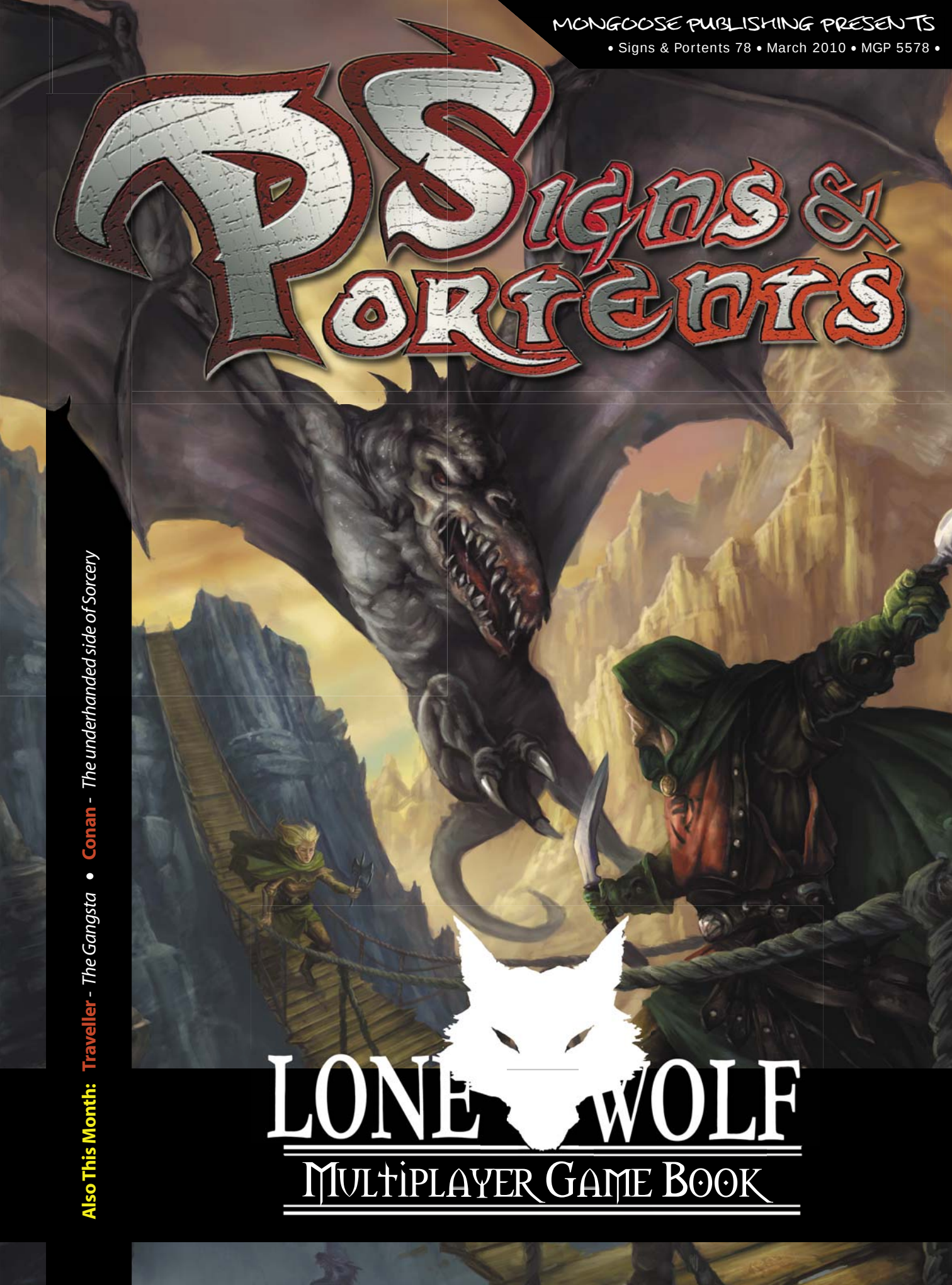


MONGOOSE PUBLISHING PRESENTS

• Signs & Portents 78 • March 2010 • MGP 5578 •

PS Signs & Portents

Also This Month: **Traveller** - The Gangsta • **Conan** - The underhanded side of Sorcery



LONE WOLF

MULTIPLAYER GAME BOOK

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Editorial



For once I have very little to say. Usual busy month, but you knew that already. Lots of books gone to print... but you also knew that.

Instead then I shall leave you with a joke.

What is brown and sticky?

A stick

... I never said that it would be a good joke!

Have a good month.

Charlie

Credits

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Chapman, Uri Kurlianchik, Katrina
Hepburn & Bryan Steele

Mongoose News

By Charlotte Law

LW Multiplayer in Full Swing

The text for Heroes of Magnamund has now been approved by Mr Dever, who has added a lot of new material of his own, making it a must see for all LW fans.

Look out for it in your local stores in July this year.

MD Ramblings

For some strange reason Matthew has been seen wandering the halls of Mongoose Towers attempting to say 'I am the Law' in a British accent. Apparently this is connected with a new project... I'll keep you posted when I find out more!

S&P Turns Book

Keep an eye out later this year for a couple of S&P compilation books that we have in the pipeline. These books will combine several of your favourite articles into hard-wearing tomes, each dedicated to a different gaming system.

New Intern for Mongoose

In the first few days of March there will be a new presence in Mongoose Towers. Mischa Thomas (of Noctum fame) is joining us as an intern for a few months and we are all getting ready to put him through his paces (evil laugh!).

Mystery Blogger

A mystery Mongoose employee has started their own blog, charting their gaming exploits. You can find out what they have been prattling on about at:
<http://www.ttgamingdiary.wordpress.com>



Convention Diary

UK Games Expo

The Clarendon Suites, Stirling Road (off Hagley Road),
Edgbaston, Birmingham, UK
Fri 7th - Sun 6th Jun 2010

<http://www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk>

|||||

The Awesometer

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

Nick Robinson's TOP 5

Roleplaying Accents

-  **Dutch** - A surprising choice until you realise one of our staff used to call himself the man with 1,000 voices. A pity they were all the same. So you had a 'Chinese' accent which sounded Dutch. Also an 'Irish' one, an 'American' one, an 'Indian' one and 996 others.
-  **Chinese** - A great one at the gaming table. Unless you happen to sound Indian (right Snowy?).
-  **Mexican** - Banditos and corrupt politicos make for wonderful NPCs, you steenkin' gringos!
-  **French** - Of course the outrageous French accents tend to be more Monty Python than Gérard Depardieu, all elderberries and hamsters.
-  **Irish** - About half the lovable rogue characters I have come across appear to be 'Irish'. Who says roleplayers only do stereotypes. Oh, right.

AWESOME

Final Fantasy 13 is released in the Western world, get your hands on this incredible piece of gaming history, it looks immense!



Alice in Wonderland through the eyes of Tim Burton, it looks exciting but will it hold a candle to other incarnations?

Daylight savings, time for light days, dark nights and hopefully some better weather.

12:00 am



The cold weather just won't go away!!!!

GRUESOME

The Timeline

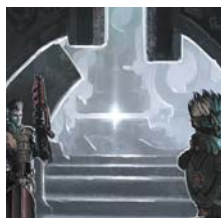
A visual guide to get your tails wagging for future Mongoose releases

April: Bring your best slaying gear, its time for Deus Vult

May: Terror of the Darklords unleashes it's fangs

June: Mongoose t

DEUS VULT



Quote of the Month

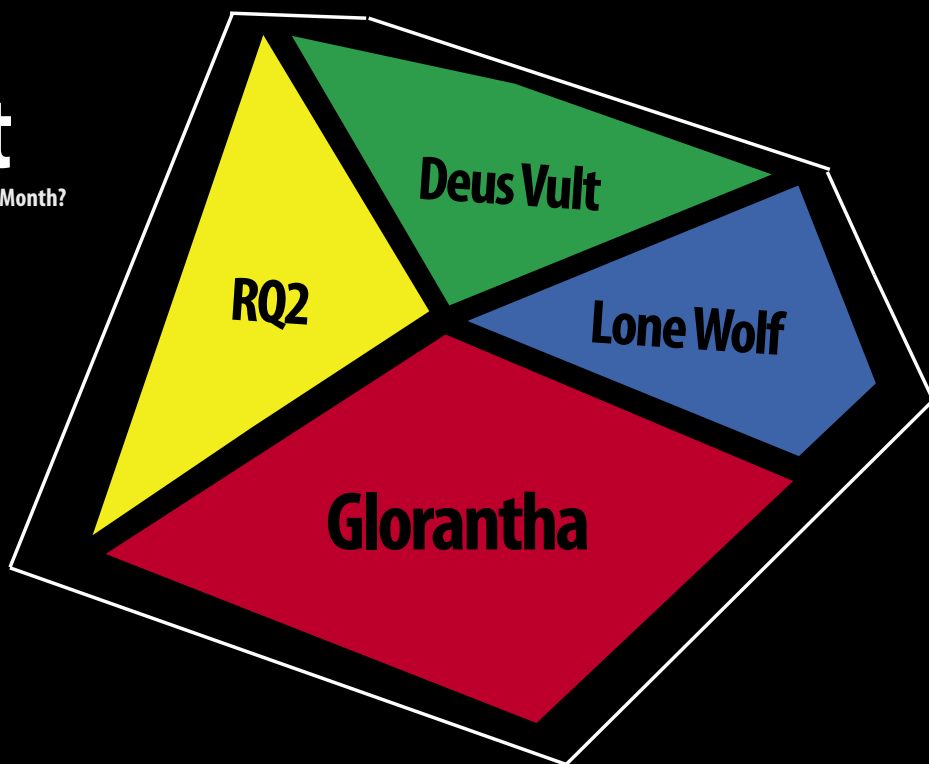
Which phrases have been flying around the office more than the dogs ball?

Why Worry when we Can
ROCK!

Sometimes when things are getting on top of you, its best to sit down, take a breather and pick up the Playstation controller! Thats right pump out a few rounds of your faveourite Fighter, Slap on your favourite rock tracks and smash those buttons, you can do this with friends, family or a loved one. Just pound the daylights out of the onscreen pixels, it pays to keep the violence virtual!

The Time Chart

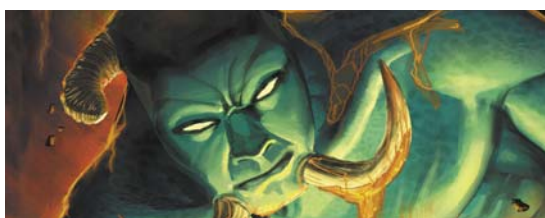
What have we been spending our time on at Mongoose this Month?



akes a look at the Darrians



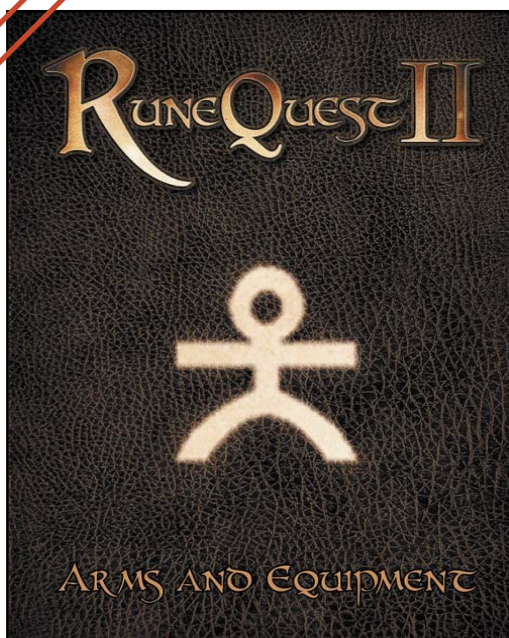
July: The Definitive Cults of Glorantha



August: Elric returns with a brand new Edition!



March 10 Releases



Arms & Equipment

Price: \$34.99

Format: Softback (128 pages)

An adventurer is only as good as his equipment, so the saying goes – and with this mighty tome, your adventurer will be the best-equipped he can be. From new weapons and armour, to the more mundane items that keep an adventure going, Arms & Equipment is a complete catalogue that will keep players coming back for more after every adventure.

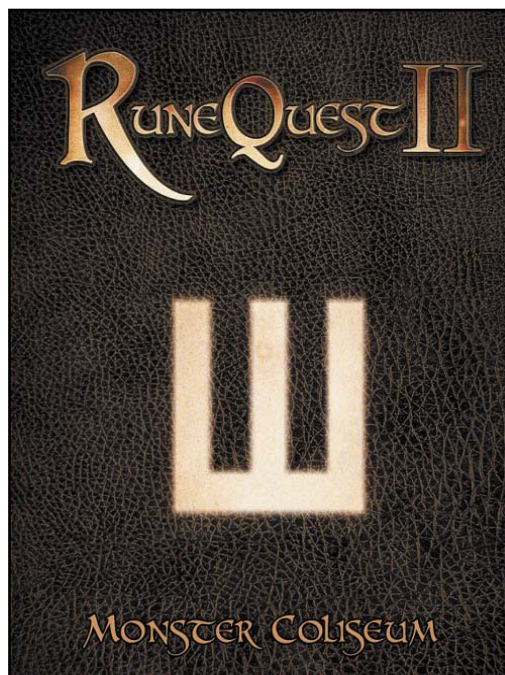
Arms & Equipment, like the rest of the core RuneQuest line, is a luxurious book, with a completely leather-bound cover.

Pre Order Now

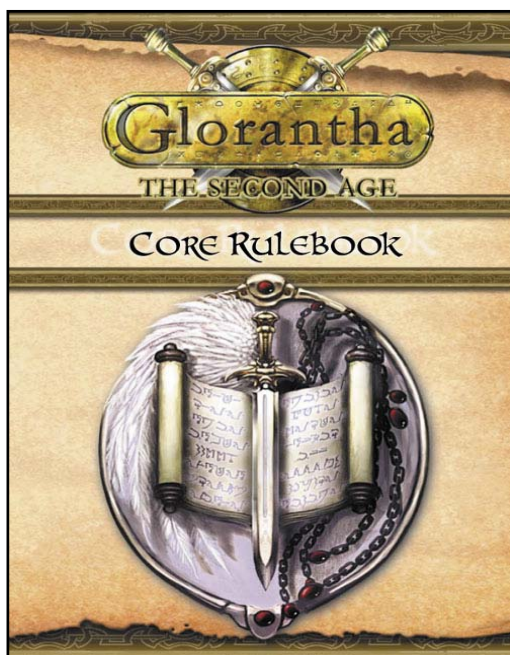
Foes, beasts and creatures from every corner of the world can be found in this tome, as well as detailed rules on how they clash in the centre of the Monster Coliseum! Whether you are looking to populate your world with rare and exotic fiends to foil your players, or simply provide them with some gladiatorial entertainment, this book contains just what you need for the new RuneQuest II rules.

Monster Coliseum, like the rest of the core RuneQuest line, is a luxurious book, with a completely leather-bound cover.

Monster Coliseum
Price: \$39.99
Format: Softback (184 pages)



Pre Order Now



Glorantha: Core Rulebook
 Price: \$39.99
 Format: Hardback (264 pages)

One of the oldest settings of any roleplaying game is back, and more comprehensive than ever! Covering every nation of Glorantha, this book lists the histories, myths and cultures of the world, complete with maps and detailed illustrations that bring the setting to life.

Glorantha is a world permeated by magic and shaped by myth. Its heroes achieve power by questing for runes, physical manifestations of the eternal abstract forces that shape its destiny. Eventually they graduate to even more powerful magics, learning to gain power by emulating the deeds of the gods, mastering the arcane formulae of the sorcerous arts, allying with spirits, or achieving meditative awareness of life's unknowable secrets. In doing so, they draw on one or more of the mythic Otherworlds surrounding their everyday material world. With the right magic, they can travel to the realms of the gods, become participants in their ancestral myths, and return with wondrous new abilities. Those who fail these daunting tests may be diminished, destroyed, or eternally lost in the mythic realms.

Pre Order Now

Lone Wolf MPGB

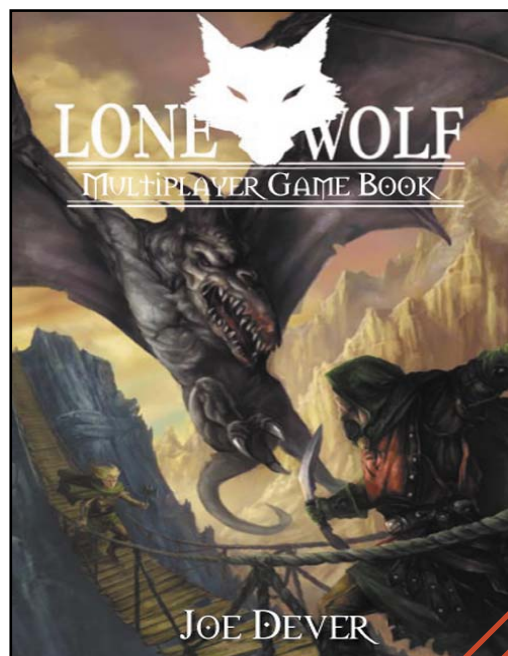
Price: \$19.99

Format: Softback (108 pages)

Launched in the 80's, the Lone Wolf series of gamebooks quickly became firm favourites among a growing fan base. Alone among the gamebooks of their day, Lone Wolf was the only one to feature a cohesive and exciting world, and an extended campaign in which your character could grow and expand as he travelled through all 28 books of the original series. This was the first true mega-campaign!

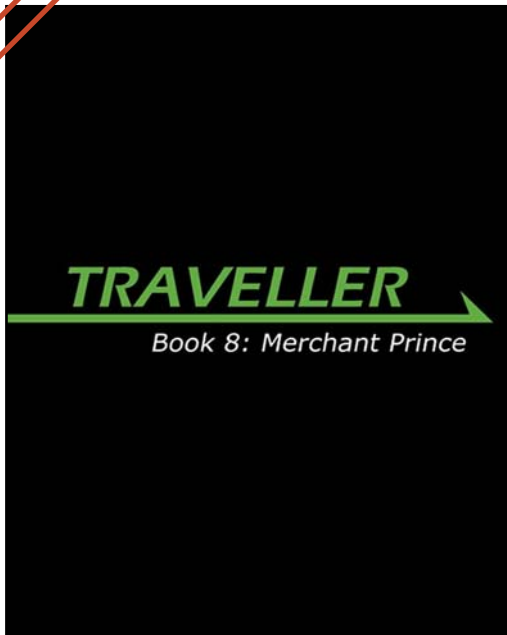
Prepare to return to the world of Magnamund, this time with your friends. The Lone Wolf Multiplayer Gamebook is a full roleplaying game, based on the simple rules system of the solo books – it is so easy, anyone can play!

The first book in this range brings you the core rules, introduces the Kai Lord character class and presents three introductory scenarios to get you started.



Pre Order Now

March 10 Releases



Long-awaited by Traveller fans, *Merchant Prince* is for every character who engages in trading while roaming the stars. Starting off with some extra tips and options for the speculative trading every Traveller player is familiar with, *Merchant Prince* adds a whole new trading option for those wealthy enough to attempt it, allowing them to build a huge trading empire that spans the stars. With new career options, cargoes and ships, *Merchant Prince* is an invaluable companion to all Traveller players.

Merchant Prince
Price: \$24.99
Format: Hardback (108 pages)

Pre Order Now

Continuing the exploration of the Third Imperium, *Reft Sector* provides new ground for your players to explore, colonise and capitalise! Part of the Great Rift, *Reft Sector* is a true wilderness, with opportunities abounding for lucky or skilled Travellers – or those on the run from more civilised space. With a complete history and every subsector and planet covered, *Reft Sector* opens fresh ground for Traveller players, allowing them to interact with the inhabitants of these new worlds.

Reft Sector
Price: \$24.99
Format: Hardback (128 pages)



Pre Order Now

Conception 2010

By Katrina Hepburn

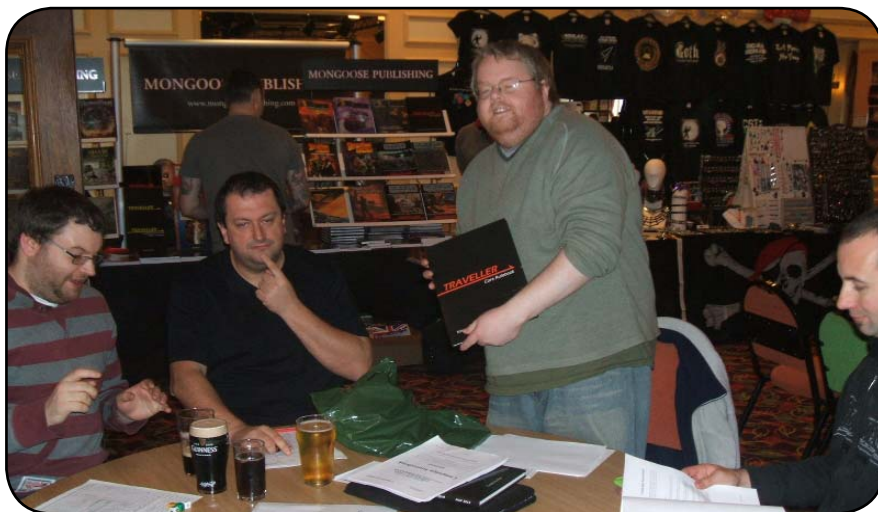
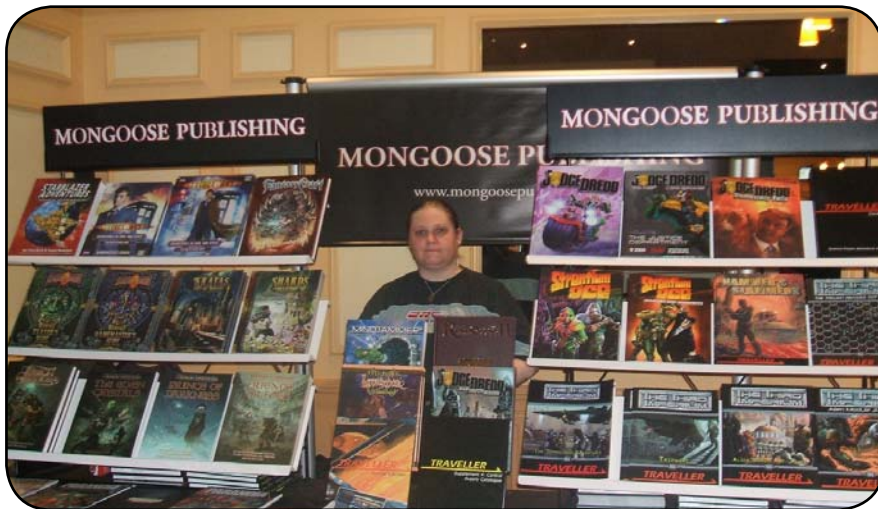
This year we did not get lost(!), we did not have to start at 6AM(!), in fact, it was noon before we even got our bottoms into the seats of the vehicle! From the first few moments we knew that Conception 2010 was going to be truly

GREAT!

Arriving in the early hours of the afternoon we all looked refreshed and raring to go...then, after lugging the multitude of books into the trade hall and setting up the sparkly Mongoose Publishing trade stand, we looked a little exhausted but we were still eager!

Once the stand was set up I spent most of the first evening wandering around and checking things out. Conception is quite a large convention and lasts a good half a week. In my opinion it is one of the best and one of my favourites. It has almost every kind of gaming going from standard paper & pencil RPG and Card Games to Board games and LARP. In fact the only thing it is lacking is large forms of table top gaming like Warhammer. However you can find smaller tabletop miniatures games like Heroes, Dreamscape or HeroClix. My first stop on my exploration was (and always is) Pagan Angel. Mel always has a fantastic array of shinies which always grab my attention before anything else and I cannot resist looking as soon as the Mongoose stand is set up. I am even often looking during initial setup as well because more often than not Pagan Angel is right next to us! You can check out Pagan Angel at www.pagan-angel.com.

Next to Mel was the Bring and Buy stand. Me and Sandrine had been wanting to clear out our gaming room of a few older books and gaming gear and so we had brought three boxes of stuff for the stand. I must say, if you ever see one at any convention it is ALWAYS a good idea to check it out, you never know what goodies you might find that will be an absolute treasure to you including: collectables, novels, games or anything! Just up from the Bring and Buy was the 'Having a Larp' Stall. This place is simply amazing! Not only was it the stand at Gencon 2008 from which I purchased my armour, but it always has the most beautiful Fantasy and Medieval Clothing...this time around for me it had a rather snazy pair of fur lined bracers which I just HAD to have as soon as I saw them!





If you haven't already, you should really check this place out at www.havingalarp.com.

Next up we had BITS (British Isles Traveller Support) which was really handy considering Mongoose Publishing was launching their Living Traveller Campaign at the convention! Andy was on the BITS stall and as always he was a joy to chin wag with. Check out www.bitsuk.net. Next to Andy we had the Collective Endeavour which is a group of small press games designers in the UK. These people were profiling a lot of very interesting post apocalyptic RP's and are definitely worth a gander at www.collective-endeavour.com. Next up I bumped into someone I will not forget easily : the man who was the seed for last month's Signs and Portents 'Quote of the Month', Theodore Aitken, Designer of ANTS, the Board Game. This amazingly simple to play and totally addictive game gets you fighting for Queen and Colony where you send out little worker and soldier ants from your home colony across the board to collect food, grow and attack other ants or home bases, sound simple? Well it is to play but the game itself is stacked against you, with other bugs, floods and giant feet ready to squish you to a pulp to name just a few of the obstacles besides the other players as well!

Among the other stands, there was a plethora of gaming and miniature stalls, including Leisure Games as always. But of course at the end of the line, what convention would be complete without a decently stocked dice store. Bob the diceman gave me a big smile as I approached the Reapers Revenge Huge collection of dice and it was not long before I was clawing through his latest stock for my next set of sparklies and it did not take me long to find them!...Silver Micro-mini Dice...SO CUTE!... and perfect for any girly-gamer like myself! Check out www.reapersrevenge.co.uk to catch up with bob and his gear!

After the first afternoon of general looking about and shopping, Myself, Sandrine and Nick settled down for an evening of Puerto Rico and Alhambra. While I have described Puerto Rico Before I don't think I have described Alhambra. In this strategic board game, players compete to construct the biggest and best Alhambra, which is a kind of palace/city/garden type of thing. Everyone gets a starting tile and some starting currency. Draw four building tiles to the supply board and four money cards (valued 1 to 9). Each turn players either take one money

Conception 2010

card, take several cards of total 5 or less, or buy a building tile for its indicated cost. Each tile is next to a symbol showing the currency in which payment must be made. End a turn by placing any purchased tile, then replenish the tiles and money. Tiles come in different colours and show up to three wall segments. When they're depleted, the game ends. Score is accumulated for having the most, second-most, or third-most of a tile type and for each tile edge belonging to your longest wall. The player with the most points wins! Simple and wonderfully fun!

On the second day I filled up most of my morning hanging out at the Hoburn Holiday Parks lavish chalet which was where we were staying for the duration of the con, while Sand and Nick had to get to the Mongoose stand to work (Muahahaha!). I spent the morning lazily lounging and finally donning the drow-like armour which seems to have become something of a trademark of mine. Arriving in the trade hall somewhere around midday after taking a few pictures I sat down to read up on the new Mongoose Publishing's Living Traveller Campaign. This is where you develop a *Traveller* character which you can constantly use through each convention you go to. Can you imagine playing in a huge immersive sci-fi world with the same character constantly developing over the course of as many conventions as you are able to go to and along with hundreds of other like-minded gamers?...it only sounds impressive because it is! And do you know where to go to find out more about it? www.mongoosepublishing.com of course!

Halfway through immersing myself once more in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*, I was approached by Bob the diceman with an invitation to attend the RPG he was GMing in the evening. Inspired by an old book named *Principia Malefex*. I must admit I was curious as I had never heard of it before, but knowing Bob, it was going to be a fun night. Myself, Sandrine and Nick sat down with 3 other gamers for this night of horror RPG, where I was playing the part of a scientist secretly looking for my father's lost reanimation research lab and the other players being mercenaries hired to protect my fragile backside from anything and everything that may happen in our path. Considering the research lab was somewhere in warring Bosnia, I definitely felt a dire need for protection. However I did not tell the other players exactly what I was looking for



at first. Of course they were all just dumb grunts and probably incapable of understanding what the word 'Reanimation' meant *nods sagely*.

Donning Bob's spectacles and referring to a ragged little notebook that I also had snatched from Bob, I thought I made a pretty convincing act as a slightly eccentric mad scientist's daughter. Halfway through the RPG, just as the zombies and ghosts had started to make us squirm and send chills through all of us, Julian Hayley decided it might be a good time to pop by and scare the crap out of the group. He was of course dressed as a zombie and had been playing with the people in the LARP area of the con, so he was coated in fake blood (which I swear looked totally real) and proceeded to make the group poop their knickers. Luckily though, none of us were eaten by zombies and decided in the end to just leg it the hell out of the lab, leaving a dust trail in our path in the general opposite direction of the zombies. As always Bob had triumphantly scared us all senseless (with Julian's help) and had run a very VERY entertaining RPG.

On the third day, once more donning my drow-like armour after a morning of lounging, I bumped into some stormtroopers who were collecting for the armed forces charity 'Help for Heroes' (www.helpforheroes.org.uk) who, after my comment of 'Aren't you little short for a stormtrooper?' (I was wearing heels) and Nicks

slip-of-the-tongue of 'Aren't you a little short for a midget?' were still ok at having their photos taken. They are good guys, real sports and while not very talkative they do a wonderful job at collecting for the charity. During the afternoon I also met up with many people I had met in previous conventions: most of the wonderful party who vanquished the evil sorceress (that would be me) back at the Gencon 2008 LARP and which I had to get a snapshot of once more to commemorate that wonderful past event!

Our evening consisted of a brilliant game of Qin (pronounced 'Chin') by Cubicle Seven which is a French game translated into English where you play Chinese warriors! Nimrod was our GM for the evening and the 4 guys who joined us were an absolute hoot. Of course with Nimrod as our GM, the night went very quickly with all of us having tears in our eyes through laughing so much, both at him and at each other! I remember one comment in particular where we were trying to dub ourselves with outrageous accents according to what we had experienced from the old style english dubbed Chinese movies: there was a lot of lip movement with little talk and one of the party sounding more Indian than Chinese, to which I immediately commented on and to which the rest of the night consisted of making fun of this said player. That's right Andrew Snowdon! You are a laugh a second and a brilliant roleplayer but your Indian accent will fool nobody! Muahahahaha!

The last day of the convention I decided to settle down with one more wander around the stalls and a few games of Carcassonne before we had to pack up the Mongoose banners and head home. I was wide-eyed to hear the convention had amassed a whopping £13,000 for charity this year so a big hats off to everyone involved for all the hard work they all go through to make this con so amazing, not only for the gamers and traders but also for all the charities involved.

Like every convention, it is all about people coming together, sharing interests and having fun. But what makes Conception very special indeed and enough so to make it that notch higher in ranking than a lot of other conventions is the heart that goes into it. Conception has a class of its own with the lengths they go to trying to make the people who attend as comfortable as possible, the length of time they keep on trooping through to make sure it is more than just another one or two day convention and of course the amount of work these people do for charities. Conception is never a disappointment and always a complete pleasure fest while at the same time benefiting those in need of help. To all you brilliant people who work so hard to make this gaming convention a reality, I salute you.

I'll be there next year...will you?



Vapnartak 2010

By Katrina Hepburn

Vapnartak! Our first "miniatures" convention.

So why is a roleplaying games company heading to a miniatures convention I hear you ask? Mongoose Publishing had been invited in the hopes to make this significantly large (5 floors of a race track stadium) miniatures convention more attractive to pen and paper roleplayers! Because we are so sweet and nice and just plain groovy!

When we arrived at the huge building which was playing host to the hundreds of tabletop gamers residing within, we stood there slack jawed and drooling as 4 big and burly northlanders came out to help us carry the heavy boxes of all our goodies to the spot we had been allocated to set up the stand! I mean this was HUGE! we were actually getting help! And these guys could carry 3-4 boxes at a time! I struggle with 2 and Sandrine can barely carry 1!

Once the stand had been set up I took the opportunity to slip away and snap some photos.

The convention itself lasts for a good 3 days. However we were only there for the last day. And while I did not actually get my hand in at playing any of the masses of games going on (I was just too busy wrapped up in shopping for most of the day because 3 of the 5 floors are clustered with masses of people selling all kinds of miniatures). I did have an amazingly fun day criticising peoples strategic tactics and pondering as to just what 'Vapnartak' meant and in what language, which I did eventually find out from one of the co-ordinators of the event: a Viking word meaning 'a mustering of warriors'. So I guess it was aptly named.

With 3 floors of shopping mayhem I could not resist spending most of the day drooling over the thousands of miniatures on show. Gateshead Gaming (www.gatesheadgaming.co.uk), Great Escape Games (www.greatescapesgames.co.uk), Forge Games (www.forge-games.co.uk), Northumbria Games (www.northumbriagames.co.uk), Musketeer Miniatures (www.musketeer-miniatures.com), Mutineer Miniatures (www.mutineerminiatures.com), Chiltern Miniatures (www.chilternminiatures.co.uk), Grand Manner (www.grandmanner.co.uk) and Stafford Games



(www.staffordgames.co.uk) were just a minute few of the stands showing off their plethora of wares. But for me one thing stood out among all the rest. I had found a Historical re-enactment stand selling a motley collection of beautifully crafted Roman era armours and items which was ran by a group known as Comitatus. These people had a working roman ballista on show at their stand, so as you can imagine, knowing my absent minded drooling over anything violent or destructive, I proceeded to ask a lot of inappropriate questions, including 'if I balanced an apple on that guys head could you shoot it off?' (for which I did not actually get an answer to. They may have thought I was either a bit loopy or they did not hear my question over the hundreds of people simultaneously taking in the huge building *coughs*. I guess we will never know). I did however receive a wonderful talk through of what they actually do. These people try and re-create roman life of the fourth century AD in present day. They re-create many of the period clothing, tools, weapons and general equipment and they strive to show how people of that time lived and worked. So check out www.comitatus.net to find out more about the group. They are a great bunch and welcome new members or interested parties with open arms.

Before my brief experience at Vapnartak I have never seen so much tabletop gaming in one place in my life. I wish we had started the convention from the beginning and ran the course of the whole experience. But for the part I did see, hundreds of thousands of superbly painted miniatures, brilliantly crafted tabletop landscapes, strategy and battles of epic proportions...even pretty good food at the canteen. I would highly recommend checking Vapnartak out if you ever get the chance. You can check in with them at www.yorkwargames.org.

As for me...I will speak to you all again after the next convention. Now where did I put that miniature working model of that ballista?



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Gods of the Space Age

By Uri Kurlianchik

'Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.'

— Arthur C. Clarke

While deities and religion often take a central role in fantasy settings, they are usually pushed to the very back of the stage in sci-fi games. In an era where Man has conquered the stars, contacted aliens and achieved a technological level that makes Biblical miracles look like cheap tricks, who needs superstitious clerics and vague shamans?

But if the miracles of yore can be reproduced technologically, why not do the same with the gods? Why throw away religion and mysticism and all the depth they add to your game, when they can be upgraded, updated and revamped to suit the Space Age?

'Gods of the Space Age' presents players with the Miracle Engineer career, the skill and technology he uses to perform his 'miracles' and a couple of exemplary patrons who might be interested in his service.

The Religious Campaign

The players are all members of some religious organisation bent on spreading its dogmas across the stars. While occasional internal intrigues or battles with heretics are possible, the majority of this campaign focuses on discovering new worlds populated by sophonts and attempting to convert them. This can take the form of training local miracle engineers to undermine existing beliefs, coming as Gods and messiahs, running theological arguments with the competition and sometimes even the violent occupation of stubborn areas. Inspiration could come from *Dune's* Bene Gesserit or Ra from the *Stargate* film.

The Alien Intervention Campaign

The players are alien miracle engineers sent to Earth for some purpose. Such a campaign would work best with a pre-industrial Earth, when humanity is still seeking mystical explanations to various phenomena. Such a campaign could focus on the 'truth behind the myth', in which the PCs will get to play the great magicians and prophets of the past and battle rival aliens and opportunistic humans in order to steer humanity in the 'right' direction. Another interesting alien intervention campaign could be an 'alternate history' game, where the PCs get the chance to try to fix humanity's historical mistakes or prevent some famous catastrophe. Inspiration for such campaigns can come from Roger Zelazny's *Lord of Light* or Harry Turtledove's *Tosev Timeline*.

The Miracle Engineer

The miracle engineers are professional messiahs, insidious wizards or genies in a spaceship. They are masters of disguise and brilliant engineers, men of science and religion, tricksters, guests from the future and prophets of the Space Age. These adventurous individuals blend faith, technology and psychology to affect primitive and superstitious civilisations; some work for governments who desire to steer pre-stellar societies to more beneficial directions, others are missionaries who help God to impress the natives, still others are sophisticated conmen who cheat entire nations out of their wealth.

Contrary to the popular conception of the miracle engineer as a lone preacher going from planet-to-planet in a shiny spaceship, miracle engineers usually work in well-coordinated teams – playing God is usually

too much for only one person, talented and well-equipped though he may be.

Qualification: Int 7+

–1 DM for every previous career

Assignments: Choose one of the following:

- **Preacher:** The preacher is a religious figure who uses technology to imitate divine miracles. He is not a cynical conman but rather a man who literally worships science and wishes to use it to spread his faith. The highest-ranking preachers travel from planet-to-planet, creating local deities and directing the progress of entire races.
- **Wizard:** The wizard is a more advanced illusionist; a person who uses cutting edge technology to achieve effects most viewers could only explain as magical. Equal parts scientist and adventurer, the wizard wishes to perfect his art through the research of futuristic technologies and the uncovering of ancient artefacts.
- **Trickster:** Unlike the preacher and the wizard, the trickster has no noble aspirations of achieving spiritual or scientific perfection through advanced technology. Instead, he uses tricks to pretend to be a demon, a genie, a deity or some other powerful being in order to cheat and rob primitive civilisations or superstitious individuals.

Skills and Training:

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Edu 8)
1	+1 Edu	Advocate	Art (any)
2	Carouse	Any Science (any)	Astrogation
3	+1 Int	Computers	Investigation
4	Survival	Deception	Language (any)
5	+1 Social	Diplomat	Leadership
6	Jack of All Trades	Engineer (miracle)	Navigation

Roll	Specialist: Preacher	Specialist: Wizard	Specialist: Trickster
1	Social Science (philosophy)	Art (holography)	Carouse
2	Admin	Explosives	Streetwise
3	Art (holography)	Art (acting)	Gambling
4	Explosives	Carouse	Art (holography)
5	Medic	Remote Operations	Remote Operations
6	Remote Operations	Sensors	Stealth

Ranks and Benefits:

Rank	Preacher*	Skill or Benefit	Wizard	Skill or Benefit	Trickster	Skill or Benefit
0	Initiate					
1	Novice	Persuade 1	Apprentice	Engineer (any) 1		Engineer (Miracle) 1
2	Teacher					
3	Master	Admin 1	Seeker	Social Sciences (archaeology) 1		Deception 1
4	Prophet					
5	Messiah	Leadership 1				Jack of all Trades 1
6	God-Maker	Social Standing 12 or +1 Social Standing, whichever is higher.	Enlightened	Artefact		

* Different religions have different hierarchies; feel free to replace these with space-rabbis, cyber-imams, nuclear-priests or anything else that suits your campaign.

Mishaps:

1d6	Mishap
1	Injured. Roll on the Injury table.
2	Your teaching is horribly distorted by some bloodthirsty dictator who goes on a genocide crusade against his infidel neighbours. You gain an Enemy in the form of the genocide's survivors. You are vilified by mass media, which reduces your Social Standing by 1.
3	Due to a tragic misunderstanding, the natives decide to reward you for the peace and wisdom you brought them by martyring you. You survive but just barely; reduce all physical characteristics by 1 and increase your Social Standing by 1. This mishap does not cause you to leave the career.
4	The superstitious natives of a less-advanced planet declare you a witch and begin to hunt you, forcing you to flee and hide for a long period of time. Gain Deception 1, Pilot 1 or Survival 1.
5	Your miracles are exposed by competitors or investigating journalists. You may try to hastily invent new tricks and go on (lose all Benefit rolls from this career but you do not have to leave) or retire and start anew (leave the career but retain this term's Benefit roll).
6	You are betrayed by an ambitious apprentice, who escapes with your secrets and spreads false rumours about you. You may challenge the apprentice to a miracle duel. Roll Engineer (miracle) 8+. If you succeed gain a Rival but retain your career. If you fail roll on the Injury table.

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Events:

2d6	Event
2	Disaster! Roll on the Mishap table but you are not ejected from this career.
3	A criminal/terrorist organisation wants to hire you to assist them in committing some serious crime. Accept and gain two extra Benefit rolls and 1d3 Enemies.
4	As you delve deeper and deeper into ancient secrets and arcane matters you begin to lose your grip on reality. Increase your Education by 2 and reduce your Intelligence by 1.
5	You invent an impressive new miracle by accident. Gain +1 DM to any one benefit roll.
6	You witness a phenomenon previously considered impossible. If you choose to study it, you quickly become obsessed and neglect all other pursuits in an attempt to uncover this mystery. Roll Investigate 8+ and Engineer (miracle) 8+. If you succeed on both gain an additional Benefit roll, +2 DM to your next Advancement roll and one level of Engineer (miracle). If you fail lose all your allies and contacts and reduce your Social Standing and Intelligence by 1.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table (page 34 in the <i>Traveller Core Rulebook</i>).
8	A primitive alien tribe worships you as a deity and caters to your every whim. You may abuse their trust and gain two extra Benefit rolls and an Enemy or guide them to happiness and gain the tribe as an Ally and +2 DM on your next advancement roll.
9	You find a race suffering from a horrible humanitarian crisis and can try to help them. Roll Admin 6+. If you succeed gain an Ally and one level of Admin. If you fail gain an Enemy.
10	You convert a prominent alien leader to your cause. Gain an Ally and +2 DM on your next advancement roll.
11	You befriend a brilliant aging miracle engineer who wishes to pass on his wisdom to a worthy student. Gain an Ally and either gain a level in Engineer (miracle) or take a +4 DM to your next Advancement roll thanks to his aid.
12	You manage to perform a miracle that was previously considered impossible. You are automatically promoted.

Career Progress

—	Survival	Advancement
Preacher	Int 5+	Soc 6+
Wizard	Int 6+	Edu 7+
Trickster	Dex 4+	Int 7+

Mustering-Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	5,000	+1 Edu
2	10,000	Miracle Device
3	20,000	+1 Soc
4	30,000	+1 Int
5	40,000	TAS membership
6	60,000	Minor cult following
7	80,000	Ancient Technology

The Science of Magic

This section describes the most important weapon in the miracle engineer's arsenal, the Engineer (miracle) skill, and presents a few examples of the various products of this skill.

Engineer (Miracle)

The Engineer (miracle) skill is used to design, construct and repair miracle

devices. As the name might imply, it mostly deals with advanced engineering, mainly optics and electronics. However, it also includes a fair amount of theatrical and visual arts, as well as a bit of psychology. The greatest challenge of this skill is not merely to construct an effective device but also to design it in such a way as to make it appear magical or divine rather than technological.

Because of this, miracle devices tend to have mythical rather than commercial titles. Even mundane items used by miracle engineers gain romantic names and designs; a common flamethrower might be designed to look like a petrified dragon and be referred to as 'The Dragon's Breath', while antibiotics are most likely to be handed in archaic-looking glass bottles and be called 'The Tears of the Martyr' or 'Magic Potions'.

Repairing damaged miracle devices functions the same way as any other mechanical repair (see page 56 in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*).

Constructing a miracle device is usually a Difficult task, while altering an existing mechanism to appear miraculous is an Average task.

Every miracle device has a rating which indicates how effective it is in convincing onlookers it is magical. This rating is equal to the skill check's Effect plus any bonuses the Referee may designate for clever construction and knowledge of the target civilisation.

This rating is applied as positive DM to the illusion roll.

The Illusion Roll

An illusion roll is an opposed check made to convince onlookers that a miracle device or its owner are magical. The miracle engineer's Deception or Persuade (whichever is better) are contested by the target's Science, Engineering or Investigate skills (whichever is better). The miracle engineer adds his miracle device's rating to this roll as a positive DM, while the target adds half of his society's TL (rounded down) to the roll. Other modifiers might be applied in case of favourable or hostile conditions.

For example, Father Larensen (Education 11, Engineer (miracle) 2, Persuade 1) tries to convince the natives of a TL 3 planet that he was sent by the Gods to lead them to enlightenment. He chooses a clichéd miracle and constructs a pair of anti-gravitational boots that enable him to walk on water. His Engineer (miracle) roll is 10, which means his miracle device's rating is 2 (10–8). The Referee decides that since this miracle is not particularly impressive and has no roots in the planet's culture, Larensen's gets no other bonuses to its miracle rating.

Now the hour of the test comes and after giving an inspiring sermon (an Exceptional Success on a Science (philosophy) check),

father Larensen confidently walks over a lake. The Referee decides the sermon is worth +2 DM and so the total DM for Larensen's roll is +4 (2 miracle rating +2 for the excellent sermon).

One of the natives present is a famous local philosopher and has Social Science (philosophy) 1. His total DM is +2 (1 from TL 3 divided by 2, and 1 from his Science skill). Larensen's player rolls a total of 13, while the Referee rolls 11. The natives believe Larensen is a messenger of the Gods and are ready to follow his divine commandments...for now.

Note that a successful illusion roll means the miracle engineer has managed to convince a person or a group of people of his supernatural powers. It does not guarantee their positive disposition or reverence. Quite often, a successful illusion roll results in fear, envy or open aggression.

The following are examples of some miracle devices:

Device	Miracle Rating	TL	Mass (Kg)	Cost (Cr.)
The Staff of Wonder	2	11	4	10,000
Genie in a Bottle	5	12	1	5,000
The Sacred Halo	7	15	0.5	80,000

The Staff of Wonder: Staffs of Wonder are a dramatic and relatively cheap way to impress the natives. These metal staffs are usually 4–5 feet long and are designed to look like petrified snakes. Either through a voice command or by pressing a hidden button, the staff can perform one of two functions; transform into a snake-shaped drone (see stats below) or shoot a powerful laser beam. The beam has the same properties as a laser carbine but has only eight charges due to the weapon's small size and imposes a –1 DM on all attack rolls because of the staff's awkward form.

Snake Drone

Strength 8 (0), Dexterity 10 (+1), Hull 3, Structure 3

Traits: Tiny, Integral System (comm, audio/visual)

Weapons: Bite (Melee (unarmed), 1d6 damage + optional poison)

While these miracle devices are unlikely to impress anyone living in a TL 7+ society, they are extremely effective on less advanced worlds and so are standard issue in many missionary organisations, where they are used for self-defence as well as miracle making.

Genie in a Bottle: The genie in a bottle is often used by miracle engineers who wish to make spectacular entrances into underdeveloped civilisations or enchant gullible individuals in more modern societies. The name is a bit of a misnomer because the 'bottle' is usually shaped like a common household receptacle in the target civilisation and therefore rarely takes the form of an Earth bottle.

This item is activated by chafing and creates a stunning show of colourful gases and dancing lights which culminates in the user's enlarged holographic image appearing hovering above the bottle. The bottle is equipped with an audio/video system that enables the user to interact with his surroundings. On rare occasions these bottles are also

installed with miniature laser pistols (six charges) to enable the user to be more than just smoke and mirrors. This costs 5,000 additional credits.

Fancier upgrades also exist, such as invisible tractor beams that enable the apparition to manipulate objects, teleportation devices to send in items or abduct natives and so forth. Their price and complexity, however, puts them far beyond the reach of all but the wealthiest and most powerful miracle engineers.

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The Sacred Halo: The sacred halo is quite literary the crowning achievement of miracle engineering; an item so immensely complex and potent that even Space Age citizens find it hard to believe it's technology and not magic. When activated, this item resembles the halos traditionally painted over Christian saints – a flat luminescent ring floating above the user's head.

The halo creates an invisible, nigh-impenetrable force-field around the user. This force-field can carry up to 500 kilograms and move in any direction at the speed of six kilometres per hour, creating the illusion of flight. Additionally, it can generate intense heat rays that function like plasma gun shots, only with Pistol range and 10 charges.

Some halos also include matter transformers that enable the user to change the atomic structure of one kind of material into another (such as lead into gold), with the most common applications being cheap metal into precious metal or non-edible material into edible material. Note that matter transformers are impossible even for TL 15 societies to create on their own and must be somehow reverse engineered from ancient technology or acquired from even more advanced alien civilisations.

Religion 2.0

This article often refers to religious activists who fabricate miracles through the use of advanced technology to further their beliefs. While in some instances these are indeed fraudulent actions done for economic or political gains, this is not always the case.

Future religions view the very existence of the technology that enables Man to perform miracles as a manifestation of God. In their eyes, God is technology. Spreading technological progress is akin to spreading the scriptures and inventing ever more incredible devices is the ultimate form of worship. Heaven is an all-encompassing cosmic scientific network that includes all sentient life forms while

Hell is when stubbornness and ignorance bring progress to a halt.

Space Age clerics realise it may take a civilisation centuries, maybe millennia, to reach the level of enlightenment required to embrace this kind of religion. For this reason, "airy tales" about mystic Gods, demons, angels and so forth are used to guide the developing civilisation in the right direction. Other clerics view mythology as more than just allegories designed to steer believers in the right direction. These clerics believe that alien miracle engineers have visited their worlds ages ago and that these visits were recorded by their primitive ancestors in the form of mythological stories. Now that these worlds are sufficiently advanced to send out miracle engineers of their own, it is their moral duty to do the same for younger races and to become the heroes of future mythologies themselves.

Have Divine Powers, Will Travel:

Most miracle engineers work as freelancers who offer their services to the highest bidder. Some customers want to spread their faith through the countless stars in the heaven, some need a dazzling distraction to carry out the perfect crime, some are wealthy parents looking for someone to entertain children who have seen everything and some are not at all what they seem...

Rims Rom Ramon Ra

Required: Engineer (miracle); Diplomat

Reward: Cr. 15,000 in precious stones and metals

Players' Information

Rims Rom Ramon Ra is an inquisitive and brilliant priest in the all-powerful cult of the Goddess of the Seven Suns. After decades of research, he uncovered the secret behind his people's religious unification and the sudden accelerated technological

progress which started about a century ago. They were visited by a human miracle engineer who entranced them with many miracles and good works before setting them on the path of unity and peace. Unfortunately, the miracle engineer's decrees were horribly subverted since then and her disciples became tyrants who forced an oppressive theocracy on the planet. This has halted all progress and made life hell through a series of arbitrary and vicious 'divine' laws.

After years of hard labour, Rims managed to construct a primitive transmission device and send a message into space, requesting a miracle engineer to come and fix this mess as soon as possible.

Referee's Information

Rims is not nearly as benevolent as he appears to be. While he resents the ruling theocracy, his own plans for his species and the PCs are not much better...

1. Rims plans to topple the ruling theocracy in order to become the sole priest of the goddess and subject the entire planet to his cruel and sudden whims.
2. Same as above, only to make sure he is never thwarted, Rims plans to keep the miracle engineers imprisoned under his palace to supply him with new miracles to use against his enemies.
- 3-4. Rims is in fact the secret master of the theocracy and wants to capture a ship full of miracle devices to spread his violent religion across the stars.
5. Rims plans to escape with the miracle engineers' spaceship, leaving them stranded on the planet while Rims and his associates take over the engineers' jobs and rewards.
6. Rims honestly wishes to release his people from the shackles of the horrible tyranny under which they live. He plans to expose the ancient miracles for what they were, technological frauds, and then put the visiting miracle engineers on trial for the crimes of their colleagues.

Kilala Bogina

Required: Engineer (miracle); Investigation

Reward: Cr. 5,000 plus all expenses covered

Players' Information

Kilala is a young widow who moved back to her family's ancient estate after her husband was killed in a deep-space mission. She hoped that a change of scenery and pace would help her and her children deal with this sudden trauma.

However, instead of peace, Kilala found horror – soon after her arrival, strange and terrifying events started happening in the castle, appearing very much like traditional ghostly haunting. Being a sceptical person, Kilala first turned to the local police. After the police failed to find the culprit, she put an ad for an experienced miracle engineer to come and help her uncover the mystery behind the nocturnal apparitions.

Referee's Information

Many years ago Kilala worked as a nurse on a cargo ship. A mistake she did during a standard revival procedure had cost a passenger travelling by cryoberth his life. She has not told anyone and has been living with the guilt ever since. This has nothing to do with her current plight but can add an interesting dimension of doubt and supernatural dread to the adventure.

1. Kilala's wayward brother is a miracle engineer who wants to drive her out of the castle with these apparitions. He might resort to some dirty tricks but will take the uttermost care not to kill anyone.
2. Same as above, only the brother is so disgruntled that Kilala inherited everything after he was disowned by their father that he is willing to kill anyone who stands in his way to regain the wealth that he considers his birthright.

3. An alien creature that exists partially in another dimension was brought to the castle by Kilala's father shortly before his death. Starving and disoriented, the creature wanders the castle, desperately looking for a dimensional exit.

4. Same as above, only the creature is intelligent and feeds on the psychic energies generated by fear. If anyone attempts to drive the creature out of the castle or expose its existence to the world, it will try to kill this person.

5. Kilala's father was a known trickster and left a series of non-lethal traps scattered across the castle as one final joke. The last entry in his diary looks like the scribbling of a madman but is in fact the key to locating and defusing the traps.

6. Same as above, only Kilala's father went completely mad in the last few months of his life and made the traps quite lethal.



SF Ref's Emergency Toolkit

By Alan Oliver

As with the previous fantasy emergency toolkit, this aims to provide items of emergency assistance for those times when the prep just isn't up to the task. As in any setting some games are more likely to end up 'in the rough' than others, depending on how much background detail the ref has to hand. Those games running to a heavily scripted story being the most vulnerable when the players do decide to go 'off script'. However even in a more sand box style game there are times when you need to slow the players down or distract them.

For the most part these ideas are not aimed at a specific game system, although the Travellers Aid Distress Signal section is obviously aimed at the Traveller game system. Doesn't mean the ideas there cannot be used in other game systems of course, they will just need a little more work.

Ideas have been grouped together by type. Firstly there are some basics on travelling in space, which will be generally useful. Then we have Time Fillers, Delays, Side Bars, Travellers Aid Society SOSs and Bar Fluff.

Space Travel

First of all, it's worth remembering that space itself is a hazardous environment that most PCs are not able to survive in on their own. There are three different ways that space will kill you, unless you have suitable protection, and they are pressure, temperature and radiation. Once that protection fails, the players will die unless they are able to do something about it, which means dropping whatever else they are doing and dealing with the situation. This can be a very useful way of stopping the party doing something else and keeping them busy for a time as they deal with the problem.

The fourth serious threat in space does not come from space itself but the environment

that most characters need to survive. This threat is fire, as most ships must keep an oxygen rich atmosphere just to keep the crew alive. Fire is always a risk, not only from directly damaging characters but also from the damage to the habitat that otherwise keeps them alive.

Pressure

This is possibly the most obvious threat, as everyone knows that space is a vacuum. Exposure to open space without some form of protection will kill almost any character, although some machine characters might be able to function in space. To protect against this the characters must maintain the integrity of the ship around them, as any breach will lead to a slow leak, if small, or a massive explosive decompression if large. Exposure under 90 seconds will generally be survivable, unless it is in the form of rapid decompression, where the pressure drops very suddenly. Exposure over 90 seconds is not survivable with current day medicine but the more advanced medical practices available in a SF game may change this. However as each game universe has access to different medical technology it is impossible to generalise as to how long a character can be exposed for and still be recovered.

Most ships are going to have some automated systems to help protect against this. Pressure doors are the most obvious, automatic doors tied to pressure sensors; they will seal off sections of the ship when they detect a radical drop in pressure. All ships will need some way of repairing incidental damage to the outer hull, which can range from a crew man in an EVA suit to nanotech self repair systems.

The other aspect of pressure is that organic crew will need a specific mix of gasses to survive. Humans need just the right amount of oxygen, too much and they get high, too little and they suffocate. Either way the life support systems of the ship must maintain

not just the correct atmospheric pressure but the correct balance of gasses as well. This will be automated to a degree on most ships but damage or poor maintenance can lead to failures.

As to how a ship can start to lose pressure, the players are a likely cause. For a start any time that a weapon is fired inside a ship, it has to hit something. In most cases player weapons are unlikely to be able to punch a hole straight through the hull of a ship, unless they carry personal anti-ship weapons. But they can hit pipes, pressure sensors, perhaps even the interior bulkhead of an airlock, any of which could lead to a leak.

Space combat of any sort is going to be a major risk to the pressure integrity of the ship. Most ship-to-ship weapons are basically a way of puncturing the hulls of other ships to kill the crews inside them, so if the ship takes any damage directly from enemy weapons there will have to be repairs. However even if the ship is not hit directly, there is a good chance that the outer hull will take some damage from debris and this might not make itself felt immediately. The bulkhead might hold out for days, even weeks, before finally rupturing. And given the nature of stories and story telling games, it will of course fail when there are characters nearby to be cut off by pressure doors.

Even without any space combat, travelling at high speeds through space makes even grains of sand dangerous. A micro meteor strike can rupture the hull of all but the heaviest armoured ships and if the players are flying around in a battleship then you can always throw a bigger rock at them.

Temperature

Space is not only a vacuum, it is also very cold. The fact that it is a vacuum actually helps here, as a ship can only radiate heat away, there is nothing to conduct it away

and no air convection to cool the ship down. Even so, ships lose heat to space at a sufficient rate that without insulation and heating, most normal organic crew will die of the cold.

This means that the ship must maintain a habitable temperature. Insulation inside the hull will help maintain internal temperature but the heat still needs to be generated. Depending on the engine technology this might come directly from the engines, waste heat from reactors being used to maintain the internal temperature of the ship. As engines get more advanced and efficient, waste heat becomes less available, so for more advanced ships they must actually convert other energy into heat to keep the crew alive.

The biggest threat here is if the ship loses power for an extended period. Damage to the insulation of a ship will increase the heat lost to space but not so much that a ship with power cannot easily compensate. But a ship without power is going to slowly cool, eventually reaching temperatures where survival isn't possible.

The simplest way to mess with this is to have the engines go offline for some reason. Not only will the crew have some issues with temperature over the next few hours, they will also not be going anywhere till the engines are operating again.

It doesn't end there though. If the ship is heated by waste heat from reactors, then that heat has to be carried through the ship somehow. Is it boiling water piped through the ship, or pipes full of high pressure gas at high temperatures, or maybe even pipes full of plasma. Any of these can cause a lot of damage if they accidentally get shot, crack due to age or otherwise get broken by boisterous characters.

If the ship is too advanced to have waste heat, then it will require powered heating systems of some sort. Not only can these heaters fail, dropping the temperature, they can also go wrong and start raising

the temperature of the ship. Want to force the players to have to dump their heavy armour and equipment while stomping around the ship, have the heating system go wrong and raise the internal temperature to about 45 C, that should get them sweating in their swimsuits.

Radiation

Open space is a harsh environment, without protection from it the radiation given out by most stars will kill you sooner or later. This isn't as quick as pressure or temperature but it's also not as obvious when it's happening.

Ship hulls will include protection against the radiation in space that is harmful to their normal crew but beware if you are using an alien ship. You should make sure that they are vulnerable to the same forms of radiation that you are, otherwise they might not have protected against them. Ships will also have radiation detectors in most sections of the ship. This raises the alarm if damage to the hull floods part of the ship with dangerous radiation. However if radiation does enter the ship there is generally little that can be done to counter it.

Once radiation does get in the crew will have two things to deal with, firstly they will need to handle the medical situation. This might be anything from taking anti-radiation drugs to advanced nanotech depending on the technology available. Whatever they are doing, it will take time and could leave members of the crew out of action for a while. Secondly they will need to get the ship radiation proof again, resealing the hull and repairing whatever anti-radiation systems the ship has.

As for how radiation can become a problem on a ship, there are a number of possibilities. For a start damage to the hull from previous combat could lead to a breach in the external radiation protection, flooding parts of the ship with radiation near to the hull.

Externally there could be radiation storms caused by local stellar activity that overwhelm the radiation defences of the ship. This would lead to radiation flooding much of the ship and most of the crew are likely to need treatment.

Depending on the technology of the engines, they could have a breach of containment themselves which could flood some or all of the ship with radiation. This is most likely to a failure to maintain the engines sufficiently over an extended period but sabotage is another possibility.

Fire

Any ship that has an oxygen atmosphere is going to run the risk of fire. While the hull and structure of the ship is not going to burn, there is a good chance that plastics are used extensively in the interior of the ship and these may well be highly combustible.

The dangers caused by fire are many. First and most obvious is that those characters actually caught in the fire will be burnt to death, or at least badly injured by the fire.

Secondly smoke from the fire is going to fill the confined spaces on board ship quickly, at the least hampering vision but possibly choking the crew. If there are lots of plastics and petrochemicals on the ship, there is a good chance that the smoke is going to be toxic as well.

The fire is also going to generate a lot of heat, which may overload or otherwise damage the environmental systems which may push the temperature inside the ship above that which can easily be survived. Given that ships are well insulated from the cold of space, it will be difficult to get the temperature inside the ship back down quickly. This means that the crew may survive the initial fire but still be cooked by the heat.

The fire may also damage the fabric of the ship itself, melting seals, rupturing pipes

SF Ref's Emergency Toolkit

and generally destroying all those systems that keep people alive in space. After a fire there may be pressure loss, or even radiation issues as the ship protection against this is damaged.

Obviously fire is a risk everywhere but in space it is lethal. It can be started in any of the usual ways, so smoking on board ships is likely to be very restricted or banned. Weapons fire on board ship obviously has the capacity to start fires, especially if laser weapons are used as they do their damage through superheating the target. Electrical faults from poor maintenance are another good way of starting a fire, especially if the techs on the crew do not carry out much essential maintenance on the ship.

As you can see, space is a dangerous place to be and it is quite easy to find ways of putting the characters lives at risk and keeping them busy just through use of their environment.

Time Fillers

These are ways of keeping the players busy for a few minutes while you look something up or do some frantic bad guy generation for an encounter that's just around the corner. These fill players' time without necessarily interrupting the actions of the characters.

Net presence

Get each of the players to go through what steps they take to control their presence in the internet/web/dataverse. In any SF setting there is going to be a massive information network spreading across from planet-to-planet and every normal member of society is going to be a part of this. Everything from medical records to tax records, military history to legal status is going to be appearing on a computer somewhere. Unless you take steps to hide yourself.

Each character should go through what they have done to hide, disguise or

alter their dataverse records. This serves several purposes, for a start it will take the characters half an hour or more to run through all of this, especially if you ask a pertinent question or two to make them worry about it.

Secondly it will make the players paranoid about who might be checking up on their identities and past. Is this the authorities closing in on them, or are old enemies on their trail again.

Thirdly it may highlight some interesting facts about the players that can later be converted into useful plot points in their own right. For example if a player uses an old contact to wipe out their criminal record, then that contact is the weak link. Later you can leak news that this contact has been themselves arrested or kidnapped, which threatens the player's new clean identity and may force them to rescue this contact. You don't have to take advantage of these potential plot points straight away, just make a note of the good ones in case you need them.

Pressure Temperature Radiation Checks

This only works if the players are operating their own ship. Get them to run through what pressure, temperature, radiation, fire and atmospheric sensors there are on the ship and who has the duty to maintain them. Then you can have these characters make a few skill rolls to see how good their maintenance has been recently.

This may not take the players long to sort out but it does buy you a few minutes and it may highlight some areas of maintenance that are not at their best, which you can take advantage of later. If maintenance is particularly bad, you are best off not jumping on it with both feet straight away but taking a note of it and using it a couple of sessions down the line. Using it straight away would be obvious and the players will see it coming.

Virus Protection

Get the players to go through all their electronic hardware, detailing the virus protection that they are using and how often this is upgraded. This serves several functions. For a start they will have to stop and think about what protection they have and how they upgrade it. This will buy you time to be doing whatever prep work you need. However it also will make the players paranoid about possible viral attack coming in on their computers, communicators, cybernetics or other hardware.

This will also give you a current picture of their electronics. There may be much in this that you can use, gaps in their communications network, players who don't bother to update their virus protection regularly enough or players who rely on a single computer for their electronics and are therefore vulnerable to losing it. These could provide starting points for sub-plots or new ways for their enemies to track or attack them.

Delays

Generally for use when the team is travelling through space and you need to distract them with something to keep them from arriving on time at their destination. For the most part these will not involve a huge amount of additional gaming, they will just affect the time of arrival at the destination. These are the opposite of time fillers, as they waste characters time while not taking up much of the players' time.

The Holy Day of Whojamiflip

This works best if you have an alien character among the crew. Have some obscure religious rite turn up which requires the alien character to not do anything useful for the day. They might even have to stop the ship, especially if they are the pilot or navigator.

Of course this requires players who will play along with it. They can easily get out of this

by having their character be non-religious so doesn't honour the holy day, or just not playing their character that sincerely. If you do have players who won't play ball, you can always add that if rumours of their character not observing the rites get back to their race then 'bad things' will happen to them.

This can of course be done with human characters as well but the players might be a bit suspicious if you suddenly tell them that it's the 25th of December, they might feel entitled to a little more warning than that. This is why alien characters are better for this one.

Engine Failure

This is most risky when travelling interstellar but would still cause delays if travelling within a solar system.

For whatever reason the ships main engines fail. This will not only stop them getting to where they are going, it may also threaten their lives, as without the engines they may lose life support and either freeze, suffocate or both.

If they have the capacity to repair the engines, then this is just going to keep them busy for a few hours and thereby delay their arrival to the time that you need them there. If they cannot repair it themselves then the entire team is at risk. They will have to look at doing whatever they can to get rescued by another ship, putting out whatever the current form of SOS is over whatever communications they have.

Be careful however if they don't have the means to repair their own engines, as if they are not rescued this could easily kill off the entire team.

There are other things that can go wrong with the ship without necessarily putting the entire team at risk. Computer failure could stop them without killing them all, while a sensor malfunction could leave them flying blind.

And now the Shooting's Started

Have some sort of armed conflict break out in the area of space that they are moving through. This might be a boarder clash between two interstellar federations or just the Empire struggling to maintain control over a few outlying systems. Whatever the nature of the war there are now a number of fully armed warships moving around in this part of space and any ship that isn't escorted is likely to be destroyed.

Obviously if the players are in command of a huge interstellar battleship then they might be up for just flying through the middle of the warzone killing whatever they meet along the way. However if they are in possession of such a powerful unit, then they will have to face both sides in the conflict trying to recruit them to serve their cause, as their involvement could easily tip the balance one way or another. Instead of delaying them by forcing them to go around the problem you can delay them with diplomatic approaches from the different factions.

However most groups don't have access to huge warships and will not want to get caught up in a warzone. This gives them two choices, either sit and wait for an escort through the warzone and hope that the enemy doesn't start shooting neutral ships, or go around the entire warzone. Either way they are going to take longer to get to where they are going than they would have otherwise.

This might even prevent them reaching their destination at all, if it is actually within the warzone. Which converts this from a delay to a roadblock.

Traffic Control

This relies on the game universes interstellar travel having narrow routes that have choke points, whether wormhole portals or hyperspace jump gates. If these exist then it is possible for traffic to build up. This might be just through normal heavy traffic or could be a ship in distress

that is blocking the entire choke point for hours.

This isn't a delay that the players can do that much about, short of blasting their way through all the ships ahead of them. They can try arguing or bribing the traffic control officials but every ship caught in the delay is going to be doing this so this could easily get expensive and may result in them taking longer to get through as traffic control punishes them for being rude or threatening.

Similar delays can occur when the players are trying to dock or undock their ship from a station. This again can just be down to heavy traffic congesting the docking areas, or if a greater delay is needed some minor problem on the docks, spilt chemicals for example, might leave a couple of the docks out of action. This can easily cause the traffic to back up and lead to a few hours of delay again. This also works if interstellar travel doesn't involve fixed routes and choke points.

On the same lines there can easily be some delays with customs and border security. This could be through staff shortages, heavy traffic or just players being typically obnoxious and having to wait till the end of the line to get processed.

Loose Cargo

Whatever type of ship the players are on there is going to be something in storage that if loose would cause complications. This could be the cargo itself on a civilian freighter, a dangerous and exotic pet getting loose on a luxury liner or just explosive ordinance on a military ship. Whatever it is if it's not stored correctly it can lead to problems later.

The delay comes about when the cargo gets loose during heavy manoeuvring, sounding alarms on the bridge and forcing the ship to slow down or halt while the situation is resolved. If the ship doesn't slow there is a good chance that the loose cargo will do some damage to the ship,

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which will cause the players to have to stop anyway. When they do slow down or stop they will still have to get the cargo under control and stored properly, which could take some time.

This can also be expensive for the players if their own hardware is part of the cargo. Hardware can easily be damaged or destroyed, which might be just expensive to replace or might not be replaceable at all.

Road Blocks

Sometimes the players decide to go somewhere that you just don't want them to. You need to stop them going there for the foreseeable future but don't want to make it too obvious. Sometimes you can just hit the destination system with something nasty, making it uninhabitable and removing whatever the players wanted to go there for. However this is not always possible or might have too many ramifications for the overall game universe, in which case you need to stop the players without destroying the system or turning it into a war zone.

Road blocks are a lot more effective in game universes where space travel happens down specific routes. Whether it's from navigation beacon to beacon through hyperspace, such as *Babylon 5*, or jump routes from system to system in *Traveller*, specific routes lead to choke points and these can be blocked without making the destination system unusable itself. Choke points are the key systems that anyone travelling to the target planet must pass through along the way and if they are unusable for some reason then the entire route is rendered inoperable.

Where ships are free to navigate their own route, not necessarily passing through inhabited systems, then it becomes more difficult to establish external road blocks. Instead you have to look inside their vessel for ways of stopping them. One alternative is always to take out their Faster Than Light drive, of whatever sort and strand them in the current system, however that forces

you to keep running games in that system for a while, which may not help the overall plot progression. Instead you need ways of stopping them going to the target, while still leaving them their freedom.

Plagues

Always a good way of blocking a choke point system. Some deadly plague is loose, capable of infecting members of different species and for which there is either no cure, or the cure is very expensive. No ships will be allowed to enter the system and those that do arrive will be quarantined and not allowed to leave, to prevent the spread of this plague to other systems. Even if the players are not themselves susceptible to this plague the authorities are unlikely to allow them to just fly away, potentially carrying the plague with them.

The down side of this option is that it relies upon there being authorities with sufficient military clout to enforce this. Where the local or galactic authorities are not powerful enough to enforce a system wide quarantine then this option becomes a little more risky.

Technical fault

This is a good way of temporarily blocking a choke point system. It's an external fault that directly affects FTL travel. In *Babylon 5* it might be the hyperspace beacons for the system, in a universe that uses wormholes to travel between systems it would be the wormhole itself. This is a good way of stopping the players because it doesn't offer any arguments, it's just impossible to go through the system in question. However it can be reversed at a later point if you want to give the players access to the system later.

Nav Comp Error

This is a way of blocking off the players if there isn't a choke point to use. Have their vessel's navigation computer suffer some incidental damage somewhere along the line, whether from virus attack or physical damage, which means that the navigational data for the system that

they want to go to is destroyed, erased or corrupted. Depending on the nature of the damage they might just need to buy the navigational coordinates again but you can hamper that in any number of ways. Charging them a high price, lack of availability, uncooperative sales assistants are all just examples.

However the damage might be a lot more serious. Whole circuits (crystals?) within the navigation computer may need to be replaced, or in a worst case scenario the entire navigation computer. This means getting in the techs to do the job, finding spare parts, hiring in specialist equipment, all of which will be expensive and time consuming.

If you want to make things even worse the ship might have a design flaw that means that the ship's navigation computer cannot be repaired without cutting through the hull. This will probably require work in a shipyard, maybe even a drydock and will certainly tie up the ship for days, even weeks. Not to mention costing a bomb.

Sidebars

These are mini sub plots and items that can easily be dropped into a game but have the potential to develop into major sub-plots or even hijack the entire game. However they can just as easily be ignored completely. They are particularly useful if targeted at characters or players that don't otherwise get much air time as it brings them to the foreground.

Bounty

The group become aware that there is a bounty out on the head of one of the team. This might be through word of mouth, the dataverse, holographic projectors left in the market square or through whatever sort of technology is used within your game world.

The bounty is for the capture, or death if your feeling vicious, of one or more members of the team. It will not give them any idea who's set it or what it is for at first,

however with some investigation it will be revealed that the bounty is for something that they did earlier in the campaign and thought they had gotten away with.

The bounty could be official, with police and licences bounty hunters coming after the PC, or it might be entirely illegal and lead to criminal bounty hunters gunning for them.

This serves several uses. Firstly it gives the players something to think about and investigating why they have bounties on them should take up some time, giving the Ref a chance to breath.

Secondly it enables you to throw bounty hunters at the team whenever you need to up the pace and introduce a little action.

Thirdly it opens up possible plotlines where the players seek to resolve whatever has caused the bounty to be placed to begin with.

Fourth it may also teach players that there are always consequences to their actions. Even if they think that they have gotten away with something, it can come back to haunt them later. This works particularly well in a longer running campaign that hasn't had too high a casualty rate so that there are still several of the original characters left, who will be the targets of the bounty. In a long running game they might have difficulty remembering just what they did to cause this.

Fifth, if targeted at a character that otherwise dominates the group and is unpopular, it may actually provoke a revolt within the team leading to that characters expulsion from the team or death.

Distress Call

The ship picks up the message shell of a ship in trouble somewhere close at hand. Analysis of the message shell indicates that they are likely to be the first ship to have heard the call. The question is what they should do about it. They might go in on a rescue operation, looking to evac

survivors and save lives. Maybe they are more interested in the salvage that the ship represents.

Perhaps the message is encoded, some high end military scrambled signal so they don't know what it's saying or who's sending it, other than it's high up in the military. Curiosity may get them interested, that and the promise of cutting edge military hardware.

Alternatively the message could be of alien origins, which may be a big thing if alien races have yet to be encountered. Here the bounty is likely to be scientific, although opening trade with an alien race is likely to be lucrative as well.

And there is always the possibility that it isn't a distress call at all, it might be a warning.....

Kid Siblings; Always a pain in the butt

Through rumours, internet, old boys' network or whatever sources of information the players have access to, they learn that the younger sibling of one of the players is in trouble. This could be that they are now in prison, possibly for something that their older sibling actually did, or that they have been drafted into the military and are serving in a high attrition rate military unit off fighting a war somewhere. Whatever has happened to them, they are obviously in it over their heads and will be facing harsh treatment and a high risk of death.

The situation is bad enough that the sibling player should be considering dropping everything to go to the rescue but without this being immediately practical. That might be because the prison is too tough for the players to crack without serious preparation, or that the war is some distance away. The point is that the players cannot go and deal with this immediately but it can become an ongoing sub-plot for them to be worrying about later. Gathering the resources or information for them to be able to rescue the sibling later can become a major motivational factor, especially for a

character who doesn't have much reason to do anything else.

Eventually the players will be in a position to go and rescue their kid brother or sister. This is likely to be the core of a major scenario. If it's a prison break, then they will have to fight their way in, find their sibling and get them out again, while possibly dealing with all the other prisoners in there as well. If it's rescue from the military then they will either be attacking a military base, not known for being easy, or meeting up with the sibling in the middle of a war zone, with all the potential for problems that this entails.

He's doing What now?

This one works best in a campaign that has been running for some time. Find an enemy that they defeated during an early fire fight or scenario that they are going to remember and who survived the experience. Now reintroduce this enemy in a completely different context from last time.

For example if he, or she, was a criminal thug that they took down in a shoot out he, or she, should turn up as a politician who's just been elected to some serious office.

Or if he was a commercial rival last time, they should learn that he is now a professional assassin working for a powerful crime family.

The point is that whatever he or she is now doing it should be something that could make them a threat to the players again but in a completely different way than he was the first time.

Travellers Aid Society S.O.S.

Now this is a specific type of distraction aimed at characters in *Traveller* who have membership of the Travellers Aid Society. Not only does membership offer assorted benefits, it does put a bit of duty onto the players. A member of the society that did

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not answer the SOS of another member would be severely looked down on, if not expelled from the society entirely. This means that if the players get an SOS from another society member the character with membership will be under a lot of pressure to answer it. This not only provokes debate within the team as he or she argues for answering the call, which may buy you some time but also will keep the group busy as they go and deal with the emergency.

Ship in Distress

One of the simplest SOS possibilities. The TAS member is on board a small ship that has suffered some sort of damage or malfunction and is in need of urgent assistance. The ship is either loosing pressure or has suffered a power failure and is slowly freezing, so they need assistance within X hours or days. X should be longer than it will take the players to reach the ship in distress but shorter than the travel times for any rescue service or other ship to reach them. The point is that if the players don't go, then the crew on the ship in distress will likely die.

Assuming that the players do the 'right thing' and go to the ships rescue it shouldn't be difficult to do. Repairs to the ship should be something simple, it's just the ship in distress doesn't have the right parts, equipment or skills to do the job. This may require skill rolls and a degree of hazard, if for example they have to do an EVA to perform the repairs, but the main point is that it will take them time to get to and from the ship in distress.

The society member will obviously be grateful for the rescue. What sort of reward they give the players for it will depend on your team. Perhaps they are an attractive member of the relevant species and are willing to express their gratitude privately. Or they may be rich and will give the team money for their aid. Another option is that they provide the team with some useful information, perhaps as the starting point to your next sub-plot. This is a great opportunity to give the players whatever

they need to keep the game running smoothly.

Missed Flight

A less urgent option this one and not one that is going to delay the team particularly. When in port they get word that there is a society member who's missed their connecting ship to the system that the team are heading to next. As fellow members of the Travellers aid society, they are called upon to give this person a lift to the next system so that they can make their next connection. While nobody is going to die if they don't, it is going to harm their reputation with the society if they don't do this.

The point of this is that it gets an NPC onto the ship for the next leg of the journey. This can fill game time if you make them someone with interesting stories to tell, assuming your players are interested in the conversational side of roleplaying. Or they may have useful information on where hardware can be acquired. They can be there to further the plot, if they have information that will be of use to the ongoing story. The one thing that shouldn't happen is that the players kill their fellow traveller for their money, hardware or whatever. The society knows that they boarded the players' ship, if they aren't there at the other end, well the player with the society membership can kiss it goodbye just for starters.

The alternative is that the stranded traveller isn't who he or she claims to be. They might be an escaped criminal or even a psychotic serial killer. This will make the journey to the next system a lot more interesting. The players will be trapped on their own ship with a dangerous killer, who should be tough enough to give them some trouble at the very least.

Spaced

The SOS comes from nearby their ship but not in the direction that they want to go. Travel time shouldn't be too long but enough that they will notice the delay. What they are coming for is someone

who's been spaced out an airlock in their vac suit. They only have air for a few hours, long enough for the players to reach them but not with that much time to spare.

This combines elements of the first two, as they have to go out of their way to rescue someone and then they will have a stranger on board their ship for the remainder of the journey. Of course the biggest question is why they were spaced in the first place and as with the missed flight, this could open up whole new sub-plots.

Bar Fluff

In any game, sometimes the players are looking for a little more detail on the patrons of the local bar, restaurant, drugs den or whatever than you have time to cater to. This is where bar fluff comes in useful. Each of these is a thumbnail description of a bar patron that can be dropped into a game at short notice. Some of these may spark off ideas that can be built into subplots later. These are split into four groups, men, women, aliens and machines for ease of finding the appropriate type to add to a bar. The aliens will not be race specific so that they can be used with any game system. The machines will only be of use in games where there are sentient machine life or at least pseudo sentient droids.

The Men

- Menial working men, 2d6 of them, in after a hard day's work at some menial job. Rough and loud.
- Office workers, shirt and tie brigade, 1d6 of them, in after work for a quick drink.
- Military grunts, 1d6 of them, on shore leave and looking for fun. Not armed.
- Mercenary, young and green, clean and fresh military surplus and a basic rifle. Loud and got a point to prove.
- Mercenary, middle aged, good quality armour and battlescars. Heavy battlefield rifle. Quiet and dangerous.
- Mercenary, old veteran, top notch defensive gear but odd choice of weapon, net gun, grenade launcher or

the likes. Old and tired, just wants to drink.

- Mercenary, looks young (actually very old with rejuvenation treatment), very good power armour or similar with small but powerful inbuilt weapons. Good natured and cheerful.
- Middle aged man with a belly, smoking cigars and drinking expensively. Well dressed but radiates violence, actually highly placed figure in organised crime and has a temper.
- Street criminals, 1d6 young men in shabby clothes, drinking lots of cheap booze. Hidden weapons and a tendency to shoot first and not ask questions.
- Students, 1d6 young men in shabby clothes, drinking lots of cheap booze.
- Frontier lawman, middle aged and in good shape. Slightly worn clothing and obviously armed. Righteous and just but has a quick temper.
- Professional gambler, early middle age, well dressed, armed with powerful sidearm of some sort. Sat playing poker or whatever card game is available.
- Gargoyle, man with extensive worn or cybernetic sensory recording devices. Sat in the corner of the bar watching and recording everything for someone.
- Underage boy, dressed in stylised sailors uniform. Drinking navy rum and chatting to the most available looking women. Either extensive rejuvenate work or adult personality downloaded into child's body.

The Women

- Office workers, secretaries in skirts, 1d6 of them in for after work drinks, ages vary.
- Shop assistants, 1d6 of them, still in their uniforms. Mostly young and boisterous. In for after work drinks.
- Students, 2d6 of them out on the town, major partying and all dressed up, all teenagers/early twenties.
- Escort, not with client. Older than the usual and somewhat past her prime. Driven to work by addiction. Likely to

be capable of violence if threatened and to be armed with something small but lethal.

- Technician, pretty but oil stained, dressed in worn overalls with tools, drinking heavily and swearing a lot.
- Navy officers, 1d6 young women in smart uniforms. Drinking and out on the pull. Will be armed.
- Professional gambler, middle aged but looking good through genetic mods or surgery, dressed in casual clothing but obviously has money. No obvious security.
- 2 jet bike cops, skin tight uniforms, powerful sidearms at their sides. Sat drinking at a table in deep conversation but aware of the rest of the room. Partners, possibly in several senses of the word.
- Mercenary cyborg woman, much of her body replaced with military grade cybernetics or prosthetics. Quietly drinking at the corner of the bar.
- Foul mouthed and smelly woman, age difficult to tell under the dirt. Arguing with the bar staff on whether she's going to drink here.
- Little old lady sitting in a dark corner drinking spirits, dressed in multiple layers of cloaks and shawls. Hidden beneath these is an artificial combat body packed with weapons. Looks harmless but actually lethal assassin.
- Mercenary, middle aged but fit woman lovingly holding a powerful sniper rifle. Will be hanging with whatever other military types are around. Likely to be smart and quiet.

The Aliens

- Alien, known for aggression, drinking alone at the bar, armed with ceremonial blade of some sort.
- Full environment suit, vaguely humanoid in form but not recognisable as one of the known alien races. Sat in the corner not doing anything, might be mistaken for decoration. Or perhaps is decoration mistaken for a customer.
- Alien with reputation for peacefulness or cowardice, drunk or intoxicated in some other way. Stumbling around

the bar being loud and aggressive.

- Alien, reputation for deviousness, sitting at a table playing poker or other card game. Well dressed by their standards and obviously wealthy.
- Alien, dressed in human style suit and speaking human languages, obviously very taken with the human race. Will be keen to speak to any humans present.
- Alien, naturally or artificially looks like a human woman in important aspects, dressed in slinky dress or similar and cruising among the human male population of the bar. Might be an escort, pick pocket or just into inter species relations.
- Alien, known warrior species, heavily armed and wearing combat armour of some sort. Stood at the side of the room watching events. Probably bodyguard for someone in the room.
- Ugly alien sitting at a table eating, has disgusting table manners or is eating vile food. Tables all around are clear.
- Alien crew of a freighter, 1d6 aliens of same species, all grimy from extensive flight, drinking and talking together.
- Alien priest in robes, very quiet and serene. Looks lost and out of place in the bar.

The Machines

- Serving droid of some sort, waiting patiently by the door for someone. Polite if spoken to.
- AI android in the bar preaching for improvements in AI rights. Small and polite machine with near human appearance.
- Small flying droid with annoying manners and high pitched voice floating around the bar examining things.
- Large AI war machine of some sort, self aware and armed, sat playing cards or gambling in some other way.
- Sexbot, dressed as a streetwalker, owned by the bar to provide special entertainment to draw customers.
- Cluster of specialist droids or AIs, gathered around a table communicating in machine language,

reason for being there unintelligible.

- Small and fast looking humanoid AI war machine sat up high somewhere in the bar watching events. May be bar security or personal protection for someone here.
- Camera drone, floating around the room filming everyone in the bar. Might be security or some sort of spy.
- Medical droid, selling services to counter the intoxicants being sold or provide hangover cures for later.

In Conclusion

This article is intended to do two things. Firstly as it says it provides ready snippets that can be dropped into a game at short notice when you need them in an emergency. Of course it doesn't matter how good this material is, it still has to be adjusted to suit the players and characters involved in the game. Material written by others can never match up to the quality of material a ref writes specifically for their players, designed to play directly to their

strengths and weaknesses. But if you don't have anything of your own, these will be better than nothing.

However beyond that these little vignettes may be good seeds from which to grow your own sub-plots, scenarios and games. This might happen through including something detailed here that the players then bite on and so it develops into something bigger, or reading this inspires fresh ideas of your own that can be developed in their own sub-plots.



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The Underhanded Side of Sorcery

By Bryan Steele

This section is devoted to two new styles of sorcery that are based in the trickery and shadow manipulation, allowing common scholars to use their arcane talents to aid them in thievery and other mischief. These styles are not limited solely to thieves but the abilities and effects they manifest are generally used by the most underhanded and shadiest sorcerers.

Chicanery

Chicanery is the arcane practice of tricking the minds of onlookers to see things happen differently from reality or not see them happen at all. A wizard or sorcerer that masters chicanery can cleverly wield powers to confuse, befuddle or fool some of the most strong minded of witnesses. This style of arcane influence is sometimes subtle and sometimes bold; but always confounding.

It should be noted that no living creature can be targeted by the following spells: *Acquiring*, *Greater Acquiring*, *Here, Not There*, and *Switching the Shell*.

Acquiring

Power Point Cost: 2

Components: S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)

Target: Any tiny object (1 lb. or less) within range

Duration: Instantaneous

Magic Attack Roll: None if item is not held/worn; Opposes the Base Defence of the target if held/worn

This spell allows the caster to effectively steal a small object in the blink of an eye. The caster casts the spell and reaches into a pocket, pouch or other personal container. When he pulls his hand out, if the spell is successful, he will be holding the item he was targeting. Sentient creatures currently wearing or holding the item targeted make the *Acquiring* slightly more difficult. The item vanishes in the blink of an eye, which can be startling for anyone currently looking at it when it disappears!

Displacing Cavort (Defensive Blast)

Power Point Cost: All remaining points

Components: S

Casting Time: Immediate

Range: Personal

Target: Self

Duration: Instantaneous

Magic Attack Roll: Opposes opponent's attack roll

This form of the defensive blast is actually only a defence against attacks that would harm the caster physically. Whether it is an arrow, a bolt of arcane fire or the stone from a catapult; the caster can unleash his arcane control over momentum and direction in a burst of chaotic motion. The caster is spun wildly in a random direction (even straight up) to avoid the blow but always lands on his feet, composed and aware.

Greater Acquiring

Power Point Cost: 4

Components: S

Casting Time: One full round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)

Target: Any small object (5 lb. or less) within range

Duration: Instantaneous

Prerequisites: *Acquiring*

Magic Attack Roll: None if item is not held/worn; Opposes the Base Defence of the target if held/worn

This spell functions in a similar form to the basic *Acquiring* spell but affects much larger objects. Instead of putting the caster's hand inside of a container, he must place both of his hands behind some kind of obscuring object. This can be his cloak, behind his back or around a door; anything, so long as no one can see his hands when the spell is cast. When he produces his hands once more, the object will be in them. Just as with *Acquiring*, the object vanishes instantly and might bring some confusion.

Here, Not There

Power Point Cost: 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)

Target: Any two small objects (2 lb. or less) within range

Duration: Instantaneous

Prerequisites: *Acquiring*

Magic Attack Roll: None if items are not held/worn; Opposes the Base Defence of the targets if held/worn

The graduation of the caster's ability to move small items through space instantly, this spell allows the caster to switch the physical positions of two similarly-sized objects that are currently in view of him. The two objects must both be within range of the caster and one another. Neither object may be more than twice as large as the other. Sentient creatures currently wearing or holding the items targeted make *Here, Not There* more difficult. The items switch places in the blink of an eye, surprising anyone who was looking at one thing when it suddenly became another! If two held/worn items are targeted by this spell and either target is not successfully overcome by the caster's magic attack roll, the spell fails.

Mynah Bird's Voice

Power Point Cost: 2

Components: V, M

Casting Time: One full round

Range: Personal

Target: Self

Duration: 10 minutes + 1 minute per two levels

Magic Attack Roll: None required

This cunning spell grants the caster the temporary ability to mimic any animal sounds or human voice he has heard in the last 24 hours, granting him a +10 bonus to his Perform skill checks to impersonate an individual or animal. This could grant

additional bonuses to skill checks for Diplomacy, Disguise, Intimidate or Handle Animal at the Games Master's discretion. The material component of this song is the placing of a cat's hair or bird's down feather under the caster's tongue.

Switching the Shell

Power Point Cost: 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)

Target: Two small containers (10 lb. or smaller capacity) within range

Duration: Instantaneous

Prerequisites: *Here, Not There*

Magic Attack Roll: None if containers are not held/worn; Opposes the Base Defence of the targets if held/worn

This insidious spell hails from the ancient shell game that con artistes have used to fleece onlookers for centuries. This spell takes all contents of two similarly sized containers and swaps them. A pouch full of stones could be used to switch contents with a merchant's coin purse or perhaps a wineskin of poison could replace an enemy's water flask. The two containers must both be within range of the caster and one another. The containers must be able to hold the materials of the other or else this spell fails. Additionally, the container must be closed (pouches tied off, flasks corked, boxes shut and so on). Sentient creatures currently wearing or holding the containers targeted make *Switching the Shell* more difficult to accomplish. The containers' contents switch places instantly, being revealed when the container is opened. If two held/worn items are targeted by this spell and either target is not successfully overcome by the caster's magic attack roll, the spell fails.

Untying Flicker

Power Point Cost: 1

Components: S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)

Target: One latch, knot, buckle and so on, within range

Duration: Instantaneous

Magic Attack Roll: None if target is not held/worn; Opposes the Base Defence of the target if held/worn

This simple spell allows the caster to undo any simple mundane closing mechanism. This includes knots, latches, buckles and similar things but does *not* include locks, door tumblers and complex mechanical devices. With a flick of the caster's wrist the target rapidly unties, unlatches or otherwise opens. This will not automatically open what the target was holding but will do so if natural gravity or motion would do so.

Widdershins

Power Point Cost: 4

Components: S

Casting Time: One full round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)

Target: One Object or person within range

Duration: Power Points

Saving Throw: Will negates (if target is a creature)

Magic Attack Roll: Opposes the Base Defence of the target

This strange and confusing spell is used to sow disarray by reversing motion for a single target. An effected log will roll uphill, an arrow will go hurtling back towards it firer and guards chasing after the sorcerer will instead run backwards *away* from him! Widdershins forces the affected individual to think carefully about how to perform his movement, as it might just put his back to the wrong person when he starts to walk oddly backwards away from his intended position!

Umbra Sorcery

Tapping into the energies opposing light and fire, umbra sorcery grants the user control over shadows, darkness and cold. This grants enormous benefits to those who thrive in darker places or need the warping of shadows to help hide their activities. Dabblers that wield umbra magic may or may not know that they play with the Outer Darkness whenever they

bring some of it to the world, staining them forever with its dangerous taint.

Any time a natural '1' is rolled on a magic attack roll with an umbra sorcery spell, the caster is flooded with too much Darkness and gains a point of Corruption.

Abyssal Shroud of Midnight

Power Point Cost: 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Personal

Target: Self

Duration: One minute per two levels

Magic Attack Roll: Sets the bonus to Hide skill checks

This spell wraps a cloak of impenetrable darkness around the caster that reaches out and blends in with the natural shadows of the surroundings. This spell cannot be performed successfully in direct sunlight or any light bright enough to leave no immediate shadows. Depending on the magic attack roll, the caster receives a supernatural bonus to his Hide skill checks, as shown on the following table.

Magic Attack Result	Bonus to Hide skill checks
10 or less	+0
11 – 14	+2
15 – 19	+4
20 or higher	+6

Blacken the Sky

Power Point Cost: 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: One minute

Range: Personal

Target: Self

Duration: One hour per two levels

Magic Attack Roll: Sets the DC of any Counterspells trying to undo the effects

This spell is an augmentation to further any umbra sorcery the caster may wish to cast later. For all purposes during the spell's duration, the caster has a large area of dim shadowy pallor all around him. Natural shadows are deeper, lit areas seem darker

The Underhanded Side of Sorcery

and the caster is nestled in its centre. While this spell is in effect, the caster has a +1 bonus to all Hide skill checks and is always considered to be 'in shadow' for other spell requisites.

Coldest Night (Defensive Blast)

Power Point Cost: All remaining points
Components: V
Casting Time: Immediate
Range: Personal
Area: 10 foot radius around the sorcerer
Duration: 1d4 rounds
Saving Throw: Fortitude halves damage
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the victims' saving throw

When this spell is called upon, the cold of midnight erupts out from under the sorcerer, seeping into the armour and clothing of everyone around him. This cold is penetrating and painful, inflicting an amount of cold-based damage on all targets in the area equal to twice the number of power points spent in its casting, allowing a Fortitude save for half damage.

Darkness Simulacrum

Power Point Cost: 10
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 2d6 Days
Range: Personal
Target: Self
Duration: Until next sunrise
Prerequisites: *Shadows Embrace*
Magic Attack Roll: Sets the Hit Points of the Simulacrum

This ritualistic spell allows the caster to create an exact duplicate of his physical self made of solidified darkness. The duplicate is simple and responds only to the caster's commands but looks exactly like the sorcerer and is equipped identically. The simulacrum does not think autonomously but will defend itself or its actions if disturbed. The darkness duplicate has all of the same physical characteristics and

skill ranks as the sorcerer but only has a Wisdom, Intelligence and Charisma of 5.

Eyes Umbral

Power Point Cost: 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Personal
Target: Self
Duration: One hour per two levels
Magic Attack Roll: Sets the DC of any Counterspells trying to undo the effects

This eerie spell infuses the sorcerer's eyes with pure darkness from beyond, turning them pitch black from lid to lid and giving the caster supernatural sight. While the spell is in effect the caster gains the *Darkvision* and *Blindsight* special abilities (see page 166 of *Conan: Bestiary of the Hyborian Age* for details) and a +1 circumstance bonus on all Intimidate checks against those who can see his eyes.

From Shadow to Shadow

Power Point Cost: 5
Components: V, S
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Personal
Target: Self
Duration: Varies
Prerequisites: *Eyes Umbral*, *Shadows Embrace*
Magic Attack Roll: Sets the maximum time available for travel

This spell opens a brief portal to the Outer Darkness and allows the sorcerer to traverse through the void, moving from one place to the next without heed to obstacles or terrain. The caster must be immersed in shadow for this spell to work, as the darkness opens up to him and swallows his body. For the next few moments the sorcerer is placed in a shadowy realm of darkness that flows and swirls around him, revealing the lighted world's shadows as windows to look out and choose where to exit the shadow realm. No amount of terrain, obstacles or mundane defences can stop the travel created by *From Shadow*

to *Shadow*, the sorcerer simply disappears within one shadow and emerges from another one seconds later. Only arcane wards and well-lit areas can protect from the effects of this spell.

The sorcerer must compare his magic attack roll on the following table, as this shows how long he is allowed to stay inside the shadow realm before the supernatural cold begins to kill them. The caster can move normally during this time but ignores all mundane objects and beings in the real world, exiting into any shadow large enough to create a five foot square before the duration lapses. For every round the character remains in the shadow realm after his time is up, he loses 1d2 temporary Constitution, dying when he reaches zero.

Magic Attack Result	From Shadow to Shadow Time Limit
10 or less	No Access; Spell Fails
11 – 15	1d3 Combat Rounds
16 – 20	1d4+1 Combat Rounds
21 – 25	1d6+1 Combat Rounds
26 – 30	1d8+1 Combat Rounds
31+	One Minute

Shadows Embrace

Power Point Cost: 2
Components: V, S
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Personal
Target: Self
Duration: Power Points
Prerequisites: *Abyssal Shroud of Midnight*
Magic Attack Roll: Sets the DC of any Counterspells trying to undo the effects

Used to hide from pursuers or lurk in perfect ambush, this spell opens the shadow realm for the sorcerer; allowing them to leave the physical world for a few moments. *Shadows Embrace* require the character to be immersed in shadows to work but will pull the caster into a pocket of the shadow realm for as long as the sorcerer wishes to continue to spend power points. If the sorcerer runs out of power points

but wishes to remain in the shadow realm, he may do so at a cost of 1d2 temporary points of Constitution per Combat Round. While in the *Shadows Embrace* the caster may not move or perform other actions but he can see magically into the physical world through the shadow he was enveloped by. If that shadow is dispelled by a light source or other effect while the caster is still held within, he is hurled out of the shadow violently – suffering 2d6 temporary Constitution damage as the spell fails around him.

Smoke and Fog

Power Point Cost: 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One full round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)

Area: 10 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels radius

Duration: 2d6 minutes

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the victims' saving throw

This spell calls forth a clinging, cold smoke-like fog from the shadow realm that chills those within it while somewhat obscuring vision. Anyone caught in the area of the spell must pass a Fortitude save in order to brace against the chilling fog. Failing this save inflicts 1 point of cold-based nonlethal damage, ignoring all forms of mundane protection. No matter the result of the saving throw, anyone in or looking through the fog-covered area consider all things Concealment (20% miss chance) unless they can see through darkness.

Snuff the Blinding Flame

Power Point Cost: 2

Components: S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)

Target: One natural light source

Duration: Instantaneous

Magic Attack Roll: Rolls against the area of the light source

This spell is a simple enough application of the shadow sorcerer's dislike of light. By reaching out and grabbing the air symbolically, the sorcerer fills the area around a single light source (torch, campfire, lantern and so on) with the cold of darkness – snuffing it out completely. This does not make the light source unable to be relit; it merely extinguishes it for the moment. The sorcerer's magic attack roll must meet a certain level before the spell will be able to put out larger lights. This is calculated on the following table.

Magic Attack Result	Maximum Light Source Extinguishable
5 – 9	Candle, Wick, Cigar or Pipe
10 – 14	Torch, Lantern
15 – 19	Candelabra, Flaming Brand
20 – 24	Campfire, Chandelier
25 – 29	Bonfire
30+	House Fire



By Alan Oliver

Introduction

In any society with laws, there are always things that are prohibited. And in any society where people with money want that something, criminals will rise to the challenge of servicing that need. Whether its prohibition and the organised crime families that got rich from it, or the war on drugs and the drugs dealers that fuel it, there is always money to be made when the government decides that the public cannot have something.

These careers produce hard men and women who are not law abiding citizens, however that's not to say that some of them don't reform later in life when it's no longer 'in them' to be players.

There are many careers to be had on the criminal side of things but for the moment we will look at three specialities within this field; Drugs dealers, Smugglers and Criminal Celebrities.

Drugs Dealers

Drugs dealers are a classic example of the supply end of this, dealing directly with the consumer. For a contemporary example of how the industry changes with the technology just look at the drugs scene in a large city, Baltimore for example. The product being sold will vary from place-to-place and the tech level of the society involved will help shape how things are done, which means that drug dealers will vary across the galaxy within this general framework.

This is the sharp end of the business as between law enforcement and competition on the streets the survival rates are not high, however serious money can be made here. One serious advantage to this career is that characters can get an early start. Most will have started at around 14 but some start even younger, starting at 10 is possible. Obviously if the character can survive into their 30s they will have a greater range of

experience. On top of that a drugs dealer who survives and keeps their head in the game can make huge amounts of money, assuming that their luck holds.

It's not all guns, girls and money though, there is a flip side to the career. Survival rates are not high and the trick is always getting out with your stash intact before the game kills you. Furthermore, starting that young will permanently damage your education, making entry into other careers and progress through them more difficult. Dealers may know the corners but few manage to understand science, technology and those who start really young might not even be literate or numerate. This in itself can present some interesting roleplaying possibilities, playing a veteran street soldier with tons of street smarts and killer combat skills, who struggles to read the simplest manual could make for good game play.

A successful drug dealing organisation will require tight discipline throughout the operation, from the top right on down to the bottom. Between the authorities trying to build evidence for a case every step of the way and the rivals looking for any opportunity to shut you down, with slugs if necessary, every member of the organisation has to stay tight at all times. Every organisation that goes down can be traced back to a discipline failure somewhere. This discipline also applies to the product as well. Few drug dealers are regular users of the product that they sell; some never touch the product, others only on special occasions.

Smugglers

It is very rare for the restricted commodity, whether it's booze, drugs, women or whatever, to be available in the location where it is prohibited. This means that someone's going to have to get it into the country, state, planet or system. That's where the smugglers come in. Smuggling is not such a dangerous game as running

the corners but there is less money to be made as you are dealing with the product wholesale. Starting out in the business is not easy and will probably involve low level tasks to begin with, working as a mule or security. Progressing up the ladder to eventually handling your own product will take time, loyalty and luck. On the up side though, smugglers are less likely to get involved in gunfights over territory on a regular basis. Instead the main dangers come from the authorities, or war when two rival operations clash.

The downside of smuggling is that there is less money to be made and less room to make it in. A city might support dozens of drugs crews employing hundreds of people. That same city might only support two or three major smuggling operations, which means only half a dozen or so men and women getting rich and employing only a couple of dozen people. The quantities smuggled are such that the authorities are likely to inflict harsh punishment on those caught with the product.

Discipline with a smuggling organisation is more likely to be a top down thing, with the bosses using enforcers to maintain order among common security and mules. Independent smugglers, who have made enough money to buy a ship, or more likely acquired it through some under the counter action, are their own bosses. For them discipline is a personal thing. However they know that missing a delivery or ditching a cargo is likely to be a very dangerous mistake.

Criminal Celebrities

Throughout history certain criminals have been able to turn their criminal activities into celebrity status. Whether it's Robin Hood, 18th century highwaymen, Dillinger or the modern gangsta rappers, they play to the public fascination with the criminal world to elevate themselves above the rest of the common criminals.

Unfortunately to become a criminal celebrity you first have to be a criminal, this career is only open to characters who have already done at least one term as a gangsta or rogue earlier in their career. Criminal celebrities can start out as kids slinging drugs on the streets, so you can start out early as a drugs dealer then make a shift into this career. Smugglers generally rely on being inconspicuous so will find it difficult to break into the career. Thieves are rarely that well known, however it is not impossible to turn a career of high profile crimes into celebrity status. Pirates are naturally flamboyant and can easily become celebrities if they can avoid the bounty on their heads. Enforcers rarely have the charisma and social skills to make the grade, but again it is not impossible.

The advantages of turning your criminal career into celebrity status are obvious, firstly you are a lot less likely to die from it, survival is generally less of an issue. Secondly you can still make a lot of money, assuming that you can make the right media contacts along the way. The Hells Angels of California in the 1960s tried to do this and failed, blowing their chance to make money off their celebrity status at the time. Thirdly if still practicing your chosen form of crime your reputation can play in your favour. For example a reputation for robbing stash houses and leaving a trail of bodies behind you can mean that eventually the corner hoppers will just be giving you their package to keep you away from them, even if your just going down to the store for milk and cereal.

The disadvantage of this as a career choice is that you will lose your friends in the real criminal world quickly, most will see you as a sell out. This can lead to bitterness and from a naturally violent criminal sub culture that's not something you want. As you become well known your crimes become well known as well, which makes it easier for the authorities to arrest, convict and punish you for them. Your celebrity status will protect you for a while, however the public are a fickle bunch and once they

lose interest in you that public knowledge of your past can become a millstone around your neck. Finally being well known for a particular type of crime can bring in rivals seeking to prove themselves better, tougher and more 'in your face' than you are.

Gangstas in play

For the most part a career as a gangsta is more likely to be part of a characters background than what they are currently doing. However a whole game based around the drugs trade offers plenty of opportunities for good drama and roleplaying, not to mention plenty of action against other criminal groups and the police. Working smugglers are more easily inserted into a mixed group of characters, especially if they are providing the transport. Criminal Celebrities naturally fit into a high society based game, or could be the focus of play.

Drug dealer ranks

Younguns are the kids who are just starting in the career. They are used as lookouts, runners and often do the actual handover of the drugs to the customer. This is their apprenticeship in the career, if they can survive this without messing up the count or getting killed over turf, then they have a good chance to progress. Most younguns are aged between 10 and 14.

Hoppers are the core staff of a corner chief. They have greater responsibilities but still get paid a set amount no matter how much selling is done. They might be watching the street stash, getting the re-up, taking the money and similar jobs. Some of them will be armed but at their level the violence is often limited to knives and fists rather than guns.

A corner chief runs a corner, will have his own crew of hoppers and younguns doing the work and may even have points on the package himself, although many are still just getting paid for their work. They don't handle the money or the drugs themselves

but watch operations looking for trouble and if it arrives have to deal with it. They are likely to be armed, with some sort of pistol in most cases for easy concealment and disposal.

A stash house is where the drugs for several corners are kept; ready to provide a re-up as necessary. The chief's job is to keep security tight on the stash and keep it moving every few days. This keeps it hidden from the authorities and from other criminals who will want to steal it. They will be armed, either with pistols or possibly shotguns, as will the enforcers they employ as muscle to protect the stash. They normally have little or no contact with actually selling the drugs other than providing the re-ups to the corner chiefs. They are normally on a paycheck rather than points on the package.

Soldiers are the heavy hitters of the drugs world. Their main roll is protecting their organisation from their rivals, whether it's the package or territory. Some are employed specifically to kill people, while others are trouble shooters for the corner and stash chiefs. They will normally have access to guns but will be careful about carrying them and will dispose of them as soon as they use them, assuming the local authorities are equipped and willing to use trace evidence to go after drug dealers. They are much more than just enforcers or thugs, they are the backbone of the drugs organisation. They will have points on the package, sometimes tied to specific corners, sometimes off the whole thing.

Lieutenants are the inner circle of the kingpin. They are advisors, brothers in arms, bankers and are often direct family to him or her. In many cases a kingpin's Lieutenants will be specialists in different areas, one might handle personnel, another violence while a third handles business dealings and the money. They are all going to be rich, having a direct share in the business but they are getting to the level where they handle so much money that it's no longer an issue.

Qualifications

Dex 7+ –1 DM for every career +1 DM for every Rogue or Gansta career
 Automatic qualification if social standing 6 or lower.
 Criminal Celebrity requires at least 1 term as gangsta or rogue.
 If drug dealer and starting at 14, then character doesn't get the automatic education skill.
 If drug dealer and starting at 10, then character also loses 2 from their Education stat.

CAREER PROGRESS

	Survival	Advancement
Drug dealer	End 8+	Int 6+
Smugglers	Dex 7+	Soc 6+
Crim celebrity	Soc 6+	Soc 7+

MUSTERING OUT BENEFITS

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	10,000	Blade
2	10,000	Blood brother
3	25,000	Gun or ground car
4	50,000	Contact
5	75,000	Air/raft
6	100,000	Package
7	150,000	3 ship shares

For every two jail terms on your record, gain a +1 DM to advancement rolls as Gangsta, Rogue or Drifter, or –1 DM to advancement rolls on all other careers.

Blood brother; very close bond formed between you and another in your career who is within 1 rank of yourself.

Package; value at wholesale 100,000, value if distributed on the streets 500,000 but with the obvious risks.

Skills and Training

Roll	Persona development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Int 10)
1	Athletics	Deception	Comms
2	+1 End	Gun combat *	Computers
3	Gambler	Persuade	Flyer
4	Gun Combat *	Streetwise	Investigate
5	Melee **	Drive (any)	Gun Combat (any)
6	+1 Dex	Recon	Tactics

Roll	Specialist: Drug Dealer	Specialist: Smuggler	Specialist: Criminal Celebrity
1	Gun Combat *	Admin	Carouse
2	Leadership	Gun Combat *	Advocate
3	Recon	Flyer (any)	Art (any performance)
4	Stealth	Pilot (small craft & spacecraft)	Gun Combat (any)
5	Streetwise	Mechanic	Persuade
6	Comms	Broker	Deception
	* Any pistol or shotgun	** Unarmed or blade	

Ranks and Benefits

Rank	Dealer	Skill/benefit	Smuggler	Skill/benefit	Celebrity	Skill/benefit
0	Youngen		Mule	Implant		
1	Hopper	Recon 1			Name	Deception 1
2	Corner chief	Streetwise 1	Soldier	Weapon		
3	Stash house	Persuade 1			Rapper	Art 1
4	Soldier	Gun (pistol)	Independent	Pilot 1		
5	Lieutenant					
6	Kingpin		Chief	Admin 1	Robin hood	

Mishaps

1d6	Mishap
1	Fatal injury: Recovered through medical assistance however your crew all believe you are dead and your reappearance will be taken as proof of snitching. Roll 1 injury and leave the career.
2	Severely injured (as result 2 on the injury table) but recovered by own people so can continue on career.
3	Organisation crashes and burns: You survive but have to seek new career in different system.
4	Police shoot out goes badly: Arrested and drafted as below and a roll on the Injury table.
5	Arrested: Spend next term in confinement, develop level of streetwise, then return to this career in 4 years time. Add one jail term to record.
6	Arrested: Lose one benefit roll from this career and drafted into the military as your next career. Add one jail term to record.

Events

2d6	Event
2	Disaster. Roll on Mishaps table but can remain in this career.
3	Arrested and spend 6 months imprisoned alongside major criminal figure, either take them as a Contact or take a +3 to next promotion roll. Gain another jail term on your record.
4	Your organisation goes to war with another organisation. You survive with fresh scars, war stories and 1d3 enemies from the opposing organisation.
5	Two more powerful organisations go to war and wipe each other out, your operation is able to step up and take their territories, take either a +3 roll on a benefits roll or automatic promotion.
6	Subordinate messes up the count, leaving you to fit the bill, either lose a benefit roll or gain an injury roll.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table (page 34 of the <i>Traveller Core Rulebook</i>).
8	Arrested and convicted, minor offences, spend 6 months in prison and gain a jail term on your record.
9	Rumours circulate of your involvement with the authorities, take a loss of two ranks or a roll on the Injury table.
10	Multiple minor arrests and jail terms, evading serious prosecutions. Add three jail terms to record.
11	Arrested and imprisoned for a year, enemies set you up on the inside for assassination. Gain 1 roll on the injury table and 1 jail term.
12	Incredible heroics leads to automatic promotion.

The kingpin is the main man. He will be a known name on the streets, even if the authorities have no idea who he is. And he or she better hope that they don't because once they do know who they are, then their time is running out. Every kingpin is constantly juggling how long they can stay in the business and so how much money they can get, against the odds that a rival will take them down or the authorities will catch up with them.

Drug Dealers in game play

A character whose current profession is a drugs dealer is going to be tied in to a specific location, so they would only be able to be played in a game set within that location. If that is the case then they will have certain advantages.

Firstly depending on their rank they will have subordinates who will do their bidding, often without fear or hesitation. A corner chief will have a number of hoppers and younguns on the payroll and can call on 1d6 hoppers and 2d6 younguns at short notice.

A stash house chief will be supplying several corner chiefs and could call on 2d6 hoppers and 3d6 younguns from them. In addition they will have several Enforcers as muscle for the stash house who are on their payroll.

A soldier answers directly to the high command, acting both as muscle and management for the corner chiefs and stash houses. They are expected to be able to bring forces to bear on a situation and

will have 2d6 enforcers who answer to them, as well as being able to bring 2d6 stash houses and corners running at short notice.

A Lieutenant will have 1d6 soldiers that take their orders from them but are unlikely to be well known to the lower orders, only corner and stash house chiefs are likely to know them.

Lastly a Kingpin will have 1d3 Lieutenants and their soldiers under their command, as well as 1d6 soldiers that answer directly to him.

In their own territory a dealer is always making money. This will involve at least six hours work a day, at whatever level they are at in the structure. This is the minimum

amount of time that they will have to put in to maintain their position, most are working all the time. This leaves little time for adventuring. However they will have a constant revenue stream to tap into.

Smugglers in gameplay

Smuggling comes in two basic forms, either smuggling contraband on legitimate transports or illegal runs in specialist smuggling ships. Smuggling can also involve many different kinds of product, ranging from illegal drugs to people trafficking. The nature of the product being smuggled will have a major impact on the methods used.

At the lowest level a mule will have a smuggling implant at TL 8 or above, to enable them to carry relatively small quantities of high value cargo while travelling as a passenger on commercial transports. Some might be permanent employees of a larger organisation, others might be freelancers who've had the implants put in at their own cost. Either way they are the pack animals of the smuggling world and their careers are often short. Whether it's a faulty implant dumping an entire shipment of drugs into their blood stream leading to death by overdose, or getting picked up by the authorities, the turnover rate among mules is very high. At lower tech levels mules have to conceal the contraband on or in their person, which can also lead to problems, such as cavity searches.

On a larger scale contraband will be hidden inside commercial shipping units in any number of ways. This might be disguising the product as something harmless like cocaine in talc bottles, or hidden inside legitimate cargo. Even concealed spaces within the containers themselves, which is generally the only way to ship a live cargo. This sort of larger scale smuggling will involve more people along the way, as manifests will need to be altered, dock hands to ensure that the right container goes in the wrong place, minders on the ships crew to ensure that the container is not tampered with en route. All this makes

this sort of smuggling the purview of large smuggling organisations only.

The second form of smuggling involves using non registered transports to carry the cargo from supplier to distributor. This might be on a planetary scale, surface ships or aircraft moving product from city-to-city. Or it could be on a planetary scale with starships running cargo from system-to-system. This is actually one of the easiest forms of smuggling if you have the funds to purchase and operate a smuggling ship, as pickup and delivery can be done from anywhere within the systems involved in most cases. This makes discovery by the authorities a negligible risk unless there is a leak within the operation.

Ship smugglers may be independent owner operators who run their own ships and work on a job-by-job basis, or they might be employees of a large smuggling operation, just paid to make the runs themselves. If it is the latter however the organisation will want to have some pretty heavy security on that ship to make sure it comes back. Ships being significantly more expensive than any individual cargo.

Independent smugglers will make for more useful Player Characters in a game, as they can easily be hired by the other players to get them from A to B and get tangled in the story along the way. If they are part of a larger operation, then they will be unlikely to have the freedom to pick and choose which smuggling runs they are on, which limits their usefulness to the rest of the party.

Criminal Celebrities in gameplay

The most important aspect of these characters is how they have turned their criminal exploits into celebrity status and are they still celebrities when they enter game time.

For example a flamboyant enforcer who makes his living hitting stash houses and has a name on the streets only has celebrity status through what he does, which limits it to the criminal and police world. But a

gangsta who has become a musician and is selling music to the general public will be much more widely known. However to do that they have to actually be able to do something more than just be a gangsta. Some form of performing art is the normal route taken to get out of the game and become a celebrity, however that is only one way. For example being a witness for the authorities will get you some celebrity status and if that is played up to the media this can lead to a whole career change.

If the character is still an active celebrity then they are going to have to spend a significant amount of time maintaining their public image. Whether this involves doing performances, holding outrageous parties or committing high profile crimes, they will have to maintain a high enough profile to keep their name in the media. They are likely to sweep other characters along with them, as they are likely to have an entourage of some sort, so making them the focus of the game. If not then they are going to have to be operating close enough to the media and fan base to maintain their profile while the characters as a whole are adventuring.

Equipment

For the most part gangstas don't have much need for specialist equipment but there are some things that do make their jobs that little bit easier.

Augments

Mule implant (TL 8-9): This is a storage space inserted into the body normally somewhere in the torso. Space is made by shifting the internal organs around, or in more extreme cases removing them. They are undetectable to most forms of scanning from an equal TL but higher TL scans are likely to discover them. They come in two varieties, either access through an existing orifice in the body or assessed through a concealed skin zip. The former are limited to the normal orifices of the body, limiting where they can be hidden, while the latter are more easy to detect with a full strip

search until you reach TL 12, where the skin zip technology is such that they can only be detected by TL 13 or above scanners.

Most mule implants are inserted in illegal clinics, which increases the chances of infection or complications. A Streetwise roll at 8+ is necessary to find a safe clinic where infection is unlikely.

Communications

The form of communications used by a drugs or smuggling operation is always going to depend on the TL environment and the current status of the law in keeping up with the technology. The authorities might be able to tap comms and comdots but not have access to Transceivers, in which case they will be the comms method of choice. Or getting a comms tap may take several days, in which case they will use disposable comms and ditch them each day.

Disposable comms (TL 9): Whatever the state of play, one use disposable comms are likely to be useful for most gangstas and in most cases they will want to be using audio only for obvious reasons. With these devices the issue becomes whether the authorities can track where they are being purchased in order to get a tap on them before they are used, so the source of these disposable comms will be important.

Typically a disposable comms will cost Cr 5–10, depending on source.

Computers: Options

Voice/bio-metric activated data burner (TL 9): Any computers used by gangstas are likely to have data on them that would incriminate them should it fall into the hands of the authorities. This option will operate some mechanism to render the

data on the computer unrecoverable when triggered. This might be accomplished in any number of ways, explosives, acid, EM pulse, data virus, in extreme cases even an AM charge. However it is done, once activated the data held on the computer will be permanently destroyed, only recoverable with more advanced technology at least 2 TL higher than the computer itself. Whatever the system used to destroy the data, what is important is the trigger mechanism. This can range from hot-key combination, through voice activation to a bio-metric system that destroys the data if the user dies or moves more than 2 metres from the computer. The exact trigger is programmed in when the computer is constructed and the system installed.

Augments

TL 8	Orifice accessed only	Cr 10,000
TL 9	Orifice or skin zip accessed	Cr 5,000
TL 10	Orifice or skin zip accessed	Cr 1,000
TL 11	Orifice or skin zip accessed	Cr 500
TL 12	Skin zip accessed even from orifices	Cr 100

Computers: Options

TL 9	Hot key activation	Cr 5,000
TL 10	Voice activation	Cr 7,500
TL 11	Bio-metric activation.	Cr 10,000
TL 13	Thought activation	Cr 20,000

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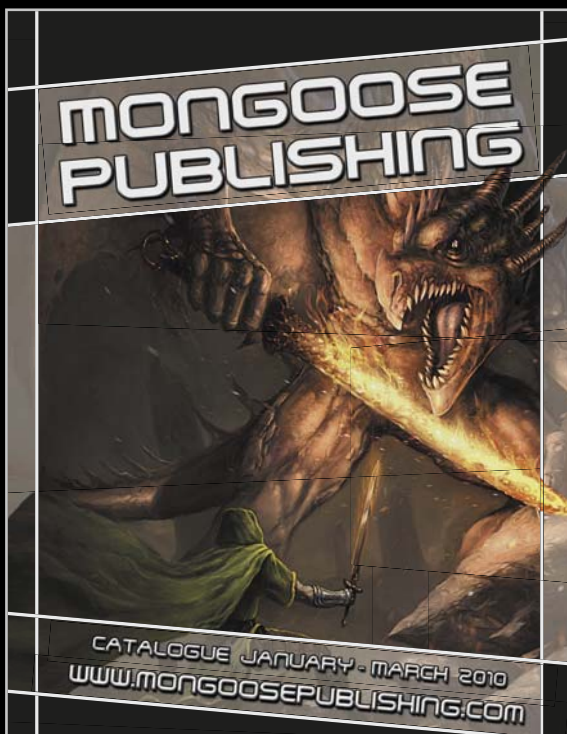
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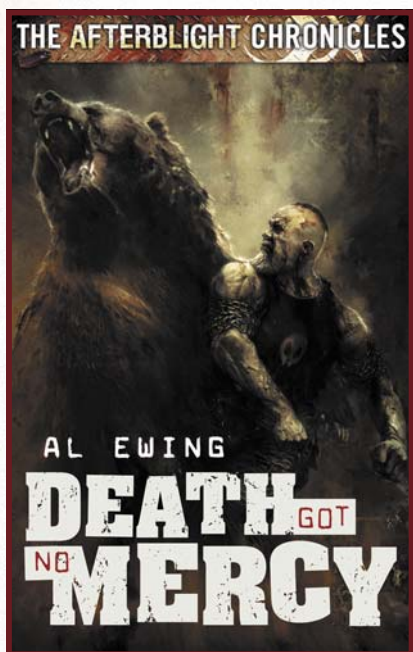


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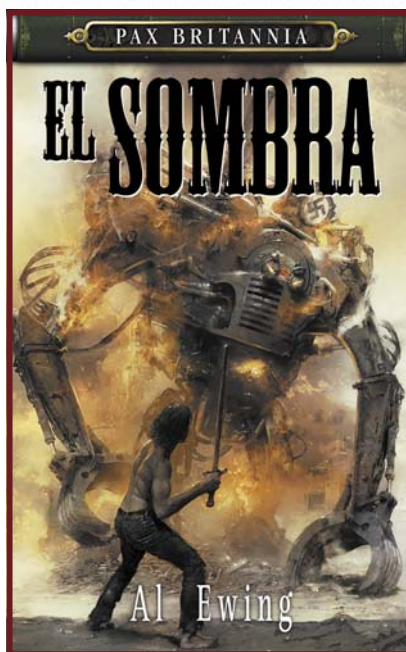
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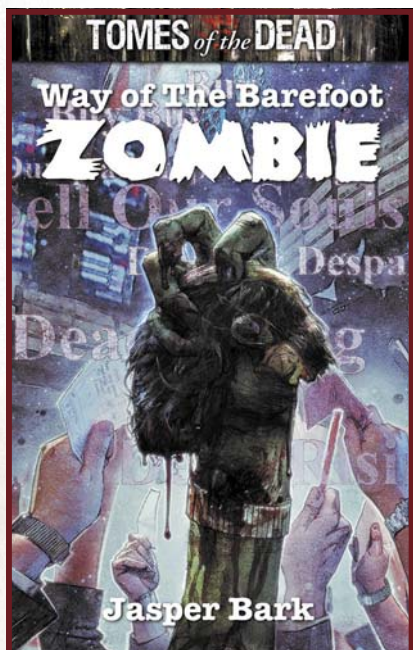
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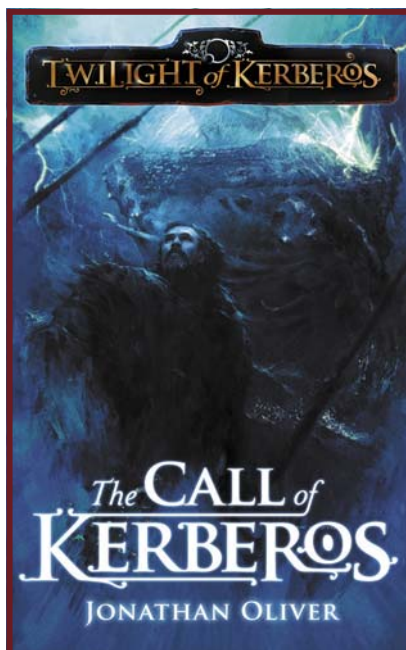
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