

# SHARK BYTES

THE UNOFFICIAL SAVAGE WORLDS FANZINE



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HOW TO WRITE A  
**HORROR ADVENTURE**

A PEEK BEHIND THE SCENES OF  
***SLIPSTREAM***

SAVAGE SPLATTERPUNK,  
DEMONIC POSSESSION,  
AND A PLETHORA  
OF POISONS

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**HAPPY  
HALLOWEEN**

# The Savage Nor'easter



## THE STATE OF THINGS

Well, we did it! Issue #1 of **Shark Bytes** has been released, and judging from the response on the Pinnacle Forums, it was a resounding success. That's not to say we don't have any kinks to work out or rough spots to smooth over. We do. However, as a result of the frank comments received from you, the gentle reader, identifying those areas and fixing them before the second issue went to print was a breeze.

Thank you for all your comments—and your criticisms—they all have been duly noted and will go a long way toward making **Shark Bytes** a FANzine better able to address the concerns and interests of those who read its pages!

Having said that let me move on to an issue that needs to be addressed: I need more submissions from you guys! I *know* for a fact that there are enough ideas floating around there to fill several issues of **Shark Bytes**. Like most of you, I have a job, a family, and a life outside of gaming—heck, I even go to school full-time on top of it all; so I can understand that your time is at a premium. So what's my point you ask? Only this: **Shark Bytes** was conceived and created on the idea that the online community of Savages wanted, nay, needed an outlet for all of their creative ideas. If you want **Shark Bytes** to continue you need to step up and share your creative ideas with the rest of the community. All you need to do is submit it to us and we'll put it out there for all to see. Consider this rant a wake up call, a plea for help, or a call to action. However you take it, I hope it'll inspire you to step up and contribute. I'd like to extend a big thanks to all those that *have* contributed to date—especially William Reger and Butch Curry. There are others that have sent in multiple submissions as well: Donald Kamadulski, Theron Seckington, Daniel Wood, Clint Black, and Niklas Brandt, to name a few. Thanks to all of you—your submissions are what make all of this possible, so keep 'em coming!

OK. Now that that's off my chest, I have something else I'd like to say: There will be no "theme issues", at least in the foreseeable future. I wish I could do them, but at this point, it's just not possible. Doing a theme issue means having a large backlog of articles to choose from, and at this point, we just don't have that luxury. So, while this issue does contain lots of horror-themed articles, it also contains stuff from other genres as well.

On a negative note, Paul Kasper, the man responsible for all the "real" editing in **Shark Bytes** #1, will no longer be working with me. Unfortunately, for me, not him, he received a promotion at his job and it requires much more of his time than his previous position. Paul, you'll be missed. Thanks for all the hard work you did on the first issue; its success was due in large part to your comments, criticisms, and eye toward professionalism. I only hope that I can maintain the standard that you set for **Shark Bytes**. Congratulations on the promotion, and best of luck in all that you do. Keep it Savage!

Now some good news—the **Shark Bytes Website** is now up and running! Take a jaunt over to [www.sharkbytes.info](http://www.sharkbytes.info) and check out *Breakout on Gartooine*, a Savage Showdown scenario by Rod Phillips as well as some other downloads only available on our website—including a collection of maps from the multi-talented Butch Curry!

Look for lots of pulpy goodness in Issue #3! I've got a battle report, some *Showdown* scenarios, a bigger than normal slew of NPCs for the *Bucket o' Chum* column, several adventures, and the debut of three new columns! Hopefully, I'll also have the next installment of *Savage Jack Speaks* as well as a preview of *Pinebox Places* from the guys at 12 to Midnight, Inc. Stay tuned and stay Savage!

Bill Littlefield, the "Editor" ;)

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# WELCOME TO SLIPSTREAM!

## A Brief Look at Life Beyond the Black Hole ...

*Well here it is—another teaser from Paul Williams, better known as Wiggy over on the Pinnacle Forums. You might recognize him as the author of Pinnacle's upcoming Savage setting book—Slipstream. If you spend any time on the PEG Forums, you know that Wiggy likes to tease us. Well now he gets to do the same thing in the pages of **Shark Bytes!** So pour a cup of coffee, sit back in your reading chair, and take a brief look at life beyond the Black Hole. Just remember that all this stuff is subject to change pending editing and playtesting!*

Hey! You with the blue fur and horns! You speak Streamer? Great! Come over here a minute. Come on, I don't bite.

You look like you're fairly new here. You are? Well, in that case, cash in some Slips and buy me a slug of Lil' Brain Rot and I'll give you a brief low down of what's what and who's who. Time is money, so I'm gonna give you just the bare facts.

Let me introduce myself. Name's Jack Savage, but you can call me Jack. I'm an Earthling. That means I'm from Earth, or at least my grandpa was. No one's come from Earth since some ark ships got sucked into a big old black hole a century back. Me, I was born and raised on Simba. You ever been there? Nice place, big open spaces, friendly locals. The locals? They're called Lion Men.

They look like... you never seen a lion have you? Oh well, they're taller than me, flat faces, furry, got these nasty retractable claws they use for killing, and follow this strict code of honor. My advice, don't upset one! They're cool if you treat them right.

Anyway, here's what you need to know. Firstly, don't worry about someone opening the doors of a rocket ship while you're in space. Vacuum? My friend, there's no such thing as vacuum here. Sure the air is thin and hard to breathe, but it won't kill you. Some people can breathe the air like it's natural, but you don't look like one of them. If you're worried, wear a bubble helmet and buy some air tablets.

Fragments have the same gravity, no matter their size or shape. No gravity in space though, so make sure you use magnetic clamps or a tether, less you plan on taking up flying. Nah, ships have got Graviton Compensators to stop you drifting around while you're indoors. Yes, they work with the door open. Don't worry so much. Space travel is safe, less you meet a leviathan or space pirates of course.

This here universe is also pretty small. You can usually reach a neighboring world in a couple of hours. 'Course, it depends how fast your ship is. How many worlds? Well, we call them fragments. 'cos that's what they are—fragments of bigger worlds ripped apart by those black holes. I reckon we got around 50 main worlds, but I've only been to half of them. You got desert fragments, ice balls, tropical jungle, forests, volcanoes, plains—the works! Just not on the same world. Each fragment has a single terrain type.

Escape? I'm afraid there is no way out. A few souls try to fly through the black hole each year, but most come back crushed. And I don't mean mentally either. You, my friend, are here for life.

You're gonna meet an awful lot of weirdoes. No offense intended—you're pretty normal compared to some of the aliens we got living here. Example? Well... the Septosians for one. A Septosian is a giant slug with tentacles that can extend to double their length. Makes for a nasty surprise when you're standing ten feet away and one of them slaps you round the face. You may also need a bubble helmet, 'cos they stink!

Worse still, they can fire off this gas that makes you heave like you were pulling a loop at full speed.

Don't get caught by the Queen's agents. You never heard of her! Man, you are new. Listen, she is bad news with a capital EVIL. She's the big boss around here. Takes what she wants, when she wants, especially males. Why? Damned if I know, but I ain't volunteering to find out. No one knows where she lives, and it's best kept that way. You go looking for trouble here and you'll find it.

She's got three main types of followers. Topping the list are the Handmaidens. These bitches are tough, packing advanced weaponry and wearing some sort of super armor. You see one of them, you run as fast as you can. They'll frag your ass as soon as look at you. Next are the Primals. They're barbaric primates, but they're mean sons of bitches. Lastly, there're the Minions. These guys are all male Earthlings and fly her ships.

You psionic? You know, mind powers? You have? Best keep that quiet. There's a price on your head whether you know it or not. The Queen doesn't like psionics. No, I ain't asked her why. She doesn't mind mad scientists, though. You know, nutters that try to recreate alien artifacts.

Here're some places to avoid. The Queen's forces interdict Quan, Psidonia, and Xaq. You go there, you're gonna die pretty fast. No, I don't know why they're blockaded, but they are. You might want to avoid Arachnea as well. The Spider Men got a nasty habit of eating anything they catch, and I mean anything. One of them took a chunk out of a friend of mine before they realized he was a Robot Man. Yep, a Robot Man. Fully sentient machines. Damn clunky when they move, but they're tough cookies.

Let's see... oh, yeah. There's this big area of space called the Dust Cloud. In the middle somewhere is Stygia. No, I ain't ever been there. Just hear me out. These dark aliens called Stygians live there. No one messes with them, not even the Queen, 'cos they're real nasty. Best avoid the Dust Cloud, though it means a longer trip.

You may have noticed the spiral of crud heading toward the centre of the universe. That's the Graviton Wave, but we just call it the Wave or the Slipstream. It carries small fragments and space debris through Slipstream to the Graveyard at the centre of the universe. Plenty of rich pickings in the Slipstream, if you can avoid the meteor storms and asteroids that is.

Look my friend, time is pressing. I've got a cargo of alien artifacts I'm hauling to Babel for some librarian. You any good with a swivel mounted gun? My last gunner bit the dust on Charadon. Got himself eaten by a Shark Man while diving for gold pearls. Nasty business.

Common, my Angeli Scout Ship is just outside. Course she's fast! I invested in some extra boosters I found on a derelict. She's the fastest ship in the universe!

# A PLETHORA OF POTENT POISONS

## Seven unique and powerful poisons for use in any Savage Worlds campaign.

*Here is a wicked selection of original poisons suitable for use in any Savage campaign. They originally appeared in The Assassin's Guide to Poisons, a d20 System supplement by Philip J. Reed. Luckily for us, Philip declared the original document to be Open Game Content (OGC). So here it is—suitably Savaged, of course! Enjoy, and be sure to check out [www.philipjreed.com](http://www.philipjreed.com), and [www.rpgnow.com](http://www.rpgnow.com) (do a search for Ronin Arts) for all kinds of D20 stuff just waiting to be Savaged! Be forewarned—these poisons are not for use by the fainthearted GM!*

### Using These Poisons

The poisons in this article were designed to be generic in nature and easy to employ. The descriptions use terms like “the mountains to the north”, “the eastern forests”, and “the great southern rivers” so that the GM may easily slot in specific locations in his individual campaign world. You'll also note that the Cost per Dose is given in generic units, equal to dollars (or its equivalent) in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. Feel free to adjust the Cost and Availability values to suit your own campaign setting.

Each poison has a listed Potency Rating (PR). Whenever a character is exposed to the poison he must pass a Vigor roll applying the PR as a modifier to the die total. With a success, the character resists the toxin and the poison has no effect. A failure means the character suffers the listed Normal Effect. A character that rolls a natural 1 on the Vigor die (regardless of the Wild Die) suffers the listed Bonus Effect in addition to the poison's normal effect!

Unless noted otherwise, if the Vigor roll to resist the poison has failed a successful –2 Healing roll made upon the character can prevent a poison from taking full effect. This roll must be attempted before half the poison's listed Onset Time (below) has expired (or before the end of the current round for Instant and Immediate Onset Times). If successful, a poisoned character subject to the Normal Effect has been saved from the poison. If he suffered the Normal and Bonus Effects, the character would now suffer only the Normal Effect. Only one attempt at this “last chance” Healing roll may be made for the character.

The poison's Onset Time details the amount of time between exposure and the time at which the character is required to make a Vigor roll. The categories are: Instant (upon contact), Immediate (at the end of the current round), Rapid (one minute after contact), Moderate (ten minutes after contact), Slow (one hour after contact), and Chronic (varies from 12 hours to one week after contact as noted in the poison's description).

The Vector listing describes how the poison must be delivered: Ingestion (character must eat or drink the poison or food/drink contaminated by it), Insinuation (poison must be introduced into the victim's bloodstream), Contact (the poison must touch the victim's skin), or Inhalation (the victim must breathe in the poison).

### ACENNAN'S RAGE

**PR (Onset Time):** –2 (Immediate)

**Vector:** Ingestion or Insinuation

**Cost per Dose (Availability):** 200 (Uncommon)

**Description:** This blue-colored liquid is the result of combining the blood of a berserker with the saliva of a rare water snake found only in the icy streams of the northern wastelands. The barbarian tribes use this poison when facing a foe of superior numbers, the usual method being to deliver the poison via tainted arrows delivered at a distance. Once the afflicted enemies have reduced their own ranks, their opponents move in for the kill.

**Normal Effect:** The victim will attack the nearest targets—friend and foe—in melee combat. All Fighting and Strength rolls (including melee damage) are made at +2. His Toughness is increased by 2; however, his Parry is reduced by 2. These effects last for four rounds. The victim may not perform any actions other than attacking the nearest targets until the poison's effects subside. Once the effects have subsided, the character is Incapacitated for d6 rounds. Healing rolls have no effect on this poison. **Bonus Effect:** Double the duration to eight rounds and suffer one wound. This wound may be healed normally.

### BLACK VENOM

**PR (Onset Time):** –4 (Instant)

**Vector:** Insinuation

**Cost per Dose (Availability):** 3000 (Very Rare)

**Description:** A viscous black liquid manufactured by the Black Elves who live beneath the windswept western mountains. The poison is made from water that has been cursed in the name of the dark gods. After bringing the water to a boil, the brewer then adds the severed head of an enemy. Once the skin has boiled away from the skull, the water is cursed again. The liquid is then left to boil for 24 hours, after which it is drained and mixed with the blood of an enemy and cursed for the last time. The elves typically use Black Venom to coat the deadly traps that guard entry to their underground realm. Since the poison does not kill outright, its victims are often collected and used in the elves' dark rituals...

**Normal Effect:** A victim of Black Venom suffers one wound and is immediately Incapacitated for d6 hours. A successful Healing roll during this time restores the victim to Shaken. **Bonus Effect:** The victim suffers two wounds instead of just one.

## DRAGON WEED

**PR (Onset Time):** -4 (Rapid)

**Vector:** Insinuation

**Cost per Dose (Availability):** 1000 (Rare)

**Description:** This poison is created from the root of the Talmus tree that grows only in the sparse forests along the eastern edge of the great desert. The root is pulverized and mixed with the blood of a dozen victims killed with the same dagger. The mixture is then boiled and left to sit for 24 hours. After this, it is buried beneath a hanging tree until the dawn following a full moon. The resulting toxin may then be used to coat the blade of the user's weapon of choice.

**Normal Effect:** A victim of Dragon Weed suffers one wound. Each raise on the attack roll that caused the poisoning requires the victim to make an additional Vigor roll at the start of their next action. Each failure results in an additional wound. **Bonus Effect:** All Vigor rolls made after the initial roll are made at -2.

## DROPS OF DESPAIR

**PR (Onset Time):** -2 (Moderate)

**Vector:** Contact

**Cost per Dose (Availability):** 1000 (Rare)

**Description:** This poison is made from the juices of three rare herbs that grow along the banks of the great western ocean. The herbs are difficult to locate and none grow within 50 miles of any of the others. The herbs are added to sea water and brought to a boil. After cooling, the top layer is skimmed off and the water discarded. The residue is then dried and concocted into a paste.

**Normal Effect:** Anyone affected by this poison suffers a general malaise that eventually deepens into depression. Ten minutes after exposure the victim begins to feel generalized body aches and muscular cramping (-1 to all actions). One hour after being poisoned the victim enters into a deep depression (-2 on all attempts to recover from being Shaken). This depression lasts for d6 hours after which time the victim may make a Spirit roll to shake off its effects. If the roll is failed, the depression continues for another d6 hours. This cycle is repeated until the character recovers. **Bonus Effect:** The depression lasts for 2d6 hours instead of just d6 hours.

## HELLSTRIKE

**PR (Onset Time):** -4 (Slow)

**Vector:** Any

**Cost per Dose (Availability):** 5000 (Very Rare)

**Description:** This versatile bright crimson paste is normally used as a contact poison (being rubbed onto clothes or other similar items sure to contact the victim's skin). However, it can also be dried and mixed with food, dried and pulverized so as to form an airborne mist, or thickened and used to coat a weapon. The paste is created from the blood and ground teeth of a slain demon.

**Normal Effect:** A victim of Hellstrike reduces their Vigor die type by one! This attribute may only be restored to its original score through normal character advancement. All derived statistics are immediately changed to reflect the reduction in die type. Any Healing rolls to treat this poison are made at -6. **Bonus Effect:** The character's Vigor is reduced by two die types instead of just one!

## MIND ROT

**PR (Onset Time):** -2 (Chronic)

**Vector:** Ingestion

**Cost per Dose (Availability):** 500 (Uncommon)

**Description:** This vile poison is brewed from the brain of an imbecile, the bones of feeble-minded man, and the heart of a liar. All the ingredients are pulverized and dried before being brewed into a foul-smelling potion.

**Normal Effect:** 24 hours after ingesting Mind Rot the victim reduces his Smarts die type by one! This attribute may only be restored to its original score through normal character advancement. **Bonus Effect:** All Smarts-based skills are reduced by one die type as well. If the Smarts die type is ever raised back up, these automatically return to their original levels.

## TWISTED ROOT

**PR (Onset Time):** -2 (Slow)

**Vector:** Ingestion

**Cost per Dose (Availability):** 150 (Uncommon)

**Description:** This poison is concocted from the root of a small tree that grows along the cliffs of the southern coasts. The root is chopped into fine shavings, which are used to brew a bitter tea.

**Normal Effect:** The victim suffers severe stomach cramps and pain (-2 to all actions). This pain slowly builds in intensity over time, -3 after two hours and finally, -4 after three hours. Healing rolls cannot stop this process. After four hours the victim is Incapacitated, but a successful Healing roll restores them to Shaken. **Bonus Effect:** The Healing roll made to restore the victim to Shaken is made at -4 instead of the normal -2.

# BLOOD IN THE WATER

## JB's Collection of House Rules, Part Two

This column will present a selection of optional and variant rules and additions culled from the ranks of the Savage Fanatics who frequent the Pinnacle Discussion Forum. This issue I present the second (and final) installment of my own house rules. These are the rules that constitute my personal "core" version of the Savage Worlds game. I also use additional rules depending on the genre I'm playing, but those will be a series of articles in their own right! Keep in mind that none of these rules were created to address any particular deficiencies in the Savage Worlds core rules—I've yet to come across any—but rather to tweak an already great set of rules into something that my group really enjoys playing more than any other system out there. After all, isn't that what house rules are all about?

### HINDRANCES

**Attribute Deficiency** (Mega): You must choose a specific attribute when taking this Hindrance. For whatever reason, your character is not as well adjusted as your average character. Perhaps he's not as intelligent or insightful as others. Maybe he's weaker or clumsier. Whatever the reason, the end result is that during character generation, when adjusting the affected attribute, it costs two points for each increase in die type; thereafter, two leveling opportunities must be spent to increase the attribute by one die type. This Hindrance is worth three bonus points.

**Amnesia** (Major): You can't remember events before a specific point in your life. The details are left to the GM, but may include additional Hindrances (such as Wanted) that your character is unaware of, forgotten family members, or perhaps unknown organizational ties.

**Dark Secret** (Major or Minor): Your character has a "skeleton in his closet". If his secret becomes known it will cause embarrassment and possibly prevent him from continuing to act in his current capacity. Whether the Hindrance is major or minor depends on the actual secret and the severity of the consequences if it becomes known.

**Illiterate** (Major or Minor): Your character cannot read and does he understand the concept of numbers beyond what he can count using his fingers and toes. He can "make his mark", but that's about it. This Hindrance is considered major if the character belongs to a society where literacy is commonplace; otherwise it is minor. (Editor: The second printing of the Savage Worlds rulebook includes this Hindrance in a slightly different form. Personally, I prefer my own version as it allows for both minor and major variants).

**Lying Eyes** (Minor): Your character is nearly incapable of telling a lie and keeping a straight face. Whenever making an Intimidation, Persuasion, or Taunt roll in which anything more than a "slight bending of the truth" is involved, a -2 modifier is applied to the roll.

**Mute** (Mega): The character (and the player) may only communicate with other players and characters by writing or some sort of sign language. The player may converse with the GM (away from the other players) if he needs to discuss what his character is doing. This Hindrance is worth three bonus points.

**Obsession** (Major): Your character is obsessed with something—acquiring occult knowledge, protecting abused children, collecting rare weapons, and getting a date with the cute girl who works at the library. Whatever it is, it's just about the most important thing in his life. He'll neglect his friends and responsibilities, expend vast amounts of energy and resources, and even put himself and his companions in danger to pursue his obsession. This can actually be useful sometimes: an obsession can drive a character into an adventure or keep him going against impossible odds. Usually though, his obsession will just cause problems.

### BACKGROUND EDGES

**Acclimated** (Novice; Vigor d8): All Vigor tests to resist the effects of Fatigue resulting from a specific environmental effect (e.g., heat, cold, sleep, etc.) chosen when this Edge is taken are made at +2.

**Buff** (Novice, Brawny, Strength d8+) characters, either naturally or through intense training, are really, really strong. They apply a Load Limit multiplier of x15 and get a +2 bonus to Toughness.

**Enhanced Senses** (Novice; Alertness): Your character has a particularly acute sense that grants a +1 bonus on any Notice rolls dependent upon it. This Edge may be taken more than once; however, each instance may only be applied to a single sense and no sense may be enhanced more than once. The bonus granted by this Edge stacks with that provided by the Alertness Edge.

**Hardy** (Novice; Vigor d8): All Vigor tests to resist the effects of poison and disease are made at +2.

**Night Vision** (Novice): Your character ignores the normal penalty for Dim illumination and halves the normal penalty for Dark illumination. A character with this Edge requires a full round to “adjust his vision” when moving from a well-lit area into an area of dim or dark illumination before this Edge will function.

## COMBAT EDGES

**Blind Fighting** (Seasoned; Night Vision; Fighting d8): The character ignores all penalties for illumination (and halves those for invisible targets) when engaged in melee.

**Brawler** (Novice; Fighting d6): Brawlers gain a +1 bonus on grappling rolls.

**Pugilists** (Brawler) gain a +2 bonus on grappling rolls. Unarmed damage is equal to Strength+1.

**Martial Artists** (Seasoned, Pugilist, Block, and Fighting d8) never count as unarmed when fighting an armed opponent. Unarmed damage is equal to Strength+2.

**Martial Arts Legends** (Veteran, Martial Artist, Agility d8) are so skilled at unarmed combat that they may ignore the normal gang-up bonus when engaged in melee against multiple foes.

**Deflect Missiles** (Seasoned; Agility d8): If your character is aware of an incoming missile attack his Parry is used as the TN for the attack.

**Eagle Eye** (Seasoned; Shooting d8): This character halves the modifiers for called shots when making Shooting attacks.

## LEADERSHIP EDGES

**Born Leader** (Seasoned; Command): Extras under the command of this character roll a d8, instead of a d6, as a Wild Die when making group rolls.

**Commanding Presence** (Veteran; Command): A character with this Edge may apply the effects of any Leadership Edges he possess to all Extras within 10”.

## SOCIAL EDGES

**Don Juan or Seductress** (Novice): These characters make all Persuasion rolls against the opposite sex at +2.

**Gift of Gab** (Novice; Smarts d8): Characters with this Edge can figure out the basics of any language given a few minutes to listen to people speaking it. Given time, he can get basic messages across regardless of the language being spoken.

## WEIRD EDGES

**Fringe Benefit** (Varies at the GM’s discretion): This Edge may be taken more than once to represent the various kinds of fringe benefits available in the game. Some examples of fringe benefits include: a license to practice a particular profession, membership in an important organization or group, law enforcement powers, absolute timing or sense of direction, eidetic memory, internal calculator, perfect pitch, or anything else the player can think of that is not covered by another Edge and is not a common occurrence in the game world.

**Jack of all Trades** (Seasoned; d8 in chosen attribute and at least one linked skill): When you take this Edge you must choose a specific attribute to be affected. Your character may ignore the normal unskilled penalty when performing skills linked to the chosen attribute. You may take this Edge multiple times—once per attribute; however, you may only take it once per rank. *(Editor: A variant of this Edge is included as a Professional Edge in the second printing of the Savage Worlds rulebook; personally, I prefer my own version as it is more generic in nature and allows the player to choose the attribute affected.)*

Well, that does it for my house rules! Now that *Necessary Evil* and the second printing of the core rulebook are available I may have to re-think some things, but for now things will stay as they are. As always, these house rules just represent my \$.02 and your mileage may, and probably will, vary! Remember to send your house rules to [editor@sharkbytes.info](mailto:editor@sharkbytes.info) if you’d like to see this column continue. Until next issue—stay Savage!





# DEMONIC POSSESSION

**A system for handling those things that “get under your skin and in your head”...**

*Whether it's a demon from Hell, the spirit of some dead guy, or a non-corporeal historian with a dislike of sentient fungus, there are a variety of beings interested in taking up lodging within some hapless person's body. What follows is a simple system for handling demonic possession. I've also included a new power for those of you who wish to take a stab at evicting the unwelcome guest. Though all the creatures that possess corporeal beings aren't necessarily demons, for simplicity's sake the term shall be used throughout this article to refer to any entity capable of possessing a corporeal being.*

## NEW MONSTROUS ABILITY: POSSESSION

In order to *possess* a corporeal being, a demon must win an opposed Spirit roll against the target. If successful, it possesses the target's body and takes control. The target is aware of what's happening; however, he is unable to take any independent action unless the demon chooses to allow it. Were the demon to get a raise on its Spirit roll (or were the target to achieve a *critical failure* by rolling a 1 on his Spirit die), the target's personality would be *completely dominated* and he would be unaware of the possession. Should the target win the opposed roll, the demon fails to enter the target's body; however, unless the target achieved a raise on his roll or the demon achieved a critical failure (as above); the demon may try again after an amount of time determined by the GM.

The GM, roleplaying the demon, has overriding control of the possessed character's actions. So long as the target was not completely dominated, once per hour he may attempt a Spirit roll at -2 in order to temporarily break free of the demon's control. The length of time for which the character remains free, and the freedom of action he's allowed, are solely at the discretion of the GM. These periods of temporary freedom should be role-played to provide as much dramatic tension as possible.

Possession can be detected by a successful use of the Conceal/Detect Arcana power. The craftiest demons will of course attempt to use the same power, if they have it, to conceal their presence.

Once possessed, there are only two ways to evict the unwelcome guest: *exorcism* (see below) and sheer willpower. The latter method simply consists of opposed Spirit rolls handled in the same manner as the initial possession attempt. Each such attempt requires ten minutes, and only one attempt per day is possible. Possession may not be defeated by sheer willpower if the target was completely dominated. In such cases, it's time to place a call to the nearest exorcist!

## NEW POWER: EXORCISM

**Rank:** Seasoned

**Power Points:** Variable (see below)

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** Instant

**Trappings:** Sprinkling holy water, presenting arcane symbols, etc...

Exorcism allows a character to cast out a demon that possesses another character. To accomplish this, the exorcist must win an opposed roll between his arcane skill and the demon's Spirit. Each attempt requires d6 hours. The Power Point cost is equal to one plus one-half the demon's Spirit die type ( $[\frac{1}{2} \text{ Spirit}] + 1$ ). It is highly recommended that the possessed character be restrained to keep the demon from interfering with the exorcism and that the proper rituals (according to the trappings of the power) be observed. Failing to do either allows the demon a +2 bonus on all of its Spirit rolls against the exorcist.

If the exorcist wins the opposed roll, the demon is cast out but is still in the general area. It may attempt to possess someone else (except the exorcist and the person it was just cast out from) or to physically manifest (if it has such ability). Should the exorcist get a raise, the demon is cast out and sent packing to whatever dimension it originated from.

If the demon wins, it retains possession of the character. The exorcist may keep trying as long as he has enough Power Points remaining. However, if the demon wins with a raise, that particular exorcist is unable to remove the demon. Another exorcist must be found or the character must wait until the demon leaves of its own accord.



## AMMUNITION



*You can never have enough ammunition, at least that's what some of my more "trigger happy" players seem to think! With that in mind, here are a variety of exotic real-world bullets that you can spring on your players—either as items available for purchase or as something flying out the barrel of an enemy's weapon! It's left to individual GMs to determine the weight and cost of these rounds as well as their availability.*

**Copper Head Rounds** (+2 damage; normal AP reduced by -2): This round features an all-copper slug with a copper ring nose in the full diameter of the cartridge. It provides excellent expansion in soft targets, such as a human body, and was primarily designed as a sniper round. Copper head rounds cause an additional +2 points of damage; however they are unable to penetrate armor as effectively as normal rounds, so the AP of the weapon is reduced by 2.

**Depleted Uranium Rounds** (+1d6/2d6 damage; normal AP increased by +2; Heavy Weapon): The head of a depleted uranium round is made of super-dense and radioactive-depleted uranium. Weapons firing these rounds are highly effective at penetrating armor and so gain an AP bonus of +2. Also, any rifle, assault rifle, or machinegun firing depleted uranium rounds becomes a Heavy Weapon (per the *Savage Worlds* rulebook). These rounds also do a lot of damage—add an extra d6 to the weapon's normal damage value. If you're feeling particularly nasty, add an extra 2d6 when used against an unarmored ("soft") target!

**Hollow Point (Dum-Dum) Rounds** (+4 damage; normal AP reduced by -2): Hollow point rounds are designed to fragment upon penetration of the target. This can result in lots of extra damage, granting a +4 damage bonus to the firing weapon. Due to their fragmentation upon impact, "dum-dums" are not very good at penetrating armor. Like the copper head round, hollow point rounds reduce the AP value of a weapon loaded with them by 2.

**Jacketed Hollow Point Rounds** (+2 damage): These rounds combine the best qualities of the depleted uranium and hollow point rounds. This variation of the hollow point round is wrapped in a harder-than-normal brass, lead, or copper casing, or "jacket". This prevents the standard dum-dum's loss of penetration power, while still retaining much of the benefit of the hollow point on the round to inflict extra damage. Jacketed hollow point rounds cause an additional +2 points of damage.

**Kinetic Rounds** (4d6 nonlethal damage): Also known as "beanbag" rounds, these are designed for use in situations where lethal and/or collateral damage is to be avoided as much as possible. The "beanbag" is filled with lead shot and expands as it is fired, delivering a massive blunt impact over a large surface area. These rounds cause 4d6 points of nonlethal damage. Only specially modified shotguns can fire these cartridges.

**Plus-P Rounds** (+2 damage at Short range; +5" to each range increment): By using a larger powder load, Plus-P rounds increase each range increment of the weapon firing them by 5". For example, an AK-47 using Plus-P rounds now has range increments of 29/53/101. At Short range, the increased powder load also translates into a +2 bonus on the damage roll.

**Rubber Rounds** (Nonlethal damage beyond Point Blank range): Like kinetic rounds, the rubber round is designed for situations where lethal and/or collateral damage is to be minimized. At very short ranges, however, these rounds can be deadly. When using rubber rounds the weapon inflicts only nonlethal damage at distances beyond one-half of the weapon's normal Short range, sometimes called "Point Blank" range. Damage inflicted within Point Blank range is lethal damage.

*All these items are designated OGL content and originally appeared in Bleeding Edge: Ammunition by Jason J. McCuistan (LPJ Design: <http://www.lpjdesign.com>), a mini-sourcebook of sorts for the D20 Modern System.*

# It's all in the name...

## ***A slew of pirate and ship names with a European flavor.***

*The Savage Worlds GM is always faced with the task of coming up with names for his Wild Cards and Extras—a thankless task that very few of us look forward to with any relish. In this article, Donald Kamadulski seeks to ease our collective burden by providing a list of over one hundred names from which to pick and choose. I guess he figured, “why stop at just pirate names?” He also sent along a list of more than a hundred ship names as well! Even though these names have a distinctly European flavor, they should be suitable for your 50 Fathoms game and they might even provide a bit of inspiration for creating your own customized name lists for other genres. Enjoy!*

### **Pirate Names**

Alan Milds	Floar Debney	Martinho Guterres
Alan Newman	Florentin Oudet (M)	Marvin Peutherer
Aleixo Simos	Fluvant Trenet (M)	Mary Bekker
Alonso Rodas	Francisco Baia	Mateus Branco
Amadeo Theriot	Francisco Bia	Mattheus Doull
Andemio De Caxias	Francisco Cervano	Mercadier Nadeau
Andre Juliao	Frederyk Kember	Mergildo Deferr
Antoine Lebreton	Friedrich Corleis	Michael Collop
Aristides Chiamulera	Garci Crusellas	Miguel Filho
Arnaud Matton	Gareth Swingler	Miles Biddick
Audrey Proude	Gary Ankers	Milon Blacque
Bartholomew Pardner	Gentile Hurtis	Morys Biddulph
Beatrice Applegate	Gheraed Drabbe	Moses Blinman
Beatriz Medeiros	Gilbert Ballester	Nadine Jansen (F)
Bernard Gosling	Gisellus Aicega	Necha Duany
Brennan Applegate	Gris Barthez	Nol Meens (M)
Camilo Machado	Hardouin Aufort	Nunn Gats
Carlos Resende	Helena Azocar	Nuno Abrai
Cecilia Pastell	Helgot Cottard	Octavien Sauvaigo
Celia Shedder (F)	Henrique Dallmeida	Oliveier Fessler (M)
Charles Windem	Henry	Olyver Blaxter
Christofor De Alencar	Horne Villette	Orable Caron
Claudio Burrieza	Humberto De Paiva	Own McDorey
Corneille Maccaux (M)	Huon Marly	Padre Domingues
Dirrik Jacobse	Irene Torres	Padre Valentim
Docker	Isidro Edinho	Paolo Jardim
Duarte Correja	Jacinto Barreto	Paolo Milazar
Edgar Attwood	Jane Attwell	Patrick Bisset
Eduard Gerrits	Janneke Blinkerhof	Pauline Beteille
Eloi Labat (M)	Jean Filaut	Peter Butner
Eloise Brock	Joaquin Da Saldanha	Peter Dashwood
Emiliano Rionda	John Filbert	Peter Emden
Emilio Guerra	John Van Pelt	Phillippe Dary
Eremegildo Caminero	Justin Beineix	Pierre Biez
Esteban Castillio	Kermit Proudfoot	Rachel Blacque
Evan Hart	Kersten Dekker	Ralph Damerell
Evard Gordon	Magdalen Ayler	Raoul Calmes
Evaristo Filho	Marc Blacque	Ras Stevense
Father Jerald	Maria Rivaldo	Reynard Gruenveldt
Feliciano Pombal	Marinella Castrilli	Rian Dekkers
Felix Baijot	Martin Hoschede	Ricout Harmse

Robert Blewett  
 Robyn Corrick  
 Rodrigo Caldeira  
 Rodrigo Neves  
 Roger Hayes  
 Romanus Ocampo  
 Sebastien Wilmart  
 Sefia Christoffel

Simon Hanpool  
 Simona Tolman  
 Stefan Loseir  
 Sylvie Bondies  
 Tanneken Clemens (F)  
 Teodulfus Lastres  
 Thierry Bosquet  
 Thomas Oreily

Toff Oremans  
 Tomaz Cid  
 Valentim Ribeiro  
 Victor Barros  
 Vincente Da Silva  
 Walter Peate  
 Yden Kalkman  
 Yvonne Dale

## Ship Names

<i>Achates</i>	<i>Blossom</i>	<i>Diadem</i>	<i>Goliath</i>	<i>Majestic</i>	<i>Seahorse</i>
<i>Achilles</i>	<i>Boreas</i>	<i>Diamond</i>	<i>Grafton</i>	<i>Mars</i>	<i>Serpent</i>
<i>Adamant</i>	<i>Bounty</i>	<i>Diligent</i>	<i>Haldane</i>	<i>Medusa</i>	<i>Sirius</i>
<i>Adventure</i>	<i>Boyne</i>	<i>Discovery</i>	<i>Hannibal</i>	<i>Megaera</i>	<i>Speedy</i>
<i>Agamemnon</i>	<i>Bravoure</i>	<i>Dispatch</i>	<i>Hare</i>	<i>Menelaus</i>	<i>Spiteful</i>
<i>Agincourt</i>	<i>Bretonne</i>	<i>Dolphin</i>	<i>Hartford</i>	<i>Minden</i>	<i>Spitfire</i>
<i>Ajax</i>	<i>Broke</i>	<i>Dove</i>	<i>Hazard</i>	<i>Minerva</i>	<i>Stately</i>
<i>Albatross</i>	<i>Brune</i>	<i>Dragon</i>	<i>Hecla</i>	<i>Minotaur</i>	<i>Success</i>
<i>Albemarle</i>	<i>Buckramx</i>	<i>Drake</i>	<i>Hector</i>	<i>Modeste</i>	<i>Superb</i>
<i>Albion</i>	<i>Bulldog</i>	<i>Dreadnought</i>	<i>Helena</i>	<i>Monarch</i>	<i>Swift</i>
<i>Alceste</i>	<i>Bulwark</i>	<i>Dromedary</i>	<i>Herald</i>	<i>Musketo</i>	<i>Swiftsure</i>
<i>Alcide</i>	<i>Caledonian</i>	<i>Duke</i>	<i>Hermione</i>	<i>Naiad</i>	<i>Teaser</i>
<i>Alerte</i>	<i>Calypso</i>	<i>Eagle</i>	<i>Hero</i>	<i>Namur</i>	<i>Terror</i>
<i>Alexandria</i>	<i>Camilla</i>	<i>Echo</i>	<i>Heroine</i>	<i>Nautilus</i>	<i>Theseus</i>
<i>Amazon</i>	<i>Cantabre</i>	<i>Emerald</i>	<i>Hibernia</i>	<i>Nemesis</i>	<i>Thunderer</i>
<i>Amelia</i>	<i>Captain</i>	<i>Endeavour</i>	<i>Hind</i>	<i>Neptune</i>	<i>Tremendous</i>
<i>Amethyst</i>	<i>Censeur</i>	<i>Endymion</i>	<i>Hirondelle</i>	<i>Nymph</i>	<i>Triton</i>
<i>Amphion</i>	<i>Centaur</i>	<i>Enterprise</i>	<i>Hoche</i>	<i>Orion</i>	<i>Triumph</i>
<i>Andromeda</i>	<i>Centurion</i>	<i>Erebus</i>	<i>Hydra</i>	<i>Orpheus</i>	<i>Turbulent</i>
<i>Apollon</i>	<i>Cerberus</i>	<i>Espion</i>	<i>Illustrious</i>	<i>Otter</i>	<i>Undaunted</i>
<i>Aquilon</i>	<i>Ceres</i>	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Impregnable</i>	<i>Pandora</i>	<i>Union</i>
<i>Ardent</i>	<i>Cesar</i>	<i>Ethalion</i>	<i>Incendiary</i>	<i>Pegasus</i>	<i>Valiant</i>
<i>Ares</i>	<i>Champion</i>	<i>Euryalus</i>	<i>Inconstant</i>	<i>Phaeton</i>	<i>Venerable</i>
<i>Arethusa</i>	<i>Charon</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Indefatigable</i>	<i>Phocian</i>	<i>Vengeance</i>
<i>Argonauta</i>	<i>Childers</i>	<i>Exeter</i>	<i>Inspector</i>	<i>Phoebe</i>	<i>Venom</i>
<i>Ariadne</i>	<i>Circe</i>	<i>Experiment</i>	<i>Intrepid</i>	<i>Phoenix</i>	<i>Venus</i>
<i>Arrogant</i>	<i>Cleopatra</i>	<i>Explosion</i>	<i>Invincible</i>	<i>Powerful</i>	<i>Veteran</i>
<i>Artois</i>	<i>Colombe</i>	<i>Falmouth</i>	<i>Iris</i>	<i>Prince</i>	<i>Victorious</i>
<i>Assistance</i>	<i>Colossus</i>	<i>Fawn</i>	<i>Irresistible</i>	<i>Princess Royal</i>	<i>Victory</i>
<i>Assurance</i>	<i>Comet</i>	<i>Fearless</i>	<i>Isis</i>	<i>Providence</i>	<i>Warrior</i>
<i>Astrea</i>	<i>Commerce</i>	<i>Fly</i>	<i>Janus</i>	<i>Queen</i>	<i>Wasp</i>
<i>Atalante</i>	<i>Concorde</i>	<i>Flying Fish</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Ramillies</i>	<i>Wolverine</i>
<i>Atlas</i>	<i>Conqueror</i>	<i>Formidable</i>	<i>Juno</i>	<i>Redoubtable</i>	<i>Zealous</i>
<i>Atrevida</i>	<i>Constitution</i>	<i>Fortitude</i>	<i>Jupiter</i>	<i>Reprisal</i>	
<i>Audacious</i>	<i>Conway</i>	<i>Fortune</i>	<i>Juste</i>	<i>Repulse</i>	
<i>Aurore</i>	<i>Cormorant</i>	<i>Foster Barham</i>	<i>Kent</i>	<i>Requiem</i>	
<i>Avenger</i>	<i>Courageuse</i>	<i>Foudroyant</i>	<i>Latona</i>	<i>Resistance</i>	
<i>Bacchante</i>	<i>Courageux</i>	<i>Fox</i>	<i>Leander</i>	<i>Resolution</i>	
<i>Basilisk</i>	<i>Couronne</i>	<i>Freya</i>	<i>L'Immortalite</i>	<i>Retaliation</i>	
<i>Beagle</i>	<i>Crown</i>	<i>Fury</i>	<i>L'Impatiente</i>	<i>Revenge</i>	
<i>Bedford</i>	<i>Cruiser</i>	<i>Galatea</i>	<i>L'Imperieuse</i>	<i>Robust</i>	
<i>Belcour</i>	<i>Culloden</i>	<i>Ganges</i>	<i>La Legere</i>	<i>Rover</i>	
<i>Bellerophon</i>	<i>Cumberland</i>	<i>General Bowyer</i>	<i>Leopard</i>	<i>Royal Sovereign</i>	
<i>Biter</i>	<i>Daedalus</i>	<i>General Smyth</i>	<i>Leviathan</i>	<i>Saturn</i>	
<i>Black Joke</i>	<i>Dart</i>	<i>Genereux</i>	<i>Lion</i>	<i>Saucy</i>	
<i>Blanche</i>	<i>Defense</i>	<i>Gibraltar</i>	<i>Lively</i>	<i>Sceptre</i>	
<i>Blenheim</i>	<i>Delight</i>	<i>Glatton</i>	<i>Loyalty</i>	<i>Scout</i>	
<i>Blonde</i>	<i>Les Désirée</i>	<i>Glory</i>	<i>Magnificent</i>	<i>Sea Flower</i>	



# NO MAN'S LAND

## An adventure originally intended for D20 gets a good Savaging!

This article provides Savage Worlds conversions of relevant weapon and character statistics for No Man's Land, a short modern horror adventure for the D20 Modern roleplaying game. To play this scenario you will need to obtain a copy of the original adventure, available as a free download from the Wizards of the Coast web site at <http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=d20modern/article/20030311a>.

### Introduction

This adventure should be suitable for five Novice (or three Seasoned) characters. *No Man's Land* may be played as a simple one-shot scenario, requiring 3-4 hours to play to conclusion; however, it is also suitable as a diversionary adventure within a modern pulp campaign. It also works quite well as a demonstration or convention game.

### Elmar Ganz and his Skeletons



**Elmar Ganz** (Seasoned Necromancer)

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, and Vigor d6

**Pace:** 6"; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4; **Bennies:** 2

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Guts d8, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Necromancy) d8, Shooting d6, Spellcasting d10, and Taunt d6.

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Delusional, and Wanted

**Edges:** AB: Magic, Power Points x2 (20 Power Points); Rapid Recharge; New Power

**Powers:** *bolt*, *fear*, *heal*, and *skeletal minions (zombie)\**

**Gear:** Glock 9mm pistol with two 15-round clips and a fighting knife; magical tome (5 Power Points, usable only for *skeletal minions [zombie]*); \$50USD

\*This power is treated as a modified version of zombie (see the *Savage Worlds* rulebook for details) that creates only skeletons. The Power Point cost is 1 per skeleton.

There are 20 skeletons for Elmar to awaken. The skeletons in this adventure can be used exactly as detailed in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook; however, I suggest reducing their pace to 5". They can be armed with any of the weapons located within the museum (see below). They will all be clothed in tattered German uniforms of the period complete with the stereotypical spiked helmets we've all come to expect. When destroyed they may be raised again. Killing Elmar (or destroying his magic tome) is the only way to permanently destroy the skeletons.

### Weapons and Ammunition

All equipment referenced may be found in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. Don't bother keeping track of ammunition for the skeletons (other than those in the tank and those firing the machinegun). It's more fun that way. Simply use

the rules for Extras and Ammo. You may assume that the Maxim machinegun has 500 rounds in two 250-round belts. Reloading the machinegun takes one action for the characters and two actions for the skeletons or Elmar Ganz.

- **Lee-Enfield Rifles with Bayonets:** M1 with bayonet.
- **Mausers C.96 Pistol:** Colt 1911.
- **French F1 Grenades:** Unlike the original adventure, these grenades work! Use German "Potato Masher" stats.
- **French Cavalry Sabers:** Saber (cavalry).
- **Assorted Knives, Daggers, and Bayonets:** Dagger or bayonet as appropriate. Note that items taken from Area 5 will suffer a -2 penalty to Fighting and Parry because of their condition.
- **Maxim Machinegun:** Browning .50 machinegun (this is a Heavy Weapon).
- **Renault Tank ACC/Top Speed 3/7; Toughness 18 (4); Crew 2; Heavy Armor; 37mm (use 30mm stats) turreted cannon.**

### Adventure Area Notes

- **Area 2:** Even though the magic worked by Elmar will allow the firearms to function, they still have not been used in many years. A result of '1' on the skill die (for skeletons) or snake eyes (for PC Wild Cards) indicates a misfire. Roll a d6. On a result of 1-4 (1-3 for machinegun) the misfire is treated as a normal jam (no firing that round able to clear for next round). A result of 5+ (4+ for machinegun) indicates that the weapon explodes for 2d6 points of damage to anyone who happens to be using it at the time!
- **Area 3:** The wire in front of the machinegun can only be bypassed by either cutting it (assuming the characters have a wire cutter), crawling under it (this requires three rounds and an Agility roll each round to avoid getting tangled for one round) or, jumping over it (if you fail an Agility roll at -2 you are entangled and must spend d6 rounds extricating yourself).
- **Area 4:** -2 Fighting and Parry if using a saber or bayonet attached to a rifle. This penalty is cumulative with the -2 penalty for their condition (see above).
- **Area 4C:** Plexiglas has Toughness 8.

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# Roleplaying in Poland

*Piotr Korys and Stopersson give us a peek into their world...*

While not a complete novelty in Poland, roleplaying games are a relatively new phenomenon. The first articles concerning these “strange games” were written by Jacek Ciesielski and appeared in the magazines *Razem* and *Magazyn Razem* in 1986. Bi-monthly articles continued to be published until 1989. Ciesielski wrote about the history of roleplaying behind the Iron Curtain, explained the concepts underlying the various games, and provided reviews of the most popular games. He hoped that someday, these games would be readily available in Poland. Unfortunately, his hope was not to be fulfilled for quite some time.

During the late 80's, a few companies started to publish fantasy and sci-fi board games and paragraph games such as *Goblin* and *Dreszcz*. Reviews of new board games and their connections to RPGs were first explored

in *Fantastyka* (1984)—a well known polish fantasy/sci-fi magazine. Issue #6 (1988) sported full-color pages and featured a gallery of painted miniatures and dioramas. *Fantastyka* was the first magazine to publish RPG-related stories. The saga of Gotrek and Felix by William King being the most notable to see print.

After the fall of communism, the RPG market received more attention than it ever had in previous years. In March, 1990, the magazine *Fenix* published a shortened version of a role playing game by Andrzej Sapkowski. The expanded version was published several years later as *Magia i Miecz*, and then as a book titled *Oko Yrrhedesa*. Unfortunately, this was all that an RPG fan could get in those days as far as “locally authored” games were concerned. Local shops didn't sell many of the games that would have been popular with gamers outside of Poland, and the only way you could get your hands on these much sought after items was to order them from foreign shops—an expensive option at the time. Most of the RPG books available to the average Polish gamer were illegal photocopies. Besides availability, another barrier standing between the intrepid gamer and his game was that of language—very few people could read English, let alone translate it into Polish. The communist government had effectively banned the population from learning English for nearly 50 years!

Everything changed on March 21, 1993. The first issue of *Magia i Miecz* (Sword and Sorcery) magazine was published, making it the first periodical strictly dedicated to roleplaying games. The issue was dedicated to *Kryształy Czasu* (Crystals of Time)—the first “official” Polish RPG. *Kryształy Czasu* was authored by Artur Szyndler, and based heavily on AD&D™. March 21st was also the day on which the publishing house, Mag, opened its doors. This company worked very hard to increase public awareness of Polish RPGs. After *Magia i Miecz*, other RPG periodicals appeared on the Polish market: *Złoty Smok* (Golden Dragon) died after four issues; *Talizman* and *Nowy Talizman* lasted a few issues longer, and *Legenda* a magazine dedicated to Vampire: The Masquerade rounded out the first batch of magazines to hit the streets.

Since 1993, more and more RPGs began showing up in Poland. With the increased availability of RPGs came the inevitable public outcry from those who were less informed about what the hobby actually involved. In 1995, *Słowo* (a Catholic journal), started an anti-RPG campaign. They used quotes and commentaries, taken from gaming sessions and other sources, but reported them completely out of context. Gamers were accused of being witches, Satanists and occultists. The article started a real witch hunt—to be honest, I was one of victims—I had trouble in school because of my involvement with RPGs. A few other newspapers and magazines wrote bad things about both the games and those that played them. The best known story was from a popular television program, in which a person who, by his own admission, had never played an RPG, blamed roleplaying games for all his misfortunes! Now, eleven years later, things are much better. However, in Poland, RPGs are still not readily available and the detractors still exist. I suspect, given time, things will improve, but what's a Polish Savage to do until then. Stay Savage, I guess! And, of course, we are still waiting for Shane Lacy Hensley; he promised to take a vacation in Poland!



# Savage Splatterpunk!

**Break out the chainsaws and put on your raincoats, folks... it's time to get bloody!**

*"Splatterpunk" is a particular brand of horror that emphasizes violent, over-the-top action; the "zombies and chainsaws" movies Evil Dead II and Dead Alive are perfect cinematic examples of the genre. Since we all know how good Savage Worlds is when it comes to wiping out tons of zombies in bloody fashion, tweaking a few of the rules just a hair will take us square into splatterpunk territory... at least that's what our resident zombie, Butch Curry, tells me!*

## TWEAKING THE RULES

### Just Too Crazyed to Notice

Drop the wound penalties for Wild Cards; losing limbs, pints of blood, and square feet of skin shouldn't slow anyone down! Just bear in mind that this will render the Nerves of Steel and Improved Nerves of Steel Edges unnecessary. Since it applies to all Wild Cards, both good and bad, don't worry too much about game balance being thrown off! GMs and players should be encouraged to really play up the special effects of their wounds—remember, in splatterpunk, nothing ever bleeds a little!

### Ewww, Gross... Now Gimme a Benny

It's not that uncommon for splatterpunk "heroes", if you can call them that, to lose a limb or suffer some other horrific injury, though it never seems to slow them down for long. Any time a player character receives a wound, they can voluntarily ask the GM to roll on the Injury Table for them! They'll suffer the effects of the injury for the rest of that scene *only* though, and in return for the injury they get a free Benny. After that scene, they'll still have the Injury; it just won't cause them any difficulty. For example, a character who takes brain damage would shake it off after the fight. Another who lost an eye would slap a makeshift eye patch on and continue on as if nothing had happened. If a character loses a hand they should get an immediate opportunity to replace it with a hatchet, chainsaw, big freakin' hook, or what have you, and still function without penalty.

### Takes a Lickin', but Keeps on Kickin'

Immediately after any fight, surviving characters may make a Vigor roll to heal a wound (or two with a raise).

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Chainsaws and sawed-off shotguns are the weapons of choice for real splatterpunk zombie slayers, but here are a few others might come in handy:

- **Lawnmower:** 3d6 damage, -2 Fighting, and acts as a Medium Shield. Roll a 1 on your Fighting die (regardless of the Wild Die) and the lawnmower engine dies. It takes an action to start it again.
- **Nail Gun:** 2d6+3 damage, Range 1/2/3, AP 1. Not a lot of range, but if it packs a fair amount of punch!
- **Power Drill:** Strength+3. If you roll a 1 on your Fighting die (regardless of the Wild Die), the drill gets stuck in your hapless victim. You'll have to make a Strength roll to wrench it free.





## THE DEAD WILL WALK THE EARTH

You're going to want to kill a lot of zombies, too, and splatterpunk zombies aren't usually too tough! An easy way to handle LOTS of zombies all at once is to treat them as a Zombie Swarm, which represents a nearly unlimited supply of zombies. Swarms can be evaded for short periods of time, but will eventually reform and come after you again.



### Splatterpunk Zombie

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts, d6, Intimidation d6

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

#### Special Abilities:

**Giblets a' Flyin':** Any attack which renders a 'punk Zombie shaken will blow off a limb, decapitate it, slice it's guts open so it's intestines spill out onto the floor, etc. This doesn't have any game effects except for looking really gross!

**Slam/Bite:** Normally, a zombie will grab and strike at an opponent for Strength damage. If they manage to get a raise on their Fighting roll, they lunge in and bite for Str +2 damage instead. (If they lost their head per Giblets a' Flyin', the head rolls up and bites the character on the ankle or something similar).

**Undead:** These zombies are undead, but they don't get any of the normal benefits for it!

### Zombie Swarm

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

#### Special Abilities:

**Bite/Claw:** Anyone within the zombie swarm takes damage (Str) from the each round they remain within the swarm.

**Swarm:** When Shaken, an additional Shaken result doesn't result in a wound. Use a Large Burst Template for the swarm. Unlike other swarms, the Zombie Swarm can be Shaken and wounded with normal (non-area effect) attacks, though you won't be able to destroy it permanently. When wounded, the swarm disperses for 1d4 rounds; after that, it must make a Smarts roll each round in order to reform. An area effect attack which gets a raise on damage (bombs, grenades, Molotov cocktails, etc.) is the only way to destroy the swarm permanently. These buggers are annoying!

**Undead:** The Zombie Swarm is undead, but gets none of the normal benefits for it!





## A look at some truly horrific websites...

This month we take a look at some websites that focus on the strange, the supernatural, and sometimes the just downright spooky! If you're a GM and you're stuck for ideas for your horror game, taking a look at these sites should provide some inspiration. If you're a player, a bit of investigation might allow you to pick up a few things that will keep your character alive!

### 12 TO MIDNIGHT

<http://www.12tomidnight.com/setting/setting.htm>

The above link will take you directly to the 12 to Midnight campaign setting page. If you don't already know it, the guys at 12 to Midnight, Inc. are big fans of *Savage Worlds* and have released several great Savage adventures to date. Pinebox, TX, the setting for their game world, is soon to be revealed in all its glory with the release of *Pinebox Places*. Look for a preview in a future issue of **Shark Bytes**!

### OCCULTOPEDIA

<http://www.occultopedia.com/occult.htm>

Occultopedia is an A-to-Z encyclopedia of metaphysical, curious and supernatural people, things, practices and events; an online treasury of unusual and occult knowledge and information. If you're stuck for ideas, spend some time browsing this site—you're sure to spark your imagination!

### THE BLACK VAULT

<http://www.bvalphaserver.com>

"Welcome to The Black Vault! You have just entered one of the largest online communities of its kind, anywhere in the world. With almost 25,000 volunteer members, over 220,000 posts on our forums, over 110,000 government documents, over 8,000 archived news articles, and over 14,000 photographs of military aircraft, UFOs, JFK Assassination material, and much more." So begins the site's introductory blurb. Conspiracy theorists should love this site!

### THE AWAKENING

<http://www1.minn.net/~arachne/awakening.html>

*The Awakening* – A Journal of Extreme Horror Roleplaying is a quarterly zine dedicated to extreme horror roleplaying. There are no limits in extreme horror: nothing is safe, nothing is sacred. Extreme horror terrifies players and makes game masters sleep with the lights on. It's the stuff that nightmares are made of. Each issue of *The Awakening* features fiction, adventures and articles designed to make the most of the horror roleplaying experience for you and your players. The zine is brimming over with new source material for your horror campaign: new cults, new monsters, intriguing NPCs and much more. There's also an online component to the journal as well.

### ZEROTIME PARANORMAL

<http://www.zerotime.com>

Another great site for inspiration! Zerotime is an organization founded by Trent Brandon back in 1994 to study and research paranormal and supernatural subjects. Zerotime continues to grow out of control like a bad weed. Teams of hand picked individual go out to study and document paranormal events. Zerotime reports and submits articles for the website so that Internet users can read and comment. Definitely worth a read!

### HORROR-WOOD

<http://www.horror-wood.com/contents.htm>

If you're into scary movies, this is a great e-zine! *Access Magazine* had this to say, "If you prefer mummies, wolf-men and vampires to slasher flicks, this monthly e-zine is your kind of horror...". Mmmm... pulpy horror—sounds just about perfect for *Savage Worlds*!

### THE BOOK OF SHADOWS

[http://members.tripod.com/~into\\_the\\_shadows/](http://members.tripod.com/~into_the_shadows/)

*Into the Shadows* is a great little horror RPG based on West End Game's *D6 System*™. It's very easily adapted to *Savage Worlds*. You can download the rules, a sourcebook, and several adventures at this website.



### THE OPEN DIRECTORY PROJECT

<http://dmoz.org/Games/Roleplaying/Genres/Horror/>

Here you will find many links to websites devoted to several well-known horror RPGs, including: *All Flesh Must be Eaten*, *Deadlands*, *Bureau 13*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Chill*, *Kult*, *SLA Industries*, and of course, the *World of Darkness*. Remember, with a little bit of work, anything can be Savaged!

Well, that does it for this issue! Remember, if you know of any cool websites—whether they're devoted to *Savage Worlds* or not—just drop me a line at [editor@sharkbytes.info](mailto:editor@sharkbytes.info) and point me in the right direction. Until next time, don't forget to close your closet door and look under the bed before turning out the light ... keep it Savage!

# FEEDING FRENZY

## The Rules Meister fields your Necessary Evil rules questions...

Welcome to the second issue of **Shark Bytes**! In this ongoing column, I will try to provide answers to your burning questions about the Savage Worlds rules. Just because these answers may be “official” (i.e., Shane or Zeke has given the nod), does not necessarily mean that they are “correct”. Always remember the Golden Rule: “The correct answer to any question about the rules is the one that makes your game fun—everything else is superfluous!” This issue, let’s get **EVIL**! Yes, it’s time to answer your questions about Necessary Evil, a setting near and dear to my heart. Now, let’s take back the world!

### Attributes, Edges, and Hindrances

**Question:** *What’s the deal with increasing Power Points and attributes at character creation?*

**Answer:** Edges that are limited per Rank, such as Extra Power Points, are limited no matter how they are taken. So if a character takes Extra Power Points as an Edge during character creation, they cannot take it again until Seasoned Rank.

Attributes are limited to being increased once per Rank when using a level-up. So Attribute increases during character creation do not count towards the limit of increasing them once per Rank by leveling up.

**Question:** *When you take the Extra Power Points Edge is there any limit to what you spend your points on?*

**Answer:** Only if the GM sets them. In general, points should be spent to enhance powers the character already has, but gaining new powers that fit the character’s design is fine. And, if your GM allows it, there is always the ever popular “radiation accident” or its equivalent which could allow a character to completely redesign their powers. Those instances should obviously be used with strict control.

**Question:** *If your Strength goes beyond 1d12, you get 1d4 of knockback, but does it also count as a Heavy Weapon?*

**Answer:** No, for that you need to take *attack, melee*.

As an optional rule, the GM may allow any Strength higher than a d12+2 to act as a Heavy Weapon since this exceeds what any “normal” human would be capable of achieving.

**Question:** *Is there a point at which Toughness derived from Vigor would be the equivalent of Heavy Armor?*

**Answer:** No. For that, a character would have to take the Toughness power with the Heavy Armor modifier.

However, if a GM were to use the optional Strength rule above, then to balance things out they should also allow a modifier (+3) to Super-Attribute: Vigor, allowing Toughness derived from it to act as Heavy Armor if bought above d12+2.

**Question:** *Do the heightened senses power and the Alertness Edge stack?*

**Answer:** Yes.

### Gear and Equipment

**Question:** *How does the electro-lance work when it is out of charges?*

**Answer:** It works exactly like a staff, doing Str+1 damage. Consider it official errata that the electro-lance also has Parry +1, no matter how it is used. This will be added in the revision.

**Question:** *What is the price and weight of an autograpnel?*

**Answer:** The price is \$100, and the weight is 5 pounds.

**Question:** *What are the effects of camouflage clothing?*

**Answer:** Camouflage clothing provides a +1 bonus to Stealth in the environment for which it is designed.

**Question:** *Does the Armor from a Z-belt or DuraWeave stack with other Armor?*

**Answer:** Armor does not stack in *Savage Worlds* no matter what the source. You should always use the highest Armor rating. One of the big advantages to the Z-belt is that it provides full coverage and can’t be bypassed with a Called Shot.

## Powers

**Question:** *What skill do you use to hit with attack, ranged?*

**Answer:** Under the general description of powers in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook, it says to use Shooting or Throwing. Which one depends on the trappings for the power, but that's fairly simple to determine. If the power is described as physically thrown (for example, tossing balls of flame), use Throwing. In all other cases, use Shooting

**Question:** *Why does attack, melee cause less knockback (1d4) than attack, ranged (1d6)?*

**Answer:** Because the 1d4 knockback modifier for *attack, melee* only applies to characters with Strength less than d12. Any character with a d12 or higher Strength already does 1d4 of knockback, and as it states under the modifier for *attack, melee*, taking the knockback modifier for them increases it to 1d10. It was felt to best mimic the genre, knockback on ranged attacks should fall somewhere between the knockback of a "martial artist" and the knockback of a "powerhouse."

If you want something more "equal," feel free to give *attack, ranged* a natural knockback of 1d4, increasing to 1d10 with the modifier.

**Question:** *Does telekinesis start with d8 Strength at level 1 or d10 Strength?*

**Answer:** The text is incorrect, but the example is accurate. *Telekinesis* starts at a d8 Strength and goes up 1 step for each additional level.

**Question:** *What's the difference between telekinesis and force control?*

**Answer:** *Force control* actually creates a physical presence that *telekinesis* does not. Other than that, there's not much.

**Question:** *Does telekinetic strength provide knockback like normal Strength?*

**Answer:** Yes. *Telekinesis* acts just like a second Strength Attribute that can be used at range.

**Question:** *Why isn't there a focus or Heavy Weapon option for telekinesis?*

**Answer:** These will be added in the revision. In addition, focus will also be added as a modifier to *force control*.

**Question:** *If I have extra actions with the repeat action modifier and a form of movement that provides an attack penalty, is the penalty increased for the additional actions?*

**Answer:** No. Each action is separate, and while the character can use an *extra action* for movement with that modifier, it doesn't change the penalty from their speed.

**Question:** *How do you handle decay and infection against someone who has armor?*

**Answer:** *Decay* and *infection* both require skin contact to affect another character. In most cases this will require a Called Shot for the Touch Attack. Furthermore, *decay* requires a full round of contact to destroy inanimate matter; otherwise, there is no discernable effect in combat (though the GM could apply effects after combat or after multiple hits).

**Question:** *Why isn't there a power like (boost/lower trait, precognition, etc)?*

**Answer:** Two reasons. One, the powers presented in *Necessary Evil* are the ones that were deemed most appropriate for the setting. They weren't designed to mimic every possible design or possibility but to fit the story and genre. And two, there simply wasn't enough room to cover every power imaginable. With the framework provided, it should be possible to come up with whatever additional powers you may wish. For example, if I wanted a *boost trait* power, I would use *copycat* as my starting point, and just change the base effect from mimicking any power seen to only being able to enhance abilities that exist. Add a +2 modifier to be able to affect others in addition to yourself, and you're done. For *lower trait*, there is *negation*.

**Question:** *Do powers with multiple modifiers like force control allow you to use them all at the same time?*

**Answer:** Yes, within the normal rules for multiple actions. This does not mean that every modifier used results in a multiple action penalty, only those requiring an action to use. So the flight modifier of *force control* can be used with any other effect since normal movement does not require an action. On the other hand, if you wished to attack one target with *force control* and use *bind* on another, that would incur a multiple action penalty, as both powers require an action. Once the *bind* is created though, the character could perform other actions at no penalty as long as they did not use the *bind* to damage the target. The same applies to creating a *force field*; creating one takes an action, but maintaining one does not.

**Question:** *Should altered form's Armor bonus be a Toughness bonus? I don't see how a guy made out of water is more vulnerable to AP bullets than normal bullets.*

**Answer:** *Altered form* covers every different form possible. Overall, it was felt that Armor best suited the power as a whole. Optionally, the GM may allow the bonus to be changed based on the specific form. He may allow +2 Toughness instead of +4 Armor against the specific attack type. In addition, the GM may allow some forms to switch out which type of attacks they are resistant to. For example, a matter form resistant to energy or an energy form resistant to physical attacks.

**Question:** *What are the categories of physical damage for immunity?*

**Answer:** *Immunity* is a little confusing. It works against damage from a source, not necessarily a type. The first sentence under *immunity* should read, "Your villain has limited immunity against a particular matter or energy based attack, such as air/wind, cold/ice, fire/heat, radiation, darkness, light, electricity, sound, and so on." Thus against physical sources, a character could be immune to attacks by metal, wood, bugs, etc. Note that while "cold" and "ice" consist of separate physical and energy types, they are close enough in source to count as a single type of immunity.

**Question:** *Isn't darkvision just a trapping of the awareness power?*

**Answer:** Not really. *Darkvision* only affects lighting penalties, while *awareness* affects any kind of obscuring effect like fog, smoke, etc. The problem is that they cost the same. An official erratum is that *awareness* now costs 3 points for the base effect.

**Question:** *Does the attack penalty from danger sense stack with the one from speed?*

**Answer:** Yes, but note that the base cost of *awareness* has increased to 3 (see above) and that none of those penalties apply to area effect attacks.

**Question:** *Can a Super purchase toughness at level 0 with Heavy Armor for the 3 points it costs for heavy armor?*

**Answer:** No. You have to purchase the base power to take the modifier.

## Miscellaneous

**Question:** *Just how fast is "super" and "sonic" speed?*

**Answer:** "Super" flight or speed would provide a Pace of 96 if you needed to keep track of it. Generally, at that level, I just said, "Put yourself where you want to be." "Sonic" levels of movement represent any speed from the speed of sound or higher. At this point, the mechanical effects of any further speed in combat are pretty much irrelevant, and it is up to the GM to determine what the maximum attainable speed for his game would be. This could be Mach 10, the speed of light, or, my preference, an individual determination based on the character's powers. At it's minimum though, it should at least represent somewhere near the speed of sound or about 750 mph. That equates to a minimum Pace of 300.

Well, that wraps up this special EVIL edition of *Feeding Frenzy*. Remember to send in your questions, and until next time...Stay Savage!

If you have a rules question for the Rules Meister, please email it to [editor@sharkbytes.info](mailto:editor@sharkbytes.info). If you have a burning question that can't wait, check out the *Savage Worlds* Forums or the FAQ in the File section of the *Savage Worlds* Yahoo Group.

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# Stalking the Night Fantastic Bureau 13

## ***A classic horror setting gets a long overdue Savaging!***

*You are a government agent, charged with the duty to dispose of the greatest unnatural threats to the people and economy of the United States. You work under the knowledge that you are funded by an agency so secret even the highest government officials do not know of its existence. Welcome to that elite band of people who wander the dark streets of the night, ever searching for the horrors that should not exist in this modern age. You are a Bureau agent, stalking the night fantastic...*

### **Introduction**

Welcome to *Savage Bureau 13: Stalking the Night Fantastic*. I remember playing the original game by Richard Tucholka way back in 1983. I loved the setting... after all, who doesn't love the idea of hunting down evil supernatural entities and destroying them! But I hated the rules system. Now, with *Savage Worlds*, we have the perfect RPG system in which to explore the awesome world described in the original *Bureau 13: Stalking the Night Fantastic* game. As they stand, the *Savage Worlds* rules fit the setting almost perfectly—any recommended “tweaks” are mentioned in the text and the Rules of the Game section that follow. You may have also noticed that in *Savaging* this setting I have also toned down some of the more overt humorous aspects of the original setting—this was intentional as “funny horror” settings just don't sit well with me. If you wish to take a look at the original source materials I used in writing this article, they can all be found, for a price, over at the TriTac website: <http://members.aol.com/TRITACGAMES>.



The premise of the game is simple enough—your character is an agent of Bureau 13, a secret government agency devoted to rooting out and destroying any supernatural entity that threatens the economy or security of the United States of America. Small Bureau teams of generally no more than eight agents travel the country watching, investigating, and if necessary eliminating supernatural menaces to our society. The main priorities of Bureau agents are the disposal of high-level evil and the maintenance of the organization's secrecy.

The world of Bureau 13 looks just like the world you know. It's the modern world—the one we live in—the United States of America in 2004. There is one difference though. In this world the monsters under the bed, in the closet, and hiding in the darkness between streetlamps are *real*. Vampires and werewolves? They're out there, preying on humanity with monstrous ferocity. Ghosts and goblins? They exist, haunting the shadows behind fast-food restaurants, convenience stores, and other places normally full of life and light.

This truth remains hidden from the world-at-large, though. Most people cannot fathom such Things of Darkness, so they either can't or won't see them for what they really are. This veil of self-deception and delusion keeps the majority of the world functioning despite the horrors surrounding them. Those who can see through the shadows find ridicule, scorn, and often madness or death on the other side. There's danger as well in knowing the true nature of the world, for being able to see the monsters usually means that the monsters can see you...

### **A Bureau 13 Primer**

Bureau 13, often referred to simply as the “Bureau”, was secretly established in 1861 to combat the destructive supernatural forces then active in the United States. The Bureau saw a huge rise in activity during the period 1870-1920 as millions of European immigrants—along with their Old World “companions”—came to our shores in search of the “American Dream” (or the American Nightmare, depending on your point of view and your home plane of existence). Since then, the Bureau's mission has grown to include the identification, isolation, and destruction of any and all supernatural entities or forces that threaten the economy or security of the United States of America.

Starting in 1960, the Bureau established foreign branches on every continent in an effort to head off potential threats before they were able to penetrate our borders. The Bureau is on the front lines of the war against the Shadow. While the memory of the Things of Darkness has faded from the collective consciousness of our modern day society, those involved in the struggle know the truth—the Shadow is still here and the evil is growing...

Technically, Bureau 13 falls under the auspices of the Department of Justice. Realistically, only a few top government officials (and no, the President isn't one of them) even know of its existence. Following the Massacre of '94 the officers of Bureau 13 went "underground". Only those individuals who work there know the actual location of the Bureau 13 Headquarters. Rumors abound that it's located within a vast underground complex in the Washington, DC area, but those rumors can neither be confirmed nor denied.

### **How do I join the Bureau?**

You don't find the Bureau and join—the Bureau finds you. Due to a disastrous confrontation a decade ago (the infamous Massacre of '94), the agency lost nearly all of its working agents. Now it is desperate to recruit competent and imaginative personnel who can accept the supernatural and effectively deal with it. Prospective agents are usually approached after an extensive observation period and given a choice—join the Bureau or else.

Successful agents are highly trained professionals who must be competent, creative, and discreet. There are no published formal guidelines or standard operating procedures. The few established rules for the teams are simple and direct. They are called the Bureau's "Five Guiding Principles for Agents":

1. Don't get caught
2. Don't leave evidence of the Bureau's existence
3. Don't leave evidence of the existence of the Things of Darkness
4. Use violence only if absolutely necessary
5. Rationalize the supernatural to all outsiders

All agents are sworn to know and live by these directives. Agents who are caught or have their work exposed are usually left to their own devices. The Bureau will not aid them in any way that will jeopardize its operational mission.

### **What does an agent do?**

Your primary mission is to identify, locate, segregate, and if necessary, eradicate any and all supernatural threats to the economy or security of the United States of America. As an agent of a top-secret government organization, you have access to the latest technology and weaponry—some of it unknown outside the doors of the Bureau's notorious R&D Laboratory (known colloquially as "The Chop Shop"). You are always "on call", ready to respond to a threat at a moment's notice. Often you are "on mission" for long periods of time—operating without any outside assistance with only your own skills and intuition to guide you.

### **What's the pay like?**

For the most part, agents live unassuming lives. Most have "no-show" cover jobs that provide an additional layer of protection. Some continue to work in whatever field they were involved in before becoming an agent. As a rule, their lifestyles are not overly extravagant, although there are a few high profile agents.

Agents start the game with 2d6 x \$1000 in their bank accounts. The Bureau pays \$1000 per Rank per week (payday is at noon every Friday). When assigned a mission an agent is issued a credit card and a line of credit with a series of banks equal to \$5000. This credit is good only for the duration of the mission. The agents pay all mission expenses beyond this allowance from their personal accounts. The Bureau spends its budget providing resources, information, and high tech gadgetry to the agents and has no excess funds to allocate to individual missions.

Salary payments to agents are handled via trace-secured direct deposits to the bank account of their choice. To further preserve their anonymity, most agents utilize offshore banking under an assumed identity. Their payments are often then distributed to various other accounts, all under other assumed names of course, in strategic locations throughout the world.

### **Does this job come with benefits?**

All agents are fully insured, and the Bureau provides full medical and dental benefits through approved third-party providers. If an agent should be killed in the line of duty, their beneficiaries receive a "death benefit" payment (usually tied to the former agent's cover job) for the rest of their lives—the Bureau takes care of its own. Anyone who survives until the age of 65 will reap the benefits of a pension plan that hasn't been tapped in over 100 years—a certain Mr. S. Holmes of London is the only agent who ever reached retirement age...

### **How do I contact the Bureau and how do they contact me, for that matter?**

In most cases it starts with a quick phone call, a beeper page, a prearranged signal, or an encrypted e-mail. This initial contact usually contains instructions for a more personal meeting at which the details of the mission, as well as the intended outcome, are covered. Sometimes contact by the Bureau isn't as obvious. Perhaps a planted headline in a local paper is an activation code for a specific Bureau team. Maybe that out of print book contains a secret mission plan. Ever wonder why some music videos seem so disconnected...?

### **What about equipment and specialized gear?**

Upon joining the Bureau, all agents are given a set of standard issue gear consisting of:

- MS67g attaché case
- Cell phone with integral digital audio recording device and extra memory chips
- Two digital cameras (one normal and one miniature) with extra memory chips
- Laptop PC and PDA
- Multipurpose tool (includes lock picking tools as well)
- Advanced Kirilian Detector (works like a Geiger counter but detects traces of the Shadow instead)
- A medical trauma pack
- Standard and paranormal evidence collection kits
- Demolitions pack (five “rounds” of C4 and detonation devices)
- All-weather lighter, flashlight and 10 glow sticks
- Two tactical radio sets with covert earpieces
- Global Positioning System (GPS) – includes receiver, transmitting beacon, and tracking devices
- Standard bugs and listening devices (wireless)
- Collection of topographical and street maps, passports, and false identity papers
- Clothes carrier and large storage bag
- 1 set each: average clothes, trendy clothes, designer clothes (including accessories and shoes)
- 3 pairs of black fatigues (including steel-toe combat boots, face mask, Kevlar body armor, and gloves)
- 9mm service pistol with silencer, laser sight, and 100 rounds of ammunition (choice of shoulder or ankle holster)
- Bureau Access Card (disguised as an ordinary credit card)

This issue is a one-time deal—the agents are thereafter responsible for all maintenance and replacement of their gear. In addition to their standard issue gear, agents may be granted access to more specialized or technologically advanced equipment on a mission-by-mission basis. Such gear remains the property of the Bureau (specifically the Chop Shop) and must be returned upon completion of the mission.

During character creation, the player will have to purchase any additional equipment he desires by using his starting funds. Equipment or items that cannot be purchased on the open market, or obtained via the Black Market, may be requisitioned from the Bureau. Such requisitions will arrive within 48 hours via a predetermined shipment method and delivered to a specific location. The cost of such equipment is generally deducted from the agent's paycheck unless the agent elects to transfer ownership to the Bureau following the completion of the mission.

The Bureau also maintains a network of supply dumps in various locations across the globe. Each agent has a list of these locations. Access is gained by using the Bureau Access Card. Most dumps are automated for entry and need no caretakers; however, they may not always contain the latest or best maintained equipment...

### **Are there different types of job positions within the Bureau?**

Although a Bureau team is generally composed of a group of 3-8 well-rounded individuals that have talents and abilities complementing one another (known simply as Operative Teams or OTs), there are a few types of “specialty teams”:

- **Clean-Up Teams**, or “Scrubbers”, are those teams that specialize in getting rid of otherwise difficult to dispose evidence left behind by the Things of Darkness. They are also good at disposing of collateral damage if the need should arise.
- **Rapid Response Teams**, or “The Cavalry”, are never given missions of their own. They are on permanent call in order to assist any Bureau teams that may have stumbled into something they cannot handle alone. These teams are rarely seen in any but the most significant and dangerous of situations.
- **Research Teams**, also known as “Bookworms”, exist to assist teams on a mission to locate specific information that relates to their mission. Such teams are usually based in universities, libraries, and rare bookstores as a cover.
- **Tactical Response Squads**, or “187s”, deal harshly with malignant supernatural entities or occult groups. They are the rarest of all the specialty teams and are only activated when overwhelming firepower is the only way to handle a situation. Their activation orders often include a suitably delayed call to the nearest Scrubber team.

### **What happens when good agents go bad?**

The most difficult problem facing Bureau 13 agents is their constant exposure to and involvement with the forces of 'Evil' in society. Even the best-intentioned agents, faced with an often seemingly unstoppable and always ruthless enemy, can unwittingly cause more destruction than she prevents. While your team is ostensibly working for the forces of good, they may actually aid evil if they are not careful and conscientious in their actions. Bureau 13 always frowns upon situations that cost innocent lives. Remaining secret means minimizing collateral damage.

To further complicate matters, a small but vocal minority of top minds in the Bureau believes that the indiscriminate slaughter of the supernatural could prove to be far worse than any imagined evil. They postulate that the supernatural is a natural and necessary part of a balanced and healthy paranormal ecology. Agents should always be prepared justify their actions against the forces of the supernatural during debriefing.

When agents are deemed to have lost sight of the destruction they've caused, they receive three warnings. After that they are dealt with in one of three ways:

- If they are a threat to the Bureau or society in general, a call is placed to the nearest 187 squad.
- If they have an otherwise good record, they're allowed to retire and live out the rest of their life in peace (under permanent surveillance).
- If they are too dangerous to remain in normal society and/or deemed too valuable to be lost to the Bureau, they are forcibly "retired" to an ocean resort on an island somewhere in the South Atlantic.

### **Friends of Bureau 13**

The Bureau has many technical and human resources that can be tapped in order to further their stated mission. These people know of the Bureau, although their knowledge may be imperfect and/or incomplete. They give of their services and abilities in order to help the ongoing fight against evil. All understand and abide by the "5 Guiding Principles". Some require payment (monetary or otherwise) in return for their services, while others provide their services out of a sense of altruism.

**The White Witch** (Greenbriar, VT): The descendant of a family who fled from the Salem Witch Trials, Barbara Platt is a practicing expert in the occult and White Magic. Last of the Platt family, she is dedicated to the use of white magic for helping the needy. This fact has alienated her from contact with the darker users of arcane forces and their many minions. Communication with Platt, because of her lack of telephone service, is handled through the local school librarian, Joseph Bueller.

**Weinstein's Forensic SWAT Team** (Atlanta, GA): When specialized medical analysis or difficult identification of remains is required the Bureau calls on Professor Julius Weinstein and his aptly named Forensic SWAT Team. This brilliant but grim group of students and their foul-tempered leader can usually answer the nagging question, "How did this die?" within 48 hours; in fact, their motto is "48 Hours or Your Body Back". They have ties with the CDC (Center for Disease Control) and noted medical experts across the globe. They can often be found disgusting customers as they talk shop at Vincenzo's Pizzeria.

**John Crenshaw, M.D.** (Winslow, AZ): John Crenshaw is an old country doctor who amazes his colleagues by still making house calls. He is an expert in folk medicine and the medical needs of those dealing with the bizarre or supernatural. In his many years of working with the locals he has acquired a wealth of lore and legends dating back more than 3,000 years. He is an unshakeable optimist, kind-hearted and caring, and possibly even possesses a latent psionic talent—although he'll never admit to it. He and his cat Clara travel the back roads of Arizona in an old green Jeep known as "The Green Thunder".

**Geoffrey Gladstone, M.D.** (Raleigh, NC): Geoffrey is a hematologist, a doctor specializing in blood disorders. While pleasant and witty he does have one slight problem—he is a vampire. Attacked and enslaved by a vampire lord while at a medical conference in San Diego, CA, he helped Bureau 13 agents locate and destroy his master. Under Bureau 13 supervision, he returned to his hometown where he readily adapted to his condition by taking a night job at the local blood bank. He is now the foremost expert on vampirism in the world. He has never taken a human life, but the Bureau keeps a close eye on him anyway.

**General Thomas McAdams** (Washington, DC): General McAdams is an expert in weapons use and acquisition. Much of the Bureau's supply of heavy ordinance comes from one of the General's supply units in Utah or Colorado. McAdams is a firm believer in the work of the Bureau—at least he has been since agents saved his daughter from a band of cultists a few years ago. As his way of saying thanks, he trained a handpicked unit of former SEALs, Rangers, Marine Recon, Special Ops, and Delta Force troops to back up the Bureau should the situation require. They are also trained to assist the Scrubbers if needed. This unit, "McAdam's Marauders", will arrive within 24 hours... and they ask no questions.



**Bloomberg, Grice, and Bryan, Attorneys-at-Law** (Dallas, TX): The Bureau realized legal counsel for the supernatural would sooner or later become a reality. In the late 1980s the firm of Bloomberg & Grice gained a ghostly helper in the form of the spirit of William Bryan, one of the foremost legal counsels of the 20th century. Their fees are high, but no case is considered too strange. The three have been both friend and foe to the Bureau: on one case assisting Bureau agents with legal matters in the field, then defending the strange or supernatural entities they have uncovered in another.

**The Cabby** (New York City, NY): Somewhere winding in and out of traffic in New York City is a paranormal cabby named Wypychowski. This quiet individual with a moldy cigar has the innate ability to identify paranormal objects and speak to disembodied spirits. For the past four decades he has been the voice of the supernatural (and the best bookie) in the city. Wypychowski professes to be “in tune” with the elementals of the city—his 1949 checkered cab has been unscratched since 1960 and the last mugger to lay hands on him was struck by lightning (on an otherwise sunny and clear day) before he got ten steps from the cab. While cheerful and friendly to the Bureau, he is often disturbed by the paranormal happenings that seem to seek him out. When not collecting fares, Wypychowski can be found at Mike’s Bar and Grill (18W 40th Street). Tip him well.

**Harvey Becker** (The Afterlife): Harvey Becker is the ghost of a Bureau 13 agent murdered in 1995. He has decided to stay on and assist his fellow agents in any way possible. With a sharp mind and a talent for ferreting out the truth, Harvey is often a lifesaver if his advice is heeded. His family still collects a regular paycheck from the Bureau (disguised as a death benefit from Becker’s cover job as a Teamster). He often appears in mirrors or leaves cryptic signs to aid Bureau agents in deep trouble.

**Dr. Offidile** (Boston, MA): Dr. Offidile is a learned historian who was fired from Harvard University due to his interest in the darker aspects of magic and the paranormal. Now, affectionately known as “Doc Crock” by his friends, he manages a rare bookshop in Harvard Square. Offidile is a font of misplaced historical fact and narration, which he will gladly discuss for hours over a bottle of good scotch. The good doctor enjoys helping the Bureau and has a collection of brilliant and esoteric friends with resources in history, magic, philosophy, religion, and science. This paranormal think tank is renowned for ferreting out fact from legend. It is rumored that the spirit of a Boston Police officer named Earl protects his bookstore.

**Gulliver and Jones** (Cleveland, OH): Sometimes the walls have ears. In this case they also have small beady eyes, whiskers, a tail, and an insatiable curiosity. This is the detective agency of Gulliver & Jones, a partnership between a human and a rat. Gulliver is what’s known as an “Alpha”—the result of genetic mutations caused by a chemical spill. Such mutants have near human intelligence and fully manipulative digits. Jones is just a normal human with a shabby detective agency that has seen better days. He works with The Bureau on occasions when he’s not otherwise occupied trying to keep Gulliver out of trouble.

**John** (Detroit, MI): A wizard of finance in American industry, John has the power to locate financial records and raise large amounts of capital in record time. While hard to contact, he is friendly and reassuring. He remembers the Bureau’s help in saving one of the nations leading automotive manufacturers and a banking conglomerate from, respectively, gremlins and demonic infestation. He has access to technology that rivals that of Bureau 13 and can open many industrial and financial doors for his friends. At times, he will request favors from the Bureau or teams he has helped.

**The Fellowship** (Scattered across the country—mainly in large cities): Sometimes called “Shadow Chasers”, these are groups of unsanctioned (i.e., non-Bureau 13 personnel) agents who can see beyond the Shadow and have confronted the Things of Darkness on their own initiative. So long as they do not betray the Bureau’s presence they are allowed to continue their work. Members of The Fellowship usually have some personal interest in slaying the Things of Darkness and are often more radical in their methods than the typical Bureau agent. Because of this, the Bureau keeps a close eye on them (several Bureau sleeper agents are current members of The Fellowship) in order to ensure that they do not inadvertently tip the scales of power in favor of the Things of Darkness.



## Enemies of Bureau 13

On the flip side of the coin are the sinister people and organizations that have learned of Bureau 13's activities and would like to see its demise. Many simple case of investigation have been turned into nightmare situations due to their crass interference. These agencies and individuals serve as a never-ending source of trouble for Bureau 13 as they attempt to get even for past intrusions by the Bureau. Many of these enemies are dedicated, smart, and resourceful, having easy access to large financial reserves and many loyal minions.

These enemies are GM-controlled NPCs. Their demise is NOT a primary mission of the Bureau—unless they happen to be of a supernatural origin—remember, even evil people have legal rights and are entitled to protection under the US criminal justice system. Besides, they ALWAYS have outstanding lawyers!

**The Wind Willow Coven** (Rural, USA): On the side of the darkest magic are the 169 families of the Wind Willow Coven. These diabolists have a deep-rooted hatred of the Bureau that goes back a full century to the destruction of their original coven house in 1869. The Coven has no qualms regarding murder or terror, so long as such activities further their ultimate goal of unleashing the spawn of Hell on an unsuspecting earth. This group, originally centered in Vermont and then Pennsylvania, has since spread across North America and now infests many rural American towns.

**Sun Yen-Yen** (Los Angeles, CA): Sun Yen-Yen was a simple farmer in Mainland China before “seeing the light” and becoming the self-professed “Earthly Messiah”. Now, with many “loyal” followers (all appropriately “programmed”) and a hefty Swiss bank account, he hopes to take the western world by dint of public relations and advertising. Yen is a concern of the Bureau's due to his propensity for calling on supernatural aid to advance his plans of world domination. Many of his vacant-eyed followers can be seen on street corners in large American cities selling flowers, egg rolls, and “I Love Sun Yen-Yen” buttons. After Bureau 13 sank his yacht off the coast of Miami in 1997, he swore revenge on the Bureau and has since been on the lookout for activities that will lead him to the Bureau's inner sanctum.

**Senator Thurston Webber** (Baltimore, MD): While collecting blackmail fodder to advance his own political career Thurston Webber stumbled on to the existence of Bureau 13. In the decades since he has been on a personal crusade to expose this “governmental waste of taxpayer's money”. Fortunately, with no hard evidence to support his claims, his story is given little credence by mainstream America. He realizes that the Bureau has kept his political career on a tight leash and he holds a grudge. He recently assembled a crack team of ex-CIA operatives to act as both personal bodyguard and snatch team. These operatives travel the country in search of Bureau activity, operating much like the Bureau itself, with little or no support or cover. They have access to military hardware and know how to use it. Recently, Webber's teams have begun kidnapping Bureau operatives—three at last count. Their whereabouts and fate remain a mystery.

**Matthias Bolt** (San Francisco, CA): Bolt is the leader of the Brotherhood of Darkness, an organization devoted to the study of Black Magic. As the absolute master of more than 300 practitioners of the Dark Arts, he presents a major threat to the Bureau and its agents. He is rumored to be of genius intelligence and possesses an unmatched personality and wit. Secure in his wealth and following, in his spare time he dreams of world conquest and domination.

**The Fundams** (Atlanta, GA): The resurgence of religion in America in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century was well appreciated by the Bureau until it began to show its darker side. Now, with the advances in computer technology and the expansion of the Internet, some high-tech fundamentalists are attacking anything and everything that doesn't make a monthly contribution or conform to their rigid standards of belief. As they began to burn books, roleplaying games, and music CDs, the Bureau began to wonder if there wasn't a darker force at work behind this immoral minority.

**The 6th Reich** (In every dark corner): Towards the end of the Second World War, Nazi mysticism reached its peak in a final desperate bid for victory. Hitler created a special unit of the Reich Central Security Department known as the Ideological Research Division. Their purpose was simple: to preserve the Reich by identifying and locating any useable magic or arcane methods to bring the Allies to their knees. In their time they failed, though their tradition has survived to influence a new generation of Nazi fanatics. Now, based in Argentina and the central United States, this “6th Reich” has begun a putsch to organize their scattered followers and find a way to destroy Britain, Russia, and the United States once and for all.

**VIRUS 9640** (A computer near you): Spawned by a lunatic with access to an experimental AI Medical Mainframe, Virus 9640 is an intelligent program that has turned homicidal. For unfathomable reasons, it has decided that the time has come for machines to take their place as the evolutionary successor to mankind. Norton Anti-Virus can't do a thing about Virus 9640!

**Reverend Rotwood** (Rural USA): Walking the backwoods of America is the Right Reverend Artemus Rotwood, man of the cloth—or so he would have you think. His fatherly advice, gentle manner, and keen wit serve as a disguise for his true calling—necromancer and diabolist. He stalks the land collecting souls from the unwary in order to satiate his otherworldly masters.

## Creating an Agent

Up until this point we've presented information that will assist the GM in creating the proper mood and setting for his campaign. Now it's time to address that question that's been nagging all the players out there—"How do I create a Bureau 13 agent?" *Bureau 13 – Stalking the Night Fantastic* is a pulp horror setting. The *Savage Worlds* roleplaying game has been described as a pulp RPG system—a perfect match if you inquire as to my eminently humble opinion! A few changes to the character generation procedure outlined in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook are addressed below.

**Race:** All Bureau 13 agents are human unless your GM decides to allow other species or supernatural entities.

**Traits:** Traits (attributes and skills) are handled exactly as outlined in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. Due to advanced Bureau training, all agents start the game with the Fighting and Shooting skills for free. They must be advanced normally beyond d4.

**Derived Statistics:** Derived statistics, such as Pace, Parry, Charisma, and Toughness are handled exactly as described in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. The one new (and optional) derived statistic, Sanity Points, is detailed in the next section.

**Edges and Hindrances:** These are handled exactly as described in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. A few new Edges and Hindrances are detailed in the next section. All Agents have the Fringe Benefits (Bureau 13 Agent) Edge as described in this issue's installment of *Blood in the Water*. This enables them access to all of the aforementioned Bureau perks. This Edge does not cost the character any points.

**Gear:** In addition to their standard issue agents must equip and provision themselves. The *Savage Worlds* rulebook contains most nearly every "standard" item an agent will need—competent GMs should have no problem whipping up items "on the fly". Starting funds and weekly compensation have already been addressed, above.

*Editor: For those GMs wanting a more detailed weaponry list (i.e., specific weapons—Glock 9mm—rather than just generic categories such as "9mm service pistol"), I highly recommend Modern Weapons in Savage Worlds by Erron 'Bo' Whitten. It's available as a free download from the Savage Heroes web site ([www.savageheroes.com](http://www.savageheroes.com)).*

## The Rules of the Game

There is very little difference between playing a game of *Savage Worlds* "straight out of the box" and playing in the *Savage Bureau 13: Stalking the Night Fantastic* setting. Those few differences are detailed hereafter.

**Arcane Backgrounds** are not generally available to agents. The Bureau doesn't look kindly on most open displays of paranormal powers. Known practitioners are usually not recruited (although the Bureau keeps a wary eye on them). However, that's not to say they never recruit practitioners—just that it's not a common occurrence. The use, or lack thereof, of Arcane Backgrounds (at least by agents) is entirely up to the individual GM.

*Editor: For alternatives, I highly suggest taking a look at Beyond the Veil by Butch Curry—an excellent variant psionic system that meshes perfectly with this setting. You can download this file for free from the Savage Heroes website. Another great system, detailed in **Shark Bytes #1**, is It's a Paranormal World After All by Ed Wettermann and Clint Black.*



**Sanity Points** are an optional derived statistic. They allow the GM to run a campaign where the agents, in addition to physical damage, also run the risk of mental damage due to exposure to the Shadow. All agents start the game with a Sanity Point total equal to Spirit/2 + 2. Characters with the Doubting Thomas Hindrance subtract two from this value. Sanity Points can be recovered (see below), but may never be raised above their initial total—even if the character later increases his Spirit die type. The GM should keep track of Sanity Points—the players should never be sure of how many points they have left. The GM should give them hints though... like phobias, paranoia, "seeing or hearing things", etc.

Throughout the course of a Bureau 13 campaign, the agent will be continually exposed to the supernatural. Such exposure takes a toll. Each creature, object, location, etc... associated with the

Shadow has a Sanity Point Cost associated with it. This cost is between 1 and 3 points—the worse the strain, the higher the point cost. The first time such a horror is encountered the agent must make a Spirit check. If they succeed they suffer no ill effects. Failure results in an appropriate reduction in Sanity Points. Rolling "snake eyes" (a natural roll of 1 on both the Spirit die and the Wild Die) doubles the listed penalty. Characters can become jaded (see the *Savage Worlds* rulebook, Fear) to individual threats after three separate exposures.

As mentioned before, an agent can recover lost Sanity Points. One week of inpatient psychiatric therapy allows the agent to recover d6 Sanity Points. Outpatient therapy allows the recovery of 1 point for each full week of therapy. If, for whatever reason, an agent's Sanity Points are ever reduced to zero he is sent to a quiet asylum in the hills of western New York where he will be given the best care the Bureau can afford...

*Editor: As an alternative, GMs may instead wish to adopt the Sanity rules found in the Tour of Darkness Savage Setting available from Pinnacle/Great White Games.*

## New Hindrances

**Dependents** (Major): Your character has a family member or significant other, or perhaps an entire family, to worry about in addition to the daily concerns of his chosen profession. This is only a Hindrance if your dependents are in a position to be exploited by your enemies.

**Phobia** (Minor or Major): A "phobia" is an irrational fear of a specific item, creature, or circumstance. Whenever a character is in the presence of the source of his phobia he suffers a -2 penalty to all trait tests. Minor phobias consist of items, creatures, or circumstances that rarely occur or are easily avoided (e.g., flying, heights, magic, etc...). Major phobias are directed at items, creatures, or circumstances that are common and difficult to avoid (e.g., dirt, large crowds, open spaces, etc...).

*Editor: The Amnesia, Dark Secret, Lying Eyes, and Obsession Hindrances, detailed in this issue's installment of Blood in the Water, are also suitable for inclusion in a Savage Bureau 13: Stalking the Night Fantastic campaign.*

## New Edges

**Brave** (Novice): Your character isn't easily rattled. Things that would send less hearty souls running in terror don't faze him. He may add +2 to all Guts checks.

**Street Smarts** (Seasoned; Spirit d6, Streetwise d8): Street Smart characters are in touch with the "rhythm of the streets" and gain a bonus of +2 to all their Streetwise rolls. In addition, when attempting to purchase items under less than legitimate circumstances, they can usually do so at 25% under the going rate.

*Editor: Enhanced Senses, Night Vision, Blind Fighting, Brawler, Pugilist, Martial Artist, Born Leader, Commanding Presence, Don Juan/Seductress, Gift of Gab, and Jack of all Trades Edges, detailed in this issue's installment of Blood in the Water, are also suitable for inclusion in a Savage Bureau 13: Stalking the Night Fantastic campaign.*

## Parting Shot

Yet throughout it all, there are those few individuals who know the truth and yet stand strong and firmly resolved to turn back the tide. Humanity may not be doomed so long as these heroes do not waver in this conviction. As an agent of Bureau 13 you are one of these heroes, and while you have anything to say about it there aren't going to be any demons moving into the neighborhood!

This article provides enough information with which to start a *Savage Bureau 13* campaign—my intent being to flesh out additional background details in a series of regular **Shark Bytes** articles. Just keep an eye out for a column entitled *Stalking the Night Fantastic* in future issues!



# The Haunted Moor

## William Reger's savage tale of horror set on the windswept moor...

*This Savage Tale of horror can be set in any pre-industrial period. It has been designed for a party of 1-4 characters of Novice or Seasoned Ranks and should take no more than three hours to play to conclusion. The Haunted Moor uses only those rules presented in the Savage Worlds rulebook. This scenario was inspired by the Solomon Kane story, Skulls in the Stars by Robert E. Howard, and is William's second contribution to **Shark Bytes**. His first, Asteroid Zero-4 was featured in our premiere issue. Be sure to check it out if you haven't already! He has submitted two additional adventures as well. Look for The Ankh of Anguish in **Shark Bytes #3**.*

"Please take the Long Way,  
Don't take the Short Way,  
Or you'll not be there by the Morning!"  
—A popular village rhyme

### Scene 1

*It is 6:00 pm on a balmy summer night. Your party is to meet a contact for a lucrative job in the next village by 8:00 am tomorrow morning. The village is eight hours away if they venture across the nearby moor. As they consider the best route to take, a young village boy approaches the party:*

*"Oh Sirs, please wait the night or at least go around the moor. People have been lost on the moor, never to return or even make it to the next village," the young boy tugging on your sleeve begs. "The road is haunted by something that drives men into the moor bogs and kills them horribly.*

*If you must go, and change your mind along the way, old McIntyre's place is almost halfway across and he'll let you stay if you ask nicely."*

It will take 16 hours to reach the next village if the party heeds the boy's warning and takes the road that goes around the moor. Obviously, taking the road or waiting until morning is out of the question if they wish to meet their contact before the deadline. Presumably, the party tells the boy as much, waves goodbye, and starts out across the moor following the old moor road...

### Scene 2

*Three hours along the moor road has you passing a lonely farmhouse nestled in a grove of magnolia trees. A large barn and several smaller outbuildings are clustered close to the house. A crude hand painted sign pointing toward the house simply reads "McIntyre's." The road continues on into the darkness beyond the house...*

If the heroes stop to check out the house they will find a recluse named Albert McIntyre (see NPCs and Creatures, below) living here. He is normally Hostile (*Savage Worlds* rulebook, Reaction Table) and his attitude can't be improved to better than Friendly. While Hostile, he will not

invite them in. However, if Albert is persuaded to Neutral or better, he will tell the characters that he believes the tales of the moor being haunted are hogwash. After all, he's lived on them all his life and nothing bad has ever happened to him. He explains the rumors away by stating that he believes the "haunting" to be nothing more than the work of bandits who murder and loot travelers. A well-armed party, like that of the heroes, should be fine so long as they're cautious. He wishes them well and sends them on their way.

If Albert can be persuaded to be Friendly, he will offer the heroes a chance to spend the night safely in the house. The house has the odor and look of having been lived in too long without ever being aired out. A picture on the wall, within sight of the door, shows two young men standing before a large magnolia tree.

If questioned about the picture, Albert will relate the story of how his poor brother, who was never quite right in the head, wandered into the moor and was lost, never to be seen again. There is nothing in the house to contradict this story and the old man doesn't look strong enough to harm a fly. However, something deep inside the characters tells them that they'll be safer out on the moor than they will in this house.

If necessary, the GM should remind the party that spending the night at Albert's shack would prevent them from making their rendezvous in the next village in time. If they fail to heed this reminder, Albert will attempt to murder each character in his sleep. Make opposed rolls in turn for each character, Albert's Stealth vs. their Notice skills. If Albert wins the roll, he cuts the character's throat as he sleeps per the Finishing Move rules. Of course, all this is for naught if the party posts a watch. If any character awakens and catches Albert attempting to murder them, Albert will try to flee into the fog-shrouded moor. If he is successful, the characters will be unable to find or track him.

### Scene 3

*As you prepare to continue your journey across the moor, shrill manic laughter suddenly pierces the night from somewhere off in the moor. McIntyre states that the winds off the moor can play tricks on your ears. He tells you that the sound you heard was a whippoorwill and nothing more. He bids you all safe travels and shuts the door.*

If the heroes continue on, or go to investigate the laughter, the road quickly gets covered with a fog so thick that visibility is reduced to less than 20 feet (3") all around. At around midnight the laughter can again be heard. As the heroes travel along the road the laughter gets closer and more manic, causing everyone great unease. The sound of someone running will be heard shortly thereafter. Within seconds of hearing the approaching footsteps, a figure bursts into sight, his face and body bloodied. He croaks, "Run! Save yourselves from the horror! Please just finish me before you go," before collapsing in a heap. The man is dressed like a typical merchant although his clothing is blood-soaked and his complexion is stark white. If Albert tried to attack the characters in the previous scene and fled into the moor, substitute him for the merchant.

The man is now unconscious and should be treated as Bleeding Out (*Savage Worlds* rulebook, Knockout Blow Table; treat him as having a Vigor of d6). Even if stabilized, he will be incapable of answering any questions or thinking rationally for quite some time.

### Scene 4

*The manic laughter is now getting closer and a cold wind starts to blow, chilling you to the bone. Rasping sounds, emanating from the fog, can now be heard and a faint glow burns in the distance through the thick fog. Suddenly, the manic laughter reaches a crescendo as a creature not of this earth bursts through the wall of fog! Its pale, human-like form flies toward your group and its burning red eyes chill your souls!*

Deal initiative cards to the players. Before the first person can act, each character must make a Fear check at -2. If the check is failed, the character runs off into the darkness in a random direction, as determined below.

If the hero's initiative card is a face card, an ace, or a Joker, he remains on the road and can attempt a second Fear check. If this check is failed, he gains one level of Fatigue and continues running.

On a numbered card, the hero has run off the road and become ensnared in a quagmire. Make an immediate Strength check. If the result of the check is greater than the value of the initiative card (Jacks are 11, Queens are 12, etc.), there is no adverse effect; otherwise, he is stuck in the quagmire! The hero will sink each round he remains Shaken. It will take three rounds to sink beneath the quagmire. Once beneath the quagmire, a character will suffocate in a number of rounds equal to Vigor/2. Once the character recovers from being Shaken he may try to extract himself from the quagmire by making a successful

Strength check at -2. Any other non-sinking hero can aid a sinking hero (if they can find them) adding +2 to the sinking hero's Strength check.

Any characters that do not flee are attacked by the apparition! Weapons will pass right through the creature (see NPCs and Creatures, below) and magical attacks do only half their normal damage (round all fractions down). Grappling is the only non-magical physical means by which the characters can engage the creature.

Characters fighting the creature can feel it trying to rip their souls apart—with nothing but pure hatred driving it on. Make a secret Spirit test for each character who is attacked. Any who pass will realize that they must deal with the creature on its own terms—by engaging in a contest of wills. Make opposed Spirit tests. The loser of the roll is Shaken; with a raise, they also suffer a wound. Once a character has been Incapacitated, the creature will no longer attack them.

Every wound inflicted on the creature imparts a piece of information to the heroes who are engaged in combat with it:

- **1 wound:** The creature was murdered on this moor by someone it trusted. It is so enraged by the fact that it can't find its slayer that it attacks all living humans it finds crossing the moor after midnight.
- **2 wounds:** The creature will continue murdering all living people it comes across until justice is done.
- **3 wounds:** The creature's name was Edmund McIntyre. His brother, Albert, who had been waylaying individuals traveling between towns, murdered him. Albert buried their bodies in the black moor and hid their goods under the floorboards in his room. When Edmund found out, he left to bring the law. Albert waylaid and strangled him under a tree about a mile from the house on the moor.
- **4+ wounds:** The creature dissipates into mist. He will reform the next night unless justice is done (see below).

### Scene 5

For "justice" to be done, the village folk must be made aware of the crime committed and be convinced of Albert's guilt. This can be accomplished by revealing the murdered wayfarers' items under the floorboards in his room. Then, if Albert can be brought living to the tree where he murdered his brother (a pathway where nothing grows leads from the back of the house to the dead tree), he will break down and confess everything. Laughter can then be heard on the wind, coming closer.

If Albert is left tied to the tree, alive or dead, the ghost of his brother will find him and be laid to rest as long as Albert's crimes have become known to the village folk. If Albert is alive, he will die of a heart attack when his brother's ghost finds him.



### Albert McIntyre, Murdering Miser

**Attributes:** Agility: d6, Spirit: d4, Smarts: d8, Strength: d4\*, Vigor: d4\*

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidate d6, Notice d6, Persuade d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Taunt d6 and Tracking d8.

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4 (6\*); **Bennies:** 3

**Hindrances:** Elderly, Greedy (Major)

**Edges:** Quick, Improved Nerves of Steel

**Gear:** Crossbow or blunderbuss/shotgun and knife

*\*When threatened or frightened these two attributes rise to d8, thus granting a +2 bonus to Toughness.*



### Edmund McIntyre, Laughing Ghost

**Attributes:** Agility: d8, Spirit: d6, Smarts: d8 (A), Strength: d10, Vigor: d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d12, Taunt d10

**Pace:** 10 (flying); **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (Undead); **Bennies:** 0

#### Special Abilities:

**Cause Fear** (-2 by sight, 0 by laughter)

**Invulnerable** (Immune to all physical harm, ½ damage from magic attacks, can only be attacked via grappling and successful Spirit versus Spirit rolls.)

**Undead** (+2 Toughness and +2 to recover from being Shaken.)



# The Magic Fish

## Updating A Magical Medley, Part Two

The Savage Worlds rulebook offers no extensive magical item lists, nor does it provide any concrete rules for creating them from scratch—heck, it doesn't even provide any examples for the poor GM! Instead, such things are considered the purview of the various Savage Settings books that are published by Pinnacle. Even so, these books contain very few magical items. To fill this magical void, I released a little document entitled *A Magical Medley* many months ago. However, looking back on it now, there are changes I'd like to make to many of the items—namely, simplifying the benefits they provide and the manner in which they work! So, to address this issue, I present these new-and-improved items of arcane power. This is the second article in a series—check out **Shark Bytes #1** for its predecessor.

### Devices of Storing

These devices may be of almost any construction—often taking the form of rods/staves/wands or talismans of some sort. Each must contain a precious stone that acts as an arcane focus.

These devices are useable only by someone with an Arcane Background appropriate to the GM's campaign. Each device allows the user to store up to 2d6 Power Points for later use. This value is determined by the GM, cannot be exceeded, and will only become known to the player upon loading the last Power Point. Only one power point may be loaded into the device per day. Power Points stored in this manner require 24 hours to recover.

Stored Power Points are used in the normal manner; however, a roll of 1 on the user's arcane skill die results in the loss of all stored Power Points and the destruction of the device. If the GM is feeling particularly malevolent, the device is utterly destroyed and the user also suffers 1 point of magical backlash damage for every two Power Points stored in the device!

### The Ever Full Goblet

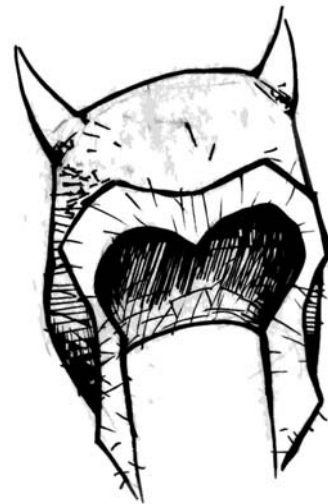
This large silver goblet will fill with wine or water, depending on which command word is spoken, up to three times per day. The goblet can hold up to 1 quart of liquid.

### The Golden Strand

This strand of fine gold is not much thicker or heavier than embroidery floss. Upon command, it will bind any single creature within 1" of the user as if the user had successfully used the *entangle* power (*Savage Worlds* rulebook, 2<sup>nd</sup> printing) and achieved a raise. The bound creature is then forced to truthfully answer any three questions posed by its owner. Any attempt to lie or conceal the truth results in the delivery of an electric shock that causes 1d6 points of damage (ignore any non-magical protection). The item may be used up to twice a day. The target is released on command, or once three questions have been truthfully answered. Asking a question counts as a "full round" action for the user (i.e., no movement allowed), and all questions must be asked within one hour of binding the target.

### Helm of Control

This unassuming metal helmet allows the wearer to automatically gain control of a single target's mind as if he had activated the *puppet* power and won the opposed Spirit roll against the opponent. Donning the helm activates its power, which is usable for up to one hour. The user may change targets within this duration. A single user may only use the helm's power for one hour per day. The helmet also provides protection as a normal pot helm.



### Lucky Coin

This normal looking gold coin allows the bearer access to a single bonus benny each session. There is a 10% chance of losing the coin each day—roll a d10 at the start of each session. On a result of '1', the coin has been lost and the character gains no bonus benny. During any session in which the bonus benny is used (it is always considered to be the final benny spent), there is an additional 50% chance that the coin will be lost—roll a d10 at the end of the session. On a result of 5+, the coin has been lost. If the coin is damaged or modified in any way (say by boring a hole through it to fit it on a necklace) it will immediately cease to function.



### Necklace of Healing

A single small diamond adorns this beautifully crafted silver necklace. By laying the necklace on the breast of a wounded character, a single wound is automatically healed as a regular action. The necklace may be activated twice per day.

### Necklace of the Stone Warriors

This necklace consists of a simple piece of rope to which are attached five semi-precious stones of varying type and color. Each stone has a letter inscribed upon it—the letters form the command word for the device. The power of the necklace may be invoked once per day. To activate the necklace, the wearer simply removes one or more of the stones and casts them to the ground while speaking the command word. Each stone thus used will be transformed into a Stone Warrior that is completely under the control of the owner of the necklace.

Once activated, a Stone Warrior will be active for one minute (10 rounds) or until destroyed—in either case, the semi-precious stone from which the warrior sprang is consumed. The command word is then altered appropriately. Each Stone Warrior possesses the following game stats:

**All Attributes:** d6

**Parry:** 5; **Pace:** 4; **Toughness:** 8 (3)

**Skills:** Fighting and Notice: d6

**Special Abilities:**

**Construct**

**Fearless**

**Stoneskin** (+3 Armor)

**Gear:** Stone Short Sword (Strength+1)

### Nectar of the Deep

This salty blue liquid grants the user the benefits of the *environmental protection (underwater)* power (*Savage Worlds* rulebook 2<sup>nd</sup> printing). The effects last for one hour per dose and each potion contains d4 doses.

### Ring of Fire Protection

This iron ring allows the wearer to ignore the effects of fire and heat as if he had cast the *fire walk* power (from *50 Fathoms*; alternately, GMs can use the *environmental protection (fire and heat)* power (*Savage Worlds* rulebook, 2<sup>nd</sup> printing). The ring may be used up to three times a day for one minute per use.

### Rings of Friendship

These rings appear as a matched set—each inscribed with one-half of a complex design. Possession allows those wearing the rings access to the Common Bond Edge. Bennies may only be exchanged between ring bearers.

### Ring of Regeneration

This ring is carved from the knuckle of a troll. Anyone wearing it is able to regenerate wounds more quickly than normally possible—for game purposes, treat the character as if they possessed the Slow Regeneration monstrous ability.

### Ring of Spider Climbing

This ring allows the wearer to move as if he possessed the Wall Walker monstrous ability. This effect can be invoked three times per day by speaking the activation word inscribed on the inner surface of the ring. Each invocation lasts one minute (10 rounds).

### Ring of Undead Summoning

These unadorned rings come in four varieties, each detailed below. Each ring allows a different type of undead to be instantly summoned to the user's side. The summoned creature(s) will do the wearer's bidding. Each invocation lasts for one minute (10 rounds), after which the undead (whether destroyed or not) will return to the ring ready to be summoned again. Each ring may be used once per week.

Ring Type	Number	Undead Type
Iron	1d4	Skeletons
Copper	1d6/2	Zombies
Silver	1d4/2	Ghouls
Gold	1	Wight

Statistics for skeletons, zombies, and ghosts are given in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook.

Ghouls use the Zombie stats with the following changes: Strength d8; Pace 6"; Claws (Strength +2; No Weakness (Head)).

Wights use the stats of a Ghost, but are armed with longswords.



## Spectacles of Magical Sight

There are several variations of these magical spectacles. When discovered, roll d% on the following table to determine the type found:

### d% Result Type of Spectacles

01-15	Spectacles of Night Vision
16-30	Spectacles of Invisibility Detection
31-45	Spectacles of Ethereal Vision
46-60	Spectacles of Magic Sight
61-75	Spectacles of Far Seeing
76-90	Spectacles of Translation
91-00	Spectacles of Illusion Detection

- **Spectacles of Night Vision** allow the wearer to see in the dark as if it were full daylight.
- **Spectacles of Invisibility Detection** allow the wearer to see anything that is invisible due to natural or magical means.
- **Spectacles of Ethereal Vision** allow the wearer to see any ethereal items or creatures.
- **Spectacles of Magic Sight** cause all magical items to glow a dull blue when viewed by the wearer.
- **Spectacle of Far Seeing** increase the wearer's normal range of vision by a factor of five.
- **Spectacles of Translation** allow the wearer to read any language viewed as if it were written in his native tongue.
- **Spectacles of Illusion Detection** reveal all illusions for what they truly are to the wearer.

These items function three times per day, for one minute per activation. Simply putting them on activates the items. Except for the Spectacles of Far Seeing, all sight is restricted to the wearer's normal vision limits.

## Staff Sword

This unassuming ash staff is 6' in length and functions as a normal quarterstaff in all respects. However, when the command word is spoken, the staff changes into a longsword. This sword is magical, although it imparts no special combat bonuses. Speaking the command word a second time will cause the sword to revert to a staff. The item may be used as often as desired—activation and deactivation both count as regular actions.

## Staff of the Faithful

This 6' long ash staff may be used as a normal quarterstaff; however, in the hands of anyone with the Arcane Background: Miracles Edge, it provides him with an additional 5 Power Points. These Power Points may be used and recovered in the normal manner. A version for mages (Staff of the Magi) also exists.

## Staff of Undead Control

A gilded human skull tops this 5' obsidian staff. Its bearer is able to control 1d6 undead creatures within the area covered by a Large Burst Template, centered on the bearer. The undead will do exactly as the bearer of the staff commands—excepting self-destruction (although they *can* be ordered to destroy one another). The staff can be used three times per day—each use lasting for 10 rounds (one minute). Sentient and Wild Card undead are allowed a Spirit check to avoid the effects of the staff.

## Sword of Defense

This sword allows a +2 bonus to the user's Parry value when used. This effect does not come without a downside, however, as an equal penalty to Fighting is applied when attacking with it. If no attack is made in a given round, the user may increase his Parry by +4.

## Talisman of Bravery

Characters wearing this talisman—which consists of a golden circle (3" diameter) with an embossed lion's head in profile attached to a gold chain—are treated as if they possessed the Fearless monstrous ability. Although no activation word is required to invoke the talisman's ability, it will only function three times per day (it activates automatically in the presence of anything requiring a Guts check).

## Talking Mirrors

These plain handheld silvered mirrors are usually found as a pair. Those possessing them can communicate with one another over any distance. The mirror allows sight and sound to be transmitted regardless of the actual distance separating the characters.

## Wand of Fire/Cold/Lightning Bolts

This unassuming 1' wand of wood/stone/metal can be used to cast bolts of fire/cold/lightning, respectively. The exact appearance and trapping is up to the individual GM. Each wand is "pre-loaded" with d10+10 Power Points and cannot be reloaded once the last Power Point is used. The user invokes the power of the wand by saying one of the three command words inscribed along the wand's length—the first casts a single bolt that does 2d6 points of damage and expends one Power Point; the second invokes a variation which expends two Power Points and casts a single bolt that does 3d6 points of damage; the final command word activates the wand's most powerful ability (and expends four Power Points), which is a single bolt doing 4d6 points of damage. Up to two bolts may be fired, at the same or at different targets, in a single round—this costs double the normal Power Point expenditure for the type of bolt fired (i.e., firing two 4d6 bolts would require eight Power Points). For purposes of determining whether an attack hits or not, assume the wand is a missile weapon (use the Shooting skill with a range of 3/6/12) and use the normal rules governing missile weapons.

## Weapon +1

Any weapon may be imbued with a magical power that grants the user a bonus of +1 to Fighting or Shooting, as appropriate. The bonus also applies to damage resulting from a successful attack. Weapons imparting such a bonus should be quite rare indeed. Such bonuses are applied as any other. Of course the GM is always free to introduce restrictions such as +1 vs. orcs only.

## Weapons of Pain

These weapons—they may be of any form—cause damage equal to their non-magical counterparts; however, any damage they cause heals at  $\frac{1}{2}$  the normal rate. Soak rolls made for a wound inflicted by a Weapon of Pain are made at -2. Damage that is magically healed is also halved so, for instance, *heal* requires a raise to heal a Wild Card of a single wound or to return an incapacitated Extra to Shaken status.

# THE LADY ROSE

*Donald Kamadulski tells me, "The Dama Rosa is a Galleon captained and crewed by Ugaks. Under direction of the Sea Hags, the crew has made a couple of interesting modifications: The main hold is entirely lined with iron in order to create a sacrificial pool within the hold of the ship. In addition, the outer surface of the hull has a thin coating of copper that has been magically enhance, giving the ship Armor +4 as well as allowing a bonus of +4 on all Handling rolls. Finally, the cannons have been magically enchanted to load themselves, allowing them to fire each and every turn! The Dama Rosa roams the waves always in search of victims for her sacrificial pool ..."*

## DAMA ROSA (Galleon)

**Acceleration:** 2

**Top Speed:** 12

**Travel Speed:** 3

**Handling:** 1

**Toughness:** 24 (8); Heavy Armor

**Crew:** 30 + 40

**Cargo Spaces:** 4 (8 if sacrificial pool is removed)

**Guns:** 16 Cannon (Range: 75/150/300; Damage: 3d6+1; ROF 1; AP 4; Heavy Weapon)

**Special Abilities:**

**Magic Copper Plating:** Armor +4 and +4 on all Handling rolls

**Sacrificial Vat:** The entire bottom section of the hold consists of an iron-lined vat filled with acidic blood. It contains a great white shark and is used in the sacrificial rites of the Ugaks. In order to be used as a normal hold, it needs to be drained, cleaned and restored to its original state.

**Magic Guns:** These enchanted cannon automatically reload themselves. They count as magic weapons for damage purposes, but may only fire normal cannon balls.

**The Crew:**



**Ugaks** (Officers) x10

Use the stats for the Red Men Chief found in the *50 Fathoms* sourcebook (p.138)



**Ugaks** (Shaman) x8

Use the stats for the Red Men Shaman found in the *50 Fathoms* sourcebook (p.138)

**Ugaks** (Crew) x52

Use the stats for the Ugak (Red Men) found in the *50 Fathoms* sourcebook (p.137)

**Great White Shark**

Use the stats for the great white shark found in the *50 Fathoms* sourcebook (p.139).

# The MAN of BRONZE

By Kenneth Robeson

*A complete book length novel of the exploits of Doc Savage and his five companions; a thrilling saga of a scrappy outfit hunting for a treasure and being hunted in turn! This quintessential Savage tale of adventure was written by Kenneth Robeson (a.k.a., Lester Dent) and was originally published in Doc Savage Magazine in 1933. We present Part Two in this issue of **Shark Bytes**.*

## THE ENEMY

**D**oc Savage was the last of the six to enter the adjoining room. But he was inside the room in less than ten seconds. They moved with amazing speed, these men.

Doc flashed across the big library. The speed with which he traversed the darkness, never disturbing an article of furniture, showed the marvelous development of his senses. No jungle cat could have done better.

Expensive binoculars reposed in a desk drawer, a high-power hunting rifle in a corner cabinet. In splits of seconds, Doc had these, and was at the window.

He watched, waited.

No more shots followed the first two.

Four minutes, five, Doc bored into the night with the binoculars. He peered into every office window within range, and there were hundreds. He scrutinized the spidery framework of the observation tower atop the skyscraper under construction. Darkness packed the labyrinth of girders, and he could discern no trace of the bushwhacker.

"He's gone!" Doc concluded aloud.

No sound of movement followed his words. Then the window shade ran down loudly in the room where they had been shot at. The five men stiffened, then relaxed at Doc's low call. Doc had moved soundlessly to the shade and drawn it.

Doc was beside the safe, the lights turned on, when they entered.

The window glass had been clouted completely out of the sash. It lay in glistening chunks and spears on the luxuriant carpet.

The glowing message which had been on it seemed destroyed forever.

"Somebody was laying for me outside," Doc said, no worry at all in his well-developed voice. "They evidently couldn't get just the aim they wanted at me through the window. When we turned out the light to look at the writing on the window, they thought we were leaving the building. So they took a couple of shots for wild luck."

"Next time, Doc, suppose we have bulletproof glass in these windows!" Renny suggested, the humor in his voice belying his dour look.

"Sure," said Doc. "Next time! We're on the eighty-sixth floor, and it's quite common to be shot at here!"

Ham interposed a sarcastic snort. He bounced over, waspish, quick-moving, and nearly managed to thrust his slender arm through the hole the bullet had tunneled in the brick wall.

"Even if you put in bulletproof windows, you'd have to be careful to set in front of them!" he clipped dryly.

Doc was studying the hole in the safe door, noting particularly the angle at which the powerful bullet had entered. He opened the safe. The big bullet, almost intact, was embedded in the safe rear wall.

Renny ran a great arm into the safe, grasped the bullet with his fingers. His giant arm muscles corded as he tried to pull it out. The fist that could drive bodily through inch-thick planking with perfect ease was defied by the embedded metal slug.

"Whew!" snorted Renny. "That's a job for a drill and cold chisels."

Saying nothing, merely as if he wanted to see if the bullet was stuck as tightly as Renny said, Doc reached into the safe.

Great muscles popping up along his arm suddenly split his coat sleeve wide open. He glanced at the ruined sleeve ruefully, and brought his arm out of the safe. The bullet lay loosely in his palm.

**R**enny could not have looked more astounded had a spike-tailed devil hopped out of the safe. The expression on his puritanical face was ludicrous.

Doc weighed the bullet in his palm. The lids were drawn over his golden eyes. He seemed to be giving his marvelous brain every chance to work—and he was. He was guessing the weight of that bullet within a few grains, almost as accurately as a chemist's scale could weigh it.

"Seven hundred and fifty grains," he decided, "That makes it a .577 caliber Nitro-Express rifle. Probably the gun that fired that shot was a double-barreled rifle."



"How do you figure that?" asked Ham. Possibly the most astute of Doc's five friends, Doc's reasoning nevertheless got away from even Ham.

"There were only two shots," Doc clarified. "Also, cartridges of this tremendous size are usually fired from double-barreled elephant rifles."

"Let's do something' about this!" boomed Monk. "The bushwhacker may get away while we're jawin!"

"He's probably fled already, since I could locate no trace of him with the binoculars," Doc replied. "But we'll do something about it, right enough!"

With exactly four terse sentences, one each directed at Renny, Long Tom, Johnny, and Monk, Doc gave all the orders he needed to. He did not explain in detail what they were to do. That wasn't necessary. He merely gave them the idea of what he wanted, and they set to work and got it in short order. They were clever, these men of Doc's.

Renny, the engineer, picked a slide rule from the drawer of a desk, a pair of dividers, some paper, a length of string. He probed the angle at which the bullet had passed through the inner safe door, calculated expertly the slight amount the window had probably deflected it. In less than a minute, he had his string aligned from the safe to a spot midway in the window, and was sighting down it.

"Snap out of it, Long Tom!" he called impatiently.

"Just keep your shirt on!" Long Tom complained. He was doing his own share as rapidly as the engineer.

Long Tom had made a swift swing into the library and laboratory, collecting odds and ends of electrical material. With a couple of powerful light bulbs he unscrewed from sockets, some tin, a pocket mirror he borrowed from—of all people—Monk, Long Tom rigged an apparatus to project a thin, extremely powerful beam of light. He added a flashlight lens, and borrowed the magnifying half of Johnny's glasses before he got just the effect he desired.

Long Tom sighted his light beam down Renny's string, thus locating precisely in the gloomy mass of skyscrapers, the spot from whence the shots had come.

In the meantime, Johnny, with fingers and eye made expert by years of assembling bits of pottery from ancient ruins, and the bones of prehistoric monsters, was fitting the shattered windowpane together. A task that would have taken layman hours, Johnny accomplished in minutes.

Johnny turned the black-light apparatus on the glass. The message in glowing blue sprang out. Intact!

Monk came waddling in from the laboratory. In the big furry hands that swung below his knees, he carried several bottles, tightly corked. They held a fluid of villainous color.

Monk, from the wealth of chemical formulas within his head, had compounded a gas with which to fight their opponents, should they succeed in cornering whoever had fired that shot. It was a gas that would instantly paralyze any one who inhaled it, but the effects were only temporary, and not harmful.

**T**hey all gathered around the table on which Johnny had assembled the fragments of glass—all but Renny, who was still calculating his angles. And as Doc flashed the light upon the glass, they read the message written there:

*Important papers back of the red brick*

Before the message could mean anything to their minds, Renny shouted his discovery.

"It's from the observation tower, on that unfinished skyscraper," he cried. "That's where the shot came from—and the sharpshooter must still be somewhere up there!"

"Let's go!" Doc ordered, and the men surged out into the massive, shining corridor of the building, straight to the battery of elevators.

If they noticed that Doc tarried behind several seconds, none of them remarked the fact. Doc was always doing little things like that—little things that often turned out to have amazing consequences later.

The men piled into the opened elevator with a suddenness that startled the dozing operator. He wouldn't be able to sleep on the job the rest of the night!

With a whine like a lost pup, the cage sank.

Grimly silent, Doc and his five friends were a remarkable collection of men. They so impressed the elevator operator that he would have shot the lift past the first floor into the basement, had Doc not dropped a bronze, long-fingered hand on the control.

Doc led out through the lobby at a trot. A taxi was cocked in at the curb, driver dreaming over the wheel. Four of the six men piled into the machine. Doc and Renny rode the running board.

"Do a Barney Oldfield!" Doc directed the cab driver.

The hack jumped away from the curb as if stung. Rain sheeted against Doc's strong, bronzed face, and his straight, close-lying bronze hair. An unusual fact was at once evident. Doc's bronze skin and bronze hair had the strange quality of seeming impervious to water. They didn't get appreciably wet; he shed water like the proverbial duck's back.

The streets were virtually deserted in this shopping region. Over toward the theater district, perhaps, there would be a crowd.

Brakes giving one long squawk, the taxi skidded sidewise to the curb and stopped. Doc and Renny were instantly running for the entrance of the new skyscraper. The four passengers came out of the cab door as if blown out. Ham still carried his plain black cane.

"My pay!" howled the taxi driver.

"Wait for us!" Doc flung back at him.

In the recently finished building lobby, Doc yelled for the watchman. He got no answer. He was puzzled. There should be one around.

They entered an elevator, sent it upward to the topmost floor. Still no watchman! They sprang up a staircase to where all construction but steel work ceased. There they found the watchmen.

The man, a big Irishman with cheeks so plump and red they looked like the halves of Christmas apples, was bound and gagged. He was indeed grateful when Doc turned him loose—but quite astounded. Doc, not bothering with the knots, simply freed the Irishman by snapping the stout ropes with his fingers as easily as he would cords.

"Begorra, man!" muttered the Irishman. "'Tis not human yez can be, with strength like that!"

"Who tied you up?" Doc asked compellingly. "What did he look like?"

"Faith, I dunno!" declared the son of Erin. "'Twas not a single look or a smell I got of him, except for one thing. The fingers of the man were red on the ends—like he had dipped 'em in blood!"

**O**n up into the wilderness of steel girders, the six men climbed. They left the Irishman behind, rubbing spots where the ropes had hurt him, and mumbling to himself about a man who broke ropes with his fingers, and another man who had red finger tips.

"This is about the right height!" said the gaunt Johnny, bounding at Doc's heels. "He was shooting from about here."

Johnny was hardly breathing rapidly. A tall, poorly looking man, Johnny nevertheless exceeded all the others, excepting Doc, in endurance. He had been known to go for three days and three nights steadily with only a slice of bread and a canteen of water.

Doc veered right. He had taken a flashlight from an inside pocket. It was not like other flashlights, that one of Doc's. It employed no battery. A tiny, powerful generator, built into the handle and driven by a stout spring and clockwork, supplied the current. One twist of the flash handle would wind the spring and furnish light current for some minutes. A special receptacle held spare bulbs. There was not much chance of Doc's light playing out.

The flash spiked a white rod of luminance ahead. It picked up a workman's platform of heavy planks.

"The shot came from there!" Doc vouchsafed.

A steel girder, a few inches wide, slippery with moisture, offered a short cut to the platform. Doc ran along it, surefooted as a bronze spider on a web thread. His five men, knowing they would be flirting with death among the steel beams hundreds of feet below, decided to go around, and did it very carefully.

Doc had picked two empty cartridges off the platform, and was scrutinizing them when his five friends put relieved feet on the planks.

"A cannon!" Monk gulped, after one look at the great size of the cartridges.

"Not quite," Doc replied. "They are cartridges for the elephant rifle I told you about. And it was a double-barreled rifle the sniper used."

"What makes you so sure, Doc?" asked big, sober-faced Renny.

Doc pointed at the plank surface of the platform. Barely visible were two tiny marks, side by side. Now that Doc had called their attention to the marks, the others knew they had been made by the muzzle of a double-barreled elephant rifle rested for a moment on the boards.

"He was a short man," Doc added, "Shorter, even, than Long Tom, here, and much wider."

"Huh?" This was beyond even quick-thinking Ham.

Seemingly unaware of their great height, and the certain death the slightest misstep would bring, Doc swung around the group and back the easy route they had come. He pointed to a girder which, because of the roof effect of another girder above, was dry on one side. But there was a damp smear on the dry steel.

"The sniper rubbed it with his shoulder in passing," Doc explained. "That shows how tall he is. It also shows he has wide shoulders, because only a wide-shouldered man would rub the girder. Now—"

Doc fell suddenly silent. As rigid as if he were the hard bronze he so resembled, he poised against the girder. His glittering golden eyes seemed to grow luminous in the darkness.

"What is it, Doc?" asked Renny.

"Some one just struck a match—up there in the room where we were shot at!" He interrupted himself with an explosive sound. "There! He's lighted another!"

Doc instantly whipped the binoculars—he had brought them along from the office—from his pocket. He aimed them at the window. He got but a fragmentary glimpse. The match was about burned out. Only the tips of the prowler's fingers were clearly lighted. "His fingers—the ends are red!"

## THE RED DEATH PROMISE

An interval of a dozen seconds, Doc waited. "Let's go!" he breathed then. "You fellows make for that room, quick!"

The five men spun, began descending from the platform as swiftly as they dared. It would take minutes in the darkness, and the jumble of girders, to reach the spot where the elevators could carry them on.

"Where's Doc?" Monk rumbled when they were down a couple of stories.

Doc was not with them, they now noted.

"He stayed behind!" snapped waspish Ham. Then, as Monk accidentally nudged him in the dangerous murk: "Listen, Monk, do you want me to kick you off here?"

Doc, however, had not exactly remained behind. He had, with the uncanny nimbleness of a forest-dwelling monkey, flashed across a precarious path of girders, until he reached the supply elevators, erected by the workmen on the outside of the building for fetching up materials.

The cages were hundreds of feet below, on the ground, and there was no one to operate the controls. But Doc knew that.

On the lip of the elevator shaft, balanced by the grip of his powerful knees, he shucked off his coat. He made it into a bundle in his hands.

The stout wire cables which lifted the elevator cab were barely discernible. They hung a full eight feet out over empty space. But with a gentle leap, Doc launched out and seized them. Using his coat to protect his palms from the friction heat sure to be generated, he let himself slide down the cables.

Air swished past his ears, plucked at his trouser legs and shirt sleeves. The coat smoked, began to leave a trail of sparks. Halfway down, Doc stopped by tightening his powerful hands, and changed to a fresh spot in the coat.

So it was that Doc had reached the street even while thin, waspish Ham was threatening to kick the gigantic Monk off the girder if Monk shoved him again.

It was imperative to get to the office before the departure of the prowler who had lighted the match. Doc plunged into the taxi he had left standing in front, rapped an order.

Doc's voice had a magical quality of compelling sudden obedience to an order. With a squawk of clashing gears and a whine of spinning tires, the taxi doubled around in the street. It covered the several blocks in a fraction of a minute.

A bronze streak, Doc was out of the cab and in the skyscraper lobby. He confronted the elevator operator.

"What sort of a looking man did you take up to eighty-six a few minutes ago?"

"There ain't a soul come in this building since you left!" said the elevator operator positively.

Doc's brain fought the problem an instant. He had naturally supposed the sniper had invaded the room above. It seemed not.

"Get this!" he clipped at the operator. "You wait here and sic my five men on anybody who comes out of this building. My men will be here in a minute. I'm taking your cage up!"

In the cage with the last word, Doc sent it sighing upward a couple of city blocks. He stopped it one floor below the eighty-sixth, quitted it there, crept furtively up the stairs and to the suite of offices which had been his father's, but which was now Doc's own.

The suite door gaped ajar. Inside was sepia blackness that might hold anything.

Doc popped the corridor lights off as a matter of safety. He feared no encounter in the dark. He had trained his ears by a system of scientific sound exercises which was a part of the two hours of intensive physical and mental drill Doc gave himself daily. So powerful and sensitive had his hearing become that he could detect sounds absolutely inaudible to other people. And ears were all important in a scrimmage in the dark.

But a quick round of the three rooms, a moment of listening in each, convinced Doc the quarry had fled.

His men arrived in the corridor with a great deal of racket. Doc lighted the offices, and watched them come in. Monk was absent.

"Monk remained downstairs on guard," Renny explained.

Doc nodded, his golden eyes flickering at the table. On that table, where none had been before, was propped a blood-red envelope!

Crossing over quickly, Doc picked up a book, opened it and used it like pincers to pick up the strange scarlet missive. He carried it into the laboratory, and dunked it in a bath of concentrated disinfectant fluid, stuff calculated to destroy every possible germ.

"I've heard of murderers leaving their victims an envelope full of the germs of some rare disease," he told the others dryly. "And remember, it was a strange malady that seized my father."

Carefully, he picked the crimson envelope apart until he had disclosed the missive it held. Words were lettered on scarlet paper with an odious black ink. They read:

*SAVAGE: Turn back from your quest, lest the red death strike once again.*

There was no signature.

A silent group, they went back to the room where they had found the vermilion missive.

**I**t was Long Tom who gave voice to a new discovery. He leveled a rather pale hand at the box which held the ultraviolet light apparatus.

"That isn't sitting where we left it!" he declared.

Doc nodded. He had already noticed that, but he did not say so. He made it a policy never to disillusion one of his men who thought he had been first to notice something or get an idea, although Doc himself might have discovered it far earlier. It was this modesty of Doc's which helped endear him to everybody he was associated with.

"The prowler who came in and left the red note used the black-light apparatus," he told Long Tom. "It's a safe guess that he inspected the window Johnny put together."

"Then he read the invisible writing on the glass!" Renny rumbled.

"Very likely."

"Could he make heads or tails of it?"

"I hope he could," Doc said dryly.

They all betrayed surprise at that, but Doc, turning away, indicated he wasn't ready to amplify on his strange statement. Doc borrowed the magnifying glass Johnny wore in his left spectacle lens, and inspected the door for finger prints.

"We'll get whoever it was!" Ham decided. The waspish lawyer made a wry smile. "One look at Monk's ugly phiz and nobody would try to get out of here."

But at that instant the elevator doors rolled back, out in the corridor.

Monk waddled from the lift like a huge anthropoid.

"What d'you want?" he asked them.

They stared at him, puzzled.

Monk's big mouth crooked a gigantic scowl. "Didn't one of you phone downstairs for me to come right up?"

Doc shook his bronze head slowly. "No."

Monk let out a bellow that would have shamed the beast he resembled. He stamped up and down. He waved his huge, corded arms that were inches longer than his legs.

"Somebody run a whizzer on me!" he howled. "Whoever it was, I'll wring his neck! I'll pull off his ears! I'll give—"

"You'll be in a cage at the zoo if you don't learn the manners of a man!" waspish Ham said bitingly.

Monk promptly stopped his apelike prancing and bellowing. He looked steadily at Ham, starting with Ham's distinguished shock of prematurely gray hair, and running his little eyes slowly down Ham's well-cared-for face, perfect business suit, and small shoes.

Suddenly Monk began to laugh. His mirth was a loud, hearty roar.

At the gusty laughter, Ham stiffened. His face became very red with embarrassment.

For all Monk had to do to get Ham's goat was laugh at him. It had all started back in the war, when Ham was Brigadier General Theodore Marley Brooks. The brigadier general had been the moving spirit in a little scheme to teach Monk certain French words which had a meaning entirely different than Monk thought. As a result, Monk had spent a session in the guardhouse for some things he had innocently called a French general.

A few days after that, though, Brigadier General Theodore Marley Brooks was suddenly hauled up before a court-martial, accused of stealing hams. And convicted! Somebody had expertly planted plenty of evidence.

Ham got his name right there. And to this day he had not been able to prove it was the homely Monk who framed him. That rankled Ham's lawyer soul.

Unnoticed, Doc Savage had reached over and turned on the ultra-violet-light apparatus. He focused it on the pieced-together window, then called to the others: "Take a look!"

The message on the glass had been changed!

**T**here now glowed with an eerie blue luminance exactly eight more words than had been in the original message. The communication now read:

*Important papers back of the red brick house at corner of Mountainair and Farmwell Streets.*

"Hey!" exploded the giant Renny. "How—"

With a lifted hand, a nod at the door, Doc silenced Renny and sent them all piling into the corridor.

As the elevator rushed them downward, Doc explained: "Somebody decoyed you upstairs so they could get away, Monk."

"Don't I know it!" Monk mumbled. "But what I can't savvy is who added words to that message?"

"That was my doing," Doc admitted. "I had a hunch the sniper might have seen us working with the ultra-violet-light apparatus, and be smart enough to see what it was. I hoped he'd try to read the message. So I changed it to lead him into a trap."

Monk popped the knuckles in hands that were near as big as gallon pails. "Trap is right! Wait'll I get my lunch shovels on that guy!"

Their taxi was still waiting outside. The driver began a wailing: "Say—when am I gonna get paid? You gotta pay for the time I been waitin'—"

Doc handed the man a bill that not only silenced him, but nearly made his eyes jump out.



North on Fifth Avenue, the taxi raced. Water whipped the windshield and washed the windows. Doc and Renny, riding outside once more, were pelted with the moisture drops. Renny bent his face away from the stinging drops, but Doc seemed no more affected than had he really been of bronze. His hair and skin showed not the least wetness.

"This red brick house at the corner of Mountainair and Farmwell Streets is deserted," Doc called once. "That's why I gave that address in the addition to the note."

Inside the cab, Monk rumbled about what he would do to whoever had tricked him.

A motorcycle cop fell in behind them, opened his siren, and came up rapidly. But when he caught sight of Doc, like a striking figure of bronze on the side of the taxi, the officer waved his hand respectfully. Doc didn't even know the man. The officer must have been one who knew and revered the elder Savage.

The cab reeled into a less frequented street, slanting around corners. Rows of unlighted houses made the thoroughfare like a black, ominous tunnel.

"Here we are!" Doc told their driver at last.

**G**hostly described the neighborhood. The streets were narrow, the sidewalks narrower; the cement of both was cracked and rutted and gone entirely in places. Chugholes filled with water reached half to their knees.

"You each have one of Monk's gas bombs?" Doc asked, just to be sure.

They had.

Doc breathed terse orders of campaign. "Monk in front, Long Tom and Johnny on the right, Renny on the left. I'll take the back. Ham, you stay off to one side as a sort of reserve if some quick thinking and moving has to be done."

Doc gave them half a minute to place themselves. Not long, but all the time they needed. He went forward himself.

The red brick house on the corner had two ramshackle stories. It had been deserted a long time. Two of the three porch posts canted crazily. Shingles still clung to the roof only in scabs. The windows were planked up solid. And the brick looked rotten and soft.

The street lamp at the corner cast light so pale as to be near nonexistent.

Doc encountered brush, eased into it with a peculiar twisting, worming movement of his powerful, supple frame. He had seen great jungle cats slide through dense leafage in that strangely noiseless fashion, and had copied it himself. He made absolutely no sound.

And in a moment, he had raised his quarry.

The man was at the rear of the house, going over the back yard a foot at a time, lighting matches in succession.

He was short, but perfectly formed, with a smooth yellow skin, and a seeming plumpness that probably meant great muscular development. His nose was curving, slightly hooked, his lips full, his chin not particularly large. A man of a strange race.

The ends of his fingers were dyed a brilliant scarlet.

Doc did not reveal himself at once, but watched curiously.

The stocky, golden-skinned man seemed very puzzled, as indeed he had reason to be, for what he sought was not there. He muttered disgustedly in some strange clucking language.

Doc, when he heard the words, held back even longer. He was astounded. He had never expected to hear a man speaking that language as though it were his native tongue. For it was the lingo of a lost civilization!

The stocky man showed signs of giving up his search. He lit one more match, putting his box away as though he didn't intend to ignite more. Then he stiffened.

Into the soaking night had permeated a low, mellow, trilling sound like the song of some exotic bird. It seemed to emanate from underfoot, overhead, to the sides, everywhere—and nowhere. The stocky man was bewildered. The sound was startling, but not awesome.

Doc was telling his men to beware. There might be more of the enemy about than this one fellow.

The stocky man half turned, searching the darkness. He took a step toward a big, double-barreled elephant rifle that leaned against a pile of scrap wood near him. It was of huge caliber, that rifle, fitted with telescopic sights. The man's hand started to close over the gun—

And Doc had him! Doc's leap was more expert even than the lunge of a jungle prowler, for the victim gave not even a single bleat before he was pinned, helpless in arms that banded him like steel, and a hand that cut off his wind as though his throat had been poured full of lead.

**S**wiftly, the others came up. They had found no one else about.

"I'd be glad to hold him for you!" Monk suggested hopefully to Doc. His furry fingers opened and shut.

Doc shook his head and released the prisoner. The man instantly started to run. But Doc's hand, floating out with incredible speed, stopped the man with a snap that made his teeth pop together like clapped hands.

"Why did you shoot at us?" Doc demanded in English.

The stocky man spewed clucking gutturals, highly excited.

Doc looked swiftly aside, at Johnny.

The gaunt archaeologist, who knew a great deal about ancient races, was scratching his head with thick fingers. He took off the glasses with the magnifying lens on the left side, then nervously put them back on again.

"It's incredible!" he muttered. "The language that fellow speaks—I think it is ancient Mayan. The lingo of the tribe that built the great pyramids at Chichen Itza, then vanished. I probably know as much about that

language as anybody on earth. Wait a minute, and I'll think of a few words."

But Doc was not waiting. To the squat man, he spoke in ancient Mayan! Slowly, halting, having difficulty with the syllables, it was true, but he spoke understandably.

And the squat man, more excited than ever, spouted more gutturals.

Doc asked a question.

The man made a stubborn answer.

"He won't talk," Doc complained. "All he will say is a lot of stuff about having to kill me to save his people from something he calls the Red Death!"

**BE SURE TO TUNE IN NEXT ISSUE FOR MORE OF THE AMAZING  
EXPLOITS OF DOC SAVAGE!**



# SAVAGED REDLINE

## A POST-APOCALYPTIC SETTING FOR SAVAGE WORLDS

*Savaged Redline is based on the Horizon: Redline setting published by Fantasy Flight Games. They describe the setting as one that "lets you relive the battles of highway gladiators and post-apocalyptic desperados from film and fiction". This Savaged version is no different. Think of it as a "fast play" set of rules designed to provide a stepping off point for the competent GM. If you require additional information, I highly suggest purchasing a copy of Horizon: Redline.*



### Introduction

*Savaged Redline* is set in a post-apocalyptic world gone mad. Bombs, biological agents, and drought have tested the limits of everything on the planet. Most of humankind's accumulated knowledge and resources have been lost in the fires of war. Despite this some humans cling to life, treading the thin line between extinction and survival. The population centers were the main targets of the weapons, and what wilderness there was has become infested with feral mutated creatures. Everything in between has been blasted to dust.

There's one thing that survived though—the open roads, crisscrossing the wastelands between settlements and derelict towns. The roads form the lifeblood of the remains of human civilization. They allow survivors to explore new areas, trade resources, and stay one step ahead of the warlords, gangers, and dreaded Creep clouds. But to do all that you need a set of wheels, the fuel to keep it going, and the skill to stay alive.

### Survival in a World Gone Mad

Sometime in the not-so-distant past the nations of the world became involved in a massive conflict. All sides employed their full arsenals of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons. No one alive today remembers when the conflict started or ended (some think it has yet to end), and very few remember why it supposedly started in the first place. The end result was inevitable—human civilization was all but wiped out. Most areas were transformed into desert wastelands, and those that did survive were left to fend for themselves. These days self-preservation is foremost in the minds of most survivors.

*Savaged Redline* is an open book. Anything can happen. The possibilities are endless and are only limited by the GM's imagination. The following tidbits may prove useful to GM's who wish to flesh out the setting for use in a full-blown campaign. The details of the *Savaged Redline* setting have been left sketchy for a reason—this world is yours to do with as you see fit! Welcome to the future...

**Regions:** The *Savage Redline* world is divided into three main types of geographical regions—wastelands, ruins, and green zones. Wastelands are the dry, dead regions that wouldn't be worth visiting if it weren't for all the fuel found there. Ruins are all that's left of the great cities, full of salvage and crawling with mutants. Green zones are hidden paradises with plenty of food and water—as well as xenophobic Savages and strange mutated creatures.

**Wastelands** are desolate, lonely regions of shifting sands, stony soil, and endless plains. The inexperienced traveler is easily lost because of the lack of landmarks. The ground is crisscrossed with cracks and dotted with strangled cacti and bits of greenery. Tiny creatures feed on the greenery; they in turn are fed upon by larger creatures that also feed on humans when they get the chance. The climate is hot and arid—between the blazing sun and the howling winds; the wastelands can suck a traveler dry within a day or two. Sand storms, Creep clouds, sinkholes, and the ever-present threat of dehydration are just a few of the challenges that await the traveler entering these regions. Potable water is scarce everywhere—even more so in the wastelands. A few ancient wells and the rare rain shower are the only sources of clean water in this burning desolation. Food is just as scarce, and the local animals are as likely to eat you as you are to eat them! What the wastelands lack in water they make up for in fuel. In isolated compounds across the region, oil derricks and refineries pump away day and night churning out gasoline for survival and profit. Salvage hunters never know what they will find in the wastelands. They can search for weeks and find nothing, then top a sand dune and discover an abandoned military base—untouched by the war and ready to be looted.

**Ruins** are vast, chaotic forests of twisted metal, shattered concrete, and broken glass. They are all that remain of the once great cities. Because the cities were the primary targets of destruction during the war they are infested with the Creep—even the “cleanest” cities still have areas that mean certain death if entered. Nevertheless, the ruins are more densely populated than the wastelands or the green zones. Many live here because they are drawn to the remains of their once great civilization. Others are descendants of the original city dwellers who survived the war by burying themselves deep within underground shelters. Others come to the ruins looking to make their fortune in salvage. For those willing to take the risk, the ruins are an opportunity to strike it rich... or die trying. There is water in the ruins, but it's not always safe to drink. Old cisterns, sewers, and water pipes have accumulated water. Whether or not it's pure is another story! Oftentimes even the rainwater is tainted, and sometimes it burns the skin as it falls. Food is limited to what the locals can grow or scrounge from the remains of ancient grocery stores. Fuel is even more limited in the ruins. Any reserves from before the war (such as those found in fuel station tanks) have long since disappeared and there is little raw material for making more. The ruins are full of salvage. They're practically made of salvage, though only a portion of it is worth anything in trade. Tools, blades, guns, flashlights, and other portable and immediately useful items are worth a lot anywhere. Beams of wood, sheets of metal, and other raw materials can be profitable as well, but it's best to have a paying customer lined up first. Rigger towns, trading posts, and boomtowns typically lay along the fringes of the ruins.

**Green zones** are just far enough from the cities to have not only avoided the bombs themselves, but the chaos of the dark years that followed as well. Mother Nature isn't dead; she's just hiding. The world is littered with isolated areas—none larger than 10 or 20 square miles—that survived the war. The water runs clear in these hidden valleys, plants still grow, and animals flourish. However, the green zones couldn't avoid the global devastation altogether. In some areas the Creep has contaminated the land and twisted the bodies of the creatures into dangerous parodies of what they once were. Green zones rarely lack clean water. Most are fed by deep running streams and a few, if their geography is right, even get a decent amount of rainfall. With water comes food. A few green zones naturally produce food in the form of nuts, berries, and fruit. Most green zone settlements grow small gardens near the water. Some settlements have small herds of goats or sheep, and most hunt and fish. Fuel and salvage are rarely, if ever, found in the green zones.

**The Creep:** The bruised and wounded surface of the world bleeds toxic, infectious substances. The myriad of environmental poisons has mingled to the point that, in regard to modern medicine, they have all become the same global ailment. To the folks who wander the remains of the world, all of the radioactive goops and lethal pathogens are thought of as a single plague: the Creep. In truth, the Creep is any effect stemming from radiation, man-made biological agents, and toxic chemicals. Specific effects vary according to the substance encountered. Most of the thousands of individual toxins have no names, at least none that anybody remembers, and are either labeled based on their source (e.g. Rad Creep) or the area where they were first encountered (e.g. Nagshead Creep). The easiest way to handle the Creep in the game is to treat biological and chemical variants as individual poisons or diseases. Nuclear and radiological variants can be treated as a single type of radiation. Game effects are handled according to the guidelines for poison, disease, and radiation as presented in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. The creation of individual strains of the Creep and their specific effects is left to the GM's imagination.

**Resources:** In the *Savaged Redline* setting, scarcity is the rule rather than the exception. Foods, fuel, water, and ammunition is all in short supplies. Resources are precious and the desire to obtain them lies at the heart of nearly every conflict.

**Water** is at the top of everyone's list. It doesn't rain much these days so most clean water is found deep below the ground. In the wastelands, this means ancient wells from before the war. In the green zones, there are streams and springs. In the ruins, the only options are cisterns and sewage treatment plants. Finding water is one thing, but making sure it's potable is another...

**Food** can't be picked up at the local supermarket anymore (at least not outside of the canned goods found in the ruins). To feed themselves these days, folks rely on subsistence gardens, livestock, scrounging, and the occasional hunting trip. Like water, finding food is the easy part—making sure it's safe to eat is a bit harder.

**Fuel** means freedom. With fuel in their rigs the character's world is an open road. Without it, they're either stuck where they are, or worse, they're forced to walk. There are undiscovered fuel depots out in the wastelands that are just waiting to be discovered and make whoever finds them very rich and powerful—if they can hold onto their find! Most people get their fuel from wandering traders, traveling fuel trucks, and the rare refinery settlement.

**Salvage** is a broad term that includes anything from before the war that isn't commonly made anymore—guns, ammunition, tires, spare engine parts, and so on. Rigs break down. Ammunition runs out. Guns get smashed by axe-wielding mutants. When these things happen, the characters need to find salvage. The odd piece or two of salvage may be found in the wastelands or the green zones; however, such a find is rare. For the most part, finding salvage means heading into the ruins. For those less stout of heart, acquiring salvage means a trip to the local trading post or a visit to a nomad caravan.

**Artifacts** include potentially life-saving technology like Creep counters, crank-powered flashlights, and operational walkie-talkies. They also include useless items that have historical significance and act as status symbols—personal music systems, hand-held video games, or any number of now-arcane gizmos. Artifact holders usually become the center of attention—whether they want to be or not!

## Character Creation

Characters in this world are tough, savvy opportunists who know how to take a bad situation and make it better for themselves and worse for their foes. Some are motivated by a desire to re-establish the civilizations of old. Others seek power. Still others may merely be trying to make the world just a little bit less scary for everyone.

**Race:** All characters are human, although some of the Rejects would have you think otherwise!

**Traits, Derived Statistics, and Edges and Hindrances:** These are handled exactly as described in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. A few new Edges and one new Hindrance are detailed below:

**Longwalker** (Seasoned, Vigor d8, and Survival d8)

Your tireless walking in the desert wastes has inured you to the hardships of that pitiless terrain. You need only half the normal amounts of food and water to survive. In addition, all penalties due to extreme environmental conditions are halved.

**One Handed Driver** (Novice, Driving d8 or Ace)

You can drive with one hand and fire a one-handed weapon with the other without invoking the standard -2 MAP.

**Vehicle Focus** (Seasoned, Driving d8 or Ace)

You are an expert at driving a single class of vehicle (car, truck, bus, etc...). All Driving rolls made when behind the wheel of your chosen vehicle class are at +2.

**Arcane Backgrounds:** Arcane Backgrounds, other than AB: Psionics (and even that is rare), are not generally available in the *Savaged Redline* setting. The use, or lack thereof, of Arcane Backgrounds (at least by characters) is entirely up to the individual GM. Some might prefer to eliminate them altogether, while others might envision cabalistic cults practicing some twisted form of "technomancy".



**Gear:** Money, precious stones, and the like have no value in the *Savaged Redline* setting. Water, food, fuel, and salvage are the only useful forms of currency in this post-apocalyptic world. To determine what gear a character starts the game with, utilize the Scrounging rules found in the Gear and Equipment section, below.

**Character Archetypes:** The following are representative of the typical character types of the *Savaged Redline* world. Feel free to develop them as character templates or simply use them for inspiration when creating your own unique character. Of course, you can always create a character utilizing the normal character creation rules found in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook.

### **Bornagains**

In times of great crisis, humanity seeks answers to life's mysteries. "Bornagains" were raised with strong religious or spiritual beliefs with which they attempt to provide those answers. Most Bornagains simply want to follow their faith, wherever it may lead them. Sometimes a Bornagain gets a little too enthusiastic about his faith—in such cases he crosses the line and becomes a "Zealot".

Bornagains and Zealots start the game with Spirit d6 instead of the free Edge normally allowed to humans. Zealots also gain the Charismatic Edge and the Delusional (Major) Hindrance. No additional bonus points are gained by taking this Hindrance.

### **Bygones**

After the war anything akin to pride, tradition, and history was lost amid the dust and fire. There are a few though, who make studying the past and planning for the future their stock in trade. These folks, called "Bygones", can draw upon this knowledge to help keep things running, be it a machine or the fabric of society. Their goals are clear: preserve the knowledge of the past and to move society beyond the current Dark Age.

Bygones start the game with either Smarts d6 or Spirit d6 instead of the free Edge normally allowed to humans.

### **Ferals**

Everyone knows that the Green Zones really aren't that safe. But a few have decided that it's safer facing mutant mountain lions than gun-toting raiders. Of course, some don't have a choice. "Ferals" are folks that have "gone wild"; either because they abandoned society or society abandoned them. They just want to survive, but instead of looking to machines and other folks, they're used to trusting their own instincts. Ferals who have lost touch with their humanity and reverted to a bestial existence are known as "Savages".

Ferals and Savages start the game with Agility d6 instead of the free Edge normally allowed to humans. Savages also gain the Alertness Edge and the Outsider Hindrance. No additional bonus points are gained from this Hindrance.

### **Marauders**

In a world gone mad, sometimes might does make right. Those who have chosen raw strength and firepower as their means to tame the world are known as "Marauders". Where Marauders go, destruction is sure to follow. Most Marauders are no more than mere thugs. However, heroic groups of Marauders do exist that ride the highways meting out their own brand of justice. Marauders and Gangers start the game with Strength d6 instead of the free Edge normally allowed to humans. Gangers also start the game with Fighting d4 at no cost and the Mean Hindrance. No additional bonus points are gained from this Hindrance.





### **Nomads**

Wandering is a way of life in these harsh times. "Nomads" stay on the move to find new resources, stay out of the way of the mutants and the warlords, and keep ahead of the Creep clouds. Most simply move around en masse because the old saying about "strength in numbers" is truer now than it ever was. Many Nomads seek to eke out an existence by becoming "Traders", leading caravans across the land to barter for needed goods and supplies. There are also some Nomads who walk a solitary path, haunted by something that keeps them from becoming a regular part of society—these enigmatic individuals are known as "Walkers".

All Nomads start the game with Vigor d6 instead of the free Edge normally allowed to humans. Traders start the game with the Persuasion d4. Walkers start the game with Survival d4. All of these wandering character types have the Outsider Hindrance. No additional bonus points are gained from this Hindrance.

### **Redliners**

Some people are born to drive. "Redliners" are the royalty of the open road; able to push their vehicles to feats no one else can achieve. Redliners follow many varied paths; some are heroes, protecting the open roads from the predations of Gangers, while others serve those very Gangers as a sort of "shock cavalry" that ensures roadway domination. Many Redliners are mercenaries who straddle the line between good and evil, doing whatever it takes to keep their vehicles running and themselves in the thick of the action.

Redliners start the game with either the Ace Edge or Driving d6 instead of the free Edge normally allowed to humans.

### **Rejects**

Once the war got going, the bigwigs figured they had nothing to lose and pulled out everything they had: biological, chemical, and even nuclear weapons were unleashed on the world. The lucky ones died horribly, but quickly. The rest lived on in the Aftermath. The "Rejects" are the scarred offspring of those unfortunates. A Reject's outlook is as varied as their genetic code. Some live to cause chaos while others are simple-minded innocents.

Rejects start the game with both Strength d6 and Vigor d6. They must take the Attribute Deficiency Hindrance with either Smarts or Spirit as the chosen attribute (see the Character Creation section above for details of this new Hindrance). No additional bonus points are gained by taking this Hindrance.

### **Riggers**

Building, tearing down, and building again is the life cycle of the "Rigger". They love to work with machinery of any sort, improving, repairing or salvaging what they can from it. Even faced with something they have never seen before, Riggers have a chance of making it work or work better. Riggers are most often encountered among Bygones and Redliners, but many "hedge" Riggers provide their services to more primitive communities.

Riggers start the game with either the Repair d6 or the Mr. Fix It Edge instead of the free Edge normally allowed to humans.

### **Savants**

While most survivors "tough it out" and get on with their lives, there are others who simply cannot deal with the everyday horrors of a world gone mad. As a defense mechanism, they focus on a few specific skills and turn a blind eye toward everything else. Their minds jumble together any facts and details that do not have something to do with their chosen area of expertise. These individuals, called "Savants", wander through life trading their skills for protection. Savants tend to have no long-term goals aside from being left alone to do what they do best.

Savants start the game with a d6 in any one attribute. They may also choose any one skill at d8 instead of the free Edge normally allowed to humans. They must also take the Attribute Deficiency Hindrance (see the Character Creation section for details of this new Hindrance). No additional bonus points are gained by taking this Hindrance.

## Combat on the Open Road

The following new vehicle maneuvers should be added to those in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook Vehicle Rules section in *Savaged Redline*.

**Force (0):** This maneuver may only be performed against adjacent vehicles of equal or smaller size. Make opposed Driving rolls (the driver of the smaller vehicle makes his roll at -2). The winner may either force the loser to hit an appropriate obstacle or lose control of his vehicle.

**Redline (-2):** You may exceed your vehicle's Top Speed by its Acceleration Value. Make a Driving roll. If you fail the roll, your vehicle suffers a Critical Hit (Engine). If you roll a natural 1, the engine explodes from the stress. Make a successful Driving roll or roll on the Out of Control Table. It requires appropriate spare parts, 4d6 hours, and a successful Repair roll in order to get the engine working again.

## Gear and Equipment

*Savaged Redline* uses broad definitions for weapons and armor. Anything that can be used like a club—a baseball bat, a tire iron, a golf club—is a club. Every long piercing weapon is a spear. Box cutters, sharpened screwdrivers, and pieces of glass with electrical tape handles are all knives or daggers. The cosmetic traits of your character's weapons are for you to decide.

Each character starts the game with a rucksack (50 pound capacity), a bedroll, one set of typical clothing, and a one-week supply of food and water. Additional items are determined by scrounging, using the method described hereafter. When determining starting gear you may start with three cards rather than two. Bennies can be used to re-roll scrounging results or to discard a card and draw another.

After character generation, equipment must be bought or scrounged for. If scrounged for, use the method described below to determine what is found. If bought, an item's value is measured in terms of food, fuel, or water. The value of a given resource depends on the character's surroundings. For example, in the wastelands, fuel is generally less valuable than water. In the green zones, water is the resource of least value. In the ruins, food is generally easier to find than either water or fuel. Of course, sometimes an item's value depends on whom you are buying it from or selling it to. The players should treat the buying and selling of resources as a roleplaying opportunity.

There are no extensive equipment lists in *Savage Redline*. Players should only have access to those things that the GM allows them to have. You can easily extrapolate equipment from the lists given in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. A quick and dirty method for getting a rough idea of an item's value is to divide the listed dollar value cost by 10 and round up. This will give you a rough idea of how much fuel (in gallons), food (in terms of meals for one person), and water (in quarts) an item is worth.

**Scrounging:** Of course, the GM is always free to simply state what the characters find when they scrounge; however, in most cases it's simply easier (and more interesting) to randomly determine what is found. The system for handling random scrounging in *Savaged Redline* is a variant of the system presented in *Savage Tale 6: Zombie Run* by Jonathan Pierson: After spending at least 10 minutes scrounging an area you may draw two cards. Then, make a Survival roll (or the normal unskilled roll of 1d4-2 if you don't have the Survival skill). You may draw an additional card for a success or two additional cards with a raise; however, you must discard one card for a failure (discard both cards if you rolled a natural 1). If you drew a Joker, discard it and draw two more cards. Consult the table below for each card you have in your hand:

<b>2-5 Spades</b>	2d20 rounds of ammunition (appropriate to character's weapon or determine randomly)
<b>6-10 Spades</b>	Melee weapon (player's choice or determine randomly)
<b>J-K Spades</b>	Firearm (roll on the Firearms Table, below)
<b>Ace Spades</b>	Firearm with ammunition (roll on the Firearms Table)
<b>Any Clubs</b>	Random item (GM's choice)
<b>2-5 Hearts</b>	1d6 day supply of canned food
<b>6-10 Hearts</b>	1d6 day supply of potable water
<b>J-K Hearts</b>	Medical supplies (enough to heal 1d10 Wounds)
<b>Ace Hearts</b>	1d6 day supply of both food and water
<b>2-5 Diamonds</b>	10 gallons of fuel
<b>6-10 Diamonds</b>	1d6 explosive devices (treat as grenades)
<b>J-K Diamonds</b>	A vehicle (GM's choice—no more than one vehicle per group)
<b>Ace Diamonds</b>	A vehicle (GM's choice—no more than one vehicle per group) with a full tank of fuel

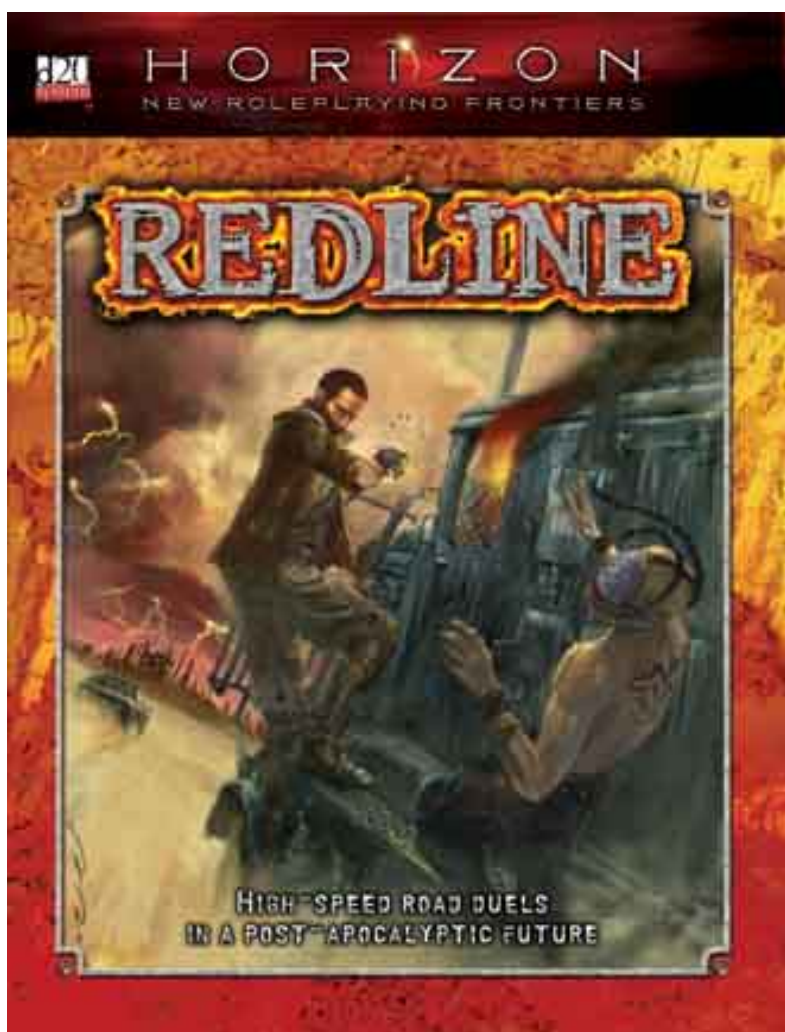
### Firearms Table (roll 2d10)

2-5	Small pistol (9mm and .22)
6-9	Large pistol (.44-.50)
10-12	Rifle
13-15	Shotgun
16-17	Assault rifle
18-19	Submachine gun
20	Machine gun

The GM can easily tweak this system to reflect the probable distribution of gear in a given area. For example, when scrounging in a supermarket he may decide that any Diamonds are treated as Hearts. In a gun shop, Clubs may be treated as Spades and Hearts may be treated as Clubs. The GM is also encouraged to create “random item” tables keyed to certain types of locations.

### Parting Shot

So there you have it! A down and dirty conversion of the *Horizon: Redline* setting for the *Savage Worlds* roleplaying system. Actually, this is the revised version of this setting. My original conversion is still available at the *Savage Heroes* website (see **Shark Bytes #1**, specifically the *Savage Dot Com* column, if you’ve never been to this website). It’s my intention to flesh out this setting through a series of articles that will appear in future issues of **Shark Bytes**—just look for a column entitled *Tales from the Wasteland*. Next issue will provide all the information you need for utilizing souped-up vehicles and such. Enjoy, and until next time ... Keep it Savage!



# We're Going to Need a Bigger Boat

## ***Because everyone needs another interesting piece of equipment!***

What self-respecting roleplayer can honestly say he's never uttered the words, "Gee, I wish my character had one of those." I didn't think so! That's what this column is all about—new gear, gadgets, and equipment to load your heroes down with. In keeping with the theme set forth in the Bleeding Edge Ammunition article in this issue, I have decided to detail optional ammunition-carrying devices, some accessories, and a few firearm modifications! These items are from the same source described in the aforementioned article. Please note that cost, weight, and availability are, as always, up to the individual GM!

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### **Ammunition Drum**

The ammunition drum is a circular magazine that holds much more ammo than the standard magazine for a given weapon. Using one doubles the weapon's listed "Shots" value. Only submachineguns, assault rifles, and light machineguns may be outfitted with an ammunition drum.

### **Barrel Extension**

This modification grants a +1 Shooting bonus on all Long range shots; however, it also makes the weapon impossible to conceal unless it is also made collapsible (see below).

### **Carbine Modification**

This modification may be performed on any assault rifle. It allows a submachinegun-sized frame to fire a rifle-sized cartridge, making the resulting modified weapon more compact (reduce assault rifle weight by 1/3) and concealable.

### **Collapsible**

This modification allows the user to break down a weapon in a way that helps disguise its nature, but is also designed to be relatively easy to reassemble for action. Notice rolls to spot the disassembled weapon suffer a -2 penalty. Assembling the weapon to its firing state is a full round action (i.e., you cannot perform any other actions—even free actions).

### **Expanded Magazine**

This magazine is simply designed to hold more ammunition than a normal "clip". Any clip-loaded weapon equipped with an expanded magazine increases its listed "Shots" value by 10.

### **Fingerprint Scan Grips**

These grips are equipped with a sensor device that scans the user's fingerprints. If the sensor reads a correct match with the registered owner, it will release the weapon's safety; otherwise, the weapon cannot be fired.

### **Flash Suppressor**

Flash suppressors are designed to minimize muzzle flash. Any Notice attempts to visually locate a shooter using a weapon equipped with a flash suppressor are made at -2.

### **Foregrip**

A submachinegun or assault rifle equipped with a foregrip mounted on its barrel grants the user better control of the weapon during fully automatic fire. This halves the normal autofire penalty.

### **Gun Camera**

With the use of fiber optic lenses, a miniature digital camera can be attached to any type of firearm. The camera functions like a normal digital camera (see **Shark Bytes #1**) and is able to record up to 20 high resolution images within its memory before needing to switch out memory chips. The camera can be set to take a picture as the trigger is pulled, and a manual switch may be integrated into the weapon's handle allowing pictures to be taken at any time.

### **Non-Metallic Construction**

The weapon has been constructed from sophisticated high-strength plastic, ceramic, or composite materials. It will easily pass through metal detectors, but its profile will be revealed by x-ray scans. These weapons are usually illegal and are much more fragile than their metallic counterparts. Any result of '1' on the Shooting die indicates a 50% chance of the weapon being irreparably damaged.

### **Recoil Compensator**

This device minimizes the recoil of automatic weapons. Weapons equipped with a recoil compensator may ignore the normal penalty for automatic fire.

### **Wrist Spring Holster**

This device may only be used with pistols. It is strapped to the user's forearm and the weapon is then attached. By flicking his wrist, the user causes the weapon to spring into his hand. Drawing a pistol in a wrist spring holster is a free action and in many instances may increase the user's chance of getting The Drop on an opponent.

*All these items are designated OGL content and originally appeared in Bleeding Edge: Ammunition by Jason J. McCuistan (LPJ Design: <http://www.lpjdesign.com>), a mini-sourcebook of sorts for the D20 Modern System.*



# BUCKET O' CHUM

**An endless source of ready-made NPCs for your Savage Worlds games!**

In this issue, Theron Seckington presents the dreaded “Brain in a Jar” and your humble editor kicks in his version of the archetypal teenage demon slayer as well as a profile of Dr. Geoffrey Gladstone, a hematologist with an unnatural preoccupation with blood! Look for future installments of this column to detail a wide array of NPCs that any GM, with a little tweaking of course, can easily slot into a pre-existing campaign or setting!



## The Brain in a Jar (Wild Card)

Kept alive by strange and arcane technology, the Brain in a Jar has become a staple of many pulp and horror settings. Its role is dictated by the flavor of the campaign in which it appears. In a typical 1930's pulp tale it most likely takes on a villainous role. In a sci-fi setting it might be all that remains of the “Savior of Humanity”. In a 1920's horror campaign, it may be representative of a strange alien life form.

Theron highly suggests using Butch Curry's alternative psionics system—*Beyond the Veil*, a free download at the *Savage Heroes* website—in place of the rules found in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. *Beyond the Veil* captures the “feel” of the Brain's psionic abilities perfectly!

**Attributes:** Agility N/A (unless it has some means of locomotion), Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength N/A, Vigor d6 (for the actual brain itself)

**Skills:** Intimidation d12, Investigation d10, Knowledge (any arcane subject) d12, Knowledge (any scientific field) d12, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Psionics d12+2, Taunt d10

**Pace:** 0 (see Agility, above); **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 8 (Includes Armor bonus for The Jar)

**Hindrances:** Arrogant, Overconfident

**Edges:** Arcane Background: Psionics (any five powers and 20 Power Points), Improved Arcane Resistance (Psionics), Harder to Kill, New Power (x3), Power Points (x2)

**Gear:** “The Jar”—This clear globe is made of some thick substance that is similar to glass but much more durable. It provides the brain with Armor +3. The globe sits atop a metal stand that incorporates a microphone and a speaker, enabling the brain to “hear” and “talk”. You may instead choose to have the brain communicate exclusively via telepathic means. In either case, the brain pulses with an eerie light when “communicating”.

If the jar is ever broken, the Brain will begin to “suffocate”. It must make a Vigor roll at the start of each round. If it fails, it gains a level of Fatigue. Once Incapacitated by this, the Brain will die.

### Special Abilities

**Fear (–2):** when seeing the Brain for the first time.

#### Fearless

**Lackeys:** The Brain is intelligent enough to understand that it's in a precarious situation—namely, that of a disembodied and immobile brain in a big jar—and needs a measure of outside assistance in order to carry out its diabolical plans of world domination. Consequently, it is never without minion attendants of some sort, be they Nazi stooges, monkey butlers, demonic imps, or buffoons in matching costumes! These “assistants”, typically between 2 and 20 in number, are treated as Extras. The Brain may also have a trusted Wild Card lieutenant or two.

**Weakness (Extremes of Temperature):** When exposed to extreme heat or cold the Brain suffers a –4 penalty to any actions it attempts.



### Teenage Demonslayer (Wild Card)

It's a nasty job, but somebody has to do it if humanity doesn't want to get overrun by a bunch of dead things from Hell! Enter the teenage demonslayer—a dedicated hero who's willing to step up to bat and take a swing for humanity. Demonslayers, although highly trained in the art of hand-to-hand combat and well-versed in occult lore, often seem to be ditzy high school chicks with attitude to spare, and always have killer looks. In between homework, dating, and chores, the demonslayer somehow seems to find the time to patrol the streets of her hometown, keeping the streets safe for all.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Taunt d6, Throwing d6, Tracking d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8 (includes bonus for Improved Block); **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Enemy (Major—all demons), Heroic, Loyal

**Edges:** Attractive, Combat Reflexes, Improved Block, Trademark Weapon (stake)

**Gear:** The Teenage Demonslayer carries a “black bag” that is tantamount to a complete arsenal of all the weapons and gear that are needed in order to fulfill their role as the “protector of humanity”. This bag includes, but is not limited to, the following items: a knife or dagger, several stakes of carved ash wood, several vials of holy water, a pair of walkie-talkies, a silver cross, and top-of-the-line cosmetic products.

#### Special Abilities

**Strike to Slay:** In melee combat against a supernatural Big Bad, the teenage demonslayer does not suffer a called shot penalty when attempting to strike at its point of weakness with an appropriate weapon.

### Dr. Geoffrey Gladstone, M.D. (Wild Card)

Geoffrey Gladstone is a hematologist, a doctor specializing in blood disorders. While pleasant and witty he does have one slight, ironic problem—he's a vampire! Attacked and enslaved by a vampire lord while at a medical conference in San Diego, CA, he helped Bureau 13 agents locate and destroy his master. Under Bureau 13 supervision, Gladstone was allowed to return to his hometown of Raleigh, North Carolina. He readily adapted to his condition by taking a night job at the local blood bank.

Dr. Gladstone is now the foremost expert on vampirism in the world. He has never taken a human life, but the Bureau keeps a close eye on him anyway. He is obsessed with finding a “cure” for his condition. (See *Stalking the Night Fantastic: Bureau 13* in this issue for more information about the Bureau and its mission.)

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Driving d6, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Healing d8, Intimidation d8, Investigation d10, Knowledge (Vampirism) d12, Knowledge (Hematology) d10, Notice d6, Throwing d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Cautious, Code of Honor, Enemy (Major—vampires), Habit (drinks blood), Loyal, Outsider

**Edges:** Level Headed, Quick

**Gear:** Gladstone keeps his refrigerator well stocked with blood he has “liberated” from the blood bank at which he is employed. He also has quite an impressive library on the subjects of hematology and vampirism.

#### Special Abilities:

##### Undead

**Weakness (Holy Symbol, Holy Water, Invitation Only, Stake through the Heart, and Sunlight):** See the “Vampire, Young” entry in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook (Bestiary) for details.



# THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY

## *The Spawn of Lovecraft by Butch Curry*

With my favorite holiday—Halloween, of course—fast approaching, it's only natural that we dedicate this voyage to some horrific nasties from the briny deep and the great beyond. This fearsome foursome is taken straight from the pages of the Master himself, H.P. Lovecraft. As a bonus, I've decided to throw in conversion notes for turning some classic critters into Lovecraftian horrors with just a few strokes of the pen. So, open the Necronomicon and pull out your Guts dice. It's time to get scared!



### **MI-GO** (the Fungi from Yuggoth)

*"They were pinkish things about five feet long; with crustaceous bodies bearing vast pairs of dorsal fins or membranous wings and several sets of articulated limbs, and with a sort of convoluted ellipsoid, covered with multitudes of very short antennae where a head would ordinarily be..."* (H.P. Lovecraft, "The Whisperer in Darkness")

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8, Knowledge (multiple mathematic and scientific disciplines) d10, Notice d10, Repair d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Weird Science d10

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

#### **Special Abilities:**

**Arcane Background (Weird Science):** Mi-go are capable of creating bizarre devices like electric guns and fungal armor. Treat them as having 15 Power Points. They typically have access to items with the following powers: *armor*, *bolt*, *deflection*, *obscure*, and *stun*.

#### **Fear**

**Flight:** Mi-go are clumsy flyers (Pace 10; Acceleration 2; Must make an Agility roll to turn) in an atmosphere. In the depths of space, they fly as per the normal flying rules (Pace 30).

**Fungus:** The fungal body of the Mi-go is resistant to harm, making them harder to injure; they get a +2 bonus to Toughness (AP attacks have no benefit) and a +2 bonus to recover from being Shaken.

**Invulnerability:** Mi-go can survive in deep space (immune to cold, radiation, and the effects of a vacuum).

**Nippers:** Mi-go have powerful pincer-like appendages (Str +1 damage).

**Perfect Vision:** Mi-go are adapted to living in complete darkness (ignore all lighting penalties).

**Vulnerability** (Drowning): Strangely, while the Mi-go can survive in a total vacuum, they're vulnerable to drowning. When submerged in any liquid, a Mi-go must immediately begin making Vigor rolls at -2 or begin taking Fatigue levels. When reduced below Incapacitated, the Mi-go dies.



### **GREAT RACE OF YITH**

*"Enormous iridescent cones, about ten feet high and ten feet wide at the base, and made up of some ridgy, scaly, semielastic matter. From their apexes projected four flexible, cylindrical members, each a foot thick... These members were sometimes contracted almost to nothing, and sometimes extended to any distance up to about ten feet. Terminating two of them were enormous claws or nippers. At the end of the third were four red, trumpetlike appendages. The fourth terminated in an irregular yellowish globe some two feet in diameter and having three great, dark eyes... The great base of the central cone was fringed with a rubbery, gray substance which moved the whole entity through expansion and contraction..."* (H.P. Lovecraft, "The Shadow Out of Time")

Few if any of the Great Race remain alive today. Most have escaped their original bodies and walk among us in human form, waiting for their time to come again...

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d12+8, Spirit d12, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (multiple mathematic and scientific disciplines) d12+1, Notice d12, Piloting d10, Repair d12+2, Shooting d10, Weird Science d12+2

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13

**Edges:** Alertness, Ambidextrous, Combat Reflexes, Improved Frenzy, Level Headed, Nerves of Steel, and Quick Draw

#### **Gear:**

**Lightning Gun:** Treat this weapon as a device with the *bolt* power (30 Power Points). Others who pick up the weapon

can make a Smarts roll at -4 to figure out how to fire it. Even then, the character suffers a -2 penalty on their Shooting rolls. Due to its bizarre alien nature, once all its Power Points have been expended only a Yithian has the knowledge and technology to recharge it.

#### Special Abilities:

**Arcane Background (Weird Science):** Yithians are masters of weird science. They have 30 Power Points and can select up to 10 different powers of any rank requirement (such as the Lightning Gun, above).

**Armor +2:** Scaly hide

**Fear -2**

**Mind Reading:** By making an opposed Smarts roll, a Yithian can attempt to read the minds of a target. With a success, they can read surface thoughts and emotions; with a raise, they can read any memories the target possesses.

**Mind Transference:** When all other options have been expended, a Yithian can escape certain death by projecting its mind from its body and taking over the body of a target creature (usually a human). This target creature's mind is then trapped in the grotesque body of the Yithian. Time and distance are not factors, so a Yithian can escape to the past, a different point in the present, or some point in the future. Doing so requires a successful Smarts roll at -4. If the Yithian targets a player character, treat the attempt as an opposed Smarts roll (the -4 modifier for the Yithian still applies).

**Nippers:** Yithians have powerful pincer-like appendages (Str +1 damage).

**Sensitive:** Yithians can use the *detect arcana* power at will (with no Power Point cost), detecting psychic or magical phenomenon with equal ease.

**Size +3**

**Telepathy:** A Yithian can communicate mentally with anyone within its line of sight. If they don't speak the language of the target, they can extract any required linguistic information via their Mind Reading ability.



## COLOUR OUT OF SPACE

*"It was a monstrous constellation of unnatural light, like a gluttoned swarm of corpse-fed fireflies dancing over an accused marsh; and its Colour was that same nameless intrusion which [he] had come to recognize and dread."* (H.P. Lovecraft, "The Colour Out of Space")

This bizarre creature appears to be a living Aurora Borealis of some horrible, nameless color. Rarely encountered on earth, they're usually seen in the depths of space. When they do arrive on earth, they are voracious hunters, stuffing themselves on the life energy of everyone and everything that crosses their path.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d12, Strength d12, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d10, Knowledge (Cthulhu Mythos) d4, Notice d10, Stealth d10

**Pace:** 20 (flying); **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

#### Special Abilities:

**Drain:** Colours attack by flowing over their opponent (treat as a Touch attack). The victim must make a Vigor roll at -2. With a raise, there is no effect. With a success, they take a level of Fatigue that subsides after one hour. On a failure, they take a level of Fatigue (which will not return for some time; see below) and lose one die type from their Vigor. If their Vigor is reduced below d4, they die. Characters who survive will begin to recover 1d6 days later, getting back a die type for each 24-hour period following their encounter. In the meantime, their Toughness is reduced accordingly, and any Fatigue levels incurred in the attack are not recovered until all levels of Vigor have been recovered (at which time they recover at the rate of one per hour). When a Colour encounters a Vigor-rich environment (i.e., a group of characters), it will continue to hunt and feed until its horrible appetite is sated. This requires the creature to "ingest" 3d6 die types of Vigor before moving off to do whatever it is these creatures do!

**Disintegration:** By concentrating its body into a small ball (roughly 1 foot in diameter) a Colour can disintegrate any material it comes in contact with. This is a time consuming process which means this power is all but useless as an attack form. When in this form, the creature moves at a rate of 1" per every two Toughness points of the substance being moved through per minute.

**Ethereal:** A Colour is immaterial and can move through physical barriers at will. They can't be harmed by normal weapons or environmental effects, including the depths of space; only arcane effects and magical weapons can harm them (see also Vulnerable, below). Their Strength rating is only used for resisting the effects of a strong magnetic field (see below).

**Fear -2**

**Flight:** Colours don't move normally; they fly at Pace 20, though this is treated as normal movement (i.e., they have no Acceleration rating; never have to use a turn template, etc.).

**Hypnotic Effect:** Colours can attempt to hypnotize a target. Treat this as the *puppet* power, usable at will with no Power Point cost; the Colour can take no other actions (including movement) in a round when it attempts to hypnotize a target.

**Perfect Vision:** Colours can see through any darkness, natural or artificial, and never suffer lighting penalties.

**Radioactive:** Colours give off a strong but non-lethal radiation, allowing them to be tracked via a Geiger counter or



similar device.

**Vulnerable** (Magnetics): Strong magnetic fields can trap a Colour. It must make a Strength roll to try and escape, with a penalty applied for sufficiently powerful fields. When captured in a field of this sort, the Colour can't use its Disintegration or Hypnotic Effect abilities, and it takes a wound level each round it's held in place until it either escapes or dies.



## ELDER THING

*"They represented some ridged barrel-shaped object with thin horizontal arms radiating spoke like from a central ring and with vertical knobs or bulbs projecting from the head and base of the barrel. Each of these knobs was the hub of a system of five long, flat, triangularly tapering arms arranged around it like the arms of a starfish."* (H.P. Lovecraft, "Dreams in the Witch-House")

This ancient race, creator of the dread shoggoths, is now all but extinct. The last vestiges of their civilization— as far as anyone knows—remain hidden under the frozen Antarctic tundra.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d10, Knowledge (Cthulhu Mythos) d10, Knowledge (Occult Lore) d12, Notice d8, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11

### Special Abilities:

**Aquatic:** Elder Things swim at Pace 10 and can breathe underwater.

**Arcane Background (Magic):** 15 Power Points and any four powers of Novice or Seasoned rank.

**Armor +2:** Tough hide.

**Constrict:** An Elder Thing can use its tentacles to constrict an opponent (see Tentacles, below). A constricted character takes Strength damage each round until he can make a successful opposed Strength or Agility roll to break free.

### Fear

**Immunities:** Elder things are immune to extreme cold and high pressure from the depths of the ocean.

**Multi-attack:** An elder thing can make up to five melee attacks per round, with no more than three of these against any single opponent. The normal MAP only applies after the third attack.

### Size +2

**Tentacles:** This attack does normal melee damage (Str); however, with a raise on the Fighting roll, they may choose to Constrict their opponent (see above).

## A Simple Method for Converting Classic Creatures into Lovecraftian Horrors...

Several existing creatures, both from the *Savage Worlds* rulebook (SW) and my very own *Savage Beasts* supplement (SB) may easily be converted into "Cthulhu terms" and inserted into your game with a minimum of fuss—so have at it!

- **Animated Dead** (Zombies, SW): Some will have increased Smarts as well as possessing the Arcane Background: Magic (Black Magic) Edge.
- **Byakhee** (Gargoyles, SB): Remove the Construct and Stillness abilities (don't forget to adjust the Toughness!). Byakhee are Immune to vacuum, cold, heat, and radiation, and can suspend their breathing at will (i.e., they can't drown, and are immune to poison gas and other such attacks or effects which use breathing as a vector).
- **Deep Ones** (Troglydite, SB): Remove the Horrid Stench ability and add Fear.
- **Dimensional Shambler** (Albino Ape, SB): Add the Dimensional Travel ability (allows the Shambler to move to another dimension with a Spirit roll at +2 in place of its normal movement). If it Grabs someone, it can drag them to the other dimension with it (never to be seen again... the unfortunate character, that is). Add Fear.
- **Hounds of Tindalos** (Shadow Hounds, SB): Add the Ichors ability (the Hounds are covered in bluish pus. When it hits in melee combat, the target takes an additional 2d6 points of acid damage). Their Teleport power allows them to travel to any corner with an angle of 120 degrees or less. It can go anywhere, in any time period, though the voyage is not instantaneous for the Hounds of Tindalos, as it must pass through a bizarre interstitial dimension. 5d20 days will pass on this trip, even if it's just a jaunt across the street! Add Fear -2.
- **Serpent People** (Lizard Men, SB): Add Bite (Str +1) and Poison (with a successful raise on a Bite, the target must make a Vigor roll or take 2d8 points of damage, and make another roll one minute later or take an additional 2d8 points of damage). Add Fear. Some will have the Arcane Background: Magic (Black Magic) Edge.
- **Shoggoth** (Giant Blobs, SB): Remove the Acidic Touch ability and increase the Fear rating to -6.
- **Spectral Hunter** (Invisible Devourer, SB).
- **Spider of Leng** (Giant Spider, Black Widow, SB).
- And let's not forget the **Cultists**! Use 'em straight out of *Savage Beasts*!



# Marathons, Rapier Wits, and Iron Chefs

## Alternate Uses for the Savage Worlds Mass Battles Rules

*There are some types of conflicts that RPGs traditionally haven't done a very good job of simulating. Of course there are some things we just don't need rules for ("Roll on the Television Subtable to see what's on TV tonight... Ooh, sorry, nothing but chick flicks. Take a level of Fatigue from boredom."). There are some contests I'd like to run in-game, though, that I've never been able to do to satisfaction. That's where this article comes in! Please note that the article's author, Butch Curry, used the Mass Battles rules from the 1<sup>st</sup> printing of the Savage Worlds rulebook when designing this system.*

### Mass combat—it's good for more than just fightin'

I can hear it now, "But aren't the mass combat rules just supposed to be used for, well...fighting mass combats?" To that I answer an emphatic, "No!"

Take a boxing match for instance. Most RPG fistfights are over in a handful of rounds, taking up no more than a minute or so of real time. A professional boxing match can go on for 36 minutes; in *Savage Worlds* terms, that's 360 combat rounds! There are ways around this, sure; you could make the rounds 3 minutes long; each fighter would then only have to make 12 attack rolls instead of 360(!). This is a little better, but it's not perfect: if neither fighter knocks the other out, who wins? You could say "The person with the least Wounds," but that's not necessarily the case in a boxing match.

Another example: fencing. Not 'to-the-death' fighting, but something more like Olympic-style sport fencing, or the back-and-forth of Wesley and Inigo in *The Princess Bride*. Lots of attack rolls, no damage rolls; at the end, who's the winner?

What we really need is a system for dealing with contests that take place over varying long periods of time. And *Savage Worlds* has one! Of course, if you read the title of this article (you did read the title, didn't you) you know what I'm talking about... the Mass Battles rules.

Perhaps you've only pulled out these mass combat rules for the climax of *Evernight*, or maybe you've been using them for big battles in your games all along. Either way, let's take a look at them again and give them a fresh coat of paint. By the time we're done, you'll see that the Mass Battles section is a heck of a lot more useful than you might have imagined.

### The Four Step Program

Let's get down to nuts and bolts. The *Savage Worlds* mass combat rules boil down to a very simple—yet surprisingly useful, as you'll see—concept: Assign tokens to quantify both sides of a contest and make opposed rolls for each round of the contest. The loser loses a token. Whoever ends the contest with the most tokens is the winner. That's it! And because it's so simple, it's easy to modify. Setting up a contest breaks down into four steps:

#### Step 1: Determine the deciding trait.

In other words, what is the attribute or skill that'll be rolled by both sides to determine the outcome? Sometimes it's an obvious choice: Fighting for boxing and fencing matches, Swimming if you're racing across the English Channel, or Riding if you're a jockey in a horse race. If there isn't a skill that's a clear choice, use an attribute instead. For example, Agility would be appropriate for a basketball game or Smarts for a chess match.

#### You don't have to use the same trait for the entire contest.

*Example: You're setting up an Iron Man Triathlon contest—that's swimming, biking, and running—that'll last five rounds. Use Swimming for the first round, Riding for the next, and Vigor for the rest. (Since they're running on fumes by the end, you might even make the last round a Spirit roll.)*

#### Both sides don't necessarily have to use the same attribute or skill! Just like any other opposed trait test, you should choose two traits that could naturally be used against one another.

*Example: Let's say Joey the Snitch is hiding out somewhere in the seedy side of town, and your cop heroes want to track him down. Joey will roll his Streetwise to stay hidden. The cops could roll their own Streetwise Skill to find him, or they could use Investigation instead. They could even use Persuasion or Intimidation if they want to play "good cop/bad cop" with some of the locals.*

## Step 2: Assign the tokens.

You might think this one will be tough, and if you go by the book (i.e., assign 10 tokens to the 'largest force' character, and X% of that to the runner-up) that would probably be the case; however, here's a heck of a lot easier way to do it:

**Use the attribute or skill die type you'll be using in the contest to determine how many tokens to give out.**

*Example: We'll use the characters from our boxing example, below. "Glass Jaw" McPhee has a d8 Fighting and his opponent, "Punchy" Agnew, has a d6. Glass Jaw starts with eight tokens and Punchy gets six.*

"But wait!" I hear you screaming, "What if they're not using the same trait for the whole contest! You told us before we didn't have to do that!" Well, there are a couple of options:

**Option One is the easiest, so it's the one I recommend: Just use the die type of the best trait you'll be testing to determine your starting number of tokens.**

**Option Two takes a little math, but at least it's easy math: average the trait scores that'll be tested and round up.**

*Example: Let's look at our Iron Man Triathlon again. One of the contestants has a d6 in Swimming and Riding, but a d8 in Vigor. You could assign him eight tokens since the highest of his three traits is d8, or do some quick math to see how many he'll start off with:  $(6+6+8)/3=6.6$ , rounded up to seven.*

**If one side has a significant advantage, and they'll maintain that advantage throughout the contest, give them 1-3 extra tokens. If one side has a major liability, and they're saddled with it for the whole contest, dock them 1-3 tokens.**

*Example: Glass Jaw McPhee may not be much of a boxer, but he has a great trainer who's going to be giving him advice throughout the fight. Now, you could have the trainer try to help out every round by rolling his Knowledge (Boxing), using the rules for Characters in Mass Battles (but with no damage to the trainer). Instead, we want to keep things easy, so we'll just give Glass Jaw an extra token. Punchy, on the other hand, doesn't have his regular cutman working for him on this fight, so his face is going to swell up like a balloon pretty quickly. We'll take two tokens from his starting total.*

Since the Spirit score represents the will to win, among other things, you can award bonus tokens for Spirit in a couple of different ways. I recommend the simplest: award the character with the highest Spirit a bonus token.

If you really want to emphasize the importance of Spirit, you can also award the higher Spirit character the difference between his Spirit die and that of the lower character (so if Punchy has a d10 Spirit and Glass Jaw has a d6, you'd give Punchy an extra four tokens!).

Of course, you could use any trait that you think would be important to the contest. A contest that involves both brains and endurance might use Smarts as its primary attribute, with a bonus token to the character with the higher Vigor.

## Step 3: Come up with some modifiers.

A modifier is a short-term advantage or disadvantage that only lasts for the given round of the contest. Instead of granting extra tokens, they add a bonus or subtract a penalty from the opposed trait roll.

Try to come up with one or two advantageous situations, and a couple of possible setbacks. (Check out the Artillery or Air Support and Terrain modifiers in the Mass Battles rules for some inspiration.) If you can't come up with any modifiers in advance, don't worry about it! Like the generic Battle Plan modifier in the rulebook, you can rely on your own inspiration, that of your players', and whatever comes up during roleplaying to determine your modifiers. They're not a requirement, and the spur-of-the-moment modifiers you and your players will come up with are probably going to be cooler anyway.

Maneuvers aren't just for normal combat any more! Here are a couple of generic Battle Plan modifiers that you can apply to just about any contest. Generally speaking, you should restrict the usage of these maneuvers to once each per side in any given contest. You couldn't try a Risky Move every round, for example, but you could start off Playing it Safe in one round, and then try a Risky Move a couple of rounds later. Only one side can use a maneuver during any given round. When in doubt, the side with the fewest tokens—in other words, the side that's more desperate—gets first option to try a maneuver. You can waive this if you want to, but it just makes things a bit more complicated!

- **Risky Move:** A character who makes a Risky Move and wins the opposed roll eliminates two of her enemy's tokens instead of just one. If she fails, though, she loses two!
- **Play it Safe:** A character with a strong lead may want to hold back, and rely on his lead to carry him through. He'll need at least a raise to win and eliminate a token from his opponent, the same goes for his opponent.

You could even come up with some maneuvers (like Catch Your Breath, below) that give you back a token instead of taking one from your opponent, but they should have a risk of loss included. Personally, these just complicate things a bit too much for me—and can cause “to the bitter end” battles to last interminably long—but they're presented here as an option. In the context of a mass combat, this might represent sending a group of your men off to bring back reinforcements. If you're lucky, you'll get the extra help, but you run the risk of weakening yourself for the moment by sending some of your men away relatively undefended.

Or, if you're desperate, you can try a sacrifice move like Give Better Than You Get, below.

- **Catch Your Breath:** You try to gather your reserves this round, instead of hurting your opponent. If you win, you get back a token, and your opponent loses none. If you lose, you lose two tokens!
- **Give Better Than You Get:** You're willing to take a hit in order to hit back harder. If you win, you lose one token, but your opponent loses three! If you lose, you lose three tokens instead. Ouch!

Here's another tip: If you don't want the odds to stack up too high against the underdog, consider waiving one of the base modifiers from the Mass Battles rules: “The side with more tokens adds +1 for every token he has more than his foe this round.” As you'll see in the Friday Night Fight example below, those extra plusses can add up fast, and can turn a nearly even fight into a slaughter very quickly.

#### **Step 4: Determine the length of the contest.**

Again, don't knock yourself out here. Keep it simple! Make it five rounds for a standard contest, or three rounds for a quick contest. If you want a real knock-down, drag-out encounter, make it 10 rounds. And for those instances when playing time isn't a consideration—when you're playing a one-on-one game, for instance—you can take it to the bitter end, and keep going until one side is completely out of tokens.

Keep in mind that the game-time length of a round in this system is up to you. Just suit it to the nature and length of the contest you're resolving. When searching for Joey the Snitch, as in the example above, each round could last anywhere from an hour to a full day of pounding the pavement. A round in a duel of wits could represent five minutes or a few hours of verbal sparring, while in a boxing match, each game round could represent one real world three-minute round of boxing.

### **So let's see this little system of yours in action!**

#### **Example 1: Habenero Challenge**

Chairman Kaga has summoned you to compete in Kitchen Stadium! You're to pit your cooking skill against Iron Chef Chinese Chen Kenichi. Today's theme ingredient: habanero peppers!

*[The GM decides that this contest will use Knowledge (Cooking) as the deciding trait. You have a d8—your specialty is American Southwestern cooking—while the Iron Chef has a d10. The theme ingredient is definitely right up your alley, but it's not too much of a stretch for Iron Chef Chen, so the GM awards you just 1 bonus token; you'll start with 9, Chen with 10. The GM declares that there'll be no special modifiers, encouraging the player to come up with her own special techniques, though the “+1 to your roll for each extra token” rule is not in effect. The GM decides this will be a four round contest; each round will represent 15 minutes of cooking time.]*

- **Round 1:** Both the player and Iron Chef Chen announce that they're opening conservatively for now; they're going wait at a couple of rounds to see who's leading before they really open up. Chen rolls a 2 while the player rolls a 3 on both her trait and Wild dice. Not a great roll, but still enough to beat Chen! The GM announces that Chen's assistant forgot to turn on the rice cooker; a brief setback, but not an insurmountable one. Chen loses a token.
- **Round 2:** Once again, both sides are holding steady. Chen rolls a 4. The player gets a 7, with a 4 on her Wild Die. The GM announces that Chen is cooking up a storm, but the player is just blowing him away!
- **Round 3:** Chen can see the writing on the wall; if he doesn't pull out all the stops now, he'll never make it! He declares that he's going to try to do an American Southwest dish, Chinese-style, to one-up his opponent. This is a Risky Move; if he wins, he'll knock two tokens off his opponent, but if he loses, he'll lose two instead. Chen rolls an 8! The player rolls a 7 and a 4. Chen can't help gloating as the PC tosses away two of her tokens. Chen still has eight tokens, while the player drops to seven.
- **Round 4:** With time running out, the player has to gamble now: risk overtime if there's a tie, or go for the kill! She decides to go for it, and counters Chen's Risky Move with her own: she kicks up her stuffed habaneras with a super-fire-hot sauce that could send the tasters to either Nirvana or the hospital! Chen's dice are not on his side today—he rolls a 3 again—but it seems as though the players' dice are: she rolls a pair of 3's as well, identical to her opening roll in round one! No one wins or loses this round, so all tokens stay where they are. In the final tasting, Chen's eight tokens beat out the player's seven. It's a close match, but Chen manages to come out with a win.

## Example 2: Friday Night Fights

The GM needs to handle a boxing match between one of the PC's and his opponent, (guess who!) Glass Jaw McPhee!

*[Fighting is the obvious trait to use here. The PC has a d8, McPhee has a d6. Both have an equal Spirit die, so no bonus there. The PC will start with eight tokens, McPhee with six. No special moves or maneuvers are allowed—the GM wants to keep it quick—but the +1/extra token rule is in effect, and the GM also declares that each raise a boxer gets on their roll will remove an additional token. Losing two tokens in a round is a knockdown; the loser will have to make a Spirit roll to get back up and keep going. If they fail, they're knocked out and the fight is over. The GM sets a three round time limit to get it over with quickly (each round of rolling represents five boxing rounds).]*

- **Round 1:** McPhee comes out swinging, rolling a 3. The player rolls a 2, with a 5 on the Wild Die, +2 for having two extra tokens, for a total of 7. That's enough for a raise, so McPhee loses two tokens and must make a Spirit roll, managing a 5. He pulls himself back up to his feet before the end of the count, but with two tokens lost he's in bad shape. He's down to four tokens, with the player still at eight.
- **Round 2:** McPhee rolls a 4. The player rolls a 7, and Aces his Wild Die! He rolls the d6 again, coming up with a 4. That's 6+4 for the die roll, +4 for having four extra tokens, for a total of 14, enough for two raises on McPhee. McPhee tosses away three tokens and makes his Spirit roll: he gets a 1. He's out... way out! The GM declares that he's knocked out cold before he even hits the canvas, and doesn't come to until several minutes later, long after the PC has collected his prize money and cleared out of there. They don't call him "Glass Jaw" for nothing.

## Example 3: The Battle of Wits Has Begun!

The PC's are a group of musketeers in service to the King of France, one of whom has been bedding the toothsome daughter of the Duke of L'Orange. The Duke is no fencer, so challenging a musketeer to a duel would be suicide. Instead, he holds a massive banquet and has his daughter invite the musketeer for the sole purpose of humiliating him in front of Paris' elite. As soon as the musketeer arrives, the Duke begins a war of wits, rumors, and clever turns of phrase.

*[This will be a battle of wits, using Smarts, Persuasion, and Taunting. The GM declares that they'll use the average for their starting tokens, and roll the best of the three for their battle rolls. The Duke has a d10, d10, and d6, averaging 8.6; rounded up, he gets nine tokens. The musketeer has a d6, d8, and d10, averaging eight exactly. The Attractive musketeer has a +2 Charisma modifier for his dashing good looks, though, so the GM grants him a bonus token. Both sides will start on an even footing, with nine tokens. The five round battle will take place over the course of a long roleplaying session; the GM tells the player that she'll call for rolls periodically, rather than doing all the rolling at once. Whoever has the most tokens after one hour, real time, will be the winner. In the case of a tie, they'll have one last round to break it. She also informs the player that the first person who can talk their way into speaking to the King – represented by a raise on a Persuasion roll – will get a +2 to their subsequent battle roll. Failing the roll, though, means they've insulted the King with their crude attempts at manipulating his favors... never a good idea!]*

Since this one is a pretty protracted battle, we won't break it down round by round. Suffice to say, though, the Duke is a much more formidable foe on the dance floor than he is on the field of battle!

# How to Write a Horror Adventure

***A few tips from our resident zombie, the one and only Butch Curry...***

## **The Anatomy of Horror**

The classic horror movie—like most movies, in fact—follows a three-act format. Certain events occur in each act; the order may change, and some events may be moved or omitted, or others may happen simultaneously, but you should find that nine times out of ten this format holds true.

In general, horror movies tend to have a short first act, introducing the characters and placing them (or their loved ones, their town, the earth, etc.) in jeopardy. This is followed by a long second act, where the characters investigate (or get slaughtered, run screaming in terror, etc.). This culminates in a final act, where the characters confront the Big Bad and tie up any loose ends. In most horror movies the “time split” is roughly 10% for the first act, 80% for the second, and another 10% for the third. By emphasizing, de-emphasizing, lengthening, or shortening the different acts, you can help impart a different feel to your story.

Of all the different subgenres of horror, “psychological horror” tends to have the longest first act. “Thrillers”, which often have horrific elements, are often indistinguishable from psychological horror, and share this quality. Examples of the former include *Alien*, *The Haunting* (the original black and white version, of course), and *The Blair Witch Project*. *The Silence of the Lambs* is a perfect example of a thriller that verges on horror, and has a long first act as well. Another exception is the “action/horror hybrid”. These will often have longer third acts than other horror movies, to give them more time for a climactic final battle. The film *Aliens* is the ultimate example of the action/horror hybrid!

Here's how the three-act plot format of “typical” horror movies look, broken down into outline form:

1. The Setup.
  - a. Introduce major and secondary characters.
  - b. Establish the setting.
  - c. Introduce a secondary threat.
  - d. Introduce the primary threat.
  - e. Eliminate one or more secondary characters.
2. The Action.
  - a. The secondary threat causes big problems.
  - b. The primary threat is a constant background menace.
  - c. Eliminate one or more secondary characters.
3. The Conclusion.
  - a. The secondary threat is resolved, one way or another.
  - b. The primary threat attacks in force.
  - c. Eliminate any remaining secondary characters.
  - d. Major characters escape / kill the primary threat / die / go insane / etc.

So, in order to generate a horror adventure like this from scratch, we'll need to do the following:

## **Choose the Setting**

If you don't have a setting in mind already, you can select or generate one from the Settings List, below. This list can work for any game, not only horror (though many—Spooky Old Houses or Insane Asylums for instance—have a built-in horror flavor to them). If you have sufficient prep time, you can select several settings, though I recommend you stick with one or two at most. An intimate setting is a staple of successful horror movies.

Don't forget: the more you can isolate the characters, the better. If you choose a setting that's normally abuzz with activity, take a moment to clear it out! For example, say you want to set your story in an airport. You could make it a small airport for private planes, or in a major airport isolated by time (3 AM in the middle of the week, when only a handful of passengers are moving through) or circumstance (it's the Miami International airport, but just a few hours before a hurricane is about to hit...a prime opportunity for setting up a secondary threat, which we'll get to shortly!).

In many ways, the setting is going to determine the course of your story as much—or even more—than the antagonist. A story that takes place in an abandoned gas station in the desert circa 1950 will offer many different opportunities for your players than one set on a moving train!



## Determine the Threats

**Primary Threat:** This is where you can really have some fun! In this step, you should decide on what the Big Bad for your story is going to be. Picking an enemy appropriate to the setting is a natural instinct—a ghost for a haunted house, a werewolf for a mist-shrouded forest, etc—but don't be afraid to buck the trend and put an unlikely monster in the setting. Take that same werewolf and drop him into a space station circling the moon and see what happens! Whatever you choose, this is the "primary threat", the real bugaboo of the story in most cases.

**Secondary Threat:** Additionally, many good horror stories also have a "secondary threat". This sub-plot unfolds simultaneously with the main plot. It serves mainly to complicate the characters' investigation of the primary threat.

Not all horror movies have a secondary threat. Many slasher movies don't, for example. Most others do have one for a very good reason: the secondary threat is typically what drives the characters to go into the haunted house (or investigate the series of murders, stay overnight in the graveyard, etc.) in the first place. Fighting your way past the cannibal zombies surrounding your house doesn't make a lot of sense if it's reasonable to believe help might be on the way, but... what if we say your daughter won't survive until sunrise without medical attention. Now you have a different, and more compelling, story altogether.

Bringing the secondary threat to center stage periodically will often provide you with some great roleplaying opportunities in between the slaughter and mayhem. In fact, you can turn a slasher horror story into a character driven thriller by flip-flopping the threats entirely! The real primary threat of George Romero's *Day of the Dead*, for example, isn't the zombies but the increasingly destructive dichotomy between the scientists and soldiers. Secondary threats can be internal or external:

Internal threats are those that come from within the adventuring party, either from one or more of the PC's or a major NPC:

- One of the characters suffers from an illness or injury, most likely something that will kill them very soon. The primary threat is keeping them from their medicine, their treatment, a hospital, etc.
- A character may be either actively or passively trying to prevent the other characters from succeeding or maybe even trying to kill them too. Greed, revenge, and love are the classic reasons, or perhaps this character is actually the one responsible for the primary threat in the first place.
- One or more characters stand to make a lot of money and/or get famous if they kill the monster. They may insist on staying and fighting when the smart thing to do is run.
- The bad guy is actually a loved one of one or more characters, inciting the group to save rather than kill them.
- Something the group wants (a loved one, a priceless artifact, their immortal soul, etc.) is being held captive by the bad guy.
- The characters are divided into two or more distinct groups with different goals. They must either find some middle ground or end up dead (possibly at each other's hands!).

External threats originate from outside the party:

- A natural disaster (earthquake, forest fire, hurricane, tornado, flood, blizzard, etc.) is impending or ongoing. It is responsible for the primary threat (or is the only thing that can kill the monster, or perhaps is completely unconnected to the monster but still a pain in the ass, etc.).
- Something is going to blow up! The characters have to get away, stop it from happening, or warn the other people who are there.
- Do you think that car (boat, life pod, etc.) is going to save you? Think again; either it's not working, or the bad guy is already in it with you, or maybe it just takes you somewhere worse. None of which you'll discover until you're on board.

The above are just a few examples to get you started.

You can give the characters some opportunities for small victories by allowing them to resolve a secondary threat before the third act of your story. But if you want to keep the pressure on, just make sure you have an even worse one to spring on them right after that! *Aliens* is the best example of this; it has numerous secondary threats which spring up and are resolved throughout the movie, each one a bit worse and more pressing than the one before it. This is an excellent tactic for keeping things moving, but can be tough to juggle, so keep things simple at first.

And remember: never leave a secondary threat or other subplot unresolved! Audiences (and players) *hate* that.

## Generate Characters

The setting and threats you have in mind will not only shape the course of your story, but they'll usually tell you what NPCs, if any, that you need for it, as well as giving you a framework for appropriate player characters as well. A story set in a prison, for example, will need prisoners, guards, a warden, staff doctor, etc., any of which could be run as PCs or NPCs. Setting your story on a college campus most likely means your players will be roleplaying students and teachers. Since horror stories are almost always one-shots, don't be afraid to set strict limits on the types of characters available to your players, or on what sorts of Skills and Edges they're allowed to take.

Also don't spend too much time fleshing out NPCs if you know they're going to get slaughtered in the first act; just a name and a brief description with a few notable mannerisms (speaks with a stutter, always eating sunflower seeds, wears bad Hawaiian shirts, etc.) is all you need. If they have one or two notable skills or attributes, make note of those too, but don't feel like you have to do a full write-up for each character you know is just going to end up as zombie chow.

## Club Night: An Example

So let's generate the skeleton (pardon the pun) of a horror adventure.

For our setting, we roll a d8 and a d10, getting results of 2 and 8, respectively. So this story will be set in a dance club. To keep things nice and creepy, we'll make it a Goth nightclub. And just to mix things up a bit, we'll locate the club in an abandoned (and unconsecrated) Catholic church.

Of course, vampires are très Goth, and I like the idea of a vamp living in an old church. We'll make it a coven of vampires in this case, using the club as cover to kidnap local kids. To keep things interesting, let's make a note to modify the vampire write-up to keep the characters guessing (change up the Weaknesses, for example, or making their vampirism the result of a blood parasite rather than being supernatural in origin...or something along those lines). Keeping with the idea that the club used to be a church, let's say that the priest who used to preside over the church is the main vampire.

So, with all that in mind, we start thinking about characters. The PCs shouldn't be too capable, so let's say they'll be a group of college students. One of their friends has gone missing and was last seen at the club. The police are treating her as just another missing person, assuming that she just ran off and will show up again in a few days or weeks. We'll make one of the PCs a brother or sister of hers, too, to provide us with a sub-plot.

For the NPCs, we'll need the vampires and a few non-vamp henchmen working at the club. Maybe a few potential victims, as well.

With all this material set up, the rest is up to you. Some GM's like to script out certain events ahead of time, while others are more off-the-cuff. Most probably fall somewhere in between. Personally, at this point I'd probably make up a quick map of the church and jot down a few ideas for scenes that I know I'd want to do. For example, I imagine a chase through the labyrinthine crypts under the church, with the characters falling through the floor into a horrible pool of stagnant water and rotted corpses. Then they discover the kidnapped locals, most already dead, crucified on inverted crosses over tubs to catch their blood. And finally, a climactic battle with the vampires in the middle of the strobe-lit dance floor.

Keeping these scenes and the plot format in mind, I've got enough to run a perfectly decent little one-shot horror story!



## Setting Generator

(10-89: roll 1d8 for "tens" digit, and 1d10 for "ones" digit)

- 10 Airplane
- 11 Airport
- 12 Amusement park
- 33 Ancient ruins
- 14 Apartment complex
- 15 Arctic/Antarctic
- 16 Bar/pub
- 17 Boat/yacht
- 18 Brothel/strip club/bordello
- 19 Bus
- 20 Bus/train station
- 21 Casino
- 22 Castle
- 23 Cave/cavern/underground complex
- 24 Cemetery
- 25 Church
- 26 College campus
- 27 Convenience store
- 28 Dance club
- 29 Department store (S-Mart, etc.)
- 30 Desert
- 31 Dormitory
- 32 Elevator
- 33 Factory/industrial building
- 34 Farm
- 35 Fire station
- 36 Gas station
- 37 Gated community
- 38 Grocery store
- 39 Hospital
- 40 Hotel/motel/inn
- 41 Housing project
- 42 Insane asylum
- 43 Island
- 44 Isolated small town
- 45 Jungle
- 46 Library/book store
- 47 Mansion
- 48 Military facility (abandoned)
- 49 Mortuary/funeral home
- 50 Museum
- 51 Normal house
- 52 Office building
- 53 Oil rig
- 54 Parking garage
- 55 Police station
- 56 Post-apocalyptic city/town
- 57 Primitive village
- 58 Prison
- 59 Research laboratory
- 60 Restaurant/fast food joint
- 61 School

- 62 Sewers
- 63 Ship (ocean liner, freighter, etc.)
- 64 Shopping mall
- 65 Spaceship/space station
- 66 Spooky old house
- 67 Sports facility/stadium
- 68 Subway line (abandoned)
- 69 Summer camp
- 70 Swamp/moor
- 71 Television/movie studio
- 72 Theatre (movie or otherwise)
- 73 Trailer park
- 74 Train (freight)
- 75 Train station
- 76 Traveling carnival/circus
- 77 Truck stop
- 78 Underwater (submarine, etc.)
- 79 Unused road
- 80 Warehouse
- 81 Water treatment facility
- 82 Woods/forest
- 83 Zoo
- 84 Abandoned drive-in theatre
- 85 Construction site
- 86 Abandoned ship
- 87 Abandoned missile silo
- 88 Old military base/fort
- 89 Abandoned theme park



# SAVAGE VOODOO

## Houngans, Mambos, and Bokors in Savage Worlds by Zac Corbin



The practice of Voodoo has its roots in ancient Africa and has been passed down to the modern era through the slave cultures of the New World, particularly those of Haiti, Trinidad, and Louisiana. Like the Christian and Muslim faiths, Voodoo teaches that there is one Supreme Being, Bondye or Bon Dieu, who in many ways resembles God and Allah. However, unlike the major monotheistic religions, Voodoo is an animistic faith, whose practitioners believe that many minor spirits, called Loa, including ones' ancestors, inhabit all things. The Loa control wealth, fortune, nature, storms...everything. It is through gifts and appeasement to these spirits that the Houngan (male Voodoo practitioner) or Mambo (female Voodoo practitioner) can ask for favors.

Voodoo ceremonies consist of several ritualistic components. These include music (mostly in the form of drums, rattles, and other percussion instruments), rhythmic dance (often resulting in the collapse of the dancer, which is seen as the body being possessed by the Loa), and sacrifices (farm animals, food, tobacco, rum, oil, and other valuables). A ceremony can last several hours or even a whole day. Many times, a Mambo is assisted during a ritual by young apprentices and students. The Voodoo priesthood's functions include healing the faithful, performing ceremonies to summon or pacify the Loa, casting spells and protections, and creating potions and infusions.

Voodoo has both good and evil uses, though its origins were for benevolent purposes. It is the evil uses of Voodoo with which we are more familiar. Voodoo dolls, zombies, and curses are the first images that spring to mind when we think of Voodoo. Houngan and Mambos can choose to walk along either path or they can follow a more neutral path. Those priests that choose evil are often referred to as Bokors.

Here are some simple rules that will allow you to introduce Voodoo into your *Savage Worlds* games.

### Arcane Background: Voodoo

**Arcane Skill:** Voodoo (Spirit)

**Starting Power Points:** 0

**Starting Powers:** 4

**Available Powers:** Good: *boost trait, greater healing, and healing*; Neutral: *conceal/detect arcana, dispel, and stun*; Evil: *fear, lower trait, puppet, and zombie*.\*

\*Both *puppet* and *zombie* require a minimum ceremony length of 3 hours.

Voodoo priests gain their power points through the sacrifice of certain materials. In order to harness the Power Points locked within these items, the priest must perform lengthy ceremonies and rituals. Due to the ritualistic nature of Voodoo, multiple Voodoo priests can cooperate with one another to cast stronger spells (i.e., they use the rules for cooperative rolls as presented in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook). The table below details the specifics of some traditional materials:

Materials	Power Points Released	Ceremony Length	Base Duration of Effects
Animal Blood	1/pint	1 minute	Rounds
Animal Parts	1/part	10 minutes	Minutes
Food	1/pound	1 hour	10 minutes
Oil or Rum	1/ounce	3 hours	Hours
Tobacco	1/pack of cigarettes or cigar	6 hours	3 hours
Valuables	1/\$10 worth of valuables	12 hours	6 hours
Rare Spices of Herbs	1/ounce	24 hours	12 hours

These rules are by no means the only methods by which Houngan and Mambos can cast spells (other than *zombie*). If the Voodoo priest were to take the Power Points Edge to give him or herself "inherent" Power Points, then they could cast powers like any other Arcane Background. Ceremonies are only required to gain Power Points from materials. Soul Drain is also a viable option for Voodoo characters—especially Bokors! However, in keeping with the ritualistic feel of Voodoo, I suggest that if you allow practitioners to take the Power Points Edge that they are only allowed to do so after reaching Seasoned rank and that they not be allowed to take it more than once per rank.

You should also feel free to create additional powers as you see fit. To get you started, I've provided an archetypal example, the *voodoo doll* power:

### Voodoo Doll

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Arcane Background: Voodoo

The practice of creating voodoo dolls is one of the most well known traditions of Voodoo. This edge allows a Bokor to craft a replica of a specific person and channel evil spells into him or her no matter what the range. All that is needed is an item belonging to the individual (a piece of jewelry, a snip of their hair, fingernail clippings, a tooth, etc.). These things are believed to contain "a piece of the spirit" and thus give the caster power over them. The Bokor must then make a Common Knowledge roll to construct the doll. He then performs a six-hour ceremony and invests 25 Power Points (which can be any combination of personal or material). He then makes a Voodoo roll. If successful, the Bokor can then cast *fear, lower trait, puppet, or stun* on the subject without expending any Power Points and without regard for the range of the spell. Any spell cast through a voodoo doll only affects the target and does not have an area of effect.

# Rituals in Savage Worlds

## Clint Black's System for Adding Arcane Rituals to Savage Worlds

*Stu placed the last piece of silverware across the doorway. The line looked unbroken, but he didn't have time to check as he heard the creatures coming up the stairs. There was no time to do it right, so he cut a few corners on the Symbol of Azael ritual. He figured it couldn't kill him any more than the creatures would. He went through the motions and incantations quickly, and the silver flared with light. For a fraction of a second, his mind touched the mind of some... thing. Stu was sent reeling as blood flowed from his nose, but when he recovered, he saw the creatures pacing in vain, blocked by the shimmering entranceway." I better get overtime for this."*



In some game worlds, practiced "ritualists" may be able to wield arcane power without possessing an Arcane Background. They accomplish this by performing strange rituals learned via grueling study of arcane texts or lessons passed through the ages from master to apprentice.

The key to this ability is a new Knowledge skill, Knowledge (Rituals), described below. It's worth mentioning that this is one of those skills that an untrained character may not make an unskilled attempt to perform. In ritual magic, training is everything.

Players should always check with the GM before taking any levels of this skill to be sure that this ability is available in her game world.

### Knowledge (Rituals)

This Knowledge skill is the understanding of how to perform generalized arcane rituals, as well as a practiced familiarity with a few specific ones. Characters use this skill whenever they perform a ritual. The character can learn a number of specific rituals equal to their Knowledge (Rituals) die type divided by 2. They can perform these rituals from memory, without any reference materials. Starting characters may begin play knowing any number of rituals up to their maximum. During play, characters may only add to the rituals they know from secondary sources such as books or other arcane texts, or by learning them from other characters.

A ritual can be interrupted by the ritualist becoming Shaken or by removing or destroying the Focus. If the ritualist is interrupted before he can finish, the ritual has been disrupted and has no effect. Roll the skill as normal, checking only for Backlash or Backfire.

**Backlash:** When a ritualist rolls a 1 on their Knowledge (Ritual) die (regardless of the roll on the Wild Die) while performing a ritual, he is automatically Shaken. This is also true if he ends up with a result less than 1 due to penalties. The ritualist must then make a Spirit roll with the same total modifier as the original Knowledge (Rituals) roll or roll on the Fright Table. If the Fright Table results in a Shaken as well, the ritualist suffers a wound as if it came from a damaging source.

**Backfire:** If the character ever rolls a 1 on their Knowledge (Ritual) die while performing a ritual or ends up with a result less than 1 due to penalties, and the Wild Die fails as well, the ritual backfires. The effects of a backlash occur to all characters present, whether involved in the ritual or not. In addition, the ritual has some detrimental effect as well, usually the opposite of the intended result. This additional effect is left to the imagination of the individual GM!

### Rituals

Rituals are simply powers with a few differences in their activation and use. Powers performed as rituals cost no Power Points to activate, but require an amount of time and skill based on the normal Power Point cost. Ritualists can attempt any ritual they already know automatically. They may also perform rituals from secondary sources, such as books, as long as they have the source present for reference during the ritual—this applies to characters without the Knowledge (Rituals) skill as well. While unskilled characters cannot start the game knowing any rituals, they can acquire them from secondary sources during play; however, an unskilled player cannot learn them per se, they must always use the secondary source and the standard unskilled modifier of -2 always applies in addition to any other applicable modifiers.



Performing a ritual takes a base 10 minutes for a 1 Power Point effect. Each additional Power Point doubles the time required to perform the ritual. At the end of this time, the Knowledge (Rituals) skill roll is made at a penalty equal to the normal Power Point cost.

*Example: Stu performs the "Symbol of Azael" ritual, which acts as the barrier power. He wants to cover a 2" space, so the power would normally cost 2 PP's. Thus, the ritual will take 20 minutes, and Stu must make his Knowledge (Rituals) roll at -2.*

Rituals typically provide very specific effects. Broader effects are harder to control, while narrower effects are easier. All rituals therefore inherently face a Utility Modifier (UM).

### Utility Modifiers:

- 2 Ritual affects anything or a very broad category (such as humans on a normal Earth-like world)
- 0 Ritual affects a limited category (such as mystical creatures, extra-planar creatures, etc.)
- +2 Ritual affects a very limited category (only the undead, creatures from a specific place, etc.)
- +4 Ritual affects a specific category (zombies, werewolves, Fan-Tos from Kran-Kor, etc.)

As stated, Utility Modifiers are inherent to rituals; they are a part of the trappings of the power the ritual mimics. Thus a character may know multiple rituals of the same power with different Utility Modifiers.

*Example: Stu has Knowledge (Rituals) at a d6; he knows three rituals. One is "Avoidance of Death", armor versus only the undead (UM: +2). The other two are both based on the barrier power. One is the "Symbol of Azael", which creates a true invisible wall of force that stops all mystical creatures (UM: 0), the other is "As Running Water", which specifically acts as a deterrent only to vampires (UM +4). When faced with vampires, "As Running Water" is the much easier ritual to perform.*

Powers with a listed duration of "Instant" work normally. Powers that can be maintained work in a slightly different manner. The power effects are effectively permanent; however, they are tied to a specific physical object called the Focus. Searching for the particular Focus for a ritual can be an adventure in and of itself. Destruction of the Focus ends the effects. The effects of the power are tied to the Focus. If the Power affects an individual, then only the person carrying the Focus gains the benefits. Powers that create or summon creatures such as zombies are considered Focused in the creatures themselves (in other words, you have to kill the zombie to make it go away).

*Example: Stu's "Avoidance of Death" ritual has the Focus of a human bone. Once the ritual is successfully performed, the one person holding the bone gains the benefits of the power. If the bone is destroyed, the effects end.*

### "Quick & Dirty" Rituals

Sometimes waiting 10 minutes to cast a 2d6 bolt is a little much. A ritualist can cast any ritual they personally know, as opposed to one from a secondary source, as a normal action; however, all penalties are doubled (before applying bonuses) when a ritual is performed in this way. This affects every penalty to the roll, so if a ritualist takes another action resulting in a -2 multiple action penalty, the Knowledge (Rituals) roll faces a -4 penalty instead.

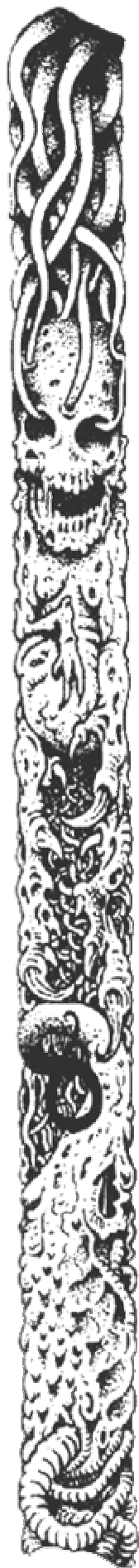
*Example: Poor Stu is faced with a horde of zombies. With no other recourse, he decides to perform a Quick & Dirty "Avoidance of Death" ritual, armor versus undead. He has the Focus of a human bone (destroyed zombies leave them lying around). The armor power costs 2 PP's for a -2 penalty normally; this is -4 done Quick and Dirty. The ritual has a +2 Utility Modifier for a total -2 to his Knowledge (Rituals) roll. Stu has a book with a ritual that provides armor only against zombies, which would give him a 0 modifier (-4 Q&D, +4 UM), but since it is from a secondary source, he can't perform it Quick & Dirty.*

### Calling All Cultists (or "What's with all the guys in robes?")

Whenever a character performs a ritual, as long as they are not using the Quick & Dirty method, other characters may aid them as normal, using the rules for Cooperative rolls as detailed in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. These characters can aid in a ritual even if they do not have the Knowledge (Rituals) skill, making unskilled rolls instead. In addition, if the ritualist ends up facing Backlash (but not a Backfire), he can designate one of the characters aiding him to suffer the effects instead! It's not easy being a cultist!

### Ignorance is... SAFE!

In some games (particularly horror), knowledge of the occult comes at a price... sanity. Optionally, GM's who use Sanity rules, such as those in *Tour of Darkness*, may rule that each ritual known costs one point of Sanity. For a truly disturbing game, each ritual known could reduce the Sanity Trait by one, limiting the character's maximum Sanity.



## Sample Rituals

### A Fish Out of Water

Power: *environmental protection*

UM: -2 (affects whoever holds the focus)

Focus: A portion of a creature native to the environment against which the target is to be protected

### As Running Water

Power: *barrier*

UM: +4 (affects only vampires)

Focus: Water across affected area. Power ends if water is removed or dries. This ritual can be performed on a stream to prevent a vampire crossing at a bridge.

### Avoidance of Death

Power: *armor*

UM: +2 (affects all undead)

Focus: A human bone.

### Mystical Prison

Power: *entangle*

UM: 0 (affects all supernatural creatures)

Focus: An unbroken line of metal shavings taken from the bars of a prison

### Obfuscation

Power: *conceal arcana*

UM: 0 (affects all supernatural creatures)

Focus: A pinch of coal dust

### Pierce the Veil

Power: *detect arcana*

UM: 0 (only reveals invisible creatures but all types)

Focus: A piece of glass that must be looked through.

### Symbol of Azael

Power: *barrier*

UM: 0 (all mystical creatures)

Focus: An unbroken line of silver across affected area.

### Take the Pain

Power: *heal*

UM: -2 (affects any human target)

Focus: Herbal poultices and incense.

### Tongues

Power: *speak language*

UM: -2 (any normal human language or mystical tongue)

Focus: Powder made from the lost pages of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

## New Edge

### Multifaceted Mind

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8, Spirit d8

Your character has the will and intelligence to comprehend arcane rituals better than most. You may know a number of rituals equal to your Knowledge (Rituals) die type. In a game where known rituals reduce Sanity, your loss is figured for every two rituals known, rounded up, instead of each one. Aren't you lucky!

# ALL HALLOWS

Theron Seckington presents a *Savage Tale* that screams to be played on Halloween!



## INTRODUCTION

*It's Halloween in Stratton, Massachusetts. At dusk, things begin to get a bit hairy... nay, deadly. In fact, they're "about to cross the line between legend and reality". Five families who fled Salem, Massachusetts during the summer and early autumn of 1692 founded Stratton. Those of you with an interest in history will recognize this as the period during which the infamous Witch Trials occurred. A local legend says that the nearby Mijau Indian tribe created a sacred circle of stone, as a gift for the white men they knew would be arriving. Yet another legend states that one of the founding families was actually a coven of witches and that they learned much from the Indian medicine men, and later, the Wiccans and pagan groups that Stratton has become a haven for. Which legends are true and which are false? That's for you to find out!*

## OUR HEROES

Players should create Novice characters that live and work in an average northeastern small town in the modern-day United States. As in our real world, magic, psionics and the supernatural are considered to be mere superstitions, so no Arcane Backgrounds are allowed. And please, no ex-Green Beret undercover Yakuza enforcers with freakin' katanas! Be sure to ask the players if their characters are dressed up for Halloween, and to describe their costumes.

## SOME INFORMATION PLEASE...

These are all things the players would know if they live in Stratton or have some other reason to know:

- Last year, there were several unfortunate cult-like incidents, apparently unrelated, resulting in at least seven murders.
- The mayor and town council have, accordingly, stepped up police/fire patrol in the neighborhoods for Halloween celebrations. There is a curfew for people unaccompanied by an adult, and they've set up a "Halloween Village" inside the Stone Circle Mall. The town has hired a private security force to protect the mall.
- The reason trick-or-treating hasn't been altogether forbidden this year is due to Stratton's long and proud history with Halloween, being a site of authentic American Celtic rituals "back in the day," and founded by exiles from Salem right at the start of the Witch Trials.

The following tidbits of knowledge require a successful Common Knowledge roll at -2:

- Miscatone University ("Miss U.") has one of the largest collections of frontier diaries, witch trial woodcarvings, in the entire state. There is also an extensive display of heirlooms belonging to the town founders.
- The ancient stone circle in Stone Circle Mall is protected by state bylaws concerning historical sites, and vandalizing it is considered a felony. It has never been vandalized. In fact, after over 300 years of existence, it's never been the victim of *any* ill intent...

**IF YOU PLAN TO PLAY THIS ADVENTURE STOP READING NOW.  
WHAT FOLLOWS IS FOR THE GM ONLY!**

## SPECIAL RULES

**Touched by Destiny:** Have each player make a Spirit roll at the start of the session; for each success and raise an extra Benny is gained. They can't spend Bennies on this roll even though it is a trait roll. Failure just means they don't get any extra Bennies.

**The Spirit of Halloween:** Due to the strange magicks at work on this special day, anyone (any character, that is) in a Halloween costume has a slight advantage—a Mystic Weapon. If someone finds and wields a weapon (in the game, that is) pertinent to their costume, they gain +1 to hit with it (just like the Trademark Weapon Edge, but without any prerequisites). Examples: Someone who dresses like "Mr. Blonde" from *Reservoir Dogs* would gain the bonus with a straight razor or silver .45, anyone dressing like "The Shadow" gains the bonus when firing twin .45s, a person dressed up like Joan (from *Deadlands: HoE*) gets the bonus when using a sword, etc. Players are not aware of this bonus until it takes effect.

## PLACES OF INTEREST IN STRATTON

The following locations should be the primary areas in which the players operate:

- **The 'Burbs:** Where it all goes down at the start. Protect as many trick-or-treaters as you can!
- **Town Square:** It's one of those old-fashioned main drags with the courthouse in the middle, church across the street, and bunches of shops. Mostly important due to the fact that the Vengeful Spirits can't get into the church, and the pawnshops and hardware store provide a place to stock up.
- **The Farms:** There are only a couple of farms outside the town, but they provide the only obvious means of exodus. Unfortunately, due to a bit o' dark magick, any efforts to escape wind up with the escapees looping right back to the opposite end of town, heading back in.
- **Miscatone University:** The only place where the players can find out more about the families that founded the town. It's a small campus, however, so the college has been mostly overrun. There are a few scattered groups of non-partygoers who've managed to pull it together.
- **Stone Circle Mall:** Where it all goes down in the end. Eventually, it should become apparent that the Circle is the focus of the whole event.

## SCENE ONE: WHAT THE F\*\*K!

The action starts in the suburbs of Stratton. The sun is beginning to set, so apply the Dim illumination modifier where appropriate. The PCs hear screaming from a block away just as the sun goes down. Ideally, you should be able to pressure them into checking it out. If not, hey, you can always make them realize "My kids might be there!" They can call the cops on the way, if need be.

Once they get there, they find a man bleeding to death on the pavement, surrounded by a shocked horde of nine and ten-year-olds. Leaning over this man is a figure in an antique black cloak (anyone with an appropriate background can identify this as a 18<sup>th</sup> century riding cloak with a Common Knowledge roll), but they'll probably also notice the long hunting knife he's got in his hand. Said knife has inflicted a mortal wound on this man, and there's nothing the heroes can do to save him.

Deal out some initiative cards, including one for the dead man (my players hate to see more cards on the table than bad guys). The killer, a Wild Card Vengeful Spirit, is automatically considered on Hold; he will spend his action as soon as possible to fade away and vamoose. The dead man rises on his initiative card as a Rager and attacks the nearest PC. This could be interesting if anyone tried to stabilize or resuscitate him on his or her turn; the Rager would get The Drop on them!

If the PCs aren't equipped (or competent) enough to handle him, two police officers appear shortly soon after and begin Tasing all parties who don't give up immediately. The Rager, however, is going to take some more serious effort. Mace, Tasers, and clubs will most likely have little effect, since it can't be rendered unconscious. Once this becomes apparent, the police will not hesitate to use their sidearm.

Soon after combat ends, while talking amongst themselves or with the police, more screams are heard from somewhere just down the street! A Notice roll at -2 (as well as any darkness penalties) notes a woman obscured by a black riding cloak opening the door of a nearby house, leaving, and disappearing out of sight behind a fence. 30 seconds later, five Ragers come pouring out of the house, three making a beeline for the PCs, and the other two running after random trick-or-treaters and their escorts.

This would be a good time to remind the PCs there are around sixty trick-or-treaters in this neighborhood.



## SCENE TWO: CHAOS IN SUBURBIA

Describe the pandemonium taking place around them (if you can, pop in The Goblins' *Dawn of the Dead* soundtrack and play the creepy titular song): Cops are arriving by twos, trying to figure out what's going on and taking a few shots. Cloaked men and women are meandering about at random, killing people and fading away. Meanwhile, kids twelve and under are running through the streets with older siblings, relatives, and parents. Many of them are now trying to make their way back to somewhere safe. Due to the nature of the incident occurring, local phone calls in town still work. However, anyone who tries to dial outside of town, even on a cell phone, finds only silence. Below are a few encounters the characters can have amongst the pandemonium. Use as many or as few as you like... the main point is to keep the characters moving from one crisis to another.

**Desperate Dan:** The characters encounter a pair of flipped over cars, one of them police. Anyone who succeeds at a Notice check at -2 can see someone is still "trapped" inside the back of the police car. This is Dan Tanner, a local troublemaker who was picked up earlier for starting a fight in a local tavern.

Assuming the heroes try to save him, they find out that he's packing heat (a Colt 1911 pistol that the arresting officers originally confiscated from him) which he fires upon anybody, living or dead, that approaches. He intends on staying there, although he could leave at any time (the car is bulletproof, can you blame him?).

**"Crazy Gus" Keziah:** "Crazy Gus" is one of the oldest men in town, and also directly related to the town founders. He has a large collection of firearms and ammo in his house. He also has an overdeveloped sense of heroism, so it's possible the "Man with the Arsenal in the Back of his Truck" runs into the PCs once or twice during the later scenes.

**Gimme Shelter:** Vengeful Spirits phase into a house the heroes take shelter in. Mayhem ensues.

**Home Security:** A family barricaded inside their house takes shots at the heroes with a rifle (Shooting d6) if they pass by.

**Wheels:** The few cars parked in driveways or on the curb are locked tight. There is a minivan with keys still in it and both doors hanging wide open about 24 yards (12") away from the heroes. Blood covers the outside and parts of the inside as well. On the other side of the doors, the heroes will see 2d6+1 Ragers charging at them from 20" away. They could just make it if they run...

At some point during the chaos, the heroes will hear a radio broadcast. This emergency broadcast is coming from the police station and is being carried on all public wavelengths. They state there is a massive riot taking place all over the town, and citizens are to report to the following "safe-zones" established by the police: Howard Street United Methodist Church, the First Baptist Church of Stratton, Our Lady of Salvation cathedral, or Phillips Street Presbyterian. All of those are in the town square.

## INTERLUDE: GETTING OUT OF TOWN

This presents quite a problem: there's dark magick afoot keeping that from happening. Anyone who drives far enough winds up coming into town from the opposite side from where they left. But not before they pass the Brooke family farm... they immediately notice that the barn is on fire, and a fire truck is parked up the driveway in front of it. The farmhouse looks as though there is still someone inside... candlelight can be seen in the lower-story windows.

**The Flaming Barn:** Yes, Virginia, it's a barn, and it's on fire. A Notice roll at +1 spots it off in the distance. A fire engine is run off the road a ways up the driveway; in front of it lay two charred bodies. Anybody who says they're waiting for something to happen (even out of character) gets an initiative card, and so do the bodies—because one of them jumps and twitches. Hopefully they waste a bullet when the startled raccoon crawls out from under it.

Further investigation of the flaming barn only results in eight Ragers in fireman's gear charging at them; quite horrifically, three are actually on fire underneath their coats. Make a Fear check for each PC when they see this horrible spectacle. There are also a couple of Vengeful Spirits with fireman's picks (Str+2, AP 1) about in the fields.

**The Farmhouse:** There are five Ragers in the farmhouse (the remains of the Brooke family). Two of them were children, decrease Strength and Vigor die types by one. There is also a Vengeful Spirit in the house that knocked out the fuse box and lit some candles.

Searching the farmhouse reveals a small cache of weapons (that's what they were looking for, isn't it): two hunting rifles, a pump shotgun, and two pistols (one a .357 Magnum revolver, and the other a .22 automatic (Damage 2d6-1, Range 6/12/24, Shots 12, ROF 1)). There's a box of 50 bullets per gun. And if they search the dead firemen for keys, hey, free fire truck!



**You Take the Low Road:** The only other route out of town is across the Jenkin Boulevard Bridge, which crosses the Miscatone River on the other side of town. As they approach the bridge, they must maneuver around a tanker truck that has jack-knifed and rolled to its side, blocking the road just beyond the turn that leads to the bridge. Anyone who doesn't approach this area quite slowly must make a Driving roll at -2 in order to avoid careening into the wreck (use the Collision rules in Vehicle Combat section of the *Savage Worlds* rulebook). Even if they make it, Vengeful Spirits have strewn broken glass, nails, and various pointy things on road leading to the bridge, causing the characters' vehicle to suffer a flat tire.

The bridge itself is blocked by abandoned and wrecked cars and broken glass, but unfortunately the bluffs in the area makes it difficult to anticipate and see this ahead of time. As the characters work to fix their flat, Ragers from the crashed and parked cars emerge and start charging straight at them. There's also a Vengeful Spirit with a lug wrench (Str+1) hiding out somewhere too. Should they defeat the Ragers and try to hoof it, the Spirit tosses a burning flare at the tanker truck that flipped over a bit back...

### SCENE THREE: TERROR IN TOWN SQUARE

Give the players some time reach the safe zones and/or to roam the town square and equip themselves, interspersing the encounters below to keep the pressure on.

**A Cry From Above:** Up on the roof of a building, the PCs can hear what sounds like a baby crying. If they go to check it out, fighting their way through several Ragers, they discover that Vengeful Spirits have set a cunning trap; it's actually a child Rager tied to an antenna. One spirit per PC converges on their position shortly after that discovery.

**Cookin' with Gas:** At the corner gas station, there appears to be a Hummer (or something appropriately macho) idling in the parking lot, with the driver side door wide open. Any one who succeeds at a Notice roll of -6 notices the screams of Ragers advancing (subsequently, it lessons to -4, -2, then nothing as they move closer). If ever they approach the Hummer, a Vengeful Spirit inside the gas station lights up a kerosene-soaked Rager (the former attendant), with its mouth duct-taped shut, and releases its grip on the creature. The flaming Rager rushes the heroes.

Adventure locations in the town square include:

**Safe Zones:** As the radio said, the churches are safe. Sort of. Any holy ground is protected from Vengeful Spirits, but Ragers are quite another matter (although anyone who dies on holy ground can never become a Rager). There's a bit of a backlog of them trying to get into the churches, which the occupants are having a difficult time defending (that stained glass doesn't do a whole lot besides look pretty). In the Methodist Church, for instance, the sanctuary has been overrun, but the basement and choir loft are still safe. The cathedral (which had a bit of a history of being plundered) is faring much better with its thick wooden doors and barred windows.

**The Municipal Building:** This complex houses the town's small police station, the fire station, and acts as the Town Hall. More than likely, some players will want to check out the police weapons and such. There aren't any left. Nor are any patrol cars present. There is one of the three town's fire engines available. No keys, unfortunately. It could be hot-wired with a Repair roll at -4.

**Pawnshop:** Due to a city ordinance, "any place of business whose express purpose is the sale of firearms and ammunition" is unable to operate here. The pawnshop, however, still carries guns. Problem one is breaking in; pawnshops have bars over the windows, metal doors, and general safeguards against just this sort of deviance. When they do break in (PCs are known for this sort of thing), they find a smattering of firearms and ammo (roll once for a gun, roll again for ammo; do this as many times as you see fit):

D20 Roll	Result:
1-6	Small pistol
7-10	Large pistol
11-12	Rifle
13-18	Shotgun
19	Something exotic and cool (Desert Eagle, Colt Walker, Uzi)
20	Player's choice within bounds (if they say "katana," freakin' kill them)

As far as melee weapons go, they can easily locate a plethora of improvised implements of destruction here. Knives and improvised clubs (Str+1), axes and sledgehammers (Str+2), or even chainsaws. Clever players might jury rig spears and such.

**Krapp's Hardware Store:** "Do things the Krapp way, or don't do them at all!" Ragers, with nails sticking out of their bodies attack anyone who approaches the store. Anyone who is hit by one of these guys, no matter what the rolled damage, is automatically Shaken.

**The Game Room:** Any character whose hobbies include roleplaying games will know that there is a perfect replica of a Medieval greatsword on display at The Game Room, a fantasy gaming shop. Use the stats in the rulebook for this weapon. It will break on a Fighting roll of 1 unless it is a Mystic Weapon in the hands of the wielder (see Special Rules above).

**Pickman's Discount Autos:** Mr. Pickman himself is here, breaking into his own shop to try to get the hell out of Dodge. Currently, he has fourteen cars on his lot, plus a decently stocked machine shop. As long as no one touches his extended cab Ford pickup (to which he's attaching a snowplow), he's happy to point the characters towards the keys or take them out of town. If they go with him, consult the Getting Out of Town section, above.

## SCENE FOUR: SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

The Stone Center Mall is of paramount importance. There are several useful stores within, plus a big group of survivors are holed up within. Dozens of Ragers have also entered the mall. The survivors are being kept on the upper level of the mall, where no Ragers had yet ventured. The mall security guards have set up a perimeter around the central food court to defend the stairway and escalators that lead to the upper level.

Interestingly, Ragers who have come into the mall proper stop screaming, slow down considerably and wander aimlessly (decrease their Pace to 4). Vengeful Spirits are unaffected by this phenomena.

**Mall Security:** As stated above, a private security firm is working in the mall this holiday. They're armed with .38 revolvers, Mag-Lites (Str+1 in melee combat), and radios. Unusually, not a one has chickened out or slacked from their duty. They keep the mall as safe as they can, and prefer to gang up on Ragers with their Mag-Lites.

**The Mall Security Office:** This space has been converted to a temporary hospital. There are two medical students (Healing d6) helping out old Doctor Adams, whom most of the characters will know from childhood. He's got Healing d10, and the med students can make a cooperative roll to help him. Doc Adams has some theories about the problems going on right now, and believes earnestly that there's more in this world than science.

Useful stores in the upper level of the mall include:

- **Sears:** Hardware. Gas. Chainsaws. Enough said.
- **King of Knives:** Knife and sword store. The swords are bulky and improperly balanced, as well as not very sharp. They deal Str+2 damage, with a -1 Parry penalty, and break if a 1 is rolled on either Wild or Fighting die. The knives are fine, though, and there are a lot of them.
- **Bookstore:** Contains some bits on Stratton history, including the exile of some Salem families who founded the town. Also contains a book, *Ghost Stories of Massachusetts*, which mentions the curse of the five founding families (the Bakkers, the Anderssons, the Caldwells, the Framinghams, and the Keziahs) and the mysterious stone circle the Mijau Indian Tribe built before they arrived.

**The Stone Circle:** The mall was built around one of the town's historical landmarks: an ancient stone circle constructed by the Mijau Indians hundreds of years before the town was founded. The circle is the central feature of the mall's food court. One of the stones in the circle has fallen over and is split partway in half. A bright green glow issues from the crack. A Notice roll at -2 identifies this glow as the same sickly green light that emanates from the eyes of the Vengeful Spirits.

In its disturbed state, breaking the circle by moving any of the stones would be a big mistake. Even approaching it causes 2d4 non-lethal damage, as sparks issue from the circle to the player who does. To touch a stone takes a Spirit roll at -2 and another 2d4 damage results. Trying to destroy one takes a Spirit roll at -6 and results in 2d6 damage to the player.

**Repairing the Circle:** This is the correct, or at least the less harmful course of action (see Scene Six: Endgame, below). If the players don't reason this out, a professor from Miscatone University is locked up in a mall café; when the heroes come by, he calls out to them if he thinks it's safe.

"Hey! You there—with the weapons! Yes, you! I need to ask you a favor. Now, I'm not going to ask you to believe anything I'm saying, but what's going on here has been coming to us for hundreds of years...and I think I know how to stop it. I think..

“Go to Miss U. Get into my office—I’m Professor Arkem, the museum curator. Bring my laptop, and the articles I’ve listed here!”

He hands them his office keys and a legal pad detailing some of the objects they need. The list includes:

- The professor’s laptop computer
- A statue weighing 10 pounds (sealed inside a glass case)
- Three books (leather-bound, also in glass cases, weighing 5 pounds)
- A leather doctor’s bag (opening it reveals a collection of powders, herbs, fluids, etc.) weighing three pounds.

If they weren’t completely dismissive, he continues further:

“I also got some of the security people around here to believe me...there’re maybe three who would go with you.”

Hopefully, at this point the party will head to Miss U. to gather the items the professor has requested.

**Destroying the Circle:** This would actually be the wrong thing to do. Destroying it releases a big wave of evil spirits on the town, who can possess anyone they see fit on an opposed Spirit roll (they have d10 Spirit). Plus, all the Ragers in town become attracted to the mall. Then five Wild Card Vengeful Spirits are released, all with the arcane powers *bolt*, *fear*, *obscure*, and *stun*. They can also fly at Pace 10. Killing them takes a miracle, probably, but if that happens, it’s all done. And most likely half the town is dead as a result. Well, the half that wasn’t dead to begin with.

## SCENE FIVE: MISCATONE UNIVERSITY

The college campus is typical of such small old New England institutions. Currently, the most important part of it is the library, unfortunately locked. Dozens of particularly rowdy Ragers stalk the streets, chasing co-eds and causing havoc similar to that the characters encountered in the suburban neighborhoods.

**Party School:** Many of the Ragers on campus were athletes in the prime of life, who are now primed for unlife. Strength, Agility, and Vigor all gain a die type. However, due to the mature party situation they were in at the moment of their death, they lose their bonus to recover from being Shaken and only move 6” per round.

**The University Library:** The library is locked for the night. There’re many methods to get into the place though, including blasting through the old wooden doors, which would leave the Rager-resistant doors hanging open. Steam tunnels present another option, although there’s a 1 in 10 chance they start up (Vigor roll vs. heat or take a level of fatigue) every few minutes.

The library interior is completely dark. There are five Vengeful Spirits and one Rager, the former librarian, lurking in the library. The spirits here favor tricks, such as pushing bookcases over on the heroes. However, they hold back, not directly confronting the party. They are curious about what the characters are looking for in here.

**The Curator's Office:** The professor’s office is located near the back part of the library. Once inside, the heroes need to make Notice rolls for each item on Professor Arkem’s list to find them in the cluttered office. After the PCs gather the items on the professor’s list, any Vengeful Spirits not killed out in the library will kick the doors wide open and attack.

## SCENE SIX: ENDGAME

The mall is under siege when the heroes return. Around 400 Ragers of all shapes and sizes have gathered outside to attack the citizens trapped in the mall. The good guys must smash their way through the Rager front lines and fight their way through to the doors. Assume they need to run about 24 yards (12”) through a mob of Ragers to get into the mall doors once the car bogs down; luckily, they’ve got fire support from the roof and some distraction from the mall security.

“Crazy Gus” Keziah joined the fight at the mall and brought a cache of weapons from his manse upon the hill. He has set up a barricaded “foxhole” near the entrance where he takes potshots at the Ragers outside. Have him approach and give one of the heroes an M60 machinegun when they get inside. Why not... they’ll need it! He’ll abandon his post and accompany the characters to the food court perimeter.

Professor Arkem meets them in the food court, shouting “Hurry! It’s getting worse!” And it is. The crack in the stone has split even further open, and the Ragers in the mall are beginning to get fiercer. There are now several hundred within the mall proper, still shambling, but bit by bit, that feral light is starting to creep back into their eyes. You might describe how one or two begin screaming at some point, but it doesn’t affect the heroes... until the ritual starts, that is...

**The Ritual Begins:** The professor explains to them he must take down the safeguards protecting this world from the next for a few minutes (it's like turning off the gas before you fix the stove), during which time he anticipates some trouble.

The professor needs fifteen minutes to set up the ritual, including drawing a magic circle of protection around him (requiring a Rager or Vengeful Spirit a Spirit roll at -6 to cross).

After the ritual gets set up, Arkem will begin by chanting, throwing strange powders and herbs into the air, general mystic sort of things. As the ritual starts, a storm forms overhead, spiraling directly over the stone circle—there's a skylight overhead that allows the heroes to see this. Within five minutes, the Ragers in the mall become fully conscious and savagely attack the perimeter.

**The Climactic Battle:** Use the Mass Battles rules to resolve this terrible battle. The Ragers start with 10 tokens, and the defenders (including the PCs) start with four tokens. Crazy Gus is leading the defense against the Ragers. Since this is a chaotic and savage conflict, use Gus' and the Ragers' Spirit attributes instead of Knowledge (Battle) for the battle rolls. The PCs can contribute to the effort per the Characters in Mass Battles rules in the rulebook. Thankfully, lightning bolts from the supernatural storm begin lancing down through the skylight towards the Ragers, granting the good guys an additional +1 per turn for their battle roll. Each battle round represents about five minutes of savage combat. Disregard the Morale rules since this is such a desperate struggle for the defenders, and the Ragers will not flee under any circumstances.

After the first battle round (five minutes into the ritual), twenty-three black clad shades appear, men and women, swaying gently on nooses from the skylight. They're ethereal and invulnerable, so there will be no effect if the heroes shoot at them. Occasionally, one points an accusing finger at a hero; have them roll Spirit (tell them it's opposed and roll a die or two behind your screen; this roll has no purpose but to scare the players a little). Regardless of the result, tell them their character shivers horribly, but nothing else happens that they're aware of.

Every battle round after that, a few of the shades shriek and fall into the crack in the stone, much like they're being sucked in, until only five are left. The five remaining spectral bodies hanging over the circle stay in place for one more round, not disappearing. Then, there is a terrible bolt of lighting from the storm, striking three at once and sending them careening into the crevasse. Characters must make a Strength roll to remain standing and fighting during this battle round. The two remaining black-clad specters are unaffected.

Fight the rest of the battle through until the heroes are triumphant, or until the Ragers overrun the defenders. In either case, the two remaining shades, one a man and one a woman, float down to the floor, become solid, and stand. Any remaining Ragers back off and open a clear path between them and the heroes.

These two specters have the stats of a Vengeful Spirit, except they're Wild Cards. The female one possesses Spellcasting at d8 and the powers *lower trait*, *bolt*, and *telekinesis* (her *lower trait* may only be used on Fighting, Strength, and Vigor). The male, meanwhile, has the Frenzy Edge at his disposal. They're pretty keen on taking out the PCs, because they represent their biggest obstacle at getting at the professor, so they won't give chase if one runs away.

The professor is now almost finished with the ritual. "Fix the Circle!" he shouts. "Keep them busy... but someone reset that stone, for the love of God!"

It will require a Strength roll at -6 to stand the stone back into place in the circle (a cooperative roll is probably the best way to go). Once back in place, the glowing crack in the stone magically seals itself right before the characters' eyes.

If this is done, all Ragers drop permanently dead. The two black-clad specters (if they're still active) become mortal human beings, and so lose their benefits from being Undead and Not Quite There. The female loses her connection to the afterlife and with that her ability to cast spells.

Any moral qualms the heroes may have about killing them now are null and void when Gus Keziah steps forward and empties a clip of .45 ACP into them both. Confronting him about this is useless; he mumbles something about his "bloodline embarrassing him ever since those two" and walks off.

**The Wrap Up:** If the players are victorious, a ragged cheer goes up in the mall; the professor is raised on the shoulders of any college students present, and everyone wants to embrace and shake the hand of anybody who helped him out. The magick about the town is lifted. Stratton is a wreck. Dead bodies litter the streets. Phone service out of town now works.

Explaining all this to the outside authorities only now reaching the town square might take some work. "Crazy Gus" becomes the temporary leader of the town, unless one of the characters has a better chance.

But right now, it'll all look better after a good night's sleep. Happy Halloween, everybody.



## ENEMIES

### Vengeful Spirits

By all appearances a rotting corpse with glowing green eyes, dressed in 18<sup>th</sup> century clothing.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Notice d8, Stealth d12+1

**Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10 (Includes bonuses for special abilities)

#### Special Abilities:

**Fearless**

**Undead**

**Infection:** Anyone killed within 20 yards (10") of a Vengeful Spirit rises as a Rager (see below) in d4 rounds.

**Life Sense:** Vengeful Spirits can tell where any living being is within 16 yards (8") with a successful Notice roll. They can immediately discern the greatest threat at a glance (which may cause them to adjust their tactics).

**Not Quite There:** In addition to having a tenuous (at best) touch with reality which grants them an additional +2 Toughness, an Vengeful Spirit can phase out of existence for up to four actions at a time; any possessions they have with them phase out as well. During this time, they are "nigh-invisible" (-6 to Notice them), although one might see a footprint appear here or there, a disturbance in fog, or some such. A Vengeful Spirit in this form may pass through solid objects and is immune to harm.

**Twist of Fate:** Any Wild Card who succeeds in killing a Vengeful Spirit is automatically awarded a Benny.

**Gear:** Vengeful Spirits don't come equipped with any gear, however, their bite is quite deadly, and they are intelligent enough to set up traps, employ tricks in combat, and wield weapons.

### Ragers

Ragers are more or less human in appearance, although their eyes have lost anything that makes them appear to be emotional, rational beings. They're also dead, if the bite marks and other wounds are any indication. They shriek horribly when sighting humans, whom they attempt to bludgeon to death with their fists.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8 (+2), Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8 (+2), Notice d6

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 9 (Includes bonus from special abilities)

#### Special Abilities:

**Fearless**

**Dead and Soulless Freaks:** +2 to both Toughness and attempts to recover from Shaken

**Berserk:** Ragers are treated as being permanently Berserk and cannot recover from this state.

**Burn Baby Burn:** Any Rager killed by fire moves toward the nearest target for two rounds after "dying" before it finally collapses into a heap of melting fat and cracking bone.

## ALLIES

### Policemen and Mall Security Guards

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

**Edges:** Alertness

**Gear:** Mag-Lite (Str+1), .38 revolver (Damage 2d6, Range 12/24/48, Shots 6, ROF 1)

### "Crazy Gus" Keziah (Wild Card)

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Driving d8, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

**Edges:** Ambidextrous, Command, Hard to Kill, Hold the Line, Marksman, Noble (old money), Rock and Roll, Two-Fisted

**Hindrances:** Heroic, Loyal (to the town)

**Gear:** Arsenal (see below), pickup truck

**Crazy Gus' Arsenal:** With a few minutes digging around, he probably has it. He even has a pair of M60 machine guns, an M79 grenade launcher, and a flamethrower. He is, however, quite reluctant to hand out the heavy hardware.

Gus doesn't have a katana. Quit looking for one.



# Now Hear This!

## What fanzine would be complete without a couple of product reviews?

Part of the attraction of a fanzine is getting to read reviews of products that can enhance your gaming experience. **Shark Bytes** is no different. In this issue, I review the first adventure in the *Savage Features* line from Legion Publishing—*Out of Sight*. I also take a look at the Roleplaying Tips: GM's Encyclopedia from Johnn Fours.

### OUT OF SIGHT



**Type:** *Savage Worlds* Adventure

**Publisher:** Legion Publishing, Inc.

**Author:** Simon Lucas

**Retail Price:** \$8.50 (RPGNow) or \$7.99 from their website

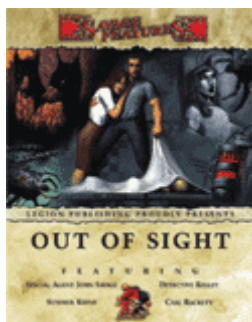
**Format:** 47 page, 4.7MB PDF Download (ZIP)

**Availability:** RPGNow and publisher's website

**Demo Version:** RPGNow

**Pros:** Interesting premise, new “grounding” mechanic, solid adventure development, pre-generated characters, fully bookmarked with a “printer-friendly” version built right in!

**Cons:** None that I noted!



**Product Overview:** A dangerous experiment leads the team of heroes into the mind of a killer to discover the whereabouts of the girl he kidnapped. What horrors lurk in the mind of a murderer? What drives a man to kill? It's time for the heroes to find out, and they'd better do it fast!

This product is the first in the *Savage Features* series of adventures. Each is based around a genre from the golden age of the silver screen. *Out of Sight* is loosely themed around the science horror B-movies and includes new rules for handling the strange psychological experiment and a cast of characters specifically tailored to this scenario.

**Product Details:** I absolutely loved this adventure, but beware—it's potentially a “killer” adventure! Luckily, the guys at Legion included four pre-generated characters specially designed for the scenario so that you won't have to risk your own precious characters! These included investigators each have a special tie to the case so each brings special abilities and skills to the table. I highly recommend that the players be given at least two level-ups before play, both to customize the “pre-gens” a bit as well as providing them a better chance of survival!

The adventure is designed as a one-shot deal that, in the words of the author, “should play like a 1940s or 1950s sci-fi

B-movie”; however, a clever GM can easily build an entire campaign around it. I know I'm going to! It's also quite easy to change the tone from that of a B-movie to one more befitting today's horror-thrillers.

In *Out of Sight* players take on the roles of psychological investigators, referred to as “professionals” within the adventure, faced with a desperate task. They must use a revolutionary new technique to enter the mind of a deranged killer and find out where he's stashed his latest victim before it is too late.

While inside the mind of the killer, the professionals have the ability to alter events and, in some cases, create their own reality. This is accomplished by means of the “Grounding” rules. Basically, each character has a Grounding value equal to their Spirit die type. By making Grounding rolls they can undo the bad things that occur, alter the perceived reality, and use Bennies without having to actually give them up! All this power doesn't come without a price though, for the longer they remain in the killer's mind, the harder it becomes for them to differentiate between what's real and what's not.

There is no map and no set course of events. Everything occurs in an apparently random and haphazard manner. This is accomplished by using eight main settings. Whenever the heroes enter a setting the GM rolls a d6 to determine the scene. The scene's potentially different every time they re-enter a setting, so backtracking isn't always possible! It's up to the players to piece together the various clues they come across in these scenes into some sort of meaningful picture and then return to the “real world” and save the day.

I can't recommend this product highly enough! Between crawling zombies, walls dripping with blood, ass-kicking cheerleaders and strippers, vampire nurses, evil clowns, and the Bone Man, my players barely had time to breathe! If this adventure is any indication of what we can expect from future products from the guys at Legion, then we're all in for a *Savage* treat!

**Other Products of Interest:** To date, this is the only *Savage Worlds* product available from Legion; however, they have more in the works.

Legion also publishes *Newfoundland: Rock of Ages* for the *Deadlands* system and *Bridge Across Time* and *Ice Fang* for *Weird Wars*. Check out their website: <http://www.legionpublishing.co.uk> for more details and information on upcoming *Savage* products.



**Type:** Generic Roleplaying Aid

**Publisher:** Johnn Four

**Author:** Johnn Four

**Retail Price:** \$9.95

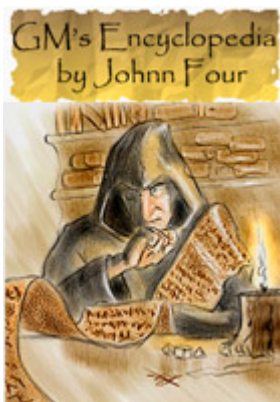
**Format:** 12MB Download (ZIP)

**Availability:** RPGNow and publisher's website

**Demo Version:** Available from the download sites

**Pros:** Lots of information, great organization, simple and easy-to-use format, sorted by issue, topic, category, title, and author.

**Cons:** If there are any, I couldn't find them!



**Product Overview:** *Roleplaying Tips: GM's Encyclopedia* is a wonderful game master tool and the culmination of four years of hard work. Johnn's taken the 2300+ tips from the first 200 issues of *Roleplaying Tips Weekly*, sorted them, categorized them, and put them into HTML format. This lets you find the information and advice you need fast, plan game sessions, and run them better. As if that weren't

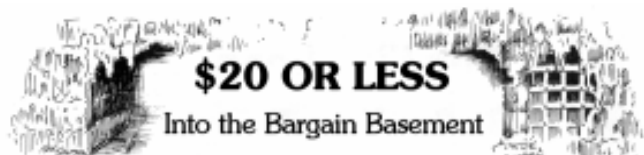
enough, Johnn also organized all the tips and sorted them by issue, author, topic, and title! As a bonus, the first 200 issues of *RTW* are also included in their original e-newsletter format.

**Product Details:** Why pay \$9.95 for information that's already available free of charge online? I'll let the author explain it himself:

*I wasn't satisfied with a simple listing of all the tips in alphabetical order. 2,300 tips are too much to digest like that. So, I spent a few months building a database of all the tips and issues so I could output them in different ways. The result is this Encyclopedia where tips have been sorted by topic, category author, and title so you have many options for easy browsing, reading, and researching.*

Simply put, this product makes browsing the tips a whole lot easier—I won't even mention its utility if you happen to be looking for a specific tip. This is definitely a case where spending a few bucks can save you a whole lot of time and effort, and after all Johnn's earned it!

**Other Products of Interest:** The *Roleplaying Tips: GM's Encyclopedia* is Johnn's only commercial product; however, his website: <http://www.roleplayingtips.com/index.php> is loaded with tons of great information... for free! It should be required reading for all GMs!



Please note that all of the following products are available on RPGNow. To locate them, simply do a search on the publisher's name. At the time of this writing, all of these products were offered at the discounted prices listed.

## **Bloodlines (Savage Edition)**

\$5.00 – 12 to Midnight, Inc. – Savage Worlds Adventure

## **Innana's Kiss (Savage Edition)**

\$3.00 – 12 to Midnight, Inc. – Savage Worlds Adventure

## **Last Rites (Savage Edition)**

\$3.50 – 12 to Midnight, Inc. – Savage Worlds Adventure

## **Weekend Warriors (Savage Edition)**

\$3.50 – 12 to Midnight, Inc. – Savage Worlds Adventure

## **Creature Weekly (Volumes 1-4)**

\$2.25 – Octavirate Games – D20 Supplements

## **DM Dungeon Design Tool**

\$7.50 – Dreaming Merchant Press – Mapping Software

## **Wild Spellcraft**

\$6.40 – EN Publishing – D20 Supplement

## **Vampire Hunter\$: OGL Edition**

\$5.00 – Team Frog – D20 Sourcebook (Setting)

## **Otherworldly Art Portfolio (Volumes 1-3)**

\$3.99 – Otherworld Creations, Inc. – Pulp Clipart

## **Complete Map Collection #1 (Deluxe)**

\$20.00 – Hart-Felt Productions – Generic Map Collection

## **Chunky Dungeons #1 (Darkstone Halls)**

\$15.00 – World Works – 3D Paper Scenery

## **Whitewash City Starter Set**

\$15.99 – Hotz Stuff – 3D Paper Scenery

## **Mapping Symbols (DF Structures)**

\$5.70 – Mapsandmore.com – CC2 Map Symbols



# Empire of Bone

## ***Randy Mosiondz previews an upcoming Savage Setting...***

Welcome to the Empire of Bone, a land of Victorian necropoleis where the dead walk hand-in-hand with the living. Skeleton chimney sweeps clean the sooty furnace stacks of the factories where zombies toil many a mindless hour. Fleshtailors and boneworkers work in fetid labs manufacturing bizarre creations brought to life by the strength of the soul forges. Nobles both living and dead ride in silver-filigreed carriages, while necromancers in their long black frockcoats scurry to their lodges to practice their arcane magicks. It is a place where death is only the beginning of your servitude...welcome home!

*Empire of Bone* is a Savage Setting that takes place in Scary Old England. Back in the Dark Ages of this world, the mystic veil that separated the living and the dead was shattered, resulting in departed souls once again walking the Earth. After much initial chaos, people came to realize that many of these undead were just as "civilized" as the living, and the world settled into a strange and twisted version of history as we know it. Now, in the Victorian Age, a foul plague is sweeping across the land destroying both the living and the dead! Will the world succumb to this sickness, or will the Empire of Bone prevail?

Below is a sample player character in *Empire of Bone*, a grim fellow by the name of Widdershins Browncoat. He is a Husk, a construct that is animated by a dead spirit; Widdershins' Husk form is that of a pumpkin-headed scarecrow! Other races include Bonemen, Gaunts, Rotters, Morts and Spooks... check back for another new character in a later issue of **Shark Bytes**!



### **WIDDERSHINS BROWNCOAT (Wild Card)**

**Race:** Husk (Pumpkin-headed Scarecrow)

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d4, Throwing d6

**Charisma:** -1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

**Edges:** Arcane Talent (Blast—throw flaming pumpkin head); 5 Power Points), Detach (can remove head or limbs!)

**Hindrances:** Flammable (x2 damage from fire, double chances of catching fire), Mean, Vengeful (Minor)

#### **Special Abilities:**

**Undead Construct** (Agile, +2 to Agility-based Tricks)

**Gear:** Scythe (Str+3, Reach 1, Parry -1), 150 spirit shillings





TAKE A SEAT!



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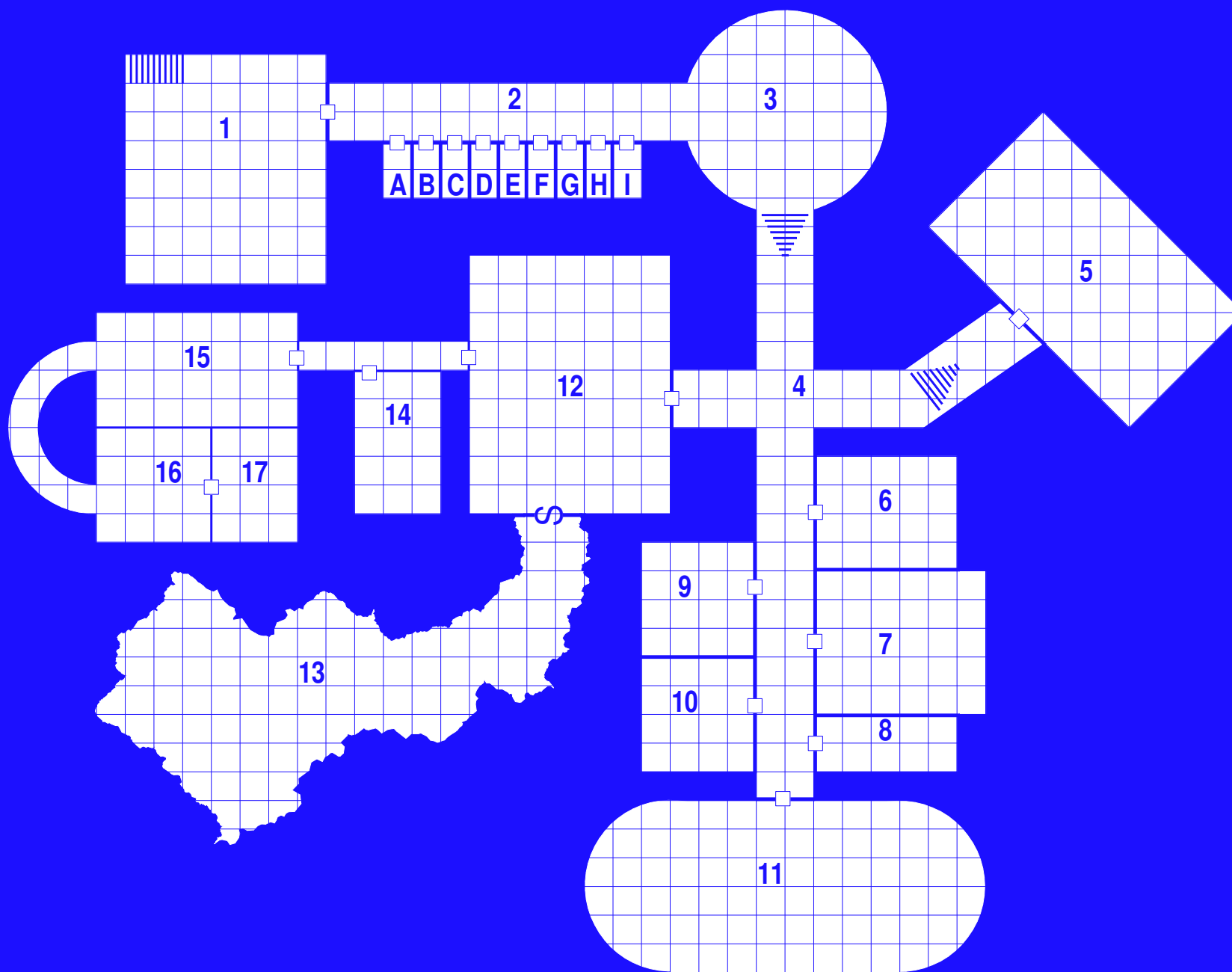


## NOTES

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<b>POWERS</b>					
<b>TRAPPING (POWER)</b>	<b>POWER POINTS</b>	<b>RANGE</b>	<b>DURATION</b>	<b>DAMAGE/EFFECT</b>	<b>NOTES</b>

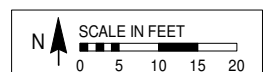
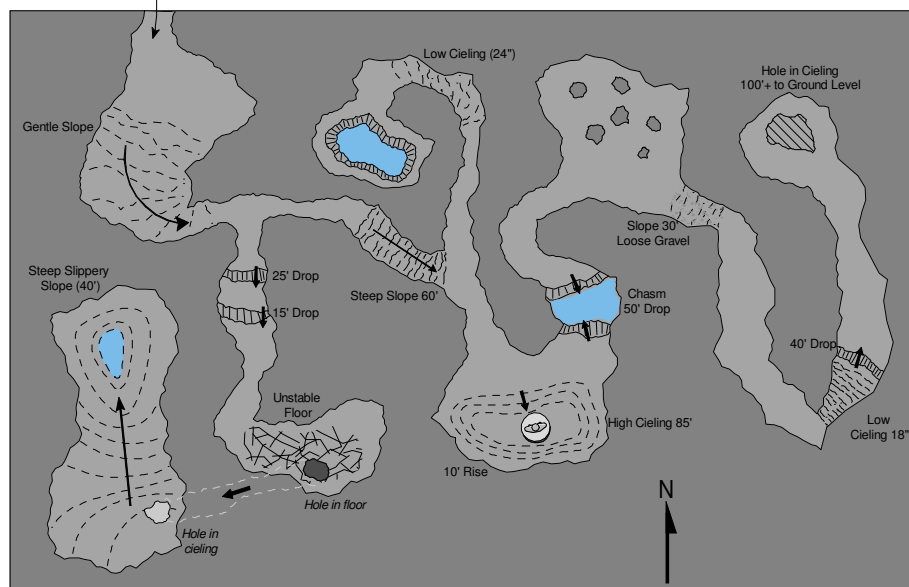
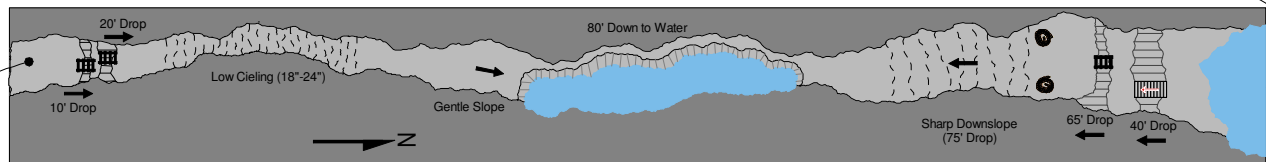
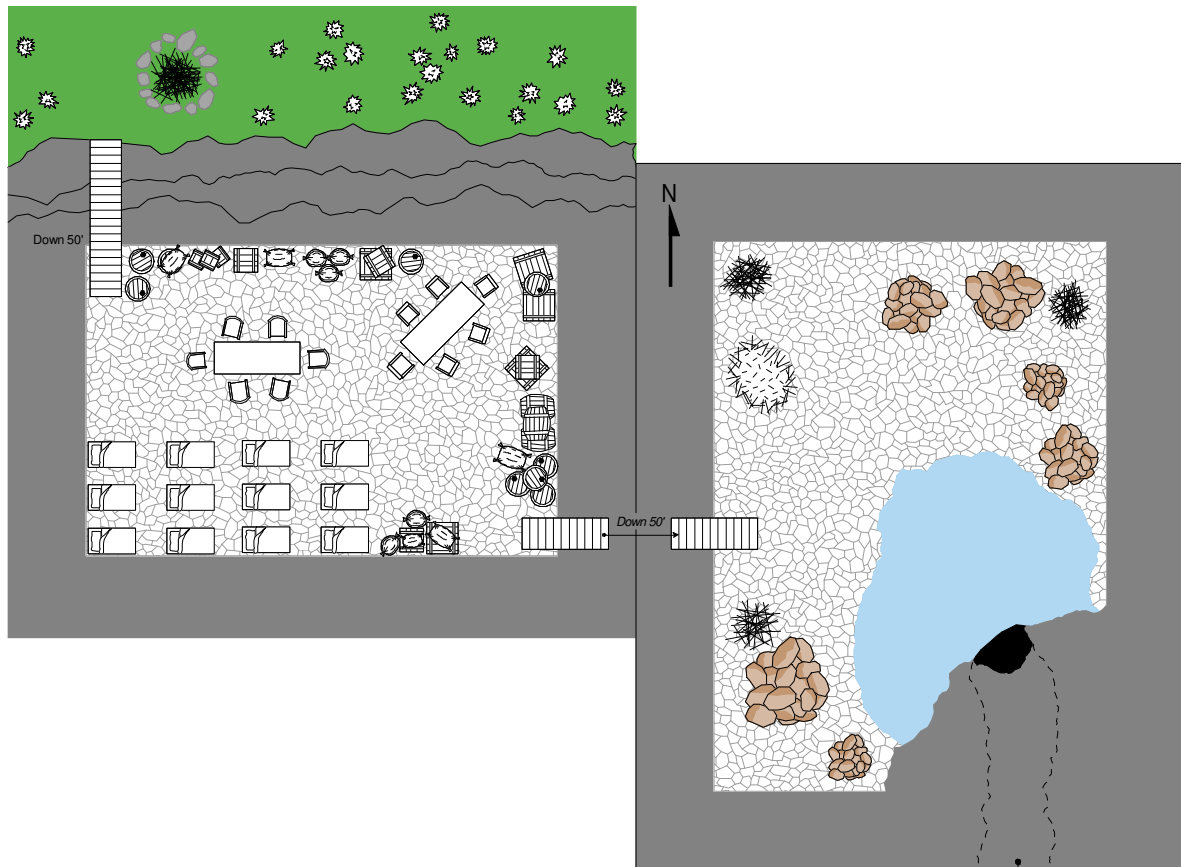
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# Goblin Cave

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### **BACK! BACK, I SAY!**

*These damn things are everywhere!*

Play this card to prevent all undead creatures from attacking you this round.

Contributed by William Littlefield  
Border Design (c) 2004 PEG, Inc.  
Shark Bytes #2 - October 2004



### **BATTER UP!**

*This one's going outta the park!*

Any player armed with a baseball bat, shovel, or other similar weapon, may play this card during combat to automatically take a zombie's head.

Contributed by Lee Reynoldson  
Border Design (c) 2004 PEG, Inc.  
Shark Bytes #2 - October 2004



### **I KNEW YOU'D MAKE IT!**

*Come on, don't give up on me now!*

Play this card after another character uses a Benny for any reason other than a Soak roll or to remove a Shaken status. Instead of discarding the Benny, you get it!

Contributed by Markus Finster  
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### **WHAT THE ...!?**

*Hold up! I think I just heard something!*

If you are surprised, you may play this card to be dealt an action card as if you had passed your Notice roll.

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### **WISH ME LUCK!**

*Fingers crossed everyone. I'm going in!*

If your hero is all out of Bennies, playing this card allows any other Wild Card to give them one of theirs.

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**Back, Back I Say!**  
(William Littlefield)

**Batter Up!**  
(Lee Reynoldson)

**Wish me Luck!**  
(Daniel Wood)

**What the ...? and I Knew You'd Make It!**  
(Markus Finster)

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You can download a ZIP file containing the full-sized cards at [www.sharkbytes.info](http://www.sharkbytes.info)

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