

THE WORLD OF ADEN
CAMPAIGN
CHRONICLES

STEPHEN CRANE

the
**WORLD OF
ADEN**
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CHRONICLES**

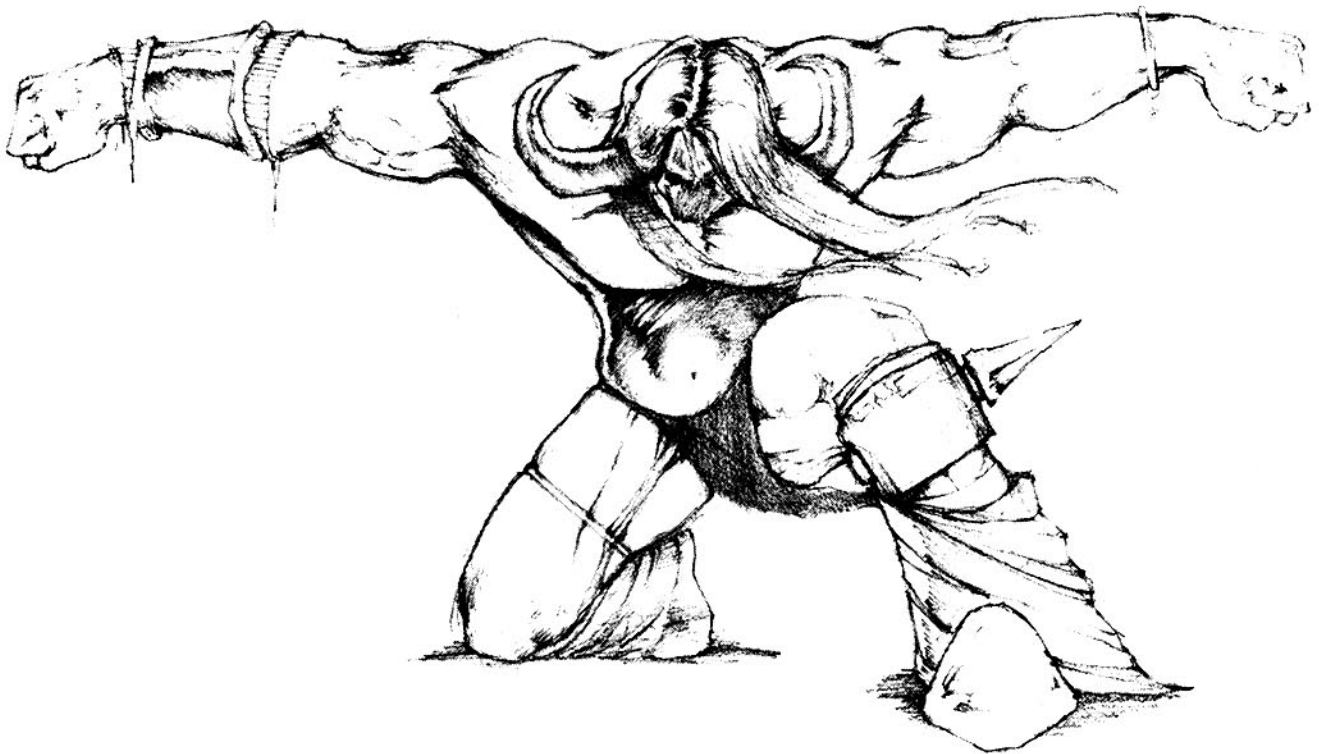


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The World of Aden is West End's fantasy roleplaying game based on the hit computer game series from SSI. Aden is a fantasy world with the trappings of conventional sword and sorcery, but it also has notable elements which set it apart as its own distinct world. Magic is an essential part of its nature, but technology has developed, too. New weapons have been created, particularly the black-powder firearms that increase the effectiveness of the warriors of the various nations, and steam powered machines make many tasks far easier. But technology has not evolved in a vacuum — it is entwined with the magical arts, giving rise to the new discipline called mechamagic. Mechamages have brought many new marvels into existence: marvels as diverse and intriguing as the magically animated automatons called steam golems, the replacement of lost or damaged limbs with mechamagical golemoid surrogates, and the awe-inspiring thunder trains, huge vehicles which allow trade to continue across the dangerous and benighted wilderness between cities and countries.

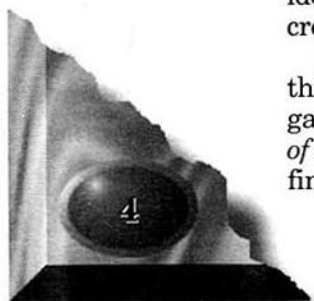
Aden is a world besieged. Ten long years ago, a curse descended upon the land. No one knows from whence it came, or what caused it. All that the folk of Aden know is that their lives are no longer peaceful and carefree. Supernatural creatures known as nocturnals have been birthed upon the land and have ravaged it and its people for a decade. Cities and settlements alike have become walled fortresses, and their citizens have learned to fight to defend their homes.

Yet in spite of the blight that casts their lives into shadow, the people of Aden hold onto hope. They know that with perseverance they will overcome the dark fate that has befallen them. They are people of indomitable spirit, who in spite of the precautions they have had to adopt, still find it in themselves to be giving and provide hospitality to those who pass through their lives.

Campaign Chronicles is your guide to this exciting new world. While many of the concepts may be familiar to players who are acquainted with fantasy literature and games, these concepts are given a new spin in *The World of Aden*. Characters, settings and adventures should be designed with these new concepts in mind.

This campaign pack is a guide to setting up a *World of Aden* game. Included in this book are explanations of the different approaches required, as well as ideas and hints for preparing the various elements of your roleplaying game: creating characters and encounters, and setting up adventures and campaigns.

This book is also valuable for beginning gamemasters. As you read through this book, you will be introduced to many of the basic concepts of roleplaying games, and how to deal with them. If you are already familiar with *The World of Aden* through one or more of the computer games set in this world, you will find that the roleplaying game will broaden your enjoyment of the milieu.



Roleplaying allows players and gamemasters much more freedom in the course of a game. While a computer is limited to responding to the situations it has been programmed with, and does not allow any actions outside the scope of those parameters, a human gamemaster can adapt to any new situations and respond to the actions of the players' adventuring party with interesting and unique encounters.

Campaign Chronicles also provides a number of locations that can be found in the world of Aden. These generic sites are presented to give you ideas about what your characters could encounter in their travels, and gives you a number of locations that you could base an adventure around. They are also handy for those times the players send their characters in a direction the gamemaster was not prepared for.

In addition, there are chapters detailing new creatures that your characters may encounter in their travels—creatures both natural and nocturnal—and new spells for magic-using characters to cast.

gamemaster screen

This campaign pack also contains a gamemaster screen for *The World of Aden* game. Experienced players should already be familiar with the screen, but a word of explanation may be in order for beginning players.

The gamemaster screen stands on the table between the gamemaster and the players. It serves to hide the gamemaster's notes and die rolls from the players. It also contains the charts and tables most frequently required during the course of a game, saving the gamemaster from having to flip through the rule book at an inopportune time. The reverse side of the screen contains those charts and tables which the players may need to consult.

The screen provided is stapled into the middle of this book and consists of two cover-sized pieces of folded cardboard printed on both sides. To prepare the screen, carefully open the staples in the middle of the book and remove the two pieces. Then fold the staples back down.

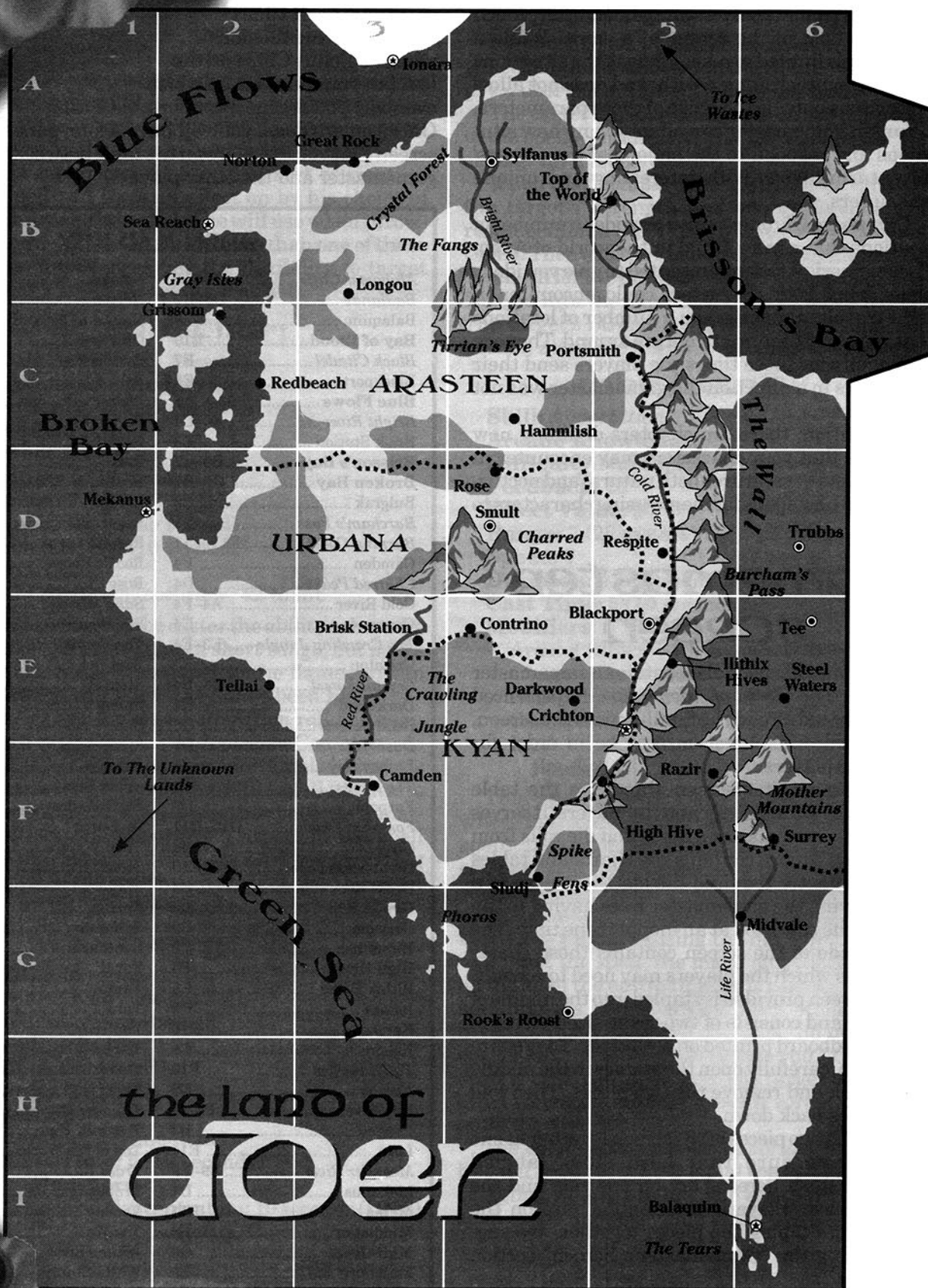
Tape the two pieces of the screen together at one edge. Make sure that both sides labeled "Gamemaster's Screen" are on one side and the faces labeled "Players' Information" are on the other before taping the pieces together. We suggest placing the "Gamemaster's Screen" section

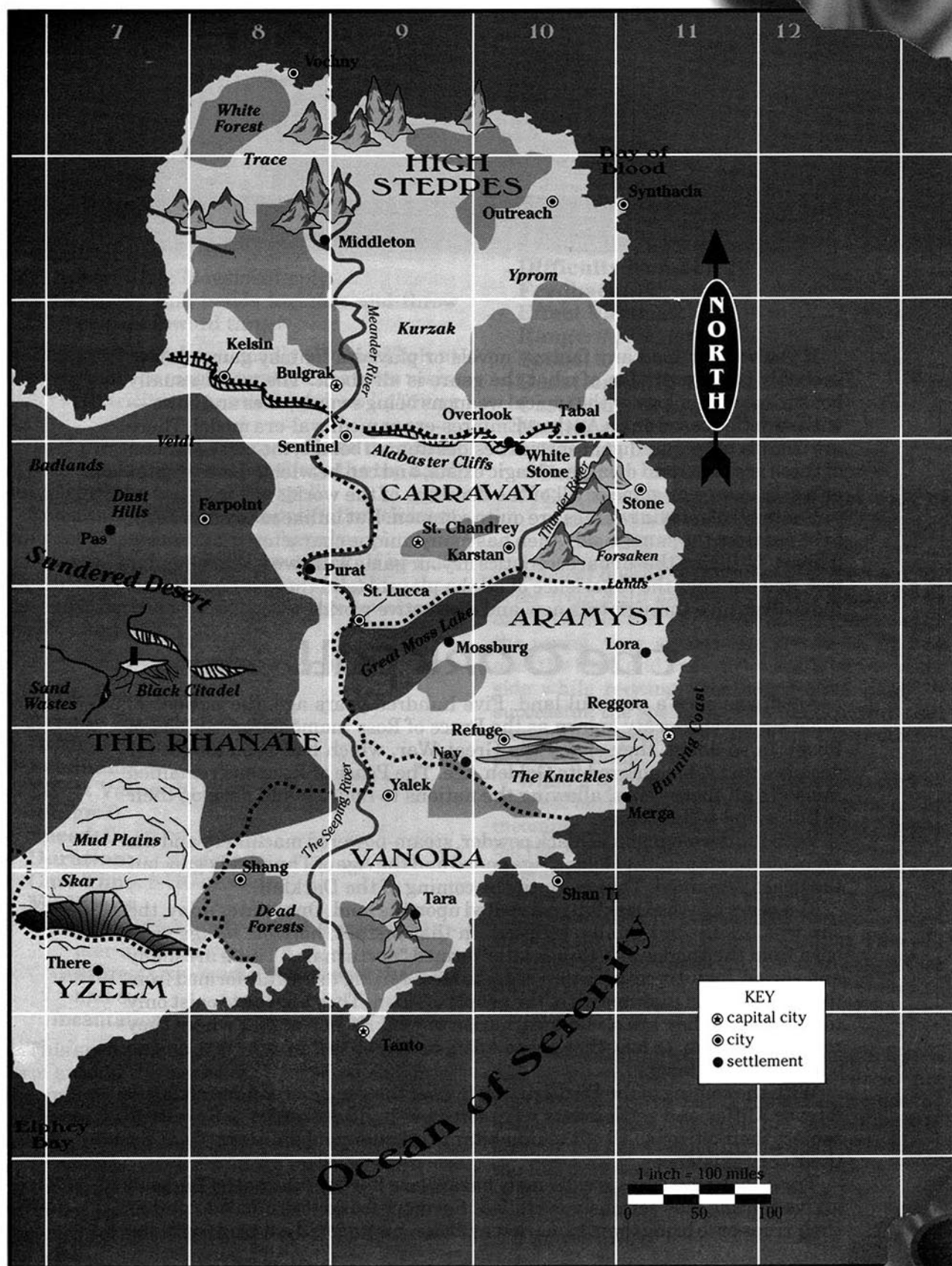
with the Success Chart on the right and the side with the Bonus Chart on the left, but you can set it up whichever way you are most comfortable with it. Once you are done, you will have a four-panel screen that you can place on the table between the gamemaster and the other players.

ADEN MAP KEY

<i>Alabaster Cliffs</i>	C7-C10	Nay	F9
<i>Badlands</i>	D6-D7	Norton	B2
<i>Balaquim</i>	I6	Ocean of Serenity	H10
Bay of Blood	B10	Outreach	B10
<i>Black Citadel</i>	E7	Overlook	D10
<i>Blackport</i>	E5	Pas	D7
Blue Flows	A1	Phoros	G4
<i>Bright River</i>	A4-C4	Portsmith	C5
<i>Brisk Station</i>	E3	Purat	D8
Brisson's Bay	B5-C7	Razir	F5
Broken Bay	C2-D2	Redbeach	C2
<i>Bulgrak</i>	C8	Refuge	F10
<i>Burcham's Pass</i>	D4	Regorra	F11
<i>Burning Coast</i>	E11-F11	Respite	D4
<i>Camden</i>	F4	Rook's Roost	G4
<i>Charred Peaks</i>	D4	Rose	D4
<i>Cold River</i>	A4-F4	<i>Sand Wastes</i>	E6-E7
<i>Contrino</i>	E4	Sea Reach	B2
<i>The Crawling Jungle</i>	E3-F4	<i>The Seeping River</i>	E9-H9
<i>Crichton</i>	E5	Sentinel	C9
<i>Crystal Forest</i>	B3-B4	Shan 'Ti	G10
<i>Darkwood</i>	E4	Shang	G8
<i>Dead Forests</i>	G8	Skar	G6-G7
<i>Dust Hills</i>	D7	Sludj	F3
<i>Elphey Bay</i>	I5	Smult	D4
<i>The Fangs</i>	C4	<i>Spike Fens</i>	F3
<i>Farpoint</i>	D8	St. Chandrey	D9
<i>Forsaken Land</i>	D10-D11	St. Lucca	E9
<i>Gray Isles</i>	B2	Steel Waters	E6
<i>Great Moss Lake</i>	E9-E10	Stone	D11
<i>Great Rock</i>	B3	<i>Sundered Desert</i>	C6-F8
Green Sea	G2	Surrey	F6
<i>Grissom</i>	C2	Sylfanus	B4
<i>Hammlish</i>	C4	Synthacia	B10
<i>High Hive</i>	F5	Tabal	C10
<i>Ilithix Hives</i>	E5	Tanto	H9
<i>Ionara</i>	B3	Tara	G9
<i>Karstan</i>	D10	<i>The Tears</i>	I6
<i>Kelsin</i>	C8	Tee	E6
<i>The Knuckles</i>	F10	Tellai	E2
<i>Kurzak</i>	C9	There	G7
<i>Life River</i>	F5-I6	<i>Thunder River</i>	D10
<i>Longou</i>	B3	<i>Tirrian's Eye</i>	C4
<i>Lore</i>	E11	<i>Top of the World</i>	B5
<i>Meander River</i>	B9-E9	<i>Trace</i>	B8
<i>Mekanus</i>	D1	Trubbs	D6
<i>Merea</i>	F11	Vochny	A8
<i>Middleton</i>	B8	<i>The Wall</i>	A5-F5
<i>Midvale</i>	G6	<i>White Forest</i>	A8
<i>Mossburg</i>	E9	<i>White Stone</i>	D10
<i>Mother Mountains</i>	F6	Yalek	F9
<i>Mud Plains</i>	F7-G7	<i>Yprom</i>	B10

WORLD OF
ADEN





setting the tone

If you've ever read any fantasy novels or played a fantasy game, you've probably got a good idea of what the genre is all about. The world usually boasts low-technology — the typical weapons being swords, axes and bows — with societies based on an Ancient Empires-era or medieval-era model. There are usually other intelligent species besides human beings; the most common of these are elves and dwarves. Magic exists, and can be wielded to a greater or lesser extent by some or all of the denizens of the world.

Fantasy roleplaying games are quite common. But unlike many that seem to be cut from the same mold, Aden has many unique characteristics that set it apart. Utilizing these characteristics in your game will give it that singular feel, and enhance the experience of all the players (and the gamemaster) as they adventure through this new and distinctive world.

the Darkfall

Aden was once a peaceful land. Five hundred years ago, the nations of Aden signed the treaty known as the Peace of Rose (named after the city of Rose). In so doing, they ended the Great War, which had been fought for decades, and Aden entered its Golden Age. The Peace of Rose has remained inviolate all these years, allowing the nations to flourish and develop their cultures and technologies.

With the development of black powder, steam-powered machinery and the art of mechamancy, the Golden Age ended and the Age of Thunder began, but the peace remained. That is, until the coming of the Darkfall.

Ten years ago the Darkfall was visited upon the land. One winter's day, the sun was briefly, but totally, eclipsed. In that instant, horrible *things* were born from the shadows — things later termed "nocturnals." These are many and varied, awful creatures that seem to have sprung to life full-formed from the folktales and nightmares of the people of Aden. They appear to exist only to destroy — they are a vile incarnation of evil. No one knows where they really came from, or how they got to Aden, or why. But they are here, and no one is safe any longer.

With the coming of the Darkfall, the lives of the denizens of Aden changed forever. Cities and settlements were forced to build palisades and walls to protect their citizens. All of the inhabitants became combatants in a war for their very existence.

Travel between cities is extremely hazardous. For years after the Darkfall arrived, trade was seriously curtailed. Farmers found it difficult to gather their crops or to bring them to market and merchants could not trade with the

other cities and nations. Even sea-going trade was curtailed. Nocturnals were everywhere. It is only by means of the mehamagical thunder trains of the Lord of Urbana that trade has been restored between the countries. With the modicum of prosperity that this has brought to the lands of Aden, they are better able to protect their citizens and attempt as best they can to return life to its prior normalcy. But it still promises to be a long, hard struggle.

Living under the Darkfall

The Darkfall and its effects are the most pervasive elements in the *World of Aden*. Therefore, this is the general mood you should attempt to convey while running a game. As the characters move through the adventure, play up the oppressive feel of their surroundings — they may come across ruined cities, expansive graveyards, decaying crops or blasted woodlands. Even the settlements which are still standing will show the ravages of the Darkfall. Perhaps some of the villages contain burnt-out shells of former buildings. It may be that all of the buildings are standing, but show the aftereffects of an attack; effects such as parts of houses caved in or torn open, or maybe arrows or other weapons still stuck deeply into the walls and roofs of the structures.

The more bleak your description of the towns and settlements the characters pass through, the more awe-inspiring it will be when they actually find something intact or untouched. It could also make them more than a little suspicious, which may just suit the purposes of your adventure.

The people the characters meet could also appear downtrodden, with looks of fear and/or despair etched on their faces. Many of these people may still hold onto their pride and their hope, but the constant fear will still be apparent in their expressions. The oppressive mood will also be brought home to the characters when they are treated with mistrust and those they meet refuse to speak with them or answer any questions. The reactions of the folk the characters meet will vary, of course, but there will always be some measure of reservation in their dealings with the adventuring party. Even those who still hold to the tradition of hospitality in Aden will be somewhat wary of the characters at first. They should only open up slowly and once

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• one: setting the tone •

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the characters have proven themselves not to be a threat. This pattern of behavior is more likely to occur — or to be more pronounced — in the more isolated, outlying towns and settlements than in the larger cities.

The end result of all this oppression and suspicion is to enhance the feeling of constant danger that the characters should be experiencing as they travel across Aden. No matter where they go, the danger of the Darkfall exists, and could strike at any time. Characters should not feel safe traversing the wilderness areas between settlements, and should feel only marginally safer within the confines of a city or town. The characters should never know when nocturnals will pop out of the woodwork (and sometimes they actually may — literally).

elements of horror

The key to keeping the characters uneasy is to maintain a creepy mood. Emphasizing the dark feel of the places they travel to and through, as described above, is a good overall moodsetter. To heighten the creepiness, you should also interject specific elements of horror at times. *The World of Aden* is a fantasy game, but the Darkfall and its nocturnals can and should be a horrific element. You will need to think along the lines of a horror story or a horror game in order to convey the sense of dread that hangs over the world. And remember that players are easier to scare if they are uncertain of what is happening and are off-balance.

There are a number of things that you can do in order to interject fear into the game and keep the adrenaline running:

Sudden Surprise: The simplest method is the sudden surprise. This is a staple of horror movies and can work wonderfully if not over-used. The sudden surprise is when something jumps up unexpectedly and yells “Boo!” (or the cat leaps out of the closet when you open it, or a friend puts a hand on your shoulder when you don’t expect it). Granted, this terror lasts only a short time, but as a way of getting the pulse racing right away and building suspense during a climactic scene, it does the trick.

The sudden surprise generally works well the first time you pull it. Use it

too many times and it becomes commonplace and loses its effect. Timing and balance are the key to this effect. If you spring two or three sudden surprise false scares in a row, you can follow them up by having the real monster pop up. Just as the characters are letting down their guard and expecting something else insignificant to be around the corner, the object of their search comes out fighting, forcing them to scramble in order to put up an effective defense.

Keep Up the Action: There’s nothing like an action-filled chase to keep the adrenaline pumping. And remember, a chase can work either way — the characters are in hot pursuit of some villain or other, or some kind of horror is pursuing the characters. Also, for the purpose of keeping the tension high, a chase does not have to be immediate, with one party hot on the heels of the other. Any running confrontation works to maintain a high level of unease. For instance, the characters may be riding along with a caravan, or even on board a thunder train, and during the course of the adventure the caravan is constantly harried by nocturnal attacks. The attacks could also come from within — there may be conflicts with the other passengers or the caravan crew. Maybe a mysterious presence is killing off the members of the caravan.

The continual pressure serves to keep the players, through their characters, tense and edgy. They never know when the next attack is coming and must maintain an unrelenting level of readiness. This is bound to wear them down and keep them off-balance.

Keeping the characters moving when the action heats up also means that they have little time to think. They just keep moving and reacting. To simulate the rush of things, make each player declare his character’s action(s) for the round, but with a time limit. If the player doesn’t state his action in the allotted time, he has missed his chance to act for that round and just keeps moving along with the rest of the party. The more urgent the situation, the shorter the time limit you should impose.

Unexpected Twists: If the players think they know what is going to happen, but then find out they were on the wrong track, it leaves them disoriented and uneasy. Such occurrences also serve to emphasize to the characters that all is not what it seems and the effects of the Darkfall are insidious and difficult to discover at times. They will begin to realize just how dangerous their world has become. The idea is to set up an

adventure in such a way that the players are led along the wrong path to a solution. But you must do this in a manner so that the players are the ones who come to that conclusion. If you try to lead them around by the nose, they'll resist. You have to leave them clues to find that lead to the wrong conclusion, and save the actual solution for the very end. The more convinced the players are that they have figured everything out, the more of a shock the actual ending will be.

For instance, suppose that adventuring characters are looking into a series of vicious attacks by nocturnals on an outlying village. During the course of their investigation, they uncover evidence that seems to implicate one of the townsfolk. The evidence may be witnesses — perhaps even the characters themselves — who have spotted him near the scene of one or more incidents. Or it might be some physical evidence (fragments of clothes, possessions of a victim, bloodstains, etc.) found at the suspect's dwelling. If the suspect is an upstanding citizen or well-liked, that will make it even harder for the other townsfolk to believe, and make the characters' job more difficult.

Once the characters are firmly convinced that they know what is happening in the village and begin to act on it, then it's time to reveal what is really going on. Don't just come out and state it, of course. Have the characters discover some new information at the last moment, information that leads them (finally) in the right direction. One of the villagers could come running up with news of a sighting of a nocturnal. Or another attack could occur while the prime suspect is in custody. By following up on the new information, the characters learn how mistaken they were.

Perhaps the citizen was just unlucky, being in a few wrong places at the wrong time, and is the victim of circumstantial evidence. Or maybe the suspect was set up, because it suited a nocturnal to frame him. This could be for malicious fun, or to throw its pursuers off the track. Maybe it has a more devious reason: the citizen is the key to the town's defense, helping to keep it safe from nocturnals, either by his presence or actions. By implicating the victim, the nocturnal removes a threat, leaving the village in turmoil and paving the way for a full-scale invasion by a nocturnal horde. It could also be that the victim was framed by another townsfolk who held a grudge against him. Maybe the other townsfolk is a nocturnal in disguise!

Keep in mind that players are generally familiar with the same types of stories that you are. You can use that to your advantage when attempting to misdirect them. Once the characters have discovered a series of clues that point in the direction you want them to follow, give them a red herring or two. Red herrings are usually provided to sidetrack the characters. But in this case, the false clues are there to lure the characters away from a path that's false as well! This is what's known as a "double-bluff." Once the characters pursue the leads and find they go nowhere, they'll be even more certain their original idea was the correct one. Watch the fun as their jaws drop when the truth is revealed ...

No Refuge: One way to drive home just how dangerous the world of Aden has become is to demonstrate that no place is safe — nocturnals can appear anywhere. If the characters spend the night in an inn, they tend to assume that they'll be safe until the dawn. Odds are, the party will not post a guard. When everyone is comfortable and sleeping, the room could be invaded by nocturnals (or just ordinary ruffians or thieves) who seek to kill, capture or rob the characters. It may be that these are creatures the party is already chasing after, and they decided on a preemptive strike when they discovered the party's whereabouts. Or maybe the characters were not involved in any pursuit, and happen to be victims of random violence (nocturnal or otherwise). Or maybe the adventurers have something — an artifact or magical object — that the attackers want. Suddenly, the characters are in the middle of an adventure ... if they survive, that is.

(And if your players are reluctant to be sidetracked by this sort of thing, maybe you could have one of the characters carried off by the attackers. This should get them moving in the direction you want them to go.)

You can demonstrate that other places are also unsafe. When the characters are holed up in a defensive position, the nocturnals might still come through the walls. Once again, they could be literally coming out of the woodwork (or the stonework). In a crowded plaza or temple, some of the passers-by may suddenly transform into nocturnals and attack.

The idea of "no hiding place" can be shown in more subtle ways, too. Picture this: the characters are in hot

pursuit of some ram-
paging nocturnal, when
suddenly they discover its
afterthem! It's been toying with them
all along, leaving them clues ... and now it
has them just where it wants them. Maybe they
learn all this by awakening to discover the head
of one of their informants mounted on a post in
their camp. That could have been one of them ...
talk about feeling uneasy!

The upshot of all this is that surviving in Aden
requires constant vigilance, which is wearing on
the nerves. For that reason, you want to intro-
duce this element, but not overdo it to the point
where all the fun is gone from the game. And it's
important for the characters to know that, even
if there is no place in the world that is safe, there
are places that can be *made* safe, through their
actions.

Engender Mistrust: As mentioned previ-
ously, many of the people that the player charac-
ters will encounter will not trust them at first.
They will be suspicious, and their trust will have

to be earned.

But trust is a two way street, and along the
way to developing a relationship with the people
they meet, the player characters will begin to
trust them. One way to really unsettle the char-
acters is to have someone they trust betray them.
This works best with a standard gamemaster
character that has been set up as a long-running
contact for the adventurers (see Chapter Two,
“Defining Characters,” for a discussion of stan-
dard gamemaster characters and their use in a
campaign). Maybe the contact is a member of the
militia or city watch in a town the characters
frequent. Or perhaps it is some other adventurer
that has aided them in the past, or provided
information or aid — maybe a monk, or an
outsider, or even a member of the Radiant Order.

After a number of interactions over the course
of many adventures, the contact could provide
the adventurers with information that will lead
them to uncovering a great treasure, or a great
weapon against the nocturnals, or a hotbed of
nocturnal activity that needs purging — or so



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they think. In actuality, the contact has been corrupted, and has sent the player characters into an ambush. They may not want to believe it was intentional, but eventually they have to face the fact that they were deceived. If they survive the ambush, the adventurers may want to go find the contact in order to get revenge, or to save him from the corruption if possible. The events that follow could be the start of the next adventure, and lead to a sense of closure in the characters' relationship with this person. Or they could find him gone, with no explanation of why he did what he did.

The idea is to build trust, then shatter it. Again, use this trick sparingly — do it too often, and the characters will never trust anyone again. And while that sort of paranoia can be to your advantage, it can also cause problems later on. Gamemaster characters are often essential to shove the characters in the right direction and you don't want to completely ruin their effectiveness.

Change of Pace: Don't use the same scare tactics all the time. Change what you do from adventure to adventure so that the horror elements become unpredictable. Players can become used to the way adventures are run and start anticipating your scares. Change to a different sort of story. Mix and match the suggestions above. Keep the players guessing.

the unknown

Make sure the characters are never quite sure what to expect. This might seem like a simple thing to do — after all, players are never supposed to know what is happening next in an adventure. But once players become familiar with a game universe, it gets harder and harder to surprise them. This is especially true for more experienced characters, who have travelled a lot through Aden and encountered many strange creatures and items in their wanderings, and for players who may have read and memorized all the supplements to the game. Many of these players and/or characters become jaded, and recognize what it is they've encountered and know just how powerful it is or isn't ("Oh, look, it's just three grave worms; we should be able to dispatch them in no time").

Characters should tread cautiously and fear for their lives. If they don't know what to expect, and are attacked by things they've never seen before — and therefore don't know the capabilities of — they will be suitably unnerved. Since

the majority of confrontations in Aden will be with nocturnals, it is relatively easy to come up with unexpected encounters. Nocturnals come in hundreds of different forms, so you can develop a wide variety of never-before-seen creatures. Create some new nocturnals. Don't use just the ones provided in the "Bestiary" chapter of *The World of Aden*, or in this book.

You can start by looking at already existing creatures to see what kind of skills and abilities they have. Determine what purpose your creature will serve in the adventure and pick appropriate skills for it. Give it a special ability or two if required. Most of the abilities can be derived from existing spells or other special effects. If you want to give your creature an ability you can't find an example for, you can create your own using the rules provided in Chapter Six of *MasterBook*, "Creating and Using Special Effects."

If you're not comfortable with creating nocturnals from scratch, start with an existing creature, and change some of its attributes, skills or Advantages and Compensations. This method can be particularly disconcerting to characters who think they know it all, as the seemingly familiar-looking creature does not react as expected or doesn't die when expected.

You can also look to other WorldBooks that are available for the *MasterBook* system. You can find many creatures and characters on which to base your own nocturnals. Coming as they do from other worlds, they may be totally unknown to your players, especially when you give them new names and dress them up as creatures of Aden. And the best aspect of them (for the gamemaster) is that they're already made up (although you might have to do a little tinkering to fit them into the *The World of Aden*). A current listing of *MasterBook* WorldBooks can be found on page 144 of *The World of Aden*.

make it personal

Remember that nocturnals are born of the nightmares and fears of the people. When developing new nocturnals with which to plague your players, keep that in mind. To get the greatest effect, tailor your creations to play on the fears of the players. Even though the monsters will be interacting with the players' characters, it is the players' feelings which drive their characters' reactions.

For instance, if a player is creeped

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out by spiders, then come up with a nocturnal that is spider-like in form. Describe the many legs and multiple eyes, and the irregular clenching of the creature's slaving mandibles. When the beast moves, emphasize the undulating rhythm of the many legs. Try to suggest all of the characteristics of the creature upon which the nocturnal is based, and watch as the player shudders at the very thought. The more descriptive and evocative you can be, the greater the effect you will have, and the more real the game will seem. If you've been playing with your group for a long time, you should have no problem figuring out what spooks each of the members. Otherwise it may take a few game sessions to determine the best way to unsettle them.

If a player's character is well-defined, which usually happens only after you've been playing for a while, and if the player is good at staying in character, then you can also design creatures that play on the character's fears. This is much more difficult to do, and requires a lot of effort on the part of the gamemaster and players, but can make for a very satisfying roleplaying session if you can pull it off.

One thing to remember, though, is that your goal in making the players uneasy is to enhance the mood of the game and to give the world depth and character, but it is important to remember that this is just a game. Don't take the scary mood too far, and keep the feelings of your players in mind. The game is supposed to be fun. If a player is uneasy about spiders, then the spider-demon is a good scary tool for enhancing the ambience of the game. But if the player actually has a phobia about spiders, then it is best to steer clear of this type of creature. You don't want to traumatize your players, after all.

mechamagic

Another major aspect that sets *The World of Aden* apart from ordinary fantasy worlds is the sorcery of mechamagic. Mechamancy was the eventual result of the melding of long-extant use of magic with the newer development of technology, in the form of steam-power machinery and black-powder weapons. While the concept of blending the new technology with magic was tried many times in the past, it always failed due to the inherent "anti-magical" quality of iron and steel. With the discovery of manite, a naturally-oc-

curing metal that can hold an enchantment and is suitable for metalworking, the art of mechamancy finally came into its own. The sorcery of metal has flourished and grown for almost 200 years now.

Since the use of manite has enabled mechamages to combine the mastery of magic with the power of steam, many new and powerful mechamagical constructs have been created, primarily by wizards working for Lord Urbane. Other nations have also developed their own creations.

Although it has been around for nearly two centuries, mechamagic is still a relatively rare art. This is due in part to the new politics of the Age of Thunder, whereby the various nations consider their mechamagical discoveries to be state secrets and guard them jealously. However, some mechamagical spells did eventually trickle down to the common people. These tend to be more commonplace spells that are handy for day-to-day living, or for combat. The powerful spells used to construct large mechamagical contraptions remain closely held secrets.

Given these developments in the evolution of mechamagic, knowledge of the existence of these creations is fairly widespread. Many people have heard of these machines, but fewer have actually seen them or know any details about them. Adventuring characters will generally have fair to good knowledge of the magical contraptions. Magically oriented characters could also have the arcane knowledge of *earth (metal)* and some mechamantic spells.

In general, magical contraptions are rare, but as they add such a particular flavor to an Aden campaign, you should try to work them into adventures where you can. You can justify that by the fact that the characters are more exceptional than the average citizen and tend to become involved in the more exotic events occurring in the land. Even if the characters do not become directly involved with a construct, incorporate them into descriptions of the places they visit. For instance, in any big city (particularly any city in the country of Urbana) there might be a mechamagical contraption performing some function or stomping around the streets in the background. When describing the bustling scene of people moving about, and the look of the buildings, work in the steaming and clanking of the large machine that seems to set a counterpoint to the activity in the streets.

Key words that you are looking for when describing these mechanisms are clanking, chug-

ging, hissing and steaming. Mention the partial visibility as the action of the machine is hidden by billowing clouds of white vapor, and the heat that assails the characters as the contrivance draws nearer. Not all of these contraptions are mobile machines, either. The characters may enter a room that contains steam engines hissing away, supplying power for some other part of the building. The room will be hot, and obscured by clouds. Describe the close scrapes the characters have with scalding hot pipes that jut into the room.

This sort of a room would be perfect for a climactic chase scene, as the characters try to run down their quarry (or escape with their lives). The clanking and banging of heavy machinery would make it difficult, if not impossible, to hear the approach of other characters, while the thick clouds would leave characters uncertain as to who might be approaching. Even then, they would be unaware of someone approaching until they were almost on top of them. Imagine the havoc that could be wrought if you managed to split up the party. Characters would have to be very careful how they reacted, especially if they tend to strike first and ask questions later.

One of the more common machines that adventurers would be likely to encounter would be a steam golem, or one of Lord Urbane's sentinels. Steam golems are employed by many mechamages, and if the characters get involved with mages, odds are they'll run into one sooner or later. The characters will probably only run into a sentinel if they are adventuring in one of the big cities of Urbana, or are somehow involved with a thunder train. Of course, sentinels shouldn't be restricted to those locations. They will probably be employed wherever the Iron Tyrant has a scheme he wants to protect. That might actually be the start of an adventure: The characters run across a sentinel or two in the wilderness of Urbana or in a small settlement somewhere off the beaten track. Thinking it odd that one of Urbane's contraptions should be found way out here, the characters look into it ...

Another aspect of mechamancy that characters can run into, and which is probably the most prominent use of mechamagic that they will encounter, is a golemoid. Many warriors and other adventurers who have lost limbs have been able to continue their careers by having mechamagical replacements attached to their bodies. Some have not even waited to lose the original through normal means. Enamored of the extra strength the attachments can provide,

or the impression that such a display will give, some characters will choose to have a healthy limb replaced. One or more of the player character may even bear such replacements.

Describing the occasional character encountered as having such attachments will continue to emphasize that the characters are not in just another fantasy world. You can work in some of the descriptive elements of mechamagic described above. Perhaps the mechanical leg clanks a bit as the character walks, or the arm creaks when in motion. Maybe the character needs to keep it oiled, and does so frequently. Another character's leg or arm might vent a jet of steam every once in a while (maybe more and more frequently as he gets anxious or upset). Besides setting the tone of the world, these are good elements to use to personalize gamemaster characters.

If you are using golemoid characters, keep in mind that almost every golemoid suffers to a greater or lesser extent from the Wasting. The Wasting is a mysterious disease that comes when a person has too much manite in their body. It weakens the victim and slowly causes him or her to lose their mind. As such, many golemoids exhibit odd behavioral characteristics and may appear somewhat unhinged. Many ordinary people do not fully trust having a golemoid around, as they fear that the golemoid may become deranged at any moment and become a threat. Adventurers are usually more tolerant of golemoid compatriots, but should still watch out for them.

Adventurers who are equipped with golemoid attachments will find the tables turned, also. They should not be surprised by the reaction of villagers and other folk they encounter, who will look on them as a potential threat and be reluctant to trust them as a friend.

other Background material

In addition to the background provided in *The World of Aden* and this volume, there are a number of other sources that you can refer to in order to get the feel of adventuring in the land of Aden.

The computer games are a good

WORLD OF ADEN

way to experience the thrill of exploring Aden. In addition, they allow you to adventure there on your own, for those times when you can't get a group together for the roleplaying game. Playing through these games can also give you some ideas for new adventures — some creature, treasure or situation that you run across may be the spark that generates hours of new roleplaying adventures.

There are two games currently available from SSI as this book is being published: *Thunderscape* and *Entomorph: Plague of the Darkfall*. In *Thunderscape*, you play a band of adventurers who seek to assist a group of knights of the Radiant Order by retaking Skellon's Pass from a horde of nocturnals and reactivating the magical shield that spanned the pass, thereby keeping the nocturnals from invading the Northlands. In the course of the adventure, the characters journey through the Radiant Citadel, Vanguard Keep and the ruins of the ancient deep-dwarven city of Karegh-Konan.

Entomorph: Plague of the Darkfall casts the player as a young fistfighter searching for his sister on Phoros, the largest of the islands off the southern coast of Aden, near Kyan. During the course of the adventure, the character discovers that even these lands were affected by the Darkfall — and they hide a terrible secret. The character must uncover that secret and solve the mystery of the Plague in order to survive and save both himself and the settlers, villagers and farmers of the islands.

As further games are released, they will detail other aspects of Aden.

In addition to the games based in Aden, there are also several novels set there. Once again,

these can be excellent sources of adventure ideas, and are an entertaining way to become familiar with the flavor of the world. Reading these books can also help you to represent the world to the players. Pay attention to the phrasing and descriptions used in the novels; even take notes if you have to. By seeing how the authors of these books present the situations they are writing about, you can use similar phrasing and descriptive elements to convey the feeling to your players when describing a scene for them.

These are the novels set in the World of Aden (they are published by HarperCollins):

The Sentinel, by Dixie Lee McKeone

Darkfall, by Shane Lacy Hensley

Indomitable Thunder, by Mark Acres

In addition to the novels, a Resource Manual for the World of Aden is planned. This is intended to be an encyclopedia detailing the creatures, peoples and nations of Aden. If you need more information on a subject, look it up in the Resource Manual. Another good use for the Manual is to browse through it for inspiration. You can gather many good ideas from the pages of the book as you read various entries at random.

Other planned World of Aden products are a boardgame and a card game (to be published by companies other than West End). These too can be useful for adventure ideas, as well as entertaining in their own right. In particular, the visual imagery of the cards can be used as inspiration for new characters, situations and magical objects. They can also be used as game aids for the roleplaying game — if your scene involves a character, creature or location that is shown on a card, you can display the card to the players as you describe the situation. After all, a picture really is worth a thousand words.



Defining Characters

Characters are the heart of a roleplaying game, whether they are the player characters or those that the gamemaster employs to interact with the players and to further the course of the game. As such, they are the one aspect of the game that requires the most thought and attention.

The players' characters are their personas when playing. It is through their characters that players enter the world of Aden and explore its wonders and mysteries. They experience the world through the actions of their characters, interacting with the locations, creatures and characters that the gamemaster has created.

The gamemaster, in turn, uses the people he has created to interact with the player characters. The gamemaster's characters can be used to give information to the player characters, or to aid them in their quest, or to hinder them if necessary. They can be friends or enemies. Everything revolves around the characters; what good are fully detailed locations or worlds with no one around to experience them? So the more presence the characters have — the more "character," if you will — the more alive the game will be, becoming a richer experience for everyone involved.

player characters

The player characters are usually the most defined in a game, and with good reason. Players tend to invest a lot of time and planning in the creation of their characters. This is to be expected, as their characters will be with them for a long time (hopefully). Also, their characters represent them, and as they are the embodiment of what the players wish to portray, they will carefully craft what the characters are like, as well as the backgrounds they come from.

Once the initial creative process is done, you still have only "starting characters." They will develop as the campaign progresses. Each player generally has only one character they play the part of, so all of their thought and attention goes into the development of that one individual. Players can develop the character along the lines of their original concept. Sometimes the character will develop in a totally different direction than the player originally intended. This usually occurs in games where roleplaying and character development are emphasized over action and combat, but can happen in almost any game, and depends on how flexible the player is. Whatever direction the character's growth takes, it is with the full involvement of the player, leading to a unique individual with its own distinct personality.

The *MasterBook* system is particularly suited to this sort of character generation and development. It is geared toward creating characters with a background story, and with a number of unique mannerisms and attitudes. This makes it easier to create a character for yourself, especially if you are new to roleplaying. Characters created in this way start out as fleshed-out individuals, not just as a collection of game statistics.

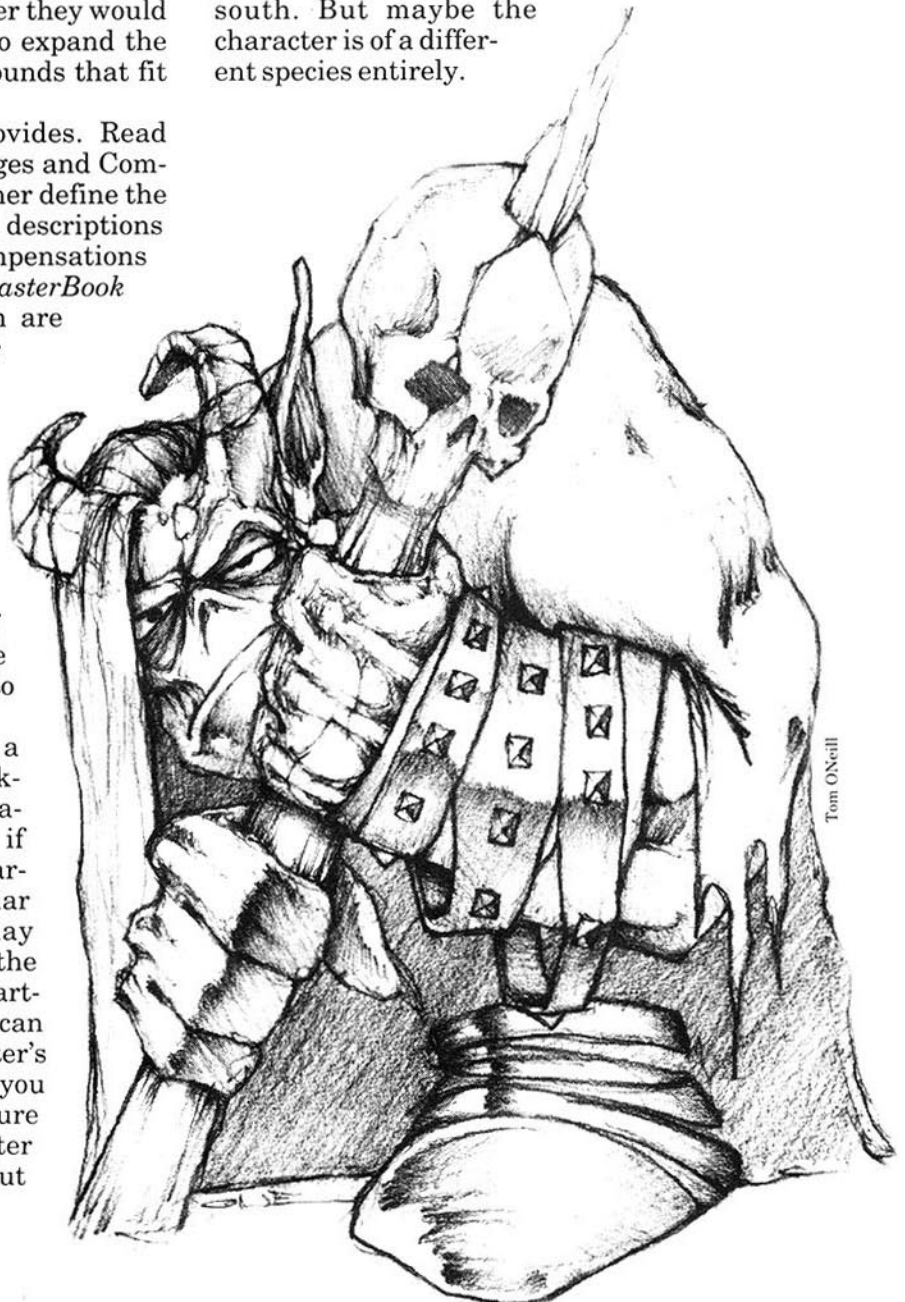
As suggested in *MasterBook*, you will want to come up with a character story for your character. Start with the character concept and build up the story to explain it. Many players will have a strong idea of the type of character they would like to play. They will just need to expand the concept with abilities and backgrounds that fit into the world.

Use the tools the system provides. Read through the Background Advantages and Compensations for ideas of how to further define the character you have conceived. The descriptions of the basic Advantages and Compensations can be found on pages 42–61 of *MasterBook* and new ones particular to Aden are described on pages 126–128 of *The World of Aden*; a summary of all the Advantages and Compensations for Aden can be found on pages 128–131 of the *WorldBook*. Look for those background elements that fit into the character concept you have established, and that also help the character to fit into the world of Aden. If you start with a strong concept, these elements will pretty much fall into place.

Other players, though, may be at a loss where to start. Using the Background Advantages and Compensations is also a good way to begin if you're not yet sure what type of character you'd like to play. A particular Advantage or Compensation may strike your fancy, and give you the starting point for your character. Starting with that kernel of an idea, you can begin to expand on the character's concept or background. Once you have explained the first feature by means of the character story, you can branch out

to other characteristics. Based on the story, what else would logically go with the initial trait that you have chosen for your character?

For instance, perhaps you like the "Special Abilities (CIII): Hardiness I" Advantage. That's a starting point. Now think about the character's background. Why is he so hardy? Is it natural or is it magical? If it's natural, how did it come about? If the character is a human, the hardiness may be a result of having grown up in a harsh environment. Perhaps the character lived in the Crawling Jungle in Kyan. Maybe she grew up in the Rhanate, struggling to survive in the Badlands or the Sand Wastes of the Sundered Desert, or in the Mud Plains to the south. But maybe the character is of a different species entirely.



Dwarves are tough, and would logically be expected to be hardy.

See where the background takes you. Once you settle on a reason for an attribute, it may suggest other features that the character has. Keep on following the chain of ideas. Sometimes it may even mean going back and revising something that came before, but there's nothing wrong with that.

Suppose that you've decided that the character you are creating has the "Hardiness" Advantage described above. You like the idea of the character coming from somewhere in the Sundered Desert. Reading through the description of the Rhanate in *The World of Aden*, the section on "Taking Coup" catches your eye. Perhaps you'd like to have it that, in the character's past, she had the opportunity to defeat one or more brigands and "took coup." It was that chance encounter that led the character to leave her home and seek out adventure. Maybe as a result of that encounter the character has achieved a certain notoriety, and so you give her a "Fame" Advantage. Perhaps some of the defeated brigands still harbor resentment, and seek revenge. The character may then have the "Enemy" Compensation.

How did the character defeat the bandits? If it was by force of arms, then you may want to give her significant adds in combat and defense skills. If she outwitted them through cleverness, you may wish to give her good values in relevant Intellect or Confidence skills. In either case, a good Agility and/or Dexterity probably would have been handy.

Narrowing down the character's origin, you remember reading that the upper desert is where bands of nomads raise the lightning lizards as mounts. That's an interesting idea. So now maybe you've decided that the character comes from the Badlands, and along the way has learned to ride lightning lizards. Maybe she even has one as a mount. Perhaps she served a stint in the Outriders, or maybe she's always been a loner.

At this point, you've come a long way toward fleshing out your character. As you get further into it, more ideas will suggest themselves. Sometimes you'll even come up with too many things to include and have to pick and choose items, but at least you've overcome the initial hesitation and now have a character you'll find interesting.

As you can see, the *MasterBook* system gives you a variety of options for creating a character. It allows you to build a character from either the general concept down to the details or from

specific aspects up to the general view. It is usually a good idea to set aside the first game session solely for character creation, so that the players and gamemaster can discuss each character and suggest new aspects to each other. The gamemaster can brief the players on the Character Generation rules in the *MasterBook*, and the players should be familiar with the background information on Aden, and the available Background Advantages and Compensations.

Character motivations

When you generate a character, picking his skills defines his physical characteristics. The choice of Background Advantages and Compensations gives you the character's individual traits, and defines how the character fits into the world. In addition to these features of the character's makeup, you also want the character to act like a native of Aden, so you have to understand the mindset of those living in Aden.

Prior to the Darkfall, inhabitants of Aden were typically known for their warmth and hospitality. For over a thousand years, the people of Aden had been at peace. The Peace of Rose kept all the nations working together, allowing their people to prosper and grow, free from the threat of war.

Then came the Darkfall. Suddenly, all that the people believed and depended on was turned on its side. No longer was there peace, nor was anyone ever truly safe. In this case, the shattered peace was not due to war with other nations but due to an invasion from outside their world. The foes they fought were their deepest fears made real.

Yet the people of Aden persevered. They banded together to safeguard their homes and lives. They did whatever was necessary to preserve what they could of their world and to deny it to their enemies. They hoped that in the end the Darkfall would be repelled and the world would return to normal.

Now, ten long years later, the end is still not in sight. But still the people fight on, knowing that they will — they *must* — prevail and cast out the nocturnals that menace them. Nevertheless, a decade of such struggle has taken its toll. The people are no longer so confident. Some are just tired, others

numb. The once warm and friendly people have retreated into themselves, huddling behind walls both physical and emotional. Many have become suspicious, even grim, but still they are hopeful for the future. If one can win past their initial distrust, one would find that they can still be hospitable and friendly. It just takes longer now for them display it.

It is a time of despair and violence. But many inhabitants of the land still manage to display courage and compassion. People will still come to the aid of their fellow Adenite, even in the face of fearsome creatures. It is an odd mix of emotions that the people of Aden carry within themselves, but the light of hope and inspiration continues to lead the folk of the land into the future without hesitation.

the Darkfall

The Darkfall is the all-pervasive threat that hangs over the heads of all of the inhabitants of Aden. One never knows when a nocturnal will turn up and drag one screaming into oblivion. Most everyone can name someone they have lost to the Darkfall. Some have been slain by nocturnals; others have been swayed by the power of the Darkfall and been corrupted. Any character in Aden will be very familiar with the Darkfall and its effects, even if they have never encountered it firsthand (and it is a rare character, indeed, who has never once encountered a nocturnal of some sort).

This actually makes for a powerful motivation for adventuring characters. A character or characters could be travelling because they wish to wreak vengeance on the nocturnals who killed their loved one or razed their village, or performed some other dastardly deed. Or their desire for revenge may be channeled into more noble efforts with a loftier goal, that of seeking knowledge of the Darkfall so as to end it once and for all, and thereby hopefully dispelling all nocturnals from Aden.

This could set up a long-term complication for the player characters. Perhaps one of the party harbors a private grudge, and is going along with the others only because it suits his own purpose.

It may be that the adventurers are on the trail of a corrupted who commands a host of nocturnals currently ravaging a particular area. Having defeated a nest of nocturnals, the characters are pre-

paring to interrogate a survivor for information leading them to the one they seek. But one of the characters sees this as his chance to avenge the death of a loved one and kills the nocturnal outright. The opportunity is lost, but how can the other characters fault him? They've all been in similar situations.

This sort of situation can add a lot of depth and character development to a game. How do the other characters react to this action? How do they deal with the character in future situations? A plot twist of this type is best worked out between the gamemaster and one of the characters in private, so that it can have the maximum effect when finally sprung.

The Darkfall doesn't just threaten the lives of Adenites; it also threatens their souls. To most of the people of Aden, it is perhaps a worse fate to be turned to the Darkfall than to have their lives snuffed out by the minions of that evil. Corrupteds are more feared and hated than even the nocturnals themselves, because they are sentient beings who have willingly submitted to the Darkfall and turned upon their fellows. This can be an ongoing element of your campaign, as various nocturnals and corrupteds attempt to seduce the characters to serve the Darkfall with promises of vast power.

This is another element that is good for character development. How do each of the characters react to these temptations? The lure could be an insidious one. One character may wish to accept the power offered because he feels that with it he can better fight against nocturnals, and counts on his own strength of will to keep himself from succumbing to the Darkfall while wielding it. This could even irreversibly alter the way the characters act toward each other, reflecting the changing group dynamics that hard decisions often precipitate.

gamemaster characters

Player characters are created in depth. A lot of thought is given to their background, and the personality of the character is further developed over the course of many games. This is relatively easy for the player, once the character's concept is developed. Following up on the character's origin and guiding her evolution do require a bit of effort, but the player has only the one character to worry about.

The gamemaster, on the other hand, has a much more daunting task at hand. He must come up with every other character in the game, and try to make them as interesting and fully rounded as the player characters. When player characters interact with other characters in the world, they must feel that they are dealing with individuals, not another in a succession of one-dimensional stick figures. The gamemaster must breathe life into his characters ... but shouldn't have to spend all of his waking hours doing so.

In the pages following, we offer some suggestions, hints and tips to help you, as gamemaster, populate your world with interesting, vibrant characters. You will see how to generate characters to serve specific purposes — even at a moment's notice — and how to stock your world with an assortment of characters who are unique and distinctive.

Experienced gamemasters may already be familiar with many of these techniques, but we encourage them to read through this section at least once, as there may be something new to be discovered, or something existing that is presented in a new light.

Character Concept

The most important question in creating a gamemaster character is, what role does the character play? The answer to that will tell you just how detailed the character needs to be and what particular aspects of the character you need to think about. Is the character to be a major influence on the player characters, or just a passing encounter? Or will the character be just one of many in the background, whose purpose is to provide local color or just to fill out the scene. What part the character plays determines just how detailed his background needs to be.

For instance, consider the following scene:

As you walk through the gates of the small village, you can't help but notice the fresh signs of the depredations that the village has suffered at the hands of nocturnals. Your appraisal of the village's buildings is cut short, though, as you notice a small crowd gathering along the main street. The people are garbed in flowing robes and simple headcloths in various shades of tans and browns, and wear drab veils across their faces, apparently to protect themselves from the desert sands. You

notice a distinctive figure off to the right whose coming seems to spark a small commotion.

The man stands nonchalantly, with his arms crossed, leaning against the nearest building. He, too, is dressed in long tan robes. What sets him apart from the rest of the villagers, though, is that he carries a long arquebus slung on his back and wears a green veil across his face. That, and the fact that a large, four-legged reptile stands alongside him. The lizard sports a saddle with a number of pouches slung from it, and obviously serves as a mount of some sort. When the man notices that you are looking his way, he straightens up, turns, and passes though the doorway of the building he was just leaning against. Two guards armed with spears eye him warily but let him pass.

Your musing over what might wait inside that structure is interrupted by the arrival of a large man in ornate robes. He wears no veil, and his face is a handsome one with a full, bushy beard. He is flanked by two guards, both walking a step behind him. He pauses and looks at you, saying, "Greetings, travellers. I am Kahlan Assad. What brings you to our village?"

This scene contains three different types of characters that the gamemaster will use in staging his adventures. Kahlan Assad is the village leader, who in actuality controls some of the surrounding territory, also. He is a major character in the adventure, referred to as an "archetype" character in *MasterBook* parlance (the three character types are described below). He is someone that the player characters will be running into and dealing with for a good part of the adventure. Assad is in a position to greatly help or hinder the characters. The gamemaster will have to prepare full details for Kahlan Assad, including a background that explains what his role in the adventure is.

The character who was leaning against the building watching the player characters is an Outrider Wanderer in command of the force that is garrisoned in the village. He is a less-important character than Assad (a "standard" character), but one who may show up again to interact with the player characters. Depending on how the characters deal with him, he may become an Arche-



Tim Bobko

type character, but for now remains Standard. As such, he does not need to be fully detailed. The gamemaster need only develop the characteristics that will come into play as the Outrider deals with the characters.

The guards and the villagers are merely background characters (“grunts”). They are there to fill out the scene, and to provide color. They do not need any stats, and a few lines of description will suffice to render them for the players. Later in the adventure the characters may have to deal with the guards, in which case the gamemaster will need to generate some stats for them.

grunts

Grunts are background characters. They serve to dress up a scene, and generally play no major part in the storyline. Some grunts may be more than window dressing, however. They may interact with the characters in order to move them along in the proper direction, or to throw them off the track.

Grunts frequently fill the role of “cannon fodder”; they’re the ones you send in to get chewed up by the characters. In doing so, they’re also slowing the characters down. Grunts are often the “muscle,” too. They herd the characters in the direction you want them to go. Sometimes they’re more direct — they just go out and haul the characters in to see whomever it is you want them to see.

Creating grunts is relatively simple. In many cases, all that it requires is a few lines of description, with no statistics involved. If the grunts are intended to interact with the player characters, then you may need to come up with one or two relevant Attribute and skill values. In either case, you will probably not need to develop a background for the grunts.

The attributes and skills that you do determine will be based on how the grunts are to interact with the characters. If the guards become involved in a fight with the characters, then you will need to know their *melee combat*, *melee parry* or *unarmed combat* stats, as well as their Toughness and possibly their Endurance and Life Points. If the grunts are villagers that the characters wish to talk to, you might have to determine a Confidence or Charisma stat, or a Mind or Intellect stat, depending on how the characters act and how the grunts react to the characters. A trader or shopkeeper might need a *business* or *con* stat.

You do not need to determine individual stats for all of the grunts in a group. Grunts who are working together (or otherwise somehow related to one another) can all be given the same stats. Using one set of abilities for all grunts in a group, especially combat-related stats, speeds things up considerably, as you don't have to constantly check stats on individual character sheets. If it is necessary to have a leader, or other exceptional grunt, just give one of them a higher skill value, or different skills, as required by the scene.

standard characters

Standard characters are the equivalent of player characters. They are used to help move the plot along. Often they are continuing characters, who crop up from adventure to adventure. Maybe the standard character is a Hospitaler or Knight of the Radiant Order whom the characters encounter whenever they return to their base of operations. Or it could be a local Watcher of the First Rung who is keeping her eye on the characters. A standard character may also be one who plays a major role in a particular scene, but does not appear during the rest of the adventure.

A standard character deals with the player characters in more depth than does a grunt. So a standard character will need a little more detailing. Generally a full set of stats will suffice, but a background or motivation is probably not required.

archetypes

An archetype character is one who plays a major role in the adventure. Usually there is only one archetype character in an adventure, but on occasion there can be two, or rarely, more. Whether the characters ever meet the archetype or not, he is a major force in the adventure. Other people the player characters encounter may have been sent by the archetype, or may be otherwise employed by him. The player characters may also deal directly with the archetype. Maybe he is the one who sends or otherwise causes the characters to go wherever they are going.

The archetype character is usually someone opposed to the player characters, but does not necessarily have to be. He could be an ally or patron of the characters. In the scene described above, Kahlan Assad is the archetype character. He could turn out to be working with the charac-

ters (maybe he needs their assistance, setting them off on a quest), or he could be the characters' opponent (he is the one hindering what the characters are trying to achieve, and they must overcome his resistance). The archetype may appear throughout an adventure, as Kahlan Assad would, or may operate behind the scenes. The characters may not even see the archetype during the course of the adventure. An archetype can also be a recurring character, who returns to make the characters' lives miserable in later adventures. He may even be tied into a *Nemesis* subplot (for more about such characters, see the section on "Continuing Characters," below).

However the archetype is used, the character must be fully defined. An archetype character will need a full set of stats, as well as a detailed description of his appearance and personality. In addition, you should determine a background story (perhaps including some Background Advantages and Compensations) and plot out the objectives for the archetype. In general, an archetype should be as detailed as an average player character. You may not need all of the information at once, but it is useful to have when planning out the adventure.

Capsule Description

Once you have determined what type of character you are creating and what role the character will play, it is time to decide what the character is like. One way is to start with the character's stats and then build around those to create the appearance and personality. The other way is to start with the appearance and the motivation, and once the character is fleshed out, plug in the appropriate stats.

For instance, you may have a certain character in mind, and all you have pictured so far is that he wears an eyepatch and has a golemoid arm. Starting with that appearance, you'll have to ascertain why he looks that way; what happened to cause it, how does he feel about it, and what effect has it had on his personality and mental health? Once you know what his background is, you can pick the skills that best fit the character that develops.

If you prefer to start the other way, you need to determine what kind of stats the character will have. This will de-

pend on the character's role, which you have previously decided. What kind of stats would the character have that make him suited for the role you have chosen. A quick way to figure out the stats for a character is to look through the types of characters provided in *The World of Aden*, and modify the stats of a character that is similar to the one you are working on.

As an example, let's say you need to create a standard character who is a sentry for the citadel of a rampaging warlord located in the Mother Mountains. You can look through the book for soldier or sentry types. You could start with a Standard Militia Soldier (from Arasteen, Carraway or Urbana), Standard Steppe Raider, Standard Soldier of the Frost Guard, Standard Home Guard (from Kyan), Outrider Nomad or a Standard Soldier (from Urbana). If you wanted a more experienced soldier, like a sergeant of the guard, you might look at an Arbiter, a Ruster, or a member of the Iron Guard. You can also look at player character templates as starting points for characters; they are especially useful for creating archetypes.

Once you have a handle on what the character is going to be like, you should come up with a capsule description for the character. This is a brief paragraph describing the character so that the gamemaster can quickly understand the character and how to present him. The description can focus on any of the character's pertinent details, such as his appearance, personality, or motivation. It can also include any important skills that character may need, depending on what type of character it is.

The easiest way to develop the capsule description is to start with three or four adjectives that apply to the character. Here are a couple of examples:

Sentry: Large, grim, powerful, attentive.

Knight of the Radiant Order: Reserved, compassionate, forceful.

These few words are enough to conjure up an image of the character already. The list of adjectives can then be expanded into a few sentences, which is all you need for a capsule description.

What you are aiming for is what people do naturally. When you walk into a room and someone comes up to you, you're already forming an impression of him. Based on the person's appearance, what he's said and how he's said it, you've

already got an idea about what this person's like. The capsule description should give you the same sort of impression, so you can get right into character.

Sentry: The sentry is a large, powerful man. He usually appears grim, but that is because he is concentrating on his duty, and also because he's learned that a grim countenance keeps casual questioners away. He is attentive to everything that goes on around him, but does not get involved unless it concerns his current duty.

Something else to include in the capsule description is a character "hook." The hook is something distinctive about the character that the gamemaster can "hang" his description on. It can be a personality quirk, a peculiar mannerism, or a manner of speaking. Something distinctive and easy to portray makes it simple for the gamemaster to get into character, and also clues in the players as to who this character is, assuming they've met him before.

Example: *The sentry at the door is large and powerful-looking. He doesn't speak much, and when asked a question, responds reluctantly. If he is asked too many questions he begins to shift his grip on his spear, and then begins to tap the butt of it on the floor. The tapping becomes more frequent and insistent the more questions he is asked.*

Example: *The street thief is small and wiry, and usually able to squeeze his way out of tight situations. When he is cornered (or when someone is talking to him and he doesn't want to be there), he constantly shifts his weight back and forth from one foot to the other. He also continually rubs his large, hooked nose with his right thumb and forefinger, which garbles what he's saying, sometimes to the point of unintelligibility.*

These kind of quirks give added life to a character, because there is something instantly identifiable about them. The personality hook works especially well for continuing characters, so that the player characters become used to their idiosyncrasies and will begin to recognize them right away, with only minimal description.

Once you've developed the capsule description for a character, it's a good idea to write it down. Start a notebook or a card file for the characters you create. This is particularly useful for continuing characters (see below), but can also be helpful for keeping a stock of grunts. For example, during the scene described above, when the characters first meet Kahlan Assad, they

could choose to follow along as Assad heads to his house or they could choose to pursue the green-veiled man. Suppose, though, that they opt instead to question the guards at the door that Green Veil went through. The gamemaster was not prepared for this, and now needs to come up with some guards on the spot.

He could go to the WorldBook, look up one of the soldier types, and make a few quick changes, if necessary. Then he has a guard ready to deal with the player characters. If, instead, he had a few capsule descriptions of different character types, he could go to the file and just pull out a guard, ready to run. This shortens the time needed to get the character ready, and makes it less likely that the unexpected turn of events will derail the story or the mood.

filling in the Details

Grunts rarely need any more description than that detailed in the capsule description. But standard characters and archetype characters do need more fleshing out. However, it is still best to start out with a capsule description. That way, you'll have some idea what the character is about, which will help in coming up with her background.

There are a number of items that can be detailed to help expand the character description: background, physical appearance, personality, resources and stats. Each of these categories is dealt with below.

Background

Genetics defines what we are, but it is our environment that defines *who* we are. A character's background goes a long way toward making a character what he is today. What kind of trials and tribulations has he had? What have been his experiences with the Darkfall and ravaging nocturnals? What the character has experienced will shape how he reacts to things. Is he suspicious of strangers, or will he welcome them? Will he face up to a challenge, or run screaming into the darkness? A farmer eking out an existence behind the walls of a small Darkfall-ravaged village will respond differently than a desert nomad or a goresaux mechemage or an elite guardsman.

There may have been incidents in the character's background that drive her to do what she does. Those incidents could also be the rea-

son for a particular physical or personality characterhook. A warrior may fight because she feels she has to; it could be to avenge a wrong or the death of a loved one, or it could be that she feels this is the only way to free her land from the Darkfall and its plague of nocturnals, or it may be that is the only way that she feels that she can redeem herself after an act of cowardice — maybe even the very act that led to the death of the loved one. It may just be that she enjoys wading in and breaking bones because it gives her delight, or perhaps she does it for the money.

The fact that the warrior is driven to be a warrior may have led to the battle in which she lost her arm, requiring a golemoid implant, or may have left her with a large scar across the face, distorting her lip and causing her to speak with a lisp.

The character's background may have even crossed paths with that of one of the player characters. Perhaps this person has some sort of history — good or bad — with one of the player characters.

The best way to do this is to write up the information about the character and how he was involved with the particular player character. This should be just the information that the player character would know from his "past" with the person. There's no need to include any of the other information you've developed for the character; it may be that this individual is misleading the player character in order to further his own ends. Maybe this figure is introduced just to be abducted or otherwise disappear, and the player character feels obligated to rescue him — he would not know what in the character's past may have been the reason for the abduction.

When your creation is first encountered, provide the player character with whom he has "history" with all the relevant information. In essence, you are creating the player character's "memories" of that meeting.

physical appearance

First impressions are usually created by a person's appearance. Even before the person speaks, you have formed some idea about him based solely on what he looks like. And in a roleplaying situation, the players see only what you describe to them. The quickest way for players to know what a character looks like and to form some opin-

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ions is to give them a well-thought-out description. And as described above, one of the ways to make the description stick in the player's minds is to give them something distinctive to latch on to. For instance, if the characters should encounter one or more Steppe Raiders, you would want to emphasize the bushy handlebar mustache that adorns their faces, as well as the baggy tunic and pants they wear. Distinctive details make it easier for players to remember characters. After an encounter with Steppe Raiders, the characters may be a bit more leery of someone they meet who has a bushy mustache

A detailed description serves to make the encounter a fuller experience, as it becomes easier for the players to immerse themselves in the game world. This applies to all characters, even the horrible creatures of the Darkfall. It is much more effective to give the players an elaborate description than to briefly describe the scene. Consider the different effect you will achieve if you describe to the players the attack of a nocturnal as "the oily black skin of the humanoid monstrosity glistens in the moonlight as it opens its wide, slobbering mouth and bares its dull-red fangs to lunge for your throat" instead of "the nocturnal tries to tear your throat out." This is not to say that your description should be long or ornate, but it should contain enough details to liven up the scene. This will make for more memorable encounters in your adventures.

Carefully choosing which details you include allows you to choose how the player characters will remember your characters. It will also let you control what their impression of the character is, so that you can use that to your advantage in later encounters. Maybe they have gotten the wrong idea about someone, which might cause them to mistrust a potential ally.

Nob Burcham is an example of a character who has taken advantage of his appearance. The commander of Burcham's Pass is a jurak who is actually quite civilized and intelligent. Most people who encounter him, though, see only a hairy savage, which he has been able to turn to his advantage in dealing with the various folk who seek to use the pass to cross Middle Wall.

personality

A character also needs a personality. Once you've ascertained where a character comes from and what he looks

like, you need to figure out how she deals with other people. Is she strong and forceful, or timid and weak? Will she dive headfirst into a risky situation, or turn tail and run? The character's personality also establishes how appealing the character is; is she charming and charismatic, or does she make your skin crawl?

As with the character's other features, the best thing to do is to focus on one or two distinctive traits, so that you'll have another hook to make the character notable. Also keep in mind that a character's behavior may change based on the situation. Is he cool, calm and collected, or does he become a nervous wreck? The evil warlord may be the picture of composure when he is in control of the situation, but he turns into a fearful, indecisive wimp when things start to go against him. Define the character's behavior to your advantage.

RESOURCES

All characters must have resources. For some characters they can be quite extensive, but for others they can be sparse indeed. Resources can be varied, too. A character may have friends or associates who will help him out when necessary, or access to a wide variety of equipment. Maybe he has a lot of minions, whom he can send after the player characters. Perhaps the character is wealthy — he has a fortune in crests and can buy just about anything he wants.

The extent of a character's resources will be determined by how powerful or influential she is. When creating the character, you will want to consider just what kind of connections she has, and what sort of resources she can draw upon. A local villager will probably have just enough to survive comfortably, but not much else. An Outrider Wanderer of the Rhanate can call upon the 10 to 20 Outrider Nomads she commands. A mechamage may have steady supply of manite, a workshop and the time to craft a number of mechamagical contraptions to serve him.

Remember, also, that resources may be conditional. Maybe the mechamage only has a workshop and raw components as long as he works for Lord Urbane. If he were to leave the Iron Tyrant's service he might suddenly find himself with nothing left to work with. The Wanderer might only command his troops as long as they have respect for him. If he is defeated by another warrior (such as a player character), he might lose whatever authority he has over the group.

Characters with lots of resources didn't just

happen upon them. They had to build them up. So they won't waste them. A character with extensive resources is probably an archetype character, most likely the villain of the adventure. He will use his resources intelligently, using just what he needs to get the effect he desires. One of the reasons a villain acquires resources is so that he will not have to get his hands dirty getting things accomplished. He has people who work for him, equipment they can use, and the money to buy what he doesn't have.

The villain will equip his minions with the equipment they need and send them after the player characters. If he does intend to confront the characters personally at some point, he will make sure that his warriors have softened them up first. The more extensive a character's resources, the more likely that the player characters will not even know that the archetype is behind everything. If they only encounter his fighters, they don't necessarily know that there's a mastermind behind all the recent events. They may just seem like random, isolated incidents.

Character stats

Now that you've created a character who is defined in a story sense, it's time to deal with the game mechanics. You'll have to establish the character's attribute and skill values. Knowing the character's background and development, you can pick appropriate numbers for the character's attributes. Then figure out what skills the character would have, or what skills the character needs in order to accomplish whatever it is you want him to do in the adventure.

If the character is standard or an archetype, they will have more than the basic skill values. This reflects the fact that they have been around for a while, and have had adventures of their own before encountering the player characters. How high the skill adds are, or how many skills the character has, will depend on how important or powerful the character is in the world, and how long he has been doing his thing. It also depends on the player characters he will be up against.

You'll want to balance the character's abilities to match those of the player characters as a group. If the archetype is going to confront the player characters eventually, you don't want him to be taken out halfway through his first sentence. But then again, he shouldn't be so tough that the player characters don't stand a chance. You're walking a fine line. The charac-



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ters should be able to defeat the villain only after a lot of work — they will need to use teamwork and effective cardplay. If they are victorious, it should feel like they earned it. The victory rings hollow if it was a cakewalk.

Balancing an experienced character against a group can be difficult, but after some experience with the game you'll get a feel for it. Important elements to check are that the archetype's Toughness is high enough to at least partially withstand attacks from the adventuring party's weapons, and that his *willpower* and/or *intimidation* can stand up against the characters' *taunt*, *trick* and *intimidation* attempts.

We mentioned previously that a good inspiration for creating a character was to look at player character templates. This is also the case when trying to determine stats. A template already gives you a collection of skills tied to a certain type of background. All you have to do is modify whichever skills or skill values may be different due to the differences in your character's background. Using existing templates is particularly helpful for beginning gamemasters, who may find the entire process of creating their characters a bit overwhelming.

Bringing a Character to Life

So you've finally got your characters. Now you've got to animate them. A character is just a collection of stats and notes until the gamemaster breathes life into her. The challenge is to play the character in an interesting and distinctive manner. The more real the characters, the richer and fuller the game world feels, which enhances the experience for all concerned. It's also fun. You get to trot out a lot of clichés and bad accents, and you get to sink your teeth into all those character hooks you've established.

If you've included those kinds of prominent features, it will make your job easier. You can also add in some more idiosyncrasies, if needed, to be the keynotes of your presentation.

The primary cues you can use are spoken ones, since the principal presentation of a roleplaying game is verbal. Physical distinctions make effective hooks, but

once you're involved in dialogue with a player, he's probably no longer picturing your carefully described character. He is instead concentrating on the words you're speaking. So if you can make the speech distinctive you'll have an additional cue that marks your character.

The easiest way to set apart your character's speech is to use an accent of some kind. Pretty much everyone can do some accents. It doesn't even matter if you can do them well — a bad accent is still distinctive. There are a number of accents that can work for you. Typically slow creatures, such as juraks, can be portrayed with the stereotypical "Brooklyn accent." A southern accent might also be useful for some characters. You can also use "foreign" accents to add a particular flavor to a character's speech.

Try to look for parallels with the real world for ideas. For instance, the High Steppes have the feel of a Russian or Central European locale. So try your best Russian accent. A Middle Eastern accent could work for the desert-dwelling tribes of the Rhanate. Alternatively, you could go for a Germanic accent for the inhabitants of the High Steppes or the Rhanate, since a certain Austrian actor has put his mark on a popular barbarian character. And a character from Vanora might have an Asian-type accent.

Besides accents, try to go for particular voice types that are common enough to be recognized. The voices of people such as Humphrey Bogart, Jack Nicholson and Richard Nixon are generally recognizable and relatively easy to mimic. Don't worry if you don't get them exactly right. You're going for an effect here, not a perfect imitation. Who knows, the way you mangle the voice may actually give you a pretty interesting result.

Besides accents, another way to create distinctive characters verbally is to give them a peculiar mannerism when they speak. This also helps to clue in players that a specific character is speaking. A type of mannerism that is easy to do is to have the character use a specific interjection or sound repeatedly as he speaks. Here are some examples:

"Oh, my, it was just horrible! There were all sorts of slimy creatures crawling all over our cart, oh my. I didn't think we'd ever escape with our lives. Oh my, Oh, my."

"As you can see, my comrade is a bit short-tempered, hmmm? He gets that way when he thinks someone is lying to him. So why don't you try answering those questions again, hmmm?"

"There's so much violence in the world these days, no? It's so unsettling. It's especially so when those horrid nocturnals attack, no?"

Another mannerism is to have the character refer to himself in the third person, or call himself by his own name. He might also use "we" instead of "I."

"Farrup knows what he likes, he does. If Farrup wants somethin', Farrup goes out and gets it, he does."

And yet another mannerism you can use is suitable for slow-witted or scatterbrained characters. Have the character ramble when he speaks. This can be particularly exasperating to the player characters when they have to endure a conversation this way because the character really does have information they need.

"... and after that, then he says the wrong to me, so I ran him through and — what were we talkin' about?"

There are also other types of mannerisms you can use to make your characters distinctive, including wringing of the hands, licking the lips, strumming the fingers on the table or a facial tic. Distinctive physical characteristics can be used to delineate a character, also. A character may have a limp, or a large mole on the face, or a peculiar scar. Remember to include the mannerism or mark in your descriptions. Mention it occasionally in follow-up descriptions so as to reaffirm its existence, but don't mention it too much, or the players may begin to attach too much significance to it.

If you do establish a mannerism for a character, be sure to note it following the character's capsule description and stats.

Continuing Characters

It may seem that this method of creating characters is a lot of work to put into individuals who will only be around for a few game sessions. But no one says your characters have to go away after the adventure is done. Most characters can reappear in one form or another in later adventures. One of the more exciting ways to make a character last is to make her a continuing character. This is a character who exists independently in the world and shows up again in later adventures. Having characters reappear from

time to time is a great way to establish continuity in your world, and to make the world seem more real.

If you choose to use continuing characters (and we heartily recommend it), it is best to start laying the groundwork for them early. The sooner you can work these characters into your adventures, the sooner you can start using them to foreshadow events in later adventures, and the less suspicious of the characters the players will be. Continuing characters are usually standard ones, but you can also use archetype characters in additional adventures.

The easiest way to work in a continuing character is as a contact. This can be as overt as having him hire the player characters for a job, and then having him hire them for additional jobs in later adventures. A more subtle way to work the character in would be to have him available to the characters as a source of information. Maybe the contact is a Hospitaller of the Radiant Order. The character is standing around near a pivotal scene, and provides the characters with information or assistance. It works best if you can arrange for the characters to approach the contact first, rather than have him go to them. This way it is the players' choice, and they shouldn't suspect that they will eventually see quite a bit of the character in the future.

In a later adventure, the Hospitaller could approach the characters with information relevant to their current quest. Or the information may be something that actually leads the characters into their next adventure. Perhaps it is a request by the Hospitaller to look into something for him, or to supply him with information. If the question is interesting enough, it could pique the player characters' interest, luring them into the action.

Once they get familiar with the Hospitaller, they may go to him for information which will help them in their latest adventure. The Hospitaller has become a continuing character that the player characters are used to seeing and meeting. He will grow along with the player characters, developing as they do. Maybe in a year or two of game time their friend will become a Knight of the Radiant Order. It might even be that the assistance of the player characters will be instrumental in this.

The relationship that develops between the player characters and the gamemaster character does not have to be a positive one. They can dislike each other, but be forced to work together by circum-

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stance. Maybe the contact is an Urbanan inquisitor, a Watcher of the First Rung. They seek the same goal — eradication of nocturnals and the Darkfall — but they do not approve of each other's methods. As they share information or even work together at times, they grow a little more tolerant of each other, but there is still some tension in the arrangement.

Other types of characters could also be used in the continuing role. There may be some local townsfolk, shopkeepers or traders or even farmers, that the player characters keep running into in their home town. Or maybe a nomadic Outrider has taken up residence near the characters, or is traveling back and forth along the same route that the characters frequently use. Perhaps an itinerant Sanguine Monk or a Vanoran beast shaman has crossed their path a number of times.

The relationship with the continuing character could also be totally negative. He may become an ongoing antagonist of the player characters'. This sort of continuing character really spices up a campaign, adding a touch of dramatic tension to the storyline. The antagonist can be a standard character who keeps cropping up, or an archetype who lurks in the background, constantly running afoul of the characters as they go about their business.

The standard antagonist might be a minor nocturnal or corrupted who escaped from a battle with the player characters, and perhaps was even maimed as a result. He is now seeking revenge. Maybe the antagonist is a mage whose work was sabotaged by the characters' actions, or from whom they stole an artifact or other magical accouterments. He is determined to track them down and exact payment, out of their hides if necessary.

It is even possible for an antagonist to become an ally. Maybe one of the soldiers tracking the characters comes to the realization that what the characters did was right. He has become disillusioned with his own government. Finally, he throws his lot in with the characters, maybe even becoming the pivotal actor in the climactic scene with the antagonist.

The most ambitious continuing antagonist is the *nemesis*, which should be an archetype character. A nemesis can fuel a campaign for many adventures. The best way to use the nemesis is sparingly. Don't

have him be behind the actions of every adventure. Save him for every second or third adventure, that way the characters will not become too suspicious that something is going on behind the scenes. They will still see their adventures as isolated events, never realizing that there is a malevolent entity out there with its sights set on them.

A nemesis could be a mid-level nocturnal or a corrupted sentient who has plans to take over an entire region of a country as an offering to the Darkfall. Her design involves a number of plans, including nocturnal attacks on isolated towns, poisoning waterways, corrupting highly placed officials and stealing food supplies. Unknown to the player characters, each of their adventures brings them up against another facet of the corrupted's grand plan. Each time they succeed in their mission, they are further curtailing her operations. Each time the characters foil a plan, they anger her even more. The characters may not know that their paths keep crossing, but the corrupted knows ("Curses, it's them again!"). Eventually, she may dispatch nocturnals with the express purpose of eliminating these thorns in her side. Depending on how that goes, she may be forced to go after them herself, with the assistance of all of her forces, of course.

Character growth

Like the player characters, continuing characters should develop over time. You should keep track of that development from adventure to adventure, so that you can stay current on the character's status. The best way is to start a notebook to keep records of your adventures and characters.

Write up a full character sheet for those characters you intend to continue. Add new sheets as you use the character, writing in a description of the part he played and what the results were. Continuing characters should improve their skills and learn new ones over time, just like player characters. Every couple of adventures, check over the characters you've used and see what they've done. Give each of them a Life Point award as if they were player characters, then use the points to add new skills or increase existing ones.

If a continuing character hasn't been used for a couple of adventures, you can make up some

adventures or experiences that the character had on his own. This will give your character an independent existence, and new experiences separate from those of the player characters. This will keep the character interesting to the players and their characters.

You should also keep records of the grunts you come up with. You may need a grunt of a similar type in a later adventure, or you may need one in a pinch during an adventure. If you've kept a file of grunts, you can go directly to the appropriate type of character and pull one out, ready to use. You don't even need to change any of the stats (unless you need a specific one the character doesn't currently have); just change the name and use it as is.

Provided below is Gamemaster Character Log to help you build a file of characters. It can be used to record each character you create, and has space to list the character's background, physical appearance, personality, resources and stats.

There is also room to record any distinguishing characteristics that you can use when portraying the character, and a space to place a picture of your character.

You can draw this in if you like, or you can paste in a photo or drawing from a newspaper or magazine that can represent your character.

If you use the character again, make notes on the Log describing how the character was used, and what changes have occurred to the character. Keep updating the logs as you use them and they'll provide a ready supply of characters for any situation.

The Character Log is designed for use with your characters, but you can also set up a file of index cards with the same information on them. If you have taken to keeping a notebook for your adventures and continuing characters, you can also use that to record the stock characters you create.

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GAMEMASTER CHARACTER LOG				Name _____
Species	Height	Mass	Age	
ATTRIBUTES			Arcane Knowledges _____ _____ Spells _____ _____ Background _____ _____ Physical Appearance _____ _____ Personality _____ _____ Resources _____ _____ Equipment _____ _____ Distinguishing Characteristics _____ _____ Notes _____ _____ _____	
☐ AGILITY ☐ DEXTERITY ☐ ENDURANCE ☐ STRENGTH	☐ INTELLECT ☐ MIND ☐ CONFIDENCE ☐ CHARISMA	SKILL/VALUE _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	ATTR. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	

sites of interest

In the following pages you will find a number of settings that are specific to the World of Aden. While some of these locations are presented as specific sites, they can be treated as generic settings to a greater or lesser extent. For instance, while the thunder train is a fairly specific setting that would not be found in just any city or town of Aden, the thunder train presented here could be used to represent any of the four currently in operation across the land, or any new train Lord Urbane may put into operation in your campaign. Likewise, the temple-fortress can be placed in any city that is equipped with one.

To use these locations generically, just pick the setting you want to use and change the name. You can also use these sites as the starting point for designing your own locales, modifying them as much or as little as needed to suit your purposes.

thunder train

The pinnacle of the mechamagical arts, and ultimate symbol of Urbana's achievement, the thunder trains are one of the great wonders of Aden. These colossal constructions of steel and manite work their way across the land of Aden, powered by steam and sorcery, keeping alive the possibility of trade and communication between the various nations. These marvels are the product of Lord Urbane's vision coupled with the sweat and blood of his mechamages and mine workers.

A thunder train is enormous. It consists of eight tremendous cargo "barges" pulled along by an equally huge engine car. The actual means of propulsion is a closely guarded secret. All that is known of it is that it involves immense steam boilers combined with a healthy dose of mechamagic. The thunder train moves about on large wheels twice the height of a man, wheels which never touch the ground. Thick metal plates are linked together to form wide bands and the bands are stretched around paired wheels. Large projections along the perimeter of the wheels haul the track endlessly around, forming a roadway of metal plates that permit the train to travel over almost any terrain. The size of the wheels and the weight of the car combine to crush anything unfortunate to find itself in the way of the advancing thunder train.

The weight of the train cannot even be totally overcome by its magically augmented power plant, which allows the train to move along only as fast as a man running at a brisk pace. While that may not be an awe-inspiring speed, a thunder train can maintain it for months. In fact, thunder trains move

constantly while traveling between cities, stopping only at official thunder-stations.

The usual route of the thunder trains runs between Mekanus and Balaquim in southern Yzeem, and is known as the Thunder Trail. Trains laden with Urbanan goods leave Mekanus and head west across the country, passing through Rose and then heading on to Burcham's Pass. Making their way through the Wall at the pass, the thunder trains turn south and proceed to Tee, a trading town set up by the Rhanate. From Tee, the trains head south, traveling through the Sundered Desert and paralleling the Wall, then swing around the Mother Mountains and continue southward until they finally arrive at Balaquim in the far south of Yzeem. From Balaquim they return along the same route, bringing new goods back to Mekanus. The entire trip takes between two and three months, and depends on the weather and the number of attacks made by brigands or nocturnals.

At present there are only four thunder trains in operation, but the word out of Urbana is that the Iron Tyrant has ordered the construction of several more of them. Except when one of the trains is dispatched to a different city to blaze a new trail, the four thunder trains are run on a staggered schedule which has one train arriving back in Mekanus every six weeks or so. Lord Urbane has already sent thunder trains to Carraway in the far east, and to Bulgrak in the High Steppes. Both trips were profitable, and return trips were planned. Once the new thunder trains have been constructed, it is likely that a regular route will be established to the east of Aden.

Each thunder train is built with the same features, but the mechemages of Urbana are constantly working to improve their creations, and these improvements and changes are incorporated into each new round of construction. Although they share a common design and appearance, there are a multitude of minor differences in function and appearance. Some of these differences are even more dramatic and visually apparent, and rumor has it that the mechemages of Mekanus are working on even bigger and more powerful thunder trains, with newer means of defense. Each thunder train is therefore unique, and is almost a work of art created by the mages of metal sorcery. However, since the basic construction of each of the trains is the same, the notes below apply to all of the thunder trains of Urbana. Where there are specific differences,

they will be pointed out in the relevant sections.

Crew Complement

Each thunder train is crewed by a group of ten mechemages who run the train and handle the sentinels provided for its defense. The train can be run by a minimum of four mages, but the standard operating contingent is five. The extra mages are required because the train never stops, and must always have drivers controlling it. The ten mages work in shifts, and in times of trouble, all can be called on to lend their sorcerous abilities to the problem. The engine crew also maintains the engine car, monitoring the boilers and steam systems, and recharging or recasting spells as necessary. They are also responsible for repairing any of the engine's machinery that breaks down, so that the train can continue its journey without stopping.

There is also always a contingent of warriors from the Iron Guard, Lord Urbane's elite military force, on board. The Iron Guard's sole task is the defense of the thunder trains.

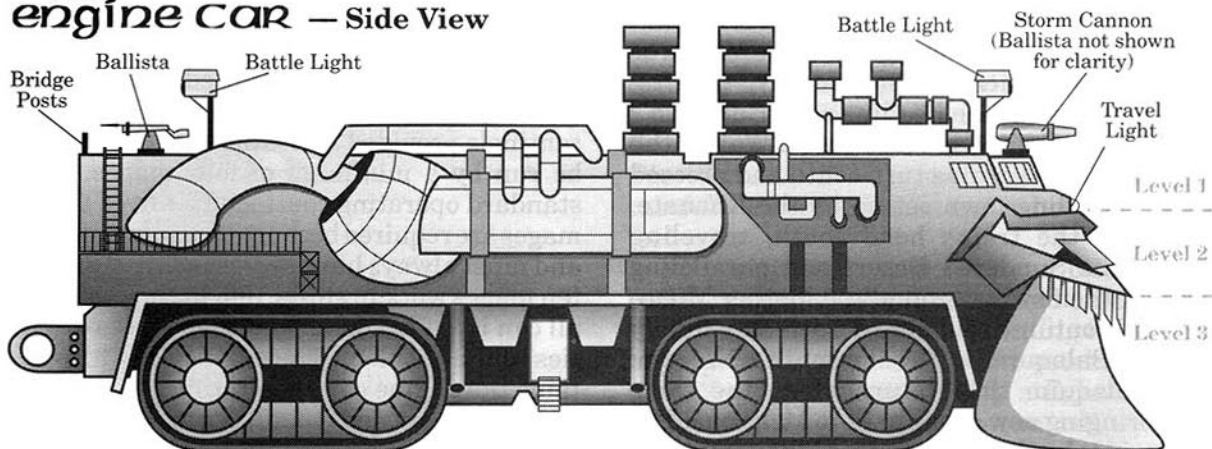
Early thunder train excursions had minimal garrisons, usually consisting of about 20 soldiers of the Iron Guard. Later excursions have had increased garrisons, though, owing to more frequent attacks by nocturnals along the Thunder Trail. Most thunder trains are now manned by a half company of Iron Guard, which puts 50 men on each train for its defense.

There are still occasional trips where the garrison is kept smaller, usually when the train carries special cargo, especially when the cargo is magical in nature. Even though this might seem to leave a more valuable cargo underprotected, the Iron Tyrant feels that the reputation of the thunder trains is enough to offset the lesser amount of men, and he prefers that there are less witnesses to his special cargoes. Also, when a thunder train carries a particularly valuable cargo, the rearmost barge is modified to carry additional sentinels, sometimes as many as a dozen (see "Defenses," below, for information about sentinels).

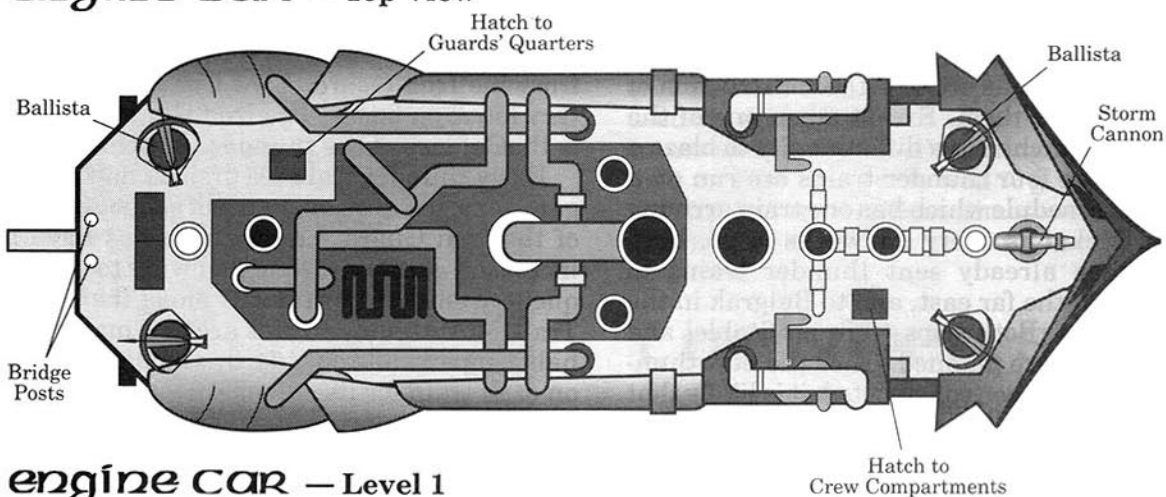
Finally, more recent thunder trains have included a crew of regular workers, whose job is to maintain the cargo barges and the cargo itself, and to repair whatever needs work. There can be from 10 to 20 of this additional crew.

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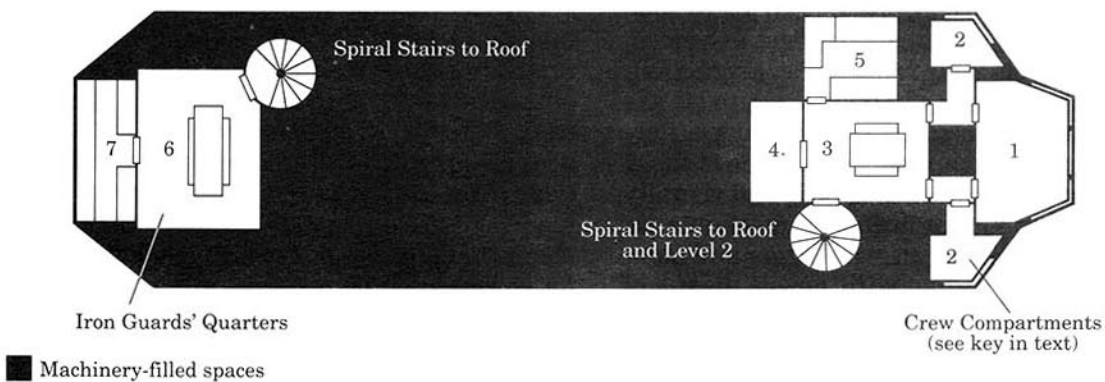
typical thundertrain engine car — Side View



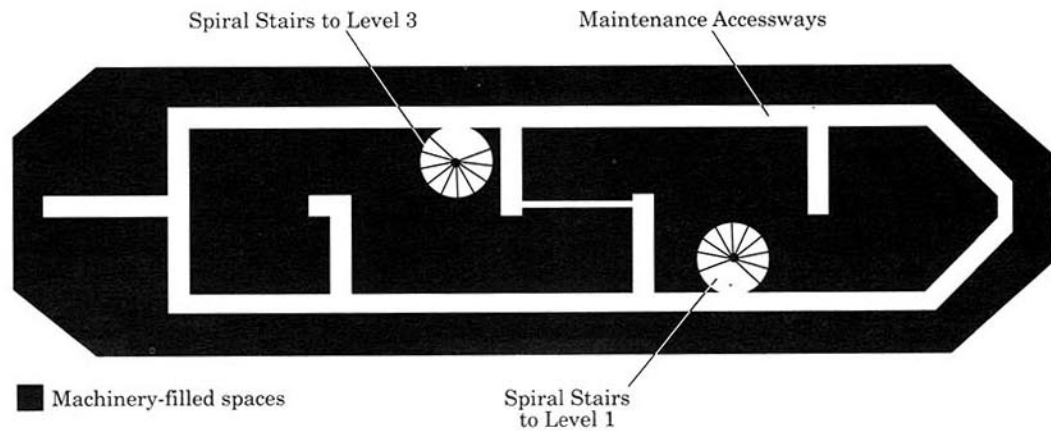
engine car — Top View



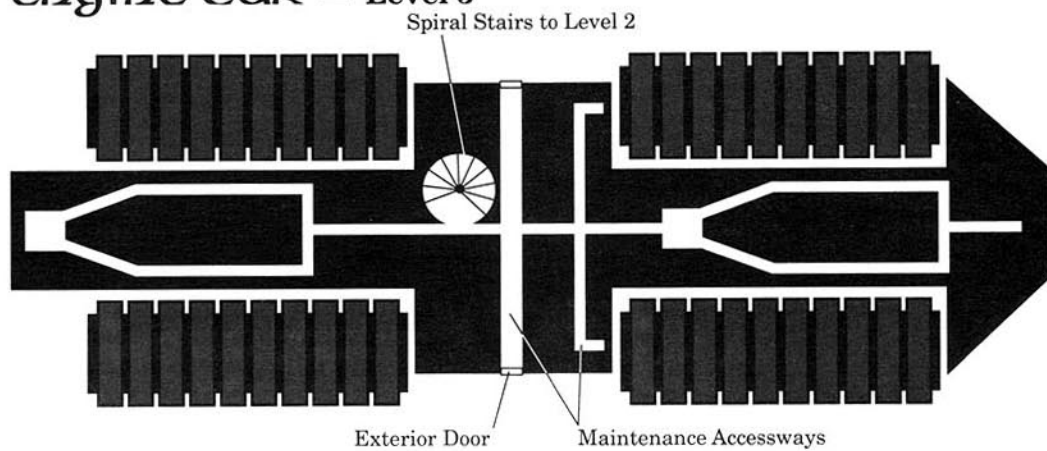
engine car — Level 1



typical thundertrain engine car — Level 2

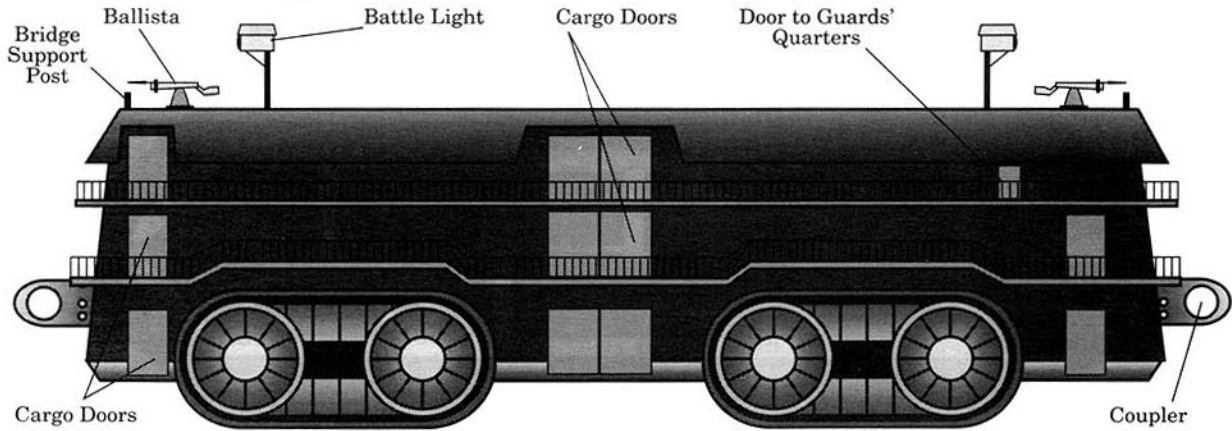


engine car — Level 3

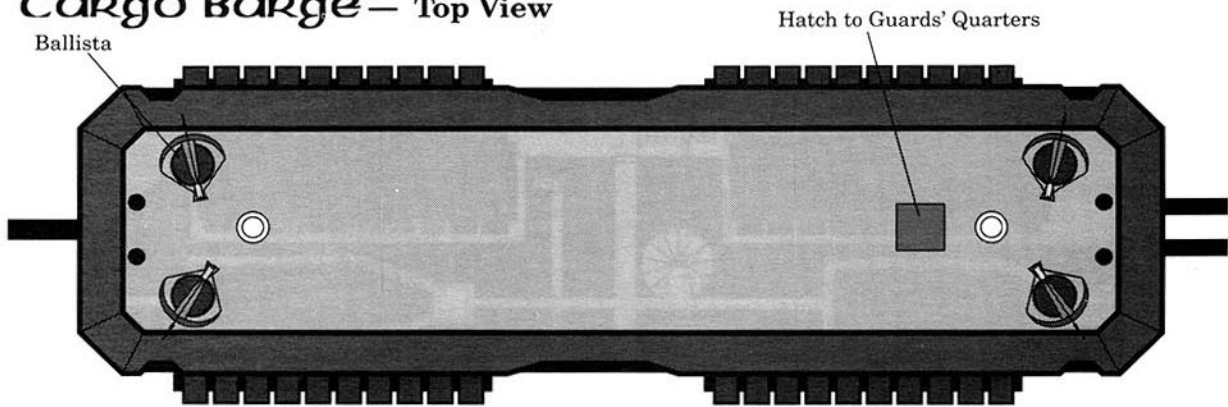


• three sites of interest •

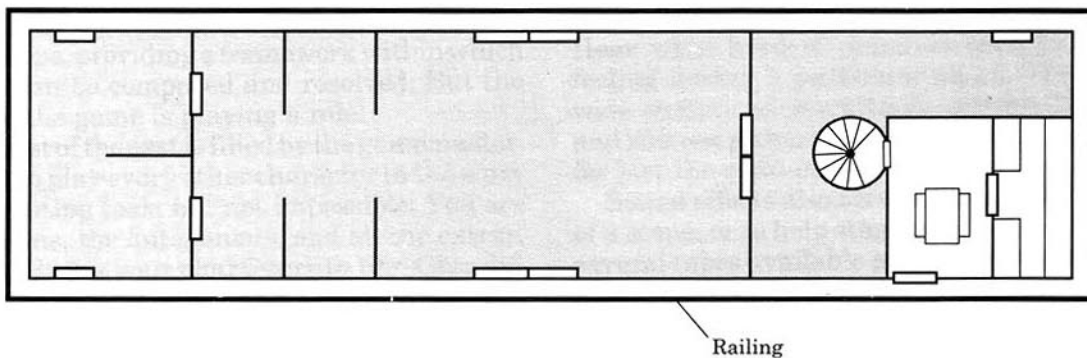
typical thundertrain Cargo Barge — Side View



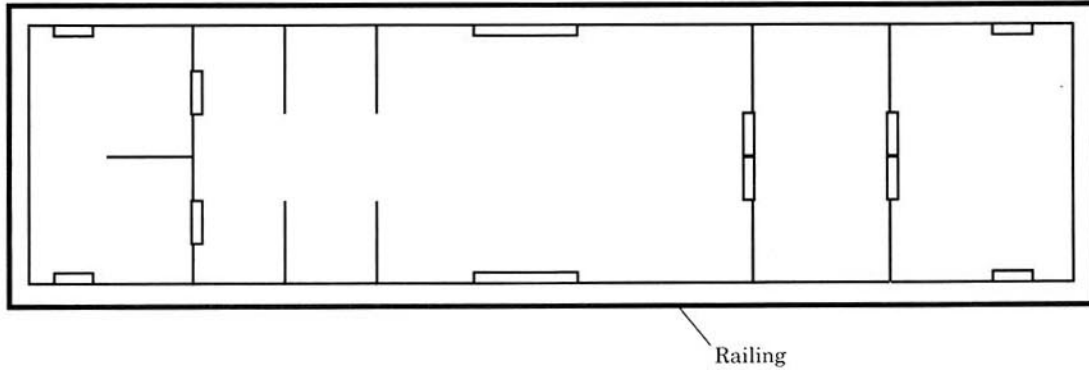
Cargo Barge — Top View



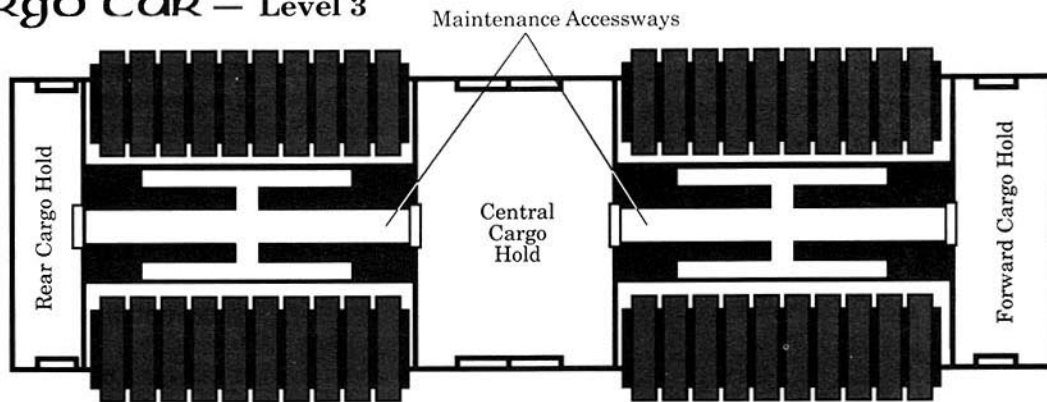
Cargo Barge — Level 1



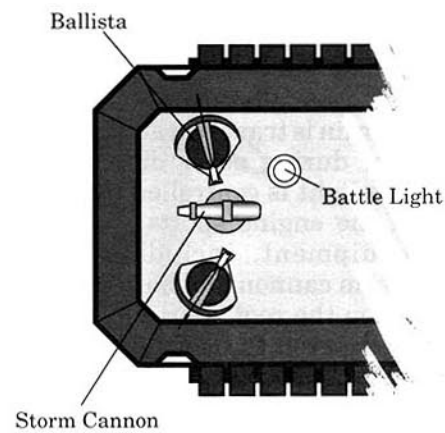
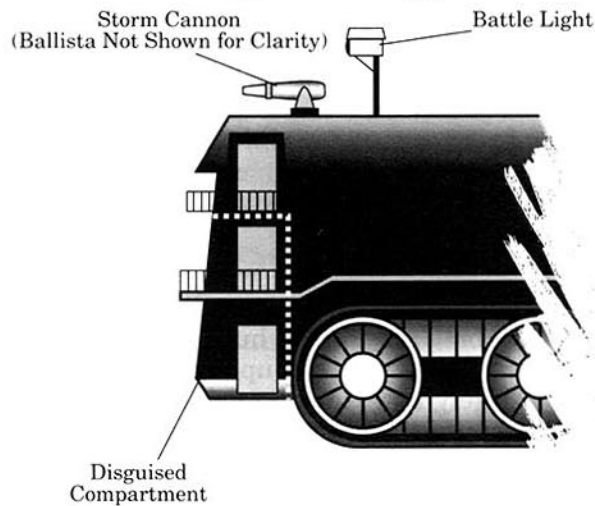
typical thundertrain Cargo Barge — Level 2



Cargo Car — Level 3



Last Cargo Barge — SideView/ Top View



Note: The remainder of the last cargo barge is the same as that of the other cargo barges.

• three sites of interest •

engine car

The engine car is an awe-inspiring sight. It is a mass of metal 40 meters long and over 13 meters wide. Its metal skin bristles with pipes and protrusions, the outward signs of the vast array of mechemagical contraptions that allow the train to function. The roof of the engine car stands 10 meters above the ground, but the pipes, smokestacks and defensive armament that sprout from the top make the engine car tower even higher. Thick plumes of smoke and steam rise even higher above the cluttered surface of the train and are visible for miles around.

A mass of conduits erupts from the metal skin of the car only to writhe across its surface before burrowing their way back into the machine further down its length. These pipes carry the steam produced by the boilers, cooling it and returning the water to the boilers to reuse. The huge smokestacks vent the smoke and magical essences that are a by-product of the reactions necessary to heat the giant pressure tanks within the metal shell. From time to time a greenish yellow plume of vapors spews forth from the stacks, an outward sign of the sorcerous processes occurring within the depths of the vast bulk.

The front of the car bears a huge, ornate plow-shaped blade that sweeps aside anything that stands in the way of the train. The blade rises seven meters above the ground, and, impelled by the size and weight of the advancing thunder train, is enough to knock even trees and boulders out of the way. Whatever is not knocked to the side is crushed by the large wheel-and-track units that carry the engine along on its journeys.

Above the blade, the train bears a travel light, a large mechemagical illuminator that lights the way when the train is traveling at night, through dark passes or during other difficult viewing situations. The light is controlled by the crew.

The top of the engine sports a collection of defensive equipment, including repeating ballistas, a storm cannon and battle lights. Iron Guards stand on the roof, alert for any signs of danger, and prepared to use the weapons provided in defense of the train. These are described in more detail in the "Defenses" section below.

At the back of the car are two heavy metal braces standing a meter high and situated a meter apart. These posts support a flexible cable extension bridge

that spans the 2.6 meters to the cargo barge following the engine. The same type of bridge connects each of the barges, allowing the Iron Guard and the crew to move anywhere they are needed from the front to the back of the train.

Running the entire length of the train are two wire cables, dubbed "the lifeline" by the Guard. Pulling on the first wire activates an alarm, which warns the entire train that there is danger. The second cable is a manual release for the doors of the compartments in the last barge that hold the sentinels. Normally it is the contingent commander who decides if and when the sentinels should be sent into action, but in extreme cases any of the Guard can activate them if required. Pulling the sentinel release also sets off a signal in the engine crew's compartments, letting the mages know that they should prepare to control the activities of the sentinels.

The engine car provides all of the motive force for the thunder train. Almost the entire car consists of the machinery necessary to drive the vehicle and allow it to haul the other cars across the countryside. Within the shell of the engine car are located huge boilers for the production of the steam required by the engine, as well as a maze of pipes and conduits that route the water and steam up and down the length of the car. Besides the mechanical and steam power, there are numerous mechemagical spells cast into the metal of the engine. The thunder train is powered as much by magic as it is by steam, although just what the spells and contraptions used to run the train are is a closely guarded secret. What heats the boilers that power the thunder train is also a mystery, as no one has ever seen fuel loaded aboard one of these behemoths.

The interior of the engine car is laid out in three levels that house the crew and provide some access to the machinery that fills the car, allowing the crew to monitor and repair the equipment as necessary.

Level 1

Crammed in and among the vast machines and tubing that fill the hulk, as if the designers were reluctant to give up any more space than absolutely necessary, are small compartments that house the mechemage crew and the garrison of the train. These compartments are paneled in wood and, for the most part, are windowless. The only exceptions are the compartments used by the mechemages when driving the train, which have small windows to allow visibility to

the front and sides of the engine.

The ten mages of the engine crew are situated in a cluster of separate compartments on an upper level at the front of the engine car, including four separate work stations and connected sleeping/living cubicles. Windows in the working areas give the mages a view of the surrounding terrain so that they can better direct the train. The windows are protected by heavy bars and spells, so that nothing can get in to wrest control of the train from the drivers.

The various compartments, as shown in the "Typical Thunder Train" diagram, are described below:

1. main control room

Situated in the center front of the engine car, giving the drivers the best overall view of where the train is headed, is the main control room. Three of the train's drivers work here, controlling the speed and direction of the massive collection of vehicles. Two of the drivers sit in front, right behind the window, carefully monitoring the train's operations and making necessary adjustments to the equipment. The third mage sits behind them in a central position, and basically supervises all operations of the train, keeping in contact with the other crewmembers through mechanical or mystical means, as required. Two doors lead out of this compartment and back to the secondary control rooms and the living quarters.

2. secondary control rooms

Located on either side of the engine car are the secondary control rooms. These rooms give a view from the sides of the engine, which augments the view from the main control room. This gives the train's crew a wider view of the route ahead, and helps them to spot trouble that much earlier. One mechamage is assigned to each of these rooms. The mages in these rooms are charged with keeping track of and maintaining the secondary functions of the train's operation.

3. living quarters

Behind the operating compartments is the small room that the mages must call home. In the middle of the "living quarters" is a wooden table flanked on either side by benches, all of which are bolted into the floor. The table seats eight, four along each side. Suspended from the ceiling above the table is a swinging lantern, which provides some measure of flickering illu-

mination for the cramped compartment.

This cubicle is situated within the center of the car, and has no windows. The doors at the front of this compartment lead forward to the control rooms. The door on the left (when facing front) leads to the sleeping quarters, and the door on the back wall opens into the sentinel control room. The door on the right wall leads to a spiral staircase that provides access up to the roof and down to Level 2.

4. sentinel control room

Behind the living quarters is a small room for the use of the mechamages who control the sentinels. This room is only used in case of an attack on the thunder train. When the contingent commander decides that the sentinels' aid is necessary to the defense of the train, two of the mages assigned to defensive duty move to this room to establish their magical links to the sentinels and take control of them. From here they remain in contact with the sentinels, able to see what they see and directing them toward whatever nocturnal threat appears.

The mages who control the sentinels do not specifically need to be in this room in order to control them. If necessary, that can be done from anywhere on the train. This room is provided to minimize distractions, allowing the wizards to concentrate totally on what they are doing. They also remain near the other mages, allowing them to coordinate their actions or be replaced if something untoward should occur.

5. sleeping quarters

This cramped cubicle contains two series of bunks that can sleep three people each. Hanging on the rear wall of the compartment are a number of deep shelves, arrayed from the floor to the ceiling. Supplies and possessions are stored in boxes on these shelves, and are held in place by wide leather straps. The shelves and bunks leave only a narrow passageway through the center of the room. The crew sleeps in shifts, so each bunk does double duty.

The noise and vibration of the train are everpresent in the crew's quarters, but the mages are a bit luckier in that the smoke and fumes of the engine are vented from above and behind them. This spares them from having to breathe or smell most of the foul exhalations that the engine pro-

duces. Not so lucky are the Iron Guards who garrison the engine. Positioned at the rear of the first level are the Guards' quarters, which are even more cramped than those of the crew. The two rooms of the garrison are as follows:

6. guards' living quarters

The living area for the soldiers of the Iron Guard is essentially the same as that of the crew. It is a plain, windowless room, with wood-paneled walls. A large wooden table is bolted into the center of the floor, as are two long benches along either side of the table. The table can seat 10. A swinging lantern hangs from the ceiling above the table.

A door toward the front of the train opens on a spiral staircase that leads up to a hatch that provides access to the roof of the car. Each soldier is careful to make sure that the hatch is closed when he enters or leaves the stairwell, as the fumes and smoke that the engine produces work their way into the passage if the hatch remains open. Much cursing and insults from his fellows greets the soldier who opens the door and lets in those vapors.

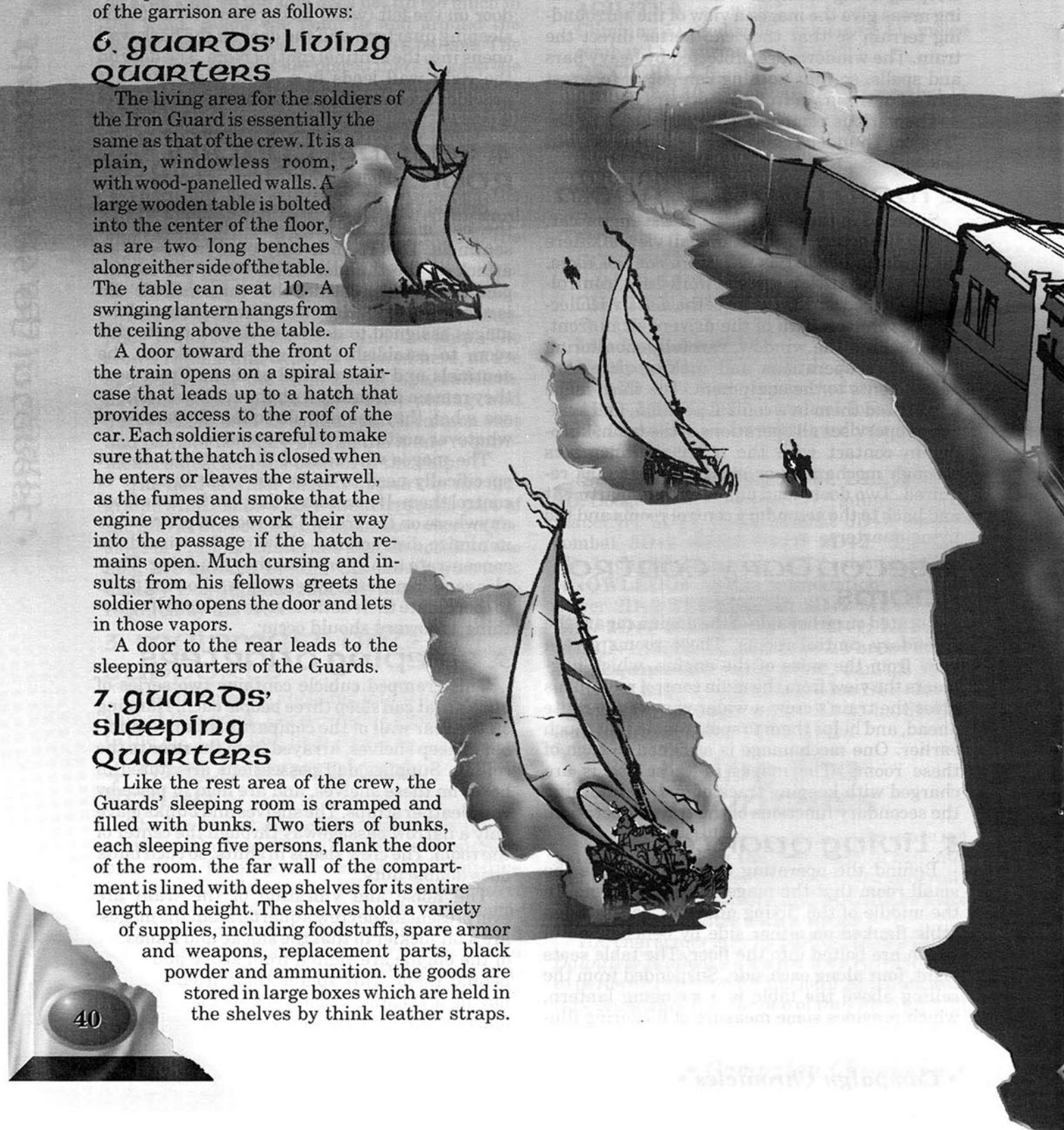
A door to the rear leads to the sleeping quarters of the Guards.

7. guards' sleeping quarters

Like the rest area of the crew, the Guards' sleeping room is cramped and filled with bunks. Two tiers of bunks, each sleeping five persons, flank the door of the room. The far wall of the compartment is lined with deep shelves for its entire length and height. The shelves hold a variety of supplies, including foodstuffs, spare armor and weapons, replacement parts, black powder and ammunition. The goods are stored in large boxes which are held in the shelves by thick leather straps.

The wide shelves and the bunks leave only a narrow space for the Guards to navigate in.

The lot of the train's guards is an uncomfortable one. Aside from the smoke and fumes, the noise of the engine is deafening. The only way to be heard above the constant din is to shout



everything you want to say. Many of the Guard feels that they must even shout their thoughts in their mind just to be able to think. With so little room available, many of the Guards spend any spare time they may have on the roof of the train — that may have been the intention of the builders of the train in making the quarters so cramped.

The Guards' quarters are designed for a contingent of 20 warriors. Like the crew, the soldiers sleep in shifts, so the bunks are almost always occupied, with ten of the Guards on duty and ten at rest.

After the thunder trains had been in operation for a while, it was decided that having more of the Iron Guard on board was a better idea. The Urbanan mechamages grudgingly gave up some of their precious cargo space to provide more living and sleeping space for additional guards in the cargo barges. Each barge contains a group of two compartments almost identical in layout to those provided for the Guard in the engine car. The Guards' quarters are located on the upper level of the barges and are connected with the roof by means of a spiral staircase.

With a standard complement of eight cargo barges, and with the Guard sleeping in shifts, a thunder train can carry a contingent of 180 soldiers. In practice, though, this is rarely the case, and most thunder trains are provided with a garrison of between 50 and 70 Iron Guard. The extra living space is often used for extra crew, usually 10 to 20 beings. The auxiliary crewmen's duty is the day-to-day maintenance of the train and its cargo. The extra crew ordinarily do not have sorcerous skills, other than the simple magic possessed by many of the common folk in Aden. They are usually just regular workers who handle the mundane tasks required by a contraption as large and expansive as a thunder train. The extra crew checks the cargo barges for damage or breakage and effects whatever repairs are necessary. They also watch over the cargo, checking that it remains secured and is not in danger of shifting or falling over. If there are any passengers, the crew arranges space for them, and also keeps an eye on them during the trip.

The rest of Level 1 is filled with the various pieces of machinery that power and run the train, some of which reaches down into the lower levels of the engine.

Level 2

Level 2 is filled almost totally with the massive machinery that is the heart of the engine. In fact, this level is practically not a level, since most of the machinery stretches from the lower level up to the topmost level. There are, however, a number of narrow, cramped corridors and catwalks that work their way in and around the immense mechanical constructs that make up the engine's power plant, and provide access to the essential parts of the equipment. Entry to the network of passages is gained from the spiral staircase that descends from Level 1. There is another spiral staircase near the middle of the car that leads down to Level 3.

Level 3

Like Level 2, this level is also crammed full of the engine's power plant and related devices. In addition, the drive mechanisms that propel the huge wheels are located here. The spiral staircase from Level 2 gives ingress to another series of tight corridors that allows the crew to get close to the important parts of the drive and power systems in order to effect repairs.

Running across the middle of the engine, from one side to the other, is a slightly wider corridor, just wide enough to accommodate an average-sized man comfortably. It leads to thick steel doors on either side of the engine that provide a way out of the car in case of emergencies, and also allow repair crews to enter more easily when the train is stopped at a thunder-station. The doors are securely bolted and protected by powerful magics, particularly when the train is out along the Thunder Trail.

Barges

The cargo barges are essentially warehouses on wheels. They are large structures containing vast open rooms in which all manner of cargo can be stored. Each barge is almost as large as one of Arasteen's merchant galleys, being 60 meters in length and 10 meters wide. The roof of the barge, like that of the engine, rests 10 meters above the ground.

Each of the baggage compartments within is piled high with an assortment of boxes, barrels and crates, and occasionally even stacks of lumber. Large, wide straps laced into thick metal tie-downs secure the cargo to the walls and floor of each room.

Levels 1 and 2 are each one long storage area. Each level is divided into separate cargo compartments by walls running from the floor to the ceiling. Some of the walls merely serve as dividers, providing more wall space to secure cargo to. Passage between baggage compartments is by means of large sliding doors in the walls.

Level 3 is actually composed of three separate storage areas, one larger compartment in the center of the train and two smaller ones at each end. Located between the storage areas are the drive and support mechanisms for the huge wheel-and-track units that the barge rides upon (these are identical to those of the engine car). Regular-sized doors in the cargo compartments open onto narrow accessways which work their way through the drive mechanisms so that the crew can service them when required.

The different levels are connected by means of ladders set into the walls. The ladders lead to hatches in the floors and ceilings of the different levels, though which crewmembers climb to move around the car. Ladders on Level 1 lead up to the roof of the car.

Levels 1 and 2 are virtually identical in layout. The exception is the inclusion of living quarters for the Iron Guard on Level 1. These are generally located in the front of the car. The rooms provided for the Guard are just like those in the engine car, and just as cramped. The sleeping area is the same narrow, windowless room, lined with five-bunk tiers and storage shelves. The living area is slightly bigger, also has no windows, and has a wooden table and benches bolted down in the center, with a ceiling-mounted lantern provided for illumination.

A door toward the rear of the train opens onto a spiral staircase that leads up to a hatch providing access to the roof of the car. Though the cargo cars are further behind the engine car, the caustic fumes of the engine still work their way into the stairway and rooms of the Guards' quarters, and are only slightly less nauseating than those that plague the engine-car guards.

The door to the front of the car leads to the sleeping quarters. There is one additional door on the side wall of the living compartment on a cargo barge. This leads to the outside of the car, where a narrow balcony is attached to the side of the car. The balcony, which is provided with a railing for safety, runs around the entire perimeter of the car, and gives the Guard a means to check on the cargo doors, as well as supplying additional vantage points for spotting raiders

and nocturnals. There is a balcony running around the car at Levels 1 and 2. The railings of the balcony are removable where they pass in front of the cargo doors, so that loading and unloading are not obstructed.

At the center of the exterior walls of the cargo car are two massive cargo doors per level, which provide access to the storage areas within. These doors are large enough to allow carts and wagons into the car, thereby facilitating loading and unloading when the train reaches a thunderstation. There are secondary cargo doors located at the forward and rear ends of the exterior of the car. The secondary doors provide additional access, which allows the train to be loaded or unloaded more quickly. Only the forward end of the upper level has no secondary doors, as that is where the Iron Guards' quarters are located. There is a regular door provided from the quarters to allow the Guard to step out onto the upper balcony of the car.

The roof of the cargo barge is supplied with defensive equipment, just like the engine car. These include repeating ballistas at each corner, and a battle light at each end. Iron Guards do not normally man the roof of every car, but are ready to take their positions at a moment's notice if the alarm is sounded.

A meter-wide flexible cable extension bridge connects each car to the next car in line, supported by heavy metal posts that rise from the roof. The flexibility of the bridge makes it useful even when the train is engaged in executing a turn.

Each of the barges has a coupler extending out from the lower level at both ends, by which it can be linked to another car. The couplers are as big around as a lightning lizard's trunk, and are connected by huge coupling bars as thick as a man's body.

Although the thunder trains' main purpose is to carry goods and merchandise to different cities and countries, they do occasionally carry passengers. Most of these passengers are traders or merchants who have cargo on board the train. However, few provisions have been made to that end. There are no passenger compartments in any of the train's cars. If a person or group wants passage on a thunder train, the crew finds room in and among the cargo for the passengers. This could be a space between piles of boxes or barrels, or it could even be a niche up on top of some crates. There are also no amenities for riders. The cargo compartments are not equipped with lights, and no food is provided.

Passengers must supply everything themselves.

The passengers' "quarters" are generally cramped, dark and uncomfortable. Even in the middle of the furthest barge a passenger cannot totally escape the acrid fumes of the train, which creep into the barge and form a stagnant miasma in its depths. On top of all that, there is the deafening roaring and clanking of the train as it cruises through the landscape. The noise level in the barges goes down somewhat the further one is situated from the engine car, but all too frequently one must still shout to be heard. Most passengers spend much of their time up on the roof of the car in order to get sunlight and fresher air, but if trouble strikes they are required to clear the roof so that the Iron Guard can perform their duty unhindered.

Last Barge

The last cargo barge of a thunder train is practically identical to the other barges. The only differences are the armament provided on the roof of the car, and the inclusion of special disguised compartments at the rear of the barge. In the last barge, the rear cargo hold has been extended up through Level 2, with a new wall separating it from the rest of that level.

The larger, two-story compartment houses a pair of sentinels, the mechamagical steam golems developed by the Iron Tyrant's mages. These six meter tall mechanical constructs are brought into action when a nocturnal attack is particularly fierce. The outside of the barge is designed to look just like any other, with balconies at both levels and cargo doors set into the walls. However, the entire side of the two-story cargo hold pivots around into the back of the barge, forming one large opening from which the sentinels debark.

In addition to the usual four ballistas at the corners, the last barge also has a storm cannon mounted at the back end of the car. There are also battle lights at either end of the car.

Defenses

The thunder trains of Urbana are supplied with a variety of defensive weapons, given that they must travel through the wilderness on their own for months at a time.

Each car of the thunder train is armed with four ballistas, one at each of the corners of the car. The weapons are

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WORLD OF ADEN

repeating ballistas, and each is capable of firing four two-meter long bolts.

Ballista: Damage value 27, range 5-15/75/200/450.

In addition to the ballistas, the engine car has a storm cannon mounted at the front end of the car and the rearmost cargo barge has one mounted at the back of the car. The storm cannon swivels 360° and can fire at targets anywhere within that arc. A storm cannon is a heavy weapon that is loaded with chunks of ore or scrap metal. The jagged fragments scatter widely when the gun is fired, creating a rain of ripping metal that is quite effective against nocturnals (and just about anything else, too).

Storm Cannon: Damage value 32, range 25/50/100/300; area of effect is cone stretching from weapon to an arc 50 meters across at maximum range.

Set into the roof of the cars near each of the weapons are hatches that open to reveal long, narrow compartments. Inside these compartments are arranged extra ammunition for the respective weapons. The ammo compartments near the ballistas are stacked with ballista bolts, as well as extra string and other parts useful for the repair of the weapon should something break down. The trapdoors near the storm cannons reveal long, thick bags of powder and shot, premeasured and ready to be dropped into the barrel of the cannon for quick loading, and the ramrod for the gun. In addition to the metal shot for the cannons, there are also stiffened bags filled with chips of bark from the clermin tree. These resin-coated chips are used for incendiary shots, as the clermin tree is not only highly flammable, but very sticky. When the bag of wood chips is fired from the gun, the explosion ignites the chips and a natural fireball streaks toward the target, then sticks to the target while it burns.

Besides the weapons carried, each car of the train is provided with a pair of battle lights for nighttime defense. The battle light is a magically powered lantern mounted 3.5 meters above the roof of the car. The lantern is mounted in a weatherproof housing with a reflector that sheds light in a 17 meter arc around the car.

Two ropes dangle from the battle light. Pulling on one rope shines a red light around the train, allowing the guards

to maintain their night vision while still providing enough illumination to spot attackers. A pull of the other rope turns on a white light, which serves to blind attackers for a few seconds while allowing the guards to fire at them.

While the train is traveling, a sentry is posted on the engine car and the rearmost barge. The forward sentry watches the route ahead of the train, looking for trouble. The sentry at the rear of the train watches the trail behind, in case some quick-moving threat is attempting to sneak up on the train. Each sentry is supposed to turn around and check the other directions regularly. Besides the official sentry positions, there are usually a number of Iron Guards up on the roofs of the cars, mostly just to get out of their cramped quarters.

At the first sign of trouble, a Guard pulls on the trip cable that runs the length of the train, sounding the alarm. When a thunder train is threatened, a half company (50 soldiers) of Iron Guards climbs to the roofs of the cars. Each guardsman carries an arquebus as his primary weapon (arquebus, damage value 19, range 3-5/10/20/50). Specified soldiers man the ballistas and the storm cannon mounted on the roofs. The remaining Guards fire with their arquebuses and any spellcasters cast spells until the enemy is in boarding range. When the enemy gets closer, half of the Iron Guards switch to their shorter-ranged wheel locks (wheel lock, damage value 19, range 3-5/10/20/50) or long spears (spear, damage value STR+6) to keep enemies from gaining the roof. The other half of the Guard awaits with sword and spear in case the spearmen and gunners fail to deter the enemy.

IRON GUARD

AGILITY 10

Acrobatics 11, beast riding 11, climbing 11, dodge 13, long jumping 13, maneuver 13, melee combat 13, melee parry 13, stealth 13, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 13, gunnery 13, missile combat 12

ENDURANCE 10

Resist shock 10

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 8

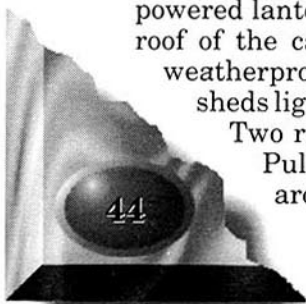
Perception 10, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 14, willpower 13

CHARISMA 6



Taunt 9

Life Points: 4-8

Equipment: Arquebus, damage value 19, range 3-5/10/20/50; wheel lock, damage value 19, range 3-5/10/20/50, or spear, damage value STR+6; plate mail, TOU+10/22

(Standard Iron Guard (D6): DEXTERITY 3D+1: Acrobatics 3D+2, dodge 4D+1, firearms 4D+1, gunnery 4D+1, maneuver 4D+1, melee combat 4D+1, melee parry 4D+1, missile combat 4D **STRENGTH 3D+1:** Brawling 4D, climbing/jumping 3D+2, stamina 3D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 2D+2:** Intimidation 4D+2, willpower 4D+1 **TECHNICAL 2D+2 MECHANICAL 2D+1 PERCEPTION 2D+2:** Con 3D+1, investigation 3D+1, search 3D, sneak 4D+1, taunt 2D+2. **Force Points:** 4-8. **Equipment:** Arquebus, damage value 4D+2; wheel lock, damage value 4D+2; spear, damage value STR+2D; plate mail, +3D+1.)

sentinels

Even though the Iron Guard is among the most elite military forces in all of Aden, Lord Urbane has decided that even they may need assistance at times when defending his thunder trains. So the defensive forces of the trains have been augmented with mechemagical contraptions known as sentinels. Sentinels are large man-shaped constructs of steel, manite and steem power, which Lord Urbane's mechemages built based on the men o' war designed by Nob Burcham's own goreaux and dwarven mechemages. These six-meter tall steam golems are an awe-inspiring sight and fearsome fighters as well.

The sentinels are stored in disguised compartments in the last car of the train, and are released when the contingent commander decides their assistance is required. In the event of an emergency, however, any of the Guard can re-

• three sites of interest •

remoras

A number of individuals and tribes have come up with a way to benefit from the thunder trains of the Iron Tyrant without actually paying for passage or suffering through the noise and smoke. They ride alongside the trains using their own means of transportation, hoping to draw protection from the proximity of the thunder trains and the Iron Guard that watch over them. The Iron Guard does not actually defend these train followers, but their hope is that nocturnals and bandits will steer clear of the massive behemoths and their defenders, thereby leaving the followers unmolested as they cross the outlands. The members of the Iron Guard have termed the train followers "remoras," after the parasitic ocean-dwelling fish that attach themselves to larger fish in order to benefit from their mobility and feeding habits.

Remora riders are usually not encountered west of The Wall, but are more common on the southerly route from Tee to Balaquim, which traverses the Sundered Desert. Although the thunder trains do not move much faster than a man running at a brisk pace, it is nonetheless a grueling ride, as the huge machines do not stop during their journey. Most remoras ride horses or carts. There is even a tribe of the Sundered Desert that rides sail-driven carts. The tribe, known as the Zephyrs, has been outlawed by the Rhanate because they scavenge goods from the ruins of cities smitten during the Darkfall, in violation of the law. Due to this, they must travel south to Yzeem in order to sell their goods.

In the past, the Iron Guard has considered trying to drive off the remoras. However, some of the remoras, in particular the Zephyrs, have willingly assisted in the defense of the thunder trains when they were attacked by raiders, so the Iron Guard now chooses to look the other way.

With the news that Lord Urbane is considering regular thunder train runs to Carraway and the High Steppes in the east, one can only assume that even more remoras will soon be accompanying them across the desert.

A WORLD OF ADEN

lease the sentinels by pulling on the second cable in the "lifeline" that runs the entire length of the train. Once the sentinels are released, they are controlled by mechatronics in the engine car's crew.

sentinel

AGILITY 7

Melee combat 13, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 6

Fire combat 12

ENDURANCE 14

STRENGTH 16

TOUGHNESS 15 (25)

INTELLECT 2

Perception 6

MIND 2

CONFIDENCE 17

Intimidation 20

CHARISMA 2

Life Points: 1-3

Equipment: Great sword, damage value STR+9/24 or Falcon Axe, damage value STR+10/25; plate mail, TOU+10/25; some sentinels have internal steam ballistas

(Standard Sentinel (D6): **DEXTERITY 2D+1:** Melee combat 4D+1 **STRENGTH 5D:** Brawling 4D **KNOWLEDGE 1D:** Intimidation 6D+2 **TECHNICAL 1D MECHANICAL 1D PERCEPTION 3D+1:** Investigation 2D. **Force Points:** 1-3. **Equipment:** Great sword, damage value STR+3D, or Falcon Axe, damage value STR+3D+1; plate mail, +3D+1.)

using the thunder train

The thunder train can be used in a number of ways. The most obvious, of course, is that the player characters book passage on the train in order to get somewhere else. During the trip, they could meet some other travelers, who might lead them into another adventure. Or the adventure could be the trip itself. Perhaps the characters they meet are antagonists, or become so. The size of the train, all of the stacked cargo within it, and the various levels, ladderways and accessways make for an interesting space in which to have a chase.

Player characters could also encounter the thunder train from the outside. They may be traveling through the wilder-

ness and come upon the thunder trail just as a train is approaching. They may try to get aboard if the train is going their way, although the Iron Guard will probably be an obstacle to that idea. Or they could come across the train while an attack by nocturnals or raiders is underway. They must decide if they wish to get involved, and if so, who they will side with. It may be that neither side wants them, and they are attacked in turn.

The train may also be a way to get the characters involved with other characters in the Wilderness. Maybe they get involved with a group of brigands who have just failed to take a thunder train. Or they could run into a group of remoras who have fallen behind the train.

temple. fortress

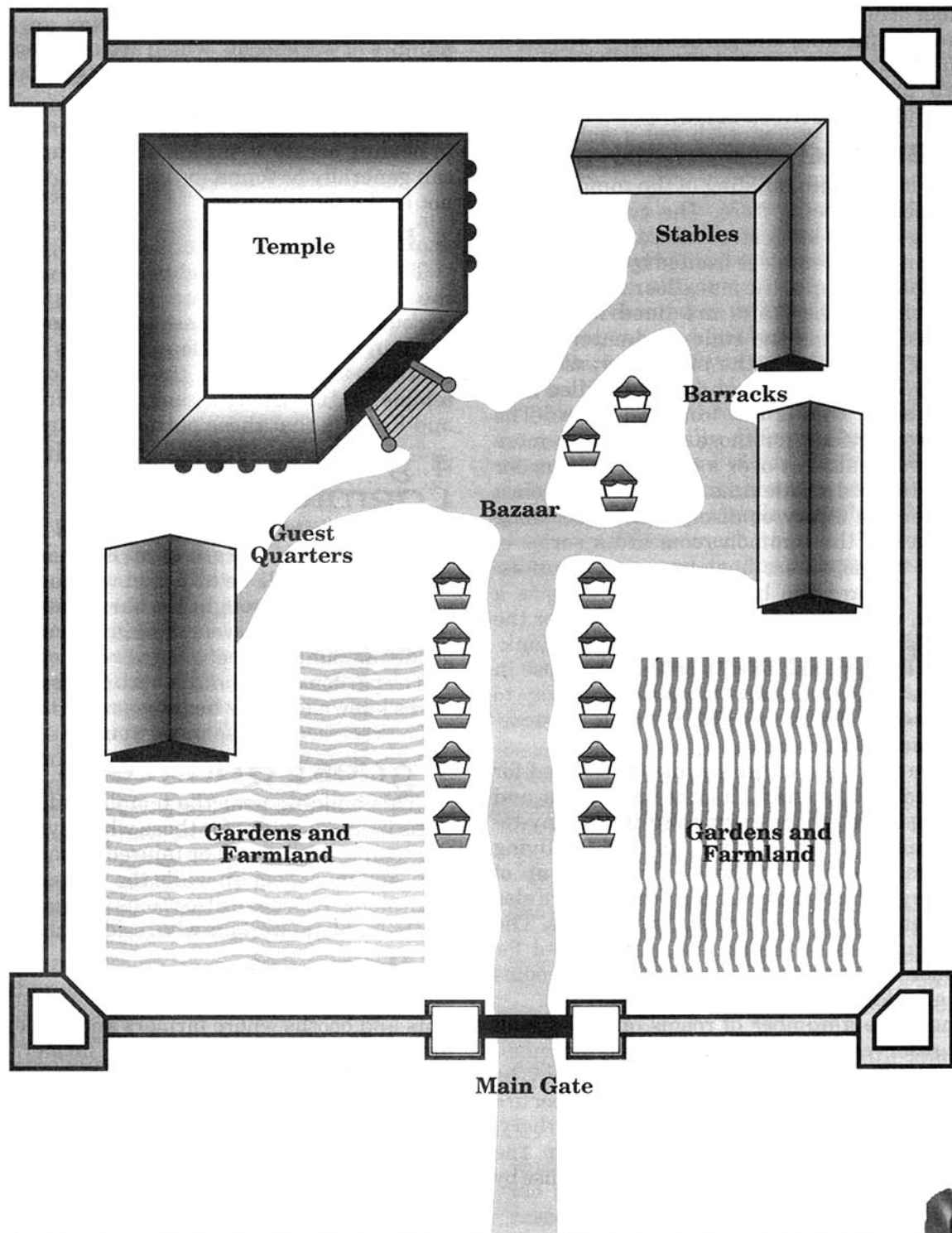
While the world of Aden has no true gods, there are certain groups and cults that worship particular beings or abstract concepts. That being the case, it is still possible to find temples of various sorts across the land. Many of these temples are fortified, especially if they are located in or near a town or village that is situated in a remote location. One of the organizations that has its share of temples is the Radiant Order, a group of men and women who dedicate themselves to the principles of compassion and justice. As such, they are an unusual mix of warrior and healer. Although they dispense justice as needed, they primarily travel through the land, aiding the people of Aden.

The radiant Order has established temples in a number of locations where it was felt they would do the most good. The temples are set up as places of healing, but are also intended to be places where the order's ideals can be displayed and practiced for the benefit of others.

A temple of the Radiant Order is generally located in a position central to a number of small towns and villages, so that its members can be of aid to as many people as possible. A Radiant Order temple might also be located in a city as well, but most of the temples are situated where the people are less able to find a healer or reach one in time.

Out in the wilderness as they are, these temples are usually heavily fortified. Like most towns and cities of the land, the temple is surrounded by a wall, which protects those within from the

typical temple-fortress



• three sites of interest •

A WORLD OF ADEN

depredations of nocturnals. At the corners of the walls are taller towers, from which the defenders can carry the assault to the attackers with bow and spell. Within the temple's walls are a number of buildings for various purposes, as well as land for farming and gardening.

The main parts of the temple complex are shown in the "Typical Temple-Fortress" diagram and are described below.

1. temple

This is the main building of the complex, and its reason for being here. The typical temple building is a two-story structure, usually built of grey stone. The temple is fronted by a wide set of stairs that lead up to the main floor. The walls on either side of the stairs are lined with large columns. Climbing the stairs and entering the building, you come to the main floor, which is comprised mostly of a large open area filled with simple beds. This is the "common room." The beds are provided for those who require more extensive treatment over a span of time, or for those who need a little time to recuperate from a more serious injury or disease. Arrayed along the edges of the common room are a series of smaller rooms, where healers can work undisturbed. Toward the back of the building is a kitchen, where food for the patients and for the staff is prepared. There are dining areas flanking the kitchen, and food is brought to those in the beds who are unable to make their way to these rooms. There are also a couple of store-rooms near the kitchen.

The upper floor of the temple is reserved for the needs of the staff. It contains offices and meeting halls for those involved in the day-to-day running of the temple, as well as living quarters. The bulk of the staff is made up of members of the Radiant Order, but there are also some people who just assist at the temple. The living quarters in the temple are reserved for members of the order; non-members have rooms in the building housing the guest quarters.

There are a number of rooms on the second floor reserved for use by higher-ranking members (the Templars) of the order who may be passing through or visiting. Also on this floor are some rooms for spell research, and an herbary, where various healing herbs from the temple's gardens are prepared for use by the practitioners downstairs.

2. stables

Here is where the temple's mounts are kept, and where the riding beasts of visitors can be cared for. The stables can accommodate both horses and buhuma, and there is food for all the mounts. Besides the riding beasts of the regular soldiers and the higher ranks, there are also a number of workbeasts which are used for farming and harvesting the farmlands within the temple's walls.

There are usually a few healers who are versed in healing beasts of burden at the temple; these can generally be found in the stables if they are not in the temple itself.

3. Barracks

This is where the Knights and Hospitalers of the Radiant Order are quartered. Besides helping out in the temple, these soldiers are here to serve in the temple's defense. Patrols are often sent out to reconnoiter the lands around the temple, and it is from the ranks of the Hospitalers and Knights that these patrols are manned.

4. gardens and farmland

The temple has its own gardens and farmland within the walls in case of an extended siege. Should the temple be attacked with no way for supplies to get through, the farmlands should provide food for everyone within the walls for a goodly amount of time.

The gardens also contain herb gardens, where herbs known for their healing powers are grown to be processed for use in the temple.

5. guest quarters

This building near the temple building contains living quarters for those who have come to the temple with a sick or injured friend or relative, and must remain while the victim receives treatment. There are also rooms in this building for the "civilian" workers who reside at the temple.

6. Bazaar

The bazaar is an *ad hoc* conglomeration of huts and booths where farmers and traders can hawk their wares. Occasionally farmers from neighboring farms will bring their goods here to sell. Other vendors are people who are spending time at the guest quarters and want to keep occupied or just make a few extra crests while they wait.

7. main gate

Fairly self-explanatory, this is the primary entrance to the temple grounds. Visitors and patrols use this gate to enter and exit. The gates are large wooden or metal doors that swing in to allow entrance.

Flanking the gates are two towers, slightly smaller than the towers at the corners of the walls, but just as effective in defending against nocturnals and ruffians. There are usually 2-3 soldiers on duty in each of the towers at any one time

8. sortie gate

This small gate located near the stables and the barracks is provided as a way for troops to be able to leave the temple grounds even if the main gate is besieged and locked. It is generally used to attack the enemy from a flank when they don't expect it. It is also possible for a rider going for help to leave by this gate and remain relatively unseen.

using the temple-fortress

The temple-fortress can serve a number of purposes. It may actually be a base of operations for the adventurers. Not all of the characters would even need to be members of the order sponsoring the temple (this may not hold true for all orders, though). Perhaps the characters are permitted an extended stay in the guest quarters because they help out the order, or they pursue the same goals as the order. It could be that the order and the characters at times go out on joint missions.

The temple can also be used as a sanctuary. The party may have suffered grievous damage in a battle, but fortunately they come across a temple whose members can help heal the characters or otherwise fortify them.

The temple could also be the location for the adventure. It could serve as a haunted house — the characters come across the temple-fortress in the woods, and they find the main gate open and unattended. Going inside, they notice that the temple grounds seem strangely quiet. No one seems to be about. Eventually, they discover that the temple complex is deserted. They may decide to find out why — what happened here? Perhaps they find a lone survivor cowering somewhere, and need to calm her down and make sense of her story.

The temple could also be a trap. The party arrives and is greeted warmly by the temple personnel. They are invited to stay and make themselves comfortable, and perhaps spend some time to rest themselves. What they don't realize is that they are being lulled into a false sense of security. The creatures disguising themselves as the inhabitants of the temple complex are preparing the characters to be a sacrifice at the next holy day celebration a few days hence. Or perhaps the characters will just be dinner for the carnivorous fiends. Or maybe they just want to suck the characters' souls out of their bodies (or their life essences, or their blood). Will the characters realize their predicament in time?

Remember also that though this temple-fortress is presented as a temple of the Radiant Order, you can modify it to serve any order or cult of the Darkfall that you wish. Maybe the temple and walls are a pitch-black obsidian with streaks of dull red shot through them. That kind of temple has a totally different feel to it. Rearrange the buildings if you desire. Add some, delete others. As the characters nose around the forbidding-looking temple complex, they may realize just how much trouble they've gotten themselves into when they discover the abattoir tucked around back.

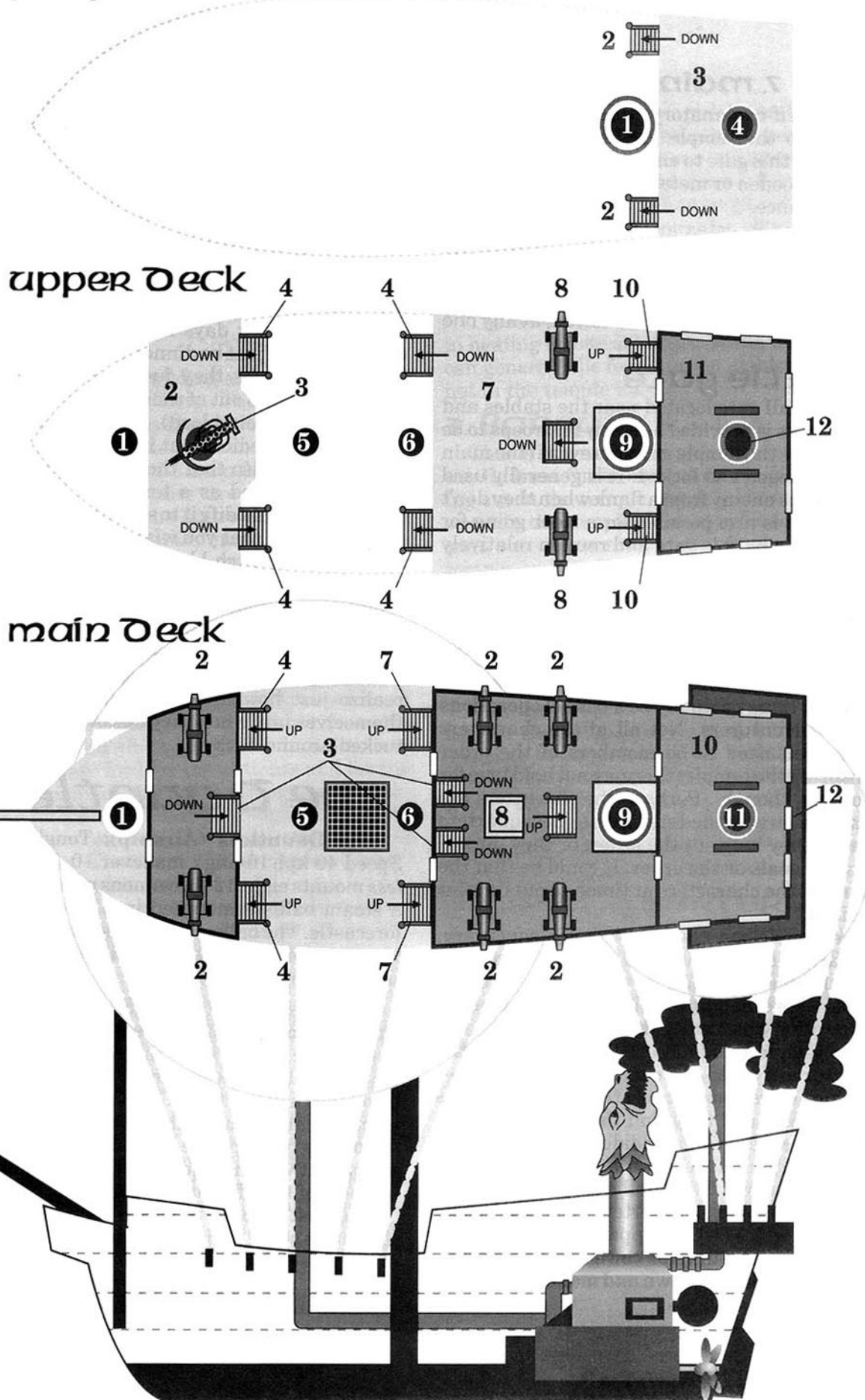
the Dauntless

The Dauntless (Airship): Toughness 24; Speed 40 kph (flying); maneuver +0. The *Dauntless* mounts eight 12-lb. cannons per side and has a steam ballista mounted in a turret atop the forecastle. The balloons that suspend the *Dauntless* are protected by a magical spell that grants them a Toughness of 18.

The most recent addition to the navy of Arasteen does not sail the seas of Aden. Instead, it plies the airways. In the constant quest for newer and better technology, Arastinian mages developed a flying ship. This ship, the *Dauntless*, is an old galleon to which enormous balloons are fixed. The balloons are heated by a large steam boiler that was installed into the hull, and takes up most of the afterpart of the ship.

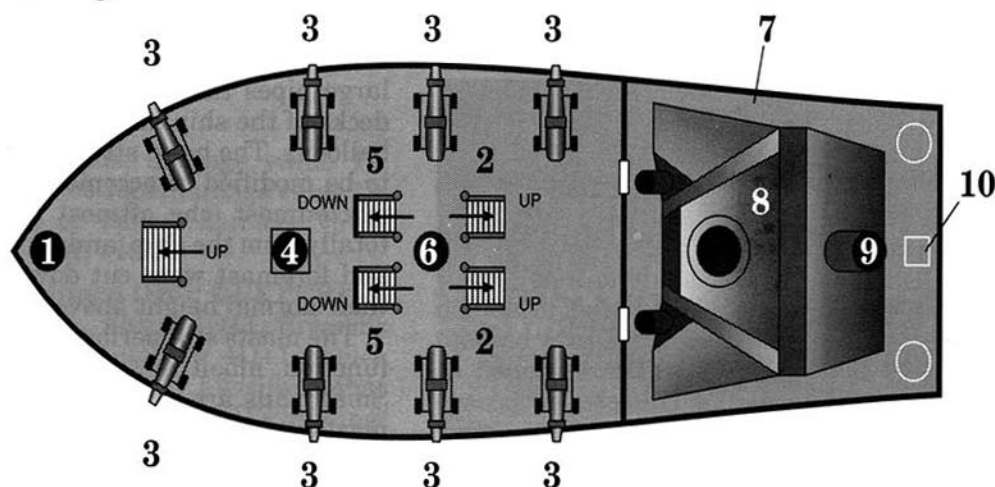
The vast amount of steam required to lift the ship is still a limiting factor in the flight of the vessel; it cannot stay airborne for too great a period of time. But as research into the ship continues, and

the Dauntless upper Decks poop Deck

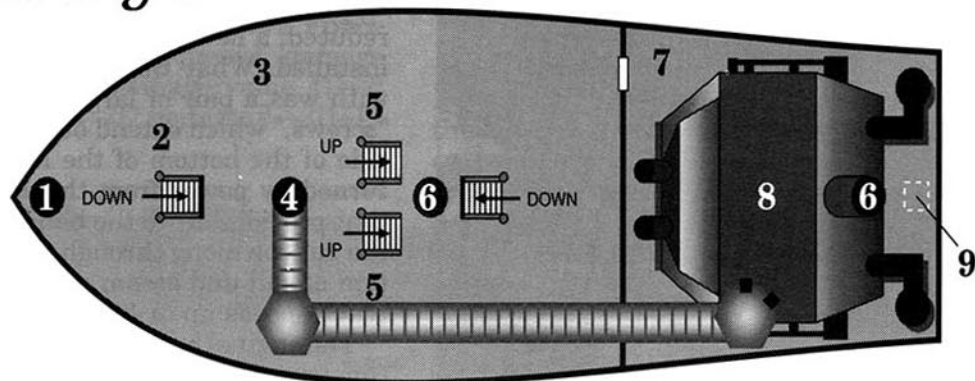


the Dauntless lower Decks

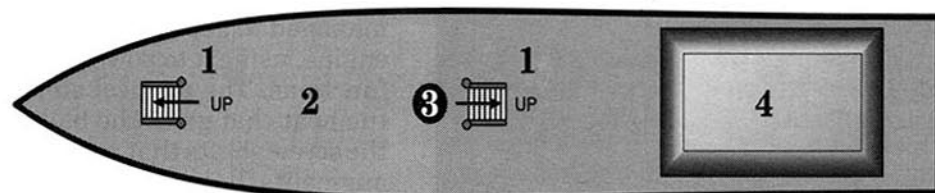
gunnery Deck



crew engine Deck



hold



better spells and machines are developed, the *Dauntless* may prove to be a valuable weapon against nocturnals who haunt the air, or who practice their depredations in large groups on the ground. It could be the beginning of an entire airborne navy.

The *Dauntless* is armed with sixteen 12-lb. cannons, which are mounted eight to a side. In addition to the black-powder guns, the ship is also armed with a steam ballista atop the fore-castle. The ballista is mounted in a turret and can be swiveled around to bring its awesome firepower to bear in any direction.

The current configuration of the *Dauntless*

has it suspended from three balloons. There are two primary balloons, which are rigged side by side over the forward portion of the ship, and one secondary balloon over the afterquarters. These airbags are made of a very tough cloth and they are reinforced with spells that increase their sturdiness. The spherical balloons are held to the ship by means of a vast network of lines which encircle the balloons near the top of the sphere and then wrap down around the body of the balloon to the attachment points located along the outer edge of the main deck.

Hot air is fed to the balloons via



Tim Bobko

large pipes that snake their way through the decks of the ship and up into the rigging of the balloons. The basic structure of the galleon had to be modified to accommodate the airbags. The mizzenmast (the aftmost mast) was removed totally from the ship, and the vessel's mainmast and foremast were cut down to less than half their normal height above the main deck.

The masts still perform some of their original function, albeit in a much less effective state. Small sails are still attached to the truncated masts, below the bulk of the balloons. The sails provide some of the motive force of the ship. Without them, the *Dauntless* would only be able to move up and down. Since the surface area of sail available to propel the ship was seriously reduced, a new method of propulsion had to be installed. What the ship's designers came up with was a pair of large wooden propellers, or "screws," which extend out of the ship on either side of the bottom of the hull. The screws are turned by power from the same steam engine that provides air to the balloons, and they push the galleon along through the air. The combination of sail and steam power allow the ship to reach speeds up to 40 kph when flying.

The engine that powers the *Dauntless* is a vast construction of metal and magic. It occupies almost a full third of each of the lower decks, and makes its presence known with a webwork of hot, scalding pipes that spread throughout the ship's interior. The Arastinian mechemages have managed to get every ounce of power out of the engine, using it to power quite a few of the ship's functions. The magical steram engine provides the heat that gives the balloons their lift, turns the screw shafts that move the ship forward, and augments the ballista's own power source. Needless to say, it requires constant maintenance. There are four crewmembers whose sole responsibility is to run the engine. In addition to them, the other crewmembers all have a modicum of training in the maintenance of the engine and help out in a pinch.

In spite of the changes required by the addition of the balloons and the steam engine, the *Dauntless* is still essentially a typical Arastinian galleon. It is 46 meters long from the stern to the tip of the bowsprit and 13 meters wide. There are two levels above the main deck, each of which forms a covered structure over the deck below it. There are also three decks below the main deck, enclosed in the hull. The various levels of the vessel are shown in the accompanying diagram,

"The *Dauntless*," and are described below. Note that each entry is keyed to the diagram of its respective deck.

poop Deck

The uppermost deck is the poop deck, located at the extreme rear of the ship. It is from here that the captain and his officers direct the *Dauntless*' travels and the operations of the crew. The features of the poop deck are as follows:

1. smokestack

The stack rises from the afterdeck and passes in front of the poop deck. The stack vents the smoke and excess heat from the combustion of the engine's fuel. The designers of the *Dauntless* allowed themselves a little creativity when building the stack. The mouth of the smokestack has been crafted in the form of a dragon's head, which appears to be breathing out the billowing smoke produced by the engine.

2. stairs to afterdeck

Two flights of wooden stairs with railings lead down to the afterdeck.

3. poop Deck

The deck itself, which is the highest point on the ship. It provides a vantage point for the command crew to oversee the operations of the ship. Unless they are involved in some other aspect of running the ship, the captain and his officers can usually be found here. The only exception is the First Mate, whose station is on the afterdeck.

4. feed pipe

Rising up out of the center of the deck is the pipe which carries hot air from the engine to the secondary balloon.

upper Decks

One level above the main deck are the secondary decks of the *Dauntless*. The roof of the fore-castle is the foredeck, located near the front of the ship just aft of the foremast. The afterdeck covers the back half of the ship and leads to the poop deck. The First Mate's station is on the afterdeck.

1. foremast

The foremast is situated just forward of the foredeck. Crewmen can gain access to the mast

and the rigging of the sails from this point.

2. foreDeck

The foredeck forms the roof of the fore-castle. Crewmembers watch for any activity in front of the ship from this deck.

3. steam Ballista

Mounted on a turret in the center of the deck is the ship's steam ballista. The ballista can be pivoted to a full 360 degrees to be fired in any direction required. The *Dauntless*' steam ballista is a four-barreled weapon, capable of firing four two-meter bolts in succession.

Steam Ballista: Damage value 32, range 5-50/200/400/800. If a *setback* ever occurs in a round in which a steam ballista has fired, the device explodes, causing damage value 27 to everyone within 10 meters.

4. stairs to main Deck

Two sets of stairs leads down to the main deck from both the foredeck and the afterdeck. There is also a wide staircase set into the afterdeck which leads down the main deck.

5. feed pipe

This pipe carries hot air to the main balloons.

6. mainmast

The mainmast is the largest mass on the ship and carries the main sails. It is situated amidships just forward of the afterdeck.

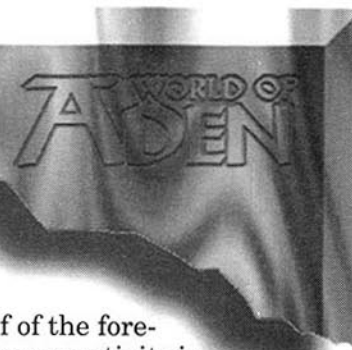
7. afterDeck

The afterdeck stretches over the aft half of the ship, and is the main assembly point for the crew members when roll is called and instructions need to be given to all members. This is also where the First Mate is stationed. He receives orders for the crew from the captain and relays them down to the main deck.

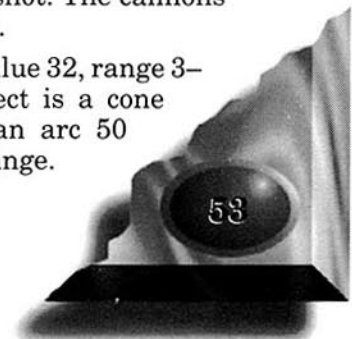
8. gunnery station

Two cannons are located on the afterdeck, one pointing to each side. These are 12-lb. cannons, which means they fire 12-lb. shot. The cannons themselves weigh much more.

12-lb. Cannon: Damage value 32, range 3-50/150/500/1000. Area of effect is a cone stretching from weapon to an arc 50 meters across at maximum range.



• three sites of interest •



9. smokestack

The smokestack passes through the afterdeck at this point. It is framed by wood panels to avoid accidental burns from the hot metal of the stack.

10. stairs to poop Deck

Two sets of stairs provide access up to the poop deck.

11. Captain's Quarters

The compartment under the poop deck is the captain's quarters. These are the most spacious quarters on the ship. Two doors in the forward wall allow entry into this room. The other three walls are pierced by two windows each, allowing the captain a variety of views from within his cabin.

12. feed pipe

The feed pipe to the secondary balloon passes through the captain's quarters. It is screened by wooden panels to prevent burns and to improve the appearance of the cabin.

main Deck

The main deck of the *Dauntless* supports two structures which house additional cannons, as well as the officers' quarters. The forward structure is the forecastle, which supports the foredeck. The aft structure is the secondary gunnery deck, which also leads back to the officers' quarters.

Set into the open deck is a large hatchway covered by a heavy wooden grating. This hatch allows light and air into the lower decks of the ship, and is also used for bringing large cargo into the ship.

1. foremast

The foremast passes through the main deck at this point. Crewmembers can climb the mast from this point, and can also climb out onto the bowsprit.

2. gunnery stations

There are six gunnery stations on the main deck. Two are located within the forecastle, one facing to port and the other to starboard. The other four cannons are located under the afterdeck, in the secondary gunnery deck.

Two of these guns face to port and two to starboard.

3. stairs to gunnery Deck

There are three sets of stairs which lead down to the gunnery deck. One is located forward within the forecastle. Two others can be found under the afterdeck, just aft of the mainmast.

4. stairs to foreDeck

Flanking the doors to the forecastle are two sets of stairs which lead up to the foredeck.

5. feed pipe

The hot-air feed pipe to the primary balloons come up through the deck just forward of the grating.

6. mainmast

The mainmast comes up through the deck aft of the grating. Crewmembers can gain access to the mast and the rigging from this point.

7. stairs to afterDeck

Two sets of stairs lead up to the afterdeck on either side of the doors opening into the secondary gunnery deck.

8. helm

The helmsman stands here holding the whipstaff, which is connected to the tiller belowdecks. The tiller in turn controls the rudder and the screw controls, allowing the helmsman to change the direction of the ship.

9. smokestack

The stack passes through the secondary gunnery deck on its way up from the engine. As on the afterdeck, the stack is framed with wooden panels for safety.

10. officers' quarters

The ship's officers are quartered here in a cluster of semi-private compartments. Two doors open onto the secondary gunnery deck, and windows line the other walls. There is also a door in the aft bulkhead that leads to the observation balcony.

11. feed pipe

The pipe carrying hot air to the secondary balloon passes through the officers' quarters and is screened by wooden panels.

• three sites of interest •



Brian Schomburg

Brian Schomburg



12. Covered Observation Balcony

Running around the stern of the ship is a narrow balcony which provides a clearer view of the sky below the shop, and also gives a view along the sides of the ship, which is helpful for determining if the ship has sustained any damage along the lower hull.

gunnery Deck

The gunnery deck is where the *Dauntless*' main battery of cannons is located. Four 12-lb. cannons are arrayed along each side of the ship, ready to blast any nocturnal that threatens the safety of Arasteen or its citizens. The aft third of this deck is taken up by the bulk of the ship's mechamagical engine.

1. Foremast

The foremast, which is anchored in place on the crew/engine deck, passes through the gunnery deck at the very front of the ship.

2. stairs to main Deck

Three stairways lead up to the main deck. The forward set heads up to the forecandle, while the aft two stairways take one up to the secondary gunnery deck.

3. gunnery stations

The eight cannons on this deck fire the main barrage when the *Dauntless* closes with a foe. The cannons abovedecks are used for follow-up fire, although their fire can be synchronized with that of the main barrage if necessary.

4. feed pipe

This is the pipe carrying heat to the main balloons. On the gunnery deck it is walled off with wooden panels as a safety measure, as the pipe can become extremely hot.

5. stairs to crew engine Deck

Located amidship are two sets of stairs leading down to the crew/engine deck.

6. mainmast

The mainmast passes through the gunnery deck in the middle of a cluster of stairways.

7. upper engine room

The top of the mechatmagical boiler passes through the gunnery deck from the decks below. Two of the four engineers charged with the running of the engine are usually stationed in this room. The upper engine room is separated from the gunnery deck by a wooden bulkhead. Two doors on either side of the wall provide admittance to the engine room.

8. mechatmagical Boiler

This is the heart of the flying ship. This contraption provides the lift necessary to raise the ship and the motive force required to move it. Two crewmembers monitor the engine constantly and are always making adjustments to the different dials and valves that sprout from the surface of the enormous machine.

9. feed pipe

The feed pipe for the secondary balloon exits the engine on this deck and begins its trip up through the decks on the way to the balloon.

10. hatch to lower engine room

A hatch in the floor of the engine opens to a ladder that allows one to climb down to the lower engine room. It is a faster way to check on the lower portion of the engine than going out to the gunnery deck to use the stairs down.

Crew engine Deck

Like all of the lower decks, the crew/engine deck is taken up by an inordinate amount of machinery — that of the mystical steam-powered engine. Located forward of the magical contraption is the crew's quarters. Also on this deck, a large pipe wends its way from the base of the engine forward through the crew's space and then turns up to head through the ceiling. This is the feed pipe to the main balloons.

1. foremast and supports

The foremast is anchored securely here by large wooden blocks which fix it to the deck and the main hull.

2. stairs to hold

Two stairways lead down into the ship's hold, one forward and one aft in the crew's quarters.

3. Crew quarters

This is a large open space that has piles of supplies scattered about. The crew does not have actual rooms; they instead find whatever space they can in this compartment to hang a hammock and store a locker for personal possessions. The piles of supplies are the overflow from the ship's hold.

4. feed pipe

This large pipe works its way from the engine, across the deck of the crew's quarters and up through the ceiling to deliver hot air to the primary balloons.

5. stairs to gunnery Deck

A set of stairs on either side of the main mast leads up to the gunnery deck.

6. mainmast

The mainmast juts through the crew's quarters just about in the center of the deck.

7. Lower engine room

A wood bulkhead separates the crew's quarters from this room, which has barely enough room to walk around the engine. Two engineers keep an eye on the engine on this deck.

8. mechatmagical Boiler

The main portion of the engine is situated on the crew/engine deck. The bulk of the machinery practically fills the engine room. A single door on the starboard side opens into the engine room from the crew's quarters.

9. hatch in ceiling to upper engine room

On the aft bulkhead of the engine room is a ladder that leads up to a hatch in the ceiling. The hatch provides access to the upper engine room for the engineers.

hold

The hold is the primary storage area for the ship. Most of the ship's supplies are stored here. The weight of the goods helps keep the *Dauntless* on even keel, so the ship does not tip too much in the wind. Below the hold, in and around the spaces above the keel, is the ship's ballast. The coarse rock and dirt are placed there to keep the keel weighted down and help the ship maintain a steady trim.

1. stairs to crew engine Deck

There are two sets of stairways along the ship's longitudinal axis, one situated forward and the other aft. They both give access to the crew's quarters above.

2. hold

Stored in the hold are all the goods and supplies required by the crew and the ship. The crew's rations and water are stored here, as are spare parts for the ship. Spare rope, sailcloth, balloon cloth, planking, nails, piping and ductwork, as well as cannon parts, cannon shot and ballista bolts are among the many requirements stacked in the bottom of the ship.

The hold is wider than it appears in the diagram, which shows only the narrowest part of the hull at the bottom due to the curvature of the sides of the ship. Materials that do not fit in the hold are stacked around the crew's quarters; usually it is supplies that are more frequently required by the crew.

3. mainmast and supports

The mainmast is anchored into the keel of the ship at this point. Large wooden blocks secured to the mast and hull help steady it.

4. mehamagical Boiler

The lowermost part of the engine fills the aft portion of the hold. There are generally no crewmen down here, as the controls and sensitive equipment are located on the two decks above. But the engineers sometimes do find themselves down here, such as when certain parts must be adjusted or certain rituals need to be performed to keep the engine running smoothly.

The *Dauntless* requires a crew of 40 to man the rigging and the 16 cannons, although it can get by with 30 if need be. These crew are in addition to the captain and his command staff.

standard crewman

AGILITY 9

Climbing 11, dodge 10, maneuver 11, melee combat 11, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 10, gunnery 10, missile combat 11

ENDURANCE 8

Resist shock 10

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 8

Perception 10, tracking 9

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 9, willpower 8

CHARISMA 6

Taunt 8

Life Points: 1-4

Equipment: Long sword, damage value STR+6/21; long bow, damage value STR+6/21, range 0-3/10/100/250, or wheel lock, damage value 19, range 3-5/10/20/50; hardboiled leather armor, TOU+4/19

(Standard Crewman (D6): DEXTERITY 3D: Dodge 3D+1, firearms 3D+1, gunnery 3D+1, maneuver 3D+2, melee combat 3D+2, missile combat 3D+2 STRENGTH 2D+2: Brawling 3D+1, climbing/jumping 3D+2, stamina 3D+1 KNOWLEDGE 2D+2: Intimidation 3D, willpower 2D+2 TECHNICAL 2D+2 MECHANICAL 2D+1 PERCEPTION 2D+1: Investigation 3D+1, search 3D, taunt 2D+2. Force Points: 1-4. Equipment: Long sword, damage value STR+2D; long bow, damage value STR+2D, or wheel lock, damage value 4D+2; hardboiled leather armor, value TOU+1D+1.)

using the Dauntless

Airships are still rare in Aden, so there are not too many around for the characters to run into. But then again, player characters are generally extraordinary characters, and so would be more inclined to encounter such a vessel.

The characters may be part of the reason the *Dauntless* is afloat — maybe they've been hired to perform a mission for the local Arasteen military commander, or for one of the Governors, or

maybe even for King Corben himself. The *Dauntless* may have been assigned to get the characters where they need to go, or to provide backup for them.

The characters could also get involved unofficially. Maybe they stumble on to the scene of a battle between the *Dauntless* and a nocturnal horde. After they lend their assistance, the captain is willing to work with them, or at least give them a lift. Maybe the *Dauntless* has been damaged and the adventure involves trying to get it afloat again before the next attack. Perhaps an innocent trip abroad the *Dauntless* leads to a harrowing adventure of survival in the wilderness; during a nocturnal attack or a violent storm, the characters get swept off the ship and find themselves somewhere in the wilds of Aden with little in the way of provisions or even weapons.

The ship involved in any of these adventure ideas doesn't even have to be the *Dauntless*. Maybe it's another

airship of the Arasteen Navy. Just change the size, quantity and/or position of the balloons and you have another ship. Maybe the characters are being held prisoner on an airship built by a corrupted in his quest for ultimate power. They could attempt to wrest control of the ship from him in order to defeat his plans and turn it over to the forces of good.

You could also use the deck plans of the *Dauntless* if you wish to run a seagoing adventure. Just remove the balloons and the mechemagical boiler, consider the masts to be full height and furled with sails, and add another mast (the mizzenmast would be located where the smokestack is) and you have a traditional Arastinian galleon. You might even leave in the steam engine. Maybe this is a new prototype galleon powered by steam and magic, making it a potentially more powerful weapon against seagoing nocturnals.



running adventures

Adventures are where all of the work comes together, and where all of the work begins. You've come up with your characters and given them their reasons for being, and the players have prepared their characters. You've given some thought to Aden and the tone of the game. Now it's time to reap the rewards of all that preparation.

An adventure is the story that the characters will experience. In the adventure the characters seek to achieve a certain goal. During the course of their attempts, they encounter a number of obstacles which they must overcome in order to succeed at their goal. The obstacles could be natural events, villains, or even locales. It is their efforts to surmount the obstacles that keep the story engaging and provide excitement and fun for the players and the gamemaster.

The framework of the adventure is prepared by the gamemaster — either from his own ideas or from a published adventure — as are certain details of the encounters. It is always good to think of the adventure you create as a framework. The reason is that the players will as often as not go off in a direction that was not planned. If you keep your adventure flexible, you will be able to shift gears and keep things moving smoothly while you deal with the unexpected turn of events.

This section presents some guidelines and ideas for setting up your adventures so that they will be interesting to the players and gamemaster, and give everyone involved some exciting experiences in *The World of Aden*.

the movie model

One of the best ways to approach a *World of Aden* adventure is to think of it in terms of film. The adventure itself is a movie, but an open-ended movie. As the adventure is played out, the actions of the characters help determine the ending. This may be the ending planned by the gamemaster, or it may be something far different.

The various elements of the film analogy are fulfilled by the gamemaster and the players, with the majority of the responsibility on the gamemaster's shoulders.

the Director

This is where you, the gamemaster, come in. It is up to you to provide direction to the adventure. You present the world to the players. They see what you want them to see. It is up to you to present the players with the proper mood and feel of the adventure and of the universe in which it occurs.

You get to choose how information is presented. You control the pace of the story: how fast it develops, when the action should slow down to evoke a mood, when the action should heat up so as to keep the players excited and involved, and so on.

The presentation of the adventure may also be enhanced by sound effects or lighting, or by the use of props. You will determine what audio or visual aids will be used to further the storyline.

the script

In the role of scriptwriter, the gamemaster determines the overall course of the adventure. What are the goals and the intermediate steps necessary to achieve them? What will happen in these scenes to keep the players interested and moving forward to the conclusion? What type of characters are necessary to move the adventure along? Gamemaster characters should be interesting and engaging in order to encourage players to roleplay their own characters. You should keep in mind the characters that your players are using and tailor the story to those characters. You want to provide a challenge to the players and the characters, but not make things impossibly difficult. You may also wish to set up situations that allow the characters to grow and develop. But above all, you and the players should have fun.

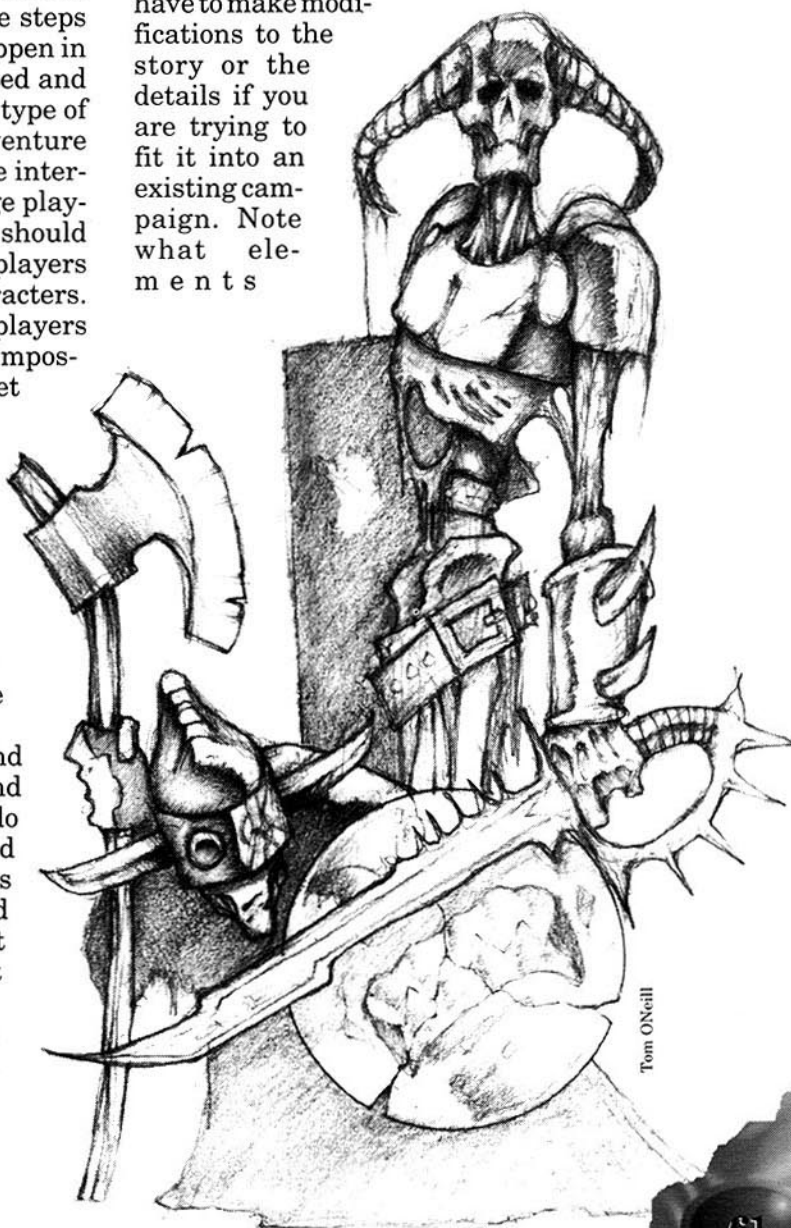
You must plan the course of the adventure, and provide the information required to let the players find their way through it. Of course, you are under no obligation to make it obvious; the players must work for their clues. On the other hand, the information shouldn't be too obscure, either.

You must also plan for side trips and tangents. Players are an inventive lot, and sooner or later the player characters will do something or go somewhere that you did not intend. You must have contingencies ready. They do not have to be fully fleshed out, but you should have some ideas that you can fall back on and develop if it becomes necessary.

The details that you work into the script will also go a long way toward evoking the feel of a real world. You are seeking to describe a world that lives and breathes. The players should not feel that their characters are just acting on a stage; they should feel that they

interacting with a world. You want to make your players care about what their characters are doing, and feel that what the characters do makes a difference in the world.

If time does not permit the creation of your own story, another alternative is to use someone else's script; that is, a published adventure. When using a published adventure, most of the work of plotting the story and creating the details is done for you. You must become familiar with the story before running it, though. Read it through and make notes. You may have to make modifications to the story or the details if you are trying to fit it into an existing campaign. Note what elements



you have changed, and add in whatever elements your version requires.

You are not restricted to published *World of Aden* adventures as your source, either. Almost any fantasy adventure can serve as a source for ideas. What you are looking for is ideas for stories, or for individual encounters. Of course, other fantasy adventures will definitely require modifications of details and story, since you will need to incorporate elements and places of the World of Aden. The storyline of an adventure can generally be moved easily from one milieu to another. That also means that you are not even restricted to other fantasy adventures. You can also lift plots from other genres. Science fiction or horror adventures could also supply interesting and different ideas. Of course, they will require a bit more work to fit them into the Aden setting. Since plots are usually transportable, you can go even farther afield and get ideas from stories you have read, or movies and television programs you have seen. Jot down interesting encounters and ideas when you see them, then try to work them into your adventure.

When the script is prepared, it is time to cast the film.

the actors

This is where the players come in. They are the stars of the film, playing the protagonists around whom the story revolves. Much of the enjoyment of a roleplaying game lies in bringing a character to life. As the director, you should encourage your players to roleplay their characters; you want them to perform. The rules and die rolls are there as guidelines for the characters' actions, providing a framework within which actions can be compared and resolved. But the heart of the game is playing a role.

The rest of the cast is filled by the gamemaster. You get to play every other character in the story — a daunting task, but not impossible. You are the villains, the antagonists, and all the extras. Strive to bring your characters to life. Give different characters distinctive personalities and particular mannerisms. This will help to distinguish your characters from one another and clue the players in as to whom they are dealing with in a particular scene.

Just as the players will try to stay in character, you should also. Keep in mind the character you are currently

portraying and what his or her purpose is in the storyline. How would this character interact with the player characters? Remember, you are not dealing with your pals Harry and Theresa, but with a battle-hardened warrior and an ice-elf mage. And you are not yourself, but the sniveling splat player whom they are questioning. For more information on creating and running distinctive characters, see Chapter Two, "Defining Characters."

the crew

Everything else necessary to the running of the game is handled by the gamemaster. From time to time, you will be required to act as propmaster, sound effects generator or lighting director, based upon which of those effects you have determined to use in your capacity as director.

As propmaster, you will prepare and distribute whatever props are required to advance the story. Usually these will be arcane scrolls, notes scrawled on scraps of paper, secret maps or whatever else might provide a clue. Actually preparing a sheet of paper with the information on it and handing it to the players at the appropriate time goes a long way toward making the world feel real.

As sound effects generator, you will want to set the mood with the appropriate sounds or music. Having a suitable musical selection playing in the background on a portable tape player can really evoke a feeling of being someplace. For instance, you might have some dramatic, fast-moving music playing while the characters are involved in a chase, or some eerie music while they are exploring a ruined temple or settlement. Listen closely to the movies you watch. Hear what kind of music is used to evoke a feeling during a particular scene. There are a wide variety of soundtrack albums available, and you can pick and choose the music you want for just the right effect.

Sound effects also serve to establish the mood of a scene, or to help stage a big scare. There are several tapes available presenting the sounds of a haunted house, from thunderstorms to wolves howling to clanking chains and eerie moans. Pick one up around Halloween and save it for year-round spooky moods.

You can also make the sounds yourself. The growl of a dog or a monster about to pounce is something just about everyone can do. Build up a repertoire of sounds and music you can throw

• Four: running adventures.



Tim Bobko



in to establish a scene. You may even wish to tape record some of your sounds and build up a library of sound effects you can use again and again.

Lighting is an often overlooked adjunct to roleplaying. No one expects you to have a series of spotlights and colored gels handy, but you don't need much to set a mood. Just dimming the lights, or turning off all but one light can make things more eerie. Remember that the mood in *The World of Aden* is sometimes horrific. One carefully placed light can make the game session feel especially creepy.

You might also pick up some colored light bulbs, in particular red, green and blue. Placing these bulbs in a fixture and turning it on for the appropriate scene can quickly establish a setting. You might also develop a lighting shorthand, so that your players can tell what the situation is just by the lighting. For instance, you could use a red bulb to signify night. Whenever the action takes place at night turn on the red bulb. Maybe the blue bulb represents a full moon when the characters are outdoors at night. Colored acetates from an art supply store can also be used in conjunction with a flashlight to establish scenes and characters. Projecting a green or blue light on your face works well to give your skin a ghastly pallor, for those times when you are portraying an undead creature or some other nocturnal.

the aden style

In order to convey the unique atmosphere of a *World of Aden* game, you need to keep a number of elements in mind when designing or preparing your story. These items serve to establish the proper mood for the game, or to reinforce the feel of the story. You, the gamemaster, should remain aware of these elements both when setting up the adventure and when actually running it. Use of these elements will help keep the players in the proper frame of mind and serve to heighten the roleplaying experience.

mood

The World of Aden is dark, brooding and filled with shadows. Things are very often unknown and sinister. It is a hard world, in which only the tough have managed to survive. Those in all walks of life come face to face with death almost every day. Nocturnals are ever present, and are a constant threat. But even though the situation is dark, it is not unrelentingly so. There is still

inspirational tales

Although the tone of Aden is dark, what allows the people of Aden to maintain their courage in the face of horror is their hope for the future. But sometimes that hope is hard to hold on to. From time to time, the people need to be reminded that the struggle is not hopeless, and that even the common man can make a difference. The victories that are achieved by the heroes of Aden serve to inspire others, especially when those heroes are just ordinary people. It shows them that anyone can make a difference.

As part of the background for your game, you can try to work in these stories, which helps set the tone for the characters, and provides examples of how they are expected to act. These tales can be related by people that the characters speak to, either by common folk telling of events in the village or by officials who are explaining a bit about their town. They can also be sung by bards, which the characters can overhear in taverns or inns.

Below is a tale representative of the type that is sung far and wide by bards. It serves as a source of hope and inspiration for all who hear it, for it shows the people that even a common person can do his part to defeat the Darkfall.

Spyre's Tale

The tale is told of the elf Spyre and the Shadowman. In his travels Spyre, an elven rogue, found himself in the village of Hammlish, in Arasteen. The village had recently been plagued by the disappearance of numerous children. An old wives' tale of the region spoke of the shadowman, a creature which lived in the dark recesses under one's bed. Spyre was asked to find one of the children by the child's father, who suspected that the shadowman was indeed responsible for his disappearance.

Spyre hid quietly in the lad's bed the next night and waited patiently. His fears were realized when an inky black shadow crawled from beneath the bed. Spyre was no warrior, and he knew that many nocturnals were not affected by ordinary weapons, but the elf had a clever mind and had set a trap of his own. As the shadowman materialized from under the bed, Spyre quickly lit three lanterns he had arrayed around the bed in a triangle. He had counted on the light of the lanterns trapping the shadow-creature, and sure enough, the nocturnal could not cross the areas of bright light.

Trapped by the brilliance, the shadowman could only thrash about and groan loudly. Spyre demanded the release of the abducted children, and after several hours of tormenting the nocturnal with more light, the creature finally relented and expelled seven children from within its shadowy presence.

The legend of Spyre began in that village, when the elf defeated that powerful nocturnal with nothing more than his wits, and struck a blow against the Darkfall.

hope, and the people have a moral strength that has helped them to survive a decade of horror. Your game should be leavened with lighter scenes so that it does not become overpoweringly oppressive.

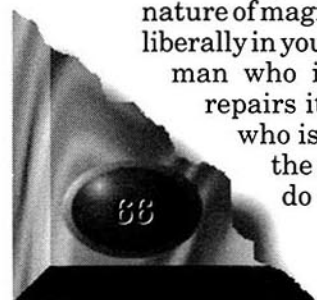
More details on the mood of *The World of Aden* are given in Chapter One, "Setting the Tone."

HORROR

Besides the darkness of the human soul, there are creatures and beings who literally have been born of the darkness. Not only do humanoid characters in this world have to put up with the dark desires and longings of their own kind, but

they are also subject to the depredations of supernatural creatures, whose only desire is to ravage the world for their own dark designs.

In addition to the trappings of the fantasy genre, then, you should also keep the conventions of horror films firmly in mind. The two genres share many characteristics, but the real twists come from combining the two, so that your players don't expect what comes at them. For instance, one of the venerable old institutions of horror films is the haunted house. But instead of it being an obvious location, like an old ruin, what if, during the course of the adventure, the charac-



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ters become trapped in a temple or an inn that is haunted by some nocturnal.

Other things, such as the gradual build-up of horrific elements leading to the grand appearance of the main evil, or the gradual whittling down of the team ("I'll go check the stables. Wait here."), can be combined with the conventions of the heroic fantasy story for excellent effect.

The World of Aden also provides you with a varied cast of monsters to use in your horror stories. They range from conventional fantasy creatures like ogres, trolls, and dragons, to the more *outré* demons and nocturnals with their own unique powers. But whatever type of monster they are, they have been brought into the world to serve the Darkfall, and may have their own distinct powers, personalities and goals.

Horror is a major part of the world, so try to keep it in mind when setting up storylines, and when describing scenes and encounters.

magic

Horror is not the only genre element that flavors the *World of Aden*. Magic is widespread and is fully accepted. It has been used for centuries. Up until the last couple of centuries, it was the primary form of technology. Even with the advent of steam power and black powder, magic is still prevalent. It is so common that almost everyone knows at least some small spell or cantrip that will aid them in their work or day-to-day existence. The ordinary townsfolk use spells to clean their homes, purify their water and numerous other small tasks about their homes and farms. If they need more powerful magic, they can visit the local "hedge wizard," who is more versed in the arcane arts. If someone needs medical aid, they can visit their neighborhood healer. There are even entire groups organized around the ability to use magic. The Radiant Order, for example, is dedicated to the healing arts, and its members travel across the land to lend their assistance to those in need.

It is important to remember the ubiquitous nature of magic. Sprinkle passing references to it liberally in your descriptions. Mention the tradesman who is gesturing over his cart as he repairs its broken wheel, or the innkeeper who is sweeping out the stables without the need for a broom. These references do not have to be major ones, either.

Small, background uses of magic say a lot more about its pervasive nature in this society than do *fireball* spells and extensive rituals.

Details

Details are what make a world seem to have a life of its own. The world becomes real when details are mentioned in passing; mentions of specific things give the impression of a full-fledged world with a variety of accepted references. The passing reference implies a much larger, accepted background.

When describing an object, don't describe it generically; give it a name or a point of origin. Using a local name in a description, such as, "A group of warriors wearing the robes and colored veils of Rhanate Outriders come charging out of the door of the Weary Wayfarer Inn," suggests a much more interesting world than the bland, "A group of warriors come charging out of the door of the inn."

When the characters enter the trade shop to question the proprietor, it feels like a richer world if he is puttering about humming "The Flames of Shosa," a Vanoran battle march.

It is sometimes difficult to come up with song titles and local references at the drop of a hat, so a good idea would be to start a collection of index cards, or a series of pages in a notebook, on which you can jot down names and ideas as they occur to you. Then you just have to scan the appropriate page when you are describing a scene and pick something that seems to fit the situation.

In order to drive home the feeling that the characters exist in a fully formed world, it is often helpful to run them through scenes that are not directly tied to the adventure being run. If they travel to a different city, roleplay their arrival and the search for an inn at which to stay. Describe the city's sights, sounds and smells to the players. Let them see that there is more to the world than the events in which they have become embroiled.

Also, occasionally tell the players of events that occur independently of their characters' actions. Maybe they're in a settlement near Contrino, which is right in the middle of the dispute between Kyan and Urbana over manite mines. As the characters pursue their business, drop information about the progress of the quarrel. As they prowl through one part of the town they may hear people on the street talking about the accusations each side is making. Perhaps the shopkeeper they are talking with mentions that

some details from the world of aden

When using details to give the *World of Aden* extra depth, a lot of those items come from the various localities of Aden. Consult Chapter Two, "Nations of Aden," and Chapter Five, "Independent Settlements," in the *Aden WorldBook* for ideas about local references. As a quick reference, here are some standard conventions of the world which you can add into your descriptions to evoke the proper feel.

- Some of the best iron armor and weapons come from Mekanus, the capital of Urbana.
- Urbana was originally called Columbey before Lord Urbane came to power (this can be used to establish a character's background, or what his true feelings and affiliations are).
- The layered steel weapons from Vanora are of excellent quality and twice as strong as weapons made elsewhere.
- Arasteen smiths also produce excellent weapons.
- Timber from the Crystal Forest in northern Arasteen (known as crystal wood) is exceptionally strong and resilient. Bows made from the wood are called crystal bows, and are some of the deadliest non-magical weapons in Aden. They cannot be exported to other nations by law.
- Carraway is a theocracy, and is governed by the Church of All Saints. The people of Carraway identify with a particular saint as their inspiration.
- Urbana is the home of most mechamagic and mechanical contraptions.
- Ionara in the Ice Wastes is an abundant supplier of diamonds.
- The people of Kyan rely on insects (giant and otherwise) in much of their everyday life.
- Most Vanorans follow the Way of the Ten Beasts.
- The Promise of Hospitality is a binding tradition in Yzeem.

the Home Guard is gathering its forces to show the Urbanans a thing or two (he's got a brother in the militia who keeps him informed). Give the impression of a much vaster world that is growing and developing around the characters and their local concerns.

Who knows, at some point they may even become involved in the background developments, as the head of the local Home Guard hires them to reconnoiter the movements of Urbanan troops near the mines (as outsiders they will attract less attention than if the Home Guard were nosing around). Having the world develop independently, and keeping the characters aware of it, is also a great way to foreshadow and/or introduce upcoming adventures. Maybe the players will even be the ones who make the decision to get involved in one of the background stories, leaving it up to you to work out the details for an upcoming adventure.

uncertainty

The unknown pervades the World of Aden. Nocturnals can be found anywhere. This is an element that makes the lives of its inhabitants an unsure thing at best. And it is this state of affairs that causes them to be extremely suspicious of strangers.

This doubt also helps you to keep the players off balance. They never know exactly what it is they are looking for, or what may be lurking around the next corner. This serves to keep the level of tension up, making for a more exciting game. It also serves to intrigue the players and keep their interest up. They want to know what is going on. They will keep moving forward as they seek to unravel the tangled threads of the mystery presented to them.

In light of this, you should strive to present adventures that are not straightforward, but that take full advantage of the principle of uncer-

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tainty. However, the adventure should *appear* straightforward at first.

Have the characters discover that there is a mystery once they become involved in the adventure. Let them discover it through their own actions. Present enough of the "hook" to keep the players following your lead, and let them discover the plot twists as they go along.

This incertitude can also be used to trick the players into tripping themselves up. Set up a few adventures where the characters become involved with someone who misleads them. After a few games the players — in the roles of their characters — will begin to realize that the clients who hire them are lying or otherwise deceiving them. After they achieve this mindset of uncertainty and cynicism, send them on a straightforward adventure. Then watch as the players attempt to uncover the (nonexistent) hidden motives of their contact. The honest patron throws them for a loop, since they are expecting to be lied to.

The uncertainty factor also applies to the various aspects of an adventure. Its most basic use is the adventure that turns out not to be what it seemed originally. But uncertainty can be used with the different elements that make up the adventure. For example, the character creation system provides for monsters with a wide variety of powers and weaknesses. This allows you to modify these antagonists to fit the story and to keep the players on their toes. They can never be certain what abilities the creature they are facing might possess. Just because the characters have faced a cackler or gremlin before doesn't mean that they are prepared for the one currently standing before them.

running aden adventures

As gamemaster, you have perhaps the most difficult task in playing the game: you must make the game fun for both your players and yourself. Approaching your adventure as if it were a movie lets you better understand how the different parts of running a game mesh together to form an all-encompassing whole.

Applying the proper style to that whole gives your game the distinctive feel that makes it come alive. Preserving

that feel is your next job.

As the director, you want your players to get into their roles and experience the world you have created for them. So you must encourage roleplaying. When the players become involved in playing their roles the game becomes more fun for everyone. It also provides greater opportunities for character development.

In addition to achieving the goal of the adventure, players should be encouraged to consider their characters' actions and how they affect the character. Does the character remain unaffected by events around him or by his or her actions during the adventure? Has the character's perception of the world or of his own life changed because of the events that have occurred? Many times these will be conscious decisions. At other times, players may be surprised to discover just how much their characters have changed. Just as some novelists claim that their characters decide the course of the story, your players may find that their characters have minds of their own.

It is this exploration of the characters, and the opportunity for players to become a character totally unlike themselves, that make roleplaying a fun pursuit and a challenging one. You can further the fun and challenge by promoting that roleplaying.

staying in character

The easiest way to promote roleplaying is to keep the players in character. There is always a tendency for players to slip out of character, telling jokes or discussing the day's events among one another. While this has its place — gaming is, after all, a social function — it tends to be distracting to the adventure, and should be reserved for before or after the game, or during agreed-upon breaks. Keeping the players in character keeps them focused on the adventure.

One of the ways to do this is to use your own characters. Gamemaster characters can be a good tool for keeping the players' attention without being too heavy-handed. Talk to the players in character, and wait for them to respond in character. If they don't, have the gamemaster character repeat his request, until the player gets the message. Have your characters challenge the players. An informant dealing with a player character who seems indecisive might tell him, "I thought I had found a mighty warrior who

would not abandon a noble cause." Try to get the players to respond by saying, "I do this" or "I do that," not "My character does this."

Another method for keeping players in character is to set up situations that are best resolved by roleplaying, not dice rolling. It is better to have players try to talk their way through something than to have them fight it out. Some characters faced with a couple of large sentries might do better to try and *con* them or *persuade* them or *intimidate* them rather than get involved in a swordfight or a brawl. When resolving a *con*, *persuasion*, *intimidation* or other such attempt, make the players roleplay it. Skills and attributes are there to serve as guidelines, or to be used for quick and dirty resolutions. It is more fulfilling to have the players think about their actions and play them through. Help the players to roleplay the encounter by playing the sentries as real characters.

Yet another way to keep the players in character is to make the world feel real. Get the characters involved in situations that are not purely action, or directly related to the case they are working on. Let them experience the world around them. Pepper your descriptions with slices of life. Keep the background alive. Describe the traders hawking their wares as the characters walk through the streets, or present a colorful description of the brigands who are lounging outside the marketplace that the characters are walking past. Etch a sharp portrait of the denizens of the tavern next to the inn at which the characters are rooming.

The key to presenting memorable depictions is the use of detail. Details bring a description to life, raising it above a run-of-the-mill generic listing of elements. See the section on "Details," above.

failure and its consequences

There are times when even the best-laid schemes go awry. It is those times that build character — assuming they don't kill you. There is a fine line to walk when adjudicating failure. In order to give a story meaning, players must feel that their characters are in jeopardy when involved in an adventure. There is no fun and no challenge if the players know that their characters cannot die. On the other hand, there is no more adventure if all the protagonists are eliminated by a stroke of bad luck early on in the story.

Tim Bobko



• four: running adventures •

A WORLD OF
ADEN

As gamemaster, you must walk that fine line. When planning encounters for your story, you must keep in mind the strengths and weaknesses of your players' characters. You want to pose encounters that will challenge the characters, yet not be impossible to overcome. There should always be a chance of failure, although the odds of it occurring can be modified if required by the storyline. Changing the difficulty numbers as the situation changes is one way to modify the players' chances. Another is to fudge the die rolls. As the gamemaster, the final call is yours. Judge the results by how the players perform.

If a player roleplays a situation well, but the result of the dice goes against him, feel free to modify the result. One way is to explain away the result. "Uh-oh. The shanker's vicious swipe catches you square in the side. Its sharp claws would've ripped your ribcage open if they hadn't been deflected by the edge of your breast plate." Another is to simply change the result to something more suitable. It is strongly suggested that you make your die rolls in secret.

Keep the gamemaster screen in front of you and roll the dice behind the screen. You don't want to let on that you are cutting the players any slack. Also, get in the habit of just rolling the dice every once in a while for no particular reason. This will keep the players on their toes, and will disguise those rolls that really mean something. It is sometimes worthwhile (and fun — at least for you) to look at the dice you've just rolled, cluck your tongue ominously, and then continue with the game. The players will be on edge expecting something to happen.

There are times, however, when failure is entirely justified. If the players are acting foolishly, such as charging into a dangerous situation without a plan or without taking any precautions, let the dice fall where they may. The surviving characters will quickly learn not to be so hasty or foolish in the future. You are under no obligation to make it easy for rash characters.

In addition, failure may be justified by the storyline. If the time is dramatically suitable for one or more characters to fail, you may even want to modify the die rolls against the players' favor. Keep in mind that failure does not necessarily mean death. It could just cause a major setback to the players' plans, or place them in a situation that endangers them further.

The failure of one or more characters could even lead to new adventures, or propel the characters into a continuing campaign. Perhaps the characters were hired to protect a mechamage, but failed to do so adequately. Maybe it is the mage who dies. In many instances the heroes will continue to pursue the culprit and in order to avenge their charge's death and deliver justice to the perpetrators. Sometimes this is due to the characters' sense of honor or duty. Other times it is a way for them to redeem themselves. The reason depends on the characters and the players portraying them, but the result is a continuing story.

Other results of failure could be the capture of one or more members of the party. This could lead to adventures centering on the escape attempts of the characters, or the rescue mission mounted by the remaining characters. The tension can be increased by instituting a time limit. Perhaps the characters have been captured by a cult they were investigating, and are now to be sacrificed by the cult in a ritual at their next ceremony two days hence. The remaining characters have a limited time to discover the whereabouts of the cult's place of worship and free their friends.

maintaining the pace

In order to maintain a level of excitement and keep the players' interest, an adventure must move along briskly. Adventures which bog down begin to fall apart. The best way to keep a story moving along is to be prepared. Once your adventure is written and finalized, read it through again. If you are using a published adventure, read it through once or twice in order to become familiar with the storyline and the possible plot twists. The more familiar you are with the material, the more quickly you can locate information and respond to expected and unexpected turns of events.

If you are using props, have them ready. Make as many copies as you will need of handouts, and keep them in one spot so you can reach them easily. Stack the props and handouts in order so that they are easier to distribute as the adventure unfolds. Once again, be familiar with the contents of each of the handouts.

In addition to reading through the adventure to familiarize yourself with it, you should also gather together any information you will need

during the course of the game. If you know that certain weapons or spells will be used, have the information regarding them in a handy place. If you know there will be a lot of climbing, you may want to have the climbing rules handy for quick access. Gather all the pertinent rules you can think of, so they'll be easy to find. Nothing slows down an adventure as quickly as having the gamemaster paging through the rule book trying to find the relevant rule.

In addition to the rules you'll need, have all your characters ready to go. Be familiar with the major and minor characters that you'll be using. Reread their backgrounds and characteristics if necessary. This where a notebook for keeping track of gamemaster characters comes in handy (see Chapter Two, "Defining Characters"). Also gather together any maps and locations you will need to consult during the game.

Familiarizing yourself with the course of the adventure and having all the pertinent facts at your fingertips will allow you to keep the adventure moving along, even if the players go off on a tangent.

Even before you begin preparing for the game session, you must keep certain things in mind to avoid stalling the game. Avoid boring scenes. Each scene should advance the story somehow and preferably give the players something to do. Scenes which are not related directly to the storyline, such as those described earlier as a means of making the world seem real, are still a good idea, but should be kept brief enough to give the players the color and feel you are seeking without boring them. Involving the players in the descriptive scene is a way to keep their interest, also.

Sometimes transitional scenes last too long and break up the flow of the story. Trim these scenes down or take them out altogether. Use a *scene shift* to bridge the extra time. A scene shift is used in books and films to gloss over unimportant information and keep the action moving directly to the next scene. For example, if the characters are traveling from the south end of Arasteen to the north, don't roll dice for encounters all along the way, and don't roleplay the entire journey. If the journey is to be uneventful, use a scene shift to get from one point to the other. Scene shifts are also useful for glossing over dull and repetitive tasks.

Example: "Getting some answers from the complaining goresaux, you determine that the person you seek can be found in

Smoketown, the factory district of Mekanus. You and your compatriots set off to question him. Stepping out onto the street, you begin the journey through the city ...

"... Halfway down Ironshod Lane you reach the corner of Steamer Street, arriving at your destination. Crossing the street, you approach the front doors of the building."

Example: "You have been told that the rapacious you are looking for is a follower of St. Enahs, so you decide to wait outside Karstan's temple of St. Enahs in the hope that he will show up there ...

"... Ten minutes later your hunch pays off, as you spot the lizard man with the golemoid arm climbing the steps of the temple."

Another problem that serves to slow down an adventure is that of overly cautious players. Again, this is something that can frequently be avoided by careful advance planning. If your encounters are too tough for the characters, the players will tend to become cautious, not wanting to risk them. They will hang back, trying to size up the situation, and looking for the safest way to approach the confrontation. Striking that careful balance between tough encounters and cakewalks is a very important skill to develop, and will come with experience.

If your players still insist on being cautious, you will have to draw them out. As discussed earlier, roleplay the gamemaster characters in such a way as to engage the player characters or challenge them. It shouldn't take much to get their interest piqued and have them charging into things once again.

the aden adventure

By now you've got an idea of how to run an adventure and make it an interesting and challenging experience. Treating the adventure as a movie — as discussed above — allows you to structure the story in easy-to-handle units. You can then add in the appropriate elements to evoke the proper mood and present a world that feels real and engrosses both the players and their characters.

But what about the underlying structure of the story, or the focus of the

adventure? What kind of adventure do you run in the World of Aden?

how an adventure unfolds

An adventure can develop in one of three general ways. First, a simple adventure may become more complicated as it progresses. Second, the adventure may be straightforward, with no added twists or complications. Third, a complicated adventure may turn out to have a simple solution.

The most common type of adventure is the one that starts out simply, but becomes more elaborate and complicated as it progresses. This may be due to the fact that some aspect of the party's mission was hidden from them when they were first contacted. As the party delves deeper into the mystery, they discover some of the hidden information, which reveals the larger picture. Or the party may have been unaware of the wider-ranging implications of the adventure they set out on, and they become embroiled in the larger situation while in pursuit of the original objective.

For example, the party may have been approached by a cleric to retrieve a sacred icon that has been stolen. As the adventurers investigate the disappearance, they discover that the icon appears to have been stolen for the precious stones embedded in it. In pursuing the mystery further, they cannot find any leads among the thieves and brigands who normally operate in the town. At the last minute, the adventurers discover that the missing icon is actually an ancient ar-

tifact of power. It was stolen by the nocturnal minions of a powerful corrupted, who intends to use its power in order to achieve some foul goal in the service of the Darkfall. The scope of the adventure has expanded from a simple theft to a long-term plot that threatens the entire city, or perhaps even the world.

Next is the adventure that is what it appears to be. The characters become involved in a situation, do what they need to in order to resolve the situation, and succeed or fail depending on the efficacy of the efforts. For instance, some characters may become embroiled in a turf war between two cults or two criminal organizations. As it becomes necessary for them to settle the conflict, they try to mediate between the two sides, or aid one side against the other, until they end the war (or not).

The least common type of adventure, because it is more difficult to construct, is the complicated one which becomes simple. In general, you may want to start this kind of adventure by introducing the characters to two or three new situations. Present the cases gradually; don't pile them on right at the start. As the cases develop, the characters come to realize that there are connections between the various investigations. Eventually they determine that they all boil down to the same cause.

As an example, the characters are involved in tracking down a missing person. A day or two later, they



are approached to recover a missing item. That search eventually comes to involve theft, murder and nocturnals. As they seek to unravel the chain of events, the characters finally discover that all of the additional events were arranged by the person they were originally looking for, as that person has become corrupted and does not want to be found. All of the other aspects of the adventure were red herrings, or red herrings that went out of control.

When creating this kind of adventure, it is best to determine what end result you want, then backtrack from there in order to set up the various diversions that will be required to make an interesting adventure. In addition, if you plan to run this type of adventure you should lay the groundwork early. Work in additional (usually simpler) subplots around the main storyline of earlier adventures, so as to get your players used to the idea that they can pursue multiple goals at one time. This way, the players will not become suspicious when you suddenly have them pursuing two or three objectives at the same time. It will be something they've experienced before and therefore will help to disguise the fact that the adventures are related.

CONCURRENT ADVENTURES

In addition to setting up the players for a complicated-to-simple adventure somewhere down the line, concurrent adventures can be interesting to run in their own right. In this case, the characters can be involved in more than one pursuit at a time; but unlike the secondary plots mentioned above, these would all be full-fledged adventures. Each adventure can have its own storyline, independent of the others, but it becomes more fun for the players if you have elements that are common to all of the stories. There may be one or more gamemaster characters who keep crossing their paths, such as the street urchin who seems to be all over town, or the Sanguine Monk who always seems to be dogging their trail.

Each of the various stories can be structured in a different fashion, so it would be possible to have one of each of the adventure types described above running concurrently. You might even have one or more of the stories end up related to each other.

BASIC PLOTS

Once you've determined how you want your story to unfold, you need to decide just what it is all about. Some basic ideas for adventures are presented below. Remember to include elements that will boast the flavor and feel you want to evoke for a *World of Aden* adventure.

CLEAR OUT NOCTURNALS

This is one of the basic adventure types for an Aden campaign. The nocturnals are everywhere. The goal of most Adenites is to defeat them and eliminate them totally. The characters could run across a village beset by nocturnal attacks, and join in the defense to remove the nocturnal threat for good. The characters' party may also be the ones beset by nocturnals. Maybe they have been ambushed. This is a straightforward combat adventure, where the fight is the goal. There could also be some intricacy to the adventure, as the characters need to come up with some tactics that will help them get out of a tight spot, especially if they are seriously outnumbered.

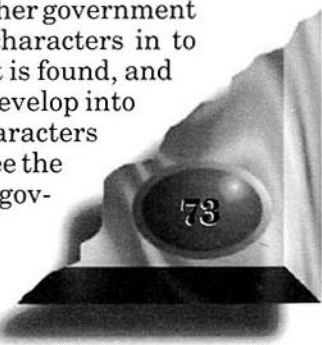
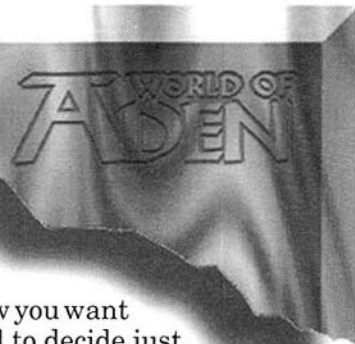
Any of the adventure types described below could also end up as an adventure of this type, if the characters have to clear out a nest of nocturnals to achieve the goal of the adventure.

FIND SOMEONE

The party must find a missing character. Perhaps they have been requested by a friend or an official to find someone who has recently disappeared. Maybe a patron wants to find someone he knew many years ago in order to get reacquainted or to deliver something (like an inheritance or a reward) to the person.

It may also be that a friend or acquaintance of one of the player characters has gone missing, and the characters decide that they need to find the person. It could also be that the missing person was kidnapped and must be rescued.

This could also be a rescue mission. Maybe a high-placed official is disillusioned with the direction his country is taking and wishes to leave. Unfortunately for him, his government feels he is too important to be let go. Another government or organization may send the characters in to help him escape. Once the target is found, and the escape succeeds, this could develop into an adventure in which the characters must protect someone, as they flee the pursuing forces of the target's government.





Tim Bobko

protect someone

In this storyline, the character or characters are hired as a bodyguard for someone. Perhaps she is a merchant doing business in an unsavory neighborhood, or is traveling on board a thunder train to another country. Or maybe he has received death threats, or suspects he has been targeted by brigands for death or abduction. The characters might be hired to guard a caravan making its way between cities.

The characters might also be engaged by one person to guard another. Perhaps a father wants his daughter guarded as she travels to the nearby city. This could be complicated by the fact that the daughter does not want to be guarded, and is constantly ignoring the characters' instructions or trying to slip away from them.

find something

In this type of story, a patron needs a rare and/or valuable object recovered. It may have been stolen or lost. Worse, it could have been lost in the wilderness between cities. Maybe it currently resides in a wizard's house or a temple or a government building. The something does not even have to be an object; perhaps it is information.

You can also add a twist to this sort of adventure. In keeping with the principle of uncertainty described earlier, the patron is not being forthright about the circumstances of the case. The object she wants recovered does not even belong to her. In recovering the object for the client, the characters are unknowingly stealing for her. This can lead to all sorts of complications, as the characters may become wanted by the local officials and then need to get the item back from the patron to clear their names.

This could also be an espionage adventure. What is being sought is information. The characters are hired by a mage who wants some of the magical secrets of a competitor or a rival, and must breach a wizard's defenses in order to retrieve his spell books or notebooks. They may also be sent by a government seeking to uncover secret research or new mechemagic developed by another country.

Another goal of this sort of adventure could be to seek knowledge about the Darkfall, so as to combat it or drive it out. Once again the characters are sent to retrieve some information. Or maybe the characters have been embroiled in

another type of adventure, but along the way they discover that such information exists. It suddenly becomes an adventure to find something (the quest for knowledge may be added to the original adventure goal, also — see "How an Adventure Unfolds" and "Concurrent Adventures" above).

An adventure of this type could also be a straightforward pursuit based on pure greed. The characters have heard about a lost treasure and are out to get it. Or it could be more noble: the characters are seeking the treasure to help out someone who needs it or what it can buy.

redemption

In the course of an adventure, minions of the Darkfall may attempt to corrupt the party, turning them to the Darkfall. Maybe a corrupted offers them power or some other object of their desire if they join him. This could be the thrust of the entire adventure, or it could occur at the end of a prior adventure, as the villain tries to tempt the characters so that he can escape unscathed. This would lay the groundwork for the redemption adventure to follow.

Maybe it's a set-up. What they think they need to destroy is actually an innocent village, but they've been led to believe otherwise, having been manipulated into their actions by nocturnals or corrupted. In trying to do good, they instead do something horrible. From now on they are outcasts.

If the characters fall for the temptation and then realize the error of their ways, they will need to redeem themselves. That may involve hunting down the villain in order to finally dispatch him. Or it could involve having to set right the events they caused or allowed to happen. If they have been tricked into doing some horrible deed (or have done it while they were under the influence of the Darkfall), it will be very difficult to convince anyone that they are now trying to fight the Darkfall again.

This could lead to a campaign where they try to clear their names. People they meet shun them if they have heard about the incident. Perhaps they are attacked by others for what they have done. Maybe there are even some survivors of the incident who are hunting them down for vengeance. It could make for some interesting roleplaying as they try to convince a survivor that they are in fact innocent.

Bestiary the second

Many and varied creatures now thrive in Aden. But they are not only natural beasts — the Darkfall has spawned new types of creatures never seen before by the eyes of man. These monsters stalk the land, and threaten all who encounter them.

Natural creatures, too, have suffered the effects of the Darkfall, as many once-normal animals have been warped into horrible forms and become ravening beasts. Even sentient beings are not immune to the Darkfall's power, and have been transmuted into fearsome creatures. Heroes who travel across Aden are almost certain to run into some monster or other, and should be prepared to face the unknown, for the chances are good that whatever *thing* crosses their path will not be something familiar.

The "Bestiary" chapter of *The World of Aden* presented a few of the creatures that might be encountered in Aden. Described below are a number of additional creatures that may be found haunting the byways of the land. While some of these creatures may seem familiar to players of *Thunderscape*, remember that the Darkfall manifests itself in many different ways. What seems familiar may instead turn out to be a ghastly surprise.

As in the "Bestiary," the creatures listed here are marked with a number of skull symbols to denote their level of intelligence and susceptibility to the Darkfall. One skull indicates a simple beast, which cannot become a nocturnal, although it may be under the control of one. An entry marked with two skulls describes a sentient species, the members of which may become corrupted. Those creatures distinguished with three skulls are pure nocturnals, begotten of the Darkfall.

Dark Dwarves



Since the onslaught of the Darkfall, many members of the sentient species have been corrupted by the enticements of the dark power it offers. Some of the more obviously corrupted are the dwarves. This is not to say that dwarves are more susceptible to the lure of the Darkfall. Dark dwarves — as those dwarves who have become corrupted are known — leave their mountain homes to spread as much hatred and fear as they can. As even those dwarves who have moved closer to the surface of the world are secretive, and have little to do with the surface-dwellers, it is the dark dwarves who rampage across the land that most people encounter, giving the impression that the dwarves are more easily corrupted.

index to creatures

Budding naturalists of Aden may at times wish to consult their bestiariums to read up on a creature that catches their fancy, or players may just want to get a leg up on the competition. Even gamemasters may need to look up a creature in a hurry. To aid all these seekers of knowledge, we have compiled this index to the creatures that are currently known to inhabit the World of Aden.

This index covers *The World of Aden* WorldBook and *Campaign Chronicles* (this volume). Page numbers with the prefix "AD" can be found in *The World of Aden*, while numbers without a prefix refer to pages in this book.

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Dark dwarves are typically heavily armored and wield axes.

standard Dark Dwarf

AGILITY 8

Dodge 10, melee combat 10, melee parry 10, stealth 11, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 9

ENDURANCE 12

Resist shock 13

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 12

INTELLECT 8

Perception 10, science: engineering 11, trick 11

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 11

CHARISMA 7

Taunt 9

Life Points: 1-4

Equipment: Falcon axe, damage value STR+10/21; plate and chain mail, armor value TOU+8/20

(Standard Dark Dwarf (D6): DEXTERITY

3D: Dodge 3D+1, melee combat 3D+1, melee parry 3D+1 STRENGTH 3D+2: Brawling 3D, stamina 4D+1 KNOWLEDGE 2D+2: Intimidation 3D+2 TECHNICAL 2D+2: Engineering 3D+2 MECHANICAL 2D+1 PERCEPTION 2D+2: Con



3D+2, investigation 3D+1, sneak 3D+2, taunt 3D. **Force Points:** 1-4. **Equipment:** Falcon axe, damage value STR+3D+1; plate and chain mail, armor +2D+2.)

floating Brains



The Darkfall has brought many new creatures into existence, some more fearsome than others. One of the more gruesome monsters that has emerged is the floating brain. No one knows exactly what these creatures are, or where they come from. It is conjectured that they are actually the minds of long-dead mages whose wills were so strong that they refused to go when death called. Whether they are the remains of wizards or not, they are indeed creatures of magic, and a grave threat to living mages.

Floating brains are aptly named, as that is the appearance they present. Hanging from the underside of the

“brain” itself are a number of thin tendrils. The floating brain uses the tendrils to attack and grapple its victim. Two thicker tentacles extend from either side of the brain, and end in large grasping pincers.

The threat to living wizards lies in the floating brain’s means of sustenance. A floating brain is attracted to magical ability, and will attempt to attack a character who has such ability in order to drain it. The brain will continue to drain magical ability as long as it can remain attached to the victim, until the victim dies from the drain.

standard floating Brain

AGILITY 9

Dodge 11, flight 10, maneuver 10, stealth 12, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 9

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 8

INTELLECT 10

Perception 11

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 11, willpower 11

CHARISMA 5**Life Points:** 1-2**Natural Tools:** Pincers, damage value STR+3/12; tentacles, damage value STR+2/11

Roleplaying Notes: The floating brain possesses the Magic Drain ability, which allows it to drain Attribute points from its victim. The Attribute affected is whichever Attribute the target's magic skill is based on. For instance, if a victim has the *apportation* skill, then the brain would target the victim's Intellect. If the victim has more than one magic skill, the brain may choose which Attribute it will drain.

To perform the Magic Drain, the brain must first grab hold of the victim with its cluster of tentacles. It does so by making a successful tentacle attack. If the attack succeeds, read the damage from the Success Chart normally, but also compare the result points to the General Success column. A Solid success or better means that the floating brain has grabbed the victim with its tentacles.

Once the victim is being held by the creature's tentacles the brain may then attack with its pincers in order to drain the Attribute. Read the result points of a successful pincer attack on the Damage column and on the General Success column. The victim takes the damage from the attack and for every success level the brain achieved, it may drain one Attribute point. As long as the brain can hold onto the victim with its tentacles, it can continue to attack and drain Attributes each round. If a victim's Attribute ever reaches zero, the victim dies.

A grappled victim can attempt to escape from the tentacles' grasp. The victim pits his Strength against the damage value of the tentacles. If the victim's skill total exceeds that of the tentacles, he has broken free of them. The floating brain must then grab the victim again before it can continue to drain his Attribute. A victim who escapes from the grasp of the brain will regain his lost Attribute points at the rate of one point per hour after the attack. If more than one Attribute was drained, each of the affected Attributes will gain one point each hour.

(Standard Floating Brain (D6): DEXTERITY 3D: Dodge 3D+2, flight 3D+1, maneuver 3D+1 **STRENGTH 3D:** Brawling 3D+2 **KNOWLEDGE 3D+1:** Intimidation 3D+2, willpower 3D+2 **TECHNICAL 3D+1 MECHANICAL 2D+2 PERCEPTION 2D:** Investigation

3D+2, sneak 4D. **Force****Points:** 1-2. **Natural****Tools:** Pincers, damage value

STR+1D; tentacles, damage value STR+2.)

gargoyles



Gargoyles are nocturnals that have been created from the stone carvings that adorn castles and towers. The coming of the Darkfall has imbued these sculptures with life, and they now swarm about their former resting places, waiting for the night. When darkness falls, they take to the air and search for unwary citizens and travelers to swoop down upon and attack with their heavy stone fists.

standard gargoyle

AGILITY 9

Climbing 11, dodge 10, flight 12, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 8

Thrown weapons 9

ENDURANCE 10**STRENGTH 10**

Lifting 11

TOUGHNESS 11**INTELLECT 8**

Camouflage 12, perception 11

MIND 7**CONFIDENCE 8**

Intimidation 10

CHARISMA 5**Life Points:** None

Natural Tools: Wings, speed value 10; claws, damage value STR+4/19; hide, armor value TOU+8/19

(Standard Gargoyle (D6): DEXTERITY 3D: Dodge 3D+1, flight 4D, thrown weapons 3D **STRENGTH 3D+1:** Brawling 3D+2, lifting 3D+2 **KNOWLEDGE 2D+2:** Intimidation 3D+1 **TECHNICAL 2D+2 MECHANICAL 2D+1 PERCEPTION 2D+1:** Hide 4D, investigation 3D+2. **Force Points:** None. **Natural Tools:** Wings; claws, damage value STR+1D+1; hide, armor value +2D+2.)

mantis warriors



Mantis warriors originated along the shores of the Ocean of Serenity in southeastern Aden. They still seem to be concentrated there, but some mantis warriors have been spotted as far north as the Sundered Desert and Carraway, or as far west as Kyan,

These creatures are a weird amalgam of insect parts. They give the appearance of being giant praying mantises, with large hooked arms giving them a vicious attack. Their powerful legs propel them along at great speeds. The mantis warrior is also armed with a large scorpion-like tail that bears a poisonous stinger.

standard mantis warrior

AGILITY 9

Unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 10

MIND 10

CONFIDENCE 8

CHARISMA 9

Charm 10, persuasion 10

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+3/10; stinger, damage value STR+5/14 (plus poison damage).

Roleplaying Notes: Whenever a mantis warrior achieves a "Wnd" result or better in an *unarmed combat* attack with its stinger, it injects poison into its victim. The mantis warrior's poison reduces a victim's Agility and Dexterity by -1 and causes

damage value 18 every 12 rounds until the victim dies or is successfully treated.

(Standard Mantis Warrior (D6): **DEXTERITY** 3D **STRENGTH** 2D+2: Brawling 3D+2 **KNOWLEDGE** 3D+1 **TECHNICAL** 3D+1 **MECHANICAL** 3D+1 **PERCEPTION** 3D: Charm 3D+1, persuasion 3D+1. **Force Points:** None. **Natural Tools:** Claws, damage value STR+1D; stinger, damage value STR+1D+2.)

shadow cats



Shadow cats were once mere beasts native to Aden. These simple mountain cats have become more cunning, aggressive and powerful due to the influence of the Darkfall. Their dark grey coloration also make them very difficult to spot, and most attacks by shadow cats happen before the victim is ever aware of the imminent threat.

standard shadow cat

AGILITY 10

Dodge 11, long jumping 12, maneuver 11, running 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 13

DEXTERITY 6

ENDURANCE 12

Resist shock 14

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 13 (12)

INTELLECT 6

Perception 11, tracking 10

MIND 4

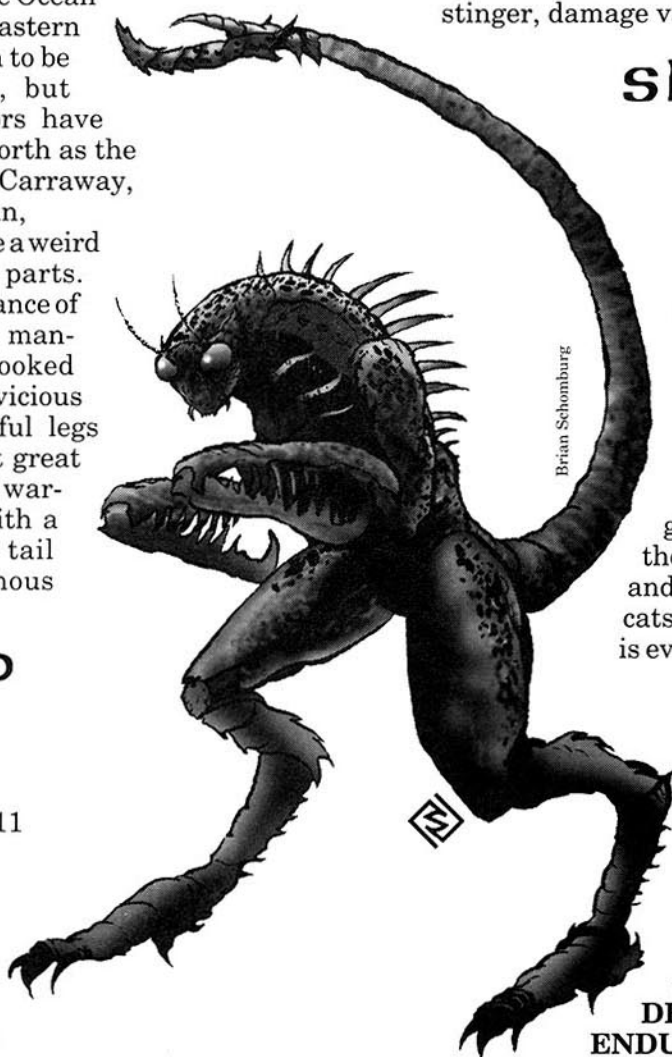
CONFIDENCE 6

Intimidation 12, willpower 12

CHARISMA 4

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Fur, armor value TOU+1/13;



Brian Schomburg



claws, damage value STR+4/16; teeth, damage value STR+3/15

Roleplaying Notes: Their dark grey coloration and stealthy nature make shadow cats very difficult to notice when they are on the prowl. An attacking shadow cat always has initiative in the round it attacks.

(Standard Shadow Cat (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2: Dodge 3D+2, maneuver 3D+2, running 4D **STRENGTH 4D:** Brawling 4D+1, climbing/jumping 4D, stamina 4D+2 **KNOWLEDGE 2D:** Intimidation 4D, willpower 4D **TECHNICAL 2D MECHANICAL 1D+1 PERCEPTION 2D+1:** Investigation 3D+2, search 3D+1. **Force Points:** None. **Natural Tools:** Fur, armor value +1; claws, damage value STR+1D+1; teeth, damage value STR+1D.)

skeletal warriors



The Darkfall is indiscriminate in its threat, and no one is immune to the effects of this unknown power. Even the greatest of heroes may have a weakness that can be exploited by the evil force. Sometimes it seems that the Darkfall seeks out heroes in particular, as if it were aware, and realized the threat that their hope-inspiring exploits posed to its power. If a hero can be corrupted, it is that much more of a victory for the darkness.

Such is the plight of skeletal warriors. They are not mere skeletons returned from the grave through the dark artifices of that grim power. Skeletal warriors are the reanimated remains of Knights of the Radiant Order. Those knights who died with doubt in their hearts have left a way in for the darkness, and now they serve it for eternity.

Skeletal warriors still wear the armor and livery of the Radiant Order. The uniform is a white tunic emblazoned with the symbol of the lighthouse. White cloths are worn wrapped around the forearms, as if they were bandages. Skeletal warriors carry the weapons that they died with.

standard skeletal warrior

AGILITY 9

Dodge 10, melee combat 11, melee parry 10, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 7

Fire combat 9, gunnery 9, missile weapons 9

ENDURANCE 10

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 4

Perception 7, trick 7

MIND 4

CONFIDENCE 10

CHARISMA 2

Life Points: None

Equipment: Long sword, damage value STR+6/21; plate and chain mail, armor value TOU+8/23; medium shield (*melee parry* +2)

(Standard Skeletal Warrior (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2: Dodge 3D+1, firearms 3D, gunnery 3D, melee combat 3D+2, melee parry 3D+1, missile weapons 3D **STRENGTH 3D+1:** Brawling 4D **KNOWLEDGE 1D+1 TECHNICAL 1D+1 PERCEPTION 2D:** Con 2D+1, investigation 2D+1. **Force Points:** None. **Equipment:** Long sword, damage value STR+2D; plate and chain mail, armor value +2D+2; medium shield, *melee parry* +2.)

steam golems



The sentinels of Urbana and the men o' war of Burcham's Pass are not the only mechanical contraptions clanking and puffing their way across the soil of Aden. Mechamages across the land have bent their talents to the construction of similar steam-powered magical constructs. Some have even succeeded. The golems that have been constructed are used as guardians, builders and even transportation. With the coming of the Darkfall, though, such pursuits are fraught with danger. Many steam golems have run amok, breaking free of the control of their masters. Now the tirelessness and great strength that made these creations useful workers makes them formidable threats.



standard steam golem

AGILITY 7

Melee combat 13, unarmed combat 16

DEXTERITY 6

Missile weapons 11

ENDURANCE 14

STRENGTH 16

TOUGHNESS 15 (25)

INTELLECT 3

Perception 11

MIND 3

CONFIDENCE 17

Intimidation 20

CHARISMA 3

Life Points: 1-3

Equipment: Great sword, damage value STR+9/25; plate mail, armor value TOU+10/25; steam golems may also have built-in crossbows or ballistas.

(Standard Steam Golem (D6): **DEXTERITY** 2D+1: Melee combat 4D+1, missile weapons 3D+2 **STRENGTH** 5D: Brawling 5D+1 **KNOWLEDGE** 1D: Intimidation 6D+2 **TECHNICAL** 1D **MECHANICAL** 1D **PERCEPTION** 3D+1: Investigation 3D+2. **Force Points:** 1-3. **Equipment:** Great sword, damage value STR+3D; plate mail, armor value +3D+1.)

spells

WORLD OF
ADEN

Aden is a world of magic. Magic has been around and has been used for centuries. In such a world, wizards and spells are varied and commonplace. There are spells for healing, for growing crops, for building, and in a world that grows increasingly violent, spells for combat and defense. Presented in this chapter is a selection of spells that should prove useful to adventuring sorcerers and warriors throughout the land of Aden.

In a land where magic is prevalent, the forms and uses of particular types of spells can vary widely. Every wizard and magic-using warrior can develop a spell that does what he wants it to in a number of different ways, depending on which magical skills and arcane knowledges he has learned. The spells in this chapter are variations of some of the more common ones in Aden, and should be familiar to players of *Thunderscape* and *Entomorph: Plague of the Darkfall*. Those spells marked with an asterisk (*) are derived from those found in *Thunderscape*, and those spells marked with a dagger (†) are derived from those found in *Entomorph: Plague of the Darkfall*.

If you wish, you can modify them even further to suit your needs and your campaign. Just refer to Chapter Six of *MasterBook*, "Creating and Using Special Effects," for more information on formulating and modifying spells, and Chapter Six, "Sorcery," in *The World of Aden* for a rundown of the magical skills and arcane knowledges of Aden and how they are used.

magic in aden

Remember that magic in *The World of Aden* is handled a bit differently than in the basic *MasterBook* rules. The mage must have the appropriate magic skill *and* arcane knowledge in order to cast a spell. After the skill total is generated, the arcane knowledge adds are added in. If the total exceeds the difficulty number, the spell was successful. Then, unlike the basic rules, the positive result points are added to the spell's effect value.

organization of the spells

The following spells are presented in the standard format for *MasterBook* spells. After the name of the spell are listed the relevant stats. First is the "Skill" necessary to cast the spell, followed by the "Arcane Knowledge" the sorcerer must also know for the spell.

Next is the "Difficulty Number," which is the number the mage must equal or exceed with his skill total and arcane knowledge adds. Following that is the "Feedback Value," for determining what effect casting the spell has had on the mage.

The "Effect Value" is the measure of the spell's effectiveness, which is used to determine damage or some other result, depending on the spell. The "Range" is the distance to which the spell can have an effect, given as a value and the meter conversion from the Value Chart. After the range is the "Speed" value, which is usually equal to the range. This insures that the spell reaches the target immediately. If the speed is less than the range, you can determine how long it takes to reach the target by subtracting the speed from the range, and reading the difference on the Value Chart in seconds.

The "Duration" is the value of how long the spell lasts once cast, and is followed by the time conversion in parentheses. In the case of spells that are charged into objects or people, the duration does not begin until the spell is released. The "Cast Time" is how long it takes to complete the spell, again as a value and a time conversion. Next comes the list of "Modifiers," if there are any for the spell.

Finally comes the description of the spell, which explains the effects of the spell and how it is cast, as well as how the modifiers affect it.

acid Bolt*†

Skill: *Conjuration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Water*

Difficulty Number: 15

Feedback: 14

Effect Value: 19

Range: 8 (40 meters)

Speed: 8

Duration: 0 (one second)

Cast Time: 4 (six seconds)

Modifiers:

Gestures: The caster licks his fingers and flicks them toward the target

When this spell is cast, the caster shoots a burst of pure acid from his fingertips. The burst burns whatever it touches, except for creatures or items which are resistant to acid.

To cast the spell, the mage licks the tips of the fingers of both hands, then flings them toward the target, releasing the spray of acid from his fingertips.

When casting *acid bolt*, the mage must make a *thrown weapons* or *Dexterity* roll to hit with the stream of acid, as the spell does not have an apportation element.

The effect value of the spell is mea-

index to spells

For the harried mage or spellcaster who needs access to his spells in a hurry, or the character who wants to know what sorcery is available to learn and would like to look it up, here is an index to the spells currently available to characters in *The World of Aden*. Page numbers with the prefix "AD" can be found in the WorldBook, while numbers without a prefix refer to pages in this book.

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sured against the target's Toughness (including armor) on the "Damage" column of the Success Chart.

acid rain*†

Skill: *Conjuration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Water*

Difficulty Number: 17

Feedback: 17

Effect Value: 16

Range: 6 (15 meters)

Speed: 6

Duration: 0 (one second)

Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)

Modifiers:

Area of Effect: Sphere 3 meters in diameter

Gestures: The caster licks his fingers and then outlines the shape of a sphere with her hands.

Incantation: "As it does rain, so shall it burn."

Acid rain is used to attack a number of opponents, as a cloud of acid is formed where the mage targets the spell. Anyone caught within the cloud suffers the effects of the acid, unless resistant to acid.

The caster first licks her fingers, then traces out the shape of a small round cloud with her hands while reciting the incantation.

When cast, this spell creates a spherical cloud of acid with a diameter of three meters around the target point. The effect value of the spell is the damage value of the attack, which is made against anyone within the affected area.

aid*†

Skill: *Alteration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Water*

Difficulty Number: 15

Feedback: 14

Effect Value: 18

Range: 4 (six meters)

Speed: 3 (four meters/second)

Duration: 1 (one minute, 40 seconds)

Cast Time: 5 (ten seconds)

Modifiers:

Multi-Target: 4 targets

Concentration: 10 seconds (DN 8)

Gestures: Caster pantomimes wrapping the group in bandages

Aid is used to heal a party's wounds. Its advantage is that it can heal more than one party member at a time.

The spellcaster must concentrate on the spell

while casting it, and pantomimes the act of wrapping bandages around the entire group.

To cast the spell, the user must first generate a *willpower* total against a difficulty number of 8, to represent the concentration he must put on the spell. If he fails the concentration test, he is unable to cast the spell. If he does succeed, then he can make his *alteration* roll. As a multi-target spell, when *aid* is cast the mage must state how many of the multi-targets he is using. *Aid* can be applied to one, two, three or four targets at a time.

If *aid* is successfully cast, compare the effect value to the difficulty number on the Medicine Chart (see page 73 of *MasterBook*) corresponding to the highest level of wound the victim currently is suffering. Read the result points on the "General Success" column of the Success Chart. A minimal success heals all shock and KO, and each success level above that heals one additional level of wounding. This procedure should be followed for each of the victims the caster is attempting to heal.

armor*†

Skill: *Alteration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Earth*

Difficulty Number: 15

Feedback: 13

Effect Value: 18

Range: 0 (one meter)

Speed: 0

Duration: 14 (10 minutes)

Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)

Modifiers:

Focus: On target

Concentration: 10 seconds (DN 8)

Gestures: Caster pounds on chest with both hands

Incantation: "You can do me no harm."

The *armor* spell is used to augment a character's natural Toughness. Any benefits to the target's Toughness are in addition to any armor she may be wearing.

Compare the effect value of the spell to the target's Toughness, then read the result points on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. The Push result is added to the character's Toughness for the duration of the spell. *Armor* is focused into the target, so the spell effects remain with the character.

Charm*

Skill: Alteration

Arcane Knowledge:

Folk, animal, or entity

Difficulty Number: 16

Feedback: 14

Effect Value: 22

Range: 0 (touch)

Speed: 0

Duration: 18 (one hour)

Cast Time: 17 (25 minutes)

Modifiers:

Focus: On target

Charges: 2 (into target's mind)

Gestures: Place open hands to side, then pretend to pat another person's head

Incantation: "I am your friend. Help me."

Charm takes control of a person's mind, allowing him or her to be controlled by the caster. The charmed target will do whatever the caster tells him for the next hour, as long as it is not self-destructive. Due to the long cast time, *charm* is a charged spell. The caster impresses it into his own mind. During the casting of the spell, the mage holds her hands out at his sides, with the hands open and the palms exposed. Then she brings one of his hands up and forward and pantomimes patting someone on the head, while reciting the incantation "I am your friend. Help me." If the spell succeeds, two charges are embedded in the caster's mind.

Once the caster releases a charge, compare the spell's effect value against the target's *willpower* or Confidence skill total. If the spell is successful, the target must obey the caster's instructions, until the duration of the spell has elapsed, or until the target manages to resist a command.

Charm cannot cause a person to do something self-destructive, or totally against their nature. If the caster commands the target to perform such an action, the target can make another *willpower* or Confidence skill roll to resist the spell, this time with a +5 modifier to the skill total. For additional such commands, the target may again attempt to resist, with an additional +1 for each occurrence.

Note: This spell can be used with different arcane knowledges, the choice of which determines what kind of target the spell is effective against. Using the *folk* arcane knowledge makes it effective against intelligent beings. Creatures with a Mind of

5 or higher are regarded to be intelligent, and are classified as folk. Basing the spell on the arcane knowledge of *animal* makes the spell work on natural creatures of animal intelligence. A creature is considered to be of animal intelligence if it has a Mind value of 4 or less. Finally, if the spell is based on the *entity* arcane knowledge, it works on those creatures which are neither animal or folk. Creatures such as will o' the wisps, faeries and nocturnals are all affected by the arcane knowledge of *entity*.

The caster can choose what sort of creature the spell will have an effect on by his choice of which arcane knowledge he will use when throwing the spell. A mage with more than one of these arcane knowledges has the flexibility to target different kinds of creatures at will.

the effects of poison

Many forms of poison continue to act on the body after they are successfully introduced (either by injection or ingestion). Some poisons may also have an initial effect, such as lowering one or more Attributes. The continuing effect on the victim is in the form of successive damage rolls using the damage value of the poison. Each damage roll occurs after a fixed number of rounds, turns or minutes.

For instance, the mantis warrior's poison is injected when the creature achieves a "Wnd" result or better in an *unarmed combat* attack with its stinger. Once injected, it reduces the victim's Agility and Dexterity by -1 and causes damage value 18 every 12 rounds until the victim dies or is successfully treated (for more information on mantis warriors, see Chapter Five, "Bestiary the Second").

Cure poison*†

Skill: Alteration

Arcane Knowledge: Water

Difficulty Number: 15

Feedback: 14

Effect Value: 25

Range: 4 (six meters)

Speed: 4

Duration: 0 (one second)
Cast Time: 4 (six seconds)

This spell serves as an antidote to many different types of poison. It is particularly useful to characters who venture into areas where venomous insects and nocturnals can be found.

To cast *cure poison*, the mage just thinks about healing the target, and the spell is released.

Once *cure poison* is successfully cast, compare the effect value, minus two, to the damage value of the poison. If the effect value is higher, then the poison is neutralized and is prevented from acting any further. Then compare the effect value, minus four, to the difficulty number on the Medicine Chart (see page 73 of *MasterBook*) corresponding to the highest level of wound the victim currently is suffering, and read the result points on the "General Success" column of the Success Chart. A minimal success heals all shock and KO results. Each additional success level above that heals another level of wounding.

Dispel*

Skill: Alteration
Arcane Knowledge: Magic
Difficulty Number: 15
Feedback: 15
Effect Value: 22
Range: 0 (touch)
Speed: 0
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:

Focus: On target
Gestures: Place hands on target, then sweep them as if brushing off some dust
Incantation: "Magic go and come no more."

Dispel is used to remove the effects of magic from a person or object. It removes all magical effects as well as prevents new ones from having an effect for the duration of the spell.

The caster lays his hands on the target, then states, "Magic go and come no more," after which he flicks his hands over the target as if he were brushing something off her.

When cast, compare the effect value of *dispel* to the effect values of any spells currently in force on the target. If the effect value of *dispel* is higher than all the other spell effect values, they cease to exist, and have no further effect. If any new spell is successfully cast onto the target while *dispel* is still in force, compare the effect values. If the new spell has the greater effect value, then

dispel is eliminated. Otherwise, the new spell fails to have its effect. *Dispel* is focused into the target, so it remains effective even if the target moves away.

Fire Ball*†

Skill: Conjuration
Arcane Knowledge: Fire
Difficulty Number: 14
Feedback: 13
Effect Value: 20
Range: 8 (40 meters)
Speed: 8
Duration: 0 (one second)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:

Gestures: Shape and throw the fire ball
Incantation: "Fear the flame!" (loudly)

This spell causes a magical sphere of flame to be hurled from the caster's hands at a target, causing damage to all but those creatures impervious to fire.

The user must pretend to be forming a ball of flame in his hands while shouting out loud, "Fear the flame!" He then hurls the fire ball at the target.

The spellcaster must generate a *thrown weapons* or *Dexterity* total to hit with the fire ball, as there is no apportionment element in the spell. The damage value of a successful attack is the effect value of the spell.

Flash*†

Skill: Conjuration
Arcane Knowledge: Light
Difficulty Number: 16
Feedback: 17
Effect Value: 18
Range: 7 (20 meters)
Speed: 7
Duration: 7 (20 seconds)
Cast Time: 4 (six seconds)
Modifiers:

Gestures: Jab with two fingers, as if in target's eyes
Incantation: "Don't look!"

The *flash* spell creates a bright burst of magical light in order to briefly blind an opponent, giving the caster time to escape or press the attack.

In order to cast *flash*, the mage needs to jab two fingers into the air in the direction of the target, as if poking

the target in the eyes.
At the same time, she
must say "Don't look!"

The caster uses her *conjunction* skill total as the "to hit" roll. If the total is greater than or equal to the target's *dodge* or *Agility* total, then compare the effect value of the spell against the target's *perception* or *Intellect* and read the result points on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. Subtract the Push value from the target's skill value for the duration of the spell, or until the target leaves the range of the spell. Also read the result points on the "Taunt/Trick" column to determine the results of the target's blindness.

*haste**†

Skill: *Alteration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Folk*

Difficulty Number: 16

Feedback: 17

Effect Value: 20

Range: 0 (touch)

Speed: 0

Duration: 13 (five minutes)

Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)

Modifiers:

Focus: On target

Gestures: Give target a small shove

Incantation: "Hurry!"

This spell is used to increase the speed of the caster or another character, giving him the chance to escape or attempt to maneuver around an opponent.

The caster must lay a hand on the target and give him a small shove (if the caster is placing *haste* on himself, he must still give himself a shove) while saying, "Hurry!"

If the spell is successful, compare its effect value to the target's *movement rate, ground* and read the result points on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. Find the Push result on the Value Chart, convert it to a measure of meters, and add it to the target's *movement rate, ground* for the duration of the spell. The shock points are ignored. *Haste* can increase the target's movement rate above his MAX, and the character can then attempt to push his movement, using the new movement rate as the base difficulty number. Shock points resulting from the additional push do affect the character.

*heal instantly**†

Skill: *Alteration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Water*

Difficulty Number: 14

Feedback: 13

Effect Value: 25

Range: 5 (10 meters)

Speed: 5

Duration: 0 (one second)

Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)

Modifiers:

Gestures: Point to target

Incantation: "Feel pain no longer."

Heal instantly is used to heal the wounds of the recipient of the spell. It is a useful spell for adventuring parties.

To heal a character, the mage simply points to the victim and states, "Feel pain no longer."

If *heal instantly* is successfully cast, compare the effect value to the difficulty number on the Medicine Chart (see page 73 of *MasterBook*) corresponding to the highest level of wound the victim currently is suffering. Read the result points on the "General Success" column of the Success Chart. A minimal success heals all shock and KO, and each success level above that heals one additional level of wounding.

*ice missile**†

Skill: *Conjuration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Water*

Difficulty Number: 17

Feedback: 14

Effect Value: 16

Range: 8 (40 meters)

Speed: 8

Duration: 5 (10 seconds)

Cast Time: 4 (five seconds)

Modifiers:

Gestures: Blow into hands and then throw

Ice missile creates a serrated shard of ice which causes physical damage if it hits its target. Even creatures who are immune to the cold can be affected, as the sharp edges of the missile can rip into their flesh.

When the caster throws this spell, she must hold her hands together in front of her mouth and blow into them, as if she were cold. She then flings her hands toward the target, sending the ice missile on its way.

The mage must generate a *thrown weapons* or *Dexterity* total to hit with the ice missile. The effect value of the spell is the damage value of the attack.

Lightning Bolt*†

Skill: Alteration

Arcane Knowledge: Air

Difficulty Number: 15

Feedback: 12

Effect Value: 21

Range: 7 (20 meters)

Speed: 7

Duration: 0 (one second)

Cast Time: 4 (six seconds)

Modifiers:

Apportation: Movement only

Gestures: Rub hands together and throw one out toward target

This spell launches a deadly electrical bolt at the target of the mage's wrath. Creatures resistant to electricity take no damage from *lightning bolt*.

To throw the spell, the caster rubs the palms of both hands together, then flings the top hand out toward the target of the spell.

Since this spell has the apportation element built into it, the caster uses his *alteration* skill roll as the "to hit" roll for the attack. If he rolls higher than the target's *dodge* or Agility, then the lightning bolt hits, doing damage equal to the spell's effect value.

maelstrom*†

Skill: Apportation

Arcane Knowledge: Water

Difficulty Number: 16

Feedback: 15

Effect Value: 20

Range: 0

Speed: 0

Duration: 5 (10 seconds)

Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)

Modifiers:

Area of Effect (with shape): 3-meter diameter inverted cone

Gestures: Clap hands, then throw them up and out

Incantation: "The storm is reality!" (loudly)

This spell causes a swirling funnel of water to form around the caster. The crushing weight of the spinning waters causes damage to anyone caught in the area of effect (except for the caster), making it dangerous to friend as well as foe.

To cast the spell, the mage must concentrate on the spell the entire time he is casting it, while spinning his hands around each other. As he becomes ready to throw the spell, he must call

out, loudly, "The air itself rejects you."

The caster generates an *apportation* skill total, and needs to beat or equal the target's *dodge* or Agility in order to hit. The effect value of the spell is the damage value of the wind.

magical Barrier*†

Skill: *Conjuration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Magic*

Difficulty Number: 19

Feedback: 18

Effect Value: 22

Range: 0 (one meter)

Speed: 0

Duration: 13 (five minutes)

Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)

Modifiers:

Variable Duration: Off

Focus: On target

Gestures: Caster swings an arm wide in front of self

Incantation: "No magic shall pass!"

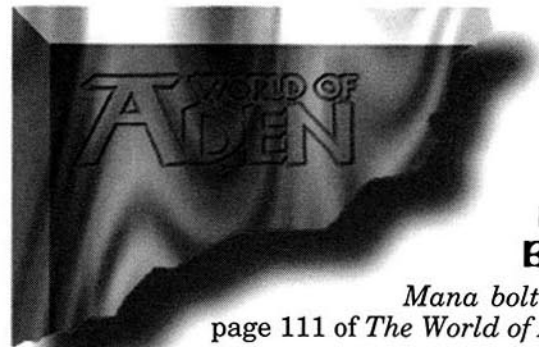
Magical barrier is intended to protect a character from spell attacks by intercepting spells cast on him or her. The caster points to or touches the target, then swings one arm wide, up and over the head and back down again on the other side while reciting, "No magic shall pass!" If successful, the spell creates a magical wall that stops other spells from affecting the protected person or thing.

When a spell is cast on a target protected by *magical barrier*, compare the effect value of the incoming spell to that of the barrier. If the barrier's effect value is greater, the new spell has no effect on the target. If the attacking spell has a higher effect value, then subtract the barrier's effect value from it. The balance of the points get through the barrier to affect the target. This will continue for every spell thrown at the target for the duration of the *magical barrier*. The *magical barrier* also protects against spells with an area of effect.

The barrier works both ways, though. Spells cast by the recipient of the *magical barrier* are also stopped when they try to pass through the barrier. However, the spell has an "off switch" built in; the caster can turn the spell off before the full duration has elapsed.

Magical barrier is focused into the target, and so remains with the target if it moves away.

• six spells •



mana Bolt*†

Mana bolt is described on page 111 of *The World of Aden*.

mystic net*

Skill: *Conjuration*
Arcane Knowledge: *Magic*
Difficulty Number: 17
Feedback: 16
Effect Value: 16
Range: 5 (10 meters)
Speed: 5
Duration: 13 (six minutes, 40 seconds)
Cast Time: 6 (15 seconds)
Modifiers:
 Focus: On target
 Concentration: 10 seconds (DN 8)
 Gestures: Pantomime casting a net
 Incantation: "Like a spider's web."

The *mystic net* spell spins a web of magical energies that enwrap and bind an opponent, immobilizing him. The mage must concentrate for one round, then swing his arms at the target as if he were casting a net and declare, "Like a spider's web." A tracery of mystical force speeds toward the target to immobilize him.

When casting *mystic net*, the caster must make a *thrown weapons* or *Dexterity* roll to hit with the web. If the caster hits, then the target is bound in the web of magical forces and cannot move, other than to struggle against his bonds. Each round the target may attempt to break free from the sorcerous constraint. The effect value of the spell is used as the net's Toughness value, which the target must pit his Strength against. The mystic net can take six wounds before it is destroyed. The spell is focused on the target and therefore remains in force until the duration is up.

poison Dart*†

Skill: *Conjuration*
Arcane Knowledge: *Metal*
Difficulty Number: 17
Feedback: 15
Effect Value: 18
Range: 5 (10 meters)
Speed: 5
Duration: 12 (four minutes)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:
 Gestures: Pantomime throwing a dart

Incantation: "Feel the sting of my wrath."

Poison dart causes a magical dart to be created in the caster's hand. The dart is coated with a poison that is introduced into the victim if the dart does enough damage. The caster declares, "Feel the sting of my wrath," then pretends to throw a dart at her designated target. As she does so, the dart appears in her hand and can then be hurled at the foe.

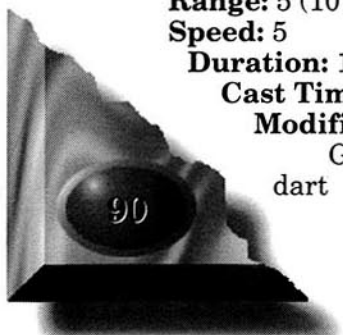
After casting *poison dart*, the mage must make a *thrown weapons* or *Dexterity* roll to hit with the actual dart. The effect value of the spell, minus two, is the damage value of the dart, which is measured against the target's Toughness. If the dart does damage of 1Wnd or better, the poison is introduced into the target's body. The spell's effect value, minus four, is the damage value of the poison, which does that damage every 6 rounds, until the spell expires.

sleep*

Skill: *Alteration*
Arcane Knowledge: *Entity, animal, or folk*
Difficulty Number: 18
Feedback: 17
Effect Value: 15
Range: 5 (10 meters)
Speed: 5
Duration: 14 (10 minutes)
Cast Time: 14 (10 minutes)
Modifiers:
 Area of Effect: Sphere three meters in diameter
 Charges: 1 (into target's mind)
 Concentration: One minute (DN 9)
 Gestures: Yawn and pretend to pull a blanket over head
 Incantation: "Drop in your tracks and leave me be."

Sleep is useful for evening the odds when a party is outnumbered. A successful cast causes the target(s) to fall into a deep slumber for ten minutes, long enough for the adventurers to escape or dispatch their opponents.

The spell must be charged into the caster's mind. It requires ten minutes to cast. During that time, the mage must concentrate solely on the casting for an entire minute (succeeding at a *willpower* or *Confidence* test with a difficulty of 9). Then she yawns and mimes pulling a blanket over her head, while reciting the words, "Drop in your tracks and leave me be." If the spell is successfully cast, one charge of *sleep* is charged into the mage's mind.



When the caster releases the *sleep* spell, she must pick a target or other point on which to cast the spell. Any creatures within the area of effect with a *willpower* or Confidence lower than the effect value of the spell immediately fall asleep for the duration of the spell. *Sleep* is not focused, so if any of the affected creatures are removed from the area of effect, they are no longer affected..

Note: This spell can be used with different arcane knowledges, the choice of which determines what kind of target the spell is effective against. Using the *folk* arcane knowledge makes it effective against intelligent beings. Creatures with a Mind of 5 or higher are regarded as intelligent, and are classified as folk. Basing the spell on the arcane knowledge of *animal* makes the spell work on natural creatures of animal intelligence. A creature is considered to be of animal intelligence if it has a Mind value of 4 or less. Finally, if the spell is based on the *entity* arcane knowledge, it works on those creatures which are neither animal or folk. Creatures such as will o' the wisps, faeries and nocturnals are all affected by the arcane knowledge of *entity*.

The caster can choose what sort of creature the spell will have an effect on by his choice of which arcane knowledge he will use when throwing the spell. A mage with more than one of these arcane knowledges has the flexibility to target different kinds of creatures at will.

slow*†

Skill: *Alteration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Animal, folk, or entity*

Difficulty Number: 18

Feedback: 15

Effect Value: 15

Range: 5 (10 meters)

Speed: 5

Duration: 11 (two minutes, 30 seconds)

Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)

Modifiers:

Focus: On target

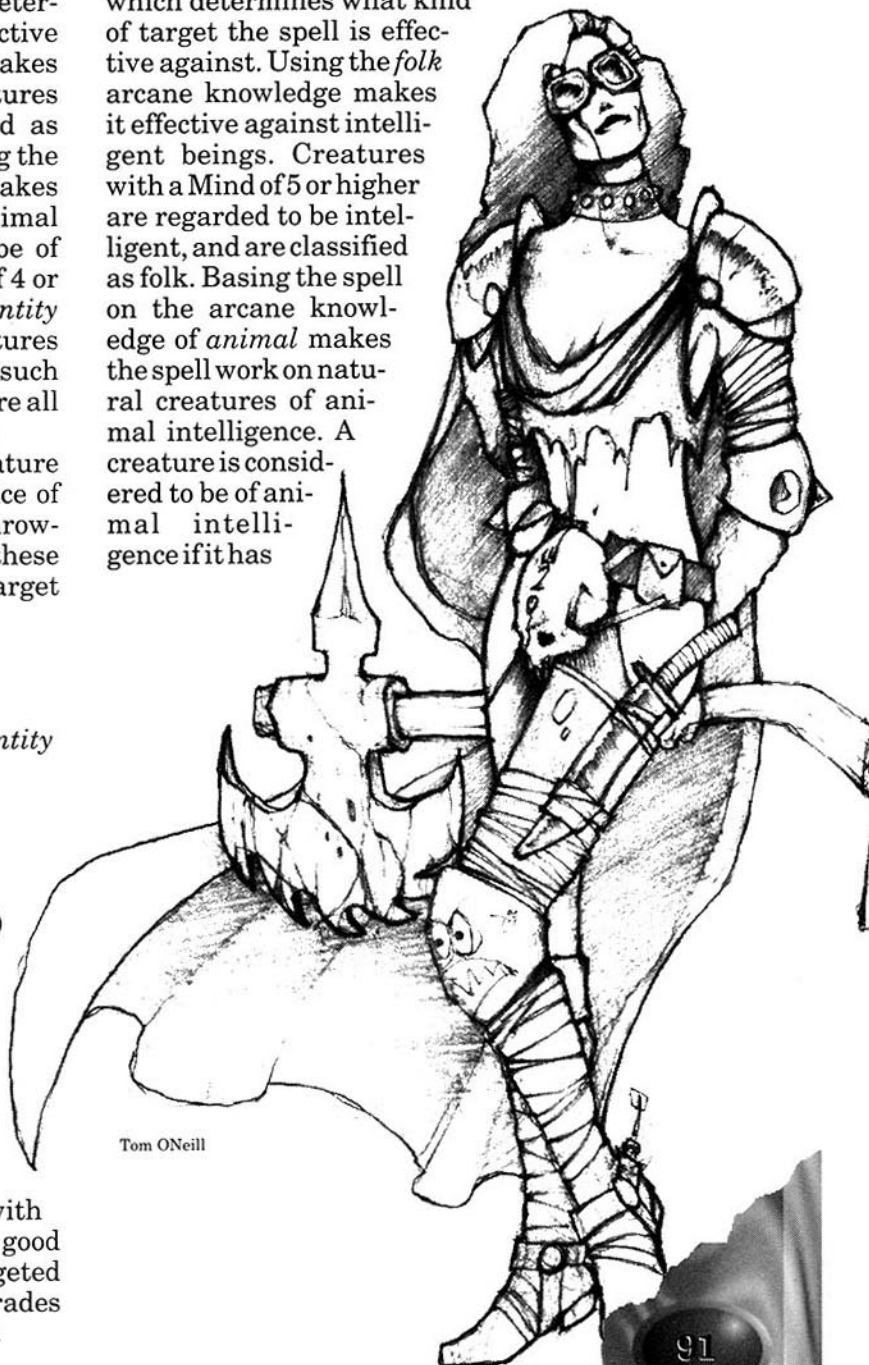
Gestures: Press down with both hands
as if holding something down

Incantation: "Hold!" (loudly)

When a group of adventurers runs into a wild creature or two, they probably feel as if they could use a little more time to deal with the creature. That's where *slow* comes in. A good shot with this spell will slow down the targeted creature and give the caster and his comrades more time to battle the beast, or to escape.

When using *slow*, the effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *movement rate, ground*. Read the result points on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. Then subtract the Push value from the target's movement rate, which is limited to this lesser amount for the duration of the spell.

Note: This spell can be used with different arcane knowledges, the choice of which determines what kind of target the spell is effective against. Using the *folk* arcane knowledge makes it effective against intelligent beings. Creatures with a Mind of 5 or higher are regarded to be intelligent, and are classified as folk. Basing the spell on the arcane knowledge of *animal* makes the spell work on natural creatures of animal intelligence. A creature is considered to be of animal intelligence if it has



Tom O'Neill

WORLD OF ADEN

4 or less. Finally, if the spell is based on the *entity* arcane knowledge, it works on those creatures which are neither animal or folk. Creatures such as will o' the wisps, faeries and nocturnals are all affected by the arcane knowledge of *entity*.

The caster can choose what sort of creature the spell will have an effect on by his choice of which arcane knowledge he will use when throwing the spell. A mage with more than one of these arcane knowledges has the flexibility to target different kinds of creatures at will.

spit fire*†

Skill: *Alteration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Fire*

Difficulty Number: 16

Feedback: 15

Effect Value: 25

Range: 5 (10 meters)

Speed: 5

Duration: 0 (one second)

Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)

Modifiers:

Apportation: accuracy, +2 to hit

This spell gives the caster the ability to breathe fire like a dragon. It has a short range, but packs a punch. A target exposed to the flames within that range will know they have been hit.

The caster makes an *alteration* roll and compares it to the victim's *willpower* or Confidence to see if he hit his target (no additional skill totals are necessary to determine if the spell hit, due to the apportionment element in the spell). As a matter of fact, the apportionment aspect of the spell gives the caster a +2 bonus to hit when targeting the spell. If the spell hits its target, use the effect value as the damage value of the fire burst.

strength*†

Skill: *Alteration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Folk*

Difficulty Number: 20

Feedback: 16

Effect Value: 20

Range: 0 (touch)

Speed: 0

Duration: 18 (one hour)

Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)

Modifiers:

Concentration: 10 seconds (DN 8)

Focus: On target

Incantation: "Be strong!" (loudly)

For those times when that extra bit of strength is needed to lift something out of the way, or to pry a door open, this spell does the trick.

The caster must lay his hands on the recipient of the spell, concentrate, and tell the target, "Be strong!" in a loud voice.

When cast, compare the spell's effect value to the target's Strength and cross-reference the result points on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. Then add the Push result to the character's Strength for the duration of the spell. *Strength* is focused into the target, so he may move freely. The target's Strength can be raised beyond the normal attribute limit for the target's species.

whirlwind*†

Skill: *Apportionment*

Arcane Knowledge: *Air*

Difficulty Number: 17

Feedback: 16

Effect Value: 20

Range: 7 (25 meters)

Speed: 7

Duration: 5 (10 seconds)

Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)

Modifiers:

Area of Effect (with shape): 1-meter diameter inverted cone

Concentration: 10 seconds (DN 8)

Gestures: Spin hands around each other

Incantation: "The air itself rejects you." (loudly)

This spell causes a small tornado to form where the caster desires (within the range of the spell). Due to the small size of the whirlwind, it can only affect one person at a time, although it would have the same effect on each member of a group of smaller creatures. The whirling winds buffet the target, causing the damage.

To cast the spell, the mage must concentrate on the spell the entire time he is casting it, while spinning his hands around each other. As he becomes ready to throw the spell, he must call out, loudly, "The air itself rejects you." Once the spell is cast, the air around the target begins to swirl violently, forming a small vortex that engulfs the victim.

The caster generates an *apportionment* skill total, and needs to beat or equal the target's *dodge* or *Agility* in order to hit. The effect value of the spell is the damage value of the wind.

West End Games MasterBook/D6 System Conversion

This system converts *MasterBook* characters and adventures to the *D6 System* rules (used in other roleplaying games produced by West End). Of course, since the conversion translates logarithmic values to linear values, you have to exercise good judgment. If something doesn't look right after you convert it, alter the value or die code to what seems more realistic.

The conversion involves one simple formula: divide the *MasterBook* value by three. The quotient becomes the *D6* die code and the remainder becomes the number of pips. For example, a *MasterBook* value of 14 becomes a *D6* code of 4D+2 ($14/3 = 4$, remainder 2). Using this equation allows you to convert statistics on the fly. You don't have to convert all the numbers in a particular adventure beforehand. For example, your characters encounter a thug who immediately opens fire. You convert the thug's *fire combat* skill value of 8 to a die code of 2D+2 and start rolling.

To convert from *D6* to *MasterBook*, simply multiply the die code by three and then add the pips. For example, a *D6 planetary systems* skill of 4D+2 has a *MasterBook* skill value of 14 ($3 * 4 + 2$).

The main sections of conversion are characters, difficulty numbers, modifiers, and damage values.

Characters

MasterBook and the *D6 System* have different character Attributes. The first task in translating a character, then, is mapping the Attributes from one system to the

other. The chart below shows the correlation between the two sets of Attributes.

Attribute Values/Die Codes

In instances where multiple Attributes in one system convert to a single Attribute in the other system, the Attributes are averaged. For example, the *MasterBook* Strength and Endurance Attributes translate to the *D6* Strength Attribute. To determine the *D6* Strength, first determine the average of the two *MasterBook* Attributes and then convert using the standard conversion formula.

Note that the *MasterBook* Intellect Attribute is used to determine the *D6* Knowledge and Technical Attributes.

To convert Attributes, divide the *MasterBook* Attribute value by three. The quotient represents the die code and the remainder represents the number of pips. For example, a *MasterBook* character with a Mind of 11 would have a *D6* Mechanical of 3D+2 ($11/3 = 3$, remainder 2).

Skills

There is no direct correlation between *MasterBook* skills and *D6 System* skills. First, try to find a skill with a similar name. For example, the *MasterBook energy weapons* skill would translate to the *D6 blaster* skill. If you can't find a match, just list that skill beneath whatever *D6* Attribute seems appropriate. For example, the *MasterBook archaeology* skill would fall under the *D6* Knowledge Attribute since the *D6 System* does not have a corresponding skill.

Example: Using the conversion formula, a *MasterBook espionage* skill of 10 becomes a *D6 espionage* skill of 3D+1.

Attribute Conversion

<u>MasterBook Attribute</u>	<u>D6 Attribute</u>
Average of Agility & Dexterity	Dexterity
Average of Strength & Endurance	Strength
Intellect	Knowledge
Intellect	Technical
Mind	Mechanical
Average of Confidence & Charisma	Perception



Karl Walter

D6 System Damage Chart

FIREARMS

Weapon

Holdout pistol (.22 caliber)	3D
Small pistol (.25 caliber)	3D+1
Light rifle (.22 long)	3D+2
.38 Special	4D
Ingram SMG	4D+1
Colt .45	4D+2
.44 Magnum Pistol	5D
.30-.30 Lever Action Rifle	5D+1
AK-47 Assault Rifle	5D+2
M16 Assault Rifle, Grenade	6D
7.62 HK21 Machinegun	6D+1
7.62 Maremont Lightweight M60	6D+2

D6 Damage Value

7.62 "Chain Gun"
GE Minigun M134

7D
7D+1

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon

Pocketknife
Small knife
Knife
Dagger, Club
Short sword, baseball bat
Quarterstaff, rapier
Light sword, warhammer
Broadsword
Morning-star, pike
Two-handed sword, battle axe

D6 Damage Value

STR+1
STR+2
STR+1D
STR+1D+1
STR+1D+2
STR+2D
STR+2D+1
STR+2D+2
STR+3D
STR+3D+1

MasterBook/D6 Skill Conversion

MasterBook Skill

D6 Skill Equivalent

AGILITY

Acrobatics
Beast riding
Climbing
Dance
Dodge
Escape Artist
Flight
Improvised Weaponry
Long Jumping
Martial Arts
Maneuver
Mechanical Maneuver

(Acrobatics/Dexterity*)
Beast riding (Mechanical*)
Climbing/jumping (Strength*)
(Dance/Dexterity*)
Dodge (Dexterity*)
(Escape Artist/Dexterity*)
(Flight/Dexterity*)
Melee Combat (Dexterity*)
Climbing/jumping (Strength*)
Brawling (Strength*)
Maneuver (Dexterity*)
Powersuit Operation (Mechanical*)
Melee Combat (Dexterity*)
Melee Parry (Dexterity*)
Running (Dexterity*)
Sneak (Perception*)
Swimming (Strength*)
Brawling (Strength*)
Brawling Parry (Dexterity*)

DEXTERITY

Energy Weapons
Exotic Weapons
Fire Combat
Gunnery

Heavy Energy Weapons
Heavy Weapons
Lock Picking
Missile Weapons
Prestidigitation

Blaster
Lightsaber, Bowcaster
Archaic Guns, Firearms
Vehicle Blasters, Capital Ship
Gunnery, Starship Gunnery
Blaster Artillery
(Heavy Weapons)
Security (Technical*)
Bows, Missile Weapons
Pick Pocket

MasterBook Skill

Security
Thrown Weapons
Vehicle Piloting

ENDURANCE

Resist Pain
Resist Shock

STRENGTH

Lethal Strike
Lifting

INTELLECT

Apportation
Camouflage
Cantrips
Computer Hacking

Computer Ops

Counterfeiting
Counter-Intelligence

Data Analysis
Deduction
Demolitions
Divination
Espionage
First Aid

D6 Skill Equivalent

Security (Technical*)
Thrown Weapons, Grenade
Archaic Starship Piloting, Capital Ship Piloting, Ground Vehicle Operation, Hover Vehicle Operation, Repulsorlift Operation, Space Transports, Starfighter Piloting, Swoop Operation, Walker Operation

Stamina (Strength*)
Stamina (Strength*)

Strength*
Lifting

(Apportation/Knowledge*)
Hide (Perception*)
(Cantrips/Knowledge*)
Computer Programming/Repair (Technical*)
Computer Programming/Repair (Technical*)
(Counterfeiting/Perception*)
(Counter-Intelligence/Knowledge*)
(Data Analysis/Knowledge*)
Search (Perception*)
Demolitions (Technical*)
(Divination/Knowledge*)
(Espionage/Knowledge*)
First Aid (Technical*)

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	D6 Damage Value
Small Rock	STR+1
Throwing stars	STR+2
Throwing knife	STR+1D
Small slingshot	STR+1D+1
Sling, short bow	STR+1D+2
Medium bow, throwing axe	STR+2D
Composite bow	STR+2D+1
Long bow	STR+2D+2
Light crossbow	STR+3D
Heavy crossbow	STR+3D+1
Compound bow	STR+3D+2

ARMOR

Type	D6 Armor Add
Heavy "adventurer's clothing"	+1
Heavy furs	+2
Heavy padding, metallic woven fabric	+1D
Leather armor	+1D+1
Leather armor with metal links	+1D+2
Chain link, "light" bulletproof armor	+2D
Light Kevlar	+2D+1
Plate & chain armor, flak jacket	+2D+2
Plate mail, standard Kevlar	+3D
Plate armor, Kevlar ceramic	+3D+1

MasterBook Skill**D6 Skill Equivalent**

<i>Forgery</i>	<i>Forgery (Perception*)</i>
<i>Inventor</i>	<i>(Inventor/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Journalism</i>	<i>(Journalism/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Linguistics</i>	<i>(Linguistics/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Navigation</i>	<i>Astrogation (Mechanical*)</i>
<i>Perception</i>	<i>Investigation (Perception*)</i>
<i>Performance Arts</i>	<i>(Performance Arts/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Photography</i>	<i>(Photography/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Psionic Manipulation</i>	<i>(Psionic Manipulation/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Radio Ops</i>	<i>Communications (Mechanical*)</i>
<i>Safe-Cracking</i>	<i>Security (Technical*)</i>
<i>Science</i>	<i>Sensors, Capital Ship Shields, Starship Shields, Computer Programming/Repair, Droid Programming, Droid Repair, Armor Repair, Blaster Repair, Capital Starship Weapon Repair, Starship Weapon Repair</i>
<i>Smuggling</i>	<i>Business (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Super-Science</i>	<i>(Super-Science/Technical*)</i>
<i>Teaching</i>	<i>(Teaching/Perception*)</i>
<i>Tracking</i>	<i>Search (Perception*)</i>
<i>Trick</i>	<i>Con (Perception*)</i>
<i>Vehicle Mechanic</i>	<i>Capital Starship Repair, Ground Vehicle Repair, Hover Vehicle Repair, Repulsorlift Repair, Space Transports Repair, Starfighter Repair, Walker Repair</i>

MasterBook Skill**D6 Skill Equivalent**

MIND	
<i>Artist</i>	<i>(Artist/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Bureaucracy</i>	<i>Bureaucracy (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Business</i>	<i>Business (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Conjuration</i>	<i>(Conjuration/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Hypnotism</i>	<i>(Hypnotism/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Language</i>	<i>Languages (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Medicine</i>	<i>Medicine (Technical*)</i>
<i>Research</i>	<i>(Research/Perception*)</i>
<i>Scholar</i>	<i>Alien Species, Cultures, Law Enforcement, Planetary Systems, Value (Knowledge*)</i>
CONFIDENCE	
<i>Alteration</i>	<i>(Alteration/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Con</i>	<i>Con (Perception*)</i>
<i>Curse</i>	<i>(Curse/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Faith</i>	<i>(Faith/Perception*)</i>
<i>Interrogation</i>	<i>(Interrogation/Perception*)</i>
<i>Intimidation</i>	<i>Intimidation (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Psychology</i>	<i>(Psychology/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Streetwise</i>	<i>Streetwise (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Survival</i>	<i>Survival (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Willpower</i>	<i>Willpower (Knowledge*)</i>
CHARISMA	
<i>Charm</i>	<i>(Charm/Perception*)</i>
<i>Disguise</i>	<i>Con (Perception*)</i>
<i>Persuasion</i>	<i>Persuasion (Perception*)</i>
<i>Summoning</i>	<i>(Summoning/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Taunt</i>	<i>(Taunt/Perception*)</i>

On the previous pages you'll find a list of the *MasterBook* skills and their *D6 System* equivalents. Where no *D6* skill matches, the skill and/or its base Attribute (if different from the *MasterBook* Attribute) are listed in parentheses. Skills placed under a different Attribute in *D6* than in *MasterBook* are indicated by an asterisk (*).

Miscellaneous Character Information

MasterBook Life Points equate to *D6* Force Points, and *MasterBook* Skill Points equate to *D6* Character Points. Bonuses or penalties resulting from *MasterBook* Advantages and Compensations can be converted using the standard conversion formula.

Difficulty Numbers

Since there is no linear formula that will accurately convert difficulty numbers, use the chart above to translate them between systems.

Modifiers

Divide the *MasterBook* modifier value by three. Treat the quotient as the die code and drop the remainder. For example, a *MasterBook* trick shot has a modifier of -4, which translates to a *D6* modifier of -1D (-4/3 = -1, remainder 1).

Difficulty Conversion

<i>MasterBook</i> Difficulty Level	<i>D6</i> Difficulty Level
Routine, Nearly Routine (1-2)	Very Easy (1-5)
Very Easy, Easy (3-5)	Easy (6-10)
Average, Complicated (6-10)	Moderate (11-15)
Difficult, Hard (11-13)	Difficult (16-20)
Very Hard, Extremely Hard (14-18)	Very Difficult (21-30)
Incredible, Nearly Impossible (19+)	Heroic (31+)

Damage Values

Since *MasterBook* damage values tend toward the high side, you must first subtract five from the *MasterBook* value and then apply the conversion formula. For example, a light rifle in *MasterBook* has a damage value of 16. In the *D6 System*, the damage value is 3D+2 ((16 - 5)/3 = 3, remainder 2).

Miscellaneous

Conversions for other areas of game play (vehicle and starship combat, magic, psionics, *et cetera*) are left to the gamemaster. In each case, the standard conversion formula should provide you with a basis for translation. For example, characters from the *Bloodshadows*™ game who have magical spells at their disposal, may attempt to cast a spell by generating a skill total and comparing it to the spell's difficulty (the skill value and the difficulty number can both be converted using the guidelines presented above).

Refer to the previous two pages for charts of converted skills and damage values.

MasterBook Games

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WOUND LEVEL CHART

Wound Level	Modifier(s)	Healing Rate	Healing Difficulty
Light	no modifier	One day	10
Moderate	-2 to physical skills	One day	12
Heavy	-4 to physical & -2 to all other skills	Three days	14
Incapacitated	-8 to all skills	Three days	16
Mortal*	automatic KO*	One day	18
Dead*	dead	dead	we mean it; you're dead

* See *MasterBook* rulebook.

FIRST AID CHART

Condition	DN
Shock, KO	8
Lightly wounded	9
Moderately wounded	11
Heavily wounded	12
Incapacitated	14
Mortally wounded	18
Dead	22

MEDICINE CHART

Wound Level	DN
Lightly wounded	10
Moderately wounded	12
Heavily wounded	13
Incapacitated	15
Mortally wounded	17

MANY-ON-ONE TABLE

# of Characters	DN Modifier	Effect Modifier
1	DN	-
2	DN+1	+3
3	DN+2	+4
4	DN+2	+5
5	DN+3	+6
6	DN+3	+7
7	DN+4	+8
8	DN+4	+9
9	DN+5	+10
10*	DN+5	+11

* For every two characters above nine, add +1 to the DN Modifier and +1 to the Effect Modifier.

RANGED WEAPONS

Fire Options	Attacking Modifier	Defensive Modifier	Damage Modifier
Burst Fire as Single	-1	0	-2
Full Auto (if possible)	+3	-1	+1
Single Fire as Multi (if possible)	+2	0	+1
Aim (for one round)	+2 (next round)	-2 (same round)	+1
"Trick" Shot	-4	varies	+2
Sweep (Ranged) (if possible)	+2	0	-5
Hit Location	*	*	*

* See *MasterBook* rulebook.

RANGED WEAPONS (MUSCLE-POWERED)

Missile Options	Attacking Modifier	Defensive Modifier	Damage Modifier
Aim (for one phase)	+2 (next round)	-2 (same round)	+1
"Trick" Shot	-4	varies	+2
Hit Location	*	*	*

* See *MasterBook* rulebook.

HAND-TO-HAND ATTACKS

Attack Options	Attacking Modifier	Defensive Modifier	Damage Modifier
Short Range	-3	-2	-1
Sweep (Hand-to-Hand)	+3	-1	-5
Grab	-1	-4	-3
"Knockdown"	-3	0	first wnd becomes knockdown
All-out	+4	-6	+1

HIT LOCATIONS

Hit Location	Attacking Modifier	Effects
Head	-8	+12 to damage
Chest	-2	+3 to damage
Abdomen	-4	+6 to damage
Left or Right Arm	-3	-2 to damage
Left or Right Leg	-2	-1 to damage

ARMOR

Armor	Bonus	Price	Notes
Quilted armor	TOU+1/16	50	
Soft leather armor	TOU+2/17	100	
Hardboiled leather armor	TOU+4/19	250	
Chain mail	TOU+6/21	1200	Fatigues; Stealth -1
Plate and chain mix	TOU+8/23	3000	Fatigues; Stealth -2
Plate mail	TOU+10/25	8000	Fatigues; Agility -2
Shield	Melee Parry Bonus	Price	
Large shield	melee parry+3	400	
Medium shield	melee parry+2	200	
Small shield	melee parry +1	100	

*Shields subtract -1 to -3 (depending on size) from certain Agility totals requiring mobility, such as *acrobatics*, *dodge*, and *maneuver*.

Fatigues: Whenever a "fatigue" result appears on the conflict line of the Drama Deck, the wearer suffers 3 shock instead of the usual 2.

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

ROUNDS PROCEDURE

0. Declare Rounds
1. Determine Initiative
2. Announce Approved Actions *
3. Act in Initiative Order
4. Summarize Results (Gamemaster)
6. Award Cards/Flip Over Cards *
7. End Rounds or Begin a New Round

* Only when using the card deck for initiative.

COVER AND CONCEALMENT

Concealment is:	Defensive Modifier
One-Quarter	+3
One-Half	+5
Three-Quarter	+8
Complete	+12
Complete Plus	+12+?

Cover is:	Toughness Modifier
Negligible	0
Weak	+2
Moderate	+4
Strong	+6
Very Strong	+8
"Impenetrable"	+12

MULTI-ACTION TABLE

Action Priority	Modifier to Skill Total
Primary	-2
Secondary	-3
Tertiary	-4
Etc. ...	An additional -1 for each

SURPRISE MODIFIERS

Surprise Levels	Attacking Modifier	Damage Modifier
Blindside*	+2	0
Partial Surprise	+2	0
Complete Surprise	+5	-2

*The modifiers for a *blindside* attack are cumulative with either *partial surprise* or *complete surprise* modifiers, but neither *partial surprise* nor *complete surprise* are cumulative with each other.

WORLD OF ADEN SKILL LIST

AGILITY	Deduction
Acrobatics	Demolitions
Beast Riding*	Divination
Climbing	Forgery
Dodge	First Aid
Flight	Induce Red Haze
Long Jumping	Linguistics
Maneuver	Navigation
Mechanical	Perception
Maneuver*	Science*
Melee Combat	Teaching*
Melee Parry	Tracking
Running	Trick
Stealth	MIND
Swimming	Artist*
Unarmed Combat	Business
Unarmed Parry	Conjuration
DEXTERITY	Language*
Fire Combat	Medicine
Gunnery*	Scholar*
Heavy Weapons*	CONFIDENCE
Lock Picking	Alteration
Missile Weapons	Con
Prestidigitation	Interrogation
Thrown Weapons	Intimidation
Vehicle Piloting*	Streetwise
ENDURANCE	Survival
Resist Shock	Willpower
STRENGTH	CHARISMA
Lifting	Charm
INTELLECT	Disguise
Apportation	Persuasion
Camouflage	Summoning
	Taunt

*Macroskill; must select focus
Boldface: Skill cannot be used untrained.

SUCCESS CHART

Result Points	General Success	Damage	Intimidation	Taunt/ Trick	Maneuver	Push (Shock Taken)
0	Minimal	1	stymied	stymied	fatigued	1 (3)
1	Solid	O1	stymied	stymied	fatigued	1 (2)
2	Solid	K1	stymied	stymied	fatigued	1 (1)
3	Solid	O2	stymied	stymied	fatigued	2 (4)
4	Solid	3	stymied	stymied	fatigued	2 (3)
5	Good	Knockdown O3	untrained	untrained	fatigued	2 (2)
6	Good	Knockdown K3	untrained	untrained	fatigued	3 (5)
7	Good	Knockdown KO	untrained	untrained	stymied	3 (4)
8	Good	Wnd K/O 3	untrained	untrained	stymied	3 (3)
9	Superior	Wnd K/O 5	untrained	untrained	stymied	4 (6)
10	Superior	2Wnd Knockdown K3	setback	setback	stymied	4 (5)
11	Superior	2Wnd K/O 5	setback	setback	stymied	4 (4)
12	Superior	2Wnd KO 5	setback	setback	stymied/fatigued	5 (7)
13	Spectacular	3Wnd Knockdown K3	setback	setback	stymied/fatigued	5 (6)
14	Spectacular	3Wnd K/O 5	setback	setback	stymied/fatigued	5 (5)
15	Spectacular	3Wnd KO 7	break	up/setback	stymied/fatigued	6 (8)
16	Spectacular	4Wnd Knockdown K5	break	up/setback	setback/fatigued	6 (7)
17	Spectacular+	4Wnd KO 7	break	up/setback	setback/fatigued	6 (6)
18	Spectacular+	5Wnd Knockdown K5	break	up/setback	setback/fatigued	7 (9)
19	Spectacular+	5Wnd KO7	break	up/setback	setback/fatigued	7 (8)
20	Spectacular+	6Wnd Knockdown K5	player's call	player's call	player's call	7 (7)
+1	Spectacular+	+1Wnd	player's call	player's call	player's call	8 (10)

ARBITRARY DN SCALE

Difficulty Level	% Chance of Success**	DN Value
Simple	100%	*
Routine	97%	0
Nearly Routine	90%	2
Very Easy	85%	3
Easy	79%	5
Average	55%	8
Complicated	36%	10
Difficult	15%	12
Hard	10%	13
Very Hard	3%	15
Extremely Hard	†	18
Incredible	†	22
Nearly Impossible	†	25+

* Simple actions do not normally need to be rolled for — opening a door, walking across a room, etc.
 ** The “% Chance of Success” is based on an average character with an attribute value of 8.
 † Cannot be achieved without a roll-again.

EXTENDED PUSH TABLE

Result Points	Push (Shock Taken)
22	8 (9)
23	8 (8)
24	9 (11)
25	9 (10)
26	9 (9)
27	10 (12)
28	10 (11)
29	10 (10)

MODIFIER CHART

Modifier to DN or Skill	Situation
+/- 1	The modifier barely affects the skill attempt
+/- 3	The modifier makes a significant difference
+/- 5	The modifier will probably change the overall outcome
+/- 7	The modifier will almost totally change the overall outcome
+/- 10 (or more)	The modifier totally redefines the skill attempt

BENCHMARK CHART

Value	Time	Weight	Distance
0	Second	1 kilo	1 meter
2			Tallest human
3		Human baby	
9	Minute	Human female	
10		Human male	Football Field
11		Lion	City block
12		Brown Bear	
15		Small Car	Kilometer
16		Large Car	Mile
17		Elephant	
18	Hour		
20		Empty Truck	
22		APC	
23			Marathon race
24		Loaded Truck	
25	Day	Blue Whale	
27		Boeing 747	
28		C5A Galaxy	
29	Week	Tramp Freighter	
30		Destroyer	Length of Great Britain
32	Month	Six-flat building	Paris to Moscow
33		Fully loaded train	New York to L.A.
34			New York to London
35			London to Tokyo
38	Year		Circumference of Earth
39		Battleship	
41		Aircraft Carrier	
45		Loaded Oil Tanker	

VALUE CHART

Val. Measure	Val. Measure	Val. Measure
0 1	35 10 million	70 100 trillion
1 1.5	36 15 million	71 150 trillion
2 2.5	37 25 million	72 250 trillion
3 4	38 40 million	73 400 trillion
4 6	39 60 million	74 600 trillion
5 10	40 100 million	75 1 quadrillion
6 15	41 150 million	76 1.5 quadrillion
7 25	42 250 million	77 2.5 quadrillion
8 40	43 400 million	78 4 quadrillion
9 60	44 600 million	79 6 quadrillion
10 100	45 1 billion	80 10 quadrillion
11 150	46 1.5 billion	81 15 quadrillion
12 250	47 2.5 billion	82 25 quadrillion
13 400	48 4 billion	83 40 quadrillion
14 600	49 6 billion	84 60 quadrillion
15 1,000	50 10 billion	85 100 quadrillion
16 1,500	51 15 billion	86 150 quadrillion
17 2,500	52 25 billion	87 250 quadrillion
18 4,000	53 40 billion	88 400 quadrillion
19 6,000	54 60 billion	89 600 quadrillion
20 10,000	55 100 billion	90 1 quintillion
21 15,000	56 150 billion	91 1.5 quintillion
22 25,000	57 250 billion	92 2.5 quintillion
23 40,000	58 400 billion	93 4 quintillion
24 60,000	59 600 billion	94 6 quintillion
25 100,000	60 1 trillion	95 10 quintillion
26 150,000	61 1.5 trillion	96 15 quintillion
27 250,000	62 2.5 trillion	97 25 quintillion
28 400,000	63 4 trillion	98 40 quintillion
29 600,000	64 6 trillion	99 60 quintillion
30 1 million	65 10 trillion	100 100 quintillion
31 1.5 million	66 15 trillion	
32 2.5 million	67 25 trillion	
33 4 million	68 40 trillion	
34 6 million	69 60 trillion	

CARD DISTRIBUTION CHART

Number of Player Characters	Number of Cards for Each
1	5
2-5	3
6+	2

MEASURE CONVERSION CHART

Measure is in units of	Value Modifier	Measure is in units of	Value Modifier
Seconds	0	MPH	+3
Minutes	+9	KMH	+2
Hours	+18	Kilos	0
Days	+25	Pounds	-2
Weeks	+29	Tons	+15
Months	+32	Meters	0
Years	+38	Feet	-3
Meters per round	0	Kilometers	+15
		Miles	+16

BACKGROUND ADVANTAGE LIST

COLUMN I

Additional Skill Adds (CI)	One general skill or focus add or two specialization adds
Additional Skill Adds	One add in a general skill, two adds in a specialization
Authority	Limited influence or low rank
Contacts	Character has a friend or friends who provide minor assistance
Cultures	Character gains knowledge of a foreign culture
Equipment	Character gains unusual equipment
Fame	Character has minor notoriety
Skill Bonus	+1 to a group of three related skills (modifier to bonus number only)
Wealth	Character is upper middle class

COLUMN II

Additional Skill Adds	Increase one general skill by two adds, or one specialization by three adds
Authority II	Middle ranking, more influence
Contacts	As Contacts I, but the friends are more influential or powerful
Cultures	The knowledge is more extensive than Culture I
Equipment	The equipment is more valuable than Equipment I
Fame	The character is better known than Fame I
Luck	The character can use certain card deck enhancements once per adventure
Skill Bonus	The character gains +1 to the bonus of 5 related skills
Trademark Specialization	The character gains +3 to the bonus number of any specialization, plus he is moderately famous for it (as Fame I)
Wealth	The character is from the upper class

COLUMN III

Additional Skill Adds	Increase one general skill by three adds, or one specialization by four adds
Additional Attribute Point	Increase one Attribute by one point
Contacts	The friends are very influential or powerful
Cultures	The character has native knowledge of a culture other than his own
Equipment	The equipment is unique or artifactual in nature
Fame	The character is recognized almost everywhere
Learning Curve	The character can improve certain skills at a cost of one skill point less after adventuring
Positive	
Luck	The character can use certain card deck enhancements during an adventure
Skill Bonus	The character gains +2 to the bonus of 3 related skills
Special Abilities	Gain strange or unusual talent or ability
Trademark Specialization	The character gains +3 to the bonus number of any specialization, plus he is moderately famous for it (as Fame I)
Wealth	The character is very wealthy or can draw on near limitless resources

COLUMN IV

Contacts	The contacts are royalty or incredibly powerful
Equipment	The character gains a legendary artifact or several extremely expensive items
Flight	Faerkin only
Luck	The character gains more use of his card deck enhancements
Special Abilities	More powerful than Special Abilities CIII

BONUS CHART

DIE																		9	11																		21	26	31	36	41
ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40	45	+5																		
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1																		

BACKGROUND COMPENSATION LIST

COLUMN I

Advantage Flaw Specialization	There is a limitation or drawback to one of the character's Advantages
Advantage Flaw	There is a limitation or drawback to one of the character's Advantages
Age	The character is older or younger than his prime
Bad Luck	The character is unlucky; usually he is affected whenever he rolls a die total of "2."
Debt	Character owes a small debt to someone
Employed	Character has a job or obligation that takes away some of his freedom of choice
Enemy	The character has a minor enemy
Handicap	The character has a minor physical or mental handicap that adds +2 to the DN of 5 or more related skills
Infamy	The character has a bad reputation among certain people or within a nation other than his own
Poverty	The character has little money and cannot control his spending well
Price	There is a price to one of the character's Advantages
Quirk	The character suffers from a personality or physical quirk that makes his life a little more difficult

COLUMN II

Advantage Flaw	There is a significant limitation to one of the character's Advantages
Age	The character is very old or very young
Bad Luck	The character is even more unlucky than Bad Luck I

COLUMN II (Continued)

Debt	The character owes a large debt to someone under dangerous circumstances
Employed	The character's freedom is virtually non-existent
Enemy	The enemy is very powerful or always around
Handicap	Choose one physical or two mental attributes and add +3 to the DN of all skill checks, except in very special circumstances
Infamy	The character is considered "evil" by some group or nation
Learning Curve Negative	The costs for learning skills are doubled
Price	There is a high price to be paid for one of the character's Advantages
Quirk	The character has a very serious personality flaw

COLUMN III

Achilles Heel	The character has a vulnerability
Advantage Flaw	The flaw interferes with an advantage and provides an additional disadvantage as well
Bad Luck	The character will suffer periodic setbacks
Debt	The character owes everything he earns to another
Enemy	The character's enemy is very powerful
Quirk	The character has a severe personality disorder

COLUMN IV

Advantage Flaw	The flaw interferes with or completely interrupts the use of an Advantage, in addition having several negative effects.
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SKILL POINTS

Intellect Is ...	Skill Points Are ...
13	10
11 to 12	9
8 to 10	8
6 to 7	7
5	6
Mind is ...	Skill Points Are ...
13	16
11 to 12	14
9 to 10	12
7 to 8	10
6	8
5	6

TOUGHNESS CHART

Strength	Toughness Points
10 to 13	4
7 to 9	3
5 to 6	2
Endurance	Toughness Points
12 to 13	8
9 to 11	7
7 to 8	6
5 to 6	5

COMPARISON CHART

# of Skill Adds	Level of Knowledge
1	Novice
2	Beginner
3	Intermediate
4-6	Professional
7-10	Advanced Professional
11-15	Adept, or "Master"
16+	Probably the most learned in the world

WEAPON CHART

MELEE WEAPONS			
Weapon Type	Damage Value	Price	
Main gauche	STR+3/18 0	300(<i>melee parry</i> +1)	
Rapier	STR+2/17	0300 (<i>melee parry</i> +2)	
Saber	STR+3/18	300 (<i>melee parry</i> +1)	
Short sword	STR+4/19	200	
Long sword	STR+6/21	400	
Broad sword	STR+7/22	450	
Gaff sword	STR+6/21	500 (+1 trick when used to feint or ensnare)	
Great sword	STR+9/25	1500	
Scaralla	STR+4/19	400	
Hand axe	STR+5/20	300	
Falcon axe	STR+10/25	2500	
Club	STR+2/17	0	
Flail	STR+4/19	300 (Reduces opponent's shield bonus by -2.)	
Mace	STR+4/19	300	
Maul	STR+7/22	2000	
Spear	STR+6/21	50	
Glaive	STR+7/22	200	
Pike	STR+6/21	150	
MISSILE WEAPONS			
Weapon	Damage/Max. Value	Range	Price
Short bow	STR+4/19	0-3/10/40/100	150
Horse bow	STR+4/19	0-3/10/40/100	300 (ignore penalties for firing while on horseback)
Long bow	STR+6/21	0-3/ 10 / 100 / 250	800
Crystal bow	STR+8/23	3-50/100/ 200/400	10000
Pistol crossbow	STR+3/18	3-7 / 15 / 30 / 50	250
Light crossbow	STR+5/20	3-10 / 30 / 60 / 120	400
Medium crossbow	STR+7/22	3-25 / 75 / 150 / 300	500
Heavy crossbow	STR+9/24	3-10 / 100 / 200 / 300	800
FIREARMS			
Weapon	Damage	Range	Price
Pistol	19	3-5 / 10 / 20 / 50	400
Arquebus	19	3-5 / 10 / 20 / 50	200
Musket	19	3-10 / 40 / 80 / 150	2000
SIEGE WEAPONS			
Weapon	Damage	Range	Price
Cannon, 6 lb.	27	3-50 / 200 / 800 / 1700	3000
Cannon, 12 lb.	32	3-50 / 150 / 500 / 100	4000
Cannon, 24 lb. mortar	28	3-50 / 100 / 200 / 400	6000
Storm cannon**	32	25 / 50 / 100 / 300	8000
Ballista	27	5-15 / 75 / 200 / 450	1000
Steam Ballista***	32	5-50 / 200 / 400 / 800	10000

*Mortars are used to lob explosive shells over walls and other fortifications. The burst radius for the shell is 0-5 / 15 / 40 / 50.

**The area affected by a storm cannon is a cone stretching from the weapon to an arc 50 meters wide at its maximum range.

***A steam powered ballista can have as many as six barrels. Each barrel after the first adds another 1000 crests to the price. Up to 3 barrels may fire in a single round. Each barrel takes one round for one man to reload once fired. If a setback ever occurs in a round in which a steam ballista has fired, the device explodes, causing damage value 27 to everyone within 10 meters.

ATTRIBUTE VALUE COMPARISON CHART

Attribute Value	Relative Quality
14+	Superhuman
13	Exceptional — A genius; an Olympic or professional athlete of the highest caliber would have attributes this high (but would also have many skill adds as well); a movie idol
11-12	Outstanding — A very adept or extremely bright character; in top physical shape; a very popular person
9-10	High average — smart; in good shape; personable
7-8	Low average — not overly intelligent; moderate conditioning; bland
6	Below average — unintelligent; in poor physical shape; dull or abrasive
5	Well below average — “stupid”; almost no physical ability; unpleasant and unpopular
4-	The character has either a severe handicap or another reason for being so below “normal.”

MOVEMENT RATE CHART

Type of Movement	Formula	Maximum
MRG: Movement Rate, Ground (running)	MRG = [AGI+AGI+STR]/4	8
MRS: Movement Rate, Swimming	MRS = [AGI+AGI+STR]/6	5
MRC: Movement Rate, Climbing	MRC = [STR+STR+AGI]/10	3
MRJ: Movement Rate, Jumping (long jumping)	MRJ = [STR+STR+AGI]/10	3

SKILL ADD COSTS

- General skill: 1 skill point per add
- Focus: 1 skill point per add
- Specialization: 1/2 skill point per specialization add

ADVENTURING GEAR

Item	Cost
Backpack	25
Buhuma	1500
Camp kit (mess kit, bedroll, flint and steel)	100
Clothing, fancy	50-400
Clothing, plain	25
Dried rations	10 crests per one day's supply
Flask of oil	10
Flint and steel	10
Grappling hook	75
Hammer and spikes	40 (+1 climbing)
Horse, riding	650
Horse, war	2000
Lantern	75
Lock picks	200 (+1 lock picking)
Lodging (1 night, ritzy inn)	40-100
Lodging (1 night, standard inn)	10
Meal, feast	30
Meal, standard	5
Parchment	5 per sheet
Rope, 50'	50
Saddle	150
Spyglass	100
Thunder lizard	2000
Tool kit, basic	100
Tool kit, complete	400

WORLD OF ADEN SKILL LIST

AGILITY Acrobatics Beast Riding* Climbing Dodge Flight Long Jumping Maneuver Mechanical Maneuver* Melee Combat Melee Parry Running Stealth Swimming Unarmed Combat Unarmed Parry	ENDURANCE Resist Shock STRENGTH Lifting INTELLECT Apportation Camouflage Deduction Demolitions Divination Forgery First Aid Induce Red Haze Linguistics Navigation Perception Science* Teaching* Tracking Trick	Scholar* CONFIDENCE Alteration Con Interrogation Intimidation Streetwise Survival Willpower CHARISMA Charm Disguise Persuasion Summoning Taunt
DEXTERITY Fire Combat Gunnery* Heavy Weapons* Lock Picking Missile Weapons Prestidigitation Thrown Weapons Vehicle Piloting*	MIND Artist* Business Conjuration Language* Medicine	

*Macroskill; must select focus

Boldface: Skill cannot be used untrained.

the
**WORLD OF
ADEN™**
**CAMPAIGN
CHRONICLES**

STEPHEN CRANE

Creatures of the Darkfall — nocturnals — ravage the land. The clanking and hissing of steam-powered sorcerous contraptions reverberates throughout the cities of Aden, as mechemages work on newer and more formidable uses for the magical metal known as manite. And in the midst of it all travels an intrepid band of adventurers — your adventurers. How can you help them find their way around the many adversities found in the World of Aden?

Campaign Chronicles gives you the information you need to make your World of Aden game interesting and fresh. There are hints, tips and ideas for creating memorable characters, running an adventure or a campaign in the World of Aden and capturing the feel and tone of this exciting new fantasy world based on the hit computer roleplaying series by SSI. There are also a selection of new spells and an assortment of new creatures — both natural and nocturnal — with which you can expand your adventures.

Also included is the gamemaster screen for *The World of Aden*, which collects many of the charts and tables needed during the game in one place for easy reference.

**Based on the
hit computer
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Campaign Chronicles is a supplement for *The World of Aden*.
You must have that WorldBook and the *MasterBook* or the *D6 System* to use this book.



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