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# From the editor

Here we are at last, issue five in hand. This represents a milestone for us, as we enter the second volume of *Gygax Magazine's* publication history. Technically, our second volume should also mark our second year, but as our infinitely patient and sainted subscribers are aware, it has taken us a bit longer than a year to get to number five. Of course, the fact that you're reading this means that there's a decent possibility that you may be one of the people who joined us with issue #1 and has renewed for a second tour of duty, and for that we all thank you. Saying complimentary things to readers and pouring on the gratitude might be a bit of a shopworn way to start out an editorial, but believe me, it's from the heart.

It's becoming a happy tradition to welcome new staff members to TSR in this part of the magazine, and I'm pleased to carry that on by welcoming Michelle Weidman and Andrew Rodgers. Michelle is the operations manager for *Gygax Magazine* and TSR, and is here in part to make sure the quarterly schedule we profess lives up to its name, so that the year 2015 close with our eighth issue. This year will also see a number of other products coming from TSR, meaning that it's more important than ever that we stay organized and productive.

Which leads nicely to Andrew Rodgers, our new designer. This is the second issue of *Gygax Magazine* that Andrew has designed, and if you don't mind my saying so, I think it looks a peach. Andrew's first work with us was just before Gary Con 2014, when he designed the limited edition standalone Top Secret module, *Operation: Rendezvous Oasis*. Anyone who was fortunate enough to play at "The Administrator" Merle Rasmussen's table at Gary Con this year went home with a copy, and was among the first to see Andrew's great photocollage work, as well as the maps that he collaborated with Diesel on, giving them that gritty desert-worn look. We're proud to have both Michelle and Andrew with us, and I'm personally thankful for the chance to work with them.

I mentioned new products in the coming year, so let me say a brief word about those. We're beginning with a series of adventure modules, the first of which will be from Luke Gygax. Issue two of this magazine gave a taste of the lands of Okkorim, with the players getting their first exposure to the Blighted Lands. The world Luke has created is a rich game environment, and a harsh and unforgiving land for the characters that brave it. The first module will be **BL1: The Search for Darwah's Temple**, to be followed later in the year by **BL2: The Tower of Akbaba**. Also in 2015, we've got products on deck from Frank Mentzer, James Carpio, and a team of very special original TSR employees that we're proud to be working with, but keeping under wraps until we have a little more to reveal. "Under-promise and over-deliver," isn't that the saying? For the moment, let me make sure that I'm following the first part of that rule.

Back to this issue that's in your hands. There are two new columns, both from regulars within these pages. We've just decided that their stuff was so good that it ought to be something you could count on every time. Our contributing editor Tim Kask is debuting a new section called "Bottom of the Pile." It's a look at the board games that many of us have sitting in our game closets, sometimes overlooked, or that merit a look from gamers who may have missed them the first time around.

Our second new regular feature comes from Jon Peterson, author of *Playing at the World* and consistent contributor to *Gygax Magazine* since issue #2. We've convinced him to hang his hat, pick out some curtains, and settle in to stay, and starting with this issue, his regular column is called the "Walworth Archives."

The cover of this issue comes from one of my favorite artists of all time, Walter Velez. His work has appeared in myriad places, including many TSR products, but I will always think of him first as the artist who brought Robert Asprin's worlds to life in *Myth Adventures* and *Thieves' World*. I hope you'll enjoy it.

Jayson Elliot  
Editor-in-Chief

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# Trader kits

For traders, it's all just business

by S. Matthew Fowler

*"Ah, for special friends of Rick's we have a special discount, one hundred francs." ~Moroccan merchant from the film "Casablanca"*

## TRADE WHAT?

The news today is full of the word "trade" used in all sorts of settings. From sports, illicit activities, business by the handshake on a personal scale, to the international mega-corporations on a global scale, trade is everywhere and everyone talks of globalization as if it were something new. Whether you focus on the positive or negative sides of globalization one thing is certain—trade is not something new. When a small child, who cannot yet speak, picks up a mundane stone and hands it to you and you take it as if it were the most precious thing in the world, that is trade. Trade is not merely an exchange of goods and services, but communication as well. You don't need to kill it and take its property if you can bargain with it. Traders deal in desires and dreams, in wants and needs, and whatever might fulfill them.

The following kits explore and possibly expand the role of a trader in any fantasy role-playing game setting. Indeed, some of the kits are based on the roles of actual historic merchants and professionals from ancient times right through to the present day. These kits are suitable for use in original systems, or, with a little adaptation, more contemporary products such as *The Dark Eye*™ (*Das Schwarze Auge*), *Pathfinder*®, *Dungeons & Dragons*® 5th Edition or even *Adventures Dark and Deep*™, and, of course, old-school or OSR Compatible products like *Arduin*™, *OSRIC*™, or *Swords & Wizardry*™, just to name a few.

Because the Dark Sun setting has certain aspects that differ from other fantasy settings, I will be inserting occasional commentary and extensions of the kit descriptions to make them suitable for that setting.

Additionally, the last few sections of the article offer some tips and suggestions for adapting these kits to contemporary systems such as *The Dark Eye*™, *Pathfinder*® and *D&D*® 5th Edition. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Scott Morgan for his advice in adapting the trader for the *Pathfinder* system.

## TRADE HISTORY

The trader, as a subclass of the rogue class, first appeared in the *Dune Trader* accessory for the Dark Sun campaign setting published by the original TSR Inc. in 1992 for the *AD&D* 2nd Edition game system. Written by Anthony Pryor, this book details the basic workings of the class and some of the various trading houses and elven tribes for the original Dark Sun setting. The book detailed all the basics for creating a trader character including things like the minimum attributes and new bonus skills. Some, though not all, of the kits below will also require a high intelligence or even a high dexterity in addition to the minimums for wisdom and charisma. Additional campaign and background information specifically useful to the trader class can also be found in the Ivory Triangle box set for the Dark Sun setting published in 1993. Further information that is valuable for traders can be found in the

Dark Sun accessories *Slave Tribes* and *Elves of Athas*, the latter of which details a more advanced set of rules and a system for bartering on Athas, which has also been published as a stand-alone article in *Polyhedron Newszine* #87. The trader class was then refined; races were added and racial limits revised for the Dark Sun Expanded and Revised box set (*DSER*) published by TSR Inc. in 1995. Between the *Dune Trader* accessory and the *DSER* a few discrepancies crept into the details.

In this article I hope to address these inconsistencies and offer some new character kits to expand the trader class in any campaign setting. In addition to three kits already specifically published for Athasian rogues: the caravaner and sycophant kits appearing in *Dragon Magazine* #194 in the article "Slave Hunters and Silt Sailors" by L. Richard Baker III and the dragoman kit appearing in the *City-State of Tyr* accessory by Walter Baas; the following kits increase the possible variations on the trader theme.

Traders or merchants have been around as NPCs in the world of *AD&D* from the very beginning. With the publication of *Dragon Magazine* #62, Leonard Lakofka wrote an article titled "Magic for Merchants" in which he sets up and describes a system for determining access to cantrips, minor wizard spells (up to 2nd level), and a minor form of magic for merchants, less powerful even than cantrips, that he called mysteries. Although originally intended for NPCs, access to these minor magics is certainly a very interesting aspect of the trader PC class. (I mean if bards can learn wizard magic as well as have their own professional spells why not traders too?) But, because of the nature of magic in the Dark Sun setting, access to these types of magics is not appropriate to Athasian merchants and no further discussion of this aspect of the trader class will be made here. By the time *Dragon Magazine* #182 was published, a full-blown merchant background was in place for the Forgotten Realms and in this issue an article by Ed Greenwood titled "Kings of the Caravans" detailing some of the powerful NPCs associated with merchant houses in the Realms was featured. In more recent developments for newer versions of *D&D*, *Dragon Magazine* #330 has a brief article by Shelley Bauer titled "Merchant Rogues" that offers a few suggestions for merchant PCs as well. However, for dealing with the following kits, only the basic trader description from the *DSER* box set or the *Dune Trader* accessory, as well as the bartering rules from the original Dark Sun boxed set or from the excerpt from *Elves of Athas* in *Polyhedron* #87, are absolutely necessary.

One other important thing to remember when dealing with merchants and merchandise in the following kits is that the monetary system and currency of the Dark Sun setting is rather different from more traditional settings. Metal is rare on Athas and so currency comes primarily in the form of ceramic pieces (*cp*) and bits more often than metal. As such, the initial funds a trader receives when a player rolls up a new character will vary depending on the setting. An Athasian trader receives the initial funds rolled according to the method from Table XXVII on page 52 of *The Age of Heroes* book in the *DSER*. According to this method the trader doubles the amount of initial funds for a standard





### TRADER MULTICLASS OPTIONS FOR ATHASIAN RACES

Aarakocra	Any one of Fighter, Cleric or Psionicist
Elf	Any combination of one or two of Fighter, Mage, Cleric, Thief and Psionicist
Half-elf	Same as Elf but may substitute Bard for Thief
Dwarf	Any combination of one or two of Fighter, Cleric and Thief
Pterrhan	Any one of Fighter or Psionicist
Dual-Class combinations	
Humans	Any

even adding to available PC racial possibilities. Although, all such changes and additions are at the GM's discretion and will require a lot of work on the part of the player and the GM to create the racial histories and cultures.

Before we begin looking at the kits we need to make one more small clarification. The following table is a correction of Table XXIV of the DSER *Age of Heroes* book, which addresses the inconsistencies that crop up between the racial descriptions, class descriptions and the original table itself in the DSER.

The *Dune Trader* and DSER do agree, however, that all traders, regardless of race or other classes, develop a natural fast-talking ability and have prime requisites of wisdom and charisma with minimum scores of 15 in wisdom and 12 in charisma and 10 in intelligence. The books also detail other aspects of the trader class such as an understanding of poisons and acquiring agents. Regardless of setting, kits, races, or other classes and subclasses, the most important tool that a trader has are his/her communication skills. Because of the importance of communication in all forms of trade, the trader receives an additional language every three experience levels above and beyond any intelligence bonuses. The remaining intricacies of these details are necessary for a trader, but are not necessary for understanding these kits.

### TRADING IN THE SRD

This section is a general description of what things mean and how to use them in the kit descriptions, however, this will be slightly different depending on the system being used. Each system will have its own tables for modifiers and bonuses, skills and feats, and available races and cultures. Also, each system may have a different name for a similar field

and the player needs to adapt the following descriptions according to the system s/he is playing.

Before becoming adventuring traders, PCs had to have done something with their lives. This is recorded in the secondary skills field in the kit. Each character has only one and it must be chosen at the time of character creation before adventuring. These secondary skills are a kind of job description for what the primary occupation of your character was prior to adventuring and, as such, represent skill sets rather than individual skills. These skill sets make up part of the character's back-story. Most kits will have a variety of potential areas of knowledge into which the characters may have delved, or trades which they may have practiced prior to running off on an adventure.

Characters will also have a number of non-combat skills, which again, may have another name or names in different systems, such as skills and feats. The mechanics of the particular system being used may vary, however, the general idea that non-combat skills will cost points to attain and these points will be earned through leveling up, is common to most fantasy RPGs. The number of non-combat skill points available, and the bonus points earned when leveling up, is dependent upon the character's intelligence score. Higher scores give bonuses to the number of points a character has available to spend on becoming proficient.

Traders may apply these points to gain skills from groupings one could label "general," "rogue," and "warrior" for non-combat skills plus the bureaucracy skill, which is normally for priests, at no penalty. All skills not falling within these three broad categories cost double the number of points to take. As noted already, all traders have a natural fast-talking ability (or feat) that, although accomplished by use of a modified ability check like other non-combat skills, does not count against any skill points the character has. Other non-combat skills in the kits are listed as: bonus skills, which are skills that traders with this kit automatically receive without having to use skill points to purchase them, required skills, which are skills the character is required to allot points to as they become available before choosing any other skills, and recommend skills, which are "nice to haves" but are up to the player's discretion. In addition to the required skills below, all traders must purchase the appraising and bargaining skills with their first two skill points. A number of the non-combat skills mentioned in the following kits may not appear in the particular system in which you are playing. GMs and players are strongly encouraged to search the web and use skills or feats from other sources or to invent their own.

On a final note before reviewing the kits, the names of these kits may be repeats of names for kits or NPC types for various races and classes across numerous settings among other products and, while the kits may share a name with

rogue (2d6 x 30) which can also be written 2d6 x 60 cp. If we compare the DSER table with Table 43 of the *Player's Handbook (PHB)* we find that, in order to maintain consistency between the tables, a trader character in a world using Table 43 would need to double the total for rogues on that table, or 2d6 x 20 gp. The first volume of the *Encyclopedia Magica* also serves very well as an additional resource for GMs and players with a trader PC since it lists extensive tables for easily converting currencies among the various TSR Inc. settings.

A discrepancy has been introduced between *Dune Trader* and the DSER in that the racial restrictions, and the associated level limits are different in the latter. For the following kits, the allowed races and racial limits follow the DSER edition. That being said, the allowed races will, of course, change based on setting and it is ultimately up to the GM as to what races are allowed to become PC traders in his/her world. As an example, almost none of the traditional humanoid races and only a few of the demi-human races exist on Athas and so these races are not even considered for the trader class in that setting, or for the kits described below, but can certainly be added by the GM. There are also other sentient races from the Dark Sun setting such as Giants, Nikaal, Ruvoka, Ssurran, and Tarek or even Belgoi or Gith which a GM might wish to consider for NPC traders and, in the case of the Nikaal and Ssurran, perhaps

some other published material, it should not be expected that any of the information under any shared name is automatically applicable or interchangeable with these kits and vice versa. If it helps, these kits can all be prefaced with the word trader in order to make the distinction between these kits and any previously published kits.

### The kits

As with the sycophant and draqoman kits mentioned above, the first three kits detailed here can also be suitable for a bard character.

#### TUTOR

**Description:** The tutor is an especially skilled linguist who travels about trading his/her expertise and knowledge for payment. Some contemporary stories prominently featuring tutors include the films *Searching for Bobby Fischer*,

*Music of the Heart* and *Cruel Intentions*, among others. Fictional characters such as C-3PO from the *Star Wars* universe and Noah Wyle's character, the Librarian, from the made-for-TV trilogy of the same title, as well as real persons such as St. Jerome, Pocahontas, Sacagawea and the now famous code talkers may also be looked to for inspiration in creating a tutor character. Although tutors are often traders, bards can also make a living with this kit.

**Role:** Tutors are not entertainers, athletes or scholars in the strictest sense, but are more practical in the use of their skills combining any or all of these fields. Tutors travel the table lands seeking to impart their knowledge and skills to others—for a fee of course. There are also rumors that a mysterious advanced being known as an Avangion, ruler of the lost city-state of Kurn, has sent out tutors in secret across the table lands to begin teaching the peoples about the blessings of freedom, harmony with nature, and that not all magic must be destructive like



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defiling magic. More common tutors are often contracted by merchant houses for the purposes of tutoring and minding the young on the long caravan routes across the table lands or by wealthy patrons of the city-states to educate the family's youth. Freelance tutors can offer public lectures or be engaged for private tutoring sessions for individual clients. Tutors often find themselves among demi-human, humanoid, and even friendly non-human tribes teaching the common tongue and learning the local language or dialect. They will normally attach themselves to adventuring parties to reach these more distant groups.

Tutors share characteristics with the lore master bard, however their motivation is teaching others more than learning histories and legends for the purposes of theatrical retellings. As such, they are more familiar with contemporary languages and customs than with ancient languages and histories. While tutors can specialize in any particular field relevant to the cultures of their world, most specialize in modern languages owing to their natural aptitude with these. Thus, tutors can also be engaged as translators and interpreters for diplomats, heralds, nobles, and merchant houses, as well as freelancing private jobs. Tutors may also choose to work outside of the law; imparting knowledge of forbidden skills, e.g. they may secretly teach reading and writing in societies where those skills have been banned or restricted.

**Qualifications:** Given their requirements of both knowledge and communication abilities tutors are required to have a minimum 12 intelligence in addition to the other standard trader attributes of WIS-15, CHA-12, and INT-10.

**Secondary skill:** Any performance or knowledge skill.

**Combat skills:** Any.

**Non-combat skills:** Bonus: Teaching, Oration; Required: Reading/Writing\*, Diplomacy, Observation; Recommended: Alertness, Bookbinding, Etiquette, Local History, Musical Instrument, Athleticism, Sign Language, Spell weaving (*see below*).

**Armor/equipment:** Tutors are not limited in their choice of armor, though they prefer light flexible armor of leather when wearing armor at all as metal can be too great an encumbrance for teaching. Tutors are also almost never found without writing materials and a wordbook or lexicon. (in cultures where reading and writing are restricted these materials need to be carefully hidden or disguised and in such cases a non-combat skill such as spell weaving may be necessary in order that the tutor be able to hide his/her wordbook).

A wordbook is as important to a tutor as a spell book is to a mage or bard and a breviary is to a cleric. In it are listed words and phrases and the appropriate translations in other languages, if there is an adequate translation which may not always be the case. A tutor who is just

starting out must purchase writing materials for a wordbook with some of his/her initial funds. If the tutor also has some athletic skill or can play some musical instrument the tutor will obviously also purchase equipment appropriate to either (*or both*) of these skills.

**Special benefits:** Adept at dealing with groups of children, tutors gain a +1 reaction bonus when encountering youths. Additionally, with their linguistic know-how, tutors are allowed to make their read languages check twice if the language is a modern one.

**Special hindrances:** Tutors can be met with suspicion in isolated communities or in cities where knowledge is strictly controlled by local authorities. In some cases it may be necessary to disguise their profession and hide their equipment in regions where, for example, reading and writing is restricted or prohibited. In more traditional worlds tutors may also run afoul of local religious leaders if their teachings are seen as a threat to the native faith and must therefore tread lightly in deeply faithful communities if they are welcomed in them at all. Owing to this, at the GMs discretion, a tutor will have a -1 reaction adjustment should s/he be found out and could in extreme cases even incur the wrath of local authorities or followers to the point that s/he and the party will be harassed or even driven off by an angry mob.

**Wealth Options:** Double the standard initial funds for rogue characters (*see beginning of article*).

**Race:** Any, though tutors are most often humans or half-elves.

## MYNTER

**Description:** Mynters are traders who have secured the license to produce the currency for a particular authority—archbishop, archduke, etc. such as depicted in Hans Burgkmair's scene from the *Weisskunig* by Marx Treitzsaurwein showing Emperor Maximilian I leaning to mint coins. This kit is based on the likes of these real merchants during the late Middle Ages from across Europe. Historical figures such as Balthasar Eggenberger, Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici or Jacques Cœur can serve as examples of how a successful mynter can rise (or fall). Mynters are initially responsible for designing and minting of the coinage and bringing it into circulation. They enter into their lease with the ruler at their own risk. They can make a profit if the production cost of the coins is less per coin than the value of the coin as currency. Historically this was accomplished by putting slightly less precious metal in the coin than the market value of the coin. But this also had the drawback of causing inflation so a wise mynter had to walk a fine line between greed and profit because if he didn't he risked causing a collapse of the currency's value and incurring the wrath of the ruler, as has happened repeatedly throughout history. Successful mynters, however, can take their

houses to great prominence; opening banks and becoming financiers with wealth to rival even the ruler's personal worth. Players using this kit for an Athasian trader might wish to read an article on currency in the Tablelands titled "Coin Collecting Under Athas's Hot Sun" by Carlo Anziano and Tina Brown in *Polyhedron Newszine* #99.

**Role:** There will always be at least one trade house, usually a major one, that operates a money exchange at each of the city gates. A mynter, working as a money changer, will be stationed in this kiosk or stall. The ruler may give this contract to a single trade house or to several to encourage competition and perhaps to ensure that no one trade house becomes too powerful. Whatever the law enforcement of a particular city is, be it a city guard or militia, templars, or some other form of constabulary, they will be stationed nearby. This is not only to monitor the people coming and going and enforce customs and taxes at all the city gates but also be there to aid the money changers in case of an attempted robbery. The trade houses will also employ their own house guards.

The mynter can also be the organizer of an adventuring party, either hiring the party as employees or becoming part of the party. For example s/he may higher adventurers for security in transporting currency to the outlying villages, outposts and forts that fall under the jurisdiction of a particular city-state, fiefdom or duchy, etc. in which they are based. Or they may higher adventurers to be guards for the transport of the raw materials needed to mint the coins so that they don't fall into the hands of counterfeiters.

Low-level mynters can start out working for a merchant house, even as a family member, or may choose to hire an adventuring party to start out on their own and lay the foundations for the rise of their own house. The duties of the mynter include exchanging foreign currency as well as taking old, worn coins out of circulation and putting new coins into circulation. To accomplish this, mynters will travel around with varying amounts coinage depending on their destination, and will sometimes cooperate with a Lombard (*see below*). It is fairly easy to bring new coinage into circulation or exchange currency in cities but for outlying villages and isolated trade posts and forts, it may be necessary for the mynter to make annual or semi-annual journeys to these areas. Mynters will also travel around to organize deals with other merchant houses, templars from other city-states or nobles from another duchy to make deals for the raw materials to produce the coins as well as to secure leases to produce the coins. Mynters are also responsible for identifying counterfeit currency. Local authorities will contract with whichever mynter has the lease for their jurisdiction to track down a counterfeiting ring; less respectable mynters might also higher out their skills and knowledge to become counterfeiters themselves.

In more traditional fantasy settings, the forgery of a metallic coin can be discovered by weight; copper has less mass than silver and so, a silver plated copper coin, although identical in size and appearance, will have less weight than a pure silver coin and when mynters check this on a scale, the forgery is easily identified. With other materials, such as the ceramic currency of Athas, this method doesn't work. For ceramic coins, mynters devised another method; they use the colored glazing of the coin to distinguish counterfeit from real coins. Each city-state has its own colored glaze for the ceramic pieces and ceramic bits. This colored glaze is manufactured in each city-state by the mynter who has the contract to produce the currency for that city-state. This glazing is produced using a carefully guarded recipe with special minerals in certain amounts to achieve a specific hue and each unique to a particular city-state. With a magnifying glass of the kind typically used by gem-cutters this hue can be identified when comparing a coin against a proof coin used only for matching the color. This is also why it is important for mynters to get older coins out of circulation; as the coin wears the colors can fade which make it difficult to tell a counterfeit from an authentic piece or bit.

**Qualifications:** As the quintessential trader, a mynter's qualifications are the same as the basic trader class.

**Secondary Skill:** Any trade skill.

**Combat Skills:** Any allowed by the trader class.

**Non-Combat Skills:** Bonus: Bureaucracy, Medailleur\*; Required: Reading/Writing, Pottery\*\*, Gem Cutting\*\*\*, Forgery; Recommended: Appraising, Diplomacy, Engineering.

\* = a medailleur is an educated artisan experienced in designing the dies or molds used to mint metal objects such as coins and medallions as well as those items themselves. As such, s/he has both artistic abilities and metalworking skills. The medailleur check is a wisdom check with no adjustments but it requires 2 skill slots.

\*\* = this is only required for mynters in the Dark Sun setting but will change for settings without ceramic pieces. For example, in a setting where printed currency is already in use, the papermaking or possibly the weaving skill should be substituted for pottery.

\*\*\* = Gem cutting is only required for mynters in the Dark Sun campaign setting where the primary currency is ceramic pieces and ceramic bits.

**Armor/Equipment:** Mynters are not restricted in their choice of armor.

**Special Benefits:** None.

**Special Hindrances:** Mynters must purchase a tumbrel (price as a merchant's scale) and a magnifying glass from their initial funds.

**Wealth Options:** Double the standard initial funds for rogue characters (see beginning of article).

**Race:** Any human or demi-human.

## LOMBARD

**Description:** The name for this kit actually comes from the historical name for a type of banking that originated in the northern Italian region of Lombardy. The name is even still used in parts of Europe to this day. This type of early banking originally developed from a prohibition in Christian communities against a capitalist style of profiting without actual labor, i.e. by investing or even worse—loan sharking. “Lombard” is just another name for pawnbroker. Pawnbrokers make loans against something surrendered as collateral for a fixed fee; should terms of the otherwise interest free loan not be met. In other words, a pawnbroker loans a specific amount against some item held as collateral with a higher buyback price than the initial loan and the right then to sell the item should the price not be met within a specific time period. There is also a charitable type of the Lombard, known as a mount of



piety, historically associated with the Catholic Church, particularly in Italy (*monte di pietà*), France (*mont de piété*) and Spain (*monte di piedad*) from whence it came to the Americas. These types of pawnbrokers record the buyback fee as a charitable contribution to the church, thus avoiding the prohibition against making money without laboring.

The traditional symbol of the Lombard, which adds a nice touch to any fantasy campaign, is three balls, usually gold in color, hanging from a bar. There are a couple of versions of the legend as to the origin of the three-ball symbol. One account attributes the symbol to the story of St. Nicholas of Myra, while another story (*more interesting for fantasy campaigns!*), has to do with the family crest of the banking house of Medici from Florence, Italy. According to this legend, a Medici in the service of the first Holy Roman Emperor, Charles the Great (*better known in the English speaking world as Charlemagne*) slew a giant using three bags of stones. These three bags of stones became symbolized in the three balls of this early banker. This makes for a most interesting background addition to any campaign setting.

**Role:** For fantasy role-playing, the role of the Lombard is not unlike that of the real bombards throughout history.

In traditional fantasy settings, Lombards

can be either legitimate businesses or fronts for money laundering, fencing and clandestine dealings and thus a Lombard may have a connection or two with members of the thieves' guild. Lombards will often travel with trade caravans or adventuring parties to sell unclaimed collateral where these items may fetch the higher price than where they were first pawned (or to fence illicitly obtained goods farther from the previous owners). Lombards are also valuable partners to mynters in helping to get freshly minted coins into circulation while exchanging them for worn coins and bits. Lombards are also experienced appraisers and are always on the lookout for rare items that may go unrecognized by common citizens or foreign cultures; something of great value to a thri-kreen may be utterly mundane to the untrained eyes of a human and vice versa and a Lombard must be able to recognize this. Free citizens and nobles will often go to a Lombard solely for the purpose of having some item appraised (*and less trustworthy Lombards might pass this information on to adventurers who would then be paid a fee for acquiring the item!*). Lombards will also travel about looking for “good deals”; items that they could sell, trade or barter elsewhere for a higher return.

In the dystopian world of Athas however, there are a few cultural distinctions that make more traditional forms of pawnbrokers

inappropriate, Lombards that function like a mount of piety, for example, are not common due to the elemental nature of clerical magic there. There are no gods whatsoever on Athas and no organized religions in the strictest of sense. For example, an earth cleric from one city-state will not necessarily have any affiliation at all with an earth cleric in another city-state or even within the same one. Then there is also the problem of competition with the powerful merchant houses of the Tyr region — a powerful merchant house is not going to sit idly by while a cleric attempts to interfere in trader business. However, Lombards fashioned in the tradition of the historical *monte di pietà* style could prove an interesting addition to other campaign settings for both the GM and the players.

Lombards of the non-religious variety, on the other hand, are quite common throughout the Tyr region and every major trading house will have one or more established locations in their respective city-state. Rival houses will also operate Lombards in an attempt to take business away from the controlling merchant house and undermine its grip on commerce. Elven merchants will also operate a type of traveling Lombard at stalls or kiosks in the elven market. These will often also be a front for illicit activities and a source for trade in less common spell components for defilers or the Veiled Alliance...or both.

**Qualifications:** Same as basic trader.

**Secondary skill:** Any trade or knowledge skill.

**Combat skills:** Any.

**Non-combat skills:** Bonus: Reading/Writing; Required: Bureaucracy (CHA), Sign Language, Observation, Awareness; Recommended: History (local and ancient), Haggling, Intimidation (CHA), Diplomacy.

**Special benefits:** None.

**Special hindrances:** None.

**Wealth options:** Double the standard initial funds for Rogue characters (*see beginning of article*).

**Race:** Any, though Athasian Lombards are predominantly elven or human.

## GAMBLER

**Description:** As the name implies, a gambler is a professional risk taker and rarely refuses an opportunity at a good game of chance. These people are experienced in various forms of betting and bookkeeping from gladiatorial competitions to races to cards and dice games or any other activity in which money can be made by playing odds on the outcome (*they'll even bet on skirmishes or wars*). There are numerous examples from both fiction and history of such figures who either use their skills as freelance gamblers traveling from location to location running their own games or they are employed by gaming houses and casinos to fleece the patrons and to ferret out cheaters. Historically famous gamblers also made note in other fields

from art, philosophy and literature to politics and military careers. Among these people are the likes of Michael de Montaigne, King Charles II of England, Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Claude Monet. Of course the popular view of gamblers as scoundrels, criminals and rebels also has a kernel of truth to it with figures like Wild Bill Hickok and "Doc" Holiday. Then there are the purely fictitious tales of great gamblers such as James Bond, Daniel Ocean, or Calvin "Slick"

gamblers in all sorts of capacities from dealers and floor managers to players running high-stakes poker games for so-called whales as well as bookies to handle betting on sporting events or award ceremonies or virtually any other activity where the uncertainty of the outcome can afford one the opportunity to make money playing the odds. Gamblers are always extraordinarily confident and always exude calmness and an aura of being in complete



Stanhope, and Kenny Rogers' "The Gambler" to perhaps less obvious examples such as Ambassador Londo Mollari from *Babylon 5*, Captain Matthew Gideon from the *Babylon 5* spin-off series, *Crusade*, or fictional author Richard Castle as well as characters from TV shows like *Las Vegas* and *The Mentalist* — should I continue? There are also both accurate and exaggerated tales of gamblers associated with organized crime across the globe but this doesn't mean that gamblers are inherently criminals. Gambling is indeed a legitimate profession and contemporary gaming houses legally employ

control of any situation; giving nothing away and betraying no hint of any doubts or fears they might have. As such they are notoriously difficult to read emotionally, hence the phrase, "poker face".

**Role:** Gamblers usually start out freelancing. They travel from location to location contracting with a local innkeeper, tavern owner or saloon proprietor to run games on a daily basis in these establishments, usually with the permission of the local templars or other authorities, though so-called "back room" games are not uncommon. Once they have

drained the local population of some of its funds they will move on to the next village or outpost. They will often follow trade caravans or larger military units. Both offer an opportunity to make money gaming when others make money from sales and salaries. As gamblers become more proficient and well-known for their skills they may be recruited by gambling halls as professional gamblers working for the casino. Gamblers can also work similar to tutors teaching new players how to play games and read another person's tell. As already noted, gamblers are not inherently criminals though they can make good swindlers.

**Qualifications:** In addition to the standard attribute prime requisites of WIS-15, CHA-12, INT-10 for the trader class, gamblers are also required to have a minimum dexterity score of 12 owing to their prowess with handling cards, dice and other types gaming equipment.

**Secondary skill:** Any.

**Combat skills:** S size weapons only.

**Non-combat skills:** Bonus: Gaming; Required: Observation, Alertness, Intimidation (CHA); Recommended: Reading/Writing, Appraising, Etiquette, Juggling, Diplomacy.

**Armor/equipment:** Gamblers prefer light, flexible armor such as leather or padded

leather if they wear armor at all as anything else interferes with gaming. Also, gamblers are a notoriously superstitious lot, even when claiming not to be, and so, along with any personal gaming supplies (*a deck of cards or dice, etc at the players choice*), they must purchase some item that they consider to be a good-luck charm—a rabbit's foot, a small idol (nonmagical / doesn't function as a holy symbol), a hat, something—from their initial funds. This good-luck charm has no inherent powers, though there is no reason it can't also be enchanted. Its "power" is more of a placebo effect brought on by the owner's need for it.

**Special benefits:** Gamblers are generally ones to take charge of a situation so they get a +1 bonus to initiative rolls.

**Special hindrances:** As mentioned, gamblers are highly superstitious and if their good-luck charm goes missing or is damaged all rolls suffer a penalty of -1/+1 or 5% (*depending on the type of roll*). Also, gamblers who tend to win often also tend to make enemies amongst the losers and so gamblers suffer a -2 reaction penalty encountering anyone from whom they have won excessively or have won some item of special significance (*particularly if it is believed or known that they cheated to do it*).

**Wealth options:** Double the standard initial funds for rogue characters (*see beginning of article*).

**Race:** Only humans and demi-humans interest themselves enough in gaming to become expert at it.

## OBTAINER

**Description:** The obtainer is most like your stereotypical treasure hunter. For examples, think of Tia Carrere's character, Professor Sydney Fox, from the TV series *Relic Hunter* or any number of protagonists or antagonists from the *Indiana Jones* series. David McCallum's character, Dr. Vance Hendricks, from the *Babylon 5* episode "Infection" and Dr. Max Eilerson, played by David Allen Brooks, on the *Babylon 5* spin-off series *Crusade*, both of whom, along with a number of other guest characters, work for Interplanetary Expeditions, also offer good examples of characters who we could call obtainers. These are highly intelligent and well educated academics who also have a strong sense of adventure, and an even stronger desire for personal gain and recognition. The obtainer is a confident person, often overconfident to the point of being both conceited and condescending. In spite of their charismatic nature they make enemies more easily than they make friends and show little interest in either in any case. As long as someone, friend or foe, isn't interfering in the obtainer's business they pay almost no heed to them. That being said, obtainers can be fiercely loyal to the few true friends they do manage to make.

**Role:** As the description implies, obtainers, are your classic adventurers but they work mostly from a desire for personal glory and



profit. They will obtain whatever is required... for a price. Whether they are freelancers working for the highest bidder or members of a single merchant house or amongst the house's retainers, the obtainer is looking for a profit for both him/herself and his/her employer. Obtainers will join a party of adventurers to seek almost anything of value; buried treasure, stolen valuables, ancient artifacts and lost technologies can all become something of interest to the obtainer.

Athasian merchant houses large and small will employ retainers to scour the Table Lands in search of ancient artifacts of great power or lost technologies that the merchant house might be able to replicate and sell and the obtainers themselves may seek enough glory and wealth or that special bit of forgotten tech that will allow them to found their own merchant house. Athas is an ancient world with a long and complex history. It is a world ravaged by prejudice and war; devastated by wanton destruction of the planet's natural resources all in the name of efficiency and avarice, ambition and hubris. Given this history, lost technologies abound, buried beneath the desert sands or hidden in ancient and booby-trapped ruins or forgotten on far flung islands in the middle of the Sea of Silt and it is the obtainers job to find them.

**Qualifications:** Obtainers are academics and require an Intelligence score of at least 12.

**Secondary skill:** Any though knowledge skills are recommended.

**Combat skills:** S or M size weapons only.

**Non-combat skills:** Bonus: Ancient History, 1 extra Language (ancient), Architecture\*; Required: Reading/Writing, Dark Sense, Locksmithing; Recommended: Looting, Observation, Alertness, Intimidation (CHA), Spelunking.

**Armor/equipment:** For the purposes of freedom of movement obtainers rarely wear armor and then only light leather.

**Special benefits:** See below.

**Special hindrances:** See below.

First, the special benefits and hindrances for the obtainer are interwoven. Like all traders the obtainer gets an extra language slot every 3 levels to use on a new language (*and only on a new language*). Most traders must use this on a modern language (*the Ancients aren't around to trade with anymore*). The obtainer on the other hand may take an ancient language or a modern one for language slots and must take an ancient language at least every other new slot.

Second, like all traders, obtainers earn thieving abilities just like thieves with the following modifications. Because of the academic focus on treasure hunting an obtainer's pick pockets and move silently skill scores suffer. On Table 3.18 in the *For Gold & Glory: Advanced Fantasy Role Playing Game*™ 2nd Edition compendium, thieving skill base scores, a 1st level obtainer, starts by subtracting 5% from both the pick pockets and move silently scores to make them 10% and 5% respectively.

But for this loss a 1st level obtainer's read languages score starts at 10%.

Third, the standard trader also receives 20 points per level of advancement to distribute amongst the thieving skills (*an Athasian trader already has 40 points to add to the base scores as Dark Sun characters start at 3rd level*). An obtainer can also put no more than 5 points per level of advancement into the pick pockets and move silently skills, instead of the usual maximum of 10 points. This reflects the obtainer's emphasis on skills more useful to treasure hunting.

\* = *The Architecture non-combat skill normally costs 3 points. However, as a bonus, the obtainer gets 1 point in the skill for free. However, after taking appraising and bargaining, like all traders, the next two available points must be spent for the Architecture skill in order to gain the full benefits of the skill.*

**Wealth options:** Double the standard initial funds for rogue characters (*see beginning of article*)

**Race:** Any.

## BLADE SHARPENER

**Description:** The knife and scissor grinder is a traditional craft going back to ancient times. It has even appeared as a subject of art since the Middle Ages; having its first know representation in the Utrecht Psalter from the 9th century C.E.; typically dated to several years after the death of Charlemagne. In towns and villages this can be associated with a blacksmith and in such places they make use of a large hand cranked grinding wheel that could take up to three people to operate or one operated by a waterwheel or by beasts of burden. However, there were also traveling sharpeners who made use of portable grinding wheels that were either hand cranked or turned via a peddle such as depicted in the painting *Scissors Grinder and Fortune Teller* by Giacomo Francesco Cipper.

These traveling sharpeners would offer their services to anyone who needed them and could pay and they often worked as a family, the father sharpening while the children and women worked the grinding wheel or perhaps sold other wares from fowl, eggs, fruits and herbs to potions and elixirs of all types as well as other handcrafted items, particularly sheaths and knife blocks and possibly even household knives, shears or hatchets but not weapons (*though a traveling weapons dealer is also a possible variant of this kit*). The wife or daughter of the sharpener may even offer to read palms or tell fortunes (*whether or not they actually can*) or, once the sharpening was tended to, they might even offer simple games of chance like crapaud (*street craps*) or Find the Lady or the shell game (*which are usually cons*).

**Role:** For fantasy role-playing games blade sharpeners tend to be nomads and gypsies. They may take up with a trade caravan or party of adventurers for security, or travel near by while not actually being part of the caravan but hoping that, should anything unfortunate

happen, the caravan security or adventurers will help. They often travel as family units and if you have a group of players who want to play a married couple or family this might be a good way to do that. Because a sharpener's services are almost always welcomed, particularly by swordsmen and peasant wives as well as the butcher, the sharpener can find it very easy to glean information from the "idle" conversation that takes place while the customer waits for their blade(s) to be sharpened so they make excellent couriers of messages and spies. A fortune teller and a sharpener working together make an even more potent team of information gatherers.

**Qualifications:** A blade sharpener must have a high Dexterity in addition to the prime requisites of WIS-15, CHA-12, INT-10.

**Secondary skill:** Any trade skill.

**Combat skills:** any (*though small concealable weapons are preferred*).

**Non-combat skills:** Bonus: Metalworking, Weapon Sharpening; Required: Information Gathering, Observation, Chicanery; Recommended: Leather Working, Woodworking, Gambling, Languages (*modern*)

**Special benefits:** None.

**Special hindrances:** Because blade sharpeners use a grinding wheel and grindstones they are required to purchase both a portable wheel (*15 gp*) and a hand held grindstone from their initial funds.

## DARK EYED TRADERS

*The Dark Eye* is the English language version of the most popular RPG in the German speaking world, *Das Schwarze Auge*. This is a fantasy setting with a more realistic feel and the most detailed and complex world of any fantasy RPG that depends greatly on cultural differences, politics and history to enhance the world. These cultural differences, reflected in the character's defining characteristics and professional options, are inspired by historical cultures from the late Middle Ages, Renaissance and early Baroque periods from southern, central and eastern Europe (*basically the major cultures in and immediately bordering on the Holy Roman Empire*). As such, the kits above, some of which are also inspired by historical professions from the same periods and cultures, should work nicely into any *Dark Eye* campaign. This will, however, require some effort and planning on the part of the GM and players to adapt the kits and adjust terminology and mechanics to work with *The Dark Eye* system.

In *The Dark Eye* characters are called Heroes rather than adventurers and they have professions which come from four broadly defined groupings. Although there are similarities, these groupings don't mirror the four basic class groupings from the original AD&D system. Traders would mostly fall under the main grouping that *The Dark Eye Basic Rulebook* calls, "shady ones (*also known as 'characters who know their way around society'*)".

The kits above, which, as mentioned, would be professions for this more broadly defined group of “characters who know their way around society” and could either be added to the list of available professions or subsumed into one that more-or-less fits, e.g. the obtainer kit shares certain characteristics with the explorer profession already in *The Dark Eye* system and can be rolled into this profession. The other kits (including those mentioned from other sources) may be added as professions to the list of available

professions with the following costs (*Caravaneer and Tutor both cost 5 GP, all others cost 0 GP*)

All of the various skills, regardless of the field in which they are listed, in the kits would be called talents in *The Dark Eye* system. These would need to be altered, exchanged for talents already defined in the rules, or added to them. Since skill checks are based on attributes this would also need to be altered as *The Dark Eye* uses a system of nine separate attribute scores and it is up to the GM (or *Highlord in the parlance of The Dark Eye*) and the players to decide which of the nine attributes offers the appropriate type of test for the talent in question. For example, the new skill detailed above, medaillieur, would require a talent test against the attribute, cleverness, while an etiquette roll might be made against the social standing attribute instead of against charisma. These skills, translated into talents, would also be placed into either 7 broad categories of basic talents which every hero may make a test against or specialized talents which the Hero must have actively pursued or be actively pursuing in order to acquire and maintain. Trader talents will be primarily drawn from the physical and social talent groups, though others may be used, e.g. the caravaneer will have the talents of athletics, ride, hide, orientation, perception, and weather sense among others while the provider will have the talents of etiquette, dance, song, carouse, and seduce. All traders will have the human nature, fast talk and appraise talents in addition to any that might be appropriate to the individual kit. The gambler will of course have the board games and calculate talents and the mynter and the blade sharpener will have the engineering talent while the dragoman (or *docent*) will have the heraldry, law, and geography talents. The tutor will have the language lore, etiquette and persuade talents. This is not a complete list but it does give some examples of how translate the skills into talents and it is left to the Highlord and the players to work out more specific details.

#### FINDING THE TRADER’S PATH WITH SCOTT MORGAN

Using the above kits for *Pathfinder* takes a bit more work. In old-school systems, bards, thieves and traders were subclasses of the rogue general class but *Pathfinder* doesn’t work quite the same. In *Pathfinder*, there is no trader as a PC class and thieves and bards have their own separate classes, rogues and bards respectively, instead of both being subclasses of the rogue class. GMs may either create another class for *Pathfinder*,

specifically a trader class, or they can roll these kits into either the rogue or bard classes.

To create a new class of trader for *Pathfinder* you can use the basic information in the introduction of this article as a description. The role of a basic trader, without a kit, in *Pathfinder* would be similar also to the information in the kits. That is, traders are travelers who either are adventuring parties trying to lay the foundation for their own trade house or they hire adventurers for security. They are useful for adventuring parties because there is almost nothing a trader can’t provide for a party, particularly in an area where the trader does business. They also serve as translators and diplomats for nobles, and adventuring parties alike. Like the rogue or bard classes the trader would use a d8 hit die.

The secondary skills field in the kits is replaced by the profession skill, which is a wisdom check and can be any one of the professions listed under the profession skill description in the *Pathfinder* SRD or any the GM and the player deem appropriate to the setting and character. The *Pathfinder* list offers only a few examples of professions. Some though are obvious matches such as the caravaneer having the profession of soldiering or a provider having the profession of courtesan. The obtainer might be a librarian professionally, while the mynter might be an architect and the tutor is almost certainly also a scribe.

The non-combat skills will be found under either skills or feats in the *Pathfinder* system. Many of the skills above will not be found in the *Pathfinder* SRD and may either need to be house-ruled or replaced using something similar from either the skills or feats lists. Traders in *Pathfinder* receive 8 skill ranks per level plus any bonus for high intelligence. As far as skill groups goes, all charisma skills as well as knowledge, profession, craft and perform are trader class skills or almost any skill available to a bard or rogue would also be available to a trader as a class skill.

The natural fast talk ability of the trader becomes the fast-talker trait in the *Pathfinder* system with the bluff skill becoming class skill for all *Pathfinder* traders regardless of kit and all traders have this trait to start off. Other traits appropriate to traders are: canny observer, charmer, coax information, honeyed words, thoughtful reexamining, follow up, skilled liar, etc. (again, traits typical of bards or rogues would, in most cases, also fit a trader).

As mentioned in the history of the trader class earlier in this article, traders in some settings may have access to minor magics (mysteries, cantrips and arcane spells up to 2nd level). In *Pathfinder* this translates into traders following the same spell lists as bards but with a second level limit. It is up to the GM to decide if it is appropriate in her/his campaign world for traders to have access to magics at all. It may instead be the case that the GM decides that the trader, instead of magic access, is a master



of poisons in which case the GM would need to adapt aspects of the alchemist class for use as a trader. If a the spell route is chosen then a trader spell list would have to be drawn up from cantrips, orisons and 1-2 level spells at the GMs discretion.

Weapons and armor in *Pathfinder* are similar to the restrictions in the kits with the trader proficient in simple weapons including the long sword, rapier, sap, short sword, short bow and whip as well as light armor and shield without suffering penalties to spell casting. Normal penalties apply to multi-class traders or traders wearing medium or heavy armor.

The following table is an example of the trader progression used to track the advancement of a trader PC in *Pathfinder* but this is only an example and I encourage you to try coming up with your own.



Level	Attack bonus	Fort save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Trader Spells per level				
						1	2	3	4	5
1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Persuasive, Fast-Talker	0				
2	+0	+0	+3	+3	1 trader trait	1				
3	+1	+1	+3	+3	Deceitful or Iron Will	2				
4	+2	+1	+4	+4	1 trader trait	3	1			
5	+3	+1	+4	+4	skill focus	3	2			
6	+4	+2	+5	+5	1 trader trait	3	3			
7	+5	+2	+5	+5	bonus feat	4	3			
8	+6	+2	+6	+6	1 trader trait	4	3			
9	+7/+1	+3	+6	+6	Cosmopolitan	4	4			
10	+8/+2	+3	+7	+7	1 trader trait	4	4			
11	+9/+3	+3	+7	+7		4	4			
12	+10/+4	+4	+8	+8		5	4			
13	+11/+5	+4	+8	+8	1 trader trait	5	4			
14	+12/+6	+4	+9	+9		5	4			
15	+13/+7	+5	+9	+9		5	4			
16	+14/+8	+5	+10	+10		5	5			
17	+15/+9	+5	+10	+10	1 trader trait	5	5			
18	+16/+10	+6	+11	+11		5	5			
19	+17/+11	+6	+11	+11		5	5			
20	+18/+12	+6	+12	+12	1 trader trait	5	5			

## THE 5TH TRADER

The 5th edition of the *D&D* RPG is the hardest to adapt the trader to mostly because the edition is so new and not all of the information has been released yet. It is not included in any form in the materials thus far published for the system. Given the ability prime requisites that a trader has, this places the character somewhere between a bard and a rogue in the 5e system. With this in mind, and with the hope that the makers of *D&D* 5th Edition will at some point introduce a trader supplement to handle the class, it is best for now to adapt the various kits to either the bard or rogue class.

One possible way to do this is to introduce another college to the list of bard colleges, a bard's business college, so-to-speak. Another option is to introduce a trader archetype to the rogue archetypes. In the first case, perhaps a college of pathos that would focus on emotion and communication skills could be added and defined to include the tutor, procuress/er, provider, and sycophant kits as backgrounds for this type of bard. While for the second case, the remaining trader kits (mynter, Lombard, gambler, obtainer, blade sharpener, caravaner and dragoman (docent) could be then subsumed as backgrounds for

characters using a new trader archetype. The various skills could be added to existing skills or they may be integrated into a similar skill already in the 5th edition rule books which have, so far, a much slimmer skill system. As such it is left to the GM and players to determine the exact nature of a skill. As examples, the inherent ability of traders to fast talk as well as the diplomacy skill might be placed under the skill of persuasion. Other skills like bluff or chicanery could be put under the 5e skill of deception. Other skills of the various trader kits will need to be translated into feats in 5e. Tutors will obviously have the linguist feat while gamblers are lucky. Caravaneers must have a keen mind and obtainers can be dungeon delvers. The procuress and provider probably have an innate talent for acting. These are merely suggestions based on the current material of the 5th edition but this must ultimately be up to the GM and players to flesh out.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of fantasy RPGs and I sincerely hope that the above information may provide inspiration and add flavor to your game of choice! ■

# Leomund's Secure Shelter

Hit location damage, additional damage, and special damage

by Lenard Lakofka

Many people do special things when a “natural 20” is rolled. Two of the most common are special damage or hit location.

AD&D's combat method is to *not* do specific hit location. The only way to stab someone in the eye is if he is held, bound, unconscious, or asleep (and then surprised). The same applies to slitting a throat or cutting something vital off, like your opponent's head. When hit location occurs in normal melee, someone will take extra damage, get maimed, or something else unpleasant. This is fine when the player beheads the ogre, but not so fine when his own right hand gets cut off. Recall that if you can maim them, they can maim you. That should be a sobering thought. Soon player characters would be missing eyes, ears, noses, fingers, hands feet, and maybe their nasty bits. They will look like they were just mugged by a pair of assassins. This is not what the player wants happening to his character, is it?

So the second alternative is extra damage. After all, damage in a

range, based on a weapon, and modified by strength and/or magic, is the normal result of a weapon hit. What if some additional damage is done occasionally? If that is a good idea, when should it happen?

It does NOT happen on a natural 20. Think that out. Your THAC0 is 17. An opponent is AC 3 so you hit him on a 14 or better (this assumes that the THAC0 is already modified for strength and/or magic). So you hit on 14 to 20, 35% of the time. 1 in 7 times you do special damage — the natural 20. Hooray. But what if the opponent is AC -3? Now you ONLY hit on a 20! 100% of the time that you get a hit you also get extra damage. Can that be right? I think not.

The natural 20 is bogus. Instead you roll TWO d20. When you do that the dice must be different colors. One “to hit” in the first place and the second for possible special damage if there is a hit! This means that the roll that will cause special damage could be 20, 19, 18 or even 17 based on criteria you establish. You make a mini-chart that gives the required roll on the second twenty sided die to cause special damage.

## Scores extra damage on a roll of 20

Fighter	Cleric	Thief	Mage	Monster*
1st to 4th	2nd to 6th	3rd to 8th	9th to 12th	1+4 HD 3+4 HD

## Scores extra damage on a roll of 18, 19, or 20

Fighter	Cleric	Thief	Mage	Monster*
8th to 13th	12th to 17th	15th or more	19th or more	8 HD 13+4 HD

## Scores extra damage on a roll of 17, 18, 19, or 20

Fighter	Cleric	Thief	Mage	Monster*
14th or more	18th or more			14 HD or more

This would presume weapon proficiency, of course, and perhaps even weapon specialization (if you use those rules). Monsters using claws or bites are “proficient.”

\*Monster also refers to monsters who bear weapons that they are used to using.



Magic and/or strength would have nothing to do with it. Your character, or the NPC (monster) fighting you, has a 5%, 10% or 15% chance to do extra damage. That extra damage could be augmented by strength or magic, however. The point would be you would need a new basic combat method. Every roll would use two 20 sided die unless the player character or his opponent is not proficient or if you like employing the weapon vs. armor type charts. It's getting complicated and we have not even quantified the amount of extra damage yet.

Is that playable? Yes but at first everyone will be befuddled, confused, outraged, or overjoyed. It does take a new mindset and the Dungeon Master (DM) and players have to adopt this new mindset at the start of an adventure. Further, it now becomes tentative law. I say tentative because as melee occurs the DM and players have to decide if this new mindset works! It might be modified over a few sessions until it becomes second nature. Some may never do extra damage based on criteria established by the DM and with player input.

Let's say that the following will not do extra damage: *Ordinary men, men at arms, monsters of 1+4 hit dice or less, magic users, any type that can only do 1, 2, or 3 hit points of damage on a single attack*

(*claw/claw/bite comes to mind*), etc. In this way the DM does not have to roll two 20 sided die for kobolds, crows, giant rats and many minor attack forms. This takes time and thought, but it can be second nature with practice.

#### Alternate label for these charts

Note that instead of saying hit on 20, 19, 18 and 17 you could change the chart to reflect the weapon type. So change 20 to two-handed sword, lance (charging on horse), any weapon whose damage potential is 12 or higher including rocks from giants.

The second category would be long swords, broad swords, morning stars, battle axes etc. , weapons or attacks whose damage potential is between 7 and 11. Note that damage potential is without magic and without strength, jus the bare weapon.

The third category would be minor weapons like arrows, hammers, hand axes, daggers etc whose damage potential is between 4 and 6.

And finally a category for very minor weapons like darts, knives, stones whose normal damage maximum is 3 points.

But you can say that ALL special damage uses a single chart. Devising the chart can be up to you if you don't like the ones here. I

only admonish that you make it reasonable and leave off the 4d20 or d% choices for extra damage. These charts are just examples. You can then add magic and/or strength *again* to these rolls (the primary damage would include damage due to magic and/or strength) or just leave the damage the way it is.

You can also do a chart that is bit more *Gangbusters* in nature:

Roll	Damage	Special
1	d2	
2	d2+1	
3	d3	
4	d4	
5	d4+1	PR
6	d6	
7	d6+1	
8	d6+2	DZ
9	d8	
10	d8+1	
11	d8+2	
12	d10	
13	d10+1	DZ
14	d10+2	
15	3d6	
16	3d6+2	AR
17	3d8+2	
18	3d10+2	PR
19	3d12+2	
20	2d20+2	UN

**PR** Knocked prone (take into account weight/size differences in opponents!)  
Recovery 2-8 segments to regain feet.  
**DZ** Dazed. -2 on initiative, loss of any dex bonus to armor class, -2 to hit for d4 rounds. No spell casting while dazed. Devices can be employed.  
**AR** Armor is damaged by the force or location of the blow. This could be armor or shield. Magical armor should get a save of seven augmented by the plus on the armor/shield.  
**UN** Knocked unconscious for 3d4 segments. See restrictions suggested.

#### Calculation of the Extra Damage

How much extra damage?

Here comes the third twenty-sided die!

#### Example for a hit on a roll of 20

<b>Roll</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Dam</b>	1	1	d2	d2	d2+1	d3	d3	d3+1	d4	d4
<b>Roll</b>	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<b>Dam</b>	d4	d4+1	d6	d6	d6+1	d8+1	d8+3	d10+2	d12+3	2d8+3

#### A hit on a 19

<b>Roll</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Dam</b>	1	1	1	1	d2	d2	d2+1	d3	d3	d3+1
<b>Roll</b>	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<b>Dam</b>	d3+1	d4	d4	d4+1	d4+2	d6+1	d6+1	2d4+1	2d6+1	2d6+2

#### A hit on an 18

<b>Roll</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Dam</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	d2	d2	d2+1	d2
<b>Roll</b>	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<b>Dam</b>	d3	d3	d3	d4	d4	d4+1	d4+1	d6	d8	d10

#### A hit on a 17

<b>Roll</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Dam</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	d2	d2
<b>Roll</b>	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<b>Dam</b>	d2	d3	d3	d3	d3	d4	d4	d4	d4	d6

Hesitate to use UN, unconscious! That can get abused and should certainly not apply to creatures from the Inner or Outer Planes. Large creatures (rhino, hill giant or larger would *not* be knocked unconscious in any case) Undead can't be knocked unconscious. The DM can negate the UN possibility if he/she feels it does not apply.

Special damage cannot occur if a creature is hit only by magical weapons of a certain power and the wielder does not have such a weapon.

I also frown on special damage from things like darts, thrown daggers or any weapon whose primary damage on that round is 3 points or less.

And finally, a bonus item for this issue's installment of Leomund's Secure Shelter, a monster that will be familiar to any fans of Japanese monster movies. To steer clear of overly litigious copyright holders, let's just call him a fire-breathing kaiju lizard monster. ■

## Kaiju

*Fire-breathing lizard monster*

FREQUENCY: Very rare

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -9

MOVE: 540 feet per round, 1200 feet per round swimming

HIT DICE: 60

% IN LAIR: Unknown, frequently debated

TREASURE TYPE:

NO. OF ATTACKS: Claw, claw, bite or tail swipe and 50% for a second attack each round

DAMAGE/ATTACK: Claw 8d8+12

Bite 12d20+40

Tail swipe 20d20+60

Step (16 per round) 6d% +200

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Breath weapon, 300 with a save for 200

No limit on repeats, range cone 180 feet long x 60 feet wide

Roar: Save vs. magic or flee in fear

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Immune to energy (lightning, heat, cold, fire, etc.), poison, hold & charm, petrification

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: High (equivalent to INT 14)

ALIGNMENT: Unknown

SIZE: L (160' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil



# MUNCHKIN

## tips and tricks

New ways to play, and strategies for screwing over your buddies from the MUNCHKIN czar

by Andrew Hackard

*Munchkin*, the card game of “role-playing without role-playing,” was published by Steve Jackson Games in 2001 and has been through over 25 printings since then. It has spawned over a dozen sequel games, and collectively those games have more than 50 expansions, boosters, and accessories.

In the course of playing and working on *Munchkin* over the last 13 years, I’ve developed some strategies that have made my *Munchkin* games more fun for me. I’ve also collected a catalog of variants, ranging from simple rule tweaks to game-changing alterations. My name is Andrew Hackard, and I am a munchkin.

### TIPS: MUNCHKIN STRATEGIES

*Munchkin* can be a pretty random game, as with any game where the way the cards fall determines how the game develops, but there are some general principles players can use to make the game more fun for everyone and improve their chances of winning at the same time. Mostly the latter.

#### Be nice early. It makes the inevitable betrayal sweeter.

I occasionally hear from new *Munchkin* players who say the game takes forever and no one can level up. Most of the time, when I ask for details, it turns out that their group starts stabbing each other in the back (metaphorically in most cases) starting on the first turn.

The problem with this, if your group isn’t looking for a no-holds-barred bloodbath, is that it’s really easy to make the game really hard for low-level munchkins — and once that cycle gets started, it can be tough to break. *Munchkin* is designed to promote cooperation at lower levels. That’s why the helper is allowed to negotiate for part of the treasure — so even players who can’t kill a monster on their own can get some loot for helping someone else and that makes it more likely they’ll be able to kill the next monster on their own. *Munchkin* is

more fun when there are lots of cards available for people to use, both for and against each other.

Of course, you don’t want to go overboard on cooperation; if one player is getting far ahead of the pack, it might be time to help the next monster — all in the interest of fairness, naturally. And once a player gets close to the winning level, take the gloves off! But . . .

#### Don’t play all your cards immediately.

Another good strategy in *Munchkin* is to always keep a card or two in your hand that can

be used to help yourself or hurt the other players. Once you get a reputation as a tricky player who never reveals everything, you’ll get a lot more respect at the table. (You’ll also draw a lot more attention, often in the form of curses or monsters that get help from your opponents. Such is the life of the savvy munchkin.) Something else to keep in mind, is that some classes and races have abilities that are powered by cards in your hand. If you play everything you have, you may not have enough cards left to use your abilities as fully as you would like.



Finally, very few curses and monsters' bad stuff effect cards in your hand, so protecting a few cards there can be helpful when you hit a run of bad luck. And because you can play one-shots or sell items for a level from your hand as well as the table, you aren't necessarily hurting yourself by doing so.

In the endgame, holding a card or two back can often induce your opponents to play more of what they have collected, which means they won't have those cards when you go after the winning level. There are very few sweeter moments than winning the game with a card you've held in reserve for that exact purpose.

#### **Death can be your best friend.**

Death is usually a very bad thing. In *Munchkin*, however, death is a temporary condition and, like Gandalf, you may find that it leads to a significant improvement. Remember that, even though you've lost all your stuff, you keep your class, race, and level, and, at the start of your next turn, you get eight new cards. This can be extremely helpful if you had a mess of low-power items and a few useless cards in your hand. More than once, I've seen a player return from death with a hand of cards that leads to a victory in very short order.

#### **Offer to help, and then be unhelpful.**

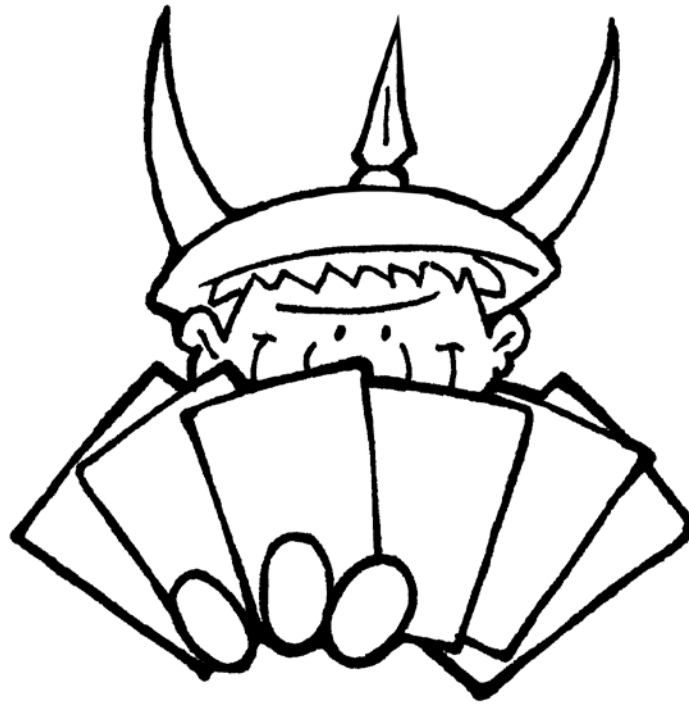
This is an advanced technique that can be devastatingly effective (*and very funny for your fellow players*) if your opponent doesn't see it coming. Nothing in the *Munchkin* rules requires a player in combat to try to defeat the monster. If you offer to help—or, even better, when you are forced to help—refuse to use your cards to help the other player! You can even help the monster, if that's what it takes. Few cards allow a munchkin to dismiss an ineffective (or hostile!) helper, and some of the ones that do specify that the player is not allowed to look for another.

This tactic is especially effective when you are immune to the monster's bad stuff and the other player is not. Chortle gleefully as he has to try to run away from something that ignores you completely. For bonus extra credit, use a card to make the other player fail the run away roll.

#### **Don't hold grudges—unless it's funny.**

*Munchkin* is a game where stabbing each other in the back is expected. If someone makes an especially fine play against you, congratulate them. You'll get your chance soon enough—and even if you don't, someone else will probably do unto them what they just did unto you, and you can get vicarious enjoyment out of it.

Having said that, sometimes another player will go after you for no apparent reason. It is for times such as this that spite was invented. There can be a bit of vicious pleasure in saying, "Oh, look, I drew another curse, and guess who I'm playing it on. Again." I would



never advise being vindictive at the *Munchkin* table—for more than a couple of turns, anyway—unless someone has done something really nasty to you. And I certainly wouldn't carry a grudge from game to game. On the other hand, my old college game group used to describe my character as "feeling more chaotic than good right now," so perhaps I should take my own advice.

#### **TRICKS: *Munchkin* VARIANTS**

*Munchkin* is (in my incredibly humble opinion) a great game, but even the best game can grow stale after a while. Here are some options to add a bit of variety.

#### **The official unofficial rules: listening at the door and shared victory**

Tucked way back at the end of the *Munchkin* rule sheet is a section called "Faster Play" with two optional rules: "Listening at the Door" and "Shared Victory."

We use listening at the door in all of our internal and play test games—indeed, it's an official rule in *Munchkin* tournament play. I recommend it very highly to all *Munchkin* players. One flaw in *Munchkin* is that it's possible to have a game where one player just doesn't see any monsters. Listening at the door gives each player a free door draw to start their turn, before kicking open the door. If you don't find a monster when you kick open the door, but you did draw one when you listened, you now have a monster you can fight by looking for trouble. Giving everyone an extra door draw makes that deck cycle more quickly, getting monsters (and classes and races) out a little sooner. Additionally, if you don't fight a monster, you loot from the treasure deck, not the door deck, so a player who doesn't find monsters to fight is still getting a little treasure

each turn. It makes the game a bit fairer and a bit more fun for players who are having poor luck with the monsters.

Shared victory is a great rule to use with new players. It says that if I help you kill a monster to reach level 10, I share in your victory. It can lead to more player interaction and is a way for someone who hasn't had a lot of luck during the game to share in at least a moral victory at the end. Otherwise, that player might lose interest or, worse, decide *Munchkin* isn't for them. It can also add a new wrinkle to negotiations: "Accept me as your helper and I won't play this card that will make sure you lose the combat"—and now it's up to the other player to decide whether half a victory is better than none.

#### **Mulligan tokens and extra starting cards**

This variant is adapted from the fantastic campaign-style board game, *Risk Legacy*. It gives people who regularly play together a way to let previous results shape later games. This variant is recommended primarily for experienced players.

For this variant, you'll need to keep a log of who has played with the group and how many times each person has won. The first game is played with the standard rules. After that, for each time someone has won a *Munchkin* game, she receives a "mulligan token," allowing her to discard whatever she gets for kicking down the door and kick down the next door instead (one mulligan per turn). Mulligans can't be saved from game to game; use them or lose them.

To compensate, previous players who have not yet won a game get to draw a bonus card from either deck at the start of the game. New players (who haven't been part of the

campaign) get to draw two extra cards, both from the same deck or one from each, their choice.

I recommend resetting the campaign every so often, perhaps every five or ten games, rather than end up in a situation where one player has 30 mulligans and never sees a curse again as long as he lives.

### Insta-epic

This is another variant for experienced players. Epic *Munchkin* is a free rule extension that lets you take your *Munchkin* game to level 20, with extra powers starting when you reach level 10. (It's available as a PDF download from <http://gyg.ax/munchkin>) In this variant, everyone starts with epic abilities. This can get out of hand very quickly, which is not necessarily a bad thing!

Note: In the Epic *Munchkin* rules, you kick down two doors when you reach level 10. That part doesn't change. It's just the epic abilities you get earlier than usual. Also, *Munchkin 7 – Cheat With Both Hands* includes cards called "Epic Junior" that do exactly what this variant allows. You can remove them from the deck if you want; I think it's more fun to say that anyone who draws epic junior immediately goes up a level instead.

### The Number of the dungeons is two

Donald X. Vaccarino, best known as the designer of *Dominion* and *Kingdom Builder*, has a delightful and hard-to-find game of mad science and world domination called *Nefarious*. The rules are simple, which runs the risk of getting repetitive after a while. Fortunately, at the start of each game you draw two event

cards, each of which changes the basic rules. Some events are good; some are very, very not good.

If you've played with dungeon cards from *Munchkin 6 – Demented Dungeons*, *Munchkin Cthulhu 4 – Crazy Caverns*, or *Munchkin Zombies 3 – Hideous Hideouts*, this should sound very familiar. A fun variant is to leave the portal cards out of the deck and draw two dungeons at the start that will be in effect the entire game. This is a cool way to introduce the dungeon deck to players who haven't seen it before, in fact, and doesn't complicate the game with some of the more interesting portal effects. Even experienced players might enjoy this change of pace.

### There can be only one, and I'm it

Ever played a game of *Munchkin* where everyone's a wizard? Boring! To use this variant, go through your deck and remove all but one copy of each class and race (or whatever analog your particular game has). This rule can really make the "lose your class/race" effects painful, to say nothing of the choice you have when the difference between killing a monster and running away is being willing to give up your class.

The other nice thing about this variant is that, with fewer cards in the door deck, the monsters (and the curses!) show up more often, which should make the game go faster.

### Munchkin chaos!

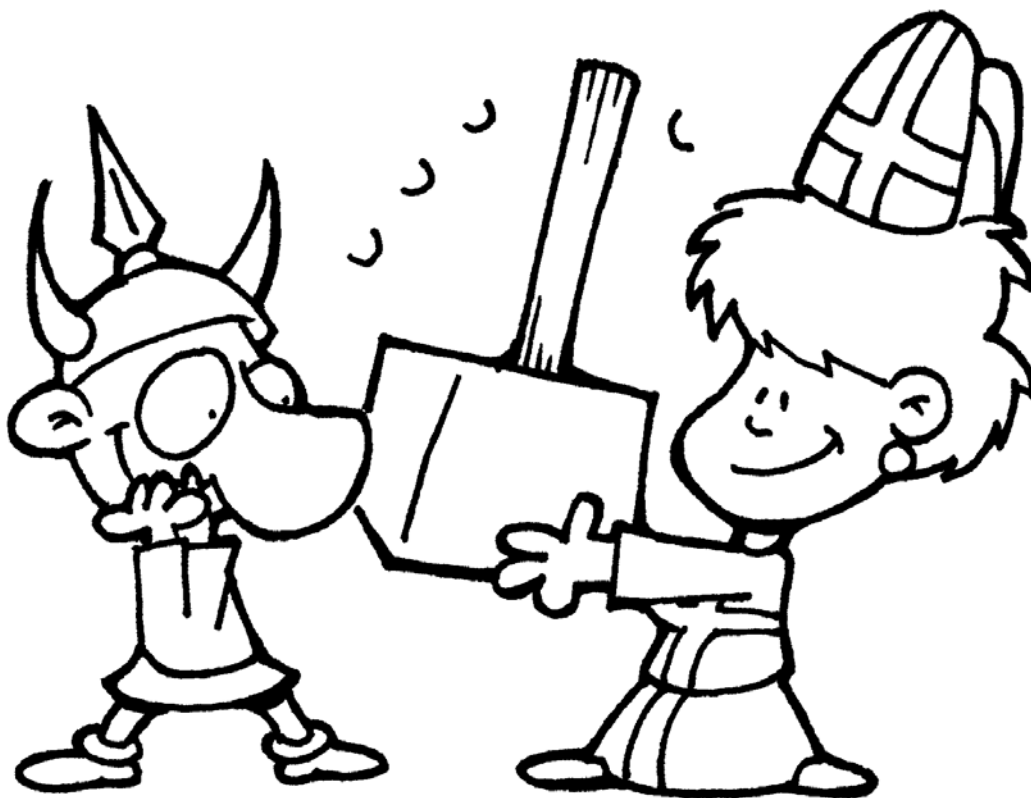
The final variant is definitely for seasoned *Munchkin* fans. It requires six different *Munchkin* sets, plus any expansions for each that you care to use. Number the sets from 1 to 6. To start

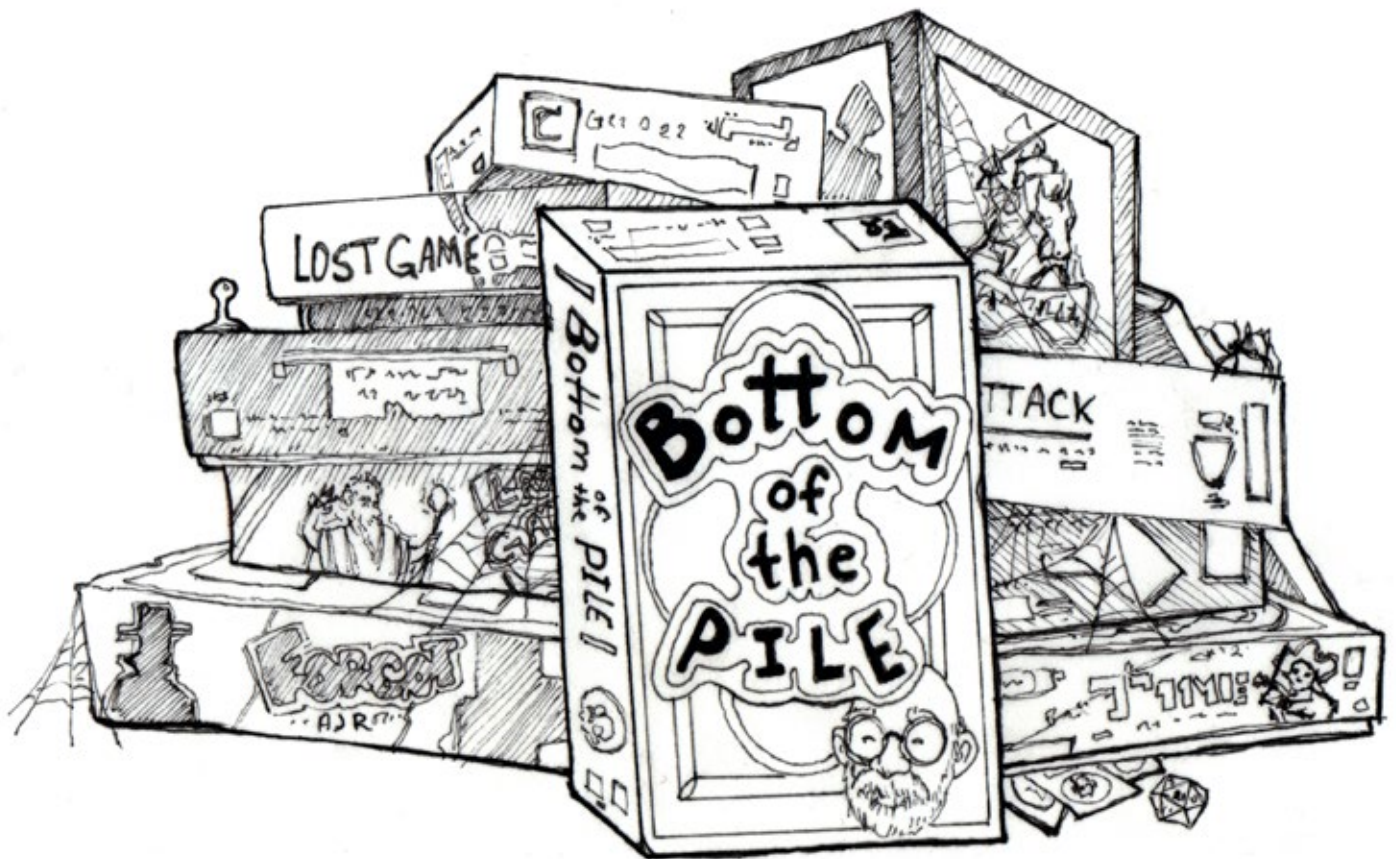
the game, deal every player one door and one treasure from each set, so the starting hand is twelve cards total. From that point, each player rolls a six-sided die at the start of their turn and can only draw from the set matching that number. (Loaded Die and Reloaded Die can be used to change this roll, but nothing else affects the result.) You can use cards from any set (and so can your opponents!) but you're only allowed to draw from the set you rolled. Your opponents are not similarly restricted; if they have abilities that will let them draw cards on your turn, they can draw from any set they feel like.

Of course, this rule can be scaled up or down as your group wants, just by using a larger or smaller pool of sets and matching polyhedral die. If you use more than six sets, I recommend starting the game by having each player roll the die and dealing one door and treasure from the matching set, rather than dealing 16, 20, or even more cards as a starting hand. (If you have only three players, go around the table twice.)

For maximum chaos, don't use more than one of original *Munchkin*, *Munchkin Legends*, and *Munchkin Conan*; the class and race overlap among those sets could make this rule less interesting.

*Andrew Hackard is the Munchkin Czar at Steve Jackson Games. He dedicates this article to the members of the Karyatane, who got him started on this merry path; to the Jester Center Rotating Game Salon, for wonderful memories and lifelong friendships; and to "a certain unnamed principal who told me in my second year of teaching that I'd never amount to anything if I didn't quit treating everything as a game." ■*





by Timothy Kask

I began my gaming life as a boardgamer, with AH's *D-Day* during the winter of '61-'62. While my name has been inextricably linked to fantasy and role-playing, my love of boardgames has never diminished. RPG's are all about cooperation and achieving collective goals; boardgames are about winning. In a two-player game, you get to beat one opponent; in multi-player you can clobber them all. In a great many multi-player games, all ages can participate. Perhaps most importantly, multi-player games bring players physically together for the fun and social interaction that our beloved hobby is so especially good at engendering.

With the explosive growth of multi-player games in the last decade or so, there has never been such a plethora of choices available. In that same span of time, I am betting that all of us have picked up a game or two that we played once a few years ago (or never got around to because we could not recruit enough players to try it) and moved on to another; it is now gathering dust at the bottom of the pile.

I will, on rare occasions, tell you about some games played with cards. Not all games using cards are of the soul-sucking, money-draining sort such as *MIG*.

I hope to encourage you to dust off some of them. Many of the games I plan to expose you to are now recent orphans—no longer being printed. I will not get you excited about a game that is not still available fairly easily, from one source or another—finding games is now so much easier, thanks to the Web. And I will not spend time touting a game that is now ridiculously expensive. As I am writing up a number of games and the editor will pick and choose to meet/fill space requirements, I have no idea in what issue or order they may appear. This is just a beginning.

## FEUDALITY

Z-Man Games, 2011  
 Designed by Tom Wham  
 2-6 players

(Full disclosure: I have known the designer since we were both students at SIU-C. I worked with him at TSR and consider him my friend. None of this has the slightest influence on what follows.)

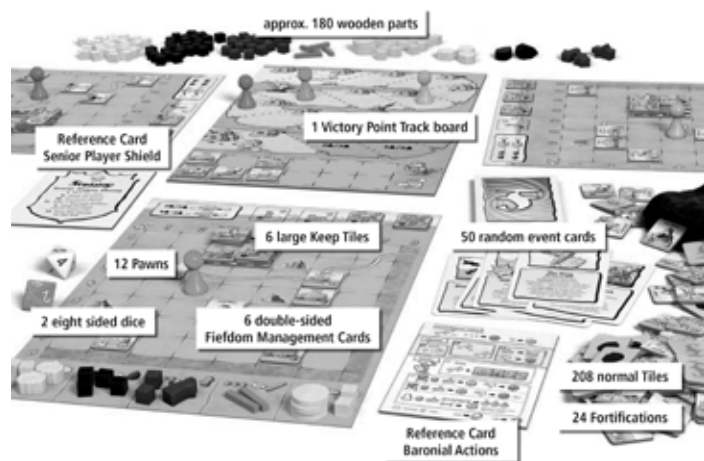
This gem mined from the fertile mind of Tom Wham is, in my opinion, his best design ever. Yes, better than *Kings & Things*, better than *Snits Revenge* and better than his classic *Awful Green Things from Outer Space*.

*Feudality* (to which I will refer as Feud from here on) is fiendishly clever and simple at the same time; a not insignificant feat. The re-playability factor is nearly infinite, which, to my mind, is the single most important measure of a multi-player boardgame.

Many of the rules could be considered somewhat whimsical that is in keeping with any of Mr. Whams' games. In this case I think the whimsical artwork typical of his games worked against him. If the game had used conventional (i.e., boring) artwork on the counters and more conventional-looking maps, I feel it certainly could have won the Roberts Award that year. It is that good, and I am not taking anything away from the games that won that year. Even with the multitude of categories, it is hard to pin down exactly where it fits.

This little beauty can be played in two hours, by up to six players. It never plays out the same way because of the 2 d8 that drive the game, as well as the event deck of 50 cards, (51 with the Essen card).

We have never gotten through more than half the deck in any game we have played. It has all the classic elements that make a game great: resource acquisition and management, collusion amongst the players against each other, the ability to severely hurt another player, ample opportunities for revenge, large elements of chance and simple rules.



In *Feudality* you build your fief by placing tiles that produce various resources or do other wondrous things, manage your resources, build an army and upgrade your stronghold, all the while fighting off bandits, monsters, and sometimes other players. The king is quickly hated because all he seems to be good for is messing with your plans and complicating your schemes. The unique turn sequencing and the randomness of what might be available ensures that no game ever goes just how you plan it.

There was a very limited run (700) of an expansion called *Dark Clouds & Pretty Flowers* that adds an entire sheet of counters into the mix, as well as several new tiles with strange abilities. I suspect that these tiles were left out of the basic game for being too “Wham-ish.” Even without the expansion, this is one super game well worth dusting off and looking at again. It is still reasonably priced on eBay if you cannot locate one new from your FLGS or online.

## BRIDGE TROLL

**Z-Man Games 2009**  
**Design by Alf Seegert**  
**3-6 Players**

I'd be willing to bet that you never knew just how nourishing a princess can be, or that Billy Goat Gruff (of Golden Book and Mother Goose fame) is nobody to take lightly. If you played this wacky game you would know that the Princess is good for very tasty repast and that Billy Goat Gruff has hooves of steel that are very bad for bridges.

In this lighthearted game each player is a troll with his very own private bridge, hoping for tasty travelers to use it. Captured travelers can become food or used for gaining victory points or even improving your bridge. Really special travelers can be held for ransom and a few allow special rules to come into play.

Not all is peaches and cream in this land of many bridges as rival trolls can seek to harm each other by means many and nefarious. Then there are the travelers that can hurt the trolls by rescuing prisoners, such as pesky do-gooder knights. These can be sent off with a barrage of boulders. There are different colored boulders, and combinations of colors play a part in the game.

Trolls bid for the right to snatch the juiciest traveler each turn; choosing not to bid at all allows a troll to stockpile more boulders. No self-respecting troll would ever admit to having too many stones. All of that turn's travelers must be claimed by someone; having to select a card that harms you is just bad troll-luck for that day.

This is a fast, goofy, and fun game that can be played by the family but is also great as a warm-up when your group gets together.

## SERENISSIMA RENAISSANCE TRADING and CONFLICT AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN EuroGames-1st Ed. 2006; Asmodee 2nd Ed. 2012 Design by Dominique Erhard and Duccio Vitale 2-4 players

So far as I know the two editions play the same. If you get the chance, get the 1st; it is a gamer's delight with scads of fiddly pieces, molded in various shades of plastic and dozens of little paper flags. To say it is impressive when fully deployed on the table is to say a sunrise over your favorite lake is OK to look at. In point of fact, that is what first caught my eye at a TotalCon several years ago; it was a visual treat.

The play is relatively straightforward; deals broken, deceit and naked greed, as well as an eye for a sharp profit are the grease that makes this game go. Combats are chancy one-on-one, but ganging up is the norm even though still bloody.

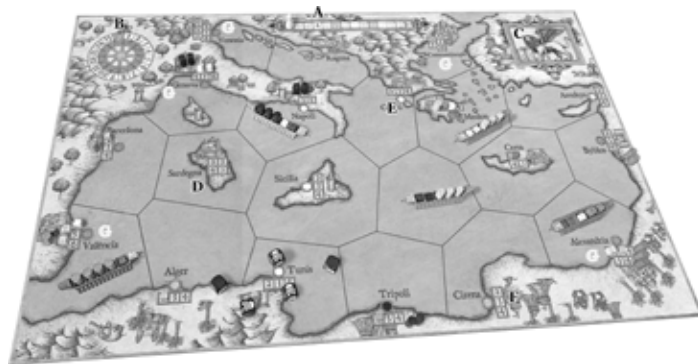
As with any good trading game, a player can win through slick deals and aggressive trading; combat is an expensive proposition and should be considered carefully. Of course, if you absolutely, positively must control Tripoli for some reason and someone is thwarting you, war is the answer.

Movement is dicey; you must get permission to transit a sea section already containing an opponent's galley(s). The grantor can renege at the moment of the grantees turn, thereby disrupting all sorts of planned moves and schemes.

The game has a clever mechanic dealing with the commodities, their sources, and their markets. Cornering the market in a given commodity by controlling all the sources is especially lucrative.

The combat system is unique to this game. Combat is mutual and simultaneous; both players roll a d6, add the number of sailors on the owner's galley, and divide the result by three, rounding down. The result is the number of sailors lost from the opponent's galley.

I was able to find a used copy in very nice condition of the 1st Ed. not very long ago on eBay for a very reasonable price. Keep your eyes open; it is an outstanding game.



## HIGHLAND CLANS AKA MACROBBER

**Queen Games 2008**  
**Design by Ralf Burkett**  
**3-5 players**

The “other” title might be a tip-off on the conduct of the game itself. Stealing cows and causing trouble for the other clans are the meat and potatoes of the game.

The premise of the game is simple enough—become the highland laird that wields the most power and influence, usually at the expense of the other clans. This is achieved through raiding, cow stealing

and political intrigue. I define this game as “euro-abstract,” light on minutia and detail, heavy on gameplay.

The clans could have any names; the designer chose to go with five of the best known from the pages of history: MacLeod, MacDonald, MacGregor, Campbell and MacKenzie. They could just as well be named Smith, Jones, etc. It is a level playing field at the start.

The game has one novel and very interesting facet—the actions you take in your turn are governed by chance. How this is determined is inspired design. Actions are keyed to colors of little wooden cubes of different numbers of different colors. As might be expected, the more common colored cubes trigger the mundane actions; the uncommon cubes allow the more exotic actions to be undertaken. Each player, at the beginning of his or her turn, draws six cubes from a cloth bag. The combination of colors determines what actions are possible, as only a few of the six can be used in one turn, with the unused cubes going back into the bag.

In a nod to the Celtic background of the game, the bards are tremendously influential and can wreak havoc on another clan’s strategy; the monks also come into play in determining success. I really think this game got the short shrift, and is well worth another look.

## BACCHUS’ BANQUET

### THE GLORY AND GLUTTONY OF ROME

Mayfair Games 2008

Design by Frederic Moyersoen

3-5 players

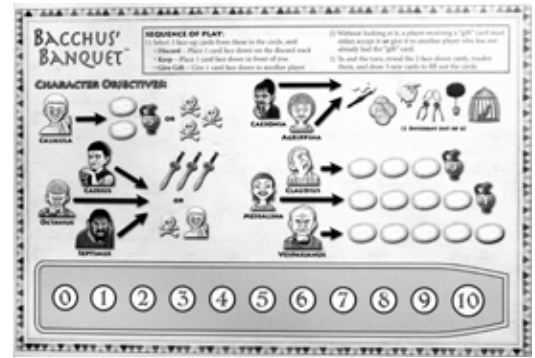
How nasty can a game be wherein you ply your rivals with fine foods, vast quantities of wine, and gifts? You might find out as you desperately seek a feather in this quirky little gem from Mayfair (why a feather will become apparent in a moment).

*BB* is a devious game of political and social maneuver amidst the intrigue of Caligula’s court. Each player has a different agenda to secure the win; only the identity of the player playing the emperor is known; all others are hidden at the beginning of the game. Three of them want to assassinate Caligula; three of them are there to stuff themselves with vast amounts of viands and vintage wines; two of them are trying to amass presents, and then there is Caligula whose agenda is eating, drinking, and lasting long enough to see three others die.

As a player, you are never really dead the first time. At the gastronomical demise of your first character you draw an unused character and join the party. If you are particularly ill-fortuned or egregiously gluttonous and die again, you can continue play until all of the characters have entered the game.

The title stems from the setting of the game and its mechanics; the

victory point recordkeeping method is a belt buckle. When your belt buckle gives way, you lose. And it’s not like you can always say no; sometimes circumstances (in the form of card



combinations) force you to accept and consume a sumptuous repast. This is when you need that feather I mentioned earlier to “relieve” three points of overeating. Can’t find a feather? Not to worry, there is always a bit of dancing or perhaps a tryst or even a satisfying nap that allows you to work off what you ate (or were compelled to consume). As this is Caligula’s Rome, poison plays a prominent role.

As each player has a different agenda, and only Caligula is known at the beginning of the game, it would seem to me that this game has an extremely high re-playability factor. This makes it ideal for play by a group that plays together regularly and therefore remembers and savors old grudges and dastardly betrayals’ deserved retributions. It is fairly easy to pick up and makes a fun convention game and even a family game for older children and adults.

## SILK ROAD

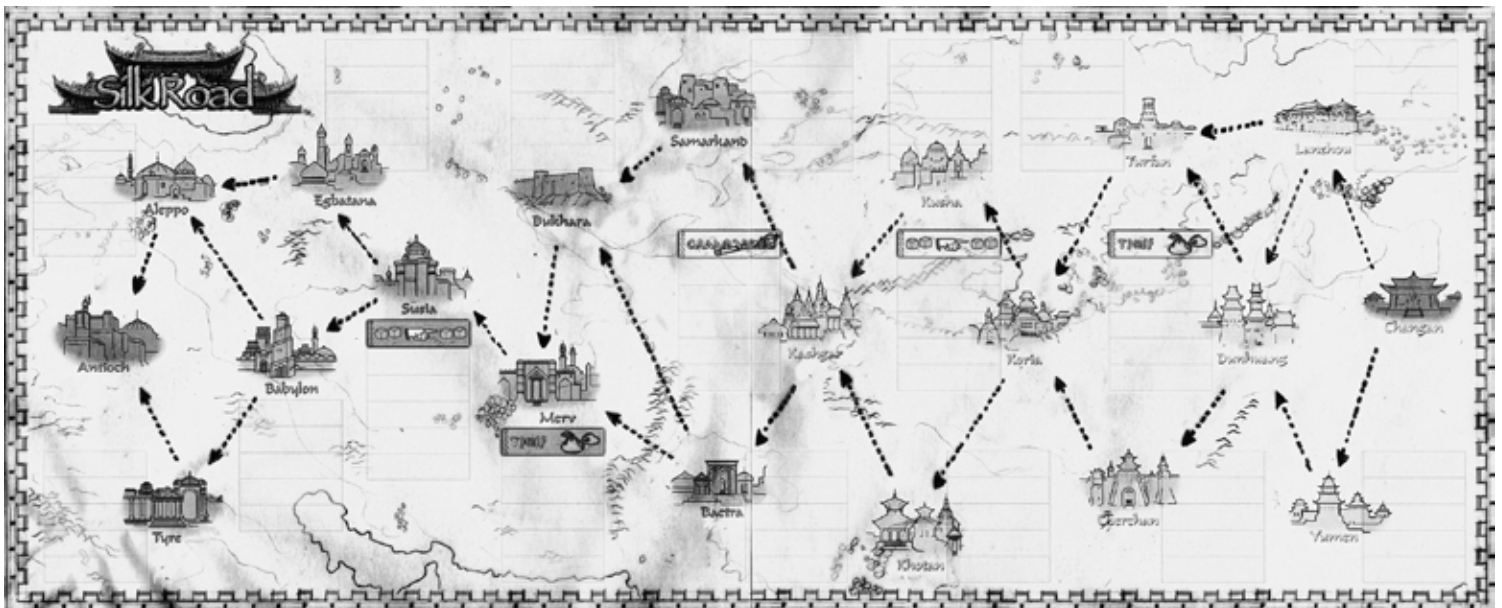
A GAME OF BARTERING & ADVENTURE ALONG THE HISTORIC SILK ROAD  
Z-Man Games 2006

Design by Ted Cheatham and Bruno Faidutti

3-6 players

The subtitle of this game is a little misleading; there’s lots of bartering which you would expect in a game based on caravans of traders. The adventure is a little light as today’s gamers might know it; there are no monsters, no evil wizards and nobody in need of rescue. There are thieves and a meddling Grand Vizier; better still, there is the element of treachery and intrigue!

The mechanics of the game are very simple and easy to master in the first game. On the surface it is merely go to a city and do some business. The player that is the most successful in trading wins the game. Each turn, one of the players is Caravan Master (CM), the player that gets to pick the next city on the route as well as



the pick of the deals available and any special deals pertinent to that city. It is in the methods of determining that worthy person where the meat of this game lies. Allow me to explain:

For the first turn, the CM is determined by a die roll.

In each city on the Silk Road there is one fewer deal available than the number of players; someone is always left holding the bag. The hapless bag holder then becomes the CM for the next turn...

Any player can bid for the right to be the CM. The bid goes clockwise around the table. The high bidder then pays the would-be CM the winning sum, unless the designated CM matches the bid and gives the sum to the bidder, thereby retaining the right to be CM.

After the CM completes his deal, it is his option on who goes next. This continues: each completed dealer designates the next to deal and so on until that bag-holder mentioned earlier, who becomes the next CM, is outbid.

As you might gather, it should be easy to keep the leader from getting too far ahead, but it really isn't because all commodities and currency are kept hidden by each player. As there are no rules forbidding it, I can imagine a lot of side-deals being made to influence turn-order, which can change every turn.

The deals are easy—so much of this for so much of that. Every now and again you can win gold by showing the most of a given commodity when the vizier meddles in your business. At the end of the game victory points are awarded for having the most of a commodity.

The 'deals' are actually chits (small rectangular counters) that are color-keyed for east and west halves of the board; both colors are identical mirror-image sets. For a change of pace, players can run a game in the opposite direction. Some cities only lead to one other city, while others offer a choice so the number of turns a game lasts will be determined by the aggregate of decisions made by the CM.

I do have one caution/caveat: the little wooden counters are poorly painted. Unless viewed in clear, bright light, the white and yellow are nearly indistinguishable. I sorted mine under bright light and then applied markings to one set to tell them apart. As these cubes are only abstracts, why could they not pick better colors? This is not the first euro-game to commit this sin.

The fun in this game is in the wheeling and dealing amongst the players, the side deals made, and the occasional betrayal. This little gem is just what every game group needs; a new grudge generator. ■

There is a new Roleplaying Game designed by Glen D. Collier that is not for the faint of heart, and if you are a gamer then you need to check it out.

# Empire 1337

You can get the book by ordering it on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), [bn.com](http://bn.com), [empire1337.com](http://empire1337.com), or by walking into your local book store and ordering the game.



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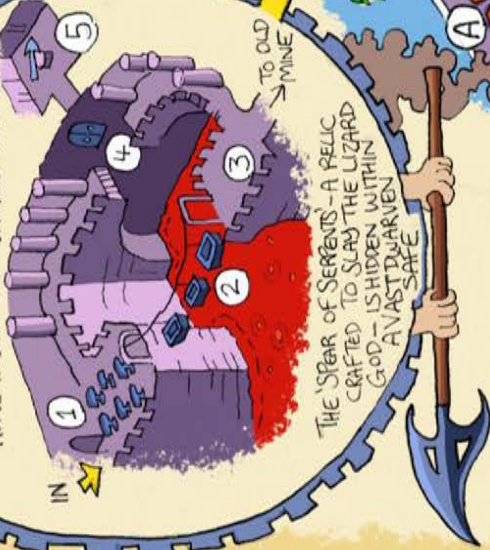
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# ISLAND OF THE LIZARD GOD

SHIPWRECKED ON A REMOTE TROPICAL ISLAND, YOUR ADVENTURERS FACE OFF AGAINST A LIZARDMAN CULT AND THEIR PRIMAL GOD: AN 80 FT TAIL T-REX!

## THE CRUCIBLE OF STEEL

THE RUINS OF AN ANCIENT DWARVEN FORGE LIE BENEATH THE VOLCANO; NOW HOME TO GHOSTS AND UNTAMED FIRE SPIRITS!

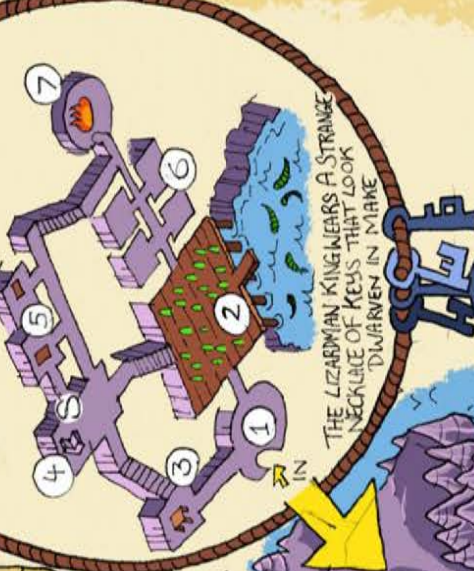


THE 'SPEAR OF SERPENTS' - A RELIC CRAFTED TO SLAY THE LIZARD GOD - IS HIDDEN WITHIN AN AVAST DWARVEN SAFE

- 1: DWARF GHOSTS HAMMER OUT WEAPONS ON FORGES. THEY MUST BE IMPRESSED WITH BRASS BOLTS OR THEY WILL QUENCH THEIR BLADES IN ADVENTURER BLOOD!
- 2: ORE CARTS CROSS A LAKE OF MOLTEN STEEL. FIRE SPIRITS ATTACK DURING CROSSING
- 3: OLD TREASURES LIE HERE.
- 4: THE DWARF-LOCKED DOOR HANGS OVER THE INFERNO. THE ADVENTURERS NEED A SET OF LOST KEYS!
- 5: HERE LIES THE SPEAR OF SERPENTS.

## MOUNT SACRIFICE

THE LIZARDMEN CHATIVES BRING SHIPWRECKED CAPTIVES HERE AND SACRIFICE THEM TO THE GOD



THE LIZARDMAN KING WEARS A STRANGE NECKLACE OF KEYS THAT LOOK LIKE DWARVEN IN MINE

- 1: SURPRISINGLY LIGHTLY GUARDED ENTRY CHAMBER.
- 2: HUNDREDS OF LIZARDMEN CAVORTING ON A RAMSHACKLE PLATFORM ABOVE A SACRIFICE POOL FILLED WITH RAVENOUS CROCODILES.
- 3: GUARD ROOM STAFFED BY DRUNKEN LIZARDMEN.
- 4: LIZARD KING'S THRONE ROOM. BEWARE HIS CHAMPION!
- 5: LIZARD KING'S CHAMBERS. (LOTS OF TREASURE!)
- 6: PRISONERS KEPT HERE PRIOR TO SACRIFICE.
- 7: PRISONERS TORTURED HERE PRIOR TO SACRIFICE.

## A: LAIR OF THE LIZARD GOD

THE LIZARD GOD SLEEPS HERE AMONG THE LAVA FLOWS. EACH DAY IT PROWLs THE ISLAND ALONG THE ROUTES SHOWN, DEVOURING ALL WHO CROSS ITS PATH!

## B: THE SWAMP SIRENS

ADVENTURERS ARE LURED INTO THE DROWNING POOLS BY APPARITIONS OF THOSE THEY'VE LOVED, LOST OR LUSTED AFTER. IN REALITY, THESE ARE LAMPREY-LIKE DEATH WORMS MASQUERADING BEHIND ILLUSIONS.

## C: 'DRIFTWOOD'

A CAVE TOWN FORMED FROM SHIPWRECKS, AND PEOPLED BY LOST SAILORS. RUN BY THE 'APE CARTEC', A CRIMINAL GROUP OF GORILLAS WHO STUMBED UPON A SHIPMENT OF INTELLIGENCE BOTIONS.

## D: JUNGLE OF INSANITY

THE THICKEST REGION OF JUNGLE. THE SCREECHING CRIES OF A COLONY OF UNDEAD PARROTS DRIVE INTRUDERS MAD WITH OFTEN PROPHETIC VISIONS.

## E: BACKFANG RIVER

THOSE SEEKING THE LIZARDMEN'S MOUNTAIN FORTRESS MUST BRAVE THE RAPIDS OF BACKFANG RIVER, HOUNDED BY LIZARD CULTISTS AND GIANT CROCODILES!

## F: LAND OF THE GOLIATHS

THE REMNANTS OF AN ANCIENT KINGDOM OF GIANTS. ADVENTURERS WHO FIND A WAY TO LIFT THE GIANTS' SOMBER HEARDS CAN LEARN MUCH ABOUT THE ISLAND.



ROLL FOR WEATHER EACH DAY - 1-2: BAKING HEAT 3: GASPING HUMIDITY 4: TORRENTIAL RAIN 5: HURRICANE 6: PYROCLASTIC FIRESTORM!

# The Island of the Lizard God

The winning entry in this year's One Page Dungeon contest

commentary by Jayson Elliot

In 2014, the One Page Dungeon contest graciously invited *Gygax Magazine* to participate in voting for its winner. In taking part, we asked to create our own award, where, in addition to the contest winner, we would select another entry to be reproduced in our magazine. As fate would have it, the contest's winner was also the choice for our own award: The Island of the Lizard God by Will Doyle.

The contest received many types of submissions, including traditional dungeon crawls, shipboard encounters, and generative maps. I'd recommend reading all of the incredibly creative entries (see [gyg.ax/onepage](http://gyg.ax/onepage)).

We ended up choosing The Island of the Lizard God for its art, classic adventure-movie tropes, and creative license it gives to the GM. Not really a traditional "dungeon," it's more of a setting and foundation for an adventure.

## Preparation

The Island of the Lizard God can be used for any game system, but requires some preparation. It should work well with any level adventuring party by creating the number and strength of monsters accordingly. You'll need to map some areas and scenarios, and consider the way the island works.

Before you begin, read through Will's descriptions of the map and ask yourself:

- How did the dwarves end up on the island?
- How long have they been gone?
- What happened to them?
- How do the lizardmen manage their society?
- What's the relationship between the ape cartel and lizardmen? Do the apes provide protection to the sailors, or are they selling them as prisoners to the lizardmen?
- Who are the Goliaths?  
Were they the islands' original inhabitants?  
What secrets can they tell?

## Monsters

You'll want to come up with stats for the island's monsters and detail the more notable ones as NPCs. You can reference your favorite game system or come up with your own. Here's a checklist:

- Dwarf ghosts
- Dwarf ghost leaders, if desired—perhaps even make one or more an NPC. Can the dwarf ghosts leave the Crucible of Steel?
- Fire spirits
- The Lizard God (create your own, or use a preexisting monster. It should be nearly undefeatable without the Spear of Serpents.)

- Death worms (the swamp sirens)
- Undead parrots
- Lizard cultists
- Giant crocodiles
- Goliaths
- Ape cartel gorillas
- Lost sailors

You may want to flesh out some gorillas and sailors as NPCs, and certainly the lizardman king and his champion.

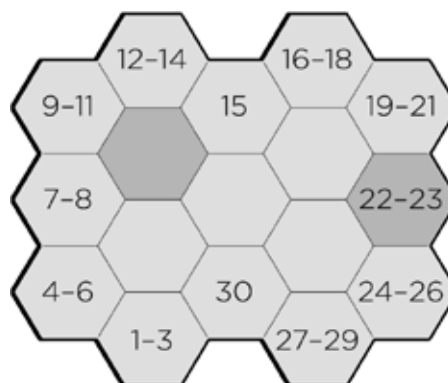
## Play notes

I'd recommend a scale of two miles per hex. You could take the map literally and make the Crucible of Steel and Mount Sacrifice two miles across. I'd personally make them considerably smaller within their respective hexes—particularly for Mount Sacrifice, which is probably surrounded by the lizardman cultists' habitat.

A great description is given for the island's main areas, but you'll want to map out a few places in more detail beforehand, like the cave town of Driftwood and the land of the Goliaths. The old mine in the Crucible of Steel would be a great opportunity to break out some old-school dungeon geomorphs!

A fun part of Will's artwork is how the island is shown as if the hexes are literal. You can make its geography as sharp-angled as on the map, which could be really fun as the players discover the hexes during their explorations. Alternatively, you could see the hexes as artistic license and give the island a more natural shape.

The adventure begins with the party shipwrecked, but where that happens is up to you. One approach would be to break their ship upon the rocks of Driftwood and have them saved by the cave-town inhabitants. Or, you may choose randomly from the 30 possible locations on the islands perimeter. Roll a d30, or use a d6 and d10, to get a location with the chart below.



Be sure to also consider the damage of the shipwreck. Is it entirely sunken or merely broken? The ship should by no means be reusable, but the amount of damage will determine what possessions the players may have once they reach the shore.

The players' motivation will be to leave the island. If the PCs have means of escape other than the ship, think about how you can prevent that from working, like maybe they've unknowingly crossed into another dimension. The adventure won't be as fun if the players can just teleport away.

So how *will* the players escape? Why haven't the sailors in Driftwood been able to leave? Tying the Lizard God's destruction to the PC's escape would make for a superb adventure hook. Leave some clues about the lizardmen, keys to the dwarven safe, and Spear of Serpents—like through rumors told by sailors. Just make sure the players have hope. Remember, what seem obvious to a GM may be frustratingly obscure to the players.

Once they move into the island, keep an eye on in-game time. The Lizard God moves in the daytime, and the lizardmen probably have a schedule for their sacrifices—as GM, you may want to have an hourly schedule for their whereabouts, or you might roll it as a random encounter. Note the dotted lines on the map; these are dangerous places to be without the Spear of Serpents.

Decide how the Spear of Serpents works. Does it kill the Lizard God immediately or no? To retrieve the Spear, the players need the dwarven keys and a way to reach the door. Make sure there's some resourceful way for them to construct a bridge or reach the door, which should not be easily accessible without the keys.

Plan things like the drowning pools, the prophetic visions of the undead parrots, and traveling on the Blackfang River. Can the PCs walk along the banks? Where will they get a boat? What are the chances of drowning?

Finally, remember the weather options for each day. Don't just tell the players it's baking heat or torrential rain, think about how it will affect them and act accordingly. And just what *is* a "pyroclastic firestorm?"

Please let us know what you do with the Island of the Lizard God. Send your maps, notes, mashups, modifications, and/or gameplay reports to us at [djinn@gygaxmagazine.com](mailto:djinn@gygaxmagazine.com) with the subject line "Lizard God," and we'll share the best ones online. ■



## Further adventures in the search for the earliest version of Dungeons & Dragons

*As I scoured the pages of the forgotten grimoire, absorbed in my studies, I suddenly felt the innroom shake. A hulking figure planted himself opposite me, slamming two flagons of ale onto the table. "I can tell you what that thing is," the fighter bantered as he lifted the visor of his black-and-silver plate armor. "Can you now?" I replied impatiently. "I've seen one like it before," he insisted. From within an uncured leather sack, after much rummaging about, he finally rescued a smooth cylinder. This he unrolled to reveal a pile of ancient parchment leaves, and even in their state of distress, I could instantly see how they resembled the runes in the book before me. "I... who are you?" I demanded. He grinned, effortlessly slugged back an ale, and proclaimed, "I am Gronan of Simmerya. And fortunately for you, I grew up in a place of such poverty that nobody ever throws anything away..."*

Or let me put it another way. When I last wrote about my research into the earliest version of *Dungeons & Dragons* a year ago (in *Gygax Magazine* issue #2), I was dangerously close to an impasse. I had made a case, I thought a compelling one, that a document found in the garage of M.A.R. Barker, a Twin Cities game designer and early *D&D* player, contained a pre-publication version of the *D&D* system. There were tell-tale traces remaining in the published *D&D* game which seemingly referenced system elements found only in this "Dalluhn Manuscript," so named after Keith Dalluhn, who preserved it when Barker tried to throw it away. If it were true, this document could offer us an unprecedented insight into the evolution of *D&D*.

There was just one hitch. Years ago, as he tried to authenticate it, Dalluhn had arranged for parts of the document to be shown to the co-creators of *D&D*, Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson. And while Arneson enthusiastically

embraced it as a pre-publication version of *D&D*, Gygax responded by pronouncing that it "seems to be a rip-off of the *D&D* game that I've never seen before."

You have to be very careful when you contradict the word of Gary Gygax. Granted, he had not seen the whole document or inspected it in detail, but his word carries weight that a mere historian like me can hardly budge. Moreover, a subject where Gygax and Arneson disagreed could reignite old partisanship and potentially bias the reception of an argument either way. While I patiently made my case on a variety of Internet forums, consensus seemed out of my reach. Some people just weren't going to listen until I had direct evidence that Gygax himself had worked on this system.

As I tried to break through this impasse, naturally I reached out for help. Although Gygax and Arneson are no longer with us, many of the people who played with them in the old days are. For example, I contacted Dave Megarry, famous as the author of the *Dungeon!* board game, and an early TSR employee. Back in the 1973, while Gygax and Arneson collaborated on drafts of *D&D*, Megarry was playing in Arneson's Blackmoor campaign and trying to find a publisher for his own game, then called the *Dungeons of Pasha Cada*. Megarry looked over the Dalluhn Manuscript and agreed it seemed to be a pre-publication draft, one that he believed originated in the Twin Cities. While it was a relief to have his corroboration, I knew that I needed more than just testimony to convince the skeptical.

I also enlisted the help of Mike Mornard. Mornard has the unusual distinction of being

the only player to campaign extensively in both Greyhawk and Blackmoor. He grew up in Lake Geneva, and with his brother Chip served as one of Gygax's early playtesters, adventuring as his famous character Gronan. In the summer of 1973, Mornard left for college in Minneapolis, and when he arrived, he connected with Arneson's group and began playing in Blackmoor. If anyone would be in a position to recognize a pre-publication document irrespective of where it originated, Mornard seemed a good candidate. When I shared the Dalluhn Manuscript with Mornard, he also agreed that it seemed like it had to be a pre-publication version of *D&D*. But then he said something further: he might still have a copy like it, at least parts of it, stowed away somewhere.

Since I have spent some years sifting through attics, cellars, old filing cabinets, and dusty moving boxes in search of the raw archival material needed to build a history of gaming, I knew that searches like this often turned out to be wild goose chases. Under the circumstances, though, any lead was worth pursuing. Mornard now lived in South Dakota, and his storage locker was back in Minnesota. I offered to go with him and provide some logistical support if he wanted to search for these lost pages of a pre-publication draft of *D&D*. We bandied around a few dates without converging on a time. But then, a few days before Christmas in 2013, I received an email from Mornard titled, "Tidings of Comfort and Joy, or at least Interest."

"I've had a ton of gaming stuff for decades," Mornard recalls today. "I knew that I had gotten these pages from Gary back in 73, and after hearing about Playing at the World and

other folks' interest in Ye Olde Dayse, I spent a weekend rummaging through my storage unit to find all the boxes of gaming crap in there. And that's how they were labeled...

'Gaming Crap, More Gaming Crap, Yet Still More Gaming Crap.' I no longer had any idea if these pages survived, but decided it was worth looking through the six or eight boxes I gathered together. And, by Crom, I got lucky."

We all got lucky. Mornard rediscovered sixteen pages of photocopies made by Gygax of his own draft of *Dungeons & Dragons* in the summer of 1973, which he gave to Mornard for his personal use before he relocated to Minnesota. While the Dalluhn Manuscript is typed on an unfamiliar (*and to date, still unidentified*) typewriter, the pages Mornard found were clearly typed on Gygax's personal typewriter, and show many hand-corrections unmistakably penned by Gygax. Combined with a solid provenance, these pages were the undisputed genuine article: an unforgettable grimoire.

However interesting this find was in its own right, my initial concern was to determine its relationship to the Dalluhn Manuscript. The very first sample page that Mornard showed me contained a "Prize Matrix," a precursor to the "Treasure Types" table of the original *Dungeons & Dragons*. Even looking at Type A alone, the connection of Dalluhn to Mornard's find was clear. In both documents, Type A treasure had a "prisoners" column that *D&D* lacked, and the values shown, for this and for silver, gold, gems and maps or magic were all virtually identical in the two versions. The most telling detail was that Mornard's page contained a typed footnote on the treasure of pirates with an addendum written in pen, clearly in Gygax's hand: that "all prizes, other than silver and prisoners are aboard ship ('in lair')." In Dalluhn, that addendum had been incorporated into the typed text, text that would not survive to appear in *D&D*. This handily demonstrated that Gygax had worked directly on the lost system preserved by the Dalluhn Manuscript before *D&D* was published. Vindication, at last.

As I further studied the pages that Mornard provided, I quickly appreciated that the system they contained was only a small sample of a far larger document. Unlike the Dalluhn Manuscript, Mornard's pages were double-spaced, as an editing draft would be, and contained numerous errors and corrections indicative of a work-in-progress. But that meant that those sixteen pages only covered half as much text as comparable pages of the Dalluhn Manuscript. Moreover, they were split up over large sections of the document, and emphasized tables over descriptive text: they showed saving throws, encounter tables, treasure tables, information you would need to consult while running a game, which is undoubtedly why Gary copied these particular parts. The pages were numbered 24–31, then

41–47, then 61. Because of the fragmentary nature of the pages, I proposed that we call this draft of *Dungeons & Dragons* the "Mornard Fragments."

The Fragments captured the state of *Dungeons & Dragons* development at a time very close to the system shown by the Dalluhn Manuscript. This is both good and bad: it's ideal for establishing the authenticity of the Dalluhn Manuscript, but because the two versions are so close in time, there is only so much that the Fragments can teach us that we can't learn from the far larger and more complete text of Dalluhn. However, the relationship was not without its complications and problems, and thus not without opportunities for revelations.

In some cases, like the prisoners text above, it seemed that Mornard's pages showed text from an earlier time than the corresponding Dalluhn Manuscript passage. But in others, it seemed like the typed text of the Fragments was identical to Dalluhn, yet Gygax's written edits extended the text closer to *D&D* in ways that Dalluhn doesn't capture. For example, the "Miscellaneous Magic Items" table (page 45 of the Fragments, page I.15 of Dalluhn) is virtually the same in the two versions when it comes to the typed text—but Gary in the Fragments has added numerous items in pen: appearing for the first time in these edits are the "Bag of Holding," the "Displacer Cloak" and the "Mirror of Life Trapping." He also has crossed out the "Djinn" in "Djinn Bottle," as we see it in Dalluhn, and replaced it with "Efreet" in the Fragments, which is how the item appears in *D&D*.

So what gives? If we see Gary's hand-edited prisoners text captured in the Dalluhn Manuscript, why does Dalluhn miss these seminal magic items? The answer lies in the fragmentary nature of Mornard's find. The Dalluhn Manuscript is clearly a single draft which captures the state of the system as one typist copied it from a set of prior notes. The Fragments offer us no such guarantee. Mornard received them as photocopies from Gary, but that doesn't mean that the material Gary photocopied all reflected material written at the same time, or indeed that the photocopies themselves were made all at once. They might not all even have come from the same draft.

Sorting this out required some hard analysis. I quickly learned to distinguish what I termed the "base text" of a Fragments page, which is to say the typed text, from the "edit text" made up of hand corrections, and effectively to treat these as two different documents, written at different points in time, where we know for certain the edit text came after the base text. In some fragments, the base text is pre-Dalluhn (*like the prisoners text*), in others, the base text is almost identical to Dalluhn (*like the miscellaneous magic items*). One can imagine Gary typing up those magic

items, making a photocopy which went into the hands of the Dalluhn editor—and then adding hand-corrections to his original as he continued working, finally resulting in the photocopies given to Mornard. There is one case where the base text in a Fragment appears to be post-Dalluhn: the case of page 61, which contains dragon rules for elemental vulnerabilities. There is no corresponding chart in Dalluhn, but the chart is quite close to the published one in *Dungeons & Dragons (Monsters & Treasure page 12)*. Page 61 of the Mornard Fragments is probably from a later draft than the notes used to make the Dalluhn Manuscript, but not so late that it couldn't be tacked on to the material Mornard brought with him to Minnesota.

While I busily untangled all of these threads, a very welcome complication fell into my lap. Late in January, Mornard notified me that he had recovered eight more pages, bringing the total to twenty-four. Now we had pages 6–7, 19–21, 24–31, 39–47, and then 61. With these new pages came more confirmation of the relationship of the system to the Dalluhn Manuscript, and more unforgettable insights into the evolution of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

What do the Fragments teach us? Most of the delight in studying drafts comes from seeing what ideas were abandoned or transformed along during the editorial process.

For example, the Dalluhn Manuscript contains a peculiar discarded idea: a second-level Cleric spell called "Tranquilize." As the spell description reads, this spell allowed a Cleric to "calm" any character who is "in hysterics or becoming insane." While the Mornard Fragment Cleric spell list omits "Tranquilize," Gary has penned to the end of its list a novel spell name: "Sleep." Neither the Dalluhn Manuscript nor the Mornard Fragments list "sleep" as a magic-user spell, and it is intriguing that this iconic spell first was associated with the cleric class, probably as a variant of the discarded notion of a "tranquilize" spell.

The magic-user spell list also exhibits some fascinating variations. When the Mornard Fragments were written, "contact higher plane" was a recent invention, added in pen to the end of the fifth-level list. But the most interesting thing that we learn from the fifth-level list concerns "animate dead." The Mornard Fragments state that the "animate dead" spell acted as "raise dead" if the caster was above eleventh level: a high-level magic-user could resurrect characters just as well as a cleric, in this draft version of *D&D*. Unfortunately, the Dalluhn Manuscript page that described "animate dead" and of the most other fifth-level spells (*page II.22*) is lost from the document, so we don't know how its spell worked — only the fragments preserve this system.

Thanks to the presence of edit text, we also see how the cleric level titles changed after

Gary typed the base text of the fragments. Initially, the first eight levels of the cleric class went as follows: acolyte, friar, village priest, priest, vicar, curē (*in some places curē*), abbē (*sometimes abbē*), and then patriarch. Then Gary crossed most of that out. Only four of those level titles survive in the edit text, which transforms them all into the level titles given in *Dungeons & Dragons*. For the most part, the Dalluhn Manuscript reflects these corrections: Table 2 of Dalluhn, which shows the experience point tallies required to advance in level, uses level titles identical to *Dungeons & Dragons*. But one chart in Dalluhn still retains the level title “friar” for second level — oversights like this show us how imperfect the editorial process was, but gives us ample evidence that these drafts display different adumbrations of the same system.

Finally, we can also detect the order in which some monsters were added to the game, if we carefully separate the base from edit text. In the fragments, the typed monster list comprises some forty entries, but a handful of additions have been crammed into the margins in Gary’s freehand — thus we know these monsters were added to the game late in the editorial process, after the bulk had already been specified. For example, hippogriffs and pegasi were appended to the bottom of the list in pen, right after the dryad; invisible stalkers and gargoyles seem to have joined still later, landing on the very top of the page

in the white space above the hydra. The manticore squeezes into the bottom of a page right after the gorgon, written in pencil. But the resulting order is followed exactly by the Dalluhn Manuscript Table 13, which has all of these monsters typed into a clean list. Only the fragments show us a time before *D&D* was home to the hippogriff.

The Mornard Fragments cannot answer all of our questions about the development of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Because its pages are so few, and largely show charts, they don’t provide a complete and playable system. But since the fragments correspond so directly to the text of the Dalluhn Manuscript, we can use Dalluhn to fill in the gaps, and jointly the two give us unprecedented insight into the way the game was played by the original playtesters in 1973. Supplemented with the system of *D&D* itself, as well as Chainmail and the system fragments preserved in *Arneson’s First Fantasy Campaign*, they promise to show us still more. Stay tuned, I will return to this subject in the future.

And there’s one thing I’ve neglected to mention so far. Mornard’s find was not limited to the pre-publication text of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Another lost treasure he recovered was draft text of the Greyhawk pamphlet, including a photocopy of charts hand-written by Gygax illustrating the damage dealt by monsters, which would become the “Attacks and Damage by Monster Type” table

(*Greyhawk* page 14–16). In any draft like this, we can always pick out tiny differences from the published version, but this text has some substantial variations as well. For example: we all know that *Greyhawk* was the first *D&D* book to specify the metallic dragon types: brass, copper, bronze, and silver. It was also the first place to specify golem types: flesh, stone, and iron. What we learn from the draft version of this monster chart is that Gygax initially had a different plan. There are no metallic types listed for dragons yet, and for golems, the types given are bronze, copper, brass and iron. It’s not too late to install a copper golem into your dungeon for that touch of the 1970s.

So let’s all lift a flagon of ale to Gronan of Simmerya, preserver of the original state of *Dungeons & Dragons*, who never forgot that he was guarding a precious grimoire! And if you want to read more about the exploits of Gronan and his player in the early days, Mornard is currently finishing up his work on *We Made Up Some \*\*\*\* We Thought Would Be Fun*, a book he describes as, “One raconteur’s purely subjective memoir of his experiences during the early years of *Dungeons & Dragons*, 1972 - 1976.” I’ve had the pleasure of reading a draft, and I can say it provides a great mix of anecdotes about the events of the day and instructions on how you too can play *D&D* like they did in 1973. ■

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# By the gods!

## Powers & pantheons in superhero settings

by Steve Kenson



Deities and mythic figures of all sorts have been a part of superhero comic books since the very beginning: Fawcett's Captain Marvel was empowered by the six elders, whose initials formed the magic word "SHAZAM!" (including Solomon, Zeus, and Mercury), DC Comics' Wonder Woman came from a lost island of Amazons to protect man's world from the war-god Mars (later the Greek Ares), and Marvel Comics' Thor has wielded the magic hammer Mjolnir for justice from his first appearance in *Journey Into Mystery* to two recent feature-films. Books like *Our Gods Wear Spandex* and *Supergods* (the latter by comic scribe Grant Morrison) draw parallels between the adventures of super-powered heroes and the gods and heroes of myth. So, clearly, the divine has a role to play in the world of superheroes. The question is: What is it, and how do you define it in your own setting?

### CHARIOTS OF THE GODS

One of the most common approaches to deities — and related figures — in the comics is to treat them as "alien" super-beings, a race from another planet or another dimension altogether, possessed of superhuman abilities which are often magical, or at least seem magical to us, but who are not truly divine beings. Perhaps these "gods" were worshipped as deities in the ancient world, forming the basis of our mythology, or they are merely similar to our Earthly legends. Oftentimes elements of the myths are portrayed as exaggerated or mistaken, allowing for the deities of the setting to depart from the lore where it is needed.

You can see this approach in settings like the Marvel Universe, where the different races or pantheons of deities are unearthly super-beings with great physical and magical abilities, and extended lifespans, but not true "deities." In fact, you even get multiple cases of "super-beings as gods" if you add in the various aliens also masquerading as divinities and superhumans like the Eternals, who are also conflated with mythic figures.

Indeed, for advanced alien visitors to the ancient world, the role of deity is a convenient one. The *Stargate* film and TV series uses this conceit, with races of aliens taking the roles of (or inspiring the myths of) ancient human deities, their advanced technology mistaken for magic and miracles. The Asgardians of the Marvel cinematic universe come from a world "where

magic and science are the same thing.” The Daemonites and Kherubim of the Wildstorm universe are ancient alien races remarkably similar to demonic and angelic figures from human myth. The Earth-Prime setting for *Mutants & Masterminds* has the Preservers, alien “space gods” who furthered human evolution and are at least partially responsible for flood myths and other apocrypha in history. Aaron Sullivan’s Algernon Files setting for *M&M* features the Acathii and Rha’Zhaketh, ancient alien races responsible for some elements of human mythology.

A similar approach is that the gods were (and possibly still are) superhumans, but not alien. They may have, in fact, been amongst the first superhumans to arise from humanity on Earth! After all, what is the difference between a “storm goddess” and a “mutant weather witch” able to control the weather, especially to a primitive culture? Like Marvel’s Eternals, if these early superhumans are also long-lived (by birthright or achievement) then they functionally are gods, in most respects.

### THE POWER OF MYTH

Another approach to deities — one taken in the Earth-Prime setting for *Mutants & Masterminds* — is that the gods are largely spiritual beings, as intangible as the myths about them, but also just as real. Their interaction with the material world requires an embodied medium, such as a human host body or champion. This is inspired by comic book heroes such as Dr. Fate and Captain Marvel, who are invested with divine or supernatural power, if not gods themselves. Alan Moore’s *Promethea* partakes of this approach as well: *Promethea* is a kind of “living story” that possesses and transforms different host bodies over the years, turning them into versions of her superheroic self.

On Earth-Prime, the mythological gods are banned from Earth by an ancient magical pact created by a past master mage, only permitted to interfere when they are called upon by mortals and, even then, limited in how they can manifest themselves on Earth. The classic examples are the heroine Siren and her nemesis Baron Samedi, both loa of Voodoo, manifested through human host bodies to work their wills in the world. *The Silver Age* hero Horus the Avenger was similar, possessing an archeologist’s body through the medium of his magical Ankh of the Avenger. There’s even the potential for non-living constructs invested with divine power or the spirit of a deity or deities (say, molded from the clay of an isolated island paradise...). Take the “god-killer” Adamant from *Freedom’s Most Wanted* for example, an armor-like construct filled with divine power by Hades, but not a god in and of itself.

This approach keeps deities a bit more at arm’s length, since their physical presence tends to be limited to how they manifest through hosts or other vessels. Their true essence remains





divinities, since they become non-linear, non-material beings made up of stories, myths, and legends, some of which may be contradictory, yet are all “true” in a fashion. After all, how do the various creation myths of different cultures co-exist in a multicultural setting where the gods of those cultures can interact?

### CLOAKED IN LEGEND

There may be no “gods” in the setting whatsoever, at least, none that can be truly identified as divine beings. That doesn’t mean, however, that myth, legend, and symbols do not have considerable power, and some will look to exploit that power for their own ends. Heroes and villains may adopt the names or mantles of mythic figures, either to inspire trust and confidence or to strike fear and awe into the hearts of their foes (*or possibly both*).

In a world without any more theological certainty than our own, who is to say for sure that a superhuman able to perform “miracles” is not divinely inspired? Perhaps there are no deities as such in settings like *Wild Talents* or *Aberrant*, but both are worlds where people wield “the power of a god” and where belief can shape that power in many ways. Is there a difference between “real” gods and cosmically powerful supers who truly believe they are gods and function as such? Holy wars have been fought over much smaller heresies and differences of opinion.

Even when it is fairly clear — at least to most — that those who have adopted the mantle of the gods are not true divinities, there are still those who will believe. Take the living gods of Egypt in the *Wild Cards* setting, for example. Some consider them just a sideshow attraction, a collection of joker freaks and aces with mutations that happen to align with some of the Egyptian pantheon, but to their followers, they are the ancient gods of the black land, reborn, real enough to follow into a holy war for survival against the caliphate. They may not be “real” gods, but people believe in them nonetheless. Similar cults may spring up in other super-settings where those with power adopt the mantle of divinity. After all, what is a god without worshippers?

Speaking of the faithful, there is also the role of belief to consider. Do the “gods” of the setting (*whoever or whatever they might be*) gain benefits from having worshippers? Is their power in some way based on the measure of belief in them, or is it independent of any faith, allowing for “forgotten” gods or those who eschew worship to wield as much power as those with vast followings? Even if they are not truly divine beings, supers who gain their power from worship — drawing on collective psychic or emotional energy, for example — may choose to act like gods, simply because it inspires the most fervent worship, and therefore the most power. This can be a moral dilemma for heroes: Do they deceive would-be worshippers about their true nature in order to gather sufficient

power to oppose their villainous foes (who have no such scruples) or do they try and tell the truth, even knowing it make place them at a disadvantage against the self-proclaimed gods leading vast cults?

### THE POWER OF POLYTHEISM

If the gods are “real” in any measure, are some gods more real than others? What about the diverse pantheons and cosmologies of humanity? What of monotheism, and the concept of One True God?

A superhero setting should at least consider these cosmological questions. Many comic book universes skirt the issue, or leave it an unexplained mystery. The omnipotent creator-god of the Western monotheistic traditions is largely absent from the Marvel Universe as an overt force, apart from the faith of his followers, while the pagan pantheons of various cultures fall into the “alien super-beings” category, for the most part. In the DC Universe, the presence (*as the Creator-God is often called*), is an extant force, complete with choirs of angels, the flaming fields of Heaven, and the vast Silver City, but the question of why and how all the diverse pagan deities also exist is left unresolved and largely unaddressed, but tending towards the power of myth approach, and the notion that all stories of the divine are equally “true.”

It is entirely possible for a superhero setting to mix-and-match the various approaches described here, using one for some gods or pantheons and another for others. For example, perhaps the Tuatha De Danann and the Fomorians of Celtic myth were alien visitors in your setting, each from different planets or dimensions, using ancient Ireland as a battleground in their eternal war, while the Greek Olympians are extradimensional beings (whose primary gateway to Earth lies at the top of Mt. Olympus) and the Hindu pantheon is made up of time-traveling, body-swapping transhuman beings (*ala Roger Zelazney’s Lord of Light*). The backgrounds of some of the setting’s heroes and villains (*if they are deities, or pretenders to the title*) should dictate some of this, as well as the setting’s “deep background,” such as if all superhumans stem from a particular origin or cause, which might also influence ancient human mythology and belief (*or vice versa*).

Give some thought to the ancient myths of human culture, the very first “supers,” and you’ll find rich veins of legend to mine for story and character ideas for your superhero setting! ■

Steve Kenson is a long-time RPG writer and designer. He is a staff-designer for Green Ronin Publishing (producers of the *Mutants & Masterminds RPG*) and also runs his own imprint, Ad Infinitum Adventures, which produces material for Icons Superpowered Roleplaying.

intangible and somewhat mysterious. It may or may not be possible to visit their divine realms: perhaps mortals can only travel there in spirit (living or dead) or there may be some means by which their physical forms are translated into the stuff of spirit and back again upon their return.

At the extreme end, this approach incorporates some Jungian archetypes and Joseph Campbell-style “monomyths,” by opening up the possibility that the “place” where these disembodied deities dwell is in fact the collective unconscious or some similar facet of the human psyche. This concept shows up as the “Imageria” in the Paragons sourcebook for *Mutants & Masterminds* and as the “Gestalt Dimension” in Scott Bennie’s *Gestalt: The Hero Within* setting, leaving open the question: Are these beings “truly” gods or just figments of our (*collective*) imagination and culture — and is there really a difference?

The power of myth approach also allows for greater poetic license when dealing with

# Disinformation

## Notes, errata, and omissions from Operation Rendezvous Oasis

by Merle M. Rasmussen  
“The Administrator”

*Editor’s note: This follow-up addresses the Top Secret adventure “Operation: Rendezvous Oasis,” which appeared in Gygax Magazine #4.*

Oops! Errors in printing or writing occur, even to the best of us. After reading and playing “Operation: Rendezvous Oasis” at Gary Con VI in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, I discovered a few items that need to be changed or added. I hope these errors will not hinder your enjoyment of this *Top Secret* espionage role playing game mission.

The illustration of El-Karriah shown taped to the regional map must be when he was young. Later in the mission he is illustrated much older with a long white mustache and long white beard. (Note: His eyebrows and nose are similar.)

On the *Rendezvous Oasis* location maps where “squares are 25 feet each,” all tents are drawn twice as large as they should appear. The three Bedouin and five Merchant Tents all measure 15 feet deep by 30 feet wide. El-Karriah’s Tent (#20) measures 30 feet deep by 30 feet wide. (Note: If the merchant tents are bunched to the south there will be more camping space available for agents to the north.)

The excellent illustration of the female agent shows her holding a SCARAB, a daytime, wall-climbing microdrone of unknown national origin. I expected to see a dung beetle shaped device the size of an agent’s thumb!

Under “**Random Encounters during INFIL or EXFIL**,” (p. 36) entry #2 should read, “A body of water appears 100 yards straight ahead. When you arrive, the body of water disappears. It was a mirage reflecting the sky.” (Note: Mirages do not appear 2-1/2 miles ahead.)

Under **Electronics** (p. 35), 12 volt map light is listed under both numbers 33 and 38.

Under **Oasis Welcome, DAY** (p. 37), there

is a reference to “an agent using binoculars” but binoculars are not issued for the mission. Binoculars can replace 12 volt map light under Electronics (#38).

**Luggage** (p. 35), #96 makes the statement “you should probably also buy a turban locally.” In the settlement where they chose to begin the mission, I allowed various agent teams to trade, not buy, their issued equipment (sunglasses, luminous wristwatches, cooking utensils, and business gifts). They chose more water, white turbans, white robes, sandals, black burquas, jambiyas, long arms with ammunition, remote control toy car, remote control toy helicopter with camera, surveying equipment, and the services of a teenage translator/guide. I did not allow them grenades. They forgot to trade for a flashlight, a flare gun, and desert camouflage netting for two vehicles. Agents did not discover their oversight until they left the settlement.

On page 38, entry #8 “**Camel Enclosure**” should read: “**DAY AND NIGHT**: A herd of ten adult camels is kept in two wooden fence enclosures; one for male camels and one for females.” (El-Karriah, whose personal interests include camel racing, would not allow his valuable collection to occupy a single corral.)

Entry #16, **Metalworker Tent** (page 39) should read in part: “**DAY**: If contact is successful, the metalworker reveals he actually deals in area denial weapons, in particular, acoustic weapons. If hostilities break out he immediately grabs ear protective head phones and an acoustic weapon from under the low wooden sales counter. Roll one die. The weapon activated in the direction of the hostilities is: 1-5 = **infrasonic** (low-frequency); 6-10 = **ultrasonic** (high-frequency).

Further down the page, under the same Metalworker Tent entry, it should read: “**NIGHT**: It sounds like one person is snoring

inside this tent. Underneath the sales counter are one set of ear protective head phones and two acoustic weapons. Near the sales counter is one of each HTH weapon listed above.”

Under **SPECIAL DEVICES AND WEAPONS (ALPHABETICALLY LISTED)** the following items were omitted or need further explanation.

**Camel, dromedary**: This beast of burden is indigenous to the Middle East. A dromedary can be trained to carry 200 pounds as an adult or pull a plow, but not without complaining. Dromedaries can also be trained to race with humans or robot jockeys on their backs. Dromedaries can be crossed with Bactrians.

Camels are easily annoyed, and will spit at anything nearby, including agents. All camels at Rendezvous Oasis have been trained by El-Karriah to attack people by voice command of their owner. Each camel has a life level of (1-10) plus 4. Each non-hobbled camel inflicts (1-10) plus 1 injury points when it attacks. Humans fighting animals get no surprise bonuses. Two camels attacking by kicking out suddenly and viciously with their hind legs, kneeling, and biting with strong, sharp teeth should provide enough distraction for one agent.

**Infrasonic (low-frequency) acoustic weapon**: This handheld device is an area denial system with ten one-second pulses and a range of 50 feet. A dish projects infrasonic waves just high enough to stimulate the human ear. The infrasonic wave stimulates the nervous system causing incapacitating nausea, although no damage is done. Think of a Taser without the dart or conducting wires. The involuntary reaction is to hold one’s mouth or abdomen. If the victim covers his or her ears, the infrasonic weapon ceases effectiveness.

**Robotedary**: This El-Karriah invention is a solar and battery-powered single humped robotic adult-sized camel for African and

Middle Eastern use. A robotedary can indefinitely carry 400 pounds, two people, or pull a plow without complaining. A robotedary can also be used to race camels. It can also

the saddle, the robotedary may continue galloping across the desert forever!)

Each robotedary has a life level of (1-10) x2. Each robotedary inflicts (1-10) x2 injury points

Camel Type	Shoulder	Hump	Short Burst	Sustained Speed
Robotedary, loaded	6' 1"	Single	20 mph	10 mph
Robotedary, racing	6' 1"	Single	35 mph	30 mph

be used for video surveillance with or without night vision and infrared vision. Asking price: how much money do you have?

The robotedary at Rendezvous Oasis is controlled by El-Karriah's and Kahli's voice commands. This robotedary "recognizes" its name and will come if "Sopwith" is called. "Koosh-koosh" makes the robot kneel for boarding. It also understands the words "stand," "walk," "run," "right," "left," "attack," and "stop." The robotedary will balance on its hind legs with the command "stand up" and return to all fours with the command "down." (Note: If the rider leaves

when it attacks. Humans fighting robotedaries may have surprise bonuses. Two robotedaries attacking with feet, knees, and teeth should provide enough distraction for each agent.

**Sting or sponge grenade:** Instead of metal shrapnel, the sting grenade disintegrates into rubber fragments. The pieces sting, but do not damage the skin. They may cause damage to unprotected eyes.

**Ultrasonic (high-frequency) acoustic weapon:** This handheld device is an active denial system with ten one-second pulses and a range of 50 feet. A dish projects ultrasonic

waves just low enough to stimulate the human ear. The ultrasonic wave stimulates the nervous system causing incapacitating ear pain, as if eardrums were being pierced, although no damage is done. Think Taser without the dart or conducting wires. The involuntary reaction is to cover one's ears. If the victim covers his or her ears, the Ultrasonic Weapon ceases effectiveness.

**Vulture drone:** This El-Karriah invention is a black solar and battery-powered long-range surveillance drone for desert use. A Vulture drone can soar on desert thermals all day during daylight hours. If necessary, they can use battery-power to flap their wings to climb higher in the sky. (Think autopilot.) Any Vulture drone above Rendezvous Oasis is remote controlled. Asking price: \$50,000.

Each Vulture drone has a life level of 1-10. Each Vulture drone inflicts 1-10 injury points when it attacks, preferably undetected from behind and above. Humans fighting Vulture drones may have surprise bonuses. Two Vulture drones attacking with beaks, wings, and talons should provide enough distraction for one agent. ■



# Senses for RPGs

There's more to roll than meets the nose

by Michael Betancourt

The first role playing games emerged in the 1970s as an abstracted version of tabletop games focused on tactics and played with miniatures, dice and tape measures. Games that began as military combat simulations later evolved into something more complex that required a degree of play-acting and performance in addition to tactical problem-solving, combat and die rolls: a heritage recognized by James Carpio in "The Cosmology of Role-Playing Games." Because of the origins of these games principally as combat systems, their core rules and system mechanics are based around the resolution of combat scenar-

ios; anything that isn't modeled by those types of game play are not readily translated into their systems, nor can they be easily accommodated by them. The "spot check," for example, is one of the most common metrics employed to determine what a character notices, but it only covers one particular kind of sense: observation. Applying it in other situations creates a "one size fits all" model for game play.

There are a variety of situations that can (and often do) arise in role playing that cannot be easily addressed. For example, a player is handed a drink in a bar, tavern, or saloon and is uncertain if it is drugged or poisoned, and so

wants to taste it before drinking: this situation requires a degree of imagination on the part of the GM. The result is inevitably capricious since it is not matchable to established parts of most game mechanics. The introduction of a set of player stats designed specifically around the five senses of the PC can help by providing not only a reference point for resolving these situations, but also creating new opportunities for role-playing that don't rely on idiosyncratic or capricious choices by the GM.

This set of generic add-on rules for senses attempts to address those situations not contained by a combat system: all those actions (such as tasting a drink to see if it's poisoned) that are neither combat nor really combat-related, but that players might want to do as characters. Focusing on the actions a player might want to perform and devising a generic system for senses that can be added to existing RPGs enables a greater degree of realism in the role playing without relying on work-arounds, or asking the GM to make arbitrary decisions.

There are two types of "sense" described by this game add-on: the traditional, immediately recognizable five senses that any child might list—sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell—and "balance" to describe a character's ability to perform acrobatics and other physical actions dependent on balance.

The decision to add "balance" as a sense has to do with its distinction from manual dexterity, which really describes nimbleness of finger movement, physical capacities that can be learned (juggling) as distinguished from capacities such as the ability to stand on one leg and touch the tip of your nose with your finger. It is the relative independence of this ability from conscious control (much like the other more familiar senses) that qualifies it as a foundational capacity. These senses are all applicable to almost any campaign and any game system—they remain a constant part of how we encounter and experience the world around us. These stats describe the physical ability (capacity) to notice something and the die roll describes the character's success in attempting to make that observation.

The second variety of senses are all more esoteric in nature, and their applicability to particular game systems is more open to the discretion of the GM. Their inclusion is to provide a model for how these sensory elements can be adapted to specific games and



expanded upon as needed for a specific system or campaign. In each case these senses are not necessarily a part of our everyday experience, but their meaning and role in specific game play situations is self-evident.

Depending on how stats are rolled up in the game, the generation of these stats can be modified. This article employs the familiar range employed by the various *Dungeons & Dragons* games of 3 to 18 for ease of comprehension. The particular values for the stats should be adjusted as needed so they integrate seamlessly into the character.

## The basic senses

The natural range for sense stats is 3–18, but can be adjusted by **mods** (bonuses) that improve the ability through prostheses (such as glasses for vision problems), or impairments that reduce the sense either temporarily or permanently through injury (such as deafness or blindness). The sense stats that characters possess describe their capacity to make observations under hypothetical, ideal conditions. In actual game play, these idealized stats should not be the value that characters roll against. There are few situations where idealized observations are possible, and GMs should take full advantage of that fact in impairing these senses.

These stats can also be rolled up following any of the modified variations for 3d6 abilities, such as rolling 4d6, dropping the lowest, rerolling 1s, etc. The selection of one paradigm for rolling or another is the GM's choice, depending on the kinds and range of ability stats they want their characters to possess. It will not affect the ways that these sense stats function. The basic senses are:

### SIGHT

This sense stat is used to determine the ability to notice something visually, as when a character is searching a room or looking for something specific.

### HEARING

This sense stat is used to determine the ability to listen for something specific, such as what is being said in the next room, untrained attempts to detect noises, etc.

### TASTE/SMELL

This sense stat is used to determine the ability to taste or smell something specific, such as poison, a specific odor, etc.

### TOUCH

This sense stat is used to determine the ability to identify objects by how they feel, as when feeling for something in total darkness.

### BALANCE

This sense stat is used to determine the ability to remain upright and maintain one's balance, as when walking along the edge of a roof or precipice.

After making the initial set of (d6) rolls during character creation, the GM may allow the player to distribute a total of 5 points into these base rolls to increase the initial sense stat, allowing a degree of flexibility in where these values lie, but no sense score should be higher than 18 or less than 3. Values above and below this range result from mods or impairments being added to the sense following the simple formula that describes the sense check roll (discussed below).

No sense can be higher than 20, even if the mod would make it higher. A sense of 1 indicates that the character lacks that particular sense. It is possible to have a negative sense stat only due to impairment. The basic range (3–18) describes the degree to which this sense functions at full capacity; a 12 is average for a player character, an 18 is exceptionally acute, and a 3 is almost entirely non-functional; a score of 1 means there is no capacity at all. The NPC median for any sense is 9.

## The sense check difficulty rating (DR)

Sense checks are used to test whether a character becomes aware of something when they are specifically trying to detect it. The sense check is a 1d20 difficulty rating (DR) that follows this formula:

$$DR = [ \text{SENSE} - \text{IMPAIRMENT} + \text{MOD} ]$$

Characters attempting to do various kinds of sense-based actions, such as listening at a door, spotting something, etc. who do not otherwise have a specialized DR for that action. Use the sense check roll with appropriate mods (which increase sensory capacity) and impairments (which decrease it). Any roll of 20 should automatically fail even if the adjusted sense stat is equal to that value. If the die roll is under this adjusted sense stat, the character has a chance to notice whatever they were trying to detect; the further under the stat, the more successful the detection. The purpose of these rolls is to open up game play for characters in a broader way, giving the action a greater degree of realism. Anyone can attempt to listen at a door. It stretches credibility that in *Dungeons and Dragons* it is an ability limited only to the various rogue variants. When characters have a specialized skill in some sensory action, the sense check gives them an added capacity (the second DR) that ordinary characters lack. In those cases GMs should do the sense check first, followed by the specialized check, since it is not logical for a character to fail their specialized check but to succeed without any specialization. Any roll that is equal to the sense is a marginal success, except sense checks where the mod and impairment results in a value below 3—in these cases, the GM should provide false or misleading information.

Any roll of a natural 20 is an automatic failure, even if a mod would make the roll a success. Failure in a sense check means that the character failed to notice whatever they might have noticed if they had rolled higher. There is no critical failure for sense checks—a character failing to notice something may have consequences based on their actions, but the failure to observe does not in itself constitute a disaster (except in the case of balance where the character would fall over).

## Mods

Modifiers to senses, depending on the game, take the form of various prosthetics that improve the sensory capacity. For example, a telescope would provide a +20 mod for a character attempting to look in detail at something very distant (or possibly very small), but would not impact any sight check at anything closer than the focal length of that telescope. A character with poor eyesight (less than 6) might wear glasses to get an appropriate mod to bring their sight up to the NPC median value of 9 (thus a sight of 3 would require glasses with a mod of +6). The ability to model the impact of this kind of apparatus gives GMs more flexibility in their game play as well as creating new opportunities for unique character-specific role play having a measurable impact on game play.

## Impaired Senses

Impairment describes limitations on sense function that prevent a character from having the full range of their sense. These range from permanent impairments, such as near-sightedness that act as negative versions of mods in describing longer-term change to sensory function—blindness / deafness / insensate / vertigo would all be up to a –20 impairment depending on the extent that the sense is impaired—to temporary sensory loss due to environmental conditions (fog, rain, darkness, loud noises, foul smells, etc.) resulting in a character's sensory capacity potentially being reduced below zero.

Psychology can also provide a more generalized impairment. The stressfulness of the situation, how fatigued or encumbered the character is, how important the sense check is to that role, can all result in impairments that are less environmental than personal. Giving a different degree of personalized impairment to characters depending

on the specifics of the moment they make their sense check allows for a GM to increase the dramatic tension of a scene, as well as the perceived danger for the player. The purpose of the sense stats is to increase a player's ability to role play their character, so including mental effects in the impairment modifier is appropriate. Consider this situation: a rogue is attempting to burgle a house, but has just failed their move silently role, and as a result made a lot of noise—their sense check to listen for noises from within the house should be impaired by the blood pounding in their ears, if not simply by the stress that failure caused. Adding an appropriate penalty of -5 to their roll increases the drama of the situation.

Depending on the nature of the game, there are also other effects that mimic impairment. In *Dungeons and Dragons* an invisibility spell would impact sight with up to a -20 depending on the effectiveness of the spell (but would not automatically mask any other sense). The use of impairments can provide balance to situations that might otherwise become unbalanced, and GMs should use them liberally when characters are making sense check rolls.

These tables provide a general framework for GMs to expand upon as needed. The simplest adaptation of these various impairments can be accomplished by simply rolling a d20 for a broader range, or a d10 for a narrower one, and having that value be the impairment for that particular sense check roll. The following tables are provided as a framework for expansion as needed by a specific game or campaign setting. These provide a guide to customizing and expanding the various elements that can produce a less-than-ideal observational situation.

#### TEMPORARY IMPAIRMENT IMPACT

Sense	Limitation	Impairment
Sight (blindness)	Darkness, complete	-20
	Blinding light	-15
	Darkness, new moon	-10
	Darkness, quarter moon	-8
	Darkness, half moon	-3
	Afterimage	-2
	Hearing (deafness)	Ringing in ears
Hat over ears		-5
Helmet covers ears		-6
Medium ambient noise		-10
Loud ambient noise		-15
Explosion		-1 to -20 depending on distance
Taste / Smell		Congestion
	Thin gloves	-2
Touch (insensate)	Thick gloves	-6
	Gauntlet	-10
	Balance (vertigo)	Spun around, mild
Spun around, extreme		-20
Blow to head		-10
Heavily encumbered		-5

## Sensory decline

Sensory decline is a reality of aging, however its use in game is optional. Because senses dim with age, older characters will have impaired senses with the result that they are less capable than younger characters; as a result, sensory decline is a permanent impairment. These tables provide a metric for how the sense stats can decline as a character grows older. The sensory decline DR is based on a “soak” concept because decline comes from accumulated damage and trauma to these capacities: the player must roll low enough to beat whatever baseline number they need to “soak up” their roll; as a result, low rolls are more successful than high rolls (i.e. the successful roll is equal to zero—there is no remainder that is unsoaked).

The sensory decline check is done against sight, hearing, taste/smell and balance; the touch sense is not impacted by aging. Optional senses are impacted at GM's discretion. Sensory decline becomes more obvious as characters grow older (this chart is for humans and human-like characters, but can serve as a template to modify for other races). While there is no critical failure or critical success with this roll, the impact of sensory decline does depend on the degree of failure in the DR. Senses that are impacted by increasing age should be calculated with the following formula:

$$[(1d20 + \text{AGE MOD}) - (\text{SENSE} - \text{IMPAIRMENT} + \text{MOD})]$$

#### AGE MODIFICATION

Age	Modification
Up to 50	none
50-54	+1
55-59	+2
60-64	+3
65-69	+5
70+	+8*

*\*One additional roll is required for each year above this age*

#### SENSORY DECLINE IMPACT

Remainder	Effect
16+	-16 impairment
15-13	-14 impairment
11-12	-12 impairment
10-8	-8 impairment
6-4	-4 impairment
3-2	-2 impairment
1-0	-1 impairment

## Optional Senses

Some RPGs include magic and other senses that can be included depending on the nature of the game being played. This collection of optional senses are designed to accommodate a variety of games, allowing for new role playing situations to arise. Because these are all optional, the mods and impairments described above can be applied to them at the GM's discretion. Their purpose is to open up new situations and provide for a more fluid solution for players in their encounters. These senses should be rolled in the same way as the basic senses and follow the same sense check formula:

## UNCANNY

The uncanny sense (or ESP) identifies the capacity to recognize and understand magic (or other similar phenomena) when it is encountered. This score has no effect on a character's ability to perform magic. DR checks of uncanny determine the ability to identify something as being magical when its magical nature is not immediately obvious.

## HONOUR

The honour sense identifies the ability to recognize fairness (personal integrity) in beliefs and actions by both the character and in interactions. DR checks of honour determine the ability to identify cheating, misrepresentation and other forms of crime, as well as recognize violations of religious/military codes.

## PAIN

The pain sense identifies the threshold for being injured before their physical ailments begin to impact their other actions. DR checks of pain determine the ability to withstand injury or torture.

## TIME

The time sense describes the ability to recognize and keep track of time passing and be aware of duration. DR checks of time determine the ability to know how much time has passed without other time keeping apparatus.

## DIRECTION

The direction sense describes the ability to navigate and be aware of their orientation and motion through space. DR checks of direction determine the ability to navigate, track, map and otherwise remain oriented spatially.

## KINESTHESIA

Kinesthesia describes the physical awareness of the body and its movement through space. DR checks of kinesthesia determine the ability to perform physical actions (for example, apart from dexterity in *Dungeons and Dragons*) such as dodging, tumbling, dancing, etc.

These senses are a framework for GMs to expand upon and employ as a way of reducing their work load in running a game. By shifting the burden of observation and sensory encounter to the players, the addition of senses to RPGs moves them further away from their origins in table top war gaming. Because all RPGs model an imaginary world, the kinds of behaviors modeled within that game system determines what capacities it has—thus what kinds of behaviors are “allowed” and “disallowed” by the game itself. The lack of a clear way to model sensory encounters of various types in game forces GMs to either give capricious and arbitrary responses that cannot be relied upon to remain consistent over time (an inherent effect of their not being codified), or to simply not allow the action to happen. Both situations make game play more difficult for both players and GM, a problem that the addition of specific senses resolve.

In providing this selection of basic senses and optional senses, the goal has been to enable a more robust, dynamic role playing by removing the otherwise inherently arbitrary nature that unrolled actions have in these games. At the same time, it also enables the GM to allow a broader range of actions for the players by giving the RPG a greater degree of realism in what a player can and cannot do. By shifting the success or failure of an attempt to observe something in game to the player's die roll, it offers players the ability to control and direct what happens with their characters in a more explicitly conscious—and thus fun—way. ■

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# Zen and the art of game mastery

by Michael E. Shea

*“Plot is no more than footprints left in the snow after your characters have run by on their way to incredible destinations.”*

- Ray Bradbury, *Zen and the Art of Writing*

Back in 1973 Ray Bradbury, the author of *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Martian Chronicles*, and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, wrote an article called “Zen and the Art of Writing.” Though this article, and the book of the same title that surrounds numerous similar articles, focus on writing, many of his ideas translate very well to the art of game mastery.

Running a role-playing game isn’t like running any other sort of game in existence. While we do have rules, we have little in the way of an instruction manual for actually setting up and running the game. Any such instruction manual would very likely cut off the varying creativity each Game Master (GM) brings to their game. Yet, as GMs, we all seek to improve our craft, to continually learn new and interesting ways to make our game great every time we sit at the table.

There is something both freeing and terrifying about running a game without clear instructions. When we compare RPGs to typical board games, there’s a distinct lack of rules for the setup. We have lots of rules for everything else but coming up with each session of the game is largely up to the GM. Dozens of books have discussed it but most of the advice comes down to “do what feels right for you and the fun of your group.”

If you take any one single idea from this article, take this one: The best tool a game master can have is an open mind, an empty cup to be filled with child-like wonder and experiences in both fiction and life that we can bring to our game. The rest of this article will dig deeper into this core and central idea.

Throughout this article I refer to *D&D* although I include into that description all of the games that have expanded from that core RPG including *Pathfinder*, *13th Age*, *Dungeon World*, and just about any other fantasy RPG. There are subtle differences in how we prepare for one game system or another, but many of the core ideas are the same, as you will see.

## FLOW

Positive psychology has a concept for a mental state in which one is fully absorbed called “flow”. This state is identified by a few indicators. Flow comes from combining activities that require a great deal of skill and concentration with the experience and expertise to carry it out well. Flow is identified by a mental state of full immersion in the activity and a perceived lack of the passage of time.

Consider the best soccer players. When those players are on the field in the middle of the game, they’re not thinking about their income taxes or how much *Transformers 3* sucked. They’re fully immersed in the game. They lose all track of time and think very little about the specific techniques required to play the game. They simply do it.

Most of us can likely think of activities into which we lose ourselves. It might be time spent playing a video game we’re particularly good at. It might be a complex activity at work. It might even be reading a challenging book.

For many of us game masters, we probably find flow when we’re running our games. Running a *D&D* game is hard work. We have a bunch of players at the table, a bunch of complicated rules to remember, and very dynamic scenes that shift and change while we play. For new GMs, this can be overwhelming. Once we get comfortable with it (or as comfortable as we CAN get), we can find flow.

When we find it, it can be very addictive. We want to run as many games as we can. There are fewer activities in our weekly lives that combine raw creativity, a high degree of expertise, and great times with our friends and loved ones all together.

When it comes to game preparation, however, flow might be hard to come by. Why is that? Why do we lose ourselves when we run our games but feel like we’re continuing to fumble when we prepare?

As unstructured as our games actually are, they are far more structured when we run them than they are when we prepare.

## GAME “MASTERY”

Let’s take a moment and really look at the term “game master,” particularly the second word, “master.” It’s safe to say that few game designers actually expect everyone who fills the role of GM to be an actual master in the craft. When we think about the word “master” from the Zen point of view (in truth, there’s no direct translation), what we’re really talking about is a commitment to lifelong learning. To some, this is the core belief of a dedicated game master. A game master continually experiments and seeks to improve.

## WORK, RELAX, DON’T THINK

In Ray Bradbury’s essay, Bradbury describes three rules for the aspiring writer: work, relax, and don’t think. Simple words with very deep meanings. If we spend a bit of time with them, we can see how they might help us understand the open process of game preparation.

We’re going to take Bradbury’s rules and, as he suggests, study them in a different order. We’ll begin with “relax.”



### RELAX

We care about our games. We want them to go well. Like every other creative endeavor, fear grips us. We fear getting laughed at. We fear that our story will end up stupid. We fear that people will walk away and never want to play *D&D* again. There's a lot of pressure on us GMs to run a good game.

Relax. It will all be fine. These are our friends we're talking about and generally speaking the only way our games go really bad is if we let the pressure get to us. Our players want to have a good time. They'll work with us to make the game great. All we have to do is relax and let things get out of our control. The game will be fine.

### AN EXERCISE IN LETTING GO

If we know we have a game coming up in a week or a month, it's hard not to spend a good deal of free time preparing for the game. We write reams of history, set out boxes of miniatures, draw elaborate maps, and plan a network of potential plot paths.

What if we didn't do any of that? What if we didn't even have the chance?

It's one thing to say to ourselves that we'll try to prepare less for our next game and putting ourselves in a situation where we have no other

choice. What if, whenever we have the opportunity, we agree to run a game right away, with no preparation at all? What if we find ourselves with five people and a couple of hours and just jump right in?

The next time you have the opportunity, whether it's at a game convention or just hanging out with a group of interested friends, try running a game with no preparation. You'll want to choose the right game system to support this. The recently released *D&D* 5th Edition starter set is a good choice as is *Fate Accelerated*. *Pathfinder*, *D&D* 4th Edition, or *13th Age* are also good systems, though you'll want to have access to some pre-generated characters.

Running a game with no time for preparations at all is a great way to learn what you really need to run a game and what is just filling time in an attempt to get yourself comfortable.

### DON'T THINK

We'll twist this piece of Bradbury's advice and say "don't plot." As we spend time preparing our game there are numerous parts of the game we can delve deeply into without trying to force the game down a pre-determined road. Sometimes our table WANTS a linear story. They don't mind going from scene 1 to scene 2 to scene 3. There's no reason we can't give them what they want. Still, if we assume we know how

each of those scenes will go, we might be hanging on too tight. Don't think. Give the scenes the freedom they need to explode into wonderful flowers of narrative and story right at the table.

Not thinking can also mean "always listen." This is that whole bit about the empty cup we hear about. Listen to your players. Keep your mind open to their ideas. Don't make assumptions about their desires. Watch their reactions and body language. Take what they give you and put it back into the game. The more we keep our minds open during the game, the happier we'll be and the better our game will run.

## WORK

Now that we're relaxed and our mind is open, we're ready for the big part of Bradbury's rules. Work. But what do we work on? If we're not deciding what the Player Characters (PC) are going to do from scene to scene, what are we deciding?

That's where you build your own instruction manual. That's where you define your own steps. That's where you practice and refine until you find yourself in flow the minute you sit down to begin preparing for your game.

There are two areas where every ounce of work we put in will have benefits for the rest of our game. First, study the rules of the system we choose until we feel comfortable with them. Second, fill our brains with the material we can use to build a deep and rich game.

When we study the rules, it's not critical that we understand every single rule in the most complex game system we can find in order to relax and run a game, but it helps to study them enough to feel comfortable and confident when running our game. It also helps to know enough of the rules to be able to improvise easily. What's the right range of difficulty checks to have on hand? Where should you look to find monsters of the appropriate difficulty? How can you quickly and easily reward PCs? Getting a good feeling and understanding of the system we're planning to run will pay off great dividends when we're actually running our game.

Our next area of study is the life-long pursuit of open-mind experience. This can come from fiction in its many forms including books, movies, music, tv shows, old adventures, new adventures, fantasy maps, stories, and video games. Fiction isn't the only source, however. Real life has even more to offer us. Seek out museums, historical sites, photos of interesting locations, and even the boring details of everyday life. We are all products of our experiences and we can tap into those experiences to bring in fantastic ideas both huge in scope and minute in detail. We just have to open our minds to these experiences and recognize the value they can have to our creative work.

This all feeds back into the idea of "relax." We need to give ourselves the freedom and permission to take our time and really experience things. It's one thing to look at a tree and define it as "tree." It's something else to really see the tree, studying the twist of the branches, the split of the bark, and the expansion of the roots. We must ignore our brain's desires to "define" things and opening up our ability to experience something uniquely even if it's something similar to what we've experienced before. When we bring this view to our creative experiences, it lets us draw these details in and bring them forth during our games.

## WORK. RELAX. DON'T THINK.

### YOUR GM'S KOAN

With our minds open and relaxed, it's time to develop our own preparation plans and develop a series of questions we can contemplate whenever and wherever we find ourselves in a position to prepare for our game. When we feel the pull of desire to prepare for our game, we can turn to these questions and, in answering them, fill in the details of our game without stepping too deeply into the parts of our game best left open at the table.

Only you can determine which questions are right for your game. While dozens of books and hundreds of articles (many written by this

very author) outline the steps you might take to run a game, only you can know what works for your game. Only you know what preparation is required.

**When you have your list, write it out as a series of questions you might answer. For a typical D&D game it might be something like this**

- What are the five scenes we'll see in tonight's game?
- What interesting NPC interactions will the PCs experience?
- What fantastic locations will they discover?
- What wild monsters will the PCs face?
- What puzzles am I going to put into it?

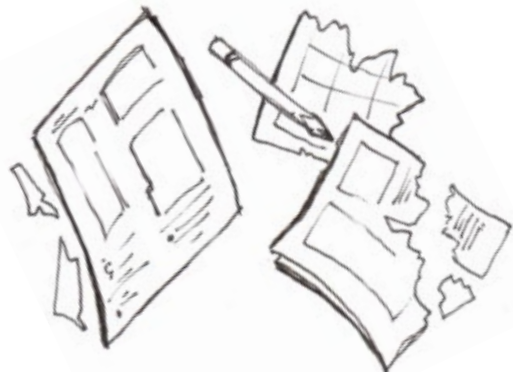
That's not a terrible list. You might use a list very similar to that yourself when you're preparing your game.

**If you run a more open ended game, though, you might want something with more flexibility. You'll want to let go of anything directly involving the PCs and instead focus on the elements of the world the PCs are likely to encounter. Here is a set of more open ended questions one might ponder when preparing their game:**

- Who are the most interesting NPCs in this story?
- What are those NPCs doing right now?
- What are some fantastic adventure locations in the area?
- What interesting monsters inhabit the area?
- What interests drive each of the PCs?
- What interests seem to drive the whole group?

Neither of these two lists might be right for you, your group, or the system you choose to play. It's up to you to determine the right questions to support the game you want to play. As you ponder them, as you use them, and as they manifest at the table, you can use your experience to tweak them, simplify them, reduce them, and add additional questions that might help get you there.

Whatever list you choose, whatever preparations you feel you must make, the most important position is the one of continual self improvement. Keep your mind open and continually improve your game mastery process to run the best game you can for you and your group. ■



# Adventure Module

## special insert:

### **Fox Hunt**

A ready-to-play *Godlike* adventure

The PDF version of Gygax Magazine includes expanded sizes of various cards located in the gatefold of the print magazine, to make the text easier to read.

You may want to print out the cards, cut and fold them for ease of use during your game.

The quickstart guide contains all the *Godlike* rules you will need to play Fox Hunt.

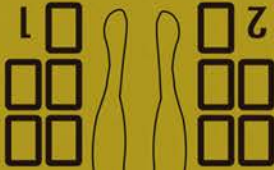
Happy hunting!



These characters were created using the Talent Power Generator, both available at [ordleem.com](http://ordleem.com). One Roll Skill Generator and the

The wife, the girls, mom and dad, the men — they're all depending on you. You can't disappoint any of them. Ever.

## WOUNDS



## MOTIVATIONS



**OTHER EQUIPMENT**  
M1 steel helmet (provides Light Armor Rating 2 for the head)  
Olive drab "beane" hat  
Thigh-length M1943 field jacket  
Web belt with magazine pouches (2 pistol, 5 submachine gun)  
canteen  
First aid pouch (one use)  
pistol holster  
Waterproof map case with Michelin road maps of the region.  
Boots with leather gaiters  
Ammunition bandolier with 5 submachine gun magazines  
Pack with a blanket, raincoat, and nine small K-ration boxes (3 breakfast, 3 lunch, 3 dinner)  
Binoculars in a waterproof case  
Compass

**BACKGROUND**  
You grew up on a farm in rural Indiana, went to college on a baseball scholarship, earned a law degree, got married, and settled down to a respectable practice. With your sandy hair (now thinning) and blue eyes, you have always been an all-American boy from a good family. And no matter how brilliantly you succeed, you have always been secretly terrified that you're going to let everyone down. That's only gotten worse in the Army, with men's lives in your hands. Your Talent power manifested two years ago at Guadalcanal in the face of a Japanese attack. A colonel saw you heroically dodging machine gun fire and reported it up the chain. Within days you were called to TOG training in Achnacarry Castle, Scotland. An instructor there nicknamed you "Broadway Jay," saying your power made you look like a dancer. The closest you've ever come to Broadway was when you changed planes at Fort Moomouth on the way to Achnacarry. You're the first commander of TOG 151 and this is their first mission. As usual, everything depends on you. As the squad leader, you lose Will points equal to the Command statistic of any man killed under your command; double that if the man is killed trying to complete a direct order.  
*(If someone else takes over the team, this applies to the new leader.)*

**TALENT POWERS - CLASSIFIED**  
**Side Step 3hd**  
**COST PER DIE: 4/8/16**  
**Description:** Through some combination of luck and prescience, as long as you have at least 1 Will point you can step out of harm's way. With three hard dice this means it always "rolls" Width 3 and Height 10 as a defense. That can "gobble" three dice from any attack with Width 2 or 3, and you can split the three gobble dice between multiple attacks. You can also attempt to "lead" an attack. A colonel saw you heroically dodging machine gun fire and reported it up the chain. Within days you were called to TOG training in Achnacarry Castle, Scotland. An instructor there nicknamed you "Broadway Jay," saying your power made you look like a dancer. The closest you've ever come to Broadway was when you changed planes at Fort Moomouth on the way to Achnacarry. You're the first commander of TOG 151 and this is their first mission. As usual, everything depends on you. As the squad leader, you lose Will points equal to the Command statistic of any man killed under your command; double that if the man is killed trying to complete a direct order.  
*(If someone else takes over the team, this applies to the new leader.)*

# 1st Lt. Jay Crumpton "Broadway Jay"

**Squad Leader** Ht: 5'10" Wt: 170lbs Age: 35

<b>BODY</b>	2
<b>COORDINATION</b>	2
<b>SENSE</b>	2
<b>BRAINS</b>	2
<b>COMMAND</b>	2
<b>COOL</b>	2
<b>BASE WILL</b>	5

Nationality *American*  
Education *Law degree*  
Dependents *Wife, four daughters*

**LANGUAGES**  
English (native) 2 (4d), French 1 (3d), Latin 1 (3d)

SKILLS	
Athletics 2 (4d)	Map reading 1 (3d)
Brawling 1 (3d)	Mental stability 1 (3d)
Climb 1 (3d)	Mortar 1 (3d)
Cryptography 1 (3d)	Navigation (land) 2 (4d)
Driving 1 (3d)	Parachuting 1 (3d)
Education 2 (4d)	Pistol 1 (3d)
Endurance 2 (4d)	Radio operation 1 (3d)
Explosives 1 (3d)	Rifle 1 (3d)
Grenade 1 (3d)	Run 1 (3d)
Health 1 (3d)	Sight 1 (3d)
Knife-fighting 1 (3d)	Stealth 2 (4d)
Law 2 (4d)	Submachine gun 1 (3d)
Leadership 1 (3d)	Survival 1 (3d)
Lie 2 (4d)	Tactics 2 (4d)
Machine gun 1 (3d)	

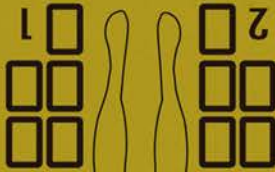
**WEAPONS**  
**Thompson submachine gun** (spray 1/3, capacity 30, damage: width +1 in killing and width in shock, range 25/100)  
**.45 semi-automatic pistol** (capacity 7, damage: width +1 in killing and width in shock, range 18/34)  
**Four (4) Mk II A1 pineapple hand grenades** (penetration 2, area 15, damage: width +2 killing, width shock, range 100/300)  
**Fairbairn-Sykes commando knife** (damage: width in shock and 1 killing)





These characters were created using the Talent Power Generator and the One Roll Skill available at [ardream.com](http://ardream.com)

## WOUNDS



Get home and finally get your life back on track.

## MOTIVATIONS



**OTHER EQUIPMENT**  
 M1 steel helmet (provides Light Armor, Rating 2 for the head)  
 Olive drab "beanie" hat  
 Thin-length M1943 field jacket  
 Web belt with 10 magazine pouches (2 pistol, 8 carbine)  
 Pistol holster  
 canteen  
 Waterproof map case with Michelin road maps of the region  
 Boots with leather gaiters  
 Ammunition bandolier with 8 carbine magazines  
 Medical pouch containing bandages, iodine, tourniquets, adhesive plaster, morphine, triage  
 tongs, bone knife, scalpel, clamps, etc.  
 (Can be used six times.)  
 Pack with a blanket, raincoat,  
 and nine small K-ration boxes  
 (3 breakfasts, 3 lunch, 3 dinner)  
 Compass

**BACKGROUND**  
 You made it most of the way through dental school, but you couldn't afford to both pay tuition and raise an unexpected baby boy after a shotgun wedding to pretty Vera. Before the war you had been working as a mechanic to save up money to return to school. It seemed like that was always the way—things just ran off the rails however hard you tried to keep them under control. After you got drafted, the Army made you a medic. You're good at the work and have saved plenty of lives over the last couple of years. In fact you were doing that when your power manifested, a force field that covered you and your patient in the middle of a firefight in Italy. You got your nickname because the force field looks like a bubble when in mud or rain. Before you knew if you were reassigned, yanked away from your company and put into talent commando school. Now it's been five weeks since you got a letter from Vera and the boy and you feel more than ever like the clock is ticking. Will you ever get home to put your life together?

**TALENT POWERS - CLASSIFIED**  
**Containment 5d**  
**COST PER DIE: 5/10/20**  
**Description:** As long as you have at least 1 Will point, you can create a bubble of force to separate or protect something or someone from the environment and threats. The bubble lasts With in minutes. You can keep it going by spending 1 Will point per minute. It can keep a liquid or gas at bay or physical objects. If a moving object hits the bubble, you must roll Containment's dice and compare the result to a dice roll based on the weight of the object. For 2d for 210 lbs or less; 3d for 210-250 lbs; 4d for 250-370 lbs; 5d for 370-500 lbs; 6d for 500-800 lbs; 7d for 800 lbs to a ton; 8d for one to two tons; 9d for two to four tons; or 10d for four to ten tons.  
 If the Containment roll succeeds and has a higher Height, it keeps the object out. To keep out a living creature, the Containment roll must beat the intruder's Body roll in the same way (just the Body dice without a skill).

# Cpl. Christian McBride

"SUDS"

Medic

Ht: 5'9" Wt: 160lbs Age: 24

BODY	2
COORDINATION	2
SENSE	2
BRAINS	3
COMMAND	1
COOL	2
<b>BASE WILL</b>	<b>3</b>

Nationality *American*  
 Education *Some dental school*  
 Dependents *Wife, young son*

### LANGUAGES

English (native) 3 (6d), French 2 (5d), German 1 (4d), Greek 1 (4d), Latin 1 (4d)

### SKILLS

Brawling 2 (4d)	Map reading 1 (4d)
Climb 1 (4d)	Mechanics 2 (5d)
Cryptography 1 (4d)	Medicine 2 (5d)
Driving 1 (3d)	Mental stability 1 (3d)
Education 1 (5d)	Mortar 1 (4d)
Electronics 1 (4d)	Navigation (land) 1 (4d)
Endurance 1 (3d)	Parachuting 1 (3d)
Explosives 1 (4d)	Pistol 1 (3d)
First Aid 3 (6d)	Radio operation 1 (4d)
Grenade 1 (3d)	Rifle 2 (4d)
Hearing 1 (3d)	Stealth 1 (3d)
Health 1 (3d)	Submachine gun 1 (3d)
Knife-fighting 2 (4d)	Survival 1 (4d)
Machine gun 1 (3d)	Tactics 1 (4d)

### WEAPONS

**.30 carbine, M1**  
 (capacity 15, damage: width +2 killing, width shock, range 100/300)

**.45 semi-automatic pistol**  
 (capacity 7, damage: width +1 in killing and width in shock, range 18/34)

**Four (4) Mk II A1 pineapple hand grenades**  
 (penetration 2, area 15, damage: width +2 killing, width shock, range 100/300)

**Fairbairn-Sykes commando knife**  
 (damage: width in shock and 1 killing)

GODLIKE

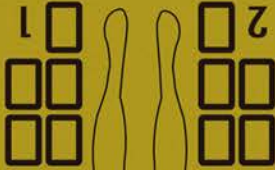


Cygax  
 MAGAZINE



These characters were created using the Talent Power Generator, both available at [arc4eom.com](http://arc4eom.com)

## WOUNDS



**OTHER EQUIPMENT**  
 SCR300 backpack radio (32 lbs., range about 3 miles) (provides Light Armor Rating 2 for the head)  
 Olive drab "beanie" hat  
 Thigh-length M1943 field jacket  
 Web belt with 8 carbine magazine pouches  
 canteen  
 first aid pouch (one use)  
 holster  
 Waterproof map case with Michelin road maps of the region.  
 Boots with leather gaiters  
 Haversack (mussel bag) with a blanket, raincoat, and nine small K-ration boxes (3 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners)  
 Compass

**MOTIVATIONS**  
 Stay alive and tell good stories.



**BACKGROUND**  
 You're a New York taxi driver with the gift of gab. You had no intention to fight in the war, but you were drafted. You lost your power manifested in Army training when someone dropped a live grenade. You didn't dive on it—you're not crazy!—but when you let out a panicked shout the grenade somehow launched itself off the ground and blew up fifty feet away. As a welcome bonus you learned in a bar brawl, when some volunteers singled out the draftees, that fists and thrown bottles seemed to just slide off you harmlessly. After your power showed up you were shipped straight to TOC commando training. That was an even less welcome surprise than getting drafted. You got your nickname (it's an acronym) from an instructor the third time you blew up the wrong target trying to use telekinesis to drop a grenade. You're the radio man because you know wiring and electronics. But that backpack radio is heavy. If the thing gets broken and you're left behind, that wouldn't be the end of the world. You've never been in combat.  
 Know you're in danger, your power does not protect you. Rating. The "If/Then" flow means that if you don't Penetrating weapons don't reduce your Heavy Armor Width of all attacks by 1. The "Hardened" extra means you're bulletproof—usually—because it reduces the point, you have a Heavy Armor Rating of 1. That means **Description:** as long as you have at least 1 Will **only if you're aware there's danger**  
**Flaws:** If/Then  
**Extras:** Hardened  
 (Qualities: Defends, Robust, Useful Outside of Combat.)  
**Heavy Armor Level 1**  
 around unpredictably.  
 means that anything you pick up swoops and smashes your power can lift no more than 100 lbs. The "Clumsy" flow your telekinests roll. The "Weak" flow means your someone's hands by beating the target's Body roll with Width in Shock damage. You can yank something out of target's Body stat dice. If your Height is greater, it does force by comparing your Telekinests roll with a roll of the your mind. You can clobber someone with telekinetic point, you can lift and move things with just the power of **Description:** as long as you have at least 1 Will **Flaws:** Clumsy, Weak  
 (Qualities: Attacks, Robust, Useful Outside of Combat.)

# Pvt. Jimmy Ione

**Radio operator** Ht: 6' Wt: 105lbs Age: 22

"Fubar"

BODY	1
COORDINATION	3
SENSE	2
BRAINS	2
COMMAND	2
COOL	2
<b>BASE WILL</b>	<b>2</b>

Nationality: American  
 Education: High school  
 Dependents: Mother

## LANGUAGES

English (native) 2 (4d)

## SKILLS

Brawling 1 (2d)	Brawling 1 (2d)
Climb 1 (2d)	Climb 1 (2d)
Cryptography 1 (2d)	Cryptography 1 (2d)
Driving 1 (2d)	Driving 1 (2d)
Electronics 1 (2d)	Electronics 1 (2d)
Endurance 1 (2d)	Endurance 1 (2d)
Explosives 1 (2d)	Explosives 1 (2d)
Grenade 1 (2d)	Grenade 1 (2d)
Hearing 1 (2d)	Hearing 1 (2d)
Inspire 1 (2d)	Inspire 1 (2d)
Knife-fighting 1 (2d)	Knife-fighting 1 (2d)
Machine gun 1 (2d)	Machine gun 1 (2d)
Map reading 1 (2d)	Map reading 1 (2d)
Mechanics 1 (2d)	Mechanics 1 (2d)

## WEAPONS

.30 carbine, M1  
 (capacity 15, damage: width +2 killing, width shock, range 100/300)

Four (4) Mk II A1 pineapple hand grenades  
 (penetration 2, area 15, damage: width +2 killing, width shock, range 100/300)

Brawling  
 (Damage: width shock)

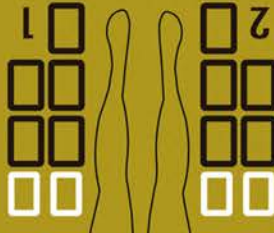
## GODLIKE





These characters were created using the Talent Power Generator and the One Roll Skill Generator, both available at [ardream.com](http://ardream.com)

## WOUNDS



Look out for the men. They're the closest thing to family you have.

## MOTIVATIONS



**OTHER EQUIPMENT**  
 M1 steel helmet (provides Light Armor Rating 2 for the head)  
 Olive drab "beaver" hat  
 High-length M1943 field jacket  
 Web belt with magazine pouches (2 pistol, 5 submachine gun)  
 canteen  
 first aid pouch (one use)  
 pistol holster  
 Waterproof map case with Michelin road maps of the region  
 boots with leather gaiters  
 Ammunition bandolier with 5 submachine gun magazines.  
 Haversack (called a "musette") which can carry up to 12 lbs of gear  
 Pack with a blanket, raincoat, and nine small K-ration boxes (3 breakfasts, 3 lunch, 3 dinner)  
 Compass

## BACKGROUND

Back in the civilian world you're a salesman from Oregon. Your supervisor once said you could give Dale Carnegie lessons on winning friends and influencing people. But you learned the hard way that sometimes it takes more than a smile to survive. A runaway from a broken and violent home, you drifted for years from trouble to worse trouble before falling in with a traveling salesman and learning the trade. You volunteered in early 1942 out of fury at Pearl Harbor. Your Talent power showed up in the Kassehine Pass about a year later, when a stray shell sent you flying. You woke up in the hospital with your leg ruined and the doctors considering amputation. Imagine their surprise when you were so desperate to return to your platoon that your leg knit itself together before their eyes. You got your nickname that night when a medic said you were your own platoon's bandage. But you never returned to your platoon. The brass reassigned you to TO6 training as soon as your power was reported. Now your job is to keep TO6 151 in line and make sure every man does his job.

**Talent Powers - Classified**  
**Extra Tough Level 2**  
 (Qualities: Robust, Useful Outside of Combat)  
**Cost per Level: 4**  
**Description:** You have two extra wound boxes on each hit location. These take damage and heal normally. If you run out of Will points, these wound boxes disappear and any damage in them transfers to other boxes on that location.  
**Regeneration 2hd**  
 (Qualities: Robust, Useful Outside of Combat)  
**Cost per Die: 3/6/12**  
**Description:** By concentrating for one round, you can roll your Regeneration dice. On a success you can spend Will points to instantly regenerate. Each Will point heals the Width of the roll (with 2hd that's always two points) in killing damage on every hit location, or if you prefer, it spends 5 Will points to heal a limb that's been permanently crippled—but you suspect that you can't regrow a limb or organ that's been severed or completely destroyed. You can spend 1 Will point to instantly recover from an illness, even a lethal disease or poison.  
**You must be conscious to use any form of this power.**

# Sgt. Mackintosh Smith

"Plaster"

**Tank** Ht: 5'8" Wt: 150lbs Age: 31

- BODY ..... 2
- COORDINATION ..... 2
- SENSE ..... 1
- BRAINS ..... 2
- COMMAND ..... 3
- COOL ..... 2
- BASE WILL** ..... **10**

Nationality ..... American  
 Education ..... Some elementary school  
 Dependents ..... None

## LANGUAGES

English (native) 2 (4d)

## SKILLS

Bluff 1 (3d)	Leadership 3 (6d)
Brawling 2 (4d)	Lie 1 (3d)
Climb 1 (3d)	Machine gun 1 (3d)
Cryptography 1 (3d)	Mental stability 2 (4d)
Driving 1 (3d)	Mortar 1 (3d)
Endurance 1 (3d)	Navigation (land) 2 (4d)
Explosives 1 (3d)	Parachuting 1 (3d)
Grenade 1 (3d)	Pistol 1 (3d)
Health 1 (3d)	Rifle 1 (3d)
Hearing 1 (2d)	Stealth 2 (4d)
Inspire 3 (6d)	Submachine gun 1 (3d)
Intimidation 1 (4d)	Survival 2 (4d)
Knife-fighting 2 (4d)	Tactics 1 (3d)

## WEAPONS

- Thompson submachine gun**  
 (spray 1/3, capacity 30, damage: width +1 in killing and width in shock, range 25/T00)
- .45 semi-automatic pistol**  
 (capacity 7, damage: width +1 in killing and width in shock, range 18/34)
- Four (4) Mk II AI pineapple hand grenades**  
 (penetration 2, area 15, damage: width +2 killing, width shock, range 100/300)
- Fairbairn-Sykes commando knife**  
 (damage: width in shock and 1 killing)



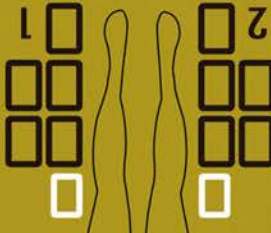
**Gygax**  
 MAGAZINE

## GODLIKE



These characters were created using the Talent Power Generator and the One Roll Skill Generator, both available at arcstream.com

## WOUNDS



## MOTIVATIONS



**OTHER EQUIPMENT**  
 M1 steel helmet  
 Olive drab "beanie" hat  
 High-length M1943 field jacket  
 Web belt with magazine pouches  
 (2 pistol, 5 submachine gun)  
 canister  
 first aid pouch (one use)  
 pistol holster  
 Waterproof map case with Michelin road maps of the region  
 necessary for union business. After seeing how well the smart ones live, you were hooked. As a Talent you're going to be famous, and you aim to live like a king in Hollywood or New York City, with plenty of women and muscle at your beck and call. Those dreams have taken an edge of spiteful urgency since you got a Dear John letter three days ago from Irene, your wife of eight years and mother to your son and daughter. For some reason she waited till you were overseas and in the war to say she'd had enough.

if it takes you don't suffer Bottle Frenzy but the power shoots in a random direction. The GM chooses or rolls for the direction or target. The "Obvious" how means the flames are bright and loud. There's no way to conceal them or be stealthy while using them. Since you have only 1 wd with this power, you can use it only by preparing a full round ahead of time to get a bonus die, or two rounds for two bonus dice. Match the wiggle die with the bonus die to get a set.

**BACKGROUND**  
 A machinist and union steward, you worked your way through the rank and file in a Chicago factory. That's where your talent power manifested. A two-ton steel roll was about to crush your coworkers but you held it back all by yourself as white-hot fire erupted from your hands. When word got around, you were drafted fast and sent straight to Achacarry for training. That's where you got your nickname, after the M2-Flamethrower. This is your first combat mission but you're not much bothered by nerves. After all, you have big plans for being a Talent celebrity after the war. You've always been a ladies' man, and you've spent maybe a little more time with gangsters than was strictly necessary for union business. After seeing how well the smart ones live, you were hooked. As a Talent you're going to be famous, and you aim to live like a king in Hollywood or New York City, with plenty of women and muscle at your beck and call. Those dreams have taken an edge of spiteful urgency since you got a Dear John letter three days ago from Irene, your wife of eight years and mother to your son and daughter. For some reason she waited till you were overseas and in the war to say she'd had enough.

**Harm: Flamethrower 1wd**  
 (Qualifies: Attacks, Useful Outside of Combat)  
**Extras: Burn, Vicious +2**  
**Flaws: Graphic, Jumpy, Obvious**  
**Description:** As long as you have at least 1 Will point, you can shoot gusts of fire from your hands like a flamethrower. The "Vicious" extra means the attack does two extra points of killing damage. The "Burn" extra means it sets a target on fire; the target must make a Cool + Mental Stability roll to avoid packing, and every single hit location except the head takes 1 Shock every combat round until the fire is put out; if the attack hits the head, the head is on fire too and the target is blinded for five minutes. Putting the fire out requires total immersion in water or else a Coordination + Dodge while rolling around on the ground. The "Graphic" flow means it's so terrible to watch that you must make a Cool + Mental Stability roll or suffer Bottle Frenzy. (But other witnesses don't.) The "Jumpy" flow is the worst. It means the power sometimes goes off accidentally when you're startled. If some loud noise or sneak attack surprises you, you must make a Cool + Mental Stability test.

## TALENT POWERS - CLASSIFIED

### Hyperstat

**+5d Body**  
**Description:** You can lift up to a ton with a little effort, or up to two tons with a successful Body roll; you add +1 Width to the damage of your hand-to-hand attacks; and your hand-to-hand attacks inflict killing damage instead of Shock. (Your weapon descriptions include those bonuses. You have one extra wound box each in your torso, arms, and legs. Your super strength and the extra wound boxes vanish if you run out of Will points.)

# Cpl. Mark Stolley

"Mark Two-Two"

Mechanic

Ht: 5'7" Wt: 165lbs Age: 30

BODY 2(7)

COORDINATION 2

SENSE 2

BRAINS 1

COMMAND 2

COOL 3

BASE WILL 5

Nationality American

Education High school

Dependents Wife, son, and daughter

## LANGUAGES

English (native) 1 (2d)

## SKILLS

Anti-tank rocket 1 (3d)	Mechanics 1 (2d)
Brawling 2 (9d)	Mental Stability 2 (5d)
Bluff 2 (5d)	Mortar 1 (3d)
Climb 1 (8d)	Navigation (land) 1 (2d)
Cryptography 1 (2d)	Parachuting 1 (3d)
Dodge 1 (3d)	Pistol 1 (3d)
Endurance 2 (9d)	Radio operation 1 (2d)
Explosives 1 (2d)	Rifle 1 (3d)
Grenade 1 (3d)	Seduction 2 (4d)
Hearing 2 (4d)	Smell 1 (3d)
Inspire 1 (3d)	Stealth 2 (4d)
Knife-fighting 2 (9d)	Submachine gun 1 (3d)
Lie 3 (6d)	Survival 1 (3d)
Machine gun 1 (3d)	Tactics 1 (2d)
Map reading 1 (2d)	

## WEAPONS

**Thompson submachine gun**  
 (spray 1/3, capacity 30)  
 damage: width +1 in killing and width in shock, range 25/100

**.45 semi-automatic pistol**  
 (capacity 7, damage: width +1 in killing and width in shock, range 18/34)

**Four (4) Mk II A1 pineapple hand grenades**  
 (penetration 2, area 15, damage: width +2 killing, width shock, range 100/300)

**Fairbairn-Sykes commando knife**  
 (damage: width in shock and 1 killing)



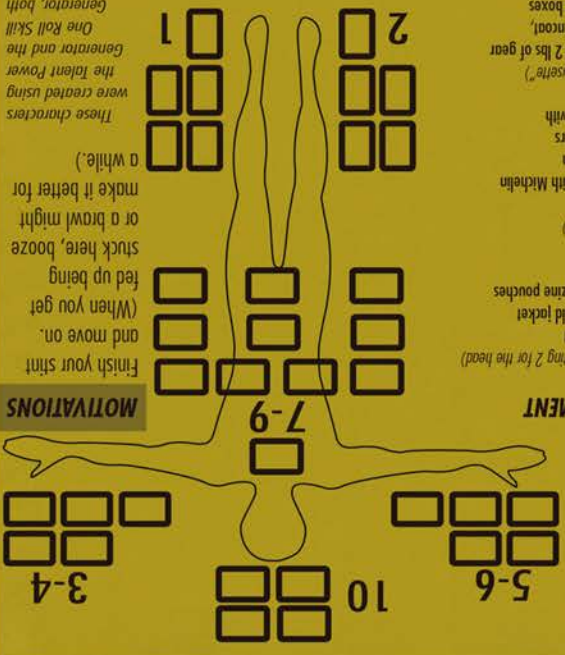


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Finish your stint and move on. (When you get fed up being stuck here, booze or a brawl might make it better for a while.)

**MOTIVATIONS**

**WOUNDS**



- OTHER EQUIPMENT**
- M1 steel helmet
  - Olive drab "beane" hat (provides Light Armor Rating 2 for the head)
  - Thigh-length M1943 field jacket
  - Web belt with 10 magazine pouches
  - (2 pistol, 8 carbine)
  - conteen
  - first aid pouch (one use)
  - pistol holster
  - Waterproof map case with Michelin road maps of the region
  - Boots with leather gaiters
  - Ammunition bandoler with 8 carbine magazines
  - Hoversack (called a "muser") which can carry up to 12 lbs of gear
  - Fork with a blanket, canteen, and nine small K-ration boxes
  - Compass

**BACKGROUND**

Burly and thick-handed with dark hair and deep-set dark eyes, you were a high school football star but you didn't have the money for college or the grades or connections for a scholarship. You went into the merchant marine, but hated it so much that after a year you vowed never to go to sea again. You even volunteered for the Army in 1942 to avoid getting drafted into the Navy. You can't stand to stay in one job or one place long, sooner or later you get lazy and start drinking and getting in fights. You plan to put in your time, avoid losing life or limb, and move on when your enlistment is up. That plan has gotten harder. Your power appeared in North Africa at the end of 1942. You were a holler-than-expected pile of rocks in a firefight. By that time you were already sick of the Army and wanted out, and when you took the leap you just kept going up. When you were half a mile in the air you had to think about it a while before you decided to come down. You didn't want to risk a court-martial for desertion. After you were transferred to Achincarry for TOG training, a British instructor nicknamed you after the "Boston" attack-bomber plane. The fact that you were born and raised in Dorchester was a happy coincidence.

**FLIGHT 5d**  
(Qualities: Delends, Robust, Useful Outside of Combat)

**Flow: Running Start**  
**Description:** So long as you have at least one Will point, you can fly. The "Running Start" flow means you need a running start of at least 30 feet. That means running — just riding in a car for 30 feet won't do — but one time in parachute training you were able to start flying after falling for a couple of seconds. You can fly up to 55 mph and you can use your Flight dice as a defense roll to avoid harm. Flying's pretty much all you can do while in the air. If you want to shoot at someone or drop a grenade while flying, that requires multiple actions, which means it's very unlikely to be accurate.

**Super Speed 10d**  
(Qualities: Delends, Robust, Useful Outside of Combat)

**Flow: Attached to Flight; Slow Breaking**  
**Description:** Once you're in the air, you can use Super Speed to accelerate dramatically. Your off-out top speed is around 780 mph, just over the speed of sound. The "Attached" flow means you can use Super Speed only with your Flight power; you can't use it to run faster. The "Slow Breaking" flow means you need a full combat round to decelerate from Super Speed. If you're flying, say, 400 mph, that's equivalent to 600 yards per round so you need 600 yards to stop. You can roll the Super Speed dice to avoid attacks and obstacles, but you've learned to use Super Speed only when there are no big barriers in the way. Your power protects your eyes, clothing and belongings from the extreme winds of high speed. But it does not protect passengers, and it doesn't allow you to breathe at very high altitudes.

**Cpl. Mark Stolley**

*"Boston"*

Vehicle specialist    Ht: 6'3"    Wt: 215lbs    Age: 33

<b>BODY</b>	<b>2(7)</b>
<b>COORDINATION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SENSE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>BRAINS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>COMMAND</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>COOL</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>BASE WILL</b>	<b>5</b>

Nationality: *American*  
Education: *High school*  
Dependents: *Wife, son, and daughter*

**LANGUAGES**

English (native) 1 (2d)

**SKILLS**

Anti-tank rocket 2 (4d)	Mental Stability 2 (4d)
Athletics 2 (5d)	Mortar 1 (3d)
Brawl 3 (6d)	Navigation (land) 1 (3d)
Climb 1 (4d)	Navigation (sea/air) 2 (4d)
Cryptography 1 (3d)	Parachuting 1 (3d)
Dodge 2 (4d)	Pistol 1 (3d)
Endurance 2 (5d)	Radio operation 1 (3d)
Explosives 1 (3d)	Rifle 2 (4d)
Grenade 1 (3d)	Run 1 (4d)
Hearing 1 (3d)	Sailing 1 (3d)
Knife-fighting 2 (5d)	Stealth 1 (3d)
Machine gun 1 (3d)	Submachine gun 1 (3d)
Map reading 1 (3d)	Survival 1 (3d)
Mechanics 2 (4d)	

**WEAPONS**

- Anti-tank rocket launcher, M1 (**bazooka**) (capacity 1, penetration 5, area 7, damage: width+1 in killing and shock, range: 50/100, slow 3)
- .30 carbine, M1 (capacity 15, damage: width +2 in killing and width in shock, range 100/300)
- .45 semi-automatic pistol (capacity 7, damage: width +1 in killing and width in shock, range 18/34)
- Four (4) Mk II A1 pineapple hand grenades (penetration 2, area 15, damage: width +2 killing, width shock, range 100/300)
- Fairbairn-Sykes commanda knife (damage: width in shock and 1 killing)



### You Are a Talent ...

... a super-man who can accomplish the impossible. You represent your country's greatest hope in defeating the super-men of the Axis forces—the Talents that the Nazis call Übermensch ("Over-Men") and the Japanese call Gaki ("Hungry Ghosts"). Without you, these crazed superhumans will plunge the world into a new dark age.

"Talent" is a term adopted in the late 1930s in English-speaking countries to describe people like you. It all began in 1936, with the arrival of the first proven super-man: Konrad Rahn, Der Flieger ("The Airman"), a Nazi who flew under his own power into the 1936 Berlin Olympics and lit the torch. The world became obsessed with the phenomenon. By the end of 1941, thousands of Talents had appeared, men and women, around the world. Most Talents in the Allied armies are gathered under the Talent Operations Command and assigned to nine-man Talent Operations Groups (TOGs). They are charged with finding and neutralizing enemy Talents. That makes their missions some of the most dangerous in the war.

Talent powers are not biological in nature. They represent nothing less than the human mind taking control over reality. They are as eccentric and odd as their owners. Each power reflects some fundamental aspect of the Talent's psyche.

All Talents share a couple of common powers. First, if two Talents see each other, and one of them is actively using a power, each immediately recognizes the other as a Talent. Second, Talents can resist other Talents' powers. If one Talent tries to use a power directly on another, unwilling Talent, a "contest of wills" ensues between them.

The GODLIKE rulebook includes a detailed alternate history of World War II as Talents change (and often fail to change) the course of history. The great forces of history drive the war much as they did in the real world. If a scenario begins on June 6, 1944, that's D-Day in the world of GODLIKE and the world watches as the Allies begin their great invasion of France.

### But in the world of GODLIKE, Talents lead the way.

### Dice and Dice Pools

GODLIKE uses 10-sided dice. We abbreviate dice as "d". So if you see "2d," that means "two dice," "3d" means "three dice," and so on. To do something challenging in the game, roll two or more dice in a dice pool and look for matching dice.

#### Statistics

Your character has six vital statistics, or stats: **Body (strength), Coordination (nimbleness), Sense (how observant you are), Brains (how smart you are), Command (persuasiveness), and Cool (level-headedness under stress).** For every point in a stat, roll 1d when using it. A stat with 1d is weak; 2d is normal; 5d is the best a human can be without a Talent power.

#### Skills

A skill is a particular application of a stat; it adds to your ability to use a particular stat. The Pistol skill, for example, adds to Coordination (since you use eye-hand coordination to aim). When you use a skill, roll a dice pool of the combined stat+skill dice. A skill with 1d indicates basic training; 5d is the best a human can be without a Talent power.

### Base Will and Will Points

**Base Will** isn't a dice pool but a flat number reflecting how powerful your Talent is in the face of Talent opposition. You also have a number of **Will points** that begin equal to your **Base Will**. **Base Will** is static, but **Will points** frequently rise and fall. If your **Will points** are lower than your **Base Will**, a good night's rest restores one **Will point**. If you do something to substantially advance or serve one of your **Motivations**, you get a **Will point**. Acting contrary to a motivation may cost a point of **Will**. When in doubt, the GM decides.

To use a power, you must bid one **Will point**. If the power's roll fails—if you roll the dice but get no success—you lose the **Will point**. If your **Will points** drop to zero, you can't "bid" that point. **Having zero Will points means you can't use any Talent power!** You become a normal person with no superpowers. Your powers return when you have at least 1 **Will point**.

#### The Contest of Wills

If you try to use a power on another Talent who doesn't want it to happen, a Contest of Wills begins. It's a bidding war. You already bid one **Will point** to attempt to make the roll. Now the target can bid 1 **Will point** to resist—to not allow you to even roll the dice. You say whether you want to bid a second

point—or just give up. If you bid another point, the target must either give up or bid another point. And so on.

Whoever gives up loses all the **Will points** he or she bid. The Talent who gets his or her way loses no **Will points**. However many **Will points** are bid back and forth, the Contest of Wills happens instantly. One Talent's force of will immediately overwhelms the other.

There are two key requirements. **First, the power must directly affect the defending Talent.** If the attacker uses a power on the environment instead of using it on the other Talent directly, the target can't resist. **Second, the defender must know it's about to happen. If the target can't see the attacker, and therefore can't sense the attacker's Talent nature, then the target can't resist.** In edge cases, it's up to the GM.

The more fanatical or desperate the Talent, the more **Will points** he or she will bid to make sure a power takes effect. Since your powers all fail when you hit zero **Will points**, don't bid that last point unless you think the alternative will be even more dire.

#### Mental Stability and Battle Fatigue

When a really bad thing happens—torture, cold-blooded murder, facing extremely heavy fire, or being badly wounded—you must make a **Cool+Mental Stability** roll. If it fails, usually you lose **Will points**. Sometimes you lose only one or two **Will points**. But

### The One Roll Engine

*The game system that powers GODLIKE is called the One Roll Engine, or the ORE.*

#### Rolling Dice

When a challenging and important action is in doubt in GODLIKE, you roll dice to resolve its outcome. (If it's not challenging or important, don't roll; just describe what happens.) The goal is to rack up sets of matching dice. If you score no matches, your action fails. For example, if you roll 6d and score 6, 3, 4, 6, 9, and 0 (meaning "10"), you succeed because you rolled two sixes.

The more dice you have, the better your chances of succeeding at a challenging action. But no one in GODLIKE can ever roll more than 10d in a single dice pool.

#### Success and Speed

**Matching sets have two important qualities: Height and Width.**

##### Height

is the number that comes up matching—so if you roll two sixes, the Height of the roll is 6. Height determines quality of success.

##### Width

is the number of matching dice—with those two sixes, for example, the Width is 2 because you matched two dice. Width determines speed and power. A Width of three or more indicates an unusually fast and powerful action.

**Matches are listed in a shorthand of "Width by Height," like this: two sixes = 2x6, three eights = 3x8, four ones = 4x1, and so on.**

#### Taking Extra Time

You can take twice as long as you need and gain a +1d bonus. Take three times as long instead and gain +2d.

#### Difficulty and Penalties

The standard roll is enough to accomplish something challenging: shooting an enemy in the middle of battle, cracking a code in record time, etc. If an action is even harder than usual, it gets a difficulty rating. Your roll must have a Height equal to or greater than the **difficulty** rating for your attempt to succeed. If the GM says it's difficulty 8, you must roll Height 8, 9 or 10 to succeed.

Some events cause you to lose dice from your pool as a **penalty**. Usually this means you lose a die from your pool before your roll (such as when trying to shoot a target at long range, for example). Occasionally you lose a die from your highest set after your roll, which is much more disruptive (such as when you take damage).

#### Multiple Sets

Sometimes a single roll yields multiple matching sets. You can use any one set of your choice, but *only one*.

The exception is when you attempt **multiple actions**. That is very hard. First, you can only use the *lowest* of all dice pools involved. You can't use hard dice or wiggle dice unless you have them with *both* proposed actions. Next, *drop a die* from that pool for each additional action. If you try three actions, you lose two dice. You always lose hard dice first and wiggle dice last. Finally, roll the remaining dice. If you roll more than one set, you succeed at more than one action. If you roll only one set, choose which action succeeds.

if you fail the roll in the face of overwhelming terror or trauma—such as charging machine gun fire or suffering through an artillery barrage—you suffer **Battle Fatigue**. If you suffer **Battle Fatigue**, you have a choice: *Either flee the scene at top speed and lose half your current*

*Will points; or curl up into a helpless ball and lose half your current Will points; or hold your ground, keep control of your actions, and lose all your current Will points in a berserk rage or dissociated fugue. If you already are at zero Will points, Battle Fatigue reduces your Base Will by one instead.*

## Talent Powers

Talent powers set your character apart from the rank and file of the Allied armies. Talents come in three flavors: hyperstats, hyperskills, and miracles.

### Talent Power Dice Pools

Each Talent power has a number of dice, much like a stat or skill. Unlike normal stats and skills, however, you can buy special kinds of dice with Talent powers.

#### Hard dice

are always set at 10. You don't roll them; just put the die at 10 and roll the rest of your dice pool. Hard dice are abbreviated "hd," so "2hd" means "two hard dice."

#### Wiggle dice

are like wild cards in poker. Set the wiggle die to whatever number you want after rolling all the other dice in your pool. Wiggle dice are abbreviated "wd," so "3wd" means "three wiggle dice."

### Hyperstats and Hyperskills

Hyperstats and hyperskills are normal stats and skills inflated to superhuman levels, up to 10d in a stat or skill.

### Miracles

Miracles are powers that aren't hyperstats or hyperskills. A miracle's dice don't add to stat or skill dice. They form their own dice pool. If you have the Flight miracle at 4d, you just roll those 4d to fly.

Every miracle has one or more power qualities that define what it can do: Attacks, Defends, Useful Outside of Combat, and Robust. A miracle needs at least one of those qualities but some have all four.

A miracle that **Attacks** can be used like a weapon to inflict damage. A miracle that **Defends** can block or prevent attacks. A miracle that's **Useful Outside of Combat** has some other useful effect unrelated to fighting. A miracle that's **Robust** keeps working even if you're hurt; without it, pain causes the power to shut down.

Some miracles also have **extras and flaws** that make the power more or less effective.

In character creation, a miracle costs points according to its qualities, extras, and flaws. Hard dice cost twice as much as normal dice and wiggle dice cost four times as much as normal dice. If a power's **Cost per Die** is "3/6/12," that means it costs three points per die, six points per hard die, and 12 points per wiggle die.

### Healing

After a battle ends, half the Shock damage that you took in that battle heals on its own as you catch your breath and recover. Mark each point that didn't heal so you remember it can't be recovered like this after a later fight.

A Brains+First Aid roll can heal Width in Shock damage on a hit location by relieving pain. The amount of damage on the location is the difficulty. An injury with Killing damage must be stabilized within 15 minutes with a Brains+First Aid roll. Failure complicates recovery. See the GODLIKE rulebook for details on long-term recuperation.

### Dodging and Defending

You can use whatever skill or power is most appropriate to avoid an attack that you can see coming, such as a knife or a bayonet. You must announce the attempt in the Declare phase. If your roll takes effect before the attack, each die in your set removes or "gobbles" one die from his set. If that means the attack is no longer a matching set, it misses. You can divide your "gobble" dice between multiple attacks.

You can't make this kind of defense roll against a gunshot unless you have a Talent power that says otherwise. But you can dive for cover.

### Taking Cover

To avoid gunfire, declare "diving for cover" as your action and tell the GM what you're trying to hide behind. Roll Coordination+Dodge. When your action comes up, you move behind the cover. If the roll fails, you get behind the cover at the very end of the round. You have its protection against any attacks that happen after that. The GM says how much of your body the cover protects.

## Combat

In GODLIKE, one roll of the dice tells you everything about a character's actions in battle.

### Combat Rounds

Battles are handled in combat rounds. Each round lasts a few seconds. Each combat round is conducted in three distinct phases: **Declare, Roll, and Resolve**.

#### PHASE

1

**DECLARE.** At the beginning of a combat round, before anyone rolls dice, everyone declares what they're attempting this round. Declarations happen in order of Sense, from lowest to highest. Where there's a tie, NPCs declare before player characters.

#### PHASE

2

**ROLL.** Every combatant rolls his or her dice pool at the same time. Use scratch paper to jot down NPC Widths and Heights if necessary. If you roll more than one set, choose which to use—but keep the unused sets aside until the end of the round. If you lose dice from one set you can still use a spare.

#### PHASE

3

**RESOLVE.** This is when everything actually happens. Which action has the highest Width? That happens first. The next-widest action goes next. And so on. Break ties with Height. If both Width and Height are the same, the actions happen simultaneously. If you do something that doesn't require a roll, like jogging across a field or shouting at someone next to you, that happens after all rolled actions. When all actions have been resolved, the round is over.

### Hit Location and Damage

The Height of an attack roll determines **hit location**. The Width of an attack roll is how much **damage** it inflicts.

If you take any damage before your action has been resolved, you **lose one die** out of your highest set. If you're using a miracle that lacks the "Robust" quality, taking any damage instantly **shuts down that power**. You must reactivate it in a later round to use it again.

Damage comes in two types: Shock and Killing. Mark each point of damage in a "wound box" on the character sheet. Mark a point of Shock damage with a single line in one wound box. Mark a point of Killing damage with an "X".

## Weapon Range

Each weapon has two numbers listed for range, such as "18/34". Ranges are in yards. The first number is close range. Beyond that, the attack's dice pool loses one die. The second number is maximum effective range. Beyond that, you must make a Sense+Sight roll to even be able to take a shot. If you're shooting at a target only five yards away or closer, add a +1d bonus to the attack.

### Spray

A weapon with a Spray rating is fully automatic. Add the Spray rating to the attack dice pool. Each set that comes up indicates a hit. A Spray weapon does not suffer a penalty for attempting multiple attacks.

### Cover Fire

Cover fire is also called suppressing fire. It pins enemies down by pouring as much fire onto them as possible. Instead of a normal attack, roll 2d and add your weapon's Spray rating, if any. Cover fire affects every character in a radius of one yard per die in your dice pool. If you're using a Spray weapon, each set that you roll applies.

If your roll succeeds, each character in the target radius must roll 1d. If it matches the Height of your set, that indicates a hit to that

## Shock

Damage means bruising, pummeling, concussive force, surface trauma, minor blood loss and other types of non-permanent damage that can be shaken off quickly. A hit location filled with Shock damage is temporarily unusable. When the head or torso is filled with Shock, the character is unconscious or in too much pain to do anything. If a hit location is filled with Shock, each additional point of Shock turns one existing Shock to Killing (change the single line to an "X"). Each point of further Killing turns two existing Shock to Killing.

### Killing damage

means puncture wounds, broken bones, shrapnel, burns, or heavy bleeding. Unless they've had a

lot of training, most NPCs panic and try to flee or hide when they take Killing damage; the GM may require a Mental Stability test to avoid Battle Fatigue or passing out if you're badly hurt. A hit location filled with Killing damage is crippled, severed, or destroyed. Any further damage to the location transfers directly to the torso, reflecting blood loss and shock. When the head or torso is filled with Killing, you die.

By the way, if it's not a stand-up fight—if the victim is helpless or surprised—don't bother with all this. The GM may just say the victim is dead or unconscious, head or torso filled with Shock or Killing damage. There should be an attack roll only if there's a substantial chance things could go wrong.

### Armor and Penetration

A Light Armor Rating (LAR) such as from a helmet has two effects. First, it reduces all Shock damage from a hit to a single point. Second, it turns one point of Killing damage into Shock for each point of the Light Armor Rating.

A Heavy Armor Rating (HAR) such as from tank plating or a stone wall reduces the rolled Width of every attack by one per point of HAR. If that reduces the Width to 1 or less, the attack fails to inflict any damage.

Penetrating weapons such as bazookas and grenades reduce HAR by one per point of the weapon's Penetration rating. They ignore LAR altogether.

location. The damage is resolved as if the attack had a Width of only 1.

Furthermore, each enemy in the target area who tries to do anything except hiding behind cover must make a Cool+Mental Stability roll or suffer Battle Fatigue.

### Area

An explosive weapon has an Area rating. Every target within the blast radius (usually 10 yards) takes 2 points of Shock to every hit location from concussion, and must roll 1d per point of the Area rating. Each die indicates a hit location that takes 1 point of Killing damage from shrapnel. The main target of the attack also takes the normal weapon damage. In an enclosed space the GM may wish to double all the damage from an Area weapon.

Heavy armor blocks all the concussion and fragmentation damage of an explosion's Area damage—unless of course the blast's Penetration reduces the HAR to zero.

### Squad Attacks

This is an option for the GM. Want to have a squad of soldiers attack without having to roll a dice pool for every single member? Just roll a single dice pool of 1d per combatant. That's the squad's dice pool. Every matching set that comes up counts as a successful attack or other action. If you get a Width of 4 or more, split

it into two separate actions. You don't need to announce a squad's plans in the Declare phase; just roll the dice and resolve each set as an action that makes sense for someone in that group.

### Ambush!

To set up an ambush, arrange your men and make a Brains+Tactics roll. The leader of the enemies gets a Brains+Tactics roll, too. Subtract the enemy's Height from yours. The difference in Heights is the number of surprise rounds that one side or the other gains. If your roll was higher, your side has surprise. If the enemy's roll was better, they outmaneuvered your ambush and they have surprise. A surprised character can only flee, cower, take cover, or stand gaping.

### Vehicle Hit Locations

Use the following hit locations for most ground vehicles. "Bottom" means tires or treads. "Top" means roof or turret. And so on. If the vehicle is armored, each location has a different HAR rating, usually a fraction of the highest rating listed (round down).

Typically five or more Killing damage leaves part of a vehicle inoperable. Shock does nothing.

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# Fox Hunt

## A ready-to-play *Godlike* adventure

by Shane Ivey

### GM Notes

It's early June, 1944. The Allied armies stationed in the United Kingdom have spent every one of the last few days waiting on tenterhooks. Would the invasion of Normandy finally launch or will it be delayed again?

At 0400 hours on June 5, Gen. Eisenhower made the call. The invasion would launch. For the rest of the day the great Allied war machine slowly lumbered to life.

For the men of your Talent commando team it's been more waiting, hour after hour. You've been smoking, sleeping, playing cards, surreptitiously drinking, and telling stories that all of you have told and heard a thousand times over the last year and a half of training. The time crawls by.

GM, this is a good time to encourage each player to say something about his or her character. If they're new characters, take a few minutes to introduce them.

- *What does the character talk about most? The character's motivations are a good cue.*
- *What was the character's life like back home?*
- *How does the character react to another character's stories or habits?*
- *Who's the character's best friend on the team?*
- *Who's his least favorite member of the team?*

If a character has 4 dice or more combined in Cool and Mental Stability, point out that he's remarkably cool in the face of looming danger. Otherwise, does the character keep up a brave face for the sake of himself and the team, or admit to being a little shaky?

If a player does a good job conveying a sense of the character's personality, award the character one bonus point of Will. If the exchange also plays into the character's core motivation, make it two points.

This process shouldn't take more than a minute or two for each player; maybe a little longer if they're all really enjoying it.

At last, late at night, the time comes. The squad loads onto a C-47 Skytrain transport plane. It rumbles up into the sky and carries them to what may be the mission of a lifetime.

**GODLIKE** is a roleplaying game about heroism. It's about being more than human and attempting to live up to that potential. It's set during the grim days of World War II. Players take the role of Allied soldiers called "Talents," blessed with impossible powers like teleportation, flight, or super-strength. In combat, the powers of even the greatest Talents are not enough to keep them from harm—each has some sort of weakness. It takes skill, luck and a level head to come out of the war in one piece, super-powers or not.

### BRIEFING

The team has a plum of a mission. Of course that means they're not allowed to talk about it to anyone or where anyone could possibly overhear, which is a shame.

They're going to kidnap Erwin Rommel.

Everyone knows Rommel is Hitler's commander for the German forces in Normandy. He spent a year and a half running roughshod over the British in North Africa, where he earned the nickname "The Desert Fox." Eventually the British put General Montgomery in charge and Rommel finally had an opponent worth fighting. The German forces in North Africa ran lower and lower on supplies and materiel and men, while the British got help from the United States. Then at the end of 1942 the Allies invaded French North Africa and drove east, pushing Rommel's exhausted forces out altogether by the summer of 1943. After brief commands in Italy and Greece, Rommel was put in charge of the defenses of Normandy in November, seven months ago.

Rommel may be one of Hitler's top men but he's no monster. They say he sent supplies to Allied field hospitals in North Africa and never treated prisoners badly—not even captured commandos, who Hitler loves to execute. Unlike Hitler's worst cronies, Rommel has the respect of the Allies.

And now the Allies have their eye on him. Allied intelligence learned that Rommel was back home in Germany on vacation for his wife's birthday. Even better, they've learned the route he plans to take back to Normandy and the timing of it. How they got those details is none of the TOG team's business. Significant looks hinted that Talents may have been involved.

The TOG team is to infiltrate Normandy and rendezvous with a British SOE agent who's been working with the French Resistance. They are to meet their contact in a village called La Frenaie. The commandos must persuade the agent and her friends—yes, the SOE agent is a dame—to guide them to an ambush spot. The less the SOE and especially the French know about the mission, the better.

The commandos have been told Rommel will be driving along a particular stretch of road (route nationale 24 bis, which runs through Argentan to the east and to the west all the way to Granville on the sea) at 0815 hours.

When Rommel's car drives by, the team must intercept it and capture the Desert Fox alive.

Finally they must carry him to an exfiltration point, a farmhouse about two miles away with only tiny villages nearby. If they are there at precisely 1330 hours, they will be brought back to England by Talent power with their prisoner. If they fail to make the exfiltration on time, they'll have to hike through German-infested countryside to the front lines to find help.

### THE TEAM

"Fox Hunt" includes six pregenerated Talents for player characters, members of a Talent Operation Group trained to use their strange powers on commando raids. This will be the team's first combat mission together after months of training. They dread it and they can't wait. If you use other characters, make sure one or two of them can speak French and all of them have at least 1d in Parachuting. If you have a large group and need details for more members, it won't take long to create them from scratch. Or pick some from "Miller's Hellions" (in the *Godlike* core rulebook and free at <http://gyg.ax/arcdream>) and say they're separated from their own unit and throwing in with the Bombers.

The text of this scenario refers to the TOG team members as men since historically such commandos and rangers in American forces were strictly men. It's entirely possible to include

a female player character such as an OSS agent or an SOE agent with Talent powers and similar training to the commandos.

A word about rank is in order. *Godlike* is a game with military themes. One player plays the team leader, a captain or lieutenant. Another player character is a sergeant, whose task is to make sure the leader's orders are carried out. The rest play privates or corporals who are expected to follow orders.

That runs counter to the grain of many roleplaying groups, since of course the players themselves are all equals and nobody ought to be bossing anybody else around. There are two key things to remember. First, the player who has the team leader should be giving orders in character but should be talking to the rest of the group about it out of character. Every player should have a say in the decision-making—even if their characters do not.

Second, there's often a world of difference between the orders that an officer gives and what a soldier actually does. Player characters are human beings and should not be suicidally brave—not without making a Cool+Mental Stability roll, anyway. And every player character ought to act according to his Motivations. Sometimes that means bending or ignoring orders.

Each character's skills list the skill's own dice and then the total dice pool, with the stat added, in parentheses.

## THE ENEMY

The mission takes place in a region that lacks heavy German presence. Large towns and some busy crossroads have guarded checkpoints, but enemy forces are expected to mostly be French militia employed by the Germans, not regular German soldiers. The militia or "*milice*" were largely recruited from French prisons after

## THE CONTACT

The team is to make contact with Lily Church-Carlisle, an agent of Britain's Special Operations Executive. Winston Churchill formed the SOE to send spies and saboteurs into Axis territory to "set Europe ablaze".

The squad was handed a four-year-old photo of Church-Carlisle to memorize—they cannot under any circumstances take it with them—and she didn't look like much of a spy or saboteur. The photo showed a petite, thin, vulnerable-looking girl, 19 years old and gorgeous.

She was a newlywed at the time. Her husband was a young businessman who worked in France. He remained in Paris handling his company's affairs one day too long after the German invasion of 1940. He was arrested and shot as a spy.

Lily Church-Carlisle coordinates the efforts of a French Resistance group in southern Normandy. She passes for a native and of course she does not use her real name. The commandos aren't told her alias. The SOE has told her to expect a rendezvous in a specific village on a specific night and to provide all possible assistance. The code word "**chocolat**", with the French pronunciation (three syllables, "ch" pronounced as "sh," with a silent "t") will identify the commandos to her.

the Germans took over; they're criminals, the more violent the better, offered amnesty for past crimes if they help the Gestapo detect and arrest spies and Resistance fighters. Many of them were fascists even before the Gestapo put them to work. As Frenchmen they are far more effective at their job than German police and soldiers, and they largely have carte blanche to abuse their authority and their countrymen and -women. Resistance fighters hate them even more passionately than they hate the Nazis.

## Scene 1 Some Foreign Field

If this were a film, we'd do a slow dissolve here to a dark field in rural France. The TOG commandos are regrouping and seeing what's left of their team. Things are in disarray.

A few hours before the Talents boarded one transport among the hundreds that were mustered and preparing for liftoff. Thousands of paratroopers were all around. The TOG team's plane stood out from the rest only because so few soldiers get aboard—just the nine or so commandos of the team rather than 15 to 18 paratroopers—and because "TOG 151" had been scrawled on the side in chalk.

The team's plane took to the sky at 2230 hours, part of the earliest wave. Most planes taking off in this wave carried pathfinder teams, airborne troops who would place transmitters and Holophane ground lights to guide the later planes to the drop zones. As the pathfinders loaded up, they waved goodbye and good luck to friends in the airborne regiments. The Talent commandos were strangers to them.

They were in the air for a long two and a half hours. It was far too noisy for conversation. Each man was lost in his own thoughts, waiting; some of them waiting for their first firefight, their first chance to take a bullet or be captured and shot by the Gestapo—assuming the pilots delivered them safely and the parachutes deployed properly.

The planes all turned to starboard after takeoff to approach Normandy from the west, hoping to confuse the enemy. After a while they came over land—the commandos could tell by the sound of anti-aircraft guns firing in the distance and shells exploding not far away among the planes.

Paratroopers filed out of the other planes. Their parachutes deployed and they drifted earthward as shells exploded around them. Their planes veered away, heading north to pick up another squad of men for another run.

Then the TOG team's plane was alone. The flak became more infrequent.

Then it was 0103 hours and the jump light flashed green. Time to go.

The officer leading the team jumped first. The men followed—the nearer they could land to the team leader, the better. The sergeant jumped last after seeing all the men off.

The men drifted down in the darkness and soon they tumbled to the earth, scattered more widely than they'd want.

How many players do you have at the table? That's how many members of the team are around after landing. The rest, NPCs, were scattered and couldn't be found in time. If a player character dies or is crippled in play, the GM might allow a lost NPC to show up as a replacement. Or the player can take the role of a Resistance fighter once they meet them.

Each player must make three rolls to gauge his or her character's condition as the team gathers around their leader and prepares to set out.

First, call for Cool+Mental Stability rolls. Each man who fails lost a point of Will when he jumped. A failure where all the dice are 3 or lower means the commando had a full Battle Fatigue breakdown. That commando lost self-control and half his Will points as the sergeant shoved him screaming out the door. As play begins the commando has regained his control but is still pale and very shaken.

Next, each commando must roll 1d for each primary weapon and support weapon and for certain other items. If the roll is unlucky, the weapon or item snapped off its straps with the impact of the parachute opening and fell into the darkness, never to be seen again. The odds of this depend on the weapon.

M1 Carbine	1 in 10
M1A1 Thompson submachine gun	1 in 10
Pack or medic's bag (attached to the leg for the jump):	2 in 10
Bazooka	3 in 10
Satchel of bazooka rockets	3 in 10
Backpack radio (attached to the operator's right leg for the jump)	7 in 10

Finally each character must roll Coordination+Parachuting. With a success the commando landed safely. With a failure the commando took two Shock to each hit location in a rough landing. If it fails and all the dice are lower than 6, the commando also took 4 Area dice in damage—each die indicates a hit location that took a point of Killing damage as the commando slammed into a tree or rocks. By the time play begins, half the Shock damage has healed. The medic should attempt first aid to stabilize any injuries with Killing damage.

The commandos gathered their parachutes up and concealed them, then set sentries and got their bearings. After a brief wait for stragglers, it's time to set out.

It's 0130 hours.



## Bocage

The team has landed in Normandy's famous bocage: pastures and little fields separated by rough stone walls or by tall berms of earth with shrubs, weeds and trees growing out of them. American officers called these "hedgerows." Simple hedgerows would have been easier to navigate. The walls and berms are mostly three or four feet tall and some are up to six feet tall, not counting the bushes and trees. Even on the shorter ones, vegetation usually blocks line of sight completely.

Paths run between farms and from farms to the wider roads that run between villages. Typically these hedges line either side so that many of these paths feel more like overgrown tunnels.

In a fight, taking cover on the other side of a berm or wall calls for a Body+Climb roll instead of attacking or doing something else. If it succeeds, it counts as a defensive roll (use the rules for taking cover with Dodge). If it fails, the character gets no protection immediately but reaches the other side at the end of the round. If it fails and all dice are 5 or lower, the character slips and falls and must try again next round. A berm, a little wall, or a small tree counts as HAR 1.

A thick tree is HAR 2.

## Scene 2 Into the Fog

The team leader (or anyone he designates) can consult maps and landmarks that they saw from the air and try to ascertain their location and the route to their first destination. This will call for a Brains+Map Reading roll—but do not make this roll yet.

When the time comes, one other character can assist the roll using Brains+Map Reading; or a flying character can use Brains+Navigation (Sea/Air). This doesn't require a roll. If the assistant has a dice pool of 4 or 5 dice, that gives the primary map reader a +1d bonus; if the assistant

has 6 dice or more, that's worth a +2d bonus.

Trying to figure out their location and the right path takes 10 minutes. If they take twice as long, they gain a +1d bonus. If they take three times as long, they gain a +2d bonus.

We'll make the roll shortly to see whether the map reading was in fact accurate.

The team must reach the village of La Frenaie, about eight miles west of Argentan.

Argentan is a town with a population of about 7,000 on the Orne River.

The Orne leads north to the English Channel (and a critical battle for the bridge in Operation Deadstick) but there are lots of Germans along the way. Allied bombers struck the Argentan train station yesterday and will keep hitting it today and tomorrow.

La Frenaie is a tiny farming village, population 300 including the nearby countryside.

The Talents must travel overland to get there, avoiding French civilians and enemy patrols and avoiding getting drawn into combat. They must keep their presence a secret as long as possible.

If they set out about 0130 hours, they have just under seven hours until Rommel's car passes their assigned interception point. To do that, they must find their SOE and French Resistance contacts to serve as guides. There's no way the Americans by themselves can find the right part of the right road in the dark in time.

In the trek, each character who's carrying an extra load (a support weapon, ammunition for a support weapon, a radio) must attempt a Body+Endurance roll. If it fails, the group must slow down or leave him behind—unless they drop the extra weight or another character can keep the exhausted one going with a Command+Leadership or Command+Inspire roll. Another character can take the exhausted one's load but then must roll Body+Endurance or face the same trouble.

To keep the group on the path that he picked earlier, the team leader must make a Brains+Navigation (Land) roll.

After all that, they learn whether they were going in the right direction in the first place. Now the team leader must make that belated Brains+Map Reading roll that you figured out earlier. If it fails, they waste time figuring out landmarks and reorienting themselves.

The time it takes them to reach La Frenaie depends on their endurance and navigation while moving, on their map reading after they landed, and on how close to the target the team leader landed in the first place.

The base travel time is 60 minutes. If the team failed the Map Reading roll, add 60 minutes. If the team failed the Navigation roll, add 60 minutes. If the team must slow for an exhausted commando, add 60 minutes.

This all assumes that the commandos stick to the fields and little paths, which involves a good bit of climbing over bocage and shaking mud and cow patties from their boots. The advantage to that is that they are unlikely to encounter anyone.

If they take the roads despite the danger of patrols and checkpoints, that halves the travel time.

## Scene 3 The Watchers

On the way to La Frenaie, the party might encounter a pair of figures, civilians, sitting on a stone wall in the moonlight. It's a mother and young son listening to the sound of distant anti-aircraft guns and watching for airplanes overhead. Shaggy cows stand still and quiet in a little field.

If the commandos stayed off the roads, they spot the strangers from a distance at the other end of a field. The team leader can attempt to get everyone out of sight and then move around the watchers without being spotted. The roll is either Coordination+Stealth or Command+Leadership, whichever has the smaller dice pool. That



adds (5 – Width) x 10 minutes to the travel time (so if Width is 2, it adds 30 minutes).

If the commandos took the roads, the strangers and the soldiers see each other at the same time. The strangers both hurry into a nearby farmhouse.

If the commandos approach the strangers, they find that they are civilians, a boy and his mother. Recognizing their uniforms as Americans, the boy is enthusiastic and the woman is horrified. She attempts to flee without speaking to them. She fears reprisals from the Germans and their collaborators.

Unless the commandos are deliberately quiet, other locals in nearby houses bar the windows and blow out the candles when they hear armed strangers with foreign accents.

The civilians are Lena Debussy and her son Cyrano. Talking to them can help the team reach their destination faster but raises the risk that word of their presence gets out too soon.

Convincing Lena to help (*Cyrano is all for it but obeys his mother*) requires Inspiration, Intimidation, or an overt threat of violence. Their help cuts 30 minutes from the time it takes to reach *La Frenaie*. Lena begs the soldiers to forget that they ever met and then she hurries Cyrano into the safety of their home.

## Scene 4 La Frenaie

However long it takes, the commandos finally reach *La Frenaie*. It's still night and the village—no more than a dozen buildings—is very dark. If any lights or fires are lit inside buildings, the Talents can't tell. Curtains are drawn tight to block light and reduce the risk of bombing.

Posters on the walls of village buildings warn in French and English that foreign parachutists and commandos, even in uniform, will be shot

as spies—and so will any who aid them.

*La Frenaie* surrounds a single crossroads. On the four corners are a petrol station with a garage, a café/tavern, a general shop, and a small church with a graveyard and a tiny, one-bedroom rectory. A modest town hall is the biggest building, not far from the intersection. A tiny schoolhouse, with a leafy yard surrounded by a wrought-iron fence, stands across the street from town hall. A traditional farmers' market gathers on Saturdays in the center of town. *La Frenaie* is surrounded by farms that are locally famous for their tasty Limousin cattle.

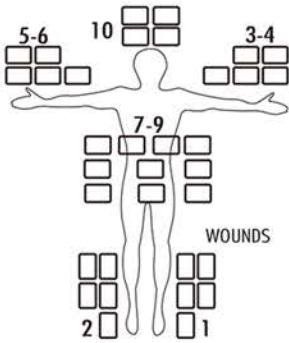
The commandos are to meet with SOE agent Lily Church-Carlisle and her contacts in the Resistance. The name of the village is all they have to go on. They'll need to search to find their allies.

The players must describe how they're entering town. The biggest and most important issue is whether they're overt or stealthy.



**SS-Sturmscharführer (Sgt.) Bernd Zimmerman**  
aka die Blendung ("Glare")

**BODY** ..... 2  
**COORDINATION** ..... 3  
**SENSE** ..... 3  
**BRAINS** ..... 2  
**COMMAND** ..... 2  
**COOL** ..... 2



**LANGUAGES**

German (native) 2 (4d)

**SKILLS**

Brawling 2 (4d)	Pistol 2 (5d)
Driving (Automobile) 3 (6d)	Radio Operation 1 (3d)
Endurance 2 (4d)	Rifle 2 (5d)
Explosives 1 (3d)	Running 2 (4d)
Grenade 2 (5d)	Sight 3 (6d)
Knife Fighting 2 (4d)	Stealth 2 (5d)
Machine Gun 1 (4d)	Submachine Gun 2 (5d)
Mental Stability 2 (4d)	Tactics 2 (4d)
Mortar 1 (3d)	

**BASE WILL** 8 **GODLIKE**

**WEAPONS**

• **MP40 submachine gun**  
 (Capacity 32, Spray 2, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 20/100)

• **P38 Walther semi-automatic pistol**  
 (Capacity 8, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 16/32)

• **SS dagger**  
 (Damage: Width in Shock and 1 Killing)

**TALENT POWERS**

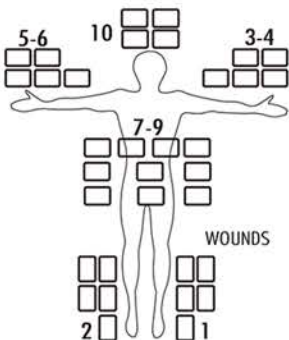
**Reflected Beam 4d**

(Qualities: Attacks, Useful Outside of Combat; Extras: Penetrating 5, Vicious 2; Flaws: Requires a mirror). **Description:** This power refracts light from a mirror into a deadly beam that does Width+2 in Killing and Width in Shock damage and ignores 5 levels of Heavy Armor.

**GODLIKE**

**SS-Sturmbannführer (Maj.) Lorenz Huber**  
aka die Kakophonie ("Cacophony")

**BODY** ..... 2  
**COORDINATION** ..... 2  
**SENSE** ..... 3  
**BRAINS** ..... 2  
**COMMAND** ..... 3  
**COOL** ..... 3



**LANGUAGES**

German (native) 2 (4d)

**SKILLS**

Brawling 1 (3d)	Mortar 2 (4d)
Driving (Automobile) 2 (4d)	Pistol 2 (4d)
Endurance 2 (4d)	Radio Operation 2 (4d)
Explosives 2 (4d)	Rifle 2 (4d)
Grenade 2 (4d)	Running 2 (4d)
Intimidation 3 (6d)	Sight 2 (4d)
Leadership 3 (6d)	Stealth 1 (3d)
Machine Gun 2 (4d)	Submachine Gun 2 (4d)
Mental Stability 3 (6d)	Tactics 2 (4d)

**BASE WILL** 9 **GODLIKE**

**WEAPONS**

• **MP40 submachine gun**  
 (Capacity 32, Spray 2, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 20/100)

• **P38 Walther semi-automatic pistol**  
 (Capacity 8, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 16/32)

• **SS dagger**  
 (Damage: Width in Shock and 1 Killing)

**TALENT POWERS**

**Echo Chamber 2hd**

(Qualities: Attacks, Robust, Useful Outside of Combat; Flaw: Attack does Shock damage only). **Description:** TA field from which sound cannot escape. From the outside it's nearly silent—whatever happens inside can be heard only with a Sense+Hearing roll whose Height is equal to or greater than the Echo Chamber's roll. On the inside it's jarring and stunning.

**GODLIKE**



### SS-Sturmscharführer (Sgt.) Horst Koch

aka die Vogelscheuche ("Scarecrow")

BODY	3
COORDINATION	3
SENSE	2
BRAINS	2
COMMAND	2
COOL	2

### LANGUAGES

German (native) 2 (4d), French 1 (3d)

### SKILLS

Brawling 3 (6d)	Mortar 1 (3d)
Driving (Automobile) 3 (6d)	Pistol 2 (5d)
Endurance 2 (5d)	Radio Operation 1 (3d)
Explosives 1 (3d)	Rifle 2 (5d)
Grenade 2 (5d)	Running 2 (4d)
Knife Fighting 2 (5d)	Sight 2 (5d)
Machine Gun 1 (4d)	Stealth 2 (5d)
Mental Stability 2 (4d)	Submachine Gun 2 (5d)

### WEAPONS

**MP40 submachine gun**  
(Capacity 32, Spray 2, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 20/100)

**P38 Walther semi-automatic pistol**  
(Capacity 8, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 16/32)

**SS dagger**  
(Damage: Width+1 in Shock and 1 Killing)

### TALENT POWERS

#### Alternate Form 2hd

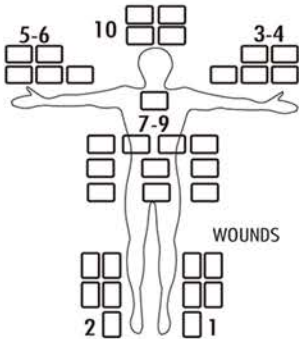
(Qualities: Attacks, Defends, Robust, Useful Outside of Combat). **Description:** The Scarecrow can transform into a literal scarecrow, all thick straw stuffed into SS uniform and burlap bags for hands and head. The alternate form has its own wound boxes and takes damage separately from his normal body. He can remain in scarecrow form until he chooses to change back, falls asleep or unconscious, runs out of Will points, or suffers enough damage to kill him in that form. If his scarecrow form is killed, he can't change back into it until he somehow accumulates 30 Will points to spend rebuilding it.

#### Light Armor level 2

(Qualities: Defends, Robust, Useful Outside of Combat; Extra: Hardened; Flaws: Gives no protection against Burn attacks, Attached to Alternate Form). **Description:** While in scarecrow form, die Vogelscheuche has a Light Armor Rating of 4. Every attack that hits him first has all its Shock damage reduced to 1, then has two points of Killing damage converted to Shock. His LAR is not affected by Penetrating weapons but offers no protection at all against Burn attacks.

#### Extra Tough level 4

(Qualities: Robust, Useful Outside of Combat; Flaw: Attached to Alternate Form). **Description:** While in scarecrow form, die Vogelscheuche has four extra wound boxes on every hit location.



BASE WILL 11 GODLIKE  
**Cygax**

GODLIKE  
**Cygax**

### SS-Untersturmführer (Lt.) Severin Schultz

aka den Schwarzenwald ("Black Woods")

BODY	2
COORDINATION	2
SENSE	2
BRAINS	3
COMMAND	2
COOL	3

### LANGUAGES

German (native) 3 (6d), English 1 (4d), French 1 (4d)

### SKILLS

Brawling 1 (3d)	Mortar 2 (4d)
Driving (Automobile) 2 (4d)	Pistol 2 (4d)
Endurance 2 (4d)	Radio Operation 3 (6d)
Explosives 2 (5d)	Rifle 2 (4d)
Grenade 2 (4d)	Running 2 (4d)
Intimidation 2 (4d)	Sight 2 (4d)
Leadership 2 (4d)	Stealth 1 (3d)
Machine Gun 2 (4d)	Submachine Gun 2 (4d)
Mental Stability 3 (6d)	Tactics 2 (5d)

### WEAPONS

**MP40 submachine gun**  
(Capacity 32, Spray 2, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 20/100)

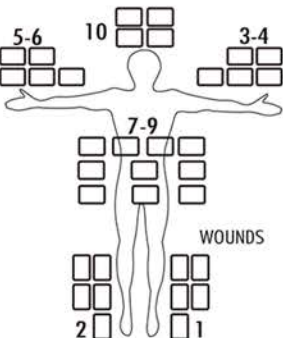
**P38 Walther semi-automatic pistol**  
(Capacity 8, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 16/32)

**SS dagger**  
(Damage: Width+1 in Shock and 1 Killing)

### TALENT POWERS

#### Animate Trees 6d

(Qualities: Attacks, Useful Outside of Combat, Robust; Extra: Spray; Flaws: If/Then: Only if a tree is next to the target, If/Then: It has to be a big tree). **Description:** Schultz can animate any big tree to smash and grab enemies, bend down to provide cover, or otherwise change shape. He can't make a tree uproot itself. The "Spray" extra means that when he makes a tree attack, it hits once for every set that he rolls with his power.



BASE WILL 10 GODLIKE  
**Cygax**

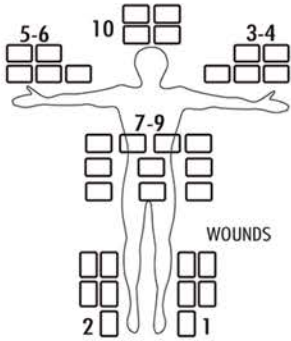
GODLIKE  
**Cygax**



### SS-Hauptsturmführer (Capt.) Achim Keller

aka das Duplikat ("Duplicate")

- BODY ..... 2
- COORDINATION ..... 2
- SENSE ..... 2
- BRAINS ..... 3
- COMMAND ..... 2
- COOL ..... 2



### LANGUAGES

English 3 (6d), French 3 (6d), German (native) (6d), Italian 2 (5d), Russian 2 (5d)

### SKILLS

Bluff 2 (4d)	Mental Stability 2 (4d)
Brawling 1 (3d)	Mortar 1 (3d)
Driving (Automobile) 1 (3d)	Pistol 2 (4d)
Endurance 2 (4d)	Radio Operation 3 (6d)
Explosives 2 (5d)	Rifle 1 (3d)
Grenade 2 (4d)	Running 2 (4d)
Intimidation 2 (4d)	Sight 2 (4d)
Leadership 2 (4d)	Stealth 1 (3d)
Lie 2 (4d)	Submachine Gun 2 (4d)
Machine Gun 1 (3d)	Tactics 3 (6d)

BASE WILL 6 GODLIKE  
**Cygax**

### WEAPONS

- **P38 Walther semi-automatic pistol**  
(Capacity 8, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 16/32)
- **SS dagger**  
(Damage: Width+1 in Shock and 1 Killing)

### TALENT POWERS

**Dead Ringer**  
4d+1wd

(Qualities: Useful Outside of Combat, Robust).

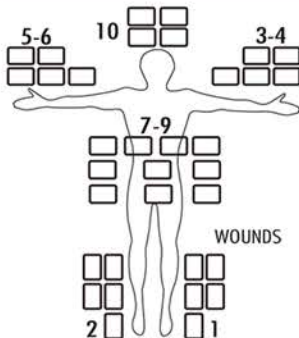
**Description:** Keller can change his appearance to a perfect imitation of someone else. It lasts until he chooses to deactivate it, he runs out of Will points, or another Talent bests him in a contest of Wills. If he takes damage, he must roll Dead Ringer to maintain the illusion. Other Talents can tell by looking at him that he's using a Talent power. Keller is presently impersonating Rommel.



### SS-Obersturmführer (1st Lt.) Helfried Weber

aka die Kolibri ("Hummingbird")

- BODY ..... 2
- COORDINATION ..... 2
- SENSE ..... 2
- BRAINS ..... 2
- COMMAND ..... 2
- COOL ..... 3



### LANGUAGES

German (native) 2 (4d), English 1 (4d), French 1 (4d)

### SKILLS

Brawling 2 (4d)	Pistol 2 (4d)
Endurance 2 (4d)	Radio Operation 2 (4d)
Explosives 2 (4d)	Rifle 2 (4d)
Grenade 2 (4d)	Running 1 (3d)
Intimidation 2 (4d)	Sight 2+2hd (4d+2hd)
Leadership 1 (3d)	Stealth 2 (4d)
Machine Gun 1 (3d)	Submachine Gun 2 (4d)
Mental Stability 3 (6d)	Tactics 2 (4d)
Mortar 2 (4d)	
Navigation (Sea/Air) 2 (4d)	

BASE WILL 7 GODLIKE  
**Cygax**

### WEAPONS

- **P38 Walther semi-automatic pistol**  
(Capacity 8, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 16/32)
- **SS dagger**  
(Damage: Width+1 in Shock and 1 Killing)

### TALENT POWERS

**Flight 6d**

(Qualities: Defensive, Useful Outside of Combat, Robust).

**Description:** Weber can fly at about 70 mph (105 yards per round). If he wants to attack someone while flying he must roll multiple actions, one for Flight and one for the attack.

**Super Speed 6d**

(Qualities: Defensive, Useful Outside of Combat, Robust; Flaws: Attached to Flight, Slow Braking). **Description:** Weber can accelerate his flight tremendously, up to about 450 mph (675 yards per round). The "Slow Braking" flaw means he needs a full round to stop. If he's going full speed, he needs 675 yards of braking space.

**Hyperskill**  
Sight +2hd





# Typical Militiaman

BODY	2
COORDINATION	2
SENSE	2
BRAINS	2
COMMAND	2
COOL	2

SKILLS	
Mostly 1 (3d)	

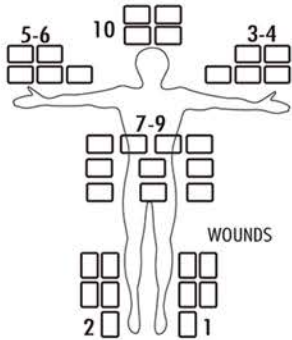
### WEAPONS

**Bolt-action 1886 or 1907 rifle**  
(Capacity 8, Slow 1, Damage: Width+2 in Killing and Shock, Range 400/1,800)

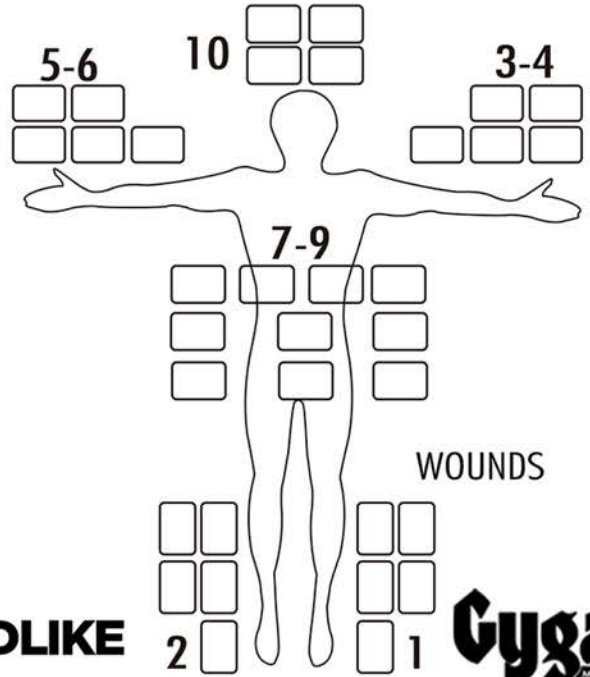
**Shotgun**  
(Capacity 1, 2 or 5; Spray 2 at short range with each shot due to the spread of pellets, but it can't be used for suppressing fire; Damage: Width in Killing and Shock, Range 30/60)

**Submachine gun**  
(Capacity 32, Spray 3, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 15/100)

**.32 revolver**  
(Capacity 6, Damage: Width in Killing and Shock, Range 15/30)



# hit location and wound boxes



# Typical Resistance Fighter

BODY	2
COORDINATION	2
SENSE	2
BRAINS	2
COMMAND	2
COOL	2

SKILLS	
Stealth 2 (4d)	Mostly 1 (3d)
Lie 2 (4d)	
others 1 (3d)	

### WEAPONS

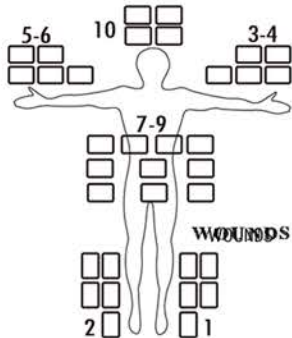
**Shotgun**  
(Capacity 1, 2 or 5; Spray 2 at short range with each shot due to the spread of pellets, but it can't be used for suppressing fire; Damage: Width in Killing and Shock, Range 30/60)

**Submachine gun**  
(Capacity 32, Spray 3, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 15/100)

**P08 Luger semi-automatic pistol**  
(Capacity 8, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 16/32)

**.32 revolver**  
(Capacity 6, Damage: Width in Killing and Shock, Range 15/30)

**Bolt-action 1886 or 1907 rifle**  
(Capacity 8, Slow 1, Damage: Width+2 in Killing and Shock, Range 400/1,800)



# Resistance fighters and their weapons:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Bel, Annette</b> , age 23<br>(submachine gun)  | <b>Laurette, Anne</b> , age 24<br>(revolver)      |
| <b>Bertram, Yves</b> , age 21<br>(shotgun)        | <b>Imbert, Jean</b> , age 15<br>(shotgun)         |
| <b>Cade, Sophie</b> , age 29<br>(revolver)        | <b>Le Jeune, Louis</b> , age 14<br>(1907 rifle)   |
| <b>Coty, Danielle</b> , age 33<br>(revolver)      | <b>Leon, Albert</b> , age 20<br>(1907 rifle)      |
| <b>Erni, Louise</b> , age 23<br>(Luger)           | <b>Leon, Jean-Pierre</b> , age 21<br>(1886 rifle) |
| <b>Faussie, Jean</b> , age 17<br>(submachine gun) | <b>Nord, Julian</b> , age 22<br>(revolver)        |
| <b>Forestier, Yves</b> , age 21<br>(Luger)        | <b>Queinnec, Albert</b> , age 20<br>(revolver)    |
| <b>Gent, Marie</b> , age 44<br>(revolver)         | <b>Robin, Elise</b> , age 31<br>(revolver)        |
| <b>Giron, Henri</b> , age 16<br>(submachine gun)  | <b>Rosin, Julie</b> , age 26<br>(revolver)        |



### Resistance Leaders

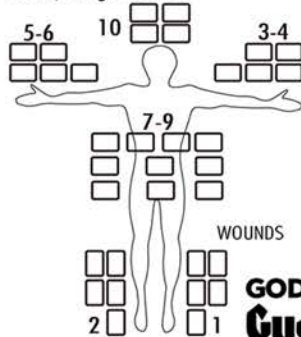
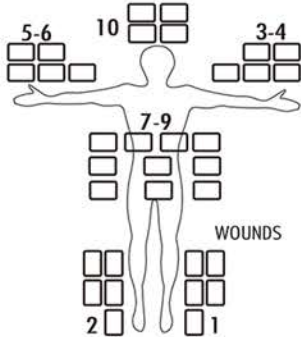
## Jean and Violette

**BODY** ..... 2  
**COORDINATION** ..... 2  
**SENSE** ..... 2  
**BRAINS** ..... 2  
**COMMAND** ..... 2  
**COOL** ..... 2

SKILLS	
Knife-Fighting 2 (4d) others 1 (3d)	Mostly 2 (4d)

### WEAPONS

**Sten submachine gun**  
 (Capacity 32, Spray 3, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 15/100)



## Focke-Wulf FW-190 Fighter

Heavy Armor Rating 2  
 Structural Points 60  
 Flight Speed 6d (Top Speed ~426 mph)  
 Maneuver Difficulty Rating 2

### GUNS

**Two fixed machine guns**  
 (attack value 2d, damage: Width + 2 in Shock and Killing)  
**Four fixed 20mm cannons**  
 (attack value 9d, Area 1, Penetration 2, damage: Width + 5 in Killing)

### NOTES

See the sourcebook Will to Power for air combat rules and details on such ratings as Structural Points and the Flight Speed dice pool. Otherwise treat attacks against the fighter as ordinary attacks on a vehicle, but at -2d for its speed. It is beyond maximum effective range for small arms except during a round when it's plunging in to attack. The co-pilot fires either the cannons or the machine guns each round.

### PILOT SKILLS

Mental Stability 2 (4d)  
 Pilot 3 (6d)  
 Machine Gun 2 (5d)  
 Radio Operation 2 (4d)  
 Sight 2 (4d)

### CO-PILOT SKILLS

Mental Stability 2 (4d)  
 Machine Gun 2 (5d)  
 Pilot 2 (5d)  
 Radio Operation 2 (4d)  
 Sight 2 (4d)



## Horch 853 Staff Car

Heavy Armor Rating 0  
 Maximum Speed 80 mph  
 Crew 1  
 Passengers 3  
 Weight 6,225 lbs (with driver and two passengers)

### IN THE FIRST CAR

**Driver:** SS-Sturmscharführer (Sgt.) Bernd Zimmermann, aka die Blendung ("Glare")  
**Front Seat:** SS-Sturmbannführer (Maj.) Lorenz Huber, aka die Kakophonie ("Cacophony")  
**Back Seat:** Generalfeldmarschall (Field Marshal) Erwin Rommel, aka der Wüstenfuchs ("The Desert Fox")

### IN THE SECOND CAR

**Driver:** SS-Sturmscharführer (Sgt.) Horst Koch, aka die Vogelscheuche ("Scarecrow")  
**Front Seat:** SS-Untersturmführer (Lt.) Severin Schultz, aka den Schwarzenwald ("Black Woods")  
**Back Seat:** SS-Hauptsturmführer (Capt.) Achim Keller, aka das Duplikat ("Duplicate")



## BMW R75 Motorcycle with Sidecar

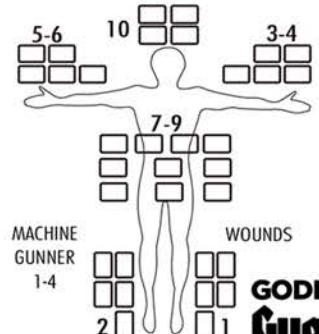
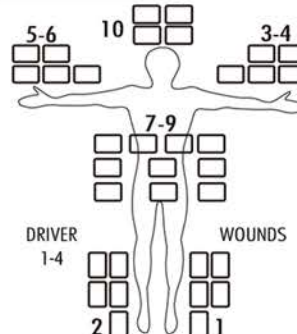
Heavy Armor Rating 0  
 Maximum Speed 57 mph  
 Crew 2 (Heer)  
 Weight 1,300 lbs (with driver and gunner)

### GUNS

**Sidecar-mounted MG34 machine gun**  
 (Capacity 50, Spray 4, Damage: Width+2 in Killing and Shock, Range 200/2,000)  
**MP40 submachine gun**  
 (Capacity 32, Spray 2, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 20/100)  
**P38 Walther semi-automatic pistol**  
 (Capacity 8, Damage: Width+1 in Killing and Width in Shock, Range 16/32)

### CREW SKILLS

Driving (Motorcycle) 2 (4d)  
 Machine Gun 2 (4d)  
 Mental Stability 2 (4d)  
 Submachine Gun 2 (4d)  
 Sight 2 (4d)





# Lily Church-Carlisle

**GODLIKE**

**BODY** ..... 1  
**COORDINATION** ..... 2  
**SENSE** ..... 3  
**BRAINS** ..... 3  
**COMMAND** ..... 3  
**COOL** ..... 4

## LANGUAGES

English (native) 3 (6d), Czech 1 (4d), Dutch 1 (4d),  
 French 4 (7d), German 2 (5d), Greek 1 (4d),  
 Italian 1 (4d), Spanish 1 (4d)

## SKILLS

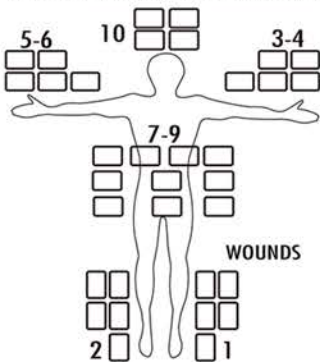
Antitank Rocket 1 (3d)	Lie 4 (8d)
Bluff 4 (8d)	Mental Stability 4 (8d)
Brawl 1 (2d)	Parachuting 2 (4d)
Cryptography 2 (5d)	Pistol 2 (4d)
Dodge 2 (4d)	Navigation (Land) 2 (5d)
Driving (Automobile) 2(4d)	Resistance 4 (8d)
Endurance 3 (4d)	Rifle 1 (3d)
Grenade 2 (4d)	Run 2 (3d)
Health 2 (3d)	Seduction 2 (5d)
Hearing 2 (5d)	Sight 1 (4d)
Inspire 3 (6d)	Stealth 3 (5d)
Intimidation 2 (5d)	Submachine Gun 2 (4d)
Knife-Fighting 3 (4d)	Tactics 1 (4d)
Leadership 3 (6d)	

## WEAPONS

**Sten submachine gun**  
 (Capacity 32, Spray 3, Damage:  
 Width+1 in Killing and Width in  
 Shock, Range 15/100)

**P08 Luger semi-automatic  
 pistol**  
 (Capacity 8, Damage:  
 Width+1 in Killing and Width in  
 Shock, Range 16/32)

**Kitchen knife**  
 (Damage: Width in Shock  
 and 1 Killing)



# Generalfeldmarschall (Field Marshal) Erwin Rommel

aka der Wüstenfuchs ("The Desert Fox")

**GODLIKE**

**BODY** ..... 2  
**COORDINATION** ..... 3  
**SENSE** ..... 3  
**BRAINS** ..... 4  
**COMMAND** ..... 5  
**COOL** ..... 4

## LANGUAGES

English 1 (5d), French 1 (5d), German (native) 4 (8d),  
 Italian 1 (5d)

## SKILLS

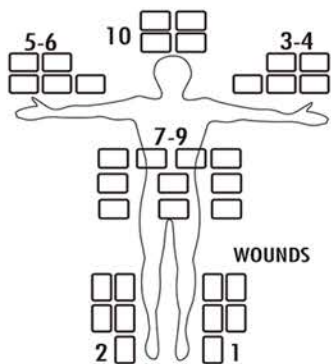
Brawling 2 (4d)	Mortar 2 (6d)
Driving (Tank) 3 (6d)	Pistol 2 (5d)
Endurance 4 (6d)	Radio Operation 2 (6d)
Explosives 1 (5d)	Rifle 2 (5d)
Grenade 2 (5d)	Running 2 (4d)
Inspire 5 (10d)	Sight 3 (6d)
Intimidation 3 (7d)	Stealth 4 (7d)
Leadership 5 (10d)	Submachine Gun 2 (5d)
Machine Gun 2 (5d)	Tactics 5 (9d)
Mental Stability 5 (9d)	

## WEAPONS

**P38 Walther  
 semi-automatic pistol**  
 (Capacity 8, Damage:  
 Width+1 in Killing and Width  
 in Shock, Range 16/32)

**SS dagger**  
 (Damage: Width in Shock  
 and 1 Killing)

**BASE WILL** 9



If the commandos are **overt**—if they stroll into town as a group on the main road—they find their allies quickly because a horrified Resistance fighter hisses to them to come into the schoolhouse before they’re seen.

If they are **stealthy**, call for a Coordination+Stealth roll by each commando who is sent to scout the town. If one succeeds, he spots a Resistance guard in the deep shadows of the trees of the schoolhouse yard. If the commandos open fire without approaching, the guard runs for the safety of the schoolhouse but does not shoot back. (*If they kill him, play it out! That will make things much, much more tense with the Resistance leaders.*)

If they don’t spot the guard, he spots the commandos first, recognizes that their uniforms are not German or **milice**, and hisses softly to get their attention.

If the commandos sent a scouting group in and they failed more than two Stealth rolls, or if the team went in overtly, they’re also spotted by another resident who looks out of a curtained window to see what’s making the noise. Each scout can roll Sense+Sight to notice that they’ve been noticed. The observer, Frédéric Cheval, owns the petrol station and lives in an apartment above it. He’s a 45-year-old widower who seems to dislike everyone.

What they do about their observer is up to them, but the Resistance won’t go along with murdering him or interrogating him roughly. They might go along with abducting and imprisoning him for a few days, if the player characters make a convincing case. In truth that wouldn’t be a bad idea. He’s secretly an informer who will warn the milice about the commandos at first light.

The school yard is surrounded by a wrought-iron fence three feet tall with gates in front and back.

If the guard hears the code-word “**chocolat**,” or otherwise is convinced they’re on his side, he opens the back gate (carefully oiled to keep it from creaking) and gestures the commandos inside.

The guard is a young man, 16 years old, named Henri Girond. He’s unarmed. He would have preferred carrying a weapon but his leaders said his function was purely to be lookout. They wanted no chance that he would fire a gun and attract attention from the militia or informers.

Inside, the schoolhouse is dark and the curtains are drawn. Another guard is posted inside the door, a 25-year-old woman named Annette Bel, a schoolteacher. She too is unarmed. She guides the commandos to a locked door to a stairway. After the outside door is shut, she unlocks this door and opens it. It’s dark inside, too—but they can see light coming from the cracks around another door at the bottom of the stairs.

In the basement, lanterns flicker. Twenty women and young men have gathered there, waiting. Michelin maps on the walls are marked with the sites of guardposts, barracks and depots. Small stoves spread warmth and the smell of gravy, potatoes, and hot milk.

The commandos recognize **Lily Church-Carlisle** in the crowd.

## Scene 5 Rendez-Vous

Lily Church-Carlisle is a few years older than in her photo, now 23, but if anything she’s even better-looking with lines of care and worry. She has shrewd, hard eyes. She is unflappably level-headed. She can put on the charm when she needs it but she’s far from a helpless flower.

She has learned deep ruthlessness over the last few years.

These French Resistance fighters are properly known as the FFI, or *Forces Françaises de l’Interieur*. Eleven of them are boys or men, ages 14 to 22, who have cleverly avoided being rounded up and shipped out as forced labor like nearly every other man their age. The other nine Resistance fighters are women, 20 to 30 years old. Four of those are schoolteachers who can get around with minimal interference from the Germans. The others are farmers or shopkeepers whose brothers, husbands and fathers have been conscripted or killed.

The resistance fighters are haphazardly armed. They have revolvers,

a couple of shotguns and hunting rifles, three Sten submachine guns and one American M3 submachine gun, the so-called “grease gun.”

The Resistance leaders are **Jean and Violette Auroch**, a brother and sister from a nearby farm, ages 23 and 26. Both are sturdy, plain, and unexceptional but for a charismatic determination to overthrow the invaders.

The Resistance fighters offer a rough meal of bread, potatoes, gravy, boiled milk and boiled water. It’s the best they have. There’s no coffee, tea or beef; the Germans seize it all.

There’s friction among the Resistance fighters along political lines. Jean Auroch and several others are staunch Communists. Jean’s sister Violette and many of the others are more conservative Catholics. The conservatives see Gen. Charles de Gaulle, long exiled to Britain despite the Allied conquest of French colonial territory in North Africa, as their unquestioned leader. Church-Carlisle has been keeping the conflicts under control—she is a moderating influence on Jean—but the TOG team’s presence complicates matters. Jean sees it as a chance to strike at the Germans aggressively.

It’s also clear to any commando who pays attention that there’s romantic tension between Lily and Jean. She has no intention of letting it develop into anything further. He plans to bring her around. She likes and respects Jean and he has some rustic rakish charm; in time he might succeed.

But Lily may be attracted to one of the commandos, too, perhaps because it gives her a reason to forestall the complications of a relationship with Jean; see the “Summer Romance” section to explore that possibility.

## Recruiting

Once the commandos have eaten, Jean and Violette want details about the mission. In fact, they insist. If they aren’t truthfully told details, they might refuse to help. The Americans are going to attempt their mission and leave, after all; these people must remain here to face the consequences and keep up the fight.

Deceiving them is tough. Any commando who knows what’s being said must make a Cool+Lie roll to deliberately mislead the Resistance fighters. An outright lie offends the Resistance fighters more than secrecy—it compounds distrust with contempt.

If the commandos tell only the time and place of their objective, not its nature, the Resistance fighters push for more.

The players can attempt skill rolls to win the Resistance fighters over. Which skill applies depends on the player’s approach: Command+Inspire for an upbeat approach; Command+Leadership to emphasize duty and the greater good; Brains+Language (*French*) to win

Success in one attempt Full cooperation, no more questions asked. The whole Resistance cell will give whatever help they can as guides, decoys, or fighters.

Success in two attempts Half of the Resistance fighters, led by Jean and Violette, will give whatever help they can. The rest lack confidence in the Americans and will not go on unless told that the target is Rommel. The fact that some refuse to help highlights political differences in the Resistance fighters. The communists follow the firebrand Jean. The conservatives don’t—except for Violette, his sister.

Success in three attempts Half the Resistance fighters (communists led by Jean, and Violette) will give partial help to the Americans. They’ll act as guides but won’t risk their necks as decoys or fighters. Telling them the target is Rommel persuades that half to cooperate fully. The others still won’t help.

Success in four attempts Only Jean and Violette agree to act as guides. If told the target is Rommel, they’ll risk their lives to help in any way they can.

Beyond four attempts The fighters will not help at all—only Lily agrees to help them, and that’s over the objections of her French friends—unless told that the target is Rommel. In that case, Jean and Violette agree to act as guides.

their trust and respect by speaking their own language. Having to talk through an interpreter incurs a -1d penalty.

Any attempt to use Command+Intimidation backfires — these people face the *milice* and the Gestapo every day. A Command+Intimidation attempt has a Difficulty of 4 and raises the Difficulty of all future attempts by all commandos by 2, or by 4 if the roll succeeds and the Resistance fighters are frightened.

Getting caught in a lie increases the Difficulty of all future attempts by all commandos by 3.

Bringing them around probably takes multiple attempts. Play this out with the Resistance fighters' arguments for more information and their threats to refuse to help.

Get the players to describe the new tack they're taking with each new attempt.

Add up the cumulative Widths of the commandos' successful rolls. Each failure subtracts 1 Width from the total. They need a total of 5 Width to get the fractious Resistance fighters to help.

More than one commando can roll at one time as they talk to different fighters. Each round of attempts takes five minutes. If they go 20 minutes without winning the Resistance fighters over, Jean Auroch loses patience and ends the discussion.

Otherwise, the quicker the commandos bring the fighters around, the more helpful they'll be.

## Dead or Alive?

If the Resistance fighters learn that an important German officerlet alone Rommel!—is the target, they are glad to help but carefully avoid promising to keep him alive. In fact they privately intend to murder the officer and all his men.

The TOG team's orders say to take Rommel alive. The Allies want him for intelligence and propaganda. Besides, he's known for sparing commandos and civilians, even Jews, and always made his men treat POWs well. The soldiers probably figure he deserves the same break. They all saw the posters in the village. They figure Rommel is the one German who would show mercy to the commandos if he caught them.

The Resistance wants Rommel dead. It's enough that he's a German general. If the argument gets bad, Lily Church-Carlisle sides with the recalcitrant Resistance fighters against the TOG team, regardless of her orders. She'll offer every assistance she can offer, but this is their country and she believes they have the right to decide what happens to invaders on their soil.

## Summer Romance

While they debate or during their hike, or any time there's a chance for conversation, Lily may find herself drawn to one of the commandos. In fact the scenario would play better for it.

Things turn that direction only if a player character deliberately tries to pursue

conversation with her. What she sees in him depends on the character. Maybe it's the commando's brashness; maybe it's his thoughtfulness; maybe it's his simplicity. Whatever it is, it's probably a quality that reminds her of her dead husband.

Let's be clear. There's no chance of a scandalous seduction in the schoolhouse. But perhaps she likes the commando, perhaps despite herself.

Ask the player if the commando in question is genuinely smitten with her, regardless of whether he acts on it. It's totally up to the player. If the answer is yes, the commando can take "Pursue Lily Church-Carlisle" or "Impress Lily" or "Make Lily fall in love with me" or something as a new motivation. From then on, anything that makes that character look good in Lily's eyes is worth a bonus point of Will. Anything that makes her think less of him costs him a point of Will.

For a smitten character, failing a Mental Stability roll due to Lily killing a prisoner in cold blood costs an extra point of Will for each murder.

Of course, let's not overlook the fact that Lily Church-Carlisle is traumatized by war. Her sensibilities have been hardened and blunted to allow for gruesome ruthlessness. Like so many people of her generation she is learning to compartmentalize her memories and the truth of her behavior and choices, perhaps never to speak of them aloud when the war is done. A relationship with her should be fraught and challenging and slow to develop. It might be a terrific roleplaying opportunity.

Naturally, Jean Auroch recognizes this budding relationship and resents it violently. If there's any chance of conflict between the commandos and Jean, it will focus on the character who's caught Lily's eye.

## Scene 6 Cross Country

According to the briefing, Rommel will be driving along a particular stretch of road (route nationale 24 bis, which runs through Argentan to the east and west all the way to Granville on the sea) at 0815 hours.

The more time they took in the earlier scenes, the less time they have to reach the destination and set up their ambush. It's only a mile away and with the Resistance as guides they make better progress than they did before—but it's still night, the blackout keeps all street lamps and houses dark, and this is countryside with thick overgrowth.

Ask the team leader how the commandos and the Resistance fighters are arrayed. Then privately ask each player whether his or her character is sticking carefully to the orders. If any are sent ahead as scouts, that will matter.

The base travel time is two hours if they have a Resistance fighter or Lily Church-Carlisle

as guide, going across country and through pastures. To save time they can march faster, but that requires a Body+Endurance roll from each commando. It's at Difficulty 3 for those carrying heavy gear or support weapons. If all succeed, they can make the trek in only one hour. The Resistance fighters are fresh and can keep up without having to roll.

If the commandos don't have a Resistance fighter or Lily as a guide, their leader must make a Brains+Navigation (Land) roll to get there. Each attempt takes two hours. They can push it with Body+Endurance rolls to halve the time, but only on one attempt.

To further save time, they can follow the roads and paths. That halves the time it takes but raises the risk of being spotted.

## La Milice

Along the way the commandos may encounter a patrol of the milice, the hated French militia. They are largely recruited from convicts who are promised freedom and luxury in return for tracking down saboteurs and spies. If the commandos manage to question any or eavesdrop on them, they learn that the militia was sent in force across this area just an hour ago. The Gestapo said there were reports of enemy commandos about.

### Taking the roads:

If the team took the roads to save time, their foremost elements encounter the *militia*, two dozen of them. (That's half of a larger group; the other half is a quarter mile away as part of the same sweep.) Each man or woman in the foremost element, whether that's a single scout or the whole group if all are together, may roll Sense+Hearing to hear the milice before they come into sight.

### Staying on the pastures:

If the team traveled across country, their scouts hear the militia at an intersection nearby without having to roll Sense+Hearing.

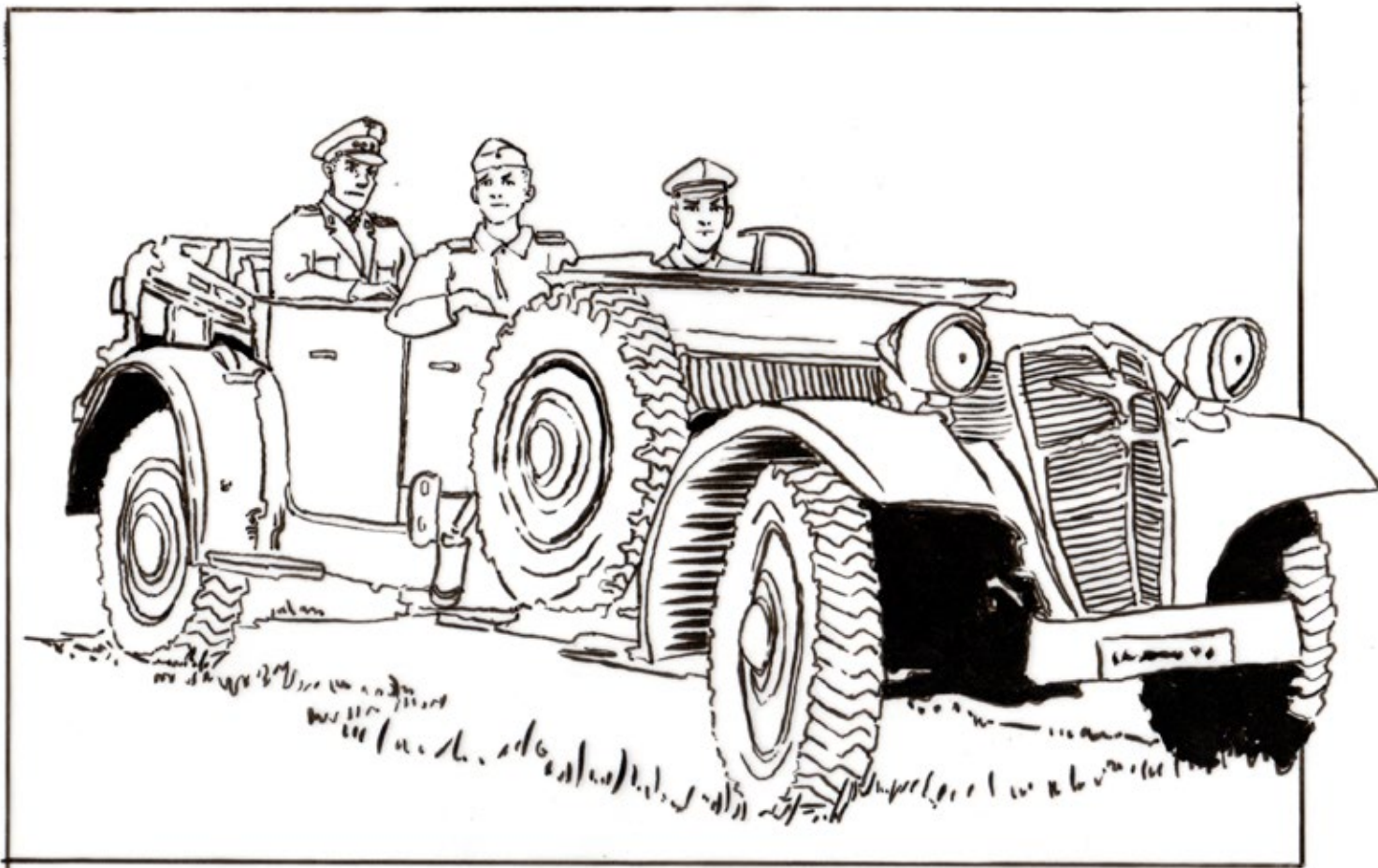
### If they hear the militia first:

If the scouts hear the *militia* before the militia spot or hear them, they can warn everyone to hide in drainage ditches or behind hedges before they're spotted.

The commandos and their guides can creep away without fighting the *militia*. This adds an hour to their travel time.

Or the commandos can creep up and attempt to capture or kill the militia without any shooting. That's much trickier. It calls for a Coordination+Stealth roll by every character creeping up. If any fails, roll one die. If it comes up equal to or higher than the number of dice in the character's Coordination+Stealth pool, a militiaman hears or sees them coming and opens fire.

If taken totally by surprise, the militiamen surrender—unless the commandos are



accompanied by Resistance fighters. Then one of the militiamen panics and assumes they're all about to be murdered. He opens fire unless he can be subdued by a melee attack with a Width greater than his gunshot's Width. If their Widths are equal, the attack with the greater Height goes first.

#### **If they don't hear the militia:**

If the Hearing rolls fail, the **milice** hear the commandos coming or spot them. They take cover behind berms and field walls and call out (in French) for the strangers to come over with their hands up or else.

If the **milice** see only one or two women, they can easily be convinced the girls are by themselves, having gotten lost trying to get home from an aunt's house. If the **milice** catch only one or two women and the rest of the commandos and Resistance fighters stay put, the women are taken away to the laughter of the militiamen and are not seen again in this operation. That costs each commando who fails a Cool+Mental Stability roll two points of Will per woman captured. The other Resistance fighters are grimly certain that the captured women will not give anything away. They might be freed when the militia are done with them.

If the milice see more than just a couple of women—or if they see any American soldiers in uniform—they assume it's a Resistance operation and attempt to round everyone up.

A couple fire their guns as a warning and as a signal to the rest of their band.

#### **Fighting the militia:**

The militiamen each wear a blue uniform coat, brown shirt, and a wide blue beret or a pre-war French Army helmet.

The **milice** carry a smattering of weapons, mostly revolvers, shotguns and old bolt-action rifles, but a couple carry German submachine guns.

If the **milice** encounter stiff resistance they break and flee, knowing the German Army will send dozens or hundreds of men the next day to root out the attackers and burn every farm around.

Fighting the **militia** and then recovering from it takes up at least 15 minutes. It might be more if the commandos pursue fleeing militia to keep them from reporting to the Gestapo. If they pursue fleeing **milice**, call for a Sense+Hearing or Sense+Sight roll for each pursuer against the militiaman's 3d Coordination+Stealth roll. Each attempt takes five minutes. If the militiaman's rolls accumulate two more Width than any pursuer's rolls, the militiaman escapes. If a pursuer accumulates two more Width than the militiaman, the militiaman is caught. A caught militiaman promptly attempts to surrender unless his captor is a lone woman or teenage boy, in which case he fights.

#### **The others:**

Remember the other half of the **militia** band, a quarter-mile away? They come running as soon as they hear a gunshot or even a good, loud scream. It takes them five minutes to arrive. If the commandos retreat into the darkness immediately they can escape but within two hours the militia will report whatever happened the Gestapo.

#### **Captives:**

If the commandos capture any of the militia and ask Lily Church-Carlisle what to do with them, roll for her Cool+Mental Stability. If it succeeds, she grimly begins shooting each of the milice in the head—or if stealth is imperative, first she makes sure each is gagged and then she cuts their throats. Only if her roll fails does she quail at the thought and ask to bind them up and have the Resistance take them for trial instead. Witnessing the slaughter without interfering triggers a Cool+Mental Stability roll in each commando. Each who fails loses one Will point per prisoner slain, up to a quarter of the commando's Base Will.

## Scene 7 The Ambush

Eventually, we presume, the commandos reach their destination on route nationale 24

bis. Rommel is due to drive past about 8:15 a.m. The quicker they traveled, the more time they have to choose their ground and set up.

It's a two-lane road that runs through gently rolling fields. The treeline is about 100 yards away on either side. There are occasional cottages and farmhouses near the road. On either side of the road are weed-choked ditches. On some stretches of the road trees and thick bushes grow from low berms of overgrown earth.

If they arrive with less than 30 minutes to spare, they have just enough time to line up on either side of the road and hide in the fields.

For every full 30 minutes' lead that they have, the players can pick one feature of the geography to add to the site as they find just the right place for the attack:

- An empty cottage 20 yards from the road.
- Hedges and trees providing cover on one side of the road.
- Hedges and trees on the other side of the road.
- An intersection with a smaller country road.
- A high tree that provides good visibility.

Each feature gives the commandos more options. The cottage means cover for those inside, but leaving it means being exposed for at least a round of running to reach a ditch or hedge. Hedge-berms and trees provide cover if you're crouching down.

An intersection with a smaller road gives them a quick getaway route afterward.

Putting someone in a high tree for good visibility gives them more warning when the motorcade arrives.

The motorcade includes two staff cars flanked by four motorcycles (each with a machine-gun sidecar), two ahead and two behind.

See the **"Ambush!"** section for rules on conducting the ambush. The players get a +1d bonus if they had someone in a tree with good visibility for a lookout; or +2d if the lookout succeeds at a Sense+Sight roll to spot the approaching cars far ahead. There's one difference from the usual rules, however. The motorcade is on the road, not maneuvering, so they can't turn the tables and surprise the ambushers. Either the Germans are surprised or nobody is.

Each driver trying to turn around on the narrow road must make a Coordination+Driving roll with a Difficulty equal to the Height of the commando leader's Tactics roll when he sprang the ambush. If the Driving roll fails, the car is stuck trying to turn about and makes no progress. If it succeeds, it starts driving off.

Rommel's staff car has an Übermensch driver and an Übermensch bodyguard. It is followed by a second staff car carrying three more Übermensch guards, including one using a Talent power to masquerade as Rommel.

### **The motorcycle drivers and gunners are normal soldiers.**

Pouring fire into a car without being able to clearly see its occupants is a lot like suppressing fire. If the attack succeeds, each occupant rolls 1d. If it matches the Height of the attack roll, that occupant takes a hit to that hit location.

Rommel stays in his car, out of sight, as long as possible. If the car crashes or is immobilized and his guards are cut down, he makes for the nearest cover and runs for it.

As soon as a Talent spots the false Rommel in the second car, the character can tell "*Rommel*" is using a Talent power. As far as anybody has heard, Rommel is not a Talent. Lily and the Resistance fighters have no Talent powers and are fooled by the illusion.

The other Übermenschen attempt to use their powers to defend the motorcade, if their Mental Stability rolls allow it. If one's attack power is thwarted by a TOG commando's superior Will, the Übermensch focuses his power on someone else or uses a mundane weapon against the Talent.

If all goes well, the ambush will probably be over by 8:30 a.m., leaving more than four hours to cover the two miles to exfiltration.

The Resistance fighters naturally want to keep any prisoners for a summary trial and, more importantly, execution. In fact, if one of them gets a chance at Rommel during the fight, he or she will try to shoot him. Realizing that it's Rommel, they are desperate to kill him. They don't want him leaving France in safely to live in comfort in England or America. Even if one of the commandos shields Rommel bodily, that commando must make a Command+Intimidation or Command+Inspire roll, or aim a weapon preparing to return fire, to persuade the Resistance fighter to lower his or her weapon.

Lily and the Resistance fighters likewise attempt to execute all other prisoners unless the commandos stop them. This triggers Cool+Mental Stability rolls in the commandos. Each who fails loses one Will point per prisoner slain, up to a quarter of his current Will.

If Rommel has been slain (or if you decide as the GM that it's not really Rommel after all) and Captain Keller, das Duplikat, is still alive, Keller does his best to persuade the commandos to take him to England as a prisoner. Considering his power, it may seem like he's trying to get placed in a position to spy, but he genuinely would rather be a prisoner of war than continue to serve the Third Reich. He was forced to join the SS when his Talent power manifested and he is surrounded by bullies, murderers and psychopaths. He is eager for his war to end.

## **Is This Really Rommel?**

In the official alternate history of *Godlike*, Erwin Rommel is not captured by the Allies in Normandy on D-Day. Is this a new fork in history? That's up to you as the GM. If you don't want to change the setting that much, then the man in the first car is not in fact Rommel—it's a non-Talent decoy who looks like him from a distance. Revise his stats accordingly. In that case, the challenge now is for the commandos to escape to the extraction point with their lives. They may have some stern words for Army Intelligence if they ever discover the officer or Talent who got them sent on this harebrained mission.

If it is Rommel, then his SS Übermenschen bodyguards are his picked men. The SS fights to control every Talent that manifests under the Reich, and Rommel's Talent bodyguards have "paper" SS rank to placate Himmler. But there's no love lost between Rommel and the SS. His guards gained their powers in army service under Rommel himself and they have remained under Rommel's command. He knows them well and trusts them, and they are deeply loyal to him.

## **Scene 8: Flight and Fight**

The TOG team must now make their way to a particular farmhouse on the edge of the Rânes Forest, about two miles away. It's daylight now so the path is easier—but of course they are far more likely to be seen. They must race to reach the appointment at 1300 hours, probably with Germans in pursuit.

How much detail should you spend on the escape and extraction? That depends. If you're playing "Fox Hunt" as a one-shot game, you'll probably have been playing for a few hours by the time the ambush ends. In that case you might want to gloss over the rest and cut straight to **Will and Other Awards** at the end. If you plan to return to the adventure later, you could end the session with Rommel's capture and return to the escape—now they have him, can they keep him?—next session. If you're playing a longer game, you might play right through to the end, with the Talents trying to keep their prisoner alive despite grim pursuit.

To get away, the team could take the staff cars, if they're still intact. About half a mile away is an intersection with a small road that goes south to a little village called Lougé, about the size of La Frenaie; then it goes through smaller villages—La Ressandière, La Hutière—before reaching the dirt path that leads to the abandoned farm.

In Lougé, a milice checkpoint blocks the road. The cars must stop. Only if the militiamen see only what appear to be Germans, and the "Germans" succeed at Cool+Bluff or Cool+Lie rolls, do they nervously let the cars past. Otherwise it's almost certainly another fight. If

any of the militia is allowed two uninterrupted combat rounds to run, he dashes inside a garage and picks up the phone to call the Gestapo.

## Paths and Fields

Otherwise they can travel overland through pastures and fields, staying on paths that are overgrown with hedges and trees on either side for the greatest concealment. This requires Body+Endurance rolls, with +2 Difficulty for any commando carrying a support weapon such as a bazooka or a machine gun, +2 for any who failed an Endurance roll before, and +2 if they must take turns carrying Erwin Rommel. Any man who is wounded is at +1 Difficulty per point of Killing damage taken. If Rommel is walking, he must make the roll too. If anyone fails, the base travel time for the trek is three hours. If all succeed, it's two hours.

If they don't have Lily or a Resistance fighter to guide the way, one of the commandos must attempt a Brains+Map Reading roll. If it fails, it adds one hour to the travel time as they find themselves on the map.

Also if they don't have Lily or a local to help, the team leader must make a Brains+Navigation (Land) roll. If it fails, they get turned around in the endless pastures and fields and lose an hour.

## Two by Air

En route to the exfiltration site, the commandos are pursued by enemies in the air: a Focke-Wulf FW-90 fighter plane with a flying Übermensch spotter. If any of the milice encountered the commandos earlier and got away, or if the commandos encountered Lena and Cyrano at the beginning, or if they were spied by the informer in La Frenaie, the encounter happens one hour after the ambush. If not, then the plane and its spotter come overhead two hours after the ambush.

The commandos will probably attempt to hide from the plane and the flying man. What's the lowest Coordination+Stealth dice pool among the commandos? That character must roll. He gains a +2d bonus if they were staying in the trees and bushes. Roll Sense+Sight for the pilot and the Übermensch. The highest set wins.

If the Germans spot the commandos, the plane banks around for a strafing run. The Übermensch does not attack—he stares through binoculars to get a good look at the entire group. Attacks from the ground are at -1 Width against him due to the altitude on top of penalties for long range.

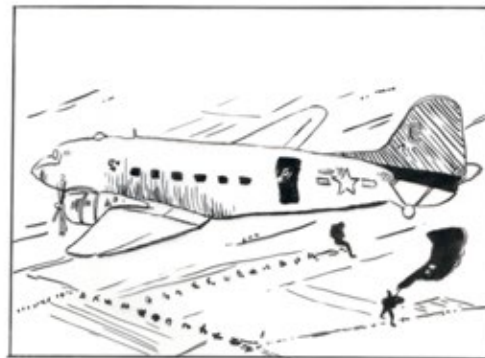
If the plane is damaged, the Übermensch darts over and pulls the pilots safely out through the canopy without breaking it, then flies quickly for the ground before he loses his grip and drops them. If any part of the plane is destroyed, it crashes and the Übermensch flies off at 450 mph to warn his superiors.

## The Door

If the Hummingbird escapes with a report of Talent commandos—and especially if he sees Erwin Rommel a captive!—three tanks and a halftrack that survived the shelling set out from Argentan, along with two trucks carrying a dozen riflemen apiece. How long it takes this force to muster is up to you. What's key is that they should be closing in, perhaps with the first tank guns beginning to fire, when the clock strikes 1:30 and the rickety door of the falling-down farmhouse opens.

A mousy, tired Czech man with a beret and a cigarette gestures the commandos toward him. He's only 24 years old but his face is lined by the trauma of six years of war. The commandos all instantly recognize him as Briety Krizova, the world's second known Talent—Pevnost. As long as Pevnost holds the door open, it leads directly to England. Once he closes it again, it will just be a piece of the wrecked house.

Pevnost smiles, gives the tanks a rude gesture if the commandos don't beat him to it, and closes the door as the last commando goes through.



## Those Left Behind

What becomes of Lily Church-Carlisle and her Resistance network? That's up to you.

For a grittily realistic game, it's likely that the milice and the Gestapo converge on La Frenaie swiftly as a point of trouble. They torture residents there and in nearby towns until the Resistance fighters are isolated and captured. Lily Church-Carlisle will realize this and be working on plans to scatter her people even as the mission goes on, although it won't be easy. Many of them have family and homes in the area and can't just suddenly appear in a different village without arousing suspicion. Of course, this is why the Resistance fighters gave the player characters so much grief at the beginning. They knew that helping the soldiers may be the last operation they can pull off without going completely into hiding and putting all their families at greater risk than ever.

**For a more lighthearted, pulpy campaign, Lily's network is already far underground and just moves to a different part of Normandy to wreak havoc.**

Either way, Lily herself is resourceful. If you want to bring her back into the campaign later, either as a prisoner to be rescued or an ally to help the PCs once again, or perhaps as a PC herself, there will certainly be a way.

## Will and Other Awards

Capturing the actual Erwin Rommel is worth one free point of Base Will, recovery of half of any lost Will points, and a Silver Star for each survivor. It means a promotion for the team leader and for a number of men (equal to his Command stat) that he highlights for their courage and ingenuity.

Defeating or capturing Übermenschen is worth bonus Will points equal to the captured Talent's Command score. Divide the Will among the player characters that captured him.

If one of the commandos convinces Lily Church-Carlisle to fall for him, that's worth 4 bonus Will points and plenty of interesting plot hooks in the future. ■

## Acknowledgements

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## the Kobold's Cavern

edited by Wolfgang Baur

# Antipaladin

Unholiest of champions  
by Clinton J. Boomer

### THE ANTIPALADIN IS VILLAINY

Very little is more terrifying — in the hands of a cunning GM — than a mortal, sentient, consciously, and willfully-wicked character. While dragons, devils, demi-liches, demon lords and dark gods may potentially serve as more powerful or more threatening adversaries, they are also fundamentally alien and utterly inhuman. The experiences & choices of such potent creatures are beyond the mundane, inherently unknowable, and incomprehensible to mere player-characters.

No mortal, try as they might, could ever truly foresee becoming such a thing.

### NOT SO FOR THE ANTIPALADIN

As the embodiment of mortality & morality's most sinister and repugnant conclusion, each and every antipaladin represents someone — a living, breathing, presumably rational person — who has chosen against the side of angels, specifically selecting the most debased and deranged of all possible paths. Though some may imagine themselves misunderstood and tragic heroes, others simply revel in the bloodshed and agony they spread. What few, incongruous redeeming qualities an antipaladin may possess only underscore their madness.

In life or in undeath, the butcher called 'antipaladin' signifies the abject, total abandonment of humanity, a final rejection

of kindness and civilization in the face of monstrosity most vile. Whether that champion of horror was coerced, corrupted, tricked, tempted, defiled or deluded into the service of pure evil, of course, makes little difference to the victims of such a monster.

Truly, an antipaladin is the warped reflection of all that good-aligned folk hold dear, and his — or her! — very existence reminds us that there is always a choice. The possibility exists for any hero to fall, to fail, to take the easy road 'just this once' and become the most terrible of foes to all life and hope.

But for the grace of good-aligned gods, each antipaladin is us. It's easy to think of the antipaladin as one-dimensional, of course, a heavily armored, frontline combatant, relegated to few choices other than whether to fight sword-&-board in clanging full-plate, or to forgo a demon-faced magic shield in favor of hefting a two-handed, flame-wreathed and poison-drenched great-blade. Lest we forget, there are other approaches to supernatural villainy.

### FEAT

#### Sorcerous Damnation

Your inherent magical abilities, drawn from a mysterious legacy, are enhanced greatly by the pacts and sacrifices you have made to the darkest of powers.

**Prerequisite:** Antipaladin level 2nd, Eldritch heritage.

**Benefit:** Add the first four bonus spells from your chosen bloodline to your antipaladin spell list at the appropriate spell levels.

Thus, if you had the Shadow bloodline, you would add ray of enfeeblement as a 1st level antipaladin spell and shadow conjuration as a 4th level antipaladin spell; if you instead had the Efreeti bloodline, you would add enlarge person as a 1st level antipaladin spell, scorching ray as a 2nd level antipaladin spell, fireball as a 3rd level antipaladin spell and wall of fire as a 4th level antipaladin spell.

In addition, you may select a special sorcerous damnation ability — see below — in place of any of the following antipaladin class abilities: channel negative energy (4th level), fiendish boon (5th level), aura of despair (8th level), aura of vengeance (11th level), aura of sin (14th level), aura of depravity (17th level). This special sorcerous damnation replaces the appropriate antipaladin class ability.

Sorcerous damnation abilities draw on the power of an antipaladin's touch of corruption. These abilities always duplicate the effects of a single specific spell, chosen when the sorcerous damnation is selected, and are spell-like abilities. An antipaladin's class level is the caster level for these spell-like abilities, and she uses charisma to determine her concentration check bonus.

All sorcerous damnation abilities have a minimum level requirement to select them; an antipaladin who does not meet this requirement



cannot select that sorcerous damnation ability. All sorcerous damnation abilities require the antipaladin to expend daily uses of her touch of corruption to activate the spell-like ability; the exact amount is listed after the sorcerous damnation ability. The saving throw against an antipaladin's sorcerous damnation spell-like ability, if any, is equal to 10 + 1/2 the antipaladin's class level + the antipaladin's charisma bonus.

Whenever you gain a new level of antipaladin, you may choose to keep your normal antipaladin class ability or to gain an appropriate sorcerous damnation of that level. For example, upon reaching 5th level, you might choose to keep your fiendish boon or to select a spell such as scorching ray or blur as your sorcerous damnation ability; using this spell-like ability would cost two uses of touch of corruption. If you had the Efreeti bloodline, as noted above, you could instead select fireball as your sorcerous damnation.

You may always select a lower level spell than the spell level listed for your sorcerous damnation, if you desire; in addition, you may always select a sorcerous damnation of a lower level. Once a specific spell is chosen as a sorcerous damnation ability, it cannot be changed from that slot.

For a few more examples of thematic antipaladins, the following archetypes put new wrinkles on old abilities:

<b>4th level Sorcerous Damnation</b>
- 1st level spell from your bloodline (1 touch) - any 1st-level sorcerer/wizard spell (2 touches) - 2nd level spell from your bloodline (2 touches)
<b>5th level Sorcerous Damnation</b>
- any 2nd level sorcerer/wizard spell (2 touches) - 3rd level spell from your bloodline (2 touches)
<b>8th level Sorcerous Damnation</b>
- any 3rd level sorcerer/wizard spell (2 touches) - 4th level spell from your bloodline (2 touches) - any spell from any class of 2nd level or lower (3 touches)
<b>11th level Sorcerous Damnation</b>
- any 4th level sorcerer/wizard spell (2 touches) - 4th level spell from your bloodline (1 touch)
<b>14th level Sorcerous Damnation</b>
- any 5th level sorcerer/wizard spell (2 touches) - 5th level spell from your bloodline (1 touch) - 6th level spell from your bloodline (3 touches) - any spell from any class of 3rd level or lower (2 touches)
<b>17th level Sorcerous Damnation</b>
- any 6th level sorcerer/wizard spell (3 touches) - 7th level spell from your bloodline (3 touches)

## ARCHETYPES

### FALCONER OF PAZUZU — ANTIPALADIN ARCHETYPE

Some of those who slay in the name of mighty Pazuzu, King of the Wind Demons, gain a special sign of his favor: a raptor born of darkness, ravenous for the scent of blood and eyes, to act as a companion.

**Wind demon (Su):** At 1st level, the falconer of Pazuzu earns the trust and companionship of a deadly bird of prey with the fiendish template. The bird can be of any type of large hunting or scavenging bird such as a hawk, eagle or vulture. This ability functions like the druid animal companion ability, but the falconer must select the bird

animal companion, and that companion has only half the normal hit points. The falconer of Pazuzu cannot teach the bird of prey the work trick, but can teach it either the roam or distract trick (below) for free. Whichever trick the falconer does not pick may be picked as a trick later.

— **Roam (DC 15):** The falconer can let his animal companion loose to roam, ruin and forage. He must let it roam for no more than one week. When the falconer lets his companion roam, it returns to the place he let it loose within the time period he designates.

— **Distract (DC 20; bird only):** The animal companion flutters wildly around any enemy it would normally attack with the attack trick. It makes an attack roll against that enemy. On a hit, the enemy is shaken for 1 round.

Pazuzu can scry upon this avian companion as a free action, as per a greater scrying effect with no save allowed.

This ability replaces detect good.

**Carrion crow (Ex):** At 3rd level, the avian companion gains the Plague Bringer class feature of its master. If the falconer of Pazuzu has the Stalking Rain of Filth feat, she and her companion possess the same diseases, and the companion may infect any creature struck by its natural attacks.

**Bond of demons (Su):** At 5th level, the falconer of Pazuzu's companion gains full hit points and is treated as through the falconer possessed the Hunter's Bond class feature. The falconer of Pazuzu may possess the Boon Companion feat, as normal, to enhance this bond.

This avian companion always gains a bonus to attack and to damage rolls equal to half that of the falconer of Pazuzu, rounded down, against any target of his smite good. The companion additionally gains the ability to deliver touch spells — including spell-like abilities from Sorcerous Damnation, if any, as well as touch of corruption and cruelty — as if the companion were a familiar.

This ability replaces Fiendish Boon.

**Swoop for the kill (Ex):** At 11th level, the falconer of Pazuzu can direct his companion to strike an enemy from high above. His companion gains the following trick as a bonus trick.

— **Thunderbolt charge (DC 20; bird only):** The falconer's bird companion flies up and then swoops down into a charge. To perform this trick, the companion must be able to fly, and it must be outdoors or someplace with enough room in which to fly great distances (a grand cathedral may have enough room, but dungeons usually do not). It spends a full-round action flying to a high vantage point, and on the next round makes a charge attack upon an enemy the falconer designates. If that charge attack hits, the bird deals double base damage with its bite and gains a ×4 critical modifier when making the attack. If the bird hits, the target is additionally staggered for 1 round.

This ability replaces Aura of Vengeance.

### KOHAI OF BLASPHEMY — ANTIPALADIN ARCHETYPE

You are an archivist of atrocities, a scholar of sin, a chronicler of corruption. You have cut and sharpened yourself into a dedicated and eager researcher, delving endlessly into the blackest depths of mortal — and immortal — horror, depravity, obscenity ... and the sick power that blossoms from it.

**Alignment:** Chaotic evil or lawful evil. A kohai of blasphemy dedicated to the cause of tyranny most likely uses the lord of darkness archetype.

**Weapons and armor:** the kohai of blasphemy is proficient in all simple weapons, and gains proficiency with one martial weapon of her choice, which must be the same as her deity's favored weapon or otherwise appropriate to her culture and faith. She is proficient with all light and medium armors and with all shields (except tower shields).

**Base attack bonus:** the kohai of blasphemy increases her base attack bonus more slowly than her fellows, progressing at each level-increase as a cleric, monk or rogue, rather than like a standard antipaladin.

**Dark knowledge, dark power:** at 1st level, the kohai of blasphemy gains skill focus in any one skill of her choice; in addition, that skill is forever considered a class skill for her.



At 3rd level, she gain both the Eldritch heritage and sorcerous damnation feats.

**Abhorrent touch:** the kohai of blasphemy gains touch of corruption at 1st level, rather than at 2nd; her level is always considered to be one higher for purposes of this ability. In addition, she adds her charisma modifier to the damage dealt (or healed) by this ability.

**Flexible sanity:** the kohai of blasphemy may choose, if she wishes, to use either her intelligence or her wisdom score in place of her charisma for all antipaladin abilities. This choice is not set in stone, and may be changed at any time without requiring an action: if the kohai of blasphemy is the target of a feeblemind effect, for example, she automatically uses her Wisdom score to determine her unholy resilience and to calculate the DC of her cruelty until such time as the effect is removed.

**Legacy of scars:** a kohai of blasphemy, in the course of her dreadful research, endures the most terrible of agonies upon body, mind and soul alike; these revelations leave scores of hideous and lasting wounds, invisible though they may be. At 2nd level, the kohai of blasphemy thus suffers a permanent penalty to her saves — in some combination — equal to one half her class level (rounded down), although she may choose where to apply these penalties as she sees fit, and may change them freely upon gaining a new level. Thus, a 7th level kohai of blasphemy might apply a -2 penalty to her Reflex save and a -1 penalty to her Will save; upon reaching 8th level, she might instead decide to apply a -4 penalty to her Fortitude save.

**Bonus feats:** the kohai of blasphemy gains an additional feat at 5th level and every two level after that: 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 17th and 19th. She may choose to take Improved Eldritch Heritage at 11th level and Greater Eldritch Heritage at 17th level, but she is not required to do so.

These feats also enhance the antipaladin, providing alternate angles of approach for a GM.

## FEATS

### GLACIER OF HATE

You burn with slow, chill wrath. You strike with the power of a screaming ice-storm. You breathe with the strength of cold murder in the night; your voice is frozen agony in pitiless winter. Your blood flows with that shattered numbness known only to the doomed and dying as their extremities crackle and fall off — one by one — blackened and shriveled.

**Prerequisite:** Antipaladin level 1st

**Benefit:** You gain ray of frost as an at-will spell-like ability. Your antipaladin level is the caster level for this and all other spell-like abilities granted by this feat (see below); you use Charisma to determine your concentration check bonus. The saving throw against these special spell-like abilities, if any, is equal to 10 + 1/2 your character level + Charisma bonus.

When using your touch of corruption, you may choose for half of the damage to be dealt as cold damage, similar to that of a flame strike effect. If you do, a creature that fails a saving throw against your cruelty is also slowed (as the slow spell) for 1 round. At 11th level, the duration increases to 1d4 rounds.

You also gain access to the following spell-like abilities, similar to those gained from the Sorcerous Damnation feat, which are activated by the expenditure of daily uses of touch of corruption:

*biting wind, endure elements, frigid touch, frostfield* — 1 touch

At 6th level, you additionally gain access to the following effects: *algid aura, draconic reservoir (may absorb fire, but that energy is released as cold), ice spears, wall of ice* — 2 touches

At 12th level, you additionally gain access to the following effects: *cone of cold, icy prison, mythic endure elements (self only)* — 3 touches

When you take this feat, remove all spells with the [fire] descriptor from all of your spell lists. You cannot cast any spells or use any spell like ability with the fire descriptor, nor activate them off scrolls, wands, or any other magic devices.

You may never again light a fire, including a torch or candle, nor use a sun rod, alchemist's fire or firearm of any kind. You may not consume cooked meat, nor anything that has been baked or fried, nor drink any liquid that has been warmed by a hearth.

In addition, you gain vulnerability to fire.

You are considered to meet all prerequisites for the Winter Shade of the Uskwood feat; your antipaladin level is used in place of a druid level for purposes of that feat, should you select it.

### MENAGERIE OF VILENESS

Your dark gifts call forth a tide of savage, hideous pets to do your bidding, in far greater numbers than the weak, meager monsters which serve your peers. What do you care that so many of the beasts are slaughtered in carrying out your whims? Pain is momentary.

**Prerequisite:** Antipaladin level 5th, fiendish boon.

**Benefit:** You are always considered to be two levels higher for purposes of determining your summon monster effect when calling forth a fiendish servant.

In addition, you may attempt to summon multiple lower level creatures rather than a single servant, if you choose, although you must still select the specific type of creature you intend to call — and in what

quantity — upon gaining a new level. Each time you use this ability, you roll anew to determine how many creatures answer your call. You may spend a single daily use of your touch of corruption while performing your summoning to increase the number of creatures called by +50%, rounded down.

You suffer no lasting penalty from the death or banishment of any summoned creature; instead, you take 1 point of damage for every hit dice of the summoned monster.

**Designer's note:** this feat is of especial use with the kohai of blasphemy archetype

### NEFARIOUS MASTERMIND

You are the consulting criminal, the shadowy spark of wicked genius; you are the designer of deepest iniquities, the sharp and stone-cold brilliance behind the most unseen blade. For you, perhaps, there has never been either right or wrong, neither virtue nor sin: there is only the thrill of the game. Within this glorious game exist such wonders as the chase, the reveal, the turn and the prestige, in all their infinitely clever permutations ... and always the great ladder, ever reaching upward from the smoke.

**Prerequisite:** Antipaladin level 2nd, ferocious deductive intellect feat

**Benefit:** You may freely spend any number of deduction points, at any time as an immediate action, to gain one additional daily use of your touch of corruption ability for each two points that you spend in

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## Sheep Raid Battle Skies Scenario

The Sheep Raid scenario turns the common strategies of Battle Skies on their head. Flying high and fast won't help you collect any sheep. Now you have to fly low to grab them and balance your need for speed with your ability to snatch sheep off the ground. This time the battle isn't to the last dragon standing but to the last sheep found and the winner is the one who has the most sheep at the end. The folio has a retail price of \$7.50. Product Number **FSW41101**



<http://www.finalswordproductions.com>

## Battle Skies

### 3D Table Top Fantasy Aerial Combat Game

Battle Skies uses the same stacking tiles and tilt block set up that is used in SITS, AVT, and Squadron Strike. The rules are simpler, and we've had test players from 13 to 65 enjoy the game. The game plays smoothly, engaging players from age 12 plus. The box game has a retail price of \$60. Product Number **FSW41000**

Box contents include: 2 sets of stacking tiles. 1 set of tilt blocks. 6 pre-generated Dragons. Dragon Character Sheets. Hex Map. Special attack play aids and movement play aids. Box miniatures. Dice. Full color Rule book. Quick Start Rules.

<http://www.battle-skies.com>



this way. Alternatively, you may freely spend any number of daily uses of your touch of corruption class ability; you immediately place two deduction points into your pool for each use you spend.

The contingency spell is always considered to be a 4th-level spell of your bloodline for purposes of the sorcerous damnation feat. When using that ability, you do not need to be the original caster of the contingent spell; you may designate the effect to be any spell which affects your person (of a spell level no higher than one-third your caster level, rounded down, maximum 6th level) to which you have access via scrolls, wands, allies, minions or any other source.

**DESIGNER'S COMMENTARY:** This feat is of especial use with the lawful evil, control-focused Lord of Darkness archetype; it is intended to be used in combination with high intelligence-, wisdom- and charisma-focused builds — such as those utilizing black magic gumshoe, clarity of mad purpose, conduit of the black blade, malign puppeteer, monster behind a grinning mask, piercing corruption, scholar of tainted blood, sculptor of sensation, student of true pain or unholy shot, for example — when creating complex, subtle, mysterious and dangerously-intelligent high-level foes.

### STALKING RAIN OF FILTH

Where your reeking arrows fall, death and pestilence spread in sickening waves. Those whom you strike may not know that they are dead just yet, but you track them with ease nonetheless, quietly following the doomed and the infected like the long shadow of the grave.

**Prerequisite:** plague bringer class feature

**Benefit:** You gain the scent ability, but only with respect to humanoids and animals who have contracted or are under the effects of a disease.

Whenever you load a non-firearm ranged weapon, you may choose to first befoul your round — as a move action which provokes attacks of opportunity — with spit, blood, mucus and other infected ichor, soaking the end of your bolt with living horror. A befouled bolt has only half the normal range increment for a ranged weapon of its type; if you expend one daily use of touch of corruption to stiffen and reinforce the blight as a free action when loading, this range penalty is obviated.

A creature injured by your befouled bolt must make fortitude saves — as per the listed disease — or become ill with all contact- and injury-transmitted diseases you carry. You are always assumed to have one of the following diseases (your choice) in addition to any others you may have been exposed to at the GM's discretion: blister phage, bog rot, bonecrusher fever, demon fever, devil chills, dysentery, rabies,

scarlet leprosy, tetanus, typhoid Fever, zombie rot (DC 11)

In addition, you may attempt to instantaneously afflict a creature injured by your befouled ranged attack with a much more terrible, magical disease, requiring the expenditure of greater unholy power as you load the shot. You must have a total character level equal to the listed level in order to use the spell-like ability, and spend the requisite number of daily uses of touch of corruption as a free action as you load. The DC for the initial saving throw against this spell-like ability is equal to 10 + 1/2 your character level + your charisma bonus; after that, apply the normal DC for the chosen disease.

— 5th level: contagion (one additional use)

— 11th level: greater contagion (two additional uses)

— 17th level: mythic contagion (three additional uses)

**Special:** This feat may be taken up to three times. Each time, the strength of your scent ability is increased by one step: disease becomes a strong scent, and then an overpowering scent. Your speed of action while befouling a bolt is also reduced by one step: from a move action to a swift action to a free action. In addition, you gain one additional permanent disease from the list above. For each instance you have taken this feat, you are also considered to be two levels higher for purposes of gaining the spell-like abilities granted by this feat.

**Special:** If you are a gulch gunner (ratfolk gunslinger archetype), you may freely use this feat with firearms. A befouled firearm round has only half the the normal range increment for a firearm of its type, and the misfire chance is doubled; as above, if you expend one daily use of touch of corruption to reinforce the befouled firearm round as a free action when loading, this range penalty is obviated.

### THIRSTY, RELENTLESS DAMNED

You are the wendigo, the upir, the conqueror leech: a living beast hungrily supping upon warm blood, made whole and strong by that power of stolen life. Your cravings are insatiable, your appetite boundless, and your methods terrible in the extreme. The crimson ichor taken from weeping victims tainted by your foul touch, of course, is the very sweetest of all.

**Prerequisite:** Antipaladin level 1st

**Benefit:** You gain all the benefits of the blood drinker feat, even if you are not a vampire. You may drink fresh blood — and gain the standard benefits of doing so — from any living, non-summoned creature which is currently suffering from your cruelty, no matter your victim's normal type or subtype. In addition, you cannot gain the staggered or dying condition as long as you have the special +1 bonus on checks and saves based on constitution from using this feat; however, you still die as normal if reduced to a sufficient number of negative hit points.

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# Spell mastery

Progressive feats  
by James Thomas

The spell mastery feat allows a wizard to have such complete a understanding of a select number of spells that s/he can prepare them without referring to his/her spellbook. Instead, these mastered spells can be prepared from memory: s/he knows them like the back of his casting hand.

There are greater levels of mastery a wizard may achieve, “deconstructing” parts of spells and reassembling them in ways to match the needs of the moment. Like a master chef modifying a time-honored recipe to create a new masterpiece, “Spell Masters” can change the direction, manifestation or shape of a spell on their mastery list!

Unlike metamagic feats, which increase a spell’s power, mastered spells merely change the manner in which the mastered spells manifest. Below are some new feat progressions stemming from the spell mastery feat you can use for your next wizard!

## SPELL GEOMETRY

You can alter the point of origin of your mastered spells.

### Prerequisite:

Knowledge: Engineering 1 Rank, spell mastery.

### Benefit:

Your mastered spells can originate anywhere within range of the spell and manifest in any direction.

### Normal:

Without this feat, spell effect must originate per spell parameters.

For example, a lightning bolt can be cast to manifest along a line of opponents from left to right. A cone of cold can be reversed so the small end is away from you and the wide end is next to you.

## SPELL BENDING

You can shorten or bend the area of effect of your mastered spells.

### Prerequisite:

Knowledge: Geography 1 rank, spell Mastery.

### Benefit:

You can change the shape of the area of effect of your mastered spells. Area type and size must remain the same as per the spell description but can be folded or bent as desired. Spells can also be cast into areas out of direct sight but must still be traceable within total maximum spell range.



**Normal:**

Without this feat, spell shapes manifest exactly per the spell parameters.

For example, a stinking cloud can be turned on its side to manifest in a deep gorge 40 feet deep and 20 feet wide (ordinarily it would be 20-ft. radius, 20 ft. high). A line spell like lightning bolt can be bent around corners, etc.

**SPELL AREA REASSIGNMENT**

You can change the area designation of your mastered spells.

**Prerequisite:**

Knowledge: Engineering 2 ranks, Knowledge: Geography 2 ranks, spell mastery

**Benefit:** All your mastered spells are also shapeable (i.e. the area can be reduced to smaller than given per the spell description, but no smaller than 10 feet). Also, the area can be changed from cone, cylinder, line, or sphere to a different one of those shapes.

**Normal:** Without this feat, the area of effect must follow the spell parameters.

For example, the area of a sleep spell could be changed to a cone or line. You could cast firecones instead of fireballs. The area of effect for a stinking cloud spell could be just 10 feet etc. ■



## Spell Mastery

You have mastered a small handful of spells, and can prepare these spells without referencing your spell books.

**Prerequisite:** 1st-level wizard

**Benefit:** Each time you take this feat, choose a number of spells that you already know equal to your intelligence modifier. From that point on, you can prepare these spells without referring to a spellbook.

**Normal:** Without this feat, you must use a spellbook to prepare all your spells, except read magic.

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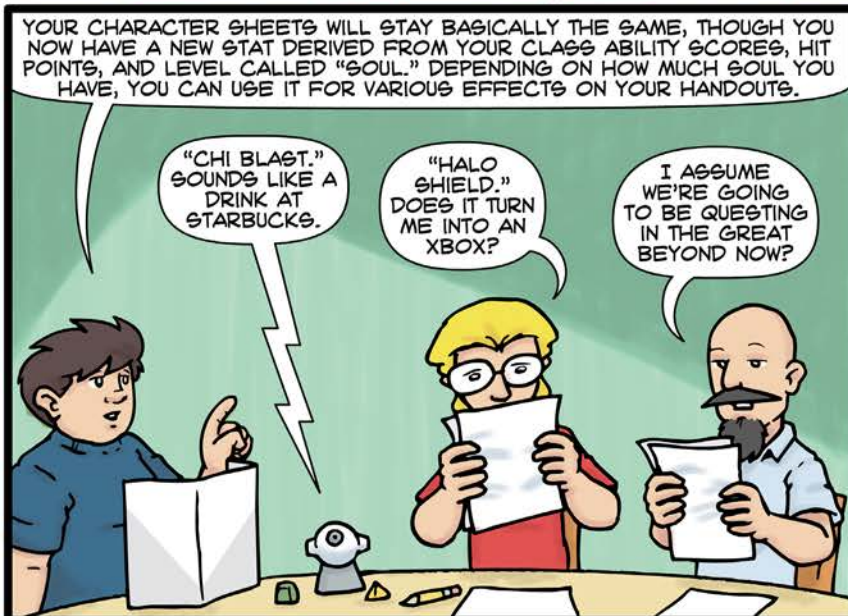
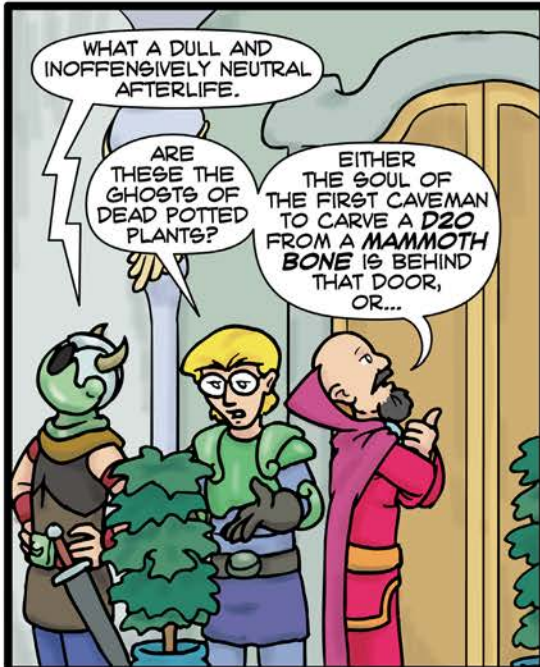
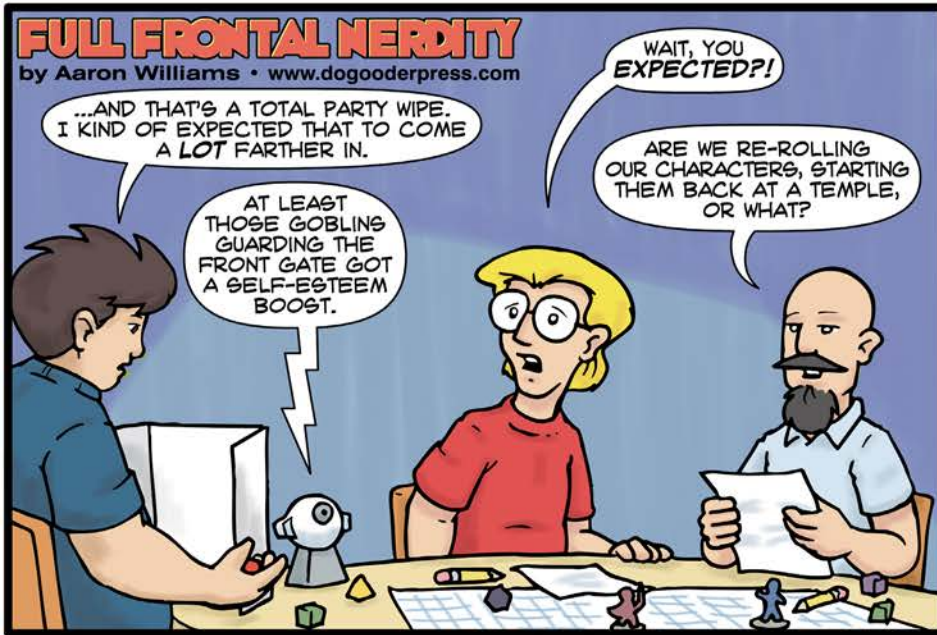


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# FULL FRONTAL NERDITY

by Aaron Williams • www.dogooderpress.com



**LATER...**

COME ON, THIS IS ONLY PROLONGING THE INEVITABLE.

NOT EVERYONE GETS TO HAVE THEIR RELIGION TURNED INTO SUPER HERO COMICS, YOU KNOW.

I WILL NOT GO QUIETLY! IF MAN SPURNS ME, THEN I SHALL TEAR HIS SOULS FROM THE PRETENDERS HE WORSHIPS!

HANG ON, HOW CAN WE HAVE SPURNED YOU IF WE'VE NEVER HEARD OF YOU?

YOUR KIND BROKE MY COMMANDMENT OF A DAILY UNICORN SACRIFICE!

OKAY, NOW WE KNOW WHY THEY'RE RARE, AND GIVEN WHO THEY'RE ATTRACTED TO, IT'S NO WONDER YOUR CHURCH LITERALLY DIED OUT.

...AND YOU'VE MADE THE HUSK OF A ONCE MIGHTY DEITY DISSOLVE IN SHAME OVER FORGETTING HIS HIGH SCHOOL MYTHOLOGICAL BIOLOGY. HAPPY?

YOUR COPY OF THE MONSTER MANUAL IS STILL ON BACKORDER, HUH?

THAT'S MORE SOUL POINTS, RIGHT? WHAT'S NEXT?

**SETTLING DIVINE DISPUTES...**

LADY, HE TOTALLY CHEATED ON YOU.

DEMI-GODS DON'T JUST SPRING UP OUT OF NOWHERE.

HEY, QUEEN NERFATOOTIE, RIGHT? WE WERE HUGE FANS OF YOUR TOMB!

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR GODS HEAR SOMEONE TURNED THAT PLACE INSIDE-OUT?

**INVESTIGATING WHY MORTAL MENTAL HEALTH IS IN DECLINE...**

THAT'S IT? YOU JUST WANT TO EAT THE WORLD?

WE'RE DONE WITH THAT PLACE, SO GO NUTS.

YOU JUST SAID "GO NUTS" TO CTHULHU.

ROLLED A ONE ON MY DIPLOMACY CHECK.

I'M A BIG ENOUGH DEITY TO ADMIT THIS WAS A MISTAKE. NOW THAT YOU'VE CAUSED ENOUGH COSMIC DESTRUCTION, RELIGIOUS SCHISM, AND PROBABLY BLASPHEMY, I'M SENDING YOU BACK TO THE MORTAL REALM.

WE DIDN'T EVEN GET TO USE OUR NEW POWERS YET!

AND THAT'S WHY I'M NOT SENDING YOU BACK AS ALGAE. GET LOST!

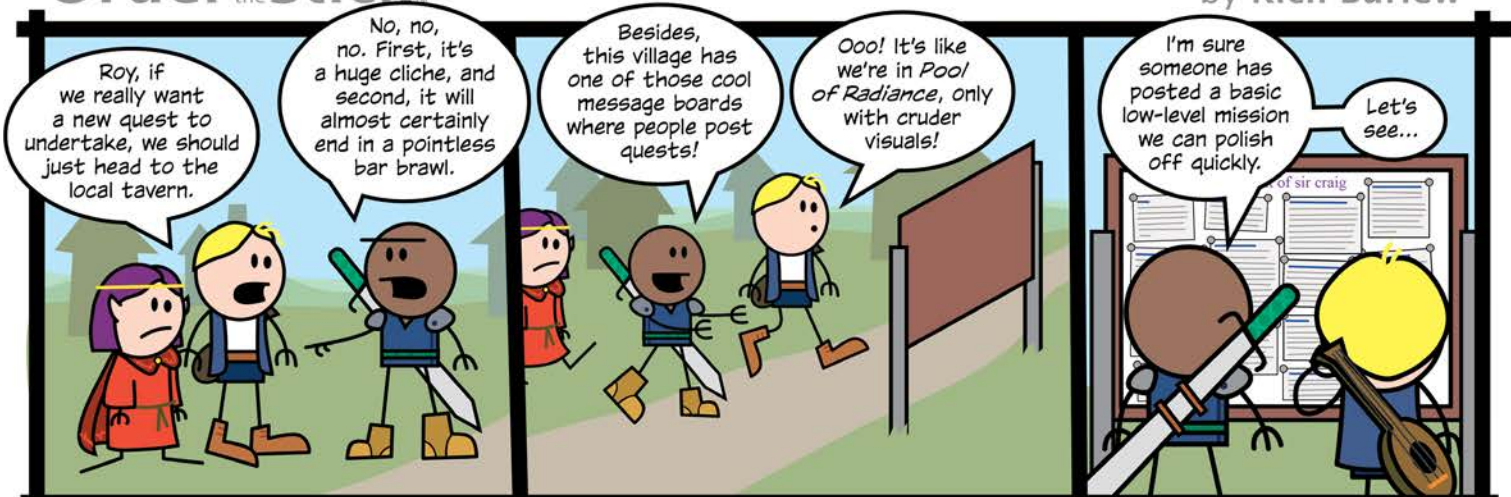
**MORTAL RE-COILER**

I WAS KIND OF HOPING HE'D MAKE US IMMORTAL SO HE'D NEVER SEE US AGAIN, BUT MAYBE WE CAN SWING THAT NEXT TIME.

WE'RE GOING AFTER THE GOBLINS TO GET OUR STUFF BACK, RIGHT?

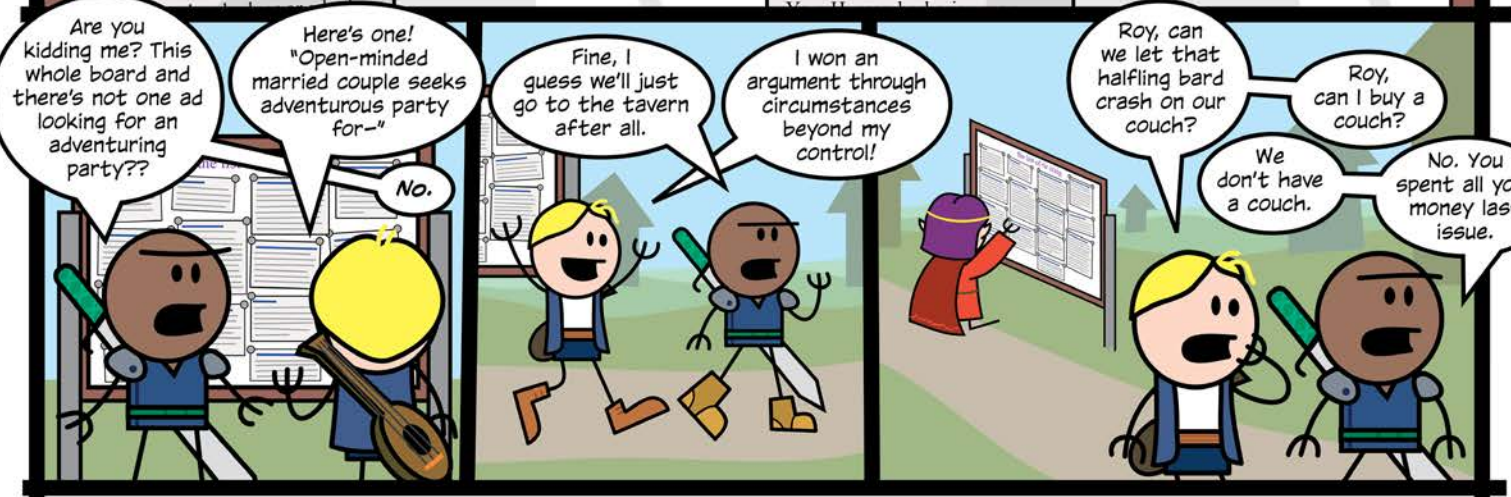
WHY DO I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE WE'VE GOT TO DEAL WITH FIRST?

OH, WELL. IT'LL COME TO ME EVENTUALLY.




### the list of sir craig

- ???**  
Attractive 140 yr old elf sorcerer and owl familiar looking for a third to take our special bond to the next level. DDF, feathers a plus.
- Let's explore**  
Edition-curious 3.5 female looking for special someone to help convert me. Open to 2e, 5e, BECMI, whatever.
- Five levels, just rennovated**  
Roomy dungeon sublet available in posh Valley of Terror neighborhood. Barracks, recently upgraded torture chamber, magical security features. Looking for mid-level monstrous humanoid tribe to occupy while I travel to planes unknown studying unholy secrets to immortality.
- Opportunity for hiring**  
We are an up-and-coming adventuring party looking for a dependable henchman. Great working environment, upbeat, fun! Temp position could turn permanent for right person, depending on survival rate.
- I Object (to Being Single)**  
Single male lawyer of color w/ great hair looking for a nice guy to love. Must like cuddles! I'm an excellent cook and like board games. Don't worry about my scowling partner, we're just friends.
- Missed Connection**  
You: Human barbarian man tearing through tribe of orc warriors with flaming greataxe. Me: One of 2d8 noncombatant females the party paladin made you spare. We locked eyes over the corpse of every man I've ever known, but I was too shy to say hi. Let's meet at the tree where you impaled our chief's severed head as a warning to all.
- BEG living at minion prices!**  
Spacious volcano cave offers plenty of living space that needs to be seen to be believed!! Rent includes geothermic energy, nearby stream, and wifi. Pets OK if they're immune to fire.
- For sale—GoOP 1e**  
Vintage First Edition gauntlets of ogre power, used condition. Provides Strength 18/00 with stylish retro feel. Srs offers only.
- House my spawn**  
Clean athletic aberration from darkened pit of despair seeking warm mammal body in which to incubate my brood. I will inject my innumerable eggs into your abdomen while you cry to your impotent gods. No drama.
- Research asst. needed**  
Continue your postgraduate education in the fast-growing field of bio-magic through an internship working directly with a leading experimental magician. Ideal candidate must have good communication skills, at least 1 yr experience in clerical or necromantic position. Must be willing to travel to planes unknown.
- Animal Companion?**  
Male druid needs wolf or
- hellpuppies need a home**  
we have 3 adorable hellhound pups for immediate adoption. spayed/neutered, up on all shots. not castletrained. need right evil overlord to love them and give them their forever home (they are immortal).
- hey yo yo!**  
i'm a m cg halfling lvl 2 bard that needs a couch to crash on for a few nights while performing in the area. lookin for chill fun-loving folks who don't mind smell of pipeweed.
- Extradiemnsional Loft 4 Rent**





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