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ISSUE #21

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IN THIS ISSUE:

Carolina Caldwell and the Quest for the Gold Idol —

Archeology Adventures for *Justice Inc.*™

Curse You, You Fiend — Villians for *Justice Inc.*™

Writing and Running Tournament Games —

More advice on designing tournaments

The Art of Magic — An alternate magic system for *Fantasy Hero*™

Airs Above the Ground — Equestrian martial arts package

Foes with Character — Replace standard monsters with NPCs

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ADVENTURERS

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ISSUE #21, \$4.00

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Issue #21, Summer 1993

ISSN —0896-8764

IN THIS ISSUE

DEPARTMENTS

'Nuff Said / <i>W.D. Robinson</i>	3
Superhype! / <i>Bruce Harlick</i>	5
N-Ray Vision / <i>Brian Curley</i>	40
Review of <i>Over the Edge</i> from Atlas Games.	
GM's Discretion / <i>Steve Perrin</i>	42
Steve looks at Recoveries and the Speed Chart.	
Games Within Games / <i>Collie Collier</i>	44
A regular look at the dynamics of roleplaying.	
Crooks & Crusaders / <i>Bruce Tong</i>	46
Featuring the Sphereship Antares	

FEATURES

Writing and Running Tournament Games, Part 2 / <i>Dean F. Edgell</i> more advice on tourneys.....	6
Carolina Caldwell and the Quest for the Gold Idol / <i>Steven S. Long</i> archeology episodes for <i>Justice Inc.</i>	12
"Curse You, You Fiend!" / <i>Steven S. Long</i>	19
Three Villains for <i>Justice Inc.</i>	
The Art of Magic / <i>John Desmarais</i>	25
An alternate <i>Fantasy Hero</i> magic system.	
Airs Above The Ground / <i>Jason Vester</i>	29
A martial arts package for your warhorse.	
Foes With Character / <i>Mike Andersen</i>	33
Replace your monsters with non-player characters.	
The Schimmelhorn Effect / <i>Alex J. Morgan</i>	37
Super Science explained!	

Adventurer's Club is published quarterly by Iron Crown Enterprises, Inc., 108 Fifth Street SE, 3rd Floor, Charlottesville, VA, 22901. All Hero-related material is copyright 1993 by Hero Games. All Rights Reserved. Printed in USA.

AC Submissions and letter correspondence should be addressed to AC Submissions, PO Box 1605, Charlottesville, VA, 22902. Subscription queries should be addressed to: Iron Crown Enterprises, AC Subscriptions, PO Box 1605, Charlottesville, VA, 22902, or call (804) 295-3917.

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NEW RELEASE BUZZ

JUNE 1993



MONTH	ST.#	TITLE	PRICE	NOTE
APRIL	424 <i>Champions Presents #2</i>	\$15.00 PUBLICATION DATE: 4/28/93
	AC20	..... <i>Previous AC</i>	\$4.00	..... PUBLICATION DATE: 4/28/93
MAY	425	..... <i>VIPER</i>	\$20.00	..... PUBLICATION DATE: 5/12/93
JUNE	426	..... <i>Shadows of the City</i>	\$15.00	..... PUBLICATION DATE: 6/7/93
JUNE '93	427	..... <i>Allies</i>	\$13.00	..... No Enemies - but Friends? An Enemies style sourcebook for <i>Champions</i> ®, except this time there are no enemies! Instead you'll meet <i>Executive Sanction</i> , <i>The Posse</i> , <i>Felix 9</i> , and the rest of the potential allies here!
JULY '93	508	..... <i>Hero System Almanac I</i>	\$13.00	..... All You Want To Know & Haven't Been Afraid To Ask! Packed full of new rules, new characters, new adventures and more; this 96 pager is both a rulesbook and a sourcebook for campaigning in all kinds of settings. First of a ever-so-often series, this debut Almanac includes an update on the <i>Champions Universe</i> . AC21 ... The one you are reading NOW! ..\$4.00 SUBSCRIBE NOW! PSST! Keep it quiet, but this AC thing is becoming, shh, like a quarterly event. Have you noticed? <i>AC18</i> : 10/92, <i>AC19</i> : 1/93, <i>AC20</i> : 4/93, <i>AC 21</i> : 7/93. <i>AC22</i> on schedule for 10/93...beware, subscriptions now expire before you know it! See page 32 now to learn how to renew or become a subscriber and save money!
	1902	..... <i>Rolemaster Companion VII</i>	\$14.00	..... they just keep going & going
	428	..... <i>The Mutant File</i>	\$14.00	..... Yes, Genocide Included! 128 pages transform you into an expert on mutants in the <i>Champions Universe</i> . Add this popular storyline to your campaign now. Includes over 30 new characters and a random mutant-generator.
AUGUST '93	9004	..... <i>Space Master Companion II</i>	\$14.00	..... <i>Space Master</i>
SEPT. '93	429 <i>Creatures of the Night: Horror Enemies</i>	\$14.00 Chills'n' Thrills Bring the world of horror to a super-powered setting! This 112 pager contains over 50 new horrific characters to challenge your bravest heroes. Scare up some excitement in your campaign!
	1304 <i>At Rapier's Point (Swashbuckling Genre Book)</i>	\$14.00 <i>Rolemaster</i>

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'NUFF SAID

DOOM AND GLOOM

As of this writing, the polar holes in the ozone layer are widening at an accelerating rate, ST:DS9 still begins like an episode of "National Geographic Explorer," and yet another charismatic cult leader has died without fulfilling his promises of the end of the world.

Don't be discouraged. Something is bound to happen. Unless MOSSAD has closed its Chicago front and ICE has melted, this issue will be the fourth in the last calendar year. Imagine that!

OTHER INCONSEQUENTIAL STUFF

In my Life Outside Gaming, I work in the field of risk analysis with a really, really big and expensive engineering consulting firm. Quite a few of our clients are corporate Americans besieged in the legal battlefields by individuals who disregarded their own common sense and in some way misused products manufactured by our clients. When common household products are used for other than their intended purposes, those products often become tools of injury, destruction, or death. How unfortunate.

In a roleplaying environment, especially one populated by low-powered heroes armed and equipped with the usual assortment of brand-name tools of social disruption, an unarmed hero is usually a short-lived hero. Next time the fifth incarnation of the bitter pavement artist you like to play is trapped in his ex-wife's house without his piece, stop the game, send the GM out for a pizza, and take a look around. I guarantee you that disregarding common sense in a kitchen filled with electric appliances is like playing "Blind Man's Bluff" on the freeway in commute traffic. The dangers in the average American kitchen don't hold a candle to those found in the average American basement or garage.

So eat your pizza and be creative. Look at the mundane with new and enlightened eyes. Save your detective and collect your duly earned experience points. When you're finished with your game, consider the possibilities you found just in your house. If you have a new twist on old appliances and you want to see your name in print, write up a proposal for an article on the subject.

THE THIRD AND LAST STUPID HEADER

Here we are.

Rather than risk sounding like a marketing sleaze and smearing you with ambiguous notions about how nifty this issue is, I will instead fill up a few lines of text with encapsulated versions of what you will find in the following pages. The order in which I

have written about the articles in no way reflects the order in which you will find them. So there.

In "Airs Above the Ground," the author, Jason Vester, has put into game terms a martial arts package for war-trained horses. Don't laugh.

Steven S. Long, author of *Dark Champions*, has provided you with a set of archaeology-based pulp adventures for your *Justice, Inc.* campaign. Unlike previous adventure sequences, these are not overly detailed and require some forethought by a GM who would use them for his players' enjoyment.

The being represented in this issue's *Crooks and Crusaders* column is one that is familiar to anyone who has used the *Champions* rulebook. Bruce Tong put a spin on the origin of a creature used to illustrate Distinctive Features. I think you'll find it amusing.

If you've ever wondered why you can't get any of the cool toys that the villains always seem to have, Alex J. Morgan has an answer in "The Schimmelhorn Effect."

Michael Andersen's article, "Foes With Character," should help if you're caught in the trap of just throwing more and more powerful adversaries at your PCs. Mr. Anderson offers up some personal experience and insight into substituting intelligent, active NPCs for instinctive, reactive monsters in your *Fantasy Hero* game.

In another fantasy-related article, John Desmarais offers power framework alternatives to spell-slingers of every stripe. If you're tired of paying premium prices for spells, this article is worth your time.

Dean F. Edgell concludes his advice on how to write and run a tournament and, of course, we have our regular columns.

I LIED

About the headers *and* about going to Origins. I have nothing against the city of Fort Worth. I am sure that it is a perfectly lovely urban blight upon the rolling plains of Texas. If someone were to pay me significant sums of money, I might even be convinced to say really nice things about it even though I've never been there and have no plans to go there, now or in the near future.

Origins is in the future. In the future, Origins is in Fort Worth. I am not going to go to Fort Worth. Can you see where this is leading? Good.

I do plan to be in lovely Milwaukee at the height of tourist season (in California), however. Ahh, ninety percent humidity and unhealthy drinking water. See you at GenCon.

Be a Hero!
W.D. Robinson



From the Author of
NINJA HERO!

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SUPER HYPE!

TIME TO CHECK YOUR SUBSCRIPTION!

As you've no doubt heard elsewhere, this is the fourth issue of the AC that has been published in a twelve month period. A first in the history of this magazine! At long last, we're finally on schedule. What you may not realize is that your four-issue "lifetime" subscription has probably expired. Our circulation department tells me that over sixty subscribers have had their subscriptions lapse. Make sure to check that *your* subscription hasn't expired. You don't want to miss a single issue of the AC!

TALKING TO THE HEROES

A lot of people out there have questions or comments regarding our products. Many of them know that I will happily answer questions. I can be reached at (415) 508-9736 between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm, West Coast time. But what a lot of you *don't* know is that Hero Games is well represented on a variety of electronic bulletin board services (BBS's).

Way back in AC #18, I mentioned the Red October BBS, out in Texas. Red October is still going strong; Bob Quinlan, the sysop, tells me that they've just had their 1,500th user sign onboard. Amazing! For those of you who missed the information, here it is again:

Red October BBS
(512) 834-2548
8 data bits, no parity, one stop bit

We're also on a couple of other services.

GEnie: Hero Games has been on GEnie for years. Steve Peterson, co-author of *Champions*, checks in there frequently to answer questions, solicit ideas and keep people informed about the product line. We have two very active topics for discussion, one for *Champions* and one for *Fantasy Hero*. We're starting up a discussion for *DARK Champions* as well. You won't want to miss it! Sign up information for GEnie can be found in most major computer magazines. Once you have a GEnie account, you can find us by typing "M805;1". Switch to Category 2, and check out Topics 20 and 26. You won't be sorry. Our GEnie address is B.HARLICK2.

America Online: We've been on AOL for over a year now. AOL is a great new service that is really going out of its way to encourage gamers. They

have lots of on-line games, discussions areas and monthly conferences. Hero Games is one of the hottest companies on AOL. We have a very active discussion folder, and I give monthly conferences on Hero Games and other aspects of gaming. Once again, you can find information on how to sign onto AOL in just about any computer magazine. Once aboard, use keyword "GCS" to find the discussions and conference schedule. Our AOL address is BruceHH.

CompuServe: Hero Games is well represented on CompuServe by Sue Grau, one of the HACs, and our official rep on that network. I'm not as familiar with CompuServe, but Sue and the rest of the users can ably answer any questions you might have. Hero Games' CompuServe address is 70762,3070.

A note about online services: all of the commercial services mentioned above charge for connect time by the hour. They don't charge outrageous fees, but be careful when starting out with them. If you get involved with real-time on-line games, you can run up quite a bill before you notice it! Be cautious, and you'll do just fine.

UPCOMING PRODUCTS

You may have noticed that I haven't mentioned any of our new products yet. Don't despair; our production schedule continues along at a goodly pace. Just released is the first *Hero System Alamanac*. The HSA is our forum for printing new alternative rules, *Champions Universe* updates, and some classic articles from the older ACs. Be sure to check out the HSA. It has a great new system on how to do spirits, covering everything from genies in the bottle to Commander Data!

Next month, Sean Fannon's *The Mutant File* will be released. This 128-page book examines the role of the mutant in the Champions Universe, and contains a detailed write-up of the organization Genocide, as well as dozens of new characters. There's even a system for rolling up random mutant characters. You won't want to miss it!

We have a bunch of other great stuff in the works, but I'll get to it in three months. Until then,

Be A Hero!
Bruce Harlick

WRITING AND RUNNING TOURNAMENT GAMES

(PART 2)

BY DEAN F. EDGELL

So you've decided to game master a tournament roleplaying game. You've created great characters, come up with a nifty plot, and designed scenes in which to bring it all to life. You've tested and polished it all. Now, you've finally arrived at the convention and half the work is still ahead. You've written the tournament. Now you've got to run it.

I'm part of the team that writes and runs the *Drive-In Hero* series of Official ICE Hero tournaments. After being involved in a number of successful tournaments, I was asked to share my experience. In an earlier article, I discussed writing tournament games. Now we'll talk about running them.

THE SET UP

Before I start a game, I check out the assigned playing space. Most playing spaces are set up with tables and chairs. This is great for games where the players are going to sit around, draw maps and talk. But with *Drive-In Hero*, we want roleplaying. That means *acting*. We need space for a stage. So we move the table out of the way and make sure the playing area is clear. We keep the chairs handy but off to the side. We may use them later in setting scenes. Chairs can be used for cars, thrones, horses and occasionally, even as chairs. We can use them in a scene if appropriate, and when the scene is over, clear the playing space again.

If a player is not in a scene and neither is the chair then I don't mind if the former uses the latter.

THE INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of any tournament game, the GM has a responsibility to introduce the game. You may want to give some background information, discuss the kind of game you're running, or outline what you expect from players. You will want to describe the hero characters so the players can choose among them.

This is where many of us make a poor start. We think of this step as a chore to be taken care of before the game starts. We're wrong. The game has already started.

As soon as you begin the introduction, you are creating impressions of your game. The pattern in which the players will see and roleplay their characters begins to take shape in their minds. Similarly the manner in which they see and will interact with the other player characters begins to be formed. You are also already establishing the atmosphere and mood for your game.

The introduction deserves as much thought, preparation and energy as any other part of your game. It's important.

THE MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENT

The first rule of quality game mastering is: "Do it with Energy!" Do not just sit there. Get up and live the adventure. Be involved. If you aren't, your players certainly won't be.

As a GM, I want to be 'up' for every tournament run. The energy must be present from the beginning of the introduction through to the end of the game.

Now, when I say a GM should have energy, I don't mean that you should be "hyper." Rather, I am thinking of intensity. The expression of energy will vary with the scene's requirements. If a scene calls for me to play a silent unmoving figure, I want to make him the most important silent, unmoving figure possible. I invest him with significance. Every role I play is important. Everything that character does is important to the character.

Similarly, I try to treat every description, every scene as if it is dramatic and exciting and important. If it wasn't, it wouldn't be in my game. So it always deserves my energy, and the players' too.

SPLIT THEM UP, MIX THEM UP

In *Drive-In Hero*, the players each have their own ideas of what their characters should do. They invariably want to split up. This is good.

The "don't split up the party" rule may make good sense if you're playing a combat tactics game, but in a roleplaying tournament, meaningful character interaction is rarely possible with eight characters in one scene. I've found that roleplaying works best with just 2 or 3 characters in a scene. Of course,

solitary characters have no one with whom to interact. So, as GMs, we should rarely let a character stay alone for long. Instead, we can manipulate events to bring solitary characters back into contact with others. (In "Surf & Die," the odds of two solitary PCs meeting while wandering in the jungle were surprising.)

So, go ahead, split up the player characters. Bring them back together again and then split them up once more. Mix and match the characters. In the middle game, when things are flexible, you can play with them a bit. The keys to a roleplaying tournament are character interaction and relationships.

Betsy and Brad have established a romantic relationship? Rick is expressing an interest in Claire? What would happen if Rick and Betsy were thrown together for a few scenes? What if they were caught in a compromising position? Drama arises from conflict. Conflict comes from problems and obstacles. Manipulate those characters. Stir the pot. Dredge up some meat for roleplaying.

QUICK CUTS

If you are running a scene with fewer players, there is an obligation to keep the players, who are not in the scene, interested. The scene that is being played must be entertaining. That is an obligation of both players and GMs. If the scene is not entertaining, cut and move on.

It is equally important that the players who are not on know that they will be on soon. We can accomplish this by keeping each scene short, cutting and moving on to another group of player characters.

In *Drive-In Hero*, after the opening scenes, we ask the players what their characters want to do. We group them accordingly and begin running scenes. The GMs then try to select encounters from the list of prepared scenes, arrange encounters between PCs, or create an encounter or event that will create conflict. The conflict is rarely combat, but rather it is emotional conflict or danger and suspense.

The scene develops until the involved characters are in a position of crisis. But when there is a sudden unexpected encounter, there is a threat to the heroes' well-being (real or imagined), a shocking revelation is made, a question is asked for which the answer is dramatically important, or someone delivers a line that is so dramatic or funny that it can't be topped, then a GM yells, "CUT!" and we move on to some other players' scene.

Sometimes, a scene just serves to advance the plot and finishes without a dramatic cusp or cliffhanger because it has resolved or it is simply time to move on. And sometimes a scene is simply boring; nothing interesting is happening and so GMs have to end it (put it out of its misery) and cut away even though this is unsatisfying.

In turn, the GMs will return to the characters they cut from and the scene will pick up where it left off. Many players will have been glad for a short break in which to plan their next move. The crisis will be resolved, or at least passed. The GM can then escalate the PC's problems, building them up and making the characters' situation worse and generate new cliffhangers. When a scene can go no further, resolve it and move on to another situation, event, or encounter.



If we're lucky, the drama, the quick cuts and the cliffhangers will create an impression of speed, energy and suspense for the players.

HOW CUTS WORK

Here's an example showing a series of scenes, cuts and escalation. For simplicity, the scenes involve single characters and are short, but they are based on events that happened in a "Surf & Die" game. (Honest! - Thanks to Marc and Lori.)

GM: O.K. Rick, what do you want to do now?

Rick: I think I'll take that motor boat out for a spin and check out this island.

GM: (*Sets up a single chair in the middle of the playing space for Rick to sit in*) You're out in the boat. How fast do you want to go?

Rick: How fast can it go?

GM: There's only one way to find out!

Rick: OK!

GM: You're moving across the lagoon now, faster and faster. Water whips past! The engine roars! The boat bucks as it hit the small waves in the sheltered lagoon! Your hair is swept back in the wind! (*The GM is increasingly excited as he delivers this speech and Rick's player is acting out the scene in response. Suddenly the GM shifts to a calmer puzzled tone.*) And then you notice something in the water just ahead, as you go racing towards it.

Rick: What is it?

GM: That would be the reef that surrounds the lagoon. (*And then with sudden panic*) And you're headed right for it!!! CUT!

GM: (*Calmly now*) Meanwhile Claire has been walking through the jungle. (*Rick and his chair/boat clear the play area and Claire takes center stage.*) Claire, you emerge unexpectedly onto the island's veldt—peaceful grass-covered meadows. There are some small brown hills a short distance away.

Claire: How lovely!

GM: Suddenly the tranquillity is rocked with an explosion from the jungle!

Claire: Oh! (*The audience realizes that the explosion occurred in Joel's scene when a special effect experiment failed.*)

GM: The brown hills are a little closer now. Closer still now. And they seem to be bobbing and shifting ever closer. (*With sudden inspiration*) Claire! Those aren't hills at all! It's a stampeding herd of...of...Giant Guinea Pigs! You're about to be trampled! CUT!

GM: Rick! You're going to crash and die on the reef! What now?

Rick: Well... I'm going to have to jump it!

GM: Jump it?

Rick: I'll have to hit it just right and use the reef as a ramp - Yah!

GM: I'm not even sure that's possible. You're going to need dice. (*If Rick rolls well, he survives. If he rolls poorly, he still survives but bad things may happen. Actually bad things will happen anyway. In this case Rick rolls well.*)

GM: You hit the reef and suddenly you're airborne!

Rick: Cool!

GM: You're up over the open sea! Wind whistles through your hair! It blows between your toes!

Rick: Yah! . . . Toes? (*and he looks down.*)

GM: Oh. Oh. Looks like you tore out the bottom of the boat on the reef!

Rick: Uh oh!

GM: And there's the ocean coming up at you fast! CUT!

GM: Claire! Where were you?

Claire: About to be trampled by a herd of stampeding giant guinea pigs!

GM: Oh. So, is this the end of Claire? (*dum dum da dum!*)

Claire: No! I have to try to grab the lead guinea pig and then swing up onto it!

GM: Ride a stampeding guinea pig? This I have to see! Make that Riding roll!...Incredible! Claire swings smoothly up a top the lead guinea pig, skirt flaring! (*Claire assumes a guinea pig riding stance and the GM assumes one beside her.*) So you're charging across the veldt atop a fear-maddened giant guinea pig with hundreds of fear maddened guinea pigs behind you. Wait! what's that directly in your path? It's Joel and Dr. Quarks!

Claire: Oh no!

GM: CUT!

In subsequent scenes: Rick is menaced by a shark; Claire fails in her attempt to turn the stampede by turning the lead guinea pig and Joel and Dr. Quarks (who fail to rescue themselves because of Joel's clumsiness) are trampled; Rick avoids the shark's teeth, somehow manages to get on top of it, and finds himself riding the maddened beast, which races out of control towards the reef; Joel and Dr. Quarks discover that giant guinea pigs will actually avoid stepping on anyone beneath their feet (whew!)—except for the clumsy ones—and they disappear beneath the mass of a clumsy giant guinea pig which trips and falls upon them; Claire discovers that the giant guinea pig stampede is carrying her up the side of the volcano to her doom; and on and on.

Now, those scenes were action scenes with little dialogue. Cuts and cliffhangers can be used equally well in dramatic dialogue scenes.

Joel: Claire?

Claire: Yes?

Joel: Claire.

Claire: Yes?

Joel: Claire, um, there's something really important I have to ask you.

Claire: Yes?

GM: CUT!

Or somewhat later:

Claire: Oh, Joel, that was a really sweet offer and I like you a lot, because you're really a sweet guy. And I think the ring you carved yourself is really sweet, but I can't marry you.

Joel: But why?

Claire: Because I'm saving myself for...for....

GM: CUT!

If you want more examples of dialogue based "cliffhangers", watch some soaps. Soap operas are based on short scenes with quick cuts, often on dramatic cliffhangers. You can do it too.

PITFALLS FOR THE GMS

1. Forgetting Who the Stars Are: As GMS in roleplaying tournaments, we have our own NPC characters to play and our own energy invested. We want to have fun too. In fact, if you don't have fun you shouldn't be running a tournament. But don't forget that the players are the stars. Do not dominate the scenes. Don't try to one-up the players; don't compete with them. It is the players' actions and dialogue that are most important.

If you are running with more than one GM especially beware of scenes that involve dialogue between GM characters while the players end up watching and not playing.

2. Not Paying Attention: Another pitfall where there are multiple GMS who share duties is to let your attention (and energy) wander while another GM is running scenes. You have to watch the game, even if you're not involved in the scene. If you don't know where all the heroes are and what they're doing, you may miss chances to help your partner improve the game with ideas or inspirations and you may make some bad judgments when you take over.

In one *Drive-In Hero* game, a new GM took over (tag-team style) and promptly collapsed the building in which some of the off stage PCs had been left in their previous scene. (oops!) The moral is, "Pay attention!" Watch the scenes you aren't involved in and keep track of all the characters.

JUDGING

When a tournament is over, winners must be chosen. This isn't always a pleasant task. There are a variety of ways to select a winner, some good, some bad. All the HAC tournaments have accepted that it is the judges' responsibility to decide.

It is a responsibility that we take seriously. Sometimes, as play ends, there is a gut feeling about who should win. However, it is always worthwhile to take the time to consider each player and try to recall the good parts of their performance.

Other GMS and trusted observers can help. They may have seen and or recall things that one GM does not. Sometimes your gut is wrong and the process has changed minds.

When judging, there are several aspects of a player's performance that should be considered. The most important are usually these: How well and how consistently did they roleplay the character? Within the scope of their character, were they entertaining?

There are other, more subtle qualities I also consider. Did the player respect his or her fellow performers? I have become increasingly sensitive to players who cut off their fellows and steal scenes. Did they respect the GMS' efforts as directors? (CUT means the scene ends.) Did the player help to advance the story? Did the player help involve other players in the game?

In the end, judgments must be made. And made in a very short time. Sadly, these decisions are rarely certain. Mistakes can be made. That is why so many GMS will precede the announcement of winners by proclaiming the difficulty of choosing. It is often true.

Afterwards, I have often had second thoughts or been unable to explain a choice to a disappointed player. It happens. And I have no advice to assist other guilty GMS except this: It's only a game.

But, if you invest time, energy and talent in your tournament, it can be a great game!



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CAROLINA CALDWELL

AND THE

QUEST FOR THE GOLDEN IDOL

Archaeology Adventures for Justice, Inc.

BY STEVEN S. LONG

Anyone who's seen *Raiders of the Lost Ark* or the other "Indiana Jones" movies knows that archaeology-based pulp adventures can be a lot of fun. Unfortunately, creating archaeology scenarios can also be a lot of work, since you (the GM) usually have to do some research to make the scenario seem realistic. For example, a scenario based around an ancient Babylonian temple loses a lot of its color and appeal if you don't know something about Babylonian civilization and architecture. Although you don't have to be an expert archaeologist to run "Indiana Jones"-type scenarios, even a little background knowledge improves the scenario tremendously, and it also gives you a basis for making up realistic-sounding "facts" which are important to the plot.

In order to save you some time and effort, this article describes four archaeological adventures for *Justice, Inc.* These scenarios are simply outlined, with enough details to give them a touch of realism (even though some of the details are entirely fictional). You can customize each adventure to fit your group of PCs. Several of the villains mentioned in these scenarios are featured in another part of this issue of *Adventurer's Club*.

These scenarios assume that at least one of the PCs has some knowledge of archaeology, anthropology, and art history. If this is not the case, you should either encourage the PCs to buy these skills or provide a helpful NPC who has them.

These scenarios are all assumed to take place circa 1935.

THE POPE'S CHESSMEN

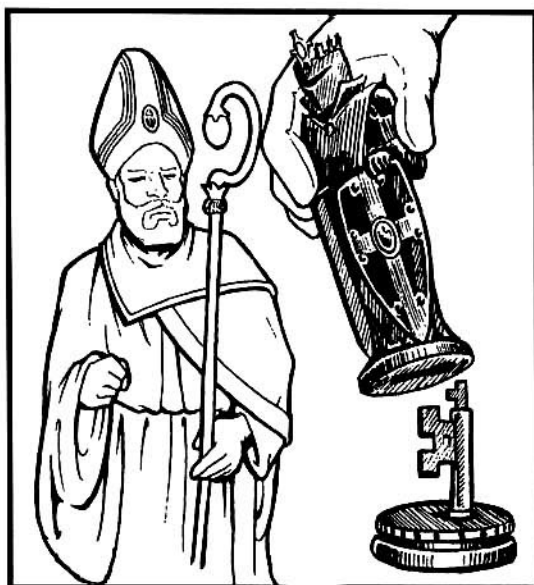
Pope Alexander VI, of the infamous house of Borgia, was pope from 1492 until 1503. During his scandalous papacy he commissioned a fabulous chess set. The board is made of ivory and ebony squares, with a tiny emerald at each corner where four squares meet. The men are made of ivory and jet, and each has a tiny amethyst set on top. The entire set weighs about ten pounds.

Upon Alexander VI's death in 1503, his children, Cesare and Lucrezia, inherited the set. Cesare, busy trying to maintain his political power, had no time for chess, and shortly before his downfall in 1506 he gave the set to the College of Cardinals as a gift. There it remained until the Sacco di Roma in

1527, when the forces of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, plundered Rome and captured Pope Clement VII. The chess set disappeared from history.

After many centuries, the chess set has finally resurfaced: the PCs have heard that it is to be offered at a top-secret black market auction in Paris. If one or more of the PCs is a well-known "obtainer of rare antiquities," he will receive an invitation to the auction for himself and his friends. The invitation does not reveal who sent it or who the seller is, but it does reveal the opening bid: \$50,000, a fabulous sum in the 1930s. (In order for the PCs to enjoy the first part of the adventure, they should be in a position to bid on the chess set. If they are not personally wealthy, let them obtain the backing of a patron [such as a museum, university, or wealthy philanthropist].)

The PCs must go to Paris. If they take public transportation, they will meet fellow passenger Elisia Copperton, a beautiful American art thief who is using the name "Clarissa Bowen." If she learns that the PCs are also going to the auction, she will become "friendly" with the handsomest male PC by using Seduction (but remember—this is *not* a "spicy story"). She will try to use the PCs as dupes or unwitting allies to help her get the chess set.



When the PCs arrive in Paris, they notice some tough-looking men watching them. These men work for Francois D'Arc, an unscrupulous art collector who is scouting out his competition at the auction. These men follow the PCs to their hotel and then report to D'Arc; if the PCs try to approach them, they disappear.

The auction is set for 6:00 p.m. the next evening. When the PCs arrive at the designated building (in formal attire, of course), they are shown into a lavishly-appointed auction room. The chess set is in a glass case next to the podium; no one doubts that it is genuine (which should automatically make the PCs suspicious). Other attendees at the auction include "Clarissa Bowen" (if she did not arrive with the PCs); Countess Natasha Alexya Fyodorovna, formerly of the court of Czar Nicholas II; Hiram Locke, Texas cattle and oil baron; and Hans Burgheim, curator of the Medieval Department of the Vienna Museum of Art. If any of the PCs has a particular rival or competitor who ought to attend, he is there as well. The coldly handsome Francois D'Arc and his bodyguard enter the room at the last minute; any PC who makes a PER Roll recognizes one of the bodyguards as one of the men who were watching them when they arrived in Paris.

You should play the parts of the auctioneer and D'Arc, so the PCs can bid. The bidding soon narrows down to two persons: one of the PCs and D'Arc. D'Arc refuses to give up; as the bids inch higher a couple of his goons turn around and stare

at the PC, hoping to intimidate him. Eventually D'Arc wins, because he is far wealthier than the PCs. He then stands up and triumphantly announces that all of the auctiongoers are invited to a party at his home to celebrate his "latest acquisition." Then he walks out, leaving one of his men to pay the auctioneer and bring the chess set.

As the PCs leave, a group of D'Arc's men will attack them (on D'Arc's orders) to teach them not to mess around with their boss. They will not try to kill the PCs, just give them a good beating. Win or lose, the PCs should go on to the party at D'Arc's mansion on the banks of the Seine. The auctiongoers and many other people are already there. The chess set is on display in a glass case with an alarm. Since the PCs have no love for D'Arc by this point, they will probably decide to steal it from him—after all, it belongs in a museum (!), and D'Arc can't complain to the *gendarmes* that his illegally-purchased chess set was stolen. If you need to convince the PCs that D'Arc is a dastardly scoundrel, have them discover a secret basement where D'Arc is manufacturing fake chess sets to sell to less knowledgeable collectors.

Once the PCs have come up with a plan, complicate things: either "Clarissa Bowen" or one of the PCs' rivals should also try to steal the set. The PCs will either get the set and have to escape with it, or will have to chase the thief who beat them to it. D'Arc's men will also pursue the thief. There are two ways to escape D'Arc's mansion: by car, or by boat on the Seine (the mansion has a small dock and a



few boats). This leads to a climactic chase scene in which the PCs barely manage to rescue the chess set intact and get it back to their hotel.

When the PCs finally get a chance to examine the set, they discover something odd: there is a secret compartment in the black king! It holds a small key. There are no keyholes in the chess set—what lock does the key open?

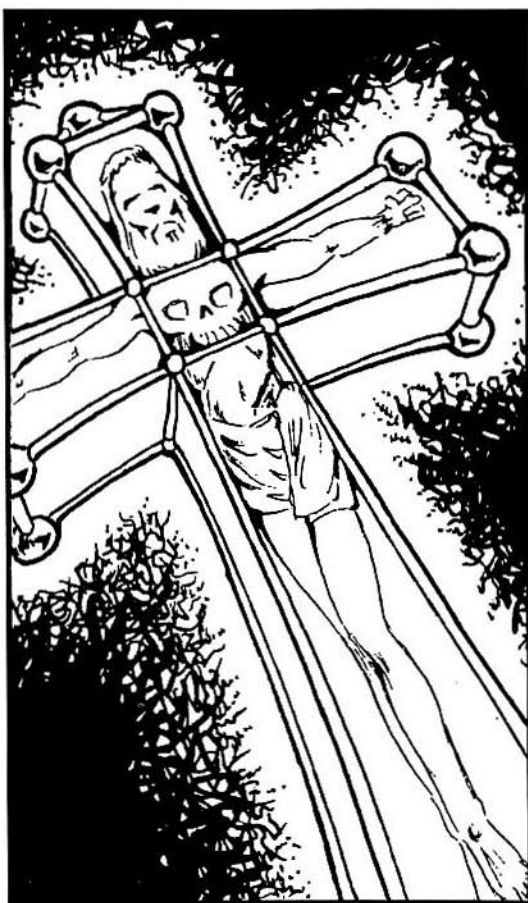
The answer to this mystery is left to the GM's fertile imagination. In the author's campaign, the chessboard was found to match a section of tile in St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. Exploring that area, the PCs found a secret compartment whose lock the key fit. The compartment contained some of Pope Alexander VI's memoirs, which led to further adventures. Other possibilities include: a secret door in the Borgia ancestral home in Rome; a chest containing some of Lucrezia Borgia's jewels which is hidden in the castle of the Dukes of Ferrara (one of whom married her in 1503); or a secret door in the Vatican library leading to a room containing several blasphemous texts on demonology and magic.

THE VOODOO CROSS

In the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, the Spanish and French imported slaves to work the sugar cane fields of Haiti. These slaves were converted to Roman Catholicism, but many of them kept their native beliefs as well. Gradually, Roman Catholic elements blended with their native faith, creating a secret religion which became known as voodoo. Some darker sects developed "red" voodoo, an evil form of voodoo involving human sacrifice. The priest-sorcerers of red voodoo, *houngan-bocors*, wielded tremendous power, both among the slaves and in the spirit world.

The worst of the *houngan-bocors* was known as Papa Machimbe. He belonged to a cruel slaveowner named Pierre Malraux. In 1688 Papa Machimbe incited Malraux's slaves to rebel, and Malraux and all his household were sacrificed to appease Machimbe's evil *loas* (gods or spirits). Machimbe and his followers fled into the interior of Haiti, where they grew ever stronger in their foul magic. Their most powerful artifact was a solid gold crucifix stolen from the Malraux household; in time, Papa Machimbe's evil life-force became bound to this cross.

For over a century, Papa Machimbe ruled an empire of evil, defying all attempts by the French to destroy him. But eventually Papa Machimbe's sins grew too great for the people to ignore. During Toussaint L'Ouverture's successful 1800-1804 slave rebellion, they slaughtered the *houngan-bocor* and his followers; Papa Machimbe was crushed underneath tons of rock. The gold crucifix was hidden away in a church. However, Papa Machimbe did not die. Since his life-force was bound into the cross, he could not be killed by ordinary means. But because the cross had been taken away, his evil power was diminished, and so he could not free himself from the rocks which imprisoned him. He passed into a state of suspended animation, more like undeath than life.



About a year ago, an American explorer named William Morrison discovered the cross beneath the ruins of a small Catholic church in Haiti. He was able to date the cross to approximately 1650. He took it to Port-au-Prince, pursued all the way by horrible voodoo creatures which were drawn to the cross's magic. When he returned to his hometown of New Orleans, he donated the cross to the New Orleans Museum of Antiquities ("NOMA") and then became a recluse, having been driven mad by the dark things he saw in Haiti.

The scenario begins in New Orleans; if the PCs are not native to the Crescent City perhaps they are there for Mardi Gras or are visiting a friend. Since they are adventurers, they are invited to spend an evening at the New Orleans branch of the Empire Club. The highlight of the evening is the unveiling of the Haitian Cross, a new artifact on loan to the Club from NOMA. Characters with mystic "sixth sense" can detect something unsettling, perhaps even "evil," about the ornate gold crucifix.

Following the unveiling, dinner is served in the Arcadian Room. One of the PCs is seated next to Chalmers Blighton, a New Orleans dilettante. He was one of the members responsible for having the Cross shown at the Club. In the middle of the entree, he glances at his pocketwatch and excuses himself. A few minutes later, a tremendous crash is heard from the Exhibit Room! The guests all rush there to find Blighton lying unconscious on the floor.

He has a bad head injury and is covered with a gray-black powder of some sort. The case holding the Haitian Cross has been smashed; the Cross has been stolen, and left in its place are three red rooster feathers tied together with a black ribbon!

Characters with a knowledge of voodoo can make a roll to know what these things are. The powder is *gris-gris*, used by voodooists to cast curses and other evil spells; any character who touches it will suffer 1d6 Unluck for the rest of this adventure. The feathers are the symbol of a particularly evil Haitian red voodoo cult thought to have been destroyed over a century ago—Papa Machímbe's cult. If the characters don't know anything about voodoo, a helpful Club member can provide them with this information.

The PCs will certainly want to help get the Haitian Cross back (especially if they have some idea that it is an evil voodoo relic). The obvious line of investigation is Blighton, who awakens in the hospital the next day. One way or another, either by interrogating him or prompting a confession, the PCs get his story. He has been involved in several shady financial deals in the past, and about four weeks ago he received a blackmail letter from a "Brother DuChamp." Blighton did as DuChamp instructed: he arranged for NOMA to loan the Cross to the Club, and then let one of DuChamp's followers into the Club and led him to it. This man hit him on the head from behind and stole the Cross. Blighton knows nothing else about Brother DuChamp.

If the PCs use Streetwise and other investigative skills, they will hear rumors that Brother DuChamp leads a red voodoo cult in New Orleans, one which supposedly has the entire black community in a grip of terror. No one knows exactly who DuChamp is, or where to find him, but if the PCs make a Streetwise roll at -4, they learn where he holds his rituals: an abandoned plantation house near Lake Ponchartrain, away from the city. A major voodoo ceremony is due to take place tomorrow evening.

The PCs might also want to talk to William Morrisson. They go to Morrisson's house to find that he's become a drunken recluse, half-mad with terror. If pressed, he will tell the PCs the story of how he found the Cross and took it to Port-au-Prince, with zombies, evil spirits, and other foul voodoo creatures chasing him, trying to get the Cross. In an agony of fear, Morrisson begs the PCs to destroy the Cross when they find it, and warns them against ever going to Haiti.

The next step for the PCs is to try to recover the Cross at the ritual. The ritual is a horrible spectacle, complete with voodoo drums, dancing, animal sacrifice, and possession of worshippers by *loas*. Brother DuChamp presides over everything, and holds the golden crucifix throughout the ritual. At some point, he will speak to the crowd, describing Papa Machímbe as their "lord and master" who has "awakened at long last." Then the PCs can attack, in whatever way they think is best. The *loa*-pos-

sessed cultists will fight back using fists, sticks, and rocks; Brother DuChamp will cast voodoo spells and throw *gris-gris* dust at the PCs. He also has great strength (derived from his personal *loas*).

One way or another, the PCs must recapture the Cross. The first PC to touch the Cross, or any PC with mystic senses who touches it, will feel a definite malevolent presence connected with it, and an urge to go to Haiti. What strong-jawed hero could resist this temptation?

The PCs travel to Port-au-Prince, capital of Haiti. Rumors speak of a new red voodoo cult which has arisen in the mountain region. Some folk fear that Papa Machímbe has returned; in fact, the PC carrying the Cross feels it subtly "tugging" at him in the direction of the mountains. The PCs spend that evening in a hotel in Port-au-Prince; in the morning each one finds a voodoo charm, a square cross made of two black sticks, in front of his door. This charm, symbolic of Ghede, *loa* of death, is a none-too-subtle threat; it also tells the PCs that they are being watched....

The PCs have at least a two-day journey ahead of them to get to the mountain area. The first day they travel by car as far as they can, to a small town named Font-du-Lac. The natives are unfriendly and uncooperative; eventually, one of them picks a fight with the biggest, toughest-looking PC. If the Haitian wins, the PCs will be treated with scorn and their requests for help ignored; if the PC wins, the loser will treat him and his friends to drinks at the local tavern and everyone will be friendly. If the native are friendly, they will point the PCs toward the center of the trouble—an abandoned colonial fort on top of a mountain, about one day's hike away. Otherwise, the PCs will waste a day exploring the region.

Either during their day of exploration or on the way to the fort, the PCs are attacked by a horde of zombies (at least one zombie per PC; use the zombie character sheet from *Fantasy Hero*). Since the PCs ignored the warning they were given back in the city, Papa Machímbe is now trying to kill them.

The PCs reach the ruined fort right after nightfall by following the light of a large bonfire. The walls of the fort are patrolled by zombies. In order to see into the fort, the PCs must either dispose of these zombies or sneak up to the ruined gate without being seen by them.

Inside, the PCs see another terrible voodoo ritual. Cultists and zombies dance around a bonfire, sacrificing animals to the voodoo spirits. To one side, a beautiful young white woman is tied to a stake, awaiting sacrifice. Watching the entire compound from a throne of bone and earth is Papa Machímbe himself, who looks like a cross between an old man and a zombie. When Morrisson took the Cross away from the precincts of the church where it had been safely kept, its unholy energies revitalized Machímbe, awakening him and giving him the strength to free himself. Then he rebuilt his red voodoo cult.

The PCs barely have time to view this ghastly scene before Papa Machímbe detects them (because of the Cross's unholy energies) and orders the zombies and cultists to attack. The PCs have three goals: survival, destruction of Papa Machímbe, and rescue of the potential sacrifice. How they do all of this is up to them. Papa Machímbe cannot be hurt by conventional attacks, such as fists or bullets, but is vulnerable to mystic attacks, fire, salt, and being struck by the Cross itself.

If the PCs are captured, Papa Machímbe regains the Cross and becomes extremely powerful; the PCs are added to the "menu" of sacrificial victims. If they have no way to escape on their own, you can arrange a last-minute attack by a group of "good" voodooists to help them out.

The young woman's name is Patrice Delacroix; her father is a rich planter who lives in another part of the island. After the PCs rescue her, she could become a romantic interest for one of them, or her father could become a valuable Caribbean contact.

THE TABLETS OF DESTINY

The Babylonians and Assyrians, who ruled in Mesopotamia from around 2,000 BC until 539 BC, told a myth about Zu (or Anzu), god of birds. Zu, a minor god, was jealous of Marduk, Ishtar, and the other gods. He decided to gain superiority over them by stealing the Tablets of Destiny from Enlil, king of the gods. These Tablets are the symbol of rulership among the Babylonian gods, and whoever owns them possesses great power. Zu waited until Enlil was bathing, then stole the Tablets and flew away to his mountain home. The gods, dismayed, held a council to determine who would get them back. One by one, each deity declined the difficult task, but finally Marduk, god of wisdom and light, agreed to undertake the mission. Marduk was successful, and he crushed Zu's head and destroyed him.

However, the myth's ending does not tell what Marduk actually did with the Tables. Rather than risk another theft of the Tablets, Marduk hid them in a deep cave. Then he stripped Zu of his intellect and his godhood, making him naught but a terrible monster, and left him in the cave to guard the Tablets. To further protect the Tablets, Marduk set three traps to catch the unwary who dared to enter the cave.

Recently, a Nazi archaeological expedition in Mesopotamia unearthed a broken clay tablet written by Yasmakh-Adad, court wizard of Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC). It tells that Marduk hid the Tablets of Destiny in a cave, but then ends at the break. The Nazis are looking for a complete copy, aware of the power that the Tablets could bring them. Besides continuing their dig, they are kidnapping prominent Assyriologists and forcing the scholars to help them; those whom they cannot intimidate into working for them are killed.

One day, a German in a black suit comes to the office of the PC who has the greatest knowledge of Babylonian civilization and myth (if none of the PCs have the appropriate Knowledge Skills, substitute a friendly NPC). He identifies himself as Herr Dietrich, an Assistant Curator from the Berlin Museum of Antiquities, and asks the PC if he would be willing to assist the Third Reich in some archaeological work near the city of Mosul, Iraq. (Mosul is in the north of Iraq, a British protectorate, near the Zagros Mountains.) Of course, the PC refuses—no true hero would help Nazis!

Without further ado, Herr Dietrich leaves and gets on a plane back to Germany—but not before ordering a local Bundist group to kill the PC. That night, Bundists armed with tommy guns attack the PC. Unless he does something stupid, the PC should be able to survive this clumsy assassination attempt. He and his fellow adventurers must then track down the Bundists, subdue them, and find out who ordered the attack. By that point, Dietrich will have returned to Germany and flown on to Iraq.

The PCs go to Berlin to investigate further and find Dietrich. Dr. Rudolf Grüber is the head of the museum's Middle Eastern Department. He is not a Nazi and is no friend of Dietrich's. If he is a contact or colleague of the PCs, Dr. Grüber will be helpful at once; if not, the PCs will have to explain Dietrich's evil scheme to him to get his cooperation. Dr. Grüber tells them that about a year ago, Nazi archaeologists digging near Mosul, Iraq unearthed a clay tablet containing veiled references to the myth of Zu (as detailed above). He will show them the tablet, covered with cuneiform characters, and



translate it for them if they are unable to read it themselves. (Alternately, the PCs may have to sneak into a secure storeroom and read the tablet for themselves.) He also tells them that the Nazis are still digging at Mosul. They are looking for the complete story, which will lead them to the Tablets of Destiny; the Tablets will make the Third Reich all-powerful.

The PCs travel on to Iraq. If you want to liven the trip up a little bit, have a band of Kurdish brigands attack them on the way to Mosul. Even if they make it safely to Mosul, the PCs will have to be very careful—it is not a large city, and their presence may be suspicious to the Nazis. The leader of the Nazi expedition, Major Baron Heinrich von Schadel, is a ruthless Aryan military man who will not hesitate to “dispose” of the PCs if he feels they are a threat. Dietrich is in Mosul, and if he recognizes the PCs, all of their efforts will have been in vain. With Dietrich is his lovely daughter Wiltrud, a student; she despises her father's Nazi ideals and might help the PCs thwart his schemes, if they are dashing and handsome enough.

The PCs must gather information about the progress of the Nazi digs (from Wiltrud, native diggers, a friendly NPC German archaeologist, or someone similar). The kidnapped Assyriologists are being held prisoner in some tents in the center of the camp. A day or two after the PCs arrive, the Nazis find a large cuneiform tablet which tells the story of Zu. Dietrich begins translating it, a process which will take at least two days. The PCs must learn what is on the tablet, either by spying on Dietrich or by stealing it and translating it on their own.

The tablet provides a more truthful ending for the myth of Zu; it tells that Marduk hid the Tablets of Destiny, including the approximate location of the Cave of Marduk in the Zagros Mountains. However, Zu's continued existence as a guardian of the Tablets is *not* mentioned. Yasmakh-Adad's full account goes on to relate that

“lord Marduk set also three cunning snares to further protect the sacred Tablets. He who would gain the Tablets for himself must be strong, devout, cautious, and clever. For the first, heed the wisdom of Urshanabi. For the second, let Shamash guide thee. For the third, walk as would the victims of Lamashtu. Then must he face the greatest peril of all.”

The scenario now becomes a race to the Cave of Marduk. The trip will take about two days by camel or horse, and five days on foot. One way or another the Nazis will find out about the PCs, and Major Baron von Schadel, Dietrich, and a squad of Nazi troops will be hot on their heels.

After a few tense moments (and possibly a fight or two), the PCs make it to the Cave one step ahead of the Nazis. It's an old, dry natural cave, with one tunnel leading down into the darkness. If the PCs didn't bring a light source, they must waste time making some crude torches. If the PCs are delayed in any way, the Nazis will arrive just as they enter

the Cave, and will use force to prevent them from going down the tunnel. If the PCs retreat, only Major Baron von Schadel and a few crack troops will be brave enough to follow them. If the PCs fight and lose, the Nazis will get to enter the tunnel and go after the Tablets first (after interrogating the PCs). If the PCs fight and win (unlikely, but possible), they can proceed onward unmolested.

The tunnel twists and turns downward for about 75 feet, opening onto a circular chamber about 20' in radius which is lit by a dim unnatural light. Filling the center of the room is a dark lake; there is a lip of about one foot between the cavern wall and the water's edge. On the other side of the lake the tunnel continues onward. Chunks of stone litter the beach near either tunnel. There are only two ways across, swim or creep around the edge.

This is the first trap; the PCs must use “the wisdom of Urshanabi” to pass successfully. Urshanabi is the ferryman of Uta-napishtim, the Babylonian Noah from *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. Urshanabi helped Gilgamesh cross the deadly waters of the Abyss by advising him to cut many boat-poles and use each pole only once, so that he would not touch the water and die. Marduk filled this lake with water from the Abyss (3d6 Killing damage if touched, 6d6 if drunk). The ledge around the lake is rigged to collapse at the halfway point, dumping intruders into the water. Since the PCs do not have a boat, they will have to find another way to follow Urshanabi's advice. The best way is to use the rocks on the beach. The lake is actually very shallow, and if enough rocks are thrown in, a series of stepping-stones can be made so that the PCs can cross without touching the water.

The tunnel beyond soon straightens out and begins to show signs of carving and decoration. Soon it opens into a great hall whose walls are carved with scenes of the Babylonian gods: Enlil, Ea, Anu, Ishtar, Marduk, Ninurta, Nergal, and many others. Prominent among them is Shamash, god of the sun, giving off rays of light and holding a great sword (which points towards the far end of the hall). At the end of the hall the tunnel narrows once more.

This is the second of Marduk's traps. If the PCs go the way Shamash points, they will be trapped when great stone blocks fall down in front of them and behind them, sealing off the passage—and then the walls begin to slowly move inward! It requires a total of 60 points worth of STR to stop the walls from moving, but that would only be a temporary solution. Another way to jam the walls and make them reverse course will have to be found; you should make your players think quickly to find the answer. Don't make it impossible, though—it isn't much fun for anybody if the PCs are crushed to death.

Yasmakh-Adad's clue does not mean to go in the direction Shamash indicates, but rather to literally follow him: the carving of Shamash conceals a secret door. If the PCs can find the catch, that section of wall will shift backwards, allowing Shamash to “guide” them into a new tunnel.

The new tunnel continues downward for many feet, then levels and widens into a sort of gallery. The walls of this gallery are carved with depictions

of many horrible Babylonian demons; one of them is Lamashtu, a demoness who steals newborn babies. As soon as you describe Lamashtu, begin to time the players. They have exactly ten seconds of real time to figure out what to do: "walk like the victims of Lamashtu," i.e., get on their hands and knees and crawl like babies. Any PC still standing after ten seconds will be hit by an enormous spiked bar which swings down from the ceiling (2d6 Killing, Double Knockback). The only ways a standing PC can avoid it are to make an Acrobatics roll at -3, or Dive For Cover at -4 to the DEX Roll.

Now the PCs are almost at their goal. After several dozen more feet of tunnel, they come to a large stone covered with Babylonian magical symbols of warding and protection. If they can move the stone (which requires a total of 50 points of STR), they can enter the Chamber of Destiny.

In the Chamber of Destiny (a large, perfectly circular room), the Tablets of Destiny sit on a pedestal near the wall opposite the door. The PCs now have to overcome a danger worse than all of the traps combined—Zu himself! Marduk has reduced him to a monstrous bird-man, with terrible claws and a screech that can shatter stone. Make Zu tough enough to give the PCs a good fight, one they'll remember for the rest of their careers.

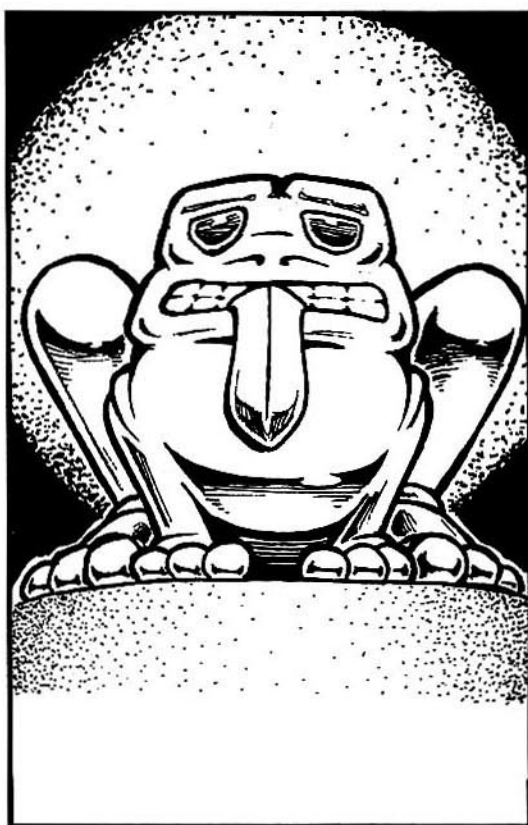
Once the PCs defeat Zu, the Tablets are theirs. Any PC who was injured or killed by the mad half-god is healed to full life and health if he is touched by the Tablets. Now all the PCs have to do is escape with the Tablets without being captured by the Nazis....

After the Tablets are taken out of the Cave of Marduk, their power soon fades and they crumble to dust. They and their power can no longer survive in a world where the gods of Babylon are as dead and buried as the cities where they were once worshipped.

THE GOLDEN IDOL OF SIKRAL

Deep within the jungles of Nicaragua there once lived a people known as the Quicháru. Although they traded extensively with the Maya and various South American tribes, they remain almost unknown to modern men. Unlike the Aztecs, Mayans, and Incans, they did not build large stone cities (only a few step-pyramid temples); their writing, carved notches in wood, was not permanent enough to survive until the Twentieth Century. The only depictions of them are in a few Mayan murals.

One man, Professor Anderson Brisby, made it his life's work to rediscover this forgotten civilization. Using only the scraps of data he could gather from the murals, he began to search for the remains of the Quicháru. While exploring the wilds of Nicaragua he came across a remote valley, hidden under jungle growth and a covering of misty clouds. Descending into it, he found not the ruins of the Quicháru civilization, but the Quicháru themselves! For centuries one last tribe of Quicháru had lived in this valley, isolated from the outside world, carrying on their native traditions and worshipping their gods: Ab Kínchel, the feathered serpent, god of



wind and rain; Yuhásin, god of crafts and wisdom; and SIKRAL, the golden frog, god of fertility and power.

Professor Brisby spent several years among the Quicháru, learning their language and their ways. He was especially fascinated by the cult of SIKRAL. The old step-pyramid temple of SIKRAL, several miles away from the Quicháru village, was no longer used by the tribe. He carefully recorded legends about the temple, including one about a fabulous idol of SIKRAL, made of solid gold, which supposedly was hidden there. He even sketched the idol: a golden frog, about 5" x 5" x 5", with a wide-open mouth and solid emeralds for eyes.

Brisby finally returned home to tell the world about his findings, and wrote a book describing all aspects of the Quicháru civilization. But he pushed himself too hard, causing recurrent bouts of the malaria he had contracted in Central America. Shortly after he finished the book, his frail body succumbed to the disease, and he passed away—but not before he made out a will, leaving his anthropological legacy (and the duty to publicize it) to one of the PCs.

Unfortunately, before Professor Brisby's papers could be inventoried, his unscrupulous nephew Randolph got into his study. In need of money to finance his gambling debts, Randolph was captivated by the Professor's elaborate descriptions of the Quichárus' golden "trinkets." He stole the book and flew to Nicaragua. He found the Quicháru and worked his way into their society, becoming a trusted advisor to the chief, Five Deer, just like his

uncle had been. He now schemes to steal all the wealth of the friendly tribesmen and make his way back to civilization a rich man.

Several months after Professor Brisby's death, the PC who has been working with Brisby's papers will finally realize that something is missing: the book the professor had planned to write. If the PC asks enough of Brisby's friends and servants, he will soon find someone who saw Randolph go into Brisby's study and spend several hours there the day before the reading of the will. Checking on Randolph will uncover his sudden departure and his gambling debts.

This should set the PCs on Randolph Brisby's trail. First, they must travel to Managua, Nicaragua. Then, working from Professor Brisby's notes, it will take them about a week to hike into the interior of Nicaragua and find the Valley of the Quicháru.

But Randolph is ready for them. He told the Quicháru that he would be followed by evil men who wanted to hurt them. The Quicháru, thinking he is their friend, believe him. When they see the PCs, they take them captive. If the PCs are foolish enough to fight back, they will end up looking like pincushions. The PCs are brought before Five Deer and Randolph, who denounces them. However, the PC who has been studying Professor Brisby's notes knows enough of the language and customs of the Quicháru to challenge Randolph.

The PCs' knowledge of his tribe's customs and language will confuse Five Deer. He decrees that the PCs will be tested to determine whether they speak the truth. At Randolph's suggestion, the test is this: they must enter the old temple of Síkral and bring back the golden idol. The PCs are allowed one night's sleep (under heavy guard), and are then taken to the enormous step-pyramid. Once they climb to the top, they can enter the inner sanctum of the temple through the "chapel" which crowns the pyramid.

The "inner sanctum" of the temple is actually a sort of maze containing many traps to slay those who have violated the sanctity of Síkral's house. You should design this maze so that the traps are challenging for your group of PCs. Try to arrange the traps so that each PC gets his own moment in the spotlight. At the end of maze, the golden idol rests on a large, flat circular dais. If they can avoid the last, most deadly trap of all, the PCs can recover the idol and return to the village. They will be judged to speak truly, and Randolph will be cast out in disgrace. If they fail to recover the idol, Randolph will see to it that they are sacrificed to Síkral....

Although the Quicháru insist on keeping the idol, the PCs may take the other artifacts they find in the temple (for example, figurines, feather art, and sacred calendars) back to America (along with Professor Brisby's book).



"CURSE YOU, YOU FIEND!"

Three Villains for *Justice, Inc.*

BY STEVEN S. LONG

Since most *Justice, Inc.* adventures highlight the "two-fisted crimebuster" genre, there is a lack of source material for another important pulp genre: exploration and archaeology adventures, like those in the "Indiana Jones" movies. This article describes three villains which are appropriate for scenarios involving globe-hopping treasure-hunters and explorers: Doctor Yin Wu, evil Chinese wizard; Major Baron Heinrich von Schadel, Nazi military man; and Francois D'Arc, unscrupulous art collector. These villains tie in with the adventures found in "Carolina Caldwell and the Quest for the Golden Idol," in this issue of *Adventurers Club*, but they can be used in many other pulp scenarios as well.

DR. YIN WU THE DRAGON MANDARIN

Background/History: Doctor Yin Wu, the Dragon Mandarin, was born the son of Chinese peasant in the year 578 A.D. A local wizard sensed potential in the boy and took him in as an apprentice. Wu soon surpassed his master's expectations; he specialized in enchantment, conjuration, and Chinese alchemy. After many years of study, Yin Wu was a powerful mage. Using an army of summoned creatures of legend (Chinese goblins (*xiáogui*) and demons (*mó*), *ch'ing-shih* vampires, and the like), he conquered and ruled a large territory in west central China. Then he used Chinese alchemy to grant himself immortality.

Over the centuries, Dr. Wu's political influence waxed and waned with the tide of secular and mystical power, but his magical skills continued to grow. In the early Twentieth Century, he went to England to study the ways of the white devils that had invaded his land, the better to defeat them. He returned from Europe all the more determined to increase his power and to rid China of Western influence.

By the 1920s and 1930s, Dr. Wu is a powerful *tuchun*, or warlord, in central China. He is known as the Dragon Mandarin because of his extensive power. Due to his magical abilities and mighty army of mystical creatures, neither the other warlords,

nor Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang government, nor Mao Zhedong's Communists dare to provoke him. His subjects live in superstitious fear of him, but also worship him as a god. He is secure in his power, and will quickly move to crush anyone who challenges it.

Personality/Motivation: Doctor Yin Wu is a typical Oriental master villain in the mold of Fu Manchu—evil, insidious, ruthless, and inscrutable. His power is derived from his mastery of magic; he despises all modern technology. Doctor Wu must observe strict codes of honor and behavior in order to maintain his magical powers: for example, he must not eat meat or break his word, and must offer homage to his ancestors every day.

Doctor Wu's main goal is to maintain and increase his power, both mystic and political. Anyone or anything who questions his authority or defies him will quickly earn his wrath. Another goal of his is to remove Westerners from China.

Quote: "Foolish Westerners! Did you truly think you could challenge the might of Doctor Yin Wu and escape his wrath? Destroy them, my pets!"

Powers/Tactics: Doctor Wu's magical abilities are limited to three areas of learning: enchantment (the creation of magical items); conjuration (the summoning and control of creatures); and Chinese alchemy (similar to Western alchemy, but based on five elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Wood, and Metal) (see "Standards of Magic for *Champions*," in an upcoming issue of *Adventurer's Club*, for further discussion of these types of magic).

Due to the limited nature of his magic, Dr. Wu's offensive powers are built through Foci—potions, enchanted mirrors, mystic crystals, and other magical items. Although he has had many centuries in which to learn the ways of combat, Dr. Wu is used to cowering his opponents with displays of power, and so he has never learned much about tactics.

Much of Dr. Wu's political power is dependent upon his army of Chinese creatures and monsters, which he refers to as *tiejun-zhaoyá*, "the iron army of talons and fangs." He usually keeps these "soldiers" hidden in his castle, for he does not wish to provoke Westerners (or his own superstitious "subjects") with overt displays of magical beings and powers.

Appearance: Doctor Wu is an old Chinese man with a long, wispy beard, intense dark eyes, and long, painted fingernails. He dresses in the traditional garb of a Chinese mage: long, ornate robes; fancy headgear and adornments, and the like.

Campaign Use: Doctor Wu is a villain the PCs might encounter on their trips to China. They will most likely meet him when they try to steal a magical item or piece of art that he owns, or try to find an artifact before he does. They might also become involved in schemes he has set in motion in an attempt to expel Westerners from China.

DR. YIN WU			
Val	Char	Cost	
10	STR	0	
18	DEX	24	
18	CON	16	
10	BODY	0	
23	INT	16	
20	EGO	20	
18	PRE	8	
10	COM	0	
6	PD	4	
8	ED	4	
4	SPD	12	
8	REC	4	
36	END	0	
30	STUN	6	

Cost Powers			
19	Martial Arts: Shao-Lin Leopard Kung Fu		
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV Notes
	Martial Block	+2	+2 Abort
	Martial Disarm	-1	+1 Disarm, +20 STR
	Martial Dodge	—	+5 Abort
	Martial Strike	+0	+2 6d6
	Martial Throw	+0	+1 4d6+vel/5, Target Falls
8	+2 DC (already added in)		
2	Use Art with Swords and Staff		
140	Magic Pool (70 pt pool)		
35	Control Cost, No Skill Roll Required (+1), 0 END (+½); Limited Forms of Magic (Chinese Alchemy, Conjunction, Enchantment) (-¼)		

Skills	
3	Stealth 13-
1	Tactics 8-
3	Scholar
2	KS: Chinese Alchemy 14-
2	KS: Conjunction 14-
2	KS: Enchantment 14-
2	KS: Arcane & Occult Lore 14-
2	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Weapons
3	English (fluent w/ accent)
15	Danger Sense 11- (out of combat, self only)
10	2d6 Luck
15	+3 Levels with Power Pool
3	+1 Levels with Kung Fu

75+ Disadvantages	
13	Enraged: if insulted or taunted, 14-/11-
20	Cannot Tolerate Challenges to His Power (V Com, Strong)
15	Hatred of Technology (V Com)
15	Code of Honor: Will not refuse personal challenges; will not use technological devices; must always revere ancestors; must always keep his word (Com, Strong)
5	Vegetarian (Uncommon)
20	Dependence: Must perform ancestor worship ceremonies every day, or will lose his magical powers (very common; takes 3d6 point loss every Turn)
15	Distinctive Features: ancient Chinese sorcerer (will not conceal)
15	Reputation: evil Chinese sorcerer and warlord, 14- Bad Reaction
153	Villain Bonus

OCV: 6	DCV: 6	ECV: 7	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
Costs:	Char	Skills	Total Disadv Base
	114	+ 232	= 346 = 271 + 75



RUGGELS '93

MAJOR BARON HEINRICH VON SCHADEL

Background/History: Heinrich von Schadel, scion of a Prussian noble family, was born in 1902. He went to military school, and was deeply saddened by Germany's loss in World War I. He was further dismayed by what he viewed as Germany's slow descent into corruptness and decrepitude. To him, Germany's proud heritage was sullied by the insulting reparations imposed on her by the Allies. He was an early convert to Nazism, and quickly became one of Hitler's devoted followers. In 1935, when Hitler revived the German military, von Schadel joined and was granted the rank of major in recognition of his party loyalty, training, and background.

Personality/Motivation: Major Baron Heinrich von Schadel is a fervent believer in the ideals of the Nazi party: Aryan superiority, hatred of the Jews, belligerent militarism, *ad nauseam*. On top of this, he is a ruthless sadist and butcher who enjoys torturing prisoners for information. His only good quality is his sense of *noblesse oblige*: as a "noble," he feels a certain sense of honor and "gentlemanliness," especially with regard to his soldiers.

Quote: "You haff trifled vith ze agents of ze glorious Third Reich vonce too offen, Herr Doktor Chess! Now that ve haff kaught you, I shall enjoy haffing you as a "guest" in mein interrogation chamber."

Powers/Tactics: Major Baron von Schadel is a brilliant military strategist and leader with extensive training. He is at his best when commanding a squad or even an entire army, but he is no stranger to personal combat—he enjoys "one-on-one" challenges and rarely refuses them. Although he has no compunctions about shooting someone in the back if this is necessary to advance the causes of the Führer, he prefers to fight in a more "honorable" fashion if possible, confident that his Aryan background and military skills will make him the victor in any battle.

Appearance: Heinrich von Schadel is the perfect example of Hitler's Aryan ideal: tall, handsome, blonde-haired and blue-eyed. He carries himself with a precise military bearing, a dignity which is only a veneer covering the cruelty which lurks just below the surface. He is usually dressed in his uniform, and often carries a swagger-stick.

Appearance: Heinrich von Schadel is the perfect example of Hitler's Aryan ideal: tall, handsome, blonde-haired and blue-eyed. He carries himself with a precise military bearing, a dignity which is only a veneer covering the cruelty which lurks just below the surface. He is usually dressed in his uniform, and often carries a swagger-stick.

Campaign Use: Major Baron von Schadel can be used for any number of scenarios involving Nazis: he might be sent to the United States to meet with a secret Bundist terrorist cell, to Egypt to coordinate an especially important Nazi archaeological dig, or to South America to lead an expedition searching for the lost city of El Dorado. He should be used as the stereotypical Nazi commander—tenacious, vicious, and capable of returning to menace the PCs again and again.

HEINRICH VON SCHADEL		
Val	Char	Cost
18	STR	8
18	DEX	24
18	CON	16
14	BODY	8
15	INT	5
14	EGO	8
18	PRE	8
18	COM	4
6	PD	2
5	ED	1
3	SPD	2
8	REC	0
36	END	0
32	STUN	0

Cost Skills

3	Animal Handler 11-																												
3	Combat Driving 13-																												
3	Combat Piloting 13-																												
3	Cryptography 12-																												
1	Demolitions 8-																												
1	Gambling 8-																												
3	High Society 13-																												
7	Interrogation 15-																												
24	Martial Arts—Commando Training																												
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Maneuver</th> <th>OCV</th> <th>DCV</th> <th>Notes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Choke Hold</td> <td>-2</td> <td>+0</td> <td>Grab, 2d6 NND(2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Killing Strike</td> <td>-2</td> <td>+0</td> <td>1d6 HKA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Martial Block</td> <td>+2</td> <td>+2</td> <td>Block, Abort</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Martial Disarm</td> <td>-1</td> <td>+1</td> <td>STR 28 Disarm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Martial Strike</td> <td>+0</td> <td>+2</td> <td>5 ½d6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Martial Throw</td> <td>+0</td> <td>+1</td> <td>3 ½d6+vel/5, Target Falls</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes	Choke Hold	-2	+0	Grab, 2d6 NND(2)	Killing Strike	-2	+0	1d6 HKA	Martial Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort	Martial Disarm	-1	+1	STR 28 Disarm	Martial Strike	+0	+2	5 ½d6	Martial Throw	+0	+1	3 ½d6+vel/5, Target Falls
Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes																										
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Martial Throw	+0	+1	3 ½d6+vel/5, Target Falls																										
1	Paramedic 8-																												
1	Riding 8-																												
3	Stealth 13-																												
3	Survival 11-																												
3	Systems Operation 12-																												
7	Tactics 14-																												
3	Tracking 12-																												
4	TF: all Ground vehicles, all Air vehicles																												
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Small Arms																												
3	KS: Nazi Military 12-																												
2	KS: World History 11-																												
16	+2 Levels with All Combat																												
3	Fringe Benefit: Major in Nazi Military																												
5	Well Off																												
3	Fast Draw 13-																												
3	Resistance (+3 to EGO Rolls)																												

75+ Disadvantages

15	Sadistic (Com, Strong)
15	Fervent Nazi (Com, Strong)
5	Distinctive Features: Nazi military uniform (easily concealed)
15	Reputation: ruthless Nazi soldier, 11-
73	Villain Bonus

OCV: 6 DCV: 6 ECV: 4 Phases: 4, 8, 12

Costs: Char Skills Total Disadv Base
86 + 112 = 196 = 123 + 75



FRANCOIS D'ARC

Background/History: Francois D'Arc is an independently wealthy art collector; his specialty is medieval art objects. In his youth, he spent most of his time engaged in sports and petty love affairs, but this ended when he was lamed in a hunting accident while on safari in Africa. Since then he has devoted himself to his art collection with an almost fanatical zeal. Although he is regarded in certain circles as an accomplished scholar of the medieval period, he is also known as a collector who will do *anything* to obtain a piece he wants. He has surrounded himself with a group of bodyguards who help him in his shady art dealings.

Personality/Motivation: Since his accident, D'Arc has eschewed the physical world in favor of devoting himself to his extensive art collection, which fills his mansion on the banks of the Seine in Paris. He is not married and has no close friends—only the pursuit of art interests him. He will go to any lengths, including theft and murder, to acquire a valuable piece of art.

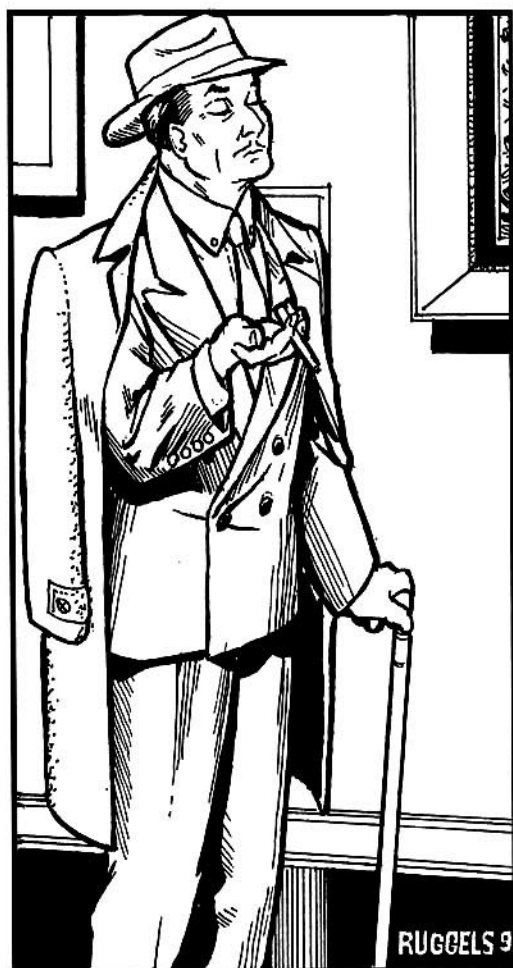
In the company of others, D'Arc is generally charming and witty, although he may become peevish if insulted or not allowed to control the flow of conversation. Characters who talk with him about anything other than art will quickly get the impression of someone whose real interests lie elsewhere.

Quote: "Yes, I recognize the piece you're referring to—the ivory cross of St. Dominic in the Vienna Museum. Fabulous inlay work, *n'est-ce pas?*"

Powers/Tactics: Although he has some training in fencing (and carries a sword-cane), D'Arc has no interest in personal combat. If "unpleasantness" is looming, he will get away as quickly as he can and leave his bodyguards to deal with it. If cornered, he will feign weakness, then ambush his foe with a sword attack.

Appearance: D'Arc is a coldly handsome middle-aged Frenchman. His short hair is black and he has a thin moustache. He dresses in the best clothing. He has a noticeable limp, and uses a cane to walk.

Campaign Use: The PCs are most likely to encounter Francois D'Arc at fancy European parties, museums, art auctions, and similar settings. In scenarios involving precious art, D'Arc will probably be trying to obtain the piece the PCs are after.



FRANCOIS D'ARC			
Val	Char	Cost	
10	STR	0	
14	DEX	12	
14	CON	8	
10	BODY	0	
15	INT	5	
12	EGO	4	
13	PRE	3	
16	COM	3	
3	PD	1	
3	ED	0	
2	SPD	0	
5	REC	0	
28	END	0	
22	STUN	0	

Cost Skills			
3	Conversation 12-		
3	Gambling 11-		
7	High Society 14-		
21	Martial Arts—Fencing		
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV
	Def. Strike	+1	+3
	Martial Block	+2	+2
	Martial Disarm	-1	+1
	Martial Strike	+0	+2
	Off. Strike	-2	+1
			Notes
			Strike
			Block, Abort
			20 STR Disarm
			+2 DC Strike
			+4 DC Strike
3	Persuasion 12-		
3	Riding 12-		
1	Survival 8-		
1	Tracking 8-		
3	WF: Small Arms, Swords		
3	Scholar		
5	KS: Art History 15-		
1	KS: World History 11-		
5	KS: Medieval History 15-		
3	AK: Europe 12-		
3	Linguist		
1	English (fluent conversation)		
1	German (fluent conversation)		
1	Latin (fluent conversation)		
1	Swahili (fluent conversation)		
15	Filthy Rich		

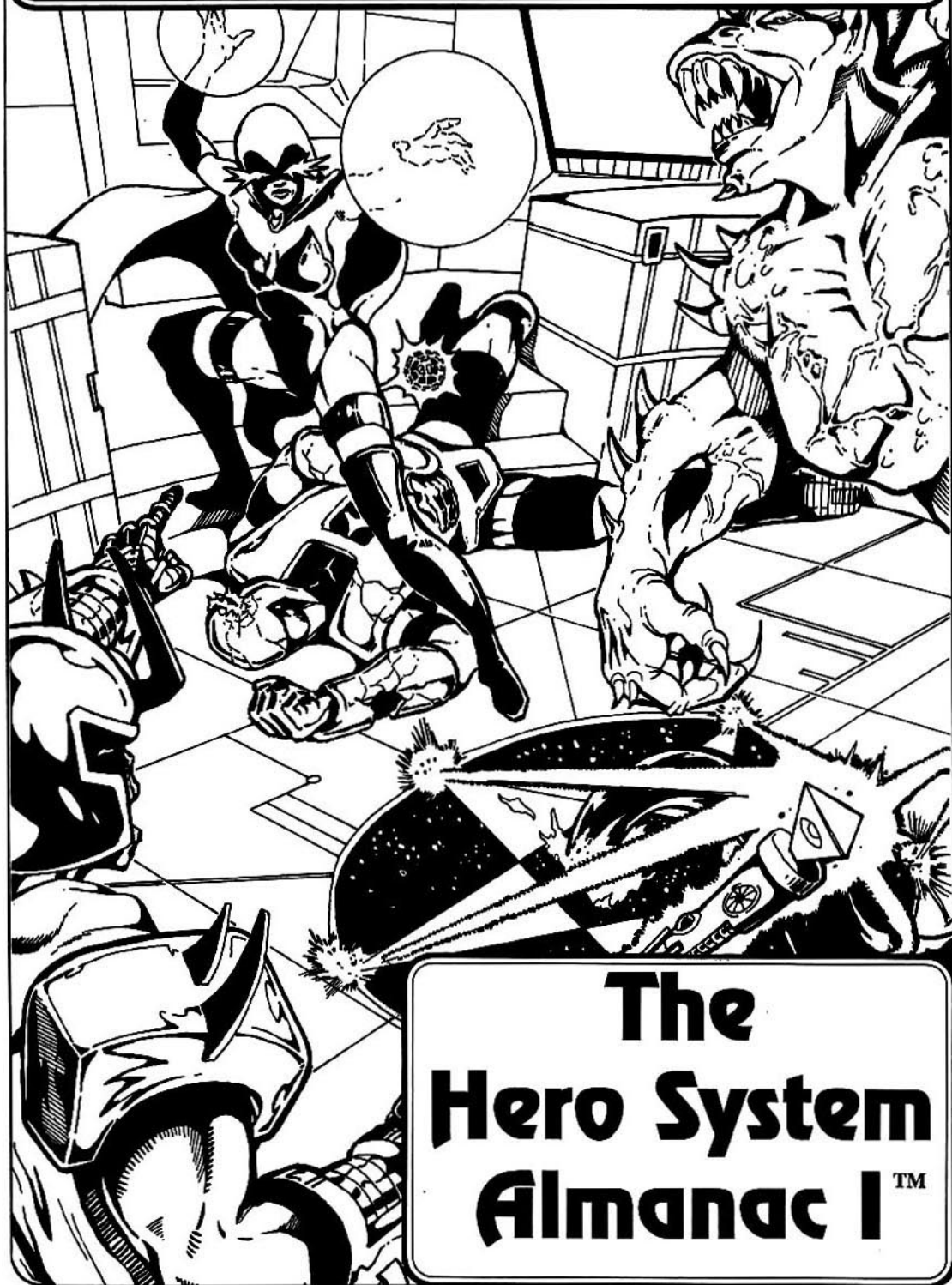
75+ Disadvantages	
15	Unscrupulous and Greedy; Will Do Anything To Improve His Art Collection (Com, Strong)
10	Lame in right leg, 3" Move maximum (Com, Slight)
5	Age: 40+
5	Reputation: expert on medieval art, 8-
5	1d6 Unluck
5	Villain Bonus

OCV: 5	DCV: 5	ECV: 4	Phases: 6, 12
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Costs:	Char	Powers	Total	Disads	Base
	36	+ 84	= 120	= 45	+ 75

The beginning of an essential series of sourcebooks for the *Hero System*[™], The *HERO SYSTEM Almanac I* is the equivalent of a "Rolemaster Companion," but the *Hero System* of courses! Packed full of new rules, new characters, new adventures and more; this 96 page book is both a rulesbook and a sourcebook for campaigning in all kinds of settings. An update on the *Champions Universe* is also included. A must for all *Champions*[®] & *Hero System* fans.

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The Hero System Almanac I[™]

The Art of Magic

BY JOHN DESMARAIS

NEW MAGIC RULES? WHAT, WHERE, WHY?

Welcome to the wonderful world of *Fantasy Hero* Magic; a magic system as rich and diverse as you are willing to make it. To this end, after reading, using, and even enjoying the ways of magic as described in the new *Fantasy Hero*, I offer this as an alternative.

I wanted a system that made the different broad types of spell-caster radically different from each other. Taking a clue from other fantasy game systems, each had 2 or 3 different spell-caster types, each differing by nature of the source of the magic. I set out to make up 2 game-mechanically different types of spell-casters (based upon the most frequently used types: the mage and priest), a concept used in the *Fantasy Hero* book, but not to my personal satisfaction. The third type, the mentalist (psionicist) was added as an afterthought when a player wanted to play one.

There are a few oddities to my system that some players may not appreciate; the most important being that it makes things difficult for the player who wishes to run a part-time spell-caster (the classic jack-of-all-trades who seems to have every skill in the book plus spells). I have no objection to the type, but under the existing system it was easy for the part-time spell-caster to outshine the dedicated spell-caster, which I did not like. One aspect of this system (the high cost of making a spell-caster) discourages the type without making it impossible. The other primary oddity is the use of variable power pools, that most dreaded of frameworks that every source says doesn't belong in a hero-level game. Well, under proper GM supervision, anything can belong in any level game. Remember that.

FOR THE CLASSIC MAGE

LEARNING TO MANIPULATE THE POWER WHICH FLOWS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

We start by creating for the character a *variable power pool* with the following limitations (others may be added as conceptual of course):

- ½ **Must have bulky spellbook.** The method by which the character acquires the book is entirely up to the GM. Be creative but don't be too hard on the players.
- ½ **Pool size may NOT exceed 2xINT (or whatever stat is appropriate).** This makes it expensive to create a hyper-competent character who merely "dabbles" in magic.
- ½ **Changing pool takes time.** 1 hour per every 10 active points in the pool has worked well. This keeps the *player* from attempting to do pool manipulation in combat time, a major time delay.
- 1 **Pool only used for spells which have been copied into in mage's book.** This limitation imposes a hard core list of spells (not effects) that the mage can cast.
- 1 **No spells may have an active cost greater than the mages INT (or appropriate stat).** This also makes it expensive to create a character who merely dabbles in magic competent at it.
- ½ **Mage skill roll needed to manipulate pool.** Another classic old standby, let the player roll those dice (all gamers love to roll dice. You do, I do, everyone does).

As an alternative, you may wish to raise the limit of the pool size to 3xINT, and the active cost limit to 2xINT.

Total limitation on Pool Control -4 (plus any other as conceptual). Once a mage has learned the spells from his book he knows those spells, and may continually cast them for as long as he has the END to do so, until he chooses to study a different batch. In this way, the size of the variable power pool (as well as the character's INT) represents how much spell knowledge the character is capable of keeping straight in his head at a time. The larger the INT of the character, the more points he can have invested in his variable power pool; thus, the more proficient he is at magic.

Mages' spellbooks may be added to with spells acquired in adventuring; found book & scrolls, acquired from other mages, and such (the GM may wish to impose some type of skill check to see if the character is capable of learning the spell, perhaps the same skill used to manipulate the pool and cast spells); or by researching to create a spell. The player should work with the GM, the character should have the Inventor/Spell Research skill, and the process should be assumed to take quite a bit of time (maybe 1 day per 10 active points). Spell research should also be fairly expensive (just to slow down the player who wants to write up every spell he's ever dreamed of), possibly some multiple of the active cost (e.g., 10 gold per 1 active point in a silver standard economy).

FOR THE PRIESTLY MAGICS

GRANTED BY SOME GREATER BEING

For the priest character, the player should merely buy each spell individually as is normally done for *Fantasy Hero* (unless the *Church Familiarity* and *School Familiarity* skills described below are being used; then the character must have the proper familiarity first); being that the priest does not study to learn his spells, they are much more like deity granted powers. The player and GM should decide on a deity or deity type and create a full spell list for that deity/church that all priests of said deity are eventually capable of casting. The Priest character should have some type of skill roll associated with the casting of the spell. To balance out the power levels between priests and true mages the priest character should take as a disadvantage "May Not Learn Spells Whose Active Cost Exceeds 2xEGO (or whatever stat is appropriate)." Treat as a physical limitation, slightly impairing, all of the time: 15 points. For the player to add spells to his character, he must simply pay the points and add the spell to his sheet.

Adding spells to the master list for the deity/church is treated very much like the process for mages adding spells to their book. The player should work with the GM, the character should have the Inventor/Research skill, and the process should be assumed to take quite a bit of time as well



as costing the Priest something (if not money, perhaps something similar to organizational brownie points; awarded whenever the priest does something exceptional appropriate for the god's ideals - not necessarily combat effective, but appropriate none the less; at perhaps of cost of 10 brownie points per 1 active point) although money would work. Once added to the deity/church Spell List the GM should assume that any priest of that church would now have access to that spell.

END FOR MAGIC-USING CHARACTERS

HOW TO KEEP THE SPELL-CASTER IN LINE

All spells *should* cost some END to use (even if it's just 1 pip) to represent that it is an active and difficult decision to be using said spell as well as to insure that the spell won't last forever. If the player/character wishes to create a permanent effect he should work with the GM to create the effect.

Instead of using the character's END to power the spells, buy for the character (mage or priest) an END Reserve which takes all day to recover (this effect may be accomplished anyway the GM sees fit; my method was to spend 1 point for REC and just tell the players that the battery recovers after a nights sleep). This allows the character to either explode in a short-lived blaze of glory, or moderately cast spells all day. This keeps *Fantasy Hero* magic from feeling like *Champions* super-powers. The END Reserve may be as large as the player is willing the pay points for.

NEW SKILLS FOR THE MAGIC-USERS

It is recommended that all magic using characters specialize in schools or churches (more than one if desired) with familiarities to reflect the school specializations.

School Familiarity (mage). Treated rather like *Weapon Familiarities*. Cost is 1 point for a familiarity with a spell (i.e., fireball), 2 points for a familiarity with a school of spells (i.e., fire spells), and 3 points for a broad group of schools (i.e., elemental school—fire, water, earth, and air). Without the familiarity the character may still cast the spell but with a penalty of -3 to the magic skill roll (as well as -3 to OCV for an attack spell).

Church Familiarity (priest). Similar to *School Familiarity (mage)*—1 point for a spell, 2 points for a church, 3 points for a broad group—except that without the *Familiarity* the priest may NOT know the spell at all. For example: a Priest Character has *Familiarity—Church of Purity* (the Church of Purity is a spell list from the *Fantasy Hero Companion*, pg. 139). Being as the priest has this *Familiarity*, at any time the character has extra experience points the player may pay the points, and add the spell to the character sheet (assuming that the spell falls with the active point limit for the character). If this is the only *Familiarity* that the character has he simply may not learn any spell outside of that church list.

Spell research. Not really a new skill, just a standard renaming of the skill *Inventor* using magic as the science. Presumably the character will have a knowledge skill of magic (the science of magic) and a knowledge skill of his school of magic.

OTHER NOTES FOR SPELLS

Side effects. When writing up spells, use the limitation *Side Effect* for all but the mentalism type of magic.

Effects of INT Aid (or whatever the magic-roll stat is for your mage). An increase to the stat will allow the mage to memorize and cast spells of greater active point cost than he normally could. In this case, the GM may wish to consider treating the spell as being *difficult* (-1 to magic skill roll per every 5 active points as opposed to -1 per every 10). The other implication of is that mages should be allowed to copy spells into their book that they are not currently capable of casting (thus, the mage doesn't lose a newly found spell before he has a chance to really use it).

Spells for newly created characters. The average mage will start the game with around three to six spells from his school which his mentor graciously allowed him to copy into his book. The spells that the mage starts with should be simple, basic spells from the school. The priest character will start the game with as many spells as the character can afford to pay the points for (the same holds true for the mentalist if they are going to be used in the game).

SAMPLE CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

Guide to abbreviations:

WF = Weapon Familiarity,
SF = School Familiarity (see above),
CF = Church Familiarity (see above),
KS = Knowledge Skill

Adventuring Wizard

STR: 8 DEX: 10 CON: 10 BODY: 8 INT: 23
EGO: 13 PRE: 13 COM: 12 PD: 2 ED: 2
SPD: 3 REC: 4 END: 20 STUN: 17 **Cost: 30**

Skills and Talents

[1] WF: Sling
[3] Riding
[46] Magic Pool
[5] Pool Control Cost
[10] END Reserve (90 END, recover after nights sleep)

[3] Magic Skill (pool manipulation)
[2] SF: Spells from School of Body Alteration
[2] KS: Magic (science of magic) 11-
[3] KS: School of Body Alteration 12-

Cost: 75

75+ Disadvantages

[5] Reputation 8-
[15] Reckless Curiosity
[10] Watched by former teacher

Disadvantage Total: 30

With little or no changes (perhaps dropping the limitation "must have x points in school") you can use the spells from the *Fantasy Hero* books (i.e. College of Body Manipulation out of the *Fantasy Hero Companion*, pg. 105). This mage can cast any spell from that school whose active cost is 23 or less and can have up to 46 real cost points worth of the spell ready to go at any time. He can also cast any other spells that he may know from other schools, but at -3 to Magic Skill roll (as well as -3 OCV if applicable) because he doesn't have any Spell Familiarities other than the one school. He is currently incapable of researching new spells as he doesn't have the Inventor/Spell-Research skill.

Adventuring Priest (kind of an oxymoron, huh?)

STR: 13 DEX: 13 CON: 10 BODY: 10 INT: 13
EGO: 18 PRE: 13 COM: 12 PD: 2 ED: 2
SPD: 3 REC: 4 END: 20 STUN: 17 **Cost: 31**

Skills and Talents

[3] Oratory
[3] Conversation
[3] Perk: Priest
[3] Paramedic
[3] Bureaucratics
[2] CF: Church of Healing
[3] KS: Religious Dogma 12-
[2] KS: Religious Procedures 11-
[3] Faith Check (spell casting skill)
[2] WF: w/ common melee weapons
[5] +1 w/ common melee weapons
[2] +1 w/ mace
[9] END Reserve (80 END, recover after nights sleep)

[5] *Spell of Wounding*

[2] *Defense Field*

[5] *Dispel*

[1] *Detect*

[4] *Major Healing*

[4] *Restore Mind*

Cost: 64

75+ Disadvantages

[20] Strict religious code of conduct
Disadvantage Total: 20

The spells used for this character were all taken from the Church of Healing (*Fantasy Hero*, pg. 239) and used just as they appear in the book.

MENTALISM

THE BASTARD MAGIC

NOTE: This is not recommended for all campaigns!

Theoretically the weakest of the three types of magic, but also the least restricted in regards to GM imposed limitations upon the spells, mentalism is defined as its own type of magic, separate from magery or priestly abilities. If you wish to include mentalism (psionics) into your fantasy campaign I suggest that you lump Mind Link and all exclusively mental powers together and restrict the other two types of magic (mage and priest) from using them. These effects will become the exclusive bailiwick of the mentalist. Base stat will be EGO (naturally). No spell may be more active points than the character's EGO (like the priest, treat this as a 15 point physical character limitation). Mentalists need not attach a skill roll to their effects, although the Concentrate limitation should be required. Unlike the other two types of magic, mentalism effects burn personal END, not a battery. It is also recommend that the Long-Term END Loss rules be used. Spell effects will also be limited by the GM to only those effects he feels fall into the realm of valid mental effects. (There may be some cross-over among the three types of magic.)

AIRS ABOVE THE GROUND

An Equestrian Martial Arts Package For The Fantasy Hero System

BY JASON VESTER

Airs Above the Ground are the trained combat maneuvers of a warhorse. Currently taught only in the French Cavalry School of Saumur and the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, these maneuvers could be logically granted to warhorses of a sophisticated fantasy culture.

These maneuvers are listed in the order that they would be taught. Horses are trained to perform both the rider in the saddle and "in hand," or at the command of their dismounted rider. Skilled warhorses use their maneuvers in combat; circus horses can use them to astound audiences. Airs Above the Ground, when performed by a skilled team of rider and horse, can confound almost any opponent. The signals given to the horse are almost impossible to detect, and attacks by an athletic horse guided by a skilled warrior are devastating.

Note that a typical *Fantasy Hero* Warhorse has a 9d6 (normal damage) kick by virtue of a +3d6 Hand Attack. The Airs Above the Ground should be given to a trained warhorse instead of—not in addition to—this bonus damage. Whether a Warhorse could purchase Damage Classes would depend on the campaign. If it is all right for a human swordsman to buy Damage Classes, then a Warhorse should be able to buy them as well.

AIRS ABOVE THE GROUND					
Maneuver	Phase	Pts	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
Pesade and trample	1+	3	+1	+0	STR +2d6 strike, target falls.
Courbette (front kick)	½	4	+0	-2	STR +4d6 strike.
Ballotade	½	4	—	+5	Dodge, Abort.
Capriole (back kick)	½	5	-2	+1	STR +4d6 strike.
Skills KS: Airs Above the Ground Combat Riding Tactics					
Elements +1 Use Art Rough-Shod +1 Use Art In Saddle					
Disadvantages -10 Style Disadvantage					

A Pesade and Trample is performed exactly like a standard Hero Systems Haymaker. It requires 1 phase and 1 segment to complete. The Pesade, Ballotade, and Capriole all take 3d6 hit location rolls.

The Combat Riding skill of a horse is to reflect its general ability to react to its rider. It is used as a complementary skill to the rider's skill rolls, assuming that there is a working familiarity between the two. Some time of training and adjustment is required for any horse and rider to work well together, and sometimes it just never works out. With the high DEX-based skill penalties for heavy armor, a knight will need this complementary roll if he is to have a prayer of keeping his seat in any riding maneuver. Familiarity with this skill allows the horse to act in combat as a trained warhorse, giving no penalty to riding rolls on

the part of the rider. All warhorses will have at least familiarity with this skill; only circus horses—whose Airts are used for entertainment and not combat—will not.

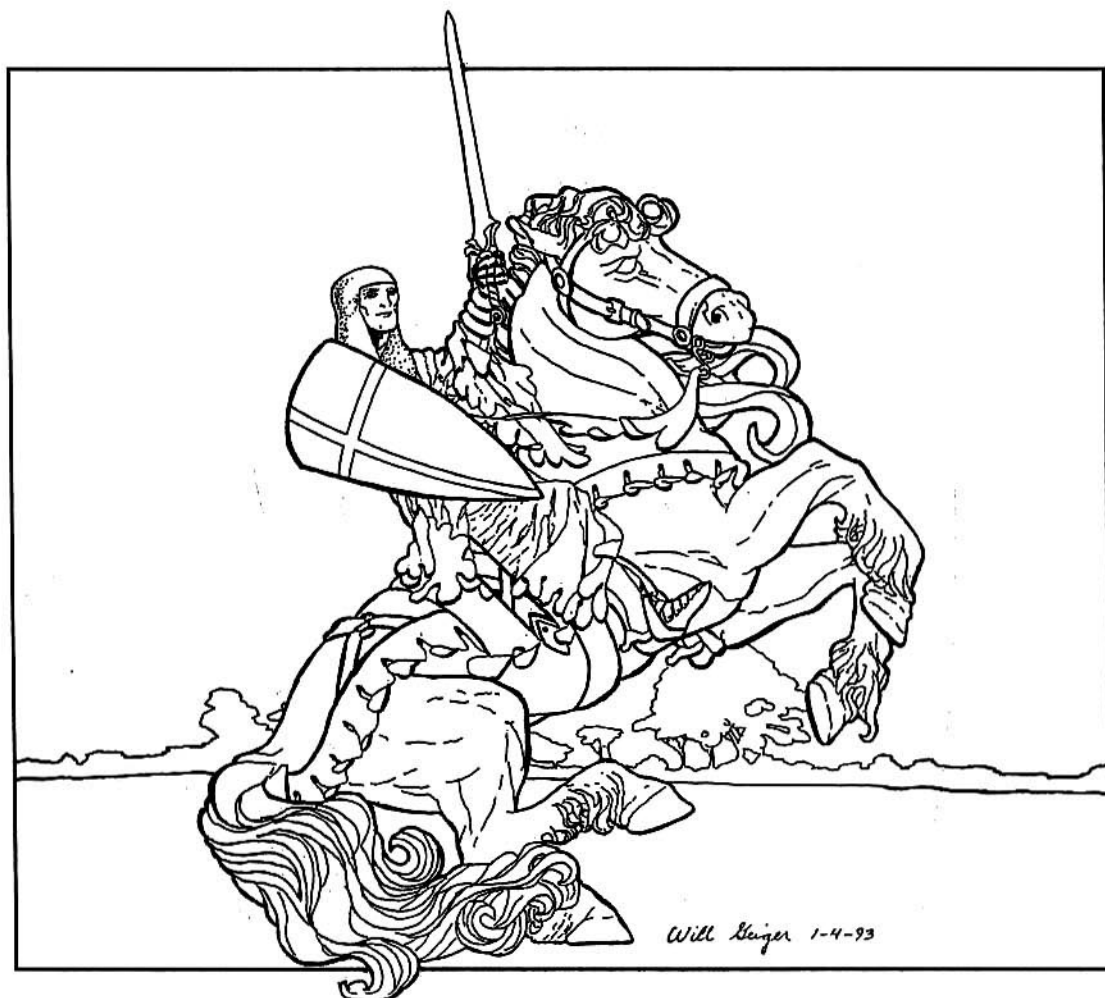
Tactics skill is used to reflect an animal's combat nerves. A horse with at least one point in Tactics skill can survive on a medieval battlefield without bolting and panicking completely. A Tactics roll may be requested by the GM to allow the trained warhorse to intelligently aid a dismounted, stunned, or unconscious rider. Again, all warhorses will have at least familiarity with this skill.

All of these maneuvers are first assumed to be used in hand, that is with no rider and on command from a nearby trainer. To use the maneuvers while the rider is "in saddle" requires a weapon element skill. Obviously, knights who intend to ride their horses in battle will wish to purchase this Weapons Element.

Certain schools train their horses to fight "rough shod"—wearing special shoes with spikes, similar to a football cleat. These obviously inflict even more harm against the victim. To use them with the Airts Above the Ground requires a weapons element. In practice, they function exactly like a cestus but inflict more damage, adding a $\frac{1}{2}d6$ HKA to any kick that the horse lands. This HKA does not receive STR bonuses, it always does $\frac{1}{2}d6$.

Though it may seem unusual at first to give a horse a Style Disadvantage, the logic for the disadvantage holds whether the martial artist is a man or an animal. Trained in a rigorous school, the horse's combat techniques can be recognized and diagnosed by a skilled warrior. Assuming that the Airts Above the Ground are taught in more than one place, the riders and trainers of these warhorses may feel a prejudice against horses trained in rival schools. Skilled duellists or fighters with KS: Analyze Style could analyze the Airts as easily as they might analyze Tarsan Sword-Dancing (or whatever martial art is common in your Fantasy Campaign). Horses that can be recognized as trained in the Airts may be stolen or ransomed by thieves.

However, as with human martial artists, the warhorse in question must have at least three maneuvers (usually the first three listed) and the KS: Airts Above the Ground before they can take the Style Disadvantage.



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FOES WITH CHARACTER

Some Good Reasons and Ways to Replace Your Monsters with Non-Player Characters

BY MICHAEL ANDERSEN

In most fantasy campaigns, monsters make up the bulk of the PC's diet. They go down pretty easy, but become bland and stale after only a couple of adventures. Consequently, many GMs try "spicier" monsters to make their campaigns more exciting. My games have experienced this phenomenon. When orcs became boring, I'd move up to hobgoblins, and then to ogres, and then to hill giants. However, my players' jaded palates always had the same response: "Where are they? Let's go kill them." Instead of adding an exciting new aspect to my campaign, my new monsters just ended up as monster pate. When you run into this rut of upgrading for excitement, you need to replace your monsters all together. The best replacement for your tired old monster recipes is a stew of well rounded NPCs.

By replacing the monsters in your campaign with well developed non-player characters, you can make your game "spicier" in two ways: first, NPCs are naturally more interesting than faceless hordes; second, when monsters are no longer needed on a regular basis to fight the party, they cease being a necessity and become a rare luxury. Their appearance is more exciting and unexpected. Are your monsters a luxury now? Do your players groan at the idea of yet another army of bloodthirsty orcs, screaming hobgoblins, or silent skeletons? Do they pester you for "something different?" When you confront the party with your newly created 500 point fiendish thingie, and the PCs cut it down like an orc, do you feel like you wasted your time? If your games are anything like mine have been, this should sound familiar to you. But how can you make the game more interesting than a 500-point fiendish thingie?

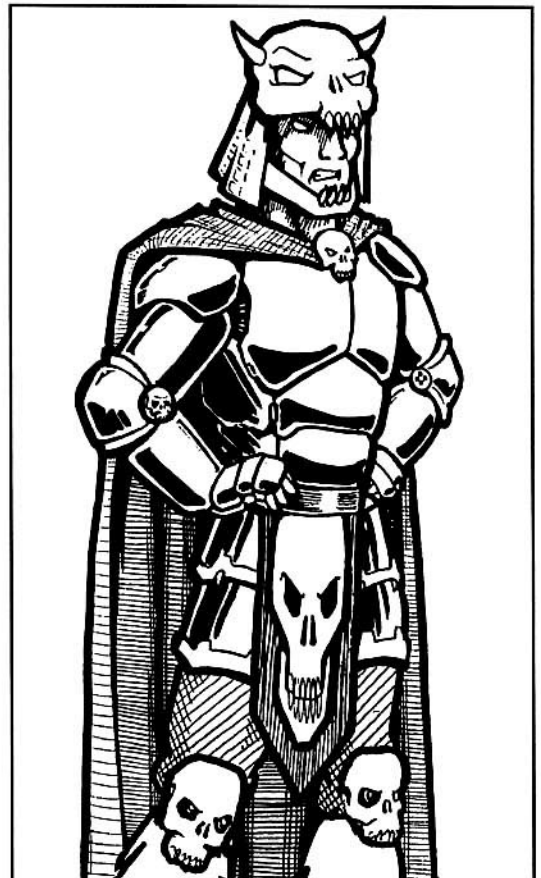
ENTER THE NON-PLAYER CHARACTER

The NPC, alas and alack, is often relegated to being the bartender who happens to know of gold hidden in the hills, or the sorrowful king hiring adventurers to rescue his daughter. The highest calling of an NPC in the fantasy genre is the mastermind wizard, who possesses the gold in the hills and the kidnapped princess. A regrettable condition, because the NPC is that "something different" your players are asking for.

Let's look at what makes NPCs different.

- 1) **NPCs are unique individuals.** They're really player characters controlled by the GM. They have psychological limitations, conditions to become enraged or berserk, skills, spells, strengths and weaknesses all unto themselves. A well-rounded NPC will also have a strong personality, friends and enemies of his own, contacts, ambitions and past achievements. Furthermore, you can load them for bear with regards to fighting your PCs.

Monsters, as you may have noticed, don't possess these things beyond what's written down in the rule book. And your players may very well have memorized the rule book. Which leads me to my next point.



2) **NPCs are unknowns.** Oh, your players will learn all about them soon enough, after several combats. Until then, the NPCs will have plenty of surprises up their sleeves. But that something different we're looking for only begins with the NPC's unknown skills and powers. Questions of motivation will have different answers for every NPC. Those questions will interest the players if they're given vague clues about the answers in their first encounter with the NPCs. Why are they attacking the party? What are their goals? How far will they go to achieve them? Are they evil, or only misguided? Will we ever see them again? Drop some hints in dialogue, or let a PC overhear a conversation, or have a friendly NPC volunteer information, and the whole party will start hungering for answers.

Those answers for monsters are pretty routine. Why? They don't have anything better to do than obey the wizard with the gold and the princess. They don't have any goals, really, except to get killed protecting the wizard. The won't go any farther than throwing their lives away uselessly. They are evil, and we'll see plenty more like them.

3) **NPCs will always use the resources available to them.** An NPC assassin will always use his stealth, the evil fighter will always strike by surprise from around the corner, the demonic priest will always pray for hellish strength prior to combat, just like player characters do. Again, you only start with these ideas. NPC's really become interesting when you leave the rules and enter your crafty imagination.

That assassin would use spies and bribery to find out everything possible about the PC's weaknesses and habits, and then resort to slander or rumors to take them off their guard before he strikes from the shadows. The evil fighter might hire a dozen more fighters for help, and let them take the fall when his ambush fails, while he escapes. A demonic priest could surely curse some members of the party before directly engaging them. And that's just for starters.

Monsters never show this much forethought. If they do, they're non-human NPCs.

4) **Like PCs, NPCs will work together for a common goal.** This is bad news for your PCs. Any player character would rather fight ten trolls with no coordination than two PCs like himself, covering for each other's weaknesses. Imagine the chaos the three NPCs discussed above could wreak working together. Now imagine them with a high-offense wizard and two front-line fighters.

Monsters never enjoy these kind of advantages. Usually they're homogeneous. Orcs work with orcs, trolls with trolls, and rarely indeed do the twain meet. The only kind of help they can hope for is from that wizard, and he, being the best, is being saved for last.

5) **Finally, NPCs are just more practical than monsters.** Think about it. As a wizardly mastermind, do you want to go through the painstaking process of uniting the orcish kingdoms through a delicate web of promises, favors and betrayals, to spend thousands of gold pieces to buy supplies from unscrupulous vendors for a huge army, to arrange the perfect kidnapping to throw the kingdom into a state of paranoia and disorder, to perch on the very precipice of conquest, and then just watch your armies be whittled away by a handful of adventurers? Until they eventually get to you? Please. Give the wizardly mastermind some credit. He'll hire professionals to take the PCs out. If he possesses the money to supply an army, he can afford some mercenaries.

HOW DO YOU WORK THE NPCs INTO THE CAMPAIGN?

While you have to do more work to introduce a good NPC than a skeleton, the payoffs are much bigger. Good ways to introduce your NPCs abound. We've already discussed how the wizardly mastermind NPC could hire other NPCs, thus bringing them into the game. Also consider that the PC's efforts in the name of good will annoy countless powerful groups, who will send in their heavy hitters to do in the PCs. The PC's hunted might catch up with him. Rival adventurers could come to town. However you introduce these new arrivals, make sure your players have some clues about their origins and motives in general early on, but leave the specifics vague until later in the campaign. While there are unanswered questions about the PC's enemies, your players can always look forward to something besides the next combat. The bigger payoff is when the PCs learn about the NPCs, and use that knowledge to defeat them.

NPCs IN ACTION!

Now let's look at a group of NPC adventurers, hired by a wizardly mastermind NPC to kill the PCs, and how they might be introduced, and what would motivate them.

Primus Maximus, leader of the raging horde of orcs in the eastern deserts, has experienced a setback or two at the hands of the PCs. Not wishing to see his plot for world conquest jeopardized by some romantic idealists, he hires an assassin to kill the interlopers. He could devote several hundred shock troops to locating and capturing the PCs, but he needs those soldiers on his front lines. Hiring a specialist makes more sense.

This assassin will have to be one bad dude, a combat monster built on at least 180 points. But he'll have skills, just like a PC would have. Disguise, concealment, persuasion, bribery, knowledge skills about slow poisons, eavesdropping and contacts all make excellent skills that can be used against the party, prior to combat. He'll also possess a distinct personality, which will show in his words, actions, tactics and style.



As the assassin sets about his task, he meets a paladin belonging to a demonic cult, who is hunting the priest in the party. Figuring they can make more progress towards their respective goals by working together, they form an alliance. The paladin will be a strong fighter, have some spells, and probably some connections with other evil minds. He'll bring his detect magic, forcewall, and NND spells to bear on the party, and use his contacts to spy on them constantly.

While eavesdropping on the party's plans, the assassin discovers a clever, greedy halfling thief, also eavesdropping. The thief heard how much gold the party won on their last quest, and he wants a piece of it. Now he joins the alliance against the PCs. The thief will steal foci and gold, frame the PCs for other crimes, and sneak up behind them in the dark, to follow them or to attack. Finally, the bad guys are rounded out by a journeying sorceress adept looking for adventure. The adept provides a powerful ranged offensive punch, an emergency escape route via flight or teleport spells, and knowledge skills that the party should envy before the game is done.

When this foursome works together, they agree to cover for each other. The thief will grab opponents to lower their DCVs, the paladin will grab low strength spell casters so they can't gesture and can be hit, the sorceress will cast her spells to help the person in the most trouble, etc. They work together, use every tool and take every advantage they can, in and out of combat.

While these characters are already more interesting than a handful of war trolls, their motivations can make them engrossing.

The assassin works for the wizard because his home city will be spared in the invasion if he's successful in murdering the party. He's determined that the PCs will die. The paladin's cult has received several setbacks from the PCs personally, and their death could mean renewed prosperity for his cult, the devotion of his life. The thief's insatiable greed leads him to do stupid things from time to time. He has 3D6 of Luck and Unluck, and his personality reflects this. The adept has been laughed at her whole life, because no one believed she could become a powerful sorceress. She needs to prove herself over and over, and visits terrible revenge on anyone who defeats her. These facts can be hinted at in dialogue.

"I'll cut your throat, sailor, so my homeland may breathe more easily."

"Your weak, sniveling gods will not help you now, in the face of my unholy might!"

"You don't really need that, do you? Good, I think I can get a good price for it."

"You've met your match, but I suppose this isn't the first time."

Once your NPCs have distinct powers and motivations, they can strike up a rivalry with the PCs in no time flat. That rivalry may seem a little one-sided at first. Remember, NPCs will work together towards a common goal, and your PCs may not be so organized. If your NPCs win half of their combats with the PCs, and escape after half of their defeats, you can use them over and over. You no longer need to fall back on war trolls to scare the party, when these four could turn up anywhere.

And what about those war trolls? Or your fiendish thingies? Well, after several games of dealing with these bruisers, your players will be very happy to see those boring old monsters. And they won't be boring anymore. In fact, the arrival of a really exotic monster, like a demon or a dragon, will truly be a rare occurrence for your PCs to remember for a long time.

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THE SCHIMMELHORN EFFECT

BY ALEX J. MORGAN

Giant robots, jet packs, Death Rays, Time Machines, backyard-built Space Rockets (you'll notice that I capitalized most of them) these are the pseudo-scientific props of more comic books than I care to remember. So, if all these "Mad Scientist" types and their more altruistic superhero brethren are building anti-gravity driven skycars, why are Dick and Jane from down the block still making do with their 5-year-old Volvo? If all these wonderful scientific marvels are being produced about one per month (depending on the strip), why aren't they trickling down to the open market? Is there a vast conspiracy among the government, industry and the halls of academe to keep the common man in comparative primitiveness? Is some Cosmically Powerful, Otherworldly Entity determined to keep homo sapiens locked up on this insignificant mudball that we call home? Or is some odd, not totally understood Law of Physics what keeps the Acme "Buck Rogers"™ Jet Pack off the market? While the first two possibilities might make for an interesting campaign, it ends up with your bunch of heroes upsetting the "variation on our own world" ambience that makes Superhero gaming interesting. Besides, *I'm* the one writing this article, and I have a lot of time and paper invested in the third possibility, so here goes:

THE SCHIMMELHORN EFFECT

The Schimmelhorn Effect, named after Reginald Bretnor's character Papa Schimmelhorn, supposes that if an inventor or designer has a view of reality that is sufficiently diverse from the norm and understands and believes in a system or principle, that he (or she) will impose a new reality pattern on the invention. The more removed from possibility the concept is, the further removed from reality the inventor must be.

MAD! THEY CALLED ME MAD!

In comic books, inventors and most scientists are, to be kind, at bit *odd* and in a habit of falling in love with their pet theories. Maybe the Great Minds keep pushing at the outer edges of possibility because they were rejected by mainstream scientific thought. At any rate, pushing away from the protective influence of the generally-accepted is apt to wear at one's sense of reality a bit, inclined to make one a bit "eccentric" (remember kids, superheroic inventors are *eccentric*, supervillainous ones are *mad*—let's keep our terminology straight). As one steps beyond the boundaries of accepted reality, one may find the ability to set up one's own set of rules—rules that work.

A VERY OLD JOKE

A guy looks out his window and sees a man hovering outside, 30 feet of the ground, flapping his arms.

"What do you think you are doing?" asks the first chap.

"Obviously, I'm flying," comes the calm reply.

"But it's scientifically impossible! Your arms don't have enough air resistance to make flapping your arms effective, and even if they were, your arms aren't strong enough to lift you off the ground!"

"Oh." And the flying man dropped like a rock.

The first man rushed down to the street where the second man lay in a crumpled heap. The injured man looked up at him furiously and said "You and your BIG MOUTH!"

This is a pretty good example of how the Schimmelhorn Effect works. If you think that you can do it, and know no good reason *why* it shouldn't work, it will... until someone tells you why you can't.



DISSECTION OF "THE MAD DOCTOR" TYPE

Your basic mad scientist is a twitchy, misanthropic paranoid who seems to be more interested in proving that he is in all ways superior to his more well-adjusted contemporaries at whatever institute they kicked him out of than he is in expanding the boundaries of human understanding in a creditable manner. *His* way of viewing any particular topic is the *only* way that he will allow in his hearing. As a result, he only allows servile yes-men around him, thus explaining the stereotype of the half-wit incompetent servile yes-man assistant (all the *competent* servile yes-men are working for the government). He is driven by a passion for revenge against the establishment, nonbelievers, and, in general, anyone who gets in his way. His faith in his inventions and his own genius (they all view themselves as geniuses, no matter how dense they act), is complete and unshakeable; everyone else is a dolt who is in a conspiracy of dunces to rob him of the glory that is rightfully his. He is given to fits of uncontrollable temper and incredible vindictiveness. All of which make this looney toon extremely capable of manifesting the Schimmelhorn Effect.

DIVERSION FROM THE NORM

One definition that fits both the eccentric and the mad is that one has perceptions and associations that are not those of the general consensus. This also fits the definition of a visionary, which is why it is so easy to get them confused with each other. Reputable scientists and engineers try to keep their developments along lines that jibe with the accepted principles of the day. Not the intrepid Mad Scientist! There's no line of investigation too outre to pursue, no concept too cockeyed, especially if it might result in unimaginable havoc and mayhem. Once one throws away the rule book, ANYTHING is possible; Why, you could even (wait for it) RUUUULE THE WOORRRRLD! YAA Ha ha!

SYSTEMS

Once you have thrown away the rulebook, the first thing most people do, mad or not, is start writing new ones. Scientists try to develop theories to explain the universe; Mad Scientists develop theories and then try to adjust the universe to fit their theories (take *that*, Von Deinen). Eccentric scientists develop theories just for the heck of it. When a scientist of the mad variety develops a theory that *really* tickles his fancy, he's not about to throw it away just because it doesn't fit the narrow strictures of responsible scientific procedure. He just *makes* it work whether it wants to or not! Of course, the closer to standard rules the theory is, the less bozo one has to be to get it to work. This is why you have superheroic eccentrics also using the Schimmelhorn Effect while keeping a job.

BELIEF

During the '60s, the theory that if you *really* believed that you could fly, you would, was very popular and led to a lot of deceleration trauma among the dooper set. Your average weirdo scientist type *has* to believe that his theories are visionary breakthroughs; his entire self-image of being an unappreciated genius is tied up in it. This desperate *need* to be right is what powers the more drastic examples of the Schimmelhorn Effect.

RESULTS OF EXPECTATION & DESIRE ON EFFECT

Unfortunately, since emotion is the real power behind the Schimmelhorn Effect, what you get with the Effect is what you subconsciously *want*, not what you rationally *expect*. If a Mad Scientist is seething with anger while he is building a giant robot, naturally it will go berserk and start wrecking things the minute that the switch is thrown. A Child of Rage can only act in rage. If an Eccentric Scientist builds a Time Machine, it will send him back to a Mesozoic Era in which Dinosaurs and Cavemen co-exist, despite the fact that this is

totally impossible. But then, "impossible" is never a problem where the Schimmelhorn Effect is concerned

UNEXPECTED EFFECTS AS REALITY RE-ESTABLISHES ITSELF

When something as delicate and basic as the fabric of reality is tinkered with so callously, there are certain to be instabilities. The effect created may mutate after a while. That is, a gigantization potion may start turning people into fleshtone Gronds, or the effect may require the continued existence of the Schimmelhorn Device to maintain itself. Thus, when Obsidion smashes the Medusa Projector, all the people turned to stone immediately revert to normal instead of remaining rock forever because Obsidion just wrecked the device that could have saved them.

IRREPRODUCTIBILITY & UNANALYZABILITY OF "SCHIMMELHORN DEVICES"

In the final analysis, all Schimmelhorn Devices, no matter how *close* to the Laws of Physics they may be, won't work without the reality-warping influence of their creators. When the McGuffin Projector is brought into a real lab, it's just a piece of junk with a history. The lab technicians don't believe in fuzzy thinking and specious logic, so the blurring of reality is neutralized, and the pattern of

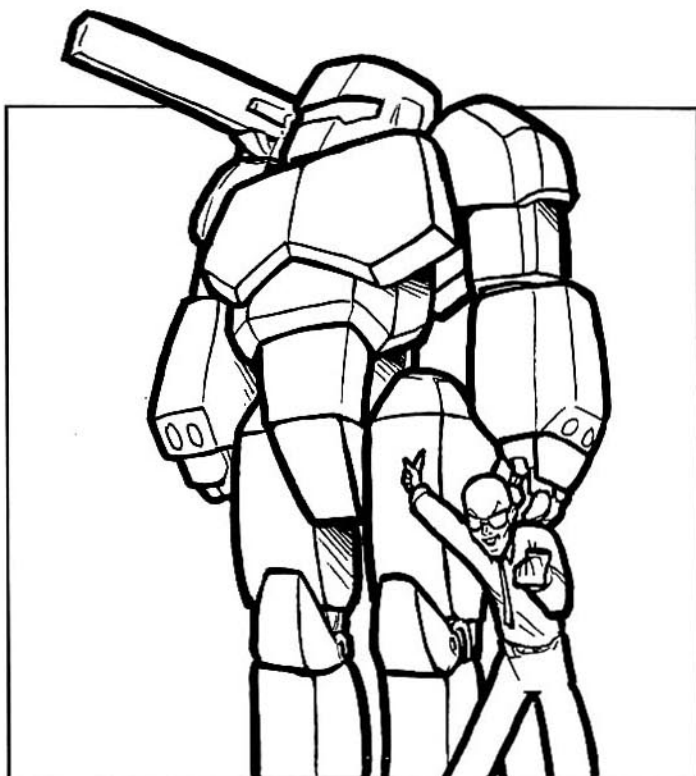
recognized science is re-established. Once a Schimmelhorn Device is analyzed by anyone with a real grip on the Laws of Physics, it will never work again unless the original inventor or someone just as nutso gets his hands on it.

EFFECT ON SOCIETY

In our society, we have elevated magic to the level of a religion and technology has been raised to the status of a kind of magic. In the world of Comic Books, technology can do anything. When a 60-foot-tall robot comes crashing through Downtown, no one stops to think that this is impossible from an engineering point of view. And if they wonder *why* no one is marketing the Buck Rogers™ jet pack, they just shrug it off as something that "superheroes and guys like that" have.

EFFECT ON CAMPAIGN

The Schimmelhorn Effect should be an embarrassing secret that scientists and engineers keep among themselves. By it's very nature, no one can purposely produce the Schimmelhorn Effect. Therefore, it doesn't count as a scientific principle. Thus, technology comes in three flavors—State of the Art, Principles We Don't Understand Yet, and *shudder* the Schimmelhorn Effect. If you can't build a Eludium Q-38 Space Modulator with those, you aren't really trying.



N-RAY VISION

OVER THE EDGE™

BY JONATHAN TWEET

PUBLISHED BY ATLAS GAMES

If you've been roleplaying for any length of time, chances are you've probably run the gamut of most popular genres. Almost everyone has played fantasy, superheroes, horror, or espionage on one or more occasions. Now Atlas Games dares you to enter the fever dream world of *Over the Edge* (OTE).

In this modestly priced (\$22.00), 240 page, softbound volume (with cover art by *Zodiac Conspiracy* author Doug Schuler), author Jonathan Tweet has crafted a world that draws together the surreal elements of *Naked Lunch*, "Twin Peaks," "The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai," and many other paranoid fantasies. Tweet has also crafted a rules system of such amazing simplicity and playability that the one-two punch of OTE is a knockout.

From the standpoint of game mechanics, OTE comes off as one of the most stunningly simple games ever published. OTE goes only slightly farther than the precedent of such time honored classics as *Cops n' Robbers*, or *playing House*. The result is a system which focuses on roleplaying rather than number crunching. The system is also simple enough that the GM may never have to consult a chart or table.

The game mechanics, which are of the "roll a number of d6's and try to beat a target number" variety, are very clearly explained and take up a surprisingly small portion of the rule book. It's fairly apparent that the designers of OTE believe an excess of rules only detracts from the actual playing of the game. While other systems have attempted this minimal rules approach, more often than not the result is a poorly designed system. OTE takes a few very simple mechanics, and then describes how to apply them to different situations that may arise during play.

Character generation is a process choosing four Traits which describe the character, and then mak-

ing a few simple decisions based on these Traits. Combat is quick and easy, using a single die roll to resolve both hit and damage.

Perhaps the most interesting facet of the *Over the Edge* system is the Experience System. Unlike most games, OTE characters begin with 1 Experience point. More importantly Experience Points have an immediate effect. Unlike most systems where EPs must be saved up (to be spent later as in the Hero System, or until a target level has been reached as in AD&D), in OTE each Experience Point may be used to gain a bonus die on a skill roll once per session. The use of Experience Points in such a manner must be explained, or justified, by the player. Of course, Experience Points are also used to improve a character's Traits. Using EPs to increase a Trait requires not only the expenditure of saved points (which are then gone for good) but also the spending of "game time" to study or practice. This limits the adventuring opportunities of the character in question and provides nicely for play balance. Truly overpowering characters will be rare, and will take years of playing to develop.

The bulk of the OTE rule book is devoted to the description of the Mediterranean Island of Al Amarja, the setting for the game. It is obvious that the designer felt that this was to be the chief appeal of the game. In fact, the rule book contains a section on using OTE with several other roleplaying systems.

The description of the setting for OTE is broken into three main sections: the Overviews (self-explanatory), a description of The Edge (the largest city on Al Amarja and the scene of most of the action in the game), and Forces To Be Reckoned With (characters and groups which serve as potential allies or enemies for the PCs). It is in this dense section of the rule book where the author has devoted most of his efforts. Indeed, it is this part of the game which sets OTE apart from the rest.

There are separate "Overviews" for players and GMs, so that the intricately woven conspiracies and dark secrets of OTE are preserved while not keeping players completely in the dark. The descriptions of The Edge and Forces To Be Reckoned With contain a wealth of suggestions on how the places,

people, and organizations can be used in the game. There are so many possibilities it is difficult to believe any GM could ever use them all. In the Introduction, Jonathan Tweet appeals to reviewers not to give away the secrets of many of the Forces To Be Reckoned With. In the interest of preserving the mystery, this reviewer will not name any of these Forces. It should be pointed out, however, that the author has done a tremendous amount of work in creating this setting, almost to the point of overkill.

Finally, OTE is rounded out by three introductory scenarios, which the author suggests be played prior to starting a continuing campaign. These scenarios are designed to teach the OTE rules, and to give the players and GM an introduction to the world of AI Amarja. Two of the three scenarios are fully detailed adventures, complete with hints for future scenarios involving the same characters and Forces. The third scenario is perhaps the most challenging, since it requires the GM to "wing it" as the players are given free reign to go and do whatever they please. The GM is provided with a list of possible "scenes" which could occur and how to follow up these scenes with other complications. All three adventures are extremely well written and very entertaining.

No system is without its faults, however. Fortunately OTE's faults are few and relatively minor.

As mentioned above, the mysteries and downright weirdness of AI Amarja can get to be too much. This is probably due to an author's decision that too much is better than too little. If everything were

weird, the strangeness becomes "ordinary" and AI Amarja would lose much of its appeal. Fortunately, Tweet suggests that GMs pick the parts they like and discard the rest. It's refreshing to find an author so willing to sacrifice his vision so that everyone can enjoy the game.

From the standpoint of game mechanics, the only area where trouble arises is the rather obtuse manner in which different types of armor (regular vs. bullet-proof) affect the damage done by gunfire (which, given the fact that firearms are illegal in AI Amarja, should be rather rare). This confusion is easily eliminated by dicing out a quick mock combat to see the rules in action.

In all, OTE is a top-flight product for which Tweet and Atlas Games are to be commended. The game mechanics are simple, elegant, and best of all stay out of the way of the roleplaying. While there are rules for using other systems included, it would be a mistake not to at least try the OTE system. You may find it very addicting.

Atlas Games has also produced several very reasonably priced supplements for OTE which provide new adventures and more Forces To Be Reckoned With. This sign that Atlas intends to support OTE is a welcome one. Too often promising systems have died on the vine due to lack of supporting material.

So if you're looking for something a little different, take a step Over the Edge....

Brian K. Curley

GM's Discretion

New Approaches to Hero System Systems

A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This column is meant for the tinkerers—the Hero System addicts who can't leave well enough alone. There always has to be a better way of playing the game, and this column attempts to find them. Some of the items featured here are outright changes to the rules (entirely unofficial, of course). Others are just suggested methods for varying your play. Have fun.

Comments and suggestions should be sent to the author: Steve Perrin, 2130 Esperanza Drive, Concord, CA 94519

RECOVERING

Longtime player and friend of mine, Steve Henderson, came up with the following solution to the following problem.

The Champions close on Grond. One massive fist lashes out and tags Seeker despite his high DCV. The Australian hero takes 16 Body and 64 Stun. With -14 Stun, Seeker is out of the combat until the next Post-Segment 12, and then he has to take two recoveries before he can get back in the fight. His player, who gave him a Speed of 6 so he would get lots of action, goes off and picks up a comic book. By the time he can take a recovery, the rest of the Champions have beaten up on Grond and the monster is down. Some excitement for Seeker's player....

This scenario has been played out in everyone's Champions and other Hero Systems campaigns. Someone gets knocked out of the fight and he or she is essentially knocked out of the group. He can either watch everyone else play (frequently rather boring), remove himself from the game entirely (making re-entry difficult later) or act as an irritant by distracting the other players with conversation or activities.

Rather than restrict a player's recoveries to a chart based on the arbitrary (though very common) figure of ten, how about putting an element of chance in the equation, and keep that knocked-out player's attention?

When a player is knocked out, look at his negative Stun. Subtract one from his roll based on his CON for every -10 STUN he is down (thus, if the Stun is at -1 to -9, there is no subtraction). At his next phase, the player tries to make the modified CON roll. If successful, he gets a Recovery, no matter how far down he is. Thus, if Seeker got stomped by Grond for another 64 Stun after the first blow (You've gotta stop mocking the monsters, Seeker), thereby putting him out with -63 Stun, then he would have a roll of $(9 + \text{CON}/5 [=5] - 6)$ or 8 or less to get a Recovery. Since his Recovery happens to be 10, then each phase he makes a successful CON roll, he gets another chance next phase at a Recovery with a lessened modifier on the CON roll.

Post-Segment-12 Recoveries are just another opportunity to make the CON roll instead of being automatic.

SPICING UP THE SPEED CHART

The Speed chart is a marvelous way to space out combat in the Hero System, but it tends to get too predictable. Worse, people start planning their character's moves based on the chart. Can you imagine Spiderman saying "I'm speed 6 and Doc Ock is only Speed 5, so I'll declare a Haymaker on my Phase 6 because I know he can't move again until Segment 8." Come on, now.

How about spicing things up by using a d12 (c'mon, I know you've still got one tucked away in your bag of dice for The Other Game)? Each player takes a d12 and rolls it each phase. If the number rolled is equal to or less than his Speed, he gets to move that phase in DEX order, as usual. One added possibility is to ignore Post Segment 12 altogether. Every time a player rolls a 12, he gets to take a Recovery and perform any other Post-Segment-12 actions.

Computer mavens in the audience have already seen the possibilities of putting this on a portable computer and having the machine roll the dice each phase. With a computer, the GM can also jiggle the DEXes so that the highest DEX does not always get to move first.

Dice and probabilities being what they are, this can result in some characters just never getting a chance to move (or at least it seems that way). One solution, which jiggers the odds but gives more satisfaction, is to let a player who did not succeed in his roll add 1 to the needed roll every unsuccessful phase (thus, a player with a Speed 5 character could roll 6 or less the phase after he misses, then 7 or less if he missed again). When he finally gets a successful roll, his next roll has to be based on his raw Speed again.

Just as with the Recovery system I've talked about, this lets all the players have an interest in

what is going on every phase of a game, instead of ignoring the game except when they know it is their turn.

BYE BYE

I think I've probably overstayed my welcome at this point. Lord willing and the Lords of ICE don't rise in anger, I'll be back next issue with more interesting ways to alter and improve the rules to the System we all love.

Steve Perrin



GAMES WITHIN GAMES

FALL IN

A quick recap of my last column: there are four basic roles *characters* can take. These are the *leader*, the *lieutenant* (or second in command), the *soldier* (or follower), and the *rebel*. These roles fulfill both organizational AND emotional needs. To some degree all the roles must be filled at some time for the team (not the players) to work together. Some examples followed.

INSPECTION

Say you have a group of good players, an enthusiastic GM, and a team of interesting characters, but your group just doesn't seem to jell. The above framework can help you figure out why. Analyze your team to discover which of these roles are not being filled. Some examples follow.

The team seems to flounder, and nothing really seems to get accomplished.

Check and see if you truly have a leader. If the team consists only of soldiers and rebels, the rebels will never be trusted and the soldiers will have no one to follow.

Talk to your teammates and/or the GM about this lack. Decide, or possibly vote, on whom you want as leader. Alternatively, have someone design a new character specifically for this role.

Another possibility is to have the different characters each take a turn or session playing the leader and making the team's decisions. The best PC to lead will usually show up after a while. If desired, the leader role can remain temporary. However, some consistency is good; it is usually best to have some kind of official framework. That way, in a crisis everyone knows who to turn to. If necessary, the "leader" can be just the public spokesperson.

The leader is unable to come to a decision; the team never succeeds in its missions.

This is a problem if the team wishes to win sometimes. If your leader is incompetent or waffles constantly, you have the *wrong* PC for a leader. See above for solutions.

The team never seems to go into combat. Everything is talked out without a fight. The team's goals are not objects, but rather ideas.

If you have a very clever leader this is possible. It may be a problem when the rest of the team is not included in the process, or if the team *wants* to fight.

Again, talk to the leader. Let her know what you really want. She may not realize how you feel.

Sometimes just being included in the decision making process is enough. If she's really good, she'll let the team blow off steam in the traditional way.

Your team has a leader, but the leader is usually cranky or short-tempered. Or the leader constantly gives directions, to the point of distraction.

This means you may have no one playing the part of the second-in-command. Your leader is overworked, and doesn't have someone she trusts to implement her decisions. This will make her frustrated and annoyed at small transgressions. Alternatively, she may be trying to make sure that her instructions are followed correctly by incessantly repeating them.

This case is can be solved in the same way as the previous example. What you need is a lieutenant. It is slightly more difficult in that your leader must trust the person filling the role of second. Another alternative is to give your leader time off, and have someone else lead for a while.

To be honest, the first suggestion is rather difficult. Playing lieutenant isn't easy. However, the second suggestion is even harder. It is an unusual person who wishes to voluntarily give up control or power. Good luck.

The team works like clockwork. Missions are always a success.

In this team everyone knows their roles. The one role that is empty is that of the rebel. Being without a rebel makes for a superbly functioning team. Unfortunately, this can also be rather boring. Without a rebel, there is no conflict; without conflict, there is no challenge.

Try swapping party roles. Initially, this will cause chaos, but it is usually fun to try to stretch your roleplaying capabilities. Also, it will certainly cause your characters to grow and change. You know that the team works well together, so if a really bad situation comes up you can go back to your traditional team roles.

The team spends all its time arguing, and personality conflicts force splits in the group.

There are several possible interpretations of this. Firstly, you may have two people fighting for leadership of the team. Everyone is being forced to take sides as each possible leader vies for control of the largest portion of the group.

Secondly, you may have no soldiers. No one wishes to show "weakness" by taking suggestions

from anyone else. Many people are trying, all at once, to fill the leader and lieutenant spaces. Those spaces are only meant for two.

Thirdly, you may have someone with a very strong will who refuses to be leader. She does not want the responsibility of giving orders. Unfortunately, she does not want to take orders either. The only spot left open to her is that of the rebel. Thus, she undermines the leader while providing no steady influence for the group.

I must admit I have never seen a team survive this type of problem. In every case, a player ended up leaving the group. However, I have also seen the rest of the group talk things over and come to amicable agreements.

This situation doesn't have to end all gaming for the group. Identify your troublemakers. Make sure she really is being deliberately difficult—she may be unaware of the problem. Explain the situation. Try to figure out what the points of contention are. Try to solve, or at least explain them. Perhaps everyone can agree, if the egos are left out of the argument. Remember, you are there to have fun while gaming. *If it's not fun, why game?*

WRAP-UP

An important thing to keep in mind is that these roles are not set in concrete. Most people are constantly changing and redefining their characters' roles.

For example, it is possible to have someone who is not usually the leader step forward and set a new direction or moral tone for the group. This could give the team an entirely different disposition. Perhaps the leader has no expertise in a certain predicament, causing others with appropriate training to temporarily take on her role.

If there is no permanent lieutenant, a soldier or even a rebel might have the maturity and/or restraint that would temporarily qualify them for that role. A team where the leader has no second forces her to work twice as hard. Be careful your leader doesn't burn out.

It is not always easy to play the lieutenant. You must *support* someone whose secret fears you will hear and know. You may feel you could or should replace the current leader. However, be careful with this attitude. It is a good way to undermine the cohesiveness of the group. Also, consider how difficult *you* would find it to be trusting and confidential towards someone who seemed to wish only ill towards you and your plans.

A lieutenant losing faith in her leader but not wanting to cause a rift in the team might become a soldier for a while. A rebel *gaining* faith could do so also.

Possibly the most annoying role is that of the rebel who will not lead, aid, or follow. This type of person is just obstreperous. If talking to her will not fix the situation, the group may be better off without that particular player.

However, rebels should not always be considered an annoyance. A soldier or a second in command might not be able to effectively head the group, but still feel strongly about a situation. They must become rebels in order to effectively discuss the problem. They are rebels because they speak out *against the current group-think*. These alternative viewpoints can become fascinating explorations of team and character morality.

DR. GAMING WESTHEIMER

I know I must sound something like Dr. Ruth, with her incessant, "*Communication ees thee answer!*" Scary though it seems, all you need is the courage to try it. I've found honesty *solves* most of the problems I've described above. People usually respond well to blatant honesty. Consider carefully those that don't—do you really want to game with them?

Let me know how things turn out, and good luck!

"Collie" Collier



CROOKS & CRUSADERS

This issue, CROOKS AND CRUSADERS explores "The Wonderful World of Special Effects." For those new to special effects, the Sphereship Polaris is a not-so-subtle example of how to label powers and game mechanics to fit a character conception. Should it fail to be a suitable example, the Sphereship is at least an attempt to describe the strange ball hovering in the Distinctive Features illustration on page 121 of the *Hero System Rulesbook*. Please, don't ask us how a starship got stuck in a police line-up.

SPHERESHIP POLARIS

Background (Polaris): The Polaris was constructed at the Lexam Starport on the planet Dravus just over seven years ago. Although the Polaris is not the first of its line, several design upgrades to navigational and sensory systems make the Polaris the most modern starship in the Dravian Navy. The Polaris was designed as an exploration craft, and thus far, has only served in that capacity. A crew of 200 officers and sailors, as well as approximately 30 civilian specialists, operate and maintain the ship.

Background (Dravians): A long, long, long time ago, the Progenitors deposited a small, specially conditioned colony of Terrans on a very high gravity planet, far out on a spiral arm of the Milky Way galaxy. Just as on Earth, when the Progenitors finished their experiments, they withdrew from the planet leaving little trace of their visit.

Dravian physiological and cultural development parallels the development of Earth cultures so closely, scientists of both planets will undoubtedly find the coincidence "fascinating." One primary difference between the cultures is the rate technology was developed; another is the rise of one central government, versus the quagmire of governments on Earth.

Current Dravian goals include expanding their knowledge of the galaxy. In the past, Dravian ships have avoided contact with other races, hoping to observe behavior and determine the risks of interaction. In many cases, Sphereships have gone unobserved by other races. Alien sensors tend to categorize the tiny starships as anomalies rather than spacecraft.

Quote: (via radio) "This is the Sphereship Polaris. Come in Defender. Polaris calling Defender. Do you read us? Over."

Personality: Ultimately, the personality of the ship depends on who's in charge, and the orders they're under. If the ship has been sent to explore and

report, it will follow an agenda of collecting samples and running experiments, before returning to base; diplomatic missions will involve identifying an appropriate contact and opening up some sort of dialogue.

Ship captains are chosen based on their experience, capability, and seniority. The Polaris is a prestigious ship of the line and draws the best captains. Each member of the crew has his own set of motivations, experiences, and specialties to guide his reactions.

Powers/Tactics: Dravian doctrine prevents the Sphereship from firing unless fired upon (the only exception being war, of course). The Sphereship will maneuver itself out of harm's way if it can do so without jeopardizing the success of the mission. When pressed to fight, the ship prefers to remain at long range and strike with its laser cannons. Unless situations dictate otherwise, the ship will flee when casualties begin to prevent the ship from functioning effectively. The ship's crew is accustomed to coordinating with other ships according to strict command and control radio procedures, and will have trouble adapting to less structured superpower conflicts. This inexperience means the ship will select targets based on their firepower. In many cases, this means targets of opportunity (stunned opponents) will be ignored in favor of other opponents.

Appearance: The Sphereship Polaris is a spherical starship just over one foot in diameter. The special alloys in its hull changes the ship's color from a silvery glow in daylight, to a dull gray in low-light conditions. Although the weapon and propulsion systems cannot be discerned from casual observation, their effects are quite noticeable when in use. For instance, the maneuver drives blow around small debris, emit a high pitched whine, and fill the immediate area with a faint smell of chemical exhaust. The ship's landing gear consists of four legs which are retracted during flight to reduce atmospheric drag.

Dravians are identical to Earthlings in every aspect, except one obvious feature. The average Dravian crewman stands 1/8th inch tall. Dravians are also extremely strong for their size (they'll take most ants three out of four falls any day). The Dravian uniform combines brown pants and boots with a light green tunic. Dravian vacuum suits are white with red trim. Depending on the role of a crewman, they may be equipped with special devices. Security personnel, for instance, tend to carry sidearms.

THE SPHERESHIP POLARIS

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
30	STR	20	OCV: 8, DCV: 8
20	DEX	30	ECV: 6
30	CON	40	Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
20	BODY	20	
23	INT	13	Costs
17	EGO	14	
20	PRE	10	Char: 185
10	COM	0	+
10	PD	4	Powers: 463
10	ED	4	=
5	SPD	20	Total 648
12	REC		
60	END		
60	STUN	10	

Cost Powers END

38	EC—"Sphereship Systems"	
37a	+25" Flight, 0 END	0
37b	12d6 EB (laser cannons), 1/2 END	3
75	+20 PD/ +20 ED Armor, Hardened	
10	FTL (1 LY/Year)	
30	Full Life Support	
10	Lack of Weakness (-10)	
10	Mental Defense (13)	
27	Shrinking, 2 Levels, 0 END, Persistent, Always On	0
7	+6 Range Skill Levels w/ Laser Cannon, Only in Space (-1/4)	
52	Radar Sense, 360° Vision, +18 Telescopic	
3	Computer Programming, 14-	
20	Universal Translator, 14-	
3	Absolute Time Sense	
10	Eidetic Memory	
3	Lightning Calculator	
3	Bump of Direction	
10	High Ranged Radio Hearing	
3	Criminology, 14-	
3	Cryptography, 14-	
5	Electronics, 12-	
3	Forgery, 14-	
3	Inventor, 14-	
5	Mechanics, 12-	
5	Navigation, 12-	
3	Systems Operation, 14-	
3	Tactics, 14-	
2	TF: Space Vehicles	
3	Scientist	
34	Misc. Sciences	
6	+4 Range Skill Levels w/ Laser Cannon	

100+ Disadvantages:

15	DNPC ("Landing Party"), Normal, 8-Legs for Landing Only
20	Distinctive Features
20	Hunted: Near Space Defense (More Powerful, NCI, 8-)
20	Tries to Complete Orders (V Com, Strong)
20	2x STUN from Electrical Attacks
10	1 1/2x BODY from Electrical Attacks
438	Experience

Campaign Use: The ship's mission, as well as the motivation of the crew, has been left open to provide the most flexibility for integration into existing campaigns. Scenarios can be constructed based on initial encounters with the player characters. Then, as the players uncover the ship's mission, a wide variety of adventures can be centered around aiding or preventing the mission.

Possible missions include: establishing diplomatic relations with Earth's governing body, whoever that is ("Take me to your leader"); trying to recruit help to save their home world from a natural disaster; or perhaps the ship is part of a scouting party for an impending invasion. Don't forget, the ship is full of NPCs, each with their own goals. Some of these goals may not agree with the mission of the ship.

The ship may provide a means for getting the player characters away from Earth for a while. Once you manage to shrink them down to size, the ship should be able to take them almost anywhere.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

- **Stun Damage:** Shields being weakened, minor structural damage
- **Knockback/Knockdown:** Crew knocked out of their seats, coffee spilled, chess pieces scattered, books knocked off shelves
- **Stunned:** Some injuries, maybe even a few casualties, damage control will be required, most systems will come back on-line quickly
- **Unconscious:** Many systems inoperable, some casualties
- **Body Damage:** Structural damage, casualties, injuries
- **Death:** Ship is unrepairable, massive casualties, a shuttle craft or two may have made it away
- **Recovery:** Damage control, falling back to redundant equipment, small miracles by the Chief Engineer
- **Mental Powers:** The ship's EGO represents the aggregate mental strength of the crew. In other words, each mental power effects the crew as one entity. ("This is the Sphereship Polaris. We hear and obey....") Mental defense represents the difficulty associated with attacking a large collection of small minds. (Err, umm, you get the idea).
- **Strength:** Tractor/Pressor Beams
- **Energy Blast:** Laser cannons systems combining fire
- **Flight and FTL:** The maneuver and main star drives
- **Ranged Skill Levels (only in space):** Atmospheric flight is too rough for sensitive equipment to function at full capacity, decreasing the accuracy of weapons. (The liberty of placing a limitation on a skill is not normally allowed and requires GM permission. This skill is supposed to make space combat possible, not turn the starship into a planetary bombardment platform).

Bruce Tong



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By Scott K. Jamison