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Signs & Portents

13

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SGP13 August 2004 \$5.95

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MGP 5513



Hondo City judge by Kev Walker graces the cover of this quite literally Dreddtastic issue

Editorial

Hi all,

Mostly this editorial is about new staff. With the arrival at Mongoose Towers we in the West Wing have been undergoing some restructuring. The most noticeable effects are within the pages of Signs & Portents itself. As of now I am grandly elevated to the post of Managing Editor. This is because I have taken on two assistant editors, Matt Sharp and Adrian Bott, names which I am sure are already familiar ones to those who trod the boards at Mongoose Hall.

What it amounts to is that my responsibilities as Studio Manager mean that on a day to day basis I have less time to devote to my baby, S&P. This is no small thing for me. I created this from nothing, and I'm enormously proud of how the magazine has developed. However we all work for the greater good (or Monty, as we call him) and I am sure that Matt and Adrian are more than capable of picking up my slack.

Now I have a confession to make...I made a tiddly mistake on the cover of Issue 12. Did you spot it? Eagle-eyed readers will note that I inadvertently forgot to alter the issue month to 'July'. No doubt one day this will make it some form of collector's item (at least that's my story and I'm sticking to it). Anyway, we are back on track now and this really is the August issue!

So, having been made to do penance in the Mongoose Towers dungeon I am now free again, and busy painting up my Narn fleet for A Call to Arms, our great new Babylon 5 space combat game. I know that the card counters in the box look really smart, but there's something about three-dimensional models that does it for me. It's the wargamer in me, I know. Either way, A Call to Arms has appeal: if you are a hardcore wargamer we have fleets coming for you to paint up, while if you prefer the ease of getting out the counters and just kicking off, then the box gives you all that you could want.

I'm sure you will all be happy at the return of Tales From Mongoose Hall. I get a lot of really positive feedback from you about this, so I hope you enjoy the slightly different approach. No big deal, but I thought each part should have its own subtitle and I've included more of the dialogue which makes the Mongoose Hall crew what we are. I'm sure you will be able to identify with what you see!

Right, I've rambled enough for another issue. Dig in and enjoy, and I'll see you next month.

Ian

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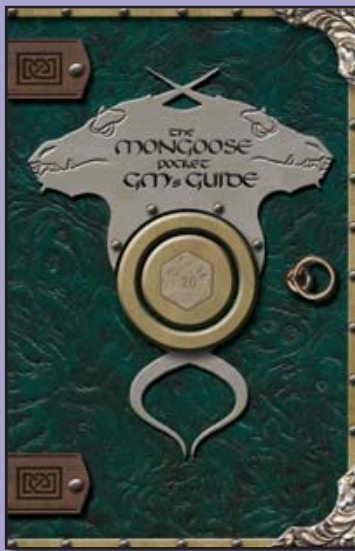
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EYE ON MONGOOSE

New Releases This Month



Right, you want to be a Games Master? You want to spend days preparing games your players will race through in minutes. You want to run elaborate tactical combats, pitting the wits of your characters against those of your entire playgroup. You want your characters to lose, over and over again, so the other people at the table can enjoy themselves.

If you still want to do it, you are either sick or you have what it takes to be a Games Master. You have the creativity, the drive, and the ability to get ego gratification from something other than 'winning'. Whatever that means, in a game about stories and the imagination.

As a Games Master you take up the challenge of providing entertainment to everyone at the table. You put your ideas on display. You decide what the characters will face. You build plots, play a host of thousands, and try to get the other players to see what you imagine in your head.

The Pocket GM's Guide is coming to help. This book contains all of the rules information needed to model a world under the D20 system. It contains rules for monsters and traps, for entire worlds and for moments in time so small an unobservant person might miss them entirely.

Conveniently sized and priced, the Pocket GM's Guide is the ultimate in convenience for the busy Games master with a dozen books to transport.

Classified

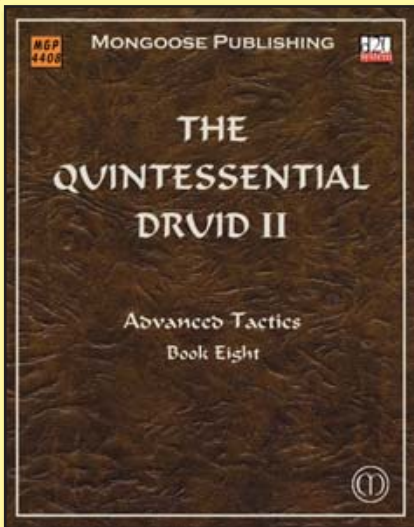


So, you want to see the cover of the new Paranoia game, eh? Why? What's your angle? You want the truth? You can't handle the truth.

Paranoia is here and it's fun. That's all you need to know. All other games have been made redundant. Just play Paranoia and have fun. Fun is mandatory

That's an order.

The computer is your friend.



Step into the shadow of the trees. Breathe in the free air, smell the rain on the heather. Listen to the whisper of the woods and the quiet talk of the animals.

This is the domain of the druids. Spells older than the work of wizards are all around you; these trees hide gods older than the petty demagogues of the clerics. A feral host greater than any army sleeps in the wood, waiting for the call to hunt. If you cannot see and hear these things, it is because you are blind to the green.

The green surrounds you. The threads of your life are woven into the threads of the green world. The druids can see it, draw upon it, speak to it and worship it.

They have learned this from the trees. Stop, stop and listen, for the bough top is whispering...

This book delves into the mysteries and magic of the druid. Variant types of druid are introduced in Career Paths and Multiclassing, describing different aspects of their religion and sacred duties. The Legendary Druid speaks of the highest echelons of the druidic order, from the sickle of the green to the shepherds of worlds. A character can rise from humble beginnings as an apprentice druid to become master of a circle or even the Grand Druid.

Superior Tools gives new types of weapon and armour for the druid, as well as techniques of wild craft, herbalism and healing. The Magical Druid discusses all the spells available to druids, as well as introducing two new methods of spellcasting (seasonal and totemic) and new spells. Tricks of the Trade discusses all the animal companions and wild shapes available to druids - learn what animals to summon in a given situation, or what form to adopt when danger threatens. Special Techniques delves into the secrets of the druidic order and the Otherworld, as well as describing the sacred groves and earthworks of the woodlands. Finally, Survival Tactics gives insight into the ways to roleplay and develop a druid character.

Unlike all the other classes, the druids have strong ties to the land and a unique perspective on the world. All too often, this can degenerate into a stereotype of a tree-hugging xenophobe, a deranged market gardener more interested in driving trespassers out of the woods than in adventuring. This book aims to shatter this style of play and bring back the mystery, mysticism and sacred power of the druid. Their roots are old and deep and dark...

Games Master's Screens

We have exciting news for Conan and Paranoia GMs. This month we are releasing screens for both these cracking games. Packed full of the essential tables that you need to make the game go smoothly, both of these come packaged with bonus material so secret that we can't tell you yet!



THE LATEST MIGHTY ARMIES FORCE IS HERE! SHUDDER AS THE SHAMBLING HORDE MATERIALISES ONTO THE BATTLEFIELD, FORMING UP AT THE COMMAND OF THEIR NECROMANCER TO DO HIS BIDDING. EVERYONE'S EPITOME OF EVIL, THE MIGHTY ARMIES UNDEAD DO NOT DISAPPOINT.

AS WELL AS THE TROOPS IN THE STANDARD BOX, WE ALSO HAVE THE TERRIFYING UNDEAD GIANT AND THE FEARSOME

DEATH KNIGHTS, THE SPEARHEAD OF THE UNDEAD ARMY, ARRIVING THIS MONTH.

NOW YOU CAN ASSUAGE YOUR DARKER SIDE AND BRING DEATH AND DESTRUCTION TO ELVES, ORCS AND HUMANS. NEW MIGHTY ARMIES ARE BEING RELEASED EVERY MONTH, BUT NONE ARE DARKER OR MORE SINISTER THAN THE UNDEAD!

EVERYBODY'S PLAYING MIGHTY ARMIES. IT'S THE PERFECT WAY TO GET INTO FANTASY TABLETOP GAMING: INEXPENSIVE, CONVENIENT, COMPACT AND FUN, EACH MIGHTY ARMIES BOX GIVES YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO BEGIN PLAYING WITH YOUR CHOSEN ARMY. THE RULES, THE ARMY, DICE AND A MEASURING STICK. SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

Caption Competition

It's back, and this time it's personal! Actually it's not that personal, but for some reason it sounded familiar. Anyway, you know the drill: look at the picture, be funny, send the funny to the address below, and claim any Mongoose book of your choice as a prize! How easy is that?



Send your witticisms to ibarstow@mongoosepublishing.com

EYE ON MONGOOSE

New Releases This Month

FEATURE RELEASE:



A Call to Arms is the game of space combat in the universe of Babylon 5. Throughout the station's turbulent history, armed fleets have enacted the harsher policies of their governments. Now you can play out these confrontations on the tabletop with entire fleets drawn from the Earth Alliance, Minbari Federation, Narn Regime, Centauri Republic or any one of the many other races that dwell in the galaxy.

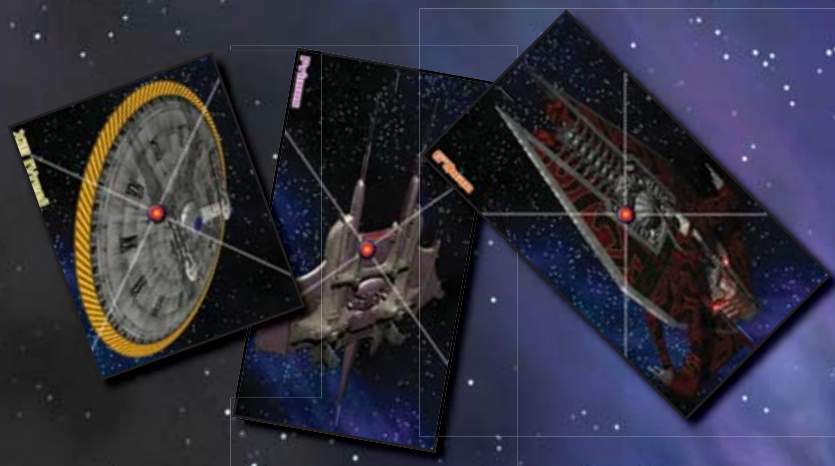
From skirmishes involving single cruisers hunting down raiders to the clashing of allied fleets against the forces of ancient beings aeons old, A Call to Arms is your ticket to exciting battles that take place in the depth of space.

A Call to Arms is our first boxed game, and we are really excited about. In fact, it's been hard getting anybody to work around here over the last couple of

months as all the Mongoose crew have been busy painting and studying their favourite fleets!

Inside the box are two rulebooks, one containing rules and scenarios, while the second book details all the ships available to the various races of the galaxy, as well as the fleet lists by which players can pick fair and balanced forces for the scenarios in Book One. Though you are not restricted to using these fleet lists for your own games (you may want to re-enact a battle from the Babylon 5 TV show, for example), when using them you can be reasonably certain that every fleet in a game should have a reasonable chance of defeating any other.

As well as the two rulebooks A Call to Arms also comes with over 100 full colour, large format gaming counters so that you can get into the action straight away!



Sample counters (not to scale)

Welcome to Snap Shots, a new feature in S&P that will showcase some of our new releases, work in progress, or just cool things that we think you'd like to see.

This month we have a little something for everyone, from Mighty Armies to Gangs of Mega-City One, with some pre-production Starship Troopers thrown in for good measure!

S N A P



Limited edition developmental Starship Troopers Mobile Infantry squad



Mighty Armies
Orc Hydra Tamer



Mighty Armies
Wild Elf Cavalry

SHOTS



Street Judges from Gangs of Mega-City One



Mighty Armies
Wild Elf Treeman



Mighty Armies
Orc Trebuchet



Mighty Armies
Wild Elf Command

Tales from

MONGOOSE HALL

Ian Barstow

The Thing About Thing

Last time out we saw the death of Matthew's paladin, Agamar.

This episode is dedicated to Matt's attempt to come up with a replacement. How hard could that be, I hear you ask.

Take a look for yourself, as we discover just what is The Thing About Thing...

After the death of Agamar Matthew was left in something of a novel position for him. Namely, having to create a new character! We could all see that after such a long period without a character death (over a year, if not more) he was having difficulty planning what to do next. It can get like that in roleplaying; your character gets through everything to the point that you get contemptuous of dropping a healing potion or whatever as you know that you'll get through OK. Of course, fate catches up with us all sooner or later and so Matthew took the long walk downstairs to the lower reaches of Mongoose Hall where new characters are born.

Upstairs we decided to carry on without him for a bit, sure in the knowledge that there would be an unexpected face in the next tavern we entered. Orfeo was strangely quiet for him – perhaps feeling his own mortality so it was left to Tharg to lead the party for a bit, a proposition which our mighty thewed hero felt was only right and proper, considering his seniority.

However the Thann brothers had other ideas, and [Rich] decided that now would be a good opportunity to exert some fresh influence over the group. To be fair for a while there had been a growing divergence of opinion regarding the benefits of hack and slash over what I would call 'proper' roleplaying. Alex, being the brains behind

the crazed Bulwei (remember him – he's still going in another campaign at an obscene level) subscribes to the 'Dungeon hack' school of roleplaying, as does Matthew, and I suspect, also Mark, although he keeps that quiet. On the other side is Doghouse (Ian Belcher), Rich and myself, although Rich tends to be preoccupied with the notion that he's the only real roleplayer in the Swindon area and that the rest of us are rank amateurs. His insinuation that I can only play one type of character (because obviously Casper and Tharg are practically identical) will be adequately disproved in our forthcoming Star Wars campaign, coming to S&P in a few issues time.

Anyway, [Rich] decides to start throwing his weight around a bit, making snide comments about Orfeo and Tharg and generally being a pain in the *cojones*. A few in character words are exchanged and a few out of character scowls, but we manage to travel on with Agamar's body until we reach the Svirfneblin, where we decide he will be interred.

This burial was some ceremony. We encased the body in 4,500 pieces of gold, morphing it onto his body so that it formed a golden effigy over him. Add to this the mithril armour he was wearing and his paladin's sword and that was a pretty expensive funeral. The whole thing became even more expensive for Tharg when he was ripped off by a local trader who offered to make him a new quad crossbow for a measly 2,000 gp. Tharg being the great haggler simply agreed and parted with his easily earned loot. More about this later.

Ian's Gaming Tip #775

Never Trust a Svirfneblin

Never, ever, ever trust a creature whose name you cannot pronounce after three pints of cider. As Idi Amin used to say, this is very important.



At this point Matthew is obliged to describe his new character in detail. I have never been able to remember this fellow's name but that was never really the important part of this particular story. Essentially, it went something like this...

Matthew: I am wearing a mish-mash of clothes, and I appear to be quite old. Walking alongside me is what appears to be a dog but what is actually some form of demon...

Alex: I fire my crossbow!

Doghouse: Me too!

Me: What, you're firing Orfeo's crossbow as well?

Rich: Nobody here can roleplay except me.

Mark: Whoa! Hold it everybody. Orfeo, are you really shooting Matthew?

I said 'Dog', not 'Hideous Bird Beast'! Now sit, I said SIT, Thing!

Having done all this there was still no sign of Matthew rising from the bowels of Mongoose Hall, so the party headed out to kill some more innocents. Having butchered a few unchallenging types, we set up camp for the night and right on cue Matthew duly arrived. The episode went something like this:

Mark (GM): Oh, you're back then. I suppose you want to play again?

Matthew: That might be nice.

Mark: Tell us about your new character then.

Matthew: Right. As you sit around the campfire you here the sound of footsteps approaching.

All: We draw weapons.

Matthew <raised eyebrow>: It's only me!

Alex: No, I'm shooting the demon.

Doghouse: Me too!

Me: Yeah, and me as it happens.

Matthew: Why? What on earth have I done?

Alex: It might be something to do with the fact that you have introduced a demon into a party where three of us hate demons.

Matthew <smiling>: Ah, so you noticed that.

Me: Kill the demon and his wizard mate as well!

Matthew: How do you know I'm a wizard?

Alex: Short of you having a sign around your neck, you mean?

Rich: Sometimes I don't know why I bother, I really don't.



Thing

Mark: I think we should take a few steps backwards here and start this bit again?

Rich: You mean reverse time? How convenient.

Mark: What's the alternative?

Me: We could kill Matt again. It would be good for a laugh.

Alex: I think Mark is right. Matthew, start off that description again and this time forget to tell us that thing is a demon?

Me: 'Thing'? That's a good name for it. I shall christen your dog thing.

Matthew: It's not a dog.

Me: If you lie and tell me it's a dog I won't kill you.

Matthew: Have you met my dog, Thing?

Ian's Gaming Tips #26

Plan Your Character To Fit In

This raises its head so many times, and will again next issue. Think about your party and work out if you really want to cause mayhem and carnage. Matthew does this, but unfortunately he always answers in the affirmative...

And so Mr Unknown and Thing joined the party. It was fairly clear from the start that Matthew's new character had not been selected with much thought to party integrity, for want of a better time. It also caused some deep-seated divisions in camp. Having been told

Thing was just a repulsive dog, Tharg accepted him instantly, much to Alex's annoyance. He kept pointing out that with an Intelligence of 14 I was by no means a dumbo. This was true but I was attempting to portray a character who had seen very little of the world outside of a gladiatorial ring. Being bright does not make up for lack of experience. Not for the first time me Real World perspectives found little support from the remainder of the group though.

So while I was happy to bed town next to Thing, the Thann brothers (doghouse and Rich, for those of you with short-term memory issues) wouldn't go within 30 feet of him or Matthew. This caused some annoyance all round, and sewed the seeds for the carnage of the next episode, but I am getting ahead of myself.

Despite a general lack of camaraderie within the group the party trudged deeper underground, encountering and beating up the usual selection off trolls, ogres, orcs, that sort of thing, without much difficulty. With the minged-up Orfeo leading once more, the party was more than a match for most things.

At length though we came to a cavern seemingly different to the rest. For one thing it split in two, so we had a decision to make...

Matthew: left, we always go left.

Alex: That would be another one then...

Rich: How do you know, you've only been with the party for a couple of days.

Mark: I shall roll some dice.

Matthew: I'm a quick learner.

This announcement, as is the case in most roleplaying groups, causes players to stop talking, lean forward and on occasion cease respiratory functions. We waited with baited breath.

Me: Let's go right.

Mark: Make a Reflex save, DC18.

Alex: Alright. You lead the way then.

Me: Hey, I'm not a scout!

Matthew: No problems, with my stats that's anything but a one. <rolls dice>

Matthew: I'll go. Come on, Thing!

So with that decided Mr Unknown and Thing entered the right chamber. Nothing much happened at first, so he went in further. Then something fell from the ceiling.

Alex: That will be another one then...

Mark: Really?

Mark: It's a stalactite.

Matthew: Really.

Me: Weren't they enemies of Dr Who?

Mark: Take 27 points of damage.

Rich: I'm the only one here that can roleplay.

Matthew: What!!! 27 points?

Mark: Another one falls while you were talking.

Mark: Sorry, rolled a crit.

Me: Hang on, we were out of character.

Matthew: What about Thing?

Mark: Tough luck.

Mark: Hang on...oh yes, he can take 27 points as well.

Me: Git.

Matthew: He's only got 20 hit points.

Mark: Right, another one falls for that.

Me: Oh, jolly bad luck, Thing!

Matthew: Wait a minute, he said 'git', not me!

Mark: He's not in the room.

Matthew: Git.

Mark: Roll a d20.

Matthew: Why?

Mark: Just do it.

Me: Yeah, just do it. <grins>

Matthew: Oops.

Alex: That would be a one then.

Matthew: It might be.

Mark: Roll again.

Matthew: I do not s&8#ding believe this!

Ian's Gaming Tips #297

Be Sarcastic

It's fun, it's witty and it's generally undemanding. We would all be the poorer without sarcasm. Brandish it like a weapon and unleash it on all and sundry. This also is very important.

At this point Matthew went downstairs again, having spotted that his character had 16 hit points left (another case of being casual with healing). I wonder what character he'll come up with for Issue 14?

Mongoose Publishing Introduces a Whole New Scale of Warfare



Mighty Armies is a brand new wargame, using Super-Size 15mm miniatures. Each box set contains a complete army, a full copy of the rules, reference card, a measuring aid and dice, giving everything you need to begin fighting immediately! Games typically take twenty to thirty minutes and the armies are eminently expandable through additional box sets or supplemental blister packs, permitting players to build giant hordes at an all new low price. The first three Mighty Armies boxed sets to be released will be a savage Orc horde, a mighty Barbarian warband and a frenzied Wild Elf host. Each box set is priced at just \$24.95 and includes between 50 and 60 highly detailed miniatures.



The Barbarian King and his elite retinue

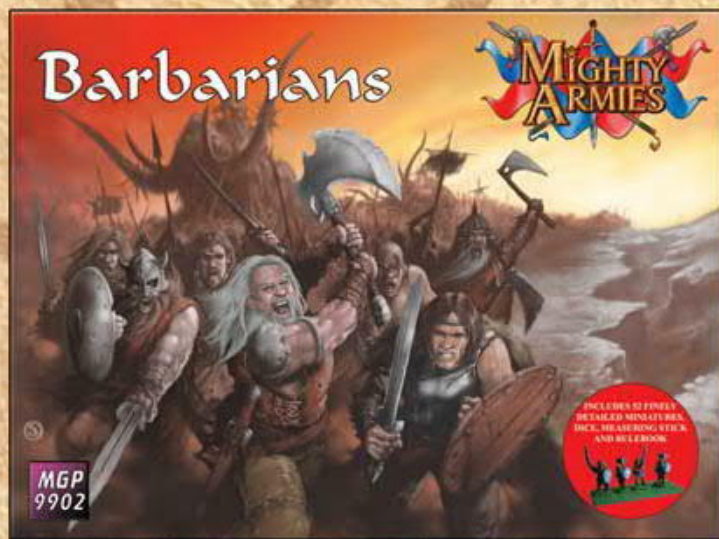


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Supply articles via email or on disc. We can read most formats, although MS Word is always a safe bet. You will be provided with a style guide when we commission your article. Make sure you read it!

Subject Matter

First and foremost, the article has to be based on one of our product lines. That is not as limiting as it sounds, however. The d20 fantasy family alone should give you plenty of scope. Think of all our various products, like the Quintessential series and the Slayer's Guides. With more than 80 fantasy-based books to choose from...well, you get the idea. But don't stop there. Think Babylon 5, Judge Dredd, Slaine, Armageddon 2089, not to mention the barrage of forthcoming games that we have coming. If you have ideas for any of our games we want to hear them.

So, you have chosen your game, but what do you actually write about? Scenarios are good. In fact, we love them. Give me a scenario to edit and I am a happy camper. Perhaps you want to discuss the philosophy of a game. That's good. We encourage intellectual thought process around here. If you have something meaningful to say, then try us out. If we don't like it, we *will* tell you. Think hard before you try humour though. With guys like Jonny Nexus about, you will need to be sharp if you want to break in. If you think you have what it takes, though, then feel free to try your hand. Just be prepared to be told you may not be as funny as you think you are.

If you want to write new rules for a game, with new uses for skills and maybe some new feats, then be our guest.

We cannot promise that we will like what you have done, but you will get constructive criticism in return, and not just a terse one-line rebuff.

Editing

It is a painful fact that whatever you write, it will get edited. That is why editors exist, after all. Even this passage will have been edited. If you can get over this hurdle you are well on your way to attaining the mentality needed to be a writer. It will help if you can handle criticism as well. Take it from us – writing is a tough business. Just ask any author doing the rounds looking for a friendly publisher.

We have various house styles that we use and you do not need to know them. As long as your submission is literate and tidy, we will do the rest.

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If you are not sure how long your article is, assume around 800 words fit on one page. Do not use the word processor's page counter as a guide. By the time it has been edited, laid out and had artwork added, it will look nothing like that screen of text in front of you.

Remember to run the article through a spell checker before you send it in. It will still get proofread, but it shows willing. Anything not spell checked will be rejected straight away.

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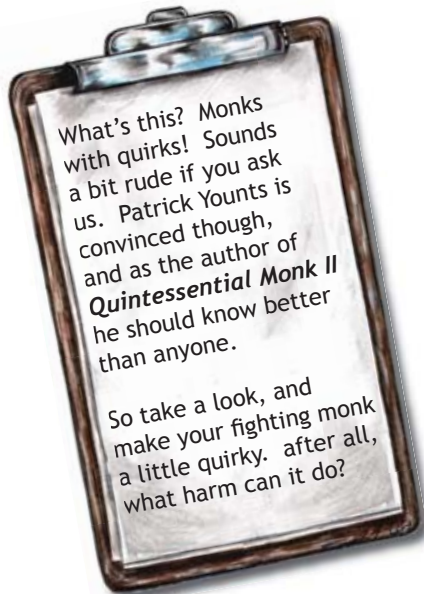
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Martial Artists' Quirks

Patrick Younts



Very often, people have an image of the master martial artist as the pinnacle of human physical achievement, with a sleek, perfect body and a focused mind which has achieved a degree of enlightenment and wisdom which few others can match. This is an idea reinforced by popular media, particularly western films and comic books, which often show the martial artist only in the ideal light, with improbably wondrous physiques and no apparent mental flaws, or even quirks. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Martial artists and monks are people, nothing more and nothing less, with as quirks and imperfections of mind and body as anyone else. What separates the skilled monk from others is not the absence of flaws but the monk's determination to overcome them, or to turn them to his advantage. Myth and legend are full of stories of martial artists who were born physically twisted or mentally twisted, or who at least possessed unusual body features or personality traits which, to put it mildly, made them stand out from the average person. Sometimes, these quirks

were obviously beneficial – as the tale of the martial arts prodigy whose legs were so powerful that he could outrun a horse by the time he was six years old – and sometimes they were anything but (as the clubfoot of the character Clubfoot, from the *Once Upon a Time In China* films amply demonstrates) but in all cases, they did not stop the martial artist from achieving greatness. In that spirit, this article presents martial artist quirks.

Martial artists quirks are a new mechanic intended to represent the true diversity of monks and martial artists. The following optional quirks will enhance your game by allowing players and Games Masters to customize their monk characters right from the beginning of play, to give them unusual physical and mental features which have actual mechanical effects, rather than being



simply notes written down in the 'describe your character' portion of a character sheet.

What Are They?

Martial artist quirks take one of three forms, physical, mental, or training based. Ultimately, there is little difference between the three, except in a thematic sense. Physical quirks, obviously, represent unique physical features the character possesses, just as mental quirks represent unique aspects of his spirit and personality that have been with him since the day he was born. Training based quirks are slightly different, as they represent the results of training the

character received in his formative years; training which has now become such a part of him that he could not divest himself of what he learned without incredible effort.

How Do They Work?

For ease of integration into the d20 system, martial artist quirks are presented in the format used for feats and are considered to effectively be feats. Each quirk has a description of what the quirk represents, followed by a listing of the quirk's benefits and then a listing of the quirk's drawbacks. Though they are similar to feats, martial artist quirks do not have prerequisites, since they are intended to represent unique features the character was either born with, or developed early in his formative years of martial arts training.

Every quirk has an associated benefit which the character that selects the quirk gains. These benefits are always represented by game mechanics, meaning they will present tangible benefits to the character in play. The benefits a character receives from his given quirk vary from quirk to quirk and can be anything from flat bonuses to ability scores, to increased damage potential, to absolute fearlessness, or anything in between. The benefits a character receives from his quirk are considered to be an innate part of him, meaning they stack with all other benefits gained from feats, or special class abilities and are always non-magical in nature.

Each quirk also has one or more associated drawbacks. These drawbacks are also represented by game mechanics, meaning they will always make their presence known in game. Some quirks also have listed roleplaying drawbacks but these are not considered to be more than negligible troubles for the purposes of balancing the quirk, as roleplaying drawbacks are often 'forgotten' or outright ignored in game. The drawbacks a character receives from his quirk are always thematically linked to the benefit and to the nature

of the quirk, to better reinforce the theme in play.

A monk can select only a single martial artist quirk and must do so at 1st level, unless special permission is given by the Games Master to do otherwise. As written, the quirks below are intended only for use by characters who are primarily monks; characters who multiclass into the monk class from another class may not select a martial artist quirk, unless the Games Master permits it, nor may non-monk characters possess any of these quirks without permission.

A martial artist can select almost any quirk listed below, with quirks that require specific conditions to be met identified as such. A quirk occupies a character's 1st level feat slot and can be selected with a normal feat, with a monk bonus feat, or with a feat gained as a result of the character's race (human, typically). Certain martial artist quirks have secondary quirks, which can only be selected by a character who possesses the original quirk, in the same way that feats in a chain can only be selected by characters who have the required feat; these quirks are the only ones which can be selected by a character who is not of 1st level and may be selected at any point in the character's career. These secondary quirks build on the original quirk, reinforcing the theme and strengthening both the benefits and drawbacks of the first quirk.

Some martial artist quirks are also available to characters that pursue martial arts styles found in *The Quintessential Monk II* and are considered to be feats for the purposes of gaining mastery of those styles only.

Though quirks are presented in a format similar to feats and though they occupy feat slots, martial arts quirks are not feats. Even if the benefits of a quirk exactly replicate the bonuses of a feat, they are not considered feats for the purposes of fulfilling any prestige class, or feat requirements.

Divesting Quirks

Typically, a character cannot divest himself of a quirk he possesses, as it is a fundamental part of his body and spirit. With the Games Master's permission, however, a character can erase a quirk by dedicating a feat slot to overcoming it. If he does this, he loses the quirk and all associated benefits and drawbacks but loses the feat slot for the quirk and the feat slot dedicated to erasing it permanently. Deciding exactly how the character loses the quirk is up to the player and Games Master to decide; though if all else fails, hard training or the use of magic can be used as a hand waving explanation.

A Cautionary Note

As a note of warning, we must stress that martial artist quirks will not be suitable for every campaign. Though the benefits gained from a quirk are balanced by the drawbacks associated with it, they are still potent abilities, which not every Games Master will be comfortable allowing into his campaign. As with anything else, the final decision rests in the hands of the Games Master but he is encouraged to take the thoughts of his players into consideration when deciding whether to introduce martial arts quirks into his campaign world or not.

A Mouse With Lightning In Its Veins

You are small but your legs move with the speed of the larger races. For whatever reason, you were born with the swiftness of a cheetah and you are as quick as any large monk.

Benefit: A monk with this quirk is faster than other members of his race. Whether this comes as a result of birth, or as a result of specialized training undertaken early in his career does not matter. In any case, the character's base speed is increased by 10 feet a round.

Drawback: You are fast and that is a good thing, because you are none too powerful. Your martial art and your body are designed to move decisively

but your unarmed attacks lack power. You gain unarmed damage increases one level later than other monks do, meaning your first increase occurs at 5th level, rather than 4th.

Special: This martial artist quirk can only be selected by monks who have a base speed of 20 feet or less, meaning it is generally suitable only for dwarves, halflings and gnomes. With the Games Master's permission, a monk of another race can select this quirk as well, in which case his base speed is increased by 5 feet a round.

Blind

You are absolutely, nigh irrevocably blind. In a world where magic can easily repair even completely destroyed eyes, permanent blindness is not an easy thing to accomplish but you have managed it. Most likely, you were born without eyes, whether as a result of natural deformity, magical mischief or your parents' bargain with a lower planar entity.

As befits both martial arts pop-culture and the themes of fantasy gaming, your blindness is not of the typical sort. While other, less fortunate victims of blindness must be content to live in a world of absolute darkness; you are not overly impaired by your lack of vision. Most certainly, you cannot see a hand directly in front of your face but you can sense it and strike it as easily as any other monk.

Benefit: You gain blindsight to a radius of 30 feet.

Drawback: The penalties associated with blindsight are more than enough to balance the benefits of the martial artist quirk, so there are no other drawbacks.

Special: A character with this quirk cannot gain sight by any means, whether by spell or by natural occurrence. Magical, artificial eyes are a possibility but if the character gains them, he loses both the drawbacks and the benefits of this quirk.



Bottled Lightning

Your natural reflexes are so swift as to defy belief and you view the world in slow motion. You can count individual grains of sand pouring through an hourglass and can dodge falling raindrops.

Benefit: You have incredible reflexes, far above what is normal for mortal beings. Whether this comes as a result of birth, or as a result of specialized training undertaken is immaterial. You gain a +2 bonus to all Reflex saves and a +2 bonus to your initiative checks.

Drawback: Though you are swift, you are relatively fragile. The mortal body is not designed to move as swiftly as you do and so your system is taxed to the breaking point. You suffer a -1 penalty to all Fortitude saving throws and gain 1 fewer hit point per level.

Clubfoot

You were born with a clubfoot, a deformity of the leg that gives you what should be a largely useless limb. While you are still impaired somewhat by your deformity, your training and your dedication have helped you overcome this flaw and even turn it to your advantage.

Benefit: When making only a single attack in a round, you can strike with your clubfoot, wielding it with the

force of a falling meteor. You gain a +3 bonus to damage when attacking in this fashion and your critical multiplier is likewise increased by x1, meaning your unarmed attack inflicts x3 damage on a critical hit.

Drawback: Though you have trained your body rigorously and though your fighting style allows you to compensate for your deformity, you are still hindered somewhat by it. Each time you gain an unarmoured speed bonus, you gain only five feet of extra movement. In addition, you do not gain the monk's good Reflex save progression, instead gaining Reflex save bonuses as a fighter would.

Coiled Cobra

You were born with a grace that shames all but the most gifted. Your body is lithe and sleek and you move with an unconscious ease that brings to mind waves rippling across a pond, or cranes in flight.

Benefits: Your body is sleek as a cobra, moving with an instinctive grace that is beautiful as it is terrifying. You gain a +2 inherent bonus to your Dexterity score.

Drawback: You are fast but lack durability and power. You suffer a -2 penalty to either your Strength score or your Constitution score.

Special: The benefits and drawbacks of this martial arts quirk stack with racial modifiers to ability scores.

Defensive Savant

You were born with an innate sense of self-preservation that has only been strengthened by your training in martial arts. It is difficult to catch you unawares and your body instinctively dodges even those blows which you do not see coming.

Benefit: You retain your Dexterity modifier to armour class even when flatfooted and do not lose your Wisdom modifier or monk class bonus to armour class even when encumbered. Though you retain your Dexterity modifier to armour class, you are still considered to be flat-footed whenever that condition would normally apply, meaning a rogue can still sneak attack you, so long as he can overcome your armour class. In addition, you gain armour class bonuses two levels earlier than other monks, meaning you gain a +1 bonus to armour class at 3rd level; upon achieving 20th level, you gain one last increase, for a total bonus to your armour class of +5.

Drawback: You practice a purely defensive style of fighting, even if you were not trained to do so. It is simply your nature to protect yourself very carefully, even if doing so actually limits your effectiveness in battle. You gain unarmed damage increases two levels later than normal, meaning your unarmed damage does not increase for the first time until 6th level.

Double Jointed

Whether as a result of training, or as a quirk of birth, you are double-jointed, able to manipulate your limbs in ways that are impossible for other people. You use this flexibility to excellent advantage in and out of combat and your fighting style is focused around it.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to all Escape Artist and Tumble checks and

a +2 bonus when initiating a grapple, as you are able to contort your body to almost literally wrap yourself around your opponent.

Drawback: Though your body is flexible, it is not built for strength and power. You suffer a -2 penalty to your Strength score.

Drunkard

Monks are not supposed to drink, for alcohol impairs the judgement and limits the body's ability to respond as the mind directs. In fact, most monasteries have strict rules forbidding the fighting monks of the order from drinking alcohol of any sort. You, however, treat this commandment as a suggestion, rather than a mandate. You enjoy your share of alcohol. In fact, most days, you enjoy your share and the share of every other brother in the monastery. Fortunately, alcohol does not affect you as it affects so many others; while your mind is still addled by the effects of the demon rum, your body is not.

Benefits: When most people drink, they only believe they get stronger and more competent. You actually do. When you consume alcohol equivalent to a pitcher of common wine, you gain a +2 dodge bonus to your armour class and a +1 insight bonus to both attack and damage rolls. These benefits last for one hour and you can gain the benefits of drunkenness for a maximum number of hours equal to one plus your Constitution modifier. In addition, your years, or perhaps decades of hard drinking have 'preserved' your insides and rendered you desensitised to the effects of toxins. You gain the diamond body ability when you gain your 8th level as a monk, rather than 11th level.

Drawbacks: Just as your body grows stronger with the influence of alcohol, so too does your mind weaken. While drunk, you suffer a -2 competence penalty to all Wisdom and Intelligence based skill checks and a -2 penalty to all Will saves.

In addition, you do not have the calmness of spirit most other monks and martial artists have. You do not gain the still mind class ability until you reach 6th level as a monk.

Enormously Fat

You are not just fat but almost grotesquely so, your body a massive testament to what can be achieved by focused gluttony. For all of that, you are not helpless and, in fact, have trained yourself to take advantage of your enormous bulk, the better to overwhelm the people who flit all around you like dust mites before the wrecking ball.

Benefit: Your thick layer of fat is now so heavy as to turn aside all but the hungriest blades. Your natural armour class bonus increases to +3 and you are now considered a large size creature for the purposes of initiating or opposing grappling checks and bull rush attempts. In addition, you now gain a +4 bonus to resist trip attempts, as your legs are thick and immovable as tree trunks.

Drawback: To say you are slow as a turtle is to insult the turtle. Your enormous bulk, which protects you from harm, also prevents you from moving with anything like the speed that other monks do. Not only do you gain unarmoured speed bonuses two levels later than other monks, you gain only a +5 bonus to your speed each time you actually do gain a bonus. This reduced speed and stagnated progression is retroactive, meaning a fat monk who selects this quirk at 6th level would lose half of the speed bonus he gained at 3rd level, from +10 feet per round to +5.

Special: Only a monk who has the fat quirk can select this quirk. No matter how enormously fat you get, you do not suffer any penalties to your Dexterity based skills. In fact, those who witness you in action are often astounded by how gracefully a fat person can move. Under no circumstances should a Games Master impose penalties to combat abilities beyond those listed above

to enormously fat characters. That said, a Games Master is well within his rights to impose penalties to non player character reaction checks involving the fat character, as many, many people view the grossly overweight with contempt and disgust. A -4 penalty would not be inappropriate, rising to -6, or even -8 for those people who would truly be disgusted by a fat person.

Eunuch

You were born without genitals, or at least without the parts of your genitalia which are responsible for reproduction. Alternately, your genitals were removed early in your life, perhaps as a punishment for some transgression, or as a ceremonial part of your induction into your martial arts academy or monastery, or maybe to simply improve your singing voice. In any case, you completely lack sex drive and are no more moved by desire than a stone is.

Benefit: You have no genitalia and no sex drive. As such, you are not controlled by the urges of the flesh as other people, even other monks are. You gain a +4 bonus to all Sense Motive and Bluff skill checks against members of the opposite sex, or against whatever sex your character would normally be attracted to (can only select one sex). In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to all Will saves against mind-affecting spells cast by members of that sex.

Drawback: No matter the reason, losing one's genitals is never a healthy experience for your body. You suffer a -2 penalty to all Fortitude saving throws. In addition, the removal of your sex organs has made you a bit of a cold fish; you suffer a -2 penalty to all attempts to influence the reactions of non-player character members of the opposite sex.

Note: In martial arts myths and popular fiction of the Far East, eunuchs are generally assigned very negative personality traits. Many

eunuchs were castrated by their own design, as a way of focusing their will towards less, in their opinion, 'wasteful' pursuits than chasing after love and sex. As a result, most eunuchs are described as grasping, greedy and hungry for power. Most of them are also considered more than a little corrupt. If creating a eunuch character inspired by the legends of the Far East, it is recommended that you at least consider following the personality notes listed above.

By contrast, the eunuchs of the Middle East are often presented as stoic and absolutely loyal. Many eunuchs were castrated as children and set to guard the harems of the richest sultans; after all, who is less likely to sample the harem's delights than a man or woman with no genitalia? When creating a eunuch character, you might also consider a harem guard, or similar background as the origins of your character.

Fat

There is no delicate way to put this: you are fat. Not just plump, or well fed but enormous, with thick layers

and rolls of fat which linger no matter how much you practice your martial arts, or watch what you eat. Some martial artists cultivate their weight and some styles are entirely based around the development of the tubby body as a weapon.

Benefit: Your thick layer of fat protects you from injury, effectively forming a layer of blubbery armour. You gain a +2 natural armour class bonus, gain a +2 innate bonus to resist trip attempts and benefit from a +2 bonus to Strength checks to both resist bull rush attacks and to perform them. In addition, you are considered large for the purposes of resisting grapple checks only.

Drawback: Unfortunately, fat people are not known for their incredible swiftness and you are no exception. You gain unarmoured speed bonuses two levels later than is normal for a monk and suffer a -2 penalty to all Reflex saves.

Special: No matter how fat you get, you do not suffer any penalties to your Dexterity based skills. In fact, those who witness you in action are



often astounded by how gracefully a fat person can move. Under no circumstances should a Games Master impose penalties to combat abilities beyond those listed above to fat characters. That said, a Games Master is well within his rights to impose penalties to non player character reaction checks involving the fat character, as many, many people view the seriously overweight with contempt. A -2 penalty would not be inappropriate, rising to -4 for those people who would truly be disgusted by a fat person.

Fearless Tiger

You were born without the capacity to know fear. For whatever reason, you remain unperturbed and absolutely calm even in the face of death of the most painful sort. Your faith in your own abilities is so strong that it even engenders confidence in your closest allies.

Benefit: You are immune to the effects of fear of any sort, including fear effects caused by spells or spell like abilities. This means that you are also immune to the effects of Intimidation. Allies within 20 feet of you gain a +1 morale bonus to their own saving throws against fear.

Drawback: Though you are absolutely fearless, you are also possessed of a raging ego, which prevents you from achieving any sort of inner calm. You do not gain the still mind class ability at 3rd level and suffer a -2 penalty to all Concentration skill checks.

Special: A fearless tiger cannot refuse a challenge to single unarmed combat with another martial artist. If a challenge is given, it must be accepted. At 10th level, the fearless tiger is no longer bound by this restriction, though most will still fight any challenger.

Fanatical

When you discovered martial arts, you discovered your life's true calling. While all martial artists

are dedicated to the perfection of their body, you are so fanatical in your training that you make them look slothful by comparison. Your absolute devotion to training has left you with a precisely tuned, highly toned physicality that is the envy of almost everyone.

Benefits: Your body is almost physically perfect, stripped of all fat and beautiful to look upon. It is also fine tuned to the point where you can react with astounding speed to almost any threat. You gain a +2 bonus to Charisma and a +2 bonus to all initiative checks.

Drawbacks: Unfortunately, your constant training has taken an incredible toll on your body. Overworked and over trained, with no time to recover, it is aged beyond its years. In other words, you are not anywhere nearly as healthy as your appear. At 1st level, you roll your hit points, instead of receiving the normal maximum. In addition, you do not gain the purity of body class ability and suffer a -1 penalty to all Fortitude saving throws.

Special: This particular quirk is modelled after some of the urban legends and rumours concerning the life and death of the modern day patron saint of martial arts, Bruce Lee. Those looking to model a character after this most iconic of martial artists should strongly consider this quirk.

Ferocious

Your spirit is infused with the raw fury of the storm and the tiger. Though your martial arts training has taught you to control your emotions somewhat, deep inside you the fire still burns and you can let it out to ravage and burn when you wish.

Benefit: Once a day, you can unleash your ferocious inner spirit. When you do, you gain a +2 morale bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls and all Will saves for a number of rounds equal to two rounds + your Charisma modifier. While allowing your fury

to run free, you can use any skills but Concentration and Knowledge (any).

Drawback: Following the use of this quirk's benefits, you are *exhausted* for a number of rounds equal to the amount of time you spent unleashing your inner fire. In addition, your mind is far too turbulent to ever know real tranquillity and so you do not gain the still mind ability upon gaining your 3rd monk class level, nor do you gain any other ability in its stead.

Fists Like Rocks

Though you are smaller than most monks, your blows are no less powerful. As a result of incredibly dedicated and focused training, you are capable of hitting far harder than anyone of your size normally should.

Benefit: You are considered to be Medium size for the purposes of determining how much damage you inflict with an unarmed attack.

Drawback: Your training has been so strongly focused on building the power of your muscles that you were forced to forgo more esoteric, mental training, as well as more general training in fighting techniques. You do not gain the still mind class ability, nor do you gain the 2nd level monk bonus feat.

Special: This martial artist quirk can only be selected by Small sized monks, meaning halflings and gnomes. If the Games Master is running a high powered game, he may choose to allow Medium size characters to select this quirk, in which case they are considered to be Large size creatures for the purposes of unarmed damage. Be warned that this is a powerful advantage for Medium size and one that should only be allowed after considerable thought.

Iron Hand Training

Early in your training you were introduced to the concept of the iron hand, a method for developing the power and durability of your fists,

at the cost of reducing your manual dexterity. As a result of this training, one of your hands is now a deformed weapon, covered in thick calluses and permanently formed into either a closed fist or a bent claw.

Benefit: When making a single unarmed attack in a round, you can strike with your iron hand, gaining a +1 bonus to both attack and damage rolls. If you have the Stunning Fist feat, then the DC of the save to resist its effects is increased by +1. Alternately, instead of gaining the bonus to attack and damage, you can use your iron hand to deflect incoming blows, gaining a +1 natural armour class bonus against all ranged and melee attacks.

Drawback: Your iron hand severely limits your ability to manipulate objects and to attack with speed. You cannot wield a weapon in your iron hand and your penalty to flurry of blows attacks is not reduced by -1 at 9th level; this means that when performing a flurry of blows, you will always have at least a -1 penalty to each attack roll.

Natural Killer

You were born with the instincts of a killer, instincts that you honed during the formative years of your training. Your unarmed attacks strike with deadly precision, finding the weak spots in your opponent's defences each and every time you attack.

Benefit: When making unarmed attacks, your critical threat range is doubled, to 19 – 20. This is considered to be your natural threat range for the purposes of feats, spells, magic items and style feats, meaning a character with this quirk and the Improved Critical (unarmed) feat would have possess a critical threat ranged of 17 – 20 when attacking only once each round. This bonus applies only to unarmed attacks.

Drawback: In addition, when attempting to inflict nonlethal damage with an unarmed attack, you suffer a

-2 penalty to the attack roll and your critical multiplier is reduced by one, to x1.

One Armed

You were born without one of your arms, or perhaps one of your arms was taken from you in an accident. In any case, you do not possess one of your limbs. During your martial arts training, you were taught to compensate for this loss and though it still limits you in some respects, it has not stopped you from becoming a masterful warrior.

Benefit: Thanks to years of dedicated training, you have developed your single arm into an iron hard weapon. Your arm is fast and dangerous, striking and defending like a hungry, iron snake. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls with any one unarmed or armed attack you make each round. In addition, your arm is so well trained that you can wield a two handed weapon with it, though you do not add 1.5 times your Strength modifier (if any) to damage when doing so.

Drawback: Though your single limb is both powerful and swift, it cannot fully compensate for your missing limb, so you are not able to attack with the swiftness and ease of other master level martial artists. The -2 penalty to your flurry of blows ability is not lowered at either 5th or 9th level and you do not gain the greater flurry of blows class ability at 11th level. In addition, and obviously, you cannot attack with two weapons. Finally, the Games Master can impose circumstance penalties to Strength and skill checks in situations where having only one limb would be a hindrance, such as lifting a heavy object.

Special: Should you ever gain a new limb, whether by magic or some other strange happenstance, you lose all the benefits and drawbacks of the one armed quirk and do not regain the feat slot originally give over to select this martial artist quirk.

Pacifist

You are absolutely unwilling and unable to strike to kill an opponent. It is simply not a part of your nature. Most monks who walk the path of the pacifist do so only after much soul searching, for it is a difficult philosophy they choose. Note that a pacifistic monk is not absolutely opposed to violent action. He can and will defend himself and others but will not kill, under any circumstance. Though some would accuse those with this quirk of cowardice, nothing could be further from the truth. It takes real bravery to face those who would cut you down without thought and refuse to harm them.

Benefit: When using unarmed attacks to inflict nonlethal damage, your critical threat range is doubled and your critical multiplier is increased by one, from x2 to x3. In addition, monks who choose this path are very skilled in avoiding blows; the better to give them the time needed to reason with their opponents. You add 1.5 times your Wisdom modifier (if any, rounding down) as a bonus to your armour class.

Drawback: You are absolutely unable to inflict normal damage with armed or unarmed attacks; you may only inflict nonlethal damage with armed or unarmed attacks. In addition, you do not gain the quivering palm ability at 15th level.

Special: You have no compunction about destroying mindless undead, constructs or mindless creatures like vermin. When attacking such creatures, you suffer no penalties when inflicting normal damage, nor is your critical multiplier reduced. When attacking intelligent undead, you may inflict normal damage but suffer a -2 penalty to all attack rolls when doing so.

This quirk can be selected by a character that does not have the reluctant warrior quirk, meaning it can be selected at 1st level.

Powerhouse

You are a physical powerhouse, rippling with muscle. Your martial arts training was focused on the development of raw power, to the exclusion of almost everything else and you are both as strong and slow as an ox.

Benefit: You gain a +2 inherent bonus to your Strength score and gain unarmed damage increases one level earlier than normal, meaning your first unarmed damage increase occurs at 3rd level, rather than 4th.

Drawback: You are largely muscle bound, sacrificing mobility in the name of raw power. You suffer a -2 penalty to your Dexterity and you gain unarmoured speed increases one level slower than normal, gaining your first bonus at 4th level.

Special: The benefits and drawbacks of this martial arts quirk stack with racial modifiers to ability scores.

Reincarnated Transcended One

You are the reincarnated spirit of a monk who achieved an enlightened state of being and then passed on to his final reward. You have taken new flesh in a selfless effort to help others reach the same state. The insights you gained in your previous life still whisper in your soul and you already one step along the path of enlightenment before you learned how to meditate, or even how to throw a punch.

Benefit: You gain a +2 inherent bonus to your Wisdom score and a +2 innate bonus to all Knowledge (arcana) skill checks.

Drawback: The reincarnated one has largely transcended the concept of flesh. Your body is more frail than most, as it is as much ether and soul as solid matter. You suffer a -2 penalty to either your Constitution or your Strength.

Special: The benefits and drawbacks of this martial arts quirk stack with racial modifiers to ability scores.

Reluctant Warrior

You find it difficult to bring harm, or even wish it on others. Whether this is a feeling that has been with you since birth, or developed during your years of martial arts training is immaterial. All that matters is that you would rather heal than hurt and find it difficult to bring yourself to kill, even when it seems absolutely necessary. Despite your reluctance, you are a skilled warrior and equal in bravery to any other martial artist.

Benefit: You are very practiced in striking powerful, nonlethal blows, hitting vital points with your palms and using throws and simple locks to incapacitate opponents. When using unarmed attacks to inflict nonlethal damage, your critical threat range is doubled and your critical multiplier is increased by one, from x2 to x3.

Drawback: You find it very difficult to attack to injure or kill. When attacking to inflict normal damage, you suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls and your critical hit multiplier is reduced by one, to x1, meaning you do not inflict extra damage on a critical hit.

Special: You have no compunction about destroying undead, constructs or mindless creatures like vermin. When attacking such creatures, you suffer no penalties when inflicting normal damage, nor is your critical multiplier reduced.

Soft Stylist

The focus of your training has never been upon inflicting damage with attacks. Instead, you have been taught from an early age to develop your *ki* energy, the better to master the spiritual side of your nature. At this point, your training is so ingrained that you could not change it, even if you wished to.

Benefits: Your years of internal training have strengthened your *ki* energy greatly. You gain *ki* strike (magic) at 3rd level, rather than 4th, *ki* strike (lawful) at 8th level instead of 10th and *ki* strike (adamantine) at 13th level, rather than at 16th. In addition, at 16th level, you gain either *ki* strike (good), or *ki* strike (evil), depending upon your alignment. If you are Lawful Neutral in alignment, you gain either one of the above *ki* strike properties you wish.

Drawbacks: Your martial art does not stress the development of powerful unarmed attacks and so you do not inflict as much damage as other martial artists of your size and skill level. If you are Medium size, then you use the damage progression for Small size martial artists, meaning you inflict 1d4 points of damage at 1st level, rather than 1d6. If you are a Small size monk, then you suffer a -1 penalty to damage on each damage die, to a minimum of one point of damage. This means that at 1st level, your unarmed attacks inflict 1d4 - 1 point of damage per attack and at 16th level you inflict 2d6 - 2 with each attack.

Swift

You are faster than even other monks, able to move across the battlefield with the effortless grace of a gazelle.

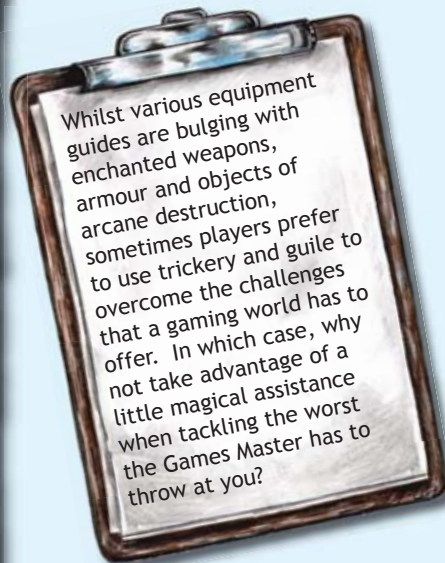
Benefit: You gain unarmoured speed bonuses two levels earlier than other monks, meaning your base speed is increased by 10 feet per round at 1st level. In addition, when you reach 19th level as a monk, you gain an additional 10 feet of movement, bringing your total unarmoured speed bonus to +70 feet per round.

Drawback: Your body is built for speed, not durability. You do not gain the monk's good Fortitude save, progressing instead as a wizard.



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Carl Walmsley



Ghost Glove

This innocuous looking black glove contains a surprising enchantment. The wearer may, with merely a thought, will the gloved hand to detach from his arm and float free. The hand retains all motor skills and its full sense of touch, and indeed responds to the thoughts of the wearer as if still physically linked to him. The gloved hand may float a short distance (no more than 5 feet) each round, manoeuvring with great accuracy if the wearer can see it (Manoeuvrability Perfect), relying entirely on a sense of touch if he cannot.

The hand within the glove is no more or less vulnerable to damage than normal; any pain inflicted upon it will certainly be felt by the owner. The hand is destroyed if it suffers 50% of the character's total hit points. The hand may carry no more than two pounds of weight which, combined with its slow movement, makes it unsuitable for melee combat. However, it may pick locks, palm

objects or perform any manner of tasks that the wearer can conceive.

Whilst his hand is detached, the wearer's arm appears to end in a black-tipped stump.

Moderate Transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, Spectral Hand, Fly; 12,000 gp.

Collar of Voice Control

Capable of deceiving even the most perceptive creatures, these enchanted collars are much sought after by rogues and tricksters. Taking the form of a dark, silken sash, a *collar of voice control* fits snugly about a character's throat, granting him complete mastery of his vocal chords. The wearer may duplicate the voice (though not the language) of any creature he has heard with near perfect accuracy. A Listen check (DC 30) is required to sense that there is something 'not quite right' about the character's voice.

The collar also enables the wearer to project his voice to any point within his line of sight and to alter the volume of his voice to match that of the creature he is mimicking. He may not, however, duplicate any supernatural effects associated with a creature's voice (a destrachan's destructive harmonics, for example).

In order to use any of the abilities granted by the collar, the wearer must be able to speak freely, though, in the case of the voice-throwing ability, no sounds will actually issue from the character's mouth.

Moderate Transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, whispering wind; 9,000 gp.

Curious Quill

Remembering every word spoken in its presence, a *curious quill* may be of more use than a thousand books. Whether recording the details of a delicate treaty or the negotiations of rival merchants, a *curious quill* offers a perfect way to chronicle any conversation; should there then be any doubt as to what was said, the quill can reproduce every word that was spoken.

This is not the only use to which these enchanted items have been put, however. It is rumoured that many a spy has made use of a *curious quill* to monitor the discussions of his target – what's one more quill amongst a desk covered in parchment and writing equipment? Because of a quill's potential usefulness in such duplicitous goings-on, one that has existed for some time may come to hold a multitude of secrets and forgotten lore.

In order to 'release' the words contained within a *curious quill*, it must first be set upright upon a blank sheet of parchment (it need not be supplied with ink to write, as it magically generates its own). The holder of the quill must then ask in a clear voice, 'What did you hear X number of hours ago?' The quill will then begin to scribe any words that it heard spoken at that time. The quill writes at the same speed as any recorded discourse was spoken; therefore the etching of the words provides a record of the passing of time during a recorded conversation as well.

If the quill is asked what it heard at a time period when there was nothing

to hear, it does not immediately start writing. However, once a period of time has elapsed equal to the interval of silence, the quill may then start to scribe anything that it later heard. For example, the quill is asked, ‘What did you hear 24 hours ago?’ At that time, the quill heard no words and so does not begin to write. However, it did record someone talking 19 hours ago. Therefore, if the quill is left untouched for 5 hours (signifying the period of silence), it will then begin to write out what it heard. This will tell the owner of the quill not only what was being said, but also the exact time it was spoken. The quill may be given an order to cease its recollections at any time.

In terms of its ability to hear, a *curious quill* is considered to have +20 Listen skill within a range of 20 feet; it never hears any words spoken beyond this distance.

Moderate Divination; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, Clairaudience; Cost 14,000 gp.

Ring of Shadows

Resembling a band of polished obsidian, a *Ring of Shadows* draws little attention from the casual viewer, which is exactly as the owner of such an item would have it.

As a move action, any character wearing one of these rings may step into and through an area of shadow as if it were a magical portal, re-emerging from another shadow. The ring-wearer’s body simply vanishes from one point in space, appearing instantly in another.

The character may only travel to a shadow that he can already see somehow, though this may be through the aid of a scrying spell or device. Also, the character may only step into an area of shadow large enough to absorb his entire body. Similarly, he must exit via a shadow of a sufficient size to fully envelop him.

Note that the ring only allows passage into areas of shadow – not simply of darkness. A shadow is defined by a lighted area that surrounds it. A ring of shadows is therefore of most use around the times of dawn and dusk, when there is a light source producing many areas of shade.

Moderate Conjunction; CL 12th; Forge Ring, shadow walk; Price 50,000 gp.

Tricksome Boots

Dubbed by some ‘the ranger’s bane’, *tricksome boots* are not some deadly arcane weapon, but a type of shape-shifting footwear that can foil even the most skilful of trackers. Upon utterance of a command word, the exterior of these boots changes both shape and size to resemble the ‘foot’ of another creature. Thanks to the enchantment upon the boots, their apparent weight also changes to create the correct imprint depth – though the wearer feels in no way encumbered by this.

The transformation of the boots’ outward shape and size takes a full round to complete and, during this time, the wearer may not move or the process is halted. Also, in order for the boots to assume the form of a particular creature’s foot, it must once have been placed within an imprint made by this creature. From that moment on, the boots ‘remember’ the shape, size and depth of that track and may mimic it.

Tracking a character wearing *tricksome boots* is no easier or harder than usual, though there is no way to tell these ‘false prints’ from those created by a real creature.

Moderate Transmutation; CL 8th; Craft Wondrous Item, polymorph; Price 5,500 gp.

Whispering Shell

Curled up waiting within every *whispering shell* is a tiny creature known as an eavesdropper crab. No larger than a man’s thumbnail, these

tiny crustaceans will only willingly leave their shell when left undisturbed for several minutes within 10 feet of a sleeping creature. When this is the case, the crab scurries forth searching for the ear of the slumbering animal. Crawling inside, the crab secretes an anaesthetic resin that numbs the host, allowing it to nestle within the inner ear undetected. (The search for a creature’s ear typically takes 1d6 rounds.) Upon waking, any creature that makes a Spot check (DC 23) notices that there is a sticky excretion in their ear and perhaps a few drops of blood.

Once the eavesdropper crab is in position it will do the host no noticeable harm. However, anyone that places an ear to the now empty *whispering shell* will hear something quite remarkable. Thanks to the enchantment upon the item, any sounds heard by the host through the ear in which the eavesdropper crab is living can also be heard through the shell.

The uses to which a *whispering shell* might be put are indeed many. It has primarily been used as a means of ‘spying’ upon someone, but could be used by creatures wishing to stay in communication – at least inasmuch as it would allow both to hear the same thing.

Trying to listen to things through the shell is a little more difficult than usual due to a slight distortion of sound that occurs as it is magically transferred from the host’s ear. Any Listen checks made in this way suffer a –2 circumstance modifier. (It is conceivable that someone using a *whispering shell* to listen in on the crab’s host might hear something that the host himself does not – or vice versa.)

Faint Divination; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Items, whispering wind; Price 5,000 gp.



MIGHTY ARMIES

Barbarian Fire Teams

Matthew Sprange & Nathan Webb

By now, fans of Mighty Armies should have many victories under their belts and may have even tried a full-blown campaign (check out the article in Issue 12 for full rules on campaigns!). Mighty Armies is the kind of game that just begs for players to try out their own ideas and it just so happens that Mongoose artist and miniatures painter, Nathan Webb, came up with a rather spiffing idea for Barbarian Warbands. Without further ado, I'll hand you over to Nathan. . .

While I was painting up the core units for the Barbarian army, I was reminded of an old film about a rag tag army of ex-slaves and gladiators taking on the Roman army. I remember one particular battle scene where some of the gladiators dragged flaming logs down a slight incline, straight into the oncoming ranks of the Roman army. *[This of course would be Spartacus – ed.]* These fire logs had a deadly effect on the Romans and also helped to break up their tight formations. I just had to have a go with a unit like this in Mighty Armies!

For the log draggers I chose barbarians whose arms were set apart from their bodies (Beserker 3, part number 01010123, if you want to order them from our web site) as this would make it easier to convert. Using a sharp blade I chopped their weapons off and then cut their arms off at the point where the elbow

met the sleeves of the clothes. I then repositioned their arms and glued small pieces of fuse wire between their hands.



I made the actual fire log by cutting about an inch off the wooden end of an old paintbrush. I then cut off the rounded tip and scraped the paint off the wood to make it easier to repaint. The flames are made from Milliput (also known as green stuff). I painted the men before I attached them to the base – fixing them to the ends of pencils using blue tack makes them a lot easier to handle while painting, as Mighty Armies figures can be quite fiddly.

Thank you Nathan! Once you have a couple of these units all set for battle, you will be dying to try them out in your next game of Mighty Armies. The rules below may be used in any Barbarian army.



Barbarian Fire Team

Whereas most ravaging berserkers will gather together in groups before battle, chewing on their blades and muttering curses before throwing themselves at the enemy, a tiny fraction of them develop an unhealthy interest in fire. Dragging huge burning logs into battle, they race across the battlefield, eager to bring a fiery death to any unit who stands opposed to their warband. Though such heroic acts are usually short-lived, they can disrupt an entire army, forcing the enemy onto its

back foot as the rest of the Barbarians tear into its ranks.

Fire Team: Once per battle, the unit may use this special ability. At the cost of 1 MP, it may double its Speed for one turn. If it makes contact with an enemy unit or Group, remove the Fire Team from the table immediately (once the fire log is released, the team will be quickly cut down) and roll one dice, adding +1 for every full 1" that the Fire Team moved this turn. On a total of 10 or more, the Fire Team has successfully sent its fire log crashing through enemy ranks, crushing enemy warriors and bringing total confusion as they try to fight fires and regroup themselves.

If the Fire Team is successful, the unit or Group affected will count as being subject to the Bind spell for one full turn. In addition, roll one dice for every unit in the Group. On a 6, the unit is automatically destroyed, crushed by the fire log. Generals, Hordes, Monstrous units and Spellcasters are immune to this attack.

Speed	Fighting	Support	Shooting	Special	AP
4"	+2	+2	-	Fearless, Fire Team	2



A Barbarian Fire Team about to bring havoc to a Wild Elf army!







Brace For Impact!

**A Call To Arms
Space Combat in the
Babylon 5 universe is
here!**

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

The Inspiration for the D&D Game, its Creation, GenCon's Founding, How TSR came into Being, and its Early Days

BY GARY GYGAX

Part 3 Older Boys and Bookworms

The summer on which I turned 12 years of age was monumental for one reason only. Dave Dimery from Chicago, my oldest friend and I were taken by our respective mothers to spend a week in the Michigan countryside. I was bored to tears there, so when in the nearby town's lone drug store I perused the magazine rack for something to read.

My eyes fell upon a copy of a pulp magazine; *Startling Stories*, as I recall. I had recently read *Conan the Conqueror* at the local filling station I liked to hang around, the paperback battered and with grease marks abundant upon its pages. How I was enthralled by the brawny barbarian's adventures! Now, there in a rustic drug store, I had discovered a magazine filled with more thrilling action – this in space! I spent my lone quarter without a qualm. Next day I had read the whole of the 'zine and was forever hooked. The stories were better than those I had read in horror anthologies I had discovered in the local library; better than all the other sorts of books I had read. In time, I acquired a near-complete collection of all the pulp SF and fantasy

magazines published in the US from 1940 onwards, as well as most of the novels published in hardbound and paperback. Now I am well ahead of the storyline, in 1955, so back to 1950 we go.

As much as I loved reading (I would finish a book a day regularly) good weather meant outdoors activity for most of the day. By wheedling I had managed to convince my parents that a BB gun was mandatory for a boy of my mature 11 years of age. Most of the other lads I hung around with had them, in fact. After a year of being cautious, it was time for BB gun wars, they being safer than exchanging bow shots or fighting with real swords. Many a happy day was spent with my friends shooting cans, bottles, and each other. The latter was usually reserved for camping trips. My grandfather owned a couple of tracts of farmland about five miles outside Lake Geneva. The smaller, 40 acres, was used for family picnics and much loved by my friends and myself for 'exploring' and overnight camping. There my play tent was finally used for its intended purpose. As it rained at night about every other time we went out for such an excursion, all of us were glad I had it to tote along on the mile or two walk from the road back to where we liked to encamp.

Once settled in, we would split into two opposing factions, move into the woods and then hunt for the 'enemy' with our Daisy air guns at the ready. The arts of stalking the foe quietly despite twigs and dead leaves, along with camouflage and ambush techniques, were quickly learned. Gentle Reader, do not try such foolishness yourself. We were fortunate that no one was badly hurt and no eyes were lost.

Fencing was something we lads enjoyed, so I saved up and ordered a pair of foils from the Johnson-Smith novelty company. They were expensive, but surely they would be worth it. With such weapons we could sword-fight with parental approval. When the package containing the fencing foils arrived I tore it open and phoned my friends. In mere minutes the first match began. It was the last fought. No one was hurt, but the foils were of soft metal and did not retain their original shape. What a disappointment. What a waste of hard-earned spending money! Then and there I vowed to stick with real weapons in the future.

Soon enough we were experimenting with 'mediaeval handgunnes' made from a length of pipe with a fuse hole drilled in the cap screwed onto one end. A firecracker charge would send a cloth-patch-wrapped ball

bearing through a two-inch thick wooden plank at close range. Not even the most juvenile of us ever thought of using them as weapons, only as experimental toys. That is why no one was ever hurt. Perhaps the best way to sum up my outlook at this time in by early days is to say that I was greatly influenced by Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* and *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, and as many of the 'Jerry Todd' series of boys' adventure books by Leo Edwards.

Wild Bookworms

Although it seems contradictory, books and 'adventures' went well together. Such exploits as we managed were certainly much enabled by the eclectic tastes in literature we enjoyed. The reading interests of my group of friends ranged widely—Westerns, history, horror, nature, mysteries, science, PI fiction, humour, historical fiction, poetry—but we all were fantasy and SF buffs. When we were not reading there was adventure waiting. Of course, we had to make the escapades up as we went along, generally *sans* any prior planning. Someone would discover an opportunity and the rest would join in. Here are a few examples:

After a spring storm, I discovered pier planks scattered along the lakeshore, so Bill Fleming and I built a raft over the next couple of days and others joined us in paddling around in the bay. Then the raft was purloined, so for a time we engaged in a game of recovery and counter retaking of the prize.

Time-fusing M80s so as to have a little fun with the local constabulary was a popular activity, the firecracker being placed on the window ledge of the Police Station or behind a drainpipe so as to make a racket.

Long walks along the lakeshore or bicycle rides into the surrounding countryside were held to be

excellent substitutes for dull classroom studies. These adventures included avoiding random encounters with 'patrols' and vicious farm dogs, as well as seeing to the cooking of rations for noontime meals. Later on, the skills of deception and forgery were needed to explain absences...

As a teenager, when my parents went off on trips I generally stayed at home, a friend staying with me to assist in cooking. In such cases the skill of fishing provided most of the dinners, pan fried yellow perch or breaded bluegill, so that grocery funds could go for the 'Dwarven Ale' to wash down such fare, as Father kept a close eye on the wine cellar. That the fellow who usually stayed over with me, John Patrick, became a fine chef should provide the Gentle Reader with a good idea of how well we ate in such bachelor circumstances.

Hanging around 'downtown' to pick up girls was standard operational procedure from June through August. Of course most of us were inept but the camaraderie was compensation enough and every once in a while we actually managed to strike up an acquaintance that was fun. Of course, we got into fights with other young males in this process. Maybe I should say 'fights' as it was usual for us to decamp hurriedly, knowing full well the value of not being seen thereafter, until we attained the exalted age of 18 and drank in beer bars, where running away was no longer an option.

Perhaps the most lauded adventure was when Tom Keogh made himself up as a werewolf, donned an aged Russian bearskin coat and reversed a pair of fur-lined gloves for paws. With him thus attired, Terry Criner and I then led him through the back yards to the old Dodge Street Cemetery a block and a half from where I lived. Tom crouched behind

a tombstone near the front where the streetlight shed a good illumination, while Terry and I lurked back some distance to hide from view. When a woman came walking along, Tom emitted a low growling sound, slipped his 'paws' into view atop the stone, then peered over the monument, growling louder as he stood. Our victim emitted a loud scream, dashed across the street and ran into the house there without so much as knocking. Convulsed with laughter, the three of us fled eastwards back towards my place. Sadly, I was so weak from laughter that when I attempted to vault the cyclone fence my leg caught the wire, so brand new Levis and leg were both torn. I felt the damage was a small price to pay for the adventure!

In bad weather we tended to gather at the YMCA or else in the attic 'clubroom' at my house. At both places we played a lot of games, practiced tumbling and engaged in arm and leg wrestling. The attic was the better place, though, for we could play penny-ante poker there or darken it and have blind squirt gun or pillow fights.

Thus the contents of the bookcases at my house tended to encourage and enhance the adventures we had. The few related above are only a small sampling. More will be related as this exposition continues but some indication of the reading material found at 925 Dodge Street will surely give insights into those things I brought to the gaming hobby.

Next time variety is the spice of life, as Gary goes from Topper to George Armstrong Custer in one easy leap!

THREE SIDES OF THE COIN

Charles Rice



Mercenaries, nobles and lowly thieves are regular characters throughout Conan's adventures, so we thought you might like a few new options to build your characters up with.

Now you can choose new Prestige Classes and Codes of Honour to reflect your character's approach to Hyborian life!

These new codes of honour supplement those found in the *Conan The Roleplaying Game* core rulebook. As with all codes of honour, they grant a +3 morale bonus on Will saving throws, rising to +6 if the Will saving throw is against Corruption. They also bestow a +2 bonus to Reputation.

CHIVALROUS CODE OF HONOUR

This is a stricter version of the civilised code of honour found in the *Conan The Roleplaying Game* Core Rulebook. This code is almost exclusive to the knights of Poitain, though it is very similar to codes found among the warriors of the mysterious eastern lands of Khitai.

A character with a chivalrous code of honour will:

- Obey all precepts of the civilised code of honour.
- Respect alliances with other honourable civilised characters.
- Avenge any insult to his

honour, even if this leads to his own death. The Poitainians are fond of the expression 'death before dishonour.'

- Find an honourable lord and swear allegiance to him. To count as an honourable lord, the person a character with this code of honour swears allegiance to must himself possess a code of honour. The chivalrous and the civilised codes of honour are preferred but any code of honour will do. This allegiance, known as fealty, will always be the knight's first allegiance; allegiances are listed in order of importance. The lord to whom the knight swears allegiance will be known as his Liege Lord.
- Avenge any insult to his Liege Lord's honour, even if this leads to his own death.
- Avenge the death of his Liege Lord, even if this leads to his own death.
- Obey the orders of his Liege Lord without question.
- Show unwavering courage and bravery in the face of battle, even if that battle involves overwhelming odds and will result in the knight's death. The knight sees his life as a temporary state but his honour is eternal.
- Aid any honourable lady in need.
- Always grant mercy (in return for ransom) to

any character with the chivalrous or civilised code of honour unless ordered differently by his Liege Lord.

A character with a chivalrous code of honour will not:

- Break any of the precepts of the civilised code of honour.
- Attack an opponent at a disadvantage. If an opponent has no missile weapons, the knight will close and melee. If an opponent is on foot, the knight will dismount.
- Break his word under any circumstances.
- Betray or abandon his Liege Lord. Once a knight swears allegiance to a Liege Lord, only the death of the knight or his Liege Lord can break that bond.

MERCENARY CODE OF HONOUR

Although they wander far to make their way as 'sellswords', many mercenaries live by a code of honour. Ruthless but not without principles, these mercenaries are highly sought after and renowned for always fulfilling their contracts to the letter.

A character with a mercenary code of honour will:

- Demand half of all promised payment up front if payment is to be a lump sum.
- Demand two months' payment in advance if payment is to be monthly.
- Notify other mercenaries if a

client does not pay.

- Require the client to spell out exactly what will satisfy the requirements of employment, preferably in writing.
- Fulfil all requirements of employment.
- Maintain confidentiality concerning who hired him and what he was asked to do.
- Work for competing employers after thirty days of the contract's expiry.

A character with a mercenary code of honour will not:

- Violate any explicitly stated requirements of employment.
- Violate the confidentiality of his employer including revealing what he was hired to do.
- Take assignments from his employer's competitors before thirty days have elapsed.

HONOUR AMONG THIEVES

Torches flared murkily on the revels in the Maul, where the thieves of the east held carnival by night. In the Maul they could carouse and roar as they liked, for honest people shunned the quarters, and watchmen, well paid with stained coins, did not interfere with their sport.

- Robert E. Howard, Tower of the Elephant

'At least we'll try; it's the chance of being turned into a spider or a toad, against the wealth and power of the world. All good thieves must know how to take risks.'

- Taurus of Nemedra

Men, civilised men, say there is no honour among thieves. This is not so. Although they will slit a throat for a copper coin or kidnap a Brythunian noblewoman and turn her into a

harem slave, thieves have a set of laws that they live by with a strange, bewildering sense of roguish nobility.

A character with 'honour among thieves' will:

- Respect and honour a better thief.
- Be bold.
- Share adventure, and spoils, with a worthy thief.
- Trust his instincts.
- Be ever watchful.

A character with 'honour among thieves' will not:

- Steal from thieves with whom he has shared adventure.
- Give aid or information to the city guard or militia about his fellow thieves, even if this costs him life or freedom.
- Kill more than is necessary in the course of his thievery.
- Take employment as an assassin.

NEW PRESTIGE CLASSES

These prestige classes embody two of the new codes of honour introduced above.

GUNDERLAND MERCENARY

As a young man it is almost a rite of passage for a Gunderman to leave home and take up service as a mercenary. Many of these adventurous youths are never seen again. Those who return home do so as grizzled veterans of foreign campaigns, dangerous, shrewd and wealthy.

Hit Die: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a mercenary, a character must fulfil the following criteria:

Base Attack Bonus: +6.

Codes of Honour: A mercenary must have the mercenary code of honour.

Feats: Toughness.

CLASS SKILLS

The mercenary's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the mercenary prestige class.



THE MERCENARY

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2	+0	Blood Money 1/day
2	+2	+1	+1	+0	+3	+3	+0	At Home In Armour
3	+3	+1	+2	+0	+3	+3	+1	Patchwork Armour +1
4	+4	+2	+3	+1	+4	+4	+1	Cheap Shot +1d6
5	+5	+2	+3	+1	+4	+4	+1	Blood Money 2/day
6	+6	+3	+4	+1	+5	+5	+2	Patchwork Armour +2
7	+7	+3	+5	+1	+5	+5	+2	Cat Nap
8	+8	+4	+6	+2	+6	+6	+2	Cheap Shot +2d6
9	+9	+4	+6	+2	+6	+6	+3	Patchwork Armour +3
10	+10	+5	+7	+2	+7	+7	+3	Blood Money 3/day; Cheap Shot 2/day

Weapon and Armour Proficiency:

A mercenary is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, two-weapon combat, light, medium and heavy armour and shields.

Blood Money: A mercenary is motivated not by patriotism, love nor discipline but by money. The listed number of times per day, a mercenary being paid a substantial sum may gain a +2 morale bonus to any one attack roll, damage roll, skill check or saving throw. To activate this ability, the 'substantial sum' must be at least 100 sp per character level if the sum is to be delivered as a lump on completion of the work, or 3 sp per character level if the character is being paid on a daily basis. The mercenary must either have received the sum already, have been paid a due share of it that day, be in line to receive the sum within 30 days, or some combination of these.

At Home In Armour: A mercenary is at home in his armour, wearing it until it becomes almost a second skin. Whether constant wear of the armour makes it more flexible or the mercenary's skin more rough is a topic of some debate. Regardless of the cause, mercenaries are renowned for their ease and comfort in their armour. A mercenary with this ability reduces the armour check penalty by 1 for any suit of armour he has owned for more than one month. Once the mercenary has owned a suit of armour for long enough to reduce the

armour check penalty, he can sleep in that armour without being fatigued.

Patchwork Armour: Mercenaries constantly work on their armour, repairing tears and dents and adding pieces of metal, hide and the armour of their opponents to shore up any weak spots. A mercenary with this ability adds the listed bonus to the DR of any suit of armour he has owned for more than one month. However, the maximum DR a suit of armour can gain with this ability is equal to the character's mercenary class level. For example, a 6th level mercenary is given a quilted jerkin as part of his 'signing bonus' with a local militia. After a month, the DR of this armour becomes 5, as the mercenary has added to the armour. Later, this same mercenary kills a soldier wearing a scale corselet. After taking a few pieces to add to his armour, he leaves the armour on the corpse, as his quilted jerkin provides just as much protection and is lighter. As he explains to his comrades, 'it's a part of me'.

Cheap Shot: Mercenaries have no concept of fair play or chivalry in battle. The mercenary always seeks an edge in battle and no target is off limits. Mercenaries also look for any weakness in an opponent's armour and will repeatedly strike at a weaker area, such as a shoulder, attempting to wear through armour. Once per day a mercenary may add the listed bonus

to the damage of a successful attack. This damage also adds to the damage dealt for the purposes of damaging armour, since the mercenary will try to exploit and open up any weaknesses. At 10th level the mercenary may use this ability twice per day.

Cat Nap: Mercenaries learn to sleep when they can. This ability functions exactly as the sleep mastery feat, except that the mercenary does not need to meet the prerequisites for that feat. If the mercenary already has sleep mastery, he gains alertness instead.

POITAINIAN KNIGHT

The kingdom of Poitain has always had to defend itself from its neighbours in incessant wars with Zingara, Argos, and Ophir. To protect its people, the tiny kingdom has developed a long and proud history of chivalry and knighthood and produces some of the finest heavy cavalry of the Hyborian Age. This training begins as young as the age of six, when a boy is enlisted to become a page to an established nobleman. At ten the boy can graduate to become a squire, a harsh, sometimes brutal life, often fighting at the side of an established knight. Only after long service and hardship is the squire named a true knight.

Hit Die: d10.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a knight, a character must fulfil the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Code of Honour: A knight must possess the chivalrous code of honour.

Skills: Ride 8 ranks.

Feats: Mounted Combat.

Special: A knight must possess the heavy cavalry formation combat ability granted by the Soldier class.

CLASS SKILLS

The knight's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nobility) (Int), and Ride (Dex)

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the knight prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency:

A knight is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, light, heavy, and medium armour and shields.

Born to the Saddle: A knight is nothing without a good horse. During any jousting tournament or battlefield encounter, the wise knight (also known as an old knight) knows his

mount is often the difference between victory and defeat. Selecting the best mount is therefore extremely important. If a knight makes a successful Handle Animal or Ride check (DC 15), he can determine the precise number of hit points and hit dice of any horse. Unlike the nomad ability of the same name, a knight cannot use this ability on a camel or pony. This extraordinary ability takes 1d6 rounds to perform and the knight must be within 5 feet of the creature to be assessed.

At 7th level a knight may also determine a horse's precise ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, and so forth) if he succeeds at the Handle Animal or Ride check.

At 10th level a knight can determine all of the above as a free action for any horse he can see, for a number of times per round up to his Wisdom modifier +3.

Horsemanship: Knights spend tremendous amounts of time in the saddle. Tilting, jousting, sword fighting, mounting and dismounting are all treated as vital combat skills. The knight adds the listed bonus to all attack rolls while mounted and to all Handle Animal and Ride skill checks.

Armour Tolerance: A knight's training begins in earnest when he is as young as ten, when the boy is referred to as a squire. Combat practice and other vigorous activities

such as horsemanship, climbing fences and crossing muddy ditches are all performed in armour. As the squire progresses in his training the type of armour worn during these activities becomes progressively heavier. By the time a squire becomes a full-fledged knight, the heaviest armour is worn with ease. The listed modifier is added to the maximum Dexterity bonus and armour check penalty of any medium or heavy armour worn by a knight. The maximum armour check penalty for a suit of armour is -0. This allows the knight to make Ride checks for fast mounting and dismounting, jump, and climb checks with a reduced penalty.

Lance Charge: The signature attack of the knight, at 4th level he gains the listed bonus to damage rolls and to armour piercing when making a mounted charge attack with a lance. At 8th level this bonus improves to +2.

Improved Heavy Cavalry: This ability improves the knight's bonus when using the heavy cavalry formation to +2.

Ex-Knights: Should a character lose or renounce the chivalrous code of honour, he cannot gain any further levels in the knight prestige class. However, he retains all previous abilities and levels earned in the class.

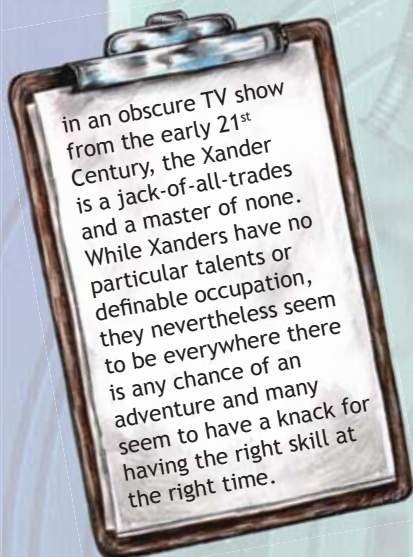
THE POITAINIAN KNIGHT

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+2	+0	+0	Born to the Saddle; Horsemanship +1
2	+2	+1	+1	+0	+3	+0	+0	Armour Tolerance +1
3	+3	+1	+2	+0	+3	+1	+1	Horsemanship +2
4	+4	+2	+3	+1	+4	+1	+1	Armour Tolerance +2; Lance Charge +1
5	+5	+2	+3	+1	+4	+1	+1	Born to the Saddle
6	+6	+3	+4	+1	+5	+2	+2	Armour Tolerance +3; Horsemanship +3
7	+7	+3	+5	+1	+5	+2	+2	Improved Heavy Cavalry
8	+8	+4	+6	+2	+6	+2	+2	Armour Tolerance +4; Lance Charge +2
9	+9	+4	+6	+2	+6	+3	+3	Horsemanship +4
10	+10	+5	+7	+2	+7	+3	+3	Armour Tolerance +5; Born to the Saddle

The Xander

An OGL CyberNet Character Class

CYBERPUNK ROLEPLAYING


Neil Striker


'Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy.'

-John Le Carre

Who Are They?

It is hard to pin down what a Xander is because as a group they are about as diverse as you can possibly be. Most Xanders feel a personal need to go where the action is and to see things and go places that most people cannot even imagine. Some say they hear the wild geese calling. Some say they have itchy feet and cannot stay in one place for very long before being ready to do something new. Some seem to be weirdness magnets, their attempts to live the quite life uprooted by events beyond their immediate control. Finally, some just have a burning need that drives their soul onward. Xanders come from every possible background and level of society; polished corporate executives, street rats, professors, white-collar professionals, blue-collar

hardhats, hackers, soldiers, gunfighters, martial artists or anything else. The only commonality between Xanders and their backgrounds is that they seem to live a life of adventure. For a Xander living a normal life of quiet desperation is just not in their cards.

What Do They Do?

A better question is, 'What does a Xander NOT do?' Most classes have a 'shtick', something that they do better than anyone else. The Xander does not. Consequently the strength of the Xander is not in being better than any one in any given task. Instead the Xander often has the ability to do that thing that nobody else around them can. Not that they necessarily do it well... but sometimes you just need to get it done. If that is the case, having a Xander around will save your ass.

How Do They Do It?

There are as many ways that a Xander does his thing as there are Xanders. Some are tough as nails and can handle a beat down with the best. Some are flashy and techy, a regular 'Q'. Just as many more are non-descript and hard to pin down. What they all share is an incredibly broad range of skills and abilities. Find the right Xander and you will almost never get caught with your pants down when things get nasty.



Class Information

Because Xanders are so individualistic they do not receive a set base attack bonus, list of Saving Throws, starting hit points, Attributes or Class Skills. They also do not get to choose any Occupations. Instead they receive 6 points (4 points if they decide to roll for attributes) to spend on the Starting Priorities Table. These points are used to 'buy' the character's starting characteristics, allowing any Xander to become a truly unique individual. Characters cannot multi-class into Xanders. A character has to choose to be a Xander at first level. Xanders can multi-class into other character classes but they always have some differences.

Hit Die: Starting Hit Die equals 1d6 + Bonus hit points (from the Starting Priorities Table) + Constitution Bonus.

Class Skills: The Xander has NO class skills. See Unique Ability – Master of None.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (7+Int modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: Special. See Priorities/Level.

Starting Feats

In addition to the two feats that all characters get at first level, a Xander gets two bonus feats and a number of Skill Feats (Selected from the following: Aerocraft Operations, Alertness, Athletic, Attentive, Builder, Confident, Creative, Deceptive, Educated, Focused, Gearhead, Guide, Medical Expert, Meticulous, Nimble, Skill Emphasis, Stealthy, Studious, Surface Vehicle Operation, Trustworthy) based on their choices from the Starting Priorities table.

Starting Priorities can be divided up in the following ways:

6 TTL
3, 3, 0, 0
3, 1, 1, 1
3, 2, 1, 0
2, 2, 2, 0
2, 2, 1, 1

4 TTL
3, 1, 0, 0
2, 2, 0, 0
2, 1, 1, 0
1, 1, 1, 1

Starting Priorities Table

Point Cost	BAB ¹	Saves (Bns hps) ²	Attributes ³	Starting Skill Feats ⁴
0	1/2	1H/2L (0)	22	2
1	2/3	1H/2L (2)	25	3
2	2/3	2H/1L (2)	28	4
3	1/1	2H/1L (4)	32	5

You receive 6 points for starting priorities.

¹ See the To Hit Priority/Level table, below, to determine advancement rate of the Xander's Base Attack Bonus.

² See the Saving Throw Priority / Level Table to determine

advancement rate of the Xander's saving throws.

³ If you use the Standard Generation Method, Variant 1 (Hardcore) or Variant 2 (Heroic) to generate ability scores you only receive 4 Points for Starting Priorities

⁴ These feats must be chosen from the following list: Aerocraft Operations, Alertness, Athletic, Attentive, Builder, Confident, Creative, Deceptive, Educated, Focused, Gearhead, Guide, Medical Expert, Meticulous, Nimble, Skill Emphasis, Stealthy, Studious, Surface Vehicle Operation, Trustworthy

To Hit Priority/Level Table

Level	1/2	2/3	1/1
1	+0	+0	+1
2	+1	+1	+2
3	+1	+2	+3
4	+2	+3	+4
5	+2	+3	+5
6	+3	+4	+6/+1
7	+3	+5	+7/+2
8	+4	+6/+1	+8/+3
9	+4	+6/+1	+9/+4
10	+5	+7/+2	+10/+5

Saving Throw Priority /Level Table

Level	Low	High
1	+0	+1
2	+0	+2
3	+1	+2
4	+1	+2
5	+1	+3
6	+2	+3
7	+2	+4
8	+2	+4
9	+3	+4
10	+3	+5

Class Features

The following are class features of the Xander.

Master of None (Unique Ability - Xander)

Xanders are unique in that they simply never specialized in anything.

This manifests in several ways. First, Xanders do not receive ANY class skills. Instead they can spend their skill points on any skill and only ever spend ONE point per skill rank. The flip side of this is that since all skills are considered cross class their maximum in a skill is the cross class skill max. This means that while a Xander is never going to be the best at anything it is likely that a Xander knows a little about just about everything. Further there is no skill a Xander cannot have, even if it would seem impossible without a special background. Xanders are quirky. Occasionally they just know stuff.

The second effect of this is that Xanders do not have to have the any of the regular attribute prerequisites for any feats. While a Xander must meet all other prerequisites for a feat, an attribute-based prerequisite can be ignored.

The third effect of this is that if a Xander does multi-class into another class or advanced class he DOES NOT receive the class skills of the class or advanced class. While he does receive the number of skill points from the class, for a Xander all skills are considered cross class skills... Once a Xander, always a Xander. Of course the multi-classing Xander only pays one point per skill rank just as if he has never changed his class.

Skill Feats

At first level a Xander can choose a number of feats based on their choices from Starting Priorities. Feats a Xander can choose from are the following: Aerocraft Operations, Alertness, Athletic, Attentive, Builder, Confident, Creative, Deceptive, Educated, Focused, Gearhead, Guide, Medical Expert, Meticulous, Nimble, Skill Emphasis, Stealthy, Studious, Surface Vehicle Operation, Trustworthy.

Priorities/Level:

Because Xanders are so individualistic they do not receive a

set number of Skill Points per level or hit points per level. Instead they receive two points to spend on the Priorities/Level Table.

Priorities per level can be divided up in the following ways:

2 TTL

2, 0, 0

1, 1, 0

Priorities/Level Table

You receive two points per level for priorities.

Point Cost	Skill Pts	HDs/Level
0	3 + Int modifier	1d6 + Con modifier
1	5 + Int modifier	1d8 + Con modifier
2	7 + Int modifier	1d10 + Con modifier

Skill Points at Each Additional Level:

Skill Points at each level are determined by Priorities per level.

Hit Points at Each Additional Level:

Hit points at each level are determined by Priorities per level.

Talents and Bonus

Feats

Xanders have NO Talents. Instead of Talents a Xander receives a bonus feat at every level.

Special/Level

Level	Special	Rep Bns	Def Bns	Edge Dice
1	Starting Priority Points, Master of None	+1	+1	1 (d4)
2	Bonus Feat, Priorities/Level	+1	+1	1
3	Bonus Feat, Priorities/Level	+1	+2	2
4	Bonus Feat, Priorities/Level	+2	+2	2 (d6)
5	Bonus Feat, Priorities/Level	+2	+3	2
6	Bonus Feat, Priorities/Level	+2	+3	3
7	Bonus Feat, Priorities/Level	+3	+4	3 (d8)
8	Bonus Feat, Priorities/Level	+3	+4	3
9	Bonus Feat, Priorities/Level	+3	+5	4
10	Bonus Feat, Priorities/Level	+4	+5	4 (d10)



New Uses For Old Skills

Although the Xander is an entirely new core class, it is designed to work easily with the rules as they are presented in OGL CyberNet. This skill expands on those presented in the core rules slightly in order to provide new opportunities for players of Xander characters.

Profession (Scrounger)

Xanders are notorious for their ability to find resources for their various projects. As such, any Xander can take the Profession

(Scrounger) skill. This represents the fact that a Xander in his downtime knows where to go scrounging or begging for resources. The rules for a Profession are unchanged from the rules presented in the OGL CyberNet core book.

New Feats

If It Moves, I Can Drive It (General)

A character with this Feat can drive just about anything.

Prerequisites: 5 ranks in Drive or Pilot skills.

Benefits: If a character has at least 5 Ranks in Drive and any Surface Vehicle Operations feat, this individual can drive anything that moves along the ground or in the water without any penalty. If a character has at least 5 Ranks in Pilot and any Aircraft Operations feat this individual can pilot anything that flies without any penalty.

Normal: Characters without this Feat or the requisite Vehicle Operations Feats suffers a -4 penalty when operating any vehicle that falls in any class other than general-purpose vehicles or aircraft.

OGILBY WILD WEST



JOHNNY RINGO... THE YOUNG HEROCELEBRITY

FROM MONGOOSE PUBLISHING

Gaming Symposium

Coins of the World

Mark Charke

S&P#13 sees the return of our Gaming Symposium series.

This time we look at that prime motivation of the roleplaying adventurer. Money. The ever popular gold pieces, the thing that most of us fall back on when we meet another character of a similarly high level.

But how much thought do you really put into that clinking sound coming from your pack?

Well, have you ever *really* looked at those gold pieces?

They have travelled as much as mankind and have been exchanged for every product and service. Hoarded, minted and spent, coins have been an important part of human society for twenty-six centuries. Most adventurers never give them more than a cursory evaluation and count. They do not know what they are missing.

Beginning around 600 BC coins came into use independently in three different parts of the world; in Lydia (now Turkey) made from electrum (a natural mix of gold and silver), Indus Valley (now Pakistan) made from silver, and China where they evolved from trade implements such as the spade and knife and were made from bronze.

If you open *Core Rulebook II* you will find one table to determine the nature

of discovered coins, yet nearly every item and service in Dungeons and Dragons game has the famous 'gp' descriptor. Without doubt 'gp' is the all-powerful lure that has brought so many adventurers to their doom, their dismay or their glory. Let us expand a little on copper, silver, gold and platinum.

Finding Unusual Coins

It is the greatest irony that magical coins are greatly sought after as coins but most often completely overlooked as the even more valuable magical item they are. While the odds of finding a magical coins are remote, about a 1% chance per 1,000 coins you search, most magical coins have disappeared into the general circulation of coins. Finding them may only be a matter of determining which coins are magical and finding a way to liberate them from their owners – a problem compounded by the fact you show any interest in the coins, especially if they are otherwise of low value.

Sleight of Hand

Most activities involving coins use the Sleight of Hand skill (previously Pick Pockets). There are a variety of tricks that can be performed with coins, besides palming them, which may be useful during the course of an adventure.

Rolling A Coin: This feat is achieved by rolling a coin over top of your knuckles by moving your fingers. It is very difficult with smaller coins. Those wishing to learn this should start with

a large coin and work progressively smaller. Successful use of this skill gives you a +2 circumstance bonus to Bluff used to distract and Intimidate checks.

Snapping a Coin: This allows you to use a coin as a weapon and increase the normal range increment. You place the coin between your thumb and middle finger and make as if to snap. Done correctly the coin will fly out of your hand and go a fair distance without any movement of your wrist. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus when making a Hide check to disguise this attack. If your check is successful you can attack with the coin as if proficient in the thrown coin and the increment range increases to the result of your check.

Sleight of Hand

DC	Task
Rolling a Coin	15
Snapping a Coin	15 (proficient in coins)
Snapping a Coin	20 (non-proficient in coins)

New Coins Wooden Coin

Wooden coins sometimes appear among the very poor, in areas where metal is scarce or in heavily wooded areas. Sometimes only children use them. A wooden coin is worth 1/10th of a copper coin so it takes a great deal of them to purchase anything. In areas where wood is scarce, clay coins may be used, with the same worth.

Mithril Coin

The money of adventurers and kings, a mithril coin is worth 1,000 gp. They are usually professionally minted. Mithril coins are rare enough that the mint often numbers and tracks the coins. Thieves may have serious difficulty getting rid of a stolen mithril coin as a result, much less a number of them. Mithril coins are used by the rich to carry around large sums of money easily, or by adventurers who can protect such value (and often wear a great deal more as armour).

A mithril coin does not contain enough mithril to make a suit of armour. It is the superb craftsmanship and pure quality of the coin that gives it much of its worth. Sometimes these coins are impregnated with ruby chips to bring up their value.

Adamantine Coin

Like mithril coins, adamantine coins are used by the kings and adventurers, only the richer ones. They have an additional use as coin knives. Just about all adamantine coins are numbered and tracked and many are done so magically. Most have a minor protective enchantment to prevent thievery.

Coins

Coin	Exchange Value						
	WP	CP	SP	GP	PP	MP	AP
Wooden Piece (wp) =	1	1/10	1/100	1/1,000	1/10,000	1/1,000,000	1/5,000,000
Copper piece (cp) =	10	1	1/10	1/100	1/1,000	1/100,000	1/500,000
Silver piece (sp) =	100	10	1	1/10	1/100	1/10,000	1/50,000
Gold piece (gp) =	1,000	100	10	1	1/10	1/1,000	1/5,000
Platinum piece (pp) =	10,000	1,000	100	10	1	1/100	1/500
Mithril piece (mp) =	1,000,000	100,000	10,000	1,000	100	1	1/5
Adamantine piece (ap) =	5,000,000	500,000	50,000	5,000	500	1/5	1

Coin Feats

Coin Exotic Weapon Proficiency (General)

You understand how to use coins as weapons.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: You make attack rolls with any coin weapon normally.

Additionally you are considered armed when wielding any coin weapon and coins you use in a sling do the same damage as bullets.

Normal: A character wielding a coin knife takes attacks of opportunity as if he were unarmed.

Special: A fighter may select Coin Exotic Weapon Proficiency as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Special Coins

Bouncing Coin

A bouncing coin is made so that when thrown it tends to bounce. Some are made with a rubbery coating while others have a round surface on each side. When dropped they tend to bounce off hard surfaces back up about half the distance.

Caltrop Coin

This coin must have metal components and has a dart that can spring up or can be twisted in the middle and has sharp edges so that it can be used as a caltrop. Such coins are designed to spring open when dropped or thrown onto a hard surface but only do so 50% of the time. A masterwork caltrop coin springs open 95% of the time.

Floating Coin

A legendary weaponsmith appeared out of the orient with a new kind of steel that floated on water. A number of his weapons were melted down by the truly ignorant and forged into coins because they thought the metal was mithril or adamantine. It was not but most still ask 1,000 gp per coin. These coins float on water, no

matter how many of them you have, and armour or weapons made entirely from this metal float as well.

Giant Coins

Giant coins are quite literally that, forged by giants or other large folk. They are ten times the size of normal coins and ten times the weight and value. A giant gold coin is worth 10 gold pieces and weights 1/5th of a pound. A giant coin can be fashioned into a weapon that deals 1d4/20x2 damage and is thrown like a discus or chakram.

Loaded Coin

These cheaters coins are weighted so that they tend to come up heads (or tails). They will come up on the weighted side 75% of the time and the other side 25% of the time (instead of 50/50). Typically a loaded coin is used to cheat at gambling. An Appraise check with a DC equal to 15 or the Craft (blacksmith) check result used to make the coin is required to spot the loaded coin.

Razor Coin

This coin has a groove in its rim around which is wrapped a length of razor wire, a thin strong wire used for cutting like a saw. One end of the wire

is attached to the coin, the other end to a loop of wire, which is not sharp. You hold the coin in one hand and the loop in the other and pull back and forth to saw. The loop fits around the coin exactly to hide the groove. A Search check (DC 20) is required to notice that something is out of the ordinary about the coin but few search coins for weapons.

Wooden Nickel

This is a wooden coin coated with a light layer of another type of coin. They cost less than the coin they resemble and are used to swindle others. An Appraise check (DC 15, or equal to the Craft check made to create the fake coin) is required to determine that it is a fake. Some extremely high quality fakes end up selling for more than the coins they resemble.

Special Coins

Coin Type	Cost
Bouncing Coin	Coin Cost x2
Caltrop Coin	Coin Cost x2 (not less than 1 gp)
Floating Coin	1,000 gp
Giant Coin	Coin Cost x10
Loaded Coin	Coin Cost x2
Razor Coin	Coin Cost + 50 gp
Wooden Nickel	1/10 th Coin Cost + 1 wp

Coin Cost: This is the cost of the type of coin the coin resembles. Most special coins are gold or silver.

Combining Costs: If your Games Master allows, you can combine costs by adding the multipliers. A bouncing, loaded coin would cost the coin cost x4. Although it might appear that it should cost only x3, there is an additional cost to get both abilities from the same coin.

Special Coin Tools

Coin Cape

This ordinary looking cape has hundreds of little pockets for coins

and is designed such that the coins never clink against each other. The cape can hold up to 200 coins without any penalty to Move Silently. When filled with coins the cape provides a +1 armour bonus to Armour Class when worn over light armour. The cape can also be wrapped, into the hood, as a pouch with a drawstring. A coin cape costs 10 gp and weighs 10 pounds.

Coin Weapons

Knife Coin

This coin has a sharp, hardened edge that can be used as a cutting tool or weapon. It deals only 1 point of slashing damage, or 2 on a critical hit. You wield this weapon as if unarmed unless you are proficient in its use.

Sling Shot

A sling shot can be used to fire coins. These do slightly less damage than sling bullets unless you have the Coin Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat. The decreased damage is shown on the table below, Weapons.

Weighted Coin

A weighted coin is made of lead or has a lead core. It is slightly heavier than a normal coin. When used as a bullet it inflicts the same damage as a bullet. As a thrown weapon it inflicts slightly more damage as indicated on the table below, Weapons.

Coin Spells

Coin Ward

Abjuration

Level: Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)

Target: 1 container of coins

Duration: 24 hours/level

Saving Throw: None (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes

You ward the coins in a container up to the size of a king's vault so that all skill checks made to steal the coins suffer a penalty equal to half your caster level (at least -1, max -10). If an opposed check is made, the thief's check suffers the penalty while the owner's check is unaffected.

Although the spell wards all the coins it is centred on only a single coin. If that coin is removed the spell stays with it and no longer wards the other coins. Any other coin removed from the container is no longer warded (but benefited from the ward while it was removed). This spell can be rendered permanent with *permanency* for 500 xp.

Weapons

Simple Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
<i>Light Ranged Weapons</i>							
Sling	—	—	—	—	50 ft.	0 lb.	Bludgeoning
Coin, sling (10)	Coin cost x10	1d2	1d3	20/x2	—	1/5 lb.	—
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>							
Knife Coin	Coin cost x2	1	1	20/x2	10 ft.	1/50 lb.	Slashing
<i>Exotic Ranged Weapons</i>							
Giant Coin	Coin cost	1d2	1d4	20/x2	10 ft.	1/5 lb.	Bludgeoning
Thrown Coin	Coin cost	1	1	20/x2	10 ft.	1/50 lb.	Bludgeoning
Weighted Coin	Coin cost	1	1d2	20/x2	10 ft.	1/25 lb.	Bludgeoning

Magic Coins

Biting Coins

Biting coins use a variation of *magic mouth*. They lie still until someone approaches within 5 feet of them and then they leap around and bite. A coin or group of coins makes a single melee attack against one target in the same 5 foot square each round (a large number of coins can attack several people if they are all in the same 5 foot square). A single coin has a melee attack +1 and deals 1/20x2 piercing damage. A group of 10 have a melee attack +10 and deals 1d10/20x2 piercing damage. A group of 20 have a melee attack +20 and deal 1d20/20x2 piercing damage. No more than 20 attack a single person each round. The coins are not intelligent and stop moving if there is no one within 5 feet of them. They never give chase.

Minor transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, magic mouth; Price 2,000 gp each + coin cost.

Coin of Greed

Anyone who sees or touches a coin of greed must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 10) or make all reasonable efforts to acquire the coin(s). Reasonable varies from person to person. A peasant might try to buy or beg for the coins while a red dragon would simply take them. Many men have gone broke trying to acquire such coins from merchants selling them. These coins are a popular plague and are often destroyed by the lawful aligned. Typically these coins are treated as adamantine coins, although they may have no adamantine in them, and are sold for between 2,500 and 5,000gp or more.

Minor enchantment; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, charm person; Price 2,000 gp each + coin cost.

Cursed Coin of Copper

This cursed coin turns 1 more valuable coin per minute near it into copper. Magical coins gain a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) to resist this effect. Otherwise this appears as a normal copper coin.

Minor transmutation; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, alter self; Price 500 gp each + coin cost.



There are other kinds of loot, of course...

Light and Dark Coins

These coins radiate *light* or *darkness* unless they are covered by a thick cloth or put inside a container. Adventurers find these indispensable for dungeon crawls. Crafted by thieves' guilds reliant on magic in alliance with wizards, these coins can be found lost or left behind in dungeons all over the world. While their cost should be slightly higher, the mass production has refined the method and made it cheaper.

Minor transmutation; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, continual fire; Price 50 gp each + coin cost.

Tax Collector's Arrow Coin

Despite the name, this is the tool of an assassin. The coin is fitted to the end of an arrow or bolt. The attack suffers a -2 circumstance penalty because the coin slows the projectile down. A successful attack against an opponent denied his Dexterity modifier causes an additional 1d6 damage if he is within 30 feet. Each coin can only be used once. Two or more coins on an arrow apply their penalty to attack cumulatively but do not increase the extra damage (this uses up all the coins and only deals 1d6 extra damage).

Minor conjuration; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, cause light wounds; Price 50 gp each + coin cost.

Variations on other Magic Items

The following magical items can be made out of coins without any change in price; *amulet of proof against detection and location, cloak of charisma, elemental gem, figurine of wondrous power, helm of teleportation, ioun stones, stone of alarm and stone of good luck*. Coin weapons can be enchanted just as any other weapon.

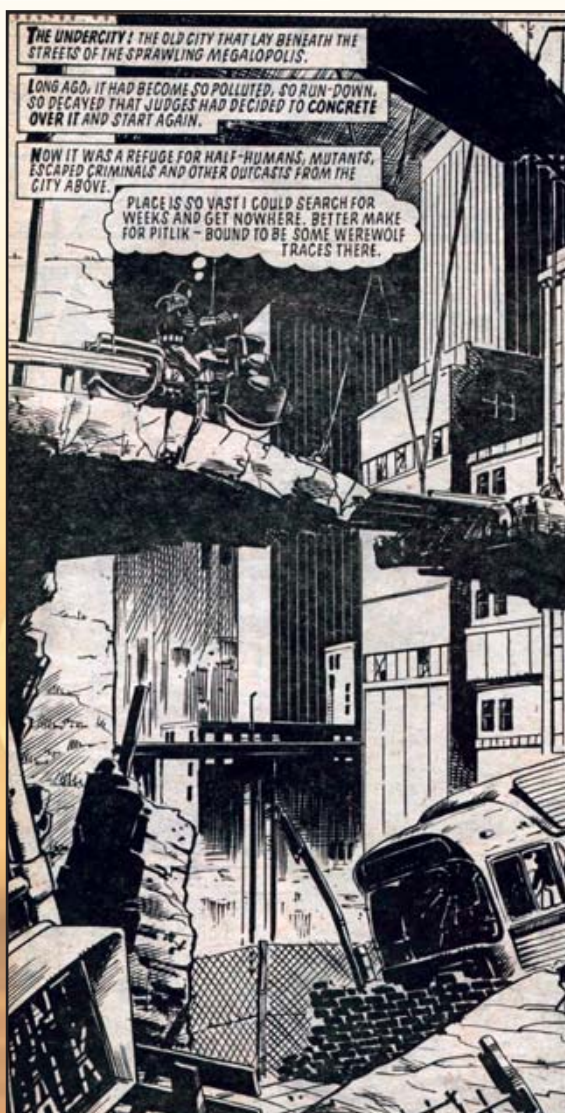
Props

A few foreign coins, or even some native ones, can make excellent props for coins. Select beforehand which coins have what abilities or enchantments and mix them in with any other treasure props you have, or hand them out to players individually, when discovered.

The
JUDGE DREDD
Roleplaying Game

The Geography of the Undercity *part 3* New York

Going Gonna



The first and most densely populated part of the Undercity, New York City is buried far beneath Sector 44. The largest foundation dome below Mega-City One covers the city. A twelve-mile radius cavern centred in

Greenwich Village, its highest point reaches over nine hundred feet above ground level. The vaulted roof is invisible in the darkness, giving the impression that the city is merely cloaked in a starless and moonless night.

The majority of the tallest buildings have long since collapsed due to the lack of maintenance. Only the strongest structures have survived the neglect and decay that time has wrought. The once majestic skyline has been replaced by dozens of the enormous rockcrete city block foundation columns – indestructible reinforced pillars that support the buildings of the Mega-City from below.

The residents of the city have tried their best to keep the roads in reasonable order, reinforcing the streets and sidewalks with the best materials they have available – usually ancient masonry or girders from the collapsed buildings.

Everywhere is cluttered with junk and rubble, such as burnt-out vehicles, the remains of shattered buildings and even the occasional corpse. The Undercity dwellers will have appropriated any useful items. Anything left behind is generally too difficult or hazardous to shift. Despite the ruin and decay there are many familiar landmarks and neighbourhoods that still survive.

Territories

Bronx: The Bronx is smaller than it once was, with the northernmost areas cut off by the huge border formed by the gigantic foundation dome that encircles the city. The Bronx is mainly inhabited by tribes of troggies and the human scavenger teams, who control many tunnels into the other areas of the Undercity, imposing tolls on their use.

Brooklyn: The easternmost extreme of the subterranean city, Brooklyn is cut off from most of its neighbours by the chemical waste that forms the East River. The majority of the bridges fell victim to this corrosive soup, rapidly decaying beyond the meagre ability of the Undercity dwellers to repair it. In fact, Manhattan Bridge collapsed before work commenced on the huge dome that engulfed the city.

Following Judge Dredd's destruction of the Brooklyn Bridge in order to eliminate a pack of werewolves,

Underground



Matt Sharp

the last remaining crossing between Long Island and Manhattan was severed. Only the strongest boats are capable of crossing the East River; most quickly dissolve. The large bridgeadeer tribe operates a reasonably reliable ferry service that crosses near to the remains of the old United Nations Headquarters.

Despite its large area, Brooklyn is sparsely populated. At the beginning of the century, the ruthless Tribe of the Free Robot brutally subjugated most of Brooklyn, eliminating any human or troggie that they came across. Over twenty years later, the population has yet to recover.

Manhattan: Still considered the heart of New York, Manhattan is the most strongly contested area of the Undercity. Probably the most densely populated area of the entire Undercity, Manhattan possesses at least a dozen large tribes and most of the important New York landmarks.

Queens: Part of Long Island, Queens is cut off from the rest of New York by the almost impassable East River. Queens borders directly with Brooklyn and was also subjugated by the renegade robots. However, the district's population of troggies fared better against the machines. They hit upon the solution of excavating deep pits in order to hide or ambush their unwieldy opponents. The entire area is now honeycombed with

a series of ingeniously concealed interconnecting passages, allowing the tribe to launch surprise attacks against invaders before vanishing without trace.



Staten Island: Approximately half of Staten Island is included in the New York dome. Cut off from the rest of the city by the Hudson River, the district of Richmond is occupied by a tribe of fiercely isolationist troggies notorious for their swift and brutal elimination of intruders. The southern bank of the Hudson River is dotted with the crucified remains of invaders, left as a warning to others.

Landmarks

Brooklyn Bridge: For many years, the Brooklyn Bridge was the last surviving crossing over the pollution-choked East River linking Manhattan to Long Island. Considering the mighty suspension bridge to be a vital resource, several of the Undercity tribes ganged together to ensure that the superstructure was kept in a good state of repair. A new tribe formed, the bridgeadeers, whose sole task was to ensure that the bridge remained intact enough to cross safely. The bridgeadeers took their job very seriously, replacing broken support cables and worn-out masonry whenever necessary, salvaging from nearby collapsed high-rise buildings. These improvised materials unfortunately tended to wear out far faster than the original bridge and the bridgeadeers' maintenance tasks became endless. Before long, the phrase 'fixing the bridge' came into common use to signify a task that could never be finished.

The bridge remained in use until 2105, when it was destroyed during Judge Dredd's notorious visit to the Undercity. Dredd packed his Lawmaster full of explosives and lured a huge pack of werewolves to the bridge. At the last possible moment, Dredd detonated the Lawmaster, shattering the bridge beyond repair and hurling the wolf pack into the lethally polluted water of the Big Smelly.

The bridgeadeer tribe moved further north and attempted to build a new bridge but as they lacked the necessary skills and resources, their efforts were doomed to failure. The tribe eventually admitted defeat and began to operate a ferry service instead.

Central Park: Located in the heart of Manhattan, Central Park was once the largest area of natural greenery to be found in New York City. Designed as a tourist trap, the park included dozens of attractions such as zoos, museums and monuments. However, even before the city was buried the location had a reputation as a haven for freaks and weirdoes. Much like its similar descendant in the Mega-City, the Martha Chesterton Memorial Park, Central Park was regarded as the last place that anyone would want to get caught in after dark. In the never-ending night of the Undercity, this reputation has increased dramatically. The entire area is a no-go zone.

Cut off from sunlight, the vegetation quickly died, leaving the ground cold and barren, littered with stinking mulch and decaying trees. Shortly after the long night began, strange noises began to be heard; screams, mournful howls and even weirder phenomena. Most assumed that the exhibits had escaped from the abandoned zoos but those who went to investigate were never seen again.

It was many years before the truth emerged. Residents of the surrounding areas began to report attacks by terrifying monsters, huge,

fur-covered creatures that walked like men but with the heads of wolves. Hundreds of troggies and human tribesmen were killed in battles with the monsters. They were the lucky ones. Those wounded by the creatures suffered a worse fate. They would gradually transform into one of the beasts, turning on their allies and loved ones in an uncontrollable bloodthirsty fury.

Before long, the wolf pack looked set to become one of the most dominant groups in the Undercity but fate was to take a hand. A huge crack appeared, leading straight to the city above. Attracted by the light and noise, several werewolves emerged, sating their bloodlust on the citizens of the Mega-City. However, the undisputed kings of the Undercity were no match for the judges of Mega-City One and the incursion was soon put down. Judge Dredd set off on a mission to totally wipe out the beasts, finally locating the source of the strange mutation. A strangely glowing pool in Central Park held mutagenic bacteria. Dredd neutralised the pathogen and killed most of the werewolves but a few survived the massacre and still cause problems in the Undercity even today.

Chrysler Building: Following the relocation of the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building is once again the tallest skyscraper in New York. Once standing 1,049 feet in height, the famous spire and top few floors are embedded in the rockcrete that forms the roof of the Undercity.

The once majestic and beautiful art deco building is less than a shadow of its former self. Uniquely for a skyscraper, the structure possessed an outer shell constructed from bricks and clad in ornately decorated metal panels. These were too soon torn away, leaving nothing but the box-girder skeleton behind.

For many years, the Chrysler Building possessed one of the most



stable and easily accessed tunnels into the Mega-City, emerging into a sub-basement of Oliver Reed Block. Rookie Judge Giant collapsed the exit of the tunnel in a battle with the Dark Judge Mortis during the Necropolis crisis and the last remaining stairwell collapsed shortly afterwards, making it extremely difficult to reach the top of the building. Today, the lower levels act as the headquarters of one of the tinker tribes who specialise in the construction of slow but powerful steam driven automobiles. The shattered streets of midtown Manhattan regularly ring to the sound of hammering when the tribe manages to gather enough material to construct a new steamer.

Grand Central Station: Once a spectacular sight, Grand Central Station is little more than a crumbling ruin, the last remaining relic of a

long lost railway system. The station has had the dubious distinction of serving as the headquarters of three of the most notorious groups in the Undercity. In the final years of the twenty first century, Slick Willy and his gang of troggies made their home in the building, using the subway tunnels to raid their neighbours until they were considered the greatest tribe of all. Following Willy's defeat at the hands of Judge Dredd, the station was left abandoned.

Other, even less human minds ultimately found a use for the station. These were renegade robots fleeing from the aftermath of the Robot War of 2099. Finding no safe bolthole in the Mega-City, many machines programmed to be loyal to Call-Me-Kenneth eventually found their way into the Undercity. This diverse collection of servo robots and construction droids eventually set up a base in the Grand Central Station, which they quickly renamed 'the Terminal'.

They were able to make use of the primitive technology that they found there. Soon they had adapted a steam locomotive to run without rails and began a reign of terror over their neighbours, without fear of interference from the hated judges. The Undercity dwellers soon learned to fear the robots' dread battle cry, 'Death to the Fleshy Ones!'

At one time, the robots ruled the whole of the eastern Undercity with an iron grip, ruthlessly eliminating all 'organics' that they came across. The machines, however, found it

difficult to survive in the low-tech environment. No spare parts were available, so if some vital system ceased to function the robot would simply grind to a halt. Only a tiny percentage of the once mighty army survives, existing by cannibalising their fallen comrades for desperately needed components.



Humans and troggies steered well clear of the Terminal while the robots were in charge. Some told tales of terrifying experiments carried out by rogue robo-surgeons, desperate to find a way to integrate organic parts into their system to prolong their existence. After many years occupying the Terminal, the robots were forced to abandon the site when Mister Bones and his mutant marauders decided they needed a secure bolthole near to the Grand Hall of Justice. The Tribe of the Free Robot became nomadic again, fleeing

the area in their steamers and the robomotive.

Bones became the third notorious maniac to establish his headquarters in the building but he will be the last. The station and surviving subway tunnels were flooded with molten lava, which destroyed Bones and his allies but gutted the structure in the process.

Grand Hall of Justice: The part of the Grand Hall visible on Mega-City One's surface is only the tip of the iceberg. The enormous building extends far below City Bottom, through the Undercity and beyond. The structure is disguised as a foundation column, encased in nine-foot thick plasteen walls with an outer rockcrete layer. The shaft holds armouries, emergency vehicle bays and holding cells. The SJS headquarters is located at the top of the shaft, directly beneath the maintenance level.

The foundation column continues below the streets of Old New York, at the very bottom of which is the Tactical Command Bunker, a Grand Hall of Justice miniature maintained for use by the Chief judge and Council of Five during the most grave of emergencies.

Madison Square Garden: Once a huge indoor sporting arena capable of seating 20,000 spectators, the Madison Square Garden has been transformed into a gigantic fortress. This is the home of the most brutal and militaristic of the human tribes, the Gridiron Union. Reinforced

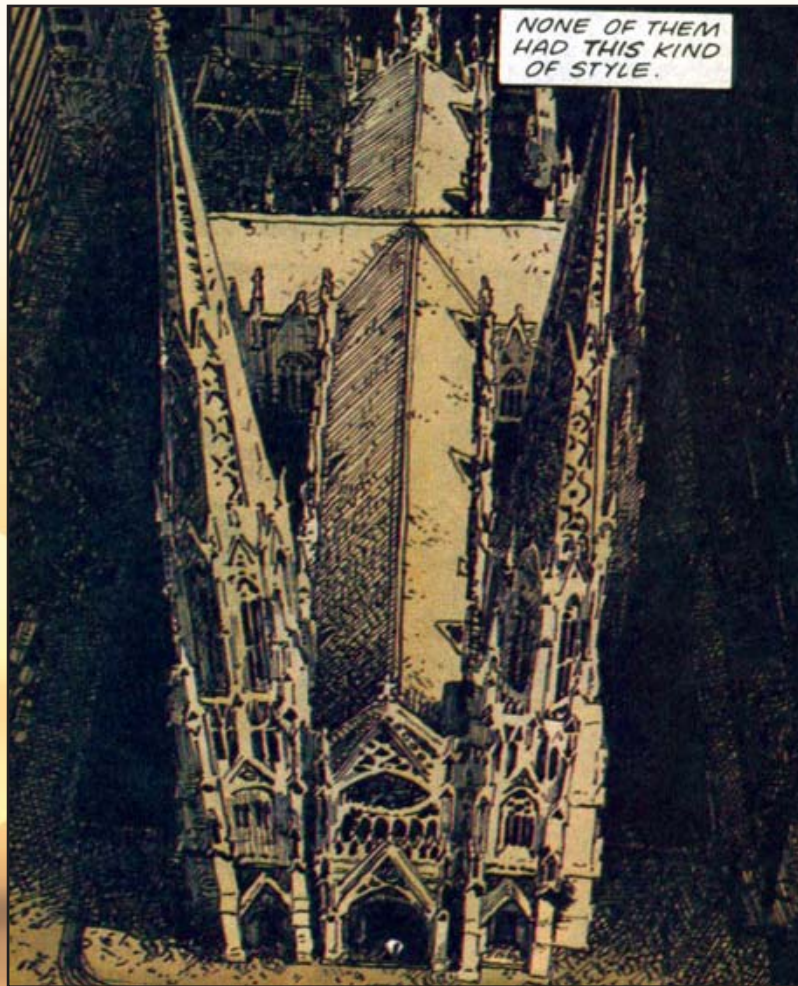
with dozens of improvised buttresses and specially built watchtowers and lookout posts, the original building is barely recognisable. The heavily armoured figures of the Gridiron sentinel troops keep a constant watch on the surrounding area, ever alert for any potential attack. Within the thick walls, the Union's single-minded and ruthless leader, known as the Coach, ensures that his team is ready for any eventuality, brutally weeding out the weak and making sure everyone else is at the peak of fitness. The great central arena regularly plays host to great gladiatorial contests.

Power Tower:

Another surface structure that extends into the Undercity, the Power Tower is an enormous man-made volcano that provides clean and reasonably safe power for much of the Mega-City. A series of massive conduits extend from the concrete sky to the broken streets of Manhattan, cutting through the shattered streets and into the very mantle of the planet. The pipes are transparent, carrying a steady flow of red-hot lava to the surface. The lava flow casts a hellish glow over several blocks, which combined with the scorching heat, ensures that the Undercity dwellers tend to avoid the structure if at all possible.

One of the conduits was fractured when Mister Bones attempted to destroy the Mega-City, opening a small volcano in the centre of New York. Fortunately, this was sealed before the city was endangered. On

the surface, however, the volcano raged uncontrollably and destroyed Harry Dean Stanton block. Now, the ruins form the Stanton Memorial Volcano and are one of the largest tourist attractions in Mega-City One. There are several Power Tower conduits passing through the various buried cities that form the Undercity. The locals always shun these structures but their presence is vital, as the controlled volcanoes are the only source of sulphur, a chemical that is vital for the production of gunpowder.



St Patrick's Church: Still a beautiful and impressive building found on Fifth Avenue, St Patrick's Church survives almost intact. Once, there was a feeling of peace and serenity that pervaded the building and even the many statues and stained glass windows remain almost complete. However, one of the most tragic stories of the burial of New

York happened within the hallowed nave of St Patrick's. Hundreds of the poor and homeless were unable to escape through the Undercity Gates before the deadline to evacuate was reached. Most eventually formed into their own tribes and gangs but some, the most religious, decided to make for the sanctuary of St Patrick's, to pray for guidance.

Their prayers were apparently answered. A great winged angel swooped down from the vaulted ceiling. This, though, was no divine being. The winged creature was a

demonic entity known as a holy fiend, who slaughtered the congregation, arranging the desiccated corpses into positions of prayer before the altar.

Other victims would be lured into this lair by the calm scene and feeling of peace. Before they noticed the state of the other worshippers, the vampire would strike. Like the werewolves before him, the fiend bit off more than he could chew when he discovered a fissure into the Mega-City. Venturing above ground, he murdered several citizens. This

brought him to the attention of the Judges, who quickly discovered his origin and dispatched Psi Judge Anderson into the Undercity to track the monstrosity down. Anderson easily located the creature with her paranormal powers and brought his reign of terror to an end but the atmosphere within the church

unsettled her. The mummified remains of the fiends' victims remain huddled within the church but the atmosphere became black and oppressive after the death of the monster and the building is generally avoided by the Undercity dwellers. Even the omnipresent rats and cockroaches steer clear, leaving the majestic structure huddled in an eerie silence.

Times Square: Times Square was formerly one of the busiest and crowded places in the world. Now, the square is a no-mans land, a buffer zone between the troggie tribes and the human population. Shrouded in an eerie silence, broken neon signs still bear forgotten slogans for consumer goods and the many theatres and cinemas advertise performances that will never be seen again.

Once a year, the many tribes of New Agers make a pilgrimage to the square to perform a strange series of rituals including chanting, singing and slowly counting down from ten. No one seems to remember the reason for this ritual but the New Agers nevertheless take it very seriously.

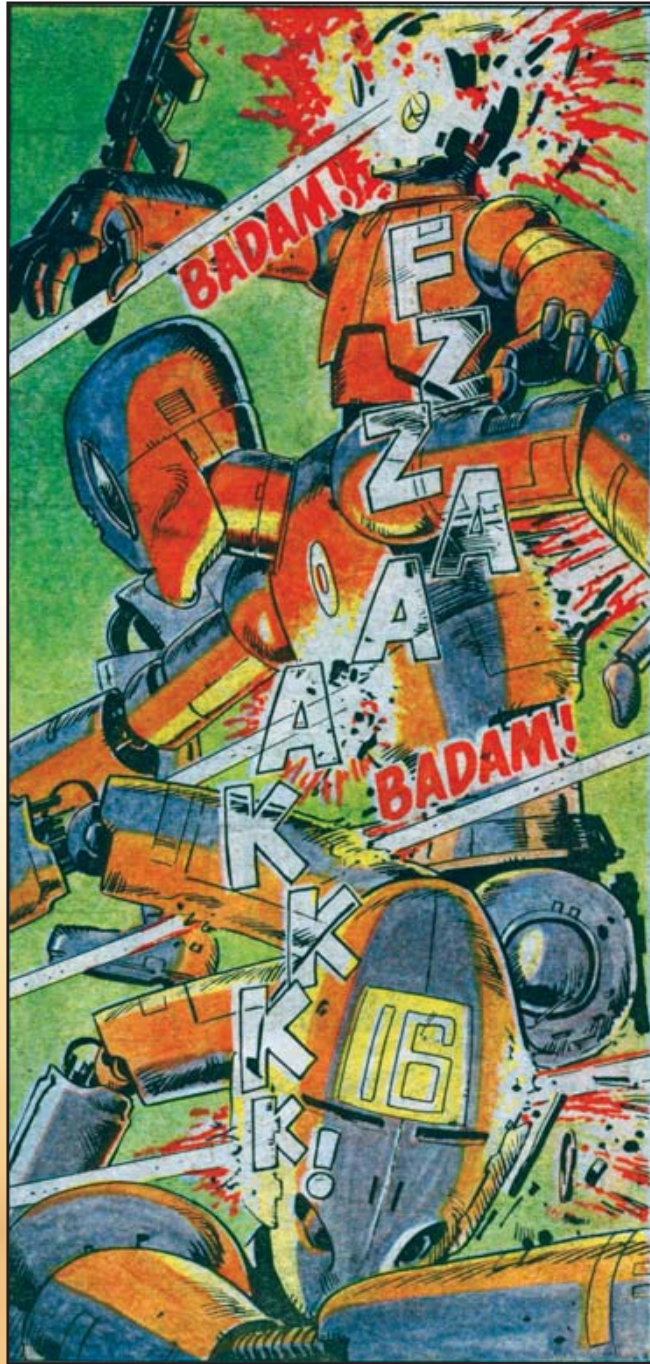
Trump Building: Located in the financial centre of Wall Street, the Trump Building once held the fiercest, cutthroat collection of mercenary groups, the New York yuppie. Naturally, when the city was buried the yuppies were the first to leave, leaving the building abandoned and cold.

Neglected, the majestic skyscraper slowly began to crumble and was the first major New York landmark to collapse. Today, the shattered ruin still plays host to most of New York's major transactions. The Trump Market is one of the few areas where the many rival tribes can gather together without a major confrontation developing. The Market is regarded as a sanctuary where much needed supplies are bartered for.

Trump Tower:

Originally designed to accommodate the ultra-rich, the majestic Trump Tower still retains some degree of its exclusive reputation. The tower is home to the vigilante group known as the Guardians, the closest thing that the Undercity has to a professional group of law enforcers.

Trump Tower is the only large building in New York that still has electricity but this light and heat is provided at a terrible cost. The generators are powered by a collection of treadmills buried in the basement. Once, volunteers would take turns to work the mills but under the influence of the Guardians, a new system developed. Lawbreakers would be sentenced to the treadmill, forced to trudge endlessly under the threat of a savage beating. Before long, genuine criminals became increasingly difficult to catch and the Guardians fell back onto a more brutal method of keeping their precious generator working – slavery. The local human tribes and troggie households have learned to live in fear of the times when the red-capped Guardian catch squads embark on a round up.



Inside The Chainmail Bra

Joanne FitzRoy

is...Gaming with Baby

Although I did not try roleplaying games until I was in my early 20's, I have embraced the many genres of RPG's with gusto. I began gaming in college and several years later ended up marrying my Storyteller. Now, after nine years of marriage, we come to the topic of this article, the art of gaming with a baby present.

Our gaming group meets twice a month on Friday and has been doing so for several years. We were not sure how the group was going to take the impending arrival of an infant. We half expected labour to start in the middle of combat during a game session. The other gamers in the group were joking that I would still be clutching my d20 in the delivery room, to which I joked back that it would be the case only if I thought the d20 would make a useful projectile if my husband were in range. It turns out that our son was considerate enough to arrive a week and a half before our next game, and since the group was going to break for a few weeks over the holiday season, I only missed one session.

When the group reconvened after New Year's, everyone was enthusiastic about gaming with the baby. The first few weeks were pretty easy. Baby napped in the crook of our arm while we played, but I found that I was 'stupid tired'. 'What die to I roll now? Where are we again? Why are you letting me map?'

Now that he is over six months old, we have established somewhat of a routine for gaming with baby. As an aside, I'm getting pretty good at one-handed mapping.

We feed and play with the baby before the gaming group arrives. Then we do a bit of a cleanup, putting away toys and disposing of the piles of spit-up encrusted tissues on the coffee table. We have always hosted the games, so the venue did not have to change for our convenience. As the group arrives, everyone greets the baby, who generally responds with a big wide grin. He's a happy kid overall. We are the only ones in the group with a child, but everyone else has a good friend or relative with small children, so often we swap baby stories before gaming begins. We also talk about how our son has changed over the past two to four weeks, since the group last met. Eventually the Games Master is ready and the game progresses something like this:

- ☺ The GM tries to catch the attention of the dwarf player, who is playing leapfrog in front of the baby.
- ☺ Baby progresses to chewing on the thief player's knuckle.
- ☺ As we start to get into the feel of the game, baby fusses.

- ☺ We stop for a couple minutes to redirect the baby's attention.
- ☺ Shaking a tube of polyhedral dice does the job well. So does playing peek-a-boo with his Cuddly Cthulhu puppet. Sometimes he even chews on the tentacles.

The baby has his own giant d20 too (well what did you expect?). This has given rise to the 'baby rule'. If junior throws or drops his die when you're rolling, you can take his roll instead of your own. Actually, the kid is a pretty lucky dice-thrower. He gets more natural 20's than I ever have. He also has a stuffed d10 and d20 to take to bed with him. No mundane teddy bear for this gamer's son.

An hour into the game, Mommy has to feed the baby and put him to bed. Before I get him upstairs, junior lets loose with his Stinking Cloud spell. Everybody rolls his or her Fortitude save except for my husband, who says he is making a Will save 'I did it last time and it is your turn, period.' Funny, that. Their characters create all kinds of mayhem, wade hip deep through blood and gore, but they cannot deal with the reality of a single messy diaper. And they're disposable!! You do not even have to rinse out the mess!

I come back downstairs a half-hour later with the baby monitor

in hand, and the group brings me up to speed. The rest of the evening is pretty routine; since once the baby is asleep he stays asleep. Occasionally if we get excited during a hearty combat I have to provide the voice of reason and ask everyone to tone it down a little since the sound wafts into the baby's room. The boys have gotten very good at policing themselves regarding coarse language. It never was a big deal with our group, but I have noticed that everyone is a little more vigilant now that there are little ears in the house.

So the gang has accepted the baby as part of the group and they even seem to enjoy the experience. I'm enjoying watching them (all single males) react to our son. I have seen them playing with the baby's toys, and a couple of them gave him a gift at Christmas. The best thing is when I have to leave the room for a short while. When I come back, I see a group of adult males clustered around the infant, all making silly faces and noises to amuse the little nipper.

We have fun with the baby at the local games store as well. If I want to play a tabletop war game for a couple of hours, one or two regular customers as well as the owner will take turns watching the baby while I game. If something needs Mommy's attention (you would think a dirty diaper was a nuclear device to some of these guys) my opponent takes a break and we resume once the baby has been dealt with. The games shop is a comfortable walk from our home, too, which is ideal for an afternoon's outing with the stroller. I'll often wander up there with the baby after lunch, have a coffee with the owner, look through the product catalogues to see what is new that we can no longer afford now that we have the

baby, and after a couple of hours, walk back home.

In fact, my husband and I owned the local games shop for ten years. That is a story for another day. We sold the business when I found out I was expecting. I am sure our son will curse that decision in a few years.

Which brings me to another subject, the cost of raising a child. My husband and I were discussing this over dinner the other night, while I was cleaning strained peas out of the baby's hair. Before the baby came along, we had a weekly budget set aside to support our hobbies of comic collecting and role-playing games. Compared to the weekly cost of bringing up baby, we often spent more on our 'toys' than we do on our son's daily needs for diapers, food and clothing. Averaged out, we estimate he costs the equivalent of a couple of new computer games a month, keeping in mind that we are not factoring in the extraordinary initial expenses like furniture. Then there is all the money we will save in the future by not having to purchase many RPG's or toys for him. We already have a library full of sci-fi, fantasy, horror and almost every other genre of RPG, CCG, board game and comic book known to fandom. Add to that our modern, medieval and ancient history reference

collection, not to mention the tabletop war game miniatures (easily 5,000 pieces fully painted and many more untouched), and the child will be hard pressed to try each item once, let alone get bored with gaming.

Who are we kidding? He's an only child. He'll make out like a bandit in the toy department.

Our only fear, and one that our gaming group reminds us of every time we meet, is this: What if (gasp!) our son is not interested in gaming? What if he's not lured by the creativity of character generation, the artistry of miniatures painting, the clatter of the dice? I guess it will mean that somehow our son and this child were switched at birth and we have been raising this boy completely unaware that he has a totally different destiny than what fate had planned. Or is that our next adventure? The only thing I'm sure of is that I have to go now. Got another Stinking Cloud to deal with.



Halfling Caravan Ship

Gareth Hanrahan



Medium Merchantman (Wooden Hull, Towed, 200 tons)

Structure Dice: 5d8 (20 sp)

Hardness: 5

Manoeuvrability: -2

Seaworthiness: +2

Speed: 15 ft./1 ½ miles

Turn Rate: 100 ft.

AC: 10

Special Qualities: None.

Fittings: Boats, Figurehead, Forecastle, Extra-Large

Galley, Pumps, Temple

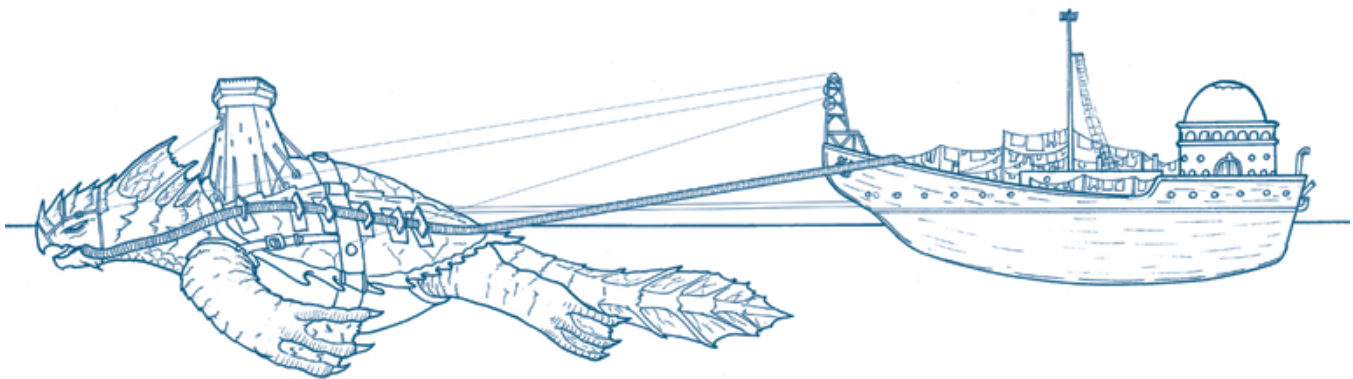
Crew: 200

Passengers: 80

Cargo: 40 tons.

Building Time: 11 months

Cost: 13,000 gp



A dragon turtle pulls this strange ship. Washing lines hang from the mast, and a dozen kitchen chimneys sprout from the wooden hull. Small vessels are tethered to its sides.

According to the tales, a halfling cook was once challenged to make the world's largest omelette. He stole the egg of a dragon turtle, but, before he could cook it, it hatched. The cook befriended and tamed the turtle and, when it was big enough, he tethered a ship to it and went off in search of an even bigger egg, perhaps that of a leviathan. However they managed it, several clans of seafaring halflings have their own tame dragon turtles harnessed to their brightly painted caravan-ships. The ships contain a whole clan, and are a warren of cabins, feasting halls, workshops and kitchens. Most caravans are followed by a flotilla of smaller boats, rafts and floating debris. The more inventive clans have even tapped the steam breath of the dragon turtles. Long tubes of specially prepared seaweed carry the steam back and use it to cook food or heat water. If one can stand the low ceilings, there are few more luxurious ways to travel than as a guest of the halflings.

WARNING

Your roleplaying is not optimized.
You are not currently serving **The Computer** with fervent loyalty.
You are not a **Troubleshooter** rooting out Communist, terrorists, subversives, filesharers, free thinkers and other dangers to **Alpha Complex**.

You are not playing **PARANOIA XP**.

Upgrade is mandatory. Fun is mandatory.

Reformatting roleplaying **NOW**.

PARANOIA XP. August 2004. Mongoose Publishing.
PARANOIA is fun. Other games are not fun. Buy PARANOIA. www.mongoosepublishing.com

Jonny Nexus

THE MAN WHO COULDN'T STOP DYING (PART 1)

I used to roleplay with a bloke called Bill¹ who had a problem with characters dying. Actually, that's incorrect. Bill had absolutely no problem having characters die. It was keeping them alive for more than one session that he had a problem with.

(A classic example of this being the Stormbringer campaign where he lost a character every session for the first five sessions).

This all occurred in a group in which combat-lite games predominated and where PCs deaths were – Bill aside – extremely rare. In around five years of play I had two characters die. Some people had none.

But Bill and death were like rivers and the sea – though there might be a few meanderings along the way, their eventual coming together was inevitable. In fact, Bill's lack of common sense became such a legend in my roleplaying circles that the character conception/personality of my current D&D character, Noorl (who I rolled up with a wisdom of 6), is based lock, stock and barrel on Bill. Whenever Noorl is faced with a dilemma, a choice, or merely an opportunity to charge headlong into danger, I only ever have to ask myself one thing:

'What would Bill do?'

It seemed unfortunate that these memories were – to quote a film better than anything I'll probably ever write – in danger of being lost 'like tears in the rain.' I felt it to be only right, proper, and – given that I have a monthly column to churn out – convenient for me to attempt to come up with the complete record of all of Bill's varied deaths.

To create this written tribute to Bill's ability to achieve termination in the most unlikely circumstances, I asked³ those who'd had the 'whatever' (I've tried all the standard words like 'honour', 'privilege', 'pleasure' and so on, but none of them seem to fit) of playing alongside Bill to recall some of his more memorable⁴ deaths, so that I could rank them in order of glorious stupidity.

Inevitably, the passage of time has led to many incidents going unremembered. The sessions in which I – notepad in hand – picked the brains of my fellow players were full of exchanges like: *'Hang on a minute, didn't he get b*****d to death by a werewolf?'* ... *'No, that was me!'* ... *'Oh yeah, it was, wasn't it! How did that happen?'* ... *'I don't know, you were the GM, remember?'*

But out of this difficult (in the sense of memory stretching as opposed to anything unpleasant) process we created an accurate (probably, perhaps, well mostly maybe) record of some of Bill's greatest deaths – so many in fact that I've been forced to split it into three instalments. (I wasn't kidding when I said that he'd died a lot – and these are just the ones we can remember).

However, I'd like to start with what I've termed the 'honourable mentions' – those occasions where his characters strived manfully to achieve a deserved oblivion, and were prevented from doing so only by circumstances beyond their control.

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Dark Conspiracy I

Upon the party encountering a glowing green radioactive hole in the ground he immediately declared, 'It's a GM plot device' and tried to climb inside (but was restrained by the other members of the party).

Stormbringer

One of his characters (given that he died every week in that campaign, we're not quite sure which one it was, although if I had to guess, I'd put my money on Number Two) was staying in the common room of an inn, decided to pick the pockets of his fellow residents, and failed the roll – resulting in him being beaten near to death. (They might have only been 'commoners', but then he was only a starting character in his half-hour of play).

Heroes Unlimited

In our 'Sword of the South' campaign (the group had been named by my character 'Southern Cross', a sort of racist Captain America... and perhaps the less mentioned about that, the better) his character Velocity caused the death of a little girl who was being held hostage by a mutant alligator. Ignoring the fact that said alligator was holding a gun to her head while saying, 'Don't come near me or I'll shoot!' he charged straight at the mutant, who promptly shot the little girl through the head.

The trauma of this (I think there was some kind of 'trauma' rule/table) made Velocity go totally schizo, embark on a killing spree, and end up getting killed by us, having become an NPC.

Dark Conspiracy II

Another Dark Conspiracy scenario in which we (the player characters) were advancing across a cornfield when we were surprised by a load of vampires. (No, I'm not sure why a bunch of vampires were hanging around a cornfield, either). Almost as one, we turned and ran, the almost in this case being, of course, Bill, who while berating us for not standing and fighting tried to trip Mark's PC in an attempt to make him stand and fight.

Mark's PC was holding a Stormcloud (apparently, this is some kind of implausibly huge hand cannon) and only decided not to blow Bill's PC away because he didn't fancy being alone in a cornfield full of vampires with only an empty gun for protection.

Quasar

In a game of Quasar (laser-tag) he tried to combat roll onto a raised section, tripped on the steps, fell, and kneecapped himself. (Okay, that isn't actually roleplaying – but it was really, really funny).

D&D

In a D&D game, raptor-like lizards attacked the PCs. They quickly formed a shield wall, except for Bill's dwarf, who broke away and charged. Unfortunately, being a dwarf and therefore slow, he didn't make it all the way to the lizards in his turn, enabling the lizards to use their leap attack on him. Badly wounded he tried to run back, but was leapt on once more before making the safety of the shield wall. John's elven PC was reported as saying: 'Strange? Is this some kind of dwarven suicide dance?'

Judge Dredd

In a Judge Dredd game he was caught beating up a perp by a fellow PC and was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment on Titan.

Phoenix Command I

In this, a game notorious for the detail, accuracy and plain damn lethality of its combat system, he tried to use martial arts against two geezers armed with machine guns. I'm told he survived. Somehow.

Phoenix Command II

Still not understanding the lethality of the system he managed to shoot his NPC best friend in the head.

Deadlands

Being by now somewhat into gunplay, he decided to have his character make a custom revolver. For reasons

that no one else was ever able to determine, he insisted on building a gun with a chamber for .45 ammunition paired with a barrel for .44 ammunition.

Call of Cthulhu

There is always some degree of confusion when attempting to recall incidents of some years ago, but particular confusion surrounds this particular incident. For reasons that have never been adequately explained to me, the whole session was recorded on tape⁵, leading to a situation where I have two sets of witnesses: members of my current Sunday group, who were present at the session, and some members of my current Thursday group, who listened to the audio record on a later occasion. (I never got to listen to the damn thing myself). In the end, the different recollections proved so irreconcilable that I have been forced to present two alternative versions of what happened.

Version 1 (as told by some of those who were there):

In scenario set on a remote Scottish island the party went monster hunting in the dark. To attack the aforementioned monster, Bill had constructed a Molotov cocktail from supplies he'd scavenged.

But when it was time to throw it, he fumbled, dropping it straight down. Instead of running away as all the other PCs did, he came up with what he bizarrely thought qualified as some kind of 'plan B'. If his throw had failed, then he'd simply drop kick it towards the bad guys, Jonny Wilkinson style. He went ahead with this plan B – despite the GM (John) asking, 'Are you sure?' a total of three times – and ended up with severe burns all down his leg after the glass bottle, not surprisingly, exploded upon impact with his boot.

Version 2 (as told by those who listened to the tape plus one who was there):

Since it was night, and therefore a bit on the dark side, he'd attempted to make a 'lamp' using only a bottle, a rag, and some paraffin he'd found in an outbuilding. However, at a crucial moment he dropped the 'lamp' and – not wanting to break it – attempted to kick it back into his hands. That would have been bad enough, but it is alleged by those listening to the tape that he failed the kick roll, and ended up with his leg stretched over the bottle when it hit the ground and exploded.

¹'Bill' is a pseudonym to protect the individual concerned. You might be saying to yourself, 'But surely if he reads the article he'll recognise it's about him from the descriptions of what happened?' but, well, you've clearly never met Bill, because if you had you'd know that he won't.²

²Some of you reading this article (and parts II and III) might (correctly) conclude that many of the deaths reported appear to be the fault of the GMs and/or Bill's fellow players, and not of Bill himself. Well that's true, but I'm the one writing this article, and having chosen my theme I'm damned well going to run with it. (You're perfectly at liberty to feel sorry for him, but I'm not going to, although I'll admit that my feelings might be slightly coloured by the fact that he borrowed thirteen hundred pounds off me to buy a car and then decided to stop paying me back when he still had a thousand pounds to go. Bitter? Hell yes!)

³I had to ask them, because as I frequently mention, I myself have the memory span of a goldfish.

⁴i.e. These were the ones we could remember.

⁵This tape (which was apparently one-fifth dialogue to four-fifths helpless laughter – so much so that Bubba was worried that TAFKAC was having an asthma attack) was later lost, presumed destroyed. It's recovery represents something of a 'holy grail' for those such as myself who have a serious interest in the field of 'Billology'.

Design and Conquer

by Adrian Czajkowski



Dark Phoenix Rising - Part I

Matthew Pritchard



Dark Phoenix Rising is an adventure for the *Judge Dredd Roleplaying Game*, designed for four to six judges of 10th to 12th level.

Background

Antonio Santiago, a powerful and ambitious Ciudad Barranquilla mobster, has acquired a source of raptaur eggs, creatures of enormous mystery. Are they extra-terrestrial or the product of terrible genetic research? Santiago intends not only to find out, but to make a profit into the bargain.

Whilst recognising the creatures' profit making potential, Santiago also rapidly learned of the extreme dangers involved in dealing with the raptours. Using his contacts amidst the Ciudad Barranquilla Justice Department he was able to house them off world in an orbital science lab. There his scientists began to experiment with the creatures, concocting dangerous new chemicals and even going so far as to mix their genes with those of humans, creating deadly hybrids.

Of course, living human bodies were needed to house the raptaur embryos if a true hybrid were to be created, and the hijack of an interplanetary shuttle was organised. Not wishing to attract attention within his home city, Santiago made use of one of his contacts in Mega-City One, Hal Corcovada, to do this. The vessel was later reported destroyed with no survivors.

Now, equipped with his deadly new merchandise, Santiago is planning to move in on new territory - Mega-City One! With the help of Hal Corcovada he plans to flood the market with the newly created Dark Phoenix tablets. The tablets have a rejuvenating effect on old or tired muscle structures, not dissimilar to Stookie pills, but they also have some very unpleasant side effects, as the judges are soon to discover!

However, a problem has arisen. Doogie Jong, a dim-witted member of Hal Corcovada's organisation and inveterate gambler, was forced to 'borrow' some of the new merchandise after a particularly heavy night's losses in order to pay off his debts. These were sold to inhabitants of the Gottfried Mengler Crock Block. Through his blunder the judges pick up Santiago's trail and begin to learn the deadly secret that lies behind the Dark Phoenix tablets...



Prog 1 - The Candyman Cometh...

One of Doogie Jong's regular sidelines is supplying crocks with the illegal medicines they need to prolong their lives. Under the pseudonym of 'The Candyman', Doogie is a well-known figure in many of Sector 190's Crock Blocks. However, he is completely unaware of the dangers the Dark Phoenix tablets pose when taken in large doses and has sold them to clients as a new form of Stookie.

Scene 1 - Watching Bay, Sector 190

Dark Phoenix Rising begins one hour into A-Watch. A serious problem with Weather Control has seen Sector 190 subjected to nearly three hours of continuous drizzle and the judges have been kept busy cleaning up the chaos it has caused. As the action begins they are sat in a watching bay, reviewing the slow moving traffic

+item+

BODIES FOUND

All units be aware, City Maintenance has just discovered a communal grave, City Bottom, Zone 12. Initial autopsies indicate victims were all killed with some kind of serrated power tool.

Instruction: Be on the look out for loons wielding chainsaws – the body count on this is already in double-figures and we're expecting to find more. *(This item relates to the vid-slug subplot the judges will later investigate.)*

+item+

PUBLIC ORDER

Any available units to proceed to Godiver Open Air Block Park. Seems some nuts have taken the rain as an excuse to strip off and return to nature. Given the new public decency ordinances issued last month, the Sector Chief wants to come down hard on them.

+item+

WEATHER CONTROL

All units be aware, the Weather Control malfunction has caused a serious logjam on back-up units. Expect delays on Med-Teams and Clean-Up squads. Sector Chief wants requests for back-up kept to a minimum. Tek's expect the malfunction to last another hour at least.

+item+

MOB WAR

Reports from Wally Squad units and various Narcs indicate a possible mob war is imminent. Following the mysterious disappearance of Vince Mullray's Mincemeat Crew, members of the Golightly gang have gone to ground and are rumoured to be massing heavy weaponry. Seems some new power has been putting the squeeze on the Golightly's Stookie rackets. Any known members of the gang are to be apprehended on sight and sent immediately to Sector House for interrogation. *(This is a direct result of the pressure Hal Corcovada has been putting on the Sector 190 underworld.)*

below and listening to the Control bulletin. Information given in *italics* is for the Games Master's eyes only. Should any judges request further details on any of the above items, Games Masters should improvise responses using information presented elsewhere in the adventure.

As the judges discuss the bulletin, a call comes through to them from Sector Control. *(Insert Judge's name here)*, take your squad over to the Gottfried Mengler Crock Block. Seems staff members there have discovered a stiff. Not surprising in a Crock Block, I know, but the institution's director, one Rustin Thornbird, thinks there's a possibility of foul play. Let us know what you find.' The judges should now head to the Crock Block.

Scene 2 - Gottfried Mengler Crock Block, Sector 190

Having arrived at the Gottfried Mengler Crock Block, the judges are

met by its chief supervisor, Rustin Thornbird, who awaits them in the building's main entrance plaza. Gottfried Mengler is one of Sector 190's most exclusive crock blocks and inside all is sparkling chrome and glass. Soothing muzak is piped through hidden speakers and the few crocks pottering around look fairly happy, paying little attention to the judges. Thornbird, however, is ashen grey in complexion. He wrings his hands anxiously as he escorts the judges to the scene of the death, explaining the details of the crime as he does so. Read the following out loud to the players.

'The victim, Mr. Bix Muffleberry, was found by a cleaning droid just a few minutes ago... Oh, I just don't understand it. Nothing like this has ever happened in Gottfried Mengler before. I hope you can clear this mess up quickly...the publicity could ruin us!'

Rustin Thornbird will continue in a similar vein until the judges either shut him up or they arrive at the crime scene. Thornbird knows very little about what has happened but, if asked, will tell the judges that the victim was a sweet old man who said very little and only came out of his room when the serving droids brought round his cup of warm munska.

Thornbird leads the judges to the crime scene, which is located on floor 44 of the crock block. Although all of the inmates on this level have been told to stay in their rooms, the judges will occasionally glimpse curious, wrinkled faces peering out at them. On arriving at Room 101, the judges quickly realise something has gone seriously amiss. The door to the room is buckled outwards and a character that makes a successful Spot check (DC12) notices the imprint of a fist at the centre of the bulge.

'Call-Me-Grandson!', the servo robot that discovered the body, also awaits the judges outside the room, his metal face painted with a huge, cheesy smile. He informs the judges that some 25 minutes beforehand he was doing his normal rounds, chatting with the inmates and calling on those of them confined to their beds, when he heard a terrible commotion coming from inside Room 101. He raced there, only to find the door buckled outwards and jammed shut. Inside, he could hear screams and the sound of fighting. The droid called security immediately and began to try to calm the other patients who had heard the commotion. During this period no one left the room and the noise slowly faded into silence. Once security arrived, they managed to open the door, found Bix Mufflebury's corpse and alerted the judges. This story will be repeated, with various muddled digressions about lost robodogs and rebellious grandchildren, should any judges question any of the crocks in adjacent rooms.

Inside, Room 101 is smashed to pieces. Furniture, walls, pictures, everything is torn to shreds. The victim lies face down in the middle of the mayhem, a frail, wrinkled old man wearing monogrammed pyjamas. The judges can discover the following information by examining the room.

- A Search check (DC 18) determines there is no sign of forced entry from outside. The windows are securely fastened and opening any of them causes an alarm to sound. Rustin Thornbird will explain this as a security measure to minimise the risk of inmates falling out.
- The victim's face is twisted into a mask of indescribable rage. Black spittle cakes his lips and chin. Analysis of this is inconclusive, although a Technical check (DC 22) with a scanalyser shows

the spittle to contain traces of an incredibly powerful stimulant.

- A Technical check (DC 20) determines that the fist imprint in the door matches that of the victim's own hand, an impressive feat of strength for someone who was practically bedridden.
- The victim's corpse is totally stiff, which after only 30 minutes dead it should not be. A successful Medical check (DC 22) discovers that all of the victim's muscles are totally contracted, as if he had undergone a violent seizure. Cause of death is due to the victim's heart having literally exploded.
- Hidden beneath the bed are a number of vid-slugs, entitled 'Robot Gore Gallery.' Each of the covers depicts an enormous, chain-saw wielding robot dismembering helpless women in nauseatingly graphic detail. The robot is helped in his endeavours by a fat, masked-man bearing distinctive Judge Death tattoos on both forearms. MAC has no details on either the robot or the fat man's tattoos.

Questioning Thornbird as to what type of pills he gives to his patients brings abject protestations of innocence, something the judges' Birdie Lie Detectors will confirm. Should any judges decide to search for any type of illegal substances in the victim's room, have them make a Search check (DC 20) to locate an empty pill container amidst the mess. Although there is no sign of the pills it once contained, traces of a fine black powder can be seen within. No one has any idea how Mufflebury got hold of the stimulant that seems to have killed him.

As the judges are finishing up at the crime scene, their attention is drawn by sounds of commotion. In the corridor outside, one of the human attendants stumbles down the corridor, blood streaming from his nose. 'Mr. Thornbird, come quickly,' he shouts, 'we've got a Crock Amok on level 42!'

Scene 3 - Level 42, Gottfried Mengler, Sector 190 - Crock Amok!

The judges race to the scene, accompanied by a near apoplectic Rustin Thornbird. Level 42 houses some of the healthiest crocks and as the judges enter it they find dozens of terrified inhabitants shuffling in the opposite direction. The judges will not have to ask them where the miscreant is located, as they can hear a series of bestial cries emerging from the nearby block park.

As the judges make their way there, they find a trail of carnage. Numerous corpses litter the corridors, some with their heads twisted around 180°; others with faces smashed to a bloody pulp. Rounding a corner, the judges spot the futsie some 50 feet away, in the process of destroying a metal bench with his bare hands. Thornbird cries out 'Why, it's Mr. Holmes... sir, your daughter will hear of this!'

Holmes turns at the sound of Thornbird's voice and judges see that his features are horribly contorted, a thick black foam coating his lips. With surprising agility he drops to all fours and begins to charge toward the judges, a jagged length of bench clutched in his hand.

Mr. Holmes, Berserk Crock

Citizen 2; HD 2d6 (9 – currently 89, see below); Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 13 (+3 Reflex); Attack +4 melee or +4 ranged; Fort +2, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 6.

Prior Life: None.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Drive

+4, Jump +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Search +4, Spot +6, Streetwise +4; Alertness, Great Fortitude.

Possessions: Length of jagged metal (1d8+3/2).

Although Holmes is unlikely to pose any serious threat to the judges, the high number of extra hit points afforded him by the Dark Phoenix tablets will make him difficult to drop (for details on the tablets' effects see adjacent boxed section.) This in turn should intrigue the judges. Analysis of the black foam caked around Holmes' mouth reveal it to contain the same substance that the judges discovered in Bix Mufflebury's room.

Examining Mr. Holmes's living pad, the judges find nothing of interest apart from a small bottle of black tablets. Each of the tablets bears the distinctive imprint of a phoenix rising from a mass of flames. Should any judge send the tablets back to the Sector House labs for analysis, they will discover the following information, which the Games Master can give the judges at a convenient point in the action (allowing 2-3 hours for the analysis.)

When the judges discover the tablets in Mr. Holmes' room, they notice that more than one of the nearby crocks looks a little nervous. Interrogation quickly brings results. A man known to them as 'the Candyman' comes

around once a fortnight, posing as a concerned grandson, bringing with him all manner of proscribed drugs which he then sells to the more daring of the Crocks. Both Mr. Holmes and Bix Mufflebury were known to be customers of the Candyman, who made his visit just last night.

The judges might well now think of running a series of Crime Blitzes to flush out other illegal substances. No more of the black pills will be found but a whole host of other illegal things will – Games Masters should determine what is found at their own discretion, but things like adifax and sugar will be high on the list. At no point will they encounter any resistance.

Having discovered the existence of the mysterious 'Candyman', the judges will probably be anxious to put a name and face to him. This is fairly easily achieved, as the judges can examine the Crock Block's security cameras for yesterday's images. Running the image through MAC quickly gives them the name of Doogie Jong, a minor perp, 33 years old. The judges can request more information on Doogie Jong if they wish.

The judges will now probably want to pay a visit to Apt.14f-123, Torrente Towers. As the judges are soon to find out, Jong is in fact dead. His theft of the tablets has been discovered and Hal Corcovada has dispatched one of the half-raptaur

Entry: 4548/X89/MC-1
Subject: Francis Jong
Known Alias: Doogie Jong
Age: 33
Height: 1.67m
Weight: 87 kg
Listed Address: Apt.14f-123 Torrente Towers

Convictions:
 2111 – 2 years in Juve Cube 16-190-F.
 20/2: Possession of illegal substance (sugar)
 2114 – 6 months in Iso-Cube 4598-190-B. 9/4: Scrawling
 2120 – 3 years in Iso-Cube 78-190-N.
 13/5: Unlawful assembly (attending bite fight)

Notes: Although never convicted of any truly serious crimes, Jong's psych-profile shows him to belong to the classification 'persistent offender.' It is highly unlikely that Jong will ever spend anything other than very short periods out of the iso-cubes. Judges encountering Jong at any time are advised to assume his guilt as very probable. After last period of incarceration it is rumoured that Jong was seeking an entrance into the world of organised crime, although this has not been confirmed.

Dark Phoenix Tablets

The tablets' chemical make up is similar to that of Adifax or 'Stookie' pills, as they have rejuvenating properties and appear to have been fabricated from some form of unknown alien DNA. However, the effects are far more unstable and aggressive than Adifax. The cells begin to replicate themselves at an amazing rate, changing the imbider's molecular structure. This leaves him stronger, more dextrous and nearly immune to pain. In anything other than miniscule doses, the tablets provoke the violent secondary effects the judges have already witnessed.

A single Dark Phoenix tablet gives the consumer a +1 circumstance bonus to both Strength and Dexterity and 10 extra hit points. Note that these are not temporary hit points. Users finding themselves at -10 or less when the effects wear off will die. These effects are cumulative (up to a maximum of +8/80), although as of the second dose a Fortitude save (DC 16) must be made to avoid flying into a berserk rage. This Fortitude save increases by +4 with each subsequent dose (for example, a character taking 5 tablets must make the save at DC 28.) The effects last for 1 hour.

hybrids to deal with Jong. The clues the judges find at the murder-scene lead them further into the mystery.

Scene 4 - Apt 14f, Level 123, Torrente Towers

Torrente Towers is a low class block in the south of Sector 190. The journey there takes about 30 minutes. The judges dismount on level 123 and head toward 14f, following a series of stinking, graffiti covered corridors.

Inside the apartment the judges quickly locate Doogie Jong, or what is left of him. His head and part of his torso have been fed into the garbage grinder. A Medical check (DC 12) is sufficient to confirm that the bloodied remains are indeed those of Doogie Jong and that he has been dead some eight hours. The area around the garbage grinder shows signs of a struggle having taken place, which would indicate that Jong was alive when he was fed into the garbage grinder. At this point have the judges make a Intelligence check (DC 18) to realise that anyone capable of feeding the barrel-chested Jong into a garbage grinder alive must have been incredibly strong.

Should the judges think to examine this area in detail, a Search check (DC 22) reveals a clear set of fingerprints on one of the work surfaces. Running the prints through MAC gives the judges a name – Dallas Hudson, a long time resident of one of Sector 190's DP camps. Curiously, the records show Hudson to be dead. According to MAC both Hudson and his family left Mega-City One for a far distant colony not six weeks ago, under the assisted passage scheme created by the Justice Department to reduce the housing problem. The flight LV-400, belonging to the NEW WORLD TRANSPORT CO., was subsequently reported as destroyed by a freak asteroid shower, leaving no survivors.

Searching the living pad, the judges discover three items of interest to them. Information given in italics is for the Games Master's eyes only.

Hanging up in one of the wardrobes there is a neatly pressed uniform. The logo on the jacket pocket bears the words 'NEW WORLD TRANSPORT CO.' (*Jong was smuggled aboard flight LV-400 disguised as a member of the crew to facilitate the hijack.*)

In the bathroom, amidst all manner of useless beauty products and hair creams, they find a small box containing dozens of smaller tablet containers. Each of the tablets found inside bears the distinctive phoenix stamp the judges will be familiar with from their experiences in the Crock Block.

Tucked away in a chest of drawers there is a crumpled holo, showing Doogie Jong arm in arm with a fat, thuggish man, a leather mask clutched in one hand. The man's forearms bear distinctive tattoos of Judge Death's rictus grin. Behind them looms an enormous droid, the twin chainsaws it carries dripping a stream of blood onto the floor. The judges will recognise both the robotic horror and the fat man from the vid-slugs discovered earlier. Running the fat man's face through MAC gives the judges a name, Humboldt Cooper, a perp with a long history of violent crime.

The holo appears to have been taken inside a large building and on a successful Spot check (DC 18) the judges notice that writing is visible on the wall just above the robot's head. Although it is far too small to read with the naked eye, the image enhancing equipment at the Sector House could give the judges a clue as to where the photo was taken. Should the judges pursue this course of action they will get a specific address – Warehouse 14, Arthur Scargill 'Dust zone, Sector 190.

Speaking to Doogie Jong's neighbours brings little joy. One was out on the night in question, whilst the other heard everything but thought it was a Tri-D show. 'The spugger always had it turned up so loud it made the walls shake!' he will claim.

The judges can now either try to track down Humboldt Cooper or take a ride over to the offices of the NEW WORLD TRANSPORT CO. Both of these options are covered in Prog 2.

Prog 2 - Lights, Cameras... Slaughter!

Scene 1 - Warehouse 14, Arthur Scargill - Dust Zone, Sector 190

The dust zone is located on the outskirts of Sector 190, close to an area of radpits and wasteland. It is a grimy, desolate spot, a perfect location for illicit activity. Warehouse 14 appears to be semi-derelict, although the judges notice a large civilian hoverwagon parked outside.

There is no sign of activity outside but the judges will notice a dim light shining inside the building. Should they choose to look through one of the many windows, read the following to them out loud:

Peering in through the grimy window you see little at first. At the far end of the building there is a group of four men, standing around smoking and listening to a fifth, a curious figure dressed in plus-four trousers and sporting a monocle, with the word 'director' written across the back of his shirt. Cameras, microphones and other recording equipment cover the floor.

Suddenly, another two goons appear, pushing a pair of struggling women before them. The goons chain them to a pillar whilst the rest of the men begin to man the recording equipment. The director begins shouting instructions, most of which are inaudible to you, although you catch the last thing he says – 'You can take their gags off now. I want to get their screams up nice and loud in the mix!'

For a moment nothing happens, then a huge robot appears accompanied by a fat, masked man. As the director shouts 'O.K., Light, Cameras...Slaughter!', the gruesome pair fire up their chainsaws and begin lumbering towards the two terrified women.

Games Masters should encourage the judges to come up with a convincing strategy for entering the building, as they have a chance here to wrap up the whole vid-slug racket. However, do not let them take too long about it, as the two innocent women inside are close to being chainsawed into muncce paste! The main doors (DR 12, Hp 60) are chained shut from the inside but the rear door is open. The Games Master should ensure Humbold Cooper survives the combat.

7 Vid-slug Racketeers

Citizen 4; HD 4d6+11 (28hp); Init +4 (+4 Improved Initiative; Spd 30ft.; DV 12 (+2 Reflex); Attack +5 melee, or +3 ranged; Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -1, Str 15, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 7, Wis 9, Cha 7

Prior Life: Goon

Skills and Feats: Balance +2, Climb +7, Concentration +7, Drive +5, Hide +5, Intimidate +3, Jump +7, Pilot +5, Streetwise +4; Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Resist Arrest, Toughness

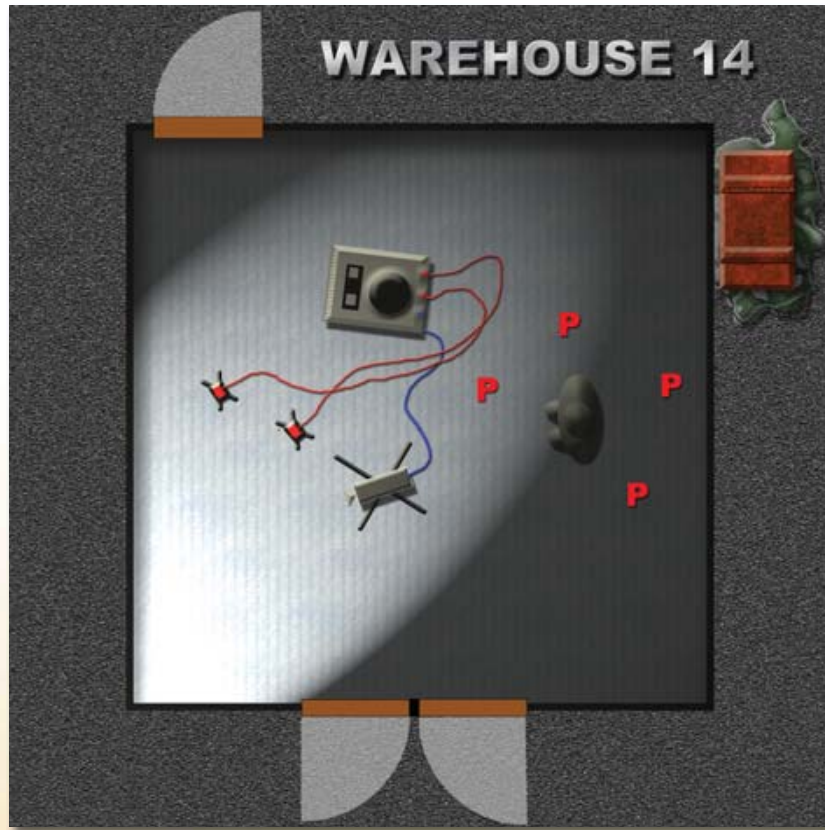
Possessions: Handgun (2d8/4), Benson's Hedge Tobacco Sticks

Humbold Cooper

Citizen 7; HD 7d6+17 (45hp); Init +4 (+4 Improved Initiative; Spd 30ft.; DV 12 (+2 Reflex); Attack +8 melee, or +5 ranged; Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2, Str 17, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8

Prior Life: Goon

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Climb +11, Concentration +10, Drive +10, Hide +10, Intimidate +8, Jump +12, Pilot +10, Streetwise +9; Improved



Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Resist Arrest, Toughness

Possessions: Chainsaw (1d8+3/6)

'Big Earl', Robot

Large Robot

Hit Dice: 18d12 (117 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: +20 ft.

DV: 9

Damage Reduction: 12

Attacks: 2 Chainsaws +11 melee

Damage: Chainsaw 1d8+8/6

Face/Reach: 5ftx5ft./10ft.

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 10

Software Capacity: 16

Software Packages: Base Attack

Bonus +3, Two-Weapon Fighting

Special: Law-breaker module

Having captured Humbold Cooper, the judges can begin to question him. Although not particularly intelligent, Cooper has an animal cunning when it comes to dealing with judges. With this in mind, he will make the judges work for their information, trying at all turns to strike bargains with them. Likely questions and answers are listed below, although for reasons of space only those relevant to the adventure are given. Games Masters should improvise answers about the vid-slug rackets, etc., perhaps using them as triggers for further scenarios.

Chainsaw

Old fashioned and inefficient in comparison to modern laser based cutting tools, the chainsaw is rarely used for the task it was actually designed for in Mega-City One, although it is occasionally found in the hands of lumberjacks in the Cursed Earth. However, chainsaws can occasionally be found in the hands of vicious criminals intent on terrifying their victims. Chainsaws are noisy and can be extremely messy, but these drawbacks only add to the appeal. Chainsaws are not designed as weapons, so suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to attack rolls when used in combat.

Weapon	Cost	Black Market Cost	Damage	Armour Piercing	Area of Effect	Critical	Rapid Fire	Range Inc.	Size	Weight	Type
Chainsaw	375 cr.	750 cr.	1d8	6	-	x4	-	-	Med.	8 lb.	Slashing

Where did Doogie Jong get the pills? Cooper accompanied Doogie Jong when he went to steal the tablets. However, Doogie insisted on the utmost secrecy and during the journey made Cooper wear a blindfold. If pressed Cooper will hazard a guess as to the rough location, somewhere close to City Bottom and not far from the Sector 190 Spaceport - 'I could hear the ships flying in above us', he claims. They eventually arrived at a large, derelict building where they began unloading the boxes. 'It was cold as hell', Cooper remembers. 'There was a hell of a racket too, like they had big freezers going or summat.' The judges can put this information through MAC if they wish, but they draw a blank. However, this information, when combined with other details the judges will learn in Scene 2, can be used to pinpoint the 15th Street Boy's hideout. Cooper also knows that Jong was hanging around with Hal Corcovada's boys a lot, that they are rumoured to have a new backer and are planning to take over the Sector 190 drugs trade. On successful Knowledge (sector) check (DC 20) the judges will know Hal Corcovada to be a minor mobster, long thought to be planning a move into the big time.

Who are Hal Corcovada's new backers? Here Cooper can truthfully say that he does not know, having had the sense not to ask. However, he does have his suspicions. During their last meetings Doogie occasionally boasted about how the 'new backers' were going to cream the entire Megwest underworld and that he (Doogie) was finally going to be a big shot. Cooper suspects the backers to be from outside of Mega-City One.

Scene 1 ends once the judges have finished questioning Humboldt Cooper.

Scene 2 - New World Transport Co., Sector 190

This section covers investigations surrounding the NEW WORLD TRANSPORT CO. and the

mysterious flight LV-400. As detailed in the background to this scenario, the luckless passengers of flight LV-400 were delivered to Antonio Santiago's orbital science lab, where they were used as hosts for the rapturs' worm-like embryos. The manager of the NWTC, Gobi Fowler, was blackmailed into co-operating with Hal Corcovada and the 15th Street Boys, allowing various members of the gang to smuggle themselves aboard the flight. The vessel was subsequently reported destroyed in a freak meteorite storm.

At some point in the adventure the judges will want to pay a visit to the NEW WORLD TRANSPORT CO. Any judge succeeding in a Knowledge (sector) check (DC 20) will know a little about the company. This information can also be called up from MAC (Computer Use check, DC 16).

Given the extreme housing problems that continue to plague Mega-City One, a Justice Department initiative has granted certain private companies the licence to offer cut-price travel to off-world colonies (with the Justice Department subsidising the tickets.) The NEW WORLD TRANSPORT CO. is one of the many companies that have flourished under this scheme, its financial backers comprising members of the Sector 190 elite. As a standard procedure, all prospective companies are thoroughly vetted by members of the Accounts Department before being accepted.

The New World Transport Co.'s head office is located in the Shelby Duvall Block. The main entrance leads into a dismal waiting room, where the judges are greeted by an irritatingly officious reception droid. A handful of grubby citizens sit slumped in the plastic chairs, staring mournfully at the faded pictures of beaming colonists arm in arm with friendly aliens. The droid is not exactly top of the range in the artificial intelligence department and will initially meet the judges' questions with irrelevant responses such as 'Where is it you

want to go?' and 'Will that be a window seat?'

However, once the judges get tough the door to a side-office slides open and the manager, Gobi Fowler, emerges. Gobi is a smarmy, skinny man, with lank hair and a chronic lisp. He will initially appear anxious to do everything in his power to help the judges. Gobi has no criminal record, although he does have a dark secret – he is chronically addicted to sugar. It was this addiction that Hal Corcovada used to blackmail Gobi and gain his aid.

Gobi will (truthfully) deny all knowledge of vid-slugs, Dark Phoenix tablets, etc, reminding the judges that he is a respectable businessman. If asked about flight LV-400 Gobi is profuse in expressing his sorrow at the terrible accident. The judges should now roll opposed Sense Motive checks against Gobi Fowler's Bluff skill of +10. If successful, the judges realise Gobi is getting a little hot under the collar when questioned about the accident and seeks desperately to change the subject.

Within the company's files the judges discover something of interest on a successful Computer Use check (DC 24). On the day of flight LV-400's take-off, certain members of the company's usual flight crew are shown as not having worked. Although not actually hidden, the file has been conveniently 'misplaced.'

When questioned as to this, Gobi Fowler will break, admitting everything. About three months previously he was contacted by a disreputable character who made several allusions to Gobi's sugar habit. Photographic evidence was also provided. Then, about two months ago, detailed instructions were sent to him. Certain changes were to be made to one of the company's scheduled flights, no questions asked. Not wishing to lose his lucrative job, Gobi followed the instructions to the letter, introducing three members of Hal Corcovada's

gang in the flight schedule. The last instructions Gobi received were to take a set of NWTC uniforms to a Sector 190 rendezvous, held in a street close to the spaceport. Although Gobi does not know the name of Doogie Jong he will recognise him if described.

If the judges press him for more details, Gobi Fowler can remember one thing of crucial importance – the man who collected the uniforms was driving a large Ground Car bearing the logo of the now defunct ‘Frobisher’s Freeziwhip’ company.

The judges can use this information in conjunction with Humbold Cooper’s to pinpoint the exact location of the 15th Street Boys’ hideout. Running a search through MAC for warehouses once belonging to ‘Frobisher’s Freeziwhip’, close to City Bottom and near to the spaceport gives the judges a specific address – Warehouse 17, Mallorn Drive, Sector 190.

Scene 3 - Warehouse 17, Mallorn Drive, Sector 190

Mallorn Drive is located in a gloomy, run-down area. As the judges pull-up outside Warehouse 17 they see that

no one appears to be around outside. The main doors are closed but as the judges approach they hear the sound of activity from within – some form of heavy machinery is operating inside. Any judges succeeding in a Spot check (DC 12) notice that all of the warehouse’s windows have been blacked out.

The judges can gain access to the warehouse via one of the smaller side doors (Technical check (DC 18) to open.) Having done this, read the following out loud to the players.

Inside the warehouse, the air is filled with the thunderous racket of generators in operation. A pair of heavy-duty droids lift crates from the back of a parked juggler and transport them to an adjacent walk-in freezer. A number of men in thermal clothing control the operation.

Should the judges decide to continue observing the situation they will notice the following.

On the far side of the warehouse, a separate group of four men are standing around smoking. They appear to be guarding the door to a separate room. On a successful Spot

check (DC 18) the judges notice that each of them appear to carry pistols under their clothes (they make no particular effort to hide them – a character with the Spot Hidden Weapon feat will notice them automatically). On a Streetwise check (DC 22) the judges recognise one of them as belonging to Hal Corcovada’s 15th Street Boys.

A well dressed Latino man appears to be in charge. He walks around the warehouse, snarling instructions. A tall, muscular man accompanies him. As the judges observe him they receive the unnerving impression that he is not quite human. The bone structure of his jaw is strangely elongated and he walks with a sinuous, cat-like gait.

The crates being unloaded contain thousands of boxes of Dark Phoenix tablets, enough to flood the entire Megwest market for months. The Latino man is Jose Matamoros, a lieutenant in Antonio Santiago’s organisation and former Ciudad Barranquilla judge.

As soon as the judges make their presence known all hell breaks loose. As the cry of ‘Judges!’ echoes around



the warehouse, all perps present will draw their weapons and dive for cover. On round three of the combat, Hal Corcovada and another four bodyguards emerge from the office door and join the fray.

8 Gang Members

Citizen 4; HD 4d6+11 (28hp); Init +4 (+4 Improved Initiative; Spd 30ft.; DV 12; Attack +5 melee, or +3 ranged; Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -1, Str 15, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 7, Wis 9, Cha 7

Prior Life: Goon

Skills and Feats: Balance +2, Climb +7, Concentration +7, Drive +5, Hide +5, Intimidate +3, Jump +7, Pilot +5, Streetwise +4; Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Resist Arrest, Toughness

Possessions: Handgun (2d8/4), Benson's Hedge Tobacco Sticks

Jose Matamoros

Street Judge 6/Citizen 3; HD 6d12+3d6+30 (88hp); Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30ft.; DV 20 (+10 Reflex); Attack +10/+5 melee, or +10/+5 ranged; Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +8, Str 14, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +13, Computer Use +15, Intimidate +13, Jump +14, Listen +12, Search +15, Spot +14, Technical +14; Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Aim, Toughness

Possessions: Laser Pistol (4d6/14), Shell Jacket (DR 8)

Hal Corcovada

Citizen 7; HD 7d6+11 (42hp); Init +4 (+4 Improved Initiative; Spd 30ft.; DV 12; Attack +7 melee, or +5 ranged; Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0, Str 14, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 7.

Prior Life: Goon

Skills and Feats: Balance +3, Climb +10, Concentration +10, Drive +8, Hide +8, Intimidate +6, Jump +10, Pilot +10, Streetwise +7; Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Resist Arrest, Toughness

Possessions: Laser Pistol (4d6/14), Shell Jacket (DR 8)

Raptaur Hybrid

Medium Humanoid

Hit Dice: 6d8+24 (60 hp).

Initiative: +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 40ft

DV: 19 (+9 Reflex)

Damage Reduction: 10 (+2 natural armour, +8 Shell Jacket)

Attacks: Las knife +11/+8 or Laser Pistol +10/+5

Damage: Las knife (1d6+5/10) or Laser Pistol (4d6/14)

Face/Reach: 5ft. by 5ft./5ft.

Special Qualities: Blindsight, Immunity to Psi

Saves: Fort +9, Reflex +9, Will +5

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 18, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14

Skills: Climb +12, Jump +12, Hide +10

Feats: Improved Initiative

Blindsight: As *Core Rulebook III*

Immunity to Psi: The raptours are completely immune to all mind-affecting Psi powers. However, Psi powers creating real, physical effects (e.g. Concussion, Fire of Retribution) affect them normally.

Once Hal Corcovada and his henchmen have been defeated, the judges can begin to examine the premises. The freezer rooms contain yet more boxes of the Dark Phoenix tablets. Further rooms contain makeshift bedding, an impressive array of weaponry and numerous large transport vehicles. It is clear Hal Corcovada was planning something big.

Hal Corcovada's office is a Spartan affair, containing little more than a desk and chairs. On top of the desk the judges find a collection of envelopes, each one bearing the name of a different Megwest crimelord. The envelopes' contents are identical, consisting of a vid-slug and a printed note – 'Watch this if you know what's good for you!'

The judges can view the vid-slug through their Lawmaster computer. Read the following out loud to the players.

The screen flickers a moment, then the camera focuses on a squat dwarf standing before a blue curtain. 'Welcome, welcome!' he announces in a thickly accented voice. The dwarf is hideously fat and his features are hidden behind a thick beard and dark glasses, but by his swarthy skin and accent he seems to be a citizen of Ciudad Barranquilla. His mouth twists into a grin, revealing yellowed teeth and he shuffles closer to the camera.

'Tonight, my friends, marks the end of an era for Megwest crime. As the saying goes 'All good things must come to an end' and for you that final moment has arrived. There are some new boys in town. What do we want? Let me spell it out for you – complete control of the Adifax market, no ifs, no buts. From now on Adifax is a no-go for anyone who wants to stay alive. I'm sure that many of you will have to learn this the hard way, but here's a little something to show you all we mean business....enjoy!'

The screen changes to show a circular pit, its floor covered with sand. A group of eight thuggish looking men stand in the centre of the pit, each of them brandishing a club. To your surprise you recognise many of them as belonging to Vince Mullray's Minceat Crew, an elite group of blitzers affiliated to the Golightly Gang. Fear shows on each of their faces as they stare bemusedly at the walls of the pit.

Suddenly two shapes drop from the ceiling, landing amidst the blitzers. Chaos instantly ensues, as the blitzers seek to defend themselves, swinging the clubs wildly as the two shadows whirl and spin amidst them, snapping necks and tearing throats with contemptuous ease. Within a matter of seconds half of the blitzers are down. The rest split, desperately seeking an exit from the pit. The two lithe figures, now visible as a man and a woman, hunt them down mercilessly. The film ends with a close-up of the woman, her eyes strangely impassive as she punches her fist clean through the last blitzer's chest.

The man and woman shown on the film are half-raptaur hybrids and give off the same unnerving aura. It is likely the judges will have a whole host of questions they want to ask about the vid-slug, but the Games Master should not allow them a chance to catch their breath as an urgent call comes through from Control.

'(Insert Judge's name here), we've got a small shuttlecraft just entered Mega City airspace. There's no response from the crew but it seems to be some form of emergency craft. Computer analysis shows it should come down near to your position.'

As the judges emerge from the warehouse they spot a small shuttle blazing a fiery trail across the skyline. The shuttle's engines emit a high-pitched whine as the vehicle desperately tries to slow its descent. As the judges leap onto their Lawmasters, the shuttle goes into a spiralling dive, smoke and flames belching from its engines. Gradually it disappears below the Sector 190 skyline, to be followed seconds later by the faint boom of an explosion.

Almost instantaneously, the judges' bike radios come to life, as Sector Control begins directing available units toward the crash site. The exact co-ordinates are fed through directly to the judges' bike computers, a location some ten minutes from their present position, close to an area of wasteland between the Ridley Scott Block and the Dan O'Bannion Munce Paste Distillery.

Scene 4 - Crash Site, Wasteland, Sector 190

The crash site is easily located, given that a thick plume of smoke is clearly visible. As the judges reach the scene, they see that the shuttle is still in one piece, having ploughed a deep furrow in the ground. However, the rear of the vehicle is in flames. Three stunned survivors clad in blue pyjamas wander dazedly away from the wreckage. Screams for help can be heard emerging from within the shuttle.

As the first unit to reach the scene, the judges' initial priority should be to rescue those survivors trapped within the vehicle. The shuttle's main entrance stands open, tongues of flame licking around its edges.

As the judges enter have them make a Spot check (DC 18). If successful they notice a flashing panel close to the door, bearing the message 'TOTAL HUMANOID LIFESIGNS AT TAKE-OFF: 14'. The judges will know this to be a safety precaution, allowing rescuers to ascertain quickly how many possible survivors they need to look for. Amazingly, everyone on board has survived the crash, although many are trapped amidst the wreckage or lay unconscious in their seats. There are ten survivors inside the shuttle and rescuing each of them takes two rounds. Perceptive judges may notice that they can only locate 13 of the survivors. No matter how much they search the interior of the shuttle they will find no sign of the fourteenth.

However, the fire in the rear of the shuttle makes their task a perilous one. Each round the Games Master should roll 2d6 and keep a running total. Once the total reaches 30, the heat becomes unbearable and everybody inside must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) each round or receive 1d6+6 subdual damage. Once the total reaches 40 the shuttle explodes, causing 10d6 damage to everyone within a 20-blast foot radius. The judges can try to beat back the fire if they wish. For each judge fighting the flames, 1d3 should be deducted from the total each round. Given the amount of fuel leaking from the engines, the judges will be unable to extinguish the fire totally; even if they manage to get the score down to zero or below.

Having rescued as many of the survivors as possible before the shuttle blows, the judges can now begin to tend to the wounded. As they do so, have them make a Spot check (DC 18). If successful, they notice that each of the survivors bears

strange red scars around the backs of their necks, as if something had been recently attached to the area and the skin then cauterised.

Any judges attempting to question the survivors will be able to get little information from them, as they appear dazed and confused, although their accents reveal them to be citizens of Mega-City One. A Medical check (DC 12) determines their state to be due to some form of drug-induced stupor.

However, one of the survivors, a middle-aged woman, appears to be a little more together than the rest. She is unable to remember her name nor any details of where the shuttle came from, but will tell the judges she saw one of the survivors run from the wreckage minutes before the judges arrived and disappear into the surrounding ruins.

As the judges ponder this, a six man Med-Team arrives, under the command of a senior Med Judge named McCoy. Given the number of severely wounded survivors, McCoy will request the judges' help in administering first aid, etc.

Some 30 minutes later, the situation seems to be coming under control. Read the following out loud to the players.

As you finish bandaging the last of the walking wounded an H-Wagon swoops in low overhead and begins to spray the blazing shuttle with foam. Behind you, McCoy and his team race back and forth between the emergency operating tables they have set up, tending to the seriously wounded. Secondary Med-Teams begin to arrive to carry the less seriously injured back to the Sector House Med-Bays.

As they are rounding up those survivors still able to walk, one of them suddenly emits a groan. His knees buckle and he falls violently to the ground, his face contorted in agony. As a Med-Judge rushes to his

side, the man begins to writhe, his hands clawing at the buttons to his pyjama jacket, ripping the garment open.

You rush to aid the Med-Judge as she tries to grab the man's thrashing limbs. Suddenly the man stills, his back arching upwards as he emits a scream of pain. For a split second his cries cease, then the air is filled with the sickening sound of flesh and bone tearing. His face explodes outwards, splattering blood in a wide arc. You jump back in horror as something dark and worm-like wriggles into view from the ragged hole which has extended the victim's mouth.

Hissing in triumph, it opens its own tiny mouth, bearing row upon row of glistening, silvery teeth. Then, with unbelievable speed, it darts forward, heading towards a nearby pile of rubble, the burst of speed at odds with its worm-like appearance.

As most players will guess, they have just witnessed the emergence of a raptaur at first hand! The creature measures little more than a foot in length and as the judges reach for their Lawgivers it suddenly darts forward, its chitinous tail propelling the creature across the ground with unbelievable speed.

The raptaur worm has DV 18 (+6 Reflex, +2 size), DR 2 and 10 hit points. The judges have two rounds to neutralise it before it disappears into the rubble.

Once the judges have dealt with the worm, their thoughts should turn to the fourteenth passenger. Quick med-scans reveal each of the other crash survivors to bear a raptaur embryo down their spines. Panic begins to spread amidst them as they stare at the bloodied mass on the floor before them.

Any judges looking for traces of the escaped survivor should make Search (DC 26) or Streetwise (DC 20) checks to locate his trail. Following the trail across the stony, rubble-strewn ground is a frustratingly

slow business however, and nearly 40 further minutes have passed by the time the judges follow the trail to an abandoned factory building.

Inside the ruins the trail is far easier to follow. Read the following out loud to the players.

The footprints lead you deeper into the ruined building, the wind blowing through the collapsed walls. Rounding a corner, you enter a large chamber filled with rusting machinery. Chains and other lifting equipment rattle in the wind high above you, filling the area with ghostly metallic echoes.

Your bike lights reveal something lying on the ground just ahead of you. Drawing closer, you see it to be the figure of a man dressed in blue pyjamas. He lies face up on the ground in a pool of reddish liquid; the remains corpse's head is just visible through the sodden fabric, a bloody mass of torn flesh and twisted bone.

As you call your find in to Sector Control the sudden flicker of movement from somewhere in the shadows above you catches your eye. Spinning around, your eyes widen in disbelief as a nightmarish silhouette drops from the ceiling above, a hideous creature, part insect, part humanoid, its elongated head ending in a grinning mouth dripping with



razor sharp teeth. You can see your own reflections mirrored in its oversized eyes, although the six waving tentacles writhing threateningly from its body provide an equal distraction. With breathtaking speed it falls into a crouch and begins charging toward you.

As any surviving judges stare in stunned amazement at the Alien corpse, an urgent call comes through from Control. '(Insert judge's name here), the Chief wants you back at the Sector House right away. This shuttle crash thing looks bad and could be it's tied in with something far bigger.'

With that, Part I of **Dark Phoenix Rising** concludes. Games Masters should award each judge between 2000 and 3000 XP.

Part 2 will appear next issue!

Raptaur

Large Creature

Hit Dice: 10d12 + 60 (135 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+8 Initiative)

Speed: 50 ft. Climb 40 ft.

DV: 24 (-1 size, +15 Reflex)

Damage Reduction: 16 (crystalline-based lifeform)

Attack: Claw +16 melee

Full Attack: 2 claws +16/+11 melee, tentacle +13/+8 melee, bite +11 melee

Damage: Claw 1d6/10, tentacle 1d8/4, bite 2d6/12

Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Fear toxin, hypnotic gaze

Special Qualities: Block detection, immunity to mind influencing effects, vulnerable to sonic attacks.

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +15, Will +4

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 26, Con 22, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 4

Skills: Balance +18, Climb +21, Hide +21, Jump +23, Listen +13, Move Silently +21 and Spot +13.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Multiattack and Weapon Focus (claw).

Climate/Terrain: Mega-City One, Mega-City One maintenance level, deep space.

Organisation: Solitary

Advancement: 11 – 14 HD (Large), 15 – 20 HD (Huge).



Savage killing machines of unknown origin, raptours are terrifying monsters that have proved to be a major threat to the citizens of Mega-City One on several occasions. No one is sure if these monsters are extra-terrestrial entities or some lethal product of a clandestine experiment to produce the 'ultimate killing machine', but the distinction matters little to the unfortunate victims of the creature. An adult raptaur is a hideous, terrifying creature. Standing approximately nine feet tall, the creature seems to be a cross between a humanoid and an insect, with distended, almost elongated limbs and a huge, 'stretched' head with a gigantic, grinning maw filled with razor-sharp, metallic teeth. The eyes are the most noticeable aspect – huge, mirrored surfaces that seem to reflect the terror of its victims. Although a biped, the creature is also equipped with six writhing tentacles, segmented like huge earthworms, and a long, sinuous tail. It moves with great speed and agility, more than capable of scaling the sides of a cityblock or hanging beneath the Meg-Ways of the Mega-City. Although basically a carnivore that is happy to eat anything that moves, the raptaur must consume regular doses of serotonin to survive – a chemical found within human brains. This, more than anything else, points towards a genetically engineered origin for the creature. Almost uniquely, raptours are not carbon-based life. Instead, their lifecycle is based on an unknown crystalline structure. This makes them almost impervious to attack, but vulnerable to sonic damage.

Combat

Whether by design or evolution, raptours are lethal killers. Their abilities make them perfect for ambush tactics and they are masters of taking targets by surprise, often concealing themselves out of the immediate line of sight before leaping out on unsuspecting victims. Their need to feed on human brains means that they will often immediately slice the top of a victim's skull off immediately in order to consume the brain, but leave the rest of the corpse in a special 'larder area' to be consumed at a later date.

Block Detection: Raptours possess the ability to block all forms of detection, including scanning technology and cameras. This power even extends to psi-talents. The creature must spend a move-equivalent action concentrating on concealing itself, but for the next hour it can use its Hide skill to conceal itself from all detection, including cameras, motion trackers and psi talents. The creature's image will fade from computer screens and its 'psychic spoor' simply seems to vanish from any psi-talented individual's perception. However, it will still be visible to conventional senses and must rely on more conventional concealment.

Fear Toxin: The raptaur's natural weapons are impregnated with an extremely potent toxin, which induces a feeling of abject terror, often reducing the unfortunate victim into a nightmare-filled, comatose state. Raptaur toxin is considered to be contact DC 14, damage 3d6 Wisdom, secondary damage 2d6 Wisdom.

Hypnotic Gaze: The mirror-like eyes of a raptaur seem to possess a mesmerising quality, forcing any victim that meets its gaze to freeze in terror. Any character that comes within 20 feet of a raptaur must make an immediate Will save (DC 15) of become stunned for the next 1d10 rounds.

Immunity to Mind Influencing Effects: The raptaur is a crystalline-based life form. Its mind is completely alien and therefore cannot be affected by any mind influencing effects, such as psi-talents or drugs.

Vulnerable to Sonic Attacks: As a crystalline-based life form, the raptaur is almost invulnerable to conventional weapons. Bullets just bounce off its rock hard skin and its unique body refracts laser energy – even explosions have little effect. However, the complex crystal lattice that forms its cells is extremely vulnerable to sonic disruption. Any hit from a sonic based weapon (such as a sonic blaster) automatically causes double damage and ignores the creature's Damage Reduction score. In addition, any successful critical hit with a sonic weapon will immediately cause the creature to disintegrate into a pile of dust.



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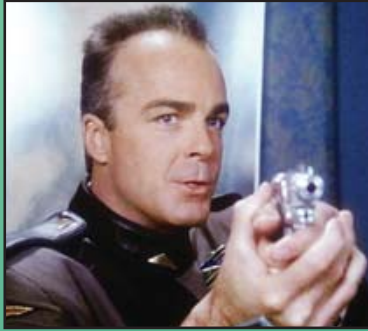
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