

Fantasy Gamer

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OCT/NOV 1983 NUMBER 2

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue cape and a dark, form-fitting outfit, stands in profile looking upwards. A bright, glowing beam of light descends from a pyramid in the distance, illuminating her. The background is a vast, hazy desert landscape with rolling hills and a warm, golden sky.

Silverdawn Featured Review

VICTORIAN LONDON: GENERIC FRP SETTING
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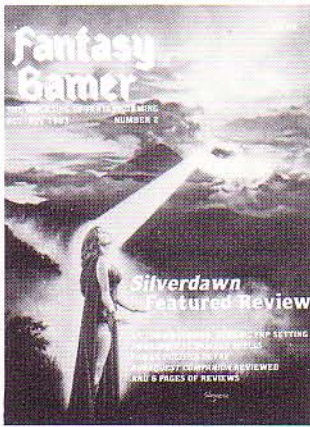
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Rules Variant:

DragonQuest Damage Spells

All right, I admit it! I think the *DragonQuest* magic system is the neatest thing since the Wiz-A-Matic Mandrake Slicer. After all, it works to role-play everything from serious demon-conjuring for ignoble purposes, to magework which is heavily integrated into a campaign (*a la* Tolkien), to Laurel and Hardy-style "let's-try-it-and-see-if-it-gets-us-out-of-this-fix" bumbling.

Appreciation of the virtues of the *DragonQuest* magic system should not, however, deter us from patching minor faults. One such is the way damage spells are handled: Thirty-three spells can inflict direct Fatigue/Endurance loss and can be cast during the Tactical Procedure. All have different descriptions and all can function distinctly in non-combat adventure situations (Ice Projectiles will cool His Majesty's drink. Lightning will light His Majesty's pipe. Both will let everyone know some things are beneath the dignity of His Majesty's court magician). However, in combat, they all blend into a

grey sameness. Each spell has a listed range, a base success chance, a listed effect, and an experience multiple. These numbers vary from spell to spell, yet produce no qualitative difference. Smoking Magma should *play* differently than a Waterspout, just as surely as Diamond Javelins should *feel* different from a Ray of Cold. Even the numerical differences can disappear, as some spells are Ranked faster than others.

Still, some damage spells stand out with unique effects. The Windstorm Spell, the Hand of Death, and all of the College of Celestial Magics damage spells distinguish themselves by the way they play, not just the way the GM describes them. Taking these as examples, I have tried to make every damage spell play differently from the others by incorporating the following changes to the *Effects* given for each spell in the spell descriptions in "The Second Book of *DragonQuest*." (This is the second rulebook, labelled *Magic*.)



Ensorcelments and Enchantments

[36.6] Special Knowledge Spells

2. Bolt of Energy (S-2)

Increase damage listed to D-4 (+Rank). If the victim successfully resists, he may elect to absorb the energy to replace lost Fatigue up to his maximum. Roll damage as normal, *add* the result to target's Fatigue, up to what he has previously lost through other causes. Counterspells (area or personal) against the Bolt of Energy do not aid such attempts; they subtract from the base chance for the cast Bolt of Energy. The Bolt of Energy cannot be cast against someone if the caster hopes to have them resist. Such attempts always cause damage.

Sorceries of the Mind

[37.6] Special Knowledge Spells

4. Molecular Disruption (S-4) (For the

by David McCorkhill

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sake of atmosphere, I call this one "Corporeal Disruption.")

Above Rank 10, caster may specify the body part damaged; above Rank 15, the nature of the damage (e.g., bone break, bleeding, numbness, etc.).**

Air Magics

[40.6] Special Knowledge Spells

1. *Windstorm* (S-1) **

**The double asterisk at the end of the description of spells in this article refers the reader to a rule on Counterspells, found later in this article. Windstorm has no other modifications.

5. *Freezing Wind* (S-5)

Instead of the listed increase in Base Chance of Infection, add 20 to Base Chance of Infection if the victim fails to take some action to warm himself within three minutes of being exposed to the spell. If the victim is travelling in a cold environment, before or after being hit with the spell, add 20 to Base Chance of Infection. These additions may be cumulative.**

6. *Ice Projectiles* (S-6)

Disregard the listed increase in Base Chance of Infection. Instead, anyone who incurs Endurance damage due to this spell suffers a minor curse known as "Sliver of Ice" . . . an indetectibly tiny sliver of ice eventually works its way into the victim's heart. Victims will be cold and uncaring, even to sworn friends. Strangers will be quick to take offense (sometimes merely at the victim's presence). Victims cannot use any empathy or communication spells. Attempts to use

healing spells will always backfire, draining one damage point from the intended beneficiary. (If the cursed Adept is unaware his heart bears the sliver, the GM can hint at this by having the intended beneficiary recoil in terror from the Adept's "icy hands.") The Sliver of Ice may be removed either by the appropriate counterspell (the easy way, if you know it) or by the Remove Curse Ritual (see Rule 84.5).**

7. *Lightning* (S-7)

The Base Chance for this spell should be reduced to 25%, but add 10 if target's armor is plate, scale, or chainmail. Lightning will not rebound from grounded metals (any understanding of this phenomenon should be limited to medieval superstitions about planting lightning rod talismans in the earth).

9. *Weapon of Cold* (S-9)

Eliminate the increase in Base Chance of hitting with the weapon enchanted by this spell. If the victim is travelling in a cold environment, before or after the wounding, add 20 to his Base Chance of Infection, due to the danger of frostbite becoming gangrenous.

13. *Ray of Cold* (S-13)

If the victim fails to take some action to warm himself within three minutes, add 20 to Base Chance of Infection. If the victim is travelling in a cold environment, before or after being hit by a Ray of Cold, add 20 to Base Chance of Infection. These additions may be cumulative. Most inanimate objects will be unaffected by a Ray of Cold, but this spell is the best known way to snuff a fire. As a GM, I play this as the only silent damage spell.

14. *Sleep Gas* (S-14) **

16. *Whirlwind Vortex* (S-16)

No damage if passive resistance is successful. Instead, all of the targets' clothing, armor, and weapons are ripped off and scattered in a 30-foot circle.**

Water Magics

[41.6] Special Knowledge Spells

12. *Waterspout* (S-12)

If passive resistance is successful, damage is reduced from listed to D-5 (+Rank), and all of targets' clothing, armor, and weapons are ripped off and scattered in a 30-foot circle. Reduce the speed at which the Waterspout can be moved to 10 Hexes (+5 per Rank) per Action Round. The chance a vessel which comes in contact with a magic Waterspout will be smashed is $30\% + (3 \times \text{Rank of Adept with the spell}) - (5 \times \text{Rank of Navigator piloting the vessel})$. Roll each Action Round, adding 30 if the vessel is a small craft with insignificant ballast, keel, buoyancy and structural strength (as a canoe or rowboat); subtracting 20 if it is an oceangoing vessel designed to weather storms (presuming it has its sails furled, and keeping in mind that reduced sail area reduces speed and maneuver).**

Fire Magics

[42.6] Special Knowledge Spells

1. *Wall of Fire* (S-1) **

2. *Bolt of Fire* (S-2)

The Bolt will not rebound from ice or water. If it hits water, it fizzles and costs the caster double Fatigue. Hitting non-magical ice, it does double damage. The layer or block of ice should be equated to an equivalent quantity of stone or metal for damage purposes. If the Bolt hits magically-produced ice, the result depends on the passive resistance of the Adept who produced the ice. That Adept's magical resistance is modified by the difference between his Rank with the spell which created the ice and the bolt-thrower's Rank with Bolt of Fire. Successful resistance by the Adept who produced the ice causes the same Fatigue loss as the spell originally cost him, but the ice remains unharmed. If he is unaware his ice is being attacked, chooses not to resist, or fails his resistance check, the ice is completely melted. The Bolt of Fire is then dissipated, and does no further damage.

3. *Ball of Fire* (S-3)

The blast is always circular, never square. At Rank 0, blast radius is reduced to 9 feet.

4. *Web of Fire* (S-4)

Specific methods of extinguishing: counterspell, five gallons of water needed for each Rank the caster has with the Web, closing a door between caster and victim, and certain other magic spells. The Spell of Rain Calling works only if the Caller's Rank with that spell is 15 higher than the Web-caster's Rank; the number of Action Rounds required is 20 + (Rank with Web) - (Rank with Rain Calling). A Ray of Cold may be used to cut the Web in much the same way as given for an edged (Type B) weapon. A Wall of Ice, Stone, or Iron created between the Web's caster and the ensnared victim will extinguish the Web of Fire, but the Web-caster may attempt passive resistance if the Web is cast with higher Rank than the Wall. Magic Resistance for this purpose is modified by the difference in Rank. If successful, such resistance crumbles/melts the Wall, preserves the Web, and costs the Adept the same Fatigue loss as the Web originally cost.**

6. *Imploding Fireball* (S-6)

Eliminate this spell altogether. There are two ways to eliminate a spell you don't want in your campaign: You can tell the players outright, but it's more fun to let them find out for themselves. Simply make sure they never meet anyone who knows it. If they start asking around they may be greeted with shrugs, gales of laughter, references to powerful Adepts of the appropriate College, false quests, or any number of other reactions commonly used to make a particular spell more difficult to acquire. They may be told that the spell they seek is a myth, that its secret was lost by the ancients, that the gods forbid knowledge of it, or that it was the product of a collaboration between a powerful Illusionist and a well-known Adept of the College with which the spell is reputed to be associated. All of this can also be told of ordinary spells. The truth may eventually become known to the player-characters through Astrology, bound ghosts, true-spoken imps, devils or demons, perhaps even the gods themselves.

8. *Demonic Firebolt* (S-8)

Incorporate the same changes as given for *Bolt of Fire* (S-2). In addition, if the backfire minimum is exceeded, note the amount by which it is exceeded and add this to the usual roll on the Backfire Table (Rule 30.1). If the adjusted roll

now exceeds 100%, refer to the Supplemental Backfire Table (42.8, see below).**

9. *Hellfire* (S-9)

Incorporate the same changes as given in this article for the previous spell, and concerning the Supplemental Backfire Table.**

10. *Dragon Flames* (S-10)

Another spell to eliminate.

11. *Web of Dragon Flames* (S-11)

Fans out to half its length at its maximum range. All within that area must resist or become ensnared. One cut will sever it, as provided for the *Web of Fire Spell* (S-4), but if the weapon used is non-magical there is a 10% chance it will disintegrate as it absorbs the full force of the spell. Unsuccessful cutting attempts do not affect a weapon. Only a counterspell will extinguish it.

12. *Storm of Fire* (S-12)

Incorporate the same changes as given in this article for the *Ball of Fire* (S-3).

Earth Magics

[43.6] Special Knowledge Spells

1. *Earth Hammer* (S-1)

If this spell does any damage to either Fatigue or Endurance which exceeds one-sixth of the victim's Endurance, he is stunned (Rule 17.6). If the die roll is 5-15% of the Base Chance to cast, do not double the effect of the spell; apply the damage directly to the victim's Endurance. If the die roll is 5% of the Base Chance to cast or less, do not triple the effect; roll on the Grievous Injury Table, treating the *Earth Hammer* as a Type C weapon.

16. *Smoking Magma* (S-16)

Disregard the given result of one-half

damage after a successful resistance check. Instead, anyone attempting passive resistance does so either by vaulting free, or standing flatfooted to marshal resistance. Anyone taking the "vaulting" option requires a ready, non-missile weapon, weighing at least as much as a scimitar (or object of equal size and weight such as a pole); the weapon will be destroyed by the very hot magma. Anyone taking the "flatfooted" option does take the one-half damage and loses three Agility points. Agility recovers at one point per day; it cannot be reduced below one by this spell.**

17. *Diamond Javelins* (S-17)

Any time a diamond-tipped javelin does damage to the Endurance of anyone in chainmail or scale armor, the armor is considered slit; plate or lamellar armor is considered cracked. Repair costs one-fifth the value of the armor. Damaged armor is not reduced in effectiveness, but it will chafe if worn for long periods. Subtract one Endurance per day from any character who wears such damaged armor longer than one hour.

Celestial Magics

[44.4] General Knowledge Spells

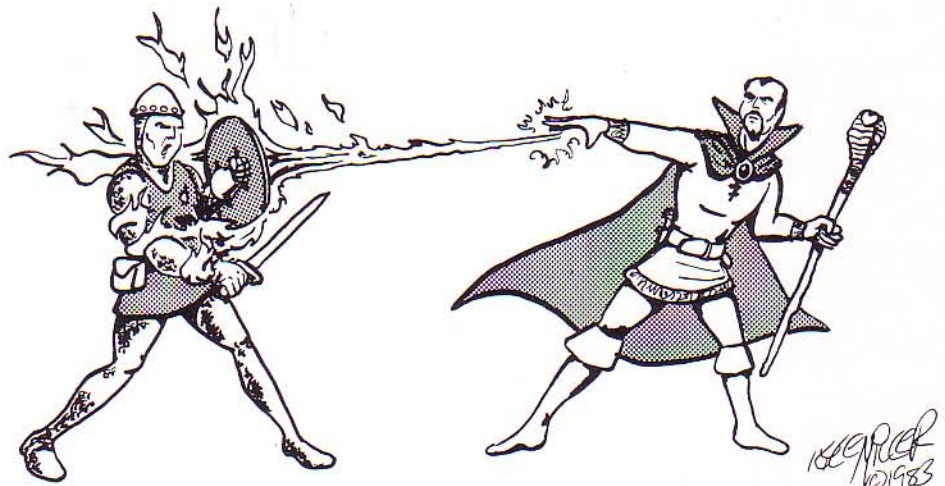
5. *Wall of Starlight* (G-5)**

6. *Wall of Darkness* (G-6)**

[46.6] Special Knowledge Spells

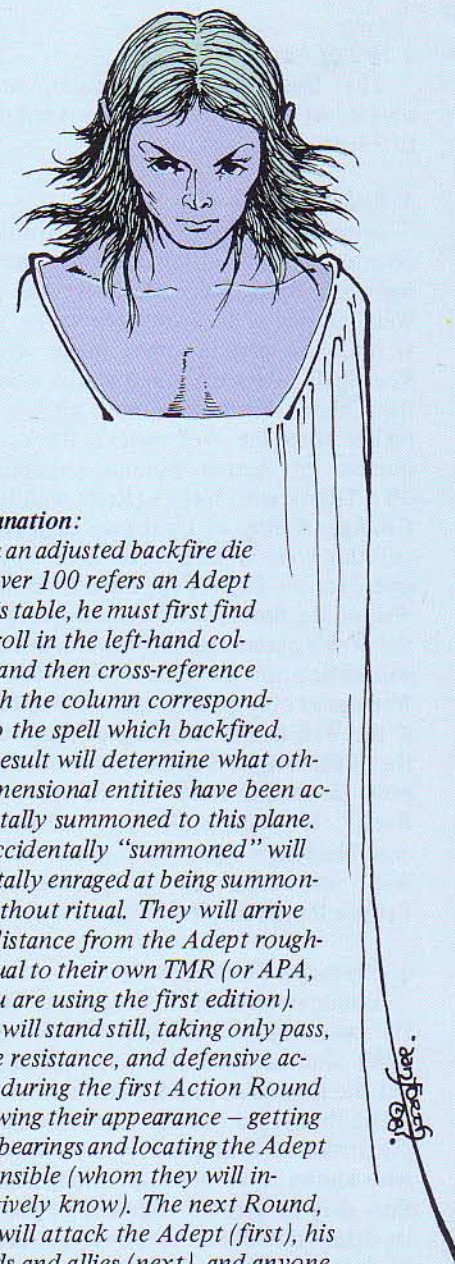
3. *Starfire* (S-3)

Increase damage listed to D-3 (+Rank); Wounds from this spell never become infected. It may be cast at existing wounds to prevent them from becoming infected, but does damage of its own; each wound must be treated separately. For this purpose, the Adept may decrease the damage roll by up to one-fifth of his



[42.8] Supplemental Backfire Table

Die Roll	Demonic Fireball	Hellfire
101 to 115	D-6 Imps (Min:1) D-5 Succubi (Min:0) D-5 Incubi (Min:0)	One Ghost with average characteristics for its race
116 to 125	D-6 Hellhounds (Min:0) D-5 Imps (Min:0) D-6 Devils (Min:1)	One Night-Gaunt with minimum characteristics
126 to 130	Demonic Duke (1:Aim, 2:Bune, 3:Eligos, 4:Furcas, 5:Gremory, 6:Murmur, 7:Uvall, 8:Valefor, 9:Vapula, 10:Zepar)	D-7 Skeletons (Min:1)
131 to 135	Demonic Prince (1-2:Ipos, 3-4:Orobas, 5-6:Seir, 7-8:Sitri, 9-10: Stolas)	D-4 Hellhounds (Min:1)
136 to 140	Demonic President (1-6:Avnas, 7:Camio, 8:Labolas, 9:Malphus, 10:Voso)	D-5 Ghouls (Min:1)
141 to 145	Demonic Earl (1-3:Botis, 4-5:Furfur, 6-7:Malthus, 8-10:Marax)	D-6 Night-Gaunts (Min:1)
146 to 150	Demonic Marquis (1-2:Amon, 3:Andras, 4:Leraje, 5:Marchosias, 6:Naberius, 7:Orias, 8:Phenex, 9:Samigina, 10:Savnok)	D-3 Zombies (Min:1)
151 to 155	Demonic King (1:Asmoday, 2:Bael, 3:Palam, 4-5:Beleth, 6-7:Belial, 8:Purson, 9:Vine, 10:Zagan)	D-8 Barrow Wights (Min:1)
156-7	A Pair of Demonic Dukes	One Wight, D-4 Skeletons (Min:1)
158-9	A Pair of Demonic Princes	One Wight, D-3 Hellhounds (Min:1)
160-1	A Pair of Demonic Presidents	One Wight, D-2 Ghouls (Min:1)
162-3	A Pair of Demonic Earls	One Wight, D-3 Night-Gaunts (Min:1)
164-5	A Pair of Demonic Marquis	One Wight, D Zombies
166	Demonic House (One King and One Prince)	D-5 Efreeti (Min:1)
167-8	A Pair of Demonic Kings	One Wight, D-5 Efreeti (Min:1)
169+	Demonic Court (One King, One Marquis, One Earl, One Prince and Duke; One President also arrives, but he does not join the attack, being content to watch and complain – should this go badly for the demons – that it was all the fault of his predecessor)	One Rank 20 Fire Elemental



Explanation:

When an adjusted backfire die roll over 100 refers an Adept to this table, he must first find that roll in the left-hand column and then cross-reference it with the column corresponding to the spell which backfired. The result will determine what other-dimensional entities have been accidentally summoned to this plane. All accidentally "summoned" will be totally enraged at being summoned without ritual. They will arrive at a distance from the Adept roughly equal to their own TMR (or APA, if you are using the first edition). They will stand still, taking only passive resistance, and defensive actions during the first Action Round following their appearance – getting their bearings and locating the Adept responsible (whom they will instinctively know). The next Round, they will attack the Adept (first), his friends and allies (next), and anyone else (only after the rest have been dispatched). They have no "summoner" for the purpose of being dispelled by a counterspell. They will honor a circle of protection in the unlikely event someone had time to prepare one. Where a die roll is indicated (as in "D-3"), roll 1D10 and subtract the number indicated to determine the number which appears. The minimum number possible is indicated in parentheses. If the minimum number is rolled, all characteristics will be at their maximum value; for each additional entity appearing, subtract one from each characteristic maximum. Wights appearing with other entities will always control all who accompany them, so the attack will be more coordinated. Major demons' exact identities will be determined by die roll: For 126-155 on the Demonic Fireball column, roll 1D10 and find the demon's name in the parentheses; for 156 and up on that column, roll once for each entity and use the appropriate lists.

Willpower, although damage will never be less than D-5.

6. *Web of Starlight* (S-6)**

7. *Web of Blackness* (S-7)**

10. *Black Fire* (S-10)

The Adept may increase the width of the column of flames by one foot per Rank, or may increase the Range by 15 per Rank. Creatures of night and shadow need not roll on the Fright Table. This spell may be used as if it were an edged weapon to cut any Web Spell (except Web of Blackness). Required damage must be done in a single cast.

Necromantic Conjurations

[45.4] General Knowledge Spells

4. *Fire and Brimstone* (G-4)

In addition to regular chance for infection, make the additional check for "inflammation" due to the noxious nature of this blast. Base Chance for inflammation is as infection +20. Inflammation can be avoided by washing the wound with water purified by magic or by an Alchemist.

9. *Ram of Force* (G-9)**

[45.6] Special Knowledge Spells

1. *Causing Wounds* (S-1)

In addition to effects listed, if the victim of this spell inflicted any wounds on any other person between the time this spell was prepared and cast, he automatically incurs an identical wound himself.**

2. *Wall of Force* (S-2)**

11. *Hellfire* (S-11)

Identical to *Hellfire* (S-9) from College of Fire Magics.

Black Magics

[46.6] Special Knowledge Spells

17. *Fire and Brimstone* (S-17)

Identical to *Fire and Brimstone* (G-4) from College of Necromantic Conjurations.

19. *Hellfire* (S-19)

Identical to *Hellfire* (S-9) from College of Fire Magics.

***Important note on the use of counterspells to extinguish, dissipate or otherwise cancel a spell which is already*

in effect: Only Namers may do this and they must use the Ritual of Dissipation [39.5], which takes at least one hour. Accidental summonings (as with Hellfire or Demonic Flame backfire) may not be returned to their dimension by a simple counterspell by their "summoner"; a Namer's Ritual of Dissipation is required. Any damage spell not mentioned in this article will operate as provided in the *DragonQuest* rules.

For Those Who Haven't Tried DQ

Role-players considering *DragonQuest* should understand that the spells listed here are not a representative sample. They are, rather, merely the tip of the magical iceberg. There are a few more which are used in combat, and still more used to prepare for combat, but the great majority are mainly for adventure situations.

I don't want to scare anyone away from this fascinating system by making him think that such a plethora of spells will overwhelm the players. The "college" system allows the GM to keep the ambience under control while limiting the quantity of material players have to absorb.

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by William Peschel

Rocky the Stomper was bored. For the past few years, he and his cohorts had roamed the face of the world, delving in dungeons, overrunning orcs, trifling with temples, and in general behaving like any other normal band of freebooters. He was now a strong and moderately wealthy fighter, so he decided to leave the dangerous underworld for the wider horizons of questing, where the monetary rewards were small, but the personal satisfaction greater. So it was when his small band rode into Rockhollow.

As judge, I ad-libbed Rockhollow as another market town, the capital of a barony whose people were suffering the oppressions of ruinous taxation by the ruler. A gleam came into his eye. He and his companions got together and decided they were going to do something about the situation. He threw caution and his gold to the winds, hired an army, and overthrew the baron, in the end defeating him in personal combat. While he revelled in his new status, a new question arose: Where does Rocky go from here? This question was, incidentally, left for the judge to decide.

Power politics are rarely dealt with in FRP gaming, and for a very good reason. They make for a difficult and subtle campaign, one which requires more diplomatic than combative skills. There are many more variable circumstances for the

judge to consider, and many possible actions a player can take. A party in a dungeon is limited by the walls, and the judge can plan for a finite range of actions. Thrusting the player into the upper classes may require the judge to do a substantial amount of preparation, especially if (as in the case above) the judge had little idea about the region's politics in the first place!

But if the judge is experienced, and is willing to trust in his skill at ad-libbing, running a campaign like this can add another dimension to role-playing.

The major problem (and the solution) to setting up a good "power politics" campaign lies in its preparation. Fortunately, since most FRP games are set in the atmosphere of Western Europe circa the Middle Ages, both the judge and the players have a general knowledge of what to expect, so the basic outlines of a kingdom can be outlined on paper in a few minutes. There are, of course, the king and queen and their relatives. There will probably be a number of dukes, counts and barons, each of whom rules a region and who is responsible for sending a percentage of his taxes to the king every few months. There are royal subordinates who handle taxation, justice, diplomacy, war, and so forth. Religious leaders will probably be distinct from the Crown and very powerful in their own right.

The major workload of this type of campaign is in writing up the NPCs, for it is their characteristics, their strengths, weaknesses, and foibles that will carry a scenario. Of all things, soap operas and situation comedies give you a good idea of what such personalities and power

politics are about. Don't laugh: Once their trappings are taken away, there are many similarities. Each involves a group of people interacting, and it is their personalities — their likes, dislikes, interests, quirks and prejudices — which will usually dictate the outcome of an encounter. When the judge knows what an NPC will like and dislike, an encounter with the player-baron could write itself.

Let us, for example, construct a baronial NPC to interact with Rocky. The scenario is that Rocky needs to gain this baron's cooperation in a power play he's making against another baron. Beforehand, the judge described Lord Hawhaw of the Havens as: "In his late 60s, and pretty set in his ways. Hawhaw has been a member of the nobility all his life, and knows nothing else. He also has a sharp perception of current political situations." We already know about Rocky, and now the judge has an idea of how the situation would go if the two were to meet.

Hawhaw has heard of Rocky's coup, and he will probably dislike the man for several reasons: Rocky won his position not by heredity, but by leading a revolt. Instead of admiring Rocky's spirit, Hawhaw would probably see him as a threat to the status quo, thinking "If they let him get away with that, who's going to stop some barbaric swordsman from doing the same to *me*?" Also, Hawhaw could have been a friend of the former baron! Before Rocky even enters Hawhaw's court, the deck is stacked against him.

All is not lost, however. Rocky could redress the balance in a number of ways, depending upon what the judge feels could affect Hawhaw's attitude. Rocky

could clean himself up and appear as a cultured gentleman rather than a barbarian. He could also attempt to bribe Hawhaw or, if all else fails, offer mutual protection to the old baron.

It sounds like a lot of work, but it can be spread out over a long period of time, depending upon when these characters are introduced. Unless the player spends all of his time in the king's court, he may meet only one or two NPCs at a time. When Baron Rocky was settled in the castle of the former baron, his first order of business was to send his friends into each of the surrounding baronies, bearing letters of greeting. This led to a series of encounters between the noble in question and each one of the players. (Since each player was going to tell Rocky everything about the meeting, I didn't bother sending the rest of the party out of the room.) The emphasis on role-playing enlivened the game and gave each player the opportunity to develop his or her character in depth.

And if there is little going on in court, there is always the baron's responsibility to his land and people to fall back upon. Some people are just as willing to tear down someone as to build him up; in Rocky's case, he had to deal with a Viking raid, a lair of wolves, assorted bandits, and a wizard-trapped tower.

Power also affected the relationship between the characters. Whenever a new situation arose, they turned to Rocky for orders. This experienced group of players then carried out the orders in their own ways, while Rocky stayed behind in the castle. To my surprise, Rocky took the job seriously enough to request a map of his barony, draw up a budget, hire troops, and he worked to secure his land from the outside!

The judge has to maintain the balance between the nobles in the kingdom. In a campaign such as this, everything does not revolve around the player-noble. It is a common practice in *Diplomacy* games that those who are losing will gang up on the winner, and, while there is no one winner in role-playing, the baron who has the ear of the king may find himself hard-pressed to maintain his position of power.

Magic can be a dangerous factor in a campaign like this, and the judge should make every opportunity to discourage its direct use on other NPCs. This rule applies primarily to charm spells; it makes things too easy to substitute spells for negotiation. Fortunately, the need for counter-magic could be anticipated by the nobility. Thus, anti-magic amulets would be everywhere, and — like weapons — spell-casting would definitely be banned in court. The judge could carry it a step

further, and make spell-casting a sign of weakness among the chivalry.

For scenario suggestions, one need only draw from history. Most nobles were striving for two goals: to protect the power they have, and to gain more power. Power can be reflected in a number of ways: influence over the king and the royal family, a wealthy treasury, additional jobs within the king's court, and influence over other nobles. The means to protect and acquire one's power can be either violent or non-violent, but the emphasis should be on the latter. Dead nobles are worthless NPCs, although a revenge scenario could make a nice adventure. Non-violent means should be left up to the players' imaginations.

The following scenarios could be developed with a player-noble:

● **Tax Time!** Many a battle royal has been fought over money. The king has decreed an emergency war tax which could cause peasant uprisings were it to be collected. There are a number of options for the beleaguered baron: dip into his private treasury; appeal to the king to reduce the tax; collect it anyway, and suffer the consequences; or even head for the nearest dungeon.

● **War!** Due to the player-noble's great experience in the art of war, the

king has decided to put him in charge of an armed force. Such an appointment could guarantee a lot of jealousy from other nobles and officers, and trouble for the player. The other players can act as spies, scouts, fighters, or command smaller units. It can also be the ultimate hack-and-slash fantasy, especially if it's a cavalry raid.

● **The King Is Dead! The Succession is on!** This would take more preparation, since the personalities of the pretenders must be worked out. Fortunately, the judge could limit them to three, define their influences, and let the campaign consist of the player-baron deciding which candidate to throw his lot toward. A wrong decision could be dangerous, while a correct choice leads to even greater glory!

Finally, a political campaign will expand a campaign to the point that dungeon-squashing becomes idle pastime (when our heroes want to escape the pressures of wheeling-and-dealing), where a character finds that all his fighting prowess is of no avail against the idle whim of a member of the royal family, and where characters with names like Rolf Tirebiter start to feel a trifle silly and concentrate more on character development. It's worth a try.

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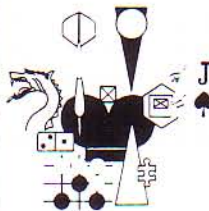
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Featured Review: *Silverdawn*

by W. S.
Armintrout

"Bimdos was an interesting fellow. Being a dwarf, he had always been pushed along toward learning the traditional mining, smelting, and construction that the dwarves were so famed for. But Bimdos had read a lot, and was 'enchanted' by magic. In secret, he sought out the few remaining dwarven mages. They were delighted to have a pupil, and Bimdos showed a remarkable aptitude to learn their magic. Thus the hearty little [fellow] learned little or nothing that dwarves were 'supposed' to know, but learned a great deal of lore and magic. He finally decided to leave the Crystal Dome mountains of his youth, and so arrived in the great city of Valapar."

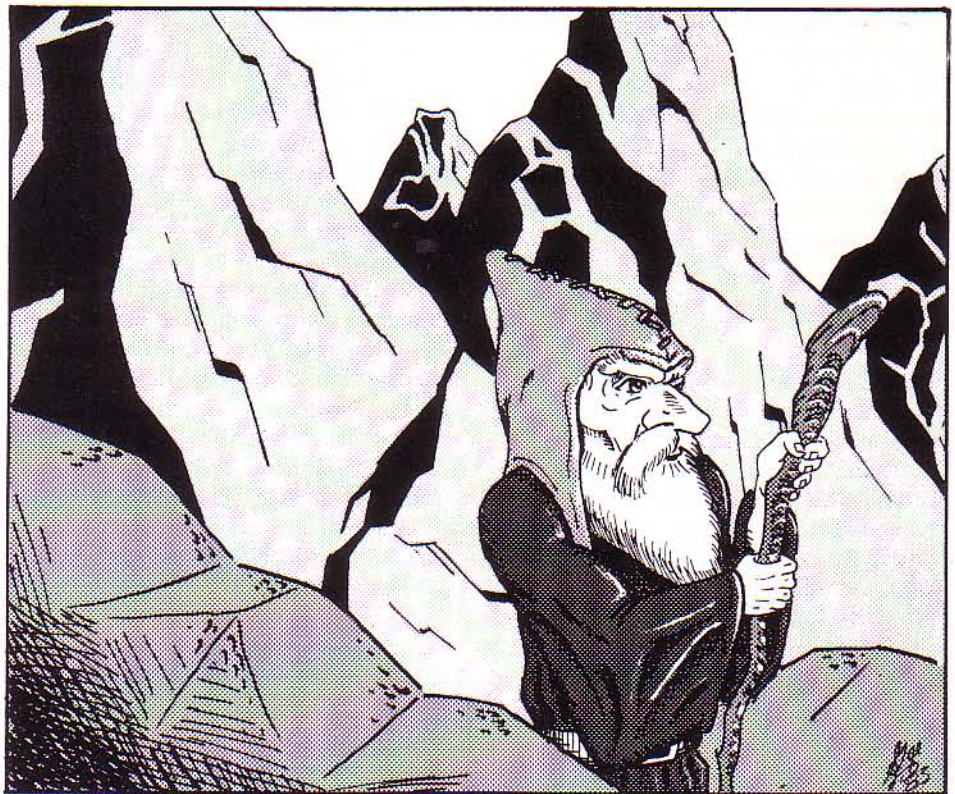
— "Move 2: The Three S's"

Silverdawn

The above is an extract from the adventures of Bimdos Glick, dwarven mage, as moderated by Entertainment Concepts, Inc. (ECI) in their *Silverdawn* play-by-mail game. *Silverdawn* is perhaps the best of the new fantasy role-playing PBMs: the excerpts from Bimdos' adventures should give you some clue as to the nature of the game.

The most striking thing about *Silverdawn* (and its relative, *Star Trek - The Correspondence Game*) is that it is a solitaire game — you *never* run into any other players! You might picture the game as a gigantic "solo" dungeon, with scores of adventures set up and ready to be played (and replayed and replayed — the same scenario can be played by hundreds of characters, even at the same time, since all of the play is "solo" and does not affect other characters).

Silverdawn may have struck paydirt with its solo format. Without having to worry about player interactions, and



associated record-keeping and deadline problems, the game has managed to run smoothly and on time. More importantly, since the "solo" concept allows each adventure to be played many, many times, *Silverdawn* has less trouble than most other games in keeping up-to-date with new adventures and scenarios. In short, a "solo" fantasy role-playing PBM is easier to run.

"Bimdos gathered together three of his best friends and after the preparations that he felt were necessary for travel and danger, was ready to leave Valapar . . . The ranger Glinthol was constantly on the watch for danger in any form, and contributed to the group's fortunes with a little hunting. Cyril the cleric kept protective wards around the camp each night . . . Hinlo the fighter warned that things would liven up considerably once they got into the mountains."

— "The Three S's"

A *Silverdawn* player starts with the rulebook, a 16-page 8½" x 11" nicely-arranged booklet. The majority of the book concerns itself with character design.

The game system uses ten attributes — strength, dexterity, endurance, tenacity, willpower, intuition, lore, beauty, charm and magic resistance — rated from 1 to 15 (or perhaps higher — 15 is the highest I've yet seen on a starting character). Although a player knows his character's general abilities from looking at his attributes, the rules provided give no

guides as to how well a 4 DEX can jump a chasm or a 10 STR can throw a boulder.

Each character also has ratings, ranging from 0 to more than 120 points, for nine Abilities. (The highest rating for a starting-level character I've seen is 42). Abilities are like "classes" in most other RPGs, except that the character has a rating for *all* abilities even though he must specialize in one. Thus, a Thief character has his best rating in Thief Ability, but might have ratings for Fighter, Spy and Merchant as well.

The abilities are:

Minstrel — wandering musician or bard, knowing a little entertainment-style magic.

Spy — adept at disguise, lying and eavesdropping.

Fighter — (obvious).

Thief — thieves pick pockets, open locks, climb walls, move silently, find traps, appraise worth, and hear well.

Merchant — travelling businessmen who are often charismatic, good at finding objects, making contacts, and appraising worth.

Engineer — handymen who build (or disarm) gadgets, build bridges, drain lakes, and figure out where secret rooms must be.

Ranger — woodsmen who track, hunt and scout.

Mage — magic-users, in four varieties.

Cleric — priests serving one of *Silverdawn's* 30 "gods."

"Then one day they began to see the cloud-

shadowed peaks ringing above them . . . As they camped at its base that night, Glinthol warned of the dangers to come. He explained that the lower reaches of the mountain were inhabited by hill and stone giants. These creatures, besides being naturally unfriendly, loved to eat people. For this reason they would be especially careful to avoid being spotted by the giants . . ."

— "The Three S's"

The rulebook also explains the magic system, perhaps the most unusual design feature of *Silverdawn*.

There are four types of mages: *Sorcerer*, who uses elemental magic and natural forces; *Wizard*, who uses the power of mind and spirit; *Conjurer*, who has mastered the art of changing physical forms and summoning; and *Enchanter*, who makes physical objects perform magical tasks.

Once he has chosen a category, a player may select spells for his character. But, to quote the rulebook: ". . . your Mage will not be restricted by contrived rules that limit his number of spells available for use. In fact, he can try any spell that you can conceive." In other words, except for a few "universal" spells — Detect Magical Presence, Protect

Object, Detect Enemies, Remove Enchantment, Enhance Charm — all spells are player-designed! You make up the spell, and hope the GM likes it or gives you a reasonable chance of pulling it off. Characters start with the universal spells, plus designed spells (two defensive spells, two offensive spells, and one miscellaneous spell).

Clerics are somewhat similar. Having chosen a god to serve, the cleric receives the "universal" rites or ceremonies — Heal/Inflict Wounds, Christening, Death Rites, Wedlock, Exorcism, Wards (to call or banish enchanted creatures), and Excommunication (with approval from church councils).

A rite is a ritual and so takes time to do. A rite will either work by itself, or invoke a minion of the god who may or may not grant the cleric's wishes. A cleric's advantage is that he can freely improvise any sort of rite he wants . . . but his god is free to ignore him.

Clerics can also tame the animals associated with their god, and have leadership abilities.

"A huge boulder suddenly sailed past the group, almost hitting Bimbos! The ranger immediately spotted the creature and began shooting arrows at him. Cyril caused some small

flames to appear under the giant. It didn't last long, but it caused the giant to panic and drop the boulder on his foot. Bimbos noticed an overhang behind the giant, and used his weaken stone spell to erode its base. In moments the rock slid down and buried the giant!"

— "Move 3: Locating the Mine"

To start the game, a player sends in a request to join up along with a preference for one of the nine "classes." ECI responds with a computer-printed character sheet and the rulebook.

The player then chooses race, sex, name, weapons and possibly spells. Not all races are available for every class, but seven non-human possibilities exist: elf, dwarf, halfling, gnome, half-elf, half-dwarf, and "Haffer" (half-halfling). Chosen race will modify attributes.

The last page of the rulebook also contains "Move 1: Finding Yourself in Valapar." Valapar is the great city at the center of Silverdawn, capital of the Golden Empire. It is 40 leagues in diameter, and magic flows like water. All characters begin their game by arriving in Valapar. The immediate challenge is to decide what you want your character to do, and then write instructions for the GM to bring such a situation about.

Company Report: Entertainment Concepts, Inc.

by Jim Dutton

Entertainment Concepts is now two years old. I started the company (while still a systems analyst with Computer Task Group, Inc.) thinking it would be a part-time hobby endeavor: Within three months I found out differently. Response to the first three *Silverdawn* ads was so good that I had to make a career decision between my "part-time" business and my full-time job. I decided to chance going out on my own; thankfully, it's worked out well.

Our first product was *Silverdawn*, a correspondence fantasy role-playing game. It was first advertised in July, 1981 and play began in November of that year. Since that time, more than 2500 players have entered *Silverdawn*, and we have processed thousands of moves. Players write instructions for their characters that encompass any plans or ambitions they can think of; turn results are written in a fantasy prose format. Over the course of time players actually wind up with a fantasy "book" where they play the main character(s).

Star Trek, The Correspondence Adventure, our second game, began play in October of 1982. Already we have more than 1500 players in the game. Game play is very similar to that of *Silverdawn*, except it is run in a science fiction setting. The player takes on the role of a starship captain with 419 crewmembers under his/her command. The game is designed to play as if the player were Kirk on the TV series. According to our players, it does just that.

My background and approach to designing work make both games quite different from any other professionally-run correspondence game on the market. At the time I designed *Silverdawn*, I was much more familiar with fantasy role-playing games than with PBM games. Therefore, *Silverdawn* was designed as a fantasy role-playing game played through the mail, rather than a war/diplomacy PBM in a fantasy setting. The same applies to *Star Trek, The Correspondence Adventure*. The difference in design philosophy makes for a game that plays entirely different from the "traditional" PBM format. The major effect is that the game winds up with a predominant emphasis on the adventure as an interesting story and mental challenge, rather than a game of warfare and number-crunching. Obviously, both types of games have their own merits and following, but I think it is a good idea for gamers to know the difference in the two styles.

ECI's performance in processing turns has had its ups and downs (mainly when I was the only gamemaster) but the overall performance has been very satisfactory. Over the last year, the average turnaround time for *Silverdawn* is less than four days, *Star Trek* is even less. Each of our games features a free monthly newsletter and contests with cash and freemoves prizes.

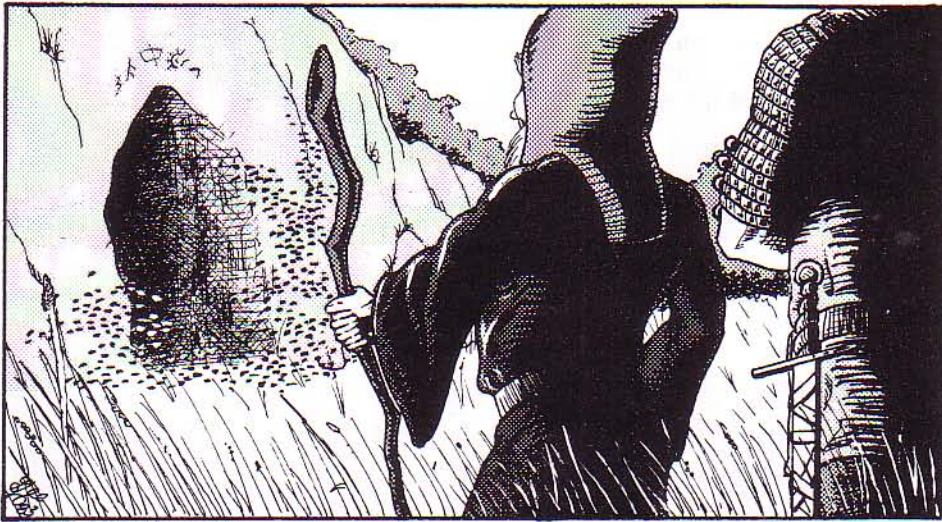
Our company has grown rather rapidly due to the quickly-increasing popularity of our games. A year ago, I was the only game-

master, with my wife helping with the paperwork. At the end of April '83 we will employ five full-time gamemasters and two full-time clerks handling paperwork. In that time we have also expanded from one very old microcomputer to four new microcomputers and three printers.

In addition to our two correspondence games, ECI continues to publish a successful series of fantasy modules. "The World of Silverdawn" is a full campaign-world with a large four-color map and a Geopolitical Guide which provides details for the map. We have three campaign aids (rules systems for organizations or areas in the world): *High Ranger Guard, Society of Sorcery, and Bavenlon, Danger in the Dark Forest*. Our three adventure modules are *The Plateau, Capital of Evil, Search for the Crystal Sword, and Search for the Lost City*.

We have just released a new module, *Peddler's Ferry*, and will soon be releasing *The Village of North Landing* and *Long Live the King*. Two additional modules are in the works: *The Crystal Domes* and *Wizards Island*. All of these modules are designed so they can easily be played with any fantasy role-playing system. Within the next year we hope to develop a set of "play at home" rules for our *Silverdawn* PBM.

That, in a nutshell, is Entertainment Concepts. For more information on our tournament and products, you can write ECI, 6923 Pleasant Drive, Charlotte, NC 28211.



"When a week was up, the group had searched far and wide for gold deposits. They'd had little luck. But one afternoon they found a regularly shaped cave opening. It was too regular not to have been shaped by intelligent hands. Bimdos knew that there were many mines in the mountains that had been abandoned during the start of the Dark Years, and maybe this was just such a mine! But Bimdos also noticed some runes carved into the rock above the opening that warned of some ancient evil within! Also, Glinthol noted signs of goblins in the vicinity!"

— "Move 3: Locating the Mine"

Moves can be up to three pages (700-800 words), and are written in plain English. It's as simple as can be — players simply write down what they want their character to do.

The detail of the move will determine the detail and length of the turn sent by ECI. If a player says, "I want to travel to Eagle's Perch," he might end up with a one-page reply. On the other hand, if the player specifies what he wants to do while traveling (improving talents, or scouting for information) and gives instructions to keep the action moving (such as what he wants to do in Eagle's Perch once he gets there), his turn might very well be ECI's two-page response maximum.

Part of the art of enjoying *Silverdawn*, therefore, lies in learning how to give useful instructions to the GM.

"As the roof several feet away crashed down, the huge tumble of rock caused the floor to cave in and it continued as the whole floor gave way beneath them!! Bimdos could remember nothing of the next few seconds other than a frenzied crawling and rolling about to escape being crushed in the falling rock and dirt!

"When the dust cleared they were in a

tunnel, deeper than the one they had been in. The way back up was blocked by the cave-in, and Cyril had disappeared. He was somewhere in the middle of the tons of rocks that the other three had barely avoided. The men lit new torches and set out, trying to find an exit from these accursed tunnels."

— "Move 5: Gold and Greed"

The turns from ECI are one to two pages long, and are computer-printed. Conveniently at the top are the company name and address, player name, turn number and that turn's title. (All turns have titles — that adds to the flavor of the game.)

Following the title comes the narrative, paragraphs describing what has happened this turn. The writing style is serviceable and sometimes excellent. On the other hand, glitches in spelling and grammar, even words missing from sentences, show up regularly.

At the end of the turn comes Notes from the GM. These include bonuses gained to abilities or attributes that turn, comments from the GM (if any), and the signature of the GM who processed the turn.

"Finally they came to an opening. The light from their torches revealed the tops of crumbling buildings rising before them! . . . the cavern was so immense that the torchlight was swallowed after only a fraction of its diameter. Bimdos was able to create a brief but strong light in the top of the cavern . . . and it revealed an incredible sight!

"The men got just a glimpse of a long dead city in a huge cavern . . . In the center of the city was a huge mound of gold, with occasional other gleaming bits reflecting from it! . . . the party moved back from the opening and began planning what to do . . ."

— "Move 5: Gold and Greed"

Adventure quality and game-mastering skill can make or break a game like *Silverdawn*.

To test ECI's ability to accommodate unusual characters, I purposely designed my Bimdos Glick character to be out-of-the-ordinary — a magic-using dwarf in search of gold deposits. To my surprise, ECI handled that without problem.

To try them further, I gave orders for something that I knew they couldn't have in their adventure file. I sent Bimdos to taverns seeking to gain the favor of the servants of important nobility, to spread the rumor of gold in a certain mountain range. Then I sent the dwarf to seek an interview with the top men of the Empire concerning a mining expedition.

Once again, ECI handled it smoothly and to my satisfaction.

My conclusion is that ECI and *Silverdawn* are ready for any character's quest, regardless of whether they have an adventure already made or not. I was also pleased with the quality of the adventures I saw — they were not simple scenarios, but had depth.

As for game-mastering, I found no mistakes in the way they processed my moves. No complaints. The best I can come up with are two minor quibbles:

(1) I felt that ECI was willing to go out of its way to keep a player character from dying. That's fine — *so long as* there is some penalty for stupid play (loss of attribute points, loss of NPC companions, bad reputation, etc.). There shouldn't be too much protection for player characters.

(2) The adventures sometimes seem to clank along mechanically, regardless of what a player does. In the excerpts, I have the feeling that the tunnel would have collapsed for *any* player in this adventure. It's a matter of taste, but I'd prefer there to be some way for players to avoid falling down the cave-in or not to set it off at all (and I'm not the game-master . . . maybe there is, and I don't know it).

Final conclusions: *Silverdawn* is the best commercial RPG in the play-by-mail field that I'm aware of. The game works smoothly. The adventures are fun. The game mastering is fair. ECI is reliable and dependable.

I had fun with the game. I recommend it.

Silverdawn (Entertainment Concepts, Inc.); \$7/set-up (\$3/additional set-ups), \$3/turn. Designed by Jim Dutton. Human-moderated with computer assistance, play-by-mail. Solitaire; turn-around time 2½ weeks.



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COMPANION

Some time ago, Chaosium's professionally produced fanzine *Wyrms' Footnotes* ceased publication, and *RuneQuest* fans had no official source of information (though *WF*'s sister publication, *Different Worlds*, has published *RQ* articles). Now the *RuneQuest Companion* has arrived to take up the slack.

Described as a sourcebook, *RQC* consists of a potpourri of material about *RQ*'s native world Glorantha, some new rules for *RuneQuest*, a short story, and a solo adventure.

A new cult compatibility chart is provided, along with an index to all *RQ* cults published by Chaosium so far. The *RQ* errata are also presented, in case you haven't already seen them.

Fragments of the Jonstown Compendium present data and legends about Glorantha. While these are brief, they are good sources of ideas for a Gloranthan campaign. There are also several short extracts from old *WF*s, which give additional Gloranthan flavor. Unfortunately, most of the latter were written for the game *White Bear, Red Moon* (since retitled *Dragon Pass*), before *RQ* was out.

New are a look at Prax's only food crop (the skullbush), more on trolls, and unicorns for *RQ*. These are by Sandy Petersen, and well thought out.

Greg Stafford presents a rational but

restrictive section on *RQ* illusions. It takes a minimum of three rune spells to get an illusion which begins to shape up to an *AD&D* Phantasmal Force (which may not be a bad thing . . .).

He has also written the mythos and history of the Holy Country, which is ruled by the Pharaoh and located to the southwest of the Dragon Pass map in *RQ*. While this section fills an important gap in the Glorantha map, the mentions of the area in *Trollpak* had led me to expect more. And, annoyingly, the map doesn't quite agree with the map in the *RQ* book, and is in a different scale.

A detective story by Alan LaVergne involves the use of *RQ* magic. I enjoyed it, but don't recommend it as a way to get readers of fantasy or detective stories interested in *RQ*.

LaVergne has also written another of his solitaire scenarios. In this one, the player tries to navigate an artificial maze and locate the magician who built it. I'm pretty neutral about solo adventures, but this one was well handled. There are elements of chance (i.e., you get to make dice rolls), a touch of humor, lots of chances to use different skills, and even the opportunity to do some rudimentary role playing. Unfortunately, completing the maze was frustrating (as well as relatively deadly), at times reminding me

of my least favorite parts of computer word adventure games. Once completed, this solo isn't well-suited to replay.

My overall impression of the *Companion* is that it's a deluxe *Wyrms' Footnotes* (a feeling perhaps enhanced by the reprints from old issues). I was disappointed at the lack of actual game material — I have the feeling I won't need to refer to the *Companion* much during play or setup.

Those who don't play *RQ* won't find much of interest, so there it's unlike other *RuneQuest* products such as *Trollpak*. Even many *RQ* players won't need the *Companion*. Those who campaign in Glorantha will find it useful, though not an absolute essential.

The *RuneQuest Companion* is not a bad product, but neither is it an especially good one. If you play *RQ*, you might want to get a copy, especially if you play in Glorantha or haven't seen the older issues of *Wyrms' Footnotes*.

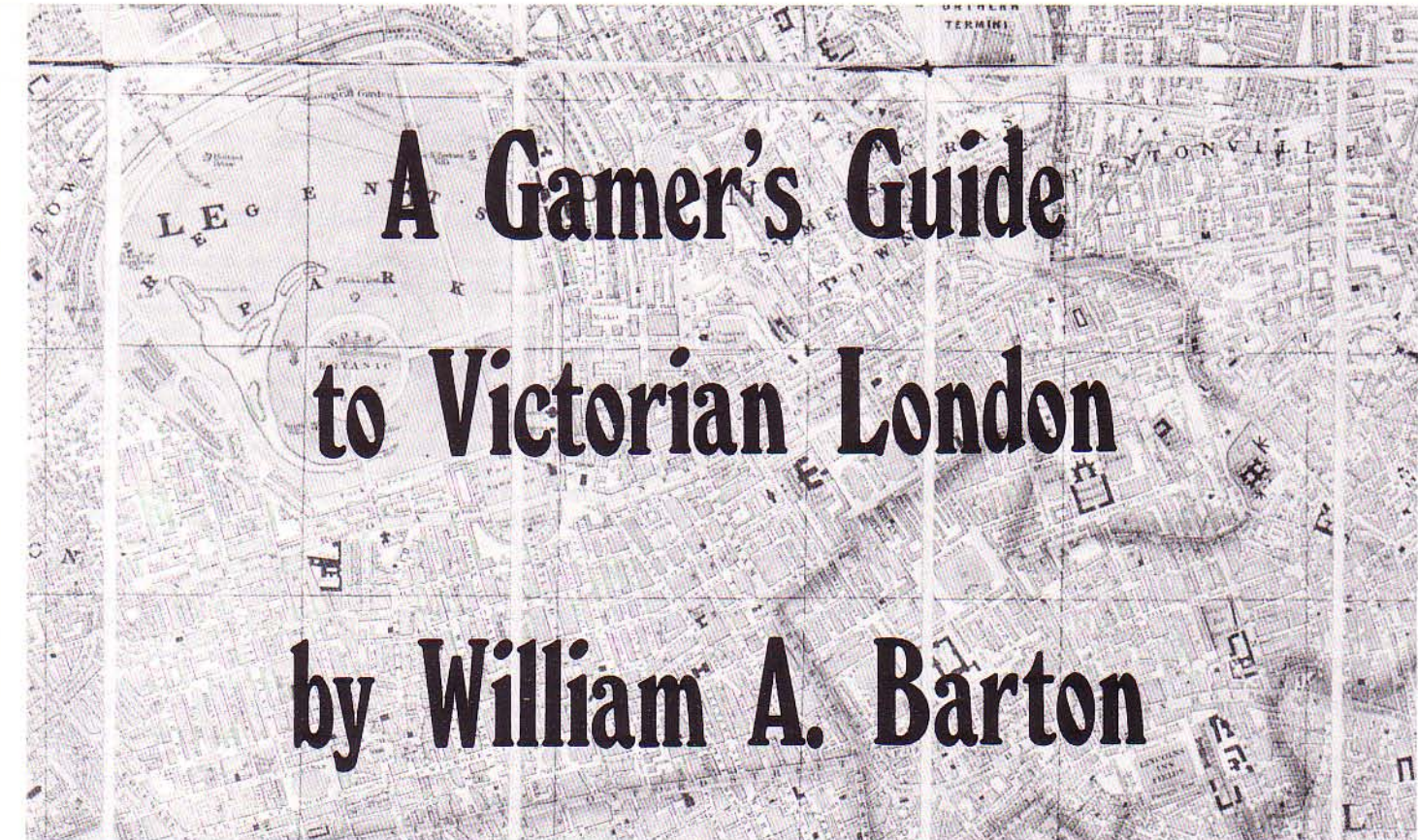
★ ★ ★

RuneQuest Companion (Chaosium); \$8.00. Written by Bill Johnson, Sherman Kahn, Alan LaVergne, Jim McCormick, Ron Nance, Sandy Petersen, and Greg Stafford. Illustrated by Rich Becker, William Church, Gene Day, Kevin Ramos, and Steve Swenston. One 72-page, 8½" x 11" softcover booklet.

review



by David Dunham



A Gamer's Guide to Victorian London

by William A. Barton

The Victorian Era was a bright, hopeful one for Britain, perhaps the last the country would see. The British Empire was at its height, and to the average Briton, it seemed that nothing could dampen the indomitable spirit of the time. The average Briton, too, was completely convinced of the **rightness** of the British way of life. True, he was aware of the sufferings of the poor and of the too-often excesses of the upper classes, but these were viewed as temporary situations, something that the inevitable progress of the British way would eventually solve. If he thought anything at all about the colonies and the natives who sometimes had to be subjugated, he thought only that they were misguided, uneducated chaps who merely had to be taught the British order of things, after which they should gladly come into the fold. After all, there was no better way of life than that of the British subject, be he walking the streets of London or the jungles of India.

Those who look back upon the Victorians as stodgy and colorless, or backward, have not looked closely at the era. The Victorian age was a time of great strides in invention, in social progress, in the arts and elsewhere. Much that we consider modern had its roots in the Victorian age. New inventions – the automobile, radio, electric lighting – either first appeared or were perfected in Victorian times. New sciences and strides in medicine and disease control made possible the increased population growth of this century. In social ideas, the Victorians, while generally conservative, were not backward. “Free love” was not a term born of the 1960s – many Victorian writers and socialists, H.G. Wells among them, used the term in their writings.

Although the whims of royalty still sometimes served to guide government policy (note the building act that prevented the building of skyscrapers in London for some 60 years because a new project was so high it cut off Queen Victoria's view), for the most part the duty of governing the empire was in the hands of the politicians and diplomats – the Disraelis, Gladstones and Salisburys – and in Parliament. Still, royalty was venerated with a love we might find hard to understand in this age of quickly-elected and just as quickly-deposed leaders. After all, Victoria had ruled longer than any British monarch in history; to many, she was Britain. And if the Prince of Wales was just a bit too flaunting of social conventions, well, it was excusable. He was, after all, the heir to the throne and would someday come under the burden of leadership. And his excesses made him seem somehow closer to the common man, who could live vicariously through the Prince's exploits.

And except for the radical socialists, those who believed that Ireland should have home rule or who advocated the abolition of royalty altogether, no one doubted that England would remain on top of the world, despite internal troubles or external threats. While the British army could at most field only half as many men as could the armies of

France or Germany, the British navy ruled the waves with more capital ships than all its rivals combined.

This was England of the Victorian Era. Full of vitality, full of hope for tomorrow, the British could not foresee any time in the future in which the sun would ever set on their empire. Yet, as the brightness of the time, personified in the new electric illumination, pushed out the dimness of the past, there still remained dark spots in the soul of the city. In the dim-lit, fog-strewn streets of London lurked hints of both ancient evil and of the darkness that was to quench the bright hope of the Victorians in the coming war and decline of the empire. Jack the Ripper stalked the streets of London. The poor still died in the streets of disease, their bodies gnawed by rats, in the dingy recesses of the East End. Girls still found it necessary to sell their bodies to live (though some, known euphemistically as “adventuresses,” found they could live quite nicely in the oldest profession if they should find the right patron – one wealthy and with a title).

But above it all, the light that was England managed to sweep away much of the darkness, bringing the world a little closer to the modern era into which we were all born. There was adventure in Victorian times for those who chose to seek it out. There were great strides and great failures. And most importantly, there was the will to try – to attempt to overcome the past, while preserving the best of tradition, to push forward and make the world an even better place for their children. Whether the Victorians succeeded or failed is not the point. Without their efforts, we would not be as we are today.

Introduction

The London of the Victorian era, a city immortalized both in history and fiction, has long captured the imaginations of many of us who live in more complicated times. It seems only natural, therefore, that Victorian London could serve admirably as a background for that most imaginative of modern pastimes – role-playing. It is with that idea in mind that this role-playing guide to Victorian London was conceived and executed. The following information is designed to allow the game-master to place player-characters from virtually any RP system into the London of the 1880s-90s.

Of course, every aspect of Victorian London couldn't possibly be included in an article such as this (whole volumes have been written on the subject – see the reading list at the end). Included instead are those aspects that would be of the most use and interest to gamers wishing to visit the London of Sherlock Holmes, H.G. Wells and Jack the Ripper. These include brief biographies of famous historical and fictional personalities (the most popular of whom are presented in a separate section in generic RPG stats, similar to those used in “The Haunting of

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Harkwood" in *Space Gamer* 63); notes on the coin of the realm, prices, clothing styles and other common items; a timeline of important events in history during the Victorian years (including a few notable fictional events); a map of Victorian London with important locations noted in an accompanying gazetteer; and other odd bits of information on transportation, communications, and so on. For those who wish to delve much deeper into the subject, I've included a reading list of books and other sources consulted during preparation of this scenario package.

If you're ready, put on your deerstalker, load up your Webley service revolver and prepare to enter the fog-strewn streets of Victorian London — where the game's always afoot.

The Coin of the Realm

The standard unit of currency in Victorian England was, and still is, the pound/sterling (£). The British pound was, at that time, worth about five U.S. dollars. Unlike the tidy decimal system used today, however, the pound was made up of 20 shillings, each of which equalled 12 pence. While bank notes, usually issued by the bank of England, were in use in denominations of £5, £10, £20, £50, £100, £200, £300, £500 and £1,000, coins were the most prominent medium of exchange.

The shilling, a silver coin equalling 12 pence, or pennies, was the most common coin other than the penny itself. Much could be purchased for a shilling in Victorian times. The slang term for a shilling was a "bob." Sums in shillings were noted by the abbreviation "s." (five shillings = 5s.).

Previously copper coins, pennies were by mid-Victorian times minted in bronze. Twelve to a shilling, 240 to a pound, the lowly penny was *not* the smallest monetary unit of Victorian England. There was also the half-penny (known commonly as the ha'penny) and the farthing, which equalled a quarter penny (from fourthing). There was even a copper half-farthing minted intermittently. The penny itself was indicated by a "d." (derived from the Roman *denarius*, which like the early British penny was a silver coin). When used with shillings, however, the designation was "/" as in 10/4, or ten shillings, four pence.

Moving upward in value we have the silver threepence (or thrupence), which, as its name implies, is equal to three pence (there was also a twopence — or tuppence — coin, though it was not in general circulation at this time). The silver sixpence, or "half-shilling," equalled six pennies. It was often called by its slang name, "tanner": Three bob and a tanner = 3/6.

Several other silver coins were common in Victorian times. The florin was worth two shillings (2/-). The crown was a five-shilling piece (5/- or 5s.), and the half-crown equalled 2/6, or two shillings, sixpence.

Four gold coins, and possibly a fifth, were in general circulation in the times covered by this article. The chief among these was the gold sovereign, the standard coin of exchange, equaling 20s. or one pound sterling. Whenever £1 was paid out, unless the sum were paid in shillings, the sovereign was the monetary unit used. The sovereign was known in slang as a "quid." Other gold coins in general circulation were the half-sovereign (10/-), the two-pound piece and the five-pound piece. The fifth gold coin mentioned was the guinea. Originally a gold coin equal to 21 shillings, the guinea was more a monetary unit than an actual coin by late Victorian times, though some were still in circulation. The higher-priced stores of the times often listed their prices in guineas rather than pounds, since 20 guineas sounded less than £21 (much as \$4.98 sounds like less than \$5.00). There was also a half-guinea coin, but it, too, had come to represent a unit more than a circulating coin by late Victorian times.

A few last notes on paper money: British pound notes of the time bore little resemblance to what we think of as "money" today. They were closer in nature to the original bank notes, which were actually promissory notes, with the bank as the promisor and a named individual as payee. The Bank of England note originally specified a date on which it was to be paid. Unlike our dollar, with its silk threaded paper, Bank of England notes used distinctive watermarks as a safeguard against counterfeiting. Pound notes were also huge, ungainly bills compared to modern bills.

Devious referees can cause a great deal of confusion among characters from other eras — or even other countries of the same era — who are unfamiliar with British currency. Having different NPCs refer to the same type of coin by its proper name and its slang term can be especially frustrating to a character attempting to learn the local monetary system, as can prices marked using the different designations for shillings and pence (it can be particularly gratifying, once they

learn that "s." stands for shilling, watching them trying to figure out what "d." means). And if any player-character fancies himself a counterfeiter, let him take a stab at a few pound notes.

Price List of Common Items

Following is a general list of prices of common items that transient characters to Victorian London might find of use — food, clothing, lodging and so on. A few common weapons (revolver, shotgun, foils) have been included as well for those player-characters of a violent bent who find themselves unarmed in the city of Jack the Ripper. (Note that characters from a pre-firearms era — fantasy or medieval — should be given stiff to-hit penalties when using firearms.) If characters wish to purchase items other than those listed here (for example, the cost of a lady of the evening — high or low class — is not found below), the GM may extrapolate from the prices quoted, comparing those with similar costs in the RP system used, and devising comparative costs for nonlisted items. Price lists from games immediately preceding and following the period of this article (old west or 1920s RPGs, for instance) may be used as a guide, and any Sears catalog reproductions from the turn of the century may prove helpful. Always remember in conversions the rough equivalency of five dollars to the pound (or \$1 = 4s.). Prices for other items may be found in some of the reference works listed in the reading list. Also note that, since the era covered by the timeline of this article extends some 30 years, prices listed may be somewhat less toward the beginning of the period and more toward the end. These are meant to be used as a general guide; a GM shouldn't worry if he's charged a group of players a few pence or even a shilling too much — chances are they'll never notice (unless an NPC has just fleeced them too obviously).

<i>Goods/Service</i>	<i>Price</i>
A good breakfast	1s.
A good lunch	2/6
A good dinner	3s.
Mug of stout (beer, ale)	2½d.
Glass of whiskey	3d.
Bottle of expensive whiskey	6s.
Bottle of good wine	4s.
Average suit of clothes	25s. (and up)
Good suit	30s. (and up)
Dress suit	5 guineas (and up)
Pair of boots	1 guinea
Shirt	3/9-4/6
Hat	3/9-10/6
Hotel lodging (average to good)	5s.-25s./night
Attendance at West End Theatre (standing/seats/boxes)	2/6, 10/6-15s., 1½-6 guineas
Tip to porter	6d.
Hansom cab fare (one hr. within four mile radius)	1-2s. 6d. + 6d./extra person
Omnibus fare	3d. (1-6d.)
London guidebook	2s.
Underground fare, station to station or complete circuit	2d.
Telegram	6d.
Postage (1½ oz. letter)	1d.
Revolver (Webley)	£5 10s.
Box of 100 revolver bullets	11/6
Shotgun, 12 g., double-barrelled	£7
Box of 50 shotgun shells	10s.
Cavalry sabre	10s.
Rapier	£1 2s.

Clothing Styles of the Day

While clothing styles of the early Victorian period were quite colorful, the styles, for men at least, took a more somber turn toward the end of the 19th century. Black, grey and other dark colors were the rule in men's clothing. Shirts for both casual and formal wear tended toward white. The "Prince Albert" or double-breasted frock coat with silk-face lapel, narrow waist and closed skirt front was popular throughout the period, though usually reserved for formal occasions toward the end of the century, and was worn most often with a silk top hat, silk scarf, gloves, and spats. The '80s saw the appearance of the "Cowes" or dress sack coat, known in the U.S. as the tuxedo.

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Heavy tweed suits were the style for sportswear; the Norfolk jacket, modeled after the Duke of Norfolk's hunting suit, appeared in the '80s and was worn with knickerbockers – the knee-length pants contrasting with the long trousers normally worn for daywear during the period. Overcoats for men included the ulster, the MacFarland (a coat with long sleeve-capes) and the Inverness caped coat, popularized by the illustrators and movie portrayals of Sherlock Holmes. Hats of the period included the soft-felt Homberg, or fedora, the “boater” (a straw hat so named as it was often worn while boating up the Thames), and of course the derby, known more commonly in England as the bowler or “billycock.” Silk top hats were the norm for formal evening wear, and a variety of soft cloth caps were worn casually. (The deerstalker, again popularized by portrayals of Sherlock Holmes – though he was never mentioned as wearing one in any of the stories – was almost never worn in the city, being considered more for country or sportswear.) While beards and other variations of facial hair had been popular in the early Victorian years, by the '80s and '90s it was common to be clean shaven, though the mustache was still popular.

Women's clothing was much more colorful and varied than men's garb. The long skirt was the rule, occasionally allowing a scandalous glimpse of ankle. Bustles were popular in the mid-to-late Victorian era, disappearing around 1889. Thereafter, skirts began to fit smoothly over the hips and to spread out into a bell-shape at the bottom. Waists were narrow (the Victorian ideal being the “15-inch waist” – requiring extremely tight corsets that contributed to many fainting spells among women of the era, and to abundant references in novels to the “heaving bosom”), and bodices were tight-fitting. Sleeves on ladies' dresses which were generally wrist-length or, if shorter, accompanied by long gloves that reached higher than the elbow, began to expand during this period. They became bigger and bigger, swelling out into what was nicknamed the “leg-of-mutton” style. Often the sleeves were of a different color or even a different material from the rest of the dress. Hats and bonnets were of various sizes, shapes and colors as well, including a straw hat similar to the men's boaters. Knickerbockers or “bloomers” – trousers for women – came into vogue with the popularity of the bicycle, despite the scandalous idea of women wearing pants. The bell-shaped skirt and high-necked blouse remained fashionable for women until about 1908, when the Victorian styles, originally highly influenced by the French, began to give way to more “modern” modes of fashion.

The above clothing guidelines are generally for the middle to upper class of London's population. The poor had to make do with whatever could be made, begged, borrowed or stolen. Still, dress lengths for women remained conservative (if somewhat tattered) even among the lower classes. Player-characters in unusual clothing would find it easier to fit in in the poorer sections of London's East End (Spitalfields, Whitechapel, etc.) especially among the street entertainers and costermongers of the teeming street markets in those areas, than in the more fashion-conscious West End.

Transportation & Communications

Aside from simply walking from one place to another, transportation in the London of the 1880s-'90s was dominated by the horse and the rail. Horse-drawn cabs and carriages filled the streets of London, while below those streets the Metropolitan or Underground railways carried passengers via steam or, after 1890, electric train. The streets were dominated by the hansoms and the growlers, or four-wheelers.

The hansom was the fast two-seater of the period, affectionately called “The Gondola of London.” It held two passengers (three if they didn't mind sacrificing comfort) sitting side by side over the wheel-axle of the two wheels of the vehicle, their weight balanced by the driver on his high seat behind and by the horse in front. Luggage sat on the floor inside the cab. Half doors closed at the front and small side windows gave the occupants the option of seeing (and being seen) or not. Orders were screamed to the driver through the trap door in the top. The hansom was an excellent choice if one needed to travel quickly and lightly through the streets of London. It was the preferred method of transport for Sherlock Holmes, as well as for many other Londoners; in 1886, some 7,000 licenses were issued to hansom cabs.

In the same year, only 4,000 licenses were issued to four-wheelers, known colloquially as “growlers” and more eloquently as “Clarences.” The four-wheeler had accommodations inside for four passengers (a fifth could ride up front with the driver if he so wished) and luggage rode on the roof, which made it better suited to larger parties or those with a lot of baggage. The passengers were totally enclosed, except for

the windows over each of the side doors; the driver, from his seat up front, could not easily observe what went on behind him, making the four-wheeler the choice of those who wished to “disappear” en route. The straight back axle could also serve as a perch for those who wished to cling unobserved to the back of the cab.

Another type of four-wheeled horse-drawn vehicle often seen in the streets of Victorian London was the carriage generally called a Victoria. It sported a collapsible hood and seats for two or four passengers with an elevated seat in front for the driver. It was more often a private vehicle than a public one, though such carriages could often be hired.

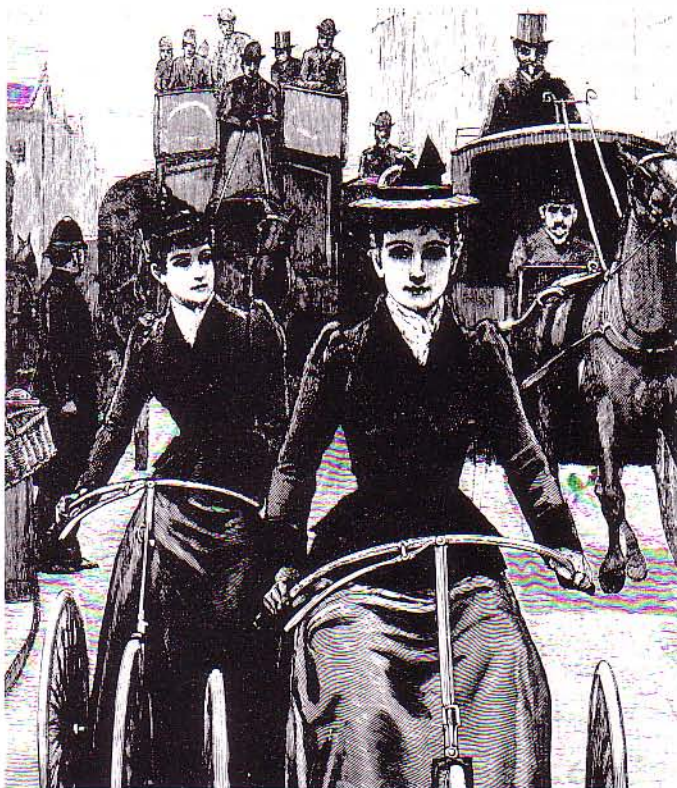
The Underground railway system of London was one of the engineering marvels of the day. While a good part of it actually did run underground in tunnels, much of the system ran in deep, uncovered trenches through and around the city.

The trains running on the underground rails were, in the beginning, steam-driven. Thus the atmosphere of the underground, filled with the smoke from burning coal, was not exactly the healthiest in London. This was somewhat alleviated with the opening of the first electric tube train on the City and South London lines. Even with the advent of the electric tube train, steam trains continued to run on the underground well into the early years of the 20th century.

The Metropolitan Railway and the Metropolitan District Railway formed the Underground circuit known as the Inner Circle, which wound around the whole of the inner part of London from Aldgate in the east, north to King's Cross and St. Pancras Stations, east past Paddington, south to Victoria Station and up along the north bank of the Thames. The Middle Circle was a western extension of this route out past Kensington. Several other lines ran suburban trains in connection with the Metropolitan lines on the Outer Circle, which reached out in a wide curve from Kensington on the west and north to the north-western suburb of Willesden, looping back around north into the City from the northeast to connect with the Broad Street Station.

Trains could be expected to run on the Underground lines every three to ten minutes. Generally, the round trip would take about a half-hour. For those who could take the discomfort, the underground was a quick, economical way to travel. It was occasionally dangerous as well, though not due to any fault of the rail lines – the underground stations were often the targets of the Dynamiters, Victorian terrorists whose specialty was planting bombs at prominent locations; their activities stretched throughout the period covered.

Numerous railway stations existed in London to take Londoners and visitors to the city to outlying areas of the country. Victoria Sta-



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tion, Waterloo Station and London Station were situated on the city's south side, from west to east, the latter two located south of the Thames. To the east were Broad Street Station and Liverpool Station, sitting side by side, and Bishopsgate just north of them. Paddington Station was the major railway access to the West End, just north of Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park. To the north, just east of Regent's Park were Euston Station, St. Pancras Station and King's Cross Station. All these stations were easily accessible by the Underground or by cab.

Two other forms of transportation common in Victorian times should be mentioned: the omnibus and the bicycle. The omnibus was a horse-drawn version of our modern bus, crowded, often double-decked, but reliable and economical. And despite the smell of horse, the air above ground was considerably easier to breathe than that in the tunnels. The invention of the pneumatic tube in 1888 made the bicycle a valid means of transportation, especially in the suburbs and the countryside. It was the bicycle that made the shocking bloomers popular among young ladies.

The automobile (or motor car, or horseless carriage, as you will) was introduced to the British public in 1896 at an international show of horseless carriages held at the Crystal Palace (the great glass and iron exhibition hall first built for the Industrial Exhibition of 1851) at Sydenham south of London. Its popularity with the Prince of Wales, who would become King Edward VII upon the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, ensured its success, despite earlier vested interests to squelch any such competition to the railways.

Communications in Victorian England, while not matching the speed and efficiency of today's satellite communications, were still quite sufficient for the day. The first telephone exchange had opened in London in 1879, and by 1888, the United Kingdom boasted 20,400 telephones, the majority of which were in London. However, it is the telegraph, favored communique of Sherlock Holmes, that is most typical of the time. With the laying of the underwater telegraph lines in the 1870s, London was in touch with the world via telegraph. A telegram from London to Egypt took only 20 minutes, to Bombay 50 minutes, to China 120 minutes and to Australia only 160 minutes. Telegraph offices were numerous throughout London and domestic telegrams reasonably priced at 6d. for messages of up to 12 words and ½d. for each word after that.

The postal service of Victorian London makes our own look poor in comparison. There were 11 deliveries *per day* in seven of London's eight postal districts and 12 in the East Central district, where most of the city's financial centers were located. The first delivery was at 7:20 a.m., the last at 7:45 p.m. Same-day delivery was the rule, all for 1d. for most letters. Player-characters in Victorian London wishing to communicate with each other quickly should have little trouble — once they learn the system. However, characters hoping to avoid swift dispersion of news of any of their misdeeds due to slow communications are out of luck.

One final note on communications in Victorian London concerns the newspaper. Literally dozens of newspapers flourished during the era. *The Times*, *The Standard*, *The Daily News*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The Daily Chronicle* were only some of the London dailies read by the population of the city. Fleet Street headquartered many of the papers, and unusually dressed characters strolling the area could quickly catch the notice of a reporter or sketch artist in need of a story during a slow period. Newspapers can prove to be the source of a wealth of information of the day to players entering Victorian London from another time, especially their "agony columns," known today as personals or classifieds. Note also that British papers of the time were engaged in fierce competition and prone to sensationalism; accuracy tended to suffer.

The Law

Player-characters visiting Victorian London from other eras are very likely to encounter a representative of British law in some form or another. In all likelihood this will be one of the members of the regular police force, the Metropolitan Police Force, the blue-clad high-helmeted bobby (the term "bobby" came from the name of the founder of the MPF, Sir Robert Peel; London policemen were also called "Peelers").

The policeman's lot in Victorian times was not a happy one. A police constable of the MPF worked seven days a week, without a day of rest, for a maximum of 23s. 4d. per week. Even the detectives of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) made only some four times that. Corruption was often a necessity for survival, and the con-

stable on the beat would often turn a blind eye to minor misdoings for an extra shilling here and there. Still, it was to the MPF that the victims of the worst types of crime could turn for protection.

The policeman himself, however, received little protection from the law. Forbidden to carry firearms, London policemen were often themselves the victims of assaults (in 1887, there were more than 2,000 assaults on the MPF) which often warranted little more than a small fine to the attacker. Among the rougher classes, it was almost considered a natural right to assault policemen; and this was in an age when guns, knives and clubs were carried freely. With crime often running rampant in the dim gaslit corners of the more run-down areas of the city, the Victorian policeman had to have been extremely dedicated to his work, for without him, the rapidly growing urban center of London might have degenerated into near-anarchy.

With the bobby on the beat working on ordinary crimes, it was up to the Criminal Investigation Division, formed in 1878, to track down the more dangerous or devious criminals. The plainclothes detectives of the CID were better off than the MPF regulars in that they weren't as easily recognizable as the law; if they were recognized, they at least were allowed to carry firearms for protection. The CID was headquartered at Scotland Yard, a name now synonymous with British justice.

Few realize that there were two Scotland Yards during Victorian times — Great Scotland Yard, which housed the CID from its formation until 1891, and New Scotland Yard, the CID's home from 1891 until recent times. Great Scotland Yard was located in Whitehall Gardens off the street named Great Scotland Yard (the Kings of Scotland had stayed there when in London). New Scotland Yard lay between Whitehall and the Victoria Embankment along the Thames, and was a building originally designed as an opera hall. Great Scotland Yard was the target of one of the Dynamiters' attacks in 1884; the bomb nearly wrecked the detective department and destroyed a pub next door.

New Scotland Yard was many things; an administrative headquarters, a laboratory, an office for licensing carriages, a central records office and a "black museum" (housing "mementos" of infamous crimes). However, it was not, in the strictest sense, a police station. What most people think of as the Scotland Yard "police station" was actually the Cannon Row police station next door. It was here that criminals were brought to be charged before being taken next door to the Yard for interrogation.

While the MPF and CID had authority in London and surrounding areas, they had no authority in the rest of England, though they were often summoned in an advisory capacity. Oddly enough, the MPF had no authority in the City of London proper, the district of the metropolis that is its commercial center, running roughly from the Tower of London on the east to the Temple on the west. The City was legally a separate municipality, distinct from the administrative county of London. As such it had its own police force, the City Police. Again, however, the CID was often called in on serious cases.

Characters visiting Victorian London who run afoul of the law may very well find themselves being booked at the Cannon Row station and questioned at Scotland Yard. They may find themselves on trial at the Central Criminal Courts at Old Bailey and held in Newgate Prison, abolished by this time as a "Gaol of Detention" except during sessions of the CCC.

The Underworld

When speaking of the Underworld of London, one must be careful, as the term had two meanings. In one sense, the Underworld was simply the domain of the poor, the down-and-out of the city. These were the inhabitants of the poorer sections of the East End — Spitalfields, Whitechapel and surroundings. This included the street vendors and costermongers, the entertainers, the beggars, those who may be involved in illegal acts or may simply be trying to survive. More properly, the Underworld was the criminal class, those who made their living by their wits or their muscles.

While individual cardsharps, pickpockets, thieves and murderers were in no short supply, neither was organized crime. The Victorian underworld often referred to itself as "the Family." There was indeed a "brotherhood" among criminals, with its own codes of honor and conduct, rough as they may have been.

One organization familiar to the readers of the chronicles of Sherlock Holmes was that of Professor James Moriarty, the Napoleon of Crime. Moriarty sat at the center of a vast criminal empire, planning, pulling strings and acting as the brain behind crimes as diverse as simple theft to murder for hire.

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Characters attempting to “infiltrate” the underworld of London for their own purposes may have a time of it, especially if they’re not familiar with the criminal slang of the day. Gamemasters wishing to add to their confusion may find some of the following terms of use:

Barker – a pistol or revolver

Blower – an informer

Bludger – a particularly violent criminal, especially one who uses a bludgeon

Broadsman – a cardsharp

Cracksman – a burglar, especially a safecracker

Crow – a look-out, especially for a cracksman

Dipper – a pickpocket

Dollymop – a prostitute, often an amateur or parttime street girl

Duffer – seller of stolen goods

Esclop – a policeman (usually pronounced “slop”)

Flash-house – the headquarters of a criminal gang, used for setting up business, receiving stolen goods and training new generations of criminals

Ladybird – a prostitute

Life-preserver – a short weighted club, like a blackjack or sap

Lurker – generally a beggar or a criminal who uses a beggar’s disguise, often employed by criminal organizations as spies or lookouts

Macer – a cheat

Mobsman – a swindler or a pickpocket working with a mob

Mug-hunter – a street robber

Nobbler – a criminal whose purpose is to inflict bodily harm; a superior nobbler was called a *Punisher* and was used to inflict severe beatings

Palmers – shoplifters

Smasher – one who passes counterfeit money

Snoozer – one who steals from hotel guests while they sleep

Toffer – a superior prostitute

Tooler – a superior pickpocket

Player-characters in Victorian London for the first time might find themselves victimized by toolers, snoozers, dippers, or broadsmen, or propositioned by ladybirds, dollymops or, if they appear high-class, toffers. Should they offend the wrong criminal elements, they might find themselves set upon by nobblers or punishers. Should they attempt a bit of freelance crime themselves, they may find themselves caught between the esclops and the Family both – not an enviable position.

Timeline

The late Victorian age was a time rich in events of importance to history, many of which could prove to be of great interest to player-characters adventuring in London during the period. The timeline that follows includes many of the events that could be at least of passing interest to adventurers in London between 1880 and 1901. Events that are fictional are marked with an asterisk, for those who wish to adhere only to history.

1880

Parcel Post introduced to England.

First performances of *Pirates of Penzance* by Gilbert & Sullivan. Early February – First successful shipment of frozen beef and mutton arrives from Australia; sells for 5½d. per pound.

March 8 – Lord Beaconsfield (Benjamin Disraeli) loses his post as Prime Minister to William Gladstone; resigns ministry April 8.

June 15 – First British telephone directory issued by the London Telephone Company, listing 255 names.

*July 27 – John H. Watson, M.D., attached to the Berkshires, 66th Foot, is wounded at the Battle of Maiwand in the Afghan War. Watson is eventually returned to England on the troop ship *Orontes*, arriving in London November 26.

December 30 – Boer Republic declares independence of England’s South African Cape Colony, an act that leads to the first Boer War.

1881

S.S. *Servia*, world’s first steel ocean liner, goes into service for Britain’s Cunard Line.

London’s Savoy Theatre opens with the first electric illumination in any British public building.

The *London Evening News* begins publication.

Benjamin Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield), oft-times prime minister and leader of the British Conservative Party, dies.

The Natural History Museum, South Kensington, London, opens.

Flogging is abolished as a common practice in the British army and navy.

The population of London reaches 3.3 million.

The “Disappearings” begin in the East End of London and continue unsolved through January 1890.

*January 1 – Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John H. Watson meet at St. Bartholomew’s Hospital in London and subsequently take up residence at 221B Baker Street.

February 27 – Boers defeat British forces in South Africa.

*March 4-7 – *A Study in Scarlet*, Sherlock Holmes’ first recorded case.

March 16 – The Dynamiters unsuccessfully hit the Mansion House in London.

April 5 – The Treaty of Pretoria gives independence to the South African Republic of the Boers, under British suzerainty.

April 23 – Gilbert & Sullivan’s *Patience* opens at the Savoy Theatre.

1882

Gilbert & Sullivan’s *Iolanthe* opens in London.

The London Chamber of Commerce is established.

January 12 – The electric illumination of London begins with street lights between Holborn Circus and the Old Bailey and incandescent lighting in 30 buildings. (However, it will be many years before electricity completely supersedes gas lighting.)

July 11 – The British fleet bombards Alexandria, Egypt. Troops land at the Suez Canal.

September 13-15 – British troops defeat Egyptian forces, occupy Cairo.

1883

Ediswan Electric Company started by England’s Joseph Swan and Thomas Edison, who beat Swan to the English patent rights to the incandescent bulb.

British control of Egypt is established.

Maxim machine gun invented by Hiram Maxim.

Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* published.

English scientist Sir Joseph Swan produces a synthetic fiber.

British scientist William Thomson (later Lord Kelvin) writes his “On the Size of Atoms.”

March 16 – The Dynamiters strike near the Local Government Office, Whitehall, causing great damage.

*April 6 – Sherlock Holmes investigates *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*.

November 4 – British General William Hicks and his forces are wiped out by forces of the Sudanese Mahdi, a self-styled prophet. British nationals are evacuated from the Sudan as a result.

1884

First deep tube of the underground railway opens in London.

Gilbert & Sullivan’s *Ida* opens in London.

London’s first A.B.C. teashop opens near Bridge Station.

January – The socialist Fabian Society is founded in London.

March 12 – Former British Sudanese governor General Charles “Chinese” Gordon rescues some 2,500 women, children and wounded men from Khartoum, but is hemmed in the city by the forces of the Mahdi.

May – George Bernard Shaw joins the Fabian Society.

May 30 – The Dynamiters strike old Scotland Yard.

November 25 – English surgeon Rickman John Goodlee performs the first successful removal of a brain tumor.

1885

King Solomon’s Mines, by H. Rider Haggard, is published.

English scientist Francis Galton first devises an identification system based on fingerprints, proving no two belonging to different persons are ever alike.

January 26 – Khartoum falls; Gordon and his troops are massacred by the Mahdi.

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March 4 – Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Mikado* opens at the Savoy Theatre.
June 9 – Marquis of Salisbury replaces Gladstone as Prime Minister.
July 6 – First successful rabies vaccine administered by Louis Pasteur in France.

1886

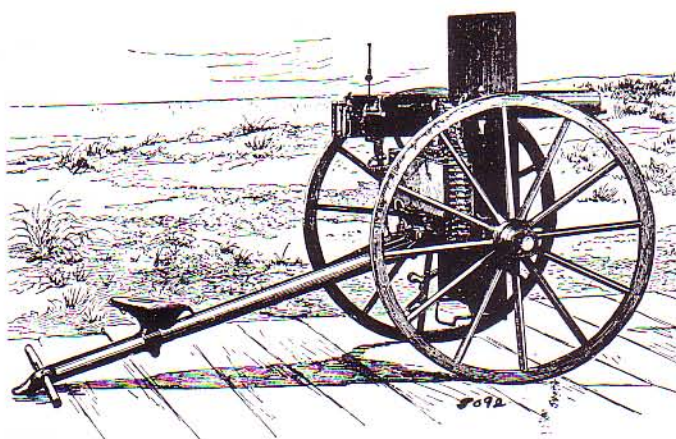
Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Kidnapped* are published.
January 27 – Salisbury ministry ends; Gladstone reassumes the prime ministry on February 12.
April 8 – Gladstone introduces an Irish Home Rule Bill in Parliament. The bill is attacked viciously by the Conservatives and many of his own party, some of whom rebel and break away from the Liberal Party. The bill is defeated in July.
July 26 – Salisbury resumes the prime ministry.

1887

Queen Victoria celebrates her Golden Jubilee.
Lloyd's of London writes its first nonmaritime insurance policy.
Sir H. Rider Haggard's *She* and *Allan Quatermain* published.
A Study in Scarlet, by Arthur Conan Doyle, the first published Sherlock Holmes story, appears in *Beeton's Christmas Annual*.

1888

The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night, by English Orientalist Sir Richard Burton, published in a 16-volume set (more commonly known as *A Thousand and One Arabian Nights*).
August-November – Jack the Ripper terrorizes the East End of London, killing at least six, perhaps more, streetwalkers in and near Whitechapel. He is never apprehended by the police.
*September – Sherlock Holmes investigates the cases Watson will chronicle as *The Sign of the Four* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.
October 3 – Gilbert & Sullivan's *Yeoman of the Guard* opens at the Savoy Theatre.



1889

British army adopts Maxim machine gun.
Barnum & Bailey's circus plays at Olympia, London.
English chemist Frederick August Abel and Scottish chemist James Dewar patent cordite as a smokeless explosive.
A worldwide influenza pandemic affects 40 percent of the world's population over the next two years.
The Cleveland Street Scandal erupts over a West End homosexual brothel that employs post office messenger boys; the brothel's clients are rumored to include the Prince of Wales and his younger brother the Duke of Clarence.
Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The Ballad of East and West" (in which "... never the twain shall meet") is published.

The Savoy Hotel opens in London; it is the first with private bathrooms – 70 total, as compared with the new Northumberland Avenue Hotel Victoria, which has only four baths to service 500 guests.
August 15–September 16 – London Dock Strikes for the workers' "tanner" an hour; helps eventually to extend unionism to the unskilled laborer.
December 7 – Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Gondoliers* opens at the Savoy.

1890

London's first electric underground railway tube goes into service.
The first volume of James G. Frazier's *The Golden Bough*, a study of cults, legends, myths and rites, is published.
The Sign of the Four, by Arthur Conan Doyle, the second Sherlock Holmes story, is published.
Sir Richard Burton dies.
*Count Dracula terrorizes London.

1891

New Scotland Yard opens up as the new home of the Criminal Investigation Division of the Metropolitan Police Force.
Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is published.
*May 4 – Sherlock Holmes disappears at the Reichenback Falls in Switzerland in battle with Professor James Moriarty, the Napoleon of Crime. Both are believed dead.
July – "A Scandal in Bohemia" by Arthur Conan Doyle, the first in the series of Sherlock Holmes short stories, appears in the July issue of the *Strand* magazine.

1892

A series of unexplained explosions occur along the English Channel and continue for several years, with no explanation ever being offered.
August 18 – Gladstone replaces Salisbury as prime minister.

1893

Britain's Labour Party is founded.

1894

Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* published.
*Strange lights are observed over Mars.
A London Building Act by Parliament limits the height of buildings in the city to 150 feet, after a new development has disturbed Queen Victoria's view.
March 5 – Gladstone is replaced as prime minister by Archibald Primrose of his own party.
*April – Sherlock Holmes returns to London after travels in Tibet, Arabia, the Sudan and France.
*June – Martian invasion of Earth centers around London and surrounding countryside.
December 3 – Robert Louis Stevenson dies.
Tower Bridge opens.

1895

H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* is published.
Lanchester motorcar is introduced by Frederick W. Lanchester as the first British four-wheeled gasoline-powered motorcar.
The London School of Economics is founded by the Fabian socialists.
February 14 – Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* opens at the St. James Theatre.
May – An unsuccessful libel suit by Oscar Wilde against the Marquis of Queensbury, who accused Wilde of homosexuality, results in Wilde's sentencing at Old Bailey to two years' imprisonment.
June 26 – Salisbury regains the office of the prime minister.

1896

An anti-typhoid inoculation is originated by British pathologist Almroth Edward Wright.
The *London Daily Mail* morning paper is founded, featuring condensed news and warnings of the threat of Germany.

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March 7 – *The Grand Duke*, the last of the Gilbert & Sullivan operettas, opens at the Savoy Theatre.
The Hotel Cecil, London's largest, opens.

1897

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.
The Dynamiters cease their activities until after WWI.
Rudyard Kipling's *Captains Courageous* is published.
H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man* is published.
Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is published.
The Royal Automobile Club is founded at London.

1898

William Gladstone dies.
Lewis Carroll, author of *Alice in Wonderland*, dies.
H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* is published.
September 2 – British General Kitchener defeats the dervish forces of the Kalifa at Omdurman.

1899

Ernest William Hornung's *The Amateur Cracksman* introduces A.J. Raffles, the gentleman burglar.
The Ashanti stage their last uprisings against the British in West Africa.
October 12 – the Boer War begins.

1900

The Boer War continues.
The Boxer Rebellion begins in China, involving British and other foreign nationals.
The *Daily Express* newspaper is founded.
The Great Houdini executes an escape from Scotland Yard and becomes a main attraction at the Alhambra Theatre thanks to the resultant publicity.
Oscar Wilde dies.

1901

Queen Victoria dies; the Victorian Age comes to a close.

The Thames

The Thames, the mighty river upon which London sits, was the very reason for the city's existence from earliest times. Easily navigable from the sea, it made London the great port capital of the British Isles. By late Victorian times, most of the shipping was confined to the dock areas at the city's East End, from St. Katherine's Docks, just east of the Tower of London, to the London Docks at Wapping, the Surrey Commercial Docks (south of the river's northern bend, just before the great south bend that formed the Isle of Dogs, where the West India Docks were situated), and on to the Victoria and Albert Docks east of the city proper.

Still, even though the majority of the shipping along the Thames was confined to the eastern reaches of the river, there was plenty of traffic along the rest of the river through London and on west, especially in The Pool – the stretch of river from London Bridge to the Tower. Low, flat, double-masted, tan-sailed spritsail barges were commonplace along the river; so were the flat-bottomed, blunt-bowed lighters designed for transferring cargo from ships anchored in the stream to the wharves, towed by steamboats or, over short distances, propelled by long sweeps. Numerous small, coal-burning clippers or launches sailed the Thames on various excursions, most legal, but often on illegal business; smuggling was profitable even in those times of fewer restrictions on items (such as drugs) which are now strictly controlled.

After 1885, when the Metropolitan Police Force began introducing steam-launches on the Thames, the possibility of chases by police launches made illegal activities on the river a more daring proposition for the criminal elements. For an example of such a chase, the pursuit of Jonathan Small and his Andaman Island pygmy, in A. Conan Doyle's *The Sign of the Four*, is recommended.

Player-characters adventuring in Victorian London are most likely to interact with the Thames merely by traveling across it over one of its many bridges. There are several railway, foot and full traffic bridges across the Thames. The most famous, of course, are London Bridge (at that time a robust granite bridge of five wide spans), and Tower Bridge, (the familiar stone-clad steel lattice-work drawbridge that appears on the covers of most modern books about the city). Tower Bridge was under construction from 1886 until 1894, and replaced a foot tunnel under the Thames just west of the Tower of London. It was operated by four steam hydraulic engines, which opened the bridge more than 6,000 times in its first year.

The waterfront areas of the city open up possibilities for underworld adventure. Dock workers were unskilled laborers of many races and nationalities – lascars, Chinese, Irish, British, Indian – who worked, drank, and fought hard. The waterfront areas of the East End often hid opium dens and other more seamy dens of iniquity, where an unwary character could easily be parted from his valuables (or his life) if not careful.

While the sewage problems that had turned the Thames into a cesspool of garbage and waste in the earlier half of the century had for the most part been dealt with by late Victorian times, there were still enough sewer ducts and half-hidden passageways into the depths of London's sewer system leading off the Thames for characters to find numerous pathways to explore the "real" underground of London – pathways that might lead to underground hideouts of criminal elements such as those of Professor James Moriarty, or even lairs of rats, Cthulhoid ghouls or whatever else might cross the fiendish mind of a gamemaster.

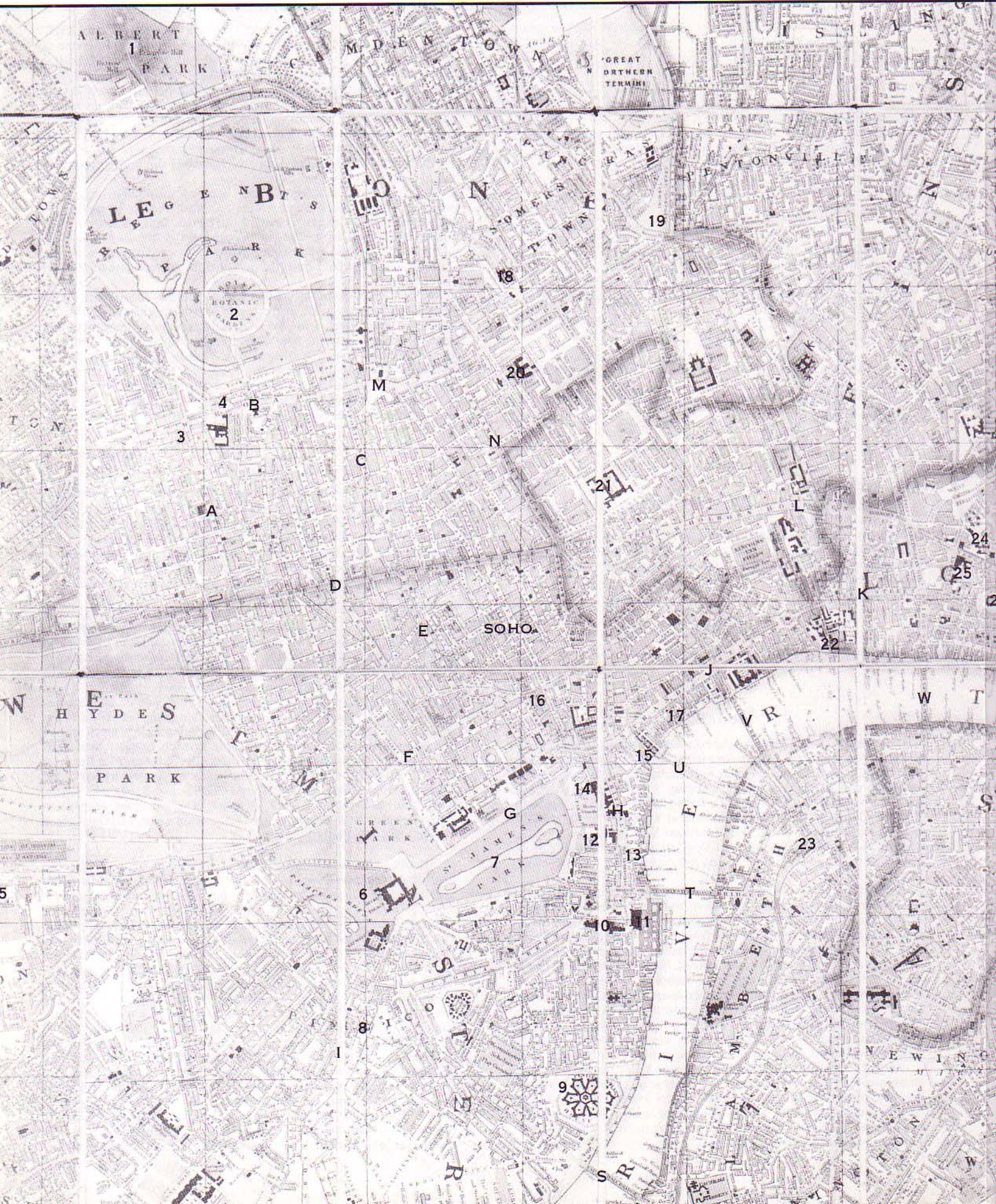
Personalities

The roll call of famous or colorful personalities to be encountered in late Victorian London is far too extensive to cover in an article the size of this one. The following brief biographies will cover some of the individuals with whom a group of player-characters visiting Victorian London might interact. Characters out of fiction are noted with an asterisk. Those around whom a gamemaster could weave entire scenarios are detailed more fully in generic game terms in a later section.

Lewis Carroll: (1832-1898) Lewis Carroll is the pseudonym for Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, a logician, mathematician, photographer and novelist, best known for his children's stories, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. He was a lecturer in mathematics at Christ Church, Oxford, and a deacon in the Church of England. A bachelor, Carroll had an amazing rapport with young children, to whom he loved to tell fantastic stories. *Alice* came from one of these stories; it was first told while he was taking some of his young friends on a boat ride in 1862. During the period covered by this article, Carroll will be encountered only if he has decided to visit London, possibly to see how his stories are doing (by his death, the "Alice" stories were the most popular children's stories in England). His last works were a book called *Curiosa Mathematica*, written from 1888-93, and *Sylvie and Bruno*, written in two volumes from 1889-93. The latter, an attempt to recapture what he'd done with the "Alice" books, was a failure. Carroll died in 1898 in Guildford, Surrey.

**Professor George Edward Challenger*: Professor Challenger, the hero of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* and other stories, properly belongs to the years immediately after those covered in this article, when he began his expeditions that led eventually to the lost plateau of Maple White Land in the Amazonian jungles. However, it is probable that Challenger was active in London toward the end of the 19th century as well, bull-headedly making enemies among the scientific community with his insistences that only the superior intellect of G.E.C. was equal to the task of unlocking the secrets of man's evolution. Challenger was, it appears, somewhat of a Renaissance man in the sciences. His main field seemed to be anthropology, but paleontology, zoology, anatomy and various other related fields, (as well as several unrelated) were within his scope of knowledge. Challenger was an ape of a man – short, squat, muscular body, bullish neck, thick Assyrian beard that seemed to merge with the growth of hair from his chest. His strength matched his intellect and he was known to throw intruders bodily from his home. He disliked reporters in particular and anyone in general who failed to acknowledge his genius. Should Challenger encounter a character from another era, especially the far past or future, he will probably grab the character's skull, oblivious to any

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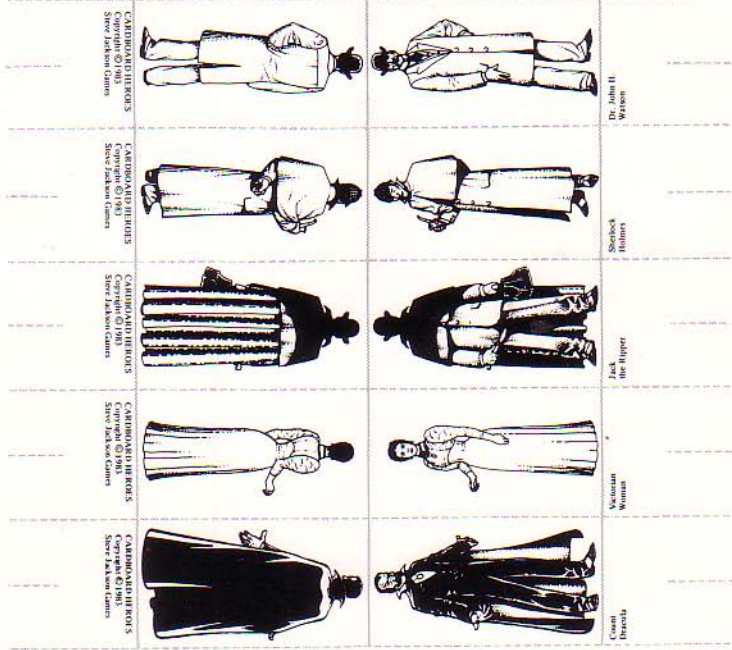
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protests by his victim, muttering about the amazing differences in the normal skull and that G.E.C. has made another stupendous scientific discovery. If attacked, Challenger is more than capable of holding his own with up to half a dozen attackers, provided they are average in physique and do not use weapons.

Aleister Crowley: (1875–1947) Aleister Crowley was one of the most infamous of the practitioners of the occult of the early 20th century, a self-styled satanist who called himself “The Great Beast” and whose motto was “Do what thou wilt is the whole of the law.” Though Crowley did not gain his great notoriety until after the turn of the century, he was well on his way to it by the last years of the Victorian age. An erotic poet, lecher, homosexual, mountain climber and seeker after arcane wisdom, Crowley joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn on November 16, 1898, quickly rising in the ranks of the society. By the end of the next year, with money to which he became heir on his 21st birthday, he purchased a villa near Loch Ness, becoming the Laird of Boleskine. During the latter years of the 19th century, player-characters might encounter Crowley in London involved in some debauchery or another, or seeking arcane knowledge in an old bookstore. If any characters show evidence of magical knowledge or ability, Crowley will latch onto them with an eye to learning their secrets, attempting to ingratiate himself with them. However, should the opportunity arise for Crowley to steal off with any book or item of magical importance, he will be gone with it at the first chance. Neither should characters depend on Crowley should they find themselves in trouble. He will readily turn his back on them to save himself. Crowley himself will not have any magical abilities at this point, though he may have a copy of *The Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*, which tells how to invoke a guardian angel (demon); he may or may not prove to be able to do so, depending on the particular game system being used.

Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield: (1804–1881). Disraeli was one of Britain’s most important statesmen during the mid-Victorian era. He was twice prime minister, in 1868 and again from 1874 till 1880, when Gladstone and his Liberals swept into office. He accepted a peerage with the Conservative party in Parliament. Disraeli was also the author of several political tomes and satires, as well as political novels. It was commonly accepted that Disraeli was Queen Victoria’s favorite minister. She was saddened by his defeat in 1880, by his subsequent illness and, finally, by his death the next year. Only those player-characters who adventure at the beginning of this period would have any opportunity to interact with Disraeli, and probably only in passing, unless they managed to somehow involve themselves with matters of state so vital to the British government that this most extraordinary of British political figures might take interest in their situation.

Arthur Conan Doyle: (1859–1930). Dr. Arthur Conan Doyle will always best be known as the creator of Sherlock Holmes (though many still claim that Doyle was only the literary agent for stories written by Dr. John H. Watson). Doyle studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh and practiced until 1891, when he realized that writing was a more profitable profession for him than medicine. It is said that he fashioned the great detective after one of his instructors at the University, one Joseph Bell, who often displayed deductive methods in his classes. Doyle himself was a hardy man, more like Watson than Holmes physically, though he, too, shared Holmes’ fondness for mental activity and for seeing justice done. He spent some time on a whaling ship, and was a stout Britisher and a Victorian in most of his ways of thinking (letting Holmes be the eccentric). Doyle himself felt his Holmes stories to be lesser creations and wanted instead to be remembered for his more serious historical novels, going so far as to kill Holmes in a duel with Professor Moriarty. It was Holmes, however, for which he is remembered, and he finally relented and brought the detective back to life. It was slightly after the period covered here that Doyle was knighted, in 1902, for his activities during the Boer War. In later life, Doyle turned to spiritualism as his main cause. Characters encountering Doyle during the 1880s may find themselves turning to him for medical treatment, depending on their activities, and could find themselves involved in some way with his writing of the early Holmes tales, even serving as inspiration for one.

***Count Dracula:** Following the visit of the solicitor Jonathan Harker to his Transylvanian castle, the notorious Count paid a visit to England in August of 1890. He arrived in London on the ghost ship *Demeter* with 50 boxes of earth from his native land. From then until a

band of dedicated vampire hunters (including Jonathan and Mina Harker, Lord Godalming, Dr. John Seward, Arthur Holmwood, Quincey Morris and Professor Abraham Van Helsing) drove him from England, Dracula preyed upon the hapless citizens of London and the surrounding areas, drinking their blood and adding them to the ranks of the undead. As a vampire, Dracula had tremendous physical strength, and had the power to appear as a wolf, bat, mist or anything else that inhabited the night hours. Tall (more than six feet in height), dressed in black, with an elongated, high-browed face, pale to the point of translucence, Dracula cut an imposing figure. His eyes glowed like smoldering embers beneath his wild, bushy brows and unruly jet-black hair with its single steel-gray streak from the widow’s peak. They competed with the daggersharp canines peeping out from beneath his drooping mustache as the center of attention when he chose to call on a victim. With his burning gaze, Dracula could mesmerize all but the strongest-willed and bend them to his purpose. He could be deterred only by wolfsbane, garlic, or, most effective, a silver crucifix. While daylight did *not* destroy a vampire, it weakened him and stole his powers, making him vulnerable, which is why he chose to spend most of the daylight hours in his coffin. Characters encountering Dracula in the fogs of London who do not have powerful magical or scientific protection had better hope for the timely intervention of Van Helsing and company – or perhaps even that of Sherlock Holmes.



Gilbert & Sullivan: Sir William Gilbert (1836–1911) and Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900), playwright and composer respectively, are best known as the team who established the distinctive English form of the operetta. So well was Gilbert’s verbal ingenuity and satire matched with Sullivan’s melodiousness, musicianship and sense of parody that the partnership won international acclaim with such works as *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado* and *The Gondoliers*. British theatre impresario D’Oyly Carte built the Savoy Theatre in London especially to feature their operettas. Despite their success, the duo quarreled shortly after *The Gondoliers* opened in 1889, when Gilbert thought Sullivan had wrongly sided with Carte in a dispute over business arrangements. They did not work together again until 1893; during the interim both collaborated with others. Their last collaboration was *The Grand Duke*, in 1896, which critics claimed did not measure up to their earlier works. Characters encountering Gilbert and/or Sullivan will probably do so casually, although a scenario could possibly be woven around the two of them hiring a group of characters to retrieve a stolen libretto or score to one of their famous operettas.

William E. Gladstone: (1809–1898) Gladstone, four times prime minister of England and leader of the Liberal party for much of his political career, was considered by many to be the greatest British statesman of the 19th century. He spent more than 60 years in Parliament, outgrowing an early conservative and Anglican philosophy to become a persistent advocate and instigator of political and social reform. A passionate moralist, he fought to apply his own strict principles to the conduct of domestic and foreign affairs, often with limited success; he alternated with Disraeli and Salisbury as prime minister almost with regularity. He vainly tried, late in his career, to secure home rule for Ireland, which led to his final loss of power (even in his own party) and to the splitting of the Liberal party itself. Gladstone would most likely be encountered by player-characters during one of his periods out of ministry, during which time he would use any influence he had to attempt to right any perceived social wrongs – provided they didn’t go against his moralist learnings.

Sir H. Rider Haggard: (1856–1925) H. Rider Haggard was an English novelist and, surprisingly, an agriculturist, best known for his tales of adventure set in Africa, including tales such as *King Solomon’s Mines* and characters such as *She* and *Allan Quartermain*. Haggard’s career was one of those success stories common in Victorian literary circles: Fol-

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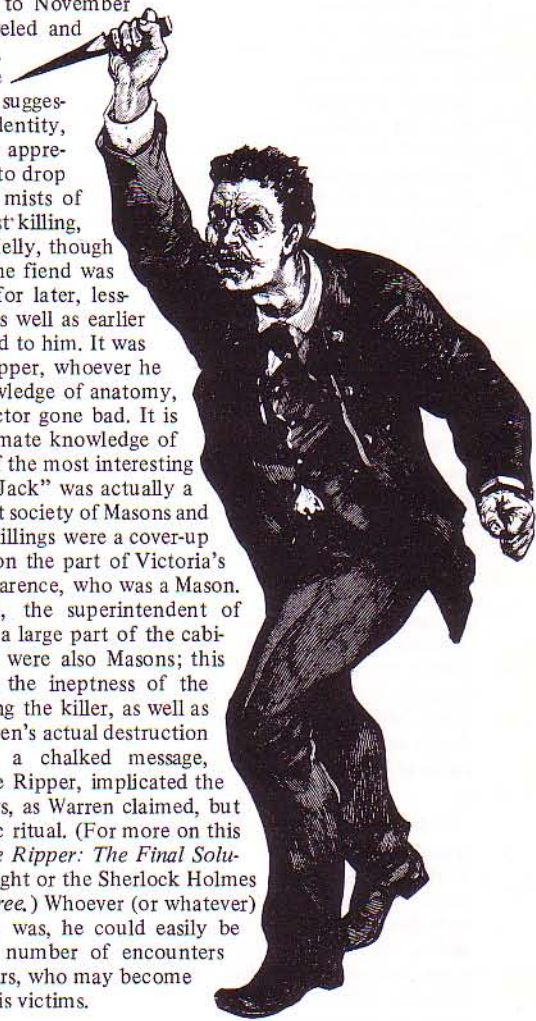
lowing the success of *King Solomon's Mines* in 1885, Haggard was able to retire to a country home in Norfolk on the proceeds of the enormously popular book and further pursue his writing. His stirring tales of African adventure stemmed from his visit to Africa at age 19 as the secretary to Henry Bulwer, nephew of the late novelist E.G.E.L. Bulwer-Lytton, author of works such as *The Coming Race*. Characters encountering Haggard may find themselves caught up in one of the tales unfolding in his imagination – or in reality, if the gamemaster so desires.

***Sherlock Holmes: (1854–1957)** Sherlock Holmes was undoubtedly the world's greatest consulting detective, a master of the art and science of observation and deduction. Holmes' career as a detective stretched from the late 1870s until his retirement to keep bees in Sussex in 1903 (though he again served his country as a secret agent just prior to the Great War). Holmes' early years in London were spent studying in the great reading library of the British Museum, just around the corner from his digs in Montague Street, and developing the talent for observing the tiniest details of a person and deducing much about that individual. Holmes could tell where one had been in London that day from some splatterings of mud on the trousers, or one's profession from the calluses on his hands. He made particular studies of tobacco ash, footprints, and tattoos and their part in criminal investigation. He was well read on the sensation literature of the times – crimes, scandals, rumors, the agony columns of the newspapers (which he kept piled around his rooms) – and could pull these details from his mind, or from his clipping books, when a similar incident suggested itself in a certain case. Holmes was a master of disguise, and quite familiar with the twists and turns of the most hidden recesses of London. His fame came after he took up rooms in Baker Street with John H. Watson, M.D., who was to become his closest friend and chronicler of his adventures. Holmes was quite strong physically (when Grimesby Roylott bent an iron poker, Holmes effortlessly unbent it), and had an iron constitution, which he pushed for days on end without sleep or food while on a case that aroused his interest. His knowledge of such diverse fields as geology, chemistry, anatomy, boxing, single-stick fencing, and botany (chiefly poisons) was immense, especially if they contributed in any way to his effectiveness as a detective. Characters who encounter Sherlock Holmes had best do so on the side of the law; otherwise, the first inking they have that he is on their trail is when he slips on the cuffs as Watson covers them with his service revolver. Dissembling will be difficult at best with Holmes, and will probably only serve to whet his interest – something most player-characters will not be able to afford, unless a kindly gamemaster allows them to assist the master detective in one of his cases. While still very human, Holmes was the closest thing to a superman Victorian London had, and only the most experienced, most capable of characters should have even a chance at getting the better of him – and then only temporarily.

***Mycroft Holmes:** Mycroft Holmes was Sherlock's older brother and, according to the detective, the only individual whose reasoning facilities were more highly developed than his own. Mycroft was not a detective, however, as he abhorred the thought of getting out and collecting clues as Sherlock did. Mycroft kept his immense girth (Watson once described his hand as resembling the flipper of a whale) either in his rooms on the Mall, in his offices in the government buildings nearby, or in the halls of the Diogenes Club, a club for unsociable men in which the only place talk was allowed was the Strangers' Room. Mycroft's exact post with the government was never specified, though at one time Sherlock commented that Mycroft was the British government. Apparently it involved the sifting and sorting of vital information from dozens of channels so that decisions could be made and acted upon. Any characters involving themselves in anything of vital interest to the British government could expect to come to the notice of Mycroft Holmes sooner or later. His notice might prove as difficult to elude as Sherlock's.

Jack the Ripper: Almost synonymous with the creeping fog of London and death on a gaslit street is the name of Jack the Ripper. For several months in 1888, the Ripper terrorized the East End, killing at least six prostitutes in and around the Whitechapel area. Terrified and fascinated with his grisly ritualistic killings, the London public (including Queen Victoria) followed Jack's exploits in the sensational newspapers almost as closely as did the police. Martha Tabram, Mary Ann Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes and

Mary Jane Kelly all died on Jack's knife from August to November of 1888, disemboweled and horribly mutilated. Though there were many theories and suggestions as to Jack's identity, the killer was never apprehended; he seemed to drop out of sight in the mists of the city after his last killing, that of Mary Jane Kelly, though it is possible that the fiend was indeed responsible for later, less-publicized deaths, as well as earlier ones often attributed to him. It was obvious that the Ripper, whoever he was, had some knowledge of anatomy, perhaps being a doctor gone bad. It is possible he had intimate knowledge of occult ritual: One of the most interesting theories was that "Jack" was actually a member of the secret society of Masons and that the ritualistic killings were a cover-up for an indiscretion on the part of Victoria's son, the Duke of Clarence, who was a Mason. Sir Charles Warren, the superintendent of Scotland Yard, and a large part of the cabinet and Parliament were also Masons; this could then explain the ineptness of the Yard in apprehending the killer, as well as the anomaly of Warren's actual destruction of evidence when a chalked message, supposedly from the Ripper, implicated the "Juwes" – not Jews, as Warren claimed, but names from Masonic ritual. (For more on this theory, see *Jack the Ripper: The Final Solution* by Stephen Knight or the Sherlock Holmes film *Murder by Decree*.) Whoever (or whatever) the Ripper actually was, he could easily be the focus for any number of encounters with player-characters, who may become his pursuers . . . or his victims.



Rudyard Kipling: (1865–1936). Rudyard Kipling is most remembered for his novels, short stories and poems celebrating British imperialism, along with his stories of daring feats by British soldiers in India and Burma and his children's tales such as the *Jungle Book*. A journalist in India from 1882–1889, Kipling became known as a brilliant writer for his tales of the East and of Britain's part in its development. A staunch imperialist with a flare for colorfully descriptive adventure stories, Kipling could be counted on for a good yarn should he be encountered by characters – provided they don't show any anti-British sentiments.

***Inspector Giles Lestrade:** Inspector Lestrade was once called by Sherlock Holmes one of the best of the Scotland Yarders – the best of a bad lot. Lestrade, a small ratty man, was, to give him his due, tenacious when on a case. He went after his man like a bloodhound, sticking to the scent and tracking him down through hard work, by the book, rather than through any investigative genius. Unfortunately, he often found the wrong man, leaving Sherlock Holmes to bring in the true culprit. Still, Lestrade was obviously a good man to have at your side in a pinch; Holmes called on him more than any other Scotland Yard inspector during the detective's career, more than Tobias Gregson, Athelney Jones, or even young Stanley Hopkins, who was one of the few members of the CID to really respect Holmes' methods. Lestrade figured in the earliest of Holmes' recorded cases, *A Study in Scarlet*, and was still around – and still an Inspector – toward the end of Holmes' active career. Characters may encounter Lestrade, with or without any of the other CID detectives mentioned above, should they break the law and be foolish enough to get caught at it. Characters may have a chance of eluding Lestrade if they are clever, but the little inspector will continue to dog their trail until they finally manage to lose him – or he concedes defeat and reluctantly calls in Holmes.

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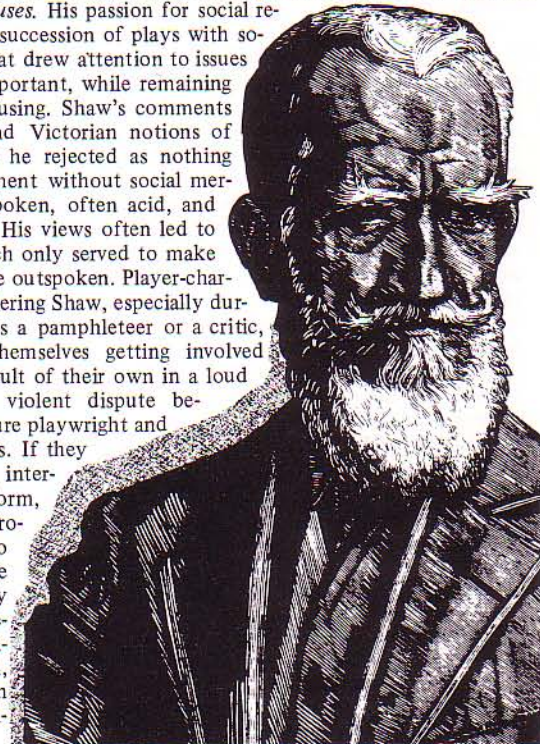
Arthur Machen: (1863–1947) Arthur Machen is today one of the least recognized of 19th century British authors, even though so great an authority as H.P. Lovecraft considered Machen one of the finest horror writers of that century. Machen did not limit himself to the field of horror, though his stories "The Great God Pan" and "The White People" are classics of the genre. Having failed the entrance examination for the Royal College of Surgeons in London in 1880, Machen worked for several years as a tutor, then for several publishers as a translator, proofreader, editor and cataloger. In 1887 he received upon his father's death an inheritance that made him economically independent for the next 14 years, during which he translated and wrote several pieces, including "Pan" and others. He often claimed to experience other realms of consciousness, from which he derived his tales. Such experiences led him, in 1900, to join the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Encounters with Machen could revolve around some occult involvement; gamemasters wishing to follow such a course are advised to read several of Machen's tales.

***Col. Sebastian Moran:** Moran was once described by Sherlock Holmes as the second most dangerous man in London, after, of course, his employer, Professor James Moriarty. Moran was a large, brutal man, his sensual lip giving an external clue to the inner bestiality of the man. A former big-game hunter in India, Moran was proficient with the air-rifle, which he used skillfully either in his capacity as Moriarty's right-hand man or on one of his own vendettas. His killing of Ronald Adari led to an attempt on the life of Sherlock Holmes (when the latter returned from his three-year hiatus in the East) and to Moran's subsequent capture and imprisonment. Moran is certain to be encountered should characters run afoul of one of the Professor's operations, particularly if their involvement results in its failure. Moran will be merciless, striking directly and brutally if necessary, though he would prefer to lie in wait for his victims, as he did when stalking the Bengal tigers in India.

***Professor James Moriarty:** Known as the Napoleon of Crime, Professor James Moriarty was behind much that was evil in the criminal world of Victorian London, sitting at the center of a vast criminal empire like a spider at the center of its webs, pulling strings that reached even beyond the capital of the British Empire. Moriarty was a criminal genius, whose intellect kept even Sherlock Holmes at bay for nearly five years before the master detective could gather enough evidence to seriously threaten Moriarty's freedom. Moriarty was originally a professor of mathematics, whose treatise on the Binomial Theorem had a European vogue and whose book *The Dynamics of an Asteroid* reached such heights of pure mathematics that none was competent to critique it. He was awarded the chair of mathematics at one of the smaller universities, but had to resign it under a cloud. He had, according to Holmes, a criminal vein that ran in his blood, manifesting itself in his undertaking to shape the criminal underworld into a vast organization ruled by his intellect. For all Moriarty's subterfuge, working through agents rather than directly, he could not in the end evade the relentless pursuit of Sherlock Holmes. Eventually, pursued by the Professor and his men, Holmes fled to Switzerland to remain safe while Scotland Yard acted on information he had accumulated. There, at the Reichenbach Falls, Moriarty met Holmes face-to-face in a final duel, which ended with the Professor hurtling to the falls below. Characters encountering Moriarty will recognize him by his high-domed brow and the curious reptilian oscillation of his neck. Unless they convince him they can be of service to him in some way, it may be the last sight they see, too.

***A.J. Raffles:** A.J. Raffles might seem on first meeting to be merely another carefree, debonair member of the British upper class, one step below nobility. A perfect gentleman, cricketer and staunch supporter of the Queen, Raffles is actually a cracksmen — a burglar — who uses his upper-class contacts to allow him and his accomplice, Bunny Manders, a crack at the family jewels. Bunny is a fairly faceless man, as befits his profession, while Raffles himself is described as exceedingly handsome and manly. In one recorded encounter with Holmes, Raffles' appearance is compared quite favorably to Holmes' hawklike, almost cadaverous features. Raffles' exploits were first chronicled in *The Amateur Cracksmen* by E.W. Hornung. However, judging by his successes, Raffles was anything but amateur. Player-characters attempting to operate above the law in Victorian London might find themselves in competition with Raffles for some valuable item, a situation that could become complicated if he makes off with it, leaving them as suspects.

George Bernard Shaw: (1856–1950) G.B. Shaw is now considered one of the most significant British playwrights since the 17th century, though he started his career as a journalist and political pamphleteer, following a series of unsuccessful novels. A socialist and advocate of social reform, a subject which was to permeate his plays, Shaw was a leading figure in the socialist Fabian Society soon after its founding in 1884. He also made his mark (and numerous enemies) as a music and drama critic. His career as a dramatist began in 1892 with a play called *Widowers' Houses*. His passion for social reform led to a succession of plays with social themes that drew attention to issues he deemed important, while remaining witty and amusing. Shaw's comments on society and Victorian notions of drama, which he rejected as nothing but entertainment without social merit, were outspoken, often acid, and always acute. His views often led to criticism, which only served to make him even more outspoken. Player-characters encountering Shaw, especially during his days as a pamphleteer or a critic, could find themselves getting involved through no fault of their own in a loud and possibly violent dispute between the future playwright and his denouncers. If they appear to be interested in reform, he could introduce them to others in the Fabian society or in the theatre community of London, depending on when he is encountered.



***John H. Watson, M.D.:** John H. Watson was a doctor who served in the Afghan War, where, in 1880, at the Battle of Maiwand, he was wounded by a jezail bullet. He was rescued by his orderly, Murray, but came down with fever and lingered near death for several months. With his recovery, he was shipped home, where he gravitated to London in November of that year. Realizing he could not live long on his pension unless he found a roommate, he asked an old companion, young Stamford, whom he chanced to meet in the Criterion Bar, if he knew of anyone looking for a roommate. Stamford did and, on January 1, 1881, introduced Watson to Sherlock Holmes at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where Holmes was working on a reagent that reacted to the presence of hemoglobin. Watson and Holmes immediately took up residence at 221B Baker Street. It wasn't until some months afterward, after observing the various people coming to see Holmes, that Watson learned of his roommate's profession. Accompanying Holmes on the Stangerson case, Watson embarked on a career as the great detective's companion and chronicler that was to eclipse his medical career. Watson shared hundreds of cases with Holmes over the years despite his marriage to Mary Morstan, whom he met during the case of *The Sign of the Four*. Mary passed away sometime in 1892–3, and Watson rejoined Holmes at Baker Street after the detective returned to London from his travels in the East in 1894. Watson was with Holmes until the doctor's second marriage in 1903. (Some say Watson was married before Mary Morstan, to a Constance Adams, from November 1886 to her death in December 1887; if so, Watson was certainly hard on wives.) Watson was a very faithful companion to Holmes, a firm believer in the traditional British values, but not above bending the law for the good of his friend's cases if he felt justice was to be done. Though miles behind Holmes mentally, Watson was definitely not a buffoon (as he has been portrayed on the screen) and could always be counted on in a pinch with his trusty service revolver. He will usually be encountered with Holmes, possibly watching in never-ending amazement at one of Holmes' pieces of observation and deduction. If medical attention is needed, Watson would be quite capable of performing it, as he kept up on the art, even though his practice was neglected for the more exciting role of Boswell to Sherlock Holmes.

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Oscar Wilde: (1854-1900). Oscar Wilde is best remembered as a wit, poet, dramatist and flouter of the conventions of Victorian society. He was a spokesman for the late 19th-century Aesthetic movement in England, which advocated art for art's sake. His best-remembered works are the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and the plays *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). In the 1880s, he was the darling of the literary and social circles of London, but in 1891 he began an ill-fated relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas, which culminated in his arrest, trial and two-year imprisonment from 1895 to 1897 on charges of homosexual offenses. A libel suit against the Marquis of Queensbury, Douglas' father, for calling him a homosexual only helped lead to his own arrest. After his release from prison, bankrupt, Wilde fled to France, where he died in 1900 of a brain inflammation. Characters encountering Wilde are likely to do so in wild, decadent surroundings, as Wilde continues in his reckless pursuit of pleasure despite any warnings of his friends toward moderation. Being associated with Wilde may not help the reputations of characters with more conservative elements of Victorian society.

NPC Encounters

This section provides generic game statistics on six of the more "active" personalities of the age. All but Jack the Ripper are fictitious, and Jack's statistics are conjecture, since the Whitechapel Killer was never caught.

Characteristics are given on a scale of 1-20, which is compatible with many games, and skills are percentile-based (01-100). For simplicity, all skills have been rounded off to the nearest five percent, and gamemasters may adjust them to suit their own tastes.

The chart below gives percentile equivalencies between 3d6 and 2d6 scores and percentile scores. If a game's skill system uses a 3d6 or less or 2d6 or more skill system instead of percentiles, use these equivalencies:

3d6 Roll	Probability of rolling number or less	2d6 Roll	Probability of rolling number or more
3	0.46%	2	100%
4	1.85%	3	97.22%
5	4.62%	4	91.67%
6	9.26%	5	83.33%
7	16.20%	6	72.22%
8	25.93%	7	58.33%
9	37.50%	8	41.67%
10	50.00%	9	27.78%
11	62.50%	10	16.67%
12	74.07%	11	8.33%
13	83.80%	12	2.78%
14	90.74%		
15	95.37%		
16	98.15%		
17	99.54%		
18	100%		

The characteristics listed are Strength (STR), Dexterity (DEX), Constitution (CON), Intelligence (IQ), Charisma (CHA), Appearance (APP), and Willpower (WIL).

Sherlock Holmes

STR 18 DEX 17 CON 18 IQ 19 CHA 15 APP 8 WIL 16
 Observation 95%; Deduction 95%; Criminology 85%; Anatomy 60%; Geology (local) 90%; Botany (esp. poisons) 80%; Zoology 70%; Special Interest - Tobacco Ashes 85%; Musicology 65%; Violin 90%; Cryptology 85%; Interrogation 75%; Boxing 85%; Fencing/Single-stick 80%; Baritsu (Japanese wrestling) 80%; Revolver 45%; Tracking 85%; Disguise 95%; Criminal Literature 90%; Criminal History 80%; Library Research 80%; Streetwise 95%; French 80%; Latin 75%; German 60%; Chemistry 80%; Stealth 85%.

It is difficult to record all of Sherlock Holmes' abilities, as we have only Watson's records of them, and we know Watson was not always accurate, nor was he able to record everything about the extraordinary detective. The above can be taken as a general list of some of the skills in which Holmes displayed aptitude at one time or another. Doubtless there were more. Holmes was a true Renaissance man, an exceptional individual. Only those characters who are of the highest levels and the most experience can hope to hold their own against him should they

stand on the other side of the law from the detective. Due to Holmes' great mental capabilities, it should be assumed he has a high psionic (or magical) resistance in addition to his other abilities. Holmes will be particularly interested in characters displaying unusual technological items. Characters claiming to be from a future time, or a past time, or having magical powers, etc., will be met with skepticism - until they manage to demonstrate some device or ability obviously beyond that existing in Victorian times. Then Holmes' mental flexibility and his famous axiom "When you've eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth" will come into play. Holmes can be an invaluable ally - and a dangerous foe. His reaction to player-characters will largely depend on their own actions and attitudes.

John H. Watson, M.D.

STR 13 DEX 11 CON 14 IQ 13 CHA 14 APP 12 WIL 11
 Medicine 85%; Surgery 60%; Diagnosis 75%; Revolver 80%; Gambling 45%; Billiards 85%; Criminology 30%; Botany 40%; Tracking 30%; Fisticuffs 50%; Riding 60%; Writing 90%; Gallantry 75% (esp. with the ladies); Dissembling 20%; Art History 10%; Loyalty 95%; Latin 85%; Anatomy 90%; French 75%.

Dr. Watson was, of course, Sherlock Holmes' faithful companion for most of the detective's career. Watson was always ready to accompany Holmes on one of his cases, no matter the time of day, the weather or whether or not Mrs. Watson might approve (luckily, she usually did). Trusty service revolver in pocket, doctor's bag at hand if it appeared it would be needed, Watson was at Holmes' side whenever he was needed. He will automatically side with Holmes against any and all comers, player-characters or otherwise, no matter what the odds; his British sense of honor would never allow him to let his friend down.

Professor James Moriarty

STR 14 DEX 13 CON 13 IQ 20 CHA 15 APP 9 WIL 17
 Mathematics 95%; Physics 75%; Criminal Organization 90%; Streetwise 80%; Disguise 60%; Tracking 65%; Revolver 50%; Invention 85%; Latin 95%; Greek 85%; Chemistry 75%; Instruction 70%; Value 80%.

Professor Moriarty was, with the possible exception of Fu Manchu, the greatest criminal genius and force for evil that London has ever seen. Constantly scheming, constantly pulling strings from the center of his vast organization of criminals, Moriarty was the guiding force behind the Victorian underworld in London. If player-characters encounter Moriarty, it will probably be because he has had them summoned. If the characters come looking to him for employment, he will require them to pull off a job to prove their worth. If they operate in his territory without his sanction, he can focus his criminal empire to the task of eliminating their interference. Only Sherlock Holmes can hope to stand up to Moriarty and counter the Professor's plots in any way but by sheer luck. Player-characters stumbling upon or being brought to Moriarty's hideout (a house on Russell Street through about 1888; a hidden warehouse later on perhaps with secret sewer entrances) who attempt anything funny are likely to find themselves in the Thames with an anchor tied to their legs.

Col. Sebastian Moran

STR 16 DEX 12 CON 15 IQ 11 CHA 10 APP 9 WIL 14
 Airgun 85%; Hunting 90%; Tracking 65%; Ambush 60%; Revolver 70%; Streetwise 70%; Cardsharp 55%.

Moran was Moriarty's right-hand man. It was he who carried out the Professor's most important assignments, serving as hitman, punisher or whatever else the Professor needed. Moran took over the reigns of Moriarty's organization after the Professor's death at Reichenbach at the hands of Holmes. He was caught by Holmes after he'd murdered Ronald Adair with his airgun. Moran's ambush of Holmes proved a trap that put the criminal behind bars. Should any characters become involved with Moran, they will find the Colonel direct and brutal, displaying none of the subtlety Moriarty would. The end result will be the same, however.

Jack the Ripper

STR 16 DEX 15 CON 12 IQ 13 CHA 11 APP 11 WIL 18
 Anatomy 90%; Knife 85%; Occult Ritual 75%; Stealth 85%; Streetwise (East End) 70%; Disguise 60%.

Jack the Ripper was a will-o-the-wisp, never apprehended, never even glimpsed for sure (except by his victims). No one knows who he was, what he looked like, or what the motives for his killings were, though there are theories galore. Jack obviously had some knowledge of

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anatomy and knife work, and apparently knew the area well enough and was stealthy enough to move through Whitechapel, doing his gruesome work with no real trace or clue as to where he'd gone or from whence he'd come. Player-characters visiting the East End could possibly strike up an acquaintance with Jack, not knowing who their newfound friend really is . . . until it is too late. Of course, the Ripper may not have lived in the East End at all. He may have been a fashionable West End physician, as some have theorized. He could be anyone. The game-master's imagination may have full reign here, as characters attempt to unravel the mystery of Jack's true identity.

Count Dracula

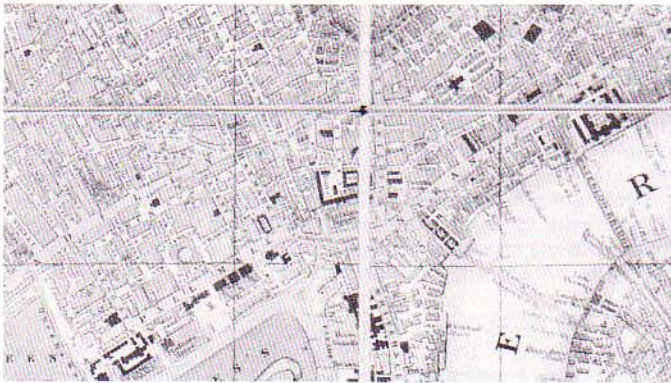
STR 20 DEX 15 CON 20 IQ 15 CHA 17 APP 13 WIL 20
Occult 100%; Vampire Lore 100%; Transfusions 95%; Stealth 80%; Rumanian 95%; Rumanian History 85%; Torture 90%; Mesmerism 85%.

Dracula was, of course, the most famous vampire of all time. Little more needs to be added to the information given in the Personalities section. If player-characters encounter the Count in London, he will probably be looking for victims – they'd better hope they remembered their crucifixes. It is possible that characters might hear of the strange deaths, the attacks of the "Bloofer Lady" (one of Dracula's first victims, now a vampire herself), and other unusual goings-on, and embark on a vampire hunt themselves, perhaps crossing paths with Van Helsing and company. Gamemasters should allow careless characters to play into the hands of the vampire, especially if they are relying too heavily on information gleaned from B-grade movies. Having one of their own party suddenly become one of the undead stalking London could provide interesting complications for a group of characters – especially if they unwittingly bring him home afterward.

The Map

The map on pages 22–23 shows London in Victorian times, from Hyde Park on the west to Limehouse on the east.

Not every site or feature of London could be noted on this map. Those keyed in on the map are those that would most likely be of interest to characters visiting London for a limited time. For extended campaigning in the city, the gamemaster is referred to one of those maps or guidebooks listed in the reading list.



On the map, letters are used to indicate principal streets and bridges. Numbers note the location of important buildings or other locations. Names show sections of the city that may be of special note to characters wandering the streets of London.

Principal Streets and Bridges

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (A) Baker Street (N-S) | (N) Tottenham Court Road (N-S) |
| (B) Marylebone Road (E-W) | (O) Bishopsgate (N-S) |
| (C) Portland Place (N-S) | (P) Aldgate (E-W) |
| (D) Oxford Street (E-W) | (Q) Whitechapel Road (E-W) |
| (E) Regent Street (N-S) | (R) City Road (E-W) |
| (F) Piccadilly (E-W) | (S) Vauxhall Bridge |
| (G) The Mall (E-W) | (T) Westminster Bridge |
| (H) Whitehall (N-S) | (U) Charing Cross Footbridge |
| (I) Buckingham Palace Road (N-S) | (V) Waterloo Bridge |
| (J) The Strand (E-W) | (W) Blackfriars Bridge |
| (K) Fleet Street (E-W) | (X) Southwark Bridge |
| (L) Holborn (E-W) | (Y) London Bridge |
| (M) Euston Road (E-W) | (Z) Site of Tower Bridge |

Places

(1) Primrose Hill – Just north of Regent's Park, this bit of high ground is notable as the spot where the Martians established their main base in the *War of the Worlds*.

(2) Royal Botanical Gardens – Here were examples of flora from all over the world. A time traveler could explain away anomalous dirt or floral matter on his clothes by claiming a walk through these gardens.

(3) 221B Baker Street – The home of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.

(4) Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum – Characters could find themselves in an eerie setting should they enter this establishment at night, especially should they come across a lifelike wax figure of Jack the Ripper or some other fiend.

(5) The Natural History Museum – This is a good location for an encounter with Professor Challenger, as his home in Kensington is near here.

(6) Buckingham Palace – An audience with Queen Victoria, should characters somehow manage that, would probably occur here.

(7) St. James Park.

(8) Victoria Station.

(9) Millbank Prison – During its service, one of the largest in the kingdom.

(10) Westminster Abbey.

(11) Parliament (Palace of Westminster) – Where the houses of Commons and Lords met to discuss the issues of the day. Big Ben is situated at the north end of this building.

(12) Government Offices – These offices, including the famous #10 Downing Street, are where the real business of governing the British Empire went on.

(13) New Scotland Yard – Where the Metropolitan Police and their Criminal Investigation Division operated from. Great Scotland Yard, where the MPF and CID were headquartered prior to 1891, is a couple of blocks north of the new site, next to the Admiralty.

(14) The Admiralty – Where the business of keeping track of the fleet went on.

(15) Grand Hotel, Charing Cross Station, and the Northumberland Hotel – The latter was where Sir Henry Baskerville stayed when in London consulting with Holmes.

(16) Alhambra Music Hall.

(17) Savoy Theatre – The first public building in London illuminated by electricity. The site of most of Gilbert & Sullivan's famous operettas.

(18) Euston Station.

(19) St. Pancras Station.

(20) London University College.

(21) The British Museum – A vast repository of works of art, manuscripts, antiquities and books, the latter being found in the central Reading Room, reserved for research purposes. To gain admission to the Reading Room required a written application and a two-day wait. Characters might find all sorts of treasures here – forbidden manuscripts, ancient artifacts, etc.

(22) The Temple – At one time the inner sanctum of the Knights Templar; who knows what items of occult significance might still be found here?

(23) Waterloo Station.

(24) St. Bartholomew's Hospital – It was in the chemical laboratory here that the historical meeting between Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson took place.

(25) The Central Criminal Courts (Old Bailey).

(26) St. Paul's Cathedral.

(27) London Bridge Station.

(28) Bank of England – Player-characters may be tempted to try a robbery here.

(29) Liverpool Street Station.

(30) Aldgate Station.

(31) Royal Mint – Where the royal coinage was struck.

(32) Tower of London – Actually a medieval fortress with a central keep and several towers, the Tower of London served as a prison for many important people through the ages. The central keep, White Tower, was built by William the Conqueror. Wakefield Tower, the central one on the inner of the double wall running along the Thames, was where the Crown Jewels were kept at this time. The Tower was believed to be haunted by the spirits of those who died there, which may prove true for characters visiting there.

(33) St. Katherine Docks.

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- (34) London Docks.
- (35) Surrey Commercial Docks.

Areas of the City

The four areas of the city on the map are marked for player-characters visiting London who might become especially involved with inhabitants or events occurring in specific areas. Generally, the West End of London was the upper and upper middle class area. Kensington, southwest of Hyde Park, Paddington, north and west of it, and St. John's Woods, northwest of Regent's Park, were the more fashionable of the West End residential areas. The north side of the city – Highgate, Hampstead, etc. – was also mainly residential. The south side of the city, south of the Thames, was industrial and residential. The East End – Whitechapel, Spitalfields, etc. – was where the poor and lower working class lived, with street vendors, costermongers and all sorts of down-and-outers.

SOHO – The foreign quarter. Player-characters who might have a hard time fitting in elsewhere could easily go unnoticed here – as long as they aren't actual non-Terran aliens, elves, dwarves or the like.

THE CITY – This is the business district, where much of the financial activity of London is carried out. It is also the home of the cockney, whose accent will freely mix with the more cultured tones of the British businessmen who can be found in abundance here.

WHITECHAPEL – The dingy East End area where the Ripper plied his trade and where a glass of gin could buy a loose woman for the night.

LIMEHOUSE – Chinatown, the docks, opium dens, the lair of Fu Manchu. Player-characters visiting this area had better be tough . . . or stupid.



Scenario Ideas

Following are some suggestions and guidelines on running characters from various role-playing systems through scenarios in Victorian London.

First, how do you get the characters to London of the late 19th century? Characters from old west RPGs, such as TSR's *Boot Hill* and FGU's *Wild West*, would have little trouble reaching Victorian London, provided they are from the later days of the western era; they simply need hop on a ship and ultimately arrive in the port of London. Older characters from some of the '20s-based systems, such as FGU's *Gangster* (or even their '30s-based *Daredevils*), TSR's *Gangbusters* or Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* (the seamier, darker sections of London's barely gaslit East End would make ideal haunts for minions of the Cthulhu mythos) could have visited London in their earlier days.

However, it's a bit trickier getting fantasy characters from systems such as *TFT*, *C&S*, *RQ* or *D&D*, or SF characters from *Traveller*, *Space Opera*, *Star Trek* or similar games, to London, A.D. 1880-1900. With fantasy characters, you can always postulate a magical gate leading into the era, opening perhaps into some dusty room at the British Museum or the Tower of London. Or perhaps they've incurred a wizard's wrath and are banished there by black magic. SF characters will need some

sort of pseudo-scientific reason for a jaunt into the past. The *Star Trek* series offered several such opportunities; the Guardian of Forever comes to mind at once. Other methods could involve swinging too close to a black hole or other high-gravity object and being accelerated fast enough to break the "time barrier." Or someone could simply invent ye olde time machine, a la H.G. Wells – provided one isn't too sticky about the science involved. Characters from superhero RPGs will need little excuse for a way back through time – superheroes time-travel a lot.

Of course, if you wish, you may generate new characters from whichever system you desire for a campaign based in Victorian London. Flying Buffalo's *Mercenaries*, *Spies and Private Eyes* would be a good system to use for this sort of campaign. If you wish to go that route, however, I strongly advise perusing several of the books listed in the bibliography for added depth and flavor necessary to a sustained campaign in the Victorian age.

Once your players have landed in Victorian London, what is there for them to do (aside, of course, from the obvious problems with orientation and confusion that will certainly result from finding oneself in a strange time and place)? Characters could spend quite a lot of time, energy and thought in eluding Sherlock Holmes, who would naturally be interested in their strange appearance, mannerisms or artifacts. Characters may in some way involve themselves in helping (more or less) Holmes solve one of his famous cases.

Characters with a criminal bent could attempt a robbery of the famed Crown Jewels from the Tower of London, probably running afoul of Holmes and perhaps even Professor Moriarty and his gang, should they undertake such a mission without his patronage. Limehouse and Chinatown near the docks could be a place where characters may mire themselves in all sorts of iniquities – opium dens, smugglers, perhaps even the Giant Rat of Sumatra, allowing the GM to tell the tale for which the world may at last be prepared. The later decades of the 19th century were about ten years too early for the first of the Fu Manchu tales, but it's just possible the Devil Doctor might have been lurking there even before Sir Dennis Nayland-Smith picked up his trail.

A simple trip on one of the underground lines could turn into an adventure should the players encounter a nervous-looking man who leaves his package on the train next to them – especially if it turns out to be a nitroglycerine bomb. Characters could then become enmeshed in tracking down the Dynamiters, either to prove they had nothing to do with it or merely to avenge nearly being blown away. Players might also become involved in solving the mystery of the Vanishings that plagued London from the early '80s to the '90s, when men, women and children of all classes disappeared into a Fortian void, never to be seen or heard from again – except in one or two instances when the bodies of the victims turned up, leaving no clue as to the cause of their deaths.

And then there was Saucy Jack – the Ripper himself. Characters visiting Whitechapel in 1888 may have the opportunity of unmasking Jack or at least joining Scotland Yard in tracking him down through the dingy streets of the East End. GMs planning on such a course are referred to *The Complete Jack the Ripper* by Donald Rumbelow (New York Graphic Society, 1975) for a wealth of theories and ideas.

Characters with mystical leanings might wish to be initiated into the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the magical society that boasted members such as Arthur Machen, W.B. Yeats and the infamous Great Beast of London, Aleister Crowley (though again, it was slightly after the period covered by this article that Crowley's notoriety grew). This could lead characters into a cesspool of sorcery, ancient horrors, mind-altering substances and magical conspiracies (remember that many have tied the Golden Dawn to the infamous Bavarian Illuminati!). *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn* by Ellic Howe (Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1972) is one source, among several, that could give background for such a scenario.

And of course, there are the works of H.G. Wells from which to draw for scenario ideas. Characters in Wells' London could be asked to track down the Invisible Man. Or, if they've been transported to the era through a backlash from the Time Machine, they could attempt to find the Time Traveller somewhere in the city for a ride back home. Or they could be trapped in London on the eve of the Martian Invasion (the latter scenario should be restricted to superhero characters, fantasy characters with some powerful wizards in the party or high-tech SF characters if the group's survival is a consideration of the GM; imagine a *Morrow Project* MARS vehicle taking on a Martian tripod fighting machine!).

*One cautionary note: Characters in colorful, caped costumes or brandishing broadswords and morningstars or wearing powered battle-armor and carrying lasers should not be surprised if the GM cuts their

A GAMER'S GUIDE TO VICTORIAN LONDON

adventuring short – “inconspicuous” should be the word of the day for such time travellers. Remember, no matter what impression you may have received from novels of the time, neither Scotland Yard nor the British army was *that* ineffective. Sure, one of Heinlein’s bug-smashing Starship Troopers could probably hold off an entire brigade of Her Majesty’s finest, Maxim machine guns and all. But what kind of a scenario would *that* make? High-level magic should similarly be discouraged; shooting fireballs down the Strand might be some players’ idea of fun, but where does one go from there?

Gamemasters should emphasize the diversity and differences that Victorian London has to offer from the player-characters’ usual haunts. Give them some of the flavor of the era. Throw in some familiar characters of history or of fiction to interact with them. Let them *know* – through use of the locations, background info and a good deal of role-playing – that they’re *not* on Joyeuse in the Sword Worlds subsector or in the labyrinths of Cidri or the streets of Gotham City or Arkham, Mass. But most of all, have a jolly good time of it, chaps. Cheerio!



Recommended Reading

Following is a listing of books I found most helpful in compiling this feature, along with a few brief notes on each. Many of the tomes listed here are out of print, but can usually be secured through the interlibrary loan system. Gamemasters wishing for further depth and flavor of the times than can be presented in an article of this nature should refer to several of these references, especially if a prolonged campaign during Victorian times is the goal. (For those who might note the frequency of Sherlockian titles among these volumes, I must confess to being a dyed-in-the-deerstalker Sherlockian myself, having served as both secretary and vice president of The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis, the local scion of the Baker Street Irregulars. Hence my interest in the period.)

The Annotated Sherlock Holmes, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, edited by William S. Baring-Gould. A two-volume set in a slipcase, containing all 60 Holmes stories in chronological order with annotations and restorations to the original text will clear up many questions for American readers of the Sherlockian Canon.

Baedeker's Index of Streets and Plans of London, 1894. Beautifully precise maps of London in 1894, showing much detail and extending beyond Kensington to the West, past the Isle of Dogs on the east, Lower Holloway on the north and beyond North Brixton on the south.

Baedeker's London and its Environs, 1905. A complete guide to London and surrounding areas in 1905, including historical sites, tourist attractions, hotels, prices, etc. Includes maps similar to the 1894 street Index, plus a map of Britain's railways. Would that the modern day Baedeker's were as useful.

The Baker Street Journal. Published by Baker Street Irregulars, the BSJ offers essays on a wide range of Sherlockian subjects, often including Holmes' London and Victorian history.

The Encyclopaedia Sherlockiana, by Jack Tracy. “A Universal

Dictionary of Sherlock Holmes and his Biographer John H. Watson, M.D.” Set up in dictionary form, Tracy's *magnum opus* includes names and terms used in the Holmes stories, outlined in the knowledge that was available at the time. Includes several useful maps.

A History of Everyday Things in England, 1851-1914, by Marjorie and C.H.B. Quennell. Written for young adults, this is nevertheless an interesting overview of various aspects of life in England during the years covered.

In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes, by Michael Harrison. Harrison is considered the foremost English Sherlockian of our day. His books on the Victorian period are among the best available (two others appear on this list as well). *Footsteps* traces Holmes' life from his first days in London as a detective to his retirement with much emphasis on the surroundings.

Life in Victorian London, by L.C.B. Seaman. A look at how people lived in London during Victorian times. One cautionary note: much of the book deals with the early Victorian years, prior to the 1880s.

London by Gaslight, by Michael Harrison. A survey of the city throughout the decades of the 1860s through 1910. Several interesting theories and commentaries on the time not found elsewhere.

London in 1888, by Herbert Fry. A contemporary guidebook to the city in 1888. Includes some excellent “bird's-eye view” maps of the various streets of London with sketches of the buildings, monuments and even lampposts in perspective. It also contains several contemporary advertisements.

The London of Sherlock Holmes, by Michael Harrison. A further study of the city of the world's greatest detective, this time concentrating on the locale more than the man.

London's Underworld, by Thomas Holmes. A study of the poor of London. The author is no relation to Sherlock.

Michelin Tourist Guide, London. Perhaps one of the best of the modern tour guide books to London. Lots of maps and historical information, including dates most structures and physical features of the city were built, making it easier than most to determine which map features weren't there in Victorian times. Also has the advantage of being easier to obtain than the period guide books listed in this bibliography.

The Mode in Costume, by R. Turner Wilcox. A survey of clothing styles through the ages, including Victorian England.

The People's Chronology, by James Trager. As the title suggests, a chronological listing of the important events of history, including the period of this article.

The Return of Moriarty, The Revenge of Moriarty, by John Gardner. Two novels of an unfinished trilogy, these Moriarty books of John Gardner's are excellent for their portrayal of the Victorian criminal underworld, as well as being good reading in themselves. Much of the criminal slang in that section of this article is derived from the glossaries of these books.

Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street, by William S. Baring-Gould. This is the standard “life” of Sherlock Holmes. It includes many interesting theories of the detective's early and later life, untold by the original stories, along with a chronology of all of Holmes' cases – including those hinted at but never revealed by Dr. Watson in his chronicles.

The Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective Game by Sleuth Publications, Ltd. Not a book at all, but one of the best (if not *the* best) of the Sherlockian games currently available. A well-drawn map and accompanying London Directory, along with several sample newspapers of the day that go along with its ten mysteries, make this game an excellent reference source for role-playing, aside from its own game merits.

Sherlock Holmes, the Man and His World, by H.R.F. Keating. This is another study of Holmes in relation to the city and times in which he lived. Several excellent contemporary illustrations.

The Sherlock Holmes Journal. The British equivalent of the BSJ, published by the Sherlock Holmes Society of London.

Sherlock Holmes Mystery Book, stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, features by Clive Hopwood. This is a children's book with a few of the original Holmes stories and some connecting features. Nevertheless, several of the features are quite good in giving facts and flavor of Holmes' London. Note especially the section on the Ripper.

Simpson's Sherlockian Studies, Vol. 1-9, by A. Carson Simpson. A hardback reprint of several classical studies, including several on money in the Sherlockian Canon.

The Timetables of History, by Bernard Grun. Another chronology, this one is somewhat easier reading due to the column format separating political, artistic, scientific, etc., historical events from each other.

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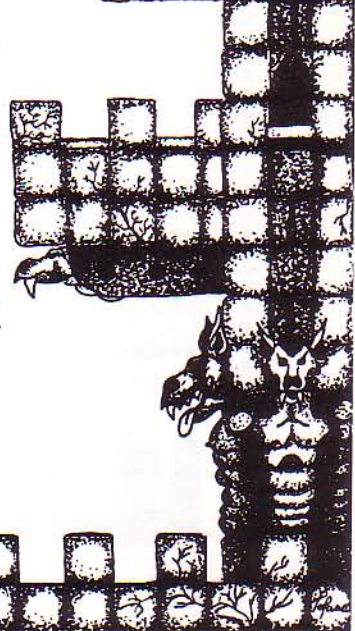
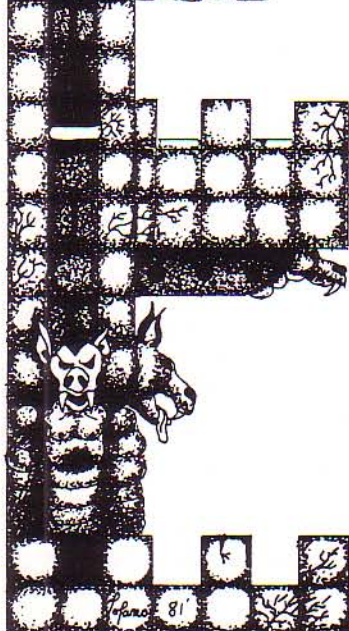
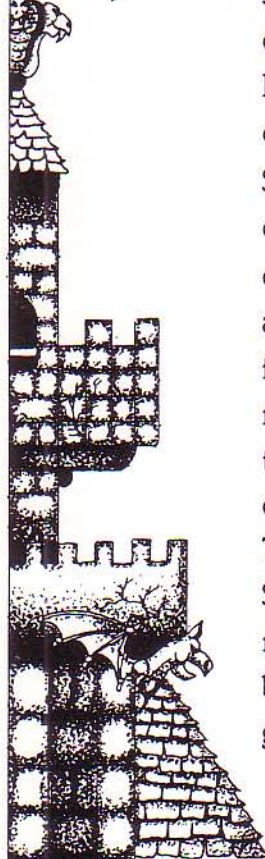
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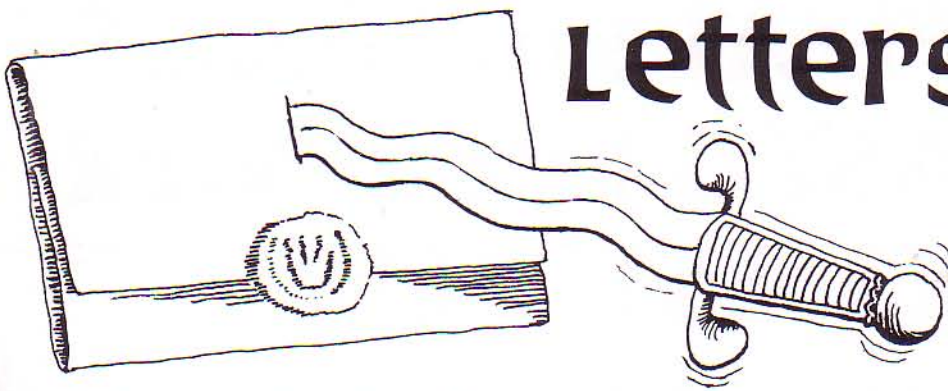
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Letters



It is hard to describe our dismay. We were appalled upon opening the first issue of *Fantasy Gamer* to find that on the Pizza Generation Table there was no provision for pineapple pizza. This is our favorite type of pizza. This omission lessens the utility of the entire table.

The Chaosium Staff
Albany, CA

Sorry, folks. We'll let you know if the planned Basic Pizza Generation Tables and Advanced Pizza Generation Tables contain the elusive ingredient.

-AA

Regarding the current "D&D War" between D&D players and religious organizations, it might be worthwhile to point out that the attitude of the various religious

groups is completely inconsistent, since the object of most D&D encounters is to *destroy* the demons. Rather than spreading demonology, we might be construed as doing them a service!

Dale E. Lehman
Kathleen K. Lehman
Hanover Park, IL

I hate your magazines. Every time one comes in the mail, I sit down and read every word, every advertisement and even between the lines. I pull every iota of information from them. I come away from them better informed, better able to deal with the games I play, and wildly depressed.

Your magazines seem to exist only to show me how much I have yet to learn.

They show me that the amount of information that exists about gaming and role playing is increasing faster than I can hope to keep up with. I am suffering from future shock. Too much information comes at me too fast and your magazines seem only to show me how much I am missing.

I can't decide whether you provide too much detail or too little. Either way, I won't quit reading either of them. They are still the best way to try and keep up.

I hate your magazines.

Drake C. Letcher
Panorama City, CA

I have subscribed to (T)SG since issue 15. I have greatly enjoyed the magazine (still do). I am attending college away from home, and usually receive my magazines every three months, and so am not really part of the "voting subscribers." Here are some of my comments about certain recent developments.

Autoduel Quarterly - A wonderful idea (and well done also). Love the game, love the mag. I shall endeavor to get enough saved for a life sub.

"Murphy's Rules/Scanner" - Bless you for both. After driving 294 miles to get home, "Murphy's Rules" are just the trick. "Scanner" is nice, for it helps those of us who are not on the inside to know what's going on. Please don't let it turn into the *National Enquirer*; there is a fine line between gossip and trash.

Naked Elf Women - Cute. If 8 x 10 color glossies with circles and arrows on the back of each one explaining what each one is ever show up, let me know.

SG/FG split - This does not concern me, for I play FRPGs, SF games, and wargames. I guess it is a good idea, for there exist those in the world without the scope to enjoy all.

Fire & Movement - Can't afford it, but someday!

Could you cease with D&D/AD&D articles? I think that not only are both games covered better in *Dragon*, but both games are fairly useless.

With the disappearance of *Wyrms' Footnotes*, could you contact Chaosium and print some of their stuff? Maybe?

Martin Gallo
Davis, CA

Thanks for the comments. Here are responses to some of them:

I'm not sure there is a fine line between gossip and trash; let me know if you've figured one out.

Naked Elf Women? What Naked Elf Women?

The jury's still out with our readership on D&D/AD&D articles. There are a lot of people out there who disagree with

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your opinion; also, *Fantasy Gamer* pieces are not limited to conforming with official rules and guidelines for the systems, so you're likely to see different sorts of articles here than *Dragon*.

We are indeed looking for more *Rune-Quest* and *BRP*-related articles. Next issue we'll have Matt Costello's "A Thing in the Darkness," a *Call of Cthulhu* solo scenario which will also have character and encounter stats for other pulp-era RPGs. But we need more. Chaosium fans, take note.

-AA

You could make a much better magazine if you would stir up some controversy that we could debate on the letters page.

FG 1 Feedback

I don't know. I'm charmed by the debates that rage in the pages of *Fire & Movement* and genuinely frightened by the slinging that goes in the aptly-named "Blood and Thunder" lettercol in *The Comics Journal*, but the idea of moderating such a debate is a little overwhelming. Besides, the only topic I could come up with offhand is "Do Naked Elf Women have armpit hair?" It just doesn't have the class you see elsewhere. . .

-AA

I would like to see a regular creature feature (but understand I am in the minority here) plus new spells and items. But, most importantly, generic and *TFT* game supplements and adventures. Maybe some short fantasy fiction.

Lawrence Person
Houston, TX

Slasher Flick is absolutely the most revolting and tasteless game in the history of the world. Do you know how hard I'm going to have to work to beat it?

Allen Varney
(The Whiz Kid)
Cupertino, CA

Don't worry. We have faith in your abilities.

-AA

While leafing through the first issue of *Fantasy Gamer* at the local hobby store, I noticed that in the "Next Issue" box, along with the information to be in the next *Fantasy Gamer*, there was an illustration of a rather comely wench with pointed ears who had apparently been interrupted in the process of bathing. From the ears, the shape of face, and the generally unclothed condition of this female, I arrived at the conclusion that this was a

Naked Elf Woman. I also noted that the illustration was signed *DRL*.

Back in issue 50 of *The Space Gamer*, the subject of "our art director's second favorite fantasy," Naked Elf Women, was broached. Since that was an April issue, said layout did not appear. However, a letter to *The Space Gamer* printed in issue 57 mentioned a sighting of a Naked Elf Woman peering from behind a tree on page two of 55. Alas, I missed that issue of *TSG*. And, had I not been riffling through the pages of *Fantasy Gamer* 1, I would have missed this one, too.

When *The Space Gamer* split, I counted up the SF games I played and compared the number to the fantasy games I played. The ratio was something like five or six to one. Therefore, I chose to receive only *Space Gamer*. If I had known that *Fantasy Gamer* would include such fun in it as *Bogeyman*, I might have changed my mind.

The point of my letter is this: Please don't deprive those of us who opted only for *Space Gamer* of Mr. Loubet's fantasy. Some of us have been waiting for a sighting since *TSG* 50 (I know I have). After all, SF gamers like a touch of fantasy now and then, too.

Craig Sheeley
Springfield, Mo.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS ...

The advertisement features four game covers arranged in a fan shape. From left to right: *Champions* (a superhero), *Espionage!* (a spy holding a gun), *Privateer* (a pirate with a sword), and *Justice, Inc.* (a pulp hero). Below the covers are four labels: **SPY**, **PIRATE**, **SUPERHERO**, and **PULP HERO**. A circular logo with a stylized 'H' is positioned between the **SPY** and **PULP HERO** labels.

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Murphy's Rules

I MAY BE STUPID, BUT I AIN'T LOST...

In Dwarfstar's BARBARIAN PRINCE, a player can remain lost for weeks in farmland. Presumably, either the Prince is too proud to ask directions from the locals, or they are incapable of providing any... (...Karl Disher)



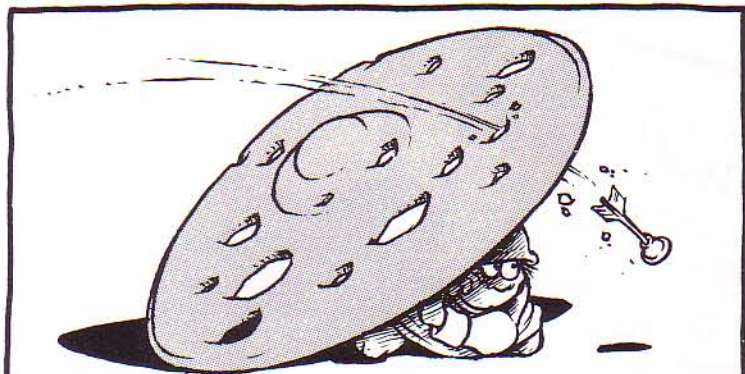
PEST CONTROL...

TOP SECRET, by TSR Hobbies, lists the Termite Bomb as one of the equipment items secret agents can use. (Termite is a little more deadly, but at least they have the bugs under control...) (...Chip Martin)



GRAND MASTER OF FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS...

In ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS (first edition Players Handbook), monks are described as "monastic aesthetics." While monks probably do have a fine appreciation of beauty, it's more likely that the intended description was "monastic aesthetics." (...David A. Cunnius)

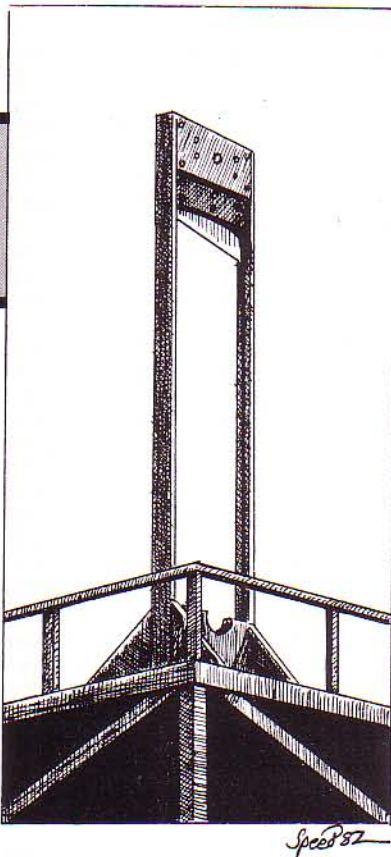


TRY USING A TRASH-CAN LID...

Metagaming's THE FANTASY TRIP system tells us that the largest shield available can only stop three points of damage. This means that someone armed with a sling stands a decent chance of penetrating the shield and injuring the shield-user. (...Cesar Abarca)

BEN SARGENT

Capsule Reviews



Fantasy Gamer reviews fantasy boardgames, role-playing games, computer games, play-by-mail games, and game supplements. We will review any fantasy game if the publisher sends us a copy. We do not guarantee reviews of historical games.

The staff will make reasonable efforts to check reviews for factual accuracy, but opinions expressed by reviewers are not necessarily those of the magazine.

Games and game items for which *Fantasy Gamer* has assigned and received reviews include *Ascent to Hell*, *Battlemats*, *Big Rubble*, revised *Bushido*, *Cards of Power*, revised *Chivalry & Sorcery*, *Dark Crystal* miniatures, *Death to Setanta*, *Endless Quests*, *Feudal Lords*, *The Glastonbury Labyrinth*, *The Great Owl*, *Kingdom of the Sidhe*, *Lords of the Dark Horse*, *Lost Worlds*, *Newgrange Reactivated*, *Sanctuary*, *Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective*, *Stalking the Night Fantastic*, *The Sunken Lands*, *Swordbearer*, *Swordplay!* miniatures, *Terra II*, *Through Dungeons Deep*, *Tome of Mighty Magic*, and *Zork III*.

Games and game items for which *Fantasy Gamer* is seeking reviews include *Alluring Alcoves*, *Ardor*, *Aztec*, *Bavenlon*, *Book of Treasure Maps III*, *Brotherhood*, *Brotherhood of the Bolt*, *Chilling Chambers*, *City of the Sacred Flame*, *Compleat Alchemist*, *Compleat Spell Caster*, *Complete Dungeon of the Bear*, *Corsairs of Tallibar*, *Curse of Zanathon*, *Death on the Docks*, *Demon Pit of Caeldo*, *Demons of Dundurn*, *The DM's Book of Nasty Tricks*, *Druids of Doom*, *Dungeon Maps*, *Dungeonland*, *The Egyptian Trilogy*, *Elfquest* miniatures, *Endless Plans*, *Forest Lords of Dihad*, *Game-master*, *Gateway to Tekumel*, *Ghoulash*, *RAFM Gilla-worms*, *Harn*, *Haven: Secrets of the Labyrinth*, *Heart of Oak*, *Heroes and Villains*, *KABAL*, *KABAL Dungeon Floor Modules*, *Kamakura*, *The Land Beyond the Magic Mirror*, *Maze of the Riddling Minotaur*, *Middle Passage*,

Mines of Keridav, *Monster Squash*, *Necromancer*, *Northern Mirkwood*, *The Palladium Role-playing Game*, *Pavis*, *Pirates of Hagrost*, *Plague of Terror*, *Questers*, *Question of Gravity*, *Runes*, *Search for the Lost City*, *Shield Maidens of Sea Rune*, *Society of Sorcery*, *Street of Gems*, Superior Models *Dragon* releases, *Tarantis*, *The Tarot Quest*, *Village of Peddler's Ferry*, *Weapons & Assassins*, *Witches Court Marshes*, *Wizards & Lizards* new releases, *Wondrous Weapons*, *The World of Silverdawn*, *Ysgarth Adventure Pack #1*, *Ysgarth Adventure Pack #2*, *Ysgarth Player & GM Record Sheets*, *Ysgarth Supplement One: Drink the Wine of the Moon*, and *Ysgarth Supplement Two: Creatures Fair and Fell*.

Games

GOBLIN (Dwarfstar/Heritage); \$4.95. Designed by Howard Barasch. One 24 page rule-book, time record sheet, 11" x 14" map, 154 die-cut counters, small box. For two players; playing time 2-3 hours. Published 1982.

Goblin is a quasi-tactical game of medieval style combat which presents the two players with radically different goals. The goblin player has a force of infantry, with seven leaders to order them about. Their goal is to plunder the hamlets and towns on the map and retire to the safety of their caves on the map edge. The feudal player has an infantry/cavalry force about half as strong, with some reinforcements. While he also starts with seven leaders, his troops are dispersed around the map and cannot move until the goblins are sighted. He then must collect his forces and use them simultaneously to protect his communities, drive the goblins away, and harry them to force them to drop their loot. In the Raid version, each player plays each side once, the winner being the one getting most points as the Goblin. In the campaign version, the goblin player keeps his job for many raid cycles until the goblin king counter is eliminated or the "confidence level" drops too low. In this version, losses and ruination in one cycle carry over to the next, except that when players switch sides, everything starts fresh. Victory is decided solely by who has taken the most plunder in his stint as goblin.

In the Raid version, goblin players get points for plunder brought home and enemy units destroyed, and lose points for goblin units lost. In the campaign game, the goblin player gets points only for plunder, but he remains goblin as long as his king counter survives and his "confidence level" stays above -8. It is also possible to plunder into ruins all the towns on the map, forcing an end to the proceedings and a change of sides.

The components are typical of the Dwarfstar line. The graphics are excellent, but the cardstock used is too thin for the box and counters and a bit thick for the map. As a result, it is hard to keep the map flat, and the

counters will tend to "float," not to mention wear out with use.

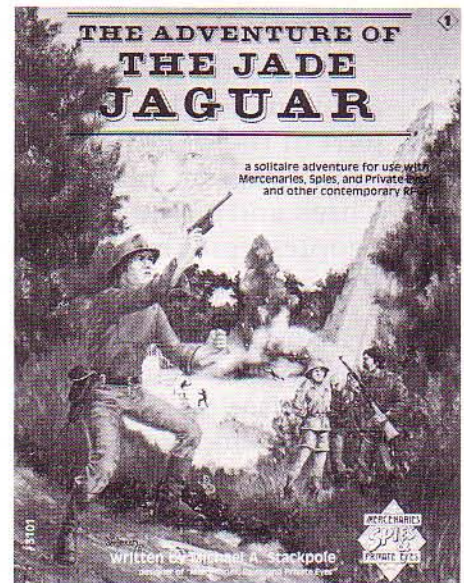
While the combat system is innovative, it has its idiosyncracies and deficiencies, and the rules are, in places, unclear or incomplete. Experienced gamers should be able to cope with the problems; others may not. However, the type of situation portrayed sets this game apart from the run-of-the-mill battle game. It is worth looking into.

—Steve List

Supplements

ADVENTURE OF THE JADE JAGUAR (Blade/Flying Buffalo, Inc.); \$5.00. Designed by Michael A. Stackpole. 25-page solo adventure for *Mercenaries, Spies and Private Eyes*. Published 1983.

You have been sent into the jungles of Latin America to find Professor Jackson and her party. The character must contend with a number of hazards, including natives, revolutionaries and the jungle. These are resolved with die rolls based on the character's attributes or skills. It is designed for a single adventurer, and, as a result of an agreement with Hero Games, characters from *Espionage* may be run through it as well.



Jaguar's physical quality is very good, and it has been a pleasure to see Flying Buffalo grow in this area. The book features excellent interior art by Michael Adams and an adequate color cover by Liz Danforth. It is also a pleasure to see that Michael Stackpole did not stint on the number of directions the adventure can take. There are more than a dozen different endings

to this story, depending upon the player's actions and the luck of the die. There is also a lot of shoot-'em-up action, and the storylines are well-plotted.

The faults lie in the spare description and the thinness of the book. Although Stackpole has thoroughly plotted out *Jaguar*, even some of the most exciting events are limited to a few quick sentences that get the player to the next decision. There are also a couple of strange sentences, such as the natives attacking the camp with five-foot "arrgws." One gets the feeling of being hurried from encounter to encounter, not a good thing for a book with the equivalent of 19 text pages. The adventure consists of (a) going through the jungle, and (b) rescuing the

party. A typical adventure will require reading between 8 and 15 paragraphs, no more than 25 minutes at best. You have to run through the adventure several times to get a good play value. Fortunately, there are a number of surprises that made rereading it a pleasure. It just may not be everyone's cup of tea.

— William Peschel

THE SINISTER SECRET OF SALTMARSH/ UI (TSR); \$5.50. Designed by Dave J. Browne with Don Turnbull. One 8½" x 11" 31-page rulebook, three 8½" x 11" maps and folder. Five to ten characters of levels one through three. Playing time indefinite. Published 1981.

The town of Saltmarsh, a quaint coastal fishing community, is plagued by a haunting. It is whispered that an evil alchemist's mansion is the center of mysterious and frightening activities. The alchemist has not been seen for years, and no villager will approach the mansion. The adventuring party must explore the house, find the source of this haunting, and then solve a mystery which is cleverly conceived. The adventurers will eventually board a ship near Saltmarsh, where the mystery seems to clear up.

The module contains maps of the mansion and ship, plus diagrams of the ship. The maps are all in one area, which is helpful. The house and its "haunts" are well detailed and thought out. The module keeps its "scary" feeling while keeping the plot intact. The story-line of the plot is smooth in transition from house to ship. The artwork is of excellent quality, which provides a good pictorial view to player characters.

A weak point in the module is the lack of strength in the pacing of the plot. It is too easy for a familiar "chop and slaughter" dungeon to replace the clever plot. There are too many major villains and sidekicks to keep track of, so careful dungeon mastering is needed.

In conclusion, the module is a strong one. With proper dungeon mastering and an ever-watchful group of player characters, this module is superior and quite enjoyable. It will surprise even the dungeon master with its creative story and twisting plot. I recommend it.

— David S. Turk

DANGER AT DUNWATER/U2 (TSR); \$5.50. Designed by Dave J. Browne with Don Turnbull. 8½" x 11" 32-page AD&D module, companion to *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh/*

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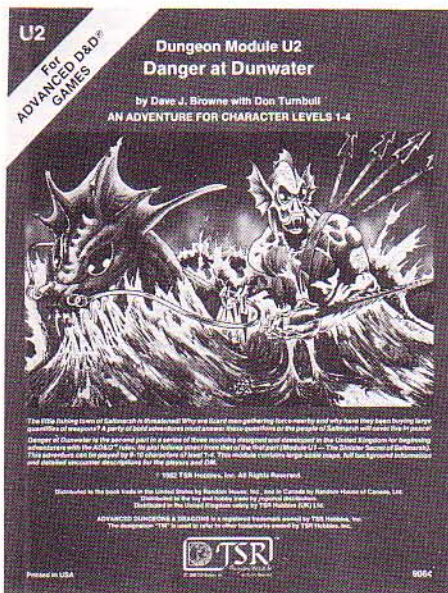
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U1. Designed for six to ten characters of first through fourth levels. Published 1982.

Danger at Dunwater is the second installment in the "U" series of modules designed and developed in the United Kingdom for the AD&D game. U2 continues the campaign begun in the first adventure. The series seems to proceed best and continue smoothly when played immediately after *Saltmarsh*. Play of this dungeon-style adventure takes upward of four hours when played separately. The campaign series is scheduled to be completed in a future release, *The Final Enemy/U3*.

Danger at Dunwater is one of the better-

designed modules TSR has produced, with nearly all the essential wilderness areas detailed, and an abundance of political intrigue included, along with a number of good player and game-master options. There are few problems with this product: Almost every conceivable aspect of play is covered.

However, there are a few minor faults. The first is the extreme difficulty involved in effectively keeping track of the changing political structure and leadership during the course of play. The second, and more frustrating, problem is the inability of players to pick up on the provided clues. Final analysis: Despite its problems, it is well worth the price. Pick this one up.

- Christopher R. Celtruda

THE PALLADIUM BOOK OF WEAPONS AND CASTLES (Palladium Books); \$4.95. Researched and compiled by Matthew Balent. 7" x 10" softcover, 50 pages, sequel to *Weapons and Armor*. Published 1982.

Weapons and Castles is 50 pages of material designed as a fantasy aid for gamemasters and players alike. It shows considerable research in its presentation of medieval European castles. Much of the material details actual castles, unusual missile weapons, and authentic siege machines, all complemented with good black and white illustrations.

The first section of *Weapons and Castles* concludes the comprehensively-researched weapons compilation begun in the first book by featuring various missile weapons. This

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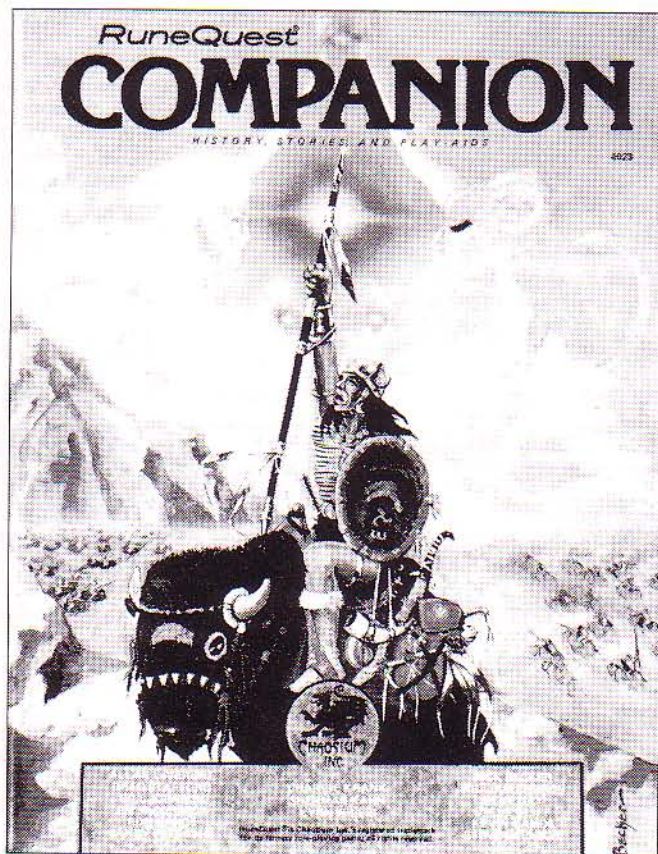
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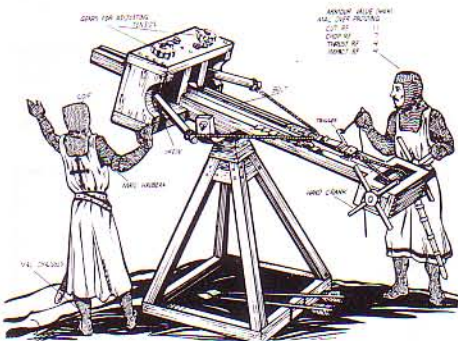
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section deals with realistic aspects of a multitude of arms, representing a variety of diverse cultures and eras. Information about length, type, pull, mass (in kilograms), and the effective and maximum range are presented for each weapon. And, for crossbows, the rate of fire and drawing device required are also provided. Of secondary interest are different release techniques, arrow (bolt) head designs, and crossbow loading and firing methods.



Reduction of half-page diagram.

However, the bulk of this work is devoted to European castles with a supplementary emphasis on siege weapons and techniques. Good art and clever diagrams keep this material consistently straightforward and useful. The best asset of this section is the realistic and adaptable castle wall system for siege combat and bombardment.

Lack of clarity and incompleteness seem to be *Weapons and Castles*' largest faults. Sometimes a good idea is presented but a lack of detailed expression causes misunderstanding.

In conclusion, *Weapons and Castles* is an invaluable role-players aid. It is well worth the price for any serious medieval-oriented referee and is a great asset for dealing with castle combat.

— Christopher R. Celtruda

AGENT OF DEATH (Infinity Limited); \$3.95. Designed and written by Ken St. Andre. Solitaire adventure for *Tunnels and Trolls* rules. 16 page unbound tabloid-size newsprint in a plastic bag. For one player; several minutes to several hours. Published 1983.

Ken St. Andre returns to *Tunnels and Trolls* with this 290-paragraph series of three vaguely connected solitaire dungeons. It is designed primarily for human "megacharacters" who have grown too powerful for the ordinary *T&T* universe; it takes place in a parallel setting of that

world. Player-characters progress from numbered paragraph to numbered paragraph, choosing options to continue via whim, guess, or reason. You have three different starting points. The title sequence sends you on a mission for your queen to defeat an enemy who is magically destroying your land. Deliver the kiss of death within thirty days or die! The other two entry points provide wanderings among dwarves, a sojourn with an unusual race of underground elves, and an encounter with a mad innkeeper, as well as the standard hack-and-slash fare.

This adventure is big. It has many, many options and several different endings. Its sheer size permits pacing and variety. You may go along rapidly for awhile, then experience pleasant interludes of *R&R*. There are opportunities for combat, entertainment, commerce, drinking, marriage, and more. You may be transformed in various ways, some pleasant, some not, but usually surprising. And all this at a price you can afford.

But that price is the root of a large fault. The paper is *cheap*. This newspaper format publication may not survive the many manipulations it will take for you to follow all the available routes. Artwork is good but the publishers have made it look like more than it is by repeating parts of illustrations and changing their sizes. The three short adventures do not make a coherent whole, and the main thread sometimes fizzles. Mr. St. Andre does not commit out-and-out murder as often as he has in some of his past works, but saving rolls abound. To be fair, that is as much a fault of the *T&T* system as it is this present work.

Is it worth the price? Yes, if you like *T&T* solitaires, can tolerate the lack of coherence, and want to take the trouble to keep the thing from physically falling apart as you play it. If you are not such a fan, avoid it.

— Harry White

Play Aids

THIRTY-SIDED DICE GAMING TABLES (The Armory); \$3.95. Written by Donald Cole. 8½" x 11" 40-page booklet, two 30-sided dice (numbered 0-9 three times), contained in a ziplock bag. Published 1982.

The Armory's *30-Sided Dice Gaming Tables* are 40 pages of computer print, complemented by black and white renderings of miniature figurines, intended for use with their new 30-sided dice. The dice are numbered 0-9 three times, with the sides distinguishable by a + sign, - sign, or plain numeral.

The second portion of this package is the

book of tables. Some of the tables included are a critical hit table (for use when a natural 20 is rolled to hit), human, elf, dwarf, gnome, and hobbit height and weight tables and an ancient ship type table.

Some of the tables are very useful and all can be effectively integrated into many fantasy systems. However, some seem to lack imagination. Many examples have little common use, while some tables appear hastily written. They could be better composed.

In conclusion, I recommend you buy a couple of d30s to add to your dice pouch and create your own tables.

— Christopher R. Celtruda

Computer Games

KAVES OF KARKHAN (Level-10, P.O. Box 21187, Denver, Colorado 90221); \$39.95. 48K for Apple with Applesoft, playing time one hour or more. Published 1981.

Kaves of Karkhan is one of the adventure games with so-called "animated" dungeon graphics. The plot centers around a huge mountain and the labyrinth of tunnels beneath. The object is to find and incapacitate the evil wizard Maldemere, who has made the mountain his home and plans to take over the world.

The program begins much like *D&D*. You, as an adventurer, decide to take on the quest. You must choose to be one of five character classes and can choose up to ten trusty townspeople to take with you.

This is where the resemblance to *D&D* ends. The type of class you choose doesn't affect the game in any way, and the only effect the townspeople have is the single item they bring (such as canvas, swords, poison, etc.) which are used as solutions to traps encountered in the labyrinth. That is *all* they are used for.

The traps themselves are, for the most part, well thought-out and challenging enough to keep you busy for a long time. At times, though, the solutions are too unrealistic or improbable — how often would you think of getting through a locked door by pouring poison on it?

The graphics for *Kaves* are adequate, but far from "animated" or the standards set by *Ultima*. Halls, monsters and traps are displayed while the program waits for a solution to be entered in two-word style commands.

I wouldn't recommend this game to anyone who is looking for fast, exciting play, but if you are an incurable puzzle buff it might prove interesting.

— Karl Westerholm

Miniatures

ALL THINGS DARK AND DANGEROUS — New Releases (Ral Partha); \$3-\$4.50/set. Sculpted by Julie Guthrie. 25mm-scale fantasy miniatures. Released 1983.

The new releases for the *All Things...* line constitute a pretty interesting mixed bag. The "Executioner Set," at \$4.50, consists of a headsman with double-bitted axe (in mid-swing), a guard with polearm at rest, a kneeling victim, a standing victim, and a block and basket (with head conveniently already within). The "Rhino Rider & Rhino," at \$4, shows one of the beasts and an axeman in full plate in both riding and standing positions. The "Hydra," at \$4, depicts one of the seven-headed beasts

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nically intertwined, and the "Saurian," \$3, is an example of the sort of lizard-man you *don't* want to meet in a dark grotto.

Of the four, I like the rhino rider best; it's a charming piece, though of limited use, and detail on the armor is nice — and how often can you get a rhinoceros in lead? The Saurian and Hydra are both nice pieces that will probably get a lot of use. The Hydra, especially, is suitable for diorama use; it's the piece most free of flash, individual scales are sculpted, and the heads are menacing and realistically reptilian.

The Executioner set doesn't do much for me. Headsmen and snivelling victims don't seem to have been much a part of the campaigns I've seen. As a diorama set, it also falls short; the human figures are a little clunky.

The *All Things* . . . line seems to be progressing nicely, though. Ms. Guthrie is a competent sculptor with a good eye for animation and utility, and these sets are worth looking at.

— Aaron Allston

BLACK TOWER — *New Releases* (Black Tower Miniatures, 2257 E. 3205 South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84109). Sculpted by Dale Angell. Released 1983.

Black Tower is a brand new company; its owner, Dale Angell, was formerly part of Masterpiece Miniatures, but split off to form his own operation. A look at the first releases offers hope for this new company.

The review samples (picked from a tableful — no "cherry-picking" for reviewers here!) included fantasy figures, miniature weapons, a one-horse wagon, and scenery. Of them all, the scenery was the most memorable, simply because it fills a need. Everybody makes

wizards and fighters, but how often do you see braziers, huge piles of treasure, archways, thrones, and the like? I'd like to see this range expanded, and Black Tower may be the ones to do it. They also have a *very* wide assortment of 25mm weapons, useful both for scenery and to individualize your other figures. An interesting touch in an otherwise ordinary line of human castings: little non-lead accessories included with the set. A hireling has a feather fan; a wizard has a jewel for his hat; best of all is the tiny glass sphere that becomes a witch's crystal ball. And all the prices seem reasonable — even low.

I have three main criticisms, and all could be overcome with time and care. The human figure detail is not up to the standards that Ral Partha *et al* are setting for the industry (the weapons and scenery are far better). A lot of flash is evident. And the metal is not sufficiently flexible; I broke several castings, trying to make slight changes.

On the whole, I'd still recommend that you look at these figures (if you can find a shop that stocks them) or write the address above for a catalogue. (This is the only catalogue I've seen that offers game data and statistics for each weapon it includes!) The initial releases won't exactly take the hobby by storm, but I think Black Tower has a future.

— Steve Jackson

FANTASY FIGURES (Dragontooth Miniatures). 25mm fantasy castings. Sculpted by Tom Loback. Released 1983.

Dragontooth is at it again. This new batch of releases shows that Tom Loback is still in good form . . . especially if you like demons.

"Syn the She-Devil" (\$5.00) and "Demon Rising from Hell's Well" (\$4.50) are both energetic, *big* hell-spawn; either would tower over a 25mm adventurer. Syn is also definitely X-rated; she is nude and highly detailed. "The Sphinx" (\$4.00), on the other hand, is massively hermaphroditic. Very interesting. More mundane is the "Adventurer or Thief," (\$3.75) who comes in two poses — riding and afoot — on the same card. Each figure has a separate head, sword, and dagger; lots of customizing possible here!

These figures don't have the overall fine detail that you see from some companies. What makes them unique is the feeling of *life* about them. The Demon isn't just standing there with his arms stuck out — he's *grabbing*. I've often seen figures with more attention shown to texture (the she-devil being an exception — every muscle was obviously done with loving care). But rarely have I seen casting so dramatic.

If you can afford the somewhat high prices, you'll probably want these.

— Steve Jackson

REPTILIADS (Rafm); from \$1.25 for single figures to \$4.50 for a group of four, with two giant war turtles offered as well (\$10 and \$14). 25-mm scale fantasy miniatures. Released 1983.

Reptiliads are lizardmen — or saurime, or reptilians, or whatever — and these are cast in a tall yet skinny 25mm. Most of the figures are being sold individually as well as in groups. Three are available only with turtles: a lizardwarf driver and two warrior-lizards manning the battlements which have been ingeniously mounted on the more expensive turtle's back. The dismounted figures have been sculpted and

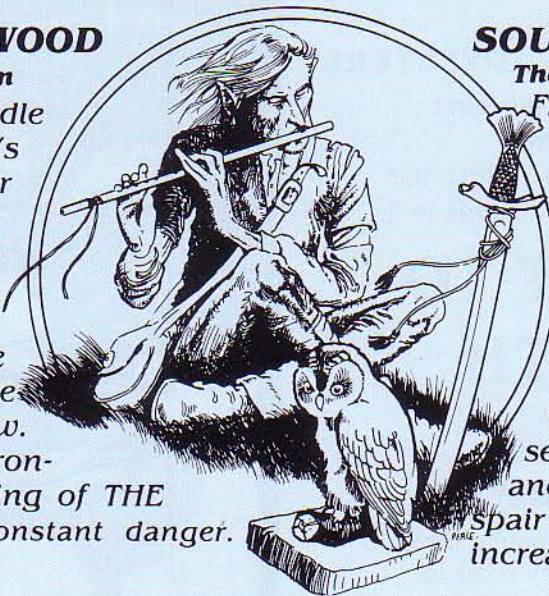
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organized with a phalanx of pikelizards in mind. Still, the heads for the large pikeaxes are by no means the only accessories included. There are standards and goads and musical instruments and even a few more unique weapons.

All of these pieces are good; many are excellent. The detail and texturing have been designed and enhanced with painting techniques in mind, yet no compromises on realism have been made. The turtles boast perhaps the greatest textural variety in the history of miniatures. They illustrate the combination of imagination and realism which only the best fantasy artists can master: There are details which are not found on actual turtles, but they do not look "stuck" on . . . they look as though they grew there. Rafm is moving rapidly toward status as one of the major miniatures manufacturers.

But this *is* a pretty obscure line. Few gamers have burning needs to expand their reptilian ranks by quite this much and I suspect war turtles are even less sought-after (but I've been looking for one for months and the bareback version satisfied my needs precisely!). As long as many assortments were being offered, an accessory pack could have been made available. The whole thing has an air of miniatures miniatures — as opposed to role-playing miniatures — to it. Indeed, a companion pamphlet on the nature, history and culture of the reptiliads has been published. It owes as much to the books on regimental colors in the Napoleonic era as it does to role-playing aids like *Trollpak*.

Such criticisms are pretty insignificant, however, and I would recommend this set to someone who wants a few good reptilian NPCs as well as to those intent on building a lizardman army.

— David McCorkhill

Gameable Movies



PSYCHO II (Universal). Produced by Hilton A. Green. Directed by Richard Franklin. Music by Jerry Goldsmith. Photography by Dean Cundey. Screenplay by Tom Holland. Cast: Anthony Perkins (Norman Bates), Vera Miles (Lila), Meg Tilly (Mary), Robert Loggia (Dr. Raymond). Released 1983.

Psycho II is an excellent film, tied for first place with *Videodrome* and *Blue Thunder* as the best picture released this season. As the

ads said, it is 22 years later (after *Psycho*), and Norman Bates is coming home. Finally released from the institution he was placed in after scaring audiences the world over in 1960, Norman is going back to the Bates Motel and all of its memories . . . mainly because he has nowhere else to go. He is sane now, but friendless and abandoned. The world is a hideous, terrifying place to the one-time killer, a place which has turned the motel he loved into a den of sin, and which now wishes to deny him his right to walk freely.

By now you know the story: Norman goes home, someone starts the killings again, and Norman (the logical suspect) is hounded by citizens and police. Director Franklin and company have resisted any impulse to make the sequel a stab-'em-up, and have instead created a mystery movie as filled with twists and surprises as the original. They *have* heightened the violence for the modern audience, though.

There is, in the final analysis, nothing to complain about in this film. It is faithful to the original. Franklin has done his utmost to recreate a Hitchcockian mood in his directions, as has Goldsmith in recapturing Bernard Herrmann's famous, frightening soundtrack. Perkins' performance is flawless, generating sympathy for the character. He is so believably Norman Bates again that the film takes on the quality of a documentary, rather than a mere suspense picture. By the film's end, he convinces us that it is the world which is insane, not Norman, and that Norman would have been better off had he stayed locked away from it. The filmmakers have cast a shadow over the society we live in. *Psycho II* is far more than most people expected it to be.

— C.J. Henderson

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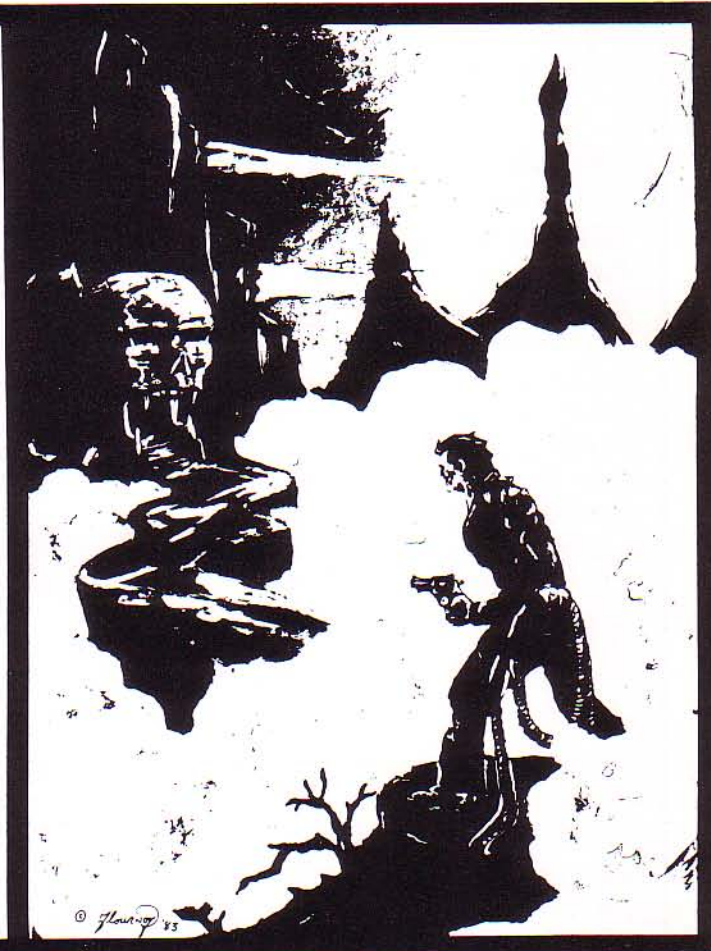
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News Briefs

Tekumel Novel to Appear

DAW Books has confirmed that they have come to an agreement with Prof. M.A.R. Barker for the long awaited "Empire of the Petal Throne" novel, "Man of Gold." DAW says that the tentative publication date is July, 1984.

Dragon, Ares Split Coverage

TSR Inc. has announced that two of its publications, *Dragon* and *Ares*, will take new directions as to content. *Dragon* will specialize in fantasy-related material and *Ares* (originally from Simulations Publications Inc., before the SPI demise) will contain only SF articles. TSR said in an ad which appeared in *Dragon* that the split meant that "fans of both genres will receive substantially more material."

New and Upcoming

EPYX/Automated Simulations has just debuted two computer games, *Oil Barons* and *New World*. In *Oil Barons*, players enter the high-stakes world of the international oil market and try to become the kingpin of the world energy market. *New World* is a game of conquest and colonization set in 1495, where each player leads an expedition to the New World. *Oil Barons* is available on disk for Apple and IBM and *New World* is available on disk for Apple and on disk and cassette for TRS-80. *New World's* suggested retail price is \$29.95 and *Oil Barons'* is \$100.00.

Strategic Simulations Inc. has announced the release of three games of modern warfare: *RDF 1985*, *North Atlantic '86* and *Computer Ambush - The Second Edition*. *RDF 1985*, the second game in SSI's *When Superpowers Collide* series, puts players in control of NATO and Soviet forces battling over an oil-rich area along the Persian Gulf. *North Atlantic '86* pits the Soviet forces against NATO in a massive operational-level game. *Computer Ambush - The Second Edition* is an improved version that is 40 times faster than its predecessor. Set in a small half-ruined French town, the game simulates man-to-man combat. Each game runs on a 48K Apple, Apple II Plus, Apple IIe and Apple III. *RDF 1985* will retail for \$34.95, *North Atlantic '86* for \$59.95.

RAFM Co. Inc. announces the release of its *Gilla-Worm* series under the *Reptiliads* class. RAFM will have five sets of siege crews out by Aug. 15. For more information write RAFM, 19 Concession St., Cambridge, Ontario, Canada, N1R 2G6.

Theatre of the Mind Enterprises Inc., a division of L.F. Enterprises, Phoenixville, PA, and Mysterious Mouse Games are currently working on a role-playing system which will be released under the name *Gaslight Theatre* in January, 1984. L.F. Enterprises also operates Theatre of the Mind, an interactive theatre concept based on fantasy role-playing. Their

recent production, *The Whitechapel Murders of Jack the Ripper*, is the basis of the game's first scenario pack.

Schubel and Son Inc. announces the release of at least two new PBM games and a third one in the works. *Global Supremacy* will be a strategy game with players in conflict for world domination. Set for late 1983 release is *Horizon's End!*, a continuous game of post-holocaust survival in a distant colony world. Under development and set for possible release is *Intrigue*, a game of international espionage.

Convention Calendar

October 28-30: WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION 1983. Fantasy literature con. Contact World Fantasy Con 1983, P.O. Box 423, Oak Forest, IL 60452. (Con is in Chicago.)
November 18-20: OUTRE-VENTION. SF and gaming con. *Ogre*, *Car Wars*, *D&D*. For information contact Outre-vention, 2246 Windsor, Salt Lake City, UT 84106.
November 18-20: PHILCON 83. Science fiction con with gaming. Contact PHILCON 83, P.O. Box 8303, Philadelphia, PA 19101.
November 25-27: CONTEX '83. Science fiction, gaming. Send SASE to Friends of Fandom, P.O. Box 772473, Houston, TX 77215.
December 3-4: MICRO WARS 83. Boardgaming, miniatures, role-playing con. Contact C.S.U.D.H. School of Humanities & Fine Arts, 1000 E. Victoria, Carson, CA 90747.
January 6-8, 1984: DRAGONCON. SF/F gaming con. Portland, ME. Contact Michael Ayotte, Dragon's Keep, 93 Ocean St., South Portland, ME 04106.
January 13-15, 1984: CRUSADER CON III. Gaming con. Contact The Auraria Gamer's Club, Metropolitan State College, 1006 11th St., Box 39, Denver, CO 80204.
January 13-15, 1984: ESOTERICON. A con of the Esoteric Arts. Contact Anne Pinzow, P.O. Box 290, Monsey, NY 10952-0290.
*February 10-12, 1984: WARCON '84. Role-playing, boardgaming, miniatures. Contact Warcon '84, MSC-SPO, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77840.
February 17-20, 1984: DUNDRACON VIII. (Gee, we'd love to tell you what is going on at this con, but the sponsors forgot to tell us.) Contact DUNDRACON, 386 Alcatraz Ave., Oakland, CA 94618.
February 25-26, 1984: GAME FAIRE '84. Gaming con. Contact Shannon Ahern, Book and Game Company, West 621 Mallon, Spokane, WA 99202, or call (509) 325-3358.
March 3-4, 1984: GOLD CON. Role-playing/wargaming con. Contact John Dunn, Gold

Con, North Campus Library, 1000 Coconut Creek Blvd., Pompano Beach, FL 33066.
*March 9-11, 1984: COASTCON '84. Gaming, science fiction con. Contact CoastCon '84, P.O. Box 1423, Biloxi, MS 39533.
March 17-18, 1984: CENTCON 84. Gaming con. Contact Chairman Ronald E. Vincent, 471 Commonwealth Ave., New Britain, CT 06053.
*March 29-April 1, 1984: AGGIECON XV. Science fiction con. Contact AggieCon XV, P.O. Box J-1, College Station, TX 77844.
April 6-8, 1984: CAPCON 84. Boardgaming, miniature, role-playing con. Contact Paul Riegel, 6119 E. Main St., #202, Columbus, OH 43213.
May 4-6, 1984: ONOCON '84. Gaming, science fiction, fantasy con. Send SASE to Onocon '84, P.O. Box 305, Syracuse, NY 13208.
June 21-24, 1984: DEEPSOUTHCON. SF, gaming convention. Contact Chattanooga DeepSouthCon, c/o Irvin Koch, 835 Chattanooga Bk. Bldg., Chattanooga, TN 37402.
June 22-24, 1984: GATEWAY CON II. Wargaming con. Contact Gateway Conventions, 305 Glyn Cagny, St. Louis, MO 63011.
July 5-8, 1984: ORIGINS '84. Boardgaming, miniatures, role-playing con. Send SASE to Origins '84, P.O. Box 59899, Dallas, TX 75229. (Con is in Denton.)

SJ GAMES and *FG* will be attending the conventions marked above with asterisks.

Correction

In *FG* 1, we incorrectly named the designers of Avalon Hill's new WWII game, *Up Front*. They are Courtney Allen and Don Greenwood. Avalon Hill is releasing a new edition of *Panzerkrieg*, which we misidentified as *Panther Creek*. We remain chagrined and offer special apologies to Mr. Allen.

PBM Update



PBM Update reports on professionally-moderated play-by-mail games. Notices are monthly. Copy deadline is 60 days previous to the first of the month for the issue in which the notice is to appear. (Deadline for the December issue is October 1.) All copy should be typed and double-spaced. Notices should not exceed 200 words in length. *FG* reserves the right to edit copy as necessary.

———— Schubel & Son ————

The Tribes of Crane

Crane I: In late June, 1982, the city of Fair was betrayed by an alliance of the Dain and Rail Peoples. The city leader was slain, the city looted and the people enslaved. Only Councilman Umox and the refugees that escaped to his

palace remained free. For unknown reasons Umox's palace was never attacked.

Umox was contacted by the Shore Peoples Confederation of Tribes. The S.P.C.T. offered to help Umox overthrow the oppressors and free the city of Fair, asking nothing in return. Nearly a year to the day of Fair's original capture, Umox and the S.P.C.T. struck, simultaneously assaulting the city walls and rebelling within the city. The city defenses, which rested almost entirely on the Rail People, quickly crumbled. Fair was freed!

Crane II: The Rebellious factions appear to be once again gaining strength throughout the world. From all corners come reports of successful ambushes and city assaults. In Western Crane, Cult forces ambushed and destroyed several Halton Factor tribes in the city of Fax and a Cult strike force attacked and captured

most of the city of Dixon despite aid provided for the city defenders by the Halton Factor and the Warlords of Thunder. In Eastern Crane, the city of Treve was attacked and looted by forces of the Blood Trust while the city of Hap was captured and looted by Dark Union forces.

StarMaster

In the NorthEast Galaxy the forces of the Imperial Dragorn Empire battled for control of Szyzygy 1 against the determined resistance of the resident Anese and their allies of the kingdom of Thalasia. In the midst of furious space battles, Dragorn transports ran the gauntlet of destruction and landed 5,000 elite Annihilist-Guard warriors on the planet. In the south polar region, heavy resistance was encountered. The Dragorn troopers swept through the defenses, destroying everything in their path and taking only a few dozen casualties. As they proceeded through the north temperate zone, with its high mountains, treacherous ravines, and ammonia-laden ice storms, the Dragorns were ambushed and destroyed by five Thalasian Samurai-Guards and three Anese Berserkers. Above the planet, space battles continue to rage...

Star Venture

The colony of Todos Santos on the planet of Syncom came under heavy attack recently. The battle began with a heavy orbital bombardment by the Destroyer A.A. *Utah*. For several hours the colony was bombarded by beam weapons and missiles while the ground attack forces moved into position. The defenders of Todos Santos lacked space defenses and were forced to wait out the bombardment in shelters.

Shortly after the bombardment ceased the colony was attacked by the forces of ground party Amax Bio-Search. The well trained and heavily-armed soldiers of Amax Bio-Search efficiently mowed down the defenders, eventually over-running the defenses. Todos Santos had fallen!

———— Capps & Capps ————

Galac-Tac

Galaxy I: Several races are hitting and running! A couple are trying to set-up "special" diplomatic conferences.

Galaxy II: The Celtani Federation is still not giving up in trying to expand and is having problems making "sweet deals." The Rose Empire has a new court pet, as no one claimed the little creature! This group for the most part looks like they might sit back and build up for heavy action again.

Galaxy III: Several LtJg's have been given



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praise for "quick thinking" and other various special duties. There is a lot of charting and exploring going on at this time. (It's like waiting for a time-bomb to go off!)

Galaxy IV: Some of the races are experiencing the all-so-common complaints of the different Ministries. Some commanders have set the "law" down about having to "work" together while others have not been so understanding and took more drastic measures.

Galaxies V & VI: Charting and exploration is beginning. Also some of the races are building ships and doing research.

Galaxy VII: Just got their setup sheets and rule books. They will have their setup and first turn this month.

Galaxy VIII: Is opened! Again, if you are interested in being a part of a game with longer turn-around times because of the great mail service in the states - let us know. The same holds true for playing against a special group of friends.

Adventures By Mail

Company news - Thank you all! For the second consecutive year the readers of the *Space Gamer* voted us the top PBM publisher in the industry. We want you to know that this honor means a lot to us. Also we offer our thanks to you for voting our games *Warboid World* and *Beyond the Stellar Empire* as the top two PBM games. Let us assure you that we will do everything within our power to continue providing the quality and service you have grown to expect from us. The *Capitol* playtest is moving ahead very quickly. We have mailed a *Capitol* newsletter and questionnaire to all 150 players. We expect a lot of input from these. In fact, we have already received a lot of suggestions from *Capitol* players and have begun to incorporate them into the game.

When reading the above, please keep in mind that it is being written two to three months before you read it due to this magazine's submission requirements.

Warboid World

The first set of *Warboid World* games have begun to produce a lot of action. Many players are invading adjacent enemy areas, with numerous battles per turn. Most players have discovered the locations of several satellite communication 'boids, and nukers and particle beams have been used like crazy. Finally, two players have performed successful shut-downs of opposing STIC's, giving them an early lead in victory points.

Beyond the Stellar Empire

Congratulations to Commander Anton Rober of the starship *IAN Shilo*. He has been promoted to the Imperial Stellar Patrol (ISP). He is the first IAN starcaptain to receive an ISP commission. This promotion was given due to Rober's extraordinary services as an IAN Region Coordinator.

Recently, the religious group The Community instigated major uprisings in the starport GTT *Hypso*. These rebellions were short-lived due to the actions of the GTT *Broken Dream*, backed by other GTT starcaptains. GTT heavy tanks rolled over the Community members (Yertzies) quickly with no survivors.

Flagritz ships have reduced the SSL colony Conrad in the Lexikonn system. It has also been reported that they have captured the SSL *Smegma* and ISS *Rignisht*. The impending attack of the Flagritz base by Imperial forces is expected shortly.

Imperial ships, including the IAN *Archimist*,

have engaged the RIP *Agin* in the transhole region of the periphery. Even with a prompt Imperial response, the *Agin* managed to elude them and escape. Rumors abound of stepped up RIP pirate activity in the transhole area due to the general lack of Imperial law enforcement there.

Clemens & Associates

Universe II

Quadrant I: The UES Knights have succeeded in stopping the Ixtli invasion of the upper portion of the quadrant. Haris is still free, and is being used as a base to build up the forces dedicated to the liberation of Alkaurops. The tide of battle has shifted.

Quadrant II: UES starships are rallying to the defense of Alula. Several powerful fleets are in the area and more are in route. There are rumors of an Etuel/Regajian truce that will enable starships of both empires to attack the Ixtli as one fleet.

Quadrant III: Major readjustments in the alliance boundaries are being made. As the CSA has split into several factions, other alliances are using the turmoil to expand their range of control. The Order of Lafitte has been sighted in new areas, with ominous implications.

Quadrant IV: Major new forces are arriving in the quadrant. Most of these are allied with the UES and seem to be in support of contin-

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ued peace and tranquility. Rumors exist indicating that some factions are plotting with the Ixtli to attack Etuel systems.

Regajian Empire: The empire is now at peace with all of its neighbors. With the liberation of Auva we have consolidated our empire and now control one-third of Quadrant I. Mutual trade rights with the Ixtli empire are being established.

Ixtli Empire: Marsik has been captured by the Ixtli forces of the Unity Alliance. They now control four civilized star systems. Ixtli forces now control half of the entire quadrant.

Muar Empire: The number of starship commanders joining the empire in Quadrant IV is increasing rapidly. As soon as the UES intruders are pushed back from our borders the counter-attack to recapture Alev will be organized.

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