

MONGOOSE PUBLISHING PRESENTS



# Signs & Portents

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Roleplayer

## Stygian Spells

A LESSON IN HYBORIAN SPELLCRAFT

## The Black Cross Mercenaries

A HUMAN FOE FOR SICON IN STARSHIP TROOPERS

## The Cult of Bel-yog-thulu

AN EASILY PRONOUNCEABLE SCENARIO FOR JUDGE DREDD

Plus... Steampunk Technologies, All About Charm Person,  
Tales From Mongoose Hall, new Lone Wolf Character Class  
and lots, lots more!

S&P Roleplayer 34

June 2006

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Howdy folks,

Words can sometimes evolve from very strange origins. Take 'sabotage', for example. This came about during a wave of farm machine smashing in France – the farm workers wore wooden shoes called 'sabots', which they would jam into the machines' workings until they stopped working. 'Sabotage' therefore means 'filled with shoes', just like an old wardrobe. I can only assume that the English equivalent would be 'clogged up'...

I have no idea if that's true, but I've found that if you tell people something that sounds even vaguely plausible like that they have a tendency to believe you.

The real English counterpart would be 'put a spanner in the works', I suppose. Of course, a lot of people don't realise that 'Spanner' is just a brand name, not the name of the tool itself....

Now, is that true or not? You don't know now, do you...?

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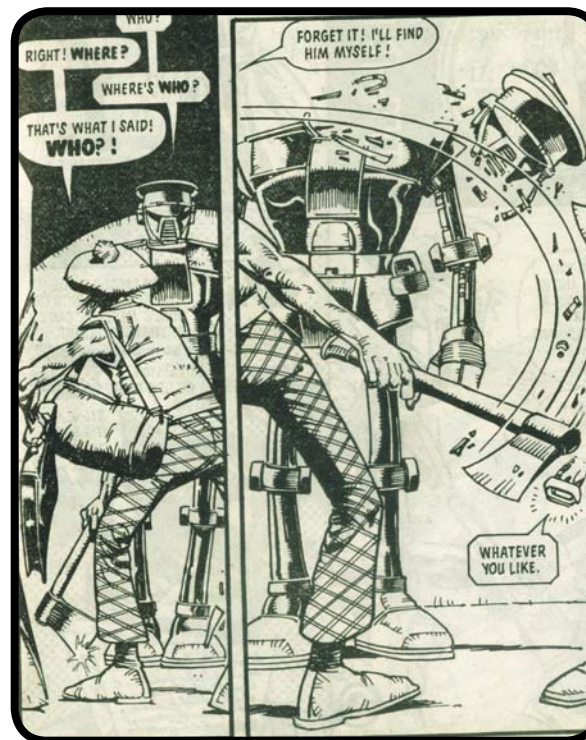
Travellers in the realm of Magnamund are often forced to cross vast areas, passing through all sorts of strange environments. One type of adventurer spends his entire life wandering in the woods and deserts, unseen by others and living in harmony with the land - the mysterious Eruan Pathfinder!

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# EYE ON MONGOOSE

*Coming This Month*

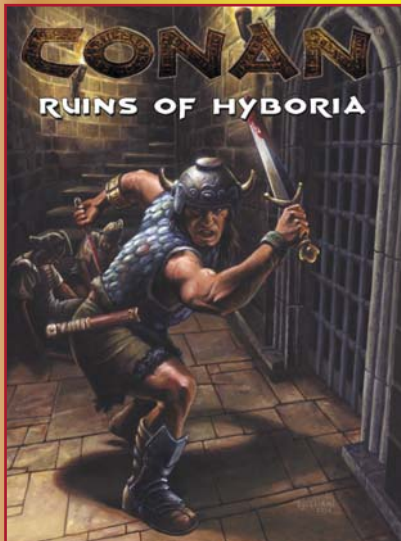


The third of the Expert Player's Guides, **Epic Monsters** provides 256 hardbound pages jam-packed with Epic-level monsters of Challenge Rating 20+ for the low, low price of just \$19.95.

This tome is the perfect companion to Epic-level campaigns, containing over 100 creatures geared to giving the most powerful characters a real challenge. Whether your scenarios are earth-bound or span the dimensions, there will be monsters in this book that you can use to give your players a real fright!"

**Epic Monsters** features 100% Open Game Content.

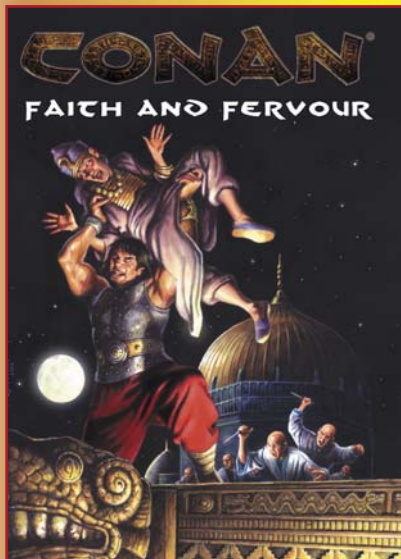




There is something irresistible in the allure of decaying ruins and ancient places. Testaments to ingenuity they are, yet the civilisations fell regardless of their creativity and intelligence. The ancient places of the world have an awesome power to impress and overwhelm the viewer in a way a newer place can never hope to have. The whole air of decay surrounding such places, the sheer sense of history pervading these old locations work to provide stimulus to the dark corners of the imagination and conjure ghosts unlike any said to haunt mankind.

There are many ruins of ancient cities and monuments scattered across the Hyborian Kingdoms, places of power that promise both great riches and terrible evils. Only recently discovered, they now beckon bold adventurers to explore their depths, overcome guardians and steal the greatest treasures.

This book contains many such ruins, ready for Games Masters to use in their own campaigns. From the Isle of the Iron Statues to the Green Stone Cities, all your favourites can be found here, ready to challenge your players.

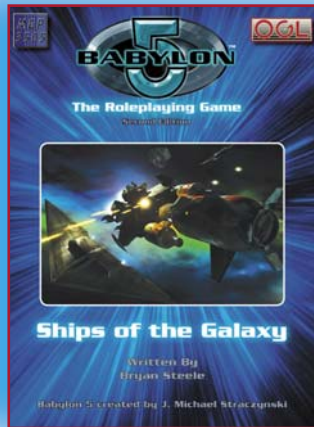


Religion in the Conan stories are generally dark, brutal affairs, full of secrets and monstrous priests. Most of the stories give religion a rather unholy, unclean air. A primitive time with primitive religions is the world Conan the Cimmerian strives to conquer and tread. This volume in the Conan the Roleplaying Game series is designed to enhance the role-playing aspect of scholars, cultists and religious leaders in the Hyborian age.

In the Conan stories, it is left unclear as to whether the gods exist or not. The descriptions for the Hyborian age gods, which may or may not be real entities, do not include 'statistics', such as might be found in many d20 and OGL sourcebooks. Even if the Hyborian age gods are considered to be real by a Games Master, they would be powers on a scale that no mortal could hope to defeat them, even the mighty Conan, thus the need for monster-like statistics for these gods is still unnecessary. Conan does not come into armed conflict with Set but only with Set's priests. Keep in mind that just because a certain demon claims to serve a deity, that demon could be lying or may have the same misconceptions about the gods as some mortals have.

The religions are divided up largely by culture, detailing even a few heresies and alternate religions at variance with the 'official' religion of an area. New feats, spells and other concepts are also detailed.

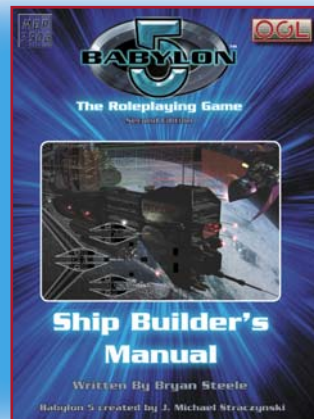




Space is very, very big. There is several billion times as much empty space as there are stellar bodies hanging in the blackness. Just as the first explorers thought the sea was eternal, space was daunting to those who first set their sights on the heavens above. The first rockets that broke away from their planet's gravity and soared into the vast sea of stars were the first infants of an industry.

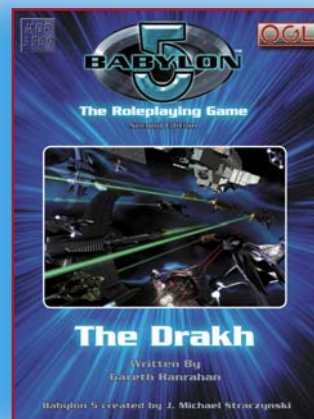
The industry of space travel.

This book is a collection of many of the ships that could be found in the era of the 23rd Century, when the turning of an age took place. Separated into their various governmental or political factions, this is the ultimate guide to the spacecraft of Babylon 5.



The Babylon 5 television series saw dozens of different starships that soared, sailed, barrelled and blasted their way across our television screens time and time again. As fans of the series, there was always a part of us that wanted to be at the helm in one of those crimson-lit G'Quan heavy cruisers, or flipping J-turns in a Starfury – which is just one of the many reasons why we created the Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game.

Space travel and starships are a huge part of the Babylon 5 universe, and almost every chronicle will no doubt run into the use of one in some way. Roleplaying evolution states that eventually the players will get tired of seeing 'the same old thing' over and over, looking for those ships that never saw screen-time. When those grow old, then inevitably players and Games Masters alike will soon look into creating vessels of their own.



The Shadows had allies and servants, and they did not leave when their masters went away. The Drakh were the foremost of these servants, princes of darkness who now hope to claim the throne left empty by the First Ones. Sheridan and his crusade destroyed the Drakh's holy world of Z'ha'dum. Now, they will have their revenge, by one means or another.

Infinitely patient, with the slow cunning of spiders, the Drakh prepare their revenge. From Centauri Prime to Minbar, from the brutal all-out attack on Earth with a Death Cloud to subtle intrigues and conspiracies on Babylon 5 itself, the dead hand of darkness reaches out to tear down a thousand worlds.

The Shadows are gone.

Their evil works live on.





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## Tales from Mongoose Hall

Matthew Sprange

Star Wars IIa

### A Lost Hope

**When we left the group in issue 32, the initial droid wave against the capital of Kothlis had been defeated but all the Jedi Masters had been killed in a trap set by General Syphus, leaving the 1<sup>st</sup> level Padawans to command an entire clone legion in defence of a whole world...**

So, business as usual for one of our weekly games in Mongoose Hall...

David, playing 'General' Itchigo (still a 1<sup>st</sup> level Padawan, remember), was still stunned a week later but help was close at hand – in the form of Van Kleif, Ian's new character (his Jedi having perished in the same trap that killed all their masters). Now, Van Kleif, it turns out, was the senior member of the Republic's Judicial branch here on the Bothan world of Kothlis, making him a good person to know for the Jedi. He knew the Bothan Senator, and knew how the Bothan Council on this world worked, which was useful for the Jedi as they hoped to swing Bothan sympathy away from the Separatists and towards the Republic – they had a vision of the Bothans rising up in arms against the droid invaders.

Ha! Like it was going to be that easy!

They quickly dispersed their clone troopers around the perimeter of the city and learned that of the 87 councillors on the planet, only 7 supported the Republic openly and many supported the trade links offered by the Separatists. The Jedi were beginning to suspect that they might have a moral

problem between following the orders of the Republic in not letting the world fall (and with it, the entire Bothan Sector), and doing what is right for the Bothans themselves. However, they had no idea...

The first emergency, however, was an oncoming army. It turns out that the force they faced before, a single company of droids (about a 1,000 droids in one of those) was just a ploy by General Syphus to wipe out the Republic's landing positions. She had initially intended to hit the capital in force, and now the rest of this army was approaching. Eying the world map which featured known droid army positions, the Jedi, aided by Van Kleif, started to put together a plan.

I have to give them credit – it was actually well-executed. They deployed their ARC Troopers well ahead to mine the road the droids were approaching along (which included an armoured company of their biggest droid tanks), then loaded up nearly a dozen gunships to rush three more companies into the area. Meanwhile, Alex (Jedi pilot extraordinaire-to-be) quickly trained five clones to pilot Jedi Starfighters and timed an attack on the main body of droid MTTs (transports) to coincide with a rush by BARC Speeder Bikes.



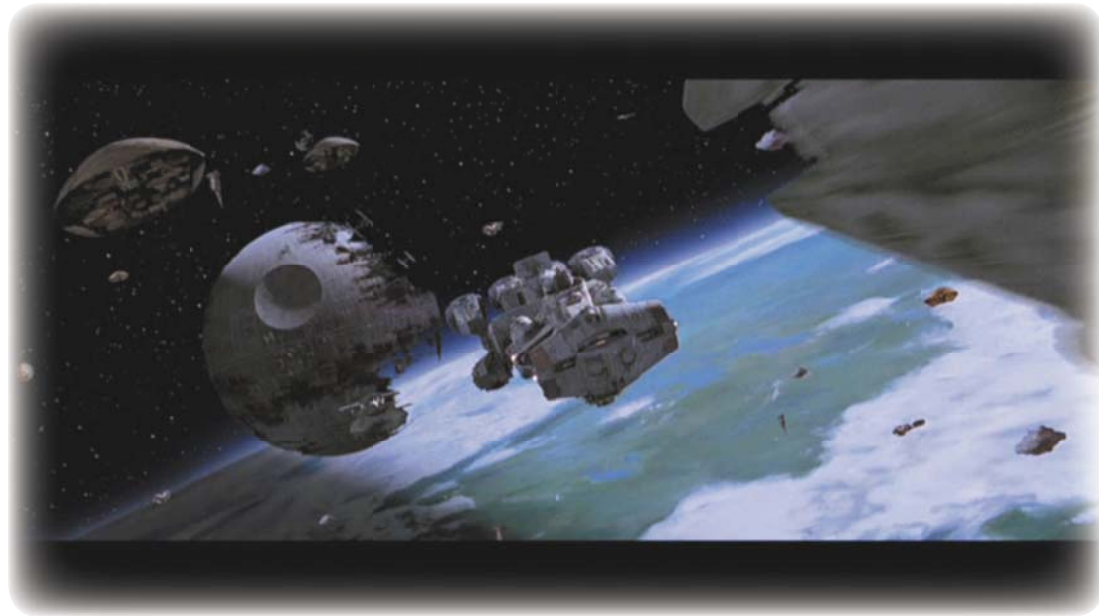
This went well. In the first few minutes of the jungle battle, half the enemy transports were destroyed and the tank column stalled by mines. Then the gunships swept in, led by David and Doghouse, to land the clone troopers and attack the tanks. They were to quickly find out that 2d8 lightsabres do not do much against tank droids...

The BARC Speeders were hit hard as they retreated from the battle and soon vulture droids appeared to tie up the Jedi Starfighters. A massive dogfight erupted above the battlefield, which downed a couple of gunships but Alex led his airborne forces well and a timely attack by Van Kleif (who had, up to now, been hanging back several miles away to 'oversee' the fight) destroyed ten Hailfire droids in as many seconds.

Over the course of the next hour, the Republic army gradually whittled the droids down, leaving only a few hundred to run into the jungle. However, many ARC troopers lay dead (they would regret that later) and perhaps an entire company's worth of other clones had gone to meet their maker. Still, the Jedi were victorious, and they returned to the capital, expecting to be feted as heroes at the head of a massive Bothan horde.

However, this is Star Wars, and things are never that easy. Councillor Borsk had been rabble rousing in the capital and was putting forth a motion to the entire council that would allow his city of Thundin'ar to effectively secede from the Republic – if he succeeded, others would follow and Kothlis would fall to the Separatists by default.

Now, technically, this motion was illegal – cities cannot just choose to leave the Republic as and when they wish but the party was soon quickly divided as to whether they should arrest him or not. Van Kleif (Ian) steps up and assures everyone that he can take care of it. So, he takes a trip to the Bothan's office General Itchigo in toe, and proceeds to first bribe him, then threaten him. It is worth pointing out that Itchigo cannot speak Bothan, the language Ian chose to use, and so was left mystified by this exchange, growing worried whenever he caught mention of his own name and that of Count Dooku.



The meeting ends and the Jedi plan their next move. The session in which Borsk intended to field his motion was due in a few hours and, besides, the new Turbo Tanks were now ready to be deployed. General Itchigo's first order? Run the massive tanks through the streets on their way to be deployed outside the city. An innocent enough order, but put yourself in the place of a Bothan citizen...

Things start going downhill when a suitably edited conversation between Van Kleif and Borsk gets broadcast on the local Holonet. Ian confidently claims that this has not damaged his reputation among the Bothans, but the Jedi are less sure. Somewhat desperate to make up the lost ground, Ian gathers a squad of clone troopers, *marches to the main council hall and arrests Borsk*. Then deposits him in a secure area of the starport which, by now, has basically become clone-central.

You might begin to see what is coming up.

Van Kleif begins to question Borsk, convinced he is a traitor selling out the Bothans to the Separatists. The Q&A session ends with a blaster bolt to Borsk's head. By this time, we are fairly convinced that Van Kleif has turned into Jack Bauer. Ian calmly leaves the room, telling the clones outside that no one, *including the General*, is to go inside. Yes, he got a Dark Side point for all of this. I think he was proud...



David, though, has other problems. Borsk's arrest has angered many Bothans and now 200 are outside the starport, protesting. The players dispatch David to sort them out. Rabbit-in-front-of-headlights is probably the best way to describe what happened next, with David clearly not wanting to be there. However, he stops the clones opening fire on the crowd and persuaded the mob to at least wait for a while. This was a tricky position for him as he a) did not want to lie and b) knew, as a player, that Borsk was already dead. He knew this was a situation just waiting to blow up in his face.

Elsewhere, the Jedi heard that there were whispers of an attack or sabotage on the main shield generators that kept the capital safe from droid bombardment. So, they first ring the place with clones, then force all the Bothans out and get the clones to run the generators. Hmm, I think, mass unemployment in the shield generation sector – the resentment towards the Republic builds.

All too soon, Borsk's motion to secede (now being read by one of his lackeys) was to commence and Ian went into overdrive with his machinations. Alex retreated to the starport, intending to find a pilot crazy enough to run the droid blockade with a message – this was probably the wisest thing any of the players did in this part of the campaign.

While David planned his address to the council (in his capacity as General of the Republic's forces), Ian's planning went something like this. First, he recruited a group of Bothans who were, shall we say, 'high' on the Republic. After demonstrating their loyalty, he quickly armed them with blaster rifles and repeating blasters, and gave them armour. Not satisfied, he then made them his personal bodyguard, giving their leader the rank of Commander – which made the young lad the equal to the senior clone officer of the legion! This situation quickly devolved, with Van Kleif's personal bodyguard very soon turning into a Bothan version of the Hitler Youth.

Ian then took his bodyguard to the offices of one of Borsk's lackeys, threatened her with charges of treason, before stealing an advanced comms disruptor device that she had been hoarding (and he had been coveting).



*Van Kleif contemplates the Dark Side...*

He then stationed an entire clone company in gunships which would circle the area, waiting for his command. He gave them two command words. 'Green' and 'Extract'. He replaces the rifles of his bodyguard with pistols (which turns out to be a *very* good move, as you'll see), then gets them to form a barrier outside the council hall – they quickly end up fending off protestors.

General Itchigo makes his speech before the Bothan council but I think we can skip over that train wreck (actually, I was very cruel – David, clearly nervous, started to speak before I shouted him down with cries of 'Boo!' and 'Shame!')

The vote is called and they start filing back to the council chamber. Ian notices his 'friend' the Senator, cast a quick glance at him, following it with an almost imperceptible shake of the head.

Now, I know that the Senator is depressed because the Separatist faction among the Bothans has just gained 36 votes – not enough to win, but their movement is clearly gaining momentum. *That* is why he is sad.

Ian sees things differently. He makes a sharp turn, walks outside the chamber and calls to his gunships.

'Extract.'

At this point I am thinking it could not have gone better if I had planned it. Gunships sweep down into the plaza as clones leap out and rush towards the council hall. Van Kleif's bodyguard are firing wildly into the frightened crowd (I could not help thinking 'if only they had been allowed to keep their repeating blasters'). Clones storm into the chamber to drag the General out – Van Kleif is already safe on board a gunship. The Republic army blasts off, leaving dozens of Bothans wounded or dead, and their democracy in tatters.

**Next time: A daring rescue mission to save Bothan resistance fighters – and will the Jedi be able to stop Van Kleif?**





# Of Steam and Other Technologies

## A Treatise on the Conception and Execution of Ludic Environments in the Steampunk Genre, part 1 of 2

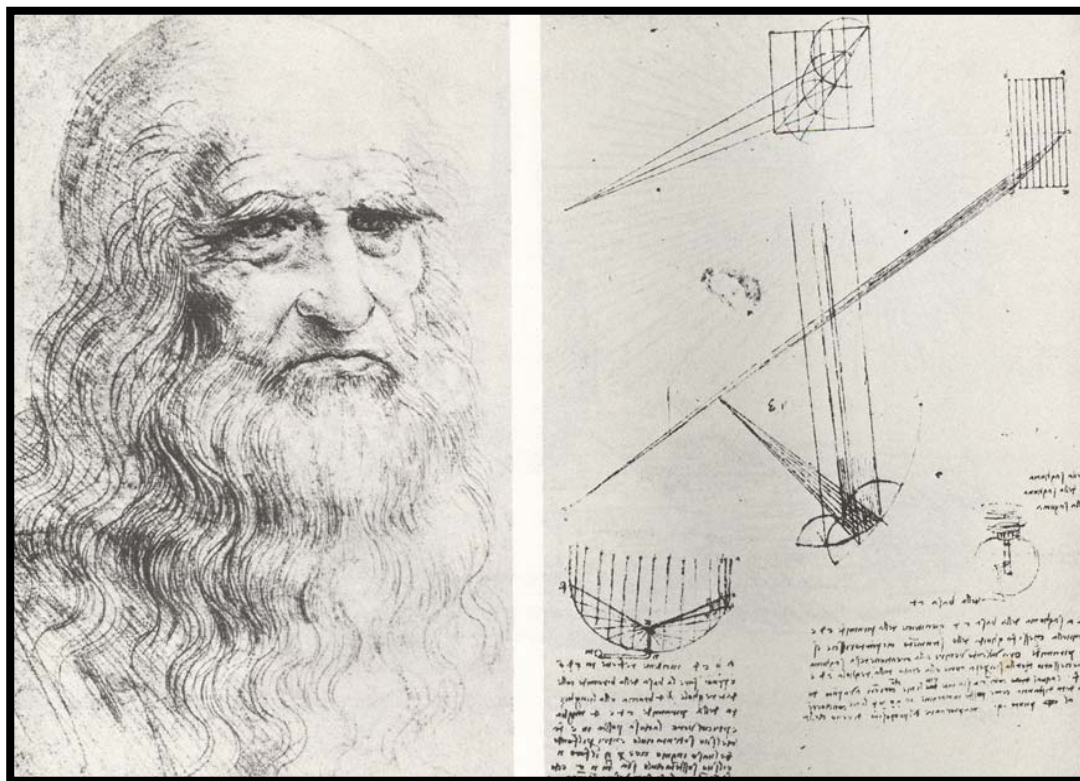
By Mr. Alejandro Melchor

As a sub genre of science fiction and fantasy, steampunk has the matchless distinction of being defined by its unique technology, and the science that engenders it. *OGL Steampunk* provides a series of options to play in a unique age, where the world of magic is slowly but surely being replaced by a world of science, but the period of transition gives characters unique opportunities to enjoy the benefits of both.

As a very rich genre, steampunk offers many options to Games Masters and players, who may wish to go beyond the options presented in the game to create their own setting. The first part of this article presents ideas on the scientific and technological elements that make steampunk what it is, allowing Games Masters to pick and choose amongst the different alternatives to assemble the state of technological advancement in their steampunk game.

### Incredible Technology

A better understanding of the world's workings brought more daring attempts to *change* it. Technology is the bastard child of science, and with the new spirit of exploration came an equally strong spirit of innovation. Artisans began to try new ways of practicing their ages-old crafts, and eventually discovered new crafts to work on. Through practice and experimentation artisans became technicians, and the genius of lone inventors introduced new and amazing technologies into wider use. When scholars applied the new inventions to their studies, they began a vicious circle of mutual inspiration, as



theories gave inventors new areas to explore, and better machines gave theorists more tools to refine their ideas.

### The Six Stages of Technological Adoption

Technology has its own rhythm, made up of the smaller beats of each new invention and how society receives it and ultimately adopts

it. Technological adoption can be measured in stages to represent just how different inventions become common use. The stages of technological adoption are ranked from 0 to 5.

**Stage 0 – Absence:** A technology in state 0 simply does not exist; it may be because there is no scientific framework for it to be conceived, the simple fact that nobody has thought about it, or because theories exist but no one has been able to



## Adoption Modifiers

The stage of technological adoption has a very real and palpable effect on a game's setting. The more integrated the technology, the more available it becomes and the easier it is to make and repair it, for its principles become better understood through simple trial and error. The adoption stage of any given technology affects the different Craft skills, as well as its market availability represented in the Purchase DC of objects based on the technology.

Technologies on the proliferation and sophistication stage have their own specialties in one of the Craft skills, while those in the innovation stage default to the general Craft skill they fall under or use the most closely related specialty. Technologies in the obsolescence stage have their own Craft specialty if they had one before being replaced.

Items apply the modifiers of each stage based upon their original DCs in the proliferation stage; a simple item normally has a Craft DC 15 in the proliferation stage, but it is as hard to make if it is in the innovation stage (DC 15 +10 = 25) as a complex item in the proliferation stage. A complex item in the innovation stage would be extremely hard to make (Craft DC 25 +10 = 35). These modifiers also affect the DC for Knowledge (technology) checks, for less information is available about items in their early stages than when they are widespread. The Purchase DC modifier in the table applies both towards buying a completed item as well as to buying the raw materials.

The purchase DCs for items given in the Equipment and Wealth chapter already consider their stage of adoption as well as their complexity. Some items, particularly those made with experimental technology, have a malfunction threshold (see *OGL Steampunk*); for every step up or down in the adoption stages, the threshold increases or decreases by 1. A machine with a malfunction threshold of 1 in its proliferation stage would have a threshold of 1-2 on the implementation stage and 1-3 in the innovation stage, but it would not have one in the sophistication stage.

## Adoption Modifiers

Stage	Craft/Knowledge DC modifier	Purchase DC modifier
0	-1	-1
I	+10	+4
II	+5	+2
III	+0	+0
IV	-5	-2
V	+/- 4 <sup>2</sup>	+/- 2 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Technology is unavailable for construction or purchase, although it could be devised using the rules for creating amazing machines later in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> This modifier stacks with that of a previous stage, and it could be positive or negative, depending on how the technology became obsolete.

Technological adoption also affects science's base of knowledge, but in a more tangential way, as theories exist about a lot of things even if they remain unproven by working examples. If the presence of a technology is vital for the formulation of a new theory, half the adoption modifier applies to the DC of the related Knowledge check. For example, telescopic lenses made it possible for astronomers to see the surface of other worlds up close; with telescopes in the innovation stage, Knowledge (physical sciences) checks regarding astronomy have a +5 increase to their DC.



build a prototype. If other technologies depend on one declared non-existent, they are based on something else. *Example:* A city without electrical power can light its street with gas pumped through underground pipes; a world where radio was never developed can make an intuitive jump to fibre optics to transmit information; firearms might evolve in different ways if there are no rifled muzzles.

**Stage I – Innovation:** Some inspired soul somewhere built the technology and made it work, but his breakthrough is still contained in the walls of his laboratory. The technology exists, but it is still in a prototype stage and may be prone to malfunctions, or the inventor created a few copies that he distributed amongst trusted friends and allies or submitted to a patent office. Innovations can be tremendously coveted by organisations wishing to exploit them or deprive others of its benefits, or may be so closely guarded that they are only a rumour amongst peasants nervous about the noises coming from the cellar of their more eccentric neighbour. *Examples:* someone ignites a carbon filament in a vacuum, thus creating the first light bulb; the first ornithopter crashes to the ground after successfully flying for a minute; voice is transmitted through a cable at long distances without the need for magic.

**Stage II – Implementation:** A technology's workings become widespread amongst like-minded craftsmen who begin to create their own versions. Some people hear about the technology and seek it, mostly out of curiosity, but it remains sufficiently rare to cause amazement amongst those who see it for the first time. In some circles, the technology is still seen as fiction in need of sufficient proof, while in others it can be confused with a magic apparatus. *Example:* the first 'moving picture' scares the daylight out of the first audience; sceptics look for the operator behind an analytical engine; the first submersible ship is confused with a sea monster.

**Stage III – Proliferation:** The technology is available to all who can afford it; tools are crafted and sold in general stores, vehicles spawn their own industry, weapons systems are adopted by national militaries and general machines improve the quality of life around them. There are new professions devoted to the design, crafting or fabrication, commercialisation and repair of items based on the technology, and nobody is surprised by them anymore. *Examples:* Steam cabriolets cruise park lanes without spooking the horses; the military adopts breech-loading rifles in favour of muzzle-loaders; electrical generators make possible public lighting based on light bulbs.

**Stage IV – Sophistication:** Once adopted, technology can only get better. In the sophistication step, craftsmen and industrialists find better ways to produce the technology and all the kinks are worked out to make it better, faster and more robust. A tendency for technology in the sophistication stage is to become smaller and simpler than its predecessors, less prone to malfunction and sometimes even resistant to quite an amount of punishment. Sometimes, the sophistication stage of a technology is simply the innovation stage of a derivative. A technology at this point has little to no trouble interacting with, or even using magic as part of its functions. *Examples:* horseless carriages travel the streets without their drivers stopping to check for glitches, but still manage to create the first traffic problems; airship design minimises the risk of using volatile gasses for lift; clockwork watches can be worn on a wristband and take some hard hits without malfunction.

**Stage V – Obsolescence:** More of a 'post-stage' than a true stage in and of itself, obsolescence means that a technology cannot advance any further, and has not for quite a while. New technologies are replacing it as they prove to yield better results, and the methods for

designing, making and repairing it are relegated to a few enthusiasts. A technology relegated to obsolescence can go in two possible ways: it can become more expensive as items become antiques or collection pieces, or it can become cheaper as items are considered junk. In addition, a technology can become obsolete at any stage of adoption if a new technology replaces it before it has a chance to become implemented, proliferate or sophisticate. *Examples:* Humans abandon greatswords as firearms make hard armour less useful, but large constructs and hybrid, as well as some anachronistic vampires and faerie, still use and produce them; ironworks are in less demand with cheaper modes of producing steel; sail-based navigation becomes a sport in light of the more powerful mechanical ironclads coursing the waters.

The following are the main technological fields that make the cornerstones of the steampunk genre. They are described as general areas where individual innovations have made their mark, or at least will. Their adoption stages are not precise rules, but guidelines for assembling the technology level of any given steampunk setting, justifying the existence of many items and defining what is commonplace and what is an amazing result of a mad scientist's dreams. Technological adoption will affect the equipment characters can acquire, the plausibility of construct characters and the cost of parts and raw materials for amazing machines.

## Power Generation

Most technology to generate power is interested in creating something else through it, with movement being the most popular result, although light and heat run a close second. Power technologies tend to coexist, as some forms are more appropriate for certain purposes regardless of how much others advance. Some of the important power generation technologies for the steampunk genre are:



**Work Power:** The most basic source of power is generated by sheer muscle; creatures pushing on levers, pulling yokes or pressing down on large funnels; there is not much sophistication to this and most people understand its principles, even if not its complications. Examples of work power include a hamster on a wheel, oxen pulling a yoke, rowers on a barge and so on. *Stage 0-II* – Mechanical power exists at the innovation stage even in the most primitive societies. *Stage III* – There are simple machines that optimise the result of work, such as the pulley, inclined plane, the wheel and the lever; most post-prehistoric societies have this. *Stage IV* – More efficient methods of using muscle power have been created, but are still in use. *Stage V* – Other technologies have replaced muscle power, allowing people to have more leisure time.

**Wind/Water Power:** One of the earliest artificial power sources, wind and water power mills and sails, or even electrical generators. The disadvantage of this power source is that the machines that use it must, by necessity, be pretty big. Examples of wind or water power include sailed boats, water mills, windmills, hydroelectric power plants and so on. *Stage 0* – People walk and grind grain by hand. *Stage I* – Neighbours say that the miller has gone crazy for putting those big sails on his building. *Stage II* – Coupled with simple mechanisms, mills are built on windy spots or by rivers to use their constant movement, but are still not that good; sails begin outpacing row-powered boats. *Stage III* – Windmills and watermills do the landscape; it is the age of sailed navigation. *Stage IV* – Gliders use updrafts and thermals to soar the air, sail design allow ships to travel faster and little power is lost from the gears moved by wind and rivers. *Stage V* – Smaller, more dependable power sources leave wind and water power the province of poor farmers who cannot afford something else, and wind-based flight and navigation become sports.



**Clockwork Power:** Clockwork involves tightly coiled springs and matching gears that store power, spending it as a mechanism winds down and must be rewound again. Examples of clockwork power are, obviously, clocks and watches, but also music boxes, small vehicles and some construct mechanisms. *Stage 0* – People tell the time by the position of the sun, through water and sand clocks and other methods. *Stage I* – The first clockwork mechanisms are possessed only by their inventors. *Stage II* – Clockwork mechanisms are big and clumsy, springing loose or misaligning gears. *Stage III* – Clockmakers repair pocket watches with practiced ease. *Stage IV* – Wristwatches are commonplace; automatons running on clockwork are to be found on most cities. *Stage V* – Other, more efficient power sources replace clockworks as the component of everyday tools, but its craft is relegated to an art form.

**Steam Power:** Where 'steampunk' gets its name from; steam power consists on heated water on a furnace, with the steam's pressure moving a piston and other mechanisms, through tubes of any lengths. Steam power requires a furnace and fuel to heat the water. Examples of steam power include steam locomotives and steamboats. *Stage 0* – Steam is that which comes from making soup. *Stage I* – An inventor notices the pressure of steam on a pot lid, and creates a simple machine that moves by its power. *Stage II* – A few machines run on steam, mostly in the textile industry, but the first steam engines are proving to be adequate to move heavy weights, such as vehicles. *Stage III* – Steam locomotives cross the country while steam-powered cars make their debut on the streets; and steamboats cruise rivers and oceans. *Stage IV* – Steam engines reach their peak efficiency, requiring less fuel and yielding more sheer force, enough to move ships around





the world and power fantastic vehicles as well as precise machines. *Stage V* – Other technologies replace steam as more efficient fuels are discovered as well as new chemical reactions; the age of steam is over.

**Electrical Power:** Electricity is one of the main examples of the benefits of scientists and inventors working together, as the discoveries of one fuelled the musings of the other and vice versa. Electrical power can generate light and heat, and motors can convert it to movement. Electrical generators work from the idea of generating current from electromagnetic fields, and batteries from the unique chemical reactions that create a current. Examples of electrical power include dynamos, light bulbs and electrified fences. *Stage 0* – Ooh, lightning! *Stage I* – Static electricity is observed, and clever but ultimately useless toys. *Stage II* – There are a few electric motors being built, used to move light vehicles for short times; large

applications such as lighthouses are literally seeing the light, but electricity is still not a common sight. *Stage III* – Electricity lights the streets, powers machines and has even spawned a new generation of technology with electricity running through them, replacing mechanisms with circuitry. *Stage IV* – It is the age of electronics, where electrical processes have replaced mechanical ones and power supply is cheap and reliable. Beamed electricity can travel through the air instead of through cabling. *Stage V* – Another technology rose to take electricity's place, rendering it a quaint member of science's history.

**Telluric Power:** This source of energy is highly dubious, as it crosses the line between science and magic. Telluric energy is that which travels between the so-called 'ley lines' and concentrates on nexuses (see Places of Power in *OGL Steampunk*). Purely technological means of exploiting telluric energy have a bit of sorcery to them, but only on a technical level; inventors are not required to learn the One Thousand Names of the Book of Something-or-Other, they extract the energy with their knowledge and machinery, and make it easy for others to do so as well. Examples of telluric power include trains running on top of ley lines using their power, ancient ruins converted into power stations and assembly-line magic items. *Stage 0* – Either the concept of telluric energy is not present in the minds of would-be engineers, or it is only exploitable by magic rituals. *Stage I* – The first telluric engine baffles scholars who cannot decide whether the inventor is a scientist or a sorcerer. *Stage II* – Magicians dabbling in technology or inventors with knowledge of the occult secure a ley line or nexus for their experiments, which become successful over time. *Stage III* – City layout as well as road-planning depend on ley lines and nexuses, streets are lighted

with arcane luminescence and protective barriers against supernatural beings can be switched on and off with the flick of a wrist. *Stage IV* – Telluric capacitors gather energy from the earth itself and store it for later use. *Stage V* – Telluric energy is deemed too unwieldy and replaced with more reliable means of powering tools and machines.

**Fossil Power:** The burning of fossil fuels is a complement to other technologies, particularly steam from the burning of coal, but they can engender a technology of their own that burns petrol and gas to create light and heat. This technology needs a lot of resources, and needs infrastructure to extract them and refine them; fossil-powered technology can move machines based on other technologies, such as steam, electrical and even telluric power, but elemental technology (see below) can replace it. Examples of fossil power include coal-powered steam engines, kerosene lamps and petrol-powered motors. *Stage 0* – Other technologies work based on something other than fossil power. *Stage I* – Fossil fuels are used mostly to light lamps, but their burning power is beginning to get noticed by curious inventors. *Stage II* – Curious people distil fossil fuels into different derivatives mostly just because it can be done, but they are found to have different properties and a few machines start burning them to generate the heat needed for other technologies. *Stage III* – Gas runs through tubing to provide light and heat, different fuels burn to push machinery. *Stage IV* – Sophisticated machines burn fossil fuel at its most efficient, such as internal combustion engines; chemists create new compounds with more potency and wars are fought over territory rich in fuel deposits. *Stage V* – People realised how damaging fossil fuels can be and replaced them with other technologies; at the most, fossil fuels are again only useful for lamps and other small applications.



**Elemental Power:** This form of power simply mixes a sheer magical effect with other means of producing power as it uses the energy given off by an elemental creature, an embodiment of air, earth, fire, water or more exotic elements like lightning, fog, lava or clay. Air elementals can power wind-based technologies, while fire and fog elementals can be bound inside steam engines; the main advantage of elemental power is that it eliminates the need for fuel or complex machinery to generate the power, using the conductors already in place for the mundane version of the elemental's energy. Examples of elemental power include golems suffused with earth elementals, sail ships propelled by air elementals and pottery devices using clay elementals. *Stage 0* – Elementals are either unknown, impossible to bind to technology, or simply no one has tried. *Stage I* – Golems are the first application of putting an elemental inside an object, but they are still fully magic. *Stage II* – Small elementals are bound to objects to make them do things they would not normally do; half of these experiments are still magic items, but many show the application of elemental power to mundane machinery. *Stage III* – Locomotives have bound fire and water elementals in their engines, electrical beings spit lightning at trespassers from security towers and automata share their conscience with that of their elemental power source, or their sentence actually *comes* from the elemental. Very specialised processes are still required to trap an elemental, impeding their wide adoption. *Stage IV* – The process to bind elementals to machinery is available to all with the proper resources, and even some techniques will bind pure elemental energy, not a half-sentient elemental creature. *Stage V* – A few elementals remain bound, but most have escaped their prisons or their essence consumed. Technology has moved on towards sources easier to tame.

## Energy Storage and Transmission

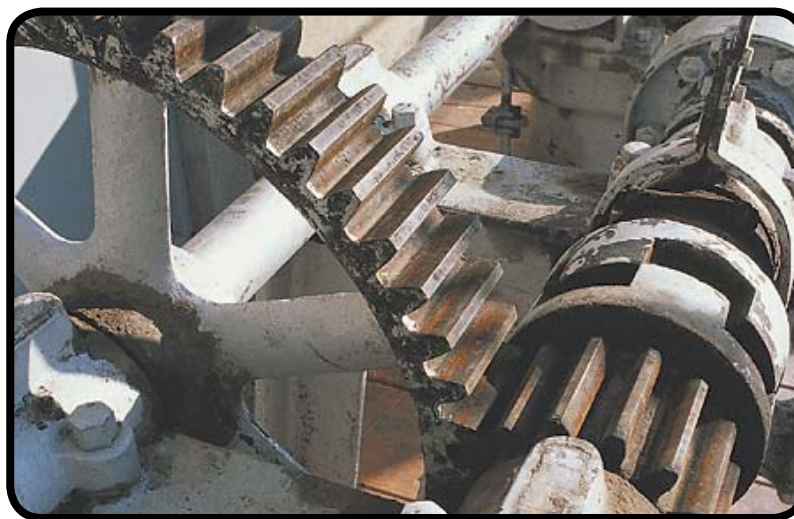
Closely related to power sources, storage and transmission technologies keep the sources' energy for later use and translate it into working force, moving machinery around or creating the effects that science and technology are known for. The adoption stage of these technologies depends a lot on the power source technology they are designed to complement, but they can grow beyond it.

**Mechanics:** Composed of moving parts grinding and pushing against each other, gears and cogs are considered mechanics, as do levers, pulleys and belts connecting them. Mechanics transform energy into movement and force and it is hard to conceive a world without them. Examples of mechanics include the interior of a mill, a pocket watch and a crane. *Stage 0* – Sheer, unaided muscle power moves the world... inch by inch. *Stage I* – An enterprising miller puts two wheels together to grind his grain. *Stage II* – Machines begin to appear in many places, aiding with labour but not replacing it still. *Stage III* – Several machines employ cogs and gears to

create force; moving parts can be found under the lids of many objects. *Stage IV* – The design of individual parts becomes so precise that it allows minute movement, such as that of a watch or even an analytical engine. *Stage V* – This technology hardly becomes obsolete, but when it does, it gives way to a much faster and less damage-prone replacement, but also harder to repair.

**Hydraulics:** Mechanical power pushes water through tubing at high pressure to transmit force. Hydraulics are expensive and hard to maintain, but can transmit tremendous amounts of power. Steam is a derivate of hydraulics in that it uses water in its gaseous state at high temperatures, which poses its own problems. Steam requires no original force to push it, but it cannot exert as much raw power as pure hydraulics, and the pipes must be able to withstand the heat without absorbing it and condensing the water. Examples of hydraulics include water pumps, steam pipes and brakes. *Stage 0* – Water is for drinking, boiling water to make tea. *Stage I* – Water is transported around canals mostly to get it to go where water, not force, is needed, but the principle is there. *Stage II* – A few tubes and pipes are

seen whenever there is innovative machinery, and a few heavy lifting mechanisms are around particular docks. *Stage III* – With the coming of steam power, hydraulic systems also multiply, moving lifts, automatic doors and other heavy machinery. *Stage IV* – Microconduits transport minuscule but precise amounts of force to make complex mechanisms work.





*Stage V* – This technology becomes part of history as more efficient or equivalent systems take their place.

**Pneumatics:** This technology works under the same principle as hydraulics, but it uses air instead of water or steam. Pneumatic tubes are flexible, and air is more manageable than liquids, but they can transmit less power. Examples of pneumatics include pistons, diving suit breathing apparatuses and air guns. *Stage 0* – Air is something to breathe, wind is strong but cannot exert localised pressure. *Stage I* – It takes longer to take hold than hydraulics, but the first uses of pneumatics are more focused towards the purpose of transmitting force. *Stage II* – There are few real applications of pneumatics, but those are widespread. *Stage III* – The ability to push air around makes underwater navigation possible; pneumatic tubes communicate small areas and becomes a delivery system. *Stage IV* – Like sophisticated hydraulics, pneumatics at this stage can run precise operations, but with greater control. *Stage V* – This technology becomes confined to a few particular uses, and can be created by amateurs.

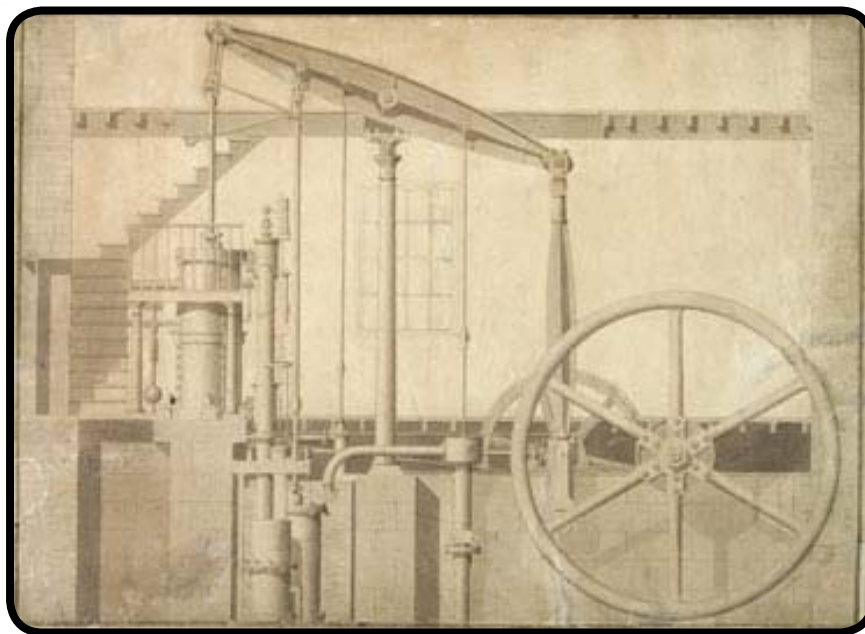
**Electrical Current:** Theorists discovered several properties of electricity and how it interacts with materials. Conductivity dictates which material can better transmit electrical current, and chemicals also proved to be capable of storing charges. Batteries use chemical reactions to discharge electrical power, and metal wires can transmit it. Power generators are very costly, but in comparison, electrical conductors absorb the initial cost by being extremely efficient in comparison to other sorts of energy transmission. Examples of electrical current include acidic batteries, constructs with voltaic attacks and the cabling that connects a light bulb to its current. *Stage 0* – Electrical power may exist, but there

is no way to make something useful out of it.

*Stage I* – The first electrical experiments can transmit small charges for little time, not enough to power large machines but sufficient to prove their viability. *Stage II* – The blessings of electricity are appreciated, but the technology cannot yet compete with other systems; electrical machines are scarce but they work.

*Stage III* – Electrical systems have replaced many other technologies, its ability to transmit force with minimal space and maintenance a big factor towards its success. *Stage IV* – Rechargeable batteries replace their previous versions, and circuitry becomes so fine that an analytical engine would fit in a fraction of its space if made with electrics rather than mechanics; a radical approach can create electricity out of magnetic fields, foregoing with the cabling altogether. *Stage V* – Whatever replaces electrical current must be great indeed to substitute such a convenient form of transmitting power.

**Telluric Circuits:** Telluric energy requires its own conductors, and is barely compatible with other modes of energy. The great advantage of this force is that it can travel through diagrams traced even with a knife on a piece of metal, as long as they are configured correctly. Telluric circuits resemble magical circles in more aspects



that both scientists and magicians are comfortable with, and it apparently loses no potency as long as the complicated circuitries are etched right. Examples of telluric circuits include the markings of an automaton to move its parts, the layout of train tracks built on ley lines and the cradle of an arcanium crystal to distribute its power. *Stage 0* – Either magic cannot be codified as such, or scientists have not realised the basic structure behind magical diagrams. *Stage I* – Magic and technology are hard to separate, but the first circuits are more identifiable as such. *Stage II* – Specialised craftsmen create special items that seem to work like magic items, but they are not. *Stage III* – Telluric energy travels along streets, powering items and equipment, and colleges teach students to design of telluric circuitry. *Stage IV* – Telluric circuitry may replace electricity either by displacing it or developing in its stead, tools and weapons work in the same frequency as magic. *Stage V* – If telluric power fades, its circuitry becomes simple and useless gibberish.



## Research Labs

A particular development of scientific progress is the birth of dedicated research and development laboratories. Invention is often the province of lone visionaries working in ill-equipped workshops, but as people realise the power of technological innovation, inventors become wealthier and are able to build the laboratories of their dreams. With large locales come a large staff of assistants and eager students. Dedicated labs become a business like any other, making their trade of progress and innovation.

Examples of research labs are easy to find; any circle of inventors, scientists and students who agree to work together. *Stage 0* – Inventions and discoveries occur in the homes of those responsible. *Stage I* – Single inventors hire assistants as permanent staff for their workshop. *Stage II* – Research labs become as guildhouses of craftsmanship, where talented persons can find employment and develop a trade in an advanced technology. *Stage III* – Universities found their own devoted research wings, inventor guilds surface, and normal guilds have their own internal group of masters and journeymen devoted to developing new techniques; independent labs surface as dedicated purveyors of progress; governments invent the concept of the patent. *Stage IV* – Labs make a name as permanent innovators, grow into their own organisations and may even become political forces of their society. *Stage V* – Research labs grew too unwieldy and splintered in small specialised workshops; the spirit of professionalism remain, but they are no longer what they used to be...

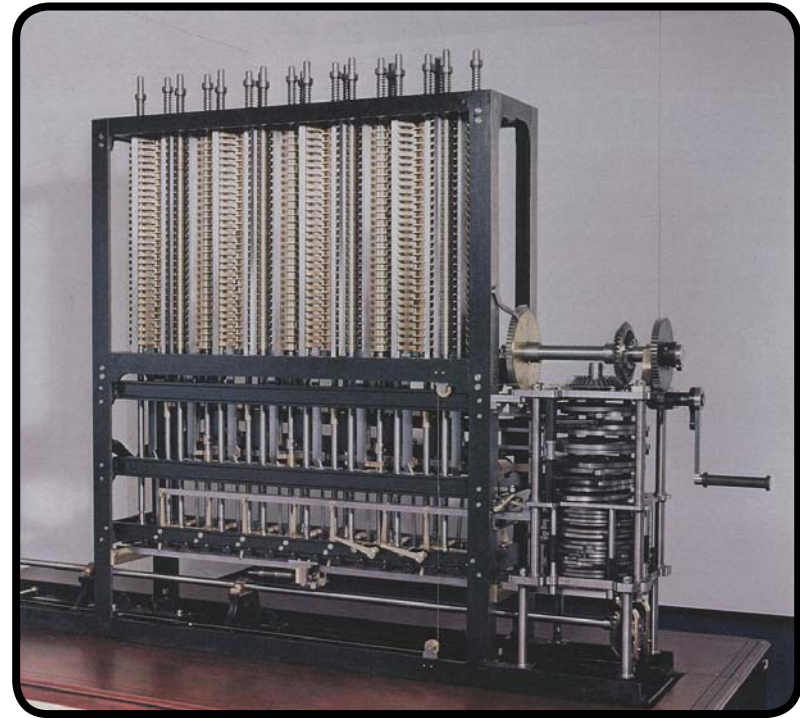
## Difference/Analytical Engines

A difference engine is a complex mechanism capable of making complex mathematical operations with several definable variables, and

tabulate their results.

They are more than glorified calculators, for they are able to make several operations by themselves with minimal human input. Analytical engines, on the other part, are true miracles of science, for they are multi-purpose machines whose capacity to process information can be adapted to many tasks with a simple change of instructions in 'soft' format, not changing the structure of the machine itself. In essence, analytical engines are the first computers, using clockworks and other physical technology instead of electronics. Analytical engines are hideously expensive and are always complex items at the very least. The analytical engines that run automata are of such exquisite intricacy that those without the proper knowledge are simply unable to comprehend them, even if they know how clockworks and other machinery works.

Examples of difference and analytical engines include a simple accounting machine that collates results, the artificial mind of a construct or an automated control mechanism for switching train tracks junctures. *Stage 0* – The abacus is the most complicated calculation device. *Stage I* – A difference engine is built to make the lives of accountants a bit easier; analytical engines are still not possible. *Stage II* – Automation begins



*A Babbage Analytical Engine, designed circa 1860 - 71, but not built until 1991. It worked perfectly.*

to take hold, and difference and early analytical engines make it possible for machines to replace sentients in repetitive jobs. *Stage III* – Bulky and, according to some, monstrous, the calculating engines are capable of controlling complex tasks in other machinery, as well as to become tools for many trades; the profession of difference or analytical engineer is recognised, as well as that of programmer. *Stage IV* – Precision and better understanding on the logic of the engines allow engineers to build miniaturised versions of them, now capable of running the complicated minds of automata. *Stage V* – The most likely successor of the analytical engine is an improved version of itself, using better technology like electrics and even telluric circuitry.



## Land Transportation

Although walking is the most common means for travelling through land people, particularly humans, have always sought faster and more comfortable ways of moving on the ground. Land transportation technology has a tradition that dates back to the invention of the wheel and the first cart, but may grow to be extremely complicated when combined with advanced techniques and visionary minds.

**Animals:** The most typical means of assisted land movement, animals are easy to maintain, fairly complex in the tasks they can perform but a bit flighty and unreliable at times. They can be ridden or hooked to vehicles and tools that the animal's great strength pushes or pulls forward. Although it is quite possible to have animal-based technology for air or water transportation, specimens are wilder and harder to tame. Examples of animal transportation include cavalry and drawn vehicles. *Stage 0* – Animals roam free and mostly unmolested. *Stage I* – Adventurous souls tame a few animals and tie them to carts but do not ride them yet. *Stage II* – Riding techniques are very crude; the techniques for tying apparels to the animals still leave them exhausted. *Stage III* – Animals are trustworthy engines of movement, although they are expensive to both acquire and maintain. *Stage IV* – Different riding techniques develop around the world; bridles, tackles and yokes are designed to cause minimum discomfort to the animals; selective reproduction creates stronger and faster breeds. *Stage V* – Automation and power sources spell the end of animal-powered transportation, although it remains as a sport for the wealthy or as the only means of transport for the poor.

**Muscle-powered:** After animals, transportation technology grew to optimise the effort of arms and legs to propel simple machines. Examples of muscle-powered transportation include bicycles,

carts and railway handcars. *Stage 0* – Walking or riding is the way to go. *Stage I* – Carts make their debut as crafty peasants find a way to transport more of their goods with them. *Stage II* – Exotic new vehicles begin to proliferate, but they are still a novelty and must cope with unsuitable terrain. *Stage III* – Bicycles and handcars dot the streets and railways, which are built with better conditions for their use. *Stage IV* – Faster, stronger and less tiring to operate, muscle-powered vehicles are sleek and inexpensive. *Stage V* – Automated transportation leaves muscle-powered vehicles as tools for sports or as emergency items when no other means is available.

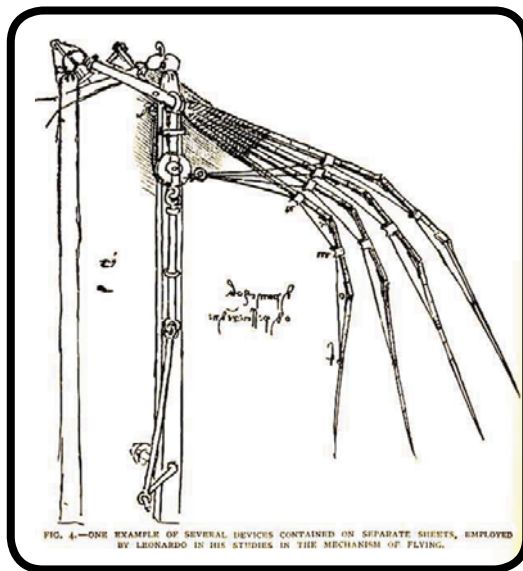
**Locomotives:** Steam power gave birth to locomotives, great hulks of iron with a great furnace and a wagonload of fuel capable of pulling incredible weights at very decent speeds. Locomotives shrunk the world and made possible the transportation of cargo across great distances, strengthening trade and industry, not to mention migration and communication. Examples of locomotives are basically trains, but independent vehicles might course the railways or even roads. *Stage 0* – Wagons in caravans are the precursors of trains. *Stage I* – The first engine capable of moving great weight debuts to the astonishment of many, but it is a drain of resources. *Stage II* – As engines become stronger and more efficient, the first tracks are laid down to accommodate the speeding hulks. *Stage III* – A comprehensive rail system is in place, and even exists for internal urban transportation for lighter locomotives; trade and travel boom as more territories open up for easy access once rail tracks reach them. *Stage IV* – The engines move by more efficient means, which may even include telluric power, with greater speed than ever before. *Stage V* – Locomotives, whatever their technology, remain an option for long-distance travel and movement of cargo, barring great dangers along their route.

**Automotives:** Without the need for tracks or overly special roads, autonomous land vehicles go from personal cars to armoured juggernauts, joined in parentage by the fact that they do not need any external support to run; their power source, fuel and mechanisms are all contained in the same body. Automotives combine many technologies that may advance at different paces, such as engine technology, wheels and tires, breaks, fuel compounds and so on, but they are considered all together to gauge the growth of the general autonomous transport technology. Examples of automotives include cars, armoured tanks and even legged vehicles. *Stage 0* – Motors are too big, yield too little power or do not exist; vehicles cannot move on their own yet. *Stage I* – Someone attaches a simple motor to a wagon's wheels and the thing begins moving, scaring everyone around. *Stage II* – Early motors are able to move light vehicles, which develop their own shape rather than being adapted animal-drawn means of transport; they are still a little unstable to be of any use in war, but some eccentric warriors mount light armoured autochariots. *Stage III* – Automotives come to their own, becoming faster and sturdier and causing the birth of new refined technologies to satisfy their needs; armoured vehicles become the new standard of artillery. *Stage IV* – Faster and stronger, automotives are available in a wide range of models for multiple purposes, from cheap transportation-only to all-terrain travel and heavy combat. Streets, roads and highways are built specially for automotives. *Stage V* – Automotives evolve into something else or are abandoned in favour of a faster and safer means of transport, perhaps magic or other incomprehensible technology.

## Air Transportation

Flight is one of the greatest pursuits of human science, be it natural or occult. While supernatural races can achieve flight through their inherent powers or ease to learn magic, humans





*Part of a design by Leonardo da Vinci for a glider. When finally built in the early 21st century, it was found to work perfectly*

had either to master difficult magic or go the way they knew best: innovation. Aerial transportation opens entirely new horizons, and metaphorically level the ground between mortals and many supernatural creatures.

**Gliders:** Gliders are simple spans of canvas held in a framework of wood or light metals, achieving flight by literally riding the wind. Some advanced models may incorporate motors for added impulse, but generally their performance in the air is slow compared to other means of aerial transportation. One of the advantages of gliders is that they provide individuals with a method of flight. *Stage 0* – No personal flight; that is for birds or magicians. *Stage I* – The first gliders usually come from the idea to strap a person to a kite, often with disastrous results, but with astounding possibilities. *Stage II* – Gliding starts as an idle sport, the technology is simple and easily adopted. *Stage III* – Glider-based courier

services transport messages and light packages; several glider models exist, including a couple for espionage and troop deployment. *Stage IV* – Gliders fit motors and propellers to give them greater speed and autonomy, and may switch their canvas wings with solid metal once the principles of flight are better understood. *Stage V* – The most likely substitute for gliders are aeroplanes, and gliders go back to being a sport.

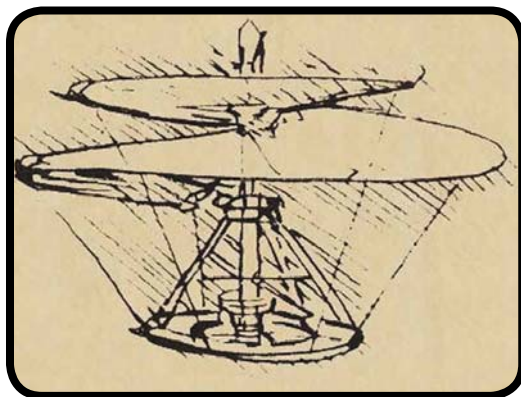
**Airships:** The underlying principle of all airships is that any gas that is lighter than air will lift any container of sufficient size. As their name implies, hot-air balloons use heated air to achieve lift and so they need something that burns, but that does not burn the basket tied to the balloon. Zeppelins are airtight bags filled with gas, usually hydrogen, with a longer cabin strapped to their bottom and metal bands and rings to strengthen the bag's surface. Both types of airship are slow and need a way of directing their movement, for the gas only provides one: up. *Stage 0* – Balloons are nothing more than a child's toy, if they exist at all. *Stage I* – Someone connects the dots between flight and light gases, and starts tying balloons to crude baskets, and achieving short but meaningful flights. *Stage II* – Rich individuals or even governmental factions fund the construction of airships for their own recreation or to conduct missions. *Stage III* – Great zeppelins cross the oceans as an alternative means of travel; balloons are luxury items, but more affordable then before. *Stage IV* – Wars are fought from titanic airships serving as troop transport and base for other aerial forces, and even cities have airship docking station. *Stage V* – Like gliders, airships are more likely to be replaced by aeroplanes and be relegated to small and unimportant roles.

**Aeroplanes:** Aeroplanes are like the automobiles of aerial transport, capable of sustaining themselves in the air by virtue of their machinery and design, and not only from the action of the

wind. The most typical shape for aeroplanes is that of a fuselage with perpendicular horizontal wings, with forward speed creating lift beneath the wings to lift it upwards, but particular effects might not need this support, such as that of a telluric engine powering an electromagnetic turbine that pushes on luminiferous ether to create antigravity. *Stage 0* – Automotive flight is still a dream; flight is achieved through other methods. *Stage I* – Barely more than gliders with a motor, the first aeroplanes are nonetheless heavier, and could not possibly fly without clever applications of aerodynamics. *Stage II* – While not particularly common, people recognise the buzz of an aeroplane's engines, which are used for military purposes mostly, as militaries are usually the only ones who can afford the construction costs. *Stage III* – Great aeroplanes traverse the world at great speeds for various concern; the method of propulsion develops into something more potent, allowing for heavier materials. *Stage IV* – Aeroplanes fly higher than ever before, threatening to cross over whatever lies beyond the sky. *Stage V* – Safer means of transporting people and threatening ground enemies replace the aeroplanes, which become, like gliders, a sporting or collector's item.

**Copters:** The term 'copter' describes a special kind of flying vehicle, which uses some sort of movement of its parts to create flight. Gyrocopters operate similar to aeroplanes, but forward speed does not provide lift, but rather rotates wide blades on top of it that act like wings. Ornithopters are rather more exotic breed of aircraft; they achieve flight by moving their wings in the manner of birds, combining mechanics and aerodynamics to lift off and go forward. *Stage 0* – Nobody has come up with the principle for these aircrafts. *Stage I* – The products of fanciful imagination, copters only fly when built by individual inventors. *Stage II* – Copters proved their viability and, for some reason, had enough





*Leonardo da Vinci's famous helicopter design.*

advantages that they begin to see use, with personnel devoted to their construction. *Stage III* – Copters dot the sky of cities and countryside, gyrocopters become personal vehicles because they are relatively inexpensive. *Stage IV* – Ornithopters form the main force of an aerial army and are quite manoeuvrable. *Stage V* – Copters are abandoned in favour of other technology, leaving them as curiosities.

## Sea Transportation

Water is one of the geographic obstacles that will never cease to captivate the imagination, no matter how much is explored or discovered. Rivers, lakes and oceans became the lifeblood of many empires and continue to be the main routes of many transportation. However, the waterways remain a dangerous and unstable element that sailors challenge every time they leave the docks under whatever power moves their craft.

**Rowboats:** Rowboats use sheer muscle power to move, aided by *very* simple mechanisms in some cases. Passengers push the boat with oars or poles if there is not much depth. Rowing requires coordination, although it is a skill that is easy to master; despite any possible innovation, rowboats are always present, as the more simple the method

of travelling is, the more dependable it becomes. *Stage 0* – People paddle with their hands to push their vessels or do not go into the water at all. *Stage I* – Poles are used to push a vessel forward, and small oars begin seeing use. *Stage II* – The oar is common in many shapes and forms, and poling is perfected so that it becomes less tiring. *Stage III* – Galleys and other oar-powered vessels course the waterways, defying the wind, although muscle-power often takes the form of slaves. *Stage IV* – Rowboats and ships have multiple levels for the rowers, and hull design makes it easier for them to propel the ship. *Stage V* – Sail are usually the technology that replaces oars, but it is not always the case. Lifeboats always have oars, and the technology is never truly abandoned.

**Sailboats:** Wind power is free, and anyone can catch it and direct it with the right amount of skill and courage. Sailboats hang large canvases from masts in order for them to catch the wind, using the exerted pressure to propel a vessel forward. Complicated rigging ensures that the pressure is exerted all over the hull and not just the mast, and combining sails of different shapes and sizes has better effects than simply having larger sails. *Stage 0* – Waterborne vehicles move by some other power, most commonly sheer muscle via rowing. *Stage I* – Large single sails push small vessels, but it is enormously dangerous as it is very hard to direct the wind at this stage. *Stage II* – The age of sail begins as more people adopt the technology, finding more ways to use it. *Stage III* – All important waterborne travel is accomplished through sails, enabling people to travel vast distances across otherwise impassable terrain. This ushers an age of exploration where all kind of people search for new resources. *Stage IV* – Sail and hull design allow a single person to control a large vessel only by pulling choice rigging; ships are faster and easier to control, but experienced sailors are still in demand. *Stage V* – Simpler technology that requires less personnel and less

maintenance is bound to replace sails, although sailing still remains the method of choice amongst poor people, and complements the sporting vessels of the rich.

**Steamboats:** The wind is a fickle source of power and requiring creatures to propel large vessels is inviting disaster. Steamboats apply the power of steam towards moving paddles, screws and propellers, divorcing waterborne navigation from one of the elements. Steam power allows ships to be heavier, an advantage that many take to build metal and armoured ships. Steamboats eventually stop using steam if other technologies become available, such as combustion engines, but the principles remain basically the same. Curiously, 'sailing' remains a term for travelling through water. *Stage 0* – Navigation must rely on the fickle whims of the weather or the fortitude of a ship's crew. *Stage I* – A steam engine pushes a small boat and quickly runs out of energy. *Stage II* – The first steamboats are rare, but they begin to ply the routes of deep rivers. The technology is still not reliable enough for ocean trips. *Stage III* – Engines are the dominant form of water travelling, now trustworthy enough for long sea voyages. *Stage IV* – As engines become more potent, ironclads give way to dreadnaughts as the engines can move the great weight of a ship of war loaded with heavy weaponry; chimneys spew the smoke from multiple engines moving multiple propellers. *Stage V* – The method of using paddles, screws or propellers does not change much, even if the power source is abandoned in favour of a more efficient one...

**Submersibles:** Terrors of the seven seas, submersible vessels can explore corners of the waterways that no other ship can even hope to reach. Completely airtight, submersibles require either a store of breathable air for its crew or a means of producing it, unless the crew can actually breathe underwater. Submersibles are



subjected to crushing pressures, which their hull must withstand without suffering damage. These vessels are dangerous weapons by virtue of being nigh impossible to detect, but when they fit their hull and ports with actual weaponry, they are positively lethal. *Stage 0* – The only vessels underwater are those that sank. *Stage I* – Submersible sightings tell of sea monsters, even if they cannot stay submerged for very long. *Stage II* – People know that there are ships capable of travelling under the water, but very few have ever seen one, for their captains prefer to keep them hidden. *Stage III* – Navies employ submersibles as an integral part of their force, and researchers and explorers manage to get hold of smaller versions. *Stage IV* – Submersibles can stay underwater for days at a time, and mount incredibly lethal weaponry for threats above and below; they also possess sophisticated techniques to detect other submersibles. *Stage V* – The technology to maintain submersibles underwater is what becomes obsolete, but the concept remains.

## Otherworld Transportation

After conquering land, sea and air, the only frontier left can only be defined as the Beyond. To push their frontiers, explorers must push even upward, further downward or, in some cases, sideways, forwards and backwards. These barriers are respectively the aether of outer space, underground, the Ethereal and Astral Planes, or time itself. What lay beyond is anybody's guess, although these unknown destinations are collectively known as the otherworlds, whether they are other planets, lost worlds in the centre of the world, parallel dimensions or other eras.

**Burrowers:** Trains going through tunnels do not count as burrowing machines, for a requisite is that they must be able to make their own way down, either by digging, blasting, melting or even phasing the rock. The destination of a burrowing

vehicle is simple: down. Some may only wish to travel beneath the surface just like submersibles do in the sea, but others actually want to reach down as far as possible. *Stage 0* – Digging is hard work enough, and nobody conceives anything doing it at a speed necessary for travel. *Stage I* – A simple burrower can only reach so far before getting crushed or simply stopping because it cannot surpass a layer of hard rock. *Stage II* – The drills of other techniques of burrowing become more efficient, but only a very small number of such vehicles exist. *Stage III* – It is most likely that burrowing machines are banned or heavily regulated, as they endanger everything that society considers important on the surface; some burrowers may have reached an otherworld at the centre of the earth or under dark caverns. *Stage IV* – Burrowing machines can travel almost at the same speed as surface vehicles, but because of their limited use and the damage they cause, they stay very few in number and very restricted. *Stage V* – People realise how futile underground travel really is; if burrowing persists, it is as a tool to carve tunnels for other vehicles.

**Aethershops:** There are two kinds of aethershops, those that brave the aether-laden atmosphere of outer space to reach other planets, and those that *shift* to higher frequencies to visit other dimensions. Such travel is very experimental and very dangerous, because there is little guarantee of a safe return. Brave aether explorers can expect to find the unexpected, from alien civilisations to the foundations of Heaven and Hell. *Stage 0* – The world has enough boundaries without needing to look for new ones. *Stage I* – A crackpot inventor launches a ship that strands him and a few friends in another world; nobody believes them when they manage to return. *Stage II* – There is an active program to explore space or other dimensions, but it is likely to be secret. *Stage III* – Aethershops travel routinely to otherworlds and bring back samples, resources and maybe even a tourist. *Stage IV* – There is frequent visits to otherworlds

via aethershops, and there may be even colonies or embassies in them. *Stage V* – Exploration is abandoned by one or many reasons, and aethershops have little other use except as museum pieces.

**Time Machines:** The concept of time travel is revolutionary to say the least, but just identified as a frontier, people are compelled to explore it. The only impact of time machines upon society comes from any change that travellers can make to the past, although time has proven rather resilient and has a natural resistance to paradoxical changes, creating situations that will yield the same historical results through different circumstances. If time travel becomes an accepted technology, it will certainly develop checks and balances, as well as new breeds of criminals and law enforcers. *Stage 0* – People can only travel to the future by aging, and to the past by reminiscing. *Stage I* – An inventor returns from an expedition with warnings from the future. *Stage II* – The theories for time travel appear to be correct, and few explorers venture into the past and future; opposing parties vie to stop each other from changing history. *Stage III* – Governments or other organisations stamp down on independent time travel, as it is something too delicate to leave unchecked; official agencies protect the timeline from transgressions. *Stage IV* – Where once time-travelling vehicles were big and complicated, now they are as small as pocket watches that open time portals. *Stage V* – Time travel was justifiably prohibited and forgotten, or time travellers have disrupted time so much that they rendered the invention unworkable (or have erased their civilisation from history entirely). Nothing replaces it.

## Telecommunications

Besides transportation, the other great contribution of technology to society is the ability to communicate quickly; the physical means of communication over a long distance



shape the way a society works. The applications of communications technology are something apart from the technology itself, but the medium shapes the message, and the characteristics of each innovation cannot help but dictate how messages are composed.

**Pneumatic Tubes:** An efficient form of documented communication within small areas, pneumatic tubes use compressed air that push canisters along a pipe from one point to another. Normally, people do not have the ability to designate a specific destination in a network of tubes, but analytical engines may be able to read special markings on a canister and direct it where it is needed to go. Pneumatic tubes are used mostly inside a building or connecting places that benefit from quick communication. *Stage 0* – Couriers and heralds carry all papers and goods. *Stage I* – An inventor ‘wires’ his house so that he can send messages to other parts of his estate without having to walk them over. *Stage II* – Pneumatic tubes communicate different levels of the same building, allowing clerks and other employees to move documentation quickly. *Stage III* – There is a simple tube network crisscrossing the city, probably run by the post office; a nation-spanning network would require many relay points to keep the air pressure constant. *Stage IV* – A complex network connects individual buildings in a city, and difference engines control traffic so that canisters arrive at the right address. *Stage V* – Pneumatic tubes are replaced by less bulky and demanding technology.

**Telegraph:** Depending completely on the theories surrounding electricity, as well as electrical power sources and conductors, the telegraph can send electrical pulses along a wire or later across the air. By coding a language made with particular pulse sequences, messages can travel almost instantly between points equipped to send or receive such pulses. *Stage 0* – The postal service takes ages, but

gets the job done. *Stage I* – The only telegraph service exists in workshops or communicating the homes of like-minded inventors. *Stage II* – Seeing the benefits of the telegraph, governments or private concerns lay wires across the land to communicate, but the service is not open to the public. *Stage III* – The telegraph is the medium of choice for long-distance communication; telegraph offices dot the territories and cables are laid out on the bottom of the sea, offering all people the ability to contact people across the globe. *Stage IV* – Instead of wires, telegraph uses electromagnetism to transmit its signals; difference engines translate hits on lettered keys into their equivalent signals and back. *Stage V* – Faster and more reliable media replaces the telegraph as the main communication tool, but it remains in use just like rowboats still exist in the age of steamboats.

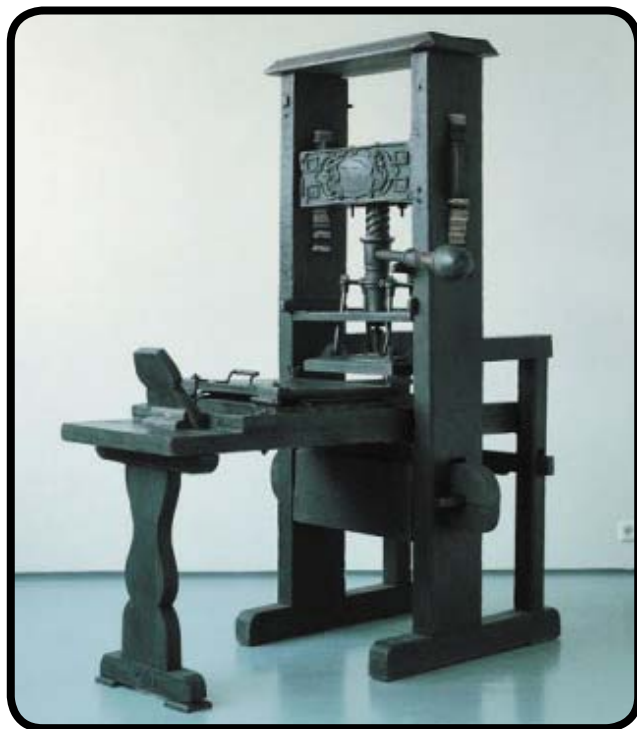
**Radio:** ‘Radio’ is the name of both the technology and the medium of expression. In addition, depending on electromagnetic developments, it transmits complex signals through waves in the radio band of the electromagnetic spectrum; the signals can be converted into sound and back, and probably into images too. *Stage 0* – Quick long distance communication is achieved via cables. *Stage I* – The signal of the first radio transmitters is still too weak to reach truly long distances. *Stage II* – Radios become the tool of a few to communicate important messages that require promptness and little room for misinterpretation. *Stage III* – Radios are adopted for leisure purposes as well as for practical communication matters, more people have access to a receiver, but not so many have access to the equipment for transmitting. *Stage IV* – Transceivers become portable and with wider access to all; the technology for batteries must evolve at an equal pace in order to power such devices and remain mobile. *Stage V* – The different steps in radio technology become obsolete, but the concept of wireless long distance remains in place, even if it takes different forms.

## The Media

There are particular technologies that are implied social phenomena; they may be simple, but their impact over the long term cannot be denied. The ‘media’ are a collection of technologies specifically designed to carry messages, communicating thoughts and ideas and making them more accessible to everybody. Art meets science in the media, for the latter provides a means of expression to the former.

**Printing Press:** The ability to reproduce texts and images gave people the chance to learn more about their own world, to find out about the ideas of people beyond their settlements’ limits. The creation of the first printing press signalled the dawning of a new era where knowledge broke out of its confinement, became a shared commodity and, because of that, began to grow uncontrollably until science emerged triumphant. *Stage 0* – Books are written and reproduced by hand, are horribly expensive and usually kept locked behind the walls of monasteries or private collections. *Stage I* – The first printing press requires a lot of work to compose a single page, but once done, it can outpace a hundred scribes. *Stage II* – Printing houses stock the first bookstores, but still few people are interested or can afford books; the writer profession is beginning to shape up. *Stage III* – Printing presses adopt automation technology to speed up formatting and production to the point that daily publications begin to appear to report on news and sell stories that more people are able to read. *Stage IV* – Print reproduces any visual form of expression, from writing to painting, granting access to millions to cultural, political, scientific and other kinds of materials; newspapers are printed by the thousands and the process is simple enough that individuals might commission personal print runs. *Stage V* – Printed text will probably yield to ephemeral forms of expression that can store much more information in the same space, but books will





always be cherished as they need no further technology to be read.

**Photography:** A picture says more than a thousand words, or so the saying goes. Painters strived to imitate reality until photography came about, a process to capture light in chemical solutions so that images were reproduced just like they appeared in real life. Photography becomes a complement to printed text to illustrate news, becomes a valuable documentation tool and eventually evolves into its own art form. *Stage 0* – Painting is the only way to reproduce images, and it is very open to the artist's interpretation. *Stage I* – Photographs are grainy and details are rough, but a few people believe their souls have been stolen as they recognise their exact likeness on the photographic paper. *Stage II*

– Photographic cameras are unwieldy and need a true professional to know how to operate them, not to mention to know how to develop the negatives. *Stage III* – Cameras become very easy to use and can now reproduce colour; many people own a camera, but professional photographers still have the edge of craftsmanship and better equipment. *Stage IV* – Cameras become small enough to carry around easily; they can reproduce their images not only as burned light on emulsion tissue, but also as raw information to be assembled by analytical engines. *Stage V* – The technology becomes smaller and loses a bit of its charm, but even if the delivery method is different, the art remains the same.

**Cinematography:** Moving pictures are a simple technology with hard complications. It is a series of photographs exhibited on a screen

at such speed as to simulate the movement of its subjects. Cinematography splits in both entertainment and documentation purposes, with the one employing many tricks to entertain an audience, and the other dispensing with any sort of nicety in order to capture the truth as it happens. *Stage 0* – There is no way that printed images can simulate movement. *Stage I* – Nickelodeons and other cheap attractions use the rapid flipping of image cards to simulate movement, but the performances are individual. *Stage II* – Several inventors toy with their own version of the cinematograph, and licence it around so that interested parties can render a moment of life reviewable. *Stage III* – 'Studios' film strips of moving pictures for both information and entertainment, although the latter eventually dominates the other; the films incorporate colour

and sound eventually, and projection halls begin to sprout, competing (but not replacing) with conventional theatre. *Stage IV* – Cinematography sprouts many recognised professions such as director, producer and cinematographer, as well as many crafts such as cameraman; the quality increases; parallel technologies could transmit moving images through radio waves, and storage media shrinks to fit on a small, slim case. *Stage V* – Even if the underlying technology changes, it is hard to imagine a world that abandons the art of filmmaking once it has a chance to grow.

**Phonography:** Next to images, sound becomes the next target in inventors' drive to preserve expression. The evolution of sound-recording technology is great, but it boils down to the etching of grooves on a surface that an apparatus causes to sound just like what was recorded. *Stage 0* – Music boxes are the best technology to capture sound and reproduce it. *Stage I* – The novelty of phonographs confuses many, making them believe they are hearing real noises and sounds. *Stage II* – Records can be pressed relatively cheaply and the technology of the players is fairly simple, although there are very few with access to an actual recorder. *Stage III* – Recording becomes accessible and the quality of reproduction increases; alternate technologies to etching diminutive marks on a disk develop, possibly using advances in electromagnetic media. *Stage IV* – Recording sounds reaches its height as both players, recorders and media become widely available, using multiple technologies to achieve their goal, usually involving analytical engines to etch the recording in microscopic detail, whether for physical reading or more exotic like magnetic or even telluric reading. *Stage V* – As people, particularly humans, invent media to document their art and history, sound recordings do not go out of vogue, although the technology to do so advances.

More next Month!





# Write for the Mongoose

**W**ant to write for your favourite RPG publisher? Want to get paid for it? Got a great idea for an article? If the answers to these questions are 'yes', then Signs & Portents wants to hear from you.

## Where to Start...

We will need a brief synopsis of your intended article, no more than one page long. Also include a paragraph or two of your actual writing style, so we can see whether you have what it takes and any samples of previously published work. If we like what we see, we will commission a first draft from you and you will be on your way to becoming a Mongoose contributing writer. And every article we publish will be paid for...which is nice.

## Things to Remember

Provide your full details, including name, address and email address if available.

Supply articles via email or on disc. We can read most formats, although MS Word is always a safe bet.

You will be provided with a style guide when we commission your article. Make sure you read it!

## Subject Matter

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

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

If you want to write new rules for a game, with new uses for skills and maybe some new feats, then be our guest. We cannot promise that we will like what you have done, but you will get constructive criticism in return, and not just a terse one-line rebuff.

## Editing

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

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

## Little Details

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

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

## Legal Requirements

Be aware that to work for Mongoose Publishing, you will have to sign a contract with us. There will also be a commissioning form for each specific story. Any work which you then generate specifically for Mongoose Publishing under the terms of that agreement will belong to Mongoose Publishing, together with all the publishing rights.

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# STYGIAN SPELLS

## A COLLECTION OF NEW SPELLS FOR THE CONAN ROLEPLAYING GAME

**S**tygia is a land of its own magical traditions and sorceries. This section includes new spells especially appropriate for Stygian sorcerers for the existing sorcery styles presented in Conan the Roleplaying Game.

### DIVINATION

#### TRACE OF THE BLOOD- WORM

**PP Cost:** 1 point

**Components:** V, M

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Personal

**Effect** See text

**Duration:** 3 rounds

**Saving Throw:** None

**Prerequisites:** *Astrological prediction*

**Skill Check:** Knowledge (arcana) DC 16

By mixing a small amount of one's blood with the dust of human bones, this spell turns the pasty mixture into a small worm. If this worm is placed on the ground, it will crawl, leaving either a smeared trail or a furrow (depending on the hardness of the ground) that points in the direction of the nearest source of food and/or water. The worm coils at the end of the trail, which is only a few inches long, to indicate the head of the 'arrow.' Each inch of trail or furrow means one hour's worth of travel at human walking speed.

**Material Components:** A small amount of the sorcerer's blood and some powdered human bone.

### NECROMANCY

#### DESICCATION

**PP Cost:** 6 points

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 full round

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)/ 100 ft.

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** 4 rounds

**Saving Throw:** See text

**Prerequisites:** *Raise corpse*, *death touch*, the fifth mystery of Set (Knowledge (Mystery: Set) 15 ranks

**Magic Attack Roll:** Sets DC for target's saving throws

By chanting the formula, 'Yotha-hie, eyes to black, Xet'ta, steel to rust, Hie-Yotha, bones to crack, Ta'xet, blood to dust,' a sorcerer causes an opponent's eyes to bulge outward, then vanish inside the skull during the round of utterance (Fort save negates; otherwise the character is blind); after

## VINCENT DARLAGE

that his weapons and armour crumble away in a shower of corroded flakes in the second round (Will save negates). Then, in the third round, every bone in the victim's body pops and twists as if a dozen heavy mallets struck him at once (Fort save negates; character drops to 1d10 hit points; may have to make a save against massive damage). Finally, during the fourth round, the victim collapses as his blood turns to crimson dust (Fort save negates, otherwise character is dead).





# THE BLACK CROSS MERCENARIES

## NEW CLASSES FOR THE STARSHIP TROOPERS ROLEPLAYING GAME

MARK 'NEO' HOWE

### BLACK CROSS DEFENDER

#### Cross-trained Speciality Class for Mercenaries

Although the Black Cross are not well regarded by SICON, they are well thought of by the outlying and unofficial colonies as they are always willing to lend a hand when trouble is near. Indeed, while it is true they charge for their services, the good intention that they began with fast turned into heavy prices that could cripple a colony but the logistical costs of running the Black Cross began to soar as their numbers grew and as such they have had to find means beyond soldiers for hire to help supplement the costs. One such means comes in the form of the Defenders, who are specially trained soldiers who hire out to the various colonies and self proclaimed important personages to protect them from threats real or imagined, or simply to give them peace of mind knowing someone is on hand who will be prepared to put their life on the line.

The Defenders are very well paid for their services, as they are required to place themselves directly in harm's way if needed by their employers with little in the way of support to back them up. Black Cross Defenders tend to be a grim if ever vigilant bunch with fast reactions and hardy constitutions.

### GAME RULE INFORMATION

Black Cross Defenders have the following game statistics.



### REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Black Cross Defender, a character must fulfil the following criteria.

**Skills:** Acrobatics 8 ranks, Athletics 5 ranks, Perception 8 ranks

**Feats:** Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Physical Adept and Toughness

**Special:** Must have at least five levels of the Mercenary class as only those whose steadfastness in the face of battle has been proved are accepted for training

### HIT POINTS

Black Cross Defenders gain three hit point per level, adding this to their total gained from previous class levels.

### CLASS SKILLS

The Black Cross Defender's class skills, and the key ability for each skill, are as follows: Acrobatics (Dex), Athletics (Str), Computer Use (Int), Drive (Dex), Knowledge (behavioural sciences) (Int), Knowledge (tactics) (Int), Perception (Wis), Stealth (Dex), Survival (Wis) and Treat Injury (Wis).

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 5 + Int modifier

### CLASS FEATURES

The following are class features of the Black Cross Defender.



**ADDITIONAL STANDARD ISSUE**

The Black Cross Defenders, as with almost all Black Cross members, have little in the way of standard issue equipment; supplies are simply too scarce and as such they must make do with whatever equipment they can steal, scavenge or buy on the black market.

**Interpose (Unique):** Whenever a Black Cross Defender is within five feet of their ward they confer a Defence bonus of the listed amount to them. However, any attack which would have missed their ward but would have hit the Defender has a 50% of doing so, reflecting that not only do they protect their ward from harm but by doing so run the risk of placing themselves in harm's way.

**Bonus Feat:** At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, the Black Cross Defender gains a bonus feat. This feat must be selected from the following list, and the Black Cross Defender must meet any prerequisites.

Advanced Two-Weapon Fighting, Atmospheric Vehicle Operation, Block, Brawl, Burst Fire, Dodge, Endurance, Exotic firearms Proficiency, Great Fortitude, Hard as Nails, Heroic Surge, Improved Brawl, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Knockout Punch, Legitimate Contact, Mounted Weapon Proficiency, Not Paid by the Hour, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Rugged, Surface

Vehicle Operation, Two-Weapon Fighting, Vehicle Dodge, Vehicle Expert, Weapon Focus.

**Awareness (Unique):** A Black Cross Defender is trained to be constantly aware of their surroundings, as a momentary lapse of concentration can miss a threat and their ward can end up dead. Essentially a Defender cannot be caught flat-footed so long as they are conscious. In addition, so long as their ward is within five feet of them, neither can their ward be caught flat-footed.

**Hardy (Unique):** The Black Cross Defender is so used to shielding their wards from harm and to taking the brunt of damage themselves that they become hardened and more tolerant to pain, able to shrug off wounds that may drop a lesser man. Essentially whenever they take damage they can make a Fortitude save with a DC equal to the damage received; if they save successfully they convert half the damage inflicted into non lethal damage as opposed to lethal damage.

**BLACK CROSS DEFENDER**

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Class Features	Defence Bonus	Prestige Bonus
1 <sup>st</sup>	+1	+0	+2	+0	Interpose +2,	+1	+1
2 <sup>nd</sup>	+2	+0	+3	+0	Bonus Feat, Awareness	+2	+1
3 <sup>rd</sup>	+3	+1	+3	+1	Interpose +4, Hardy	+2	+2

**BLACK CROSS SKINNIE HUNTER****Cross-trained Speciality Class for Mercenaries**

The Skinny Hunters came about due to the Black Cross's long history of engagements with the skinnies that raid the outlying colonies. Long before the Arachnids became the threat of the day, these mercenaries were regularly engaging, foiling and countering Skinny threats along the edge of known space.

The Skinny Hunter is the embodiment of the ~~adition~~

~~the~~ the Skinny Hunter hold this

wisdom so close to the heart of their purpose that they employ the skinnies own tactics and methods of fighting against them.

**GAME RULE INFORMATION**

Black Cross Skinny Hunter has the following game statistics.

**REQUIREMENTS**

To qualify to become a Black Cross Skinny Hunter, a character must fulfil the following criteria.

**Skills:** Perception 5 ranks, Stealth 5 ranks, Survival 8 ranks.

**Feats:** Alertness, Alien Technology Proficiency, Beat Feet, Track.

**Special:** Must have at least three levels of the Mercenary Class and fought skinnies directly on at least two occasions.

**HIT POINTS**

Black Cross Skinny Hunter gain two hit point per level, adding this to their total gained from previous class levels.



**ADDITIONAL STANDARD ISSUE**

As with all Black Cross Mercenaries, Skinnie Hunters make do with whatever equipment that is available to them. However, Skinnie Hunters almost always have the following items in addition to their standard gear:

- M-1S7 Stryker suit in place of any normal body armour
- Skinnie Light Neural beamer and 1d3 magazines **OR** Skinnie Boneshard Pistol and 1d3 magazines

**CLASS SKILLS**

The Black Cross Skinnie Hunter class skills, and the key ability for each skill, are as follows: Acrobatics (Dex), Athletics (Str), Computer Use (Int), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (alien species -skinnies) (Int), Knowledge (tactics) (Int), Knowledge (technology) (Int), Perception (Wis), Stealth (Dex), Survival (Wis), Technical (any, must be taken individually) (Int) and Treat Injury (Wis).

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 5 + Int modifier

**CLASS FEATURES**

The following are class features of the Black Cross Skinnie Hunter.

**Know Your Enemy**

**(Unique):** Skinnie Hunters are very familiar with their enemies' tactics, armaments and psychology. Thanks to the information garnered through many engagements with the Skinnies at 1<sup>st</sup> level a Skinnie Hunter gains a +2 bonus on Investigate, Knowledge checks, Perception, Stealth and

Survival checks when using these skills against or in relation to all instances concerning Skinnies. Upon reaching third level the bonus increases to +4.

**Ranged Prowess (Unique):** Skinnie Hunters learn through their knowledge, and tactical emulation of the skinnies methods of waging war an eerily competent prowess with ranged weaponry. This competence is rivalled only by the skinnies own skills.

Unlike the skinnies' prowess of the same name, the Skinnie Hunters skill is limited only to weapons with which they are trained and familiar. Beyond that their prowess allows them to ignore the -4 penalty usually associated with firing a weapon at long ranges. If a Skinnie Hunter is capable of firing a weapon at more than long range, the -4 penalty begins at extreme range instead.

**Anatomical Expertise (Unique):** The Black Cross and its Skinnie hunters have long studied their enemies, not only their tactics and technologies but also their anatomies. Many Skinnie prisoners and remains have been studied in order to learn their weaknesses. Provided a Skinnie Hunter uses a full attack action he can increase the threat range of his weapon by one step for that round only (20 becomes 19-20, 19-20 becomes 17-20, 17-20 becomes 15-20 and so on) for purposes of harming Skinnies only.

**BLACK CROSS SKINNIE HUNTER**

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Class Features	Defence Bonus	Prestige Bonus
1 <sup>st</sup>	+1	+0	+2	+0	Know your Enemy	+1	+0
2 <sup>nd</sup>	+2	+0	+3	+0	Ranged Prowess	+2	+0



## BLACK CROSS COMMANDO

### Cross-trained Speciality Class for Mercenaries

The Black Cross, from Fleet level down to squad, has found itself relying heavily on its ability to remain hidden. The Black Cross' bases, training camps and repair facilities are all hidden either at the edge of Federation space or beyond. The Black Cross' success has thus far been due to their ability to apparently appear out of nowhere, strike a target or remain for a short time and then disappear back into the darkness from which they came.

So perhaps it should not come as any surprise that amongst their number are a group of highly trained commandoes, stealth troopers who specialise in fast, lightning strikes; they are almost as infamous in the use of the hit and run tactic as the skinnies are, ironic when that it was the Black Cross' familiarity with fighting the skinnies that allowed them to master their techniques.

### GAME RULE INFORMATION

The Black Cross Commando has the following game statistics.

### REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Black Cross Commando, a character must fulfil the following criteria.

**Skills:** Athletics 6 ranks, Knowledge (tactics) 4 ranks, Perception 8 ranks, Stealth 8 ranks, Survival 2 ranks.

### ADDITIONAL STANDARD ISSUE

As with all Black Cross Mercenaries, Commandoes make do with whatever equipment is available to them. However, Black Cross Commandoes almost always have the following items in addition to their standard gear:

- M-1S7 Stryker suit in place of any normal body armour
- Plus see Expertise benefit below.



**Feats:** Alertness, Blind Fight, Brawl, Dodge, Stealthy

**Special:** Must have at least three levels of Mercenary class, and be chosen for selection by his superiors.

### HIT POINTS

Black Cross Commandos gain two hit point per level, adding this to their total gained from previous class levels.

### CLASS SKILLS

The Black Cross Commando's class skills, and the key ability for each skill, are as follows:

Acrobatics (Dex), Athletics (Str), Escape Artist (Dex), Perception (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Stealth (Dex) and Survival (Wis).

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 6 + Int modifier

### CLASS FEATURES

The following are class features of the Black Cross Commando.

**Hit and Fade:** A trick the Black Cross picked up from the skinnies is the proficient skill of hit and run strikes. Essentially the Commandoes can utilise the Stealth skill while retaining the ability to move at their full base speed. Unlike the skinnies whom they emulate, however, a Black Cross Commando does not receive a bonus when moving at half speed.

**Speciality (Unique):** The Black Cross commando is not a catchall designation for a generalised specialist; there are many sub specialist branches of the commandoes. When the Black Cross



## BLACK CROSS COMMANDO

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Class Features	Defence Bonus	Prestige Bonus
1 <sup>st</sup>	+1	+2	+0	+0	Hit and Fade, Specialty	+1	+1
2 <sup>nd</sup>	+2	+3	+0	+0	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
3 <sup>rd</sup>	+3	+3	+1	+1	Efficient Killer	+2	+2
4 <sup>th</sup>	+4	+4	+1	+1	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
5 <sup>th</sup>	+5	+4	+1	+1	Surprise Strike	+3	+3

Commando gains this benefit he must choose a specialisation, which in turn grants him specific bonuses of some sort tied to his expertise.

### SABOTEUR

These commandoes are specially trained in sabotage and demolitions; they are the proverbial spanner in the works.

**Bonus Class Skills:** Sabotage, Demolitions

**Bonus Feat:** Cautious

**Additional Gear:** 3 TOAD Charges, Demolitions kit

### INTERROGATOR

These commandos are trained in interrogation techniques and are masters of breaking the will of people in order to gain every last ounce of useful information they may possess.

**Bonus Class Skills:** Persuasion, Investigate

**Bonus Feat:** Confident

**Additional Gear:** Multipurpose Tool, 2 sets of Handcuffs, Duct Tape

### EXTRACTIONS EXPERT

These commandoes are trained in the use of various forms of transport and should the need arise they can drive, pilot or get running just about any kind of vehicle.

**Bonus Class Skills:** Drive, OR Pilot (choose one), Repair

**Bonus Feat:** Vehicle Expert

**Additional Gear:** Mechanical Toolkit (basic)

### TECHNICAL EXPERT

These commandoes receive special technical training in the specifics on one area of technical expertise, as well as the skills to repair most devices.

**Bonus Class Skills:** Any one Technical Skill, Repair

**Bonus Feat:** Gearhead

**Additional Gear:** Electrical or Mechanical toolkit (deluxe)

## CRYPTOGRAPHER

These commandoes receive additional training in code breaking and data retrieval, they are able to break into almost any computer system, or decipher any signal given time.

**Bonus Class Skills:** Computer Use, Code Breaking

**Bonus Feat:** Studious

**Additional Gear:** Databox, communications Set

## INFILTRATOR

The Infiltrator can be anyone, changing his appearance as needed and producing any necessary identification or documentation to validate his assumed identity.

**Bonus Class Skills:** Forgery, Persuasion

**Bonus Feat:** Skill Focus (forgery or persuasion)

**Additional Gear:** Forgery kit, Disguise kit





## WET OPS SPECIALIST

Although all commandoes are given extensive training in killing techniques, the wet ops specialist is trained in the subtleties of killing quickly and quietly.

**Bonus Class Skills:** Knowledge (tactics), Sleight of Hand

**Bonus Feat:** Weapon Focus

**Additional Gear:** Lizard Line, 2 M909S Fog Grenades

**Bonus Feat:** At 2<sup>nd</sup> level and again at 4<sup>th</sup>, the Black Cross Commando gains a bonus feat. This feat must be selected from the following list, and the Black Cross Commando must meet any prerequisites.

Advanced Two-Weapon Fighting, Atmospheric Vehicle Operation, Block, Dead Aim, Double Tap, Endurance, Exotic firearms Proficiency, Far Shot, Great Fortitude, Hard as Nails, Heroic Surge, Improved Brawl, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Knockout Punch, Mounted Weapon Proficiency, Not Paid by the Hour, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Rugged, Surface Vehicle Operation, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus

**Efficient Killer (Unique):** All commandoes are adept at killing, they are given in depth training in how to bring a foe down quickly, it is not necessarily clean, or subtle (unless they are also wet ops specialists) but it is efficient. The Black Cross in its present state lives and dies on its ability to make fast hit and run strikes into Federation space, or take contracts that can be completed quickly with as few casualties as possible. In effect, this benefit increases the critical multiplier of the commando's weapon one step (x2 becomes x3, x3 becomes x4 and so forth).

**Surprise Strike (Unique):** The Black Cross commandoes rely on their ability to make lightning strikes, fast in, do the job, fast out arrangements and to that end the ability to get the drop on your enemy is invaluable. As long

as the commando is hidden from his target and undetected in the first round of combat they can catch their enemies off guard, adding +1d6 additional damage to their opponent if they hit.

## BLACK CROSS PROPAGANDIST

### Cross-trained Speciality Class for Mercenaries

The Black Cross grows each year, with more and more colonists joining as well as renegade Mobile Infantry troopers and other troops who grow disillusioned with oppressive life within the Federation. These new members are key to the Black Cross' ability to grow and survive in an ever increasingly hostile universe.

In part at least, some of these new recruits are due to the Black Cross' skilled propagandists who are trained in sowing the seeds of doubt with regards to the benefits of the Federation, pointing out the truth behind the lies, and citing example after example of Federation oppression and deceit. The

Propagandists are key in helping them to sway colonies and troopers to see the Federation for the fascist body it is, and provide them an option for freedom: join the Black Cross.

Were it not for the ever growing and immediate threat from the arachnids it is the work of these propagandists that would almost certainly ensure many future conflicts with SICON forces still loyal to the Federation, as the Black Cross and its propaganda are viewed as a growing threat to the sanctity of federation life.

## GAME RULE INFORMATION

Black Cross Propagandist has the following game statistics.

## REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Black Cross Propagandist, a character must fulfil the following criteria.

**Statistics:** Must have a Charisma 13+

**Skills:** Persuasion 8 or more ranks, Knowledge (Behavioural Sciences) 8 or more ranks,





### ADDITIONAL STANDARD ISSUE

The Black Cross Propagandist's gains the following standard issue equipment in addition to his normal allowance.

- Leaflets denouncing the Federations fascism
- Databox
- Communications set

Knowledge (civics) 6 or more ranks, Knowledge (current events) 4 or more ranks, Knowledge (history and moral philosophy) 4 or more ranks, Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 4 or more ranks

**Feats:** Confident, Educated, Skill Focus (persuasion), Skill focus (any one of knowledge skills listed above)

**Special:** Must have at least two levels of Mercenary.

### HIT POINTS

Black Cross Propagandists gain one hit point per level, adding this to their total gained from previous class levels.

### CLASS SKILLS

The Black Cross Propagandist's class skills, and the key ability for each skill, are as follows: Computer Use (Int), Drive (Dex), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (any, each must be taken individually) (Int), Perception (Wis), Persuasion (Cha), Research (Int) and Treat Injury (Wis).

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 6 + Int modifier

### CLASS FEATURES

The following are class features of the Black Cross Propagandist.

**Compelling Speech (Unique):** At 1<sup>st</sup> level, the Propagandist is able to spend three rounds to grab and hold the attention of those around

them. This works as follows, the propagandist makes a Persuasion check, the result of which acts as the DC for a Will save for all who can hear the propagandist within a 60-foot radius. Those who fail this save become fascinated by what the propagandist is saying and can do nothing other than stand or sit quietly, taking no actions other than to pay attention to the propagandist's speech, this condition remains for as long as the propagandist spends a full round action each round in order to keep his audiences attention.

It takes a -4 penalty on skill checks made as reactions, such as Perception checks. Any potential threat, such as a hostile enemy approaching, allows the fascinated crowd a new saving throw against the propagandist's speech. Any obvious threat, such as someone drawing a weapon, as horde of arachnids charging over the hill, automatically breaks the effect. This effect only works against humans and has no effect on skinnies or arachnids.

**Sow the Seeds of Doubt (Unique):** Beginning at 2<sup>nd</sup> level the propagandist is able by spending three full rounds professing the 'truths' of the Federation's fascism and how they have abused their power and oppressed their people, committing atrocities in the name of not-so-just causes. Such speeches have the potential to sow the seeds of doubt in any enemy within a 60-foot radius of the propagandist leaving them doubting the Federation and its intentions. The propagandist makes a Persuasion skill check with the result acting as the DC for the listeners Will save. Any who hear the propagandist's speech and fail this saving throw become *shaken* for the duration of the encounter. Those who succeed this save become immune to any further attempts to sow the seeds of doubt for 24 hours.

**Convert (Unique):** Finally at 3<sup>rd</sup> level the Propagandist gains the ability to convert others to the Black Cross' cause. However, this can take some time to achieve, essentially whenever a Propagandist attaches himself to a colony or group of individuals, informing them of the Black Cross and its aims as well as pointing out the evils and oppressions of the Federation. Over time those he has attached to may begin to see the wisdom of the propagandist's words and buy into his way of thinking. Essentially each month any Non Player Character who comes into regular contact with the propagandist must make a Will save against a DC set by the propagandist's Persuasion check

### BLACK CROSS PROPAGANDIST

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Class Features	Defence Bonus	Prestige Bonus
1 <sup>st</sup>	+1	+2	+0	+0	Compelling Speech	+1	+1
2 <sup>nd</sup>	+2	+3	+0	+0	Sow the Seeds of Doubt	+2	+1
3 <sup>rd</sup>	+3	+3	+1	+1	Convert	+2	+2



(especially loyal and/or patriotic colonies or groups like the Mobile Infantry for example receive a bonus on their saves equal to their prestige bonus, +10 maximum). After one failed save the Non Player Character begins to see some sense in what the propagandist says, and so the process continues. After two failed saves the Non Player Character begins to attend the propagandists speeches regularly. After a third failed save the Non Player Character begins to consider joining the Black Cross and no longer receives the prestige bonus to their saves. Finally after a fourth failed save the Non Player Character buys wholeheartedly into the propagandists cause and the Black Cross and seeks to become a member.

## BLACK CROSS NAVIGATOR

### Cross-trained Speciality Class for Mercenaries

The Black Cross utilises psychics in much the same way as the Federation does and indeed they fill similar roles within both organisations although in much smaller numbers in the Black Cross. It should come as no small surprise then that they have also developed a small number of unique psychic disciplines. The origins of these unusual psychic disciplines are shrouded in mystery but it is believed that they were learned from their

### ADDITIONAL STANDARD ISSUE

The Black Cross Navigator gains the following standard issue equipment in addition to his normal allowance.

- Combat Flight suit
- Databox

experiences with the skinnies, perhaps even directly taught from captured or allied Skinnie psychics.

The Black Cross' Navigators are one such unique faction. These psychics have developed the ability to navigate space, detect enemy vessels or hazards and allow them to go far into the void without fear of becoming lost or stranded. Indeed it is largely due to this small number of specialised psychic that the Black cross have proven so efficient at avoiding unwanted Federation contact.

### GAME RULE INFORMATION

The Black Cross Navigators have the following game statistics.

### REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Black Cross Navigator, a character must fulfil the following criteria.

**Skills:** Concentration 10 ranks, Perception 8 ranks, Pilot 8 ranks.

**Feats:** Spacer, Starship Operation, Starship gunnery, Zero G Training

**Special:** Must have either two levels of Special Services Agent or Rogue Psychic.

### HIT POINTS

The Black Cross Navigator gain one hit point per level, adding this to their total gained from previous class levels.

### CLASS SKILLS

The Black Cross Navigators possess all the class skills gained from levels in either the Special Services agent or Rogue Telepath classes and may purchase ranks in these skills normally. In addition, Pilot (Dex), Repair (Int) and Technical (any, each skill taken separately) (Int) become class skills and may be purchased with points gained from this class or those of Special Services Agent or Rogue Telepath.

### BLACK CROSS NAVIGATOR

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Psychic Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Class Features	Defence Bonus	Prestige Bonus
1 <sup>st</sup>	+0	+1	+0	+0	+2	<i>Psychic Piloting</i>	+1	+0
2 <sup>nd</sup>	+1	+2	+0	+0	+3	<i>Sense Disturbances</i>	+2	+0
3 <sup>rd</sup>	+1	+3	+1	+1	+3	<i>Navigate Void</i>	+3	+1
4 <sup>th</sup>	+2	+4	+1	+1	+4	<i>Sense Weakness</i>	+3	+1
5 <sup>th</sup>	+2	+5	+1	+1	+4	<i>Coordinate Fleet</i>	+4	+2



**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 5 + Int modifier

## CLASS FEATURES

The following are class features of the Black Cross Navigator.

**Psychic Piloting (hit point cost per use 2):** this ability allows the navigator the ability to add their psychic attack bonus as a bonus to their piloting skills. This cost is per round.

**Sense Disturbance (hit point cost per use 2):** Through this ability the navigator is able to detect the psychic disturbances of such things as weapon fire, other vessels or gravity wells created by asteroids or other planetary bodies in space around them, effectively allowing them to get the jump on their enemies by being aware of their movements on a nanosecond by nanosecond scale. This awareness allows the navigator to bestow a +4 psychic bonus to the defensive value (DV) of their vessel in each round they pay the cost.

**Navigate Void (hit point cost per use 6):** This ability allows the navigator to psychically make the quantum values and vector calculations necessary to utilise the Cherenkov propulsion drives in their mind, without the need for computers. It is largely because of this ability that the Black Cross has managed to all but avoid being captured by SICON time after time. When this ability is used the Navigator can unerringly ensure their vessel reaches its intended destination; unlike a normal pilot who would require a full round action or longer to plot a jump point and initiate it they can do so as a free action through this ability.

**Sense Weakness (hit point costs per use varies):** Through this ability the navigator is able to open their mind's eye and intuitively place any weapon's fire at their enemies' weakest or most undefended point, essentially ignoring the damage reduction

of the enemy for that single shot. The cost must be paid for each shot and varies based on the size of the target (larger area to be psychically aware of).

Large Vehicle: 2  
Huge Vehicle: 4  
Gargantuan Vehicle: 6  
Colossal Vehicle: 8

**Coordinate Fleet (hit point cost 1 per vessel):** Through this ability the navigator is able to mentally orchestrate fleet actions, warning and nudging their allied vessels in order to help them take the safest or most effective actions, effectively providing a +1 psychic bonus to all skill, attack and damage rolls as well as providing a +2 competence bonus to the defensive value (DV) for a number of ships equal to their psychic attack bonus. This ability costs one hit point per vessel per round. In order to maintain the psychic orchestration of a fleet action, the navigator must (in addition to paying the hit point costs) succeed a standard psychic action check but the DC is determined as follows: 10 + 2 per vessel being directed. In addition, in order for a navigator to be using this ability he must fall into a deep meditative trance leaving them prone and unable to take any action, or even defend himself.

## BLACK CROSS SHADOW

### Cross-trained Speciality Class for Mercenaries

The Black Cross utilises psychics in much the same way as the Federation does and indeed they fill similar roles within both organisations although in much smaller numbers in the Black



Cross. It should come as no small surprise then that they have also developed a small number of unique psychic disciplines. The origins of these unusual psychic disciplines are shrouded in mystery but it is believed that they were learned from their experiences with the skinnies, perhaps even directly taught from captured or allied Skinnie psychics.

The Black Cross Shadows are another such unique faction, they specialise in using their psychic powers to hide or distract the enemy. Their powers to hide themselves or their compatriots have been another great contributing factor in their success in making hit and run strikes that would otherwise have failed. Guards suddenly find themselves nervous and on edge, or drifting off into sleep when they should otherwise be maintaining a vigil against possible threats.

## GAME RULE INFORMATION

Black Cross Shadow have the following game statistics.

### REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Black Cross Shadow, a character must fulfil the following criteria.



**Skills:** Concentration 8 ranks, Perception 5 ranks, Stealth 8 ranks.

**Feats:** Iron Will, Stealthy

**Special:** Must have either two levels of Special Services Agent or Rogue Psychic.

## HIT POINTS

The Black Cross Shadow gain one hit point per level, adding this to their total gained from previous class levels.

## CLASS SKILLS

The Black Cross Shadows possess all the class skills gained from levels in either the Special Services agent or Rogue Telepath classes and may purchase ranks in these skills normally. In addition, Stealth (Dex) becomes a class skill and may be purchased with points gained from this class or those of Special Services Agent or Rogue Telepath.

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 5 + Int modifier

## CLASS FEATURES

The following are class features of the Black Cross Shadow.

### *Cloud Mind 1 (hit point cost per use 2):*

This ability lets the psychic cloud the mind of an individual target in order to hide their own presence from them. This ability does not make the psychic invisible so much as tells the viewers senses that the signals they are receiving do not exist. In effect if it is successfully employed against a target, then the psychic uses their psychic control check result plus any ranks in Stealth for purposes of determining the targets DC for any perception checks in order to notice them. This ability ends automatically the instant any hostile action is made by the psychic or if they physically interact with the viewers in any manner. Cost is paid per round and using this ability is a standard action.

*Unnerve foe (hit point cost per use 2):* This ability allows the psychic to project feelings of anxiety and nervousness into the mind of an enemy, making them edgy and disturbed. This ability has often been described as being similar to the sensation of being watched but multiplied many times. In effect this ability if it successfully affects a target it makes them *shaken* for that round. If a natural 20 is rolled on the psychic control check then instead of *shaken* it makes the target *panicked* for 1d6 rounds. The effect only lasts for one round in general but

it may be used against the same target again in following rounds.

*Relax Foe (hit point cost per use 3):* This ability allows the psychic to psychically slow a targets heart rate, relaxing them in order to cause them to fall into a deep, natural sleep if the psychic power succeeds against the target for 1d4 hours. Any loud noise or physical interaction with the sleeping target may cause them to awaken (DC 15 Concentration check).

*Euphoria (hit point cost per use 2):* This ability allows the psychic to psychically restrict the oxygen supply to a targets brain, in effect causing temporary hypoxia completely disorientating the target and provided it successfully affects the target causes them to have difficulty thinking cohesively and affecting their motor control causing them to become *confused*. This ability only lasts 1d3 rounds but may be used against a target in successive rounds in order to prolong the effects.

*Cloud Mind 2 (hit point cost per use 4):* This ability works in exactly the same way as *Cloud Mind 1*, however instead of affecting the psychic themselves it instead affects a group of individuals (one plus one additional target for

## BLACK CROSS SHADOW

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Psychic Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Class Features	Defence Bonus	Prestige Bonus
1 <sup>st</sup>	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2	<i>Cloud Mind 1</i>	+1	+0
2 <sup>nd</sup>	+1	+1	+0	+3	+3	<i>Unnerve Foe</i>	+2	+0
3 <sup>rd</sup>	+1	+1	+1	+3	+3	<i>Relax Foe</i>	+3	+0
4 <sup>th</sup>	+2	+2	+1	+4	+4	<i>Euphoria</i>	+3	+1
5 <sup>th</sup>	+2	+2	+1	+4	+4	<i>Cloud Mind 2</i>	+4	+1





# Monty's Offer of the Month

## *more pocket paradise!*

This month Monty thought his idea from S&P 33 Roleplayer was so good that he'd spread out the largesse to incorporate Starship Troopers, with our More Pocket Paradise offer! For one month only you can now get the Starship Troopers Pocket Handbook and either the MI Field Manual or Arachnid Empire for just \$40/£25, post free!



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# Eruan Pathfinder

## A New Hero for The Lone Wolf Roleplaying Game

The Pathfinders are elite woodsmen who operate in the lands bordering the Infernal Hellswamp in Northern Magnamund. They are extremely proficient trackers and make excellent guides for those wanting to venture into the dangerous lands around their home nation. The ease at which they navigate the often treacherous landscape has earned them respect from their allies and causes fear in the hearts of the foes they are so skilled in hunting down in this region.

After fighting against their age old adversaries from the Hellswamp and the surrounding Drakkarim nations for centuries, the skilled warriors of Eru's elite order are experts in their chosen fighting styles and know well the strengths and weaknesses of their common enemies. Something that the creatures frequenting the Hellswamp and its environs only discover at great cost.

Eru is a resource rich but economically poor nation. With the number of people drafted in to defend their realm, not enough remain to work the land for the large quantities of metal ores and precious gems that lie just under the surface of the numerous hills and mountains that dot the land. The Pathfinders are called upon to perform many tasks in fewer numbers than Eru's regular forces could hope to cover.

One of Eru's most valuable exports is nineryl, the rare gemstone used by the Brotherhood of the Crystal Star to make their wands. The Sommlending mages guild pays handsomely for each shipment of this useful gemstone they receive and the Eruan government will do all it can to ensure that the nineryl mines are safe for the miners to continue working for as long as possible. To this end Pathfinders are regularly deployed to patrol the surrounding hills on the look out for bandits, thieves and, of course, Darkspawn.

From border patrols, to reconnaissance missions that often infiltrate deep into enemy territory the Pathfinders are often called upon by Eruan commanders to lead their troops through treacherous terrain, providing advanced warning of any dangers that lie ahead. Often they are loaned out to Eru's allies and sometimes are sent to help guard trade caravans through particularly hostile terrain in and around the borders of their small homeland.

Those who are chosen to enter the ranks of the Pathfinders have a natural affinity for nature. They are selected by the more experienced Pathfinders from the general populace or Eruan military only if they show they are suitable when they are invited for testing. Suitable candidates are taken to Sharwhan where their natural talents

**David  
Thompson**





are honed and they are taught new skills in the training camps hidden in the surrounding forest. They are taught how to live off the land and use the terrain to their advantage when hunting their foes and can set deadly ambushes while remaining invisible to their targets.

## Adventures

Since the creation of their order shortly after the founding of Eru, the Pathfinders have been called upon to serve their realm in many ways. As scouts, they are unmatched in Northern Magnamund, their ability to traverse the most difficult terrain is also legendary. As a result there are many nations who would pay Eru a small fortune to hire one of their Pathfinders, something that the regent of Eru is all too aware of. Pathfinders can find themselves called upon to serve their poor nation on home soil aiding their armed forces or far away aiding those nations friendly with the Eru royal line or those simply paying handsomely for the service of the Pathfinders renowned skills.

## Characteristics

Pathfinders are resourceful, resilient individuals. Their grey uniforms and cloaks are recognised throughout the region and garner both respect and trepidation from those that cross their path, for where they are, danger is surely nearby. Those chosen to join the ranks of the Pathfinders tend to be loners, able to survive in the wilds on their skills and wits alone. Often they have good cause to join the Pathfinders due to personal tragedy, but many simply join out of loyalty to the Eruan flag. They do however work well together, as they share a hatred of all things Darkspawn and would willingly lay down their lives to free their small nation from the predations of the bordering Drakkarim lands and all that support them.

## Religion

Not known for their faith in any particular god, the typical Pathfinder usually has more respect for his natural surroundings than divine forces. They often pay their respects to the spirit of the land and would never take any action that would directly harm the flora and fauna that exist in their lands. That said however, they usually pay their respects to the gods Kai and Ishir due to their connection with nature. They are all too aware that the dark god Naar has influence over the world that can turn things in his favour.

## Background

Most people chosen to be Pathfinders have lived with the effects of their nations location all of their lives. The proximity of Eru to the Hellswamp, the Hammerlands and Ghatan means that attacks by Darkspawn and other allies of the Darklands are almost an everyday occurrence. This makes the Eruan people a hardy type to begin with, the Pathfinders even more so. Their affinity for the land and creatures of the area make them ideal people to act as scouts and to some extent hunters of Darkspawn and the other evil creatures that invade their homeland.

They are all resourceful, hardy individuals whose hatred for the Darklords and their servants drives them on through their realm's desperate struggle for survival. Some Pathfinders are recruited from outside Eru but these rare individuals all share the same hatred for their common enemy which unites them.



## Other Classes

Pathfinders primarily operate alone or in small groups. Increasingly however, they have been asked to act as scouts for military units, gathering information on terrain and the composition of approaching enemy forces. In addition, they are given the task of protecting valuable cargos of ores and other trade goods along Eru's more dangerous trade routes, mixing with different classes from other nations. Although usually reserved they mix quite well with other warriors





such as Sommlending Knights of the Realm and Palmyrion Knights of the Shield. Both classes are respected as powerful, honourable warriors. Kai Lords are particularly well respected because of their shared affinity for nature and the Kai's legendary martial skills.

Magic users are usually regarded with suspicion although the Herbalish Druids are regarded as safe due to their affinity with nature. The Brotherhood mages of the Crystal Star Guild and other wizards are often thought of as tampering with the natural order of things and Pathfinders rarely seek out their company. The Cener Druids are considered to be the worst kind of magic users and Pathfinders would likely attack any they encounter on sight.

## Game Rule Information

**Racial Note:** Eruan Pathfinders gain all the bonuses afforded them due to their race. They get a +1 bonus to both Perception and Initiative checks due to their battle hardiness.

**Starting Age:** 18 + 1d6  
**Starting Wealth:** 50 gc  
 + 2d10

**Abilities:** Dexterity and Constitution are the most important to a Pathfinder as they are largely dependant on their mobility and resistance to environmental conditions and natural poisons and disease. By wearing only light or medium armour they maximise their ability to conceal themselves from their foes and strike at them

through terrain that would slow down other troops. Their high Constitution aids them in both resisting the natural hazards of the swamps and forests they operate in. Natural diseases and the venom of their Darkspawn foe are easier resisted with their great fortitude. In addition, their toughness helps them cope with the punishment their bodies endure due to their almost constant exposure to the elements.

**Endurance Die:** d8

**Base Speed:** 30 ft.

## Class Skills

Athletics (Str), Climb (Str), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Geography, Nature and Warfare) (Int), Perception (Wis), Stealth (Dex) and Survival (Wis).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (4 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at each level:** 4 + Int modifier

## Class Features

**Weapon and Armour Proficiency:** Pathfinders are proficient with light and medium armours. They can use bucklers and small shields only. They can use any one-handed bladed weapon and the spear, and can use both long and short bows.

**Ambush Attack (Ex):** One of the first skills developed by the Pathfinders is to effectively ambush their enemies. While attacking from concealment or otherwise unnoticed by his foe, a Pathfinder can direct his attacks at vulnerable areas. The target is classed as surprised and does not get his Dexterity bonus to AC. The additional damage is not applied if the target is immune to critical hits, such as undead. A Pathfinder must be within 30 feet of his intended targets(s) when using Ambush Attack to launch a ranged attack.

This ability can only be used if the Pathfinder is unarmoured or is wearing leather armour or lighter.

**Camouflage (Ex):** A Pathfinder quickly learns to use all that nature provides to conceal himself from his quarry. On mastering this ability a character can add half his class level as a bonus to his Stealth skill checks when in his Favoured Terrain (see below). The penalties incurred for movement when using the Stealth skill are reduced while in the character's Favoured Terrain. When moving at up to base speed there is no penalty to Stealth checks, when moving at greater than base speed the penalty to Stealth rolls is -10. When charging or running it is almost impossible to remain hidden, though the penalty for attempting to do so is reduced to -15.

When in other terrain types the bonus to the character's Stealth checks are halved and penalties for movement are normal. The Pathfinder can only use this ability (in any terrains) when wearing leather armour types.



**Calm the Beast (Ex):** Developing a growing understanding with the animals native to their Favoured Terrain(s), a Pathfinder can use this knowledge to prevent animals attacking them without having to harm the creatures themselves. They can use their Handle Animal skill to calm angry or attacking animals. By opposing their Handle Animal skill check against the animal's Will save they can calm an angry or frightened animal for a number of rounds equal to the Pathfinder's Charisma score. The ability takes a standard action to perform and works on any natural animal but not aberrations or Darkspawn.

**Favoured Terrain:** Due to his intimate knowledge of the flora and fauna of his locale, the Pathfinder gains the following benefits while in his favoured terrain type. Note that these benefits do not apply when the character is in any type of structure or building within the applicable terrain. Pathfinder gets a +2 AC bonus when he is able to apply his Dexterity bonus to AC, also gains a +2 bonus to the following skill checks: Handle Animal, Knowledge (Nature), Perception, Stealth and Survival.

Each time the Pathfinder gains the Favoured Terrain ability he can choose a terrain type from the list below:

- Forest
- Jungle
- Plains
- Wasteland
- Hills
- Mountains
- Swamp
- Volcanic

**Follow the Trail (Ex):** The Pathfinder can follow the tracks left by his quarry with ease over any terrain and follow them regardless of the weather. See page 40 of *Lone Wolf, The Role-playing Game* for full rules on this ability.

**Force of Nature (Su):** Now one of the most feared trackers on Northern Magamund, a Pathfinder attaining the highest level of spiritual connection to his environment can virtually become the land he effortlessly crosses in pursuit of his quarry. He also gains the favour of most natural creatures that inhabit the forests and vales he protects. A Pathfinder can issue simple commands to animals by making a Handle Animal check against a DC of 10 + the End die of the animal in question.

He is virtually invisible in his Favoured Terrain, adding his class level as a bonus to any Stealth check. He also gains +4 bonus to all skill checks used in any of his favoured terrain unless their use directly endangers the flora or fauna. His skin becomes like the toughest bark of the oldest tree, granting him a +4 AC bonus (not cumulative with Favoured Terrain). The spirit of the land also enters him, empowering him with a bonus to attack and damage his first Hated Foe equal to +4 (this stacks with other bonuses) when fighting them in his Favoured Terrain.

**Hated Foe (Ex):** At 1<sup>st</sup> level the Pathfinder chooses a race that he has reason to class as his Hated Foe (Giak, Drakkarim, Gourgaz and so on) and gains the following benefits when faced with such a creature:

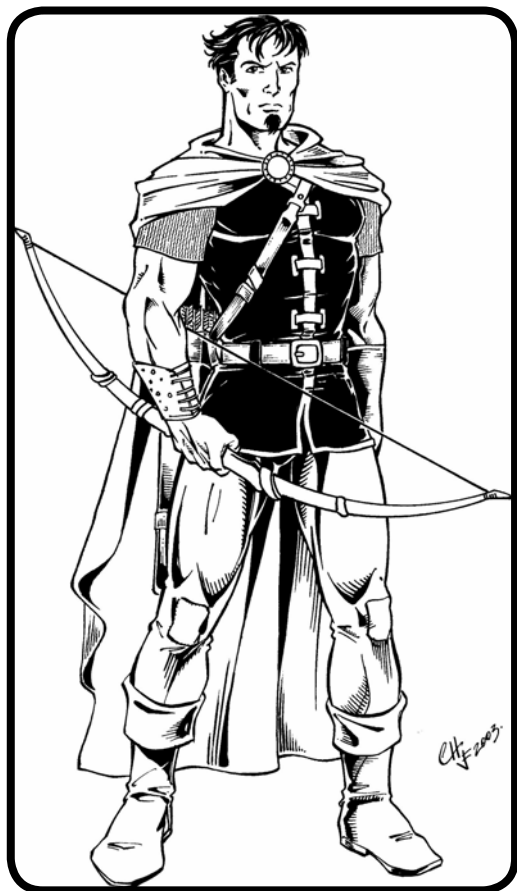
- The character gains a +1 to Bluff, Perception, Sense Motive and Survival (when tracking the Hated Foe) against this race. Also the character gains a +1 bonus to damage rolls made for attacks against this creature due to his familiarity with the creatures' common tactics and physiology.
- At 11<sup>th</sup> level the Pathfinder can choose an additional race to be a Hated Foe. Also on reaching this level his experience with dealing with his original Hated Foe is such that he



now gains a +2 bonus to use the listed skills against the creature and deals +2 additional damage against such an enemy (this stacks with the original bonus, for a total of +3 damage to his first choice creature).

**Mark of the Quarry (Ex):** A Pathfinder as skilled as this can discern more information than most from the tracks left by their prey. For a Survival check at a DC of 5 more than the usual DC required to track the target a Pathfinder can determine one of the following pieces of information about his quarry: species, height, weight, armour, encumbrance, sex or End die. A separate roll is required for each fact a character wishes to know. After a failed roll the Pathfinder can find out nothing further from these tracks, but





may try again after another mile (in other words, after another successful tracking roll).

**Natural Compass (Ex):** Due to his affinity for the outdoors and the natural world, the Pathfinder can use the stars and other natural signs as guidance and can always determine where north is. Because of this he can never get lost due to any natural weather conditions, such as dust storms or blizzards. For example, if in a forest where he cannot see the sky there will be other signs such as moss growing on certain sides of trees to show which direction is north. Magical conditions can cause the character to loose his bearings while they are in effect.

**Natural Resistance (Ex):** Due to constant exposure to the hazards of the Hellswamp and its denizens, a Pathfinder soon builds up a resistance to natural diseases and poisons. Characters reaching this level of experience gain a bonus to their Fortitude equal to half their character level when rolling a save against a natural disease or poison. Magical diseases and poisons are more difficult to build resistance to and therefore this ability provides no added protection.

**Peerless Tracker (Ex):** On reaching this level of experience the Pathfinder is so in tune with his natural surroundings that it is virtually impossible for his quarry to escape once he has picked up their trail. Only when conditions cause an increase in the DC to Survival rolls needed to track the target does the character need to make a new Survival check. Lighting conditions no longer make any difference to the Pathfinder, so advanced is his tracking prowess. If he ever does loose the trail it takes him half the usual time to regain the trail and roll another Survival check.

**Scout Area (Ex):** The character is used to taking in large amounts of detail under pressure while scouting enemy formations or camps. The Pathfinder can 'take 10' when making any Perception skill checks even if he is under attack from the enemy he is scouting. Taking 10 counts as a full round action as usual but this ability allows the character to do so when he would not usually be able to.

**Survivalist:** At 5<sup>th</sup> level the Pathfinder is an expert at living off the land and knows by heart the names and general properties of the flora and fauna of the lands he considers his Favoured Terrain. He can also determine whether or not any water he finds is safe to drink with a Survival (DC 10) check. A Pathfinder can always find food in his Favoured Terrain, and takes only half the time normally required to do so.

The second tier of Survivalist allows the Pathfinder to add half his level to any Survival or Knowledge (Nature) checks he makes. Also, he now knows (with a Knowledge skill check of DC 10 + end die of creature) of any special or unusual abilities of any flora and fauna native to his Favoured Terrain.

**Swift Passage (Ex):** The Pathfinders natural grace and agility means that while traversing his Favoured Terrain he can move at full speed, even if the terrain would otherwise slow him down. Even when in other terrain he moves with surprising speed and agility, only suffering half the move penalty listed for all other terrain types. This ability only functions when wearing light or medium armour and no more than lightly encumbered.

**Trackless Step (Ex):** Providing he is not bleeding (i.e. suffering no untreated wounds), wearing armour no heavier than leather, and not in any way encumbered, the Pathfinder leaves no visible trail to follow. Creatures that use other methods to track, such as by scent, are still able to follow the character's path.

## Multiclassing into the Eruan Pathfinder

As long as the potential candidate shows a natural aptitude and is willing to swear loyalty to both the Eruan crown and the Pathfinder order, most volunteers are accepted for training. However, magic users and anyone from a criminal background, for example Shadaki Buccaneers, are immediately turned away or worse. Magic users are not trusted by Pathfinders because their powers often directly flout the laws of nature. Herbalish Druids are the single exception to this rule as their magic is powered by their connection to nature and they are sworn to protect nature in all its natural forms.



## Ex-Eruan Pathfinders

A Pathfinder that leaves the order is a rare thing indeed. It takes great influence and often great evil to turn one as loyal as a Pathfinder against their cause. Few leave the order through anything other than grievous injury and even then they are so fanatical to their cause that they would rather continue to serve the nation in some way than leave altogether.

A Pathfinder that turns traitor is a dead man walking; such is the wrath of the Pathfinders when betrayed. They would stop at nothing to

bring to justice anyone who so much as spoke of such an act. The locations of their secret training camps and favoured ambush sites are all given to trainees on pain of death. Those that have left the

order in the past in such circumstances have never lived long enough to cause the Pathfinders serious problems – the folk of Eru simply would not allow a traitor to remain at large for long.

## Eruan Pathfinder

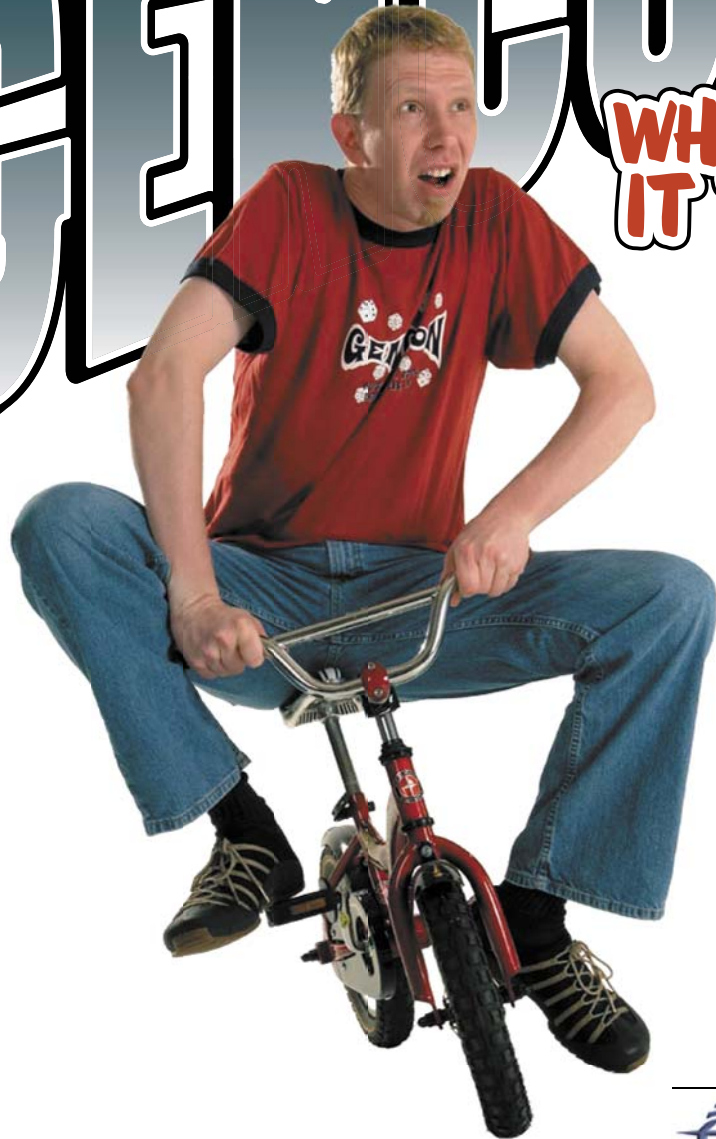
Class level	Base Combat Skill	Fortitude Save	Reflex Save	Will Save	Special
1 <sup>st</sup>	+0	+2	+0	+0	Natural Compass, Hated Foe I
2 <sup>nd</sup>	+1	+3	+1	+1	Favoured Terrain I
3 <sup>rd</sup>	+1	+3	+1	+1	Follow the Trail
4 <sup>th</sup>	+2	+4	+1	+1	Ambush Attack +1d6
5 <sup>th</sup>	+3	+4	+2	+2	Survivalist I
6 <sup>th</sup>	+4	+5	+2	+2	Camouflage
7 <sup>th</sup>	+5	+5	+3	+3	Scout Area
8 <sup>th</sup>	+6/+1	+6	+3	+3	Favoured Terrain II
9 <sup>th</sup>	+6/+1	+6	+4	+4	Mark of the Quarry
10 <sup>th</sup>	+7/+2	+7	+4	+4	Swift Passage
11 <sup>th</sup>	+8/+3	+7	+5	+5	Hated Foe II
12 <sup>th</sup>	+9/+4	+8	+5	+5	Ambush Attack +2d6
13 <sup>th</sup>	+10/+5	+8	+6	+6	Trackless Step
14 <sup>th</sup>	+10/+5	+9	+6	+6	Favoured Terrain III
15 <sup>th</sup>	+11/+6/+1	+9	+7	+7	Survivalist II
16 <sup>th</sup>	+12/+7/+2	+10	+7	+7	Peerless Tracker
17 <sup>th</sup>	+13/+8/+3	+10	+8	+8	Natural Resistance
18 <sup>th</sup>	+14/+9/+4	+11	+8	+8	Calm the Beast
19 <sup>th</sup>	+15/+10/+5	+11	+9	+9	Favoured Terrain IV
20 <sup>th</sup>	+15/+10/+5	+12	+9	+9	Ambush Attack +3d6, Force of Nature





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# All About Charm Person

Uncover the secrets of the most dangerous magic of all

Morgan Davie

## Spellcraft

The mind is incredibly complex. Enchantment spells that want to affect the mind must make use of a sophisticated mixture of psychic influences: they have to dominate the target's will, overcome their self-perception, outwit their self-monitoring. Such complex magic requires a high level of magical power.

Except for *charm person*. *Charm person* is an enchantment that even beginning magicians can use. This is because *charm person* is built around a very ingenious trick: it makes the target's mind do most of the work.

Whoever first created the *charm person* spell had noticed that we tend to be friendly to anyone who reminds us of our friends. This mage realised that an enchantment spell did not need to throw a lot of heavy magic into someone's head to make them like you – all it needed to do was remind the target of a close friend.

*Charm person* links, in the target's mind, the caster's image to that of a close friend. This link happens at the subconscious level. Everything the caster does reminds the target of their friend, and the target cannot help but respond positively – but they do not know why. The caster just seems like a particularly friendly person.

This effect is subtle – and a subtle enchantment is a powerful one. The target probably does not realise there is anything amiss, and so does not resist the effect; and when the charm wears off, they might not even realise they were ever enchanted.





## Image

Another reinforcement to the subtlety of *charm person* is the simplicity of its casting.

The somatic component is usually built around a ritualised gesture symbolic of 'affinity'. Three common forms are the caster putting his palms together, the caster clasping his hands together, or (less commonly) the caster slowly brushing back his hair with both hands.

The verbal component is more complex than the somatic, but by magical standards it is still quite simple. In almost all workings of the spell it is the same, an incantation that takes about two seconds to vocalise in a calm and assured speaking voice. As with most spells, the words are in the language of magical cant and have no meaning apart from their role as magical tools.

## History

It is the worst kept secret in magic that almost every wizard has *charm person* in his spellbook. The overwhelming popularity of the spell is all the more surprising in light of its controversial past and short history.

The *charm person* spell is a recent development in magic. It is the culmination of a magical lineage that has explored different ways of controlling or influencing a target's mind, and it is rightly seen as one of the

## Realising you were charmed

After a *charm* effect concludes, the target may realise they were under a charm. This requires a second saving throw against the spell's DC. If the victim fails, they do not find anything strange in how they were acting. If they succeed, the fact that they were enchanted becomes obvious to them.

If someone else tells the target that they were under an enchantment, they can retry the check with a +2 circumstance bonus. If this check is failed as well, they will refuse to acknowledge they were charmed unless they are shown that their behaviour can be explained in no other way. Because this gets into complicated issues of character self-knowledge and understanding, the Games Master (and the player, if the victim was a Player Character) should adjudicate the effects of any future attempts to convince the victim of the truth. The likelihood of success will depend very much on the specific experience of the *charmed* person.

## Realising someone else is Charmed

A character who interacts with someone under the influence of a Charm spell might notice that the target is acting strangely (Sense Motive check, DC 20). It is even possible to identify that the victim is under an enchantment (Sense Motive, DC 25). A modifier of as much as +5 would be appropriate if the victim is well known to the character. If the victim is a complete stranger, or the new behaviour matches the character's expectations, a penalty of up to -5 could be appropriate. This large range is appropriate because of the huge variety of different social situations and relationships in which interaction might occur.

A character who is witness to the actual casting of a *charm person* might notice it, even though the verbal and somatic components are not particularly flashy. A successful Spot check (DC 15) will give the character a mild hint that something is up. If they are paying particular attention, a +2 circumstance bonus is in order.

If something is noticed but is not identified as a spell being cast, the person noticing still receives a +2 circumstance check to the Sense Motive check to realise the victim is under an enchantment, reflecting that their suspicions have been raised.

highest achievements of the enchanter's art. A powerful and complex effect has been captured in such a simple and elegant working that it can be quickly mastered by any wizard.

Other enchantments, such as its close antecedents *emotion* and *calm emotion*, are more powerful, but these spells rely on brute-force methods that flood the target's brain with an appropriate intoxication to create their effect. *Charm person*, however, is built on a mind-affecting technique that cleverly takes advantage of the target's own thoughts. It is a much more sophisticated spell.

The exact origin of the spell is unknown. Versions were circulating in the black market for years before the spell started to appear in the mainstream wizardly repertoire, and the black market of magic is notoriously good at keeping its secrets. Rumours have long circulated that it was developed by a court magician for this king or for that noble, and it is certain that historians both magical and mundane would pay dearly for the identity of the spell's creator. If such an historical personage were ever unmasked as the creator, it is certain that the integrity of the political environment around them would be immediately challenged. Political wounds can run deep and grudges can



last through time; the true origin of *charm person* could have the potential to wake a sleeping dragon.

All enchantments have inspired controversy down through the years, but *charm person* has been at the centre of particularly vigorous argument. It has had profound effects on magic's political landscape that are still readily apparent in the present day.

As it appeared more and more in the spell collections of otherwise respectable wizards, debates broke out that threw the whole morality of enchantment into focus. Some wizardly disputes from this time have carried on and intensified over the years, and whole magical schools have foundered over the issue and the complex questions of right and wrong that it raises.

The controversy was hardly limited to the wizardly world. Once word of the spell escaped the academy, suspicion of wizards rose to new heights. Everyone knew that powerful wizards had terrifying abilities to dominate the minds of the common folk, but this new spell meant that even junior wizards could influence the thoughts of the innocent. In an even more sinister twist, the victims might never even know they had been enchanted. The strange power that the magical hold over the non-magical had never been shown in such an unsettling light.

All of this controversy sometimes forced a response. In some realms this spell was banned by royal order. In others, wizardly orders themselves had it removed from circulation. In one case, a league of grandmothers successfully forced the wizard's college to make morality classes a compulsory part of their curriculum. From this event is derived the customary presence, at some wizardly graduations, of an elderly commoner woman serving as moral witness.

Usually, however, highlighting the often fraught relationship between magic and worldly power, nothing was done on an official level. Whether to *charm* or not to *charm* was left to the moral judgement of individual wizards.

## Usage

*Charm person* is useful in almost any social situation, but it is particularly useful when dealing with solitary strangers who you do not expect to see again. If someone has influence over your fate, whether a doorkeeper, a customs inspector, a salesman, a diplomat or a princess, *charm person* can help things work out in your favour.

## Gather Information and Charm Person

If a Gather Information attempt is not being role-played out but instead dealt with by a single abstract roll, the information gatherer can use a *charm person* spell in the attempt to acquire a +3 circumstance bonus. The Games Master may allow multiple uses of *charm person*, each adding a new bonus of +3 or less, depending on the specific situation.

Note that this is only applicable where information is being sought in a way that makes the spell useful – if, for example, a community of vampires is being interrogated, it will be of no help at all.

*Charm person* is very handy as an aid to investigation of all kinds. Grumpy strangers will become informants, and used wisely this spell alone can bring about success.

It is important to be careful with who you choose to target and the circumstances in which you do so. As a low-level magic, it is easier for a target to resist the effect than with other, stronger spells. As always with enchantment spells, the wise and perceptive are to be avoided. If there are witnesses about, be particularly careful, even more so if the witnesses are associates of the target. Have an escape route prepared in case a resisting target recognises that a spell was being cast upon them.

## Countering charm person

If you discover that you are facing a *charm person*-using foe, immediately put your wits about you. Your friends and allies could already have been under the effect. However, be careful of manipulation - enchanters tend to be very cunning and are well versed in sowing mistrust and taking advantage of suspicion. You have to think collectively when facing an enchanter, because any weakness in your social network will soon be found and exploited by a resourceful foe. Do not just concentrate on strengthening your own willpower, do your best to ensure everyone who could give an enemy a way in is similarly protected.

Avoid being isolated at all costs. Without your companions to watch out for you, chances are high that you will be targeted and it will only take a moment under enchantment to betray your friends and yourself, causing damage that may be impossible to repair. You as well may find yourself in grave danger - a vindictive enemy who places you under charm can fairly easily lure you to a messy death.



## Practitioners

While few wizards would admit to holding it in their daily spell collection, certainly many do. It takes a certain amount of courage to publicly use such a controversial spell as *charm person*. If nothing else, a wizard's attitude towards this spell certainly reflects on their bravery.

*Charm person* is a favoured spell for the more cynical wizards, especially those who strongly believe the ends justify the means, but it features in the repertoire of all kinds of wizards. The 'soft' effect of the spell means even the most upstanding wizards can sometimes rationalise the spell's use.

In the songs and stories of the bards, enchantments are often used by the ugly and un-charismatic. However, those with low charisma rarely use *charm person*. To be very effective, *charm person* needs to be used with confidence, which is an attribute such people often lack. Those with low Charisma prefer enchantments that are more powerful and less complicated – in other words, enchantments that do more of the work for them.

However, the 'gentleness' of *charm person* can be appealing to such people, as it gives them a low-guilt avenue to win some friends and thus enhance their self-worth.

## Complications

If, after a *charm person* wears off, a target realises they have been enchanted, they will at least be suspicious of the caster and will probably be angry and resentful. This

does not mean they will instantly complain to their neighbours or the authorities, however. In any community where it is understood that the weak-minded are vulnerable to charms and enchantments, there will be a lot of shame attached to falling victim to such magic.

Even if the victim does not make their experience public, they may still find ways to exact some retribution. Great damage can be done to a caster's reputation by a victim determined for revenge, for example.

Luckily, if a target does not realise they were enchanted, they will usually rationalise the experience by convincing themselves that the caster really was a friendly sort. A new friend for life may even result. Of course, if the caster treats their new friend poorly after the spell is worn off, the friendship will quickly end with the accusation 'you've changed'.

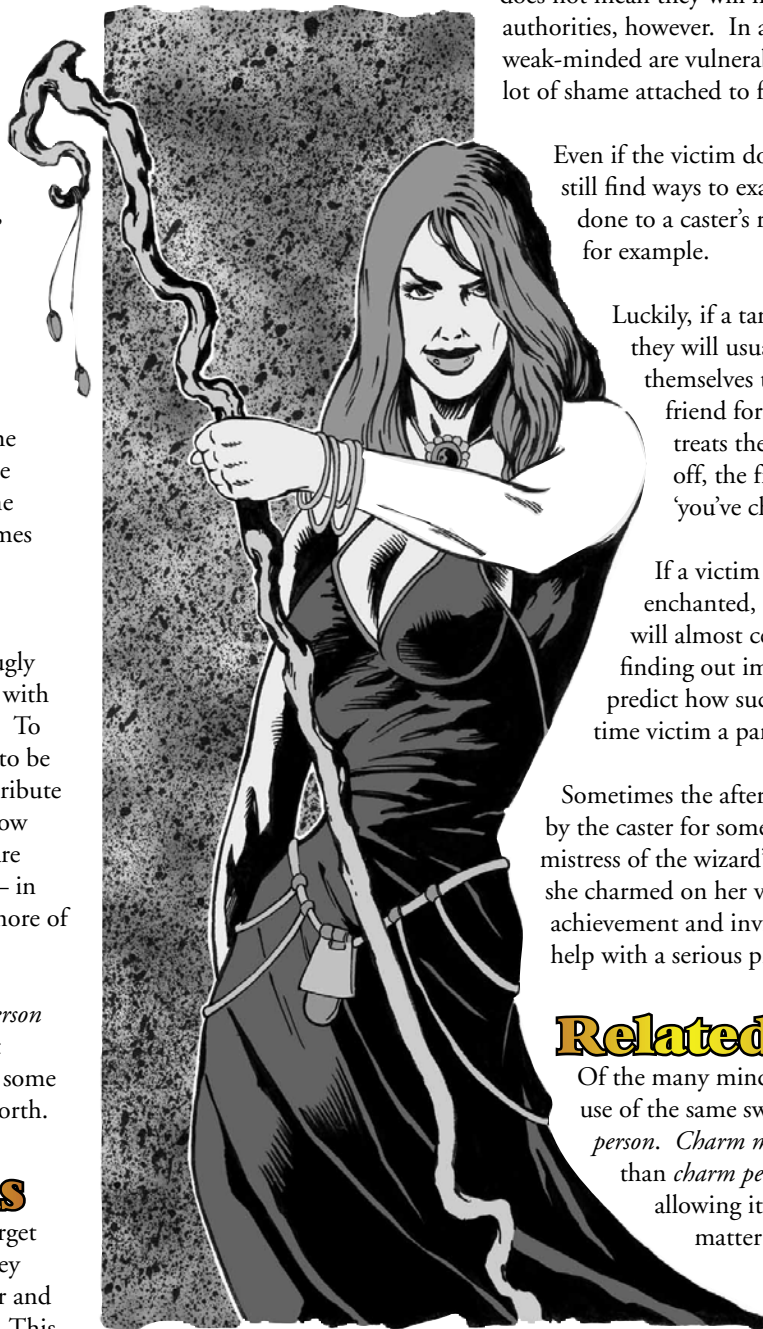
If a victim carries on for years without realising they were enchanted, the truth (if it should somehow be revealed) will almost certainly be very traumatic, much more so than finding out immediately after the fact. It is impossible to predict how such a person would act. It may make the one-time victim a particularly dogged foe.

Sometimes the aftermath of a *charm person* will not be known by the caster for some time. Consider the possibility of the new mistress of the wizard's guild receiving a scratchy letter from the orc she charmed on her very first adventure, congratulating her on her achievement and inviting her around to visit the pit – and perhaps help with a serious problem or two.

## Related Spells

Of the many mind-affecting spells, only *charm monster* makes use of the same switchback technique that is at the core of *charm person*. *Charm monster* is of course much more complicated than *charm person*, with multiple redundancies and subtleties allowing it to find a pathway to the desired effect no matter what kind of mind is targeted.

The Druidic *charm person or animal* has the same effect as *charm person* but it works





very differently. This magic taps into a fundamental connection with nature that is at the core of each living being, and then convinces the target that the druid is a representative of this natural force. The inherent trust and love living things have for nature becomes a justification for trusting and loving the druid. It is rare for someone subjected to this spell to fail to realise they were enchanted; more likely, they will remember the experience vividly. For some it even becomes a life-changing experience.

## Sorcerers

Sorcerers, already charismatic, become potent social weapons when *charm person* is in their spell list. A wise sorcerer with *charm person* will usually cultivate a wide circle of friends. This community of friends has the effect of encouraging new targets to accept their affection for the sorcerer as legitimate – after all, if everyone around you likes a person, you are much more likely to accept that he is your friend.



There have been occasional cases of *charm*-capable sorcerers taking this to its logical extreme. These sorcerers found small communities in isolated places and fill them with acolytes committed to a cult of personality. Sometimes the sorcerer just wants to be adored; other times the community is a means to a far more insidious end...

## Changed Spells

Skilled practitioners of a spell can make small changes in the effect of the spell as they cast it. If a caster chooses, a prepared *charm person* can be cast as one of the following spells instead, provided a Spellcraft check (DC 11) is successful. If the Spellcraft check is unsuccessful, the spell is lost.

Alternatively, the following changed spells can be prepared in their own right. In this case, no Spellcraft check is required either to prepare the spell or to cast it. However, these changed spells can in turn be changed at the point of casting using the normal method. For example, a character could prepare *intimidate person* but at the point of casting change to effect to *charm person* instead; this will require the Spellcraft check to succeed, and if the check is failed, the spell is lost.

All the parameters of *charm person* apply to these variations. In each case, they work using the same switchback mechanism as *charm person*, but each time associating with a different kind of emotion.

*Intimidate person:* This enchantment makes a humanoid of Medium size or smaller regard you as a fearsome individual. This is precisely as effective as a successful use of the Intimidation skill.

*Enamour person:* This enchantment makes a humanoid of Medium size or smaller regard you as an attractive amorous proposition. It does not change the target's romantic orientation, nor overcome any bias such as those against certain races or castes, nor will it make an ugly person attractive. If everything else is in order, however, it will make a romantic gambit much easier.

*Nauseate person:* This enchantment makes a humanoid of Medium size or smaller regard you as a sickening presence. This will usually serve to drive away the target; however, it will not overcome any duty or overriding interest that motivates the target to stay put. For example, you cannot drive away a guard from his post with this spell; an annoying bard, however, will probably be quickly on his way.



## Games Masters and charm person

*Charm person* has always been a tricky spell to adjudicate because it relies so much on Games Master judgement. The spell explanation given here, of a 'switchback' that reminds the target of a trusted friend when they deal with the caster, is intended to give a good, clear basis to the adjudication of this spell in your game. *Charm* effects will always come down to Games Master judgement in the end, but if you keep the switchback in mind your rulings should be both easier to make and more consistent.



## When Player Characters get charmed

*Charm person*, more than almost any other spell, requires a fine touch to Games Master well. You may want to simply leave it out of your Non-Player Character spell lists and avoid having to worry about it. If you do want to include it in the enemy arsenal, then you will benefit from thinking in advance about how to deal with *charmed* Player Characters.

When Player Characters are charmed, the Games Master has a number of options.

One technique is to try to keep the player in the dark about what has happened. Try and incorporate the *charm* effect in the character's experience. A brief note to the Player saying they are confident the caster is particularly trustworthy is one way to begin, especially if you pretend it is the result of a successful 'Sense Motive' check. This does not apply, of course, unless in your game you only use Sense Motive to tell a Player when they should not be trusting someone. You can reinforce this by portraying the caster in the best light you can, describing them in winning terms, manipulating the Player's perception to match that of the character. Careful though, you do not want to lay it on too thick or the Player will smell a rat.

Another way to handle it is simply to tell the Player they have been *charmed*, and ask them to play along. Be warned, however: when you interfere with a Player's control over their character, you walk into a minefield. Some Players will relish the roleplaying challenge, but others will make little effort to act *charmed*, while others will resent the imposition and will try to get around it as best they can. Always keep in mind that the group's fun has to be paramount, and if one Player is miserable then the group's fun is going to be affected. If the *charm* is ruining your game, get the Player out of the *charm* as quickly as you can, however you can manage it; otherwise the session will suffer.

Another method is to keep the period of the *charm* off-screen. Take the Player aside, briefly talk them through their experience with their new friend, and then get back into the game and keep going. This has the advantage of not forcing the Player to sit through long periods of a game with their character out of their control, but it can only be used when the charmed character will remain undisturbed by other Player Characters for the *charm*'s duration.

As Games Master, you are entitled to tell a *charmed* Player how to play their character. However, much more importantly, you should only ever do this if you are certain the player will be happy to receive such orders. Fun at the table is always trumps a good rendition of *charm person*.







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# The Cult of Bel-yog-thulu

A scenario for The Judge Dredd Roleplaying Game for a group of 3 to 5 Judges of 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> level

**Matt Thomason**

*Forty Years ago, Citizen Collington Gumpworthy received a letter which changed his life.*

*An ancestor of his, Sir Reginald Gumpworthy III, had left an inheritance that was unclaimed after his death. Sir Reginald had died back in 1924 during an archaeological dig and most of his estate was left to relatives. Unfortunately, the items intended for his son Archibald were never claimed, as Archibald died alongside his father. His grandson John never bothered to fill in the required paperwork to collect some of the more obscure items, as he had inherited enough money for his family to live comfortably for generations – although he instead chose to live extremely extravagantly for a single generation.*

*The unclaimed property remained with London solicitors Barrington, Barrington and Burke until the company dissolved in the economic crash of 2022.*

*Years later, Brit-Cit development company Habsprawl bought a number of old buildings in Sector 4, intending to demolish them in order to build a new Cityblock. Amongst the buildings was a small group of ancient offices at City Bottom. An archaic demolition regulation, however, stated that the buildings were to be cleared and any property found returned to its legitimate owner.*

*In the basement of one building a box was found, along with legal documents stating it was part of the estate of Sir Reginald. Six months later, an estate locator finally traced Gumpworthy's family line to Mega-City One, and Collington Gumpworthy.*

*The box contained a large leather-bound tome, with handwritten entries on parchment pages. The language was unknown, but Collington decided to devote the rest of his life to translating the book. After all, the unemployed boogie inspector had nothing better to do.*

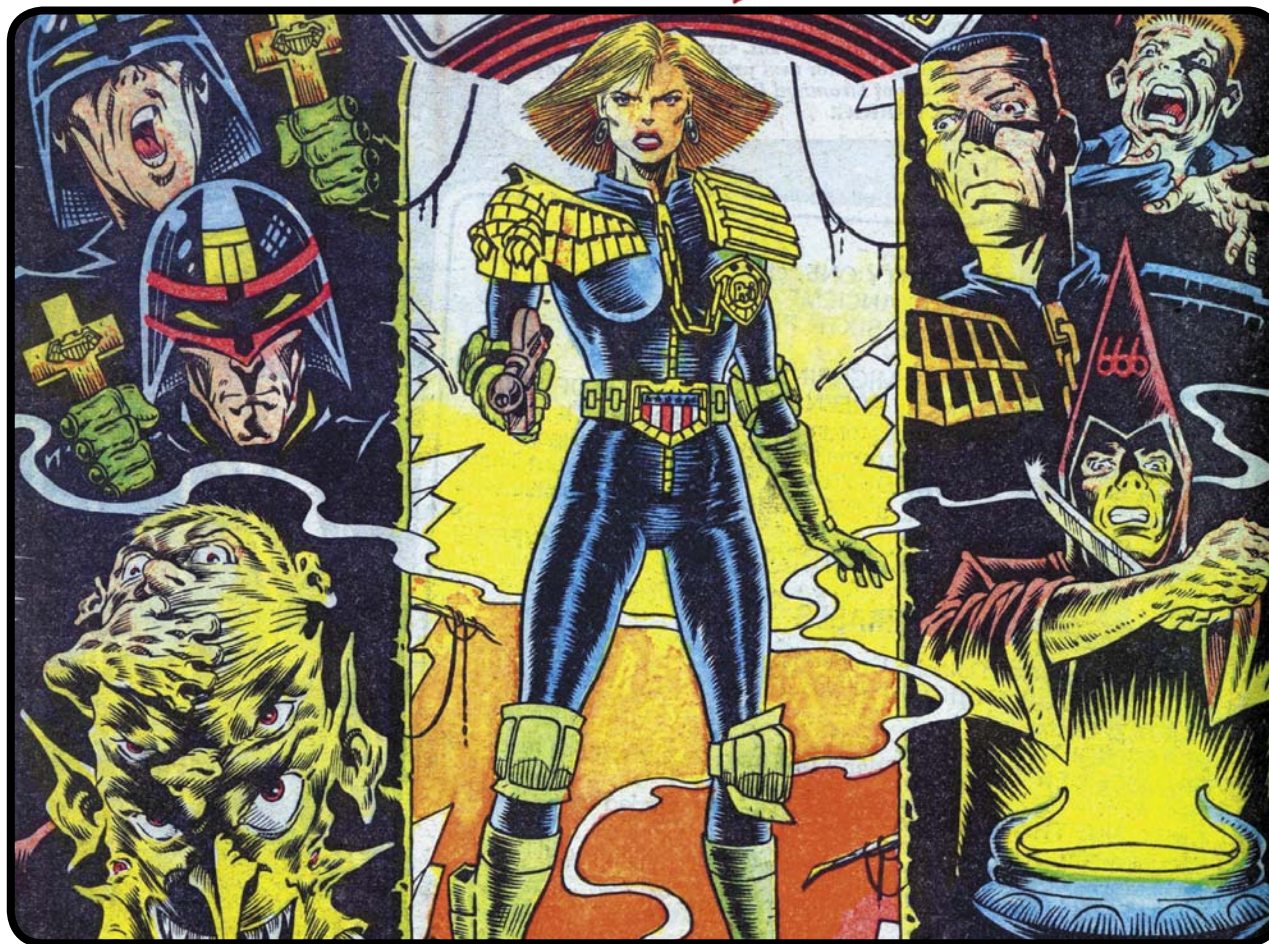
*Collington passed away in 2112 during the Necropolis disaster, leaving the book and volumes of notes to his son, Bezington.*

*Bezington, or 'Bez' to his friends, continued his father's work. Two years ago, he managed to translate the name of the book as 'The Mortorelinquon', apparently a treatise on the dark god Bel-yog-thulu and powers that could raise people from the grave.*

*Bez Gumpworthy believed the book would give him immortality, if only he could unlock its secrets. While he himself did not possess the resources to complete the translation, he utilised the boredom of many of the other residents of Aug Derleth Block to organise a cult. Little more than a club who met twice a week to sit around the book and chant made-up prayers to Bel-yog-thulu, the combined resources of the club allowed Gumpworthy to import a number of rare books from Luxor City, and in some cases to sneak them past Mega-City One customs.*

*However, the Cult's harmless activities changed three weeks ago, when – assisted by fellow Cult member Lyn Peto, Gumpworthy finally translated a passage from within the book. It appeared he had unlocked a spell to grant immortal life. A spell that only required little more than a sacrifice to their dark god, and the removal of the vitae from the body...*





## Preparation

During this scenario, you will be tracking the Judges' ability to cope by themselves. Keep a secret running total of *Support Points* for the group. The Judges begin the scenario with a total 2,000 Support Points between them. Various points within the scenario deduct points for putting a drain on Justice Department resources. The Games Master should also deduct points at their discretion if they encounter circumstances not covered within the scenario.

One fixed cost in place at all times is asking for repeat information from Control – every time the Judges ask for this, it costs 20 Support Points per item. Do not tell the players about Support Points – they are used at the end of the scenario to calculate bonus experience points.

If you want to make this scenario last a bit longer, insert some random crime scenes at any points you like.

A number of pre-prepared handouts can be found at the end of this scenario. Do not give these out

unless the Judges specifically request the information on them.

Ensure that one Judge in the group is identified as the squad leader (usually the most senior Judge, or pick the least experienced player just for fun).

It is assumed your Judges already have an assignment to a Sector House, and that you already have established Non Player Characters for issuing orders, giving pre-shift briefings, receiving end of shift reports and so on. This scenario therefore does not mention names for these Non Player Characters, or the number of the Judge's 'home Sector'. All action is presumed to take place within this Sector.

The scenario begins with the Judges on patrol, preferably riding Lawmasters.

## Prog One – They Came to Take Him Away

The Judges are riding down Randy Carter Meg-Way on patrol at 0235 when an update flashes through on their bike computers. Read all **+item+** text to the players. Additional information for the Games Master is given in *italics* in case the Judges request it – or simply to satisfy the Games Master's curiosity. Some of the items can be expanded into subplots or follow-up sessions if the Games Master wishes.



## Morning Briefing

+item+

### LECTURE REMINDER

Judge-Tutor Williams will be giving a lecture on Statistical Pre-emption of Crime at 1730 today, in the Sector House conference room.

*Instruction:* All off-duty Judges are reminded that attendance is mandatory.

+item+

### ISO-BLOCK 19 BREAKOUT

Iso-Block 19 is reporting a mass breakout after a Munce tanker left the Andrew Chambers Megway, colliding with the outer wall. Out of fifty-nine perps reported to have escaped, fifteen are dead and twelve have been re-arrested. Thirty-two are still at large, and believed to still be in the sector.

*Instruction:* On alert for. Further details available on request.

+item+

### TEMPORARY SENTENCING CHANGES

Due to iso-cube overcrowding reaching an all-time high, the following changes in sentencing have been approved on a trial basis:

- All Code 9 offences to be capped at a maximum of 5 years.
- Code 14, Sections 3,4,5,6,7 and 10 offences to be reduced to a 100 – 5,000 credit fine.

The option of exile to the Cursed Earth is in force for all Life sentences, at the discretion of the sentencing Judge.

*Instruction:* Be aware.

+item+

### POSSIBLE SERIAL KILLER WARNING

A body has been found in the basement of Art Clarke Block, drained of all blood. This is the fifth body in the area to have been discovered in this state in two weeks, indicating the likelihood of a serial murderer, or possibly an alien creature subsisting on human blood. Psi-Division wish to remind everyone not to rule out supernatural causes either - an Exorcist squad have been readied at the Sector House.

*Instruction:* On alert for.

+item+

### ILLEGAL FLYING OBJECTS

A number of citizens are releasing inflatable animals over the city, causing a hazard to legitimate traffic.

*Instruction:* All Judges are reminded that littering the sky is as much a crime as littering the ground is.

+item+

### HOSTAGE SITUATION

At least fifteen armed perps are holed up in Howie Lovecraft Block Holoplex, holding approximately ninety citizens hostage.

*Instruction:* Units are in attendance.



## Morning Briefing Notes for the Games Master

*Lecture Reminder: Judge-Tutor Williams is a 40-year veteran who took the option of teaching at the Academy of Law after losing his left arm to a perp wielding a las-cutter. He has taken Judge Dredd's belief of the statistics pointing that everyone is guilty of something a step further and believes it is possible to calculate the statistical likelihood of which crime the prospective perp has committed simply by examining their lifestyle trends. He therefore proposes the arrest of complete demographics of society for efficiency's sake, with the odd citizen or two being wrongfully arrested and sentenced being nothing but collateral damage.*

*After giving this particular lecture, it will be obvious he has gone crazy, and he will be escorted to a nice, clean psycho-cube.*

*Iso-Cube Break Out: This is a red herring... unless you want to use it as a subplot to make this scenario longer. Maybe the Judges will run across a group of escaped convicts.*

*Temporary Sentencing Changes: It is worth noting that the latter sentencing option has been seen before after citywide disasters. These measures have been put in place for four weeks only, after much debate between the Chief Judge and the Council of Five.*

*Possible Serial Killer Warning: The deceased is citizen Amelia Philison, a resident of Art Clarke Block. She is the latest victim of the Cult of Bel-yog-thulu.*

*Illegal Flying Objects: Unfortunately, this latest craze to strike the city involves purchasing plasti-balloon animals, inflating them with helium, and letting them fly high, high, up to the sky. These cause the aforementioned risk to air traffic, as well as making the place look generally untidy (especially when the burst ones find their way back to the ground). For some reason, every shipment of these plasti-balloon animals to this Sector contained only mongooses.*

*Hostage Situation: Howie Lovecraft is nowhere near the Judge's patrol route, at least an hour away from their current location. There is no reason for them to go there, and any request to Control will confirm they are to stay on their assigned route.*

*The perps are calling themselves the New Ecological Front, and are demanding that one in ten city blocks be demolished immediately and replaced with newly-planted trees. There is of course about as much chance of their demands being met as Judge Dredd shaking hands and kissing babies on his next patrol.*

Give the players a minute or two to settle into patrol; then spring the following encounter on them.

### The Road Block

Read the following to the players:

*As you approach Jerry Samuels Zoomover, you notice a group of juves pushing a car over the edge. It slams into a Catch Wagon passing underneath, which swerves into the crash barrier and comes to a halt on its side. The area is in chaos within seconds, with vehicles unable to pass and the threat of gridlock widening by the minute.*

The Juves are part of a gang calling themselves the Dr. Demento Demarcaters, from the nearby Dr. Demento Block. Their leader, Hervie Soule (although he prefers 'Napoleon LXIV') was arrested twenty minutes ago and left cuffed to a holding post for pickup.

Knowing the area as well as they do, they realised the Zoomover would be on the route to the Sector House, and set an ambush for the Catch Wagon after it picked up Soule. Stealing a Foord Slabster, they drove it to the edge of the Zoomover and waited to push it onto the Pat-Wagon as it passed beneath them – not too tricky seeing as the traffic was moving at about 10 mph anyway. The gang's

plan is to descend onto the Meg-Way using ropes and cables, then to cut their leader out of the Pat-Wagon and finally disappear down the rabbit warren of adjoining ped-ways.

Unfortunately, things are not going according to plan. Soule is in the back of the Pat-Wagon, his legs trapped under a twisted bench. One of the gang has a las-saw for getting the back of the vehicle open, but cutting through the bench without removing Soule's legs will be somewhat more difficult.

As if that was not enough, a group of Judges on patrol (the players) have just seen the whole thing.



The encounter should not prove to be too much of an obstacle to the Judges, despite the fact the Pat-Wagon crew were knocked unconscious during the crash and are unable to assist. Two more street Judges will arrive if backup is requested, at a cost of 50 Support Points.

## Dr. Demento Demarcaters (x9), angry anti-establishment gangers

Citizen 1; HD 1d6 (6 hp); Init +4 (+4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; DV 10; Attack +0 melee, +0 ranged; Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 14

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +2, Balance +4, Climb +4, Computer Use +2, Drive +1, Hide +3, Intimidate +3, Jump +2, Pick Pocket +2, Ride +2, Streetwise +3, Technical +1; Improved Initiative, Run, Skill Focus (streetwise)

**Prior Life:** Juve

**Equipment:** Knife (1d6/2), Zip Gun (2d8/4) with two 10-round magazines.

One member (currently in the Pat-Wagon) is armed with a las-saw (1d8/10).

Two members (on the Zoomover) are armed with Spit Guns (2d6/6) recently looted from the Dr. Demento Citi-Def armoury instead of Zip Guns. Each also has three 30-round magazines.

**Tactics:** Five of the gang are still on the Zoomover, and will attempt to pick off the Judges from a distance. Of the other four, three attempt to keep the Judges away from the Catch Wagon while the last member struggles futilely to help Hervie.

If the Games Master wishes to make this encounter more difficult, having some more prisoners in the Catch Wagon break free, along with scatter guns

(2d6/2) from the Catch Wagon weapons rack, is a good addition.

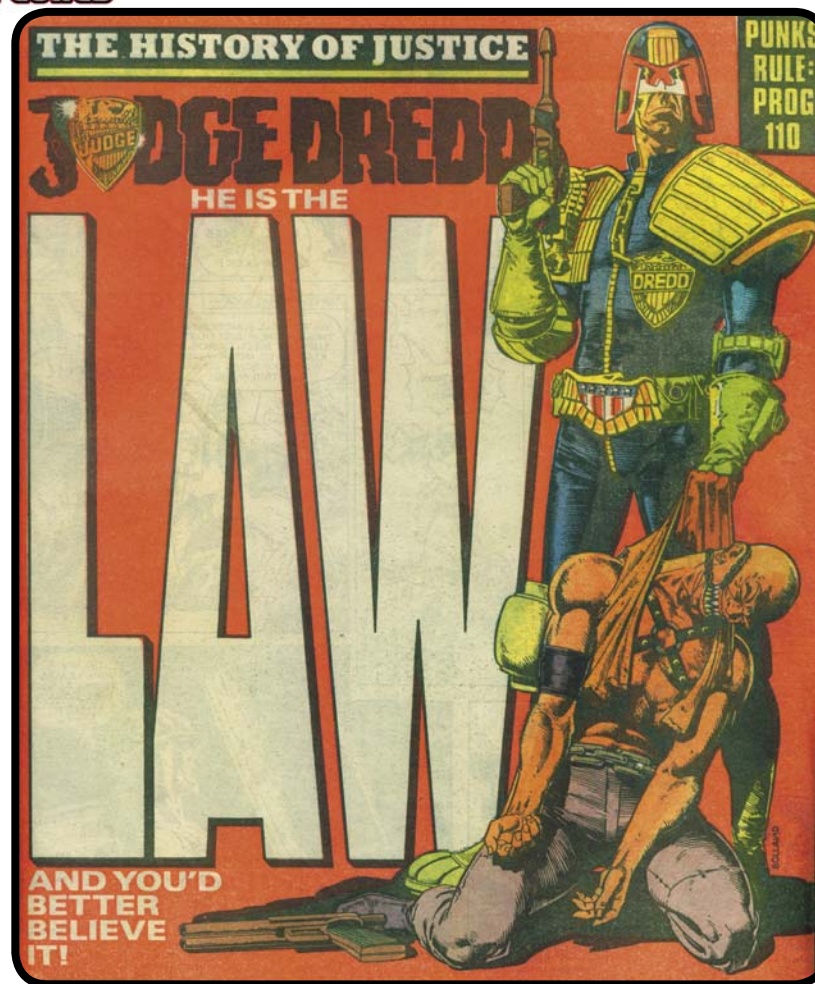
Hervie is unable to take part in the combat, and will remain trapped whatever else happens.

Once the gang have been dealt with, the problem of getting the unconscious Judges and trapped prisoner out of the disabled vehicle remains. Luckily, the Judges can be moved and other than a few scratches are unhurt once revived.

Hervie is trapped under the bench (DR 18, 20 hit points, Break DC 30) and must be released – using the las-saw might be an idea, although there is no penalty for waiting for a replacement Catch Wagon to arrive (they did call one, right?). He is wearing a rather striking yellow and green Bel-Yog-Thulu plasti-sweater. He refuses to do much more than curse about the amount of pain he is in.

Once the situation has been dealt with, read the following to the players:

*The voice of Control comes in loud and clear over your headsets.*



*Squad [insert squad leaders name here], proceed to Stevie King Con-Apts. Citizen reports a mutilated body on underblock level five, stairwell seven.*

*Judge [insert random Judge from the group here] turns his attention back to his driving, narrowly avoiding hitting an inflatable mongoose as it floats by.*

The Judges may request the name of the citizen who reported the body - a Bertha Beem.



## Prog Two – Every Body Hurts

Upon reaching Stevie King Con-Apt, the Judges can locate stairwell seven easily and walk down to underblock level five (the lowest level of the block, a sub-sub-basement). Taking an elevator or ramp to basement level five and then trying to find stairwell seven is more difficult, as level five is a huge parking garage divided into twenty identical sections – it is incredibly easy to get lost (make a Wisdom check at DC 15 to find the stairwell, with a failed roll wasting five minutes of time and 20 Support Points).

Read the following to the players:

*You reach the bottom of the stairwell on underblock level five to find an overweight female citizen, weeping, while six Citi-Def soldiers stand around trying to look important. As the weeping citizen notices you, she drops her handkerchief and walks towards you.*

*Streaks of blood are obvious on the floor, apparently leading into the alcove under the staircase. An inflatable mongoose is wedged between the steps.*

Citizen Bertha Beem is standing amongst a group of six Citi-Def around the body. She makes a statement to the effect that she discovered the scene this morning when she walked down to her car (a green Oostin Macro). She immediately raised the alarm, and the Citi-Def (ever on the lookout for something vaguely official to do) were on the case within minutes to secure the area until the Judges arrived.

The corpse has been dismembered – the torso is under the staircase, with both legs and one arm nearby.

A trail of blood leads across the floor showing where the body was dragged from. This can be followed out into the parking lot, back to a red Foord Skybolt (similar stats to the Strato, but a hovercar rather than ground car). A few splatters of blood can be seen on the left side of the car (and match the blood type of the body if tested later). The missing arm can be found under the car.

A smaller trail leads from the torso to an empty parking space, and it can be deduced this is most likely where the missing head was taken. Unfortunately, all the security scanners and PSU cameras in the parking bay have been vandalised.

If the squad includes a Tek-Judge, they can perform a forensic investigation the victim (or the pieces still here, at least). Otherwise, a Tek squad will have to be called (no support point cost for this) – they will arrive within ten minutes.

If the Judges insist on waiting around for the hour the Tek squad take to detail the crime scene, deduct 50 Support Points for time wasting (they can just as easily be out busting heads while they wait for the report). Do not deduct any points if they spend the time constructively (for example, questioning the inhabitants of the block, who unfortunately do not know anything more than is on the victim's record).

An hour after the Tek squad arrive (or soon after the squad's own Tek-Judge feeds the forensics information into their bike computer), a DNA match on the victim is found – Citizen Jonas Duggan, resident of Stevie King Con-Apt. The full results of the autopsy will be available at the end of Prog Three.

The Judges may want to arrest Bertha Beem for littering (the dropped hankie). A Spot check (DC 15) turns up the fact that one of the Citi-

Def is carrying a Justice Department-issue Colt M2000 Widowmaker (see *The Rookie's Guide to the Justice Department*). This should, of course, be impounded and the wielder arrested.

## Duggan's Apartment

Duggan's Apartment consists of a single room plus a bathroom. The living area contains a convertible bed/sofa, a Tri-D, a wardrobe full of clothes and a kitchen area. A Search check (DC 20) turns up a bag of sugar behind a false back to a cupboard in the kitchen area, although it is a bit late to arrest him for that now.

## Optional Side Mission

Unfortunately, the Citi-Def trooper with the Widowmaker has no idea where it came from – it was just the first thing he grabbed from the Citi-Def armoury.

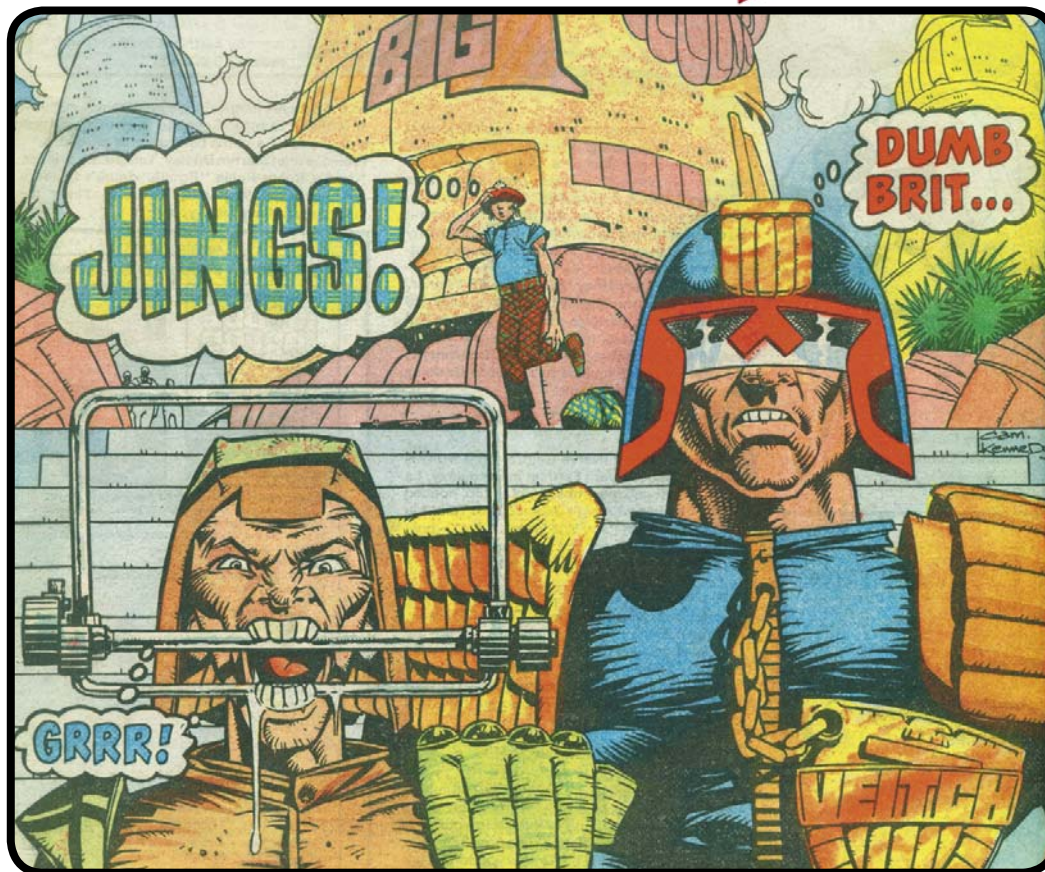
Investigations turn up a number of illegal weapons in the armoury, which are eventually traced to a missing Justice Department shipment. Stevie King Citi-Def Leader Hurge Grinkson, angered at the withdrawal of so much ordnance because of new regulations, took it upon himself to re-arm the block with stolen weapons purchased from a group of arms dealers in a neighbouring Sector.

## Prog Three – Another One Bit the Dust

Read the following to the players:

*Once again, the voice of Control cuts in on your helmet radios. 'All units in vicinity Ramsey Campbell Block, gunfire reported, Ramsey Campbell Block, 29<sup>th</sup> floor Freezie-Munce Stand.'*





Make sure the players realise that Campbell is only two blocks away – hopefully, they will respond! If for some reason they do not, Control will get no other responses (there are no other Judges in the area), and will run a manual check on units in the vicinity and order them to respond anyway. This will cost the group 250 Support Points.

### Ramsey Campbell Block

The group arrive at the Freezie-Munce stand to the following scene:

*An angry-looking woman has one arm clasped around her victim's throat. He is turning purple*

*from lack of air, but perhaps more worrying is what her other arm is doing – waving around a hand holding an assault rifle, aiming at anyone who dares to get too close. An inflatable mongoose floats by, distracting her for a second. The next second, it is in pieces on the floor and she is checking her ammunition.*

*A row of bullet-holes in the wall opposite her indicate a distinct probability that she has actually fired the weapon. The probability rises as your eyes glance down at the bullet-riddled citizen on the floor at the base of the wall and the streaks of blood that show where they fell and slid down it.*

*However, none of this theoretical situation and circumstantial evidence means as much as the bullets spraying out of her gun as she spots you.*

### Lyn Peto, Not Exactly What She Seems

Citizen 5; HD 5d6 + 3 (28 hp); Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; DV 14 (+3 Ref, +1 Dodge); Attack: +4 melee, +5 ranged; Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 17

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +3, Balance +4, Bluff +2, Climb +4, Computer Use +4, Disguise +2, Drive +6, Hide +4, Jump +4, Listen +3, Medical +2, Move Silently +4, Ride +4, Search +3, Streetwise +3, Swim +4, Technical +4, Tumble +4; Dodge, Iron Will, Toughness.

**Prior Life:** Agitator

**Equipment:** Knife (d6/2); Flechette AP Assault Rifle (1d4/18), (see *The Rookie's Guide to the Justice Department* – the assault rifle is another stolen Justice Department weapon); six 12 round magazines for the Flechette; Zip Gun (2d8/4)

Hopefully, the Judges manage to take her alive. If so, make an interrogation check. Then ignore it (but let the characters think they succeed the check anyway), as she reveals the following:

- Her name is Lyn Peto, an unemployed vidzine reader, and a member of the Cult of Bel-yog-thulu.
- Every Cult member has been to kill a citizen and bring their blood back for a ceremony that will summon their dark god to make them all immortal. Oh, and he will probably devour the planet too, but that is just a little side-issue.
- She refuses to divulge the name of any Cult members, or their meeting place.



If interrogated on the spot, the Judges will most likely want to check out the Cult immediately. MAC has no information about the Cult, so they are on their own with what they have managed to get out of Lyn.

If she is not interrogated successfully, this will happen back at the Sector House at a cost of 50 Support Points, with the results being given to the Judges when they are briefed tomorrow, along with orders to follow up leads on this Cult in place of their standard patrol.

If she dies during a firefight, nobody in the vicinity is able to identify her. The body can be identified by any Bike Computer by performing a scan of the face and linking to MAC's database. Alternatively, they can wait for the Tek Squad to arrive (this will cost 50 Support Points) and they will receive ID information at tomorrow's Daily Crime Briefing. They can then check out her apartment in Aug Derleth for clues (see below).

The results of the autopsy on Jonas Duggan are available once this encounter is over, and the relevant handout should be given to the players.

### Optional Side Mission

If Peto was interrogated without any thought for privacy, it is possible that some of the Campbell blockers overheard some of the details. It would not be beyond the realms of possibility that one of them could take this as an attack by Aug Derleth Block and plot a nasty revenge... 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth - and a Derleth blocker for a Campbell blocker!' The Games Master may want to run this either before or after the Judges decide to investigate the Cult, and may even want to have the incident spark an entire Block War!

### Lyn Peto's Apartment

This is not your average apartment in Mega-City One. Lyn Peto was apparently a collector of many rare artefacts and items. Her apartment is full of them, from dusty old tomes in ancient languages to strange tribal sculptures.

Interestingly, her records cannot explain how she could afford any of this, being rather lacking in sources of income. In fact, her records do not explain much at all – they point towards her being a 100% stereotypical Mega-City One citizen. This is more than odd – the chances of being a 100% match for the 'average' citizen are over a million to one. There is no evidence of her record being tampered with, and nobody anywhere has any real memories of her beyond the last few months. Nobody outside of the Cult has any memorable contact with her - even her neighbours barely remember the fact that she exists.

### Prog Four – Soule in Isolation

The Judges have a name for the group that may be behind a number of local murders – the Cult of Bel-yog-thulu. They may remember their encounter with Hervie Soule at the beginning of this scenario – if not, make an Intelligence check (DC 15) for each Judge to recall seeing the name 'Bel-yog-thulu' on his clothes.

There are no records of the Cult or a 'Bel-yog-thulu' within any normal files, although Psi-Div do have a single reference to the entity being a dark god believed to have lived on the Earth thousands of years ago and worshiped by the ancient Mesopotamians (then again, they had a tendency to worship anything out of the ordinary, including people with flu symptoms and frogs with red stripes on their backs). If the characters are really stuck, at this point, spend 100 of their

Support Points to have Psi-Div look further into the name – after meditating on the subject (this takes until tomorrow), they come up with the following images:

*A pyramid-like structure stands atop a tall city block. Unfortunately, there are thousands of blocks in the city with this particular design; several in this Sector alone.*

*A man sits in an Iso-Cube. The description matches that of Hervie Soule, arrested along with his gang for causing criminal damage to a Pat-Wagon and a traffic pile-up under the Jerry Samuels Zoomover.*

At the next opportunity (either as the Judges resume their patrol route or when they begin, the next day) the following comes through on their Bike computers:

**+item+**

#### WEATHER CONTROL MALFUNCTION

Weather Control is reporting problems with the system. Freak weather conditions may occur. All Judges are asked to be vigilant for panic amongst the citizenry. Weather Control has confirmed that the problem is affecting this Sector only.

*Instructions:* Expect unpredictable weather until further notice.

There are legitimate problems with Weather Control, although this only confuses things later during the Summoning of Bel-yog-thulu...

### What Soule Knows about Bel-Yog-Thulu

Soule is slightly more co-operative than before, being free of pain from his crushed legs and fed up after only a night or two in the Cubes. He will answer the Judges' questions willingly. The Games Master should not be too free at volunteering information, though, and should only give answers to the questions asked.



Soule knows the following:

- Bel-yog-thulu is a dark god from ancient times. Apparently, he has the power to 'give life', but also wishes to devour the planet.
- He learned this from the time he joined a Bel-yog-thulu cult, about three years ago. Back then there was not really much going on and he got bored with the kooks and left. He is certain that Bel-yog-thulu would not be too appreciative of the lack of faith in most of the cult members, who appeared only to be there for the entertainment and not down to any true belief.
- The cult operated out of a basement room in Aug Derleth Block.

Another hint from Psi-Div can be used at this point if the Judges still do not know where to go, costing 200 Support Points for a vision of the basement room and the words 'Aug Derleth Block'.

## Checking out the Cult

The basement room that Soule described is deserted. Notebooks, candles, skulls and various other paraphernalia lie around the room. A cupboard contains a pair of small industrial vacuum cleaners adapted to take a fairly large (four-inch long) surgical syringe on the nozzle. Usually used for cleaning computer equipment, these units were obviously used to extract blood from the victims.

A whiteboard on one wall shows what appears to be a pyramid on a rooftop. A quick check with MAC (a verbal description will be fine) will confirm that Aug Derleth Block has such a pyramid, used as a Tri-D communications array.



## Prog Five - How To Make The Monster

Hopefully, the Judges are now finding the fastest route to the roof.

Note that they may request H-Wagon support at any time, costing a whacking 500 Support Points. If they decide to wait for it, however, feel free to have a giant betentacled Bel-yog-thulu materialise on the roof and consume reality from around them, ending their lives, the scenario and most of

the Sector before he gets full and decides to take an after-dinner nap... for a few thousand years.

It is also possible the Judges may request a spy-in-the-sky camera, which will reveal the following scene to them prior to their opening the access door to the roof (and costing 50 Support Points).

Assuming the Judges head directly to the roof, read the following:

*The cult is mid-summon when you arrive. All are hooded and robed, standing in rows before a giant pyramid that forms the base of a communications*



array for the block. Two, however, are standing facing one another at the base of the pyramid. A tall broad-shouldered man with overly large feet wields a giant silver key, while a short overweight woman struggles under the weight of an enormous padlock.

You hear one of them announce: 'I am the Yalemaster! I shall insert and twist!'

To which the other responds: 'I am the Lock-keeper! I shall open for you!'

The final member of the group prostrates himself at the base of the pyramid, apparently wailing in an unknown tongue, a twisted dagger held over his captive. These crazies need to be stopped, and now!

Note that at this point, the attempt to summon Bel-yog-thulu cannot be proven as legitimate and the correct treatment for this group is as a bunch of lunatics (or shortly at worst they can be arrested for assault on a Judge, resisting arrest and numerous other relatively minor offences). Try to emphasise this to your players.

The Cult will not surrender, and some members will attempt to tie the Judges up one-on-one, allowing the rest to continue with the ritual.

## Cultist (x14), fanatical crazies

Citizen 2; HD 2d6 (9 hp); Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; DV 10; Attack: +2 melee, +1 ranged; Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 11

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +4, Bluff +1, Climb +4, Computer Use +3, Drive +4, Hide +4, Jump +2, Knowledge (Occult)+1, Listen +1, Medical +2, Move Silently +3, Ride +3, Search +3, Streetwise +1, Swim +1, Technical +4, Tumble +4; Great Fortitude, Resist Arrest

**Equipment:** Knife (1d6/2)

### Other weapons (one per cultist)

3x Zip Gun (2d8/4), plus two 10-round magazines

2x Electro-Prod (1d10/-)

6x Club (1d8/0) – includes 1 x Giant Key and 1 x Giant Padlock

2x Sawn-off Stump Gun (2d2/2) with 8 shells

1x Hypo Dart Gun (Special/0)

The cultist at the base of the pyramid is Gumpworthy himself.

## Bez Gumpworthy

Citizen 4; HD 4d6 + 3 (23 hp); Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; DV 13 (+3 Reflex); Attack: +1 melee, +1 ranged; Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 11

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +5, Bluff +2, Climb +4, Computer Use +5, Drive +5, Hide +4, Jump +3, Knowledge (Occult)+5, Listen +3, Medical +2, Move Silently +4, Ride +3, Search +4, Streetwise +2, Swim +1, Technical +4, Tumble +4; Improved Resist Arrest, Resist Arrest, Toughness

**Equipment:** Knife (1d6/2); Walther Mitsubishi LPK I (4d6/14) with two 20-shot power packs

Whatever happens (including the slaughter of the complete Cult, should the Judges go that far), Bel-yog-thulu *will* arrive. The preparations have been put into place and the stars are right. The scene with the cultists was purely for show, and interrupting it does nothing other than deprive the Great Aged One of his audience.

Note that this summoning does *not* use the rules for Summoning Psychic Entities from the *Rookie's Guide to Psi-Talent*. The ritual being performed (including the collection of blood from the 'sacrifices' over the past few weeks) does nothing more than open a magical communications conduit to Bel-yog-thulu's dimension. Once contacted, he powers the move to our dimension himself, simply following the 'beacon' the cultists have created.

After d4 rounds, read the following:

*The sky above goes dark, and forks of lightning begin to hit the pyramid. Obviously Weather Control is having problems again.*

After d4 more rounds, read the following:

*The next bolt of lightning is red, and strikes the pyramid with full force. The entire building shakes, knocking you off your feet.*

The shaking causes 1d3/0 subdual damage to everyone present, and knocks everyone off their feet and onto the ground.

Before the Judges can react, read the following:

*The gigantic pyramid begins to crack vertically, sliding open to reveal a gateway to... another place. You notice an impossibly large scene within the pyramid, an entire world - stretching out with a purple sky and a green swamp as far as the eye can see. Strange winged creatures flap around in the distance. Either Weather Control has gone completely to Drokk or something else is happening here...*

*A voice reverberates around you 'Bel-yog-thulu has returned. Choose the form in which your god will manifest!'*

This bit is cool. Really. Well, you will just have to trust us.

Take every player outside the room to a place you can talk to them without the others hearing, and ask them what their character is thinking of. You know the routine; whatever image pops into their head is what the extra-dimensional demon will appear as.



Once you have spoken to each player, ignore everything they have told you and read the following:

*The image in the pyramid grows even more disturbing, as a gigantic slimy red tentacle flops out of the base of the pyramid. Another three tentacles follow, along with the bloated red face they are attached to. Two pincer-like hands reach out, and a gargantuan creature steps through the gateway. It must be at least thirty feet tall.*



*The creature looks down at you, and then gazes across the rooftops of the Mega-City. Turning back to you, it smiles a gruesome smile and exclaims:*

*'Whoop! Whoop! Whoop! Whoop! Whoop! Whoop!'*

Okay, so the taking everyone somewhere private was not strictly necessary, but hopefully your players are now glaring at one another wondering whose fault this is.

Please note that the *Security of the City Act* is now in effect – Under the threat of destruction of the entire city, the Judges are permitted to take any action they feel is necessary, including those that would normally be illegal. This could take the form of immediate execution of the cultists, or ordering a TAD strike against the Sector.

## A number of Alternative Endings

The Games Master is given a choice of endings from this point, depending on how they think their group will react.

For a truly action-packed ending, H-Wagon support can arrive (it will not cost any Support Points if called at this point), pick up the Judges, and they can direct its fire against the creature as it tries to bat away hover-cars while clinging to the side of the building. The following stats should be used in this case:

## Bel-Yog-Thulu

**Hit Dice:** 13d12+52 (137 hp)

**Initiative:** +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**DV:** 18 (-1 Size, +9 Reflex)

**Damage Reduction:** 20 (Natural Armour)

**Attacks:** 2 Slams +19 Melee

**Damage:** Slam 2d8 +7/20

**Special Qualities:** Power Resistance 18

**Saves:** Fort +14, Ref +9, Will +13

**Abilities:** Str 25, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 16

**Skills:** Climb +10, Concentration +20, Knowledge (Occult) +20, Listen+28, Psi-Scan +21, Search +20, Sense Motive +20, Spot +12

**Feats:** Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Initiative

For a more heroic combat, they can take it on by themselves, in which case use the following stats:

## Bel-Yog-Thulu

**Hit Dice:** 12d12 (117 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (+1 Dex)

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**DV:** 18 (-1 Size, +9 Reflex)

**Damage Reduction:** 12 (Natural Armour)

**Attacks:** Slam +14/+9/+4 Melee

**Damage:** Slam 2d6+2/4

**Special Qualities:** Power Resistance 8

**Saves:** Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +10

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 16

**Skills:** Climb+6, Concentration +8, Knowledge (Occult) +10, Listen+9, Psi-Scan +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +7, Spot +8

**Feats:** Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative

This may sound incredibly unfair, but:

- The Judges have projectile weapons, and can keep their distance while pelting the creature with gunfire.
- The Judges (hopefully) brought their Lawmasters up in an elevator.

A third possible ending is provided for those groups the Games Master believes can truly appreciate it. It can also be used to bail out the Judges if they appear to be in over their heads. Depending on how much involvement the Games Master wishes the players to have in their own



scenario finale, this can be linked to defeating Gumpworthy himself.

*You hear an upper class Brit-Cit accent from the stairwell behind you. 'This way! According to the prophecies, he who would consume the Earth will be battled by the forces of Law and Order at this place, at this time. They will have not the power to contain him! Well, I think this is the place, anyway... Zargon was a bit vague about the details...'*

*A second Brit-Cit accent (although a substantially more common one) utters 'There you go again, quoting the prophecies of Zargon. Look, I knew the git back in eighteen fifty-six, and I'm telling you that stuff he wrote is complete bollo-'*

*'Will you two just stop it!' A girl's voice, full of authority and a Mega-City accent, cuts in. 'All that matters here is that the big bad has finally arrived and it needs its butt handing to it!'*

*A man in a tweed jacket and glasses stumbles out of the stairwell, carrying a large leather-bound book. Another with a long leather coat and bleached-blond hair follows him. Finally a young woman (you estimate aged about twenty-one) comes running out, and towards the creature. Taking a running leap, she somersaults through the air, and connects her foot with its tentacled face. The creature is taken off-guard, stumbles, and falls backwards through the portal.*

*A flash, a bang, and before you know it everything is back to normal. The rooftop is devoid of extra-dimensional portals, creatures, and strange people. Except for the cultists, who lay around groaning in various states of health.*

If you want to do the final option and give the players a hand in the battle, have an injured Bel-yog-thulu to re-emerge from the pyramid (use the stats from above with one-quarter the hit points), plus throw in the cultists to fight as well.

## Epilogue

Lyn Peto has disappeared. If she was dead, her body has apparently vanished from the Sector House morgue without a trace (it was not due to be delivered to Resyk for another couple of days).

If arrested, her cell is found empty the next morning, although the Cube wardens have no recollection of her ever being in there, or any record of her admittance. Anything taken from her apartment has also disappeared (including any evidence under lock and key). Her apartment itself is home to a family of four, the Nephrens, who insist they have lived there for twenty years... as do their neighbours. Any recorded records which mention her or anything to do with her have been mysteriously wiped, and if Psi-Div are consulted their operative gets nothing except a creepy shiver going up their spine if they attempt to scan any of the affected equipment. A member of Psi-Div actually visiting Peto's former apartment

will be physically ill and must leave the area, gaining nothing more than a vision of pitch-blackness.

In short, she is a complete enigma (and the wise Games Master should be able to figure out why).

The Judges should receive 2,000 experience points each for participating in this scenario, plus 1,000 more for completing it successfully. They also receive a bonus equal to the amount of remaining Support Points they did not spend, as a reward for dealing with things on their own without calling in the big guns.

## Optional Follow-up

Play through the Judges submitting their reports to the Watch Commander. Any mention of strange or supernatural goings-on will get no more than a raised eyebrow at this point, but will almost certainly result in an SJS psych evaluation within the month.

## Player Handout

### Jonas Duggan Autopsy

Time of death appears to be one hour before discovery. The victim's throat was cut first, death following shortly thereafter.

Most of the blood was drained from the victim's body while they were still relatively intact, and it is more likely the loss of blood was the actual cause of death, as the cut to the throat was not immediately fatal. A puncture wound over the heart appears to have been the point of extraction, using a large hollow needle and some form of suction device. Flakes of metal within the wound can be traced to a standard clinical needle in widespread use in just about every medical facility in the city.

The head and limbs were removed after the time of death, once the blood had been drained. Any blood trails were from the small amount of blood left within the body and limbs.





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