



# Signs & Portents

46

Roleplayer

## SPYCRAFT

A campaign setting and a *World on Fire* preview

## MOUNT YIMSHA

Savage tribes, magical defences and Hyboria's most subtle sorcerer

## THE QUEST FOR THE STONES

An adventure for experienced *RuneQuest* characters

Plus intelligent magic items for *RuneQuest*, advanced rules for spaceships in *WARS* and *The World According to Roleplaying...*

S&P Roleplayer 46

July 2007

MBP 5546R

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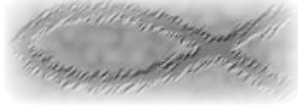
There are two things I want to share with you this month. Unfortunately for you, neither of them are my giant pile of cakes. Those are all for me.

#### FIRST!

This is not a new scheme, but it bears repeating: the Mongoose Infantry – our team of product demonstration guys – is open to roleplayers too! For more information [click here](#), or send email to [ibarstow@mongoosepublishing.com](mailto:ibarstow@mongoosepublishing.com).

#### SECOND!

A new rune for your RuneQuesting enjoyment: Cod.



**Runic Power:** Rune Touched suffers no skill penalty from wearing scale armour.

### Piscine Deluge

Casting Time 2, Instant, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Area (10 × Magnitude)  
Runes: *Cod*

*The caster raises his hands over his head and his magic takes effect: fish fall from the heavens, blanketing the surrounding area in stinking slime!*

When this spell is cast, fish materialise above the area of effect (centred on the caster) and rain to the ground in a sudden splatting downpour. Anyone in the area of effect (including the caster) takes a single point of damage to their head location (absorbed by armour normally) unless they are holding a shield overhead or are otherwise sheltered.

The fish are real fish and remain after the spell is cast – they are unfortunately inedible to anything but a troll or similarly ‘gastronomically robust’ creature, but anyone moving at more than half speed through the area must make an Acrobatics check (–5% per point of Magnitude) or fall prone in an undignified manner and cover themselves in fish grease.

Chris

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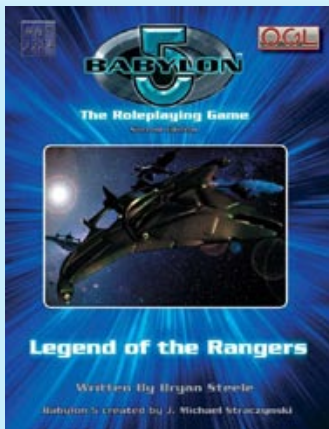
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# EYE ON MONGOOSE



## Babylon 5: Legend of the Rangers

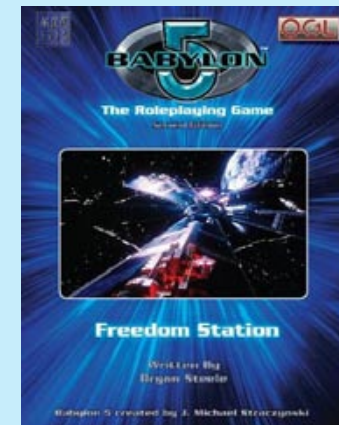
The year is 2265 and much of the galaxy is happily growing closer together through the efforts of the Interstellar Alliance. The Anla'shok Rangers are the omnipresent policing force used to serve and protect the member worlds, from escorting diplomats to hunting down raiders and bringing them to justice. A cunning Ranger officer from one of these common missions questions the old ways and sets a spiral of events into motion that will reveal weaknesses in the Minbari's ancient traditions, bring together unexpected allies, and pull the shroud from a deadly new enemy – the Hand.

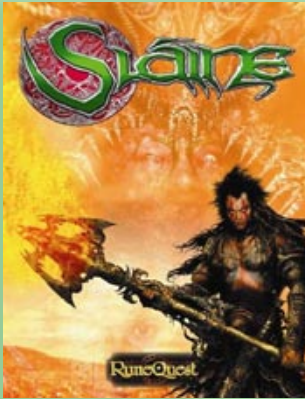
The Legend of the Rangers was an interesting telemovie that brought several new ideas and events to bear in the Babylon 5 universe. This sourcebook for the Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game Second Edition gives the information concerning those events in a way that could be used by Games Masters and players to bring 2265 in vivid detail to their own campaigns. Although very specific in nature, The Legend of the Rangers set the stage for a number of new plotlines to spin off from the Rangers of that year, their vessels and evolving traditions, and their new and powerful foe.

## Babylon 5: The Lurker's Guide to Freedom Station

Before there was a Babylon 5, before the League of Non-Aligned Worlds had a place to bring all their commerce, there was Tirrith Transfer Point Alpha. Years pass, wars are waged, and the station took on a new name... Freedom Station. Although not as popular as other stations Freedom Station is a massively popular stopping point for a specific type of space traveller – raiders.

This book is a guide to the people and happenings of this controversial space station. It looks at the League's original version of the Babylon Project, how it failed, and where its new residents took it once they settled with the locals. Freedom Station is a powerful reminder that law and justice mean drastically different things depending on where in the galaxy you go, and who really runs the spacelanes away from the policing of the larger governments.





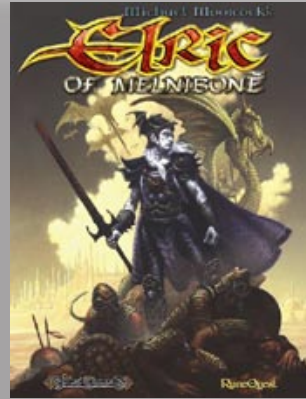
### RuneQuest: Slaine

Tir Nan Og – The Land of the Young – is a place of myth and legend, where the warring tribes of Celts fight one another constantly, except when joining forces to combat invaders. It is here that Slaine mac Roth built his legend in the pages of the comic 2000AD and now you can also adventure in his world with the new RuneQuest rules system.

In this setting your character can learn many new skills unique to the world of Slaine (such as the Salmon Leap and Shield Biting), have immense warp spasms that can lay waste to his foes and use the power of the earth to cast magical spells to defeat his enemies.

The creatures unique to Slaine's world are detailed within. With Shoggy Beasts, Titans, the Half-Dead and many more all presenting dangerous challenges to overcome.

In Slaine you will have the opportunity to adventure in a world rich in Celtic myths battling terrible foes at the behest of your tribe and gods.



### Elric of Melniboné

The eldritch isle of Melnibone and the Young Kingdoms across the sea provide a wealth of strange places, deadly foes and potent spells for the Elric of Melnibone roleplaying game. Sail the seas of fate into a demon-haunted world where dragons ride the storm-racked skies and the price of dreams is above rubies. Walk the streets of fabled Elwher, steal the lore of Pan Tang, and cross the Sighing Desert as you quest for eternal Tanelorn.

Continuing the Eternal Champion RPG line, Elric of Melnibone takes players to the Young Kingdoms where dragons fly the skies and chaos reigns!

Based on the RuneQuest rules system, Elric of Melnibone is a complete and self-contained rulebook.



### RuneQuest: Pirates

*'A Pyrate is Hostis humanis generis, a common Enemy, with whom neither Faith nor Oath is to be kept... if Pyracy be committed on the Ocean, and the Pyrates in the attempt be overcome, the Captors may, without any Solemnity of Condemnation, hang them up at the Main-Yard; if they are brought to the next Port, & the Judge rejects the Tryal, or the Captors cannot wait for the Judge, without Peril or Loss, Justice may be done upon them by the Captors.'*

RuneQuest Pirates brings the golden age of piracy to life! Lay hand to your cutlass and stick your pistols in your belt, friend – adventure's waiting for you offshore. Band together with other scurvy dogs and take command of a ship and a crew. Lead them to victory and plunder, or to a watery grave! Win fame and fortune, or dangle at the end of the yardarm when the Navy catches you!

The shining blue waters of the Caribbean lie before you, and the wind is in your sails. What you do next is up to you!





## Spycraft 2.0

Beyond espionage, beyond military mayhem, Spycraft 2.0 is your gateway to an unlimited world of modern action-adventure! It takes the wildly popular Spycraft RPG d20 system to a whole new level, expanding and updating character options, condensing and refining the rules set, and providing the ideal platform for any scenario from any genre in any setting! Whether your play style is intimate or epic, freeform or stat-driven, this landmark release contains everything you need to launch into the adventure today! Spycraft 2.0's Second Printing includes all errata compiled to date and reorganizes the gear chapter for fast, simple use!



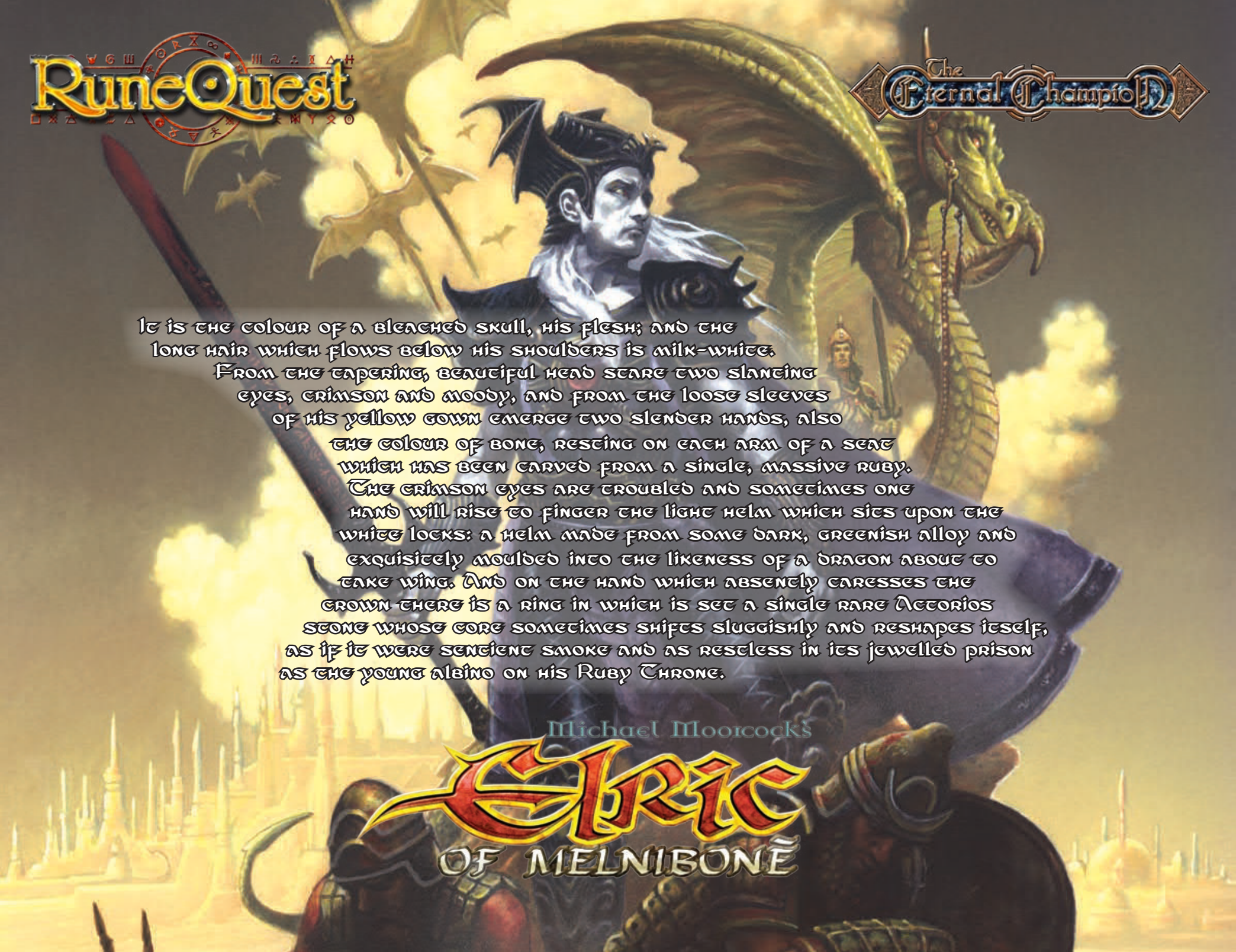
## Spycraft: World on Fire

Enter the daring realm of dystopian espionage in this brand new RPG setting for Spycraft 2.0! From the halls of Majestic Branch to the twisted corridors of the Nine Tiger Dynasty and everywhere in between, this essential Spycraft volume takes you behind the scenes of an epic superspy saga like no other. Dive into the fight against the monolithic Franchise and its myriad conniving masterminds. Delve into the darkest corners of the globe to uncover the puzzles and plots left untouched for decades. Defend against the relentless onslaught of Project: Pitfall (or take on the task of bringing Pitfall's enemies to final justice). Own the future. Today.



*For more Spycraft goodness, see page 47!*





It is the colour of a bleached skull, his flesh; and the long hair which flows below his shoulders is milk-white. From the tapering, beautiful head stare two slanting eyes, crimson and moody, and from the loose sleeves of his yellow gown emerge two slender hands, also the colour of bone, resting on each arm of a seat which has been carved from a single, massive ruby. The crimson eyes are troubled and sometimes one hand will rise to finger the light helm which sits upon the white locks: a helm made from some dark, greenish alloy and exquisitely moulded into the likeness of a dragon about to take wing. And on the hand which absently caresses the crown there is a ring in which is set a single rare Accorios stone whose core sometimes shifts sluggishly and reshapes itself, as if it were sentient smoke and as restless in its jewelled prison as the young albino on his Ruby Throne.

Michael Moorcock's

# STERIC

## OF MELNIBONÉ



# THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ROLEPLAYING

WHAT HISTORY MIGHT LOOK  
LIKE IF IT WAS THE RESULT OF A  
ROLEPLAYING GAME..

BY NICK ROBINSON  
AND IAN BARSTOW

## 3. THE SINKING OF THE TITANIC

### DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Captain Oates  
First Officer Scott  
Lt. Woodshed  
Seaman Wilson  
Seaman Bowers  
Seaman Evans

### SCENE 1

*1912, The Titanic: somewhere at sea*

GM (*a detached voice*): Right, you've been out at sea for just over 4 days now. Nothing much has happened at all. Oates, what are your plans?

OATES: Well first of I don't know why everybody had to use the same names from the Scott business. Look, I'm the only survivor, right?

SCOTT: You went out for a walk and on the way learned how to captain a ship. Yeah...right.

OATES: Hahaha! Sulking because you can't be captain again, eh? If you hadn't nearly caused a TPK in the Antarctic you might well still be running the show. As it is, just get on with doing whatever it is you do.

WOODSHED: Excuse me, sir, but do you and Mr Scott know each other?

OATES: Never met the chap before this voyage. You must be new.

WOODSHED: Pardon?

OATES: Nothing.

WOODSHED: Sir, I've been meaning to ask. Why do you carry that Winchester rifle around with you?

OATES: What, oh this? Just an affectation, nothing more.

SCOTT (*under his breath*): That's my bloody gun!

OATES: Did you say something Mr Scott?

SCOTT: Hmm? No, nothing captain. I'll do the rounds.

Scott leaves, looking angrily at Oates' Winchester and muttering incoherently.

### SCENE 2

*Still 1912 on the Titanic's forward deck. A number of seamen stand around waiting for something to kick off.*

SCOTT: Come on you chaps, look lively!

EVANS: Feels like we've been standing around here for days...

BOWERS: strange you should say that.

SCOTT: Who's on lookout duty?

WILSON: Pardon?

SCOTT: Lookout. Who's the bloody lookout?

EVANS: No need to swear, sir. (looks up) Actually we don't currently have one...

SCOTT: Have we been going four days without a lookout?

BOWERS: Possibly. We're new to this cruise liner malarkey.

SCOTT: God's teeth! We could have had a disaster on our hands! Seaman Evans, get up into the crow's nest, quick as you can.

GM: Evans, make a Climb check please.

SCOTT: What? You're kidding, right? He does this every day!

GM: Not according to him he doesn't. Make the check please.

EVANS: Er...

SCOTT: OK, can any of you actually climb?

WILSON: I can.

SCOTT: Up you go.

WILSON: If I must.



SCOTT: Just get on with it. Take twenty if you have to but get on lookout. The rest of you, do something useful. Check the ship for... I don't know, things and stuff.

*The three move off, with Wilson heading up to the crow's nest. Woodshed comes out, struggling into an overcoat.*

WOODSHED: Aren't you cold? I'm perishing.

SCOTT: Are you kidding? We've been in worse pickles than this.

WOODSHED: Like what?

SCOTT: Never mind. A camping trip that went a bit pear-shaped.

WOODSHED: never liked camping. Shall we take a turn around the deck?

SCOTT: Sure. Out of interest, why are you carrying a revolver?

WOODSHED: The captain insisted. Said I might run into a Shoggoth or similar. What's a Shoggoth?

SCOTT: Beats me. He's always had a fixation about them for as long as I can remember.

WOODSHED: is that why he insists on carting that rifle around with him?

SCOTT: We don't talk about that.

WOODSHED: Sorry, my bad. Hey, who are those two?

*Woodshed squints, picking out two figures at the very bow of the ship, seemingly a man and woman standing with arms outstretched.*

SCOTT: Looks like a couple of passengers messing about. No concern of ours. Oh, hang on... here comes the captain...

OATES: Brisk evening, gentlemen, eh?

WOODSHED: Quite so, sir.

OATES: I'm bored. Nothing's happened for ages. Let's shoot something.

WOODSHED: Beg pardon?

SCOTT: Oh lord...

OATES: Look, what harm can it do? You, seaman Evans... stop wibbling about and throw something in the air for me to shoot. He holds out the Winchester, looking optimistic.

EVANS: Erm... throw what exactly sir?

OATES: I don't know. Chuck your hat in the air. That'll do.

EVANS: If you say so sir.

GM: Evans, make a ranged attack roll please.

EVANS: What? For throwing a hat?

GM: Unless you have the Throw Hat feat.

EVANS: Eek. I suppose a natural one isn't going to be good?

GM: Nope.

*Evans and the others watch as his hat sails into the air and over the side of the ship.*

SCOTT: Not really doing very well tonight, are you?

EVANS: I'm changing this bloody dice.

OATES: Idiot. You, Bowers, throw your hat.

BOWERS: Lucky my head doesn't get cold... Bowers throws his hat in the air.

EVANS: How come he didn't have to make a check?

GM: He has the feat.

EVANS: What feat?

GM: Throw Hat.

EVANS: I thought you were just making that up.  
*Bowers shakes his head.*

EVANS: You wasted a feat on that?

OATES: Steady, I've got a shot here!

EVANS: looking over the side for his hat. Bloody hell!

OATES: Eh? \*BANG\* Oops...

*A scream followed by a splash comes from the bow of the ship.*

WOODSHED: You just shot that bloke at the front.

OATES: Are you sure?

WOODSHED: Look, the girl's on her own now. And she looks very angry with you.

OATES: Hmm... this presents a problem. Chambers another round in his Winchester.

SCOTT: Oh no, not again!

OATES: Look, it wouldn't do to have the captain of the Titanic done for murder.

SCOTT: He's going to say it...

WOODSHED: say what?

OATES: No witnesses! \*BANG\*

SCOTT: That would be it.

OATES: Look they were only NPCs. Didn't even know their names. Best thing to do is forget about it and see if he gives us any XP for them.

GM: You are so lucky there's no alignment in this.

EVANS: You ought to come and look at this...



OATES: What?

*Evans points over the side of the ship.*

SCOTT: Good lord!

OATES: Looks like I got him in the head.

SCOTT: Not the NPC, you idiot... that bloody big iceberg.

OATES: Oh that. Just a bit of snow. Nothing important.

SCOTT: It will be if we hit one.

OATES: Cobblers. Firstly we have a lookout posted and secondly, this tub's unsinkable. Said so in the background notes, remember?

GM: Wilson, make a Spot check please.

*Sudden silence ensues as the party all look at Wilson expectantly.*

WILSON: Spot check, you say?

GM: Yep.

WILSON: Ack.

SCOTT: Is this a bad time to ask your Wisdom modifier?

WILSON: Remember I rolled that six when we were rolling up stats?

OATES: What? But Charisma's always the dump stat!

WILSON: I wanted a good Charisma so I could make out with some of the female NPCs on the voyage.

OATES: Just make the roll. How hard can it be?

WILSON: Six...

OATES: Not bad... probably only a DC 5 job.

GM: It is. Sadly he hasn't taken off his negative Wisdom.

SCOTT: You put some ranks into Spot, right Wilson?

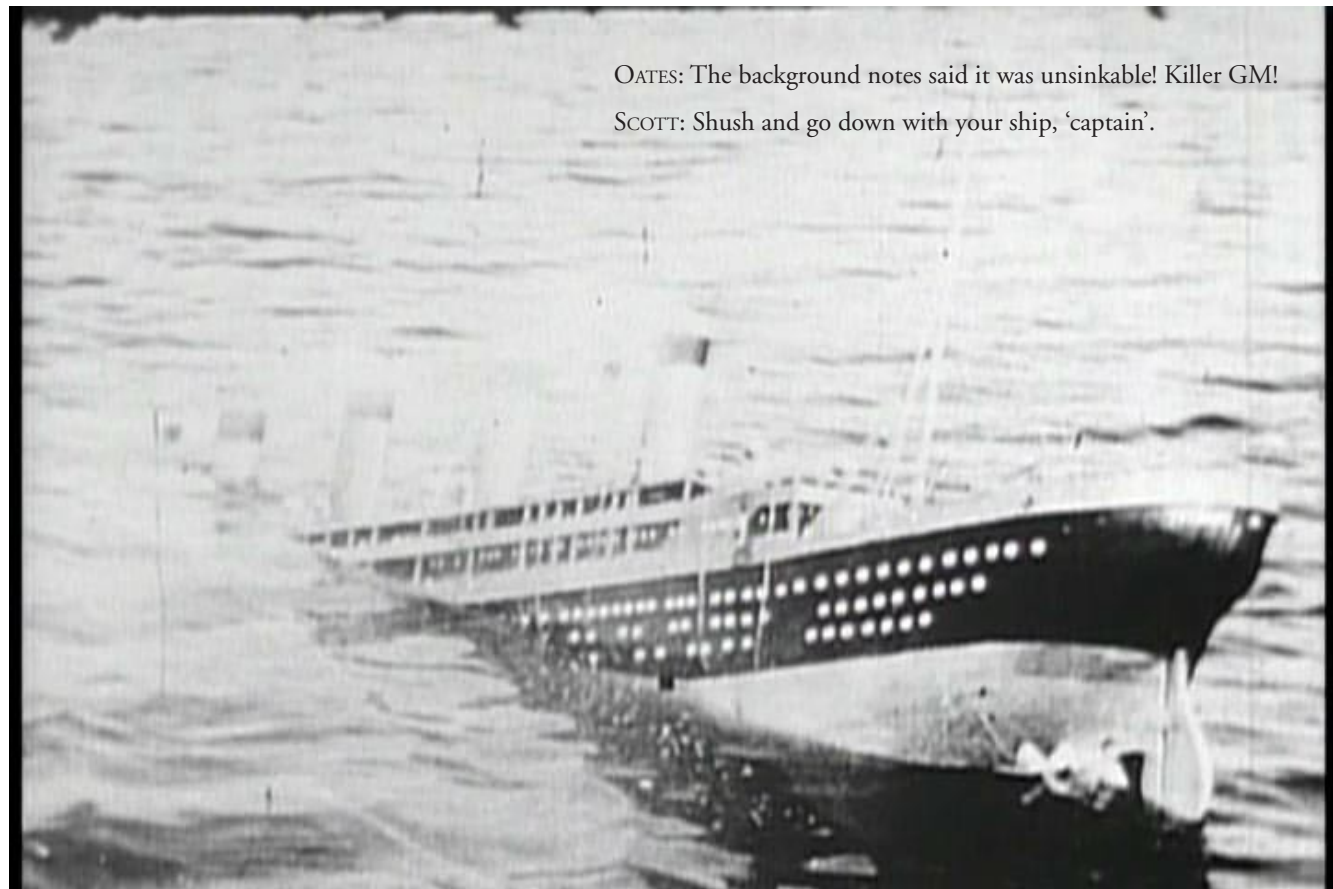
WILSON: I was going to do that when I levelled up... I'm very good at Perform (wind instruments)...

GM: That's a four then and you fail. You feel the whole ship rock as something hits it.

*The party as a whole begin to panic and talk amongst themselves, except Oates who looks remarkably unconcerned.*

GM: Captain, any orders?

OATES: I think we all just need to calm down a bit. Remember, this is the Titanic. What could go wrong?



OATES: The background notes said it was unsinkable! Killer GM!

SCOTT: Shush and go down with your ship, 'captain'.





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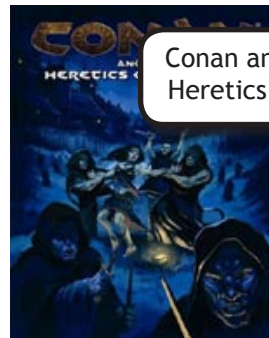
# Monty's Offer of the Month

## CONAN AND THE THING OF OTHER THING

In the run-up to the release of Conan 2nd Edition next month, we're practically *giving* away Conan adventures to get your blood up and your thews flexing. Since 2nd Edition still uses the OGL rules you need not fear your purchases being made obsolete – so order them today! All four Conan adventures for the knock-down price of \$25 / £12. You won't find a better deal short of joining a ship of corsairs and raiding the coast of Stygia!



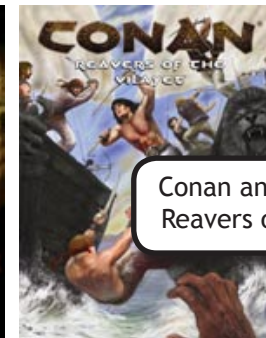
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# WARS: Ships, part 1

Part 8 of the unreleased supplement, *Soul and Steel*. Written by Greg Lynch

Ships are as essential to *WARS* as armour, weapons and kizen powers. Without ships, the five factions would be unable to fight. Without ships, the Solar System's economy would crumble. Without ships, the Player Characters would have to settle for causing trouble on only one world, rather than having an entire Solar System as their playground.

The ships in this article are divided into three groups: capital ships, civilian and transport ships and fighter and scout ships. Though there are dozens of ships detailed below, there are dozens, even hundreds more models plying the space lanes of the Solar System, each with its own strengths and weaknesses.

## Optional Rules for Ships

### Maintenance

Since humanity first created the wheel, there has been one tried and true thing all machines have in common, whether the machine in question is a simple windmill or the latest and most advanced GRAV drive engine ever created – with use, they tend to break down.

Although virtually all ships built by any of the five factions in *WARS* (even the cobbled-together constructions of the Cogs) are built to last, a piece of machinery that travels hundreds of millions of kilometres through the void of space on the back

of a GRAV drive is subjected to a great deal of stress. Not only is there the constant friction of the various moving parts, the erosion of the reactor, the pummeling the hull receives from a constant rain of dust and pebbles, there is the simple wear and tear of use and the crushing damage of combat in space to contend with.

The bottom line is simply this: ships are machines. Their parts wear out, their systems break down, they malfunction. Sometimes, in the worst situations and circumstances possible, they stop working altogether, forcing the Player Characters to either fix the problem or find some way to summon help (which can lead to whole new adventures when an Accord raider shows up to answer the emergency hail). There are many tales told in the Rat's Nest and similar taverns throughout the Outer Rim of salvagers who found what seemed to be an undamaged ship floating in space, its entire crew dead of asphyxiation, starvation, dehydration or even frozen to death, all because of a failed system that was easily fixed by someone who knew what they were doing.

### Routine Maintenance

Owning a ship in *WARS* is not simply a matter of making a huge one-time purchase (or a huge one-time theft, as the case may be). In order to keep the ship working properly, the owner or owners must perform periodic maintenance on it.

This maintenance, which also includes such expenses as fuel for the thrusters, must be performed monthly. With a ship that has just rolled off the assembly line, this is a fairly light expense (*WARS* does not provide rules for 'lemons' – unless the Games Master is feeling a bit cruel and wishes to employ the rules for used ships below). The proud new owner of the brand new ship will have to pay a monthly maintenance cost of one percent of the cost of the ship itself (for example, a ship that cost 75,000 creds would have an initial monthly maintenance cost of 750 creds).

As the ship ages and logs millions of kilometres of travel back and forth across the Solar System, keeping it in good working order will steadily become more and more expensive. Routine maintenance costs on a ship go up on an annual basis. For the first two years in service, routine maintenance will incur a monthly cost of one percent of the ship's purchase price. In the above example, with a 750 credit monthly cost, that will equate to an annual cost of 9,000 credits for the first two years. The cost of routine maintenance increases by one percent of the ship's original purchase price for every two years after that. Thus, after ten years, the monthly maintenance cost on the ship will be 3,750 credits. After 20 years, the monthly cost plateaus at ten percent, or 7,500.

Routine maintenance on a ship takes time, time during which the ship must stay in dock. Every 1,000 credits of expense will require a standard eight-hour shift



to perform. Most major spaceports, from Earth and Gongen to Ceres Station or Vesta Station, routinely run multiple repair crews shifts around the clock, thus, 3,000 credits worth of routine maintenance can be carried out in a single 24 hour day.

Player Characters with the appropriate skills may wish to carry out their own routine maintenance, which will cut the cost in half (they must still purchase things like thruster fuel and needed spare parts). Doing so will require hourly Repair skill check rolls (DC 15 to 20). Note that only the expense is halved by the 'do it yourself' method, the time required remains the same.

Obviously, if the ship is docked and unused for months at a time, the Games Master may feel free to lower or even negate the cost of routine maintenance for that time, and not count those months against Negligence (see below).

## Overhauling

Ship owners who have grown tired of paying the high monthly costs of maintaining an aging ship have two options. First, they may simply go out and buy a new ship. If, on the other hand, the ship owner does not have the money to do so, or wants to keep his current ship for any reason, he may elect to put the ship in for a complete overhaul.

A complete overhaul costs five percent of the ship's original purchase price for every year it has been in service (or since its last complete overhaul). Thus, a complete overhaul on a ship that has been riding the spaceways for seven years will cost 35% of the ship's original purchase price. However, for those who can afford it, this is a worthwhile investment. It entails a nearly complete gutting of the ship's systems, testing every wire, pipe, circuit and weld and replacing or

repairing anything showing the slightest sign of wear. As this is a more time-expensive process than mere routine maintenance, it will take a full day for every 1,000 credits of cost to carry out, during which time the ship must stay in dock.

The benefit of the complete overhaul is that it effectively makes the ship brand new again, resetting the cost for routine maintenance to one percent of the ship's original purchase price per month. Only through regular overhauls do the ancient ships still in use by some of the smaller Maverick gangs manage to stay spaceworthy. Military ships, for example, usually undergo a complete overhaul every two years, ensuring that they stay in peak shape for service.

## The Cost of Negligence

Does a ship fall apart if it goes a month without routine maintenance? Of course not. Many ship owners regularly let their ships go for several months without such maintenance. However, doing so is not without risk.

A ship designed to travel through space is a hideously complex piece of machinery, a conglomeration of thousands of parts and multiple systems, all of them under constant stress and all of them capable of breaking down at the worst possible moment.

Every ship described in this article is assigned a 'malfunction rating', which indicates how prone it is to failure. So long as routine maintenance is performed, this malfunction rating may never see use in a

*WARS* campaign. However, once the Player Characters begin to let the maintenance of their vessel lapse, the chances of something going terribly wrong begin to rise.

For every month in which routine maintenance is not performed on a ship, the Games Master should privately roll the ship's malfunction chance, found on the table below. The chance of a malfunction increases the longer a ship goes without maintenance, thus, the Games Master should double the chance for the second month, triple it for the third and so on.

**Malfunction Rating:** The designation given to the ship that determines its likelihood of malfunctioning without routine maintenance.

- Malfunction Rating A: This ship is either a very simple design or is extremely well constructed, probably a model that has been in service for at least a few years, allowing the engineers to work out every kink.
- Malfunction Rating B: This Malfunction Rating

## Malfunction Chance Table

Malfunction Rating	Malfunction Chance	Example Ship	Malfunction Severity Modifier
A	1%	Shi Quarrel	+0
B	3%	FedGrav 77A4 Heavy Freighter, Inca 1 Fighter	+0
C	5%	LuxSystems Sabre XII	+1
D	10%	FedGrav Type I Fighter	+2
E	15%	Starwake H3, used ships	+4



is usually applied to ships with a more complex design, or that have not been in service very long.

- **Malfunction Rating C:** There are either some significant flaws in the design of the ship, or it is little more than a prototype vessel, the kind of ship that has only been in service a matter of a few months.
- **Malfunction Rating D:** This Malfunction Rating is generally found only in those ships with serious faults and oversights in their design, or in the most aged and decrepit models, the kind utilising parts that are not even in production any longer.
- **Malfunction Rating E:** This is a deathtrap. Even the most negligent Earther corporation would not market a ship this shoddy, at least not since the Holly Butor Group went bankrupt from lawsuits resulting from the Starwake H3. This Malfunction Rating is rarely, if ever, found outside a used ship.

**Malfunction Chance:** The percentage chance the ship will suffer a malfunction if it goes without routine maintenance for one month. This chance is compounded for each month the ship goes without routine maintenance. For example, a ship with a malfunction rating of C that goes without routine maintenance for three months has a 15% chance of suffering a malfunction, while a ship with a malfunction rating of E that goes the same amount of time has a 45% chance of suffering a malfunction.

**Example Ship:** An example of a ship with the listed malfunction rating.

**Malfunction Severity Modifier:** The more prone a ship is to malfunctions, the more prone it is to severe malfunctions. Whenever there is a malfunction on a ship, the Games Master should add this modifier to the d20 roll for the malfunction severity table below.

## Effects of Combat on Ship Malfunctions

Anyone who has been through combat in space knows just how damaging it can be to a ship. In addition to the melted holes in the hull from arcs of plasma and streaking missiles, the damage inflicted by combat can be invisible at first. Shocks to a ship's systems from the trauma of combat can create a minor problem that, left unchecked, can quickly evolve into something life threatening.

A ship that has been damaged in space combat effectively has its last routine maintenance (assuming one was carried out within the month) erased. Immediately after combat, the Games Master should roll the ship's malfunction rating to determine if the combat caused any collateral damage to any ship systems not directly damaged or destroyed during the battle.

If a ship has gone more than a month without undergoing routine maintenance, the Games Master should increase the ship's chance of a malfunction as if it had gone one more month than it actually has since routine maintenance.

## Malfunction Severity & Location

Although any malfunction on a vehicle travelling through the hard vacuum of space is legitimate cause for concern, some malfunctions are less worrisome than others. Some malfunctions are very small in scope, only slightly impacting a ship's system. Others

may be much more severe, but have no effect on a ship's ability to reach a safe harbour for repair.

If a malfunction occurs, the Games Master should consult the tables below to determine the severity of the malfunction and which ship system or systems are affected. Each table requires a single d20 roll. If the malfunction location roll indicates a system the ship simply does not have (such as missiles), the Games Master may either roll again or choose a related system (such as energy weapons in the case of missiles).

## Catastrophic Malfunctions

Catastrophic malfunctions are hideously dangerous, but are also quite rare. For a ship to undergo a catastrophic malfunction, the Games Master must roll what amounts to a 'critical hit' on the Malfunction Severity Table above. Thus, if the Games Master rolls a 20 on his d20 roll, there is only a possibility of a catastrophic malfunction. To confirm the catastrophic malfunction, he must roll the d20 again and get another 20 – otherwise the malfunction is considered to be a total malfunction. However, the ship's malfunction severity modifier, determined by its malfunction rating, is applied to both d20 rolls, meaning that for a deathtrap of a ship with a malfunction rating of E, the Games Master must merely roll 16 or higher twice in a roll on a d20 for a catastrophic malfunction to occur.

**Beam Weapons:** This malfunction will affect any ship-board weapons system that relies on coherent, focused energy to deliver damage, including such weapons as plasma cannons and laser turrets

**Communications:** The ship's ability to send and receive transmissions, along with its connection (if any) to a nearby datanet has suffered a malfunction.



### Malfunction Severity Table

D20	Degree of Severity	Result	Repair Requirements
1-5	Trivial	Though noticeable, the malfunction has no significant impact on ship operations	Can be repaired in the field with a Repair skill check DC 15
6-10	Minor	Affected system suffers a 10% loss of functionality	Can be repaired in the field with a Repair skill check DC 15
10-14	Moderate	Affected system suffers a 25% loss of functionality	Can be repaired in the field with a Repair skill check DC 20
15-16	Major	Affected system suffers a 50% loss of functionality	Can be repaired with a Repair skill check DC 20, but requires the ship be docked in a repair station
17-18	Extreme	Affected system suffers a 75% loss of functionality	Can be repaired with a Repair skill check DC 20, but requires the ship be docked in a repair station
19-20	Total	Affected system suffers total failure	Ship must undergo a complete overhaul to fix the problem
20 and 20	Catastrophic	Affected system is totally destroyed	The system cannot be repaired. It must be replaced as part of a complete overhaul

### Malfunction Location Table

D20	Malfunction Location
1	Beam Weapons
2-3	Communications
4-5	Computer
6	Defence
7-8	GRAV Drive
9	Hangar
10-12	Miscellaneous
13	Missiles
14	Navigation
15	Reactor
16-17	Thrusters
18	Quirk
19	Cascade Failure
20	Massive Cascade Failure



**Computer:** A malfunction in the ship's computer compromises any automated systems. On Gongen capital ships, this is particularly dangerous, as it affects the performance of the ship's AI.

**Defence:** A malfunction in the defence systems of a ship weakens or eliminates the ship's major defensive systems, such as energy screen.

**GRAV Drive:** A malfunction in the GRAV Drive renders the ship's means of interplanetary propulsion less efficient or altogether useless.

**Hangar:** A malfunction in the ship's hangars can reduce or entirely eliminate a ship's ability to launch fighter craft.

**Miscellaneous:** This is intended as the catch-all category of various ship systems, and the Games Master is free to choose any system not otherwise listed in this table. Examples of miscellaneous systems include light shields, ejection seats and point defence systems.

**Missile:** This malfunction will affect any ship-board weapons system that relies on firing projectiles at the enemy.

**Navigation:** A malfunction in navigation can be extremely dangerous for a ship, as it hampers or eliminates the ship's automatic navigation systems, making it more difficult to reach an intended destination. Without a functional (or reliable) navigation system, the ship's crew will have to either send out a message requesting help or find their way through skill. Navigating the Solar System without a reliable navigation system requires a Knowledge (physical sciences) skill check roll (DC 20).

### Effects of a Malfunction

The manifestation of a malfunction obviously depends upon which ship system is affected. Consider, for example, a Maverick ship equipped with a GRAV drive, thrusters, communications system and a missile rack. If the ship suffers a moderate malfunction, decreasing the functionality of one of these systems by 25%, the manifestations of that malfunction will be very different depending on which system suffers the malfunction. The GRAV drive would lose some of its speed, reducing the ship's rate of interplanetary travel to 75% of normal. The thrusters would lose some of their efficacy, reducing the ship's acceleration, deceleration, handling and other scores to 75% of normal. The communications system would start to fail, only successfully sending and receiving 75% of any given message. The missile rack would be unreliable, only successfully firing 75% of the time.

Catastrophic failures can be another issue altogether. Though a catastrophic malfunction in the thrusters would simply destroy the ship's thrusters (not an inconsequential problem by any means), a catastrophic malfunction in a missile rack is something else entirely. Such a malfunction triggers an explosion, destroying that space on the ship and a randomly determined adjoining space. Additionally, a catastrophic failure in a weapons system has a 50% chance of breaching the hull and triggering an explosive decompression (see the Wars Roleplaying Game core rulebook).

While these malfunction effects may not perfectly reflect hard science, WARS is a game of action and fast pacing. The malfunction effects are designed to be simple to remember and apply in the midst of a furious space battle.

**Reactor:** The nature of this failure is up to the Games Master. He may either rule that the power supplied by the reactor has been decreased or interrupted, or he may rule that the containment systems of the reactor have been compromised.

**Thrusters:** Though ships rely on GRAV drives to hurl themselves back and forth between planets and moons, they rely on thrusters to manoeuvre in combat, or nudge their way into a docking port. Loss of thrusters means the ship cannot perform any of these manoeuvres.

**Quirk:** As anyone who has ever owned a piece of complex machinery knows, sometimes they develop strange quirks. The same part or system of the machine might fail again and again for no apparent reason. Roll again on this table to determine the precise system to suffer a malfunction. Not only does the system malfunction, the ship has developed a quirk. From this point on, whenever a malfunction check is called for, either as a result of combat or as a result of ignoring routine maintenance, the Games Master should roll two checks. The first should be a normal malfunction check; the second (at double the usual malfunction chance) should be for the quirky



system to see if the quirk manifests and the system malfunctions. The system will continue to be quirky until the ship undergoes a complete overhaul.

**Cascade Failure:** The malfunction has compromised two ship systems. Roll twice on this table, ignoring any results of 19 or 20.

**Massive Cascade Failure:** The malfunction is spreading through the ship like a virus. Roll three times on this table. If 19 or 20 come up, roll more times as indicated by the result.

## Used Ships

Since the invention of the GRAV drive and its assumption as the standard propulsion for vessels throughout the Solar System, the drive itself has become faster, smaller, more efficient and cheaper. Still, while the cost of a GRAV drive is significantly reduced from what it once was, a brand new GRAV drive equipped ship remains far beyond the resources of most people.

Corporations and governments are the largest consumers of new ships in the Solar System, as only they can afford the astronomical costs of buying and maintaining fleets of ship. However, they do not keep these ships until the welds begin to fall apart. Rather, these ships are either scrapped (in the case of most military vessels, particularly capital ships) or are sold off as-is to help defray the costs of purchasing a replacement ship. These ships are still serviceable, and it is through these corporate or governmental cast offs that many a freelance trader or mercenary in the Solar System has acquired his own ship. Additionally, the Mavericks are renowned throughout the Solar System for taking abandoned, derelict ships and reconfiguring them into a vessel that can be used for anything from running a blockade to transporting goods and people

to waging a war. While many of these vessels are impressed into the service of the Maverick gang that found it and restored in, many others find their way to the auction block, the proceeds going to fund the gang's operations.

Lastly, there are more than a few bands of Maverick pirates who like to put plundered ships up for sale in the less reputable areas of Ceres Station, Titan Station and other places. Usually, these are older models of ship that cannot easily be modified to serve the pirates' needs, but from time to time, it is possible to find a truly impressive vessel for sale, generally one the pirates might have liked to have kept, but for reasons ranging from needing an infusion of cash to simply not having enough men and women to crew it, have opted to put it up for sale through one of the many fences that operate in the Belt and the Outer Rim.

## Look Before You Buy

The best places to find a used ship are on Earth and in the Belt. Earther corporations usually sell their cast-off vessels to smaller corporations (and sometimes even individuals) of Earth whose primary business interest is reconditioning and reselling old ships, either to another corporation or to an enterprising and rather wealthy individual. However, the choices here are often rather limited – generally nothing but large, unwieldy cargo vessels (like the SHIP NAME) and an assortment of shuttles make up the lion's share, if not the entirety, of such inventory.

Shopping for a used ship on Earth is not without its benefits. The CGC and the CAC have a large number of laws governing traffic in ships, be they new or used, and the chances of laying out a large sum of money for a lemon of a ship are less on Earth than elsewhere in the Solar System. On the other hand, there are some very firm restrictions on

who can buy a used ship on Earth. Given the current climate of war throughout the Solar System, only people who are legally Earthers (in possession of all proper identification and documentation) and who are not suspected of any manner of disloyal activity (conorting with Gongsens, for example) may buy a ship on Earth. Obviously, with the right connections (or Standings) and the right forged documentation, it is possible to circumvent these laws, but most people find it ultimately much easier to forget about Earth and seek out a used ship in the more varied inventory and much more accommodating legal restrictions (basically none) in the shipyards of the Belt.

The Nest and the Cogs are, of all the Maverick gangs, the two who are most deeply invested in the used ship market, making Ceres Station and Vesta Station the most likely spots to find the perfect used ship, though Themis Station, with its armadas of ships captured by the Hellcats, is not far behind. The eclectic inventory to be found on Ceres, Vesta or Themis is a reflection of the way these ships are recovered. Many of them were abandoned derelicts, others the spoils of war or piracy and still others sold off by colonists, failed gangs or cargo captains who either no longer needed or could no longer afford the ship. Almost any classification of ship can be found in the shipyards of the Belt, though finding a capital ship is all but impossible – not because they are not salvaged and restored, but because any such ships automatically go to the Accord, the Cartel or one of the other large Maverick gangs.

## Caveat Emptor – Buyer Beware

Whether the used ship is bought in the gleaming chrome offices of an Earther corporation specialising in such trade, or if it is bought through money furtively exchanged in the bottom levels of Themis Station, the Player Characters should be aware that buying a used ship does not mean they are buying a ship that is as



good as new for a reduced price. There is always a reason the ship is no longer being used by its original owner; whether that owner was an Earther corporation that is upgrading its aging fleet, or a Maverick cargo captain who endured one too many firefights with Accord raiders, the important thing to remember is that the ship is used. It has logged hundreds of millions of kilometres of travel back and forth between the planets, and has the scars to show for it, even if they are impossible to see at first glance beneath the shiny new paint and sparkling polish. It would behoove Player Characters to maintain a skeptical attitude towards any used ship, despite hearing 'Goldy' Trevino, owner of Good as Gold Used Ships on Ceres Station, swear up and down that the used freighter they are about to buy (the one with the plasma burns, the leaky airlock and the blood stains on the deck plating) was only flown half an AU a month by a little Mav grandmother from Callisto who used it to visit her grandchildren on Europa.

To determine exactly what (if anything) is wrong with a used ship, roll on the following table. The baseline for this table is a ship purchased from a Maverick dealer. As used ships bought from an Earther corporation are usually more reliable, subtract five from the roll. If the Player Characters are buying the ship from another party, the Games Master should modify the roll as he believes appropriate. Note that not all the results on this table are negative. From time to time it is possible to buy a used ship that turns out to be a much better deal than it initially seemed to be.

D20	Result
1-3	No additional problems
4-6	Quirk
7-8	Minor Structural Problems
9	Major Structural Problems
10-11	Persistent Quirk
12-14	Battle Scars
15	Evidence
16	Famous (Infamous) Owner
17	Extra Modification
18	Pleasant Surprise
19-20	Roll Twice

**No Additional Problems:** This used ship is in excellent condition. Only additional maintenance costs (see below under Costs of a Used Ship) apply to this ship.

**Quirk:** The ship has an existing quirk which the used ship dealer may or may not know about. This functions in every way like a quirk resulting from a malfunction (see page 17).

**Minor Structural Problems:** Whether this is just a poor example of the ship model, or if this particular ship has just been through the proverbial wringer, the ship has some inherent problems that cannot be repaired. The Malfunction Rating of this ship is increased by one (a ship model that usually has a Malfunction Rating of B would have a C instead, and so forth).

**Major Structural Problems:** At some point in its life, this ship has taken a real beating or two, and has the wounds to show for it. The Malfunction Rating

of this ship is increased by two (a ship model that usually has a Malfunction Rating of B would have a D instead, and so forth). If this would increase the ship's Malfunction Rating past E, the ship instead stops at a rating of E and develops a Persistent Quirk (see below).

**Persistent Quirk:** The ship has an existing quirk which the used ship dealer may or may not know about. This functions in every way like a quirk resulting from a malfunction (see page 17), except that it cannot be resolved by a complete overhaul. It is simply something the owner of the ship will have to live with.

**Battle Scars:** This ship has seen its fair share of combat. Though the obvious signs of combat have been repaired or cleaned up, the ship still carries invisible wounds of its last major battle. The Games Master should follow all rules outlined above under Effects of Combat on Ship Maintenance, rolling 1d3 and using the result as the number of 'months' this ship has gone without maintenance.

**Evidence:** The ship was used in the commission of a currently outstanding and unsolved crime. Perhaps it was the getaway vehicle of whoever stole the first shrouds from XeLabs Venus, or maybe it strafed one of the Gambler's cargo ships off of Europa during a covert operation. Whatever its history, the Player Characters (and potentially the individual selling them the used ship) know nothing of its history until people looking for the ship's former owners come knocking rudely at their door. This result requires a bit of storytelling finesse on the part of the Games Master, but offers an excellent opportunity to expand the *WARS* campaign storyline. Few things will worry a Player Character more than discovering a hidden cargo hold in his newly-bought used ship, opening it



and finding a dozen corpses inside, each wearing an Earther military uniform.

**Famous (Infamous) Owner:** The former owner of the used ship was particularly famous or infamous. Perhaps the Player Characters will be mistaken for the former owners, or perhaps someone will believe they must have stolen the ship, and will attempt to capture the Player Characters in anticipation of a reward that will never come.

**Extra Modification:** The ship features an extra modification of the Games Masters' choice. This is a modification the used ship dealer was unaware of, and was not factored into the price of the ship. Thus, it makes little sense for the Games Master to choose something like a pair of GRAV missile pods tacked onto a FedGrav 77A4 Heavy Freighter as the extra modification – there is no chance the used ship dealer would not have noticed that and charged extra for it. However, a modification like an extra, hidden cargo bay for smuggling or even a energy shield system with enhanced efficacy are perfectly acceptable modifications for this result.

**Pleasant Surprise:** The former owners of the ship left something behind, something that has not been discovered by the used ship dealer. What form this pleasant surprise takes is entirely up to the Games Master. It could be anything from a storage locker filled with advanced weaponry to a file tucked away somewhere in the ship's computer system containing the complete blueprints to the XeLabs Venus Station or coordinates of a stash of treasure. In addition to providing the Player Characters with a pleasant surprise, this result gives the Games Master a perfect means of setting up future *WARS* adventures.

## Costs of a Used Ship

The sale price of a used ship is usually between 40% and 70% of its original purchase price, depending upon too many variables (age of the ship, popularity of the model, recurrent mechanic problems, its use in commission of a crime) to list here. Games Masters should first determine what, if anything, is wrong with the ship and determine its price accordingly. Of course, it is possible to barter with a used ship salesman to get a better price, an exchange the Games Master and players may play out, or if they prefer, it can be resolved with a series of Persuasion (diplomacy) and Perception (sense motive) skill check rolls. In any case, it is very unlikely the salesman will deviate more than 5% from his original asking price.

Note that even if the roll on the table above indicates the ship has no major problems, it will still have a number of tiny issues that may be impossible to ever completely resolve. A used ship costs more to maintain, plain and simple. A used ship's minimum monthly maintenance cost is 2% of the ship's original purchase price (the cost of the ship when it was new, not what the Player Characters paid for it), and increases by one percent every year, not every other year. Even a complete overhaul cannot change this, it can only bring the monthly cost back down to 2%.

## I Can Take That Off Your Hands

As the Player Characters adventure throughout the Solar System of *WARS*, defeating enemies and building their Reputations as they gain levels, they are almost certain to find themselves in possession, from time to time, of derelict, abandoned or captured ships.

At first, the Player Characters will likely want to keep any ship they are lucky enough to obtain, but as time

passes and they grow in power, wealth and level, they will almost certainly find themselves with more ships than they can reasonably expect to use. For example, a group of Player Characters with their own TranSun Class 8 Heavy Freighter and a pair of Inca 2 fighters in the freighter's customised cargo bay are unlikely to be enthused by the prospect of keeping the Universal Dynamics L2 Shuttle they just seized from a group of enemies who are now too dead to use it. When that time comes, they will need to find a way to rid themselves of these excess ships.

Of course, the Player Characters could simply leave any excess ships lying around for someone else to find and claim, but most Player Characters are not quite so generous. Fortunately for these Player Characters, if they are willing to go to the trouble of hauling the ship back to a place like Ceres Station, they can sell such unwanted ships to a used ship dealer.

Used ship dealers are like anyone else in business in the Solar System – they like to make a profit. Typically, a used ship dealer will offer that Player Characters anywhere between 20 and 30% of a ship's original value for anything they bring him for sale, intending to turn around and sell it for at least 10% more than he paid for it. The exact amount of his offer will depend upon what sort of relationship (if any) he has with the Player Characters, what sort of Reputation they have gained and whether or not they are able to successfully barter with him (see Costs of a Used Ship above). Obviously, a ship that is badly in need of repair will fetch even less money – for every destroyed space on a ship, reduce the base amount of the ship dealer's offer by 5%. Thus, if the dealer's initial offer would have been 30% of the ship's original cost, but there are two destroyed spaces, his offer will only be for 20% of the ship's original cost. If more than half the spaces on a ship are destroyed, most used ship dealers



will not be willing to buy the vessel for more than 1 or 2% of the ship's original cost – it is simply not worth it to them to fix such a battered wreck, and they are only buying it for the spare parts they might salvage.

## Capital Ships

Capital ships are the mighty warships built by the various factions, from the Earther battleship Atlantis to the Gongen Guardian Class Carrier to the Quay Lifeships. They are the pride and the backbone of any faction's fleet, and the chances of finding one for sale are vanishingly small. Obviously, none of the factions that produce capital ships offer them up for sale, as none of them are so foolish as to allow their finest technology to land in the hands of an enemy.

Generally, the captain of a capital ship will destroy the vessel before allowing it to fall into enemy hands, but from time to time a capital ship is captured that is still at least partially intact. Even then, only the Mavericks would consider offering the vessel for sale, but such sales are made directly to people like Raving Red Jane and the Gambler, individuals of great wealth and power in Maverick territory. Essentially, the only way a group of Player Characters can hope to get their hands on a great capital ship is by finding a way to capture it themselves. Even then, they will find they may have bitten off more than they can chew. Not only will the faction from whom the ship was taken stop at nothing to get it back, but the Player Characters will find themselves the target of the other four factions as well, each eager to acquire the captured ship, but probably far less eager to pay the Player Characters anything for it.

No prices are given for capital ships. In the rare event of one coming up for sale (usually in a back room deal on Ceres Station), the ship is priced at whatever the

market will bear, and bidding wars (and possibly real wars) are expected. A capital ship is worth as much as the buyer is willing and able to pay.

## Accord Destroyer Naglfar Type

**Accord Destroyer Naglfar Type:** Immense Capital Ship; **Defence:** 17 (-12 Size, +15 Armour, +4 Manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 2,000; **Acc:** 40; **Dec:** 20; **GRAV:** GRAV 2.5; **Sensors:** +12; **Stealth:** +1; **Weapons:** 4 Grade-6 Plasma Cannons (Close, 12, +2); 2 Accelerator Guns (Close, 10, -1, P); 2 Grav Missile (Long, 10, +0, P); **Control Spaces:** 3; **Engine Spaces:** 7; **Structural Spaces:** Hanger 1, Crew 5, Cargo 1; **Craft:** 4 fighters (2); **Training:** +5; **Stress:** 16; **Features:** Boarding tube (2), point defence

Built around the old shell of a Transystem A-12 Spaceliner, the first of these ships was named the *Naglfar*, a destroyer that has terrorised the Outer Rim for years. The *Naglfar*'s reputation and effectiveness were so impressive to Raving Red Jane, leader of the Accord, that she ordered the construction of a score of vessels just like it. Until the arrival of the Crimson Corsair, these ships formed much of the backbone of the Accord fleet.

## Chuluktika

**Chuluktika:** Colossal Capital Ship; **Defence:** 26 (-8 Size, +16 Armour, +8 Manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 2,500; **Acc:** 30; **Dec:** 25; **GRAV:** GRAV 2.5; **Sensors:** +12; **Stealth:** +4; **Weapons:** 5 Plasma lance (close, 9, +5), Kanakh gravity beam (Close, 14, +0); **Control Spaces:** 3; **Engine Spaces:** 8; **Structural Spaces:** Crew 3, Cargo 1; **Training:** +5; **Stress:** 18; **Features:** Energy screen (4), insertion capsule launchers, refractive shielding, regeneration

The Chuluktika class is the most common type of Quay support ship, featuring excellent cargo capacity,

good countermeasures and an assortment of powerful weapons.

The primary weapon system of the Chuluktika is its mysterious gravity beam, a device which focuses the energy from the ship's GRAV drive into a powerful force, creating an area of extreme gravity around an enemy ship, literally crushing the hull like a can. Additionally, the Chuluktika boasts ten insertion capsule launchers, able to blast ten Quay insertion capsules toward a planet from orbit every turn. Lastly, the ship is equipped with refractive shielding, a strange technology that scatters any incoming coherent energy attack (such as plasma and lasers) reducing the damage of such attacks by two.

As with all Quay vessels, the Chuluktika is capable of regenerating. Any turn in which a Chuluktika is not damaged, any damage done to its armour regenerates.

## Crimson Corsair

**Crimson Corsair:** Immense Capital Ship; **Defence:** 22 (-12 Size, +16 Armour, +8 Manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 3,000; **Acc:** 45; **Dec:** 30; **GRAV:** GRAV 5; **Sensors:** +12; **Stealth:** +4; **Weapons:** 6 Plasma M3 Cannons (Close, 11, +2); 2 Accelerator Guns (Close, 10, -1, P); 2 GRAV missile launchers (long, 10, +0, P), Superior grapple beam (Close, 0, -4); **Control Spaces:** 2; **Engine Spaces:** 6; **Structural Spaces:** Crew 1, Cargo 3; **Training:** +6; **Stress:** 16; **Features:** Boarding ramps (3), energy screen (5), point defence, superior grapple beam

This ship is Maverick genius Hephaistos Hopper's masterwork. Strong, tough and as fast as a vessel only half its size, there is at present only one Crimson Corsair, built by Hephaistos Hopper for Raving Red Jane and currently serving as her flagship. The



## Capital Ship Statistics

Ship	Size & Type	Faction	Malf. Rating	Defence	Speed	Acc/Dec	GRAV	Ship	Size & Type	Faction	Malf. Rating	Defence	Speed	Acc/Dec	GRAV
Accord Destroyer Naglfar Type	Immense Capital Ship	Maverick	C	17	2,000	40/20	GRAV 2.5	iCom Pompeii Series Cruiser	Colossal Capital Ship	Earther	A	18	2,500	30/15	GRAV 5
Chuluktika	Colossal Capital Ship	Quay	C	26	2,500	30/25	GRAV 2.5	Jikoku Defender Class Carrier	Vast Capital Ship	Gongen	B	18	800	10/5	GRAV 2.5
Crimson Corsair	Immense Capital Ship	Maverick	B	22	3,000	45/30	GRAV 5	Kavindi Damir	Immense Capital Ship	Shi	A	26	2,000	40/20	GRAV 2.5
FedGrav Hellion Series Survey Cruiser	Colossal Capital Ship	Earther	B	22	2,000	30/50	GRAV 2.5	Komoku Insertion Class Carrier	Vast Capital Ship	Gongen	B	16	1,250	20/5	GRAV 2.5
FedGrav Stork	Tremendous Capital Ship	Earther	C	12	550	6/4	GRAV 2.5	Makaltika	Tremendous Capital Ship	Quay	C	14	500	4/4	GRAV 2.5
Gongen Guardian-Class Carrier *	Tremendous Capital Ship	Gongen	B	12	450	5/4	GRAV 2.5	Reaper Craft	Colossal Capital Ship	Shi	B	23	2,500	50/30	GRAV 2.5
iCom Battleship *	Tremendous Capital Ship	Earther	B	18	1,000	15/10	GRAV 5	Tamon Assault Class Carrier	Tremendous Capital Ship	Gongen	B	16	800	10/5	GRAV 5
iCom Rift Class Enhanced Battleship	Vast Capital Ship	Earther	C	20	1,500	20/10	GRAV 5	Tenno Tandoku Assault Transport	Colossal Capital Ship	Gongen	B	22	1,500	40/20	GRAV 2.5
iCom MK 3 Escort Cruiser	Immense Capital Ship	Earther	B	17	1,000	20/15	GRAV 2.5	Vinisha Class Battleship	Tremendous Capital Ship	Shi	B	16	750	20/20	GRAV 5

\* Complete statistics for this ship can be found in the *WARS Roleplaying Game* core rulebook



elegance and power of this vessel has made quite an impression on Jane and other powerful Mavericks like the Gambler, however, and Hephaistos Hopper has received orders from throughout the Rim for almost a dozen more just like it.

The Crimson Corsair is well designed for piracy. It features a superior grapple beam, an enhanced version of the simple grappling beam found on the FedGrav NR-6 'Atlas' Tugboat (see next issue). Only effective at extremely close range (within 100 metres), the superior grapple beam can hold steady any ship of size Colossal or smaller it manages to latch on to, so long as that ship's Acceleration rating is less than 50. Note that this requires the Crimson Corsair to attempt a Vulture manoeuvre (see the *WARS Roleplaying*

*Game* core rulebook). The Crimson Corsair also has three separate boarding ramps – collapsible tubes that extend from armoured hatches to adhere to the enemy ship's hull, allowing quick access for up to three boarding parties.

## FedGrav Hellion Series Survey Cruiser

**FedGrav Hellion Series Survey Cruiser:** Colossal Capital Ship; **Defence:** 22 (-8 Size, +12 Armour, +8 Manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 2,000; **Acc:** 30; **Dec:** 50; **GRAV:** GRAV 2.5; **Sensors:** +16; **Stealth:** +4; **Weapons:** 4 Plasma M1 cannons (close, 9, +5), 1 grav missile (long, 10, +0, P); **Control Spaces:** 2; **Engine Spaces:** 4; **Structural Spaces:** Crew 3,

Cargo 2; **Training:** +7; **Stress:** 14; **Features:** Energy shield (2)

The Hellion Series Survey Cruiser is a dual purpose vehicle. The ship's primary mission is to patrol Earther space in pairs in concurrent, overlapping patrols to keep any enemy ships from slipping through to menace Earth itself. Although the Hellion is far from helpless in a fight, neither does it qualify as a true 'ship of the line', and its orders on detecting an enemy incursion are always to radio back to Earth immediately, then begin an engage and retreat strategy until help arrives.

The Hellion is also used as part of a larger attack force, designed to make a quick landfall, drop off Earther special forces, and take off again in a matter of moments.

## FedGrav Stork Juggernaut Carrier

**FedGrav Stork Juggernaut Carrier:** Tremendous capital ship; **Defence:** 12 (-20 size, +16 armour, +6 manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 550; **Acc:** 6; **Dec:** 4; **GRAV:** GRAV 2.5; **Sensors:** +10; **Stealth:** +2; **Weapons:** 8 grade-6 lasers (Close, 12, +2); 2 homing missiles (long, 8, +2, P); **Control Spaces:** 4; **Engine Spaces:** 12; **Structural Spaces:** Hangar 10, crew 10, cargo 1; **Craft:** 40 Juggernauts (10); **Training:** +10; **Stress:** 20; **Features:** Point defence

After seeing too many of its Juggernauts destroyed on iCom tenders, plucked off the bottom of the ship like so much overripe fruit, FedGrav decided to build its own specialised ship to carry them. Large and ungainly, the Stork is not an effective front-line battleship, but is exceptionally effective at what it is designed to do – namely, to drop a horde of Juggernauts on top of enemy positions. Rather than carrying the great round tanks on external tenders, the Stork has a series of



*Hellion Series Survey Cruiser*



enclosed hangar bays running along its bottom, each containing a single Juggernaut, protected by the ship's thick armour. In its first few engagements, the Stork was extremely effective, as all the Earther enemies had grown used to seeing Juggernauts carried on tenders, and were ill-prepared when the Stork disgorged its lethal cargo.

## iCom Rift Class Enhanced Battleship

**iCom Rift Class Enhanced Battleship:** Vast capital ship; **Defence:** 20 (-16 size, +22 armour, +4 manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 1,500; **Acc:** 20; **Dec:** 10; **GRAV:** GRAV 5; **Sensors:** +16; **Stealth:** +2; **Weapons:** 8 M4 Plasma cannons (close, 14, +2); 6 improved accelerator guns (close, 11, +0, P); 4 grav homing missiles (long, 10, +2, P); **Control Spaces:** 5; **Engine Spaces:** 10; **Structural Spaces:** Hangar 1, crew 12, cargo 1; **Craft:** 4 shuttles (1); **Training:** +10; **Stress:** 22; **Features:** Energy screen (10), point defence, targeting disruption field

The Rift Class battleship is the latest and greatest iteration of the cornerstone of the Earther fleet – the battleship. Though it is referred to as the Rift Class, this new generation of battleship has actually been in the planning stages since the day after the Battle of Phobos, when iCom admirals realised they needed something more powerful to break the back of the rebellious elements on Gongen and in the Maverick territories. The appearance of the Mumon Rift, and the advanced technology of the two extrasolar species that spilled through it into the Solar System, only added further urgency to what was already a certainty – the unveiling of the new battleship.

In addition to its upgraded armour and weapons systems, the Rift Class battleship features a new technology known as a targeting disruption field. Extending outward 100 metres from the vessel, this electrical field plays havoc with the guidance systems of incoming missiles, imposing a -4 penalty on all missile attack rolls.

The first of these vessels, the *Vengeance*, has been offered to Admiral Horatio Hicks, but despite his involvement in the creation of the new class of battleship, he has not yet accepted nor declined, and it is rumoured he simply feels guilty at the thought of abandoning the *Atlantis*, a ship that has seen him through dozens of battles.

## iCom MK 3 Escort Cruiser

**Escort Cruiser:** Immense Capital Ship; **Defence:** 17 (-12 Size, +15 Armour, +4 Manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 1,000; **Acc:** 20; **Dec:** 15; **GRAV:** GRAV 2.5; **Sensors:** +12; **Stealth:** +1; **Weapons:** 4 Grade-6 Plasma Cannons (Close, 12, +2); 2 Accelerator Guns (Close, 10, -1, P); **Control Spaces:** 3; **Engine Spaces:** 7; **Structural Spaces:** Crew 5, Cargo 1; **Training:** +5; **Stress:** 16; **Features:** Point defence

As devastatingly powerful as an iCom battleship can be, it is vulnerable when alone. Since the earliest days of naval warfare, navies have built smaller combat ships to accompany the great dreadnoughts, to shield them from harm. The iCom MK 3 Escort Cruiser is the latest iteration of this long tradition. More than capable of holding its ground in a fight against all but the most powerful ships, the MK 3 Escort Cruiser is usually detached as part of a larger Earther battlegroup, with three or four of the ships standing guard around each of iCom's enormous battleships.

## iCom Pompeii Series Cruiser

**iCom Pompeii Series Cruiser:** Colossal Capital Ship; **Defence:** 18 (-8 Size, +10 Armour, +6 Manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 2,500; **Acc:** 30; **Dec:** 15; **GRAV:** GRAV 5; **Sensors:** +10; **Stealth:** +8; **Weapons:** 4 Plasma M1 cannons (close, 9, +5), 3 Bullseye laser cannons (long, 10, -2); **Control Spaces:** 2; **Engine Spaces:** 6; **Structural Spaces:** Crew 2, Cargo 1; **Training:** +7; **Stress:** 14; **Features:** Energy shield (4), point defence, targeting assist

The smaller cousin of the battleship, the iCom Pompeii Series Cruiser is a faster, cheaper and extremely reliable vessel, the primary arm of the Earther military in all but the largest naval encounters.

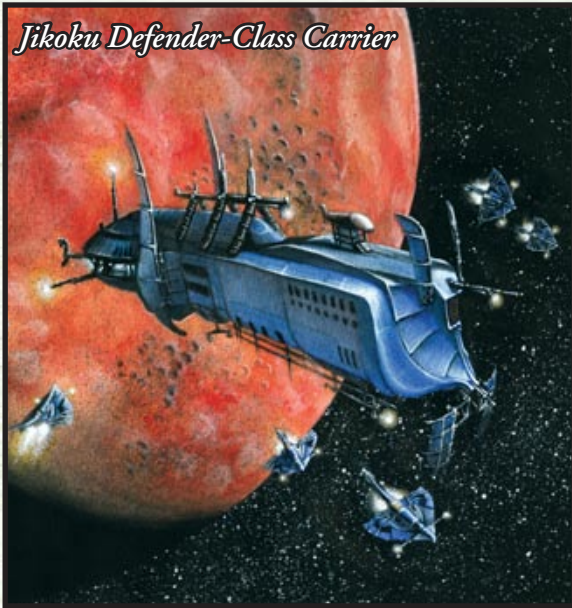
Though the Pompeii is a good, rugged, all purpose ship by any count, it is the vessel's unique targeting assist systems that truly make it shine. This impressive suite of software and hardware can greatly increase the accuracy of even the ship's long-range Bullseye laser cannons, adding a +4 attack bonus to all the ship's attacks. Though there have been numerous attempts, iCom has not yet managed to make the targeting assist systems function reliably on any other class of ship.

## Jikoku Defender Class Carrier

**Jikoku Defender Class Carrier:** Vast Capital Ship; **Defence:** 18 (-16 Size, +14 Armour, +8 Manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 800; **Acc:** 10; **Dec:** 5; **GRAV:** GRAV 2.5; **Sensors:** +12; **Stealth:** +6; **Weapons:** 6 Shocho Kaji-M Plasma turrets (close, 11, +4); 4 Sougon grav missile (long, 10, +0, P); **Control Spaces:** 3; **Engine Spaces:** 6; **Structural Spaces:** Crew 2, Cargo 4, Hangar 5; **Craft:** 20 fighters (5); **Training:** +10; **Stress:** 18; **Features:** AI, energy screen (4), point defence



### *Jikoku Defender-Class Carrier*



Refitted after the Battle of Phobos with better weapons, thicker armour and less extraneous space, the *Jikoku* is now equal parts battleship and carrier.

One of several ships in constant patrol around Gongen, its moon and Eros, the *Jikoku* became a template for a new wave of Gongen carriers – a craft that can carry a large number of fighters while retaining impressive offensive capability in its own right.

Like all Gongen capital ships, the *Jikoku* Defender Class Carrier's systems are monitored by an AI, and the ship requires the Pilot Gongen Starship skill to pilot.

### **Kavindi-Damir**

**Kavindi-Damir:** Immense Capital Ship; **Defence:** 26 (-12 Size, +20 Armour, +8 Manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 2,000; **Acc:** 40; **Dec:** 20; **GRAV:** GRAV 2.5; **Sensors:**

+20; **Stealth:** +2; **Weapons:** 6 Plasma sparker (close, 10, +4), 2 Seyalshi missile systems (long, 14, +4, P); **Control Spaces:** 3; **Engine Spaces:** 7; **Structural Spaces:** Crew 1, Cargo 5; **Training:** +5; **Stress:** 16; **Features:** Mining laser, point defence

Created by the Damir, the Kavindi-Damir is one of the most common Shi support and resource vessels. Its twin purposes are to provide support and protection for larger capital ships, and to scour the Solar System for needed resources to help rebuild the ravaged world of Seyal, still reeling from the destruction caused by its trip through the Mumon Rift. Of all Shi ships, Kavindi-Damir have been seen most often by humans.

### **Komoku Insertion Class Carrier**

**Komoku Insertion Class Carrier:** Vast Capital Ship; **Defence:** 16 (-16 Size, +12 Armour, +8 Manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 1,250; **Acc:** 20; **Dec:** 5; **GRAV:** GRAV 2.5; **Sensors:** +10; **Stealth:** +8; **Weapons:** 4 Shocho Kaji-M Plasma turrets (close, 11, +4); 2 Tentou accelerator guns (medium, 8, -2, P), 2 Sougon grav missile (long, 10, +0, P); **Control Spaces:** 3; **Engine Spaces:** 7; **Structural Spaces:** Crew 2, Cargo 3, Hangar 7; **Craft:** 28 fighters (7); **Training:** +10; **Stress:** 18; **Features:** AI, energy screen (4), point defence

When the Tenryu Party chose to create specialised classes of carrier following the Battle of Phobos, the Komoku was selected as the basis for a insertion carrier, a ship that would slip through holes in an enemy's defence to disgorge a swarm of deadly fighters.

As far as stealth goes, the Komoku Insertion Class carriers are about as stealthy as a ship that enormous can be. Unable to match other carriers like the *Jikoku*



*Komoku Insertion-Class Carrier*

Defender class for its ability to dish out and absorb damage, the Komoku is probably the most versatile of the bunch, able to fight at close, medium or long range and equipped with a mixed squadron of fighters and interceptors.

Like all Gongen capital ships, the Komoku Insertion Class Carrier's systems are monitored by an AI, and the ship requires the Pilot Gongen Starship skill to pilot.

### **Makaltika**

**Makaltika:** Tremendous capital ship; **Defence:** 14 (-20 size, +18 armour, +6 manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 500; **Acc:** 4; **Dec:** 4; **GRAV:** GRAV 2.5; **Sensors:** +12; **Stealth:** -15; **Weapons:** 20 Plasma lance (close, 9, +5), 5 Kanakh gravity beam (Close, 14, +0), 10 Cluster missile (medium, 10, +2, P), 15 kundanaka missile pods (long, 9 + special, -2, P); **Control**



**Spaces:** 4; **Engine Spaces:** 12; **Structural Spaces:** Hangar 15, crew 15, cargo 15; **Craft:** 60 Hekaton (15); **Training:** +1; **Stress:** 5; **Features:** Energy screen (8), point defence, regeneration

The *Makaltika* is the largest ship in the Quay fleet, and the first to enter the Solar System through the Mumon Rift. It is the template by which all other Quay life ships are designed.

The *Makaltika* (and other Quay life ships) are so huge they stretch the definition of Tremendous. Designed to carry thousands of individuals and capable of operating without resupply for months at a time, these vessels are so large they even generate a small amount of gravity (microgravity). At 1,000 metres long and nearly 600 wide, this vessel is a lethal and almost indestructible foe. Still, the Quay have only a limited number of life ships, and will not willingly risk them in combat if it is not necessary.

As with all Quay vessels, the *Makaltika* is capable of regenerating. Any turn in which a *Makaltika* is not damaged, any damage done to its armour regenerates.

## Reaper Craft

**Reaper Craft:** Colossal Capital Ship; **Defence:** 23 (-8 Size, +9 Armour, +12 Manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 2,500; **Acc:** 50; **Dec:** 30; **GRAV:** GRAV 2.5; **Sensors:** +18; **Stealth:** +10; **Weapons:** 6 Plasma sparker (close, 10, +4); **Control Spaces:** 2; **Engine Spaces:** 4; **Structural Spaces:** Crew 2, Cargo 3; **Training:** +7; **Stress:** 14; **Features:** Energy shield (4), mining laser, sensor ghost, truginium collector

Lightly armed (at least compared to most Shi vessels), the Reaper craft is not truly intended for combat.

Rather, its main function is to collect truginium, the precious resource that powers Shi rift technology, the stores of which were utterly exhausted with the opening of the Mumon Rift. Reaper Craft are most commonly seen near the Jovian moon of Ganymede, scooping up truginium that has escaped the surface of the planet. A Reaper Craft is a valuable piece of hardware, one the Shi are very protective of. Such ships are never seen unescorted.

A Reaper Craft has a truginium collector unit installed on its hull. This is essentially an enormous scoop that picks up and sorts through the random bits of gaseous and solid matter found throughout space. Anything the collector identifies as truginium is pulled into a storage tank, while the dross passes through the other side of the collector and back into space. The Reaper Craft is also equipped with a mining laser array. Though this is of little use against a target that will not sit still (such as an enemy ship) and has a range of only 50 metres, it is capable of boring quickly into asteroids, moons and other rocky formations in search of needed resources.

The purpose of the Reaper Craft in combat is to get away, but preferably never to enter combat in the first place. When the Reaper Craft detects a hostile ship approaching, it will activate its sensor ghost feature. This electrical feedback causes any enemy ship that has detected the Reaper Craft and is attempting to lock on to it to register the Reaper as 200 metres away from its actual location, thus causing the enemy ship's attacks to miss. This technology has its limits, and will not fool an attacker for long, but the Shi hope it is enough time for the Reaper to get away while other, more combat oriented ships, move into the fray. A sensor ghost will only work against a maximum of three ships at a time, and never for more than one

turn against any single ship – once the first volleys of shots go wide, the enemies will realise the problem and compensate for the sensor ghost.

## Tamon Assault Class Carrier

**Tamon Assault Class Carrier:** Tremendous Capital Ship; **Defence:** 16 (-20 Size, +18 Armour, +8 Manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 800; **Acc:** 10; **Dec:** 5; **GRAV:** GRAV 5; **Sensors:** +10; **Stealth:** +2; **Weapons:** 8 Shocho Kaji-M Plasma turrets (close, 11, +4); 5 Sougon grav missile (long, 10, +0, P); **Control Spaces:** 3; **Engine Spaces:** 8; **Structural Spaces:** Crew 4, Cargo 1, Hangar 8; **Craft:** 48 fighters (8); **Training:** +10; **Stress:** 18; **Features:** AI, energy screen (5), point defence



*Tamon Assault-Class Carrier*

The largest of Gongen's specialised carriers, the Tamon Assault Class Carrier is a terrifying presence in battle. Its weapons systems make it the match of all but the finest battleships, and its ability to disgorge a seemingly unending supply of fighters makes it the centrepiece of many a Gongen battle plan.



Like all Gongen capital ships, the Tamon Assault Class Carrier's systems are monitored by an AI, and the ship requires the Pilot Gongen Starship skill to pilot.

## Tenno Tandoku Assault Transport

**Tenno Tandoku Assault Transport:** Colossal Capital Ship; **Defence:** 22 (-8 Size, +14 Armour, +6 Manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 1,500; **Acc:** 40; **Dec:** 20; **GRAV:** GRAV 2.5; **Sensors:** +12; **Stealth:** +1; **Weapons:** 4 Shocho Kaji-M Plasma turrets (close, 11, +4); 2 Accelerator Guns (Close, 10, -1, P); **Control Spaces:** 1; **Engine Spaces:** 4; **Structural Spaces:** Crew 2, Cargo 4, Hangar 3; **Craft:** 3 fighters or 6 TSVs; **Training:** +5; **Stress:** 16; **Features:** AI, energy screen (4), point defence

In the few short years since the Gongen War of Independence, the Tenryu Party has made the creation of stronger, faster and better armoured ships a priority. Though the speed of the Gongen ships gave them an edge during the Battle of Phobos, Shocho knew that the Earthers would eventually return, equipped with a way to compensate for the Gongen speed. Thus, the design and construction of ships like the Tenno Tandoku Assault Transport.

The Tenno Assault Transport is designed to take troops, fighters and ground vehicles to wherever they are needed, braving the worst of enemy fire with its thick hull and energy screens. Its multi-function hangars allow the Tenno Assault Transport to carry anything from fighters to surface attack vehicles, and can accommodate three gargantuan vehicles or six huge vehicles. Up to 100 troops in battle armour can squeeze into this transport.

Like all Gongen capital ships, the Tenno Assault Transport's systems are monitored by an AI, and the ship requires the Pilot Gongen Starship skill to pilot.

## Vinisha Class Battleship

**Vinisha Class Battleship:** Tremendous capital ship; **Defence:** 16 (-20 size, +20 armour, +6 manoeuvrability); **Speed:** 750; **Acc:** 20; **Dec:** 20; **GRAV:** GRAV 5; **Sensors:** +15; **Stealth:** +4; **Weapons:** 10 Plasma sparker (close, 10, +4), 4 Seyalshi missile systems (long, 14, +4, P), 2 Vinisha accelerant cannons (long, 18, +2, P); **Control Spaces:** 5; **Engine Spaces:** 10; **Structural Spaces:** Hangar 4, crew 8, cargo 1; **Craft:** 16 Quarrels (4); **Training:** +10; **Stress:** 20; **Features:** Energy screen (10), point defence, Rift generator

Modeled after the *Tilak-Vinisha*, the flagship of the Tilak fleet, Vinisha Class battleships are the rigid backbone of Shi naval power. The tough but light

armour and impressive energy shields of these vessels proved an all but unstoppable combination when the Shi first entered the Solar System, and the three human factions have been struggling to adapt ever since.

The Vinisha Class battleship mounts one of the deadliest weapons a ship may carry (outside of nuclear ordnance) – a pair of Vinisha accelerant cannons. Several generations more advanced than any previously seen accelerator gun (such as the standard iCom battleship mounts), these guns stretch the entire length of the ship and use the power of the GRAV drives to hurl projectiles of metal or stone at amazing speeds over long distances.

As with many of the largest Shi vessels, the Vinisha Class battleship features a Rift generator, but with the unstable nature of the Solar System and the lack of sufficient fuel, the Shi do not dare use these generators.

*Guardian-Class Carrier – see page 249 of the WARS main rulebook*





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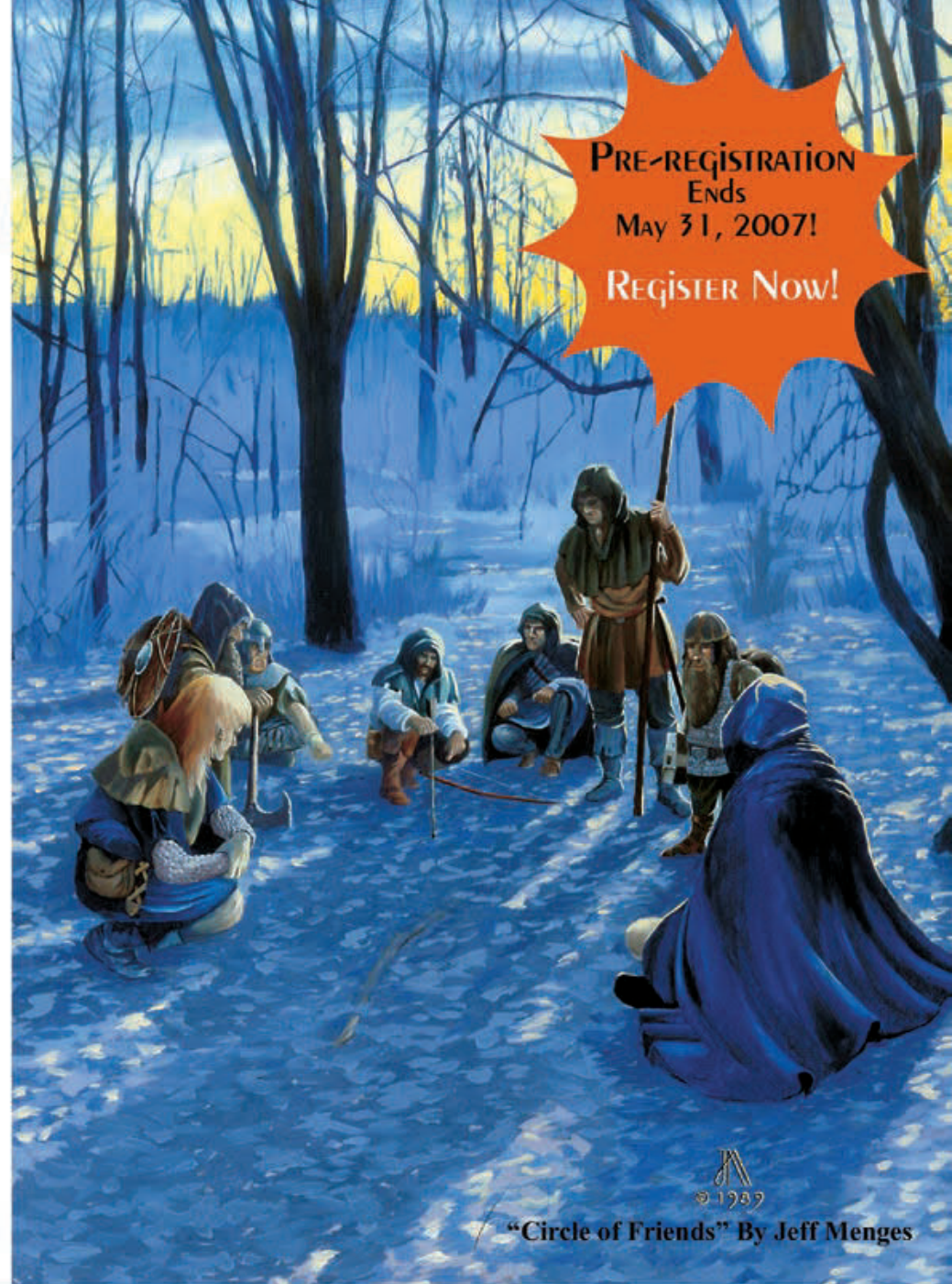
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# MOUNT YIMSHA

A FAMOUS AND FORBIDDING PEAK FOR CONAN, THE ROLEPLAYING GAME, BY RONALD TOLAND

*"There are no paths or signs of human habitation in these parts," she commented. "Even for the Himelians this region seems singularly deserted. We have not seen a trail since we left the one where we met the Galzai woman."*

*"For answer he pointed to the northwest, where she glimpsed a peak in a notch of the crags."*

*"Yimsha," grunted Conan. "The tribes build their villages as far from that mountain as they can."*

*- Robert E. Howard. The People of the Black Circle*

## INTRODUCTION

A remote mountain keep. An evil sorcerer using intrigue and black magic to conquer a nation. A student of the dark arts, whose heart is as black as his master's, throws off his chains for the sake of love.

Robert E. Howard's story *The People of the Black Circle* brings all these elements together. Mixed with the mighty thews of Conan the Cimmerian, the result is a thrilling tale of daring and adventure.

But Mount Yimsha still holds secrets Conan left unexplored. This supplement will describe Mount Yimsha for use in your *Conan The Roleplaying Game* campaign, covering its environment, history, and deadly residents. Whether your characters explore Mount Yimsha before or after Conan, there is much to see and do on the mountain.

## OVERVIEW

Mount Yimsha is the home of a group of sorcerers called the Black Seers. Their leader is known as the Master of Yimsha, or the Master of the Black Circle. Next in rank are the Lords of the Black Circle, four demons chained to the Earth and to the Master's will. Beneath them are a number of acolytes of the black arts.

In *The People of the Black Circle*, Conan is pulled into an attack on the Master of Yimsha. The Cimmerian, now leading a band of Afghuli warriors from the Himelian mountains, kidnaps the Devi Yasmina, Queen of the country of Vendhya, to barter her for the release of seven of his captains.

But the Master of Yimsha has his own plans for the Devi. The power-hungry sorcerer seeks the throne of Vendhya for himself. To achieve that end he slew the former King of Vendhya. With the King dead and the Queen in his power, the county would be ripe for conquest by an army of northern horsemen under his control.

The Master is not the only one seeking temporal power. Khemsa, a student of the Master of Yimsha, has fallen in love with Gitara, a maid of the Devi Yasmina. Gitara convinces Khemsa to betray his master. Together they plan to kidnap the Devi and use her as leverage to seize power in Vendhya. When Conan snatches the Devi first, Khemsa and Gitara track them into the Himelians.

When Khemsa finally catches up to Conan and the Devi, however, the Lords of the Black Circle intervene. They appear between Conan and Khemsa as the two

men confront each other on a rocky ledge. The Lords fail to ensorcel Khemsa, but break his will by sending Gitara over the edge of the precipice. They then cause a landslide that sends Khemsa over the edge as well. Conan grabs the Devi and tries to leave, but is slowed by the Lords' magic. They steal the Devi from Conan, whisking her away to Mount Yimsha.

Furious at the theft of his prize, Conan heads for Mount Yimsha. Along a rocky trail below the ledge where he faced the Lords of the Black Circle, he finds Khemsa, dying but not yet dead. Khemsa completes his betrayal by telling Conan how to get past the Master's defences.

With this advice, and the help of a band of Irakzai tribesmen, Conan storms the Keep. The Lords of the Black Circle use their sorcery to kill several of the Irakzai before Conan smashes the crystal ball that kept them on Earth, sending the Lords back to the Outer Dark. The Master of Yimsha himself appears and kills Conan's remaining companion.

In a crimson fury, Conan attacks the Master of Yimsha and chases him into the room where the Devi has been held captive. The Master shape-shifts into a giant snake form and tries to crush Conan within his monstrous coils. Conan skewers the Master with a long knife, wounding him terribly. Before he can finish the sorcerer off, the Master of Yimsha slinks away in a trail of blood. Conan and the Devi escape from the Keep, thankful for their lives.



## HISTORY OF MOUNT YIMSHA

No one knows how long the Keep of the Master of Yimsha has stood, nor when the current Master took up residence. The evil sorcerer has lived there long enough for the local tribes to fear even the sight of Mount Yimsha. Beyond that scholars can only speculate.

The presence of structures made of green jade at the site (see below) leads some scholars to suggest that the Master's Keep was built on top of the ruin of an ancient city. Perhaps the same race that built the lost cities of Xuthal and Gazal once paused to raise a great city on land that would become the Himelians? A city mostly destroyed in the Great Cataclysm, whose bones were used to shape a home for the Master of the Black Circle and the Black Seers of Yimsha?

## JOURNEYING TO MOUNT YIMSHA

Mount Yimsha is defended by more than sorcery. Just reaching the mountain is a feat worthy of the greatest adventurers.

The Himelians are a range of tall, snow-covered peaks separating the warm plains of Vendhya to the south from the steppes of Turan and Hyrkania in the north. An hour's ride north from Peshkhauri, the northernmost outpost of Vendhya, brings travelers to the Zhaibar Pass, the main route through the Himelians. Treacherous, narrow trails wind for two days' ride north and west from the Pass to Mount Yimsha. Some of these paths are less than five feet wide. The sun is hot and merciless during the day, though the wind feels as cold as any Nordheimer blast.

At night the stars fill the sky, but for all their light they lend no warmth to those sunless hours.

And though the area immediately around Mount Yimsha is uninhabited, the rest of the Himelians teems with tribes of hill people. Afghulistan lies just south of

the mountain, with Ghulistan to the east. Warriors of the Wazuli, Afghuli, and Irakzai clans – among others – constantly patrol the mountain passes and nearby trails for unwary travelers and easy plunder. They are masters of their home terrain, attacking from cover with thrown javelins and showing little mercy to enemies. While they obey a code of hospitality toward guests, any insult – real or perceived – to their honour is avenged with blood. Characters should be especially cautious at night. The hill people see better in the darkness than any other people of the Hyborian age, and their favourite tactic is a nighttime ambush.

The Games Master should consider having characters make Ride checks (DC 15) to keep their mounts – if any – from losing their footing on the slippery trails. When traveling on foot, Climb (DC 15) or Balance (DC 14) checks to keep from falling off the sides of steep slopes should be expected. He should also consider the possibility of the characters getting lost in the twisting paths and barren terrain of the Himelians. Even if the characters manage to deal with the local tribes peacefully, they will not willingly go near the mountain, making them less useful as guides.

The Master of Yimsha also watches the mountains around his home using his Divination spells. If the sorcerer has some reason to know and hate the characters, they should not be surprised to find the Lords of the Black Circle paying them a visit.

Should an adventuring troupe survive the journey to the mountain, their trials have just begun. Mount Yimsha is so

steep that what paths snake their way around and up it are barely fit for horses. Halfway up the slope, it becomes impassable to anyone not on foot.

Hours of riding and crawling up the mountain will bring the stout-hearted within sight of the snow line and the two towers that rise from the side of Mount Yimsha.

## LAYOUT

**Acolytes' Tower:** Built to house the Acolytes of the Black Seers of Yimsha, this tower stands on a narrow plateau of rock at the top of a deep ravine that separates it from the Master's Keep (see below). From its height, pupils of the Black Seers of Yimsha keep watch over the lower slopes of the mountain. The immediate approach to the tower is a bare slope that provides no cover to trespassers. Any adventurers hostile to the Master of Yimsha must first deal with the tower's residents (see **Acolytes of the Black Circle**, below).

The Acolytes' Tower is a circular keep of dressed stone 20 feet in diameter and 40 feet high. There are two entrances on the ground level. One door faces out toward the path down the mountain, the other faces back toward the







ravine. The top of the tower has a rim of stone blocks for a parapet. Those who have seen the tower – and lived – swear it is deathly quiet; the acolytes do not like to betray their presence to intruders until they attack.

Both doors are made of stout teak and can be barred from the inside. They are also protected by an overhead machicolation through which the acolytes can pour molten lead on the heads of enemies. The front door has an additional protective trap on the inside. When any character steps inside the tower, a large stone block falls from the ceiling, blocking the door and crushing anyone unfortunate enough to be underneath it.

The tower's ground floor has a single large room. The room is bare save for the two doors and a stairway leading up the

tower. There are three more floors above, with sleeping chambers for the acolytes and rooms for their sorcerous studies. The stone stair that begins on the ground floor spirals all the way to the upper battlement.

What lies in the upper rooms of the Acolytes' Tower is left up to the Games Master. One possible layout would have the second and third floors divided into two rooms, with the fourth floor a single room. The second floor could hold a sorcerous library in one room, filled with musty tomes bound in human skin, and an alchemical laboratory in the other, with herbs hanging from the ceiling to dry and strange liquids bubbling in glass containers.

The rooms of the third floor could be used for summoning and ritual sacrifices. The summoning chamber would have shelves filled with foul-smelling potions mixed in the laboratory below, along with supplies of sulphur, black candles, and incense. The sacrificial chamber would be bare save for a blood-stained stone altar with iron manacles at either end for securing victims.

The single room on the fourth floor of the Acolyte's Tower could be a common sleeping room. Bedrolls for the acolytes would line the walls, a simple chest beside each for holding their worldly goods.

The top of the tower gives a commanding view of the surrounding area. The acolytes keep watch in shifts and attack intruders from here. They use the *horn of the earthquake* to summon earth elementals that can shake the mountain, causing avalanches of rock or snow. They also have a large supply (20-30) of *hellfire puffballs*. They throw these explosive balls off the top of the tower toward enemies still struggling up Mount Yimsha, killing them before they reach the tower.

See **Magical and Unusual Items**, below, for more information on the *horn of the earthquake* and *hellfire puffballs*.

**Teak doors:** 2" thick wood, Hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 23.

**Molten Lead:** Treat as mechanical trap; location trigger (five-foot square in front of door); manual reset; 4d6 fire damage (Reflex save DC 15 or catch fire); Reflex save DC 20 for half damage; multiple targets (can strike anyone in square adjacent to target for half damage, halved again with a DC 20 Reflex save); Search DC 20; Disable Device 25.

**Falling Block Trap:** Mechanical; location trigger (five-foot square just inside door); manual reset; 6d6 damage; Reflex save DC 25 for half damage; multiple targets (anyone in first two squares inside front door); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25.

**Ravine:** Two hundred yards behind the Acolytes' Tower yawns a deep chasm in the mountainside. It is 400 feet wide and 500 feet deep. There is no way around the ravine. It circles the entire mountain, forming a natural moat for the Master's Keep.

Adventurers wishing to cross must either fly – via *Yimsha's carpet* or some other such spell – or brave the climb to the bottom. A sinister, translucent gas with a rosy colour fills the entire ravine.

There are several sets of handholds carved into the sides of the ravine (Search check DC 15 to notice). Characters using the handholds can reach the bottom with a DC 15 Climb check.

Most of the handholds are a sure path to death. Beginning seven feet from its lip the chasm is filled with a deadly strangling gas. Only one set of handholds is safe: a vein of gold ore (Search DC 20 to find) marks out a way down the near side of the ravine, then across and up the other side. Characters following this path are not subject to the effects of the strangling gas. All others will likely perish on the way down.



**Strangling Gas:** Characters immersed in Strangling Gas cannot breathe. A character can hold her breath for one round per point of Constitution. Beyond that she must make DC 10 Constitution check every round or suffocate. The DC of the Con check increases by one each round she remains in the strangling gas.

As a secondary effect, all objects – whether thrown or simply falling – move at one-half the normal rate through the gas. All characters have an effective +4 DR against ranged weapons while in the gas.

The strangling gas is a creation of the Master of Yimsha and is subject to the Rule of Impermanence (see *Conan The Roleplaying Game*, page 191).

**Master's Keep:** A path from the side of the ravine opposite the Acolytes' Tower leads to a set of six 100-foot wide steps carved of green jade. At the top of the steps is a long gallery, also made of green jade, that ends at the door to the Master's Keep.

The Master's Keep is a stepped pyramid rising just below the snow line. Its very presence seems magical. It clings to the side of the sheer slope, a structure so flawless it looks to be carved from the stone of the mountain itself. As with the Acolytes' Tower, there are no outward signs of habitation. The Keep is silent, its many windows covered with heavy curtains.

The entrance to the Keep is a solid teak door bound with gold, barred shut from the inside. Its bronze handle is carved in the shape of a rearing serpent. The handle animates and attacks anyone that touches it. Treat the animated handle as a Tiny Viper (see *Conan The Roleplaying Game*, page 310).

**Teak door:** 2" thick wood; Hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 23.

The room beyond the entrance is wide but only occupies a third of the ground floor. Its walls are made of polished grey stone, not the green jade of the gallery outside. The room is

bare save for a single stone dais and a few square black wooden stools. The floor is covered by a sinister mosaic of entwined dragons and serpents. A second teak door opposite the entrance leads deeper into the Keep.

Five rounds after any character enters the Keep a crystal door slides down to block the entrance. A character can hear this door settle into place with a DC 20 Listen check. The crystal is completely transparent, requiring a DC 25 Spot check to notice it before running into it. It is nearly impossible to break, trapping unwelcome visitors within the Keep.

**Crystal Door:** 2" thick clear crystal; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28.

The second teak door swings open as soon as any character approaches within five feet. Beyond is a 100-foot long hall occupying the rest of the ground floor. A series of glassy columns runs along each side of the hall. Like the first room, the walls are bare of any ornamentation.

In the center of this hall stands the source of much of the Master of Yimsha's power: the *pomegranate altar of the Black Circle* (see **Magical and Unusual Items**, below). It is a square altar of black jade surrounded by four golden serpents. Each serpent is depicted rearing its head to strike, with its tail wrapped around the base of the altar. Each serpent faces a different cardinal direction. These serpents animate and attack any character that approaches within 5 feet. Treat them as Medium Vipers (see *Conan The Roleplaying Game*, page 310).

A single object rests on the altar: a crystal globe, filled with a smoky substance. In the center of the globe float four golden pomegranates, one for each of the Lords of the Black Circle.

At the far end of the hall is a set of green jade steps that lead up to an unseen landing. The lower steps are almost as wide as the room, but they narrow as they rise.

Two sets of steps – one to the left, the other to the right – lead up from the landing at the head of the green jade

staircase. Each smaller stairway ends at a long corridor running the length of the second floor. The corridors are also of jade, and bare of furnishings. Curtained doorways spaced evenly down each corridor lead either out to the battlement formed by the roof of the first floor or in to one of many interior chambers.

One large chamber, reached by taking the left-hand stair from the landing, contains two daises. One, a great dais of stone, sits in the center of the room. The other, a smaller dais of jet, rests 5 feet away from the first. The walls are completely covered with dark tapestries that depict terrible dragons. Though the windows are blocked, a dim light fills the room from an unknown source. A sandalwood screen opposite the entrance covers a small alcove with a door to a secret passage.

What lies in the other chambers, or on the other floors, is left up to the Games Master. Presumably a set of green jade steps leads from one floor to another, to rooms filled with the tools of alchemy, or rooms left barren and haunted by the spirits of men sacrificed in evil rituals.

One suggested layout of rooms would include larger, better-equipped versions of the rooms in the Acolytes' Tower: a library, alchemical workroom, summoning room, and sacrifice room. Characters should not expect to find any idols to gods – foreign or otherwise – in the Keep, as the Master acknowledged no deities, only demons.

The Master should have a room for power rituals, when his acolytes lend their strength to his sorcery. Such a room would need several small bronze horns and hide-bound drums for his acolytes to play. There should be a large inscribed circle, where the Master would stand and chant as his acolytes played and sang in a circle around him. Such a room would reek of evil sorcery to any characters that found it.



## RESIDENTS OF YIMSHA

### ACOLYTES OF THE BLACK CIRCLE

	Medium Humanoid (Vendhyan) 3 <sup>rd</sup> level scholar	Medium Humanoid (Vendhyan) 5 <sup>th</sup> level scholar	Medium Humanoid (Vendhyan) 7 <sup>th</sup> level scholar
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	3d6 (10 hp)	5d6 (17 hp)	7d6 (24 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+3 (+2 Dex, +1 Reflex)	+3 (+2 Dex, +1 Reflex)	+4 (+2 Dex, +2 Reflex)
<b>Speed:</b>	40 ft	40 ft	40 ft
<b>Dodge Defence:</b>	13 (+1 level, +2 Dex)	13 (+1 level, +2 Dex)	14 (+2 level, +2 Dex)
<b>Parry Defence:</b>	11 (+1 level, +0 Str)	11 (+1 level, +0 Str)	12 (+2 level, +0 Str)
<b>DR:</b>	–	–	–
<b>Base Attack/ Grapple:</b>	+2/+2	+3/+3	+5/+5
<b>Attack:</b>	Knife +4 finesse (1d4, 19-20/x2, AP 0)	Knife +5 finesse (1d4, 19-20/x2, AP 0)	Knife +7 finesse (1d4, 19-20/x2, AP 0)
<b>Magic Attack:</b>	+3 (+1 base, +2 Charisma)	+4 (+2 base, +2 Charisma)	+6 (+3 base, +3 Charisma)
<b>Power Points:</b>	7 (max 14)	7 (max 14)	8 (max 24)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft/5 ft	5 ft/5 ft	5 ft/5 ft
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Sorcery	Sorcery	Sorcery
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Vendhyan qualities, knowledge is power	Vendhyan qualities, knowledge is power	Vendhyan qualities, knowledge is power
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +6	Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +9	Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +10
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 14	Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 15	Str 11, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 16
<b>Skills:</b>	Concentration +6, Craft (alchemy) +7, Craft (herbalism) +7, Decipher Script +7, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (arcane) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Knowledge (religion) +7, Perform (horn) +8, Perform (ritual) +8, Sense Motive +4	Concentration +8, Craft (alchemy) +9, Craft (herbalism) +9, Decipher Script +9, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (arcane) +9, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perform (horn) +8, Perform (ritual) +10, Sense Motive +6	Concentration +10, Craft (alchemy) +11, Craft (herbalism) +11, Decipher Script +11, Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (arcane) +11, Knowledge (nobility) +13, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perform (horn) +9, Perform (ritual) +13, Sense Motive +8
<b>Feats:</b>	Fleet-Footed, Ritual Sacrifice	Fleet-Footed, Ritual Sacrifice, Iron Will	Fleet-Footed, Ritual Sacrifice, Iron Will, Tortured Sacrifice
<b>Possessions:</b>	Knife, green robe	Knife, green robe	Knife, green robe
<b>Corruption:</b>	2	3	2
<b>Spells:</b>	Hypnotism - <i>entrance</i> ; Oriental Magic - <i>calm of the adept, darting serpent, warrior trance</i>	Counterspells - <i>warding</i> ; Hypnotism - <i>entrance, hypnotic suggestion, torment</i> ; Oriental Magic - <i>calm of the adept, darting serpent, warrior trance</i>	Counterspells - <i>warding</i> ; Hypnotism - <i>entrance, hypnotic suggestion, torment, domination, savage beast</i> ; Oriental Magic - <i>calm of the adept, darting serpent, warrior trance</i>

Sworn to obey the Master of Yimsha and the Lords of the Black Circle, the Acolytes of the Black Circle are their master's first line of defence. They spend most of their time in the Acolytes' Tower, keeping watch on the lower slopes of

Mount Yimsha when not engrossed with their study of the sorcerous arts.

All acolytes wear green robes and are bare-headed. Most are probably Vendhyans, though Khitan acolytes are possible. At any given time there are likely 8-10 acolytes

in the tower. Most (6-8) will be Low-Level Acolytes. The Master of Yimsha is more interested in how useful his pupils are than how much they learn. He is also wary lest any of them grow strong enough to challenge his position as Master of the Black Circle.



The acolytes have orders to defend the Keep with their lives. They will not hesitate to use all the *hellfire puffballs* (see **Magical and Unusual Items**, below) they have available and the *horn of the earthquake* (see **Magical and Unusual Items**) to wipe out any invading force.

Should those weapons fail, they will retreat across the ravine (see **Ravine**, above) by following the path marked out by the vein of golden ore. Once across they will await and use their knives to attack any enemies that survive the crossing.

### KHEMSA

Khemsas involvement in any adventure involving Mount Yimsha is up to the Games Master. As a former Acolyte of the Black Circle, he could serve as a way to draw the characters to Mount Yimsha. He may end up bringing the characters to the attention of the Lords of the Black Circle, if the characters are seen by the Master of Yimsha to be helping Khemsas in his rebellion.

Either way, he could give the characters information – like the presence of the gold ore marking a safe path through the Strangling Gas – needed to survive the adventure. Perhaps the Games Master wants Khemsas present at the Acolytes' Tower, and reconciled to his master, to increase the challenge of assaulting the Keep. Or he could be simply left out if the Games Master wants to lure the characters to the mountain some other way.

Finally, Khemsas statistics could be used for any generic Acolyte leader if the Games Master chooses.

Khemsas was a Vendhyan of youthful appearance. He wore a camel-hair robe to distinguish himself from the other acolytes of the Master of Yimsha, and kept his long hair wrapped in a green turban. His eyes were dark, his gaze magnetic from his mastery of Hypnotism magic.

Before he rebelled, Khemsas was the greatest student of the Master of Yimsha. Even the Master himself acknowledged that Khemsas was nearly his equal in sorcery.

Once he decided to use his magic for himself rather than his master, Khemsas displayed an appetite for cruelty that shocked his lover Gitara. He reveled in the use of his powers to hurt, maim and kill those in his way. He did not hesitate to *entrance* someone, use them to reach some goal, then *dominate* them into killing themselves. Though he probably did not realize it, Khemsas was much like the Lords of the Black Circle he turned against.

### Medium Humanoid (Vendhyan)

#### 16<sup>th</sup> Level Scholar

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	10d6+16 (51 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+8 (+3 Dex, +5 Reflex)
<b>Speed:</b>	40 ft
<b>Dodge Defence:</b>	19 (+6 level, +3 Dex)
<b>Parry Defence:</b>	17 (+6 level, +1 Str)
<b>DR:</b>	–
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+12/+13
<b>Attack:</b>	Unarmed strike +15 finesse (1d4+1)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Unarmed strike +15/+10/+5 finesse (1d4+1)
<b>Magic Attack:</b>	+13 (+8 base, +5 Charisma)
<b>Power Points:</b>	11 (max 44)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft/5 ft
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Sorcery
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Vendhyan qualities, knowledge is power
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +14
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 13, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 21
<b>Skills:</b>	Concentration +20, Craft (alchemy) +21, Craft (herbalism) +21, Decipher Script +21, Diplomacy +9, Knowledge (arcane) +21, Knowledge (nature) +12, Knowledge (nobility) +22, Knowledge (religion) +21, Perform (horn) +11, Perform (ritual) +24, Perform (song) +15, Sense Motive +8
<b>Feats:</b>	Fleet-Footed, Ritual Sacrifice, Iron Will, Tortured Sacrifice, Improved Unarmed Strike, Opportunistic Sacrifice, Summoner
<b>Possessions:</b>	Camel-hair robe, green turban, <i>globe of Yezud</i> .
<b>Corruption:</b>	7
<b>Spells:</b>	Counterspells - <i>warding, greater warding</i> ; Curses - <i>lesser ill-fortune, curse of Yizil, ill-fortune</i> ; Hypnotism - <i>entrance, hypnotic suggestion, torment, domination, savage beast, mass hypnotic suggestion, boundary</i> ; Oriental Magic - <i>calm of the adept, darting serpent, warrior trance</i> ; Summoning - <i>master-words and signs, summon demon, summon elemental</i>



	<b>Medium Humanoid (Vendhyan)</b> <b>15<sup>th</sup> Level Scholar/5<sup>th</sup> level Master of the Black Circle</b>
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	10d6+30 (65 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+9 (+3 Dex, +6 Reflex)
<b>Speed:</b>	40 ft
<b>Dodge Defence:</b>	21 (+8 level, +3 Dex)
<b>Parry Defence:</b>	16 (+6 level, +0 Str)
<b>DR:</b>	–
<b>Base Attack/ Grapple:</b>	+14/+14
<b>Attack:</b>	Unarmed strike +17 finesse (1d4)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Unarmed strike +17/+12/+7 finesse (1d4)
<b>Magic Attack:</b>	+17 (+9 base, +8 Charisma)
<b>Power Points:</b>	19 (max 76)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft/5 ft
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Sorcery, master mesmerist
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Vendhyan qualities, knowledge is power, spellcraft
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +18
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 10, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 20, Wis 19, Cha 27
<b>Skills:</b>	Concentration +25, Craft (alchemy) +28, Craft (herbalism) +28, Decipher Script +28, Diplomacy +27, Gather Information +25, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (arcane) +28, Knowledge (nobility) +30, Knowledge (religion) +28, Perform (horn) +21, Perform (ritual) +21, Perform (song) +21, Sense Motive +18
<b>Feats:</b>	Fleet-footed, Craftsman, Ritual Sacrifice, Craft Magic Item, Tormented Sacrifice, Bleed Dry*, Adept(Hypnotism), Steely Gaze, Improved Evil Eye*
<b>Possessions:</b>	Silk robes, 20 doses of flame-powder, 3-stringed harp, potion of hibernation*, dust of forgetfulness*
<b>Corruption:</b>	10
<b>Spells:</b>	Cosmic Sorcery - <i>the time is right, the stars are right</i> ; Curses - <i>lesser ill-fortune, draw forth the soul</i> ; Divinations - <i>astrological prediction, mind-reading, visions, visions of torment and enlightenment, projection*</i> ; Hypnotism - <i>entrance, hypnotic suggestion, mass hypnotic suggestion, ranged hypnotism, illusion*, swell*, dread serpent, domination</i> ; Necromancy - <i>raise corpse, agonising doom, death touch, draw forth the heart</i> ; Oriental Magic - <i>calm of the adept, shape-shifter, Yimsha's carpet</i> ; Summoning - <i>demonic pact, greater demonic pact, summon demon, summon elemental, banish outsider*, bind demon*, form demon*</i>

\* See *The Scrolls of Skelos* for a complete description.

## THE MASTER OF YIMSHA

Feared and reviled by the Himelian tribes, the Master of Yimsha is an intimidating and powerful sorcerer. He is a subtle and long-term planner bent on evil ends.

As described in Howard's story *The People of the Black Circle*, his acolytes – and thus the Master of Yimsha – control the priests of Tarim in Turan. In that story, his acolytes convince him to aid King Yezdigerd of Turan in expanding his empire. The Master slays King Bunda Chand of Vendhya using foul sorcery. King Chand's death is then a signal to an army of Turanian horsemen to invade Vendhya through the Himelian mountains.

In appearance the Master of Yimsha is a normal, if vain, middle-aged Vendhyan. He dresses in robes of black velvet trimmed with gold, covering his head with a matching velvet cap. His expression is always calm and placid. His voice is melodious, like the clear ringing of a temple bell, but his laughter is contemptuous and wicked enough to chill the heart of any that hear it.

The Master of Yimsha is confident in his ability to meet any challenge. He rarely confronts intruders directly, preferring to let the Lords of the Black Circle (see **Monsters**, below) deal with any threat that gets past his acolytes (see above).

When forced to do battle himself, the Master wastes no time in using his Necromancy spells to slay opponents. He uses his *draw forth the heart* attack to kill at a distance and replenish his Power Points. He relies on his *agonising doom* to finish off any remaining foes. If somehow reduced to less than half of his hit points, the Master of Yimsha *shape-shifts* into the form of a giant serpent (treat as a Large Viper from *Conan the Roleplaying Game*) to flee. He will hide in the many corridors of his tower, healing and waiting for a better time to strike.



	Medium Outsider (demon)
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	13d8+39 (97 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+12 (+4 Dex, +8 Reflex)
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft
<b>Dodge Defence:</b>	23 (+9 level, +4 Dex)
<b>Parry Defence:</b>	24 (+9 level, +5 Str)
<b>DR:</b>	5
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+13/+18
<b>Attack:</b>	Broadsword +18 melee (1d10+5, AP 8)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Broadsword +18/+13/+8 (1d10+5, AP 8)
<b>Magic Attack:</b>	+9 (+3 base, +6 Charisma)
<b>Power Points:</b>	20 (max 40)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft/5 ft
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Halt, puppet, sorcery
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Manifest
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +11, Ref +12, Will +13
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 20, Dex 18, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 20, Cha 22
<b>Skills:</b>	Bluff +22, Craft (alchemy) +18, Craft (herbalism) +18, Hide +20, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Listen +21, Move Silently +20, Perform (ritual) +30, Spot +21, Search +18
<b>Feats:</b>	Combat Expertise, Improved Grapple, Improved Trip, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint
<b>Spells:</b>	Hypnotism - <i>entrance, hypnotic suggestion, dread serpent, domination, savage beast</i> ; Necromancy - <i>raise corpse, agonising doom, death touch, draw forth the heart</i> ; Oriental Magic - <i>Yimsha's carpet</i>

See *The Scrolls of Skelos* for a complete description.

**Halt (Sp):** Treat as an *entrance* spell cast by a 13th level scholar, but without the HD limit and no Power Point cost.

**Puppet (Sp):** Treat as a *dominate* spell cast by a 13th level scholar, but without the HD limit, no Power Point cost, and no verbal communication required.

### THE LORDS OF THE BLACK CIRCLE

There are four Lords of the Black Circle. They are usually seen together, covered from neck to foot in long black robes, with wide sleeves hiding their shriveled hands. Their tall, gaunt forms exude a chilly menace, and all the terror of the Outer Dark lies in their unsettling gaze. They are completely bald, resembling misshapen vultures as their heads bob and nod in unison.

Their true forms are said to be more than mortal men can bear. Characters who see more of the Lords of the Black Circle than their heads – such as a hand or a foot – must make a Terror check (DC 16). Failure means the character is frightened and takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. The character will flee from the Lords of the Black Circle as fast as possible. Once out of sight of the Lords of the Black Circle the character may act normally.

The Lords of the Black Circle obey the Master of Yimsha completely. They are his second line of defence after his acolytes, though they are known to deal with perceived threats anywhere within sight of the Master's Keep. They use the spell *Yimsha's carpet* to travel to and from the mountain.

Rather than attack directly, they prefer to use their halt and puppet powers to induce enemies to kill themselves. As an alternative, they may puppet a creature into giving them its weapon, then halt the creature while they deliver a coup de grace with that weapon. Throughout combat a Lord of the Black Circle remains expressionless.

The Lords of the Black Circle are tied to the *pomegranate altar of the Black Circle*. If the crystal on the *altar* is destroyed, they are instantly banished to their realms in the Outer Dark.

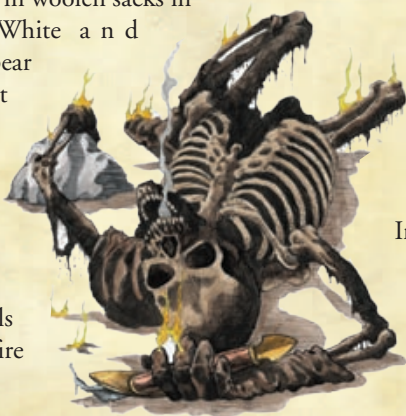
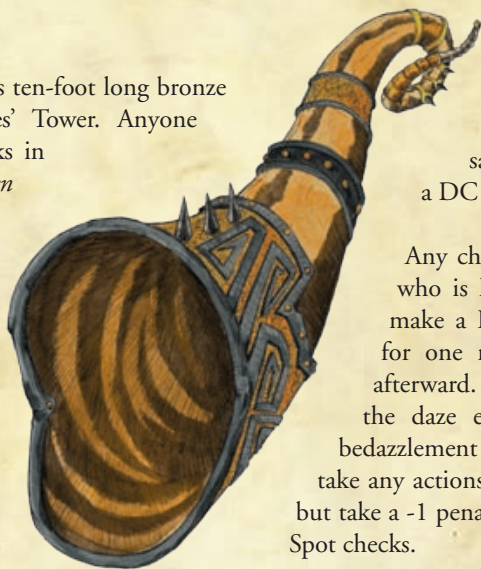


## MAGICAL AND UNUSUAL ITEMS

**Horn of the Earthquake:** This ten-foot long bronze horn is kept in the Acolytes' Tower. Anyone with at least 1 PP and 4 ranks in Perform (horn) can use the *horn* to summon a 1 HD earth elemental to perform a single task lasting no longer than 1 hour. The character must blow the *horn* and expend 1 PP. For each additional 4 ranks in Perform (horn) possessed by the character, they may spend an additional 1 PP to increase the HD of the elemental summoned. For example, a character with 3 PP and 12 ranks in Perform (horn) could spend all 3 PP while blowing the *horn of the earthquake* to summon a 3 HD earth elemental.

Scholars of 10th level or above can use the *horn* to cast *summon elemental* normally, but receive no other benefit.

**Hellfire Puffballs:** These nebulous, 5-foot in diameter balls are kept in woolen sacks in the Acolytes' Tower. White and smoke-like, they appear harmless, but are in fact very dangerous: any steel that contacts the *puffball* causes it to explode in a flash of blinding light. The *puffball* deals 10d6 fire



damage to anyone within 15 feet of it when it explodes. Characters not in the same square as the ball can make a Reflex save (DC 20) for half damage. Characters caught in the same square as the Puffball can attempt a DC 30 Reflex save for half damage.

Any character within 30 feet of the *puffball* who is looking at it when it explodes must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be dazed for one round and dazzled for one minute afterward. A successful Fortitude save negates the daze effect and reduces the duration of bedazzlement to 1 round. Dazed creatures cannot take any actions. Dazzled creatures can act normally, but take a -1 penalty to attack rolls, Search checks, and Spot checks.

*Puffballs* float in whatever direction they are originally thrown. The acolytes will not hesitate to toss all their *puffballs* (20-30) over the top of the tower toward approaching foes.

**Pomegranate Altar of the Black Circle:** The Master of Yimsha keeps the Lords of the Black Circle bound to Earth using this evil altar. The crystal ball on the altar has a Base Defence of 9, a Hardness of 8 and 1 hp.

Smashing the crystal ball releases the four pomegranates and banishes the Lords of the Black Circle to the Outer Dark. In addition, destroying the ball causes the crystal door at the entrance to the Keep to shatter.

Information on the requirements for crafting items such as the *horn of the earthquake*, *hellfire puffballs* and the *pomegranate altar of the Black Circle* can be found in the supplement *The Scrolls of Skelos*.

## TREASURE

There are numerous treasures to be found on Mount Yimsha. The *horn of the earthquake* and any remaining *hellfire puffballs* would make excellent weapons to add to a character's arsenal. If the animated serpents of the *pomegranate altar of the Black Circle* are slain, each returns to its solid gold form. They would be heavy, but worth hundreds of thousands of golden lunas each.

What other riches may be hidden in the keep is for the Games Master to decide. It doubtless cost many fortunes to construct the *altar*. In addition, the Master of Yimsha is known to employ a group of expert thieves and to have somehow placed some of his acolytes in positions of authority among the priests of Tarim in Turan. All of these activities, not to mention his black sorcery, would take a vast sum of silver and gold to maintain.

Such a treasure falling into the hands of the characters may well unbalance a campaign. The Games Master should feel free to find a creative way to keep the characters from hauling away so much loot. One way is to end the adventure with the characters fleeing the Keep to escape the wounded and angry Master of Yimsha, as Conan did. Another might be to let the characters make off with some of the treasure, only to have it stolen during the night by Himelian raiders. Perhaps the Master of Yimsha keeps his riches hidden in some other place than his Keep. Seeking out that wealth could be the basis for a whole other adventure. Remember that Conan, though he plundered the southern coasts as a pirate and explored many lost cities with untold riches, rarely got to keep the wealth he found.

## USING MOUNT YIMSHA IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Mount Yimsha might be used any number of ways in a Hyborian campaign. Choosing to have the characters play through the events in the story *The People of the Black Circle*,



with Khemsa's betrayal of his masters for the love of a handmaiden and the kidnapping of the Devi Yasmina, would make for a fine adventure. The characters could get involved for several reasons. Perhaps they are attached as fighting-men to one of the Himelian tribes. Or perhaps they are mercenaries with the Turanian force that invades Vendhya. They could even be hired by the governor of Peshkhauri to find the kidnapped Devi.

Games Masters wishing to give their players a greater challenge might have them investigate Mount Yimsha before Conan. Khemsa would still be a faithful acolyte of the Master of Yimsha. His presence at the Acolytes' Tower would make any assault a daunting prospect.

There are plenty of reasons to travel to Mount Yimsha even after Conan's adventure. After all, he may not have killed the Master of Yimsha. The evil sorcerer would likely set to work rebuilding his smashed *pomegranate altar of the Black Circle* so he could re-summon the Lords of the Black Circle. He would recruit more acolytes and turn once more to spinning plots of conquest against Vendhya and Turan.

Even if the sorcerer is dead, Conan left all the treasures in the keep behind. The Himelian tribes will not go near the mountain, so any riches hidden in the keep will remain undisturbed for characters to seek out later. Perhaps a different sorcerer, one not as powerful as the Master of Yimsha, will take control of the keep and serve to challenge treasure-hunting characters.

### ADVENTURE HOOKS

Depending on when your campaign is set – before or after Conan travels to the mountain – several different scenarios might lead the characters to the Mount Yimsha.

The characters may hear rumors of a powerful but aloof sorcerer living in the Himelians. It is said he is willing to take pupils and train them in the magic of the East. Scholar characters may want to seek out the Master of Yimsha and become his disciple for a time.

If your campaign is set during the events of *The People of the Black Circle*, the adventure might begin when the King of Vendhya is slain by foul magic. The Devi Yasmina, the new Queen of Vendhya, immediately suspects the Master of Yimsha as the culprit. Instead of being kidnapped by Conan, the Queen might hire the characters to hunt down the Master and either bring him to justice or kill him.

If the characters recently explored a green jade ruin, they might find evidence that points to the existence of another lost city of green jade somewhere in the Himelians. Tracking down where this city is might lead them to Mount Yimsha. This scenario provides a reason to travel to Mount Yimsha even if your campaign is set after Conan traveled there and he did in fact slay the Master.

Perhaps a thief has been caught while trying to steal a number of local sorcerous artifacts. He confesses under torture to working for a mysterious sorcerer living in the Himelians. The characters are hired by local authorities to root out the thief's master.

Rumors might reach the King of Turan that the priests of Tarim have come under the influence of a foreign sorcerer. He might hire the characters as spies to verify the truth of these rumors. If the characters verify the Master of Yimsha's control of the Tarim priesthood, the King might then hire the characters to put an end to the sorcerer's interference. Or perhaps the King discovers the evidence on his own, and when his own sorcerers fail to stop the Master of Yimsha, he hires the characters for a more physical intervention.

A campaign set after Conan fought the Master of Yimsha, but failed to kill him, might deal with the consequences. The characters could hear rumors of a powerful sorcerer, thought to be dead, who has re-appeared in the Himelian mountains, bent on revenge against Queen Yasmina of Vendhya and King Conan of Aquilonia. They could then be hired by the Queen to finish off the sorcerer for good.

Since the Master's death or life is an unknown, Queen Yasmina might hire the characters to search the keep for evidence. Or perhaps Conan's stories of his adventure reach the characters' ears, and they set off in search of the riches the barbarian left behind in his flight from the mountain.







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# LIVING MAGIC

Magic items that think, by Carl Walmsley.

A magical object which has a will of its own is at once mysterious, dangerous and exciting. It cannot be relied upon simply to function in a mundane and predictable way – it becomes, in the truest sense of the word, *magical*.

Any sentient magical object will have been created with a particular goal in mind – it will have a *raison d'être*. Accordingly, it will encourage its owner to act in a certain way. This influence may be subtle or direct, guiding, aiding and possibly changing a character over time.

A Games Master looking to wrong-foot players who think that they have seen it all before might consider making all magical items sentient. Doing so can make arcane objects as perilous and enigmatic as when players first began encountering them.

A Games Master should also feel free to add behavioural quirks to these items if it suits his purposes – they can be given as much personality as he wishes. Each item is a living thing, and its actions may be driven by desires as complex as those of any other creature.

Imbuing magical items with a will of their own can act as a way to temper their power or to limit the abilities

of advanced characters. Of course, these items will work equally well within a standard campaign, simply providing some unusual and memorable finds.

## Resolve and Influence

Sentient Magical Objects are defined using two new characteristics, **Resolve** and **Purpose**.

**Resolve** represents an object's strength of will. The higher an item's Resolve, the greater its ability to manipulate and control a character who is using it.

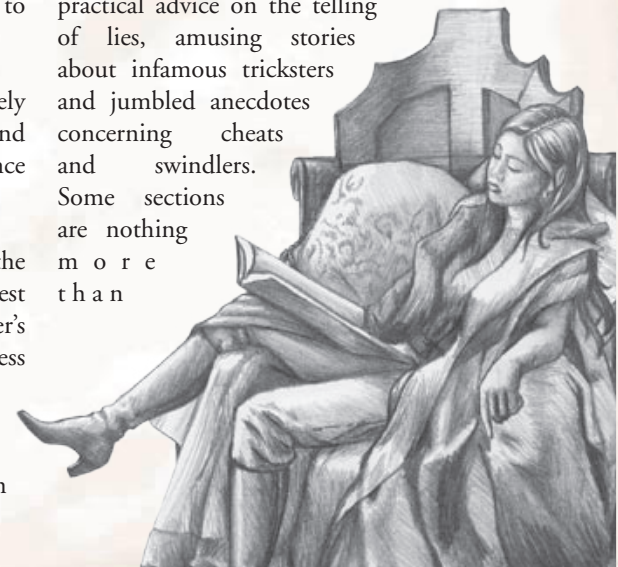
**Purpose** explains what an object's goals are – effectively how the object will try to make its owner behave, and the conditions under which it will seek to influence him.

Each time a sentient object wishes to influence the thoughts or actions of its owner, an Opposed Skill test is made using the object's Resolve and the character's Persistence. This is referred to as a Resolve Test. Success for the object means that it forces the character to act in the way outlined in the object's Purpose. Failure means that the character resists the influence of the object – at least for the time being – and can act as he chooses.

Sometimes, there are repercussions for resisting an object's desires. It may become increasingly difficult to resist subsequent manipulation, or the object may seek to punish the character in some way.

## The Book of Deceit

This ornate, leather bound tome is a collection of musings on the nature of deception. It contains practical advice on the telling of lies, amusing stories about infamous tricksters and jumbled anecdotes concerning cheats and swindlers. Some sections are nothing more than





apparent gobbledygook: bare-faced lies for the perusal of the reader.

The origin of the book is, perhaps unsurprisingly, enmeshed in a tangle of lies and half-truths. Some say the book wrote itself, others that each person who has owned it has added to the sum of its deceit.

A character who reads the book for four hours or more each day for a week begins to soak up the lies and deceit within. He has now established a bond with the book. He receives a +20% bonus on all Influence tests involving deception from this moment on, so long as he continues to read the book for at least one hour each day. If the character fails to read the book, he loses this bonus until he goes back to reading it again.

**Resolve:** 30

**Purpose:** Whenever the character has the opportunity to tell an important truth, the book will compel him to lie. Exactly what constitutes an important truth is left to the Games Master's discretion, but the book will seek to make its owner deceive at least one person each day.

A wise, if unscrupulous, character will seek to orchestrate situations where he might tell a few lies which will appease the book but will not cause him too much trouble. Of course, there should still be times when the character would rather not lie but will find the book trying to force him to do so.

If the character fails to tell at least one worthwhile lie in a day, the book will become frustrated with him.

The next time the character tries to tell someone an important truth, he will need to succeed at an Influence test (without the book's +20% bonus) or the person/people being told will be convinced the character is lying.

The book is always looking for the big lie: *No your highness, I'm quite sure the Uz army is not intending to invade; Of course, fellow adventurers, I'm sure that the dragon will let us pass.* Should the owner of the book freely choose to tell a lie which has significant repercussions either for the adventuring party or for the campaign as a whole, he receives an immediate free improvement check for his Influence skill. The book approves of such devilish behaviour.

## Cloak of Wanderlust

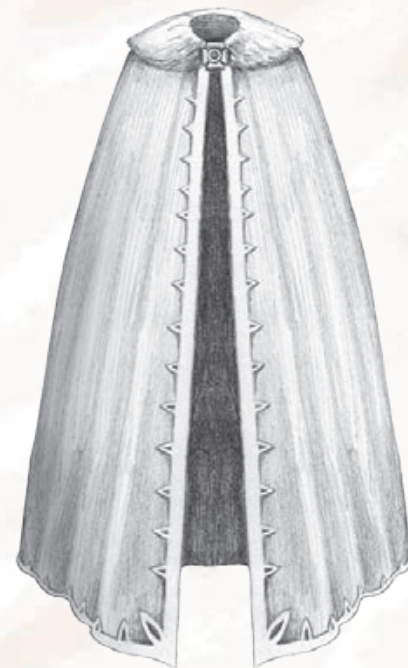
The wearer of this cloak is imbued with superhuman endurance, and the ability to run faster and jump further than he would ever have imagined.

The cloak doubles a character's Movement and allows him to ignore two levels of Fatigue. He should also add a +20% bonus to all Acrobatics and Athletics tests involving running or jumping.

**Resolve:** 35

**Purpose:** Wherever the cloak comes from, it seems to have been created to facilitate travel. As a result, it can become extremely impatient if forced to remain in the same place for any length of time.

If the wearer of the cloak tries to spend more than a single night in the same location, the cloak will seek to persuade him to move on. Unless the character can



succeed at a Resolve Test, he is forced to move at least ten miles from the location where he previously rested. Note that a character who fails this Resolve Test must travel ten miles even if he then immediately takes the cloak off.

The character may elect to take the cloak off before he has spent 24 hours in a location, and this will prevent the garment from seeking to influence him. He will, of course, lose the use of its powers whilst he is not wearing it. Perhaps more significantly, when the character next dons the cloak he must make an immediate Resolve Test or be compelled to move at least ten miles away before he next stops to rest. In this instance, the cloak receives a +5% bonus to its Resolve for each day that it has not been worn.



## The Maestro's Blade

This elegant, basket-hilted rapier is an enticing find for any duellist. Whilst fighting with this blade, the wielder receives a +10% bonus on Rapier skill tests and his Strike Rank is increased by 3. In addition, the wielder receives one bonus Reaction each combat round which may only be used to try to parry an attack. The blade has 12 HP and AP 6.

**Resolve:** 25

**Purpose:** The Maestro's Blade was created with only one thing in mind – duelling. It is aware of this fact and will try to coerce its wielder into engaging in single combat.

If the wielder is ever challenged to single combat – be it a formal duel, a confrontation during a larger battle or any other type of contest – the wielder must succeed at a Resolve Test or accept the challenge.

If the challenge is taken up, the character will not willingly accept help from others until it is over. The blade will reward the character's courage and bestow a +3 bonus on either his STR or DEX: the wielder is free to choose which characteristic is increased. This bonus lasts until the end of the challenge.

If the character succeeds at the Resolve Test, he may resist the will of the blade and act however he chooses. However, the blade will be disappointed if its wielder chooses not to accept a challenge. In response, the next time the character is challenged it will exert more of a pressure on him to accept. The blade's Resolve receives a +10 bonus for the next test. Further failures to accept challenges add additional bonuses.

*For example: Keros, current wielder of The Maestro's Blade, is told of a competition organised by a local nobleman to find the area's finest swordsman. The blade compels him to enter. A week ago, Keros refused to fight a duel and a few days before that he relied upon the help of a friend during a battle where an Uz issued him with a direct challenge. The blade therefore receives a +20 bonus to its Resolve, giving it 45 for the purposes of this test. If Keros succeeds in the test, and elects not to enter the competition, the next time that the blade tries to coerce him, it will have 55 Resolve.*

## Amulet of Adoration

Mounted in a heavy platinum casing, affixed to a linked chain of gold, this egg-sized ruby amulet catches the eye of any who see it. In fact, the wearer almost shines with an enigmatic charm that draws the adulation of the masses. So long as the amulet is visibly worn, the wearer receives a +2 bonus to his Charisma and may receive a bonus on skill tests aimed at entertaining or persuading a crowd of people.

**Resolve:** 40

**Purpose:** The Amulet of Adoration was created to garner the praise and admiration of others. It passes on to its wearer the need to seek adulation and approval.

Whenever the wearer has an opportunity to 'show off' in front of a dozen or more willing spectators, he will feel compelled to do so. He must succeed with a Resolve Test or succumb to the compulsion.

If the character successfully entertains or in some way sways a group of people, he feels elated and the amulet rewards him. Depending upon the number of people

moved by his actions, the character receives a bonus on all related skill tests for the next 24 hours:

Number of people influenced on skill tests	Bonus
11 or fewer	
No bonus	
12 to 25	+5%
26 to 50	+10%
51 to 100	
+15%	
101 to 500	
+20%	
501 or more	
+25%	

The sorts of skills and actions which can benefit from the power of the amulet include:

Dance  
Play Instrument  
Sing  
Oratory

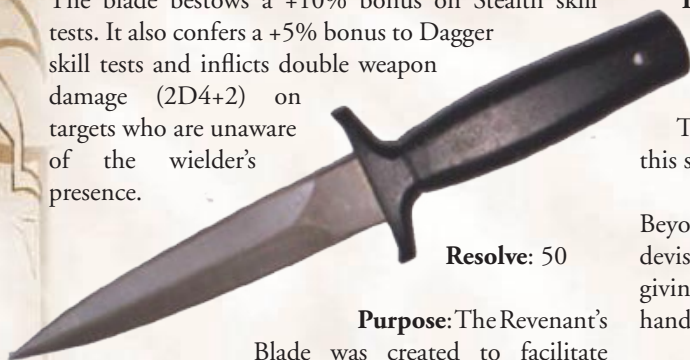
If the amulet finds that its owner is not outgoing enough, it will deprive him of the Charisma bonus until such time as he performs for a crowd of 26 or more people. The Amulet of Adoration is happy so long as its owner entertains a group of at least 12 people once in each week.

## Revenant's Blade

This sentient dagger has absolutely no concept of mercy or fair play – and expects its owner to share its outlook.



The blade bestows a +10% bonus on Stealth skill tests. It also confers a +5% bonus to Dagger skill tests and inflicts double weapon damage (2D4+2) on targets who are unaware of the wielder's presence.



**Resolve:** 50

**Purpose:** The Revenant's Blade was created to facilitate perfect assassinations. Accordingly, once the blade has drawn someone's blood, it expects to end their life. Attacks against a target that has been wounded by the blade receive an additional +10% bonus. However, attacks made against any target other than the one already wounded by the blade inflict no damage at all – the blade completely loses its edge, and may not even be used to bludgeon someone.

The blade expects to take the life of an unsuspecting victim at least once each month – this, after all, is what it was created for. Should it fail to be used in this way, it loses all of its abilities and does not regain them until used to assassinate someone.

## Tactician's Robes

These simple yet finely crafted robes have been worn by a succession of great military leaders. They have aided a succession of owners to plan both decisive military campaigns and brilliant defences.

**Resolve:** 20

**Purpose:** Upon donning these robes, a character finds that his wits are sharpened and his grasp of military tactics is greatly enhanced. The wearer receives a +20% bonus to his Lore (Military Tactics) skill tests. Note that a character must have this skill in order to benefit from wearing the robes.

Beyond the bonus on skill tests, the character is able to devise plans which no-one else would think of, often giving those fighting under his command the upper hand.

Assuming that the wearer of the robes has time to evaluate the situation – the terrain, weather, forces, etc. – where a conflict will occur, he is able to devise a stratagem that will increase the odds of his side acquiring victory. In order to devise such a plan, he must succeed with a Lore (Military Tactics) test. The Games Master may modify this test according to the situation. For instance, it is easier to devise a Defensive Formation plan (see below) in an area of rocky terrain (+20% bonus) than it is on a beach (-20%).

There must be a minimum of 20 fighters under the command of the wearer of the robes in order for him to be able to devise an appropriate plan. Assuming that this is the case, the wearer may employ one of the following strategies:

**Ambush** – The wearer of the robes determines the best place for his forces to hide, bestowing a +20% bonus on all skill tests to avoid detection before the battle starts.

**Defensive Formation** – The tactician arranges his forces to take advantage of cover and terrain, making it harder for the enemy to engage them. For the first

combat round, his fighters gain a +10% bonus on all Dodge and Parry tests.

**Attacking Formation** – The fighters on the robe wearer's side receive a +2 bonus to their Strike Rank for the first round of combat.

**Steady Aim** – Characters firing missile weapons at the enemy as they approach receive a 10% bonus on their first attack.

The Games Master must determine whether a specific strategy is appropriate given the situation in which a fight will occur. For instance, trying to organise an ambush on open grassland may be impossible – there are limits to the ability of the robes to inspire a cunning strategy.

Note also that these descriptions are necessarily vague – Games Masters may tailor them to specific situations, especially if a map of the battlefield is being used.

If the wearer of the robes does not use their power to devise a purposeful strategy at least once each month, they begin trying to convince him that he should go to war. A successful Resolve Test is required each week or the character is compelled to seek a position of command that will lead him quickly into battle.

## Helm of Lordly Bearing

This impressive knightly helm is forged from the finest steel, the face plate fashioned into the likeness of a roaring lion. It instils fear and respect in all who see it.

**Resolve:** 40



**Purpose:** This magnificent helm was crafted to be worn by great leaders of men – champions who inspire loyalty in their men and fear in their enemies. The helm bestows great self-belief upon whoever wears it – along with a huge dose of arrogance.

The helm provides 5 AP to the wearer's head, and has 20 HP. When the face plate is up, the helm bestows a +10% bonus on all Influence and Oratory tests. When the plate is down, the wearer receives a +10% bonus on Intimidate tests.

When dealing with nobles and those of rank - important dignitaries, wealthy merchants and the like – the wearer of the helm may be as charming and ingratiating as he pleases. When dealing with commoners – especially those near the bottom of the heap – the wearer of the helm may find himself compelled to act in an arrogant and condescending way.

Whenever a character wearing the helm interacts with a commoner for the first time, he must pass a Resolve Test or be forced to treat the commoner with disdain. As far as the wearer is concerned, the character is beneath him and would do damn well to remember it! However, each day that the wearer comes into contact with that particular commoner, he may make a new Resolve Test to try to shake off the compulsion to act in this way. If the wearer passes the test, he is then free to act as he chooses with regard to that individual.

## The Storm-Forged Axe: Reaver's Joy

According to legend, the druid artificer who forged this axe summoned a dozen bolts of lightning to heat the ore. The pale steel of the two blades is traced with lines of blue sparks – fragments of the lightning strikes, trapped forever within the metal. The haft of the axe is carved from the thigh bone of a giant and engraved with runes that call upon his strength whenever the weapon is swung in anger.

**Resolve:** 35

**Purpose:** *Reaver's Joy* is an object of pure destructive power. It revels in conquest and slaughter and seeks to find use in the hands of a true warrior.

When wielded by a character who has a Strength of 16 or higher, *Reaver's Joy* inflicts 2D8 base damage. A character with less than 16 Strength may not even lift the weapon unless he passes a Resolve Test; even then, it inflicts only 1D8 damage if used in an attack.

If the character wielding *The Storm-Forged Axe* has the *Axe* skill at 55% or higher, he receives a +10% bonus when attacking. Characters with an *Axe* skill lower than this receive no bonus.

The owner of the axe – irrespective of whether he is currently holding the weapon – will feel compelled to answer any challenge or insult with an instant and violent reply. A Resolve Test is required to resist the urge to do so.

*Reaver's Joy* is happiest when in the thick of battle. Each time it is used to kill a worthy enemy (this would not include helpless targets or those which offer no real challenge), the axe becomes suffused with energy. This increases the wielder's Damage Modifier by one step – from 1D4 to 1D6, for example. This energy dissipates quickly, however, encouraging the wielder to strike down more foes if he wishes to benefit from it. The damage bonus lasts for a number of combat rounds equal to the amount of damage inflicted by a killing blow. Killing multiple enemies may result in a maximum of three increases to the wielder's Damage Modifier.

*Fealdin, wielding Reaver's Joy, strikes an opponent for 11 points of damage, all but cleaving him in twain. The warrior feels a surge of approval from the weapon which becomes charged with energy. His Damage Modifier increases by one step, and will remain this way for 11 combat rounds.*

*In his next action, Fealdin smites another enemy for 13 damage, which is enough to kill him. The axe continues to revel in its owner's slaughter, bestowing a further increase to his Damage Modifier. This increase will last for 13 combat rounds.*

*Theoretically, if he strikes down another foe quickly enough, Fealdin could benefit from a third (maximum) boost to his Damage Modifier.*



# OWNING THE WORLDS WHERE YOU LIVE (AND A FEW WHERE YOU DON'T)

A CAMPAIGN SETTING THAT SHOWCASES SPYCRAFT'S CAMPAIGN QUALITIES.

BY SCOTT GEARIN AND PATRICK KAPERA.

With not one but two *Spycraft* print releases due imminently from Crafty Games and Mongoose Publishing (*Spycraft 2.0: Second Printing* and *World on Fire*, for those of you keeping track), we at the home office thought it might be a good time to revisit some of what makes the game's second edition such a powerful tool box for gamers of all stripes. Among the *Spycraft* engine's most exciting innovations are campaign qualities, or 'official house rules' that let you tailor the game's rules to support any world you can imagine. As an example, the *gritty* and *bloodbath* qualities make the combat system deadlier, transforming every fight into a vicious, decisive encounter. Alternately, the *fast feats* and *slow growth* qualities let you modify player advancement to match the pacing of your story arc, while the *mellow* and *cake walk* scale down the campaign's intensity, allowing your game to focus more on the fun of character drama than the unrelenting challenge of, say, saving the world.

With just a couple campaign qualities you can dramatically shift the rules, pace, tone, and flavor of your game to showcase any genre you might favor. With a little work, you could even include multiple genres in a single campaign. Here's just one way that might be accomplished...

## THE CHASM GROUP

The Chasm Group was founded in 1991 as a military/industrial complex think tank dedicated to the study and development of practical applications for what it terms 'intrinsic description theory.' As described in Professor Anthony Martin's groundbreaking papers published earlier the same year, this esoteric theory examines probability structures in an attempt to define the fundamental concepts underlying the 'why' of our universe. For the most part the Chasm Group expected to be involved in dry technical investigation into the latest theories of quantum variance and particle properties with an eye toward military applications such as the fabled 'force field' so common in science fiction.

Unknown to most of its backers, the Chasm Group saw an unexpected breakthrough four years ago with a warehouse-sized device capable of sustaining a semi-stable energy field. Rather than deflect projectiles, however, this field sent them... *elsewhere*. Unwittingly, Chasm scientists had stumbled across a working 'doorway' to other potential and/or parallel worlds. After a slew of 'first wave' drone experiments, live teams were authorized to step through this Door and exploration commenced in the realms beyond, places Chasm personnel called 'Parallels.'

Acting on orders from their faceless superiors, the human 'second wave' emphasized the discovery of

alien science and technologies. These acquisitions were in turn used to line Chasm's coffers – as well as those of many other operations, both covert and public. In some cases, when advancements were close enough to the cutting edge, they were simply patented and sold through various front companies. Other gains were deemed too bizarre for general release and were instead incorporated into Chasm's arsenal, or transferred elsewhere for better effect.

Defying the popular expectation that parallel worlds would translate to infinite possibility, Chasm mathematicians theorize with some certainty that the Door leads to exactly one hundred and seven alternate worlds. One hundred and eight related realities drifting through time. Second Wave teams have only visited a handful of these worlds to date. The Door's tremendous energy requirements keep use to a minimum, lest brown outs and other side effects through the global power grid attract undue attention. Missions are staggered accordingly and teams are often stranded on other worlds for days at a time, requiring careful drone scouting which slows the process even further.

Roughly fifteen percent of the Parallels visited so far are uninhabitable or too distorted to warrant a Second Wave visit, but many of the rest are eerily similar to categories of literary fiction. This alignment of reality and imagination has triggered countless arguments



amongst Chasm theorists (and the Second Wave explorers for whom the question has rather more than academic implications). The main camp postulates that the Parallels are somehow generated from Earth as reflections of the human subconscious. A smaller group holds that the Earth is no more significant than the other Parallels and that the one hundred and eight worlds create and sustain each other – that there really are butterflies in some distant timelines dreaming themselves as men. Sadly, the explorers have found little of practical value to settle this speculation and boil their experience down to a single, simple maxim that saves lives on a daily basis: 'Doubt the familiar. Expect the unexpected.'



Professor Serkan Hattan, one of the original minds behind the Door's creation, coordinates Second Wave missions. His thick Middle Eastern accent does little to disguise his sharp and sometimes vicious intelligence, nor his dry collegiate wit. Though an accomplished academic, Serkan very much appreciates the Door's vast financial potential and diligently assigns teams to extract anything and everything of value when off world. Fortunately for Second Wave operatives, the recruitment and screening of new explorers is an expensive process, so Serkan views his staff as fairly valuable resources, too valuable to risk for any but the most impressive prizes. As yet, nothing has tipped the cost-to-gain ratio enough to warrant a suicide mission. If anything ever might, it's quite possible Serkan would never see it in any official report.

By virtue of a multi-million dollar cover up, Chasm's Door technology remains a highly guarded secret on Earth, but 'vigilance' is most certainly the watchword of the day. Some disagree, citing that 'paranoia' is more fitting. Among this segment of Chasm's personnel is Mission Officer Donna Ritts, who manages Chasm operations on this side of the Door. A no-nonsense CIA veteran with extensive industrial espionage experience, Ms. Ritts frequently shanghais Second Wave operatives for Earthbound assignments, primarily reconnaissance and counter-intelligence. Occasionally, these mission teams are tasked with intimidating or silencing Chasm staff suspected of leaking the project's secrets to civilians. Ritts realizes this is an inevitable outcome of Chasm operations and has drafted several contingency plans for the day the Door technology makes the front page. All of them involve a military response. Most of them anticipate war. Ritt is neither a hopeful nor a cheerful person.

**Organization Statistics:** Using *Spycraft 2.0's* organization rules, Chasm has the following statistics:

### THE CHASM GROUP

**Goals:** 3 (Reconstruction, Secrecy, Visionaries)  
**History:** 3 (Betrayal, Changing of the Guard, Triumphant – Science/Super-Science)  
**Image:** 5 (Secretive Goals, Mysterious Methods, On Record Leaders, Secretive Members, Secretive Sites)  
**Sites:** 3 (Door\*, Law Offices, Motor Pool)  
**Tools:** 4 (E-III, G-II, R-III, S-IV, T-III, V-III, W-IV)  
\* The Door site is a unique facility (*see below*).

### THERE AND BACK AGAIN

The key to Chasm's growing influence is of course the Door and the worlds to which it leads. The Door does possess several important limitations, however. First, it is far from mobile, housed in a massive complex within a cluster of warehouses in the industrial district of Chandler, Arizona. For security reasons – and because many of those in positions of power want to benefit from the Door without risking their lives should an attack come from off-world – the Chasm Group also maintains offices in nearby Phoenix and Washington D.C.

Door features and limitations include...

- An active Door appears as a dull orange plane of energy with a maximum size of 15 ft. × 15 ft. A Door is not visible in the target world.
- Each Door must be tuned to a single Parallel and can be held open for no more than three minutes. Due to power and security limitations, no more than one Door is opened every 72 hours. In practice, a Door is opened on average between three and five times a month. Consequently, no more than three teams are allowed off world at any time.
- As matter passes through a Door, it's projected into the target Parallel for a period of time proportional to the amount of power used to energize the transfer (roughly selectable between 1 and 100 hours). This time



period is slightly variable (average of the expectation and d% hours, rounded down). At the end of this period, all projected matter returns through the Door regardless of its current location in the Parallel. The point of arrival in each Parallel appears to be fixed; you always end up at the same spot in each world.

- Matter from Parallels is *not* transported back with Second Wave explorers. While this generally limits new acquisitions to information only, it has had an unexpected side effect – operatives steadily adapt in Parallels, especially as they breathe and otherwise consume local substances. Early on, this phenomenon nearly killed several explorers, who returned to Earth with uneven oxygen distributions in their bloodstreams. Consequently, teams now carry dedicated food and oxygen supplies for use near the end of each mission.
- Returning teams are often accompanied by ghostly images and figures (called wisps) that swirl around the Door before it vanishes. The source of these images is unknown, as the figures don't seem to match any known persons on either side of the Door.
- Slight variations between Parallels sometimes prevent technology and techniques from working as expected, or working at all, in alien worlds. Technology, magic, psionics, and other 'powers' sometimes fail to function in any given Parallel (*see Everything Under the Sun, below*).

## POISONED APPLE

While the mere process of exploring new worlds is fraught with seemingly limitless risk, the greatest threat facing the Chasm Group actually comes from within. Twenty-one hours after the eleventh successful transfer of human agents to a Parallel, the Second Wave team returned through the Door, killed by small arms fire. While hostile natives and other mishaps had resulted in fatalities before, evidence from the Parallels had never returned with the victims. These bodies, however, were

riddled with bullets – bullets forged on Earth – leading Chasm to believe the team was killed by attackers from this world.

Further incidents generated a profile of the attackers: a rival group operating with its own Earthbound Door. Recently, a Second Wave team returned with startling intel that verified Chasm's worst fears, that this other group was led by a traitor, the legendary early explorer John Ocrest.

Ocrest was a pioneer with Chasm, whose exploits through Doors established many early mission protocols. The public record claims that Ocrest was killed in a traffic accident over a year ago, while he was on vacation from his cover position at Luke Air Force Base outside Phoenix. Chasm knows the truth, though. Ocrest was reportedly killed with his entire team while on assignment to Parallel 88. It's now clear that the team's fate was staged as the first step of a rival faction that may well become the most dangerous foe in Chasm's mounting rogue's gallery.

## EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN

The Chasm Group exists as a way for GCs to bring together much of *Spycraft's* potential in a single coherent campaign setting. The number of Parallel worlds beyond the Door is high but not infinite, making each destination a place to revisit and a valuable piece of the cosmic puzzle. These worlds' uncanny resemblance to classical fictional genres and settings gives the GC *carte blanche* to borrow from books, movies, and even other RPGs to inhabit his personal Parallel universe. Ocrest and his growing ranks of rival explorers provide constant threats that can strike at any time, on any world, with motives that are a dark reflection of the players' own goals.

Parallels also offer an easy venue for exploring some of *Spycraft 2.0's* more exotic options: the *high magic* campaign quality, first introduced in Crafty Games *Spellbound* series, which unleashes magical might and hundreds of powerful spells; the *legacy of the ancients* quality, which grants psionic power as seen in the *Classic Spycraft* volume, *Shadowforce Archer* (now available in PDF); and the *man + machine* quality, which activates cybernetic character options to be featured in the upcoming *Shatterpunk* campaign setting (another print product from Mongoose Publishing).

In the 'starter' Chasm setting, several worlds are already approved for Second Wave exploration. A quick summary culled from Professor Hattan's files follows, letting you dive into the action right away. Conveniently, most of these worlds fit the genres described in the Play Styles section on page 405 of the *Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook*.

**Earth.** This world not only serves as the players' base camp and launching site for new missions, but can also host long-term operations not limited by the restricted travel times beyond the Door. The GC can alternately apply campaign qualities like *high magic* or *power of the ancients* to the players' native world to allow them to use various character options learned on other worlds or continue to restrict such abilities to missions outside of the known world. In many ways the Chasm Group's Earth sets the tone of the whole campaign, being the bedrock on which players' assumptions are built.

**Parallel 4: 'Desolation Junction'** — Apocalyptic genre (*see the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook, page 409*): Few worlds so immediately illustrate the dangers of Parallel exploration as the blasted desert landscape affectionately called 'Desolation Junction.' This world's Door opens along an obvious interstate highway interchange, where the probes initially found no signs of life. Second Wave teams eventually located a human settlement about 30



miles down the southern roadway, a small but fiercely defended enclave of humans with a dire cautionary tale about the dangers of rampant technological warfare. Nine-tenths of the Parallel's population was eliminated in the catastrophic release of a nanotech weapon called the Gomorrah Plague, which near-instantly petrified its victims, leaving behind slowly eroding statues of rock salt. Entire cities were reduced to crumbling tombs awaiting the weather to reclaim what was once the world of men.

Chasm views this Parallel as a potential treasure trove of advanced technology, happily left unguarded by its once-advanced civilization. However, in their rush to claim this coveted knowledge, the Door's arrogant taskmasters learned a harsh lesson about the dangers of suicidal societies. The first live missions to Desolation Junction very nearly spelled the end of the Chasm Group and all of Earth. Some of the deadly nanites still drift across the dry winds of Parallel 4, occasionally finding something to latch onto and replicate. When one of these nanites replicated within the flesh of an exploration team member, forming Earth-native atoms, it gained a ride back to a much richer world: our own. Only the exceptionally quick thinking of John Ocrest and the destruction of one of the Door complex's cooling systems prevented the nanite plague's spread. Additional safety protocols have since been instituted for missions to the barren world and assignments to Parallel 4 are now on a strictly volunteer basis.

The *bleak* campaign quality applies in this Parallel, reducing the number of action dice available to player characters and forcing them to rely more on skill than luck. It would be obvious to also add the *bloodbath* or *gritty* qualities, which increase the world's lethality, but that's maybe a little *too* obvious. Instead, the *tense* quality applies, ratcheting up any stress damage suffered and making the Junction more than a little unnerving.

Additionally, the GC may want to build many NPCs with the *class ability* quality, offering them Scout, Soldier, Guide, and Wheelman options. He might also want to bone up on animal options so he can introduce a few unique mutants to the equation. Chases are probably common here, with characters cobbling together 'crash cars' and 'battle wagons' from spare parts and weapons; thus, the GC should prepare to run a few Dramatic Conflicts using the chase cards.

**Parallel 9: 'Grimwater'** — Horror genre (*see the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook, page 422*): This world closely resembles modern Earth except for the strangely black seas, lakes, and rivers. A spiritual calamity swept across Parallel 9 on 1 January 2000, ushering its people into a new Dark



Age. The dark waters have a calming, placating effect on most, but provoke sociopathic behavior in a small percentage of the populace, granting them inhuman strength and speed, as well as an insatiable hunger for human flesh.

Chasm seeks to harness the black water's common effect as a method of behavioral adjustment, perhaps even a weapon if a suitable means of delivery can be found. Unfortunately, the water's powerful traits have so eluded explanation. Worse, several Second Wave explorers have succumbed, joining the deadened ranks of the Parallel's populace or the deranged monsters stalking them. Recovering these lost operatives is a distant second priority for new teams arriving on Grimwater.

The horror genre suggests a number of qualities, including *bleak* and *tense*, which we've applied to Desolation Junction. Wanting a more action-oriented, shock value Parallel in Grimwater, we instead apply the *violent* quality, which increases the chance of critical hits. For good measure, we'll also throw in the *paranoid* quality, instilling a 'trust no one' attitude in the world's beleaguered populace. The modular NPC creation rules allow the GC to vary the dark water's effects on the infected and the GC can quickly add a little color to them with Origins (making one a 'privileged stranger' and another a 'rowdy hunter').

**Parallel 11: 'Jade River'** — Chop Sockeye genre (*see the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook, page 410*): An ancient oriental empire straddling the banks and canals of the 'World River,' this Parallel's civilization is home to countless martial artists of peerless skill. These warriors command immense inner strength that allows them to leap enormous distances, defy gravity (if only briefly), deflect and absorb crushing impacts, and face down veritable armies of lesser foes.



No other realm has driven Chasm to work as hard at overcoming the Door's 100-hour limitation. If Chasm agents could gain a foothold here and train in the martial arts of Jade River, the benefits could reach across all worlds. Even if the skills of the Jade River masters are not entirely transferable to other Parallels, a fraction of their power could make for unstoppable agents on Earth and abroad.

When visiting the Jade River, operatives should be on the lookout for chances to visit the Underworld (seemingly a not uncommon experience here, though mainly for those who are lost in mind, spirit, or body). Within this series of seemingly natural caves, hapless wayfarers claim to encounter otherworldly beings of their darkest nightmare. These beings pose honorable challenges with the promise of escape or wild dreams made real. Chasm thinkers are eager to learn whether the truth behind the Underworld and its denizens, especially whether the caves are naturally subterranean, a previously unknown Parallel, or something else.

The Jade River is governed by the *historical* quality, which sets the limits of its native technology. One way this manifests is that nuances of electrochemical behavior prevent combustion engines and certain explosives from working along the banks of the World River. Guns may or may not work, at the GC's discretion, and if they do, the GC might add the *gladiators* quality, which reduces the overall utility of firearms while emphasizing melee and unarmed combat. Also, the *bulletproof* quality is applied, allowing for intense, prolonged combats with fewer critical injuries. Finally, the additional martial arts feats in *World on Fire* and the advanced actions and tricks found in the *Practice Makes Perfect* PDF are the perfect tool for fleshing out the many competing styles of the Thousand Schools of Jade.

(Interested in *Spycraft* kung fu? See page 55! - Ed.)

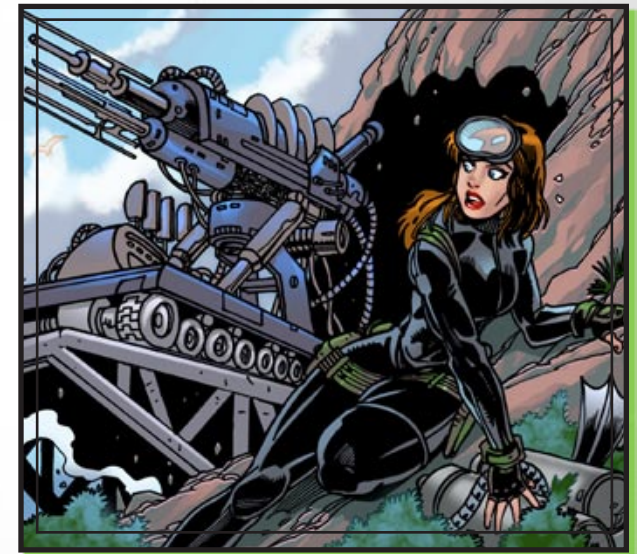
**Parallel 17: 'Duke'** — Western genre (see the *Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook*, page 422): This world of vast grasslands and rugged mountain ranges isn't entirely what it appears. Despite its level of technological development, which hovers near the American west in the late nineteenth century, certain inhabitants exhibit the disturbing ability to wield what appears to be genuine magic, reportedly of divine origin. Through healing and destruction, control of the weather or feats of superhuman strength and will, Duke's gifted periodically achieve greatness on both sides of the law. Most of these individuals call themselves 'shamans' and 'priests,' but a small number call themselves heroes and villains as well.

Duke is a world teetering at the brink of an explosive new age of development, with these visionaries leading the charge. Chasm operatives have standing orders to remain out of the fighting, due in no small part to an incident on the Parallel during the first team's visit. The explorers found themselves in an escalating conflict between a frontier town Sheriff and the natives on whose land the town stood. The Sheriff and his people were apparently in the wrong, stealing the territory to mine precious metals, and when unexpectedly pressed to take a side in the situation, the Second Wave team chose to fight with the natives. Unfortunately, it turned out the natives were just as complicit in the bloodletting, kidnapping frontiersmen for use in bloody rituals to their dark god. The only blameless character in the equation was a drifter who called himself Duke, who drove out the leaders of both factions and brokered a peace between the others. Sadly, Duke vanished shortly thereafter, presumably to wander off to help others in need. In honor of the man's work, though, Chasm named the Parallel after him and tries to uphold his legacy of strategic, beneficial involvement whenever possible.


The Duke Parallel is a place where motives are somewhat murky, so the *black and white* quality — which widens

the gap between the good and bad guys — isn't appropriate. The *corrupt* quality works just fine, though, allowing characters much greater latitude in dealing with the Parallel's shady inhabitants. The *historical* quality applies obviously, as does *diplomatic*, which gives negotiations and other positive social efforts a little boost. Finally, the *high magic* quality from Crafty Games' *Spellbound* conversion of the d20 magic SRD is perfect for powering those shamans and priests with all the might their gods can muster.

**Parallel 20: 'Sunset Drive'** — Near Future genre (see the *Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook*, page 418): The Door to this world deposits operatives in a helpfully secluded canyon on the outskirts of the vast post-modern metropolis of Sunset. This unbroken urban sprawl stretches from Alaska to Baja along a largely familiar west coast. The only similar sized city-nation, Eudomina, occupies most of western Africa. The rest of the world has balkanized into countless tiny city-states which serve as the proxies and battlefields for continuous low-level warfare between the two super-powers of the day.







The city-nations' most prolific divisions by far are their weapons manufacturers, which engage in their own private arms race at the bleeding edge of the Parallel's technological curve. Mercenaries are drafted into service for both sides, donning heavy suits of personal battle armor and sporting sidearms that in practice amount to man-portable rail guns. Most warfare happens on a small scale, with no more than a dozen or so on either side, but the danger to anyone in the immediate area when fighting breaks out is all too real. Entire city blocks are sometimes leveled in the process, with no reprieve for those injured, killed, and left homeless in the wake. 'It's just the price of progress,' the bureaucrats say. Then the sweeping crews arrive to clear the area before the civil engineers expand their nations' holdings.

Despite the localized destruction, the citizens of the nations' satellite states count their blessings. It could be so much worse. Parts of Europe, South America, and the poles are pocked so deeply the craters can be seen from space. Each area was devastated in 'less sophisticated times,' when solo slave-soldiers of the Powers That Be were hardwired with tactical biotech nukes set to go off when their heartbeats stopped, and many of them still aren't inhabitable two generations later.

Chasm operatives tend to stay out of the militarized civil mayhem perpetrated by the Parallel's juggernauts. They plug into the street pulses of the nations and states, where street gangs and city militia wage bloody personal wars of chrome and vice. Extensive cybernetic augmentation is common at the bottom of this world's food chain, and though such invasive implants can't port back to Earth and many other worlds, the fundamentals of the tech provide a steady stream of related discoveries. New medicines, prosthetics, vehicular refinements, and more comes out of this research, and trips to Parallel 20 don't look to be scaling back anytime soon.

The *violent* quality defines this Parallel, and the *gunmen* quality grants a few enhancements to guns already listed in the gear chapter that place them firmly in the 'near now' category. The GC might also want to make an exception to the Seasons Only rule and apply the *big budget* quality here, universally increasing gear Calibers to simulate the Parallel's superior rate of progress. Cybernetics and biotech will be covered in Crafty Games' forthcoming *Shatterpunk* toolkit setting, which will also include a wide variety of material supporting near now games of any flavor. In the meantime, the GC can simulate most cybernetics by simply allowing characters to install gadgets into their own bodies. The immense number of gadget options covers most classic cyberpunk-style installations and a few more.

**Parallel 21: 'Neo-Atlanta'** — Pulp genre (*see the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook, page 419*): No other Parallel does quite as good a job of showing the 'sideways through time' flavor of the worlds beyond the Door as '21,' otherwise known as Neo-Atlanta. Operatives emerge in a charming city park that could have been lifted straight from 1920's New Orleans, except that the two-storey Victorian flats are surrounded by an impossibly massive skyline periodically obscured by passing zeppelins belching endless clouds of choking ash. No less than two hundred art-deco skyscrapers spike up through this blanket of industrial airborne grime, each a towering monument of shimmering copper, brass, and silver.

Tiny personal zeppelins dart between the massive cargo dirigibles, carting about a litany of rich, powerful, and ingenious persons. These men and women, and the forces of business lording over the concrete monoliths poking through the clouds, are the leaders of the day. Unlike the patchwork quilt of ethnicities huddled below, this upper crust lives without limit. They make dreams reality on a daily basis. Some of them, a random few, are

even more. With strange powers discovered, inherited, or stolen, these larger-than-life 'Marvels' make their own futures. Some enforce personal brands of justice; others expand their fortunes and indulge their wicked fantasies. All change the world.

Chasm is keenly interested in learning more about these Marvels, as it's unclear whether the source of their power is a physical thing or, preferably, an untapped facet of the mind or will. In the latter case, the abilities may even transcend the Door, becoming an undiscovered country for the jaded theorists and power mongers on Earth. Unfortunately, all attempts to define these abilities have met with frustrated failure. While some seem to be the product of mystic studies in the Far East, others are the glorious triumph of mad science conducted in hidden basement laboratories (often to the beat of a crackling Jacob's ladder).

Beyond the ubiquitous *historical* quality, Neo-Atlanta also features *spirited*, which improves player character action dice and increases the number available, and *omni-competent*, which removes result caps and enhances skill use. If the GC is feeling plucky, he might also add the *catch phrase* quality, which spices up the game with signature calls and statements for key characters. New character options might include psionics, which can be handled with conversion rules provided in the Classic Spycraft release, *Shadowforce Archer*, available as a Crafty Games PDF. Otherwise, characters might become globe-trotting, action-junkie Explorers, versatile Pointmen, or even take the Test Subject Specialty so they can become – gasp — talking apes! Because no pulp setting is complete without talking apes!

**Parallel 33: 'Quisling'** — Conspiracy genre (*see the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook, page 411*): In a strange twist on the old adage 'Keep your friends close and your enemies



closer,' the single most dangerous world beyond the Door is almost indistinguishable from Earth. It even has its own Chasm Group.

During Earth's first venture into Quisling, the Second Wave team thought the Door had malfunctioned, as they were unceremoniously deposited in a formation of rock outcroppings several miles outside Phoenix. They returned to civilization on foot and found the Door complex populated with strange technology and unfamiliar faces. Unfortunately, they were discovered before their scouting mission yielded much fruit and only narrowly escaped capture. Ten hours later, after a harrowing chase across the American southwest, the team was whisked back to Earth through their closing Door and reported their findings. It wasn't long before things got worse.

You see, unlike every other Parallel visited to date, Quisling can return the favor. They know about the Door to Earth, and they've used it on more than one occasion. Prior to Chasm's first trip to Quisling, the Parallel's counterpart had written Earth off as a harmless curiosity, lesser in ambition and devoid of technologies to plunder. Burying three of their people with Earth bullets in their guts changed all that. Now they plan, circling dates on their calendars for a return of that particular favor as well.

Quisling resembles Earth in all but tone. Where this world's Chasm Group was founded upon lofty ideals that were later perverted by greed, Quisling's counterpart was free of such limitations from the start. Forged in fear and paranoia, it was created with the sole purpose of inter-dimensional pillaging toward a stronger, more draconian future. The people of Quisling long ago gave up rights we consider inalienable and champion their public version of Chasm with every empty platitude

they're force-fed by the shallow spin doctors in their media. They cheer for the day their heroes – the explorers openly robbing other worlds to bring back their future – deliver on their promise to crack the one-way barrier. Someday soon, they believe, that future won't just be words and concepts, but hard reality: weapons for conquering and treasures to horde.

Chasm knows this sentiment all too well, and many in its leadership worry that Earth might be slipping toward the same dark fate. This is especially true with the increased frequency of Quisling's incursions. It's one thing to step through the Door from a world impervious from reprisal. It's quite another to fend off an enemy with at least as much knowledge, and possibly a great deal more. That's the sort of situation that leads to panic, and panic... well, fear and paranoia aren't that far off.

Aptly enough, the dominating qualities on Quisling are *paranoid*, *tense*, and *thriller*, which contribute to the Parallel's anxiety-ridden, slow-burn flavor. They also make it harder to sway opinions and complete dangerous tasks under pressure. As an evil afterthought, the *revolving door* quality also applies, though with no Reputation cost and only when dead characters' bodies are recovered by Quisling's Chasm Group. Normally, this quality allows for characters to burn a big chunk of their personal or professional standing to be recovered near or just after death and nursed back to health. One of the most advanced technologies available on Quisling, stolen from a Parallel they later pushed into an annihilating world war, is that of cloning. More terrifying, this late world also provided foolproof brainwashing, which Quisling uses to keep its clones in line. Quisling's sadistic Chasm leaders can't wait to test those two discoveries on the remains of the next Earth team who dares cross through their Door...

## QUARTERMASTER



### REQUIREMENTS

Charisma: 13+.

Streetwise: 6+ ranks.

Feats: Fence.

EXPERT  
CLASS

With so many operations taking place beyond the Door, it's essential for Second Wave teams to rely a complete logistical base. The Quartermaster ensures his team has the right tools for every occasion. He not only plans for as many contingencies as possible, he's also a master of foraging or bartering to cover unexpected needs.

**Attributes:** The Quartermaster loves to wheel and deal, making Charisma his foremost attribute. He may also have to scrounge up goods by careful inspection, making Wisdom a solid secondary choice.

**Vitality:** 1d8 + Con modifier per level.

### CLASS SKILLS

The Quartermaster's class skills are Analysis, Bluff, Bureaucracy, Computers, Cultures, Electronics, Falsify, Mechanics, Networking, Notice, Profession, Search, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, and Streetwise.

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 8 + Int modifier.

### CORE ABILITY

**Something Just for You:** Your mission gear includes a number of additional upgrades in any gear category



equal to the number of Gear feats you possess. These upgrades may be applied to any gear items you or your teammates possess.

**CLASS ABILITIES**

**Pick and Save:** You know all the tricks to getting what your team wants when they need it. At Level 1, you gain the Advanced Skill Mastery (Fence) feat. Further, your Fence feat also affects Bureaucracy checks.

At Level 5, you gain the Grand Skill Mastery (Fence) feat.

At Level 9, you gain the Perfect Skill Mastery (Fence) feat.

**Swap Meet I:** At Level 2, during the Intel phase, you may spend a number of your mission gear picks up to your Charisma modifier to choose the same number of gear items from any category (minimum 1).

**Swap Meet II:** At Level 7, during the Intel phase, each of your teammates may spend 1 of their mission gear picks to choose 1 gear item from any category.

**Bonus Feat:** At Levels 3 and 7, you gain 1 additional Gear or Tradecraft feat.

**Fully Stocked I:** Only the best for you and your friends! At Level 4, at the start of each mission, your Possessions Rating and that of each of your teammates increases by 1 until the end of the current mission. This ability may not increase any single character's Possessions by more than 2, no matter how many *fully stocked* abilities are involved. Further, these additional points may not be liquidated for Spending Cash, nor may they be retained in any fashion beyond the end of the current mission.

**Fully Stocked II:** At Level 8, this ability's Possessions Rating bonus increases to 2.

**'I Know a Guy...':** At Level 4, your Basic Combat, Style, and Tradecraft feats count as Gear feats when determining the effects of any ability, prerequisite, or requirement based on the number of Gear feats you possess.

**Let's Deal:** At Level 6, instead of making an opposed Bureaucracy check, you may set your result to 1 higher than that of your opponent. This cannot result in an error or threat. You may use this ability a number of times per session equal to your starting action dice.

**'Money, Money, Money':** At Level 8, each time you make a Streetwise check, you roll twice and keep the result you prefer.

**Something for Every Occasion:** At Level 10, a number of times per mission equal to the number of Gear feats you possess, you may automatically succeed with a Gear or Request check without rolling.

THE QUARTERMASTER									
Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Def	Init	Wealth	Gear	Abilities
1	+0	+0	+1	+1	+2	+0	1	1R, 1V	Pick and save (Advanced), <i>something just for you</i>
2	+1	+0	+2	+2	+3	+0	2	2R, 1V	Swap meet I
3	+2	+1	+2	+2	+3	+1	2	2R, 1V	Bonus feat
4	+3	+1	+2	+2	+4	+1	2	2R, 1V, 1E	Fully stocked I, 'I know a guy...'
5	+3	+1	+3	+3	+5	+1	3	2R, 2V, 1E	Pick and save (Grand)
6	+4	+2	+3	+3	+6	+2	3	3R, 2V, 1E	Let's deal
7	+5	+2	+4	+4	+6	+2	4	3R, 2V, 1E	Bonus feat, swap meet II
8	+6	+2	+4	+4	+7	+2	4	3R, 2V, 1E, 1T	Fully stocked II, 'money, money, money'
9	+6	+3	+4	+4	+8	+3	4	3R, 2V, 2E, 1T	Pick and save (Perfect)
10	+7	+3	+5	+5	+9	+3	5	3R, 3V, 2E, 1T	Something for every occasion



# TOURNAMENTS AND ISLAND LAIRS

A SNEAK PREVIEW OF THE MARTIAL ARTIST BASE CLASS FROM WORLD ON FIRE

## MARTIAL ARTIST

The Martial Artist hones his body and mind into a deadly weapon. Deriving his power as much from spiritual focus as physical conditioning, he transcends ordinary expectations of human ability.

**Attributes:** The Martial Artist benefits from a balanced array of attributes, as he can put any of them to good use at any time.

**Vitality:** 1d12 + Con modifier per level.

**Starting Weapon Proficiencies:** 6.

## CLASS SKILLS

The Martial Artist's class skills are Acrobatics, Athletics, Impress, Intimidate, Medicine, Notice, Resolve, Sense Motive, and Sneak.

**Skill Points at Level 1:** (4 + Int modifier) × 4.

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

## CORE ABILITY

**Unyielding:** You can withstand tremendous physical punishment. Once per combat, you may take 1 full action to spend and roll 1 or more action dice, immediately recovering a number of combined vitality and wound points equal to the total result. These action dice explode as normal. You may take this action even when you're *helpless* or *dying*.

## CLASS ABILITIES

**Martial Arts:** At Level 1, you gain the Martial Arts feat, waiving all prerequisites.

**Life of Discipline:** You're devoted to a deeper, more spiritual understanding of combat. At Levels 2, 11, and 19, you may choose 1 of the following abilities.

- **Discipline of the Body:** Your intense martial discipline grants you extraordinary control over your body. The lower of your Strength or Constitution scores increases by 1 (if they're tied, you choose which to increase). Further, you gain a +1 insight bonus with Fortitude saves. Finally, you may spend 1 action die to hold your breath for an additional number of minutes equal to your Constitution modifier while performing actions, or for an equal number of hours while remaining still.

- **Discipline of the Mind:** Your studies into the nature of the mind have unlocked inner powers. The lower of your Dexterity or Intelligence scores increases by 1 (if they're tied, you choose which to increase). Further, you gain a +1 insight bonus with Reflex saves. Finally, you may spend 1 action die to ignore the fatigued condition or reduce the exhausted condition to *fatigued* until the next time you receive damage.

- **Discipline of the Spirit:** Your contemplation of the spirit strengthens your resolve. The lower of your Wisdom or Charisma scores increases by 1 (if they're tied, you choose which to increase). Further, you gain a +1 insight bonus with Will saves. Finally, when an adjacent character scores a threat, you may spend 1 action die to activate their critical success.



**Bonus Feat:** At Levels 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, and 19, you gain 1 additional Melee or Unarmed Combat feat.

**Improved Reach:** You may strike opponents with rapid lunges or punch and kick loose objects toward them.



At Levels 4, 12, and 20, your Reach with melee and unarmed attacks increases by 5 ft.

**Ploy:** At Levels 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18, you may choose 1 of the following abilities. Each of these abilities may be chosen only once.

- **Backhand:** You may choose to inflict subdual damage with an unarmed attack to gain a morale bonus with all Intimidate checks targeting the same opponent for 1 minute.
- **Beat Down:** Each time you make a successful unarmed or melee attack, the target suffers 1 point of stress damage in addition to any other damage inflicted by the attack.
- **Great Sweep:** You gain a +4 synergy bonus with any skill check made as part of a Bull Rush or Trip action.
- **Provoke:** You gain a +4 synergy bonus with any skill check made as part of a Taunt or Trick action.
- **Quake Strike:** As a full action, you may take 1 Trip action targeting all adjacent opponents. You roll once for this action, while each opponent rolls to resist separately. If you suffer a critical failure or any opponent scores a critical success, you automatically become *sprawled*.
- **Smack Down:** When you make a Standard Unarmed Attack without applying any tricks, your attack gains the *takedown* quality.
- **Stare Down:** When you render an opponent *unconscious* or *dead*, you may take a Threaten action against another opponent within CQB range as a free action, even if you have not yet injured that character.
- **Still Standing:** You gain a +8 bonus with Fortitude saves made to remain standing after being hit by an attack with the *takedown* quality. Additionally, you gain a +4 bonus with skill checks made to resist Bull Rush and Trip actions.
- **Strut:** After scoring a threat or critical hit with an unarmed or melee attack, you may spend your next half

action posturing, at which point you gain 1 bonus action die (without the accompanying XP bonus). If not used by the end of the current combat, this action die is lost.

- **Take It:** You gain 2 points of subdual resistance against all melee, hurled, and unarmed attacks. This resistance is applied after damage reduction and can reduce the effects of bruising.

**Wuxia I:** At Level 8, your horizontal and vertical Acrobatics/Jump check results are no longer limited by your height. Further, the distance you travel when making a Jump check increases by 50% (rounded up).

**Wuxia II:** At Level 16, the distance you travel when making a Jump check increases by an additional 50% (for a total increase of 100%). Further, you are considered to weigh only 1 lb. when determining if a surface or object can support your weight.

**Master's Touch I:** At Level 10, you may add 1 additional trick from any melee or unarmed "Basics" or "Moves" feat to one of your actions (for a total of 2 tricks from any of these feats). You may use this ability to add an unarmed feat trick to a melee attack or vice versa, ignoring all requirements for the weapon type used.

**Master's Touch II:** At Level 20, you may add 2 additional tricks from any melee or unarmed "Basics" or "Moves" feat to one of your actions (for a total of 3 tricks from any of these feats).

**Finishing Move:** At Level 14, once per scene, when one of your attacks decreases a target's wound points, or when a standard NPC fails a Damage save prompted by one of your attacks, you may instead choose to decrease 1 of your target's attributes of your choice to exactly 1. At the end of the current scene, the target heals 1/2 of all Attribute damage inflicted by this ability (rounded up); the rest of the damage heals as standard.





## THE MARTIAL ARTIST

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Def	Init	Wealth	Gear	Abilities
1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	+1	0	–	Martial Arts, <i>unyielding</i>
2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+3	+1	0	1W	Life of discipline
3	+3	+2	+2	+2	+3	+2	1	1W	Bonus feat
4	+4	+2	+2	+2	+4	+2	1	1W, 1S	Improved reach (+5 ft.)
5	+5	+3	+3	+3	+5	+3	1	1W, 1S	Bonus feat
6	+6	+3	+3	+3	+6	+4	2	1W, 1S	Ploy
7	+7	+4	+4	+4	+6	+4	2	2W, 1S	Bonus feat
8	+8	+4	+4	+4	+7	+5	2	2W, 1S	Wuxia I
9	+9	+4	+4	+4	+8	+5	3	2W, 1S, 1R	Bonus feat, ploy
10	+10	+5	+5	+5	+9	+6	3	2W, 1S, 1R	Master's touch I
11	+11	+5	+5	+5	+9	+7	3	2W, 1S, 1R	Bonus feat, life of discipline
12	+12	+6	+6	+6	+10	+7	4	2W, 2S, 1R	Improved reach (+10 ft.), ploy
13	+13	+6	+6	+6	+11	+8	4	2W, 2S, 1R	Bonus feat
14	+14	+6	+6	+6	+12	+8	4	3W, 2S, 1R	Finishing move 1/scene
15	+15	+7	+7	+7	+12	+9	5	3W, 2S, 1R	Bonus feat, ploy
16	+16	+7	+7	+7	+13	+10	5	3W, 2S, 1R	Wuxia II
17	+17	+8	+8	+8	+14	+10	5	3W, 2S, 2R	Bonus feat
18	+18	+8	+8	+8	+15	+11	6	3W, 2S, 2R	Ploy
19	+19	+8	+8	+8	+15	+12	6	3W, 3S, 2R	Bonus feat, life of discipline
20	+20	+9	+9	+9	+16	+12	6	3W, 3S, 2R	Improved reach (+15 ft.), master's touch II



# THE QUEST FOR THE STONES

An assault on a goblin stronghold for experienced RuneQuest characters. By Neil Smith.

## HISTORY TO PRESENT (CCD Only)

Some years ago a large party of goblins set out from an established and overcrowded stronghold. Their mission was to search out a site for a new base from which to expand their empire. The force that came south was ambushed three weeks out by a huge party of elves and slaughtered to a goblin. The only survivors were those who had been sent out on a hunting expedition and were travelling parallel to the main group. The hunters, now leaderless, returned to a previously discovered abandoned underground complex and waited for an attack which never materialised.

They decided that they were too small a force to make the journey back and started to make the complex defensible while they waited for a rescue that was sure to come. It didn't take long before they had wiped out the local game (wild goats mainly) and had to cast further afield for their provisions. Soon they encountered the outskirts of civilisation and that was when their presence was noted.

## THE STORY SO FAR

A number of cattle had disappeared from outlying farms and the local militia followed the tracks of the rustlers towards 'the mountain'. The path they followed

rose high into the rocky gorges and it was growing late when they were ambushed. The sole survivor of the encounter (a 15 year old lad) explains:

*'They didn't stand a chance. I was behind the others and had a chance to run. I saw it all. We were walking up a path, with a sheer drop on one side and the cliff wall on the other. Master Jenks turned to me and said that we were nearly at the top and that we had got them trapped and then there was the twang of bow strings and an arrow appeared through his neck. He looked at me funny and he fell off the cliff. I watched him fall out of sight then I looked at the rest of the blokes. They had their shields raised to protect against the arrows from above and then there were little men amongst them stabbing with spears and swords. Some of us were forced off the cliff and some were just lying there on the path, not moving. Most of the little men wore leather armour but a couple had strange looking armour and all I could see carried bucklers. Jack and Stewey had almost reached me before a hail of arrows took them down and I couldn't see any more of our blokes standing. I threw my spear at the biggest mass of them and then turned and ran. An arrow caught me in the arm and I dropped my shield but I didn't stop running until I got down to the flatlands. They weren't human but I don't know what they were. They were shouting*

*guttural things to one another. There must have been thirty to forty on the ledge with bows and another ten who did the fighting.'*

At this point the mayor intercedes, perhaps to stop the boy scaring you off, saying 'Last time he told the story it was twenty with bows and five with swords.' Although, if pressed, he will admit that the boy was the only survivor of ten militiamen.

The ambush was a couple of months ago and the town has already hired one party of adventurers to take care of the problem. Grendel and three neer-do-wells had been passing through and asked to help. She had agreed on condition of half payment up front. The mayor was a bit canny and asked her to pick four of eight gems. The four she picked he kept giving her the others as part payment.

They collected all information known about the attackers and set forth. Three days later a letter was delivered to the Mayor which detailed a time and a place for the first payment of 1,000 silvers which would stop, for a month, the activities of the Goblins. The note was signed Grendel and explained that a total of 20 payments would be necessary to make the Goblins permanently cease their activities.



The deadline came and went and everybody (in the know) waited with bated breath to see what would happen. Two days after the deadline an outlying farm was burnt to the ground and the name Grendel was carved into the chests of the five slaughtered occupants.

You, the party, have been hired to retrieve the gems paid to Grendel and to bring herself and her friends in, dead or alive. Grendel and her lieutenant, Salco, will fetch a bounty of 1,000 silvers each, the other two members of her party have a bounty on their heads of 500 silvers, and the Goblins 50 silvers per head. Other than the gems, anything that you find you can keep.

There are only two days before the next payment is due and the Mayor wants results before this date. If the party do not return before then, the payment will be made although the Mayor will not say were it is to be made.

It is known that the goblin camp is at the back of a plateau half way up 'the mountain' and the only path leads to the front of the plateau leaving 50 metres of open ground to cover. At one point the path runs 20 metres below the plateau edge and climbing this section will position the party at the edge of the cliff wall at the back of the plateau.

The bodies of the militiamen have been stripped and their equipment is stored in area 5. The bodies themselves have been eaten by Grendel, Salco and the goblins.

## Final GM's Notes

When Grendel and the others approached the plateau they watched and waited, spying out the lie of the land. When she realised how few the goblins were she thought up the idea of using the goblins to terrorise the locals and extort a ransom. They captured a lone goblin and once they had calmed him down, explained that they wanted to parley. He delivered the message and was sent back out to bring Grendel and her associates into the camp.

When the goblins finally understood what was required of them they gleefully agreed and when the first payment was missed they followed Grendel without hesitation to cause murder and mayhem.

Since then Grendel has tightened up the camp security (although Goblins are naturally lax and lazy and only sheer luck alerted them to the posse) and drilled them somewhat in weapons and tactics. She knows that there may be another attack on the camp (if the Mayor can persuade anyone) but she doubts it will be before a payment or two is made.

Grendel, Salco, Sven and Harrol consider the Goblins a means of income, nothing else. Should the goblins be wiped out they will only continue the fight if they are confident of winning. They will then continue to terrorise the local populace banking on the theory that the Mayor considers the party a last ditch attempt to avoid paying up and will now capitulate to her demands.

If they feel that they cannot win they will use their superior knowledge of the complex to escape. They may also attempt to ambush the party on their way back to town to retrieve their spoils.

## The Plateau

The plateau is not entirely bare but any trees that were once here have long been used as fuel for fires. There are small bushes or patches of scrub scattered around which are the fodder for the two remaining cows which are wandering about aimlessly. These patches of foliage are also scattered all over the mountainside and will offer some concealment but no protection.

### A) Entrance

This is a small cave created mainly by the cliff which forms its side walls. Its roof is formed by bushes and scrub. The entrance to the complex is at the back of the cave screened by a blanket.

### B) Cooking Fire

If the party approach during the night then ignore all room occupants except the lookouts (E and #8).





There will be D6+3 goblins attending the fires or cooking or just sitting about in the dark. The remainder will be randomly scattered about the complex doing various tasks from cleaning to weapons practice. One goblin will always be in the lookout position and any others that are not by the fire can be found by rolling D8 for their location. The non-goblins each have a 30% chance of being near the fire otherwise roll D8 to find their location. Any mass attack will attract the attention of the lookout who will fire the heavy crossbow at the attackers and then run to the entrance to warn the complex.

If the party approach during daylight the fire will be mere ashes and the remains of a number of meals will be scattered around. (Examination will reveal enough human bones to account for all the militiamen's bodies.)

### C) Birds Nests

There are holes in the cliff at this point and it is a nesting place for a number of birds. Anybody approaching along the path must make a Stealth or Survival test or startle them and they will take flight alerting the lookout and anybody on the Plateau. This test has a +20% modifier at night, since the birds are asleep.

### D) Climbable Section

Attempting to climb any other section of the mountain is at -50% due to the sheer cliffs. This section can be climbed at standard difficulty. A successful Perception or Survival test is necessary to tell the easy climb from the difficult surrounds.

## E) Lookout

This location contains at least one goblin lookout at all times. There is an abundance of scrub and bush here which effectively camouflages the ledge on which the goblin sits. There is a chance to see the goblin from 25 to 50 meters in front of the ledge with a successful Perception test. Any approach from the end of the path will be seen by the lookout. Anybody sneaking beneath the ledge will have to make a Stealth test. There is a tripod-mounted heavy crossbow here which all of the goblins have a 50% weapon skill with and which does 2D8 damage (range 150m).

The part of the complex which is used by the Goblins is only a small part of the original which has been long abandoned. There is not even a rumour of its existence in the surrounding area. The walls of passages and rooms are carved in bas relief throughout although the goblins (probably the first to enter since what ever catastrophe wiped out the inhabitants) have marred much of the carvings. Should the party manage to interrogate one of the Goblins they will be told that it was though the people had just upped and left mid meal. There are oil lamps hanging from brackets set into the walls every 5 metres, long since out of fuel but still serviceable should they be filled and the wick replaced. They are currently covered with a hundred years of spider webs and fly corpses (the Goblins are not into spring cleaning). Currently there are torches scattered about the complex as only Grendel and Salco can see in total darkness.

## 1. Guard Room

This is the only entrance to the complex. During the day there will be two Goblins here sitting at the table playing cards or bickering noisily (or both). The door to the outside will be open, the door behind them closed.

If they've been forewarned of the party's approach, they'll have the door behind them open and let fly with missile weapons as soon as someone steps into view then run south to room 2 without stopping to reload. Otherwise they'll be brave if one intruder enters, unsure if two enter and flee (to room 4) if any more enter.

## 2. Sleeping Quarters.

This room is the quarters for Sven and Harrol. They've stacked boxes against the door so, if the party have managed to get in without the alarm being sounded, they will be awakened as the door is opened. If they have been alerted they will be armed and will be waiting for the two goblins from room 1 to get to them. Then they'll start firing their missile weapons down the passage getting one of the Goblins to open and close the door for them as they reload.

## 3. Main Hall

The ceiling of this main hall is out of sight in the gloom. It will be empty unless there are any randomly allocated goblins here at night – they will be doing weapons practice.

## 4. Barracks

The beds in here are bunk beds although not all are in use. There is a niche carved out of the wall at the head of each bed (for personal effects of the original occupants) but these have already been ransacked.

During the night any randomly allocated Goblins here will be sleeping (having been on watch during the day) although they will awake at the least noise. During the day there will be 7 sleeping Goblins if they haven't been alerted to the party. If they have they will be armed and armoured and waiting at the open door for the command to charge.



## 5. Armoury

There are tables and shelves all around this room. These are covered with the necessary equipment to service weapons and armour. The equipment in here is obviously of ancient origin and includes a grinding wheel, sheafs of arrows and bolts (although any quivers have long rotted away). The room has survived the rigours of the Goblins better than most. The eastern door is barred from the other side.

## 6. Practice Room

This room has been taken over for the practise of missile weapons and a couple of dummies towards the north show the effects of the Goblins' increasing accuracy. The tables contain two throwing knives, one light crossbow and one short bow as well as a quiver of arrows and a case of bolts.

## 7. Officers Quarters

Grendel and Salco occupy this room and it contains no light source at all as both have dark sight.

During the day they will be sleeping in here, Grendel is restless and will wake Salco if anybody tries the door. Their hand weapons are within easy reach of the beds. They will kill before eating and eat before asking questions, and all the goblins know not to disturb them uninvited.

The chests in the room contain clothes, one chest for each of them. In a hollow beneath the chest on the west wall is a pouch containing the 4 gems from the Mayor. Their combined value is 2000 sp. Grendel carries a pouch that contains four fake gems with a combined value of 5 sp. She presumes that she can use the hidden location of the actual gems as a bartering lever in case she's captured.

If they have been alerted they will be looking west from the practice room door. If they hear sounds of combat coming from Sven and Harrols room or see the party pass south at the end of the corridor they will (making Stealth tests to remain unheard) move towards them picking up goblins along the way. Otherwise they will wait until the party draw level with the south passage to the goblins' room and then charge to the attack.

## 8. The Lookout

Should he be alerted to the party's presence during the day he will run down the tunnel to the barracks and send goblins to warn Grendel, Salco, Sven, Harrol and the guards in room 1. If the party attack at night (when most of the goblins are on the plateau) he will fire the heavy crossbow and then run to alert anybody left in the complex.

## 9. Collapsed Tunnel

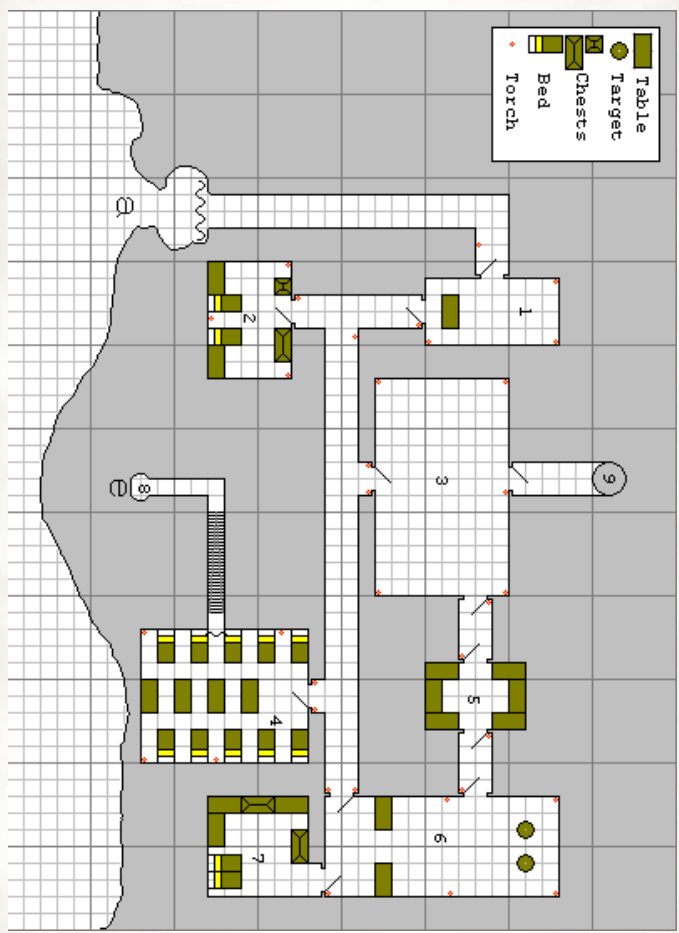
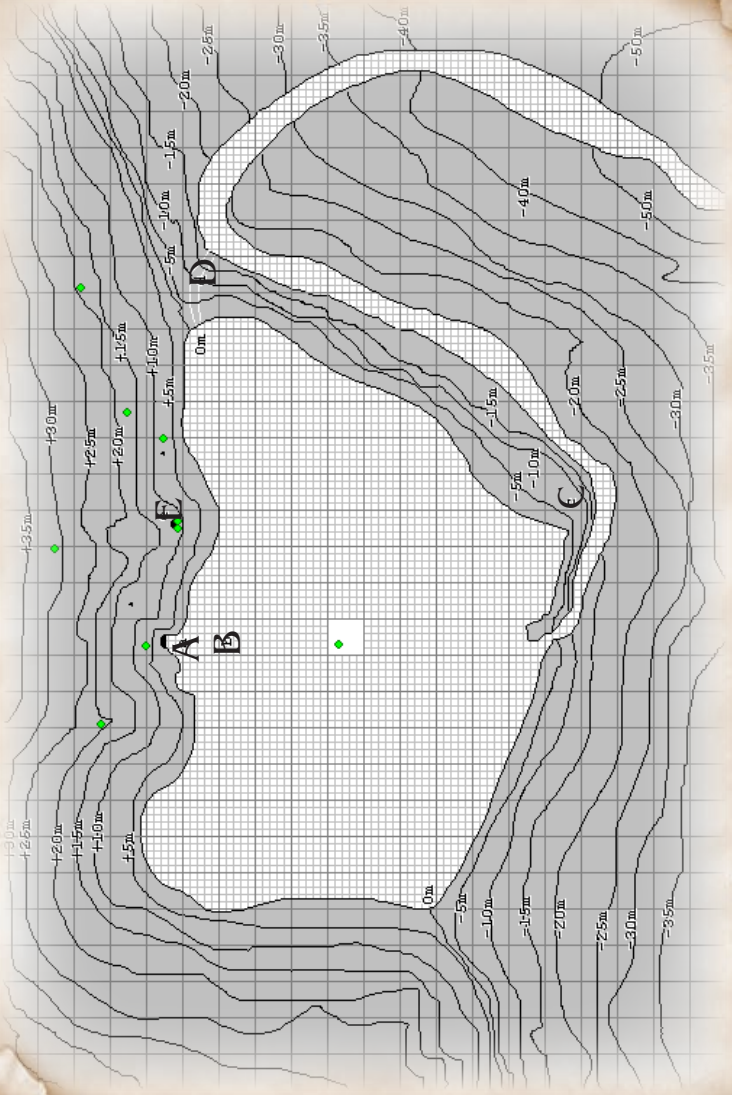
The rock fall has effectively closed this passage and anyone can see that the roof is still not safe. If the characters examine the fall closely (and move some of the smaller debris) they will see the tip of a skeletal hand. There is a 10% chance that uncovering the skeleton to the waist will bring down a small rock fall (1D4 damage to 1D6-1 locations for all in the passage). A large boulder has crushed the legs of the skeleton and moving this will result in a large rock fall (1D6 damage to 2D4 locations to all in the passage). Once the skeleton's chest is exposed the straps of a leather bag can be seen. The bag itself is trapped under the large boulder.

The bag itself, should the party come up with an ingenious method of retrieving it without everybody dying, contains a pouch of gems (6 gems with a total value

of 467sp) and a scroll case. This contain a hand-drawn map of this section of the complex describing this area as a 'back door' with notations of the guard posts and patrol routes. It also shows the lookout post.









## Grendel

Dark Troll female.

### Characteristics

STR 17  
 CON 15  
 DEX 15  
 SIZ 18  
 INT 17  
 POW 7  
 CHA 14

### Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	4/7
4-6	Left Leg	4/7
7-9	Abdomen	2/8
10-12	Chest	2/9
13-15	Right Arm	1/6
16-18	Left Arm	1/6
19-20	Head	7/7

### Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
War Sword	67%	1D8+1D4 / 4
Kite Shield	62%	1D6+1D4 / 10

### Special Rules

**Combat Actions:** 3  
**Strike Rank:** +16  
**Movement:** 4m  
**Traits:** Dark Sight, Earth Sense  
**Skills:** Athletics 86%, Lore (World) 49%, Perception 42%, Persistence 71%, Resilience 72%, Stealth 36%, Survival 76%, Tracking 50%, Unarmed 71%  
 (-16% Skill Penalty included)

### Equipment:

Runes of *Fire* and *Luck*, war sword, kite shield, leather hauberk, ringmail skirt, full helm, knife.

## Salco

Dark Troll male.

### Characteristics

STR 18  
 CON 12  
 DEX 10  
 SIZ 19  
 INT 9  
 POW 12  
 CHA 13

### Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	1/7
4-6	Left Leg	1/7
7-9	Abdomen	6/8
10-12	Chest	6/9
13-15	Right Arm	6/6
16-18	Left Arm	6/6
19-20	Head	1/7

### Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Great Hammer	48%	1D10+3+1D6 / 3

### Special Rules

**Combat Actions:** 2  
**Strike Rank:** +9  
**Movement:** 4m  
**Traits:** Dark Sight, Earth Sense  
**Skills:** Athletics 64%, Perception 38%, Persistence 61%, Resilience 64%,

### Magic Skills:

Stealth 27%, Unarmed 31%  
 (-20% Skill Penalty included)  
 Runecasting (Darkness) 62%  
 Runecasting (Plant) 71%  
 Runecasting (Harmony) 68%

### Equipment:

Runes of *Darkness*, *Beast* and *Harmony*, great hammer, chainmail shirt, knife.

### Spells:

Darkwall (Darkness),  
 Vigour III (Beast),  
 Strength II (Beast)

## Sven

Human male.

### Characteristics

STR 15  
 CON 14  
 DEX 14  
 SIZ 13  
 INT 11  
 POW 11  
 CHA 17

### Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	1/6
4-6	Left Leg	1/6
7-9	Abdomen	1/7
10-12	Chest	1/8
13-15	Right Arm	1/5
16-18	Left Arm	1/5
19-20	Head	2/6

### Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Staff	60%	1D8+1D2 / 3
Heavy Crossbow	52%	2D8



## Special Rules

**Combat Actions:** 3  
**Strike Rank:** +12  
**Movement:** 5m  
**Skills:** Athletics 71%, Dodge 64%, Martial Arts 32%, Perception 56%, Persistence 44%, Resilience 56%, Stealth 67%, Tracking 76% (-8% Skill Penalty included)  
**Magic Skills:** Runecasting (Motion) 30%, Runecasting (Earth) 32%, Runecasting (Water) 30%  
**Equipment:** Runes of *Motion, Earth* and *Water*, quarterstaff, heavy crossbow, 10 bolts, knife, leather shirt, leather treads, heavy leather cap.  
**Spells:** Mobility I (Motion), Protection I, II (Earth), Speedart (Motion), Water Breath I (Water)

## Harrol

Human male.

### CHARACTERISTICS

STR 14  
CON 14  
DEX 11  
SIZ 13  
INT 14  
POW 11  
CHA 14

### Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Greatsword	60%	2D8+1D2 / 4
Heavy Crossbow	52%	2D8

### Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	5/6
4-6	Left Leg	5/6
7-9	Abdomen	5/7
10-12	Chest	5/8
13-15	Right Arm	5/5
16-18	Left Arm	5/5
19-20	Head	5/6

## Special Rules

**Combat Actions:** 2  
**Strike Rank:** +12  
**Movement:** 4m  
**Skills:** Athletics 38%, Dodge 21%, Perception 56%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 50%, Stealth 31%, Unarmed 34% (-35% Skill Penalty included)  
**Magic Skills:** Runecasting (Cold) 42%, Runecasting (Magic) 40%, Runecasting (Mastery) 33%, Runecasting (Shadow) 26%  
**Equipment:** Runes of *Cold, Magic, Mastery* and *Shadow*, chainmail coif, chainmail shirt, chainmail skirt, greatsword, heavy crossbow, 6 bolts, knife.  
**Spells:** Countermagic III (Magic), Cover of Night I (Shadow), Frostbite (Cold), Thunder's Voice II (Mastery)

## Goblins (12)

### CHARACTERISTICS

STR 10  
CON 10  
DEX 17  
SIZ 6  
INT 11  
POW 10  
CHA 7

### Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/4
4-6	Left Leg	-/4
7-9	Abdomen	1/5
10-12	Chest	1/6
13-15	Right Arm	1/3
16-18	Left Arm	1/3
19-20	Head	-/4

### Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Shortsword	40%	1D6-1D2 / 3
Shortbow	40%	1D8
Buckler	40%	1D4-1D2 / 5

## Special Rules

**Combat Actions:** 3  
**Strike Rank:** +14  
**Movement:** 3m  
**Traits:** Night Sight  
**Skills:** Athletics 50%, Dodge 50%, Perception 35%, Resilience 35%, Stealth 55% (-4% Skill Penalty included)  
**Equipment:** Shortsword, short bow, 2D8 arrows, buckler, leather shirt, 1D6 SP.



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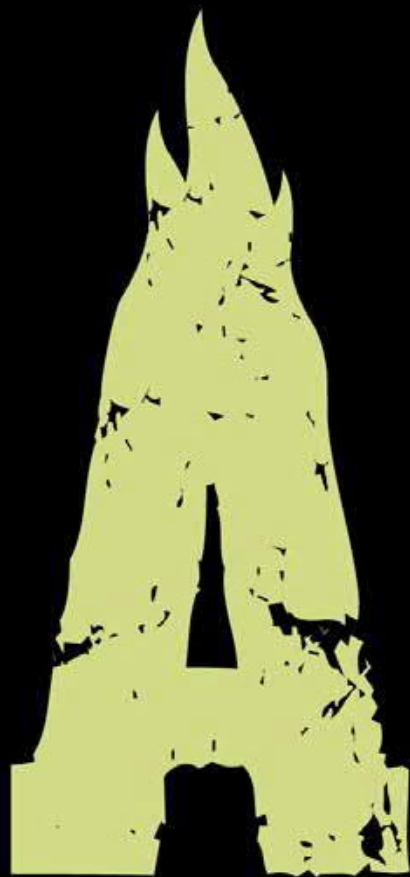


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