 40mm autocannon +4 ranged, and 140mm rockets +1 (+ number of rockets fired) ranged, and Lancer +12 ranged; or WarMek punch +4 melee; or WarMek kick +4 melee

Mek Damage (McGregor): Medium laser 1d8, and 80mm rockets 1d6; or WarMek kick 1d6+1

Mek Damage (Macmillan): 80mm rockets 1d6; or WarMek kick 1d6+1

Mek Damage (Scrimger): 40mm autocannon 1d8, and 140mm rockets 1d12, and Lancer 2d10;

or WarMek punch 1d4+3; or WarMek kick 1d6+3
Special Attack: Double damage with any WarMek weapon used within 20m.

Face/Reach: 1.5m x 1.5m/1.5m

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 12

Skills: Mek Pilot +7, Scan +6, Spot +3, Move Silently +7, Hide +7

Feats (McGregor & Macmillan): Weapon Focus (80mm rockets), Vehicle Dodge (WarMek), Alertness

Feats (Scrimger): Weapon Focus (140mm rockets), Vehicle Dodge (WarMek), WarMek Handling

The Gunther X-Bow

The Gunther has standard Model B game statistics except for the addition of a nanomuscle-powered 'crossbow' launcher for the onboard Lancers.

Using the same nanomuscle fibres employed in the best-quality WarMek actuators, this modified launch mechanism effectively spring-launches the missile so as to make it far harder for the defender to determine the source of the launch. The missile's own propulsion system is modified so as to activate only after a set period of time, usually less than a second but still sufficient time so that the infrared signature spike produced by the firing missile occurs approximately 100 to 200 metres from the launching WarMek.

The 'Crossbow' inevitably does not much resemble a medieval crossbow, though the principle is similar. Like the near-silent medieval crossbow, it can make a highly effective sniper's weapon, too.

The 'Crossbow' launch mechanism fitted to the Gunther X-Bow's Lancers does not add any appreciable weight to the WarMek, but this experimental version would certainly have been very costly to develop and make had it been done on a commercial basis rather than cobbled together by outlaw scientists from WarMek spare parts. If a commercial version is ever released, expect it to cost in the region of \$400,000 per Lancer two-pack. A team of WarMeks who captured the experimental version could probably sell it to the right arms manufacturer for in the region of \$5,000,000, assuming they also deduced its purpose.



Production model VolksMecha Gunther

Comms Cable

Comms cable is available at a cost of \$1 per metre, or ECM-shielded at \$10 per metre. It can be buried or otherwise used to link various positions together so as to provide very secure communications with a minimal electromagnetic signature (40). It is occasionally used in fortresses, but is far more common as a means of setting up pre-prepared ambush positions.

Comms cable can be jacked into any comms processor as a standard action by any manually enabled WarMek or character. It can be removed as a free action, though this essentially involves tugging it out and will eventually ruin the cable. Comms cable is always regarded as high-bandwidth.

Initial Positions

The three guerrilla WarMeks begin the game more or less dug in, well concealed by both banks of earth and the area's foliage. All three have had their reflective armour coatings removed and replaced with MultiCamo™.

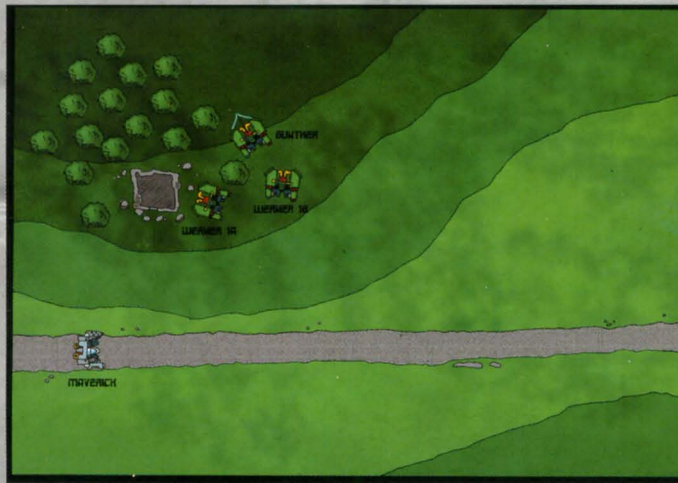
The Gunther is partially entrenched at position A, giving it one-quarter cover, and behind sufficient foliage to give it one-half concealment. The two Werners are behind a ruined cottage and dug into the side of the hill at position B, giving them total cover.

These three positions are linked by a hardwired comms cable, allowing the WarMeks to send and receive data without compromising their positions (see Box, 'Comms Cable').

Broderick's WarMek enters the map from the road at position C. It is already slightly damaged, with the torso reduced to 46 armour. Broderick is making little attempt at concealment now, simply running

his Maverick at full tilt, and so it will most likely be spotted rapidly. As the game begins, it is around 5 km away from point A. Given the Gunther's height advantage atop a low hill, it will spot the Maverick at a base DC of 15, -8 for the Hide size penalty, +3 for the MultiCamo, for a total DC of 10. Rolling a 12 and adding +3 (skill) and +20 (target speed) for a total of 35, Scrimger easily sees the running Maverick.

Broderick in return needs to beat a base DC of 25, +3 for the Gunther's MultiCamo™. The Games Master rules that the Gunther's waist-deep trench means it is effectively the size of a Small WarMek (only -4 Hide penalty) for a total DC of 24. However, the one-half concealment allows Scrimger to attempt a Hide check instead of simply standing there. He rolls a 6 on the Hide check, +7 for his skill, +3 for MultiCamo™,



Broderick's Maverick approaches the ambush site

+15 for range, -4 for size, for a total of 27. Broderick rolls his Spot check, getting a 3, +7 for his skill, a total of 10 – not nearly good enough.

Pre-Combat Activity

The Games Master rules that Scrimger has a surprise round, if he wishes to attack. For the moment he simply uses the comms cable to warn his colleagues, reckoning that the Maverick pilot will not see him just yet.

Scrimger decides after a brief conversation with McGregor and Macmillan that he will launch his Lancer missiles the next round. Though this will alert the enemy to the presence of hostiles, he is hoping that by using the 'Crossbow' technology he will remain undetected and have a chance to head north down the hill, circle round and join his comrades at position B. He will only do this if it appears that the Maverick is still heading for the ambush site. If it turns and runs off in a different direction, he will remain stationary in an attempt to keep it in sight, radioing other guerrilla forces to apprise them of its current heading and speed.

Surprise Round

Broderick rolls Initiative, getting a 20 + 3 = 23. Scrimger rolls only a 5 + 3 = 8, but he is the only character who acts during the surprise round in any event.

Scrimger fires both his Lancer missiles. With a speed of 3km per round, it takes two rounds for the two Lancers to reach their target. They will strike on Round 2.

Round 1

Broderick has a chance to spot the Lancers, now two kilometres away. The DC is 10 due to the distance. He gets a 14, +7 = 21, easily spotting the long, sleek missiles as they roar towards him. He must decide in a split second whether to keep on down the road into a probable ambush, stop and try to ascertain the source of the missiles so he can bring his howitzer into action, or retreat by a different route. For the moment he elects to keep running, hoping to avoid them – he may well be going into an ambush, but this whole region is crawling with guerrillas and he has no indication that taking a different, longer route will especially help. He would rather take his chances in the ambush and hope to win.

Broderick declares that he will add +1 to his DV against the two missiles from his Vehicle Dodge bonus,

assuming they are from the same source.

Due to his Defensive Reflexes, Broderick would usually be permitted an attack of opportunity against one of the missiles, but they are too far out of range for his small laser, the only suitable weapon for defensive fire.

Scrimger simply observes during this round.

Round 2

Broderick acts first. He continues to run and also readies an attack against the first missile with his small laser. He will shoot at the first Lancer as soon as it comes within 300m so as to avoid range penalties. Unfortunately he only rolls a 2, +8 for BAB, -4 for running = 6, very much short of the DV 34 of a moving missile.

Scrimger makes his attack roll for the Lancers he fired during the surprise round, getting a 9 and a 20, +12 = 21 and 32. The Maverick's DV is only 8, +4 for its speed, +1 for Dodge, +3 for Dexterity = 16, so both missiles hit. Scrimger rolls again to attempt to confirm the threat, getting a 12, +12 = 24, no problem. He rolls for hit location and damage for the two missiles:

2, left leg, 12 points damage, reduced by Hardness 3 to 9. This reduces the left leg's armour from 30 to 21.

15, torso, 18 points damage, reduced by Hardness 4 to 14. The torso armour is reduced from 46 to 32.

Round 3

Broderick continues to run down the road towards safety, hoping (correctly) that his enemies have no more missiles to shoot at him.

Scrimger decides that since Broderick appears to be heading into the ambush, he will attempt to join his compatriots. By ducking down his Gunther, he is able to retreat north out of the trench and down the hill without greatly exposing his WarMek to observation by Broderick, though



The opening shots announce the rebels' intentions

the latter still has a chance to see him. The Gunther is moving only 10m this round, so as to allow Scrimger another Hide check (moving at less than half speed). This time his Hide check result is a roll of 14, +7 for his skill, +3 for MultiCamo™, +15 for range, -4 for size, for a total of 35.

Broderick rolls his Spot check, getting a 17, +7 for his skill, a total of 24 – still not good enough.

Round 4

Scrimger and Broderick are no longer able to detect one another, so the Games Master declares this combat over. If the enemies come into contact with one another again, he will call for Initiative checks again and consider it a new combat.

IN THE MEANTIME...

Broderick continues to run, hoping his enemies have lost him. Once the hill is between him and Broderick, Scrimger moves faster, running round and joining the other two at the ambush site, Point B. The three of them ready attacks against the first

WarMek they see coming down the road from the other side of the house. They are only some 50 metres from the road.

Still running at 120m per round, it takes Broderick less than five minutes to cover the remaining 5 km or so

between his present position and the section of road just south of Point B. By that time the three guerrillas can hear his running WarMek and the Games Master calls for Initiative checks again, ruling that the guerrillas will once more have a surprise round.

McGregor rolls a 14, +3 = 17.

Macmillan rolls 12, +3 = 15.

Scrimger gets an 8, +3 = 11.

Broderick rolls a 19, +3 = 22. He will be acting first this time – at least, he will once the surprise round is over.

Surprise Round

All three guerrillas launch rockets at their enemy. Broderick's DV is currently 12 – he is unaware of any hostiles at present and so adds no dodge bonuses, though he still has his speed bonus of +4.

McGregor is firing 18 rockets, 9 from each pack (80mm), and rolls 9 + 18 (rockets fired) -4 (range) = 23. This is 11 higher than was needed and so he rolls 1d8 to determine how many hit. He lucks out, hitting with 8 rockets.

9, left arm, 2 damage, less Hardness 2 = 0 damage.

17, torso, 5 damage, less Hardness 3 = 2 damage (torso is now on 32 -2 = 30).

16, torso, 4 damage, less Hardness 3 = 1 damage (torso is now on 30 -1 = 29).

8, left arm, 2 damage, less Hardness 2 = 0 damage.

20, head, 6 damage, less Hardness 2 = 4 damage (head is now on 24 -4 =20).

7, left arm, 2 damage, less Hardness 2 = 0 damage.

17, torso, 1 damage, less Hardness 2 = 0 damage.

9, left arm, 1 damage, less Hardness 2 = 0 damage.

Macmillan fires 27 rockets, 9 from each pack (also 80mm), getting a 4 + 27 (rockets) -4 (range) = 27. With 15 higher than the target's DV, he hits with 1d12 rockets. He rolls a 9.

16, torso, 3 damage, less Hardness 2 = 1 damage (torso is now on 29 -1 =28).

11, right arm, 4 damage, less Hardness 2 = 2 damage (right arm is now on 27 -2 =25).

4, right leg, 5 damage, less Hardness 3 = 2 damage (right leg is now on 30 -2 =27).

11, right arm, 4 damage, less Hardness 2 = 2 damage (right arm is now on 25 -2 =23).

12, right arm, 2 damage, less Hardness 2 = 0 damage.

17, torso, 1 damage, less Hardness 2 = 0 damage.

17, torso, 2 damage, less Hardness 2 = 0 damage.

3, left leg, 5 damage, less Hardness 2 = 3 damage (left leg is now on 21 -3 =18).

7, left arm, 3 damage, less Hardness 2 = 1 damage (left arm is now on 27 -1 =26).

Scrimger fires all 24 of his longer-range, heavier 140mm rockets. He only rolls a 2, +24 (rockets) = 26. This is 14 higher than the target's DV, so he hits with 1d8 rockets. He rolls a 4.

2, left leg, 6 damage, less Hardness 1 = 5 damage (left leg is now on 18 -5 =13).

17, torso, 7 damage, less Hardness 2 = 5 damage (torso is now on 28 -5 =23).

7, left arm, 8 damage, less Hardness 2 = 6 damage (left arm is now on 26 -6 =20).

8, left arm, 10 damage, less Hardness 2 = 8 damage (left arm is now on 20 -8 =12).

9, left arm, 30 damage, the arm is blown right off. The catastrophic damage check result is a 14, +2 (structure points damaged), +1 size modifier, +1 inflammable contents (rockets), for a total of 18 – actuators. In this case since the arm is already gone, the catastrophic damage result has no effect. Macmillan must make a WarMek piloting check (DC 15) or fall prone. He rolls a 9, +7 = 16, and totters but stays upright.

He considers using his howitzer, but he is not quite desperate enough to fire it without deploying anchoring spikes, and does not want to halt his retreat.



As the action escalates, Broderick begins to realise the danger surrounding him

Round 1

His Maverick's armour is badly damaged, but Broderick's WarMek is still functioning fine – for the moment. Realising however that he cannot take much more of this, Broderick slows to double speed (60m) and launches all that he can against the Werner 1B, on the grounds that it should prove easiest to destroy. He is going to dodge the 1A, so his DV will be 16 against the 1A and 15 otherwise.

He rolls an 18 with his small laser, +8 (attack bonus), -2 (own speed) for a total of 24, more than enough to hit the 1B.

11, right arm, 6 damage, energy weapons ignore Hardness (right arm is now on 16 -6 =10).

He rolls a 16 with the electrothermal cannon, for a total of 22, again a hit.

This time McGregor moves at double speed (70m), closing the distance between himself and the Maverick. He once more fires 18 rockets, 9 from each pack, and rolls 14 + 18 (rockets fired) = 32. This is 16 higher than was needed and so he rolls 1d12 to determine how many hit. He hits with 5 rockets.

2, rear left leg, 5 damage.

From this angle the 1A is actually behind the Maverick, so it affects the back armour of the leg: 5 less Hardness 1 = 4 damage (rear left leg is now on 15 -4 =11).

17, rear torso, 4 damage, less Hardness 2 = 2 damage (rear torso is now on 27 -2 =25).

13, rear torso, 5 damage, less Hardness 2 = 3 damage (rear torso is now on 25 -3 =22).

4, rear right leg, 4 damage, less Hardness 1 = 3 damage (rear right leg is now on 15 -3 =12).

7, rear left arm, 3 damage, less Hardness 1 = 2 damage (rear left arm is now on 13 -2 =11).

16, rear torso, 2 damage, less Hardness 2 = 0.

McGregor could also shoot his medium laser this round, since he can do a full attack action, but he does not have sufficient power points after moving at double speed.

Macmillan also moves at double speed, moving just in front of and to the left of the Maverick. He shoots 18 rockets this time (9 from each pack again – his WarMek's right arm pack is gone, along with the right arm). He rolls a $13 + 18$ (rockets fired) = 31. At 16 higher than the DV, this allows for 1d12 rockets to hit. He rolls a 4.

20, head, 2 damage, less Hardness 2 = 0.

10, right arm, 3 damage, less Hardness 2 = 1 damage (right arm is now on $23 - 1 = 22$).

18, torso, 3 damage, less Hardness 2 = 1 damage (torso is now on $23 - 1 = 22$).

14, torso, 5 damage, less Hardness 2 = 3 damage (torso is now on $22 - 3 = 19$).

Scrimger attacks with his 40mm autocannon, rolling a 16, $+4 = 20$, a hit.

2, left leg, 7 damage, less Hardness 1 = 6 damage (left leg is now on $13 - 6 = 7$).

Round 2

Broderick once again fires everything he has at the 1B and dodges the 1A. He continues down the road for another 60m.

He rolls a 3 with his small laser, $+8$ (attack bonus), -2 (own speed) for a total of 9, a miss.

He rolls a 20 with the electrothermal cannon! This is a hit and a threat. A 16 confirms the critical. 13, torso, but only 34 damage. Still, this is enough to take the torso down to 4 APs, which should certainly give Macmillan something to think about.

McGregor again closes the distance and fires 18 rockets, his last-but-one volley – if this does not do some serious damage, he is going to be a little worried, to say the least. He rolls $18 + 18 - 2 = 34$, enough for 1d12 to hit. This time 9 rockets hit. Note that though all three guerrillas are now behind Broderick, any hits other than to his legs will strike his front armour, since he is turning to face them and shoot at them.

Five very low-rolling attacks fail to penetrate the Maverick's Hardness.

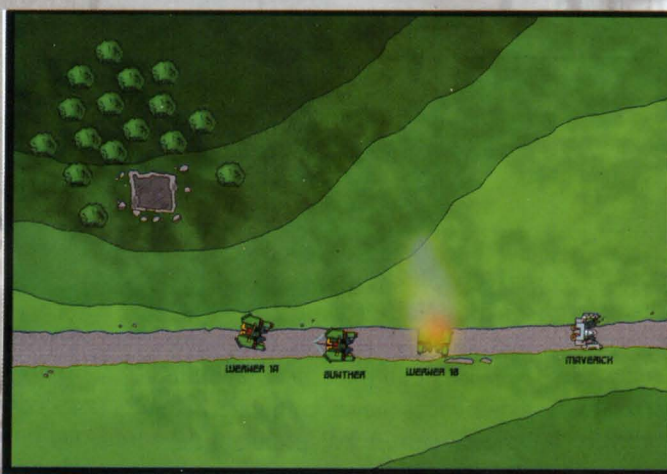
dodges the 1A, and carries on moving down the road at double speed.

He rolls a 14 with his small laser, $+8$ (attack bonus), -2 (own speed) for a total of 20, a hit.

6, right leg, 8 damage, 11 left.

He rolls a 17 with the electrothermal cannon, $+8$, -2 , for a total of 23.

16, torso, 28 damage – this destroys the 1B completely. It fails its explosion save, rolling an $8 + 3 = 11$ when it needed a 15, and so the entire torso location explodes, scattering the remaining limbs and head in all directions.



With one rebel down, Broderick decides it's time to cut and run

16, torso, 4 damage, less Hardness 1 = 3 damage (torso is now on $19 - 3 = 16$).

11, right arm, 5 damage, less Hardness 2 = 3 damage (right arm is now on $22 - 3 = 19$).

1, left leg, 6 damage (left leg is now on 1!)

10, right arm, 2 damage, less Hardness 1 = 1 damage (right arm is now on $19 - 1 = 18$).

Scrimger attacks with his 40mm autocannon, rolling a 7, $+4 = 11$, a miss.

Round 3 and beyond

Now quite desperate, Broderick again fires all his weapons at the 1B,

At this point MacGregor and Scrimger decide to beat a retreat back down the road. They have inflicted horrendous damage on the tough Maverick, but have failed to take it down and now the tide seems to be turning, with one of their number destroyed and their ammunition very low. They fire as they go, but at 60m away once more have little effect.

Broderick considers anchoring now and taking pot-shots at them with the howitzer as they go, but decides to limp on home as fast as he can, pondering on the odd nature of the battle which for once ended in something of a draw, with neither side winning decisively. On balance, though, he is happy enough just to be alive.



Hopefully Ian has given you a few insights into how to handle WarMek engagements. At the very least you now know it's sometimes better to cut and run.

The Quintessential Half-orc hits the bookshelves in October - and not before time, you might well add. Enough of the namby-pamby elves and jovial gnomes, it's time for some serious muscle, and where better to start than with a look at some starting Character Concepts?

Character Concepts

If you do not know what Character Concepts are, then clearly you have been hiding under a rock for the last two years. Since the arrival of *The Quintessential Fighter* players have been treated to a stunning variety of background concepts enabling them to flesh out their starting characters without unduly destabilising them. The forthcoming *Quintessential Half-orc* is no exception with regard to the variety of concepts available to spice up the 'standard model', and we thought you might rather like a quick look at what is coming.

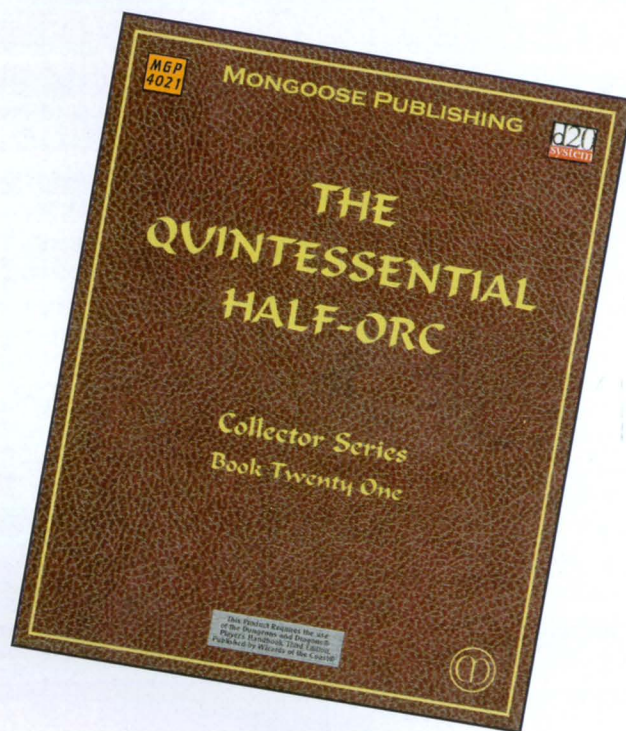
From the moment of their birth, half-orcs start a never-ending war between the two halves of their heritage. On one side, their orcish blood burns with uncontrolled savagery and base primal urges; on the other side, their human heritage makes them restless and inquisitive. The result of this mixture can be quite explosive and dangerous if it is not channelled in the right way. Barring magic, there is no way that a half-orc can hide his mixed ancestry from either of their parent races, and therefore must contend with the inevitable prejudices that will plague the rest of

his life. Half-orcs outsiders wherever they are, even amongst themselves because of all the different childhood experiences they accumulate. They have no culture except that of their parents and, even then, they will always feel as forceful additions, the image in the mirror reminding them that they are different.

Any one Character Concept may be applied to a character as it is being created. The listed bonuses and penalties are applied, any role-playing description modified and adjusted to take into account the template and then the character is ready to play! From this point forth, both the player and the Games Master should be aware of the Character Concept chosen and take steps to ensure the character is played accordingly. It must be stressed that Character Concepts are a role-playing tool, not simply a method to gain lots of new abilities! Unlike other character races, half-orc Character Concepts are divided in three broad categories depending on the character's upbringing, because the gross differences in the outlooks of both parent races give rise to equally different Character Concepts.

Adopted

Many half-orc children are thrown away or abandoned after they are born. The method of the abandonment vary, but the result is the same: the half-breed child will grow up raised by people other than his real parents. Whoever finds the unfortunate child must have a great sense of mercy, for even at such tender age his heritage is evident. This means that only civilised races are likely to raise such a child, for the savage species with which orcs have contact would sooner eat the child than raise him as one of their own. The adopted half-orc grows up even more alienated as others of his kind who grow with either of their parent races, for not only is he in the middle of two worlds, he is growing up in a third. Humans are the most likely race to take an abandoned half-orc baby under their wing (see the human-raised concepts), but others may find it in their heart to do so as well. Half-orcs raised by elves are perhaps the least appreciated, viewed with derisive pity by all except his foster parents; they feel more at home between dwarves although they must first perform a really glorious



achievement to prove themselves, but once they do they are considered worthy part of the clan, even if nobody buys him drinks. A gnomish or halfling community is perhaps the healthiest option for the adopted half-orc, as he likely gains the title of 'really big brother' with children of similar ages; the problem is when a prank gets to him so much that he reacts with orcish anger.

Adventuring:

Adopted half-orcs almost never remain with their foster family, driven away by the utter otherness of everyone around them. They travel so they can meet either orcs or humans so they can understand themselves a little better, and to try to carve a niche for themselves in either community. They will latch to the first group that has humans or orcs in their numbers and they will count their blessing if another half-orc is also there. Depending on his experiences, he will act friendly towards a member of his foster parents' race and surprise others with his comprehension of their cultures.

companions, members of their foster race or even from orcs encountered



on the way. Such encounters tend to go badly, as all non-human races

and the half-orc is torn between what he has heard the orcs to be and what he sees in the field.

Bonuses: Adopted half-orcs gain a number of benefits depending on which race raised them. See above.

Penalties: Adopted half-orcs have Orc as a bonus language instead of an automatic language. In addition to these disadvantages, adopted half-orcs also have other drawbacks depending on their foster race. See previous page.

Foster Race	Bonuses
Dwarf	Automatic languages (Common and Dwarven), +2 racial bonus on Craft checks that are related to stone or metal. Dwarven exotic weapons are martial weapons for the half-orc.
Elf	Automatic languages (Common and Elven), proficient with all bows and with the longsword.
Gnome	Automatic languages (Common and Gnomish), +1 racial bonus to saves against illusions. Gnomish exotic weapons are martial weapons for the half-orc.
Halfling	Automatic languages (Common and Halfling), +1 racial attack bonus with thrown weapons. Halfling exotic weapons are martial weapons for the half-orc.

seem to have a particular hatred towards orcs that goes deeper than the simple territoriality of the humans,

Roleplaying: Adopted half-orcs act a little bit lost. Being out of their usual social environments twice removed confuses them and leaves them unarmed for facing some of the social challenges they meet during an adventuring career. Everything they experience is filtered first by the culture that brought them up and second by their half-breed nature, which sometimes makes them look like they are country bumpkins or simply slow, which is rarely the case. They are always trying to look for their own identity, trying out new behaviours and sometimes even copying them from human

Foster Race	Penalties
Dwarf	Living in the darkness of dwarven homes triggered the light sensitivity in the half-orc's orcish heritage. He suffers a -1 penalty to attacks in daylight and within the radius of the <i>daylight</i> spell.
Elf	The orc developed an odd sleep cycle while living with the elves and is thoroughly confused with the concept of a lifetime. He recovers three fourths (rounding up) of the normal hit points he would heal by resting for the night and has a 25% chance of not being able to prepare or cast one spell of each spell level due to poor sleep.
Gnome	The half-orc grew up to be a little gullible and trusting about others' intentions; he suffers a -2 penalty against mind-affecting magic and to Sense Motive checks.
Halfling	The half-orc becomes overconfident and reacts poorly in combat, gaining a -2 penalty to initiative.

Castoff

Many half-orcs endure the hardships of growing up amongst orcs, letting the brutality of their lives shape them, but not so the castoff. He holds close to his heart the teachings of his human parent and knows that the brutality he is surrounded with is not the only way to live. Castoffs are always rebelling and defying domination by the orcs in the tribe, refusing to be dragged into the mire of their evil society. Even if their human parent is killed, the castoffs cling to the core of their humanity to carry them through. Eventually, such brave half-orcs either get killed or escape, looking for a better life but finding more misunderstanding and even more challenges.

Adventuring: The reasons behind a castoff's adventuring are simple to understand; he is in search of a better life than the one he knew. Considering his days in an orc tribe, 'better life' is just about anything else, but the castoff always feels as if there is something else just behind the next hill, and adventuring is a way to look for it. Companions are surprised with the amount of punishment that castoffs can put up with as if it was the most normal thing in the world, and many make the mistake of pushing the half-orc past that line that made him defy his orcish tribemates, and the new group's companion do not have the benefit of being bigger and meaner.

Role-Playing: Castoffs are driven and enthusiastic. Their optimism in the face of the worse conditions imaginable can become the motivation that keeps a whole group together and resisting defeat. However, all is not sunshine in the mind of a castoff half-orc; he still remembers clearly what he had to endure to become what he is, and sometimes the memories become too painful for him. Although not going to the extreme of suffering from flashbacks, the half-orc recalls vividly the adversities in his upbringing; he balances hope for the future with apprehension for the present and resentment for the past.

Bonuses: Castoff half-orcs have a very clear idea of what they want for themselves and others, climbing up from the bottom of their original home. This gives them a very strong conviction and sense of purpose. Whenever he is the target of a mind-affecting spell or ability, he gains a +2 inherent bonus to his Will saves to resist, with the exception of fear effects (see below). He also receives this bonus to opposed skill check to resist coercion, intimidation or deceit that would make him act against his principles.

Penalties: The castoff's moral strength comes from long experience with punishment. Although the continued cruelty did not break the castoff, it did put a chink in his armour. When he gives in to fear, he gives in deeply. He suffers a -2 penalty on saves against fear effects (the bonus against mind-affecting effects does not apply in this case) and, if he fails the save, his state of fear is one step worse than the one described in the original effect (shaken becomes frightened, frightened becomes panicked, panicked becomes cowering and cowering becomes unconscious for 1d4 rounds). Whenever he gains a level, the castoff can reconcile with his past and eliminate the penalty, but he also loses the bonus to Will saves.

Bastard Child

Product of violence or of jaded tastes, the half-orc is born into 'polite' society and raised as the family's dark secret, for the shame of his birth tarnishes their good name, but they are not as callous as to sacrifice him, nor as thoughtful as to give him away. The half-orc does not suffer from physical cruelty as if he had been born in an orc tribe, but the psychological abuse is almost as relentless. What contact the bastard child keeps with his human parent, it is always strained and uncomfortable; the half-orc knows in his very bones that he is an affront, a disgrace and something to be ashamed of. If he has human siblings or cousins matters get worse, for he is also expected to defer to them even if he is the firstborn. He is illegitimate,

and nobody in the household will let him forget that fact.

Adventuring: Bastard children escape their homes because they cannot take it anymore. The years of hiding in the attic when visits arrive and being treated like a dog take their toll until the half-orc snaps and decides that he is better off alone than with a family that hates him. He is out to prove – to others as well as to himself – that he deserved to be born. He is a devoted party member, and although he may not be too keen for teamwork and is quite reserved with his thoughts, he is a real asset during combat and other strenuous tasks, for he will give his all to accomplish something and prove his worth.

Role-Playing: The bastard child always has something to prove, forever trying to accomplish his tasks by any means necessary. His persistence borders on plain stubbornness; but he will not quit. His past experiences with matters of family leave him wary of personal relationships, withdrawing and interacting with others only on the 'professional' level. If someone wins his friendship and, against all odds, his trust, the half-orc is the most loyal of friends, finding in his companions the family that he never had, despite growing up while surrounded by relatives.

Bonuses: Forced to hide and act 'politely,' the half-orc controls his inner rage to the point that he cuts off his orcish heritage. During creation, the character can choose a favoured class instead of the barbarian. This new favoured class is fixed and does not change depending on the character's highest class level. He may cut off his orcish blood, but he is still not human.

Penalties: Because the character parted with his family in less than savoury terms, he starts with half the money as a normal 1st-level character of his class.

Desperate for more? I should think so too. Not long to wait now...and those of you who have never played a Half-orc have no more excuses. Bring on the pain!



The Fiery Trial

By Bruce Graw

Designer's Notes

When I first received the assignment for what would later be called Fiery Trial, my instructions were simple. The aim of the book was to provide a campaign framework that moved a diverse group of characters through the first season of Babylon 5. According to my assignment parameters, there were only a few things that were absolute requirements.

First, I had to make sure the scenarios were playable by just about any group, regardless of composition, and that the hooks were sufficient to encourage virtually any type of characters to participate. Second, the individual adventures were to be separated by long periods of down-time on the station, permitting the Games Master to insert other scenarios as needed, or to enable the characters to interact with other happenings on Babylon 5 during the interim period. Finally, I was told how the campaign series was to end, and to ensure the final scenario ultimately brought the characters to that point. Other than these basic tenets, I could write virtually anything that came to mind.

One thing I decided straightaway was that most, if not all, of the campaign modules would involve trips off the station. The Babylon 5 universe is a big place, and I wanted to give the players a chance to enjoy travelling to and exploring something more than just another level of Brown Sector. Besides, in between modules, the characters would have plenty of chances to participate in the events of the First Season, as well as a variety of other events to be included as side scenarios. I wasn't yet sure what these would involve, of course, but I knew I'd be writing them eventually. I expected the material between modules would be nearly as voluminous as the modules themselves and I was not mistaken.

With this in mind, I set out to come up with an overall story arc that would suffice to bring together a potentially diverse group of individuals and form them into the sort of team that would be willing and able to reach the target endpoint of the campaign. (I won't explain the details of the final encounter here, so as to preserve your enjoyment of

the moment should you participate in the game.) What, I wondered, could possibly be so all-encompassing to arrange such a situation while still being able to involve a ranking individual in EarthForce, a diplomatic attaché from Babylon 5, a telepath from Psi Corps, the most desperate of lurkers, or just about any other character? As a potential answer, I came up with a mysterious individual named Roland Anderson who appears on the station soliciting aid for a rescue mission. There's more to Mr. Anderson than appears, naturally, and members of official organisations quickly discover this upon asking for advice from their superiors. *[editor's note: you can read in Tales from Mongoose Hall how quickly I sniffed out Anderson as a wrong'un. Sadly I sniffed it before I could uncover him!]*

For various reasons, ranging from security suspicions about Anderson to alien races knowing through intelligence that he is up to something, just about any character in the group will have some reason to want to participate in his mission and later ones as well.

Of course, for those without official ties, Anderson just seems like a desperate man trying to arrange the rescue of his company's employees. He retains this attitude throughout the book, appearing on several other occasions to offer missions to his new friends on Babylon 5.

Each assignment becomes more and more difficult, challenging the characters' ability to work their way through a variety of problems. While combat is sometimes necessary, most of the time these missions reward stealth and guile over brawn and brute force. A wide variety of party skills are highly recommended – a group made up of hot-headed Drazis will have a rough time making it through most of the scenarios.

Originally, I came up with six or seven different scenarios for the book, but after writing the first, it became obvious that there wouldn't be room for more than four. As expected, the between-scenario material also occupied a large volume of text. One of the side scenarios, involving

one of the primary Non-Player Characters in the campaign, is nearly long enough to be a module itself!

Over the course of producing the campaign, I drew heavily from my experiences with writing Babylon 5 Wars. Several of the ships used by characters in various missions come straight out of that game, vessels like the Raider Brigantine, Tirrith Freedom Base, and Narn Sho Kos Police Cutter.

One of the ships, the Civilian Bulk Freighter, is highly detailed, as one of the modules involves the characters making their way through a derelict ship of this class. I also introduced a new race in the product, the Llort, an amusing lot who have no concept of personal ownership. The race is described in enough detail that they can be used as player characters, although if this happens in your campaign, your character is advised to lock down anything he wants to keep!

What proved most interesting to me was the shift from writing about spaceship combat to producing a compelling roleplaying campaign. With Babylon 5 Wars, I rarely had to concern myself with what came next. Rules for ships and weapons were straightforward and players were left to come up with uses for them on their own. In the roleplaying supplement, however, actions have consequences, and what happens in one scenario affects the next. With each scenario in Fiery Trial, I had to include notes and alternatives based on things that might have happened in a previous module. However, converting to this mindset proved to be not as difficult as I first thought. By the time I reached the halfway point, such things were coming automatically.

I had a great deal of fun writing Fiery Trial. At the end, I delivered a book with a much higher page count than my assignment required, and I actually wished I had more room to put in another module or two. I now anxiously await feedback regarding the project from the public at large. Like any writer, I constantly worry and wonder if my work was properly entertaining. If you have any comments or questions, you can forward them to me at:

agent1@agentsofgaming.com.

I'd love to hear from you!



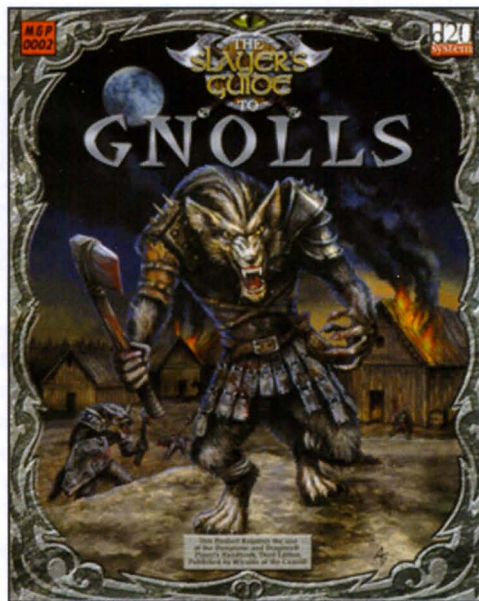
THE PDF COLLECTION

by Ted Chang

The Mongoose PDF Collection is an exciting new resource for fans of Mongoose products, but many people do not even know it exists, which is why I'm here to tell you all about it.

The PDF collection consists of books from various sources, primarily either those that are no longer in print, like the *Slayer's Guide to Centaurs*, or those that are just a bit too risque to put into conventional print form, such as *Encyclopaedia Arcane: Nymphology*.

On top of that we are uploading essential add-ons to books which are already so crammed full of goodness, like *More Ultimate Equipment*, 49 pages stuffed with exciting, novel and unexpected items of kit for the discerning adventurer. At a cost of only \$6 this is tremendous value.



The second supplement to be printed in the acclaimed series from Mongoose Publishing, *The Slayer's Guide to Gnolls* focuses on this bloodthirsty race, from their brutal and savage society to their lethal tactics of ambush.

Ravenous packs of gnolls are the bane of many adventurers. Inhuman in the extreme, this vicious race delights in acts of cruelty and brutality against the weak, the defenceless and the

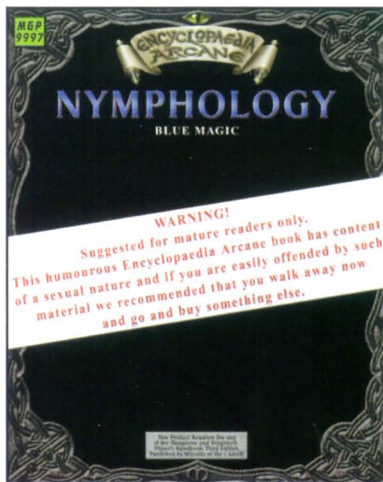
innocent. This book contains everything you need to hunt down and annihilate these evil creatures.

First published in 2001, *The Slayer's Guide to Gnolls* has been sold out for over a year, and is now resurrected in PDF form to provide both old and new fans of Mongoose Publishing the opportunity to acquire this rare book.



Within these pages you will find detailed information on winter wolf physiology, habitat, and society, giving you a basic overview on how this race exists and interacts with the rest of the world. Players can learn winter wolf hunting tactics and Games Masters are given guidelines on how to introduce winter wolves into their existing campaigns. They will also benefit from material demonstrating how to portray winter wolves to the players, so that they stand out from the normal wolf. The section on foundlings may make for an interesting Non-Player Character (or even player character) background. Finally, a complete winter wolf lair is featured to be used as either an extended encounter or as an example of how such lairs are generally laid out.

Written by the author of so many 'Ecology' articles within *Dragon* magazine, *The Slayer's Guide to Winter Wolves* is the ultimate resource for any player or Games Master daring to adventure within the cold lands of the north.



This is truly the book we could never print. *Ever*. It is just too full of naughtiness and innuendo to appear on the shelves of your local retail store. As such, this instalment of the Encyclopaedia Arcane, Nymphology, is only available in PDF form, and you must be old enough to possess a credit card in order to purchase it.

If you are easily offended by humour of a sexual nature, DO NOT BUY THIS BOOK. It will offend. We promise. Written by Grim Jim (*Slayer's Guide to Rules*

Lawyers and Female Gamers), Nymphology is a humorous look at the most secret arcane talent of all – that of Blue Magic, or Sex Magic. In the yards, lavatories and dormitories of the various colleges of magic, young students swap tales and cobbled together spells developed by other students of magic over the years.

Some famous names in the field of magic have a history that is only told in notes passed in class and some of their early work is. . . enlightening to say the least, shedding light on their particular obsessions. Some drop out entirely to pursue this aspect of magic with complete devotion and clarity of purpose. Covered within are original uses for existing spells in the field of Nymphology (including a few surprises for grease and enlarge spells. . .), new erotic spells, travels to the Elemental Plane of Lust, prestige classes you will never seen anywhere else (the Agony Mage, Mystic Pimp, Seduction Mage and, of course, the Peeping Scryer), magic items, creatures of lust and a whole range of special tricks you can try when mastering this mighty magic.

Everything contained within this tome has a practical use in all fantasy-based d20 System games. But then, Grim is known to play some pretty strange games. . .

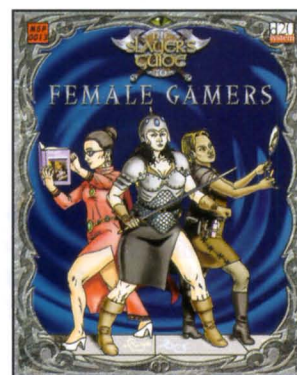
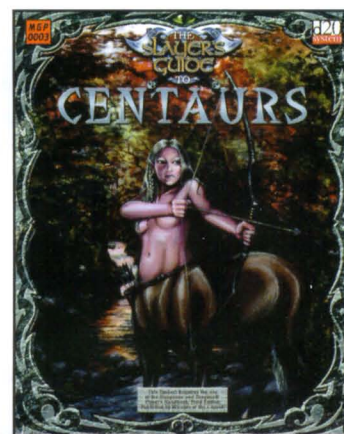
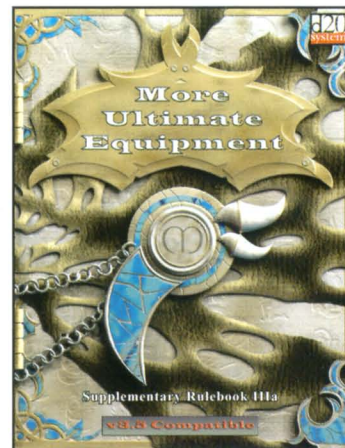
Getting to the PDFs

This really couldn't be easier. Go to our web site at www.mongoosepublishing.com and select PDFs where you can find the full range of our PDF Collection ready to buy and download. Then remember to look for future release information in the pages of Signs & Portents.

Coming soon. . . *Quintessential Temptress*, *Slayer's Guide to Female Gamers* and *Modern Playing Aids*!



Also available on PDF...



White Queen's Gambit is a fantasy scenario designed for four 3rd-level player characters. It helps if you and your players are familiar with the rules of chess or are at least acquainted with the more common chess terms.

Scenario Background

Atop a tall crag of rock jutting up from the ocean stands a small temple of white marble. In ages past, it was a place of worship whose clerics were known for their powers of prophecy and divination. Today, the clerics are all gone, their goddess forgotten; only the temple remains.

The temple was rediscovered by an enterprising gynosphinx sorcerer with a passion for chess and wordplay. The gynosphinx, Amariel, took it as her lair and spread rumours about the benevolent 'spirit', the White Queen, that inhabited the temple and would perform simple magicks like removing curses and identifying magic items for a suitable offering. Amariel remained invisible during these transactions so none knew her true nature. She vandalised the statues of the goddess in the temple and the levels below, chipping the faces off so none would know the deity's true countenance. (A little superstitious, Amariel did not want the image of the goddess 'watching' her as she put the temple to her own use.)

Amariel extended the temple's underground levels, occasionally using *charm person* spells to persuade those who came to purchase her services to stay awhile and assist her in her remodelling. One such 'assistant' was Kraglin, a necromancer who used *animate dead* spells to provide a dauntless work force to dig the extra rooms and corridors Amariel desired. When

he had served his purpose Amariel slew him to keep her secrets safe. Kraglin's minions continue to serve as unliving traps within her temple lair.

As the years passed, Amariel became old and paranoid, slaying those who came to her for help lest they penetrate her inner defences and defeat her clever traps. Eventually, people considered the temple cursed and stopped coming altogether. Amariel lived a solitary existence in the temple with her puzzles, chessboards and accumulated wealth.

When she died, Amariel found herself trapped in the temple as a ghost. Furthermore, her spirit would find no rest until all of her handiwork had been defeated: Her puzzles solved, her undead minions defeated, her hoarded wealth taken by others. So she waits, with the patience of the dead, for the day when she might finally be rid of the burden of her everlasting existence...

Character Hooks

There are several ways to involve the player characters in the adventure:

- They might follow a map discovered in a previous adventure to

the temple, hoping to find a source of forgotten treasure.

- Those dedicated to the destruction of undead might have heard about the fell creatures in the temple from an adventurer who barely escaped with his life, and travel there to destroy them.
- Perhaps the forgotten goddess sends the player characters a vision of the temple's location in a dream, hoping to have her temple rid of undead and restored to its former glory.

The Rock Spire

The temple sits upon a 400-foot diameter rock crag rising up out of the ocean to a height of 950 feet, not far from the mainland cliffs. Crude steps spiral up the crag, circling it several times before reaching the top.

Normally, one must reach the crag by boat. There are several strong mooring spikes imbedded along the lower 'steps', providing a place to tie a small boat. Of course, flight provides even easier access to the temple.

Creature: Player characters climbing the stone steps spiralling

WHITE QUEEN'S GAMBIT

By Johnathan M. Richards

up the crag encounter a giant praying mantis perched upon the cliffside, waiting patiently for prey to pass by.

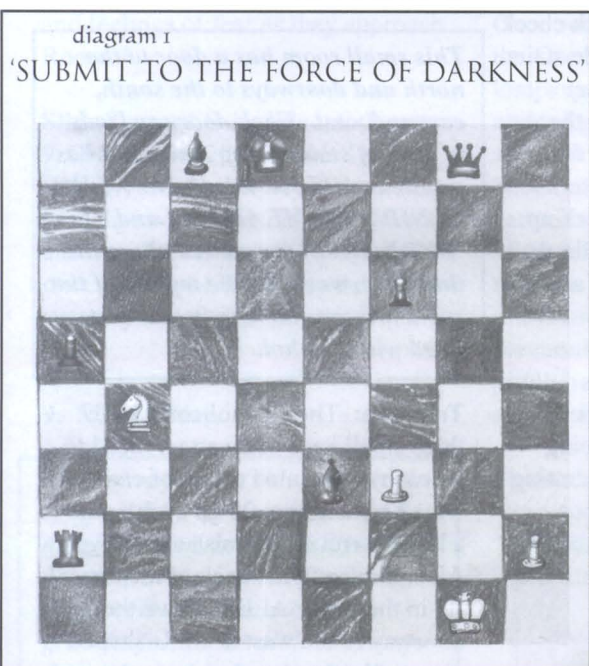
Giant Praying Mantis: hp 30; *Core Rulebook III*.

The Temple

1. Temple Interior.

A small temple of white marble sits at the top of the stone-carved steps.

When the player characters enter the temple, read the following and present DIAGRAM 1 to the players:



The room is lit by four burning braziers. At the far end stands a white marble statue of a beautiful woman wearing flowing robes. Her face has been chipped off, leaving blank space from chin to brow. At 18 feet tall, her head nearly touches the 20-foot-high ceiling.

On the floor before her, squares of coloured tile form a chessboard. Several stone chess pieces are positioned as if in the middle of an interrupted game. Before the chessboard are carved the words, 'SUBMIT TO THE FORCE OF DARKNESS'.

The phrase tells how to activate the secret door in the temple's floor. Tipping over the white king (signifying white's surrender to black, the 'force of darkness') lowers each rank of the chessboard to a specified level below the floor. The rank closest to the statue

lowers 1½ feet and each subsequent row lowers an additional 1½ feet until a stairway forms allowing entry into the lower levels of the temple. Dwarves can make an Intelligence check (DC 18) to notice the eight rows of the chessboard move in some way, although the players must still puzzle out the triggering mechanism.

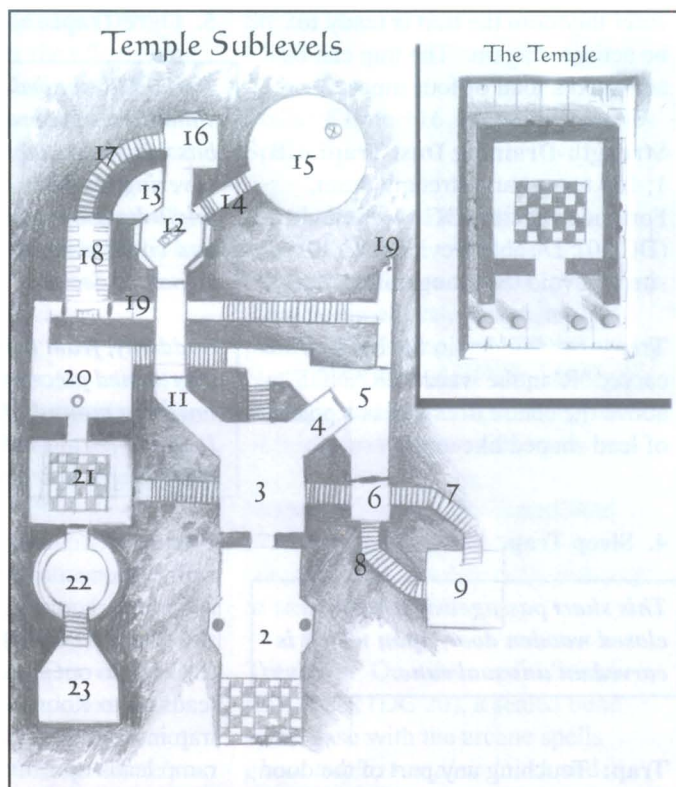
Temple Sublevels

Unless otherwise noted, the underground levels are 10 feet high and unlit.

2. Archer Statues.

This 20 ft.-by-30 ft. room has an open doorway in the opposite wall. Situated in each niche is a marble statue of a toga-clad female archer with drawn bow. Each figure has had its face chipped off.

Returning the white king from the chessboard stairway to an upright



position sends the stairway back up to the upper surface of the temple. The stairway can also be lowered or raised by means of a lever in the wall of this room.

3. Weak Orange Peels.

This room has a faint fragrance of oranges. The floor contains a tile mosaic forming an orange tree, and the words 'WEAK', 'ORANGE' and 'PEELS' appear over three doorways to the north. Those on either end veer off to side corridors, while the middle leads downstairs.

Trap: Anyone stepping onto an 'orange' tile (anyone walking in the centre of the room does so unless they specifically state they are avoiding such tiles) triggers a trap. A fine powder falls from numerous tiny holes in the ceiling, filling the room in an orange cloud of choking dust. Note, it is possible for player characters to fall victim to this trap numerous times if the 'orange' tiles are triggered again. It takes three rounds for the mechanisms in the ceiling to reset but the cloud also takes three rounds to dissipate, so by the time it is once again safe to

enter the room the trap is ready to be activated again. The trap can be activated a total of four times.

Strength-Draining Dust Trap: CR 1; 1d4 temporary Strength drain, Fortitude negates (DC 14); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20) or simply avoid the orange tiles.

Treasure: Hidden in the back of the carved 'R' in the word 'ORANGE' above the centre doorway is a piece of lead shaped like an 'R'.

4. Sleep Trap.

This short passageway leads to a closed wooden door, upon which is carved an unusual rune.

Trap: Touching any part of the door activates the rune, which glows and reveals itself as a *symbol of sleep*. At the same time a *grease* spell covers the surface of the floor, which drops down to the northeast and spills everyone into Room 5. Player characters sliding into Room 5 in this manner might take damage from the impact. Those asleep take 1d4-1 points of damage; those awake take 1d4-3 points of damage. The door in Room 4 is a false one and cannot be opened.

Those with the Spellcraft skill and access to the *read magic* spell can make a check (DC 19) to identify the *symbol of sleep* without activating it, so long as the door remains untouched. Additionally, dwarves can make a Search skill check (DC 20) to recognise that the floor pivots.

Symbol of Sleep/Slide Trap: CR 3; Will save (DC 22) or fall into a deep sleep for 3d6×10 minutes, triggered symbol affects everyone in Room 4; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 33).

5. Ogre Trap.

This oddly shaped room is a shambles, with broken and rotting bits of wooden tables and benches covering the floor. Clumps of mould might have once been bits of food and could account for the prevalent stench of decay.

Suddenly, from behind an overturned piece of table rises a towering mound of overripe flesh. It shambles toward you with jagged claws eager to tear at your skin.

There are two doors along the north wall and one along the south. Each is locked, requiring an Open Lock skill check (DC 20) or Strength check (DC 18) to open. A set of wide stairs leads up to Room 3. If the *sleep* trap in Room 4 was triggered, the ramp leads up from this room for three rounds before returning to its normal position. Climbing back up the ramped floor is difficult (Climb, DC 25) due to the steep angle and the *grease* spell.

Creature: Due to a flaw in its orders, the zombieified ogre does not differentiate between sleeping victims and dead ones, concentrating its attacks on those awake. Thus, player characters who succumbed to the *symbol of sleep* are safe until they awoken and move.

Zombieified Ogre: CR 2; Large Undead (9 ft. tall); HD 4d12+3; hp 29; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (-1 size, -2 Dex, +5 natural, +3 hide armour); Atk +9 melee (2d6+9, Huge greatclub) or +9 melee (1d8+9, slam); Reach 10 ft.; SQ Undead, single actions only; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +1; Str 23, Dex 6, Con —, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills: Climb +5, Listen +2, Spot +2

Feats: Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatclub)

Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease.

Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Single Actions Only (Ex):

Zombieified ogres can perform single actions only. Thus they can move *or* attack, but can only do both if they charge.

Treasure: A search through the rubble (Search, DC 15) unearths a silver dagger and a wooden holy symbol of a lawful good deity appropriate to the campaign. Player characters can Take 10 or 20 but must deal with the ogre first.

6. Wine Cellar.

This small room has a door to the north and doorways to the south, east and west. Each doorway leads to a set of stairs going down and has a rune carved overhead. The words 'A NIP', 'OF MEAD OR', and 'PURE ALES' are carved above the three doorways. In the middle of the room are several barrels and crates filled with alcohol.

Treasure: The alcohol consists of three small kegs of dwarven mead (6 gp each), two small crates of elven wine (24 bottles at 20 gp each), and a large barrel of gnomish ale (40 gp). Also, hidden in the back of the carved 'L' in the word 'ALES' above the doorway to the west is an 'L-shaped' piece of lead.

7. Pain Trap. The rune over this doorway is a **Trap**, a *symbol of pain* triggered whenever anyone passes through the doorway. Those with the Spellcraft skill and access to the *read magic* spell can make a check (DC 19) to identify the *symbol of pain* without activating it, so long as nobody passes through the doorway.

Symbol of Pain Trap: CR 3; -2 to Dexterity, -4 to attack rolls, skill checks and ability checks for 2d10×10 minutes; Fortitude save negates (DC 26); Search (DC 26); Disable Device (DC 33).

Additionally, everyone notices feelings of anxiety and nervousness when Room 9 comes into view.

8. Stair Trap.

Trap: When more than 20 lb is placed on the middle step, all of the steps tip forward to form a 45° slide sending everyone spilling into Room 9. Affected player characters are prone the first round but take no falling damage due to a soft landing. Dwarves can discover the stone stair trap with a successful Search skill check (DC 20). If the trap is bypassed by not putting weight upon the trigger step, the player characters develop an increasing nervousness and feelings of fear as they approach Room 9.

Slide Trap: CR 1; slide into Room 9; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20) allows the player characters to realise which step triggers the slide and avoid it, but this can only be done once the player characters are on the stairway and the trigger step is within sight.

9. Mould Trap.

The entire floor of this small room is covered by various growths of mould: green, brown and yellow compete in a miasma of swirling, sickly colours. The mould growths form several thick clumps throughout the chamber but you cannot determine what, if anything, they cover. A set of stairs reaches from the north to the centre of the room. To the west, a set of stairs begins in the centre of the wall, halfway up.

Trap: The mould is a strange breed that produces spores when agitated. When inhaled, these spores produce feelings of extreme fear. Player characters walking down the stairway of Room 7 or 8 notice a quickening of their pulses and an overall nervousness as soon as they see the mould. Once touched, the mould increases spore production, forcing each player character to make

a successful Fortitude save (DC 20) every round or suffer the effects of a *fear* spell. Note, paladins of 2nd level or higher are immune to the spores and can use their *aura of courage* to boost their companions' Fortitude saves with a +4 bonus. Additionally, unaffected bards can use their *inspire courage* ability to grant a +2 bonus to their companions' saves.

Mould Trap: CR 1; suffer effects of *fear* spell, 1d6 rounds; Search (DC 10); Disable Device (DC 10) allows a player character to realise the effects of the mould without disturbing it. Note this is only possible if the mould is examined without first touching it.

Once someone enters the room, the **Creature** attacks. One of the lumps in the room is a skeletal undead girallon, although this is not apparent at first since the creature's bones are completely covered by the varicoloured mould. It rises from one of the largest lumps of mould and attacks. Note, the player characters must continue to avoid the effects of the mould while battling the undead girallon. The girallon does not follow anyone fleeing out of the room.

Skeletal Undead Girallon: CR 5;

Str 26, Dex 19, Con –, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +16, Move Silently +9, Spot +7

Feats: Improved Initiative

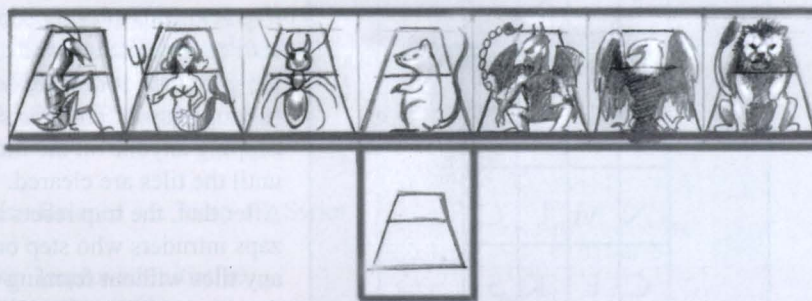
Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Immunities (Ex): Skeletal undead girallons have cold immunity and take only half damage from piercing or slashing weapons.

Treasure: On a successful Search skill check (DC 20), a sealed bone scroll case with the arcane spells *ghoul touch*, *vampiric touch* and *halt undead* is found buried under the mould. Note, player characters cannot Take 10 or 20 because of the constant *fear* effects of the mould's spores; they must continue to make Fortitude saves each round they search.

10. The Long Stairs. Present DIAGRAM 2 to the players.

Diagram 2



Large Undead (8 ft. tall); HD 7d12; hp 45; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.; AC 16 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +12 melee (1d4+8, 4 claws), +7 melee (1d8+4, bite); SA Rend 2d4+12; SQ Undead, immunities; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +3;

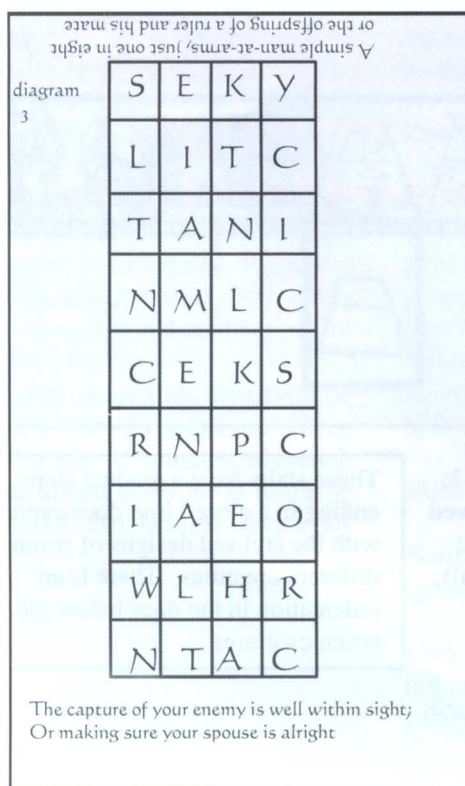
These stairs have a gradual slope, ending in a closed iron door carved with the stylised designs of seven different creatures. There is an indentation in the door below the seven creatures.

The door is magically reinforced, requiring a Strength check (DC 40) to bash it down. The trick to opening it is to place the proper animal pieces on the lower indentation on the door. Each creature consists of three pieces; each piece can be removed and placed in the appropriately-shaped receptacle in the lower indentation. The creatures, in sequence, are: Ankheg, Mermaid, Ant, Rat, Imp, Eagle, Lion. The mermaid's head, the lion's body, and the eagle's wings together form a gnosphinx. Once these three pieces are in place, a *magic mouth* activates (on the gnosphinx's face), saying:

'You've built my body, but all the same, to pass you must first say my name.'

The password is 'AMARIEL'. The players can deduce this by taking the first letter of each of the creatures depicted over the door. If the correct password is spoken, the door opens. If not, it refuses to budge, perhaps forcing a search for an alternative entrance.

11. Riddle Corridor. Present DIAGRAM 3 to the players. The following description is written for player characters heading north from Room 3.



The corridor bends toward the north and up ahead there are letters carved onto the floor tiles, arranged in a 4-by-9 grid extending from wall to wall.

Trap: The answer to this riddle is 'CHECKMATE'. Each player character must step onto the first row's 'C' tile, then move to the 'H' tile in the next row and so on until they have spelled out the word 'CHECKMATE' and reached the other side. Anyone stepping onto a different tile receives a jolt of electrical energy similar to a *shocking grasp* spell.

Electrical Trap: CR 1; 1d8 points of electrical damage; Search (DC 21); Disable Device (DC 21).

Once the player characters get to the far side of the gridwork, they see a different riddle carved into the floor, facing the other direction. To cross safely from north to south, they must spell out the riddle's answer.

The answer is 'KINGSPAWN,' which can be either 'King's Pawn' (a chess term) or 'King-spawn.' The gridwork can be traversed in either direction but not both simultaneously, for it is the pressure of the weight of a body on either the southern 'C' or northern 'K' that determines which way the trap is keyed. If two people start at opposite ends of the gridwork, it defaults to 'wrong answer' and starts zapping anyone on the tiles are cleared. After that, the trap resets and zaps intruders who step on any tiles without forming the words 'CHECKMATE' or 'KINGSPAWN' as appropriate.

Player characters capable of flight, levitation, or *spider climbing* can bypass walking on the gridwork tiles but the walls are too smooth for normal climbing attempts.

12. Damaged Statue.

This large, octagonal room has eight openings. The north, south, northeast and northwest doorways lead to different rooms or corridors, while the others open into a small niche holding a bench, so one might sit and gaze upon the statue prominently displayed in the room's centre.

The statue stands 8 feet tall upon a raised platform, showing a warrior woman with metal spear held high, stabbing down at a winged demon at her feet. The demon wears an expression of pain. Like the other statues, the woman's face has been chipped away.

Perhaps now you know the culprits responsible for the damage to the statues, for carved above the three northern doorways is the legend 'ORCS DID HARM YON STATUE THERE.'

The statue contains both **Creature** and **Treasure**. The human figure is a normal statue of the temple goddess' warrior aspect but the 'winged demon' is really a gargoyle. A Spot check (DC 10) allows the player character to notice the woman and the pedestal are carved from the same block of white marble but the 'winged demon' appears carved from grey stone.

Creature: The gargoyle waits until the player characters have passed by the statue, then springs to the attack. He attempts to push a player character onto the *symbol of discord* in Room 13, then tries Bull Rushing a heavily-armoured enemy into the pool in Room 14. If combat goes against him, he flies to the temple entrance and escapes.

Gargoyle: hp 40; *Core Rulebook III*.

Treasure: The spear is a +1 *longspear* and can be slid from the statue's hand. Hidden in the back of the carved 'M' in the word 'HARM' above the doorway to the north is a piece of lead shaped like an 'M'.

13. Armoury.

This room holds several weapon racks.

Trap: There is a *symbol of discord* carved into the floor just inside the doorway. The *symbol* is visible to anyone examining the floor before entering (Spot, DC 8). Furthermore, those with the Spellcraft skill and access to the *read magic* spell can make a check (DC 19) to identify the *symbol of discord* without activating it, so long as nobody steps onto it. If triggered, everyone in Rooms 12 and 13 (including the gargoyle) must make a Will save (DC 22) or begin bickering and fighting.

Symbol of Discord Trap: CR 3; Bickering and arguing lasts 5d4 rounds, fighting begins 1d4 rounds into the bickering and lasts 2d4 rounds (50% chance that victims of different alignments attack each other); Will save (DC 22) negates; Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 33).

Treasure: The weapon racks contain 12 short swords, 12 longswords, 6 longspears, 12 javelins, 3 maces, 2 warhammers and 10 daggers, all non-magical but in good condition. They can be sold for the prices listed in *Core Rulebook I*.

14. Purification Pool.

This unlit corridor leads to a room holding a statue, lit with many flickering candles. The centre of the corridor becomes a pool of water, with steps leading into it at each end.

Those with the Knowledge (religion) skill may recognise the pool as a means of ritual purification before entering a holy shrine (DC 10). While its depth is unknown, most purification pools are about 4 feet deep. Druids can use their Nature Sense to detect the water in the pool is unfit to drink. Additionally, a player character with the Spellcraft skill can make a check (DC 30) to understand the magical rust effect without actually observing it in action.

Trap: Anyone wading through the water has their metal items rust away. The water loses its magical properties one minute after being removed from the pool.

Rust Water Trap: CR 1; immersed metal objects rust, metallic magic items must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or rust; Search (DC 20); trap cannot be disabled but can be avoided by not entering the water.

Creatures: Hidden in covered pits under the water are two skeletal undead lizardfolk. They remain hidden while the player characters make their way to Room 15, attacking only when they re-enter the water on their way back to Room 12. (There is a better chance they will be unarmed and unarmoured then.) Furthermore, when the undead spring up from their covered pits they leave the lids off, so anyone stepping into the 5-ft.-deep pits submerges completely. No damage is taken but the dunking provides an opportunity for any metal objects worn above the normal water level (helmets, amulets, and so on) to rust.

Skeletal Undead Lizardfolk (2): CR 1; Medium-size Undead (6 ft. 9 in. tall); HD 1d12; hp 8 each; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws), +0 melee (1d4, bite); SQ Undead, immunities; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 12, Con –, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Balance +5, Jump +7, Swim +9

Feats: Improved Initiative, Multiattack

Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Immunities (Ex): Skeletal undead have cold immunity and take only

half damage from piercing or slashing weapons.

15. Shrine.

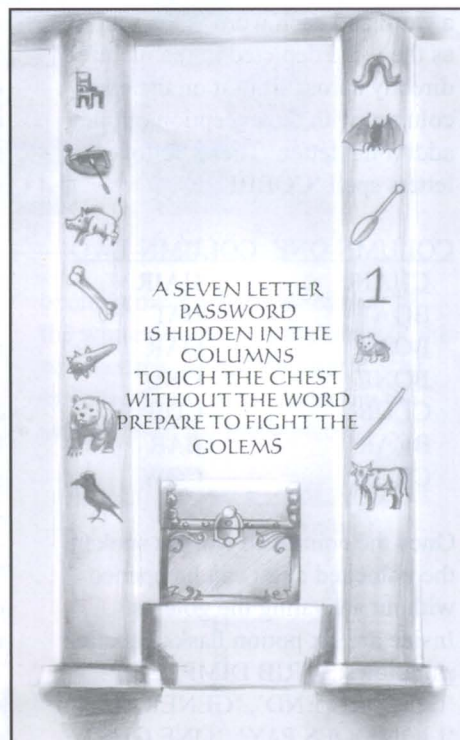
This circular room is lit with dozens of candles spaced along the curving walls. Directly across from the entranceway is a white marble statue of a woman kneeling with arms spread in benediction. Her face has been chipped away.

These 42 candles are *everburning candles*, similar to an *everburning torch* but only illuminating a 5-foot radius.

16. Riddle Room. Present DIAGRAM 4 to the players.

This large chamber is mostly empty with walls panelled in various woods. On the far wall is a small alcove flanked by two columns, upon which are carved various pictograms of animals and objects. Within the alcove sits a small chest, with the following carved below:

Creatures: Two wood golems are perfectly imbedded in niches in the walls of this room. (Spot check, DC 20, to notice them.) Touching the



chest without saying the password causes the golems to attack. They also fight if attacked but do not leave the room.

Wood Golems (2): CR 4; Small Construct (2 ft. tall); HD 4d10; hp 22 each; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (cannot run); AC 22 (+1 size, +11 natural); Atk +4 melee (2d4+1, 2 slams); SQ Construct, magic immunity, fire vulnerability, 60-ft. darkvision, DR 15/+1; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 10, Con –, Int –, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Magic Immunity (Ex): Wood golems are immune to all spells, spell-like abilities and supernatural effects, except as follows. *Diminish plants* and cold-based effects slow them (as the spell) for 2d6 rounds with no saving throw. *Plant growth* and *ironwood* break any slow effect on the golem and cure 1d6 points of damage.

Fire Vulnerability (Ex): Wood golems suffer double damage from fire effects.

The password is 'COBBLER'. The players can solve it with the pictograms engraved on the two columns. Each picture represents a word and each word is the same as the word depicted in the picture directly across from it on the other column, with the exception of one additional letter. These 'leftover' letters spell 'COBBLER'.

COLUMN ONE	COLUMN TWO
CHAIR	HAIR
BOAT	BAT
BOAR	OAR
BONE	ONE
CLUB	CUB
BEAR	BAR
CROW	COW

Once the command word is spoken, the unlocked chest can be opened without activating the golems. Inside are six potion flasks, labelled as follows: 'CRIB DIMPLES', 'CURE AN END', 'GENERAL', 'LION DOES PAY', 'ONE GUST',

and 'REWIND GHOUL CUTS'. These are potions of *spider climb*, *endurance*, *enlarge*, *delay poison*, *tongues*, and *cure light wounds*, respectively.

There is a secret door in the middle of the west wall (Search, DC 15). Elves passing within 5 feet of it have a chance to notice it. The player characters can Take 10 or Take 20 on their Search rolls.

17. Stairs. These steep stairs lead down.

18. Sanctuary.

This large room holds 14 pews. At the south side is a raised table, upon which are three closed chests. Doors stand at the southeast and southwest.

Each chest has a rune engraved upon its lid and words carved into its front: 'A TINY SIN', 'AS TINY', and 'AS AN INSECT'.

Trap: Chest #1's rune is a *symbol of insanity*. It can be identified as such by those with the Spellcraft skill and access to the *read magic* spell (DC 19). The chest contains chunks of white marble, parts of the many disfigured statues in the temple. A *mending* spell restores the pieces to feminine faces of great beauty; if then placed upon the proper statues and a second *mending* spell applied, the faceless statues become whole once more. You may wish to grant an experience point bonus to the thoughtful player character who takes the time to so honour the gods, even forgotten goddesses fallen from memory.

Symbol of Insanity Trap: CR 3; Suffer effects of *insanity* spell; Will save negates (DC 22); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 33).

Treasure: Chest #2 is locked (Open Locks, DC 20, to open) but untrapped; its rune is nonmagical. The chest holds a divine *greater restoration* spell scroll. Note, this spell can be used to remove the

effects of the *symbol of insanity* from one person.

Treasure: Chest #3 is also locked (Open Locks, DC 20, to open) but not booby-trapped, with a non-magical rune. Inside is a glass container holding an ant farm. See the *ant farm* sidebar for details.

Both wooden doors are unlocked.

19. Collapsed Tunnel. This corridor leads from the former dining area (Room 5) to the sanctuary (Room

ANT FARM

When the appropriate command word is spoken (see below), the *ant farm* becomes a giant ant. The type depends upon the command word spoken but any ant appearing obeys the verbal commands of the *ant farm*'s wielder.

Command word, 'QUEEN': **Giant Queen Ant:** hp 22; *Core Rulebook III*.

Command word, 'KNIGHT': **Giant Soldier Ant:** hp 11; *Core Rulebook III*.

Command Word, 'PAWN': **Giant Worker Ant:** hp 9; *Core Rulebook III*.

Regardless of type, each ant exists for only 6 hours, then disappears and becomes the glass-enclosed *ant farm* once again. Each type of giant ant can be summoned but once; after the third ant's time limit expires, the *ant farm* disappears forever. In all other respects, the *ant farm* is treated like a *figurine of wondrous power*.

Caster Level: 11th

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*

Market Price: 1,500 gp

Weight: 5 lb

18) and includes a section of stairs. Another branch leading north once led to the clerics' quarters but that section collapsed.

20. The Caduceus.

This large, rectangular room has open doorways along the northwest, northeast and south walls. A statue of two snakes wrapped around a winged pole stands in front of the southern doorway. Above the doorway to the south is carved 'ESCNWC'.

A successful Spot check (DC 10) reveals the two snakes are joined together at the tail. When the player characters reach the centre of the room, a *magic mouth* activates on a snake-head:

'If you wish to pass by me, State how many in your party there be. Tell the truth, and pass at will. Lie, to me, I'll strike to kill!'

Creature: The key to getting by the two-headed snake statue is the carving above the doorway behind it. Pronouncing each letter aloud creates the sentence 'He is seeing double, you see'. Thus, if there are four members in the party, the player characters need only tell the statue there are eight. If they correctly double their true numbers, the statue allows them to pass. If they provide any other number or attempt getting past the statue without giving it a number it animates and attacks, fighting until destroyed.

Animated Two-Headed Snake

Statue: CR 3; Large Construct (13 ft. long); HD 4d10; hp 22; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14 (-1 size, +5 natural); Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, 2 slams); Face 5 ft. by 10 ft.; SA Constrict; SQ Construct, hardness; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Constrict (Ex): Deals automatic slam damage with a successful grapple check against creatures up to Huge size, and can make constrict attacks against multiple Small or smaller opponents at once.

Construct: Immune to mind-

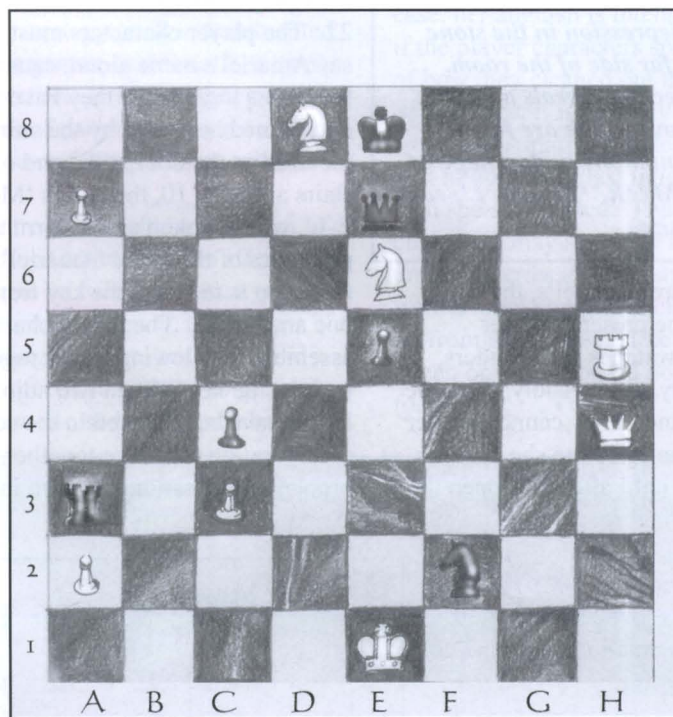
influencing effects, poison, disease and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Hardness (Ex): Made of solid marble, the statue ignores the first 8 points of damage received each round.

Treasure: Hidden in the back of the carved 'E' above the doorway is a piece of lead shaped like an 'E'.

The short corridor to the south is blocked by a musty old curtain.

21. Chess Room. Present DIAGRAM 5 to the players.



The middle of this room's floor is a giant chessboard with pieces carved from black and white marble with stylised faces on the kings and queens. The board is set up in mid-game, with captured pieces set in rows along the sides of the board.

The walls of this room contain paintings of various animals: to the north, a bee and a chicken; to the east, a fish and a dog; to the south, a sheep and a goat; to the west, a horse and a cow.

The secret door along the south wall can be discovered (but not opened) with a Search skill check (DC 20). Player characters can opt to Take 10 or Take 20 to discover the door's location. The only way to open it, however, is through the coded message hidden in the chessboard.

The chess pieces on the board cannot be removed but can be twisted from side to side. Along the south edge of the board are the letters A through G and the west edge contains the numbers 1 through 8. This is standard chessboard notation, allowing the moves of a game to be recorded. This particular configuration also spells out a hidden message revealing the secret door's

opening mechanism: starting with the white pieces, read the letter of the square each piece is on as you scan the rows from 1 to 8, repeating the process with the black pieces.

ROW	WHITE	BLACK
1	E	(none)
2	A	F
3	C	A
4	H	C
5	H	E
6	E	B
7	A	E
8	D	E

The hidden message is 'EACH HEAD FACE BEE'. If the kings, queens and knights on the chessboard (the only pieces with 'heads' in this chess set) are swivelled to face the bee painted on the northern wall, the secret door slides down into the floor with the grating sound of stone on stone.

22. Amariel's Den.

Once the door recesses into the floor, a circular room is exposed beyond. The stink of decay assails your nostrils and its source is soon evident: a sphinx skeleton on a pile of rotting straw. This room is noticeably colder than the room behind you.

There is a depression in the stone wall on the far side of the room. Closer inspection reveals a large keyhole, above which are four carved indentations in the shape of the letters 'M,' 'R,' 'E,' and 'L', each a different size.

The bones are Amariel's, the chill caused by the presence of her ghost. She watches the intruders, incorporeally and invisibly, from the Ethereal Plane. They cannot see her until she manifests and she chooses not to do so until after they open the door to the final room in the temple.

Just inside the doorway from Room 21 is a lever that raises or lowers the secret door from inside the circular room.

When anyone touches the keyhole, a *magic mouth* activates on Amariel's skull. She rises from the ground, turns to face the player characters, and says the following before sinking back onto her bed of straw:

*'The door is locked, a key you need
I'll lead you if my words you heed
Seek four letters made of lead
Each stood above you overhead
Place each letter, say my name
Then form the key from one and same.'*

The lead letters are hidden in the carved words above the doorways of the following rooms:

LETTER	ROOM	WORD
M	12	'HARM'
R	3	'ORANGE'
E	20	'ESCNCW'
L	6	'ALES'

As the appropriate letters are gathered, present the players with the letters cut out from DIAGRAM 6.

DIAGRAM 6

MREL

The lead letters must be placed into their proper receptacles in Room 22. The player characters must next say Amariel's name aloud, causing the letters to glow. If they have not determined her name by the animal pictures on the door at the end of the stairs at Room 10, the letters 'M-R-E-L', when spoken aloud, form the phonetics of the name 'Amariel'. The final step is to 'form the key from one and same'. The player characters assemble the glowing letters together to form the key. When two adjoining letters have been placed in the correct configuration they fuse together. The proper configuration is shown in DIAGRAM 7.

DIAGRAM 7

EMR

When the assembled key is placed into the keyhole and turned, an audible click is heard and the doors can be slid open. The doors are each arcs of solid stone balanced upon metal spheres (like large ball bearings), requiring a combined Strength of 19 to move open. Note the way the stone arcs are built, opening the doorway to the south effectively seals off the doorway to the north and vice versa.

Treasure: Amariel's ring of invisibility is still on one of her front claws; since the ring is ivory and blends in with her claws and bones, finding it requires a successful Search skill check (DC 20).

NOTE: This ring represents over half of the value of the treasure in the adventure. If you feel a 20,000 gp ring is too valuable to place in a 3rd-level adventure, remove the ring or assume it had a limited number of charges (already used).

23. Treasure Room.

A wide stairway descends into a room piled with various treasures. Along the eastern wall is a wooden bookcase housing several tomes. Against the south wall stand two chests. A shelf on the west wall holds several small objects, with a large roll of heavy cloth below it.

Amariel manifests when the first player character enters this room.

'Suddenly, a form partially materialises in the centre of the room. It is a winged lioness with a beautiful human face, eyeing you with infinite weariness. 'You have made it this far,' she says in a regal voice. 'Answer my final riddle and all that you see is yours.'

'Rod of wonder, cube of force, scroll of flesh to stone. Add the numbers in these things, if their sum be known.'

Emphasise the player characters detect a great deal of power emanating from the gynosphinx ghost and strongly suggest that combat would be unwise. Amariel does not attack the intruders but waits patiently for them to answer her riddle. If they attack her she fights only until the first player character is slain, then breaks off to allow the remaining party members to change their mind. Amariel does not wish to kill the intruders; she wishes them to solve her riddle so she may finally be laid to rest.

The answer to the riddle is 'SEVEN', derived by adding the numbers that appear, phonetically, in the names of the magic items as follows:

ROD OF WONDER = 'one'
CUBE OF FORCE = 'four'
FLESH TO STONE = 'two'

In her desperation, Amariel allows each player character to provide an answer. If none of them can figure out the answer to her riddle, she attacks to kill but allows the last survivor to live, hoping he will spread word of the temple and its treasure, eventually leading others there to free her from her undead existence.

If the player characters successfully answer her riddle, her face beams in a wide smile. 'Thank you, my friends,' she says as she fades from view, her undead form dissipating to nothingness.

Amariel, Gynosphinx Ghost, Sor5: CR 14; Large Undead (incorporeal), former Large Magical Beast (7 ft. tall); HD 8d12+8 (gynosphinx, ghost) + 5d4 (Sor); hp 64; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect); AC 21 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +11 natural) or 14 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +4 deflection); Atk Incorporeal touch +11 melee (1d6+4, 2 claws); Face 5 ft. by 10 ft.; SA Incorporeal touch pounce, incorporeal touch rake 1d6+2, spell-like abilities, manifestation, telekinesis; SQ Undead, incorporeal, rejuvenation; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +12; Str 19, Dex 12, Con —, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 23.

Skills: Concentration +12, Hide +8, Intimidate +13, Listen +17, Search +8, Spot +17

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Spells (6/8/6), save DC 16 + spell level: 0— *arcane mark, detect poison, disrupt undead, light, mage*

hand, mending; 1st — charm person, grease, hold portal, magic missile; 2nd — arcane lock, magic mouth.

See *Core Rulebook III* for descriptions of Amariel's gynosphinx and ghost abilities.

Player characters who defeat Amariel by solving her riddles and slaying her undead minions each receive a 1,000 XP story award. As a Challenge Level 14 creature, Amariel is not intended as a combat opponent and receiving the normal XP for defeating a CL 14 creature would potentially unbalance the campaign by allowing the player characters to level up too quickly.

Treasure: The books are all about chess: strategy guides, documented famous games, and Amariel's own observations on chess strategy and records of games she has played. They fetch 500 gp from a collector.

Other treasure includes a *brooch of shielding* (which absorbs 10 points of *magic missile* damage), a jar of *restoratives ointment*, a fold-up travelling chess set with gold and silver pieces valued at 500 gp, and a dozen well-used picks and shovels

wrapped in a canvas tarpaulin. There are also two chests: a small one containing six pearls each valued at 100 gp and a large one containing 1,000 gp in various coinage. Neither chest is trapped or locked.

Concluding the Adventure

If the player characters overcome the undead in the temple and lay Amariel's spirit to rest by solving her final riddle, they will have gained a bit of experience, a little treasure and perhaps even a new-found appreciation for chess. If they defeated Amariel's ghost in combat (an unlikely but possible occurrence), her body reconstitutes in 2d4 days if at least one other undead creature remains in the temple or one of her puzzles has yet to be solved. In this case, her anguish is intensified, for if the player characters spread tales of how they cleaned out the temple of its riches, it is unlikely others will come and Amariel's undead existence will undoubtedly last much longer than she anticipated. The player characters may someday hear tales of unearthly cries of anguish emanating from a lonely crag of rock jutting up from the cold sea, like a solitary queen on a chessboard no longer used for play.



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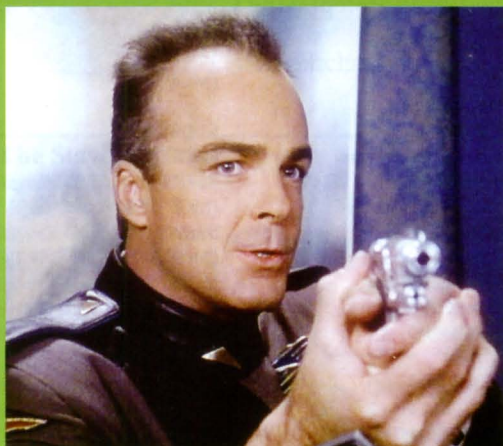
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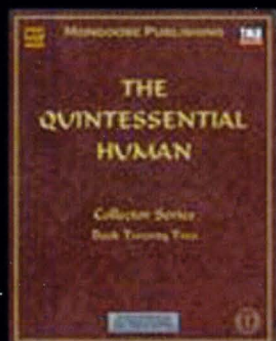
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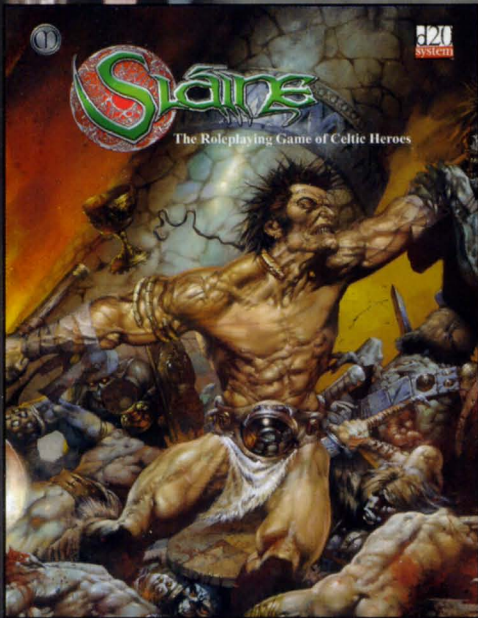


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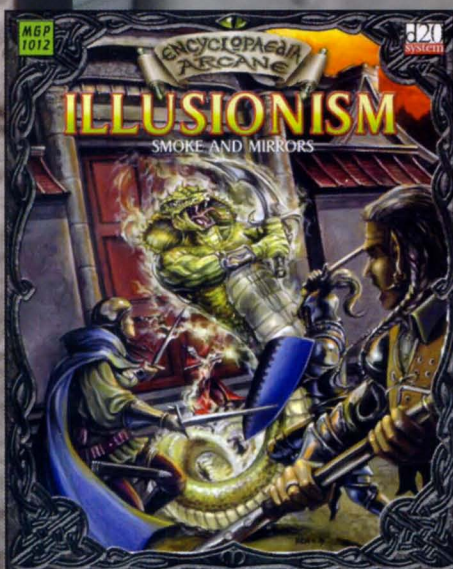
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