

Edge Work

Issue #2

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In This Issue:

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 - Magic Alternative
 - A Super Option
- and more!

The Fanzine of

**OVER THE
EDGE**™

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Kaput meantime

Hey look! Another place I get to spout off about just about anything I like. Gen Con, my OTE game, the Internet, anything, and people are not only have to listen but they must take me seriously! Well,... all right... maybe at least they'll read...

Kick-off at Gen Con

At 1992's Gen Con Game Fair in Milwaukee, Over the Edge was debuted by Atlas Games. This year, *EdgeWork* made its debut, much to the delight of OTE gamers. Aiding its success was the fact that Atlas Games actually had a booth (instead of being forced to share one as they did in 1992). I had to run a game first thing Thursday morning and so my friend Bob and his business associate Joel delivered the box of *EdgeWork* #1s to the Atlas Games booth when it opened.

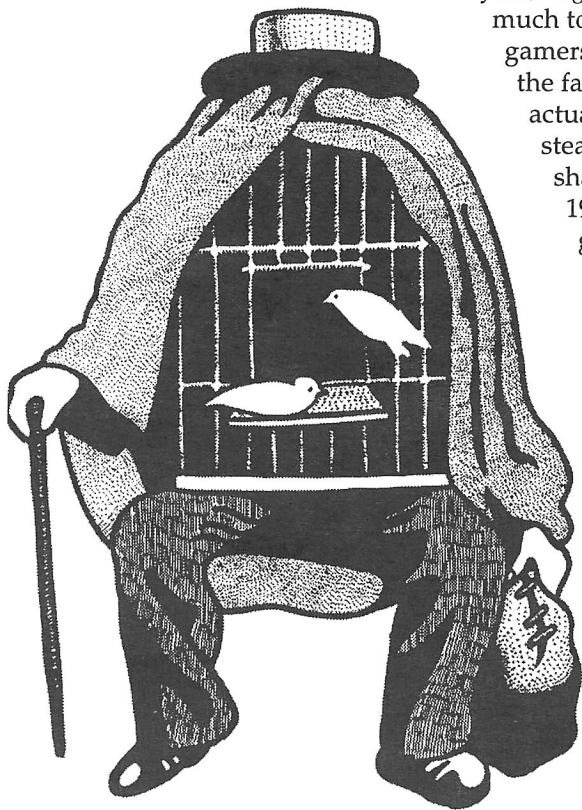
Atlas was conveniently located off of one of the main causeways of the dealer's room and far enough from the TSR castle to be out from under its dark

shadow. Fortunately for me, they were also just up the aisle from Abalone games. (I'm a big Abalone fan! <grin>) Since Atlas was doing me the favor of pushing my other fanzine (*Redcap*, for *Ars Magica*), I basically split my time during the convention between the two booths when I wasn't running games.

The experience let me meet a number of gaming honchos and semi-honchos who breezed by the Atlas booth to say hello and scam some of the latest Atlas product. Robin Laws, Ken Ralston, Paz and Angus of *The Last Province*, Nicole Frein (née Lindroos) and her Mark, Lisa Stevens and her new toy, Dave Nalle, Stewart Wieck and hosts of others all stopped by. Some of these folks I had met before but many were new friends.

I also ran an OTE game at Gen Con. "Stream of Consciousness Blues" was an interesting experience of role-playing. Seemed that most of the folks had a good time during the game. At the end of it, they all gave me a nice round of applause. First time that's happened to me at Gen Con!

But I think the seminal experience of Gen Con lies not in its games. The hordes of people who descend upon MECCA each year and game from 8:00 A.M. to midnight only to retreat to their hotels and grab a brief rest before going at it again are only getting part of the Gen Con experience. For each year there are a number of parties thrown by various parts of the gaming industry at near-by hotels. Completely apart from the opportunity to swill a few brews on someone-else's tab, these gatherings give us the ultimate opportunity to do what drew us to gaming anyway: socialize! Imagine your typical party. A room full of folks



chatting amiably and consuming party foods and drinkables while listening to some music perhaps. Now add in the fact that *all* the people have at least one thing in common with you: they are gamers! Imagine discussing the relative merits of metaphysics based on the opposing views that there is an objective reality and that reality is determined by consensus belief only to discover that your opponent in this discussion is someone like Robin Laws or Ken Ralston!

That, I think, is the ultimate Gen Con experience. You can wax poetic about your good games and the exciting seminars and the schmoozing in the dealer's room but when you get right down to it, conventions are for talking to people. If you don't do it (either at a party or a bar or a restaurant) you're just missing out. And if you don't go to conventions of any type, you'll just never know.

The two parties I attended at least briefly this year were the Alarums and Excursions (A&E) party and the White Wolf party. A&E is the longest-running gaming apa, a collection of some of the best gaming writers all putting their thoughts into something like a computer bbs but on paper. Another way to describe it would be a "cocktail party in print." And every year at Gen Con they throw a party so that members and friends can meet face to face. Given these people's tendency to talk about the philosophy of gaming and game design, some of the con's most interesting gaming conversations happen at this party. And the people are really nice too. It's a relatively small affair and tends to be intimate and fun.

White Wolf's party draws hordes of people that follow their games. From the small start in their hotel room a few years ago, they've moved into hotel function

spaces to provide the kind of room their following needs. This tends to be a more raucous party with plenty of drinkables and, this year, a nice little collection of cheese and fruit on a buffet table. But the noise and crowd just didn't really appeal to me. Especially after Mark Hagen threw a half-full glass of beer on me. He protested that he was aiming for John Nephew but it was my blazer that bore the brunt of this attack. By then it was middling late anyway and I wandered on back to my hotel.

In other news, the glorious President of Atlas Games did his patriotic duty and had the editor of this humble, horrid rag arrested. Klingon jailers apprehended him in the middle of an Abalone game/sales pitch and dragged him, screaming, to their vile cells. There he was imprisoned with a lowly shop-lifter and wallowed in abject dishonor until the Klingons recognized his status as a political prisoner and put him in with a war criminal, Tom Johnson of Task Force Johnson. Years later, his sentence finally finished, the editor was released to live once again under the mercy of the exalted President.

My OTE series start...

You may recall from my last editorial that, despite launching a career as OTE's top spokesperson, I hadn't actually started an OTE series as yet. Well now I have. My regular Sunday game needed a break and when the guy who wanted to run Warhammer Fantasy Role Play didn't show up, I offered to run OTE.

It took a while to convince everyone to give OTE a shot. Mostly because we're just a bunch of apathetic slobs. "Whatta you want to play?" "I don't care, whatta *you* want to play?" But when it came down to it they relented. So then we started creating characters.

The group is fairly creative but limited somewhat by not knowing what OTE is all about. I ended up with quite a few fringe talents among the group, something that seems to occur in the one-shot games I run now and again as well. I have an elderly English woman on the trail of a long-lost nephew, a swashbuckling Hollywood actor, a yoga master and teacher, a soft-hearted PI, a former secret agent trying to retire, a mind-reader from another planet and a street-bum with a technicolor coat.

My only real struggle in character creation was with the former secret agent. He wanted to take Blind as a flaw but then have a fringe power that allowed him to sense things around him (i.e., the Daredevil comic character). Once I convinced him that this combination didn't make Blind a Flaw, he altered his conception some to come up with a workable character.

The only other difficulty was when two of the players wanted their characters to have guns upon the island, in spite of being warned about the consequences. We ran through brief scenarios in which they did a good job of convincing me that they would be able to sneak their personal firearms onto the island. The first is a one-shot charge in the base of one character's cane (like a shark gun) and is unlikely to get him in deep trouble until he uses it. The other is your standard issue semi-automatic pistol with one clip of ammunition. This will be causing its owner some grief in the future but for the time being I've got him so paranoid that he keeps it in a locked metal box on the top shelf of his closet. So there is no real danger of it coming into play anytime soon.

Over the course of a couple of sessions I think I've got them started along some plot lines that

should pan out nicely. You might recall, however, that my fear about how I might run OTE was that I would screw up the setting. Well, true to form, I did just that. A few of the PCs broke into a storefront and the whole group of them ended up in a little fight with the security force that came to the alarm. I made two mistakes with this security force. First, the shop was in Flowers and the security wasn't the Aries Gang. Second, the four operatives who responded had the red dagger emblems of Safe n Sound on their uniforms but later identified themselves as members of Dunkleburg's Security to questioning PCs.

In the flow of the game, I just let these things slide not even noticing the mistakes. Later, when I looked over my game notes I discovered them and gave myself a mental slap on the forehead. But, remembering a seminar on creativity that I attended for work earlier in the month, I set about on a path to fixing those problems. The method I learned in that seminar, I think, lends itself quite well to OTE problem solving and has actually turned my weaknesses as an OTE GM into strengths.

The basic idea of the method is to define a paradox and then ask yourself, "How could this be true?" For example, if you're looking for a way to find a new market for refrigerators, you might take an obvious relationship about refrigerators and create a paradox: Refrigerators are hot! Then ask yourself the determining question, "How could this be true?" and come up with the idea that, as insulated boxes, refrigerators might be useful to Eskimos as a place to keep food from freezing during the long winter.

In this spirit I took the problem that I had created and posed the question. "How could Safe n Sound agents say they worked for Dunkleburg's?" or "How could

Dunkleburg agents get Safe n Sound emblems?" From there came the "Why?" questions. And on Al Amarja, the whys can lead you anywhere, right? So no matter how preposterous the reasoning, it could be true. The agents could be under some form of mind-control, one security agency could be trying to set the other one up as incompetent (most of the PCs escaped after all), a third party could be trying to bring down both of them.... The possibilities are really endless.

And now that I've "discovered" this method, I feel a lot more freedom as an OTE GM. There are no more mistakes, there are only opportunities.

OTE on the net

If you're looking for an even more avenues to explore OTE in all its glory, the OTE Internet Mailing List is for you! All you need is access to the Internet to join this messaging service dedicated to OTE. While you might find occasional mentions of OTE elsewhere, only on the OTE list can you be guaranteed devotion to OTE topics alone.

To subscribe to the OTE list send a message with your Internet address to: edge-owner@cool.khis.com. Clay Luther, the list administrator will get you set up and in no time at all you'll be receiving the latest word on OTE!

Frequent contributors to the OTE list include Jonathan Tweet, Robin Laws, John Nephew, Woody Eblom and yours truly. Get the dope straight from the grower, subscribe to the OTE list today!

And EdgeWork can also be reached on-line. Mail sent to peter.hentges@cool.khis.com will get me and I'll give it the full consideration it deserves.



Involuntary measure

Phil Masters dominates this installment of EdgeWork's column of new places and faces for Al Amarja. Phil was a little late getting his submission into Friend or Foe so we benefit from his tardiness. Here are four new inhabitants of the Edge from Phil's fevered brain, and Nicole Lindroos Frein tells us about her Neighbor Lady.

Bernadette O'Craig

Chambermaid and Slightly Naive Natural Witch

Bernadette O'Craig is a farmer's daughter from the rural west of the Republic of Ireland and a charming, optimistic, open-hearted young girl, too. Not, one might think, a natural emigrant to Al Amarja. Indeed, she often wonders what she is doing here; but she thinks that her mirror knows what it is talking about.

Bernadette is, in fact, a natural magic-wielder; someone with a genetically-derived talent for astral manipulation so powerful that it needs no special training. (That said, her natural open-mindedness and wide-eyed fascination with the world in every conceivable aspect wouldn't necessarily block any fringe or magical talent.) However,

her ability needs a focus to work through; she finds it in any decent mirror.

When Bernadette looks at a mirror, it stops reflecting light, and starts projecting images from the astral plane in the form of what look like modified reflections. At first, other observers may not notice this fact, unless there is a large amount of magic around. But sooner or later, they will see that individuals look a little different in the glass than in reality, backgrounds look distorted and heavy with shadows, and a few objects seem to be wrapped in light (or darkness). If anything masked or disguised is in view, the disguise will be at least partly eliminated in the reflection. All of this only applies while Bernadette is looking in the glass.

She herself can do a lot more with mirrors. Her "reflection" is in fact her astral body; she can transfer her consciousness "through the looking-glass," at which point her physical body slumps, her reflection smiles and then the mirror returns to normal except that it no longer reflects Bernadette's inert physical body. (This is an effect that could lead to tricky misunderstandings for people with old-fashioned ideas about supernatural beings and mirrors.) Furthermore, her "reflection" appears to have knowledge that Bernadette herself lacks; presumably by virtue of its access to magical symbol-functions. It sometimes "talks" to Bernadette when she looks at it, giving her suggestions, warnings, and advice.

In fact, although it seems certain that Bernadette's "reflection" is simply her astral body, it has some unusual traits. It seems rather more worldly-wise, assertive, and aggressive than her normal

personality; its character is far more that of a self-assured, tough and slightly secretive woman. This probably just means that experience of the astral plane has made Bernadette very slightly crazy, making her slip schizophrenically into this different persona when she uses her powers. This could be bad news; multiple personalities are not always regarded as a sign of health. The alternative, that the reflection really is someone else, could be worse.

(One relatively mild option is to decide that Bernadette is actually the reincarnation of a skilled medieval witch, and when she accesses some of the witch's powers, the witch's personality tends to assert itself. Of course, that could lead to other complications...)

Despite her tougher "astral persona," and because of her optimistic, good-natured mind-set, Bernadette's vision of the astral plane is a lot less deformed and frightening than most people's. Mostly, it looks like the "real world," but flooded with more light and plunged into deeper shadow. Its more hostile denizens generally appear humanoid to her, but hulking, lumbering, and dark, with few visible features; almost like a child's idea of the sort of strangers one shouldn't talk to.

At home in Ireland, Bernadette kept her mirror-magic a secret, and did little with it. However, a few months ago, her reflection told her, loud and clear, to travel to Al Amarja. Why, it won't say; apparently, it feels that something there needs or deserves her attention. Quite possibly, it actually doesn't know what it has sensed; it seems to enjoy projecting a sense of mystery, even to Bernadette herself. It may be working against one of the many great evils to be found on the island; it may hope to get Bernadette more entangled in the supernatural there, strengthen-

ing the side of her personality that it represents; if she is actually the reincarnation of a powerful individual, it may be pursuing some personal vendetta or debt from this past life.

In Al Amarja, Bernadette has found work as a chambermaid in Cesar's Hotel, living in staff quarters there. Off-duty, she is sometimes to be found in cafes in Sunken or Flowers Barrios, letting the rougher side of Al Amarjan life slide past her, but her reflection might direct her almost anywhere. On Sundays, she attends Mid-Eastern Compromise services in the Temple of the Divine Experience; she is a good Roman Catholic, but not too hot on the precise details of doctrine. At other times, she shuts herself up in her room and enters her mirror, trying to find out what she should be doing next.

Irish woman, age 21, 165 cm, 61 kg, innocuous, with dark hair and green eyes; dresses plainly.

Languages: English, some Gaelic, a few words of Al Amarjan patois.

Attack: 2 dice (if she has to)

Defense: 2 dice

Hit Points: 16 (healthy)

Traits

Astral Projection, 2 dice: She requires a mirror to trigger this trick, as described above, but otherwise, she rates as a pretty good operator on the astral plane. (Sometimes "faints" while looking at a mirror, leaving no reflection.)

Oracular Reflection, 2 dice: It would be really interesting to know how her reflection finds out so many secrets, but it isn't telling. Mostly but not always, it obtains data relating to magical/supernatural phenomena. To extract information from it, she has to talk to it; others can hear what she says (although she talks quietly), but only she can "hear" the answers. ("Talks" to mirrors.)

Mirror of Truth, 1 dice: When she is looking in a mirror, it tends to show reality rather than appearances, replacing illusions and seemings with the truth, and showing magical items as obviously "strange." (Looks carefully into mirrors.)

Astral Persona, 3 dice: If encountered on the astral plane, she comes across as a competent, adaptable individual, and everything she does on this level (dealing with astral entities, fending off magical assaults, whatever) justifies that impression. (Projects a tough, competent air when dealing with magic.)

Innocuous Charm, 3 dice: She is so pleasant and open and friendly that many people are pleasant right back to her, even on Al Amarja; she can get answers and co-operation by this most simple of tactics, and she doesn't even know she's being clever. (Open, friendly, polite demeanor)

Relatively Innocent, penalty die: Being nice and open and honest may achieve results sometimes, but not always. Faced with unrelenting hostility, fanaticism, cruelty, or calculated mendacity, she suffers a penalty die on attempts to handle the perpetrators socially or emotionally, due to emotional shock and inexperience of guile. She is also a committed Catholic, and may annoy devotees of other beliefs by her refusal to back down from that position. (Open, friendly, naive demeanor)

Scenario Idea 1

While staying in Cesar's, one of the PCs is still in her room one day when room service comes by. The chambermaid goes round, cleaning briefly but efficiently, and is just wiping the mirror when she seems to look at her reflection briefly, murmurs "oh dear", and seemingly faints (dropping out of sight of the mirror).

Bernadette has received an urgent instruction from her reflection, and headed off into the astral plane. The PC's first (and perhaps, for the moment, only) problem is to look after the unconscious body. The admin staff at Cesar's will be quite willing to help when contacted, although they may ask a couple of tactful questions to check if the PC did anything to bring on this problem. (They have to be alert for tricky, malicious, or dangerous guests.) If the PCs notice Bernadette's lack of reflection in a mirror, it's up to them how to react; if anyone points it out to the Cesar's staff, they will be concerned and confused, but their first instincts will be to keep such weirdness quiet, to avoid scaring any guests. (Staff, such as Mugly Flats, with other loyalties, may report back as appropriate, leading to more complications in the plot.)

Bernadette will "recover" in a few hours, and at first, she will refuse to talk about the incident, beyond saying that she feels fine now. However, the problem she was confronting still exists, and the next time she gets to a mirror, her reflection will suggest to her that the PCs might be able to assist, and after all, they are already involved.

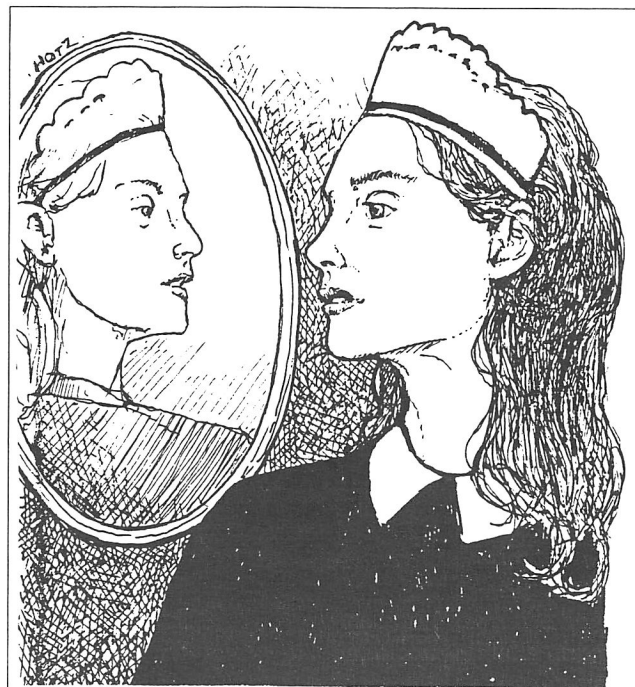
This will lead to a conflict with some supernatural problem from around Al Amarja. This could mean some open exponent of black magic, such as Sir Arthur Compton (or more likely, rather, his bennies), or a slightly-more-competent-than-most Satanist gang; a "traditional" supernatural threat, such as a vampire; or it could mean some slightly less obvious operator, such as Paul Weisberger (of the *Philosopher's Stone*). For a really heavy incident, Bernadette may have been noticed by Cheryl D'Aubainne, and have been shadowed astrally by Juana Salvador, who has orders not to

attack (yet) while other of Cheryl's followers investigate on the physical plane.

(Alternatively, any time that a PC staying in this hotel knowingly or unknowingly brings something magical back to the place, Bernadette may become aware of its reflection, and somehow get involved in the related adventure.)

Scenario Idea 2

There's a bar on Flowers with a big mirror behind the counter, visible through the window from the street outside. One afternoon, Bernadette and some of the PCs both happen to be down that way. Sharp-eyed characters may see her glance casually into the bar; anyone nearby will notice her gasp and run off down the street. Very alert folk will note a normal-looking passer-by fade off the street. Seconds later, a big, distorted, dangerous-looking fellow (perhaps a mutant?) emerges from the bar and sets off in the same direction as the girl, not running, but moving with determination. Inside the bar, a little confusion has been caused; the big fellow evi-



dently seems to have sneaked behind the counter, than leapt over it, spilling a few drinks on his way.

Bernadette has, in fact, spotted a demonic entity which was maintaining human form, but with some difficulty, being more powerful than subtle. Her truthful perception of it in the mirror has shattered most of the illusions it was projecting, forcing it closer to the form she perceived (and to the mirror). It wants revenge; more to the point, it wants to stop her imperilling its secret mission on Earth.

The first problem for the PCs, once they realize what is going on, may be to protect Bernadette, or at least to deal with the confusion on the streets of the Edge as the entity storms after her, trampling on anyone who gets in its way. If any law enforcement types intervene, the being will shrug them off; this may lead to an escalation of violence, and the main problem for the PCs may then be to keep their heads down low enough. If it faces overwhelming force, the being may fade back to its plane of origin, or concentrate on regaining a harmless appearance, but it will certainly be back on Bernadette's trail, sooner or later.

Of course, there is also the question, in the longer term, of what the creature was up to before it got side-tracked. If the PCs team up with Bernadette, her good nature and high principles will ensure that she worries about that, even if they don't.

An entertaining variation on this theme would be to have Bernadette see Michael d'Angelo (see below) in a mirror. She would be awe-struck; he would be primarily concerned to keep her quiet, without harming her, and to stop her persistently running to him for aid against evil. He might sub-contract the problems she brings him to anyone convenient. Such as, say, the PCs.

Michael d'Angelo

Resting Soldier

If anyone asks, Michael d'Angelo describes himself as "a soldier, relaxing between battles." If asked if he's a mercenary, he laughs and says no. If anyone suggests that Al Amarja is a pretty odd place to relax, he shrugs and says "I've seen worse than this". His appearance and manner suggest that he could well be a very good field officer; he's evidently tough, intelligent, and self-assured.

Socially, he's great company. He's clearly determined to party, and while he'll usually let others take the lead, he'll join in with anything, provided that it's reasonably moral. (It may take characters a while to notice that he doesn't take any interest in blatantly immoral or illegal pleasures.) Mostly, though, he prefers a relatively quiet style of fun, sipping drinks and swapping stories. He's clearly seen a lot of wild things in his time; anyone studying his stories will note that he's usually a passive observer in the events described. In the company of military folk, and after a few drinks, he may slip in what sound like "tall tales" about battles fought with swords against unspecified enemies.

The truth is that Michael d'Angelo is a soldier in the war between good and evil on a level that makes all human concerns look petty and trivial. As a faithful servant of the light, he's been given a few decades to rest, in human guise, and he's determined to enjoy it. Al Amarja strikes him as a good place to spend his time, because the boundaries between good and evil, right and wrong, seem fuzzier here, which lets him relax from his normal attitude of absolute rigor, and here he can experience human existence in the

greatest possible variety. Most of his stories come from earlier parts of his vacation, when he wandered the Earth.

He may be a major power for good, but he's taking a break just now, and he doesn't want to be disturbed. If anyone tries to involve him in serious matters, he just ignores them. If someone tries, knowingly or otherwise, to appeal to his better nature, he might say "Ten thousand years of tyranny on Earth are just an eye-blink in eternity. What's it to me?"

That might make him sound like a cold fish, but nothing could be further from the apparent truth. He surely wants to enjoy himself and human beings provide the context for his relaxation. If anyone or anything forces him to exert his real capabilities (let alone return to serious battle) he will be very annoyed. How do you like having your vacations interrupted?

If anyone wants to find Michael for any reason, they are best advised to check out the classier bars and cafes in Broken Wings; occasionally, he takes in a play or movie in Flowers or Science. (Nothing too morally challenging, that would interrupt his mental relaxation.) He lives in a permanently rented suite in Bienvenidos Hotel. His monetary needs are met by a world-wide collection of investments and accounts, established centuries ago.

(Apparently) Al Amarjan man, age early 30s, 191 cm, 85 kg. Short, medium-brown hair cut neat and fairly short, dresses casually but stylishly.

Languages: Observed to speak English, French, German, Al Amarjan patois with ease; could probably pick up any others in a few hours (the talent is part of his vacation package).

Attack: 5 dice (anything at hand)

Defense: 5 dice.

Hit Points: 40 (impassivity)

Traits

Perfect Warrior, 5 dice: An eternity of combat with the ultimate enemy might not count for much, but the good-quality body he's been allowed for his break is built to keep him comfortable. This covers not only personal combat, but strength, reaction times, etc., as well as command and tactical skills in stress situations. (Looks in excellent condition.)

Astral Potence, 6 dice: Anyone who observes him with magical senses, tries to attack him using spells, or whatever, will soon become aware that he possesses incredible magical power and potential, although he doesn't choose to use it. (Regarded with awe or horror by magical entities.)

Spiritual Awareness, 6 dice: He can perceive the truth through any amount of magic, misdirection, or confusion. (Ignores all lies and camouflage.)

Cannot do Evil: He may be resting at the moment, but when push comes to shove, Michael d'Angelo is an agent of good, and free will isn't part of the question. He won't commit any acts of cruelty or unfairness, and he tends to obey the law, so far as is possible on Al Amarja and so far as is compatible with morality. He obeys local moral codes, less because they are automatically right than because casual violation of such rules is a "bad habit," leading to a disregard for any rules. He is moderate in his consumption of alcohol, and he will only engage in sexual activity with voluntary partners who won't be hurt by his own emotional detachment. (That's on Al Amarja; in an area where the local sexual morality is stricter, he'll be celibate.) He doesn't judge others (being on vacation); he just acts this way. (Always behaves morally impeccably.)

Scenario Idea 1

The PCs are out for a drink one evening when they are publicly attacked by some very powerful opponents. In fact, their latest enemy has some connections in the black magic underground, and he's lost his temper and set a bunch of thinly-disguised demons on them.

Just as things are looking really bad, Michael d'Angelo shows up. He takes one look, draws a deep breath, and steps forward. Twelve seconds later, two demons are down, and the rest are running. One is dangling in d'Angelo's hands. He looks at it, says "I am on holiday; I resent being disturbed," and throws it through the nearest window. It flees, gibbering in terror. Michael d'Angelo then moves for the nearest bar, refusing to discuss the incident with anyone.

This should both distract the PCs, and annoy the hell out of them. They could end up spending several sessions trying to find out more about d'Angelo, with little success. Alternatively, they may find that their current supernatural enemies have started ignoring them, and going after him. The resting warrior of good will find this very tiresome, becoming increasingly terse and abrasive as the opposition refuse to let him take a holiday in peace. He may politely tell the PCs that he wishes they hadn't got him mixed up in all this. Not really their fault, of course, but would they mind dealing with these villains quickly? He'd take it as a personal favor.

(What he regards as the value of a personal favor is left to the GM. It might mean d'Angelo putting in a good word for the PCs with his superior officer. Say, after their deaths.)

Scenario Idea 2

PCs who need cash, or who just make a living as investigators, are hired by an unknown third party, working through intermediaries, to investigate Michael d'Angelo's background. This should make for a strange time, as it is both trivially easy to establish facts about his recent past as a wandering observer and playboy, and completely impossible to establish who he really is or where he comes from. He just appeared, in a quiet corner of northern India, about fifteen years ago. If they challenge him directly, he just laughs them off.

Eventually, the PCs will have to turn in a report admitting defeat. Their mystery employer evidently accepts this (at least, they get paid a minimum as per contract) but word comes back down the line; there could be a bonus if someone is willing to... remove... d'Angelo.

How the PCs react to this is up to them; morality aside, they may have learned enough by now to know that the project would not be as easy as it might sound. Even if anyone (PC or NPC) actually

succeeds (actually sending d'Angelo back to a higher order of existence), someone bearing a family resemblance to the deceased shows up a few days later, and investigates the matter with frightening efficiency. (This would be another emissary of higher power, also on vacation, determined to prevent such holidays being disturbed in future.)

The hidden employer causing this trouble is actually a senior Peace Force officer, working semi-officially. It has been noted that this person d'Angelo appears very competent in military affairs, and he is psychologically immune to many of the forces that keep most of the denizens of the Edge in line; he doesn't take drugs, shows no detectable "hooks" for blackmail, and ignores threats. This has the Peace Force and their de facto allies in the Net worried. It will probably be best for all who have become entangled in the affair if someone can somehow convince them that Michael d'Angelo will leave them alone if they leave him alone.

Sandy Three-Five

Free-lance Mechanic

Sandy Three-Five's real name is Jane Sanderson. (This is no great secret; it's just that everyone who knows her uses her nickname.) She was born in Sydney, Australia, the daughter of a bank clerk, but she developed an obsessive interest in automobiles from a very early age. Eventually, having obtained formal training to go with her natural talent, she found various jobs as a junior mechanic on the international rallying circuit. Then, one day, while between jobs and feeling rich enough to take a holiday, she heard about Al Amarja. When she got there, something about the casual, opportunistic local life-style appealed to her. (Mostly, it was the lack of auto safety regulations.) Furthermore, she decided there was a gap in the local market for good mechanics. So she never got around to leaving.

Sandy now has a workshop in Justice Barrio, with living quarters attached, protected by a Safe n Sound decal, where she repairs jitneys and cabs (she is good friends with a lot of Giovanni's drivers). Sometimes, she gets more exotic work, such as tuning up "specials" for people who can pay enough. (She has no taste for engaging in criminal activity herself, but she doesn't ask stupid questions of her customers.) She is a versatile mechanic, and might be found working on a smuggler's speedboats or (on a bad week) a building's elevators, but her first and last love is the private car. She knows Dmitri Vatsavos (of Dmitri's Fix-It Shop) slightly; they compete for some business, but mostly, she likes big, conventional machines, and he likes small, weird gadgets, so they get on okay, and sometimes pass customers over to each other.



Sandy is unusual in Al Amarja in that she runs a private car. Actually, she usually has three or four of her own in the shop at any one time, in varying states of completion and usefulness; when she gets bored with one, she'll sell or dismantle it. Sometimes, she finds that none of her current stable are actually roadworthy when she needs transport, and she has to take a cab, but more often, she'll appear in some '50s American finned monster or '60s British family rust-heap.

As this may suggest, Sandy makes house calls if offered cash, so she may turn up almost anywhere round Al Amarja from a poor cabby's place in the depths of Four Points to the garage of some plutocrat out in the country. She's not stupid, she knows where's safe and when isn't, she can look after herself in a fight, and she doesn't start trouble, so she's unlikely to be found in need of rescue. Her elevator repair work gets her standard passes from Dunkelburg's for Broken Wings and the Golden Knights for Gold, and she has friends among Otto's Men, who get a bit unhappy at the thought of an unattached woman with a job, but can't help liking her dirty-finger-nailed style and straightforward manner; they end up treating her as an honorary male, an exception that proves the rules they set for female behavior.

Her skills and growing rep enable Sandy to make a decent living, but she actually works as she does for love. She really likes machinery; her favorites are middle-of-the-century automobiles, preferably with V8 engines. Her nickname comes from her special fondness for a certain smallish, 3.5 liter alloy engine used in a number of US and British models; many of her personal stable of cars incorporate this power unit.

Sandy is, naturally, good with all sorts of mechanical tools, but she is never without her favorite monkey wrench, which she can use as a weapon if she has to. She half believes it brings her luck.

Sandy is a useful contact, especially if you have a machine needs fixing. Her ability to pass almost anywhere on the island would make her a very versatile ally, except that she doesn't want to get mixed up in dangerous activities or lose customers, and she values her rep for tact and neutrality. Still, convince her that, say, you're fighting someone who's out to conquer the Earth, and she'll pitch in with the best of them. More usually, though, she works for cash, around \$200 a day, plus travel and parts, although she'll give generous informal discounts to fellow enthusiasts and anyone who'll sit and talk cars with her for an hour or six. At the end of a long day's work, she'll usually be found in some fairly quiet bar, drinking beer (not jumped, but in respectable quantities) and talking cars with any fellow enthusiasts she can find. She rarely takes much interest in romance, although it's not inconceivable she might fall for someone, in a straightforward sort of way.

Australian woman, age 33, 167 cm, 67 kg. Blonde hair, grey eyes, usually dressed in overalls and carrying a monkey wrench.

Languages: English (Australian accent), some Al Amarjan patois, a few words of Greek.

Attacks: 3 dice, x2 (wrench)

Defense: 2 dice

Hit Points: 22 (stolidity)

Traits

Ace Mechanic, 4 dice: There's not much in the way of machinery that she can't fix, and quite likely improve if she has to. (Always talking about old cars, and often working on them.)



Old Car Expert, extra die: She is downright obsessed with private automobiles from the late 1940s through to early 1960s. Her knowledge of this narrow field is such that she gets a full extra dice on any action involving such vehicles. (Always talking about old cars, and often working on them.)

Robust, 3 dice: A varied life, little interest in health-diminishing vices, and some heavy physical work, have turned her relatively small body into a well-muscled and efficient mechanism. She is rarely ill, and can swing a heavy punch. (Solidly built.)

Old Car Bore, penalty die: She is rather single-minded in her interests; in fact, if they were a little more cerebral, she'd probably be called a nerd by people who think in such terms. As it is, she's not the easiest of people to hold a conversation with, unless you share her obsessions; she suffers a penalty die in most social situations, and may be slow to recognize some problems as really important. (Always talking about old cars, and often working on them.)

Scenario Idea 1

One evening in a bar in Flowers, the PCs notice Sandy, whether or not they've met her before. She seems to be having an argument with a member of the Aries gang. Not smart, that.

Actually, she's let her enthusiasms get ahead of her good sense, and is debating the relative merits of Harley Davidson and Triumph motorcycles with the biker. How this situation develops depends on the GM and the players. It might be a brief, if tense, matter of talking the slightly drunk biker down from getting violent, without impugning his status, after which the PCs will have made a friend in Sandy. On the other hand, careless, over-violent, or over-chivalrous PCs might escalate what is currently a mild bar-room dispute into a full-scale battle with the barrio's de facto police force. Even if things stay calm for the moment, the Aries gang may harbor a grudge against the PCs, or against Sandy. In the latter case, she might ask or hire the PCs to watch her back for a day or two

while she's out on her repair jobs, until she's had a chance to straighten things out with the gang, making for a few days of wandering around assorted strange corners of the Edge.

Scenario Idea 2

After they have become friendly with her, or come to owe her a favor, Sandy comes to the PCs with a puzzle that they might be able to help solve.

It goes like this. Recently, she had a customer she didn't recognize, who asked her to come out to an estate in the Al Amarjan woods. Leaving a note with Safe n Sound as to her location (naturally), she made the trip. There, in a big old barn, she was set to work to perform some necessary but minor maintenance on the finest collection of classic autos she's ever seen; an early Rolls Royce, a mint '50s Chevy, a couple of Ferraris, a racing Bentley, a WWII German general's staff car, and a lot more. She goes dreamy-eyed just talking about them.

The trouble is, they have no right to exist. Sandy knows her classic cars; most of these were limited-production models, and every known example is documented and accounted for. They might have been replicas, of course, but Sandy would stake her reputation as an expert that they weren't. There was nothing fake to be found; furthermore, some of them looked genuinely aged, cracked leather on the seats, a touch of corrosion here and there, stuff like that.

Sandy memorized a few chassis numbers, and looked them up; the results were confused. Some of them corresponded to cars known to be kept in open but secure museums by various reliable organizations, others were on record as completely destroyed, and others again were completely wrong: non-existent, never existed. Now, she normally doesn't ask questions of customers who pay on time, but she has her priorities—and this puzzle is driving her crazy...

There are three options for the GM here, three answers that the PCs might find, assuming they help Sandy investigate. Firstly, the collection could be genuine; the life's hobby of a recently-deceased Al Amarjan high-up, a friend of the D'Aubainne family. His heirs, a bunch of brain-burned decadent socialites, just don't appreciate what they've got; there could be a real opportunity for profit here, if the PCs don't mind risking the anger of some very rich, amoral people.

Secondly, the collection could be fake; the embodiment of a huge, eccentric scam, the creation of a fairly crazy master criminal. Unfortunately, the team of expert technicians who created it were recently, in the course of a celebration, wiped out in one of those sad accidents that happens on an island with lax drug laws and/or

fire safety regulations, and the criminal underling responsible for the next phase of the scheme panicked and got sloppy, hiring an outsider (Sandy) to help get the cars ready for showing to the prospective marks. This could put the PCs in a tricky position; there might be scope for them to either profit from or prevent this large but non-violent crime, but the scheme is being funded by leading members of the Net, who could decide to have any nuisances removed with simple, brisk efficiency.

Lastly, the collection could be something very strange. Someone, some innocuous-looking GMC, has developed the fringe power to transport large inorganic objects in from alternate timelines, and they have been taken under the wing of a rich Al Amarjan with a taste for exotic automobiles. Perhaps to build up a collection of saleable items, perhaps just to provide this patron with lots of beautiful toys. The fringe power wielder has developed enough control and sensitivity to obtain the sort of thing that the patron wants more often than not, but the sea-bed near the estate is full of dumped cars, less interesting "acquisitions." In this case, the PCs aren't necessarily in big danger as they investigate, but the patron may become ruthless if his source of pleasure is threatened, and the fringe power wielder may become the target of all sorts of people with other ideas as to how this talent could be used, such as the Philosopher's Stone, or pretty well any other conspiracy on the planet. (If a conspiracy does get use of this power, the GM can have a lot of fun working out just how deadly it could make them. To start with, there's all those alternate timelines with atomic bombs, or perhaps even weapons that haven't been invented in our world, yet...)

Sigourney Stuidhuist

Free-lance Theatre Person and Friend to Lame Ducks

Sigourney Stuidhuist was born and brought up in a comfortably-off Jewish family in New York. Her weird mental gifts emerged slowly through her childhood, and her parents proved quite adept at ensuring that they lead her to be seen as a freak, even when she developed into an unusually tall, strikingly thin young woman. Eventually, she entered college, and looked set for a career somewhere in the arts world.

Then her weakness for all manner of lame ducks kicked in. She joined various theatre and art groups, and the leader of one, in a fit of hubris, declared that they should go on a world tour. In her heart, Sigourney knew that the group wasn't up to such a project, but she couldn't bring herself to desert them. That she was effectively the star of the group says more about their talents than hers.

The group got to Europe, and the stress of artistic failure made the leader increasingly extreme in his ideas. He had heard of Al Amarja; there, he declared, his (sorry, their) genius would be appreciated. However, even Al Amarjans have some taste. After a few weeks, he and the handful of members who had stuck with him managed to get a plane out.

But without Sigourney. Her sympathy for the underdog and the born failure had been stimulated here as never before. Landing a series of short-term jobs with various theatre groups, she settled down. Eventually, she found she could augment her income by working as a stringer for the kind of newspapers that believe the things she reported from the Edge. Her phenomenal memory and basic artistic talents make her tolerably competent in this work.

She lives in a rented apartment in Sunken, dividing her time between making a living and helping people. She is known to such luminaries of the Edge arts world as the Black Death Theatre Troupe, and occasionally works for them, but she is not regarded as a major figure in their world. She is usually found in theatres or artist's bars, sometimes taking notes for a review or "background piece," unless she has latched onto a human disaster area.

Sigourney's mental gifts might bring her to the attention of the likes of the Philosopher's Stone, if they were a little more spectacular or a little more unusual. As it is, her friends are the only people who usually become aware how odd her mental functions can be.

Jewish woman, age 24, 184 cm, 62 kg, slightly cadaverous, short dark hair and brown eyes; dresses in slightly "melodramatic" or "artistic" ways, but with a lot of variety (long skirts trimmed with white lace, highly-colored trouser suits, immaculate linen safari suits over black velvet blouses, etc.).

Languages: English, a few words of Yiddish, a smattering of Al Amarjan patois.

Attack: 3 dice, x3 (rapier)

Defense: 3 dice

Hit Points: 20 (determined)

Traits

Weird Mental Abilities, 2 dice: There seems to be an oddly "mechanical" element to her brain. This gives her near-photographic recall, a precise sense of musical pitch, the ability to perform accurate mental arithmetic at high speed, and the skill to judge time and compass direction with a glance at the sky. (Sometimes displays implausible precision or makes accurate calculations without thinking.)

Useful Stage Performer, 3 dice: Although she's never going to be a star, she is a versatile performer.

She can act well enough for support roles, dance in various styles, handle her own make-up, play backing music on clarinet, and even perform stage acrobatics in a pinch. Some of these techniques might be useful away from the theatre, although she might take a penalty die for trying to apply them to unfamiliar purposes. (Moves quite gracefully, has stage make-up and a pair of clarinets.)

Competent Fighter, 3 dice: Having learned assorted self-defence techniques as basic good sense in New York, a bit of Aikido, and fencing and suchlike for stage work, she is far from helpless in a fight. If faced with the possibility of serious combat, she may carry a fencing rapier with a functional point and edge to it. (Moves with precision in dangerous situations, sometimes carries a rapier.)

Sucker for Lame Ducks, one die: She really can't ignore any kind of born failure or obvious loser, and only rolls one die if attempting to resist a hard luck story. Note, however, that this does not mean that she is stupid. She has the same chance as anyone else to recognize a con artist, and she tries to give people the help they need, rather than what they ask for. She tends to get romantically involved with the kind of emotional basket cases that no really sensible person would allow into their life. Anyway, her help is sometimes sufficient to lift people out of the category that she instinctively wants to help. (Listens sympathetically to hard luck stories.)

Odd Looks: She is strikingly tall, thin as a rake, pale and vaguely cadaverous-looking. This doesn't stop her being fairly attractive by many people's standards, but it limits her ability to blend in with crowds, or take certain parts on stage. (Looks slightly weird.)

Scenario Idea 1

The PCs hear that some enemy of theirs will be in a certain theatre that night, and set out to catch him there. Unfortunately, Sigourney also is there, and she notices the PCs moving towards their target. Guessing that they mean him no good, she warns him, then covers his escape by providing a diversion, probably using her knowledge of the theatre layout and talent for precision timing.

Assuming that the PCs aren't the sort to just nail Sigourney for being a nuisance, they'll want to do a certain amount of talking if and when they catch up with her. Of course, if their enemy then returns with greater force, her sympathies may switch to the PCs.

Scenario Idea 2

Having somehow heard of the PCs' past good deeds, Sigourney comes to them for help when her latest sad case looks to be seriously out of his depth. He's a pale, flabby character, who seems far too naive to have lasted a minute on Al Amarja, and everything about him strikes her oddly-tuned brain as wrong.

Actually, this "victim" is a Mover plant, set up, through medical manipulation and hypnosis, to look a little like a Pharaoh's Aphid. The Movers want to know more about the Aphids, and just how important they are to the Pharaohs, and they have identified Sigourney as competent enough to flush something from cover, and manipulable enough to handle later if necessary. They have therefore set up this scam in the expectation that word of Sigourney's latest "friend" will get back to some Pharaoh Quisling who will react in an interesting way. (Yes, this is a pretty vague, under-structured sort of plot for the Movers to pull, but that's part of the idea; the high-ranking

Mover responsible reckons that, if nothing else, it should confuse the Pharaohs no end.)

The other wild card in this plot might be Monique D'Aubainne, or rather her underlings, and most especially Dr Nusbaum, working on her behalf. He'd love to have an Aphid of his own; as he points out to Her Exaltedness, it would allow him to provide her with those treatments based on Apep's Breath, without having to rely on anyone for supplies. (Truth be told, he'd be most interested in examining its metabolism and genetic structure, but that's not what he'll say to her; he's not stupid. Of course, he knows that she'll have guessed his personal priorities... But their interests still coincide, and he would never betray her. He's not stupid.) Thus it would be a very bad move to let any word of all this to get to the powers that be.

Incidentally, remember that if the PCs decide to give up and hand the fake Aphid over to anyone, Sigourney will turn against them and make a break for it with the poor victim. He's exactly the sort of being who triggers her over-developed protective instincts.



Al Amarja Today

Liberian freighter sinks!

HALIFAX, Canada UPI - In early January, Canadian search crews were combing the North Atlantic by air, looking for some 35 crewmembers of the Liberian-registered, 81-ton *Marika-7* freighter believed to have sunk in heavy seas.

The ship left Quebec on Dec. 27 bound for Holland with a load of iron ore. A distress call was radioed reporting the ship had sunk in latitude 46:53 North, longitude 33:10 West, some 1,300 km northwest of the Azores Islands.

Dan Bedell, a spokesman for the Canadian Rescue Center, said two Canadian military aircraft had circled the skies 1,500 km east of St. Johns, Newfoundland, looking for the bulk carrier.

Aircraft crews reported seeing lights in the water but found no signs of the ship, Bedell said.

The official said the crewmembers were believed to be from Greece and the Philippines.

Canadian maritime authorities radioed a message at 2314gmt to all vessels in the vicinity to render assistance.

Bedell said the Rescue Center had received an emergency call from the *Marika-7* Saturday morning, and a Hercules search-and-rescue plane was dispatched to the area.

A second aircraft sent to the area joined the search, which will continue during the night, the spokesman said. A commercial tanker was also heading to the spot to assist in the search, but Bedell said 18-foot-high waves and 50-knot winds could slow the rescue mission.

The *Marika-7*, built in 1973, is operated by Atlantic Maritime Enterprises S.A., of Piraeus, Greece.

M e d . Refineries Shutdown

LONDON—Mediterranean refineries are undergoing particularly large-scale maintenance shutdowns in the period from end-January to April, largely in response to a tight crude oil market that has squeezed profit margins, refiners and traders in the region say.

In Italy, Agip SpA has slated a heavy shutdown program, with the Livorno refinery (processing around 84,000 barrels a day of crude) closed for one month. In Spain, Repsol's Cartagena refinery (120,000 b/d) will be shut through May.

By May, peak seasonal demand for gasoline is expected, and it is better to have most producing capacity back on-stream by then.

Chile Gen. Pinochet to Visit

Gen. Augusto Pinochet is planning a holiday in South Africa, a country that maintained close links with Chile during the 1973-90 military government. Pinochet started his official vacation Tuesday.

As an adjunct to his vacation, General Pinochet will also be making a stop in Al Amarja. It is likely his stop will include a visit with Her Exaltedness, Monique D'Aubainne.

Radioactive chair kills!

MOSCOW (UPI) — A Russian businessman who died recently of mysterious causes was apparently killed by his chair, which was found after his death to be highly radioactive. Investigators discovered that the deadly office chair was the source of 1.5 million times more radioactivity than normal background levels, causing fatal radiation poisoning in the man. The man, identified only as V. Kaplun, was general manager of a Moscow-based private firm and had been hospitalized for over a month before his death last week. Doctors had been unable to diagnose his ailment, though one physician said the symptoms resembled those of radiation poisoning. The

dead man's colleagues at the firm discovered the chair's potency after they decided to inspect the office with a Geiger counter and found levels off the scale. Peace inspectors found radiation levels on two floors of the building of 120 to 200 roentgen per hour. Inside the man's office, the paper said, "radiation levels were enormous, comparable to only Chernobyl." The building was immediately cordoned off. Other employees of the firm will be examined for signs of radiation poisoning. It was not known how the chair became radioactive, though there have been other incidents where ordinary household items and even foods have been found to be radioactive.

Little Scratches

Seymor McBean sez YES to caffeine!

The Cleaner. 186676

Ascend by elevator, occupying a mid-way position to forces of wrong and wronger ostensibly shaking the self asleep — The Cut-Ups

The administrators reserve the right to determine what is unacceptable or out of theme. This policy is not debatable and violators of it will not be tolerated.

Of course, this in turn gives us the opportunity to learn to use the power of our minds to heal ourselves.

There is something that can be described as a medium based "activity" that is going on with showbusiness. They all are having fun with the topic of adult entertainment. For example the owner of Burts Place was found dead along with his wife, and it became Ricks Place the very next day, with a person like "Regis Fillman" warning that the girls were on the agenda not the menu. Well... Ricks Place closed down due to fighting over how tips were passed and the aids issue. Arm length tips? in 1984 some guy came to a bar I was at and told me. Well... it changed to Cheetas with the same people involved. I constantly hear innuendo about that Ricks Place fight on how tips were to be given coming from old movies, communicating through time. They couldn't have picked a better issue to drive all of "America crazy" as sexual issues seem to do the trick!

Acrid hallucinations power the libido groped missiles dressed sluggishly killing Mary. — The Cut-Ups

Be seeing you-Richard

Public acts of a sexual nature as well as buildings and objects of sexual nature are strictly prohibited.

The hole in the ozone layer is growing and letting in increasing amounts of deadly cancer-causing radiation. This growth is claimed to be caused entirely by pollution and CFCs from industry and transport. If you look at the statistics you will notice that the total amounts of CFCs and carbon-dioxide emissions do not account for the ozone depletion. They fall short by an order of magnitude. So why is ozone being depleted so rapidly? The truth is that it is being deliberately depleted as part of an effort to reduce the population of the Earth by 33% by the year 2000. This secret plan was hatched after the Club of Rome's report on overpopulation, and is known as "GLOBAL 2000".

The GLOBAL 2000 agenda is implemented in many ways. Wars are engineered deliberately. New genetically-engineered strains of diseases are released, and cures are deliberately suppressed. Natural and artificial disasters (e.g. Chernobyl, Bhopal, and droughts and floods) are created. Ozone depletion is created by similar means. Giant aircraft based at Lake Groom enter low earth orbit to release a chemical substance more potent than CFCs. This substance is responsible for the majority of ozone depletion.

Why is this happening? It is partly to reduce the Earth's population for economic reasons, and partly as an experiment into new techniques of reducing the population rapidly and precisely. Various senior elements in the US (Bolshevik) Government, the Bilderberg Conference, the Trilateral Commission, and the secret shadow world government that operates through the United Nations are responsible for this policy.

REPRODUCE THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION FREELY.

The Neighbor Lady

A pale, almost emaciated woman, with big eyes and curly, dark hair piled into a ponytail on top of her head and fastened with a large shiny bow, the neighbor lady is only seen through the window of her apartment or occasionally gripping the hand of an equally big-eyed, chubby, sandy-haired toddler and waiting for a taxi.

When a car pulls up in front of her home, the neighbor lady jumps up and dashes to the window, staring out at whatever activity is taking place with unblinking interest. Sometimes, inexplicably, the neighbor lady will become agitated or enraged by the presence of people, or maybe because the people arriving are not who she is expecting, and she will jump up and down screaming and gesturing from behind her closed window. A pantomime in rudeness. Mostly, though, the neighbor lady and the child will only stare, looking surprised or perhaps frightened.

People looking into her house from the street will see that her curtains are never drawn. Little of her house is visible from outside, but it is possible to see several Christian images (pictures of Christ ascending, a crucifix, a nativity scene) on the walls, a television set, a pile of cassette tapes, a sofa and coffee table, a kitchen table and four chairs and a napkin holder. Notably missing are any children's toys. Occasionally, there is a CB antenna set up in front of the house, sitting on an overturned pot. The location of the antenna and the pot changes frequently, although no one is ever seen moving it. Sometimes the antenna is mounted on the outside of the building (hanging from the porch light, sticking straight out from the wall, etc.). No radio device can be seen from the outside of the house, nor is the neighbor lady ever seen using a radio, walkie talkie or telephone of any kind.

Further unusual behavior includes turning cartwheels on the front sidewalk, riding a bicycle in

circles on the road and gesturing at the child in some unusual sign language (not ASL).

Encounters with the neighbor lady make people curious. Who is she waiting for? Why is she there, alone with her child? Is the child hers (there seems little resemblance)? On those rare occasions, where does she go in her taxi? More unusual, what is she doing on the bicycle and turning cartwheels? Is she psychotic?

Some possibilities for the Crazy Neighbor Lady

1) The neighbor lady is really a Half-Glug, who was until recently living a rather typical life as an Al Amarjan. Last year she attracted the attention of a sower, who taught her a little about her Glugness and impregnated her, and then mysteriously disappeared. (Maybe he died, maybe he has been captured and examined.) The strain of this has left the neighbor lady in an unstable emotional state, caught between fear that the truth about her will be found out, and the rage at being trapped in the house with a mostly-glug child. The Christian imagery hides totems and idols of Armzhak.

2) The neighbor lady is hiding out on Al Amarja where her unusual behaviors are more likely to go unnoticed. She has stolen the child from a couple for whom she was working as a nanny. She has taught the child to respond to a sign language she has created, so that she can order him around without ever having to use his name. She keeps tabs on radio transmissions in case anyone calls the Peace Force.

3) The neighbor lady and the child are really incorporeal aliens who have taken human forms. They don't realize that their



behaviors might be seen as unusual, because they have had no contact with humans other than a few bad Jerry Lewis movies and some episodes of America's Most Wanted, so they alternate between pratfalls or goofy humor and violent outbursts. A lot of the actions taken by the woman (such as riding the bicycle and turning cartwheels) are just her way of experimenting with her new body.

4) The neighbor lady is a normal woman who came to Al Amarja from a repressive culture, which demanded that women maintain total control over themselves at all times, that they remain in a subservient role and that they maintain absolute celibacy until marriage. She was seduced by a member of another culture who offered her a different life; she came to Al Amarja to meet him when she discovered she was pregnant, but although he is supporting her here, he has not shown up to be with her. Her actions are those of a woman who finds herself alone in a foreign culture that makes no demands of self-control or propriety upon her. Because she has given up on her own cultural restraints, she finds that she is a victim to mood swings. Her outbursts at passing cars and people on the street are due to her frustration at being left alone by her lover, whom she still expects to arrive any day. Her occasional taxi trips are to check for him at the airport. She has no experience in child rearing or any rambunctious behavior (like bicycle riding) and is merely muddling through as best she can.

(Based on Nicole's neighbor lady. Really.)



SUBMIT!

To the Just and Beneficent Ruler of the Universe...

EdgeWork needs your ~~women~~ talents! This 'zine is dedicated to bringing you what you want out of OTE. The only way I can do that is if you tell me. So write a Letter of Comment (LoC) or, better yet, submit material that you'd like to see in *EdgeWork*.

Send submissions to Peter Hentges, 1055 SE 26th Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55414, USA. I am specifically looking for artwork, articles, character/place descriptions, plot/conspiracy ideas and expansions upon OTE. But anything, *anything*, you'd like to read about in *EdgeWork* is perfectly fine with me.

So get off your lazy ass and get writing! The best way to send stuff is on 3½" diskettes. Any Mac or DOS word processing file will likely work fine (save down to ASCII if you're using something particularly odd). You can also send material to me via internet at peter.hentges@cool.khis.com. Failing electronic submission, please type and double-space your submission and mail it to the address above.

Art submissions should be photocopies of black and white line art. Interested artists should send a query letter so that specific assignments can be sent out to you. I often have short turnaround times so ability to work quickly under dead-lines is a plus.

People who contribute to *EdgeWork* get the issue their work appeared in free. And occasionally, John Nephew will be in a particularly magnanimous mood and send you some OTE product as well, but that's not an official thing so don't expect it.

Looking for the Right Connection?

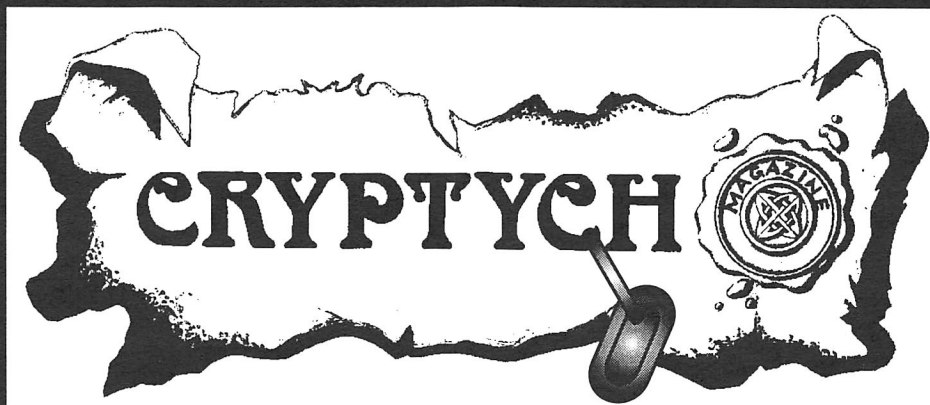
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Over the Edge

Lisa Padol offers us a variant to the standard OTE rules. These rules are designed to be used for a superhero-type of game using the basic idea of the OTE rules. Use Lisa's ideas to take your heroes out of the comics and Over the Edge!

This variant was created by Avram Grumer, who kindly gave me permission to write this article about it. He intended this to be used for a superhero game, where it may be desirable to have high skill levels in fringe powers.

Begin by creating an OTE character with the standard traits: one exceptional trait, two superior traits, and one flaw. Now, if you choose, you may take up to two additional flaws. For each additional flaw, you get an additional die which may be applied to any trait, or used to create a new trait.

Thus, if I take an extra flaw, I can put another die into a regular trait, say knife fighting, for 3D (e.g., the 2 everyone gets plus 1 extra). Or, I can put it into an exceptional trait, like neurosurgery, or a fringe power, and get 1D (the original 0 plus 1 more). Or, I can add it to a good or exceptional trait, getting, say 5D in acting, or 3D in neurosurgery. A superhero character with three flaws might have 6D in strength, or 4D in telekinesis.

Alternatively, if you want high powered characters, but you don't want them to have to take multiple flaws, just tell the players that they have a certain number of extra dice to play with as they see fit. The characters above were built with two extra dice, but you can allow your players more. Any unused dice can become part of the experience pool.

Sample Super NPCs:

Back when OTE was still in the playtest stage, I tried converting a character I'd created for Vampire: the Masquerade to OTE. I wanted to do this while staying within the OTE rules, so I decided that there were only 2 traits a vampire needed, strength and hypnotism.

This worked out well:

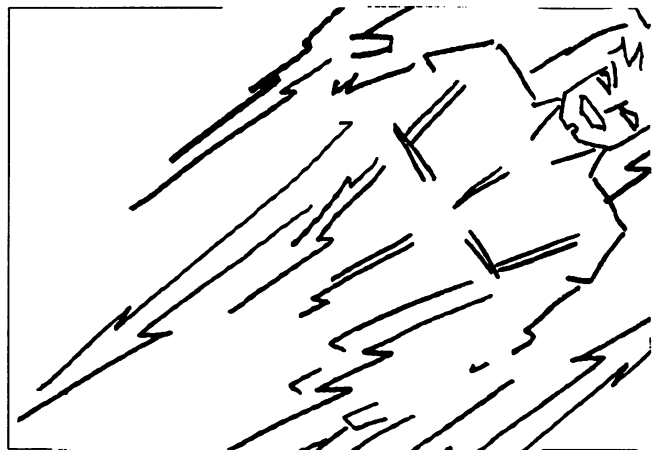
Strength, 4 dice

Hypnotism, 1 die

Acting, 3 dice

I didn't miss all the abilities

Vampire: the Masquerade vampires have. The personality translated surprisingly well. The problem was, vampires are supposed to be superhumanly strong, and very good at hypnotism. I really wanted 2 dice in hypnotism and 5 dice in strength. Using the rules above, this becomes possible.





**Chevalier Charles Genéviève
Louis Auguste André Timothée
D'Eon de Beaumont**

Le Chevalier will also answer to Chevalier D'Eon, Chevalier, D'Eon, Beaumont, de Beaumont, Charles, and Chuck.

Historically, Le Chevalier D'Eon was a cross dressing spy for France. He was given a pension on two conditions: First, he had to choose a gender and stick with it. Second, he was not allowed to write his memoirs. All bets as to his actual gender were settled at his death, when it was revealed that he was indeed male.

Nevertheless, the vampire insisting that she is Le Chevalier is female.

She owns a small theater near the Plaza of Flowers, and works as an actor and stage manager. Her flamboyant style and insistence on being referred to as male fails to provoke so much as a raised eyebrow.

Caucasian female, left handed, 160 cm, 55 kg, brown hair worn in a long pony tail, brown eyes. Favors flamboyant clothing which

would have been considered fashionable two and a half centuries ago.

Languages: French, English, Al Amarjan Patois

Attack: 5 dice or 2 dice (unarmed or with rapier) x1 or x3

Defense: 5 dice or 2 dice

Hit Points: 28 points of Inhuman Endurance

Traits

Inhuman Strength, 5 dice (1 extra die here) (When she loses control, Le Chevalier throws heavy furniture around)

Hypnotism, 2 dice (1 extra die here) This allows Le Chevalier to easily hypnotize normal humans, as a proper vampire should. Strong willed humans can still resist, again with traditional precedent. Of course, there are quite a few folk in Al Amarja who fall into this category.

Acting, 3 dice (refers to herself as a Thespian)

Flaw: Can't function in sunlight. (Never seen during the day.)

Flaw: Needs a blood diet. (No stray animals near the theater.)

Flaw: Insane. Le Chevalier is attempting to deny her past by constructing an elaborate fantasy world. (Will lose control if reminded of unpleasant facts - See secret below.)

Secret: During the French revolution, Le Chevalier and her sire were imprisoned. Her sire told her to drink some of his blood. When she tasted it, she lost control, and drank it all, killing him. Her guilt over this incident caused her to go to radical lengths to deny it, adopting a new personality. However, certain circumstances might bring back unpleasant memories, such as being asked to drink another vampire's blood (this was originally intended for Vampire, the Masquerade, remember), she will react in one of a number of interesting ways. She may go berserk and attack; she may try to run away; she may beg her dead sire for forgiveness.

Story ideas

Le Chevalier is flamboyant about her wealth, which is considerable. Perhaps the PCs are tempted or hired to separate her from it?

Le Chevalier could become the patron of any PC with an interest in working at her theater. The PCs in question will no doubt notice her strange habits.

The Neutralizers could recruit the PCs to kill Le Chevalier. Or, Le Chevalier could hire them to protect her from the Neutralizers. Or, the PCs could stumble into this conflict with no idea of what's going on.

One of the PCs could remind Le Chevalier of her sire. She could follow him around, begging for forgiveness.

There's always the old standby: Le Chevalier decides to make a midnight snack out of one of the PCs.

Karen Matchstick

Back when Avram was thinking about running Over the panel's Edge, I found myself bereft of inspiration. I suggested a female version of King Arthur, perhaps a reincarnation. To my surprise, he liked this idea. We dubbed her Karen Matchstick, since we both liked Matt Wagner's *Mage*.

Avram's campaign world is an alternate version of Earth, with superheroes. Nothing, as far as I know, was set in Al Amarja.

What you are doing in this case is using the OTE system, but not the background. Avram limited the number of extra flaws to two, but you don't have to do this.

At 17, Karen became pregnant. The father, Morgan, 20 years old at the time, was told by his parents to marry her. Shortly after the baby was born, Karen decided that Morgan had manipulated her into a life she didn't want. She divorced him, and he retained custody of the child. He got a degree in Thaumaturgy. She joined the armed forces of the League of Nations.

Avram's alternate history kicks in here. He reasoned that, since the land now known as Iraq is where many scientists agree that life originated, any secrets that man was not meant to know probably came from there. During the Gulf War, Saddam Hussein dug up one of these and used it to devastate the League's forces.

Karen was in Iraq with the League, but she was not present during Hussein's attack. She'd met a man named Martin Bard the night before. Martin was actually Merlin. He realized that Karen was the reincarnation of Arthur, and teleported her away from the battle.

Caucasian, age 32, 175 cm, 60 kg, brown hair kept short, blue eyes.

Attack: 5, 3, or 2 dice (see below), damage varies.

Defense: 5, 3, or 2 dice (see below)

Hit Points: 21 (tough)

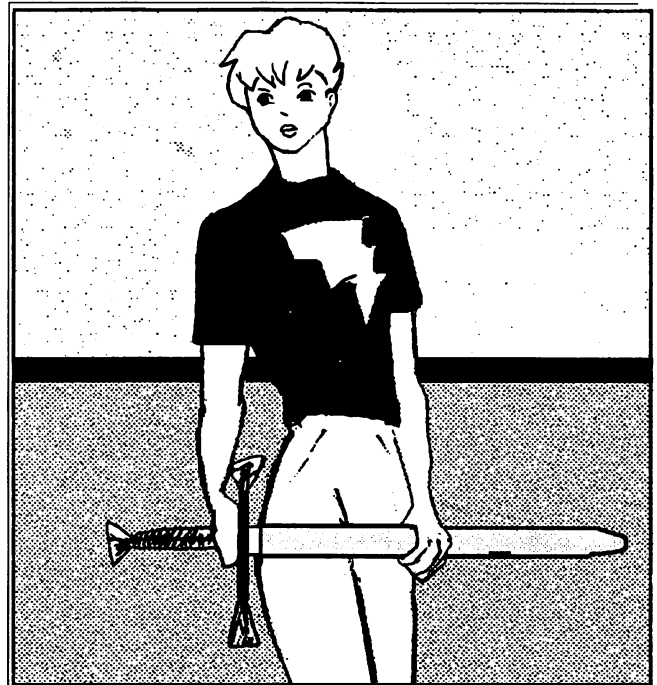
Traits

Soldier, 3 dice: Arthur wasn't necessarily the greatest fighter. There was no reason for Karen to be either. Avram pointed out that I didn't have to take 3 flaws. 2 can be quite a handful.

Leader, 3 dice: Karen has Arthur's ability to rally troops in battle.

Excalibur, 5 dice: Avram wouldn't tell me precisely what Excalibur was capable of doing. I think he intended it to allow Karen to use 5 dice when attacking with it. I'm pretty sure it was to count as a magical weapon in the case of beasts that can only be hit with such things. Avram was also toying with the idea of allowing Excalibur to shed light equal to thirty torches, as Malory claimed one of Arthur's swords did.

Flaw: In disgrace. The League of Nations believes Karen deserted.

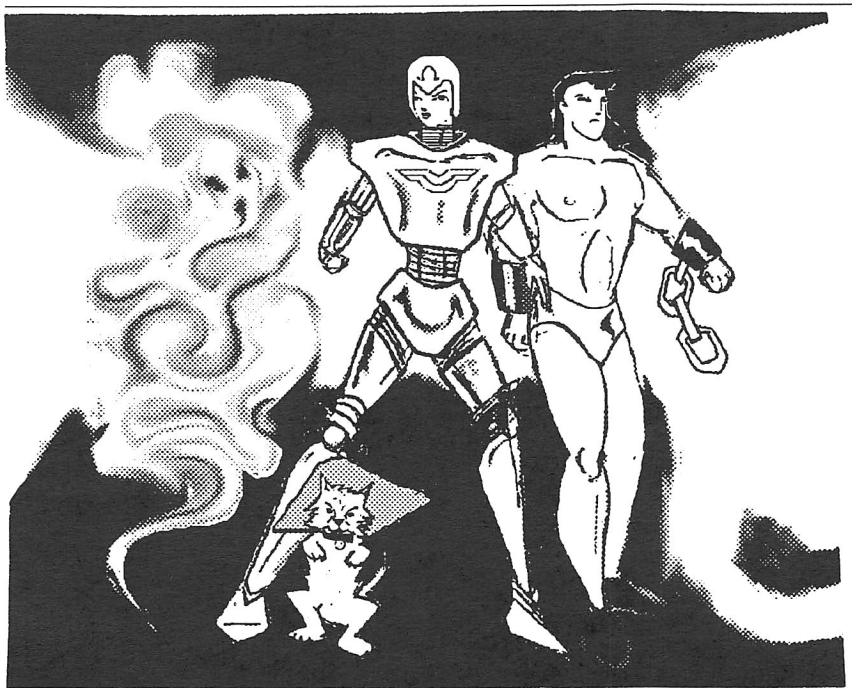


Flaw: Memories of Arthur's life have started to return. Unfortunately, they overpower Karen's mind. Thus, she's likely to break into Old Welsh, address people who died almost 1500 years ago, find herself in bed with a woman even though she's heterosexual, and so on. (For those of you interesting in source material, check out Tim Powers' *The Drawing of the Dark*.)

Other ideas for Super-powered PCs:

Many secret organizations on Al Amarja are trying to create super-powered beings. Perhaps all of the PCs come from one such group. Maybe The Philosophers' Stone has finally succeeded in awakening fringe powers. Whatever organization created the PCs undoubtedly has plans for them. They may or may not wish to go along with these plans. And, of course, all the other secret organizations on Al Amarja are going to want to control or neutralize the PCs.

You can also use this as a way of creating interesting alien races. Perhaps all PCs are part of the same race. Or, perhaps they represent different races in a diplomatic or surveillance operation. Naturally, all the secret organizations on Al Amarja will want to use the aliens to further their own interests. Alien races such as the Kergillians may perceive the PCs as a threat to be eliminated, or, they may form an alliance with them. Perhaps the fate of the galaxy depends on the PCs coming to a diplomatic agreement with the various aliens hidden in Al Amarja. It is the ideal location for an interstellar conference. Earth is unaware of the existence of alien civilizations, so the political advantage of holding the conference on a particular race's home ground can be eliminated. Al Amarja is the only place on Earth where such a conference could take place without attracting undue attention.



Alternative magic pool system

Joshua Kronengold provides an alternate method of limiting the use of fringe powers by PCs based upon a measure of fatigue. I guess reading thoughts and moving stuff with your mind gets to be a strain for most people....

The system presented by Johnathan Tweet in OTE for fringe powers is quite flexible. Unfortunately, because Johnathan didn't initially use his "magic pool" rules in his own games, but added them, along with hit points, to make the system palatable to a greater variety of GMs, they seem rather artificial to me. I have created a system which possesses approximately the same complexity as the OTE hit point system, and which provides a very different view of how a fringe power will work.

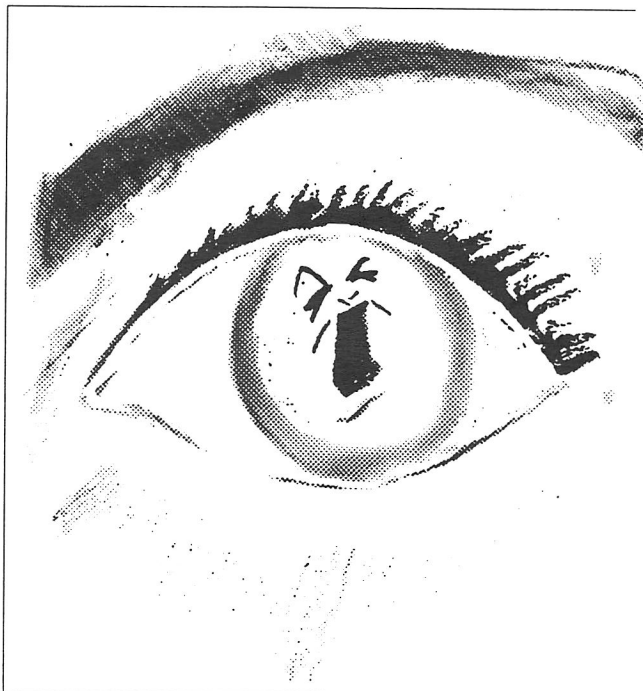
In most literature discussing fringe powers, a character unable to use her abilities from overuse is either very tired, or better yet, unconscious, rather than simply out of "psychic pool." Nor will she ever know exactly how many times she can use her abilities, though she might be able to make a good guess based on how tired she is. And surely a telekinetic won't be nearly as drained by mentally moving a chess piece as by stopping a car from hitting a small child!

Because of the divergence between my conception of how fringe powers should work and how OTE represents them, I have created a fatigue based system, incorporating all of these points and several others. Because this represents a conceptual difference with the original OTE system, it should be useful both for those for whom the mechanical system was added, as well as those who would rather just wing it.

Fatigue

Under the fatigue system, the psychic pool, where most psychic attempts are considered equal, is replaced with a "fatigue level," in which a more difficult effect can be produced less frequently.

My method for calculating fatigue is analogous to that for hit points, except that unusual traits (those that start at 0) are treated as if they were two dice higher for this purpose. If you have one fatigue related trait (a trait that



requires fatigue, or a trait which would logically influence it, like high will, constitution, or Zen mastery) you can choose to roll its effective magnitude [2 plus it's magnitude if the average character has it at 0, its magnitude if the average character has it at 2] times 2 dice, or take 7 times its effective magnitude as a default fatigue level. The rules given for multiple hit point affecting traits also applies to multiple fatigue affecting traits, which is why I mention non-fringe fatigue related traits at all.

For example, a character with Zen Buddhism at 4 and Psychic Invisibility at 1 could choose to take the maximum of 8 dice for Zen and 21 points for the Psychic Invisibility (which counts as 3 for this purpose), or the 6 dice (Invisibility) and 28 (Zen) or 8 dice and six dice.

Like hit points, fatigue levels should have descriptive names attached to them, like "chi" "mana" or "energy."

Whenever a character succeeds in a roll to normally use a fringe power, the amount of fatigue lost

is equal to the target number minus the amount by which the roll exceeds the target number. If she fails, the fatigue is equal to the number rolled (except in the case of a botch, where it's twice the target number, or depends on what effect the GM wants to attach to the botch).

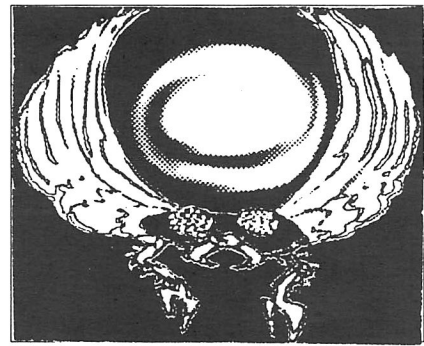
So, if Sara Jane, with a Possession trait of 3 dice and a fatigue of 45 (average for that high a fringe power) attempts to take over the mind of John Doe (with no applicable abilities), and rolls 13 against his 8, she will take 3 fatigue; if she rolls 12 against his 6 she will take none, if she botches (rolling three ones) and he rolls a ten she might take 20 fatigue and end up in the mind of a nearby stray animal.

Effects of fatigue

Because fatigue represents the character getting mentally tired, losing fatigue involves more than just not being able to use your fringe power. When a character has lost half of her fatigue, she gets a penalty die on all actions, and should be role-played as if she hasn't slept for a night.

When she has lost fatigue equal to or greater than her fatigue level, but less than twice that of her level (between 0 and -[maximum fatigue]) she loses one die on all actions, and if she rests she will fall unconscious. She must also make a roll on her best fatigue related trait (with against -1 x [her currently negative fatigue level] in order to stay conscious whenever the GM rules that she isn't filled up with enough hormones to keep going until she hits the limit of human capacity. Dodging bullets counts for this purpose, as does attempting to drive in non-traffic jam NYC rush hour traffic; negotiation probably doesn't.

If a character manages to lose twice her maximum fatigue, she falls unconscious, and remains unconscious, barring unusual

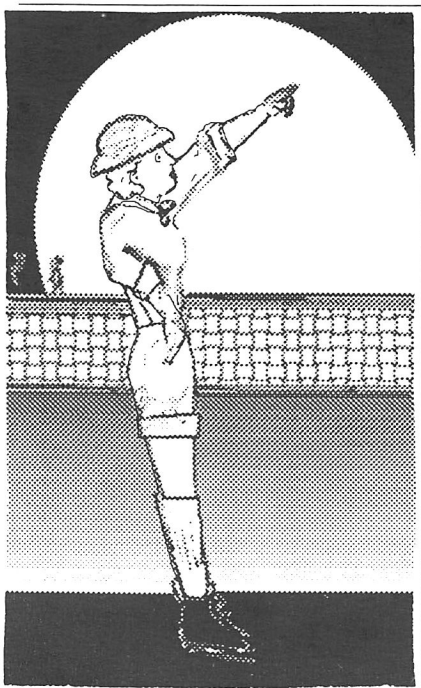


interference, like drugs, until she reaches at least 1 fatigue point, at which point she will sleep normally, until she reaches full fatigue or is completely rested.

On average, 8 hours of sleep or unconsciousness will restore a character from 0 fatigue to full, and non-mentally strenuous waking time will restore fatigue at about half that rate (having endorphins or adrenaline pumped through your brain counts as mentally strenuous for this purpose). A character who has fallen unconscious in the heat of a battle (by losing over twice her fatigue level) will stay unconscious for at least 8 hours, and possibly 16 or more.

Pushing

Pushing a fringe power is also covered in this system, but is made much more dangerous and interesting. As in the psychic pool system, a character pushing a fringe power will receive bonus dice equal to her level in the power. However, fatigue loss is equal to the roll made, as the character isn't holding back, but is attempting with full effort to succeed in the given task. Any excess over the needed target number does not counter the drain, but may act as overkill, at GM's discretion. If a character attempts to use her Infatuation fringe power, pushes, and ends up with twice the resistance score, she may end up with someone who



worships her as a goddess. Smaller amounts of overkill may also prove interesting.

Have fun with this.

Because pushing a fringe power involves a brute force approach, "blowing the top off" (rolling all sixes) isn't quite as lucky as it would be in other cases. Rather than showing tremendous finesse (which in this case approaches impossibility) it indicates that the character does something with her fringe power that it rightfully shouldn't be able to do.

A psi-blaster might have everyone around her in pain, not to mention the intended target. A scanner might end up not with the thoughts she was looking for, but with the entire mind of her target permanently ensconced in her skull along side her own. A possessor might switch bodies rather than just controlling for a time. It is possible that a character could use these as a springboard for developing a new fringe power, but it's also possible that she could never preform the task again, or that her brain will be permanently altered, and that any successive attempt to use her fringe power will activate the new effect.

Have fun with this, too.

The two effects need not be combined, nor does blowing the top off require success. A failed (but all sixes) roll will not succeed at what it would normally do, but is much more likely to succeed at whatever inadvertent effect is caused.

To use the previous examples, if all of the previous targets had successfully defended, the psi-blaster would have had everyone around her except for the intended target rolling around on the ground, the scanner would end up with the mind, but as a whole, with personality, and not be able to read it fully, nor find the information she was looking for in the original mind; the possessor's

situation might be unchanged, or he might find himself in residence in the target's unconscious, unable to affect her physical processes, or leave, until she goes to sleep, at which point things get interesting.

These rules also apply to psychic defense. Again, the rules in the book for random mechanics are identical, but an unsuccessful active defence will not have the lowest two dice counted towards drain. Alternately, the GM can rule for certain kinds of attacks that non-psi will receive drain when "attempting" to defend against certain kinds of attacks. Because these rules affect the character in question, and only that character, they can be used in the same game with different fringe powers to simulate different power sources and mechanics. A telepath might get fatigued as she used her trait, while a mage might simply draw on the mana in his body and be unable to use his magic once it was gone. For that matter, some powers, like empathy, work best when they cannot be turned off, or at best focused or shielded.



Pious field day

*A column of
correspondance from
those who have written into
EdgWork. Wouldn't you like
to be like these people?*

Robin Laws
robintl@aol.com

By the way, I finally had a chance to read *EdgeWork* (between screenings at a film festival—talk about piling disorientation upon disorientation) and very much enjoyed it. Right now I'm debating with myself whether to add the subway to my OTE series. Given the hidden nature of the stations, it would be possible to just go, "Subway? You mean no one told you about the subway?" even though they've been playing since January. However, the question I wouldn't be prepared to answer is why the stations are kept hidden—since they're privatized, one would expect the station owners to not only advertise their own stations but perhaps be involved in cut-throat competition with the other station owners. Which would be cool but not amenable to dropping in mid-series.

Anyway, take care
Robin

Thanks for writing Robin. You'll have to tell us all about that film festival The way I explain away the private subway station owners not being competitive is that they are kind of a pain the butt. You want people banging on your door in the middle of the night wanting to use the subway? So while convenient for the rider, they are inconvenient for the home-owner. See Lisa Padol's letter below.

Lisa Padol
lvp@cunyvms1.gc.cuny.edu
Got ish 1, and I like it. There's nothing I dislike about it.

I like the underground, but will pass on a critical comment: Putting terminals in businesses, homes, etc. is logically even more inconveniencing that the regular way of doing things. Construction and all that.

Re: Alto-Ubica: I love this. What happens to PCs who try to go there, using maps and so on? It does, after all, maintain a physical existence. If they succeed in escorting a native "home," what happens? Does she realize it's home, or does she think a mistake has been made?

Lisa Padol
Glad you liked EW1. You are right about adding subway terminals to homes and businesses and such. That's part of the reason they turn up in such strange places. In the cellar behind the water heater, for instance. Or out back right next to the dumpster. In the copy room with the microwave and vending machines. Or that water cooler swings out revealing a closet. Or...

Maybe Bruce Turner can answer your Alto-Ubica questions. Or maybe another reader has an opinion? Well?

Nicole Lindroos Frein
nikchick@aol.com
Peter,

First off, let me say that I had a chance to read through *EdgeWork* more thoroughly (after the move to Canada and getting settled in). I hope that it does well for you, and I intend to recommend it to everyone I meet in the local gaming store. The first issue started off with a bang. Good job!

As for what I would like to see in *EdgeWork*, the content of issue one just about sums it up. Although I think the Atlas Games products are of high quality, I do think there is value in the sections of *The Edge* and *Al Amarja* that don't deal directly with drugs, violence and sexual deviancy. I know, I know, those things are a large part of OTE and Atlas Games' tries to provide us with "cutting edge" material. That's good but I also like to see things such as the essay from Jonathan on the origin of fringe powers, and the creation of new secret societies. This is great stuff, keep it up!

It was nice to see you at Gen Con. I hope I'll see you again next year. Take care,

Nicole Lindroos Frein
Gee, more people liking EW....
Beginning to sound like a conspiracy.
I think the "cutting edge" material does draw a bunch of people to the game. But it can only go on so long before it grows old and tired. People want new things and EW is one place they can get it from. Stuff that will never make it into an "official" supplement (because of editorial direction or length) will continue to show up in the pages of EW.

Shadowgate Manor
4809 E. Washington Avenue
Las Vegas, NV 89110
Dear Peter,

I just had the rare pleasure of reading the first issue of *EdgeWork* and am dutifully writing a letter of comment as requested in your editorial. Each of the articles in the magazine were interesting and provided gaming ideas. Because the essence of *Over the Edge* is things-are-not-what-they-seem, the referee needs to be able to constantly provide new input and that can only come from magazines such as *EdgeWork*; as you pointed out some of us have to occasionally go to work, walk the dog, etc., instead of creating things for our FRPG campaigns.

You asked for comment on the alternate damage rules. They are easier, but melee combat is easy enough in this game that the subtraction/multiplication isn't all that onerous. Personally, I like simple roll-the-dice-for-damage vs. roll-the-dice-for-armor, so I'm in favor of the alternate damage rules on general principles. It does appear though that targets will be hurt more often. Possible someone could do the math on this? More compelling is an alternate rule for gunfire combat vs. armor. Since neither guns nor bullet-proof armor are intended to be used very often on Al Amarja, the rules for figuring damage are needlessly complex.

In most role-playing games, population of the world the characters inhabit seldom intrudes on adventures. There is presumed to be large numbers of people out there somewhere from which comes the pertinent tiny number of adventures. However, your article on what the Al Amarja subway system might look like suggests a reverse population problem. The population of Las Vegas proper is about the same 300,000 as The Edge. Yet, this is still a small town

in which people of a given profession or social circle are likely to know, or at least know of, almost everyone who has been in that circle for any length of time. The Edge is simply too small to contain the vast number of powerful supernatural conspiracies contemplated without them tripping over each other, even with the disinformation practiced by Her Exaltedness. Similarly, the NYC subway system is hundreds of times larger than what you propose and it would be bursting at the seams to contain the amount of strangeness appropriate to the game. My modest proposal is to consider that the population of Al Amarja is at least ten times as great as suggested in the rules—unlike a fantasy milieu where it would be impossible to actually feed all those people while fending off dragons, in a modern-day economy an island the size of Al Amarja could easily support that many. A secondary proposal would be to have the action going out into the rest of the world—presumably the various conspiracies have tentacles everywhere, and you'd get a chance to use all those nifty firearms rules if the characters adventured in places with less de facto gun control.

Ronald Pehr (or so I interpret the signature...)

I tend to agree with your comments about the amount of weirdness in Al Amarja. I think the basic job of every OTE GM is to decide which bits of strangeness are just the proud product of over-active imaginations on Al Amarja. But to take an example from my own life, I used to be quite active in the Minnesota SF Society. I helped run conventions and was active at meetings. Still, I only knew about a third of the members well enough to tell you what they did for a living. Thus, I believe that even in a place the size of The Edge, people can have secrets as big as being a Pharaoh quising. So I don't think we need to crank up the size of the Edge, we just need to think more deviously.

Edge watcher

Lisa Padol reviews two OTE supplements available from Atlas Games. Ready to spend your OTE bucks? Read this first!

Sylvan Pines

Welcome to *Sylvan Pines*, adventure for Over The Edge, Atlas Games. Design & Conception: Stephan Michael Sechi, Additional Design & Development: Mark Frein, John Nephew. \$8

This 32-page scenario assumes that the PCs are staying in one of two wings at Sylvan Pines, a psychiatric facility. Wing Two is where the dangerous patients stay; the doors between the two wings are locked. Strange things happen, and the doors to the outside are locked, while the doors between the wings are opened. The PCs must figure out what is really going on and, presumably, escape.

A year ago, I probably wouldn't have noticed that there were any problems with the way the scenario was written until I stumbled across them. However, I am now aware that players will come up with clever, but logical ideas that scenario designers haven't taken into consideration. In addition, their characters have unusual abilities. Thus, I read *Sylvan Pines* extremely carefully, hoping to spot potential problems in advance.

The big problem is that, once the adventure begins, the PCs are straitjacketed into one course of action. This surprised me. It's just not a problem I associate with OTE. Nevertheless, page 23 says:

"There is...no way to get out without going to the basement. Don't let PCs fuss around too much.... They're in for the duration."

In other words, this is a jail break scenario, and there's only one way to get out. Sorry, that's not workable. I can hear my players asking all sorts of logical questions.

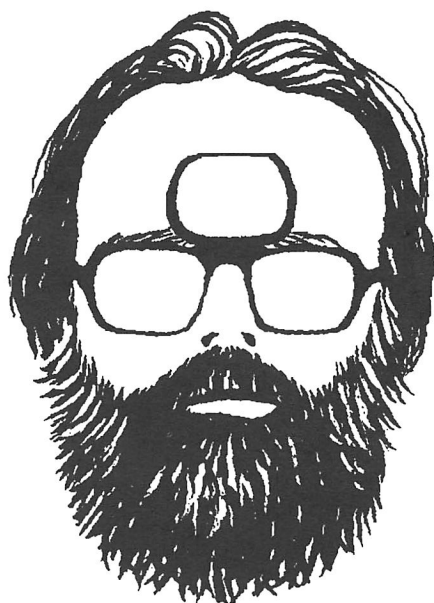
How do the locks work? I know the computer opens them, but is it a matter of magnets? Can they be picked? Can the entire lock be taken out of the door? Which way do the doors open? Where are the windows? How strong are the doors, walls, and floors? Or could one break through the roof? I can't just say, "Nope. This just says there's no way out." It's wrong.

I shouldn't have to invent this on the fly because the designers didn't see fit to think of it. After all, I am paying for someone else to do my thinking in the first place. You'll notice that this has nothing to do with any special abilities individual characters might have. I'm surprised this didn't come up in the playtesting.

I'm not sure why it's so terrible to keep the PCs from leaving in other ways than the designers intended. But if you only want one way out, it's your responsibility to go over the adventure with a fine toothed comb, systematically removing the obvious possibilities.

I have some minor nitpicks as well. The overview of the scenario says that the orientation section includes "floorplans for the sanitarium." It doesn't. I don't know if this was a change that was missed in the proofreading, or if a map somehow got left out.

There is a map at the end, but it does not show everything. Where's the meat locker? Where are the Quiet Rooms? If they're in Wing Two, just how does a Wing One patient, get into them? There is a reference to "Secured Rooms" in



Wing Two. Where are they? How do they differ from normal Wing Two rooms?

Also, it would be nice to know what the outcome of all the chaos will be, presuming inaction on the part of the PCs. One GMC has locked another into a closet. What does he plan to do next? Wait until the other starves?

The designers hope that Sylvan Pines will be reused. It is intended to provide both a setting and an adventure. However, the scenario leaves Sylvan Pines short on personnel, and possibly unusable by the time everyone gets out.

There is a lot of material in Sylvan Pines that I can use. However, both as a setting and as an adventure, it should have been thought out more carefully.

Airwaves

Airwaves, adventure resource for Over The Edge, Atlas Games.

Design: Rembert N. Parker. \$5.

This 16-page scenario doesn't have an easily summarizable plot. It has different characters with different goals. One or more of these goals may involve the PCs in the problems faced by AXTC, a new television station in The Edge.

The designer seems to have taken most of the possibilities into account. The flexibility of the scenario makes surprises easier to deal with.

One of the GMCs has hired the Hooligans, a gang specializing in making life miserable for its target. A nice touch is that the scenario takes into account the possibility that the gang will be paid off. This sounds obvious, but many scenarios would assume that, of course, PCs won't stand for this. The Hooligans are also well thought out, far more interesting than ordinary terrorists. (I would, however, like to know whether they would ever turn down a client on moral grounds.)

The GMC who hired the gang eventually kidnaps another GMC. The set up for this is also well thought out. If the PCs are dealing with the Hooligans (whether by force, bribery, or some other method), the GMC who hired them takes matters into his own hands. If the PCs refuse to deal, or if they aren't involved with that plot, the kidnapping occurs when the Hooligans have escalated their actions to a specific degree without getting results.

The climax of the scenario is a showdown between two GMCs who aren't directly involved in the plot mentioned above. Advice is given for running this conflict if the PCs are on one side, the other side, or neither side. There's also a nice section on the fallout from the adventure, as well as suggestions for integrating the setting with OTE campaigns. Whereas Sylvan Pines will likely be in some...disrepair, due to the events scheduled to occur, the setting of *Airwaves* will probably be reusable, no matter what occurs.

Minor Nitpicks: On page 14, it says: "the Hooligans absolutely refuse to reveal who hired them". Does this mean that they won't break under torture? Especially in an OTE campaign, it wouldn't surprise me if some PCs used torture to get the Hooligans to reconsider. I'd give this a fair shot of working, and then have the Hooligans target the PCs for the rest of the campaign. But, it would be nice to know how the author would handle it.

Then there's the map. Which way do the doors in the theater open? Where are the windows? On the street map, where are the doors?

Nevertheless, *Airwaves* is well thought out, both as a setting and as an adventure. I had thought \$5 was a stiff price, but I am forced to admit this product is worth it.



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Edited independently by Peter Hentges of Minneapolis, *EdgeWork* provides a fresh view of OTE material. Not slaved to the publisher of the game, Peter and other contributors can give unbiased reviews of OTE products and recommended products by other manufacturers that might fit your OTE game.

This fanzine operates with the direct support of its readership. An active letter column explores topics raised in previous issues. Readers submit articles that further detail the setting of the game and offer alternatives that would likely not be published elsewhere. Whether too much outside the editorial direction of most OTE material, or intriguing but too short for a full supplement, the cream of "alternative" OTE material appears in *EdgeWork*.

Join the legions of avant garde gamers playing OTE and read *EdgeWork* today!

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