

SPLINTERED REALMS MAGAZINE

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Patreon Support

Thank to you my patrons on Patreon who contribute every month so that I can keep creating things. In the spirit of the previous games I've published using this engine, I'm releasing things for you to use and develop in this way:

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- ♦ **The core game engine** and its mechanics are released under the *Open Game License* (see pages 26-27).

The cover is a tribute piece to the image that launched my gaming life the front piece to the 1981 B/X rules by Bill Willingham. Thanks, Bill.

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These kind people support me every month through their ongoing patronage, and I am incredibly grateful: Volker Jacobsen, Erik Tenkar, J. Quincy Sperber, Mark Margelli, Lloyd Rasmussen, Ron Edwards, Kathleen Kreinheder, Eric Nelson, Keith Kaminski, Jim Craddock, Chris and Brigid Hirst, and Elaine. You can sign up to support my work at: <https://www.patreon.com/MTDAA?ty=h>

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Opening Remarks

I’ve been a game designer since I was twelve years old. Ever since I first cracked open the red box and dumped those dice out on my bed, I’ve been tinkering with games, working up my own mechanics, and playing out fictions across a range of genres, examined through the filter of RPG mechanics.

Although I spent several decades designing my own game mechanics, a few years ago I gave up my pursuit of a better mousetrap, deciding instead to refine the best mousetrap I had ever seen. The B/X rules have become a launching point for most of my subsequent forays into design, including the fantasy rules *Saga of the Splintered Realm*, the superhero rules *Sentinels of Echo City*, and the sci-fi rules *Shards of Tomorrow*. These, along with my flagship game, *Michael T. Desing’s Army Ants: Legacy Edition*, are the foundation of my corner of the game publishing world. For the first time in the last thirty years, I don’t have a game I want to write. I’ve already written them.

Now, I am ready to transition into a new role: supporting the games that I’ve created. *Splintered Realms Magazine* is going to be the primary source where you will be able to find support for the four games I have currently available for the foreseeable future. Each issue will be a pay-what-you-want download, although it’s quite possible that content will eventually be collected into larger print editions for each separate game. As it always does, time will tell.

For now, dive in and see what’s going on across the Splintered Realms.

- Mike

Half-Orks, Gnomes, and Elves (Oh My):

New Archetypes for *Saga of the Splintered Realm*

The core rules for *Saga of the Splintered Realm* promised that future supplements would outline additional archetypes and spells. It's about time I follow through on that promise! Presented below are the half-ork assassin, the wood elf scout, the half-ogre barbarian, the human monk, and the gnome trickster. Have fun adding these to your saga!

Half-Ork Assassin

FEAT	5 + Level Modifier + better of STR or DEX modifier
Armor	Medium
Shield	None
Weapons	Medium
Magic	None
Talents	Levels 4, 8, 12
Abilities	Darkvision (60'); <i>sneak</i> ; <i>sneak attack</i> ; <i>poison use</i>

As a **half-ork assassin**, you are a member of a cruel and savage race. While you are a clever combatant, your true strength comes when you attack from surprise, or with a poisoned weapon. You take a bonus to surprise attack damage as a human thief of the same level. You cannot be lawful.

Poison Use

Once per turn, you may attack with a poisoned weapon. You poison your weapon (either a melee weapon or a piece of ammunition) with a virulent poison. You must purchase poisons by the dose. In many locales, poisons are illegal, and the use of poison may lead you into conflict with the law.

Poisons

Type (cost)	Effects
A (25 sp)	Living target rolls a FEAT or is paralyzed for 1 turn.
B (25 sp)	Living target rolls a FEAT or suffers +2d6 damage.
C (50 sp)	Living target rolls a FEAT at +4 or dies in 1d10 rounds.
D (75 sp)	Living target rolls a FEAT at +2 or dies in 1d10 rounds.
E (125 sp)	Living target rolls a FEAT or dies in 1d10 rounds.
F (200 sp)	Living target rolls a FEAT at -2 or dies in 1d10 rounds.
G (300 sp)	Living target rolls a FEAT at -4 or dies in 1d10 rounds.

Wood Elf Scout

FEAT	5 + Level Modifier + better of WIS or DEX modifier
Armor	Medium
Shield	None
Weapons	Medium (Heavy Missile Weapons)
Magic	Nature (see below)
Talents	Levels 4, 8, 12
Abilities	Darkvision (30'); <i>sneak</i> ; <i>track</i>

As a **wood elf scout**, you are from a secretive people dwelling in the deep wilds of the Splintered Realm. Wood elves are generally quiet and aloof, preferring time among their own kin to interactions with other species. Your attunement with nature gives you an additional +2 to both *sense* and *sneak* FEATS while outdoors. However, you take -2 to *sneak*

FEATS, and you take no bonus to *sense* FEATS, while indoors or underground.

You are also able to *track* foes. Use 1 turn to roll a FEAT to attempt to track a foe. Take up to -4 to the roll for difficult circumstances (for example, tracking stealthy foes or those who have walked across stone) or take up to +4 to the roll for favorable circumstances (for example, through snow or large numbers).

Half-Ogre Barbarian

FEAT	5 + LM + STR modifier
Armor	Light
Shield	None
Weapons	Heavy
Magic	None (see below)
Talents	Levels 4, 8, 12
Abilities	Darkvision (30'); 50' move; D8 for hit points; <i>sneak</i> ; <i>frenzy</i> ; +2 to FEATS to resist arcane magic; limit on arcane use; max INT 6; +LM to STR

As a **half-ogre barbarian**, you are a brutish, savage warrior capable of terrible carnage. Although you wear only light armor and cannot carry a shield, you offset this with considerable combat abilities. You travel quickly (base move 50') and are exceptionally hardy (using d8 instead of d6 to roll hit points).

You are especially suspicious of arcane magic; your natural aversion to such magic grants you +2 to FEATS to resist all arcane

spells and spell effects, but also makes it difficult for you to overcome superstitions; any time you encounter an arcane device (including enchanted weapons and armor), you must roll an INT check (target 20) or your superstition prohibits you from wielding the item(s). Although you can never have INT of better than 6, you take +LM to your STR score (so a STR of 12 at character creation becomes 13 at levels 1-2, 14 at levels 3-4, etc). You automatically take the *frenzy* talent; if you purchase this as an additional talent, take +2 to attack and damage when you *frenzy*, instead of +1.

Gnome Trickster

FEAT	5 + Level Modifier + better of INT or DEX modifier
Armor	Light
Shield	None
Weapons	Light
Magic	Arcane (see below)
Talents	Levels 4, 8, 12
Abilities	Darkvision (30'); <i>pilfer</i> ; <i>sneak</i>

As a **gnome trickster**, you use a variety of magic and sleight of hand to startle, amaze, and manipulate others. Although you are an arcane caster of a sort, you are limited to using spells that fall under the sphere of illusion. Unlike a human magic user, you do not get bonus spells for high INT. You are limited in your spell selection, having access to only the following spells (including a handful of new spells, detailed hereafter). As a gnome trickster, you have a base move of 30.

Trickster Spells by Sphere

Roll	Sphere 1	Sphere 2	Sphere 3
1	Arcane Armor	Arcane Lock	Aura of Invisibility
2	Blur*	Change Self*	Clairvoyance
3	Charm Person	Detect Invisible	Dispel Magic
4	Detect Magic	Invisibility	Displacement*
5	Light (Darkness)	Illusory Script*	Haste (Slow)
6	Magic Mouth*	Levitate	Hold Person (Free Action)
7	Portal	Locate Object	
8	Read Languages	Mirror Image	
9	Sleep	Phantasmal Force	
10	Ventriloquism	Web	

Roll	Sphere 4	Sphere 5	Sphere 6
1	Arcane Eye	Dream*	Permanent Image*
2	Charm Monster	Greater Phantasmal Force*	Shadow Conjunction*
3	Confusion		



New Trickster Spells

Blur (30'). The target becomes blurry and hard to see, taking +2 to sneak FEATS, +1 to AC, and making the specific characteristics of the individual difficult to discern (requiring a *sense* FEAT at -4) for 1 turn.

Change Self (touch). Change the physical appearance of the target to another creature of the same general size and shape. This lasts for 1 hour per caster level. Those attempting to see through the illusion must roll a *sense* FEAT at -4. Unwilling targets of the spell may roll a FEAT to resist.

Displacement (self only). You magically appear within 6' of your actual location, while your true form remains obscured, for 1 turn. The first attack against you automatically misses, and each subsequent attack is made at -4. This lasts for 1 turn.

Dream (anywhere in the same realm). You are able to send a dream vision to another living creature in the same realm. The creature will not realize that it was you who sent the dream unless a successful FEAT at -4 is made.

Greater Phantasmal Force (240'). This spell operates as *phantasmal force*. However, the force has AC of 10 + CL, has 1d4 hp per CL, and deals actual damage, up to 1d4 per caster's LM. Although this deals actual damage, no more than half of a target creature's total hit points (reflecting willpower and determination) are affected, and these points are automatically recovered at the end of the turn. This damage cannot kill a target, and will reduce hit points to no lower than 1 point.

Illusory Script (touch). You are able to scribe a message on parchment or another surface. Only the intended recipient may read the message; you select a recipient when the spell is cast.

Magic Mouth (30'). You enchant an object or device to speak a specific, short message any time a creature touches the object. The magic mouth will speak only once per turn, but is permanent unless dispelled.

Permanent Image (60'). You are able to create a permanent illusion of an object, creature, or item of up to 20'x20'. This image can be dispelled for up to 1 turn, or a creature can see through it with a successful FEAT at -4. Those seeing through it are aware that it is an illusion, but the illusion remains in place. The illusion is completely immaterial, and can be passed through without effort.

Shadow Conjuration (special). You are able to mimic any arcane spell used by a magic user of spheres 1-5, but such spells are only half as effective (in the case of a spell such as *fireball*, which deals half damage), or take -4 to their potency (for example, a spell like *disintegrate* that allows a FEAT grants an additional +4 to the FEAT to resist). Range, duration, and area of effect are typically the same as the parent spell.

Human Monk

FEAT	4 + Level Modifier + better of WIS or DEX modifier
Armor	None (see below)
Shield	None
Weapons	Light
Magic	None (see below)
Talents	None (see below)
Abilities	See below

As a **human monk**, you are a disciplined warrior, a monastic adherent of a rigorous lifestyle. Your focused dedication to life as a monk prevents you from learning other abilities (as reflected in talents). In the

same way, you cannot take a calling as a monk; mastering your role as a monk consumes all of your thoughts and actions.

You automatically learn new abilities and/or become more effective in unarmed (hand-to-hand) combat. All monks have the following abilities:

- ◆ When attacking unarmed, take the better of STR or DEX modifier to attack and damage rolls.
- ◆ If you wield a light weapon, you replace your primary melee attack with this weapon. You may wield two light weapons once you reach level 4, replacing your unarmed attacks, if so desired.
- ◆ You *sneak* as a human thief of the same level.
- ◆ Add level x10' to your movement rate; you have a base of 30' + (level x10').
- ◆ Although you cannot wear armor, you add your level modifier to armor class (having AC of 10 + LM + DEX Modifier).

Monk Abilities by Level

Level	Abilities You Earn
1	You make one unarmed attack per round, dealing 1d4 damage.
2	You make one unarmed attack per round, dealing 1d6 damage.
3	You take +4 to FEATS to resist mind control, charms, sleep, hold, and the like.
4	You make 2 unarmed attacks per round, dealing 1d6/1d4 damage.
5	You take an additional +2 to AC against ranged attacks. A foe rolling your LM or below with a ranged weapon against you indicates that you have snatched the projectile/weapon out of the air, which often forces an immediate morale check for your foe(s). For example, at level 9 (LM 5), you snatch any missile attack roll of 5 or less out of the air.
6	You make 2 unarmed attacks per round, dealing 1d6/1d6 damage.
7	You may strike foes only affected by enchanted weapons while unarmed.
8	You make 2 unarmed attacks per round, dealing 1d8/1d6 damage.
9	Mind over Matter. All damage you suffer is temporary, and is recovered at the end of the turn. You can still die normally.
10	You make 2 unarmed attacks per round, dealing 1d8/1d8 damage.
11	Quivering Palm. Once per day, you may force a living target of a successful unarmed strike to roll a FEAT (taking a penalty equal to your WIS modifier). On a failed FEAT, the target dies in 1d4 rounds.
12	You make 2 unarmed attacks per round, dealing 1d10/1d8 damage.

Ravenswood Vale

A Campaign Setting for Saga of the Splintered Realm

Welcome, Brave Adventurer

Your adventure begins here. May the road welcome you. You begin among the populace of the village of Wyvern Hollow, nestled in the heart of Ravenswood Vale.

Ravenswood Vale

You have never been outside the Vale, and travel beyond your own village is rare. While travel to the south leads you among noble people of dwarves and elves, few dare the northern roads.

The Village of

Wyvern Hollow

A haven of peace and tranquility, the Hollow is your home. No threat has ever tried to breach its stone wall.

Persons of Note

- **Ganymede.** The Wizard of the Hollow, also called 'the elder', or 'the grey man'. A kind if unusual fellow with a fondness for riddles.
- **Fisk.** Innkeeper at the Golden Flagon. Richest man in the Hollow. He loves gossip.
- **Lady Trask.** Mistress of Castle Ravenswood. Unwelcome in the Hollow.
- **Pax.** The Stoutling Sherriff. Survivor of the fall of Shire, and high watchman of the village. Haunted by memory.

Oliver Knight, A Common Rime

Oliver Knight, Oliver Knight

Oliver never did do what was right.

He gambled and argued and often did fight.

That was just Oliver, Oliver Knight.

In Oliver's youth he saw a great sight

He witnessed the mountains, their terrible height

He said "I will cross them, as that is my right!"

Yes that was fool Oliver, Oliver Knight.

His mother she begged him in terrible fright,

"Dare not those mountains, their terrible height

Please stay with us, stay with us, just for one night;

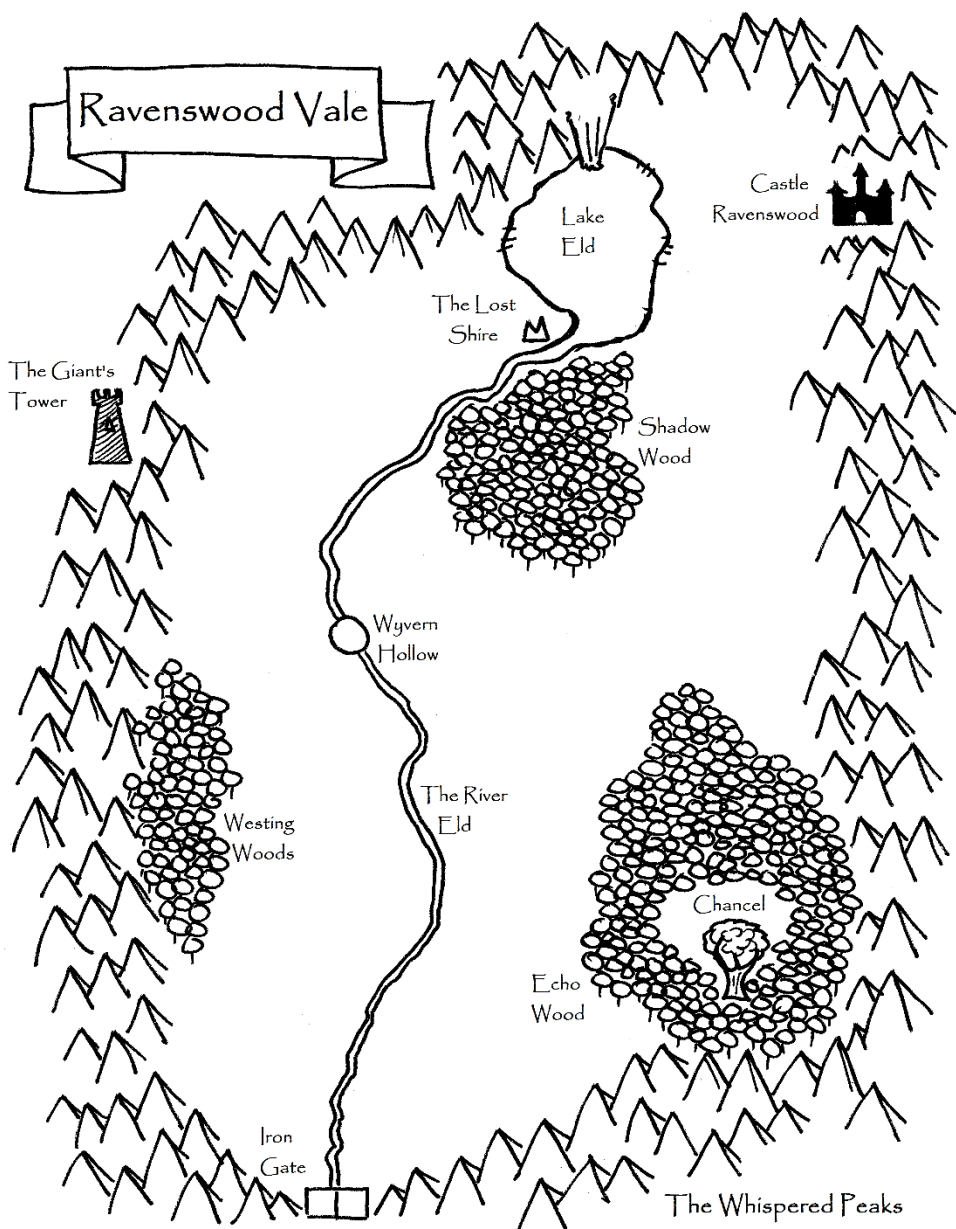
Oh do not go out there, sweet Oliver Knight."

But Oliver answered "I leave here tonight;

I will dare those mountains, their terrible height."

He gathered his things and then he took flight;

And that was the last of poor Oliver Knight.



GM's Journal: Session One

Ganymede is dying. The magical barrier that protects the village, tied to his own life force, is starting to fade. Everyone outside the village can feel it. His old friends are preparing for when he's gone, and his old enemies are positioning themselves to gain power.

As an **elder sphinx**, Ganymede has served as the guardian over the grave of the Raven Queen since her death 230 years ago. A new guardian will have to be found, or there could be trouble.

He's trying to hide his activities from others, and needs to keep things on the D.L. He sends the fellowship to recover 'an old thing' from a ruined tower on the outskirts of the Fallen Shire, a tower now taken by a small tribe of kobolds. He will equip them, and give each a *potion of healing* to take along. They will seek to recover a book that is magically sealed and locked, requiring a unique key.

They will return to find the village in mourning. In his will, Ganymede leaves them his neutral pet **pocket dragon** (elemental shadow) *Mischief*. Every 1d4 hours, Mischief coughs up a hairball. On a roll of 1 on 1d6, the hairball has a key to Ganymede's book...

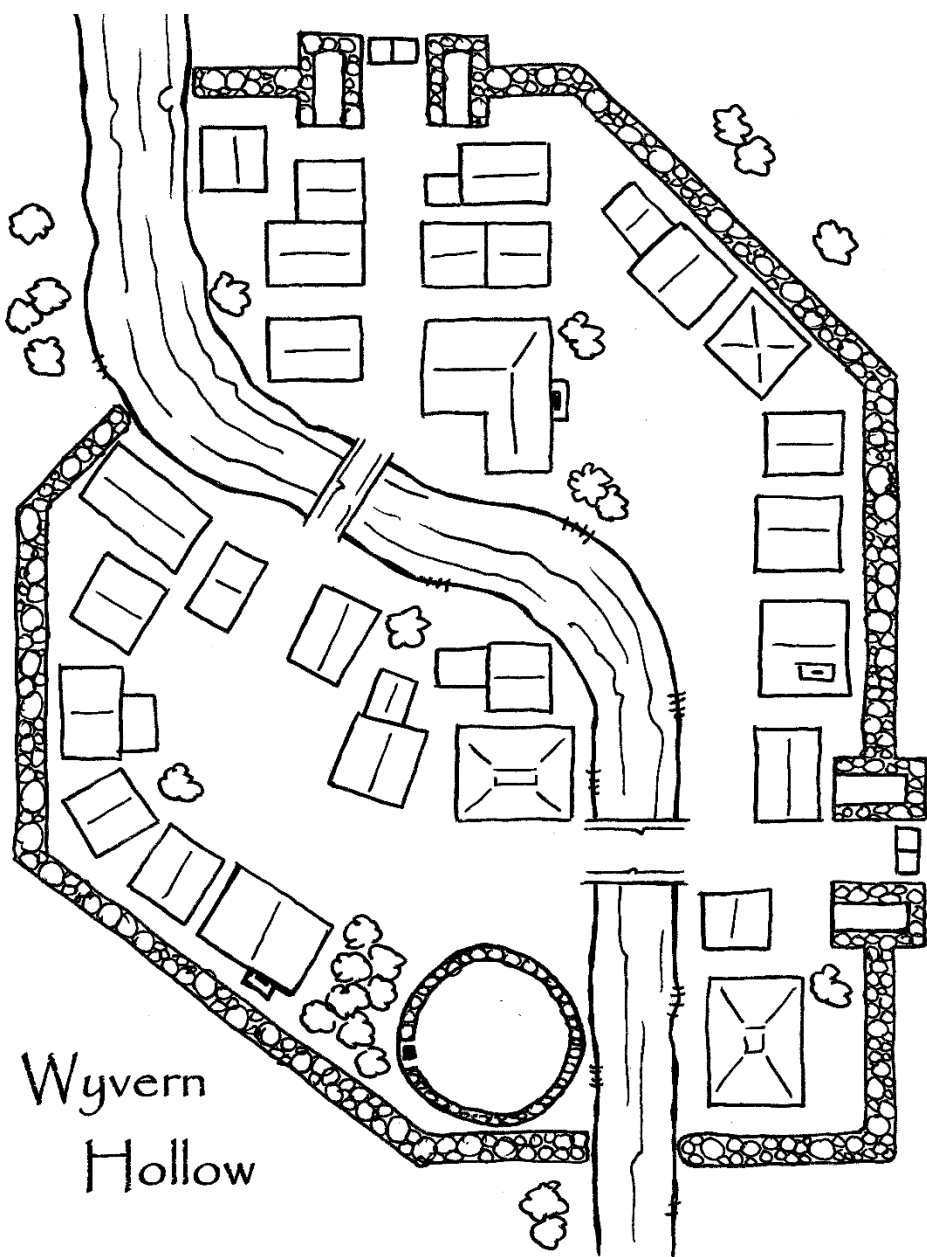
Before setting out, allow each character to learn of a rumor. If desired, you can allow a CHA check (target 20) to learn a second rumor.

Rumors (roll 1d12)

1. Something lives under the north bridge. I've seen it.
2. I saw a body floating in the river last week. It wasn't right.
3. You know that Ganymede? I heard he isn't even human.
4. Shadow Wood? It's nothing. An elf rumor to keep us from harvesting the lumber.
5. There was once a Raven Queen who ruled this vale. She was a cruel mistress.
6. That Lady Trask isn't normal. She runs with wolves, you know.
7. There's wolves in them northern woods. And they don't all like each other.
8. Pax is going to return to the Fallen Shire someday. Just you watch.
9. A mighty dragon once roamed this Vale. They called him Ruin.
10. Oliver Knight? He was a real person, I tell you.
11. The dwarves to the south won't let anyone cross through their iron gate. Ever.
12. The elves of Chancel are just as likely to stab you in the heart as they are to let you walk amid their woods.

Clarification on Rumors (for the GM only)

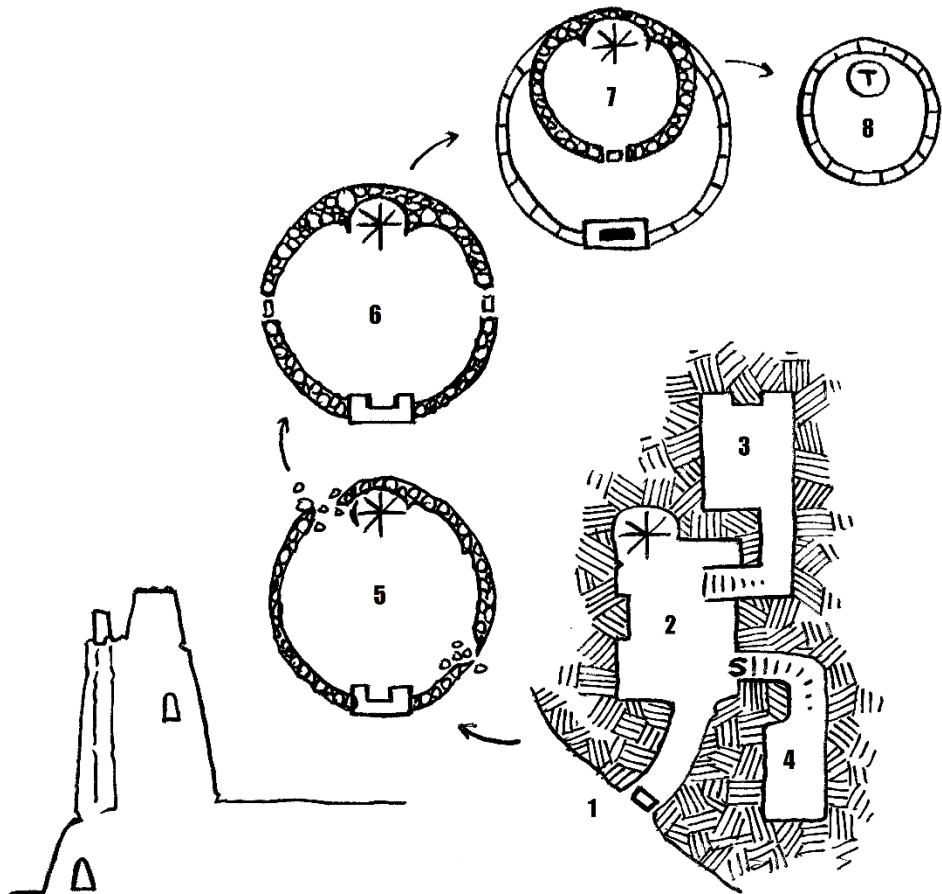
1. Yes. It's a reformed troll who helped Ganymede, and who has been given special protection by him. His lair (under the bridge) is virtually undetectable without magic. The troll cannot leave the village, or his many enemies would hunt him down and kill him.
2. It wasn't right, because it was a ghoul that had been destroyed. It floated downstream from the Fallen Shire. Wolves working for Lady Trask have begun to make raids upon the Shire, looking for a book that Ganymede is rumored to have hidden there. He did! (and the heroes are going to recover it – we hope).
3. True story. He's a polymorphed elder sphinx who loves the village and its people. But he's dying, and he needs to make a plan for succession.
4. That would be nice, but no. The entire wood is a battleground between a tribe of werewolves and servants of Lady Trask, who fight for the north lands, wanting dibs on Wyvern Hollow when its barrier falls. They all sense it weakening.
5. True story. This land is actually the land set apart for the Raven Queen, the lady of death. It was invaded by soldiers of Cavarria 230 years ago, when her castle fell to their forces. Her cloak was lost, but other artifacts remain hidden, and her body is entombed within.
6. Well, that would be because she's a vampire. She is the final remaining handmaiden of the Raven Queen, and seeks to take her matron's place. She has no interest in raising the Raven Queen, but wants to assume her mantle.
7. That's what happens when a tribe of werewolves and a different pack of dire wolves under the control of a vampire cross paths. Things get bloody.
8. Doubtful. He is so overwhelmed with guilt and sorrow for his failure to protect the shire (he was dragged from its burning ruins by Ganymede and brought here, after it fell to the undead forces of Lady Trask). He has trouble getting out of bed in the morning. However, he may prove instrumental in training and preparing the new heroes for their job...
9. Yeah, that's totally true. Ruin was put into a magical slumber by Ganymede 100 years ago. Unfortunately, he's starting to wake up.
10. That he was... er, rather, is. He's now captain of the Celestial Caravel the *Distant Horizon*. He may show up at some point...
11. Sure, but there's a good reason! The gate is the only way for evil to enter or leave the Vale, and they have sworn a sacred oath to maintain the gate. Those who dwell here are fated (cursed?) to never age. Any dwarf in the fellowship was born here, but was secreted to Wyvern Hollow so it would be allowed to grow.
12. It's not personal. The elves remember the Raven Queen and her tyranny, and would prefer that she (nor any successor) never returns. They don't trust anyone.



Random Encounters in the Northern Wilds:

Roll once every hour (3 miles) of travel. There is a 1 in 6 chance of an encounter.
Roll 1d6 for what the fellowship runs into...

- (1) 1d4+1 skeletons, wandering from the north
- (2) 1 hungry wolf, prowling too far
- (3) 1d4+1 kobolds with 1d4 rat pets
- (4) 1 small spider
- (5) 2 fire beetles, foraging near their nest.
- (6) 2d4 stirges in their nest, a rotting tree



The Ruined Tower

Key to the Ruined Tower

1. Entry. Door is lightly-barred (STR check to force it). **1 kobold** stands on guard duty.
2. Hall. **2 kobolds** are here, preparing armor and weapons. There are 4 suits of poor leather armor and 7 poor javelins they are in the midst of 'maintaining'.
3. Rear Hall. **2 kobolds** are rummaging through the belongings of the old wizard, ripping up his old clothes and tossing about miscellaneous items of little value (candles, cheap paper, various minor ingredients collected from nature).
4. Hidden chamber. The secret door requires a *sense* FEAT at -4 to locate (if the fellowship has been told of the door, roll at +4). The kobolds have not discovered it. Inside are 4 suits of chainmail armor, 2 suits of chainmail +1, 2 short swords +1, several good cloaks, and a variety of normal weapons (total value of the chamber is 500 silver). In addition, the wizard's prized possession is here, locked inside of a stout wooden box that is covered in runes. Ganymede will have told a fellowship he sends of this chamber.
5. Living Area. This was once a table, chairs, and cooking utensils. **4 kobolds** and **2 dire rats** pick through. The stairs at the north are blocked off with a variety of junk, but a rope runs the height of the fireplace (that's how the kobolds move through the tower).
6. Bedroom. This was the wizard's bedroom. **5 kobolds** now ransack the chamber. They are arguing over a strongbox that is locked and contains 37 sp and 5 gp. The stairs at the back are barricaded.
7. Upper study. This was once a study, but now is the nest of **giant bees** that have built a huge hive here, and that travel through the ruined trap door in the ceiling. Only **2 giant bees** are here at present, but a bee returns every 1d10 rounds (a maximum of **12 giant bees** live here; most are out collecting pollen). The nest has 2 pints of the healing honey, but no queen or elite bees at present.



**ECHO CITY MAP
BY MICHAEL HANSEN**

THE SUPER GAME MASTER IN SENTINELS OF ECHO CITY

Being the GM for any game presents a number of challenges, but this role is especially daunting in the world of supers RPGs, where the sky is not even the limit.

In considering titles for the person who runs the game, I considered a few different terms: Referee; Storyteller/Narrator; Editor. I went with **Game Master** for a specific reason. A master is someone who has not necessarily learned everything about a topic (because that's impossible for many topics), but has internalized enough of it to be able to independently operate in a correct way. I want to encourage you to internalize the game to the point where you can independently operate in the correct way. What does that look like? You don't refer to the rule book for every decision you make. You can make consistent rulings across a wide range of circumstances because of your understanding of the system.

Let me give you an example from teaching to illustrate the concept. When grading a written response on a state test, teachers are given a rubric. It may list 5 or so criteria for analysis, with a scaled score attached to each. The first time you grade a paper, you look at it along each of the qualities being evaluated. How well did it make the argument? How well did it use language? How are the mechanics? How well are details used to support arguments? What about the overall organization of the piece? The first few times, you give an individual grade in each category, and then you average them out. You might end up with a 4.75 as the grade for the paper, which you round up to a 5.

You do that 5 times. Then 5 more. Then maybe 10 more after that.

And then suddenly, around paper 25 or so, you suddenly are halfway through a paper, and you just know. It's a 5. You're processing all of those categories at once, digesting each piece in the larger context. You give the paper to a colleague to grade. She reads it for 45 seconds and hands it back. "It's a 5."

You've both mastered the rubric, and internalized the process.

Eventually, by playing the game for a while, you get a handle on what a superhuman check 'feels' like, and what a standard check 'feels' like.

"YES BUT" INSTEAD OF "NO"

It is tempting to say "no" when a player suggests something completely out of the realm of possibility. "No" is often the first response when a player asks if his character can try something that is logically impossible. I'd argue that you are better off to think of changing your "no" to "yes, but..." Here are some suggestions:

- ◆ Yes, but you have to spend a Resolve point to try a stunt (that's what the mechanism is there for).
- ◆ Yes, but you have to spend a Resolve point and make a FEAT at -4 (because this is kind of crazy, yo).
- ◆ Yes, but you have to spend a Resolve point and roll a natural 20 (because pushing the moon into the sun is a really, really, really hard to do).

SETTING TARGETS

When setting targets for a check, it is tempting to consider all of the factors involved and build to a number that accurately reflects exactly what the hero is attempting to accomplish. Exactly how many cars is he trying to lift with his magnetic control? Exactly how hot is the flame in the furnace he's trying to extinguish? Exactly how far is she trying to throw the tank?

I'd like to challenge your thinking on that. Instead of parsing out the specific details, consider only two things: is this *impressive*, and is it *important*?

- ◆ **Impressive** means that it's got a wow factor involved. Those watching this may be amazed.
- ◆ **Important** means that it's vital to the success of your current objective.

IN PLAY

- ◆ If it's **neither impressive nor important**, no roll should be required. You can just go ahead and do that. For a character with STR 20, carrying a car across a parking lot because you got mad at someone for parking in a handicap spot when they are not handicapped, no roll is required. You can just go ahead and do that.
- ◆ If it's **either impressive or important**, the base target should be 20, modified by circumstances. If you are using your fire control to create a fireworks display for an Americas Day celebration, this is impressive, but not that important. If you fail, you're going to have some disappointed spectators, but that's about it. In the same way, if you are using your fire control to put out a campfire just before a camper falls into it, this is important, although not that impressive. The base target for either of these should be 20.
- ◆ If it's **both impressive and important**, the base target should be 30, modified by circumstances. If you are trying to use your electric control to jump-start the entire city's power grid after a massive blackout that is causing rioting and people are dying by the minute from lack of power to life-support equipment, that's both impressive and important. The base target should be 30.

MOL, RULER OF THE UNSEEN PLANET

Note: Mol and his planet were originally devised for *Sentinels of Echo City*, and are presented for that game. However, Mol and his planet fit just as well in *Shards of Tomorrow*, and could easily be a planet that floats freely through space, or is hidden in the Fringe (or even behind another planet in one of the existing systems)...

Ashrak, the unseen planet, is the twin planet of Mars. Due to powerful technologies, it emits an anti-gravity pulse wave that neutralizes its gravitational signature, causing it to effectively 'disappear' behind Mars. It remains fixed in orbit with the red planet, always on the opposite side from earth. Mol is the warlord of this brutal and violent planet, and hoards the technology that would make its people free and powerful. There is an ongoing war between the Mol-Ek (his cruel and savage race of followers, 10% of the populace at about 100,000) and the Nuaru (a kind race of empathes, 90% of the populace at about a million). Some of the Ambassadors knew of the existence of this planet, and intervened in the past, but with them now dead, the only allies the Nuaru once had are gone.

90% of the planet is an uninhabitable wasteland, with only the north and south poles moderately hospitable. The south pole has a large lake, with Mol's Fortress at its center and a massive city inhabited by the Nuaru encircling it. Beyond this walled city, the world quickly degenerates to barren wasteland, the Sea of Ash. The north pole is a huge jungle that is the home to all native species. The only beasts at the north pole have been brought here by Mol and his servants. The species are limited to a half dozen forms of insect, two varieties of small wild lizard, and thunder beasts of massive size. There are only four varieties of flora in the entire jungle, but one of these is a poisonous flower that emits a powerful toxic gas.

MOL THE WARLORD (VILLAIN 10)

AC 21; HD 10d8 (hp 120); FEAT +11; Move 40';

Energy Staff Bolt (+8/1d10+5) or 2-Handed Staff (+11/1d12+6)

STR 18 (+6); INT 10 (+2); PWR 16 (+5)

DEX 12 (+3); CON 20 (+7); CHA 14 (+4)

Traits: Body Armor; Bolt (from energy staff); Invulnerability; Large; Mind Shield; Weapon (2-Hand Energy Staff 1d10)

Talents: Two-handed fighting

MOL'S SKY CHARIOT

AC 16; HD 3d8 (hp 15); Move 500';

Cannon (+2 targeting/3d6 damage/range 500')

MOL-EK CAPTAIN (VILLAIN 5)

AC 16; HD 5d8; FEAT +9; Move 40'; Energy Axe (+5/1d10+2)

MOL-EK BERZERKER (VILLAIN 3)

AC 14; HD 3d8; FEAT +7; Move 40'; Energy Axe (+3/1d8+1)

ALIASHA, THE NUARU PRINCESS (HERO 4)

AC 14; HD 4d6 (hp 19); FEAT +8; Move 40'; Staff (+2/1d6)

STR 7 (-); INT 12 (+3); PWR 16 (+5)

DEX 11 (+2); CON 8 (+1); CHA 14 (+4)

Charm; Empathy; Emotion Control

TYPICAL NUARU LEADER (HERO 3)

AC 13; HD 3d6; FEAT +8; Move 40'; Staff (+2/1d6)

PWR 12/CHA 12: Empathy; Emotion Control

TYPICAL NUARU CITIZEN (HERO 1)

AC 11; HD 1d6; FEAT +6; Move 40'; Staff (+1/1d6)

PWR 10/CHA 10: Empathy

THUNDER BEAST (HUGE)

AC 19; HD 10d12; FEAT +11; Move 60'; Bite (+10/5d6)

These huge reptilian beasts (40' long) answer only to Mol himself, who controls them through some form of advanced technology. They live in the wild places of Ashrak. The loud trampling of their movement forces targets within 120' to roll a FEAT or flee in fear for 1 turn.

THUNDER BEAST (STEED)

AC 16; HD 3d8; FEAT +7; Move 40'; Bite (+3/2d6)

These smaller thunder beasts (15' long) serve as steeds for many Mol-Ek captains, who lead Mol's forces into battle.

HOOKS FOR INCLUDING MOL

- ◆ A communication meant for the Ambassadors, a desperate plea for help to rescue the leader of the Nuaru from unjust imprisonment and certain execution, falls into the hands of the supers.
- ◆ A teleportation sphere or wormhole opens on earth, leading into the barren wastelands of Ashrak, and the heroes go to explore.
- ◆ Mol has grown bored with the sport on his planet, and learns of the existence of the supers. He kidnaps them, using them for entertainment in his gladiator pits, pitting them up against mutant Mol-Ek Berzerkers and strange varieties of thunder beast.
- ◆ The heroes learn that he has imprisoned a hero such as Tribune or the Messenger, using them as above, and the heroes go on a rescue mission.
- ◆ **Plot Twist!** Princess Aliasha has long believed that her father, King Asher, has been slain by Mol. Just the opposite! He actually serves as Mol's secret advisor, and is the mastermind behind the entire thing! Mol is actually *his* puppet. King Asher's strong attunement to emotions caused him to feel the suffering of his own people so fully and painfully that it eventually drove him insane, making him use Mol as a puppet to lash out, inflicting pain upon the Nuaru to help him ease his own suffering. He is on the verge of launching a campaign to wipe out the Nuaru entirely, although he suspects (rightly) that the psychic feedback from such an event would destroy his own mind entirely. He can no longer comprehend that the best way to end the suffering of his people is to remove Mol and grant them freedom; he cannot even conceive of this possibility due to his insanity.

BOUNTY HUNTING FOR FUN AND PROFIT: BOUNTY HUNTERS IN SHARDS OF TOMORROW

In order to contribute to order throughout the Five Systems, the High Council of Guilds has recently formalized the process of assigning and collecting bounties. In order to become a registered bounty hunter, an individual must apply through the High Council (approval is pretty much guaranteed) and pay a registration fee of 10 sc. Bounties fall into two categories: closed and open bounties:

♦ **A closed bounty** is assigned to a single hunter, or to a particular group of hunters. A closed bounty is generally kept quiet, and often is assigned when the one setting the bounty does not want to alert the target that a bounty has been posted.

♦ **An open bounty** is available to any hunter. Open bounties are usually listed on the 'bounty post', a published electronic database of all current open bounties, searchable by bounty amount, employer, or system. Each bounty listing includes at least 1 lead that gives some clues for hunters to pick up the trail. Remember that other bounty hunters may have 1 or more of the same leads, and an open bounty may bring as much conflict with other bounty hunters as it does with the target of the bounty.

LEADS (ROLL 1D6)

Roll	Lead
1	Contact information for 1d4 known associates of the target.
2	1d4 known aliases that the target typically uses.
3	1d4 known hangouts or favorite traveling spots of the target.
4	The most recent location where the target was seen.
5	Where the target was last headed to.
6	Recordings of the last communication the target transmitted.

TYPICAL BOUNTY VALUES (BY CL OF THE TARGET)

CL	Typical Bounty	CL	Typical Bounty
1	25 sc	7	500 sc
2	40 sc	8	750 sc
3	75 sc	9	1,000 sc
4	125 sc	10	1,500 sc
5	200 sc	11	2,500 sc
6	350 sc	12	4,000 sc

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN SPACE

When traveling through space, there are any number of strange, odd, or unexpected things that you can encounter. For each hour of traveling through space, there is a 1 in 10 chance of encountering something from the lists below. Roll first on list A, and then on another list, as needed.

A. WHAT YOU ENCOUNTER IN SPACE (100)

1. A ship (roll on list B)
2. Huge creature(s) (roll on list B)
3. A space station (roll on list C)
4. An asteroid (roll on list D)
5. An Aberration Cloud (roll on list E)
6. An asteroid or debris field (takes 2d6 rounds to move through, requires a control check every round to move through it, each failed check results in 2d6 damage to the ship, ignoring shields but not hull)
7. A comet (1 in 10 chance that it's on a collision course with something in the next 1d10 days)
8. A graveyard for old ships, or the scene of a huge battle with many wrecked vessels
9. A tear in the fabric of space leading into another realm or time, which flutters inconsistently, and may close at any time
10. An uncharted and randomly-moving wormhole that leads to a location within the Fringe

B. CREATURES IN SPACE (100)

1. Huge celestial whales that migrate between stars over the course of eons
2. A massive black sphere several miles long that consumes everything in its path
3. A giant godlike entity who eats planets
4. A swarm of tiny robots that work together as a hive mind, seeking out other technology to consume and absorb into its essence
5. A mammoth crystalline creature that grows by absorbing energy from living creatures it absorbs
6. A swarm of beings composed of pure energy that seek starships to consume the lives on board

C. WHAT'S ON THAT SHIP OR SPACE STATION (1030)

1. A creature (from the creature section)
2. Smugglers who are running late
3. Bounty hunters who mistake one of the PCs for their target
4. The deposed princess of the shadow lands
5. Escapees from a prison complex
6. A huge prison complex (with some inmates recently escaped)
7. Pirates seeking ships and small outposts to raid, using a false distress signal to lure potential targets
8. Undead remains or spirits of the former crew
9. Members of an alien race on safari
10. A giant ooze that has consumed all biological material on board, but is still hungry
11. A sentient computer with a god complex that has either wiped out or converted the crew
12. A crew that has been frozen for centuries, but is coming out of stasis, having traveled from another galaxy
13. A crew that only spends one day per year in this realm, and then slips out of phase, moving into an alternate reality where time flows very slowly
14. A gamblers' den
15. A society of hedonists
16. Creatures from the distant past
17. Creatures from the far future
18. The evil twins of the player characters, pulled from an alternate reality
19. A scientific team on a research grant, sent on a mission to gather data on celestial dust
20. A staunch team of Confederates who don't know that the war has gone badly
21. A lot of garbage, and the pilot can't get clearance to land on any settlement
22. A massive weapon prototype that has never been tested
23. A powerful ancient alien who travels the universe collecting rare items
24. A crime boss with his cartel
25. A race of albinos who have lived aboard for generations, never knowing life outside this ship
26. A paranoid loner who believes that the collective is monitoring him, and is trying to keep a low profile
27. Microscopic parasites
28. A cosmic zoo with a variety of exotic creatures from many planets
29. Slavers
30. A broken communication drone with a message that was never delivered

D. WHAT'S ON THAT ASTEROID? (1d6)

1. A huge cosmic eel that devours starships
2. A small colony of miners delving for a rare mineral at the heart of the asteroid
3. A naturalist who has constructed a bio-dome and is maintaining rare flora
4. A seemingly abandoned outpost
5. A colony of religious zealots dwelling in a temple
6. Workers building a theme park that will one day be the system's number one attraction

E. ABERRATION CLOUD (1d12)

1. Changes the genders of the crew
2. Causes living creatures to exchange bodies
3. Causes aging
4. Causes disease
5. Causes madness
6. Gives psionic abilities as a terran templar (1 standard stunt attempt per turn)
7. Causes loss of 1 point from an attribute
8. Causes increase of 1 point in an attribute
9. Changes one element to another
10. Animates technology
11. Blocks all communications in or out of the cloud
12. Causes all living creatures to fall into a deep sleep, taking part in a shared dream that they must work together to escape

Note: Aberration Clouds are large expanses of mystical gas (typically 1d10 miles wide and 1d10 miles long) that drift through the cosmos. These fields affect creatures and objects moving through them. All applicable creatures or items must roll a FEAT at -4 or suffer the effects of the Aberration Cloud.

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