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A couple of years ago, I was invited to visit Treasure Trap. This entailed hitting a lot of people dressed up as monsters with a foam-clad sword. It was fun, but dirty and potentially dangerous. Last month in Dallas, I visited Planet Photon. Running around a 10,000 square foot 'alien terrain', I indulged in an SF battle with equipment that included helmets with radio transmitters and receivers, laser-like 'guns' that trigger sensors when their bursts strike their targets, power belts with a microprocessor to analyse and report on my performance. Needless to say I enjoyed myself. The one conclusion is that role-playing gamers can really enjoy 'real' role-playing given the right environment and equipment. It could be part of the leisure centres of the future. In the meantime, I'll keep rolling the dice and will give a full account of Planet Photon soon.

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**DEPARTMENTS**

**Critical Mass**
Our knave changes his image...

by Dave Langford

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RuneQuest 3 in depth

by Mark Harrison

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by Carl Critchlow

**Small Ads**
Games for sale, clubs and announcements

51

---

**FEATURES**

**News of the World**
Government policies axe PCs shock!

by Jon Smithers

**Starfall**
An Enterprising adventure in space

by Marcus L Rowland

**The Dawn of Unlight**
A web of intrigue under Mirkwood

by Graham Staplehurst

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ISSN 0265-8712.

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Contributions: The editor will be pleased to consider any previously unpublished articles or artwork for inclusion in White Dwarf. Contributions should be typed, double-spaced on one side of the paper only.
A Look At Government, Law and Conflict in Fantasy Campaigns
by Jon Smithers

What are the real life goals of the characters in your campaign? Wealth, prestige, power? The first is easy to achieve with continual dungeon bashing, but how can prestige and power be attained without some sort of outside activity? There are often several villages and one or two towns in most campaigns, however, in many cases these signs of civilization are pretty much the same, making the world outside appear boring compared to the eternal treasure hunt.

With some thought a campaign can be brought to life by creating a whole range of nations; not just the typical feudal kingdoms but also democracies, dictatorships and empires. Onto this tapestry can be woven a pattern of conflict, again not just the usual fight for survival and turf and its semi-human allies against the evil hordes, but also civil wars and wars between states. These wars become easier to establish when there are different types of government. A consequence of this type of background is that it gives players a greater variety of goals for their lives other than amassing wealth and building castles for a safe and happy retirement. Local nobles may resent the presence of the nouveau riches characters, or the players may wish to overthrow a dictator or become one themselves. This way they can achieve true prestige and power over their fellows if this is what is desired, something hard to achieve if there is no political background.

It is impossible to provide a complete guide to the different types of government, their varying legal systems and conflicts in an all-inclusive one of this length. It is hoped, however, that the ideas herein will help you build and network a referee something from which to work and make the escapades of his adventurers more interesting without resorting to more and more monsters and encounters.

GOVERNMENT
In most campaigns there are only a limited number of government types, usually of the feudal kingdom ilk with an occasional empire thrown in for variety. However, this short changes the world you have created and the characters who have to live in it. It could be said that there are almost as many types of government as there are people who think about such things, and you needn't be a student of politics to discover many of them.

A glance at a book of European history will bring to light more than a few types of governments. There were the great empires of Egypt, Persia, and Rome; all of which were different from each other. Then there were the states of Ancient Greece. Even within this small geographical area and historical era there were a number of different government types, ranging from democracies to dictatorships and republics to monarchies. Later we have the dynastic kingdoms of petty nobles such as France and Spain; feudal England with its knights and yeomen; the Holy Roman Empire and finally, the City States of 14th Century Italy and Germany run by small princes, popes and guilds.

This need not be your only source of inspiration, since the Middle and Far East provide equally useful examples. Indeed you need not stop with historical information. Fantasy literature makes equally good reference material in many cases, for the nations' rulers in these novels are usually mentioned briefly and can be taken out and used in your campaign.

L Sprague de Camp's 'The Goblin Tower' is a good example since a great many governments are mentioned, some in detail. All this is mere tip of the iceberg and doesn't account for the imagination of each individual referee.

Having selected the types of political institutions which fit the character of the campaign, a fairly pleasing result can be achieved placing them on a map at random. This is much the same as using random monsters in a scenario, something which most self-respecting referees would not do. It is a far better idea to put some thought into the placing of political bodies because each type of government is a result of history and, to a lesser extent, geography. This can be done in reverse, so that the reasons for the existence of a particular government type can be made after placing, but this has complications of its own. After a while, reasons for existence become a little thin on the ground and lead to repetition and decreasing logic. Once again a bit of thought beforehand becomes necessary to avoid stagnation.

History is the primary creator of political institutions and thus some idea of the history of the world is a considerable advantage. This need not be worked out in great detail, all that is necessary is a broad outline of what has happened, eg great wars, the decline of large empires, the gradual rise from barbarism, etc. It is these events and their effects on certain areas which result in differing types of government. For example, have there been any wars in a certain country for a while? If so then the chances are that a dictator, king or queen has appeared on the body and has forced the people into these wars. Likewise peaceful nations are likely to be more democratic since most people dislike war and will thus avoid it as much as possible.

If the country was once part of an empire then the government of the country is likely to be a reaction to this. Thus post-imperial nations will give the people a say in the running of their country to variable degrees: this would result in limited monarchies, republics and guild-run states. Religious history will also affect governments. If there is a god of authority, for example, then there is a theocracy. The empire was eventually restricted to the southern continent and new states began to form. These were far more democratic than the empire had been and were largely republics or limited monarchies. This was all in reaction to the newly won freedom from the overbearing empire.

However, the history of these new 'city states' (similar to those of Renaissance Italy) in the last 500 years has not been peaceful and wars have been fought between them. The result is that two heavily defeated republics have been replaced by a dictator and the military who were able to discern the old leaders due to the lost wars and promise a new age of national splendour. A large invasion by evil hordes from the north, only stemmed through the bravery of the local clerics, has led to the establishment of a theocracy, for the people came to believe after the war that rulership should not be left in the hands of mere mortals but should be entrusted to the gods. Thus they placed the government of their nation in the hands of their clerics, the agents of the gods on earth.

This is only half the story, what of events in the north? However, it does show how history and the decline of an empire has led to a number of small states attempting to fill the power vacuum left. In their attempts to do this, wars have influenced their political nature. Thus history has created a small democracy, two monarchies, a dictatorship, a militarocracy, two republics and a theocracy.
organised, there will be a greater chance of being captured and, when caught, being treated fairly. The captors will know and make as much use of them as they can get away with; including pocketing prisoners' personal property, selling prisoners as slaves or even killing them if they believe it is safest that way.

In prison the treatment of prisoners will also vary according to the country in which they are being held. A dictatorship would be liable to execute anyone it is expedient to get rid of, regardless of their guilt. Various methods may be used to gain a confession depending upon the society. A good and honourable king may rely on his priest to cast Detect Lies spells, etc whilst other regimes may use more 'effective' methods. Judges may take bribes in certain areas whereas in others they may be more scrupulous. This kind of affair can be left to the individual referee to work out, but once again it should be worked out beforehand. A good example of law and how it can work is an individual city can be found in the Trillian series, especially Part 6 (WDA8).

But what of religious law? Most of the above statements can be applied here also. However, religious laws tend to have little foundation in truth and reason and are therefore harder for the average player to establish unless she's been one. Blasphemy is an obvious religious law but many others will exist, eg ‘No man may bring a flame into a temple of Thor’. (Because of his hatred of Loki, the god of fire). It is also true that since religious laws are the means of ensuring loyal worshippers who, as they believe, will be brought into a future world of bliss if they obey the laws must at least be seen to have been punished. Normally there will be no escape from punishment by bribery and everyone will be dealt with in the same way. Punishments and guilt tests will vary with the god; gods of fire will use fire, gods of water will use water, etc. All else that are likely to happen will vary with the belief of the people. As already stated, these laws will affect relationships between characters and the local populace, if not adhered to, especially in small, isolated areas. These customs may seem strange to outsiders but they were once based on the fact and the referee should consider them when establishing such customs. A certain building or area, for example, may be taboo due to some strange deaths that happened there in the past.

Local customs may be the reason for the continued existence of the community, especially those concerning farming. However, in smaller groups, where the land is being farmed, these customs will be seen by the locals to be threatening their continued existence and will be dealt with accordingly. Local customs and rites, because they are so bewildering to strangers, can also be a cause of extreme consternation to player characters in the same way as religious laws.

THE WARS OF THE WORLD

World conflict is something which characters can become really involved in, whether as soldiers of fortune, generals, patriotic leaders, spies or adventurers. Conflict is also a major element in making a world come to life as a world without conflict is an unexciting place and there would be no need for adventurers to save people from harm (which is, after all, what the game is all about). Conflict can be any kind of, from petty brawls between guilds up to full scale war. It is the latter which is inherent to most fantasy literature and to which characters can relate to.

In a very general term: there are religious wars, interstate wars, wars between local nobles, civil wars and of course racial wars. These will be covered in due course but the effects of war on characters must be noted. Firstly, do they take sides: if not then they will probably be treated with suspicion by the sides and hence may be asked to take sides then not only do they have a cause in life but they will also have enemies to complicate matters. As characters become more powerful then they can influence wars in a decisive way, maybe even starting them.

Another aspect of war to consider is whether or not the wars are isolated or part of a greater pattern of conflict. There could be a religious war between good and evil, for example, which will never end until one side wins everything. This war may not always be noticeable but nevertheless is always present. Alongside or within this major conflict, inter-
state wars, civil wars and race wars may be occurring as well. Are these merely isolated examples of man's need for war or part of the greater war which inevitably affects everyone, the religious war?

How wars are related, what wars are going on and how they affect the characters is entirely up to the referee. But again it should be noted that everything needed planning beforehand. Since it is difficult for player characters to have decisive effect in a war the referee can plan out wars in advance. A calendar can be made of important events such as when wars start, dates of major battles to come and when the war ends. This allows the referee to tell his players what is going on in the outside world so they can make choices accordingly, this is especially important if they are in a war zone.

RELIGIOUS WAR
This type of war can have two aspects. There can be the great struggle between good and evil for domination of the world, in which the gods set their forces against each other in a war which only one side can ultimately win. In this type of war the gods can be seen as attempting to direct the world to their ideals and to do this they will use their worshippers. Because gods cannot (and should not) interfere directly, powerful leaders will be spoken to by the gods and directed to take certain actions; the forces of evil will appear out of the dark and the darkness will be to people of the world. For their part, attempts to destroy these secret places and destroy their evil inhabitants. Neutrals will either be attempting to maintain the balance or will not care what is happening or who wins. The ultimate aim of this type of religious war is confusion and division in the minds of the population. Of course, at times, the war may die down altogether as both sides regroup their forces after a particularly devastating episode. Even in these apparently peaceful times the war will probably still be going on, although by more subtle means. Such a war is likely to have all the components of good vs. evil men placed in situations where their actions can influence them by subtle means, assassinations will occur etc.

The second aspect of religious war may not be as apocalyptic for the world but is just as important for the deities and worshippers. This aspect is the battle between individuals or groups of individual gods. For example, the druids of a nature god may be in constant conflict with the clerics of an agricultural god. The druids are attempting to prevent the spread of organised agriculture and preserve nature at all costs, while the clerics will be attempting to increase the amount of cultivated land. This type of war will be more subtle in many ways — all out war will be uncommon and guerrilla warfare techniques likely such as the burning of farmland by the druids.

How does a religious war affect the characters in a campaign? When they are asked to deal with its effects at all. They may defeat a tribe of orcs which are threatening a village not realising that these attacks were actually part of a greater plan to take over the country of which the village is just a small part. More powerful characters will be assembled to oust one or another of one of your gods to command the gods to go on a quest. This type of war gives a greater purpose to adventuring than the mere accumulation of wealth.

INTER-WARS
This is the most common form of war in the real world and in fantasy literature. Wars between countries are normally fought over a specific issue and complete annihilation of the opposition is not necessarily the purpose of the war. The war may have a grander aspect, however, the presence of different governments and laws. In many cases the war will end as suddenly as it began and for equally whimsical reasons. (The aims of the war having been achieved being the usual reason but others are obvious if the idea is thought through.)

This type of war mainly affects players when they are in the war zone where they may need to declare which side they support. If they do so then enemy territory is going to become a hostile environment even with the absence of dangerous monsters there may still be a dislike of the opponents' politics among other reasons. In many cases the war will end as suddenly as it began and for equally whimsical reasons. (The aims of the war having been achieved being the usual reason but others are obvious if the idea is thought through.)

WARS BETWEEN RACES
Racial war is typified by that between orcs and elves, however, the idea of them fighting is for what of an alliance of all the goblin races in a war to the death against an alliance of dwarves and men. A good example of a race war which the characters can become involved in is TSR's Against the Giants series of modules. It is preferable that the enemy have some form of access to magic since this means that they will not have to resort to the usual goblin horde style of attack. In the above example the drow were behind the alliance of giants and they make excellent enemies for a race war. The dracoonians from the new Dragon Lance modules also seem to have the making of the ideal enemy race.

A race war is a conflict with no compromise between the two sides; it is similar to the religious war since genocide is the aim of at least one of the sides, if not both. As long as the hordes are large or powerful enough then there is plenty of scope for the adventurers to become involved in the war. They could be hired as commandos by either side or attack isolated groups of the enemy race, say. Players may even prefer to work for their own benefit against both races, an example of the variant war can give a campaign.

CIVIL WARS
Civil war can either be a bloody war — war of the worst sort in which families become divided — or a quiet, almost unnoticed revolution until the final coup takes place. This type of conflict between the population is probably the most difficult for the characters to understand. In the case of a revolution there may be no one that the characters can identify as the enemy, it may simply be the man in the street that is like the man in the street. The characters will have to be very careful in this situation — the man in the street may be the enemy.

In the quiet, plotting subterfuge of the secretive revolution character may be called upon to assassinate popular leaders, in the boredom of crowds or infiltrate the police or military in an attempt to reduce its effectiveness or even bring it over to the side of the rebels.

Civil war is a nasty business and can lead to all sorts of problems for the other players, especially if they supported the losing side. If they backed the winning side then they may receive positions of power as a reward. This success may only be short-lived for if there is a subsequent successful counter-revolution then they will be in as much trouble, if indeed not worse trouble, as they would have been if they had lost in the first place.

CONCLUSIONS
Conflict is an essential part of any campaign since it helps to create a real life for characters. This is because it forces them to make decisions which influence the rest of their lives; it gives them a purpose in life and a cause for which to fight. Without it dungeons have little meaning and life becomes a long series of treasure hunts.

Since conflict is normally due to some grievance with the world, it is usually only stirred by the presence of different governments and laws. These in themselves help to create a more believable world for characters to live in. Without them the world outside the dungeon becomes a boring place where nothing of consequence happens and is relegated to the role of shopping centre where they only go to buy equipment and spells, etc.

An aim in life is essential for the creation of a good character and a believable world helps the players in this respect. Whether it be the extermination of a race, the expansion of a nation or the overthrow of the oppressors it helps to bring the world to life. A well-planned world also helps to show the players that they cannot get away with everything that they may wish to without considerable effort, for there are forces at work, both seen and unseen, which will not allow them to do so. Of course they may wish to remove these restricting influences — now that really is an interesting idea.
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Strange noises at Beast HQ were yesterday found to be due to a large number of DRAGONROARS - part of a consignment of high quality games and play aids from Standard Games. Amongst the ensuing chaos could be found the entire range of games, maps and game components, as well as the popular A4 sized hex pads, macro hex pads and character records. A Beast spokescreature said that the company would now be distributing the items following receipt of suitable GPs.

The successor to The Halls of the Dwarven Kings has been named as The Lost Shrine of Kasar-Khan, available now from Beast Entz or good games shops. Interested parties were referred to page 38 for further details, where an outbreak of Endless Plans, now securely boxed, could also be found.

Willy wizards could be found today feverishly inscribing parchments in payment for issues 1 to 6 of TORTURED SOULS! in an attempt to beat the price rise on April the 1st. Issue 7 - appearing shortly - will cost £2.95, as will other issues purchased from the 1st of April onwards. The good news for existing subscribers is that they will still receive issues until their sub. runs out, and hence save even more precious GPs.

Stunned onlookers have again been doubting the sanity of the Beast following the disclosure of the latest ongoing Beastie Mega-Freebie Scenario (a rather plush-looking set of colour floorplans free with a special AD&D/BASIC/- DRAGONROAR competition module in TORTURED SOULS! 7).

Tortured Souls! (2.95), Starstone (3.95), The Halls of the Dwarven Kings (7.95), The Lost Shrine of Kasar-Khan (4.95), Endless Plans sets 3, 4, 6, 7 & 8 (3.99 each), Dragonroar (12.95), Cry Havoc, Siege, Samurai Blades (9.95 each), Scen Book 1 (2.95), Starship Captain (12.95), Hex Pad, Macro Hex Pad, Character Pad (1.95 each) are all distributed by, and available (POST FREE) from BEAST ENTERPRISES LTD, DIVINITY ROAD, OXFORD, OX1 1JR.

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No More Niceness?

Often I get letters from my enormous readership (a phrase I'll have to stop using if, like the other half of the Langford fan club, he goes on a diet). Typical complaints: 'You are the greatest literary genius the world has known, can you lend me a fiver?' 'Why won't you review my wonderful Penguin Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks, you bastard?' ‘Why don't you just throw yourself down forty foot canvas tube lined with fish-hooks?’ The latest letter, though, contains a hideous accusation - that this column has become too nice. Arg... anything but that!

The appalling truth is that publishers have rumbled me. No longer do they send Stephen Donaldson epics neatly trussed for the slaughter, or Asimov novels that you didn't squeeze them in public: I even hear I've been blacklisted and won't receive my coveted freebie copies of L Ron Hubbard's 10-volume sequel to Battlefield Earth. Instead, some fiendish turtle plodding through the void, to the Ringworld RPG since it issue.

It's one of those horrid, dwindly sensible bits from the opening chapters.

Soon Gosseyen is teleporting intergalactically every few pages, potentially interesting characters are lost in narrative hiccups, ludicrously lowbrow science sprouts like mildew and is about as palatable, and van Vogt loses track of his own nonsense: on page 197 Gosseyen, able at will to teleport anyone or anything into the next galaxy, and having already done so ad nauseam, sees an assassin about to hurl a bomb at him. And: 'He could not take any counter-measure until the act of throwing took place.' Why not? Answer came there none; and it's all like this... The book can only be read as parody or in a spirit of innumerable worth of overwhelming nostalgia for the 'Golden Age'.

Frederik Pohl wrote some of the better SF (usually with Cyril Kornbluth); like van Vogt, he's still at it, but Pohl has visibly matured. The Years of the City (Gollancz 334pp £9.95) is an innervatingly plausible attempt at one of SF's hardest feats - to build a realistic Utopia rooted in the exceedingly mucky soil of today. To add to the challenge, Pohl's chosen site is New York.

Five linked stories offer snapshots from the nearer future to late next century. 'When New York Hit The Fan' shows the worst, a syndrome of strikes and disasters which help force the introduction of Pohl's first utopian reform: electronic access democracy via 'universal town meetings'. Story 2 (the weakest) depicts the inevitable corruption and graft surrounding a project to 'green' slums into communities self-sufficient in energy; story 3 (the strongest) chronicles similar

problems in building 'The Blister', a climate-maintaining dome over the city. The final two are more light-hearted, covering changes in law and custom: I liked the idea of a democratized US Supreme Court, chosen by conscription! There are corry elements like the traditional whores and crooks with hearts of gold in story 1) and things I can't believe; but overall it's impressive, with enough 'realistic' bitterness to make us cynics swallow the sugary core of optimism.

A long way from near-future realism: The Void Captain's Tale by Norman Spinrad (Granada 250pp £1.95). In the luxurious artificiality of his starship Dragon Zephyr, amidst the passengers' orgastic amusements, Void Captain Genro makes huge gestures of cosmic Angst. He has incautiously got to know the ship's (usually shunned) Void Pilot, a woman who, plugged into the Jump circuitry, flings the vessel across space in a timeless instant of orgasm. Like Captain Ahab, Genro becomes obsessed with the 'Great and Only' fulfilment of Jump space; like Ahab, he's led on to disaster.

I feared the book would be disastrous: a mindbogglingly ambitious allegory of the search for transcendent worlds peopled with metaphysics and sex, told in a polygot jargon ('an all-too-necessary form at the heart of our transstellar waltzung'). Incredibly, though, the story succeeds. It's over-long, it bogs down in portentiousness, but the chase of the metaphysical white whale still compels. Worth a look, though younger readers may need to protect impressionable parents from the many sex scenes.

It's reissue time. Keith Roberts' The Furies [Penguin 220pp £1.95] is a wry revenge - his first novel. A 'typical British disaster tale' of giant wasps ravaging England, it has interesting mystical overtones, is well written, and cuts deeper than John Wyndham - because the danger is vivid and present - in V. Michael Moorcock's concern for people doesn't allow him to dismiss the background megadeaths with a twitch of the stiff upper lip.

Alan Dean Foster's Bloodthyme [NEL 206pp £1.75] is a reasonably exciting space opera of deathly predictability, with a world-destroying nasty called the Vom (lifted from early van Vogt), numerous cute goodies and alien heavies, and the dreaded drug of the title (so irrelevant to the plot that one instantly guesses it's there for use on world-destroying nasties). An entirely unnecessary character is included to link this to other Foster novels; if you haven't read The Ter-Ayim Krang etc, his presence is baffling.

Michael Moorcock's first novel The Golden Barge has been reprinted again (NEL 189pp £2.50), and I have no hesitation in repeating my words in WDB8. (An interesting read). I don't want to think about what those sods at Games Workshop have just done; Dragonlance Chronicles 1, produced by TSR, based on some ineptly written AD&D campaign, and apparently written by a committee. Have I really got to...? (Yes. By next issue please - Ed.)
In Open Box, science fiction and fantasy games and rulebooks currently in the shops are reviewed by independent authorities.

**RuneQuest**
- **DeLuxe Edition** £39.95
- **Gamesmaster's Box** £26.95
- **Player's Box** £20.95
- **Avalon Hill**

At last, the long-heralded new edition of *RuneQuest*. Yes, the prices seem high, but not uniquely so for recent American products. *RuneQuesters* will want to know what is offered for their money, so I must make clear that this is no minor revamping, but a considerable expansion, and comprehensive revision of the original. Limited space prevents comment on every detail here, and I will try to concentrate on the most significant changes. In my view these are in the systems for previous experience, training, and magic (especially), in the introduction of fatigue points and emphasis on the effects of Encumbrance, and in the background. This is no longer the world of Glorantha but 'fantasy Europe': in examples, we follow the exploits of Cormac the Pict and his companions. The link with Glorantha is not completely broken; a booklet gives a summary account, with much new information, and projected supplements will include revisions of sources like *Cults of Prax* as well as fantasy Europe settings like *Vikings* (close to publication). Guidelines are provided for players wishing to convert their PCs to the revised system, which could be applied equally well to the NPCs in published scenarios; but GMs should be prepared to do this in the spirit of the new version. Glorantha-addicts like myself should take this to heart, but I wonder how many with established PCs or campaigns are ready for the degree of change involved.

Of the boxes, the *Player's Box* contains the essentials of the system in its two books (Players Book and Magic Book), with a summary of PC-creation and dice. The *Gamesmaster's Box* contains the Gamemasters Book (much is new here, including revised Encounter Tables for the physical and spirit planes), Creatures Book (a much enlarged list including useful detail on spirits), Introduction to Glorantha, 16 pages summarising the tables in the *Player's Box*, and a map of fantasy Europe (including the Middle East and North Africa). The Gamemasters Book also includes a beginners' scenario, *The Money Tree*. Several adventure sheets are provided, also sheets for ships (a major section concerns ships and sailing), but no equivalents to the useful sheets summarising adventure and NPC groups for GM's to use. The *DeLuxe Edition* contains everything that is in the other two and is the one to get if you intend to be a GM, unless you already possess or have easy access to the *Players Box*. Everything is well laid out and clearly expressed, and almost everything is there that should be, as far as I can see; there are nice illustrations, but Lisa Free's in the Creatures Book seem to have been over-reduced. The map is colourful but sketchy, concentrating on differences of terrain and the major Roman roads.

There are various alterations in the numerical base. Skills no longer increase, nor are bonuses from characteristics calculated in multiples of 5; everything is in precise figures, so that a new table is needed for Criticals, Specials, and Fumbles, which demonstrates the basic rule [Players Book p33]: round up fractions of 0.5 or over, round down otherwise. There are only 10 Strike Ranks to the Melee Round, and various changes have been made in SRs needed, but the basic figure for preparing, changing intention, etc, is now 3, which evens things out. In experience rolls, you must now roll your skill percentage or over to improve: any characteristic bonus is added to the roll, so that it is possible to go beyond 100, and there is no bar on improving past 100%, or on training up to 75% in skills which have a basic chance, but the amount of time needed to improve purely by training is enormous, since every improvement requires as many hours as the present skill percentage. This is also needed for improving by 'research', which is self-teaching, and practice which requires a successful experience roll as well. Anyone who has superior skill may teach, and anyone who has improved an improveable characteristic may teach someone else to, but the time needed is even lengthier and the result clumsy (roll present level x 5 or more; if successful, add 1d3 – 1). In improving by experience, training or research, you may either add respectively 3, 2, or 1, or roll 1d6 (–2 if not by experience).

As before, PC's have 7 characteristics, APP(earance) replacing CHA; humans rolls SIZ and INT on 2d6+6, the rest on 3d6. These affect skill levels as follows: each point above or below 10 in a primary characteristic (as DEX for Agility) adds 1% to or subtracts 1% from basic ability. For negative characteristics (SIZ for Agility) this is reversed, and secondary characteristics (STR for Agility) add or subtract 1% for each 2 or part of 2 points above or below 10 (thus, STR 17 or 18 give +4, as seen from the examples that are not spelled out in the text. Hit Points are the average of CON and SIZ, rounded up (separate Hit Location tables are now provided for Melee and Missiles); magic points are the same as POW; fatigue points are the sum of STR and CON. These add a new dimension.
Your PC may now carry as much as you wish, but each Encumbrance point is subtracted from the fatigue points; the remainder are expended, 1 per MR, as seen above. Stressful activity begins, and once a negative level is reached 1% is lost from each skill; this may then be regained at 1d3–1 per MR. Since each Encumbrance point also subtracts 1% from the chance of casting spells or using magic skills, and since the Encumbrance for armour has been raised considerably, Encumbrance will require some thought.

Many changes have been made in the skills list, in regrouping (between Agility, Communication, Knowledge, Magic, Manipulation, Perception, and Stealth) and often giving more general names (eg Scan, Search for Spot Hidden/Trap; Sleight for Hide Item and Pick Pocket). There are useful additions (eg Dodge, Throw, First Aid, and various Knowledge skills) as well as items whose usefulness has been questioned, and some more realistic starting levels (40% Climbing, 25% Scan and Search). The extremely detailed PC-creation system which played a critical role in the use of the encumbrance system in old TRAVELLER has been simplified and streamlined, with some basic equipment, varied according to cultural (Primitive, Nomad, Barbarian, or Civilised) and parental background (the omission of a number of useful skills may be a quick one for GMs in a hurry) offers previous experience in some 15–20 skills, adding 1–5% for each year past 15 (you are encouraged to start with a 21-year old). Additionally, the changes in the magic system have made some basic equipment, varied according to magical defences or (in sorcery) to improve effects. Magic points are required to cast and resist spirit magic and sorcery, and may be used to boost any spell, to get it past magical defences or (in sorcery) to improve effects. Magic points can never exceed basic POW unless some are stored in crystals or otherwise acquired; if all are used, the adventurer falls unconscious. Tokens are regained at 1/4 of total per hour.

Space forads discussing the very useful Gambemasters Book beyond what has already been mentioned, except to say that most items now cost more, armour a great deal more, and prices are higher in general, for some things, lower for others, outside the cities. Acquiring good armour, magic items, etc is going to be more of a struggle and so, I feel, more satisfying. I hope the adventurists are better prepared for it. I hope the adventurists are better prepared for it.

There are three kinds of magic, spirit, divine, and sorcery; all make use of rituals for specific purposes, eg to enchant objects or summon creatures, but the Ceremonial ritual, used for increasing the chance of casting a spell by taking extra time, is the only one in which everyone has a basic chance, improved by the Magic bonus. Spirit magic (equivalent to Battle Magic) is learned with the help of shamans or cults, by defeating spell spirits in spirit combat. The basic chance of casting a spell is the same as old Rune magic in its conditions, though fewer spells are generally available (Shield is not); initiates may get it on a one-use-base for the sacrifice of POW and a little money (note that adults will normally be initiates of some cult in Barbarian and Civilised cultures), while priests get reusable spells. Sorcery is a totally different system, disliked by followers of the other two, in which spells and procedures to manipulate and improve them are learned as spells, through training by sorcerers and study only (no experience rolls); the spells requires INT to remember, have a range of 10m and a basic duration of 10 minutes. Magic points are required to cast and resist spirit magic and sorcery, and may be used to boost any spell, to get it past magical defences or (in sorcery) to improve effects. Magic points can never exceed basic POW unless some are stored in crystals or otherwise acquired; if all are used, the adventurer falls unconscious. Tokens are regained at 1/4 of total per hour.

Players off. I foresee that some may adapt what rules they like piecemeal, but feel that the revised rules are an improvement. Three final points: the Ancients, Npcs. Players Book p44] nowhere appears; the donkey, commonest beast of burden in the ancient world, is omitted apart from a price for 'burros'; the obsolete spell Detect Life is given to several NPCs in the scenario (Substitute the Detect Enemy?).

Presentation: 9  Skill: 8
Playability: 9 Complexity: 8
Rules: 9 Overall: 9
Oliver Dickinson

TRAVELLER ADVENTURE 12-
SECRET OF THE ANCIENTS

Game Designers Workshop

This adventure explains why Humaniti were spread across the universe, the real history of the Droyne and Vargr, and other interesting puzzles in the prehistory of the official GDW Imperium. It builds on the background presented in two earlier adventures, Research Station Gamma and Twilight's Peak, but can be run independently. However, it is almost impossible to run if a campaign doesn't already involve the Ancient background.

This adventure begins as one of the player characters inherits an Ancient statuette, illegally imported from an Imperial archaeological site. The background information presented with the statuette gives some important (and subtle) clues to the next stage of the scenario; an expedition to an undiscovered Ancient site, complete with artefacts and a working TL25 starship! The starship is preprogrammed to take the characters on the ultimate adventure, a trip outside the universe to confront the last of the Ancients.

The main problem with this scenario is its sheer scale, which makes subplots almost impossible. A normal Traveller adventure has room for side expeditions, real events, and misleading events - this adventure doesn't even have a rumour table! Bar a few thugs, who appear early in the adventure and lead players to a patron, there are neither human nor alien opponents. Although the setting is the Spinward Marches around the time of the Fifth Frontier War, there is no mention of the conflict. Characterisation is almost completely missing, and almost all events, including the vital meeting with the Ancient, are summarised with a minimum of detail. Several pages repeat information which has already appeared in other scenarios and supplements.

Another flaw is the fact that the secret is disappointing. It isn't particularly exciting or useful and doesn't add much to the 'feel' of the Imperium. It also duplicates ideas from the work of two well-known SF authors, without acknowledgment. Some of the technological implications are interesting, but characters controlling the artefacts described would totally unbalance any normal campaign.

Despite these flaws, this scenario does introduce the Ancient artifacts, and contains useful details about expeditions into the upper atmosphere of a gas giant, several 'new' Ancient artifacts, and an odd starship resembling a piece of intestine mated to a bunch of grapes. If you're a Traveller completist, or want to find out the 'real' history of the Ancients, this adventure is a must. If you don't use the Ancients it may still be useful, but can't really be run without a lot of preparation.

Overall: 7

Marcus L Rowland
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The characters used by the players should be senior officers of a Constitution class heavy cruiser. Although the Enterprise is used this may be changed to suit the circumstances of a campaign. This scenario was written using first edition Star Trek rules.

**PLAYERS' INFORMATION**

Captain Log,
Stardate 7734.2,
11:00 hours: The Enterprise is on a routine survey mission in the Organian Neutral Area. We have just received distress signals from a Klingon civilian freighter, claiming that their reactor has developed instabilities and will detonate in a few minutes. The crew are abandoning ship. This message is genuine, we are bound to rescue them if false we are likely to enter a trap. I have decided to investigate.

Captains Log Supplemental, 11:45 hours: At 11:25 hours we detected a matter-antimatter explosion near system KA-1102. Sensor readings confirmed the destruction of a Klingon freighter, and records show that it is an authorized route. We are proceeding to the freighter's last known position with a lifeboat, and will scan for hidden weapons and explosives before we beam the survivors aboard.

Captains Log Supplemental, 12:15 hours: Nine survivors, the full crew complement of the freighter, have been rescued. The captain has requested transport to Klingon territory.

Captains Log Supplemental, 12:35 hours: One of the Klingons, named Zithar Malalax, has requested political asylum.

**REFEREE'S INFORMATION**

Malaax, is a deserter, a Klingon Navy Lieutenant, who used false papers to join the merchant fleet. He supports an outlawed extremist political and religious faction which favours an immediate all-out war against the Federation. Most of this faction were killed in recent purges within the Klingon fleet; Malaax fled to avoid execution.

Malaax's faction considers the indirect tactics currently favoured by the Klingon ruler to be an insult to the warrior spirit of the Klingon race. He asked for political asylum because he knows that the freighter survivors will be interrogated when they return to Klingon space. He is a skilled politician, and can defeat voice stress analysis and conventional lie detectors, unless questions are worded extremely carefully.

The following questions and answer session shows his tactics:

**Q:** Why do you want political asylum?
**A:** I was being persecuted by the Klingon government.

**Q:** Why are you persecuting you?
**A:** I oppose their military policies.

**Q:** Which policies do you mean?
**A:** I don't think that we should be attempting to sabotage Federation activities (Malaax means that he would prefer all-out war, but doesn't say so).

**Q:** Which Federation activities do you mean?
**A:** (Malaax describes a Klingon subversion attempt which he knows has failed. He has successfully diverted attention from his political goals.)

Malaax will not voluntarily submit to Psycho-Tricorder interrogation or truth drugs. He intends to escape on a neutral world, and make his way back to the Empire to resume an underground political career.

If Malaax is taken at face value he will escape sooner or later, doing as much damage as possible before he leaves the ship. If he is questioned properly when he defects, or after an abortive escape attempt, he will reveal the following information:

The freighter carried five Klingon agents on its last trip, three weeks earlier, and met a Federation shuttle near System KA-1102. The agents boarded the shuttle carrying several equipment cases. Malaax does not know what the agents planned; and does not see the registry number of the shuttle. He believes that they intended to sabotage the Federation colonies in system KA-1102.

The spies were members of an infiltration squad who spent some time determining the weak points of the colonies and have now taken over automated mining facilities, reprogramming the equipment to bombard two colonised class M worlds with 500-ton ore cargoes. Once the main cities are destroyed the Klingons will say that the Federation colonisation effort has failed, and will claim the system for the Klingon Empire.

**SYSTEM KA-1102: PLAYERS' INFORMATION**

This system is midway between Federation and Klingon space, and is notable for its triple suns, a close trio less than two million miles apart. They radiate powerful gravitational waves and electromagnetic pulses, making Sensor and Transporter operation unreliable.

**SYSTEM SURVEY:**

**KA-1102/1**
Type: V (Vulcan type)  
Planetary Rotation: 285 hours  
Land: 50%  
Climate: Hot (30-45°C)  
Mineral Content: Normal metals 37%, special minerals 8%, radioactive 5%, gemstones 24%, industrial crystals 8%  

**KA-1102/II**
High Sierra  
Type: M (Matter Type)  
Planetary Rotation: 24 hours  
Land: 45%  
Climate: Temperate (16-25°C)  
Mineral Content: Normal metals 18%, special minerals 18%, radioactive 31%, gemstones 46%, industrial crystals 8%  

**KA-1102/III**
New Sussex  
Type: M (Matter Type)  
Planetary Rotation: 24 hours  
Land: 55%  
Climate: Hot (30-45°C)  
Mineral Content: Normal metals 88%, special minerals 8%, radioactive 35%, gemstones 46%, industrial crystals 8%  

New Sussex has 7568 citizens, primarily Terrans. Most inhabitants are involved in agriculture and the development of a viable industrial base. There is a lucrative mining industry, but no intelligent life forms. Several automated mining projects are based on the moon.

**KA-1102/IV**
(Unnamed)  
Gas giant with six moons, none habitable.

**KA-1102/V**
(Unnamed)  
Gas giant with four moons, none habitable.

**SYSTEM KA-1102: REFEREE'S INFORMATION**

The gravity waves and electromagnetic effects in this system cause all Sensors and Transporter operations to be made at a -15% penalty at short range, -15% at medium or long range, -25% in the inner system, and +5% closer to the suns.

The Klingons are based on the moon of New Sussex, occupying one of the

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**A Star Trek Scenario for 3-5 Characters**
by Marcus L Rowland
mine installations. The mining operations create static which disrupts Sensor scans and Transporter operations in a 5 km radius. Within this radius, 'atmospheric pressure' is subject to the influence of these systems. Outside this area operation is normal for the system.

There are no immediate clues to the Klingon's location and the Enterprise will probably investigate the entire system. The referee may wish to run some or all of the following encounters:

**Planet I (Hells).** During the exploration of this system, two Federation ships discover the outer formations of this planet's surface. Both are detectable from space but have corroded to an extent which makes accurate identification difficult. They can be beamed aboard but nothing significant will be learned. The planet's intense heat, corrosive atmosphere, and high pressure are far beyond the capabilities of normal life support equipment. If anyone beams down to this planet their equipment will start to malfunction in 5-116 days, failing at 50% per day. In approximately 3 days, without life support will die instantly. Since this planet is close to the triple sun, all Transporter operations are made with a -25% penalty. If the first roll fails nothing will happen, and it will take a second roll to escape. If a second roll fails the Transporter will 'scramble' and kill the person being beamed.

**Planet II (High Sierra).** The colonists will extend a normally cool Vulcan welcome to visitors. The climate of this world means that mirages, sandstorms, and other dangerous weather conditions are highly likely. Colonists with 1D8+1ST without local advice would be exposed to these conditions. There are no native life forms, but the colonists have imported a few familiar species. Many of the local homes have Setbots as pets. There are a few Le-Matak yachts in the desert and they are equipped with a water supply of 100,000 gallons. If a Vulcan crew member (or a crew member who has visited Vulcan) lands, make a luck roll. If this roll succeeds the party will be met by a Vulcan (Vulcan) who will invite the party to visit the home. This Vulcan is a mining engineer who helped the automated installations on New Sussex's moon. He is particularly interested in talking about his work, preferring to concentrate on news from home and intellectually stimulating topics.

**New Sussex**

**Day 1:** The new colonists are at a disadvantage in their negotiations with the inhabitants. While the colonists are armed, their weapons are less than adequate for the current situation. In the current situation, the colonists are at a distinct disadvantage.

**Day 2:** The colonists have learned that a woman living on the planet's surface is being chased by a mysterious object. This object is a starship. She is a harmless clerk, who has heard about the Enterprise's mission and put her information to work. She is a valuable member of the crew and will be missed. The colonists are not able to follow her lead.

**Day 3:** Dr McCoy (or any medical officer) is asked to visit the planet's main hospital and give some advice on a terrifying disease, a man規劃s to cut into an unidentified object, possibly a starship. She is a harmless clerk, who has heard about the Enterprise's mission and put her information to work. She is a valuable member of the crew and will be missed. The colonists are not able to follow her lead. She is a harmless clerk, who has heard about the Enterprise's mission and put her information to work. She is a valuable member of the crew and will be missed. The colonists are not able to follow her lead. She is a harmless clerk, who has heard about the Enterprise's mission and put her information to work. She is a valuable member of the crew and will be missed. The colonists are not able to follow her lead. She is a harmless clerk, who has heard about the Enterprise's mission and put her information to work. She is a valuable member of the crew and will be missed. The colonists are not able to follow her lead.

**Day 4:** Dr McCoy (or any medical officer) is asked to visit the planet's main hospital and give some advice on a terrifying disease, a man planned to cut into an unidentified object, possibly a starship. She is a harmless clerk, who has heard about the Enterprise's mission and put her information to work. She is a valuable member of the crew and will be missed. The colonists are not able to follow her lead. She is a harmless clerk, who has heard about the Enterprise's mission and put her information to work. She is a valuable member of the crew and will be missed. The colonists are not able to follow her lead. She is a harmless clerk, who has heard about the Enterprise's mission and put her information to work. She is a valuable member of the crew and will be missed. The colonists are not able to follow her lead. She is a harmless clerk, who has heard about the Enterprise's mission and put her information to work. She is a valuable member of the crew and will be missed. The colonists are not able to follow her lead. She is a harmless clerk, who has heard about the Enterprise's mission and put her information to work. She is a valuable member of the crew and will be missed. The colonists are not able to follow her lead.

**Day 5:** [Bakke if James Kirk (or similarly charismatic Captain) is a player character.] While visiting government offices, Kirk meets Alice Vilky, a girl who was in his class at school before he entered Starfleet. Alice and her family were the only ones to escape from the planet's surface. Kirk has always thought of Alice as an old friend. She regards Kirk as a war-mongering savage, and tries to convert him to her philosophy. This encounter is amusing but irrelevant to the adventure; however, Vilky will be killed if the Klingon plan succeeds, and the Captain will have to live with his conscience.

**If the party makes no progress by day 6 the following incident should occur:**

An engineer making a routine visit to moon mining base 4 reports that there was an attempt to contaminate the fuel. They have come to the conclusion that the fuel was on a mission costing 200,000 credits and a hull was punctured. Fortunately he was wearing a life support suit and managed to fly the shuttle out of range. Ticonderoga's examination of the damage suggests that an energy weapon was used.

**THE APOCALYPSE PLAN**

The mining complexes on the moon are standard automatized designs, requiring no human supervision apart from occasional maintenance. The mining complexes are designed to spread over a much wider area, with more pitheads (see below) to the South, East, and West of the mapped section. The complex is powered by a buried matter/antimatter power plant. The main control panel is located in the mining plant's main control complex, built over remains of a metallic structure which collided with the moon a few million years ago. Ten-kilometre deep shafts are dug by Phasers set to disintegrate, the mined material is transferred to the shaft by a hydraulic lift. A permanent target beam installation (usually a 'Pheared') pulls the molten rock up the shaft. It cools as it rises, and is slagged eventually before being poured into a continuous liquid smelter which purifies and refines it. Valuable components (eg, radioactive) are shipped by a factory freighter. Useless components are shipped on a spoil bog. After being poured into 500-ton cylinders, usually called cabs. The sludge travel down another: belt to the main control complex, where they are loaded onto a magnetic mass driver and fired into New Sussex. Ground-based Tractor and Pressor installations catch the sludge and bring them in for slow landings at equatorial sites. There are usually several dozen sludge stores in the control centre for firing as needed. The mining complex and main control centre (area scale) may be shown to players if requested, since they are on New Sussex.

**New Sussex**

**Day 1:** The planet is extremely rough; the 50-metre contour lines shown on the map are a guide to the general lie of the land, and sharp ridges and stones are very common. The zero altitude on this map is an average along the contour lines. The area is used for mining buildings. Gravity is 25%, except on the upper floor of the control building.

**Note:** It is assumed that the Klingon plan begins 18 days before the team's arrival on the moon, regardless of the player's rate of progress. As the Federation team arrives it is the lunar morning. The sun is to the north above the horizon. The lunar day lasts 28 earth days. The Klingons have projected the moon mine to be used in the near future for New Sussex in exactly one hour (or if they are sure the mine is under attack). Time bombs have been placed at the planet's surface installations, a device, and their 7th Transport. The time bombs take four hours to reach their destination. At this range their accuracy is high, and the Klingons can place slugs on cities and industrial installations.

There are fifteen Klingons in the complex, six outside the control complex (two in cover near each landing pad, two on patrol) and the rest in the building. All Klingons wear atmospheric suits, capable of operating in a vacuum (5 points for a man-made suit, 1 point for a man's in domestic or colony rover (a small craft designed for local exploration). The Klingons have been surgically deformed to resemble Humans.

**Note:** If Klingon weapons capable of operating in a vacuum are used in a campaign, they must not be carried by the saboteurs. The aim is to make the incident look like an accident or a Human rebellion.
Federation personnel can land by shuttle or beam down to an area outside the static field of the main complex without difficulty. If they choose to land or materialise on either pad they will immediately be exposed to heavy fire. If they decide to beam into the control building, place the Klingon troops before asking the players where they intend to arrive.

Most of the mining equipment is inaccessible; the shafts, pitheads, and smelter unit are automated, radioactive, and extremely hot. Major excavation is required to reach the buried power plant.

The mass driver is a huge magnetic accelerator, designed to induce strong electrical fields in conducting objects entering the West end and throw them to the East. By the time objects leave the track they are travelling at 25 kilometres a second. The track is supported on pylons up to 150 metres tall, to give a horizontal line across the crater. The only section touching the ground is immediately East of the control building. The pylons carry uninsulated high-voltage superconductors, and anyone touching them will take 50 points of electrocution damage. It is necessary to cut the cables on eight adjoining pylons to put the mass driver out of action. The driver may also be destroyed by starship Phaser fire or explosives, but this will disrupt New Sussex's industries and probably lead to a Klingon victory.

The solar panels are 50 metres tall, with the area behind each panel in shadow. Destroying them will not affect the Klingon plans; they are an emergency supply only.

The two landing pads are made of rubble, melted flat by Phaser fire. Each is fitted with a beacon and bright landing lights (shown as crossed lines on the map). If a shuttle approaches within 5 km, automatic proximity detectors will switch on the beacons and lights, warning the Klingons that a vehicle is approaching. The smelter robots will not emerge with cargo unless a freighter lands on the larger pad. There is no manual entrance to the smelter building; the only access is by the conveyer belts out of the final stages of automated production lines with little room for intruders. For maintenance the system would be powered down and decontaminated by remote control, but this takes 45 hours.

The conveyer belts follow the land contours, supported on causeways where they cross difficult terrain. They move at 10 kph. Where belts meet the ore falls down a chute, landing on the belt which moves towards the smelter. Characters could ride belts if they avoided falling down a chute. The final belt before the smelter is visible from the area around the freighter pad, and characters riding it may draw fire from the Klingon control centre.

The control centre is a huge block, with walls and roof built to withstand up to 11 points of damage by starship weaponry (for the purposes of this scenario, 1100 points of hand weapon fire):

**Lower Floor**

1. Causeway and road from the landing pad.
2. Vehicle store. Doors can be forced, but this results in 30 points damage.
3. Pressurised hangar holding two shuttles. Both are Starfleet units belonging to small ships which are believed to have been lost in the treaty zone. This discovery may be the start of another adventure, to trace the whereabouts of the missing ships. Both shuttles hold Klingon homing beacons, but this isn’t obvious unless the players spend time searching them.
4. Lift rising 50m to the control section.
5. Airlock to the warehouse section, which is in vacuum.

6. Conveyor belt from smelter to control building.
7. Powered rollers, used to carry the slugs from the belt into the warehouse. The tunnel between the belt and the warehouse is fitted with blast doors, which take 4 seconds to close. These doors can withstand 300 points of energy or projectile fire.
8. Two cargo-handling robots. These robots are fitted with contragavity lifters, and lock onto a slug then fly it to any part of the warehouse. Because the mass driver equipment produces mass and electrical static, their computer brains aren’t particularly bright. They will not recognise Humans or respond to verbal commands unless a special control console (ie compartment 20) is used. There are four emergency stop buttons around the base of each machine; pressing one of these butttone makes the robot stop moving until reset. Both robots have manual control cabinets (5 metres above the ground, reached by ladder), and can be flown as normal atmosphere flying vehicles, maximum speed 25 kph, maximum altitude 250m. Robots can take 150 points of damage before they are punctured, the inner mechanism is delicate and will start to malfunction after another 25 points of damage are taken.
9. Slag racks. Slags are stored on steel racks, supported at 7-metre intervals above the floor. The lowest rack of each unit (at floor level) is shown; there are another five racks above them.
10. Powered rollers feedings slugs into the first stage of the mass driver (11) a machine which generates a powerful Pessor beam which pushes the slug forward through a non-metallic barrel (12) into the main mass driver (13). The powerful fields generated by the coils of the driver induce a powerful electric current in the slug, which can then be moved by the magnetic fields of the mass driver.

**Upper Floor**

Note. The facilities shown on this floor should be mapped out in tactical scale, complete with furniture and other equipment. This floor is fitted with artificial gravity generators, giving a standard gravity throughout.

14. A large lobby containing crated machinery and parts, none of immediate use but vital to any attempt to repair the installation after combat.
15. Four workshops, containing an assortment of tools and parts. Use of this equipment gives a -15% modifier on the use of all engineering and technical skills.
16. Sick Bay. An emergency operating theatre and dispensary, intended for visiting work crews. It has never been used, since wounded crewmen have always been ferried to New Sussex. This is fortunate, because the diagnostic bed is faulty. There is a 25% penalty on medical skill rolls using this bed, but all other equipment gives the normal -25 modifier for sick bay use.
17. Galley. Equipped to feed up to 25 personnel (with some crowding). The food synthesizers have been reprogrammed to produce Klingon rations, which are unpleasant but edible.
18. Recreation compartment. A typical Federation facility, fitted with games and sports equipment, hologram projectors, musical instruments, etc.
19. Life Support equipment. A complex machine, similar to those in use on Starships. There is a cumulative 10% chance that any shot fired into this compartment and missing its target will damage the equipment, with the following effects:

1-3. Air purifier failure
4-5. Water purifier failure
MINING INSTALLATION
CONTROL ROOM

KEY:
A: ARMoured DOORS
B: CEILING GRILLES
C: Ramps
D: DESKS
E: FOOD SYNTHESISER
F: COMPUTER UNITS (BANKS)
G: COMMUNICATIONS
   CONSOLE
H: ROBOT CONTROL
   CONSOLE
I: CABINETS - ELECTRONIC
   EQUIPMENT
J: MAIN CONTROL DESK
K: FRESHER
L: HOLOGRAM DISPLAY
   SCREEN
M: HOLOGRAM DISPLAY
   SCREEN

AVERAGE HUMAN SIZE
0 1.5 METRES
second intervals. Any manoeuvre will take the Enterprise out of danger, with the slugs aimed at it burning up in New Sussex's atmosphere. The other slugs are aimed directly at planet-side installations, and the Enterprise must attempt to get out of the way as they arrive, using the interception rules above. The first 15 slugs are aimed at cities, and each will kill D10×1000 people if they penetrate. The remainder are aimed at farms and mining installations with D10×1000 points of damage.

In this case the Klingons will have already left the moon in their shuttles before the first slugs reach New Sussex, detonating the charges as they leave.

END GAME

If the Enterprise escapes, they intend to fly to a D-7 battlecruiser, which is supposed to pick them up near the outer gas giant. At this point the referee has three options:

1. The battlecruiser is present, and will pick up the Enterprise. It will remove the Enterprise from the Solar System.
2. There is no battlecruiser. When the Enterprise switches on homing beacons they will explode, killing everyone in the shuttles. This isn't, in fact, the worst part of this adventure, because the enemy is able to take advantage of the situation.
3. The battlecruiser is present but will fire at the first sign of trouble, firing on the shuttles to silence their crews. Again, this is a typical Klingon contingency plan.

Players may choose to accept the Klingon command and learn about the rendezvous plan. It is possible that they might then attempt to impersonate the agents and capture the battlecruiser. Roll a D20. On a roll of 2-3, the roll is 4-5, or the roll is 6-7 plus 10% of the crew in the battlecruiser is in use. On a roll of 1 the 'homing beacons' are bombs. Players should be allowed luck rolls before switching them on, and will realise that something is wrong if the roll succeeds.

The long-term consequences of a Klingon success include the abandonment of the colony, and its acquisition by the Klingon empire. The Captain of the Enterprise will be court-martialled and possibly relieved of command.

If the Klingon plan fails and the Federation can prove that they attempted to destroy the colony, the Organians will confiscate a Klingon colony and give it to the Federation. The Captain will be decorated.

Immediate results (partial failure or success) should be handled accordingly.

**KLINGONS**

There are 16 NPC Klingons in this scenario, of whom 12 are typical Klingon Soldier Guards as described in the Star Trek game. All have access to, and are permitted to use, the occupied Federation life-support suits described above. All Klingons, apart from Maaalax, are surgically disguised as Humans.

- Zithalat Maaalax: Former Klingon Lieutenant, deserter; STR:67; END:73; INT:68; DEX:55; CHA:44; LUC:28; PSY:07; Significant skills: Leadership 66; Negotiation/diplomacy 33; Interrogation 77; Starship Cmb 26; Marksmanship 68
- Personal Combat (unarmed) 75; Transporter Ops 63; Computer Tech 45; Language, Terran 37.

Maaalax carries an Agonizer (concealed under a bandage on his left leg) and two plastic daggers in his boots. The daggers won't show up on a normal Tricorder scan.

- Galizar Havloth: Klingon Captain (Intelligence); STR:72; END:66; INT:70; DEX:60; CHA:68; LUC:26; PSY:10; Significant skills: Leadership 66; Negotiation/diplomacy 36; Interrogation 73; Starship Cmb 27; Env suit op 73; Marksmanship 59; Personal Combat (unarmed) 52; Shuttle Ops 43; Computer Tech 25; Language, Terran 68
- Phaser II, Communicator, Agonizer, Detonator (see above), armoured life-support suit

- Slaad Sliix: Lieutenant (Intelligence, Technical Branch); STR:56; END:45; INT:78; DEX:78; CHA:14; LUC:18; PSY:10; Significant skills: Leadership 45; Electronics 57; Personal Combat (unarmed) 52; Transporter Ops 63; Computer Tech 45; Language, Terran 39; Mech Eng 69; Disguise (Surgical) 47; Env suit op 31
- Phaser II, Electronics tool kit, Tricorder (Federation model), Communicator, Explosives kit (contains 3 limpet mines, detonators, a spare radio-detector, etc.), armoured life-support suit

**NEWS SKILLS**

Disguise (Surgical). The ability to use automated plastic surgery instruments for disguise. Not available to character players, who must use Medical skill instead.

**DEMOLITION.** The effective placement and use of explosives.

**SOURCES**

The adventures in this scenario were not directly suggested by any one source. The following references may be useful to referees:

- The Moon is a Harsh Mistress: Robert A. Heinlein
- The High Frontier: Jerry Pournelle
- The Fountain of Paradise: Charles Sheffield
- The Web Between the Worlds: Dave Langford
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Welcome to Heroes & Villains, the regular column devoted to Superhero role-playing. This column will aim to expand the rules of SHRPGs in much the same way as Treasure Chest, RuneRites, Starbase, etc., have expanded other game systems. The first few instalments will be devoted to Golden Heroes, but the page is open to other SHRPGs. If you’ve got any good ideas, put them down on paper and send them in.

To start with, we proudly present something to allow beleaguered SSs who’re besieged by hordes of oilrig-hurling heroes to get their own back with...

MEGAVILLAINS

Primarily, megavillains are powerful characters who can single-handedly take on and beat a superhero team. Each comic-book superhero team has its own megavillain whose schemes they must constantly thwart and whose abilities match their own superpowers. Five Frames whenever you must first decide on a theme or a name (preferably both). The theme should be generic/elemental rather than specific to allow you to build in many different superpowers. For example, total control over temperature, weather, earth, or fire. Select the megavillain’s superpowers to reflect this theme. If the power has more than one Grade, then they should be given in the order of Highest to Lowest. But avoid unnecessarily high Grades: never use Grade 3 where Grade 2 would do.

If necessary, invent a new superpower or have the megavillain develop new ones. Comic-book villains often have abilities new to the heroes and it is fun to bemuse the players and keep them guessing. Don’t go over the top, as any refinement should be available to the players as well if they have a suitable hero.

It is important that the megavillain has several advantageous backgrounds compatible with their theme. Most megavillains Grades, if not maximum. But avoid unnecessarily high Grades: never use Grade 3 where Grade 2 would do.

The megavillain’s physical attributes should be designed with the strongest opposing hero as the standard. The megavillain should be able to plug it out with that hero on equal terms - taking the damage dished out and giving it back in equal measure. This does not mean that they need be Superstrong or have Tough Skin or Armour, however. Use a method more in keeping with the megavillain’s other abilities. Mass Variation, Cybernetic Devices, Magical Enhancements, etc., are good ways of compensating for high Strength in an opponent whilst Force Fields and good dodges (particularly refined power dodges) can be used instead of the more obvious damage reducing powers.

The real bugaboo for the heroes is the number of Frames that these fiends have each round. Megavillains have as many Frames as the SS wishes, and these need not remain constant for that particular character. The usual number of Frames for a megavillain is 3 plus 1 for every hero they are engaging at that time, but this can be increased if they are fighting on their own ground or decreased if they are having to watch out for lackeys, etc. Furthermore, they ignore initiative rolls (the real clincher), using their own frames whenever they want to throughout the round. It is impossible for a single hero to defeat them and even the most powerful team would need good teamwork to stand a chance.

Most importantly, megavillains require an experienced and skilful SS. It is the quality of their tactics and personality which sets most megavillains above their contemporaries. Refrain from using them until you are confident you can do justice to this side of their persona.

As an example, here is Earthlord, to give you some idea of what this sort of character should be like.

**EARTH LORD**

**Allies: Various**

**Ego:** 17  
**Dexterity:** 9  
**Strength:** 43 (23)  
**Vigour:** 18 (11)

**Movement:**

**Dodge Modifier:** Can’t dodge

**Strike Modifier:**

**Defence Class:**

**Frames per Round:**

**HTK:** 62  
**Recover:** 1d6+1/Rdh  
**Recover:** 1d6+1/Rdh  
**Pushback:** 25*  
**Stage:** 13

**Usual Attacks WC:**

**Damage:**

**Fists:** 2d6HTC 1d6–6HTK (+28+)  
**Energy Attack:** 3  
**Force Field:** 3

**Superpowers**

**Energy Attack:** Earth Grade 2: hail of pebbles and stones.

**Energy Immunity:** Earth: boulders, rocks, most iron thrown at him are absorbed into his body or.

**Energy Reflection:** Earth: can be reflected back to their source due to his innate control over the elements of Earth.

**General Force Barrier:** 10HTK: made of earth and stone, it cannot be moved.

The shapes remain after he stops concentrating so he can form as many as he wants, given time. He can attempt to form them around a foe as a restraining attack and are DC5 for the purposes of destroying them.

**Health:** Grade 4 (Grade 2): Disease, Radiation/Toxin Immunity, Regeneration, Fast Recovery.

**Larger:** Grade 1

**Shapechange:** Freeform: to large stalagmite or boulder, etc; can merge with the earth and move through it at a rate of 3m.

**Solidify:** Grade 3

**Tough Skin:** Grade 4 (Grade 1)  
**Wallcrawling:** Only on natural walls of earth or stone, etc, at a rate of 3m.

**Earthquake:** 20m radius, created by stamping his foot (1 Action); those in range must roll under Dexterity or fall and spend 1 Frame recovering and another to get up at some time.

**Advantageous Backgrounds**

**Immortal**

Earthlord is an elemental earth-spirit from the dawn of history. For aeons before the birth of humanity, he wandered the Under-earth tending its crop of minerals and nurturing the roots of the Earth’s plant life. Then came Man; forging the stones of the Earth into weapons to slay his own kind and the Earth’s other creatures and mining, to rape the Earth of her glory. Finally, he layered metal and concrete upon the land and turned it from its natural form into mad shapes of his own devising.

At first, Earthlord tried to tame the upstart. Man’s nature, however, precluded Earthlord’s peaceful rule; he was betrayed and bound by Man’s magic. Only recently has he escaped, swearing to remove the stain of Mankind from Mother Earth for ever.

Earthlord cannot abide man’s concrete and steel world. He lurks in the wilderness, pouncing on any encroachment. Remote scientific establishments are particularly prone to attack and he is not averse to capturing scientists and forcing them to turn their lunatic science back upon their own.

Earthlord is a large, roughly humanoid mass of earth and clay mottled with patches of moss and fungi. He smells damp, mouldy, and earthy, and speaks in a deep rumbling voice.

Earthlord is a megavillain. He ignores initiative rolls. If he is lifted (requiring a strength in excess of 30 if he is on the bare earth), his attributes and power grades fall to those indicated in parentheses.

*He cannot be pushed-back when standing on bare earth.*
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Dear WD,

Whilst perusing the February issue, I found several points which I believe need commenting upon.

Firstly, on the Fiend Factory debate: it is a fact that the quality of the Factory has deteriorated of late, but the February issue was a distinct improvement. These mini-scenarios help to flesh out the monsters, and I hope that when Fiend Factory branches out into other systems, this excellent idea will be used.

I also notice that the price of our wonderful hobby is continually on the increase. As gaming becomes increasingly commercialised and hyped, so the prices increase. Admittedly, some rises are necessary, such as the figure price increase, but the new RuneQuest costs! Oh no! As far as I can see, this will simply begin to kill off the game, I mean £24.95 is really quite ridiculous.

Back to White Dwarf, however. A Place of Damp and Darkness is one of the most excellent and inspiring articles seen for some time. Let’s hope for some more of similar quality. A new writer I notice.

I cannot understand the populace’s disdain for The Travellers, Thrud and Dave Langford, all of which are excellent and contribute to the standard of White Dwarf, which is above that of most of its garish American contemporaries. We should be pleased with what we have.

Yours faithfully,
Stephen Gardner, Cheltenham.

Dear WD,

Could I make a suggestion? Could the RQ scenario be designed with 3rd edition stats along side the 2nd edition stats? It does not need to be any major effort, just get the writers to add such things as Magic points, Fatigue, DEX SR, some skills and spells in brackets.

I loved Beyond the Shadow of a Dream, for though it was labelled a D&D and Fighting Fantasy scenario it was full of role-playing. It would be easy for any referee to convert it to any other system easily.

The ‘Motivated Traveller’ was also very useful, again because if you get the spirit of the simple objective system you could use it in any other system. The Altrist looks particularly fun to play! In days gone by when I played D&D and no other system had been invented, the new monsters in Fiend Factory did create interest. The game seemed to be one long puzzle of how to take out the next monster. We knew no better then. It was only later that we realised that the best evenings play were spent role-playing. Now new characters, settings, new plots and land keep us amused.

How about turning part of Fiend Factory into a space for plot ideas?

Issue 87 is one for the file, so thank you WD. There was even an article on Alchemists, and me with a new character who is a dwarf.

Yours role-playing,
Max Parsonage, Oxford.

Dear WD,

It’s a well known fact that you can’t win, but you can’t win, can you? Still smirking from the lash of Peter Moore’s sarcasm, I thought it might be worth writing to explain to him and Lolith’s anonymous follower what we were trying to achieve in writing Night’s Dark Agents the way we did.

We were, in the end, on the task of creating a Nipponese supplement for AD&D. That has been promised for some time, and when it arrives will no doubt cover samurai, ronin, yakuzza, geisha and ninja ample enough to satisfy Peter. We had a more modest aim — to provide enough information on historical ninja to allow players and referees of any role-playing game to accurately incorporate ninja and ninjutsu. Such information was obviously relevant to Bushido, which already has ninja, but given the wide popularity of AD&D and RuneQuest, we included rule variations for these systems as well, and in the case of the former a complete character class.

This might seem pointless exercise if, as Peter maintains, such a class is incompatible with either game. That all depends on how closely you stick to the original rules when designing a campaign. It’s true that the ninja are not really at home in the feudal European settings of AD&D, but the combat rules make it difficult to simulate chain weapons and the aimed attack characteristic of martial arts, but there is nothing fundamental to prevent an AD&D based campaign being set in a fantasy Japan similar to Bushido’s Nippon, or for that matter a RuneQuest based one. There is an important difference between a campaign system and a rule setting. Those who don’t want a Nipponese campaign can take as much or as little as they want from the articles, but given the popularity of thieves/assassin types, we were not trying to be thought that there was something in them for most people.

Hour of the Tiger was a multi-system scenario, and there was no way that full stats for all of them could have been included in the available space. They shouldn’t really be necessary, though. NPCs do what the referee wants them to do, and the people who need to have fully detailed skills are the player characters. They had three articles and a character class, which should be enough to go on.

Before signing off, could we use this opportunity to ask Gordon (?) Schilde, the ninjutsu student from Canada who wrote to us care of White Dwarf to write to us again. The envelope with your address was not passed to us, and we can’t reply! Hoping things are clearer now.


Dear WD,

It is with regret that I do not use the usual preamble we find in most of your letters (you know the sort, ’the best of all worlds’). I’ve even found I find it less worth the effort of sorting the good articles from the plethora of ads etc.

Anyway, down to business, and in particular the letter from Jez Keen printed in WD87. In defence of the Fiend Factory he gives the excellent reason that they provide interest, confronting the players with something they don’t expect. In the same issue’s Fiend Factory we find the ambane bug (a poisonous flying beetle), the buzzbug (stand outside on any summer’s day, sweat and see who happens along), and various other creatures, apparently doing the same as my creatures, but in a different setting.

Jez does have a point though, a limited number of monsters does make for a boring ‘knock ’em down drag ’em out’ dungeon crawl, but outside the bendy dungeons and cartoons there is room to make monsters more interesting, perhaps in the vein of Trollpak for D&D.

Even within the dungeon there is the opportunity to make the monsters interesting. Jez gives the example of trolls running a sweetshop as novel, but silly, and I quite agree, but trolls and even orcs may run sweetshops when they enter next door to the ironmongers! Some orcs may be capable of running an organised society.

Imagine your errant paladin’s surprise when, packed full of stories about orich misdeeds, and out for blood, with the full blessing of his church, he comes across an orc city filled of (moderately) calm and peaceful orcs. Add a nearby tribe of orcs of a more traditional vintage, and the paladin will feel a great crisis of conscience looming! (Read the first Corum books by Michael Moorcock for a similar situation.)

The wealth of monsters available will provide a great variety of different ways for adventurers to die or be killed, but a well chosen and fleshed out selection will, in my opinion, make for an ultimately more interesting and durable campaign. I can do no better than to quote Roger Musson (WD25) . . . D&D in its highest form allows players the fun of actually taking part in a fantasy novel.

Please note that the numbers of different monsters in a good novel is very low. May your troll’s profits never dwindle, Nigel Steel, Uppermill.
DM'S INTRODUCTION

The *Dawn of Unlight* is a fantasy scenario set in the Forest of Mirkwood in the northwest of Middle Earth. Although firmly set in the world that Tolkien created, it may also be set in your own campaign world with little trouble; pick any forest area associated with evil things and make sure that there are some elves or a similar race nearby. If you are playing the scenario in Middle Earth, almost any time period could be used, such as the standard MERP seventeenth century TA or sometime in the 4A.

This adventure has been designed for fairly low level characters, although DMS should not find it difficult to upgrade individual encounters for more powerful adventurers. A party with a total of around 15-20 levels is suggested, eg 3-4 types of characters of 4th level or 6 of 3rd level. If you are playing MERP, the following types of characters are suggested: silvan elves, sindar, stoors, beardings, dunedain, eothrim (rohirrim) and woodmen. Any character professions and abilities may prove useful, and everyone should be able to defend themselves. If you are playing D&D or AD&D the following races and classes are suggested: elves, men, halflings, half-elves, half-orcs, fighters, rangers, magic-users, clerics, druids and thieves.

The party should start based in or around the Forest of Mirkwood and the adventure begins as a seemingly normal trip into the forest. It would help the plot greatly if one or more of the characters comes from a woodland tribe. The following extract from *The Silmarillion* should provide you with ideas of the atmosphere you should try to create and can be read to the characters if they visit the elves (section 3).

"... Therefore Melkor said to her: 'Do as I bid; and if thou hunger still when all is done, then I will give thee whatsoever thy lust may demand. Yea, with both hands.' A cloak of darkness she wove about her, and made the points of darkness that she wove sift to dust when Melkor and Ungoliant set forth: an Unlight, in which things seemed to be no more, and which eyes could not pierce, for it was void. Upon the mountain-top dark Ungoliant lay; and she made a ladder of woven ropes and cast it down, and Melkor climbed upon it. Then Melkor laughed aloud, and leapt swiftly down the long western slopes; and Ungoliant was at his side, and her darkness covered him.

'And in that very hour Melkor and Ungoliant came hastening over the fields of Valinor, as the shadow of a black cloud upon the wind fleets over the sunlight; and they came before the green mound Ezelloh. Then the Unlight of Ungoliant rose up even to the roof of the trees, and Melkor sprang upon the mound; and with his black spear he smote each Tree to its core, wounded them deep, and their sap poured forth. But Ungoliant sucked it up, and going then from Tree to Tree she set her black beak to their wounds, till they were drained; and the poison of Death that was in her went into their tissues and withered them, root, branch and leaf, and they died. And still she thirsted, and going to the Wells of Varda drank them dry; but Ungoliant belched forth black vapours as she drank, and swelled to a shape so vast and hideous that Melkor was afraid."

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

The party are between the Forest River and the Old Forest Road and are hunting either for their supper or furs. They stumble into a clearing in pursuit of a boar or deer and see a woodman encampment on the other side, nestled amongst the boulders that surround a natural fountain spring. However, the glade is unusually quiet, the tents are in disarray and in the undergrowth lie many bodies...

GM'S Notes

The players should not be expecting trouble and though they have strayed deeper into the forest than they usually care to, they should initially feel within the safe confines of civilisation. As they are on a hunting trip, they will most likely not have all their usual adventuring gear. It may help you to keep a calendar as time may become important.

ONE

The Clearing

The clearing is about 30 by 50 yards and has a rocky outcrop at one side where the spring is. Strawgy shrubs and grasses grow on the floor of the clearing and there are many tracks around. The players will find that the bodies have been hacked, stabbed and torn apart. The woodmen were slain on unawares in their sleep and the bodies have been lying dead for some time (over a day). The guards were presumably surprised and slain first, then every other person was slaughtered. Players may search the area for as long as they like. Each 1/2 hour a character may make a Perception roll (AD&D: roll under INT on 4d6). If successful, roll a d6 to determine which of the following points of information they realise or discover. If this is a repeat of an earlier roll or is inappropriate to their skills, nothing is discovered.

1. The men were killed both by natural weapons (teeth and claws) and by manufactured ones (daggers and swords). Some arrows were evidently used but retrieved - except one, a blackened-wood shaft with a wickedly barbed head.
2. There are no bodies of children here, despite the obvious signs in these tents of childrens' belongings.
3. The branches overhead around the clearing retain strands of great cobwebs. They are still slightly sticky.
4. A number of the bodies appear to have died of smothering or suffocation before being mutilated. Only someone able to hear can tell this.
5. A successful tracking skill roll will
OF UNLIGHT
of Mirkwood by Graham Staplehurst

MAP 3: The Hollow
a. Dwellings
b. Cliff
c. Platform
d. Standing Stones
e. Lip of Hollow
f. Boggy Ground
g. Edge of Forest

reveal human or humanoid tracks leading from and to the northeast, into the forest.
6. A patch of rare plants are purplish-black compared with their normal dark green hue. A Herbalist, Druid or Ranger will be able to tell this as a sign of the presence of great evil or poisonous creatures.

The Troll
If the players remain in the clearing for an hour or more, the following encounter takes place. First roll Perception (at Difficulty "hard" – 10) to see if they are surprised. If they all fail, then they will not detect the approach of the troll. (AD&D: roll for surprise as normal, using a d6)
The troll will attempt to surprise a character separated from the rest of the party and capture them with his net and club (for full details of the troll, see stats at the end of the scenario). If the troll manages to capture someone, or if he is badly wounded, he will run off and attempt to evade the rest of the party. He knows the paths in the forest well and will make for his cave, which is 3 miles away. He shares the cave with a she-troll whose whereabouts should be determined by a d100 roll:
01 – 15 The troll meets the she-troll on his way back to the cave.
16 – 60 The she-troll is in the cave on his return.
61 – 80 The she-troll encounters the party separately as they are pursuing the first troll.
81 – 00 The she-troll returns to the cave about 1 hour after the troll does.

The she-troll will not be too upset at the loss of her mate, but will help him if he sees him being attacked. Both trolls are renegade olog-hai. The cave is a simple 3-room affair, hidden, exceedingly smelly and messy. Under a pile of rubbish in the furthest room is a large slab under which their treasure is kept. Anyone trying to lift the slab must roll under STR on d100 + 50 (AD&D: roll on 4d6 + 6). Underneath in a scraped-out hollow is a sword with a silver hilt, several hundred copper and silver coins plus a few gold, a gold necklace, some rusty weapons and shields and a dark glass bottle. The bottle contains Zur potion (see Table ST – 8) and has 5 doses (AD&D: Zur potion is brewed from a fungus and increases sense of smell and hearing ten-fold for 1 hour per dose). If any potion is drunk in the cave, the character will be stunned for 20 minutes as the smell is so bad!

TWO
Introduction
The players may wish to find out who has slaughtered a whole woodman tribe, particularly if one of the characters is of their kin. The DM can have the character recognizing some of the dead people. Clues leading to the discovery of the perpetrators include:
The trail from the clearing into the deep forest.
2. Speaking with the dead, either through casting spells or eating special herbs.
3. Contacting inhabitants of the forest hereabouts – speaking with the animals or even plant life. There may also be intelligent creatures such as the sprites that shifty linger amongst the oaks.
4. Investigating the rumors along the road – these include a story about dead spirits that have arisen, being troubled in their graves, and are stalking the woods and killing people.
If the party either follow the trail or the directions of the forest folk, they will end up at the haugh eventually.

The Haugh
The haugh is a barrow mound where several wise men of the woodmen tribes were buried early in the TA. With changes in clan structures and the effects of the Great Plague, most people have forgotten the ancient grave, but they were great leaders in their time. The Cultists (see below) needed a place of this sort to attempt their link through the spirit world with Ungoliant.
Inside the haugh there are 3 chambers laid out in a T-shape. The two side chambers seem to have been left mainly undisturbed, but close examination will reveal that the bodies have been moved and apparently pulled through a thorn bush! Both these corpses are actually wights, and a couple of minutes after anyone enters a side chamber they will animate. The wights will try to drive anyone interfering with their burial mound out, and if anyone steals anything from a wight’s chamber, that wight will follow by night. It will be able to catch up with the party on the second night.

When the characters see a wight in its animated state (glowing, misty green and noisome) they must make an RR at 2d6 + 1 + level of the party or flee in terror (AD&D: roll under WIS on 3d6 + 4 to save). If the characters approach the haugh or camp nearby after nightfall, there is a 40% chance of encountering a wight from the haugh. If a wight is destroyed outside the barrow, it will permanently disintegrate in the light of the morning sun.
Wights are armed with green wooden daggers and any touch from them automatically causes a ‘cold critical’ (AD&D: This effect should be treated as an icy version of burning hands spell at 4th level) as well as any other damage. All the chambers are about 18’ long and 12’ wide. They contain a central slab on which the attired body was set, wreathed in woodland flowers and leaves. Pots of food and wine were set around the slab. The chambers have walls of solid stone arranged like a dolman. From the outside, the haugh is hard to distinguish from any other knoll or rocky outcropping in the forest, except for a door hidden behind a holy tree planted by the woodmen of a Giar-dian spirit. Druids and herbalists will know that the holy is a sacred tree to these people.
Chamber A. The figure here is skeletal and almost completely fleshless, and lies wrapped in a tatty cloak and ringmail tunic. At its side lies a gold-hilded sword of fine antique craftsmanship. Hidden beneath it is its green dagger. Around it are pots of dried-up honey, fruit, wine, etc. The corpse here is nothing but tatters of skin and bone, wearing a mildewed cloak apparently worked with heavy brocade and tiny gemstones. Around its waist is a wide brown belt and horsehide hunting knife. At its side lies a heavy iron warhammer with nastily spiked claws opposing the beak. The hammer was made by dwarves of the Iron Hills as a present for the chieftain and has dwarfish runes inscribed on the hilt. If read and understood, they have two effects but only someone friendly to dwarfind will be able to use it. The first ability is causing fear in an enemy; it strikes, equivalent to a 6th level stunning command. (A&D: hold person). The second ability is a shout that can point the hammer to produce a 6th level fear’s song. (A&D: fear).

Chamber C. This chamber has been disturbed by the Cultists for their own uses. They have left the other two corpses as they are good guarding and confuse the local populace as to the real nature of going-on in the area. The plinth on which the third corpse once rested is now an altar against one wall and the floor has been thickly strewn with ashes in which a spider-web pattern has been traced. At certain points in the design, green woodden daggers have been stuck upright in small creatues, including a human baby. The whole exudes a very strong feeling of evil that should make a check to stay. Strange and unpleasant smells hang in the air, not least that of rotting flesh but also other nameless and loathsome things.

On the black wall of the chamber are some strange carved writings and inscriptions, painted in blood. The main one is shown in the illustration. The alphabet is elvish, but the language is unfamiliar.


DAWN OF UNLIGHT

Characters able to speak Quenya will be able to read certain words, such as ‘mother’, ‘trees’ and ‘fire’, but no more. However, the other Cultists are curious and encouraged to make every effort at finding a translation. Since the text is so obviously elvish, a trip to an elvish place of knowledge and learning with a library should be found, if not in Rivendell, Lorien and Amor Thranduil in Middle Earth. If you are setting the scenario in your own campaign world somewhere similar will doubtless be known to the players.

THREE

A long trip to one of the elvish settlements will not prove uneventful. Middle Earth is a dangerous place and Mirkwood is certainly no exception. Foes of every sort roam abroad, ready to ambush and kill anything that passes, for food, gold or sheer aggressive instincts. There are three possible encounters for the DM to impose on the party; timing and location is left open for the DM to set.

A. Orcs. A group of 5 orcs are on a ‘wide patrol’, sent out by the Necromancer of Dol’Guldor or the Witch-King of Angmar to terrorise their reaches of Mirkwood and its environs. Their leader, a Gwollin who wears red leathers and carries a shield and morning star. The other four wear soft leather armour and carry either a scimitar or a handaxe along with either a shortbow or 2 shortbows, or two precious flasks on his belt: one of the orcs carry a chalice which boasts endurance >3 for 1 day, the other of Rovk Bow, made from a variety of oak apple and capable of healing 3.20 HP (A&D: 20 HP).

The orcs sleep in trees during the day. At dusk they rise, light a fire and prepare their meal before moving off when light falls. The party may encounter them if they try to climb to the top of the trees and find the orcs sleep. In either case the orcs will be woken up by the noise and smoke, or will surprise the party by dropping on them having heard them approach.

Alternately, the party may come across their camp at night and attempt to surprise anyone on watch. All the orcs carry bows, daggers or knives and a collection of oddments. Golbak has a heavy ring with a dangerous spell and Morgoth’s evil, Uldolin was one of the greatest evils in Endor; even Morgoth being afraid of her when she was at the height of her powers, but she is assumed to have perished even before the First Age began since being driven off by Morgoth’s host of balrogs.

The elven leader will then ask what the party intends to do and expect them to want to hunt down this band of evil worshippers. To this end, the elves will offer help in two ways. Firstly, they will suggest that one of their kind, namely Golbak, will teach them the joiul personality. The second is Nimirshul, a special mithril-dagger forged in the 1A to fight creatures of the spirit world which may pose some defence against such foes. The party will also be equipped as necessary and provisioned before being escorted to the edge of the elves’ domain.

FOUR

Introduction

This part of the adventure is a search for the Cultists. There are various ways of proceeding with the search. The party could wander through the vast expanses of Mirkwood hoping to come across
DAWN OF UNLIGHT

further traces of the cult. They might journey between settlements enquiring of the woodman and itinerant elves what rumours they have heard concerning the Cult. It may take the characters a day or two to hear of the Cult by word of mouth, or they may hear of it from the woodman (they would have to ask around to see who visits it or investigate other potential ritual sites. Whatever the party do, they have a chance to discover the following:

There are apparently more spiders in the woods these days, or else they are becoming bolder and attacking men and elves more frequently.

2. Several cases of children disappearing whilst straying off to play or on errands are related to the party.

3. A hunter says he found a clearing in the wood north of the road where something enormously powerful had flattened a hundred trees, even huge oaks and firs. The site may be found, but there are no clues to how it happened. During their journeying, the characters should have found a few signs of unknown creatures. The party should devise a suitable location for them.

4. Bats. Four giant bats silently swoop down one night on sleeping characters. The bats have a wingspan of about 4 yards, and do not make a sound, but if they have been startled (they wake up if a critical or fumble result is rolled). After having been awakened by the bats, the wounfl will bleed 3 hits per round until bound. The bats are susceptible to fire or will fly off if struck twice.

5. The Cult. The party will be ambushed by a small group of cultists late one afternoon when it is dark and they are straying in the woods. There are 4 men, 2 elves and 2 great spiders in the group. The elves are accomplished tree-walkers and move lightly from branch to branch, which makes them difficult to avoid whilst the men stay on the ground to catch people trying to run off. All the humanoid are swathed in black cloaks complete with hoods, making the ambusher hard to detect with a Perception roll (A&D: the ambusher should roll for surprise with 1 bonus). The ambush starts when the spiders are dropped onto the two of the party. The elves and men then attack the remaining two. As the arms and armour detailed in the stats section, the humanoid all have several small spiders hidden in the folds of their clothing, which may be used to distract them in combat. A thrown spider is a thrown attack on the missile weapon attack table (AT - 4) with 1d8 damage. The spiders, except for armours: only shields count (A&D: treat as a thrown missile against AC3, as - 3 if defender has a shield). After landing ("scoring any damage"), a spider attacks as normal. The spiders' bite (treat as a medium spider) injects an irritant poison: it is second level and the victim may roll an RR every round until successful, then no further effects are suffered. The effects are: 1:4 hits per round plus reduce OB and DB by 10 (this latter is not cumulative). Test for reduced OB after 2 rounds and then lasts for up to 10. (A&D: Effects: Observe D: 0-2 (1d3-1 damage per round, plus -2 hit and -2 AC.)

The great spiders have ordinary stats (A&D: giant spider, see MM) and inject a poison (8th level when they score a critical. The effects must be resisted every round for 10 rounds. Each round a roll is failed, the victim is slowed by 10% (reduced to movement by 1/10th level), (A&D: reduce number of hits and movement rate by 10%, and -1 hit if 1 AC for 10% each). Each subsequent poisoning incurs a further 10 rounds of saves, possibly overlapping with the first set and requiring more than one RR (A&D: saving throw against poison) each round. Each time a Cultist or spider is killed or incapacitated, the party is given a chance to keep morale. The first time this is at 3rd level, then add 3 levels for each ambusher lost. This encounter is designed to weaken the party, not slaughter them! The ambusher may be opposed, and the encounter should have one of two outcomes:

1. The cultists are driven off by the party, and are forced to leave behind a sacrifice - a child they had captured (perhaps they thought he was dead). The party should then use him as a source of information: he can be threatened into revealing the location of the Cult's lair. For the cultists, the fact in a day's time they plan to sacrifice many children in a final attempt to raise the spirit of the Great Mother of Unlight.

2. The party are overwhelmed by the ambushers who command them in webs and drag them off to their lair to be sacrificed with the children.

In any event, the characters now have a good idea of the location of the web trapped and hidden lair of the Cultists before the ceremony gets underway.

FIVE

If the characters find the lair themselves rather than being dragged there captive, they should arrive just after the ceremony has started.

The Lair

The lair is a rocky hollow surrounded by blackhearted trees. One side of it is walled by a small cliff and jumbled boulders. Caves in this cliff and stone huts are built up the cliff, that is the location of the Cultists. The trees around the hollow are scraggly larches and yews. On the opposite side of the hollow to the cliff is a small lip and then dank, boggy ground that leads down to the stream (unless you're a spider!). The ground in the hollow is hard and only a few wizened plants and wiry grasses grow there. A bent line of black standing stones faces the council ring, and the huts where the children (and characters if captured) are secured. In front of the stones is a low rock platform, scratched and pitted where rivulets of poison have etched it away.

The Ceremony

For the ceremony, all the Cultists have gathered behind the standing stones, facing both them and the platform. There are about 50 in all, including 2 or 3 priests and priestesses. The ceremony begins with the priestess speaking. The priestess stands just behind the rock platform facing the congregation. This is Ungorth Móre (or Blackheart Deathspider), who has no real idea what he is doing. The ceremony consists of a lot of chanting, moaning and singing, starting as night falls and going on for a couple of hours. To approach the hollow, the characters must either clamber up the back slope of the cliff or find a path across the brook. They will find that any approach from the side is impenetrably hampered by masses of webs strung between the first. Small, smoky fires have been lit in bowls around the edge of the hollow. They give off evil-smelling and dense smoke which will obscure most details of the scene to characters even if they were websed to the stones. However, it may also give the party some clues to approaching characters.

Ungoltan Appears!

None of the Cultists know the true extent of Ungoltan's power in the past or her power now and will be exceedingly surprised when her spirit actually appears. The appearance will start after the second sacrifice, and (if free) the party will have no chance to escape before they are carried away. If they do interfere, the Cultists will find no further chance to summon Ungoltan that night or indeed for another two weeks. However, the appearance of Ungoltan will have an indelible mark on the characters, for the cracking and groaning sound emanates from the darkness and the cracking gradually gets louder. The darkness can be seen to be pushing back the oily smoke and at its edges there appear to be black flames guttering. The blackness expands to absorb the High Priest and then the standing stones. Anyone within the blackness will find that they can see perfectly both within and outside it (albeit with a feeling of disorientation, so vision, apart from infravision will be poor at best). The webs holding the captives will quickly become brittle and breakable. Those inside will also see Ungoltan's spirit (see effects below).

Within a short space of time, the flames around the blackness will suddenly burst out with great ferocity and consume all the cultists, burning their bodies from the Cultists as they are lashed by the black fire. Soon all will be dead as the black flames solidify into a massive, gruesome web, with all its human and elf filic trapped within the web. The glowing-red spider figure replaces the blackness above the web, towering 30' above the standing stones.
Evil clash. Nimrindal assumes a ghostly white form and starts to draw on a beam of white light which appears to come down from the Moon. As the struggle continues, the beam grows stronger and Nimrindal bigger. The clash of energies makes the earth convulse and showers of rocks are thrown into the air. Trees are tossed like matchsticks and all the characters (again including the High Priest) will suffer a 'B' crush critical (AD&D: 2-20 points of damage).

When the turmoil ceases, the characters will see that the spirit of Ungoliant has vanished and her web is rapidly melting, leaving piles of slimy sludge glistening greeny-black in the moonlight where it evaporates and dissolves the Cultists trapped by it. Then, from the centre of the hollow rises a terrible figure: blackened and torn by magical energies, his eyes ablaze with madness and torment is Ungurth More the High Priest. He will utter a terrible curse and attack the party to the death for their actions. This is the final encounter. You may wish to wind up the adventure in a number of ways: the characters will have earned the gratitude of the local people for rescuing lost children and of the high elven lords for averting a terrible disaster. They might be rewarded with gifts, or there might be plenty for all in the Cultists’ caves.

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**What Happens Next**

The players have but two sensible options: flee or use Nimrindal. Ungoliant is so huge as to be impossible to miss unless a fumble roll is made. The knife may be thrown or used in the hand. Remember that the players may not be in a position to attack without descending the cliff or crossing from the hollow – avoiding the black web. Also, the Cultists may have removed the knife from the party and put it in one of their dwellings. Ungoliant will not sense the characters’ presence until it is too late, but the High Priest may if they act within the standing stones. However, he will also be subject to the effects detailed as the party members.

As soon as Nimrindal strikes Ungoliant, there will be a thunderclap as good and evil clash. Nimrindal assumes a ghostly white form and starts to draw on a beam of white light which appears to come down from the Moon. As the struggle continues, the beam grows stronger and Nimrindal bigger. The clash of energies makes the earth convulse and showers of rocks are thrown into the air. Trees are tossed like matchsticks and all the characters (again including the High Priest) will suffer a ‘B’ crush critical (AD&D: 2-20 points of damage).

**Note**

Wights carry green wooden daggers that have +15 OB for evil creatures. Wights also cause a ‘B’ cold critical whenever they hit, but do not cause paralysis. Wights can only be damaged by enchanted or magic weapons.

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**AD&D STATS**

### Section One

- **Troll**: ogre, HD4-1; HTK21; AC5; c
- **She-troll**: ogress; HD1-1; HTK19; AC5; c

### Section Two

- **Wights**: HD4+3; HTK23(A),26(B); AC4(A),6(B); dagger (1-4 drain level); silver or magic weapons to hit; selective spell immunity.

### Section Three

- **Golbak**: hobgoblin, leader; HD1+1; HTK9; AC5; morning star (2-8+1); +1 hit prov (17 STR).
- **Avathor**: HD2; HTK18; AC5; bastard sword (+1 damage)
- **Bats 1-4**: glant bats (FF)

### Section Four

- **Gallows**: male elf; HD1+1; HTK8; AC5; dagger; shield; shortsword and shortbow (12 arrows)
- **Avethen**: 1st level fighting-woman; HTK15; AC7; mace (+1 damage)
- **She-bear**: black bear; HD3; HTK15; AC7; bite (1-6); 2 claws (1-3); hug (2-8)

### Section Five

- **Ungurth More**: 4th level MU; HTK11; AC5; dagger; darkness spell (1-4 drain level); silver or magic weapons to hit; selective spell immunity.

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**MERP STATS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section One</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Hits</th>
<th>Armour</th>
<th>DB</th>
<th>Melee OB</th>
<th>Missile OB</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Troll</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>70/cl</td>
<td>70/net</td>
<td>7/rock Renegade olog-hai, will not return to stone in day-light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She-troll</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>56/cl</td>
<td></td>
<td>60/rock</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Two</th>
<th>Wight (A)</th>
<th>Wight (B)</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Hits</th>
<th>Armour</th>
<th>DB</th>
<th>Melee OB</th>
<th>Missile OB</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wight (A)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50+15/d*</td>
<td>50+15/d*</td>
<td>Minor wights, see below.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wight (B)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50+15/d*</td>
<td>50+15/d*</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Three</th>
<th>Golbak (orc)</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Hits</th>
<th>Armour</th>
<th>DB</th>
<th>Melee OB</th>
<th>Missile OB</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wight (A)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50+15/d*</td>
<td>50+15/d*</td>
<td>Minor wights, see below.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wight (B)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50+15/d*</td>
<td>50+15/d*</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**AD&D STATS**

### Section One

- **Troll**: ogre, HD4-1; HTK21; AC5: club (1-10); net; throw rocks (1-6).

### Section Two

- **Wights**: HD4+3; HTK23(A),26(B); AC4(A),6(B); dagger (1-4 drain level); silver or magic weapons to hit; selective spell immunity.

### Section Three

- **Golbak**: hobgoblin, leader; HD1+1; HTK9; AC5; morning star (2-8+1); +1 hit prov (17 STR).
- **Avathor**: HD2; HTK18; AC5; bastard sword (+1 damage)
- **Bats 1-4**: glant bats (FF)

### Section Four

- **Gallows**: male elf; HD1+1; HTK8; AC5; dagger; shield; shortsword and shortbow (12 arrows)
- **Avethen**: 1st level fighting-woman; HTK15; AC7; mace (+1 damage)
- **She-bear**: black bear; HD3; HTK15; AC7; bite (1-6); 2 claws (1-3); hug (2-8)

### Section Five

- **Ungurth More**: 4th level MU; HTK11; AC5; dagger; darkness spell (1-4 drain level); silver or magic weapons to hit; selective spell immunity.
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INTRODUCTION
In White Dwarf 56-59, Chris Elliott and Richard Edwards gave a detailed and fascinating account of the Japanese ninja. They applied the information to such fantasy role-playing games as RuneQuest and D&D, and as anyone who reads contemporary pulp thrillers or superhero comics will have run into one idea that was not discussed in Night's Dark Agents: the survival of ninja groups and ninjutsu into the present day and even the future. This raises the possibility of applying some of Chris and Richard's ideas to Spy, SF, and Superhero games, which is the purpose of this article.

Justification
In any world where violence, rivalry, and political intrigue persist, there will be a need for experts in the arts of stealth, combat, and espionage. Of course, such experts are not always popular, and the rulers of society may decide that they represent a threat to the status quo; thus, in a stable era when these skills are not proving widely useful, organisations dedicated to their employment may well die out — or be attacked and eliminated. Furthermore, as communications improve the scope for large, secretive organisations with extensive training facilities dwindles. This is presumably the reason that ninjutsu can only be said with certainty to have survived until the 17th century; the art may, however, have survived longer as some evidence suggests.

Japanese fighting skills and physical disciplines certainly have lasted up to the present day; karate and judo are obvious examples, but even such exotica as iai-jutsu — fast sword drawing - are all still studied and practised. Ninjutsu, however, is a little more than these: it comprises a whole body of complex techniques, demanding years of study and training, and must therefore be taught as something more than a hobby by a dedicated organisation. (This is not to say that individual ninja skills, as described in Night's Dark Agents, could not be 'borrowed' and adapted for use by less extensively-trained fighters or spies, but in general such borrowings would be covered by most systems' provision for stealth, martial arts, acrobatics or reconnaissance skills; ninja are peculiar for their dedication to such arts and for some of the highly developed details of their work, not just for any one trick.) Thus a campaign that is to involve ninjutsu, or something like it, must incorporate ninja organisations, at least in the background. Not all ninja-trained characters need to be active members of such bodies, of course, but there must be some link or association. One obvious possibility is the existence of ninja-trained renegades, who can only occur in fiction; if the ninja organisations bear animosity to such freelances, as seems likely, then the solo characters had better be good if they are to survive.

PC ninja can either be renegades, whether renegade or on good terms with their 'schools', or members of ninja organisations, as Night's Dark Agents assumed for fantasy games. The latter approach is very much a matter for the GM's decision, and if it is determined that players may use 'serving' ninja, then the whole party should generally be such, as ninja have little cause to work with non-ninja for more than one-off missions. This approach will set the stage for a limited role-playing campaign; it might well be interesting to pursue, but it should not be taken lightly. On the other hand, given that a reasonably plausible ninja will be a dangerous character to be played by any character, care should be taken about allowing 'freelance' PC ninja in 'mixed' parties, if the non-ninja characters are to get a look in. This is less of a problem in superhero games, where the specialism of obtaining superhuman abilities, and it may be reduced in games with a large non-combat element (a ninja on the crew of a mercantile starship would be of limited use when it was simply trading, but could be highly useful when the crew were attacked while on the ground), but it should always be considered.

Maintaining Balance
The problem with introducing ninja into any game is that they are very, very dangerous. Even if non-ninja characters are good enough to defeat them face to face, or if the campaign puts a premium on non-ninja skills, the talents which make the ninja what they are can still make the referee's job difficult. Stealth and assassination techniques can allow a ninja character to kill an opponent — no matter how powerful — without even a fight, while clever use of spying skills can make it hard for GMS to preserve the secrecy and confusion that make campaigns interesting. At their best, ninja will use psychology, misdirection, and subterfuge to achieve their ends; GMS or players operating in character generation process — as ordinary people with fairly unremarkable upbringings, who then acquire the skills that the game requires. Ninja are not like this. They were — or are — trained up for a life of action, violence, and careful use of their abilities, and a character generation system that adequately reflects this could produce truly overwhelming individuals.

There are a number of ways of balancing out these problems. Firstly, whenever ninja or similar characters appear, remember that they are specialists. Their peculiar, lengthy training may have left them short of modern technological knowledge, and they may display some ignorance of the subtleties of normal society. (Of course, the best ninja can be masters of disguise, and so will not be too ignorant, but not all will be the best.) If their schools are assumed to be very traditionalistic — as is very likely — ninja may be strikingly inept with modern weaponry. Their hair-trigger reflexes can be a limitation; one traditional way of masking a disguised ninja in a crowd was to stage a mock attack, and see who reacted fastest, and in a campaign of espionage, using these shadowy, single-minded specialists may stand out as freaks. If there are no player character ninja, problems may be reduced by careful refereeing, ensuring that no situations occur in which hostile ninja could use their special skills to completely annihilate a PC party, and making very sure that PCs facing ninjas know that they...
have dangerous opponents. Purely ninja PC parties should be given appropriate missions, and mixed groups should be granted opportunities to use other skills than those possessed by the ninja. As ever, there is no substitute for good, careful refereeing!

**Very Special Agents: Spy RPGs**

Ninja are traditionally masters of espionage, and so it is natural that games based around the topic of spying should include some provision for the appearance of such individuals. In fact, if the referee determines that any ryu (schools) of ninjutsu, or anything similar, have survived into the 'present' of his or her campaign, then the only questions left to answer are how far the ninja extend their area of operations, and whose side they are on; that they might eventually become involved with campaign events is almost certain.

The two questions are important and connected. Assuming that these are true ninja, and not some other comparable organisation (which could be based anywhere), the obvious assumption is that the ryu would have its headquarters in Japan, although it is also possible that a ninja group could have transferred elsewhere at some stage in history. Given that the ninja would probably be fairly few in numbers, they could then not exert strong influence much beyond the islands of Japan itself, although lone ninja could sometimes be sent almost anywhere to perform 'one-off' missions.

This leaves the question of which side they support. They could be 'pure' mercenaries, offering their services to anyone able to contact them and pay their rates, in which case they would be encountered in the series of oriental criminal organisations, and perhaps ruthless Far Eastern business corporations (ninja would be excellent industrial spies); governments with close associates with the east (include the Japanese spies among them), but would probably tend to distrust such freelances and prefer to rely on their own secret services. Government-backed player character agents would thus encounter ninja attempting to steal military secrets with industrial applications, or attacking the enemies of Dr No/ Fu Manchu style master criminals. Alternatively, the ninja might take a more active role in the same area of life.

At its simplest, this would mean a ninja group acting as a force in Japanese-based crime, perhaps combining this with mercenary work, and probably showing the usual interest of organised criminals in extending operations wherever the biggest money lies. It is said that Japan already possesses some fairly powerful criminal groups – the Yakuza – and an attempt by ninja to obtain control of such activities would have a good chance of success. A more complex approach is to assume that the ninja retain their historical ideal of acting as a balancing force in society, preventing any group or power block from gaining too much control or influence.

Applied purely within Japan, this could lead the ninja to attack foreign groups – businesses or governments – who might in any way try to obtain power in Japanese life (by all accounts difficult for business, but a real possibility for foreign governments seeking to manipulate the industrial power of Japan); applied determinedly on a global scale, this could present player-characters with a difficult puzzle, as the same group of shadowy assassins and espionage appeared to aid or foil apparently opposite sides in different parts of the world. A final possibility is to have a ninja group maintained and supported by some other group – perhaps the Japanese government. Anybody interested in employing the best possible spies might consider ensuring that these traditional skills survived; this would certainly answer the problem of how a secret training camp could be run in the modern world – governments being the only people who are expected to have top-security installations in remote parts of the country. The Japanese government is much given to supporting experts in traditional skills; one who earns his government grant could ensure that Japanese secret agents would have an excellent knowledge of certain areas.

Incorporating ninja-type training into spy RPGs should not be difficult, although it should be emphasised again that ninja tend to be very good at many things that spy characters need to be good at. Their basic training would grant enhanced values for basic characteristics, especially dexterity and constitution, while all ninja would have high ratings in stealth-based activities such as concealment and silent movement. Martial arts and other combat techniques – apart perhaps from gun skills – should also be granted, and other ninja techniques can also be considered. Disguise is usually well covered by games, but if it is decided that some more esoteric ninja tricks such as hypnotism and chemical 'conjuring' are to be used, a few special rules may have to be developed (what a ninja might do with the aid of sophisticated modern chemistry does not bear thinking about).

**A Touch of the Hand: Superhero Games**

Along with the alien physics, the radiation accidents, the mutations and the cyborg limbs, special training is a well-trodden path for characters. Any kind of aptitude that marks out a super-being. Furthermore, in a superpower laden world, many organisations seek to organise forces of agents with the skills and special equipment that they more or less continuously put up with. This is, of course, only too true of the latest years, and it is worth considering how to incorporate ninja into superhero games.

Many of the comments above concerning ninja in espionage games apply equally well here, especially in a globe-trotting campaign. Some characters are asked to assist government or other bodies. In some ways, however, ninja may distort the style of play in superhero games even more than they do in games where they merely class the relatively mundane characters.

This is because superhero characters are not used to thinking in terms of subtlety, subtlety and indecisiveness. If a hero can fly and hurl energy blasts, he may not be used to watching his back, and may indeed have little more chance than any normal being of noticing a shadowy assassin. Ninja do restrict themselves to their traditional weapons – blades, bows, darts, and suchlike – then some characters are going to be able to ignore their attacks, being tough enough to laugh off a sword blow, but some are not. (In a game known to the writer, a strong superhero group were attacked in their beds by an
equal number of ninja. Some were warned or possessed exotic senses, and dealt with by attacking; some survived the initial attack because of their powers, and could fight back; some were in bad trouble, and needed very special medical care. In games, player characters with ninja-style abilities are less of a problem, although referees must always allow for their nature and use subtly, but ensuring that they do not trample unswitched villains underfoot. Of course, this assumes that the player is skillful enough to use a ninja-style character or Train, it must be pointed out that the most refined ninja skills of psychological manipulation could be very hard for a player or referee to make.

Ninja characters should be easy enough to 'build' in terms of most super-hero game systems; high dexterity, a vast array of skills (notably stealth, martial arts, and weapon skills), and appropriate training will together make up a plausible ninja. In fact, issue 3 of Hero Games' Adventurers Club Quarterly has a set of statistics for ninja for use in Champions, although these do not incorporate original style of training of such individuals (notably, they are wearing armour and lack acrobatic skills). Part of the problem is that a character with the full range of classic ninja abilities would tend to be in the super-hero class, whereas recent comics involving ninja have tended to show small groups of heroes (or solo heroes) in combat with small armies of the ninja, and so on. Not only is the question of original style of training of such individuals (notably, they are wearing armour and lack acrobatic skills) difficult to answer, but ensuring that they do not trample unswitched villains underfoot. Of course, this assumes that the player is skillful enough to use a ninja-style character or Train, it must be pointed out that the most refined ninja skills of psychological manipulation could be very hard for a player or referee to make.

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The Dark Space: Science Fiction Games

If we can conceive of ninjutsu surviving up to today, why not tomorrow? In other words, why not incorporate ninja into SF games? The question may not be quite as simple as this. The survival of ninjutsu requires means (the availability of potential sites for training and headquarters), motive (a desire to preserve ninja-style services), and opportunity (governments unable or unwilling to stamp out the ninja, and a tradition of ninjutsu training). For all three to be available continuously from the fairly recent past to the far future may strain credibility; however, if actual ninjutsu become less likely the further into the future a game is set, the more plausible it becomes that some comparable group could be developed between the present and the time of the game-setting.

Thus the important question is whether the game is essentially 'near future' or 'far future'. In the former case, actual ninja are plausible, and much the same comments apply as were made about spy RPGs. In the latter days—more

non-human psychologies and physiologies. However, it is very plausible that non-human races could develop some some thing akin to their own form of ninjutsu (equally inaccessible to humans), and indeed the character creation system in the Traveller Asian module includes an Assassin career path.

SF games tend to emphasise prior experience in their character generation systems, which makes ninja—trained from childhood instead, from age 18—a double problem; if one adapts the system to match, one will produce grotesquely dangerous characters, which is particularly bad if one is considering PC ninja. Some compensations may be achieved by lowering the ninja's effective technical and technological knowledge or education, but the place of these superb killers in the campaign as a whole must be carefully judged. In addition, some games do not deal with ninja-style skills (stealth, wilderness survival, archaic weaponry) in great detail, although adaptations can be attempted; issue 19 of the Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society had an excellent, if slightly sketchy, article on Martial Arts in that particular game at least.

Bibliography

This is, of course, partial, personal, and probably controversial. Mention of a book, series, or comic here is no promise of quality, merely of slight relevance. You Only Live Twice—Kazuhiko Koshimizu

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Many hundreds of years ago the prosperous oasis city of Trogar controlled all trade throughout the desert region. Gradually the sands reclaimed its land, and the people slowly abandoned the city as more fell into disrepair. The High Priest Desv, died with the city when its final defences were breached by the elements and the increasing numbers of desert marauders. Desv had spent the last desperate months creating a creature to protect the holy places from desecration, the sand golem. In these times they numbered over two hundred, only a handful now remain to carry out their final task; to kill all intruders. Showing no fear, they methodically carry out this task until their foe or they are destroyed.

**SAND GOLEM**
by Ian Alvarri

- No Appearing: 1
- Armour Class: 7
- Movement: 8" 
- Hit Dice: 50HP
- Treasure: Nil
- Attack: 2-20 plus special
- Intelligence: Low
- Alignment: Lawful evil

The sand golem stands over 9' tall and is heavily muscled in build with a strength of 19 with all bonuses. The golems range in colour from a bright yellow to a light brown. They are immune to weapons under a magical +1 in value. To disguise its approach, the sand golem will create a sandstorm covering an area of three hundred square yards, centred upon the golem. Anyone who is caught within this storm will be blinded from it on a 1-5 on a D6. Within this sandstorm the golem will surprise its opponents 90% of the time. A golem can create such a storm at any time it is needed. The storm will not radiate any form of magic if magic is detected for inside it. Also within the storm, the golem has a magic resistance of 20% and its foes are at -2 to hit. Each person in the storm must make a saving throw at each round to avoid being blinded from the swirling patterns of sand, the effect lasting for 1-2 rounds. This saving throw must be made at least once every three rounds while within the storm. Never having to eat or rest, a sand golem can stalk its prey at a steady rate of 15 miles per day or until the prey leaves the desert. The deep black orbs which are its eyes can cause fear unless a saving throw is made. A disintegration or two dig spells cast upon the golem will destroy the sand golem.

Desert orcs are mainly sand-brown in colour retaining the pinkish snouts and dark brown hair of their normal cousins. Desert orcs have well developed tusks like lower canines and some are known to have a short horn based on their foreheads.

**DESERT ORC**
by Duncan Gregory

- No Appearing: 20-200
- Armour Class: 4
- Movement: 9" 
- Hit Dice: 1-6
- Treasure: Individuals L, M; D1, (x5), S in lair
- Attack: 1-8, or by weapon
- Intelligence: Low-Average
- Alignment: Lawful evil

The upper levels of the city have been occupied by a large tribe of desert orcs, who have discovered a well still fed by a stream, far below the surface of the city. They do not venture into the lower reaches of the passageways beneath the city, they fear the sand golems as much as the sand snipers which lurk near this, their only source of water. The desert orcs use the city as a base for all their raiding activities.

Desert orcs are often (60%) encountered riding light war horses and for every 20 encountered there will be a groupmaster of 14HP and 1-2 champions of 13HP. If 80 or more desert orcs are met there will be a sub-chief of 2+2HD, 2 groupmasters and 5-20 champions. Sub-chiefs are armoured class 2 and do an additional 2HP of damage. The desert orc lair is above ground 95% of the time and consists of a wooden stockade within which are D10+20 log huts. This stockade will be defended by 3-12 watch towers and 3 heavy and 2 light catapults for every 30 warriors. There is a 30% chance for any lair to have 1-2 ballistae. If the lair is subterranean then there is a 65% chance of the tribe using 1-6 giant scorpions as guards.

The desert orc lair contains the following figures in addition to those previously mentioned: a chief (AC2, HD3, 3-12 (D10+2) damage), a group of 1-4 sub-chiefs, and 5-30 champions selected as bodyguards. Females equal to 150% of the number of males are present and fight as goblins: young equal to 200-300% of males are also present but are non-combatant.
good night vision which enables them to see up to 60' or 90' on bright moonlit nights.

The cactus cat is small, being about the size of an ocelot but is covered in jet black fur which consists of small, tightly packed hairs. These are noticeably longer on the ears.

To aid survival in the arid wastes in which they live during drought, they drink the sap of cacti. They have developed bony ridges on their forearms to cut through the tough, leathery skin of all but the biggest cacti. Each cactus cat will have several cacti it will visit. After it has drunk from one plant it will move on to the next before returning to it in a few days or weeks later. During this time the wound will have healed over; contact with the atmosphere sometimes causes the sap to ferment near the wound.

The next time the cat drinks from the plant it becomes mildly intoxicated and in this wild condition these normally timid creatures have been known to raid desert encampments for food. They will try to run off with whatever items they have managed to steal instead of fighting.

These animals are rarely encountered and then usually only where cacti predominate. If two animals are encountered they will be male and female and there is a 70% chance of them having 2-5 cubs in their lair.

The most dangerous predator near the city is the sand sniper. Their ancient name is buras and they prey almost exclusively on desert orcs. The single well which the orcs control is the life blood of the whole area, and the buras will not stray far from its source. The orcs will organise regular hunts to clear the surroundings.

The real difference, however, between the desert orc and his normal cousin is realised in combat. Unlike the normal orc, the desert orc's first choice is not his weapon, but a magical ability to control the sand around him. The desert orc can, with a swaying of his hands, cause dust or sand particles in a 20' radius to rise in a swirling, hypnotic pattern. The effect of this phenomenon is the same as a confusion spell, lasting for 2-8 turns, with normal saving throws. Desert orcs can control sand in this way twice a day, each casting taking 2 rounds to perform. The swirling dust disperses after the monster will drag the prey to its lair. The area around the sniper's mouth and body is very treacherous; the ground is soft and shifting, which in itself will draw any unsuspecting creature to its death, like quicksand (3-18 melee rounds).

Snipers are particularly vulnerable to cold attacks (double damage), but they take half damage from fire. When hurt or if 2 or more tentacles are severed the buras will withdraw, blowing a cloud of fine sand into the air. It will attempt to dig down burying itself in the sand. Any one caught inside the 30' diameter by 8' high cloud will lose his eyesight for 1-6 turns (no save).

The buras has no treasure of its own, but if found in its lair, lying just beneath the sand is the wealth of past adventurers and not so fortunate. The city and its new inhabitants suffer the same problems of survival that others endured in the past, time has gone full circle.

The ecology of the area is in a very precarious balance. The arrival of the desert orcs some twenty years ago wiped out the small amount of wild animals in the area with one exception, the cactus cat. The fur of this creature is highly prized by the orcs. It is common for their champions to wear small caps made of this as a sign of their speed and ability.

**CACTUS CAT**

by Peter Fawcett

| No Appearing: | 1-2 |
| Armour Class: | 5 |
| Movement: | 10' |
| Hit Dice: | 2d8 |
| Treasure: | Nil |
| Attack: | 1 bite for 1-3 and 2 claws for 1-4 |
| Alignment: | Neutral |
| Intelligence: | Animal |

These creatures inhabit arid and semi-desert regions where they live on a diet of small rodents and snakes. They are mainly nocturnal and have extremely

**SAND SNIPER**

by Kevin Readman

| No Appearing: | 1-6 |
| Armour Class: | 3 |
| Movement: | 10' |
| Hit Dice: | 3-5 |
| Treasure: | Nil |
| Attack: | 2 tentacles, 2-7/2/7 |
| Alignment: | Neutral |
| Intelligence: | Low |

The sand sniper, or the buras, is only known to inhabit hot, arid regions; this beast is more numerous and common near oases and murky waterholes in sand-swept deserts. Snipers are a hidden terror, waiting in their concealed homes beneath the sand.

The sniper's huge and heavy tentacles lie just out of sight, covered with sand, never hesitating to snatch at any form of life. Generally yellow-tan in colour, the 30 or 40 foot long tentacles stretch out to form the perimeter of the sniper's territory. Unlike the hard, scale-armed tentacles, the sniper's short, cylindrical body is rather soft and leathery in texture. Being well-covered by sand the body is almost never exposed. Two small clawed flippers allow the buras its briefer-like movement within the sand.

Exploding from beneath the sand, a single tentacle will seek to hit the victim (unless the prey is not surprised the buras will fight the first round at +4 to hit). Then a second tentacle will burst forth. Each hit by a tentacle constricts for 2-7 days of damage. There is a 25% chance that the creature struck by a tentacle will have its upper limbs pinned and held. To break free a tentacle must be severed or constricted negated. The sniper is very strong; the chances of breaking free from its grip are the same as Bending Bars.

Once caught the sniper will drag the victim toward its mouth. Every round the monster will drag the prey 10' closer; within four melee rounds the helpless victim will be drawn under the sand, to suffocate and finally meet the sniper's craving mouth. The area around the sniper's mouth and body is very treacherous; the ground is soft and shifting, which in itself will draw any unsuspecting creature to its death, like quicksand (3-18 melee rounds).

The orcs are some twenty years ago wiped out the small amount of wild animals in the area with one exception, the cactus cat. The fur of this creature is highly prized by the orcs. It is common for their champions to wear small caps made of this as a sign of their speed and ability.

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Crawling Chaos is our new bi-monthly column for players of Call of Cthulhu, edited by Marc Gascoigne... This month, we present a disturbing piece which has just come into our possession. Thanks to the diligence of Steve Williams and Mike White in unearthing the following document, we are able to present to you...

**THE BEARERS OF THE MARK**

Most experienced investigators will have come into contact with Masonic orders and brotherhoods. Whilst these organisations can claim to have extensive contacts and manipulative power, their weakness lies in the virtual impossibility of maintaining their anonymity whilst remaining discernable to fellow members. There exists one society, however, whose members have developed means of communication extending far beyond the surreptitious handshake.

The origins of the Bearers of the Mark are shrouded in mystery and intrigue; its existence was first hinted at in a Home Office memo which brought to the attention of the Minister concerned the resurgence of a once-popular masonic order. The memo apparently suggested that the group's post of global significance might pose a potential security risk. Membership included, it was said, Latin American merchants, foreign diplomats and notable Europeans of all political persuasions. The matter was never followed up, due to the early retirement of the sender of the memo owing to a crippling nervous disorder with which he was so suddenly afflicted.

The secrecy of the Bearers of the Mark has remained a secret to this day, had it not been for the notes of a certain Doctor Eustace de Phyle. During the month of August, 1927, he was consulted by a patient calling himself Ernest Gracialla, who claimed to be a member of the organisation. It is drawn onto the forehead by a brother or superior. It allows immediate recognition within the organisation. It is drawn onto the forehead by a brother or superior. It allows immediate recognition within the organisation.

**Initiate Mark**

New members of this order have a distinctive Mark denoting their position within the organisation. It is drawn onto the forehead by a brother or superior. It is visible to all fellow members and allows immediate recognition worldwide. Removal of the Mark requires a retracing by one of the original officiators at the initiation ceremony.

**Waywords**

One of the first skills taught is the reading of Waywords (writing is taught at a later stage). These recorded messages are ingread psychically into a symbol, usually a circle or spiral, and can be read simply by tracing the outline with the index finger. The recorded thoughts of the author are then transferred directly to the mind of the reader. These Marks are primarily drawn onto walls or doors to warn or advise fellow members of what lies beyond. If detected, these messages give no visible clue as to their content. Waywords are usually designed to only be read once, and often have a limited lifespan.

**Zenos Strip**

Despite the cloak of secrecy that surrounds the Bearers, non-initiates have tried to unlock the mysteries of the brotherhood. An effective way of identifying such inquisitors can be achieved by the application of a Zenos Strip. Once administered to the forehead (usually while the victim is asleep), the stranger will be instantly recognisable to initiates. He himself will be unable to see the strip, but may experience hot flushes when in close proximity to an initiate.

**Lock of Hypnos**

Another subtle yet effective way of discouraging unwanted attention is through the Lock of Hypnos. These will 'lock' the victim into either of two states — asleep or awake. The former is more usual, since the victim is usually asleep when the Mark is administered. He will experience violent nausea, and may pass out.

**Wards of Zenos**

Those previously marked with a Zenos Strip can be further discouraged from investigating by the placement of Wards. These large symbols are drawn on the ground, within the Mark's influence and rooms. They cause the victim to fall into a trance, rendering him inert and unseen. Should anyone bearing the Strip attempt to pass over the Ward, he will experience violent nausea and may pass out.

**The Brand of the Beast**

The greatest punishment meted out by the Bearers to renegade initiates and investigators who get too close appears to be the Brand. Its potency is indicated in its method of transferal, as it does not need the presence of the intended victim when it is generated. Ernest Gracialla received his Brand in the form of an innocuous letter. This purported to be from a gentleman claiming to be an estranged cousin, but it was the writing paper itself which attracted his attention. It was written on a thick piece of foolscap, with a curious, faint indentation beneath the writing, like a heavy watermark. The hapless Gracialla curiously traced his fingers over the paper, and unwittingly administered the Brand. He remarked later to Doctor de Phyle that he instantly felt a queer sensation, and instantly knew that this 'Brand of the Beast', as he called it, had been sent by his former master as retribution for his disloyalty. The effects of the Brand, an apparent metamorphosis into some form of vile creature (in Gracialla's case, a ghoul), seem only to occur in the immediate vicinity of the Brand. As de Phyle says in his case records: "... standing in front of the mirror, he would cry pitifully, clutching his face with his hands. Time and time again he would try and convince me of the supposed changes to his face... all I could offer was sympathy to a man so horribly twisted by his own imagination."
Tabletop Heroes is a regular feature covering figures, modelling and painting tips by Joe Dever and Gary Chalk

Proxy Painting

Every month we are sent a large number of new figures to review, so many in fact, that it is sometimes impossible to keep on top of all the painting they require and the backlog grows. Being brought on by a growing sense of despair, we hit upon a solution to the problem - what if we sent some of the new releases to the professional painting services that you see advertised in the classified sections of the hobby press; not only would we clear our ever-growing mountain of miniatures, but we could also showcase the work of these professional painters. Unfortunately, as the figures returned, we discovered the work of these painting services to be far from satisfactory. When one considers that their work was to be shown to over 40,000 prospective customers, it was surprising that little effort had been put into some of the samples. However, having said this, there were some notable exceptions that ranged from good to excellent, and we have featured some of these in this month's photo page. Please don't think we are being too harsh or snobbish in our appraisal of these samples. However, having said this, the most thought-provoking question is - do you think the figures are done on purpose or by mistake?

This Month's Photographs

Figs 1, 2 and 3 show six figures from a new range of dwarfs by Asgard Minatures. From left to right, they are a Black Dwarf (DW6), a Dwarf Spearman (DW4), Dwarf Crossbowman (DW10), Dwarf Axeman (DW2), Dwarf Lord (DW8), and finally a Dwarf with Arquebus (DW11). These are all very well cast miniatures with excellent detail, and produced in a clean, dry condition. The Black Dwarf comes complete with carrion bird perched on his shoulder, and the Dwarf Lord sports an impressive dragon-breasted helm. Perhaps the most thought-provoking question is - do you think the figures are done on purpose or by mistake?

Fig 4 shows a Citadel Cleric, again painted by Jena Enterprises, in a style that relies heavily on dry-brushing. All were very well detailed and carefully shaded, albeit a little on the dark side. With the interest in Call of Cthulhu growing steadily among role-players, we thought it would be an interesting look at some of the miniatures currently available to Keepers and investigators: Grenadier Models produce two boxed sets - Adventures in the Cthulhu Mythos (DW40) and Creatures (DW50), both designed by the award-winning Andrew Chernak. The castings of both the humans and non-humans are superb. Alternative poses of the figures will soon be available in blister pack form, retailing at about £1.25.

Fig 5 shows the very popular Dwarf with Arquebus (DW10) by Jena Enterprises, painted in a style that relies heavily on dry-brushing. The coat of basic flesh pink, to which nothing has been added except a little shading with dark earth (Humbrol MC6 with a little black). From a distance, the figure is only a 'shapeless congerie of protoplasmic mess with some flesh detail'. The base is brown (a pacifist miniature) and the듦 (Humbrol MC72 is ideal) into the white of the bone - it produces a 'fishy' look. If you finish your figures with a matt varnish (or leave them unvarnished), avoid a coat of basic flesh pink, to which nothing has been added except a little shading with dark earth (Humbrol MC6 with a little black). The last of the Cthulhu nasties is Fig 10, shows a Citadel Cleric (CO3/1a) that has undergone their tender ministrations. They favour a style that accentuates the contrast between light and dark (sometimes called 'blacklining') although they can paint to order, depending on the customer's preferences. They will supply a sample figure on request, the cost of which is refundable against your first order.

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Spells for Friends
by Martin Fowler and David Marsh

LIFE CANDLE
Usable by: Cleric, MU
Level: 2,3
Duration: See text
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 turn

At the culmination of this ritual, the recipient of the spell lights a wax candle and places it in a protective golden tube (minimum cost 100gp). The candle will then burn continuously with a yellow flame until the character who lit it, however far away, is in danger of his or her life (ie on less than 1HP), when it will begin to burn dimly. Should the character die then the flame will be extinguished, leaving the wick pointing towards the place of death. Should the character subsequently be raised, then the candle will light up once more.

CANDLE IN THE WINDOW
Usable by: Cleric, Druid, MU
Level: 2
Duration: 2 days + 1 day per level of caster
Area of Effect: 4 miles + 2 miles per level of caster
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 turn

At the time of casting, a wide circle made of ashes from the hearth of the home in which the spell is cast is drawn around a candle. Those who are to be affected by the spell stand inside the circle and the candle is lit. The candle will burn until the duration of the spell expires or until it is extinguished by being doused with water. Whilst the candle burns, from anywhere in the given area, if the characters concerned look in the right direction, they will be able to see the candle burning, its brightness varying with their distance from it, although to see the candle they must be in open air or looking out of a window. Thus they should always be able to find their way home.

HOME CANDLE
Usable by: Cleric, Druid, MU
Level: 4
Duration: See text
Area of Effect: 4 miles + 2 miles per level of caster
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 turn

As for candle in the window (above), but the candle burns indefinitely or until purposely extinguished.

SENSE TAP
Usable by: MU
Level: 4
Duration: See text
Area of Effect: 1 mile per level of caster
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 6 turns

By means of this spell, the MU enchants some item, which could be any inanimate object, even an item which is already magical. During the spell a large gem (minimum cost 250gp) is also enchanted. This is the 'key' to the tap: any person grasping the gem 'taps' the senses (sight, hearing, touch, etc) of the person (or any sentient being) who is carrying the enchanted item. If the item is not being carried, being, for instance, locked away in a chest, then the character grasping the gem will just sense 'static'. This tapping may be done any number of times, but for each whole or part round of use there is a 3% chance that the gem will disintegrate (only 2% if the gem cost 1000gp or more) and the dwemer will be dispelled. The chance for detection of such scrying is the same as for a Crystal Ball (DMG), but the character will not realise the source of the scrying automatically. The gem or item may change hands any number of times. Clearly this spell has uses for other than between friends.

BLOOD CANDLE
Usable by: Cleric, Druid, MU
Level: 6
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: Special
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 turn

Blood brothers may send one telepathic message of up to two dozen words once per day over any range. They can always sense approximate distance and direction of another brother, this sense becoming more accurate over shorter ranges, so that blood brothers will always recognise each other. Should a brother die, the other will be able to detect in a similar fashion both the corpse and the place of death.

Due to their sense of and empathy with each other, if a character has a blood brother at his side in melee, he or she fights at +1 to hit and with -1 armour class (+2 to hit, -2 armour class with a brother at each side).

Should a character ever turn against his blood brother, the wound from which the blood was taken will open up and begin to fester, and the character will lose one point of Constitution per week until he or she seeks forgiveness from the Cleric who performed the original ceremony. If a character should kill his blood brother then the loss is one point of Constitution per day. Should the original Cleric be dead then so much the worse!

Blood brothers may occur in groups of more than two (though every combination of two from within a group must be blood brothers), but the location and reception of message abilities doesn’t identify which brother is which. If more blood brothers are to be added to the group then the whole group must first assemble. Since, at the death (even of old age) of any blood brother, the whole group loses one point of Constitution each permanent (unless resurrection is performed), there are obvious disadvantages in having too many blood brothers.

BLOOD KNIFE
Usable by: Cleric
Level: 6
Range: 0
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: 1 item
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 turn

By means of this spell, the casting Cleric enchants a small, bejewelled dagger (minimum cost 500gp) on behalf of a particular character, who must already have a blood brother.

At any time in the future, should a blood brother of that character be killed (not die of old age), then the character may place the dagger into himself, sacrificing one point of Constitution in the process. If the knife is then placed on the lips of the dead blood brother within one day per level of the casting Cleric, then the brother will be resurrected. The knife loses its dweomer after resurrection or the necessary time has elapsed. 

47
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BRITISH TOY FAIR
This is the major UK trade show held annually at Earls Court, London. Really it is the equivalent of the HIA show or Origins in the US. Tucked in with the cuddly toys were all the major manufacturers and distributors of 'hobby' games in the UK. Games Workshop were showing the new UK edition of MERP and Star Trek III ship combat, as well as three new computer games. Citadel Miniatures had the real show stealers, 60mm Fighting Fantasy figures in hard plastic, and very nice they are too. The real level of the show though were Citadel's Official D&D figures, available both in boxed sets and blister packs. TSR had absolutely masses of new modules, mostly Dragonlance modules, mostly Conan AD&D settings, and Marvel Superheroes ones. Perhaps most interesting are the new Conan AD&D settings. Standard Games launched their new RPG DragonRage; the secret ingredient turning out to be an introductory cassette, complete with a solo adventure. As I mentioned before, MB Games' three new boardgames were on show and they really have made a good job of them, plenty of plastic, a lot of attention to detail. Other interesting exhibits were the mess of robot models and radio-controlled, small-scale vehicles that turn into all manner of odd things.

NEW CONCEPT IN FIGURES
Citadel Miniatures are currently working on a new series of figures as part of the official D&D range. The plan is to release a three pack which will have versions of player characters throughout their lives: a young level, an older model level, and a veteran for the highest levels. Great idea, hopefully characters will last long enough to use all three!

IRON CROWN in '85
Designers of Rolemaster and MERP, Iron Crown Ent, have just told me their planned releases for this year. Chris Christensen says that they aim to have at least sixteen new products ready by next Xmas. Many of these should be available by now, together with Battle of the Five Armies, long awaited and popular releases. Also out before March will be Rangers of the North, a Middle Earth campaign book, along with Thieves of Tharbad, a MERP scenario. The reworked Character Campaign Law rulebook is expected at the same time. Set for release March in the US are Creatures and Treasure, the Rolemaster bestiary, and the rumours of Future Law, which is apparently along the lines of MERP. It is a SF-Fantasy RPG, supplement modules etc to follow. With as yet unspecified release dates are Merchant Adventurers, Cleric's Revenge, Riddles of the King, and Conquest of the King (Battle of Pellenor Fields), all board games. Looking further forward into the year brings us The Tolkien Bestiary, quite obviously the monster bestiary I have been mentioning, and Eagles of Eriador, another MERP scenario. Moria II and Dol Amroth, both Middle Earth campaign books, should be out before next Xmas. Chris did say that these were all they had detailed so far, no doubt there will be other additions later.

ONE LINERS
Twilight 2000 (GDW $18.95) This new RPG features US soldiers stranded in war-torn Europe after World War III. The production is very good, but if the advertising is anything to go by GDW are hoping that this will really take off. Halls of the Dwarrow Kings (Gnome $9.95) Very interesting release this one. Similar in approach to Dungeons and Dragons the Dwarrow Kings is full of all sorts of goodies. Maps, drawings, adventure guidelines etc., and most interesting the facsimile scrolls and fragments for play aids. Multi-system and good quality. Designed by Beast Enterprises and Endless Games. A welcome addition; further releases may include Grenadier figures.

TRAVELLER FOR CHAIR!
As previously mentioned a few months ago, the latest Traveller series are being released by Game Designers Workshop. The Traveller set in Space and Ground rules is coming later this year. The Traveller set in Space is going to be released by the end of the year and the Ground set is due next year. Each volume will cost between $2.50 and $2.95.

GOBBLEDIGOOK by Bill

NEW GAMES WORKSHOP SOFTWARE
Previewed at the Toy Fair were three new titles by GW for the Spectrum, reading this release is a preview of the best-selling boardgame Talisman. It has moving graphics, coupled with an adventure game type description of the location. The dice have been replaced with a time limit which allows players to move from several locations and then decide what they want to do as they move around the screen. With the monsters zooming across the screen to fight you, the amount of playing the mind's eye. In the game the vector of The Tower of Despair will be to create and to fight you, and those of the puzzles of Tower of Despair will be played on by the computer. The Key of Hope is everything of complexity as the original, and is also based on a computer version of vector ball, more details about that soon.

PUZZLE QUEST BOOKS
Available now is the latest in the series by Steve Jackson and Jon Pickle. The countdown, full colour book, published by Oxford University Press at $9.95 each. The first is Steve's. The key of the Tachyon concerns an ageing wizard who in your twelve tasks, each being a puzzle, hidden in the story and the colour plates. The drawings by Steve's aid. The second is the Casket of Secrets, and should be out by Autumn: Illustrations from McGee (Dreadnought Dungeon). . .

AND BRIEFLY
* Tunnels and Trolls. It is rumoured it is being released by bootlegs as their entry into the gaming field!
* Corgi Books are about to sign the top selling German FRP system The Black Eye for the UK. The success of the RPG depends on who you talk to; it has apparently sold between 20-200 thousand copies so far in Europe.
* Puffin are dropping their Fantasy computer software after poor sales.

THE NEXT ISSUE

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