

MONGOOSE PUBLISHING PRESENTS

Signs & Portents

61

Elric

A supplement on Love and Hate within the Young Kingdoms

Battlefield Evolution: Modern Combat

For Love or Money - A Mercenary Unit

GenCon UK

A report on all of the action from the Mongoose stand

Plus... RuneQuest, Conan, Gangs of Mega City I, Traveller, Spycraft and much more!

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Well I am afraid that my editorial, like the magazine this month, is short but sweet and packed with information!

Firstly I would like to say a huge thank you to all of you for all of the emails, PMs and forum posts wishing me a speedy recovery. I would also like to thank you all for being so understanding about the re-launch of S&P being put back to November, yet I know that you all agree that rushing it in the last stages would have been a major injustice.

I am well on the mend now. Still having some twinges and the odd numb hand but I am back in the saddle both at work and at the stables! In fact below, to fill in space and to prove to you all that I am getting there, is a picture of me and my horse last week jumping for the first time since the accident. As you can see they are very tiny jumps as I am determined to build my back up again slowly... although my horse seems to think that I am insulting her ability with these meagre offerings!

I hope to see many of you at the B5 open day. Have a great month

Charlie



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January 28th - February 1st 2009

BY VINCENT N. DARLAGE

Deep in the darkest regions of the Black Kingdoms lies a world of shaded sunlight filtering through a dense canopy of leaves, a world where the uncanny silences are punctuated by the strange cries of birds and animals, a world where the pygmy hunters live in harmony with the darksome forest. Malaria and dengue fever are rampant throughout the humid, hot rainforest region where these people dwell.

The Pygmies of the southern Black Kingdoms are rainforest denizens who generally do not grow taller than five feet on average. Most pygmies are notoriously keen-sighted. Pygmy characters should almost always have their Spot skill kept at maximum ranks. Most pygmies are also noted for excellent memory and mimicking skills. Food is plentiful in the rainforests, so most pygmies only have to hunt for three or four hours a day. The remainder of the day is spent socializing.

Few pygmies know how to swim and most have a deep distrust of large bodies of water. Pygmies are the best specialist hunters and are used for that purpose by other peoples, such as the kingdoms of Amazon and Atlaia. The pygmies are also noted for their complex music styles. They dress in a loincloth made of softened tree-bark. They are usually bare-footed.

THE B'AKKAH PYGMIES

The B'akkah are a nomadic pygmy people living in the rainforests south of Amazon and Tombalku.

They are primarily gatherers, fishers and foragers but the hunt is a powerful ritual in their lives

and they accord great respect to their most successful hunters—especially those hunters who can hunt elephants, as elephants symbolize the supreme might of the rain forest. B'akkah elephant hunters are used by ivory hunters throughout the region.

The B'akkah often file their teeth to sharp points, leading to claims of cannibalism. The B'akkah occasionally find themselves the target of cannibals because local tribes believe the flesh of pygmies is magical and eating that flesh gives either magical powers or wards off the sorcery of others. However, some sorcerers *are* cannibals, believing it gives them more power. B'akkah sorcerers often shapechange into predatory forms and eat their victims.

Their houses are leaf-covered igloo-shaped affairs. Families tend to live apart from other families, instead of in clans. Life in the jungle tends to favour smaller groups.

They have a secret initiation ceremony for the men, which turn a young boy into an adult. The boys of an age are led into a secret part of the rain forest for the darksome rituals, in which the Spirit of the Forest eventually kills them by eating their liver and then resurrects them as adults with special powers.

The B'akkah hunt smaller mammals (such as monkeys) with poisoned arrows and larger mammals (such as elephants) with spears. Crocodiles are hunted by trapping them, then killing the beast with spears. The men also gather honey from the rainforest bees. They do have a

unique method of fishing. They create a poison from crushed plant material; this poison, when introduced in water, deprives the fish of oxygen. This kills the fish and they float to the surface for easy collection. The women fish by creating a dam, which traps the fish and then they let the water out of the dam—again creating a situation where collection is easy. This also provides fresh-water crabs, shrimp and eels for food. All food is shared by the entire village.

The B'akkah are noted herbalists, able to use the jungle around them to cure illnesses, treat maladies, create poisons and find food. Their medicinal skills are such that neighbouring non-pygmy tribes seek out B'akkah healers for their own ills, believing the pygmies to be magical or even bordering on the supernatural.

GOVERNMENT OF THE B'AKKAH

The government of the B'akkah is egalitarian, in that at birth all B'akkah of either sex are theoretically equal. Leadership is determined by experience and/or skill level. Healers, elephant-hunters and elders tend to have the most clout.

RELIGION OF THE B'AKKAH

The B'akkah have an animist religion centred on various forest spirits. The spirits are called *Bobe* and they appear as phosphorescent animals that can transform into plants instantaneously. There is no division between the physical and the spiritual

in B'akkah belief. The chief of the forest spirits is called Enjengui. After each hunt, the Luma dance of thanks is performed in honour of Enjengui and the Bobe. The lives of the B'akkah are infused with symbolic rituals and traditions. The creator-god is called Komba but he is largely indifferent to the world he created. They also believe in a large number of lesser spirits that are invoked as ghosts or demons.

The B'akkah have a class of diviners known as *Bange*. The B'akkah follow the dictates of the Bange in all things due to his intimate communion with the spirits of the jungle. The Bange are the teachers, healers and shaman of the B'akkah.

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE B'AKKAH

Ghosts: The B'akkah believe that the recently deceased haunt the village unless they are put to rest with three days of drumming, singing, and dancing. The women paint their faces white during these three days of funeral celebrations. A villain could continually stop these celebrations, thus cursing the village to severe hauntings.

Mókílá: The best animal hunters among the B'akkah can shape-shift at will into animal forms in order to approach their prey. The best hunters of the B'akkah are initiated into a secret society (Mókílá) and then taught the power. These hunters are also gifted with special vision and access to the spirit world. Many believe their power on the hunt is enhanced through cannibalism. Indeed, a hunter who has 'gone bad' begins eating his own family in order to enhance his own hunting skills. These great hunters do not eat the flesh of an animal that they have personally killed, leaving it for the rest of the village to feast upon.

Wá-Mbú: A Wá-Mbú is a sorcerer or witch; the Wá-Mbú shape-shifts into various animal forms to hunt down human victims. The power of witchcraft is born into the witch and its powers are located in the stomach of the witch. Witches often form secret societies where their victims are brought in for communal blood-feasts. These witches and sorcerous societies can create zombie slaves.

SUBGROUPS OF THE B'AKKAH

Badolu: The Badolu pygmies are totally nomadic and self-sufficient, having little or no contact with other tribes. Small game is hunted with snares and larger game is hunted with poisoned arrows. They believe in spirits called *macoi* and these spirits must constantly be appeased. Drumming rituals can summon these spirits.

They have a secret society within their religion called Bwiti, which ingests the iboga plant. The iboga plant is a powerful psychoactive drug; its ingestion allows the person to wander the spirit realms of the dead. The drug allows for potent insight into one's own psyche and its effects have been said to be like a decade of psychoanalysis all packed into one night.

The Badolu are considered master sorcerers, especially when they have access to iboga. To a Badolu shaman, the iboga plant gives them the power to see into the future, to speak with the dead, to enter the spirit realms and to heal the sick. Hunters eat iboga before hunting so that they can speak with the spirits of animals and plants. The effects can last for days. An overdose is also liable to kill. Unlike most B'akkah Pygmies, scholar is a favoured class for the Badolu and is not prohibited at all.

Ba'Ngombe: The Ngombe pygmies, the "water people" use sacrificial swords in many of their darksome

rituals. They live in a particularly forbidding region of the rain-forests, a region of forest few non-pygmyes enter willingly.

B'AKKAH CHARACTERS

Names: Examples: (male) Deo, Gaetan, Kiniey, Kuku, Ngbendu, Omari, Raputo, Sese, Wa, Za; (female) Atosa, Esi

B'akkah use the following racial traits.

- +2 Wisdom, -2 Str: the B'akkah are not physically strong but are considered wise in the ways of woodcraft and survival.
- Small: as a Small person, a Pygmy gains a +1 size bonus to Dodge Defence, a +1 size bonus on melee attack rolls and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks but uses smaller weapons than normal sized people and a Pygmy's lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of a Medium character.
- Pygmy base land speed is 20 feet.
- +2 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks made in any jungle. The Pygmy tribes know every inch of their native rainforests and rarely leave them except to trade or seek vengeance.
- +2 racial bonus to all Spot checks. The Pygmies are notably sharp-eyed.
- +2 racial bonus to all Perform (mimic) checks. The Pygmies are adept at mimicking sounds heard.
- +1 racial bonus to all attack rolls with hunting bows and spears.
- Simple Weapon Proficiencies: all B'akkah Pygmies are proficient with hunting bows and spears.
- Bonus Feats: Alertness, Poison Use (even if other qualifications are not met; Pygmies are taught to handle poison from their youth).

Background Skills: Climb, Craft (herbalism), Knowledge (nature), Spot and Survival.

Favoured Class: Barbarian or Borderer

Prohibited Classes: Noble, Pirate, Scholar

Automatic Languages: B'akkah

Bonus Languages: Any Southern Black Kingdom, Pygmy, Atlaia, or Amazon near them

THE MBESI

The Mbesi people (or Bambesi) are the most distinct pygmy people. The Mbesi are among the shortest of the pygmies, the males averaging about 4'8" and the women averaging about 4'6". They are completely at home in a certain lost rainforest near Atlaia, a dense forest seen as impenetrable to outsiders.

To the Mbesi, the rainforest is one of their spiritual parents, for the sacred forest is the source of all of their needs, such as clothing, shelter and food. Their rituals give thanks to this omnipresent source of all of the things that are good in their lives. Most of their day is spent singing, storytelling and just talking because food and forage is generally plentiful, a gift from the forest.

The Mbesi have strong endurance, a necessity for the life they lead. They rarely get lost or lose their sense of direction and are quite capable of travelling long distances quickly – and with far more ease than would seem possible through a rainforest.

The Mbesi live by hunting the animals, insects and birds of the rainforest and by gathering fruits, mushrooms, honey and other plants. They know what they can eat and what they cannot. They also trade with the Southern Black Kingdom tribes along the outskirts of the rainforest for plantains and other goods.

They live in small groups of families; small enough not to drain the resources of the group or the location but large enough to provide enough labour for survival. Their houses are rounded huts made from saplings covered with huge leaves (looking much like leafy igloos). These huts are extremely temporary as the family moves often when food grows scarce in that particular location.

Mbesi men do the hunting if they are using bows and women do the cooking. The women also set up the huts. Both men and women forage for food and share in child-care. Indeed, the Mbesi are noted for having incredible fathering skills. If the tribe hunts with nets, then men spread the nets and women (and children) flush the game into the nets for the men to kill. Successful hunters share with those who are unsuccessful.

Giant forest hogs are a common prey animal for the Bambesi because they sometimes eat pygmy babies. Occasionally they hunt the West African manatee found in some of the rivers. They are well-regarded as brave elephant-hunters, spearing the beasts as they charge toward them, leaping out of the way at the last second before they are trampled. Gathering honey is an exclusively male activity, while women gather firewood and water.

The Mbesi are excellent archers, usually able to outshoot any of their taller neighbours. They can shoot three or four arrows so quickly that the last has left the bow before the first has struck its target; however, if an arrow misses, the pygmy's rage is such that he breaks his bow and the rest of his arrows.

Although not necessarily a cannibal people, a stranger walking on a game trail is fair game for the Mbesi. Strangers have no business in their forests, to their way of thinking. The Mbesi can be quite clever about it, as

well. One trick is to tie a long string to a branch and lie in wait. When the stranger approaches, the string is tugged, making the branch jiggle. This invariably makes the stranger halt and stare, trying to figure out what is on the branch that might kill him. At this point, the pygmy shoots the stranger in the back.

Since the Mbesi do not own land and own few resources at all, there is no reason for them to organize war efforts to gain further resources. That said, the Mbesi, while not particularly aggressive, have a vengeful nature—they fight in the name of revenge. Their fame for revenge is such that the neighbouring tribes fear angering them. One might find a banana tree with a pygmy arrow in it and upon asking the owner of the tree what the arrow is about, the owner is annoyed but refuses to remove the arrow or the batch of bananas it is near, saying, "A pygmy wants them and marked them as his and will come for them when they are ripe."

Typically cautious in the wild, the Mbesi are defiant and fearless when taken captive. They have no regard for concepts of time, no ideas of land-ownership and they regard anything occult as foolishness.

GOVERNMENT OF THE MBESI

They do not have a centralized authority; they just live cooperatively and generally argue a point until a compromise is reached. If someone refuses to compromise, that person is ostracized (and possibly beaten) and forced to live alone in the wilderness until the person's common sense returns. Men and women share power equally, as every issue is discussed over a campfire until a consensus is reached.

Society is handled on the basis of small bands of related persons, sometimes little more than

just a nuclear family. The band takes precedence over kinship lines, however and most goods are shared communally by the band; indeed the Mbesi have been remarked as being extremely open-minded about extramarital affairs by both sexes. Children are also raised communally. Marriage is handled through sister-exchange with other bands. There is no real concept of bride wealth as men and women are considered equally valuable. There is no marriage ceremony either, other than the groom giving the bride's family an antelope that he has personally hunted.

RELIGION OF THE MBESI

For the most part, Mbesi religion is animist. The most important ritual among the Mbesi is the *molimo*, a ritual that uses a trumpet and a lot of singing and dancing to awaken the forest. The Mbesi believe all good things come from the rainforest and if something bad has happened, then the forest must be asleep. As with most pygmy rituals, the duration varies depending on the mood of the participants and it can last for a few hours to more than a month. When not in use, the wooden (or bamboo) fetish trumpet is stored high in a tree, deep in the rainforest; certain boys are sent to fetch it when it is needed.

The Forest is the primary god of the Bambesi, personified as Khonvoum, the Creator and Hunter god. He created black people from black clay, white men from white clay and pygmies from red clay. Tore is a thunder, leopard, hunting and death god. Gor is an elephantine thunder god who serves as a messenger of Khonvoum.

Arebati is the god of the moon and the sky. Some of the subgroups have variants on this basic list of gods and most just see the 'gods' as stories that personify the Forest around them.

The Bambesi have no priests or witchdoctors. The rainforest is the only god they need and each individual Mbesi is taught from birth how to commune with the forest (the *molimo* ceremony is a form of communion with the forest). Each Mbesi also knows which herbs and roots are needed for healing, which are needed for food and which are needed for poison. They have no concept of magic, as everything comes from the Forest.

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE MBESI

Negoogunogumbar: Negoogunogumbar is an ogre-like monster. It devours children.

Obrigwabibikwa: Obrigwabibikwa is an evil pygmy race that shape-change into various reptiles, such as chameleons, crocodiles and snakes.

Sorcery: The Mbesi tend to regard any tales of magic and sorcery as superstition. Even the trumpet used in their ceremony is not regarded as being supernatural or magical. They find the secret societies and claims of witchdoctors of nearby Southern Black Kingdom tribe peoples humorous. Scholar is a prohibited class among the Mbesi.

Nearby southern Black Kingdom tribes tend to see the Mbesi 'bravery' in the face of witches and magic as proof that the pygmies are immune to sorcery and can protect them from sorcery; they believe the pygmies must have magic stronger than theirs. Some people (such as the Darfari) believe that eating a pygmy gives them magical powers or magical defences.

SUBGROUPS OF THE MBESI

Wachua: The Wachua neighbour the region of the B'akkah pygmies; they live in the northwest of the

Olu-Igbo Forest. They typically hunt with nets and spears. They also make extensive use of natural traps. The Wachua speak their own language. They like the Mabodé and Momvu but avoid the Megé southern Black Kingdom tribes. They are hardy in war and have a vengeful nature when wronged. Although none of the Mbesi subgroups tolerate thievery, the Wachua are especially disdainful of the practice.

The Balesé: The Balesé control the most land of the three Mbesi peoples. The Balesé hunt using bows and arrows. Their arrows are either iron-tipped or poison-tipped (antelope are hunted with iron-tipped arrows but monkeys are hunted with poison-tipped arrows). The Balesé are masters at using natural poisons. They also use spears when hunting forest buffalo or elephants. They hunt animals alone (monkeys), ambush in small numbers (antelope) or in groups (elephants). They use honey-whistles to drive the bees away from the honey so they can gather it safely. Nearby Southern Black Kingdom tribes believe the Balesé have special skills related to hunting down witches. The Balesé are more kinship-oriented than the Temu and Wachua (who are more band-oriented). The Balesé speak Balesé.

The Temu: The Temu live on the western edge of the Olu-Igbo rainforest. Like the Wachua, they prefer to hunt with nets and spears. The men set up the nets in a circular wall to keep the prey confined after the animals are beaten out of the woods by the women and children and then they stab the trapped animals to death with spears. The Temu speak Bira.

The Temu living in the swamps to the west of Atlaia are known as Tdomevlo; they are fishers and trappers. The Tdomevlo use flutes and whistles in their music and their dancing styles are based on foot

movements instead of body movement. They have a strong preference for the quiet of the forest and learn to climb the trees and listen to them at an early age. Their songs and dances are performed with the trees. They do not let problems fester inside; they always are upfront about issues, although they usually tinge their confrontation with sarcastic, teasing humour. Although they squabble a lot, they do not become aggressive or violent among themselves—they reserve such animosity for intruders.

MBESI CHARACTERS

Names: Examples: (male) Bizima, Eliko, Kengo, Kitengi, Mawapanga, Nzarbarimb, Pelo, Seko, Tabu, Wembe; (female) Aluta, Ediobo, Keniteefo

Mbesi use the following racial traits.

- +2 Dex, -2 Str: the Mbesi are not physically strong but their hand-eye coordination is incredible, especially in regards to archery.
- Small: as a Small person, a Pygmy gains a +1 size bonus to Dodge Defence, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks but uses smaller weapons than normal sized people and a Pygmy's lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters those of a Medium character.
- Pygmy base land speed is 20 feet.
- +2 racial bonus to save against any sorcerous spell or effect; the Mbesi simply does not believe in sorcery. This bonus even applies to other skills if necessary

(such as a Spot check to see a Sleight-of-Hand a sorcerer might use to make its alchemical weapon look like magic).

- +2 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks made in any jungle. The Pygmy tribes know every inch of their native rainforests and rarely leave them except to trade or seek vengeance.
- +2 racial bonus to all Spot checks. The Pygmies are notably sharp-eyed.
- +2 racial bonus to all Craft (herbalism) and Perform (mimic) checks.
- +2 racial bonus to all attack rolls with hunting bows; they almost never miss with a bow and arrow.
- An Mbesi loses 1 point of Reputation each time he misses a shot with a bow and arrow (Reputation cannot fall below 1). Leaders lose 1 point of Leadership with for every three missed shots.
- Simple Weapon Proficiencies: all Mbesi Pygmies are proficient with hunting bows and spears.
- Bonus Feats: Rapid Shot, Endurance

Background Skills: Climb, Craft (herbalism), Knowledge (nature), Perform (mimic), Spot and Survival.

Favoured Class: Barbarian or Borderer

Prohibited Classes: Noble, Pirate, Scholar

Automatic Languages: B'akkah

Bonus Languages: Any Southern Black Kingdom, Pygmy, Atlaia or Amazon near them

THE JIHJI PYGMIES [MZATU]

The Mzatu Pygmies live in the forests near the Jihji people. The Jihji consider the Mzatu to be their servants but the Mzatu play an important ritual role among Jihji society. Newborns of noble families are presented to the Jihji tribes by Mzatu Pygmies. Also, the children of chiefs receive their first milk from a Mzatu in order to be strong. The pygmies are also present when the Jihji enthrone or bury a chief. The Mzatu are seen as intermediaries with the forest spirits; they are the witchdoctors and healers of the Jihji also. The Mzatu recognize the Jihji chiefs as authority figures.

The Mzatu and the Jihji both make fetish masks. Some masks are for public use but others have a more sinister, secretive aspect; for example, the Death Mask of the Mzatu is only made at night and has an instrument within it that makes a curious sound; the Mzatu keep this mask secret, as well as the sound, and only initiates of certain secret societies may approach it. There are masks for the women also. Each type of mask has a song and music attached to it and its ritual use.

In most respects, the Mzatu are similar to the B'akkah. Use the B'akkah template to create an Mzatu pygmy but replace Craft (herbalism) with Craft (fetish mask) in background skills and scholar is not a prohibited class.

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The Specialists: Bite-Fighter

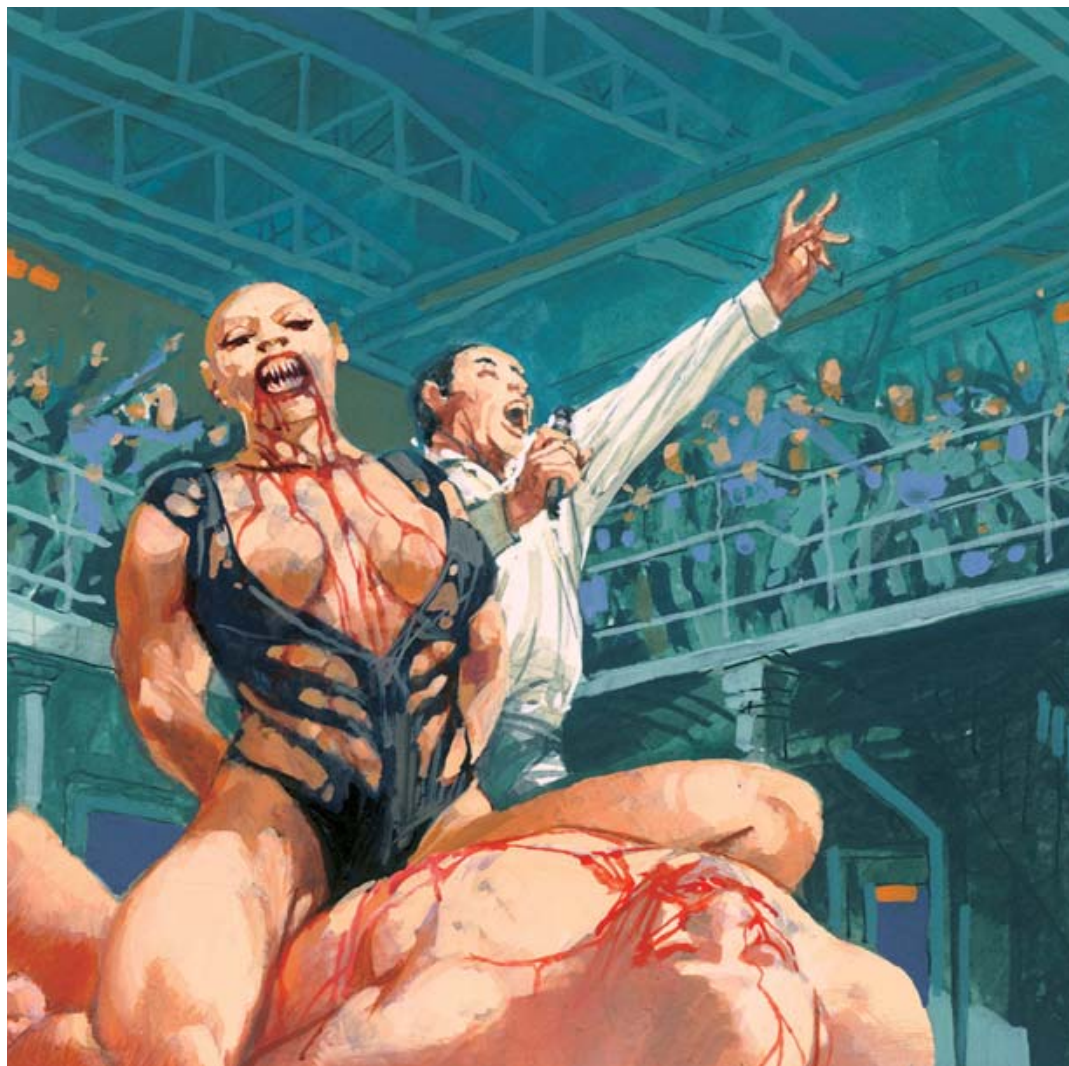
By Neil Edmonds



Two individuals, barely clothed, their hands bound or shackled behind their backs, must try to barge, butt and bite each other to death, surrounded by a baying crowd of enthusiasts and gamblers. Bite-fighting is a brutal, gory sport that pre-dates the founding of Mega-City One and despite countless raids and surveillance is too engrained in low-life culture for the Justice Department to stamp it out.

It's a bloody business. The only rules are no hands and no armour... and etiquette demands that the killing strike must be delivered with the teeth. Beyond that, only eating your dead opponent is frowned upon.

To become a bite-fighter requires strength, resilience, a taste for violence and – at the simplest level – the filing of the teeth to razor sharp points. Later enhancements might include steel tusk-caps or shark tooth implants, the removal of the lips (to allow unrestricted gape) as well as major cyber-docking ops like plasti-flex bone replacements for escaping leg-holds and muscle augmentation for general strength. A catchy nickname won't do any harm either: Felix 'The Filth' Lundstrom, Sirius 'Wolfman' Wollen and Regina Dentata (of the Black Lotus Zaibatsu) all enhanced their early reputations with an apt moniker.





The career of a bite fighter is often short and brutal but – if he can survive to make a name for himself – he's likely to work his way onto the international circuit (there have been world champs from Brit-Cit, East Meg and the Radlands of Ji) and meet ever more powerful and exotic foes. Huge-mawed mutants, arch-assassins the Gila Munja and baffled visiting aliens have all been recruited to up the ante in big-fee contests for highfalutin clientele. Wally Squad operative Judge Ferrara – after years of successful undercover fighting – finally met his match at the fangs of the Vatican's vampire exorcist Devlin Waugh.

Between fights, they train. This will involve practicing kicks, slams and leg locks, as well as honing their chomping skills on 'munce-bags' – slabs of synthetic flesh hung in filthy low-street gymnasiums. However, it's not unusual for a bite-fighter to fall into other criminal activity. The few friends they have will be perps and they are often employed as muscle in low-level criminal undertakings. Their appearance makes them intimidating enforcers and heavies.

Their criminal careers are limited by one thing: As their terrifying reputations are dependent on their unarmed ferocity, they will not be seen in public armed with anything except what Grud (or surgery) gave them. Fighting with hands unshackled is the one concession they will make, so their commitment to doing it 'their way' means they are hopelessly outclassed in a firefight.

Although a few lucky bite-fighters have worked their way up to managing their own bite-ring, most start and end their careers scrapping in blood-stained pits in barren underpasses, abandoned industrial buildings or sound-proofed chambers beneath Shuggy Halls. It's the promoters and bookies who make the real money but in a city with almost no job prospects, bite-fighting is one of the few ways for the lost, desperate and deranged to gain a glimpse of a career ladder.

Bite-Fighter

	Spd	Ag	Res	CC	Hits	WtF	R e q Rep	R e c Cost	Rep
Bite-Fighter	5"	4+	6	3D	2	3+	14	4,500	8

Equipment: A bite-fighter's filed teeth or fang implants count as a knife in Close Combat but still qualify as 'fists and feet' for use with the Martial Artist trait. The teeth can not be destroyed by the Destroy Weapon trait.

Traits: Close Combat Master, Martial Artist, Tough

Professional Pride: No Bite-Fighter would threaten their professional rep by relying on weapons. They may never be given any additional weapons or armour but may carry other equipment and cyber-docking implants.

Loyal Following: Each time a Bite Fighter manages to kill (see Injury Table) an opponent in Close Combat, he gains +1 to his personal Rep.

Prize Fighter: If assigned to manage turf, a bite fighter generates an additional 500 cr. from a single Gambling-type turf by taking on all-comers.

NOTES:

Intention:

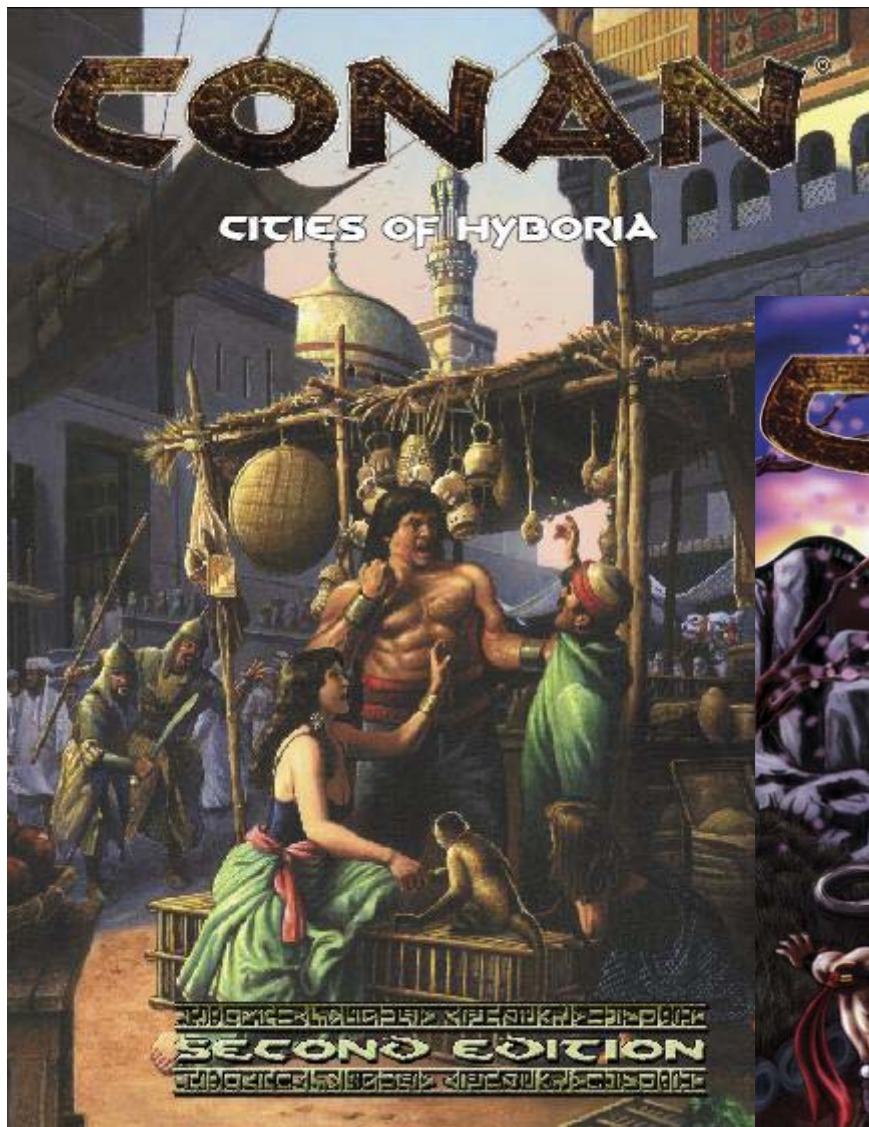
My intention was – rather than creating a close combat powerhouse like a robo-dog or Blitzer - to make a low to mid cost Specialist (somewhere around the Bodyguard or sub-Futsie level), with several handy Close Combat traits to compensate for their being woefully impractical in a firefight, plus a couple of appropriate additional abilities.

To emulate their teeth, rather than give them the werewolf / Klegg 'counts as cleaver', I've gone for 'counts as knife but can be used with Martial Artist', which, coupled with Close Combat Master and Martial Artist traits, give them the following attack:

CC+1, Dam 1D+2, AP1, **NO** unarmed disadvantage, 1 Parry

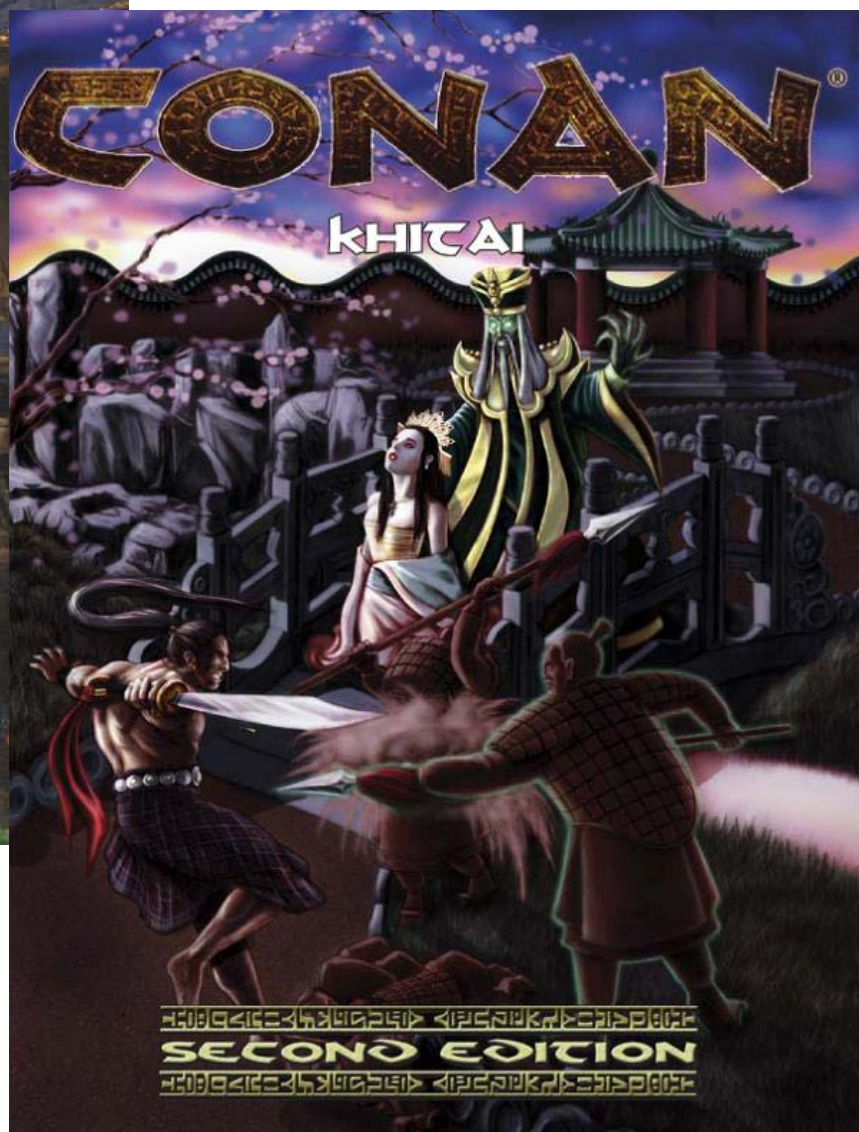
Playtesting suggests that they usually beat a juve with a cleaver, often lose to a punk with a cleaver, nearly always lose to a gorilla with a cleaver (do slightly better vs a werewolf), nearly always beat a gorilla with a club, can't do much against a robodog and are pretty even with a street judge using a daystick, surprisingly. This seems about right to me and means that they'll need to pick their targets a bit until they've earned a trait or two.

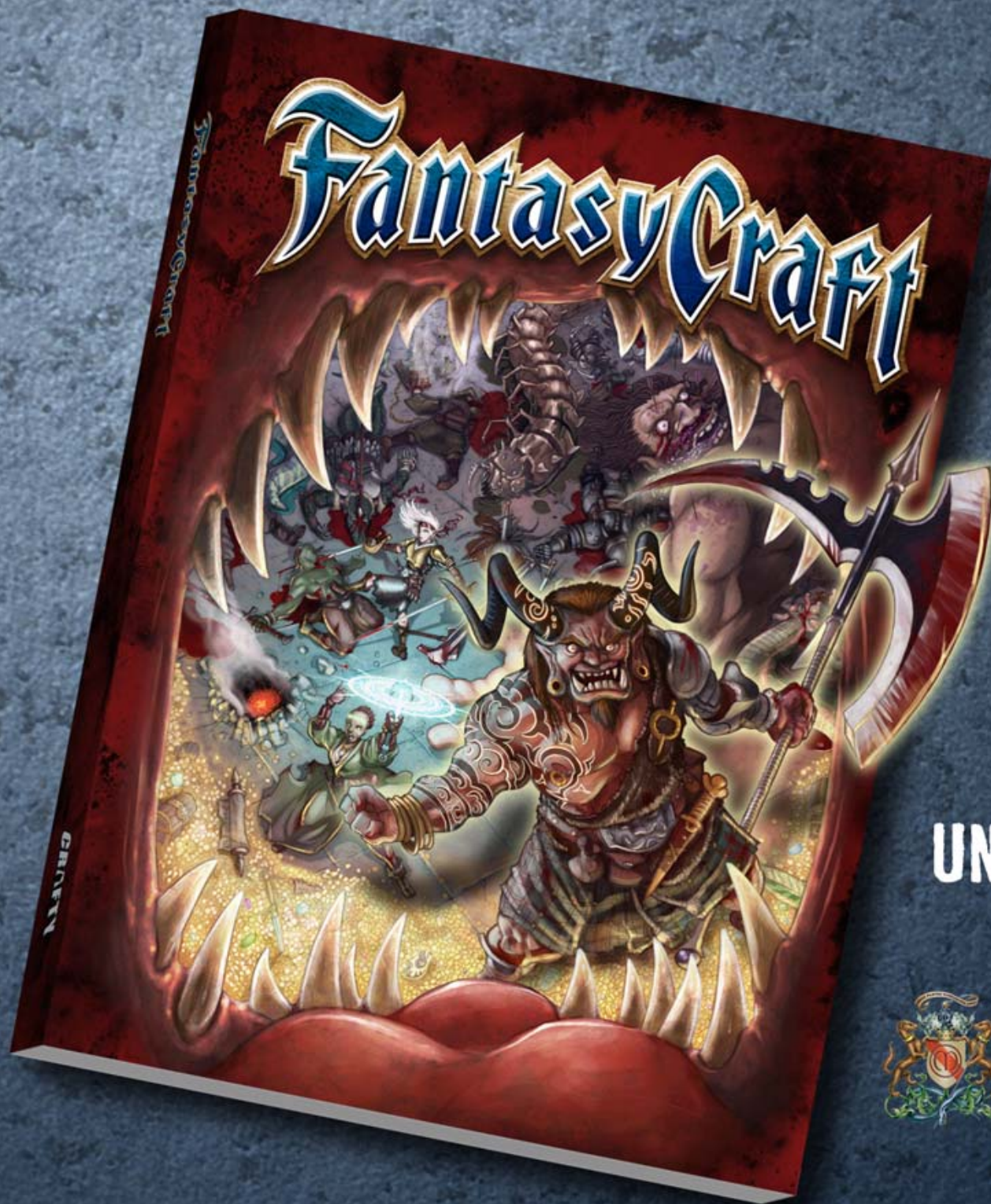
They're a Specialist that will require a bit of grooming, which is neatly balanced by how reckless they'll need to be to take advantage of the rep for kills ability.



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Adapt and Overcome

By Carl Walmsley

Stranded on a backwater world, the PCs become embroiled in an effort to explain a series of bizarre attacks and to capture some very unusual creatures.

Evolution

For several years, the bio-genetic corporation *Janus Tech* has been trying to develop creatures that can mimic the abilities and behaviour of other species. The corporation's goal is to produce rapidly evolving creatures – called biomorphs – that can be introduced to new environments and adapt quickly enough to form part of a stable food chain.

The corporation's first biomorph is now at the stage where it needs to be field-tested – and the world chosen for this experiment just happens to be the place where PCs are currently docked.

The Experiment

24 hours ago, the lead scientist on the first biomorph field test – Dr Walter Kraig – oversaw the release of seven specimens. His team has set up a monitoring station in the forests surrounding the port, from where they can monitor how well the creatures adapt. To facilitate this, each creature has a tracking device located beneath its skin so that the scientists can keep tabs on them.

The biomorphs have a genetic safeguard, which means that they can only adapt their genetic code for the first 24 hours after their release – after this, their form and abilities 'lock'. This is to prevent them working their way all the way up the food chain and dominating an ecosystem.

In their un-changed form, biomorphs are rather featureless, grey-skinned quadrupeds.

The Test Site

The site chosen for the experiment can be any quiet backwater world with a small starport. Besides the limited industrial hub around the port, the surrounding environs are based on agriculture and include vast swathes of untamed forest where off-worlders occasionally come to hunt.

If the PCs need a reason to visit such a place, any of the following is suitable:

- The PCs are lured to the planet with an offer of work – perhaps transporting rare merchandise to another world.
- The PCs are tempted by a reward for the capture of a criminal who is hiding out on this world.
- The PCs have been forced to land in order to effect repairs or to re-fuel.

Whatever the PCs reason for being here – and it is best to provide them with an incentive to leave this world as soon as possible – the adventure begins when they attempt to depart and find that every ship in the starport has been grounded.

Quarantine

Unfortunately for Dr Kraig and his team, two of the biomorphs released into the forest have mimicked the abilities of some dangerous indigenous creatures that they were not aware of and have started to attack the local population. One of these attacks occurred inside the port itself. As a result, the authorities – who fear that a hazardous alien life-form might have been smuggled in – have sealed off the port. They have also ordered a search of all docked vessels.

The PCs can huff and puff as much as they like but the port's bureaucratic head of security – Marrick Waller – will not allow any ships to leave; not until the strange attacks have been explained.

Unexplained Attacks

A couple of hours before the PCs make their attempt to leave, a security guard working within the port is critically injured in an animal attack. The wounds correspond to those that would be inflicted by a *taythar* – a large scorpion-like creature that lives deep in the

woods. It is inconceivable that one could have made it into the port unobserved, however, so the locals are baffled as to what could have happened.

Hopefully, the PCs will realise that the quickest way for them to get off-world is to clear up this mystery. If necessary, Waller will offer a small reward – or may turn a blind eye to any questionable merchandise that he has discovered on board the PC's ship.

If the PCs decide not to intervene, further attacks will occur within a matter of hours and the local populace will become increasingly concerned. The finger of blame may even start to be turned towards strangers.

Picking Up the Trail

As soon as the PCs decide to get involved in the search, they will receive word that another attack has just occurred – this time, inside a factory.

The victim of the attack – Kalem Pierce – was an employee of Bensen Agri-Farms. Unfortunately, this attack has been fatal and there is evidence that Pierce's dead body has been fed upon. A blood trail leads from the body, down into the port's sewerage system.

The local constabulary will seal off the area but it will not be difficult for the PCs to talk their way in if they are offering to help.

The First Hunt

Following the trail down into the sewers presents the PCs with a number of problems. Firstly, Bensen Agri-Farms has been illegally stowing pesticide canisters in the tunnels directly beneath the factory. Most of these are intact but a few have leaked, producing a toxic spill that is strong enough to burn skin (1 point of damage per round of exposure).

Secondly, the biomorph has adopted the sewers as its home and will attack any characters that search for it.

Sewer Biomorph

Type: Killer
Habitat: Sewers
Str: 14
Dex: 10
End: 12
Int: 3
Instinct: 10
Pack: 1

Recon 2, Melee (claws) 2, Stealth 2
Pincers (3d6), Sting (1d6 + neurotoxin poison*), Hide (2)

* *Traveller Core Book* (page 74)

This particular biomorph has taken on the features of a *taythar* scorpion (providing it with pincers and a stinger) and a sort of predatory eel (known as a *narok*). It is now about three metres long.

The biomorph remains beneath the surface of the sewer water until prey comes close enough for it to attack.

Encountering the Team from Janus Tech

Once the PCs have killed or captured the sewer biomorph, a recovery team from Janus Tech will immediately arrive. Dressed in hostile environment suits and armed with stunner weapons, it should be clear that they are searching for the biomorph themselves.

The leader of the team is Dr Kraig's assistant, Catherine Belvue. She and her men will try to take the biomorph

back to their monitoring station using a specially prepared transportation vehicle that they have waiting nearby. If the PCs are not willing to surrender the creature, Belvue will firstly try to 'buy' it from them and if this does not work, admit that the creature is part of an experiment and that her company created it.

Given that the PCs have managed to capture or kill the first biomorph, Belvue will ask for their help in tracking down the second that has gone astray. Again, a payment of some kind will be forthcoming if necessary.

If the PCs ask Belvue about the biomorph, she will explain its adaptive abilities to them and admit that things have not gone according to plan.

The Biomorph Lair

Using the locator hidden beneath the second biomorph's skin, Belvue has narrowed down its location to a cave complex at the edge of the forest. If at all possible, she will persuade the PCs to go in and capture the creature – or at least flush it out. She can provide the PCs with a scanner that allows them to locate the transmitter to within a few metres.

What Belvue does not know is that the biomorph – and its locator – has been swallowed by an enormous indigenous predator called a *maklith*.

Maklith

Type: Trapper
Habitat: Caves and Forests
Str: 17
Dex: 10
End: 20
Int: 1
Instinct: 9
Pack: 1

Recon 1, Melee (tentacles) 2, Stealth 3
tentacle (1d6 + paralytic poison), Bite (2d6), Hide (1)

Paralytic poison – any character that suffers at least 1 point of damage from the maktith's tentacle attack must make an Endurance check or become paralysed for 1d10 minutes.

The *maktith* resembles a huge black jelly-fish with a large circular mouth located on its back. Thanks to internal air-sacks it is able to float through the air and attack prey from above. It spends most of its time, however, hidden within a muddy pool, absorbing the gases it needs to fill its flotation sacks.

The rock around the central chamber where the maktith dwells is honey-combed with storage holes where prey is stored until such a time as the creature is hungry.

The Maktith attacks intruders that stray too close to its mud-pool. It will seek to paralyse them and then drag them beneath the mud, where it can drown them – and then place them in its food store.

Quarantine Lifted

Once the rogue biomorphs have been captured or killed, Dr Kraig will do all that he can to hush things up. His experiments will continue – only now in greater secrecy and on a more isolated world. Marrick Waller will receive a hefty bribe from Janus Tech to keep quiet about recent events.

Within a matter of hours the quarantine will be lifted, allowing the PC's to leave. Whether they happen to have a biomorph stowed away on board their ship or not is entirely up to you...

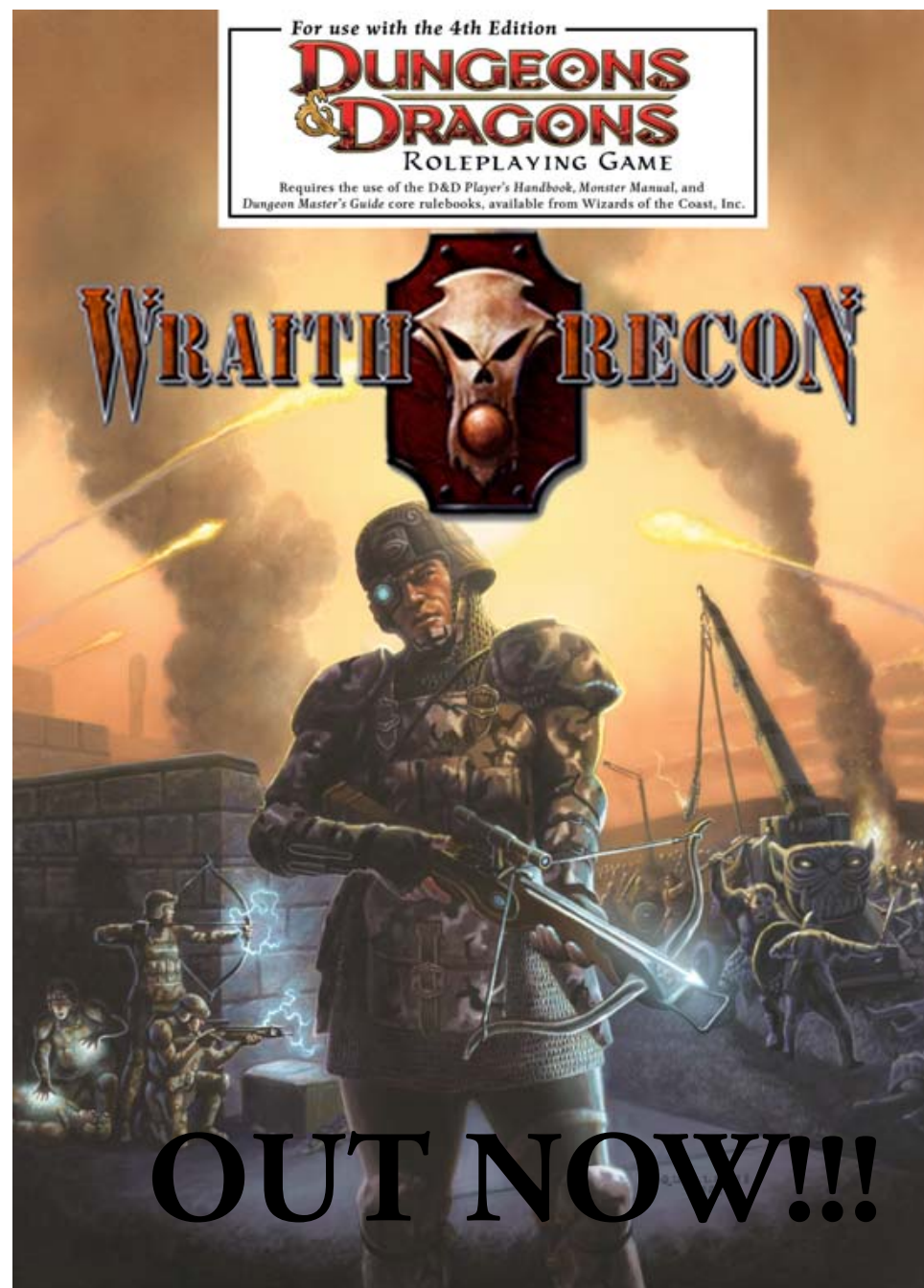
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WRAITH RECON TRAINING

BY BRYAN STEELE



Wraith Recon is Mongoose Publishing's new game setting for Dungeons and Dragons 4th Edition; placing the players in the role of a covert military force performing secret missions on behalf of the kingdom of Dardarrick. Whether it is spying on potential spies within their own borders or being teleported to the home of a rising warlord two kingdoms away to assassinate him – the Player Characters' team will get their orders and be expected to stay on target until the job is complete.

This article is a very basic mission assignment designed for new players and Games Masters to place their new *Wraith Recon* Player Characters on a short but interesting mission assignment. This takes the form of a routine training exercise in the capital city of Graenwich.

It is designed for newly created Wraiths but could in theory be scaled up into a harder difficulty for existing teams as well.

The Graenwich Crier

A masked troublemaker who calls himself the 'Graenwich Crier' has begun an unsubtle campaign against the current king of Dardarrick by appearing randomly on street corners and in public forums to cry out against the so-called tyranny of King Archiveldt. Until very recently he was simply a nuisance that most of the population ignored but his rantings spurred a passing drunk soldier to attack him in anger – during which the Crier stabbed

and killed the soldier before fleeing into the night. Ever since the altercation he has been increasingly frantic and the Brotherhood of Magnus believes it is time to *eliminate* him.

It is Wraith Recon's job to get this done. No uniforms, no rules and absolutely no witnesses.

Training Assignment SP1.1

Mission Start Date: 13th day of Fatherstime, 1,208 YBD

Deployment Location: Graenwich, Dardarrick

Deployment Method: Overland on Foot

Primary Mission Goal: Find and eliminate the man known as the Graenwich Crier.

Secondary Objectives: Circumvent any other resistance encountered.

Maintain

anonymity – no witnesses.

Expected Resistance: None but for the Crier.

Useful Information: The Graenwich Crier is in very good physical shape and has been witnessed to be an amazing melee combatant.

Pre-Mission Briefing:

Settle down, Wraiths and listen up.

I am sure by now you all have heard about the obnoxious troublemaker known as 'the Crier'. What you may not know is that he has gone and killed an infantryman last week and that ever

since there have been multiple violent situations involving him.

The Pillars have made their call and someone has to silence the Crier. I have chosen you because this is a good mission to cut your teeth on. Since you will not be wanting to wear your normal uniforms and you will only go as far as the capital, there is little worry you will give yourselves away. The Crier is going to disappear and it must look like it was just another random act of urban violence.

Hide your lenses, wear street clothes and get across the bridge into Graenwich. Comb the underbelly of the city and find where the Graenwich Crier is hiding. Find him; then eliminate him for the greater good of Dardarrick.

Dismissed.

Mission Segment SP1.1: Comb the Underworld

The Wraiths are issued into the capital city of Graenwich, crown jewel of Dardarrick, in an effort to find the elusive criminal known only as the Graenwich Crier. In order to do this they must first put on disguises and mingle in the darker side of town, where the crown's enemies are less likely to stay private in the company of their fellows.

Complication 1 – Mingling Amongst the Hoods

Making sure that your omnilegs is carefully tucked under your headgear, you walk through the streets of Graenwich's in search of clues that will lead you to where the Crier is hiding.

This skill challenge is a basic test of the Wraiths' ability to act covertly amongst their own people.

Setup: To find clues leading to the Crier, the Wraiths will need to carouse at pubs, taverns and gambling dens.

Level: Equal to the level of the team.

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 4 failures)

Primary Skills: Bluff, Endurance, Intimidate, Streetwise.

Bluff (easy DCs): You tell the perfect stories and make up necessary lies to get the Crier's allies to confide in you.

Endurance (moderate DCs): You down some mugs and bottles of booze and ale to loosen tongues but you might feel it more than you think.

Intimidate (hard DCs): Harsh words and well placed threats can get results with the right people.

Streetwise (moderate DCs): You know the best places to duck into in the back alleys and dives to have a quick look around.

Success: The underworld life in Graenwich has steered you to an old sewage tunnel complex that is where the Crier has been seen coming and going by the locals.

Failure: The Wraiths have made a poor impression on the locals, who believe them to be some kind of undercover police force. They do not take kindly to your ruse and ambush you at the first possible opportunity, starting a combat with the following enemies before having to restart this Complication in a different set of taverns and pubs:

Level 1 Encounter (XP 343)

- ◆ 2 human bandits (level 2 skirmishers)
- ◆ 3 human rabble (level 2 minions)

Complication 2 – Watchmen at the Grate

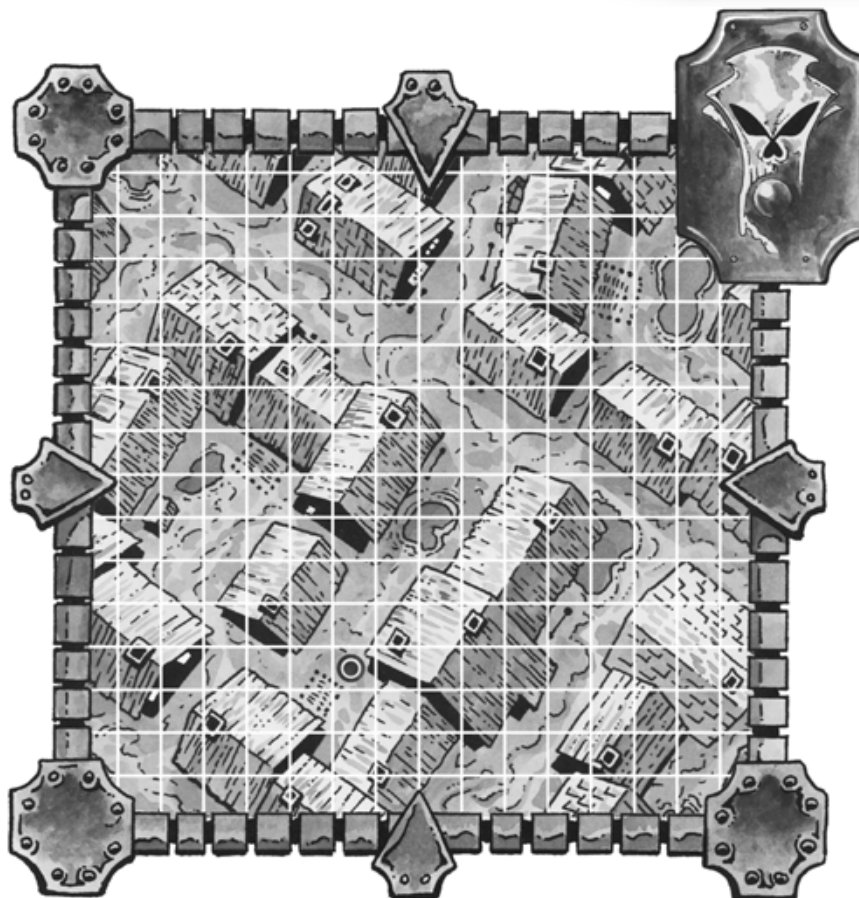
Following the hints and tips of the lower class folk, you end up at a large sewer grate that leads into an area of Graenwich's sewage system that is no longer in use. Standing in front of it is a number of thuggish folk.

'Well, what do we 'ave 'ere lads?' the lead thug says, picking his fingernails with the tip of a long bladed dagger, 'I think these folk are lost. Let's send them on their right an' proper way!'

This is a combat Encounter (standard) with the following enemies involved:

Level 2 Encounter (XP 593)

- ◆ 2 halfling thieves (level 2 skirmishers)
- ◆ 2 human bandits (level 2 skirmishers)
- ◆ 3 human rabble (level 2 minions)



Complication 3 – Open the Grate

You must get inside the sewer to find the Graenwich Crier but you cannot go too quickly or noisily. Even though you dealt with the thugs watching the grate, any town watch that might see you have no idea who you are or who you work for – and they cannot be allowed to. You must get in quickly and quietly.

This skill challenge gives the Wraiths their need for expedience and a willingness not to do the job

hastily. If they move too slowly they could get caught, if they move too hastily they might spring the trap or summon the town guard.

Setup: To get the grate open without alerting the local town watchmen.

Level: Equal to the level of the team.

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 4 failures; one of which *must* be a Thievery success)

Primary Skills: Athletics, Stealth, Thievery.

Athletics (moderate DCs): You are just going to use brute force to quickly open up the grate. Due to the noise that rattling metal makes, any failures of this skill count as two failures toward the challenge total.

Stealth (easy DCs): You are going to try to not make any noise that could attract watchmen to what you are doing.

Thievery (hard DCs): You are opening the hinge mechanism that keeps the grate in the closed position. It should be noted that anyone attempting a Thievery check for this challenge is first given the opportunity to use Perception to see the trap hidden in the housing of the grate. The statistics of the trap are as follows:

Blade Drop	Level 4 Lurker
Trap	XP 275

A scything blade falls down along a groove in the grate housing, trying to bury itself in anyone standing in its path.

Trap: Any character on the 2-by-4 section in and in front of the grate housing has a chance of being sliced by the falling blade.

Perception

♦ DC 22: The character notices the grooves in the housing, gaining +4 to their AC when it falls.

♦ DC 28: The character notices the pressure plate in the base of the housing that triggers the trap and can avoid it.

Trigger

The trap is the 2-by-4 section at the mouth of the grate housing. Walking into the grate's housing archway activates the blade-dropping mechanism, attacking any characters standing in the area before retracting and re-arming itself.

Opportunity Action

Melee

Target: All creatures in the 2-by-4 section when the trap fires.

Attack: +10 vs. AC

Hit: 1d10+6 damage

Countermeasures

♦ An adjacent character can disable the trigger plate with a DC 25 Thievery check.

♦ A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

♦ A character can attack the trigger plate (AC 11, other defences 10; hp 25; resist 5 all). Destroying the trigger plate renders the trap useless.

Success: The team manages to get the grate open and can begin their search for the Graenwich Crier within.

Failure: The team makes too much noise or is witnessed by town watchmen. The following combat encounter immediately occurs; the Wraiths can try to get the grate open again after the combat.

Level 2 Encounter (XP 650)

♦ 2 dwarf bolters (level 4 artillery)

♦ 2 human guards (level 3 soldiers)

Mission Segment SP1.2:

The Crier's Tunnels

The Wraiths have tracked the Graenwich Crier to what they believe is his hideout down in the unused eastside sewer tunnels. They have gained entry to the tunnels and now must track down where he must be living in order to eliminate him and his treasonous propaganda.

Complication 1 – Finding the Crier's Lair

Although unused by the city's residents, these sewer tunnels are still filthy, wet and dismal. You have to try and navigate them to any of the dozens of transfer rooms that the Crier could be using as his hideout.

This skill challenge is a practice of the Wraiths' subterranean survival abilities.

Setup: The team members must use their subterranean and urban survival skills in order to locate where the Crier is hiding.

Level: Equal to the level of the team.

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Dungeoneering, Nature, Perception.

Dungeoneering (moderate DCs): You know how underground tunnels works in relation to themselves, helping you navigate them toward larger chambers.

Nature (moderate DCs): You can feel air currents, smell changes in pollutants and watch for vegetation signs of passage.

Perception (moderate DCs): You are going to simply look for common signs of passage in the mud and filth or a glow on a tunnel bend.

Success: The team has found the main chamber in

the area, where the Graenwich Crier has been holed up for a while now.

Failure: The team wanders the tunnels long enough to be discovered by some of the sewer's more hostile inhabitants. After the following combat with these denizens, the team must begin this challenge again.

Level 1 Encounter (XP 400)

- ◆ 2 dire rats (level 1 brutes)
- ◆ 8 giant rats (level 1 minions)

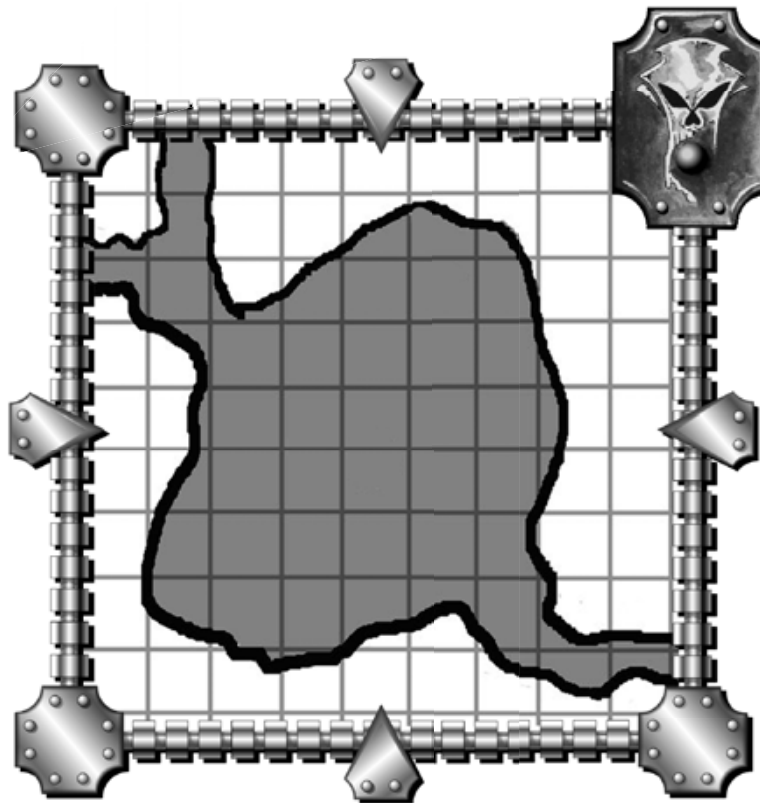
Complication 2 – The Graenwich Crier

You follow the tunnels in a seemingly unending knot, eventually coming on to a dimly lit chamber with a gentle melody echoing out to greet you. The sound is like a haunting chime but you can recognise the harmony of Dardarrick's royal anthem within its song. As you enter you see a man in a tattered green cloak and cowl playing a pair of intricate pipes, setting them down as you enter; he lowers his cowl and turns to look upon you with red-rimmed eyes.

'I knew they would send you eventually,' he says, his mouth twitching with insanity, 'My brothers and sisters have told me about you...about the Ghosts that live in old Fort Brazen. No...not ghosts...Wraiths.' He smiles, his teeth yellowing and elongating into fangs as you watch his skin darken with matted grey fur. His face twists, the resemblance of the sewer rats that are congregating around you apparent and you begin to understand why this thing lives in the sewer.

'The chittering horde of freedom will not be silenced!'

This is a combat Encounter (difficult) with the following enemies involved:



Level 4 Encounter (XP 950)

- ◆ 1 wererat; The Graenwich Crier (level 3 skirmisher)
- ◆ 8 dire rats (level 1 brutes)

Exportation Details

The team might take a few hours to find their way out of the twisting sewer tunnels but when they are back on street level it is just an hour's walk or less back to Fort Brazen. They could take longer by stopping off for drinks, dinner or other distractions but their exportation back to headquarters is as easy as just a few hundred footfalls.

Post-Mission Debriefing:

Good work, team Four. We always wondered how that Crier character knew as much as he did about sensitive things that took place behind closed doors. Being able to shift into the form of a rat would make for the perfect spy. Too bad lycanthropes are erratic and prone to violence, else we might put them on the payroll!

Lycanthropy is a vicious disease and we will need to be on the look for symptoms of other wererats in the city for the next few weeks. After the rise and fall of the next moon we should know if we still have a problem but that is something we can leave for the town watch and the apothecaries.

Take the rest of the night to yourselves, Wraiths. Get cleaned up, grab your pay at the front office and celebrate tonight.

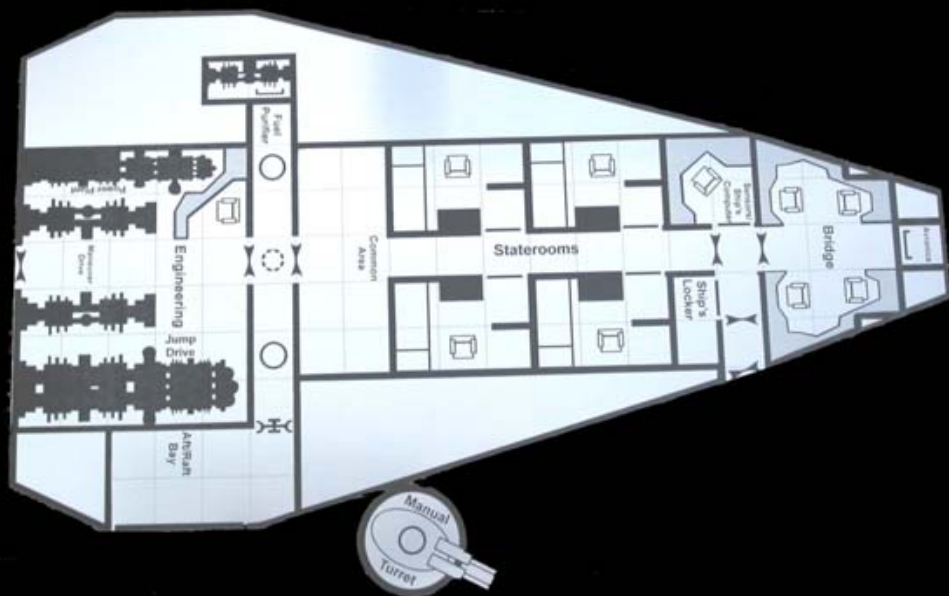
Because tomorrow...well, tomorrow we have something special cooking up for your team.

Dismissed!

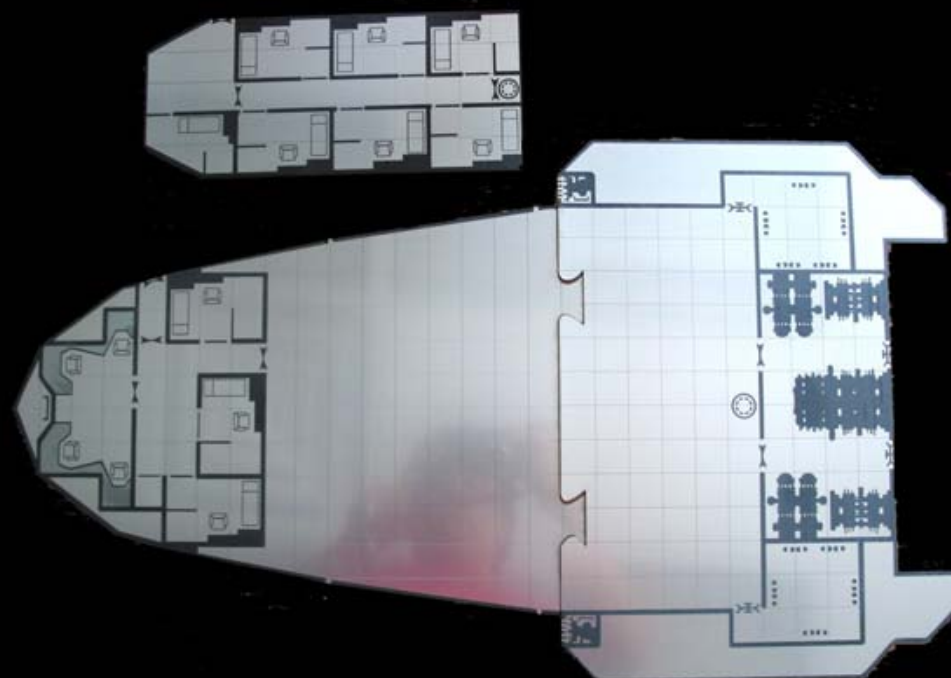
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The Ulysses Agenda

A Faction Resource for *World on Fire*

By Jon Andersen

The world is torn between forces whose lust for power recognizes boundaries neither geographical nor political, and who care for the welfare of none but themselves. In this precarious era we must find the courage to gather those whose strength can lead us to new soil free from the danger of this slave nation that is Earth.

— Ulysses Agenda mission statement

The Space Race promised a life beyond Earth, a promise that today lies broken. The world is on fire and the Doomsday Clock is closer than ever to midnight. Some believe humanity will be unable to forego that final, fateful hour and that civilisation, at least as we know it, may not survive. They are the Ulysses Agenda, a movement in some ways selfish yet also visionary that sees the long-abandoned promise of space exploration as the only rational response.

Faces in a Terminal Age

The Agenda is composed of three distinct organisations – Planetary Engineering, Technacothaka and Project Babylon. Together or apart, these groups may be used as foils and points of interest in any *World on Fire* or similarly desperate modern campaign. They might become allies to enlist, resources to acquire or mysteries to solve. They might even serve as the characters' home office! This article assumes no particular application and presents everything in an open-ended manner, so the Game Control can easily tweak the Agenda to fit his specific needs.

Planetary Engineering Pty Ltd.

Goals: 2 (Enlightened Evolution, Visionaries)

History: 5 (Allies, Growth, Prophecy, Respected, Rivals, Triumphant)

Image: 2 (On Record Goals, On Record Methods, Prominent Leaders, On Record Members, Prominent Sites)

Sites: 5 (Airstrip, Bureau, Harbour, Law Offices, Media Studio)

PEPL maintains aeronautical and marine research facilities in southern Africa, eastern Russia, and South America.

Tools: 4 (E–IV, G–II, R–II, S–V, T–II, V–V, W–II)

PEPL has invested significant resources in non-military air and watercraft, which are the only Vehicle categories within which it's full Caliber of V is applied; ground vehicles are acquired as if the company possesses a Vehicle Rating of II.

Technacothaka

Goals: 6 (Credibility, Greed, Protection, Revelation, Secrecy, Stability)

Technacothaka lives and dies by escaping unnecessary attention and dealing fairly with clientele. Able to amass currency as needed, its wealth is mostly comprised of information and favours.

History: 8 (Allies, Enemies, Growth, Honour, Prophecy, Respected, Rivals, Triumphant)

Technacothaka once coexisted with Banshee Net (and before them, BRAINCHILD). However, having benefited from the Murder Lottery has resulted in frequently antagonism.

Image: 7 (Prominent Goals, Secretive Methods, Secretive Leaders, Mysterious Members, Mysterious Sites)

Sites: 7 (Advanced Lab, Archives, Black Market, COMSEC Centre, Counterfeiter Ring, Records Office, Satellite Network)

Highly mobile, almost all of the organisation's infrastructure can be relocated with little notice (the durations involved in a Silent Running event are reduced to scenes and sessions from sessions and missions but the generated XP is halved).

Tools: 9 (E–V, G–V, R–V, S–V, T–V, V–V, W–0)

The organisation's reluctance to directly traffic weapons has a dramatic impact on the operational ability of its agents.

Project Babylon

Goals: 5 (Grail, Megalomania, Reconstruction, Secrecy, Visionaries)

The Project exists to ensure the worthwhile aspects of humanity survive the loss of the Earth.

History: 5 (Enemies, Great Leader, Growth, Respected, Triumphant)

Image: 9 (Mysterious Goals, Mysterious Methods, Secretive Leaders, Mysterious Members, Mysterious Sites)

The Project is carried out in remote locations under the strictest secrecy. A vigilant cadre of enforcers keeps constant watch over the organisation's operatives at all times.

Sites: 6 (Advanced Garage, Advanced Lab, Bureau, COMSEC Centre, Hospital, Secret Base)

Tools: 9 (E–V, G–V, R–IV, S–V, T–V, V–V, W–III)

The Project tends to shy away from noisy conflict resolution, preferring to outthink the enemy rather than overpower him.

Jump Before You're Pushed

The Agenda seeks to spread humanity to other worlds out of a basic survival urge, something that the women and men dedicated to the ideal have learned is easier said than done. They endure through a combination of sheer visionary will and the knowledge that if they do not pursue this all-important step humanity itself will pay the price.

Beyond the daunting work facing the movement here on Earth, any earnest attempt to colonize another world will require countless thousands of volunteers ready and able to undertake the journey, not to mention hundreds of billions of dollars in development.

Methods

Throughout human history, everybody's business has always been everybody's business, so you need a distraction; the Agenda's sleight of hand is called Planetary Engineering Pty Ltd. With a global presence and almost 30 years of legitimate corporate history behind it, Planetary can operate largely without intervention. It's carefully conceived public goal – to design and implement technologies to establish viable, long-term communities in the oceans and skies of Earth – conveniently masks Agenda research on the infrastructure required to colonise other worlds. Further, as a private company operating outside the USA, Planetary avoids many of the oversight hassles suffered by a number of its publicly listed competitors.

Behind this shield of public anonymity, the Agenda's gears grind away...

Planetary Engineering: Planetary is capable of existing independently even if it should happen to be cut loose from the Agenda and part from a few key individuals its employees are generally ignorant of the organisation's true purpose. PEPL has two primary career paths – “above” and “below” – with most employees holding some sort of professional diving or flight licence or at least a degree of

applicable recreational experience. These qualifications are often internally sponsored and such training may utilise company facilities, such as their equivalent of NASA's Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory (located in Australia). Employees frequently attend international symposiums on their fields – sometimes as much to blow the company's trumpet as to gather new intelligence.

Technacothaka: On the flip side, Technacothaka is all about discretion, subterfuge, high mobility and profit. The Agenda's oldest facet, it employs relatively few full-time operatives, relying mostly on untraceable freelancers whose mission gear is typically arranged through dummy corporations and dead drops. These privateers are often paid in kind; procuring data and goods that can be traded through the shadow community. The few significant monetary transactions that do happen are with various clients seeking high-end consultations and specialty development.

Technacothaka refuses to work with groups that traffic weapons or with those that condone or perpetrate violent acts, a restriction extending to its own personnel as well. This keeps the organisation (largely) off Project: Pitfall's radar and has nurtured a great deal of respect within the world's shadow community.

Its ace-in-the-hole is a small but secure orbital satellite network, purchased during the infamous Murder Lottery, granting real-time oversight of all its worldly endeavours and a secure command channel during critical operations.

Project Babylon: Similarly clandestine, Babylon is not even remotely near anyone's radar – save *perhaps* the Eternals. In many ways a cult of personality, its membership is meticulously handpicked and groomed to ensure commitment to the greater purpose, whether they know it or not.

Project “outsiders” include those with strategic positions in other organisations or families ignorant of the truth, while “insiders” reside at the Monolith: the Project's redoubt, HQ and launch facility. Both groups are quietly monitored by a secret cadre of sweepers and cleaners hired to protect the interests of the Project and the greater Agenda.

Reputation in the Ulysses Agenda

Faction/Condition Reputation Gain/Loss

Planetary Engineering

Objective (Crucial Skill Check)	+1 *
Triumph (Profession or Science)	+2
Exposure (Cooperation)	-1 **
Any failure during an Under Review event	-2

Technacothaka

Objective (Transport)	+1 *
Triumph (Investigation or Streetwise)	+2
Exposure (any Anonymity)	-1 **
Any unresolved Theft event	-2

Babylon Project

Objective (Contain)	+1 *
Triumph (Mechanics or Science)	+2
Exposure (any Anonymity)	-1 **
Any Wanted event	-2

* Each Faction has its own priority mission objectives. This modifier is applied to characters possessing the appropriate Allegiance each time the team completes an objective of the listed type (*see the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook, page 431*).

** Each Faction has its own “pet peeves” among common forms of exposure. This penalty is applied to characters possessing the appropriate Allegiance in addition to the standard penalty for this exposure trigger (*see the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook, page 436*).

Operations

All three Agenda divisions maintain ongoing missions. Due to the potential Eternals connection and the Agenda's ultimate goal, the operations of Project Babylon probably offer the greatest chance of campaign strangeness (*see We Are Leaving!*, page XX).

Planetary Engineering: PEPL's biggest ongoing concern is its ORCA test-bed facility off the northeast coast of Australia; an ongoing experiment in maintaining a largely self-sustaining sub-surface habitat, its physical infrastructure resembling that of the ISS but on a grander scale. It also leases space to other science projects – like cetacean research and coral reef preservation – and serves as a relay point for exploratory projects including deep ocean mining. As it hosts public visits (including school children), ORCA maintains its own security detachment and a constant communications link with the Australia Coast Guard.

Surface efforts are split between aeronautics (luxury airships) and hyper-engineering (self-contained environments or “arcologies”). Africa and South America in particular are interested in the former as a means of generating eco-tourism, governmental control and decreased reliance on the West. Most interest in hyper-engineering comes from Japan and the Middle East.

PEPL supports local communities and maintains cordial relations with the authorities hosting all its major facilities. This has also necessitated a certain engagement with criminal elements as part of the price of doing business.

Technacothaka: This organisation's schedule is constantly in flux to meet the ever-evolving demands of its clients and those of the greater Agenda. Some of the most powerful

bargainers with recent stops at the table include the Phage and the newly minted Alliance of Evil Geniuses. Even Pitfall has made a deal or two.

Members of Technacothaka, along with highly trusted freelancers, are aware of standing orders to compromise the activities of Banshee Net whenever the opportunity safely presents itself. This mandate is ultimately about revenge: the Mouthwash Confession devastated Technacothaka's assiduously gathered stockpile of compromising information and resulted in the deaths of many compromised agents, allies and assets. Technacothaka stops short of placing actual bounties on the hackers but has little compunction about engineering their downfall.

Technacothaka has three off the book missions. First is a constant low-level campaign of industrial espionage benefiting PEPL. Second is a detailed analysis of the Mouthwash Confession – the analysts know there's something wrong with it. Finally, the organisation is compiling a detailed profile on the so-called mastermind ORCHID, after they traced several of her confirmed Murder Lottery kills to areas of heavy Pitfall activity.

Project Babylon: Almost entirely focused on procuring supplies, hardware and personnel for the colonisation effort and avoiding attention in the process. An intriguing counter-intelligence and recruitment effort was mounted several years ago, involving the production of a reasonably popular science fiction show with a rabid fan base, as well as a successful roleplaying game franchise.

We Are Leaving!

Operations

For those wanting to detail the practical requirements of realising the Agenda's goal there are two likely options: the Tower and the Gate.

The Tower is about rocketry and physically flinging would-be colonists into the heavens. At the lowest end of the spectrum this would place Project Babylon at least a decade ahead of NASA technologically: scramjets, ion drives, a self-sustaining closed environment for the trip, fast-establishing greenhouses for food and atmosphere production, radiation shielding, simulated gravity via carousel and garage-sized nuclear reactors. At the other end you are looking at a cold-fusion powered, aerodynamically designed spacecraft that can break orbit under its own power. The trip might take six months (maybe less) of closely confined tedium or some form of viable suspended animation. Naturally, rockets and spaceships can be intercepted or shot down.

The Gate demands access to wildly advanced technology and metaphysics that may have campaign-spanning consequences. Unless you are deliberately looking to establish personal teleportation in your game, it is probably safest to require a device at each end of the journey – it will stop people from materialising anywhere they like and makes controlling both ends of the conduit extremely important.

There is also the possibility that the gate does not work as intended: Project Babylon could be the perfect opportunity to introduce your players the Chasm Group setting featured in Signs & Portents #46.

Structure

The Agenda's organisational structure is in many ways similar to that of Project: Pitfall – except that it runs significantly more smoothly, as ultimately one person is in charge.

Planetary Engineering: Structured like any other company, ostensibly run by Managing Director Nathan Stone, ex-soldier turned businessman. Immediately beneath him is the Board of Directors, composed of the heads of each of the company's main installations, a Chief Financial Officer and a Chief Legal Officer. Though all decisions are ultimately Stone's to make, he only acts unilaterally on matters directly related to the Agenda.

Each installation head is responsible for hiring and organising personnel at their facilities, including hubs and satellite offices. In practice, much of the day-to-day hiring – and indeed, most of the daily operations – are left to deputy heads. Beneath them is the usual melange of middle and project management handling design, engineering and logistical support. Security oversight of each facility resides with its head, though security chiefs are kept on staff as tactical advisors and to make calls when the head is unavailable.

Technacothaka: Its inner workings abandon ranks and seniority in favour of a classic cell structure with command responsibility allocated according to experience. Analysts tend to make up the bulk of the organisation, sifting through data collected from around the world and filtering the important bits to freelance operatives in the field as they tend to the needs of the clients.

The flamboyant, charismatic and somewhat unsettling spider in the middle of all of this is Cathayan – an identity

quite possibly belonging to more than a single individual. Cathayan has autocratic control over Technacothaka's clients and as a member of the Alliance of Evil Geniuses is one of the planet's most powerful individuals. This is the one exception to an otherwise universal rule within Technacothaka that no personnel shall harbour allegiance to more than one group (Agenda loyalists are prohibited from taking command seats in the organisation, for example).

Project Babylon: Understandably, Project Babylon's approach borrows extensively from both its companion organizations. Monolith staff has a shallow hierarchy with the necessary oversight to ensure precise direction and quality control but workers tend to be rather fraternal, even with their superiors. As at Technacothaka, ultimate authority rests with one person (in this case Koschei) but with her frequently in the field managing the moles, turncoats, and cleaners who aid and obfuscate the movement, practical management falls to her second-in-command, Valentina.

The Ulysses Agenda In Your Game

Depending on the campaign you are running, the Agenda's three component groups can be used together or in isolation.

Planetary Engineering: As the public face of the Agenda, Planetary is the easiest to use as background colour: company members are viable targets for kidnapping and ransom scenarios, its flying dolphin logo is a familiar sight at career days and community events, it funds scholarships and apprenticeships and the group as a whole works well in campaigns featuring industrial espionage. These plots can become the roots of a full-fledged Agenda campaign if the PCs discover the company has links to a larger entity.

Technacothaka: The Agenda branch best positioned for use as a PC Agency or criminal organisation – though the infrequent need for gunplay may not suit the style of all players – a Technacothaka campaign lends itself well to any of the basic Spycraft campaign schemes (*Faction*, *Freelance* or *hybrid*). Similarly, it is an easy place to source contacts and foils from even if the organization itself never makes an appearance. *World on Fire* applications are myriad: Banshee Net characters may find themselves targeted by Technacothaka-sparked events, including Marked for Death, Silent Running, Theft, and Wanted; Shadow Patriots might recruit the organisation to act as a foil in a greater operation to bring down one of the Alliance of Evil Geniuses' shadow nations; or one of the Krypt's bizarre Vault City inventions might peak the interest of Technacothaka analysts, leading them to send freelancers to make first contact.

Project Babylon: PCs can become sweepers or cleaners in Koschei's employ or perhaps even colonists. Koschei makes for an ideal mastermind, wielding Project Babylon as a way to conquer the skies or escape to them if her motivations are shifted to nihilist extermination. She might launch an excursion seeking rare materials required for a ship's construction, hire the Krypt to defend Babylon against AEG incursion or cross paths with Project: Pitfall when it takes exception to some of the more... sensitive materials acquired to fuel the new space race.

Ulysses Agenda NPCs

Nathan Stone: Ex-Australian SAS with qualifications in half a dozen engineering fields. One of the few men in the Agenda's highest echelon, he inherited the organisation from his father; being Koschei's grandson affords him a privileged status above others of his kind. In his forties, unconventionally attractive with short and slightly wild

ginger hair, he keeps in shape and typically displays a laconic attitude towards life. His family is ignorant of the Agenda and his secret loyalty to the cause.

Stone seizes every opportunity to tour Planetary's offices, however remote, arguing that there's no substitute for hands-on review. It is in this capacity that the PCs are most likely to encounter him.

Nathan Stone (Special NPC — 170 XP): Init VI; Atk VI; Def V; Resilience VI; v/wp: VII; Competence: V; Skills: Bureaucracy IV, Science V, Tactics VI; Wealth: VII; Weapons: Unmarked 9mmP FN Browning High-Power service pistol with briefcase holster (dmg 1d10+1, error 1, threat 20, ammo 13M4, recoil 12, range 25 ft., SZ/H D/1h, qualities: *dependable*); Gear: Business suit (Gadget — sensor mask (x-ray/metal, PR 4)); Vehicle: Limousine; Qualities: *Class ability (bright idea, faculty, manual adjustment, media personality, orders II, professor, terminally harmless), extended training* (all weapon categories, Personal Ground Vehicles, Standard Ground Vehicles, Personal Water Vehicles, Standard Water Vehicles, Personal Air Vehicles, Rotary Air Vehicles, Service Air Vehicles), *fearless I, feat* (Aquatic Training, Battlefield Trickery, Best Under Pressure, Charmer, Safe House, Speed Demon), *henchman, steadfast, strong-minded I, superior attribute* (Str 15, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 15), *talented* (Daring).

Cathayan: Though apparently human Cathayan is a second-generation *androgyne*, rescued from a Vault City and subsequently given to Koschei as a sort of graduation gift. The two grew close enough for her to defend the androgyne's status in an Eternal duel, Cathayan's undying loyalty. A dynamic personality, charming physical assets and disturbingly intuitive insights about total strangers made Cathayan the perfect candidate to head up Technacothaka.

Helplessly social, Cathayan regularly hosts wildly decadent underground flit gatherings. These parties are the best opportunity to introduce Cathayan to a PC team, maybe while they're pursuing or meeting someone else. Characters unfamiliar with androgynes may assume Cathayan is a cross-dresser or possibly fraternal twins using the same name.

Cathayan (Special NPC — 215 XP): Init VI; Atk IV; Def VII; Resilience VI; v/wp: V; Competence: VI; Skills: Analysis VI, Falsify VI, Impress VI, Networking VII, Sense Motive VI; Wealth: X; Weapons: Ranged stun gun (dmg 3d8 electrical, error 1–2, threat 20, range 5 ft., SZ/H D/1h); Gear: Party clothes; Vehicle: Limousine (or equivalent air/water vehicle); Qualities: *Captivating, class ability (behind the scenes II, cover up, field of expertise (Networking), the hook-up, human nature, I337, meticulous, notebook, security detail, trailblazer, usual suspects I), feat* (Gorgeous, Holdout, Hustler, Advanced Skill Mastery (Hustler), Nemesis Basics (Banshee Net), Political Clout, Political Favours), *mastermind, seductive, Specialty* (Icon), *steadfast, strong-minded I, superior attribute* (Str 11, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 16, Charisma 18), *talented*.

Valentina: A titan hailing from Soviet super soldier experiments conducted by Krypt researchers. Blooded during the conflict in Afghanistan, she and her siblings were yearned for more than just bloodshed. She found it or rather *her*, tied up in the back of Mujaheddin jeep. The captive introduced herself as Koschei and promptly recruited her liberators, in whom she saw unique potential. Likewise impressed, Valentina and her kin soon abandoned their creators, fleeing into a future finally full of promise.

Valentina stands over 7 feet tall with a powerful, panther-like build. Her raven-eyed features are the stuff of legend, a fierce blend of superhuman beauty and inhuman strength. A

perfect blend of tender ferocity makes Valentina an excellent complement to Koschei's ruthless stewardship — and the heart and soul of the Agenda.

Introducing Valentina can be a blunt process. She is hard to miss and likely to draw the PCs' attention by virtue of her size and appearance alone. The GC could also use her to interrupt or raise the stakes in a fight, an event that is sure to stick in the players' minds for many sessions to come.

Valentina (Special NPC — 300 XP): Init VI; Atk VIII; Def VII; Resilience VII; v/wp: VIII; Competence: V; Skills: Athletics VII, Intimidate VI, Notice VI, Sense Motive V, Tactics V; Wealth: IX; Weapons: Mjolnir; Gear: None; Vehicle: Touring motorcycle (when encountered alone); Qualities: *Captivating, class ability (all over the world, cyclone I, hot-blooded, human nature, lifeline, little details, Martial Arts (Strength), still standing, uncanny dodge I, wuxia I, wuxia II), extended training* (all weapons, Personal Ground Vehicles, Mounts, Standard Ground Vehicles, Heavy Ground Vehicles, Personal Water Vehicles, Personal Air Vehicles), *fearless II, fearsome* (removable — Mjolnir), *feat* (Adrenaline Rush, Gorgeous, Hammer Basics, Hammer Moves, Hammer Supremacy, Soldier's Duty, Spirit Moves, "This... Is My Boomstick!", Wolf Pack Basics), *fleet I, henchman, horrific* (removable — Mjolnir), *hulking I, natural attack* (Slam III, Squeeze III), *steadfast, story-critical, strong-minded I, superior attribute* (Str 20, Dex 18, Con 19, Int 16, Wis 16, Charisma 13).

Koschei: Ashlynn O'Connor was born at the dawn of the 20th Century, discovering her Eternal nature during the Roaring 20s under the tutelage of a Raj prince named Dakkar. The seeds of the Ulysses Agenda were planted by the horrors of World War I and the influenza pandemic that followed but it was not until Dakkar introduced her to the

wonders of atomic energy – discovered by him nearly 100 years before its public debut – that the vision crystallised.

Her initial campaign for support among her fellow Eternals found only a distinct lack of interest. Decades passed and nothing – not even the Cuban Missile Crisis – urged them to action. When Dakkar was cut down during the infamous Nine Tiger Conclave attack, she finally acted on her own. Using her own daughter to engineer an advantageous marriage with a minor industrial magnate that ultimately resulted in the creation of Planetary Engineering. With her growing number of allies at her side, she meticulously scavenged failed and emerging criminal operations to construct Technacothaka. Finally, she set up Project Babylon on one of the numerous uncharted islands Dakkar had used to spearhead his maritime operations during the 19th Century.

Dark-haired, attractive, tenacious and blessed with mesmerising cornflower blue eyes, she often comes off as cold and distant. She reserves her affections for those that prove worthy of her valuable time.

Koschei (Special NPC — 240 XP): Init V; Atk VI; Def VII; Resilience VI; v/wp: VI; Competence: VII; Skills: Blend VI, Cultures VII, Investigation V, Notice V, Search VI; Wealth: IX; Weapons: Long knife (dmg 1d6+4 lethal, error 1, threat 19–20, SZ/H D/1h, qualities: *armour-piercing (1), bleed*), .45 USP service pistol with silencer (dmg 1d12 lethal, error 1, threat 19–20, ammo 12M4, recoil 16, range 25 ft., SZ/H D/1h, qualities: *composite, takedown*); Gear: Cleaner kit II, armoured coat (average low-profile armour); Vehicle: Full-size sedan (acceleration increase I, emergency services package (police), top speed increase I); Qualities: *Class ability (1,000 faces, crusade, inner drive, insane stunt, lead, lifeline, sneak attack I, status quo, usual suspects I), extended training* (all weapons except Guided, Personal

Ground Vehicles, Mounts, Standard Ground Vehicles, Heavy Ground Vehicles, Personal Water Vehicles, Standard Water Vehicles, Personal Air Vehicles, Rotary Air Vehicles), *fearless I, feat* (Adrenaline Rush, Knife Basics, Long View, Queen's Gambit, Martial Arts (Wisdom), Sands of Time, Safe House, Style Over Calibre, Traceless, Wolf Pack Basics), *mastermind, Specialty* (D-6 Agent), *steadfast, strong-minded II, superior attribute* (Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 15).

Hammer of the Gods

This Tomorrow experiment was rescued from the Krypt's Koffin, final resting place for everything they fear.

Mjolnir (dmg 1d12 bang, 1d12 electrical, and 1d12 lethal, error 1, threat 18–20, SZ/Hand: S/2h, weight 60 lbs., qualities: *bulky, keen (12), massive, ornamented, quirky, reach 15 ft., sure-grip, takedown, upgrade* (custom handle, deadly precision 1/combat), *unreliable*). This weapon is supernaturally heavy and may only be lifted by characters bearing a Light Load. Using Mjolnir's *reach* quality requires 1 full action and the weapon cannot be used during the following round. Further, once per session as a full action, the wielder may use the weapon to emit a powerful EMP blast (equivalent to a Reputation-only EMP blast Gadget Mechanism; all characters within the wielder's square are immune). Once per mission, the wielder may use the weapon as a limited weather manipulation Gadget Mechanism (with double the standard action die cost).

Talents

Androgyne (Medium Near-Human): Perhaps the unexpected result of an Eternal attempt to understand Essence or a deliberate attempt to augment human genetics, you kind are social and sexual chameleons quietly expanding

through the population. You only gain your specialty's bonus feat if it is Clergyman, Double Agent, Entertainer, Icon, Operative or Unknown.

- +2 Charisma, –2 Strength.
- Falsify is a class skill for you.
- You require no additional time to complete and suffer no penalty with Falsify/Disguise checks due to gender change.
- Once per session, you may increase the disposition of 1 non-villain NPC by 1 grade without a skill check.
- Once per scene, you may suffer 2 points of damage to gain a +1 morale bonus with Bluff, Impress, Intimidate, Manipulate and Network checks targeting a character within your scent distance. This bonus lasts for a number of minutes equal to your Career Level, and increases by an additional +1 at Career Levels 6, 12 and 18.

Specialties

Networks Agent: Silent, precise and deadly – these things describe you and your actions. When your Agency needs to “wet the ground,” you are the operative to whom they turn.

- Bonus Feat: Any Unarmed Combat or Covert feat.
- Once per scene, you may take a Coup de Grace action targeting a flat-footed standard character even if he isn't helpless. Further, when you take advantage of a terminal situation, you need not spend an action die.
- Once per scene, you may roll 2 dice when making a Reflex save, keeping the result you prefer. You may use this ability 1 additional time per scene at Levels 7 and 14.
- Each time you successfully inflict lethal damage on a special character with an attack, the damage increases

by 1. This bonus damage increases by an additional 1 at Career Levels 5, 10, 15 and 20.

Reputation

The following options are available to members of Planetary Engineering Pty Ltd, Technacothaka and Project Babylon whose Allegiance is set to the Ulysses Agenda.

Safe Passage (5 Reputation): You may spend 5 Reputation and 2 days to gain secure and uninterrupted passage to anywhere on the surface of the planet. This passage still takes the typical amount of time.

Interdepartmental Loan (Special): You may spend an amount of Reputation equal to $2 \times$ the Gear Rating of an organisation that is a parent, subsidiary or sibling of your own to use the target Rating until the end of the current scene.

Disaster Insurance (25 Reputation): You may spend 25 Reputation to presciently establish an escape route in the following scene. Thereafter you may end the scene at any time, beginning the next at the closest safe house available to you or your organisation.

All Alone (50 Reputation): Once per mission, you may spend 50 Reputation and 1 day to burn any special non-mastermind character you've met during the current mission. The victim is immediately targeted by a Marked for Death and a Wanted event (*see the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook, pages 399 and 404, respectively*).

Events

The following events may be helpful in a campaign featuring the Ulysses Agenda.

Silent Running

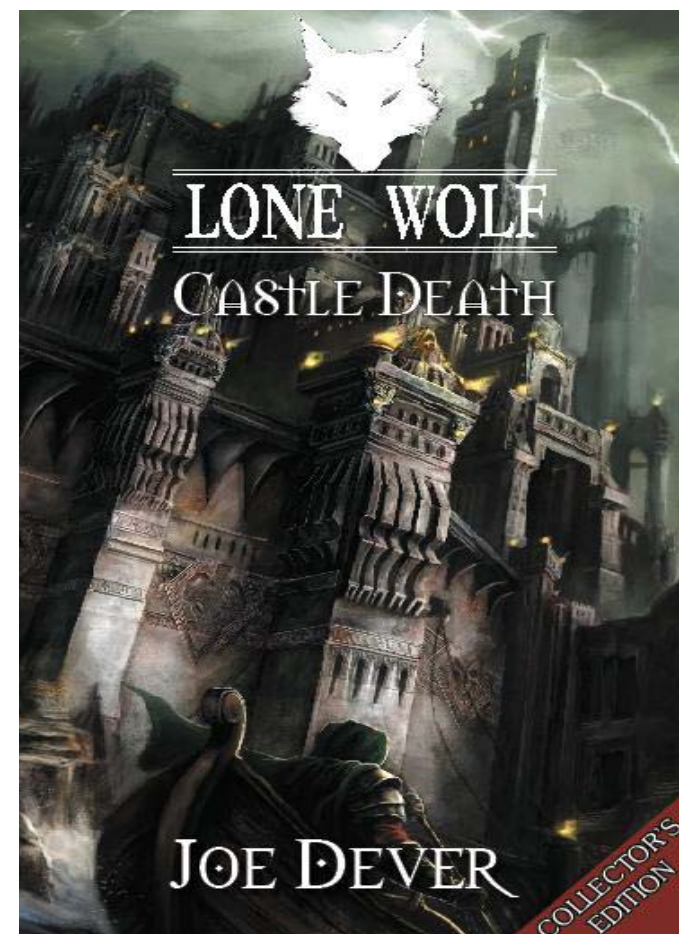
Agents rely on a degree of stability in their lives – most importantly the certainty that when they put a call in to the home office it will be answered. In those rare cases when the call is not answered, it is not always an indicator that the agent has been burned – sometimes an agency simply goes quiet. This can happen because a critical location has been compromised, necessitating a chaotic frenzy as personnel and equipment are evacuated, evidence is eradicated and new sites are occupied. Other causes can include internal subterfuge and revolution, overextension and even good old-fashioned communication and clerical errors.

The GC may spend 2 action dice to invoke the Unavailable Faction Assistance complication for the rest of the session and then the Limited Faction Assistance complication for the remainder of the mission. At a cost of 4 action dice the GC may invoke the Unavailable Faction Assistance complication immediately and for the rest of the mission. Particularly cruel GCs may choose to spend the requisite action dice during the next and subsequent missions to continue this event.

Event Triggers: Any character makes a Request check in hostile territory or any member of the Agency is captured or fails an Undesired Attention event.

Limited Faction Assistance: While this complication is in effect, the affected organisation can only provide up to Tier II NPC support or Caliber II gear (this ban includes Reputation-only gear); all feats, class abilities and other character options that increase NPC Tier or gear Caliber have no effect. Additionally, the cost and delivery time required for Request checks and class abilities granting NPCs from the organisation are each doubled. Finally, characters belonging to the organisation may spend no more than 10 Reputation per mission to benefit from non-gear options. This complication increases the mission's base XP by an amount equal to one-half the organisation's total Rating scores (rounded up) + 1 per gear pick category available to the team per scene the complication is in effect. For example, a team with a Level 1 Snoop and a Level 1 Wheelman working for an organisation who's Ratings total 20 gains an additional 13 base XP.

Unavailable Faction Assistance: While this complication is in effect, the affected organisation cannot provide NPCs or gear of any type, whether through Request checks, class abilities, feats or other options. Characters belonging to the organisation may spend no more than 5 Reputation per mission to benefit from non-gear options and such requests are considered event triggers for the Marked for Death, Under Review and Wanted events. This complication increases the mission's base XP by an amount equal to the organisation's total Rating scores + 1 per gear pick category available to the team per scene the complication is in effect.



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Love, and Hate

By Lawrence Whitaker

'She laughed. 'You begin to sound like my brother. Are you testing my love for you, my lord?'

He began to remount his horse. 'No, Cymoril, but I would advise you to test your love yourself, for I sense there is tragedy implicit in our love.'

As she swung herself back into her saddle she smiled and shook her head. 'You see doom in all things, Can you not accept the good gifts granted you? They are few enough, my lord.'

Elric of Melniboné

Love, devotion and hatred are a central theme of the Eternal Champion saga: tragically doomed love; unrequited love; passionate love; love across the Million Spheres; lost loves, slaughtered loves and love regained. So too does Hatred figure: Yyrkoon and Theleb K'aarna's hatred for Elric, motivated by greed and jealousy; Elric's hatred of his own fate; the beggars of Nadsokor's hatred for Tanelorn.

Just as the game mechanics for *Elric of Melniboné* provide a way of dedicating one's soul to a god (the Pact), so too can Love and Hate be quantified. This section provides an **optional** set of mechanics for Games Masters to use to simulate the effects of love

and hate in their *Elric of Melniboné* campaigns (and, equally, in *Hawkmoon* and the forthcoming *Corum* game).

Pacts of Love and Hate

A character's Love or Hatred for a thing is measured like any other skill or Pact – on a scale of 1 to 100 and above and should be recorded as an Advanced Skill on the character sheet. The object of Love or Hate can be anything – a person, a group of people, a country, an object, an ideal. Love or Hate can be established at any point – either during character creation or and perhaps most interestingly and appropriately, during game play. All a character needs to do is stipulate that he intends to Love or Hate something. If this is stated during character creation, there is no cost: the Love or Hate skill is not counted as either a cultural, professional or freely chosen skill, it simply comes into being.

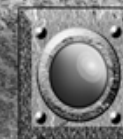
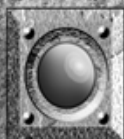
If the Love or Hate is established during play, then it costs 1 Hero Point to establish it at its base value. If the circumstances warrant it, then the Games Master can choose to waive the Hero Point cost.

The starting value of the Love or Hate varies according to the type of Love or Hate being declared:

Love and Hate Starting Percentages

Loving or Hating...	Starting Percentage
A person, in a romantic context	Character's POW+CHA, plus, Loved one's POW+CHA
A person in a platonic context (a friendship, for example)	Character's POW+CHA, plus, Loved one's CHA
A group of people	Character's POW+CHA, plus 10+1D10
A country	Character's POW+CHA, plus 10+1D10
An object (The Ruby Throne, for example)	Character's POW+CHA, plus 10+1D10
An Ideal (Tanelorn, for example)	Character's POW+CHA, plus 10+1D10

All the Starting Percentages may be modified by the Games Master to reflect deeper or lesser devotion; thus, Love (Tanelorn) might begin for a character at 35%, using the above Starting Percentage calculation but because the character is so devoted to finding Tanelorn, knowing that his long-lost father was also seeking the Eternal City, the Games Master decides to



increase the Starting Percentage to 45%, taking into account the familial devotion.

Where a person or people are concerned, the love *does not need* to be reciprocated. It is up to the Games Master to decide if it is or not and the Player must decide if unreciprocated love will strengthen his character's Love/Hate or weaken it. If the decision is made to strengthen the depth of feeling (unrequited love often drives the heart to *deeper* fondness or infatuation), then the Love/Hate value can be increased (or decreased, if the depth of feeling is diminished) by 1D10%.

Example: Farric's Saga

Farric, through his adventuring in Pikarayd, has fallen in love with the daughter of the local chieftain. Farric's POW and CHA total 22 and the chieftain's daughter, El'nassa, has POW and CHA totalling 32. Thus, Farric's Love (El'nassa) is at 54%. However, because Farric has to keep his love a secret from the over-protective chieftain, the Games Master decides to increase this by 5%, so Love (El'nassa) is now 59%. Pete, Farric's player, also decides that El'nassa has never declared her love for Farric and Farric knows that the sorcerer, Malagan, has also been courting her. Because Farric's love is unrequited, Pete reasons that Farric's infatuation for the Pikaraydian princess is deeper and so it is increased by a further 1D10% - resulting in 8%. Therefore, Farric's Love (El'nassa) is now at 67%.

Also, because Farric hates the sorcerer Malagan, who is his rival for El'nassa's affections, the Games Master gives Farric Hate (Malagan) at 52% (Farric's

POW+CHA, plus Malagan's POW+CHA of 30). He also declares that, because Malagan has caused Farric's exile from Pikarayd, following the revelation of his feelings towards El'nassa, Hate (Malagan) increases by 20%, so it is now 72%.

Farric loves El'nassa – but he hates Malagan more...

Increasing and Decreasing Love and Hate

Like any skill or Pact, Love and Hate can increase through Skill Improvement rolls, as described in the main *Elric* rules, if the Player wishes to spend a roll on the relationship. However, if, during play, something that happens that would deepen the Love/Hate or diminish it, the Games Master can either impose an immediate increase or reduction of up to 20%, depending on the circumstances or he can call for the character to roll for the increase (or diminishment) himself. If the character rolls, then

1D10 For a minor deepening or diminishment (She says 'I love you!' unexpectedly)

1D10+5 For a substantial deepening or diminishment (Malagan slaps Farric in the face, following an argument over El'nassa's future, intensifying Farric's hatred for Malagan)

1D10+10

For a major deepening or diminishment (El'nassa stays by Farric's bedside, comforting him, after he has fought a duel, and been wounded, defending her honour)

Once a Love or Hate has been established, it can fall below its starting value but can never be reduced to zero or less. Once established, Love and Hate are permanent fixtures on the character sheet.

Love and Hate; Gifts and Compulsions

If a character has a Gift or Compulsion that concerns Love and Hate, then, depending on the nature of the Gift or Compulsion, a Love or Hate is either *increased* or *decreased*, depending on the context, by an amount equal to half the governing Pact. For example, Lady Sathril with a Pact (Eequor) at 64% has, as one of her Compulsions, a hatred of men. The depth of her Pact means that she will have Hate (Men) at a bonus of +22% to any starting or existing value for the Hatred.

Using Love and Hate

Love and Hate are used in several ways.

- As a *comparative value* to demonstrate strength of feeling (Farric, for example, hates Malagan *more* than he loves El'nassa). If the value of the Love or Hate exceeds 100%, then it is an all-consuming passion – at the kind of intense levels seen in

Elric for his love for Cymoril, Theleb K'aarna in his love for Yishana – or his jealousy of Elric. An intense Love or Hate is likely to drive the character to extraordinary lengths in pursuit or defence of whatever he loves or loathes.

- As a *bonus* to any skill that might be used to help, defend or influence in the name of the object Loved or Hated. The bonus is equal to the Love or Hate's critical range. So, if Farric was fighting a duel with Malagan, following a slight about El'nassa, Farric could gain a bonus to his combat skill of +6% for his Love (El'nassa) of 67% and a bonus of +7% for his Hate (Malagan), for a total bonus of +13%. The Games Master is always the arbiter of when Love and Hate can be used as an augmentation in this way and to which skills any augmentation should apply.
- As the *skill in an opposed test* that concerns the object of the Love or Hate. For example, Lady Sathril's Hate (Tanelorn) 75% could be used in an opposed test (instead of Persistence, say) where Jurgen, an Agent of the Balance, is trying to use his Influence of 80% to persuade her to fight in its defence against Miggea's wolf army. Whether or not the Love or Hate is used as a skill outright in this way or used as an augmentation to, for instance, Influence or Persistence, is dependent on the circumstances and the strength of feeling. If Sathril's Persistence was higher than her Hate (Tanelorn), then an augmentation would serve her better. If Persistence was lower, then Hate (Tanelorn) can be used as the active, resisting skill.
- As a *skill in its own right* where the character is wrestling with his conscience over some matter

concerning the object of his Love or Hate. *For example, Farric and Malagan have fought a bitter duel over El'nassa. Malagan, through trickery and sorcery, has badly injured Farric and is about to deliver the killing blow: El'nassa begs Malagan to spare Farric's life. Malagan has Love (El'nassa) 66% and Hate (Farric) 75%. He is torn between his love for the chieftain's daughter and his hatred for his enemy but decides that he hates Farric enough to kill him anyway. The Games Master decides to make a test against Malagan's Hate (Farric) to see what happens. The roll is 86 – a failure. Despite his hatred for the Filkharian, Malagan cannot, for some reason, bring himself to deliver the coup de grace. He spits on Farric's prone body and walks arrogantly away. Had the Hate (Farric) test succeeded, then Malagan would have killed him. Conversely, had Malagan tested against Love (El'nassa) and succeeded, he would have heeded her pleas and spared Farric – but would have killed him had the test failed.*

Whenever Love or Hate are used as game mechanics, it is worth remembering how love and hate are central themes in Michael Moorcock's writing; that, grand, operatic tragedy and all consuming passion. Love drives Elric to destroy his own kingdom and Erekošë to destroy an entire world. Hatred drives Theleb K'aarna to kill Myshella and attempt to murder Elric but his love for Yishana also keeps him as a love-lorn lackey to her personal whim. The mechanics for Love and Hate should be used to drive grand intentions and gestures, fuel desperate battles for survival (and not just with weapons – the love for Tanelorn might be the clinching factor for a lost traveller to crawl across the Sighing Desert to reach the fabled city); and to inform

future schemes and agendas. Theleb K'aarna's hatred for Elric drove him to extreme lengths but what if Elric had done something to reduce that hatred? Might Theleb K'aarna's actions – and therefore the destiny of the Young Kingdoms – have radically altered?

Love and Hate are powerful emotions and should be exploited to the fullest in an authentic Eternal Champion campaign.



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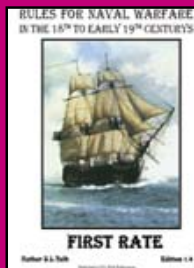
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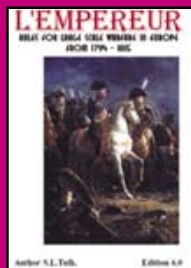
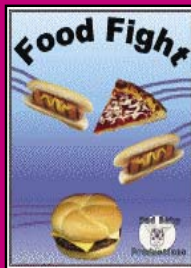
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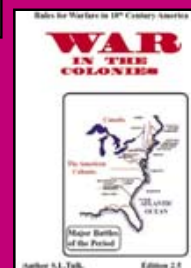
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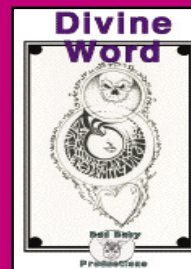
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Sanity Defined

A Resource for use with RuneQuest

By Kevin Hayward



1. Sanity and Insanity defined

'Yes, I know Berek Ironhand. See that guy passed out by the bar? That's Berek. A great warrior but ever since that dark troll set a shade on him, he hasn't met a bottle he didn't like.'

- *Ulfric of Estali, Safelstran mercenary*

Previous systems for modelling sanity in RPGs have tended to go along the lines of "your character failed this roll, therefore they are now paranoid, phobic, addicted" and so on. The basis for such rules is an unspoken standard of normalcy. They assign a mental state to the character and the label, Insane.

Normal behaviour is simply that; the norm. It is what everybody else is doing; it is what is acceptable to the majority. The makeup of that majority and the definition of acceptable behaviour may change; from nation to nation, between the sexes or even between different social classes. However, a normal person will be able to adjust to those differences.

These rules do not assume some arbitrary standard of sanity/normalcy. Instead, they focus on a character's

actions; how he behaves in public, how he interacts with others. They assume that a character's ability to judge what appropriate behaviour is and to act accordingly is the measure of mental health. For the purposes of these rules, a normal character is able to rationally choose the actions, which are appropriate to his circumstances.

A character with mental problems will make decisions irrationally, based on subconscious impulses. Such a character will be viewed with suspicion, their reactions will be unpredictable and in extreme cases, violent. For people around the character, he is dangerous.

For the character himself, he will find he has to struggle against his own mind to appear rational to others. He will also have to struggle against his own impulses to follow his conscious plans and desires. His actions may not be his own.

2. Psychic wounds

'Red Deer is a great man. He sends his spirit out into the world to fight the spirits. He brings back magic to help the tribe. He protects our herds and strengthens our warriors. The smell? Well, it is said he once fought a great water elemental and since that

day, he cannot abide the touch of water on his skin.'

- *Two Dogs, Praxian warrior*

Insanity is a label applied to people who act irrationally. The ultimate cause of such irrational behaviour is the mind of the afflicted.

The rational mind can perceive its surroundings accurately and act accordingly. The human mind is reasonably resilient and requires intense trauma to develop irrationally.

Such trauma will be referred to as a Psychic Wound. It is damage, therefore a Wound but it is purely mental, hence Psychic.

If a character:

- 2.1. rolls a Fumble in Spirit Combat
- 2.2. his opponent rolls a Critical in Spirit Combat
- 2.3. rolls a Fumble on his Persistence roll to avoid fear, including rolls against Resilience to avoid Fearshock from a Shade (Darkness Elemental)
- 2.4. rolls a Fumble on his Persistence roll to avoid any mind controlling magic, e.g. Demoralise

2.5. rolls a Fumble on his Persistence roll to avoid the effects of long term stress

Then the character will suffer a Psychic Wound.

A Psychic Wound represents emotional trauma and has a long-term psychological Effect on the character.

Example: Andreus is attacked by a Basmoli shaman. In spirit combat, the shaman scores a Critical hit and Andreus takes a Psychic Wound. The GM decides to give Andreus a new Effect, a phobia of cats.

3. Psychological Effects

Poor Willem D'Hubert. He was a very promising student. Intelligent, pious and hard working. He went exploring the Undercity with a few other first years. He was the only one to return and hasn't stopped raving about Chaos loose in the Machine. They're keeping him safe in the academy's infirmary until he recovers. The poor, poor boy.'

- Arctorios Heneblo,
Professor at the Academy of
Tomorrows' Perfect World.

If a character suffers a physical Wound he will, at the least, need time to recover. He may have a scar or even lose a limb. These are long term physical Effects of a Wound.

Similarly, if a character's mind is Wounded there will be a long term Effect.

Effects are defined by three terms:

3.1. Type

3.1.1. Phobia

The character feels extreme discomfort in certain situations and will act to distance himself from those situations. This may be immediate, such as running away or life changing, such as a person with a Phobia of oceans moving inland.

3.1.2. Philia

The character is unable to control his impulses and will act on those impulses. Philias could be compulsive behaviours, addictions or even everyday behaviour that the character cannot avoid performing. An alcoholic or an Obsessive-Compulsive are both suffering Philia Effects.

3.1.3. Fantasy

The character is sometimes dominated by a delusional belief and will act on that belief. The belief need not be false, it is the characters' inability to judge when to act on it that is the problem. The Effect may lead to preaching about the belief

Example: Willem D'Hubert may be correct. The bowels of the Clanking City may truly be riddled with Chaos.

His problem is his inability to keep quiet about it.

3.2. Nature

The situation, activity or belief that the player manifests.

In the case of Phobias, the Nature describes the source of the character's fear.

For Philias, the Nature describes the activity the character is compelled to perform.

For Fantasies, the Nature describes the character of the belief.

3.3. Strength

Strength is rated from 1 to 5.

The Strength of an Effect works in three ways:

Firstly, it acts as a Divisor to the Persistence roll to avoid the Effect. I.e. at Strength 1, the player must roll Persistence. At Strength 5, the player must roll against Persistence/5.

Secondly; the higher the Strength the broader the range of situations that may Trigger (see below) the Effect.

Thirdly, the combined strengths of all Effects a character has are subtracted from his Reputation.

4. Triggers

'They say I am insane. I am not. Go down to the undercity. Look closely. There are creatures living there that were no part of our plan for the Machine. The

air is tainted. Even the magic feels wrong. We have unleashed ... something. Or provided a haven. Go! See for yourself. We are racing toward the precipice each moment we allow the taint to remain beneath our feet.'

- Last recorded words of Wilhelm D'Hubert, before his suicide.

An Effect will control a character when it is Triggered. At any time, the GM may decide that the character's situation will Trigger the Effect. At that point, the player must roll against Persistence divided by the Strength of the Effect.

If the player fails the roll, the GM may dictate the character's actions until the Triggering situation has passed.

As the Effect becomes stronger, the GM may broaden the definition of situations that will Trigger the Effect.

Example: Alan is an alcoholic: "Philia, Consume Alcohol, 1" while Bill has a delusion: "Fantasy, Lady Elspeth is trying to kill me, 1."

At Strength 1 Alan must roll against Persistence to avoid drinking himself insensible when in a bar, while Bill must

roll against Persistence to avoid boring his friends, yet again, with the details of Lady Elspeth's plots against him.

At Strength 3, Alan must roll against Persistence/3 to avoid getting drunk every day, while Bill must roll against Persistence/3 to avoid denouncing the evil Lady to strangers.

At Strength 5, Alan must roll against Persistence/5 to do anything that does not involve the procurement and consumption of alcohol while Bill must roll against Persistence/5 to do anything not related to his plot to assassinate Lady Elspeth.

5. Healing

'They say I am insane. I am not. Go down to the undercity. Look closely. There are creatures living there that were no part of our plan for the Machine. The air is tainted. Even the magic feels wrong. We have unleashed

... something. Or provided a haven. Go! See for yourself. We are racing toward the precipice each moment we allow the taint to remain beneath our feet.'

- Last recorded words of Wilhelm D'Hubert, before his suicide.

Healing a damaged mind and returning it to rationality is not easy. Psychological Effects, in a sense, represent a warped or skewed viewpoint and it is hard to undo that.

For example, to heal a person with a Phobia they would first need to be convinced that the object of their Phobia is not dangerous. As a large part of that person's identity is invested in that fear, they will resist.

Therefore, every time a character attempts to heal an Effect each roll is divided by the Strength of the Effect, as if the character had encountered a Trigger. In effect, they have, as the Phobic has to confront the source of his fear, the Philiac has to deny himself his indulgence and the Fantasist has to deny his own reality.

5.1. Rest

A character may lower the Strength of one Effect by 1 each year he does not encounter a Trigger and successfully roll his Persistence divided by the Strength of the Effect.

5.2. Therapy

If a character is treated by someone with any skill resembling counselling (Psychology, Psychiatry, Counselling and so on) for half a year, the counsellor may make a skill check divided by the Strength of the Effect. In a fantasy setting, a therapist dedicated to a god of healing may use Lore (Theology).

If successful the character may lower the Strength of one Effect by 1.

5.3. Magic

Healing cults, whether Sorcerous, Divine, Mystical or Shamanic, can be assumed to have rituals and spells to heal damaged minds.

After three months, or two Seasons in Glorantha, a priest may cast that spell (or perform the ritual).

The character may lower the Strength of one Effect by 1 if he successfully rolls his Persistence divided by the Strength of the Effect.

5.4. Miracles

A character may call upon Divine Intervention to prevent a Psychic Wound causing an Effect (or increasing the Strength of an existing Effect).

A character may perform a Hero Quest to lower the Strength of one Effect, or remove it completely.

If, at any time, a recovery roll is a Critical, the character may reduce the Strength of one Effect by 2.

Conversely, if any roll is a Fumble, the Strength of the Effect is increased by 1. If the Strength becomes greater than 5, the character should be removed from play until some form of miraculous healing (Divine Intervention, HeroQuest) can reduce the Strength.



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FOR LOVE OR MONEY

A MERCENARY UNIT FOR BATTLEFIELD EVOLUTION: MODERN COMBAT

BY BRYAN STEELE

The advanced warfare of the world has progressed in many ways to eliminate the need for individual soldiers, with smart-bombs and laser-guided missiles taking the place of a lone gunman holding off entire platoons of mobilising soldiers. No matter how much high-explosive and mechanised warfare is called upon, there will always be a need for foot soldiers to take and hold territories – especially when collateral damage is not desired.

As personal warfare technology increases, so does the ability for privatisation of those resources to fall into capable – but greedy – hands. Such people are sometimes called upon by powerful nations with deep pockets to fight in their battles for them. They are mercenaries and they are good at what they do.

The following selection of units are all considered to be available to any given army or force type. Each unit within the 13th Dogs of War takes up a Battalion Asset to represent the amount of additional funds and amenities that the high-paid, high-profile mercenaries require to fight on someone's side. It is NOT possible to field an army solely of the 13th Dogs of War; they are not an army in their own right.

THE 13TH DOGS OF WAR

Formed around the sizeable trust fund of the Knight brothers, the 13th Dogs of War is a fully vested and fully funded mercenary outfit that hires ex-military types, former revolutionaries and anyone that can pass the required training tests held at the Knight Compound.

SPECIAL RULES

The following special rules apply to all 13th Dogs of War units.

THE MERCENARY CODE

No member of the 13th Dogs of War will ever take action to harm another member of the 13th. Because of this, they will not take Actions or Reactions toward other 13th Dogs of War units. Should the unlikely situation occur that leaves opposing forces with *just* 13th Dogs of War units on the tabletop, the game immediately ends and victory is calculated as if the 13th units were not involved at all.

FIST

All members of the 13th Dogs of War are equipped with advanced soldier technology they purchased off of various military organisations. Because of this, any model targeted by a 13th Dogs of War Shoot action will count as being in one level of Cover lower. Those in Light Cover will count as being Obscured. Models that are currently Obscured are unaffected.

Walter “White” Knight – 60 points

The leader and most veteran member of the 13th, Walter is a consummate gun enthusiast and a seasoned professional soldier.

Type	Size	Move	C l o s e Combat	Target	Save	Kill	Traits
Walter Knight	1	4"	D6+1	5+	5+/ 5+	7+	Hits/2, Indep- endent

Unit: Walter Knight with AICW and Phos II grenades.

Elite Training: Walter gains an extra +1 bonus to his Armour except when in Cover. He may also re-roll any Close Combat dice.

Stealthy: If Walter is in Cover and did not make a Shoot action or reaction in the last turn, enemy models more than 20" away may not draw Line of Sight to him.

Benjamin "Black" Knight – 50 points

Walter's younger brother, a true aficionado of close quarters combat, commonly risks his life to get behind enemy lines and get in close to enemy assets. Whether with his knife or silenced machine pistol, few who get close to this mercenary live to tell the tale.

Type	Size	Move	C l o s e Combat	Target	Save	Kill	Traits
Benjamin Knight	1	5"	2xD6+1	5+	5+/ 5+	7+	Hits/2, Independ-

Unit: Benjamin Knight with Silenced MP-9 and Combat Baton.

Ambush: Benjamin may be concealed in an area of terrain outside the enemy's deployment zone before the game begins. Note the location of the unit before any models are deployed on the table. You can reveal the ambush by placing the model on the table at any time after a unit (friendly or otherwise) has completed an action. However, Benjamin must be revealed by the end of turn three or be counted as being destroyed.

Elite Training: Benjamin gains an extra +1 bonus to his Armour save when in Cover. He may also re-roll any Close Combat dice.

Silenced Pistol/Stealth: If Benjamin is in Cover, enemy models more than 20" away may not draw Line of Sight to him.

Ricardo "Hammer" Estaves – 55 points

A former member of Mexico's secret police, Ricardo is never more at home than when he is behind the trigger of his hip-mounted minigun rig. He loves marching along with the regular soldiers but only to make fun of their 'little pop-guns' – right before he opens up with his withering firepower.

Type	Size	Move	C l o s e Combat	Target	Save	Kill	Traits
Ricardo Estaves	1	4"	D6	5+	5+	7+	Hits/2, Independ-

Unit: Ricardo Estaves with M134-2.

Elite Training: Benjamin gains an extra +1 bonus to his Armour save when in Cover. He may also re-roll any Close Combat dice.

Focussed Fire: If Ricardo chooses to ignore the Auto trait of his minigun and only create a 3" Fire Zone, he may re-roll any Shoot action dice he makes with that action.

Felicity "Mercy" Meyers – 50 points

No one knows where she got her training but when this young, southern belle showed the Knight brothers exactly how good she was with a normal rifle... they could not wait to give her an advanced one to put holes in armoured targets. Anything that gets on her fully computerised sighting suite can expect for a quick and painless death; which is why she has the nickname she does.

Type	Size	Move	C l o s e Combat	Target	Save	Kill	Traits
Felicity Meyers	1	4"	D6	4+	6+/6+	7+	Hits/2, Independ-

Unit: Felicity Meyers with M82A3.

Ambush: Felicity may be concealed in an area of terrain outside the enemy's deployment zone before the game begins. Note the location of the unit before any models are deployed on the table. You can reveal the ambush by placing the model on the table at any time after a unit (friendly or otherwise) has completed an action. However, Felicity must be revealed by the end of turn three or be counted as being destroyed.

Elite Training: Felicity gains an extra +1 bonus to her Armour except when in Cover. She may also re-roll any Close Combat dice.

Stealthy: If Felicity is in Cover and did not make a Shoot action or reaction in the last turn, enemy models more than 20" away may not draw Line of Sight to her.

Ivan "Anvil" Trotskavich – 35 points

Ex-KGB enforcer, Ivan claimed that he was 'the anvil on which the hammer sharpened the sickle' and that the USSR would have survived indefinitely if he were in charge. Fortunately for the 13th he was not and he left the country with a very sizeable fortune in gold and armaments. Now he works for the highest bidder, happily bringing his favourites from his arsenal to the battlefield.

Type	Size	Move	C l o s e C o m b a t	Target	Save	Kill	Traits
I v a n Trotskavich	1	4"	1D6+2	5+	4+/6+	7+	Hits/2, I n d e p - e n d e n t

Unit: Ivan Trotskavich with AA-12.

Elite Training: Ivan gains an extra +1 bonus to his Armour except when in Cover. He may also re-roll any Close Combat dice.

Options: Ivan may purchase an additional AGS-17 grenade launcher for +10 points, a GPMG for +15 points, or an RPG-7 for +25 points. Additionally, Ivan may purchase a Medium Truck from the Russian Army lists (see *Battlefield Evolution*:

Modern Combat page 79) for +50 points.

13th Dogs of War Armoury

Weapon	Range	Damage	Traits
AA-12 automatic shotgun	15"	2xD6+1	Auto, Piercing/1
AGS-17 grenade launcher	30"	2xD6+1	Lethal Zone/3", Piercing/1
AICW	24"	2xD6	Auto
AICW Metal Storm G/L	20"	D6+1	Artillery, Lethal Zone/2", Ready
Combat Baton	—	As CC	Parry/2
GPMG	30"	2xD6	AA, Auto, Piercing/1, Prone
M134-2 minigun rig	30"	4xD6	Auto, Piercing/1
M82A3 sniper rifle	40"	D6+1	Accurate, Multihit, Piercing/1
MAC-9	12"	D6+1	Auto
PhosII incendiary grenades	6"	D6+1	Artillery, Flame, Lethal Zone/2", Ready
RPG-7	40"	D10	Lethal Zone/2", Piercing/2, Slow

AA-12 automatic shotgun: The American-made drum fed automatic shotgun that puts the fear in the hearts of anything within 75 metres, the AA-12 is amongst the most powerful weapons of its size and type. Capable of firing titanium-laced slugs at 300 shells per minute, this beast tears even armoured targets to shreds.

AGS-17 grenade launcher: Purchased from the Russian military, this is a heavy infantry support weapon using devastating high explosive rounds.

AICW: The advanced infantry combat weapon was first built in Australia, turning into an expensive but useful assault system that fires a common calibre of round at a staggering rate of fire. It also has an attached Metal

Storm grenade launcher attached to its over-barrel, allowing it to fire a 40mm grenade at the flip of a switch.

Combat Baton: A metal-core rod of fibreglass designed for martial arts fighting, the combat baton can turn away lethal blows with a flick of the wrist while being able to crack bones and even puncture soft areas.

GPMG: This Russian man-portable machine gun is a support weapon that is a fantastic suppression weapon capable of putting holes in enemy forces.

M134-2 minigun rig: The advanced version of the common seat-mounted helicopter rig, this belt-fed minigun is attached to a weight stabilisation system that allows a man of significant size to fire it without too much trouble, turning enemy infantry to red mist at the press of a button.

M82A3 sniper rifle: One of the deadliest .50 calibre sniper rifles on the planet, the M82A3 is built for penetration as much as it is for accuracy. A computerised tracking and wind-elevation system makes it a sharpshooter's dream – the enhanced .50 slug makes it a target's nightmare.

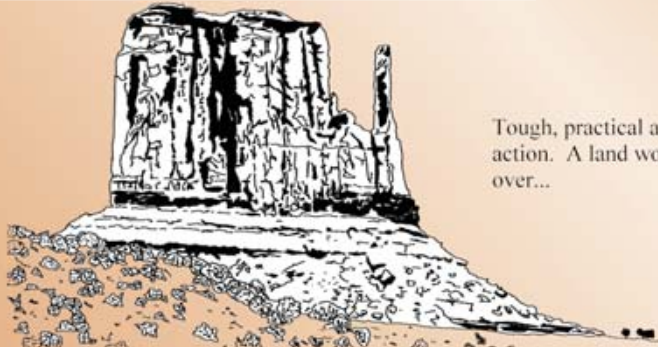
MAC-9: A fast-firing machine pistol that readily accepts a nearly soundless silencer, the MAC-9 is a good support firearm for urban commandoes.

Phos II incendiary grenades: An explosive charge used to detonate concentric rings of white phosphorous, the Phos II fills a small area with metal-scorching heat and sticky flames that will even burn underwater.

RPG-7: A reliable Russian RPG, the seven lacks the armour penetration of newer models but is easy to use and easier to reload in combat than other models.



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GenCon UK 2008

By Sandrine “Sand” Thirache & Katrina “Kat” Hepburn

There it was, GenCon UK, one of the biggest gaming conventions this side of the Atlantic. What better way to finish those last august days than with such a ray of sunshine (or two, as the actual sun decided to grace us with its presence). We liked the idea that the event was located half an hour from us, however having to drive back every night was a little inconvenient. No matter, we went and enjoyed every moment.

After an early start picking up the books from the Mongoose offices and hitting the road, we arrived at Reading University without a fuss, found parking behind the trader's area and set up the trade stand in less time than it takes to say “superfunkalifragisexy”. Although we did sneak out for a hot drink while we retrieved the passes.

Mongoose was ready to welcome the horde of gamers and when the doors opened, there was that magic moment when you know something great is about to happen and then it starts, the meeting of fans and gamers from all over Europe.

This year, the convention had a Dungeons & Dragons theme, with the prominent presence of Wizards of the Coast in the headquarters building, with demo games of Magic the Gathering and the Fourth Edition of D&D books. Their D&D “dungeon delve” (tabletop demo) granted points to players that they could exchange for goodies. Upper Deck on the other side was focusing on their World of Warcraft line of cards, as well as presenting a new addition in the form of a miniature game. Their World of Warcraft (known affectionately as WoW to the fans) card game works in an ingenious way, the standard system being a one on one player versus



Anne Stokes



David Griffith



MONGOOSE



player mechanism but the variant system pitches a team of players against a big boss, very much like the online MMORPG. We found it very entertaining when we tried it and even managed to kick Onyxia's bottom.

There were many stores alongside Mongoose, as well as a few other publishers and some of the best artists in the roleplaying industry. Taking our courage in both hands, we ventured to the artists' corner to drool on the illustrations. A note on the side: Anne Stokes and David Griffith were present. Both artists did produce some of the earlier amazing covers for Mongoose Publishing. Artists are easier to approach than people think. They are very passionate about their work and are always happy to talk about it with fans, so if you see your favourite artist about, don't be shy!

The convention was a great place to meet faces, both old and new and there was so much to do that we did not have time to get a proper look at the trader's hall until the Saturday, with the exception of Kat homing in on one of the shops behind us, called "Larping Around". The stall provided LARP (Live Action Role Playing) players with all kinds of armours and foam weapons. They had on display a full set of heavy leather armour. Kat had found her birthday present! A few adjustments later and she was the proud owner (and wearer) of the all black and beautiful drow-like set. On the Saturday evening, after being volunteered for the live dungeon roleplay, she donned it again to take the role of the "evil sorceress", enjoyed a crash course in pyrotechnics and experienced a quick and painless death at the hands of the brave adventurers. And we will certainly never forget the look on the face of one certain mage when confronted with one of her pyrotechnic "fireballs".

Needless to say, after four days, we were sorry to pack up and head home, even though the rest was much needed. Mongoose did really well during that event, the range of books gaining more popularity by the day. We all had a great time and we are already thinking about the next event. See you all at Dragonmeet!



The Evil Sorceress is vanquished



Kat having a LARP!

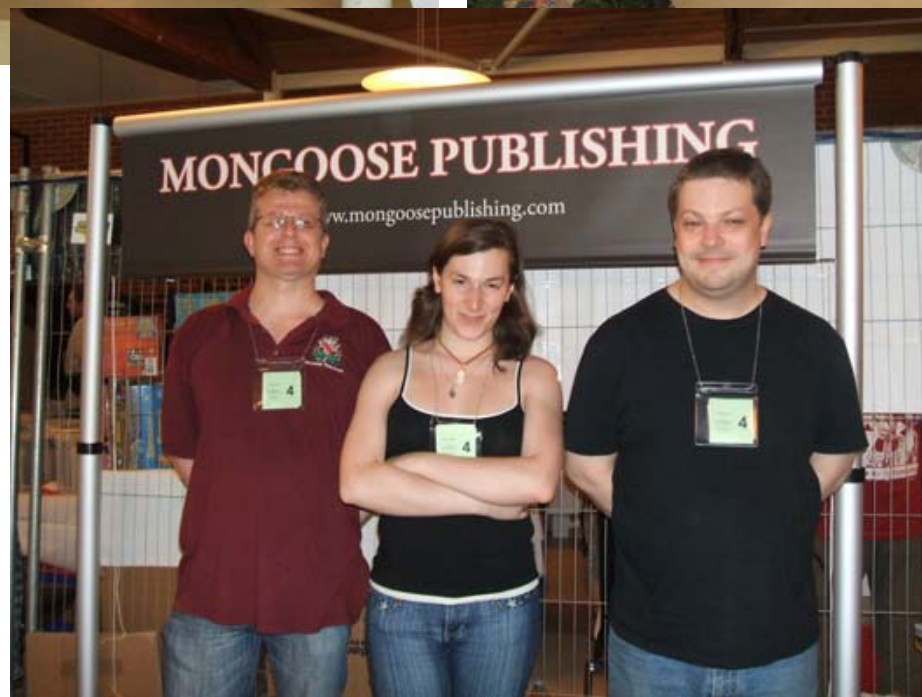


Kat's Black Armour



The Mongoose Stand





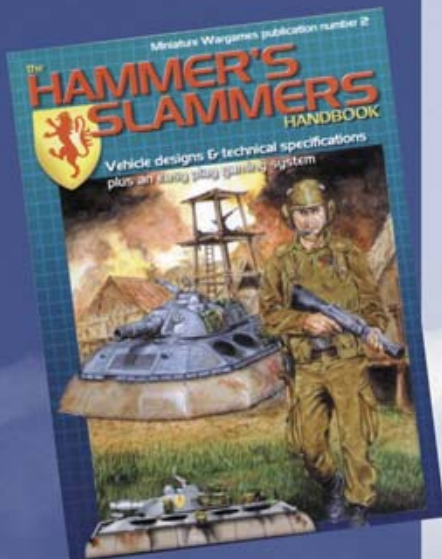
Nick, Kat and Matt all looking rather pleased with themselves!



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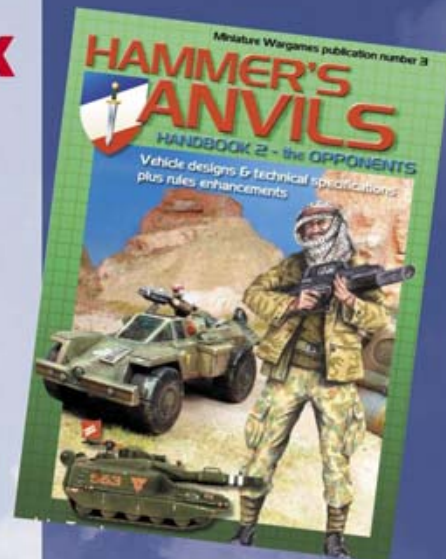
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