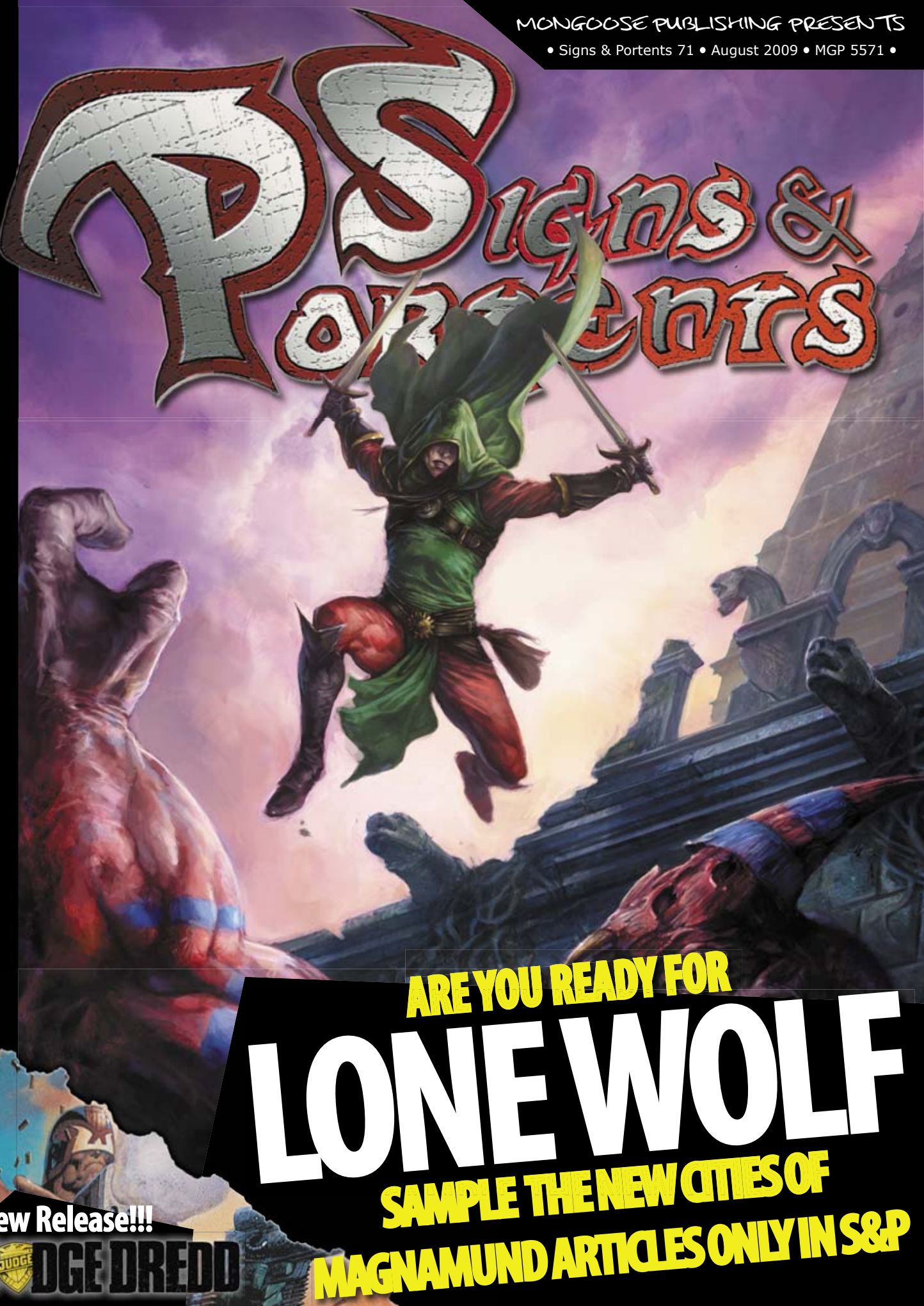


MONGOOSE PUBLISHING PRESENTS

• Signs & Portents 71 • August 2009 • MGP 5571 •

Also This Month: **Traveller** - The Victory • **Paranoia** - Interactive Purchase Guide • **Runequest** - Plunder of the Dwarfs



ARE YOU READY FOR

LONE WOLF

SAMPLE THE NEW CITIES OF

MAGNAMUND ARTICLES ONLY IN S&P

New Release!!!

JUDGE DREDD

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Editorial



Welcome one... welcome all... to the new and vastly improved Signs & Portents Magazine!

Over the past few months I have teamed up with Mongoose Layout Genius, Will Chapman, and between the two of us (and with a lot of "ohhh... I like that one" from Matt) we have painstakingly worked on improving the magazine that you all know and love, and injected it with some "wow factor".

In this issue you will find brand new features, a stunning new layout scheme and all of the fabulous supplements that you look forward to each month. We hope that you find it an improvement on the old format and are pleased with what it has to offer.

Now for an appeal. I would like to hear from you... yes you, the reader! Letters, or rather, emails to the editor are always appreciated. Be they praising Mongoose's efforts or offering constructive criticism or helpful suggestions, I want to see them. They can be related to S&P or to Mongoose products, or indeed Mongoose as a whole; if you have an opinion I'd like to hear about it.

Each month I will pick the best letters and they will appear in lights within the magazine. So drop me an email at claw@mongoosepublishing.com and be sure to enter the subject as "Letters to the Editor".

Have a great month one and all

Charlie

Credits

Editor

Charlotte Law

Managing Director

Matthew Sprange

Mongoose Studio Staff

Nick Robinson, Will Chapman, Richard Ford, Sandrine Thirache and Kelly George

Layout & Graphic Design

Will Chapman

Interior Artists

Kev Walker, Luis David Gomez, Jason Banditt Adams, Andrew Lilly, Gill Pearce, Carlos Esquerra, Tony Emson, Chris Quilliams, Rich Longmore, Ben Wooten, Patrick Reinemann & Neil Roberts



Cover Art

Alberto dal Lago

Contributors

Bryan Steele, Sarah Steele, Simon Beal, Charlotte Law, Lawrence Whitaker, Jason Banditt Adams, Will Chapman, Shannon Appelcline, Nick Robinson, Matthew Sprange, Darren Pearce, Matthew Keevil, James Norbury & Gareth Hanrahan.

Mongoose News

By Matthew Sprange

Lawrence Whitaker

Has recently announced on Planet Mongoose that he has finished the Strontium Dog RPG, and has now commenced work on a project that is 'close to his heart' and 'as important as it gets'. This is for a new line of games that will start appearing in January 2010, and will be as every bit exciting as *Traveller*...

Miniatures Return

The Mongoose forges have begun warming up in preparation of producing more Miniatures. Over the next few months, you will see a 'Classic Miniatures' section appear on our web site, where we will be making available a few of the miniatures we have produced in the past. We are still sorting out exactly what will be appearing in this range, but a certain highly popular fleet of ships is a strong possibility.

Gen Con

If you are attending Gen Con this year, be sure to swing by Mongoose's booth (421) and say hello! Crewed by Rob, Kelly and Matthew, they will all be delighted to greet you (Kelly, especially, just *loves* to hear character stories - ask for her in particular). We will, of course, have a whole slew of new books waiting for

you, including *Judge Dredd* (pictured), *Paranoia* (be quick if you want the limited *Black Missions* edition, as we expect them to disappear on the first day), *Fantasycraft* (yes, it exists!), *Golden Age Starships*, *Earthdawn* and much more!

Paranoia: Black Missions

This special edition is not just super sexy to look at; it also comes with it's own bonus CDROM. This bonus disk contains previous Mongoose *Paranoia* releases as PDFs, interviews (interrogations!) of key figures in the history of *Paranoia*, a host of sound effects and computer slogans and more.

I must warn you though that there are little over 100 copies unreserved so if you want one I suggest you act fast!

Adventurer's Equipment Guide 4e

Many of you were looking forward to this book late last year, but it succumbed to a serious case of re-scheduling. However, we can now announce that our editors have been hard at work, and you should expect to see this mighty tome, packed with mundane (non-magical) items for *Dungeons & Dragons 4e* before the end of the year!



Convention Diary

Constitution 2009

New Hall Cambridge, UK
Fri 31st July - Sun 2nd August 2009

www.constitution-con.org.uk

|||||

Gen Con

Thurs 13th August - Sun 16th August
Indiana Convention Centre
Indianapolis, Indiana, U.S.A

www.gencon.com

|||||

Furnace 2009

The Garrison Hotel, Sheffield, UK
Sat 10th - Sun 11th Oct 2009

www.rpgfurnace.com

|||||

Ludicrus '09

Kesgrave Community Centre, Ipswich, UK
Sat 5th - Sun 6th Dec 2009

www.ludicrus.org

The Awesometer

Generic events that get our hearts racing (or sometimes not) each and every month!

Employee of the Month

Each month we pick a member of staff to list their favourite random 5 things and by random i mean we choose something random every month, enjoy!

Nick Robinson's TOP 5 CHAT UP LINES

1. Oops! Sorry.
2. Hi. I'm wearing my lucky blue suit.
3. Do you know any good chat up lines?
4. Do you know any good chat up lines that work?
5. Hey babe. Looking great. What's your name? Where are you from? Enough about you, let's talk about important stuff. Like me.

AWESOME

Look out for the incredible Blu Ray release of Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children... Visit ssl.square-enix-shop.com/eu/index.php



GEN CON
THE BEST FOUR DAYS IN GAM

Head on over to Indianapolis for this year's GenCon... www.gencon.com

Sun Sun SUN!!!!
part 2 of the british summer is on its way, enjoy it while it lasts!



The Global Recession... Who knows... but it is not a fun subject.



FANBOYS!!!!
B i
font colour: []

Fanboy's + Forums = some gruesome reading. I would have more fun at the box factory.

Swine Flu is the mother of all pains in the butt. The faster this thing gets gone the better.



GRUESOME

The Timeline

A visual guide to get your tails wagging for future mongoose releases

September: Get Ready For the Earthdawn Companions



October: Strontium Dog Explodes into the Studio



November: It is time to finally



Quote of the Month

What words have been flying around the office more than the dogs ball?

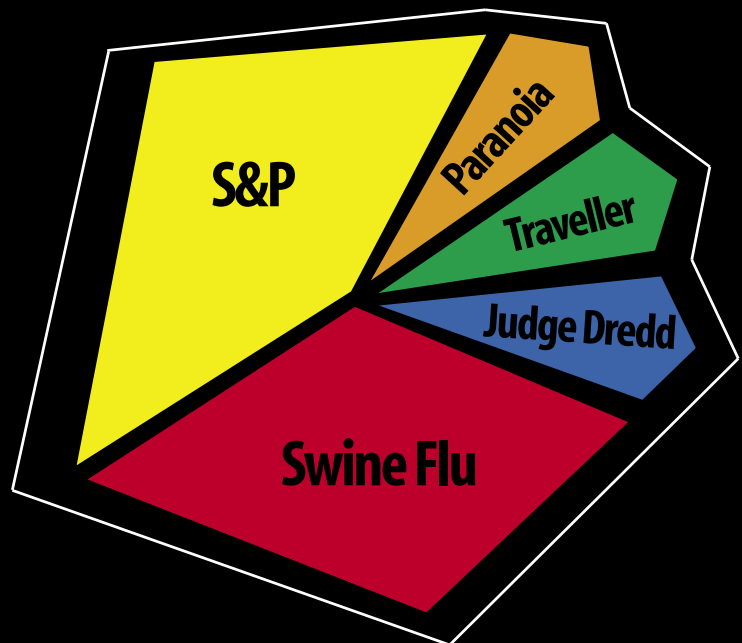
SHUT UP GREEK!

This month, as with most months, these three little words have been uttered more than any others. Our own Nick "The Greek" Robinson often finds himself the subject of so called "Fordy Rage". The context for this phrase usually follows a set pattern; something goes wrong on one of Fordy's projects, Nick offers a witty yet useless comment, then Fordy replies with "Shut Up Greek!" Fear not though dear readers, for no Greeks are actually harmed in Mongoose Towers.

We have had all sorts of crazy happenings this month, with half the office suffering from the infamous Swine Flu virus to the complete overhaul of our friendly neighbourhood magazine. Onto professional endeavours we also had two incredibly huge projects to deal with. The main cause of stress this month was the 25th Anniversary edition of the *Paranoia* RPG, the project was plagued with problems but it eventually went out the door as happy as a teched out Troubleshooter. Also leaving the Mongoose studio doors was the visual spectacle that is the *Judge Dredd* RPG, this book was the centre of lots of graphical challenges, some say it is the best looking book we at Mongoose have produced, of course that is for the individual to decide. And last on the list of time obsorbers were the various *Traveller* products meeting with the printers, these included *Scoundrel* and the two *Vehicle* books, safe to say you will have plenty to look forward to in the coming months. Lets hope our time chart is filled with something a little more exciting next month.

The Time Chart

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



unleash the Alien Vargr

December: Traveller becomes the next line to turn French

January: Look out for the Mega-City One Archives



August 09 Releases



TRUST THE COMPUTER! THE COMPUTER IS YOUR FRIEND!

The 25th Anniversary of Paranoia is celebrated by this marvellous tome – new rules to ignore, and new missions to be excited by, all dedicated to those staunch defenders of Alpha Complex, the Troubleshooters!

PARANOIA: A light-hearted game of backstabbing, treachery and guile, where trusting other players is a sure route to the termination centre. Get paranoid. Or else!

PARANOIA IS FUN. OTHER GAMES ARE NOT FUN. BUY PARANOIA.

The Black Missions edition, limited to 1,000 copies, has an all new cover, plus a Bonus Mandatory Fun DVD, which includes material streamed straight from the grey subnets – electronic copies of classic Paranoia supplements, Computer Voice Control, Traitorous Sound Effects, and much more!

Paranoia Troubleshooters: Black Missions

Price: \$49.95

Format: Hardback (208 pages)

MGP6666

TRUST THE COMPUTER! THE COMPUTER IS YOUR FRIEND!

Greetings, citizen! THE COMPUTER has made you a TROUBLESHOOTER, a protector of the underground city of ALPHA COMPLEX. You and your fellow Troubleshooters will have lots of fun rooting out Communist mutant traitors. The Computer says so.

The 25th Anniversary of Paranoia is celebrated by this marvellous tome – new rules to ignore, and new missions to be excited by, all dedicated to those staunch defenders of Alpha Complex, the Troubleshooters!

PARANOIA: A light-hearted game of backstabbing, treachery and guile, where trusting other players is a sure route to the termination centre. Get paranoid. Or else!

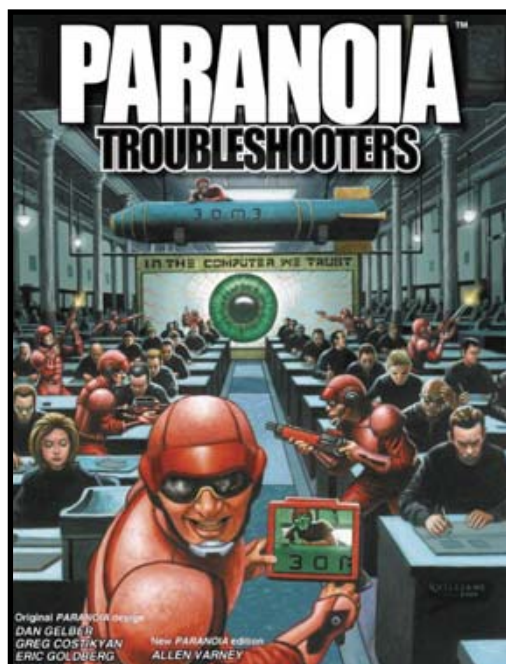
PARANOIA IS FUN. OTHER GAMES ARE NOT FUN. BUY PARANOIA.

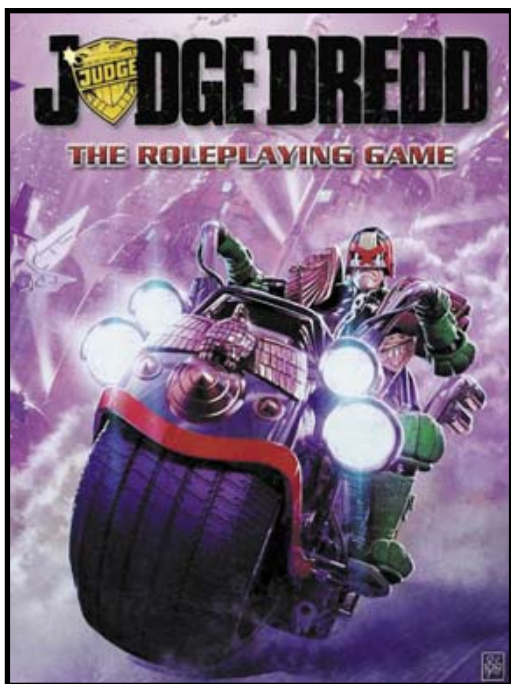
Paranoia Troubleshooters

Price: \$39.95

Format: Hardback (208 pages)

MGP6665





Judge Dredd
 Price: \$49.95
 Format: Hardback (272 pages)
 MGP10000

Welcome To Mega-City One

A vast metropolis where each of 360 million citizens is a potential lawbreaker. Patrolling these mean streets are the judges, tough lawmen of the future, trained to keep the peace and equipped to take on the criminals of the 22nd Century. Toughest of them all is Judge Dredd, for he is the Law, and you'd better believe it creep!

Judge Dredd is a new setting for the Traveller roleplaying game, in which you take on the role of Mega-City One judges, patrolling the streets astride your Lawmaster bike, ready to defend the city's civilians against an array of foes.

Lavishly detailed as a full colour hardback, Judge Dredd will take your Traveller games to somewhere they have never been before!

FantasyCraft

Price: \$49.95

Format: Softback (288 pages)

Your Dungeon, Your Dragon, Your Way

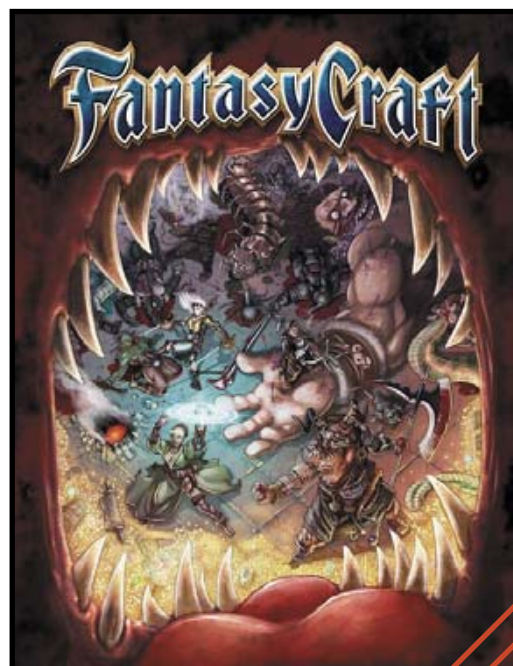
The ultimate fantasy toolkit is here! At last, you can run a full-blown fantasy campaign of any scale using the award-winning Spycraft engine, or introduce some unexpected adventure into any Crafty setting!

More than just another retread, Fantasy Craft gets back to why we love gaming in the first place. It's about the stakes, and raising them. It's about the odds, and beating them. It's about legends, and making them. It's about you. Roll your dice like a hero again. This groundbreaking release includes...

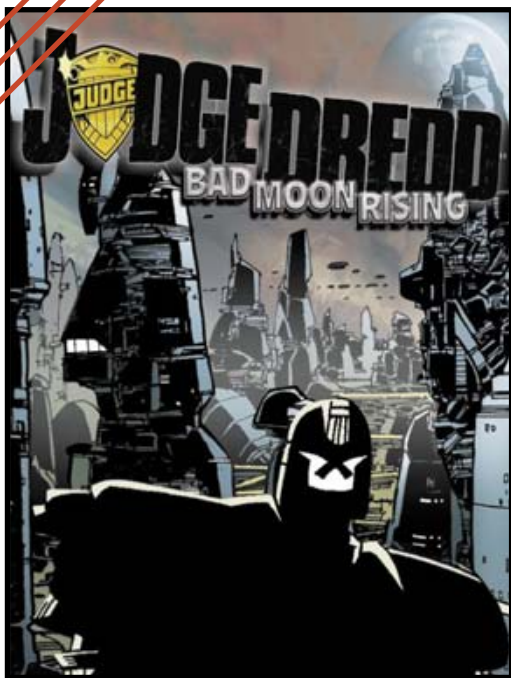
**Classic Fantasy Upgraded! All the races, classes, monsters, and spells you already know with all the Spycraft might and versatility you crave.*

Unleash the pride and power of ten playable races, including elves, dwarves, pechs, giants, goblins, ogres, saurians, drakes, rootwalkers, and unborn! Rise to glory as a merciless Assassin, wily Burglar, clever Sage, daring Swashbuckler, or vicious Warlord! Over twenty base and expert classes and loads of new Origins, skill checks, feats, Subplots, and new character options to explore.

And Much More...



August 09 Releases



The Moon Lights The Streets

The first complete adventure for Judge Dredd, Bad Moon Rising starts with a quiet, humdrum investigation for the Judges, but it soon becomes apparent that the crimes being committed are anything but normal.

Why are murders being conducted seemingly at random? Why are the Narks suddenly silent? Is this a new plot against Mega-City One? Or a very, very old one?

Judge Dredd: Bad Moon Rising

Price: \$24.95

Format: Softback (128 pages)

MGP10001

Trust us, when an elf and a gorgon have your back against an unspeakable horror from beyond space and time, you'll be glad you bought this book

Spies like to joke about the boogiemens in the shadows and the spookshow they play out for flag and future... But what if they're only part wrong? What if there really is something to fear in the dark? What if the spooks in the shadows are actually something more ...or less... than human? Here, for the first time in print, is everything you need to answer these and many other questions in your campaigns.

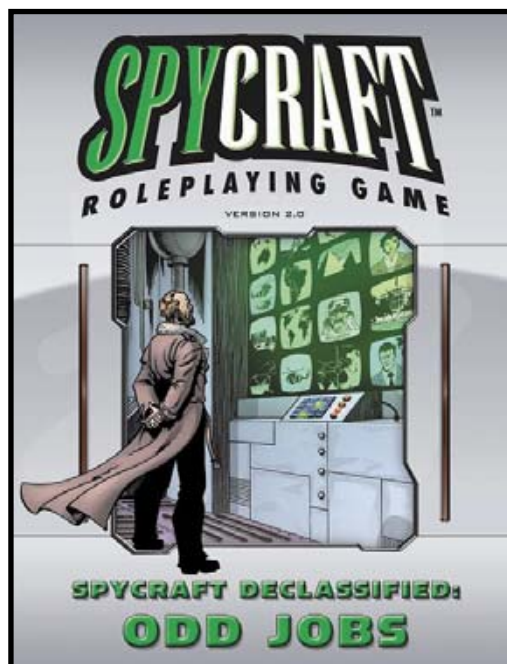
Spycraft Declassified: Odd Jobs collects the strangest and most fantastic of Crafty Games' PDFs and Signs & Portents articles, including classic Greek and fantasy races from *Origin of the Species*, sanity-blasting cosmic horror and advanced stress rules from *Fragile Minds*, a new capsule setting that can take you literally anywhere you want to go, a new agenda for *World on Fire* that's out of this world, and a ready-to-play adventure! Take your game in a whole new direction with this wild new *Spycraft* expansion.

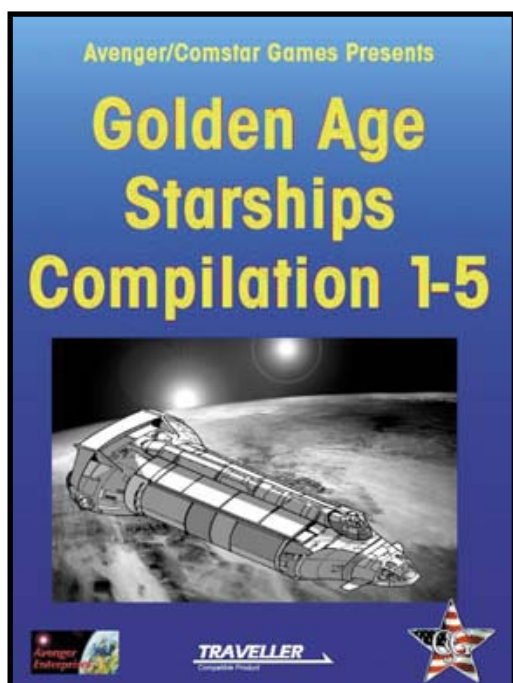
Spycraft Declassified: Odd Jobs

Price: \$24.95

Format: Softback (96 pages)

MGP6138





G.A.S Compilation 1- 5

Price: \$29.95

Format: Softback (172 pages)

MGP6143

Compiling the Golden Age Starships, this book features new ships for Traveller, including deck plans, crews, variants and scenario ideas for each. All ships can be found in the official Spinward Marches setting, and the Compilation features the Fast Courier, Corsair, LSP Modular Starship, Sword Worlds Patrol Cruiser, and a collection of archaic small craft and stations for worlds who are just finding their way into space.

Golden Age Starships 1: Fast Courier

Golden Age Starships 2: Corsair

Golden Age Starships 3: LSP Modular Starship

Golden Age Starships 4: Sword Worlds Patrol Cruiser

Golden Age Starships 5: Archaic Small Craft and Space Stations

Elric De Melniboné

Price: €29.99

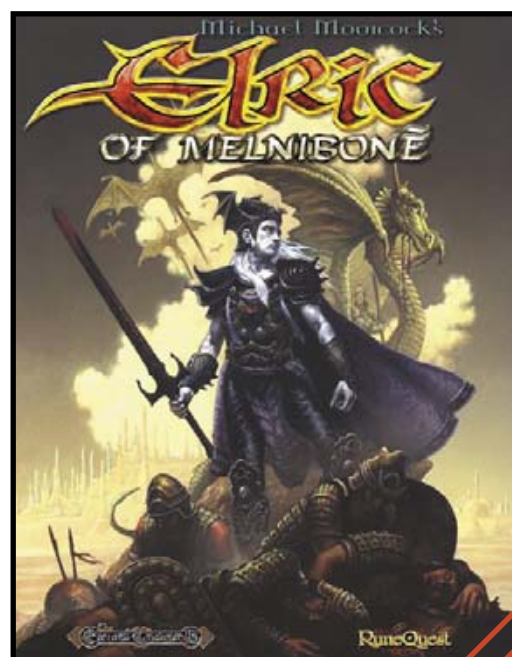
Format: Hardback (168 pages)

MGP8163

L'île magique de Melniboné et les Jeunes Royaumes au-delà des mers fournissent une pléthore d'endroits étranges, d'ennemis mortels et de sorts puissants pour le jeu de rôle d'Elric de Melniboné. Naviguez sur les mers du destin dans un monde hanté par les démons, où les dragons parcourent les cieux déchirés par les éclairs et où les rêves valent plus que les rubis. Errer dans les rues de la fabuleuse Elwher, dérobez la connaissance de Pan Tang et traversez le Désert des Soupîrs en quête de l'éternelle Tanelorn.

Agrandissant la gamme de Jeux de Rôle du Champion Eternel, Elric de Melniboné entraîne les joueurs dans les Jeunes Royaumes où les dragons parcourent les cieux et où le Chaos règne !

Basé sur le système de règles de RuneQuest, Elric de Melniboné est un jeu complet et indépendant.



August 09 Releases

TRAVELLER

Supplement 5:
Civilian Vehicles

Including a complete vehicle creation system, Civilian Vehicles is a ready reference for any Traveller needing to get from A to B in the fastest/ classiest/safest way possible – take your pick! From primitive ground cars to the most advanced skimmers, this book is a complete catalogue of vehicles found in civilian hands.

Traveller Supplement 5: Civilian Vehicles

Price: \$24.95

Format: Softcover (128 pages)

MGP3821

Traveller Supplement 6: Military Vehicles

Price: \$24.95

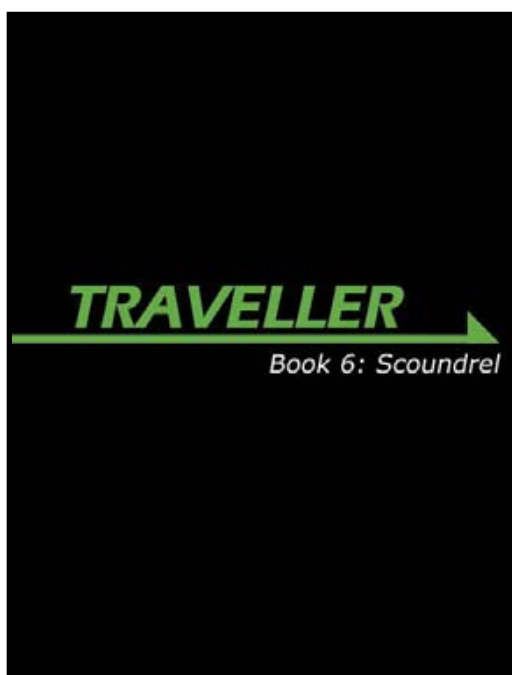
Format: Softcover (128 pages)

MGP3822

Sometimes battle dress is just not enough. Upgrading the vehicle creation system from Civilian Vehicles, Military Vehicles gives you the armour and weaponry you need for mass destruction. From simple scout skimmers to heavy self-propelled guns, to giant walking mecha, Military Vehicles contains everything a Traveller needs for self-defence on the road, in the wilderness and in the skies.

TRAVELLER

Supplement 6:
Military Vehicles



Concentrating on Rogue and Drifter careers, Scoundrel brings to life some of the most favoured characters in Traveller – those who avoid legitimate lines of work, who straddle the grey areas of the law. Expanding the Rogue and Drifter careers, Scoundrel shows you just how to survive in a universe that insists on everyone doing an honest day's work, without actually having to work for it. From confidence tricksters and gamblers to smugglers and thieves, Scoundrel is an essential companion for any Rogue or Drifter.

Traveller Book 6: Scoundrel
 Price: \$24.95
 Format: Softcover (136 pages)
 MGP3823

Traveller Referee's Screen
 Price: \$14.95
 Format: Screen (4 pages)
 MGP3824

With stunning artwork of a Type-S Scout's cockpit facing the players, and every vital table for the Referee, the Traveller Referee's Screen is the perfect complement to a well run Traveller campaign.

With all the important tables and charts, the new Traveller Referee's Screen is constructed from quality heavy-weight cardstock that will stand the ravages of many years' gaming.





CONAN'S[®]

SCORE OF STEEL

Every month the guys at Mongoose will be looking to bring you their reviews and opinions on some of the hottest events happening around the world, from Movies, Video Games, Books and naturally Hobby Gaming, of course we all need some scoring assistance.



Terminator Salvation

By Simon Beal

Ever since walking out of the cinema in the early '90s after watching *Terminator 2*, I've been hoping for a *Terminator* film set in the future world where humans are fighting the forces of Skynet. Jump forward 17 years and I have a big grin on my face as I purchase my ticket for *Terminator Salvation*. OK, it is set in 2018, not 2029 as we see in the T2 flash forwards, but it's close enough.

Terminator Salvation is a reboot of the *Terminator* franchise and in many ways it is the start of the *Terminator* story where we learn how John Connor (played by Christian Bale) becomes the resistance leader and see how Kyle Reese (Anton Yelchin) becomes the man that Connor will eventually send back in time as told in the original *Terminator* movie.

The Plot

The story begins in 2003 where we meet Marcus Wright (Sam Worthington). Marcus is on death row and is visited by Dr. Serena Kogan (Helena Bonham Carter) who talks him into donating his body to science, a chance for him to give back to society. Marcus wakes up 15 years later and quickly discovers that



humanity is fighting for its very survival against the army of machines created by Skynet. Marcus meets up with a young Kyle Reese and Star, a young mute girl who follows Kyle.

After hearing a resistance broadcast by John Connor, Kyle sets off to find the resistance, accompanied by Star and a reluctant Marcus. After some spectacular action sequences, Kyle and Star are captured and taken to a Skynet base in San Francisco.

Meanwhile, we are introduced to John Connor. As the only survivor from an attack on a Skynet base, Connor discovers plans for a new type of terminator that incorporates living tissue. He also learns that Skynet is holding a large number of human prisoners. At this point in the story, John is a well known resistance fighter but is not yet the leader he is destined to become.

John is informed that the resistance has intercepted a list of people that Skynet plans to terminate in four days time. This list includes the names of the resistance command staff, including John Connor and Kyle Reese. The command staff does not know who Kyle is but Connor knows that Kyle must be found and protected. Connor then listens to the tapes recorded by his mother where she explains that Kyle not only saves her life but is also John's father.

On a nuclear submarine that serves as the resistance headquarters, General Ashdown (Michael Ironside) is planning to attack Skynet in response

to the information they have found. The resistance have also discovered a weakness in the machines and John is sent to field test their new weapon.

Marcus soon meets up with another resistance fighter called Blair Williams (Moon Bloodgood) who takes him to a resistance cell where they meet up with John Connor. Marcus discovers what he has become and does not get a warm welcome by the resistance but he does inform Connor that Kyle is being held prisoner at the Skynet base in San Francisco, the same base the resistance plans to attack.

Only Connor realises how important Kyle is but General Ashdown will not delay the attack so that Kyle and the other prisoners can be rescued. Connor now has to defy Ashdown's orders if he is to save the past and the future of humanity.

Conclusion

Terminator Salvation is a visually stunning film with fantastic effects and great action sequences but there are a few instances where it transcends the threshold of realism. There are a host of terminators and machines including harvesters, hunter-killers, moto-terminators, and hydrobots. The film also reveals the origins of the classic Series 800 terminator from the previous films (played by Arnold Schwarzeneger).

The story is fast paced with one action scene leading to

the next. There are a few moments of character development but they focus more on Marcus Wright rather than John Connor. Although the Marcus arc is engaging, I felt that John Connor was a little side-lined for such an important character in this universe. It is only towards the end of the film that Connor plays a more active role.

For the most part, the continuity with the existing canon is maintained and there are several nods to the previous Terminator films; Kyle's first line is 'Come with me if you want to live.', we hear some Guns N' Roses music, and of course there is the classic line 'I'll be back.'. Another nice touch was the scene where John is listening to the tapes recorded by his mother from the first Terminator movie. However, fans of the TV show will be disappointed that Kyle's brother Derek does not seem to exist in this telling of the story.

There were several disappointing clichés such as Star who served no purpose to the story or characters and was clearly added to get the 'cute kid vote'. The ending was also a bit too sentimental for my liking and a quite predictable once a certain event happens in the story.

Terminator Salvation has big shoes to fill and for this reason diehard fans will be disappointed with this latest offering. The first two Terminator movies directed by James Cameron combined a good mix of action with character development, giving the films a depth and quality that has yet to be matched by their successors. Terminator Salvation may not be perfect but it is an enjoyable film that provides a fresh look at the Terminator franchise.

Score: 7/10



Roleplaying

The future world of the Terminator universe provides a lot of ideas that can be used in Traveller roleplaying games. Terminator Salvation has a wealth of material that could be used to form the basis of a Terminator resistance campaign, a world within Your Traveller Universe, or simply inspiration for robots and drones.



Watchmen

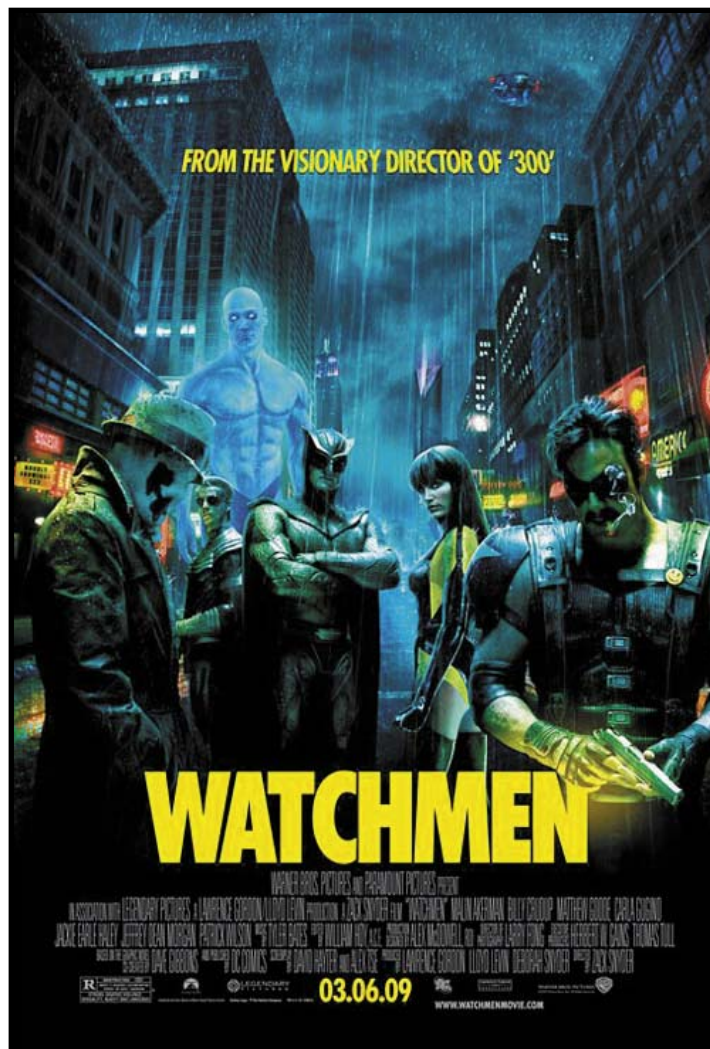
By Lawrence Whitaker

1986 was a great year for comics. Frank Miller created, perhaps, the ultimate Batman story in his epic, multi-layered, exceedingly dark, *Dark Knight Returns*. Here, Miller played with the whole myth of Batman, subverting and reinventing the caped crusader, creating a nail-hard, embittered, sociopathic vigilante that was pitch-perfect for a Reagan-era America.

Across the Pond, in Northampton, Alan Moore – every bit Miller's storytelling and visionary equivalent, but with a very British mindset – was busy creating *Watchmen*, in which the entire superhero genre would be dismantled, dissected, scrutinised and then reassembled into a breathtaking dialectic about the nature of heroes and, in particular, costumed heroes. Where Miller examined the mythology of a single hero, Moore examined the genre. Both writers did remarkable things, and altered, forever, the landscape of comics.

Movies inevitably followed: *The Dark Knight Returns* was the inspiration for Tim Burton's innovative *Batman*, with Michael Keaton and a scenery-chewing Jack Nicholson as The Joker; later, Christopher Nolan would return to the darkness of Frank Miller's story to give us the harder, grittier, *Batman Begins* and *The Dark Knight*. Meanwhile, rumours of a *Watchmen* movie came and went: Terry Gilliam would direct; then Wolfgang Petersen. Treatments came out of and went back into Development Hell. *Watchmen* was unfilmable, many said – not least its creator, Alan Moore – but, eventually, in 2009, *Watchmen* the movie finally arrived, almost (but not quite) a quarter of a century after the graphic novel first appeared. The film arrives courtesy of Zack Snyder, the director of *300* which is itself based on a Frank Miller graphic novel, and is about to be released on DVD/Blue Ray.

So, who watches the *Watchmen*?



For those S&P readers unfamiliar with the graphic novel, here is the summary.

In an alternative 1980s costumed heroes have been outlawed by the Keene Act, making vigilante acts illegal. The *Watchmen*, a team of costumed heroes that emerged from the ashes of the *Minutemen* (established in the 1930s, when costumed heroes first emerged), has disbanded, its members either vanishing into obscurity, mundanity, commercialisation or, in the case of Rorschach, the most unrepentant of the *Watchmen*, violent, reactionary, vigilantism. One of the *Watchmen*'s members, the amoral Comedian, is murdered – thrown from his high-rise condo. Rorschach investigates the murder and uncovers a conspiracy that is either designed to save the world from destruction, or hasten it; but either way at the expense of the surviving

Watchmen. As Rorschach investigates, his old colleagues are drawn into a web of intrigue that leads to a devastating conclusion.

Fans of the graphic novel (and that includes me), are likely to be both elated and deflated in equal measure. The elation comes in how faithful Snyder has been to the subject matter. It was always going to be an impossible task to completely translate Alan Moore's detailed and sweeping story onto the screen, and, sensibly, Snyder doesn't try. Instead, he distils the core elements of the *Watchmen* story and leaves to one side (to a greater and lesser extent) various parts of the graphic novel's plot that would simply be too much effort and too much of a distraction to place on screen. Some elements of the complex character development found in the graphic novel, notably Rorschach and

Doctor Manhattan, are trimmed and revised to fit the story, but convey most of what Alan Moore took a great deal of time to develop. Snyder also succeeds in condensing the sprawling backstory of the Minutemen into an innovative credits sequence that neatly provides background and context that was scattered liberally across the graphic novel's 12 dense chapters.

The feel of the movie is almost precisely that of the graphic novel. Sets faithfully recreate the scenes of the action, and entire set-pieces are recreated in ways that will satisfy any Watchmen aficionado. The protagonists are, in the main, brilliantly realised. The Comedian, Doctor Manhattan and Rorschach are almost perfect renderings of their two dimensional counterparts. Less successful are Nite Owl (the suit looks cumbersome – but then, so did the comic book version), Ozymandius (the fake musculature fools no-one) and Silk Spectre (yellow and black fetish latex, with thigh-high suspender boots: it ups the sex appeal, but detracts from the more innocent qualities the comic book Silk Spectre displays). But, otherwise, the look and feel of the film is brilliantly realised.

The film deflates in its approach and attitude to the subject matter – particularly in its approach to violence. Where Snyder lavishes attention – successfully – on recreating the look and atmosphere of the graphic novel, he gets it badly wrong with the way he pitches the violence quotient of the movie. The fight between Comedian and his nemesis is bone-crunching but believable: the Comedian is, after all, a pumped-up thug used to street combat, and one can believe that he has the capability to punch through a breezeblock. However, later, Nite Owl and Silk Spectre find themselves in an alley fight which, in the graphic novel, proves they are competent combatants, capable of handling themselves and unafraid to do so. In the movie, they become killing machines, and Snyder gleefully pitches us into slo-mo, with compound fractures, gallons of blood,

and both Nite Owl and Silk Spectre killing their foes – something that utterly detracts from their characters, and, ultimately, makes them, somehow, unlikeable. Given that Nite Owl and Silk Spectre are meant to be the moral conscience of the story, this really is unforgivable as it leaves the viewer with a nasty taste in the mouth and less sympathy than one should have. A similar approach is taken with Rorschach – the one character who, in the graphic novel, resorts gleefully to the old ultra-violence: however, on this occasion, Snyder has Rorschach perform an act of violence at a crucial moment in the explanation of how Rorschach became as embittered as he is. One can see why Snyder decided to make this change to the story, but the overall effect is to weaken and dilute the psychological ambivalence of Rorschach, in favour of introducing slasher-flick theatrics and gore.

Elsewhere the film suffers from dense, intricate plotting that the uninitiated may find hard to follow and, at the film's denouement, hard to swallow. Ultimately, the changes Snyder makes to the story are sensible and reasonable, in the context of the overall plot arc, but if one is unfamiliar with the original story, this may be of little consolation. However, despite the sheer density of the story, Snyder does maintain structure with a beginning, middle and end, punctuated by some decent action sequences (marred by

the ultra-violence and Snyders love affair with slow motion) and good character development.

Acting-wise, there is good and bad to report. Matthew Goode as Ozymandius fails to convince us that he's the 'smartest man in the world'. This is, in part, because he is burdened with some poor exposition and a ludicrous blond wig; but also because he simply lacks the physique and presence of his graphic novel counterpart. Malin Akerman as Silk Spectre looks gorgeous, and does her level best with a role that is slightly underdeveloped in terms of character, and over-developed in terms of providing sex for the sake of it. Patrick Wilson, as Nite Owl, is not bad at all, accurately portraying the nerdy, repressed millionaire-technowhiz with the right blend of awkwardness and integrity once the owl suit is donned.

The acting honours go to Billy Crudup for his Doctor Manhattan. Despite being CG'd to the gills, Crudup manages to portray Manhattan's increasing distancing from humanity with subtlety and pathos, eventually bringing him back to being able to relate to humans again, even though a holocaust is pending. Jeffrey Dean Morgan – a dead-ringer for Robert Downey Jr – is superb as the Comedian: amoral, vicious and as testosterone-filled as he needs to be. The Oscar, however, goes to Jackie Earle Haley who, as the damaged, growling, sociopathic Rorschach,



is a complex, paranoid, obsessive-compulsive who genuinely dominates every scene he is in. He is at his most powerful when out of the trademark, ink-blot mask: a cold-eyed killer who, interned in the penitentiary, reminds the inmates that 'I'm not locked up in here with you. You are locked up in here with me.' A seething, incomprehensible force of nature, Rorschach is even more

implacable without his mask, and Hailey makes Rorschach complex and compelling in precisely the ways Alan Moore takes time to do throughout the Watchmen graphic novel.

Do I recommend Watchmen? Yes I do, but with reservations. The violence mars what is otherwise a thoughtful, intelligent, largely successful stab at translating difficult subject matter to the screen. Snyder exhibits maturity in his direction and characterisation, only to wreck it with juvenile blood and guts that is woefully misplaced and misjudged. The dense plotting will make it difficult for neophytes to understand and fully appreciate the nuances of the story (but by no means impossible: you just have to pay attention, all the time), and the film is, perhaps, better watched after having read the graphic novel, and better suited to DVD where one is at liberty to replay those parts that will cause the most head-scratching moments (or those moments where Malin Akerman disrobes, if that's the way you're inclined). The DVD also promises a wealth of extras, including the comic-within-a-comic, *Tales of the Black Freighter*, which features in the graphic novel, and the costumed hero expose, *Under the Hood*. Both are important storytelling devices in the graphic novel, and, if Snyder has approached them with the maturity he displays through most of the film, then they will be worthy additions that enrich the Watchmen experience.

I will buy it on DVD because I believe it is a successful telling of the graphic novel that brings a fresh perspective to the story. However, I can see myself fast-forwarding through some of the fight sections so that I don't feel mildly sullied by Snyder's immaturity when it comes to on-screen violence.

Score: 6/10



Watchmen and Gaming

Watchmen, whether the graphic novel or film, offers some intriguing roleplaying opportunities. Here are some ideas for consideration:

Minutemen

A two-fisted, 30s/40s Pulp campaign using the original Minutemen. Set in 30s New York, costumed vigilantes are coming into their own and being welcomed by a city that has been plagued by a string of violent mobsters who are threatening to wrest control from the authorities. The Minutemen – Captain Metropolis, Hooded Justice, Mothman, Silhouette, the Comedian, Silk Spectre I, Nite Owl I, and Dollar Bill – are popular figures in an America crawling out of the depression and watching the march of war across Europe; however, each Minuteman has his or her foibles. Dollarbill is mentally ill and veering towards acute depression; Silhouette is a lesbian, in an era where homosexuality is outlawed; Silk Spectre is more glamour model than costumed heroine; and the Comedian is an unstable, misogynistic bigot who has raped Silk Spectre. These flawed heroes, whilst pre-defined characters, set in an era noted for hard-boiled action, would form an excellent, one-shot campaign, using the Traveller or RuneQuest rules. None of them have superpowers, and must rely on their skills to outwit underworld figures such as Moloch (the Comedian's particular nemesis) the Magician – a stage conjuror who has turned his skills to the pursuit a life of crime.

Alternative Watchmen

Suppose the Keene Act had been defeated; would the Watchmen still be operating in 1986? If so, how would they be operating? The Cold War is escalating towards possible nuclear confrontation, with President Nixon driving a confrontational agenda. Doctor Manhattan could, in theory, be used to crush Soviet aggression, but he is becoming increasingly isolated from humanity as he loses his ability to empathise with a world he has no stake in. On the streets, crime is changing. The old organised criminal gangs have given way to younger, more feral gangs operating on tribal lines, fuelled by an influx of cheap drugs from South America and South East Asia. Cocaine, Crack and Heroine are the main drivers of crime and social unrest; the Watchmen face an increasingly dangerous foe in the form of the well-armed drugs cartels.



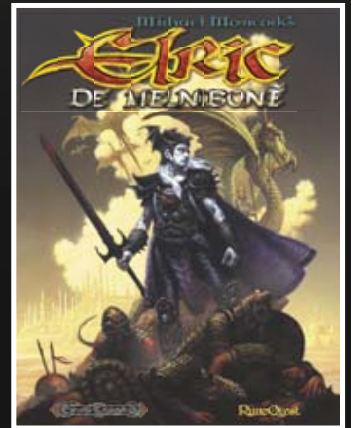
Michael Moorcock's

Eric

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à la saga du Champion Eternel!*

PROCHAINEMENT



MONGOOSE
PUBLISHING

Judge Dredd

A look at the latest setting for Traveller players

By Matthew Sprange



Thundering down the Megway on the back of your heavily-armed Lawmaster bike, weaving in and out of traffic as you chase down renegade perps in a stolen roadster – that is the stuff great adventures in *Judge Dredd* are made of!

However, if you are familiar with *Judge Dredd* and Mega-City One, from the 2000AD comic strips, the greatest law enforcer in history has no need of an introduction from me. You already know how cool he is! Here, we are going to delve into the world of *Judge Dredd* for those who are not familiar with the comics, showing you why this new setting for *Traveller* should be an essential part of your collection!

The year is 2131 and most of the world has been obliterated in the Atomic Wars. Vast wildernesses of irradiated desert cover much of the globe, filled with mutants, monsters and desperadoes. Ordinary citizens huddle together in vast Mega-Cities, massive metropolises filled with fantastic technologies. Greatest of these cities is Mega-City One, covering much of the American eastern seaboard.

MEGA-CITY ONE

Four hundred million people call Mega-City One their home, packed into mile high blocks that are designed to accommodate their every need. Mega-City One is not, however, a utopian society.

With so much labour handled by robots and computers, unemployment runs at 87%. This leads to a lot of bored citizens, despite their education being aimed almost solely at living a life of leisure. Crazes and fads sweep Mega-City One on a weekly basis, with everything from power boarding across the skies to eating becoming all-consuming obsessions (the first two ton man came from Mega-City One).

Crime is, to some, just another way to stave off the boredom of a meaningless life, where the average citizen is a nobody among hundreds of millions of others.

Gangs of young juves regularly terrorise other inhabitants of their blocks, while some citizens just flip out, and go crazy at the thought of life in an advanced city – they go Futsie, suffering from Future Shock Syndrome.

Still more treat crime as a serious business, dealing in organised smuggling, organ-legging, fraud and robbery on a massive scale.

THE JUDGES

Watching over all of this are the judges, the most advanced and best-trained law enforcement officers ever to appear on Earth. Taken into the Academy of Law at a very young age, they spend 15 years training – and training hard.

When they hit the streets, each judge is fully capable of taking on an entire armed gang by himself, protecting the citizens and ensuring the rule of Law across the entire city.

There is much that is illegal in Mega-City One. You must not drive too fast on the Megway. You must not drive too slow. Coffee is illegal (too addictive). Synthi-caf is illegal (also too addictive – only synthi-synhti-caf is permitted). So are sugar and comics from the 20th Century. There are perps that trade in body parts, and perps that engage in races through the streets (or skies!) of the city. There are religious fanatics who await the coming of Grud and worse fanatics who riot in the name of democracy. There are rogue psychics, demonic infestations, werewolves rising from the Undercity and entire blocks who wage war on other blocks.

This is, of course, on top of the regular murders, arson attacks, robberies and mutant invasions that fill a judge's day!

Armed with his Lawgiver sidearm and Lawmaster bike, a judge is expected to be able to deal with all of these.

SO, WHAT DO YOU DO?

In the *Judge Dredd RPG*, you will play a judge and form a patrol with the other players. Your mandate is to investigate crimes and bring perps to justice.

Your Lawgiver is a pistol capable of rapid fire and has six different types of ammunition (Standard Execution, Armour Piercing, High Explosive, Heat Seeker, Incendiary and Rubber Ricochet), all selected by voice control.

Meanwhile, your Lawmaster is a very large bike capable of travelling over 200mph – and it can do that automatically, with no help from you, due to the advanced bike computer! It is armed with a twin-linked street cannon and a heavy-duty Cyclops laser. It has communications links with your sector house, from which you can double check a citizen's identity, call up floor plans of most buildings in the city and consult the vast amount of recorded information the city generates.

You have a lot of very powerful tools to enable you to get the job done.

A typical patrol might start off with you listening to the regular crime briefings from the sector house, informing you of recent crimes in the area, and any perps to watch out for – you can do this while travelling the patrol route on your Lawmaster. On the way, you might see a citizen commit an offence; jaywalking, perhaps, or maybe a mugging. Perhaps the Sector House will vector you to a crime that is in progress, such as a robbery. It will be up to you to apprehend, arrest and sentence the perps.

You might also stumble into a far-reaching investigation for a major crime. In this case, you will likely be taken off your patrol so you can focus purely on this (though you must still arrest anyone you come across for the crimes they commit, even if they are unconnected with your current investigation). You will be required to use your brain, gather evidence and use appropriate back up support (such as forensic teams) to gather enough evidence to arrest the criminals instigating the larger crime.

This crime could be anything from a ring of corrupt judges bringing the Law into disrepute, to a desperate Hondo-City plot to annihilate Mega-City One with nuclear weapons! There is much that is weird and wonderful in the world of *Judge Dredd* and you must expect anything.

JUDGE, JURY, EXECUTIONER

So, *Judge Dredd* is not your ordinary, run of the mill science fiction setting. You will have a very definite job and a very definite purpose in the game – uphold the Law! As well as murderers and burglars, you could encounter mutants, aliens, vampires, sorcerers, zombies, pirates, Satan, talking apes, food riots, irradiated monsters, dinosaurs and many other things that all have their unique Mega-City One twist.

Visit the city, just once, and you will be hooked.

And remember, as soon as you put on the judge's helmet and badge, YOU are the LAW!



The Paranoia Troubleshooters Interactive Purchase Guide

By Gareth Hanrahan

The new edition of Paranoia is out soon and you may be wondering whether or not to buy it, especially in these grim economic times. Worry not! This Interactive Purchase Guide will help you make this and other critical life decisions! Don't stress over choices and might-have-beens, just put your unquestioning faith in our secret wisdom. (As a wise man said, get their wills and their wallets will follow.)

To use the Interactive Purchase Guide, start at paragraph 1 and follow the instructions. Optionally, roll 2d6 for your Skill, Stamina and Luck, just like you did in those Fighting Fantasy books when you were a kid. The Interactive Purchase Guide doesn't actually use those rules, but we're gambling on the nostalgia factor here. 80% of the roleplaying industry is trying to sell you the feeling of being 12 years old again (another 10% is selling you new editions that might actually work, and the last 10% is indie games about roleplaying Polish child soldiers working for Mormon vampires or something.)

1. The Myth of Self

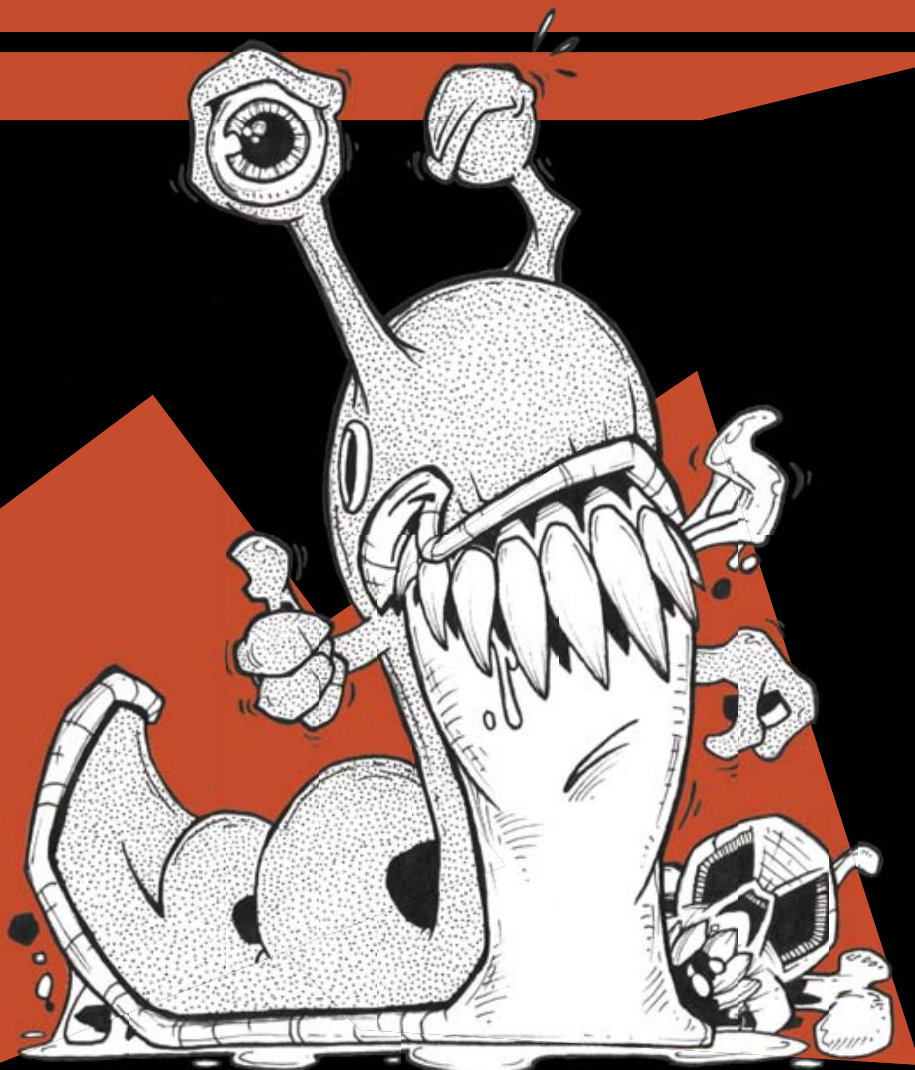
Would you describe yourself as:

- Someone who purchased the 2004 Edition of PARANOIA (which is not now, nor ever was or will be known by the soubriquet 'XP'): Go to 9.
- Someone who purchased a previous, non-2004 edition of PARANOIA: Go to 4.
- Someone who has never owned PARANOIA but is eager to try it: Go to 8.
- Someone who despises that stupid game about Communists and traitors: Go to 3
- Someone who is very confused by this whole exercise: Go to 5

2. The New Shiny

The new edition of PARANOIA is reorganised for ease of use during play. Problematic rules have been smoothed out, there are new mutations and new missions, and everything's shiny and wonderful (definitions of 'shiny' and 'wonderful' may vary). PARANOIA: TROUBLESHOOTERS is this year's must-have accessory.

If that's not enough, then what you want is the exclusive prestigious BLACK MISSIONS COLLECTORS EDITION, which includes a CD-



ROM containing:

- PDFs of lots and lots of PARANOIA books
- Forms and more forms
- Sounds of Alpha Complex
- Interviews with the original High Programmers
- And more!

Are you convinced?

- Yes! Go to 20.
- I feel like I want to buy something, but not this... Go to 18.

3. Your Attitude Does You No Credit

Ok, we'll admit that PARANOIA isn't to everyone's tastes. Not everyone enjoys the competitive backstabbing, the Blackadder-esque lying, the pathological aversion to actually accomplishing anything, the surreal 1984-meets-Charlie & The Chocolate Factory setting, the paperwork, or the

Beckett-like comic futility of the game. Others were turned off by the execrable Fifth Edition, or by the degenerate style of play where shooting everyone else in the team as quickly as possible while shouting 'die Commie' loudly. (This was particularly prevalent at cons. We used to shove Paranoia games into a little ghetto so they wouldn't annoy the Wolfies.)

If you don't like PARANOIA, then I challenge you to challenge your own preconceptions by buying the game and giving it a try. Grow as a person by exploring new horizons and new ways to play. We learn not by repeating what we already know but by embracing that which we do not. I'm not saying that buying PARANOIA will make you a better person, but... actually, screw it. I am saying that. Buying PARANOIA will make you a better person – cooler, more stylish, more with-it (whatever the it is; in all this wasteland of identity discourse and narrative collaboration we have yet to find it).

More seriously (by at least a micron), PARANOIA is one of the genuinely original roleplaying settings. It takes concepts like the party (roleplaying games are played by a group of players, as opposed to the single protagonist of most adventure fiction), character death (in other games, a major event that signals either the end of a game or a trip to the local temple; in PARANOIA, it's a five-minute time-out) or the GM/player relationship (neutral or antagonistic in most games, a Skinner box in PARANOIA). No other game system could get three hours of hilarious play out of a situation like 'someone's painted this corridor the wrong colour.'

Are you convinced?

- Yes! Go to 20.
- I need more... Go to 2.

4. Welcome Back, Friend

No doubt you have fond memories of PARANOIA games from years past. That time you shot your friend in the back. The experimental equipment from R&D. The invisible Commie. Those memories can live again with the new edition!

- I'm happy with my older edition: Go to 6
- But what does this new edition offer me?: Go to 2

5. Very Confused

Ok, stay calm. Staying calm is very important in these situations. Do you know what you're doing right now?

- I'm reading a spoof article in an online roleplaying magazine? Go to 15.
- Not really, no. Go to 13.

6. Happiness is a Lie

Ah, but which edition are you happy with?

- First Edition: Go to 10
- Second Edition: Go to 7
- Fifth Edition: Go to 12

7. I played 2nd edition

Then you'll be pleased to know that PARANOIA: TROUBLESHOOTERS aims at recapturing more of the spirit of 2nd edition. Treason Points, exiled to abstraction in the most recent version of PARANOIA, are back! You get to shout Treason Point again! Huzzah!

- Huzzah and bonus Hot Fun for all! I'm off to buy it! Go to 20
- I'm intrigued but not convinced. Go to 2.
- I've already got a PARANOIA game I like. Go to 18.

8. Welcome to PARANOIA

Ah, fresh players! Welcome, welcome! Some PARANOIA players like to haze the newbies by speaking in Alpha Complex can't ('What's this game about?/I'm sorry, that information is not available at your Security Clearance'). We don't do that here.

The basics of PARANOIA: You're a citizen in an underground city of the future, called Alpha Complex, ruled over by Your Friend, The Computer. Life in Alpha Complex is perfect; The Computer says so. Everyone is happy, because Happiness is Mandatory. The Computer says that too. The Computer is happy. (The Computer is insane.)

The happiness of Alpha Complex is threatened by Commie Mutant Traitors. As a Troubleshooter, your job is to hunt down and terminate Commie Mutant Traitors. However, you are a Mutant, and a Traitor. If your team-mates discover this, they will terminate you. Your only hope is to avoid suspicion and/or terminate them first.

This will be Fun. The Computer says so.

- Sounds like fun. Go to 20
- I'm intrigued but not convinced. Go to 2.
- What else have you got? Go to 18.

9. Greetings, Valued Customer

As a loyal citizen of Alpha Complex, you know that Capitalism is Good and Communism is Bad. Capitalism is built on Consumer Goods! Stimulate that economy by buying the new edition of PARANOIA! If you don't buy it, you're a filthy Commie!

- I'm no Commie! I'll buy it! Don't shoot me! Go to 20
- I need a little more convincing... Go to 2
- It doesn't sound like there are many changes. Go to 14.

10. The Old School Renaissance

Wow. 1st Edition? Really. That's seriously old school. Respect. Well, while you're playing PARANOIA in the retirement home, you'll probably want an edition with easier-to-read print and fewer fiddly numbers.

- Huzzah and bonus Hot Fun for all! I'm off to buy it! Go to 20
- I'm intrigued but not convinced. Go to 2.
- I've already got a PARANOIA game I like. Go to 18.

11. THIS ENTRY IS NOT AVAILABLE AT YOUR SECURITY CLEARANCE.

12. The Unproduct

Fifth Edition has a bad reputation among some Famous Game Designers, who argue that its emphasis on parody, bad puns and rambling metaplot all undermined the essential PARANOIA ethos, leading to the decline of the game until it was heroically and gloriously resurrected in 2004, co-incidentally by those same Famous Game Designers.

This particular Famous Game Designer doesn't give a damn, he just wants your cash. Buy the new edition of PARANOIA.

- Huzzah and bonus Hot Fun for all! I'm off to buy it! Go to 20
- I'm intrigued but not convinced. Go to 2.
- I've already got a PARANOIA game I like. Go to 18.

13. Wibble, I say. Wibble.

Excellent! This is an ideal mindset for playing PARANOIA, not to mention joining a cult or falling for a Nigerian email scam. Of these three options, PARANOIA is by far the cheapest. Go buy it (go to 20) or the collector's edition (go to 2). You should also look at the other books (go to 18). Trust me. I'm your only friend.

14. Free Traitor Beowulf!

Ah, I understand your confusion. You see, PARANOIA relies on a concept wholly alien to many Traveller fans, called 'humour', defined as

the tendency of particular cognitive experiences to provoke laughter and a generally positive emotional reaction. You determine your Humour by throwing 2d and applying DMs as follows:

- 2 per career term past 30
- +1 if you spent at least one term as a Scout
- +1 if Intelligence 8+
- +2 if Hiver or Vargr
- 2 if Aslan or Solomani
- +1 if Zhodani, but only when wearing a silly turban

The Referee may designate an encounter or event as 'funny', in which case all players should throw 2d and compare the result to their Humour. If the dice roll is less than or equal to Humour, the character is amused.

The above section is funny.

- If you are amused: Go to 8
- If you are not amused: Go to 3

15. I'm Reading S&P

Marvellous. Basic motor functions and rudimentary self-awareness – you're a fully functioning member of society and fully qualified to run for political office. Yes, you're reading Signs & Portents and you've wandered into a PARANOIA article by mistake. How're you finding it?

- It sounds great! Go to 8
- It sounds confusing. I feel scared and alone. Go to 13.
- This all sounds like a load of dingo's kidneys. Go to 3.
- I'm more interested in Traveller. Go to 14.
- I'm more interested in Conan. Go to 17
- Why did Mongoose cancel Starsh? Go to 16.

16. Questions are Treason

Oh dear. Wrong choice. The Internal Security goons drag you away to the termination booth. Your quest ends here.

17. Crom!

Look, I'll let you play Conan in PARANOIA if that'll make you happy.

Conan-R-BRB-1

Male Armed Forces Hygiene Officer
Tic: Cleaves skulls
Example of tic in use:
Team Leader: Hello, citizen.
Conan: By Crom, I'll cleave your skull!
Management 04
Chutzpah 10
Oratory 10
Bootlicking 01

Stealth 10
Sneaking 14
Security Systems 01

Violence 10
Unarmed Combat 14
Hand Weapons 14
Energy Weapons 01

Hardware 04
Software 04
Wetware 04
Outdoor Life 08

Secret Society: Er... Probably Romantics.
Mutation: Pantherish twist.

Secret Skills: Cleave Skulls 14, Hyperborean Cultures 12

Equipment: Sword, Loincloth, Sandals Of Jewelled Throne Treading, Troubled Brow (ILLEGAL, as Troubled Brows are a clear sign of Unhappiness)

- Crom! Go to 20!
- Crom! Go to 3!
- Crom! Go to 18!

18. But Wait! There's More!

In the coming yearcycle, Mongoose will introduce two new ways to play PARANOIA!

PARANOIA – INTERNAL SECURITY puts you in the jackboots of Internal Security Troopers! As Alpha Complex's elite law enforcement, you'll hunt down traitors, keep the proles in line and decide who gets dragged off to the termination booths! Optimised for longer, more intrigue-filled games and excessive amounts of ultraviolence!

PARANOIA – HIGH PROGRAMMER dares to trespass into the highest corridors of power in Alpha Complex. As one of the elite ULTRAVIOLET High Programmers, you control The Computer itself. Squabble with your fellow High Programmers over prestige, experiment with mad science and scheme to take over everything!

19. The Goblin Attacks You

If you have the Curious Talisman from the wandering caravan, you can present it to the goblin, who runs away. Otherwise, you must fight the goblin.

SKILL 7 STAMINA 6

If you win, you gain 4 gold pieces. Go to 15.

20. Buy!

An excellent decision! Visit your Friendly Local Games Store (yay!) or your Impersonal Giant Internet Discounter (boo!) or contact Mongoose Publishing directly.



PARANOIA™

Troubleshooters

Black Missions

Bad things happen if you don't buy it!

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AROUND THE WORLD

By Will Chapman

The Around the World feature is a researched article on different countries all over the world, covering geography, culture, history and naturally hobby gaming. We will look at what makes each country unique from types of food to favourite sports, just to give a fresh outlook on the day to day lives of different societies from all over the globe. The article will conclude with an account of the differences (if any) between the common view of the roleplaying and hobby gaming world compared to each national representation.

The first Country of interest is Japan

& natural locations is to go for a visit, but if you can't, detailed information is everywhere.

Hobby Gaming

schools therefore most locals will have some understanding .

The population of Japan stands at over 126 million people with most living in densely populated urban areas. A lot of people associate Japan with huge crowds and its not hard to see why.

TRPG's in Japan (known as Tabletalk RPG's) are a niche market similar to the rest of the world, the highest sales there naturally belong to Dungeons and Dragons but there are a few home grown items that have caused a major stir. The main item in question is Tenra Bansho, it plays like a Sim world focusing as much on your acting skills as your ability to use your imagination; the more

About Japan

Japan - Nippon - 日本

Naturally the best way to start is with a little bit about Japan. It is situated to the Northeast of Asia and sits between the Pacific Ocean and Sea of Japan. The country is made up of 4 major islands surrounded by thousands of smaller ones.

Honshu is the largest of the Japanese islands and is home to its biggest cities, including the capital, Tokyo.

The spoken language of Japan is Japanese, although most English speaking people will be happy to know that English is taught as a compulsory subject in all Japanese

Japanese Culture

It is difficult to give justice to a whole culture in just a few words so instead I have listed a few iconic things associated with this unique country.

Japanese culture is famous for many things of which include Mt. Fuji, Kanji, Robots, Calligraphy, Geisha, Skyscrapers, Technology, Chopsticks, Kimono's, Architecture, Sushi, Karaoke, Sumo, Samurai, Manga, Shogi, Cosplay, Hotsprings, Ukiyo-e, Shinto, Cherry Blossoms, Yakuza & Bonsai.

It is easy to list a variety of Japanese words but the best way to sample these incredible people, events, items



Tenra Bansho Zero - F.E.A.R (Far East Amusement Research)

Shinjuku Nightlife



entertaining and creative you portray your character the more bonuses you earn. Although, with any good story, using your bonuses carelessly can lead you to discover darker elements of the game.

The second edition of Tenra Bansho was titled the Zero Edition and was picked up by a western company named Ziggurat Builder Studio to

be translated and produced for an English speaking audience, which in turn will be the first fantasy RPG to be translated from Japanese to English.

The artwork within the book looks highly Japanese in style with an incredible array of Manga. Hopefully this will remain a firm feature within the translated version.

Anyone with any interest in the Japanese feudal era, science fiction,

manga and roleplaying should really consider looking up this book, we need to try to export more gems from Japan and bring them over to the English speaking world, where they can inject some freshness into our creative industry.

For more information on Tenra Bansho Zero's Translation visit www.tenra-rpg.com

For more information on Japan visit www.jnto.go.jp



Artism... Vol. 1

The Dragon

By Jason Banditt Adams

A drawing is a very organic thing. You should think of it like a body, it is always changing, evolving and made of several layers. When it has matured, you should hope that it is something to be proud of after investing so much time. So be sure to take your time.

In this case I will be drawing a dragon. Since it is a creature of the imagination, you cannot do it wrong.

1). First, begin with a basic shape of what is in your mind. Be free with your penciling, nothing is set in stone. Be generic at first. Think of it as a stuffed animal; draw the outline of the basic shapes and the stitch down the middle. This stitch down the middle is your centre line and will help with symmetry later on.

This is the 'skeleton' of your drawing. A simple place-keeper for the body to hang from.

2). Add the beginning of prominent features. Don't worry about throwing on incredibly de-

tailed areas. As you draw more, you may realise that the eye would have looked better if moved over a little. A waste of time if you detailed it heavily and will have to draw it over again.

Right now our dragon is looking like ALF, but that is okay because we are still in stuffed animal mode. Much like a puppet. Notice also that I changed the position of the neck. You can change things as many times as you want. Change things until the final piece looks just right. It is better to spend 4 hours on a great piece, than 1 hour on a so-so lackluster piece.



1 First, begin with a basic shape.

2 Add the beginning of prominent features.

3 Now we are adding more definite detail.

I have extended the centre line from the tip of the snout in an arc down to show where that same centre line will end up on the chin. Then I added the beginning of the mouths' outline to connect the chin to the rest of the head.

3). Now we are adding more definite detail. Still nothing overly complicated, just marking the territory of detail to come. Once again I have altered the neck. Let the drawing evolve!

The curved lines from the cranium are taking the shape of horns and the eyebrows are getting a more definite shape. The nasals are being fleshed out, as is the snout. The jaw line is altered for a more interesting look. The eye is taking form; I have added the lower eyelid to define where the eyeball relates to the head.

Right now we are in the meat of the drawing. Building off of the skeleton to give true shape and form.

4). This is a scaly creature, so be free with your hand. Don't hold the pencil to stringently; let it make bumps and sharp lines to give the definition of the face a more rugged look.

I have begun to plot the final detail. Adding spines along the ridges changes our plush animal into something a bit more fearsome. I have plotted the lines where the teeth will take their positions. The upper eyelid has been added and a simple slit for the iris included. The ventilation of the snout has been marked out and prepped for detail.

All that remains is to add the skin, the last layer of detail that will finalise our drawing. Now all the tedious work has been done. All that remains is letting our imagination go crazy and filling in our Dragon with the little details that make him unique!

5). All a drawing is made of is shape and shade. You've done your shape in steps 1-4, now its time for the shading!

The finished piece. Adding scales need not be a tedious endeavor. Allude to the scales: draw a few dots and shaded dots. Do you notice every single scale on a lizard? No, you see the ones picked out by light or shadow. That's all you have to do here. Pick out some light and shadow.

Make some ragged arcs inside the lines marking out the teeth. Connect the tip of that arc along the backside of the tooth and you are good to go. Like making the waves atop the ocean just stroke after stroke.

The horns are given some detail akin to those of rams. Not the curve so much as the detail. A thick median ridge runs along the side with lateral ridges along the bottom. These harsh lines fit better with the jagged details of this dragon than a smooth bulls' horn.

* You can see more of Jason Banditt Adams work at: www.Rogue-Artist.com



4

This is a bump, scaly creature, so be free with your hand.



5

All a drawing is made of is shape and shade.

Agent Contractors

By Matthew Keevil Contributions by James Norbury

Agent

a-gent [ey-juh nt]

An individual who is;

a) In the employ of a company holding a 'Type 2 Executives License'.

b) In possession of a law enforcement license.

c) Acting on behalf of and representing his or her employer.

It is common, though not mandatory, for such individuals to be upgraded with cybernetic modifications. Most notably, I.C.E technology and neural stabilisers.

- From the 'Dictionary of Contemporary Legal Terminology, 2499 edition'

Agent Contractors

There are some jobs which really can only be carried out by a professional, for this reason the Corporations started and maintain their Agent programs. However, not everyone has easy access to a pool of elite Agents at their beck and call and so often have to settle for regular mercenaries, who generally go down like bowling pins should real Agents turn up. To fill this void in the market the Agent Contractors stepped in. Agent Contractors are small-enterprise companies that sink the majority of their starting capital into either augmenting some of their employees with Agent enhancements or else hiring out-of-work Agents and providing them with the equipment they need to do their job. For the right price, anyone can hire one of these unaffiliated Agents to do just about any job, from bodyguard-duty to detective work. Many of the businesses that work under the auspices of the Coalition for Independent Commerce (CIC) are common patrons of Agent contractors as few are wealthy enough to maintain their own Agent-level operatives.

Since their inception, several Agent Contractors have become relatively reputable businesses, at least to the public eye. The UIG by comparison hate Contractor Agents possibly even more than they hate Corporate Agents, who at least are easier to track than the civilian freelancers who move around and switch employers as they please. In general though, Contractors run the gamut from highly professional enterprises with multiple offices and even something of a corporate image to shady fronts for illegal assassination-brokers and small operations consisting of a single man working out of a one-room office who makes a living off their contacts with retired Agents. Some of the bigger names in the game are *Wilton Securities*, run by Harold Wilton, a former employee of Eurasian Incorporated, *Ronin Enterprises*, a firm recently linked to organised crime, and the ever-popular

Dial-A-Badass, famous for providing on-call armed backup to any account-holder.

New Licences

Freelance Agent (6)

ICE and Neural Stabilisers, Rank 1, no base stat below 5, Law enforcement License

You are licensed to legally undertake armed and investigatory work on behalf of a private party or Agent Contractor and without a sponsor Corporation.

Part-Time Freelance Agent (4)

Corporate Agent, Rank 3

When off duty you are licensed to undertake freelance work on behalf of Agent Contractors or private parties, including accepting moneys in return for legal armed and investigative work. You must consider all contracts null and void should they at any time directly impinge upon the interests or affairs of your Corporation.

Type 2 Executives Licenses (10)

Corp. Knowledge 5, Rank 4

You are permitted to employ one or more individuals in your corporation who are tasked with safeguarding the company's assets by utilising UIG issued Licenses and offensive hardware. Such individuals are henceforth referred to as Agents. Agents must possess a 'Law Enforcement License' and be of Rank 1 higher. It is understood that these Agents may be recruited by the UIG for its own work and the employer will be compensated financially. Such Agents are also obliged to act in the capacity of law enforcers should the situation warrant.

Playing Contractor Agents

Contractor Agents walk a fine line between Civilian and Military, packing enough cybernetic hardware into their bodies to make them a threat even to Corporate Agents but without having to sacrifice their principles if they don't want to. Contractor Agents are true freelance employees, not

"I hear

you do freelance

work." Said the grey-suited woman who'd walked up to Steele as he sat half-dozing in the smoky underground bar.

"Yeah? Where'd you hear that from?"

Steele replied, lifting his glass of s'whisky to his lips.

He felt the laserbeam stares of a few of the bar's clientele focus on him.

Maybe they were hoping for a bit of entertainment.

"Five thousand credits, a two-hour job, might get messy but that's really all up to how good you are, you in?" The woman said, ignoring his admittedly sarcastic reply.

"Slip?" Steele said.

"Of course, I'm not new to this." The woman said with a sardonic smirk.

"Okay then, I'm in, what's the job?"

"One thing before I go on, first you have to pass a test." The grey-suited woman said, the next instant she drew a hefty Y&S automatic from inside her jacket and unloaded three bullets into Steele's chest. He could have avoided them if he'd wanted to, with his boosted reflexes he could have been at her side and broken her wrist before she was even finished aiming, he didn't bother. Instead he looked down at the trio of smoking holes in his chest.

"Satisfied?" He said, taking another sip of s'whisky.

"Very," The woman replied, heedless of the screams and commotion of the bar's other occupants or the barman who had levelled his shotgun warily at the back of her head. "A lot of freelancers don't get ICE'ed to save money, I had to be sure." Steele nodded understandingly and finished off the contents of his glass.

"Just so you know, you owe me a new shirt."

indentured servants, and unlike Corporates they are free to turn down any missions they don't like the sound of. While their employer might not have quite the same degree of

raw resources as a full Corporation, and consequently are likely to be rather low on the mission-perks (not to mention the lack of a company car, personal office and free spire accommodation), the type of people who become Contractor Agents are usually the sort who value their freedom enough to make do without these trinkets. Playing a team of Contractor Agents might be a good introduction to the Corporation world for a group of players familiar with roleplaying games where they take on the role of adventuring heroes rather than ruthless, highly paid, corporate-sanctioned executives.

Designing A Contractor Company

No two Contractor companies are identical in either style or resources, before playing a Contractor Agent you must first design their company, which are usually somewhat more eclectic in their abilities than a full Corporation. Regardless of the Contractor, the usual Rank-based perks detailed on page 81 of the *Corporation* Core rules do not apply to freelance Agents. They do not receive a corporate vehicle allowance, an office space, a spire apartment or a personal workshop/laboratory unless they later become employed by an organisation that offers such perks, such as a full Corporation. At that point though, they are no longer Contractor Agents.

To create a Contractor company, simply work through the following steps;

1. Contractor Name

Either make one up or roll on each of the following table columns to generate a suitable name;

2. Contractor Bonuses

Just like Corporate Agents, Contractor Agents receive special bonuses provided by their employer. For Contractor Agents these tend to not be in the form of permanent enhancements or free Trainings and Licenses as Contractor employment is typically on a flexible and temporary basis. To determine what they are, roll a D3 (D6 divided by two and rounded up) to determine how many bonuses they get and then roll a D10 an equal number of times to find out what they are:

1. Pharmaceutical Bulk-Buy – The Contractor buys large quantities of field medicines at discounted prices to equip its Agents with. At the beginning of each mission on their behalf, a Contractor Agent working for this company receives D4 free IV Medpacks and D4 Toxin Purges.

2. Free Equipment Servicing – After each mission on the Contractors behalf, an Agent may turn in a number of pieces of equipment equal to their Rank for servicing. After 1 week these items will be returned with their condition level raised by 1.

3. Telepathic Mentoring – The Contractor hires an experienced Telepath, likely a tutor on-loan from a Comoros university, to mentor its Agents in telepathics. The experience point cost of raising Telepathic skills is lowered by 1 for Agents working for the Contractor.

4. Legal Defence – The Contractor's expert team of defence lawyers will help shield any Agents working for them from the ire of the UIG courts. Any Rank Point deductions

incurred while on missions for the Contractor are reduced by 2D4 points.

5. Federation Guns – The Contractor has somehow come by a cache of Western Federation armaments intended for its own Agents. Perhaps they came by these illegally or maybe the company is run by an Ex-Federation Agent who kept his old guns. In either case, Agents working for this Contractor may take guns from the company by making a down-payment of 50% of the weapon's value which they get back when they return the weapon. All such weapons are considered Federation-standard with Diced-Up damage and ID chip checkers.

6. Psi-Hunters – The Contractor specialises in taking down telepaths, be they rogue criminals or simply on someone's bad side. All Agents working for this Contractor receive a free Injector Pistol or Injector Snipers Rifle, 6 darts loaded with Psitropine and a Telepathic Disrupter. On capture missions they may also be equipped with Psi-Cuffs.

7. Licensing Board Insiders – The Contractor has contacts within the UIG licensing board that allows them to gain their Agents special legal powers when on missions for them. At the beginning of each mission the Agent may take their Rank+D10 points in temporary licenses of their choice.

8. On-Site Weapon Masters – The Contractor hires expert Western Federation and Shi Yukiro weapon masters to train its Agents in combat. The XP cost of raising all weapon skills is lowered by 1 for Agents working for the Contractor.

9. Aegis Contract – The Contractor holds a favourable purchasing agreement with Aegis, the world's largest manufacturer of Hard Ion Shields. Agents working for the Contractor may buy Hard Ion shields at a 20% discount.

10. Rental Tank Pool – The Contractor bought a bay of old (condition 5) corporate surplus war machines, likely left over from the Corporate Wars, usable by it's Agent employees. At rank 2–3 you may take out a Light Tank, at 4–5 a Medium Tank or MAG Tank* and at 6–7 a Heavy Tank. Taking out a vehicle from the rental bay requires a down-payment of 10% of the vehicle's base price.

**To be released in a future supplement due out this year.*

D10

1 Agent	Recruitment	Line
2 Detective	Acquisition	Contractor
3 Telepath	Shadow	Team
4 Mercenary	Protection	Guild
5 Private	Investigation	Group
6 Security	Advocacy Union	
7 Yojimbo	Diplomacy	Office
8 Muscle	Hire	n'Co
9 Operative	Assassination	Regiment
10 Spy	Retribution	Service

Sure, the work is hard, but at least the pay is shit.
- attr. Freelance Agent Yuri Yumashev

Agent Contractors

There are some jobs which really can only be carried out by a professional, for this reason the Corporations started and maintain their Agent programs. However, not everyone has easy access to a pool of elite Agents at their beck and call and so often have to settle for regular mercenaries, who generally go down like bowling pins should real Agents turn up. To fill this void in the market the Agent Contractors stepped in. Agent Contractors are small-enterprise companies that sink the majority of their starting capital into either augmenting some of their employees with Agent enhancements or else hiring out-of-work Agents and providing them with the equipment they need to do their job. For the right price, anyone can hire one of these unaffiliated Agents to do just about any job, from bodyguard-duty to detective work. Many of the businesses that work under the auspices of the Coalition for Independent Commerce (CIC) are common patrons of Agent contractors as few are wealthy enough to maintain their own Agent-level operatives.

Since their inception, several Agent Contractors have become relatively reputable businesses, at least to the public

Ah, and one more thing. You don't want to piss off those PACs (Private Agent Contractors) without good cause, they've got no big boss holding their reigns threatening to demote them or cut off their pocket money. All they have is their rep and killing cocky little bastards like you is gonna do that no harm at all.

-Sergeant Carlos Ortega,
CRO Induction Seminar

eye. The UIG by comparison hate Contractor Agents possibly even more than they hate Corporate Agents, who at least are easier to track than the civilian freelancers who move around and switch employers as they please. In general though, Contractors run the gamut from highly professional enterprises with multiple offices and even something of a corporate image to shady fronts for illegal assassination-brokers and small operations consisting of a single man working out of a one-room office who makes a living off their contacts with retired Agents. Some of the bigger names in the game are *Wilton Securities*, run by Harold Wilton, a former employee of Eurasian Incorporated, *Ronin Enterprises*, a firm recently linked to organised crime, and the ever-popular *Dial-A-Badass*, famous for providing on-call armed backup to any account-holder.

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NOCTUM VIVISECTION



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LONE WOLF

THE CITY OF TORAN: UNCOVERED

BY DARREN PEARCE

"Toran, why there's no other city like it, aye, there's Holmgard and that being the capital and all...but this is the seat of power for the Brotherhood of the Crystal Star, that has to count for something, why I hear the walls themselves are magical and can turn back even the Darklords themselves." ~ Jasper Pennypincher, proprietor of Jasper's Curios.

BRIEF HISTORY

When the Sommlending arrived from the Northern Void, in MS 3434 led by the mighty King Kian they quickly established themselves as powerful and capable warriors, battling the Darklords as if they were born to it. They drove the Darklords back behind the Durncrag Mountains and quickly settled in the eastern lands. Not long after this time of expansion and conquest King Kian ordered the construction of four massive cities, Holmgard which would become the capital of Sommerlund, Tyso, Anskaven and the northern Port City of Toran, the eventual seat of the Brotherhood of the Crystal Star.

King Kian gave over command of the four cities to the Sommlending who served in the war, giving them the title of baron and allowing them freedom to rule as they so wished. Toran was built as a strong and powerful city, with the streets designed to channel the magical energies

of Magnamund into the city itself. The walls, and some even say the stones, of Toran have gained a kind of free-willed sentience. This may be fanciful words spoken by proud citizens of Toran or maybe the truth, over time it has become increasingly harder to tell. What is known is that time and time again, since the city was built, Toran has held strong against the invaders and given its people a feeling of safety and peace whilst they are protected within the massive stone walls.

Ruanor was the last Baron of Toran and after the defeat of the Darklord Vashna in MS 3799 he left to search for the Lorestones of Nyxator. In MS 3810 he was successful and he erected the Kai Monastery and took the name Sun Eagle. Whilst he wrote down his knowledge in the Book of the Magnakai, the city of Toran changed, flourished and became an important beacon in Sommerlund.

The Brotherhood of the Crystal Star had established their base of power there and a collection of merchant guilds ruled Toran. The head of the brotherhood during the time of the Kai Monastery before the sacking in MS 5050 was a sage known as Geryon, with his help Toran flourished and became a strong metropolis for trade and the centre of magical training in Sommerlund, and some proudly say all of Magnamund. During the aftermath of the Kai slaughter in MS 5050, Toran became a battleground and the mighty walls were breached by the Darklords as they attacked with kraan, zlanbeast and naval strikes.

The city was eventually rebuilt and repaired and the magical wards and spells re-laid by the Brotherhood. Yet the people of Toran had become increasingly wary of outsiders and their sense of 'protection' has never fully recovered.

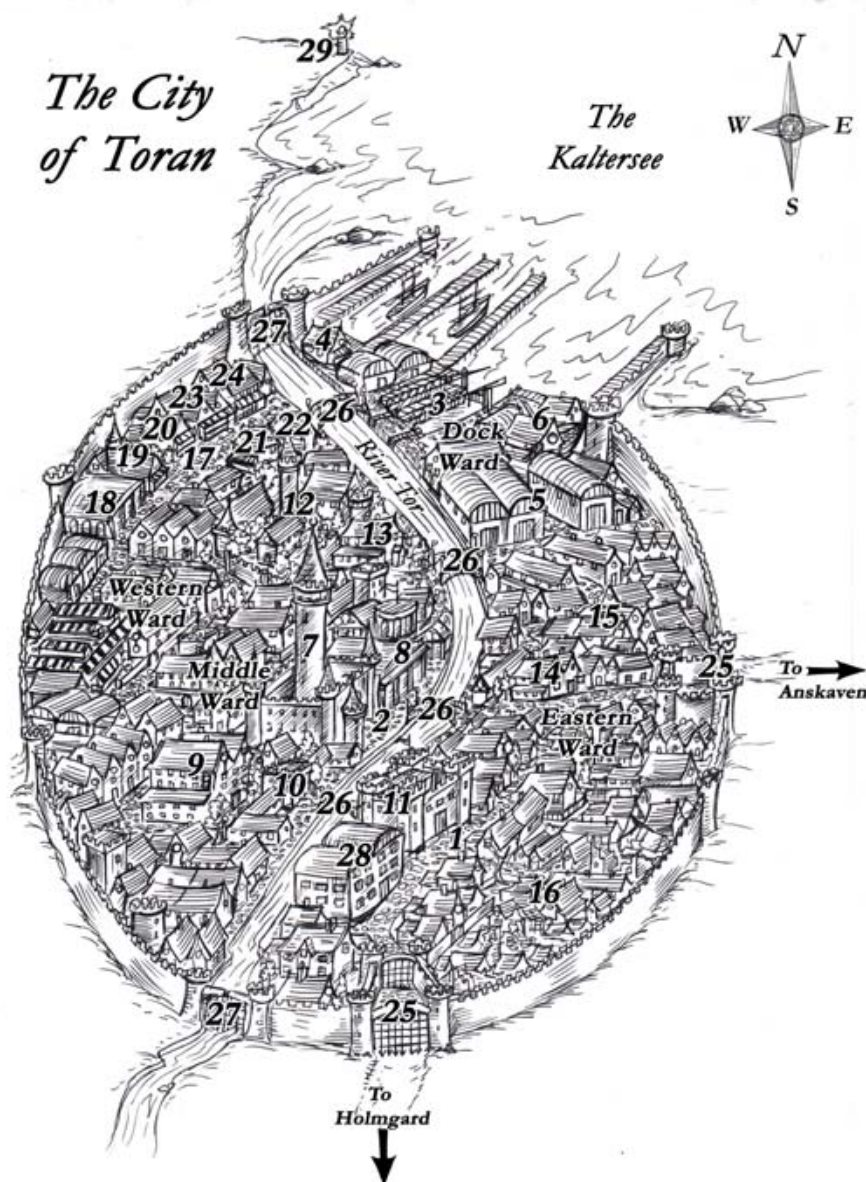
In its heyday Toran is a beautiful city, a marvel of Sommlending architecture and design. It is dominated by the incredible

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

vertigo-inducing tower that serves as the seat of power for the Brotherhood of the Crystal Star. The high circular stone walls rise up nearly 100 feet and provide adequate defence against all but the most determined of attackers or monsters. The city itself is built on the northern shore of Sommerlund and is reached by travelling through the Toran Valley. The River Tor flows through the city using specially designed water-gates, one in the southern wall and one built in the northern wall, the river cuts across Toran and several bridges are built across it to accommodate road and foot travel.

There are two large gates in Toran, one that serves the road to Holmgard in the south and another that does likewise for the road to Anskaven in the east, they are both heavily guarded and patrolled at all times by the Toran City Watch and

The City of Toran



Key

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Conduit Walk | 10. Monastery | 19. The Tangent |
| 2. Administration Circle | 11. The Watch House | 20. Shora's |
| 3. Dry Docks | 12. Residential Area | 21. Luca's Blades |
| 4. Harbour Master's Office | 13. The Golden Sun | 22. Erik Deedles |
| 5. Company Wharf | 14. The Boar and Pony | 23. Storm's Hammer |
| 6. The Silver Gull | 15. Middle-Class Residences | 24. Sundries and Stuff |
| 7. The Brotherhood of the Crystal Star | 16. Slums | 25. Main Gates |
| 8. Government Buildings | 17. The Street of Silver | 26. River Bridges |
| 9. Hospital Area | 18. Bath House | 27. River Gates |
| | | 28. Jail |
| | | 29. Lighthouse |

a couple of Brotherhood mages. The interior of the city is split into various wards and there are numerous locations of interest for the would-be traveller and visitor to Toran. The northern part of the city is given over to the docks and the company buildings for the various trading companies, including that of the Northlands Trading Company.

The middle of the city is made up of the council chambers, the administration areas, the watch houses and the

residential homes for the more affluent of Toran's residents. It also contains the actual merchant guild headquarters which is a large building with several stories that serves the interest of every guild and company in the city. Towards the western side of the city are the shops and services, with a covered market known as the Merchant's Gathering, this sits beneath a large stone structure and two wooden swing-doors provide entry. The eastern side of the city has the majority of the middle-class population

as well as a small area where the poor can eke out a living.

The architecture of the buildings holds true to the Sommlending style, looking more like a cross between a fortress and a keep, from the outside, than a true city. What it lacks in aesthetic design it makes up for in tenacity and durability. A local grey stone and black slate is preferred for most of the building work, with the white stone for the Brotherhood tower quarried elsewhere and shipped in via sea. At night the city seems to come alive with glowing lights and many lanterns bob up and down near the north, as the port is lit by the various ships that are docked. The Brotherhood Tower seems to be lit from within as many of the windows glow brightly and spill out their light into the night air.

During the day lazy grey smoke drifts up into the sky and on a hot summer's day, a definite heat haze hangs over Toran. A small crystal-lamp lighthouse rests on a small peninsula to the north of the city, providing guidance and safety for shipping even in the worst weather conditions and the thickest of fogs.

On the whole Toran looks similar post MS 5050 with some of the areas still being rebuilt and at least one of the main gates is undergoing serious repairs. The Brotherhood Tower with its golden pointed star suffered some minor cosmetic damage and there are levitating scaffolds and walkways that surround it, providing stonemasons and magicians access to the structure. The lighthouse suffered the worst of the bombardment and remained inoperable for a number of months until a suitable lens-crystal could be manufactured and shipped to Toran from Dessi.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Travelling through the rough cobbled streets of Conduit Walk to the elegantly paved Administration Circle, Toran has something of interest above and below the city to fascinate and intrigue even the

most jaded of travellers. This is a short guide to some of the more interesting places in Toran and is by no means an exhaustive de-facto list.

The Dock Ward

Populated by garishly dressed swarthy sailors and sea-going folk from all over Magnamund, Toran's Dock Ward is a cornucopia of sights, sounds and smells that all takes place on the pier-front. It is dominated by the huge harbour that serves to load, unload cargo and offers a complex ship repair service using dry-docks and specially manufactured cranes operating with a lever and pulley system. There are several locations of importance in this mostly wooden area.

The Harbour Master's Office

Home to Gunvald Hadronsen, the Harbour Master of Toran, a meaty fellow with a massive girth, ill-fitting pants and a spit-flecked manner of addressing folk. The building has seen better days and in the aftermath of the MS 5050 attack has a massive cannon-hole in the top, covered by a piece of irregular wood taken from the hull of a wrecked ship.

Company Wharf

This is a collection of company buildings, including merchant house warehouses and store-fronts for such notable merchants as the Northlands Trading Company. It is heavily patrolled at all times by members of the Dock Front Militia who serve to keep the peace against thieves, rowdy sailors and backstabbing from the merchants themselves.

The Silver Gull

This well cared for tavern and inn sits in a prominent position on the dock. Built partly from a damaged ship and a prime drinking spot for many travellers, it has grown over the years into a bustling place packed with people at all times of the day and night. The proprietor Lyssa Aera is a striking looking Sommlending woman, who takes no nonsense and runs her establishment with an even hand. A group of wreckers moved their operation to the back room but were quickly rooted out.

Middle Ward

The hubbub of the tightly packed Dock Ward is a far cry from the Middle Ward; the area is well lit and patrolled by guards. The streets are kept clean and even at night there is very little street crime here. The ward is dominated by the Brotherhood Tower and the flat stones of the various streets seem to pulse with energy underfoot. There are also numerous buildings that provide various services to the residents of Toran based here.

The Brotherhood of the Crystal Star

It is here that the Brotherhood Tower stands; a beautiful, fortress like building with white stone walls and many windows peering out from the circular tower. The tower is set inside a keep-like walled enclosure and a pair of magical gates that sense the intention of the visitor, open and close in a disconcerting manner to admit or deny entry to the secrets within. The courtyard of the tower is populated by various mages and students walking and talking beneath the shadow of the tower itself.

Government Buildings

These tall and imposing structures form the various offices and administration areas of the city. There are offices for the merchant guilds and the largest building in this collection is devoted to the Northlands Trading Company. The buildings are made from a flat grey stone and constructed with arches and columns, the columns being made from white and grey marble. Throngs of people pass through the various doors seeking guidance from the officers within, including those of the various embassies for the other lands of Magnamund.

Hospital Area

The Healer's Guild building stands dominant here, a large many floored structure with wide windows and a serene atmosphere. Next to it is a small monastery where robed monks often come to pray alongside the population. The monks also serve to provide healing services and medical knowledge to

supplement that of the many physicians and nurses within the Healer's Guild.

The Watch House

This imposing structure has several stories and is placed alongside the jail. It serves as a fortress in times of war and houses the Toran City Watch as well as barracks for the militia and soldiers from Sommerlund. There are several cells inside the jail that can hold monsters as well as those designed to strip the Helghast of their shape-changing ability and confine them within. The spells are broken when the city is attacked in MS 5050. Watch Master Agravane serves to provide justice and law in the city; he is a burly man with a thick bushy beard and a brusque manner.

Residential Area

The most affluent of Toran's population live here, in their sumptuous houses with gardens and walled enclosures. The rooftops are made from a red slate common in the south and specially shipped to Toran. The wide open streets give way to tight alleys and several blind spots that could be perfect for mischief, if the thieves and cutthroats did not fear Agravane's justice so much.

The Golden Sun

This is an affluent tavern and inn that is the premier place for the nobility and the wealthy. Well dressed guards make sure no undesirables enter and disturb the residents and beggars are kept a fair distance away. The large building takes up quite a portion of the Middle Ward and is run by Farah, a middle-aged domineering dowager with a sharp tongue, a quick head for numbers and an astute manner. She is particular about who she allows within the walls of her establishment.

Eastern Ward

Throngs of people pass to and from the east down the many streets of Toran; most of the middle-class citizenry live here in ample luxury, with the furthest eastern portion of the ward given over to the run-down and slightly ramshackle houses of the poor. There are several appointed places for beggars to operate and those

caught outside are often brought before Agravane in the Middle Ward. The streets are fairly clean and whilst the guards do not patrol as much here, they are still a presence that is felt and heard.

The Boar and Pony Inn

One of the most famous inns in all of Toran, the Boar and Pony is run by Colman and his staff. It serves luxury ale and several imported wines, it has a friendly and no-nonsense atmosphere and there is a stone circle out in the back garden for patrons to settle their differences bare handed. Two dwarven bouncers ensure the no-weapons rule is enforced and woe betide those who break it, since Erdel Gunnerson and his brother, Kordel are both excellent pugilists. The inn is a stoic looking building that has seen better days, it shows signs of age and some of the roof tiles could do with replacing. It is still one of the finer establishments in the city, even when compared to the Golden Sun; this is mostly down to Colman and his staff's excellent manners.

Middle-Class Residences

The rough made stone and wood houses make up the majority of this area, there are many wooden gates and few walled off enclosures. The quality of the buildings deteriorates as the area moves further east towards the poor and the slums. The people here want for nothing and most of the middle-class citizens look down on the poor. They have forgotten that there but for the grace of the God Kai and the Goddess Ishir go they. It is only a thread of fate that separates anyone in the city from being poor. In MS 5050 some of these middle-class citizens pay for their snobbery and find out what life is like further down the road.

Slums

This is the worst area of the city, the streets are untidy and the poor hang around like the dregs they are. Many homeless cling to a vague life here far from the eyes of the nobles and their lavish parties, they are lucky if they can eat a cooked rat for supper at night. There are often impromptu fires set in many of the ruined buildings and many a poor homeless soul has perished when the weather drops colder. The Slums are

even bigger in MS 5050 and expand to swell towards the middle-class.

Western Ward

Night and day you can find most of Toran's populace here amongst the shops, market stalls and spending their gains in the Street of Silver. The area is patrolled by guards, well lit at all times and there are many sights and sounds, colourful market stalls dot the streets along with the smells that come from incense burners, exotic goods from Dessi and beyond as well as food stalls that offer a variety of cooked goods.

Bath House

Just at the edges of the Street of Silver is a large columned building that houses over 20 separate baths, communal bathing is encouraged and the Sommlending people have no inhibitions when it comes to their physical bodies. The bath house is clean and well kept and is run by a group of monks who believe that the water has been blessed by Ishir.

Street of Silver

This Street has many small and large shops along it; most notable is the Merchant's Gathering, a large covered area made of stone, wood and metal. Inside this building there are many interesting places to spend coin.

The Tangent

The Tangent is the place to come to purchase anything magical or related to magic. It is run by Mimbir, a former Dessi Mage who has set up his shop here in Toran and whilst the prices are inflated, the goods and the service is considered to be worth it, even by Brotherhood standards.

Shora's

This is the place where medicinal herbs, healing remedies and anything to do with exotic plants and concoctions can be brought. Shora Flynn is a female herbalist who specialises in unguents and powders.

Luca's Blades

Luca Geri specialises in swords and armour, his focus is the blade and he trained in Sommerlund as a Knight of

Sommerlund before he retired at the age of 50. Now he serves to ensure that all weapon needs are taken care of in his large establishment. He offers instruction in the care and cleaning of swords as well as tall tales of high adventure.

Erik Deedles

Erik is a clandestine man, cheery on the surface although he cultivates a nervous disposition. This often gives him the appearance that he is hiding something. He is a fence for stolen goods for whilst there are no official thief's guilds in Toran, he can make goods vanish for the right fee. He is a scarred and slightly porcine man.

Storm's Hammer

Storm Ragnar is a dwarf from Bor. He specialises in his people's firearms and his shop stocks a variety of custom made weapons. However, he will not sell to anyone outside of Bor and his shop has a sign that reads: There are to be no customers other than those of dwarven stature. He has so far managed to stay in business but pickings are slim.

Sundries and Stuff

The twins, Peter and Jacob Harlin run this little store, it is a place where unusual items can be found. It does not stock magical or mystical items but it does stock some unusual curios that the twins have managed to find in the past. These blond youths are effervescent and extremely chatty.

Other places of interest

There are other locations of interest in Toran, including those that are beyond the view of the naked eye. Some of them are simply just additions to the other areas like the main gates and they provide a simple but effective means of protecting the city.

Main Gates

These massive stone and iron gates are set with a double walled interior, a huge iron portcullis and two large circular watch towers that flank either side of the gate. It is possible to drop the portcullis on both

sides; trapping would-be invaders inside the space between where archers can fire down through murder-holes or direct boiling oil or spells through.

River Bridges

These magnificent stone and wood constructions are found throughout Toran, where the River Tor winds through the city and feeds into the northern sea past the docks. They are split in two and can be broken to stem the on foot advance of invaders should any enter the city. They are wonderful designs with fluted filigree down the sides and exquisite carvings of large eagles at both ends.

Sewers

Beneath Toran the sewers are expansive, full of hidden chambers and secret passages. Some of these have long since collapsed and are full of dangerous creatures that have snuck in from under the walls. At least one pack of giant rats has moved into the northern most chambers recently. There are other tunnels that are designed to channel magical power, these lead to the central area of the sewer system and a circular chamber beneath the Brotherhood Tower that radiates a strange radiance and causes harm to all who dare to enter it.

POPULATION

Nearly 100,000 people make up the population of Toran; these are spread between the native Sommlending residents to the Dwarves of Bor and those from Dessi. Since it is a port city the exact numbers vary from season to season with the hot summer bringing in a large increase in numbers, the population swelling to around 150,000 people during the peak time.

CULTURE

The people of Toran observe many traditional feasts of their own land, such as the Feast of Fehmarn. This is the most pivotal tradition in the Sommerlund and is where the native Sommlending reaffirm

their allegiance to the king. It is an important time and the streets of Toran are packed with monks, revellers and travellers alike. The first day of spring is a bountiful one and this feast is celebrated widely over all of Toran. Colourful bunting with many golden suns adorning it spreads over the city and flutters in the breeze during Fehmarn. Kai Lords are often seen returning to Sommerlund through Toran's port during this time, so that they may gather at the Kai Monastery.

Even the poor are given small baskets of food during this time and for once in their lives, they feel a little equal to those who look down upon them. It is also a traditional time when young lovers reaffirm their bonds, both spiritual and physical and there are gatherings, drinking parties and tournaments throughout the whole of Toran itself. The people of Toran also observe feasts and celebrations key to the worship of Kai and Ishir, having many small shrines in their homes and very few open temples in the streets.

Every full moon the city observes Ishir's hour and for that time, their curtains and drapes are flung open to allow the light of the moon to flood in through the windows. It is said that during this time if a devout believer offers a prayer into a bowl of water under the light of Ishir's blessing, it will be granted before the next full moon.

SOCIETY

There are several societal strata in the City of Toran, the people observe a feudal relationship with their leaders, in the Brotherhood Tower and serve them loyally and faithfully, like all Sommlending people, from noble to commoner alike. The breakdown of this runs something like:

The Council of the Star

the Brotherhood of the Crystal Star formed a council of wizards and merchants; these are the de-facto rulers of the city. They make the laws and pass them down to the Administra. They wear flowing robes and have an ostentatious life style, they eat of the finest foods and

drink the best drinks, and they are the cream of social strata in Toran.

Administra

These are the officers of the law, both government and civil. These are the people who pass on the rulings from the Council of the Star to the population. They are characterised by their dark wine coloured robes and solemn manner. They are given access to the best food and drink that money can buy.

The Toran City Watch

These make sure that the streets are safe for people and they are armed with the best weapons, armour and equipment. They eat and drink frugally but their food is still of a quality that is much better than the lower classes.

The Nobility

These are the upper echelon of society; they hold lavish parties, run the merchant houses and look down on everyone below them with a sense of disdain and disgust. They can afford the finest cuts of meat, the most sumptuous of apartments and the richest of wines. They are often allowed to field their own personal guard to keep an eye on their property. They wear bright coloured and elaborate clothes, the women favour intricate gowns and sparkling gems.

The Middle Class

These are the people who make up the majority of the city, they drink the ale that the nobles will not touch, eat the food that the nobles dislike and keep the city working as they perform the menial jobs from street sweepers, scribes, shop proprietors and taverners. Yet they look down on the poor and homeless with much of the same disdain as the nobles do upon them. They wear functional clothing and whilst many of the women wear skirts and simple tops, they will often prefer trousers and male garments over the frills of the nobility. They live in well maintained residencies.

The Poor

They fight for everything, a scrap of dog meat, roasted rat, boiled fish eyes that are stolen from a passing cargo cart.

They live in the slums, the dirt, and die in the cold and rain. They are a stinking unwashed people; many of them victims of circumstance and most of them are honest good folk, who have just had a bad lot in life. They wear rags and are often unkempt, diseased and racked with ailments and pain.

GOVERNMENT & LAW

The city follows the rest of the law of Sommerlund, whilst they are ruled by the Brotherhood of the Crystal Star and the Merchant's Guild, they serve the king and their laws come from Crown Decree with some additions per Toran. Murder is punished by hanging or in some cases beheading, since Sommerlund has little time for inflicting pain on those who break the law. Torture is forbidden in the walls of Toran and the City Watch often uses magic to find out the truth. Thieves are given one chance to redeem themselves, if they are caught again they are either incarcerated or they lose a hand in a similar way to Dessi's punishment system. Impersonating a Brother of the Crystal Star carries a jail sentence followed by immediate exile upon the termination of that period.

ECONOMY

Toran, being a port city, is affluent; it gets goods from all over Magamund and has the Merchant Guilds to provide a steady source of income. To this end it imports luxury goods from Dessi and elsewhere, such as soap, silk, cotton, dyes. It exports timber, fishing materials as well as fish, with Toran Bass being a highly sought after delicacy in many regions of Magnamund. It also exports ores and gems, especially those imported from Ruanon. Grains and crops provide a secondary export since Sommerlund is an agriculturally rich region.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS / REGIONAL RELATIONS

Toran gets on well with the other Baronial Provinces in Sommerlund; it also has a good trade relationship with Dessi where it has numerous imports and exports, as mentioned previously. Toran maintains an excellent relationship with the Kai Lords and many Kai Lords come through Toran at the beginning of the Feast of Fehmarn before they trek to the Kai Monastery as part of their pilgrimage. Many of the Kai Lords will also bless the festivities before they move on.

Toran viciously opposes the Darklords and their servants as well as those who would align themselves with the enemy. To this end they are extremely distrusting of strangers who are of non-Sommerlund or Dessi origin. This attitude worsens post MS 5050 and the city goes into a decline for a year as trade, tourism and relations between Toran and other places decline due to the events of the Darklords attack upon their city.

Secrets

There are numerous secrets beneath the City of Toran, including the chamber that lies right under the Brotherhood Tower, where the magical energy of the city is directed by the design of the many streets and alleys. The exact purpose of this chamber is unknown but it is directly related to the magical wards that are built into Toran itself, it is rumoured that the energy that is collected is focussed into the tower and can be redistributed throughout Toran at a moment's notice to shore up any deficit in the city's magical defences. During the time of the Darklord's attack in MS 5050, Helghast Agents who are immune to the deadly effects of the magic penetrated the chamber and managed to disrupt the flow. This coupled with the aerial strike and naval attack caused heavy damage to Toran from which the city may never truly recover.

Geryon's home: Hidden away in the Middle Ward of the city is the actual home of one of the Brotherhood's leaders. This reclusive sage remains quietly hidden away when he is not in the council chambers or the tower. He is a wise man, wise enough to realise the danger he could be in if he did as the rest of his peers and flaunted his power before the masses. So, he is content to remain where he is in the modest two story house with enough luxury to get by.



LONE WOLF

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A Guide to Surviving GEN CON

By Bryan Steele

I have been attending the GenCon gaming convention for a long while now (although not as long as some) and every year I see old faces and new, and come home with new stories to share with those friends and relatives that could not make it that year. Some understand what it is like to be a part of the United States' largest gaming convention, but others do not... cannot... fathom what it is like until they have been there and been involved with it.

This article is a personal guide to all those who plan to come out to GenCon Indy this year taken from my experiences over the last years. Think of it as a sort of 'survival guide for the convention going gamer', and take everything I say with a healthy grain of salt – I have my opinions on things, and they may very well differ from yours.

To make things easier on you, the readers and future convention goers, I have divided this article into several smaller lists that give you all of my 'top 10s' of the various things that I see as rather important to the overall convention scene.

TOP TEN REASONS TO ATTEND GENCON INDY

10. To be a part of the largest U.S. gaming convention and support the gaming industry, of course!

9. To buy products first hand that you might otherwise have to arrange for through websites or mail order.

8. Socialise with gamers from across the world; some of whom you may already know and others that might turn out to be lifelong friends.

7. Wander the exhibition hall and 'window shop' for the next best things that are coming out this year, or the next; potentially even buying some of them before they reach the game stores.

6. Attend seminars, panels and events that could help a budding gaming professional get into an industry that is difficult to enter.

5. Meet the artistes and guests of honour that make up some of the greats in our industry.

4. Compete in certain events in order to hopefully win unique or special prize support offered by the companies that make the game.

3. Play games with the very people who designed, wrote or illustrated them.

2. Get away from the sometimes heavy weight of everyday life and enjoy some games for an extended weekend.

1. Come and meet your favourite authors, office staff and friends from Mongoose Publishing!

TOP TEN BOOTHS TO VISIT AT GENCON INDY

10. Miniature Building Authority; even if you are not a miniature gamer, go by this booth and take a look at what they have

produced. Not too expensive for such quality and artistry, my personal favourites are the 'witch burning scene' and 'hobbit house'. Ask my friend Bob that works over there to show you what I'm talking about. (Booth #1535)

9. Catalyst Games LLC; the company that picked up Cthulhutech when they were separated from Flaming Cobra and a good place to find sourcebooks and miniatures for several games that are 'old favourites' like Shadowrun, Battletech and now Cthulhutech. (Booth #803 & 911)

8. Gale Force Nine; THE source for the best miniature gaming aids the industry has to offer in my opinion. If you need sculpting tools, putty, templates, counters or even amazing terrain pieces... go see John, Aaron and the rest of the blue-shirted team at GF9 to sort you out. (Booth #1433)

7. Paizo Entertainment; look for the purple booth filled with good d20 add-ons and useful roleplaying aids and you will likely be at Paizo. They do really good work there and the fabulous guys from Dead Gentlemen Productions are most often doing business through them – an added bonus to be sure! (Booth #2312)

6. Battlefoam LLC; I cannot say how cool these guys are. I desperately want a set of these foam trays for my own various armies, and my wife's. You should swing by their booth and ask to take a look at some of their custom cut stuff. If you are a miniature converter like I am, these folks are a priceless resource to protect your most fragile pieces. (Booth #1815)

5. Crocodile Games; the creator and source for the beautiful and engaging miniature game War Gods of Aegyptus, this booth is the home of the amazing miniature sculptor Chris Fitzpatrick and all of his fabulous works. Stop by and take a look at the gorgeous models he

has made and some of the fantastic paint jobs they have put on them. (Booth #2300)

4. Privateer Press; perhaps a little biased to my old co-workers, this booth is never dull and tends to be bustling with beautiful models, friendly demo folk and convention-only pre-sells. A word of advice however, do not expect to be able to buy the 'newest thing' without standing in a long...long...line. While you are over there though, ask for a guy named 'Biggie' and tell him Bryan at Mongoose sent you. *wink* (Booth #1201)

3. Fantasy Flight Games; these guys are some of the best in the industry and their booth area always is packed with new games, game demos and friendly folks willing to talk to you about whatever is new and exciting. (Booth #720, 811, 915 & 921)

2. Wizards of the Coast; they always have a great set-up with loads of interesting art, playing tables, and sneak peeks at the new stuff coming next year from the largest company in our industry. (Booth #1721)

1. Mongoose Publishing, of course! We will be there with our newest products, words and rumours on new stuff, and maybe just a few minutes to discuss the industry we know and love. (What? I never said I was unbiased!) (Booth #421)

TOP TEN PLACES TO GRAB A BITE TO EAT AT GENCON INDY

10. Convention Centre Food Market; a bit on the expensive side, the food at the convention centre is still pretty good and fast enough to get you back to gaming quickly. If you are in a rush or have really sore feet from walking the halls all day, this will do.

9. Jimmy John's Subs; some of the best sandwiches you can get cheaply and quickly, Jimmy John's even delivers if you have an address (hotel room, convention centre door and so on). They might not be exactly

the finest dinner but they are a great lunch between events.

8. Alcatraz Brewing Co.; a fantastic pub attached to the Circle Center Mall, they do a good pint and some of their appetisers (starters for you folks over the pond) are amazing. The prices are not bad either but prepare for a wait if you have a large group.

7. Buca di Beppo; a great place to bring six or seven friends for a good Italian 'family-style' meal, everyone pitches in and gets a portion of large dishes of food. They have excellent entrees but I find their deserts are far better.

6. Circle Center Food Court; found on the second floor of the mall attached to the convention centre, the food court is likely to be the primary place anyone gets to eat lunch while at GenCon. There are several different types of food, from sushi and Chinese to burgers and gyros. It is mall food, but it is cheap and easy to get.

5. The Rathskeller; a fantastic Bavarian restaurant where someone can get likely the best sauerkraut or sauerbraten in town. It is a little further of a walk for GenCon attendees to make between gaming sessions but I recommend it at least once while you are there.

4. The Claddagh; a little Irish pub restaurant that offers very good food. I especially like the bangers and mash or the fish 'n chips. They may not be as good as the ones I had in Southampton or Nottingham, but they'll do in a pinch.

3. Mikado; close to the convention centre and home to some fantastic sushi and other Japanese cuisine, the Mikado is a little expensive to be anything but a special event over the course of the convention. I can say that the times I have eaten there, I have NEVER been disappointed.

2. The Ram; this burger-n-fries kind of restaurant really gets into the GenCon spirit each year. They alter their menus, change up their uniforms to wear gamer shirts, and always

offer a special GenCon product. There is always a wait and it WILL be crowded but you never know who might sit down next to you at the bar.

1. Weber Grille; a fantastically superb steak house that offers pretzel dough as table bread, an amazing Scotch and mixed drink menu, and some of the best food the city has to offer near the convention centre. It does however, have a pretty high price tag...but it is worth it.

TOP TEN CONSUMER TIPS FOR GENCON INDY

10. Hitting the ATM for cash early in the day is a good way to limit your spending and ensure you will have funds – because the ATM may not have any at the end of the day!

9. If you already have a decent-sized bag or satchel, offer to not take one from the booth you are buying at. It cuts down on litter, swaying body-luggage and will likely be easier for you to get home after the convention.

8. Remember that small items are easily misplaced, so keep track of where you put purchased dice, miniatures and such. Having to buy something twice because you misplaced the first would be a travesty – especially if it was a convention-only product!

7. If you buy art (posters, paintings and so on), make sure it is well protected as you walk the halls. The crowds can get a little awkward and I have seen fragile things get damaged by a wayward elbow or book bag. If you have a hotel room, I would stash it immediately after you buy it, if only for safety's sake.

6. If you see something that you think you might impulse buy, ask the booth clerk to hold it for an hour. If you still want to buy it after that time, go back and do it. If you no longer desire it, you can walk away and spend your money elsewhere.

5. If you are not sure about how you might enjoy a product, see if the company that makes it is running demos before you buy it.

A Guide to Surviving **GEN CON**

At least try to talk to someone at the company about the product's workings. Thirty minutes learning the basics on how to play could easily save you some funds on something you might not later enjoy.

4. There are several resale booths and shops at the convention; some may sell things cheaper than the company that makes the product you are buying. You might save a few dollars or pound notes, but keep in mind that you could be getting autographs, notations or product knowledge from the company for that small saving.

3. If you are planning to buy something that requires you to wait in line for a long time, make sure you are waiting to buy the product and not a chance to buy the product. Some companies offer raffles or lotteries to win special products; just make sure you are waiting for what you think you are waiting for.

2. Never be afraid to ask a booth worker if there are special deals or discounts available for large purchases; many of them do. However, do not be surprised if the amount required is higher than a handful of products. We are, after all, a business trying to be profitable.

1. If you truly came to the convention for one product to buy, make sure you grab it early on. If it is that special to you, do not risk it being sold out later in the convention.

TOP TEN SOCIAL TIPS FOR ATTENDING GENCON INDY

10. Remember how large you and your personal baggage might be. The aisles in the hall can be pretty tight and crowded, setting up for bashing into others with your book bags, purchases and – for those of who are larger of

body – our selves. Just be aware of where you walk and what you are doing.

9. Costuming is all well and good, but if your costume includes body paint, make-up or pointy bits you should avoid tight crowds. You could rub up or bump into someone or something that could be damaged by your costume.

8. If you are going to drink at the convention, have someone at hand to take good care of you. Nobody wants a staggering drunkard wandering the halls. That's what the pubs are for, after all.

7. Taking pictures of peoples' costumes is expected, but you should always ask if it is okay first. There are no accepted 'gamer paparazzi' out there; so do not try to steal snapshots of someone without their knowing about it.

6. If you are chatting with friends or someone at a booth, try to pull your conversation physically to one side of where traffic will be. Even while aside however, be prepared to slide one way or another in case a customer needs to look at something past your current position.

5. Be mindful of your language. A lot of people bring their children to these conventions and profanity should be curbed. Some of us might have a sharp tongue when in our own social circles but there is no need to submit other peoples' families to it. They came here to enjoy themselves and the convention, do not make them move faster through the halls to get away from your language.

4. Buying a round of drinks or shots is rarely a bad idea when with friends; especially at rare events like a gaming convention. Even if someone does not drink, making the offer still holds the same good tidings. This is especially true, of course, if I am at the table!

3. If you have to carry a foam or costume weapon for whatever reason, DO NOT swing it

around or duel with your friends when people are around. Whether you know it or not – you are risking bopping someone that does not want to be bopped.

2. Remember that the artistes, writers and designers are people too. Offering them ridicule for past works or, worse yet, telling them how much better you could do is simply rude. Hearts and souls go into a lot of these products; sometimes passionate gamers forget that we love our games, too.

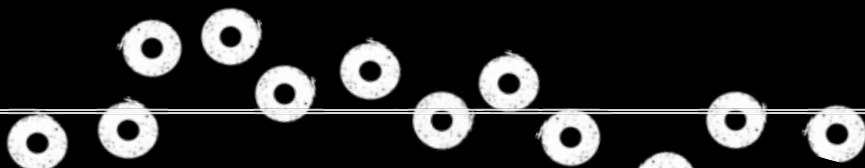
1. Be polite. This really is the golden rule for all social gatherings, not just conventions. We ask our children to learn their 'please & thank yous', everyone should remember the simple ways to make the convention a better atmosphere. No one will be upset with you if you offer them common niceties.

TOP TEN REMINDERS FOR NEW OR NON-GAMER ATTENDEES BY SARAH STEELE

That is right readers; this last section is actually penned by my lovely bride of nearly 10 years, mother to my son and sun in my sky. Although we met through a LARP (yeah, I was a LARPer back in my day), she has blossomed into a consummate gamer in her years and she has accompanied me to several conventions, GenCons or otherwise. These are her top ten things to share with gaming 'newbies'...

10. They are called miniatures. Or perhaps 'figs', as in short for figurines. They are not 'army men,' 'toys' or 'little plastic guys.'

9. A quick acronym overview: GM/DM/etc = Game Master/Dungeon Master/etc. RPG = Role Playing Game. LARP (rhymes with tarp) =



Live Action Role Play. MMORPG = Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game. CCG = Collectible Card Game

8. Check out the art show. Often, the artists are there and are more than willing to discuss the work they do. Of all the art shows I have attended, these are the most personable, approachable artists I have ever met.

7. Drink water. Indianapolis can be brutally hot in mid-August. Now is not a good time to dehydrate.

6. There are all kinds of booths in the convention hall, and not all of them sell games. Walking the halls, you will find costumers, corseters and jewellers.

5. Retail therapy abounds. The Indianapolis Convention Center is in the middle of downtown Indy, within easy walking distance of hundred of shops, attractions and restaurants. It is totally okay to leave the convention, cruise Nordstrom's and come back. :)

4. GenCon has plenty of non-gaming events. There are writer's symposiums, movie screenings and costume contests. Check out the guide when you arrive to see if there are things that may interest you.

3. Bring cash. Most, but not all, vendors accept debit card and ATM fees can be prohibitive.

2. Wandering the convention hall in cute-yet-painful footwear is a bad idea. The floors are likely concrete and you're in for miles of odd paced convention walking.

1. Women who go to conventions are one in ten. Women who go, play and have fun are one in a million. If you're a first time conventionette, along for the ride with the man in your life, nothing will make him cheer more than knowing you didn't just go to make him happy... you had a great time too. So get out there and play!

For Those Who Need Them

Here are the addresses for all of the places I spoke of in the article, in case someone wants to plug them into their GPS, Garmin or other mapping they might need to find them.

- Alcatraz Brewing Company; 49 W Maryland St # 104. Indianapolis, IN 46204
- Buca di Beppo; 35 N. Illinois St. Indianapolis, IN 46204
- Circle Center Mall; 49 W Maryland St. Indianapolis, IN 46204
- The Claddagh; 3835 E 96th St. Indianapolis, IN 46240
- Jimmy John's Subs; 1 North Meridian. Indianapolis, IN 46204
- Mikado; 148 S Illinois St. Indianapolis, IN 46225
- The Ram; 140 South Illinois St. Indianapolis, IN 43225
- The Rathskeller; 401 E Michigan St. Indianapolis, IN 46204
- Weber Grille; 10 N. Illinois St. Indianapolis IN 46204

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Plunder Of The Dwarfs

By Shannon Appeldine

All of the races of Glorantha have special items of their own. In the case of the Mostali, they are not necessarily "magic" items, but nonetheless the PLUNDER of the dwarfs is of interest to dwarfs and adventurers alike. This article builds upon the dwarf background found in *Dwarfs: A Guide to the Mostali*. It is written in the format of *Plunder*, a classic *RuneQuest* book, and complements "Plunder of the Elves," found in *Signs & Portents* #63 and "Plunder of the Ducks," found in *Signs & Portents* #70.

Most of the categories used in this article are self-evident but two of them require more explanation.

Cults describes which Gloranthan cults are familiar with the item.

- *Associated cults probably made the item and know everything about it.*
- *Friendly cults will have a positive reaction if they recognise the item and may know something about it.*
- *Enemy cults will usually attack a bearer of the item.*
- *Hostile cults will probably dislike the possessor of the item.*

Knowledge describes what the public knows about the item and how to use it.

- *Automatic suggests that its use is self-evident.*
- *Common means that everyone knows about the item and how to use it.*
- *Cult Secret suggests that the making and/or use of the item is only known to a few.*
- *Famous notes that the item is quite well known, and that its possessor will be viewed in a different light as a result. For Influence tests, take a +20% bonus for associated cults, a +10% bonus for friendly cults, a -10% penalty for hostile cults, and a -20% penalty for enemy cults.*
- *Few means that there are a small, limited number of the item.*
- *One of a Kind means the item is unique.*
- *Owner Only means that some or all of the item's powers can only be used by the original owner/creator.*

Thanks to Rudy Kraft for creating the idea (and format) of *Plunder*. Two of the items, the Gloves of the Mostali and the Stone Branches, originally appeared in Rudy's 1980 book, though they've been updated here for the newest version of *RuneQuest*. Likewise, the stats for the cockatrice are based on those found in the *Gloranthan Bestiary*, a RQ3 book. Thanks also to Lawrence Whitaker for the dwarf lore underlying this article.

DIAMOND DWARF EQUIPMENT DESCRIPTION

Any dwarf equipment, including tool belts, tools (such as hammers, chisels, spanners, wrenches, screwdrivers, bolt cutters, engraving instruments and other items) and can openers. The items are perfectly made, with any cutting or pounding surfaces made from diamond.



CULTS

Associated – Dwarfs.

Hostile – Chaos cults.

KNOWLEDGE

Automatic

HISTORY

Diamond dwarfs are those who have perfected themselves. Therefore, diamond dwarf equipment is that equipment which has been perfected. There is no need to record a single moment of creation for diamond dwarf equipment, for perfection is the natural state of the world. All else is fallen from this original template.

Any dwarf could own diamond dwarf equipment, though much of it is indeed owned by diamond dwarfs, for it complements their own perfection.

PROCEDURE

Diamond dwarfs can create diamond dwarf equipment by taking 100x the normal

length of time to make the equipment and rolling a critical success on their Skill Test. Since diamond dwarfs tend to have 500%+ in the skills they commonly use, they succeed at making diamond dwarf equipment about half of the time when they try to.

Diamond dwarf equipment is usually restricted to the list of standard dwarf equipment (see *Dwarfs: A Guide to the Mostali*, p.95) but diamond dwarfs could choose to make other perfect items, if they desired.

POWERS

Diamond dwarf equipment tends to give a +10% bonus to appropriate Skill Tests when used. It also resists attempts to change its perfect state. Thus a diamond dwarf apron does not get dirty and a diamond dwarf knife does not dull.

If a diamond dwarf object is ever attacked with the intent to harm it, it should be considered to have 20 AP because of its perfect nature (though these AP only apply to damaging the object itself; diamond dwarf armour would not give any extra protection to its wearer, just to itself). However, if even a single point of damage gets through the object's armour, it immediately and permanently loses its perfect nature and can never regain it.

VALUE

When diamond dwarf equipment makes it into the wider world, it usually sells for 10x to 100x the cost of normal equipment of the same sort.

FLINTNAIL'S PARCHMENT OF PLANNING DESCRIPTION

A plain-looking parchment except for its regular, square shape and a stasis rune written on one corner.

CULTS

Associated – Flintnail, Pavis.
Friendly – Any cults of builders.
Hostile – Dwarfs.

KNOWLEDGE

Automatic

HISTORY

Flintnail Hardeye was a magnificent architect. He created the mighty city of Pavis from the Faceless Statue because he was able to see the true nature of what lay inside of each of the Statue's organ stones, and was able to reveal those natures through the blueprints and other plans that he drew for the workers of Pavis.

He was able to partially transmit this true architect's vision through his Parchments of Planning – plain looking sheets of vellum that contain some of the innate power of the Mostali planning rooms and their great chalk-boards, the very places where Flintnail learned his craft before the Reboot.

Flintnail manufactured these parchments for several years while he stayed at Pavis. Thousands of blank parchments still remain around the world, though their numbers constantly dwindle due to their usage and due to their destruction by fanatical dwarfs who hate the secrets that Flintnail gave to the world through his open-handed ways.

PROCEDURE

Only Flintnail knew how to make these papers, though it is possible that the secret of their manufacture still lies somewhere within the great city of Pavis.

POWERS

Each blank parchment may be used to draw out the plans for one level of a building. However, the parchments' powers only come into play if the architect is looking at the materials intended for the building (or the quarry or forest where they'll be drawn from) while he does his sketching. If

so the purpose of the materials will reveal themselves through the architect's sketches. This results in a +50% bonus for the Skill Test using Craft (Mason), Craft (Architect), or other appropriate building skill.

Though Flintnail never intended for his parchments to be used in such a way, they can also be used to reveal the best methods to assemble or disassemble mechanisms and mechanical devices, allowing for a +50% bonus to an Engineering or Mechanisms test, provided that the mechanism is first sketched out.

Once a single sketch has been made on a parchment, its main power disappears – though the parchment will continue to be particularly resistant to aging. (It's not diamond dwarf parchment, but it is close.)

VALUE

An unused parchment would fetch 250–500 SP, perhaps more if there were an immediate need for it. A used parchment has almost no value, though the Flintnail cult in Pavis has been willing to offer up to 100 SP for parchments written upon by some of Flintnail's protégés in the city.

GLOVES OF THE MOSTALI DESCRIPTION

A grey, hand-shaped, hollow stone. It becomes flexible if a hand is inserted into it.

CULTS

Associated – Dwarfs.
Hostile – Cockatrice creators.

KNOWLEDGE

Automatic; Cult Secret.

HISTORY

The first cockatrice were created by agents of chaos who perverted both the sorcerous system that Mostal created and the natural processes by which stone came into being.

Plunder of the Dwarfs



Because of the grave imperfections that cockatrices introduced into the world, silver dwarfs were forced to find ways to combat them. Sorcerer #1732-BZ was successful in inventing a ritual to do so. It is a difficult process, but a few dwarfs now know it across Glorantha.

PROCEDURE

These gloves can only be made by diamond silver dwarfs. They are created with an enchantment (see *RuneQuest Companion*, pp.38–43), Stone Glove Enchantment (Difficult –20%). There is no requisite spell; being a diamond dwarf provides the required knowledge. It costs 1 POW to create the gloves.

POWERS

Anyone wearing one of these gloves cannot be turned to stone. However, note that they will only fit someone of the same SIZ as their original maker. Roll 1D6+6 to determine SIZ. The gloves have an ENC of 0.

VALUE

5,000 SP. That value will be larger for gloves of SIZ 10+.

ABOUT THE COCKATRICE

Cockatrices are large rooster-like monsters with wicked, toothy beaks. They are the result of sorcery spells. Because of this, they are sometimes found acting as familiars for God Learner sorcerers, particularly those travelling through dangerous areas.

COMBAT

Each round a cockatrice may peck and attack with either its tail or its claw.

The tail attack has a chance of knocking down the cockatrice's foe. Whenever an opponent is hit with it, he must succeed at a Persistence test to remain standing. Failure leaves the opponent in a prone stance.

The venomous peck of the cockatrice can turn its opponent to stone. If even a single point of damage gets through armour, treat this as a poison (see *RuneQuest*, pp.90–91).

COCKATRICE VENOM

Type: Natural Weapon
Delay: Immediate
Potency: POWx3
Full Effect: Turn to stone
Duration: Permanent

THE COCKATRICE

STR	2D6+6	(13)
CON	3D6	(11)
SIZ	2D6+3	(10)
INT	4	(4)
POW	1D6+12	(16)
DEX	3D6+12	(23)

Cockatrice Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–2	Tail	3/4
3–5	Right Claw	3/4
6–8	Left Claw	3/4
9–12	Body	3/6
13–15	Right Wing	3/5
16–18	Left Wing	3/5
19–20	Head	3/5

WEAPONS

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Tail	45%	1D8
Claw	35%	1D6 + knockdown
Peck	50%	1D10 + turn to stone

SPECIAL RULES

Combat Actions:	4
Strike Rank:	+14
Movement:	3m, 5m when flying
Traits:	Poison
Skills:	Dodge 40%, Perception 45%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 35%
Special Armour:	Scales and feathers (3AP, no Skill Penalty)

JOLANTI ARMOUR ACCESSORIES DESCRIPTION

These are variant armour locations for Jolanti armour. They are usually made from black iron and have various pulleys, gears, or clockwork embedded in them. Possible alternatives include: boots with springs coming out of the bottom, gauntlets with retractable triangular blades coming out of the front and a helmet with a built-in glowing light.

CULTS

Associated – Dwarfs.

Enemy – Elf cults, Troll cults.

KNOWLEDGE

Automatic

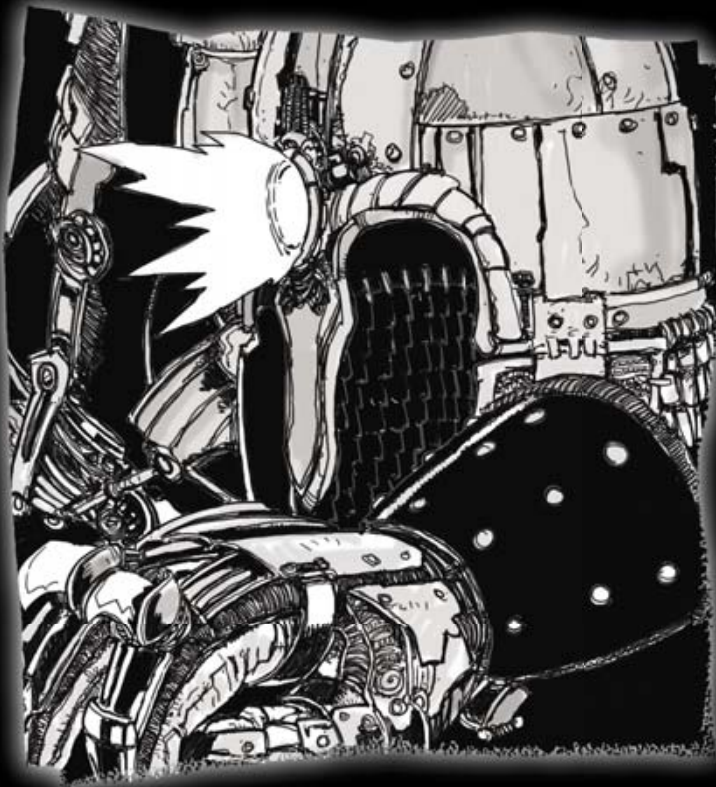
HISTORY

Grindeye Black Hammer has been indicated as the original creator of Jolanti armour. However, suggestions have been made that its creation was self-evident, for it was a part of the World Machine's master plan. Certain dwarfs have taken credit for extensions and revisions to the master Jolanti armour blueprints. Several of these improvements have proven that the original plans were imperfect. However, individual inventors are usually not rewarded with recognition, any more than dwarfs would reward the gears that keep a clock running on time, so the names of these later inventors are not known.

PROCEDURE

Standard Jolanti armour is generally created with black iron mined from the Rockwood Mountains. Thus, the largest Jolanti armour foundries are found in the dwarf homes within those mountains, such as Axehead and the other Greatway cities. The techniques for creating Jolanti armour are known by some brass dwarfs, particularly diamond brass dwarfs.

The accessories described herein are somewhat rarer, with the manufacture of



Blade Gauntlets. These gauntlets include blades that may be extended as a Combat Action.

Weapon	Skill	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP
Blade Gauntlet	Dagger	1D4+3	-/-	-	6/7

each unique accessory usually representing an individual brass dwarf's specific twist on the Jolanti armour manufacture process. (A unique twist, it should be noted, that has been checked, rechecked, verified, and finally approved by a brass dwarf total-quality-manufacture council.)

POWERS

Jolanti armour accessories can only be used with an otherwise complete set of Jolanti armour (see *Dwarfs: A Guide to the Mostali*, p.114). They are useless without the gears, levers and springs that help control the armour. Following are descriptions of three possible accessories.

Spring Boots. These are boots with springs inside the heels that may be used to suddenly propel the wearer forward. To use them, the wearer must make a successful Drive Skill Test. If he is successful, he may leap forward up to 10m as a movement action. If he fails, he leaps forward 1d10 metres. Afterward the wearer must move

normally for two Combat Rounds (running, walking, or leaping up and down, as preferred) to reset the boots so that the he can spring again.

Light Helmet. These helmets include an embedded light source. The light source can be turned on as a Combat Action, as if it were a Light spell. It will remain lit indefinitely, provided that the wearer continues to move at least half of the time. The light may also be made to flare brightly as a Combat Action. Anyone in melee with the wearer must be a Resilience Skill Test. If they fail, they are blinded for 1d6 Combat Rounds. This drains the helmet's battery and it may not be used as a light source for 1 day afterward.

VALUE

A dwarf offered a Jolanti armour accessory is most likely to demand the object, claiming that it has been stolen from dwarfdom.

Plunder of the Dwarfs

THE OCTAMONIUM DESCRIPTION

A chunk of granite cut into a rough 8-sided octahedron. Each side has an arcane rune cut into representing one of the original 8 races of dwarfs.

CULTS

Associated – Dwarfs.

KNOWLEDGE

Cult Secret; One of a Kind.

HISTORY

In the Beginning, Mostal made the Mostali, to help build the Machine. He created them over eight generations, but the plans for all the Mostali were present from the start, in a huge four-dimensional Master Octahedron that sat outside the universe and provided the master blueprints for these very important cogs in the machine.

During the Gods War, the great saboteurs swept across Glorantha, ruining parts of the Machine for no reason other than random destruction. A gold dwarf named

Quickthinker Brighthead, after completing 100 years' worth of calculations, came to the conclusion that even the Master Octahedron outside the universe was at risk. So, he went upon a great quest to walk outside the universe and see the Master Octahedron.

Upon his return, Brighthead did his best to reconstruct the Master Octahedron with the vastly inferior materials that were still available in the now-flawed world. The result was the Octamonium, Brighthead's best reconstruction of the four-dimensional original in three-dimensional space. Though imperfect, it contains many secrets of the first eight races of dwarfs.

POWERS

The Octamonium has two main purposes.

First, it may be used to create any sort of Mostali. Usually, when two dwarfs engage in the grinding ritual, they can only create proto-dwarf capsules that match their own castes. If the Octamonium is present in the New Mud Laboratory, then provided that both dwarfs have a Lore (Mostali) of at least 75%, they may create a different sort of Mostali (of the original eight types).

Second, the Octamonium provides great knowledge of the Mostali. It may be used as a +50% bonus to any Lore (Mostali) roll that requires an understanding of one of the eight original castes of Mostali (though this does not apply to the New Mud Laboratory usage roll).

VALUE

The Octamonium is entirely priceless. Most dwarfs would do anything to recover it, whether that required killing, stealing, or giving over a small fortune. It is particularly valuable to Octamonist dwarfs, who see it as proof as their core beliefs, while dwarfs in conflict with Octamonists are a bit more indifferent to it.

SHEARS OF STUNTING DESCRIPTION

A pair of gardening shears made with granite handles and iron blades.

CULTS

Associated – Dwarfs.

Friendly – All Troll cults.

Enemy – All Elf cults.

KNOWLEDGE

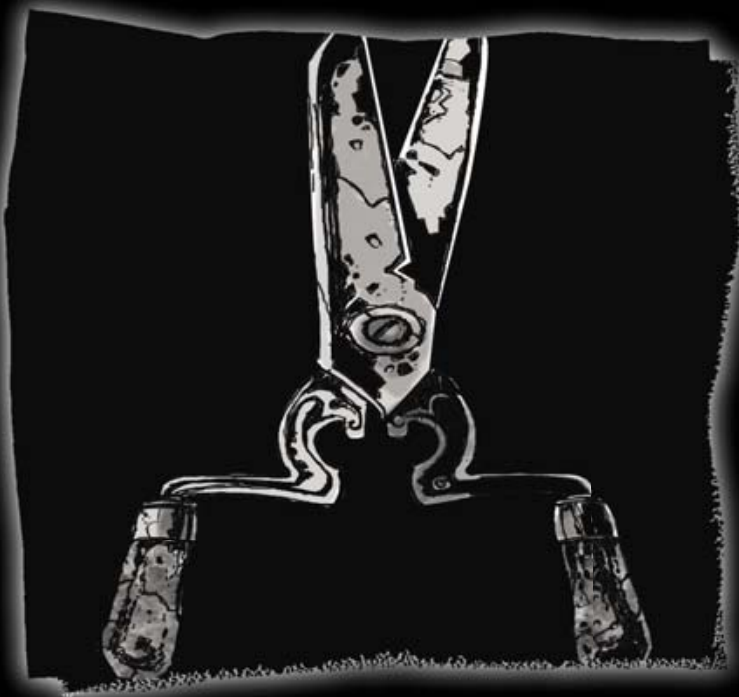
Automatic; Few.

HISTORY

"Growth is bad. It creates changes, which is also bad. Plants embody growth. Therefore, plants are bad."

This was the thesis of Hardened Stone Maker, a silver dwarf working in Dwarf Mine. He thus designed the shears of stunting and worked with Thick-sinewed Hammerwielder and Iron Soldier #DM-1732 to create working prototypes. Twenty-two of them were created before Isidilian learned of the unauthorised expenditure, shut down the project and filed away the blueprints. Isidilian decommissioned some of the shears at the same time but others had already made their way into the world.





POWERS

The shears' main power is that they keep any growth from occurring in a 50 metre radius. This stops the natural growth of most living creatures. (Though this is mainly seen as a bad effect, it also effectively grants immortality, as has been discovered by Ortilin Lizard-eye, a wyrmfriend of Dragon Pass who possesses one of the shears and is now over two 200 years old.) It also blocks the casting of all Fertility spells within that radius.

Finally, if the shears are used as a weapon, they do +6 damage to any creatures associated with the plant rune, such as Aldryami, runners, and dryads.

The shears are not actually that great a weapon for fighting anything other than plant creatures, however.

VALUE

Anyone interesting in fighting or opposing Aldryami would happily pay 3,000–5,000 SP for these shears.

STONE BRANCHES DESCRIPTION

A piece of a statue of a tree made of white stone with a slight greenish tint.

CULTS

Associated – Elf cults, dwarfs.

KNOWLEDGE

Cult Secret; Few.

HISTORY

Before the Reboot, a mysterious stone tree was discovered. No one knew what it was or where it came from, but both the Aldryami and the Mostali claimed the tree for the own. The Aldryami believed that it was the first tree grown from Gata's soil by Falamal's seed, while the Mostali stated that it was an important component of the Perfect Machine.

In the great battle that ensued, many elves and dwarves were recycled and the stone

tree was broken into pieces, which were scattered and lost throughout the world.

PROCEDURE

Use of a Stone Branch can only be gained by Aldryami rune priests of a Grower god (see *Elfs: A Guide to the Aldryami*, pp.74–90) and by diamond dwarfs (see *Dwarfs: A Guide to the Mostal*, p.107). To use a Stone Branch a user must integrate it, like a rune. Though it is not actually one of the recognised runes, the ability to integrate it proves that the stone tree is an integral building block of Glorantha.

POWERS

The Stone Branch acts like a crystal of the dead (see *RuneQuest*, p.43) that can be used to store 3D6+6 Magic Points, except those Magic Points restore themselves every morning, with no need for the user to fill it.

These Magic Points may also be used to cast any divine spell known by a Grower god, but the Branch permanently loses a number of Magic Points equal to the cost of the spell. It may also be used to allow its wielder to pass as a specific dwarf for a day at the permanent cost of 1 Magic Point or to help someone with no other knowledge to manufacture dwarf technology at the cost of 1 day per ENC of the item and 1 Magic Point per 5 ENC of the item. The items that can be made are limited to relatively common dwarf items; the Branch will not make one-of-a-kind items or Godtime artefacts. The magic points used in such a manufacture are likewise permanently lost.

When the Branch is reduced to 0 Magic Points through the casting of divine grower spells, the impersonation of dwarfs, and the manufacture of dwarf technology, it crumbles to dust.

VALUE

Dwarfs are usually willing to offer a small piece of technology and elves are usually willing to offer a one-time casting of a divine spell for a Stone Branch. If forced to expend money, they might offer up to 15,000 SP.

Weapon	Skill	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP
Shears of Stunting	1H Sword	1D8-1	9/13	1	6/10

Plunder of the Dwarfs



ZORANBANE DESCRIPTION

A two-headed war axe. The entire weapon is made from the best black iron of Axehead. It has the rune of fertility on one blade and the rune of light on the other.

CULTS

Associated – Brass dwarfs, Iron dwarfs.
Friendly – Other dwarfs, Elf cults.
Enemy – Troll cults.

KNOWLEDGE

Automatic; One of a Kind.

HISTORY

Grindeye Black Hammer has been one of the most inventive makers of weapons among the brass dwarfs since Before Time. Jolanti armour was one of his earliest creations, laid out, planned, analysed, and manufactured within days of the start of the Gods' War. It is now made throughout Glorantha (though almost always with black iron exported from Black Hammer's own Axehead foundries). He also made many unique items which others cannot duplicate, among them The Consumate and Proportionate Shamble Stabiliser (which reduces the effects of chaos), The Epitomic Efficiency Enabler (which improves worker time usage), and The Diacuminated Armament of Uz Annihilation.

The last invention is a two-headed war axe that Grindeye made on the spot when trolls were threatening his workshop. It is better known as Zoranblade, and it embodies one of Grindeye's prime philosophies of weapon manufacture. Death is a blunt instrument that can be applied widely, but with less efficacy than something precisely designed for a job. Thus, Zoranbane was smelt using the life and light runes, to make it particularly dangerous to entities that oppose those runes, particularly Zorak Zoran trolls.

After the immediate threat to Grindeye was dealt with by an iron dwarf wielding the new blade, Zoranbane passed beyond Grindeye's purview, because it was no longer of relevance to him.

POWERS

Zoranbane always acts as a very high-quality and dangerous axe:

However, Zoranbane is even more dangerous against its specific foes. It also can do extra 1D8 damage each to creatures of darkness or death.

Light Powers. Zoranbane acts as a light rune. If integrated, then the user also gains access to the rest of its light powers.

Zoranbane does +1D8 damage to creatures of darkness. This includes: trolls; acolytes, rune priests, or runelords of darkness deities; darkness spirits; and other entities that have a strong tie to darkness. This damage is cumulative with the extra fertility damage.

Finally, the wielder may cast the Glow sorcery spell, with up to 10 Magic Points worth of manipulation. The wielder must pay the magic point cost, as usual, but his

casting chance is equal to his Runecasting (Light) skill, not any sorcery skill.

Fertility Powers. Zoranbane acts as a fertility rune. If integrated, then the user also gains access to the rest of its fertility powers.

Zoranbane does +1D8 damage to creatures of death. This includes: the undead; acolytes, rune priests, or runelords of death or undead deities; spirits of the dead; and other entities that have a strong tie to death. This damage is cumulative with the extra light damage, noted previously.

Finally, the wielder may cast the Regenerate sorcery spell, with up to 10 Magic Points worth of manipulation. The wielder must pay the magic point cost, as usual, but his casting chance is equal to his Runecasting (Fertility) skill, not any sorcery skill.

VALUE

On the open market, Zoranbane is worth 100,000 SP or more.

Weapon	Skill	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP
Zoranbane	2H Axe	2D8+2	15/11	3	5/20



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Victory-Class Advanced Destroyer

By Bryan Steele & Stuart Machin

Built for the Interstellar Alliance by the best engineers gathered from around the galaxy, the Victory-class is the largest warship built since the exodus of the First Ones. Adding Minbari, Earth and Vorlon systems into one vessel, each Victory is a supreme engine of destruction able to cross the galaxy and crush nearly any opposing force through its unforgiving firepower. Although it causes a massive drain to the ship's reactor, the reverse-engineered Vorlon lightning cannon the Victory is built around can demolish nearly any foe no matter how large.

For 1d6 rounds after a Victory fires its lightning cannon it cannot fire any weapon system at all, including defensive ones. Whilst the normal fighter complement is 18 Starfuries and 18 Thunderbolts, the hangar can handle a 100% Thunderbolt complement.

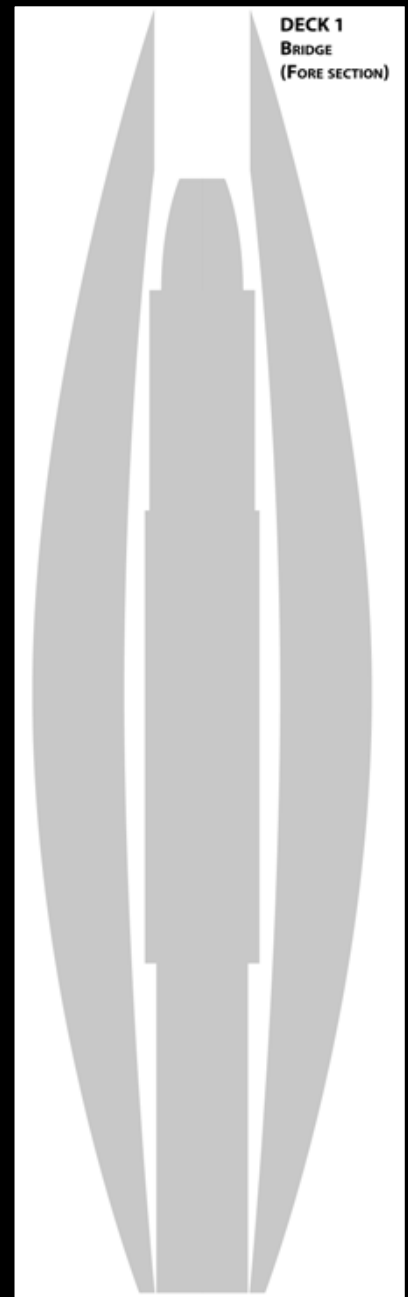
Victory Advanced Destroyer			Tons	Price (MCr)
Hull	500 ktons 5 sections each	Wedge Hull 2,500 Structure 2,500		60,000
		Advanced Technology Hull (TL14)	–	15,000
		Streamlined	–	–
Armour	Bonded Superdense	15 pts	62,500	93,750
Artificial Gravity		Minbari-Design Gravitic Field Generator (100%)	–	–
Jump Point Generator		Jump 6	50,000	60
Manoeuvre Drive		Thrust 6	16,250	8,125
Power Plant		Rating 6 (TL15) Emergency Power System	18,750 1,875	46,875 4,687.5
Bridge		5 Command Modules Command Bridge Holographic Controls Hardened	12,500 400	12,500 600 3,275 3,275
Computer	Core / 9fib	Rating 100	–	195
Electronics		Survey Sensors Military Countermeasures x 5	10 100	10 125
Weapons	Spinal Mount	Lightning Cannon	10,000	25,000
	100 ton Bays	10 x Improved Neutron Lasers	1010	500
	50 ton Bays	10 x Heavy Fusion Cannon	510	60
	Barbettes	40 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	200	80
	Turrets	48 x Double Light Pulse Cannon 120 x Interceptors (Triple Sandcaster)	48 120	120 210
Ammunition		24,000 Interceptor rounds (sandcaster barrels)	1,200	–
Fuel	150,360 tons	Six Jump 6 – 24 weeks of operation	150,360	–
Cargo	144,825 tons	(25,000 tons set aside for spares)	144,945	–
1,920 Staterooms			7,680	960

Victory Advanced Destroyer			Tons	Price (MCr)
Extras	Probe Drones x 40		8	4
	Armoury x 90		180	45
	Briefing Room x8	Holographic Viewing Screens	32	4
	Laboratory x10	Full MedBay	40	10
	Library x4		16	16
	Luxuries x50		50	5
	Vault x3		36	18
	1920 Escape Pods		960	192
	Repair Drones		5,000	1,000
	Armoured Bulkheads	Drives Weapons Command and Sensors	8,687.5 1,188.8 1,301	1,737.5 237.76 260.2
Craft	6 Cutters, 6 Shuttles	Standard Hangars	1,170	492.948
	18 Starfury Heavy Fighters	Standard Hangars	936	706.5
	18 Thunderbolt Heavy Fighters	Standard Hangars	936	1,770.66
	Cobra Bays	40-ton Launch Tube	1,000	500
Software	Manoeuvre/0		–	–
	Intellect	Rating 10	–	1
	Library		–	–
	Evade/3	Rating 25	–	3
	Auto-Repair/2	Rating 20	–	10
	Jump Control/6	Rating 30	–	0.6
	Fire Control/5	Rating 25	–	10
Maintenance Cost (monthly)				23.5360
Life Support Cost (monthly)				3.84
Total Tonnage & Cost			499,999.3	282,431.668

Department	Crew	Crew Damage Track
Command	250	Dead (–)
Engineering	869	Survivors (–4)
Gunnery	216	Skeleton (–2)
Flight	126	Half (–1)
Troops	400	Weakened
Service	1,000	Full
Frozen Watch	0	Battle – Starting Position
Total	2,861	Overstrength
Passenger Staterooms	100	Massively Overstrength
Low Berth Passengers	0	

Victory-Class Advanced Destroyer

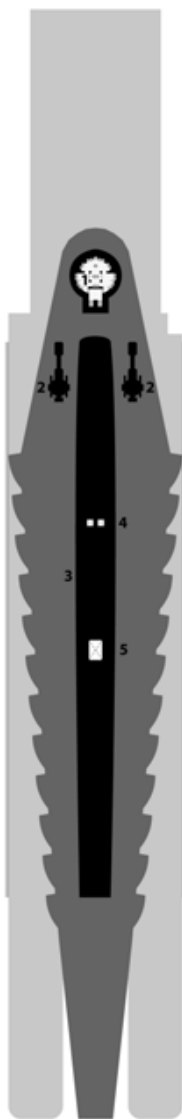
	Engineering				Aft				Amidships				Main				Forward			
	2,000		2,000		2,000		2,000		2,000		2,000		2,000		2,000		2,000		2,000	
Hull																				
Structure																				
Roll	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal	External
2	Crew	Hull	Crew	Hull	Crew	Hull	Crew	Hull	Crew	Hull	Crew	Hull	Crew	Hull	Crew	Hull	Crew	Hull	Crew	Hull
3	Jump Point Generator	Hull	Cargo	3 x Cutter	Fuel	3 x Cutter	Fuel	3 x Cutter	Structure	3 x Cutter	Structure	3 x Cutter	Structure	3 x Cutter	2 x Heavy Fusion Cannon	9 x Starfury	2 x Heavy Fusion Cannon	9 x Thunderbolt		
4	P-Plant	12 x Interceptors	2 x Neutron Laser	10 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	2 x Heavy Fusion Cannon	10 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	2 x Heavy Fusion Cannon	10 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	2 x Neutron Laser	10 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	2 x Neutron Laser	10 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	2 x Neutron Laser	12 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	2 x Neutron Laser	12 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	2 x Neutron Laser	Lightning Cannon		
5	Minbari Gravitic Field Generator	12 x Interceptors	Fuel	12 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	Structure	12 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	Structure	12 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	Structure	12 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	Structure	12 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	Structure	12 x Interceptors	Cobra Bays	12 x Interceptors	12 x Interceptors			
6	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull		
7	Hold	Armour	Hold	Armour	Hold	Armour	Hold	Armour	Hold	Armour	Hold	Armour	Hold	Armour	Hold	Armour	Hold	Armour		
8	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull		
9	Bridge	Hull	Cargo	3 x Shuttle	Hangar	3 x Shuttle	Hangar	3 x Shuttle	Hold	3 x Shuttle	Hold	3 x Shuttle	Hold	9 x Starfury	2 x Heavy Fusion Cannon	9 x Starfury	2 x Heavy Fusion Cannon	9 x Thunderbolt		
10	Jump Point Generator	12 x Interceptors	Repair Drones	10 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	2 x Heavy Fusion Cannon	10 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	2 x Heavy Fusion Cannon	10 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	2 x Neutron Laser	10 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	2 x Neutron Laser	10 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	2 x Neutron Laser	12 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	2 x Neutron Laser	12 x Heavy Pulse Cannon	2 x Neutron Laser	12 x Interceptors		
11	P-Plant	12 x Interceptors	Computer	12 x Interceptors	Fuel	12 x Interceptors	Fuel	12 x Interceptors	Fuel	12 x Interceptors	Fuel	12 x Interceptors	Fuel	Sensors	2 x Heavy Fusion Cannon	Sensors	2 x Heavy Fusion Cannon	12 x Interceptors		
12	Critical	Hull	Critical	Hull	Critical	Hull	Critical	Hull	Critical	Hull	Critical	Hull	Critical	Hull	Critical	Hull	Critical	Hull		



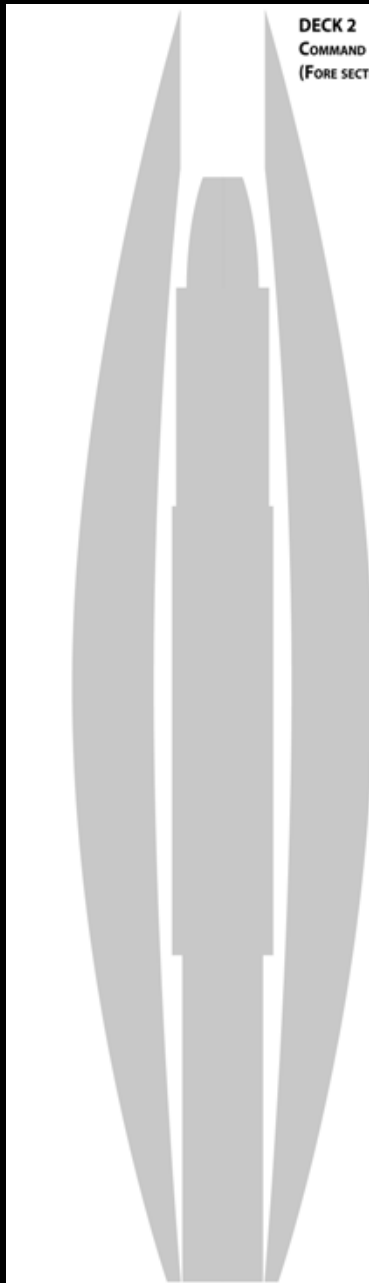
DECK 1
BRIDGE
(MID SECTION)



DECK 1
BRIDGE
(AFT SECTION)



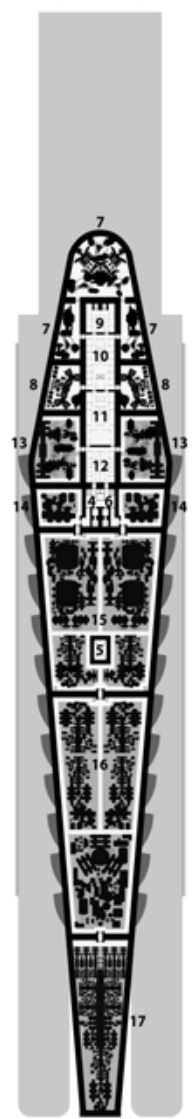
DECK 2
COMMAND
(FORE SECTION)



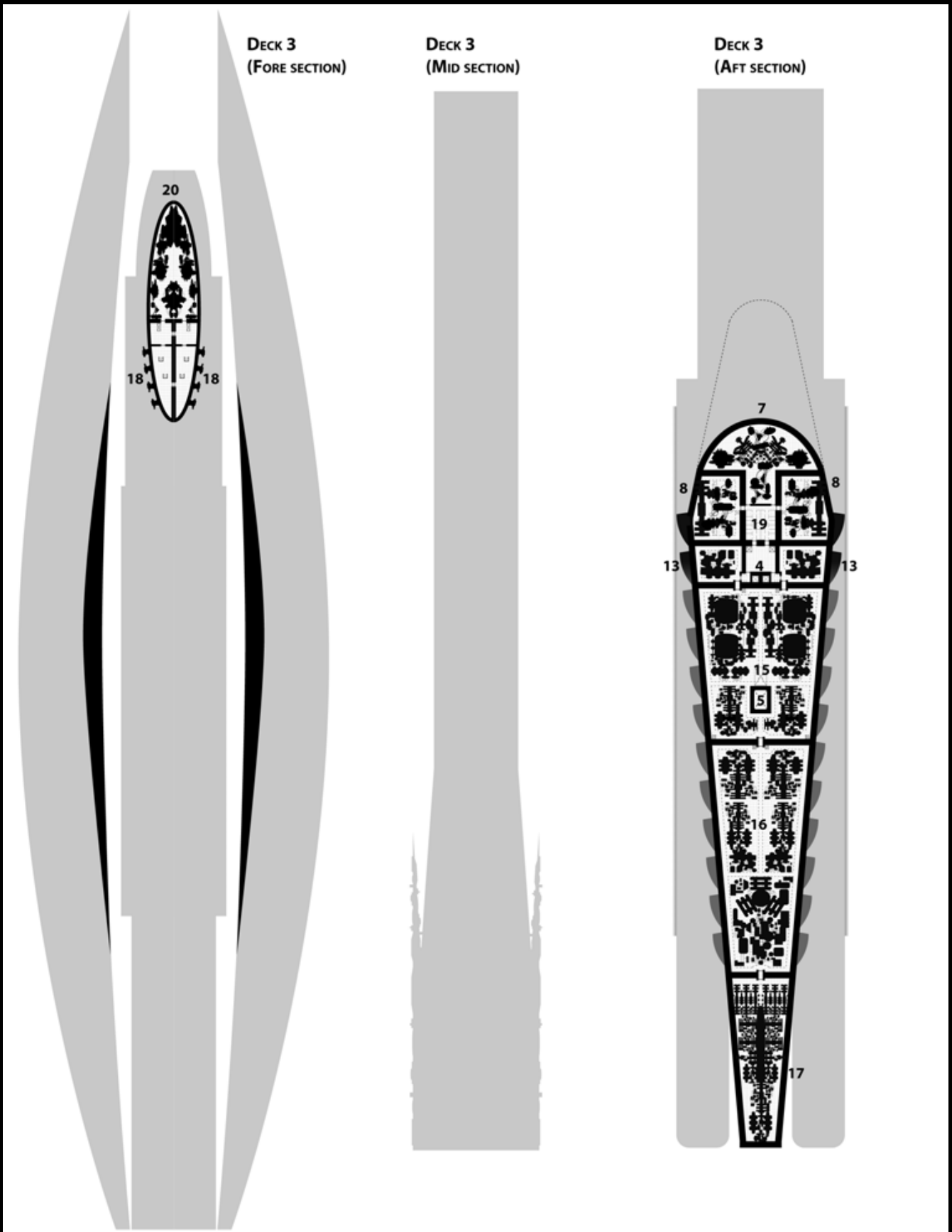
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COMMAND
(MID SECTION)



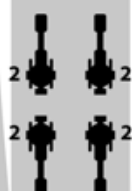
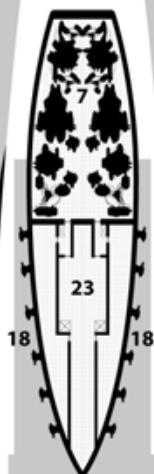
DECK 2
COMMAND
(AFT SECTION)



Victory-Class Advanced Destroyer



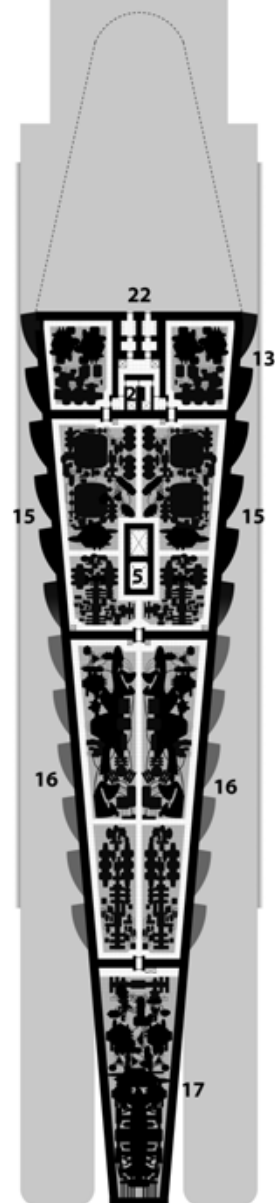
DECK 4
(FORE SECTION)



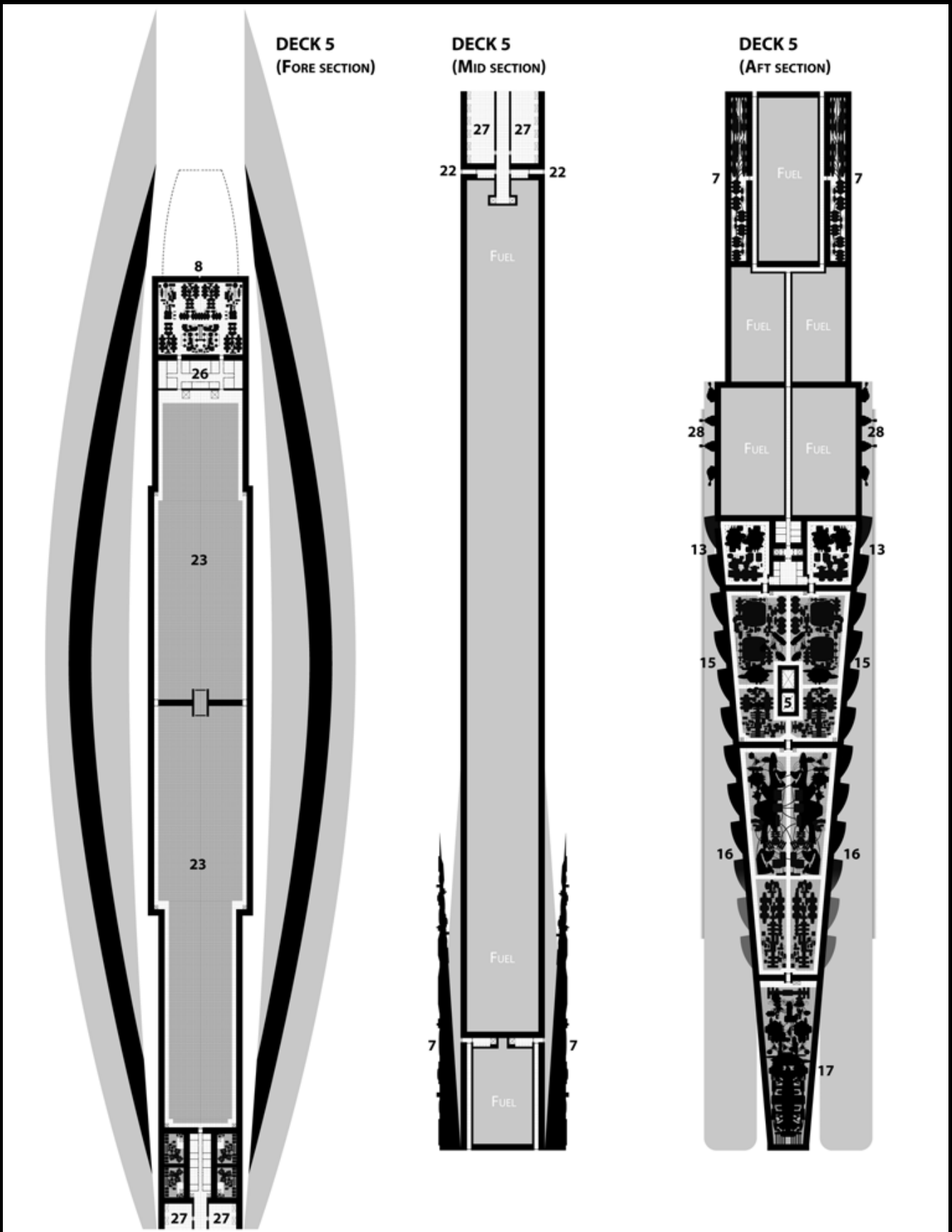
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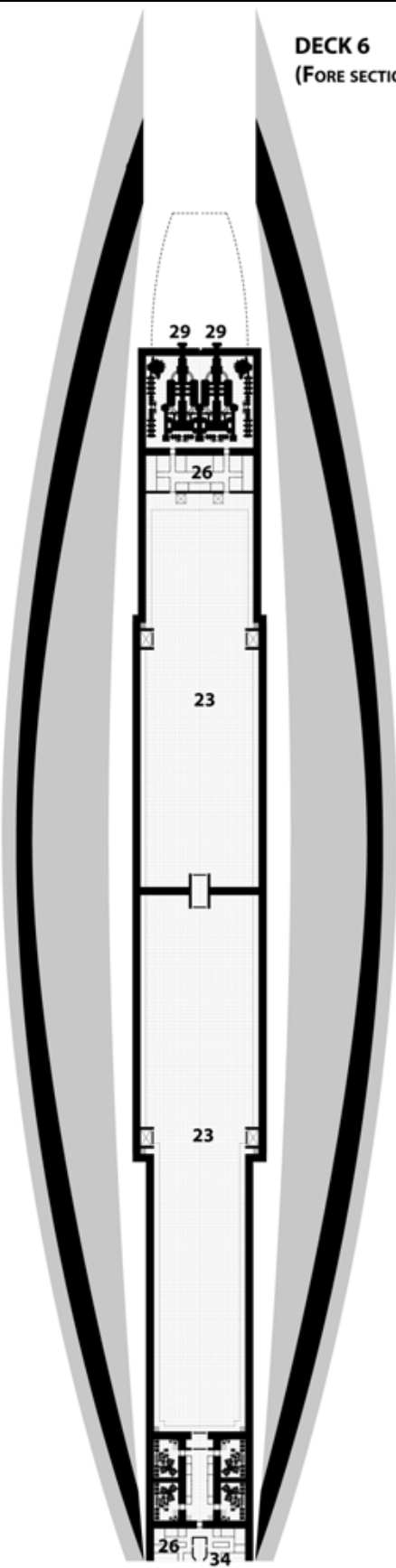
DECK 4
(AFT SECTION)



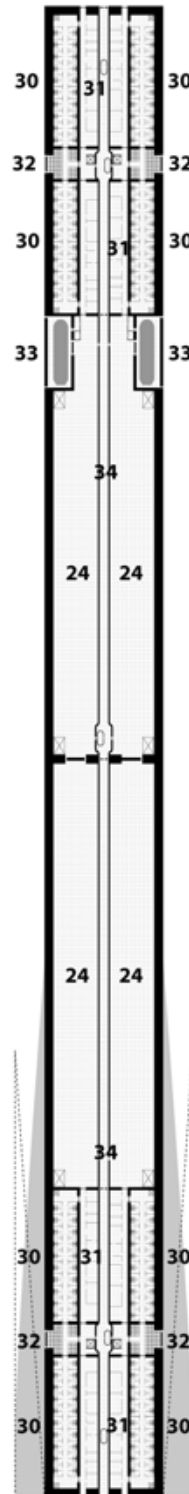
Victory-Class Advanced Destroyer



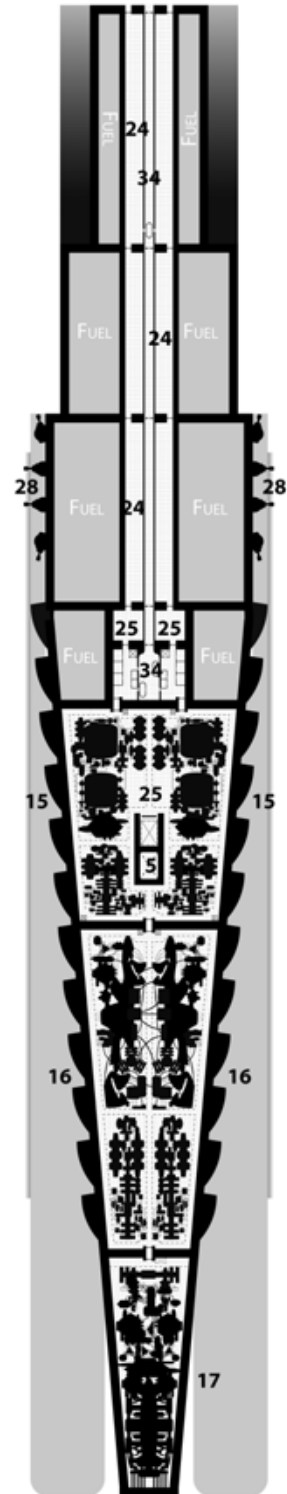
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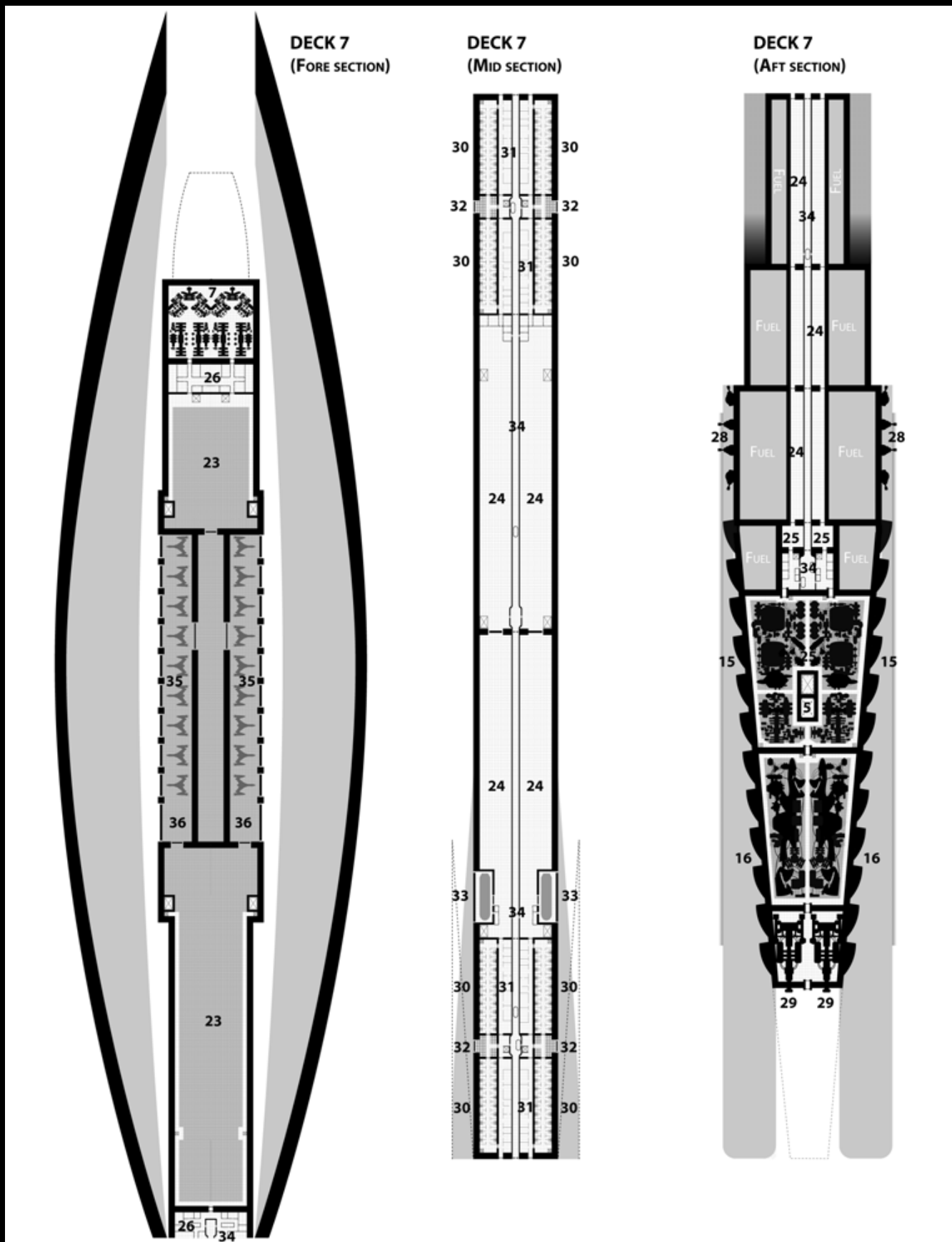
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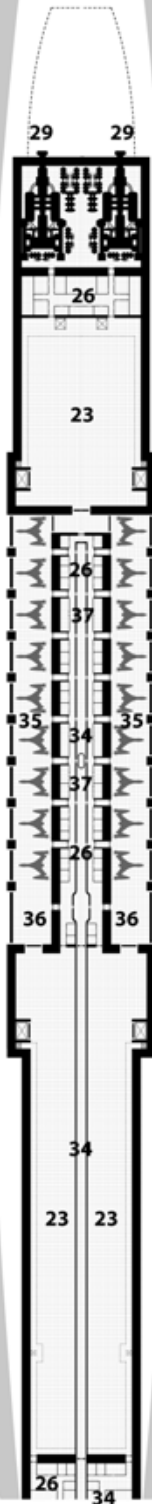
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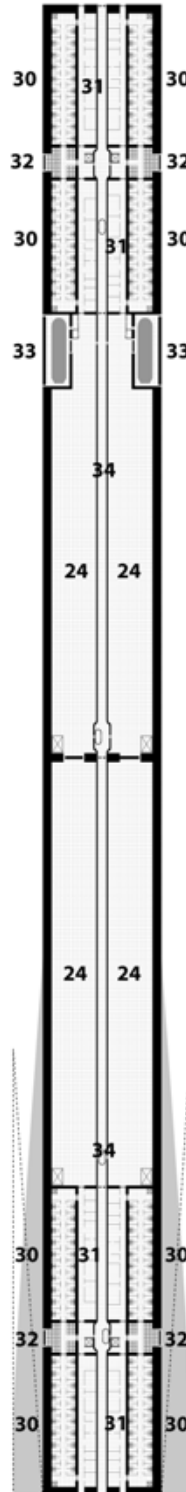
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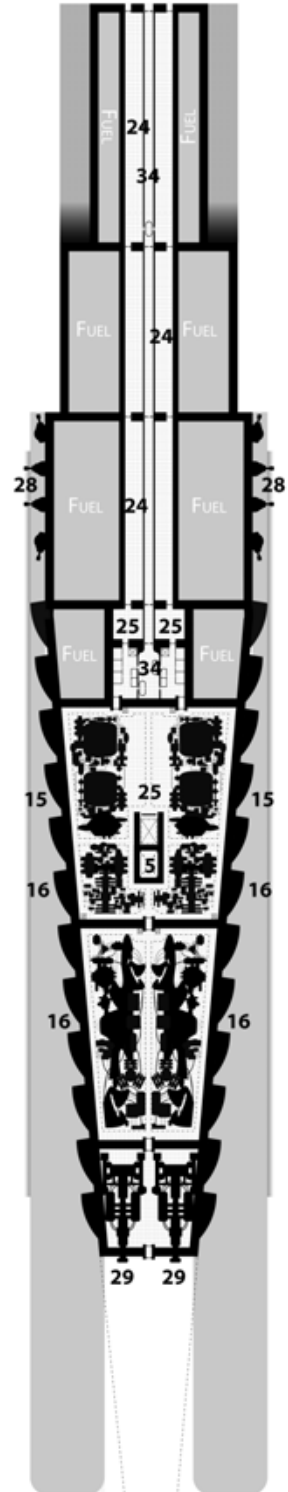
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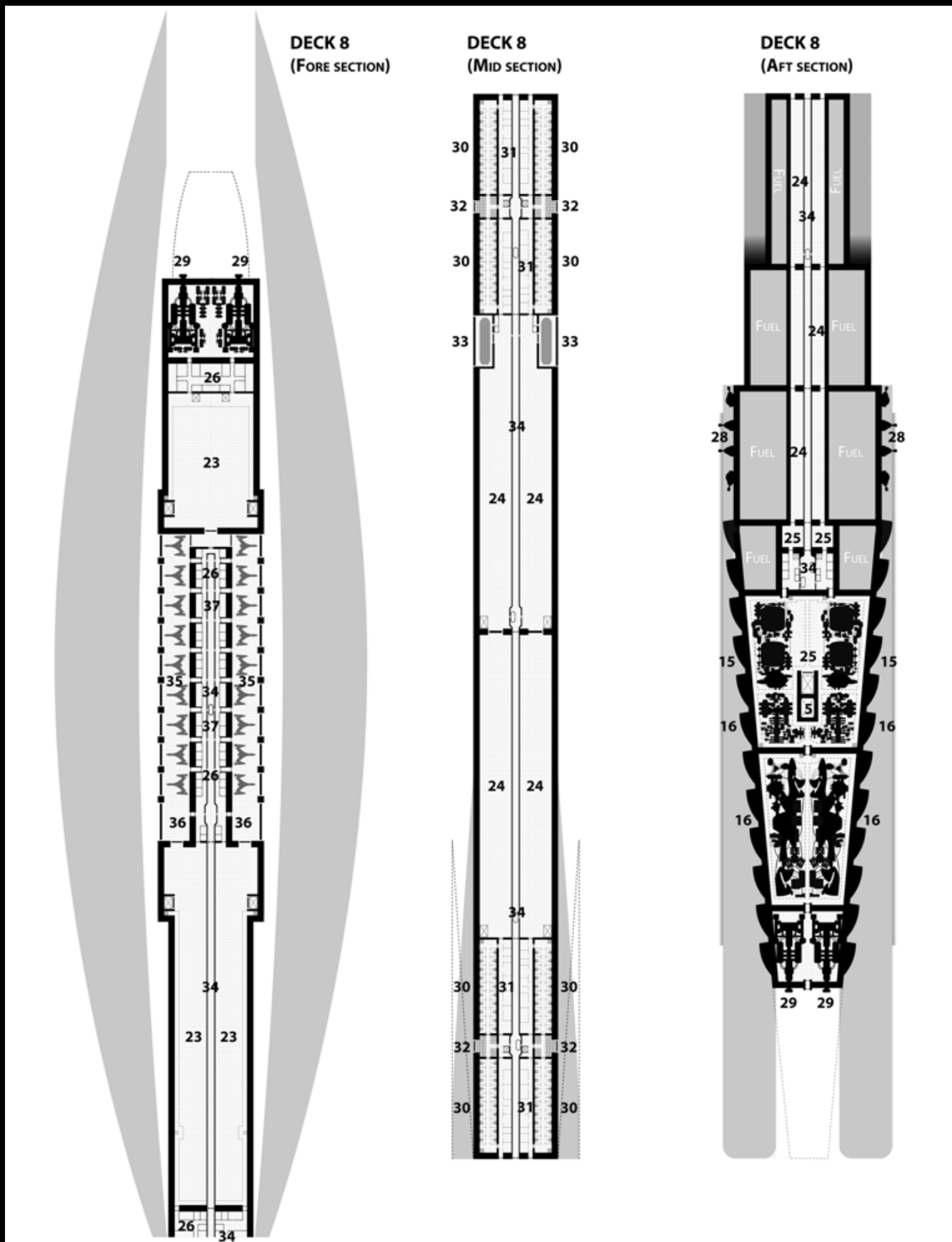
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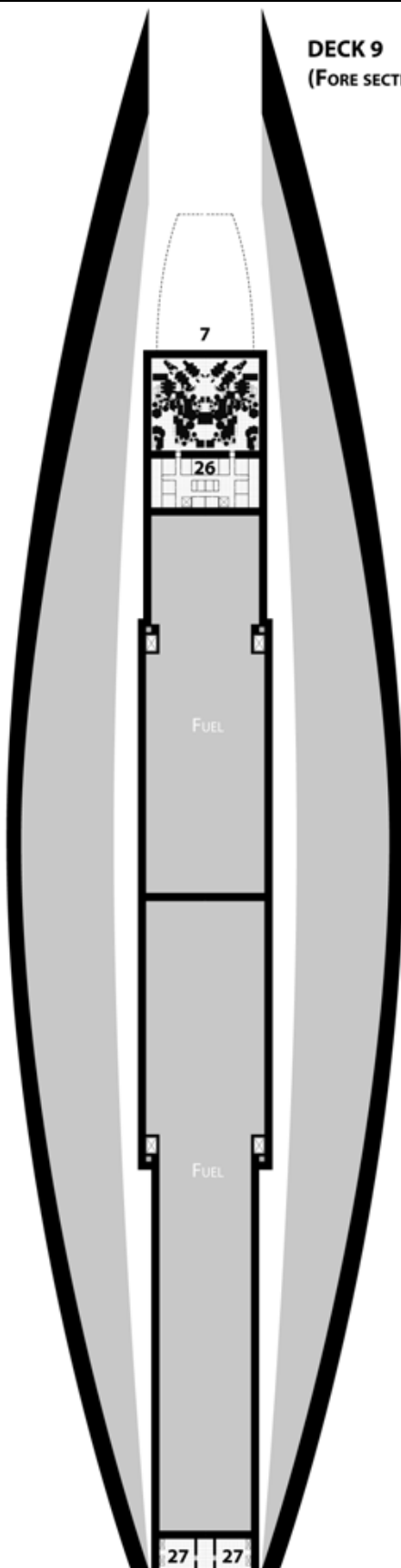
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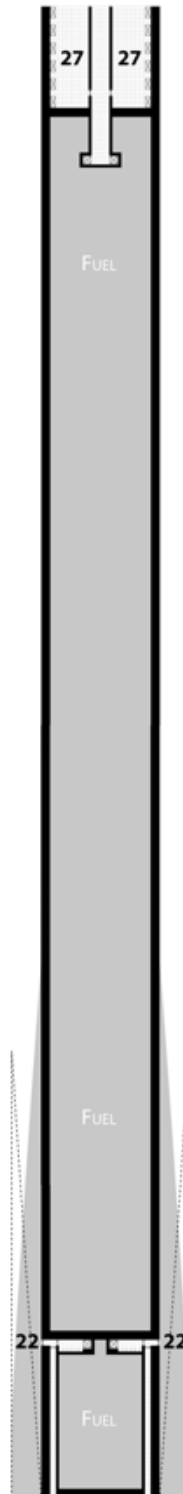
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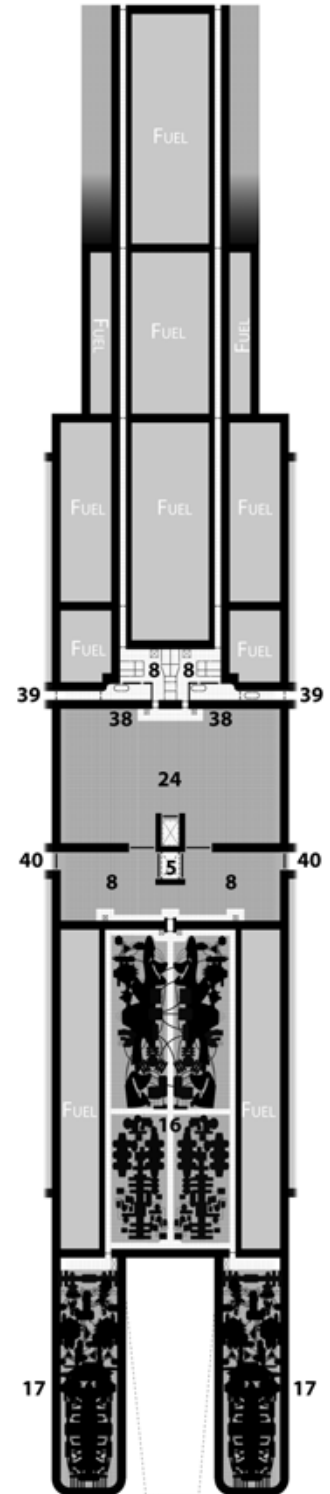
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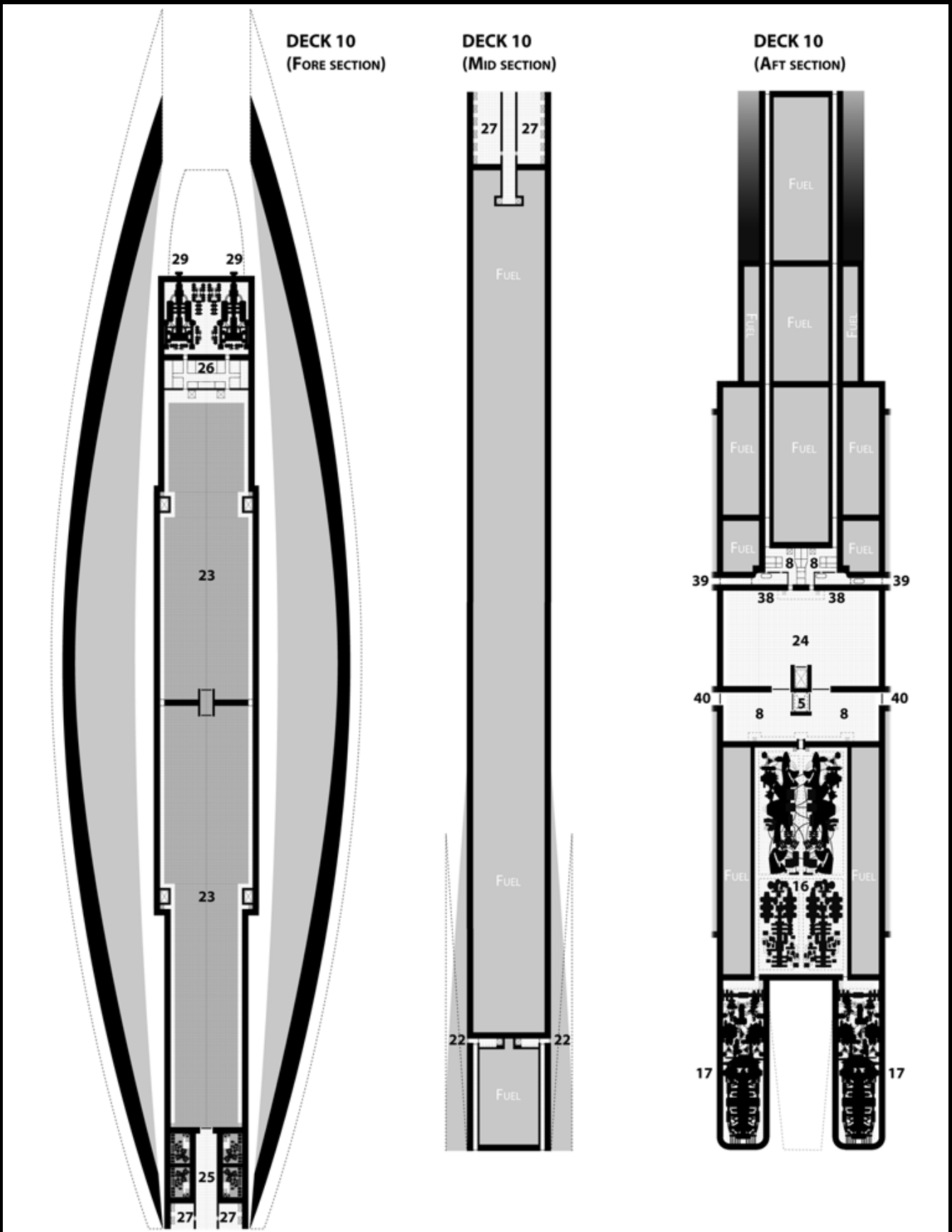
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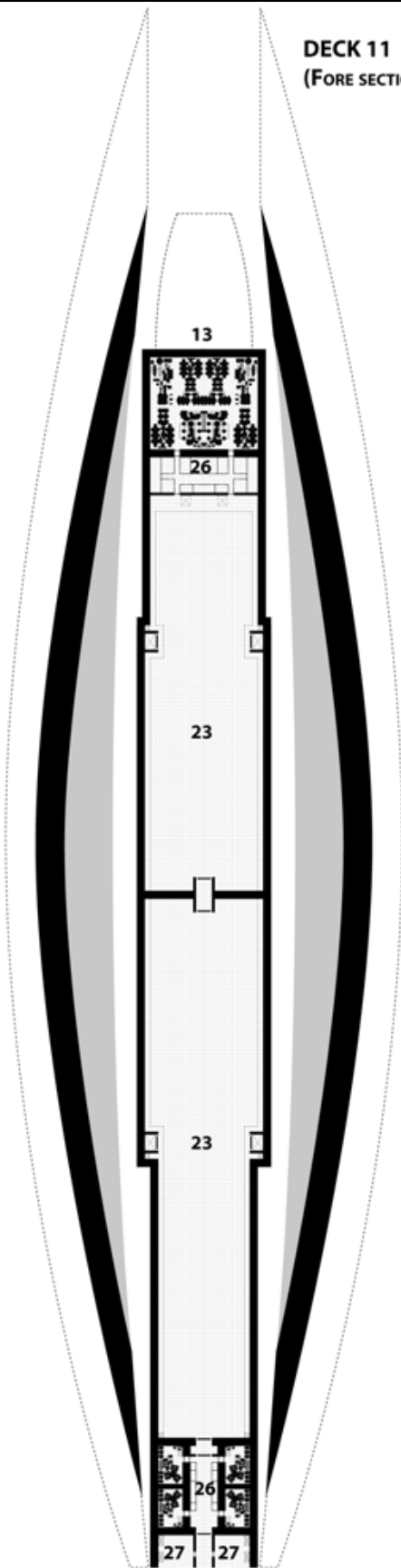
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Victory-Class Advanced Destroyer



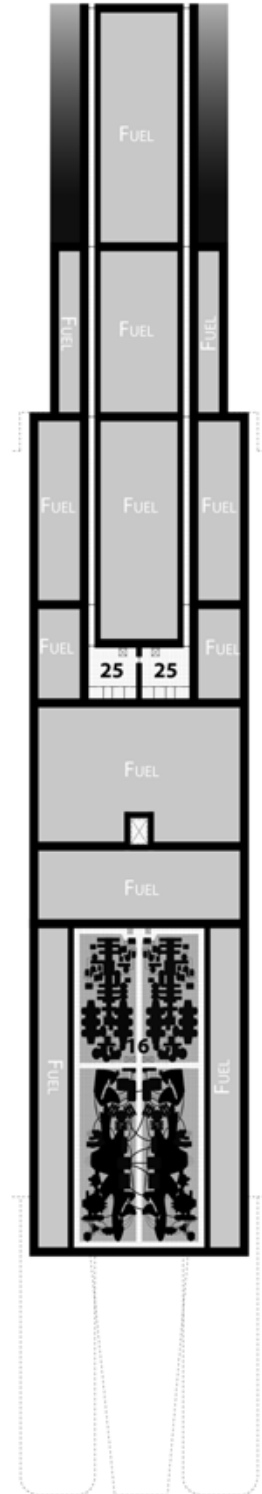
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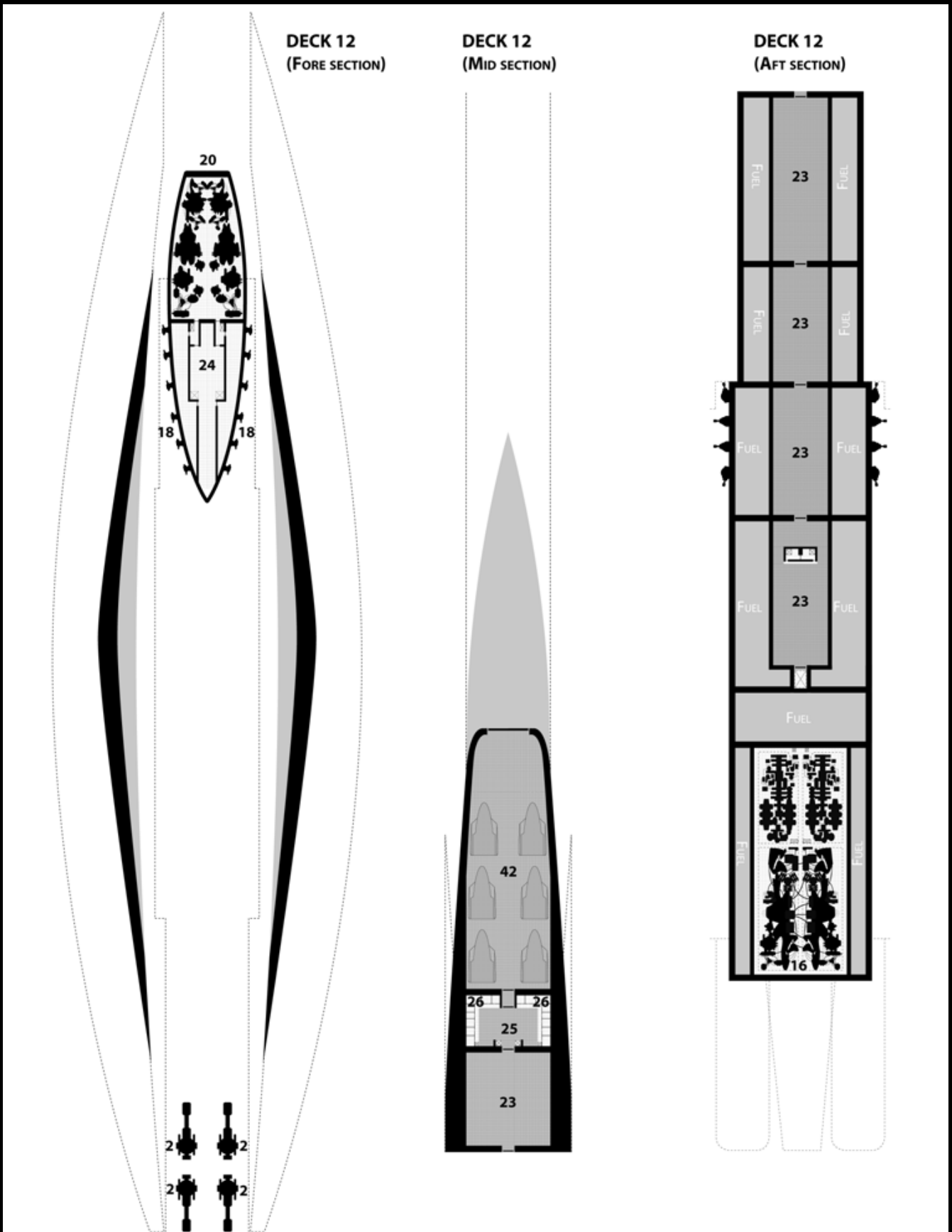
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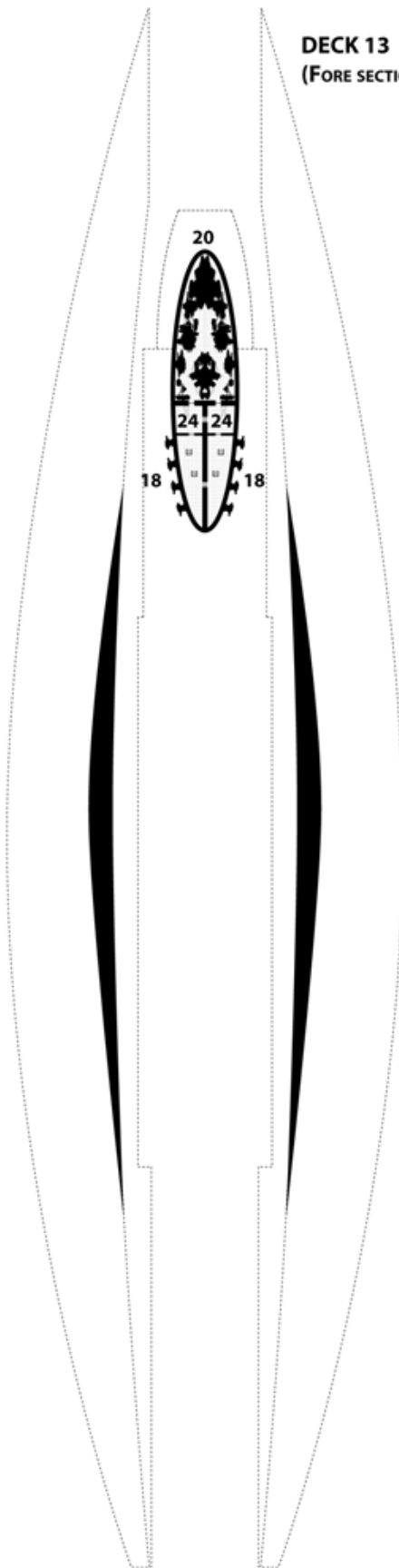
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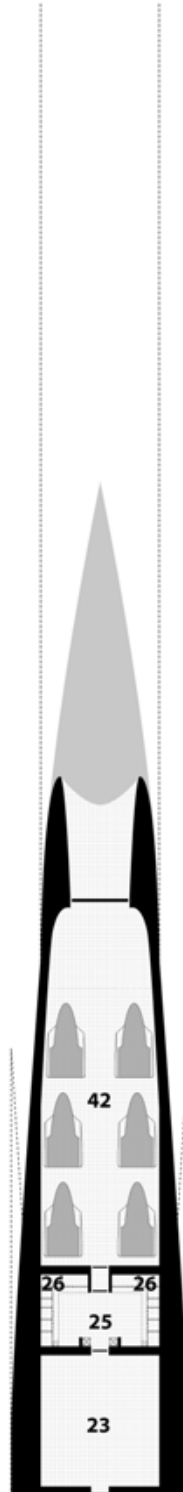
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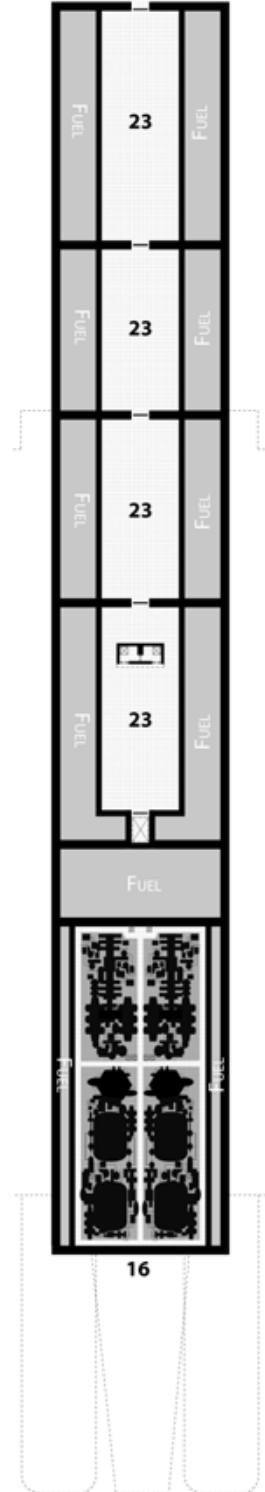
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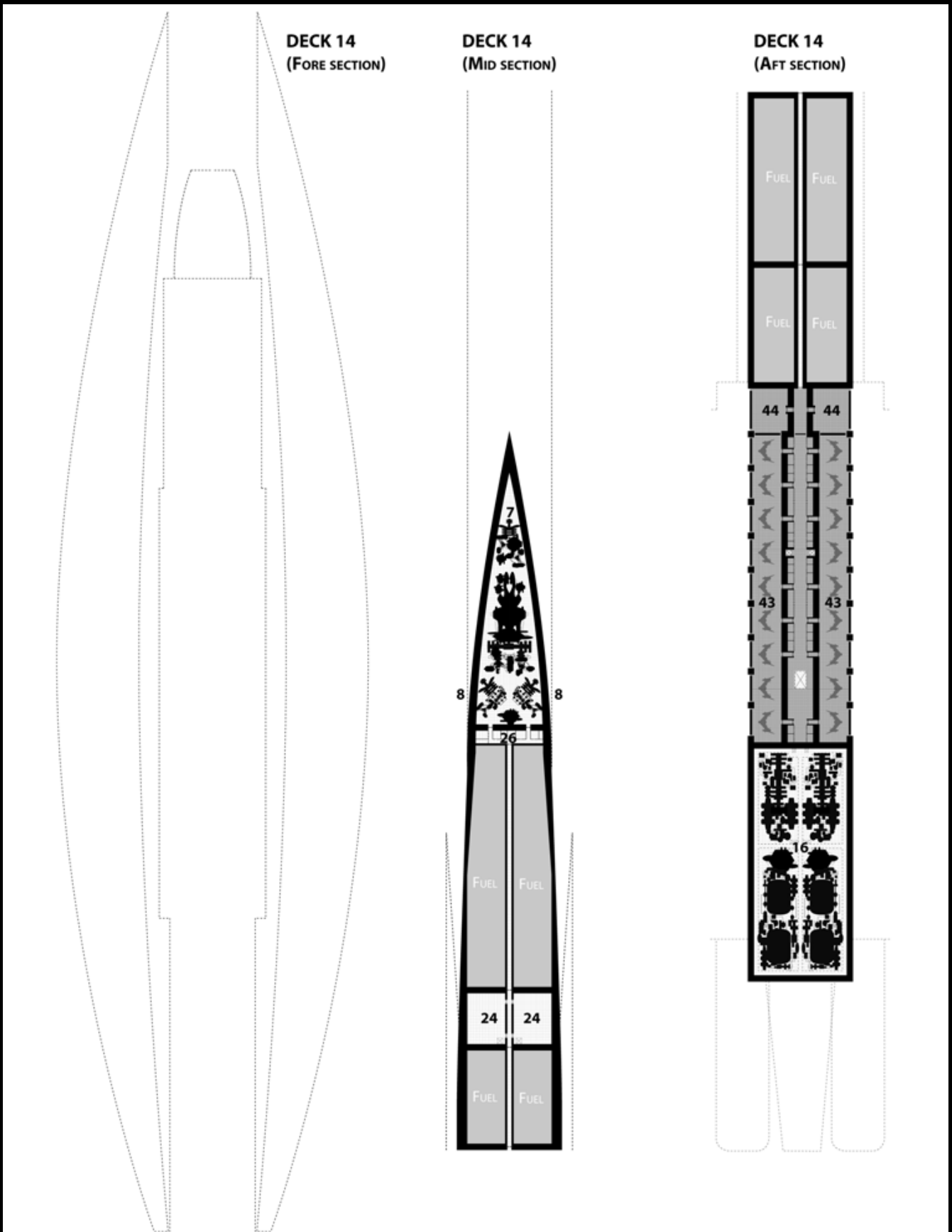
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**DECK 13
(AFT SECTION)**



Victory-Class Advanced Destroyer



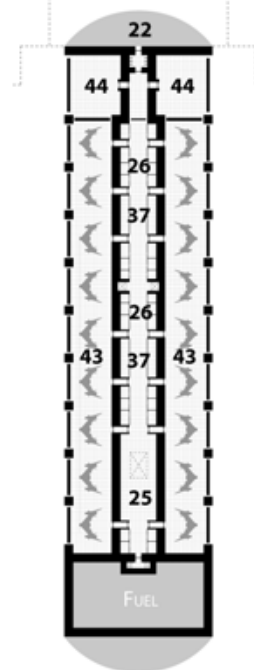
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DECK 15 (MID SECTION)

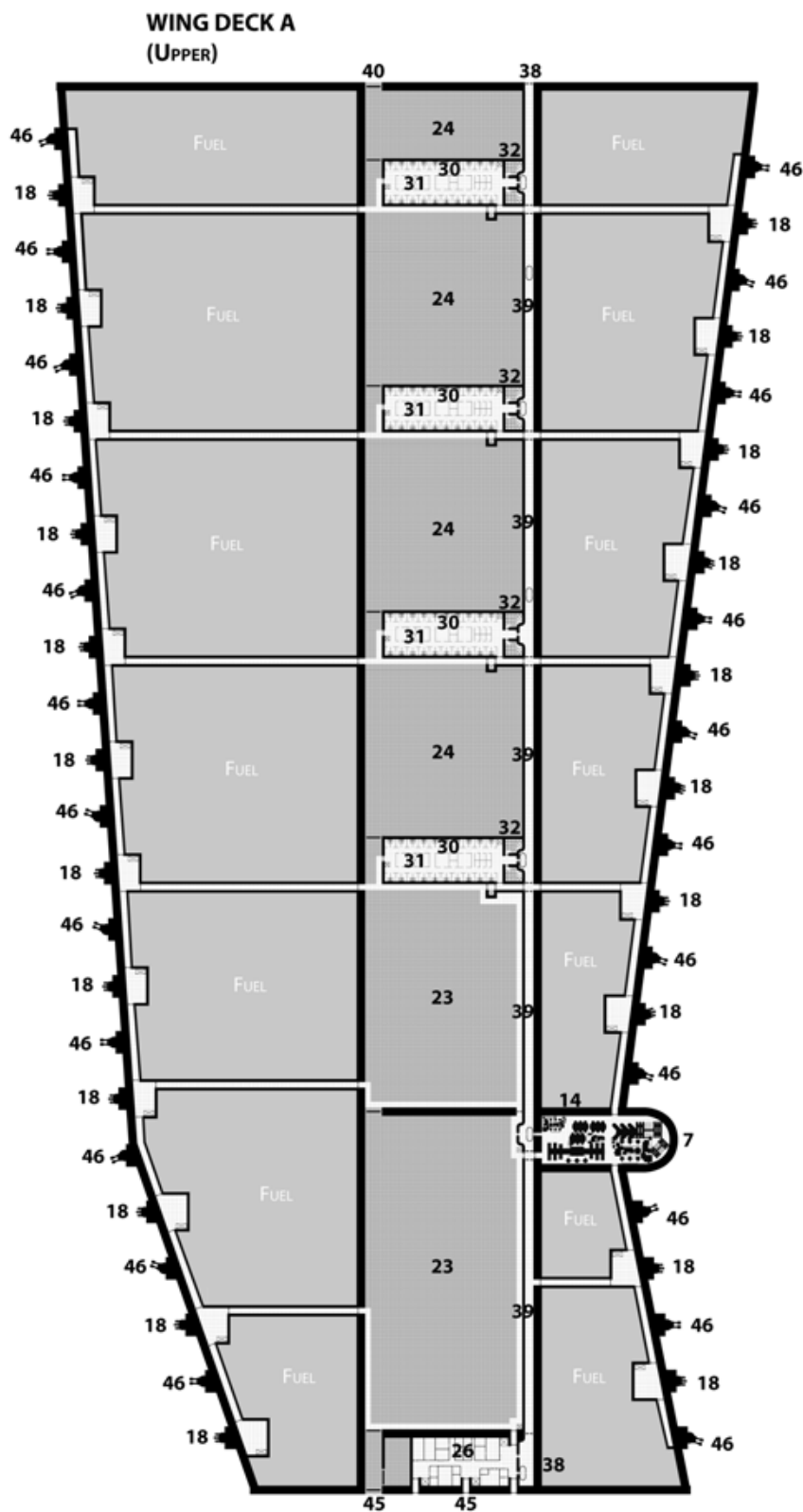
DECK 15 (AFT SECTION)

KEY (ALL DECKS)

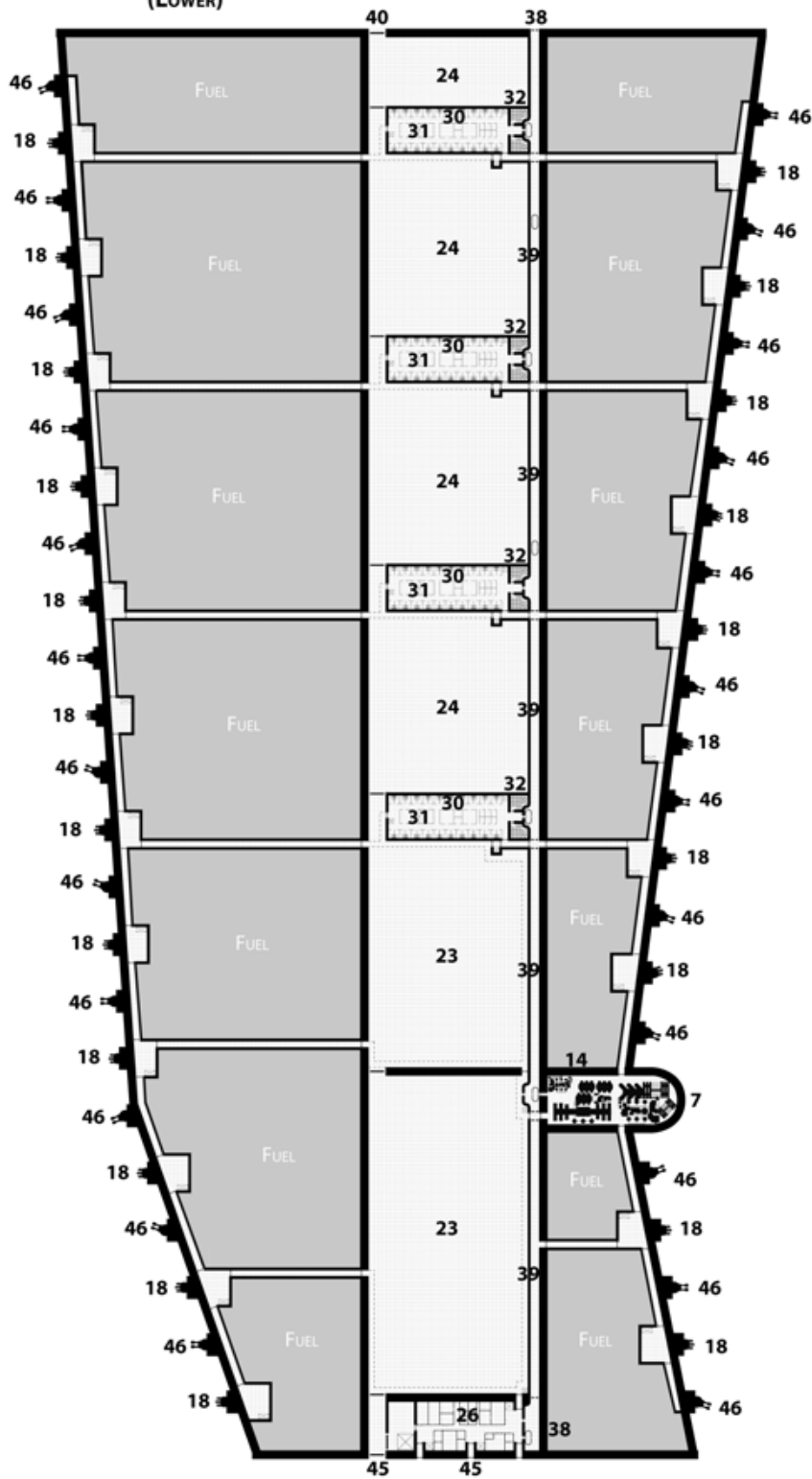
1. COMMAND BRIDGE
2. HEAVY FUSION CANNON
3. DORSAL WING
4. DORSAL WING PERSONNEL TRANSIT SHAFTS
5. DORSAL WING CARGO TRANSIT SHAFT
6. GRAVITY TRANSITIONING AREA
7. SENSOR SYSTEMS
8. MILITARY COUNTERMEASURE SYSTEMS
9. CAPTAIN AND EXECUTIVE OFFICERS' CABINS, LOUNGES, OFFICES AND MEETING ROOMS
10. SENIOR OFFICER CABINS, LOUNGE, MESS AND TACTICAL PLANNING ROOMS
11. MAIN BRIEFING HALL, ARMOURIES AND VAULTS
12. PRIMARY MED BAY AND LABORATORIES
13. EMERGENCY POWER SYSTEMS
14. GRAVITIC FIELD GENERATORS
15. POWER PLANT
16. JUMP POINT GENERATOR
17. JUMP POINT GENERATION FOCUSING SYSTEM
18. INTERCEPTOR BATTERIES (WITH AMMUNITION STORES)
19. BRIEFING ROOMS, RECREATION FACILITIES
20. LIGHTNING CANNON DIRECTIONAL FOCUSING SYSTEM
21. TERMINATION AREA FOR DORSAL WING TRANSIT SHAFT
22. AIRLOCK
23. CARGO HOLD
24. CARGO HOLD (SPARES)
25. CARGO HANDLING AREA
26. ENGINEERING AND MAINTENANCE WORKSHOPS
27. REPAIR DRONE STORE AND LAUNCH AREA
28. HEAVY PULSE CANNONS
29. IMPROVED NEUTRON LASER
30. CREW STATEROOMS
31. CREW MESS, LOUNGE, MEETING AREAS AND ARMOURIES
32. CREW ESCAPE PODS
33. CUTTER DOCKING BAY
34. CREW RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM
35. HANGAR (THUNDERBOLT HEAVY FIGHTERS)
36. DOCKING BAY (FOR HEAVY FIGHTERS)
37. FIGHTER ARMOURIES
38. TERMINATION AREA FOR SIDE WING TRANSIT SYSTEM
39. SIDE WING PERSONNEL TRANSIT SHAFTS
40. SIDE WING CARGO TRANSIT SHAFT
41. LAUNCH CONTROL
42. SHUTTLE LAUNCH AND RECOVERY BAY
43. HANGAR (STARFURY HEAVY FIGHTERS)
44. DOCKING BAY (FOR STARFURY FIGHTERS)
45. ACCESS TO/FROM WING POD
46. DOUBLE LIGHT PULSE CANNON
47. LIGHTNING CANNON PULSE GENERATOR
48. LIGHTNING CANNON FOCAL SYSTEM
49. MANOEUVRE DRIVE



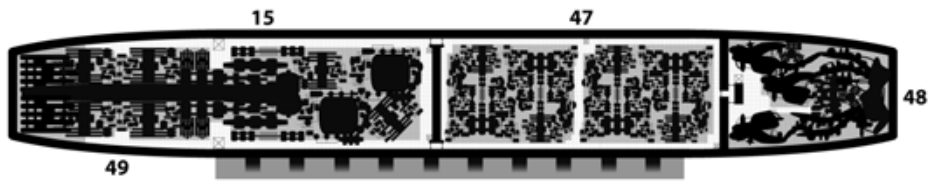
Victory-Class Advanced Destroyer



**WING DECK B
(LOWER)**

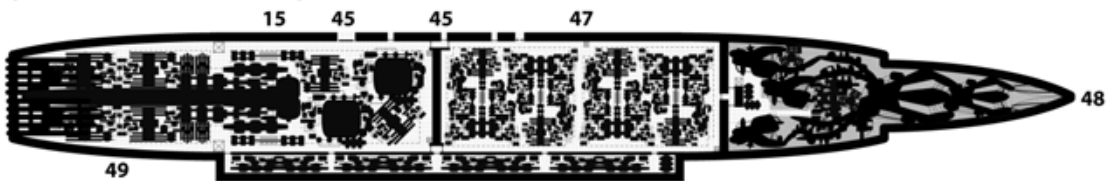


WING POD DECK 1



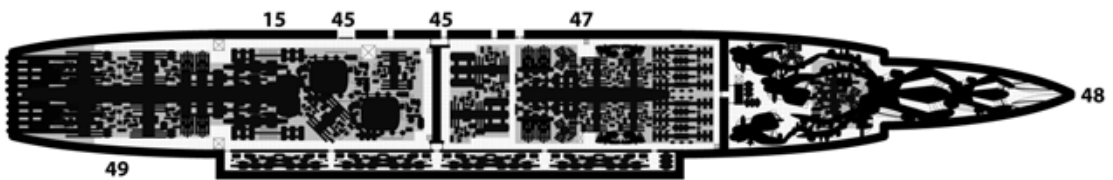
WING POD DECK 2

(CONNECTING TO WING DECK A)

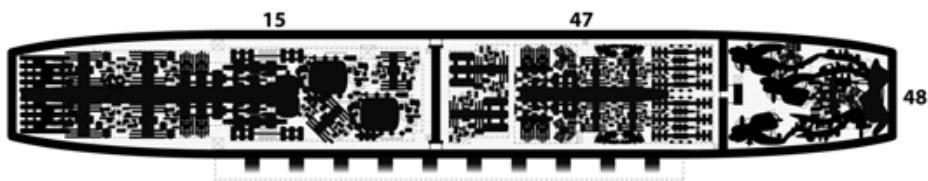


WING POD DECK 3

(CONNECTING TO WING DECK B)



WING POD DECK 4





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BY SIMON BEAL

LEGACY OF WAR

EPISODE 9:
LIFE IN SHADOW (PART 2)

'The first obligation of any prisoner is to escape.'

John Sheridan "All Alone in the Night"

Excavation Site

When the prison was being built, the Legacy Group discovered some alien ruins on the dark side of the moon, but most of the ancient civilisation is buried deep beneath layers of rock and rubble. A camp was soon established to excavate the site but due to the moon's natural background radiation, sensor scans were unable to reveal any areas of interest.

Once the inmate population began to grow, the prisoners were put to work. The prisoners' duty is to clear away the rock and rubble to find areas of interest. Once any archaeology is revealed, the prisoners move on to another area allowing Dr Avari and her team to examine what has been uncovered (which they do during the night when there are no prisoners present).

So far no major discoveries have been unearthed, but even with their limited knowledge of the alien civilisation, the Legacy Group is confident that there could be something of importance here.

This is the only activity where inmates leave the prison facility, and each inmate is issued with an EVA suit. Since there is no way off the moon, the workers here are not heavily supervised.

The Daily Grind

Work here is hard and reminiscent of the chain gangs on Earth. Inmates are tasked with breaking down the rubble and carting it to specified areas. Due to the low gravity of the moon, the rocks are easier to lift and carry but it is still tough going.

Some of the inmates are given pick axes to break the rocks down. Others carry the broken rocks to carts nearby. When full, inmates must push the carts to the dumping areas, unload and return the empty cart to begin again.

There are certain dig sites where tunnels have been created to dig down to potential areas of interest. These can sometimes change as the archaeologists discover new leads and new tunnels must be started. Lights are installed in the tunnels and inmates also have lamps fixed to their EVA suits.

Anyone with any archaeological skills will be given the much easier task of investigating the excavated areas and must study and report their findings to Dr Avari. This could give any players assigned here the opportunity to earn Sakina's trust and maybe her affections. Sakina and her team are as much prisoners here as the other inmates and if any of the players get close enough to her, she could be persuaded to help them escape when the opportunity presents itself.

Organising the Work

Workers are split into groups to work in different areas. Each group will usually have anywhere from four to ten workers. Bob Nash is in charge of organising the work here but he delegates this job to one of the inmates that he knows can be trusted. The organiser must report to Bob but they get to assign tasks and decide who is in each group.

Discovery

After the players have been in the prison for about three months, one of the players will make a discovery whilst excavating one of the tunnels.

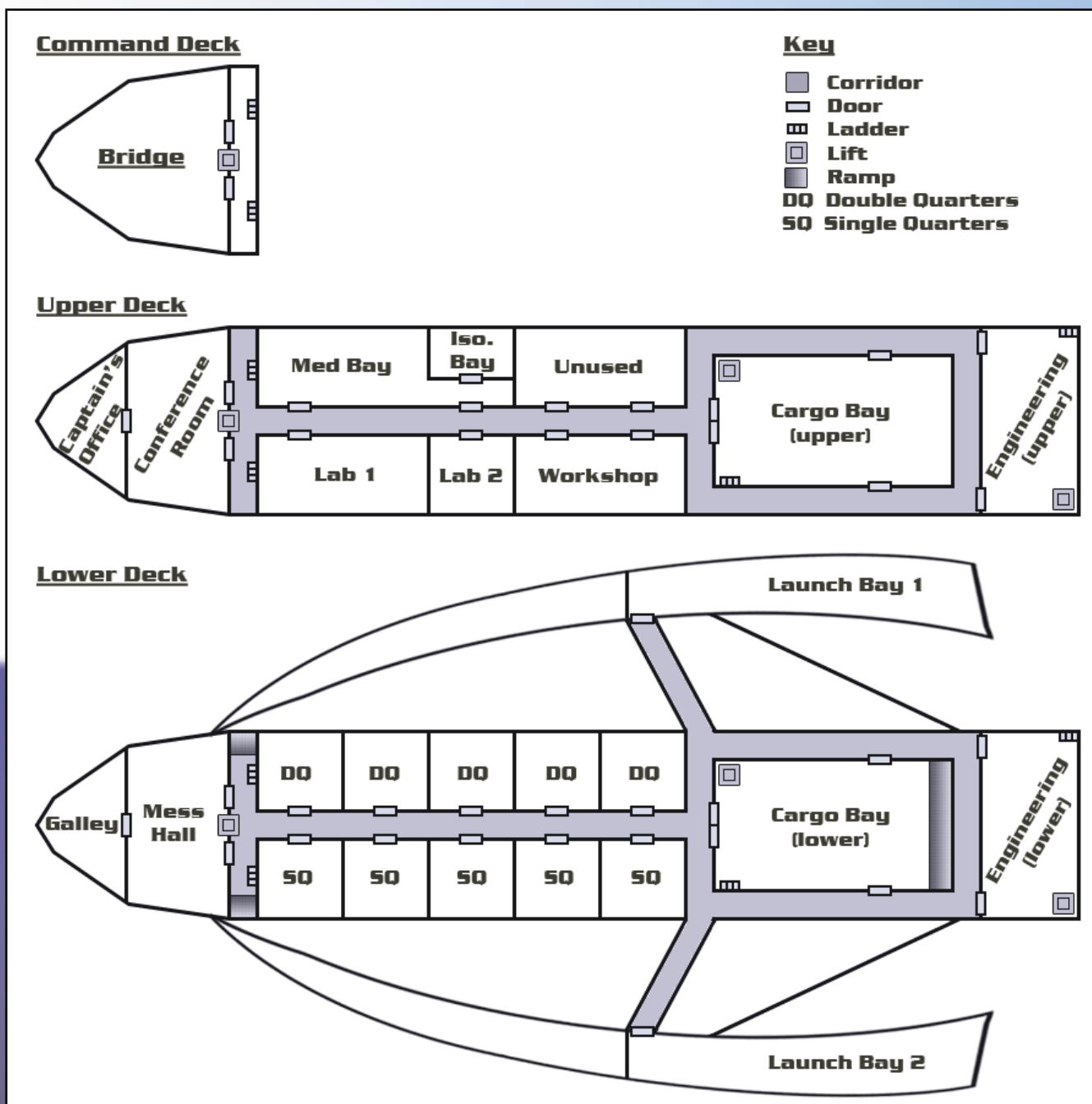


Alien Ship			Tons	Price (Cr.)
Hull	1,400 tons Streamlined	Hull 28 Structure 28 Stealth Self-sealing		—
Armour	Bio-Lattice	12 points	140	—
Artificial Gravity		Bio-Grav	—	—
Jump Point Generator		Jump 2	140	—
Manoeuvre Drive V		Thrust 5	39	—
Power Plant V		Rating 5	61	—
Bridge			40	—
Computer	Model 6	Rating 30		—
Electronics	Very Advanced	DM +2	5	—
Weapons	Bays	2 x Neutron Canon	102	—
Fuel	240 tons	Four Jump 2 – Eight weeks of operation	240	—
Cargo	800 tons		800	—
10 Staterooms		Double Occupancy	64	—
Extras	Airlock x2		1	—
	Briefing Room		4	—
	Laboratory x 2		16	—
	Medical Bay		12	—
	Repair Drones		8	—
	Workshop		12	—
Craft	4 Fighters	Full Scale Hangars	104	—
Software	Manoeuvre/0			—
	Auto Repair/2			—
	Evade/3			—
	Fire Control/5			—
	Jump Control/2			—
Maintenance Cost (monthly)				65,000
Life Support Cost (monthly)				20,000
Total Tonnage & Cost			13,724	Priceless



Weapon	Race	Optimum Range	Damage	Cost (MCr)	Special	Notes
Neutron Canon	Unknown	Medium	6d6+Crew Hit	Priceless	Armour Piercing	Ignores the first 4 Points of Armour
Neutron Gun	Unknown	Short	1d6	Priceless	Armour Piercing	Ignores the first 2 Points of Armour

Alien Fighter			Tons	Price (Cr.)
Hull	20 tons Streamlined	Hull 0 Structure 1		—
		Stealth		—
		Self-sealing	—	—
Armour	Bio-Lattice	6 points	1	—
Manoeuvre Drive V	sJ	Thrust 9	2.5	—
Power Plant V	sJ	Rating 9	3.3	—
Bridge	Cockpit for 2		3	—
Computer	Model 6	Rating 30		—
Electronics	Very Advanced	DM +2	5	—
Weapons	Fixed Mounting (front)	2 x Neutron Gun	2	—
Fuel	1 ton	One week of operation	1	—
Cargo	0 tons		0	—
Software	Manoeuvre/0			—
	Evade/3			—
	Fire Control/4			—
Total Tonnage & Cost			17.8	Priceless



As you dig through the rubble, you feel the ground shift beneath you as it collapses. You fall into the darkness for several seconds before landing on something. You do not injure yourself but the wind is knocked out of you.

You are surrounded by darkness and turn on your EVA suit lights, revealing a scene you could only dream of. You appear to have fallen into a large hanger cut into the moons' surface. Had you fallen all the way down you would surely be dead, but luckily you landed on an alien ship.

It is roughly twice the size of the Star Dancer and unlike anything you have seen before. The hull has a rustic hue with a tint of green, giving it the look of organic technology but it would need to be studied to be certain.

Part of the hanger has collapsed, burying part of the ship but most of it remains accessible. Just as you are deciding whether to investigate further, you hear the guards calling out the end of the work shift.

Hopefully the player will realise this could be the means to their escape. The guards have called time so the player will need to get out of the hanger and cover up the hole so it is not discovered by anyone else.

Discussion

Once back in the prison, the players will need to discuss using the ship to escape. They will need to find somewhere secret where they can speak without anyone else finding out about their plans.

The first thing they need to do is examine the ship to see if it is space worthy. Only then can they start to formulate their escape plan. To do this they will need to get an engineer and a xenoarchaeologist on board to investigate further.

To investigate the ship, the players will need to make sure the appropriate people are assigned to the work camps. The players will then need to make sure they are in the same group so some can guard the tunnel whilst the others examine the ship.

Exploring the Hangar

Much of the hangar has caved in so there is not much to explore, especially since the ship fills most of the remaining space. It is unclear where the doorway to the hangar was, so the best option for getting the ship out is to simply fly straight up but the ground above will need to be cleared first.

A search of the hangar will reveal some fuel cells that have been buried by some rubble. They can be easily dug out but most have deteriorated beyond repair.

Exploring the Ship

The interior of the ship looks much like the exterior and is split into two main decks, plus the command deck.

Bridge

The command chair sits in the centre of the bridge from where the captain can command the crew. It has a communications device and a small console that crew members can relay data to.

Two positions situated at the front are used to pilot the vessel and control the weapon systems. Basic access to sensors and communications are also available, allowing the ship to be flown solo if necessary. The port side station has a full sensor suite and the starboard side has a computer console and full access to the communications array.

Upper Nacelles

The two upper nacelles contain advanced communication and sensor arrays. They also contain elements of

the life support system. Each nacelle is identical, providing redundancy should one get damaged.

Weapons

The ship only has two weapons but they are extremely effective. Each weapon is integrated with the front end of the lower nacelles.

Power Systems

The ship uses a fusion power reactor which spans both levels of the engineering section.

Life Support

The life support systems can sustain up to 20 people. Once sealed, players can remove EVA suits to do their work (once the systems are active). These systems also include artificial gravity.

Engines

The main engines are connected to the upper nacelles, located further back in the centre. Manoeuvring thrusters are located all over the hull indicating that this is a very agile craft. The main engines appear to be in working condition but the manoeuvring thrusters and jump drive are not currently operational.

Hangars

The lower nacelles each contain a hangar with two fighters in each bay. The fighters appear to be in working order but need to be fuelled before they can be used.

The Verdict

After their initial examination, you can give the alien ship handout to the players. The weapon and communication systems require parts they do not currently have access to, but the life support, engines, and jump drive can all be fixed once they can get the necessary tools and power has been restored.

No items or equipment can be found on the ship, and the players should come to the conclusion that the ship was near completion when the moon was attacked.

Power Struggle

If the player captain has been a good leader, his original crew will most likely

continue to be loyal to him. However, if other NPCs join the escape team, some of them may think they are better suited to running the show. This can create some tricky situations and something that the players must consider before letting anyone else in on their secret.

Escape Plan

Once the party know the ship can be repaired, they will need to carefully plan their escape. Due to the restrictions they have, it will take several months to get everything ready. The main points they need to discuss are listed here.

Keeping the Secret

The most important thing they need to do is to keep this a secret from both the guards and inmates or it will all be over. Any meetings will have to be done in secret and they must keep the hangar hidden from prying eyes.

Selecting the Team

They also need to decide who will be going with them. The ship is designed for 15 crew members but it can support up to 20. The players should keep a couple of places spare in case they need to add more people as their plan unfolds.

An additional five people could be transported for a short period of time, but this would have to be a temporary situation as the life support system was not designed to support this many people.

Work Duties

Anyone not in the work camp who will be escaping must somehow get transferred to work camp duty. Also, some items (such as tools) may only be obtainable by working in other areas so they will need to be assigned there before joining the work camps.

Tunnel Access

To spend time on the ship, the players' need to ensure the right people get assigned to the tunnel and remain there long enough to do what they need. They must also continue to excavate the tunnel to avoid arousing suspicion.

This means the players must either bargain with the NPC in charge of

the work camp roster to ensure they can continue to work on the ship. An incentive would be to allow the NPC to escape with the players. Alternatively, the players could attempt to get the job for themselves if they do not want to let the NPC in on the secret, but convincing Bob Nash will be difficult and would result the players making an enemy of the inmate NPC.

Translating the Alien Language

Before they can do anything, the players must gain a reasonable understanding of how the ship works. To do this they need to translate the alien language. It will take about two weeks before they are ready to begin the other tasks.

Tools

Various tools are required before work on the ship can begin. The players must obtain these by dealing with other inmates or stealing them from the workshop.

Powering the Ship

Before the party can start repairing the ship, they must first restore the power systems. With a little time and the correct tools, an engineer will be able to make one working power cell from the units found in the hanger (enough for one jump and a few weeks operation).

The fusion reactor will then need to be powered up and calibrated. All sub-systems will then need to be checked to make sure the power flow is working throughout the ship. Restoring the power will take about one week.

Restoring Life Support

Once the ship has power, next on the list should be life support as it will make the rest of their work a little easier. Completing this task will take one week.

Repairing the Ship

The biggest job will be getting the vessel space worthy. This includes repairing the main engines, jump drive and modifications to various sub-systems. To complete all the repairs will take six to eight weeks.

Flying the Ship

They will also need to work out how to control and fly the ship which can be done at the same time the repairs are being done. This will require the combined efforts of a pilot and someone able to translate the alien writing.

Freeing the Ship

Once it is repaired, they still need to get the ship out of the hangar. Since the weapons are not functioning, some well placed explosives on the surface should loosen the rubble enough to fly the ship through.

Fighting the Guards

When the ship is ready and the party want o make their escape, they must consider how to overcome the guards who will make every effort to stop the inmates once it is clear they are attempting to escape. Since work groups never have more than 10 people in them, the players may have to fight some of the guards to get everyone to the ship. This will require weapons or a way to overpower the guards and take their guns.

Prison Encounters

From their initial discovery of the ship up to when it is ready to launch will take about three months. During this time and the three months preceding this, many things can happen. The players will make new friends and enemies who will help or hinder their escape plan. A number of possible encounters are listed here.

Rumours

As the players make new friends, they will start to hear various rumours about the prison and other inmates. Here are some to get you started but free to make up your own.

- Prisoners are taken away every so often and are never seen again. Some think there are other bases and work camps, whiles others think they are experimented upon.
- Over 100 of the surviving crew of the Orinoco were taken just days after they were captured. They and have not been seen since.

- Some of the guards will do favours as long as it will not result in any problems but there is often a price tag attached. Guards have been known to provide a variety of safe items such as books or a deck of cards.
- If the guards do you a favour, they will come to you when they need information.
- Some of the guards are quite nasty and regularly beat up prisoners they do not like.

Gangs

The players will probably join one of the gangs or form their own. Some individuals might even be recruited by other gangs.

Bullying

Cage and his people will pick on anyone who looks like an easy target, especially if they are not in a gang or an alien. Some ideas are listed here:

- The player is simply pushed around and made fun of.
- During meal times, someone will trip the player over so they spill their food.
- The player is ordered to give up their desert every mealtime to pay for their 'protection'.
- The player is made to steal items from work areas or other inmates.

Bullying can really start to wear down anyone on the receiving end but unfortunately the only way to prevent it is with a confrontation. Such situations usually end up with a visit to the infirmary.

Gang War

The presence of the players might be seen as a threat by Cage. As the weeks go by, they will have various run-ins with his gang (as detailed previously). The hostilities will increase even if the players stick up for each other.

Eventually, it will escalate into a fight and many members of Cage's gang have various makeshift weapons. Try to engineer a situation that acts as a catalyst for this, perhaps even related to their escape plan (maybe the players

need to steal something from one of Cage's men).

Infirmary

If anyone is injured they will be taken to the infirmary to be treated. There are many drugs, tools and equipment here that might be needed for their escape, so one of the players may need to get themselves admitted here if their plan is to succeed.

Cell Inspection

There will be several cell inspections during the course of their time here. Any items obtained for use in their escape will have to be well hidden or the owner will face severe punishment.

Punishment

Punishments are given for disobeying the rules. The most common form of punishment is a beating down by the guards. Severe infractions result in solitary confinement where inmates spend days in a small dark room with minimum rations. Inmates emerge from solitary in a weakened state (-2 DM to all skill checks) and take 24 to 48 hours to fully recover.

You can have it so a key member of escape team ends up in solitary confinement at a critical point, delaying the party's plans to escape.

Eavesdropping

An inmate overhears the players discussing part of their escape. He will threaten to blow the whistle on everything he knows if they do not tell him more and let him go with them.

Work Team

A prisoner is assigned to the players' work team in the tunnel. The players must try to keep their secret from him, whilst continuing their work. Maybe they can get him reassigned or maybe he will discover the ship and want in.

Arrivals

Some new inmates arrive. If the players get to know them they can ask about current events.

Plague Update

'Nothing new has really happened since the conference on Mars back in June. Several ideas were discussed which scientists are now investigating, but most people's hopes still rest with the Excalibur.'

Excalibur News

'Some fashion gurus tried to 'improve' the Excalibur's image in the media. Many people were angered by this - nobody really cares what they look like, they just want them to find a cure.'

Ghost of Hyperspace

'They have found the people responsible for the missing ships. The Ghost of Hyperspace was actually a heavily armed transport. The Orinoco has been pursuing them and... hang on, you're one of them aren't you?'

The players will eventually be recognised as one of the fugitives reported on ISN so there is a good chance they will find out that they are wanted criminals.

Departures

Some inmates are shipped out. This will most likely be some of the Orinoco crew, but choose some inmates that the players have become friendly with, maybe even someone vital to their escape.

Guard Patrol

Several of the guards patrol the work areas and will occasionally check the tunnels to make sure everything is in order. The players will need to make sure they have someone on watch at all times and if a guard is spotted, they must cover the hangar entrance.

Depending on the warning, some players might get left inside the hangar. Will the guard notice that some of the work team is missing? And if so, how will the players explain their way out if this?

Tunnel Inspection

Dr Avari (accompanied by several guards) makes a surprise inspection of the tunnel to see why the players are taking so long to excavate it. The same situation applies as the guard patrol

above, with the added difficulty of Dr Avari spending much longer to inspect the tunnel.

New Tunnel

This encounter follows on nicely from the previous one. Dr Avari will conclude that the tunnel is not revealing anything and it must be abandoned in favour of a new site. The players will need to convince her that work must continue here.

If there is an archaeologist in the escape team then perhaps they can falsify something that rekindles her interest in the tunnel (such as planting an artefact here from another dig site). Alternately, any players close to Dr Avari could risk letting her in on the secret, offering to take her with them when they escape.

Snitch

One of the guards wants the player to be a snitch. The player must listen out for anything going on in the prison and warn the guard who can then take appropriate measures. The guard is gunning for a promotion and pre-empting any trouble will hopefully get him noticed.

The guard has private talks with the player in one of the interrogation rooms. He may use bribes (such as giving the player food or items, changing work schedule, moving to a better cell), or threats (beatings, solitary, moved to a cell of rival gang member, janitor duty).

This can work to the players' advantage if they need something, but is very risky if they get caught by any of the inmates. This would also make a good reason for the gang fight to start as detailed previously.

Dealings

The players need something to continue their work, such as an item or a skill that they lack. However, getting it will be difficult and several scenarios for this are presented here.

Revenge

The only inmate that has what they need has a high price tag attached. One of the guards or inmates has treated

him badly. Maybe he was bullied, had something stolen or was left in solitary too long. Whatever his issue, he wants his revenge on that person and in return he will help the players. He may want to humiliate the person, get them in trouble, have the players steal an item or simply dish out some prison justice.

You can combine this with one of the other encounters. For example, the NPC could be in charge of organising the work camps or he could arrange the sports match (detailed later on).

A Tricky Situation

The only inmate that can help them wants to know what it is for. He knows the players have been up to something and wants to find out what they are up to. The players must either attempt to lie or bring the NPC into the group. If the NPC suspects the players are lying, he will not help them. The players must then decide whether to let him in to their group.

Riot

Something happens that precipitates a riot amongst the inmates. This could be a follow on from a gang fight or maybe a failure in one of the prison systems (heating or plumbing failure). This event will work best if it happens during recreation time and all the inmates are within the prison facility but not locked in their cells.

A lockdown will ensue. Anyone who can get into their cells will be safe, but anyone locked out will be drawn into the conflict. This could jeopardise the escape plan but also provide an opportunity to acquire anything they need from one of the cells before the lockdown occurs.

Sports Match

A basketball or football match is organised and the players must play against a rival gang or the prison guards. There are a variety of reasons why the match is arranged:

- The guards want to humiliate the inmates.
- A rival gang wants to humiliate the players.
- The players need something from an inmate and the inmate wants to

humiliate the guards, so he will give the players what they want if they beat the guards.

Rules

- All skill checks are made using the Athletics (Co-ordination) skill, or just Dex for anyone who does not have that skill.
- The game is split into two halves. One team starts with the ball in the first half, and the other team starts in the second half.
- The game is played in real time (such as 5 or 10 minutes for each half). Use a stopwatch to keep track of the time.
- Whoever has the ball makes a skill check to move in a direction. The greater the success, the more distance they cover.
- Anyone without the ball can move, making an opposed skill check against an opponent if they are competing for a specific area.
- An opposing team member can try to tackle the person with the ball by making an opposed skill check.
- The person with the ball can make an opposed skill check to shoot at the basket or goal.
- If a move or shoot check is fumbled, the ball goes out of play and the opposing team are given control of the ball.
- Anyone can make a Melee (Unarmed) check to trip someone over, but a foul will be called if the referee notices the attack.
- If a foul is spotted, the opposing team get a free shot at the basket or goal.

Cheating

The players may try to cheat (such as drugging drinks during half time) but this is very risky if they get caught.

The Great Escape

When the ship is almost ready, the players will hear rumours that more prisoners are due to be shipped out (someone overhears the guards talking about it). They do not know who this will be, but since it could include members of the escape team the players will have to put their escape plan into action during the next work schedule.

Last Minute Preparation

There will probably be a few things they will need before they can leave, so there will be a last minute panic to get everything ready.

Rigging the Explosives

Explosives must be set on the surface above the hangar for the ship to break through. The following steps must be taken without being spotted by the guards:

- Get the explosives to the detonation points (which they must have worked out beforehand).
- Place the explosives and set the timer (remote detonation will not work due to the radioactive interference).
- Cover them up so they are not noticed

Boarding the Ship

With the explosives in place, the players' must get everyone who is escaping through the tunnel and into the ship. They can probably sneak a few people on board but it will not be long before the guards notice the mass exodus.

Fight

At some point, the guards will notice that something is going on and intervene. Initially the party will only have a few guards to deal with. The players must take them down quickly or the guards will sound the alarm.

Once the first guards have been dealt with, the party will have some decent weapons. However, the guards will most likely get a few shots off which will alert other guards and it will not be long before the alarm is sounded.

Once other guards get involved it will be a dangerous and bloody battle. Other inmates who are not part of the escape will also start fighting the guards and each other. This is a deadly situation so do not make it easy for the players. They will get shot and injured and will probably need to use destiny points to avoid fatal injuries.

To illustrate how deadly this is, kill off some of the NPCs in the escape party (perhaps one who has been on the crew for some time, but make sure you keep a xenoarchaeologist as they will be needed later on). If a player uses a destiny point, maybe one of the NPCs takes the shot for them, dying in the process.

Chaos

Amidst the chaos, the ship starts to fill up with the escapees. The pilot should be one of the first on board as they will need to start the ship and prepare it for takeoff. An engineer will also be useful to make sure everything is working correctly.

If you want to throw a spanner in the works, something can go wrong with the ship which will need to be fixed

before they can take off. With everything else going on, the players should be panicking as their carefully planned escape starts to fall apart.

To make things more interesting, some of the rival inmates could see what is happening and try to board the ship as well. Make this as chaotic as possible as the situation starts to go out of control for the players. If the fight spreads to the tunnel or the ship the rest of the team must fight their way through if they are to escape.

Lift Off

At some point, the players must make the decision to take off before they are overrun with guards and inmates. They may even have to leave some people behind.

The pilot must make a successful Pilot check –1 DM to start the ship for the first time. Once the explosives detonate, the ship will rock with the blast as tonnes of rock falls on to the ship. Clangs echo throughout, but no damage is done.

The pilot must then make another Pilot roll –3 DM to fly the ship out of the hangar remains. Once out of the hangar the ship will break orbit and activate the jump engines. A jump point forms and the ship enters hyperspace.

Ending the Episode

The module ends as the ship enters hyperspace. The escape will catch the Legacy Group off guard and there will be no sign of pursuit. The players may have escaped but they are not yet free.

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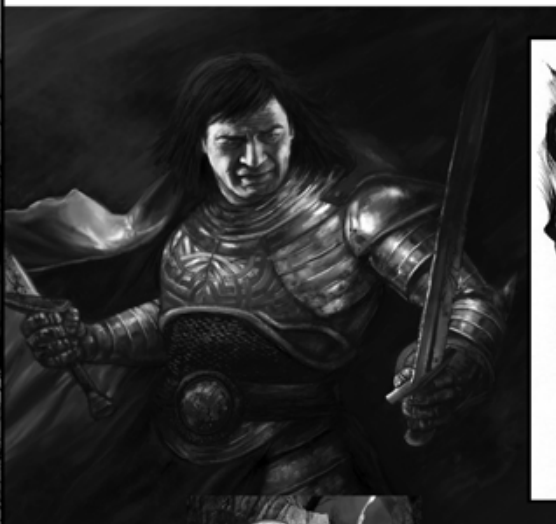
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