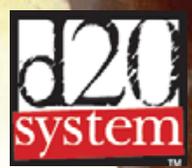


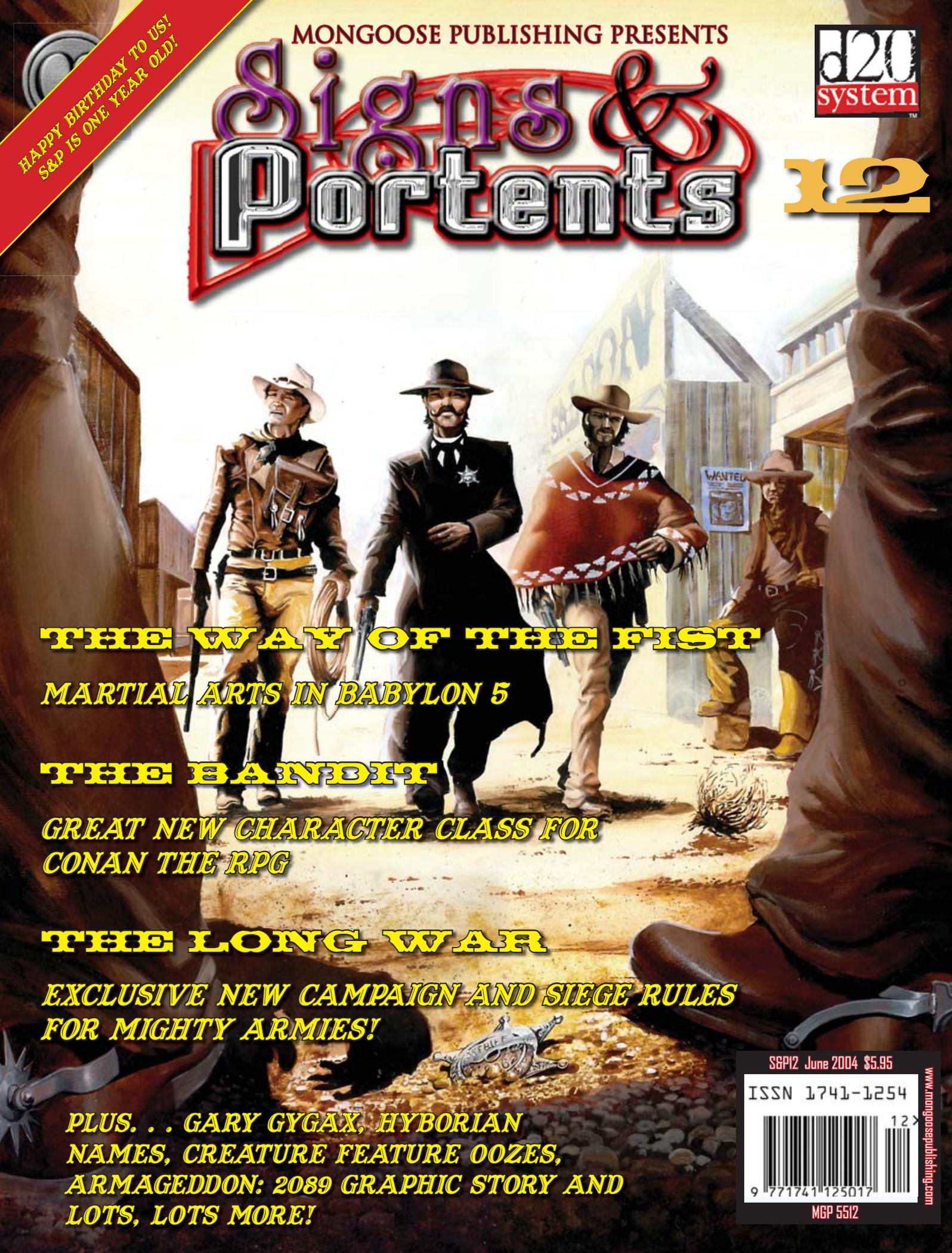
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US!  
S&P IS ONE YEAR OLD!

MONGOOSE PUBLISHING PRESENTS



# Signs & Portents

# 12



**THE WAY OF THE FIST**

**MARTIAL ARTS IN BABYLON 5**

**THE BANDIT**

**GREAT NEW CHARACTER CLASS FOR  
CONAN THE RPG**

**THE LONG WAR**

**EXCLUSIVE NEW CAMPAIGN AND SIEGE RULES  
FOR MIGHTY ARMIES!**

**PLUS. . . GARY GYGAX, HYBORIAN  
NAMES, CREATURE FEATURE Oozes,  
ARMAGEDDON: 2089 GRAPHIC STORY AND  
LOTS, LOTS MORE!**

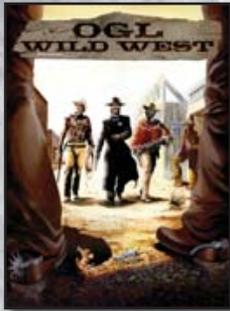
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**Editor:**

*Ian Barstow*

**Editorial Director:**

*Matthew Sprange*

**Production Director:**

*Alexander Fennell*

**Mongoose Staff:** *Rich Neale, Mark Humphries, Ian Belcher, Rich Ford, Bob Roberts and Ted Chang*

**Artists:** *Randy Nunley, Nathan Webb, John Thompson, Jim Brady, Steve Dillon, Gillian Pearce, Brett Ewins, Arthur Ransom, Tony Parker, Andrew Dobell, Vitor Ishimura, Reginaldo Almeida, Ralph Horsley, Paul Ridgon and Adrian Czajkowski*

**Contributors:** *Gary Gygax, Matt Sharp, Fey Boss, Rich Ford, Todd Tjersland, Gareth Hannahan, Bryan Steele, Matthew Sprange, and Jonny Nexus*

**Miniatures Painter:**

*Nathan Webb*

**Statistical Analysts:**

*Mark Quennell, Steve Mulhern*

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**Editorial**

Hi All,

So Issue 12 is here. It hardly seems a year ago that I was putting together the template for the original concept. Since then we have come rather a long way together. I've certainly learnt a great deal about my business during this time. In fact, it amazes me that I managed to get Issue 1 out at all, knowing what I do now!



What I do hope is that you have enjoyed what we have done to date, and that, like me, you are looking forward to the future. With tabletop gaming having arrived and graphic novels in the offing, Mongoose has plenty going on – as usual. Since I last wrote an editorial we have relocated to Mongoose Towers, an even more salubrious establishment, and we in the Studio find ourselves occupying the West Wing of the spacious edifice.

Life at the new Mongoose Towers is as hectic as ever, though. We have Starship Troopers on the horizon, with both wargaming and roleplaying rules in development. Even more, if you take a look at the back and inside back covers you will see some sample pieces from the graphic novels that are in development. In fact, the theme of S&P12 is something of a storytelling one. We also have a short graphic story from Armageddon: 2089 plus a short story from new editorial guy Richard Ford to support the release of OGL Wild West. Fordy fancies himself as a bit of a literary type, so we might see some more of his work in future issues. In fact, I've been so busy that there been no time for my monthly Tales from Mongoose Hall this month. It will be back as usual next time, I promise.

The question you are probably asking though is why the picture of the mongoose? Well, apart from the obvious, this is no ordinary mongoose. This is Montgomery, who lives at Cotswold Wildlife Park in Oxfordshire. That's right, Mongoose Publishing has adopted its own mongoose! If you are in the neighbourhood why not pop in and look the little fellow up. See him in his natural environment going out and killing all manner of dangerous reptiles (I may have made up this last bit). I think you'll agree he's a handsome, dashing sort of chap. Just like us really.

So, time for you to dip in and enjoy this month's articles while I go off to thrash everybody at Gangs of Mega-City One. Want to know more?

*Ian*

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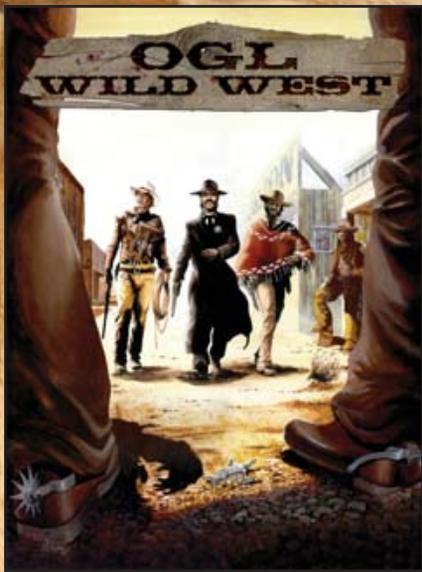
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Printed in China

Babylon 5 created by J. Michael Straczynski

# EYE ON MONGOOSE

## *New Releases This Month*



THIS IS A GAME ABOUT THE AMERICAN WEST. SOME OF THE BOOK IS ABOUT HOW IT WAS, AND SOME IS ABOUT HOW IT IS REMEMBERED. IT IS UP TO THE PLAYERS AND GAMES MASTER TO FIND THEIR OWN VERSION OF THE WEST, FINDING THEIR OWN TRAIL BETWEEN TRUTH AND LEGEND. IF THE PLAYERS WANT A HISTORICALLY ACCURATE GAME WHERE MILES ARE MILES, EVENTS OCCUR AS THEY TRULY DID, AND DEATH COMES MORE OFTEN FROM DISEASE THAN A BULLET, THEN THEY WILL FIND THE TOOLS THEY NEED IN THIS BOOK. ALTERNATIVELY, IF THE PLAYERS WANT A GAME INSPIRED BY MOVIES AND DIME NOVELS, WHERE THE HISTORY IS JUST A PAINTED BACKDROP AND HEROES RIDE HIGH IN THE SADDLE, THEN THEY TOO WILL FIND THEIR DESIRES CATERED FOR WITHIN.

THE CHARACTERS MAY BE COUNTED AMONG THOSE WHO BUILD AMERICA, WHO DROVE THE RAILROAD ACROSS THE CONTINENT AND BUILT THE WESTERN STATES.

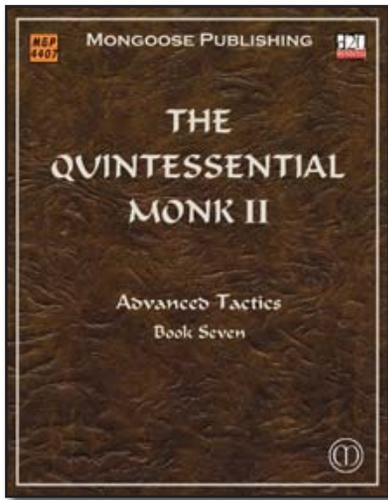
THEY MAY BE SOLDIERS WHO FIGHT AT THE FAMOUS

BATTLES OF THE WEST, OR ADVENTURERS WHO BLAZE THE TRAILS THROUGH THE WILDERNESS. THEY CAN BE STATESMEN OR SCOUNDRELS, OUTLAWS OR LAWMEN, THE QUICK OR THE DEAD. THEY WILL EITHER BECOME PART OF THE LEGEND, OR DIE IN SOME GODFORSAKEN HOT AND DUSTY PLACE AND BE FORGOTTEN.

THE BASIC SYSTEM USED IN OGL WILD WEST IS FUNDAMENTALLY IDENTICAL TO THAT USED IN THE OTHER CORE BOOKS FROM MONGOOSE PUBLISHING. THE SKILLS AND FEATS ARE SIMILAR, AS IS THE COMBAT AND TASK RESOLUTION SYSTEMS.

THIS 256 PAGE HARDBACK VOLUME GIVES YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE GREATEST GENRE EVER CREATED - BECAUSE IT REALLY HAPPENED! WALK WITH THE EARPS TO THE OK CORRAL, BACK UP JOHN T CHANCE AND THE DUDE IN RIO BRAVO, KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE DASTARDLY TUCO OR BACKSHOOT BILLY THE KID AND SAVE PAT GARRETT THE BOTHER.

WHETHER YOU WANT TO BLOW UP BRIDGES IN NEW MEXICO OR THROW DOWN QUEENS AND ACES ON THE MISSISSIPPI, THIS BOOK OPENS THE DOORS TO THAT EXPERIENCE. WELL, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? ARE YOU GOING TO PULL THAT SMOKE CANNON OR JUST STAND THERE BLEEDING?



The martial artist is a staple of popular culture and has been for decades in Western society. The fighting prowess of the martial artist has been amply demonstrated in comic books, novels, film and television and many martial artists have achieved superstardom, or even cinematic immortality. In the East, martial arts popular culture has an even longer history, with famous monks, both entirely fictional and historical, taking centre stage on film for almost a century and in literature for literally millennia.

The martial artist appeals to us on multiple levels. Visually, unarmed fighting techniques are beautiful, even the most straightforward of them, for there is beauty in brutal simplicity; this means that well made martial films and shows are thrilling to watch. Beyond the visceral thrill of watching lightning fast flips, punches, kicks and throws, there is also the unspoken admiration we have for anyone who can truly claim to be a master of some skill. The best martial artists are absolutely, unswervingly dedicated to the perfection of

their bodies and of their fighting skills and we, as viewers, or even martial arts practitioners, respond to that.

This book, the *Quintessential Monk II*, is designed to bring the thrill of martial arts to your d20 fantasy gaming. Using the rules presented in this book, you will be able to create characters who truly emulate the martial arts heroes of popular culture, of myth and of legend. Read on and immerse yourself in 128 pages dedicated to the martial arts world.

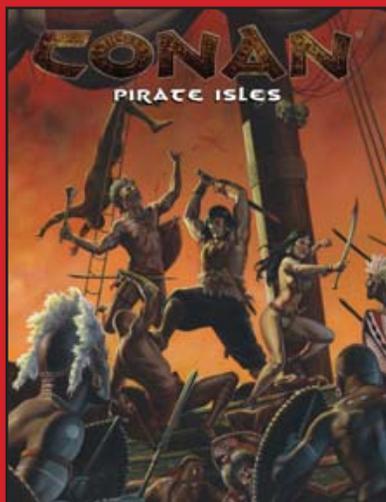
The book opens with Class Paths, which are thematic enhancements that will allow you to focus your martial artist's character hook with laser precision. Following that chapter is the Multiclass Monk, a thematic continuation of the Alternative Schools presented in the original *Quintessential Monk*; using the multiclass paths presented in this chapter, players and Games Masters alike will be able to create martial artists of almost endless variety, the better to replicate the many, many martial arts archetypes of history and legend.

Speaking of legends, the *Legendary Monk* introduces six new prestige classes designed and intended for advanced play, each with an assortment of powers truly worthy of high level heroics. After that are new Superior Tools, new Tricks of the Trade and new items for the magical monk, a collection of mundane and magical weapons which will make the monk's life much easier and an extensive assortment of new uses for his existing skills which will make his enemies' lives much, much harder. Of course, no *Quintessential Monk* book would be complete without new martial arts feats and new abilities, so you will find secret symbols and complete martial arts styles, each composed of multiple new feats, here as well. The book closes with *Surviving to Enlightenment*, a long discussion of the tips and tactics essential for surviving and thriving and all levels of play.

MAKE WAY, YOU ORCS AND BARBARIANS! THE FORCES OF THE WILD ELVES ARE HERE. MIGHTY WARRIORS FROM THE FOREST DEPTHS, THESE DETERMINED ARCHERS AND SPEARMEN FORM THE CORE OF A BRAND NEW FORCE FOR MIGHTY ARMIES. FACE A NEW TACTICAL CHALLENGE AND DRIVE YOUR FOES BEFORE YOU. THE BOX CONTAINS EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO LAUNCH THE ELVEN HOST AGAINST ITS ENEMIES - RULES, DICE, MEASURING STICK 56 BEAUTIFULLY SCULPTED MINIATURES.

ALSO NEW THIS MONTH ARE BLISTER PACKS OF CHARIOTS AND TREEMEN TO SUPPORT THE WILD ELF HOST!





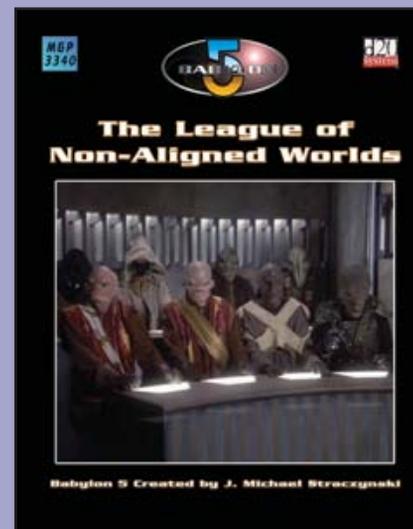
The desert wind whips up from the coast of Hyrkania, sending waves of spray arcing over the shielded bulwark to break on the side of your face. Beside you another of the Red Brotherhood laughs with pleasure at the salty sting, gripping his tulwar firmly as your sleek galley closes with the limping merchantman. Soon the waves will run crimson once more as another cargo of booty passes into cut-throat hands.

Know, o reader, that poised within the covers of this tome lie various texts describing all manner of brutal and sadistic sea dogs. From the silk-pantalooned Red Brotherhood to the dusky menace of the corsairs of the Black Kingdoms, from the swashbuckling rovers of the Barachan Isles to the ruthless privateers of Zingara.

All these assorted brigands and more besides await you amongst the Pirate Isles, the latest explosive sourcebook for Conan the Roleplaying Game. Seeking the freedom that only the sea can bring, these renegades prey on the weak and helpless, piling their decks high with bloodstained gold and hapless captives destined for the slave blocks of a dozen lands.

Pirate Isles is a 128 page full colour book detailing life on the high seas of Hyboria. Whether you see them as brutal killers or dashing freebooters, many of Conan's greatest adventures were aboard pirate vessels or with a motley crew at his back. Now you too can stalk the western coast, ready to pillage goods intended for the Road of Kings, or row into royal Aghrapur itself to raid imperial merchantmen.

Hoist the sail, dog brothers, for the treasures of Hyboria are waiting to be plucked!



*'We Who Are One - The League of Non-Aligned Worlds.'* With these words of wisdom, Representative G'Kar ushered in an unprecedented age of unity under the watchful eye of the Interstellar Alliance. That unity would stand for hundreds of years. While it would not always be a smooth road, the Alliance would prove time and time again the strength in G'Kar message. The Interstellar Alliance was One - one heart, one mind, one common ground of principles and beliefs.

While the story of the Alliance, and of the Babylon Station that made it possible, is a human tale told by humans about humans, the message of being One transcended all racial and moral barriers. Babylon 5 was built by human hands, but the feel that walked its halls belonged to many different people and cultures. The station was a gathering place for hundreds of worlds, a place when governments across the vast reaches of the galaxy could come together and do business with one another in relative peace. This was a union of a sort long before the ISA's Declarations of Principles attempted to define it in so many words.

In the world of Babylon 5, perhaps no single example of the fractious yet enduring concept of unity can be found than the League of Non-Aligned Worlds - several very different, very alien groups brought together by the universal languages of need and fear. United in their desire to have more power than they could individually wield, the League of Non-Aligned Worlds collectively represented more ships, more guns, and more temporal power than any of the 'major' governments of the galaxy could claim. Even the Minbari would have been hard-pressed to deal with the enmity of the entire League.

# THE BIG MONGOOSE

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Ok, so here's the deal. Down at Mongoose Hall we want to know what you are thinking. With this in mind we have put together some questions below and on the next page which will help us fine tune the Mongoose machine to make sure you get exactly what you want.

But what's in it for me? I hear you ask. How about **\$150** worth of Mongoose books of your choice? Not bad, eh? What are you waiting for. Get filling in!

### Question 1

Rate each gaming/product line on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being best and 1 being the worst)

Slayer's Guides	<input type="checkbox"/>	Encyclopaedia Arcane	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quintessential Series	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quint. II: Advanced Tactics	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cities of Fantasy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Classic Play	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ultimate Series	<input type="checkbox"/>	Judge Dredd RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slaine RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>
Armageddon: 2089	<input type="checkbox"/>	Babylon 5 RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	Macho Women with Guns	<input type="checkbox"/>
OGL RPG Series	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paranoia	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mighty Armies	<input type="checkbox"/>	Power Classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lone Wolf	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Question 2

a) Who is your favourite Mongoose author?

b) Who is your favourite Mongoose artist?

### Question 3

Would you consider Mongoose products to be value for money? Yes  No

### Question 4

What is your favourite Mongoose product?

### Question 5

What is your *least* favourite Mongoose product?

### Question 6

How many Mongoose products do you own? (circle the one most appropriate)    less than 5    5-10    10-20    20-30    30-50    50+

### Question 7

What product would you like to see us produce?

### Question 8

How many times per month do you roleplay on average?

**Question 9**

a) Where do you buy your Mongoose products from?

b) and why?

**Question 10**

What is your favourite RPG genre?

**Question 11**

What future Mongoose product are you most looking forward to?

**Question 12**

Do you play miniature wargames?

Yes

No

**Question 13**

If so, do you prefer buying painted or unpainted miniatures?

Painted

Unpainted

**Question 14**

What part of the Mongoose website do you find *most* helpful?

**Question 15**

What part of the Mongoose website do you find *least* helpful?

**Question 16**

Rate the Website on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 is best)

**Question 17**

Rate Signs & Portents magazine on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 is best)

**Question 18**

What sort of articles do you want to see in S&P? (tick all appropriate)

Scenarios

Fiction

Graphic Stories

Cartoons

Background

Product Specific

Supplements

Power Classes

Equipment

Mongoose Hall/Humour

**Question 19**

a) Have you taken out a subscription to S&P?

Yes

No

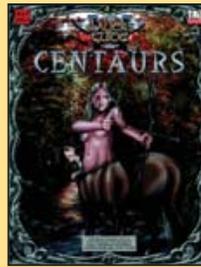
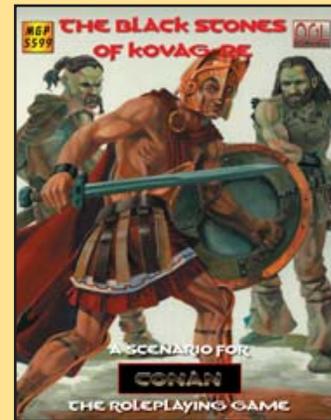
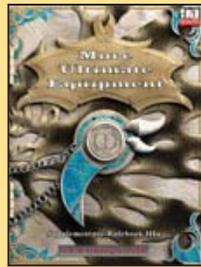
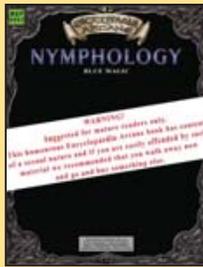
b) If not, what could we do to get you to subscribe?

**Question 20**

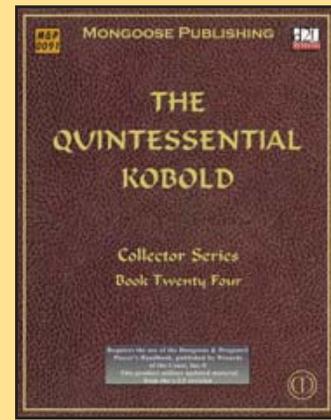
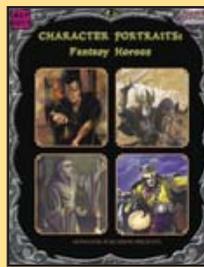
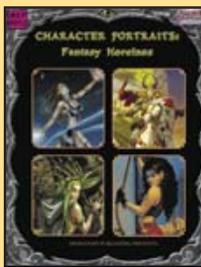
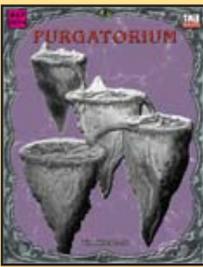
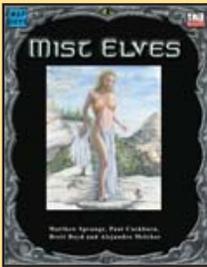
What is your nationality?

# Signs & Portents PRESENTS

## THE PDF COLLECTION



Watch  
this  
Space!



The Mongoose PDF Collection is an exciting and inexpensive resource for fans of Mongoose products. If you are not familiar with PDFs, they are easily downloadable files which can be read using free and readily available software. Each month we are adding new items, including out of print books unavailable anywhere else. So, if you need a quick gaming fix then try out the Signs & Portents PDF Collection. To download these items just go to our web site at [www.mongoosepublishing.com](http://www.mongoosepublishing.com) and select PDFs.

**Out Now! the Quintessential temptress!**

To commemorate the release of **OGL WILD WEST** our very own *Richard Ford* has written a short story to get you in the mood.

## BRANBING BELLE

In a flurry of dust and whinnying horses the stage pulled up in front of Kane's Saloon. The town of Big Red held few attractions besides the ramshackle bar. Its streets were deserted and even though it was a little after noon there was no one in sight along the single, sand-covered highway.

The coach driver jumped down from his seat atop the stagecoach and walked to the door. His back was crooked from long miles spent hunched in the same position and the crack between his sweaty buttocks peaked over his slack leather britches. He opened the door, scratching his rough chin.

Belle stepped down from the coach, ignoring the driver's hand, which was held out in a half-hearted offer of assistance. Instead she smiled meekly as though apologising for finding the prospect of holding the driver's hand repulsive. The driver gave a nonchalant shrug; his offer had obviously been refused before. He looked her up and down, taking in the easy site of her wasp-waist and lifted bosom. Belle's bright blue dress stood out in stark contrast to the harsh dusty-grey of Big Red.

'Sure this is where you want to get off missy?' asked the driver. 'Stage goes all the way to California. Woman o' your means should find plenty more to her likin' there than in a run down dung-heap like this.'

Belle gave a meek smile. 'I'm sure this is the place. Thank you kindly, you've been ever such a gracious driver.'

The driver flushed at her pleasantry and returned to his seat atop the stage. Belle sighed deeply as the coach lurched away behind her. She looked up at the faded sign that declared the saloon belonged to Kane. Swallowing hard she walked up the rickety steps toward the saloon door.

As she gingerly swung the door open she was surprised at the muted reception she received. Belle had been led to expect either a raucous, bawdy cheer as she entered, or for the patrons to place their warm beers on their tables and stare as though a two headed buffalo had just entered the bar. The muted indifference she was greeted with was an unexpected surprise.

In the corner was a group of three men. Guns were on their hips but they did not have the hard-bitten look of killers. They were probably wranglers, stopping off on their way to find work. In another corner sat a greying, black-suited man. His other features were obscured by the fact that he was face down on his table, a half drunk shot of whisky still clutched between his rigid fingers. The only other soul in Kane's was the bartender. He barely glanced up as Belle entered.

Without trying to appear too out of place Belle walked to the bar. 'Glass of whisky please Kane,' she said in a confident manner.

The bartender didn't look up as he reached beneath the bar and produced a cloudy shot glass and a cloudier bottle of what could loosely be described as whisky.

'Name's not Kane,' he said as he poured a large measure, 'and try not to throw up on the bar. Just cleaned it.'

Belle picked up the shot glass, ignoring her monosyllabic host, and knocked back the fiery concoction. Her eyes widened as she placed the glass back on the bar. The bartender shrugged with an 'I told you so' expression on his face and went back to wiping his bar.

The group of wranglers laughed from the bottom of their bellies as Belle spluttered and wheezed. One of them stood and approached, a conciliatory smile crossing his face.

'Never mind miss,' he said. 'I've seen a shot of Old Hokey's Brew floor cowpokes three times your size.'

Belle looked up, her embarrassment obvious.

'A glass of milk for the little lady Pete,' said the cowboy, his smile now much more sincere. 'My friends and I would be honoured if you'd join us.'

Belle returned the cowboy's smile and nodded her agreement. After receiving Belle's milk the pair sat down. Belle could see that a quiet hand of poker was underway between the trio and she could barely hold in her excitement. The cowboys had just finished their hand and the deck now sat in a neat pile in the middle of the table.

'So,' said another of the cowboys, 'what brings such a purdy little thing to Big Red?'

Belle instinctively picked up the cards and with one hand cut them and cut them again. The cowboys looked on in amazement as she shuffled with lighting speed and then proceeded to deal with one hand.

'Poker boys. Poker brings me to Big Red.' The cowboys stared; all three jaws were hanging limply. 'And in case you were wondering, the name's Belle.'

Kane's Saloon had become shrouded in shadow as the glaring sun slowly retreated behind distant hills. The bartender had lit several candles held in whisky bottles, one of which now sat in the middle of the poker table. Belle had a satisfied grin on her face, in stark contrast to the sullen expressions of her three new companions.

As she began to deal what she considered to be the last hand of the evening a sand-filled breeze swept through the saloon. A number of candles were suddenly extinguished, and Belle paused mid-deal. The two cowboys had stiffened slightly, just as the feral wind had swept through; they were now staring over her shoulder towards the door.

Belle froze as she heard the steady tread of footsteps. Accompanying them, lifted on the air by the breeze, was a stale smell, like herded cattle only more moist and less natural. She slowly turned in her seat, scared of making any sudden moves and spooking whatever ornery varmint had crept in from the desert. Standing behind

her was a huge shadowy figure. His hat was pulled down over his eyes and a vapour trail of dust and hovered him. His stench was somewhat overpowering, even from a distance, as though he'd been on the road for days carrying several pounds of old jerky.

'Thought I told you two never to come in here again,' said the figure in a low, southern drawl.

'Well, you see Kane,' one of the cowboys began to blurt, 'we wasn't expecting you to be back so early and a hand of poker turned into ten and well... you know how it is Kane.'

The dark figure gave no reply. Several uncomfortable seconds passed and Belle began to wish her chair would move her out of the way of this argument.

'You still here?' said the figure suddenly.

Without hesitating the cowboys leapt from their seats, grabbing what little gear they had with them, and sprinted for the door. The vapour and dust that hovered around the dark figure was whipped up into a brief frenzy as they rushed past.

Belle tried not to stare at the imposing figure of Kane, who was still standing in the middle of the bar. From the corner of one eye she could see the bartender stirring uncomfortably. After several seconds she made to rise from her seat.

'Where you going?' asked Kane.

'Well, er...' Belle was unsure how to proceed. 'I just dropped by for a few hands of poker and it seems my fellow players have had to leave in quite a hurry so now I think I'll be on my way.'

'Don't move,' said Kane, his voice filled with quiet menace. Belle jumped suddenly at his retort. 'I mean,' his voice softened somewhat, 'you can't leave my place without me buying you a drink.'

Without hesitation the bartender rushed over, another glass of milk held between his quivering fingers. He placed it in front of Belle and retreated back behind the bar as quickly as he arrived.

Belle stared at the glass, then slowly lifted it to her lips. As she drank she heard Kane sigh a long satisfied sigh. It was as though something had been pricking him in a tender spot and as soon as Belle drank he was relieved of the annoyance.

There was a shallow groan from the bartender and Belle turned to see him with his head in his hands. Kane was grinning, the silhouette of his figure becoming clearer as he approached across the saloon.

'Now you'll have to stay. You can't accept a drink from a stranger and not stay to get to know him.'

Belle looked around quickly, panic rising within her. There was no help coming. The only other figures in the saloon were the bartender, who was not about to intervene, and the drunken patron, who hadn't moved in the five hours since her arrival.

Kane perched himself at a nearby stool and now Belle could see him in all his glory. He was big, almost huge, and a sweating beer

gut hung over his low slung pants. A bullwhip was tied around his waist in place of a belt and a rusty Colt was slung low by his side. Beneath the brim of his hat was a ragged, sallow face, crossed by an unkempt moustache containing the remnants of whatever Kane had eaten for his most recent meal.

'Well if its all the same to you,' Belle smiled meekly, 'and not meaning to cause any offence, I think I'd be just as well to get on my way.'

'Don't talk trash woman,' Kane was menacing once more, with his face visible he was an even more imposing sight. 'Where you gonna go at this hour. Ain't another town for fifty miles. If the desert don't get you, sure as horse-hair the injuns will.'

Belle was about to speak when there was a calamitous sound from just outside the saloon. Kane smiled revealing a set of cracked and tobacco-stained teeth.

'Time for you to meet the rest of the crowd,' he beamed. With that a gang of four leering, cheering cowboys entered the saloon. With them were a group of four dishevelled women, dressed in frocks that might have once been classed as fashionable but were now no more than rags.

Kane stood, roughly shaking one of the cowboys who seemed more than a little worse for drink. He grabbed one of the women and kissed her roughly on the cheek, licking her earlobe as he pulled away. Despite her obvious disgust she made no attempt to stop him.

'Boys,' shouted Kane unnecessarily, 'this here's er...'

'Belle,' shouted the bartender suddenly from behind the makeshift barricade of the bar. Belle shot him a glance as though pointing out his treachery.

'This here's Belle,' continued Kane. 'I think she'll make a great addition to our little gang.'

'Well actually my momma told me never to get involved in...' Belle began.

'Your momma don't have no say round these parts missy. I have the last say round here and I say you're gonna be one of my girls. Why don't you show her ladies.'

Slowly the girls glanced at one another then, one by one they pulled down the sleeves of their dresses to reveal a huge brand on each of their arms. Belle stared closely at the nearest girl's arm and swallowed hard as she read the words 'PROPERTY OF KANE'.

Big Red had seen more than its share of killers over the years, the frontier had brought with it a tide of gunslingers, all willing to kill for little more than a hot meal and a bottle of bourbon. But none of those killers were as proficient, or prolific, as the men who now walked along the town's deserted street.

The first was a thick set Mexican. He was bereft of the trademark sombrero but he wore a poncho and his drooping moustache were more than a testament to his heritage. The thick set man carried a shotgun by his side. He wore no holster, that way his weapon was never away from his grasp, never unavailable when he needed it most.

His companion was dressed as a preacher, with black suit and dog collar, but his demeanour was far from holy. The black eyepatch and ugly scar across his face told a tale that no priest's garb could disguise. He carried a single Tranter by his side, a bright silver instrument of god's destruction. If anyone got close enough to the massive hand cannon, and they seldom did, they would have been able to see the inscription written across the barrel: 'Left Hand of the Lord'.

They found themselves outside Kane's Saloon and, despite its unattractive front, the bar seemed the only place of interest in the entire town. The two killers mounted the steps to the door simultaneously, their footfalls matched perfectly as though they were marching to the tune of a military band.

First through the door was the Mexican. He drank in the saloon's interior with an arrogant disdain. The Preacher entered close behind him, his face expressionless. Behind the unremarkable bar stood the bartender, his usual look of boredom turning to surprise, then cowed compliance as the men entered.

'Well, hello there gentlemen. What can I interest you in on this fine morning?'

'The Mexican was first at the bar. He looked the bartender up and down as though his eyes were searching for something his hands would not be able to find. The bartender was frozen to the spot, not daring to move lest he offend the greasy foreigner.

'We've come fer the women,' said the Preacher suddenly, making the bartender jump. Dragging his gaze away from the Mexican, the bartender looked at the Preacher, a smile flashing on and off across his face, unsure of whether to show itself.

'S-sure. We've got plenty of women here, more than enough to go round.' The smile eventually decided it was safe to appear.

'No,' said the Preacher, his single word followed by the sound of a cocking hammer. 'We've come to take 'em all.'

The bartender's false smile stayed rooted to his face as he considered the Preacher's words. After several seconds the Preacher leaned in close, almost nose to nose with the bartender. Stale breath passed back and forth between the two for several more seconds.

'You simple boy? Go an' git hose women,' the Preacher commanded.

Still with his ridiculous smile plastered to his even more ridiculous face, the bartender ran from behind his bar. He rushed towards the stairs and stopped suddenly when he saw the figure standing at the top.

Kane was wreathed in shadow, despite the seeming brightness of the morning sun which permeated the room. The killers went to raise their weapons but before they had moved more than two inches the sound of several guns cocking made them freeze.

'So, you boys want to take my women.' Kane began to stride slowly down the stairs. 'Well, I must say that's mighty bold of ya. You boys must have cohones the size of a buffalo on heat. Specially you Mexican, I hear that's how you're all built south o' Texas.'

The Mexican's gun hand twitched but he didn't raise it. From the corner of his eye he could see two Winchesters pointing from a doorway. If he tried anything he'd be dead before he could get a single shot off.

'I'll tell you what we'll do instead, you boys drop your guns and my boys won't kill you like a couple o' mangy dogs.'

The two killers looked at one another briefly. It was the quickest of glances but in that instant each read the others intention. Slowly the Preacher unbuckled his belt and let it drop to the ground. The Mexican likewise loosening his grip on the shotgun until it fell from his palm.

Kane smiled as he swaggered towards them. Licking his lips as though preparing to chow down on a juicy steak, he leaned in close to the two men. 'Ain't never branded me no Mexican before. Come high noon today we is gonna have us a really hot Mexican.'

With that he began to guffaw. His men joined in, their laughter a little nervous and unsure. The bartender's laughter mixed in with it, shrill and unnatural.

The killers made no move or sound realising they were outgunned. If they ever got out of this alive, next time it might be a good idea to formulate a plan before leaping into the viper's nest.

The sun was intense, its heat searing the street of Big Red. A haze wavered at each end of town like an impenetrable barrier, trapping any and all within the town's seedy limits. In the centre of town sat a lonely fountain, which would have been a welcome oasis from the glaring sun was it not now a dry and barren shell, housing only broken whisky bottles and an array of other detritus.

It was around this well that the main event was about to happen. Kane stood, still tall and dark in the sun, seeming to suck the light from around himself. He gleefully poked at a glowing brazier, the branding iron within proudly stating 'PROPERTY OF KANE' in backwards writing.

Sitting idly around the fountain were his girls. Their looks, which may once have been pretty, were now smeared with a grimy nonchalance. They were flanked by Kane's four henchmen, idly fingering their Winchesters, looks of arrogant lasciviousness dripping from their grinning maws. Shackled and looking a little embarrassed were the Mexican and the Preacher. The two proud gunslingers had been stripped to their smalls. The Mexican stood in a pair of grimy long johns, the Preacher in an all in one black ensemble, which much resembled the garb he wore when fully clothed.

Last of all was Belle, her chin held high in defiance, despite her current situation. Her dress was showing signs of wear after spending the night in a dusty cellar. Kane had promised her many nights of pleasure by his side, but only when she was properly branded and made into 'one of his women'.

Suddenly Kane ceased prodding the brazier and turned to address the assembled mob. 'I'd like to thank you all for comin' on this fine afternoon, not that any of you had a choice.' This produced a ripple of laughter from his motley troop of followers. 'As you may

or may not know we're here to perform what's become something of a tradition here in these parts. The lovely... er?' Kane paused, a quizzical look crossing his face as though he were trying to figure out the inner workings of the combustion engine.

'Belle?' piped up one of his henchman, a particularly piggy looking thug in a tight gingham shirt.

'I know her name buckwheat!' screamed Kane, causing his toadying henchman to visibly flinch. 'The lovely Belle here is gonna become one o' my women. An' these two,' he swung the effulgent branding iron in the direction of the Preacher and Mexican, 'these two are gonna burn.' With his last word a huge toothy grin spread across his mangled face. The Preacher was impassive, as though the news of his impending death was nothing new, but the Mexican spoke some words of Spanish under his breath spitting on the ground. This brought new guffaws of laughter from Kane and his cohorts, who found the Mexican's bravado hilarious.

'Hold 'er,' Kane commanded and one of the henchmen grabbed Belle, exposing the milk white skin of her upper arm.

'N-now hold on there a minute Mr Kane,' Belle said suddenly. 'Can't we talk about this. How about a quick hand of poker, I win and I walk out of here, you win and its fun, fun, fun for as long as you can handle it.'

Kane paused; again the look on his face resembled that of a mathematician trying to unravel the inner workings of the most incalculable equation. 'I know,' he said, suddenly brightening as though he had found the answer. 'How about we don't play poker and I have fun, fun, fun anyway.'

Once more the belly laughs rang out across the all but deserted street of Big Red, as Kane closed in.

'OK, OK,' shouted Belle. 'Let's do it.' Kane paused at her unexpected compliance. 'But not like this. At least let's do this with some dignity.' She smiled coyly at the he ugly monster in front of her.

Kane was unable to resist. With a nod of his head the thug let go of Belle and took a step back. Belle, still smiling her seductive smile, took a step towards Kane, her arm held out as though offering it to the branding iron. Kane and the iron leaned in, inch by burning inch.

Faster than Kane's eye could catch, Belle's other arm snaked forward, plucking his Colt from its holster. Before the brute could react Belle had cocked the gun and pulled the trigger, leasing a bullet straight into his foot. Kane screamed as his toes disintegrated, and fell to the ground, branding iron flying wildly behind him.

Before Kane's henchmen could react Belle had turned, with the flat of her palm she cocked the gun four times, loosed four bullets from the chamber dropping each of the four henchmen to the ground.

The sound of the Colt's repeat drifted off into the warm air, replaced by the sound of Kane's mewling groans of pain. Belle turned, slowly cocking the gun once more and training it on the huge figure writhing on the ground. Her previously amiable

expression had now disappeared, replaced by a look of steely determination. She no longer looked the naive city girl; she bore the look of a killer.

'Lot of use you two were,' she said regarding the Preacher and the Mexican with the same look a mother would give her misbehaving children. 'You were supposed to wait until this morning before showing your ugly faces.'

'Pedro got bored,' said the Preacher with an innocent shrug of his shoulders. The Mexican bore a similarly browbeaten look.

'You ladies are free to leave,' said Belle to the dishevelled women who were now staring in a mix of amazement and relief at the bodies of Kane's thugs.

One of them looked up suddenly, a smile of utter joy creasing her grimy, tear-streaked face. 'How can we ever thank you?' she said, suppressing the sobs that were welling in her throat.

'Don't thank me, thank the bartender, he put up the cash for your rescue,' replied Belle, motioning behind her. Slowly the bartender appeared from his saloon. Without hesitation all four of the women rushed forward to embrace their saviour. The bartender blushed briefly before being consumed in a melee of hugs and kisses.

'So,' said Belle, turning back to the huge writhing lump that was Kane. 'What do we do with laughing boy here?'

The Preacher slowly walked forward and bent down, picking up the branding iron in his manacled hands. 'I have one idea...'

\* \* \*

Runs Like a Squaw sat proudly atop his war pony. Two Socks whinnied briefly, smelling something foetid on the evening air. The sound made Runs Like a Squaw sit up suddenly and survey the horizon. Many was the time that Two Socks' nose had saved them from certain death. The white man had many tricks, but few that could beat the alertness of Two Socks' nose.

In the distance was a plume of desert dust, something was approaching and it was not concerned with stealth. As the figure drew nearer, Runs Like a Squaw noticed it was limping heavily. When it came even closer the Sioux warrior realised that it had a fresh foot wound and must have been in considerable pain.

When the figure reached little more than twenty feet, Runs Like a Squaw gasped in surprise. This was a white man, but like no other he had ever seen. Naked but for a drooping moustache the figure limping past was covered from head to foot in sores. The sores were identical, circular and some of them wept fresh pus. The stink was almost unbearable, and Runs Like a Squaw could not stand to see such a pitiful creature suffer. Pulling his tomahawk free from his belt he kicked Two Socks into action. Runs Like a Squaw had killed many white men, but none out of mercy. This time he would have to break with habit, after all...a scalp was a scalp.



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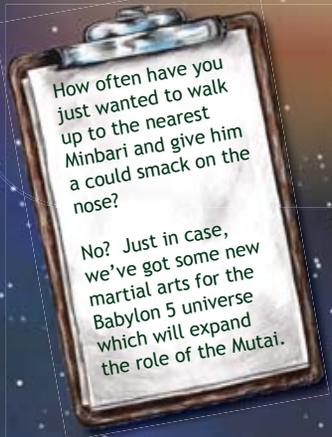
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Signs & Portents  
Mongoose Publishing  
PO Box 1018  
Swindon  
Wiltshire  
SN3 1DG  
UK

email: [ibarstow@mongoosepublishing.com](mailto:ibarstow@mongoosepublishing.com)

# The Way of the Fist

Bryan Steele



Ever since the earliest days of history, humans have sought out ways to defend themselves against each other without immediately resorting to weaponry. Over centuries patterns form, and these patterns become teachings. From tae kwon do and Aikido to boxing and wrestling, Earthers have been accustomed to a great number of martial arts fighting styles – another testament to the fractious and adaptable human nature. As humans began to mingle with the other races amongst the stars, situations were bound to arise where civil arguments (and sometimes not so civil) would come to fisticuffs.

Just as humans found schools of pattern in their martial arts, so did the various races that share the galaxy with them. While there are dozens upon dozens of minor martial practices found throughout known space, there are a handful of them that are used in great abundance by the races that created them. From teacher to student these fighting traditions are passed through the generations, engraving such things in the minds and hearts of its people.

The following information is a comprehensive list of the most recognisable schools of martial arts found among the major spacefaring races. Although be sure it is not a

complete list, as countless smaller schools appear now and again throughout space. In the next few pages you will find descriptions of five major alien martial arts, and an assortment of Feats and Skills related to them. While not all Games Masters will want to give their player characters access to such schools while on Babylon 5, it may make for a lengthy side plot to a colony or even a player character's homeworld in order to learn a particular art.

**NOTE:** The schools below are different to the Mutai, listed in the plot segment **TKO** (see the main B5 rulebook). Although many of the Mutai have some of the feats below, and many martial arts users will combine these with the Mutai Prestige Class found in the main rulebook.

All of the following schools and Feats require the Improved Unarmed Combat feat. It will be included in the noted Prerequisites, but Games Masters should encourage their player characters to choose it before they begin to practice the Arts below.

## Human Arts

Even before humans set out into space they had already created dozens of cohesive martial arts that have enormous followings even in today's multi-planetary culture. There is an enormous low-gravity shotokan karate dojo on Mars, and Proxima-7 has one of the largest boxing gymnasiums in EarthForce. So common have these martial schools become that someone with the time and the credits could easily take classes or be privately instructed in a host of varied methods – or several at once.

For sake of bookkeeping, and to show the great similarities between the fighting styles of humans, their martial schools have been split into three broad Feats; Martial Grapple, Martial Fist, and Martial Foot. While such a broad generalisation might not do true justice to the actual martial arts schools, it is necessary to make them playable. You will also note that some schools of arts appear in multiple or all lists. That is primarily due to the art having a broader scope

of uses – depending on the player character's devotion to the aspects of his chosen art. Obviously Games Masters and player characters can work out new or different arts and choose which category they should fit in.

It should be noted that unlike several of the racial martial arts, the following could be taught to ANY race, should they choose to do so.

Some common examples are:

**Martial Grapple:** *Aikido, Judo, Kung Fu and Greco-Roman Wrestling*

**Martial Fist:** *Aikido, Boxing, Karate, Tae-Kwon-Do and Kung Fu*

**Martial Foot:** *Karate, Kung Fu, Muay-Thai, Savate and Tae-Kwon-Do*

## Martial Grapple (General)

Your unarmed prowess lies up close and personal with your opponent. Using holds, throws and locks you can render an enemy harmless.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (chosen martial art) skill, base attack bonus +2 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat.

**Benefits:** You may choose to do lethal damage with any attack from the following list: Bull Rush, Disarm, Grapple, Overrun and Trip. Any such attacks are also considered to have a critical threat range of 19-20/x2.

## Martial Fist (General)

Your hands can be just as lethal as any knife or PPG when you want them to be. You are never truly unarmed.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (chosen martial art) skill, base attack bonus +2 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat.

**Benefits:** You may choose to do lethal damage with any basic unarmed attack with your hands or elbows. Any such attacks are also considered to have a critical threat range of 19-20/x2.

## Martial Foot (General)

You have very powerful and agile legs that allow you to put great amounts of force and precision behind your attacks. No one within their reach is safe from your tremendous blows.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (chosen martial art) skill, base attack bonus +2 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat.

**Benefits:** You may choose to do lethal damage with any unarmed attack with your lower body (knees, ankles, feet, etc.). Any such attacks are also considered to have a critical threat range of 19-20/x2, and cause +1 damage on all related dice.

## Martial Adept (General)

Your dedication to your martial art is honed and steady, making you a formidable exponent of your art. You may even have begun to take on students to show them the basics.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (chosen martial art) skill, base attack bonus +6 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat, any one of Martial Grapple, Martial Fist or Martial Foot.

**Benefits:** Any unarmed strikes you make that gain the benefits from other Martial (Grapple, Fist or Foot) feats are treated as having a critical threat range of 18-20/x2. Also, you gain a +4 Initiative bonus at the start of each round if you are unarmed.

**Special:** Characters with this feat can teach others any Martial (Grapple, Fist or Foot) feats they possess. The student must have the necessary prerequisites and an open feat slot in order to do so.

## Martial Mastery (General)

You have reached the pinnacle of your chosen art. Students are in awe of the displays you perform and no fair opponent is beyond your abilities.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (chosen martial art) skill, base attack bonus +9 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat, Martial Adept, any one of Martial Grapple, Martial Fist or Martial Foot.

**Benefits:** Any unarmed strikes you make that gain the benefits from other Martial (Grapple, Fist or Foot) feats are treated as having a critical threat range of 18-20/x3. Such strikes can ignore up to your Strength or Wisdom modifier (whichever is higher) worth of Damage Reduction.

**Special:** Characters with this feat can teach others the Martial Adept feat, as long as they possess the necessary requirements. Characters that also have the Leadership feat may choose to have their followers come from their chosen martial art's following.

## Tronno (Centauri)

The noble houses of the Centauri have used duelling and contests of skill as quick and stylish ways to end arguments and conflicts – from old feuds to familial misunderstandings. Because of their extravagant and decadent natures, they often find themselves inebriated or worse when they are forced to back up their often-uncensored dialogues. From generations of such encounters, the noble House Regari (a family of belligerent drunks that saw more duels than any other in their time) created their own edge in such encounters – Tronno.

Tronno is an elegant yet underhanded martial art focused primarily on sweeping kicks, and athletic leaps and dodges. It takes into consideration the need for Centauri aristocrats to keep their head and shoulders out of harm's way (how else can one be recognised by gossips as the victor?) while calling upon devastating kicks and dirty blows to end the fight.

In the generations following its creation, Tronno spread amongst the more militant Houses like wildfire and House Regari grew in station until its violent excommunication and dissolution in 2016 – for the art's excessive use! Even so, Tronno has become well used by a large number of travelling Centauri. Its use has been seen more than a few times

in the Zocalo, even if those who saw it had no idea it was anything special at all.

Tronnos often look like any other Centauri, dressing and behaving like countless others – as it has always been the art's true strength, its unexpectedness. Particularly savvy Tronnos will adorn their boot tips with silver studs or spikes, adding a lethal edge to their wardrobe and their art as well.

## Tronno (Centauri)

You have learned to use your quick and powerful legs to bring most opponents to their knees – especially if unaware of your pending attack. Your motions make you difficult to strike as well, bending and leaping as you attack. With grace and style you can cripple your targets, hopefully without spilling your drink!

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Tronno) skill, base attack bonus +3 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat.

**Benefits:** Your kick attacks cause 1d6 damage. This damage remains subdual unless the attack is made against a flat-footed, flanked, or prone target. While fighting unarmed (anything larger than a goblet full of bravari cancels this bonus) you gain a +1 bonus to your Defence Value.

## Blindbluff Kick (Centauri)

A particularly nasty way to end a fight is to blind your opponent. You have become so adept with your precise kicks that you can actually put out your opponent's eye by getting him to look one way when your foot strikes it. Considered an extremely harsh way to end a proper duel, but victory has no price too high for some.

**Prerequisites:** Bluff skill at +8 or higher, Knowledge (Tronno) skill, base attack bonus +6 or higher, Tronno, Improved Unarmed Combat.



**Benefits:** You may choose to make a Blindbluff kick as a full-round action. Make a Bluff skill check contested against the Sense Motive skill check of the target. If successful, the attack is a Called Shot at -8, aimed at the target's eye. You may add the difference between your skill check and theirs to the damage roll if successful. Damage is still subdual, but Games Masters should make note that excessive damage could lead to permanent eye injury as well. If the Bluff check fails, the character attempting should be considered to be flat-footed for the round.

## Stagger and Sway (Centauri)

Because Tronno is often used in situations where the Centauri has been drinking, those adept in its use find ways to make such a situation an advantage instead of a hindrance. You use the slight sway in your stance as a form of dodging, and your slightly numbed nerves allow you to utilise places on your legs and feet that are otherwise too soft or easily hurt.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Tronno) skill, base attack bonus +3 or higher, Tronno, Improved Unarmed Combat, Constitution of less than 15.

**Benefits:** Only usable after having

failed a Fortitude check concerning inebriation or intoxication. This feat offers a +3 bonus to Defence Value for the first 2d6 combat rounds. You may choose to inflict lethal damage instead of subdual damage with your kicks during this time period, but each round in which you do so you receive 1 point of subdual damage yourself. This damage is not blocked by your own Damage Reduction, if any.

## Below the Belt (Centauri)

The Centauri may have a strong sense of honour, but it is a strange one. Victory in a conflict is far more important than your opponent's view on your technique, and Tronno users are quick to pick up on this. You are well schooled in dealing painful and debilitating blows to the *sensitive* regions of opponents, using this knowledge to great advantage when necessary.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Tronno) skill, Medical skill, base attack bonus +3 or higher, Alien Anatomy, Tronno, Improved Unarmed Combat.

**Benefits:** Any attack following a successful Medical skill check DC 12 (make separate checks if there are multiple opponents, noting which ones were successful) you cause an

extra point of damage and require your opponent to pass a Fortitude save DC 10 + damage caused after Damage Reduction or be stunned for d6 rounds.

## Tronno Regal (Centauri)

You have mastered the art of Tronno, and few can withstand your powerful strikes any longer. Your bone-shattering kicks are undaunted by any thickness of armour, and seem to come from all angles.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Tronno) skill, base attack bonus +8 or higher, Tronno, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Combat.

**Benefits:** You are always considered to be catching any single opponent you can see as flat-footed while fighting unarmed. Your kicks ignore any Damage Reduction from armour of any kind worn by your target. You may, at will, choose not to do subdual damage with your kicks. You may ignore called shot penalties with your kicks a number of times per day equal to your Wisdom modifier.

## Onh'l Domo (Minbari)

The Minbari have used meditation and ritualistic combat in all three of their castes for centuries upon centuries to instil discipline and prowess in their people. Springing from the knowledge taught by the Warrior caste in the times of Valen, Onh'l Domo is a primarily defensive martial art taught to many warriors and religious zealots who are assigned to protect and serve someone of higher station – such as Lennier being assigned to Deleenn on Babylon 5.

Onh'l Domo is based almost exclusively upon the hands, and specific ways to shape them when attacking in order to maximise potential impact while minimising recoiling shock. When used properly, an Onh'lo (singular term for a learned member of the art) can shatter brick

with what looks like a fingertip flick or stop an attacker cold with a seemingly gentle tap from a few pursed-knuckles.

It is a rare thing to see Onh'l Domo in use by anyone not serving as a bodyguard or attaché, but some warrior caste members have added the art to their repertoire – making for deadly and efficient combatants indeed. Because of this, users of the art are completely indistinguishable from other Minbari save for their odd hand positioning when reacting to a possible threat.

## Onh'l Student (Minbari)

You have learned enough of the Onh'l Domo to redirect blows with open hands, and focus precise strikes with folded ones. You understand you have just begun to walk the path, and you are not an Onh'lo yet.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Onh'l Domo) skill, base attack bonus +2 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat.

**Benefits:** You may, at the beginning of any round in which you are unarmed, subtract up to 5 from your base attack bonus to add the same number to either a damage roll or your own subdual Damage Reduction. Use of this feat is not instinctual, and cannot be done if caught flat-footed or surprised.

## Instinctual Student (Minbari)

Your Onh'l Domo skills are ingrained, and must be part of your heart's calling. You have a seemingly instinctual take on the otherwise complex hand forms of the art. Sometimes you find your hands going into the motions without you even realising you are doing it.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Onh'l Domo) skill, base attack bonus +3 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat, Onh'l Domo.

**Benefits:** You receive a +2 Initiative bonus when fighting unarmed. You also may subtract 1 from the base

attack bonus requirements for the following feats; Onh'lo, Onh'lo'shar, Sword of the Onh'lo'shar.

## Onh'lo (Minbari)

You have graduated into the main body of knowledge that is the Onh'lo. By altering your hand strikes slightly, you can numb the body or break it – depending on what the situation calls for.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Onh'l Domo) skill, base attack bonus +4 or higher, Instinctual Student, Improved Unarmed Combat.

**Benefits:** You may inflict regular damage with your unarmed attacks at will. Before making any unarmed attacks, you may subtract from your attack rolls to add to your subdual damage *only* at a 1:2 ration (each point sacrificed gains 2 damage points) up to your base attack bonus.

## Onh'lo'shar (Minbari)

Your mastery over the ancient skills of Onh'l Domo is nearly complete. You have a degree of control over your opponents that allows you to judge and misdirect their actions in your mind well before they choose to make them.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Onh'l Domo) skill, base attack bonus +8 or higher, Instinctual Student, Onh'lo, Improved Unarmed Combat.

**Benefits:** At the beginning of each round, you may sacrifice up to 5 points from any or all of the following; attack rolls, damage rolls, Initiative, Defence Value, and Reflex saves. If you do so, choose one opponent in melee combat with you – they receive the same penalties to the same values you adjusted, but with an additional -1.

*Example: Arthenn, a Warrior Caste Onh'lo'shar, sacrifices 3 points from her attack and damage rolls in order to subtract 4 points from Rehshaz's, the Drazi pirate trying to mug her, attack and damage rolls this turn as well.*



## Sword of the Ohh'lo'shar (Minbari)

You have become the pinnacle of what Ohh'l Domo teaches. Your hands can be as soft and giving as silk, or as lethal as a fighting pike. You are capable of a rain of blows that staggers the minds of those who perceive them, and can immobilise with a touch. Legendary Swords of the Ohh'lo'shar are said to strike a target's soul directly – a harsh terminology that does little to endear them to the Religious caste.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Ohh'l Domo) skill, base attack bonus +10 or higher, Instinctual Student, Ohh'lo, Ohh'lo'shar, Improved Unarmed Combat, Sixth Sense.

**Benefits:** Once per day equal to your Dexterity modifier, you may choose to inflict minimum damage from all of your unarmed strikes automatically against one opponent. This takes your full-round action. Once per day equal to your Wisdom modifier, you may knock a single opponent unconscious with a single unarmed strike if they fail a Reflex save vs. your attack roll. Once per day equal to your Strength modifier, you may cause 1 point of temporary Constitution damage per successful attack upon a single target this round. Such losses are returned in 2d4 hours of bed rest.

**Special:** There are only ever three Swords of the Ohh'lo'shar at any given moment – one from each of the castes, who give up their position willingly to the next applicant capable of defeating them in honourable combat. Losing the position does not sacrifice the benefits of the feat, however.

## Var'Tok (Narn)

During their many generations of living under Centauri rule, the Narn turned their raw aggression and oppressed need for freedom into a driving force that burned in many of their hearts. Weapons were hard to come by, so unarmed combat became a necessity and a focus of a great many freedom fighters. These skills, rough and directionless, were finally brought together ironically just a few short years before the Narn became free of Centauri rule.

Those who found a pattern in the instincts called the new fighting form the Var'Tok, meaning 'Dagger Hearted'. Narn who study the collective Var'Tok call upon their fiery rage to augment their already brutal melee fighting. It is accompanied by a strange sort of hissing and growling as well, using their intimidating reputation as an extra edge in combat.

Var'Tok uses a claw-shaped hand that takes weeks to master so the user does not jam knuckles or break comparably fragile fingers when striking. As with most Narn-spawned tactics, Var'Tok does not ignore the rest of the user's body – it merely focuses upon the claw-shaped hand. A skilled Var'Tok fighter will generally wear thick-fingered gloves with sewn-in studs or bands to protect their precious weaponry.

## Var'Tok

### (Narn)

You can assume the crouched fighting stance of the Var'Tok. Arms wide, fingers spread into the claw-hand, and hissing and growling all the while. While most Narn are capable combatants, you are a vicious foe indeed.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Var'Tok) skill, base attack bonus +2 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat, Blood Rage.

**Benefits:** You can choose to cause lethal damage if you wish. While in combat, your Intimidate skill has a bonus equal to your base attack bonus (up to +5).

## Bin'Nik, 'Swordhands' (Narn)

Your hands are truly vicious, and can tear through flesh as though your fingers were blades.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Var'Tok) skill, base attack bonus +3 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat, Var'Tok.

**Benefits:** Your unarmed attacks with your hands receive the critical threat range 19-20/x3. Also, you may ignore the first point of Damage Reduction from your opponent's armour.

## Chon’Nok, ‘Embers in the Blood’ (Narn)

By reaching into the already deep well of rage that lies within you, you can fan the fires of that rage for lengthy encounters. Or, conversely, you can ignite them into a veritable inferno to end a conflict in seconds.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Var’Tok) skill, base attack bonus +5 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat, Blood Rage, Var’Tok, Con 13+.

**Benefits:** When calling upon the benefits of the feat Blood Rage, you have three options to choose from. Obviously, you may use the standard Blood Rage rules. You may also choose from the following alternate effects:

- a) +2 Strength and +4 Constitution, +4 morale bonus to Will saves, +4 hit points per level, -1 DV, and a duration of 5 rounds + Constitution modifier.
- b) +6 Strength, +6 Will saves, +2 hit points per level, -2 DV, and a duration of 1 round + Constitution modifier. Fatigue remains the same in all versions of the Blood Rage; -2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity for one hour.

## Unbreakable (Narn)

Var’Tok teaches that your body is a temple to the Narn ways. You can transform your temple into a fortress! You have mastered the ability to steel yourself against any wounds or pain you might feel in order to dismay your opponent no matter how badly it seems to be going for you. You seem like an unflinching juggernaut against the odds – all the while keeping your fiery eyes locked upon your enemy’s.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Var’Tok) skill, base attack bonus +3 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat, Var’Tok, Con 16+.

**Benefits:** You shrug off pain. You may choose to fight beyond 0 hit points. You may continue to fight as normal up to -10 hit points for

a number of rounds equal to your Constitution score (when you will begin suffer normal effects). From 0 to -10 hit points you suffer a -1 penalty to all attack and damage rolls. During any melee combat in which you are wounded, you may add your current lost hit points to your Intimidate skill checks.

## At Any Cost (Narn)

Sacrifice is a major tenet of the Narn people, and Var’Tok teaches that it can give you the edge to snatch victory for your allies – even if it means defeat for you personally. You can put yourself in harm’s way in order to push yourself beyond your limits.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Var’Tok) skill, base attack bonus +8 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat, Var’Tok, Unbreakable.

**Benefits:** You may take a penalty to your own DV up to your own base attack bonus, and add half that number (round up) to all unarmed damage rolls for that turn.

## Zhashalla (Drazi)

It is no surprise that a belligerent species like the Drazi have a great focus on martial combat – unarmed or otherwise. It may come as some surprise though that they have had one of the oldest martial arts forms in known space. Possibly only predated by the Minbari’s Onh’l Domo, the priests and chaplains of the Temple of Droshalla have devised a method of concentrated strikes they call ‘Zhashalla’, or ‘Homelight’.

Zhashalla is solely based on the Drazi instinctual ‘strength over all else’ belief structure. They put the infallible tenacity of their faith behind each and every attack they call upon. Drazi history is filled with legendary moments of Droshalla’s faithful performing unbelievable acts of strength and dedication that

parallel some of Earth’s own ancient mythologies.

The art is primarily used only by the clergy of Droshalla, but has been taught to others in the centuries of its use. Those who study this devastating art are almost always clad in blessed or holy garments of the priesthood, but those rare non-clerical students often still wear symbols of Droshalla upon their person. Some bolder Drazi in the last few generations have bleached or etched ritualistic religious scripts onto their scales in homage to the source of Zhashalla’s power.

## Zhashalla (Drazi)

You have either schooled in the Droshalla clergy or under a Zhashallan monk to learn the basics of the art of Zhashalla. Your body is a weapon – even more than a regular Drazi that is!

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Zhashalla) skill, Knowledge (Droshalla Religion) skill, base attack bonus +2 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat.

**Benefits:** You may choose to inflict normal damage with unarmed attacks, and inflicts half-again your Strength modifier with the first successful strike each turn. Increase your Natural Damage Reduction by 1.

## Rasping Scales (Drazi)

By using your natural protection as a weapon, you have learned to drag your scales across your target in a fashion that causes ripping wounds instead of bludgeoning ones.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Zhashalla) skill, Knowledge (Droshalla Religion) skill, base attack bonus +3 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat, Zhashalla.

**Benefits:** As long as your unarmed attacks are striking unarmoured flesh you may add your Natural Damage Reduction to your unarmed damage. This bonus is negated if attacking with a portion of your body covered by anything thicker than cloth.

## Concentrated Strike (Drazi)

Focusing all of your martial knowledge and physical prowess into a single tremendous attack, you can bring momentous force behind your blow – bending metal and shattering stone.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Zhashalla) skill, Knowledge (Droshalla Religion) skill, base attack bonus +5 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat, Zhashalla, Strength 15+.

**Benefits:** By spending at least one full combat round concentrating, and passing a DC15 Concentration check, you may add the following bonuses to your next attack (which will also

(Zhashalla) skill, Knowledge (Droshalla Religion) skill, base attack bonus +5 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat, Zhashalla.

**Benefits:** If you choose to make a Stonehead Strike, you suffer a –2 penalty to hit. If successful, you inflict normal damage to your target and half that damage to yourself in subdual damage (which you can reduce with your Natural Damage Reduction). Your target must also pass a Fort save at 10+ damage inflicted or be knocked unconscious for 2d6 rounds and suffer d3 temporary Intelligence damage. Ability score loss returns at a rate of 1 per hour of rest. This attack *may* be combined with other combat feats.

passing a DC15 Concentration check, you may add the following bonuses to your next Strength related skill check; double your Wisdom modifier, +1 per character level, and +1 for every consecutive full combat round you pass the necessary Concentration check (up to +5). If used to break or physically damage an object (ripping a door off its hinges, bending prison bars, etc.) you cause an equal damage to the object equal to an uncontested Strength check.

## The Mutai (General)

An assembly of the finest martial artists, the Mutai is no doubt where the greatest examples of the above arts can be found. The society has spread across known space in recent decades, and has thousands upon thousands of members on hundreds of worlds. Some of the Mutai that hail from these specific arts and races have trends that have revealed themselves over the decades.

## Famed Sho'Rin (General)

You have competed and were victorious in at least one Mutai tournament. You have held the title of Sho'Rin – possibly still do. You are not afraid to flaunt this fact where people will know what it means. This comes with great respect and a healthy list of benefits.

**Prerequisites:** at least 1 level of the Mutai prestige class (pg. 277 of main rulebook), and must have defeated at least one other Sho'Rin in Mutai combat.

**Benefits:** On any planet or station where a Mutai circle exists, you gain the following benefits:

- Up to 500 credits per day in free food, drink and entertainment.



be a full-round action): your Wisdom modifier, +1 for every two character levels (round up), and +1 for every consecutive full combat round you pass the necessary Concentration check (up to +5). This attack ignores Damage Reduction and Hardness of the target.

## Stonehead Strike (Drazi)

It is no surprise that some folk think Drazi are thick headed, especially if they have ever seen you use yours in combat. With very little movement, you can smash an opponent with startling force.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge

## Droshalla's Strength (Drazi)

Concentrating your strength in combat is natural for Zhashallan Monks. You have a capability to call upon such power for feats of strength outside of conflict. Nothing can match your sheer will to lift, push, or throw.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Zhashalla) skill, Knowledge (Droshalla Religion) skill, base attack bonus +8 or higher, Improved Unarmed Combat, Zhashalla, Strength 15+.

**Benefits:** By spending at least one full combat round concentrating, and

- b) A completely free stay in above average lodgings.
- c) +4 bonus to all Intimidate or Gather Information skill checks. These benefits are halved (250 credits per day, half-price lodgings, +2 bonus) if and when you lose your current standing as a Sho'Rin.

**Special:** Any Sho'Rin is expected to fight in all local Mutai Championships, and accept all honourable Mutari challengers. Games Masters are encouraged to use this often for Sho'Rin that flaunt their status as such.

## Tournament Tronnost (Centauri)

Tronno is not a very respected art-form outside of Centauri space, but you still bring your devious and sometimes lethal art into the Mutai ring to bring honour and fame to your name. Nearly any Centauri will no doubt bet upon you, and no self-

respecting Narn would EVER win credits as a result of your wins. You can always use this knowledge to your advantage.

**Prerequisites:** at least 1 level of the Mutari prestige class (see main B5 rulebook), Profession (gambler) skill, Bluff skill at +6 or higher.

**Benefits:** By placing side bets on your own matches with dubious onlookers through anonymous sources, for every Mutai match you are involved in that you successfully predict the outcome of (and yes, thrown matches count!) you win 2d6 x your bet in credits divided by your current Mutari prestige class level.

**Special:** Mutari that bet upon

themselves are not looked upon fondly by their peers. All other Mutari that fight a Tournament Tronnost in a sanctioned combat gain +1 to their attack and damage rolls against them.

## Blood Warrior (Narn)

When a Narn dedicates himself to a cause such as the Mutai, he gives himself over to it with a dedication unrivalled by any other. There are a good number of Narn that have joined the Mutai, but you are among the elite who have made it your life.

**Prerequisites:** at least 1 level of the Mutari prestige class (see main B5 rulebook), Intimidate skill at +4 or higher, Priestly Devotion, Var'Tok.



**Benefits:** You receive an additional +1 to attack and damage rolls in any Mutai-sanctioned combat. You may increase this bonus to +2 if you perform a ritualistic pre-fight meditation that must last for 1 hour.

**Special:** Narn Blood Warriors have become a strange, militant religious group based around the victories of the Mutai. Older Narn may find them almost blasphemous, and young ones often see them as some sort of heroes.

## Droshalla's Blessing (Drazi)

The fighting Zhashallan Monks consider their pugilistic ways as a blessing upon those they fight with. You have joined a Mutai circle in order to pass on Droshalla's Blessing, and the bruises that accompany it, to any race that steps into your temple – the Mutai ring.

**Prerequisites:** at least 1 level of the Mutari prestige class (see main B5 rulebook), Knowledge (Droshalla) at +8 or higher, Concentration at +8 or higher, Zhashalla, Concentrated Strike.

**Benefits:** By calling upon the attack provided by the Concentrated Strike feat, and speaking a short litany in Droshalla's name (requiring a Knowledge skill check DC 12),

you can imprint the Blessing of Droshalla on a successful Concentrated Strike. This massive bruise, while meant for religious reasons, will make any others who see it falter in the same ring as you. Anyone who has seen you deliver the Blessing will suffer a -2 modifier to their attack and damage

rolls against you in further Mutai bouts in the current tournament.

**Special:** Droshalla's Blessing leaves a large ugly bruise wherever it lands that will spread outward like some sort of odd sunburst – the symbol of Droshalla's faith.



# CREATURE FEATURE

## CHOOSE AN OOZE OR TWO TO USE!

Johnathan M. Richards

As creature types go, the ooze is the single most underrepresented in *Core Rulebook III*. This is perhaps not surprising; after all, what is an ooze but a mass of amorphous protoplasm? Even examining the four oozes appearing in *Core Rulebook III* – the black pudding, gelatinous cube, grey ooze and ochre jelly – we find a striking similarity between them: they all lash out with pseudopods fashioned from their bodies and secrete acid to dissolve their prey.

This ‘sameness’ among oozes need not always hold true. There are numerous ways one might liven up the creature type and expand upon the possibilities. While having a body made of pliant protoplasm certainly makes striking out with a pseudopod the most logical way to attack prey, it need not be the only way and not all of the seven new oozes presented here do so. Similarly, not all of these new oozes rely upon digestive enzymes in their attack strategies. With imagination as the only real limitation, there are untold different ways in which a potential ooze might attack; these seven only scratch the surface of the limitless possibilities.

Three of the creatures in particular can be used in rather atypical circumstances for oozes. The skinslime actually ‘bonds’ with another creature, allowing the Games Master to grant a humanoid

opponent a slight upgrade in power without giving it too much of a combat edge; this is especially useful if a player character spellcaster tends to rely heavily upon invisibility magic. The arcanavore is an ooze that seeks out and devours magic in the form of existing spells and magic items – perfect to spring upon a player character party grown complacent with layers upon layers of ‘buffing’ spells. Finally, the inebriator jelly is occasionally used as a missile weapon: try that tactic on your party and see what kind of facial expressions you can coax from your players!

Oozes make excellent dungeon dwellers. With no intelligence to speak of, an ooze is simply an organic eating machine, one whose bizarre anatomy might allow it to go for years

between meals – perfect creatures to place inside long-sealed dusty tombs or hidden passageways deep under the earth, just waiting to be discovered by an inquisitive band of adventurers.

Thus, the next time you are stocking a dungeon with aberrant life forms for your group’s player characters to encounter, do not forget about the slithering masses of formless matter always eager for succulent flesh – and choose an ooze or two to use!

### AQUATIC PUDDING (‘The Ooze of Hues of Greens and Blues’)

Medium Ooze (Aquatic)

**Hit Dice:** 3d10+18 (34 hp)

**Initiative:** +0

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 10 ft., swim 20 ft.

**Armour Class:** 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/+4

**Attack:** Slam +4 melee (1d4+3)

**Full Attack:** Slam +4 melee (1d4+3)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Engulf, paralysis

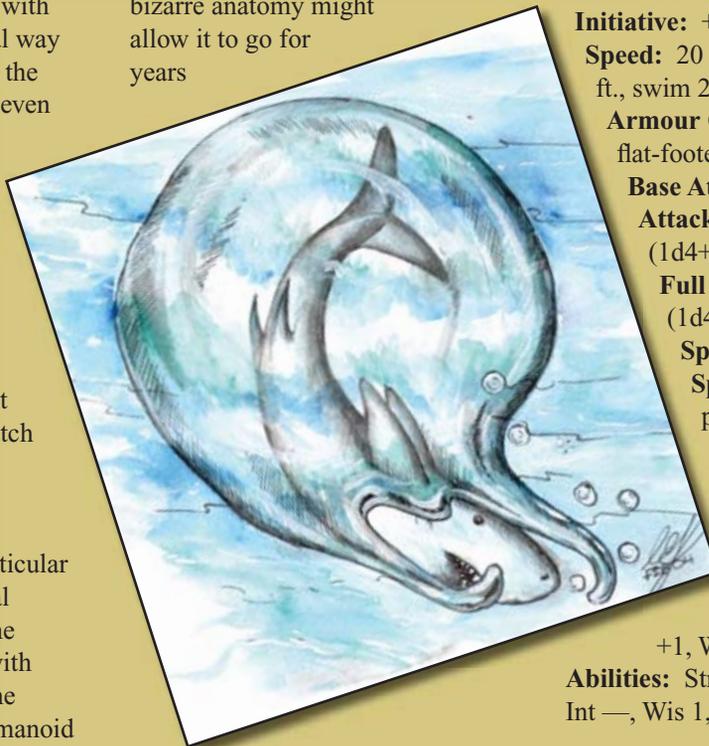
**Special Qualities:**

Blindsight, camouflage, ooze traits, resistance to cold 10, split

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref

+1, Will -4

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 11, Con 22, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1



**Skills:** —

**Feats:** —

**Environment:** Any aquatic

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement Range:** 4-6 HD

(Medium-size), 7-9 HD (Large)

**Level Adjustment:** —

The aquatic pudding is a waterborne cousin to the black pudding. Smaller in size and lighter in coloration (with striated bands of green and blue allowing it to blend in with the surrounding water), the aquatic pudding is a marine creature, rarely if ever venturing out onto dry land.

Instead, it spends its time swimming above the ocean floor, dropping to engulf prey in its pliant body. Aquatic puddings feed primarily on crustaceans that crawl on the ocean floor and any fish swimming too close.

Although as protoplasmic as any of the other oozes, the aquatic pudding generally configures its body into a hollow sphere. It opens a hole in one end to let water in, seals the hole, then opens another in the end of its spherical body opposite the direction it wishes to move and compresses its body, squirting the water out and thus moving in a series of jet-propelled thrusts rather like an octopus or squid. Optionally, it can slither along the ocean floor in the manner of most oozes.

**Combat**

Aquatic puddings strike out with a rubbery pseudopod against Medium or larger creatures. Prey of smaller size is usually engulfed instead. Any victim of an aquatic pudding attack must deal with the paralytic secretions of its amorphous body.

**Engulf (Ex):** An aquatic pudding can simply mow down Small or smaller creatures as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The aquatic pudding has

merely to move over its opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents who do not attempt attacks of opportunity against the aquatic pudding must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 12) or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the aquatic pudding surges forward. Opponents who make attacks of opportunity against the aquatic pudding are automatically engulfed. Engulfed creatures are subject to the aquatic pudding's paralysis and are considered grappled and trapped within its body. The save DC is Strength-based and includes a +1 racial bonus.

**Paralysis (Ex):** Aquatic puddings secrete an anaesthetising slime. A target hit by its slam or engulf attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 17) or be paralysed for 3d6 rounds. The aquatic pudding can automatically engulf a paralysed opponent. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Blindsight (Ex):** An aquatic pudding's entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent, sound and vibration through the water within 120 feet. This distance is halved when on land.

**Camouflage (Ex):** It requires a successful Spot check (DC 15) to notice a swimming aquatic pudding for what it is.

**Resistance to Cold 10 (Ex):** Aquatic puddings ignore the first 10 points of cold damage each round.

**Split (Ex):** Weapons do no damage to an aquatic pudding. Instead, the creature splits into two identical aquatic puddings, each with

half the original's hit points (round down). An aquatic pudding with only 1 hit point cannot be further split.

**Ooze Traits:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph and stunning. Not subject to critical hits or flanking.

**ARCANA VORE** ('The Ooze That Renews From the Spells That You Use')  
Large Ooze

**Hit Dice:** 4d10+20 (42 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

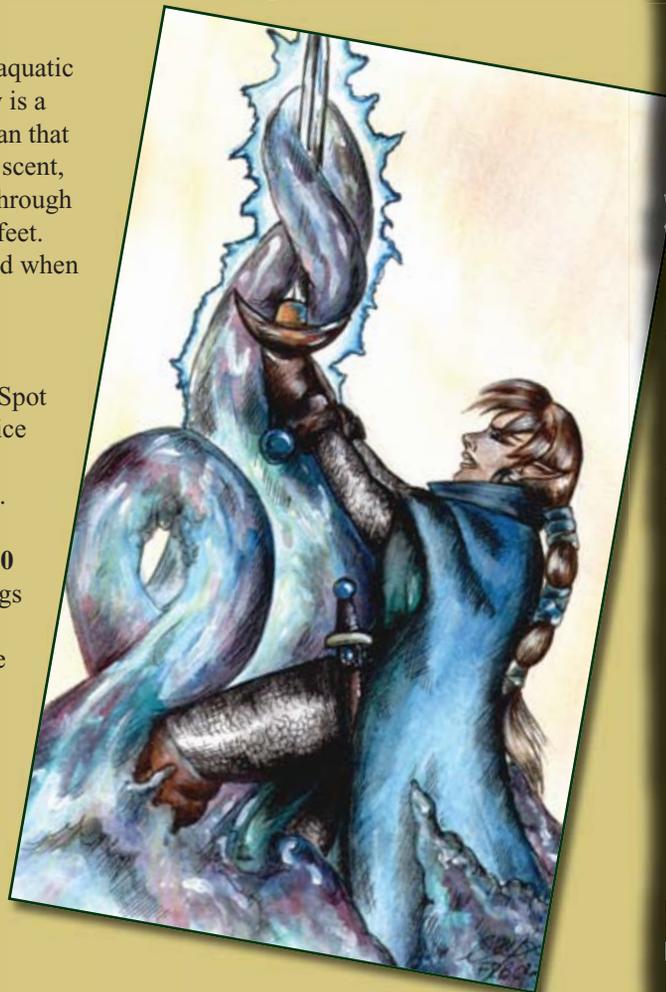
**Armour Class:** 11 (-1 size, +2 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 9

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/+10

**Attack:** Slam +6 melee (1d8+6)

**Full Attack:** Slam +6 melee (1d8+6)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./5 ft.



**Special Attacks:** Drain magic  
**Special Qualities:** Blindsight, detect magic, immunity to spells, ooze traits

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +3, Will -4

**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 15, Con 21, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

**Skills:** —

**Feats:** —

**Environment:** Any land and underground

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 5

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement Range:** 5-8 HD (Large), 9-12 HD (Huge)

**Level Adjustment:** —

Arcanavores are fairly liquid as far as oozes go, certainly much more fluid than most. Their garish coloration (a continuously swirling miasma of just about every colour known) makes the arcanavore stand out against nearly any background. As an arcanavore moves its body jostles and heaves with a continuous series of ripples and waves. However, it can condense a portion of its body into a hardened pseudopod capable of dealing out considerable bludgeoning damage. Arcanavores are almost constantly moving, seeking out sources of magic upon which they feed. They are a source of considerable dread for many adventurers, especially those relying heavily upon ‘buffing’ spells to enhance their physical attributes or wielding magical equipment.

### Combat

Arcanavores can attack with pseudopods in the manner of most oozes (and do so if attacked) but prefer absorbing magical energy directly from magic items or active spells. If given a choice of targets the arcanavore heads unerringly for the strongest source of magic.

**Detect Magic (Sp):** An arcanavore can detect magic at will and also detects any antimagic fields within the radius of its awareness (60 feet).

Arcanavores never willingly enter antimagic fields.

**Drain Magic (Su):** An arcanavore makes a touch attack against any target from which it detects magic emanating. In the case of a living opponent, the victim is allowed a Reflex save (DC 14) to avoid the effects of the arcanavore’s touch. Those who fail have their magic stripped away, in the following sequence: magic spells currently active are dispelled (highest-level spells first if there are more than one; determine randomly in the case of two or more active spell of the same level), use-activated magic items are suppressed for 1d6 rounds (‘plussed’ items are targeted first) and then charged magical items are drained of 1d6 charges. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

As an example, an arcanavore attacks a wizard wearing *boots of levitation*, wielding a +1 *dagger* and a *wand of magic missiles* and who is currently under the effects of the spells *bear’s endurance* and *mage armour*.

Assuming the wizard fails all of his Reflex saves, the arcanavore’s first drain magic attack dispels the wizard’s *bear’s endurance* spell (*bear’s endurance* being a higher-level spell than *mage armour*). Its second strike dispels the *mage armour*; its third suppresses the +1 *dagger* (making it temporarily nonmagical but still a masterwork dagger); its fourth suppresses the *boots of levitation*; and its fifth drains 1d6 charges from the *wand of magic missiles*. A sixth attack in this instance would drain another 1d6 charges from the wand unless the duration of magic suppression of the boots or dagger had expired by then, in which case they would take their standard places in the arcanavore’s magic-draining hierarchy.

If an arcanavore is allowed constant contact with a non-artefact magic item, it drains it of all magic within 1d4 hours (plus one hour per magical ‘plus’ of the item: it would

take an arcanavore 1d4+2 hours to completely drain a +2 *longsword*).

Despite the name ‘arcanavore’, these creatures can devour both arcane and divine magic with equal ease. An arcanavore cannot drain magic on the same round it uses a slam attack.

**Immunity to Spells (Su):** An arcanavore is immune to all spells except for dispel magic, which, if cast upon the ooze, slows it for 2d6 rounds (no save). Other spells cast upon it have one of two effects: if the arcanavore is injured, each spell cast directly upon it heals one point of damage per spell level (thus, a magic missile cast on a wounded arcanavore heals one point of damage and a finger of death cast by a sorcerer or wizard heals 7 points of damage). If the arcanavore is already at its normal maximum hit points, further spellcasting upon it has no effect.

**Blindsight (Ex):** An arcanavore’s entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 feet. It is particularly attuned to emanations of magic.

**Ooze Traits:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph and stunning. Not subject to critical hits or flanking.

## BLOODHEART (‘The Ooze That Spews the Gunk That Glues’) Huge Ooze

**Hit Dice:** 12d10+72 (138 hp)

**Initiative:** -1 (Dex)

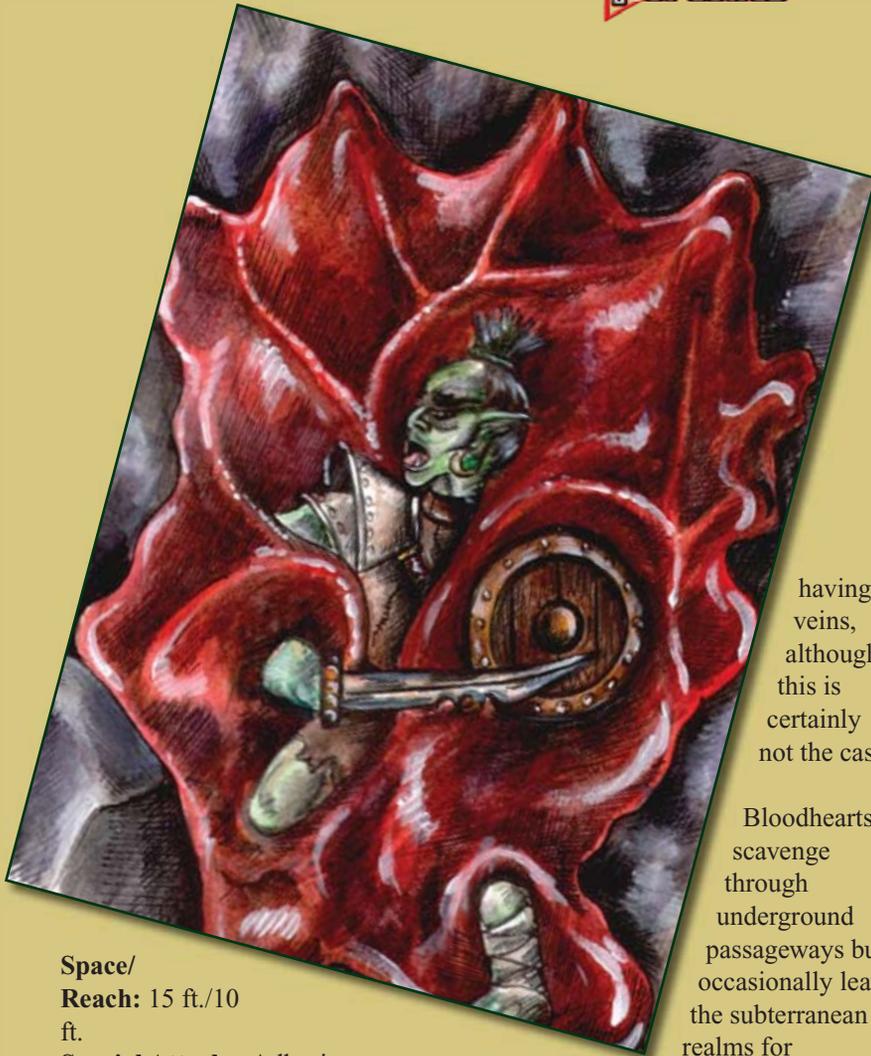
**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Armour Class:** 7 (-2 size, -1 Dex) touch 7, flat-footed 7

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +7/+25

**Attack:** Slam +17 melee (2d6+15)

**Full Attack:** Slam +17 melee (2d6+15)



having veins, although this is certainly not the case.

Bloodhearts scavenge through underground passageways but occasionally leave the subterranean realms for excursions to the

surface. Like all oozes, they are motivated primarily by hunger; wherever there is potential food to be found, that is where the bloodheart's wanderings take it.

Bloodhearts usually grow to 18 feet or so in diameter, although there have been reports of specimens nearly double that size. They are roughly hemispherical, with a sloppy trail of slimy ooze along their bottom edge.

**Combat**

Bloodhearts slam opponents with powerful pseudopodal appendages they extend from their bodies. In addition, they can open pores in their bodies and squirt a sticky, reddish liquid (naturally, this is referred to as 'blood' although the term is not technically accurate) that holds victims in place while the bloodheart meanders up to reach them.

**Adhesive (Ex):** The reddish 'blood' produced by a bloodheart is extremely sticky. Anyone attacking a bloodheart with a melee weapon must make a Strength check (DC 23) to pull it out of the ooze's body. The same holds true of anyone touching the bloodheart, although an Escape Artist (DC 23) can be substituted at the victim's option. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +1 racial bonus.

**Bloodsquirt (Ex):** A bloodheart's 'blood' can be squirted at a single opponent up to 60 feet away with no range increment. This is treated as a ranged touch attack. A victim drenched in a bloodheart's 'blood' is treated as if under the effects of a *tanglefoot bag*; the reddish substance dries quickly and hinders movement. 'Bloodsquirted' victims suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls and -4 penalties to effective Dexterity. If they fail a Reflex save (DC 15), they are glued in place and unable to move. A character glued to the floor can break free with a successful Strength check (DC 23). (See the *tanglefoot bag* in *Core Rulebook I* for further details.) The save DC is Dexterity-based.

**Engulf (Ex):** A bloodheart can simply mow down Large or smaller creatures as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The bloodheart has merely to move over its opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents who do not attempt attacks of opportunity against the bloodheart must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 15) or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the bloodheart surges forward. Opponents who make attacks of opportunity against the bloodheart are automatically engulfed, as are opponents glued in place by a 'bloodsquirt' attack. Engulfed creatures are considered grappled and trapped within its body, where they take 1d6 points of acid damage each round. The exterior

- Space/Reach:** 15 ft./10 ft.
- Special Attacks:** Adhesive, bloodsquirt, engulf
- Special Qualities:** Blindsight, ooze traits
- Saves:** Fort +10, Ref +3, Will -1
- Abilities:** Str 31, Dex 8, Con 23, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1
- Skills:** —
- Feats:** —
- Environment:** Any land and underground
- Organisation:** Solitary
- Challenge Rating:** 9
- Treasure:** None
- Alignment:** Always neutral
- Advancement Range:** 13-24 HD (Huge), 25-36 HD (Gargantuan)
- Level Adjustment:** —

A bloodheart is so named not only because of its reddish-black coloration but also because of the way its entire body throbs and pulsates in a never-ending (yet eerily silent) rhythm. Its amorphous exterior even gives the appearance of



of a bloodheart's body is not caustic enough for it to add acid damage to its non-engulfing attacks. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

**Blindsight (Ex):** A bloodheart's entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 feet.

**Ooze Traits:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph and stunning. Not subject to critical hits or flanking.

## **ECHOBLOB** ('The Ooze That Coos and Sometimes Moos')

Medium Ooze

**Hit Dice:** 3d10+12 (28 hp)

**Initiative:** -5

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Armour Class:** 5 (-5 Dex), touch 5, flat-footed 5

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/+2

**Attack:** Slam +2 melee (1d6 plus 1d4 acid)

**Full Attack:** Slam +2 melee (1d6 plus 1d4 acid)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Acid, sonic blast

**Special Qualities:** Blindsight, immunity to sonic damage, ooze traits, sound imitation

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref -4, Will -4

**Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 1, Con 19, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

**Skills:** Hide +11\*

**Feats:** —

**Environment:** Any land or underground

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement**

**Range:** 4-6 HD (Medium); 7-9 HD (Large)

**Level Adjustment:** —

Echoblobs are generally about 5 feet in diameter with a tannish-brown coloration making them look much like a patch of dirt. They are seldom silent; even a stationary echoblob gives off occasional noises – the cooing of pigeons or doves, a cow's moo, the sounds of someone traipsing through autumn leaves, the belch of a contented bear after a fine meal, the tinkling of a mountain brook, the droning of bees, the sound of beating rain upon cobbled streets – in a seemingly random fashion.

### **Combat**

Echoblobs are patient hunters, preferring to lie in wait in one spot and lure others to their location through the sounds they make. Once prey comes within range, they strike out with a pseudopod. Echoblobs dissolve slain prey with acid from their protoplasmic bodies.

**Acid (Ex):** Echoblobs secrete digestive enzymes that dissolve only flesh. Any melee hit deals acid damage and anyone touching an echoblob with their bare flesh takes

an automatic 1d4 points of acid damage.

**Blindsight (Ex):** An echoblob's entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 feet.

### **Immunity to Sonics (Ex):**

Echoblobs take no damage from sonic attacks.

**Sound Imitation (Su):** Echoblobs store ambient sounds they hear and can imitate them at will. They instinctively choose sounds appropriate to their current environment, making the noise of a frightened baby bird in a forest or a wounded bat in a subterranean cavern. In each case, the sounds are used to lure predators into checking out the 'easy kill,' only to often find themselves the echoblob's prey!

**Sonic Blast (Su):** In dire straits (as when at less than half of its hit points), an echoblob can blast out all of its stored sounds. This is similar to a *shout* spell centred on the echoblob but affects everyone in a 30-foot radius around the ooze. Those failing a Fortitude save (DC 15) are deafened for 2d6 rounds and take 5d6 points of sonic damage. Those making their saves avoid the deafening and only take half damage. Once emitting a sonic blast, an echoblob cannot do so again until 24 hours have elapsed (during which time the creature 'stores up' additional ambient sounds to power its sonic blast ability). However, if an echoblob comes under a sonic attack (to which it is immune) before then, it can use it to power an additional sonic blast. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Ooze Traits:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph and stunning. Not subject to critical hits or flanking.

**Skills:** Echoblobs' coloration and appearance grants them a +16 racial bonus to Hide checks when not moving.

## INEBRIATOR JELLY

(‘The Ooze That Crews Compare to Booze’)

**Diminutive Ooze**

**Hit Dice:** ½d10+3 (5 hp)

**Initiative:** -3 (Dex)

**Speed:** 5 ft. (1 square)

**Armour Class:** 11 (+4 size, -3

Dex) touch 11, flat-footed 11

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +4/-11

**Attack:** —

**Full Attack:** —

**Space/Reach:** 1 ft./0 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Alcohol poisoning, Wisdom damage

**Special Qualities:**

Blindsight, ooze traits

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref -3,

Will -5

**Abilities:** Str 5, Dex 5,

Con 16, Int —, Wis 1,

Cha 1

**Skills:** —

**Feats:** —

**Environment:** Any land, occasionally carried aboard seagoing vessels

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** ½

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement Range:** —

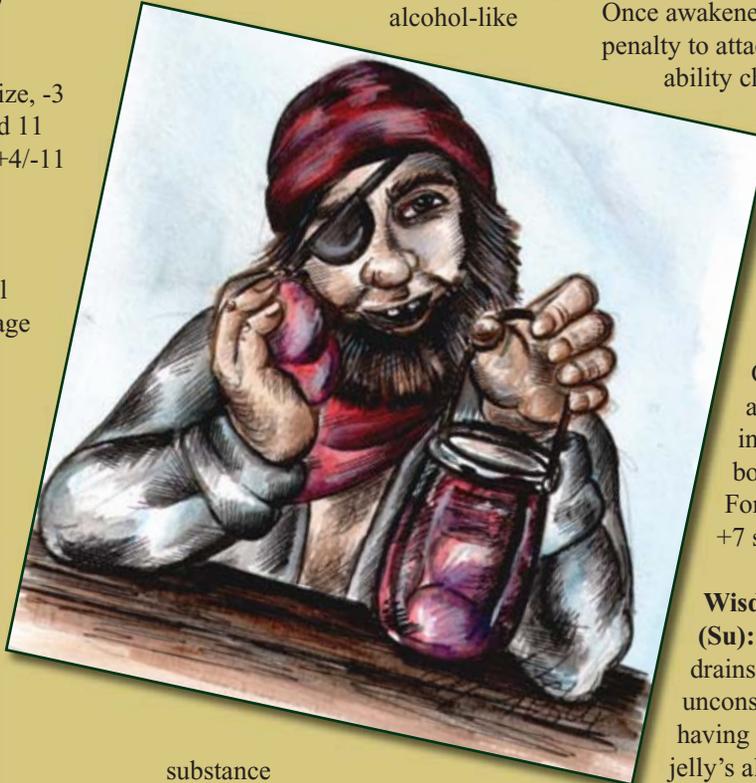
**Level Adjustment:** —

The inebriator jelly is a lumpy, slow-moving blob of reddish-purple protoplasm. It gets its name from the pleasant, drunk-like feeling of contentment that coming into physical contact with one of these oozes produces. In fact, many ships carry one or more inebriator jellies in sealed containers on board their ship; if the booze runs low, the same effects can be duplicated by holding an inebriator jelly. Usually, in such cases, the ship's captain maintains hold over the inebriator jelly's use by the crew for, left to their own

devices, many crews (especially those who have been at sea for a long time) will overdose on the jelly's effects and be useless until they 'sober up'.

### Combat

Inebriator jellies are not built for combat. Instead, they prefer lulling their victims to sleep by flooding their systems with a fast-acting, alcohol-like



substance secreted from the ooze's body. Once their victims have succumbed, the inebriator jellies feed by draining Wisdom.

Some pirate vessels use inebriator oozes as weapons themselves, flinging them via catapult into the midst of the enemy crew before boarding their vessel.

**Alcohol Poisoning (Ex):** Once having touched an inebriator jelly, a victim must make a successful Will save (DC 15) to voluntarily release it, as the sensations are quite pleasurable. Every round a living creature remains in contact with an inebriator jelly he must make a Fortitude save (DC 13) or take a cumulative -1 penalty to attack rolls, skill checks, ability

checks and Reflex saves. When this numerical penalty equals the creature's Hit Dice the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or pass out. If the save is successful, the inebriated victim must continue to make an additional save at +1 DC for each additional round. Those losing unconsciousness from contact with an inebriator jelly sleep as if under the effects of a *sleep* spell. Once awakened, the cumulative penalty to attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks and Reflex

saves is lessened by one point per minute. A *heal* or *neutralise poison* spell removes the victim's penalties immediately. The save DC is Constitution-based, and the Will save includes a +2 racial bonus, while the second Fortitude save includes a +7 save bonus.

### Wisdom Damage

**(Su):** An inebriator jelly drains Wisdom from an unconscious victim (one having succumbed to the jelly's alcohol poisoning effect) at the rate of 1 point per full minute in physical contact.

An individual inebriator jelly only deals 1d3 points of Wisdom damage before being sated. It can go for months between feedings if needs be. This Wisdom damage is only temporary and is restored at the rate of 1 point per day or can be reversed via spells such as lesser restoration.

**Blindsight (Ex):** An inebriator jelly's entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 feet.

**Ooze Traits:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph and stunning. Not subject to critical hits or flanking.

## SEWERDUNG ('The Ooze of Phews and Stinky-Poos')

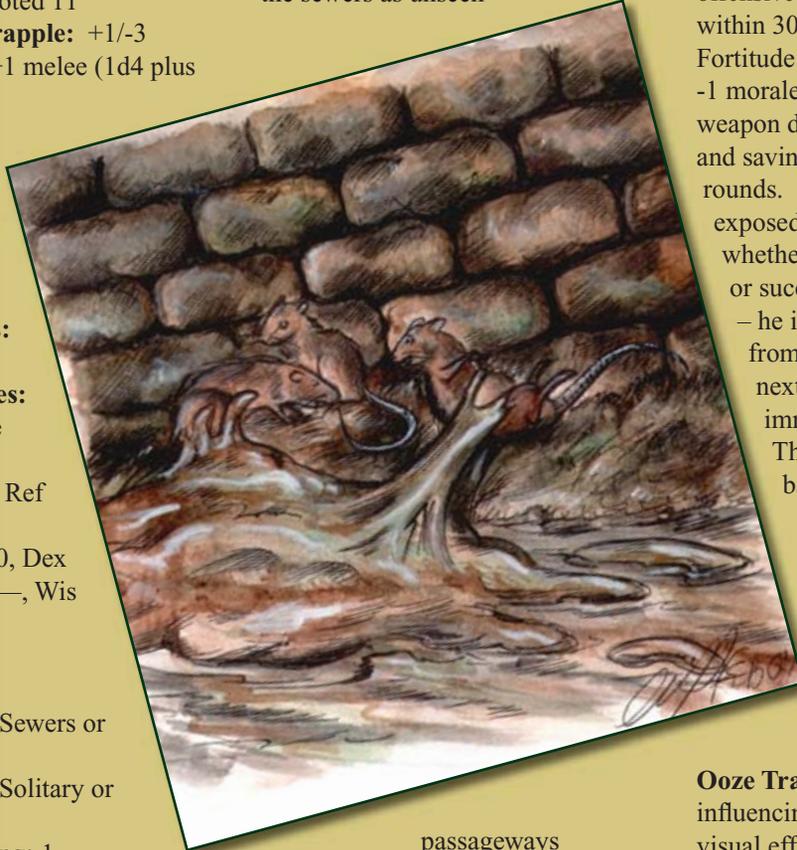
Small Ooze

**Hit Dice:** 1d10+4 (9 hp)  
**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)  
**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 10 ft., swim 10 ft.  
**Armour Class:** 12 (+1 size, +1 Dex) touch 12, flat-footed 11  
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/-3  
**Attack:** Slam +1 melee (1d4 plus disease)  
**Full Attack:** Slam +1 melee (1d4 plus disease)  
**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.  
**Special Attacks:** Disease, stench  
**Special Qualities:** Blindsight, ooze traits  
**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -5  
**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 12, Con 18, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1  
**Skills:** —  
**Feats:** —  
**Environment:** Sewers or underground  
**Organisation:** Solitary or colony (2-5)  
**Challenge Rating:** 1  
**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Always neutral  
**Advancement Range:** 2-3 HD (Small)  
**Level Adjustment:** —

Despite a wide variety of cruder names by which it is also known, many refer to the sewer-dwelling ooze common in many cities as a 'sewerdung.' As the name suggests, the sewerdung is not a pleasant creature by any stretch of the imagination – it is perhaps the most physically repulsive ooze of all.

Sewerdung are small blobs of amorphous protoplasm, usually reaching anywhere from 3 to 4 feet long, with a width and height approximately half their length.

They scurry about in sewers or other areas of filth and offal, subsisting on waste materials better off not dwelt upon. If left alone, sewerdung are quite harmless. Most people are more than happy to give sewerdung a wide berth; it is the unwitting who occasionally stray into their reach (mostly thieves and assassins using the sewers as unseen



passageways connecting various parts of the city or those unfortunates with nowhere better to go).

Sewerdung are completely at home in the sewers, capable of climbing up the walls or swimming through the wastewater with equal ease. Their constant immersion stains their normally translucent bodies the colour of mud and filth and provides them with a telltale odour that gives them away if they stray too far from their sewers.

### Combat

Sewerdung strike with slimy pseudopods, dealing concussive force and quite often spreading disease as well.

**Disease (Ex):** Filth fever – touch, Fortitude save (DC 14), incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 temporary Dexterity and 1d3 temporary Constitution (see Disease in *Core Rulebook II*). The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Stench (Ex):** The sewerdung's offensive stench forces everyone within 30 feet to make a successful Fortitude save (DC 14) or suffer a -1 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, skill checks and saving throws for the next 10 rounds. Once a character has been exposed to a sewerdung's stench – whether succumbing to its effects or successfully saving against it – he is immune to such effects from that sewerdung for the next 24 hours. Sewerdung are immune to their own stench. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Blindsight (Ex):** A sewerdung's entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 feet.

**Ooze Traits:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph and stunning. Not subject to critical hits or flanking.

## SKINSLIME ('The Ooze That Imbues Alternative Views')

Tiny Ooze

**Hit Dice:** 1d10 (5 hp)  
**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)  
**Speed:** 10 ft. (2 squares), climb 10 ft.  
**Armour Class:** 14 (+2 size, +2 Dex), touch 14, flat-footed 12  
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/-8  
**Attack:** Touch +0 melee (1d2 acid)  
**Full Attack:** Touch +0 melee (1d2 acid)

**Face/Reach:** 2½ ft./0 ft.  
**Special Attacks:** —  
**Special Qualities:** Blindsight, bond, immunity to normal weapons, ooze traits  
**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -5  
**Abilities:** Str 7, Dex 14, Con 11, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1  
**Skills:** Climb +6  
**Feats:** —  
**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and underground  
**Organisation:** Solitary  
**Challenge Rating:** ½  
**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Always neutral  
**Advancement Range:** —

A skinslime is an odd type of ooze, instinctively seeking out host organisms with which to bond. Skinslime is a nearly translucent and odourless protoplasm that crawls slowly along dungeon passageways, in the branches of trees and even occasionally along the walls in city alleyways – anywhere it can drop down upon an unsuspecting potential host organism. As the creature usually spans a roughly 3-foot diameter it generally targets Medium or larger creatures.

Despite the immediate feeling of disgust most humanoids instinctively feel at the thought of having a near-liquid organism crawling about on the surface of their skin, a skinslime makes for a beneficial symbiotic partner. It subsists on the flakes of dead skin normally shed by its host organism and drinks up the waste products released when the host sweats, both nonintrusive ways of feeding upon the host. In return, the skinslime ‘shares’ its sensory abilities with any being touching it – a goblin ‘wearing’ a patch of

skinslime gains the blindsight ability so long as he keeps in physical contact with the ooze.

Many ‘encounters’ with a skinslime go by completely unnoticed if the ooze is already riding upon a humanoid host organism, in which case – as a result of the ooze’s thinness and lack of pigmentation – it appears to be merely a patch of



wh a t be beads of ‘sweat’ on its outer surface) upon the humanoid host. The skinslime must be in contact with the bare skin of its host organism and it slowly crawls over different exposed areas of skin during the course of a day. The host can cover the skinslime with a layer of clothing or armour but doing so blocks out the creature’s blindsight, depriving the host of the one benefit he receives in the symbiotic partnership. For this reason, skinslimes are more prevalent among creatures that habitually wear little or no clothing, like ogres and trolls, than among the more ‘civilised’ races that insist upon being fully clad.

**Combat**

Skinslimes usually either drop down upon unsuspecting victims or creep up to them when they are unmoving; many skinslimes approach while their victims sleep. If attacked, a skinslime can release a dribble of caustic acid, but it does this only in self-defence: the skinslime would much rather live comfortably off dead skin cells and sweat than kill a potential host and have to look elsewhere for its meal ticket.

**Blindsight (Ex):** A skinslime’s entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 feet, so long as its body is not blocked by layers of clothing or armour.

**Bond (Ex):** A skinslime can transmit its blindsight ability to anyone with whom it is in physical contact. This allows the host to detect invisible creatures and those in areas of darkness out to 60 feet.

**Immunity to Normal Weapons (Ex):** Skinslimes take no damage from normal weapons, as their fluidic protoplasm reforms around any cuts or perforations and bludgeoning weapons merely ‘squash’ it out of shape for an instant. Magic weapons deal their ‘plus’ damage and skinslimes take full damage from spells (although if the host organism makes a save the skinslime automatically does as well and skinslimes are allowed a separate saving throw if the host organism fails his save).

**Ooze Traits:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph and stunning. Not subject to critical hits or flanking.

**Skills:** A skinslime has a +8 racial bonus to Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.



# HOW IT ALL BEGAN

The Inspiration for the D&D Game, its Creation, GenCon's Founding, How TSR came into Being, and its Early Days

BY GARY GYGAX

## Live Action RPGing in 1947, Part Two

The stories we acted out were based on whatever radio program or movie we had listened to or seen recently. Favourite themes were from such radio programs as *Sam Spade*, *Casey Crime Photographer*, and *Suspense* (brought to you by Autolite, good night).

Sadly for us, Jim stopped being the Games Master when he was well, so after the summer of 1947 the games were pretty well forgotten until many, many years later. Only well after I had written the D&D game did the connection between Jim's 'realistic' games and roleplaying games strike home. He had certainly tilled the 'imaginary' soil for the game form to eventually sprout and bear fruit.

When Jim was taking the role of a Non-Player Character in the game, he always did what is now called 'judge-fudge,' of course. For example, as a bank teller he always managed to trigger an alarm, when playing a potential target his character had a bulletproof vest on. As we were but lads of nine, it was easy to dupe us, as he did one time by avoiding death because the character had a metal plate in his

head that stopped the bullet from harming him! Once, and once only, I managed to win out over the cruel Games Master.

The cellar at 921 Dodge Street where the Rasches lived was small. Not much room in it for playing, but we managed. A portion by the inside steps that was only partially dug out was where we sat when 'driving an auto' or 'flying a plane,' the instrument board and steering mechanism set before us, base standing on the floor. There was just enough room next the base of the stairs to set up the 'saloon' for playing Wild West games. We were doing that when it struck me that I might have more than one 'character' in the game. So I tried it, and it went something like this:

'Jim,' I ventured, 'my guy, Jack Slade, is upstairs watching us play poker.' After all, most saloons seen in Westerns had a stairway in the bar room, a walkway with a rail that someone usually crashed through and fell onto a table below in the fight scenes.

Jim accepted that, asking: 'Who are you now then?'

'I'm...ah... *Blackie*, another of the cowboys working at the ranch,

who's here in the saloon with Big John to have some fun.'

That was sufficient. Jim then took the role of saloon owner and later as a professional gambler who sat in at our poker game. Soon we were nearly cleaned out of our hard-won wooden gold and silver pieces, so: 'You're a cheatin' tinhorn!' I accused. With that Jim drew the model gun he had handy, was about to shoot my character. 'Pow!' I cried gleefully. You're plugged before you can get off a shot!

'What?!' he demanded. 'You don't have a gun drawn.'

'Blackie doesn't, but Jack Slade does. You forgot that my main guy is up above watching,' I said with a smirk.

Jim grumbled but finally agreed. John and I recovered our 'money,' but we weren't out of trouble. The tinhorn had a partner who began harassing us. He was clearly a gunslinger. No offer of a drink would do. He meant to kill us! As he looked at us with drawn hogleg, daring us to try to fill our hands before he shot us dead, another 'shot' rang out. Once again our Games Master had forgotten that

Jack Slade, my main character was still standing up above watching Blackie and Big John.

For once Jim quit the game by leaving in disgust, rather than managing to get one of our characters tossed in jail or shot. At least the sad end of such playing fun was accompanied by a triumphant feeling that my friend John shared with me!

Even though the many girls in the neighbourhood were included in the make-believe games, none of my playmates would agree to having me as both Games Master and player in what I had come to call 'realistic games'. Certainly it was because my ability to manage direction was lacking. Thus the shining example Jim Rasch had set for us was quickly forgotten. We returned to the usual 'Cops & Robbers' sort of play in good weather, games like *Foto-Electric Football* and *Monopoly* when forced indoors. Being a dedicated gamer even back then, I would even agree to play 'house' if there was no alternative...and I had a crush on the girl who suggested that. My favourite indoor games involved toy soldiers and block forts, though. Most of my pals loved them too, so we played with them often in whatever room of the big house I lived in was available for a mess.

Metal soldiers were found in every variety store during WWII and some years after. My collection had begun in Chicago when my father bought a few for me to play with. He brought a new toy home every Saturday, and as I loved soldiers, many of those little presents were a new figure or two. When I was old enough to go to the local dime store on my own, I'd pick up as many more as I could afford – not many as they cost a whopping 10 cents – as much as a loaf of bread sold for! My army

filled a mesh bag that oranges come in by the time we moved to Lake Geneva, and I added both more of the 70 mm WWII figures and whatever 54 mm Britons, and other kinds as well, I could talk my parents into buying me for birthday and Christmas presents or I could afford from my allowance and odd-job pay. That was little as movies and firecrackers came ahead of toy soldiers. Nonetheless, there were mounted desert Arabs, Bengal Lancers, cowboys, Indians and Union Infantry intermixed with the more modern military. To improve the forces I managed to get both artillery pieces and scale model AFVs – an M3 half-track, an M5 Stuart light tank, and two M4 Sherman tanks. Those came in handy when the battle was against rampaging dinosaurs. We'll return to the toy soldiers later.

As time passed I thus acquired some marvellous new things. First came a tent that we pitched in the yard and used for all sorts of make-believe games. It was never slept in then, as the front porch was cooler, screened against mosquitoes, and had a *chaise longue* and big swing to serve as beds. The tent was for cavalry soldiers or persons on a jungle expedition! Next came a lemonwood bow made by Bear Archery. It had a 39-pound draw, so in no time my pals and I could draw an arrow fully back, sending it through the bale of straw backing the target. Oh-oh, time to find somewhere else to practice archery!

The fact is we were now nearing teenage years and a lot bigger and stronger, but not wise in the least. After seeing a film with swashbuckling and swordplay, I went into the attic, found the sabre that my great uncle Russell had plied in the Civil War when an officer in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin Cavalry Regiment and the long cane knife with a horn handle that had come

from someone in the family who had been in Cuba during the Spanish American War. My friend John Rasch and I were going to have a duel with real blades. We were both highly disappointed when my mother confiscated our weapons.

Not long after that we saw a medieval action film, perhaps *Ivanhoe*, I don't recall. The movie inspired me to make a flail. Using a length of hickory wood as a haft, I drilled a hole, bolted a short length of chain onto the end, and attached a massive old iron nut to the end by looping the chain through the eye and bolting the links together. One knightly weapon down, and the other was already made, a lovely hand axe. This time John Rasch and I were actually able to smite each other's garbage-can-lid shield several mighty blows before we were spotted in the back yard by anxious parents and the tournament was brought to an untimely end. Back to wooden swords and toy guns for us, or else!

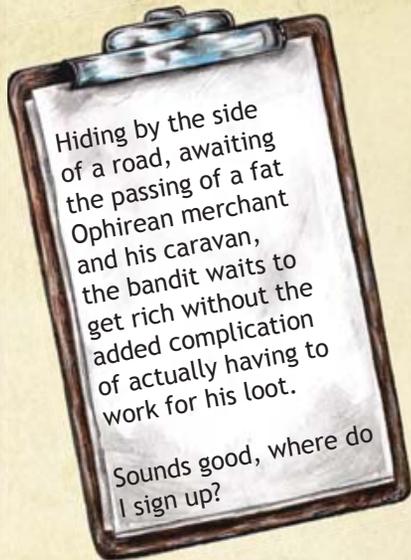
It was soon after that that I discovered that quarterstaff fighting was dangerous. Another friend, Mickey Patton, and I were having at it, each of us got in a good thwack on the other, and that engendered a simultaneous loss of temper. As if one, Mickey and I shortened our grip and swung mightily at the other. The staves met with a crash, each sliding down the other to strike our hands. Mashed and bloody fingers shaking in pain, we decided then and there not to play at staff fighting any more.

There awaits you in the next instalment the revelation of how I became a fantasy fan, more live action combat, and tales of wilderness survival.

# THE BANDIT

A new character class for

Todd Tiersland



**Adventures:** Bandits are raiders, ambushing unwary travellers and demanding payment for safe passage. A bandit's life is a wild and free one, but often short and violent. Bandits recognise no authority other than that of their leader, and only then so long as he is the strongest and smartest among them and can provide them with rich plunder.

**Characteristics:** The bandit is, by necessity, a fast and agile fighter, adept at laying ambushes and bullying victims into surrendering their valuables. A bandit relies on a quick, frenzied strike to bring down the most powerful among his foes before they have a chance to counterattack. This is all the better to terrorise and demoralise any other resistance among his victims.

**Religion:** Bandits often swear by Bel, God of Thieves, while others hold to the gods of their homeland.

**Background:** Many bandits are deserters from shattered armies, down on their luck mercenaries, or criminals forced to flee into the wilderness. Bandits stay near established roadways likely to see

rich caravan trade, and the Road of Kings is the most tempting of these targets, particularly the farther east one travels. The Zamorian forests and Eastern Desert near Turan are filled with bandits, as are rich nations suffering under civil war and rebellion, such as Corinthia, Koth and Ophir.

## GAME RULE INFORMATION

**Abilities:** A bandit's quick-moving combat style relies on Dexterity in battle, followed by Strength and Constitution to help him win through tougher opponents, and finally on Charisma to avoid unnecessary fights altogether. A high Wisdom also benefits several of his skills.

**Hit Die:** d8

## CLASS SKILLS

The bandit's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (any mundane) (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (geography or local) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis) Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), and Use Rope (Dex).

**Skill Points at 1<sup>st</sup> Level:** (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

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

**Weapon and Armour Proficiency:** A bandit is proficient with all simple



and martial weapons, two weapon combat, light armour and shields. Note that armour check penalties for wearing medium or heavy armour apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armour and equipment carried.

**Favoured Terrain:** At 1<sup>st</sup> level a bandit gains a favoured terrain type from among the following: Desert, Forest, Hills, Mountains, Plains, Swamp or Tundra. At 7<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> level, he may choose an additional favoured terrain. All the benefits derived from favoured terrain are extraordinary abilities.

Any time a bandit is in one of his favoured terrain types and wearing at most light armour, he gains certain benefits as follows:

+1 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Spot and Survival checks.

+1 Dodge bonus to DV. The bandit is adept at using the natural features of the terrain to his advantage in combat.

At 4<sup>th</sup> level and every four levels thereafter, the bandit's favoured terrain bonus increases by +1. His second favoured terrain bonus increases by +1 at 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> levels, and his third favoured terrain bonus increases by +1 at 19<sup>th</sup> level.

The bandit gains additional benefits as his favoured terrain bonuses increase. If he has a favoured terrain bonus of at least +2 for the terrain he is in, he gains a +10 feet circumstance bonus to his movement.

If he has a favoured terrain bonus of at least +3 for the terrain he is in, he may use the Hide skill even if the terrain does not usually grant cover or concealment. If he has a favoured terrain of at least +4 for the terrain he is in, his movement bonus within that terrain is increased by +20 feet. If he has a favoured terrain bonus of at least +5 for the terrain he is in, he can use the Hide skill while being observed.

**Ferocious Attack:** The bandit's ferocity tends to rapidly overwhelm almost any opponent. On the first round of any combat, he may declare a ferocious attack. He gains a +2 bonus to his Initiative check and all melee attack and damage rolls that round. However, he is unable to defend himself very effectively during the ferocious attack and has a -2 penalty to his Dodge and Parry Defence Value score during the first round of combat. Furthermore, he may not make any sneak attacks on the round in which he declares a ferocious attack. This is an extraordinary ability.

At 7<sup>th</sup> level, the bonuses to initiative, attack and damage rolls increase to +4, and the penalty to -4. Furthermore, the bandit gains an additional attack on the first round of combat, at his highest attack bonus.

At 13<sup>th</sup> level, the bonuses increase to +6, and the penalty to -6. Furthermore, any opponent struck and damaged by the bandit during the first round of combat must make a Will saving throw (DC = 10 + ½ bandit's class level + bandit's Charisma bonus) or be stunned for 1d4 rounds due to fear of the bandit. Note that if the bandit is also able to somehow perform a coup de grace on the first round of combat using his To Ride A Road of Blood And Slaughter class feature, any Will saving throws called for by the Ferocious Attack class feature have their DC increased by +2.

At 19<sup>th</sup> level, the bonuses increase to +8, and the penalty to -8. In addition, if the bandit strikes an opponent

during the first round of combat, any of the opponent's allies who observe the ferocious attack must make Will saving throws (DC = 10 + ½ bandit's class level + bandit's Charisma bonus) or be at -2 to attack rolls for 1d4 rounds.

**Persuasive:** At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, the bandit gains Persuasive as a bonus feat. If he already has Persuasive, he instead gains Negotiator. Bandits often use threats and trickery to get loot from victims without entering combat. Bandits with codes of honour will usually keep their word not to harm those who surrender and co-operate, while those without honour will do as they please.

**To Ride A Road of Blood and Slaughter:** A bandit of 2<sup>nd</sup> level or higher may perform a coup de grace as a free action up to once per round. This coup de grace never provokes an attack of opportunity – the bandit is so used to dispatching helpless opponents that he can do so before an opponent can react. Furthermore, he gains a +4 bonus to Intimidate checks he may make for one round immediately following the performance of a coup de grace, if it was successful. This is an extraordinary ability.

**Sneak Attack:** From 3<sup>rd</sup> level onwards, any time a bandit's target would be denied dodge or parry bonus to Defence Value (whether the target actually has a dodge bonus or not), or when the bandit flanks the target, the bandit's attack deals extra damage. The extra damage is +1d6 at 3<sup>rd</sup> level and an additional 1d6 every three levels thereafter. Should the bandit score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied.

Ranged attacks can only count as sneak attacks if the target is within 30 feet. The bandit cannot strike with deadly accuracy beyond that range.

With a sap or unarmed strike, the bandit can make a sneak attack that deals subdual damage instead of

normal damage. The bandit cannot use a weapon that deals normal damage to deal subdual damage in a sneak attack, even with the usual -4 penalty (except see the Sneak Subdual class feature, below).

A bandit can only sneak attack a living creature with discernible anatomy. Any creature that is immune to critical hits is also not vulnerable to sneak attacks. The bandit must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach a vital spot. The bandit cannot sneak attack while striking a creature with concealment or striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

**Sneak Subdual:** At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, the bandit gains the Sneak Subdual feat for free. This is an extraordinary ability.

**Uncanny Dodge:** From 4<sup>th</sup> level and above, the bandit retains his dodge or parry bonus to Defence Value (if any) if caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. If the bandit already has Uncanny Dodge from some other source (such as from already being a 4<sup>th</sup> level barbarian) he instead gains Improved Uncanny Dodge (see below). This is an extraordinary ability.

**Mobility:** From 5<sup>th</sup> level onwards the bandit gets a +4 dodge bonus to Defence Value against attacks of opportunity caused when he moves out of or within a threatened area. If the bandit already has Mobility from some other source (such as from already being a 5<sup>th</sup> level nomad) he instead gains Improved Mobility (see below). Note that Mobility does not apply if the bandit is mounted.

**Improved Uncanny Dodge:** At 8<sup>th</sup> level, the bandit can no longer be flanked, except that a thief or pirate at least four levels higher than him can still flank him. This is an extraordinary ability.

**Improved Mobility:** From 10<sup>th</sup> level onwards the bandit never provokes

attacks of opportunity, whatever he does, so long as he moves at least 10 feet during that combat round. If the bandit somehow already has Improved Mobility (such as for already having had Mobility from another source before reaching 5<sup>th</sup> level, and so gaining Improved Mobility at 5<sup>th</sup> level instead of Mobility) he instead gains Greater Mobility (see below). Note that Improved Mobility does not apply if the bandit is mounted. This is an extraordinary ability.

**Greater Mobility:** From 15<sup>th</sup> level onwards the bandit 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 ten feet of his movement. Note that Greater Mobility does not apply if the bandit is mounted or is wearing heavy armour. This is an extraordinary ability.

**Human Compass:** At 10<sup>th</sup> level, the bandit gains the ability to automatically know where he is on land, even in the middle of nowhere. He has a detailed mental map of all the lands he has visited and how to get there from where he is now. This is an extraordinary ability.



## THE BANDIT

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2	+0	Favoured Terrain, Ferocious Attack
2	+1	+1	+1	+0	+3	+3	+0	Persuasive, To Ride A Road of Blood and Slaughter
3	+2	+2	+1	+0	+3	+3	+1	Sneak Attack +1d6, Sneak Subdual
4	+3	+3	+2	+1	+4	+4	+1	Uncanny Dodge
5	+3	+3	+2	+1	+4	+4	+1	Mobility
6	+4	+4	+3	+1	+5	+5	+2	Sneak Attack +2d6
7	+5	+5	+3	+1	+5	+5	+2	Favoured Terrain, Ferocious Attack (additional)
8	+6/+1	+6	+4	+2	+6	+6	+2	Improved Uncanny Dodge
9	+6/+1	+6	+4	+2	+6	+6	+3	Sneak Attack +3d6
10	+7/+2	+7	+5	+2	+7	+7	+3	Human Compass, Improved Mobility
11	+8/+3	+8	+5	+2	+7	+7	+3	
12	+9/+4	+9	+6	+3	+8	+8	+4	Sneak Attack +4d6
13	+9/+4	+9	+6	+3	+8	+8	+4	Favoured Terrain, Ferocious Attack (additional)
14	+10/+5	+10	+7	+3	+9	+9	+4	
15	+11/+6/+1	+11	+7	+3	+9	+9	+5	Greater Mobility, Sneak Attack +5d6
16	+12/+7/+2	+12	+8	+4	+10	+10	+5	
17	+12/+7/+2	+12	+8	+4	+10	+10	+5	
18	+13/+8/+3	+13	+9	+4	+11	+11	+6	Sneak Attack +6d6
19	+14/+9/+4	+14	+9	+4	+11	+11	+6	Favoured Terrain, Ferocious Attack (additional)
20	+15/+10/+5	+15	+10	+5	+12	+12	+6	



## Siege!

Matthew Sprange

### Taking the battle to the enemy in Mighty Armies!

By now, you may consider yourself the greatest of all generals, having led your forces to victory on countless occasions. The greatest challenge, however, still awaits – marching your army through enemy territory and laying siege to his stronghold.

This is not a task for the weak or brash. Defeating an entire force on their home ground while supported by their stronghold is one of the most difficult tactical challenges you will ever face.

### Playing a Siege

Players of Mighty Armies can choose to play a siege at any time. Alternatively, they may be forced to play a siege when taking part in a campaign, as described elsewhere in this issue.

A siege uses the same rules as for any other game of Mighty Armies, with the following changes:

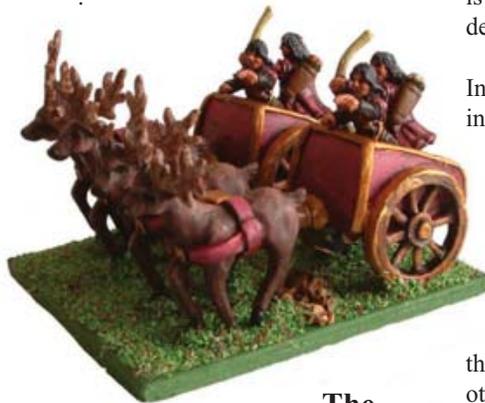
- ◆ One player will be the defender with a Stronghold, his opponent the attacker. If you are playing a campaign, it will already be decided who will be the defender. In one-off siege games, decide among yourselves or roll a dice – the highest scoring player will be the attacker.
- ◆ When setting up the battlefield, the defender may place up to four pieces of terrain as he wishes – this is his own turf, after all. The attacker does not place any terrain.

- ◆ The defender then places his Stronghold (see below for rules on Strongholds) anywhere on the table, within 6” of his table edge.

- ◆ The defender deploys his entire army as normal, within 6” of his table edge. Any Scouts must be placed at the same time and must

also be within 6” of his table edge. Units may be placed within the Stronghold.

- ◆ The attacker deploys his entire army as normal, within 6” of his table edge. Scouts may be used as normal.
- ◆ The attacker automatically receives the first turn. Battle commences. .



### The Stronghold

You will need a suitable model to represent the Stronghold in this game. This should be no more than 3” x 3” in size and will ideally represent a castle, fort or other defensive structure. However, this being a fantasy game, you need not limit yourself there. An orc army could have a large cave mouth, elves a tree-fort, while dwarves might use the guarded entrance to a mine.

The Stronghold has the following characteristics in Mighty Armies.

Speed	Fighting	Support	Special	AP
0”	+6	+6	Fearless, Magic Resistant	0

In addition, the Stronghold can never be Flanked or suffer from a Surprise Attack and can never be moved in any

way. It can also hold up to four units (though not Monstrous or Chariot units) inside. Any unit or Group can move into the Stronghold simply by being moved into its entrance as part of their normal movement. They can leave again by having their movement measured from the Stronghold’s entrance. Units within the Stronghold can simply be removed from the table while they stay inside – just don’t mix them up with your casualty pile!

Place a dice on or near the Stronghold with the ‘6’ facing upwards. This is known as the Damage Dice. Every time the Stronghold suffers a shooting or close combat attack that would ‘kill’ it, turn the Damage Dice over to the next lowest number. If the Damage Dice is showing ‘1’ and the Stronghold is ‘killed’ once more, it will be destroyed!

In combat, a Stronghold and any units inside are considered to be a single Group. In close combat, the defender may nominate any unit (including the Stronghold itself) to be the primary attacker. However, the Stronghold must always be the first casualty (having its Damage Dice reduced by one) whenever the defender loses a close combat. Any other casualties are then applied to the units inside as normal.

When facing shooting attacks, only the Stronghold may be targeted – units inside may not.

### Victory Conditions

In addition to the normal victory conditions of Mighty Armies, as described on p12 of the rulebook, the attacker also automatically wins if he destroys the Stronghold.

### Campaigns

Playing out a siege makes for a great change in one-off games and will pose new tactical problems for all armies, defender and attacker alike. However, the real fun begins when sieges are used as an intrinsic part of a campaign, as described elsewhere in this issue. Only then can you consider yourself a true master of Mighty Armies.





## The Long War

### Complete Campaign rules for Mighty Armies

Matthew Sprange

Mighty Armies is a fun game. The forces are cheap to build and battles quick to play – the perfect antidote to long, drawn out games that take hours to play. If you have already tried several different armies and have played around with custom forces, it may be time to try a new challenge – enter the campaign. . .

A campaign is a series of linked battles where players fight for territory and every victory or loss can have a profound effect on future engagements. Some campaign rules for other games can take weeks or months to complete. In keeping with the spirit of Mighty Armies, however, you will be able to play through this campaign in an entire evening!

### Preparing for a Campaign

All you need for a successful campaign are 4-10 players, each with a complete army of their own. Players should have a few more units than necessary, as they will have the chance to change and even expand their forces as the campaign continues.

A map should also be drawn up, consisting of a number of territories. Each player begins with three territories and there should be one ‘no-man’s land’ territory linking all the players together. Players should also be linked to their immediate neighbours. An example is given here of a typical four player campaign.



A mighty Barbarian horde prepares for battle!

One territory held by each player (the one not connected to any enemy territories) will be their Homeland, where their Stronghold is located.

### Campaign Turns

A campaign turn is simply a chance for every player to take part in one battle. Every player rolls a dice – those who have Tactician units among their choices may add +1 to this roll. Re-roll any ties.

The highest scoring player may choose to advance into any one territory that is directly connected on the map to one he already owns. If that territory does not already belong to another player (because it is the no man’s land territory or because it belonged to a player who has already been defeated), he automatically claims it for himself. If it belongs to another player, they must immediately fight! Battles are conducted as normal for Mighty Armies, with each force amounting to no more than 40 AP.

The next highest scoring player then chooses to advance into a new territory. However, if he chooses to advance into a territory belonging to a player who is already fighting, he may only send an allied contingent of no more than 12 AP to assist one of the other players – it is your choice as to which you help out! For this game, use the rules for fighting larger battles on p15 of the rulebook.

If the next highest scoring player has already been attacked by another player, he may not choose to advance into a new territory – he must defend his own!

Players continue choosing where to advance their armies in descending dice order until everyone has a game to play. If you have an odd number of players, you may find yourself in a situation where someone has no one to fight. In that case, let him have a quick break and a coffee – the current battles will be over quickly enough and he will soon be back in the game!

### Victories and Losses

All battles are fought to the normal victory conditions described on p12 of the rulebook. However, in a campaign, victory means more than just bragging rights.

If a player advances into the territory of an opponent and wins, he captures that territory – it becomes his and should be marked on the map as such. The losing player now has one less territory.

Winning and losing also has a profound effect on armies. A great general will rally many men to his cause while a weak leader will find whole units deserting. For every victory you

achieve, you may add 2 AP to your current army total. This is cumulative, so if you win three battles in a row, your fourth will be fought with a force totalling 46 AP. For every loss, you lose 1 AP from your total.

**Allied Contingents**

Great leaders often send allied contingents to fight for other generals they would like to see win – there is also a good chance to pick up some easy loot.

If you send an allied contingent to assist another player, you will not gain any part of the territory you are fighting for. You will, however, gain 1 AP to your army total if you are on the winning side. If you are beaten, you will lose nothing – such is the luck of the mercenary!

Allied contingents are only ever 12 AP in size, no matter how great your army’s AP total is. However, you can choose not to take a General in your allied contingent, though you will suffer the usual –1 penalty to MP.

**Strongholds**

Every player begins with a Homeland that he must defend at all costs. Whenever a player’s Homeland is attacked, play a siege, as detailed elsewhere in this issue. The defender will be the player whose Homeland has been attacked.

If you lose a siege game as a defender, you have not just lost a battle – you have lost your Homeland and kingdom! You are now out of the campaign. Grab some biccies and a coke, and begin cheering on any player who fights the one who beat you!

If you win a siege as an attacker, you have not only captured the territory but the Stronghold as well! If you are later attacked in this same territory, play a siege again, with you as the defender.

**Victory!**

There are two possible ways to win a Mighty Armies campaign. Only one such method can be used in each campaign and players should agree which they will use before play begins.

1. **Command and Conquer:** The last player left in the campaign after all others have lost their Homelands is declared the winner.
2. **Grab for Territory:** The campaign is played for a set amount of time (say, two hours). The player who has the most territories after that time is declared the winner.

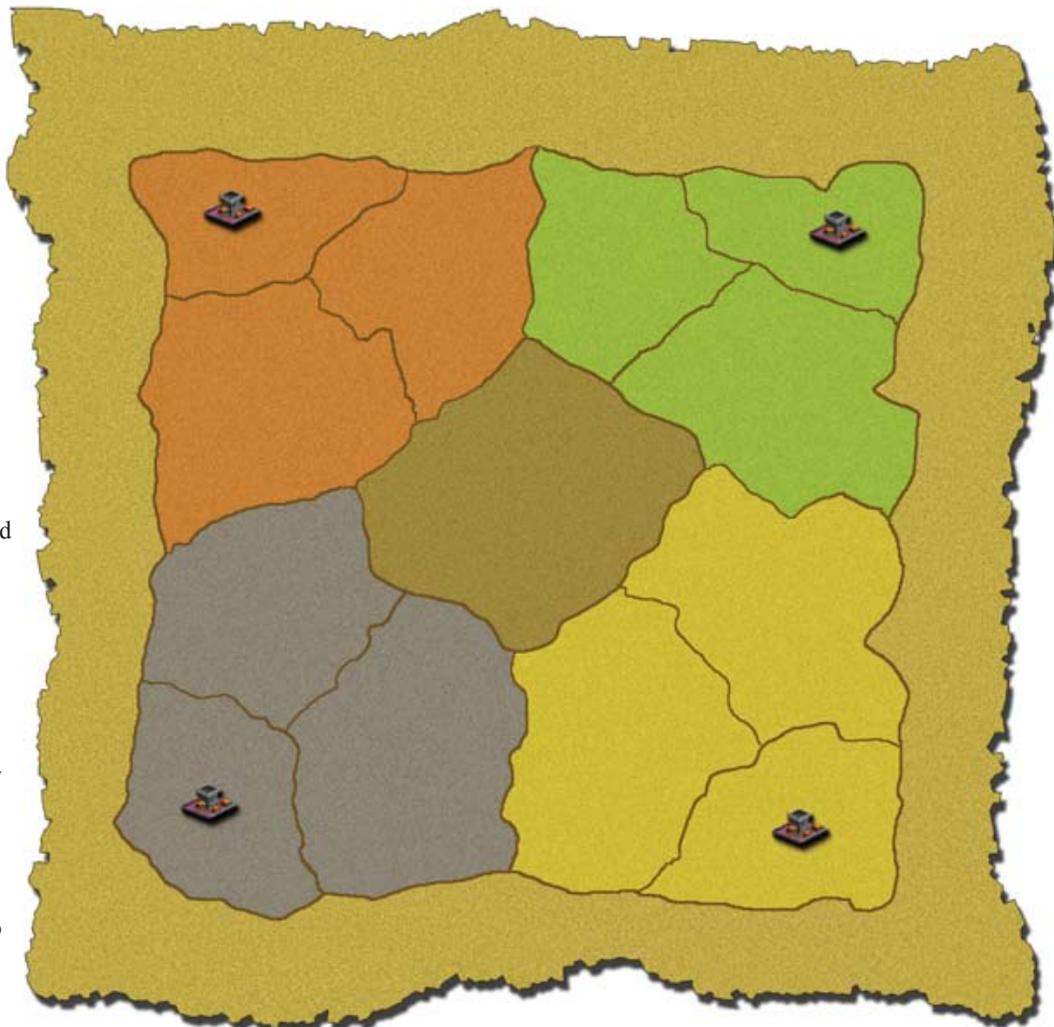
you are no longer playing a game against another bunch of dwarves – you will be desperately fighting to wrest control of the Talus Marshes from the devious hands of the Longbeard Clan dwarves!

Setting up a campaign of Mighty Armies is an ideal activity for any gaming club or group, as it can be completed in a single session and can handle almost any number of players. Indeed, you could form a brand new club, if none exists in your area, using Mighty Armies campaigns as a foundation.

So, grab some mates, find more Mighty Armies fans in your area (checking down the local games store is always a good start), and prove once and for all that you are the greatest general of all time!

**Playing Campaigns**

Campaigns are a lot of fun for all involved and are far more satisfying than one-off games. All of a sudden,



A Typical Mighty Armies campaign map for four players

# Birthday Surprise

Here at Mongoose Hall writers and artists have been burning the midnight oil on a new line of graphic novels. Being the kind soul I am I thought you would like to see a little taster of what is coming, so I raided the Armageddon: 2089 desk...

Say, Mirya; you heard about the commander's birthday party?

Yes, what of it?

Just wondering if you had an idea for a good present.

I'm not really the gift-giving type; why are you asking me now?

Hey, it's as good a time as any.

You realise that we could be called into action any minute?

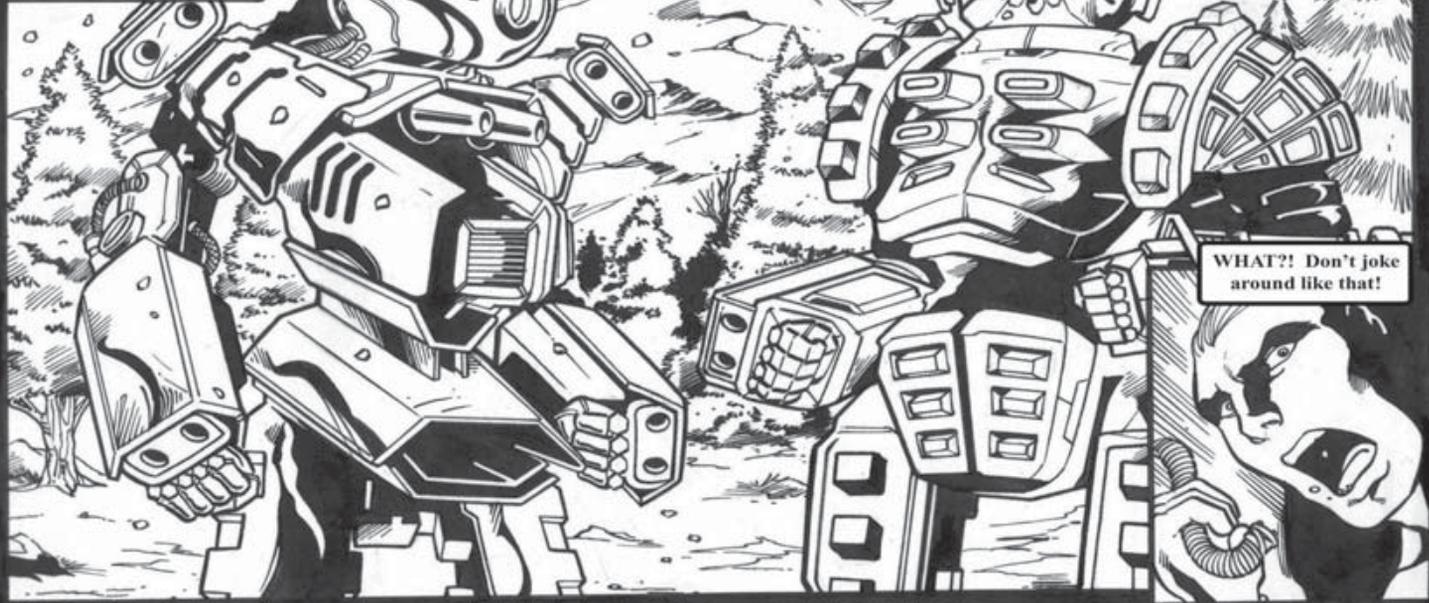
(YAWN) Sure, we have to wait for the whole caravan to cross first.

I wish the escort got a wind of us. I'm bored.

Not going to happen, babe; I have them all jammed up, and they don't even know it.



Oh, yes? Then explain why those soldiers are pointing at our position?



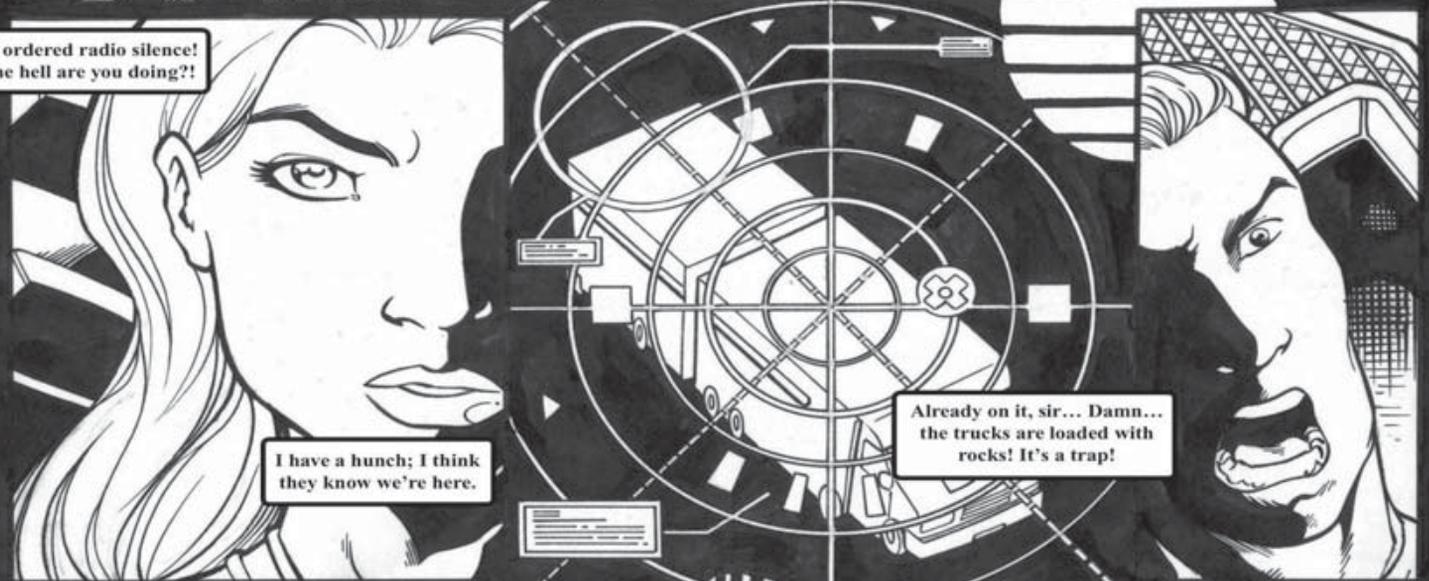
WHAT?! Don't joke around like that!

You know me, I have no sense of humour.



Alpha Dog, this is Puppy 2, we may have trouble, over.

Kolm! I ordered radio silence! What the hell are you doing?!



I have a hunch; I think they know we're here.

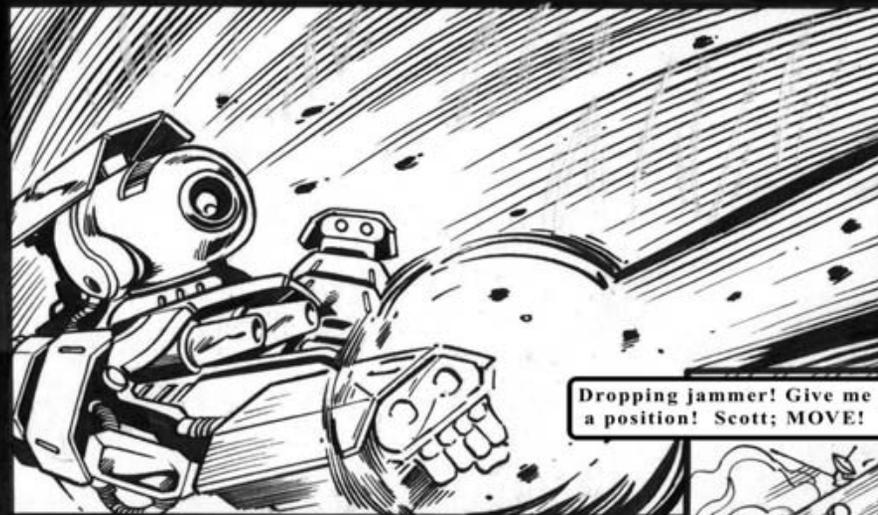
Already on it, sir... Damn... the trucks are loaded with rocks! It's a trap!

Beck, run a scan on that caravan.

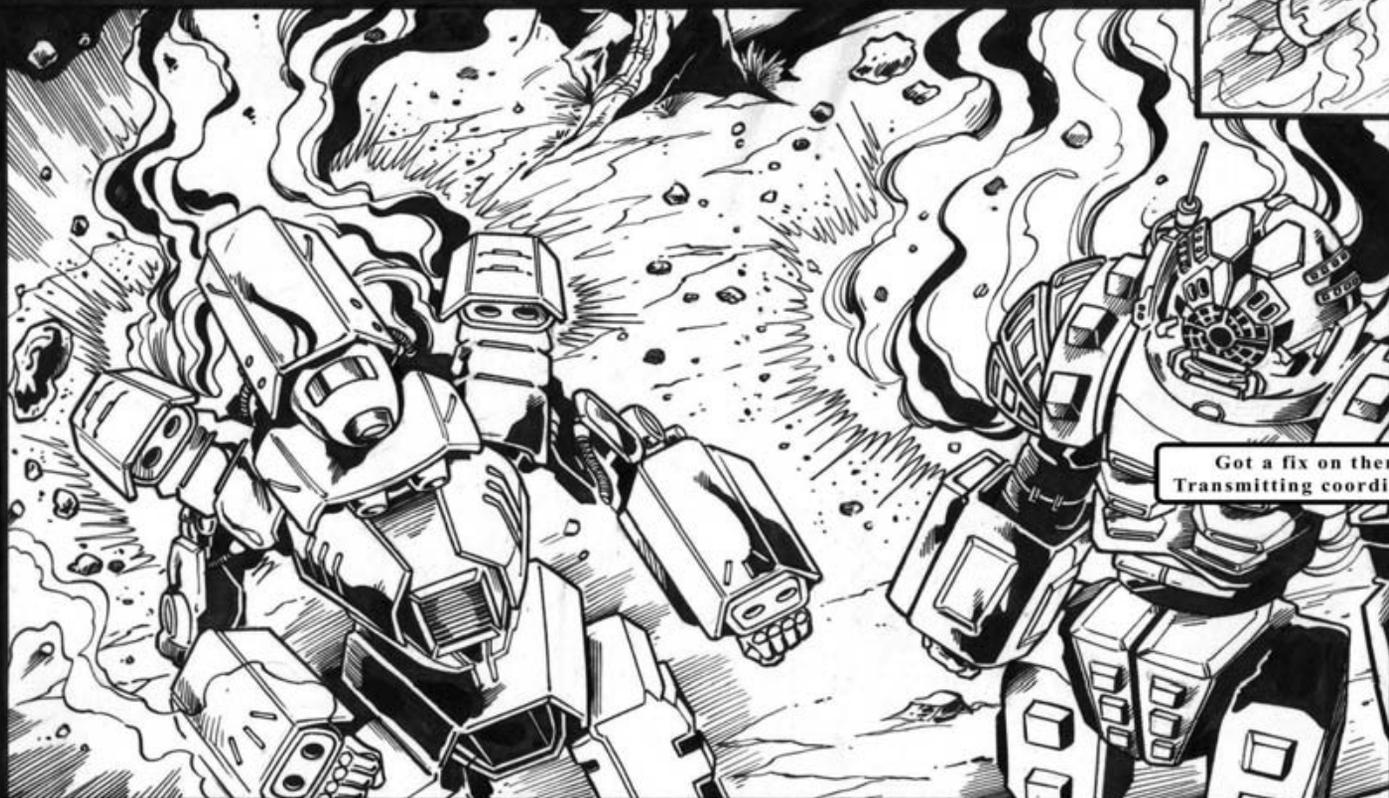
Alpha Dog to all Puppies! Prepare for emergency pull-out! It's a trap!



Three blips on this side of the tunnel!



Dropping jammer! Give me a position! Scott; MOVE!



Got a fix on them! Transmitting coordinates!



I see one! Stay behind, Scott!



The caravan is blocking the tunnel! We can't send any reinforcements! Hold on there!



Easier said...

You're getting on my nerves!

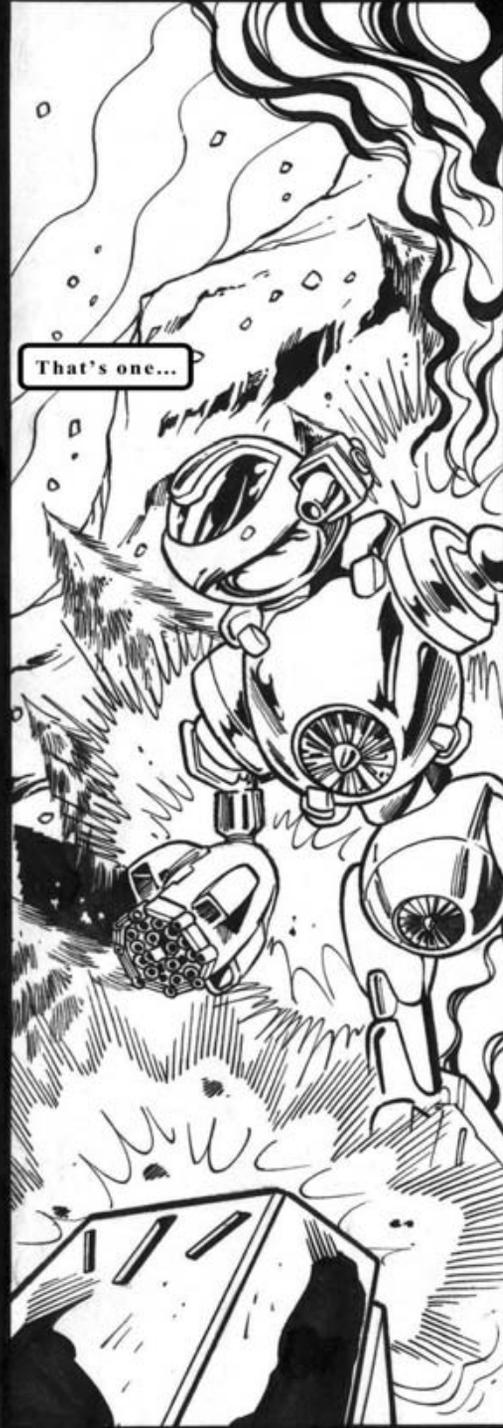
Bogey 2 must be a comms mek!



Let me deal with this one first!



That's one...



Click!

That's two...



Three's the charm! One down, point me to the other!



Bogey 3 is a Maximilian! I'm jamming its sensors but Bogey 2 is on to you!



I. See. You.



Making me sweat for my prize, eh?



A-ha! It can't see anymore! It's all yours!



It already was!

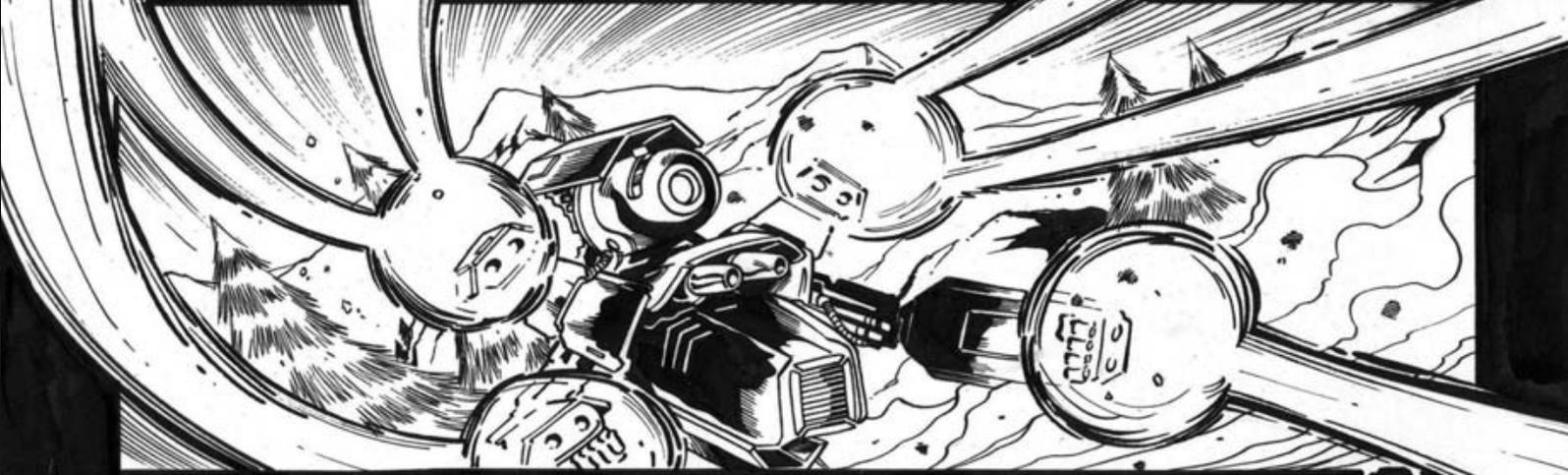


Yow! You said it was blind!



It is! It's firing wild!

Then it's time to put it down.



Bogey 2 is retreating! It was their comms unit!



Scott... you're living proof that comms officer not always run away... Alpha Dog, this is Puppy 2, we're clear.



We're mopping up over here; good work people; too bad we're not getting full pay for this.

Ah, but we are... I have two meks in almost mint conditions ready for salvage... happy birthday, chief.

The  
**JUDGE DREDD**  
Roleplaying Game

# The Geography of the Undercity *part 2*



## Philadelphia

The true Undercity consists of the various American cities that were buried when the Mega-City was first constructed. Mega-City One covers an enormous area on the East Coast of North America, stretching from Maine to North Carolina, engulfing the Appalachian Mountain Range and every settlement, town and city, in between. Detailed here are some of the larger areas of the Undercity that have been included in stories in 2000AD and the Judge Dredd Megazine. There are dozens more inhabited caves and caverns, allowing any Games Master the scope to create their own locales based on almost any town or city on the East Coast of America using this for inspiration.

Once known as the 'city of brotherly love', Philadelphia is located on the East Coast between New York City and Washington. The second American city to be buried, the developers decided to try a radically different method from the huge dome that had engulfed New York. Tunnels were built around

every street and road, and every building was engulfed in a massive vaulted chamber before the entire area was smothered with rockcrete. Philadelphia became a claustrophobic labyrinth of low tunnels opening into a series of caverns. The experiment was not judged a success and was not repeated in other areas of the Undercity – Mega-City visitors to the 'Philly Maze' often mistake the tunnel network as part of the Mega-City sewer system until they encounter some recognisable landmark. Humans are scarce in this area of the Undercity and most of the population consists of a troggie subspecies. These are smaller but rather more intelligent than their cousins in other parts of the Undercity, usually reaching about three feet in height, and have developed a reasonably sophisticated hunter-gatherer culture. The Philly trogs avoid the old buildings and structures, instead favouring dwellings that they build themselves. The caverns and tunnels are dotted with their settlements of primitive roundhouses and wigwams.

### Territories

The unique nature of the Philadelphia Undercity has blurred many of the old territorial boundaries. Formerly, the city was divided into four districts named after the points of

the compass. This straightforward system was rendered completely meaningless by the complex tunnel network. One territory usually consists of a passageway or collection of caverns, but there are several surviving areas.

**Delaware River:** The Philadelphia part of the Big Smelly was formerly known as the Delaware River. Fed directly from the Black Atlantic, the Delaware tends to fluctuate enormously – sometimes it is little more than a trickle, but often the water level rises so much that the tunnel network floods. The passageways are usually at least ankle deep in stinking, black water that reinforces the area's sewer-like feel. To make matters even more dangerous, the Delaware has a thriving population of gators, always ready to pounce on the unwary. Living in the pollution-saturated waters has made the great albino monsters particularly hardy.

**University City:** Formerly the city's educational district, the University City district is noted for the remarkable complexity of its tunnel system. The troggie population has excavated dozens of warren-like passages everywhere, in every direction. Even residents of the area sometimes become

A CRACK HAS OPENED IN THE FOUNDATIONS OF NORMAN PITLIK CITYBLOCK –



# Underground



**Matt Sharp**

hopelessly lost trying to navigate the multiple levels and convoluted, maze-like network. Some tunnels extend right into the Mega-City sewer system, but only someone with an unerring sense of direction would dare to attempt access to the City by this method.

**Germantown Avenue:** Once, Germantown Avenue was a 'rustic' area, a district of the city kept deliberately old fashioned to attract tourist interest. The avenue retained an ancient cobbled roadway surrounded by authentic 19<sup>th</sup> century housing. The Undercity dwellers unfortunately possessed no appreciation of the picturesque scene – the historic buildings have long since been looted and fallen into ruin and the cobbles have been stolen, leaving nothing but a muddy track.

Germantown Avenue occupies its own vaulted cavern, at the heart of which stands a ruined church. This is the location of a shattered stone archway, covered in strange, cabalistic carvings that seem somehow alive. Built by a group of Mega-City witches in 2106, the archway was intended to act as a bridge into a demonic dimension. After months of fruitless chanting and summoning rituals, the witches eventually managed to conjure the demon Gargarax. The monster was intend on converting the archway into a permanent portal into his world of demons, and wasted no time in locating the last needed component for the ritual – an innocent soul.

Gargarax eventually located the ideal candidate – ten-year old Hammy Blish, who lived in Ed Poe Block. The demon possessed the unfortunate boy and escaped through the gateway, closely pursued by Psi Judge Anderson. Anderson eventually defeated Gargarax and his demonic horde, but at a terrible cost – she was forced to execute Hammy Blish to prevent the demons from completing their unspeakable rituals. The judges destroyed the gateway, but the remains still remain partially active, acting as a lodestone that allows the occasional demonic creature access into the Undercity.

**Fairmount Park:** At one time touted as the largest landscaped park in the world, Fairmount Park is found by the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. It is now barely recognisable, even though it occupies its own cavern. The ceiling is a little over six feet above the ground; supported by hundreds of rockcrete columns positioned every fifteen feet. The once ordered lawns and flowerbeds have gradually degenerated into a foul-smelling swamp, occupied by grumble toads, extra terrestrial refugees that have established their home in the dank environment.



**Landmarks**

**Independence Hall:** It has been said that the United States was born in this imposing Georgian mansion, as it was the scene of so many pivotal historical events, not least of which was the drafting and signing of the American Constitution. The twelve famous figures that put pen to paper

WHEN A JUDGE'S USEFUL LIFE WAS OVER, HE COULD CHOOSE TO TAKE THE LONG WALK - TO BRING LAW TO ONE OF THE LAWLESS AREAS BEYOND THE CITY'S BOUNDARIES -



on a hot day in July 1776 could never have imagined the ultimate fate of the building. Even buried far below the ground, the mansion retained some of its majesty. However, things changed when a bizarre entity known only as the Creep made his home within the walls of the historic landmark. The Creep possesses the incredible ability to warp and twist reality itself and is prone to changing the appearance of his lair on a whim – on some days the Independence Hall is its normal, red brick self, on others it bears the fake Grecian façade that it held in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At other times it becomes even stranger – such as a massive representation of the Creep's bulbous head. Creep likes nothing more than tormenting his neighbours, using

ONE SUCH AREA WAS THE UNDERCITY - THE SEALED-OFF REMAINS OF THE OLD CITY ON WHICH MEGA-CITY ONE HAD BEEN BUILT -



his terrible abilities to bewilder and confuse opponents before murdering them.

**City Hall:** Found near the Delaware River on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, the City Hall served as Philadelphia's combined courthouse and jail during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. At one time, the building also acted as the Supreme Court for the entire United States. For a while after the city was buried the building maintained its distinguished reputation. Mega-City judges who embarked on the Long Walk into Philadelphia established a Sector House within the building. Things changed following the arrival of the psychotic Judge Gunn. Gunn had taken the Long Walk after murdering another judge in the Mega-City – he was careful enough to avoid leaving enough evidence to convict, but many were still suspicious of him. In order to avoid an in-depth investigation of his shady activities, Gunn decided to take the 'honourable' alternative to bring law to the lawless in the dark world of the Undercity. Entirely cut off from all forms of supervision, Gunn ran amok, tracking down and killing every Long Walk judge he could find and beginning a despot

reign of terror over Philadelphia. The corpses of his victims were hung like trophies in the basement of City Hall – a so-called 'Lost Patrol' of judges. Gunn ultimately met his match when he came into conflict with the Creep. His savage brutality was no use against the extra-ordinary abilities of the stunted being – Creep grew a set of razor sharp talons specially to rip the heart from the chest of the renegade judge. Subsequently investigating

Gunn's lair, Creep was delighted to find mummified remains of the Lost Patrol. He used his psi-abilities to animate the corpses, forcing them to serve as his personal bodyguards.

**United States Mint:** The fourth coin minting building to stand in Philadelphia, the United States Mint bears little resemblance to most other majestic and impressive federal buildings. Squat, box-like and utilitarian, the mint looks more like a fortress than a national monument. The building would probably have made an impregnable castle for one of the Undercity tribes, but it is the most looted building in the entire Undercity. Tales of millions of abandoned coins left in the huge building still circulate within the Mega-City, regularly attracting treasure hunters. The structure is now riddled with huge holes and tunnels made by eager fortune seekers – who are inevitably disappointed as the authorities ensured that nothing valuable was left behind when work began on the burial of the city.

### Southern Rad Caves

Before the Apocalypse War of 2104, the Undercity spread much further to

the south, reaching as far as Florida. When a Sov attack obliterated the entire southern end of the City in a terrifying saturation bombardment, much of the subterranean cave network was also wiped from the face of the earth. However, the great domes had been designed to last and a few isolated specimens survived – albeit saturated in lethal radiation, which swiftly wiped out the majority of the population. One particular species began to thrive in the radiation – the humble cockroach. The Undercity has always been infested with these tenacious creatures, but the monstrosities that emerged from the glowing ruins were something else entirely. Averaging nearly three feet in length, their thick shells are practically bullet proof. More intelligent and organised than their smaller cousins, the roaches swiftly came to dominate many of the surviving southern caverns. A visitor to a cavern controlled by the rad-roaches can easily believe that they have strayed onto some strange alien planet – the insects have adapted the dingy caverns into a colossal, hive-like structure, obliterating any sign of human habitation.

### Northern Jumble

The northwestern corner of the Mega-City is another victim of the Apocalypse War. The scene of terrible close quarter fighting between the Mega-City and Sov forces, dozens of cityblocks and almost every building in several sectors were brought crashing to the ground, leaving a massive wasteland of shattered ruins. Clearing the area would require a massive investment of resources, which city administration cannot afford. The area, known as the jumble or Shattered City, has become the refuge of the dispossessed and homeless. It is also the location of the North-West Hab Zone, five Sectors that miraculously survived the war, linked to the rest of the City by the megaway known as Hell's Highway. The Undercity beneath the jumble survived more or less intact and is one of the few areas with easy access

to the world above ground. Because of this, the caverns tend to become jammed with refugees fleeing from the semi-regular disasters that sweep the City.

### New Prestige Class – The Undercity Guide



Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is little up-to-date information about the Undercity available in the Mega-City. Old maps and atlases are often hopelessly out of date, and the citizens and criminal groups that dare to visit rarely trouble to draw a map detailing the latest developments. Even the judges seldom bother maintaining current information – they visit the dark underworld too infrequently, and the nightmarish landscape changes too much for them to be unduly concerned with such a task. Most visitors are forced to visit without any sort of guidance or preparation. Even the Undercity dwellers themselves rarely have cause

to stray more than a few miles from their territories – neighbouring areas are regarded as strange, alien places are to be feared and hated.

This leaves a niche in the market for a professional Undercity guide, someone who knows all the secrets of the dark subterranean world and is prepared to trade his knowledge with

anyone with the means to pay for it. Undercity guides are often somewhat elusive characters, as the necessary nomadic lifestyle is fraught with terrible dangers. It takes many years to learn the secrets of the Undercity, but the knowledge is often extremely valuable.

**Hit Dice:** d6.

#### Requirements

To qualify to become an Undercity guide, a citizen must fulfil all the following criteria.

**Skills:** Knowledge (Undercity) 8 ranks, Search 4 ranks, Spot 4 ranks and Wilderness Lore 8 ranks.

**Feats:** Endurance and Great Fortitude.

**Special:** Must have spent (and survived!) at least six consecutive months within the Undercity for every level gained in this class.

## Class Skills

The Undercity guide's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Drive (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Undercity) (Int), Listen (Wis), Medical (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Pick Pocket (Dex), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Streetwise (Wis), Swim (Str), Technical (Int) and Wilderness Lore (Wis).

## Class Features

The following are class features of the Undercity guide prestige class.

**Darkvision:** In his travels through the midnight world of the Undercity, the guide's eyesight must rapidly adapt to see in the absolute darkness. At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, the guide gains Darkvision to a range of 10 ft., increasing to 20 ft. at 4<sup>th</sup> level. If the character already possesses Darkvision, the new figure is added to the range (so, for example, a guide

with the Undercity Dweller prior live that begins the game with Darkvision of 30 ft. would increase the range to 40 ft. at 2<sup>nd</sup> level and finally 50 ft. at 4<sup>th</sup> level).

**Sneaky:** At 5<sup>th</sup> level, the Undercity guide has learned almost everything there is to know about the Undercity. He is able to anticipate how the tribes and troggies will react to any situation and can predict how any particular creature may react to his presence. As long as he remains in the Undercity, the guide gains an innate +4 bonus to any Hide and Move Silently checks. He also seems to have an almost supernatural affinity with the dark underworld, apparently able to sense anything that comes near. He is never taken by surprise and can no longer be caught flat-footed as long as he remains in the Undercity.

**Upside Links:** By the time he reaches 3<sup>rd</sup> level, the Undercity guide has learned many ways of travelling into and out of the Undercity in order

to pick up contacts with the citizens of the Mega-City. The guide is always able to find a safe route out of the Undercity within 1d6 hours, even if his regular route to the 'Upside' has been compromised. Additionally, his regular trips to the surface world have allowed him to adapt to the blinding light of the Mega-City – he no longer suffers any penalty for exposure the bright light. However, high-powered flashlights and the like may still dazzle him.

**Undercity Expert:** The Undercity guide is already extremely knowledgeable about all the habitats and life forms of the Undercity when he obtains 1<sup>st</sup> level. He is able to add his class level to all Knowledge (Undercity) and Wilderness Lore checks, as long as he is in the Undercity.



## The Undercity Guide

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Undercity Expert
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Darkvision 10 ft.
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Upside Links
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Darkvision 20 ft.
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Sneaky



# Mongoose Publishing Introduces a Whole New Scale of Warfare



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The Barbarian King and his elite retinue

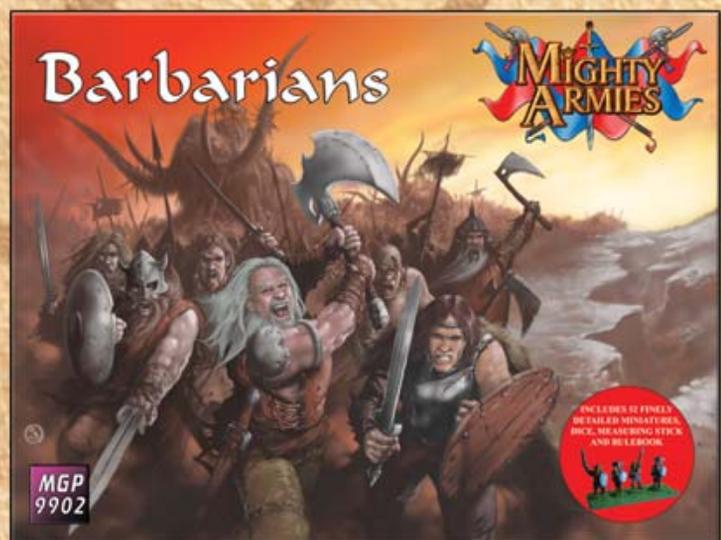


Led to battle by their king, the Barbarian Warriors are tough fighters



The Orc Shaman provides invaluable magical support on the battlefield

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## MONGOOSE PUBLISHING

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# Inside The Chainmail Bra

Am I infatuated with elves?

asks

Fey Boss

It's no secret that an awful lot of women really enjoy playing elves – sometimes to the accompanying eye rolling of male players in the group. Even before Orlando Bloom came along to boost elf stock with his patented *Legolust* charm, we women have sighed, drooled and fought over elves and often claimed that race as our preferred one for our characters.

I've occasionally been asked what the attraction is – sometimes with extreme frustration, and almost always by male players for whom the attraction did not exist. 'Why, Fey, why do you like them? Humans are number one, they have the fewest disadvantages and the most flexibility, the most ability to adapt!'

Now, my personal reasons for liking elves only intersect occasionally with other people's reasons; my primary reason amounts to 'if you're going to be stuck all your life with a name like Fey, you're going to find something redeemable in the experience'.

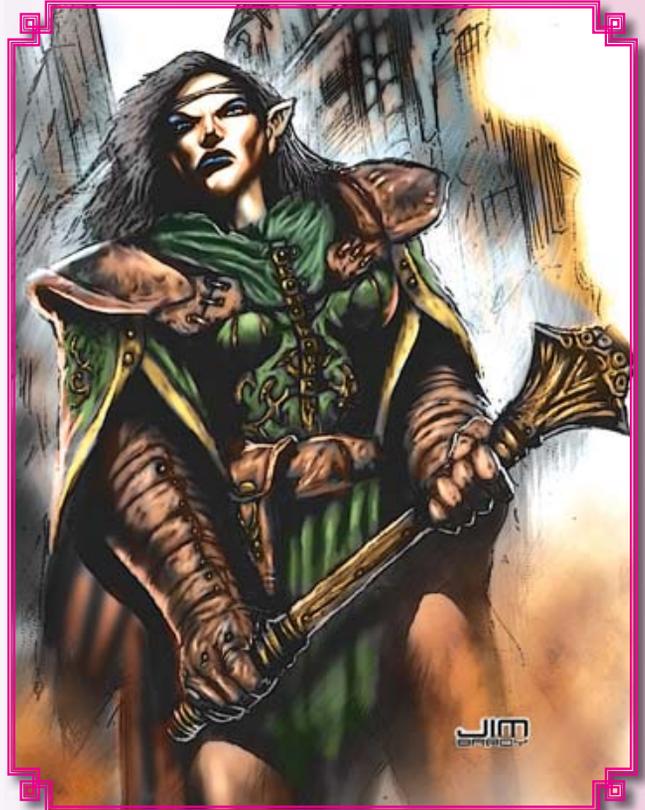
That being said, I've gone out and pounded the pavement, scoured the city and investigated the Internet in the hopes of answering this question more legitimately. I've read the reports, examined the evidence, unearthed the unknown, dug up the dirt and perused the particulars. I've even exhumed errata, traversed topics of terrific traffic, considered catalogues of cryptic collusion, explored examples of evocative erudition and burst bubbles of immature infatuation. In short, I did some homework.

The exact transcripts of discussions and reading material would be a bit bulky to attempt to reproduce here, so I'll share a summary, shall I?

First: Elves are cute.

I can see the doubting looks from here, so bear with me. While this is a superficial reason, it's nonetheless an accurate one – elves are typically held up as beings of ethereal beauty, the like of which humans cannot attain. There may be ugly elves, but even an average-looking elf is, by human standards, an attractive specimen. To some degree this might be due to exotic tastes; Leonard Nimoy had quite a bit of popularity thanks to the combination of adhesive and rubber ears.

This may strike some as a shallow reason to play an elf. However, it is fairly comprehensible. Very few of us want to be considered ugly when we're away from the gaming table, so why is it such a surprise in a game where beauty may be attained without money and time spent on lipstick, mascara, spandex, aerobics and



plastic surgery? Whether or not it's politically correct, we tend to react to good looks – and elves have an edge in the looks department.

Second: Elves are less flexible.

I've heard plenty of arguments about how humans have the advantage over elves' longevity because their shorter lifespans cause them to be more adaptable and more fertile. To this I say 'hogwash!' This argument is material for fertilising the pretty colourful things which pop up out of the ground in spring.

This is not to say it isn't necessarily true; it may well be true, and many game worlds do hold that it is true. Instead, I maintain that this argument is irrelevant nine times out of ten

because few, if any, campaigns run to the point in sheer duration where it could become relevant. It is useful when examining the underpinnings of a culture or political situation or scenario at times, but the rest of the time, it has little impact on daily in-game life.

A race's traits only become manifest in global or epidemic situations. Most campaigns place the emphasis on the individual characters, who may well be exemplary models of their given races, but more often are not. Why not? The answer to this is a large one and becomes its own subheading.

Third: Iconoclastic survivability, or 'he ain't normal, ma!'

By and large, we do not choose to play upstanding members of society. Even if we are not playing assassins or the like, neither are we playing tailors, bakers, honest burghers or stoic midwives. We choose to play adventurers, and these are the characters who break with a sane, even commonplace, existence in favour of going face-to-face (or in sneakier cases, face-to-tail) with dragons.

This is not behaviour that gets one promoted at the bank. It is most likely to get one planted six feet down, and that's only if there's enough left to be buried.

A true-to-life example of what we put our characters through would be putting on body armour picked up at a local military surplus, camping and sport or martial arts supply shop and then going for a stroll on the wrong side of the bars through your local zoo's bear or lion exhibit. Adventurers start with little money and the most basic of equipment and skills – and no guarantee of a friendly cleric nearby to put the pieces together if they screw up. At least most players can call an ambulance.

For this reason if no other the argument of elves being static and

slow to adapt in comparison to humans is immaterial. If the elf character in a game is an adventurer, he will either be the exception to the general stereotype or the problem will be rendered moot by a friendly local Grim Reaper.

As for fertility, by the time a character is ready to settle down to raising little mini-druids and mages, that particular creation is usually retired and more or less off stage anyway. Does it matter if he's shooting blanks or she's having difficulty conceiving? If it does, I for one would rather not hear about it; Moonleaf's quest for the Fountain of Fertility could be amusing as a comic book quest, but that's about it.

Fourth: Elves live a long time.

This is both good and bad; from the point of view of character development, it can be fascinating. How does someone deal with watching the world change, governments rise and fall, friends and enemies live and die? What effect does this result in? A good Games Master can do wonders with this.

However, this too is moot; it's rare a campaign will last long enough for an elf's longevity to have much bearing on matters. Even if the campaign lasts that long, chances are the character will not. Adventurers do occasionally retire to spend their fortunes on wine, women and song (or wine, weapons and song) but for every one who does, there is a graveyard filled with littered character sheets for headstones.

Fifth: Elves are artistic and creative (those poncy fruits).

They live in beautiful surroundings, whether a carefully constructed city or organically grown community; they wear garments which range from whimsically elegant silks through to lethal yet lovely armour and tools of destruction; they create enchantments whose sole purpose is to beautify their chosen environments, and they

are often apart from other races in their homelands, mingling utilitarian function with almost Dionysian form.

This does not hold much appeal for some, perhaps, but for quite a few women it holds a powerful allure indeed. After all, would there be a market for fashion or home and garden centres if it didn't? If the world turned tomorrow to a fantasy world, it has often been joked, the fashion designers would be among the first to turn out to be elves. Maybe, but if so, it explains why women flock to those, too.

This is not to say there are no downsides to playing an elf. Many people who do play elves concentrate on the surface impressions of the race and never do examine anything deeper; there are plenty of examples of such which have been lampooned in print and online. Shallow impressions are always going to be shallow impressions, and every gamer who has been to a convention knows that half the girls who dress up as elf chicks do so to show off their, uh, assets.

Elves do not have more benefits as a played race than do humans or dwarves unless the game's world is run in such a way that they do; in a world where humans are in charge and elves are slaves, the elf character will be at a significant (and dangerous) disadvantage. The reverse holds just as true and is why Underdark scenarios are often so popular.

However, it's worth noting in perhaps half the cases I've encountered of someone not being prepared or willing to accept elves as an 'equal' choice to humans, the reactions have almost exactly paralleled that of someone shot down in a club. 'She goes for elf PCs? Man, but they suck! Humans are where it's at!'

Well, I'm here to tell you that ain't the way it is. Remember, it's a girl's world...see you.



# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

**CONAN**  
 THE ROLEPLAYING  
 GAME

Last month in the first part of this series on Hyborian names we looked at Aquilonia. This time round it's the turn of Argos and Cimmeria (no, they aren't *all* called Conan!)

## ARGOSSEAN NAMES

Argossean names are Italian or Greek in tone, though as it is a major trading country a mix of names is possible.

### Female Argossean Names

Abree	Abrienne	Adalgisa	Adreana	Albagia	Albiera	Albinia
Albissima	Albizzina	Alcee	Alcinia	Alessa	Andreola	Aurelia
Aurella	Aurora	Aveduta	Ayguana	Azzurra	Banca	Bandecca
Byanca	Cadera	Calandra	Calendre	Capriccia	Carinna	Carissa
Ceres	Ceri	Dafne	Dahna	Dahnya	Dalia	Dalila
Damiana	Damiata	Damocta	Dani	Doni	Donia	Dovizia
Druda	Drudola	Duccia	Elenna	Ellyssa	Eutiche	Fafylena
Fausta	Faustina	Fecca	Genevria	Genna	Genovefa	Gessa
Gessica	Gisella	Godentia	Gostanza	Hally	Hilaria	Hilda
Iacoba	Iacomina	Iacopa	Ianella	Ileana	Isolde	Isotta
Ivanna	Janella	Jasmine	Katia	Kiarra	Labe	Lagia
Lakresha	Laldomina	Lavinia	Lisabetta	Lisetta	Lissandra	Livia
Lizia	Luna	Mabilia	Mara	Marcella	Marina	Marinella
Marisa	Marissa	Masia	Masina			

### Male Argossean Names

Abarmo	Agabito	Albouin	Andreano	Aringhieri	Armir	Asparru
Astore	Baccio	Baltista	Barbriano	Bate	Bati	Benciveni
Beppe	Beppo	Bertrando	Bicci	Bonamente	Bonarota	Bonfigliol
Buondelmon	Camazarin	Carino	Caroccio	Caroso	Ceccherell	Centuri
Ceo	Chiarissim	Cosmo	D'Arzenta	Damone	Davanzato	Delteglia
Demetrio	Doriano	Dorso	Drago	Drazic	Epifanio	Eridanus
Ezechiele	Falco	Falcone	Falcuccio	Faunus	Fausto	Ferruccio
Flaviano	Fontana	Fortunato	Fuccio	Galimberto	Ghelere	Gherarducc
Ghoro	Grimaldo	Guidaccio	Guy	Ignasco	Ignazio	Ilario
Incanto	Jacobbe	Kajetan	Karel	Lipp	Loso	Lotario
Lothlorien	Malpiglio	Marabottin	Marcho	Marciano	Menandro	Mercato
Naimerio	Nardo	Narduccio	Nari	Nestore	Octavio	Omero
Onesto	Oratio	Palla	Parigi	Piedrobbon	Piripi	Ponzzo
Quilico	Rainieri	Remo	Renaldo	Rosso	Salimbene	Salito
Schiatto	Scipione	Segna	Severiano	Sostegno	Stagio	Stoldo
Stregone	Strozza	Tamerighi	Tamaro	Taruccio	Tebaldus	Tenghi
Theodoric	Tito	Toma	Turridu	Tybold	Uguccione	Umbro
Vannetto	Verdiano	Vettorino	Voglia	Xhumi	Xiomar	Yuri
Zalli	Zorzi	Zuanne				

## CIMMERIAN NAMES

These are best based on old Irish or Scottish Celtic names, such as Conan.

### Female Cimmerian Names

Aedammair	Aideen	Ailionora	Ailis	Aine	Airmid	Aisling
Alma	Ana	Andraste	Anu	Aoife	Artis	Badb
Bairrfhionn	Banba	Bean Mhi	Beare	Becuma	Berrach	Bevin
Binne	Blair	Blaithin	Boann	Brenda	Briana	Brid
Bryg	Caer	Cahan	Caillech	Caireach	Caireann	Caitriona
Caoilinn	Casidhe	Ceara	Celach	Cessair	Ciar	Cliona
Clodagh	Cochrann	Colleen	Conchobarre	Cori	Creidne	Cuimhne
Dairine	Dallas	Darby	Daron	Dealla	Dechtire	Deirdre
Delaney	Delbchaem	Derry	Dervil	Devin	Devnet	Doireann
Doirind	Doneele	Donnfhlaidh	Druantia	Dubh	Dubheasa	Dubh Lacha
Eavan	Ebliu	Edana	Eibhilín	Eibhilín	Eilidora	Eilis
Eithne	Elatha	Elva	Emer	Ernine	Etan	Etaoin
Flann	Flannery	Flidais	Fodla	Fuamnach	Isibeal	Isleen
Mona	Moninne	Mór	Moriath	Morrigan	Muadhnaít	Muireann
Muirin	Muiriol	Muirne	Naomh	Narbflaith	Neala	Nessa
Nevina	Nia	Niamh	Nila	Nola	Nora	Sadhbh
Saoirse	Saorla	Saraid	Scathach	Sceanbh	Seana	Seanait
Shanley	Shannon	Sierra	Sile	Sine	Sinead	Siobhan
Siomha	Sláine	Sorcha	Taillte	Tara	Teamhair	Tierney
Tipper	Tlachtga	Trevina	Troya	Tullia	Uathach	Una

### Male Cimmerian Names

Abbán	Abram	Achais	Adam	Adamnan	Adhamh	Adrian
Aeneas	Agh	Aghy	Aichlinn	Aidan	Ailbe	Ailbhe
Ailfrid	Ailill	Ailín	Ainmire	Ainsley	Alaois	Alastar
Albion	Alby	Allister	Alphonsus	Ambrós	Amergin	Amhlaibh
Aodh	Aonghas	Árón	Artúr	Auliffe	Bainbridge	Baird
Bearnárd	Beartlaidh	Benen	Bevan	Bran	Brasil	Bréanainn
Brian	Cael	Cailean	Cailt	Cairbre	Callaghan	Callough
Caoimhghin	Caolán	Carlin	Carlus	Carney	Carroll	Cathal
Cathal	Cathaoir	Cearbhall	Cedric	Cian	Cianán	Ciarrai
Cillian	Cinnéide	Cleary	Coinneach	Coireall	Colin	Colla
Colm	Comala	Comán	Comhghan	Conall	Conan	Conary
Conchobhar	Conn	Connlaoi	Connor	Conor	Conraich	Corai
Cormac	Cory	Crimthan	Críostóir	Cruaidh	Cú Uladh	Cuchullin
Cul	Cuma	Cúmheá	Curran	Daibhéid	Dáire	Dáithí
Diarmaid	Dima	Dónal	Donnan	Donnchadh	Doon	Dougal
Doyle	Drummond	Duane	Dubhán	Duer	Duff	Duncan
Dunham	Ea	Eadoin	Eamhua	Eamon	Eanbotha	Earnán
Edan	Egan	Éibhear	Éimhin	Eithriall	Énán	Ennis
Eoghan	Eoghan	Eóin	Eóin Baiste	Erin	Evan	Eveny
Fagan	Faolán	Farrell	Fearghus	Feoras	Ferris	Fiachra
Flann	Flannery	Flinn	Flynn	Garbhán	Gearóid	Giallchadh
Gilvarry	Giolla	Giolla	Giolla Dhé	Glaisne	Gofraidh	Greagoir
Hannraoi	Heremon	Hydallan	Iarfhlaith	Innis	Ionhar	Íoseph
Kerwin	Kieran	Kiernan	Labhrás	Laughlin	Laurence	Leachlainn
Léon	Liam	Lochlain	Logan	Lomán	Lúcás	Lughaidh
Lynch	Macallister	Maclean	Maeleachlainn	Mahon	Mairtin	Maitias
Maitiú	Moghcorb	Morne	Murdoch	Nessan	Nevan	Nevin
Niall	Niece	Nioclás	Nicol	Nyle	Odhrán	Oilibhéar
Oistin	Oscur	Ossian	Owain	Owney	Pádraig	Parlan
Parthalán	Peadar	Piaras	Pilib	Proinnsias	Quinlan	Ragnall
Rayne	Réamonn	Renny	Revelin	Riocárd	Rodhlann	Roibeárd
Roibhilín	Roibín	Rónán	Ronat	Rory	Rotheachta	Ruaidhri
Rylie	Séafra	Séamas	Seanán	Searbhreathach	Séarlas	Sedric
Seoirse	Seosamh	Shanahan	Shea	Sheehan	Siómón	Siseal
Thady	Tiarnach	Tiernan	Tiomóid	Tomaisin	Tomás	Torin
Tremain	Uaine	Uileog	Uilliam	Uinseann	Úistean	Ultan

# Jonny Nexus

SAY WHIAT?

Have you ever watched one of those science fiction shows that assume that everyone not only speaks English, but speaks it with an American accent? (Except for the bad guys, who are allowed to sound British). I'm guessing you have, and if you haven't then why are you reading this magazine if you aren't into geek stuff? Anyhow, these programmes generally come up with a supposed explanation, but are these explanations at all plausible? Well let's imagine what would happen if this was a game, and your Games Master was trying to spin just such a dubious technical explanation:

**GM:** *As you land in front of the party of aliens, one of them approaches you, saying: 'Greetings! Welcome to our world!' Okay, what are you going to do?*

**Player:** *Hang on a sec... How come we can understand what he's saying?*

**GM:** *There's a translating device that you wear. It translates everything that someone says to you into your language, and everything that you say into theirs.*

**Player:** *And it can do it for species we've never met before?*

**GM:** *Well, it's clever!*

**Player:** *But it still understands them even when they use slang and local sayings?*

**GM:** *It's really clever!*

**Player:** *And I can't hear anything that they're saying, just what it's saying, and it sounds to me like the voice from the translator unit is coming from where they're standing?*

**GM:** *Well... Maybe it projects the sound somehow?*

**Player:** *What, like surround-sound?*

**GM:** *Yeah... and maybe you can't hear the sounds they're making in their language because it transmits a special wave constructed to cancel out the original sound!*

**Player:** *Right... And how come their lips are syncing perfectly with the English I'm hearing? Shouldn't it look like a badly dubbed Hong Kong action flick?*

**GM:** *Maybe it projects a hologram over their lips?*

**Player:** *And how come they think I'm speaking their language?*

**GM:** *Well it does the projection and surround-sound for them, too!*

**Player:** *Are you sure they're not just speaking English?*

**GM:** Yeah. Okay.

Right...

Real-life is made considerably more 'interesting' by virtue of us all speaking different languages (a classic example being the occasion when the American President Jimmy Carter, while on an official visit to Poland, told the crowd greeting him at the airport that the American people wanted to have sex with them<sup>1</sup>) and I think we can add some of this 'interest' to our games.

Take, for example, a cyberpunk game that some of my friends played in. One of the players – who I usually refer to as Bill – created an Indian character, but neglected to spend any points on giving his character English (as a foreign language skill, his native language being Hindi). His character's inability to understand anything that anyone was saying to him resulted in a short, confused, but hilarious gaming career that terminated in him being beaten to death in an alleyway by a couple of muggers after he'd failed to hand over his wallet.

**GM:** Some guys come up to you in the alleyway and say something to you. Roll your language skill.

**Bill:** [Rolls] I failed.

**GM:** You don't understand what they're saying, but they seem pretty angry about something!<sup>2</sup>

So let's assume that we ignore the 'science fiction magic box' approach and decide to have a world with multiple languages. What sort of things can we put in?

Well one thing that I find interesting about languages (warning: I'm being a bit serious here, and possibly even boring) is that there are other types of languages beyond standard 'native' languages. Two interesting alternative types are pidgins and creoles, which are not – as I originally thought before being enlightened by a documentary on the Discovery Channel – names of specific languages, [I thought it was an Elvis character – ed.] or even families of languages, but which instead describe particular types of languages. (It is true that there are specific languages that are often referred to as 'pidgin English' or 'creole' but the words are actually generic terms).

It will probably make more sense if I explain what the words mean.

Imagine that fifty people, from fifty different countries, were kidnapped from Earth by aliens and settled as a slave colony on a distant world. Now if this happened today, it's likely that most of them would speak English as either a first or second language, so English would become the language that they spoke (with those who didn't speak it being taught it by those who did). But imagine if each of

the fifty people spoke a different native language and no other. How would they communicate?

The answer is that they would create a makeshift language, comprised of bits borrowed from their various languages combined with various made up sounds. It would be a very reduced language with a very simple syntax. None of the kidnapped would ever be fluent in it and would always speak it as a non-native language (because as a language it wouldn't be rich enough to be used for fluent speech). But it would suffice to allow them to communicate and to work together.

That language would be a **pidgin**.

Now imagine that those fifty kidnapped people start having children, who would learn the pidgin as their native language – at an age when children absorb language like a sponge. Those children would grow up fluent in that language, creating all the richness and structure that it had previously been lacking, and turning it into a proper language.

The language would now be a **creole**.

So we have our definitions. A pidgin is a makeshift language created so that people who have no language in common can communicate. A creole is a pidgin that developed into a native language<sup>4</sup>.

In our history, pidgins generally came in two forms:

- Pidgins created by slaves bought together from many regions (many of which developed into creoles such as Papiamentu, Haitian Creole and Kwéyòl of Dominica).
- Trade tongues used by merchants or sailors to communicate where no-one wished to learn another people's language (such as Russenorsk, which was used to communicate by Norwegian and Russian fishermen in the Barents Sea until relatively recent times, or Sabir, which was used by sailors in the Mediterranean from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards).

So how much are pidgins or creoles incorporated into typical game worlds? Well, disregarding thieves' cants and battle tongues (which I think are more coded systems of communication rather than actual languages) I think that there have been attempts to put 'trade tongue' style pidgins into game worlds, typically as some kind of 'common' tongue. However, I think these tend to get diluted, firstly by a failure to recognise that this should only ever be known as a 'second' language and then only by those who travel or trade, and secondly by a failure to recognise that it is only a crude 'pseudo-language'. (So it instead gets used as a universal non-pidgin world language that most people speak, much as is the case with English today).

Personally, I think it would be much more interesting to have a party who – once they travel outside of their native land – are incapable of communicating in the local native languages, and have to instead rely on the trade tongue that only one of their number (probably a rogue explorer type) speaks<sup>5</sup>. I have to confess that a creole has fewer obvious adventuring possibilities. But I think it could add an interesting touch of detail in a game world where you have a recently settled area.

Before I finish, I've got two final observations about communication which might add spice to your game: accents and culture.

You should always remember that while two people may speak the same language, they may well speak it with quite different accents. A person's accent betrays not only their geographical origin and the class of their birth, but can also cause persons meeting them to make a whole load of stereotyped assumptions. I once saw an item on a morning TV programme where a university professor from Birmingham was talking about some research he'd carried out. He had found that people with Birmingham accents (who are called 'Brummies', just as Londoners are called 'Cockneys' and Liverpoolians 'Scousers') suffer huge discrimination in the job market because people from the rest of the UK perceive the Birmingham accent as sounding uneducated and stupid (purely through irrational prejudice).

His argument was somewhat convincing, but I had great difficulty taking what he was saying seriously; partly because it seemed slightly hyperbolic, but mainly he was saying it in one of those awful droning Brummie accents, and therefore sounded, well, stupid.

A second point to bear in mind is that even when two people speak the same language, there is a great risk of miscommunication if they are from different cultures. A classic example of this is when I had my wisdom teeth removed some years back by an Egyptian dentist. I should stress at this point that besides speaking perfect English, he was very skilled and pleasant and did an excellent job, and that him working in the UK is clearly the our gain, and Egypt's loss.

But we did suffer a classic communication failure on the first of the sessions, when the local anaesthetic didn't work, and I was in extreme pain every time the drill went into the nerve. (I can say with some certainty that the anaesthetic had failed, because two weeks later, when I had the other side of my mouth done, the pain was a fraction of what I'd experienced during the previous session).

Anyhow, after a few minutes he must have noticed that I appeared to be in some distress, because he stopped, and asked: 'Is everything alright?'

I replied with something like: 'Well I am in some discomfort, actually<sup>6</sup>,' which in British English translates, of course, into: 'I'm in such extreme \*\*\*\*ing agony that my testicles are about to explode' – and what did he do? He simply smiled, told me that it would soon be over, and then carried on!

Total failure on the communication roll.

<sup>1</sup>He was trying to say that the American people had 'great affection' for the Polish people, but his soviet-supplied translator cocked it up.

<sup>2</sup>The GM was perhaps being harsh with this ruling, and the players were perhaps being cruel to laugh at what happened to Bill's character – but they were heavily influenced by the fact that most of them didn't like him<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup>If you think I'm being cruel in bringing this up, I'd like to point out that a) I didn't like him either; b) I'm using a pseudonym to spare his blushes; and c) he stiffed me on a loan of a thousand pounds that I gave him six years ago to buy a car, and yes, I am still bitter about it.

<sup>4</sup>You might be asking what the difference is between a creole and a 'normal' native language. Well, none except that a normal language evolved naturally over a long period, and its origins will now be lost in the mists of time, whereas a creole developed in a short period of time during recent history. Linguists are very interested in creoles because it enables them to study the formation of languages. Unfortunately, as previously mentioned, most creoles in our world were developed in secret by African slaves in the New World, and so there is obviously little in the way of recorded history. *[Except for the Elvis movie, of course – ed.]*

<sup>5</sup>Imagine the pickle that they'd find themselves in if he was killed? They wouldn't be able to talk to anyone, and they wouldn't be able to recruit a local replacement because they wouldn't be able to talk to him even if he did speak the trade tongue – because they didn't. (Consider the humorous possibilities inherent in conducting a crucial job interview entirely in mime).

<sup>6</sup>I am prepared to concede that I often act a tad *too* English for my own good. But you don't like to make a fuss, do you?

# Design and Conquer

by Adrian Czajkowski



# Something Fishy This Way Comes

Richard Ford

Something Fishy This Way Comes is a d20 fantasy adventure for four to five, 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Level characters. It can be set around any town or city and can be used as a mini-adventure between or during campaigns. Sections marked in italics should be read to the players as appropriate.

## Introduction

*Gwamwave found the fresh air liberating this early in the day. Although his gills yearned for the water whenever he was away from it, he somehow found the defencelessness of the open air invigorating. His burden was growing heavy and this place was beginning to stifle; he knew his comrades felt it too. Gwamwave fingered the amulet about his neck, resenting it for all it signified.*

*As he turned to leave he suddenly saw something from corner of one huge eye. It was only a brief movement, a barely visible stirring in the morning mist, but it was definitely there. His leg muscles tensed as he prepared to leap into the waiting safety of the lake but in the split second it would have taken him to move, he was struck rigid. A little magic from the shadows was all it took and he was prone, a slimy statue laid out in the lakeside dew.*

*Footsteps crunched on the wet grass and Gwamwave felt somebody kneel down beside him. A voice, human, using the language of the land-dwellers. It had been a long time since Gwamwave had used the words and he couldn't understand them at first.*

*Seconds passed and there was a tugging sensation around the locathah's neck as his medallion was taken. There was a sigh, of victory or relief Gwamwave couldn't tell, but the words that came after were clear as day.*

*'It's time for us to have a long conversation, fish man.'*

*The voice was lilting and pleasant, but Gwamwave knew his troubles had only just started.*



## Adventure Background

A carnival arrives in whichever town or city the characters are currently residing in. All manner of weird and wonderful sights are presented for the delectation of the crowd and everyone flocks to see the myriad acts on show. The enigmatic Tiberius, a man of many words, leads the carnival troupe, all of them laced with such sweetness it is surprising that nectar does not drip from his tongue.

As well as the standard acrobats and clowns there are a number of shows and galleries presenting many weird and wonderful exhibits. The characters will be tempted by the tests of skill that are on offer to the general public, from simple trials of strength to tests of cunning and magical prowess. Should they prove themselves skilful enough, Tiberius will approach them with a very tempting offer.

Whether or not the characters choose to undertake Tiberius' mission, they will come into contact with a strange band of humanoids who are desperately searching for a lost companion. How this is linked to Tiberius they do not immediately know but soon, all will be revealed...

## For the Games

### Master

Tiberius has come to the town in search of a magical flask, fabled to contain the essence of aquatic elf magic. The carnival is a convenient cover for Tiberius, who is a bard, hell bent on propagating his own power. He has found the location of the flask after kidnapping one of the flask's guardians. This guardian is

a locathah, left to protect the flask against those who might seek to misuse its power. Under pain of death the locathah has revealed the whereabouts of the flask, an underwater temple not far from the town, but he will not impart the secrets of the temple's defences no matter how severe his torture. Tiberius, not willing to risk members of his own troupe, needs to enlist the help of mercenaries.

The carnival troupe has come to the town to seek a band of adventurers who will brave the temple and retrieve the flask. Through their tests of strength and guile they will be able to measure the best candidates for the job. Tiberius will not reveal the real dangers, or the value of the prize that is at stake, when he sends the characters off to retrieve the flask.

Within an exhibit of the carnival known as the Gallery of Aberrance resides the woeful locathah, Gwamwave. He is chained and muzzled so he cannot tell anyone of his predicament. Unbeknownst to him, his fellow guardians are currently searching him out. Unfortunately they have abandoned their posts at the temple and it is now unguarded, leaving it open to a rival band of amphibious humanoids who have also learned of the temple's treasure.

The locathah will seek the help of the characters to free their companion so that they can return to their task of defending the temple. When they return they will find that they need more help ridding their home of unwelcome guests. If the characters do free the locathah from the Gallery of Aberrance, Tiberius will be none too happy with having his captive escape.

## The Carnival Arrives

The characters will be residing at an inn or guesthouse in a medium sized city or town. When they bed down for the night they will be none

the wiser as to what awaits them in the morning. When day breaks, the carnival will have arrived in town.

*You wake to the sound of excited voices. The gasps of children and the bellowing laughter of adults creeps through your window with the morning air. Looking out you see the townsfolk flocking down the street, happy looks of anticipation playing across their faces as they swarm like sewer rats. Following the direction they are moving you spy a red and white big top peeking over the roofs of the houses. You cannot really differentiate between the excited voices or make out individual conversations but one phrase seems to be repeated over and over: 'Carnival. The carnival is in town!'*

Undoubtedly the characters will be swept along in the excitement. There is little else of interest in the town and the temptation should be too much for them to bear. If they need any encouragement have the innkeeper close down his establishment and turf them out, so eager is he to join in the fun for himself.

When the characters reach the carnival and see what is on offer for themselves they should be suitably impressed.

*The carnival is a truly impressive sight. A huge big top sits at its centre. From inside you can just make out the delighted squeals of the townsfolk as unseen performers entertain them. All manner of stalls surround the big top, fanning out like the spokes of a wheel, and every conceivable aroma assails your nostrils from the sweet charcoal smell of barbecuing meat to the dried manure of the performing ponies. Clowns run amongst the thronging crowd, performing their perpetual slapstick and a painted man on stilts glides past you, his head almost brushing the clouds.*

The characters are free to explore the carnival as they wish. They will be confronted by the usual delights any carnival has to offer but there are certain stalls, tents and exhibits that they may find of particular interest...

## The Big Top

In the centre of the carnival is a huge red and white tent. From within can be heard the delighted squeals of children and the occasional amazed gasp. The characters can choose to enter the big top at any time and will be charged 5sp at the entrance.

*On entering the big top you are astonished at its size. Although the red and white pavilion looks huge from the outside, it is positively gigantic within. Surrounding the central performance area are rows of benches, most occupied by the expectant crowd. A team of clowns is just finishing their act in the centre of the ring and you can sense the real action is about to begin.*

As soon as the clowns have finished the carnival master will enter. He is a huge, muscular individual with a mop of dark, oily hair and a huge handlebar moustache, which is greased at the ends. His clothes are red and white, matching the big top itself, and he smiles exuberantly. Despite his somewhat ostentatious appearance, as soon as the carnival master speaks, the characters will be mesmerised.

*'Greetings to one and all,' shouts the carnival master, his hands outstretched in a welcoming gesture. 'I am Tiberius, the master of the carnival troupe and I welcome you to a show that will thrill and enthrall, astonish and astound, flabbergast and flummox. Please stay in your seats, for I cannot guarantee the safety of anyone who enters the ring. What you are about to see is a spectacle you will never forget; where nothing is quite what it seems.'*

With that, Tiberius takes a step to his left and disappears. The performances proper will then begin. Although quite impressive they should be nothing to what the characters have already experience in their adventuring careers. A dancing bear and elephant take to the stage along with a pair of snow-white horses that a young girl balances upon. A trapeze artist swings across the top of the pavilion and then walks a tightrope. Two men breath fire at one another and a fat man sticks his head in a panther's mouth. Although the rest of the crowd appear suitably impressed, breaking out into spontaneous applause in all the right places, it is hardly the unforgettable spectacle Tiberius has built it up to be.

When the acts have finished Tiberius appears once more, his arms outstretched, and the rest of the troupe joins him. The audience applauds wildly and Tiberius soaks up the adulation with a wild glint in his eye.

The crowd is invited to contribute any further monies they see fit as the troupe move amongst them with hats and open satchels. The characters will notice that these bags fill quite quickly, as the audience is more than happy to show their appreciation.

## Bargoth's Brawn Bout

A huge, brutish looking man stands atop a raised dais, stripped to the waist, his bald head shining in the early sunlight. He stares gleefully at the crowd as they file past him, some shying away, fearful of the man's baleful stare. A small gnome sits on the edge of the dais swinging his legs idly. As the characters near the dais the huge man begins to bellow:

*'Come on then! Who thinks they can defeat the great Bargoth?' shouts the huge man, causing some passers by to visibly wince. 'Does anyone think they can take me on? Three tests, three prizes, only one gold piece to enter.'*

Should any of the characters feel they want to take Bargoth on they will be faced with three tasks once they have handed over 1gp. The first is to lift a large spherical stone above their head. Bargoth will demonstrate by lifting the boulder easily. The boulder is quite heavy and requires a Strength check (DC15) to lift. Should the character succeed Bargoth will congratulate them and his gnome assistant will hand over 1gp prize money.

Bargoth will then invite them to take the next trial. Should they agree he will invite them over to a specially designed arm wrestling table. Make an opposed Strength check against Bargoth. If the character defeats him he will hand over a further 2gp and, looking a little dejected, invite them to take the third trial. If they agree Bargoth's face will light up.

By this time a crowd will have gathered around the small dais, with most cheering on the character in question. The small gnome will produce a table and two chairs and place them in the middle of the dais. Bargoth will sit, inviting the character to take the chair opposite. The gnome will then tie Bargoth's left hand to that of the character. The object of the third trial is to trade punches until one or other of the contestants admits defeat or falls unconscious. Begin by flipping a coin to see who goes first. The character and Bargoth will take it in turns trading blows (both contestants deal nonlethal damage and are considered helpless defenders for the purposes of AC) until one is reduced to 0 hp or until one surrenders. Should Bargoth be defeated, (he will surrender when reduced to 5hp or less) his assistant will hand over 5gp to the victor and the crowd will go wild.

**Bargoth, male human Ftr3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d10+6; hp 27; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 Leather); touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk/Grapple +3/+7; Atk Weapon +7 melee (weapon); Full Atk Weapon +7 melee

(weapon); Space/Reach 5 ft. /5 ft.; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 9; AL CN; Intimidate +3, Ride +3; Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack.

## Del'rey the Magnificent

A self-satisfied looking dwarf stands outside a small, garishly decorated tent with a banner outside proclaiming 'Del'rey the Magnificent'. The dwarf's hair is plaited and he wears blue silken robes. He gently smiles and nods at the passers by but there seems little interest in the contents of his tent; and he does not seem particularly concerned about it. If the characters approach Del'rey he will smile and hail them.

*'Greetings good, sirs. I hope the day finds you well,' smiles the dwarf. His exuberant grin reveals several gold teeth within his shining maw. 'Would any of you care to chance your arm in a contest of sorcerous skill?'*

Del'rey will direct his question at any characters who appear to be magic users (wearing robes might give that one away). Should any of the party take the dwarf up on his offer he will usher them inside his tent.

After the character has paid a charge of 3gp, Del'rey will explain the rules of the competition. On a table in the tent is a small cage containing a large black rat. The cage door is held shut via a rope which, when pulled or severed, will open the door. Also on the table is a saucer of water and a small hatch through which the rat can escape. Del'rey will offer the character the option of making the rat drink or helping it escape through the hatch. When the character has decided they are then allowed to pick three of the six scrolls that Del'rey offers them. The scrolls contain the following spells: *open/close, mage hand, acid splash, flare, ray of frost*

and *ghost sound* (obviously if there are no arcane spellcasters in the group it will be quite difficult to play the game). The character will then have to use the scrolls, and any spells they have of their own, to either make the rat drink or escape. Del'rey uses the leftover scrolls to achieve whichever task the character did not choose. Del'rey and the character then take it in turns (the player goes first) using the scrolls to coax, frighten, lift and tease the rat to their desired goal. Freezing the water with a *ray of frost* means the rat cannot drink, closing the hatch with *mage hand* means the rat cannot escape, etc.

The Games Master may wish to add a 'random rat option', which means whatever Del'rey or the character does the rat simply suits itself, running around randomly or simply sitting still and not budging. If the rat is killed during the game Del'rey will be a little upset (although he will continue smiling his sparkling toothy-grin) and refuse to give a refund to the character.

Whoever achieves their goal first wins the game. Should the character best Del'rey he will hand over 8 gp, beaming insincerely, and quickly usher them out of his tent.

**Del'rey, male dwarf Wiz 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (dwarf); HD 5d4+5; hp 19; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk/Grapple +2/+3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); Space/Reach 5 ft. / 5 ft.; SA spells; SQ darkvision, dwarf traits; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 13; AL N; Concentration +9, Decipher Script +5, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Ride +3, Spellcraft +9; Empower Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (enchantment).

**Spells (4/4/3/2):** 0 – *daze, detect magic, light, read magic*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *charm person, hypnotism, magic missile, sleep*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *bull's strength, daze monster, touch of idiocy*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *deep slumber, hold person*.

## Gambler's Corner

Towards the edge of the carnival there is a rather dour, nondescript tent. People slink in and out of it, some of them obviously trying their hardest not to be seen. This is the gambling tent and within are an array of betting opportunities. The tent looks plain so as not to draw attention to what is contained within. Gambling is frowned upon in some regions but often a blind eye is turned, so it is best not to advertise the fact that a gambling den nestles amidst a seemingly innocent carnival. Should the characters wish to enter and try their luck the exciting atmosphere of Gambler's Corner will greet them.

*There is an almost tangible tension in the air, but it is not the icy terror of battle or the mystical tingling before a spell is cast. This is an ambience unique to the gambling arena. In every corner of the pavilion wild eyed, and sometimes desperate, looking townsfolk are handing over their hard earned gold and silver for the chance of a few meagre riches. The croupiers politely comply with their customers' wishes, handing out cards and spinning wheels in exchange for hard cash. Little is given in return, and you notice several dark-looking figures occasionally taking the croupier's cash satchels and exiting the tent with them. How much the bags contain can only be guessed at.*

The characters are free to 'have a flutter' if they feel lucky. There are three separate games on offer:

**Roulette:** A grid of twenty squares is laid out next to a roulette wheel, each is numbered from one to twenty. Each character may choose to place 1sp in any square they choose. There will be other gamblers betting and the croupier allots at least five squares to himself (all blank squares are deemed to belong to the croupier also). The Games Master will role 1d20 to determine which number the roulette ball lands in. The winner receives 20sp (or all the stake money if it is the croupier who wins).

**Black & White:** There is also a black and a white square on the roulette grid. The characters can choose to place any amount on either black or white. If the number rolled on 1d20 is odd, the number is deemed to be black, evens are white. If the character has his stake on the correct colour he will double his bet, otherwise it is lost.

**Voies:** Six voles are lined up in cages in front of a ten-foot track. A cat is held over the cages to whip the voles into an appropriate frenzy. The voles and the cat are released simultaneously and the rodents must make it along a high-sided track into a small hole at the other end before the cat catches them. Characters may choose to bet on which vole will make it to the edge of the track first. A 1gp stake will return 4gp for the winning vole (randomly determined by rolling 1d6). As well as rolling for the voles, roll for the cat on 1d20. On 7-20 the cat does not manage to nab a vole but on 1-6 the cat catches the corresponding vole, whether it was winning the race or not. If a character has backed a vole caught by the cat he will receive a 5sp booby prize.

The Games Master can choose to insert any other games he sees fit. Card games should be played for real with the characters playing against the Games Master who can act as croupier, but remember: the house always wins in the end.

If the characters wish to use magic to help their chances of winning (*augury* or *mage hand* can come in very useful at the roulette table) the croupiers will have a chance of noticing (allow them a Spot check DC15). Characters found cheating will be forcibly ejected from Gambler's Corner by the same men in black who are collecting the croupiers' money. Trying to pick the pockets of these men will also be frowned upon if the attempt is discovered. Both of these events will also bring the characters to the attention of Tiberius, who may well be impressed by their gall.

## Tommi Two-Axe

The carnival's resident axe thrower operates in plain site. He is a conceited, arrogant individual and always picks the best position within the carnival's boundaries (other than the big top). The characters will be able to hear the crowd's gasps before they are close enough to watch Tommi's act.

*The gasps of men and women alert your instincts to possible trouble. As you draw closer to the sound, rather than seeing figures fleeing from some madman with a sharp implement, there is a large crowd mesmerised by one of the carnival's acts. Moving closer you see a man dressed in black, standing atop a raised platform. His smile is as thin as his moustache as he casually flips a throwing axe in one immaculately manicured hand.*

*'Ladies and gentleman,' he begins in a drawl as casual as his manner, 'prepare to be amazed by the death-defying treats ahead. Not only will I mystify and mesmerise, I will also cheat death, all for your entertainment.'*

Tommi will then begin his act. He is an axe thrower of considerable skill, hitting the bullseye of several targets, each of decreasing size. After landing his axes in the haft of a two-inch wide pole he will call on his 'assistant'. The characters will soon see that the 'death-defying' part of Tommi's act is not performed by him but by his rather sheepish looking assistant, Lydia. She stands against a revolving wheel as Tommi plants his axes in various positions around her body. He will then strap her to the wheel and spin it, once again missing her by inches. For his finale he draws out a blindfold and again throws his axes expertly, planting them in the revolving board while missing Lydia.

Once he has finished he will invite someone in the crowd to try their hand at hitting his targets. At the cost

of 2gp the characters can try their hand. There are five targets in all, which the characters can try to hit with the axe (use an AC of 10 to 14 for the five targets as their bullseyes become progressively smaller). Should the character hit all the targets first time Tommi will look surprised and offer the character a chance to hit the pole. The character will be given two shots. By landing both in the target (AC 17) Tommi will grumble something about 'nobody ever doing that before' and offer them the chance to hit the targets on his spinning wheel. There are three spots on the target, which will be revolved. By landing three axes in the correct targets (AC 18) Tommi will begin to look flustered. His pride, however, will get the better of him and he will call forth his assistant. Despite her protestations he will strap Lydia to the wheel. The character can of course refuse to proceed any further, at which point Tommi will regain his composure and make some conciliatory, if uncomplimentary remarks. Should the character wish to chance his arm (and the life of Lydia) he can give it a go. Make another three throws (AC 18) however this time on a miss there is a 50% chance Lydia will be hit. If she is hit she takes 1d6 damage (doubled if the miss was on a natural 1). And a large gasp will go up from the crowd. The damage should not be enough to finish her off but the character should feel suitably ashamed for risking her life in such a manner.

Should the character safely plant all three axes in their targets whilst avoiding Lydia, Tommi will stop short of producing his blindfold. Throwing 8gp on the ground at the character's feet he will snatch his axes and stomp away, leaving Lydia revolving helplessly on her wheel.

**Tommi Two-Axe, male human Ftr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d10; hp 32; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+4 Dex, +3 Studded Leather), touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk/Grapple +5/+6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+3, throwing axe) or +10 ranged (1d6+1,

throwing axe); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+3, throwing axe) or +10 ranged (1d6+1, throwing axe) or +8/+8 ranged (1d6+1, throwing axe); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 4; AL N; Intimidate +3, Jump +3, Perform +3, Ride +5; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (throwing axe), Weapon Specialisation (throwing axe).

## Beat the Bells

A halfling known as Bethel Runn keeps a stall on the outskirts of the carnival. He is an accomplished, if grizzled, thief who now turns his hand to entertainment rather than crime.

*Towards the fringes of the carnival you notice a rather intimate crowd gathered around something. The crowd is silent and motionless and as you move closer you wonder whether they are affected by some enchantment. Suddenly there is a loud crash and the sound of a hundred jangling bells. The crowd bursts into peals of laughter and from within their midst you hear a gruff voice:*

*'Bad luck, bad luck my friend. Not as easy as it looks, eh? Well, who's next? Don't all rush at once, we've got plenty of time.'*

As the characters draw closer they will see a grey-haired halfling holding a wooden and leather mannequin's torso. Secreted on the mannequin's body are various pouches and purses but more noticeable are the scores of bells tied to the mannequin's clothes.

For 5gp any character can attempt to steal one of the purses but will fail if a bell is rung. To make matters worse the character must stand on a rickety, three-legged stool whilst they are performing the act of felony.

Characters wishing to lift a purse must make a Sleight of Hand check (DC 20) with a -4 penalty for balancing on the stool (characters

with any ranks in the Balance or Tumble skills may disregard this penalty). Success means the purse is lifted without any bells ringing.

Should the character succeed Bethel will congratulate them with an odd, sad sincerity, and allow them to keep the contents of the purse. There are varying amounts of treasure in the purses and these can be left up to the Games Master's discretion.

**Bethel Runn, male halfling Rog 5:**

CR 5; Small humanoid (halfling); HD 5d6+5; hp 25; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 Studded Leather), touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk/Grapple +3/+3; Atk +6 melee (1d4/19-20, short sword) or +6 ranged (1d6/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4/19-20, short sword) or +6 ranged (1d6/19-20, light crossbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Sneak Attack +3d6; SQ evasion, uncanny dodge, halfling traits; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 12; AL N; Appraise +4, Balance +4, Bluff +4, Diplomacy +4, Escape Artist +5, Hide +6, Jump +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +6, Ride +4, Search +4, Sleight of Hand +8, Tumble +4; Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

**The Gallery of Aberrance**

A large, multi-coloured pavilion stands to one side of the carnival, adorned with pictures of many wonderful and freakish creatures and objets d'art. Beneath a sign that proclaims the pavilion as being the Gallery of Aberrance stands a man in a shabby hat carrying a rickety cane. He stands atop a box shouting at the would-be patrons of his 'exhibit'.

*'Don't be frightened, ladies and gents,' shouts the man, his rickety cane wagging in his gnarled fingers, 'just make sure you hold onto the kiddies' hands and try not to touch any of the exhibits. Everything you are about to see is completely*

*genuine, gathered from the five corners of the known world. Some things you've only heard of in tales, others you've probably only dreamed of and all here for the meagre price of 10 silver pieces a head – just five for the kiddies, of course.'*

Should the characters wish to hand over their cash to enter the Gallery of Aberrance they will be greeted with a surprisingly impressive selection of exhibits.

*The pavilion seems quite spacious and is lit by a system of dim braziers. On various plinths sit a number of rare and seemingly magical items, all neatly labelled with a small brass plaque. A bell jar sits on one plinth and contains a huge eyeball. The brass plaque proclaims it to be the Eye of Gehrhut the All-seeing, plucked out by an unknown adventurer over two hundred years ago. Another plinth contains the huge pickled head of a baby red dragon and the plaque simply reads 'Draconis Mortem'.*

The characters can peruse the gallery for as long as they wish; the Games Master can fill it with whatever he pleases as long as the items are dead, stuffed and inanimate. None of the items are actually genuine but skilfully made by artisans. A successful Appraise check (DC 15-18 depending on which piece is being examined) will reveal the exhibits to be fakes. The only live (and genuine) exhibit in the Gallery of Aberrance resides in a cage at the end of the pavilion.

*As you near the end of the pavilion you notice a small cage in the gloom. Chained within is a fish-like humanoid that stares glumly over its leather muzzle. As you approach, the stench of filth and rotting fish pervades your nostrils and you cannot help but feel pity for the pathetic creature.*

This is the locathah Tiberius has imprisoned and interrogated for information. The creature can speak common and has consequently been muzzled to guarantee his silence and stop him calling for aid. Tiberius' avaricious nature has provoked him into using Gwamwave as an exhibit even though he has gleaned as much information from the creature as he possibly can.

The characters can identify the creature's race on a successful Knowledge (nature) check (DC 15), unless of course the characters have encountered locathah before, in which case no check is necessary. **Gwamwave (Locathah) Ftr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (aquatic); HD 2d8+4d10; hp 35; Init +1; Spd 10 ft. (Swim 60 ft.); AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk/Grapple +5/+5; Atk - ; Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 11; AL N; Craft (trapmaking) +10, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Listen +6, Spot +10, Swim +15; Weapon Focus (longspear).

**A Fishy Proposal**

After a busy day at the carnival the party may be ready for some rest. When they have seen all there is to see (or all they wish to see) the characters should return to their lodgings. On the way they will be shadowed by four mysterious figures, all heavily cloaked. These are the locathah who are desperately searching for their comrade, Gwamwave, who also happens to be the leader of the group. Unbeknownst to the locathah, their leader is currently residing in the Gallery of Aberrance.

The Games Master should roll a secret Spot check for the party, opposed by the locathah's Hide skill as they attempt, somewhat vainly, to blend in with their surroundings. Any characters that spot the locathah shadowing them may wish to pursue and confront the hooded figures.

If the characters do not spot or do not wish to pursue the locathah they will meet up anyway, later in the night.

Once the characters have bedded down they will receive a rude and rather smelly awakening. The following encounter can be read to all the characters, though the locathah will approach whichever character appears the most powerful or most suited to leadership.

*You are approaching the end of a rather pleasant dream that includes pixies, faeries and blossom-swept groves when a rancid smell invades your nostrils. In your dream a slithering creature crawls from the shadows, its rank stench becoming ever more overpowering. You open your eyes to escape the terror of your nightmare and are startled by the walking horror that looms over your prone body.*

The locathah will have broken into the characters' room, seeing them as the best option for help amongst the rag-tag collection of townsfolk. Should the characters not immediately attack the group of strange fish-men who have appeared in their quarters, they will be greeted with a desperate plea for help.

## The Locathah

The four locathah are rather timid and speak in a strange meld of Aquan and Common. Eventually they will be able to make themselves understood and explain that they are envoys on a secret mission, given to them by their ancient masters. One of their number has recently gone missing and they require the aid of the characters to retrieve him. It may become evident to the characters that the comrade the locathah are looking for is the fish-beast locked in the Gallery of Aberrance (if they visited it).

The locathah have nothing to offer the party as a reward for their aid but they will explain that their mission

is of the utmost importance and they need their leader or they cannot carry out their orders properly. If the characters press them further for information, the locathah will reveal more details of their mission, explaining that they are the guardians of an ancient source of aquatic elf magic, entrusted with its safety and ordered to keep it secret from all prying eyes. Further pressure will force the locathah to reveal the entire history of their current situation...

**Locathah (4):** CR 2; Medium humanoid (aquatic); HD 2d8; hp 9 each; Init +1; Spd 10 ft. (Swim 60 ft.); AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk/Grapple +1/+1; Atk +2 melee (1d8/x3, longspear) or +2 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8/x3, longspear) or +2 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 11; AL N; Knowledge (arcana) +5, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +8; Weapon Focus (longspear).

## A Secret War

It is two hundred years since the end of the Trident Wars. Air breathers know nothing of the bitter conflict fought in the underground streams and lakes beneath their feet. Neither do they know of the price paid by those that fought and died in it.

The Elatl tribe of aquatic elves had made their home beneath the ground for a thousand years and had lived peacefully. Human encroachment was kept at bay by raw cunning, and not a little magic, and they managed to build a strong civilisation in their underwater realm. That was until the sahuagin came. Turned out of their lands by a long forgotten evil, the sahuagin had come seeking new territory. Normally, a refugee tribe of sahuagin would be no match for the talents of the aquatic elves but these were different; organised and ruthless, they set about the systematic destruction of the Elatl civilisation.

After months of bitter fighting the proud Elatl turned to the only allies they could, and the locathah answered their call for aid. Tragically the sahuagin also called for help and it came in the form of a tribe of skum who were almost as brutal and bloodthirsty as the sahuagin themselves.

The war continued with losses on both sides mounting fast. Before long, the tide was beginning to turn in favour of the sahuagin and the aquatic elves were fighting against inevitable defeat.

Rather than concede their lands to the evil invaders, the aquatic elves decided that if they could no longer stay in their realm then the sahuagin would not have it either. History does not tell what fell magic they used, some think they bargained with the demons of the sea, others think they sacrificed themselves in a ritual that destroyed both parties in the war. Whatever the solution it was a devastating one. Both sides were almost wiped out and the previously tranquil waters that had been the Elatl's realm were now stagnant and uninhabitable.

The sahuagin and their skum allies retreated to search for more fertile lands. The Elatl also left their barren realm behind them, but as a warning to any who might think of trying to inhabit their dead lands they left the source of their cataclysmic power behind. To guard this power source they enlisted the help of their allies, the locathah, who would be charged with guarding this prize and ensuring that the Elatl's realm remained unconquered.

For centuries the locathah have done their duty but now their number has dwindled to the five souls that remain. With Gwamwave missing the temple and the source of elven power is in great danger...

## Tiberius' Offer

The characters will encounter Tiberius in one of two ways:

After being confronted by the locathah they may wish to challenge Tiberius head on and demand (or bargain) for the release of the locathah leader. Tiberius will not be open to any kind of negotiation regarding the release of Gwamwave; the characters either have to do as he requests (see below) or fight Tiberius and his minions.

Alternatively, if the characters refuse to aid the locathah or if they spend time formulating a rescue bid, one of Tiberius' troupe will approach *them* and request that they meet with the carnival master. If one or more characters managed to best one of the troupe members at their respective talents it will be that troupe member who approaches them (they will have reported the character's success to Tiberius and he will send them as an envoy).

Either way, if the characters come face to face with Tiberius he will offer them a chance of riches, or if they are appearing on behalf of the locathah, the opportunity to have Gwamwave released.

Tiberius the carnival master is a charismatic individual but his lust for power has led to the development of his ugly soul. He has learned of the legend of the Trident Wars and through extensive research has managed to track down the location of the temple. He and Del'rey kidnapped Gwamwave after staking out the stagnant lake and have managed to glean certain information from him. Tiberius now wishes to enlist the characters to complete the final stage of his plans.

*There is something I need,' smiles Tiberius, fingering one of the shiny signets on his well-manicured fingers. 'Well, not so much a need, more a desire. Not far from here is a stagnant lake. Below its northern shore lie a series of tunnels at the end of which you'll find a door. Place this in the indentation in that door.' Tiberius presents a small,*

*star-shaped amulet. 'Once you've gained entry I want you to bring me back what you find in the chamber... then I'll give you what you desire.'*

If the characters are not bargaining for Gwamwave's freedom Tiberius can offer them anything they suggest, within reason. He will cite a network of contacts and a list of merchants who can requisition any equipment, armour or weapons (magical or otherwise) the characters can name. These items will be delivered to the characters once they return to Tiberius with the contents of the underground chamber.

**Tiberius, male human Brd 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (human); HD 8d6+8; hp 48; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 leather), touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk/Grapple +6/+7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword) or +8 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword) or +8 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Space/Reach 5 ft. /5 ft.; SA spells; SQ bardic music; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 17; AL N; Appraise +2, Balance +3, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +6, Hide +3, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (history) +4, Move Silently +4, Perform (oratory) +7, Ride +4, Sleight of Hand +4, Spellcraft +6, Tumble +3, Use Magic Device +6; Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Penetration, Weapon Focus (longsword).

**Spells (3/4/4/2):** 0 – *ghost sound, mage hand, prestidigitation*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *charm person, hypnotism, magic mouth, summon monster*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *enthral, locate object, rage, suggestion*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *charm monster, see invisibility*.

If pressed for more details Tiberius will remain tight lipped. The truth is he does not know any details of the underground temple, nor what the source of power is within the chamber. He has stolen the star-

shaped amulet from Gwamwave and the only information the locathah has imparted regarding the source of the aquatic elven power is its location.

Tiberius is a cautious man and will not risk himself or his troupe. Instead he will send the party to do his dirty work. Of course he has no intention of keeping his side of the bargain once they return with their prize...

## The Underwater Temple

Should the characters decide to take on Tiberius' quest he will provide them with simple directions to the underwater temple. This can be made easier if they have also decided to aid the locathah, as they will happily guide the characters to the entrance to aid in the rescue of Gwamwave.

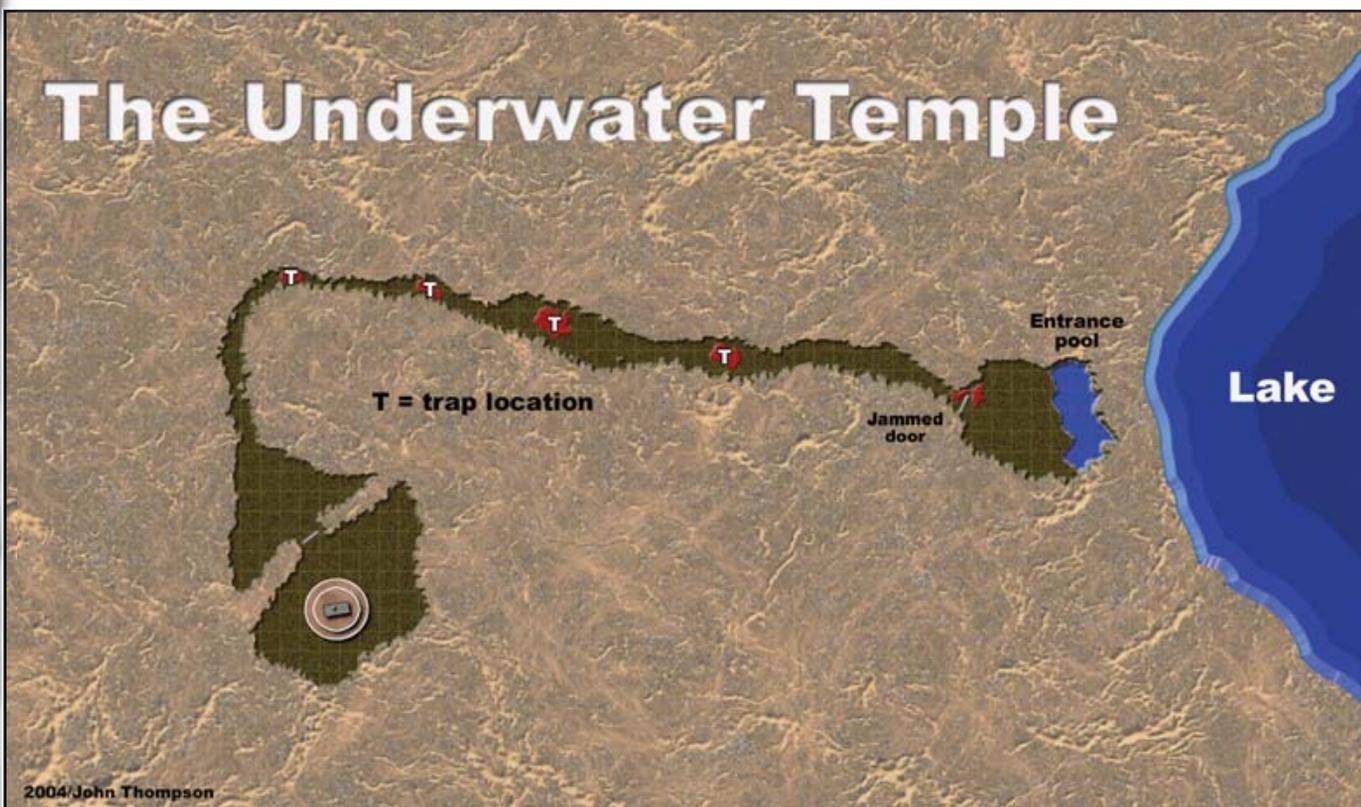
The entrance is just beneath the surface of a lake, which in turn is not far from whichever habitation the carnival is set up at. To gain entry the characters will have to swim down around ten feet with a successful Swim check (DC 5). Should they fail the check they can re-attempt the swim as many times as they like, although the Games Master may wish to add the risk of drowning if they fail too many times and become fatigued.

Once inside the entrance the characters will be greeted by a rather drab and unimpressive hallway.

*The musty smell of damp and rotting fish hits your nostrils as you cross the dim hall. Your feet make a slopping noise as they come into contact with the soggy, tiled floor. The noise echoes through the room, mixing with the steady sound of dripping. Two braziers burn on either side of the room, their scant illumination revealing a stone door at the opposite side of the hall, which is slightly ajar.*

If the locathah are accompanying the characters they will make eerie, high-pitched warning sounds. One of

# The Underwater Temple



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them will explain that a series of traps have been set to catch any unwary intruders and it would be best if they went ahead to clear them. However, there are some unwanted intruders already inside the temple and they have gone about clearing the traps for themselves, albeit at the cost of several lives.

The locathah will discover the body of a dead skum warrior in the doorway up ahead. He has been crushed in the door (which was rigged to slam shut on any intruders) and his comrades have squeezed through the gap he has created. If the characters are unaccompanied by the locathah they will discover the body themselves. The group should be able to squeeze through the gap provided by the crushed skum warrior and continue along the tunnel.

Once through the party will discover the tunnel slopes downwards. It becomes quite slippery the further the characters venture and the stench becomes more overpowering. At various intervals the party will discover the body of another skum

warrior, impaled, decapitated, eviscerated or crushed by one of the temple's many traps. There seems to be a somewhat inexhaustible supply of skum to be utilised for trap clearance until the characters reach the end of the hallway.

*Around the corner you can hear the unmistakable, guttural discourse of the Aquan language. Unlike those of the locathah, these voices do not seem lilting or peaceable; their speech is harsh and clipped. As you draw closer a loud banging echoes down the hallway as the voices bicker. Whatever lies up ahead is copious in number and extremely displeased...*

## Uninvited Guests

It is not only Tiberius who covets the legendary power of the aquatic elf magic. A party of skum warriors has been staking out the locathah temple for days. They observed Tiberius' kidnap of Gwamwave and the locathah's subsequent evacuation of

the temple in order to search for him. Their leader has sacrificed his men to circumvent the temple's traps, but he is stuck at the final obstacle.

The door to the final chamber is held shut by an unsurpassable mechanism and can only be opened via the medallion given to the characters by Tiberius. It would be easy for the characters to unlock the door, they simply have to place the star-shaped medallion in the corresponding star-shaped hollow and it will swing open. Unfortunately a pack of angry skum warriors stands between them and their goal. The locathah will join in any combat with the skum, fighting with a surprising zeal against their hated enemy.

**Skum Warriors (6-8):** CR 2; Medium aberration (aquatic); HD 2d8+2; hp 11 each; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (Swim 40 ft.); AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk/Grapple +1/+5; Atk +5 melee (2d6+4, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (2d6+4, bite) and +0 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Rake 1d6+2 (while

swimming); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6; AL NE; Hide +6\*, Listen +7\*, Move Silently +6, Spot +7\*, Swim +12; Alertness.

\* +4 racial bonus underwater

Once the skum have been dealt with the characters will be free to enter the final chamber. The door swings open on creaking hinges and the characters walk in.

*On a plinth in the centre of a dark, dank chamber stands the object of your mission. A small, incongruous flask seems to be the focus of so many desires. The flask is made of a rusty metal and is rather drab considering it contains the source of the aquatic elf power that destroyed a realm and ended a war.*

Of course the plinth is trapped. If the locathah are accompanying the characters, and they have survived the encounter with the skum, they will reveal the secret to lifting the flask (so desperate are they to save Gwamwave they will disregard their centuries old mission). A lever beneath the plinth is pulled to the right and the flask can be safely purloined. Any character can successfully notice the trap without the locathah on a successful Spot check (DC 20). Should the flask be lifted before the trap is disabled all will seem well at first, until the chamber and tunnel begin to fill with water.

The characters will have to flee the temple before it is completely submerged. Anyone with a speed of 30 feet or above should be able to make the exit before the water becomes too deep. They will then, of course, have to make a Swim check (DC 10) to reach the surface. Anyone moving slower than 30 feet will find themselves submerged before they can escape, leading to a more difficult Swim check (DC15 for speed 20 to 30 feet, DC 20 for anything less). Slower characters will find

themselves helped by the locathah if they are accompanying them adding +4 to the Swim check. Characters who fail their Swim checks, and are not accompanied by these extremely adept swimmers, may be able to find pockets of air to breathe in temporarily (at the Games Master's discretion) and attempt to swim to the surface when they have regained their composure – and some air.

## Double Cross

At this point the characters should be fairly fatigued from their fight with the skum, their flight from the temple and their swim to the surface. To top this, they will be soaking wet, standing on the shore of a muddy lake. The sight that greets them will do nothing to perk up their spirits.

Tiberius, Bargoth, Tommi Two-Axe, Del'rey and Bethel are waiting for them, fully armed and ready for action, mounted on horses. They also have Gwamwave who is chained up and looking as glum as ever. Tiberius will demand the prize, which the characters should now possess, and if they keep their side of the bargain he will keep his as far as releasing Gwamwave is concerned. If the characters completed their mission for purely venal reasons they will have a nasty surprise as Tiberius and his men pull out crossbows (or in the case of Tommi, two axes) and demand the aquatic elf artefact with no intention of handing over any kind of payment.

Handing over the flask will result in Tiberius' retreat. If the characters do hand over the flask the locathah will – somewhat surprisingly – do nothing to stop them as Gwamwave explains the secret he has kept for so long...

## Concluding the Adventure

With Gwamwave rescued the locathah can offer the characters nothing but their gratitude. With the flask gone they will swim off to waters new, their rather unenviable job as guardians finished with. If the

characters enquire as to the reason behind Gwamwave's lack of remorse he will reveal the flask's secret.

Tiberius has been desperately searching for the source of the power that stagnated the waters in which they used to live and forced out the sahuagin. The legend is true, to a certain point: namely that the source of the 'power' they used for this task was left behind. As a ruse to keep their lands clear they kept a flask full of this 'power' in a safe place to ward off trespassers. In actual fact, all the aquatic elves did was taint the fresh water environment in which they had lived with seawater, making it uninhabitable to the fresh water-dwelling sahuagin.

All that Tiberius now holds in his hands is a flask full of salt water.

At best the characters will be left with the locathah's gratitude and wet clothes. They may wish to trail Tiberius and exact their revenge for the double-cross (although when they return to the town the carnival will have packed up and moved on as quickly as it arrived) or they could let bygones be bygones.

However, the Games Master may wish Tiberius to exact a terrible revenge himself, so devastated is he when he learns the truth of the flask's contents. On top of the chill they are about to catch, the characters could find themselves pursued by an angry carnival troupe...





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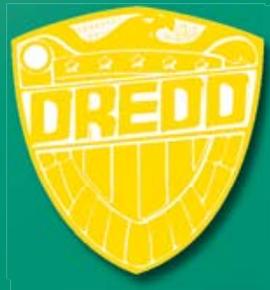
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