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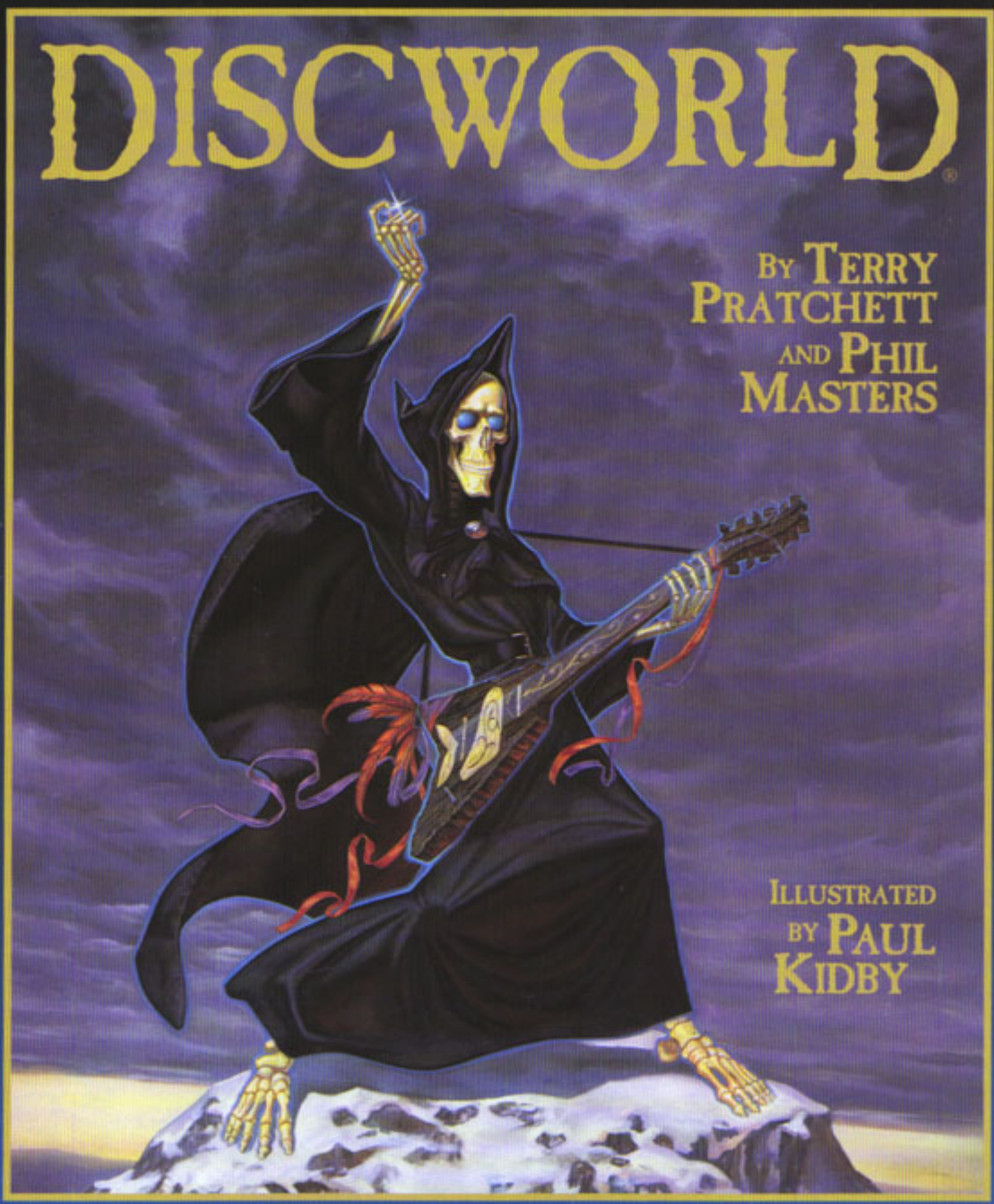
DISCWORLD®



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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

G U R P S

DISCWORLD

Adventures on the Back of the Turtle

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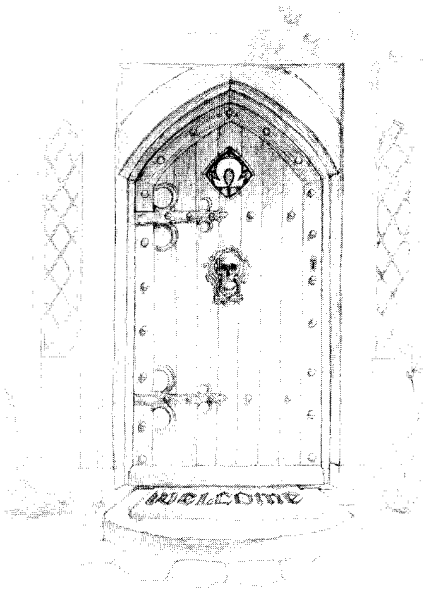

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the ***GURPS*** system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Pyramid (www.sjgames.com/pyramid). Our online magazine includes new rules and articles for ***GURPS***. It also covers all the hobby's top games – ***AD&D, Traveller, World of Darkness, Call of Cthulhu, Shadowrun*** and many more – and other SJ Games releases like ***In Nomine, INWO, Car Wars, Toon, Ogre Miniatures*** and more. And *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online, to see (and comment on) new books before they're released.

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GURPSnet. Much of the online discussion of ***GURPS*** happens on this e-mail list. To join, send mail to majordomo@io.com with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your World Wide Web browser to: www.io.com/~ftp/GURPSnet/www/.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the ***GURPS Lite*** rules, included herein (see p. 207) and, where they exceed the scope of the "lite" version of the rules, to ***GURPS Basic Set,*** *Third Edition (Revised)* and ***GURPS Compendium I.*** Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the ***GURPS Basic Set,*** while any that begin with a CI refer to the ***GURPS Compendium I*** – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the ***GURPS Basic Set***, while p. CI95 means p. 95 of the ***GURPS Compendium I.***

Other page references also follow the conventions given on p. CI181; AN refers to ***GURPS Arabian Nights,*** G refers to ***GURPS Grimoire,*** M refers to ***GURPS Magic.***

INTRODUCTION

Somewhere . . .

There is a flat, circular world which rests on the backs of four elephants, which in turn stand on the back of a giant turtle, which swims through space. Magic works here. Well, most of the time. Some of the time, anyway. There are gods and heroes.

It is a fantasy world but with some haunting similarities to this one, and hence it makes a perfect setting for fantasy stories. Some of these stories have been told over the past fifteen years or so in a series of twenty-odd novels by Terry Pratchett. (For convenience, this body of stories is hereafter referred to as *the chronicles.*) Now you can create Discworld stories of your own, using this book, and some players.

The Discworld is a comedy setting, but with room for occasional bits of tragic relief. Hence, this book is about running comedy games, and keeping the atmosphere right. But these stories are also about people, and games played in this setting can be as complex and character-driven as any you can set anywhere else.

So dive in. Don't eat the meat pies, don't frighten the swamp dragons, and be careful how you refer to the Librarian.

What Else You Will Need

Well, nothing, really, except pencils, paper, and three six-sided dice. Oh, yes, and some silly people to play with . . . 2 to 6 make a good group. All the game rules you'll need are in the ***GURPS Lite*** rules, at the back of the book.

Taking It Further

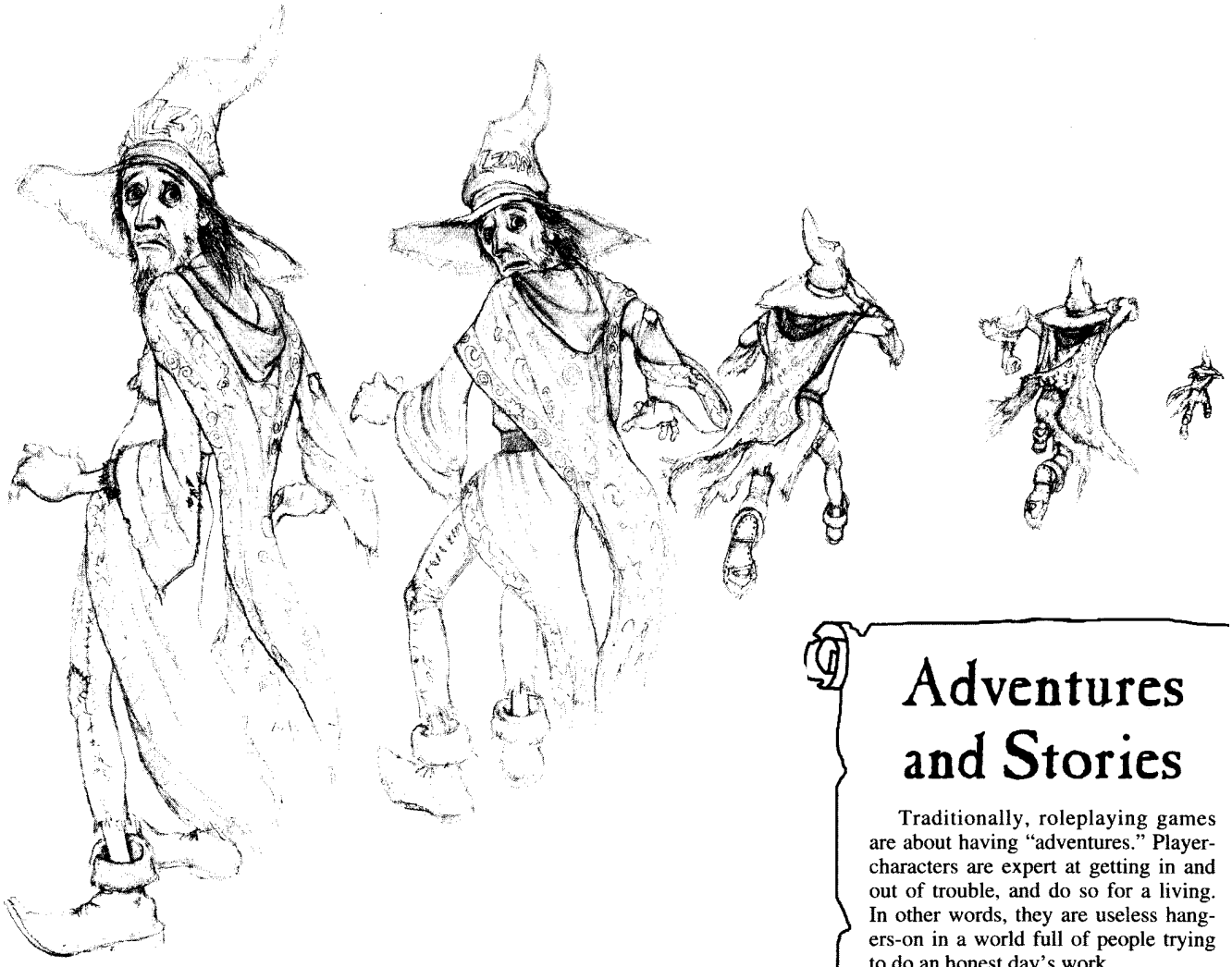
Should you decide that you want to take this roleplaying stuff a bit further, the ***GURPS Basic Set*** is the "long version" of the rules in this book, with lots more advantages, disadvantages, skills, and things to do with them. ***GURPS Compendium I*** contains still more character features and optional rules. ***GURPS Compendium II*** contains further optional rules, and many GMs find it useful, but it is less relevant for Discworld games.

GURPS Magic and ***GURPS Grimoire*** contain many, many additional spells and more material for magic-wielders. As magic is common on the Discworld, these books are **strongly** recommended, especially if players want to play wizards or witches. Other ***GURPS*** books may contain material of interest; see the sidebars on pp. 200-201 for some ideas.

The Discworld Companion (by Terry Pratchett and Stephen Briggs) is a further source of organised information on the Discworld, and so may be very useful to GMs. From the same authors, and perhaps even more useful, are ***The Streets of Ankh-Morpork*** (a map of the Disc's greatest city) and ***The Discworld Mapp.***

Some Warnings

Spoiler Alert: This book is not written with the intention of giving away the plots of the chronicles. But it's impossible to talk about the state of things on the Discworld without mentioning how things got that way, and how recent events turned out. In other words, read this book from cover to cover, and you may not get *quite* so many surprises if you read the novels later.



What It's Not: This book is not an attempt to retell the entire history of the Discworld, or even the history-so-far. For that, you need to read the chronicles. What *this* book attempts is to give a general feel for most parts of the setting, and to help you roleplay there.

About the Authors

Phil Masters has now been roleplaying half his 39 years, which is a thought he finds – strange. He is the author of ***GURPS Arabian Nights*** and co-author of ***GURPS Places of Mystery,*** and has written material for other games including ***Champions, Warhammer,*** and ***Castle Falkenstein.*** He lives in England with a wife who is smarter than him and a computer which is probably getting there.

Terry Pratchett, it turns out, wrote his first RPG scenario when Phil Masters was still running around the playground. It had a toilet in it. It also had an intelligent box called The Luggage, which walked around on legs. Some ten years later, when he had the idea of writing a fantasy novel that'd be an antidote to too many bad fantasy books, he remembered it . . .

Since then the Discworld series has sold more than ten million copies worldwide and the books have achieved best-seller status in the UK mainstream lists. He hasn't thrown a dice in anger for years.

Adventures and Stories

Traditionally, roleplaying games are about having "adventures." Player-characters are expert at getting in and out of trouble, and do so for a living. In other words, they are useless hangers-on in a world full of people trying to do an honest day's work.

The Discworld is a very good setting for this sort of thing. However, it's also a good venue for a different sort of story; tales of people building communities, trying to avoid trouble, dealing with weird stuff because it comes to them, doing their best. The Discworld books are full of "adventures," but few of the characters are actively looking for that sort of thing, and some are desperate to avoid any sort of excitement whatsoever. There *are* some "adventurers," but they're a minority – just as they are in this world, really – and are generally regarded with that distrust always shown by people in real trousers towards those who persist in wearing tiny leather hold-alls whatever the weather.

This supplement is intended to assist both sorts of game, and not to impose either sort of story. Feel free to play either way, but most importantly, remember that you have a choice.

1 On the BACK of FOUR ELEPHANTS... 1

The Discworld is rather strange, even by the standards of fantasy settings. This chapter therefore deals with some questions of life and reality in such an eccentric world.

Why A Disc? Why The Turtle?

The Discworld, which looks like an extraordinarily unlikely object (at least, until one examines some terrestrial concepts of cosmic structure), can exist because it occupies a region of Highly Stressed Reality. There can be wizards, and trolls, and dragons, because the physical constraints that prevent them in other parts of the multiverse are relaxed – in fact, downright limp. There are still rules of existence, but they are permissive, not exclusive.

> ***"There can be wizards, and trolls, and dragons, because the physical constraints that prevent them in other parts of the multiverse are relaxed – in fact, downright limp."***

Or, to put it another way, the Disc is the handiwork of a Creator working to a specification that was more poetic than usual.

Either way, it exists at the far end of the probability curve. It is consistent, in its way, but not *likely*. Furthermore, this improbability, and laws of narrative causality which have real force here, are important to more than just its origins. They pervade life on the Disc.

Rules and Principles

Most of the operation of the Disc can be derived from three basic principles:

1. Life Force
2. The Power of Metaphor and Belief
3. Narrative Causality

Life Force: Anything on the Discworld may develop, in some sense, life. This may be full intelligence and animation (trolls are walking, thinking rocks), intelligence alone (as with some wizards' staffs), or just the ability to have an attitude. While it cannot be proven that every object in the world has a viewpoint, it is often safest to assume it. And the mere fact that a building, say, has stood comfortably in the same spot for several centuries does not guarantee that tomorrow it will not develop a longing for the open road, or at least a better neighbourhood.

That doesn't mean that every random object the PCs have to deal with will have a mind of its own. Sometimes, a rock is just a rock. But magical adepts sometimes act *as if* any inanimate object had a mind.

Furthermore, the flow and balance of this life force is a dynamic thing, that sometimes requires management. (This, in a subtle way, is part of Death's job.)

Great A'Tuin

The Disc is borne through space on the back of a World Turtle, of the species *Chelys galactica*. This *is* a species, not just a unique specimen; a cluster of eight baby turtles, each bearing four elephant calves and a little Discworld in its geological youth, were once observed to hatch from moon-sized eggs that had been left in orbit round a full-sized star. They spent a little time orbiting Great A'Tuin, but have since departed on their own cosmic voyages. It is possible that they are the literal offspring of Great A'Tuin, but the turtle's gender remains unknown, despite heroic research programs.

Great A'Tuin is ten thousand miles long – slightly smaller than the Disc it carries. Its shell is encrusted with methane ice and pocked with meteor impacts; its eyes are like oceans. Its brain is the size of a continent. Wizards have tried for centuries to get a telepathic peek into its consciousness. They all forgot the joke that runs: "I've decided to dedicate my life to teaching a turtle to sing." "Do you realise the enormity of what you're proposing?" "Yes, but what's time to a turtle?" Time is not of much importance to a turtle; to a really big turtle, time is *really* unimportant. Its thoughts move like glaciers – although it *does* think, and indeed it seems quite content with life.

Berilia, Tubul, Great T'Phon and Jerakeen

Even less is really known about the four elephants who stand on Great A'Tuin, and on whose backs the Disc rests, perhaps because it is even harder to get a look at them – they are well under the rim. They are not completely static, however; the Disc's sun and moon trace rather complex orbits, thus ensuring phases for the moon and seasons for the Disc, and every now and again, an elephant has to cock a leg to let one of them go past safely.

Nor is it clear how the Disc rotates round its hub, or how the elephants avoid severe chafing. There is some evidence that the direction of rotation changes at geological intervals, which may be part of the arrangement to avoid such problems.

Incidentally, it is likely that the Disc's moon generates its own light. It certainly seems to appear like our own world's moon, waxing and waning quite regularly, whereas a lunar cycle generated by the Disc's sun's motion coupled with the local physics of light would surely be too complex to contemplate.

But Really . . .

Okay, let's be honest for a moment: The Discworld *doesn't exist.*[1]

More precisely, the Discworld is a place where *stories happen.* It was created as a setting for the chronicles. Things have appeared or happened there because they fitted the stories, more than out of deep logic.

That's what makes the Discworld work so well *as a setting for stories.* But when it comes to roleplaying games, it means a little common sense is required.

To begin with, there may be a few inconsistencies in the chronicles. Fortunately, the Disc is, first and foremost, a place where magic works, so many of these can be explained away as the product of supernatural influences. Perhaps more confusingly, the Disc has changed through the evolution of the novels, from a parody of a rambunctious sword-and-sorcery world to something rather more modern. This is explicable as the result of the setting being dragged through a peculiar and accelerated sort of Renaissance, which the inhabitants seem determined to ignore (something which the novels do actually tend to support). In any case, we should remember that while the words 'Victorian times' conjure up images of steamships, railways and the telegraph, for the majority of people in the world – even those living within a hundred miles of the most developed cities of the Western world – it meant 'living pretty much as your ancestors did' but with a few changes of fashion.

This even raises some gaming possibilities; apart from the fact that periods of change are always interesting, games can be set before, during, or after such changes, depending on what people want to play *with.*

But most of all, there's a moral of sorts. Because roleplaying games are stories, too. So if you, as a GM, need to tinker with the setting in order to get your campaign to work, go ahead. Try to be consistent – it's fairer on your players – but don't treat the place as sacred.

[1] *This may be news to the millions of beings who live there, but there you go. Or, in their case, there they don't go.*

Metaphor and Belief: Metaphors, too, tend not to sit like Patience on a monument smiling at grief, but to get off the monument, hunt Grief down, and demand to know why he done her wrong and how about the maintenance payments, mister? Death is not an abstract concept represented by a robed skeleton with a scythe; he *is* a robed skeleton with a scythe.

Belief has powerful effects. The gods are created, or at least empowered, and maintained in their power, by the collective belief of their followers. The power of wizards and witches depends only in part on their abilities with magical energy; they also require that other people *believe* in their power. Convince enough people that you can turn them into frogs with a hard stare, and you may never have to prove it. (Conversely, disbelief can prevent something from existing, or from being seen even if it does exist.)

> ***"Convince enough people that you can turn them into frogs with a hard stare, and you may never have to prove it."***

Incidentally, one side-effect of this tendency towards personification is the recurrent, and sometimes tiresome, literal-mindedness of the Disc's inhabitants. People take metaphors literally because metaphors all too often become literal. Talk about your true love as a rose, and people are likely to point out that she (a) isn't green and scarlet, (b) doesn't have thorns, and (c) walks about a lot. Poets, like engineers, can have a tough time of it on the Disc and, indeed, have been at times been severely controlled by law. 'Poetic license,' on the Disc, is also not metaphor.

Narrative Causality: This is the power of stories, perhaps the greatest power of all. People want, and need, events to follow certain courses, and come to proper resolutions. A war is supposed to end with the "right" side winning and the "wrong" side having learned its lesson forever. The fact that in the extremely long history of warfare this has hardly ever happened does not alter the fact that people want it to happen and resolutely believe, at the start of each new war, that it'll happen again.

On the Disc, by a process of feedback one may deduce from the other two principles, this has become a powerful force indeed. There is a whole class of people (the History Monks) whose job is to observe history, making sure that it happens as it is supposed to. Genuinely heroic efforts to get off-script have failed because of the innate power of the plotline.[2]

On the other hand, there is more than one story to be told. One man armed with nothing but faith prevents a century of pointless warfare; even Death has bent the rules in the service of a satisfying resolution. The secret seems to be providing Destiny with a plot that is better, more original and satisfying, than the original plan. In short, you can beat the power of stories with a *better* story.

Morphic Fields and Discworld Genetics

In our world, there are some highly disputed theories about "morphic resonance" or "morphic fields." On the Discworld, these theories are all true. Even the contradictory ones.

Basically, everything – every stone, every insect, and every person – has a natural form, which is represented in its morphic field. This field is a *lot* harder

[2] *This is a definition of Tragedy, of course.*

to change, by magic or brute force, than the thing's physical shape. If someone has their arm or leg chopped off, they sometimes talk about the sense that a "ghost limb" is still there; this shows that they are dimly sensing their morphic field. (Indeed, actual ghosts retain the image of their former human form by retaining some of their morphic field.) If a change is magical, the morphic field struggles to reassert itself, eventually overcoming the magic, which is why transformation spells usually wear off; to make the change permanent, the caster must make a permanent adjustment to the morphic field, which is *difficult.*

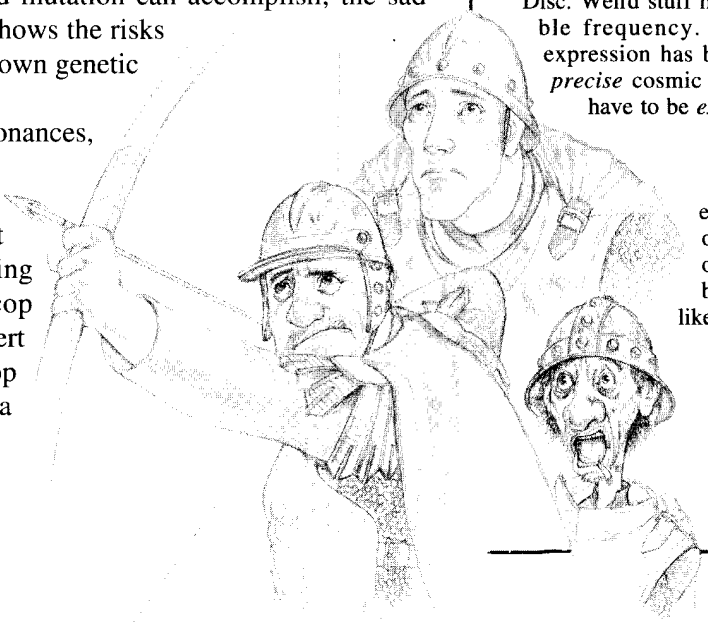
Furthermore, morphic fields exhibit **resonance effects.** Once one exists, other objects can imitate it. Thus, if something has been made once – a type of tool, say, or a style of art – then it is fairly easy to repeat the trick. Genuine creativity is hard, because it means shaping new morphic fields.

Once a change has been made, it can be just as hard to undo. Greebo the cat, for example, was once the subject of a short-term transformation spell, and he has had an embarrassing tendency to switch to human form in times of stress ever since. Werewolves tend to exhibit some lupine attributes in human form (extra hair, superior senses), and human intelligence, or at least cunning, and sometimes too-sophisticated malice, in wolf form, because although they can adjust their morphic field between two states, each tends to carry "echoes" of the other. (Sometimes these echoes fade, so that the special abilities may fade with time.)

Thus, inheritance does not operate in Discworld biology as it does in our world. To get technical, it is at least as much Lamarckian as Mendelian. Morphic fields change (if slowly) and resonate, so that acquired characteristics can be passed on to offspring. In fact, characteristics can even be passed on to adopted offspring. For example Susan, the daughter of Death's apprentice and Death's own (adopted) daughter, not only exhibits Death's powers of invisibility and memory (which are arguably functions of his office, which she must sometimes perform); she also has three marks on her face, which only become visible when she blushes or is angry, and which match a mark left on her father's face when Death slapped him. Part of this sort of thing can be put down to magical action, which can not only change animals deliberately, but can affect them accidentally (as with all the intelligent animals found around Unseen University); part, however, is a much more general function of the universe.

Discworld genes also react intelligently at times, or at least take hints. The appearance of one (so far, fortunately, only one) supersonic, jet-propelled swamp dragon shows what a truly focused mutation can accomplish; the sad history of the Counting Pines (see p. 176) shows the risks to a species that tries too hard to control its own genetic destiny.

Finally, there are even more subtle resonances, which play a major part in the humour of the stories. As Ankh-Morpork's City Watch becomes more organised, so it becomes more familiar – it's as if it's being shaped by the field generated by every cop show you've ever seen. This can be so overt that in times of real stress a Discworld cop might well attempt to shoot the lock off – a difficult feat with a bow.



Corollaries

Rules have logical consequences, not least the three rules given in the main text. Most of them are conditional and vague, but there are a few worth mentioning.

The Rule of Universal Humour: When an event can happen in a variety of slightly different ways, it tends, on the Discworld, to happen in the most satisfying way from the point of view of narrative. Because even tragedies have jokes or comic interludes, this means that some small things happen because they are funny. This is especially true when magic is involved, as it consists of mucking about with the structure of reality.

Thus, for example, if a wizard turns an opponent into a pumpkin, the spell encompasses any clothes that the victim may be wearing. (It's magic; it's about morphic fields and symbolism, not boring questions of molecular rearrangement.) Nonetheless the pumpkin will almost certainly still be wearing the victim's hat. Similarly, in any Disc society advanced enough to have invented plate glass, the main function of large sheets of the stuff is to be carried by two men into the path of anyone engaged in an urban chase scene. (This doesn't necessarily mean that chases are disrupted more than is statistically likely; it just means that the disruption often takes that form.) In game terms, GMs should not be too frightened to throw a cliche detail into a scene, if it will raise a laugh. (But don't get addicted to this, or the players will get bored.)

The Million-to-One Rule: As everyone know, in stories, million-to-one chances come up nine times out of ten. This is certainly true on the Disc. Weird stuff happens with terrible frequency. But this casual expression has become a terribly *precise* cosmic reality. The odds have to be *exactly* a million to one; 999,998 to 1 is not good enough. (Still, exact million-to-one chances do occur pretty often, because stories are like that.)

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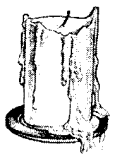
Corollaries (Continued)

The Option of Narrative Manipulation: Players should be extremely careful of attempting to *use* narrative causality, just as they should be discouraged from attempting to exploit million-to-one chances. For one thing, it's unreliable; stories *can* be subtle, and can take many forms, and they even seem to resent being exploited. A character who tries casting himself as the Brave Peasant Lad Who Outwits The Troll may find that he is actually playing one of the Twenty Poor Peasants Eaten By The Troll Before The Knight Comes Along. Or he might even end up as the Devious Little Human Squashed By The Troll Hero. (Troll fairy-stories are not very subtle.)

And secondly, it's ethically tricky. A lot of what happens in stories involves unpleasant things happening to minor characters. Even if PCs can get themselves classed as Successful Major Characters, bad things may have to happen to NPCs. Those who try to cultivate stories have to feed them – and they eat *people.*



Society on the Disc

Disc society is made up of many species, dozens of cultures, and a sprinkling of magic. Thus, it is only kept together by a certain amount of compromise and a recognition, at least some of the time, that intelligent beings can't spend *all* their time hitting each other.

It is also changing, as the place is currently being dragged through a kind of warped and confused Renaissance with Victorian trimmings. For convenience, this book assumes that gamers will wish to play in the world as it is seen in the most recent books (around *Feet of Clay* and *Hogfather*). That is not a firm rule; for example, anyone who wants to have some fun with the conventions of heroic high fantasy is welcome to set their game in and around the more medieval Ankh-Morpork of *The Colour of Magic.* At least one novel, *Small Gods,* can best be interpreted as lying a couple of decades or more in the past of the main sequence of stories; thus, GMs wishing to use the tyrannical, deadly, pre-Brutha version of Omnia are going to have to go back that far, or tinker with the history discussed here. Feel free; it's the stories that count, not the numbers.

Known History

The history of intelligent life on the Disc is a slightly under-researched topic, perhaps partly because it gets a little hazy when examined closely; divine interventions, conditional events, and the occasional magical distortion can cause such problems. (See p. 15 for more on Discworld Time.) It has certainly been long, confused, and sometimes depressing.

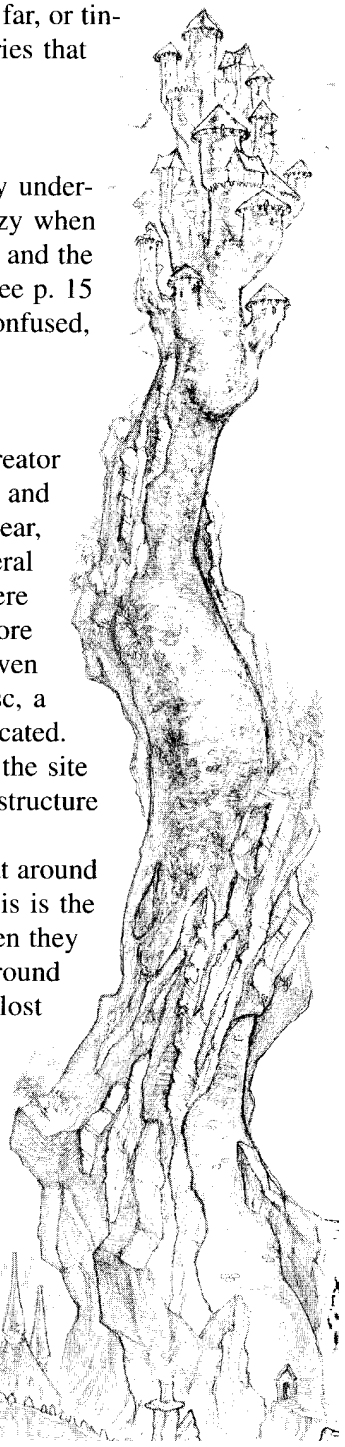
Prehistory

The Disc was constructed by a being known as the Creator (see p.152), who was evidently working to a tight budget and an eccentric specification; who employed him remains unclear, although they were apparently creating the universe in general at the time. How long ago this was is also uncertain, but there is evidence of continental drift, evolution from less to more complex forms of life, and devastating meteor impacts; even given the accelerated way these things happen on the Disc, a time scale in the hundreds of millions of years seems indicated. Somewhere along the way, the Tower of Art appeared on the site of what is now Ankh-Morpork; there is evidence that this structure pre-dates humanity.

Humans, trolls, and other races seem to have evolved at around the same time, and promptly started believing in gods. This is the time that most Disc religions and many histories mean when they refer to "the creation."[1] However, once they had looked around and found out a little more, the humans quite naturally lost their temper. As there was a great deal of magic around in those days, the wars between men and gods were balanced and very violent; many of the Disc's more unstable

"The Disc was constructed by a being known as the Creator (see p. 152), who was evidently working to a tight budget and an eccentric specification."

[1] *Anything earlier was just mechanical, and unobserved, and so doesn't really count.*



high-magic zones and more bizarre species date to this period. Eventually, the Old High Ones (see p. 152) intervened, exiling the gods to the mountain-tops, reducing mortals considerably in size, and reducing the magic level of the Disc.

Still, a great deal of raw magic was possible; human history remained dominated by Sourcerers (see p. 105) for some time, until eventually, things were brought under control by human agreement or other powers. Magic was focussed in relatively controlled bodies such as Unseen University (see p. 109).

Human Civilisations

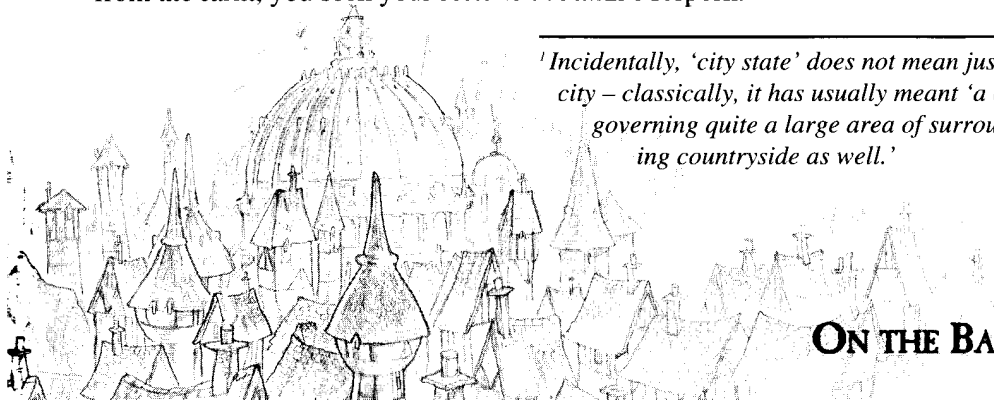
Ankh-Morpork goes back somewhat over three thousand years in something like its current form, and other urban Disc cultures, such as the Agatean Empire and Klatch, go back about as far, give or take a millennium. However, there has been civilisation of a sort for rather longer, especially around the Circle Sea (the Disc's counterpart to our Mediterranean). The land of Djelibeybi (see p. 24), for example, claims 7,000 years of history, although much of it was recycled. Frankly, things get cloudy at that distance; even the history that was written down is largely lies or half-truths.

Anyway, with the long, slow decline of Djelibeybi, the region around the Circle Sea divided into several nations, leading to the patchwork of competing powers we see today (as described in Chapter 2). For most of history, the two most powerful were Ankh-Morpork, with its wizards and commercial strength, and Klatch, with its sophisticated deviousness. Recently, they have both been challenged to some extent by Tsort, although its army has never been quite powerful enough to conquer other major powers. Across the Disc, the insanely wealthy Agatean Empire long ago found a stable equilibrium, based on bureaucracy, careful control of thought, and paddy fields.

Nations, Kingdoms, and City-States

The modern socio-politics of the Disc can best be summed up in words like *patchwork*. Think of the world in, say, 1850 – there were democracies, republics, kingdoms and feudal states. The Discworld has all of these, sometimes in interesting combinations. 'Greek' Ephebe is still based on slavery, but with so many laws about the proper feeding and care of slaves that the slaves themselves have always opposed the abolition of the system. A slave must be fed, but a free man is free to starve. Lancre, in the Ramtops, now seems to operate a sort of reverse feudal system, with a fairly tough and forthright peasantry getting on with their lives while one king works his fingers to the bone governing the place.

Ephebe is one of a number of city states, which abound in the lands around the Circle Sea.[1] The greatest, and oldest, of these is Ankh-Morpork – once the hub of a mighty empire held together by the might of its armies, now still immensely powerful because of the strength of the Ankh-Morpork dollar. Think of it as Renaissance Florence and Victorian London rolled together with some of the outlook of modern New York. In many respects its 'empire' now is the whole of the Sto Plains. If you want a new life, a better job, or just to get away from the farm, you seek your fortune in Ankh-Morpork.



[1] *Incidentally, 'city state' does not mean just a city – classically, it has usually meant 'a city governing quite a large area of surrounding countryside as well.'*

Disc Statistics

For those who worry: the Disc has a diameter of about ten thousand miles. It is about thirty miles thick at the Rim, and is thought to be substantially thicker in the centre; certainly, it seems to have a substantial internal pocket of molten lava, necessary for interesting volcanoes. (There is some evidence of continental drift, too, which suggests either a molten interior or a really strange arrangement of wheels.) There are fossils in these rocks, and also lots of signs of sedimentary layering; these are widely blamed on the Creator trying to confuse people.

Where the Disc's internal heat comes from is unknown; one theory says that it is the result of high pressure acting on deep-lying deposits of octiron (see p. 123). This might also explain the Disc's strong magical field, which is so intense that it can slow light down to a crawl in places. But there are plenty of mysteries about the Disc – for example, no-one can explain why the oceans remain at the same level when water is forever pouring over thirty thousand miles of circumference in the extraordinary "Rimfall." Arrangements are presumably made. Anyway, we've been taking oil out of our spinning Earth for years now, so why aren't we kept awake at nights by the axles squeaking?

Other Turtles, Other Worlds

As mentioned previously, there are at least eight other world-turtles in the same universe as the Discworld, along with other discs with other arrangements – one is ringed by a great dragon, its tail in its mouth. However, this is likely to remain purely of academic interest in games. Interstellar flight is not really a feasible concept for this setting; Discworld technology is really nowhere near up to the idea, magic depends on the availability of a strong Thaumic field, and the gods depend even more on the proximity and fervent belief of a large group of worshippers. Still, if any GM wants to develop their own disc setting from scratch, there is nothing to stop them.

Discworld Light

The Disc's magical field has a peculiar effect on light; it slows it right down. Seen from vantage points available to the gods, a Disc sunrise involves the light of dawn spreading across the landscape like incandescent honey.

In fact, the magical field sometimes reduces the speed of light at the Disc's surface to about the same as the speed of sound (750 MPH). Thus lightning and thunder can arrive at the same time. However, there are problems with the suggestion that this is true everywhere across the Discworld; as Didactylos the Ephebian pointed out, this would mean that sunlight would take longer to cross the Disc's 10,000-mile diameter than the sun takes to go from rising to setting, and the sun would have to travel markedly faster than its own light. Working out current illumination levels at any point on the Disc at any time would be quite astoundingly headache-making. So possibly it is only near the Rim, where the magical field is densest, that light is quite so severely slowed.

However, Discworld light definitely behaves like a thick liquid; it piles up behind mountain ranges, so that valleys do not get dawn until it spills over the ridge (some hardly get light at all) and it forms pools in low-lying areas. (It seems to be slightly heavier than air.) Tribes in the Great Nef have built light dams, enabling them to trap this substance for their own purposes.

Light passing through strong magical fields also gets split into the traditional seven-colour spectrum, plus an eighth colour – *Octarine,* the colour of magic, visible only to the magically adept.

The Non-Existent Horizon

Given that the Discworld is flat, it should logically be possible to see across it for unlimited distances. As the inhabitants will happily point out, however, this isn't true because things get in the way.

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Two other empires that have featured in the books are the Agatean Empire, distinctly 'oriental' and held together by a huge ancient bureaucracy, and the Omnian Empire, bound together by a powerful religion and the fact that the deserts mean there's nowhere to run to.

So adventurers can always *hope* to find a secluded barony or pocket kingdom, ripe for the taking, if their ambitions lie that way. And however dumb the political system, someone somewhere is trying to make it work. Even democracy has been attempted, with votes for all (at least, everyone reasonably rich and definitely male).

Recent Decades

During the chronicles the Discworld has gone through some accelerated progress.

A key turning point was the appointment[1] of Lord Havelock Vetinari as Patrician of squabbling, lawless Ankh-Morpork. He has entirely transformed the city, finding ways to canalise the relentless self-interest of its warring factions for the good of the city as a whole. Ankh-Morpork remains squabbling but is not exactly lawless, and is something of a boom town. Vetinari governs it anyway (see Chapter 5 for details). Today, rather than brutal thugs and scarred assassins round every corner, there are polite thugs and very gentlemanly assassins (the latter waiting round only the best corners).

This has, indirectly, by example, or coincidentally, triggered a period of further changes round the Disc. Djelibeybi has woken from its cyclic history, forcing Tsort and Ephebe to revise their ancient enmity. Omnia has transformed from a land of psychotic religious fanatics to a land of polite missionary religious fanatics. Even the Agatean Empire has been changed, admittedly by the traditional means of a barbarian conquest (but only a *very* small one). Threats that might have brought the whole Disc down in flames, such as the brief rise of Coin the Sourcerer, or the even briefer rule of a full-size dragon in Ankh-Morpork, have been contained, by luck or judgement or inadvertent bravery. Theatre is going through a golden age; opera is at a peak (but never mind). All this is combined with a small-scale industrial revolution based on low-key magic and limited use of the printing press (moveable type is not permitted by the wizards, for their own reasons, but there is a quite sophisticated engraving industry in Ankh-Morpork).

Not that anyone on the Disc would ever happily admit that things are improving, or credit the people responsible. And not that there is no longer any scope for adventure, or possibility of threats to civilisation. In fact, since there are more civilisations, there are more threats – and many come from inside the city walls.

Languages

Languages on the Disc are a moderately confused subject, but less of a problem than one might expect.

The most widespread language, known as Ankhian, may indeed have originated in Ankh-Morpork; it is spoken as a first or second language all around the Circle Sea and across the Sto Plains as far as such Ramtops kingdoms as Lancre. It is useful or essential for everyone who is in frequent contact with this area or its people. It even seems to be the main language of Krull (perhaps that secretive

[1] *Or assumption, or usurpation . . .*

kingdom was settled from the Circle Sea area), and is widespread in the patchwork society of Genua (which may well be a colonial foundation of some kind). By cosmic coincidence, it resembles the English language of our own universe.

However, there are other languages. Omnians claim that they have their own, although this seems to be an exaggeration based on their rigorous and rule-bound approach to communication. Klatch, Tsort and Ephebe also claim to have distinct languages, although these may be related to each other and Omnian. (For game purposes, treat Ephebian, Klatchian, Omnian, and Tsortean as dialects of a single language, defaulting to each other at -3.) Further into the interior of Klatch, there are thousands of tribes with as many languages; the D'Regs, fierce desert nomads of the continent have one which uses the same word for "traveller," "stranger," and "target."

Slightly more distant mountain lands also preserve their own tongues; Llamedos, for example, certainly has a strongly distinctive accent, which probably indicates the preservation of an ancient, musical, fluid language, for ceremonial purposes at least. Uberwald, across the high ridge of the Ramtops, has a guttural style of speech.

And, of course, the most distant nations have very divergent languages; here, it will suffice to mention Agatean, which is tonal and subtle, and written in an intricate script of thousands of pictograms. (The only other modern language that ordinary Agateans have been known to learn, very occasionally, is Trob, as used by sailors who visit their ports from the nearest island chain.) And one should beware of Black Oroogu, which has no nouns and just one adjective, which is obscene.

The Social Position of Magic

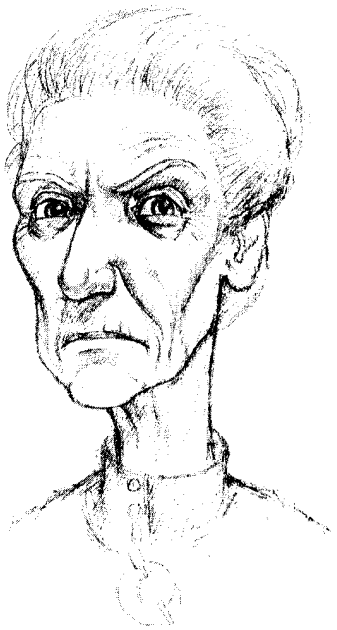
Magic is an accepted part of life on the Disc, and is not usually regarded as intrinsically evil. However, it does sometimes worry people, the way that other people with excess firepower do.

Exponents of Discworld magic are not always above exploiting such worry. Witches work on the theory that much of their power comes from the respect (or fear) in which they are held. The wizards of Unseen University don't so much keep accounts with local tradesmen, as have *arrangements.*[1] And the ability to work magic is closely linked to the ability to see things as they really are, rather than as people assume they must be, which in turn gives magic-workers a slightly unnerving, detached air; where other characters take part in stories, witches and wizards *shape* the stories, and sometimes it shows.

> ***"Magic is an accepted part of life on the Disc, and is not usually regarded as intrinsically evil. However, it does sometimes worry people, the way that other people with excess firepower do."***

There is also a divide between truly powerful magic-workers – witches, wizards, and the exotic variants on these types such as voodoo-users – and the large class of less versatile supernatural specialists. Mediums, wandering fortune-tellers, dwarf broomstick-mechanics, and some alchemists may all possess a

[1] *The tradesmen deliver groceries, and the wizards don't have as many accidents as they might if they weren't so fat and contented.*



Discworld Light (Continued)

Well, okay . . . On open sea on the Disc, on a clear, calm day, one can see a heck of a distance. However, Discworld light is usually distorted and diffused by minor local variations in the magical field, along with the usual water vapour in the atmosphere and so on. In practice, recognising anything smaller than a mountain at distances greater than a couple of miles is simply impossible. But if players insist on asking – no, their characters don't see a proper horizon – just haze, and if they're in the right place, the edge of the Disc.

The Rimfall

All around the edge of the Disc, the Rim Ocean tumbles endlessly into mist and empty space. It refracts the light into the Rimbow, a double rainbow of eight colours – the terrestrial seven, spread out close to the Disc's surface, plus a broad band of octarine, some distance farther out. The Rimbow is visible at dawn and sunset, when the Disc's little orbiting sun is at just the right angle.

You really *don't* need to worry about how the water gets back on the Disc.

Brigadoons

Brigadoons are areas in which the structure of reality is weak, and the location (sometimes complete with buildings and population) slips in and out of local existence. This may happen randomly or at long fixed intervals. Generally, no time passes while the brigadoon is wherever else it is. Most brigadoons return to the same place, but a few "floating" examples move through space as well as time. Wandering Shops, those entities which sell people things they need on a moral or metaphysical level but could *really* do without on a practical level, may use similar mechanisms.

"Brigadoons are areas in which the structure of reality is weak, and the location (sometimes complete with buildings and population) slips in and out of local existence."

Such locations are known in many universes. Possible Discworld examples include the Lost City of Ee (see p. 27) and the village of Turnover in the Ramtops. The land of Chimeria is also sometimes mentioned as a possible example, although other evidence says that it is quite consistently real.

Signs of a brigadoon include unusual disappearances (of travellers, livestock, or ships), and, less often, strange appearances of extinct animals or dazed-looking people in funny clothes who aren't up on current affairs.

Brigadoons, whether random or cyclic, have a singular tendency to appear when player-characters are in the immediate vicinity. They make inherently dramatic locations for adventures, since when it's time to go, it's *really* time to go. Certain kinds of magic may be able to delay the departure slightly, and in some cases True Love can hold things up (in the usual True Love fashion).

scrap of true power, but they aren't generally in the same league as spell-hurling pointy-hat wearers, and they are somewhat easier to live with. One exception is demonologists, who are generally authentic (if not overly powerful) wizards, but who choose voluntarily to have dealings with beings whose job descriptions mention Infinite Evil and Corrupting the Souls of Mankind; this *does* tend to aggravate the neighbours, and demonologists quickly learn not to tell other folk what they do in their attics.

Magic-users have been persecuted on rare occasions, sometimes even systematically. Individuals may get their profession a bad name (by indiscriminate frog-making, demonology, or whatever), and nearby communities may develop a prejudice that can take years to change. There is also a traditional rivalry between magic and religion; magic-workers know enough that they don't take the gods as seriously as the gods would like, and they see priests as people who are prone to encourage stupidity. Priests, meanwhile, feel that spell-casters undermine the significance of divine miracles, and have a pretty good idea about the very real dangers of demonology, let alone the Dungeon Dimensions. This enmity mostly remains on the name-calling level, but some powerful and expansionist religions have been known to progress to bonfires and inquisitions.[1]

The social status of magic might give non-spell-caster PCs ideas about making false claims – dressing up in pointy hats, waving sticks around, and demanding better service. It might even work sometimes, but it is really, really not clever. Discworlders mostly know enough about magic that they know that small effects are generally easy for true experts to accomplish, and have usually seen a few smarter con games than this in their time; they are likely to demand demonstrations of any claimed power, politely or brusquely according to their mood and the apparent plausibility of the claim. Furthermore, real spell-casters get irritated by such fakery; Unseen University still has some quite medieval statutes on its books related to the subject, and has jurisdiction in the matter, while a typical Ramtops village witch would probably do something milder but seriously humiliating.

Directions, Time and the Calendar

Obviously, the Disc has no north or south as spherical worlds do. Rather, directions are given as *hubwards* (towards the centre of the Disc), *rimwards* (away from the centre), *spinwards* (in the direction of rotation – clockwise as seen from above) or *widdershins* (or occasionally *trailing* – opposite to the direction of rotation).

Weather and Temperature

The Disc is orbited by a small, hot sun, and a moon, which whirl under and over it (passing between two of the elephants) as the whole turtle-borne assembly moves through space. The hottest place on the Disc, at any particular time, must be where the sun is closest, at the start or end of the day. In other words, the points on the rim currently adjacent to the sun's orbit experience the equivalent of a tropical summer. Other points on the rim obviously receive less heat, and hence should be downright cold at times, but in fact, they are usually no

[1] *Seldom against real magic users, of course, precisely because they can use magic. But a good inquisitor can always find a helpless old woman if the need for a victim arises.*

worse than "mild." Heat is transferred around the Rim somehow; most theories say that this is through the dense magical flux there. (There is also ocean round almost all of the Rim, and water is a great conductor and store of heat.)

The Hublands, on the other hand, never get more than distant sunlight, and are surrounded by a lot of land – so this is a cold and wintry region. Ankh-Morpork, a temperate city with some hot summers, is – surprise – just over halfway from the Hub to the Rim.

One other point; the orbit of the moon is fairly close to the Disc. Thus, points on the Rim, during summer, can see it from fairly close up. On the Disc, the tropical moon looks bigger because it really does occupy a larger portion of the sky.

Time

Discworld time can be both conditional and flexible. For example, the past has, on very rare occasions, been changed at the whim of powerful supernatural beings (although this usually seems to require the consent of the gods). Time can not only divide into two separate historical paths, it can later re-merge, leaving people with a hazy sense that various things happened in the past, but no strong sense of causality. To add to the confusion, time can be stopped, by magic, over limited areas; for example, the entire kingdom of Lancre was once put into stasis for well over a decade by a heroine-ic piece of witchcraft.

And, to be honest, the chronicles were never written to a tight, pre-planned chronology. Trying to fit a consistent historical time-line to the recent events described there is not only inherently difficult; it is actively misguided. This book contains what is merely a best guess, to give players and GMs something to refer to.

On the other hand, the Discworld does have working calendars of sorts. They are slightly messy and confused, but coherent.

The Disc Year

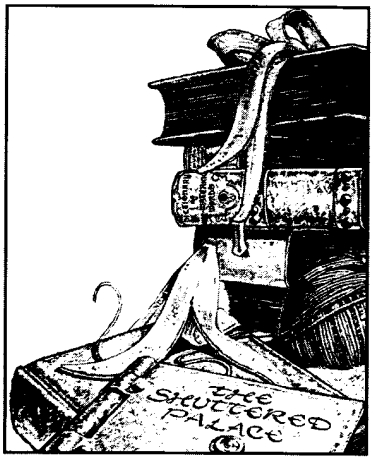
To begin with, there are two sorts of year on the Disc. In one sense, a year is 800 days, the time it takes for the Disc to revolve once relative to the Turtle. This is known as a "spin year," among those with sufficiently advanced astronomical knowledge and enough time on their hands to worry about it. Because the sun makes two orbits in this period, there are eight seasons in the spin year – two of each. It is summer when a point on the Rim is directly under the sun's orbit, winter when it is 90 degrees away.

In the days when Ankh-Morpork was an Empire, the eight-season year was known as the Great Year, with differently named seasons: Winter Prime, Spring Prime, Summer Prime, Autumn Prime, Winter Secundus, Spring Secundus, and so on. This was, however, of interest only to wizards and astrologers. For most people, the year is four seasons – more specifically, a year is plowing, planting, growing, and harvest – except that in half of them the sun comes up on the left of the Hub, and in half it comes up on the right.

This gives a 'year' of 400 days – close enough to one of our terrestrial years for all practical purposes, and treated as such in this book. All references to a "year" in Disc-related sources should be taken as one of these 400-day units unless clearly stated otherwise.

Ancient and Arcane Languages

There is an "Old Language" in the region of Ankh-Morpork, which is used for traditional activities such as heraldry; it resembles Latin. PCs who wish to pursue careers in traditionalist fields should learn it. (For game purposes, think of it as Latin – but flippant, inaccurate, "Dog Latin" translations are fine.) Ancient magical tomes may be written in all sorts of dead (and undead) languages, of course; the one certainty is that wizards will be able to read books that they shouldn't, and have immense difficulties with books of what turn out to be basic horticultural spells.



Non-Human Languages

Dwarfs and trolls each have their own language, but both races often learn Ankhian as well, especially if they have many dealings with humans. Both these languages are designed for non-human throats; humans *can* learn either, but achieving unaccented fluency in them requires an Unusual Background.[1] Gnomes and goblins seem to have adopted Ankhian, as they are too rare to form large communities of their own. Golems all understand the language of the place where they were created, as well as that of the religious writings used in their making. And orang-utans have a sophisticated, complex, and expressive language, which unfortunately only has one word.

[1] *Or an unusual throat.*

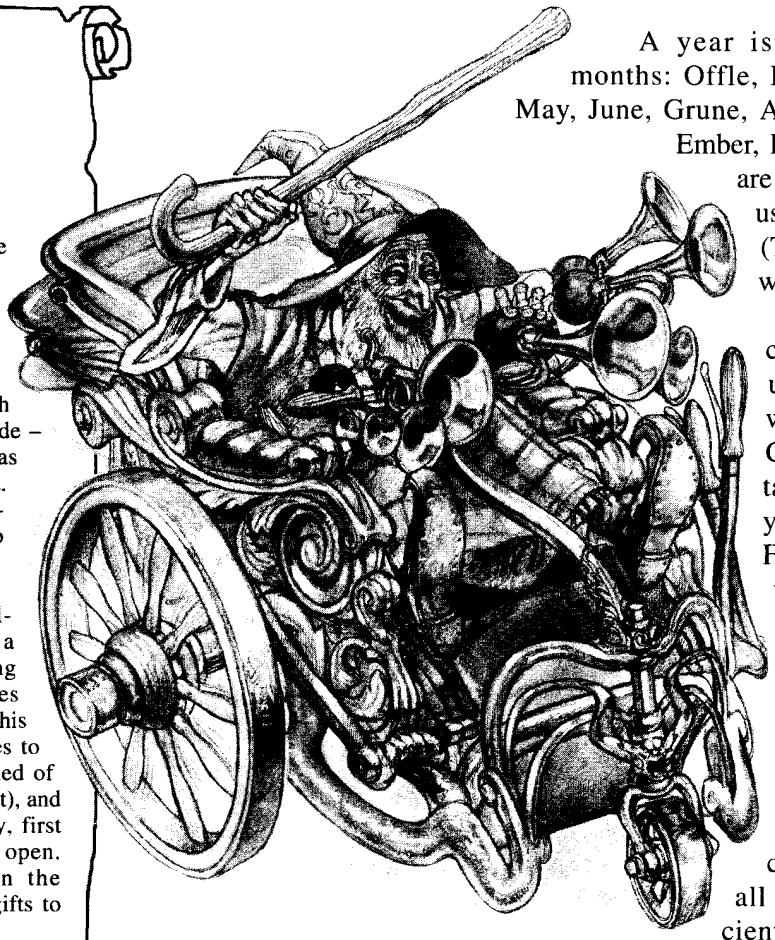
Discworld Holidays

Because of the double nature of the Disc year, its festival days tend to come in pairs, one in each half of the Great Year. For example, there are two major, very widely-observed festival pairs, in a cycle which runs Small Gods' Eve – Crueltide – Midsummer Eve (also known as All's Fallow) – Hogswatchnight. Many people, however, especially in rural areas, use only two names; Midsummer Eve and Hogswatchnight.

Hogswatchnight (or Crueltide) is the last day of the year – a traditional day for slaughtering pigs (hence the name). Witches are expected to stay at home on this one night (although no-one likes to insist; the same has been claimed of All's Fallow, with as much effect), and on the following Hogswatchday, first day of the year, shops do not open. This is also the night when the Hogfather (see p. 159) brings gifts to children.

The other noted dates on Sto Plains and Ramtops calendars are Soul Cake Days – the first Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday after the first half-moon in Sektober. This is a Halloween/Bonfire Night sort of festival, also observed by dwarfs, who engage in bobbing for trout and toffee rats on a stick; humans have traditions including trickle-treating, all-comers Morris Dancing, and rolling boiled eggs down the Tump in Ankh-Morpork (see p. 90). Don't ask why; it's tradition, and an excuse for a party. The festival has its own anthropomorphic, or rather aviomorphic, personification, the Soul Cake Tuesday Duck, which doesn't seem to do very much – perhaps wisely, as the festival also marks the start of the duck-hunting season.

Genua (p. 32) has its own favourite festival season, Mardi Gras (also known as Fat Tuesday), which culminates in Samedi Nuit Mort, the night halfway between the Living and the Dead, which is marked by processions and a ball at the palace. Suffice to say that Genua *really* knows how to party.



A year is divided into thirteen months: Offle, February, March, April, May, June, Grune, August, Spune, Sektober, Ember, December, and Ick. There are eight days in a week; our usual seven, plus Octeday. (There are, of course, fifty weeks in a year.)

Years and (especially) centuries are also named, usually by astrologers with obscure logic. Chronicled events mostly take place during the last years of the Century of the Fruitbat; the previous era was the Century of the Three Lice. Ankh-Morpork uses a numeric calendar (less poetic but theoretically easier to work with); this was originally dated from the city's founding, but the city has been destroyed, or all but destroyed, or sufficiently damaged that people wanted to forget the whole thing and start over, so many times, and so many kings have decided that the beginning of their reigns ought rightly to be the Year One, that no one is very sure anymore what this relates to. Fortunately, an alternative was found.

Unseen University was founded in its present form in a year then given as AM 1282 – 1,282 years after the foundation of the Ankh-Morporkian Empire, which ended shortly after the University was founded. The University began counting years from this point, with no reference to what the city outside was doing, since they didn't care. Citizens eventually began following the University calendar, since whatever it referred to, it did not gain or lose time like a two-dollar hall clock. (Though even by the University count, the year 1456 happened twice, for reasons still not clear.) Because wizards, for all their faults, can be precise about things that can be useful to them, this calendar seemed guaranteed, and has spread across much of the Disc. By this reckoning, the Century of the Fruitbat is in fact the twentieth century, and in the recent books is drawing towards its close.

Technology On the Disc

At first glance, the Discworld appears to be a solidly medieval society, with some high-fantasy trimmings. Soldiers use swords, spears, and halberds at close quarters, and bows and crossbows at range; they wear chainmail or scale, with the odd piece of plate – often rusty or ill-fitting, as it's expensive stuff, and

much-reused. A few foppish aristocrats carry fencing rapiers, for show as much as anything. Gunpowder is known, but used mostly for fireworks. A crude form of printing press, based on well-paid engravers rather than moveable type, has proved successful in Ankh-Morpork. Long-distance transport is by horse (or other beast of burden); stagecoaches run on some routes. At sea, ships generally use the wind, exploiting it with some fairly advanced rigging, although inshore vessels on more placid bodies of water often employ rowers. (These are more usually well-paid professionals than slaves; formal slavery is rare on the Disc, though not unknown.) Vieux River boats have paddle-wheels, powered by trolls. Architecture still mostly looks medieval, but there are some huge and quite elegant stone and brick buildings.

In short, in prosaic ***GURPS*** terms, it seems to be Tech Level 3, advancing to TL4 in wealthy population centres. (Proud professionals in fields such as architecture are likely to insist on working at the higher TL.) But that misses the richness and perversity of the thing.

To begin with, inevitably, there's magic. It's not so much the high-end spell-casters, who are not always very practical, and who don't disseminate their achievements very efficiently. It's the odd ideas that come from alchemists, apprentices, and whoever got hold of the spell for summoning and binding small and (supposedly) efficient imps. This technology seems to have originated in the Agatean empire, and spread to Ankh-Morpork in recent decades. It can be used for cameras (the imp needs accelerated time sense, a few pots of paint, and tiny brushes), watches (the imp must have Absolute Timing and a clear voice), and personal organisers (the imp needs to be organised – at which point, the subtly but hopelessly demonic nature of this and all technology becomes evident). The use of exceptionally fast imps, and the magical material known as octo-cellulose, to create a moving picture industry, was something of a mistake, inspired by malevolent extra-dimensional entities; the citizens of Ankh-Morpork have formed similar opinions of imp-based time-pieces, and have quickly replaced them with clockwork.

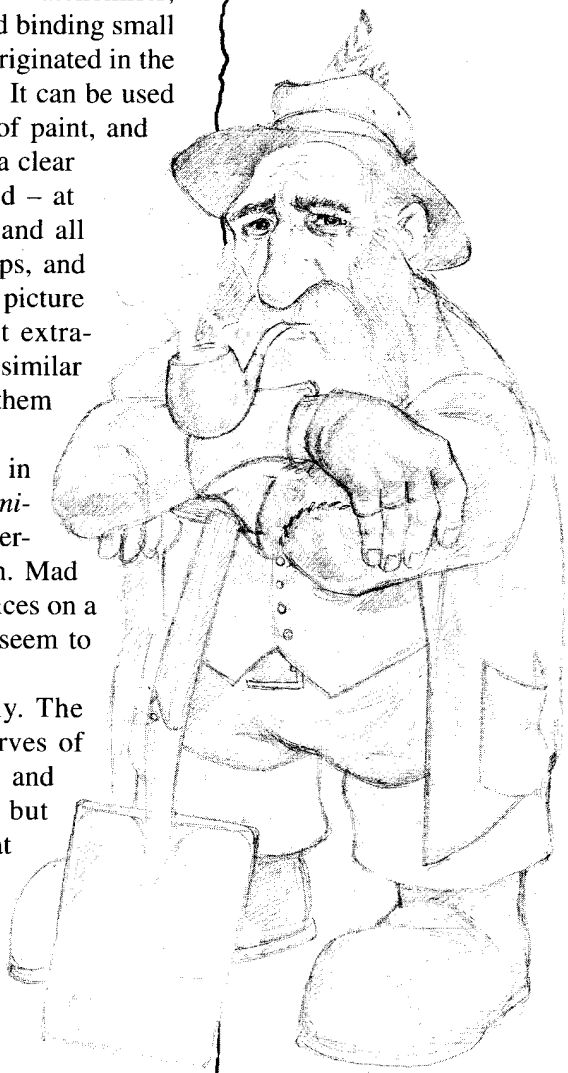
This is typical of the Disc. A great deal is possible here, even in the field of non-magical technology, *given the idea and the determination.* It is a TL3 society alright, but with huge masses of higher-TL potentiality lurking in the wings, plus magical augmentation. Mad inventors, of whom there are a few, can construct astonishing devices on a one-off basis, but like all such crazed geniuses, they can never seem to repeat their strokes of genius, let alone mass-produce things.

(Nor is even widespread technology exploited effectively. The Agatean Empire has endured for centuries, and has huge reserves of inventions. It knows more about gunpowder than most nations, and has even applied it to warfare; handguns are a way off yet, but Agatean armies include cannon. However, the very system that creates this stability also creates problems; those cannon are designed by bureaucrats who are selected for their traditional grasp of the fine arts, not for their technical ability. The best place to be when a Agatean 'Barking Dog' is fired is about two miles behind it.[1])

Non-Humans and Money

Discworld non-humans can usually comprehend basic trade, but they do not necessarily think naturally in terms of standardised units of exchange. Trolls, for example, base their intra-species trade on lumps of rock. Dwarfs have a keen and precise idea of the values of precious metals, but only shape it into standardised lumps because humans expect it; they would really rather measure nugget weights to the microgram, and argue for hours over metal purity.

Some creatures are still firmly at the barter stage. Gargoyles, for example, define their needs and desires in terms of pigeons.



[1] *And even then, only maybe.*

Travel

Transport on the Disc *is* still rather basic. Terrain runs the full range discussed on pp. B187-B188 (and then some); for example, the Sto Plains, being alluvial, flat, and well-settled, are "Good," but the land rises through "Average" and "Bad" to "Very Bad" in the Ramtops. Roads are almost all "Bad," although some conscientious nobles have bullied their people into raising local standards to "Average" with a bit of spade-work and small stones. There are regular stagecoach services from Ankh-Morpork to other cities and parts of the Ramtops, which implies roads that don't turn into marshes after a shower.

It's also possible for stagecoach companies to subsidise road improvements; their prices are certainly high enough. For example, the trip from Lancre to Ankh-Morpork, a journey of some five hundred miles, or perhaps a little more on the road, costs forty Discworld dollars ($800 in ***GURPS*** money) for a single ticket. (This suggests a basic rate of about $1.50, ***GURPS*** money, a mile; GMs can vary this up or down for more or less popular routes.)

Banditry on land and piracy at sea add to the fun, although some of the former at least is somewhat formalised; the risk to one's finances is serious, but many bandits would rather cultivate a raffish reputation than inflict serious harm, given the choice. Discworld pirates tend to more yo-ho-ho-ing brutality (it's sometimes safest to be caught by slavers, to whom you are at least a valuable commodity), but sensible merchant ships can *usually* either avoid the most dangerous routes, or carry enough armaments to fight through.

The threat of banditry encourages merchants to form caravans; these are usually organised by a major merchant, who may hire professional guards for very dangerous routes, and who will charge other travellers a small fee for the safety of joining. By tradition, wizards are not charged, but rather are *paid* to join caravans, as their powers come in useful in various ways.

There's also the option of river travel, from the great floating palaces of the Vieux River (see p. 32) to barges and other small craft on waterways such as the Ankh.

Continued on next page . . .

Medicine and Disease

Medicine on the Disc is one area where things are primitive by real-world standards, although not *quite* as bad as they may appear at first glance. Surgery involves carpentry tools and hot pitch, and is best avoided, and doctors are often seen as well-educated con men who have worked out how to get away with literal murder.

Magic is not as useful here as people hope, because it is too insidiously powerful. An injury or disease could be removed by magic, but then the patient's body would be magical, and would be prone to erratic behaviour; it would no longer be entirely under the owner's control. The cure would almost certainly be, quite literally, worse than the disease. (In game terms, healing spells could theoretically work, but they would *always* have the sort of side-effects normally associated with interesting critical failures.)

On the other hand, it can be used reasonably safely for diagnostic work, and also for anaesthesia by those who can afford it. This alone improves survival rates significantly – in many worlds, shock kills the greatest proportion of surgery patients – while less severe cases can be helped by other medicines.

The Disc does have a huge and effective repertoire of herbal medicine, mostly in the hands of witches. Despite their concentration on the placebo effect, haphazard methods, and semi-literate record-keeping, Disc witches can work near-miracles with a few scraggly leaves extracted from under old logs. They are helped in this by several factors; for one thing, intense magical fields in areas such as the Ramtops have evolved a huge and bizarre flora to use for raw material. For another, a little careful magic can help in preparing, purifying, and testing herbal preparations. Many witches have a very nice commercial sideline in medicine manufacture; their folk wisdom extends into areas such as contraception, making them especially popular, at least among women. They also have other useful techniques; for example, they are often talented chiropractors.[1]

Disease is also relatively rare on the Disc, at least at truly serious levels. This is even true in Ankh-Morpork, where sanitation and water supplies are, err, not to modern standards. This can be credited to a combination of evolution (natives of Ankh-Morpork should always be permitted to buy Immunity to Disease), the long-term efforts of various specialists, and literary convention. (And maybe even the odd god of medicine, although such deities are not always very helpful – too many of them double up as gods of thieves or bureaucrats, having discovered that standard Disc-human levels of belief in medicine are not sufficient to power a decent thunderbolt.) Still, there *have* been reports of plagues, and Pestilence still rides with the other Horsemen of the Apocralypse; if an adventure plot calls for disease, then disease there can be.

In ***GURPS*** terms, Disc medicine is mostly Tech Level 3, but First Aid from a witch, a wizard with Physician skill, or a really capable doctor (GM's option, but they are rare), counts as TL4. Long-term medical care is usually considered to work at TL3 speeds, as even witches do not believe in hurrying treatment, but may be faster if a highly-skilled healer with good medicines can be persuaded to hurry. GMs may also bring in special herbal remedies with interesting effects; these are not usually detectably magical, but tend to demand rare plants, picked in highly specific circumstances.

Probably the most advanced branch of 'real' medical practice in the areas around Ankh-Morpork is veterinary.[2]

---

[1] *They derive this art from a basic belief that what most people need is a hard shove in the right place.*

[2] *It makes sense. People aren't worth much, but a good racehorse can be worth tens of thousands of dollars.*

Discworld Currencies

Being a pre-industrial world where paper money has never caught on, the Disc has a huge array of confused currencies, mostly theoretically based on the value of precious metals, but actually based on what governments can persuade people into letting them get away with. There is no great system of international money markets, just a lot of shrewd merchants who know how desperate different governments have been at different dates, and who keep a few alchemists on retainer to check the worth of any new coins that do come along.

The most internationally useful currency on the Disc is the Ankh-Morpork dollar, which unfortunately is worth much more than the nominal unit of currency indicated by the "$" sign in standard ***GURPS*** material (including the tables in the back of this book). To convert, multiply Ankh-Morpork dollar prices by **twenty** to give the ***GURPS*** unit. This book uses ***GURPS*** values throughout, to maintain consistency with other ***GURPS*** material.

However, for those who want to get deep into Discworld accountancy, the following notes may be of interest.

The Ankh-Morpork dollar coin is the size of a sequin (half the width of a US nickel, but fairly thick because of the technology of coining). It is theoretically gold, but in practice the currency has been debased so often that there is no meaningful quantity of gold in it. However, as the Ankh-Morporkian economy is productive and relatively stable, its currency is stable as well, and it is the *de facto* standard for all the nations around the Circle Sea. (This is little different from paper money on our world, but Discworlders find the feel of real metal coins reassuring.) Other currencies tend to be defined by their value relative to this. Forged coins are possible, of course, but plenty of commercial factions regard this as Bad For Business, so forgers face serious dangers to life and limb.

The dollar is divided into a hundred pence, or pennies. For convenience and by tradition, there are other coins and units; the shilling is ten pence, while a 50-pence quantity is known as a nob, a ton, half a bar, or a knocker, and 25 pence is half a ton.

In Ephebe, the coinage is a derechmi, worth one Ankh-Morpork dollar and divided into 50 cercs. The Djelibeybi talent and the Omnian obol are each worth about one Ankh-Morpork penny. In small nations such as Lancre, silver pennies, weighing more than an ounce, are used on the rare occasions when any sort of coinage is needed. These *do* have some measurable silver coinage; country folk take value seriously.

The least valuable coin on the Discworld is the lead quarter-*iotum* of Zchloty, which is worth less than the lead it is made of. It is run close by the Hershebian half-dong, which is worth one-eighth of a penny.

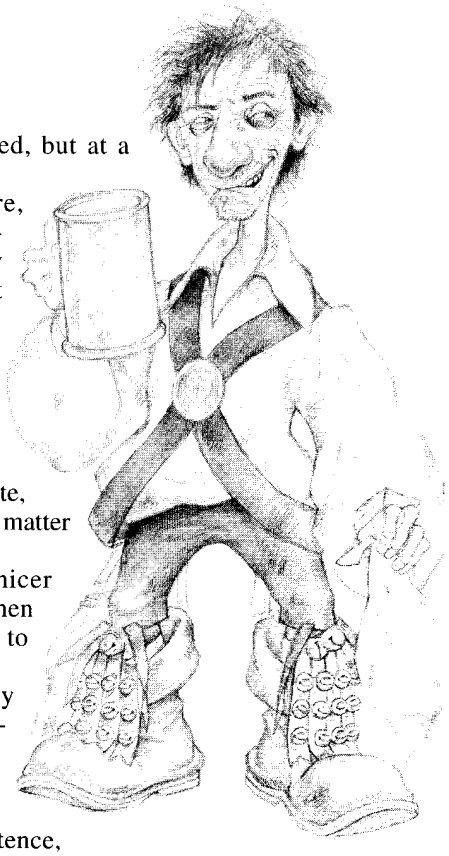
That just leaves the Agatean Empire, where gold is barely a semi-precious metal. The Agatean *rhinu* is *pure* gold; its value relative to the Ankh-Morpork dollar is not calculable, because if *rhinu* started appearing in Ankh-Morpork in quantity, the whole economy would be warped.

Travel (Continued)

For witches and wizards, long-distance flight is feasible; adventurers in Klatch may alternately obtain flying carpets. Flying is generally safe, but not especially fast, and most forms are somewhat tiring and poorly protected against bad weather.

"The least valuable coin on the Discworld is the lead quarter-iotum of Zchloty, which is worth less than the lead it is made of."

The Generic Inn Rules



In certain types of generic fantasy, and on the Disc, a great deal seems to happen in inns. Therefore, it is worth having some general idea of what sort of places a party of PCs enters. Hence, the Generic Inn Rules.

Note; "inn" is an inclusive term. A drinking establishment may serve some sort of food, but is not required to. Hotel-keeping is not a widely practised skill on the Discworld. In Ankh-Morpork, a tavern-keeper may respond to a room request with "Is the street full?" Those that have spare rooms may have, literally, spare rooms, full of spare stuff not resembling bedding. The prices listed below are for single nights – generally for as many people as want to cram into the room, though the better class of places may set limits (as in signs saying "NO MORE THAN FIVE IN A BED"). Most accommodations in Ankh-Morpork are in private houses, or tenements, and rent by the week or month; the weekly rate should be discounted by 10%, monthly by 25%, more if the travellers haggle hard. Village inns are much more likely to have food and rooms by the night.

There are five classes of establishments:

		Room	Meal	Drink	Security[1]
1	Classy[2]	$10	$5	$0.50	4
2	Comfortable	$5	$3	$0.10	6
3	Ordinary	$3	$1	$0.05	9
4	Seedy[3]	$1	$0.25	$0.02	2
5	"Here?"[3]	$1	$0.25[4]	$0.02	6

Notes:

(1) The "get rolled roll." If the GM rolls this number or less on 3d, some kind of attack or robbery attempt is made on the PCs. The roll is at -1 if they look conspicuously wealthy or naïve. (GMs may of course have them attacked or left alone at will.)

(2) The prices for Class 1 establishments should be considered " . . . and up."

(3) The difference between Class 4 and 5 is not in price, but relative safety and quality.

(4) Also, roll vs. HT or be sick (half HT) for a day.

On arriving in an unfamiliar town, travellers should decide what class of service they are looking for. Then, one of them makes an IQ roll, modified by fatigue. (Tired people are not only more likely to miss subtle cues, like a pool of blood on the registration desk, they are more likely to want a bed no matter what it looks like.) Some modifiers:

-1 to -3 for inexperience. New arrivals in Ankh-Morpork always get at least a -2; anyone who "just fell off the turnip wagon" is at -3 anywhere. Mere ordinary inexperience is -1.

+1 to +2 for experienced travellers.

+1 if they are trying to find a class 1 or class 5 place – inns at the extremes of quality are easier to spot than those in the middle of the curve.

Someone with the Professional Skill: Innkeeper (for a low-tech world – the rules for Hiltons and Hyatts don't apply here) may use that skill instead of IQ; the above modifiers still apply.

On a success, the party locates the desired category of service. On a Critical success:

• If they were looking for a Class 3 to 5 place, they find one that is one class better, but charges the lower bracket's prices.

• If they wanted a Comfortable or Classy place, they get one of the category they wanted, but at a 15% discount.

On an ordinary failure, the place they find is actually one class worse than they wanted, but they won't know this until money has been paid (and won't be refunded).

On a critical failure, the GM may choose one of three options:

• It is discovered, too late, that the joint is Class 5, no matter what they were looking for.

• The place is much nicer than they expected, but when the bill arrives, will prove to be more they can afford.

• The "inn" isn't actually an inn; it's a thieves' market, illegal gambling den, or other extremely dangerous place. The inhabitants may decide to maintain the pretence, hoping either to get the travellers to leave without attracting the notice of the Watch, or to dispose of them quietly.

All these results only apply fully in big cities such as Ankh-Morpork. Indeed, rolling at all is sometimes pointless; in a one-horse village, you take what you can get.

Once visitors know their way round a town or city a little more, or if they simply have time to ask around, they can of course start using other knowledge to find the sort of place they want – and skills may be used in place of IQ in the above system. Area Knowledge always comes in useful, and may give large bonuses for simple questions such as this. Carousing is useful in the sense that local drinking companions can suggest where to go next, while Streetwise can obtain pointers, mainly to low dives (where other street rabble hang out), but also to classy residences (full of prospective targets).

Some Backwoods Hostelries

Noted Ankh-Morpork hostelries are discussed elsewhere (p. 98). The following are some inns that appear in the chronicles, their locations and likely ratings:

The Fiddler's Riddle (Ohulan Cutash): A low-grade small-town traveller's hostelry – class 4, but assaults are likely to be commercial and aesthetic rather than physical.

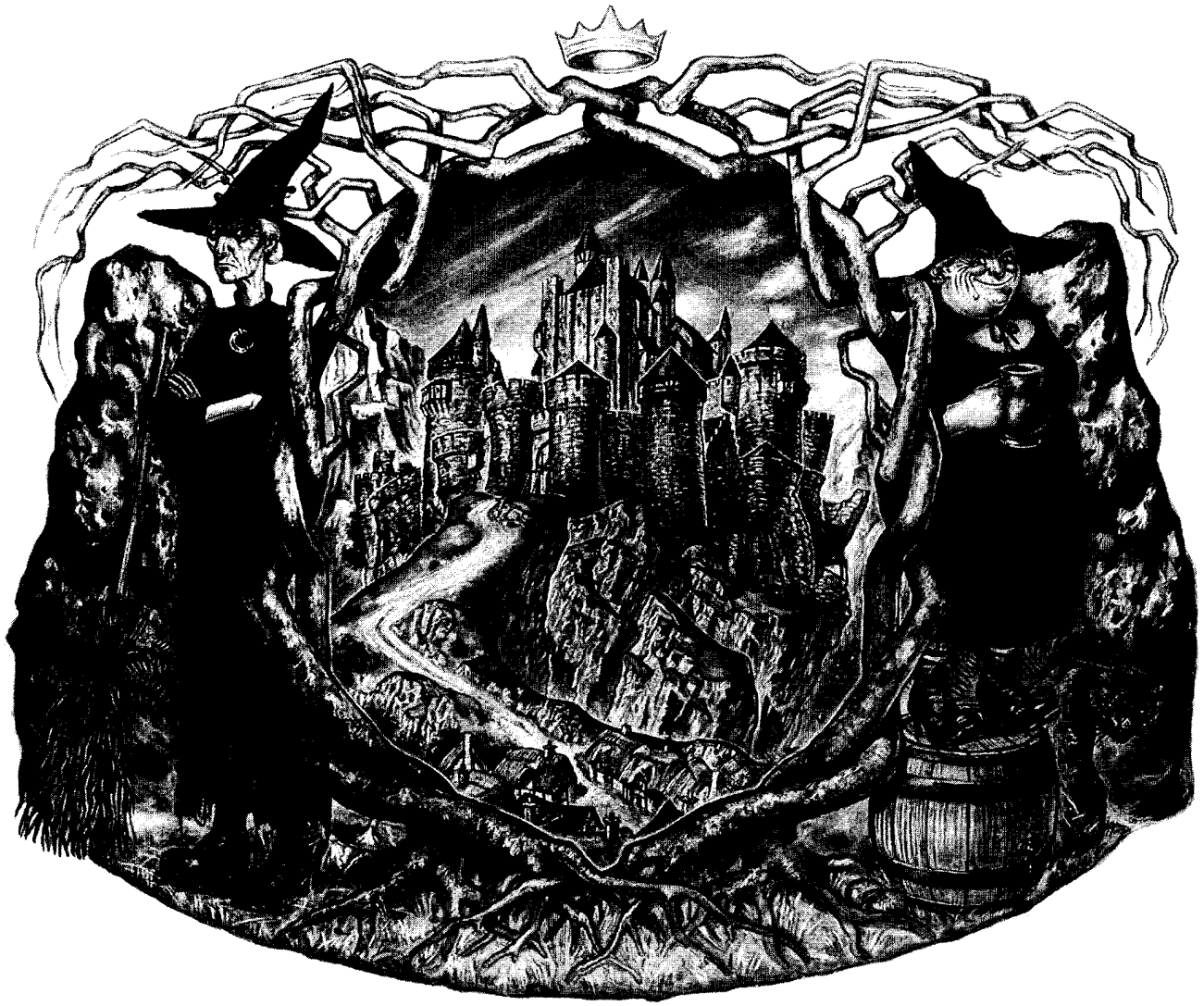
The Goat and Bush (Lancre): An expensive, classy inn, by the standards of a 500-person kingdom – class 2, with occasional lapses if not watched.

The Jolly Cabbage (Scrote): A deeply sordid small-town bar – class 4, or even 5, especially if the cabbage harvest has been bad.

The Quene's Hed (or Duke's Head) (Sto Helit): A conventionally sordid small-town bar – class 3, but the locals react to strangers at -1.

WHERE TO GO, AND WHY NOT TO

A Discworld Gazetteer



The Sto Plains

The people of the Sto Plains consider themselves to be the most sophisticated on the Disc, because they have been civilised longest and have the most advanced technology (except perhaps for the Agateans, who are foreigners, and who therefore don't count), the best travelled (except for certain Hubland barbarians, who can't count), and the most broad-minded (except when dealing with foreigners, barbarians, and people who quibble).

The Plains are rich, in an agricultural sense, and well-populated. The black soil has been deposited over aeons by the flooding of the river Ankh, and is highly fertile.[1] It grows good cabbages.

The Plains are a patchwork of pocket kingdoms and city states. Since the land is all good, and there are few major mountains or watercourses, the boundaries of these nations are purely conceptual; they shift every time someone thinks his army is better than someone else's, or signs a royal marriage contract, or slips up at one of the Royal Geographical Societies (which generally consist of one retired cavalry officer who used to know how to read maps). The region is economically dominated by Ankh-Morpork, its largest city and port (see Chapter 5), but Ankh-Morpork doesn't bother to claim authority beyond its city limits. It doesn't need to.

Natives of the Sto Plains have few obvious common attributes in game-mechanical terms, although anyone brought up too near the Ankh may have inherited an Immunity to Disease. People susceptible to disease died out years ago.

Quirm

A nice town in a wine-growing area overlooking the Rim Ocean, with flowers adorning its cobbled streets, and a famous floral clock. Quirm is not merely dull, but devoted to the idea of dullness; many of the inhabitants *used* to have adventures, and have consciously given that up. People go there to die, on the basis that after a few years in Quirm death won't offer many surprises.

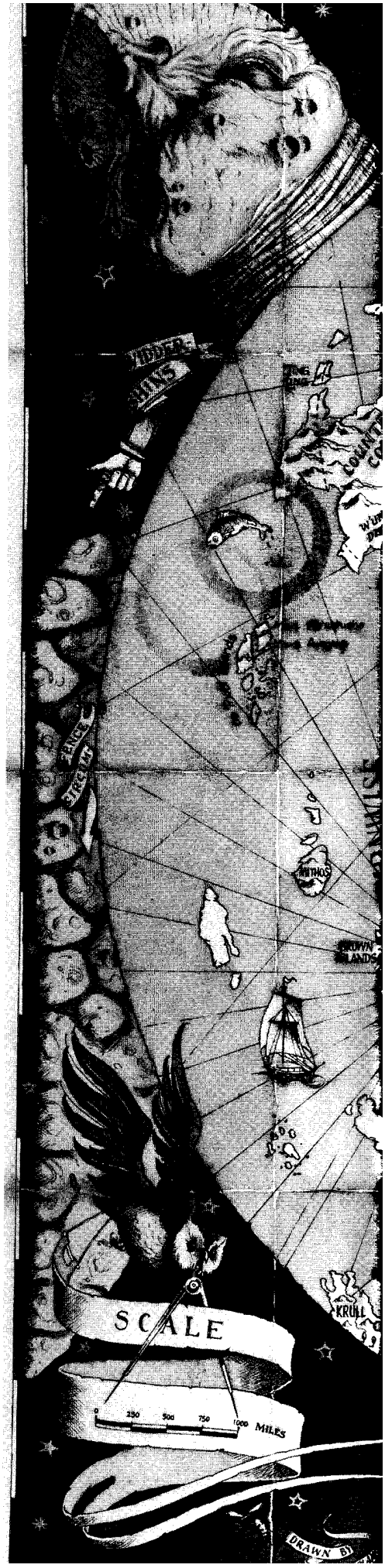
Still-active adventurers will on arrival be offered a glass of local wine, a garland of flowers, and a table outdoors. If they don't get the hint, they will be told the equivalent of, "Been there. Done that. Do it somewhere else."

Quirm is famous for making cheese.

The Forest of Skund

A dense woodland, lying between the plains and the foothills of the Ramtops (see below). Its name means "Your Finger You Fool" in an ancient dialect; an early explorer pointed at it and asked a native what That was called. It is a magic-rich region (with a lot of small-to-medium-sized Very High Mana areas).

Casanunda the Dwarf (see p. 181) claims to have received the title of Count from the Queen of Skund, but in fact, the wood seems to be inhabited only by a handful of supernatural beings (it is natural territory for evil witches), just enough woodcutters and small villages for the former to terrorise, and a community of shamanic priests who appreciate the local magic-mutated fungi. Either Casanunda made the acquaintance of a witch with a particularly heavy power complex, or he is living up to his claim to be an outrageous liar.



[1] ***After** all, every ounce of it has at some stage been what is politely termed "fertiliser."*

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Pelargic
No Thingfjord
Whale Bay
HUB
Cori Celesti
HUBLAND STEPPES
VORTEX PLAINS
Rammerock Mountains
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LLAMEDOS
RAMTOPS
Vieux River
The Swamp Sea
Cutshade Forest
OCTARINE GRASS COUNTRY
LANCRE
ÜBERWALD
BOROGRAVIA
Smart R.
CHIMERIA
Carrack Mountains
Forest of Skund
STO PLAINS
Ankh-Morpork
Morpork Mountains
BRINDISI
Gulf of Brindisi
ORDHAI PENINSULA
Egg of Hasle
REHIGREED PROVINCE
RIM FEN
Circle Sea
Leshp
ELL
KINTE
Gebra
Eritor
Al Khali
ISTANZIA
KLATCHISTAN
MUNTAB
FARFEREE
HERSHEBA
KLATCH
SYRRIT
Tsort River
OMNIA
BETREK
USHISTAN
YMITURY
ELHARIB
SMALE
H'RULL
Ghat
VANGLEMESH
KHANLI
Gulf of Tezuma
HOWONDALAND
LAOTAN
SAMTRI
TEZUMAN EMPIRE
Zabingo
URABEWE
GREAT NEF
Lake Yo Yo
T'ETSE
S'BELINDE
Cape Terror
CIRCUMFENCE

Sto Lat and Sto Helit

Its citizens consider the walled city-state of Sto Lat, twenty miles Hubwards of Ankh-Morpork, a dull place, but its current Queen Kelirehenna ("Keli"), Protector of the Eight Protectorates and Empress of the Long Thin Debated Piece Hubwards of Sto Kerrig, may have a Destiny to start a long-term process of political unification in the region. Fortunately, she is probably the sort to do so by talking.

The adjacent duchy of Sto Helit is politically subordinate. Its current Duchess Susan (see p. 182) lives elsewhere, and basically keeps an eye on the running of the place by a loose association of city burghers. She's Death's grand-daughter, so what she says goes – eventually.

Across the Circle Sea

The Circle Sea lies about halfway between the Hub and the Rim, and empties into the Rim Ocean on its turnward side. Its name is accurate, if unimaginative. It is surrounded by mercantile nations and cities.

Rimward of the Sea lies the continent of Klatch. This name is strictly speaking that of an ancient empire, now reduced to a (still substantial) region dominated by the city of Al Khali (see below), but the people of Ankh-Morpork never bothered to distinguish much between the empire and the region; indeed, they use "Klatchian" as a near-generic term for "foreigner." Klatch is a continent of burning deserts, impenetrable jungles, and all sorts of old-fashioned adventuring opportunities.

Klatchian humans have dark skin; some are nearly blue-black. Their cuisine involves curries, boiled fish, rice, and sauces containing numerologically significant varieties of ingredients. It is exotic by Sto Plains standards, and often ferociously spiced; it has become popular in Ankh-Morpork. The coffee is pretty remarkable, too.

Klatch is currently going through a certain amount of turmoil as new rulers try to drag it (kicking and screaming, naturally) into the Century of the Fruitbat. Outlying tribes whose loyalty was never that strong are threatening to break away, communities closer in are looking at the booming city of Ankh-Morpork and wondering why it seems to have more fun and, all it all, it may well be a land of opportunity for an adventurer with a fast camel and a suitcase full of Ankh-Morpork dollars.

Al Khali

This is technically just the capital city of the *nation* of Klatch, but the point about desert empires is that they consist of a few important cities and a lot of sand, which only counts as part of the empire because trade has to travel across it, and the empire needs an excuse to deal with the desert tribes who keep trying to impose 100% toll rates.

Al Khali is an ancient, sophisticated city,[1] ruled by a Seriph. Naturally, the real power in the land tends to be held by the Grand Vizier, who usually has a short beard, excellent manners, and a psychopathic temperament.[2] The city is dominated by a great palace, the Rhoxie, and a giant garden, or paradise; the Seriphs spend their money, not wisely, but very well. The rest of the city is a maze of bazaars and white-walled houses, where the trade of the Circle Sea meets the caravans of the desert, and everybody spends hours bargaining, while hawk-eyed desert nomads work on their reputation for imperturbability.

PCs from Al Khali could be merchants, desert nomads, wizards of a foreign and melodramatic kind, or bazaar rogues with a lot of luck and nerve. Anyone without a reasonable level in Merchant skill is probably going to be Poor.

Al-Ybi

A desert city, some way across a mountain range from Al Khali, and hence able to maintain its independence, Al-Ybi has its own Seriph. It is said to be the place where the concept of zero was invented. Also, for various historical reasons, many of its inhabitants are short (a sign of dwarfish blood) and ill-tempered.

Djelibeybi

A country two miles wide and 150 miles long, Djelibeybi basically consists of the fertile flood-plain of the river Djel; its name means "Child of the Djel." (During the flood season, the nation is almost entirely under water.) Djelibeybi grows melons, garlic, and (formerly) pyramids. The pyramids nearly squeezed out the edible crops, and since they were the only real industry, the nation was permanently bankrupt. Politically, it could only survive by playing off its more powerful neighbours, Tsort and Ephebe.

It was not always so. Djelibeybi is 7,000 years old, and was once a mighty kingdom, for which it seemed Time itself stood still.

In fact, it did. Pyramids slow and even store time rather as capacitors store electrical charge. The necropolis of the Old Kingdom contained thousands of pyramids; it was the second largest city on the Disc, after Ankh-Morpork. The pyramids charged up with new time every morning, and every night bled it off as a blue flare from their peaks. The

[1] *So sophisticated that the temple frescos are X-rated.*

[2] *Something must happen at the interview.*

Kingdom was using the same day, over and over again. People were born, grew old, and died, but somehow nothing *happened.*

However, since the events of *Pyramids,* change has arrived. Progress has become possible, and the first order of business is to get some decent plumbing installed.

Djelibeybi is ruled by a deified Pharaoh – or rather, these days, by Queen Ptraci I, who is as determined as her subjects to get things moving again. PCs who have dealings with her may take her for an airhead, until they discover her amazing ability to brush aside anything that might cause her inconvenience.

It is still mostly underwater in the flood season, though.[1]

Djelibeybi-born PCs could be young peasants or artisans responding to the spirit of the age by looking to travel, or pyramid engineers looking for new employment. On the other hand, a Phobia about pyramids would be perfectly understandable.

Ephebe

A sun-lit, relaxed city-state which grows olives and grapes and makes good use of the local fishing, Ephebe is a small country (population 50,000) with a major cultural and intellectual tradition.

Ephebians seem addicted to paradox and dispute. The city produces most of the Disc's serious philosophers,[2] and the philosophers spend much of their time arguing. Their tendency to turn metaphors into practical experiments leads to much running around and shooting of arrows. All this makes the city's continuing strength seem implausible; part of the explanation is that a small but significant proportion of the philosophers' ideas turn into something practical, usually in the way of bizarre engineering. An assault on Ephebe is prone to run into tower-mounted parabolic mirrors focussing solar rays to burn the attackers, ships with bizarrely-shaped hulls that cut through water like marlin, or mathematically-designed tactical systems that sound like gibberish but win battles.

Through a (paradoxical) linguistic accident, the ruler of Ephebe is called the Tyrant, and is democratically elected for a five-year term. (Admittedly, the electorate excludes anyone who happens to be female, poor, a slave, foreign, mad, or, supposedly, frivolous.) The Tyrant lives in a citadel-palace at the highest point in the city, and must want the job enough to put up with the Ephebian contempt for politicians.

Ephebe is one of the few advanced parts of the Disc which retains slavery. However, after a thousand years, there are a lot of rules about it. Slaves must be given three meals a day, one day off a week, and two weeks being-allowed-to-run-away per year. They cannot be overworked or beaten without permission. After twenty years, they are entitled to their freedom, but most refuse it, knowing that they are better off than most of their owners. Ephebian slaves fight furiously[3] against political reformers or foreign invaders who threaten to free them.

Ephebian PCs could have almost any abilities; Science skills are especially easy to justify. An Odious Personal Habit of "Questions Everything" would not be inappropriate. An Ally slave could make an interesting NPC.

Omnia

A dry country on the Klatchian coast (population about two million), Omnia is ruled by the Church of the Great God Om – or more accurately, Omnia *is* the Church of Om. Its principal city, Kom, is dominated by the Citadel, a temple complex that extends for miles. The Citadel contains dormitories, kitchens, refectories, gardens, barracks, and towers. There are few staircases, and those that do exist are all shallow, with small steps, suitable for processions of very old men. It also contains unknown miles of cellars, subterranean corridors, forgotten rooms, and the chambers of the Quisition.

The Great Temple of the Citadel is a fine example of just how big a building can get when the architects are constrained only by gravity and compressive strength, not money or reason. Its vast dome bears the Golden Horns of Om; its doors are 100 feet tall, made of 40 tons each of steel-reinforced bronze, and bear the 512 Commandments of Om in golden letters on lead. The Great Temple faces the Place of Lamentations, an open plaza 200 yards across where worshipers gather.

Until the events of *Small Gods,* the predominant arm of the Church was the Quisition, which dealt with rooting out heresy. It was a suspicious body, which meant that there was clearly a lot of heresy.[4] The army of Omnia, the Divine Legion, wears fishmail (scale), and on special occasions, black and yellow cloaks. While sometimes called upon to defend Omnia (often at some distance beyond the border) their principal task was traditionally to stamp out heresy within Omnia.

The Quisition nearly eliminated competent blacksmithwork in the country (smithing being a craft of many small rituals, all of which are naturally heretical). No Omnian

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[1] *We have not seen how Ptraci might deal with six feet of water, but don't bet against her.*

[2] *And probably most of the frivolous ones, too – it's hard to tell.*

[3] *And paradoxically.*

[4] *Om would not make the faithful suspicious without good cause, after all.*

could make weapons, or any other metal item, of better than Cheap quality. Members of the Divine Legion might have better equipment, either made long ago by one of the last good smiths, or captured from another nation. Assuming that the game is set after Brutha's rise to power, this situation could have changed somewhat, but the best metalwork would probably still have to be imported.

The Church of Om did significantly alter its methods after Brutha became Cenobiarch, but it remained a theocracy and, in the fashion of governments that have sustained major changes without slaughtering the old hierarchy, preserved many of the forms. Nor did the worship of Om lose much popularity; sheer habit aside, the god had manifested himself in front of whole armies and proved his power, after all.

Also recall that Brutha's tenure as Cenobiarch covers one hundred years of gradual changes. High-minded adventurers who forget that the Great God Om, despite some reversals of fortune, is a working god, or worse, who attempt to overthrow the Omnian theocracy before Brutha makes contact with his deity, are likely to meet an interesting end involving hot metal and pulleys.[1] In fact, once Omnians lost their reputation for holy wars, they became known and feared over a far wider area; they took to visiting unbelievers with leaflets and lengthy arguments, seeking to spread their faith that way.

Thus, Omnians are *always* likely to be Fanatics, possibly with additional Odious Personal Habits or Reputations ranging from Forever Preaching to Spreads Faith by Force, and quite likely Intolerance. The Divine Legion produced reasonably competent fighters, as they were full-time troops who trained fanatically, albeit with the assumption that Om would guarantee victory, and with more time spent harassing peasants than fighting massed battles; the later missionaries might include some who actually preached quite well (Bard skill), and many with high levels in a Theology specialisation (Commandments of Om).

Tsort

Tsort lies on the coast and the Tsort River. Although it is approximately as ancient as Ephebe, Tsort gives an impression of being less self-confident than most nations of the Circle Sea, having a culture that borrows much from its neighbours. The trouble is that the Tsorteans compensate for any inferiority complex in the traditional way – by taking it out on others.

[1] *Further, there is known to be an alternate history in which Brutha dies without becoming the Prophet, and a century of incessant warfare follows. You wouldn't want to be responsible for that, would you?*

One key moment in Tsort's ancient history was when it was burned to the ground by Ephebian armies following a long war over the legendary Elenor of Tsort. The Tsorteans have not chosen to forgive and forget (and the Ephebians haven't tried very hard to make up, either). It is possible that the city is one of those that has been burned down on a periodic basis over the centuries, leading to many different, borrowed, styles of architecture. At one time, the Tsorteans appropriated the idea of pyramids from Djelibeybi, and in fact built the single most spectacular (enduring) such structure on the Disc.

The Great Pyramid of Tsort required sixty years and the lives of ten thousand slaves to construct. It contained 1,003,010 limestone blocks, and its height plus its length divided by half its width equals exactly 1.67563. (There are a great many arcane numbers associated with the Great Pyramid, most of them as fascinating and significant as any twelve random digits.) It is honeycombed with secret passages, which are reputed to contain the complete wisdom of the Tsorteans. There are also booby-traps, and probably the standard issue of pyramid guardians, wrapped and unwrapped. In other words, if players insist on a tomb-robbing or mystical-investigation adventure, it can provide them with hours of fun.

Tsortean gods are many, varied, and often borrowed; some seem to be constructed of random parts left over from the creation of other deities. Tsortean PCs could be the varied products of a dynamic imperial power, perhaps tending to minor Odious Personal Habits such as bragging.

The Burning Rim

Once one travels into Klatch away from the Circle Sea, one is in pulp adventure territory. Diamond mines, lost cities, Amazonian kingdoms just waiting for Mr. Right, poison-dart-frog breeders, and probably the odd mad scientist with a beautiful unworldly daughter and an urbane robot butler. Oh, and dinosaurs, don't forget the dinosaurs. This is territory with the same appeal for adventurers that a cardboard box lined with glue has for household pests. What it is ***not*** is comfortable.

Howondaland is the quintessentially "dark" and "mysterious" part of Klatch, where map-makers know better than to tread. *Hersheba* is a small desert kingdom on the edge of this area, said to be ruled by an immortal queen.[1]

Characters from such areas tend to be Primitive, but that is *not* the same as stupid. (After all, Howondaland produced M'Bu, the finest organisational brain on the Disc.) However, some tribes are prone to hobbies such as Bloodlust.

Ee and the Great Nef

The Great Nef is a vast desert, towards the rimward edge of Klatch. It is so dry that it has negative rainfall. The Lost[2] City of Ee (location of the first pizza ever created on the Disc) is said to lie in the Great Nef – or at least, it started there. Ee is a random brigadoon (see p. 14); it has been known to appear at more than one location.

The Jungle Empires

Widdershins of the Great Nef is another jungle region – a large area of rain forest. In other words, along with the heat and the insects, the local inhabitants have to put up with intolerable amounts of precipitation.

This is major lost-city territory – or at least, it has plenty of cities that would be better lost. Think step-pyramids, and tribes who will try any political structure, god, or system of marriage that seems daft enough.

The Tezuman Empire

For example, take the Tezumen. They are gloomy, irritable, and perverse; they invented the wheel, but use it solely as headgear and jewellery (the axles of their llama-drawn chariots are supported by two people a side). Their music is as painful as their religion. Their pictographic writing is chiselled laboriously onto granite blocks. Their craftsmanship in obsidian, jade, and feathers is impressive, and their garden-style agriculture is efficient, but neither gives them any pleasure.

"They invented the wheel, but use it solely as headgear."

Partly, this is the fault of the demon Quezovercoatl, who visited their leaders in a dream, set himself up as their god, and (with typically demonic imagination) commanded them to bloody conquest and human sacrifice. However, it has to be said that his followers were naturals for the role. They also invented hot chocolate, just the thing to settle down with after a long hard day sacrificing 50,000 people.

Following the events of *Eric,* the Tezumen have ceased worshipping Quezovercoatl, and now revere an image of Rincewind's Luggage.[3]

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[1] *A caution: adventurers who visit places like this tend to get romantically involved with the less stable locals and cause major volcanic or tectonic incidents, usually within two hours of the opening credits.*

[2] *Or possibly just Forbidden.*

[3] *If a congregation takes its nature from its god's personality, this may not make for much of an improvement.*

The Rim and Turnwise Oceans

Rimward and turnwise of the Circle Sea is a vast expanse of ocean, embellished with archipelagos. Some ships sail here, but much is under-explored. There are plenty of whales, sea-serpents, ghost ships, and weed-filled seas haunted by undead pirates.

Krull

This island kingdom is one of the few land masses to abut the very edge of the Disc. Krull has some dealings with the rest of the Discworld, but is a secretive nation, and largely self-sufficient.

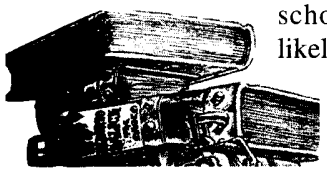
The capital city of Krull (also called Krull) is sited on the highest point of the island, which slopes upwards to the very Rim – so the city has a magnificent, if disturbing, view. The Krullians combine a rather plain, pragmatic attitude to many subjects, including magic, with a driving interest in certain areas of pure research, such as astrozoology; the monarch of Krull is called the Arch-Astronomer, and he and most of his senior staff tend to be wizards. Krull even permits women to study wizardry, and makes good use of high-powered hydrophobes (see p. 130). The arrogant Krullians have been known to strike bargains with Fate himself.

The Circumfence

Krull controls the Circumfence, a structure of posts, ropes, and nets that extends thousands of miles either side of the island, round almost a third of the Rim. It catches the flotsam of the sea, giving Krull a huge, if random, source of treasure.

The Circumfence is tended by enslaved sailors, called Lengthmen, who man stations every few miles, and patrolled by seven navies. (Incidentally, Krullian slaves often have their tongues cut out.) It is the source of the wealth which has enabled Krull to transform itself into a society dedicated to pure research.

This system has also had an effect on Krullian architecture. Most of the buildings on the island were originally the hulls of wrecks or derelicts, caught by the Circumfence, hauled ashore, and mortared together.



Krullian visitors are rare in the rest of the Disc, but those who do appear can easily be wizards or scholars, or just sailors. They are likely to suffer the Social Stigma of being Overdressed Foreigners, or to have the Odious Personal Habit of Arrogance. On the other hand, they may have a Code of Honour, or a Sense of Duty to pure scholarship. Some at least of them have night-black skin and hair the silver colour of moonlight – exotic, even by Disc standards.

Other Islands

The *Brown Islands* and *beTrobi Islands* form parts of a chain of archipelagos. These are the place to go if one wishes to learn the joys of surfing from large gentlemen, or to dive for pearls. The beTrobi Islanders are a cheerful people, but not above fighting tribal wars. Insofar as there is any trade between the Counterweight Continent and the Circle Sea region, it passes this way.

Turnwise Lands

Returning to the mainland, spinward of the Sto Plains, one finds another agricultural area, albeit rather wilder, with rolling hills rising to actual mountains. However, this is a more *chancy,* less heavily settled area. The coastal plains are known as the Octarine Grass Country, a sign of their pastoral and magical natures.

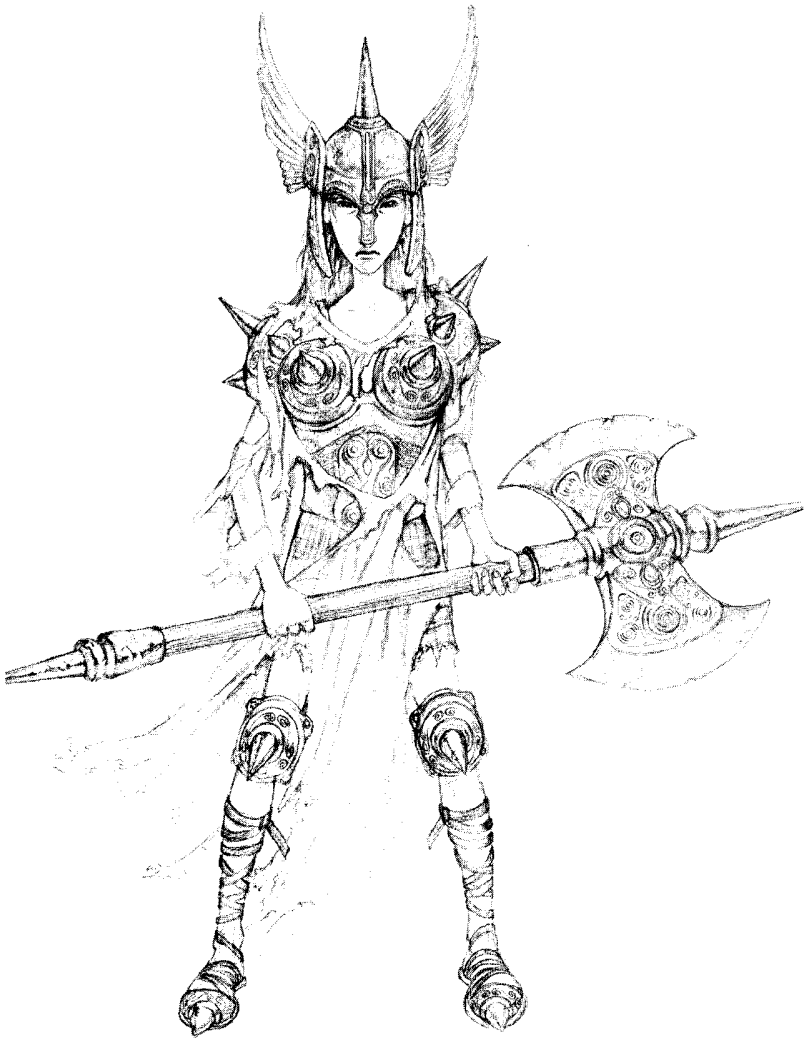
Pseudopolis

Also known as Psephopololis; the Gateway to the Octarine Grass Country (from the point of view of the Sto Plains). It is a place that a citizen of Ankh-Morpork might think of running to if he was looking for somewhere nice and distant (about 500 miles) but not impossibly foreign.

The Wyrmberg

This is the centre of an area of Very High Mana several miles across, and therefore a strange and dangerous place. Anyone who comes close enough to the Wyrmberg itself before they notice the local breakdown of conventional physics should get a large hint; the Wyrmberg is an upside-down mountain, about twenty yards across at the base, and widening as it goes up until, a quarter-mile above the green plain, it tops out in a quarter-mile-wide plateau. The plateau has a little forest, some buildings, a lake, and a river that spills over the edge to rain on the plain. Just below this, the mountain is circled by caves, which look suspiciously regular, as if they have been crudely carved.

The other problem with getting close is that the Wyrmberg is inhabited, and the inhabitants are not very polite. The rampant magical field has enabled the development of a far more *heroic fantasy* sort of society than is widespread on the Disc – a culture that can get by without obvious forms of economic support, and for that matter,



female warriors who manage without normally-necessary support, too. This is bulging muscles and minimal-coverage chainmail country. It is also dragon country.

The magical aura of the Wyrmberg area means that a properly trained, or romantically credulous, mind can create dragons here, through sheer force of imagination. The dragons thus summoned are clearly of the "Noble" sort (see p. 168), although they are relatively small and manageable. The dragon warriors of Wyrmberg ride them to "war," although, because they cannot exist beyond the area's magical field, such "wars" are basically just banditry. Still, it is hard to fight a dragon-rider, although the riders' tendency to wear no armour but some leather thongs and a scrap of chainmail may help, as may the fact that rendering a dragon rider unconscious, let alone dead, causes the dragon to disappear instantly.

(If PCs visit the Wyrmberg, their chances of creating a useful dragon for themselves must be assessed by the GM; in general, the less practical and sensible they are, the better their chances. The actual feat could involve an IQ roll, *reduced* by any levels of Strong Will. Before dreamers become too pleased with the trick, however, do remind them that the locals have much more experience.)

The Wyrmberg rock is shot through with corridors and rooms. In its very centre is a large cavern, the roost of the dragons. Thousands of iron rings have been spiked into the roof; dragon-riders wearing hook boots use these to walk across the ceiling.[1]

The Wyrmberg is a monarchy. The most recent known ruler was Liessa Wyrmbidder, who murdered her father, the wizard Greicha the First,[2] and then had to get around the place's sexist inheritance laws through a scheme that involved forming a liaison with the barbarian hero Hrun. He presumably reigned in collaboration with her for a while, then wandered off, in the way of barbarian heroes.

Few inhabitants of the Wyrmberg emigrate to other parts of the Disc, but any who did could be competent warriors or wizards in a posturing sort of way, although the lower general magical field could cause them serious inconvenience. Overconfidence would certainly be an appropriate Disadvantage.

Llamedos

A small country in the mountains hubward of the Octarine Grass Country, inhabited by a dour people with inclinations to Strict Druidism, sombre choral music, and their own stern form of football. It rains constantly[3] in Llamedos; water is the country's principal export (along with stone circle engineers). The only plant that grows reliably is holly; everything else just rots.

Llamedese druid technicians may be found almost everywhere on the Disc, tuning and maintaining megalithic structures. In earlier times, they were a warlike folk, masters of the human-wave choral assault, but today they are rather more inclined to keep to themselves, as they have decided that that most of the rest of the Disc is too filled with Sinful Temptations.[4] Travelling PCs from Llamedos could either be druids, seeking to bring the benefits of religion and decent computing methodologies to the rest of the Disc, or mildly rebellious "black sheep" who are prepared to face the risk of sinful temptation. Musical Ability is genuinely common in Llamedos; it's the uses it is put to that cause problems.

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[1] *Yes, upside down. It takes practice.*

[2] *Although he refused to actually die for some time.*

[3] *Except when it drizzles or snows.*

[4] *That is, people who don't believe in Strict Druidism.*

The Ramtops

The Ramtops are a spectacular mountain chain that runs all the way down from the Hub to near the edge of the Disc's main land mass. However, the term as commonly used refers specifically to the high mountain country hubward of the Sto Plains – an area of duchies and kingdoms that can't grow beyond the pocket size because invading the neighbours would require crampons and oxygen. There are also countless dwarf-holds,[1] and a lot of goats. There are great expanses of vertical wasteland, mountain lakes, dense forests, and deep valleys. Ramtops sheep produce wool that can be knitted into garments of near-chainmail quality.[2]

A standing wave of pure magical energy lies across the entire Discworld. The Ramtops cut through this wave, acting as a kind of induction coil. Raw magic crackles from the peaks and is grounded in the valleys. This has side-effects. Leaves rustle when there is no wind to move them; so do boulders, if they are in the mood. Many of the Disc's greatest witches and wizards are born here. In ***GURPS*** terms, there are a lot of patches of Very High Mana, some of them intermittent or Aspected, and plenty of opportunity to acquire components for unusual spells, at proportionate risk.

Lancre

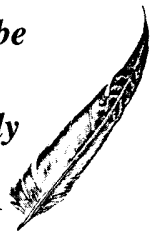
A kingdom on the Sto Plains side of the Ramtops, total population (humans, dwarfs, and trolls) about 500. This is admittedly small, even for a fantasy kingdom, but Lancrastians have a talent for leaving Lancre and becoming famous elsewhere. The country has produced more than its share of powerful wizards, for instance. The local witches are also powerful, though less inclined to leave.

Lancre's geography is not conducive to urban sprawl. There are a great number of icy mountain peaks that even dwarfs don't find hospitable, and dark forests where you just know that many pairs of little beady eyes are always watching you. Worse, little beady eyes not in pairs, or really big beady eyes above even bigger teeth. Add in the exceptional quantity of standing stones, barrows, treacherous mountain pathways with rickety little bridges, and gateways to other dimensions, and one gets the feeling that Lancre was intended to be larger, but became badly wrinkled.

Most human Lancrastians live in Lancre Town. "Town" is an extravagant name for it, but it is the biggest habitation, which gives it some of the privileges of a city, such as City Proclamations. One of these states that all peddlers and performance artists must be outside the city gates by sundown. This is universally observed, but since the town has no walls to go with its gates, they just come back in again after sundown. It has a tavern, the Goat and Bush, and an inn (well, a house with beds for hire).

The Lancre River is a tributary of the Ankh, shallow and very swift. Around the town, it is all winds and rapids, but farther into the mountains there are quiet pools. It is crossed near the town by Lancre Bridge; the road between curves through forested banks, where travellers may be ambushed without undue inconvenience.[3]

"One gets the feeling that Lancre was intended to be larger, but became badly wrinkled."



On an outcrop of rock above the town stands Lancre Castle. It is much bigger than the country would seem to require. It is certainly larger than its staff is capable of maintaining. Each morning, the first task is to determine what has fallen off the building during the night. The permanent staff currently numbers four: Mrs. Scorbic the cook, Spriggins the butler, Millie Chillum the maid, and Shawn Ogg, whose titles and responsibilities are too numerous to list. The known outside staff consists of Hodgesaargh the falconer and Mr. Brooks the beekeeper.

The castle is certainly atmospheric, if with a sense that the architect was aiming for more atmosphere than the budget allowed. The caves beneath add to the effect (they are generally, and sensibly, assumed to have a secret connection to the castle); the official dungeons are sadly short on monsters, treasure, or traps (although there may still be some torture instruments, purchased by the late unlamented King Felmet), but once anyone gets into the natural caves, they could meet pretty much anything.

Apart from the Town, Lancre has villages. For example, there is Bad Ass, the birthplace of Eskarina Smith, the only female ever (yet) admitted to Unseen University. The roads around Bad Ass have been paved with wooden boards, and the trees have been cut with notches out to a distance of nearly two miles. These precautions have saved the lives of many travellers lost in the snows. This is a good example of the sort of sideways ingenuity that adventurers may encounter in the Ramtops. Then there are Slippery Hollow, Razorback, and Slice.

Oh yes. Slice; a place people are warned about. It is located in a deep, forested cut in the mountains. Other Lancrastians tend to roll their eyes and make woo-woo

[1] *Mines.*

[2] *At least, they feel that way.*

[3] *To the ambushers, that is.*

noises when speaking of Slice's residents. In addition to private lives that would embarrass a mink, Slice is known for containing the original Rock and a Hard Place, and the Place Where the Sun Does Not Shine.[1]

Magical Sites

The Dancers: In the Ramtops, a few miles up an overgrown path from Lancre Town, stand eight great stones in a circle. The stones are of thunderbolt (meteoric) iron, and their arrangement has no apparent astronomical or occult significance; indeed, the circle isn't very regular. Three of the stones have names: the Piper, the Drummer, and the Leaper. The names are not significant.[2]

It is said that rain falls inside the circle a few seconds after it lands outside, and that when clouds dim the sun, the light within fades a moment later than without. In fact, the *location* is an intermittent portal between the Discworld universe and the land of the elves (see p. 171); the *stones* act as a barrier, preventing the portal's being used. They are detectably very magnetic. (Magnetism is a poorly understood phenomenon on the Discworld, although a few theoretician-wizards are taking an interest.)

Since the events of *Lords and Ladies,* Lancrastians have a fair idea about the nature of the Dancers; any visitors who seem intent on tinkering with them will be run out of town, if they are lucky.

The Long Man: This is a group of three burial mounds in the forest: two round mounds at the foot of a long one. Long ago, the local men would gather at the Long Man, build sweat lodges, drink scumble (a fermented apple cider with some of the character of apples in autumn and some of dimethyl hydrazine just before lift-off), put horns on their heads and dance. Whether this was an ancient mystic rite, or the equivalent of a fraternity party, is unknown.

At the foot of the long barrow are three large, irregular stones, marking a cave. Within this is a flat rock carved with the image of a horned man and a runic inscription (in Oggham – see p. 203). This has been (politely) translated as "Oo, isn't mine big." Underneath the rock is an entrance to the Lancre Caves, including fairly direct access to another entrance to Elfland – one that is less direct danger than the Dancers, given that it leads to the King's Court (see p. 173).

The Standing Stone: A man-sized stele of bluish rock in the centre of a moor. Although there is only one of it, it cannot be counted. If a visitor looks too curious, it will shuffle around behind him; should a team of would-be enumerators show up, it may go off and hide in the bogs for awhile. It is one more discharge point for accumulated magic, and may be a mobile Very High Mana zone. Or it may just be shy.

PCs and Lancre

Although it is a setting for several Discworld novels, Lancre is not a natural spot for old-fashioned adventure scenarios. In purely human terms, it is a sleepy backwater; the occasional problems it suffers are countered by the formidable local coven (see p. 183). That said, it is an interesting place for a visit, and an intrepid and broad-minded Unseen University researcher who wanted specific information on witchcraft or old magic might be sent there by other wizards, to ask Granny Weatherwax.[3] Proving that one was both serious and trustworthy could be an interesting roleplaying exercise, and could lead indirectly to all sorts of adventures.

Adventurers (and other characters) who originate *from* Lancre are a standard Discworld "bit." Giving them the surname "Ogg" is quite defensible.

Uberwald

Scrambling over the dwarf-infested ridge of the Ramtops, widdershins from Lancre, one eventually arrives in a land of dark pine forests and jagged mountains, many of them topped with glowering castles whose architecture involves a disproportionate number of turrets and spires. Uberwald doesn't have much in the way of central authority, being ruled by an array of barons and margraves. A remarkable number of those aristocrats are – unusual.

In other words, as the linguistically quick-witted may guess, Uberwald is the Discworld's equivalent of Transylvania, with a Germanic twist to the language. The architecture is Gothic, and so are the stories that happen there.

Most Uberwaldian characters in the chronicles are surprisingly normal (even the werewolves), but the region does promote stereotyping. The aristocrats tend to Dis--advantages like Bloodlust (even if they aren't vampires) and Enemies (other aristocrats), while everyone else may be prone to Paranoia, Intolerance (of undead and/or aristo-

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[1] *A dark (naturally) orifice beneath a huge overhanging rock. The folk of Slice sometimes fasten a rope around one of their number (it's not something one would ask a stranger to help with) and lower him in, hoping to find something useful. Objects found there include tools, a great number of musical instruments, and unpopular jobs. The Place is another example of the Discworld's refusal to let metaphors remain immaterial. PCs might well find it interesting, but they'd have to deal with the people of Slice. (Playing the banjo might help; commenting on atypical physiology is less wise.)*

[2] *Sure they're not.*

[3] *While they struggle to keep a straight face.*

crats), and Scotophobia.[1] 'Igor' is a very popular name among the peasants, and there is an annual brain-juggling championship.

Bear in mind that in the dark reaches of Uberwald you may well encounter whole societies where *not* turning into a wolf at full moon is considered strange.

Widdershins Regions

Large areas of the Disc, widdershins of the Circle Sea and Klatch, have not featured much in the chronicles. The mountain land at the hubward end of the Ramtops, Klatchistan, is no doubt a hotbed of traditional mountain-pass folkways (banditry, feuding, and hawk-eyed sentinels sitting behind rocks). Further round, there is a temperate area of rolling plains and hills. Much of the country in this area is rather pleasant, in a fairy-tale sort of way; deciduous woodland, punctuated with farming villages.

The Trollbone, Rammerock, and Blade mountain ranges, at the far limits of this region, are serious geology. The Trollbones especially are as high, sharp, and generally challenging as such things get, save for the close foothills of Cori Celesti; troll, dwarf, and little-bald-enlightened-monk territory.

The Vieux River

The Vieux River rises in the mountains of Uberwald, but understandably leaves as soon as possible, descending into flatter country and slowing down once it is safe. It becomes a broad and useful waterway, navigated by paddle-boats (powered by trolls in treadmills), which in turn provide profitable employment for countless professional gamblers.

"The Vieux River rises in the mountains of Uberwald, but understandably leaves as soon as possible, descending into flatter country and slowing down once it is safe."

The Vieux enters the Swamp Sea through a broad and marshy delta.

Genua

As a port on the Vieux's delta, Genua is inherently prosperous, if foetid. It has been called the Magical Kingdom or the Diamond City. It is an independent duchy, with a population whose ancestors came from all over the Disc, and who have the skin tones to prove it. The dominant local style of magic is voodoo; the local cooking reflects the same eclectic roots. Genuan cooks are generally brilliant, although a wise gourmet doesn't ask about their ingredients.[2] There are small white buildings around the perimeter, large white houses closer in, and at the centre a castle with lots of ice-cream-cone turrets. The whiteness dazzles against the muted swamp colours.

Genua has had a mixed history recently. A few years ago, it was ruled by the wicked, if charismatic, Baron Saturday, who formed a liaison with a certain voodoo witch. However, this regime wasn't evil enough to ruin the city. That nearly happened once the Baron was overthrown by Lady Lilith de Tempscire (Lily Weatherwax, Granny Weatherwax's older sister), and her protege, the Duc. Lily was determined to make Genua a happy, well-organised place, using her peculiar expertise in stories. Guardsmen in toy-soldier uniforms of red and blue made sure that everything was very clean, including the cobblestones, and that everybody smiled. There is nothing to break the human spirit quite like a life of enforced smiling.

Following the events of *Witches Abroad,* things are returning to normal under the rule of the young Duchess Ella Saturday, who is probably no worse than most hereditary rulers; at least she knows what it's like to at the bottom of the heap. Adventurers who visited Genua during Lily's reign were bound to get into trouble, at least as soon as their jaws got tired. Those who arrive in a later period might run afoul of the fact that the Genuans know only too well what it is like to live in a generic fantasy city, and react very badly to anyone who reminds them of it.

PCs from Genua could be, say, voodoo witches, traders, or cooks. There are few skills or abilities unique to the area, although good levels in Boating, Survival (Swamp), or Cooking (Soul Food) would be plausible. Genuans may suffer from a unique Phobia; a terror of cliches, happy endings, and nice, bright, cheerful communities (-5/-10 points). Have a nice day.

The Hub and Beyond

Cori Celesti

The Hub about which the Discworld revolves is also the site of the home of the gods; a spire of grey stone and green ice ten miles high. Electrical discharges, the Aurora Corialis, crackle around it. It, or at least the aurora, can be glimpsed from almost anywhere on the Disc. Other moun-

[1] *Fear of darkness. Nothing to do with bagpipes.*

[2] *This is a swamplands city.*

tains cluster nearby; they are no match for it in size and sheer impressiveness, but anywhere else, they would be regarded with serious respect.

For information on Dunmanifestin, the residence of the Disc's major deities, see p. 164.

The Hublands

The main thing that people from around the Circle Sea associate with the Hublands is large, surly gentlemen with more skill in Broadsword than Savoir-Faire. This is *barbarian* country.

The Steppes

The high, cold plains beyond the Hub are home to nomadic "Horse People" tribes. They eat horse meat, horse cheese, and horse soup, and drink thin beer. They sleep in yurts (tents) heated by burning dung; as they get quite enough fresh air during the day, their yurts are not ventilated. Some also herd yok.[1]

These are mk.1, uncomplicated nomads, with no particular regard for the rights or feelings of people outside the tribe; they usually have ridiculously good Riding skill, along with bow and sword training and probably a "Pirate's" Code of Honour. The tribes also produce competent witches, of the shamanic or old-fortune-teller style.

The Vortex Plains

Adjacent to the steppes are some slightly more fertile lands, where the people do not indulge in such barbaric practices as raiding, but have settled down to agriculture and blood sacrifice. The Vortex Plains are the Disc's second centre of druidism (after Llamedos), and are mainly noted for their large collection of stone circles. (The inhabitants are forever being talked into investing in upgrades, but one snag with this sort of computer is that no-one has yet found a way to make money from carting the old ones away, and offering them to employees to take home lacks plausibility.)

Plains natives have the dour spirituality of a people whose priests are big on holly, mistletoe, and well-sharpened sickles, while lacking even Llamedosian cosmopolitanism.

The Fjords

The coastlands of this region are glacial and heavily indented, and inhabited by people who live in long-houses and sail longships. Yes, they wear furs and horned helmets. Yes, they use axes for many purposes.[2] Yes, they have a rich, lengthy, and boring tradition of sagas. Does anyone really need to know more?

The Far Rim

The Discworld has pretty good communications by fantasy-world standards, but there is still no radio or regular air travel. From the Ankh-Morpork point of view, the other side of the Disc is a region of mystery and legend, and trade with such parts is limited to small-scale deals conducted through a lot of intermediaries. Admittedly, there is increasing contact of sorts with the Agatean Empire, but even that is a new and under-developed phenomenon.

The Counterweight Continent

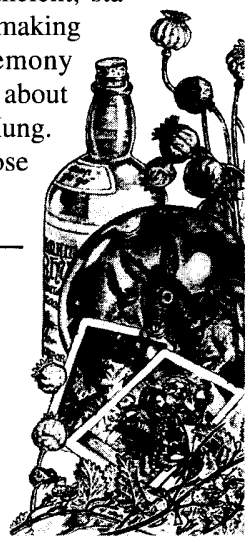
Although it is linked to the Disc's main land mass by a narrow, trackless isthmus, the Counterweight Continent is usually considered to be a separate body of land, which is how the local rulers like it. It has a relatively small area compared to continental regions on the other side of the hub; thus, in order for the Disc to be balanced on the four elephants beneath, it logically has to be especially dense.

This is why the Counterweight Continent is reputed elsewhere to be the source of vast quantities of gold; it is sometimes known as the Aurient. It is semi-mythical because most of the people who sailed off looking for it either came back with nothing but one-that-got-away stories, or did not come back at all.

Although gold *is* very common there, most of the Continent's mass is actually in large deposits of octiron (see sidebar, p. 123), deep in the crust. And while among the magical professions octiron is even more valuable than gold, it is a dangerously ill-behaved substance. Given also the depth of the major deposits, it is thus little traded.

The Agatean Empire

All but a few small parts of the Continent are controlled by the Agatean Empire, an ancient, stable, and civilised realm where even making a cup of tea requires a formal ceremony taking up to an hour. Its population is about 50 million, and its capital is Hung-Hung. It is ruled by the Sun Emperor, whose subjects consider him a god.[3]



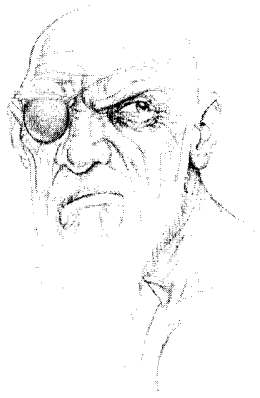
[1] *Like yak, but heavier.*

[2] *Including cleaning their teeth.*

[3] *That is, he doesn't have to apologise for anything he does.*
Or even explain.

A wall was long ago constructed around the entire Empire, to keep out curious strangers, and more to the point, to keep in curious Agateans. This wall is patrolled by the Heavenly Guard. Agatean architecture tends toward pyramids, rather squat ones.[1] Gold ornamentation is popular, as gold in the Empire is about as common as copper in other places. This last fact is always getting adventurers into trouble.

The Empire traditionally encouraged its people to believe that the rest of the world was a barbaric wasteland inhabited by blood-drinking vampire ghosts. (Nonetheless, a few refugees did get away, often going into the restaurant business in Ankh-Morpork.) It was dominated by five noble families, the Hongs, the Sungs, the Tangs, the McSweeneys and the Fangs, who fought among themselves for power. They tended to regard soldiers and peasants as disposable pawns; each had a personal army, and between them, they could put seven hundred thousand troops in the field, from samurai warriors, through gunners with sophisticated, unreliable cannon, to quivering conscripts.



Things have changed recently (see *Interesting Times*); the Empire is currently ruled by Emperor Cohen, formerly Cohen the Barbarian (see p. 180). Whether Cohen, who has frittered away more treasure in his life than most kingdoms can dream of, can hold on to this latest acquisition, remains to be seen.

Visits to the old Agatean Empire were tricky and dangerous; visitors would have a very hard time getting in, and if they did manage that, would be likely to be bitterly disappointed in their attempts to bring away gold in public-works-project quantities. It was not so much that the Agateans valued the gold itself, as the understanding that if you let one group of visitors get away with it, there would be an unending stream of adventurers coming after them. Nowadays, things are a little more open, but the habit of suspicion may endure.

Still, there is a good chance that the Empire's trade with the rest of the Disc will expand. Given that the main things it has to offer are gold, sapient pearwood, magical domestic technology, and possibly octiron, the long-term social and economic consequences could be interesting. The Empire's major sea-port, and the only place where contact with foreigners is anything like routine, is Bes Pelargic.

Agatean PCs could come from many professions, although the vast majority of its people are peasants of a very stolid kind. Its professional warriors and ninja tend to a formal approach and personal arrogance that makes them ill-suited as wandering adventurers, and its culture regards magic as something to be used almost solely for very minor, peaceful purposes. On the other hand, unusually bold merchants could have a great deal to trade, the Empire's large clerical class might be able to export their efficient managerial methods (once they learn to give up some of their formality), and the local culture is bizarre enough that Agatean entertainers could become very fashionable. Note also that the first Agatean to appear in the chronicles was also the Disc's first tourist.

BHANGBHANGDUC

This large tropical island lies between the Agatean Empire and EcksEcksEcksEcks. It is at least partly controlled by the Agatean Empire, but is mostly inhabited by orang-utans.

EcksEcksEcksEcks

Another semi-mythical continent, so called because that is how it is usually labelled on maps. Allegedly, EcksEcksEcksEcks is a land of wizards, who wear corks around their hats, eat only prawns, surf on the fresh new light from the Rim, and drink pure golden nectar from bottomless chalices (well, out of tins, anyway). Other visitors merely report black people who claim they live in a dream, but who can muster a full meal from an apparently empty patch of desert, and good beer. The land is reputedly populated by great leaping rats, beavers with beaks, and giant flightless chickens. Still . . . no worries, mate.

The main city is Bugarup, which boasts – not that Ecksians boast, because it's bloody obvious that anything in EcksEcksEcksEcks is better than anything else in the bloody world – a magical university. And a really good jail.

THE LOST CONTINENT OF KU

The Disc's greatest legendary Lost Land lies beneath the Widdershins Ocean, between EcksEcksEcksEcks, the Counterweight Continent, and the Fjordlands. It sank several thousand years ago, but took thirty years to do so; thus, the inhabitants, who spent a lot of time wading, are unlikely to have left much in the way of arcane technology or pillared temples full of loot. If any of them transformed themselves into amphibious beings and covered their cities with domes of crystal, the fact is not widely known.

[1] *The better not to see over the wall.*

"INNE JUSTE 7 DAYES . . ."

"... I Wille Make You A Barbearian Hero!"

Okay, so there is this setting. But stories need characters . . .

Starting Points

A lot of different styles of game are possible on the Discworld, and starting points levels are one thing that help determine how a game plays. Once the GM and the players have decided what sort of entertainment they are after, it's time to fix some numbers.

25-50 POINTS: PAWNS OF THE LADY

Many folk-tales and fairy-stories feature ordinary, unremarkable people who find themselves plunged into bizarre situations, and so this sort of thing naturally happens on the Disc. If the players are willing to have their characters rely on wits rather than raw power to solve their problems, this can make for an interesting game.

Starting with 25 points, and no more than 20-25 points of Disadvantages, produces PCs who can be moderately competent specialists, in a best-in-the-village sort of way. Few wizards or witches will be so low-powered, but students and trainees with just a couple of spells may be feasible. Going up to 50 points allows for characters who look like fairly credible heroes, although they would not be advised to try storming the evil demonologist's tower without first checking that the demonologist is out and that he doesn't bother with traps or guards.[1]

One option is to start with low points, but to allow substantial Disadvantages, and to award generous experience. This produces plots similar to that of *Mort,* wherein unimpressive, even incompetent characters are plunged into adventures, and learn and grow through the experience. However, such a plot has to be limited in time; no-one can carry on learning and growing that fast forever. (Of course, the game can always mutate into a slower-changing series of adventures for the newly matured heroes.)

75-125 POINTS: HONEST WORKING ADVENTURERS

For stories with PCs who are capable of looking after themselves and taking a hand in their own destiny, but who do not have to save the Disc or alter the destiny of Ankh-Morpork every week, use standard ***GURPS*** starting values; 100 points, plus no more than 40 in Disadvantages. Dropping the base to 75 points makes for more restrained peasants-in-the-street; raising it to 125 allows for slightly more impressive sorts.

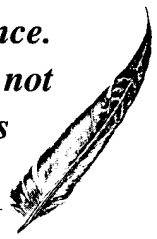
The chief drawback to this starting level is that PCs may be too tough to feel comically stressed by problems, but not powerful enough to emulate the achievements of true heroes or great magic-wielders such as Cohen the Barbarian or Granny Weatherwax. However, it does make for *stable* games, and that may be preferable to trying to emulate the feel of the chronicles slavishly. RPGs are not the same thing as novels, and it's a mistake to try and make them work exactly the same way.

150-300 POINTS: SMALL GODS, LARGE HEROES, AND INFLATED WIZARDS

Comedy is not the same thing as incompetence. Some Discworld stories revolve around seriously capable individuals, who do get to save the Disc, repel extra-dimensional invasions, and dent the special effects budget. (Think of Carrot taking on the entire clientele of the Mended Drum, or the Silver Horde's conquest of the Agatean Empire.) Certainly, qualified Discworld spell-casters have vast abilities, even if they aren't always very clever about how they use them. Therefore, games may involve high-points-level PCs.

The snag with this is that the GM must come up with plots that stretch and employ such extensive skills, shaking the Disc without knocking it off its axis. Fortunately, there are always plenty of gods and other powers to help straighten matters out after especially weird days (although this plot device should be used with caution). There is also the example of Cohen and his Horde, who have been doing this stuff for years – and yet they still can't retire, because they've never got the hang of saving, and they don't know any other way to live.

"Comedy is not the same thing as incompetence. 'Funny' is not the same as 'stupid.'"



However, if a game is going to involve high-powered PCs, it *is* useful to give serious prior consideration to the question of what sort of stories will be involved. A Barbarian Hero, a Doctor of Morbid Spellbinding, and a Genuan Court Assassin might all be 300-pointers, but it could be hard to bring them together for an adventure, let alone an extended campaign.

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[1] *Remember, incidentally, that any Differently-Pigmented-Lords you're likely to meet on Discworld probably know all about 'unknown secret passages,' and don't dress their guards in a uniform that conveniently covers their faces.*

"The Disc is a strange place, and much that happens in the chronicles is funny – but the inhabitants are more than straight-men and victims. They live their lives, try to avoid unpleasantness and Death, and deal with each other as best they can. Discworld games are about more than laughs."

Comedy Characters

There's one thing that maybe needs to be said here. "Funny" is not the same as "stupid."

Because a Discworld game should be (mostly) comic, some players may come up with silly, inconsistent, or unbalanced characters. This indicates a misunderstanding of the setting. The Disc is a strange place, and much that happens in the chronicles is funny – but the inhabitants are more than straight-men and victims. They live their lives, try to avoid unpleasantness and Death, and deal with each other as best they can. Discworld games are about more than laughs.

Certainly, characters in the chronicles include some obviously comic concepts; a wizard who doesn't know any magic, a geriatric swordsman, a New Age witch. Some of them even have silly names.[1] However, each of them has a real, rounded personality, and each is genuinely competent at some things – survival, languages, swordsmanship, magic. More to the point, the novels in which they appear don't consist entirely of jokes at their expense. There are plots and adventures and ideas. Comedy on the Discworld arises from situation and personality.

So, if players can't come up with funny characters, they don't have to try. Let them design simple, straightforward PCs, and then let those loose in some typical Discworld situations. Comedy enough should ensue.

(On the other hand, Discworld games *should* be about more than slaughtering monsters and faceless thugs and taking their property, and it's more important that the PCs should be interesting than that they should be invulnerable. If any players seem to be trying too hard to squeeze every ounce of lethality out of their points, they should be gently discouraged.)

[1] *As opposed to un-silly names like . . . er . . . Finkelstein, Pressburger and Oral Roberts.*

Character Types

Alchemist

Discworld alchemists are not spell-casters, although some of their work borders on magic. They say that their concern is not with the supernatural, but with secrets of ancient learning and the natural laws of the universe.[1] Most spend most of their time working alone, seeking the Elixir of Life and the Philosopher's Stone; they generally lack social skills, and don't even get on that well with each other (although they have never had the wizardly habit of literal back-stabbing). Despite their impracticality, they can turn a decent living if they can concentrate for long enough on boring stuff; the dwarf Cheery Littlebottom has proved a competent forensic specialist in the Ankh-Morpork Watch. Others doubtless resort to the traditional Alchemist's Art of persuading kings that they are within an inch of turning lead into gold, and all they need is a moderate research grant.

Advantages: Some Alchemists insist on testing new compounds by all five senses; Acute Taste and Smell may slightly reduce the risk this implies. Old Hands in the profession may have Combat Reflexes (applied less to actual combat than to the sight of a retort fizzing in an intensifying way). Obsessive academics often need Less Sleep. Patrons are useful, but rarely permanent.

Disadvantages: Laboratory accidents can give an alchemist almost any Physical Disadvantage, or a negative Reputation. Curiosity, Delusions, Overconfidence and Cluelessness are part of the image (although not compulsory); Dependants are rare.

Skills: Alchemy (Discworld) is the primary skill for this career (see p. 56); other Science skills, Demolition/TL4, and First Aid all have their uses. Alchemists traditionally study anatomy (they suspect that the human body is symbolically related to the universe in general), and hence may know Physiology.[2]

Allied Magical Trades

Magicians and Thaumaturgists are not real wizards, but the wizards couldn't get along without them. Magicians are very low-level "magical technicians" who keep wizards' labs running, while Thaumaturgists, who are untrained in magic, have the task of going and acquiring all those bizarre ingredients. It's a dirty job, but – well, it does look quite interesting from a player-character point of view, doesn't it?

Advantages: Magicians *may* have a level or two of Magery, although their magical abilities tend to be patchy and unreliable. Thaumaturgists need some kind of edge in order to survive, but details vary. Employers who recognise the value of good help can act as Patrons.

Disadvantages: Magicians and Thaumaturgists tend to be Struggling, but not actually Poor. Magicians may suffer from minor physical disabilities; Thaumaturgists can't afford to be too slow or unable to spot threats, but may have sociability-limiting problems such as being Mute. All manner of psychological problems are common. Magicians with Hunchback and either a Sense of Duty to their employer or Slave Mentality don't *have* to be called Igor, but they ought to get used to it.

Skills: Magicians have skills like those of wizards, such as Thaumatology, but at lower levels. Thaumaturgists can learn almost anything, but Merchant, Naturalist, Scrounging, and Stealth are obvious options.

Assassin

People throughout the multiverse are prone to hiring each other to impose terminally on third parties, but in Ankh-Morpork, the word "assassin" specifically means a member of the Assassins' Guild (which in turn usually means a graduate of the Guild's school). The Guild is a famously gentlemanly, refined organisation, which values human life very highly, and so charges large amounts to take it away. It also provides a strictly personal service; an assassin might be hired to deal with several persons on the same mission (and may have to deal with guards on the way, although by-passing such with stealth and agility is considered better manners than leaving a trail of corpses), but would never employ any gross or clumsy form of lethal assault. Assassins are adept with daggers, crossbows, and poison, but would despise the idea of using explosives or heavy weapons – the most famous assassins never kill more than thirty people in their entire careers. The school takes only male pupils, but the Guild is realistic in certain crucial ways, and accepts female members, both to lecture its pupils and to perform its central role.

All of this might sound like a rather un-heroic profession. However, there are ways in which a PC might have studied the trade without actually becoming a professional killer. The Guild school is acknowledged to provide the finest all-round education on the Disc, and many offspring of noble houses are sent there purely for that. (The training in lethal skills and techniques is likely to be of use to even the most pacifistic of nobles, as unfortunately, even they

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[1] *Unfortunately, one of the subtler laws of the Discworld universe that they never seem to have noticed is the Rule of Universal Humour, which is part of the reason that they once got through four Guildhalls in two years.*

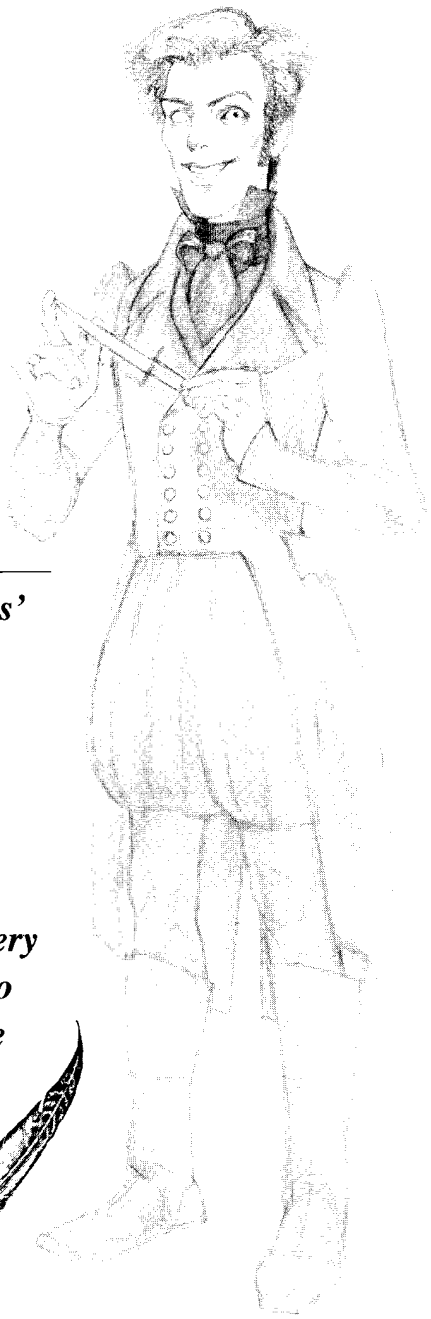
[2] *They also pick up quite a bit of that while cleaning their slower brethren off the ceiling.*

may have less good-natured relatives, and so may need to know what to defend against.) Indeed, the vast majority of graduates do *not* become assassins; given the lethality of the graduation test, one must assume that there are arrangements whereby pupils may be discreetly withdrawn shortly before the end of their last term. Even fully-qualified graduates do not necessarily become active agents of the Guild; for examples, see *Pyramids*. And although the Guild endeavours to ensure that all its accredited members are willing and morally able to kill, some may lose the habit; they may spend years as, say, advisors on domestic arrangements to wealthy employers, and if they perform that task with skill, the household may never see any sort of murderous activities.

Advantages: Assassins are gentlemen, and so have Status at least 1; many rank higher, by birth or social acceptance. Any and all other social or combat-related Advantages can be useful, but none are essential; the Guild's training emphasises skill and attention to detail over freakish talent.

Disadvantages: An assassin who lacks the Guild's Code of Honour must conceal the fact, perhaps qualifying for a Secret or a bad Reputation; having the Guild as a full-blown Enemy is broadly the same as being Terminally Ill. Most other Disadvantages are possible, but should be handled with care; the Guild dislikes messy, careless, or distracted agents.

Skills: Assassins typically carry a wide selection of weapons, usually concealed, but these mostly come down to crossbows, garrottes, daggers, and throwing blades. Guild training also ensures a high level in Poisons, Savoir-Faire (along with social accomplishments such as Dancing, Heraldry, and languages), and physical abilities such as Climbing, Stealth, and Acrobatics.



"The Assassins' Guild is a famously gentlemanly, refined organisation, which values human life very highly, and so charges large amounts to take it away."

BANDIT/HIGHWAYMAN

Highway robbery is widespread on the Disc, in a low-key sort of way. It's not so much that the people responsible don't enjoy being dramatic about it, or that they aren't prepared to work (the sheer effort they put in implies a degree of determination which could turn a serious profit in several sorts of honest living), it's more that the Discworld attitude to law enforcement is based on a mixture of laziness and uncomplicated morality. A bandit group that merely *robs* travellers on the same remote stretch of road can keep going unhindered for months, but if they acquire too much of a reputation, some local landowner or the Merchants' Guild is likely to put together a response – and if the bandits should *harm* anyone not too unpopular, the response is likely to be similar, but more democratic. Note also that on the Disc, a banditry operation may have been in business for several generations, and be associated with a considerable amount of family tradition and local pride.

More flamboyant miscreants tend to take a more solitary path; they invest in a horse, good weapons, and an expensive suit of clothes with lots of lace at the cuffs, and call themselves highwaymen. Being robbed by a highwayman is more satisfying than mere banditry, because the victim gets a better story to tell, and knows that his or her money isn't going to be spread too thinly among a bunch of mere thugs, but will be spent with style.

Either of these careers is viable for PCs, but players should note that one of the Disc's dominant principles is narrative necessity, and thus highway robbery – for those of a heroic bent – invariably involves encounters with vengeful nobles, wizards, supernatural entities, and persons of the opposite sex, romantic inclinations, and a certain age.

Advantages: Bandits generally get by with an Ally Group and a little Common Sense. Highwaymen don't feel complete without romantic features such as good Appearance or Charisma.

Disadvantages: Highway robbery often earns an Enemy or six. The Pirate's Code of Honour keeps Bandit groups together, while a Highwayman will flaunt the Gentleman's version. The latter occupation also somehow tends to involve Secrets or a Secret Identity.

Skills: All one really needs for these occupations is a little weapons skill, a bit of Intimidation, and Survival for the local environment, plus Riding for a Highwayman. However, Bandits often occupy their time developing ever-more-elaborate Camouflage and Traps, while Highwaymen insist on demonstrating Savoir-Faire and Sex Appeal at the drop of a three-cornered hat and a bunch of lace at the throat.

Barbarian Hero

Barbarian heroism is a profession in decline on the Discworld, despite the efforts of Cohen the Barbarian. On the other hand, the *idea* of stripping down to a leather thong, picking up a big sword, and having pneumatic women draping themselves all over your feet, remains curiously popular.

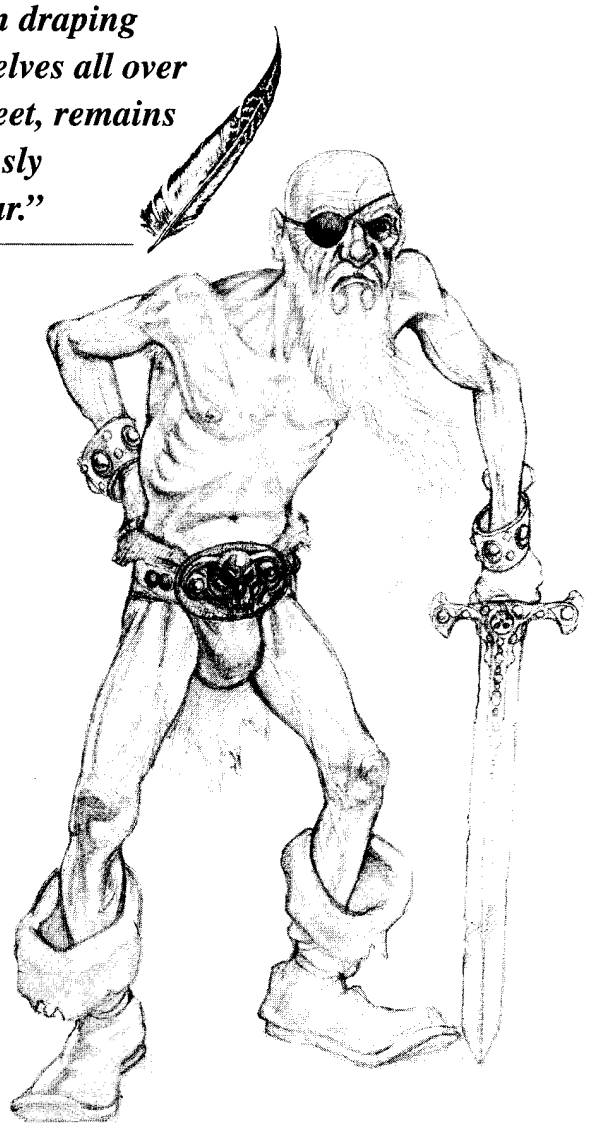
Some barbarian heroes are born, some are made, and some have barbarian heroism thrust upon them (up and under the ribcage). In most cases, there's something of all three involved. Being the offspring of a Hubland tribal chief with poor parenting skills is a good start, as is having a hero for a parent; in fact, they can actively prevent your entering any other line of work. Conversely, the mere lack of the correct genes and upbringing is no barrier to entry to the profession. Some might think that there is a divide between the born Barbarian Heroes and the mere wannabes, but that would be missing the point; there is no entry examination, no Guild of Heroes – and anyone who is prepared to dress like that in pursuit of their destiny is surely heroic by any standards.

Advantages: Everyone knows the traditional stuff; high physical characteristics, a deceptively adequate IQ (in the longer-lived cases), lightning-fast Combat Reflexes, an unbending Strong Will, and so on *ad nauseam.* The traditional costume seems to imply Temperature Tolerance.

Disadvantages: See the Odious Personal Habit and Compulsive Behaviour on p. 53. If there *was* a Guild of Heroes, any members lacking *some* kind of Compulsive Behaviour would be slung out. Alcohol-related Personality Changes, or even a full-scale Manic-Depressive mind-set, are the sign of a hard-core Hero. Social Stigma: Barbarian is *not* automatic, at least in Ankh-Morpork, where the locals are mostly too busy taking visitors' money to despise them very much.

Skills: Again, lots of weapons skills (especially with Broadsword) are the foundations of this career. Remarks about Performance being a key skill just prove that the speaker is jealous.

"The idea of stripping down to a leather thong, picking up a big sword, and having pneumatic women draping themselves all over your feet, remains curiously popular."



Beggar

The Discworld may be less *painfully* medieval than it looks at first glance, but its cities still have their share of beggars. Actually, the Beggars' Guild is the oldest in Ankh-Morpork, and is as structured and organised as any; see p. 98.

Even so, Beggars have a pretty miserable time of it, especially in cities where they lack such organisation. However, they make interesting characters for story purposes, being placed to see much and be seen less than any other non-supernatural being on the Disc. Shrewd rulers, including the Patrician, may provide them with additional income in exchange for the odd report.

Advantages: Immunity to Disease can be very useful, although the character may then be obliged to *fake* a disease or three. Pitiable is *very* useful.

Disadvantages: Beggars are, of course, generally Dead Broke. Almost any other Disadvantage is possible, although some almost count as Advantages in beggar terms.

Skills: Panhandling, Scrounging, and Area Knowledge of their city are the basic skills for a beggar. Acting helps with certain schemes, Streetwise helps in dealings with other street-level folk, and Savoir-Faire can tell a beggar what will annoy a prospective donor.

Engineer

Discworld folk recognise two basic types of engineer: those who dig stuff out of the ground and construct things with it, and those who invent things. Many of the mining and construction engineers are Dwarfs. The inventing engineers tend to be absent-minded men (either young or quite old – they seem to skip middle age) who say "Hmm" a lot.

The Disc's greatest living inventor is Leonard of Quirm (currently an involuntary, but comfortable, guest of the Patrician). Its most spectacularly productive was Goldeneyes Silverhand Dactylos, who combined brilliance with an ultimately fatal inability to take a hint. Urn of Ephebe was its first steam engineer.

Advantages: Engineers are commonly afflicted with Single-Mindedness. The GM can permit a character to take Gadgeteer, if the campaign can handle some really demented ideas. Patrons have their uses.

Disadvantages: Inventors are often Absent-Minded (sometimes with the deadly addition of Eidetic Memory, which automatically gives them the Odious Personal Habit of "Unbelievably Boring"), sometimes Clueless or Oblivious, and usually Curious. Most have lots of Quirks. Ex-patrons may become Enemies.

Skills: The only mandatory skill for an engineer is, of course, some variety of Engineer, (and its prerequisite), but in practice, most such characters will have several versions of the skill, and quite likely also Artist. (Ephebians may prefer Philosophy.) The Discworld hasn't quite got the hang of this compartmentalised knowledge thing yet.

Entertainer

Being an entertainer on the Discworld can be a good, if precarious, existence, especially if you can find just the right nice things to say about rich people. If not, it has all the disadvantages of being unemployed with less social status. Musicians, dancers, wandering actors, and storytellers have an exceptional freedom of movement.[1] Strippers also have their own Guild (the city being a rather unreconstructed society); it even has troll members, who specialise in putting clothes *on.* Opera in the city is similar to that in our own world,[2] while theatre is based round The Dysk and similar theatres (see p. 90).

Other artistic traditions include Dwarf Song, which is more subtle than humans might believe possible for a form that uses only one word ("gold"), and Agatean Opera. Others could be introduced, although the precedents of moving pictures and music with rocks in suggest that this might not be a good idea. Fools and Clowns and (renegade) Street Mimes are detailed separately below.

Advantages: Appearance, Charisma, Musical Ability, Voice, and a Patron are all useful to an entertainer, but none are actually required.

Disadvantages: Many entertainers are Poor. Some have the Odious Personal Habit of hamming everything up, or Compulsive Behaviour: Must Create.

Skills: A Discworld Entertainer should generally have either a high level of skill in one or more Artistic Skills, or (for cheap comedy) a very low one.

Farmer/Peasant

Peasants are farm or ranch labourers whose land, crops, and/or animals belong to someone else. Farmers, on the other hand, mostly own their land and livestock; this often exchanges the vicious whims of feudal overlords for those of the free market, while preserving the peasantry's traditional freedom to starve.

Being a peasant has the advantage of . . . umm . . . a lot of company. Discworld peasants are somewhat less oppressed than those of some other worlds; they may occasionally be heard to express an opinion, and seem to stay a step ahead of starvation. They know their rights, and can list them at length. Still, a peasant not actively engaged in agricultural labour is subjected to being asked severe questions by men on horseback.

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[1] *Indeed, someone is always telling them to go somewhere else.*

[2] *That is, possessed of an audience of fanatic followers, and incomprehensible to everyone else.*

Many farmers, on the other hand, are comfortably off, or at least content. Farming doesn't allow much time for adventuring, but the children of successful farmers may have the freedom to go off on their own to the Big City (usually Ankh-Morpork, but everything is relative; there are people to whom Scrote or Lancre Town are gleaming metropoli). These young people normally leave home with some specific purpose (attending school, conducting business, getting away before her dad finds out, visiting Great-Aunt Fidity,) but anyone who has ever read a fantasy novel, or indeed has ever left home on his or her own, will know the rest.

Some Princes in Disguise pose as peasants, but they are rarely able to carry the charade very well. You have to be born to it. Real peasants are seen throughout the countryside, where they can be heard singing merry folk tunes about the hideous deaths awaiting peasants who acquire sudden wealth, mess around with noblewomen, or otherwise threaten the Natural Order; farmers listen to such songs with a mixture of contempt and sentiment, or wear ear-plugs.

Advantages: Farmers tend to be uncomplicated people. The even more rugged peasant life *may* grant a lot of physical Advantages, such as Toughness. Traditional peasant virtues include Common Sense and Intuition, but tradition doesn't always relate to fact. Peasant adventurers are supposed to have Luck, but that may just be the ones who survive to tell their stories.

Disadvantages: Low Wealth and Status, Illiteracy, and Intolerance; these are the fine traditions of peasant life. They are not necessarily universal, but someone who doesn't have any of them isn't a peasant (they're probably a yuppie with a cottage in the country). Farmers are almost as bad as dwarfs when it comes to developing Compulsive Carousing the moment they get somewhere they can have a decent carouse.

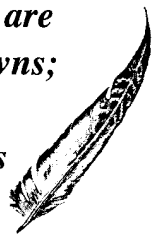
Skills: Useful as Agronomy is, it's not an *exciting* skill. It tends to be learned at TL3 on the Disc, despite the best efforts of keen reforming aristocrats. Polearm is the traditional combat skill for yeoman-farmers (their barns being full of innocuous tools that can double as weapons in the hands of an irritated mob); peasants are often encouraged by farmers to study polearm combat, as free farmers aren't always numerous enough to form a decent mob on their own. Area Knowledge is good for hiding from annoyed nobles. Those who leave home for a good purpose should usually ideally know some Merchant ways.

Fool/Clown

Many adventurers are called fools or clowns; on the Disc, some have qualifications to prove it.

Straightforward comedy work simply makes a character an Entertainer (see above), but graduates of Ankh-Morpork's Fools' Guild are qualified in the highest traditions of slapstick and jesting. In other words, they possess a huge repertoire of tired old routines and stock punch-lines, and regard with horror anything like an original joke. Some work in the theatre or circus; others occupy the traditional position in royal courts, of the person who persuades some paranoid psychotic monarch that he is really very tolerant – after all, he puts up with these jokes, and even laughs at them (unlike everyone else). This is an interesting way for a non-noble to become involved in courtly plots – a risky, Shakespearean sort of way.

"Many adventurers are called fools or clowns; on the Disc, some have qualifications to prove it."



Advantages: All those years of pratfalls may grant a little Toughness; Ambidexterity helps with juggling. A court position can mean Patrons, Contacts, or a Reputation, but rarely to a very reliable level.

Disadvantages: After years in the trade, some fools develop interesting Phobias, usually involving custard and buttonhole flowers; Guild leaders and teachers seem prone to Sadism and clearly have No Sense of Humour. Some Court Fools possess a strong Sense of Duty to the throne.

Skills: The Guild insists that Fast-Talk and Performance are largely irrelevant; Fools' Lore (p. 57) is what matters. Physical comedy does require some skill in Acrobatics, however.

Gambler

There may be a human society with no gamblers, but don't bet on it.

Advantages: Luck is the obvious Advantage needed by a gambler – but *not too much of it.* To make serious money, one must deal with other gamblers, and should they suspect supernatural deception, they can become violent. (*Mundane* cheating is perfectly acceptable to professional Discworld gamblers, within Gamblers' Guild-defined limits; everybody does it, so games become contests of skill, even if they are supposed to be pure chance.)

Disadvantages: Compulsive Gambling normally clouds a character's judgement too much to permit a professional career. Foolish habits like fleecing marks so heavily that they don't come back can make Enemies of other gamblers. Making Enemies of anybody else is just part of the territory.

Skills: Gambling and Sleight of Hand are obvious requirements, but Fast-Talk and Streetwise can be as important. Savoir-Faire can get a gambler into the richest games with the easiest marks.

Guards/Watchmen

On the Disc as elsewhere, there are things to be guarded and laws to be enforced; this tends to be handled by quasi-military forces. *Watchmen* are basically policemen; they are generally a grubbier, more footsore bunch than *Palace Guards,* who usually get nice dress uniforms and are really just superior bouncers with no grasp of the law. Successful merchants also hire guards, to protect their property in a world largely innocent of insurance companies.

Guard cavalry is not common – horses are expensive to maintain, and not useful when the person you're chasing ducks into a basement – but wealthier towns or individuals, especially merchants, may have some mounted guards for travel or fancy-dress occasions.

Ankh-Morpork's Watch is currently evolving into a fairly sophisticated, if eccentric, police force (see p. 91). It is still largely concerned with keeping the peace, stopping people going where they shouldn't, and chasing them away when they do, but it also investigates crimes, and even includes a nascent plain-clothes section. Disc-based "police procedural" adventures are perfectly possible.

(Incidentally, there are no chronicled "Consulting Detectives" on the Disc as yet, and few or no people in any sort of "Private Eye" role. Mysteries on the Disc somehow always turn out too messy and confused for Sherlock Holmes-style plots – Watch Commander Vimes is especially cynical on this subject – but any clever-clever PCs who want to enter this business are welcome to try.)

Advantages: Military Rank is convenient for those who would rather shout than be shouted at, and it is foolish not to make an Ally Group of one's colleagues. A high-ranking Patron can also help. Danger Sense and Alertness can aid with *serious* bodyguard work. Watchmen and Royal Guards have Legal Enforcement Powers.

Disadvantages: Duty is the defining feature of these careers. Other matters depend on the nature of the employer; some forces seem to recruit only Bullies, while others look (perhaps too hard) for Honesty.

Skills: Basic drill *usually* means a point or two in a force's specific weapons. Being versatile is useful, as potential employers are likely to say something like "I need a shortswordsman who can use a crossbow and wears a 42-regular cuirass," but the life can end up teaching a lot more Gambling or Scrounging. Officers try to cultivate Leadership, but often do best to learn to Detect Lies. The Ankh-Morpork Watch now employs specialists with skills such as Alchemy, and any police-type work can involve Streetwise and Area Knowledge.

Guerrilla Mime/Renegade Street Actor

This occupation is a peculiar and specific consequence of one of Lord Vetinari's few personal foibles, and so is unique to Ankh-Morpork. Since the Patrician prohibited street theatre and mime, a small class of dedicated, fanatical, stupid practitioners have naturally turned it into a form of romantic rebellion.

Most of the rebels hold down day jobs as cover, meeting in secret after hours to lay their long-term plans, occasionally in mime. None of them has yet come up with any sort of viable revolutionary program, but that suggests that heroic adventurers who can put forward something vaguely credible might well obtain a following, at least until the movement splinters.

Despite the large number of other factions who are usually plotting against the Patrician, Underground Street Theatre is a deeply hopeless revolutionary movement, as the law against which it is fighting is widely accepted, and even popular; in the unlikely event of Vetinari's fall, the odds are that the new regime would keep it as a sop to public opinion. Given this nihilistic aspect to their situation, and their fondness for white make-up, it seems that the Guerrilla Mime movement appeals to the sort of people who, in other universes, spend their time roleplaying vampires.

Advantages: The rest of the Movement may provide Allies or an Ally Group. Danger Sense may save a PC from absent-mindedly Unicycling at the wrong moment.

Disadvantages: Active Street Entertainer is a Secret, nominally leading to Possible Death, although given the relaxed nature of much Ankh-Morpork law enforcement, and the fact that the Patrician sometimes merely locks the criminals up (albeit with a few scorpions), that could be reduced to "Imprisonment or Exile." Anyone who behaves in this way presumably suffers from a Compulsive Behaviour, Delusion, or a warped Sense of Duty.

Skills: Aside from any "day job" skills, and enough Stealth or Running to stay alive, the rebel should, of course, have some Artistic skills, Performance, or Gesture. On the other hand, these may not be at a very high level.

History Monks

Somewhere in the High Ramtops dwell an order of monks whose task is to observe history as it happens. They guard great books wherein the history of the Discworld – past and future – is written, and often go forth to make sure that it happens properly, not (officially) by intervening, but by observing it. Large-scale quantum mechanics, in a way, they know that this is essential for what happens to be history, and not just random events.

Powerful though they are, in a way, they are always up against quantum uncertainty, and like a swan their stately progress may be because of frantic paddling down below. All it needs is a man to drop the wrong glass or miss with the wrong arrow and a History Monk may find himself scurrying around trying to put everything 'right.' In addition, novice Monks are no doubt sent out to observe small historical events and, like apprentices everywhere, may get things wrong with, as they say, hilarious results.

History Monks are not obvious candidates for use as PCs, as even if they do stretch a point and intervene, they have to be very tactful about it. Even if they are capable of leaping seventy feet to kick other people in the head (philosophically), they very rarely get to indulge this hobby. However, as "the Men in White," they do have a license to go anywhere in time and space on the Disc. Furthermore, they may possibly employ lesser individuals to keep an eye on the more trivial aspects of history – a task which a PC group might well desire, or deserve.

Advantages: Operating largely outside of the normal flow of time, History Monks are as near to Unaging as makes no difference. They all have their own type of Clerical Investment, of course, and indeed they tend to be good at passing as harmless priests anywhere.

Disadvantages: Being a History Monk is a special Discipline of Faith or Duty (depending how you look at it), requiring a rather ascetic lifestyle and a lot of simply watching things happen. The Monks never own more personal possessions than they can carry on their missions, and have little interest in material things, which rarely last as long as the Monks themselves. However, they are permitted a fair degree of latitude as to how they go about their task. This Disadvantage is worth -10 points.

Skills: Apart from a frighteningly extensive knowledge of History, not all of which may have happened yet, a History Monk could acquire all manner of useful skills over the centuries. Most have high levels in the subtler Social Skills, enabling them to go about their work without worrying other people.

Medium

Mediums are people who have (mostly friendly) dealings with ghosts and spirits. For some reason, in urban societies, most of them are female, usually middle-aged, and lower-middle class; in other areas, the job shades into shamanism (see p. 128).

"Mediums are people who have (mostly friendly) dealings with ghosts and spirits."

There are relatively few mediums in Ankh-Morpork, where the dead usually make haste to get away from their relatives, but there's always work for a few specialists who can help sort out the odd ghostly problem.

Advantages: The easiest way to define a medium PC is by giving them some combination of Channelling, Medium, and Spirit Empathy (see ***GURPS Compendium I***). Alternatively, the character might be a low-powered spell-caster with spells such as Summon Spirit (p. M72). Many mediums also seem to have some psionic abilities, usually ESP. Spirit Guides can be treated as Allies.

Disadvantages: Anyone who wanders round in tune with two worlds simultaneously is likely to end up Absent-Minded. Some also develop Delusions or Odious Personal Habits such as "gossips incessantly about invisible spirits."

Skills: Mediumship doesn't require much in the way of specific skills.

Mercenary/Soldier/Monster Hunter

Large-scale warfare may not be *very* common on the Disc, but it does happen. However, many Discworld nations lack standing armies; they recruit, conscript, or hire troops when the need arises.

Even when there is no full-scale war on, there are plenty of opportunities for hired swords; it's just that contracts have to be negotiated more on a personal or small-unit basis than wholesale. Most mercenaries end up employed as Guards (see above), often by rulers who don't entirely trust their own subjects. Others may be taken on to train local militias, or try bounty-hunting. Some resort to banditry.

In short, this is a career for a PC whose player reads too much military history. It keeps such people happy, and shows them that this setting isn't too strange to play in. Much soldiering is, of course, pretty boring, with moments of sheer terror, but it has its opportunities. Still, it is something that PCs are more likely to reminisce about nostalgically than to enjoy at the time.

Most of these comments also apply to military sailors on the Disc, although of course different skills are involved.

Monster Hunters are a specialist class of mercenary; self-assured, well-armed men with a strong knowledge and sense of tradition. They will not take on the larger varieties of monster for anything less than the traditional half-kingdom and royal marriage.

Advantages: As with guard/watch work, Military Rank is useful to anyone who likes to make their own decisions, and an Ally Group (comrades-in-arms) can be essential. Although they endeavour to give the impression of snake-fast Combat Reflexes and troll-like Toughness, most mercenaries know that they mostly need to cultivate good Reputations, and the Common Sense to quit certain jobs while they're ahead.

Disadvantages: Soldiering can lead to various Compulsive Behaviours on an eat-drink-and-be-merry/brutal-and-licentious-soldiery sort of basis. Relatively minor physical afflictions, such as One Eye or Unattractive (Scarred), can help project a professional image. If they work too hard on their sales pitches, they develop the Odious Personal Habit of Bragging; if they come to believe themselves, they develop Overconfidence, but rarely last very long. The worst tend to be Bullies.

Skills: Those sales pitches mention weapons and Tactics, but in fact, a successful mercenary career depends as much on Merchant skill, and sometimes Camouflage or Running. Soldiers spend a lot of time Gambling or Hiking, while officers have to try and get the hang of Leadership, and cavalry need Riding. Monster hunters often learn to use specialist weapons; heavy polearms to chop through scales, lassos and nets for bring-'em-back-alive jobs, and incendiary contraptions for dealing with oozing amoebic Things.

Merchant/Entrepreneur

The more civilised parts of the Disc are seeing the growth of a middle class: shopkeepers, traders, and manufacturers. The less civilised parts get to see some of these merchants almost as quickly, especially if they have pearls, furs, or spices to trade.

"Entrepreneurs" are distinct from "Merchants" the way that an unbroken mustang is distinct from a carriage horse; the former has more energy and is a lot more dangerous to be around, and so probably has more potential, but after a few years, the two are often indistinguishable. The archetypal Discworld entrepreneur is C.M.O.T. Dibbler (p. 87), but it is no coincidence that he has analogues in many other cities of the Disc. The main characteristic of this class is an eye forever scanning for the main chance, combined with a tendency to cut corners.

Richer merchants frequently act as Patrons, hiring others as guards, to open up new territory, or on speculative missions to recover fabulous treasures (whose guardians are never adequately described in the contract). The children of merchants make prime PC material: they have a bit of freedom of movement and disposable income, but are far enough below the actual nobility to feel discontented. In urban stories, all generations tend to feature in pursuit, not only of gold, but of the intangible treasure of status and respect.

Advantages: Merchants usually have a certain amount of Status and Wealth (usually more of the latter than the former). They find Charisma merely useful, whereas for an entrepreneur, it can be a life-saver. Entrepreneurs' Wealth tends to be highly variable.

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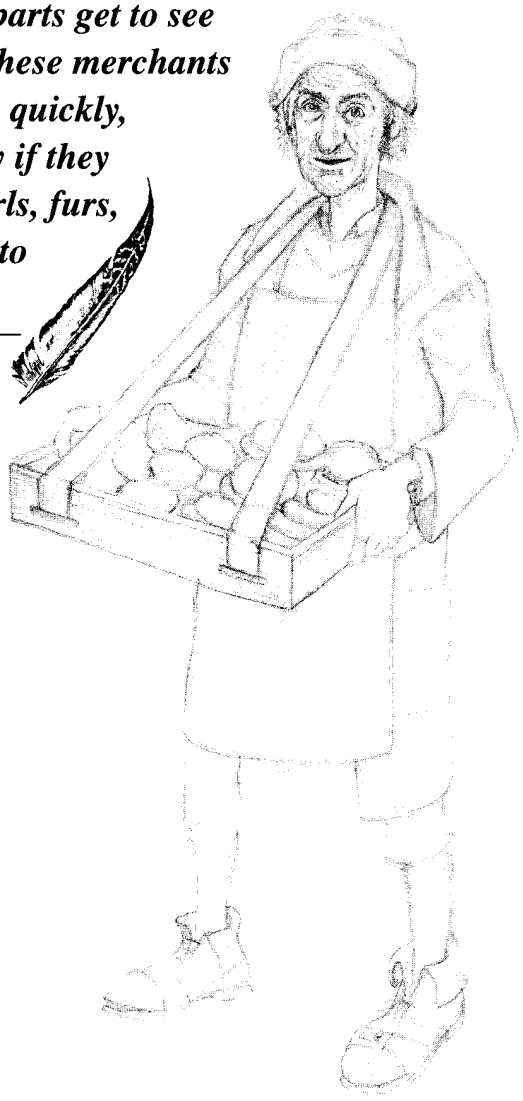


Disadvantages: Anything that causes bad reactions in others is limiting for a trader. However, Fat, Gluttony, and Overweight are traditional for merchants, as are Greed and Miserliness. Truthfulness is normally crippling, but the Zoons, a Discworld culture who are normally incapable of lying, have become successful traders.[1] Aside from Enemies, an entrepreneur may acquire a bad Reputation.

Skills: Merchant is obvious, but Fast-Talk runs it very close among entrepreneurs, whereas only unwise merchants depend on it. (Really.) Most entrepreneurs are jacks of all trades, but lack the patience to *master* any, while Languages and Packing, Riding, Teamster, or Seamanship help a merchant diversify.

Noble

Nobles are truly *well off.* Even an "impoverished" noble can often keep getting groceries delivered and bespoke tailoring done, on the presumed commercial advantages of being Purveyors to the Elite. Even *dispossessed* Nobles without a bean to their once-great names never seem to have any trouble in acquiring loyal followers far in excess of the number of baronies that might eventually be distributed.

That said, Discworld nobles do have problems. As the old ruling class in a world where the merchants are on the rise, they feel pressured; with kings on one side and spellcasters on the other, they often feel downright threatened. The best of them have difficulties introducing reforms; the worst have difficulties preventing them. (And thanks to their deep-seated traditionalism, Discworld peasants have an annoying habit of showing more respect to spectacularly dissipated nobles than to hard workers.) Not surprisingly, nobles often end up in the middle of stories.

Advantages: Nobles usually have Status and Wealth (unless Dispossessed), and frequently an Ally or two, or an Ally Group (retainers).

Disadvantages: The headaches of power can include anything from Paranoia to a Sense of Duty. All but the most retiring nobles tend to have Enemies.

Skills: Traditional courtly training includes weapons drill, Heraldry, Riding, and Savoir-Faire. Some nobles know about Administration and Agronomy; others have servants to deal with that. Hard workers learn Diplomacy, Politics, and Strategy; serious dissipation teaches Carousing, Gambling, and Hunting.

Priest/Druid

Discworld gods depend on belief; priests have the job of sustaining and spreading it, chopping bits off unbelievers, and running the consequent bureaucracy.

Few of them display much in the way of magical or miraculous powers, although they are likely to be present when matters come up which attract their deity's attention. For example, if a priest gets into a public argument with an atheist, the atheist may be struck by lightning – but that is a direct action by the god, not a spell cast by the priest. Priests *are* supposed to be competent at whatever their temple decides needs done, which usually means administration, preaching, or disembowelling small furry animals.[2]

[1] *They have a class of specially-trained liars.*

[2] *Or unbelievers.*

Discworld priests are not generally adventurous, but sometimes, a situation demands active attention. This could mean protecting a congregation from a threat (either out of a sincere sense of duty, or for political or pragmatic reasons), investigating some mystery that seems to involve the religion, or missionary work. Furthermore, some Disc religions have priests who wander round a more-or-less fixed circuit of "parishes," usually in rural areas where belief is a little casual and there are a number of competing faiths.

"Discworld gods depend on belief; priests have the job of sustaining and spreading it, chopping bits off unbelievers, and running the consequent bureaucracy."

Discworld *Druids* are priests with a taste for stone circles, sickles, and the open air; see p. 162 for details.

Advantages: Clerical Investment defines a priest, of course. A temple hierarchy can provide Allies, Contacts, and Patrons (and Enemies). Full Literacy is *usually* expected of priests; Blessed characters (see p. CI34) are rare, as the gods are very poor about helping individual worshippers, preferring the smiting-the-unbelievers side of divinity. Magical Advantages, including some types of Aspected Magery, are certainly possible, especially for druids.

Disadvantages: Duty, or a Sense of Duty, are theoretically standard for priests, but not actually compulsory. In a polytheistic society, other people can afford to react badly to the Odious Personal Habit of "Always Preaching," or to Fanaticism. Intolerance of wizards is common; they are seen as competitors in the supernatural stakes. A few Disc religions require special Vows or Disciplines of Faith. Quirks such as "Damp Handshake," "Plays the Guitar," or "Always Ostentatiously Means Well" can fit. Senior druids seem prone to Bloodlust, while stone circle engineers tend to have the Odious Personal Habit of Talking Shop.

Skills: These vary according to priests' functions and training, although all are *supposed* to have Theology. Administration is common in many religions, while Bard suits effective missionary preachers and parish priests who retain some enthusiasm. Interrogation is popular in some religions, but the crude stuff (with a bit of Physiology on the side) is mostly left to low-ranking heavies; Omnian exquisitors in the heyday of that strange religion go for Psychology and Intimidation. Performance/Ritual is the mark of a religion that believes in wowing the masses. Some gods, who specialise in particular fields of activity (War, Farming, Negotiable Affection . . .) may expect their priests to have at least a grounding in the relevant skills.

Druids especially value Performance/Ritual and Sacrifice, as they can slightly alleviate the boredom of a wet feast day in Llamedos. Few druids are as adept with Poetry or Singing as they like to think, but many know more Bardic Lore than is good for sanity. Some are competent with Poisons. Old-fashioned druids will have studied Naturalist or other Outdoor Skills, while younger ones favour Programming (Stone Circle).

Thief

There are two sides to urban crime on the Disc. On the one side, there is the routine business of picking pockets, coshing people, climbing walls, and fencing the swag at a quarter the market value. On the other is Ankh-Morpork's Thieves' Guild (see p. 97).

Characters may of course seek to become Guild members, which involves a lengthy process of application and examination, and a lot of bureaucracy and following of rules. Or they may decide to remain freelance, if they *really* like danger.

Advantages: The usual thief attributes are relevant on the Disc, although only freelances are likely to need acute senses.

Disadvantages: Freelances in Ankh-Morpork have the same problems as thieves in most cities, only a lot more so; Enemies, Secrets, and low Status. Membership of the Guild replaces these with the things one experiences in large organisations (mostly Duties).

Skills: Thief skills are basically those listed as such. Those who wish to rise in the Guild might do better to learn Administration, Diplomacy, Politics, or Accounting.

Thug/Splatter

The urban life-style of cities such as Ankh-Morpork involves a certain amount of rough-and-tumble, and of course some individuals find that, if they concentrate on being rough, it's the other person does the tumbling. Some work on an entirely freelance basis; others end up standing in the doorways of hospitable establishments, controlling the flow of hospitality. (A "splatter" is like a bouncer, but with more force; a natural occupation for trolls.) At heart, few such individuals want adventures – they prefer an essentially stable life-style – but sometimes they get them anyway. Those who indulge in a bit of independent mugging may decide that travel is good for the health, preferably before the Thieves' Guild finds out.

Also; most Guilds in Ankh-Morpork see it as their duty to prevent non-members from poaching their members' legitimate profits, although their success in this varies. Some accomplish the crude-but-necessary part of this program by hiring dull-witted arm-breakers, or even Assassins in exceptional cases; however, others prefer to keep as much work as possible "in house." (This maintains the dignity of the Guild, and stops outsiders from hearing about the failures too often.) The result is a peculiar variety of professional heavy; a thug with training for a day job.

Advantages: High Pain Threshold, Toughness . . . Peripheral Vision helps in bar fights, too. Rapid Healing is useful after really bad misjudgements. As many citizens like to maximise their survival chances, they tend to keep track of who is most dangerous to be around, which can grant the successful thug a positive Reputation. (It's a Reputation, and it makes people be nice to them.) *Some* gangs and guilds may serve as Patrons or Ally Groups; others don't bother.

Disadvantages: Low Appearance and negative Status are the thug's lot, as are many "bad" Mental Disadvantages, such as Bully. Physical Disadvantages may come to those who are not cut out for the career. Guild Enforcers may have some small but deep-rooted flaw that keeps them from prospering in the Guild's main line of work; Brontophobia in an alchemist, say, or Truthfulness in a lawyer, or low HT and a susceptibility to colds for a stripper.

Skills: Start with Brawling, Blackjack, and Knife, or at least the Acting to fake it. Intimidation can go a long way, but Discworld cities are places where pose and reputation have to prove themselves from time to time. Guild Enforcers should usually also have at least a modicum of talent in the Guild's official line of work, usually an Artistic, Craft, or Professional Skill.

Tourist

Twoflower, the first tourist in Ankh-Morpork, arrived in the city in living memory. It is a sign of the speed of recent changes that the city's merchants now publish guidebooks.

Tourism is still rare, but there are enough people on the Disc with spare cash to make the idea increasingly popular with merchants and inn-keepers. There are also enough wandering witches who have suddenly discovered a world beyond their home villages to make that welcome somewhat guarded.

Tourists can, of course, have any kind of regular job, but it should usually be of a sort to grant them a certain amount of cash and free time.

Advantages: Some Wealth and perhaps a little Status is theoretically a prerequisite. Non-combatant tourists who insist on getting mixed up in adventures probably need some kind of Luck; Common Sense would be too much to hope for.

Disadvantages: Voluntarily travelling far from home on the Disc implies something strange. Possibilities include Gullibility, Impulsiveness, Lecherousness, Overconfidence, Compulsive Carousing, Curious, or Xenophilia. A tourist character-concept could be built around any one or two of these.

Skills: Aside from Professional and Hobby skills, a tourist could easily have Carousing, Diplomacy, or Savoir-Faire. Area Knowledge may or may not be acquired in play.

Tribesman

Some areas of the Disc still remain at an even lower level of technological and social development than the barbarian lands, fighting merely small-scale wars, often with blunt instruments only. However, the spread of trade has brought some of these places into contact with regions where getting dressed involves more than one piece of fabric, and today, the occasional beTrobi islander or Howondalander may be seen strolling the streets of Ankh-Morpork. Such folk are somewhat vulnerable to local business practices, but as some of them have a certain direct way with People-Who-Use-Lies-To-Get-More-Meal-Nuts, the problem is not necessarily insuperable.

Advantages: Primitive lands are noted for producing people with cat-like agility, superlative health, and extraordinary senses; Animal Empathy is also a commonplace. As *everything* they see in civilisation is new to them, they may be effectively Unfazeable.

Disadvantages: Primitive is an obvious problem for a recent immigrant, and Poverty and full Illiteracy are likely. Intolerance based on intra-human racism is *not* a big problem on the Disc; humans are too busy persecuting trolls and dwarfs.

Skills: Aside from weapons, Animal Handling, and various Outdoor skills, many tribesmen acquire cultural traditions such as exotic Musical Instruments. (Ankh-Morpork hasn't caught on to the idea of World Music yet, but give it time.)

Witch

Witches are discussed in full in Chapters 6 and 7. They have been known to go wandering, and (although they thoroughly disapprove of the idea[1]) meddling with human affairs. Given the proper motivation (particularly a threat to their community), they will not only Challenge Evil, but organise the party, make sure everyone has warm clothes

[1] *Oh yes.*

and a toothbrush, and keep slackers in line with the intensity of a British Army sergeant-major.

A few witches have subsidiary careers as Fairy Godmothers (good or bad), which means a lot of travel. These women usually have wands (see p. 126); the role, and the wand, are passed down from one witch to another. How this system started in the first place is unknown.

Advantages: See p. 104 for details of the prerequisites for witchcraft. Common Sense and Strong Will are also common. A young witch's instructor, if still alive, may become a Patron; a coven may provide Allies, although these can be so hard to deal with as to verge on the Unwilling.

Disadvantages: Some witches are famously Bad-Tempered, though not usually physically violent. Most have a Sense of Duty to their home area. Fairy godmothers have a Duty toward their godchildren. Other foibles tend to the personal, if often powerful.

Skills: Again leaving aside magical training, most witches seem to have a point or so in Brawling, less through training than through an instinctive willingness to deliver a sharp kick or a hat-pin where one is needed.

Wizard

This class of magic-worker, too, is discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. It is usually considered that no proper Party of Adventurers is complete without at least one spell-caster, and wizards are the obvious candidates. Wizards adventure in search of personal power, to get away from rivals who have obtained a serious upper hand, out of curiosity, or even, sometimes, because it is the right thing to do. Others set up as "consultants," and then receive interesting commissions.

Being a wizard is in some ways like being one of the nobility: people will often make allowances for you, or give allowances to you, based on an exaggerated idea of your power. On the other hand, wizards are sufficiently commonplace on parts of the Disc that it can be hard to get a table even at less exclusive restaurants.

Advantages: As well as magical abilities, wizards often have Status, and adequate Wealth if they are organised. Not much else is standard; wizards consider that magic is about magic, and not about getting side-tracked.

Disadvantages: Some wizards are Curious, or have similar motivations for their activities, but a surprising number have more or less fallen into the profession by chance. Successful academics at Unseen University are often Fat; those on the way up may be merely Overweight. This is generally the result of Gluttony. Many have an Addiction to Tobacco. More flamboyant types are often loaded with Quirks and Odious Personal Habits.

Skills: Again, aside from things directly or indirectly related to wizardry, there is little that wizards *have* to know – although most students at Unseen University seem quite adept at Carousing, and the senior staff there often have moderate social skills appropriate to their offices.

Female Characters

Much of the Discworld is dominated by tradition, and nearly all of it represents a parody or an echo of our own world. Rather old-fashioned ideas about the place of women are therefore widespread. However, Discworld folk (of both sexes) can be determined and bloody-minded, so it is not entirely surprising that there are such things as successful female adventurers. This is the Century of the Fruitbat, after all.

Independent female characters in the chronicles are too numerous to list; gamers can look there for ideas. While many Discworld societies are certainly sexist, relatively few are of the lock-the-women-up persuasion, which means that female adventurers won't be viewed with horror simply for going out of the house. Games built round communities, covens, or the like have an even better reason for including plenty of female PCs.

Actually, one reason for games to include truly adventurous female characters is that there are *few* opportunities for women in Disc society. Ankh-Morpork, for example, is rather like Victorian London; the only easily accessible paying jobs for a woman are as a servant (anything from a governess down to a below-stairs maid), or as a "seamstress" (see p. 95). On the other hand, there is also a solid fantasy-world tradition of heroic swordswomen, who don't have to tolerate sexist remarks from dim men. It's likely to be very tempting for some women.

And, of course, there is the matter of witches. And dwarf women, who can't easily be identified as such.

So the best idea for anyone who wants to play a female character is just to do so. If the GM really wants to play up the setting's sexist elements, then female characters could be given a -5 or -10 point Social Stigma ("Independent Woman" or "Valuable Property"), but that should be settled before the game begins.

Advantages, Disadvantages, and Skills

Advantages

Clerical Investment — See p. 214

Because the gods of the Discworld are real and active, Clerical Investment always carries with it an extra +1 reaction from *anyone,* worth 5 points. It's not that priests can reliably call on their deities for aid; it's more that everyone knows that people who annoy the gods get hit by lightning a lot. Hence, even characters who have seriously bad reactions to a priest are likely to limit their attacks to verbal insinuations and making trouble behind his back.

Therefore, 10 points (5 for the first level of Clerical Investment, 5 for the reaction) make one an ordinary, workaday priest, "rank 1" in the theological hierarchy. Large temples and highly-structured religions have higher "clerical ranks." The highest rank in most hierarchies is 4 or 5, and this is usually associated with a similar Social Status.

High religious rank confers a lot of tiresome responsibilities and complications, can involve full-time political struggles with rivals within the same hierarchy, and doesn't earn quite as much respect as it should (*dedicated* followers of any specific religion, who give the full reaction benefit, being relatively few). However, it does confer some small perks. For one thing, the gods do pay *some* attention to their high priests, and may (at the GM's option) drop the odd lightning bolt on those who argue religion with them. For another, basic divine etiquette says that lightning-bolting another deity's priests is bad form; a god who forgets Himself enough to throw such a blast may see it diverted at the last minute by the target's deity. And for a third, high priests are granted direct knowledge of the doings and desires of their god. Admittedly, this last isn't much of a benefit, as it amounts to having plot summaries of a tacky soap-opera fed directly into your brain while having to be polite about the cast, but it could have its uses.

Enhanced Dodge — See p. CI24

This may be made available to characters in comedy games without any special training – in fact, it may be limited to characters with *low* combat skills and Cowardice. This reflects a comedy convention; the character who runs screaming desperately from everything, ducking and dodging with surprising success.

The Limitation "Not with an Attack Manoeuvre" is worth -40%, but is not compulsory, even for cowardly characters; for example, Rincewind is prone to attacking in a terrified frenzy when cornered.

Extra Encumbrance — See p. CI55

In Discworld games, this can be purchased by some little old ladies; the carrying capacity of aged rustic grandmothers is truly phenomenal. It might also be permitted to dwarfs, who are stocky, sturdy beings who are used to carrying a lot of weight in armour and equipment.

Immunity to Disease and Disease-Resistant — See p. 218

Disease is not as great a problem on the Disc as the standard of sanitation in Ankh-Morpork might lead one to expect (although there is the occasional plague). Mostly, this is a matter of literary convention, but if the campaign is going to reflect it, a generous GM might halve the cost of these two advantages. It is possible that pretty well everyone born on or near the Sto Plains is at least Disease-Resistant, thanks to genetics and extended exposure.

Legal Enforcement Powers See p. 214

Civil rights are a rather weakly-grasped concept on the Disc, so where these powers are granted at all, they permit a fair amount of leeway; they rarely cost less than 10 points. On the other hand, Discworld nations are small and decentralised, and few organisations enforce law across wide areas, so the 15-point version is also rare.

International law is informal on the Disc; co-operation is possible ("Yes, he's a mass murderer all right. Why don't you take him home with you?") but not guaranteed. Also, while special agents may be granted supra-legal powers by some leaders, rulers with that kind of authority usually set things up so that the agent is left to dangle in the wind if the mission goes wrong.

Literacy See p. 218

Literacy is common, but not universal, on the Discworld; it is perfectly possible to get along without it, but most characters in the books (even the trolls) seem able to puzzle out at least a few words. For game purposes, therefore, *Semi-Literacy* (p. CI29) should be the norm; Full Literacy costs 5 points, and complete Illiteracy is a -5 point Disadvantage.

Longevity See p. B21

This seems to be widespread in the chronicles; few of the retirement-age characters are slowed down much.

Luck, Daredevil, and Serendipity See pp. 218, 217, and CI30

Anyone with these Advantages – especially at a high level – must be considered, to some extent, a pawn of The Lady (p. 163). This can lead to all manner of other complications, including strange Enemies (up to and including Fate); the GM might also insist that the character be a Weirdness Magnet. A PC might take The Lady as an actual Patron, but that is not generally wise; remember that She is whimsical, and She *never* helps when She is asked.

Magic Resistance See p. B21

This seems to be rare on the Disc; it may be an attribute of some Barbarian Heroes, however, given their remarkable survival rate in the face of wizardry.

Magical Aptitude (Magery) See p. 218

This is required for true witch or wizard training on the Disc, although the high local mana level enables amateurs to cast some half-baked magic. Amongst other benefits, Magery grants the sensitivity to magical phenomena that wizards call "Octarine Vision."

A few Discworld inhabitants (such as priests) may have some kind of Limited Magery, although it isn't common, and it doesn't usually grant "Octarine Vision." See p. 121 for more on all this.

Second Sight See p. CI43

Because Magery implies "Octarine Vision" on the Disc, Second Sight gives no advantage to witches or wizards. A few "minor talents" and supernatural creatures might take it, to reflect a lesser level of metaphysical awareness.

Tenure See p. CI31

This is granted to some academics at Unseen University; they are very difficult to get rid of, unless they violate some fundamental rule (by, say, getting married). Of course, back in the pre-Ridcully days, they could be got rid of in more permanent ways.

Disadvantages

Odious Personal Habit See p. 213

"Barbarian Heroism" is an Odious Personal Habit worth -5 or -10 points, depending on severity. It involves a great deal of quaffing, shouting, brawling, moroseness when sober, petty thievery when short of cash, attacking anyone who might be an evil wizard, and interminable quotation of tribal epics, pedigree, and feuds. Some urban dwarfs develop similar vices.

"Stares Thoughtfully at People's Throats" is a -5 point Odious Personal Habit among werewolves and vampires; it causes people to either shun them or prepare the stakes and silverware.

Social Stigma See p. 214

Strangely enough, few groups are *systematically* stigmatised on most of the Disc. Certainly in Ankh-Morpork, the population would rather take a foreigner's money than snub them, and back-alley cosh-work is usually for personal or financial reasons rather than ethnic or social malice. There are a few lands where oppressed women or slaves suffer the "Valuable Property" stigma, but mostly, prejudice is of the grindingly simple, class-or-money-based kind.

Non-humans might be said to suffer from a Stigma, but in fact, this is only expressed by Intolerant individuals. Dwarfs are widely regarded as occasionally vicious and always money-grabbing little devils, but saying so to their faces is reckoned rather too dangerous by most people who have regular contact with them; the same goes for trolls, although they do have an Odious Racial Habit, and don't always understand insults. (The Silicon Anti-Defamation League does sometimes come round and hit people who say that trolls go round hitting people.)

There are, however, some undeniable Stigmas:

Overdressed Foreigner: This is worth -10 points. It earns the character a -1 reaction from Discworlders who are neither hell-bent on earning foreign money nor consciously cosmopolitan and short of taste; it also makes them a favourite target for *lots* of con artists and other rogues, some blatant and annoying, others subtle and effective. If for some reason the character is thought to be a wizard, rightly or wrongly, they receive -3 reactions from Unseen University graduates, who regard them with suspicion, barbarian heroes, who regard them as favourite (if dangerous) targets, and others with strong views on the subject.

Undead/Lycanthrope: Most Discworld denizens distrust vampires, zombies, and werewolves, despite the fact that many such are surprisingly well-behaved. This is therefore a -10 point Disadvantage, earning -2 reactions from most people.

Logical Impossibility: Some Discworld beings are rather implausible by any standards; at the worst, other Disc inhabitants may refuse to believe in them, even in the face of overwhelming evidence. This form of Stigma does not cause a reaction modifier; rather, other people simply ignore the character, refusing to acknowledge their presence, or at least their exceptional nature, unless they have a specific reason to believe. Characters with Magery or Second Sight can usually accept that logical impossibilities do exist, and so perceive them, but a few old witches and wizards can be exceptionally crusty. This Disadvantage is worth -10 points.

Bad Sight See p. 219

Vision-correcting glasses are available in some, but not all, parts of the Disc, so this Disadvantage may be worth the higher or lower points value.

Blindness See p. B27

Blindness on the Discworld does *not* prevent the use of mystical powers such as Precognition. *Witches Abroad* mentions a witch with "second sight" who went blind but trained her precognitive power to work on the present – thus, in game terms, buying off her Blindness.

Addiction See p. B30

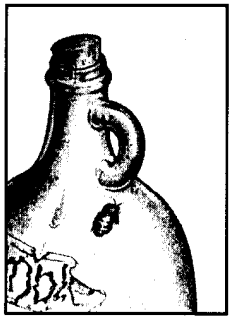
Few refined drugs are generally available on the Disc, but there are a fair number of bizarre mushrooms and such; with GM permission players can invent Addictions for their PCs. Tobacco *is* available, and many wizards are chain smokers.

Trolls, who are immune to human drugs, *are* prone to an addiction to "Slab," a mixture of chloric ammonium and radium. This is moderate-priced and hallucinogenic; it does not appear to be especially addictive, but trolls are rather short on willpower, and some may find it more appealing than others, so its addictiveness rating can vary between characters. It is illegal, which in troll terms means that trolls hit other trolls *very hard* for handling it; in Ankh-Morpork, Sergeant Detritus nails Slab dealers to walls by their ears. It is poisonous (and indigestible) for humans.

Alcoholism See p. B30

A huge and sometimes peculiar range of alcoholic refreshments are available on the Disc, and are almost universally legal. One small advantage for drinkers living near the Circle Sea is the availability of Klatchian coffee, a brew so effective at eliminating drunkenness that it should only be administered by a (sober) expert, as an overdose can render the drinker *knurd* (the opposite of drunk), a state in which one sees the world horribly stripped of all fuzziness and illusion. Klatchian coffee-lovers follow cups of the stuff with shots of *orakh,* a virulent spirit.

(Characters who become knurd suffer a range of effects at the GM's option, according to the depth of the effect; mild knurdness is merely slightly depressing, giving the victim -1 or -2 for any task that takes time and concentration, while an extreme case can render the sufferer paralysed. The long-term effects of overmuch coffee use can include Truthfulness, Chronic Depression, Manic-Depressive behaviour, Alcoholism, or a taste for bad gothic fiction.)



Trolls are immune to alcohol, but have their own vices; a troll "alcoholic" takes refreshments containing molten sulphur, which has the same effects as alcohol on a human. Troll bars and cosmopolitan Ankh-Morpork establishments keep a stock of insulated mugs.

Code of Honour See p. 219

Assassin's Code of Honour: A member of the Ankh-Morpork Assassins' Guild is not a vulgar hired killer; he is a gentleman. He always behaves with courtesy to other gentlemen, and never kills except for payment. Killing a target's guards, let alone mere servants, is bad manners. (It might be forgiven if the situation was exceptional, but it is a matter for stern self-criticism.) The Guild offers a personal service; although it might possibly deal with two or three problems at the same time, bulk orders will not be accepted. Nor will an assassin shoot down a victim in the street, at least if the target is of the better class of person; that would smack of crude thuggery. The Assassins deliver at home or at the office, and they always leave a receipt.

Assassins usually wear black, as a matter of style, which does help mark them out. This can inspire respect, but it can also attract the attention of lower-class persons who feel that killing an assassin is something to boast about.

The Assassins' Code of Honour is worth -10 points.

Compulsive Behaviour See p. 219

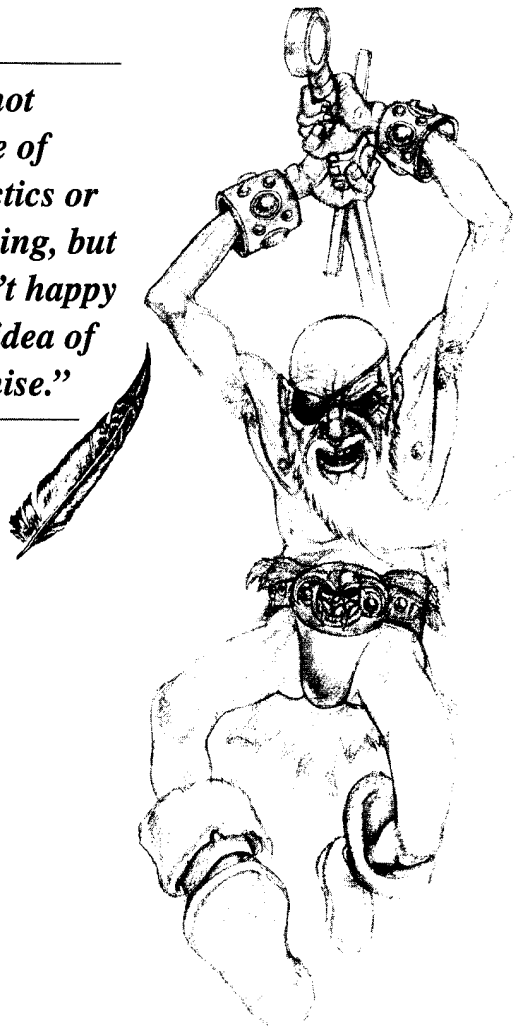
Barbarian Heroing: You make such a habit of "Heroing" that you find you cannot live any other way, or imagine how to. Your preferred solution to almost any problem is to grab a sword. You may, of necessity, be very good with it, and you are not incapable of clever tactics or low cunning, but you aren't happy with the idea of compromise. You also suffer from intermittent wanderlust, and possibly from other Compulsive Behaviours, such as Carousing, Spending, and Vowing.

This is obviously closely related to the Odious Personal Habit discussed above, and characters may well have both. But whereas that is external and annoying to others, the Compulsive Behaviour is internalised, and a danger to the character.

It is not quite the same as Impulsiveness; Barbarian Heroes are capable of carefully-timed stratagems. (Someone who suffers from both this Compulsive Behaviour *and* Impulsive-ness is simply doomed, as they will adopt violent solutions to every problem without even pausing to decide tactics.) Rather, the character adopts the "heroic" response to every situation. Need money? Rob the biggest, most heavily ornamented temple in town. Annoyed by the neighbours' loud music? Take an axe to their front door, and challenge them to a duel. Find yourself on a ship in a bad storm? Lash yourself to the mast and assume that you'll be cast up on some forsaken shore, even if there are plenty of lifeboats and the ship is entering a harbour. Bored with being king? Abdicate and start working your way up from the bottom again.

Players who take this Disadvantage must roleplay it. It's not just frequent violence; it's a question of living up to a whole image. It is worth -10 points.

"You are not incapable of clever tactics or low cunning, but you aren't happy with the idea of compromise."



Skills

Hidden Lore See p. CI147

Most supernatural hierarchies around the Disc are fairly up-front about their activities, or at least their conspiracies are too small to justify a Hidden Lore speciality. Demonic and divine politics are convoluted, but the basics are covered by Theology, Area Knowledge: Hell, Occultism: Demonology, and so on; keeping up with *current* events requires direct contact. There are certainly City Secrets to learn about Ankh-Morpork and Hung-Hung, however, and probably other major conurbations.

Languages See p. 225

See p. 12 concerning languages on the Disc; all can be considered Mental/Average. An Unusual Back-ground is required for a human to speak a non-human language with native fluency.

Medical Skills See pp. 223, 224, B56

Discworld medicine is at TL3, even in the most advanced areas. Witches can learn any Medical skill except Surgery, and are often remarkably adept at them; urban doctors tend to study Diagnosis, Physician, and Surgery, but are not very good at any of them. People with any common sense will often employ a Veterinary Surgeon, on the basis that they are often more sensible and seldom any worse than doctors. See p. 18.

Navigation — See p. 224

Discworld navigation is mostly at a rather approximate stage (TL3), but usually suffices. Standard equipment includes an octiron needle (which aligns with the Disc's magical field and points towards the hub; treat it as equivalent in price and usefulness to a magnetic compass on other worlds). Because the constellations change, slowly but surely, over time, they can only be used for precise navigation if the user has kept up with recent published data (available in any major port).

Photography — See p. 224

A special version of this skill is available on the Disc; "Photography (Discworld)." This represents practice in the use of imp-inhabited picture-boxes (see p. 128), including knowing when to supply the imp with more paints, what it is or isn't likely to be able to achieve, and how to talk to it. These imps are actually quite versatile, but will *only* paint what they see, and may become quite ironic if asked to perform difficult or unusual jobs.

Psychology — See p. B62

Witches (at least those influenced by Granny Weatherwax) call this "Headology" (see p. 107). They sometimes study it to a higher level than any academic, but without any formal system of training.

Survival — See p. 225

One type of environment is unique to Discworld-inspired campaigns. *Survival (L-Space)* represents an intimate knowledge of problems found in L-Space (see p. 115).

Sumo Wrestling — See p. CI136

This is called "Tsimo Wrestling" in the Agatean Empire.

Theology — See p. B62

Research Theology is an optional specialisation known on the Discworld; it is the study of how many gods there *actually* are, which are rising or fading, and which are actually other gods masquerading behind false noses or changes of robes. Some Research Theologians suspect the truth . . . the number of gods is potentially infinite.

New Advantages

Inspiration Magnet — 5 points

In the Discworld universe, new ideas are *literally* sparked off, like flickers in a physics experiment, and in a similar way – by collisions with fundamental particles. These particles are called *inspirations,* and they possess the time-hopping undetectability of tachyons or neutrinos. However, moderately complex brains possess a receptor which reacts with the passage of inspirations.

Anyone can get lucky and stop the odd inspiration, which may even be useful. However, rare brains possess exceptionally large receptors, and can even, somehow, attract inspirations. This is often useful, and hence is an Advantage, but it also has side-effects.

Whenever the character sets to work on a *creative* project that involves a skill on which they have spent at least one point, roll one dice. On a 1, no particular inspiration strikes; the character must use natural talent and hard work. On a 2, 3, or 4, the character soaks up enough inspirations to receive a +2 bonus on the main skill roll for the project. On a 5, the project automatically succeeds, although the results are unnervingly original or off-beat; make a skill roll anyway, at +5, to see if you get a critical success. However, on a 6, the character overloads on inspirations, and either produces something brilliant but wildly off-beam, or comes up with something semi-relevant but impractical, such as a rational system of urban traffic management when trying to create a new kind of war-chariot, or a new genre of publishing when trying to explain the nature of the universe.

There is no way to block inspirations, and if there were, it would render the shielded individual incapable of creativity; characters *must* use this ability when applicable. They can always re-start tasks that have become side-tracked, but this wastes time and may require a Will roll. Furthermore, if the character spends too long performing mindless or routine tasks, the GM can give them all sorts of weird and wild concepts that they must make Will rolls not to pursue.

Also, because inspiration involves insight, ideas granted by this ability tend to be fundamentally *truthful.* Using it to create dubious propaganda, or to build theories on flawed foundations, leads to confusion.

Psychic Invisibility 25 or 50 points

You are invisible to others, not because light passes through you, but because their minds insist that you aren't there; they literally *refuse* to see you. This is primarily an attribute of Anthropomorphic Personifications who have to go about unseen.

If the invisibility only applies when you are going about some clearly-defined and narrow duty, such as tooth fairy work, then it costs 25 points; if you can switch the power off and on at will, it costs 50 points. However, this power is sometimes *granted* by a powerful being, and often related, somehow, to a Duty; characters who use it for inappropriate or trivial purposes may find that it stops working.

If an invisible character starts interacting with normal mortals, let alone attacking them in any way, they will of course notice him, and have to accept that he is there. (Borderline cases may be settled with a Will Roll.) Characters with Magery or Second Sight can perceive the supernatural, so this power does not work against them (although they may be slow to notice the invisible being if distracted, or if the being really shouldn't be there, at the GM's option).

Traces left by an invisible character (footprints and such) should theoretically be visible, but people tend to overlook them, or absent-mindedly sweep them away; again, the GM should use common sense and discretion. Some invisible characters are also granted some kind of Insubstantiality to reduce this problem.

Sapient Pearwood Property Variable

You own an item made out of Sapient Pearwood (see p. 129). This is somewhere between special equipment and an Ally. The material is so rare that the GM may require an Unusual Background, except perhaps for an unusually lucky wizard with a small inherited staff – except for someone from the Agatean Empire, where Sapient Pearwood is used to make everyday items such as luggage.[1]

The base cost for such an item is 10 points, which gives you a wooden object of mundane function that somehow always shows up if you lose it, and which never works right for anyone else unless you explicitly lend it to them. For +5 points, the item can have some minor magical ability, such as moving under its own power for short distances. For +10 points, it can have a moderate magical ability, such as swift movement over moderate distances, repairing itself almost instantly, or serving as a wizard's staff (with extra energy storage capability – see p. 132). For +15 points, it can have a major ability, such as long-distance travel, keeping travelling clothes and other property perpetually clean and tidy, or attacking threats to the owner's well-being with lethal effect.

A fully self-aware item costs +5 points, and has IQ, DX, and any relevant ability rolls of 10. Increasing its effective skill in one area costs +2 points for +1 to the roll. An item with serious personality/attitude problems costs 5 points *less.*

"Wizards recognise Sapient Pearwood on sight, and envy the owner terribly; it is hard to steal such an item, but an envious wizard is a dangerous neighbour."

Sapient pearwood is completely immune to magical damage; it simply soaks up the energy. It seems at least as resistant to axes and other problems as best-quality teak.

Some examples:

A Wizard's Staff with high energy capacity, that flies to the owner's hand over short distances: 10 + 10 + 5 = 25 points.

A shield that stops magical attacks from the front, and has a mind of its own that can telepathically provide tactical advice with a roll of 15-: 10 + 15 (the magic-stopping) + 5 (the personality) + 10 (enhanced Tactics skill) = 40 points.

The Luggage, as seen in the chronicles: 10 + 15 (long-distance movement through all environments and dimensions) + 15 (clothes kept clean and pressed) + 15 (lethal attacks) + 5 (Personality) + 8 (combat skill of 14) - 5 (psychopathic mentality) = 63 points.

All Sapient Pearwood items develop Quirks. These are left to the GM to determine, although the player may make suggestions. Note also that wizards recognise Sapient Pearwood on sight, and envy the owner terribly; it is hard to steal such an item, but an envious wizard is a dangerous neighbour.

[1] *Of course, one might have, say, a toothpick of Sapient Pearwood. It would be a* **very** *good toothpick.*

Voice of Command — 15 points

You have a voice that can by-pass conscious thought in a normal sentient being who hears it, triggering reflexive obedience. It may be quintessentially commanding, or insinuatingly wheedling; determine the details when the character is created.

A Voice of Command is a potent ability, but should not be permitted to make the possessor all-powerful. It takes *at least* one round to use (the GM can time the speech involved if necessary), it only works on one subject at a time, and the effects only last for a second or two. Furthermore, it cannot be used to cause the subject to take any obviously suicidal actions, and anything too dangerous, or which goes against strongly-held beliefs or Psychological Disadvantages, is also unlikely. If in doubt, the target of the command should be permitted a Will Roll, with positive or negative modifiers at the GM's discretion.

Rapidly repeated uses of the effect on the same target should also become less effective; from the third use onwards within a single minute, the victim *must* be allowed a Will Roll to resist, with each subsequent roll taking a cumulative +1. Assuming that they realise what is being done to them, NPCs should have a reaction roll made for them after the first successful attempt to resist, at -1 for each use of the effect that they know of; ignore any results better than Neutral.

New Disadvantages

Literal-Minded — -10 points

This problem is usually found in characters brought up in dwarf society, although some Discworld barbarians also suffer from it. You use language literally, cannot grasp metaphors, and take rhetorical exaggerations at face value. Explicit similes are slightly easier, but you will often take a minute or two worrying at them and pointing out the flaws. ("I am NOT attracted to that gold like a moth to a flame; I can't fly, and I won't catch fire when I touch it.") Given a little experience of human discourse, you can form a dim comprehension of the *idea* of metaphor, but you still find it bizarre, and have to have specific examples explained at length. ("Bob is my uncle? But Bob is not my uncle; Lars Axewaver is my uncle.")

It is possible to buy this off with experience, but it usually takes a while. Most humans find Literal-Minded characters irritating, and react to them at -1 when the problem becomes evident; joker types and poets react at -2 or worse.

(That said, dwarfs find humans comparably annoying. To dwarfs, humans are always offering a meditation on the nature of time and the beauty of fire when you want to know just when the lighted fuse is going to reach the powder kegs. Humans would say that dwarfs regard human language as a maze, or a minefield, but of course dwarfs don't; they regard it as very difficult and confusing.)

Literal-Minded characters seem rather boring in their use of language by normal human standards; they may suffer penalties of -1 to -3 or worse on Social skills (especially Bard and Fast-Talk) and Poetry (unless working in a tradition that eschews metaphor).

Literal-Mindedness is *not* the same as No Sense of Humour; although humans often say that dwarfs suffer from the latter, it isn't true. Literal-Minded characters simply favour a blunt, pulling-faces-and-pratfalls sort of humour. Subtle wordplay and irony are lost on them. (Of course, the sense that other people are laughing at something you've missed is often annoying, which leads to dwarfs' reputation for grumpiness.) However, the two conditions do overlap; the value of taking both together is only -15 points, not -20, and the character suffers only the worse of the two possible reaction modifiers in any encounter.

Magical Incompetence — -5 points

This Disadvantage represents a broad version of the Incompetence Disadvantage (see p. CI91), covering the entire category of spells, rather than a single skill. It should generally only be available in High-Mana worlds, and can certainly only be taken by characters who spend at least ten points on features normally associated with spell-casting, such as Magery or Thaumatology skill. (Otherwise, it would be points for free.)

You have a ham-fisted inability to get any spell to work, even in conditions that should make it possible for anyone. You can employ magic items that don't specifically require spell use, you may have some supernatural sensitivity, and you might even have some psionic power, although if this is considered a branch of magic, as on the Disc, you cannot train up the associated skills. But spells are beyond you.

New Skills

Alchemy (Discworld) (Mental/Hard) Defaults to IQ-6

Discworld Alchemy is a science, akin to Chemistry (p. B60), rather than a form of magical study, although it sometimes borders on the supernatural. This is one area where the Disc has advanced from TL3 to TL4, and even TL5 in places, but more to the point, the whole discipline is subject to the Disc's arbitrary and whimsical laws of nature and plot. Record this skill on character sheets as "Alchemy (Discworld)," but treat it as Chemistry/TL4 for

most purposes; it can be used on problems involving the identification of magical substances or some routine thaumaturgical activities (albeit often at a penalty), but it does not permit any actual magical transformations. (Alchemists *do* understand some of the work done in places like Unseen University's High Energy Magic Building, and greatly envy the research grants involved.)

Astrozoology (Mental/Hard) — No default

This is the study of the extraordinary metafauna that support the Disc – Great A'Tuin and the four elephants. (It would also be possible to study the gigantic dragons, snakes, and other creatures that support or define other discs, but none have ever passed close enough to the Discworld for long enough to observe.)

This skill can only usually be learned in a region very close to the Rim, such as Krull – unless the student is a *very* powerful spell-caster, with the ability to apply scrying and telepathy to the topic. However, a few characters may learn it on a theoretical basis from a teacher.

Finding a use for this skill is left as an exercise for players.

Engineer/Magical (Mental/Hard) — No default; Prerequisite: Thaumatology

This is actually a new specialisation of Engineer; specifically, it is the Discworld-specific skill of building mechanical devices or systems with a major supernatural component, from the imp-infested watches and cameras of the Agatean Empire to Unseen University's great computer, Hex. It is learned at around TL3 or 4, but frankly, anyone who worked on non-magical technology would run gibbering from this area of work. See the notes on Engineer skill on p. B60 for ideas on applications.

Flight (Broomstick) Defaults to DX-2

This is the skill of operating a flying broomstick, studied by many witches and a few unconventional wizards. It is considered to be a version of the Flight skill (see p. CI131), with all the possible modifiers applied to that, rather than Pilot, because a broomstick is decidedly non-technological and is flown by instinct and agility. The same skill can also be used on a flying yarrow stalk, but that is more of an elf preference.

Discworld broomsticks are reasonably easy to fly in a straight line under normal circumstances, but rolls against this skill are required if characters try anything fancy. Most witches are too staid to indulge in aerobatics, but there are always exceptions.

Fools' Lore (Mental/Average) — Defaults to IQ-6

This Knowledge Skill represents the body of rote facts taught by the Fools' Guild; standard punchlines, formalised physical routines, and stock puns. Some of them are quite clever, but almost none of them are actually funny. However, the skill is hammered home hard by the Guild teachers; a graduate of the school will often have to make a Will roll to avoid responding to a recognised feed line.

Shouting at Foreigners (Mental/Hard) — Defaults to Linguistics-4, IQ-6, or HT-6

Many people think that they can get by in any language by speaking loudly, slowly, and clearly in their own, or by dredging up a few half-remembered words from old stories and books. On the Disc, this sometimes works.

This skill permits the character to communicate with anyone who speaks a widely-known Discworld language, given time and minimum willingness to try on both sides. One skill roll is required *per simple concept;* each attempt takes at least one minute. A critical success means that some additional information gets across.

Language Talent adds to this skill. It has a default from HT because high HT lets a character speak louder and for longer.

Optionally, characters may specialise in one narrowly-defined form of communication; for example, Rincewind specialises in Screaming and Begging for Mercy.

L-Space Theory (Mental/Very Hard)

No Default Prerequisite: Research at 15+

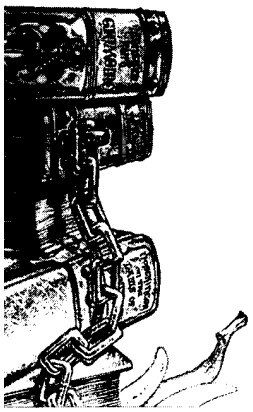
You have some understanding of the multiply-connected space-time between libraries (see p. 115). By using this skill, you can enter L-space deliberately in a large enough library, and navigate while there – or avoid entering it accidentally. You can bring along (or keep safe) as many people as can remain in sight of you in a cramped, labyrinthine library – not usually more than three or four (GM's option).

Note that the ability to enter L-Space, and to navigate its convolutions, is NOT the same as the ability to remain safe there. Characters are advised to learn Survival (L-Space) and Stealth before using this skill.

Programming/Hex (Mental/Hard)

No default Prerequisite: see below

This is the skill of getting useful results out of Hex, the Disc's only non-megalithic computer. It can only be learned by students at Unseen University. It might theoretically be mastered by characters with no other specific skills, but in practice, all Hex programmers are qualified wizards, with enough skill in Thaumatology, Engineer/Clockwork, and Engineer/Magical, to understand the hardware they are working on, or at least to explain why they can't do what they just said was easy after all. True Unseen University computer experts should also know some Biology, Ecology, and Mathematics; Fast-Talk is also useful, either for explaining their results or for dealing with Hex's voice input facility. PCs may also need an ability to survive on pizzas, the usual food of Hex programmers.



A successful roll against this skill, while working with Hex, will usually obtain some kind of useful information pertaining to magical theory or analysis. Useful to *who* is another matter. Details of time taken and answers obtained are entirely up to the GM.

Programming/Stone Circle (Mental/Hard)

No default Prerequisite: see below

This is the skill of working with the Disc's most advanced silicon technology; the stone circles of Llamedos and the Vortex Plains, the smaller circlets installed for druidic flocks elsewhere on the Disc, and the new-fangled laptop circles that are catching on with hip young rural processionals everywhere. Circles are allegedly designed for ease of use, but no-one asks use for *what;* one needs a level of 12+ in one of Astronomy, Meteorology, or Performance/Ritual before learning to operate a circle effectively.

Use of the skill takes at least an hour; a successful roll at the end permits the user to determine the time, make basic astronomical observations, predict the weather a number of hours ahead equal to the amount by which the roll was made, or organise a satisfactory sacrifice. A critical success achieves any two of these results at once (GM's option); a critical failure confuses two or more of them, so that the programmer can end up predicting, say, that the sacrifice will be a wash-out (common enough in Llamedos).

Status

Discworld inhabitants are actually a remarkably democratic bunch, considering that most of them are rabid traditionalist monarchists. They theoretically acknowledge all manner of gradations of aristocracy, but mostly, in practice, they admit to three social classes, who can be summarised as Proper Gentlefolk (to whom the other classes bow because some of them have the ability to turn quite unpleasant if you don't); *Nouveau Riche,* mostly merchants (about whom everyone is usually rude, but who have the money to purchase, if not respect, then a working facsimile); and Everyone Else (salt of the earth, honest working folk, downtrodden proletariat), who make up the vast majority. Magicians, priests, and witches stand to one side.[1] There are also a few kings, beggars, and other freaks.

It is therefore suggested that GMs ignore all reaction modifiers, and most other aspects of exact Status, when dealings are *within* one of the three categories. Nobles address other nobles with standardised politeness; peasants and beggars rattle along together with approximate tolerance. (There are a few nit-picking snobs, but they are the exception, not the rule.) However, when dealings occur *between* the three groups, all modifiers *can* apply –

[1] *And scowl if they don't get treated with respect.*

although on the Discworld more than anywhere, GMs should be prepared to use common sense. Persons in the class of magic-working special cases just cause trouble; they expect respect from everybody, but if they push their luck too hard with someone of higher Status, and the GM rolls a bad reaction, the noble may hire a mercenary wizard to even the odds, or just risk a quick stab before the source of the annoyance can get a spell off.

The Discworld is a big place, and contains a vast array of societies. The table below attempts to consolidate categories, but can only be an approximation at best. Anyone who wants to get seriously technical about social gradations in a specific Discworld culture should acquire the ***GURPS*** historical sourcebook relating to the nearest Earth equivalent, and borrow from that.

All currency amounts here and in the following sections are in ***GURPS*** dollars; divide by 20 to give Ankh-Morpork dollar equivalents. (See p. 19 for more on Discworld money.)

Status Table

Level	*Typical Jobs or People*	*Monthly Cost*
8	Agatean Emperor, Pharaoh of Djelibeybi	*
7	King of a Large Nation, Seriph of Al-Khali	*
6	Minor King or Seriph, Patrician of Ankh-Morpork, Cenobiarch of the Church of Om	*
5	Independent Duke, Arch-Chancellor, High Priest of a Major God, Grand Vizier	*
4	Major Guild Master, High Priest of a Lesse God, Major Court Functionary, Lesser Duke	$2,500
3	Lesser Guild Master, Scholar-Wizard, Noted Witch, Senior Priest, Earl, Assertive Baron, Rising Agatean Civil Servant	$1,500
2	Master Craftsman, Respectable Witch, Small-Town Wizard, Affluent Merchant, Watch Captain, Minor Baron, Ephebian Philosopher, Lesser Civil Servant	$800
1	Student Wizard, Junior Witch, Craftsman, Small Landowner, Minor Priest, Mercenary Captain	$400
0	Salt-of-the-Earth Peasant, Common Citizen, Ephebian Slave	$200
-1	Superior Beggar, Common Ruffian, Watchman in an unreformed Watch	$100
-2	Non-Ephebian Slave, Beggar, Bungling Thug**	$50
-3	Owned Golem	***

* The Discworld does not have the concept of salaried heads of state. All jobs associated with Status 5+ are assumed to carry with them enough rents, gifts, tithes, perks, and socks of gold stuffed behind the furniture to keep the incumbents (and a few family members) in appropriate style. That's "assumed," notice. Many a God-King or

Supreme Patriarch has had to ask his butler to double as a cook, and to lend him a few dollars until Friday. However, precise details of such situations are up to the GM, bearing in mind that accounting remains a haphazard art on the Disc; NPCs should be played as rich or poor as the plot may demand, and if any PC should somehow ever ascend to these heights, the question of their finances should be a topic for scenarios and a running joke, not an exercise in arithmetic.

** Merely being a known professional criminal is rarely a great social liability on the Disc – certainly not in Ankh-Morpork. However, crude and incompetent thugs are not much respected.

*** No-one at this level has to worry about money. Being beaten senseless/smashed to clay fragments on a whim, yes, but cost of living isn't an issue.

The status accorded various ranks of the nobility varies from place to place and time to time. In particular, some Dukes are "Independent" – they have their own pocket countries, and don't have to answer to anyone. Others have to pay more attention to what some monarch commands.

And with servants, and even slaves, remember that Status is infectious. Who a person works for can be very significant.

Jobs and Wealth

Economic activity on the Discworld is very varied, but is mostly distinctly pre-industrial. The debased coinage of Ankh-Morpork flows through a complex commercial system that includes a certain amount of banking, although most people favour the sock-under-the-mattress model. Conversely, many rural areas get by on barter, making both income and cost-of-living figures more conceptual than literal. Witches, especially traditionalists such as Granny Weatherwax, favour the Old Clothes Standard (although Granny Weatherwax for one is highly numerate, and can handle money with some skill if pushed). A witch secure in her own community rarely needs to see money at all – people kindly give her presents. You don't want to live near an *unfriendly* witch, do you?

The Job Table below should be taken mostly as a set of guidelines. The GM should feel free to tinker with PC income levels and outgoings – and also with the results of successes or failures on dice rolls.

Job Table

Job (Required Skills), Monthly Income	*Success Roll*	*Critical Failure*
Poor Jobs		
Apprentice (no attribute below 7), Bed and Board + $5	IQ	1d/LJ
Beggar* (no requirements), $50	11**, Acting-2**, Panhandling, or Scrounging	2d
Labourer (ST 11+), $150	ST	2d,LJ/2d,LJ,-1i
Non-Guild Petty Thief* (Thief skills totalling 30+), $170	IQ	2d/4d
Kitchen-Boy (DX 8+, HT 7+), $70	IQ	1d
Street Mime* (Performance 9+, Gesture 10+), $75	IQ+1	1d/1d,-1i
Struggling Jobs		
Actor* (Performance 14+), $200	PR	-1i/1d,-1i
Bandit* (One weapon at 11+, Camouflage 12+), $200	IQ	-2i/2d,-2i
Bar Entertainer* (Bard, Musical Instrument, or Singing at 14+), $150	PR	-1i/1d/-1i
Bar Staff/Waitress (HT 11+, DX 9+), $140	IQ	-1i/LJ
Bouncer/Splatter (ST 13+, any combat skill or Intimidation at 14+), $150	Best PR-1	2d/2d,LJ
Court Fool (Bard 10+, Fools' Lore 15+), Bed and Board + $10	IQ	1d
Craftsman's Assistant (Craft skill at 14+), $170	PR-1	1d,-1i/LJ
Fisherman* (Fishing 12+), $20 × skill	PR	2d/2d,-1i
Guild Enforcer (Craft Skill at 10+,combat skills and Intimidation totalling 30+), $220	Intimidation	-1i/2d,-2i
Junior Guild Thief (Thief skills totalling 40+), $200	IQ	-2i/1d,-2i
Peasant (Inherited), $300	Agronomy or HT	-1i/1d,-2i
"Seamstress," hem hem (HT 9+, Sex Appeal 10+), $160	Sex Appeal-1	-1i/1d,-2i
Teamster (Animal Handling or Packing at 15+), $12 × skill	PR	-2i/1d,-2i
Thaumaturgist (IQ 8+), $200	IQ	2d/accident
Thug* (ST 13+, any combat skill or Intimidation at 14+), $150	Best PR-1	2d/2d,-2i
Tooth Fairy (Female, Literate, HT 10+, DX 10+), $130	IQ	-1i
Unseen University Student (Male, Magery), Bed and Board + $50	IQ	1d/accident
Average Jobs		
Alchemist* (Alchemy 14+), $60 × skill	PR	1d/accident
Clerk (Full Literacy, Administration 13+), $500	IQ	-1i/-1i,LJ
Cook (Cooking 14+), $40 × skill	PR	-2i/LJ
Craftsman (any Craft skill 14+), $80 × skill	PR-1	-1i/-2i
Gambler* (Fast-Talk, Gambling, and Streetwise totalling 30+), $50 × IQ	Worst PR	-2i/2d,-2i
Guild Thief* (Thief skills totalling 60+), $50 × Best Thief skill	IQ	-2i/1d,-3i
Highwayman* (One missile weapon at 12+, Riding 14+, Bard 8+), $350	IQ or Bard	-2i/2d,-3i

Magician (DX 10+, Thaumatology 10+), $200	IQ-2	-1i/accident
Mercenary (3 combat skills 14+), $750	Best PR	3d/4d
Sailor (Seamanship 14+), $300	PR	1d/2d
Schoolteacher (Fully Literate, Teaching 13+), $500	PR	-1i
Shopkeeper* (Merchant 13+, $1,000 stock), $80 × skill	PR-1	-1i/bankrupt
Smallholder (Own Land, Agronomy 11+), $700	PR	-1i/1d,-3i
Travelling Peddler* (Merchant 14+, $200 stock), $50 × skill	PR	-1i/bankrupt
Unseen University Graduate (Magery, Thaumatology 14+), Bed and Board + $100	PR	1d/LJ
Village Witch (Witch training, own cottage, Psychology 10+), $50 × Psychology	IQ	1d/1d,-1i
Wandering Priest* (Clerical Investment, Bard 13+), $400	HT	-1i/1d,-1i
Watchman (Intimidation, Streetwise, and combat skills totalling 40+), $700***	Best PR	2d/4d
Comfortable Jobs		
Assassin* (Status 1+, and Combat skills, Poison and Savoir-Faire totalling 70+), $800	IQ-1	-2i/3d,-3i
Court Official (Savoir-Faire 15+, Administration 13+), $100 × Savoir-Faire	Worst PR	-2i/intrigue
Military Officer (Weapon skills, Strategy, and Tactics totalling 60+), Rank × $800	Strategy	-2i/1d,-4i
Innkeeper/Landlord* (Own Establishment, Merchant 13+), $1,000	IQ-1	-1i/-4i
Master Craftsman* (any Craft skill and Politics totalling 30+), $1,500	Worst PR	-2i/-4i
Master Merchant* (Merchant 16+, $2,000 stock), $100 × skill	PR	-2i/bankrupt
Priest (Clerical Investment, plus Bard, Politics, or Theology totalling 25+), $500 × Clerical Rank	Best PR-2	-1i/-2i
Rich Farmer* (Own Farm, Agronomy 12+, Merchant 11+), $1,500	Worst PR	-1i/-3i
Ship-Captain* (Navigation 13+,Shiphandling 14+), $120 × best PR	Worst PR	-1i/2d,-3i
Small-Town Wizard* (25 different spells,Local Reputation +2), $800	IQ	-2i/1d,-3i
Stone Circle Engineer (Programming: Stone Circle 15+), $800	PR	-1i/1d,-1i
Unseen University Faculty (Male, 25 different spells, Tenure), Bed and Board + $200	Administration or IQ	1d/accident
Wealthy Jobs		
High Priest (Clerical Investment Rank 4+, Bard, Politics, or Theology totalling 35+), $2,500+	IQ-1	-2i/intrigue
Mad Wizard* (30 different spells, own tower), $1,500 × Magery	IQ-2	2d/accident
Noble Hanger-On (Status 3+), $500 × Status	IQ	-3i/-3i,intrigue
Noble Landowner (Own Estates), $2,000+	Agronomy-1, Leadership-3, or IQ	-1i/-3i
Vizier (Status 4+, Administration 16+, Politics 14+, Savoir-Faire 13+), $3,000+	Worst PR-3	-2i/intrigue

* Freelance Job.

** +2 to roll for a visible Physical Disadvantage (missing limbs, etc.).

*** An Ankh-Morpork Watchman is paid $600, plus $100 living-out allowance for those who don't sleep in their watch-house.

NOTES

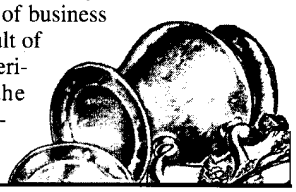
"Bed and Board" means accommodation and general upkeep at a Status Level appropriate to the job; additional income is in the forms of pocket money, surplus allowances, etc., and may be used for entertainment, buying equipment, or self-indulgence.

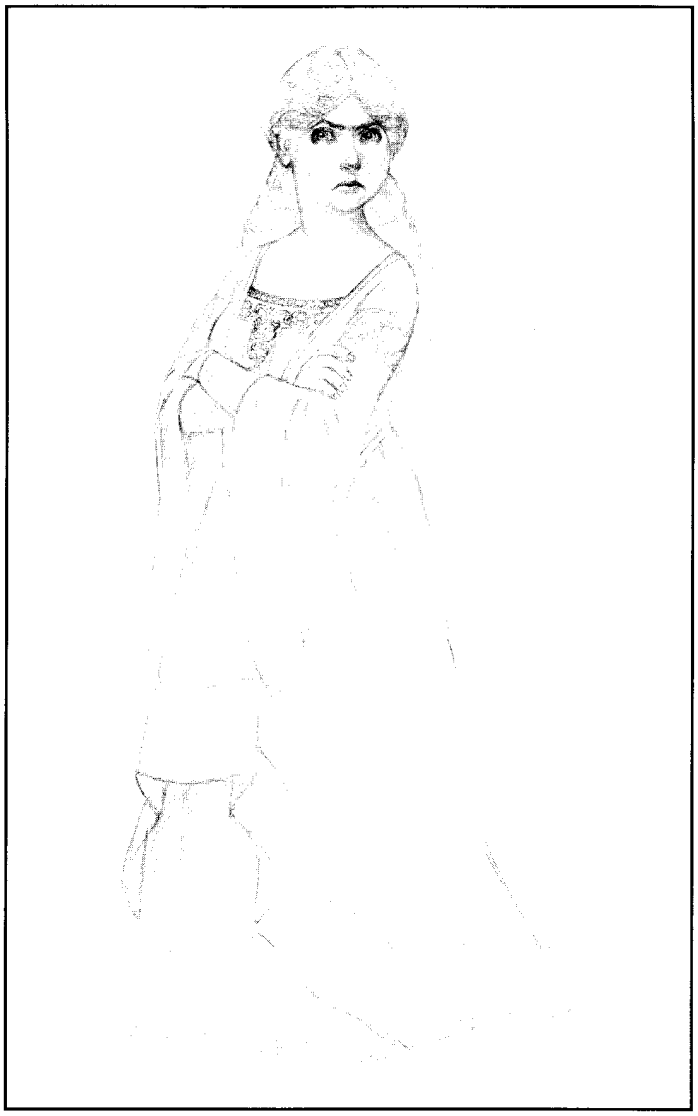
Non-Guild thieves suffer from the attentions of law-enforcers everywhere, and the Thieves' Guild in Ankh-Morpork. Guild Thieves are usually only found in Ankh-Morpork.

Street Mimes cannot operate in Ankh-Morpork.

Abbreviations: PR = Prerequisite; LJ = Lose Job; "d" = dice of damage suffered (the GM may play this out as an adventure); "i" = months' income lost.

An "accident" is something generally spectacular, and always painful, that happens in the course of your work; the GM can get creative here. A result of "bankrupt" means that you lose all your cash and any possessions that you couldn't carry with you while making a midnight flit (Honest characters generally suffer worst, as they hide less), and you cannot carry on many sorts of business in that area in the immediate future. A result of "intrigue" means that you have become seriously and *dangerously* entangled in the secret politics of your region or organisation.





Starting Cash

The Disc is a fairly standard fantasy world from the point of view of character economics, so standard starting wealth is $1,000. GMs may of course modify this for, say, a group that is to consist entirely of Howondaland tribesmen, or a tour party of gold-laden Agatean holidaymakers.

Equipment

The Ancient and Medieval Weapons and Armour (pp. 226-228) and Fantasy/Medieval equipment lists in the ***GURPS*** rules (p. B212) are applicable to the Discworld, with a modicum of common sense. For example, each nation has its own preferences in weaponry and armour; trying to acquire plate armour in the hot lands rimwards of the Circle Sea, or anything more sophisticated than farming implements in Lancre, will gain a character little but odd looks. Fencing weapons are likely to be rare, unless the character can afford to buy from a high-class armourer who makes blades for aristocrats. Most standard equipment is constructed at TL3, although TL4 handicrafts (including some quite advanced clockwork) are available in large cities such as Ankh-Morpork at double cost.

There are also magical devices containing captive Imps; see p. 128 for details.

Sample Characters

Hunchbroad Modoscousin,

Dwarf Thaumaturgist

Age 54, 3'11", 150 lbs.; dark hair and grey eyes.
ST: 12* [-] **IQ:** 12 [20] **Speed:** 6
DX: 12 [20] **HT:** 12* [10] **Move:** 4
Damage: *Thrust* 1d-1; *Swing* 1d+2
Dodge: 4 **Block:** 6 (buckler) **Parry:** 7 (axe – must ready)
Winter Clothing, Cloth and Chainmail Body Armour, Pot Helm, Leather Gloves, Sollerets; Medium Encumbrance.
Point Total: 100

Advantages

Dwarf Package with Dwarfish Greed (see p. 68) [20]
Contact: Modo the Gardener – effective skill (knowledge of Unseen University layout and recent history) 12, available fairly often, completely reliable [3]
Patron: Group of wizards – reasonably powerful, aid fairly often [15]
Toughness: increase total DR to 2 [10]
Disease Resistance [5]
Fully Literate [5]

Disadvantages

Dependent: Random 50 pt. Close Family Member on 9- [-12]
Duty: to employing wizards, quite often [-10]
Trademark: Always carves his name when and where he completes a job [-5]

Quirks

Secretly regards recent-immigrant dwarfs as hicks [-1]
Works through multiple tasks in alphabetical order [-1]

Skills

Alchemy (Discworld)-9 [½*]; Archaeology-9 [½]; Axe/Mace-14 [6*]; Blacksmith-12 [½*]; Brawling-11 [½];

Buckler-12 [1]; Engineer (Primitive Machines)-12 [1*]; Geology-12 [1*]; Mechanic (Wagons)-12 [½*]; Metallurgy-12 [1*]; Naturalist-10 [1]; Prospecting-13 [1*]; Riding (Mule)-10 [½]; Scrounging-12 [1]; Throwing-12 [4].

Languages

Ankhian-11 [1]; Dwarfish-12 (native).

Weapons

Throwing Axes, 1d+4 cutting; Pick, 1d+3 impaling; Large Knife, 1d cutting, 1d-1 impaling.

Possessions

2 Throwing Axes; Pick; Large Knife; Buckler; Pot Helm; Middle-Class Winter Clothing; Cloth and Chain Mail Torso Armour; Leather Gloves; Sollerets; Small Backpack containing Personal Basics and Whetstone; Small Pouch containing $45 in loose change.

* Note bonuses, etc., from Dwarf racial package.

Hunchbroad Modoscousin is a member of a dwarf clan that has long been settled in Ankh-Morpork; in fact, he and many of his family regard the majority of first and second generation immigrant dwarfs with concealed disdain, as brash newcomers. They fill all sorts of artisan roles around the city, and few of them get fighting drunk more than four times a week. Hunchbroad is very loyal to his family, and often finds himself being asked to assist some close relative, but he somehow never seemed suited to join any of their businesses.

Hunchbroad is cousin to the gardener at Unseen University, but perhaps the biggest mistake that the family sometimes makes is attempting to trade on this. When Hunchbroad came of age, for example, they asked Modo to try and get him a good job.

Modo is not very good at social skills, but he did manage to speak briefly with one or two random passing wizards. Following a series of misunderstandings, Hunchbroad did get a job; whether it can be called "good" is another matter. He has become a thaumaturgist, employed on a group basis by a number of research wizards at the university.

Although this is, of course, a moderately high-risk occupation, Hunchbroad is making a decent job of it. The shrewder wizards even realise that a dwarf can be best employed searching for exotic minerals, although he may also find himself sent after plants, animals, and abstract concepts; they find him useful enough that they *may* look after him. Hunchbroad has learned the basics of a range of skills, and carries weapons that can double as tools (a miner's pick, a substantial and serviceable knife, and so on) but when all else fails (not infrequently), he trusts to old-fashioned dwarfish axe-work.

Hunchbroad has decided, dwarfishly, to take pride in his employment, come what may. Given that some of it is rather un-dwarfish, however, he feels that he must go out of his way to make his mark, and he does so in a literal-minded way; he *always* carves his name on or near the place he finds the thing he is looking for.

Jemzarkiza of Krull,

Chelonologist and Female Foreign Wizard

Age 28, 5' 7", 140 lbs.; Silver hair and grey eyes.
ST: 10 [-] **IQ:** 17 [100] **Speed:** 6.5
DX: 13 [30] **HT:** 13 [30] **Move:** 6
Damage: *Thrust* 1d-2; *Swing* 1d.
Dodge: 6 **Parry:** 6 (Knife, at -1 for size)
No Armour; No Encumbrance.
Point Total: 250

Advantages

Animal Empathy [5]
Appearance (Attractive) [5]
Disease-Resistant [5]
Full Literacy [5]
Lightning Calculator [5]
Magery +3 [35]
Reputation: Exotic Enchantress – +2 from xenophiles, anyone interested in strange magic, and those who think they are story-book villains (small group) [3]
Status +1 (acknowledged spell-caster) [5]

Disadvantages

Odious Personal Habit: Terse, Doesn't explain herself much [-5]
Mild Acrophobia [-10]
Moderately Curious [-5]
Reputation: Sinister Enchantress, -2 from would-be heroes and serious xenophobes (small group) [-3]
Social Stigma: Overdressed Foreigner [-10]

Quirks

Aquatic reptiles fan (prefers little ones) [-1]
Considers herself a civilized traveller in barbarian lands [-1]
Carries a small pet turtle in her luggage [-1]
Drinks in Biers to get some peace [-1]
Loves academic argument, to the point of forgetting herself and becoming voluble [-1]

Skills

Alchemy (Discworld)-14 [½]; Animal Handling-19* [1]; Astrozoology-15 [1]; Fishing-16 [½]; Knife-14 [2]; Naturalist-16 [2]; Navigation/TL3-14 [½]; Philosophy-16 [2]; Research-17 [2]; Savoir-Faire (Krullian)-19 (from Status); Seamanship-16 [½]; Spell Throwing (Ball)-14 [2]; Thaumatology-17* [2]; Veterinary/TL3-17* [½]; Zoology-16 [2].

* Includes bonuses from Animal Empathy and Magery.

Spells

Beast-Soother-18 [1]; Reptile Control-19 [2]; Mammal Control-18 [1]; Sense Life-18 [1]; Sense Foes-19 [2]; Ignite Fire-18 [1]; Create Fire-18 [1]; Shape Fire-18 [1]; Heat-18 [1]; Cold-18 [1]; Fireball-18 [1]; Seek Water-18 [1]; Purify Water-18 [1]; Staff-18 [1]; Englebert's Enhancer-18 [1]; Spolt's Forthright Respirator-18 [1]; Divination/Scrying-18 [1]; Divination/Sortilage-18 [1]; Light-18 [1]; Continual Light-18 [1]; Flash-19 [2]; Octagram-18 [1]; Fear-19 [2]; Sense Emotion-18 [1]; Foolishness-18 [1]; Daze-20 [4]; Mass Daze-20 [4]; Sleep-18 [1]; Delusion-18 [1]; Rite of AshkEnte-18 [1].

Languages

Ankhian-17 (native); Klatchian-15 [½]; Ancient Eeish-15 [½]; Tsortean-15 [½].

Weapons

Fine Large Knife, 1d-1 cutting, 1d-1 impaling.

Possessions

Fine-Quality Large Knife; Upper-Class Clothing; Shoes; Small Pouch containing $45 in loose change. Scrying Mirror, Spare Middle-Class Clothing, and Personal Travel Basics in rented rooms.

Wizard's staff.

Jemzarkiza is a slim, healthy woman who dresses in good-quality but practical dark clothing, and carries a slender ebony staff embellished with silver. She has the unique Krullian skin and hair colour.

Jemzarkiza is in many ways a typical upper-class Krullian; clever, somewhat arrogant, magically adept, and driven by a burning academic curiosity with little concern for practicality. Her talents also include a knack with figures, and a broad range of minor skills (note that she has many good defaults). However, in other ways, she is atypical, and suffers from the worst fate for her kind; her pet subject is academically unfashionable.

Specifically, she is interested in turtles. Not Great A'Tuin, not the theoretical topic of other star-turtles, just the ordinary shelled, beaked things that swim in the rivers and seas of the Disc. (She even prefers small river species to the big ocean-going types.) It all started when she made a brief study of Astrozoology, and was shown some of these creatures to illustrate a theoretical point. She became fascinated, and never completed the course. Any possible move into astrozoology on her part was further stymied by her fear of heights, which makes looking over the Rim quite out of the question. She is actually very good with animals, finding them less ludicrous than most of her fellow human beings.

Unfortunately, every turtle in the academic halls of Krull is reserved for comparative study by the astrozoologists, who also control virtually all the other resources. Jemzarkiza, a competent practical wizard and all-round natural philosopher, found herself despised for her "crankish obsessions." Eventually, she grew sick of this, and decided that there must be *somewhere* where people had their priorities better organised. She took passage on one of the few foreign ships permitted to trade in Krull's ports, and made her way on a series of vessels to the Circle Sea region. She found work as a freelance wizard where she could; she also paid attention to the handling of the ships she was on, and learned something of life at sea. She has recently arrived in Ankh-Morpork.

But, as a foreigner who claims to be a wizard despite being female, she has some difficulty being taken seriously in the city. She is far from stupid, and having anticipated trouble when travelling in what Krullians consider barbarian lands, she made a point of refining her skill with a few spells that are quite adequate to keep minor assailants off her neck, plus a knife for special emergencies. What she did not anticipate was the nature of her worst problem.

This concerns her *image*. Everyone in Ankh-Morpork has deduced that she is some kind of exotic foreign enchantress, and she is good-looking enough, in an quiet but exotic sort of way, for the stories to insist that she has an unearthly beauty that drives men mad. So, as well as wizards viewing her with disdain, she has rising thieves feeling that their Greatest Challenge is to plunder her baggage, and would-be barbarian heroes certain that their Destiny is either to battle her Evil Machinations across a dozen novel-length adventures, or to form some kind of brawn-and-brains partnership with her. She, meanwhile, is trying to get a job in the Patrician's small private menagerie, while earning cash lending magical advice to alchemists and doctors who have fallen out with Unseen University (and *that's* proving more exciting than she really likes). This conceptual clash has already reached the stage that the only place she can get a quiet drink is in Biers.

NON-HUMANS ON THE DISC

As readers may have noticed by now, the Disc is dominated by humans.

At this point, it is traditional to launch into an explanation of how, despite the fact that we are smaller, squidgier, less magical, or less good at mining than other races, we have a crucial edge of some kind – a willingness to kill, say, or determination, or the ability to co-operate, or the favour of the gods, or just the ability to out-breed everyone else. But the *important* point is actually that these stories and games are created by human beings, for human beings. Perhaps there are worlds dominated by Yeti, somewhere in the multiverse, where they tell tales of the uncanny humans who live down in those sinister warm valleys; there is certainly a disc, in the same universe as *the* Discworld, where sea-trolls rule. But reading or playing games in those wouldn't be the same.

But the Disc does run to a few other races, with whom it is useful to be acquainted.

The racial packages given below often include Mental Disadvantages that are a product of culture and upbringing rather than biology. This is justified by the fact that non-human cultures are strong and old-established on the Disc; however, non-humans PCs can usually buy such things off with points, although this can get them a strange name, and possibly a negative Reputation, among others of their race.

The Mortal Races

These are "natural" creatures in Discworld terms; they probably evolved, *here,* and they fit within local systems of biology. They could probably all survive in no-mana zones, although hard-nosed biologists would want an explanation.

Dwarfs

A humanoid race, stockily built, averaging about four feet tall. The normal dwarf life-span is about 300 years. Their natural affinity is to live among mountains, especially under them. They also have a natural aptitude for mechanical engineering, particularly building things (and sometimes blowing them up). In fact, almost the entire race has a constructive obsession with metals and minerals of all kinds, coupled with an obsessive attention to detail. However, they are biologically close to humanity; dwarf-human marriage and offspring are all but unknown, but not impossible.

Dwarfs of both sexes have beards, of which they are very proud. They also generally wear multiple layers of clothing – up to a dozen – which, combined with their naturally broad build, can make them look like walking barrels. The layers often include an under-vest of the wool of Ramtops sheep. Other dwarfs wear metal next to the skin; those of delicate sensitivities favour silver underwear if they can afford it. They also usually wear iron-shod boots, or even solid iron footwear, and helmets.

In game terms, all dwarfs should wear the equivalent of winter clothing, at minimum, along with either metal-reinforced boots ($110, treated as ordinary boots but provide extra protection at GM's option) or Sollerets. Many wear enough thick layers to count as cloth armour for purposes of cost and protection, or simply chainmail everywhere; most wear pot-helms, even indoors. Any who wear lighter garb than this will be commented on even by humans, and most other dwarfs will react to them at -1.

All this makes it impossible for anyone without super-human senses, even another dwarf, to tell what gender a dwarf is. Dwarfs don't worry about this, beyond considering it a private matter; older dwarf dialects don't even include feminine pronouns. They consider other races strange, rather than anything else, for publicly admitting to gender – but then, they find other races strange in many ways. Dwarf courtship is a lengthy and delicate process, mainly devoted to finding out the other dwarf's sex. They would usually prefer to think about geology, engineering, or hydrology. They reach puberty at about fifty-five, and are not usually told the facts of life until then.

The other significant dwarf psychological feature is an urge to literal-mindedness, far stronger than routine Disc-human literalism; beings who mostly work in mines, with pit-props and heavy machinery, naturally favour unambiguous communication. This is reflected in the "Literal-Minded" disadvantage (see p. 56).

Large dwarf communities always have a "king," though the dwarfish term ("dezka-knik") translates better as "Chief Mining Engineer." When someone says "I am King of the Dwarfs," he means that he is king of these particular dwarfs, not those in the next excavation up the valley. Their society works more like a set of efficient industrial companies than any human monarchy. The down-side is that the "king" usually cares more about the state of the mine than the well-being of his subjects, but other dwarfs understand this perfectly well.[1]

However, dwarfs are only like this – quiet, obedient, and well-behaved – among themselves. When they leave for other areas, such as Ankh-Morpork, they show a tendency to adopt a name that sounds more like a series of threats, wear armour at all times, carry weapons (usually large axes, though mattocks, flails, and adjustable wrench-

[1] *Dwarfs are a renewable resource; a good vein of ore is irreplaceable.*

es are also popular), drink too much, and erupt into violence at the drop of an iron helmet. Sensible watchmen class dwarf bars as extraterritorial, although the modern Ankh-Morpork Watch has enough high-mindedness and dwarf members to keep some kind of control. The trouble is that getting away from home gives a dwarf the excuse to get a few decades of frustration off his chest, coupled with a commonplace expatriate tendency to play up distinctive cultural features.

Dwarf culture is not complex to human eyes, although dwarfs would argue. They have songs that play every possible variation on the word "gold," and they are very proud of their culinary tradition – especially their bread (with its high mineral content), which can double as a weapon. They like eating rat, a taste which entrepreneurs of other races are happy to service.

Dwarfs vs. Trolls

Trolls and dwarfs have a mutual enmity that seems to have originated about eight or nine minutes after the creation of the universe. Dwarfs call trolls "rocks," and trolls call dwarfs "gritsuckers," and neither word could be printed if this book was politically correct and members of either species were reading it. There have been several attempts to explain this hostility in rational terms, as if it were the disease of the week on a television doctor show, but the major problem is in fact fairly simple.

To start with, both races are mountain-dwellers, and there's only so much vertical real estate. Even if the dwarfs (for instance) are persuaded to take their operations somewhere else (a situation known in trollish as "We Got Bigger Rocks"), there are probably some trolls over there as well.

Also, dwarfish mining activities often lead them into direct contact with trolls, specifically trolls who have settled down to Think and become one with the countryside. Discovering that one of your relatives has been used to resurface a highway is one of the few things that is hard for a troll to swallow. The dwarfish saying, "The only good troll is one that's architecturally sound" doesn't help matters. For their part, trolls are rarely careful of dwarfish constructions that might get in their way. (Troll joke: "What difference between dwarf and hole in ground? Me.")

But frankly, that's history – an explanation, not a *reason.* Trolls and dwarfs no longer need reasons to fight each other. There are far too many past offences to dredge up, and both races are long-lived, with excellent memories. One of the favourite topics for renewed debate is the Battle of Koom Valley, one of the few events in military history where both sides ambushed each other. Anyone who thinks that the dwarf/troll conflict will be solved by sweet reason has stumbled in from some other fantasy series. It goes on because, well, it always has gone on.

Hence, in game terms, each race has Intolerance towards the other. This can be reduced to a quirk, bought off, or perhaps replaced by a negative Reputation among one's own species ("rock-lover"/"troll who talk to gritsuckers"), but it is the standard. If a PC party includes members of both races, they will probably *have* to reduce it somehow; non-stop squabbling and surreptitious ankle-kicking is funny for a while, but . . . There are examples of dwarf-troll friendships and, classically, these tend to be strong. (Dwarfs and trolls get along fine in the Ankh-Morpork Watch, but if Completely Mismatched Police Partners Didn't Learn To Respect Each Other Eventually, then the narrative universe as we know it would come to an end.)

Dwarfs in Play

Dwarf PCs: Dwarfs are common on the Disc, and should not be a great problem to depict. A PC is likely to be a voluntary expatriate, and so may have disadvantages such as Alcoholism, Bad Temper, Berserk, or Compulsive Carousing, but none of this is mandatory, and some of the most interesting dwarfs are those who have got rid of some of their racial features.

Dwarf NPCs: Dwarfs will usually have the standard package, with one or two attributes shifted a point or so either way. Urban dwarfs will usually have high skill in a profitable craft (and very likely high Axe/Mace, Brawling, and a minor drink problem); their backwoods cousins will have good ratings in Prospecting or Engineering (Mining). There are many reasons why a dwarf may acquire high combat skills.

"Calling a dwarf a 'lawn ornament' in a human language is also a fight-starter, but the dwarfish version works best."

Dwarfs and Magic: Dwarfs do not seem to learn spells very often, if at all, but their skill in craftsmanship definitely extends into the realm of magical artefacts. In game-mechanical terms, they cannot generally have Magery, but they might still learn a few Enchantment spells; a few might even run to One College Magery (p. CI39) restricted to Enchantments. They can certainly learn Engineer/Magical skill, and apply their racial bonus to it.

Dwarfish Sayings and Battle-Cries

The dwarfish language is generally *spoken* only among dwarfs, but it is often shouted, snarled, or declaimed in mixed company. Thus, a few common expressions may be of interest:

aaDb'thuk?: Literally "All correctly beamed and propped?" – the dwarf equivalent of "Okay?"

B'zugda-hiara: Literally, "Lawn Ornament." A deadly insult among dwarfs; it can be used as a term of endearment, but the speaker must be *very* certain of the dwarf's affection. (Calling a dwarf a "lawn ornament" in a human language is also a fight-starter, but the dwarfish version works best.)

Gr'duzk: "Good day."

G'hruk, t'uk: "Evening all" – a friendly farewell to a group.

T'dr'duzk b'hazg t't: "Today Is A Good Day For Someone Else To Die." The most menacing dwarf battle-cry of all; once it has been shouted, someone *must* be killed.

Dwarf Character Package

Dwarfs have ST +2, with the Limitations *No Jumping Bonus* (-5%) and *Doesn't Affect Skill Defaults* (-5%), for a net cost of 18 points. (Unlike some races with enhanced strength, they *do* have better endurance.) They also have +1 HT (10 points), +1 Damage Resistance (3 points) and two levels of Extended Lifespan (10 points). They all know Axe/Mace skill at DX level (2 points) or better, and have racial skill bonus of +2 with any skill that routinely involves crafting with or studying metals, including Armoury, Blacksmith, Jeweller, Mechanic, Engineer, Geology, Metallurgy, and Prospecting (12 points).

Dwarf racial disadvantages are Greed *or* Dwarfish Greed (see below: -15 points), Intolerance of Trolls (-5 points), and Literal-Minded (-10 points). Their racial quirks are Aggressive When Drunk (-1 point), Proud of Beards (-1 point), Like Wearing Metal (-1 point), Consider Dwarf Gender a Private Matter (-1 point), and Can't Run Long Distances (see below; -1 point).

It costs 20 points to play a dwarf. Some additional notes:

1. To improve DR above the 1 included in the above package, a dwarf must buy Toughness at the same rate as for humans (10 points for another +1, 25 for +2).

2. Discworld dwarfs do *not* suffer from a reduced Move rate. They may have short legs, but they are also notably well-muscled; sheer strength gives them startling acceleration. They cannot necessarily keep such speed up for long distances (although they can *march* all day); roll vs. HT to avoid fatigue for every 50 yards a dwarf runs, not every 100.

3. All dwarfs are native speakers of dwarfish. Dwarf PCs are recommended to learn at least one human language, but this isn't automatic.

4. Typical dwarfs are 2 feet shorter than a human of the same ST, but weigh only 10 lbs. less than a human of the unmodified height.

Special Disadvantage: Greed (Dwarfish)-15 points

Dwarfs are, sadly, a greedy species. Some suffer from Greed as defined on p. B33, but many more have a racial variation on this flaw. A combination of literal-mindedness and a racial affinity for minerals makes them peculiarly obsessed with *gold.*

Someone who suffers from Dwarfish Greed is more interested in getting hold of gold coins or nuggets than other forms of negotiable assets (although silver has its charms), and may be distracted by a direct offer of gold from a more profitable opportunity that would pay in, say, bearer bonds. This Disadvantage also incorporates an element of Miserliness; the character will be *very* unwilling to hand any gold over to anyone else, although really serious danger to life and limb, or a fair crack at greater profits, can be persuasive.

No-one may take both ordinary and Dwarfish Greed; the two overlap too much. And a character with Dwarfish Greed only receives -5 points for also taking Miserliness, as there is a marked overlap there, too.[1]

[1] *But it's not true that dwarfs love gold. They just say that to get it into bed.*

Goblins (and Gnomes)

Gnomes and goblins are the same species; a gnome is simply a goblin who chooses to live underground. They are the Disc's smallest humanoid race, and in consequence, its most reclusive; many humans believe them to be extinct, although one or two have shown up in Ankh-Morpork recently.

They range from 4" to 2' tall, tending to the lower end of that scale, and like most creatures of such a size, they tend to be quick on their feet and good at hiding. They have little culture of their own, beyond a fondness for setting up house in large mushrooms, which they outfit with windows and chimneys. (Though for all anyone knows, there could be whole hidden goblin cities in distant corners of the Disc.) They are basically hunter-gatherers, a lifestyle that has adapted well to human cities (even if that which is gathered there may already have an owner). They mostly speak Ankhian. No goblin has been known to use magic.

They are an easy-going race, in a slightly irascible way, and some have discovered the advantages of dealing with humans commercially; there are many job best done by tiny fingers, and a small payment from the human can convert to a lot of food or drink for the gnome. Some have been enslaved by humans, but this looks like terrible bullying, and other humans of a sentimental bent will often side with the small creatures if the situation becomes publicly known.

Gnomes usually make their own clothes, out of ratskin or similar, and thus end up looking rather shabby and sordid; this sort of goblin outfit has a nominal value of $1-$10. If they really wanted to dress up, and could stand the humiliation, they could acquire superior dolls' clothes, or have something similar made up from a human tailor's scraps box; this would cost about $5-$20. Armour is not feasible for a creature this size; however, gnomes are physically very tough and can even survive being trodden on, and may well wreak a serious knee-bashing on the treader.

Goblins in Play

Goblin/Gnome PCs: Members of this species are rare in the human-dominated world, and should be played with a certain game-level caution; even one as tough as Wee Mad Arthur (see *Feet of Clay*) might have a difficult time of it in certain activities (and a lot of advantages at other times). However, for players who want a practical challenge and some interesting moments, this race could make an interesting option.

Goblin NPCs: Rustic goblins usually buy up their Camouflage, Stealth, and Survival, and carry a small weapon (equivalent to a dagger) with which they are competent. They also usually have good Naturalist and Area Knowledge skills, enabling them to avoid most trouble. Urban goblins have skills appropriate to their chosen or enforced way of making a living, from Performance through espionage to pest control.

Goblin Character Package

Goblins/gnomes have -6 ST (-50 points), +2 DX (20 points), +6 Fatigue (18 points), Decreased Life Support (10 points), and +1 Passive Defence (25 points). They also have +3 to Camouflage (2 points) and +1 to Stealth (1 point). Their disadvantages are -6 Hit Points (-30 points), Inconvenient Size (-15 points), two levels of Reduced Move (-10 points), and Short Arms (-10 points), and they have the racial quirk of Mild Paranoia (-1 point).

Playing a goblin is a -40 point disadvantage. Those under 12" tall can take an additional +1 Passive Defence (+25 points), simply by virtue of being hard to hit. They can also buy their Reduced Move up or down one level (+/-5 points); some of them are quick on their feet, but those feet *are* on short legs.

Note that gnomes are immensely strong for their size, and there is nothing to stop them buying their ST back up to near-human levels. Irate, heroic gnomes have been known to overthrow human opponents.

Goblin Size: This race's size is not particularly correlated to their physical strength; some of the toughest individuals are also among the smallest. Players are welcome to decide on whatever height suits them best, and should then determine a suitable weight to match, from a pound or so for the smallest individuals up to six or seven, or perhaps even ten for a large and stocky goblin.

"Troll culture is based on rocks in general, and hitting people with them in particular."

Trolls and their Ilk

Trolls are something between a logical piece of xenobiology (silicon-based life) and a figure of speech run amok (rocks who get up and walk). They are an earthy, stolid species, albeit with some quirks.

Being based on silicon, they are immensely strong and robust; they sometimes seem slow, but in fact they can move with the speed as well as the force of an avalanche, and very little can slow them down. They are generally regarded as stupid by other races, with some reason, but the situation is actually a little more complex than that. The truth is that a troll brain works best at low temperatures (see p. 75), so that in the cold mountain areas which are their natural environment, they are no more than moderately unintelligent. But when a troll has the bright idea of migrating to the big city, he or she generally ends up in a situation where, for practical purposes, he just isn't so bright any more.

Not that being a little dimmer really reduces their urban survival ability. They are usually employed as doormen, bouncers, enforcers, or in other professions where brute force and ignorance are virtues, and human cities are full of people who are willing to overcome a little species prejudice in the interests of having a walking rock on the payroll. This in turn has generated a market for troll food and entertainment.

Troll culture is based on rocks in general, and hitting people with them in particular. "People" definitely includes trolls; indeed, trolls hit other trolls even more than they hit other races. One troll hitting another with a rock may represent a fight, a business transaction, a casual greeting, or romantic attraction.[1] Troll music is percussive. Trolls might class as Primitive, except that they grasp the important aspects of new technology quickly enough. (That is, important from their point of view – whether you can hit things with it.)

Trolls' reputation for brutality is somewhat unfair. They are capable of loyalty, affection, and even a degree of altruism. They *can* be reasoned with, using words of one syllable. However, they are direct, and they do hit things a lot, which tends to lead them too easily into work that would count as illegal if Ankh-Morpork had more active laws. A truly evil troll is little troubled by conscience.[2]

[1] *In the last case, the male troll will select a very nice rock, some opal matrix, say, or something with pretty red-quartz inclusions.*

[2] *Unless required to spell it.*

Trolls usually eat and drink mineral-based substances, and it is generally thought that they cannot actually obtain any nutrition from carbon-based foodstuffs, and that they therefore only persist in eating people and dwarfs and raiding hen-houses out of bloody-mindedness, or because they know it annoys their racial enemies. Certainly, they quickly give such habits up in areas where it would be dangerously tactless. On the other hand, even trolls might not have carried on a *completely* pointless tradition at quite such length; their high-mountain cousins, the yeti, still act that way, and gargoyles, another troll variant, seem to live on organic matter filtered out of gutters, and the occasional pigeon. So perhaps the trollish digestion and metabolism can do something with carbon-based organics after all.

Troll teeth, which have to deal with solid rock, are diamonds. This is the sort of datum which causes certain old-fashioned roleplayers to look thoughtful, and there is no escaping the fact that these diamonds are worth good money. However, there are logical reasons for humans to refrain from mouth-plundering. To begin with, of course, trolls are tough opponents, and hard to render helpless with their mouths open. For another, it is safe to assume that a troll tooth is easily recognisable, at least until carefully cut. Even if the PCs wish to walk around with this sort of thing in their pockets, the odds are that most human jewellers will take one look, break out in a cold sweat, and refuse the deal. And for that matter, with so many such stones potentially in circulation, the grade of diamond found in troll mouths is probably not worth very much.

Which said, a troll who really wants *can* extract one of its *own* teeth; this requires a Will roll, but trolls hit themselves almost as often as they hit other people. In *Soul Music,* a troll tooth raises the equivalent of $300, although it is probably worth far more.

And incidentally, a few troll gang bosses wear diamond jewellery. This marks them out, very clearly, as Not Nice People, even by troll standards.

Troll leadership is based on who, at the moment of decision, has the biggest rock. This can lead to difficulties for trolls in more civilised areas, where politics has advanced to who can establish the reputation of having the biggest rock, or is willing to provide employment to the largest number of subordinate rock-wielders.[1] Trolls in Ankh-Morpork occasionally have to be reassured that the Patrician really does have a rock . . . sometimes, in the classic manner, by being told that the rock is right there, but only the cleverest and most worthy can see it.

Trolls mostly dress in a few rags, if at all. A complete outfit for a troll rarely costs more than $5, and $2 is quite adequate. Armour costs them at least 50% extra, if they bother at all. Trolls name themselves after types of rock, geological feature or similar; females favour gemstone names. Trolls with low status in troll society are sometimes referred to as "sedimentary," and may be rather soft and weak by troll standards (there is some evidence that this is genetic, and that troll physiology can resemble different grades of rock); these individuals may have names to match, such as "Chalk" or "Shale."

[1] *"Landslide victory" is one of the few human political concepts that translates directly to trollish.*

Gnolls

These are, simply, a variety of troll, of an especially dull-witted kind. They can be treated as ordinary trolls, except that even other trolls may be disparaging about them. They definitely seem to be able to digest organic material, and are now to be found employed, dragging badly-made carts, as street cleaners in Ankh-Morpork. (In ***GURPS*** terms, they have the Cast Iron Stomach Advantage.) Unusually for Discworld trolls, they grow an enormous thatch of hair, which is invariably so matted that its owner looks like a shambling compost heap.

Yeti

These are high-mountain trolls who are well adapted to life above the snowline, and specifically to jumping out of snowdrifts onto people or goats. They can be treated as normal trolls, but a combination of light coloration and lots of practice means that they usually have Camouflage skill around 15. Also, because they have Troll Brains (see p. 75) and live in very cold environments, they display a mean cunning that might surprise someone used to urban trolls.

Gargoyles

An example of high-speed Disc evolution in action, gargoyles are a type of troll that has developed a symbiotic relationship with architecture. They are filter-feeders; they sit around on building ledges, funnelling water from gutters through their ears and out through fine sieves in their mouths. They occasionally augment this diet with a passing pigeon, although birds and bats have mostly learnt to avoid them. They are immensely patient; some do not move for years. They are usually quite amiable, but hard to talk to, as their mouths cannot close properly. They have names reflecting their lifestyle, such as "Cornice Overlooking Broadway" or "Downspout." Their ability to survive on gutter out-pourings is reflected by Cast Iron Stomach and Decreased Life Support advantages.

Gargoyles are mostly part of the urban scene, but some may roost on atmospheric castles in the Ramtops.

Gargoyles are not very plausible as PCs; even in cases such as Constable Downspout, of the Ankh-Morpork Watch, their main talent and interest is sitting around patiently.

Gargoyles are well settled in cities, and generally know only the human language of their home area.

Trolls in Play

Troll PCs: Obviously, it takes a lot of points to play a troll, but it should not be impossible, even in a 100-point-base campaign; a somewhat under-skilled troll character, with plenty of problems, can be balanced. Of course, it would not be good for *very* much, but it could still be entertaining.

Whatever the points base, remember that trolls are comically dim, but not completely moronic. A troll PC should be the butt of a fair amount of misfortune, but can get its own back when raw strength is needed. However, Discworld games should *not* be about solving every problem with mindless violence; gamers who want to play trolls because of the gross amount of damage they can do should be gently discouraged.[1] Apart from anything else, they will probably react badly to laughs at their troll's expense, which are likely to be frequent.

Troll NPCs: If a Discworld adventure needs an old-fashioned monster, with just enough intelligence to worry a PC group, then a troll can meet the need. If the incident takes place in a cold climate, the PCs may be in for a particularly nasty surprise. However, there is a little more to this race than just hitting people.

Trolls are *the* Discworld symbol of dumb muscle; if a PC group needs to be shown that an NPC is too rich and busy to fight for himself, then that NPC will hire a troll or six. But they are also an interesting race on their own account, with a culture of sorts; to invert the normal pattern of things, for example, a PC party might be hired by a troll entrepreneur to travel to some hot rimward land and acquire some rare minerals, which then have to be shipped back for sale as food in troll communities.

Typically, trolls have their racial package, a few points in combat skills, and just enough knowledge of anything else they need to make a living. However, huge variations in attributes (especially ST) are common. Rural hen-house-raiders may even have some a talent for Stealth and Camouflage.

Trolls and the Supernatural: No troll ever seems to have learned magic, and it really would seem a little perverse to create a troll spell-caster. Trolls do have a mythology, with gods and heroes, although it is not exactly complex; a troll priest is basically a story-teller, with a good throwing-rock or two at hand in case of blasphemous hecklers.

Trolls and Time

Trolls have a peculiar concept of time. When they are cool enough to be philosophical, trolls believe that they are moving through time backward, from the distant demise of the universe toward an end that others think of as birth. Their evidence for this is that they can make out, with some clarity, what the past looks like, but cannot see the future; therefore the past must be in front of them, and the future behind them.

This leads to some odd figures of speech. To add to the fun, trolls speak of the "Sunset of Time" when they mean the beginning. They are, after all, naturally nocturnal creatures.

Troll Equipment

Trolls don't bother with a great deal of technology (except rocks) or clothing, although they do get into the habit of wearing a few scraps of cloth in cities. They often use weapons that were made for humans, although only the largest types; they tend to break bows. If large enough weapons can be arranged, and there is time for training, they can become competent crossbowmen. ("Large enough" means something like heavy siege equipment.) Much equipment intended for troll use costs 50-100% extra (or more), having to be reinforced, over-sized, and often specially made.[2]

Weaponry: Trolls hitting people or things with rocks do punching damage plus a point or two, and use Brawling skill. Trolls have never developed much in the way of an armaments industry; a troll encountered with a polearm or pike will have received or taken it from a human. Trolls are near enough to human-sized to use human weapons, although anything smaller than a heavy axe or broadsword is likely to break in their hands within a few rounds.

Sergeant Detritus

Detritus is a troll's troll. His fundamentally uncomplicated nature suggests that he was born up in the mountains, and came down in search of work. He found it as a splatter at the Mended Drum (p. 99), and later in the short-lived Discworld motion picture industry, when he met a troll singer named Ruby. Love made him determined to improve himself, and he signed up with the City Watch.

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[1] *Point them towards a human barbarian instead.*

[2] *"Troll proof" is like "idiot proof," only with rigid iron bracing.*

"Detritus is not one of nature's detectives, but it is very hard to misdirect him; his physical and mental inertia are too great."

Detritus is not one of nature's detectives, but it is very hard to misdirect him; his physical and mental inertia are too great. He has a trollish immunity to boredom, which makes him good at interrogations. He has even become Semi-Literate. His biggest problem is a tendency to punch himself out when saluting.

He has ST 23, DX 12, IQ 7, and HT 13/17. He has bought off his Intolerance of Dwarfs, and has Area Knowledge (Ankh-Morpork)-10, Brawling-14, Broadsword-13, Crossbow-14, and Polearm-13, plus Ankhian-8 and Trollish-7.

When on duty, he wears a breastplate and carries a large truncheon. If the situation demands, he also carries a crossbow that started life as a siege engine (ST 23, damage 2d+5).

In his quarters, he has a special helmet, made for him by a dwarf. This incorporates a complex mechanism that can cool his brain, giving him a point or two of extra IQ; if he then sits down to think, he can sometimes achieve remarkable results.

Troll or Gnoll Character Package

Trolls have +12 ST with the "Natural" limitation (see p. CI8: 78 points), +2 HT (20 points), -2 IQ (-15 points), +4 Hit Points (20 points), 4 levels of Body of Stone, non-switchable (24 points: gives PD 1, DR 2), +2 Damage Resistance (6 points), one level of Extended Lifespan (5 points), Extra Encumbrance (5 points), High Pain Threshold (10 points), 2 levels of Increased Density (10 points: gives +2 DR vs. crushing damage), Longevity (5 points), Night Vision (10 points), and 4 levels of Temperature Tolerance (4 points; add 3x the troll's HT to the bottom end of its comfort zone, and 1x HT to the upper end – so a typical troll is comfortable from about 0 to 100 degrees, aside from any effects from its Troll Brain). They all know Brawling skill at DX+1 or better (2 points).

Their disadvantages are Fully Illiterate (-5 points), Odious Racial Habit: Hitting People with Rocks (-5 points), Intolerance of Dwarfs (-5 points), Troll Brain (-10 points or more), and Ugly Appearance (-10 points), and they have the racial quirks of Innumerate (-1 point), Put Everything in Terms of Rocks (-1 point), Think that Time Runs Backwards (-1 point), and Regard Brawls as Basic Social Relationship (-1 point).

It costs 145 points to play a troll. Some additional notes:

1. A standard troll has DR 4, and an extra +2 DR vs. crushing damage. They may, with GM permission, buy an additional 2 levels of Body of Stone, non-switchable, for +12 points, representing a particularly granite-like physiology, and giving a further +2 DR. To improve DR above this, buy Toughness at the same rate as for humans (10 points for another +1, 25 for +2).

2. Trolls' "Odious Habit" might seem surprisingly low-valued, especially given that some unreconstructed trolls do still sometimes try eating people, and indeed on most worlds it would be worth -10 or even -15 points. However, some humans have come to see it as "just troll-ish ways," while others are terrorised into politeness by it, so its practical effect on reaction rolls is relatively small.

3. Trolls have their own uncomplicated language; even a troll would probably be unable to use it above skill 13, whatever the situation. Most learn Ankhian for convenience.

4. Trolls have their own ideas about personal attractiveness, but mostly these are very vague, and based on size of rocks used in combat. They disregard all Appearance modifiers when dealing with each other or with other races.

5. Trolls have their own specific diet, based on minerals, which costs about the same as human food; hence this is treated as a "special effect," not as either an advantage or disadvantage. Similarly, silicon-based biology has its own diseases – and also its own poisons. Little that poisons a human is likely to worry a troll, but a smart alchemist or researcher could doubtless come up with something that would work. Admittedly, such knowledge is very rare – but that should make the surprise for troll PCs all the greater when they run into well-prepared opposition.

6. Allegedly, trolls have a vulnerable spot on their necks, which the Assassins' Guild has recently made a point of researching; how vulnerable this is, and how easy to hit, is left up to GMs. Some barbarian heroes may have identified it by trial and error.

Troll Height, Weight, and Encumbrance

Because of their silicon-based biology and non-human build, trolls cannot easily be fitted into the standard ***GURPS*** character height and weight system. (There is a special problem with their Increased Density and Extra Encumbrance.) And just to add to the fun, trolls come in a wide range of shapes and sizes, and size is not always very closely correlated to strength.

So, for simplicity, the following rules should be applied:

1. Any (non-overweight) troll or troll-related character should be treated as carrying exactly 100 lbs. of Encumbrance, in the form of dense body mass, before picking up any equipment or clothes. Thus, given the race's load-carrying ability, a typical ST 22 troll is always at least Lightly Encumbered, and can only carry up to 10 lbs. of weapons or gear before going to Medium Encumbrance. (This sounds harsh, but they do have a reputation for lumbering. And note that a troll can carry a heck of a lot before suffering more than Medium Encumbrance.) Overweight or Fat trolls are very rare (and barely mobile).

2. Base height for a typical (ST 22) troll is 6'6"; base mass is 430 lbs. For every point of ST above or below this base, adjust height by 2" and weight by 15 lbs. (Big, high-ST trolls get *very* big.) Many trolls walk on their knuckles some of the time, and gargoyles usually adopt hunched postures, so apparent height may be rather less than the value given by this formula.

Troll Ageing and Learning

Trolls have an unusual ageing process, represented by their advantages and disadvantages and the following special rules.

First, because of their Extended Lifespan advantage, they (sort of) mature around the age of 36, and start making ageing rolls once every two years at the age of 100,

once per year at the age of 140, and once every six months at the age of 180. And because they also have Longevity, they only fail these rolls on a natural 17 or 18. (In fact, they only really feel the geological clock ticking at 140.)

But because rock doesn't really get much weaker with time, trolls do not have to roll for loss of ST. In fact, many trolls can be assumed to channel most of their experience points into ST, so they keep getting stronger – and each such increase means that the troll gets bigger, in accordance with the guidelines above. A really old troll can get as big as a house. A *really, really* old troll can get *much* bigger.

However, the downside is that IQ can not only go down, but the Troll Brain disadvantage applies. In fact, older trolls don't really lose intelligence; they just think *slower and deeper*. They start pondering the nature of the world around them, the meaning of truth, and other such imponderables. Eventually, their IQ falls to 4 or less, at least for some of the time, and they take to doing nothing but sitting around thinking. At this stage, they basically develop a capacity, latent in the species, for hibernating.

What few Discworld inhabitants realise is how many of their most noteworthy hills are really great philosophers. Every now and again, vast and powerful ideas move slowly through the deep rock . . .

Also; trolls are not big on formal study. In theory, starting troll characters can spend up to twice their age in points on skills, like humans (see p. 222), but in practice, they tend not to. And trolls should not use the Improvement Through Study rules (p. B82) very often, except perhaps when picking up the basics of new skills when starting a new job.

Special Disadvantage: Troll Brain 10/-20 points

This problem is specific to Discworld trolls and related species, and can only be taken as a Racial Disadvantage. It represents the fact that trolls have brains made of silicon and other minerals, which are adapted for activity in very low temperatures, and which in fact operate *best* in conditions which are dangerously cold even for a troll's rock-like physique. Thus, trolls have a reputation for stupidity, while at the same time earning a name for cunning from those who have to deal with them on cold winter nights or high in the mountains. Conversely, they are said to "turn to stone" in daylight; they don't (they are already stone), but on warm days, some of them lose so much brain function that they stop moving.

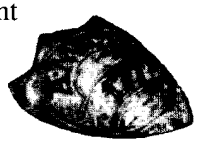
A troll's purchased IQ (adjusted for the racial package) actually represents its intelligence on a typical evening or night in a temperate area such as Ankh-Morpork, or daytime in chilly mountain regions. (Conditions that a human might call "pleasantly cool.") The value goes down as ambient temperatures rise.

In daylight in a fair-to-warm weather, or on a noticeably warm night, a troll loses 1 point of IQ. In conditions that a human would call *hot,* the reduction is -2 ; scorching, tropical heat causes a -3 reduction, while a troll dropped in the Great Nef would take a -5 IQ penalty. Somehow inserting a troll in a bonfire will cause it to turn even more thoroughly stupid. The troll's mental skills are adjusted to reflect its modified IQ.

If a troll's IQ goes to 3 or 4, it can do little more than grunt, and hit back if attacked. It isn't even very good at this, as its DX, and all DX-based physical skills, are reduced by 4. Mostly, trolls in this condition lumber off into a corner and go to sleep. A troll at IQ 2 is running on pure instinct, and can do nothing but move around vaguely at half normal speed until it finds a place to fall over safely. (Most trolls consider falling on top of a human to be perfectly safe, of course.) At IQ 1 or below, a troll locks up and "turns to stone;" old trolls can spend years like this, although at the GM's option, they may respond to extreme provocation, running on the troll equivalent of adrenaline. An IQ 1 troll gets **no** natural DR against heat-based damage, as its nervous system can be injured directly. In theory, a rocky troll should take some minutes to warm up, but in practice, most cease functioning the moment the sun rises; this may be partly a psychosomatic effect. (GMs may allow Will rolls from PC trolls to keep going for a few rounds.)

Heat-based attacks (magical flame, incendiary weapons, and so on) cause trolls to suffer temporary IQ penalties; half the hit points of damage rolled for the attack, for 1D rounds. A salvo of small fireballs can heat a troll into temporary immobility, even if none of them really hurt it. Trolls naturally fear and avoid very bright illumination, and may be repelled by strong light, even if there is no real heat involved.

Balancing all this, trolls can gain some advantages when the temperature is especially cool. Cold winter conditions may give them +1 IQ, sub-zero weather is worth +2, and a howling blizzard could grant +3 or even more. *Serious* cold, as will cause even a troll physical harm, may also raise its IQ, possibly to genius levels. If this happens (say, while a troll is locked in a freezer), it may gain extraordinary insights into its situation, or the nature of the universe. This is left to roleplaying and GM discretion; the burst of advanced intelligence need not grant anything useful, and the troll may not know what to do with it, but this rare event can be a strange sight for nearby PCs.



Creatures of the Night

In casual Discworld usage, the term "undead" encompasses werewolves and all manner of night-loving creatures. Not all such beings are particularly evil or vicious; some, indeed, are quite pleasant when you get to know them. However, most of them do need lots of red meat in their diets, and many have difficulty refraining from staring at people's throats while talking.

Vampires

Discworld vampires come with a variety of power levels and abilities, but they are generally very traditional. (A GM who really wants to get into this subject could acquire a copy of ***GURPS Blood Types*** and work through the range of blood-suckers therein.) On the Sto Plains and in Uberwald, they follow the western "cinematic" tradition; they are physically strong, do not age or show reflections in mirrors, have a healthy range of vulnerabilities and aversions, are nonetheless ridiculously difficult to dispose of permanently, and can either fly or transform into various kinds of animal, usually bats.[1] Their problem with holy things extends to all vaguely credible Disc religions; in theory, they could be crippled on a world where practically everything has been used as a symbol by some deity at some stage, but actually, only an object consciously wielded or used as holy causes them problems. (For character generation purposes, such symbols are treated as being found "occasionally.")

One thing that makes them more acceptable in society is that, although they need blood, it does not have to be human blood, or even to be especially fresh. Many a vampire lives a blameless life on blood puddings and very rare steak. Thus, some have found social niches in professions where longevity and a slightly detached view of humanity are positive assets, as family lawyers, say. On the other hand, there *is* something about vampirism that makes a being take a rather predatory view of people. It's not that Discworld vampires are prone to angst (although some of them do complain interminably about the practical aspects of their lifestyle); it's simply that, after a few centuries of not dying, watching humans grow old, and never taking summer holidays, they are prone to see themselves as other than human, and probably *better.*

Vampirism is mostly spread by powerful vampires with Dominance or Infectious Attack abilities, but they tend to be careful about this (the old finite-food-supply problem). In some cases, it seems to have been inherited, not even necessarily through genetics.[2]

Vampire Character Package

Vampires have +5 ST (60 points), Night Vision (10 points), Sharp Teeth (do cutting damage: 5 points), Vampiric Immortality (60 points), Vampiric Invulnerability (150 points), and Resurrection with limitations: it doesn't activate while the vampire is down with a stake through the heart (-30%), and, if the vampire is reduced to dust or ashes, it doesn't come back until the ashes come into contact with blood (-10%: total 90 points). In addition, they either have Winged Flight (usually swirling a cloak out melodramatically so that it transforms into temporary wings: 30 points) or a version of the Multiple Forms advantage giving the ability to transform into a large bat (5 points: the bat has ST 2, PD 0, DR 0, Winged Flight at a move of 12 with a Dodge of 6 while in flight, the famous bat Sonar Vision, and the vampire's hit points, intellect, aversions, and vulnerabilities).

Standard disadvantages are Dependency on blood in some form (Common), required daily in quantities of a two or three pints (-15 points), Dependency on sleeping every night on the vampire's native soil (treated as Occasional because most Disc vampires seem to define "native" fairly broadly and get by, but arrangements *do* have to be made: -30 points), Dread of Holy Symbols within 3 hexes (-13 points), No Body Heat (-5 points), No Reflection (-10 points), Social Stigma: Undead (-10 points), Vulnerability to wooden cutting or impaling weapons (two levels, Occasional: -20 points), Vulnerability to beheading (one level, Occasional: -10 points), Vulnerability to direct sunlight (three levels, Common: -45 points), Vulnerability to direct contact with garlic (two levels, Occasional: -20 points), Vulnerability to direct contact with holy water (two levels, Very Rare: -6 points) and a Weakness to anything holy in the vicinity, which causes 2d Fatigue per minute (Occasional: -20 points). Vampires also have the quirk of reacting visibly to garlic (-1 point) – they cannot help hissing and spitting at it.

It costs 200 or 175 points to play a vampire of this type; GMs are welcome to juggle with parts of the package in specific cases, and to add any of the many traditional vampiric attributes. Note that these vampires are purchased with standard, not "Vampiric," Resurrection; this represents the bad old cinematic problem that even if you stake

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[1] *Many also have the quirk, "Wears evening dress at all times."*

[2] *Acquiring a big old gothic castle and a title with a lot of consonants in it has a funny effect on some people.*

"Many have difficulty refraining from staring at people's throats while talking."

them out in the sun and crisp them, sooner or later, some poor idiot invariably spills a drop of blood on that grease-spot, and next thing you know . . .

Disc vampires are not as tough as in some fantasy games, but they do *come back* a lot; PCs who take them lightly as enemies could be in for a nasty surprise. (That said, see *Witches Abroad* for one apparently-guaranteed way of disposing of one.) Older and/or aristocratic vampires are likely to have acquired a *lot* of skills over the centuries, many oriented to reducing the threat of annoying would-be heroes; they also tend to have all manner of useful social offices and contacts. Serious vampires can also have attributes (especially ST) a *lot* better than the basic package.

Vampires are probably not suited for use as PCs in extended Discworld campaigns, whatever the points level, because of their problems with daylight and sleeping arrangements. However, an "all monster" game could be amusing (see *Reaper Man* for ideas), while an "all vampire" campaign could be set up as a parody of a Certain Other Game, with incessant power politics, hostile rustic werewolves smashing down the doors and then shedding fur all over the antique furniture, and human wizards fixated on transform-to-soap-bubble spells.

Werewolves and Wolfmen

Disc werewolves vary even more than the vampires. They range from the traditional howling, angst-laden monsters, through people who just happen to change into large dogs once a month, to "wolfman" types who retain a bipedal posture even while growing fur. Some are little more than tall, saturnine humans who have to shave a lot. There are even a few "inverted" cases who are born as wolves, and transform into rather unhappy humans on nights of the full moon. Doubtless, some are into New Age religions and ecological activism.

Their one near-universal trait is an *ambiguous* view of life. In wolf form, they see the world through the eyes of a pack carnivore – not especially vicious or cruel, but short on moral complexity, and full of strong scents and driving instincts. But they also remember the complexities of the human viewpoint, even if they shed a little intellect when they grow fur, and when they regain human form, they cannot help remembering the wolf world-view. They are perpetually a little confused and always out of place.

Few Disc werewolves are actually slavering killers, but they *are* part-time *wild* animals, with straightforward carnivore instincts – which the more moral of them can control. At the worst, they combine this with the less appealing side of human nature; they kill for food, find it fun, and justify it with intricate arguments later, when they are back on two legs. Also, living in human society sometimes gives their wolf form the sort of opportunities that make foxes in henhouses so unpopular. Perhaps the worst cases are werewolf families (the trait is generally genetic) who have acquired the status of aristocracy in human societies; they are apt to expound a might-makes-right philosophy, then demonstrate with their teeth.

GMs who wish to explore all the possible variations on Discworld lycanthropy in detail, and especially those who want to allow players to run werewolf PCs, should acquire a copy of ***GURPS Bestiary*** and look through the "Were-Creatures" chapter. The only idea that it emphasises which is *not* often appropriate on the Disc is heavy use of the "Split Personality" disadvantage. Disc werewolves are very much the same person in either form, though their instincts may shift a little.

The two packages below reflect common varieties of Discworld lycanthrope, but any number of variations are possible, including individuals with no control over their changes, and others (such as Constable Angua, p. 79) who have limited Resurrection when in wolf form. Werewolves in wolf form can usually pass as large dogs; many Discworld dogs, as on Earth, still resemble their wolf ancestors. Note also that Disc werewolves with a tendency to involuntary changes transform for more than one night per month; in at least some cases, the "full moon" effectively lasts for a full Disc week. In the case of Constable Angua, who may be considered a paradigm of a modern 'conscientious' werewolf, she *can* change into wolf form at any time but *must* change when caught by full moonlight.

Werewolf Character Package

This includes the Shapeshifter (Werewolf) advantage, with the aforesaid ability to change at will as well as changing on nights of the full moon (20 points), and also +1 Alertness (5 points) and Discriminatory Smell (15 points); the human form preserves a "morphic echo" of the wolf's capabilities. Furthermore, when in wolf form, the character can detect emotional states by odour (as the enhancement given on p. CI52, but only worth +20% because of the restriction: 3 points).

Being a werewolf is either a Social Stigma or a Secret (either is worth -10 points), and the character also has the Odious Personal Habit "Stares Thoughtfully at People's Throats" (-5 points).

It costs 28 points to play this type of werewolf.

Wolfman Character Package

This represents a character who changes into a shaggy, fierce humanoid during nights of the full moon, defined as eight days in every thirty-day month. (GMs can tweak this a day or two either way occasionally, to reflect the oddities of astronomy.) As the creature is still approximately person-shaped, albeit with added abilities and attitude, the character simply purchases a bundle of attributes, advantages, and disadvantages, with a -50% limitation.

The wolfman form has +2 ST (10 points), +2 DX (10 points), -1 IQ (-5 points), +2 HT (10 points), +3 Alertness (7 points), short Claws (+2 damage on attacks: 7 points), +1 Damage Resistance (1 point), Discriminatory Smell (7 points), +1 Enhanced Move (Running: 5 points), light Fur (+1 DR: 2 points), High Pain Threshold (5 points), +1 Increased Speed (12 points), and sharp Teeth (cutting damage based on ST: 2 points). Disadvantages are Monstrous Appearance (-12 points), Bad Grip (-5 points), Berserk (-7 points), Bestial (-5 points), Impulsiveness (-5 points), Mute (-12 points), severe Pyrophobia (-5 points), and a non-limited Secret or Social Stigma (-10 points).

It costs 12 points to play a wolfman. Note that the character has a total of +2 DR when shifted into beast form, and that many features applied to the human form can modify the value of the beast form; for example, if the human is Unattractive, then the net value of the beast's Monstrous appearance is reduced to -10 points, so the package costs 2 points extra.

Many werewolves can talk to dogs, sometimes even while in human form; this is treated as a Mental/Average language (it's grammatically simple, but hard to pronounce with a human throat). For a normal human to learn this language would require an Unusual Background, and probably some non-human senses to pick up the subtleties of dog communication.

Werewolf (and wolfman) PCs should probably buy off the worst of the package disadvantages, although a certain amount of misbehaviour is traditional among lycanthropes. The biggest problem may be players trying to warp game timescales so that their characters are always at their best for a particular task; GMs should resist this.

NPCs of this type are most interesting as ambiguous encounters, showing the better side of the animal kingdom but keeping PCs worried about the exact extent of their self-control.

"Angua von Uberwald rebelled against the aristocratic werewolf tendency to treat neighbours as lunch on the hoof, left home, and wandered the Disc before joining the Ankh-Morpork Watch."

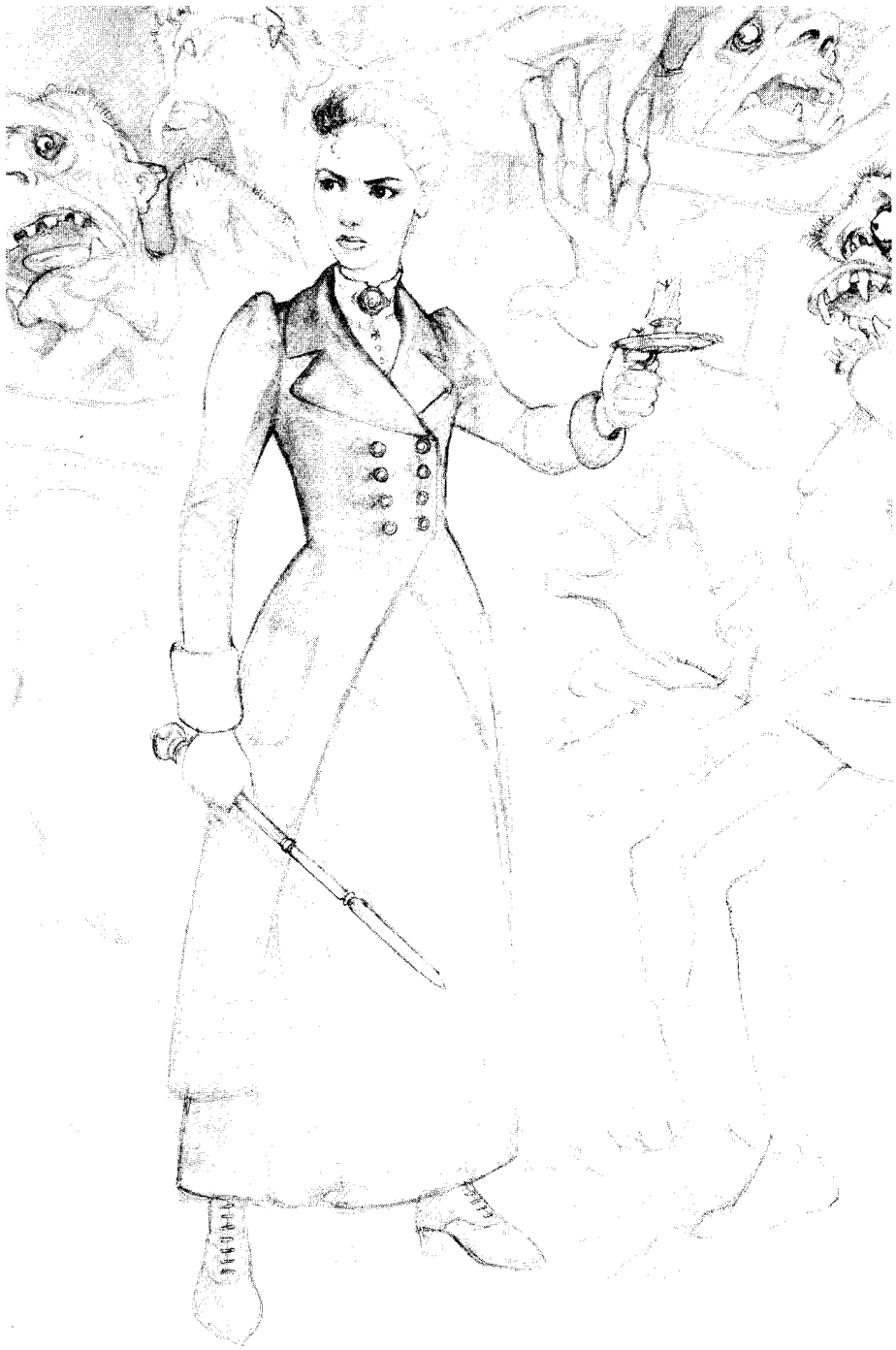
Constable Angua

The daughter of an Uberwaldian werewolf-baron, Delphine Angua von Uberwald rebelled against the aristocratic werewolf tendency to treat neighbours as lunch on the hoof, left home, and wandered the Disc before joining the Ankh-Morpork Watch. Here, she formed a relationship with Captain Carrot (p. 94). She remains worried by her wolf side, which sometimes takes the odd chicken (for which Angua always pays, anonymously).

As a human, she is a beautiful young ash-blonde woman, with ST 11, DX 13, IQ 13, and HT 13, and some of the wolf's Discriminatory Smell ability. She knows Brawling-13, Broadsword-13, Carousing-12, Crossbow-13, Naturalist-11, Stealth-12, Streetwise-12, and Survival (Forests)-13, plus Ankhian-13, Canine-11, and Uberwaldian-13. She is likeable, if sarcastic, with a stock of off-colour jokes that shock her colleagues, but she sometimes tires of being treated as an honorary male.

She changes into a wolf (with an ash-blonde mane) during nights of the full moon, sometimes when struck by direct moonlight, or voluntarily. This form has ST 11, DX 14, IQ 10, HT 15, Move/Dodge 10, a sense roll of 15, skill 16 in close combat, Ultrahearing, and the "Detect emotional state" enhancement on her Discriminatory Smell. She also gains Resurrection, with the limitation that silver can kill her permanently (if she is "killed" by anything else, she remains in wolf form while regenerating). Her growl has a direct effect on human instincts (treated as Intimidation-13). However, she also gains an Allergic Susceptibility to even the touch of silver.

The *only* being she permits to watch her rather unnerving transformation process is Gaspode the Dog (see p. 82), with whom she has formed a kind of friendship.



Werewolf Garments

Shape-shifters have a problem with clothes; they should ideally be able to get them off with paws. A werewolf who goes out of his way to find garments that meet this requirement will end up spending 20% extra on clothing, and still has to make DX rolls at inconvenient moments. Equally, it has to be stated that a werewolf does not magically re-acquire clothes when it reverts to human form, and if it is some distance from 'home' at the time this may lead to much use of old sacks, barrels and so on. Werewolves who work a particular area often secretly stash spare clothes in various places.

Other Were-Animals?

No were-beasts apart from wolves of various sorts have yet appeared in the chronicles, but given the nature of the Discworld, many such are presumably possible. Werebears and wereboars would likely originate near the hub, werecats in Klatch, weresharks in the beTrobi Islands, and so on. Essentially, anything big and unloved will probably be accused of pretending to be insidiously human – like communists in '50s America – and on the Disc, the border between accusation and fact is downright fractal.

Mummies

Mummies are simply the dead bodies of rulers and other important people in Djelibeybi or Tsort, who are subject to complex funeral rites. This mostly means removing assorted vital organs for separate storage, treating the body itself with an array of preservatives and enough bizarre substances to supply a medium-sized perfume factory for a year, then wrapping the whole thing in cloth bandages.

Contrary to widespread vulgar belief, this does not in itself leave the deceased able to rise from its sarcophagus and lurch vengefully down pyramid corridors in pursuit of tomb-robbers. Even the most powerful Tsortean rulers prefer to arrange for animated statues and bound demons to handle such duties, rather than doing it themselves; the situation in Djelibeybi was more complex (see *Pyramids*), but animating mummies was not standard procedure. If and when such animation did occur, the result could be considered a fairly standard zombie; the main thing to be said for the mummification process then is that it keeps the body intact for a long time. However, a pickled body is quite a bit tougher, and so could have greater strength and DR than most zombies.

Supernatural Personifications

A few Discworld philosophers and well-informed wizards realise that in their dimension, belief can not only move mountains, it can take the form of a mountain-removal-man. In other words, in the literal-minded magical field of the Discworld, the human urge to personify natural forces sometimes produces concrete results.

This seems to be distinct from the process that permits Small Gods to ascend to full divinity, although the distinction is blurred. Personifications are less interested in worship, more in getting a job done. They are created by raw belief, rather than prayer. However, a mindless Small God may be the piece of grit around which the Personification accumulates like a pearl. More to the point, they represent abstractions that may predate humanity and belief, and they may hope to survive humanity. Death is the Anthropomorphic Personification *par excellence.*

Even on the Disc, it takes a great deal of belief and emotion to form a Personification; these days, a major figure has to be banished or suppressed for enough psychic pressure to come free, and any subsequent re-balancing process tends to eliminate the new Personifications. However, some may survive, mostly by chance; this is why there is now a Death of Rats. Thus, it may be possible for players to take the roles of a new Personification, or perhaps a minor entity left around from ancient times.

The last time new Personifications were created was in the course of the story of *Hogfather,* and some minor figures (aside from the Oh God of Hangovers) may have survived that. (There are also family relationships; War, one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocralypse, has not only two sons, Terror and Panic, but a daughter, Clancy.)

Personifications as PCs

Personification PCs are only likely to be viable in high-starting-points campaigns, although a franchise phenomenon, like the Tooth Fairy (see p. 161), could have agents of only modest power. It is also possible for mortals to be obliged to adopt a Personification's role temporarily; see *Mort* and *Soul Music.* Such substitutes may be granted some of the Personification's powers, such as Death's invisibility; this is more of a plot idea than a character concept, but it is important to the background of Susan Sto Helit (see p. 182).

Advantages: Even the lowliest Personifications have an array of relevant powers and are usually hard to kill (although they may be easy enough to *hurt*); it may be useful to refer to ***GURPS Supers*** as well as the full Advantages lists in the main rules and ***GURPS Compendium I.*** The GM must approve all Advantages, especially those not available to human characters, and should ensure that they fit the concept.

Disadvantages: Personifications usually have a Duty, but some just embody a phenomenon (such as hangovers), and don't have to perform active tasks. Some, of the less anthropomorphic sort (such as laundry-raiding Towel Wasps), may be driven by simple instinct.

Skills: Personifications rarely need specific skills, as their powers are designed to enable them to do their jobs, but they may learn through observation or hobbies.

Sentient Animals

Discworld humans don't, usually, believe that anything with four legs or wings is likely to be intelligent,[1] but that doesn't prove anything. Some very smart animals have appeared in the chronicles. Their chief problem is that people never do believe in them, even when Gaspode the Wonder Dog is telling them to give him a biscuit.

Such animals tend to be one-of-a-kind, or at least one-of-a-small-community. The usual cause is runaway magic, as with the Librarian (p. 110), or Gaspode (p. 82). The University's magical emanations cause a lot of problems; the rats in its basements have a small tribal culture, and the engineering skills of its ant population are quite worrying.

However, magic seems more likely to amplify what's already there than to generate anything entirely new. Ants are organised creatures by nature, and rats have a lot of low cunning. Other known examples of animal sentience include a demonologist's pet parrot, and Quoth the Raven, who lends his services to the Death of Rats; both such birds are noted for their vocal skills, and if a being can talk fluently, most people assume that it's pretty smart.

And there are also camels; see p. 169.

Sentient Animal PCs

It is possible to play a sentient animal in a Discworld game, but there are obvious problems; GMs should point out to players that it is a seriously frivolous roleplaying challenge. It is probably advisable to charge an Unusual Background cost.

[1] *Unless it also packs a sheaf of lightning bolts and leers at passing maidens.*

First, the player will need an *explanation;* "Hanging around Unseen University" is valid, but unoriginal – a more interesting tale would be nice. Of course, a camel could simply have accidentally let slip that it is bright, but how easy is it to play a camel PC?

Next, the creature must be built with a combination of natural abilities and problems and sentient-level capabilities. It will be worth looking at ***GURPS Bestiary,*** which not only has descriptions and game mechanics for numerous species, but also general guidelines for the process. (The Racial/"Super" advantages listed in ***GURPS Compendium I*** are also likely to be relevant.) Many sentient animals will have more disadvantages than the campaign standard, which is acceptable providing that the excess represent a plausible animal "package" (as with Mute or No Fine Manipulator).

And lastly, the animal must be *interesting.* It would be possible to create a talking horse, of course – but what is the point if that simply means that the PCs have an extra horse to ride? It is far more interesting if the horse has a cynical attitude, or a noble nature combined with equine instincts.

Gaspode the Wonder Dog

Gaspode could be taken as a model for a sentient animal PC:

ST 3/8, DX 11, IQ 11, HT 13/5

Speed 6, Move 5

Dodge 6

Advantages: Contact: Angua; Decreased Life Support; Discriminatory Smell; Disease Resistant; Four Legs (Cannot Kick); Fur; Passive Defence +1; Sharp Teeth; Voice of Command.

Disadvantages: Bad Smell; Compulsive Behaviour: "Doggy Image" (instinctively wants to be a "good dog," save the day and have his ears scratched, and behaves accordingly); Dead Broke; Horizontal Posture; Inconvenient Size; Mild Phobia about Being Domesticated; No Fine Manipulators; Reduced Move; Social Stigma: Logical Impossibility; Unattractive Appearance.

Quirks: Proud of his disease collection and smell; Sometimes claims to have a happy domestic home somewhere; Cynic.

Skills: Area Knowledge: Ankh-Morpork-15; Stealth-10; Survival (Urban)-14.

Languages: Ankhian-11; Canine-11.

Gaspode was born an ordinary mongrel in Ankh-Morpork, and promptly thrown in the river. The river being the Ankh, he was able to walk out, but he feels that this set the tone for his life. He soon acquired a truly startling range of minor diseases (including one normally limited to pregnant sheep), which he claims must be so busy fighting each other than none of them can kill him, and indeed he never seems to get any worse; this, and some diligent effort, gives him a serious stray-dog smell.

He spent some moderately contented years as an ordinary mutt, until the magical side-effects of the events of *Moving Pictures* temporarily granted him full sentience. After a brief but heroic few weeks, he returned happily enough to his old nature, but his psyche had been sensitised, and a few days' careless rooting round the rubbish bins at Unseen University gave him back colour vision and speech.

Unfortunately, no-one ever believes that a dog can talk, but he has found that this has one advantage; it makes humans respond to what he says without realising that he said it. Mostly, what he says is "give the nice doggie a biscuit." Speech also gives him power over other dogs, as he can snap out "bad dog" or "sit!" and drill right into *their* hind-brains, but he is nervous of using this power, as the effects rarely last for more than seconds.

Gaspode has found himself helping the Watch with a number of problems; Constable Angua, who, being a werewolf, can talk to dogs, has no psychological difficulty chatting to him. He has also associated with Foul Ole Ron the beggar, one of the few beings in Ankh-Morpork who smells even worse than him, acting as the world's first thinking-brain dog.

Some of Gaspode's disadvantages may seem contradictory. They are. All dogs are caught between a lust for freedom and a wish to be petted. Gaspode's big problem is that he knows it.

WELLCOME TO ANKH-MORPORK . . .

Citie of One Thousand Surprises!

The Smell

A key feature of Ankh-Morpork – perhaps its defining feature – is its Smell. It is appalling; the consequence of having a million people living around a turgid river with no sewer system that they remember. Stories say that at least one invading army was defeated when they sneaked in at night, but their nose plugs gave out.

"A key feature of Ankh-Morpork – perhaps its defining feature – is its Smell."

The citizens are very proud of the Smell. They erected a statue to that victory (although the stone of the monument has somewhat rotted away). People take chairs outdoors on summer evenings to appreciate it. And when they are obliged to travel away from Ankh-Morpork, they talk about their dreams of getting back to the Smell.

The Smell has little effect in game terms, although it makes it effectively impossible to trick an Ankh-Morporkian into thinking he or she is home when that isn't true. However, visitors from more refined cultures might have to make HT rolls for a few days after arrival to avoid a lot of gagging.

Ankh-Morpork is the oldest surviving city on the Disc (depending a little on definitions, of course), and the largest. Its population of about one million, suburbs included, is quite an achievement, given the existing technologies of transport,[1] water supply,[2] and waste disposal.[3] It is, technically, two cities, separated by the River Ankh: Ankh, the slightly more prosperous of the two, is on the turnwise side of the river, Morpork to the widdershins. But only somebody trying to sell a house would bother distinguishing.

Most of the trade of the Circle Sea and the Sto Plains passes through Ankh-Morpork; it is the centre for mysterious industries such as wizardry, assassination, and banking. It is The City to which young people from the country dream of going, until they become old enough to warn young people against going there.

History

Ankh-Morpork grew up around Unseen University (see p. 109), which, being a magical establishment, makes questions of causality a little uncertain. The University grew around the Tower of Art, and a sort of service village grew up nearby. Later, the focus shifted down-river, towards the docks.

This dockside community lay on the site of what is now the Shades; the growing sprawl eventually took in the villages of Dolly Sisters and Nap Hill. Remains of ancient walls still poke up through later buildings, and some foundations in the Shades seem downright timeless.

Then, about 3,300 years before the present, came the Empire of the Kings of Ankh, which lasted about 1,300 years. This is long enough ago to be thought of as a Golden Age of Glorious Deeds. Surviving remnants include a sewer system, which is no longer connected to much in the way of surface plumbing. (Until recently it was known only to the Assassins' Guild.) Also, a ruin on a hill called the Tump might have been a castle back then. There is also a throne (actually a throne-shaped heap of dry rot held together by gilt and good intentions), and the legend of a Sword.

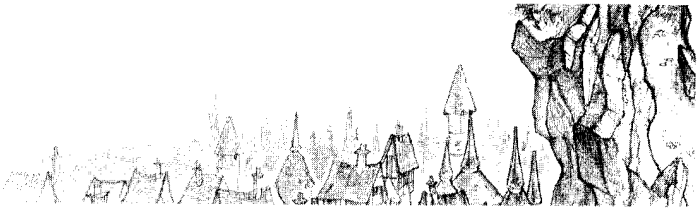
The fall of the Kings of Ankh was followed by seventeen centuries of the less mythical Ankh-Morporkian Kings; the crown belonged to anybody with soldiers to take it and the poor judgement to keep it. There were wars, betrayals, assassinations, family squabbles about who was going to swim the moat in leg-irons, and prophecies ending in "Beware!" or "Aaaarrggh." The Monarchy was actually highly egalitarian; most wealthy families got to be "royal" for at least a generation.

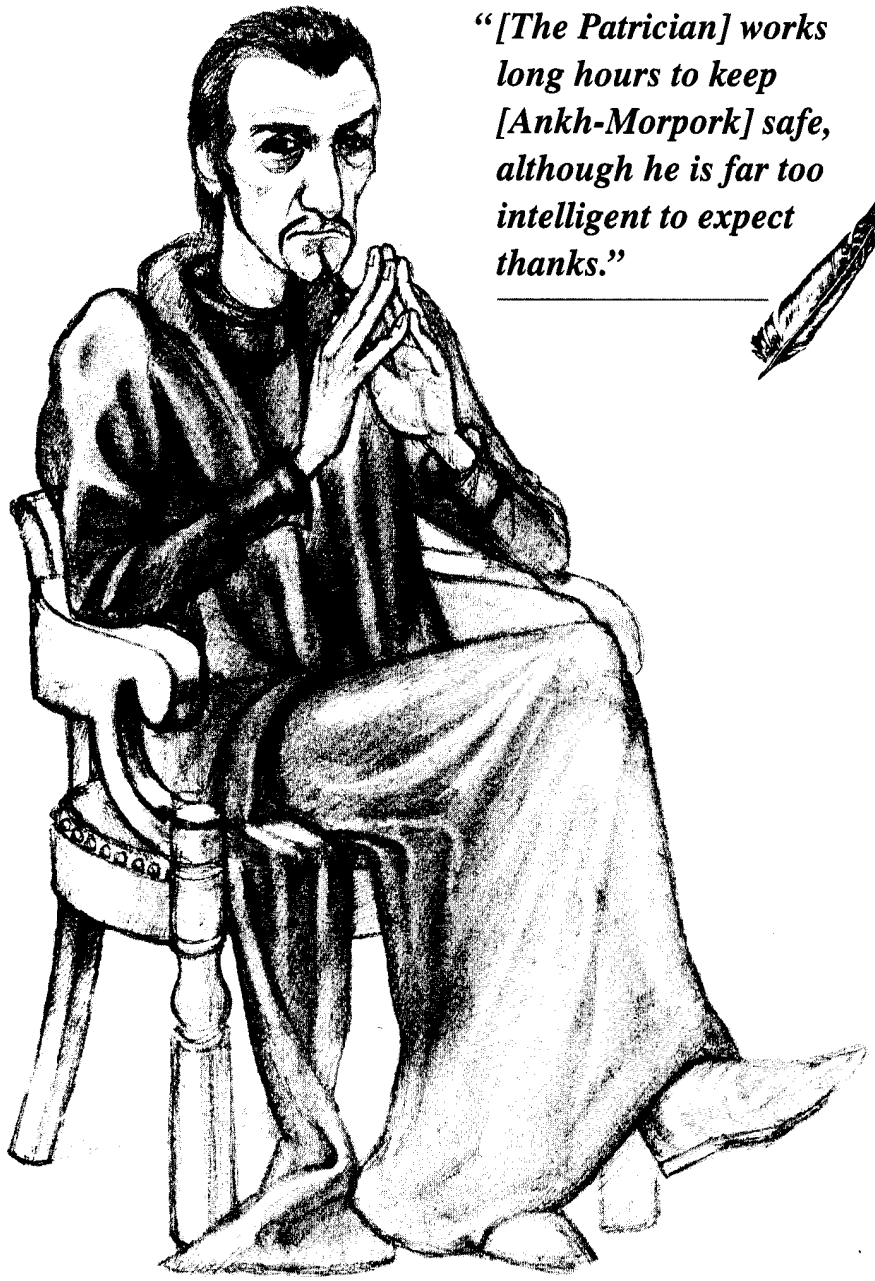
All these monarchs were formally pretenders, since no-one knew what had happened to the Kings of Ankh. The population understood that the True King was the one who held The Sword, so a whole series of "true swords" were produced. (King Blad carried two bits of wood hastily nailed together, for fifty-one years.) The Sword is now considered lost, though like Atlantis and crashed flying saucers, it cannot ever be considered really gone.

[1] *Poor.*

[2] *Worse.*

[3] *What?*





"[The Patrician] works long hours to keep [Ankh-Morpork] safe, although he is far too intelligent to expect thanks."

The Monarchy ended in 1688 (University dating) with the Civil War. (There had, of course, been countless civil wars, but this is the one that gets the capital letters.) This was a genuinely popular uprising against King Lorenzo the Kind, whose private depredations were so unspeakable that people actually did not speak of them. Lorenzo wasn't even an *effective* monster; the city was becoming dominated by Klatch (see p. 24), which was going through a dynamic phase.

The end of the Monarchy was not actually a rebellion against the *idea* of kings, or even their arbitrary, bloody-minded imbecility. Still, from then on, people never quite believed that the maniacs in charge of them had been put there by the Will Of The Gods.

The Patrician

ST 11, **DX** 12, **IQ** 20, **HT** 13

Speed 6.25, Move 6
Dodge 7 (enhanced)

Advantages: Comfortable Wealth; Contacts (Assorted); Empathy; Enhanced Dodge; Fully Literate; Immunity to Disease; Less Sleep ×2; Reputation +3 in Ankh Morpork (Stay On The Right Side Of This Man); Status +6; Unfazeable.

Disadvantages: Enemies (occasional over-confident plotters); Intolerant of Street Theatre and Mime; Sense of Duty to Ankh-Morpork.

Quirks: Austere tastes; Enjoys *written* music; Cynically fascinated by human mental processes; Ironic; Ruthless.

Skills: Accounting-18; Acting-20; Administration-20; Area Knowledge (Ankh-Morpork)-20; Area Knowledge (Circle Sea Region)-19; Camouflage-20; Detect Lies-19; Diplomacy-20; History-18; Knife-14; Merchant-19; Musical Notation-20; Poisons-20; Politics-20; Psychology-20; Riding-11; Savoir-Faire (Ankh-Morpork)-22; Stealth-14; Traps-20.

Languages: Ankhian-20; Klatchian-19; Ancient Tongue-19; Uberwaldian-19.

Little is known about the early history of Lord Havelock Vetinari, but he is known to have studied for a few years at the Assassins' Guild school, leaving him well equipped for self-defence. (He still dresses like an assassin, too, all in black.) The Vetinaris are a well-established, wealthy trading family – the sort of merchants who can delegate all the dirty work, and hence have been absorbed into the aristocracy.

He is tall, thin, and austere in his habits; vices are a tool for others to use against one. (His view of street theatre is widely regarded as simply an understandable foible.) He did at one time keep a small terrier named Wuffles, but even a Patrician's pets are mortal. It is typical of him that he likes music, but he reads it on paper for preference; he finds the idea of fallible human musicians getting involved, with all the sweat and spittle, faintly distasteful.

Continued on next page . . .

The Patrician (Continued)

In fact, his true weakness is simply that he is dedicated to Ankh-Morpork. He works long hours to keep the place safe, although he is far too intelligent to expect thanks. (Admittedly, retiring from his job now might give some people the idea that it would be safe to take revenge for old wrongs, but that could hardly be an insurmountable problem for his intellect.)

He is also fascinated by human nature, if not impressed by it. Although he has long since learned enough to manipulate it, he continues to observe it finding new forms of self-destruction. He just wishes that it would stop threatening the city in the process.

He is treated as having Comfortable wealth because he works full-time at his job and does not take a large salary. However, he has direct access to the city's income, which despite the Ankh-Morporkian aversion to paying taxes, is fairly substantial. If he needs money, he can usually find it.

Note: PCs should NOT be encouraged to cross the Patrician. He is ruthless, *very* smart, and has made sure that many factions don't want him dead just yet. The problem for anyone who goes up against him will be staying alive. Kind GMs can rig such situations so that he keeps PCs around for use as tools in another plot.

Mad Kings

Ankh-Morpork in the monarchical period had its share of rulers who were a trifle lacking in sanity. Many of these did not last very long, naturally enough, as sanity is important for self-defence, but some endured a while, perhaps because none of the plausible replacements were any more acceptable. Anyway, kings cannot, by definition, be mad; even "eccentric" is too strong a term to be polite.

For example, King Ludwig the Tree gave the city much to remember him by in his four-year rule, not least one of its official mottoes, "Quanti Canicula Ille In Fenestra?" ("How Much is that Doggie in the Window?") His call for the creation of a new kind of frog had less durable results, but amused much of the population no end. He was harmless, after all, and hence amusing. Others were more in the Caligula class.

Not that some of the Patricians have been much better, of course, but at least they aren't bred for it. In places like the Agatean Empire (p. 33), where absolute monarchy and the associated back-stabbing remain the norm, some of the emperors remain serious threats to anyone in sight.

Current Government

The Monarchy was succeeded by the rule of the Patricians. Ankh-Morpork barely qualifies as having a *system* of government. What it has is an *ad hoc* arrangement.

The Patrician is the ruler. He is not elected; he is a person who, when the office becomes vacant, applies enough cleverness, guile, blackmail, and other leverage. It can be thought of as something like musical chairs, in which anyone who has a dagger sticking out of him may not sit down. The office is held for life, which does not, of course, prevent anyone with the right resources from changing the office-holder.

Once in office, Patricians tend to hold it by something like consensus (not necessarily universal consensus, but of the people who count), understanding that they do not have a Divine Right, or any other mandate to rule. This has not prevented the stresses of leadership having an effect on past Patricians; the number who are known to history by such names as Deranged Lord Harmoni, Frenzied Earl Hargarth, and Mad Lord Snapcase (Psychoneurotic Lord Snapcase to his close friends) bears witness to this. Still, the system seems to work to the satisfaction of most Ankh-Morporkians, and lasting long enough in the job to become known to history is more than quite a few kings achieved.

For what it's worth, the Patrician may sometimes call a meeting of a sort of city council. This consists of assorted heads of major guilds, major aristocrats, and anyone else whose advice is likely to be useful or whose omission could be fatally tactless. This meeting has purely advisory power; only occasionally is the advice "do this or we'll kill you."

Ankh-Morporkians say that their government is a democracy, with one man, one vote. The Patrician is The Man, and he has The Vote.

"Ankh-Morporkians say that their government is a democracy, with one man, one vote. The Patrician is The Man, and he has The Vote."

Recent Events

The current Patrician, Lord Havelock Vetinari, is an exceptional (and very, very sane) figure (see sidebar, p. 85). He has realised two things. Firstly, that what people want, more than anything else, is stability; and secondly, that changes are currently inevitable, as the Disc is going through one of *those* historical periods.

A lesser ruler might worry about such a contradiction; Vetinari takes it in his stride. If the citizens do not wish to see change, then he will not force them to look. He provides the stability that everyone silently demands. His belief is that even a bloody tyranny would be seen as a Good Thing if it carried on long enough, but he has no wish to test the point. He simply does what must be done, quietly, while taking care not to offend any faction much more than any other.

They all hate him, and the brighter ones even know that they are being played off against each other, while traditionalists cannot help but notice and hate the changes that Vetinari has permitted. However, at no point does the idea of getting rid of Vetinari ever actually seem preferable to keeping him, to most people. If he were to die, the struggle for power would be horrendous – and no-one feels certain enough of winning.

That does not, however, mean that he is never threatened. There are always the mad, the desperate, and the supernatural. *Guards! Guards!* and *Men at Arms* tell of two such attacks, and *Feet of Clay* describes a move that was all the more deadly because it involved keeping Vetinari alive and creating a compromise-candidate replacement. However, none of these plots succeeded.

Going back a little, however, Vetinari's program of reform really got underway after the latest Great Fire of Ankh-Morpork, consequent on the visit of the tourist Twoflower (see *The Colour of Magic*), which enabled a certain amount of rebuilding. The Merchant's Guild came into being at the same time; the Thieves' and Assassins' Guilds were stabilised not long after (see below). The brief reign of Coin the Sourcerer (see *Sourcery*) had no significant long-term effects on the city; nor did the later rise and fall of the Disc's motion picture industry (see *Moving Pictures*).

Even the Patrician's brief replacement by a dragon (see *Guards! Guards!*) left him back in charge (although it did create a small area suited to urban redevelopment), and perhaps served to demonstrate that Vetinari is not the worst thing the city might have to live with.

Geography

Ankh-Morpork is a walled city, but as it has not faced siege for many years now, the walls are not seen as much more than a nuisance to developers. Most of its million-strong population actually lives outside, in the suburbs. However, the great circular heart of the place is what most people think of when they talk about Ankh-Morpork – it stands as Manhattan stands to New York.

Because the city has grown with time, there are actually older plans within the largest circle, some marked out by older, fragmentary walls, and all strung out along and around the river. Thus, from above, Ankh-Morpork has something of the look of a cut onion.[1]

[1] *But it smells* ***much*** *worse.*

C.M.O.T. Dibbler

ST 9, **DX** 12, **IQ** 13, **HT** 12

Speed 6, Move 6
Dodge 6

Advantages: Contacts (wholesalers); Disease-Resistant; Fully Literate; Less Sleep ×4.

Disadvantages: Greed; Impulsiveness; Reputation -1 among anyone who has eaten one of his pies; Skinny; Weak Will -2.

Quirks: Always says that any deal is "cutting his own throat;" Tone-deaf; Wears an overcoat with lots of pockets.

Skills: Accounting-11; Acting-12; Area Knowledge: Ankh-Morpork-12; Bard-12; Fast-Talk-14; Holdout-12; Merchant-12; Scrounging-14; Streetwise-11.

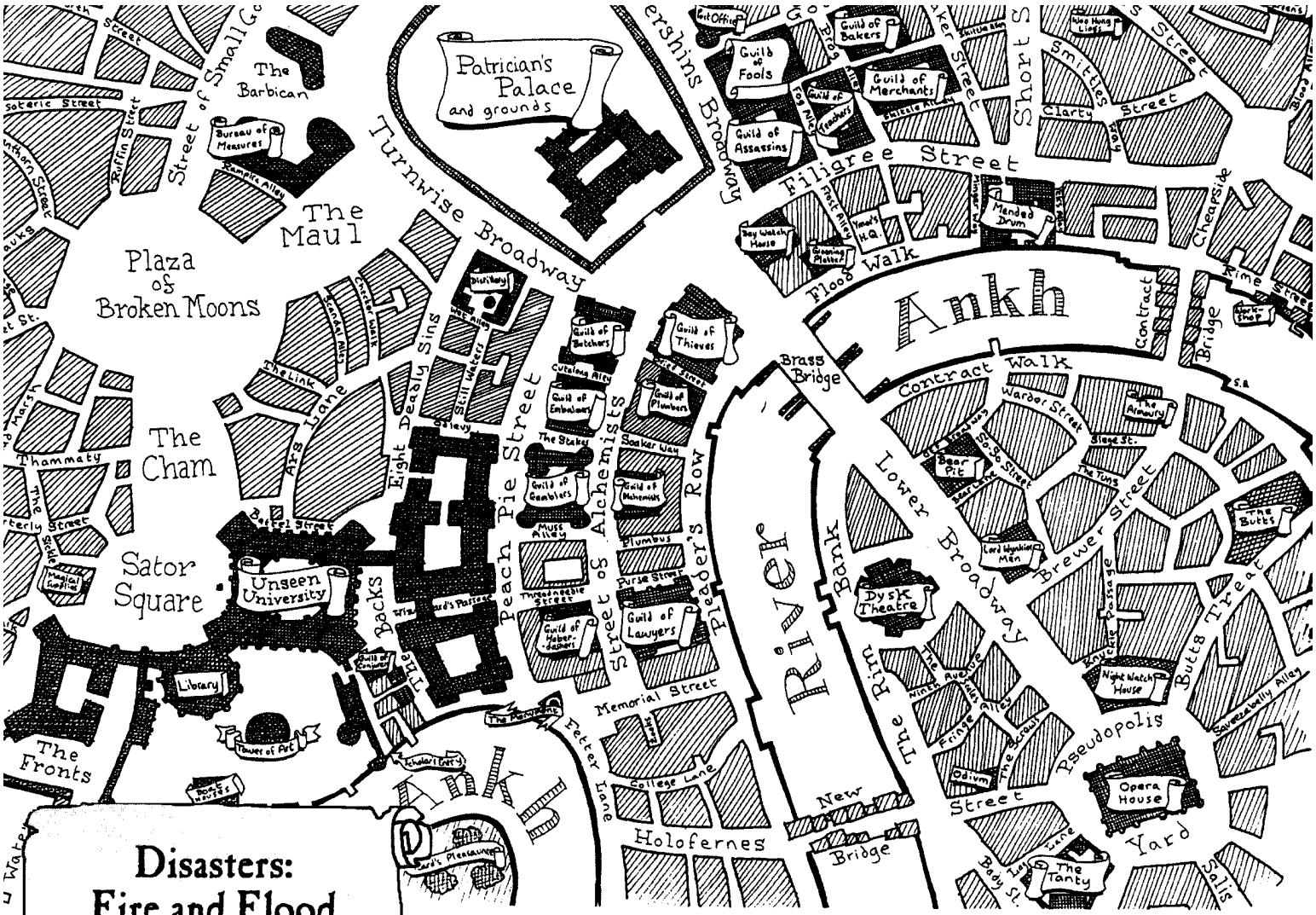
Languages: Ankhian-13.

Cut-Me-Own-Throat Dibbler (who has never admitted to any other name) is one of Ankh-Morpork's best-known figures. His most frequent activity is selling snacks on the street, but he has engaged in all manner of other commercial activities. He is not technically a merchant – he is not *technically* anything, not even a criminal, despite the opinions of those who have bought his meat pies – but rather, a quintessential entrepreneur. He is the sole member of the Guild of C.M.O.T. Dibblers. (That legal loophole was closed immediately after he had used it.)

Dibbler is a skinny, rodent-like figure who is perpetually on the look-out for sales opportunities, and never has the right change. He runs his schemes from a cellar near the Shades; no-one knows where he lives, and there is a theory that he never actually sleeps, because then he might miss a chance of profit. He has a nephew, Solstice ("Soll") Dibbler, who shares his instincts, but in a slightly more sophisticated, or at least yuppified, form.

Dibbler's schemes have included selling self-help books (on topics such as martial arts techniques and barbarian heroism) and dragon detectors. He also spent brief periods as a moving picture mogul and (in an uncertain time-line) a music promoter, both professions ideally suited to his nature. His profits go up and down, but it is unclear what he does with them, or what he would do if one of his major schemes ever held together to fruition.

A measure of his marketing skills (and of the effect of the smell of fried onions on the human palate) is that he not only sells a fair number of meat pies, but that he actually gets some repeat custom.



Disasters: Fire and Flood

Ankh-Morpork suffers periodic disasters as a kind of habit. Fire is the worst threat, although the citizens consider that it is the stone buildings that define their city, and those rarely suffer enough damage to be destroyed. There is a really comprehensive fire about once a century or so, which many people (especially those who live in stone houses) think helps pest control and urban renewal. Despite their usual habit of useless loitering, some Ankh-Morporkians respond quite briskly and efficiently to fires, as their own property is always at some risk. They organise bucket chains, close the river gates, and – if the fire is still on one side of the river – often demolish the less solid bridges. Afterwards, they quickly rebuild in their beloved well-seasoned timber and bone-dry thatch.

Flooding is regarded as a lesser risk; although being inundated by the Ankh is not pleasant, all that is usually required afterwards is a good clean up. Sometimes, that even happens.

Do note that this is an old-world[1] sort of city plan, not a modern American grid. There are very few right angles. Strangers in Ankh-Morpork often have to ask directions, and are usually confused by the answers. Area Knowledge of the city is useful for even the simplest errands.

Hubwards Morpork

Unseen University lies on the trailing bank of the river, at the hubwards end of town; the river-facing areas (the gardens and the "Fronts") are adjacent to Water Bridge and the Bridge of Size. (See pp. 109-118 for more on the University.) Just upstream is the area known as the Unreal Estate, where the wizards have dumped far too much dysfunctional magic and assorted thaumaturgical garbage over the centuries. (An unstable Very High Mana area.) On the other side of the University from the river is the Plaza of Broken Moons, and beyond that the Street of Small Gods, which runs down to the temple district.

It also cuts across Upper Broadway, which links the Hubwards Gate with the Patrician's Palace and its gardens (see below). The area between the University, the Plaza, the Palace and the river contains a number of major guild-houses, including those of the Butchers, the Gamblers, the Thieves (hard by the river and the Brass Bridge), and the Alchemists.[2] Between Broadway and Short Street,

[1] *And maybe even Olde Worlde.*

[2] *The Gamblers' hall is opposite that of the Alchemists. Think about it.*

which also runs from one of the gates to the river (or rather to the Mended Drum, which is on the river), is a bustling area that not only holds most of the temples, but also a lot of mercantile businesses and the Street of Cunning Artificers, traditional home of the city's craftsmen. There is also currently a large open area, where a dragon crash-landed. Other major guilds, including the Fools and the Assassins, have headquarters around here, mostly near the river and the palace.

Rimwards Morpork and The Shades

Much of the city rimwards of Short Street is made up of innocuous residential and shopping areas, ranging from the poor-but-honest to the rich-but-run-down. However, this area does encompass the Shades.

This is an area bounded by Treacle Mine Road, Elm Street, the river, and the wall. It is considered to be the oldest part of the city. To quote from the Merchants' Guild publication, *Wellcome to Ankh-Morpork:*

> **"Thee Shades bee a folklorique network of old alleys and picturesque streets, wherre exitement and romans lurke arounde everry corner and much may be heard the traditional street cries of old time also the laughing visages of the denuizens as they goe about their business private."**

What the visitor actually sees is a labyrinth of winding little streets, some barely wide enough to expand your chest in, haunted by people who always seem to be looking the other way, gods nobody remembers, freelance thieves confident that even the Thieves' Guild won't follow them in here, and people of all descriptions and beyond description selling all kinds of things that you will shortly regret owning and have a lot of trouble disposing of.

The typical visitor sees this for approximately ten minutes before someone puts his lights out with a blackjack. If he's lucky.

Many accounts suggest that visiting the Shades alone is, quite simply, automatically terminal, and there are certainly parts where this is true. (These parts expand after dark.) However, there are enough locations that folk simply *must* visit, even at dusk, that the Shades simply cannot be as bad as some would suggest. Not quite, anyway.

Obtaining anything unpleasant or illegal that is absolutely necessary to the completion of a game adventure probably calls for a trip to The Shades. Area Knowledge of Ankh-Morpork is a basic survival skill at these times. Turn off your Danger Sense . . . it'll only give you a headache.

Cockbill Street

On the rimwards edge of the Shades, Cockbill Street runs from the city's great cattle market to Pearl Dock. This is not a completely desolate area – there are many small workshops and such – but it is very, very poor. The manufacturing round here is sweatshop work. The inhabitants are generally too honest to take the traditional Ankh-Morpork routes up out of poverty, so they stay poor.

The River Ankh

The Ankh rises in the Ramtops, and winds in a generally Rimward direction down to the Circle Sea. On the way, it collects the silt of the plains, and by the time it reaches the city walls it is quite thick. In the city, it collects still more silt, along with every form of solid waste created by nature and civilisation; when it exits the walls, it is the consistency of very lumpy oatmeal. The citizens are proud to point out that it is very difficult to drown in the Ankh, but one can suffocate in it.

So much material has accreted on the riverbed that it is actually higher than some low-lying parts of the city. When spring snowmelt causes the level to rise, these areas – which, as one might imagine, are not fashionable – flood, though the actual effect is more like pulling a gravel throw-rug over a dirt floor.

The down-river wall gates, and some bridge gates, can be closed to flood the city deliberately, in the case of a fire. This is what city administrators call a tough choice. Or maybe not. It depends on the administrator, and where his house is relative to the fire and the river.

The purity of Ankh water is insisted upon by the citizens, who point out that the kidney is one of nature's most efficient filtering devices. There are known to be uniquely-evolved fish, in a broad sense of the word; these have not been closely studied, as when removed from their natural habitat they explode.

The river is not, however, the city's source of water. At one time there was a viaduct on Water Street, but it collapsed centuries ago; a few traces are still visible. Water is drawn from wells, which need not be deep, due to the high water table. The average citizens' resistance to disease is clearly extraordinary.

The Port

Ankh-Morpork is a port, albeit a little way up-river from the coast, and very much a trading city. Normal ships built at the Disc's current level of technology have little problem reaching its docks, although of course sailing craft must allow for the available wind. Most of its dealings are with other nations of the Circle Sea (see p. 24), although some merchants do venture further afield, into the Turnwise Ocean.

Bloody Stupid Johnson

Bergholt Stuttley Johnson was a landscape gardener and all-round inventor of considerable renown, not all of it positive. He was in many ways a talented man, and many of his creations are elegant and beautiful. His main fault lay in the quantitative area. It was a fault that has placed him in the history books as "Bloody Stupid" Johnson.

He seems never to have comprehended the difference between a foot and an inch, or an ounce and a pound. Or perhaps he never got ratios right. In any case, the ornamental cruet set he designed for Mad Lord Snapcase may be seen today in Ankh-Morpork's Upper Broadway: four families live in the salt shaker, and the pepper pot is used for grain storage. The triumphal arch commemorating the Battle of Crumhorn is kept in a small cardboard box, and the Colossus of Morpork is not on public view, as it would be too easy for someone to slip it into a pocket. (An honest citizen is paid a token fee to take care of such items.) Ankh-Morpork contains many of his greatest accomplishments, but he travelled to Quirm to build his famous Collapsed Tower, and to mess up the view from the local overlord's mansion.

His most famous creations include the Gardens of the Patrician's Palace and the Mighty Organ of Unseen University's Great Hall (p. 115). The former contain a trout pond (sized to hold one long, thin trout who does not mind being unable to turn around), a fountain (which operated once, launching a stone cherub beyond the city limits), a chiming sundial (which routinely explodes at noon), a beehive (used to house messenger albatrosses), and a garden maze, which is small enough that people get lost trying to find it.

Johnson was never discouraged by what some people considered his failures. And he never lacked for work, there generally being people so rich they can spend large amounts on things that amuse them, like a tree-lined promenade four feet long, or a submerged gazebo.

Johnson's other 'achievements' are known to include the University's giant washing machines and the Archchancellor's musical bathroom. Johnson's inventions often work, but for some purpose quite different than that for which they were built. There may be other 'Johnsons' lying in wait for the unwary explorer.

The Isle of Gods

Technically, the Isle of Gods is part of Ankh. But it is actually defined by a looping meander in the river, and some past urban scheme or another drove a canal or extended dock, the Cut, across the loop, making this into a true island.

Today, it is Ankh-Morpork's theatreland. At its very centre – and indeed the very centre of the city – is Pseudopolis Yard, at the bottom end of Lower Broadway. This is perhaps the most valuable piece of real estate in the city. Lady Ramkin owns property there, which she gave to the Watch after the dragon demolished their old HQ. Pseudopolis Yard is a large circular plaza, with the city's huge opera house in the middle. Nearby, on the river, is the Dysk, its greatest theatre (somewhat resembling Shakespeare's Globe, in London), home base to Vitoller's Strolling Players, who include the genius playwright Hwel the Dwarf and the uncannily brilliant actor Tomjon.

Ankh

The more expensive half of the twin city is somewhat grander than Morpork; people who spend more money to live there can also afford to ensure that it stays that way. It includes a genuine park (Hide Park), as well as the apothecary gardens (where medicinal plants are grown) by the river, and also a racecourse. At the hubward side of things, the mound of the Tump, with its ancient ruins, is another open space, forcing the city wall outwards from its circular plan.

The Patrician's Palace

The Patrician rules from the former Winter Palace of the Kings of Ankh, located square across Broadway. (The Summer Palace is some distance outside the city, so that one may enjoy the outside air on a warm summer's day without stiffening and falling to the ground. It is not much used by any Patrician who realises how long he can afford to turn his back.)

Much of the building is presently taken up with clerks' offices, handling both normal city business and the extensive intake of Lord Vetinari's spy network. When he wishes to work in private, the Patrician occupies the Oblong Office; more public meetings take place in what was originally the Throne Room, which still contains the Golden Throne of the Kings of Ankh.

Lord Vetinari does not use the Throne, preferring to sit on a plain wooden chair at the foot of the Throne's dais. This is partly for symbolic reasons, and partly because the Throne might collapse under a large weight of sunbeams.

The Palace dungeons are still fully operational, with all the standard equipment. Street mimes are suspended upside down in a scorpion pit, facing a sign (inverted for easy reading) saying "LEARN THE WORDS." Most of the other cells, however, are quite humane, as such things go.[1]

The palace also has its share of secret passages and other traditional features, but these have all been installed or adjusted to suit the current Patrician. Only he knows how the secret passages run, for example, and anyone else would need a *lot* of skill or luck to find them in a hurry.

[1] *Vetinari rarely bothers locking his enemies up, preferring to make use of them in other ways if he can, and to remove them permanently if he must . . . but if he has to keep somebody in one place, he usually wants the option of dealing with them on a civilised basis later, which makes maltreatment rather counter-productive.*

The Palace Grounds are quite splendid, with a small zoo, a bird garden, a racehorse stable . . . and the Gardens. These are the quintessential achievement of Bloody Stupid Johnson (see sidebar, p. 90).

The Patrician's Guard

For most of the city's history, the kings and patricians have retained a palace guard for their personal security. These guards also dealt with any little matters that their employer might need attended to (and hence qualified as having Legal Enforcement Powers; indeed, their effective powers were greater than those of the Watch, because people knew that it was a lot less wise to question them). Originally, Lord Vetinari retained this system, and indeed his guards were an exceptionally rough crew. (Think of the heavies that a Mafia boss in the movies calls in when dealing with people he really, really doesn't like, then put them in armour.) Furthermore, Vetinari paid them well, and made sure that they knew he could outbid anyone who might come along with a bribe.

However, following the events of *Guards! Guards!* this group were somewhat discredited, while Vetinari grew increasingly confident that anyone who might previously have threatened him was too well boxed in politically to make trouble. With the restored Watch willing and able to deal with the sort of problems that had previously required his personal heavies, he has paid them off (doubtless generously – no need to antagonise someone who knows parts of the layout of the palace).

Law and Order

The Watch

Many years ago, there were four "guard" forces in Ankh-Morpork. The Palace Guard, or Patrician's Guard, were as described above.

The Cable Street Particulars were an elite group of investigators and secret police. The Day Ward and Night Watch were street patrols, whose tasks included catching criminals, directing traffic, rousting drunks, and what modern police forces refer to as "Animal Control."

However, over time, the Cable Street Particulars faded away (their former headquarters is now used as a dwarf delicatessen), and the two street patrol groups found themselves increasingly irrelevant. On the one hand, they simply could not perform their jobs to anyone's satisfaction, while on the other, the guilds and other groups stepped in to handle much practical law-enforcement. When he became Patrician, Lord Vetinari did not bother trying to reverse this process; instead, he formalised the Thieves' Guild's crime-control function, monitored the other guilds with relaxed efficiency, and deliberately filled the Ward and Watch with dubious characters, drunks, and no-hopers, so as to avoid having armed groups with the wrong attitude on the streets.

Watch Commander Sir Samuel Vimes

ST 11, **DX** 12, **IQ** 14, **HT** 12

Speed 6, Move 4 (in armour)
Dodge 4, Parry 6 (sword)

Advantages: Danger Sense; Disease-Resistant; Fully Literate; Legal Enforcement Powers; Luck; Multimillionaire; Patron: the Patrician; Rank +5 (Watch Commander); Status +4.

Disadvantages: Duty to Ankh-Morpork; Enemies (various); Intolerant of kings, vampires, and anyone else he sees as preying on people; Sense of Duty to the weak and the spirit of the law.

Quirks: Despises detective stories; Dislikes royalists and subservience; Misanthropic, talks as though he is Intolerant of *everyone;* Says that no-one but himself is entitled to kill the Patrician; Secretly proud of his ancestry; Self-controlled alcoholic.

Skills: Administration-13; Area Knowledge: Ankh-Morpork-17; Brawling-14; Broadsword-12; Crossbow-13; Detect Lies-13; History-12; Riding (Horse)-11; Savoir-Faire-16 (unused); Traps-14.

Languages: Ankhian-14.

Samuel Vimes was born in Cockbill Street (see p. 89). His family has a long tradition of Watch membership and Samuel signed up more or less automatically.

He was always one of nature's Honest Coppers, never getting the hang of corruption. Some of his contemporaries worked their way up from street gangs to positions of power; he worked more sideways. Basic honesty, linked to a policeman's tendency to look closely at his surroundings, eventually drove Vimes to drink. (He has been described as being permanently slightly knurd when sober – see p. 52.) He ended up in the Night Watch, which the Patrician was filling with no-hopers to keep it from causing trouble, and became captain because no other candidates existed.

Continued on next page . . .

Sir Samuel Vimes (Continued)

However, recent events have turned Vimes completely around. He met and fell in love with Lady Sybil Ramkin, the richest woman in the city, when he consulted her about a dragon-related problem, and they married. (He still considers the money and social position to be hers, but she is an old-fashioned woman and assigned her entire property to him; thus, his nominal wealth is phenomenal, although he doesn't use it much.) At the same time, he helped foil two serious plots against the city, and so was given a knighthood, matching his rank to his position.

At first it was assumed that entry to the upper classes would remove Vimes from police work, but instead, he received the newly-resurrected position of Watch Commander. His rank and wealth mean that he moves in the highest level of city society, but many of the aristocracy can never forget his origins or forgive his blunt code of honour (all of which amuses the Patrician).

With his wife's encouragement, Vimes has sworn off the bottle. Of course, he is still technically an alcoholic, but he has discovered a greater addiction: to police work. The situations when he might be most likely to drink are precisely those when his obsession with justice drives him to keep a clear head, and he remains fully teetotal. He has also developed other useful instincts. For example, his willingness to arrest even the upper classes has led to more than one contract for the Assassins' Guild, but Vimes has survived all such assaults, partly through sheer alertness and partly by booby-trapping areas around his own home. He has not (yet) found it necessary to terminate any of his uninvited visitors; they have left chastened, but not seriously damaged. This is earning him a great deal of respect in the halls of the Assassins' Guild, which means the price on his head is going up.

Vimes remains a dedicated, if cynical and authoritarian, copper; he believes that everybody is guilty of something. The Patrician keeps him and the more amoral powers within the city in dynamic equilibrium, while within the Watch, Vimes is balanced by the more idealistic Captain Carrot.

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However, the brief problem of an invading dragon (see *Guards! Guards!*) pulled the Night Watch together, and Vetinari began to make more subtle use of Captain Vimes (see sidebar). He did fill the expanding Night Watch with racial minorities (trolls, dwarfs, and werewolves), apparently in order to keep them preoccupied with internal worries, but this had an odd side-effect; instead of falling apart, they began to define themselves as Watchmen first, anything else second. When they foiled an attempt on his life (see *Men At Arms*), the Patrician decided to go with the tide. He disbanded the Day Ward, which had long since faded to little more than a street gang, appointed Vimes to the long-defunct post of Commander and the charismatic Carrot Ironfoundersson to the rank of Captain, and fitted them into his political schemes.

The Watch has continued to recruit, and now has several subsidiary watchhouses as well as its HQ in Pseudopolis Yard. It numbers at least 30, and is still growing. (A "police procedural" campaign could have a group of PCs as a newly-recruited patrol.) It includes a remarkable number of non-humans and first-generation immigrants, perhaps because they are more likely to need work than natives who are plugged into the city's network of family connections and favours, and hence are less fussy (the Watch is still not *very* popular), perhaps because Vimes knows that they are less likely to be corrupted by that same network. Vimes has resurrected the Cable Street Particulars as a plain-clothes division, and recruited a forensic alchemist.

Vetinari continues to observe all this with apparent favour; Vimes balances the arrogance of the aristocracy and the growing power of the guilds. On the other hand, Vimes' cynicism could produce a force with little respect for the feelings or nominal rights of the mass of the population (he is happy to call the Particulars "secret police"), and although Vetinari has no particular regard for "human rights," he does know better than to push people too far. He is assisted in keeping the balance by Carrot's fresh-faced idealism; Carrot *does* believe in human rights, because they are written into the law.

Watch Equipment

Standard Watch armour includes a chain-mail shirt, a steel breastplate, and an iron and copper pot-helm. Watchmen also wear leather knee-breeches, and cheap boots in cold weather, sandals in warm (or iron boots – sollerets – for dwarfs, of course). A leather cape may be worn in the rain.

This, at least, is the theory. In fact, the Watch is equipped from the City Armoury, on the principles of Protection, Proper Fit, and Already Paid For, not necessarily in that order.

For a random Watch patrol, assume pot-helms (often removed if no trouble is expected), PD 3, DR 4 chainmail on areas 9-11 and 17-18, and miscellaneous PD 1, DR 1 gear on limbs. Those breastplates are light, granting an extra +1 DR to the front of areas 9 and 10 only but also eliminating the usual problems for chainmail vs. impaling weapons. The whole array weighs about 50-55 lbs. Given that the typical moderately competent watchman has ST about 11 or 12, most of them are likely to be carrying Medium Encumbrance – which explains why they take so many surreptitious sit-downs.

Roguish PCs may notice this and try the old tactic of Running Away Quickly, laughing as they go. Well, that's traditional for quick-witted heroes faced with lumbering guards, and shouldn't be automatically penalised. On the other hand, if they make too much of a habit of it, have them run into Constable Angua, or Captain Carrot, or just a troll watchman with a crossbow.[1] Watchmen

[1] *And remember: Some Watchmen know **all** the shortcuts.*

on light duty may be armed with oak truncheons (treat as light clubs); swords are also part of the uniform. It is very difficult to prevent dwarf watchmen from turning up for duty with their axes. Riot duty may call for a "pike" (spear) or halberd. Crossbows are standard issue when serious trouble is expected; the budget now runs to crossbows suited to individual strengths.[1] The typical watchman can be assumed to have DX about 11 or 12, and appropriate weapon skills at DX or DX+1.

Laws

Ankh-Morpork is not short of laws; it actually has about two thousand years' worth. However, they are simply not enforced. Perhaps the only person who actually knows all of the criminal law is Captain Carrot, who conscientiously taught himself the book before discovering that there wasn't much point.[2]

There *are* a large number of guild rules, mostly of a fairly commonsensical nature, plus what the Patrician defines as "natural justice." This means that if someone can get away with something, it is legal, but if the victims object with sharp implements, it is illegal, and the punishment is proportionate to the illegality. (There is also a body of Unseen University law – "The Lore" – which is enforced by the Archchancellor's Court; it deals with University administration and the practice of magic, over which the University has authority. Penalties available to the Archchancellor cover the full range.) Criminals taken by the Watch tend to get off with a fine or some small and appropriate penalty; Captain Carrot has had various bright ideas about community service, which have led to a lot of old ladies having their houses redecorated, repeatedly.

The Courts

Anyone taken by the Watch has the right to appeal to the Patrician. This may not always seem very wise, as the Patrician dislikes having his time wasted, but he is fair, in an ironic sort of way, and he sometimes finds that unconventional judgements keep everyone on their toes. Strange cases, and those which the Watch feel concern the city as a whole, are likely to be brought to his attention; of course, he will usually have heard about them already. (His intelligence-gathering system is extraordinary; not so much a spy network, more a large number of people who believe, sometimes against all experience, that he will pay them for information received.) Other cases go to guild courts, which are as formal as the guild sees fit (but guild-masters do enjoy their pomp and sense of power).

[1] *Okay, night watchmen mostly carry an hourglass and a bell, and yell "Medium-sized pile of sand and all's well!"*

[2] *He is now in a position to* ***make*** *a point of such things, if he chooses to.*

Sir Samuel Vimes (Continued)

Although he is obliged to dress to suit his position, Vimes is at his most comfortable in uniform; he claims to be able to tell where he is in Ankh-Morpork by the feel of the cobbles through the thin soles of Watch-issue boots. His wife has given him a fine-quality crossbow, which he may carry if he expects trouble; he does appreciate its reliability.

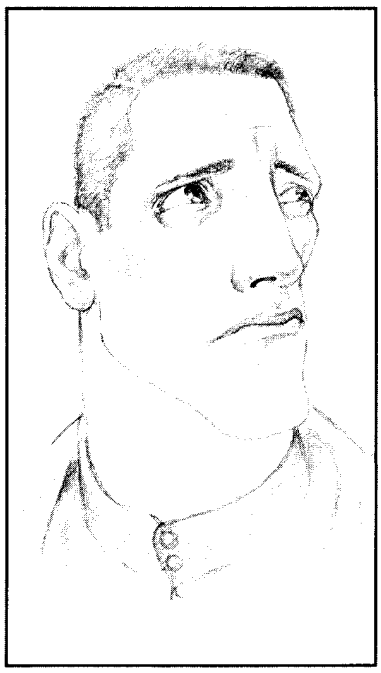
Lady Ramkin

Commander Vimes' wife was born Lady Sybil Ramkin, and retains the surname, as a title, for social convenience. She was the last heir to the richest (and in that sense noblest) family in Ankh-Morpork, and inherited a great house in Ankh (and a lot of money and investments, besides properties throughout the Plains).

She is a huge and handsome woman, although her chestnut hair is a wig (normal among those who keep swamp dragons); her family seemingly bred for rude health rather than aristocratic chinlessness. However, she directed all her considerable energy (and wealth) into her hobby: the care and breeding of swamp dragons (see p. 167). She is an acknowledged expert on this subject, and has written several books on diseases of the species (an immense topic). In game terms, her skill in anything related to swamp dragons is at least 16, and often more.

She is well known to the Watch as well as to Ankh-Morpork society. She is a tolerant, broad-minded person, not likely to be shocked by anything apart from cruelty to swamp dragons, and could become involved in all manner of events.

In games, Lady Ramkin is a wonderful device for moving things along; the combination of social status, fits of enthusiasm, and unconquerable self-confidence acts as a bolt-on motor for any plot. Characters with the Hard of Hearing disadvantage can hear her, too. Her contacts are enough to protect her from many dangers, but she would not bother her husband, the Watch, or her fellow aristocrats without good reason.



Captain Carrot Ironfoundersson

ST 19, **DX** 16, **IQ** 13, **HT** 16

Speed 8, Move 7 (in armour)
Dodge 7, Parry 9 (sword)

Advantages: Charisma +4; Combat Reflexes; Contacts (miscellaneous); Disease-Resistant; Fully Literate; Language Talent +1; Legal Enforcement Powers; Patron: the Patrician; Rank +4; Reputation: +1 among honest Ankh-Morporkians (small group); Status +2; Strong Will +4; Toughness: +1 DR; Unusual Background (Dwarf Upbringing).

Disadvantages: Duty to the Watch; Honesty; Odious Personal Habit: Boring about Ankh-Morpork history and geography; Reputation: -2 among a few Ankh-Morporkian criminals; Secret (possible royal status); Sense of Duty to Ankh-Morpork; Truthfulness.

Quirks: Has "an understanding" with Angua; Somewhat literal-minded; Says that he's a dwarf "by adoption;" Swears in asterisks if at all; Teetotal; Writes home regularly.

Skills: Area Knowledge: Ankh-Morpork-16; Axe/Mace-16; Brawling-18; Broadsword-18; Engineer (Mining)-13; Geology-12; History-13; Law-18; Throwing-18.

Languages: Ankhian-14; Dwarfish-14.

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Anyone caught up in the system may hire a member of the Guild of Lawyers if they so wish; this is also recommended for anyone involved in a civil case, especially as these are now judged by the Guild. This is an expensive process; the Thieves' Guild regard the Lawyers with terrified awe, as they make a lot more money than the thieves while being a lot less honest, and still have higher social standing. Judges are senior lawyers, appointed by the Patrician; as they are on fixed public salaries, this means a drop in income, unless they get flagrant with their bribe-taking, so Vetinari finds it a useful threat to use against lawyers.

Major Punishments

Ankh-Morpork has a small prison, mainly for holding unusual cases temporarily, but the city takes a medieval view of the subject – that prisons are a drain on the state and a school for criminals – and prefers floggings and the like. One ancient and rarely-used punishment is to tie the miscreant to one of the pillars of the Brass Bridge at low tide, then to untie him one day later. There also used to be a public gallows, to terrify potential criminals into virtue; as in our world's history, such policies completely failed to accomplish this, but provided a lot of entertainment for the masses. (The gallows still stands, though, by Hide Park, in Ankh, with a wooden dummy on it for show and to confuse the ravens.)

Which is not to say that the city has abandoned the death penalty; it is certainly much enforced on, say, non-Guild thieves and people the Patrician considers an unalloyed problem, but *informally.* Acknowledged capital crimes these days are treachery to the city, continuing to commit murder after being told not to, irredeemable stupidity while not being a troll, and persistent street theatre.

Armed Forces

". . . any barbarians who want to conquer the place are welcome; they are likely to end up being sold a bunch of souvenirs."

Strangely enough, Ankh-Morpork doesn't have an army. The Watch is purely a law-enforcement body (and the old Patrician's Guard just guarded the Patrician). Nothing more seems to be necessary. The usual comment in the city is that any barbarians who want to conquer the place are welcome; they are likely to end up being sold a bunch of souvenirs. Historically, this was largely true, but today, the Sto Plains are too densely populated for barbarian hordes to reach the city without tripping over a **lot** of cabbages on the way.

The other cities and duchies of the region might be a greater threat, but in fact, the Sto Plains has little serious warfare these days. There is simply too much trade, and people know that you can't sell things to a corpse, even that of an old trading partner who was also a cousin.

The traditional Ankh-Morpork military system, in the old days, was basically feudal; the city has lots of aristocrats, and each of them could, given an excuse, raise a few regiments of personal troops. (As usual in a feudal system, this made kingship a tricky business of alliance-juggling and favour-rationing.) The Militia, which could be called up by royal command, was more of an emergency law-enforcement force than anything else. Like most Ankh-Morpork laws and traditions, all this has fallen into disuse rather than being formally repealed. The essentially libertarian nature of Ankh-Morpork distrusts any large body of men paid to hang around with weapons. They might get bored.

The Guilds

Ankh-Morpork contains somewhere over three hundred medieval-style guilds. A guild has a very broad scope: it controls not only who may practice its particular trade, but who may learn the trade in the first place, who the practitioners may hire and fire, where they may set up their businesses, how much they may charge, what standards apply to the production, quality, and advertisement of the good or service provided, and almost anything else that the administrators think of.

This is considered a Good Thing, at least by those who have received their Guild memberships. The guild normally charges a tithe (ten percent of gross income), and provides protection for its members from unfair competition, leakage of trade secrets, and ordinary crime. A large guild is effectively a society of its own; many guilds-folk have no social contacts outside their profession.

It is essential for visitors to understand that the Guilds protect their territory absolutely. Freelancing in a Guild-regulated profession is not acceptable, and this includes crime, begging, and assassination. The Guilds have enforcement powers, and act as their own courts.

Almost all schools in Ankh-Morpork are guild-operated, not least because almost all advanced knowledge is considered the private property of one guild or another. Most hospices are also operated by guilds, for the medical care of members and their families.

Ordinary Trade Guilds

The vast majority of the guilds deal with unremarkable commercial activities – mostly small-handicrafts manufacture, with a scattering of service industries. Butchers, bakers, haberdashers and rat-catchers all have guilds. GMs should bear in mind the state of local technology; for example, the Engravers' Guild concern themselves with printing, because moveable type has not been invented (or more accurately, is suppressed by agreement between UU and the Patrician). Some guilds have a broader ambit than their name implies; for example, the Embalmers' Guild also numbers undertakers and grave-diggers among its members.

Some guilds run formal schools for junior members (like the Assassins and the Clowns, only usually less so); others (such as the Seamstresses) believe in on-the-job training.[1] Those that do run schools can at least be trusted to produce fairly consistent standards of workmanship,[2] and have a care for their image (the embalmers teach young grave-diggers philosophy, morbid humour and ventriloquism). Others, at their worst, devolve into protection rackets (as happened with the Musicians).

[1] *The business of the Seamstresses' Guild, by the way, has nothing to do with needles or thread.*

[2] *Although the plumbers teach unreliability and procrastination.*

Captain Carrot (Continued)

Carrot Ironfoundersson was brought up by the "king" of a dwarf community in the Ramtops, having been discovered by them as a baby amidst the remains of a human travelling-party that had been wiped out by bandits. Affectionate but practical dwarfish family life, lots of mountain air, hard work down the mine, and good plain food, produced a young man who was built like a tree; it did not, however, produce a dwarf. Come puberty, this looked set to cause social problems, so someone suggested that he seek his fortune in human society. Rumour, centuries out of date, suggested the Ankh-Morpork City Watch offered an admirable career.

When Carrot arrived in the city, he still possessed absolute dwarfish Literal-Mindedness (p. 56), and had spent the trip from the mountains memorising the laws of the city. As the Night Watch was then at its lowest ebb, this led to what is known as conceptual dissonance; Carrot persistently tried to arrest thieves and enforce laws.

However, a couple of problems appeared for which his talents proved a useful solution, and gradually, he learned to understand people in general and Ankh-Morpork in particular a little better. What emerged through this was a mind of peculiar precision; Carrot tends to solve problems by direct but very effective means, uncluttered by presuppositions. Thus, when the Watch were reorganised, Carrot was made a Captain.

Carrot's true ancestry remains generally unknown, but a number of people have observed his amazing, apparently congenital charisma, the old but very effective sword that was found with him by the dwarfs, perhaps the crown-shaped birthmark somewhere on his person, and his instinctive love for Ankh-Morpork. Thus, they strongly suspect that he may be the rightful king of the city. There has even been, allegedly, documentary evidence to prove this. However, Carrot himself takes the view that kings are not what the city needs these days, and has destroyed any such documents that he can get his hands on.

Carrot is 6'6" tall (but walks with a slight stoop due to his mine upbringing), and has short red hair. His clean-living nature is such that he can actually swear audibly in asterisks ("Oh, *****!"), on the rare occasions when he shows that much annoyance. He is romantically involved with Constable Angua (p. 79).

Other Watchmen

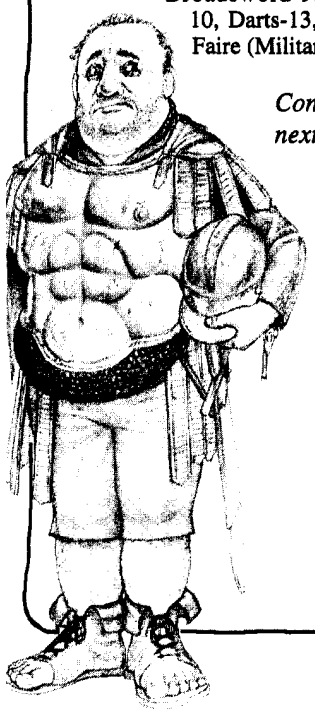
Sergeant Colon

In another life, Frederick Colon might have become a pork butcher or a school-teacher; as it was, he joined an army somewhere on the Sto Plains, and rose to his natural rank of sergeant. (He's not any sort of warrior; overweight, steady, pipe-smoking, perspiration-prone individuals just fit neatly into the backwaters of NCO duty.) He subsequently signed up with the Night Watch, where he spent thirty years. His wife works days while he works nights, so they communicate mostly by notes, but somehow they have produced a family.

He is often found guarding the Brass Bridge or the Opera House. They might be hard to steal, but any bold thief who tries will have to deal with Fred Colon. He avoids combat; as he can't run, he mostly spends time thinking about safe choices. He did win prizes for archery in his youth.

The recent changes in the Watch have left him trailing, but his steadiness has helped with new recruits. However, he is pushing sixty, and has been thinking of retiring. He was talking about buying a farm in the country, despite his complete ignorance of agronomy, but a recent traumatic experience in the Ankh-Morpork cattleyards apparently changed his mind, and he has somehow obtained a new post on traffic duty instead.

He has ST 8, DX 10, IQ 11, and HT 9, with Area Knowledge: Ankh-Morpork-12, Bow-13, Brawling-9, Broadsword-9, Crossbow-10, Darts-13, and Savoir-Faire (Military)-14.



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The Merchants' Guild

Oddly enough, the Merchants' Guild is the newest in the city. Once upon a time, people professionally involved in buying and selling used to look down on guilds, which they saw as dubious clubs for suppliers, seeking monopolistic advantage in the naturally dog-eat-dog, free-booting world of commerce. Then, with the invention of tourism and a growth in communications, some brighter merchants discovered the benefits of alliance.

Part of the inspiration was the nuisance caused by the Disc's tradition of heroism, which is largely thievery with a bigger sword.

PCs who wish to conduct occasional trade will probably have no problems with the Guild; anyone who seems set on taking it up full-time will generally receive a pointed invitation to join. (Of course, influential guild members *may* seek to warp the system in their own favour.) Guild members dealing with non-members in the City may receive +1 to Merchant skill, due to their knowledge of obscure Guild regulations. Those who try to rob Guild merchants, save under the terms of the Thieves' Guild charter, may be severely dealt with.

The Assassins' Guild

The Assassins' Guild has been a long time evolving, but its modern form is a recent creation, encouraged by the Patrician. It has a beautiful, airy guildhall on Filigree Street, resembling a gentleman's club, but incorporating the best school on the Disc. Its weathervane displays a creeping man in a long cloak. The tower clock is set slightly behind every other clock in the city, as a reminder that whoever you are, you may find the Assassins behind you.

Although the gentlemanly aspect of the guild goes back years, it was previously much underplayed, and the name was mostly used by a bunch of scar-faced throat-cutters. The high-class Assassins doubtless ignored these people as beneath their contempt. Today, however, there is only one Assassins' Guild; one must guess that Vetinari persuaded the gentlemen that their image was being sullied. (Although large-scale elimination of members of the lower orders is not this guild's style, a combination of their knowledge and Vetinari's political skills would have gone through a bunch of thugs like a highly precise tornado through a cornfield.)

Today, someone with a little cash can still find hired killers in the Shades, but these never dare call themselves Assassins. It is also firmly believed by members of the Thieves' Guild that, if they are clumsy enough to turn a mugging into murder, the Assassins take offence at the demarcation problem, and come round to say goodbye; but again, this really sounds too sordid for them. (It is probably a rumour that they spread to keep competition under control, encouraged by the Patrician.) The Assassins have no strong opinions on ordinary murder (beyond thinking that it is usually amateurish); it is murder **for hire** that they monopolise.

Within their guildhall is one of the largest libraries in the city, its collections unsurpassed in its speciality areas.[1] The Guild in fact offers the best general education anywhere on the Disc. An Assassin must be at home in any social environment, able to perform his task with grace and taste as well as technical competence. Only about one in fifteen Guild novices actually becomes an Assassin; most boys are sent there for the education. Sons of dead Assassins receive a free scholarship.

[1] *Anatomy, poisons, concealable edged weapons, Death and Death Studies.*

Female students are not accepted. However, the Guild acknowledges that many of the finest Assassins are women, and the school does have female instructors.[1]

Assassins are by far the most stylish of all the guilds. They are always dressed in fine black (teachers wear a purple sash). Not to be well-dressed when killing someone would be almost as bad as botching the job, though not nearly as bad as not being paid.

This is important. The Guild saying is: "We do not kill merely for a handful of silver. It's a lapful of gold or nothing." The Guild charges very high fees (reflecting the value they place on human life) and for an Assassin to work for free would be the gravest breach of the rules.

See p. 98 for details of this fee structure, and p. 52 for details of the Code of Honour that the vast majority of Assassins obey.

The Thieves' Guild

The Guild of Thieves, Burglars, and Allied Trades, like the Assassins' Guild, is a recent organisation of an old practice. It claims descent from various mobs and gangs that existed in the city from time immemorial, but its current form was (again) actually inspired by Lord Vetinari.

His idea was based on the belief that, if Ankh-Morpork was going to have crime, it really ought to be *organised* crime. He put this to various persons, who were happy to accept an annual quota of tolerated crime – a level of burglary, robbery, and so forth – that lay within acceptable social limits. They, of course, assumed that they could exploit this system for a few years, then drop back into their old ways if it all started getting inconvenient.

By the time they discovered that Vetinari had found out their names and addresses, and those of their families, mistresses, and favourite eating-houses, it was too late. They were not arrested; they trapped themselves, growing fat and happy as pillars of the community. The line between criminal and tradesmen in Ankh-Morpork had often seemed thin; today, it has simply disappeared.

Guild crimes are subcontracted to individual members or groups by the Guild administration. The quota is spread fairly, so that all members receive an adequate income, unprofitable crime (robbing bankrupt businesses, for example) is avoided, and all citizens are subject to a strictly limited amount of crime per year.

Many citizens arrange to fulfil their quota at a convenient time and place – for instance, one might be robbed at knifepoint in the early evening, in one's side garden, with property damage specified as that awful garden ornament one was given last Hogswatchnight – and spend the rest of the year in perfect safety. Some people, with less foresight, have difficulty accepting muggings as a civic duty, but this is to be expected in a free society.

Naturally, private criminal enterprise represents a danger to this system, and the Guild works swiftly and dramatically against it, generally in a manner that provides a lesson to other would-be freelancers, as well as to students of anatomy.[2]

[1] *Guild admission for women is a form of honorary degree, conferred on those of proven ability.*

[2] *This is considered a matter of internal discipline, and so is of no interest to the Assassins' Guild.*

Other Watchmen (Continued)

Corporal Nobbs

Cecil Wormsborough St John ("Nobby") Nobbs was born and brought up in an Ankh-Morpork cellar, but spent a period in the army of the Duke of Pseudopolis. Unfortunately, they made him their quartermaster.

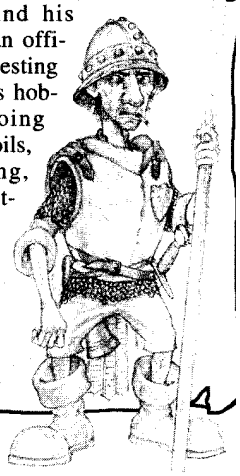
Normally, Nobby restricts himself to petty theft, but he is *instinctively* dishonest; he allegedly stole the entire inventory. Following the disintegration of that force, he moved home and joined the Watch. He rose to the rank of corporal, which suits him; in a force with more regulations, he would become a barrack-room lawyer.

He has remained in the Watch despite its recent improvements; it is loyal to its members, and he now shares traffic work with Fred Colon. Nobby gets on well with people, despite everything; they tend to see him as "colourful." Even the rest of the Watch almost like him, although whenever a crime appears to be the work of a warped criminal mind, they do wonder.

Nobby has one principle: Never Volunteer. He has dived head-first through a window sooner than accept responsibility. There is some evidence that he is actually the rightful Earl of Ankh, but since he learned that this might imply *duties,* he has ignored it.

He has ST 8, DX 11, IQ 10, and HT 9, with Area Knowledge (Ankh-Morpork)-12, Armoury/TL3-10, Artist-8, Crossbow-11, Dance (Rustic)-10, Darts-13, Filch-14, Gunner/-Arbalest-11, Holdout-11, Savoir-Faire (Military)-12, Scrounging-10, Starglazing-11, and Stealth-13. (He is a weapons enthusiast, not a fighter.)

He is about 4' tall (shorter than many dwarfs), pigeon-chested, moves at the sidle, talks out of the corner of his mouth, and stores cigarette ends behind his ears; he carries an official document attesting his humanity. His hobbies include doing tricks with his boils, country dancing, historical re-enactment, and painting (probably just because of the nude models).



Assassins' Guild Rates

The Assassins' Guild sets a wide range of charges, but is never cheap. The absolute minimum appears to be $200,000 (ten thousand Ankh-Morpork dollars). The last stated price on Commander Vimes' head was $400,000, but following injuries to several competent assassins, and a bloody nose for the head of the Guild himself, this was set to rise. These rates may seem impossibly high, but there is a huge diversity of personal wealth in Ankh-Morpork.

Incidentally, the price on the Patrician's head is $20,000,000 – a million Ankh-Morpork dollars. This reflects both the Guild's sense that his survival may be desirable, and their guess as to the difficulty of the task. It is also rumoured that they would charge *more* to guarantee that he *stayed* dead.

The Assassin's Salute

Assassins' Guild members salute each other casually by pressing the right thumb against the first two fingers of the right hand, and rubbing gently.

Disorganised Crime in the City

Not all crime in Ankh-Morpork is sanctioned by the Thieves' Guild; so long as a villain is discreet, and restricts his actions to people without much social standing – or leaves them unable to complain, ever – it is possible to make a living as a freelance miscreant. There are also always a few new arrivals from out of town, idiots, and inadequates, whose best chance is that the Watch will catch them before the Guild does.

And, of course, once in a while, a genuinely extraordinary rogue shows up and keeps ahead of *everyone,* for a while.

For game purposes, this has several implications. For one, the Shades contains any number of surly thugs who don't respect possession of a Guild receipt, and who can be used to keep things interesting for visitors. For another, PCs or NPCs with a little nerve and cash and the need can always acquire the services of such heavies, as the plot may require. And if the PCs decide to take up freelance crime – well, it is up to the GM to decide which category they belong in.

This has all become rather formalised, even ritualised, but being a Guild, the thieves nonetheless ensure that a proper system of training and promotions is in place, and are entirely competent in their field.

The Beggars' Guild

This is the oldest guild in the city. It is also, allegedly, the wealthiest, since its central principle is not to pay cash for anything that someone can be persuaded to give you. The Guild antedates the other guilds by centuries at least, and indeed probably originated five minutes after the first hunter-gatherer came back from hunting-gathering with more than he could consume on the spot.

The Guild has a large, and to the uninitiated, bewildering system of types and degrees of beggary (Mumblers, Streetcorner Shouters, People Who Need Tuppence for a Tea, etc.). The current leader of the guild is Queen Molly, a sharp but essentially good-natured woman who does rather well considering that the Guild's traditional hierarchy obliges her to ask for nothing less than full banquets, with wine and spirits.

In practical terms, the beggar's living is earned in two ways: begging and not begging. Begging we will assume the reader is familiar with. Not begging as a career involves having a distinctive appearance, an exceptional aroma, or what ***GURPS*** refers to as Odious Personal Habits, that others will gladly pay not to experience close up. Not begging at people's parties is especially profitable.[1]

See p. 206 for a holiday portrait of some leading Guild members.

The Fools' Guild

The "Guild of Fools and Joculators and College of Clowns" maintains what is probably the grimmest guildhall on the Disc, dank and silent except for the occasional whimper of a student learning that dying is never easier than when you're trying for comedy. This makes a depressing contrast to the modern, cultured guildhall next door, which belongs to the Assassins. It has stern rules about what is or isn't funny, and regards original humour as nearly blasphemous. Only the greatest clowns may invent jokes.

Visitors to the Guild should watch out for the small details that members regard as necessary symbols of their art (buckets over the door, trick buttonhole flowers) but these are invariably rather predictable. Guild ceremonies, even funerals, involve a lot of stock routines and custard.

The Guild President is known as Dr. Whiteface, though it is not known whether this is a specific clown or the name used by whoever has risen to the job.

Food, Drink and Lodging

Ankh-Morpork derives a lot of income from visitors. There are a great many rooms-to-let available, a variety of food shops and restaurants, and countless places for a drink and a brawl.[2] The following are a few establishments of some interest in the city, together with their classifications under the system given on p. 20. The GM may want to save establishments such as the Drum for specific encounters.

[1] *The citizen pays the Guild a small fee, and no beggars show up.*

[2] *The brawl may be included with the cover price.*

The Mended (or Broken) Drum

The Mended Drum, on Filigree Street, is an Ankh-Morpork institution (especially if "institution" is defined to mean "a place where there's lots of screaming, and people with funny ideas about reality"). It is a *well* established hostelry. It has burned down many times, but somehow, it always gets rebuilt. At times, it has been known as The Broken Drum ("you can't beat it," ho ho), then re-named after the next fire by a new owner with a quick sense of humour.

The Drum opens directly onto the street, the door being guarded by a troll; it backs on the River Ankh. Steps lead down to the main room, which is thick with the smoke of generations, and whose floor is paved with matted rushes and trampled beetles, many of otherwise un-encountered species. There are also a few rather insalubrious, but just tolerable, rooms for rent upstairs.

The inn serves something identified as beer; food might be available, though the request would be considered odd. The real point of visiting the Drum is its clientele. It is said that if you spend enough time here, every major hero on the Disc will steal your horse. It is also a favourite haunt of student wizards from the University, who tend to sit in a corner, nursing one drink all night and hoping that their pointy hats will scare off trouble.

It should be understood that the Drum has its own particular sort of indelicate decorum. There will certainly be brawls; that is part of the ambience. People sometimes get killed, but not maliciously. Children are not at great risk (except of expanding their vocabulary), nor are maidens (unless that is the maiden's idea); any ruckus is strictly confined to consenting adults. (Still, entering the bar may be considered *de facto* evidence of consent.) There are even quiet nights, usually after some incident (an invasion, a dragon attack) has given everyone enough excitement for a few days, when the owner may even set out bowls of peanuts on the bar (unless of course the Librarian is expected).

The Drum has changed ownership many times. Any attempt to redecorate usually means a new owner will be along soon; it is difficult to change anything on the Disc that has been around long enough to develop a personality. The current owner is Hibiscus Dunelm.

Incidentally, one of Dunelm's temporary mistakes was trying to organise some entertainment in the Drum. Unfortunately, the customers decided that anyone standing up on stage was a legitimate target, the Librarian took to throwing peanut shells, and the place is now blacklisted by every entertainment guild in the city.

It can be placed in class 4, if anyone needs to know, or perhaps class 3 – but somehow "Ordinary" doesn't seem the right word.

Biers

This hostelry is in one of the marginally safer parts of the Shades; it used to be called the Crown and Axe. It does not now, strictly speaking, have a name; "Biers" is more of a nickname. It doesn't even have a sign outside; there is a sense that people who belong there will somehow manage to find it, and those who don't, won't. PCs who actively go looking for it will need an Area Knowledge or Streetwise roll at -4, unless they *belong* (at the GM's option), in which case IQ+3 will suffice.

Troll and Dwarf Bars

Since the non-human population of Ankh-Morpork started rising, a number of establishments have opened to cater to their needs. Dwarf bars are much like their human counterparts, but with lower ceilings (dwarfs mostly being born down mines, this makes them feel at home); humans over about 5'6" must walk bent over (and hence perform any action that requires speed or agility at penalty). They serve beer in huge quantities, and tend to have rugged furniture and decor, as the axes fly most evenings. Humans will not actually be ejected, but will get a lot of funny looks, and any conversation from them containing the words "short," "low," or "small" will be interpreted as racial insults meriting armed response. Any troll who entered such a place would be recorded as a suicide.

Trolls drink molten or liquefied minerals, and are intoxicated by sulphur. Thus, a troll drinking den is perforce a hot place. It must also be built ruggedly, and a human entering would have the sense of being in a cave in the side of a volcano, complete with the grinding sounds of unstable geology. As a troll bar is unlikely to serve anything that a human could imbibe, such a visitor would be assumed to be there on some errand, and would be viewed with a distant, dull, faintly hostile curiosity.

Larger and more ambitious human bars in Ankh-Morpork serve troll drinks, although the range may not be good. Trolls and dwarfs are tolerated as customers in such places; both are, frankly, often seen as likely trouble, but the grief involved in refusing them service is almost as bad as the trouble they might cause once in, and more certain.

Lowest Dives

The Troll's Head: Somewhere in the Shades is a tavern, whose sign consists of a real troll's head, on a pole. The customers are not acceptable in the Mended Drum, and can deal with any trolls who feel like complaining about the sign. It's definitely class 5 (as per p. 20).

There are also some bars in the Shades that are downright nameless, and again class 5 in most ways. These are places where the lowest levels of the underworld go to do business. They are actually safe enough for anyone who is there for what the denizens see as legitimate reasons; after all, the whole point is that people should be able to meet and talk as necessary. Anyone else will be highly unlikely to make it out of the door breathing.

It does not really fit in the standard classification system, but at a pinch, it could be called class 3. Its speciality is that it serves beings who do not really fit in any other bar; undead, werewolves, and anthropomorphic personifications are regular customers. They make this a rather sinister-seeming place, although it is patronised by tooth fairies as well as bogeymen. Biers never closes, and the lighting is kept low.

It also serves *things* that you would not find in most bars. The barman, Igor, makes a point of keeping everything his customers might want to order, within the limits set by Ankh-Morpork's very broad legal and moral system. He is flamboyant enough to decorate some of the drinks he serves; some of the decorations are a little startling (Fright Checks optional). Still, you can also obtain fruit juices and conventional booze, too; not all the customers want blood. There is no food, apart from bar-top snacks that one wouldn't wish to talk about.

Igor himself seems to be human, apart from a bit too much hair and eyebrows that meet in the middle, and the fact that he seems to mind the bar twenty-four hours a day. He sets a few *ad hoc* rules for customers, which keep the place viable; these boil down to "no use of excessive supernatural powers, and no brawling." It is actually a very safe bar in that sense. Any "normals" who do somehow wander in, usually wander out again very briskly, but if they stay, they are unlikely to suffer worse than cold looks, and the clientele are unlikely even to follow them and rend them limb from limb, unless they actually make trouble. (There is even one regular local "normal" – old, nearly-blind Mrs. Gammage, who hasn't realised that the place has changed since her youth, and who has been adopted as a mascot by the other regulars.) But the stares in Biers – and some of the drinks that you can get with a misjudged order – are, well, serious.

The Bucket

The Bucket, technically a class 3 hostelry, run by a Mr. Cheese, is not especially highly regarded, although there is nothing actively wrong with it. It serves mediocre beer and a few other drinks, but no food; it almost defines "ordinary," except that customers are certain *not* to get rolled here, which is extraordinary by Disc standards.

Its crucial feature is simply that it has become the favoured haunt of the City Watch, who appreciate a quiet, boring place which gives credit. As they are good customers who do not damage the furniture, this is fine with Mr. Cheese.

Non-Watch drinkers who enter the Bucket will not find any trouble, unless they bring it with them, but the atmosphere may seem a little cool. It will get a lot cooler if they look like typical roistering, brawling adventurers (i.e. work for the other drinkers). If they simply drop in for a quiet drink, however, that's their business. Coming here to find Watch members, for adventure-related purposes, is considered very bad manners – the drinkers here are *off duty* – but will lead to silence and scowls rather than a fight. Delivering genuinely urgent messages is fair enough, but don't expect thanks.

The Gritz

The Gritz is a *hotel,* not a bar; its main business is its bedrooms, plus a well-regarded restaurant, not selling drinks. And in fact, its customers think highly of it; it could be considered class 1 or 2.

However, those customers are virtually all trolls. Members of other species aren't likely to be impressed by the range of unusual clays in the restaurant, and will worry about the floor coverings. (They are soft and they are on the floor, but are they carpet?) And, of course, the staff and other guests take a trollish approach to life. Thus, for most purposes, the Gritz is class 4 or 5, with rip-off prices.

IN THE NAME OF THE LORE

Danger Zones

Areas of excessive Residual Magic vary in area from the county-sized region dominated by the Wyrmberg (p. 28) to small and deceptively lush clearings in old-growth forests. The only sure way to judge their exact extent is by experiment or appropriate spells, and it is perfectly possible to wander into danger without realising it, but there are often indicators. All such zones can and should be custom-designed by the GM, with their own attributes and quirks, including possible warnings.

The most obvious include a greasy feel to the air, and small stray sparks of various colours (including octarine) appearing around people's fingernails. These may be obvious to all parties (a *very* strong sign), or only noted by observers with Magery. Slightly less self-evident, but usually quickly noticeable, are distortions in the fabric of probability; coins landing on their edges, flying pork (living or cooked), and so on.

Other indicators are the long-term effects of the magic. These can be either natural or architectural. Natural effects may again be blatant (six-legged rabbits, teleporting ducks), or they may only be obvious to someone who makes a roll against Naturalist or some other appropriate skill, or at least IQ (bushes with the wrong type of fruit, birds who sing perfect scales). GMs should be imaginative rather than cruel. (Apples filled with prussic acid are boring; apples loaded with lysergic acid are interesting.)

Lastly, architectural indicators are the result of humans (or other races) being foolish enough to exploit the power of the effect. The traditional witch's gingerbread cottage needs lots of magic to stay intact; rather less amusing are the Twisted Blasphemous Chthonic Temples, dedicated to Unspeakable Beings From Beyond Sanity. Such Beings are most likely to show up in these sorts of area (needing the magic for sustenance, or the associated weak dimensional barriers for ease of manifestation), and somehow they always seem to acquire a fan club with a taste for heavy, dank pillars and lots of cellar space.

Magic is everywhere on the Discworld. Also above, below, to either side, and through.

This chapter looks at it as a force and a social factor, with especial reference to Unseen University, the Disc's leading thaumaturgic institution. The next chapter deals with game-mechanical aspects.

The Basics

Essentially, Discworld magic is part of the fundamental structure of the universe, and explains the way things work on the invisible level – somewhat like quantum mechanics in our world. This "Intrinsic Magic" can be stored (in, say, a wizard's staff) and changed into various forms, including solid matter, but even individuals who can use it directly – Sourcerers – cannot create or destroy it.

It can also lie around in dangerous puddles, because it doesn't generally decay with time. Specific sources may be temporarily depleted, but unless they are actually destroyed, they will recharge, usually very quickly. This is because magic is not a substance, like a fossil fuel; it is a condition of change in the nature of reality.

Residual Magic is the thaumaturgical equivalent of radioactive waste. Most of it occurs in areas blasted by the long-ago Mage Wars (see p. 107). Areas such as the Wyrmberg are saturated with leftover magic. The result is that even the Discworld's patchy natural laws often do not apply at all. Creatures exist that oughtn't, and magical artefacts of the Man Wasn't Meant To level can come into existence.

In ***GURPS*** terms, zones of Residual Magic count as Very High Mana areas (with complications – see sidebar); the rest of the Disc is merely a High Mana area. Wizards can make deliberate use of residual magic, in somewhat the same manner that gasoline can be used to put out small fires. Mostly, though, the energy that powers spells is either drawn from across the entire cosmos, or, for those in a hurry, it comes from *outside.*

> ***"Wizards can make deliberate use of residual magic, in somewhat the same manner that gasoline can be used to put out small fires."***

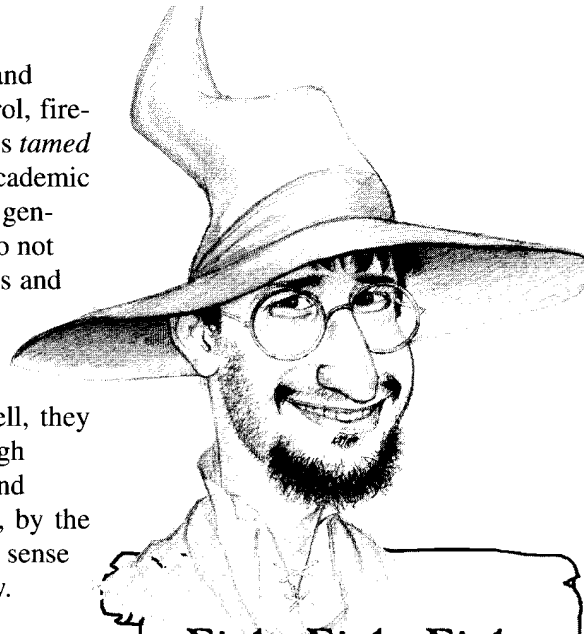
The latter is where the danger lies. Because magic tinkers with the nature of things, it always tends to weaken the structure of reality; zones of Residual Magic have particularly thin barriers. And there are a lot of unpleasant things that want to come *through.* The worst are the Things from the Dungeon Dimensions (see p. 157).

Induced Magic is an oddity, created by usage and belief. It is unusual in that it can be used by people who are not necessarily magically skilled. And since it works outside the academic mindset of University wizards, they often neglect its power, or are contemptuous of it – "Bunch of superstitious peasants, believing in a magic sword!"

On the Disc, belief is a force in itself. And there is plenty of magical energy floating around, so even something that begins as a "mere folk belief" will eventually gather a convincing quantity of power. Folk rituals actually start doing what people only wished they could do – and acquire the appropriate penalties for improper use. Objects may or may not pick up true supernatural powers, but they *will* tend to become archetypes of themselves: a sword will seem more and more like the ideal of what a sword ought to be.

Mostly, though, magic is the stuff used by wizards and witches, and consists of manipulating intrinsic magic to practical ends: weather control, fireballs, making the salt disappear from the dinner table. In other words, it is *tamed* magic. It has a huge body of rules and principles – written down in academic texts in the case of those of wizards, passed down by word of mouth and general tradition among witches. What students (and many senior experts) do not realise is that these are less laws of nature than they are laws for witches and wizards. They enable to raw power of magic to be tapped and manipulated without too many people's heads exploding.

Really powerful witches and wizards are those who have realised that all rules are merely guidelines. They can do anything because, well, they know they can do anything. In game terms, their skills are high enough that they can cast magic quickly and with few special requirements, and their range of spells is huge. However, the system has evolved so that, by the time someone *really* understands this, they have also learned the good sense not to over-use the power. Well, usually. In eight cases out of ten, anyway.



Eight Eight Eight

The number eight is crucial to the supernatural in the Disc's universe. Wizards inscribe Octograms, the colour of magic is Octarine (the eighth colour of the spectrum) which is perceived by octagons in an adept's eye, and so on. Thus, in any game plot where magic and numbers are important, eight should be important, or significant by its absence.

Note, incidentally, that eight is both a crucial number and an unlucky one. Being slightly inherently magical, it tends to attract the attention of the Things from the Dungeon Dimensions. Thus, although wizards must often work with it, they tend to be superstitiously (but rationally) careful of actually *mentioning* it. It can, incidentally, **usually** be mentioned without fear by laymen.

Conservation Laws

Discworld magic often seems to include the sort of basic "conservation" laws that underlie physics in our own universe. For example, levitation effects may be easier if one causes a heavy object to fall to balance one's own rise, and telekinesis may take the form of leverage, with consequent pressure on the user's brain. All of this is somewhat approximate, from the layman's viewpoint, and often disregarded. However, it is a significant part of the flavour of magic in the chronicles. In game terms, GMs can attach a "conservation" effect to any spell that seems to need one, and can *certainly* impose such effects on *new* spells, should PC wizards get that far into research.

Types of Spell-Casters

Wizards

Discworld wizardry is largely an academic endeavour. The principal school is Unseen University, in Ankh-Morpork, though there are a number of other magical colleges around the Disc. As far as Unseen graduates are concerned, these other schools are the equivalent of those advertisements in the back of magazines that offer to sell the Wisdom of the Ancients by mail for $29.95.

Unseen University has established eight formal branches of magic, and eight grades of proficiency. Other schools claim to offer up to the twenty-first grade; there is nothing in most law-books to prevent a wizard from claiming that he is of any grade he chooses – unless you believe that old saying about wizards with Unseen University diplomas being subtle and quick to anger, and leaving uppity correspondence-school wizards soggy and hard to light.

(Well, Unseen University does have some remarkably medieval stuff in its statutes about falsely claiming to be a wizard, but this is only usually likely to be invoked if the faculty had a bad night last night. And in any case, University law is only generally applied within the grounds of the University, and only even nominally respected within Ankh-Morpork. Also, a generous interpretation would say that it only covered people falsely claiming Unseen University qualifications.)

Wizardry is not a subtle sort of magic; senior wizards by and large have a got-it, flaunt-it attitude, and are much given to throwing energy in various forms and turning annoying persons into amphibians. However, junior wizards who are seriously interested in the high-power stuff are more into research than application (the way that most nuclear physicists are interested in linear accelerators, not bombs), while most older and less intense wizards have long since discovered the joys of administration (which is power with a lot less responsibility) or really large dinners.

Props

Much Discworld magic seems to involve a lot of candles, bizarre culinary ingredients, and expensive jewellery. Wizards are the worst offenders in this, but some witches are almost as bad, particularly if that is their own way of maintaining their image. Most of these props are specific to the spell being cast, but there are a few standard items.

The Wizard's Staff

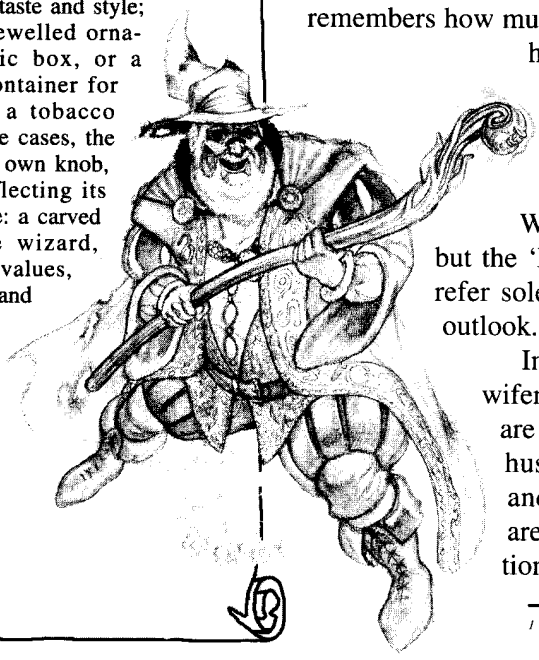
A wizard's staff is an energy storage device, a mark of status, a support while taking long meditative walks, and, if necessary, six feet of bashing weapon. The typical staff is made of oak or ash. Sapient pearwood is the most desirable of materials, as its magical capacity is enormous, but this material has become very rare (see p. 129).

A few wizards have had metal staffs, such as the sourcerer Coin's, which was of octiron. They hold a very adequate charge of energy, and are certainly durable, but the magic in such staffs tends to become corrupt.

A staff may be handed down through several generations of wizards. With enough time and use, it can develop a kind of consciousness, and a personality, of its own.

A wizard's staff has a knob on the end. This is the title of a popular folk song, as well as a fact. Wizards don't understand why people find the song so amusing; well, of course the staff has a knob on the end, so what?

The knob reflects the wizard's personal taste and style; it may be a jewelled ornament, a music box, or a waterproof container for matches and a tobacco pouch. In some cases, the staff grows its own knob, in a shape reflecting its history and use: a carved image of the wizard, something he values, or, for twisted and nasty sorcerers, something twisted and nasty.



Witches

Witchcraft on the Disc is practised exclusively by women. (There is occasional mention of warlocks, which seems to mean male witches, but no-one has ever seen one; the concept seems to be a bit like anti-matter – an opposite to normal reality which must logically exist, but of which it is rather hard to imagine the creation.) Witches are mostly solitary, and certainly do not form colleges. "Covens" are rare, and nothing like what rather fevered imaginations envisage; the informal association of Granny Weatherwax, Nanny Ogg, and Magrat Garlick (or, now, Agnes Nitt) in Lancre is exceptional.[1] The truth is that a witch is generally a non-joiner by nature, and not normally at home in company; the plural of wizard is 'wizards', but the plural of witch is 'argument'.

Most witches can read and write, but unlike wizards, they do not derive their knowledge or power from books. They are taught by other witches, on a one-to-one basis; a witch may have only one tutor, or less often, several in series. While the daughters of witches often become witches themselves, it is thought bad practice for mother to teach daughter. A certain amount of the teacher's style will inevitably be transferred to the student, and magical inbreeding would have the same kind of degenerative effect it has in livestock.

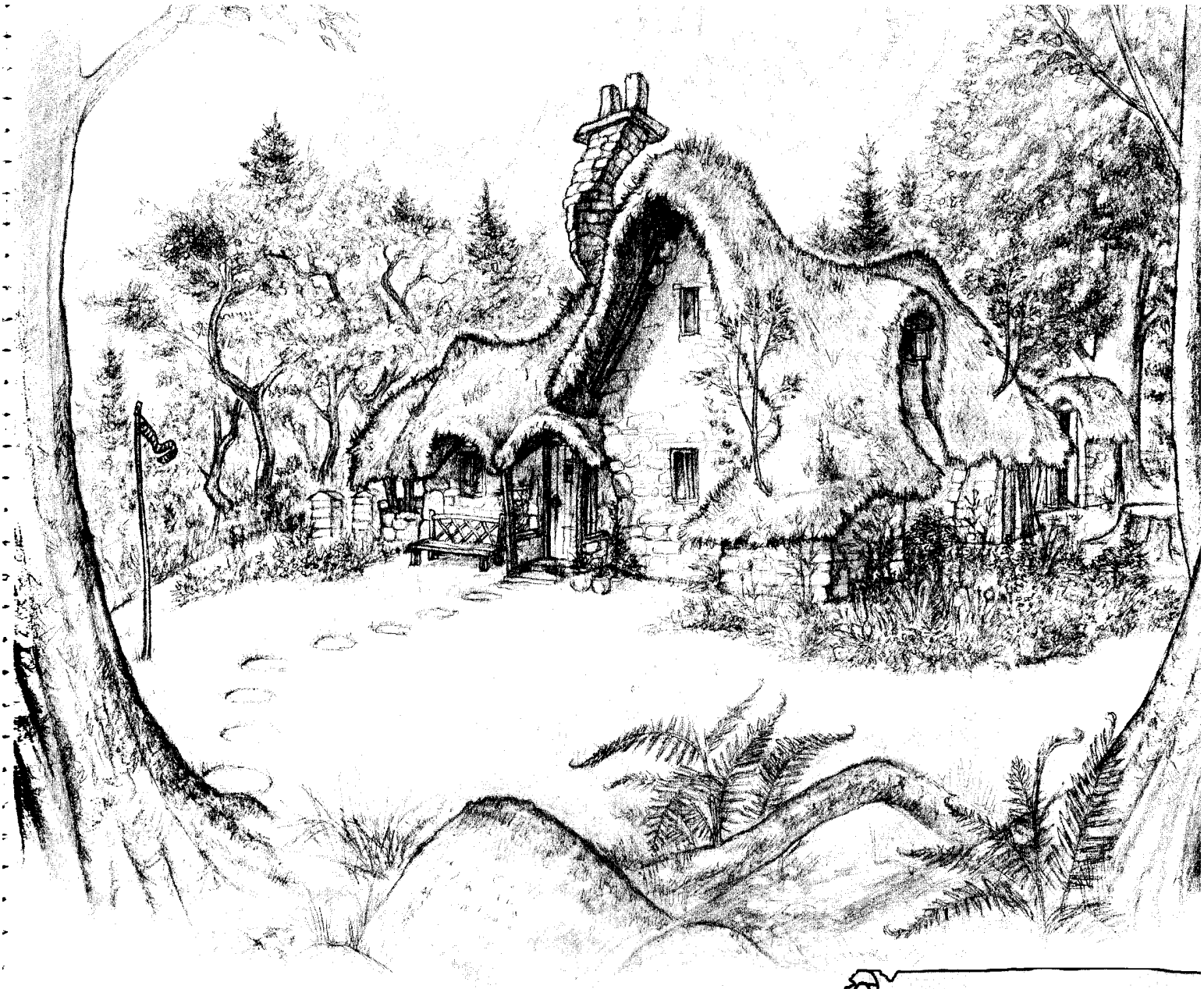
A witch has a home area, centred on her cottage. When she dies, another witch, normally one of her trainees, takes over the locality and the cottage; some cottages have been in continuous use for centuries. Indeed, the basic unit of witchcraft is essentially the cottage. As this suggests, witchcraft is mostly a rural occupation, although small and even large towns may have odd ladies dealing with medical and practical problems from murky market-place booths (which might be considered honorary cottages).

Discworld witches are driven by tradition and stereotype enough that they usually fit the archetypes of the Maiden, the Mother, or the Crone, as epitomised by the three Lancre witches. Magrat Garlick is nice down to her pointed shoes, if naive, and loves new ideas and interesting witchy paraphernalia. (Her replacement, Agnes, is similarly interested in new ideas, if a little less naive.) Nanny Ogg is easygoing and understanding, and has a large family. She does not often do actual magic (although she certainly has power); her role is more that of a social worker, combined with the wise lady two doors down who always remembers how much pectin to put in the home-made jam. Granny Weatherwax has a deep knowledge of "Headology," iron will, and an absolute conviction that she is always right. A naturally well-featured woman, she nevertheless attempts to look as crone-like as possible, because when people are afraid of you they are already in your power.

Witches generally don't discuss the theory behind their craft, but the 'Maiden, mother and crone' triumvirate is not considered to refer solely to physical condition, but more to variations in mental outlook.

In addition to magic, there are other village-witch roles: midwifery, preparing the dead for burial, and folk medicine. Witches are matrilineal – the women are heads of household, and their husbands normally take their surnames, as do their children and grandchildren, male and female. In sparsely populated areas, such as the Ramtops, this is subject to individual variation. Witches aren't really interested in rules, as a rule.

[1] *And Granny insists it isn't a coven anyway.*



Other Types

Demonologists

Demonologists are technically wizards, although other wizards regard them with distaste; it's not that they don't do real magic, or that they don't gain access to real power in the process, but the simple fact – which even a wizard can see is common sense – is that their approach involves borrowing power from beings that have had a lot more practice in politics and contract negotiation. They tend to be solitary men with warped senses of priorities.

Note that demonologists deal with the demons of the Discworld's Hell (see p. 165); the Things from the Dungeon Dimensions (p. 157) are too icily inhuman to bargain.

Death and Magic-Workers

It is traditionally said that witches and wizards are entitled to know the day and the hour of their death. This is correct, and has a number of significant consequences. Many a wizard has gone out at the end of a great party, with a long list of debts and an empty wine-cellar; even the quietest witch will tidily lay in only as much firewood as she needs, and will leave an enjoyably complex will.

Continued on next page . . .

Death and Magic-Workers (Continued)

However, this fact does not stop anyone taking sensible precautions against accidental or violent death, or from worrying about their skin generally. It seems that all they actually learn is the time of their death from natural causes and barring misadventure. If PC spell-casters insist on this entitlement, they can roll all the ageing effects for themselves until they decay to a level that the GM considers means that they are likely to keel over. Also, the information may be limited to those who have learned some kind of Divination spell, or something similar.

Still, this tradition does open the possibility of an interesting character concept. Build a witch or wizard with the Terminally Ill disadvantage (p. B239), and declare that they have determined or been informed that they *will* die on a certain date. The cause, of course, can vary; if the GM can give them a glorious victory against an opponent who gets in a dying low blow with a poisoned dagger, that's heroic, but if they miscalculate and keel over on the way in with a heart attack from the excitement – well, irony is part of Disc reality, too.

The other thing about such mortality is that Death himself is required to turn up in person to collect the deceased. Given that anyone with extra-sensory senses can see Death, this can lead to some mildly interesting roleplaying opportunities. However, don't expect such scenes to last long; Death is very busy, and never hangs around much.

Incidentally, Death also turns up in manifested person for royalty, other significant figures, and most people dying in vaguely interesting ways (such as from a brand new disease or after being killed by a non-existent monster).

Discworld Voodoo

Discworld Voodoo is considered to be a branch of witchcraft, but with a strong flavouring of applied religion, and it works a little differently.

Voodoo-workers, who are always female (and hence would be known as *mambos* in our world) do not often change people into frogs, ride broomsticks, or read tea-leaves.[1] Their mental powers tend to be subtle and a little dark in application. They do create zombies (something most other Disc spell-casters regard with distaste), and they are very skilled at working with the small gods of their home regions.

This last skill mostly involves negotiating with these beings, who are homely, earthy, if dangerously temperamental divinities of odd moments and commonplace behaviours. (See Chapter 8 for more on Discworld gods.) Permitting them to "ride" (temporarily take over the bodies of) worshippers – and even the voodoo expert – is routine. The most powerful voodoo practitioners claim that they can actually *make* gods – which would mean identifying an area of religious opportunity, and generating enough faith and belief in a small congregation – perhaps just the magic-worker herself – that a small god picks up the idea and develops real power.

GMs wishing to do very much with Discworld voodoo should read both *Witches Abroad* and ***GURPS Voodoo*** for further ideas.

Hedge Wizards

Hedge wizardry is an authentic and respectable branch of magic, which attracts men who could probably do very well as druids if they had more interest in blood and large slabs of stone. The field involves extensive knowledge of plant magics and mundane horticulture; hedge wizards are the sort of gardeners who know that talking to plants helps them grow, because the plants tell them so. This is all a bit rustic, primitive, and eccentric even by the standards of Unseen University (where eccentricity is, of course, thick on the ground), but the difference is one of emphasis, not deep philosophy.

Mediums

Other professional Discworld spell-casters would never admit that mediums (see p. 44) belong in this chapter, but they *are* people who employ supernatural abilities for a living. Mediumship requires a sensitivity to the unseen and the supernatural, which is the first requirement for professional magic, but the medium has a different, limited emphasis. A competent medium often also has other mental powers of a type normally associated with witches, such as precognition.

Sourcerers

Sourcerers are *rare*. Exactly one appears in the chronicles, and he soon leaves after nearly destroying the world. It is hard to imagine a game scenario in which one could appear. However, the basis for their previous existence is important.

On the Disc, the eighth son of an eighth son usually develops magical talents and becomes a wizard. However, if, in defiance of a lot of sensible traditions, such a wizard has eight sons in turn, the eighth will be a sourcerer. It is possible that, in ancient times, such individuals had less statistically extreme origins, but that is the only way it can happen now.

[1] *For scrying purposes, they prefer gumbos; after all, everything goes into a good gumbo, so you can see everything in there.*

(Once, wizards talked about promising juniors with creative abilities, rather loosely, as "possible sourcerer material." That would be considered rather tasteless today, since some wizards have seen what a *real* Sourcerer is like.)

Conventional wizardry is about trying to use what power you can collect to nudge the Universe your way. Sourcerers grab the thing by the back of the neck and point it where they want it; they are connected directly to unlimited, primal magic. They are walking sources of power, and, being directly acquainted with the stuff, they can create new spells on the fly.

The trouble with Sourcerers is that, having the ability to boil the oceans, move mountain ranges around like stage props, and generally treat reality as if it were made of modelling clay, they can't control the desire to do that kind of thing. And because absolute power isn't really absolute if you have to share it, the cosmos isn't big enough for two of them. They cannot combine their efforts. The Mage Wars of prehistory, which nearly destroyed the Disc before the Old Ones stepped in – and left pockets of dangerous residual magic (p. 102) which persist to this day – were the Sourcerers' equivalent of King of the Hill.

To prevent this unfortunate condition from recurring, Unseen University recommends celibacy for wizards. (Contrary to some folklore, one's sexual activity or lack thereof has no effect whatsoever on magical ability or practice.)

It is generally believed that only a sourcerer can defeat another sourcerer in combat. The experience of Coin and Rincewind, however, established that this applies only to purely magical combat.

Working Magic

Magic is, as the saying goes, a matter of will and intent. However, it also requires some vague understanding of what one is doing, in order to gather the requisite energy, or a high-power, easy-to-use energy source; it is preferable to have both. The former without the latter is hard work, but manageable. The latter without the former is a problem that should ideally be solved quickly, before it solves itself (and most other problems in the neighbourhood).

Spells

Spells are standardised magical techniques. As such, they are theoretically optional, but actually essential. Many witches especially know various basic spells so well that they can cast them with negligible apparent effort (represented by high skill in ***GURPS***), and may even be able to shape magical power by direct effort of will on an ad hoc basis (which talent can be treated as psionics for ***GURPS*** game purposes). Wizards tend to know more, bigger, showier spells at lower skill levels, requiring a certain amount of arm-waving to achieve results – after all, being seen to work hard at doing astounding things is what wizardry is all about – but even they can *sometimes* produce small, useful effects with quick gestures. See p. 132 and following, and pp. 238-239, for lists of spells.

Wizards sometimes appear to have to return to their books to prepare specific spells for use. This is probably mostly down to being so out of practice with some particular effect out of all the ones they know that they need to reassure themselves that they are going to get it right. It also gives them a chance to ensure that their staffs are fully charged.

Non-wizards can sometimes work spells, but they always have to do so carefully, with much reference to notes, and usually in a ritual group. And the results are usually still disastrous.

Headology

Witches in general, with Granny Weatherwax as a good example, are experts in practical psychology. Granny, like some others, refers to this as "Headology."

This can be treated, in ***GURPS*** terms, as Psychology skill, plus optional helpings of various Social skills, occasionally Intimidation (especially from Granny Weatherwax on a bad day), and often a lot of Common Sense.

However, it is important to remember that the crucial focus of Headology is *manipulative,* if not always malevolent. A witch should always be concerned about how she is perceived by others; if this is handled correctly, she has to actually cast far less real magic. For one thing, it is less often necessary to use defensive magic, curses, and so on, if people respect (or fear) you enough to be polite out of habit. Just as important, however, is the fact that witches do a lot of practical doctoring, with much use of psychosomatic and placebo effects. Thus, they need patients with plenty of respect for their abilities, who will seriously believe that a bottle of coloured water will make them better.

Important tools for the mistress of Headology include a tall, well-made witch's black hat, and a matching dress. Black is not mandatory for the complete costume; for that matter, the approach need not be primarily intimidating. Despite Granny Weatherwax's opinions, a witch can earn adequate respect in several ways, provided that she is *clearly* a witch – and weirdly colourful and floaty dresses, or (in warmer climes) perhaps even the stock-fantasy minimal enchantress outfit (especially for less benevolent witches), do clearly make some kind of relevant point.

The need for what they classify as respect sometimes makes even "good" witches seem like rather unlovely people, but in fact, Headology does not generally call for much active unpleasantness. If the foundations are properly laid, then any time that anyone annoys the witch, any minor unpleasantness that they suffer in the next five years, though the routine exigencies of life, will be credited to the witch. Witches tend to be good. No one said anything about 'nice.'

Mustrum Ridcully

ST 11, **DX** 13, **IQ** 17, **HT** 14

Speed 6.75, Move 6
Dodge 6, Parry 8 (staff)

Advantages: Alcohol Tolerance; Ally (Granny Weatherwax); Ally Group (High Energy Magic Lab); Contacts (Hughnon Ridcully, High Priest of Blind Io); Fit; Fully Literate; Immunity to Disease; Less Sleep x4; Longevity; Magery 3; No Hangover; Status +5; Wealthy.

Disadvantages: Age; Compulsive Carousing; Odious Personal Habit: Poor Listener; Sense of Duty to Unseen University; Weak Will -1.

Quirks: Autocondimentor; Fresh-air fiend; Makes loud jokes but never gets other people's; Somewhat literal-minded; Trophy-taking hunter and fisherman.

Skills: Agronomy-16; Brawling-13; Crossbow-15; Fishing-17; Naturalist-16; Riding-12; Savoir-Faire-19; Spell Throwing (Ball)-13; Staff-12; Survival (Woodlands)-16; Thaumatology-16; Traps-18.

Languages: Ankhian-18.

Spells: As a high-level wizard, Ridcully has probably forgotten more spells than are listed in every ***GURPS*** supplement put together. Note that his minimum level with any spell is 18 (17 for Very Hard magic). He has certainly used, or admitted to knowing, Fireball, Teleport, Divining (Crystal-Gazing), Morphic Tweaking ("Stacklady's Morphic Resonator"), Octagram, Simple Illusion, Staff, Teleport, Weaken, and the Rite of AshkEnte.

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Exploiting the Laws of Disc Reality

Much Disc magic, especially witchcraft, is very subtle, and is based on careful exploitation of the universe's quieter natural laws – much like engineering. However, on the Disc, such laws include Narrative Causality and Life Force (see pp. 7-8).

These factors *can* be manipulated, but things are a little more complicated than that sounds. *Any* attempt to tweak raw natural forces has its problems. One big trouble is that much of this stuff has a consciousness on the Disc, and may resent being tweaked; furthermore, little of it can easily be quantified, which means that any attempted action may have trivial results – or may let off the metaphysical equivalent of a nuclear weapon.

Thus, mostly, this sort of thing is "encoded" into standard Disc magic. Witches gain much of their power through their understanding of stories, and their ability to stand a little aside from them, while certain spells (for example) tap raw life force. It's easier for many spell-casters to demolish a wooden door by making it *grow,* and thus destroy its frame, or to move rocks by reminding them of the time when they were molten, than it is for them to cast any kind of "Disintegrate." A clever witch would take the view that events have a natural 'story;' if you can work out what it is, you can find ways either to encourage them or 'make a different ending.'

When It All Goes Wrong

Inevitably, sometimes, magic goes wrong. This is rare for standard spells cast by competent, trained experts, but it can happen even then. Castings in zones of high Residual Magic, attempts at new or experimental procedures, or magic in the hands of untrained or unstable users, all run deadly risks.

The first, more likely, and more immediate threat is that the magic will somehow run amok. It may go in the wrong direction, blow back at the caster, or generate weird side-effects. Remember that it is a dynamic and near-conscious force. Perhaps the only reason that Unseen University does not blow up as often as the Alchemists' Guild HQ, and with stranger colours, is that the wizards have been doing this stuff longer, and so have better ideas about the risks. Note also that no sane magic-worker would ever cast a spell that incorporated magic permanently into his or her own body; the result would probably be hugely inconvenient at best, hideous at worst. (Hence the dearth of magical healing on the Disc.)

The deadlier risk, because it is also the more subtle, comes from the Dungeon Dimensions (p. 157). The Things outside reality want to get in, and magic is their favourite, easiest route. Worst of all, a trained, magic-using mind gives them an entry that they can prop open. They do not exactly seek to corrupt magic-workers – they aren't that smart – but they can twist any foibles in a vulnerable intellect to their own ends. An obsessively orderly mind could be turned into an inhuman tyrant, calmly sacrificing millions in the name of efficiency, *and convincing them it is for the best,* while a passionate, artistic imagination could be twisted to think of any number of horrors as beautiful. And the Things do know how to *threaten.*

Mostly, magical training is designed to eliminate this risk – a fumbled spell, in the worst of circumstances, rarely produces more than a moment of sickening chill and a sense of a narrow escape – but really powerful minds and unusual magics can mean trouble.

Wizards and witches both keep an eye out for such dangers, and will co-operate with each other or anyone else to deal with them. Unfortunately, the techniques that can be used are limited; raw magical blasts are useless, because they just feed the Things precisely what they need. Thus a competent expert will usually first try to determine what the invaders are using as a doorway, and close or destroy it by mundane means; the investigation will also usually show what rules the Things are having to twist, but still obey, to gain their entrance, and these can be used against them. See *Moving Pictures* for an example of a major, slightly eccentric, but very serious incursion.

Unseen University

[Note for American readers: many of the jokes in the chronicles' description of Unseen University are based upon the British university system, especially the old collegiate universities of Oxford and Cambridge, which differ in details and terminology from the American system. In simplifying things for this book, we have omitted some of these, let some pass without comment, and explained a few, rendering the joke comprehensible if no longer funny. Those interested are referred to ***The Discworld Companion.*** *One rule for games, though; try not to add too many American university jokes – they just won't fit.]*

History

Unseen University was founded – or rather, established in its modern form – approximately 2,000 years ago (the exact date is usually given as 1282 in the then-current city calendar). Before then, the usual first meeting between two wizards was like the first meeting on the main street of Dodge City between two men who were both supposedly the Fastest Gun in the West. Afterwards, it was merely like an encounter between two experts on the pipe-rolls of a demolished medieval cathedral who both wonder what the other's position is on certain debated points . . .

Except that both of them would be packing the metaphysical equivalent of an anti-tank rocket launcher. Minimum. Still, there was a net improvement overall.

The founder was Alberto Malich, "the Wise," whose life is quoted as 1222-1289. (Actually, he is still alive, working as Death's manservant; see p. 187.) He was the first Archchancellor, and the blueprint for one type of holder of that office; the thin, irritable, explosive type. Others include the fat, ponderous, decadent type, the very old type (usually elected as a compromise, sometimes without their knowledge), and the seriously insane type.

Throughout the ensuing centuries it was generally accepted that the route to promotion in Unseen University might involve stepping into dead men's shoes, but that shouldn't slow a clever chap down. Blatant brawling was considered a little crass, and anything that could seriously endanger the University itself was obviously missing the point, but any number of methods of removing obstacles could be, and were, used. The only limiting factor was the level of power and deviousness this tended to imply at the top of the heap, and the fact that the whole point of getting there was to settle down to a slothful life of very large dinners.

Mustrum Ridcully (Continued)

The social significance of "Ridcully the Brown" is described in the main text account of recent Unseen University history. He is not, as his colleagues expected, a rustic hedge wizard; rather, he is a huntin' shootin' and fishin' man who also just happens to be a very competent magic-worker. In fact, he achieved seventh level at the extraordinary young age of 27, and while forty years of estate management did not involve much wizardry, and his staff had been supporting a scarecrow, he had never lost his edge.

His favourite spells include Divination with a scrying mirror, because much as he loves hunting, he finds *tracking* rather boring; although he regards use of combat magic in the field unsporting (preferring to use a crossbow), he is well able to look after himself when things get messy, magically or physically, and he has defended Ankh-Morpork from more than one supernatural threat. He survives as Archchancellor, when many others have fallen to ambitious underlings, through a combination of ingenuity, caution, and slamming people's heads into doors; this has made candidates for his job cautious to the point of non-existence these days.

Ridcully has a huge personality, of the sort that demands beer with breakfast and never seems to need sleep. He shouts a lot. He is far from stupid, but his intelligence is based on a thundering ability to *focus*, which makes it very difficult for other people to get ideas through to him; he also suffers from typical Discworld literal-mindedness. He is capable of some charm, but he doesn't waste it on the rest of the faculty; the Bursar's fragile mental condition is largely his creation. He regards the younger research wizards with incomprehension, but he has come to realise that some of their ideas achieve real results.

When he was young, Ridcully had a friendship, which might have become a romance (but didn't), with the young Esmerelda Weatherwax. They have recently come into contact again, and despite a little friction, they remain friends and could call on each other for help, given the need. His brother Hughnon is Ankh-Morpork's chief priest of Blind Io, and hence is the city's leading religious figure; neither can afford to mention this much, given what priests and wizards traditionally think of each other, but they are actually on good terms.

The Librarian

ST 20, **DX** 14, **IQ** 15, **HT** 15

Speed 7.25, Move 7
Dodge 7, Parry 10 (brawling)

Advantages: Acute Taste and Smell +5; Alcohol Tolerance; Brachiator; Contacts (miscellaneous wizards and librarians); Fully Literate; Immunity to Disease; Language Talent +2; Reputation in Ankh-Morpork taverns and bars (stands his round), +2; Second Sight; Status +3; Tenure; Toughness +2; Two Extra Short Arms (prehensile feet).

Disadvantages: Bowlegged; Intolerant of people who call him a monkey; Mute; Sense of Duty to books; Unattractive.

Quirks: Bar-room brawler; Peanut addict; Theatre fan who insists on slapstick scenes; Twitchy around carnivores; Wears a tatty robe after baths and for formal occasions.

Skills: Acrobatics-14; Archaeology-14; Area Knowledge: Circle Sea Region-15; Brawling-15; Carousing-15; Climbing-15; Gesture-16; History-18; L-Space Theory-16; Literature-16; Occultism (Demonology)-14; Philosophy-14; Professional Skill: Bookbinder-16; Research-18; Stealth-14; Survival (L-Space)-15; Thaumatology-15; Theology-14; Throwing-13; Wrestling-16.

Languages: Ankhian-17; Orangutan-18; Numerous others, mostly defunct.

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However, in recent years, the process accelerated out of hand. Changes in the Disc at large bred restlessness even among wizards. The events of *The Light Fantastic* and *Sourcery* removed a large number of senior figures, which merely gave a lot of middle-rankers inflated ideas of their own chances. Too many Archchancellors were barely making it through their inaugural dinners.

This slammed to a halt with the appointment of Mustrum Ridcully to the Archchancellorship. He was originally intended to be another compromise appointment; he had not been seen at the University for over forty years, having been managing his family's country estates, and was generally assumed to be some kind of hedge wizard. This was, of course, incorrect.

In fact, despite his very different personality, Ridcully has had much the same effect on the University faculty that Lord Vetinari has had on the city at large. He is simply too robust, alert, and formidable a personality to assassinate, and he doesn't much approve of such behaviour among his underlings. It's not that wizards are frightened of danger – they deal with hideous extra-dimensional horrors as a matter of course – but being shouted at by Ridcully was *too* stressful.

Thus, today, the University has become a relatively stable element in Ankh-Morpork society, while continuing in its ancient task of regulating and restraining magical activity. The occasional horror from beyond time slurping round the city streets is a small price to pay.

Town and Gown: Location and Maintenance

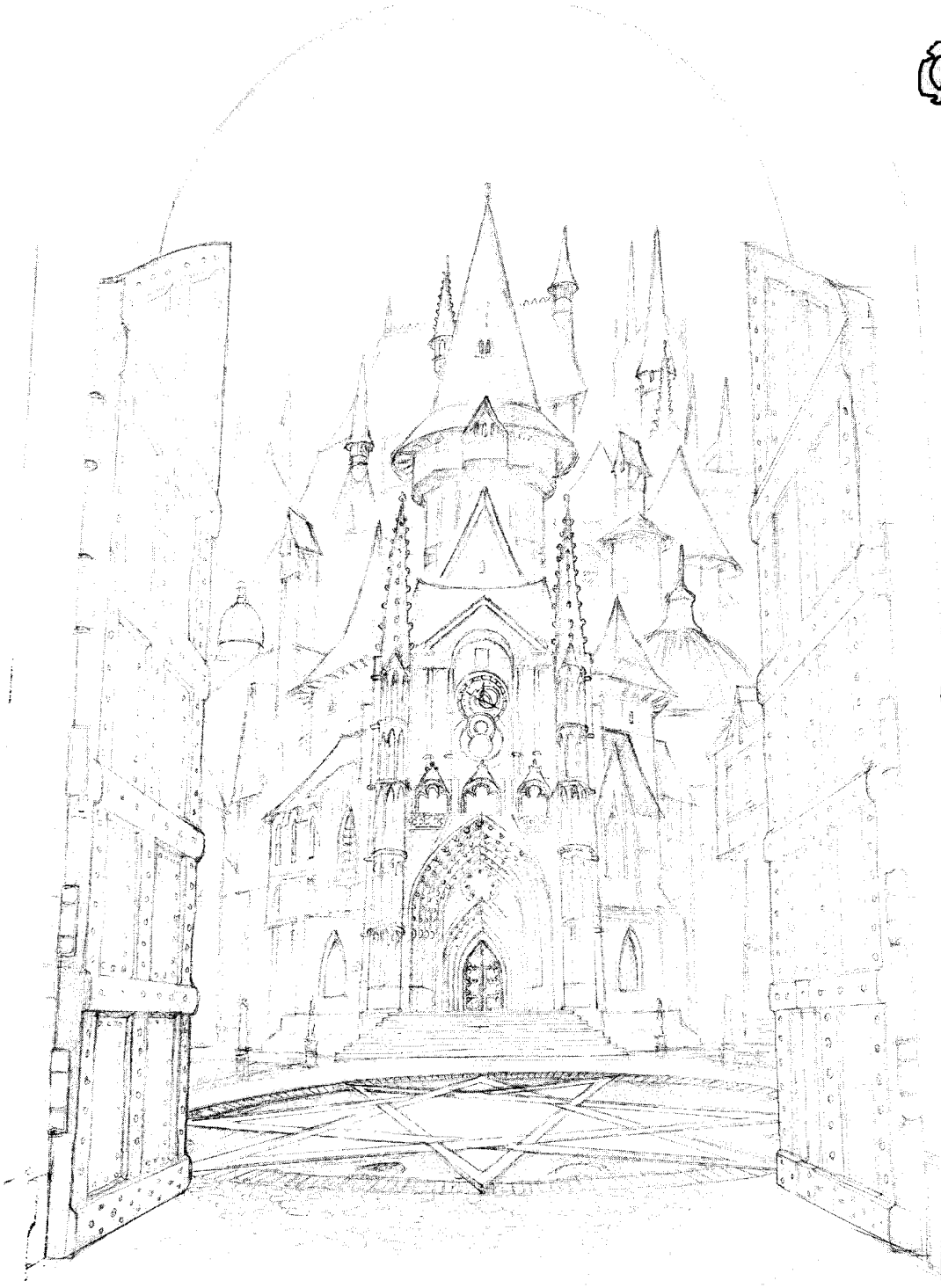
The University does not have a clearly-defined campus; indeed, some would say that it is very weakly defined indeed, in space and time, as some rooms seem to contradict the normal rules of architecture and reality, and some of the upper floors seem to be older than the sections beneath. (The adjacent Unreal Estate has been especially unfortunately affected by thaumic radiation.) However, for practical purposes of giving directions, it mostly lies between the Ankh and Sator Square (site of a weekly market). It is conveniently located for students looking to waste time on the town, although it has enough walls that they do have to learn one thing – the location of a patch of wall in the alley between the Observatory and the Backs. Here, loose bricks in may be easily removed to create a ladder over the wall, which has been used for centuries by students entering after the Main Gate is locked.

Talking of University and City . . . UU is wealthy, but it is a metaphysical sort of wealth. It owns much of Ankh-Morpork's real estate, but the rents are mostly token and the leases so ancient that even the University's lawyers can't understand them. Most of its actual income comes from donations, usually in kind (that is, gifts of goods and services rather than money). It is generally understood that keeping the wizards fed and content, and on their side of the walls, is worth a few casks of ale and cartloads of starchy vegetables.

The Tower of Art

The University is (architecturally) dominated by the Tower of Art, a structure of black stone 800 feet high. The Tower's age is indeterminate.

It is older than the city, than the present University, and possibly than most of the Discworld itself; it was, certainly, the original Wizards' College. It has no windows; its top sprouts little towers and crenellations, along with small forests, like a Bavarian fantasy castle (with gardens) painted black and stuck on a very



high smokestack. Despite the occasional shedding of stone ornamentation, and clear signs of erosion and wear, it never seems to need repairs. Like some jungle plateau, entire species of bird and beetle have evolved in isolation up there; the magic rising from the University below has turned that evolution in some very odd directions.

There is a small door in the base. Inside is a spiral stairway of 8,888 steps. At one time there were internal floors, but these have long since rotted away, and the Tower is no longer officially used for anything. From its top, a wizard might think he could see the edge of the Disc, once he got his breath back. It is a symbol of magic – not just wizardry, but the primal force underlying the universe.

The Librarian (Continued)

Unseen University's Librarian used to be human, but has been accidentally magically transformed into an orang-utan; today, no one can remember exactly who he used to be, and the relevant page in the UU yearbook is missing. (A banana peel was found in its place.) He now speaks only the language of his new species, which consists of a single word ("Ook"), sometimes heavily inflected ("Ooook-Eeek-Ook!"); those who know him learn to extract a considerable amount of information from his tone and gestures. He can *read* a huge range of languages.

The Librarian is entirely, vociferously happy with his form. It's not that he is unaware of the glory and the richness of the human condition, it's just that, comparing it to the practical advantages of his present shape, you can put it in an obscure geographical formation in Lancre. In his human days he was a wizard, but he has not been known to use any magic whatsoever since his transformation. He is, however, an *ex officio* member of the University council, and a wizard for all legal and symbolic purposes.

He lives in a cubby-hole in the Library, surrounded by books and an old blanket. He is of course a lover of books, but like many librarians, feels a certain distress at the way people disorder them by taking them off the shelves and putting wear on them. This aside, he gets on pretty well with other people, and has a soft spot for Rincewind (p. 178), who once worked as his assistant and who peeled a competent banana. He does tend to resort to violence when anyone calls him a monkey, though; he is an *ape*. (He can, however, spot a joker when he sees one; anyone setting up someone else to use the wrong word in the Librarian's presence is likely to come off worst.)

He spends many of his evenings in the Mended Drum (p. 99). Bar-room brawls are no problem for him; 300 pounds of muscle, with prehensile feet, can give even a troll problems. He does not, incidentally, have the heavy cheek-pads that indicate the dominant male in an orang-utan troupe. Ridcully becomes very tetchy when this curious fact is discussed.

Invisible Writings

A recent development of hypothetical L-space theory (see sidebar, p. 115) is the study of Invisible Writings. This is based in the concept that the L-space fields of individual books affect all other books, and since L-space extends in all temporal dimensions, this includes books that have not yet been written. There are obvious empirical proofs: books written in the past clearly influence later books (plagiarism being the asymptotic case), and books written in the present mention earlier books as influences. Under General L-space Theory, it is believed that an adequate study of extant books can extrapolate the content of any book yet to be written.

The present Reader in Invisible Writings is Ponder Stibbons (p. 190).

Administration

The University is headed by the Archchancellor, who chairs its council, the Hebdomadal Board, which traditionally consisted of the heads of the eight orders. However, following recent upheavals, the board is now directly appointed by the Archchancellor, who thus acquires considerable power. On the other hand, most academic wizards are happy to leave the tiresome business of administration to whoever is willing to handle it.

Recently, this has meant the Bursar (p. 188), a wizard who long since discovered the small, safe joys of administrative power and a personal knack for figures. (Previous bursars were sometimes not even wizards, but this one jumped into the post when it came free.) Unfortunately, serving under Ridcully has driven the Bursar to dementia and dried frog pills, but he remains very good at his job.

Incidentally, senior wizards do not do much teaching; some have an active phobia concerning students. The University has teaching staff to insulate the higher levels from such horrors – usually mid-ranked graduates, desperate for extra income or still interested in actual scholarship (and hence in having bright young minds to bounce ideas off).

Admission

On the matter of students; admission to the University can be obtained in various ways:

1. Perform some recognised service to magic: recover an artefact of power, develop a new spell, whatever.

2. Be sponsored by a practising wizard, after an appropriate apprenticeship (what's "appropriate" being up to your sponsor). A promising youth who has been gifted with a staff by a dying wizard is automatically considered to have been sponsored; arrangements may be made for him to obtain apprentice training if necessary.

3. An eighth son of an eighth son may demand admission.

Numerous scholarships and bursaries exist to support poor-but-promising youths through their studentship, but many receive support from their families, or from nobles or factions who like the idea of having a friendly magician on tap. In fact, so long as such support is forthcoming, it is very difficult to be rid of a student; they can keep trying to graduate until they pass.

There is no age restriction on admission. Unseen University wants to have as many wizards as possible within its control.[1] The usual age of new students is sixteen. The youngest on record was four; this created fewer problems than one might expect, as many of the most senior faculty also need naptime and strained food.

[1] *Sorry, "fellowship."*

Women are not, and have never been, admitted.[1]

Once accepted, a student studies towards one of a huge array of degrees: Bachelor of Thaumatology, Bachelor of Sortilage, Bachelor of Magianism, Bachelor of Civil Lore, Bachelor of Applied Theurgy, Bachelor of Impractical Necromancy, and so on. (There are also Master's Degrees and Doctorates in many of these specialisations.)

Promotion

Once one is admitted to UU, and certainly once graduated, tenure is pretty well automatic: a wizard may continue to learn lore, do research, write papers, and potter about in the back stacks of the Library as long as he desires. There is always a spare study somewhere, and a seat in the Great Hall (though to bring one's own napkin and utensils is a mark of wisdom).

There are eight recognised levels of magical achievement within the University. Level is determined by degrees completed, work published, and the usual academic criteria. At the higher levels, only a certain number of positions are available at any one time; there are, at least officially, only eight wizards of the eighth level, the heads of Orders. While new positions may be created, generally a level only opens through promotion or the death of a holder. There is only one way to create a vacancy at the eighth level, but almost all eighth-level wizards are very old men to begin with, and accidents will happen.

Some of the faculties also have a sponsored professorship, which, while it carries a decent stipend, also requires the holder to actually teach. These positions include the Patricius Professor of Magic and the Haudmeritus Professor of Divination.

It must be understood that the system of degrees and honours is not so much to reward magical achievement as to control it. Wizards who are working on the advanced degree they need to reach sixth level, and then waiting for one of the existing sixth-levels to walk into an accidentally-set deadfall while looking for his scarf, are not out somewhere trying to dominate the multiverse with dark rituals or dodgy shares in a tunnel under the Circle Sea, or to blow big holes in reality to see if it works. They are even slightly less likely to kill other wizards.

In game terms, senior wizards tend to have some combination of skills in actual magic, arcane areas of scholarship where no-one else has the knowledge to prove that their accomplishments do not merit promotion, Carousing and Diplomacy (helping them stay in well with other senior wizards), lethal traps (for the old-fashioned), Administration (if they let themselves be talked into it), and Politics (for those who really know how to work the system).

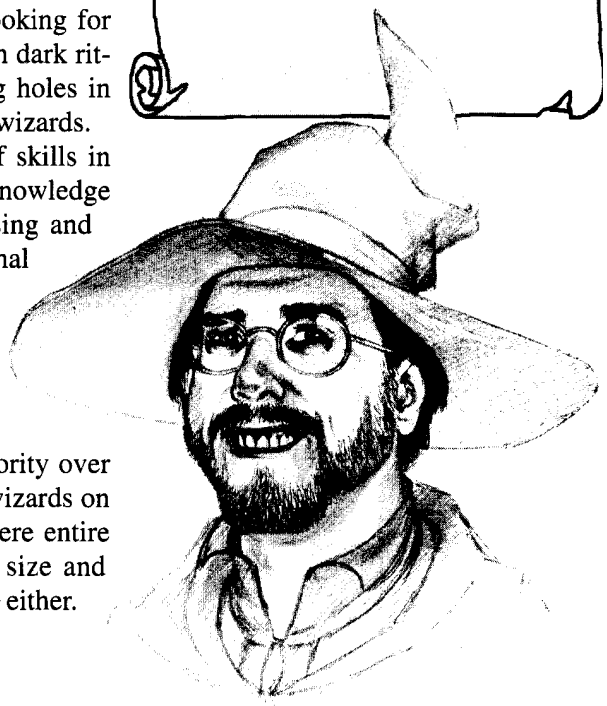
The Rank of Archchancellor

The Master of the University is its most senior official, with authority over all other faculty, staff, and students. He is also the titular leader of all wizards on the Discworld, but this is a title, not a particular fact; not only are there entire countries who do not know who the Archchancellor is, such is the size and complexity of UU that there are wizards across the octangle who don't, either.

The Archchancellor's Court and University Law

As the University theoretically grants its members immunity to city law (which is not worth anything, in game terms, because there isn't enough working city law to be immune to), it needs its own legal system. This was probably never very formal, and now mostly consists of the Archchancellor getting annoyed at being interrupted and taking it out on the offender.

Many Discworlders believe that UU has a stern law against use of magic against non-wizards. Actually, this is only partly true. Setting fire to large portions of the citizenry is certainly considered a breach of decorum, and wizards don't like psychopaths any more than anybody else does. But they consider magic a perfectly legitimate form of self-defence, and wizardly dignity as very important. In other words, as Ridcully often says after turning some annoying individual temporarily into a frog, it's more of a guideline. The idea that it's a *law* is mostly promoted by untalented students who are seeking to bluff their way out of sticky situations.



[1] *There was one exception, but that doesn't seem to have set a precedent. Possibly, the administration is making sure that it doesn't happen again – or perhaps the University is just still reviewing the consequences of the incident. That can take a while, with wizards.*

Non-Wizardly Studies at Unseen University

In addition to magical study, UU maintains colleges of medicine, lore (history), minor religions, and other non-magical topics. However, these are small by comparison with the magical faculty, and all teachers must have trained first as wizards. There are also occasional guest lectures from specialists in fields that wizards may or may not respect, but cannot deny are magical, such as witchcraft or shamanism.

Thus, many more-or-less scholarly characters with or without borderline magical talent could have contacts at UU.

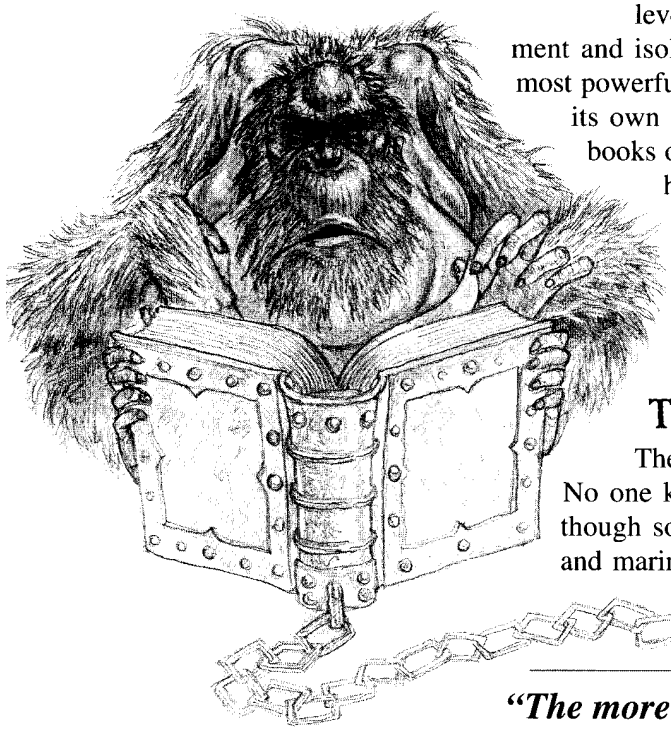
The selection process for Archchancellors is a bit vague. Officially, he is elected, but wizards cannot always be troubled to vote; formally, he is chosen by the gods, but wizards don't believe in the gods (or at least, don't believe in troubling them). The selectee – however he gets there – definitely must request entry to the locked Great Hall three times, signifying the consent of wizardry in general to his accession.

The Library

As has been said elsewhere, on the Disc, representations of reality tend to double back and modify the reality they illustrate. This is particularly true of books. Large concentrations of books create strong reality fluxes that bend dimensions and produce bookwormholes – channels of multiply connected spacetime. Add in the fact that most of the University Library's books are magical, and one understands that a casual browser risks more than a mould allergy. As with any large library, earnest students do disappear in there, but in other libraries they come out again when they run out of junk food.

Magical energy flows and coruscates from the books. Copper rails along the shelves are there to ground this power. There are also corona effects, blue fire dancing over the spines, and a constant rustling. At night, the books talk to one another.

The apparent form of the Library is that of a low, circular building, about 100 yards across. Its actual dimensions are infinite. There are about 90,000 magical texts in the Library; most of these are enormous volumes, a couple of feet high and six inches thick, in correspondingly elaborate bindings made from every imaginable substance, a few unimaginable ones, and some you could imagine but wouldn't want to. The more powerful books are chained to the shelves – not for the books' protection, but the readers.' In the lower levels are the Maximum Security Stacks, books that require containment and isolation; books that eat other books, books that eat anything. The most powerful book on the Discworld, the Octavo, is in a very special room of its own (described below). There are also many thousands of "ordinary" books of magic-related and occult knowledge – astrological ephemerides, herbals, pronunciation guides to nameless horrors, and so on. (The adult section is especially dangerous to impressionable minds; some of the magical volumes there are held under iced water, in plain covers.)



The present Librarian is a 300-pound orang-utan; see the sidebar on pp. 110-111.

The Octavo

The Octavo is the spellbook that belonged to the Discworld's Creator. No one knows why it was left behind after the great work was finished, though some researchers – particularly those involved with insect culture and marine biology – have suggested a combination of absent-mindedness and a fondness for really odd practical jokes.

"The more powerful books are chained to the shelves – not for the books' protection, but the readers'."

The Octavo contains the Eight Great Spells which, presumably, were sufficient to create all time, space, and matter, or at least the Disc. No one really knows what they are; even the one person who has done anything with the spells – Rincewind – doesn't understand what he did. However, they did transform a potentially Disc-annihilating situation into a eight-ways happy event (see *The Light Fantastic*).

The book is once again kept – "imprisoned" might be a better word – in a special room in the Library, warded by signs, pentacles, and the Eight-fold Seal of Stasis, fastened to its stand by chains of a very purposeful thickness. No one is allowed to remain in the room for more than four minutes, 32 seconds. This figure has been arrived at through many years of trial.[1]

Other Noted Features

The Gates

The first thing that many people see of UU is the Main Gates, which open onto Sator Square. The large doors are plated with octiron, and are locked each night at sunset by the power of magic.[2]

The Great Hall

The Great Hall is considered the most important part of the University by many wizards. It is, after all, where they have dinner.

Around the Hall are the portraits and statues of past Archchancellors, bearing objects of wizardly significance and expressions of disapproval at how things have got worse since their terms of office. Some of the portraits are unfinished, the sitter's tenure (of Archchancellorship and existence) having ended before the sitting was complete; a few are represented by pencil sketches or blocks of rough marble with little brass nameplates.

The Great Hall's floor is covered with a pattern of black and white tiles that should not be looked at too closely or too long. There are long tables and benches throughout the chamber. At the turnwise end is a large clock, to widdershins a great fireplace. The wall opposite the doors is mostly taken up by the Mighty Organ, designed and built by Bloody Stupid Johnson (see p. 90). Johnson, principally a landscape architect, approached his first organ design with his accustomed optimism: "It's only air going through pipes, it can't be that difficult."

[1] *And error.*

[2] *Actually, they are locked by the gardener, a dwarf named Modo, but one must keep up appearances.*

L-Space

In one sense, *all* books can be found in the library.

Students of metabibliology theorise the existence of *L-space*, an in-between universe that connects *all* libraries, everywhere and everywhen. Knowledge is power, and sufficient concentrations of power can warp and even puncture reality, creating interconnections to other points with similar energy density. According to the theory, it should be possible to travel between one node of L-space and another, conducting interlibrary loans of books that no longer exist, or that never precisely existed in the first place.

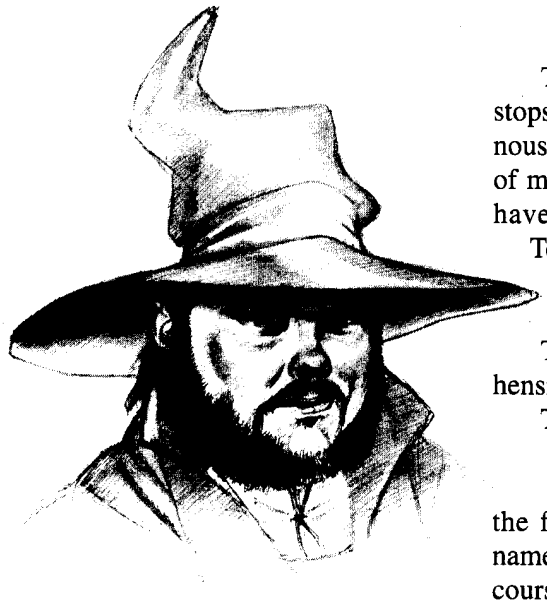
This theory is correct, but at UU, perhaps only the Librarian knows it. The trouble is that L-space connects all places *and times*, making it a serious threat to causality. Therefore, informed librarians are sworn to secrecy on the subject.

L-space also has its own life forms, some of which are dangerous: the kick-stool crab, the wild thesaurus, quarto-horses (like a leathery Eohippus), carnivorous carrel plants, and the unspeakable shushers. There are tales of tribes of lost readers. This is why it has its own form of Survival skill (p. 54).

L-space travel is an extremely difficult skill (see p. 58), known to only a handful of librarians in the entire multiverse. (Some people stumble upon it by accident, of course; sometimes they are found pressed in the pages of old atlases, between Atlantis and Mu.) In our reality, Jorge Luis Borges may have had an inkling. There are also strict rules governing its use, because it crosses not only space and the multiple universes but also time. The Librarian has been known to use L-space travel in pursuit of his own priorities – to rescue some volumes from Didactylos's library in Ephebe, and while investigating an especially serious book theft – but not for anything else. Note that both these uses were connected with the *safety of books.*

For the record, the rules of the Librarians of Space and Time are:

1. Silence.
2. Books must be returned no later than the last date shown.
3. Do not interfere with the nature of causality.



The Organ has three keyboards, a large number of pedals, uncountable stops, and many unique controls, including one that floods the pipes with poisonous gas to kill the mice. It can fairly be said to have expanded the possibilities of music itself; a piece has been written for it that seems to the audience not to have commenced until stunned bats tumble into their laps. The use of the Terraemotus pedal has been forbidden; connected to a 128-foot pipe called Earthquake, its last use moved spirits, hearts, and large intestines all over the city, and shifted the building a quarter-inch.

The Librarian plays the organ by way of a hobby. His arm length and prehensile feet help.

The enormous black iron chandelier suspended above can hold one thousand candles, creating warm illumination and a partial vacuum in the Hall below. All major University activities are held in the Great Hall, as well as the four main meals daily. Senior faculty once occupied the High Table, so named because it could float several yards above the floor, landing only between courses; it is now grounded, following what is known only as the Incident at Dinner.

Also in the same building are the Uncommon Room, which maintains a roaring log fire regardless of season, the small chapel and almost as small infirmary (wizards generally being as healthy as they ever get, or dead), and the classrooms, auditoria that slope steeply down to the central teaching area. The senior wizards' lavatory is here as well. Visitors will note its actual running water.

Duelling in Magic

Contests between spell-casters on the Disc can take many forms. In less well-regulated times and places, showdowns between wizards basically reduced to old-fashioned artillery duels, with a lot of power, skill and ingenuity but very little restraint or style. A less lethal contest, designed to make a point without causing too much mess or permanent injury, might consist of a series of low-power but skilful assaults with Illusion or Mind Control spells (or similar psionic powers), looking for openings in an opponent's mental defences.

The latter type of duel might appear (for a while) to observers as a series of illusory shape-changes, with each contestant trying to find a shape that the other could not counter. True "shape-duels" are known on other fantasy worlds (see ***GURPS Arabian Nights*** or ***GURPS Celtic Myth***), but on the Disc, spell-casters are generally averse to tinkering with their own morphic fields; the appearance of, for example, the classic witch-vs.-wizard contest in *Equal Rites* is purely a matter of stylish special effects.

Continued on next page . . .

The High-Energy Magic Building

The High-Energy Magic Building is the only building on campus less than a thousand years old. This facility is the source of some tension between the younger students (many graduates) who work there and senior faculty, who largely avoid it. The students are constantly submitting funding requests for thaumic particle accelerators, superconducting linear athanors, and ever-more-elaborate containment octagons. The seniors have doubts both about where all the money is going, and the actual value of discovering ever-smaller magical particles and finer thaumic structure constants, but mainly they are worried by the idea that the students are actually enjoying their work, a dangerous thing in a student.

They would be even more worried if they understood what the graduate students were planning to build in the squash court.

Hex

A typical High-Energy Magic Building project in many ways,[1] Hex is the Disc's first thaumaturgical computer. It is a combination of clockwork, ants running round in glass tubes (the builders have got nearly all the bugs in now), and stuff that no-one can remember putting in there (including an hourglass that indicates when it is thinking). Data entry is through a giant keyboard, or these days, through experimental voice input; output involves Hex writing with a quill pen. It weighs about ten tons, and no-one understands it any more; certain components – the mouse's nest, with mouse; a fluffy teddy bear (FTB) – serve no obvious purpose, but it refuses to work without them. No-one has dared remove the sticker from the side saying "Anthill Inside," though no-one knows how it got there.

[1] *"That's a strange idea – let's try it."*

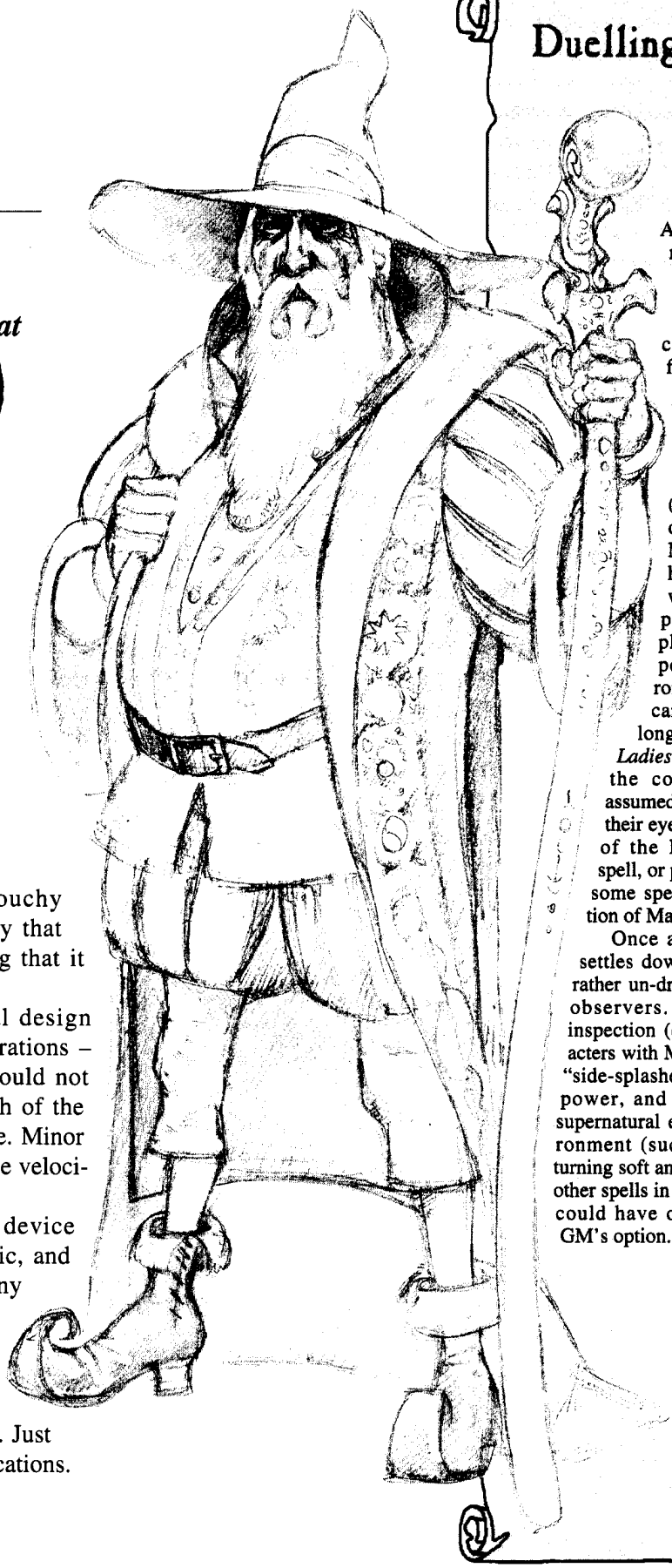
"The students deny that Hex is actually intelligent, insisting that it merely talks as though it is."

Incidentally, "refuses" is a touchy choice of words. The students deny that Hex is actually intelligent, insisting that it merely talks as though it is.

Actually, it serves its original design function – analysis of magical operations – fairly well; even the UU faculty could not teleport people across the full width of the Disc, for example, without its advice. Minor side-effects, such as uncertain relative velocities on arrival, are just details.

In game terms, Hex is a plot device supreme. Its intelligence is eccentric, and its capabilities are erratic, but if any wizard with a connection to UU needs something done that isn't supposed to be possible, or a question answered that barely makes sense, then Hex may be able to help. Just watch out for the unexpected complications.

Duelling in Magic (Continued)



Another type of duel may take place between witches, and possibly other spell-casters; this consists of a very formal contest in some specific matter requiring magical power, and could be as simple as a staring contest (basically a contest of Will or Will + Magery). The point here is to establish who is the most powerful without physical damage to people or the environment. Seeing who can out-stare the sun longest (see *Lords and Ladies*) is a variant of this; the contestants can be assumed to avoid damage to their eyes by some variation of the Recover Strength spell, or perhaps just through some special-effect application of Magery.

Once a duel of any type settles down, it tends to look rather un-dramatic to untrained observers. However, close inspection (especially by characters with Magery) will discern "side-splashes" of raw magical power, and small but clearly supernatural effects on the environment (such as solid matter turning soft and warping). Casting other spells in the area at this time could have odd effects, at the GM's option.

"The cellars also contain the museum of biological curiosities. This and the kitchens should probably be visited on different dates."

The Observatory and the Other Observatory

The Observatory is a glass-domed building with an ornate mosaic floor inlaid with the sixty-four signs of the Disc zodiac (at some date – it changes as the Disc moves through space). Access is controlled by the Librarian.

Very deep in the cellars is the Other Observatory, a lead-lined room from which the *other* stars may be viewed.

The Cellars

In the cellars are the kitchens and their support areas (pantries, butteries, cold rooms, meat lockers, sculleries, bakeries, and taprooms).

Unlike most of the University physical structure, which is not so much remodelled as built over and allowed to settle together, the kitchens are modern and constantly bustling. Conclusions about the University's sense of mission and priorities may be drawn from this, but it would probably be pleasanter just to find a seat in the Great Hall and tuck into a pie and a pint.

There are also the laundry engines – two floors high, powered by treadmills, and requiring crews of half-a-dozen muscular operators.

The cellars also contain the museum of biological curiosities. This and the kitchens should probably be visited on different dates.

The Grounds

The neatly maintained grounds, with their rose arbours and gravel paths, lead down to the river's edge, where there are small jetties with moored boats. A footbridge crosses the Ankh to Wizards' Pleasaunce, a small meadow in a horseshoe bend of the river. It is a nice spot for an evening's stroll, when the river wind is blowing away from it. Wizards are, by tradition, allowed to bathe naked in the river at this spot, but wisely no one has taken advantage of the privilege for some centuries.

The grounds also include the Archchancellor's gardens and veranda. They are protected by a wall twenty feet high, topped with spikes. A bit further on is a mossy courtyard, criss-crossed by clotheslines hung with damp linens.

Old Tom

The University clock tower holds a bell, nicknamed Old Tom, which is made of octiron, not brass. The clapper fell out long ago, but its silences still mark the hours very clearly.

7 MESSIN' WITH REALITY 7

Temporary Mana-Level Increases

Some spell-casters may wonder if ambient magic can ever be increased, if only temporarily. The first answer is Yes. The second is Don't.

The reason is, of course, that such an exercise would involve a weakening of local dimensional integrity. A wizard or witch might briefly find some benefit in this, but that would soon be irrelevant, because the next thing that would happen would be the arrival of *beings* seeking to exploit the situation. See *Moving Pictures* and *Lords and Ladies* for examples of such temporary windows of opportunity being enthusiastically assailed with metaphysical crowbars, and notice that the witches and wizards present in each case weren't celebrating.

Aspected Mana

Some Disc Mana might be "Aspected" (see p. M94). However, such a location should always be a little strange, even whimsical, and unlikely to be very useful to sane spell-casters. The most likely sort of "Aspect" will act to make summoning spells easier and more powerful, but with a special risk of summoning a particular type of (not usually friendly) entity instead of that intended. Other zones could have runaway entropy, making death and destruction spells easier, but increasing spell maintenance costs.

Perhaps the worst, subtlest problems come from zones that let alien *ideas* loose on the Disc. In *Moving Pictures,* these were the cliches of Hollywood, but at least "Holy Wood Magic" proved manipulable for the heroes as well as for the Things. Imagine a region where romantic fiction or soap operas were becoming overwhelmingly *true;* PCs could find themselves plunged into torrid and complex relationships, and unable to function as a team because of enforced plot complications. Even increases in "life energy" can make for problems; when Death was temporarily inactive, in *Reaper Man,* Ankh-Morpork suffered an assault from a pseudo-living entity that could drain the vitality out of whole cities.

This chapter deals with the game mechanics required to handle magic on the Discworld. See p. 238 for basic magic rules. If the GM or players wish to have a lot of wizards or witches involved in a game, it is recommended that the group obtain ***GURPS Magic,*** and preferably ***GURPS Grimoire*** as well. The chronicles involve a large number of spells, not all of which can be detailed here; those two supplements will fill most of the gaps.

Design Philosophy

Discworld magic, as it is seen in the chronicles, is a complex and erratic, but manageable force. The *practice* of magic is orderly and intricate (and requires years of training). Now, we could have sweated blood and produced a complete rules system that exactly modelled magic as-seen-in-the-books. Unfortunately, that would have required a whole supplement to itself, and then it would have been missing the point. The important thing about Discworld-game-magic is that it should *feel* right – that is, it should feel like some sort of fantasy magic, and be both worryingly powerful and irritatingly limited. Discworld magic works for the sake of plot, more than anything else.

So what this chapter provides is standard ***GURPS*** magic, warped a little, as appropriate to the setting. Rather than try to plug every loophole, it has to give responsibility to the GM. It is quite possible, given bloody-minded determination, to follow these guidelines and still come up with a character who *feels* wrong for the Disc.

Thus, all spell-caster characters *must* be approved by the GM, and the players *must* accept that they are subject to veto. But this shouldn't be too restrictive; the chronicles have a huge and colourful range of magic, and the Disc is very definitely a fantasy setting. The main thing is simply to remind players that this is not a power-gamer's world, and world-wrecking spell-casters are not appropriate. Fat and absent-minded wizards and cranky witches can be powerful, amusing, and fun to play, without being optimised to convert medium-sized gods into sushi with one hand tied behind their backs.

Mana Levels and Magic-Working

To begin with: almost all of the Disc is a High-Mana area; it has to be, else it would never hold together.[1] This means that anyone can, *in theory,* learn to work magic; and indeed, on occasion, such astoundingly mediocre individuals as the Elucidated Brethren of the Ebon Night (see *Guards! Guards!*) do manage to work up powerful castings. However, there is, as the Elucidated Brethren dimly sensed, a limiting factor.

The widespread assumption is that magic-wielders are running a closed shop. This is largely true, and as many people go on to assume, the reason is partly sheer selfishness. However, it is also a very sensible policy, given the dangers of inept magical activity to anyone in the vicinity.[2]

The point is that magic is a **dynamic** force. Therefore, anyone who wants to do anything more than trivial or ritualised castings has to be able to *see* what they are doing, which requires a kind of sensitivity. Trying to work magic without Magery is like trying to learn to drive in a car with no windows; technically possible, but largely futile, and dangerous, especially if you start to succeed. Potential students without Magery are considered virtually unteachable; they

[1] *A **flat** world? On the back of a turtle?*

[2] *"Vicinity" is defined quite broadly, and perhaps even astronomically.*

certainly lack options. Note that, on the Disc, Magery can be improved by training from level 1 to higher levels.

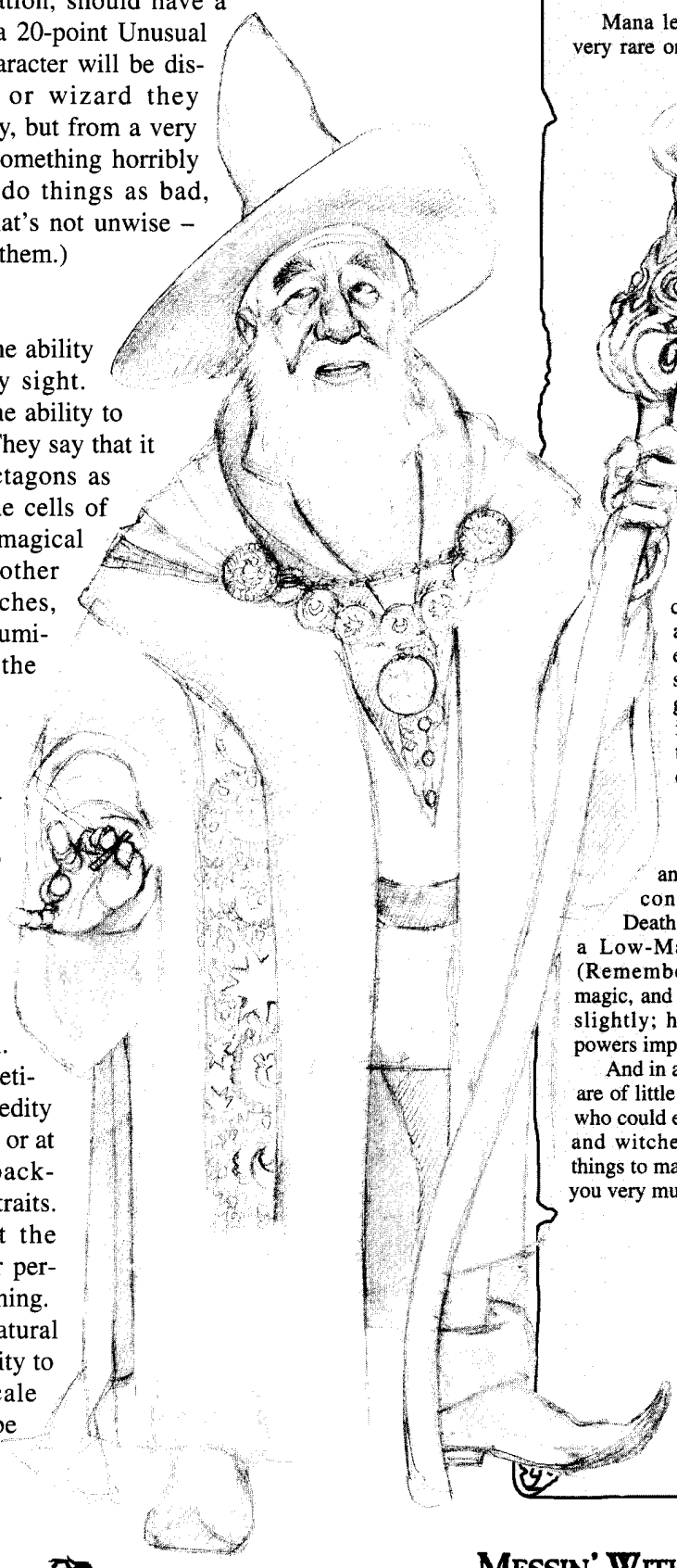
Any magic cast by those who lack Magery and training tends to be slow, formalised, ritualistic, and still dangerous to all involved. Anyone who wants their character to have a handful of small, quick, convenient spells, but no Magery or proper magical education, should have a very good explanation, and take a 20-point Unusual Background. Furthermore, the character will be distrusted by any proper witch or wizard they encounter, not *just* out of snobbery, but from a very real concern that they could do something horribly unwise. (Witches and wizards do things as bad, almost as often, of course, but that's not unwise – it's the only way to learn. Just ask them.)

"Octarine Vision"

Magery, at any level, grants the ability to perceive magical energies by sight. Wizards often talk about this as the ability to see *octarine* (see p. 12, sidebar). They say that it is granted by the presence of octagons as well as rods and cones among the cells of the eye. It is certainly true that magical adepts can see octarine, while other humans usually cannot, but witches, who work with subtler and less luminescent effects, rarely mention the subject; they just know that they see things that other people don't. Some even claim it's just a matter of common sense and concentration. Whatever it is called, the ability certainly enables the possessor to perceive all sorts of supernatural phenomena, including beings with Psychic Invisibility (p. 55).

This sensitivity does seem to require a little training to be useful. It also sometimes seems to be genetically inherited (although Disc heredity is complicated and self-distorting), or at least determined by personal background and very basic character traits. Thus, the wizardly line about the octagons may be a metaphor – or perhaps they grow as the result of training.

A few characters and supernatural beings may have a limited sensitivity to the supernatural, but not full-scale Magery. Such individuals could be given Second Sight (p. CI43).



Lower Mana Regions

Mana levels lower than High are very rare on the Disc. They represent regions of peculiarly high dimensional integrity, and in general, most processes acting on the Disc seem to make reality thinner, not tougher. *Drain Mana* spells (p. M63) are not technically possible on the Disc. Something might suck all the magical *energy* out of an area, in some sense, but that's like drawing all the water out of a well; it will flow back in a little while.

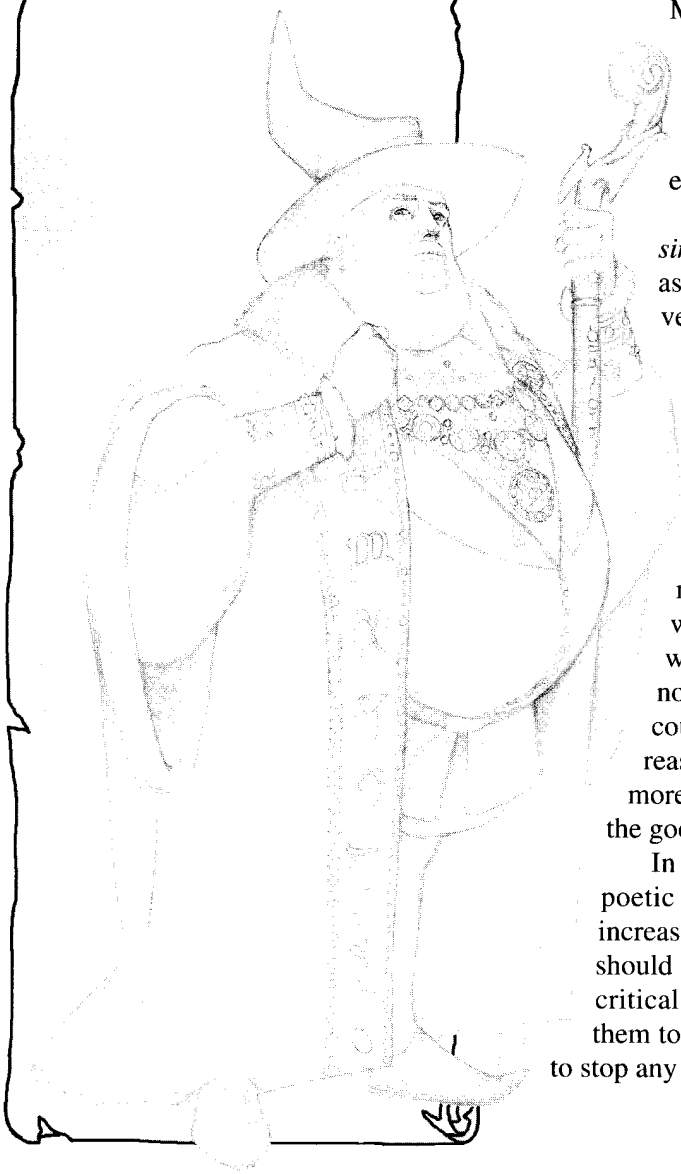
It is possible that some *very* powerful supernatural beings could create wards in multiple adjacent dimensions, lowering the mana level of a site, but they would need a good reason to do so. (This is probably what was done to the entire Disc at the end of the Mage Wars.) There are also other dimensions, accessible from the Disc, where magic is "damped" and dimensional intrusion is controlled; the House of Death, for example, is probably a Low-Mana or No-Mana zone. (Remember, Death does not use magic, and may even disapprove of it slightly; he uses the much deeper powers implicit in his job.)

And in any case, low-mana regions are of little interest to the only people who could easily detect them. Wizards and witches do not go looking for things to make their lives harder, thank you very much.

Spell Memorisation: An Optional Rule

In some of the chronicles, it is said that Discworld spells must be *memorised* through raw mental effort, and that they depart the caster's brain on use. This is clearly reminiscent of a Certain Other Game, and can serve certain comic effects.

However, other accounts seem to call these claims into question, and it must be said that the chief source of this information *was* Rincewind, who never passed an exam in Applied Thaumatology in his life. Thus, it is probably best to discard this approach, except perhaps in relation to especially weird and powerful magics.



Characters who have such perceptions should determine their "special effect" – the *way* that they perceive the supernatural. This can be "seeing octarine light," reliable intuition, or, for untrained characters, suffering shivers in the presence of magic, or seeing it as a blurring or sparkling effect.

Limited Magery: If the GM permits characters with Limited Magery (see p. CI39), they should not generally have supernatural perceptions (although there is nothing to stop them purchasing Second Sight as well). They would be assumed to manipulate magical energy in complicated, indirect ways, rather than through direct examination. However, the GM can permit some limited perceptions, linked to the Magery limitation; for example, Moon-Aspected spell-casters might be able to see supernatural beings by moonlight, single-college mages might notice energies given off by spells from that college and similar events, and priests whose limited abilities come from their religious training might have magical perceptions so long as they are on temple property or performing religious rituals.

Very High Mana

One piece of good news, for ambitious wizards, is that areas of Very High Mana are known on the Disc. The bad news, for everybody who doesn't look where they are going, is that they are in fact the same as the areas of high Residual Magic (see p. 102). In other words, they are inherently unstable and dangerous; so much so that even vaguely sensible wizards do not attempt to exploit them.

From the GM's point of view, the main thing is that there are no *simple* areas of Very High Mana. They all have *personality.* Which, as anyone who has ever been sold a crumbling old house by a silver-tongued property dealer can attest, is not entirely a good thing in a piece of geography. Some generate small jolts of lightning every time magic is used; some are infested with talking trees; some are in perpetual twilight; some are always sweltering hot, or freezing cold. The Wyrmberg permits the creation of fairly controllable dragons by sufficiently intense imaginations, and is generally much more like a traditional sword-'n'-sorcery locale than most of the Disc, but that is a very unusual case; far more common are regions of weakened dimensional barriers, where tentacled monstrosities are forever coming out of the woodwork. (These zones tend to be plastered with large Keep Out notices, signed by famous senior wizards, but sadly, such may be counter-productive. Senior wizards are terrible at explaining their reasons, leaving younger wizards with a natural, often accurate, but more often fatal suspicion that the old swine are being miserly with the good stuff.)

In other words, GMs should be creative with such regions, and poetic if they like, but more often, creatively destructive. With the increased risk of critical failures to worry about, witches and wizards should soon learn caution. (If their casting skills are simply too high for critical failures to be a serious problem, GMs can always introduce them to areas where magic is so rampant that an IQ roll at -5 is required to stop any casting *also* generating the equivalent of a critical failure result.)

Adapting the GURPS Magic Rules

The most important question when fitting ***GURPS*** to Discworld magic is that of types of spell-caster. For this purpose, such folk can be divided into three broad categories: academic wizards, witches, and "minor talents" (a catch-all). But note that the three types aren't as different as they like to think; some wizards take an instinctual sort of approach to their work, some witches have tidy, analytical minds, and most minor talents borrow style or methods from one of the other groups.

The single thing that best distinguishes the serious contenders from the dabblers is Magery – or rather, the associated sensitivity ("Octarine Vision"). A Disc spell-caster needs to be able to sense the flows and shapes of magic to work safely. If you've acquired that, one way or another, the rest is mostly just training. However, that said, you may need a *lot* of training, and there are people who have the sensitivity but no spells.

(Incidentally, Teatime the Assassin, in *Hogfather,* apparently had some kind of magical sense thanks to a glass eye made of scrying crystal. Any fairly sane wizard told that somebody had implanted magic in their own *eye-socket* would back away, whimpering.)

Energy

Like most fantasy magic-workers, Discworld witches and wizards mostly draw on two possible sources of power; personal energy and objects that act as "batteries." On the Disc, the latter mostly means wizards' staffs.

Witches rarely use anything but personal energy. Those who think about the subject at all take the old martial-arts-expert line; if you come to rely too much on your tools, you're stuffed if and when some unsporting opponent takes them away from you. More to the point, witch magic tends, as a matter of style, to be low-key, low-energy, and indirect. A witch who exhausts herself casting spells is a witch who hasn't learned the real art of witchcraft yet, and that's not *just* because she hasn't reduced the energy cost of her spells far enough. Powerful witches can tap narrative patterns for energy – or rather, can make their magic less strenuous by going with the flow of narrative – but that's tricky, morally ambiguous, and often unreliable.

Wizards, on the other hand, *love* high-power magic. It's part of their image, and even if they share the witch theory that respect counts for more than actual magic-use, they know that respect for wizardry is related to pyrotechnics. Thus, they need power "batteries." They do not use powerstones, as in other ***GURPS*** settings; rather, they use their staffs (see p. 131). Of course, this means that a wizard without a staff in his hands *may* be in trouble – but then, other wizards will likely be laughing at him anyway, which is what will *really* be worrying him.[1] Note also that Disc wizards would rarely think of using their personal Fatigue for anything other than spell-casting, if they have any choice. The whole point of wizardry is that it saves a chap from all that exhausting running around and fighting with swords and such. Thus, they tend to talk about their personal energy, along with that in their staffs, as their "magic." An exhausted wizard is "out of magic," not "tired."

[1] *It's not Freudian, really.*

Octiron

Octiron is a strange, iridescent metal that radiates raw magical energy in dangerous amounts. An octiron needle will always line up with the Disc's magical field and point at the Hub. It will also darn socks as if by – well. The sourcerer Coin possessed an octiron staff, inherited from his wizard father, that looked like a black slit in the universe itself. Most wizards say that it is impossible to make a staff out of metal; they are obviously wrong, but it is not a trivial project, even (especially?) with octiron, and the construction or operation of any octiron artefact should be the subject of a campaign in itself.

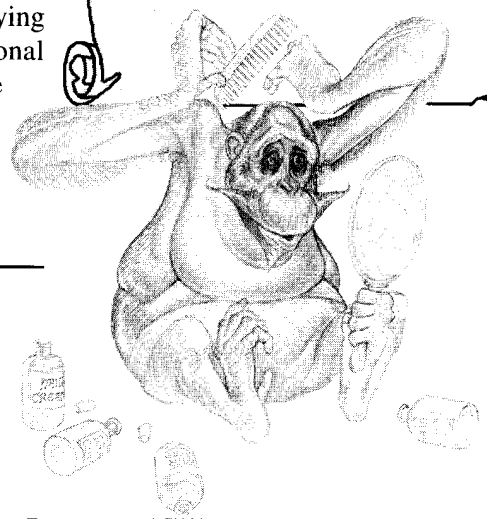
Octiron is about as rare and valuable as sapient pearwood. Multiversal travellers are cautioned that it is stable only in extremely magic-rich environments (High-Mana zones); in other realities it will promptly decay into less hazardous substances, like californium-252 or wyomium-256.

Octogen

Octogen is a gas that gives off dangerous quantities of raw magic. Not much else seems to be known about it. Young wizard PCs might wish to apply for a research grant, and invent some very special breathing apparatus.

Dehydrated Water

In the centre of the Great Nef (see p. 27), under the effects of great heat and octarine light, water can enter a state of dehydration: it becomes a silvery, ultra-fine sand. Well-designed ships can sail through it (and people can sink in it). It harbours very strange fish. Dehydrated water can be rehydrated by adding water. It naturally has magical applications, which might tempt adventurers to visit that region.



GURPS Magic Items

Given that the Disc is hardly short of magical artefacts, GMs may borrow ideas from sources such as ***GURPS Magic Items*** and ***GURPS Magic Items 2.*** Minor items can simply be convenient creations of powerful wizards; more potent or bizarre artefacts are probably left over from the Mage Wars, or the handiwork of absent-minded deities. However, with the Disc's peculiar handicraft-based magical engineering industry, some very strange exceptions are possible.

Items that play a significant part in any plot should be given some kind of Discworld spin. For example, any sentient device (such as Mentor, p. MI91) is likely to be over-confident, or vain, or depressive, or horribly optimistic. A Golem Shield (p. MI28) would be less likely to hurl horrible curses than sarcastic or cynical remarks. And anything associated with demons is associated with *Discworld* demons – petulant, unimaginative, and usually rather dim-witted. Thus the Demon of One Thousand Keys, (p. MIT28), would play only the most tiresomely jaunty, old-fashioned, irritatingly vapid tunes.

(Note: powerstones aren't widespread on the Disc; the nearest thing is the wizard's staff. The material on pp. MI108-111 should be disregarded, or adapted to apply to staffs and wands.)

Seven-League Boots

A search round Unseen University's museum might turn up one or two pairs of Seven-League Boots, kept for emergency travel and to illustrate to students why high-powered magic is not always a good idea.

They enable the wearer to teleport up to 21 miles by taking a single pace, at a cost of one Fatigue. However, this magic requires careful control; roll IQ+Magery-Encumbrance for every use. Distracted wearers may suffer a penalty to this roll at the GM's option. In the event of a failure, roll vs. DX-Encumbrance; a success on this second roll means that the wearer has restrained the attempt at the last unstable moment, but loses the Fatigue anyway. If the second roll *fails*, the wearer succeeds in placing one foot 21 miles ahead of the other, but without properly controlling the dimension shifts involved. Anyone observing this must make a Fright check; the wearer himself is very, very dead.

Few Disc spell-casters ever use personal HT to power spells; they regard that as far too dangerous. Wizards especially are generally cautious of their own well-being, and would probably have to make Will rolls, reduced by the amount of HT they wish to spend, to do such a thing. At the GM's option, any spell-casters who render themselves unconscious while casting spells may also be subject to the psychic attentions of the Things from the Dungeon Dimensions.

PSIONICS

While most wizard magic at least is clearly academic, book-based spell-craft, other sorts of Discworld magic, particularly parts of witchcraft, seem to act more like psionics in ***GURPS*** terms.[1] If psi is indeed a separate phenomenon to magic, no-one on the Discworld has recognised the distinction yet; pretty well every instance of what might be psionics among humans in the chronicles has involved a character with other proven supernatural powers, from Granny Weatherwax to Mrs. Cake.

Games certainly do not *have* to use the ***GURPS*** psionics rules; any "psionic" effect seen in the chronicles can be simulated with spells, especially some from the Communication and Empathy and Mind Control colleges. However, characters may "feel" more accurate if the game does use both. Still, GMs should remember that they are facets of the same power, not separate arts; anything that stops magic will stop psionics, and vice-versa. Psionic Resistance is not available as a distinct advantage; Magic Resistance (if it is available at all to mortals) reduces an opposing psionic's skill roll, as it reduces that of a spell-caster, and a No Mana zone (if such can be found) also prevents use of psi.

Elves (see p. 171) are treated as using psionics for practical reasons; GMs who really object to the idea are welcome to recast them as limited but powerful spell-casters.

Assuming that psionics rules are used, only Telepathy and ESP are generally available. Psychokinesis and Teleport require more raw energy than is safe to handle without the mediating control of spell-casting; anyone trying to work such psionic effects would have their brains boil or ooze out of their ears. (They may be acquired by some supernatural beings as an innate ability, but cannot then usually be "trained up" from their fixed starting level.) Healing is a bad idea because of the nature of Disc magical energy (see p. 18 on Disc medicine); Antipsi simply does not fit the setting. GMs with ***GURPS Psionics*** should exclude Astral Projection (better covered by spells, if at all) and Electrokinesis (too energetic and not very useful), but Psychic Vampirism would make a good power for a Discworld villain.

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[1] *And the included **GURPS Lite** rules do not attempt to cover psionics, which is a strong argument for contenting yourself with magic to start out.*

Critical Failures

The following table should be used when Discworld spell-casters suffer critical failures, instead of that on p. B147. As usual, these are guidelines rather than firm rules; the GM may always modify the results, applying common sense or narrative logic as appropriate.

3 – Spell fails entirely; caster takes 1d of damage if it was a spell that could possibly cause physical damage, otherwise is unconscious for 2d hours.

4 – Spell produces the reverse of the intended effect.

5 – Spell is cast on one of the caster's companions (roll randomly, but never one on whom it was meant to be cast).

6 – Nothing happens, except that the caster forgets his own name, and develops a mental block about remembering it if reminded – make a Will roll after a day, and again every day, until he remembers.

7 – Spell merely causes local lighting levels to dip momentarily, and produces an unpleasant chill in all nearby beings.

8 – Spell affects someone or something other than its target – friend, foe, or random object (roll randomly, or GM makes an interesting choice).

9 – Spell fails entirely; caster takes 1 point of damage from a flurry of octarine sparks.

10 – Spell fails entirely; caster is mentally stunned (IQ roll to recover), and curses volubly.

11 – Spell produces a strange noise and 1d coloured billiard balls.

12 – Spell produces a weak and useless shadow of its intended effect, and one white dove.

13 – Spell produces a dramatic explosion that leaves the caster with no eyebrows, a blackened beard, clothes in rags, and hat 3d yards away, but causes no actual injury.

14 – Spell fails entirely; caster's hair and beard instantly grows 2d yards, and fingernails 1d inches.

15 – Nothing happens except that the caster temporarily forgets the spell – make a Will roll after a week, and again after another week, until he remembers.

16 – Spell seems to work, but it is only a useless illusion.

17 – Spell appears to work, but all useful numerical results are halved, and the caster has intense dreams of the Dungeon Dimensions for 1d+2 nights. In this time, all sleep is considered to be "half lost," and thus costs 2 Fatigue that cannot be recovered until the victim gets a decent night's rest. If the GM is willing to play this as a semi-horrific game, the victim should also have to make a Fright Check each such night, at +1 for each preceding night in the sequence when the check was successfully made.

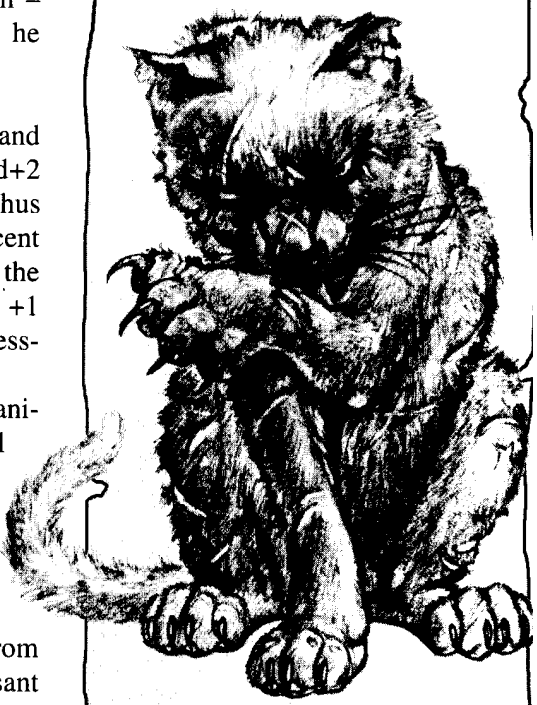
18 – Spell fails entirely, and something from the Dungeon Dimensions manifests somewhere in the area. This may represent an actual physical manifestation, or partial mental possession of the caster or another vulnerable mind, leading to a temporary Split Personality; GM's option for details and cure, but there should be plenty of Fright Checks along the way.

In addition to the above, every time a spell-caster rolls a critical failure, the GM should secretly roll 1d; on a 1, he has been noticed by the Things from the Dungeon Dimensions. The result may be anything from a few unpleasant dreams to a full-scale horror plot, at the GM's option, but anyone who is thus noticed repeatedly should be in *serious* trouble.

Familiars

Discworld spell-casters do not usually have familiars in any really magical sense, despite the fact that the *idea* is as well known as on our world. Many wizards, especially those in commercial practice, keep a raven around their workshop, preferably perched on a skull, but that is simply a matter of image. Some witches, such as Nanny Ogg, have pet cats (and Nanny's Greebo is no ordinary cat – see p. 185), but that is just a matter of old ladies and pets. Others may also feel obliged to try keeping, say, a toad, but there is little to guarantee that it will not wander off or die. To judge by one known example, voodoo experts also go for pets, such as huge and malevolent cockerels, but these do not seem to serve a specific magical function.

All of which said, Disc magic can be a personal sort of thing; anyone who wants a familiar of any of the types discussed on p. CI37 is welcome. They should simply be ready for a mixture of technical interest and condescension from other magic-workers.



Re-Naming Spells

Discworld spells tend to be given very interesting and bizarre names. Wizard-spells are especially prone to this, as the creator of a new technique always wants to be sure of the appropriate glory and status, and will usually tag his own name to a new recipe. (Disc wizards only rarely go on grimoire-signing tours, because grimoires don't actually sell enough copies – wizards are parsimonious, and prefer to borrow their books from university libraries – but if new printing technology brought the cost down a little, they'd be out there with their quill pens like a shot.) Examples from the chronicles include *Vestcake's Floating Curse, Stacklady's Morphic Resonator,* and *Gindle's Effortless Elevator.* (The last is known to ***GURPS*** rules as *Apportation.*) Thus, GMs and players of wizards are encouraged to come up with interesting new names for existing ***GURPS*** spells with prosaic appellations. Some examples are given later in this chapter.

Magic Wands

Magic wands, as carried by Fairy Godmothers, are *extremely* powerful artefacts; see *Witches Abroad.* They are capable of transforming more or less anything non-magical to anything else. Even though they can only be used by characters with Magery, and even if they have quirks such as automatically re-setting to a single option (such as pumpkins or frogs), they should only be used in games very occasionally, as plot devices, and PCs should not be permitted to keep them.

If a wand does appear, it should require an IQ+Magery roll to operate, and the effects should only be temporary, lasting no more than a few hours. The larger the change, the harder and briefer it should be. Anything larger than pumpkin-to-coach should be impossible.

Also, a wand has a Duty attached – usually, fairy godmother work, as seen in the fairy-tales. Anyone using one without concern for its traditional purpose should attract some kind of subtle but powerful disadvantage, such as increasing levels of Unluckiness.

Witch Training

Witches are trained by other witches, either being deliberately selected as apprentices or (in very rare cases) presenting themselves so persistently that the old witch gives in for the sake of peace and quiet. In either case, the teacher will only think of training a girl with Magery.

Exact details of witches' training and talents can vary enormously, but there are some basic essentials; any witch lacking the following should have a very good explanation and an Unusual Background.

1. Witches are trained in rural medicine, which can be impressively effective on the Disc. They should have effective skill levels of *at least* 11 in Diagnosis and Physician, which, in rural Disc societies, is considered the same as Herbalist. Many have much better ratings, but others rely heavily on standard formulae and the placebo effect. As for other common Medical skills: Hypnotism is known among witches, often being enhanced by telepathy, but is mostly considered a minor form of magic rather than a branch of medicine as such, while Surgery is very rare – witches work through the mind and herbs, not by gross carving – but may be learned at a low level for serious emergencies.

(Incidentally, Ramtops herbalism is much enhanced by the exceptional, magic-shaped variety of local plant life. Some straightforward "standard formulae" used by the local witches have astonishing results.)

2. Witches also learn "Headology" – how to ensure the respect of non-witches, and to achieve results without actual magic. This training sticks a lot better in some cases than others; at best, it grants the witch Psychology skill, and probably other skills (as discussed on p. 107). Even the least assertive or manipulative witch should have some talent for getting information out of people she knows, which may be simulated by a point or two in Social skills, or good Area Knowledge of her neighbours. Indeed, that Area Knowledge is very important to any witch who looks after some region.

3. Again as part of the need to build up respect and a personal image, a witch should have a Reputation of some kind. This may be good or bad, and will quite often be a mixture of both (and thus may balance out to zero cost); the important thing is to be known, not what one is known *for.*

4. Last – and some witches would say, least – is witch-magic. Assuming that psionic powers are available in the campaign, witches buy some combination of those and spells. They may be psionics without spells (though this is very rare), spell-casters, or both. Witches find spells easier to teach than psionic powers; the spell-magic provides a discipline and a route into the more flexible powers of the mind.

Whatever the game-mechanisms involved, witch magic tends to the subtle. Only the most crass or eccentric do *not* learn Borrowing (p. 138) to some level, usually high, although the after-effects can be amusingly disturbing and so it is often avoided. Although most threaten to turn people into frogs at some stage, they are probably less likely to actually do so than wizards; Granny Weatherwax for one finds it much more satisfying to make an annoying individual *think* they are a frog. This is typical; witches cast most of their spells on minds, or talk about objects as if they had minds. They dislike fire, which has no mind at all that they can discern, and have a lot of trouble with iron, which has a cold, rigid intellect at best. (Weather, on the other hand, has distinct personality patterns.) Even witch-spells that do direct physical damage tend to take the form of delayed and misdirecting curses, rather than gouts of energy.

Voodoo Witches

Voodoo is considered to be a branch of witchcraft, but it is a very variant form. GMs may permit voodoo witches to modify the standard list of attributes above to fit their image; for example, many (especially the less kindly ones) may have Poisons instead of medical skills, and some have a Secret rather than a Reputation. Their spells certainly tend to be different, as they rarely go in for Borrowing, but usually know how to create zombies.

Wizard Training

Anyone seeking formal wizard training must have Magery and full Literacy. Students do not necessarily learn much in the way of useful spells to begin with, although they can pick up a fair amount if they try; the first few years are mostly spent on theory (Thaumatology skill), on which active wizards must always spend at least one character point, and any number of background studies. How much of the latter sticks depends on the college, the student, and luck, but wizards can justify knowing any number of Medical or Scientific skills.

Most colleges, including UU, insist on teaching the Discworld version of the Staff spell (p. 131) to all their graduates (the admission or graduation ceremonies may involve formal presentation of a staff), partly as a matter of style, partly for its practical benefits; again, a wizard would need an Unusual Background to miss out on this.

Lastly, most students also learn at least one "blast" spell of some description – something that uses violent, visible effects to do physical damage at range. The specific spell is a matter of personal style (Lightning, Create Fire, or Disintegrate are possibilities), and the character may not be very good at it – but a wizard who cannot throw raw force around if pushed is not much respected, and such spells are always useful for lighting cigarettes or demonstrating one's nature to non-magicians. Only wizards with Pacifism and an academic focus (lots of Scientific skills) are likely to lack such a spell.

Wizards and Psionics

Assuming that they are available in the game, wizards treat psionic-style powers as a frivolous secondary discipline; they prefer formalised spells. They *must* put at least as many points into spells as into psi abilities.

Unseen University apparently recognises the existence of psionics, and provides tutoring and practice space, but the more senior faculty members probably consider studying them to be a distraction – rather as a Theoretical Physics major might view, say, learning the bongos.[1]

Minor Talents

The vast majority of Discworld minor talents tend to have a very limited range of effects, and a clear and specific theme to their powers. On the other hand, they can be very powerful in their narrow way, and can often accomplish things that would take an Unseen University wizard weeks of research.

[1] *Or worse,* ***applied*** *physics.*

Commonplace and Imp-Powered Devices

A number of standardised and easily-created magical devices and artefacts are available in any large Disc city; if they are not actually on shelves in shops, they can be purchased from jobbing wizards with Engineering (Magical) skill. These *are* very much standardised designs; wizard PCs could conceivably get profitable work making them, but trying to craft new designs in a hurry to meet specific needs is much harder. GMs should treat anything really *useful* to adventurers as needing a long-term research program.

Recently, various complex devices incorporating small, talented, single-minded imps have come on the market. These imps are not evil, although they look like conventional sulphur-breathing demons in miniature; they *can* be a little irritable. They exist on the Disc to do one job, and do not object to this, but may complain about working conditions. They are sustained by the Disc's background magic. If the device housing them is destroyed, they vanish back to their home dimension with a small pop.

Imp-based technology seems to have originated in the Agatean Empire, and recently spread to other lands, partly because of the growth of general trade. Unfortunately, the Agateans don't always seem to be exporting their better designs. In fact, Ankh-Morpork adopted and then dropped imp-based timepieces in a few short years, realising that mundane clockwork was actually better.

Small-town commercial wizards often keep a number of very minor magical devices around the place for effect.

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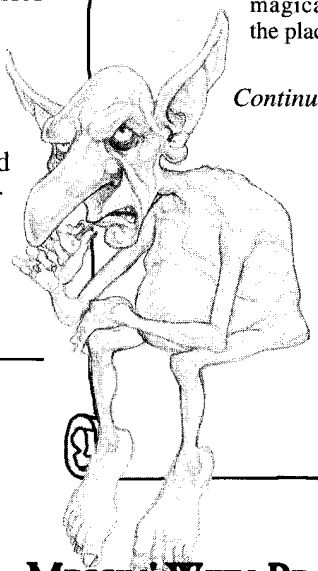


Commonplace and Imp-Powered Devices (Continued)

Iconographs ("Picture-Boxes")

An iconograph contains an imp with the Artist skill, along with a supply of paints, a tiny easel and stool, and some papers. These imps are fast workers, able to run off a picture in a second or two in good light; the paint then takes a few minutes to dry completely. They have excellent memories, and can repeat any past picture on request. They stick their heads out of the box to say when they run out of art supplies; a full stock is usually good for 20 or 30 pictures, but if, say, the user requests a lot of pictures of trees, they may run out of green after only ten or fifteen.

Trick "photography" is very difficult; the imps paint exactly what they see, and may in fact see through magical illusions (GM's option). They are summonsed to be reliable, and don't understand requests to "lie."

"Picture-boxes" cost $100-$500, depending on size, reliability, and so on. (More or less skilled imps are possible; Artist-17 is the norm.) Paint and paper for each picture costs about $2; again, fancy boxes may use high-grade canvas and fine oil paints.

Moving images are possible, but since the events of *Moving Pictures,* they have been banned in Ankh-Morpork. (Bearing in mind that the Patrician, several UU faculty members, and the entire city were all seriously endangered on that occasion, one may be sure that the law is enforced with extreme prejudice.)

Watches

Timepiece-imps have Absolute Timing and good voices; when the case is opened, they announce the time, usually in a formal style. The basic "mechanism" costs $50, but the casing tends to be fine jewellery, and so adds considerably to the price.

Continued on next page . . .

Priests and Druids

Some (but not all) Discworld religions preserve complex metaphysical doctrines which include training in some kind of magic. Most of the minority who go in for real power-use, however, tend to teach a small list of spells or psionic disciplines, often appropriate to their deity, with clearly-defined applications. The best example is the classic Evil High Priest type who attempts to hold off the Barbarian Hero with a Fear spell or a telepathic Mental Blow.

Mediums

See p. 44 for discussion of Discworld mediums in game terms.

Fortune-Tellers

Many Disc fortune-tellers are actually witches or wizards with one or two good Divination spells, but some come into serious magic through their chosen form of prediction, or actually have semi-trained psionic Precognition, and any other powers or spells they possess will have grown from this base. For example, a Caroc card reader could have a handful of spells, each of which requires dealing out a symbolically-suitable card from the deck – or psionic ESP, with a special limitation that requires using a card-reading to seek out the information.

Shamans

Shamans are nature-priests, often with a taste for distinctly strange fungi. See ***GURPS Religion*** for a serious and detailed treatment of such traditions; for a quick-and-simple Disc version, build the shaman with one or more Addictions, a little Magery (quite likely limited as per pp. CI39-40), and a few interesting spells, most likely from the Animal or Communication and Empathy colleges.

Magic Items

Magic in the chronicles can be embodied in objects as well as in spells. These are mostly created by tinkering wizards or dwarfs; such manufacture does *not* always seem to require actual spell-casting ability (dwarf spell-casters are rare or unknown), but merely high levels in appropriate skills such as Engineer/Magical (p. 57). However, big, high-powered, one-of-a-kind magics doubtless demand both Magery and much research work; the rules on p. B152 are appropriate for this.

Broomsticks

Flying broomsticks are actually quite common on the Disc, and represent a profitable line of manufacturing work for some dwarf communities. So does maintenance and repair work, because broomsticks are approximately as reliable as the sort of cars that people always swear are more reliable than their reputation implies. That is, some of them work fine for decades, and others were clearly run off last thing at night by a trainee. They rarely crash fatally, but may develop quirks. (Granny Weatherwax's requires a running start, for example.)

Broomsticks can be piloted by anyone with Magery (the operator must be able to sense the magical energy they use in order to activate them). Thus, witches and wizards can both use them, but wizards tend to regard them as a little

undignified and, well, *witchy,* and prefer to either use their feet or to show off and fly on their staffs (using spells). Witches, on the other hand, find them useful when flitting round their rural responsibilities, and thus many live with the stereotype.

Roll vs. IQ+Magery to start a broom; unfamiliarity with the practice, or with a specific broom, can impose penalties to the roll, and some broomsticks are lousy starters, with consistent problems. Once started, flying in a straight line or making easy turns requires no special rolls, but complex manoeuvres can demand a Flight (Broomstick) roll (see p. 57), as if operating a vehicle. They cost one Fatigue point per hour in flight (used to keep the magic under control). If the user ever falls to 4 or lower ST through fatigue from this or other causes, the stick becomes hard to control, and one or more Flight (Broomstick) rolls are required to make a safe (if usually bumpy) landing. (GMs should be generous at this point; at worst, a witch will usually suffer 1d or so crash-landing damage. However, landing is *required.*)

A standard broomstick carrying up to 200 lbs. can fly at a move rate of 18; for every 10 lbs. over this limit, reduce move by one. A broomstick with its move reduced to 3 or below will simply not get off the ground. Non-standard broomsticks with different capacity or speed may be possible, at the GM's option, but will usually cost extra as "custom models."

A broomstick costs around $500 new. (Witches, who are not always on the cash economy, may have to do a dwarf community a few large favours.) Second-hand models may be a little cheaper, but this is at the purchaser's own risk; if it's being sold cheap, the seller usually wants rid of it. Running costs are usually 1d × $20 in maintenance and emergency repairs to the spells 1d-3 times per year. Manufacturing a broomstick takes about a month in a special workshop run by individuals with Engineer/Magical skill (not working full time), or a similar amount of full-time effort from a spellcaster with appropriate spells – details are up to the GM, but it should usually be easier to buy than to build your own.

Sapient Pearwood

A wood with an exceptionally high capacity for magic, Sapient Pearwood originally evolved after the Mage Wars, in areas that had seen much expenditure of sorcerous energy. It is much valued for the manufacture of wizards' staffs, as it can hold ten times the energy of other woods. It is also absolutely immune to the effects of magic – it simply absorbs it – and it tends to display *absolute* loyalty to its owner. It has sometimes been used for the grave goods of insanely wealthy monarchs, as it will follow them to the afterlife.

It can also be fashioned into objects with a "life" of their own, and a limited volition. It is possible to build a bucket that will carry water by itself, for instance. These items are useful, but a bit monomaniacal; it would be a good idea to give the water bucket a sense of when to stop filling the bathtub. For some reason – possibly the memory of all those wizards' duels – they also often have a bad temper. Sapient Pearwood apparently feels annoyed at being sapient, although it also takes pleasure in its malevolence.

Sapient Pearwood has been logged very heavily. It is still fairly common in the Agatean Empire, but not a single tree is known to stand within five hundred miles of Unseen University.

Sapient Pearwood Property is a character advantage for game purposes; see p. 55.

Commonplace and Imp-Powered Devices (Continued)

(Incidentally, mundane clockwork watches cost about the same in Ankh-Morpork, but are rarer and more expensive in less advanced cities. Being largely dwarf designs, they can be rated up to TL5.)

Personal Organisers

The latest in imp-based practicality and convenience. Or at least, so it is said, by people selling them. A personal organiser is a pocket-sized box containing an imp with Eidetic Memory and Absolute Timing. Its job is to remind the user of appointments, take memos, and generally act as a combined timepiece, calendar, diary, and source of moral aphorisms. Advanced models have precognitive imps, supposedly able to schedule appointments before they are even made.

"It has been said that modern Disc personal organisers have fifteen functions, of which ten consist of apologising for getting the other five wrong."

It has been said that modern Disc personal organisers have fifteen functions, of which ten consist of apologising for getting the other five wrong. They also have an irritating habit of saying "bingledy-bongledy-bing" or similar when activated. They have handwriting recognition ability, but not Literacy.[1] See *Jingo* for a case of a personal organiser going *really* off-track.

They cost about $500. Imp-based technology may have room for further advancement.

[1] *"Yes, that's handwriting."*

Hydrophobes

Magical hydrophobia is known and understood by anyone with a wizardly education, and the concept is no secret, but it is only routinely exploited on Krull, where magic is regarded as too valuable a tool for any trick to be missed. Basically, it involves augmentation of a person's natural psychic abilities by giving them something to really focus on – specifically, water.

Hydrophobes, or Loathers, are trained from birth on dehydrated water (see p. 123). As characters, they should be purchased with an extreme Phobia towards any sort of water (-30 points), and either high-power psionic telekinesis with a limitation "only on or away from water" (-40%), or a set of spells set up to achieve a similar effect. They can learn any sort of generally-available magic, but often put a hydrophobic twist to it; they are especially good at some weather magic, as they can drive away rain clouds with a gaze of pure loathing. They tend to die young, from disgust at their own bodies, and hence may take disadvantages such as Short Lifespan or Terminally Ill.

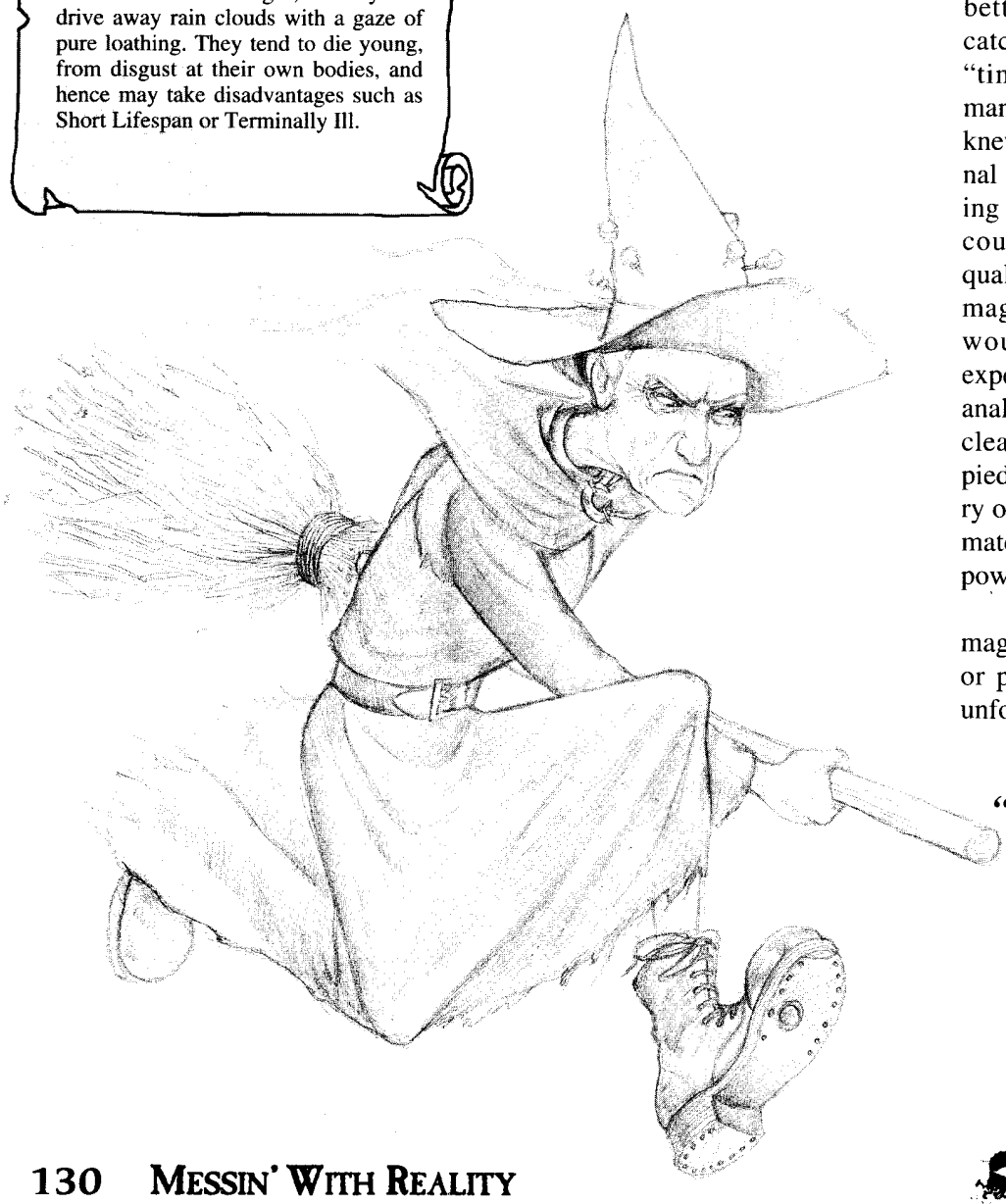
Enchantment by Use

On the Disc, old and much-used items can gain magical attributes through two processes. The first, and most obvious, is actual absorption of magical energies through extended direct exposure. For example, a chisel which a craftsman-wizard used in the manufacture of animated puppets for many years might become capable of granting anything it was used on some semblance of life. However, this is an unpredictable and not very controllable process, thanks to the nature of Disc magic; the chisel could actually become capable of casting the animation spell, "straight" or with a malicious twist, or it could just become terribly sharp, or it could develop a limited personality and critical tendencies – or it could take to flying round the workshop and hiding in inconvenient places when not watched. GMs can use this effect for plot twists and incidental jokes; it takes too long, and is too unreliable, to be of much use to PCs.

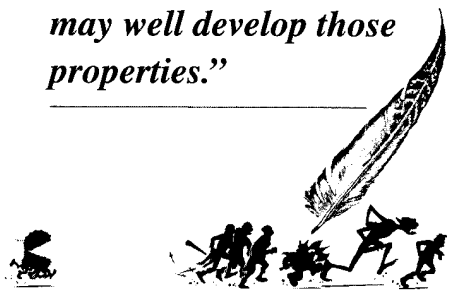
The second, more subtle process is a matter of belief. If enough Discworlders believe that an object has particular properties, it may well develop those properties – and while this is not *exactly* a magical process, it can grant magical powers.

For example, a sword used by generations of kings may become a "kingly" sword. If the kings are much given to ceremonies and processions, it might get better at holding a mirror sheen and catching the light with a near-audible "ting," but more likely, if the kings managed to last that long, they mostly knew how to use a sword for its original purpose, and the blade, while looking increasingly battered and notched, could actually improve to *very fine* quality. But neither would be detectably magical in the conventional sense; it would take a shrewd and sensitive expert in Thaumatology to discern and analyse the effect. What might become clearly magical is, say, a castle occupied by (presumed) wizards for a century or three. If the gargoyles weren't animated and the drawbridge wasn't self-powered, it would be very surprising.

(Also – just occasionally, new non-magical devices of exceptional quality or power *demand* to be used. This is unfortunate with weapons.)



"If enough Discworlders believe that an object has particular properties, it may well develop those properties."



Old Staffs

Wizards' staffs were discussed in the previous chapter, and the relevant spell is described on p. 132 below. Old wizards' staffs are much valued, but that tends to be because the ones that are kept around are the ones that belonged to really powerful adepts, and hence are the most powerful. In a few cases, they may even be sapient pearwood. The snag is that staffs have to be deliberately passed on to be useful. See the spell notes for more details.

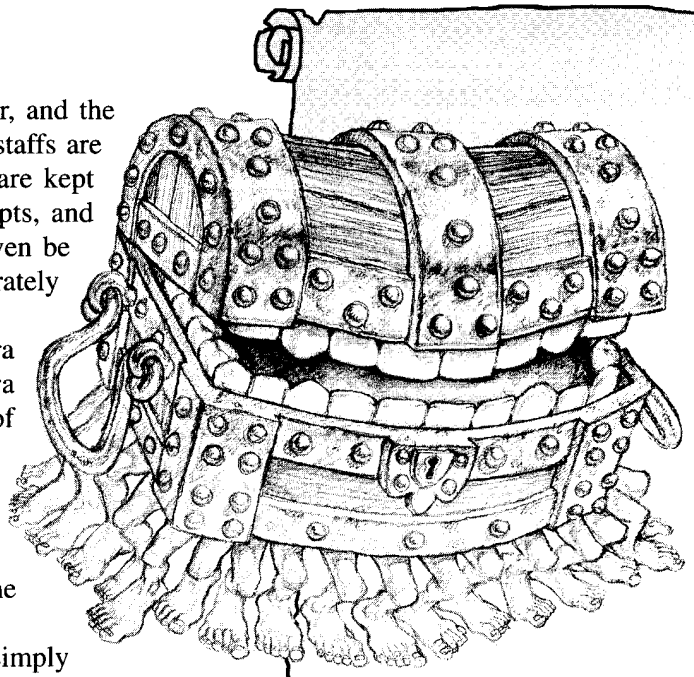
However, it is also possible for a staff to absorb extra magic through extended use. This could be simply extra energy capacity, some "built-in" spells, or perhaps echoes of the personalities of past owners. PC wizards who wish to start with special staffs can use the following guidelines, with GM permission only:

• Built-in spells are treated as learnt in the normal way, but cost is reduced by 25%, then rounded up, to reflect the fact that the spell can only be cast with staff in hand.

• Advantages may be granted by the staff. These are simply bought with a cost limitation, "staff must be in hand;" -30% is probably fair, but GMs can vary it as seems appropriate. For example, Absolute Direction (staff acts as a compass) probably only merits -20%, as it is most useful when the wizard is up and walking, whereas Danger Sense (staff warns of threats) could merit -40%, as it is most useful to know of danger at precisely the moments when one has left one's staff in the umbrella-stand. A staff could also grant subtle advantages, such as Luck, or even a Reputation among wizards – "anyone who carries a staff like that deserves respect."

• Staffs with personalities especially may also grant disadvantages, again with reduced points value if they only cut in when the staff is on hand. A staff might generate a perpetual low hum in the wielder's head, equal to Hard of Hearing (and perhaps Bad Temper) with a -35% Disadvantage, or an order of fanatical killers might be sworn to avenge the misbehaviour of some past bearer of the staff (an Enemy). If the staff merely refuses to assist acts against its nature, but doesn't stop the wizard doing such things with his own power and abilities, that is equal to the disadvantage (usually a Code of Honour or Compulsive Behaviour) with a -75% cost limitation.

• Staffs may be *closely* psychically linked to their owners. Such staffs cannot be discarded, and generally, although such a link can have its uses, this is a disadvantage, as it makes the caster vulnerable to damage to the staff. If the two become separated, a Detection or Communication spell can be cast on the staff as if on the owner, and can locate the owner; the staff also tends to reflect the current situation of the owner (strictly speaking, the owner's mind), warming up if they are hot or fevered, cooling down if they are cold, and so on. Primarily, however, half of any damage suffered by the staff (after its innate DR is subtracted) is also suffered by the owner, in the form of "stunning" damage (pain and shock, wearing off at a rate of one point per minute but causing full penalties to other rolls at the time), and if the staff is destroyed, the user must roll vs. HT or die. (At the GM's option, expert medical care *might* keep the character alive, probably with reduced HT.) This is considered a special version of the Vulnerability disadvantage, worth -10 points.

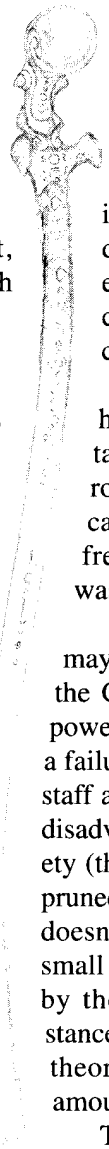


Agatean Luggage

Twoflower the Tourist said that he had bought his Sapient Pearwood luggage (see p. 178) from a Mysterious Vanishing Magic Shop, but in fact such trunks are quite common on the Counterweight Continent; presumably, the Mysterious features of his purchase were things like its unlimited malice, high speed, infinite capacity (and ability to launder clothes placed in it), and most of all its extreme lethality. It is hard to imagine the Agatean Empire permitting its ordinary citizens to own suitcases that could chew through a regiment of guards like a armoured vehicle fan's fondest dream.

The key feature of normal Agatean Sapient Pearwood luggage is that it has lots of tiny legs, and runs around loyally after its owner (most cases have a Move of about 6). Such luggage is not available on the rest of the Disc; in the Empire, it is very widespread, and presumably therefore not very expensive – say, about $100 per cubic foot of capacity. However, characters proposing to transport Sapient Pearwood to elsewhere on the Disc should be required to pay experience points for the advantage.

The Staff Spell



The enchanted staffs that are so important to Discworld wizard culture are produced by a spell which replaces the standard ***GURPS*** "Staff" spell (but **only** on the Discworld). This is technically an Enchantment, although it is used by many wizards who never bother with other spells in that college.

Staff Enchantment

The wizard's staff is a very important thing, as described on p. 131. Anyone touched by the staff is considered to be touched by the wizard for spell-casting purposes, so it is a useful way of extending the user's reach, but its main practical importance is as a power storage device.

However, its symbolic importance is even greater. A wizard can only use a staff that he himself has enchanted, or that was passed to him willingly and with due ceremony by a predecessor. Furthermore, a wizard can only possess one staff at a time; after losing or discarding one, at least a month of preparation is needed before another can be adopted. Thus, wizards tend to regards their staffs as both a badge of office and a extension of their (considerable) egos.

Wizards either inherit staffs, or more often, receive their first (which may well last them a lifetime) on entering a magical college, or at least as soon as they advance far enough to learn this spell. Others acquire the staff on graduation; a few never do pick up the spell, but these individuals are considered eccentric. The spell is often cast (very) ceremonially (necessarily given its energy cost), with senior wizards assisting; this is part of most college's ceremonies.

A normal enchanted staff can hold mana (magical energy, useable instead of Fatigue when casting magic) equal to its creator's IQ + Magery at the time of enchantment. (Thus, wizards may choose to make themselves new staffs if they train themselves up extensively during their careers.) A staff made of sapient pearwood (see p. 129) can hold *ten times* as much energy. Metal staffs, let alone octiron, are always special cases, and subject to GM whim. Also, old staffs may increase their capacity over time; see p. 130. The energy can only be used by the staff's current owner, who must be in physical contact with it at the time.

A staff with less than its full charge of energy recharges from the local mana at the following rates:

No-Mana Zone: No recharge.

Low Mana: 1d points/week (or 1 point/2 days).

Normal Mana: 1d points/day (or 1 point/7 hours).

High Mana: 1d points/hour (or 1 point/15 minutes).

Very High Mana: 1d points/minute.

Fixed rates are given for GMs who don't want to roll too many dice, but variable rates better represent the uncertainties of Disc magic. Re-charging in Very High Mana zones is *always* chancy, and may involve weird special effects and side-effects, from dazzling octarine flares to the staff's becoming infested by *something*. Mana levels of less than High are of course rare on the Disc, but are mentioned here for completeness.

Also, a wizard can transfer up to three points of his personal energy (fatigue) to recharge his staff by taking one minute to concentrate and making a Will roll, with -1 per point of energy transferred. On a critical success, the staff regains an extra point of energy free; on a critical failure, the fatigue is used up and wasted.

Extra enchantments may be cast on a staff, and it may also acquire extra abilities over time (see p. 130), at the GM's whim. However, every time a staff gains new powers in any way, roll the current owner's Will at -2; on a failure, the staff acquires a quirk. On a critical failure, the staff acquires a *serious* quirk, up to the level of a character disadvantage. These oddities may be of the ordinary variety (the staff smells funny, or grows shoots that have to be pruned weekly), or they may be personality traits (the staff doesn't like to work after 11 PM, it won't risk harming small woodland creatures). Details should be determined by the GM, and should be appropriate to the circumstances; as a rule of thumb, a disadvantage should have a theoretical points value equal to about three times the amount the Will roll was missed by.

The quirks and traits acquired by a metal staff are always unpleasant (they may be humorous, too – it all depends on which end of the thing you're on), and any personality it develops will tend toward the malicious; either childish and nasty, or outright psychotic.

A wizard who starts with this spell may be assumed to have a standard staff created at his present ability level. A wizard with an inherited staff, or one that otherwise somehow has extra thaumic capacity, should spend $200 of starting cash for every extra point of capacity. Possession of a sapient pearwood staff *also* requires that the character has the Sapient Pearwood Property advantage – see p. 55. For other rules on starting with inherited or otherwise special staffs, see p. 131.

Energy cost to cast: 64

Prerequisite: Magery and wizard training.

Item: A wooden or metal staff, at least four feet long (five to seven feet is preferred). May be decorated with other materials, if the wizard is pretentious or eccentric.

Modifying and Renaming Existing Spells

What follows are mostly examples and guidelines, showing how to make ***GURPS*** spells fit the Disc a little better. However, one or two changes are essential. If nothing else, more spells should have impressive names, if wizards are to use them with any credibility.

"Creation" Spells

Any spell listed as creating a material object, permanently, should either be unavailable, very hard to cast, or simply made somehow *peculiar* on the Disc. The object created can almost never be truly permanent; a sort of conservation-of-effort law ensures that the work involved in casting such a spell will always be equal to that involved in creating the object by mundane means. This applies to spells from many colleges, not just Illusion and Creation.

Animal Spells

This college is a favourite of witches, hedge wizards, and shamans. Academic wizards don't generally know one end of an animal from the other, except the Archchancellor, who mainly knows which are the best bits to shoot at.

Borrowing, described on p. 138, is very similar to *Rider Within* (p. M29) and *Beast Possession* (p. M24), but not identical. GMs may choose to prohibit these two spells to avoid confusion, or limit them to wizards, who take a more analytical and mechanistic approach to such things (and who would probably call them *Psychoproicio*). Note also that swarms of bees and ant-colonies are considered each to have a single "group mind," which is very difficult to access for humans who are used to going in one direction at a time; the rules given for Borrowing could be applied to these other spells.

Shapeshifting and its variants (such as *Partial Shapeshifting* and *Great Shapeshifting*) are not often reported among Disc spell-casters (although born werewolves are common enough); they might require an Unusual Background to learn, and are never likely to be popular, as witches and wizards frankly know a little too much about magic to want to use it on their own anatomy. (They might even react to somebody who did use such spells at -2, as they would regard that individual as literally "unstable.") *Shapeshift Others* is, therefore, also rare, but the similar technique of *Morphic Tweaking* (see p. 140) is very popular. One rule that certainly applies to all such magic is an immutable law of Discworld metaphysics; nothing can ever change the appearance of a being's eyes. Change a man into an ox if you have the power, but the ox will look at you with a man's gaze.

Body Control Spells

Many of these are popular among the old-fashioned sort of bad witch, who always appreciates the effects of a quick and annoying curse. *Alter* spells and the like are rarer, and remember, no power in the Disc's universe can ever change the appearance of a being's eyes.

Cadence (p. G16) grants no benefits to use of Engineering (Magical) skill.

Communication and Empathy Spells

This is the witch college of first resort. Most witches know most of these spells, often at skill 18+.

Borrowing, described on p. 138, is similar to *Soul Rider* (p. M29). The comments above under "Animal Spells" also apply here.

Elemental Spells

These are the favourites of many Disc wizards. Most of them are far too unsubtle and exhausting for most Disc witches, who might even need an Unusual Background to learn them; Fire spells in particular are not normally witches' style, as fire lacks any kind of latent consciousness. On the other hand, Weather spells (see p. G26) are rather more witch-like, and these have other Air spells as prerequisites, so a GM might let powerful witches learn just enough to cast *Storm. Dry Well* is a classic witch's curse.

Granny Weatherwax does claim to know some Earth spells, especially *Shape Stone* (p. M31). She says that it is a matter of reawakening the stones' memories of the time when they were molten lava.

Wizards refer to Earthquake (p. M33) as *Herpetty's Seismic Reorganiser.* It is the kind of spell that they thoroughly enjoy.

Elemental Spirit Spells

No "elementals" have appeared in the chronicles to date, so it is probably best to prohibit any spells to Summon, Control, or Create such (p. B156-157 or p. M33).

Enchantment Spells

Dwarf craftsmen may be permitted to learn spells from this college without full Magery, or even some prerequisites; they might buy single-college Magery (p. CI39) for the college. To balance the advantage, they might be required to purchase an Unusual Background; "Old-Fashioned Dwarf Craftsman" (5 points).

Characters with *Enchant* (p. B160 or p. M42) and Engineer (Magical) skill may manufacture many trivial devices without necessarily even using any other spells. Details are left to the GM; this is more like a branch of routine handicrafts than high sorcery, and about as lengthy and profitable.

Weapon and Armour Enchantments (p. B160-161 and p. M44-46) are certainly possible for Disc wizards, but not very popular these days; most wizards do not believe that warriors should be encouraged. Dwarfs, however, are very fond of such magic.

Golem See p. M44

Discworld golems are mostly the product of an ancient and largely-lost religious procedure. However, there are occasional stories of magicians coming up with something similar, so this spell may be available in a few ancient grimoires. Given the instability of Discworld magic, however, wizards may feel that the idea lacks appeal, and GMs are welcome to make wizard-made "golems" quirkish or unpredictable. It has been established that *golems* can make new golems.

Malefice (VH) See p. G39

This is generally regarded as a witch's spell on the Discworld, but the theoretical principles are well understood by wizards, who regard them as ancient and rather crude, but interestingly powerful. It is also generally felt to be a rather nasty, sneaky form of magic, and many people respond badly to characters believed to have used it, but many witches employ it occasionally, when they are sufficiently annoyed.

On the Disc, if no suitable "personal materials" are available, but the caster knows the target's appearance well, the caster can make DX and IQ rolls to create a "generic" doll that will work on the target (or anyone *closely* resembling them!), but this is -10 to the Malefice casting roll and -4 to any spell cast through it.

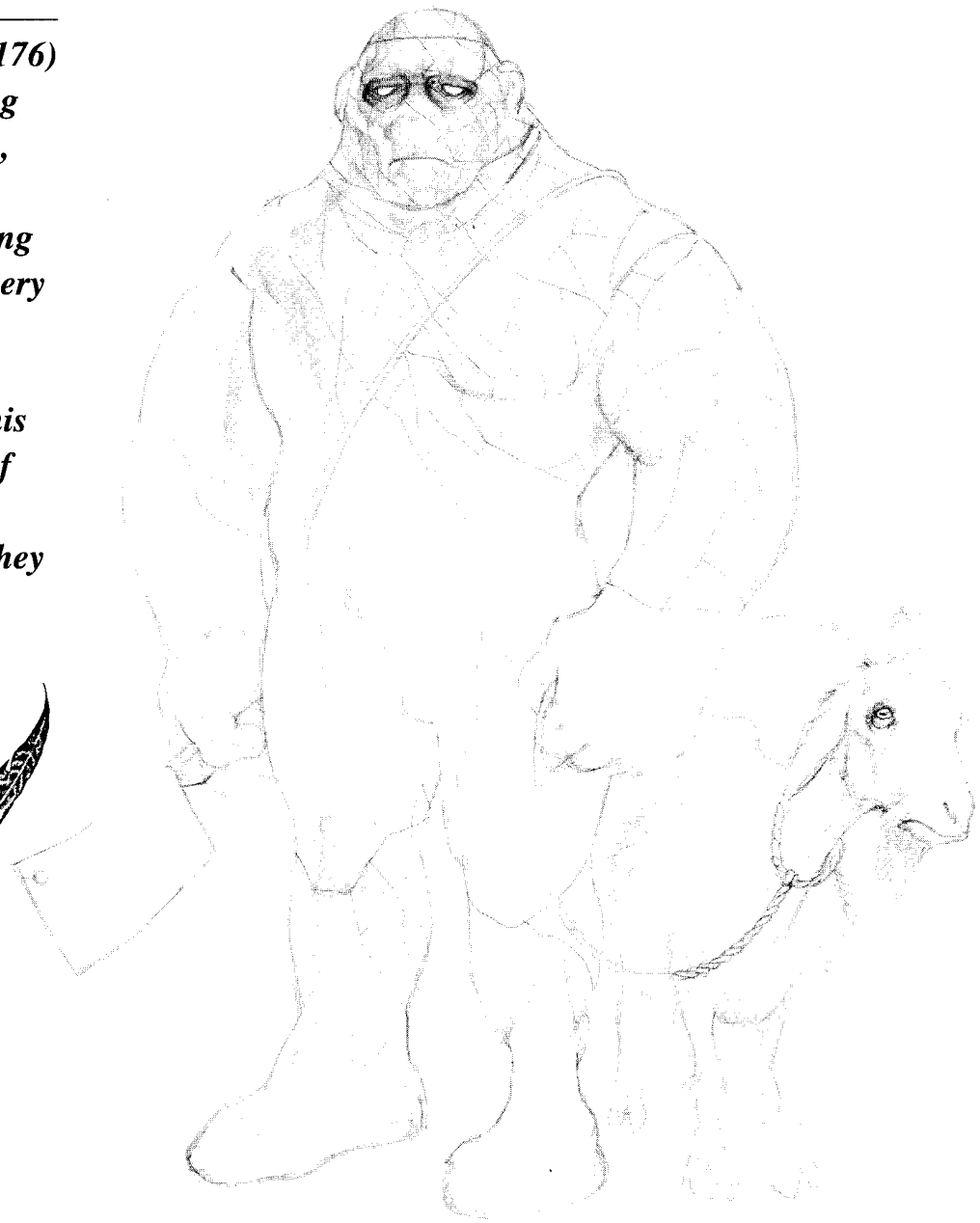
Scroll See p. B160 or p. M42

Magical scrolls are rare on the Disc. They are probably possible, but most wizards would consider it something of an admission of weakness to resort to "notes" when performing magic.

Talisman See p. G38

Some Discworld witches may create talismans, mostly for purposes of preventative medicine. (This is relatively safe, unlike most forms of magical medicine, because a talisman can shield the body without having the magic enter

"Dorfl the Golem (p. 176) has the quirk of being interested in religion, and metaphysics generally, and of being happy to discuss it (very logically) for hours. The city's priests initially objected to his existence, but each of them is now too busy trying to prove that they can convert him. Being effectively lightning-proof, he is the safest agnostic on the Disc."



it.) Talismans (and Amulets) against spells are rarer, although technically possible.

STAFF — SEE P. B161 OR P. M47

This spell is substantially changed on the Disc; the new version, only used in this setting, is described on p. 132.

POWERSTONE — SEE P. B161 OR P. M47

This spell is *not* usually available on the Disc; the Disc's version of *Staff* fills much the same role. Any GM who decides to make *Powerstone* available to obscure spell-casters in distant lands should also make the necessary stones extremely rare; otherwise, it will spread across the Disc within a short time of any of any users showing the stones off elsewhere.

(Similar comments obviously apply to *Manastone* and *One-College Powerstone,* in ***GURPS Grimoire.***)

Food Spells

Spells to merely find or purify food are perfectly plausible in Discworld campaigns, and indeed may be very popular among academic wizards who are obliged to go wandering against their better judgement. However, *Create Food* is not available; a spell with apparently the same characteristics may be known to some spell-casters, but the snag is that the food is not only not truly nutritious, but really bad choices of starting substance (such as rocks or hard wood) may transform back spontaneously in the stomach.

Gate Spells

These are all or mostly technically possible on the Disc, but most of them come under the heading of "controlled information," taught only to graduate wizards of proven mental stability.[1] The problem is, of course, the number of dimensions adjacent to the Disc's universe that are infested with not-very-pleasant entities.

Time-twisting magics are considered relatively safe; see for example the Discworld version of *Suspend Time* (p. 142).

Healing Spells

True healing magic, in the form of spells such as *Minor Healing, Major Healing,* or *Cure Disease,* is not available on the Disc – or rather, it is not *used.* As has been noted elsewhere, the trouble with using Discworld magic for healing is that it infuses the healed body with magic – a cure that is literally worse than the disease. For this reason, attempting to research *Regeneration* could be a *really* silly idea. *Resurrection* is simply unavailable; on the Disc, dead is dead. Or at best, undead.

However, *Lend Strength* is available. A competent medical witch might also know *Lend Health* and *Awaken.*

A witch, or a wizard who studied spells specifically for use in adventuring, might learn *Recover Strength,* but would *never* cast it in a Very High Mana zone, as this would mean absorbing Residual Magic into their own metabolism.

Also, although it is not explicitly mentioned in the chronicles, *Halt Ageing* seems to be known to a few people – at least, certain Disc spell-casters are startlingly spry for their years. However, it comes in a variety that leaves the apparent signs of age (white hair, wrinkles) and some minor symptoms (trivial memory loss, small aches, nostalgia) untouched. Thus, *Youth* is certainly not available as a spell.

Illusion and Creation Spells

Illusions are often used by wizards; most of them seem to know at least *Simple Illusion* (p. M51). Witches might know that one spell, but no more.

True Creation spells are much rarer, and limited by the conservation-of-effort effect discussed above; thus, GMs may prohibit or reduce such effects at whim.

Knowledge Spells

These do exist on the Disc, but then again, mortal spell-casters in the chronicles never seem to know more than their senses can tell them at crucial moments, unless they use one of the Disc's many but often erratic forms of Divination (p. 144). Thus, GMs may restrict or prohibit any spell from this college.

Making and Breaking Spells

Witches (even fairly nice ones) often know *Weaken* and *Shatter* at high levels; being able to throw a quick "curse" that makes possessions break is often a good way of seeing off annoying peasants without doing anyone actual harm.

Meta-Spells

Bless (p. M62) and *Curse* (p. M63) are always favourites on basically conventional fantasy worlds such as the Disc. In fact, GMs might choose to make the prerequisites slightly easier; say, Magery 2, and at least 3 spells from each of 5 different colleges, with Magery 3 required for the 3-point versions. A GM might also limit these spells to witches, hedge wizards, and priests; they are both a little primitive and somewhat too subtle for academic wizards.

Linking Spells are always useful for manipulative individuals; Unseen University wizards certainly use *Delay* on occasion.

Mind Control Spells

This is another favourite college for witches; the good ones limit themselves to low-power spells for emergencies only.[2] Witches traditionally believe in free will, and prefer to only tweak emotions and perceptions, rather than turning humans into puppets. Wizards may be less considerate,

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[1] *Well, stability by wizard standards. They definitely shouldn't be taught to people who are* ***unstable*** *by wizard standards.*

[2] *Honest.*

but they are rarely so good at mind magic, preferring to cause fear – if necessary – by fireballing part of the scenery. After all, a fire spell will light a cigarette, too.

Movement Spells

Apportation is called *Gindle's Effortless Elevator* by Disc wizards, who enjoy using it immensely.

TELEPORT — SEE P. M71

This spell is beloved of some high-power wizards, but is far too energetic for witches. The details are modified as follows on the Discworld:

Failing the Roll: If you fail by 1, you arrive at the destination, but suffer 2d extra Fatigue and are physically stunned. Any other normal failure has no effect, but still costs energy as if on a success, and produces minor local special effects (small objects moved, the pop of air-pressure equalisation, and so on) that may slightly inconvenience the caster or others nearby. On a critical failure, the caster goes *somewhere else,* of the GM's choosing – always somewhere interesting, but not usually immediately lethal. They also suffer 2d extra Fatigue and are physically stunned.

Successful Teleports: If the modified roll is made by 8 or more, the teleport works perfectly. If it is made by a smaller margin, the GM should introduce a non-lethal but disruptive side-effect, usually related to some kind of "energy balance." Characters become uncomfortably warm or freezing cold; objects or beings are brought from the target point to the departure point; air explodes outwards from the arrival point violently enough to knock other characters off their feet – whatever feels appropriate to the GM. Such effects should be used as a deterrent to combat use of this spell.

Long Ranges: Teleporting characters vast distances across the Disc runs into relative-velocity problems, and is generally messy; see *Interesting Times.* GMs should only permit such castings as a plot device, with maximum comic complications.

Prerequisites: Magery 2, IQ 14+, and at least 15 other spells.

Necromantic Spells

Most of these are considered as unpleasant on the Disc as anywhere else, and so will not usually be used by PCs, but are good for old-fashioned villainous wizards. Also, the fate of the human spirit after death is a complex and unpredictable question on the Disc (see sidebar, p. 134). So *Summon Spirit* (p. M72) may not be available at all, or if it is, it may not always find the required spirit available.

SUMMON DEMON — SEE P. M74

This will summons a *Discworld* demon (see p. 164), with its own peculiarities. Even if it is neither controlled nor restrained, the creature may not *necessarily* go on a destructive rampage or go away; it may be quite willing to do some kind of deal. Disc demons are irretrievable traditionalists, and barter is something they traditionally do. On the other hand, unimaginative rampages are also a tradition; the GM should roll a random reaction for the being, or just act on whim. Smart PCs may well be able to outwit a dull-witted hell-spawn, but GMs should remember that even unimaginative Discworld demons have had thousands of years of experience at composing long, complicated, devious contracts.

Of course, the relevant protective measure on the Disc is an Octagram (see p. 146).

Plant Spells

The less powerful of these are popular with witches and hedge magicians. More dramatic and violent spells in this college are too energetic for such people, and too "rustic" for most wizards.

Spells that certainly are available include *Seek Plant, Identify Plant,* and *Plant Growth,* all as on p. M75, and *Rejuvenate Plant* as on p. G88. *Heal Plant* (p. M75) is also known; despite the Discworld problem with magical healing, it is fairly safe, because plants grow and act only slowly, and hence can withstand and expel magic. However, repeated uses involving the same plants are at a cumulative -2, and any failure by 5 or more imbues the subject plants with Discworld magic (effects up to the GM, but weird and inconvenient).

Protection and Warning Spells

Discworld wizards and (especially) witches seem to have an uncanny but not evidently magical capability for surviving dangerous situations. This is *partly* because they often know spells from this college to a very high level, and disguise them as apparently "natural" events. For example, a witch with a *Missile Shield* active or using *Deflect Missile* may appear to knock opponents' thrown spears out of the air.

Deflect Missile (p. G91) can be given modified prerequisites; Apportation *or* DX 13+ and Shatter. This reflects the fact that it and *Catch Missile* (p. G92) are known to witches who never use grosser Apportation effects.

Technological Spells

Mostly, the Disc is too low-tech a world for this college to have developed. However, with the growth in the manufacture of simple but useful devices, the possibility exists for research wizards to research and develop it. Treat the Disc as TL4 when defining spells.

"Borrowing a goose or a swallow, getting lost, and then flying rimwards for the winter, can be a tragedy."

New Spells

This section includes some completely new spells, and some that are radically changed from their form in previous ***GURPS*** sources to fit the setting.

Blocking Spells

Blocking spells are discussed in ***GURPS Magic*** (p. M12); the rule is repeated here for convenience.

A "blocking" spell is a special type that can be cast *instantly* as a defence, either against a physical attack or against another spell. This is the magical equivalent of a block, parry, or dodge. You may only use one blocking spell each turn. A critical success on an attack makes a blocking spell impossible.

If you try a Blocking spell, it automatically interrupts your own concentration. Any spell you were preparing is lost. However, you may concentrate again when your own turn comes. And if you have an already-prepared missile spell in hand, it is unaffected. You cannot cast or enlarge it that turn, but you may retain it for later use.

Animal Spells

Borrowing — Regular; Resisted by IQ

This spell is a witch's favourite; every properly-trained witch may well know it, although some do not use it very often. (It might be treated as a prerequisite within witchcraft for a large number of other spells which involve tinkering with the latent awareness of a being or object). Wizards *may* also be able to use it, or they may use some similar but differently-organised spells such as *Soul Rider* or *Rider Within* (see ***GURPS Magic***).

The witch projects her mind into that of another being, and can use all of the creature's senses. The witch can also manipulate the subject-creature, and steer it gently to go to places that she wishes to observe. However, this is not absolute control; the caster must take care that the creature does not realise that it is being steered, or it will probably panic. This spell is best used with creatures with simple, straightforward minds, such as rabbits or small birds; carnivores are a little harder, being intensely focussed, while intelligent beings, whose minds are a roiling mass of impulses, thoughts, urges and ideas, are very hard. Ant communities and bee-swarms are considered to have a single mind each; these are the hardest of all to Borrow, because even humans don't think about flying in several directions at once while also building a hive and laying eggs.

The spell takes normal distance modifiers when first cast, and the following cumulative modifiers for type of mind being accessed:

Subject is a carnivore: -3.

Subject is a non-intelligent magical creature: -2.

Subject has IQ 7 or greater: -4.

Subject is insane, or very "strange" (GM's decision): -4.

Subject is a group mind: -12.

The subject-creature is permitted an IQ roll to resist, at +3 if it has *trained* magical or psychic abilities; if this is successful, it means that the creature has become aware that *something* is inside its head, making it impossible for the caster to accomplish anything this time. (The caster must wait at least five minutes before trying again with the same creature.) If this initial casting is successful, the caster can use the creature's senses, and begin trying to steer it.

The steering process consists of placing impulses or ideas in the subject's mind. This is not direct control; all actions ensuing use the creature's own abilities and mental processes. *Each* such impulse takes ten seconds to place, and requires a Quick Contest of IQs (**not** skill with the spell) between caster and subject. If the caster wins this contest by 5 or more, the impulse can be made specific and complex; otherwise, it must be simple. If the subject wins by no more than 3, the caster can make another attempt after another ten seconds. If the subject wins by 4 or more, it suspects that it is being mentally invaded. The caster must either leave immediately, or spend five minutes lying low and win another Quick Contest to disguise the intrusion, with -2 to the caster's IQ and +4 to the subject's. Cumulative modifiers to the caster's IQ roll in both these cases are as follows:

Impulse is very much in accord with the subject's normal behaviour: +2.

Impulse is slightly unusual but well within the subject's normal behaviour-patterns: no modifier.

Impulse is slightly unusual but not totally alien to the subject's normal behaviour: -1.

Impulse is significantly unusual for the subject but not actually worrying or unnerving for it: -3.

Impulse is radically bizarre for the subject: -6.

Impulse appears dangerous for the subject: -12.

Subject is a non-intelligent magical creature: -1.

Subject is a carnivore: -2.

Subject has IQ 7+: -5.

Subject is insane, or very "strange" (GM's decision): -5.

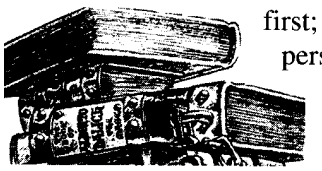
Subject is a group mind: -7.

If the subject does become aware of the intrusion, its exact behaviour is up to the GM; it will usually involve violent and possibly self-destructive panic, but some nervous creatures freeze when they sense danger, while intelligent being may scream, clutch at their heads, worry about going mad, or even attempt some kind of dialogue. (The last, however, is rare, even on the Disc; having one's mind invaded is easy to find frightening.) A DX roll may be required to carry on doing anything else, such as running (fast-moving creatures may take a penalty to their DX roll); a desperate witch can use this spell to trip up a dangerous creature or even an intelligent opponent, by Borrowing them for a second, making no effort to hide the intrusion, and possibly planting an impulse to fall over.

Two rounds after the spell is cast the caster's body falls deeply unconscious, and remains thus throughout its period of effect, in a state that can easily be mistaken for death by the untrained. (For this reason, these days, Granny Weatherwax always places a card in her hands saying "I ATE'NT DEAD" when she goes Borrowing.)

When the caster wishes to end the spell, she must make another roll vs. spell skill, subject to normal distance penalties, *doubled* if the subject-creature is out of sight of the caster's body at the time. If this is unsuccessful, the caster must maintain the spell for another minute before trying again, using HT instead of fatigue if necessary; it is entirely possible to die this way, which is why sensible witches are extremely careful of Borrowing until they have learned to maintain it at zero cost.

The greatest danger with the spell is that the caster will become lost in the subject-creature's mind and instincts, and never return. Roll vs. skill with the spell once per hour, with a cumulative -1 per hour after the first; if this is unsuccessful, the caster's personality has become entirely submerged, and remains so until a successful roll is made with a further -2 penalty. Borrowing a goose or a swallow, getting lost, and then flying rimwards for the winter, can be a tragedy. The abandoned body slowly deteriorates; roll vs. HT every day or lose one hit point, which cannot be healed until the caster's mind returns. Despite these risks, Borrowing is immensely attractive, even addictive, especially for those who are tired of human society; it is often thought among witches that some of the greatest of their kind ended up as small birds. The roll to avoid personality-loss may take penalties for a susceptible character (GM's option), and a witch recovering from such an episode often shows signs of still thinking that she has wings or paws.



Most witches – especially the ethical ones, who tend to be best at this spell, being least inclined to *force* creatures to act in any particular way – feel a strong sense of obligation to creatures they "Borrow," and will usually make sure that they receive some kind of food or similar payment.

Duration: 1 minute.

Cost: 5 to cast, 1 to maintain.

Time to cast: 5 seconds.

Prerequisites: Witch training, or, if available to wizards, Magery, Beast-Soother, Persuasion, and Sleep.

Morphic Tweaking (VH) Special; Resisted by HT

This is a standard technique widely used by both witches and wizards (although not as widely as people think). Wizards refer to one version of it as *Stacklady's Morphic Resonator.* It is based on the fact that most beings' morphic fields (see p. 8) are actually controlled to a large extent by their minds, so by making a small adjustment to the subject's self-image, their shape can be changed.

The best-known use of this is to change people into frogs temporarily, but it can also be used for other effects. Pumpkins are popular, and real show-off casters have been known to change frogs or cats into *people.* However, the spell cannot *create* a mind to modify, so pumpkins or rocks cannot be changed *into* anything.

In fact, it has a number of peculiarities. *Small* changes are often harder than large, or rather, it is hard to specify fine details about the eventual form. This is because kicking a morphic field between shapes is one thing, but sculpting it precisely is quite another. Such changes take penalties to the roll of -2 to -8, at the GM's discretion, while imitating a very specific existing form (such as a particular person) adds an additional penalty of up to -4, unless the caster has made careful study of the target shape, including some magical examination of its morphic field.

Also, *less* intelligent subjects are *harder* to change, because they have less mental power to persuade into changing their morphic field. The spell-casting roll is at -2

for every point by which the subject's IQ is below 8. On the other hand, subjects with a strong self-image are hard to change; -1 to the roll for every point by which their normal Will roll exceeds 12. (So a dumb troll with IQ 6 but eight levels of Strong Will would give a total of -6 to the casting roll.)

Because morphic fields have levels of similarity, changing a subject's "kingdom" gives -2 to the roll; changing people into vegetables suffers this penalty, as does changing trolls (walking rocks) into anything but other minerals.

Changing a subject's base Hit Points imposes a -1 penalty for each point of change up or down, and any damage carries over between forms (so the spell cannot be used to heal wounds); an injured human can become a tough but injured frog. Non-intelligent creatures changed into sentient beings may gain a point or two of intelligence from their newly-enlarged brains, but no more than that; each such point of increase gives a -3 penalty on the roll. (They also tend to retain their old instincts and habits, and they just aren't used to thinking.) *Reducing* intelligence is easier, as it's just a matter of suppressing mental processes; -1 to the roll for each point of reduction.

Finally, because the whole business is a kind of mental trickery anyway, standard effects and cliches are easier to achieve. Changing a human into a frog gives +2 to the roll for a wizard, and +3 for a witch, while changing anyone into a pumpkin is a base +2 (though the "kingdom change" penalty brings this down to 0). An end-result form that is unknown to the subject imposes a penalty of -5, as the trickery is harder. ("He said he'd change me into an okapi, but it didn't work. What is an okapi, anyway?")

The spell takes Regular spell range penalties. All transformations must be approved by the GM, who may demand that certain effects be included, or impose extra penalties to the roll for less plausible ideas. Also always remember that the spell can never change the appearance of the subject's eyes.

The results of the spell last one hour per point by which the roll defeated the subject's resistance. For subjects or transformed shapes with a size greater than one hex, multiply the energy cost by the number of hexes of either the initial or the transformed shape, whichever is greater, then add +1 to the cost for each hex by which the subject's size is being *changed.*

Note: This spell can become the basis for longer-lasting effects, deliberately or accidentally; see Greebo the Cat, p. 185, and the Duc in *Witches Abroad.* Such effects are left for the GM to determine for plot purposes.

Duration: See above.

Cost: 8; cannot be maintained.

Time to cast: 10 seconds.

Prerequisites: Magery 2, Beast-Soother, Sense Life and Foolishness.

Body Control Spells

Morphic Tweaking (VH) — Special; Resisted by HT

As described under Animal Spells.

Communication and Empathy Spells

Borrowing — Regular; Resisted by IQ

As described under Animal Spells.

Elemental Fire Spells

Sumpjumper's Incendiary Surprise — Area

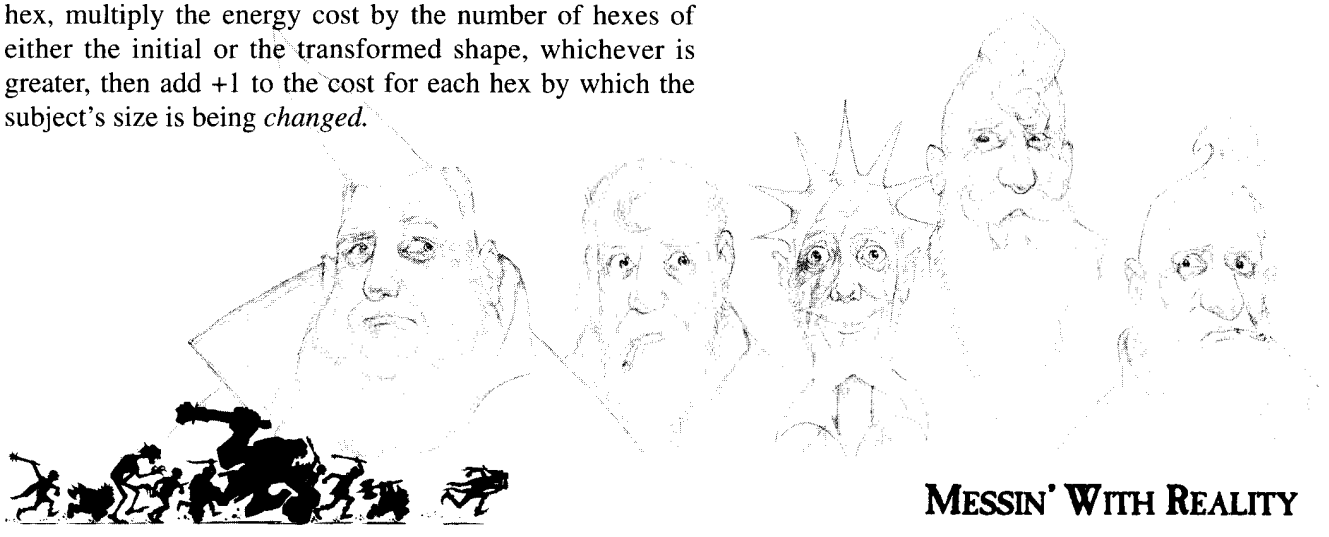
A wizards' favourite; creates a dense scattering of burning flares across its area of effect, springing up from often-unexpected places. Basically, it's a wide-area Create Fire with special effects that appeal to pyromaniac practical jokers.

Duration: One minute.

Base Cost: 3 to cast; 2 per minute to maintain.

Time to cast: 10 seconds.

Prerequisites: Magery 2, and at least 6 Fire spells, including Fireball.



Enchantment Spells

Crystal Ball — Enchantment

(Note: This is exactly as given on p. M47. It is included here because crystal-gazing is a popular technique on the Disc.)

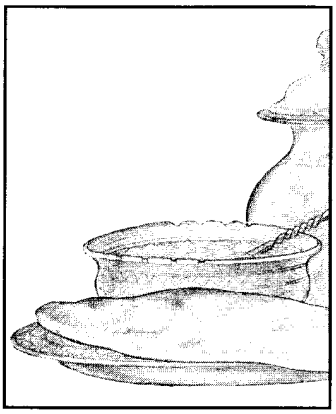
Used in the Divination spell (p. 145). Requires a ball of flawless crystal at least 2" in diameter (value $1,000). A 3" ball (value $5,000) gives +1 to divinations. A 4" ball (value $20,000) gives +2.

Energy cost to create: 1,000.

Prerequisite: Divination (Crystal-gazing).

Summons Technician Imp — Special

This is the spell used in the manufacture of various "commonplace" magical devices, such as iconographs and personal organisers. A variant is also used to create talking door-knockers. It will summons a tiny (1 hit point, usually 2"-3" tall) humanoid imp with highly specific skills, which can be bound to operate a device with some trivial but useful function; see p. 128 for examples. Each type of imp is summoned by a different spell, which must be learnt separately. Slightly different devices may use the same type of imp, but conversely, major product upgrades and redesigns may require new spells to be researched; the GM's decision is final in this.



(And of course, experimental new spells may summons imps who are not as useful as they ought to be – hence the Personal Organiser problem.)

The device must be ready beforehand, and inscribed with appropriate containment symbols, otherwise the imp simply returns to its pocket-dimension home (with a sarcastic remark). Given a properly-prepared device, such imps will stay around apparently indefinitely, although they may eventually wear out or fade away from years of use.

The energy cost is 8 points for every distinct ability that the imp possesses. For example, an iconograph imp has Artist skill, the ability to work very quickly, and a limited eidetic memory, allowing it to recreate pictures on request; that spell costs 24 points to cast.

Duration: Permanent.

Base Cost: See above.

Time to cast: One minute.

Prerequisites: IQ 12+, Engineering (Magical) skill at 13+.

Food Spells

Englebert's Enhancer — Regular

The caster creates a greenish ball of light, and drops it into some food or drink. The spell then augments the fundamental *nature* of the item. If the substance is nutritious, it becomes more nutritious; if it is fattening, it becomes more calorific; if it has medicinal value, it becomes better for the consumer; if it is alcoholic, it becomes more potent, and so on. It affects up to two pounds or two pints of food or drink; increase the casting cost in proportion for larger quantities.

If the substance is *simply* nutritious, fattening, or whatever, it increases in "value" by 100% for each point of energy put into the spell. (Thus, say, a loaf of bread becomes as nutritious and starchy as two loaves for 1 energy, three loaves for 2 energy, and so on, while an alcoholic drink becomes as heady as two or more drinks.) If it has effects that require a dice roll, that roll is at +2 or -2 for each energy point, as appropriate. (For example, a medicine that grants a HT roll to throw off a disease gives a bonus to the roll; drugged food that requires a ST roll to resist now gains a penalty to the roll.)

The "special effects" of the spell are up to the GM. Usually, the food or drink looks much the same, although it may gain a little stronger colour or smell more distinctive; however, the "nature" of some dull and uninteresting food may be largely considered to be bulky, so the spell may make such foods physically larger in proportion. All effects are permanent, but the food will go stale, mouldy, or whatever just as usual – perhaps a little faster, in fact, because the processes involved have more to work with. (The exception is food whose essential nature it is to be long-lasting. Enhanced dwarf bread will become nearly indistinguishable from a rock, but it won't spoil.)

Duration: Permanent.

Base Cost: See above.

Time to cast: 10 seconds.

Prerequisites: Sense Life, Purify Water.

Gate Spells

Suspend Time (VH) — Special Area

(Note: This could be considered a much-modified, setting-specific version of the spell on p. G50. However, the changes are extensive. It is a favourite of traditionalist high-power witches.)

To cast this spell, the caster must begin the ritual some time after dusk, taking an hour, and spend half the energy cost, then pass entirely around the subject area before cock-crow. (This is usually defined as simply dawn, but a little cheating involving keeping as many cockerels as possible gagged or out of sight of the sun can stretch the time a little.) The caster may walk, run, or fly on a broomstick. Then, the spell can be completed, which takes one minute, and the remaining energy cost is paid. These times cannot be changed by high skill levels.

Time within the area is then stopped for the duration of the spell; relative to the outside world, the occupants of the area will not move, breathe, age, or think. The caster can place herself inside or outside the area. From the outside, the area appears normal, if a little hazy, but anyone trying to enter it becomes "lost" and ends up at the point where they tried to enter 1d minutes later; on an IQ roll, they can automatically guess that some kind of magic was involved, otherwise they may think that they simply lost track of the path. Objects thrown into the area seem to move normally, but somehow fall to the ground at the edge. Spells cannot be maintained inside the area by anyone outside, or vice-versa.

The energy cost for this spell is based on the duration of the time suspension and the diameter of the effect, measured at its widest point. (Characters should *not* be permitted to cast it over complex-shaped areas; nothing more convoluted than a rough oval is possible.) The cost is 1 energy per five years, multiplied by the number of miles of distance, rounded up.

The spell also takes a penalty to the roll based on the length of the path followed by the caster; -1 for every quarter-mile (round up). It can be cancelled from outside by "Dispel" magics or similar.

The spell is not normally resisted, but if anyone within the area has Magic Resistance, it acts as a further penalty to the casting roll. (Use the highest individual Resistance involved, with a further -1 for each other individual with Resistance.)

Duration: See above.

Cost: See above.

Time to cast: See above.

Prerequisites: Magery 3, Enchant, Curse, at least forty other spells.

Healing Spells

Catch Wound Blocking

This spell gets around the Discworld problem with healing magic by shifting an injury through time, rather than stopping it altogether. It is therefore easier and more reliable than most defensive magic, but with the limitation that the caster must take *some* damage eventually.

The spell is cast when the caster is hit by some single non-magical attack that causes physical damage. It cannot be used against "large-area" damage such as Area spells or being sprayed with acid. The caster must specify some part of their body that can get in the way of the attack; this is usually a hand, but could be a limb or any other body part. The attack appears to fail, being stopped dead by the caster's skin, caught in their hand, or whatever.

However, at this point, calculate the *minimum* damage that the attack could do, minus any armour that the caster is wearing on that body part, plus one. This is damage that the caster *will* take to the relevant body part when they stop maintaining the spell. The effect is exactly as if they had been hit by the weapon at that moment, complete with all the pain, shock, and any effects from poison or whatever. Sensible casters carefully clean and bandage the affected spot before "accepting" the damage.

If the caster reduces the energy cost to maintain this spell to zero, they can even "maintain" it in their sleep. However, they may only maintain a number of castings of this spell equal to their IQ divided by five, rounded down, however little energy they have to spend on it.

Duration: One hour.

Cost: 2 to cast, 2 to maintain.

Prerequisites: Magery 2, Lend Strength.

Spolt's Forthright Respirator — Regular; May be resisted by HT

This spell gets the subject's lungs working again when they had previously been having trouble breathing. It has an effect equivalent to one successful First Aid roll to help someone who was choking or drowning. It can also be used to make someone start breathing who was trying to hold their breath, in which case it can be resisted with HT.

Base Cost: 3.

Time to cast: 5 seconds.

Illusion and Creation Spells

Eringyas' Surprising Bouquet

Creates a large bunch of very attractive roses, which last for the duration of the spell. This spell is mostly known to wizards, but they could teach it to any competent spell-caster.

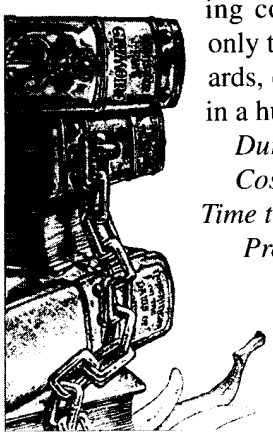
Duration: 8 minutes.

Cost: 1 to cast and to maintain.

Fresnel's Wonderful Concentrator — Regular

This spell requires the breath of a demon and $500 worth of other rare ingredients, and must always be cast ceremonially by at least eight wizards; the preparation and actual casting take a week, which cannot be reduced by skill level. It produces a large, completely transparent disc, twenty feet across, which lasts throughout the duration of the spell. This disc is completely immune to physical damage, but very easy to move by magic; it weighs about 50 lbs. Small shapes can be worked into the surface of the disc when the spell is cast, usually so that safety straps and similar can be attached.

The disc is usually used as a form of transport; a competent wizard with some kind of movement spells can use it as a platform to move himself and a number of other individuals or objects around at speed. However, the casting cost and complexity mean that this only tends to be done by very showy wizards, or those who know that they will be in a hurry in a week's time.



Duration: 8 hours.

Cost: 20 to cast, 2 to maintain.

Time to cast: One week (see above).

Prerequisite: Magery 2.

Knowledge Spells

Divination — Information

*(Note: This is the Disc version of the class of spell discussed on p. M55 and p. G59. Other divination methods from other **GURPS** supplements might be introduced to Discworld games, but must always be explicitly approved by the GM, and may well be somewhat mutated in the process.)*

Divination takes many forms on the Disc, and has to be treated slightly differently from standard ***GURPS*** versions, mostly because it is more widespread. Each type described below is treated as a separate spell, with its own casting materials and prerequisites. Divination spells vary enormously in format and effect, but what they all have in common is that they provide information; usually either a vision or image concerning current events or the future, or a simple yes-or-no answer to a single question. However, all such information tends to be distorted, ambiguous, and tricky to interpret; the universe delights in giving confusing answers. GMs should balance the wide availability of these spells by making the responses they give confusing, annoying, or just plain strange.

GMs should also do the dice-rolling for this spell, secretly, to keep players guessing. Critical successes *may* give clear answers (or they may just give more detail on the confusing answers).

Skill modifiers: Standard long-distance modifiers. If repeated questions are asked on the same subject within one day, results tend to be even more muddled; -4 skill for the second question, -8 for the third, and so on. Questions about the past or future (where possible) use the long-distance modifiers *again,* substituting "days" for "miles."

Common features for all Divination spells:

Cost: 10.

Time to cast: 10 minutes, unless specified otherwise.

Prerequisites: Either Magery or Divination Talent (p. CI36), plus specific requirements for each spell. (These do not usually include other spells; the Disc has fortune-tellers who are not otherwise spell-casters.)

Types of Divination:

Astrology: The Divination must concern an individual, or an object or organisation with a clear date and place of origin. Without precise birth information for the subject, the roll takes a large penalty; -4 if only the date is known, -6 for city and date to within a month, and so on (GM's decision applies). The Divination takes 30 minutes, and produces one or two paragraphs of advice for the subject, in semi-cryptic form. ("This could be a very good time to think about travel, but be careful of small women and farm implements. Your lucky colour for the day is green; your

lucky number is anything with a fraction . . . ") Interpreting it is up to the PCs.

Special Prerequisites: Astrology skill at 15 or better, and either direct observation of a clear sky or a set of high-quality current astronomical almanacs. Equipment for the former costs at least $800; the latter cost $50 in a major city, doubling for every 500 miles distance from such a source, and must be updated every six months. Some poor-quality almanacs are available (GM's option for cost and ensuing penalties for inaccuracy); old almanacs give -1 to the roll for every month out of date.

Caroc Reading: This uses a Caroc deck (the Discworld's Tarot), and gives a fairly complex but subtle set of images relating to the question asked. Divinations for anyone but an individual or a couple, in their presence, are at -5. Remember that "Death" doesn't always mean death. Honest.

Special Prerequisites: A decent Caroc deck, costing at least $100 new; an IQ roll will assist with interpreting the result.

Ching Aling: A Hubland creation (resembling our world's I Ching). The subject or caster of the spell rolls a set of yarrow stalks (preferably so that they all land on the table), and the resulting pattern, or "Octogram," is interpreted with the aid of a reference book, which gives terse but immensely wise advice. Unfortunately, most translations of the book lose something; a good version in Ankhian costs $100 and requires an IQ roll to recognise, whereas someone who speaks the obscure language of the original need only pay $50 if they can find a copy. Each $5 reduction in book price gives -1 to the roll. Many small-town wizards have the requisite stalks and a $40 copy of the book, but don't actually know the spell, because the results sound impressive. (" . . . At evening the mollusc is silent among the almond blossom.")

Special Prerequisites: Yarrow stalks (costing at least $50) and the reference book.

Crystal-Gazing: The caster stares into a crystalline or reflective surface, and receives a vision relevant to the question in hand; interpreting it is up to them. Clear water in a bowl, or a cheap ($10) mirror, can be used at -10 to the roll; a special, high-quality silvered mirror ($500) gives -2 for visions related to current situations, but -10 for the past or future; a crystal ball, which gives the best and most flexible results, must be prepared using a special spell (p. 142).

Special Prerequisites: Water, mirror, or ball.

Cuisinomancy: Divination by contemplating some kind of food or drink, mostly as a source of complex patterns which the mind can interpret. Witches often use tea leaves; voodoo specialists favour gumbos and similar stews. Any character knowing this spell should specify a favoured dish or drink to use; other materials give penalties from -1 to -10, depending on similarity. The substance must be prepared with a successful Cooking or Beverage-Making roll (not necessarily by the caster); a critical success on this gives +2 to the Divination (and making a simple cup of tea is +5 to such rolls). The resulting "vision" tends to be a murky but meaningful collection of symbols – skulls, trees, horses, and so on.

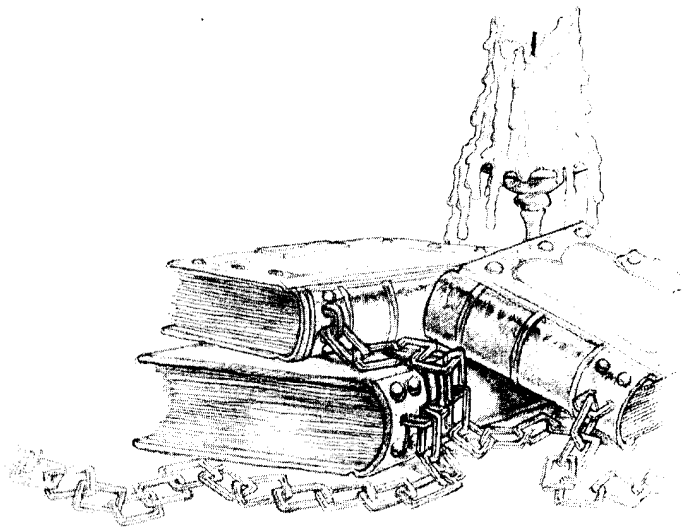
Special Prerequisites: Magery or Second Sight, and the chosen consumables.

Demon Invocation: Divination by summoning a very minor demon which can be required to answer three questions. Strictly speaking, these should always have yes-or-no answers, but a particularly good reaction from the demon or successful use of Intimidation at -2 can get more information out of it. It will know a fair amount about current supernatural and mundane events in the area, and have a little knowledge of the future, but it cannot be omniscient; if in doubt, the GM should roll vs. skill with the spell for each question, with appropriate modifiers. (This spell is one of the few acceptable uses for demons, in the opinions of most witches and wizards; demons themselves find it irritating.)

Special Prerequisites: Magery. In theory, the spell requires a cauldron, an octagram, candles, various spices, and so on; in fact, these are simply a way of focusing the necessary Will, and the spell has been successfully cast with a washing-bowl, a large spoon, and some cheap soap-flakes. However, such cut-price equipment imposes a penalty of -1 to -5 on the spell.

Palmistry: Divination by study of the patterns on a person's hand. This can only answer questions concerning that person and their personal fate, although it can be a good way to detect a Destiny.

Special Prerequisites: If the user lacks Physician or Physiology skill at 12 or better, the roll is at -4; Physiology at 18 or better gives +1.



Pyromancy: Divination by staring into a large (domestic-sized) fire. The caster gains slightly indistinct visions of current or near-future events. Not much colour or detail is possible, but this is a safe and easy type of Divination.

Special Prerequisites: Unless special spices, costing at least $50, are burnt in the fire, the roll is at -4.

Reannual Alcoholism: Divination by use of alcoholic beverages made from re-annual grapes or other fruit (such as the Vul Nuts favoured in Krull and the Agatean Empire) which grow before they are planted, thanks to the Disc's intense magical field. This is a powerful, versatile form of Divination with one major drawback; the caster must get drunk to make it work, to at least level 5 on the Intoxication Table (***GURPS Compendium II***). This takes at least five minutes, and imposes a penalty of at least -1 on the casting roll. If the casting is successful, the character begins remembering snippets of information from their own (probable) future, and can assemble these into a set of strong impressions and fragmentary visions. The more the roll is made by, the better; impressions can be picked up for up to four hours ahead per point by which the roll was made, with a minimum of eight hours. With a Will roll, the caster can form a definite yes-or-no answer to any question that they are likely to resolve in that period; each question after the first is at a -3 cumulative penalty to the Will roll, and once one is failed, no further questions can be contemplated. The caster must always sober up before attempting a second casting, whether or not the first succeeded.

Re-annual drunkenness often gives hangovers *before* the imbiber has started drinking; resolving what this means for a character (especially one with indifferent HT) who regularly uses this spell is left as a matter of roleplaying and negotiation between player and GM. (Attempts to use this effect to pass information back to one's past self, especially by characters untrained in this spell, represent dangerous meddling with causality; GMs should become inventively malicious when faced with such ideas.)

Special Prerequisites: Sufficient re-annual drink to enable one use of this spell costs at least $30. Frequent users may prefer more pleasant, and thus expensive, beverages. Use of a re-annual drink not familiar to the caster (as when, say, a Ramtops-based wizard who normally uses grape wine is forced to used Agatean Ghlen Livid) may impose a -1 to the roll due to problems judging dosage.

Sortilage: Divination by the casting of lots – specifically, by rolling dice. On the Disc, 8 8-sided dice are used for this. These must be made to a very high standard, to ensure complete randomness, and cost at least $50 a set. Note also that the results of this spell always, obviously, take the form of numbers; questions that are not easily answered in such a form give penalties to the roll and cryptic results. As a system of Divination with the illusion of mathematical precision, Sortilage is popular among scholar-wizards.

Special Prerequisites: Gambling and Mathematics skills, each at 15+.

Meta-Spells

Mystic Feedback

Special; Special Resistance

This spell counters a Malefice doll (see p. 134 and p. G39) which is being used against the caster. (It cannot be used to help others.) It is resisted by the current power of the Malefice, but at -5, because it uses the Malefice's nature against itself. After casting it, the caster does something violently self-destructive, such as plunging her hand into a flame; the damage is transferred to the doll, which is destroyed, and the caster suffers no damage. The GM should roll for success on this spell secretly; on a critical failure, the caster thinks it has succeeded, and may do herself significant harm.

Cost: 4.

Time to cast: 2 seconds.

Prerequisites: Magery 2 and Persuasion.

Octagram

Special; Resists attempts to cross it

Note: This is, of course, the Discworld version of Pentagram (p. M62), using an octagonal design. It is a little more limited in effect than Pentagram is in some worlds.

This spell produces a magical barrier which blocks hostile spells and magical creatures from passing in either direction; it projects upwards from a design traced on the floor or ground. Any hex that is even partially within the Octagram is protected. Summonsed and most extra-dimensional creatures can neither move, cast spells, nor move any physical object across the border. Other creatures, including mages, can cross the Octagram, but cannot cast spells through it; nor can they use magic to travel across it. However, creatures can be summonsed to appear within the Octagram (a standard summoner's safety measure). The barrier extends about ten or twenty feet up, and is closed at the top.

If part of the Octagram is cut or erased, its power will be lost until the caster can remake it – usually requiring just a piece of chalk and a second. Magic cannot damage the Octagram, but an ordinary person could walk up and scuff it with a shoe.

An Octagram can only stop summonsed and extra-dimensional beings, as "native" magical beings (such as undead and golems) are considered "natural" on the Disc.

Moreover, it will only stop Things from the Dungeon Dimensions for 1d rounds, as they can absorb its magic and carry on, and such a design will only stop Death (sometimes) if it is part of the Rite of AshkEnte, into which it is incorporated – that particular traditional invitation aside, he can go wherever he has to be.

A trapped creature may try and force its way through an Octagram. Roll a contest between the creature's (ST+IQ)/2 and the skill with which the Octagram was cast. If the creature wins, it destroys the Octagram. No one creature can thus "test" an Octagram more than once per day. (Some rule-bound creatures may not even be able to try this; GM's option for the attempt.)

This spell has no prerequisites as such; anyone can trace an octagram and say the words. However, characters without Magery cannot tell if the casting has gone correctly.

Duration: Permanent unless broken.

Cost: 10 per hex protected. A mage can also use "slow and sure enchantment" (p. B153) to create a large Octagram single-handedly, though this is not technically an Enchantment spell.

Time to cast: A minimum of 5 seconds per hex protected. This time is spent in tracing the design, and cannot be reduced by high skill or any other circumstances. Designs traced in permanent materials, such as paint or tiles, takes longer but can last a very long time (GM's option for details).

Tap Narrative Power (VH) — Special

This spell enables the caster (usually a witch) to increase her power by working with the Disc universe's tendency to follow standard plots. It is cast immediately before another spell, and adds to the energy available to power that spell.

The extra energy available is equal to the caster's Will, modified as follows:

Results contradict a standard story-line (e.g. keep the handsome hero from the princess, let evil go unpunished): Spell has no effect.

Results help one story-line while slowing another (e.g. help the prince on his way to save the kingdom by keeping him from his true love): × ¼.

Results are a moderate help to the story (e.g. tell the peasant-lad where to look for the sword that will kill the giant): × ½.

Results are a standard part of the story (e.g. turning the prince into a frog so that the princess can rescue him and thus make him grateful): × 1.

Results are key part of the story (e.g. put the castle to sleep for a hundred years, make the volcano erupt just as the explorers flee from the decadent city): × 2.

Notes: First, this spell is not inherently "good"; unpleasant spells are at least as important to stories as nice ones, and magic can be used to set up problems as well as to solve them. And even disregarding this, more ethical witches often disapprove of this spell, or rather, they recognise the danger that it represents; by forcing people to follow stock story-lines, it denies them free will. In a sense, it's as bad as draining them of strength to power your own magic, and with longer-term effects. Some still learn it; they just try to avoid using it.

Cost: 2. (This can be drawn from the energy gained if the spell is successful.)

Time to cast: 5 seconds.

Prerequisites: Magery 2, Enchant, Narrative Manipulation.

Mind Control Spells

Delusion — Regular; Resisted by IQ

Implants a single powerful Delusion in the subject's mind, equivalent to the -5 point disadvantage (see p. B32) or to a -1 point quirk. In other words, the victim acts a little strangely for the duration of the spell, but can still operate normally in society. (Granny Weatherwax has been known make people who annoy her think that they are frogs, so that they keep trying to sit on lily-pads and ask to have ponds dug to live in.)

Duration: 1 hour.

Cost: 5 to cast, 2 to maintain.

Time to cast: 5 seconds.

Prerequisites: Magery 2, Daze.

Mass Hibernation — Area; Special Resistance

This is another "fairy-tale witch" spell. When it is cast, it appears to resemble Mass Sleep, except that it has an all-or-nothing effect on characters in the target area. However, it is rather more powerful than that; victims do not age at all, and may sleep for years. Any such "sleepers" who are suffering from diseases, poisons, etc., get a free HT roll at +2 every five years to eliminate the problem from their bodies. The spell is often cast over whole castles or the like, with the aid of the Tap Narrative Power spell (see above).

The spell is resisted by the HT of the character with the highest *Social Status* in the area of effect; if more than one character has the same Status, the caster can choose who suffers the effect – and if the resistance fails, everyone in the area is affected. It lasts for a period set by the caster, but can be broken before then by a condition set by the caster (and one plausible condition *must* be set; the kiss of

a handsome prince is traditional, but not compulsory), or by Awaken or appropriate Dispel/Remove magics. However, all magical attempts to cancel this spell are at -4, due to its broad power. Once the spell is broken, everyone caught up in it wakes up.

Duration: 10 years or more (see below); cannot be maintained.

Base Cost: 5. Minimum radius 2 hexes (costs 10). +1 to *base* energy for every +10 years to Duration (paid on casting, not as maintenance).

Time to cast: 1 minute.

Prerequisites: Magery 3, Sense Life, Mass Sleep.

Break Mental Walls (VH) Regular; Resisted by Will-3

This subtle but terrifying spell slips into a subject's mind and breaks down all the mental barriers that a person erects to help them deal with their own guilt, fears, and self-destructive impulses. It is resisted by the target's Will, but at -3 because it is *insidious*. It is not obviously an attack; in a sense, it consists of helping the target to think more clearly.

The effect, if the resistance fails, appears similar to a Daze spell, but is a lot less pleasant from the inside. It normally lasts for a number of minutes equal to a 2 dice roll plus the points that the character gains from "unpleasant" Mental Disadvantages, Phobias, and similar Quirks. These certainly include Bad Temper and Berserk (unless the character is a good person prone to "righteous anger"), Bloodlust, Bully, Cowardice, Sadism, and so on. Compulsive Behaviour isn't usually included, unless it is tied in with a malicious impulse; Code of Honour is certainly excluded, *unless* it is based on some terrible sense of guilt over past actions, and similarly, Secrets may be included if they are dark and terrible. Every vicious or deliberately cruel act in the target's recent past adds 5 minutes to the total, or 10 if it went against their usual nature. All of this is very much subject to GM's decisions and options.

For every ten minutes or part thereof that the effect lasts, the target must roll a Fright Check. If they are physically attacked or injured, they are permitted a Will roll, plus the total injury damage, -1 for every three minutes of duration remaining, to snap out of the condition. They cannot normally sleep until the effect wears off; if sent to sleep magically, it resumes when they wake up, unless they make a Will roll as if injured.

There are, however, one or two snags with this spell. On the one hand, anyone who is truly saintly or really "knows and likes themselves" is partly or wholly *immune* to its effects. This is left to the GM's decision again; such people are rare, but *Blessed* characters may be fully immune, while the Higher Purpose or Illuminated advantages might halve the duration. (Years in psychoanalysis, or southern Californian residence, would, mysteriously, make no difference whatsoever.)

Worse, full-blood elves, and a few very dangerous humans (mostly outright psychopaths), are genuinely in touch with themselves and their inner children. Elves are immune to the spell; humans who qualify are affected for 1d rounds, and can then make an unmodified Will roll every round until they snap back to normality, usually laughing. (Casters may then be required to make a Fright Check themselves, at the GM's option.)

Most people consider this spell somewhat unethical, and certainly no "nice" character would use it routinely. However, some witches bluntly observe that the fact that it works so well tells you a lot about people.

Duration: See above; cannot be maintained.

Cost: 5.

Time to cast: 2 seconds.

Prerequisites: Sense Emotion, Fear, Foolishness.

Narrative Manipulation (VH) Special; Special Resistance

This advanced and subtle spell is used by witches when they know (or think they know) that a "story" is going on around them. A "story" is defined as a series of events with a certain historical momentum, a bunch of fairy-tale cliches being acted out in real life (which happens quite frequently on the Disc), or somebody's Destiny being worked out. It is up to the GM to determine if this is actually happening, but anything that was planned as a key part of a scenario, or that involves a Destiny advantage or disadvantage, should qualify. A witch can tap into the patterns of story and kick it onto a new track. The results are usually subtle, but can involve a warping of reality on a par with a Wish.

This spell takes Long-Distance Modifiers (for the distance from the caster to the furthest person directly affected), and so is usually cast from the middle of things. The direct effects can include giving individual characters bonuses to important rolls equal to the same amount, or groups of people bonuses equal to half that amount. Any success permits up to five characters to make immediate sense rolls to notice important facts, Will rolls to break compulsions, and so on.

If the roll was made by 5 or more, information may enter people's heads "from nowhere;" they will regard this a lucky guess or intuition, but may feel compelled to act on it. Characters may also be induced to act in various unexpected but not directly self-destructive ways; if this is against their best interests, they can resist with a Will roll.

For example, in the theatre scene towards the end of

Wyrd Sisters, Granny Weatherwax uses this spell to cause a Big Denouement In The Theatre, a common narrative event; her casting succeeds by enough to give the actors the "correct" dialogue for the scene they are enacting, and to make them follow it rather than the script.

However, this sort of magic is not always easy, or safe. Stories possess momentum, and even a kind of latent willpower. Trying to actively oppose the "plot" gives penalties to the roll from -1 to -5, at the GM's option. If two spell-casters are both trying to manipulate the plot in different directions, treat this as a Quick Contest between the two spells; reduce the amount by which the winner is considered to have made their roll by the amount by which the loser made theirs. The ball at the end of *Witches Abroad* involves a contest between two castings of the spell, one at a large disadvantage because the other is following a classic fairy-tale plot; however, the combination of the opposed spell and mundane interference does disrupt matters somewhat.

As with *Tap Narrative Power,* this spell is not especially "good," and abuses free will. However, a witch may use it to steer events to a desired conclusion without too much ethical trouble; it all depends on the story.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Cost: 6 to cast, 3 to maintain.

Time to cast: 5 seconds.

Prerequisites: Magery, Persuasion, Bravery, and any ten other spells.

Movement Spells

Atavarr's Personal Gravitational Upset (VH)

Regular; Resisted by HT

This spell causes gravity to act at right angles to the norm on one subject, usually a person. They thus begin to fall sideways, in a direction determined by the caster; if they were standing on the ground to begin with, it becomes like a nearby wall, and they may grab fixed projections to save themselves with a DX roll.

This spell has both offensive and helpful uses; for example, it enables the subject to walk up walls, and might be used to help someone falling into a deep, narrow crevasse. However, its offensive power is more obvious; it can effectively throw an opponent into a wall, and leave them seriously inconvenienced for its duration. Used in the open, it can be truly vicious, especially if there are no solid obstructions for some distance in the direction of falling; the subject's best hope is to grab something on the ground, but if this isn't done quickly, the roll will be at large penalties for the speed of falling. Flying beings have fewer problems, although they may need a second or two to orient themselves to the changed gravity; they can simply fly sideways until the spell wears off.

A second casting of this spell can either cancel the first, or set up a new falling direction, which must still be at right angles to the norm.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Cost: 8 to cast; the same to maintain.

Time to cast: 2 seconds.

Prerequisites: Magery 2, and at least 30 other spells from at least five different colleges.

Quondum's Attractive Point

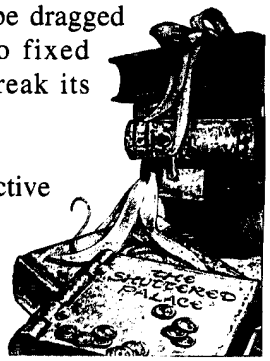
Special; Special Resistance

Creates a field of attraction centred on a point of the caster's choice; the spell takes distance modifiers from the caster to that point. Anything at the point (defined, for convenience, as a hex) is held stationary; anything else nearby is drawn towards it.

The spell has a "strength," determined by the energy put into it, which acts to hold objects at the centre; the attractive force further away is equal to its strength minus the distance in hexes from the centre. Thus, for example, a strength 20 casting acts at strength 13 on objects seven hexes from its centre. Treat objects as being thrown, dragged, or whatever, as appropriate to their weight and the acting strength; of course, as they move closer to the centre, they become subject to more strength, and may hurtle off the floor.

Objects move in unguided straight lines under the influence of the spell, but may hit anything fixed that gets in the way; if they have had at least three hexes to build up speed, treat them as being thrown by a being of strength equal to the spell strength at the point of impact. Of course, anything that breaks off with the impact will start moving itself. Objects from more than three hexes out, light enough to be thrown by the spell's strength at that point, arrive fast enough to damage anything at the centre.

After about five seconds, the attractive force may start pulling loosely-assembled objects apart with its local strength; details are left to the GM. (Treat this much like falling; clothing is unlikely to be dragged off people who are hanging on to fixed points, but heavy armour might break its straps.)



Duration: 10 seconds.

Cost: 1 for every 2 points of attractive strength, and the same to maintain.

Time to cast: 5 seconds.

Prerequisites: Magery 2, Apportation.

Necromantic Spells

THE RITE OF ASHKENTE — SPECIAL

This spell can *only* be cast ceremonially; the listed time is that required for a ceremonial casting. It used to be thought that it required eight wizards, standing at the points of a ceremonial Octagram (scribed beforehand; see p. 146), along with a lot of swaying, chanting, candles, and incense. Now, smug junior research wizards have proved that it can be performed by two wizards with three small bits of wood and 4cc of mouse blood; it can even, at a pinch, be performed by one person with two bits of wood and a fresh egg (although the egg *must* be fresh, such a casting is at -2, and it obviously has an annoying energy cost).

Even more annoying junior research wizards say that there are provably nine other, substantially different, ways to perform the Rite, but they all tend to kill you instantly. Senior wizards invariably suggest that they demonstrate this.

The spell quite simply summons Death himself (see p. 154). In theory, it also binds him, and indeed, if the roll is made by 5 or more, he cannot leave the central Octagram. However, lesser castings leave him free to wander in and out; he is usually too polite to demonstrate this, as he generally wants just to get the thing over with and go about his business, but sometimes he forgets, to the distress of the casters.

He is obliged to answer one question, to the limits of his ability; as he goes (almost) everywhere, and is involved in most serious matters, this is sometimes very useful. In theory, he could stick at one question, but as he *is* polite and dislikes being pestered repeatedly, he usually finds it easier to answer any follow-up queries and expand any details when asked. Any wizards who took part in the Rite cannot then do so again for at least 24 hours.

In fact, most try to avoid doing so at all, for the simple reason that wizards are at least as nervous of dying as anyone else, and drawing Death's attention to themselves feels like a bad idea. This is irrational, of course; Death is not capricious or malicious, and merely comes when he is due, and wizards who so choose are entitled to know when that is for themselves – but there you are. This spell is often ignored when it could be useful.

PCs whose players have read the chronicles may act in a more cold-blooded fashion, casting the Rite daily to answer their smallest questions. This is simply out of character for the Disc, however, and should be discouraged. Death tolerates use of the Rite, which acts on him as an invitation that cannot be refused, but he is known to regard it as an inconvenience, and over-use will make him increasingly irritated and evasive. Although he is rather literal-minded and straightforward, he is capable of a degree of deviousness, and could omit details or distort his answers so as to reduce the annoyance he suffers. He could even lend indirect assistance to the PCs' enemies, although he would have to be subtle about this.

Note that the Rite will summon whoever is currently acting as Death; thus, in the past, it has almost summoned Mort (Death's apprentice of the time), and it has brought his "granddaughter" Susan when she was standing in. This is unlikely to happen again, but not impossible. Summoning the Death of Rats would presumably require research into a revised version of the Rite.[1]

Cost: 16.

Time to cast: 8 minutes.

Prerequisites: Wizard training, Magery, Octagram.

[1] *But that would seem fairly pointless, unless your question can plausibly be answered by "SQUEAK."*

8 LARGE QUESTIONS, SMALL GODS 8

Paul Kidby '00

"Things are rarely the way people think – but they are always the way people believe."

Being a fantasy world, the Disc has plenty of gods and demons. Actually, it has literally billions, although few of them ever amount to much. The complication is that things are rarely the way people think – but they are always the way people *believe.*

The Foundations of Reality

At the top of the Discworld universe's hierarchy of powers are the primal forces of creation, which determine not simply how things *are,* but how they *can be.*

The Creation of the Universe

The universe was evidently created, but how and by who is not clear. The Disc itself, and possibly much of its reality, was the handiwork of a being called the Creator, but he was, by his own account, working to a specification, and he does not seem to have had a lot of imagination. (Any entity who could leave his working manual – the Octavo – lying around when he had finished must have had some mental limitations.)

It is even possible that the universe came into being through the operation of natural forces, and that the Creator and his ilk are simply a personification of these in a situation where everything is personified. But it would be tactless to say so. These forces are not worshipped, but lesser gods could become very irate if people went round saying that they were subordinate to blind chance.

The Old High Ones

The highest powers recognised by Disc theology are eight entities known as the Old High Ones, to whom even the gods are answerable. All discussion of these beings is very indirect. They do not intervene in individual affairs; that would be like a human being intervening in the affairs of one microbe. Their sole major direct action on the Disc was to end the Mage Wars (see p. 107), which were threatening the structure of reality. They might be considered to oppose the Things From the Dungeon Dimensions, but that is a matter of housekeeping, not warfare.

Azrael

The only one of the Old High Ones whose name is currently known is Azrael, the Great Attractor, the Death of Universes, the Beginning and End of Time.

Azrael represents, not just death, but finality. The Absolute. He is as large as a universe, with eyes in which a supernova would vanish. The Deaths of all worlds, including the Disc, report to him, and may indeed just be aspects of his being. He keeps the ultimate clock, which only goes round once. It does not record the passage of Time. It *is* the passage of time.

Mortals do not have dealings with Azrael, and beings who think of themselves as immortal avoid him, knowing at heart that their claims to significance are rendered ludicrous by his existence.

Things in Residence

Some Things have made permanent escapes from the Dungeon Dimensions, trading a little power and potential for a little stability. This happened most in the earlier ages of the universe, when nothing was entirely stable.

One such unlovely being is known as Bel-Shamharoth, the Soul-Eater, the Soul-Render, the Sender of Eight. In physical form, Bel-Shamharoth is all tentacles and mandibles, with one enormous eye. Its temples are bigger on the inside than the outside, and are decorated entirely in black. They have, in short, all the traditional features, and were doubtless built by Inhuman Entities Before History. They are also eight-sided, as is every element and decoration inside them. It is suicidally unwise to so much as mention the word "eight" in such a place.

The Necrotelicomnicon

Creatures such as Bel-Shamharoth are detailed in a volume called the Necrotelicomnicon, or *Liber Paginarum Fulvarum.* This was written by Achmed the Mad, about whom little is known.[1] It seems likely that he drank far too much Klatchian coffee, rendering himself deeply knurd, with a *real* comprehension of the nature of the universe. The only copy of the first edition is kept in the library of Unseen University, heavily protected and chained down; most people read heavily bowdlerised tenth-hand copies. The Librarian is unlikely to let anyone gain access to it (it does unspeakable things to careless human beings), but he may look details up in it himself (he isn't human, after all).

[1] *The "About the Author" page of his book spontaneously combusted shortly after his death.*

The Auditors of Reality

The executive arm of the Old High Ones is a category of much lesser creatures referred to as the Auditors of Reality. These appear as small, grey, cowled robes which are evidently completely empty. Indeed, they give a general impression of absence. They do not speak; they do not even plant words in the brains of those to whom they communicate, like Death. Rather, they create the *memory* of something having been said in a quiet monotone.

The Auditors are responsible for enforcing the most basic laws of the universe. If something travelled faster than light, the Auditors would be the ones to give it a speeding ticket. They are absolute order, and their idea of the universe is something that runs smoothly, along pre-determined curves, and eventually winds down and stops. They sometimes claim proudly to represent oblivion.

The Death of Rats

For the most part, Death takes responsibility for the end of every life on the Disc; different beings may have their own ideas of what death is, as do different human cultures, but they all get the animated skeleton with the scythe.

However, following a metaphysical incident, rats gained their own Death. He is a (mostly) bipedal, rat-sized rat skeleton (with bony whiskers and a blue glow in its eye-sockets) in a hooded robe, with a small scythe. He turns up when ships sink unexpectedly, barns burn down, or terriers are set loose. He mostly deals with rats, but may attend mice, gerbils, and hamsters when the senior partner is busy. He communicates with hollow squeaks.

He is just as briskly efficient as Death himself, but a little more pragmatic and straightforward; not having to associate with human beings much, he has not picked up human habits of thought. (He frankly finds humans rather exasperating.) On occasion, when Death is distracted or in trouble, he may attempt to help.

He sometimes rides a talking raven named Quoth – actually the magically-mutated pet of a wizard in Quirm – which provides an interpretation service to humans. If he is obliged to act as a physical being, he can be treated as having ST 5, DX 12, IQ 12, and a Move (and Dodge) of 6.

There is also an even smaller Death of Fleas, but that keeps out of sight.

Binky, the Steed of Death

Death's horse is an actual, living horse, not skeletal or winged, although he can fly, and normally leaves no hoof-prints (except when travelling between dimensions, when he sometimes leaves glowing prints in the air). He wears a silver-and-black harness; his ornate saddle has a sheath for Death's folding scythe and a saddlebag for his riding cloak.

Binky is extremely intelligent and well-cared-for, and Death clearly regards him with whatever Death's version of affection is. He is equivalent to a Heavy Warhorse (p. 230) but with IQ 5; he is not war-trained, and therefore not especially hard to handle, unless he has some reason to be difficult. If he *does* wish to be difficult, it'd be a very good rider who could stay on.

Death and the Afterlife

Death merely marks the end of a being's life, and sometimes transports souls away a little distance. It is sometimes said that souls go to the House of Death, but that is not how it seems to the occupants; perhaps a few pass through on their way to their own particular afterlife.

Because the point about the afterlife on the Disc is that, perversely, people get what they really expect. Hubland warriors get picked up by well-built blonde women on horseback and taken to a life of eternal feasting; those who have pursued a life of what they know is considered evil go to Hell (see p. 165); some souls are reincarnated, in forms that range from reward to punishment; and some are fated to hang around the world as ghosts, temporarily or for long periods, until something is resolved or just because that's fate.

Death himself appears to know the nature of afterlife arrangements in the Discworld universe, although strictly they fall outside his ambit, but he will not let on too much to living mortals. All else aside, sensible mortals who knew the truth would lynch hellfire-preaching missionaries on sight.

One constant, however, appears to be the Desert that souls cross after death. It's black sand under a starry night sky which, at the same time, is brightly lit – it might be like one of the 'seas' of the Moon. What happens to the soul on this trek appears to reflect the way they acted when alive. Those who know the old folk classic 'The Lyke Wake Dirge' will get the picture.

They find life, and individuality, immensely annoying, even hateful. They cannot act directly against it, but they can complain about it, and they have recently started taking subtle actions to make it less annoying (see *Hogfather*). The limits on their power are fortunate, because their theoretical control of matter, energy, and the laws of nature is absolute. They despise the Death of the Discworld, who is, by his nature, intimately involved with the cycle of life, and who has developed a personality and a degree of cold sympathy for living things. (Azrael, however, chooses to accept Death's behaviour.)

They never speak of themselves in the first person, because if they did it would indicate individuality – or rather, if they do, they instantly cease to exist. However, this makes little difference, as another one of them appears immediately as a replacement. Their hatred of life is actually a danger to them, because it makes them think like individuals.

PCs who somehow get caught up in the plots of the Auditors are in vast danger, although those plots are always quite subtle and indirect, and philosophical – they relate to abstract ideas. They are most likely to be opposed by Death, although beings such as Luck or even Fate (see p. 164) might be amused to frustrate them. However, all sides at the highest levels are bound by rules that any human will find hard to understand; mortals caught up in such affairs are largely on their own.

Major Powers Manifest

The great forces of the universe, as represented by the Old High Ones, may also be manifested on the Disc in a more local form. Mostly, however, these are very abstract entities; the only such event which humans consistently insist on personifying, and which therefore often shows up in personalised form, is Death.

Death

The Death of the Discworld is an emissary, or an aspect, of Azrael, but he is also a personification, imagined by humanity. Any paradox in this is not resolvable by PCs. His task is to separate life from its end. He is not a god; he neither requires nor accepts worship, and he happens whether people believe in him or not.

Death appears as a polished skeleton, seven feet tall. There are tiny points of light, usually blue, in his empty eye-sockets. He normally wears a robe of absolute black, and sometimes a black riding cloak with a silver brooch, showing his monogram, the Infinite Omega (an omega superimposed on a lazy-eight infinity symbol). HIS VOICE is felt within, rather than heard, and he is understandable in all languages, though his statements may sometimes be less than absolutely clear. It is equal to the Voice of Command advantage (p. 56). His scythe has a normal-looking wooden handle, and his sword has an intricate but conventional hilt, but their blades are an ice-blue colour, so thin as to be transparent. Both are, for all purposes, infinitely sharp, and can cut through anything. (If it ever matters, they ignore armour PD and all DR, and do triple damage.) Their purpose is to divide body and soul. Death usually uses the scythe, but royalty and a few other important people are entitled to the sword.

Under normal circumstances, Death can be seen only by cats, people with magical senses, and those he has come to collect. Persons in a heightened state

of awareness (possibly some form of trance, or just extremely agitated and alert) can sometimes perceive Death, though not clearly.

Death says that he does not make himself invisible; people simply do not choose to see him, and reflexively move out of his way to avoid having to pay him attention. If he acts in such a way that they have to respond to him, they tend to only half-attend, thinking of him as unthreatening and "just another person." They may later become puzzled at the vague sense that someone *was* there, but quite what he looked like is evasive.

In his role, Death can appear in any form, and for a time he tried to reproduce whatever the client's cultural beliefs called for, but he no longer bothers. All those black celestial dragons and giant scarab beetles were merely confusing, and most people had only vague ideas to begin with. The skeleton is illustrative enough.

Death's Motivations

Death is not cruel. He has an appointment with everyone, and he always keeps it, no matter how inconvenient this may be for the mortal involved. He does not put the dagger, or the big rock, or the botulinus organism, or the embolism in the victim's way. He no more kills his clients than the postman writes the letters he collects.

He has no emotions in the usual sense. He can, however, disapprove of the way things are going, particularly among mortals who are trying to "cheat" him, and most of all those who use offensively crude methods, such as human sacrifice. Death's disapproval is cold enough to freeze helium. He can also become depressed when the service he tirelessly performs goes unappreciated.

He also has an intellectual fascination with Humanity, apparently because of their incessant efforts to swim against the current of Time – not just avoiding him personally, but building tombs for those who can least appreciate them, exploring distant places for no special reason other than They Are There, writing poetry, worrying about the fundamental structure of a possibly unknowable Universe, making war, and making more humans to carry on. His study of these things, has led to certain acquired preferences that might be considered human: he likes cats, and curry, though it is unnecessary for him to eat. He has created a house and garden, which contain structures that imitate human ones – a furnished bedroom and bathroom, for instance, though he has no need of either; it just seems to him that a proper house ought to have them.

Death is fundamentally uncreative; he can only imitate what he has seen. This accounts for his lack of artistic sense. He has tried to learn music (the banjo in particular), but with poor results. He *can* dance, rather well; the "Dance of Death" is sometimes mentioned in human myth, and he usually lives up to his image.

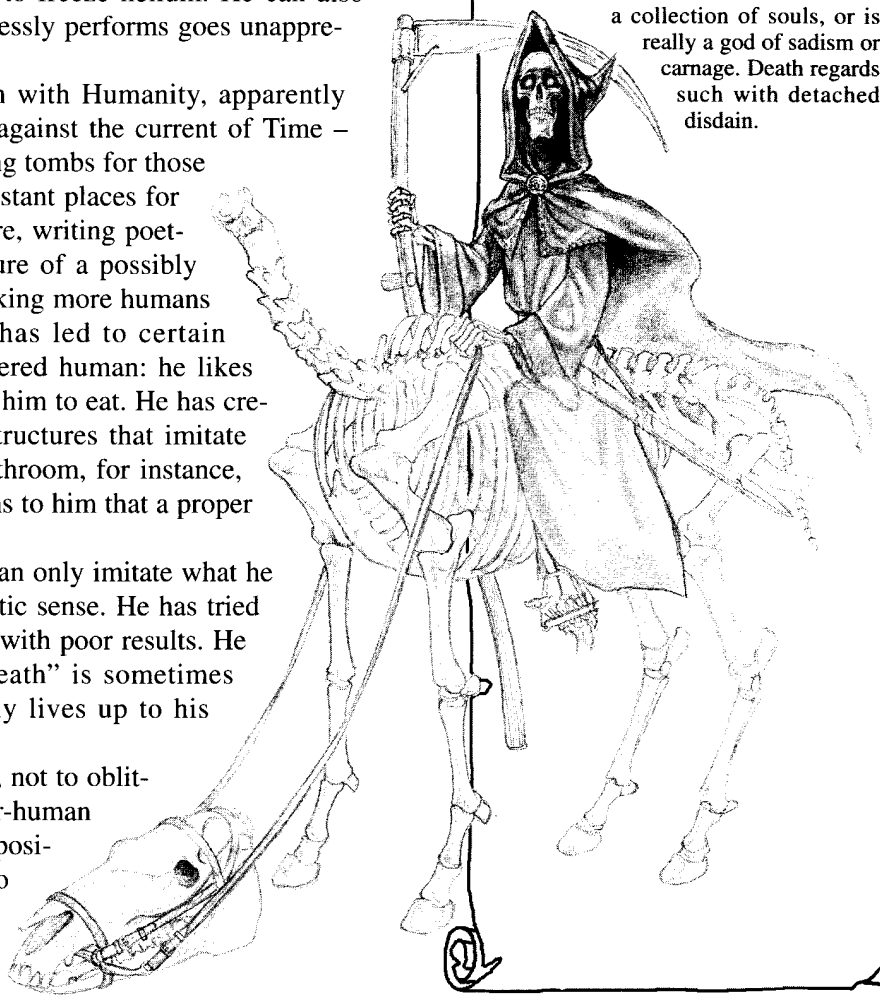
Still, his job is to manage life's endings, not to obliterate it, and human belief gives him a near-human aspect. That is why he finds himself in opposition to the Auditors of Reality; compared to them, he is a close ally of humanity and of life in general.

Death and the Gods

Death has some formal but straightforward dealings with the gods. The gods sometimes remind Death to deal with some annoying or fated individual; he does not need such reminders, but is too polite to say so. Alternatively, they may discuss some complex destiny with him; that, he classes as legitimate professional business. In return, he sometimes requests their aid in straightening out some supernatural confusion or modifying some aspect of human existence; they are better at things like compassion and vengeance than him, being more human.

The gods (and demons) see Death as a necessary part of the universe they think they run, although they find him too inflexible to treat as a servant. Death, on the other hand, knows that gods themselves can die, whatever they may think, and accepts their activities as part of his job. The ones he gets on best with are the most businesslike.

Any god who claims to be "God of Death" is either a mere curator of a collection of souls, or is really a god of sadism or carnage. Death regards such with detached disdain.



Roleplaying Death

As with other characters from the chronicles, Death should not appear overly often in games. Even if people are dying "on screen," and observers have magical senses, the fact is that he's a hard-working entity with little time to hang around and chat. Most encounters (of the non-final sort) ought to be brief and to the purpose. While he is never less than polite, there will always be some reason why he is taking the time to converse with mortals, and they should consider it a privilege not to be abused.

However, he is also one of the major elements of Discworld stories, and players will expect him to crop up sooner or later. When he does, the GM can have some fun, but the event is also something of a challenge.

To start with, there's the Voice, as written in hollow capitals throughout the chronicles. Ingenious GMs might plan ahead and lay in a stage effects box to shift them down an octave and add lots of echo . . . Others will just have to depend on player imagination. Remember, Death doesn't gabble or snap; if you can't think what he would say at a particular point, he may well restrict himself to a thoughtful "Hmmm?"

Equally, however, Death isn't superhumanly bright or alert. He can know everything, before it happens, if he lets himself, but mostly he projects the character of a hardworking, dutiful type who just happens to be the End Of Everything.

He is really neither cruel nor compassionate to individual humans; the first would be unnecessary, and the second would make his work impossible.[1] He knows that, if he said too much, people would be forever pestering him for information or "wisdom," so he is mostly rather taciturn, and he slightly dislikes attempts to trick him into talking, but he doesn't bother blaming anyone for their own motivations.

Despite his lack of creativity, he can seem ingenious, or at least good at getting people to do what must be done. He also has what might pass for a bone-dry sense of humour; actually, this is more of a sense of irony, derived from long experience of reality.

Continued on next page . . .

[1] *Though he does make a very occasional minor exception for a mortal who engages his interest or respect.*

Death's powers are not finite, but they are limited; he is obliged to play by the rules, although no-one but him really knows what they are. He could be considered to have limited, almost human characteristics in his skeletal guise – say, ST 15, DX 15, and IQ 11, and 20 hit points of damage from some appropriate source could dismantle him (although he would promptly start re-assembling himself, completing the process in 2d seconds). However, when he is obliged to use some ability or aspect of his myth, he is usually infallible; if narrative logic suggests that he should have a tiny chance of error, or degrees of possible success, treat him as having skill 20. When he is playing by some rule that says he should have a meaningful chance of failure, his effective roll for any task becomes 15. In his private life, he tends to operate at the appropriate characteristic level.

He can go anywhere that something can die, which is to say, pretty well anywhere. The fact that he may choose to walk up a flight of stairs, rather than simply "teleporting" to the client, is a dramatic choice rather than a practical requirement. (The choice, however, is much more mortals' than Death's; he rather dislikes drama, but always meets reasonable expectations.)

It should be apparent, given the number of times a day he is called on to make collections, that Time operates differently for Death than for others.

There has been speculation that Death might be killed by his own weapons, or by those of another Death, but whether this is would in fact be "dying" or something wholly else is difficult to say. Trying to get hold of Death's own scythe to test the concept is the kind of thing heroes often set out to do, three or four chapters before the abrupt denouement, but it cannot be recommended. Death can be summoned and temporarily bound by the Rite of AshkEnte (see p. 150), but this is a matter of accepted myth and convention, an invitation he feels obliged to accept. Mostly, magic has no effect on him, and he slightly dislikes it, perhaps because he has seen its worst consequences.

Given that space and even Time are largely an irrelevance to Death, it would be possible to assume that some of the "side-visits" he is shown making in the chronicles actually happened at different times to the main events of the plot involved. He certainly finds human ideas of reality a little hard to grasp, which is why, for example, his house is bigger inside than out, and fixed distances seem to be strictly optional there.

Lifetimers and Autobiographies

Death dwells in a pocket dimension, outside of space and time. His house there is described at various points in the chronicles, and in *The Discworld Companion* . . . GMs should familiarise themselves with these accounts if PCs somehow look set for a visit.

The house holds two resources of special interest:

Lifetimers: One room holds millions of hourglasses, each with a design and decorations as unique as a fingerprint, and the trickling sand sounds like a full sea. Empty glasses vanish with a pop, and new ones replace them with a pinging sound. Each of the hourglasses is a life, its sand running; when the sand is gone – well, the house owner is a busy man. Death himself has a Lifetimer, which is larger than normal, decorated in an ornate skull-and-bones motif, and has no sand in it. Those of other major supernatural entities, which are tucked away in a semi-secret side room, are another matter. Death can produce anyone's Lifetimer from his robe, if he wishes to know more about a mortal.

Autobiographies: Death's vast library is full of a sound of small scratchings, as of countless quill pens. The books are everyone's lives, being written as they are lived. Browsing is discouraged (and rather rude), but not impossible; the shelves are organised alphabetically, and the information they contain is not likely to end any universes, although it can wreck personal privacy. Death can summon any book to his hand while in the library.

If one looks at one's own autobiography, one finds the last page being filled with a description of oneself reading the book.[1] One might use the book to recover some forgotten detail from one's own past, but that would require lengthy leafing back and forth, and probably trawl out some unwanted memories. Browsing someone else's autobiography can be a way of finding out what they have done, or even where they currently are (although if they don't know – if, say, they have been blindfolded and kidnapped – the book won't say).

The back stacks hold the biographies of those dead more than five hundred years. Go far enough back and the books become scrolls, then tablets of wax and clay, then scratchings on stones. The autobiographies of gods and other long-lived beings can take several volumes, occupying whole shelves and even bookcases.

Roleplaying Death (Continued)

When major metaphysical problems arise, he may even work with mortals; it will usually turn out that he knew about the problem before they did. He can be politely grateful for assistance received, but he is actually in no real position to grant favours; he certainly cannot be expected to change the date of anyone's demise. He is bound by the largest Duty in the universe, and although he doesn't generally complain, this is the central fact about his personality. If he feels it is somehow Right, he *may* petition the gods to grant rewards or aid, and they are careful enough of his power that they will usually oblige.

The Dungeon Dimensions

There are wastelands outside of space and time, limitless and all but empty, the ground consisting of silvery sand. The exception to the emptiness is the sad, angry, unreal beings which dwell there, and which both desire the touch of reality and hate all real beings. This creates *tension.*

The Things

These are creatures which strictly cannot exist. Not should not, not do not – cannot. They do not accept this.

They are attracted by magic, because high concentrations weaken the boundaries of reality, offering them a chance to break through. Sometimes the entry point is inside a mind, allowing a Thing to take over the mortal; wizards are particularly attractive targets. Witches are also tempting, but their magic tends to be subtler and less prone to rip holes in reality, and their more practical natures offer fewer opportunities for the kind of applied insanity that the Things can exploit.

They can also exploit bizarre *ideas,* even if these are not explicitly magical. Anything that makes reality less coherent, or minds more confused, represents an opportunity. However, they are then constrained by the shape of the ideas that they are exploiting.

These beings are also, for some reason, attracted to the number 8 on the Disc. Wizards are often advised never to speak this number, or at least to be careful where and when they do so.

The Things from the Dungeon Dimensions, in short, are the kind of rampaging, inhuman, Lovecraftian monstrosities that adventurers can have no compunction about using extreme force against. The snag is that they can be very tricky to hit.

[1] *Think about this too much and the page will fill up with a description of one's thoughts; the feedback involved could lead to headaches, but probably nothing worse.*

Fighting Invasions

Rule One: If the Things erupt into the Disc's universe from the Dungeon Dimensions, matters are getting *serious.*

The situation will probably involve magic, but magic is the worst thing to use against them; they feed on this raw energy and grow stronger thereby. They can be fought physically – their "natural" forms are often quite weak – but they are also often quite large, and they may possess humans or other vessels who PCs may wish to save. Furthermore, there is no point in dismembering one or two or ten of them if their means of entry to reality is still open, and a thousand more are coming through.

Thus, the chief concern should be to close the entry-way, and then to cut any who are already present off from any source of magic. Very often, this will mean dealing with a confused or rogue spell-caster who has somehow given them what they need.

The Gods

Research theologians say that the Discworld has at least three thousand gods, with more being discovered every week. They are wrong, by several orders of magnitude.

The Disc actually has billions of gods. They fill every corner of space. If a tree falls in the forest, hundreds of gods hear it. But most of these deities are tiny and powerless, intangible, with no consciousness beyond a surging ego and an instinctive hunger for that which they feed upon; belief.

"Research theologians say that the Discworld has at least three thousand gods, with more being discovered every week. They are wrong, by several orders of magnitude."

It is only when a god receives the prayers of worshippers that it can begin to grow. Every ounce of faith provides the god with power. The more belief that a god receives, the more it grows, and as it grows, it can perform more miracles. These tend to take the form that the god's worshippers associate with divinity; lightning bolts to smite the ungodly, food for the hungry, and so on. Obviously, such behaviour makes the being more credible as a god, and so a growing religion enjoys positive feedback; as it gains more worshippers, its god can do more, and the more a god can do, the more worshippers it gains.

However, there is a limit. Human beings can only believe so much. There is a fixed amount of faith to go round. (People do tend to believe more in times of stress or danger, but gods can only promote such experiences so far before their worshippers start looking for a less demanding deity who will make their lives more comfortable.) Thus, all gods are to some extent in competition.

They are also shaped by the belief that empowers them. Their growing intellects and powers match what humans expect of gods, which is partly the lightning bolts, and partly the sort of behaviour that humans would indulge in given power without responsibility. This explains the unattractive divine behaviour seen in many legends; it's what people would do if they could get away with it.

"Gods who lose all their worshippers have, for the most part, also lost their chances."

Forgotten Gods

Gods who lose all their worshippers have, for the most part, also lost their chances. They are driven out into wildernesses, where they may go insane; unlike unworshipped Small Gods, which still have hope, they are decrepit and set in ways that will never come again. They may fade over millennia, but perhaps they never entirely die; all they have left is dreams of glory. They may haunt ruined temples to themselves. Small Gods in the wilderness manifest as whirling djinn or tempting demons, given a human to tempt into faith, but a Forgotten God displays a more desperate and hopeless personality.

A really cold-blooded religious philosopher, or an insane scholar, might actually set out to resurrect the worship of a Forgotten God. This could just mean attaching an ancient name to a new god (or to a current god who doesn't mind operating under false colours), but it might actually mean resurrecting the god itself. Given that some religions are abandoned for good reasons, and that any such resurrected god would likely have gone mad during its centuries in the wilderness, the resulting religion would probably develop a strange and sinister flavour. Preventing ensuing carnage could be a worthwhile project for a PC group.

(It also makes gods painfully vulnerable to artistic errors and confusion on the part of their congregations. For example, Patina, the Ephebian goddess of wisdom, was once thought to have a symbolic owl as her companion and messenger. However, a bungling sculptor who couldn't do birds right was commissioned to create an important image for her temple, and the image he created became the accepted standard, with the result that Patina is now accompanied and symbolised by a rather unhappy-looking penguin.)

And if a religion can grow, it can also decline.

Divine Appearance

One power that most humans give their gods is the ability to appear in any form they like; on the other hand, most deities are assigned a standard appearance that is expected of them in routine manifestations. Furthermore, even gods – even, it seems, higher powers – can never change the appearance of their eyes, which are the windows of the soul.

The Small Gods

Returning to the bottom of the heap: the tiny, powerless gods of game-trails and rocky ledges are knows as Small Gods. They can just about generate enough psychic energy to move a small stone or project a passing thought, and the vast proportion of them never gain any more. They need to find followers. There is evidence that non-sentient animals can generate a little belief, but not enough to support more than a very few gods; it is thinking beings who must be convinced. Thus, the instinct of a Small God is to cluster round human habitations.

The Hogfather

There are a handful of functions on the Discworld that are fulfilled by beings that aren't labelled gods, but ought to be. For example, the Hogfather is a very ancient god indeed, who has done a magnificent job of moving with the times and adapting to human cultural evolution.

The legend of the Hogswatch holiday is that the Hogfather, a kindly, fat gentleman with a long beard and big boots, arrives overnight to the sound of hog bells, bringing toys for all good children, who leave a glass of wine and a pork pie for him. An oak tree is erected in a pot and decorated with paper sausages; on Hogswatch day the family wears paper hats and eats a pork dinner.

This is the modern, safe version of the story. In older times (and not so much older, in places where pig-killing is something that happens close by and in common view), the Hogfather lives all year in a secret palace of pig bones, to emerge on Hogswatchnight in a sledge drawn by four tusked wild boars (Gouger, Rooter, Tusker and Snouter). He delivers packets of sausage, black pudding, hams, and scratchings (fried pork rinds) to good children; bad children get a sack of bloody bones (the kind of detail that proves this is a children's story).

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The Hogfather (Continued)

Deeper than this . . . The Disc has had plenty of winter myths and renewal ceremonies, some of them very bloody indeed. Unlucky individuals from ancient rural communities could find themselves feted and then hunted by dogs to make the sun rise, for example. They were not expected to get away. The sun wouldn't have risen if they did.

But Hogswatchnight is safely commercialised and secular these days, especially on the Sto Plains and Ramtops. Large shops in Ankh-Morpork are staffed by fat actors (assisted by "pixies") receiving queues of variously bored and over-excited children, and fathers desperately try not to wake sleeping offspring as they deliver presents to waiting stockings (or pillowcases, for wealthier or greedier children). Still, the sheer level of belief involved makes the Hogfather one of the most powerful gods on the Disc, in his way.

He is the god of the shortest night of the year, and of the renewal of the sun in the depths of winter. He appears to predate humanity, and maybe the Disc; this could mean that he was a god who was recognised by the earliest and simplest life-forms in the universe, or it could be that the sheer power of belief has pushed his existence back to the dawn of time. Gods don't worry about temporal paradoxes.

He does not associate with the gods of Cori Celesti; they would be at once too crass and too high-flown for him. He dwells in his Castle of Bones, or in the human collective imagination. Mostly, he does not need to manifest; his representatives in the big shops, and those tip-toeing fathers, handle the miracle-working.

However, because they are in competition, and given that they have the power to push each other around, only stronger deities can hold on to positions near large communities. The wildernesses of the Disc are haunted by the weak and desperate; spirits who try to tempt travellers and wanderers and shepherds into believing in them. Sensitive souls with a predisposition to religion are the best catches, but of course such people tend to carry existing faith with them, which makes it harder for a Small God to get through.

However, once in a while, a Small God may help a goat-herd find a lost animal, or guide a traveller back to the road. If it is lucky, the human may then build a heap of stones as a tribute to the helpful spirit, and perhaps tell his friends about the experience. At that point, faith *might* begin to spread – and then a new religion is on the rise.

All of this is kept secret, although a few Ephebian philosophers and cynical theologians have guessed the truth; gods do not approve of information that might undermine belief, and Discworld gods have the power to do something about "blasphemy." However, Discworlders are dimly aware that there are an unknown number of small, weak deities "out there" somewhere, and are prepared to be polite to them. A few large cities (including Ankh-Morpork) have temples to the Small Gods, giving the whole mass of them a few prayers to help keep them going.

Pantheons

Despite their inherent competitiveness, gods can find ways to work together. The obvious way to build up a pool of worshippers is to specialise in a specific area – the weather, metalwork, farming, and so on – and help people in that particular activity. Thus, all human life can be divided up between a group of gods, who acknowledge each others' rights, and may even become almost friends. These pantheons may be associated with specific areas, nations, or tribes; thus, there are gods of Ephebe, Djelibeybi, and other lands.

Pantheons tend to be led by gods of some major force, such as the weather or war, but such a leader is rarely more than first among equals; after all, in times of peace or once the harvest is in, prayers in that temple tend to drop away, while the god of cooking is still getting a steady turnover of moderate faith, because people always have to eat. The result tends to be a sort of soap-operatic family relationship within the pantheon.

However, not all regions have a single standard pantheon. Especially in the modern age of reasonably extensive travel, believers and religions move around and mix and match. Broad-minded, cosmopolitan lands such as Ankh-Morpork and Tsort are full of temples to contradictory gods, and belief there is a matter of personal choice.

In fact, most major Disc gods know each other, and a kind of aggregated pantheon has developed, with some deities who share interests sticking to specific nations of worshippers, and others sub-dividing their fields of interest. This mixed group share living space in Dunmanifestin (see below).

Some Popular Gods

A few deities have made themselves known across wide areas of the Disc, and acquired enough followers to make themselves credible to most Discworlders.

Blind Io is Chief of the Gods and a thunder-god. In fact, he is the single major thunder-god on the Disc, having mastered the art of obtaining additional

worship under false names. He has a collection of disguises, seventy different hammers, and a talent for voices.

His chief feature (in his normal aspect) is that he has no eyes on his face – just blank skin. Nonetheless, he has eyes; rather a lot of them, in fact. They fly around independently, enabling Io to observe many parts of the Disc simultaneously (a useful talent in a chief). Blind Io is not as powerful as he likes to think – praying to the thunder seems a rather crude and primitive idea to sophisticated Discworlders, and he is rather taken for granted – but neither is he weak.

Offler the Crocodile God (Six-Armed Offler of the Bird-Haunted Mouth) started out as in Klatch, and succeeded in spreading from there. He has an obvious role in any hot land with big rivers, especially when people have to hope that a log is just a log, but he has somehow acquired worshippers as far afield as Ankh-Morpork and even the Ramtops. This is partly through his taking responsibility for all sorts of reptiles and other scaly things which most gods ignore, and partly through the creation of a visually impressive but largely undemanding cult which accepts prayers without pushing for too much more. Offler's crocodilian mouth-structure causes him to speak with a strong lisp.

Offler is patron deity of the city of Al Khali; his statue stands in the Square of 967 Delights.[1]

The Sea Queen is the all-encompassing deity of the Disc's seas and oceans, who is somewhat believed in and greatly feared by pretty well every sailor. She is as powerful as the sea, uninterested in human concerns, and believes in taking her own sacrifices without waiting for them to offered, frequently in large quantities. She is not especially bright, and has a short attention span, but this causes her little trouble. Sailors try to appease her through assorted superstitions without doing too much to attract her attention. She seems to have a soft spot for dolphins, or at least to make a point of punishing those who harm them.

One Gods

One Gods are high-risk, high-return strategists. They take responsibility for every aspect of human life, generally denying to their worshippers that any other gods exist, or dismissing them as demons.

The benefits of this are obvious; a One God receives an awful lot of prayers and belief. The first drawback is equally clear; One Gods annoy other deities, who see them as hopelessly selfish and greedy, and who may try to undermine their monolithic systems. Of course, the One God probably has more raw power to oppose this, and simple religions find it easier to inculcate fanaticism in their human worshippers – but such belief can be brittle. Once a few worshippers so much as accept that other deities really exist, the whole edifice may collapse into dust in short order.

The second danger is more subtle, but even deadlier in the long run; having taken responsibility for everything, the One God may start being taken for granted. On the one hand, it must take some of the blame for bad events as well as credit for good (because even if it blames evil on demons, it must claim that it could stop them if it wanted), and on the other, having built up a monolithic idea of reality, the god can be seen as barely logically necessary. The problem is exacerbated if the One God, having built a nice, tight system, becomes lazy and complacent. It may take centuries, but the One God's religion may become formalised and hollow, with belief concentrating on the system and not on the god. When it then falls, the god has no supporting faith to fight the collapse.

[1] *Klatchians are very precise about the things that interest them.*

The Tooth Fairy Franchise

Another deep-rooted figure, the Tooth Fairy is an anthropomorphic personification of something complicated involving juvenile dentistry and basic economics. She turns up when small children leave milk teeth under their pillows, replacing them with a silver coin.

"... something complicated involving juvenile dentistry and basic economics."

The amount of childish imagination involved makes her as real as the Hogfather, but the arrangement is different. It has long been delegated to a franchise operation, which provides work for young women trying to make their own way in the world. The money is poor – waitressing pays better – but the job does have some small advantages.

In fact, it goes back a very long way, to when an ancient being who wanted to protect children realised that those teeth represented a danger, as sympathetic magic could be worked through them. It therefore started collecting and investing money, to provide a steady income, and employing humans to do the work. Today, the money has grown into an empire of investments. The young female employees gain Psychic Invisibility (see p. 55), and carry ladders to give them access to children's rooms. (They also carry pliers in case they can't make change; there is a fixed rate per tooth.) The teeth are carried away by an organisation of representatives, and eventually deposited in the Tooth Fairy's Tower, which lies in a realm outside reality created by childish imaginings. See *Hogfather* for more details, and for information on the current standing of the organisation.

PCs could be working or former Tooth Fairies; aside from the Invisibility, the character could acquire Contacts on the fringes of the Disc's supernatural world, Area Knowledge of her "beat," some sort of Hidden Lore, and useful habits of Stealth. Tooth Fairies tend to be financially Struggling, and the job itself is a Duty.

Inter-Faith Relations

Relationships between groups of priests mostly reflect those between their patron deities; the gods expect their representatives to share their personal prejudices, and make a point of keeping their high priests informed of who is friendly and who is the subject of a feud this week. However, such rivalry is mostly limited to name-calling, and perhaps a little mud-throwing; for one thing, priests are not necessarily above secular laws against assault or murder, and for another, pacts between the gods include rules against serious damage to each others' power structures.

"The gods expect their representatives to share their personal prejudices, and make a point of keeping their high priests informed of who is friendly and who is the subject of a feud this week."

As the overall leader on Cori Celesti, Blind Io gives his priesthood a great deal of status. In Ankh-Morpork and other cities, the local High Priest of Blind Io is also the chief spokesman for the religious community when they need one. He may also take responsibility for state ceremonies.

None of which makes outright religious wars impossible, but they represent an extreme situation for the gods involved, and a waste of worshippers all round. If the gods are paying attention, they may actually act as a restraining influence for once. Unless, of course, they have side-bets running on the result; then they are likely to get very excited.

One Gods are not to be confused with deities who happen to have found a small, isolated group of worshippers who can support them but not much more. For example, there is a tribe of fifty-one people (at the last count) who worship only a giant newt named P'tang-P'tang. This is not considered particularly selfish of P'tang-P'tang, and other deities with any power are not inclined to try poaching on his territory; even by the standards of Disc theology, fifty-one people aren't enough to start wars over.

The primary example of a "One God" religion in recent Disc history was Omnia (see p. 25), which spent centuries building and elaborating the national worship of the Great God Om. Om almost suffered a classic disaster of hollow faith, having built a religion on *telling* people what to believe rather than convincing them.

Nature Gods

There are also a number of divinities with rather vague but broad areas of responsibility in the natural world, who are worshipped in rural areas across much of the Disc, and who receive at least a little belief from non-sentient animals. They include:

An unnamed *Moon Goddess.*

Hoki the Jokester, who manifests as an oak tree, or as half-man and half-goat. Hoki was once referred to by Granny Weatherwax, who has much experience of rural metaphysics, as a "bloody nuisance." Many other gods agree; Hoki occasionally shows up on Cori Celesti, before getting banned again for some gag or another.

Herne the Hunted, the god of small furry animals whose destiny is to end their lives with a crunchy squeak.[1] Herne is three feet high, with floppy rabbit ears, very small horns, and a good turn of speed.

Druidism

The priests of these deities are *druids,* who are also concerned with the careful study of natural forces, the construction of ever-larger stone circles, and lots of sacrifices. Druidism is popular in Llamedos (p. 29) and on the Vortex Plains (p. 33); the hard-core form is known as "Strict Druidism." Druids are fond of music, poetry, and exotic herbal poisons; outsiders who have experienced all three tend to prefer the poisons.

Druids are not as close to their gods as most Disc priests, or as interested in their personal lives; they are deeper into the supernatural-in-general view of religion, and spend much of their time studying astrological forces, engaging in odd cultural traditions (including dour arts and violent ball games), a fair amount of magic, or just bossing people around.[2] This suits their gods well enough, as nature-deities rarely want to be pestered by mortals; they get enough *belief* from superstitious rustics to keep them going, without bothering with *worship,* which always seems to have an undertone of wanting something in exchange.

Druids have made themselves expert in the design and construction of silicon chunk technology, even if their stone circle computers do always need to be upgraded within a year or two, and they have mastered relevant magical techniques, such as flying full-size monoliths long distances overnight when an upgrade is needed.

[1] *There are a lot of them, and they all have something to pray for, although Herne is rarely able to help them.*

[2] *Yes, that's typical of many priests – but Strict Druidism has enough power to make it stick.*

Druids wear long white robes and decorative torques and bracelets (usually of burnished copper), and carry sickles which they are all too happy to use on people. (Treat a sickle as a sword, without a thrusting option.)

Enigmatic Cases: Fate and The Lady

Two deities in particular often appear on Cori Celesti, and join in the games of the gods, while appearing a little detached from the normal pattern of divine behaviour. They may represent higher-level powers in the universe, rather than having evolved from Small Gods.

Fate looks like a friendly middle-aged man with neat greying hair and a kindly face – until one looks closely at his eyes. They are not, as first appears, dark, but rather are black, bottomless pits of terrifying night. He has a few worshippers, who know that their prayers are pointless, as Fate is inexorable and uncaring towards mortals. He is not a very emotional deity, but he hates having his plans or strategies disrupted. It is sometimes said that he originated in another universe, which he departed after it suffered some terrible and obscure disaster.

The Lady is Fate's chief opponent when the gods play games with mortals. She appears beautiful, with iridescent emerald-green eyes. She never answers prayers, but she sometimes aids those who least expect it – and sometimes she doesn't. A group of gamblers once tried creating a temple to her, and all died shortly afterwards – although she likes gambling, no lady likes to be taken for granted.

She is, of course, Luck, but one thing that all properly-educated Discworlders know is that they *must not* mention her by name. She says that she plays games not to lose, rather than to win, and that she never sacrifices pawns. But it is, of course, never safe to depend on that or anything else about her.

Priests and Priesthood

In order to sustain themselves, Discworld gods must acquire and maintain congregations of followers; priests are their agents in this. They manage and supervise the routine business of religion, in exchange for a share in the power and glory, extensive access to the material benefits of the system (which are of interest to the actual gods only insofar as they can be used to promote belief), and perhaps the occasional lightning-bolt dropped on people who cause them trouble.

Thus, the vast majority of Disc priests are rather unremarkable – middle management in large organisations that impose a strong corporate image on their employees. Of course, some religions do attract particular personality types; usually this means the bloodthirsty, but some are authentically well-meaning or even saintly.

It is important to realise that priests do *not* generally know much about the underlying nature of divine power. They of all people must believe in the absolute importance of their gods, and not pay too much attention to blasphemy or philosophy. Indeed, some better-intentioned priests have ideals and ideas that go far beyond anything the gods are intellectually capable of. Some of the Disc's greatest social figures have worked devoutly in the name of divine airheads who couldn't find their own backsides with an atlas.

Demons as Gods

If one thing demonstrates the close relationship between Discworld demons and gods, it is the fact that some demons *are* gods – or rather, some gods are really demons. This usually happens when a wandering demon, perhaps in astral form, finds a human community that has somehow failed to find a god to suit themselves.

The demon will then present itself as a god, and instruct its new worshippers in whatever it thinks is a worthwhile campaign of evil. For example, the very minor demon Quezovercoatl made itself into the god of the Tezuman Empire (see p. 27), the Feathered Boa, God of Human Sacrifices. The resulting wars and general carnage were unpleasantly impressive. (However, as Astfgl pointed out, most of the dead were lost to Hell; a *really* devious demon would have encouraged a less bloody empire with a bureaucracy and a taxation system that would have driven millions to damnation through sheer frustrated hatred.)

"The very minor demon Quezovercoatl made itself into the god of the Tezuman Empire, the Feathered Boa, God of Human Sacrifices. The resulting wars and general carnage were unpleasantly impressive."

This kind of thing may be one reason why the gods dislike demons; they resent poachers. However, it does provide Discworld campaigns with their share of berserk demon-worshipping cults to suppress, should a plot need such a thing.

(Quezovercoatl, incidentally, appeared as half-man, half-chicken, half-jaguar, half-serpent, half-scorpion and half-mad – a typical case of demonic excess, except in his height, which was approximately six inches.)

Astfgl and Vassenego

The current Life President of Hell is the demon Astfgl, who, like all demons, is as uncreative and heavy-witted as a vending machine: you put your dollar in and you get your eternal punishment out. He dresses for work in a red silk gown, a trident with one wobbly point, formally pointed horns, tail, and beard. He looks, in fact, rather like a school-play version of Ming the Merciless played by a skinny kid who has seen too many Vincent Price movies. Demons have no fixed shape, however, and when Astfgl is annoyed his talons rip through the silk and he develops big black bat wings and very serious ram-horns – like a slightly older kid who has read too many underground comics. It has been suggested that this is where Astfgl got his two favourite shapes, though never in his presence.

Actually, the "Life Presidency" is a strictly honorary position, designed to get Astfgl out of the way. (He tried too hard to be up-to-date, which was more than the other Dukes of Hell could tolerate.) However, he may not have realised this yet.

The *real* current power in Hell is Duke Vassenego, an ancient, suave demon with the soul of an old provincial lawyer. (Well, actually, he has the souls of several thousand lawyers, but one is the one he was created with.) He is almost human in his deviousness, and aristocratic in his manner. However, Hell is naturally riddled with politics and back-stabbing, and supreme power changes hands periodically. On the other hand, "periodically" among immortal demons can mean "once every five or ten thousand years."

Cori Celesti

Cori Celesti, the ten-mile-high peak at the Disc's very centre, shows divine psychology at its most typical; the gods *have* to be at the middle of everything, above everybody, and inaccessible in the most literal-minded way.

Dunmanifestin

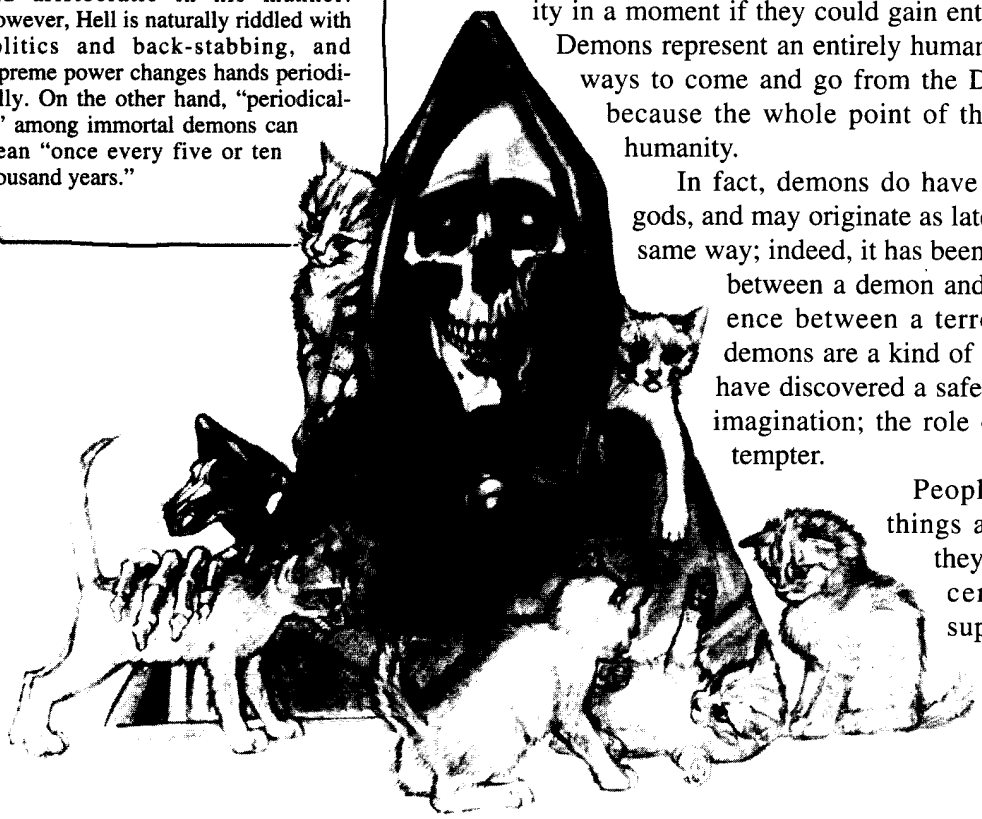
Dunmanifestin, the home of the gods, atop Cori Celesti, looks like a stage set for one of Shakespeare's Roman plays, or a Ray Harryhausen movie, designed by someone with a huge budget and not much imagination; lots of white marble columns and endless shiny inlaid floors. The main problem is that since gods can do almost anything they feel like, they have no particular need for imagination, and there's not much that they've been forced to put off until retirement.

It is just conceivable that extraordinarily determined adventurers might climb Cori Celesti to reach the abode of the gods, but this might be likened to climbing Everest, twice, in an ice storm, to reach a garish housing estate full of very boring bourgeois people with short tempers and heavy weaponry.

Not all gods live on Cori Celesti, or even visit. Theoretically, anyone with any worshippers is allowed in, but minor deities tend to be treated with ill-concealed snobbery, and One Gods may be openly criticised (and secretly envied). At any time, a number of deities will be engaged in feuds and sulks, and will refuse to go anywhere that they might meet various others. A few may even have too much good taste, but that is rare.

Discworld Demons

Discworld demons have nothing in common with the Things from the Dungeon Dimensions, who are utterly alien and would annihilate humanity in a moment if they could gain entry to the universe in the process. Demons represent an entirely human concept of Evil,[1] and often find ways to come and go from the Disc's reality; they need humans because the whole point of their existence is bound up with humanity.



In fact, demons do have something in common with its gods, and may originate as latent psychic entities in exactly the same way; indeed, it has been observed that the real difference between a demon and a god is the same as the difference between a terrorist and a freedom-fighter. If demons are a kind of mutant small god, however, they have discovered a safe, if cramped, niche in the human imagination; the role of eternal jailer, tormentor, and tempter.

People will believe many different things about their gods, but one thing they are always convinced of is the certain expectation of infinite supernatural punishment for their

[1] *Often capitalised.*

enemies, their neighbours, and (for the really insecure or honest) themselves. Demons provide that service. The snag is that they are so amazingly unimaginative about it. Perhaps the best evidence that they are products of human fantasy is the fact that they really need human beings to provide them with both the evil that they are supposed to thrive upon, and the punishments they are supposed to inflict for it.

Which is why demons are so keen to tempt human beings; they need the creative imagination that a human who has been promised a few routine rewards can provide.

Demons do not get on with the gods, who treat them with a snobbery that may be fuelled by moral insecurity, but there is not usually any conflict between the groups.

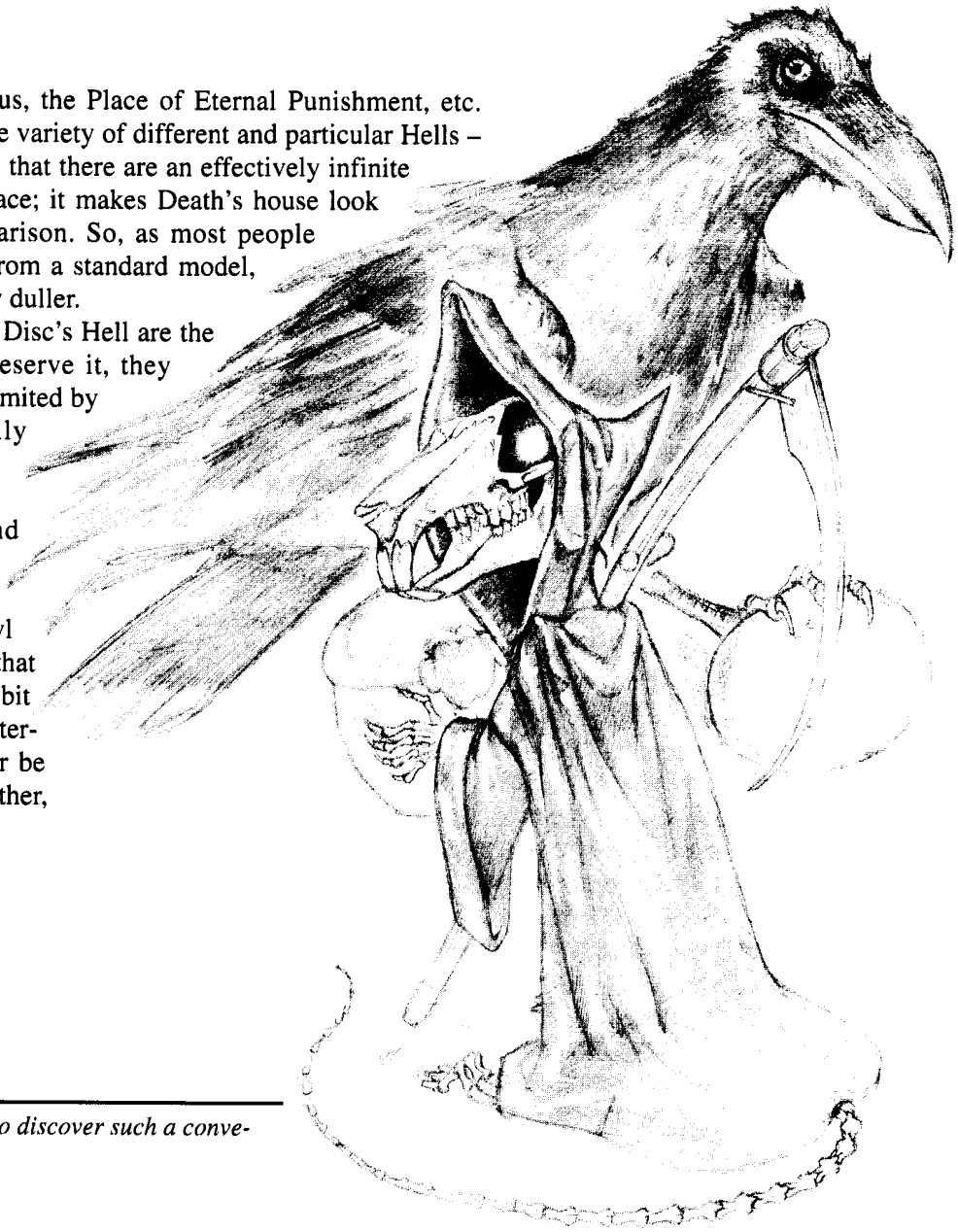
Physically, demons can take many forms; the senior ranks and old-fashioned types favour the old red cape, horns and trident look, while many junior ranks go for chaotic mixtures of eyes, claws, jaws, legs, and tentacles. The random generation tables on pp. M113 or G82 are entirely appropriate.[1]

"The current Life President of Hell is the demon Astfgl, who, like all demons, is as uncreative and heavy-witted as a vending machine: you put your dollar in and you get your eternal punishment out."

Hell

Demons live in Gehenna, Tartarus, the Place of Eternal Punishment, etc. You know, Hell. Now, there are a wide variety of different and particular Hells – indeed, the nature of the multiverse is that there are an effectively infinite number. But Hell is an uncreative place; it makes Death's house look aesthetically sophisticated by comparison. So, as most people have formulated their ideas of Hell from a standard model, that is pretty much what it's like. Only duller.

Although the souls who go to the Disc's Hell are the ones who, at heart, feel that they deserve it, they soon realise that their punishment is limited by the fact that they no longer actually have physical bodies to suffer. Thus, the place is full of rocks being rolled up hills, boiling lakes of blood, and howling storms, all inflicted on souls who spend a lot of time chatting to the demons, with the occasional howl of torment to keep everyone satisfied that the place is being run properly. It's a bit like prisoners and warders in some eternal gaol from which no one will ever be freed or fired; they'll all in this together, so they tend eventually to get along.



[1] *Indeed, many demons would be pleased to discover such a convenient source of ideas.*

9 BEWARE THE AMBIGUOUS PUZUMA 9

This chapter deals with Discworld animals and other beings who are mostly unsuited for use as PCs. Note that most Disc fauna (and flora) is similar to that of our world; this is, essentially, a *familiar* setting, and too much weird and silly wildlife destroys that familiarity. Nonetheless, the magic-laden environment does throw up some oddities.

Dragons

Discworld dragons come in two very different species, with some variants. Curiously enough, one species actually evolved from the other – but there was a lot of magic involved.

Swamp Dragons

ST: 1-6 **Move/Dodge:** 6/4 **Size:** 1
DX: 11 **PD/DR:** 1/1 **Weight:** 5-40 lbs.
IQ: 5 **Damage:** 1d-2 cut
HT: 8/3-6 **Reach:** C

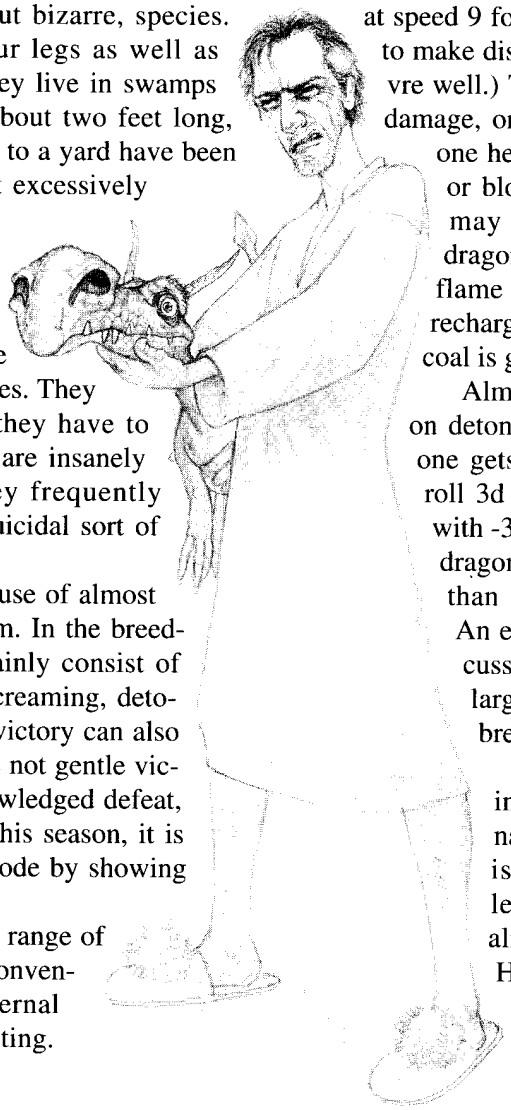
Swamp Dragons are a natural, but bizarre, species. They are vaguely reptilian, with four legs as well as wings, and as their name suggests, they live in swamps and marshes. They usually grow to about two feet long, although sizes ranging from six inches to a yard have been reported. They are intelligent, but not excessively so.

Their most unusual attribute is a truly phenomenal digestive system, which can reconfigure itself to handle almost anything, and use it to generate substantial quantities of flammable gases. They can, literally, breath fire. However, they have to store these gases internally, and they are insanely excitable creatures; as a result, they frequently explode. This seems to constitute a suicidal sort of species defence mechanism.

Swamp dragons will explode because of almost any strong emotion, including boredom. In the breeding season, males fight duels that mainly consist of attempts to provoke each other into screaming, detonating rages; sadly, the excitement of victory can also lead to explosion. (Swamp dragons are not gentle victors; if the loser rolled over and acknowledged defeat, the winner would disembowel it.) In this season, it is very easy to make a male dragon explode by showing it its own reflection in a mirror.

Swamp dragons are prey to a huge range of diseases, some beyond the realms of conventional biology, and most of their internal fluids are corrosive, or at best disgusting. Their stomachs sound like antiquated plumbing. Nonetheless, they are sometimes adopted as pets by rich and/or silly people in Ankh-Morpork. They are not exactly domesticable (the damage they do by dribbling on carpets is too expensive for the word to fit), but they can be induced to adopt the personality of a particularly dim and messy dog. However, too many owners become bored with them, and abandon them on the streets, whence they may be rescued by aristocratic, charitable dragon-lovers, if they are lucky.

Otherwise, they may end up being used as cigarette-lighters or paint-strippers. This is considered heartless by some very rich and sentimental people, but the biggest risk is that the dragon will get excited by something. They have also been used as *ad hoc* weapons, but that runs even more of the same risk. There is at least one case of a dragon being used as a demolition charge (in a box, with a mirror), but trying that will get a lot of rich dragon-lovers *very* annoyed.



Dragons trot around at a move of up to 6 (but one that has to run too much may get excited), or they can fly at speed 9 for short distances. (They are too heavy to make distance flyers, and they do not manoeuvre well.) They can bite or claw for 1d-2 cutting damage, or breathe flame. This can reach up to one hex, and can be dodged, but not parried or blocked. It does 1d+1 fire damage, and may set fire to flammable objects. Any dragon is likely to have enough gas for 2d-2 flame attacks when first encountered; they recharge by eating bizarre meals (high-grade coal is good).

Almost anything will make a swamp dragon detonate, but as a rule of thumb, any time one gets into a fight or a screaming contest, roll 3d every round from the third onwards, with -3 for males in the breeding season. The dragon explodes if the roll is equal to or less than the number of rounds fought so far. An exploding swamp dragon does 2d concussion damage (see p. B121) – 3d for a large male with lots of flame-gas in the breeding season.

A dragon killed by a cutting or impaling weapon probably won't detonate (roll 6 or less on 3d), but one that is battered to death might (roll 9 or less), and one that is killed with fire almost certainly will (roll 15 or less). Hence, fighting swamp dragons tend to finish each other off with fang and claw.

GMs may modify all swamp dragon capabilities for large, small, over-fed, or mutant specimens.

Supersonic Swamp Dragons: The responsive Discworld Swamp Dragon genome has, on just one occasion so far, thrown up a curious variant; Errol, a Swamp Dragon with a streamlined head and body and stub wings, initially dismissed as a "whittle" (runt). After his genes and metabolism had got to grips with things, Errol also acquired the ability to generate a very hot flame indeed, out of the opposite end of his digestive system to the norm. The result was the fastest flying creature ever seen on the Disc. Some breeders are hoping to retrace the genetic path that led to this, but given the damage done by Errol's sonic booms, this may not be a good idea.

Giant Swamp Dragons: According to well-informed legend, there used to be a type of "dragon" that lived in swamps, and was substantial enough for heroes to boast about killing. These did not actually breathe fire, although their breath smelled disgusting and they did collect firewood (and, supposedly, treasure).

This sounds like a mutant swamp dragon which has lost much of its chemical-processing capability in the push for body mass. The last of this species was supposedly killed a couple of centuries ago, but if a GM wants to have a survivor come crawling into play, it could be, say, ST 15, DX 12, IQ 5, and HT 15. It would have a choice of two attacks on any round; teeth and claws for 2d cutting, or breathing choking fumes over an area of up to three hexes to its front. Anyone caught in that area would have to roll vs. HT or be at -4 to all dice rolls for a number of rounds equal to the amount the roll was missed by; if the fumes met open fire, they would generate a flare of purple flame, burning anyone immediately adjacent for 1d-3 damage.

Presumably, these creatures instinctively collected firewood in order to build bonfires outside their lairs; any "treasure" they collected would probably be a result of ancestral memories causing them to gather unusual substances in the hopes of finding a digestive use for them, and would turn out to be a mixture of rubbish and scrap metal, with the odd bit of junk jewellery somewhere in the heap.

Noble Dragons

Noble Dragons are descended from Swamp Dragons who learned to feed on magic. This enabled them to grow to huge size, and gave them spectacular flight and fire-breathing ability.

Fortunately, noble dragons are effectively extinct. When ambient magic on the Discworld fell to sensible levels, this species migrated into the only reliable ecological niche for a magical species; the human imagination. Unfortunately, they have an occasional chance of escaping back into the real world when a supply of magic comes available and a human offers them a channel. Combining the most spectacular power that human imagination can conceive with the darkest lusts and urges of the human soul, a "noble" dragon is essentially an unstoppable force with an attitude. They are not sociable; a key description of their mind-set is that the nearest thing that they have to a friend is an enemy who isn't dead yet.

One grimoire, Tubul de Malachite's *The Summoning of Dragons,* describes the ritual. The author thought that a wizard of sufficient nobility of purpose and mental discipline could summon a truly noble and benevolent dragon. Only one copy of the book is known to exist, and much of that, like its author, was burned to ash in an inexplicable fire. The copy is in the library of Unseen University, and the Librarian doesn't permit borrowing.

If a Discworld dragon somehow gets loose, it can be given practically any statistics that a GM wishes. It is likely to be immune to any physical attack that a human warrior can make, and it will simply soak up magical attacks. Noble Dragon breath can annihilate a house, and everyone in it, in one blast. Scenarios should be based around the desperate quest to work out how to persuade it to go somewhere else, preferably back where it came from, or perhaps to cut it off from its supply of magical energy.

Wyrmberg Dragons: In the Very High Mana region of the Wyrmberg (see p. 28), a trained human imagination can easily conjure up a dragon. Fortunately, the techniques taught in this place, and the local metaphysical conditions, only generate *relatively* low-powered specimens (which in any case can only continue to exist within the local zone of wild magic).

A Wyrmberg Dragon weighs about 500 lbs. (lighter than they look, but they are flying creatures), with ST 45, DX 13, IQ 7, and HT 15, and a move of 6 on the ground, 15 in the air. They can bite for 2d+2 cutting damage, but they prefer to breath flame with a range of up to four hexes; roll vs. DX to hit, and the jet does 3d fire damage, and can be Dodged but not Parried or Blocked. They are strong flyers, able to fight in the air while carrying a rider.

Other Fauna

The .303 Bookworm

This is an example of accelerated Discworld evolution. It is extremely dangerous to be around magical books for very long, even for an invertebrate, so this species can get through a row of tomes at projectile-weapon velocities. It does not intend to be dangerous, but anyone in the way of a .303 bookworm when it comes off the end of a shelf could take a die or two of damage.

The Ambiguous Puzuma

The fastest animal on the Disc, the Ambiguous Puzuma can approach relativistic velocities. Unfortunately, it is less good at stopping. PCs are unlikely to encounter a live specimen.

Camels

ST: 32-50 **Move/Dodge:** 6-10/5 **Size:** 3
DX: 9 **PD/DR:** 1/1 **Weight:** 900-1,100 lbs.
IQ: 12 **Damage:** 1d+1 cr
HT: 12-15 **Reach:** C

Discworld camels *appear* very much like those of our own world, right down to the behaviour (surly) and the smell (*distinctive*). They are often domesticated, and will put up with carrying up to Heavy Encumbrance (15 × ST) with their usual poor grace. They are useful for load-carrying rather than for speed. Their legs appear to work by some complex system of consensus planning, which makes them slow to get moving from a sitting or lying position, although real emergencies can persuade them to make haste. They kick for 1d+1 damage, or bite for 1d-1. If they are eating something reasonably moist, they can also spit; at short range, up to 3 hexes, the dollop of cud can blind a victim for 1d-2 rounds, and if they happen to be eating dates (with stony cores), they can project the stones up to 10 hexes for 1d-3 damage. (They enjoy stunning passing birds this way.) Their skill with ranged attacks is 15.

What no-one fully realises is that camels are actually intelligent beings, perhaps the most intelligent on the Disc. They all possess the Intuitive Mathematician advantage (p. CI26); their spitting attack is not instinctive, but is based on instant mental calculation of trajectories, factoring in local wind speeds and anything else relevant. They are dedicated hobbyist pure mathematicians.

They do not reveal this because they have a very good idea what humans would do if they found out. They regard a life of contemplation in stables and deserts as perfectly satisfactory, and have no worries about being hit with sticks by sub-numerate herders. They cheerfully adopt human names for themselves, such as "Evil-Minded Brute" or "Filthy Maniac." However, if mathematical problems or questions of theoretical physics ever become *really* important to a party with a camel carrying its baggage, strange hints may begin arriving from unexpected directions.

Elephants

ST: 250-300 **Move/Dodge:** 8/0 **Size:** 10+
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 3/4 **Weight:** 5-8 tons
IQ: 6 **Damage:** 3d cr
HT: 17/40-50 **Reach:** C,1,2

Elephants on the Disc are much like those of our world; large, intelligent, and a little nervous.[1] They are domesticable, and will carry up to Medium encumbrance (10 × ST).

They can trample for 3d damage, and their trunks have ST 12 and a 2-hex reach, striking for 1d crushing damage if necessary, or even throwing objects, with double ST for determining distance. They cannot Dodge (except their trunks, which Dodge at 6). Their skulls have +2 DR.

Hermit Elephants: This shy, thin-skinned (PD 0, DR 2) subspecies has adapted well to human activities; it adopts deserted human-built huts for camouflage and extra protection. (Mysteriously enough, it has little difficulty finding such; every hut that an elephant enters seems to be deserted by its inhabitants soon after, if not before.) Growing Hermit Elephants add extensions to their mobile dwellings. A standard Howondaland hut is worth +1 PD and +3 DR.

The Pointless Albatross

The Discworld Albatross is much like its counterparts elsewhere; a very large seabird (wingspans of over eleven feet are possible) capable of flying very long distances. It has ST 4, DX 11, IQ 4, HT 14, 5 hit points, a flying move of 15, a Dodge roll of 7, and the ability to peck for 1d-1 cutting damage if cornered.

The best-known Disc species is known as the Pointless Albatross, because it has been known to fly from the Hub to the Rim without landing, but nobody knows *why*. Some specimens have been domesticated for message-carrying purposes, and represent the only swift, reliable form of communication between the Agatean Empire and the Circle Sea. This is a minor state secret at both ends, as the Agateans find few reasons to communicate with foreigners, and people like the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork know that any messages that do arrive are nothing but trouble.

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[1] *Elephants under the Disc are four in number, and not like those in any other universe.* *See p. 7.*

The Quantum Weather Butterfly

A dramatic example of metaphor made solid, this is the butterfly which, when it flaps its wings, so changes air flow patterns that it can cause a thunderstorm a thousand miles away.

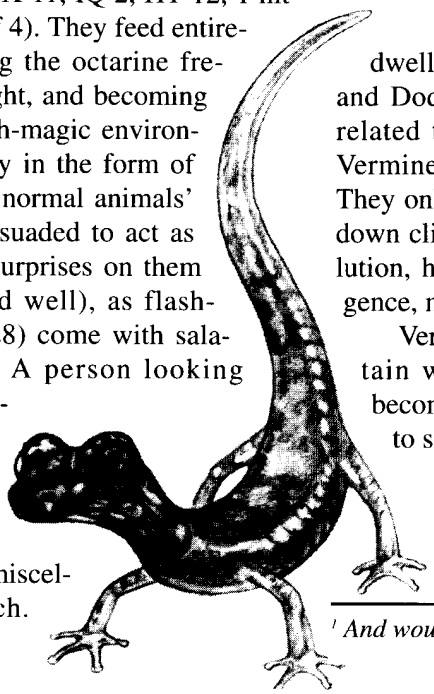
However, it rarely bothers with a thousand miles. It mostly generates small, localised thunderstorms for troublesome creatures in its immediate vicinity. It is potentially the deadliest standard-sized butterfly in the multiverse. It also seems to be more intelligent than most small insects; after all, it can respond to, and manipulate, its environment.

It also has very pretty fractal patterns on its wings.

Salamanders

Salamanders are desert-dwelling creatures, resembling small mouthless lizards (ST 1, DX 11, IQ 2, HT 12, 1 hit point, with a Move and Dodge of 4). They feed entirely on magical energy, absorbing the octarine frequencies from Disc desert sunlight, and becoming comfortably well-fed in any high-magic environment. They excrete waste energy in the form of bright light, in a similar way to normal animals' excretion; thus, they can be persuaded to act as torches, or, by inflicting sharp surprises on them (especially when they have fed well), as flashbulbs. Some iconographs (p. 128) come with salamander-based flash systems. A person looking towards a group of well-fed salamanders when they flash can be dazzled for a several rounds (GM's option).

Salamanders can be purchased from specialist magical-miscellany dealers for about $20 each. They are easy to look after, requiring only bright sunlight or a fair amount of ambient magic, but a little unreliable as a practical light-source, as they may stop excreting at critical moments.



Troll Animals

Silicon-based life on the Disc is not limited to humanoid trolls (p. 70), although other species are not often encountered. There are troll dogs, a sort of huge and shapeless troll horse, and even troll ducks (which sink a lot). All tend to remain in the remotest mountain regions.

To create a troll animal in ***GURPS*** terms, take the stats for a carbon-based species of the same general shape and size, double its ST, add +4 to its HT and hit points, and give it +1 or +2 toughness if it is smaller than human size, +3 if it is around human scale, and +4 or more if it is very large. Such creatures also have the Troll Brain Disadvantage (see p. 75), but variations in IQ are likely to be rather smaller than for humanoid trolls.

Turtles

Discworld turtles are large, placid creatures whose only problems in life are finding safe breeding-beaches and avoiding people who've discovered turtle soup. Some may grow far bigger than any on our world; after all, turtles big enough to be mistaken for islands are a well-known myth, and the Disc has a thin myth-reality divider. Such species would need a heck of a lot of beach.[1]

The other minor danger for all Discworld turtles is being studied by wizards and astrozoologists who want reference-points when formulating theories about Great A'Tuin (p. 7).

Vermine

Vermine are small, black-and-white, Hubland-dwelling rodents; ST 1, DX 14, IQ 5, HT 14/3, Move and Dodge 7, and no apparent combat ability. They are related to the lemming; unlike their cousins, however, Vermine are much too level-headed to commit suicide. They only throw themselves over very small stones, abseil down cliffs, and use small boats to cross water. Their evolution, having started out towards good sense and intelligence, may even be accelerating.

Vermine fur is used to trim formal robes worn by certain wizards and other dignitaries. If Vermine *are* becoming smarter, they may eventually have something to say about this.

[1] *And would make quite a bit of soup.*

Elves

Elves are an extra-dimensional race who appear not too unlike humans. This is deceptive. Elves are, in a very true sense, monsters.

They occasionally manage to obtain access to the Discworld (and other worlds), and set to work amusing themselves. They are often later remembered as wonderful; the nature of their amusements is such that beings with *better* memories regard them as one might regard an intelligent plague virus.

Elves used to be widespread on the Disc, millennia ago, but they were driven away by the growing use of iron among native races, coupled with the determined opposition of local witches and other magic-workers. The decline of magic on the Disc may have robbed such defenders of some of their power, but it also reduced the number and reliability of dimensional gateways. They left behind a number of elf-human crossbreeds, some of whom retained a distinct social identity; eventually, these became known as, simply, elves, but they are more correctly called elf-kin.

Typical Elf

ST: 11 **Move/Dodge:** 7/7 **Size:** 1
DX: 13 **PD/DR:** 0/0 **Weight:** 150 lbs.
IQ: 10 **Damage:** by weapon
HT: 11 **Reach:** by weapon

Elves can use human-style arms and armour, and some find it amusing to become good with weapons; others rely more on their powers. They are intelligent, although they do not include the sort of geniuses or extraordinary individuals that any human population produces. They usually know how to ride, handle weapons, and hunt; many also combine Interrogation and medical skills (which are not exactly used for healing). Elves rarely study, but being ageless, they have millennia of experience.

Powers: Elves have Absolute Direction, Ambidexterity, High Pain Threshold (which may help explain their complete lack of empathy), Immunity to Disease, 6 Levels of Magic Resistance that only works against illusions, Night Vision, Perfect Balance, and Second Sight, along with Disguise skill at IQ+1.

In addition, elves are all psionic, with a minimum Power 10 in Telepathy. Their usual skills are Aspect (the ability to radiate an impressive psychic "aura," which causes others to respect and admire one; see ***GURPS Psionics*** for details), Illusion (again as in ***GURPS Psionics;*** grants the ability to manipulate others' perceptions, once their minds have been entered with Telereceive, and is resisted by the victim's Will; elves learn it with the Modifiers "Can Be Used Against Groups" and "Affects Own Appearance Only"), Telecontrol, Telereceive (usually at very high levels), Telesend (again usually with high skill), and Mind Shield.

(As a special effect more than anything else, elves often sing while using their Telecontrol. This is not especially musical – they have to kidnap human bards for that – but it is part of their image, and their victims usually convince themselves it sounds wonderful.)

However, these psionic powers, along with their senses of direction and balance, are based on a sensitivity to magnetic fields; a very refined form of the sense that may enable pigeons to navigate. An elf can sense what is going on inside a human's brain, and even manipulate it. This power can therefore be blocked or disrupted by **iron.** It takes a fair amount to actually stop elves cold, but even quite small quantities cause them distress, and may persuade them to go elsewhere. They have an Allergic Susceptibility to Iron, a Dread of Iron in the same hex, and a Vulnerability to iron weapons, which cause them 2d Fatigue in addition to their standard physical damage. This is the origin of many Discworld rural superstitions, such as nailing a horseshoe up over a doorway "for luck."

"Conscience – the idea that any possible concern should be taken for the lives or feelings of anyone who isn't an elf, or is an elf but isn't you in particular – does not exist for them."

(For those who might wonder; elves could in theory learn to sense magnetic fields as such. However, they simply do not think in those terms, and would find high technology, with all that steel and magnetism, terrifying.)

Also, their power is primarily *insidious;* they cannot generate much raw energy. They cannot use Psychokinesis, Teleportation, or other "high energy" psi; also, because of their natures, they can never employ Emotion Sense (Empathy) or psionic Healing. And although a few of them use some forms of ESP, being locked in the here-and-now, they cannot employ Precognition or Psychometry. (This gives some human magic-workers a real edge.) And they find some non-human brains harder to control.

Elves do not use much magic as such, although their powers are considered akin to it. However, some elves know a little magical theory, and can teach this, or even grant magical power to humans, when it suits them. Some of them do know a spell that enables them to fly on yarrow stalks (at Move 18).

In the mass, they can warp reality on a large scale, overlaying aspects of their home dimension on parts of another world to make it more hospitable to themselves, but this is a function of their dimension-hopping activities, rather than a personal power.

Mass Psionics: Because they have a low sense of identity and similar powers, large groups of elves can work together to affect large groups of humans. An elf gets +1 Power and +1 to skill for every three other elves present who are working to achieve exactly the same result. However, this only works when seeking to generate large illusions, or control crowds.

Elf-Shot: Elves sometimes use small bows to fire stone-tipped arrows tipped with exotic poisons. These do little or no physical harm (1d maximum), but may send the victim's mind off wandering, or make humans easy to control (reduced Will roll).

Elf Nature

Elves are psychopaths and sadists. Conscience – the idea that any possible concern should be taken for the lives or feelings of anyone who isn't an elf, or is an elf but isn't you in particular – does not exist for them. If an elf thinks something might be amusing, and believes it can get away with it, it will act without hesitating. The trouble is, they usually can get away with things, because of their quasi-psionic abilities, which are known as *glamour.*

Elves make themselves appear beautiful to humans, and render them fascinated and obedient. "Getting away with murder" doesn't begin to cover it. Elves are not, in fact, especially beautiful by human standards (they really look like very tall, rather thin, pointy-faced humans, graceful but perhaps too obviously predatory), but they have an enormous sense of *style.* They wear scruffy furs and random bits of armour with unlimited panache. Their illusions are beautiful, although not terribly original. Elves are cultural parasites, and most of them lack much sense of personal identity, with the exception of their monarchs and some of the aristocracy. They do like to be surrounded by beautiful things, obtaining them by enslaving human artisans. It is questionable whether this is actually the desire for beauty, or just the desire to have something someone else doesn't have.

Elves find human creativity – even the simplest rural dancing – fascinating. Also, they are creatures of winter and of moonlit nights, and their pale skins burn easily in strong sun; this is not a serious weakness, but it does affect their behaviour.

Elves seem to use human languages rather than anything of their own (language is *creative*), although most communication between elves is likely telepathic.

Elves are sexually indeterminate (really so, not just difficult to distinguish, like dwarfs). Like everything else, in an elf's worldview, sex itself is dull; it's only interesting as a way of messing up other beings. The population of elfland does not grow very quickly, despite elvish immortality, because elves know what other elves are really like.

On the Disc, elves are thought of as creatures of beauty by hopeless romantics and anyone else who buys into their "enchanting" image, and remembered with burning hatred by dwarfs, trolls, and humans who know their true nature (including most older witches, some antiquarian wizards,

and these days, the entire population of Lancre). They should primarily serve as opponents for straight-down-the-line adventures where the PCs are wearing white hats; they have the classic melodramatic villain's combination of sadism, style, and a certain gullibility.

Some players might suggest the idea of elf PCs, but this is not advisable. Aside from the fact that every dwarf and troll they met would try to kill them, the more correctly an elf is roleplayed, the less fun it is for everyone trapped in their company. Indeed, a perfectly roleplayed elf would be bored all the time anyway.

Terminology: It is not wise to use the word "elf," except with plenty of iron around, if any of the species are likely to be in the neighbourhood. They may be surveying the area psychically, and they often notice mention of themselves, and *take an interest.* Also, if they are discussed at all, the power of belief may make it easier for them to turn up. For this reason, witches and others are prone to euphemism. Common alternative names for elves include "Lords and Ladies," "Fair Folk," "Gentry," "Shining Ones," and "Star People."

Elf Royalty

The King of Elves appears as a horned man with goat legs and hooves. He is less interested in scheming than in waiting, certain that sooner or later the other races will abandon their childish use of ferrous metals and agriculture, and the proper Elvish dominion will be restored.

The Queen is often seen as the shapely Dark Lady in a flowing dress of a thousand Gothic-novel covers; she knows what humans like. She is constantly engaged in numerous intrigues, usually complex and inevitably nasty. She has no more use for the King than any elf has for anyone else, but their power is linked in some unknown but definite way.

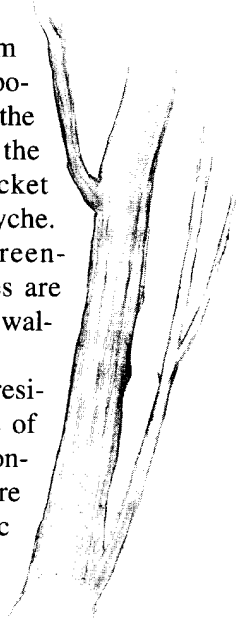
The average elf would probably be happy to overthrow the monarchy (in favour of another monarchy – meaningful change is beyond them), for the entertainment value as much as the power, except for the part about getting away with it.

Elf Animals

The elves' extra-dimensional "elfland" has its own fauna, including unicorns, which are basically horses with large spears on their heads, and minor glamour powers of their own (Telepathy power 12, Aura skill 12) and the traditional bizarre unicorn concern with virginity. There are also riding-horses, which are psychotic carnivores. Doubtless elves also keep hunting-dogs; cats might be altogether too much like elves for elves to tolerate. Elf-animals share the elven resistance to illusion, as there is a lot of it about in their own reality.

Supernatural Beings

Dryads



Dryads (Hamadryads, to give them their full name) are a species of anthropomorphic personification who represent the spirits of trees. They live, not inside the trunks of trees, but in capacious pocket dimensions defined by their tree's psyche. Females, who are dominant, are green-skinned, with long, mossy hair; males are built like body-builders, with skins of walnut. Both have luminous green eyes.

Fortunately, very few trees have resident dryads, who are tough, defensive of their trees, and ruthless, and possess considerable mystic powers. The females are the equal of most witches, with psionic telepathy and scrying abilities. They also have good physical abilities; the males are every bit as tough as they look.

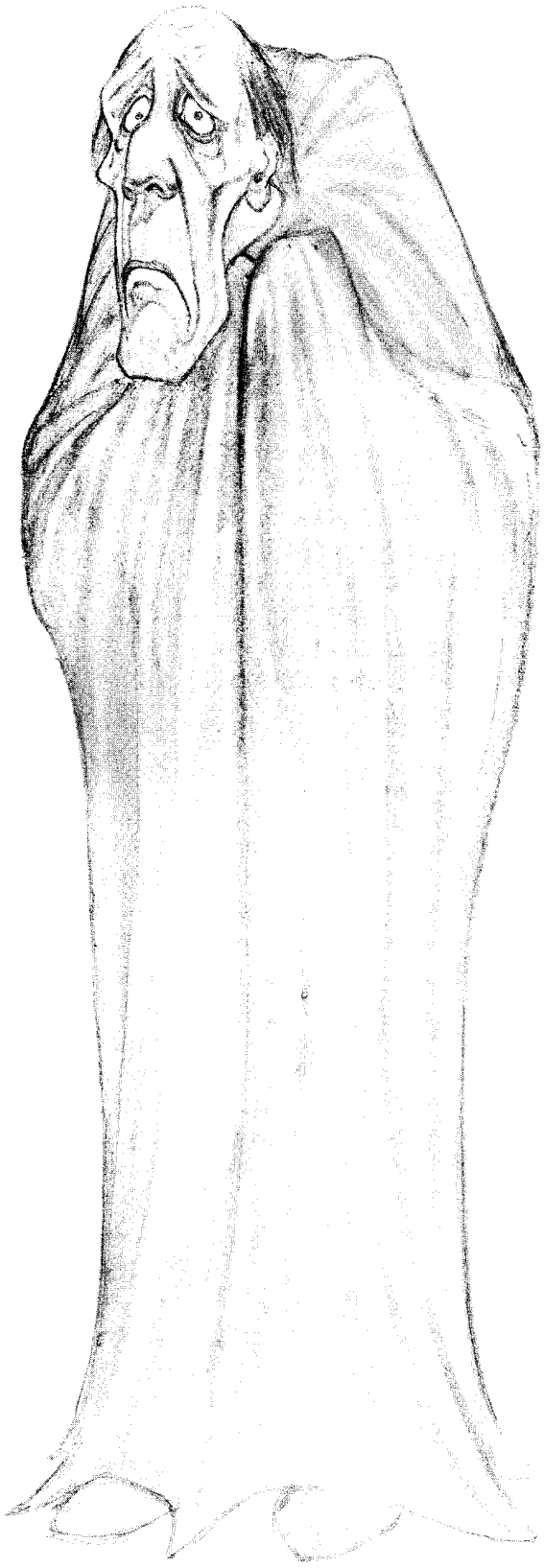
Genies

Al-Khali being a land full of camels, viziers, and meaningful lamps, it naturally has a number of genies, too. These have powers over space, energy, and matter, and can sometimes grant wishes.[1] If anyone wants to get deeper into the myths, ***GURPS Arabian Nights*** has a section on djinn, but mostly, they can be played as talking plot devices who can do as much as the GM wants, and always find wonderful excuses for not doing more.

Ghosts and Spirits

Life after death is a complex subject on the Disc (see Chapter 8), but sometimes, dead souls stay around in intangible form. It is far from clear what determines whether this is going to happen, but noble (or even better, royal) birth, some kind of unfinished business, violent death, and dying in a high-magic area, all seem to be contributory influences. Lancre Castle, in the magic-riddled Ramtops, has (or had) a large number of ghosts, most of them kings, many with grudges against the people who replaced them.

[1] *But not always as competently as one might hope.*



Ghosts are almost always invisible, except to cats and those with Magery or Second Sight; competent Mediums (with the character advantage, p. CI41) can sense them intuitively and speak with them. They may, by an effort of will, be able to generate physical effects in the real world; a very few, with exceptional willpower and sense of identity, can even produce "poltergeist" effects, moving small objects around. (As a rule of thumb for game purposes, such ghosts should make a Will roll every round, and can exert physical strength equal to the amount by which they make the roll.)

Many ghosts are restricted to a "haunting site" (such as Lancre castle); most others have only a tenuous link to the material world, and must work through a medium if they are to accomplish anything. Thus, they are not very well suited to use as PCs, even in the weirdest of campaigns.

Mr. Ixolite the Banshee

Banshees are, of course, supernatural beings who appear when someone is about to die, and indicate this doom by their terrifying wailing. Only one Banshee is known to survive on the Disc; its name is Mr. Ixolite. What happened to any others is unclear.

Unfortunately, Mr. Ixolite is not a very happy Banshee, perhaps partly because he is a male being in what is traditionally an exclusively female vocation, but mostly because he suffers from a speech impediment. He is painfully, cripplingly shy. Thus, rather than wailing, he creeps up to doomed people's doors, and slips notes under them saying "OoooeeeOoooeeeOoooeee" (or similar), then runs away.

If players are showing too much knowledge of the chronicles, and becoming over-confident as a result, GMs might wish to have their characters receive such a note one night. Whether or not it comes from Mr. Ixolite is *their* worry.

Golems

Golems are supernaturally-created beings (or rather, perhaps, machines). They were mostly made by priests of scholarly cults, who wanted to prove something about the power of words and to get some heavy work done. (Wizards naturally insist that they could do something just as good, but that such vulgar tricks are beneath them.)

Exceptional cases aside, no golems have been manufactured for hundreds, maybe thousands, of years. Modern priests insist that the creation of things that act like living beings is blasphemous, and ordinary Discworlders tend to agree. Whether this is a sign of insecurity, based on the fact that golems are much stronger than humans, is an open question. People, even trolls and undead, do look down on

golems, more than their supposed status as dumb mechanisms can explain.

Golems are made as humanoid fired-clay statues. A holy text (or a spell) is either inscribed on their forehead, or more usually, written on a slip of parchment (the "chem") which is placed inside their head. (They are made with hinged tops to their heads to facilitate this.)

The result is a mute being that is bound to obedience, primarily to the text that empowers it. Golems do what they are told, and cannot kill, or even harm a living being. However, they must also (for example) respect certain religious holidays; if they are refused permission for this, they simply stop working. They communicate by writing, and so usually carry chalk and slates. Their eyes glow an unnerving red.

There is no such thing as a "standard" golem; each is hand-crafted. However, a typical specimen might have ST 30, DX 14, IQ 10, 18 hit points and Move 6. HT is irrelevant; golems do not worry about pain, disease, or poison. They are also completely tireless, and need neither food nor air. Being ceramic, a golem is highly resistant to damage; PD 2, DR 8, and immune to any level of heat or cold normally encountered on the Disc, and most lightning-bolts.

A golem is not indestructible; it can be smashed up with a simple sledgehammer. But so long as its head remains intact enough to retain the chem, it can be repaired. Golems often end up repairing themselves, and most of them show signs of centuries of bodged patching. Large repairs require a large, hot oven. The easiest way to disable a golem is to order it to stand still, open up its head, and remove its chem.

Golems are faster and far less clumsy than they look; many can parry missiles with their bare hands, if they choose. (Treat them as having an effective Brawling/Missile Parry skills of 18.) However, that is usually disobedient, so they stand and take whatever is done to them.

Golems in Play

The events of *Feet of Clay* showed that golems are far more complex beings than had been thought, but most of them continue their centuries-long tasks, generally involving mindless repetition or conditions too dangerous even for trolls. After reading that book, some players may express a wish to play a golem PC, but this is not really feasible.

On the one hand, only one golem, Dorfl, has so far acquired a fully independent (rational) will, along with the ability to speak, and even he continues to obey personal moral imperatives. On the other, golems are simply too ridiculously powerful for practical game purposes.

Still, if the campaign is *really* high on starting points, and the player is *really* determined, then it *might* be possible to design a golem PC; ***GURPS Robots*** would be useful.

Variant Golem Psychology

Tinkering-crazed players may be tempted to alter or "enhance" a golem's chem, in order to change its psychology. This is not recommended; GMs should read *Feet of Clay* to understand why not. In short, the brief, well-established set of rules that empowers most golems produces stable, trustworthy, limited personalities. Anything beyond that may contain subtle contradictions. And an insane golem is a terrible thing.

Creating a *viable* new chem might require rolls against both Theology and Philosophy at -10. (Golems might do it with a straight IQ roll.) Also, the other processes involved in creating a completely new golem, without even any clay from an old specimen, are effectively forgotten; would-be creators would require the assistance of several existing golems to create a new one, and afterwards, they will probably have a lot of annoyed priests to contend with.

Dorfl

The only free-willed golem currently known, Dorfl has a voice, and no chem to limit him. He is intelligent (IQ 12), and speaks *firmly,* as though every word began with a capital letter. He also has full parrying and missile-parrying abilities.

He has a Duty to the Ankh-Morpork Watch, of which he is a member, and a Sense of Duty to his fellow golems; he is saving up his Watch pay to buy them out of servitude. He also has the quirk of being interested in religion, and metaphysics generally, and of being happy to discuss it (very logically) for hours. The city's priests initially objected to his existence, but each of them is now too busy trying to prove that they can convert him. Being effectively lightning-proof, he is the safest agnostic on the Disc.

Disc Flora

The Disc has a wide variety of unusual plant life, but relatively little that would startle anyone but a botanist. Some plants in Very High Mana zones develop intelligence and speech, but don't usually do much with them. (Actually, many Disc trees are intelligent, but their thoughts take about a season each to process.)

In some areas, high levels of magic have had all manner of effects on the local flora. Travellers in such areas should be careful what they eat. If PCs are careless about such things, the GM is welcome to become self-indulgent.

One tragic example of vegetable sentience is the Counting Pines of the Ramtops. These started out with some very clever genetics; wherever their seeds landed, they would pick up the genetic code of the most successful local plant through morphic resonance (see p. 8), copy it, and out-compete even its original user. However, they then somehow detected that human beings were cutting down trees, counting the tree-rings, and calculating the trees' ages thereby. Thinking that this was *why* humans cut down trees, the pines decided to start displaying their own ages on their trunks, in neat numerals. Within a year, the species was rendered almost extinct by the ornamental house number-plate industry. Today, only a few remote groves survive.

But the greatest vegetable oddity is the class of re-annual plants, which have four-dimensional DNA, and only grow in magic-rich environments such as the Ramtops. These often come up a year or more before they are planted. They can be and are farmed, despite the risks (this is the only branch of agriculture where a failure to plant seeds can disrupt the structure of causality); the most popular re-annual crops are those used to make alcoholic drinks. Re-annual drinks give the imbiber hangovers (or rather, hangunders) before they are actually drunk; these tend to be severe, and so the sufferer usually drinks a lot by way of compensation and to forget, which . . . Well, causality is preserved, only backwards.

Re-annual fruits include *vul nuts,* which makes a wine that can mature up to eight years before the seed is sown, and which is freeze-distilled in the Agatean Empire to make a drink called Ghlen Livid. There are also more "conventional" re-annual grapes. Re-annual wine is used in a form of Divination (see p. 146).

10 SUICIDALLY GLOOMY WHEN SOBER, HOMICIDALLY INSANE WHEN DRUNK 10

Assorted Wanderers

This chapter provides game details for various major protagonists from the chronicles. One point here; the Disc is a big place. While players will certainly expect to meet well-known characters from the novels, and indeed should whenever it is useful to the story, try to resist the temptation to have Granny Weatherwax, the Patrician, Captain Vimes, Death, *and* Rincewind (with the Luggage) appear in every episode. That's too *busy.*

Rincewind

ST 9, **DX** 12, **IQ** 12, **HT** 10

Speed 5.5, Move 7 (running)

Dodge 7 (Enhanced and w/Combat Reflexes)

Advantages: Combat Reflexes; Danger Sense; Disease-Resistant; Fully Literate; Language Talent +5; Magery 1; Enhanced Dodge; Extraordinary Luck; Secret Patron: The Lady; Reputation: as a "Great Wizard" in the Agatean Empire, +3.

Disadvantages: Compulsive Behaviour: Insists he's a wizard, even when this is dangerous; Cowardice; Incompetence (Thaumatology); Involuntary Duty to The Lady; Laziness; Magical Incompetence; Reputation: a walking disaster area with That Luggage, among UU senior faculty, -2; Skinny; Struggling.

Quirks: Likes boredom; Never trusts strangers who are being nice to him; Non-smoker (unusual in a wizard); Sentimental about Ankh-Morpork; Sometimes tries to talk sense to people when he can see it's pointless; Occasionally does the Right Thing when all else fails.

Skills: Brawling-12; Carousing-9; Fast-Talk-12; Research-11; Shouting at Foreigners (Specialises in Screaming and Begging for Mercy)-11 (17 with speciality); Streetwise-11; Survival (Island)-12; Running-12.

Languages: Ankhian-17; numerous others. (If Rincewind arrives in a place, he usually knows the local language.)

Rincewind started out as a student at Unseen University, but although he possessed "Octarine Vision," supposedly implying some magical ability, he proved singularly incompetent at both the theory and practice of magic. After several years of study in which he learned virtually nothing, Rincewind opened the Octavo (see p. 115) on an unwise bet, and one of its incomparably powerful spells impressed itself upon his mind. Not, however, upon his consciousness; nobody, least of all Rincewind, knew what the spell *did.* For this, he was expelled from the University. He then took to exploiting his genuine talent for languages in the shadiest parts of Ankh-Morpork that weren't obviously dangerous.

Since then, he has suffered more adventures than any-

one could ever expect (and certainly far more than he wanted). He became guide to the Disc's first serious tourist, fell off the edge of the Disc, discovered that the great spell was actually using his brain as a hiding-place, assisted in the defeat of a Sourcerer, travelled to the Dungeon Dimensions, through time, and to Hell, and went cheerfully insane on a desert island. Recently, he accidentally assisted a revolution in the Agatean Empire (having a ridiculously inflated reputation there as a "Great Wizzard" thanks to Twoflower's memoirs), before being magically transported to the continent of EcksEcksEcksEcks.

None of this was voluntary. Rincewind hates excitement. The closest thing he has to a truly useful supernatural ability is a sense of danger, coupled with long enough legs to try and put it behind him.[1] Unfortunately, the metaphysics of the Discworld guarantee that someone with so little interest in crisis situations will find himself endlessly at the centre of them. He is possibly the most widely travelled person on the Disc – excepting, of course, Death, whose country he has also visited. (Death knows him by sight, but the sight Death usually sees is the back of his retreating head.) He is in fact a favourite pawn of The Lady (p. 163), who never sacrifices a pawn if she can help it – but he is still a pawn.

Rincewind is tall and scrawny, with an attempt at a beard. He wears a dark red robe with imperfectly embroidered magical symbols; it is badly worn and not very clean. He also wears a pointy hat with a star on top and the word WIZZARD in crooked letters. When he can get hold of one, he bears the octagonal bronze pendant of an Unseen University graduate, though he never actually graduated. He is emotionally convinced that he is a wizard, despite being fully aware of his own incompetence. This could get him into serious trouble under university regulations, but he has now performed certain services for the University which he was *promised* would earn him an honorary qualification.

For some time, he owned (or at least, was accompanied by) the most lethally malicious Sapient Pearwood Luggage in the history of Agatean carpentry; it is unclear whether it is still following him, or whether it has settled down romantically since it got back to the Counterweight Continent.

Given his history, Rincewind might turn up anyplace, anytime. If encountered by PCs, he will do his level best not to share whatever trouble they are trying to get into. If there is no option, he will lend what assistance he can,[2] but use any excuse to get away, unless the situation really does seem to be Disc-threatening, in which case he may get confused and behave admirably. In a campaign, he is best used as a source of comic relief, a one-time magus ex machina, or a source of down-at-heel common sense when the PCs are making things too complicated. Although he lacks either magical skill or a proper theoretical understanding of the topic, he has spent long enough at UU to recognise some common magical phenomena and artefacts, which is sometimes useful. (Though mostly it means that he knows what to be most frightened of.)

"Death knows him by sight, but the sight Death usually sees is the back of his retreating head."

[1] His "Combat Reflexes" are not combat-oriented at all; they simply reflect his instinctive capacity for reacting to danger fast. He fights, if he must, in a frenzy of fists and knees, with no technique whatsoever.

[2] Not usually much, although the Luggage can complicate matters.

Cohen the Barbarian

ST 12, DX 15, IQ 13, HT 17

Speed 8, Move 8

Dodge 9 (w/Combat Reflexes), Parry 14 (sword, Enhanced, w/Combat Reflexes)

Advantages: Alertness +1; Combat Reflexes; Composed; Enhanced Parry, all weapons; Fearlessness +2; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Disease; Longevity; Luck; Reputation (famous barbarian hero), +2; Strong Will +1.

Disadvantages: Age; Compulsive Behaviour: Barbarian Heroism; Compulsive Spending; Odious Personal Habit: Barbarian Heroism; Odious Personal Habit: Doesn't Wash; One Eye; Pirate's Code of Honour; Skinny; Struggling; Unattractive.

Quirks: Enjoys some of the comforts of civilisation; Has a soft spot for honourable stupid heroism; Smokes recycled cigarette dog-ends.

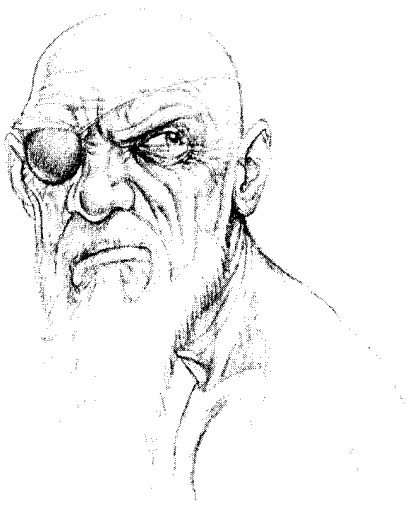
Skills: (Include all modifiers for disadvantages): Anthropology-11; Axe/Mace-18; Body Language-13; Brawling-16; Broadsword-25; Camouflage-16; Climbing-14; Shouting at Foreigners-13; Intimidation-13; Knife-15; Psychology-11; Riding-14; Spear-15; Stealth-15; Survival (Plains)-16; Tactics-13; Throwing-13; Traps-15.

Languages: Native in Hublander; has acquired numerous others in passing.

Cohen the Barbarian is a legend in his own lifetime – literally. Barbarian heroism is on its way out on the Disc, but Cohen is of the last generation that *really* knew how to do it.

The trouble is, part of the point of being a Barbarian Hero is the irresponsibility. Cohen never had the hang of saving money, let alone investment (the kind of dubious activity that he associates with the fat merchants who he regularly robs). He did allegedly try buying a farm once, but gave that up within minutes. He has acquired and then spent more money in his lifetime than the annual GDP of many a trading-city. (Indeed, he has stolen and thrown away the entire contents of several cities.) In all this time, he has never lost his combat edge, despite loss of an eye, creeping arthritis, and most of the normal minor problems of age. (His Bad Back seems to be under control these days, though.)

He is incredibly old now, but, well, "spry" is the traditional term. He is shrunken and totally bald, with a long beard and a body covered in varicose veins and scars. More to the point, he is very, very experienced. His sword isn't so much blindingly fast as always in the right place at the right time, and he has no compunction about fighting dirty if possible. He long since lost his teeth, but has replaced them with a rather unnerving false set made out of diamonds which used to be in a troll's mouth.[1]



Cohen is semi-literate (he can read a little, but barely sign his own name), so the How To Be A Hero manuals were presumably ghost-written. He gets on well enough with people who he isn't trying to rob or who don't try telling him what to do; the other thing he has spent his life doing is taking people as he finds them. (He actually has a good pragmatic understanding of humanity, from sheer experience.) Recently, he and a bunch of similarly geriatric heroes, the "Silver Horde," managed to steal the entire Agatean Empire, installing him on the throne; whether he can be persuaded to settle down even there is entirely another question. (The above details reflect him as a lone wanderer; as Emperor Cohen, he is Status +8 and a Multi-Millionaire, with numerous Allies and other advantages.)

PCs who meet Cohen should be extremely careful about crossing swords with him; the sensible ones should guess how he survived to this age. He might join in some suitably heroic quest, although he will expect the largest share (and will certainly take it). He might also take short-term, interesting jobs for generous payment. Hiring him as a teacher isn't an entirely pointless idea, but he's not exactly patient, and in truth, many of skills are unteachable instincts; he's likely to wander off after quicker profits very soon.

Although he may not remember it, Cohen has at least one offspring, named Conina. She was the daughter of a temple dancer he rescued, and inherited her mother's stunning looks, along with her father's abilities and instincts. This is slightly unfortunate, as she really wants to become a hairdresser, but she can't stop herself from fighting her way through hordes of enemies to steal rare gems or slay monsters. (For her, Barbarian Heroism is a Compulsive Behaviour but not an Odious Personal Habit.)

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[1] *1d-1 cutting damage if Cohen gets nasty in close combat; more to the point, +1 to Intimidation if he gets an opportunity to grin maliciously.*

Count Giamo Casanunda

ST 14, DX 13, IQ 13, HT 13

Advantages: Charisma +1; Damage Resistance +1; Extended Lifespan x2; Fully Literate; Status +2 (doubtful title).

Disadvantages: Lecherousness.

Quirks: Can't run long distances; Frequent but frivolous liar; Mildly nervous of heights and enclosed spaces; Optimist; Very taken with Nanny Ogg.

Skills: Axe/Mace-14; Brawling-14; Carpentry-13; Erotic Art-18; Fast-Talk-14; Gambling-14; Musical Instrument (Mandolin)-13; Savoir-Faire-15; Sex Appeal-15; Shortsword-18.

Languages: Ankhian-12; Dwarfish-12; probably others.

A very uncharacteristic dwarf, one of the greatest (or at least most enthusiastic) lovers on the Disc. He also claims to be the greatest liar, but if you miss the logical snapper in that statement you had best stay well clear of Ephebe. His title was granted, he says, by Queen Agantia of Skund, for some unspecified service. His card reads:

> Count Giamo Casanunda
> WORLD'S SECOND GREATEST LOVER
>
> *"We Never Sleep"*
>
> DISC'S FINEST SWORDSMAN SOLDIER OF FORTUNE
> OUTRAGEOUS LIAR STEPLADDERS REPAIRED

. . . any or all of which may, of course, be a lie.

(If anyone asks about the "Second Greatest," his cheerful comment is "we try harder.")

He wears periwigs, satins, and lace – "fop" clothes – understanding that conventional dwarfish attire is not thought modish by gentlewomen, especially the iron boots. He even shaves his beard for the same reason.

Casanunda is serious about being a soldier of fortune, and takes work where he can get it; he has also resorted to banditry, when the need has been pressing. Whether or not he is really the Disc's finest swordsman, he is certainly a competent fighter. (It is assumed here that he is simply pretty good, but GMs are welcome to adjust his sword skill to taste.) His wealth level goes up and down as erratically as any adventurer's.

He has a great fondness for Nanny Ogg (below), and may be encountered in her company on occasion. He may be encountered by PCs almost anywhere, and can serve many purposes in a plot. He should not be used as a mere adversary figure, however; he is sharp-witted, generally helpful, and eternally optimistic, and can come in on any side or none.

Casanunda has bought off most of his dwarfish disadvantages and quirks, but he retains a certain deep attention to detail, and some alertness about the difference between real and fake gold.

"He also claims to be the greatest liar, but if you miss the logical snapper in that statement you had best stay well clear of Ephebe."

Susan Sto Helit

ST 10, DX 14, IQ 15, HT 14

Advantages: Comfortable Wealth; Composed; Contacts (UU Faculty); Fully Literate; Lightning Calculator; Patron (Death); Psychic Invisibility; Second Sight; Status +4; Unusual Background (Death's granddaughter); Voice of Command.

Disadvantages: Sense of Duty to family and employers; Unnatural Feature (self-styling hair, occasional skeletal aspect).

Quirks: Gets on best with other "outsiders;" Terse; Treats children like adults; Tries to avoid using supernatural abilities.

Skills: Area Knowledge: Circle Sea Region-14; Brawling-14; Broadsword-14; First Aid-15; Literature-14; Mathematics-15; Philosophy-15; Polearm-14; Riding-13; Savoir-Faire-17; Sports (Hockey)-14; Sports (Lacrosse)-14; Teaching-14.

Languages: Ankhian-15; Klatchian-13.

Susan is the daughter of Mort (Death's former apprentice) and Ysabell (Death's adopted daughter), and has inherited the Duchy of Sto Helit (p. 24), which was granted to her father. (In accordance with convention, she uses that as her surname.) Her parents, nervous of the oddities of the family connection, brought her up to be a very practical, materialistic person, never telling her about her relationship with Death after some very early family visits. However, they also ensured that she received an unusually good schooling.

This approach was successful in many ways, but could not suppress the fact that, through the oddities of Disc genetics, Susan inherited a number of attributes from her "grandfather," including a talent for psychic invisibility, a voice that can – if she chooses – drive straight into the human subconscious, and the ability to see what is or isn't actually there.[1] She turned into a rather cold, albeit intelligent young woman, a social outsider, who was very good at subjects she found interesting, and just disappeared in classes she found boring. Her parents died while she was still at school, but this didn't seem to affect her much, at least at the time.

The discovery of her heritage, and the need to stand in for her grandfather briefly, was naturally a shock, but she eventually adapted, and she tries not to allow such things affect her life. On leaving school, she became a very capable professional governess in Ankh-Morpork; she has a usefully cynical view of children. She can see the bogeymen and monsters imagined by her charges, but her strong will and honorary position in the supernatural hierarchy enable her to beat the daylights out of them. The only sign of her oddity, to public view, is her tendency to drink in Biers (see p. 99) on her evenings off; however, the Assassins' Guild, and probably the Ankh-Morpork College of Heralds, have somehow become aware of her peculiar history.

[1] *She also exhibits a worrying talent for any activity involving waving a long-handled implement.*

When her social-climbing employers discovered her noble title, they were thoroughly confused as to how to address her, but she rarely exploits her rank. Presumably, the Duchy of Sto Helit is being managed for her in her absence by competent staff. (She formally owes allegiance to the throne of Sto Lat, and would probably get on fairly well with its strong-willed Queen Keli, who was a close friend of her parents.)

Nonetheless, she could conceivably become involved in events there, and she could become a rather unusual element in the politics of the Sto Plains. The other way that she can become involved in adventures is through her supernatural connections. Her grandfather has manipulated her into helping with at least one problem since she left school; she remains fond enough of him for another such incident to be possible. Her adventures have also acquainted her with the Unseen University faculty, who find her unnerving; she regards them as crazy but uniquely qualified to deal with some questions. She would probably form a similar opinion of a typical PC party.

If she does appear in plots, Susan should be a stabilising force with some special connections. She tries to refrain from using supernatural powers except when the problem is supernatural, but she is not above stretching any point in emergencies. She should not be permitted to take over control of a problem, but should usually be seen playing her own part in events in her idiosyncratic way, intersecting with the PCs and other factions at odd moments. If she is standing in for Death, and on some other occasions, she gains use of his full range of powers, including the ability to stop time, intangibility, and the power to speak and understand any human language.

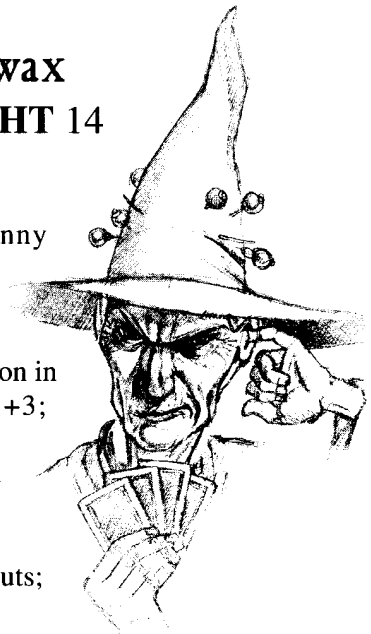
Susan is attractive, if a little thin, with pure white hair with a black streak. Since she learned of her supernatural heritage, it has started styling itself to match her mood and needs (a minor talent, but striking). Her face has a birthmark, three pale parallel lines, that only shows up when she is angry (quite often) or when she blushes (rare).

The Lancre Coven

The kingdom of Lancre (p. 30) has enough villages to need the services of three witches, who these days sometimes operate in a group – which may or may not qualify as a coven. (There are several more witches within fairly easy travelling distance, and they occasionally join in meetings, but usually it's just the three.) They meet on local hillsides, mostly on more pleasant nights (finding the idea of dancing around in thunderstorms as silly as anyone else would), to share a meal and gossip.

Granny Weatherwax

ST 12, **DX** 14, **IQ** 18, **HT** 14



Speed 7, Move 7
Dodge 7

Advantages: Allies (Nanny Ogg, Mustrum Ridcully); Disease-Resistant; Extra Encumbrance; Full Literacy; Longevity; Magery 3; Reputation in Lancre ("Do Not Argue"), +3; Status +3.

Disadvantages: Age; Bad Temper; Bully; "Pirate's" Code of Honour; Sense of Duty to Lancre and roundabouts; Stubbornness.

Quirks: Prefers to be paid in old clothes; Says that magic is the wrong way to solve most problems; Slow writer and idiosyncratic speller; Uses subtle attacks and humiliation rather than physical violence; Would prefer to be properly warty and ugly (she is actually quite well-favored for her age).

Skills: Area Knowledge (Lancre)-18; Brawling-16; Distilling-13; Gambling-17; Hypnotism-17; Intimidation-17; Naturalist-16; Physician (Herbalist)-16; Psychology (Headology)-19; Stealth-14.

Spells: Granny Weatherwax is a formidable witch, despite her preference for not using magic when an alternative exists; she has duelled an Archchancellor of Unseen University to a standstill, held off the Queen of the Elves, and defeated voodoo experts and her own sister. She is particularly fond of Borrowing, having a skill in that around 25; she also routinely uses Shatter, Delusion, and Catch Missile at some level. Other spells that she has demonstrated or claimed to know include Sense Life, Morphic Tweaking, Shape Stone, Catch Wound, Curse, Mystic Feedback, Tap Narrative Power, and Break Mental Walls. She is also adept at Narrative Manipulation, but will only use it with extreme caution, and she has used Suspend Time at least once. Like most witches, she uses more than one type of Divination; she is good at Crystal-Gazing and at least competent in Caroc-Reading, Cuisinomancy, Demon Invocation, Palmistry and Pyromancy.

Psionics: Granny Weatherwax has often displayed powers that can best be interpreted as psionic. She seems to have at least Power 10 in Telepathy and some ESP, with skill in Telereceive, Mental Blow, Mind Shield and Precognition, and possibly others. For convenience, GMs may give her higher Psionics rather than trying to assign all the Communication and Empathy and Mind Control spells that she might know.

Languages: Ankhian-18.

Many people consider Granny Weatherwax the greatest witch on the Discworld. She certainly does. She was trained by several other witches, and when she had learned all they had to teach, completed her training on her own.

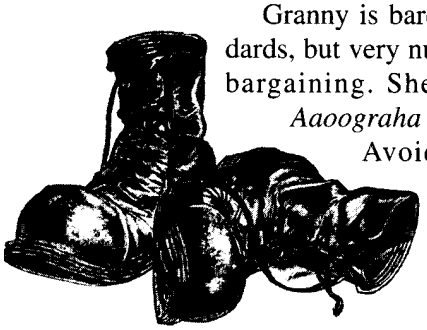
At first sight (not to mention hearing), Esmerelda ("Esme") Weatherwax appears so wicked-witch-like that one expects a Kansas farmhouse to drop on her at any moment. (The only farmhouse to try, missed, and hit Nanny Ogg instead.) She is old (although to her annoyance, not warty or especially wrinkled), wears black, has a pointy hat, a pointier temper, and a positively scalpel-grade tongue, and is at all times convinced that she is in the right. She hates losing, and her mental and sorcerous abilities, coupled with an absolute willingness to do what has to be done, mean that she doesn't lose often, if ever. She does not understand the concept of 'coming a good second'.

However, Granny's record is definitely that of a good witch. She understands with preternatural clarity that what people want, what they need, and what somebody else thinks they need, are three different things, and giving them the one on either end usually comes out very badly. A favourite saying of hers is that you can't help people with magic, but you can help them with skin – that is, by actually doing something direct and physical, not just chanting a spell and hoping that the energy patterns will sort themselves out. She frequently uses "headology" (p. 107).

Her older sister Lilith (Lily) ended up proving the wisdom of Esme's philosophy by trying to fix everything, and everybody, in the kingdom of Genua, by magic. This was eventually straightened out, and Lily has not been seen since.

Her self-confident mind-set is also her major weakness in dangerous situations; she is bad at asking for help, and very bad at passing important information on to other people. She doesn't really trust anyone else to deal with problems the way that she sees is right.

Granny lives in a cottage outside the village of Bad Ass, in Lancre. Like most witches, she owns a broomstick; it was originally another witch's, but every part in it has been replaced over the years. It also, despite endless tinkering by the best dwarfish mechanics, requires a long run-up before takeoff. Note that her default Flight (Broomstick) skill level is 12, and she hasn't bothered raising it.



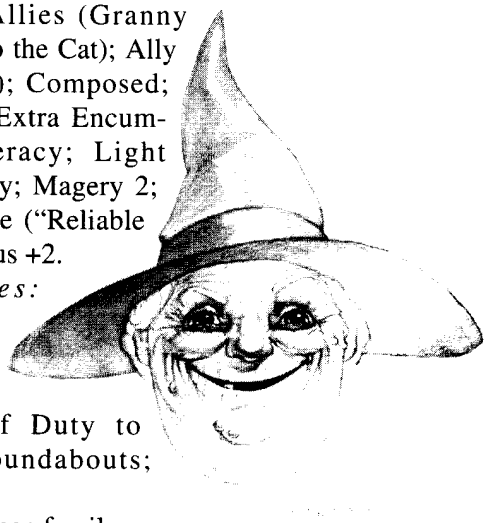
Granny is barely literate by most standards, but very numerate and competent at bargaining. She is known to trolls as *Aaoograha hoa,* "She Who Must Be Avoided," and to dwarfs as *K'ez'rek d'b'duz,* "Go Around the Other Side of the Mountain."

Nanny Ogg

ST 11, **DX** 11, **IQ** 14, **HT** 12

Speed 5.75, Move 5

Dodge 5



Advantages: Allies (Granny Weatherwax, Greebo the Cat); Ally Group (burly sons); Composed; Disease-Resistant; Extra Encumbrance; Full Literacy; Light Hangover; Longevity; Magery 2; Reputation in Lancre ("Reliable old Witch") +2; Status +2.

Disadvantages: Dependants (miscellaneous family); "Pirate's" Code of Honour; Sense of Duty to Lancre and roundabouts; Unattractive.

Quirks: Bosses her family around; Broad-minded; Adult-rated sense of humour; Likes a drink; Nosy.

Skills: Area Knowledge (Lancre)-18; Beverage-Making-14; Brawling-13; Carousing-12; Cooking-15; Distilling-13; Flight (Broomstick)-13; Musical Notation-14; Naturalist-12; Oggham-14; Physician (Herbalist)-14; Shouting at Foreigners-15; Stealth-12.

Spells: Nanny is not a frequent spell-caster, but she has her moments. She certainly knows Borrowing well enough to respect Granny Weatherwax's talent with it, and she has assisted in the use of Morphic Tweaking. She has also used Curse, Lend Strength, and several types of Divination, including Cuisinomancy, Crystal-Gazing, and Demon Invocation (Granny Weatherwax darkly suspects that she quite likes those demons because they are evidently male), and enough tracking spells to find Greebo when he goes missing.

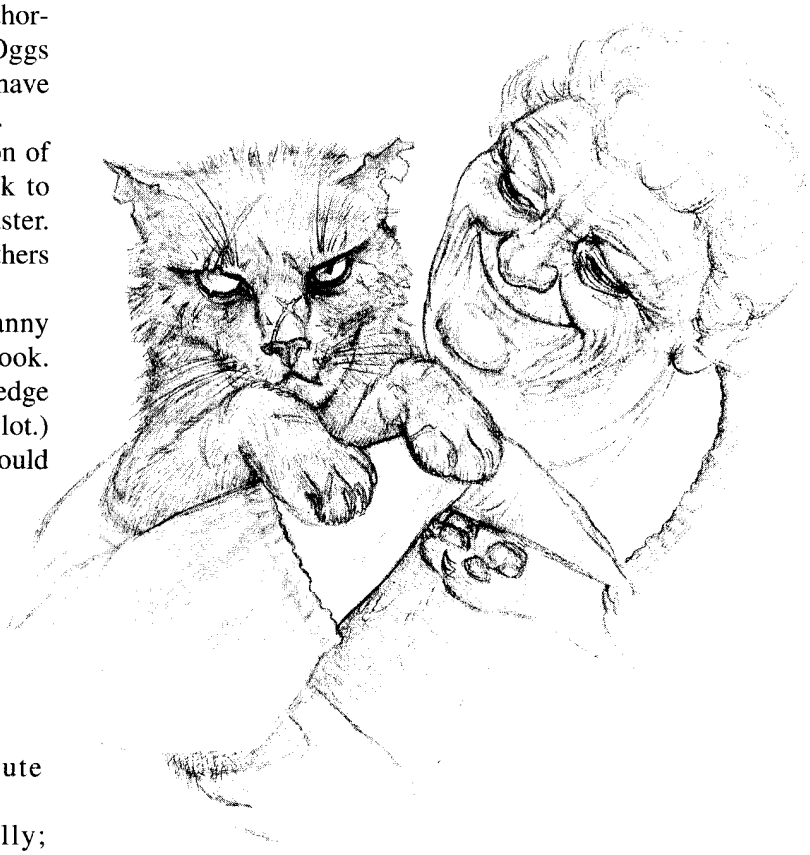
Languages: Ankhian-14; Dwarfish-12; Trollish-12; a few words of many others.

Thrice-married, outgoing, and with fifteen children and a past that would be disreputable if anyone in Lancre cared (or dared say anything), Nanny Ogg is very unlike her contemporary and friend, Granny Weatherwax. She is easygoing and understanding, and is ridiculously proud and defensive of her large family. They include Jason, her oldest, a blacksmith of enormous talent (and musculature), and Shawn, her youngest, the guard, handyman, and entire male indoor staff of Lancre castle. (Others of the family are known to have gone to sea, taken to crime in Ankh-Morpork, and generally made their way in the world.) She does terrorise her daughters-in-law (none of whom she

ever considers quite good enough for her sons), and thoroughly enjoys family feuds. Note that witches and Oggs both tend to be matrilineal; her husbands would never have suggested that she might change her name to their own.

Nanny primarily serves the very important function of providing Granny Weatherwax with someone to talk to who can talk back; she is not as much of a spell-caster. Still, she probably *enjoys* her magic more than the others of the coven.

Under the pseudonym of "A Lancre Witch," Nanny wrote *The Joye of Snacks,* an adults-only cookery book. (She could be considered to have a theoretical knowledge of Erotic Art skill around 15; it used to be applied a lot.) Any of her readers who identified her as the author would be most impressed.



Greebo

As a Cat:

ST: 5/14 **Move/Dodge:** 15/9 **Size:** 1
DX: 15 **PD/DR:** 0/0 **Weight:** 15 lbs.
IQ: 5 **Damage:** 1d-3 cut
HT: 15/5 **Reach:** C

Advantages: Typical animal senses; Absolute Direction; Catfall; Fearlessness +3; Strong Will +3.

Disadvantages: Standard animal form; Bully; Lecherousness; One Eye.

Special skills: Intimidation-17; Jumping-15; Stealth-16.

As a Human:

ST 14, **DX** 15, **IQ** 8, **HT** 14

Advantages: Attractive; Charisma +1; Claws; Fearlessness +3; Strong Will +3.

Disadvantages: Bully; Lecherousness; Odious Personal Habits: Cat Mentality; One Eye.

Quirks: Can't get the hang of human thinking; Obeys Nanny Ogg; Talks with a cat-like growl.

Skills: (Including all modifiers) Acrobatics-15; Brawling-15; Climbing-16; Intimidation-14; Jumping-15.

Languages: Ankhian-8.

Greebo, Nanny's cat, is a huge, one-eyed tom, theoretically grey but in practice mostly scars with a bit of fur around them. His good left eye is yellow; the other one is pearly white. His main activities are eating, sleeping, and making kittens. He can terrify wolves and alligators, and does, for fun. (The only things that have ever seriously scared him have been a cockerel with voodoo connections, a vixen defending her cubs, and a pack of elves.) He smells as if someone saved up essence of tomcat for six months or so, simmered well, and served it with a skunk cabbage side salad. He is acknowledged by most people (and other cats) who know him to be a psychopath. To Nanny Ogg, however, he is still an adorable little kitten.

However, he has a problem these days. During the course of an adventure, the coven changed him into a human being. This was supposed to be a strictly temporary measure, but Greebo's morphic field was permanently affected. Nowadays, he tends to flip back to human guise whenever his subconscious suggests that this might be a way out of a stressful situation. Unfortunately, his subconscious has trouble with the small additional spell that the coven used to give him clothes, and in any case, Greebo doesn't really have the hang of being human; he finds all the social relationships and other subtleties far too confusing. He is, however, terrifying in a fight (or anywhere else), and he radiates a kind of raw animal charisma.

In human guise, he appears as a darkly, even demonically, handsome man, usually dressed in leather (if at all) and an eye-patch. He still has retractable claws in his fingertips (used with Brawling skill, do thrust/cutting damage).

Incidentally, in cat form, Greebo has the usual feline willingness to try eating anything he can catch. This isn't exactly a Cast Iron Stomach (cats are too fastidious to eat rotten meat), but Greebo did once catch a vampire in bat form, and it hasn't been seen since.

Magrat Garlick (now Queen Magrat of Lancre)

ST 10, DX 12, IQ 15, HT 12

Speed 6, Move 6

Dodge 6

Advantages: Ally (King Verence); Contacts (the Coven); Full Literacy; Magery 2; Versatile; Reputation in Lancre ("Actually quite a competent witch") +1; Status +4.

Disadvantages: Sense of Duty to Goodness and Virtue; Truthfulness.

Quirks: Confused romantic; In love with Verence; Lectures people on healthy eating; Likes "witchy" paraphernalia; Loads up on impressive-looking hardware when she's nervous.

Skills: Area Knowledge (Lancre)-15; Brawling-13; Diagnosis-15; Naturalist-14; Physician (Herbalist)-18.

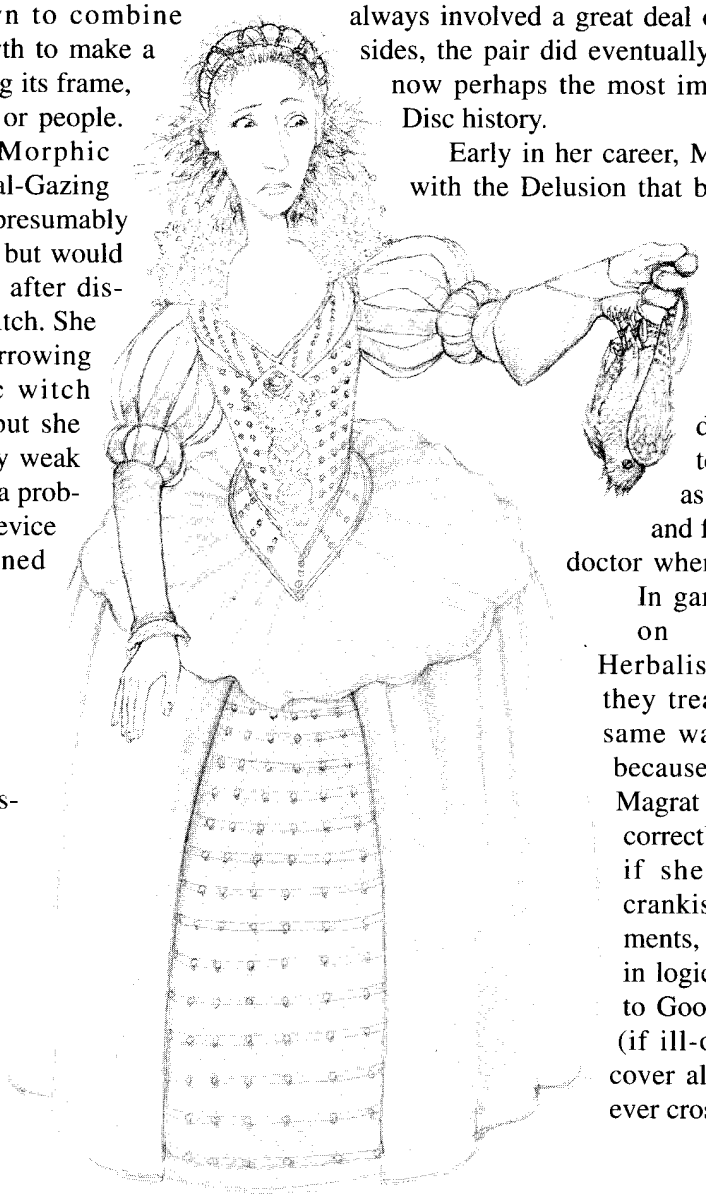
Spells: Magrat's magical abilities are patchy but effective. She has been known to combine Rejuvenate Plant and Plant Growth to make a door demolish itself by outgrowing its frame, but she is less happy with rocks or people. She has assisted in uses of Morphic Tweaking and Divination (Crystal-Gazing and Demon Invocation), so she presumably knows those spells at some level, but would probably only happily use them after discussing the details with another witch. She must surely have training in Borrowing (along with many other basic witch spells, such as Lend Strength), but she doesn't use it much; her relatively weak sense of personal identity may be a problem there. GMs who need a plot device could declare that she has learned almost anything from Goodie Whemper's notes.

Languages: Ankhian-15.

Magrat Garlick was selected for witch-training by Goodie Whemper, a research witch – one of the few members of the profession who really cares about the significance of specific herbs or the structure of spells. (Research witches are regarded as crankish by other witches, but undeniably do some useful work.) It is possible that the choice of Magrat, an impractical character for all her genuine talent, was itself some kind of experiment.

Magrat has inherited Goodie's interest in the new and unorthodox, but combined it with a tendency to romanticism and an urge to melodrama. She is forever acquiring books about exotic foreign mystical arts (a few of them genuinely relevant, most totally useless, and often published by C.M.O.T. Dibbler). She loves new ideas and interesting witchy paraphernalia – candles, cards, ancient disciplines of unarmed combat. She wears green silk and so many rings that they can function as brass knuckles, but never feels comfortable in a pointy hat. Her mind is so open that it tends to get cluttered. Personally, she is short, pointy-nosed, flat-chested, and hopelessly sentimental, with uncontrollable hair. But she *is* an accomplished witch, and, like many cute little creatures, dangerous if cornered.

Originally the third and youngest of the coven, Magrat became romantically involved with the Fool at Lancre's court, and remained close to him when, through a complex series of events, he became king. Although the relationship always involved a great deal of embarrassment on both sides, the pair did eventually marry, and so Magrat is now perhaps the most implausible witch-queen in Disc history.



Early in her career, Magrat was somewhat shy, with the Delusion that bad things only happen to bad people, but she has learned from her adventures. In one respect, she even has an edge on the senior members of the coven. Because she really does think that details matter, she has become at least as good a herbalist as them, and frankly, she makes a better doctor when things get complicated.

In game terms, the others rely on defaults from their Herbalism skills for Diagnosis; they treat similar symptoms the same way, and it usually works because people believe in them. Magrat is more likely to diagnose correctly in the first place. Even if she sometimes resorts to crankish or experimental treatments, they will have some basis in logic, and she also has access to Goodie Whemper's extensive (if ill-organised) notes, which cover almost anything that could ever cross her path.

Agnes 'Perdita' Nitt

ST 9, **DX** 11, **IQ** 15, **HT** 12

Advantages: Fully Literate; Magery 1; Voice.

Disadvantages: Fat; Unattractive.

Quirks: Can't ignore others' problems; Still slightly irritated at becoming a witch; Sometimes likes melodrama and style, but undermines it with common sense; Sometimes flips over to "Perdita" personality.

Skills: (Including bonuses from Voice) Breath Control-12; Detect Lies-13; First Aid-15; Mimicry (Human Speech)-14; Musical Instrument (Piano)-13; Musical Notation-15; Needlecraft-13; Singing-21; Ventriloquism-18.

Languages: Ankhian-15.

After Magrat became Queen of Lancre, a position that makes full-time witch-work impractical, Nanny Ogg realised that the coven would need a third member to maintain some kind of balance, and for Granny Weatherwax to push around. Agnes Nitt was the only young woman in Lancre who looked to have potential magical talent.

Agnes is the kind of fat person of whom everyone patronisingly comments that she has good hair and a nice personality. She already had a sneaking suspicion that she might have some kind of unusual ability, and she had even played at magic with an unwise group of friends at one stage, but she found the witches too annoyingly self-righteous to wish to join them. However, Discworld magic will out; Agnes's had emerged in the form of a truly extraordinary singing voice. Her dreams of something better than Lancre also caused her to temporarily adopt the more romantic name of Perdita.

"Agnes is the kind of fat person of whom everyone patronisingly comments that she has good hair and a nice personality."

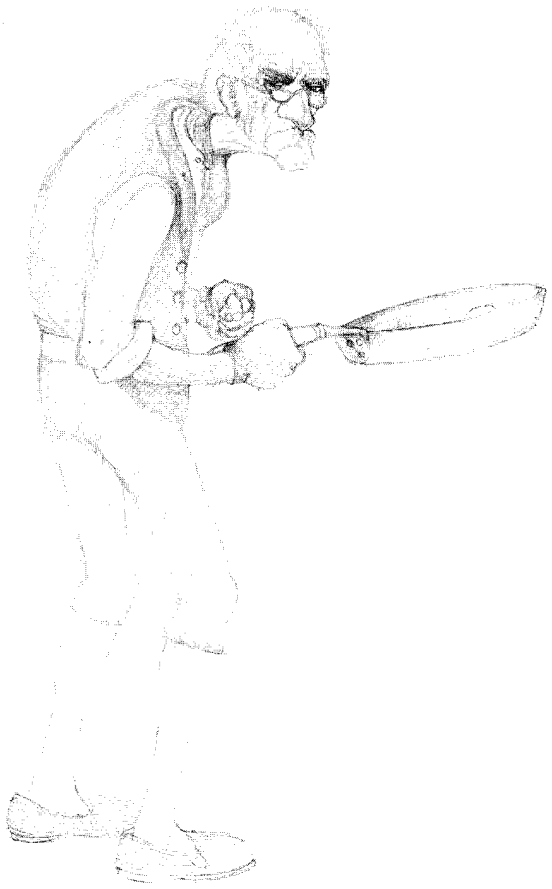
Eventually, after a short stint in the chorus of the Ankh-Morpork Opera House, Agnes was convinced despite herself that she was fated or doomed to become a witch (she is simply too intelligent and shrewd for any other life), and she has now taken over Magrat's old cottage and begun learning from the other two. She will therefore now have gained the basic magic-wielder's sensitivity to the supernatural; doubtless in the near future she will gain more Magery and a local Reputation, and learn Borrowing and other spells and some medical skills.

They say that inside every fat person is a thin person trying to get out, and this is very true of Perdita, who can be thought of as a sort of sub-routine in Agnes's psyche or an 'invisible childhood friend' who never went away. Perdita was inadvertently created by Agnes as the paradigm of all those things Agnes would like to be (but does not trust), and she thinks all those thoughts that Agnes is too moral, sensible or scared to think. She spots things Agnes does not, and in times of stress may even try to take over the 'shared' body and try to solve problems *her* way. This isn't quite a Split Personality Disadvantage – Agnes and Perdita have the same general abilities – but it is a rather substantial quirk.

Others

Albert

Death's manservant was originally Alberto Malich "the Wise," founder of Unseen University, who officially died, and definitely disappeared from the Disc, in 1289, aged sixty-seven. He was trying to perform the Rite of AshkEnte (p. 150) backwards, in order to obtain another sixty-seven years of life; instead, he left a big burnt spot and some charred notebooks. In fact, he found himself in Death's Domain, where he has remained for the nearly two thousand years since. Time does not pass there, but happens over and over again seriatim; while some people would find this intolerable, Alberto, a man of ritual and habit like most academic wizards, fits right in.



(Note; performing most or any spells backwards is not as easy as just reversing the order of a few words and hand-signs; just try talking like a tape of ordinary speech played backwards. PCs should not generally accomplish anything if they attempt such tricks.)

He did return to the Disc from time to time, especially in recent years, for shopping trips. Time does, however, pass for him during such visits. At the time of his translation, he had 91 days of life remaining, which has now been almost entirely used up.

He is a thin man who appears hunchbacked; actually, he is tall and wiry, but walks bent over. His nose is red and drips constantly; this does not seem to bother Albert, but makes other people blow their own noses in sympathy. He has ST 11, DX 13, IQ 14, and HT 12; as an inhabitant of the realm of Death, any attempt to cause him serious harm is hopelessly paradoxical.

In his time on the Disc, he was as powerful a wizard as any at Unseen University. However, much of his reason for wishing to avoid dying quite so desperately is that he knows how many extra-dimensional entities are waiting to get their claws, paws, tentacles and pseudopods on him, so he tends to be wary of such topics.

Albert is a crabby, self-righteous character, quick to pass judgement on others, and as dedicated to his master's duties as Death himself, with arguably even less capacity for compassion. His cookery shows that he is not worried by the dangers of cholesterol.

Twoflower

The Disc's first tourist was a very ordinary little citizen of the Agatean Empire, a clerk in an insurance office, with ST 9, DX 10, IQ 11, and HT 10. As a well-brought-up Agatean, Twoflower has Tea Ceremony-13 along with Administration-14. His vision is poor enough for him to need spectacles.

However, somewhere along the line, he acquired a bizarre urge to See The World, and to take pictures of it with his iconograph. This could have seen him murdered for his huge stock of gold coins in short order, but a perverse luck kept him alive, at least until people realised that he was protected by his Luggage (as later owned by Rincewind – see above), or that he was more profitable alive than dead. It seems that he enjoys the personal interest of The Lady, which explains a lot.

He dragged Rincewind through many of his early adventures, then decided to go home to tell people about what he'd seen. His story, published in the Agatean Empire as *What I Did On My Holidays,* inspired a revolutionary movement with its tales of a world in which people weren't always tortured to death for speaking out of turn. Twoflower was not a natural revolutionary, but became personally involved with the movement after his wife was killed during a minor manoeuvre in the internal politics of the old regime.

Twoflower was thus involved when Cohen the Barbarian acquired the throne of the Empire, and as Cohen knew and quite liked him, was promptly appointed Grand Vizier. As a long-time clerk and nice person, Twoflower is probably better suited for this job than most candidates.

King Verence II (formerly the Fool)

The current King of Lancre (and husband to Queen Magrat) was originally the court fool, before a questionable bit of alleged genealogy gave him the throne. He didn't like his old job, but his intense Sense of Duty made him work very hard at it, and he graduated from the Fools' Guild school with distinction; he has the skills Performance and Fools' Lore at level 15. However, having got out of that line of work, he would be happy never to see another bucket of whitewash in his life. (He might be considered to have No Sense of Humour, although he is not a cold or unsympathetic person.)

He is a short, thin man with runny eyes, but he is neither stupid nor inflexible. He does believe strongly in information obtained from books, and his attempts at improving his kingdom's agriculture have thus run headfirst into his people's bloody-minded conservatism. Similarly, his attempts to introduce a degree of democracy have met the response that, as he's king, it's his blasted job to rule the country, and will he please stop bothering other folk about it?

On the other hand, the people of Lancre are not inclined to complain too much about a king who means well – they've experienced the other sort – and his serious efforts and willingness to learn, and the involvement of his wife, will probably achieve quite a lot of good in the long term. PCs who become involved in the state affairs of Lancre shouldn't underestimate him, or push their luck.

The Dean

As the head of administration at Unseen University, the Dean is a senior wizard, and actually quite good with a spell, as well as having Administration-14. He is also a typical senior UU wizard in that he is elderly but more or less healthy, and enjoys very large meals, as often as possible, as his waistline illustrates. (In game terms, that's Fat and Gluttony.)

None of that, however, is the key to his personality. To begin with, he is nothing like as mentally resilient as his intelligence might suggest – in game terms, he has IQ 16 combined with six levels of Weak Will. That is only part of the problem, however; the main point is that he is

immensely susceptible to outside influences. This verges on being a psychic talent, as he seems to pick up on fads, fashions, and insidious metaphysical distortions of the Disc's society before they have even started; it is certainly Compulsive Behaviour, and perhaps a sort of Gullibility, with the added quirks "Fashion Victim" and "Manipulable." The one good thing about it is that the rest of the Faculty can use him as an early warning system; when the Dean starts acting oddly, Something Is Happening.

If he is pushed into combat, the Dean is likely to charge in with cries of "Hut! Hut!" and let fly with a lot of high-powered magic; he is especially fond of Herpetty's Seismic Reorganizer. He will probably wear himself out rather quickly, but the damage he will do before that should be substantial. The Archchancellor finds his enthusiasms somewhat wearing, which is a bit hypocritical from Ridcully.

The Dean wears normal magician's robes, or sometimes, a leather robe with the words "BORN TO RUNE" marked across the back in metal studs.[1]

[1] *Only a Disc wizard could wear a fashion souvenir from a piece of history that didn't even happen.*

The Bursar

The Bursar is in charge of finances at Unseen University, and unlike some of his predecessors in the post, he is a genuine, competent wizard. (He certainly knows spells such as Sumpjumper's Incendiary Surprise, and is quite gung-ho about using them.) He is also very good with figures; he has the Lightning Calculator advantage and Accounting-17. He probably once specialised in mathematically-based magic, before discovering the even greater power that lay in a set of investments going back two thousand years.

Unfortunately, since the arrival of Mustrum Ridcully as Archchancellor, the Bursar has been finding life increasingly stressful. Ridcully's attempts to make him take some exercise were bad enough, and all the shouting *really* got him down. Today, his nerves are shot to pieces,[1] and his mind wanders badly. This can be moderated by Dried Frog Pills, the state of the art in Discworld psychological medication (which might be prescribed for any PC with sanity problems); Hex did once manage to cure him by conversing more weirdly than he did, but the effect didn't last.

However, the Bursar remains good at his job. He dresses much like the rest of the senior faculty, but is rather skinny, as his nerves burn off a lot of calories. During the random phases when his condition renders him rigidly catatonic, he can be used as a crowbar or a plank.

Ponder Stibbons

As a student at Unseen University, Ponder Stibbons accidentally received a rigged exam paper that enabled him to graduate with a score of 100%. This suited him well, as it enabled him to go on to graduate work; his ambition was to find some comfortable corner and enjoy the food for the rest of his life. He obtained the position of Reader in Invisible Writings (see p. 112).

However, somewhat to his own distress, Ponder found that he possessed not only a real talent for theoretical magic, but also a seriously inquiring mind. He has become the effective head of the High Energy Magic Lab (see p. 116) and a leading figure in the construction and upgrading of Hex (see p. 116). Ridcully sometimes gets annoyed at Ponder's use of words such as "quantum" or "continuum," but turns to him when faced with problems that require theory rather than experience. Ponder thinks of himself as the University's token sane person, with some justice, and spends much of his time trying to avoid Ridcully's attempts to make him take exercise.

Ponder is a pale and slightly plump young wizard, with no great love of work until he gets interested. He is a classic nerd, and occasionally seems Clueless, but in fact he is pretty good at practical matters when he tries. He has never been known to cast a useful spell, apart from assisting the Archchancellor with the Rite of AshkEnte and other rituals, but with the technical assistance of Hex, he could probably work up and cast some phenomenal (and unpredictable) ceremonial magic if pushed.

"Ponder thinks of himself as the University's token sane person."

[1] *Almost literally, given Ridcully's fondness for the crossbow.*

11 "BAD FOOD, NO SLEEP, AND STRANGE PEOPLE . . ." 11

On Becoming a Discworld Adventurer

You were born on the Discworld. Congratulations. So what do you know?

Well, Discworld mass communications and rapid travel are patchy at best. A farm-boy from the Sto Plains – or a minor noble, for that matter – may not know much about the world a few miles distant; he would certainly be aware of the great city of Ankh-Morpork, and might head for it as soon as the harvest was in and he had a few dollars in his pocket, but he would not have a detailed street map with a handy guide to inexpensive food, clean, safe lodgings, and discount adventuring supplies. (Well, he might – copyright C.M.O.T. Dibbler . . .) At best, one of the codgers at the hometown tavern might mention that The Fretting Porpentine serves a fine shepherd's and pint (as of thirty years ago); this will introduce our lad to the delights of Ankh cuisine and the niceties of tavern brawling.

Continued on next page . . .

"... Inexplicably trying to stick pointed objects in bits of you"

To repeat a Golden Rule: The Discworld is a place where stories happen.

All sorts of stories – not just comedies. Tragic and dramatic things happen here, too. If anyone really wanted, they could use the setting for an old-fashioned game in which heroes and wizards beat up monsters and take their treasure. Or they could create a series of gloomy sagas about a band of angst-ridden vampires on the streets of Ankh-Morpork. There's no obvious reason to do so, but nothing stopping anyone either.

But stories set on a flat world on the back of a giant turtle do somehow lend themselves to comedy . . .

Running for Your Laugh

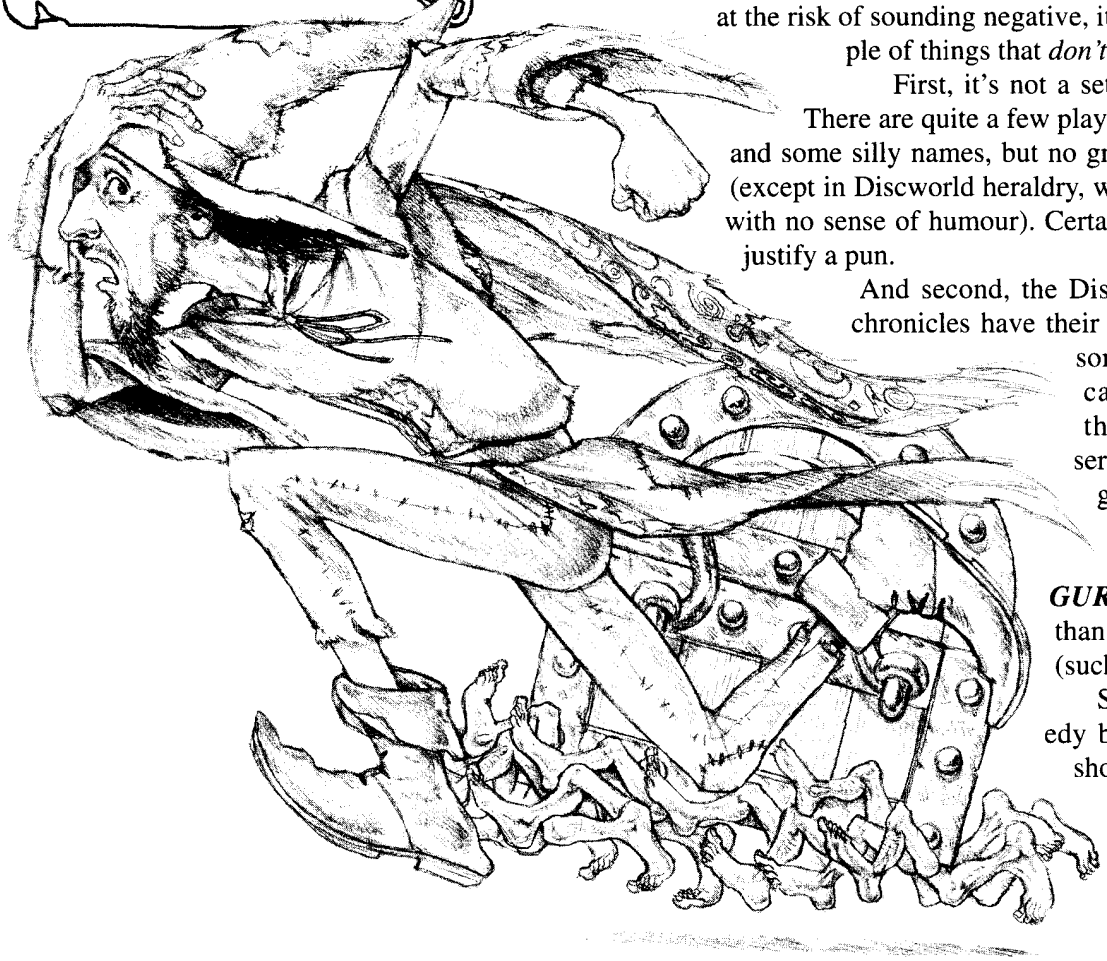
Everyone knows the saying; dying is easy, comedy is hard.

(Actually, people are careful about saying that in Ankh-Morpork. The Fools' Guild became nervous that it might be tested on them, and took out a standing order with the Assassins to suppress the expression.)

Anyway, and fortunately, in RPGs, it is only literally true for game-level characters. But RPG rules *are* usually better at talking about negative hit points than they are at raising a smile.

Comedy comes in several forms – there are many ways to get a laugh – but, at the risk of sounding negative, it's worth starting with a couple of things that *don't* fit in too well on the Disc.

First, it's not a setting that suffers from puns. There are quite a few plays on words in the chronicles, and some silly names, but no grinding, humourless punning (except in Discworld heraldry, which is run by clever people with no sense of humour). Certainly, nothing exists *solely* to justify a pun.



And second, the Disc is light on slapstick. The chronicles have their share of physical comedy – some of it carefully and intricately choreographed – but the violence is basically as serious as in real life. If people get hurt, it *hurts.* That's one good reason for using a realistic RPG system like ***GURPS*** for this setting, rather than a slapstick comedy system (such as ***Toon***).

So what *can* Discworld comedy be about? As the chronicles show, quite a lot of things, and sometimes several at once.

Death and Taxes

First, it's possible to run a pretty straightforward blood-and-guts adventure, but with an eye to comedy. Such stories can include other non-comedy elements, such as mystery or even horror.

Most Discworld stories work as straight adventure stories, and many sound entirely serious if summarised in a single sentence. *Guards! Guards* is about a band of watchmen who defend a city against a monster; *Lords and Ladies* is about an invasion of supernatural aliens. Several plots are partly detective stories (although the detectives are cynical about Sherlock Holmes-style deductions); *Men at Arms, Maskerade,* and *Feet of Clay* are all murder mysteries. *Small Gods* is a drama about religion and war. Thus, there is a good argument for setting up a Discworld game as a fantasy RPG campaign first, and a comedy second.

The Picaresque

However, if a group wishes to concentrate on the comedy aspect of the setting, they may be content to wander through the landscape, meeting strange people and odd events. Often, such stories involve quirky individuals as travellers as well as encounters. Literary critics call this a *picaresque.*

The problem with this approach from a game point of view is that, sooner or later, people start to get bored with pure tourism. There are two solutions; either make some of the individual encounters into short adventures of a more focussed kind, as in *The Colour of Magic,* or give the journey a little more point.

The Confused Quest

This more focussed version of the Picaresque can turn into a quest, on the classic heroic-fantasy model. See *The Light Fantastic* for an example of such a plot emerging out of unplanned journeying, *Sourcery* for a circular expedition, *Eric* for a magical quest through space and time, and *Witches Abroad* for a quest leading to an urban adventure.

The problems with quests in games are, firstly, keeping the PCs on track – players have an astounding capacity for becoming side-tracked, worrying red herrings to death, and finding sub-plots more interesting than the main event – and secondly, deciding what to do next, without anti-climax, when the plot is complete. Thus, quest plots may work best for groups who don't mind taking a hint and ending the story at a fixed point. Alternatively, limited quests may be worked into larger games.

Comic quests are mainly distinguished by the degree of confusion and unwillingness on the part of the protagonists (meaning that they need the right PCs), and the oddness of the people encountered, in a picaresque sort of way. Thus, they probably work best with players who are prepared to throw themselves into things and enjoy the comic atmosphere.

Social Comedy

Classic intelligent comedy is usually comedy of manners, or comedy about realistic personalities interacting in complicated ways.[1] This is a recurrent theme of Discworld stories, despite the fantastical setting; most have at least a bit of it, and certainly every story set in Ankh-Morpork plays off the social complexity of the city. *Men at Arms* and *Maskerade* are among the stronger examples.

[1] *Farce, somebody said, is tragedy played at a hundred and twenty revolutions per minute – and tragedy is all about people who can't get on with each other or the world.*

On Becoming a Discworld Adventurer (Continued)

A native of the city is not much better off. He will know the basics of how to get along there, and will therefore make a useful friend to the farm-boy,[2] but he won't know every alley and back door. (Nobody, in fact, knows *every* alley and back door in Ankh-Morpork; they have a way of shifting as they are charted.) If he is not a wizard, he is unlikely to have been within the walls of Unseen University; if he *is* a wizard, he will probably know little of the surrounding metropolis beyond several taverns.

On the other hand, the Disc is a hotbed of rumour and gossip. Communications are on the rise, and people are discovering the profits to be made from selling information to other people. Some of it is even true. All but the most reclusive will have heard tales of remote lands, and while these will be a mixture of exaggeration, xenophobia, and simplification, they should not find the idea of, say, Klatchian desert nomads or Genuan voodoo too outrageous. Given a basic PC's dose of curiosity or opportunism, they should in fact find such interesting.

So "adventurer" PCs should start with a sense of opportunity. What they do with it is up to them. As a Discworld native, you are *already* caught between crass gods, scheming politicians, inhuman extra-dimensional monstrosities, and the tempting smell of one of Mr. Dibbler's meat pies.

Have fun.

[2] *As long as the farm-boy's money holds out.*

"Sitcom" Campaign Ideas

1.The PCs could be a group of rural wise-women; perhaps they had an NPC mentor who has her appointment with Death in the first episode, and they have to divide up herb-gathering rights and cackling responsibilities for the district, establish their credibility with the rustics, and clean out the old lady's cellar (which turns out to be bigger than the cottage above – *much* bigger). Non-witch PCs could include sturdy peasant allies and local priests.

2. The Ankh-Morpork City Watch is comprehensively covered in the chronicles, and its recent successes have been noticed in other cities of the Sto Plains. One such decides to keep up with the neighbours, and re-establishes its own Watch. This represents a job opportunity for combat-capable PCs; others could include forensic wizards and street-level contacts. Of course, not everyone in the town will want the project to succeed. Be careful out there.

3. High in the Ramtops sits a castle comparable to Lancre's for size and complexity. This establishment has, in fact, just emerged from a century-long sleeping curse, to discover the world outside has changed, and the old village nearby has long since decayed away. The PCs are the noble owners, their guards and servants, and perhaps a confused traveller or helpful wizard who somehow broke the curse. They need to re-establish contact with the outside world, and repopulate the village or otherwise provide themselves with an economic basis for survival.

4. Not all wizards live in Unseen University. Even those who do may have fallings-out with department heads or the Librarian. Perhaps a group of such academics could found a new college of their own, in a remote rural spot or some smaller, less odorous city?

5. Finally, there are *vast* areas of the Discworld still unexplored. Less that a third of the land area (and who knows what lies under the sea?) has been 'explored' by the chronicles, and outside of Ankh-Morpork and Lancre even these known lands have largely been traversed rather than fully examined. There could be *anything* out there.

This sort of thing can be difficult in RPGs, because PCs must be played on the fly, which makes complex relationships and motivations hard to depict. However, a good, determined group of players may manage. One stock theme of social comedy is social climbing, and PCs are often determined to rise in the world; making this ambition social rather than defining it in terms of combat ability could make for a lot of comedy.

Sitcoms

As seen on TV, more than in novels. A sitcom is usually a kind of low-level social comedy. It starts with a simple situation; "family with three kids living in the suburbs," "single yuppies sharing an apartment," "dim-witted mother in the media, clever schoolgirl daughter, decadent parasite friend." From this, the creators spin off a new plot every episode; because the audience soon become familiar with the main characters, it's easy to get a new story moving each time.

This could be a very good model for a ***GURPS*** Discworld campaign. The GM should agree a theme with the players, who then create characters to fit. To give the players the chance to feel that they are achieving and building something, the situation should probably include a clear start-point and an opportunity for long-term growth. See the sidebar for some possible themes.

Parody

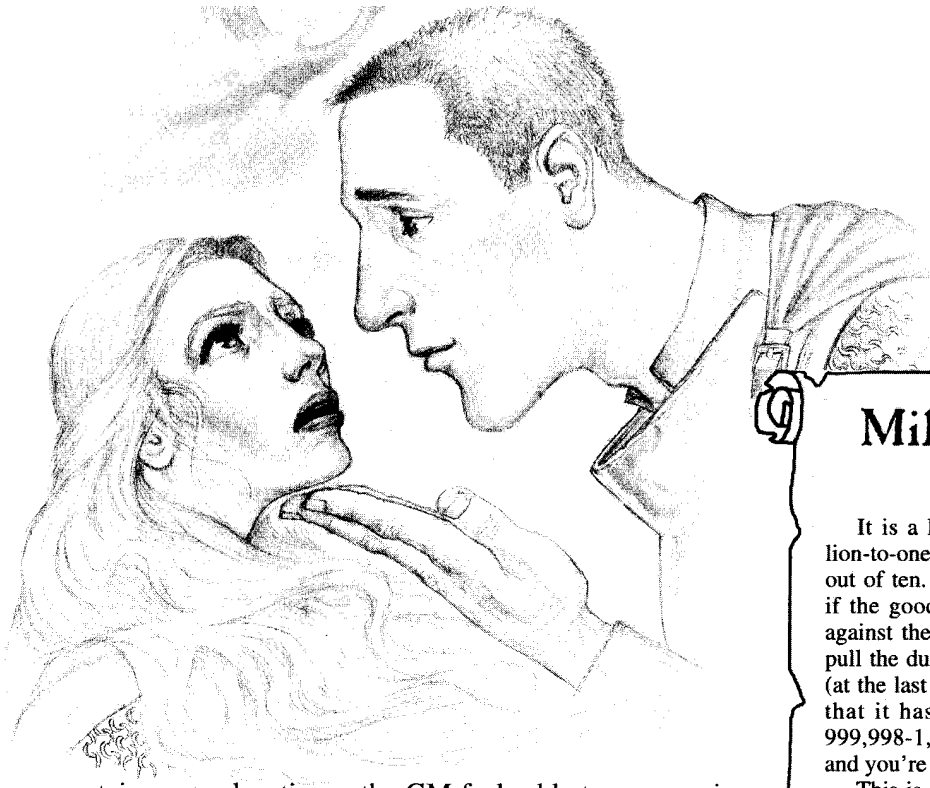
Parody is an easy, effective, but rather unsubtle style of comedy, which is wonderful in small doses, but tiresome in large lumps. Of course, the Discworld and everything about it is a parody of the fantasy genre, but there's a lot more to it than that. Individual elements and some plots are parodies; Discworld dwarfs and magicians are jokes about their counterparts in other worlds, and *Wyrd Sisters* is a sort of parody of Shakespeare's tragedies (with a very Shakespearean theatre troupe in starring roles). *Maskerade* builds on a parody of *The Phantom of the Opera,* while *Moving Pictures* and *Soul Music* parody the habits of the real-world movie and music industries respectively.

It's hard to parody complete plots in RPGs, because the players are entitled to some control over the plot of the game; struggling to keep them on a track that either they can predict in advance, or that they won't understand at all, is a rather futile exercise. However, one *can* spoof individual elements and "bits," as *Wyrd Sisters* and *Lords and Ladies* do with Shakespeare. It would also seem logical to parody some old RPG traditions in a game (and *The Colour of Magic* contains several RPG references). One could send a totally inappropriate party on a dungeon raid, or have a merchant ship crew who forever accept bizarre jobs from noble patrons in dockside bars.

Satire

Satire is not the same as parody; it's more subtle and complex. Parody is comic imitation; satire is a (more or less) comic way of commenting on other matters.

A lot of satire is political or otherwise concerned with the sort of thing that gets into the newspapers, but this isn't common in Discworld stories. Apart from anything else, that sort of satire dates very quickly, and is incomprehensible to people who don't recognise the targets. However, some Discworld stories do satirise social topics; *Equal Rites* is a story about gender roles and sexism (and a sort of satirical response to Ursula Le Guin's "Earthsea" stories), while *Pyramids* concerns itself with a tradition-driven society, and *Small Gods* is about religious faith. *Maskerade* mostly parodies opera, but says some satirical things about the art and its audience.



A game plot can contain as much satire as the GM feels able to squeeze in. For example, a setting could be designed as a satire on contemporary society; a game doesn't have to travel and endure the way a novel should, so GMs are welcome to try some contemporary political satire if their players will put up with it. (The only catch is that a GM who tries to impose political ideas on players could be in for a lot of arguments.) Players should also note that character concepts can be satirical, if only at the level of a six-foot human who insists that he is a dwarf, or a wizard who is incapable of casting magic.

To Bear in Mind . . .

When GMing stories set on the Disc, there are a couple of important features of the setting to remember.

Important Concept #1: Not Everything Is Completely Known.

Even after more than twenty books, maps, and assorted porcelain figures, there are an infinite number of details of Discworld place, life, and reality that remain questionable, or blank. This bothers some people. It is possible, for instance, that Death is actually a subordinate aspect of Azrael the Great Attractor. Or maybe all the Deaths are independent beings who work as Azrael's branch managers. It really isn't given to mortals to know this kind of thing, but they still worry about it. It is certain, however, that the answers can't have much effect on what mortals do.

On a more mundane level, one can't say precisely what sort of weapons and armour an Ankh-Morpork City Watchman will have; not only is the issue less than perfectly uniform, but when a Guardsman lays aside his grieves and vambraces at the end of shift, he can't be sure they won't have turned to flakes of rust and mouldy leather scraps by the next duty call. The best one can say is that a Watchman will be wearing something somewhat protective and carrying an object capable of causing personal injury. Maybe the adventurers' weapons will get through the armour, maybe not; do you feel lucky today?

Million-to-One Chances

It is a Discworld axiom that million-to-one chances pay off nine times out of ten. It has been established that if the good guys can adjust the odds against them to 1,000,000-1, they can pull the dumplings out of the cauldron (at the last moment, when else?). Note that it has to be exactly a million. 999,998-1, or a million-three to one, and you're toast.

This is one of those ideas that your run-of-the-dungeon player-character seizes upon like a piranha on a blood sausage. Given a chance, some PCs will turn every even remotely doubtful encounter into a million-to-one odds. If this becomes a problem, here are some suggestions:

Get the Details. Require them to explain just how they're shifting the odds toward the magic million. "Well, Bjorn's going to fight without his left boot, and I'm going to use fresh eggs instead of crossbow bolts – that ought to be good for at least a hundred fifty thousand . . . "

Limit uses. One million-to-one per adventure should be enough even for the greatest heroes, right? Requiring that the party spend all their remaining uses of Luck-based Advantages would also be reasonable. And if it starts to look like the group is betting all its chips on the sure-thing million-to-one at the climax –

Strike pre-emptively. After the PCs have spent two or three hours huddled in the inn, working out the odds to the seventh decimal place, somebody in a game of Cripple Mr. Onion on the other side of the room leaps up to display the legendary, unbeatable, Nine-Card Run.

And if all else fails: *Work it to death.* Set up an adventure (preferably short) in which every last encounter requires million-to-one luck, with the corresponding odds-juggling and sweat-damp calculations. They should get the hint.

Dieter the Poacher

Age 20, 5'7", 148 lbs.; dark hair, brown eyes.

ST 11, **DX** 12, **IQ** 10, **HT** 11

Speed 5.75, Move 4 (Light Encumbrance)

Dodge 4, Parry 6 (Staff)

Point Total: 25

Advantages: Acute Hearing +1; Secret Patron: "The Monster" (150-point individual on 9 or less).

Disadvantages: Struggling; Status -1 (Downtrodden Yokel); Delusion ("That monster wants to kill me"); Shyness.

Quirks: "The poor can never make a truly honest living;" Avoids dogs and wolves (fears werewolves); Worried by deciduous trees ("They lose all their leaves? They must be dead."); Regards pitchforks and torches as basic necessities.

Skills: Agronomy-9; Camouflage-10; Crossbow-13; First Aid-10; Naturalist-8; Polearm-11; Staff-10; Stealth-11; Survival (Mountains)-9; Tracking-10.

Languages: Uberwaldian-10 (Native), Ankhian-8.

Possessions: Dagger; Quarterstaff; Crossbow (ST 11); Quiver with 10 bolts; Lower-Class Clothes; Armoured Cloth Cap; Leather Torso Armour; Boots; Small Backpack containing Personal Basics, Torch, and Packed Lunch; Pouch containing $15.

Dieter is an example of a 25-point Discworld PC – an unremarkable person caught up in events.

His home village in the mountains of Uberwald was ruled from a castle owned by a noble necromancer/philosopher. The villagers felt unhappy with this, but the Baron's defensive measures (spikes, hot oil, and zombies) deterred them from the traditional torches-and-pitchforks routine. They were left with a festering sense of injustice, and a yen for bigger pitchforks.

Dieter, taught from birth that anything was justified that fed the family, grew up to take up poaching on the Baron's lands. Then, one night, his keen hearing caught the sounds of a argument among the trees.

Continued on next page . . .

And, of course, there are the ale-barrel philosophers who really want to know about the intimate lives of elves and dwarfs, and the refractive index of octogen. Curiosity about the world one is vicariously living in is certainly healthy, but on the Disc, as in the real world, wanting to know an answer – even needing very badly to know it – doesn't mean an answer is forthcoming. If the players really make an issue of the price of a double order of chicken vindaloo at the Klatchian Curry House or the airspeed velocity of an unladen witch, think upon the published material and invent a plausible response. You might want to make a note of it for future reference.[1]

Important Concept #2: It Isn't All A Joke.

To be sure, humour is an essential part of the Discworld. And some of this humour can be a bit, well, silly. But the things that happen in Discworld stories – wizardly plots, palace intrigue, battles and sieges and wars – are the same things that happen in terribly serious fantasy yarns, just warped by the intense magical flux and sheer cussedness of the environment. The frantic defenders trying to stop a really big, bad dragon from crisping first them and then Ankh-Morpork are really scared of the dragon, even though their plan for stopping it consists of adjusting the odds against them to exactly a million to one.

And while Death (the individual) is the kind of person one can only wish our world's Death was, death (the event) is just as scary and final (sparing a few undead) as it is for us. On the Discworld, Palace Guards have an *opinion* about being disembowelled in passing by Heroes on their way to something Heroic.

And now and then something happens that is quiet and even moving, like Death's last dance in *Reaper Man*. Earning moments like that takes a lot of work.

By all means, laughter is the reason for adventuring on the Disc. But a lot of that laughter comes from the fact that Discworlders respond to their incredible surroundings in a more, well, *realistic* way than most fantasy characters.

Scenario Seed: Full Court Press

The succession to the Duchy of Applegrove on the Sto Plains is contested between two candidates: Anastasia Dapplegrove, heir to the last Duke, Danton, and Wynvoe Cadwallader, whose claim to the coronet is less clear. There seems to be no way of resolving the conflict, short of a civil war.

This adventure may be handled in several ways:

- A clear case of Good vs. Not So Good, with a race for the Lost Treasure followed by the accession of the Rightful Ruler.
- A mystery, in which the treasure hunt runs parallel to the question of which claimant is the (morally) rightful ruler.
- An ambiguous tale of court intrigue, in which people must determine for themselves who is "in the right," and decide the destiny of Applegrove through their actions.

Anastasia (Annie) Dapplegrove is 19; her grandfather was the last formally-crowned Duke. The coronet has been in the family for generations. Anastasia is absolutely convinced that she is supposed to be Duchess of Applegrove. She is also convinced that a handsome prince will marry her and add his vast lands to hers, that babies are brought by a large bird (possibly an owl), and that she looks ravishing in yellow.

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[1] *On the other hand, if you are called to question on such points, you might also compress your lips, narrow your eyes, and suggest in your best Granny Weatherwax voice that having antlers and a spherical red nose for the next six weeks would give one much more immediate things to worry about.*

She is supported by Captain Vaughan of the Applegrove Lancers, the Duchy's guard force and standing army (the rest of the force consisting of two Corporals and a dozen Serjeants). Vaughan is in love with her, but torture wouldn't get it from him. Despite the difference in their ages, he would probably make a good consort and co-ruler.

Wynvoe Cadwallader is 53. The Cadwalladers have been cider-masters of Applegrove almost as long as the Crabtree/Dapplegrove dynasty has been ruling it – longer, if you believe Wynvoe. Regardless of his guilt or innocence in past events, Wynvoe believes firmly that he is the best-qualified person to be Duke, and that makes him the "rightful ruler." Research into the Duchy's traditional law actually bears this out; the title has always belonged more to the candidate best accepted by the rich local farmers than to any heir-by-birth.[1] And Wynvoe has a lot of friends among the farmers.

A one-man third faction consists of Doctor Aufidius Roskilde, D.M. (Unseen), D.Plant.Sci. (U.Minn.), wizard, horticulturist, and chancellor. Dr Roskilde came to Applegrove during the reign of Anastasia's great-great-grandmother, Tisane. Some say that he was a very young man then, others that he has always looked the same as he does now. As the holder of a doctorate in agricultural science, he was brought in to modernise the orchards that make up almost the entire national economy. There was actually little Dr Roskilde could do to improve fructiculture in the Duchy, because after hundreds of years the locals were already very, very good at it. His organisational skills proved of great practical value, though, and the fact that Applegrove is now comfortably wealthy is mainly to his credit. He is a competent wizard, but rather unpractised these days. His staff looks like a walking-stick made of live apple-wood.

A Death and a Quest

The death of Duke Danton occurred some months ago, and involved a crossbow-bolt of uncertain origin while he was out hunting. Since then, various complications have prevented Annie's coronation. These are legalistic and tortuous, but come down to Wynvoe's efficient use of politics.

Mumblings at the court about Anastasia's "unsuitability" were coming to a head. But then, the castle cook's son came back from a trip to the big city and said in passing that he'd seen a piece of metalwork with the Ducal symbol on it in the market there. This was immediately identified as part of the Ducal Cider-Press, ancient and revered symbol of the Duchy.

(Why was it rediscovered now? Narrative causality? Wynvoe fixing to get his problem out of the way temporarily while he plotted?)

Anastasia promptly announced that *she* would recover the Press, and even refused more than a token bodyguard.[2] Vaughan, of course, insisted on being the bodyguard. Somewhere along the line, the PCs should get involved, but Annie will insist on the fiction that they are not *with* her, however much they tag along and *help* her.

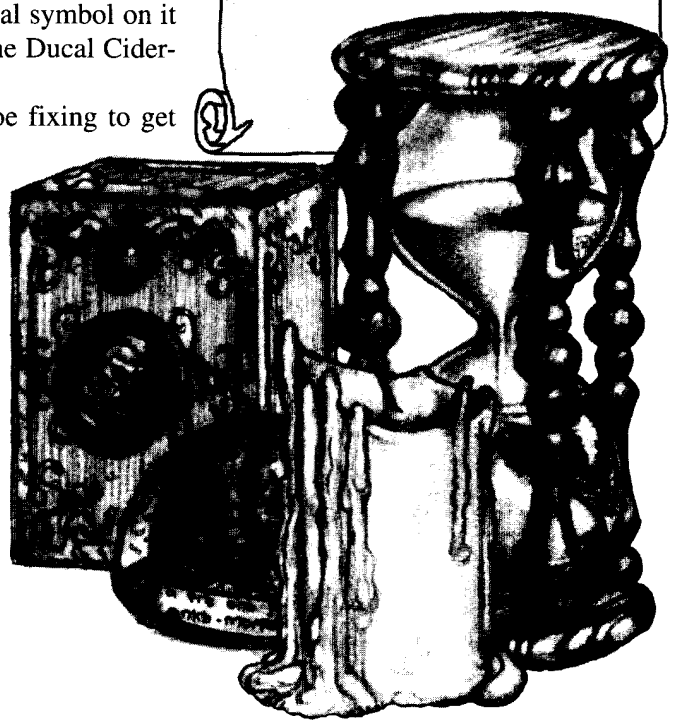
Dieter the Poacher (Continued)

In fact, the Baron's latest creation, a sort of oversize composite zombie with added brain tissue, had discovered free will, and the Baron was having difficulty persuading it to return to the lab. Dieter crept up on the scene, gasped at what he saw, and convulsively fired his crossbow. The bolt took the Baron in the throat, and the monster turned towards Dieter . . .

Dieter didn't stop running for three villages, and then slowed to a brisk walk. He settled some miles away, but one dark and stormy night, great fists battered on his door. He jumped out of the back window, and has been running across the Disc ever since.

But this is all a tragic misunderstanding. The "monster" was never more than curious; in fact, it feels a little gratitude to Dieter, and sometimes helps him out in secret. It is currently studying comparative literature at a small university a few miles from Dieter's location. Dieter, however, knows a hideous monster of the night when one comes calling, keeps a torch handy, and shows a recurrent interest in pitchforks. What's worse, he has trouble dealing with people, and so never gets to talk the matter through with anyone else.

Dieter is a stocky, clean-shaven young man, with a perpetual expression of puzzled worry. He dresses in shabby peasant garb.



[1] *That's a polite way of saying there've been a lot of small civil wars. But precedent is precedent.*

[2] *Far too many romantic stories, that one.*

The SF Option

You may suffer an urge to bring PCs to the Disc from a science fiction universe. After all, Great A'Tuin *does* swim through interstellar space . . .

Frankly, this is one of those things that sounds better than it plays. The collision of super-technology with medieval fantasy can be funny, but it's *one* joke, and one joke repeated twenty times is not the same as twenty jokes.

That said, it can be made to work with the right attitude. Some possibilities:

Arrival: The Disc is unlikely to exist in a normal SF universe, so some dimensional side-stepping may be in order. The starship's doubletalk drive malfunctions, and suddenly the navigator reports a *turtle* two points to starboard. Alternatively, the Disc may exist in defiance of all rationality; see *Strata,* by, er, Terry Pratchett.

If the starship has teleporters or shuttlecraft, it may be left in orbit.[1] It may lose power or control in the Disc's magical field, and hard-land. Or it may land safely; the locals need not be as awed by it as the crew might expect. "Ah. Floatin' wizard's palace, eh?"

Once There: Jokes about technology vs. sufficiently advanced magic will be important, but probably won't serve as the main thread. Unless the crew has arrived on a mission, they should be faced with some kind of local problem – the usual 'We Need A Hero, But You'll Do' situation. Incidentally, on any world where light can sometimes be slowed to the speed of sound, high-tech equipment can be expected to behave oddly. At minimum, a lot of Engineering and Science skills may be necessary for re-calibration.

Continued on next page . . .

[1] *Keep in mind the nature of local space. "Captain, we cannot beam back to the ship while it is between the elephants."*

When she arrived in Ankh-Morpork, the unworldly and under-funded Annie found a room in the cellar of a run-down boarding-house. Looking round, she saw what she thought was a piece of ornamental stonework, which she said was "nice." The sentiment, and the sound of what he thought was his name ("How did lady know, unless was supposed be?"), went straight to the brain of Gneiss, a rustic troll who was hiding out there after a violent misunderstanding with a group of dwarfs. Since then, he has been her utterly devoted follower and bodyguard. He will take orders from Captain Vaughan, but only if he agrees with them. For the Duchess, he would happily jump into a volcano.

The Press

The important item, which is designed to be functional, though used mainly as a ceremonial item, consists of three separable components:

- An open-topped oak barrel.
- The press assembly, consisting of a frame that clamps around the barrel, holding a large-diameter screw and a wooden-faced piston.
- The handle, a bar of metal about two feet long, with a wooden handgrip at each end, and a central socket that fits over the end of the press screw.

The metal parts are of cast iron, with the Ducal crest (a coronet around an apple) in several places.[2]

The Press disappeared sometime very close to Dr Roskilde's arrival in the Duchy; there is disagreement about whether it was before or after.

Involving the PCs

If the PCs are mercenary swords, they could be recruited into the Applegrove Palace Guard, while wizards could be asked by a patron to look up an old friend of his who has recently mentioned having problems in a letter. ("Name's Roskilde. Clever chap; bit obsessed with plants, but there y'go. Seems to be lookin' after the books for some tin-pot duchy.") If necessary, The GM can set up a preliminary adventure in which PCs acquire a debt of honour to Anastasia or Vaughan.

Alternatively, if the PCs are street-level operators in Ankh-Morpork, they can be staying in a flophouse on Elm Street, when they become aware of some odd neighbours; an implausibly high-class-seeming young woman, her broad-shouldered protector, and a troll who appears unwilling to stop lurking in the basement.

Of course, they may decide to do something traditional about this, such as robbery, but Anastasia and Vaughan actually have little worth stealing. The GM should set up as many coincidences as are necessary for the PCs to fall into conversation with the visitors, who reveal their quest. The possibility of getting on the good side of a full-powered Duchess, who may have wealth back home, should tempt many PCs.

And even if it doesn't, they will be approached, within a day or two, by an agent of Wynvoe Cadwallader. Wynvoe presents himself, through this messenger, as the morally rightful, and almost-democratically-plausible, ruler of Applegrove. ("The Dapplegroves have always oppressed the apple-growers. And can you imagine an airhead like that doing any good for a modern nation?") Ideally, he would like to get hold of the press himself, but merely preventing Anastasia's getting hold of it would be enough.

[2] *Realist nit-picker's note: No part of a cider press that comes into contact with the apples or juice can be made of iron or steel, as this will damage the flavour. That's why so many parts are made of wood.*

But Wynvoe does *not* want Anastasia harmed. He will say that this is because he is not a murderer, he just wants justice, and he really has no personal hatreds. Of course, PCs might also reflect that Anastasia's death would throw a lot of suspicion onto Wynvoe's head, given Danton's accident, and make her into a martyr.

It's up to the PCs whether they take Wynvoe's part (and he is offering cash as well as arguments), tell him where to go, or try playing off both sides.

The Mechanism

The weekly market in Sator Square is a good excuse for a few encounters; Thieves' Guild operatives, C.M.O.T. Dibbler,[1] wizards, PCs' Enemies, whatever. There's also the problem of Gneiss, who will come along to "help," but who must either be dissuaded or made inconspicuous if he is not going to be more trouble than he is worth.

Yes, the press mechanism is on sale on a market stall. (If the PCs are acting against Anastasia and Vaughan at this stage, the GM should rig events so that Anastasia gets to the stall first.) The stall-holder will be secretly glad to be rid of it, but of course, he's an Ankh-Morporkian merchant, so he will bargain hard anyway. The visitors' funds are limited, and they are not good bargainers; time for some PC intervention?

Anyway, once the deal is done, the stall-holder will throw in a free answer to the next question. "Oh yes, I got this as scrap off old Cheese at the Bucket." So it's time to take some more directions, and visit one of Ankh-Morpork's famed hostelries; the one favoured by the Watch (see p. 91).

The Bucket

There, Anastasia will go into raptures at her "good fortune," for the next plot token is plain to see. The press's barrel has become the Bucket's sign. The only snag being, of course, that Mr. Cheese thinks that it makes a *good* sign, and his regulars[2] tend to get slightly unhappy if anything changes round the place.

So it's time for more hard bargaining, punctuated by interruptions from various Watchmen (up to and potentially including Detritus, Angua, Carrot, or Vimes), who want to know why their favourite quiet drinking spot has suddenly become so noisy. (Anyone suggesting stealing the sign is welcome to try. The place opens long hours, has Watchmen inside for all of them, and any annoyance caused the owner will be taken personally by the customers.)

Eventually, some arrangement should be possible, and Mr. Cheese will also throw in a Plot Clue. "Mmm. Sold the contraption to that fellow down the market as a curio, but he wasn't interested in that big handle thing; too bulky, he reckoned, and after all, any old handle would do. So I chucked it on one of the junk carts. It'll be down City Tip Four[3] by now."

[1] ***Try*** *to stop Anastasia buying a sausage in a bun just because she thinks he looks "sweet."*

[2] *Yes, all those polite gentlemen in armour.*

[3] *For our American readers, a "tip" is a dump site.*

The SF Option (Continued)

Departure: Figuring out how to get off the Disc may be tricky. The solution should involve obtaining the assistance of the locals.[4] This may mean magic, or assistance from someone like Leonard of Quirm or Urn the Ephebian. Note that any engineering will be Discworld engineering: not tunnel-diode effects and Mach space, but pulleys, counterweights, and a long wooden track down the side of Copperhead Peak. (" . . . at this point, you'll be doing ninety yards a heartbeat, so your wossname drive should start up. If it doesn't, who do you want the hole named after?")

The Rimfall provides a sure-fire way of getting off, after either a run-in with Krull, or just a long sail. The ship *should* fall out and away, with enough momentum to carry it clear of the Disc's magical field. Obviously, this should be timed to miss the Turtle's head.

The Librarian of Unseen University could, of course, obtain a full set of starship tech manuals through interdimensional interlibrary loans, but this is a desperation measure; where would *anyone* get enough bananas?

[4] *If it doesn't, it will probably involve getting the ship started before the locals arrive with torches and pitchforks.*

Other GURPS Supplements

The ***GURPS*** series encompasses, at last count, 150 volumes, and you don't *have* to have any of them to play in the Discworld; this book, with ***GURPS Lite*** in the back, is sufficient.[1] But the whole point of the ***GURPS*** system is that the books work together, and we'd be remiss if we didn't point out some possibilities . . .[2]

Historical Worldbooks

The main use for these would be to help flesh out various Disc cultures. Some examples:

GURPS Arabian Nights: Highly relevant when setting games in Al Khali or many other parts of Klatch.

GURPS Aztecs: Relevant for anyone considering the Tezuman Empire in detail.

GURPS Celtic Myth: Useful when setting up some Hubland tribal cultures, and to some extent in relation to Llamedos.

GURPS China *and* ***GURPS Japan:*** The two obvious sources for ideas for the Agatean Empire.

GURPS Egypt: Obviously relevant to Djelibeybi, and to some extent to Tsort.

GURPS Greece: Should provide some ideas for games set in Ephebe.

GURPS Imperial Rome: Tsort has definite aspects of Rome in its present-day culture.

GURPS Middle Ages 1: The independent duchies and petty kingdoms that stretch from the Circle Sea across the Ramtops to the Vieux River remain more than somewhat medieval.

GURPS Places of Mystery: Some buildings on the Disc doubtless resemble interesting locations in the real world. The chapter on stone circles may be of interest to druid PCs.

Continued on next page . . .

[1] *Certainly this book contains references to rules in the* ***GURPS Basic Set*** *and elsewhere which are not found in* ***GURPS Lite****. Here's the secret to getting past those spots, and it is the secret to most good GM-ing: Make it up as you go along. It's all right, we promise you.*

[2] *At any given time, the exigencies of a small press being what they are, some of these will be out of print. But the average game retailer often has some amazing things on the back shelves, so it evens out.*

If anyone asks for details, Cheese might add that the press originally came to him on a cart with a load of cider from the country. "I kept it because I was always thinking of making my own stuff – can't be hard, can it, it's just apples." (Here, Anastasia winces prettily.) "But it never came to nothing. The bucket made a good sign, though. And then the other day, some fellow came with another cartload, and saw it sitting back of my cellar, and said that them markings were some kind of bad luck charm or curse or something. Sends cider bad, he said. Well, I wasn't worried, but – ah, it was just junk."

(Note; if the PCs get to the Bucket first with the intent of foiling Anastasia, and succeed, they can stay ahead of her; but she will look tragic enough at Mr. Cheese that he will tell her about the handle for free.)

The Tip

City Tip Four is also known as "Shamblebins," from its location beyond Shambling Gate, to the widdershins-rimward of the city. Shambling Gate is so named because it leads to the livestock market area of Ankh-Morpork (a "shambles" being a place where animals are slaughtered). It is also the closest gate to the point where the Ankh leaves the city. The total effect is best appreciated by trying to think about something else, preferably away from open flames.

Anastasia will pale visibly, but despite the fact that logically the chance of recovering the handle is zero, she will insist on going on. And she will be vindicated. But first . . .

Depending which side the PCs appear to be assisting, Wynvoe or Anastasia will have a few friends back at Applegrove, who are less subtle or romantic than their respective leaders. This is the moment when these stout country lads catch up with all and sundry.

Use as many "heavies" as will make for interesting chaos, with Vaughan attempting to shield Anastasia, and Gneiss leaping out of the shadows at the wrong moment and hitting all the wrong people. Any PCs who cut loose with magic during this fight should see it produce some interesting effects, as the tip produces all sorts of reactive out-gassing, and some of the solid matter may interact with spells. Those who prefer simple violence should be reminded that escalating a blunt-instruments brawl to use of lethally edged weapons is frowned upon, even in Ankh-Morpork; Anastasia will be deeply shocked and unhappy in the event of any deaths or serious maiming.

In the midst of all this, Ivan Shallowpans will wander onto the scene, trying to determine who is making a mess of his nice tidy rubbish. When it is all over, he will cock his head, look at people, and ask what all this was about.

Ivan Shallowpans, General Manager of City Tip Four, is a Sanitary Engineer and Solid Wastes Handling Specialist. He is a master of the Plumbers' Guild (p. 95). Ivan was at one time short-listed for the rank of guild-master, but withdrew when he learned that his responsibilities would be purely administrative. Ivan simply likes cleaning things up, and he is a hands-on sort of person.

He will be slightly charmed by Anastasia, but not as much as some people; all human beings are remarkably similar from his point of view. His natural instinct is, in fact, to help anyone who asks (although he doesn't approve of anyone who makes his job harder).

This is fortunate, as he is the *only* way that anyone is going to find the handle. He knows his tip as well as the Librarian knows his library; what look like mounds of rubbish to anyone else are, in his amazingly orderly mind, accurately categorised by date and origin. "Oh yes, the Bucket. That's area four; last week, y'say? Three feet down, seven over."

Of course, this still means that someone will be spending several minutes digging through rubbish.

Comfort With Apples

With all the parts located, and perhaps even all in the same hands, it's time for a quick bath, then Applegrove.

There, the population will respond to the return of their Ancient Symbol by assuming that a party is indicated. With lots of cider. The press will be formally re-assembled, and everyone will settle down to some serious politics. Of course, anyone who's been on the cider beforehand may not be at their best during these debates.[1]

Wynvoe's support turns out to be strong; many of the local farmers are unhappy with the idea of their newly-prosperous land being run by "some slip of a girl." Even if he cannot actually snatch the title, Wynvoe may be able to reduce the Duchess to a ceremonial figurehead, with himself as prime minister. Even if he is actually honest and not a murderer, Wynvoe's instincts will be to engineer himself a lot of power; if he is not restrained, he is likely to end up as a dictator, with all the important ducal powers and none of the *noblesse oblige.*

Meanwhile, Dr. Roskilde will be looking enigmatic. Roskilde is much respected, as sensible locals recognise how much good he has done the place, and if there are any bodies, he is the one who knows where they are buried.[2]

Gneiss will stand around looking confused through all this, but will have to be dissuaded from hitting anyone he thinks has been nasty to Anastasia.

How things develop from here on depends on what the GM has determined about the true history and motivation of the NPCs, and also of course the actions of the PCs. A little detective work concerning the murder of Duke Danton may be in order, as may some verbal fencing with Roskilde over the recent history of the family (and maybe his relationship with the Duchess Tisane). If things get out of hand, Roskilde might also turn out to be rather more of a serious wizard than he appears. ("My, my – hadn't cast Gherricauld's Flinty Barrier for donkey's years. Nice to know one can still manage.")

Matters should culminate in the revelation of The Truth, at least to the PCs; other people might be better left in ignorance. This can be followed by a coronation and more partying (and more cider) – a suitable setting for any last-minute revelations and reversals of fortune.

Rewards for the PCs are more likely to involve useful social contacts and a place where they are always welcome than vast sacks of jewels, but a small but well-filled purse each from the new ruler would not be inappropriate. Either Wynvoe or Vaughan can be left as a new enemy for the group; Gneiss will probably end up with a lease on one of the Duchy's bridges.

Other GURPS Supplements (Continued)

GURPS Vikings: The main Norse-style cultures of the Disc are in the coastlands below the Vortex Plains.

Fantasy and Horror

Fantasy-related sourcebooks contain lots of useful genre-related material. ***GURPS Conan*** is especially likely to be of interest to admirers of Cohen the Barbarian.

The Discworld does not feature the horror of blood, but the horror of ideas – the Disc is never more threatened than it is by someone who thinks everything should be changed for the better. Spell-casters, while rarely actively evil, have to be careful not to open conceptual doors that are better left closed. The conventional "monsters" of the Disc, by contrast – the vampires and werewolves – are often misunderstood, and have enough free will to refrain from throat-ripping.

Thus, ***GURPS Horror*** should be primarily used as a source of concepts to modify.

GURPS Bestiary, GURPS Dinosaurs

Large expanses of the Disc remain relatively wild and unexplored, so details of contemporary, archaic, or imaginary wildlife can often be useful in Discworld games.

GURPS Illuminati

There are conspiracies on the Disc, but the really traditional password-and-blood-oath secret societies are actually the least effective; it's the above-ground cliques, and the solitary, determined geniuses, who cause most trouble.[3]

[3] *If anyone tries to merge the two books, note that trolls obviously belong in the Masons.*

[1] *Another note for Americans: "cider" on the Disc means the same as it means in Britain, which is not the sweet unfermented children's drink served in certain other countries. Apple juice ferments very nicely; the results are rather stronger than beer. Also, given the presence in apples of various trace chemicals, the "rougher" versions can be very insidious indeed. The best Applegrove cider is not rough, but the stuff served in the market square varies. And the locals are fond of playing little jokes on visitors.*

[2] *Under apple trees, mainly.*

Adventure Seed: Soldiers Eight (approx.)

Sometimes, PCs decide that foreign travel shows the best hope of profit, excitement, and evasion of people who want to discuss past events or debts. What better time, then, to travel to far-flung Klatchistan, to take up the simple life of the soldier, and to defend the mountain passes on the edge of civilisation from the turban-wearing bandits beyond.

It might have been more honest of the employer to mention that those mountain passes were only incorporated into civilisation a few years ago, and that some of the turban-clad gentlemen might feel they had a plausible claim to the territory in question. For that matter, words like "bandits" and "civilisation" might start sounding hollow when one compares the barracks with the rajah's palace beyond the pass. But frankly, it's not the screaming scimitar-armed warriors that worry most of the troops out there. It's the curry.

(GMs should break out the Kipling before running this adventure. Or at least, the Hollywood movies with titles borrowed from Kipling.)

Adventure Seed: Llicensed Reseller

A master stone-circle engineer from Llamedos has decided that his craft is only marginally related to Strict Druidism, and in fact he'd like to establish a start-up organisation and become his own boss. However, given that the fundamental tenets of Strict Druidism involve a certain amount of bloody sacrifice, he's decided to leave his homeland to do it. Anyway, he feels that an organisation HQ somewhere warmer and drier might have its advantages. He is currently looking at various regions of the Disc, all preferably a little way from Llamedos.

What he is actually trying to establish is a rationalist astronomically-related religion which spends more time on agricultural planning than it does on sacrifices. He also wants to set it up as a sort of franchise operation, with local priests running their own circles and paying him commission for his ideas. Whether it will ever work is an open question, but the founder isn't totally stupid; he realises that he will need assistants, technical staff, sales representatives, and when the Strict Druids find out about him, guards. Would the PCs mind taking share options in place of salary?

Scenario Seed: Plumbing the Depths

A secret is buried under the streets of Ankh-Morpork: the sewer system built millennia ago by the Kings of Ankh. For centuries these tunnels have been known only to the Assassins' Guild, but now that they have been rediscovered, an expedition to explore them has been mounted.

More, however, is going on down there than any one person suspects. In faction-riddled Ankh-Morpork, there are always groups trying to exploit any discovery for its own ends. And when intrepid explorers are up to their cuisses in albino alligators, can they remember that their original purpose was to draw maps?

The PCs probably become involved in this affair through being hired by engineer and inventor Willem Moorland Robinson, who secretly wants to build a mule-drawn Underground Rail-Way through the sewers. First, however, he has to do a survey. He has reasonable funds and some tentative sponsors among the craft and merchant guilds, to whom he has hinted that the sewers may hold great opportunities if they are "properly managed." None of them know what he's on about, but none want to be left out of anything profitable. If the PCs aren't working for him, he will show up with a party of assistants including a few well-muscled apprentices and dwarfs.

Other NPCs involved include Ivan Shallowpans, Senior Flow Control Officer, as seen in *Full Court Press.* (If that adventure has been played, Ivan has now been promoted to a supervisory position, though he refuses to leave the hands-on operations to others.) He is down here to see what may need doing. And then there's Lithic, troll leader of the Honey Lane Irregulars, an underground (literally) cell of Deconstructivist Artists, with a plan for a major act of Art in Ankh-Morpork.[1] Some of her followers have grasped a bit about civil engineering, as appropriate to her artistic conception; they consist of a mixture of trolls and disaffected humans.

And, of course, the Assassins are seeking to recover the exclusive use of the sewers. To avoid carnage, assume that no-one is paying for any specific assassinations in this mission, and the Guild does not believe in blanket commissions, so (by the Assassins' Code of Honour) they can only kill in self-defence. (Or if they can persuade someone to offer the guild minimum for someone else, of course, but who comes down a sewer carrying that much cash?) *Scaring,* confusing, or otherwise harassing people, however, is all part of life.

For real complications, others may be seeking to disrupt the Assassins' planned disruptions. For example, the Fools' Guild might decide to prove their comic brilliance by pulling a prank on their annoyingly superior neighbours. Now imagine the mental state of a clown told that he is supposed to tweak the collective nose of every Assassin in the city.

Oh, and there must also be the Albino Alligators, which have wandered into the sewers from another set of narrative assumptions. Use the alligator details in the ***GURPS Bestiary,*** or improvise.

By the way – the sewers are only accessible at the end of long, hot summers, when the water table has sunk. For the rest of the time, they're mostly flooded. Don't be down there during a heavy storm . . .

[1] *Involving buildings sinking into the ground.*

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

Apocralypse, The: The much-debated End of the World predicted by Disc myth.

Archchancellor, The: The head of Unseen University, and nominal head of all wizards on the Disc.

Autocondimentor: A person who seasons his food before tasting it.

Bogeymen: Anthropomorphic Personifications of childish fears. Large and unattractive humanoid creatures given to lurking in cellars and wardrobes.

Borrowing: A witches' magical technique; "riding" in the mind of another being, usually an animal.

Breccia, The: Rumoured to be a secret troll criminal society. Such rumours are rarely good for the health of those spreading them.

Caroc Cards: The Disc's counterpart to the Tarot, used for both cartomancy and games.

Cenobiarch, The: The supreme head of the Omnian religion.

Chelonauts: Krullians appointed to take part in expeditions over the Rim in experimental vessels, to research the nature of Great A'Tuin.

Dwarf Bread: Nearly-indestructible baked products created by dwarfs for consumption on the march and for use as throwing weapons.

Edificeering: Assassins' Guild slang for roof-climbing as a hobby and sport.

Ghlen Livid: Strong alcoholic drink made from Vul Nuts (q.v.) through a process of freeze-distillation.

Headology: Psychology, as applied by witches. The placebo effect as a martial art.

Hogfather, The: The Disc's version of Father Christmas, but with more of a focus on pork and ham.

Hogswatchnight: The primary Discworld midwinter festival.

Iam: A rank above bishop in the Omnian religion. *Archpriests* are senior Iams; the Cenobiarch (q.v.) is the Supreme Iam.

Inhumation: Assassins' Guild euphemism for killing.

Morpork Daggers: Bottles with the bottoms broken off them, for use in brawls.

Necrotelicomnicon: The most fearsome work of dark magic on the Disc (also known as the *Liber Paginarum Fulvarum*). Written by Achmed the Mad (also known as Achmed the I Just Get These Headaches).

Octarine: The eighth colour of the Disc spectrum, visible only to the magically adept. Said to resemble a sort of fluorescent greenish-yellow-purple.

Octarines: Gemstones that resemble inferior diamonds, but which glow in strong magical fields.

Octavo: The Creator's own grimoire, which holds the Eight Spells that are apparently terribly important to the Disc's position in reality. Held in a secure room in Unseen University's library.

Octeday: The eighth day of the Discworld week.

Octiron: A very rare metal, appearing slightly iridescent, with exceptional and complex magical properties, mostly of a rather dark kind.

Octogen: A dangerously magical gas.

Oggham: An ancient runic alphabet, still used by some dwarfs in the Ramtops.

Patrician, The: The supreme government executive authority in Ankh-Morpork. Also the supreme government legislative authority in Ankh-Morpork. Also the supreme head of government administrative operation in Ankh-Morpork.

Quisition, The: The sharp end of Omnian religious absolutism. Now disbanded.

Ramtops, The: The Discworld's premiere mountain range, stretching from the Hub to near the Rim. Impressive, angular, heavy on magic, and a real problem to get over.

Re-annual Plants: Magical plants which grow the year before they are planted.

Sapient Pearwood: A type of tree, extremely rare outside the Agatean Empire, which produces wood with a mind of its own – totally immune to magical damage, but very useful for purposes such a wizards' staffs.

Turnwise: Clockwise. The way the Disc turns.

UU: Unseen University – the Disc's premier centre of magical learning.

Vermine: A small, cautious mammal occupying colder parts of the Discworld. Its fur is much in demand for trimming ceremonial garb.

Vul Nuts: A type of re-annual plant (q.v.) found in the Agatean Empire. Used in the production of Vul Nut Wine and Ghlen Livid (q.v.).

Widdershins: Counterclockwise. The way the Disc doesn't turn.

APPENDIX B: BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Chronicles

The following make up the Discworld series at the time of writing:

The Colour of Magic starts the series, introduces Rincewind, Twoflower, and the games of the gods, and shows Ankh-Morpork at its most archaic and sordid. This is also the source for information on both the Wyrmberg and Krull.

The Light Fantastic continues the saga of Rincewind and Twoflower and their tour of the Disc, taking in several new lands and people, including Cohen the Barbarian.

Equal Rites is the story of the only female student yet admitted to Unseen University, partly thanks to Granny Weatherwax, and includes much about both witchcraft and wizardry.

Mort is the tale of Death's apprentice, showing something of Disc metaphysics.

Sourcery sees the return of Rincewind, who gets to visit Klatch, and shows why sourcerers are a Bad Thing.

Wyrd Sisters reintroduces Granny Weatherwax, as she and the Coven deal with a tyrant in Lancre.

Pyramids concerns Assassins, Djelibeybi, Ephebian philosophy, and the problem of too much pyramid-building.

Guards! Guards! introduces Carrot Ironfoundersson to the Watch, under Captain Vimes, and shows how Ankh-Morpork really works these days. It also features the only true Noble Dragon to appear on the Disc in recent times.

Eric is a shorter story in which Rincewind returns from the Dungeon Dimensions and promptly takes his longest journey yet, involving both the Tezuman Empire and the Discworld's Hell (and its peculiar demons).

Moving Pictures sees Ankh-Morpork under attack from the Dungeon Dimensions through the peculiar magic of motion pictures.

Reaper Man introduces Azrael and the Auditors of Reality, who force Death to retire temporarily; the plot also features an assortment of Discworld undead and the strangest alien invasion of all.

Witches Abroad sends the Coven to Genua, and a confrontation with a renegade fairy godmother and the power of Discworld voodoo.

Small Gods illustrates the secret truth about Disc religion by telling the story of the reformation of the Omnian church.

Lords and Ladies brings the Coven back to Lancre just in time to face an invasion of elves.

Men at Arms shows the Watch growing and changing, and dealing with an attack on the Patrician.

Soul Music features another alien idea invading the Disc, and introduces Susan Sto Helit as Death's occasional understudy.

Interesting Times brings Rincewind back purely so that he can be sent to the Agatean Empire, and suffer reunions with Cohen and Twoflower.

Maskerade has Granny Weatherwax and Nanny Ogg seeking a new member for the coven – backstage at the Ankh-Morpork Opera House.

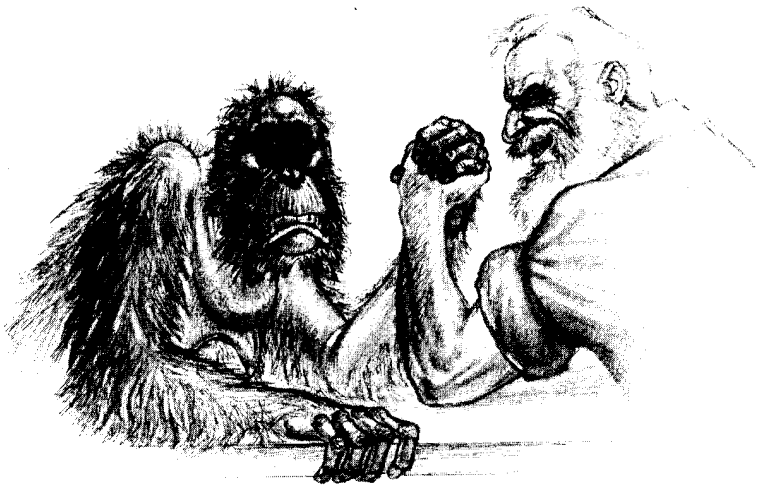
Feet of Clay presents the much-improved Watch with a complex problem involving golems and heraldry.

Hogfather explains what Hogswatchnight is really all about, as various established characters deal with a very peculiar assassination.

Jingo is newly released; it sees Ankh-Morpork going to war, despite its lack of an army.

"Troll Bridge" and "Theatre of Cruelty" are short stories. The former isn't quite a Discworld tale, but could be squeezed in; it concerns trolls and heroism. The latter is a snapshot of Carrot's early work in the Watch.

In addition, this volume contains one or two 'future echoes' from books written but not yet published, or even in the process of being planned. Discworld books turn up so frequently that *any* publication of this nature will miss at least one, but in more than 20 books so far the *basics* of Discworld geography and society have been pretty well established.



References

The Discworld Companion, by Terry Pratchett and Stephen Briggs, is the definitive guide to people, places, and phenomena mentioned in the chronicles. It is an invaluable reference for all Discworld GMs.

The Streets of Ankh-Morpork is a map of the walled centre of that city, with additional notes. It can be used to pin down the locations of events in either the chronicles or games set there.

The Discworld Mapp provides an over-view of the setting, very useful to GMs running quests and picaresque adventures.

Spin-Offs

The Discworld has inspired computer games, music, figurines, posters, a Christmas ('Hogswatch') card, T-shirts, jewellery, the Unseen University college scarf, a micro-brewery beer and many tattoos on the more devoted fans. A couple of stories have been adapted into graphic novels, and others have become animated films for TV and video release. There have also been radio dramatisations. Several of the stories have also been adapted for the stage, and the scripts of four of these have been published. At any one time there are probably forty or more amateur dramatic Discworld plays in production somewhere in the world.

The Pratchett Portfolio, a collection of portraits and sketches by Paul Kidby with text by Terry Pratchett, may be the best available guide to the appearance of many of the characters in the chronicles.

By The Same Author

Some other works by Terry Pratchett may be of direct interest to Discworld GMs:

The Carpet People, an early work (later revised), features another flat fantasy world.

Good Omens, with Neil Gaiman, is set in our modern-day world, and includes an alternative view of the Four Horsemen.

Strata is an SF novel – but there is this big flat disc in space . . .

Other Fantasies

The Discworld stories are written in a long-established tradition of comic fantasy, and initially at least owed to a great deal to what Pratchett has defined as 'the consensus fantasy universe' – the one based slightly on NW European mythology, filtered through Tolkien and a thousand role-playing games. The following are other building-blocks of that tradition:

The *Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser* series, by Fritz Leiber, is always worth reading. The city of Lankhmar does somewhat resemble Ankh-Morpork in the early part of the chronicles.

The Dying Earth and *The Eyes of the Overworld* by Jack Vance, specifically for the way in which magic spells and systems ('Chapstick's Wonderful Invigorator') are portrayed; they were a seed for a lot of RPG usages, and hence for the Discworld, too.

The Evolution Man (also known as *What We Did To Father* or *Once Upon an Ice Age*), by Roy Lewis, is an anthropological comedy. A few details of geography aside, it might almost be set in the early days of Disc history. It could inspire a merger of ***GURPS Discworld*** and ***GURPS Ice Age.***

Tanith Lee's "Flat Earth" series is not especially comic, but it's set on another disc-shaped world, with untrustworthy higher powers and strange societies, and could be of interest for those after more of a "high fantasy" feel in their games.

James Branch Cabell was one of the founders of 20th-century comic fantasy; his epic "Biography of the Life of Manuel," set in and around the mythical land of Poictesme, provides an alternative approach to such comedy.

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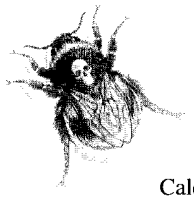

This index includes entries in the ***GURPS Lite*** rules (pp. 209-240), as well as the ***Discworld*** material. Note that each ***GURPS Lite*** page has two page numbers . . . one in sequence with the rest of the book, starting on p. 209, and one treating the first page of ***GURPS Lite*** as page 1. Internal references within ***GURPS Lite*** use the ***GURPS Lite*** page numbers, because ***GURPS Lite*** is also available by itself on the Web. Entries in this index and the rest of the book use the ***Discworld*** page numbers. If this is confusing, discuss it with the Bursar; he can make it worse.

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