

The Australian Role Playing Gamers' Magazine ~~\$2.95~~ Spring 1985

AD&D and a
Super Squadron module,
Runequest Race,
News, Strips



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MULTIVERSE

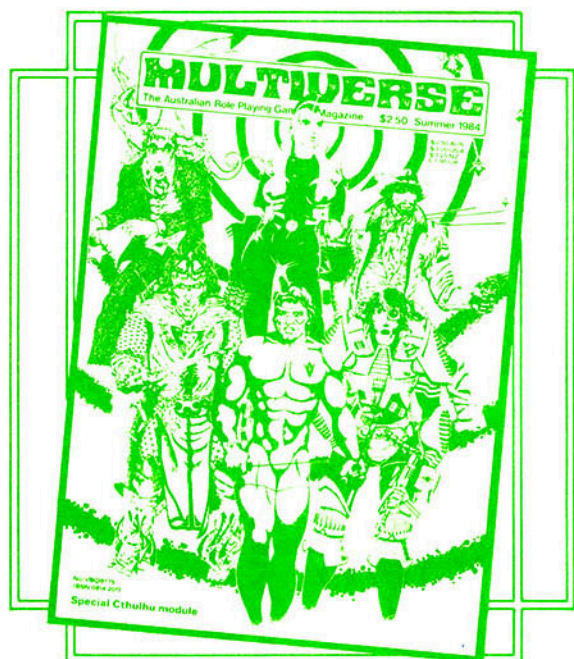
The Australian Role Playing Gamers' Magazine

Multiverse as the name implies, is a magazine which covers **all role-playing** games. It is Australia's first major effort in this field.

Each issue will feature a **module** for one of the major role-playing systems. More importantly, each issue will be totally devoted to the major gaming field, RPG's, presenting an all Australian view of **supplements** and **variants**.

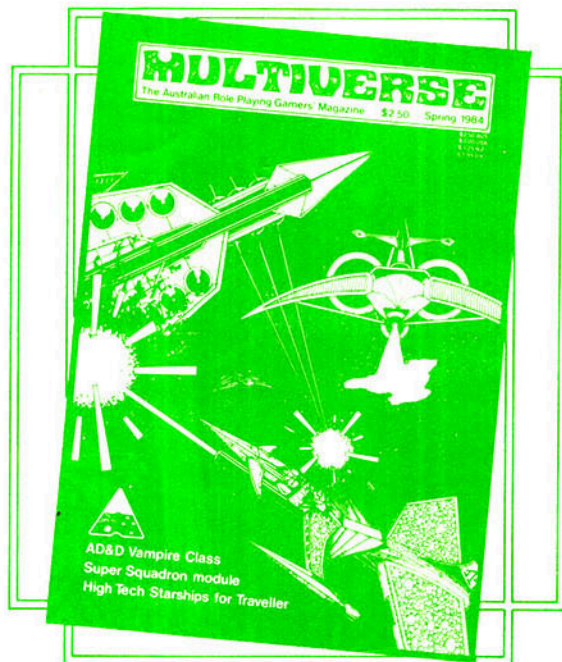
Subscriptions are available at the discount price of \$11.00 for four issues, and may begin from any issue you nominate. Issue 6 is due out in February.

Issue **One** (2nd edition) is back, due to popular demand. This is an all Super Squadron issue featuring; variants; SS/AD&D conversion; module; errata and strips for \$2.00.

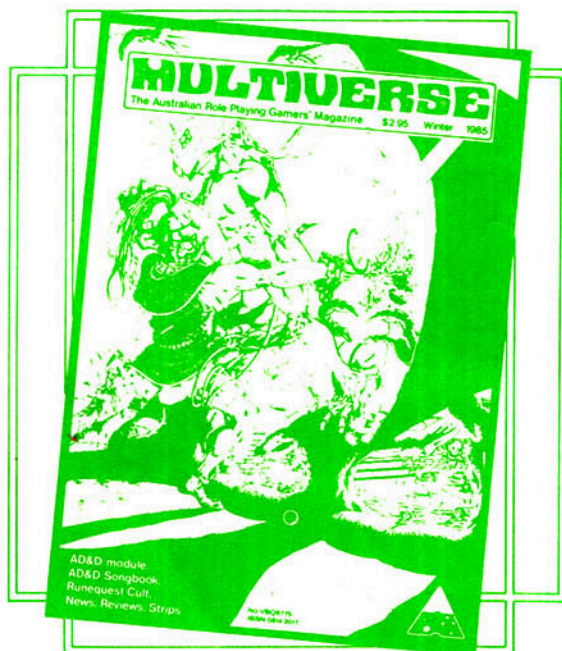


Issue **three** features a cover spotlighting generic RPG. Articles include: "Super Squadron variant"; "Magic Weapons and Armour generation for AD&D"; "Star Trek Variant"; Call of Cthulhu module, "Runequest Armies"; New AD&D class; news; comic strips; reviews and supporting general articles for \$2.50.

Issue **five** features two modules for AD&D and Super Squadron; a Token Bestiary; artifacts for Call of Cthulhu; Arcanacon convention report; James Bond 007 Variant; new race for Runequest; news; comics and much more for \$2.95.



Issue **two** features a cover spotlighting the lead article: "High Technology Starships for Traveller (TL16-30)". Other articles also include: "Vampires as a character class for AD&D"; "Priests & Paladins for Dragonquest"; a module for Super Squadron; news; comic strips and more for \$2.50.



Issue **four** features a cover spotlighting fighting fantasy scene. Articles include: an AD&D module; a new Runequest Cult; the AD&D songbook; Super Squadron column; Phantastacon convention report; comics; news; reviews and more for \$2.95.

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Adventure Simulations, P.O. Box 182, Mitcham 3132

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Contributions: Submissions for publication are accepted and encouraged. Return postage should be included if you wish your submission returned. Contributors will be paid at a rate of \$10.00 per page for articles and \$16.00 per page for artwork. A minimum payment of \$5.00 is applicable to contributions. Contributions which do not make the minimum payment will receive a free copy of the magazine.

Staff: Martin Dick, Kelly Grant, Greg Ingram, Joseph Italiano, Robert Mun, Ian Padgham, Siegfried Pietralia, Andrew South.

Artists in this issue: Brad Ellis; Alan Greenway; Mike Hill; Peter Hughes; Joseph Italiano; Mintie and Robert Jan.

Editorial

What you now have in front of you is the premier publication of a new company. From this issue, Multiverse will now be produced by Ghostwriters Publications, in practical terms this will have very little effect on the magazine. Ghostwriters is merely the formalised structure of the group that has been producing Multiverse for the last four issues. Our forming into a company will give us a more organised base from which to publish Multiverse, which should result in a better service to both our readers and contributors.

Every issue we produce seems to herald changes and advances for Multiverse, perhaps the most significant in this issue for the readers, is that we will now be paying our contributors for their work. The rates will be \$10.00 per finished published page for text and \$16.00 per page for artwork. With this added incentive for seeing your name in print, we look forward to seeing an increase in the number of submissions. We will publish articles on any roleplaying system and PBM game, so if you feel you can make a submission up to our current standards, send it in!

Multiverse five will also see our print run increase for the fourth consecutive issue. We have sold out of issue four and are set to do the same on issue five even with our increased print run. So, it is now the ideal time to take out a subscription to Multiverse and have Australia's roleplaying magazine delivered to your doorstep. See the facing page for details.

This issue sees the introduction of a column where, you the readers, can contribute with very little effort. I am referring to our letters column, such a column can be a highly enjoyable aspect of a magazine, but only if the readers respond to it. This issue features a detailed and thought provoking look at the Australian club gaming scene by Steve Hayes and I am convinced some of our readers must have comments on his views. As well we hope to provide, in the letters column, a means to answer your questions about Super Squadron. If you have any queries about the game; write to us and we will endeavour to answer them for you in the column.

On a general note, the games industry is going through a slump both here and the US, though I believe the situation is not as dark as some people would have us believe. One of the major reasons for this, is the lack of attention paid to the grassroots of the hobby by the manufacturers. Roleplaying companies have over the last few years, been able to ignore to a large degree the playing public, as it was a rapidly growing market supported by an often fanatical buying public and the impetus of being a fad. With gamers becoming more discriminating (we have to be, who can afford to pay out \$95.00 for RQIII or \$30.00 for an AD&D book, unless you really want it!) and the faddish aspect diminishing, the growth in roleplaying is stabilising and new avenues for growth must be found.

One excellent attempt being made to stimulate roleplaying is by Matthew Cohn and ARPL. The ARPL newsletter can be found in this issue, and as can be seen, the people involved in ARPL are putting a considerable quantity of time and effort to give roleplaying a boost. They are well worthy of any support, you, as the individual gamer, can give them. The hobby can only benefit from increased involvement.

Ours is by nature, a chaotic and fragmented hobby, at Multiverse we aim to provide an enjoyable and informative magazine for the disparate sections of roleplaying. We feel that we are doing this with what we consider to be our best issue yet.

Martin Dick



Deadline for submissions to Issue #6: January 31st
Release Date: March 1st



DESIGNING CHARACTERS

The Heroic View

One of the major differences between Super Squadron and some other superhero role playing games is the method of generating characters. Super Squadron uses random character generation while other games use a design based character generation system, where players 'purchase' their characteristics and powers. Although it is difficult to incorporate this system into Super Squadron, due to the dramatic variation of powers and abilities, we are working on a design based system as an alternative option. The most recent version is presented below. It is recommended that you use either the random generation method or the design system in a campaign, but not both.

The steps necessary in designing a character have been listed in point form for ease of reference.

1. The character determines their total power points.
2. The character purchases an origin(s), (see table one).
3. The character then purchases their powers, (see table three).
4. The character determines and distributes their characteristic points. They then calculate their Luck factor.
5. Excess power points may be used to buy characteristic points or 'defective powers'.
6. Extra abilities may be taken for defects.

1. Power Points (PP)

Each player randomly determines the number of power points they begin with. Power points are determined by rolling $8d10+20$. These points are used to purchase an origin(s), powers and possibly extra characteristic points.

2. Origins

The player purchases an origin type at the PP cost shown on table one. The player may buy up to six origins as long as they pay the appropriate cost for each.

Eg: A character may buy the Alien origin for 8PP and then also buy the Self Developed origin for another 6PP plus 3PP for the second origin. This would allow the character to buy powers from either table and also give the character the maximum characteristic training bonus (up to 25), for the Self Developed origin type.

The only exception to this is that if a character chooses to be an artifact, they **can not** purchase any more origins. The specific origin type will determine what range of powers a character can buy. Only powers that appear on the character's origin table(s) may be purchased.

Eg: If a character purchases the Mutant origin for 8PP, he can not purchase Magic Spells because this power does not appear on the Mutant Powers

Table.

3. Powers

Once the origin type has been determined, the character purchases their powers (from the appropriate power table), at the PP cost shown on table three. If the character purchases a power more than once, they must pay an additional PP cost as shown on table two.

Eg: If a character buys Enhanced Agility three times at $(10 \times 3) = 30PP$ he must also pay an extra 6 PP for having the same power an extra two times. This brings the total PP expended to 36.

All powers that are bought multiple times can only be taken as intensified abilities, such as immunity to the power. Related powers **can never** be taken in this fashion.

Eg: If a character takes Dimensional Gate three times $(15 \times 3) = 45PP$ (plus 6PP for taking the power an extra two times), the extra abilities can be taken as increased range, reduced AP cost or failure chance, etc, but can not be taken as related powers such as Time Travel or Teleportation.

Many alien powers can be generated by a device. If an alien character purchases one of these powers, he can roll randomly (51-00)% to determine whether the power is generated by a device or he can pay 2PP and select whether the ability is generated by a device or not.

4. Characteristic Points

Once a character's origin has been determined, the character generates their characteristic points, $40+6d6$. These points are divided between the following characteristics, as the player chooses, ST:AG:CH:IQ:SA:EG. No characteristic may be over 20 points, and each characteristic must have a minimum value of one point.

Luck is not randomly generated but must be bought with power points. The first Luck point is bought for 10 power points, thereafter each LK point can be purchased for 5 power points. A maximum of 10 LK characteristic points can be purchased in this fashion, as long as appropriate power points are paid per LK characteristic point.

5. Excess Power Points

If a character has excess power points which they did not wish to spend to buy any applicable powers, they may take one of two options.

The first is to purchase additional characteristics points at the rate of one characteristic point per power point. The only restriction on this is that no characteristic can be raised over 20 using this method. The characteristic points can be spread over a number of characteristics or all used on one characteristic.

The second option is to buy another power at a reduced cost, for a terminal defect. A terminal defect is a problem that the player can eventually overcome. The degree/intensity of the defect is subject to the cost difference between the power purchased and the points expended. It will be up to the GM to determine the exact degree of the defect.

Eg: If a character has 6PP remaining and then purchases Heightened Defence for 12PP, he gains a terminal defect.

Eg: This player's terminal defect could involve being hunted by a criminal gang. The player could eventually overcome this defect when the criminals are either all imprisoned or captured.

6. Extra Power Points

Characters may also opt to spend extra power points (in excess of what they have generated) in any fashion they choose, either to gain more powers or increase their characteristics. However any power points gained in this fashion will result in the character gaining permanent defects. Their intensity will depend on how many extra power points are taken, but as a guide, every 10PP can be assumed to be an 'extra' power for purposes of assigning defects.



Table 1 - Origins

Origin Type	Cost
Accidental/Scientific	9
Alien	8
Artifact	12
Designed	5
Mutants	8
Self-Developed	6
Sponsored	3
Supernatural	8

Table 2 - Multiple Powers or Origins

Extra Number	Cost
One additional	3
Two additional	6
Three additional	9
Four additional	12
Five additional	16
Each extra one	+4

Table Three - Power Point Costs

Cost Powers

- 8 Adaption
- 17 Air Generation
- 12 Animal Affinity
- 4+ Armour 4 plus 4 per level (as per the Tome)
- 7 Astral Projection
- 6+ Body Augmentation 6 each, maximum of three
- 6+ Cybernetics 6 each, maximum of three
- 16 Darkness Generation
- 25 Death Touch
- 3 Defect

- 15 Density Control
- 15 Dimensional Gate
- 8 Disguise
- 20 Disintegration Beam
- 3 Ego Change
- 12 Elasticity
- 18 Emotion Control
- 17 Energy Absorption - Type A
- 22 Energy Absorption - Type B
- 10 Enhanced Agility
- 3 Enhanced Charisma
- 10 Enhanced Intelligence
- 8 Enhanced Stamina
- 10 Enhanced Strength
- 20 Environment Control
- 12 Fast Recovery
- 17 Flame Generation
- 6 Flight - up to lightspeed
- 15 Force Beam - Any Type
- 25 Force Field
- 17 Gravity Control
- 9+ Gimmick 6 plus 3 per item
- 13 Heightened Attack
- 12 Heightened Defence
- 12 Heightened Expertise
- 3+ Heightened Senses 3 each, maximum of three
- 9 Heightened Speed
- 17 Ice Generation
- 8 Immateriality
- 8 Immortality
- 6-9 Inherent Power - variable, subject to GM
- 15 Invisibility
- 20 Invulnerability
- 10 Light Control
- 17 Lightning/Electrical Control
- V Magic Device - Powers, 5 plus $\frac{1}{2}$ power cost (max 4 powers)
- 9+ Magic Device - Spells 6, plus 3 per spell point (max 4 sp)
- V Magic Device - AP store 3AP per 1PP (max 60AP)
- 12+ Magic Spells 8 plus 4 per spell point (max 5 sp)
- 12 Magnetic Manipulation
- 10 Metamorphosis - either type
- 15 Metamorphosis - both types
- 20 Mimic - either type
- 25 Mimic - both types
- 15 Mind Control
- 15 Mind Control Special
- V Mind Powers 5-20, subject to GM
- 20 Multiplex
- 1 Mutation
- 5 Non-Requirement of Air
- 12+ Organic Power 8 plus 4 per ability (max 8 abilities)
- 7 Out of Phase Detection
- 12 Paralysis Ray
- 3+ Pet or Companion - Pet, 3 plus purchase powers
- 5+ Pet or Companion - Companion, 5 plus powers
- 15 Phantasmal Forces
- 8 Regeneration
- 7 Revivication
- 8+ Robotic Body - Organic Brain 5 plus 3 per ability (maximum of five) 15PP under the current system
- 10+ Robotic Body - Electronic Brain 6 plus 4 per ability (maximum of five) 18PP under the current system
- 8 Self Discipline
- 6 Shape Shift - one form only
- 14 Shape Shift - one order only
- 25 Shape Shift - one class only
- 18 Size Change - either (permanent @ $\frac{1}{2}$ cost)
- 25 Size Change - both
- 12 Sonic Abilities
- 30 Special Vehicle
- 11+ Special Weapon 8 plus 3 per ability (max of 8)
- 15 Subduction
- 20 Teleportation
- 13 Temperature Control - either
- 18 Temperature Control - both
- 17 Terra Generation
- 20 Time Travel
- 3 Water Breathing
- 9 Weakness Detection
- 15 Weather Control

V This indicates that the power point cost is variable, dependant on the specific ability taken, and should be determined by the GM.

° This indicates that there is a base cost for the power plus an additional cost for all the other sub-properties. There is always a maximum to the number of sub-abilities that can be taken for each single use of the power.

7. Sample Characters

The character rolls their number of PP, rolling 8d10+20 and gaining (6,1,4,3,9,6,7,2)+20=58 points. The character then decides to be a Mutant, which costs him 8 points leaving him with 50 points with which to buy his powers.

From the powers available on the Mutant Power Table he purchases: Enhanced Strength (+15) at 10PP, Terra Generation at 17PP and Flight at 6PP costing him a total of (10+17+6)=33PP, leaving him with (50-33)=17PP.

The next step is to determine his characteristic points, rolling 6d6(6,4,6,5,1,4)+40=66. He assigns the following points to his characteristics:

Strength	11 (26)
Agility	17
Charisma	06
Intelligence	10
Stamina	12
Ego	10

As he still has 17 PP remaining, he buys a LK factor point for 10 PP and 7 extra characteristic points for 7 PP. This gives him the following final characteristics:

Strength	11 (26) Powers
Agility	17
Charisma	06
Intelligence	15
Stamina	14
Ego	10
Luck	01
	Enhanced Strength (+15)
	Flight - 99kph max
	Terra Generation

The second character generates his PP, rolling 8d10+20 and gaining (6,3,5,9,6,8,7,3)+20=67 points. The character decides to be a double origin character, taking the origins Supernatural for 8PP and Self Developed for 6PP plus 3PP for the multiple origin, costing him a total of 17PP and leaving him with 50PP.

He now purchases his powers from those tables taking Heightened Attack twice (+12%/+3DD & +16%/+2DD) [13x2]=26PP plus 3PP for taking a power one additional time, costing him a total of 29PP. He then purchases Magic Spells with 3 spell points at 8PP plus (3x4)=12PP, costing a total of 20PP, Fatalunes Fade (1), Bubbles of the Bizante (1) and Shield of Sheldon (1). This leaves him with (50-29-20)=1PP remaining.

The next step is to generate his characteristic points, rolling 6d6(4,1,2,5,1,3)+40=56. He assigns the following points to his characteristics:

Strength	08
Agility	13
Charisma	10
Intelligence	10
Stamina	10
Ego	05

As he still has 1PP remaining, he buys a statistic point and adds it to his Ego rating.

Strength	08	Powers
Agility	13	Heightened Attack x 2
Charisma	10	(+12%/+3DD and +16%/+2DD)
Intelligence	10	Magic Spells (3 spell points)
Stamina	10	Bubbles of the Bizante (1)
Ego	06	Fatalunes Fade (1)
Luck	00	Shield of Sheldon (1)

8. Final Notes

As with any character design system, it is possible for players to design some extremely powerful characters. Should this happen, (which can also be the case under the original random generation system), the GM may impose terminal defects to compensate and balance the campaign for the other players.

This system is still fairly new and you may discover some problems in play balance. One of the main reasons this system is being printed so soon is so that you can play test it for us. Let us know how it works for you, what you like and dislike about it. Direct all comments to The Heroic View, C/- Multiverse.

by Joseph Italiano

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News and Rumours

Currently the gaming industry is going through a massive slump. The resultant shakeup in the American market has caused several companies to go to the wall. The smaller companies have been the ones who have been affected to the greatest degree, but the larger companies have not gone unscathed. All of the major companies seem to be scaling back the production of new material and ceasing production of their less popular lines.

This recession has reached Australia sooner than expected, probably hastened by the high cost of games here at the moment. It is because of these current trends in the gaming economy that importers have been reducing their inventories.

It is rumoured that these cutbacks will hit the person who plays 'uncommon' systems. The systems that will continue will be Dungeons and Dragons, Star Trek, Twilight 2000, Runequest, James Bond, and most of the Chaosium systems. The hardest hit items seem to be the RPG magazines as many of these will no longer be imported. This includes magazines such as White Dwarf etc. Even Dragon will have its importation quota greatly reduced. It has also been rumoured that Steve Jackson Games have ceased production of Space Gamer and Chaosium's Different Worlds seems to be experiencing similar problems which have been complicated by the fact that its editor, Tadashi Ehara, has apparently left the company.

Flying Buffalo/Blade has been trying to sell the copyrights for their entire game line. This came to light at Origins this year. Apparently, several other companies in America are aiming for similar sales.

The local industry is still healthier than our American counterparts. Strategic Studies Group released their third game in June. This is called Europe Ablaze and is based on the air war in Europe from 1939 to 1945. Australian Design Group released their second board game at Origins. A new board games company called Panther Games has started up in Canberra and has released their first game 'Trial of Strength'. It is based on the conflict between Germany and Russia in the Second World War. They currently have two new titles in production, they are called Warlords of the Middle Kingdom and China in Disarray, 1920-1940.

On the roleplaying scene Adventure Simulations is working on rules expansions for Super Squadron. Owing to the time consuming nature of this project, they are now accepting material from outside persons for possible publication. The next adventure book which is currently in production will feature the first of these submissions. If you are interested in submitting a scenario for future adventure books, contact Adventure Simulations, P.O. Box 182, Mitcham 3132 Victoria.

In addition to this, a number of Australian gamers are currently engaged in producing roleplaying material for several American companies. Unfortunately, they prefer to remain anonymous at this stage. We hope to be able to release further details soon.

The most dramatic incident in the Australian industry in recent times was the gutting of Ventura Games warehouse by fire in late August. Ventura is one of the major Australian distributors, and their entire supply of stock was destroyed in the fire. The fire, which was apparently started by an electrical fault, destroyed the entire building within five minutes. Fortunately, the Ventura staff were able to evacuate the building with no injuries. Ventura, luckily keeps all of its records in a separate building and thus were able to recommence business the following day.

In the retailing area, Decision Games has opened their second store in North Balwyn. They are now the third chain to open in Melbourne. Mind Games City has moved premises to a larger site and can now be found at 244 Swanston St. Mind Games is also planning to open a store in Ballarat in the near future.

CONVENTION LISTINGS

Sagacon '85 to be held on October 12th to October 14th at Adelaide University Union House, Level 5, Games room. The tournaments run will include AD&D, Runequest, Traveller, B&B and many others. All correspondence should be sent to Adelaide Uni Simulation Gaming Association, c/o University of Adelaide, North Terrace, Adelaide, South Australia, 5000.

Kingcon has been cancelled, but another group has taken over and plans to run it, though no details are available at this time.

Canberra Games Convention is to be held on the Australia Day Weekend from January 25th to 27th at Phillip College, Woden, A.C.T. The major tournaments are to be AD&D, Traveller, Boardgames and Miniatures. The contact for enquiries is the Canberra Wargames Society, G.P.O. Box 1016, Canberra City A.C.T. 2601.

Wargames '86 is scheduled for sometime in February and the location is yet to be decided. The planned major tournaments are AD&D, Wargames etc. The contact for this is David Bruggeman (03) 898 6032.

Phantastacon '86 is to be held at the Hotel Australia, Collins St., Melbourne and is to be held over the Easter weekend from Friday 28th March to Monday 31st. The major tournaments are AD&D and Runequest, with many other maxi and minor tournaments. For details contact: Adventure Simulations, P.O. Box 45, Mitcham, 3132 Victoria. Ph. (03) 874 7475 or (03) 347 5757 (after hours).

Cauldracon is to be held at St. Andrews Church Halls on the 24th to 25th of May. The major tournaments are AD&D, Cthulhu, and Runequest. The contact for this is B.A.D.D.A. c/o Douglas McKiggan, (03) 592 7603.

by Greg Ingram



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ARPL news



The Australasian Role Player's League is a league of role playing games clubs which has the simple aim of supporting the role playing games hobby in various different ways. We support communications between role players, role playing events and role playing clubs. The league releases news columns which appear in various club newsletters and hopefully soon in other role playing magazines as well as Multiverse. The league only functions on the grounds that people are prepared to support it and offer suggestions as to what it should be doing. Since Phantasticon we have made great progress, not only in initiating projects, but carrying them out. If you have any suggestions about what you think ARPL should be doing, please bother to contact us. Our contact address is: C/- 1 Manor Street, Brighton, Victoria, Australia 3186. Phone Matthew Cohn (03) 592 5620.

Some of ARPL's projects have included: meetings to initiate projects; a 12 month convention calendar provided free to role players which has now been produced; a proposed Australian guide to running Role Playing Games Conventions; Tournaments and other events which are currently under production; the introduction of ARPL subcommittees to promote the role playing games hobby in their particular state and a guide to running role playing games clubs. Likewise, we are also trying to establish an up-to-date list of Australasian role playing games clubs. There are obviously other things ARPL can achieve, but we will need the support of you as role players. The following describes some of ARPL's projects in more detail.

The Convention Calendar

This was released just before Arcanacon III, and it contains all of the Australian role playing conventions, some club meeting times, ARPL contact numbers etc. It is basically a guide to what's on in the role playing games scene from August '85 to July '86. If you want one and can't get hold of one, contact ARPL and we'll send you one.

The ARPL Victorian State Committee

The ARPL Victorian State Committee was formed at Cauldracon, and has so far had an article printed in The Age (a Melbourne Newspaper) about role playing games, and applied for grants from the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation in Victoria to run a general role playing games promotion in shopping stores and libraries around Melbourne at Christmas time, expanding to the country areas of Victoria in January 1986. For this promotional campaign, we will be needing the help of as many game masters and role players as we can get our hands on! If you would be prepared to support this project please contact: ARPL C/- Matthew Cohn. Hopefully other state committees will appear in the near future!

ARPL Guide to running Role Playing Games Conventions

This is currently under production, and it will contain guides to running role playing games conventions, role playing games tournaments, free form role playing tournaments, and other role playing events. It will be written with advice given from people with a wide range of experience in running role playing games events, i.e. Joe Italiano, Rhys Howitt, Ian Harrison, Matthew Cohn and many others. We are still interested in hearing from anyone who thinks they could help with this project.

If so we are interested in hearing about the benefits and flaws of your convention venue, the costs you encountered, how many turned up, how much you charged and how much labour was required to run the event.

ARPL Guide to running Role Playing Games Clubs

For this guide we have created a questionnaire on different aspects of running role playing clubs, the problems people are likely to hit, etc. If your club would be prepared to fill in this questionnaire, contact ARPL and we'll send you a copy. It should be produced some time next year.

ARPL News

This is released every month or so in club newsletters and magazines with the intention of informing role players about what's going on in ARPL and the role playing games hobby in general. If you would like to reprint ARPL News, write in and I'll send you a copy. If you have any news that you think other role players might be interested in, please send us a copy.

That about sums up what ARPL is doing at the moment! If you have a role playing games club, you can join the Australasian Role Players League by filling in an application and sending it in, it's that simple! It costs your club nothing to join ARPL, it is there for you! So write to ARPL and I'll send you an application form. Upon joining you will receive the MUDDA newsletter containing an ARPL news column, and gain voting privileges at ARPL meetings which work on the principle of one vote per club whatever its size. Whatever happens, I hope you will consider the ideas put forward in this column and support ARPL.

by Matthew Cohn



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Curse of Suspira

An AD&D module

INTRODUCTION

The Curse of Suspira is an AD&D mini-adventure designed for 4-5 characters of 3rd-4th level. The scenario revolves around a set of old ruins located in a dark wood of sinister reputation. A number of strange occurrences will take place in the vicinity of the ruins, until even the most dull-witted of players will begin to realise that something is amiss. Nonetheless, coming to grips with the cause of the disturbance may prove to be difficult.

There are many possible ways for the players to come across the ruins. In my own campaign they became lost in the woods and took shelter in the ruins when it began to rain. Another way to introduce the adventure might be via a treasure map - perhaps the account of a traveller who had the misfortune to find himself in the area.

This document would be considered a map to a minor magical hoard, and could be used to substitute for a dice roll of 1-5 on the Magic Treasure Table (page 120 of the Dungeon Masters Guide).

There are many other ways by which the players could come across the ruins - after all, a ruined building in a dark wood will fit into almost any campaign at some point.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The tale of the ruins began almost 250 years ago. At this time there lived a powerful sorcerer by the name of Salsibar Salmistra. Rumours of the dark secrets and hidden treasures in the woods had reached the mage, but its reputation made him rather nervous. Anxious to discover lost power, Salsibar eventually decided that he could wait no longer - but he took precautions. Before entering the wood, he spent many months in preparation for his journey. During this time, he crafted a magical amulet that would safeguard his psyche or soul if he should run afoul of some great evil (an amulet of life protection). This done, Salsibar set off into the wood with the amulet about his neck. His fears proved to be justified, for he had only been in the woods for several weeks before he was visited in the night by a female vampire.

Many years previously, his attacker had been a foreign noblewoman possessed of great beauty and enormous wealth. She was visiting a cousin in the local area and was dismayed to eventually discover that he was both a vampire and a necromancer. Horrified, she attempted to flee, but was captured by the fiend and drained of her lifeblood. She was forced to obey his commands for

My dearest Leonara,
It has only been days since we spoke last, yet it seems like an eternity. The agony of separation from you has only been made more miserable by the hardships we have endured on the road. The stories they tell of the Black Woods are all true! Were it not necessary to ride and fetch the priest for our forthcoming marriage, I would not even have considered passing through them. I will certainly never do so again. As you know, we have been riding on the Northern Road towards Glensbrook. Some 30 leagues or so along the way, we came upon a set of ruins a short distance from the road. A storm was brewing and we decided to pitch camp there. Would that I had settled upon some other spot! That night passed slowly, my dearest. Every moment seemed somehow suspended - it is difficult for me to describe the feeling of wrongness that pervaded the area. I found it impossible to sleep and chose to wander from my tent. I sat upon a rock and gazed at the stars, thinking of you.

Imagine my horror when, from the depths of the forest, a phantom came gliding towards me. It looked like a young woman, ghostly pale and drenched in water. I found myself frozen in terror. As I stood in helpless fear, she stood before me and spoke her dire warning. "Flee this place ... before it is too late," she said. With those words, she vanished. Naturally, I needed little more encouragement. Frenzied, I kicked the servants into wakefulness and we rode for our very lives. I only felt truly safe once we were clear of the accursed woods once more.

I am sending this note back by messenger, so that you will not worry, my dearest. We have reached Glensbrook and located the priest but (quite understandably) have decided to circumnavigate the Black Woods on our return. We expect to be delayed four or five days. In the meantime, know that I love you above all else, my sweet. I will return as soon as humanly possible to join you in holy wedlock.

Yours forever, Sylarus Valmorat

the next two years before the populace of the area stormed his castle and impaled him as he lay in his coffin. The woman managed to escape the carnage. Taking the new name of Suspira, she became a creature of the night. She took to living in the deep woods, where the sun never penetrated, and preyed upon those foolish enough to cross her path. Suspira proved more than a match

for Salsibar, and he fell victim to her deadly charms with little resistance. Unfortunately for him, Suspira correctly judged that the amulet he wore was some sort of protective charm, and had him remove it before she fed. Thus did the adept die.

Suspira took the amulet, but thought of it as little more than one of the usual protective baubles worn by travellers in the woods. She lived for several more decades before fate eventually caught up with her, in the form of a wandering knight named Gurnick Trueblade. This man was possessed of enormous physical and moral strength and slew the vampiress as she made her advances. As she breathed her last, however, the amulet she had stolen leapt into life, drawing her psyche and undead essence into itself. It was not meant to function in this way, for it had been designed to protect the soul of a living human being from oblivion. By absorbing Suspira's uncleanness into itself, the amulet became irrevocably and horribly tainted by evil. Suspira's consciousness was thrown into a fitful, dreaming non-awareness by the shock of the transition - but she lived on. Gurnick Trueblade built a pyre and burned Suspira's body after her apparent death. The amulet was about her neck at the time, but being a potent magic item it was unharmed by the flames. Its brightness was covered over by the ashes, and it lay undiscovered for many years.

Eventually it came to pass that a family decided to build a house in the nearby area. A timbercutter/trapper and his family erected the house that now forms the ruins some 180 years ago. They lived happily for several years - and then disaster struck. While playing in the woods, one of the children uncovered Suspira's amulet. Fascinated, she picked it up. With the touch of a living creature, Suspira's consciousness was instantly roused from its somnolent dreaming. Her mind overwhelmed the young girl's with ease. Suspira's psyche and evil essence poured into the body of the child, incidentally casting her soul into oblivion in the process. Suspira had become unhinged by her disorienting experiences. She had been evil before Gurnick Trueblade slew her, but the new Suspira was deranged, maniacal and possessed of diabolical cunning. In the guise of the child, she returned to the house. Over the next few days, she arranged a grisly death for each and every one of her family members. During this time, her body gradually wasted away, drained by the ravages of possession by Suspira's undead spirit. In the end, the child simply sat down and laughed until her life slipped away, several days later. As she did so, Suspira's spirit re-entered the amulet, to which it had become bound.

This is how things stand at present. The house has since fallen into ruin. Suspira's amulet lies buried beneath it, but she still hungers for death and destruction. No longer somnolent, she has the power to project images in the immediate vicinity of the ruins. These cannot actually harm the party, but can lead them into great danger if they are unwary. Suspira still dwells on the deaths she caused almost 200 years ago, and the images the party sees are likely to be closely linked with these happenings.

THE RUINS

Not far away, you notice a ruined building nestled amongst the trees of the wood. Overgrown by vines and grass, it has all but disintegrated. Almost nothing of its original structure remains - hardly more than a few sections of wall.

The ruins are fairly unremarkable and a search of the area will reveal nothing of any major interest. All will initially seem quite ordinary. The ruins themselves have no real importance - instead, the adventure revolves around the encounters the players will have near them.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure relies heavily on atmosphere, which the DM should attempt to create at every opportunity. This will heighten the impact of particular encounters, and give the players a much more enjoyable time. Note that the scenario is structured as a series of encounters, so that the players are more or less free to walk (or run)

away at any point. The DM should not attempt to actively prevent this - instead, he or she should try to arouse their curiosity as the adventure progresses. If the problem proves to be too hard for them to unravel, then so be it. Perhaps they will return some other time.

ENCOUNTERS

The DM should make an encounter check every 3 hours that the players are within a ½ mile of the ruins. The nature of the encounter is determined on the tables below.

Table 1 - Encounter Determination

Roll 1d10	Daytime Encounter
1-7	Nothing
8-9	Bizarre Incidents
10	Replayed Death
Roll 1d10	Nighttime Encounter
1-4	Nothing
5-7	Bizarre Incident
8-10	Replayed Death

BIZARRE INCIDENTS

These encounters are basically unsettling experiences meant to keep the players on their toes. Some are dangerous, others are not. Their basic purpose is to help create some atmosphere, so the DM may elect to have one occur if play becomes slow. The exact occurrence should be determined randomly, but most should not be allowed to happen more than once. If all of the incidents described below have come to pass, then the DM should attempt to invent some other mood-producing event.

Table 2 - Bizarre Incidents

Roll 1d8	Encounter
1	Boar Attack
2	Falling Block
3	Flight of Birds
4	Ghostly Warning
5	Girl's Laughter
6	Nightmare/Daydream
7	Sudden Silence
8	Thunderstorm

1. Boar Attack

With little warning, there comes an abrupt crashing and snorting from nearby. Emerging from some scrub, there comes a gigantic boar - possibly the largest you have ever seen. It pauses for a moment, snorting loudly, its eyes wild. Then, it begins to charge towards you.

This is a monster of a boar, and it is in a highly dangerous mood. It has become profoundly agitated by the aura of wrongness that pervades this area, and it will therefore attack anything it encounters. It will fight to the death, and will pursue anything that tries to flee from it. A vicious creature indeed!

1 Boar - AC 6; MV 12"; HD 5+3; D/A 4d4; SIZ L; HP 36; can continue to fight for 1d4 melee rounds while between 0 and -10 hit points.

2. Falling Block

There is a sudden grinding noise from somewhere above you. You turn towards it just in time to see a large block of stone tumbling down from the top of one of the ruined walls.

The sudden precipitation of the ancient stone block could be due to some quite natural explanation, but it will certainly help to unnerve the players. If they are actually within the ruins when the encounter occurs, there is a 40% chance that the stone will actually fall on a randomly determined party member. If this is the case, the unfortunate victim must roll for surprise. If surprised, he or she fails to react in time, and is automatically struck by the block. Otherwise, he or she will gain a 1d20 under DEX to dodge the falling object before it strikes. The stone inflicts 3d6 hit points of damage if it hits. Subsequent examination will fail to reveal any explanation for its fall.

3. Flight of Birds

All is very quiet in the woods around you, when there suddenly comes a crashing and squawking from somewhere nearby. For no reason that you can discern, a large group of crows have abruptly taken to the air in a very noisy manner. They begin to circle overhead, cawing angrily.

Once again, no explanation will be forthcoming for this inexplicable event. The senses of animals are keener than those of men - who knows what agitated them so? If a Speak With Animals spell is used, the birds will become very nervous and evasive when questioned closely. They do not want to talk about whatever it was that upset them, but will mention something about this being an "evil place".

4. Ghostly Warning

This event involves a ghostly visitation by one of the members of the unfortunate family that died here so long ago. They will be trying to warn the party of the danger they are in if they remain here. The phantoms will be ghostly and shimmering in appearance and are totally insubstantial. They cannot be affected by any form of physical attack, which will simply pass through them harmlessly. The only magic that will affect them is an exorcism spell, which will banish them utterly. The exact nature of the encounter will vary, depending on the current circumstances of the party, but some suggestions are given below. None of the spirits will manifest themselves for longer than a minute or so. When the encounter occurs, the DM should roll on the following table to determine which ghost has appeared.

The Axeman: This is the spirit of Alex Blackstone, the father of the girl who found Suspira's amulet. Killed by a falling tree, he appears as a brawny, bearded man wearing logger's clothing and hefting an axe. He moves with a pronounced limp, as though one of his legs had been crushed. He will probably be encountered while silhouetted against the night sky. His message to the party will consist of one word, whispered over and over in a deep voice; "Leave... leave... leave..."

The Drowned Lady: This is Lisa Blackstone, the mother of the girl who found the amulet. She was drowned after a fall into the garden well, and so appears as a wet and bedraggled, but quite beautiful young woman. She wears sodden clothes of simple cut, and has long black hair and brown eyes. She leaves dampness wherever she passes, and speaks in a cold but quiet voice. If possible, she will manifest herself as a reflection on some watery surface. Otherwise, she will appear as a fleeting phantom that rises from the ground. Lisa will speak to the party but once, saying "Flee this place... before it is too late." She will then vanish.

The Young Boy: This is Jeremy Blackstone, the elder brother of the girl who happened upon the amulet. He was impaled when he fell onto a pitchfork, and still bears the scars. His ghost appears as a young boy of perhaps ten years age, and wears shorts, sandals, and a short-sleeved shirt. He has short dark hair, brown eyes, and a round cherubic face. Gaping wounds show where the pitchfork tore open his shirt and his stomach. The child will probably approach one of the characters and say something like "You shouldn't stay here, mister. This is a bad place." That done, he will turn and run into the trees, where he will not be found again.

The Possessed Girl: This is the ghost of Erica Blackstone, the girl who stumbled upon the Amulet of Suspira, and was possessed by the mind of the vampiress. A small girl of roughly six years age, she wears a white frock and has long blonde hair and brown eyes. She seems thin and frail as if somehow drained, and is unnaturally pale - almost white. If Erica appears before the party, she will stand near the edge of the party's camp for a time, watching what is going on with wide eyes. She will make no response to anything that happens. At an appropriate moment, the DM should have her look directly at one of the characters and say "Go 'way! Go 'way! Bad lady lives here! Go 'way!" With this, she will fade into oblivion.



5. Girl's Laughter

From somewhere nearby, you catch the noise of childish laughter. It sounds like a young girl, but there is somehow something chilling and indefinably wrong about it. The laughter builds, until it seems to fill the whole forest. It has no apparent source.

This is an auditory impression generated by Suspira's evil psyche within the amulet. When possessed by Suspira, Erica Blackstone laughed like this for days on end, until she eventually wasted away. The laughter is childlike, but instead of being gleeful and unrestrained, it is soft and menacing. The laughter will continue for a minute or so before abruptly ending. Echoes will then reverberate hauntingly through the woods. No explanation to the phenomenon will be forthcoming.

6. Nightmare/Daydream

If nobody is asleep when this encounter is rolled, the DM should consider the possibility of ruling that one of the characters has dozed off unintentionally. If this is not possible, re-roll it altogether. The encounter basically means that one of the party members has had his or her dreams disturbed by the bad "psychic vibes" within the area. The DM should try to devise some horrifying nightmare based on the worst fears of the character in question. The dream will seem vivid and extremely real - the DM might even like to pretend that it is reality until the character awakes. It will contain grisly elements from the history of the ruins, although these may not seem to make any kind of sense.

Example: While on guard duty, the character hears a mewling cry from behind a tree. He attempts to wake his comrades, but they cannot be stirred from their slumber. Rounding the trunk of the tree, he sees a human baby dangling from a hangman's noose. The child is blue from asphyxiation, but still it struggles and gives strangled cries. Then, before the character can act, it turns its gaze upon him and bares horrific vampiric fangs. It begins to change shape, transforming into a monstrous blue-black bat. Its rope breaks. As the character flees, he feels the draft from the bat's wings as it slowly lifts from the ground and begins to pursue him. A hysterical chase scene follows, but there is no escape. The bat descends on the unfortunate victim. As it sinks its fangs into his neck, the character awakes from the dream with a horrified shout. It was only a dream - he fell asleep while on watch.

The DM should attempt to make the dream as vivid and atmospheric as possible. It will be much more effective if it has specific relevance to the character in question, which is why no specific details are given here. Use your imagination!

7. Sudden Silence

All of a sudden, you realise that you are surrounded by total silence. For some reason, everything has gone deadily quiet around you.

Once again, this phenomenon will remain quite inexplicable. The silence will last 1d20 minutes, after which time the noises of the woods will return once more. During this period, there is a high probability that something else will occur (roll again on Table I to determine what).

8. Thunderstorm

Dark clouds have begun to boil overhead, and some distant rumbles are beginning to sound from the horizon. The wind is starting to pick up, and the air feels quite damp. Then, it begins to rain.

The party is about to be hit by a violent thunderstorm, which will last for 1d10+3 hours. The DM may decide to use this encounter to delay the party from leaving the ruins, which will offer them valuable shelter.

REPLAYED DEATHS

These encounters are all directly caused by Suspira's presence within the amulet buried in the ruins. She possesses the power to project images within the immediate vicinity of the ruins. These look and sound quite real, but have absolutely no physical substance. Anything used to physically touch or attack the images will simply pass straight through them. The only magic that will affect the images is a dispel magic spell, which must succeed against 9th level of experience. Success will cause the offending phantasm to vanish. The images are almost impossible to harm, but on the other hand, they cannot harm the party directly. Suspira will try to kill the party, but can only do so by having the images lead them into deadly danger. For this reason, the DM should try to arrange for one character to be led away from

the rest of the party. These encounters are much more effective when given to an individual character.

As mentioned previously, Suspira still dwells on the deaths of the family she slew so long ago. For this reason, the images that the characters encounter will strongly parallel the events that actually occurred. The encounters described below should be given in order from 1-5, not randomly determined. They are as follows.

1. The Baby

Gradually, you become aware of a distant mewling, much like a baby crying. The sound is interrupted by periodic gurglings.

This sound is that of a young baby drowning. Many years ago a child by the name of Pippen Blackstone was drowned in a well bucket by his possessed sister, Erica. The crying will continue for an hour or so if not investigated. Should one of the party members decide to do so, read them the following.

While searching for the source of the crying, you round a small bush and come upon a wooden bucket, within which floats a horrifying sight. Bobbing at its surface is a tiny baby, no more than several months old. It has obviously drowned, for its skin is blue and its body bloated with water. As you come upon it, the tiny body rolls over in the water, revealing a tiny face with vacant, staring eyes and a purple, lolling tongue.

This is meant to be gruesome and unnerving. The sight upon which the unfortunate character has stumbled is an image projected by Suspira's spirit. The instant he or she looks away, it will vanish. Any attempt to touch it will also cause it to disappear. The DM should try to ensure that only one character witnesses the vision, thus increasing its impact when he or she describes it to the rest of the party. Once the image has been witnessed and has vanished, nothing more will be heard from it.

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2. The Young Boy

This encounter is basically a reconstruction of the death of Jeremy Blackstone, who was killed when pushed from an embankment by his possessed sister. He fell onto a pitchfork and subsequently died. When the encounter occurs, read the following to one of the party.

The sensation that something is undefinably wrong has been growing on you now for some time. Turning, you catch a momentary glimpse of a young boy running behind a large tree some distance away. Boyish laughter filters back from his direction.

Nothing further will happen if the party makes no effort to pursue the child. However, he will lead them a merry chase through the forest if they decide to do so. No matter what they do, the boy will always seem to be a step ahead of their pursuit. When they are on the verge of giving up, tell the party that the boy has finally been cornered between themselves and a steep embankment. If they approach him, read them the following.

As you draw closer to the boy, he turns and leaps from the edge of the embankment onto a huge pile of leaves. Giggling hysterically, he picks himself up and begins running into the trees.

If the child's pursuer(s) do not follow the child's example and leap into the leaves, he will escape and not be seen again. Should someone decide to follow his example, they will find that a very old and rusted pitchfork is concealed within the leaves. The unfortunate victim will suffer 3d6+3 hit points of damage from the subsequent impaling that he or she receives. Upon recovering from this injury, the character will turn to find the boy long gone. No further trace of him will be found.

3. The Axeman

Alex Blackstone was a trapper/forester that was killed by a falling tree when distracted from his work by his daughter, who was possessed by Suspira at the time. When this encounter is rolled, an image of the long-dead axeman will lead the party into deadly danger.

All seems quiet around you, when suddenly there comes the sound of cheerful whistling from amongst the trees. Turning, you see a brawny, bearded man wearing logger's clothing and hefting an axe. He strides purposefully amongst the trees, looking as though he is sizing them up. He seems to be moving off into the forest.

If the axeman is not followed, his whistling will gradually fade into the distance, and nothing more will be heard from him. All attempts to attract his attention will prove to be pointless - he will walk on obliviously, ignoring anything the party does. If they decide to give chase, he will lead them through the woods for a time before disaster strikes. The image will lead his pursuer(s) through an area trapped long ago by Alex Blackstone. One of the party (roll randomly to determine who if more than one is present) will stumble into an ancient beartrap, which is old and rusted but still functioning. A ranger or druid has a 1 in 6 chance of noticing the trap before stepping in it; other character classes will not have enough time to spot it.

The beartrap will inflict 2d8+2 hit points of damage on the unfortunate victim, and will also severely incapacitate his or her leg for a considerable period of time. He or she will be unable to walk unassisted until the damage inflicted has been healed. During this time, he or she will suffer a penalty of -3 to dexterity, and will have his or her movement rate reduced to one-third its original figure. These penalties will no longer apply once the damage has been healed (whether through curative spells or natural recovery). Once the trap has been sprung, the image of the axeman will turn and laugh at the victim in a deep, booming voice. He will then fade away.

4. The Drowned Lady

This encounter revolves around the death of Lisa Blackstone, the mother of the possessed child. She was pushed into the garden well, and subsequently drowned.

From somewhere near the other end of the ruins, you can hear some very strange noises. They sound like a woman's cries for help, and are interrupted by periodic splashing and gurglings. They sound very faint, as if muted by great distance.

These noises will continue for up to an hour. If by this time the party has not investigated them, they will cease. Anyone that tries to find the source of the noises will eventually find that they originate from beneath a clump of rocks. If these are shifted (five minute's work), then a circular shaft will be revealed - the remains of the old garden well.

As you shift a large rock aside, there is a crumbling sound as part of the ground nearby caves in. The debris seems to have fallen into a wide circular shaft in the ground. A loud splash sounds from somewhere down it. You can now hear the splashing and cries for help quite clearly. "Help me! Help me! I can't swim!"

If the characters decide to leave matters be at this stage, the sounds will once again continue for an hour or so, becoming fainter all the time. They will then cease. The walls of the well are very slippery, and totally impossible to climb. The well will remain totally dark, no matter what spells are used in an attempt to illuminate it. It is quite possible that some of the party (particularly paladins) will be brave enough to venture down into the well (by being lowered on a rope, for instance). Should this occur, catastrophe will strike. The walls of the well will collapse, inflicting 3d8 hit points of damage on the unfortunate victim.

The strange noises will cease immediately when the well collapses, and the well itself will become simply a dried-up 30' deep garden well that has caved in. If the unfortunate who climbed in is at negative hit points, then he or she will be buried in the rubble, and will lose 2 hit points per melee round (1 from bleeding and another 1 from asphyxiation). It will take the party 1d4 rounds to uncover him or her. The well does not lead anywhere else.

5. The Possessed Girl

In this encounter, Suspira will generate an image of Erica Blackstone, the child she possessed so long ago. This is a very important encounter, for it is here that the party may finally uncover the amulet and get to the bottom of the whole affair. If the party ignores the encounter, the DM should use it over and over again until they decide to investigate it.

From somewhere near the centre of the ruins, there comes the sound of a child singing.

The singing will continue for up to 1d4 hours. If by this time the party has not decided to investigate, it will stop. Should someone decide to locate the source of the singing, read them the following.

Rounding a small bush, you come upon the apparent source of the singing. Sitting not far from you is a small girl, no more than six years old. She is wearing a white frock and has long blonde hair and brown eyes. She seems to be playing with an amulet or medallion of some kind - and it looks to be worth a king's ransom. As you catch sight of her, she turns toward you... and hisses, baring horrible fangs!

The DM should do his or her best here to convey the sudden switch from the picture of innocence to the creature of evil. At this point, the characters are likely to be slightly taken aback. Erica's image will then sink very slowly into the ground, hissing at the party all the while. All attempts to attack and/or kill it will only cause it to hiss menacingly at the offender. Eventually, the phantom will sink beneath the ground's surface. The spot at which it does so is the exact spot at which Erica died. If the party digs there for a quarter of an hour or so, they will eventually uncover the Amulet of Suspira itself, buried six inches beneath the surface. At this point, they are really beginning to get somewhere, although they probably won't realise this fact.



THE BATTLE WITH SUSPIRA

The amulet appears as an enormous cabachon-cut ruby in a gold setting, and hangs upon a fine gold chain. Deep within the red stone is a strange flaw that is shaped like a tiny bat with wings outstretched.

The amulet will initially contain Suspira's lurking spirit, and is therefore extremely dangerous. It will react positively to both detect evil and detect magic spells, and will instantly defile any non-magical consecrated object it comes into contact with. The amulet will remain totally inert until it is either destroyed, or touched with exposed flesh. At this point, Suspira will lash out at the party, with possibly disastrous results.

Destroying the Amulet

If the party attempts to destroy or damage the amulet, treat it as a gem on the Item Saving Throw Matrix (but with a +3 bonus due to its highly magical nature). If

the attempt to destroy the amulet is successful, then read the following to the party.

The gem in the centre of the amulet cracks sharply, and there is a sudden silence. Then, a black shadow begins to ooze forth from the crack. Swiftly, it billows into an insubstantial black shape that heaves and swirls in a most sickening manner. Abruptly, the cloud clears, revealing a beautiful, long-haired woman dressed in fine clothes and a long cape. Yet she too seems to be made of nothing but shadow, and her shape is shimmering and indistinct. She throws back her head and laughs, and it is an evil sound indeed.

Suspira's undead essence has been freed from the amulet, but has no body to give it form. It has therefore assumed the shape of a wraith, which will now attack the party (unless it is daylight, in which case she will attempt to flee and return the next night). She hungers for living souls after her long imprisonment, and will attack the party at once. She is more than a little deranged, and will fight to the death if necessary. She will hunt down anyone who tries to escape from her. If the party succeeds in killing her, then the strange occurrences in the ruins will be at an end. Otherwise, she will continue to haunt this area as a wraith, while the bodies of the characters become as dust beneath her feet. Either way, the amulet has been destroyed, and is now worthless.

1 Wraith - AC 4; MV 12"/24"; HD 5+3; D/A 1d6; SIZ M; HP 35; touch drains 1 life level; +1 or better weapon needed to hit; immune to charm, cold, hold, poison, paralysis and sleep-based attack forms.

Touching the Amulet

If any living creature touches the amulet with naked flesh, then he, she or it will immediately become involved in a battle for control over his or her body. At this point, read the following to the player concerned.

As you touch the amulet, you experience a dizzy sensation, and then feel as though you are plunging into the depths of the gem. When you are able to see again, you find yourself in a red void. Everything around you is tainted blood-red, except for a small girl that stands not ten feet from you. She is perhaps six years old, and is dressed in a white frock. She begins to come toward you, smiling.

There is no escape. The character's psyche has been drawn inside the amulet, and must now do battle with Suspira for control of his or her body. The vampire appears as Erica Blackstone, because that was the last form she possessed. She will attempt to approach her opponent and kiss him or her, thereby draining a life level. If (as is likely) this ruse fails, she will fall on the character, biting and clawing. The character she faces may react in any way that he or she feels appropriate. All magic items and spells will work normally within the amulet. There will be only one survivor from the battle - either the character or Suspira herself. The victor will take (or retain) control over the character's body. The psyche of the loser will be sent to oblivion.

If Suspira defeats the character, then she will take possession of his or her body as she did Erica's. This works much as if a magic jar spell had successfully been used on him or her. Suspira will immediately set about attempting to kill the rest of the party using the victim's body. She is extremely cunning, and may even pretend to be the character for a time in order to catch the rest of the party unawares. Note that the possessed character will radiate strong evil. A successful exorcism spell will drive Suspira back into the amulet (leaving the character's body dead). The ravages of being possessed by Suspira will permanently drain 1 point per day from the victim's constitution. If (when) the victim's body dies, Suspira's spirit will return to the amulet once more, there to remain dormant until someone else touches it.

Should the character succeed in defeating Suspira's spirit, then the whole affair is at an end. Any damage he or she sustained during the battle (including loss of life levels) will be restored, as it is not real. Furthermore, the amulet will now be both intact and relatively safe to use. It is quite a powerful magic item, and has several

highly unusual properties that relate to its strange origin.

Suspira's Spirit - AC 5; MV 12"; HD 5+3; D/A 1d6; SIZ S; HP 35; bite attack drains 1 life level; immune to charm, cold, hold, poison, paralysis and sleep-based attack forms.

THE AMULET OF SUSPIRA

Once Suspira has been banished from the amulet, it will become a very useful magic item. It retains all of its original abilities as an amulet of life protection, and has gained additional powers through absorbing the essence of a dying vampire. Now, as well as protecting the wearer's psyche, the amulet also grants a number of quasi-vampiric powers to the person wearing it. The properties of the amulet are as follows.

1. The amulet wearer cannot be possessed by magic jar spell or any similar mental attack, including demonic or diabolic means.
2. If the amulet wearer is slain, his or her psyche will enter the amulet and be protected for 7 full days. Thereafter, it will go to the plane of its alignment.
3. Psionic attack modes psionic blast and psychic crush do not affect the amulet wearer.
4. The amulet wearer gains a bonus of +2 to his or her strength score (vampires are extremely strong).
5. The wearer gains the ability to throw a charm person spell by gaze, up to three times per day. The spell functions at his or her level of ability. Normal saving throws apply.
6. The wearer gains the ability to speak with animals, but only when dealing with bats, rats or wolves.
7. Through concentration, the amulet wearer can summon 10d10 bats, 10d10 rats, or 3d6 wolves to do his or her bidding. They will remain for a period of up to 1d4 hours, and will serve the wearer faithfully during

this time. Only one such summoning may be performed per day.

8. When the amulet is donned, the wearer's incisor teeth will become elongated and sharp (like those of a vampire) over the course of an hour or so. If it is removed, they will return to normal over the course of a similar period of time. Under appropriate circumstances, the amulet wearer may use these teeth to bite an opponent, thereby inflicting 1d2 hit points of damage.
9. Sunlight becomes intensely distracting to the amulet wielder, who therefore suffers a penalty of -2 to hit during the daytime.
10. Physical contact with running water or a consecrated object will cause the amulet wielder to suffer 1 hit point of damage per round. He or she will also lose any taste that he or she previously possessed for garlic.

The amulet radiates powerful magic and also has a dim aura of evil (which is the result of it becoming tainted). Its apparent jewelry value is roughly 5,000 gp, but its actual value is closer to 30,000 gp. For those who give experience points for magic items, an experience value of 7,500 XP is suggested.

AFTERWORD

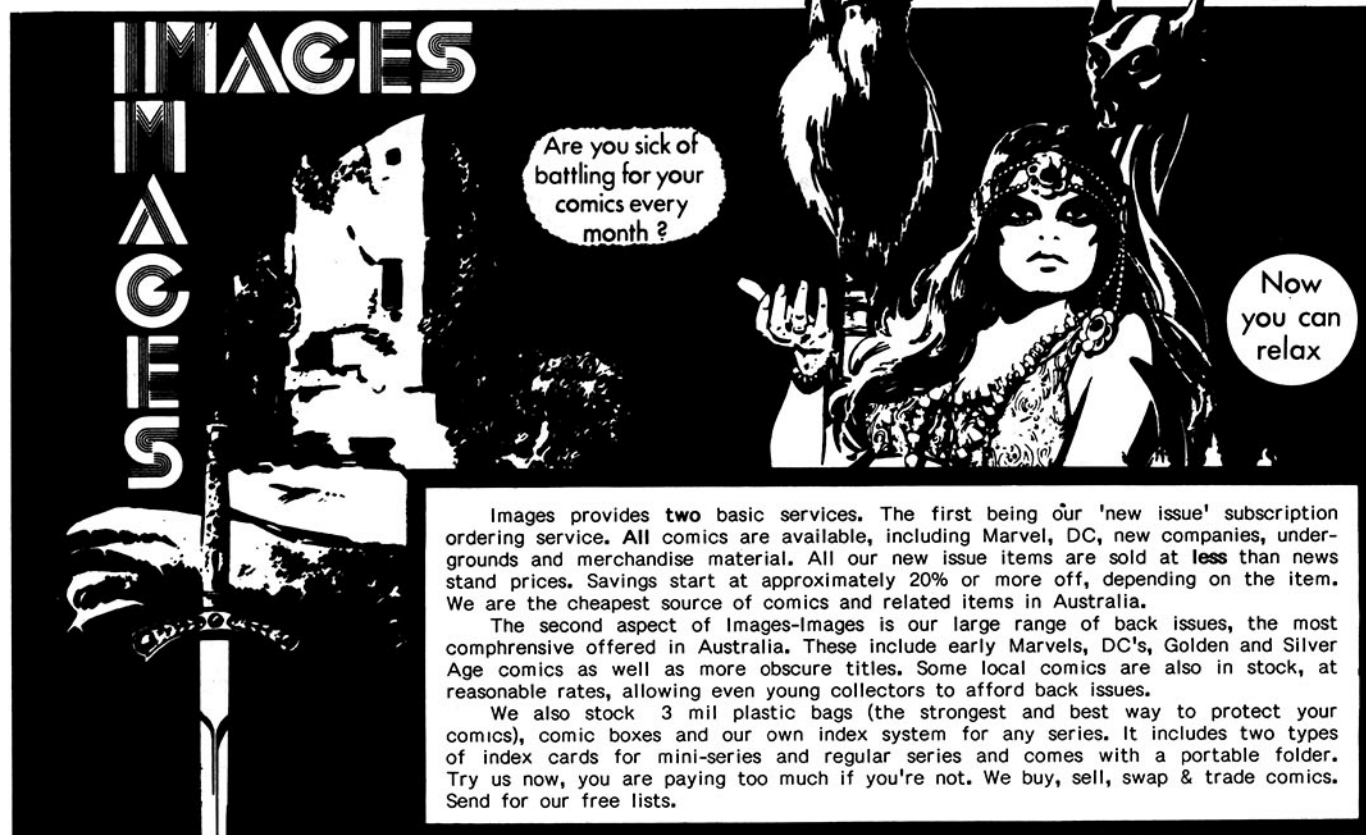
This adventure does not contain much combat, but does involve significant work on the part of the players. Therefore, it is suggested that the DM award the party a total of 300 experience points for every encounter they successfully play through. A further award of 3,000 experience points should be made if they manage to destroy Suspira's evil influence on the area.

by Andrew South

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IMAGES



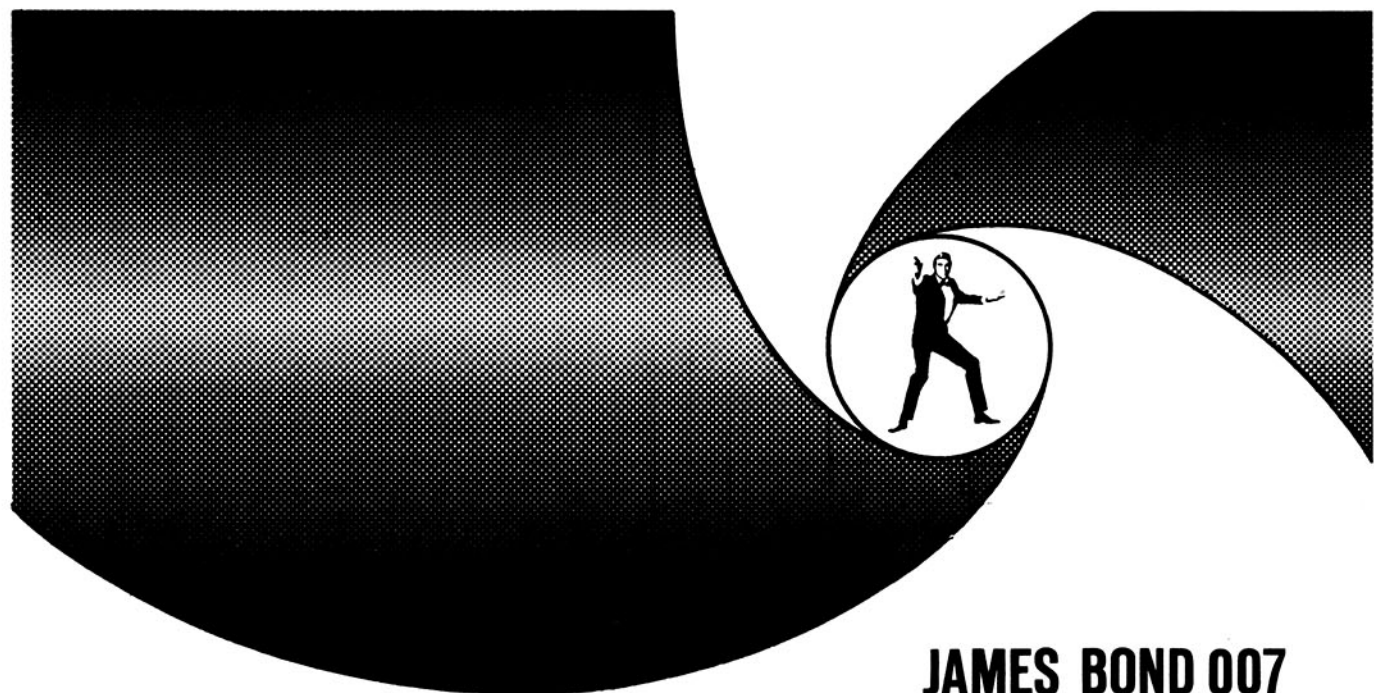
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JAMES BOND 007 VARIANT

James Bond 007 has been available in Australia for some time now. Though its popularity is not as great as some of the other spy role playing systems, it is still widely played. Its success is due to its thoroughness and the way the system encourages role playing. However, while playing it, we have found several deficiencies in the system, and the following are a list of suggestions to make the game more enjoyable and to remedy the deficiencies that we have experienced.

The system uses ease factors as a multiple for skill and characteristic rolls, with one glaring anomaly. The problem that arises from this, is that skills have a primary chance of 20. The roll is not based on the characteristic that it is supposed to represent. The problem is easily rectified by doubling the relevant characteristic and using this as the Primary Chance for the roll. This gives a wide range of values and it also gives characteristics a more important role in the game.

Another problem that occurs of a slightly different nature is in the chase procedure. The problem is the GM knows both the players and NPC's Primary Chances, and thus has an unfair advantage over the player, for he knows what the probability of the character making his roll is and that of the NPC, and aims for the NPC's advantage. This can be overcome in one of two ways, the first method is to give each NPC an ease factor that they cannot go under, the second method is more involved, but adds suspense to the situation for the GM as well. To go less than ease factor five (or under the vehicles red line, which ever is higher), the GM must make a $(WIL \times 2 + \text{Relevant skill Primary Chance}) / 2$ times the desired ease factor for the NPC to bid that particular ease factor. If the roll is failed the NPC will concede initiative to the characters. This can always be altered depending on the determination of the NPC by adding or subtracting ease factors to the above roll. For example, suppose Luigi Scarlatti is pursuing the characters in his Caprice Classic and he wishes to bid ease factor four. His WIL is 10, and his driving skill Primary Chance is 22, thus he

must roll an 84 or less to be able to bid this factor, he rolls a 92, and he hasn't the nerve to risk it in this car.

Surprisingly, considering how detailed most of the NPC interaction section is, the rules governing initial reaction rolls is totally inadequate. While playing in a low level campaign it was found that most of the NPC's without a predetermined reaction, hated the PC's on sight due to their low charisma levels. There is no logical reason for this reaction, as the characters are trained agents, and have built up their self confidence and presentation in their previous occupations. However, the major omission is a table that lists ease factor modifiers for the characters appearance etc. The following is a table similar to that for the seduction skill. The base ease factor is five.

Ease Factor Modifier	Reason
-6	The NPC is opposed to the characters organisation, and knows the characters true identity.
-1 to -3	The NPC has encountered the character under suspicious or compromising (for either) circumstances.
+2	If the NPC's weakness is for members of the characters sex.
+1	If the NPC is male and the character is female.
-2	If the character is plain.
+1	If the character is attractive.
+2	If the character is striking.
+3	If the character is sensational.

It should be noted that this only provides an initial reaction to the character and that Persuasion, Seduction and the character's actions can easily alter their attitude.

Another problem we have found while playing

was having the character searched after they had been captured by an enemy organisation. No rules were supplied for the searching of a character other than that a perception check should be made. This problem can be corrected by the addition of a new skill, and a chart listing modifiers for the perception check. Note, the base ease factor for a perception check is five.

CONCEALMENT

Primary Chance: INT + Skill level

Base Time: Variable depending on object size. For a normal item about the size of a pistol, 30 seconds is required.

Success: Affects the chance of the observer/searcher finding or noticing the object.

Information: Does not apply to this skill.

Repair: Does not apply to this skill.

These tasks involve concealing an object on a person or in a room in an effort to prevent it from being found. An object may not be hidden in area that is too small for it under any circumstances. Eg. An assembled rifle may not be hidden under a coat without people seeing its outline. The higher the quality rating of the attempt, the harder the object is to find. The ease factor for concealing an item is five. A person looking for a concealed item makes a perception roll with a base five ease factor. The ease factor is modified as follows:

Ease Factor Modifier

Reason

- 1 A concealment quality rating of four.
- 2 A concealment quality rating of three.
- 3 A concealment quality rating of two.
- 4 A concealment quality rating of one.
- +2 The concealment attempt failed.
- +5 to -5 Concealment modifier depending on the size of the item.
- 1 Quick search or pat down body search of a person.
- +1 Thorough search or body search of a person.
- +4 Ransacking search or strip search of a person.

The ease factor for concealing an item is modified as follows:

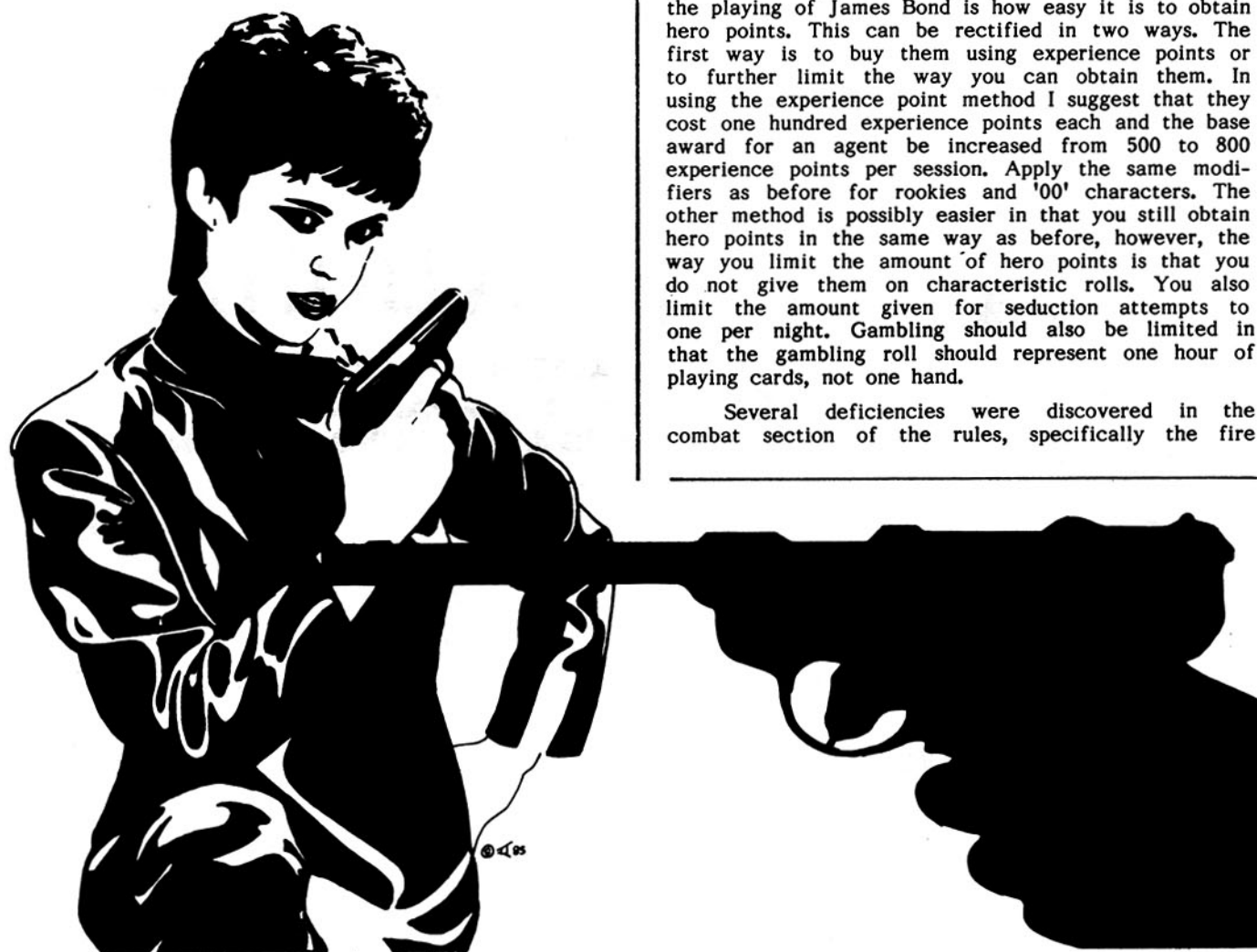
Ease Factor Modifier

Reason

- +1 Double base time spent concealing the item.
- +2 Quadruple base time spent concealing the item.
- +1 to +3 Ingenious or prepared hiding place.
- 1 to -3 No appropriate hiding places.

Another problem that we have come across in the playing of James Bond is how easy it is to obtain hero points. This can be rectified in two ways. The first way is to buy them using experience points or to further limit the way you can obtain them. In using the experience point method I suggest that they cost one hundred experience points each and the base award for an agent be increased from 500 to 800 experience points per session. Apply the same modifiers as before for rookies and '00' characters. The other method is possibly easier in that you still obtain hero points in the same way as before, however, the way you limit the amount of hero points is that you do not give them on characteristic rolls. You also limit the amount given for seduction attempts to one per night. Gambling should also be limited in that the gambling roll should represent one hour of playing cards, not one hand.

Several deficiencies were discovered in the combat section of the rules, specifically the fire



combat rules. They are, as mentioned in the Game-masters Supplement some what bloody. The main cause of this is the ease with which people can hit each other. This becomes even more apparent when compared with hand to hand combat. To remedy this problem, subtract the opponent's speed from the ease factor of the firer, similar to that for hand to hand combat. This rule reduces the hit chance of all fire-arms, but it helps the characters as they usually have a higher speed then the ordinary NPC's, and thus their survivability in fire combat improves to an acceptable level.

The other problem lies in the operation of automatic weapons. This is explained very poorly and vaguely in the basic rules, and is not explained elsewhere. Using the basic information supplied the following system was developed for their operation.

Automatic weapons may be fired in several different ways. Most have a single shot setting as well as their automatic setting. When they are set on single fire they act as outlined in the basic rules. When set on autofire they act as follows: the firer has two options; (1) he may fire at a single target with a sustained burst; or (2) he may fire a burst amongst a group of targets.

If he fires at a single target, he gets a single roll to hit with a +1 ease factor modifier. If the 'shot' hits damage is done according to the damage class listed for the weapons automatic fire. The increased hit chance representing the effect of the possibility of hitting the target with several bullets.

If he fires at a group of targets, the procedure becomes more complex. Firstly the targets must be capable of being connected by a series of continuous straight lines (in any direction), and the total length

of these lines may be no longer than 10 ft (one square) for each shot the weapon fires in its burst. The character then commences firing at the targets moving from one end of the line to the other. These shots suffer a cumulative -1 ease factor modifier for every two squares after the first fired at (this includes unoccupied squares between targets). Note, the character must commence firing at the targets from either the left or right end of the continuous line, not somewhere in between.

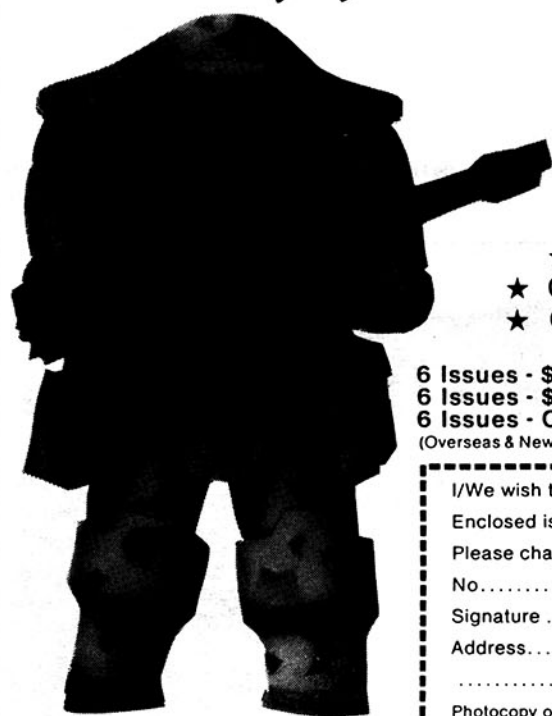
To determine the number of shots fired at each target, divide the number of bullets in the burst by the number of squares the weapon fires into (this includes unoccupied squares), this gives the number of shots fired at each target. If a fractional number of shots results, one of two procedures may be followed, either (1) round to the nearest whole number, or (2) multiply the decimal part of the fraction by one hundred, and this is the chance on a d100 that another bullet is fired at the target. This should be rolled separately for each target.

Each shot fired at a target, is rolled independently to determine if a hit occurs. If a hit is scored, damage is done according to the single shot damage class of the weapon (reduce the automatic fire damage class by three if no single shot damage class is listed for the weapon).

The above rules were developed and tested in a campaign and have been found to work quite adequately, and add additional enjoyment to the game. We would be interested in seeing other peoples rule modifications. May your pistol never jam.

by Greg Ingram

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Arcanacon III REPORT

Arcanacon III was run over three days (30th August to 1st September), not the usual four days by the North-West Adventurer's Guild and Maxwell's Demons. Wearing distinctive windcheaters, it was easy to locate an organiser, but having found one did not in itself solve all the problems. Contrary to what some people thought the Maxwell's Demons' slogan of "Chaos through Disorder" was not how they wished to run things. Our apologies to anybody who may have missed out on playing their minor tournaments.

This year Arcanacon was held at the Melbourne College of Advanced Education, and for once no complaints were heard about the venue. Maybe Arcanacon has finally settled on a location it is happy to return to. The rooms were not too crowded, and there was always free space in which people could recover between sessions.

The convention started on the Friday with the initial registrations proceeding quite well. Although Arcanacon suffered a drop in overall numbers with about 350 people attending, those that did attend enjoyed themselves. With registrations out of the way, there was the major AD&D tournament, two maxi Tournaments - Runequest and Call of Cthulhu and twelve minor tournaments to keep people busy.

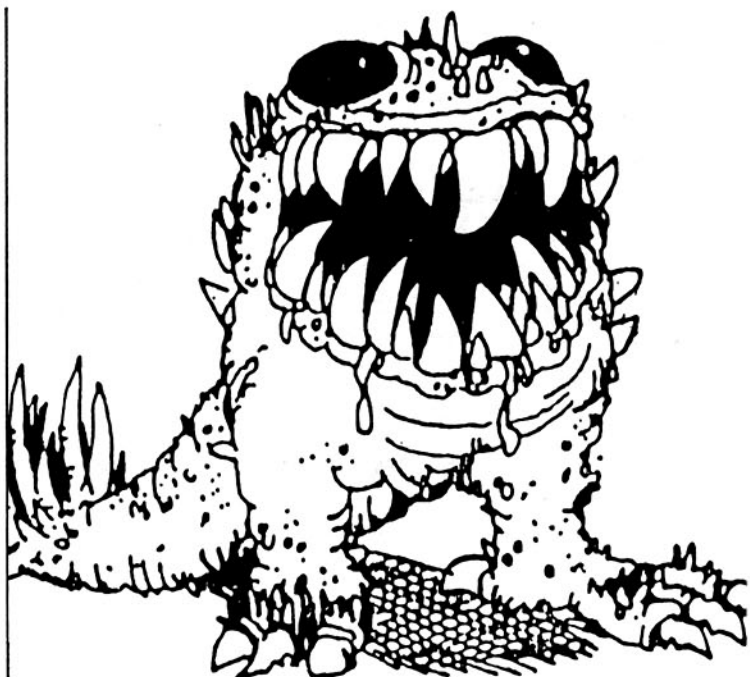
The major AD&D tournament was 'The Black Orb' designed by the fiendish minds of the North-West Adventurer's Guild and Maxwell's Demons. This involved a party of second level adventurers in the Australian Bush, with the inclusion of such creatures as Drop Bears (carnivorous Koala Bears), Lyre Birds, the Bunyip, Tasmanian Devils and Tasmanian Tigers. The party had to restore the ancient city of the Druids by recovering the Black Orb, which was possessed of unknown mystical powers.

The tournament was designed to provide the characters with a large scope for roleplaying. With the twin half-elven brothers who spent most of their time annoying each other and attempting to outdo the other at every turn, as well as swapping clothes to confuse the rest of the party, an aboriginal cleric, outspoken on Women's rights, a mud wrestling, opera singing gnome, an eccentric Magic-user obsessed with flight and a solicitous dwarf making pumpkin scones, the sessions at times became chaotic when the characters were well played.

One of the best incidents was when David Oram of Zigfried Beaver was playing the cleric. In the Salty Apple Tavern, the cleric tried to convince the serving girls that their scant clothing was a form of male exploitation, and that wages could not cover them demeaning themselves in such a fashion. They replied that they were happy and well paid. The cleric then suggested that they express their femininity and be proud of their bodies, causing the good barman to rant and rave about the good name of his pub, and the high standards he set, unlike the other hotel in Lon-Sexton.

The two maxi tournaments were again of a high standard. John Coleman's Call of Cthulhu gave the players a deep and terrifying insight into Darkest Africa. What happened, hidden under the cover of the dense jungle, proved that the animals and natives were not the only things to fear. The Runequest was designed by Neil Todd and had an unusual twist, with the players taking on the roles of some of the lowest scum the Lunars could produce. With Corriander 'Before whom even the Crimson Bat trembles', a Broo character and other unsavoury sorts, the lists of crimes committed by the various quartets would make a supervillain look saintly.

Arcanacon ran two different freeform tournaments. The first, run by Rhys Howitt, Jeff Webb and Cathy Simpson was 'Nights of Camelot'. Set in the court of King Arthur and the Round Table, the Arthurian ideals of romantic love and chivalry went by the board, as plots, counterplots, assassinations, betrayals and rebellions



flourished. The Machiavellian intrigue reached its heights with the conflict between Guenevere and Lancelot, and Arthur's taking of hostages from each one of his lords to forestall treachery. Indeed, historical errors abounded, as King Mark of Cornwall stood and fought against four knights including Arthur and Lancelot to allow the rest of his faction to escape. A brave action that no true Cornishman would have contemplated.

The other freeform was designed by Alan Greenway and was called 'The Last Gasp'. It featured the return of Professor Thaddeus Finklebottom, mad scientist and purveyor of murder mysteries, first met at Phantasmacon earlier this year. At Arcanacon, Finklebottom took the players for a fun-filled one week cruise in the English Channel, plagued by mystery and murder. Many humorous incidents happened in the various sessions, perhaps the best was when having discovered that there was a murderer aboard, the yacht docked in Spain. The majority of the passengers, for their own inscrutable reasons decided to go sightseeing, the psychiatrist, a personage who had become well disliked by this stage, decided to go to the police. Upon his return with the police however, he was dismayed to find the rest of the passengers denying that they had ever seen him before. After much ado, the Spanish police dragged him off to jail. No doubt much to the pleasure of the murderer.

The other minor tournaments proved popular as well. James Bond, Stormbringer, Car Wars, Super Squadron, AD&D Solo, Paranoia, Cthulhu Now, Chivalry and Sorcery and Bunnies and Burrows all provided many enjoyable moments for the players. Paranoia was probably the most popular minor tournament. Paranoia relies heavily on the roleplaying of the Gamesmaster, who has the job of playing robots, computers and the deranged maniacs who inhabit a Paranoia world. It is game where the way you die, is much more important than the death itself.

Saturday night's Banquet and Masquerade went extremely well, with excellent food and plenty of it. The banquet also saw the emergence of a new Master of Ceremonies to take on the job vacated by Alan Greenway. Tim Wight-Le Rossignol was a splendid MC, though he didn't have Alan's normal colourful wardrobe. The entertainment of song and medieval dance, led by members of the Society of Creative Anachronism made this one

of the best convention dinners for a long time. The masquerade had the theme of King Arthur's Court, with fashion comments by Tim Wight-Le Rossignol and Kelly Grant. Outstanding people were the Court of All Britain (Zigfried Beaver) and the Royal Court of H.U.S.H. The masquerade only lacked the North-West Adventurer's Guild who have that special skill of combining their costumes with theatrical performances, as those who were at Arcanacon last year or Phantasticon this year will testify. Naturally, the Keepers again provided those present with their normal high standard of costume. Then the evening ended all too soon with the film 'J-Men Forever'.

Arcanacon survived a rather turbulent year for MAGInc, that saw the rise and fall of four Presidents. From this background, our small group worked hard all year to recover from the confusion of Summer Games (I'm not surprised if you didn't hear of it) and overcame our own inexperience to provide for everyone, the best possible convention. From what I've heard on the grapevine, the convention was a success with those who attended enjoying themselves thoroughly.

by Ewald Van Laake

ARCANA CON 85 RESULTS

Major AD&D

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1st | Sydney 1 | |
| | Chris Berry | Helen Cram |
| | Jeff Dash | Debbie Jones |
| | Phillip Wallach | Dean Wright |
| 2nd | Apocalypse A.S.A.P | |
| 3rd | Zigfried Beaver | |
| 4th | Sirius Cybernetic Corp. | |
| 5th | Indecision Unlimited | |

Major Runequest

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1st | Mad Prax Beyond Sundome | |
| | Mark Morrison | John Coleman |
| | Mark Holsworth | Jim Stuckey |
| 2nd | Last Tango in Pavis | |
| 3rd | Knights in White Cotton | |

Major Call of Cthulhu

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|--------------|
| 1st | Sydney 1 | |
| | Chris Berry | Debbie Jones |
| | Dean Wright | Unknown |
| 2nd | Crypt Creeps | |
| 3rd | Vulgar Boatmen | |

Minor Tournaments

James Bond

- | | | |
|-----|-------------|--------------|
| 1st | Susan Brown | Stephen Lake |
| | Viv Murdoch | Andrew Hunt |

Paranoia

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1st | Armageddon Incorporated | |
| | Greg Hallam | David McCartney |
| | Tim Bentley | Glenn Sandford |
| | Neil Andrews | Gary Pimm |

The Last Gasp

- | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 1st | Ruth Burke |
| 2nd | Susan Brown (for being so paranoid) |

Car Wars

- | | |
|-----|-------------|
| 1st | Kenneth Mok |
| 2nd | Colin Toh |

Super Squadron

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------|---------------|
| 1st | Those who met again | |
| | Robert Prior | Matthew Cohn |
| | David Nixon | Nicholas Cohn |

Cthulhu Now!

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|-------------|
| 1st | RMIT X-Men | |
| | Andrew Chapman | Jon Metcalf |
| | Andrew South | Graeme Hook |

AD&D Solo

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1st | Sandy Cooper |
| 2nd | Jon Metcalf |
| 3rd | Susan Brown |
| Special Award | - Laurie Converse for roleplaying above and beyond the call of the dungeon. |

Stormbringer

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------|---------------|
| 1st | Le Gopeners S + M | |
| | Louey Fly | Barney Mutant |
| | Alan Pricter | Adrian Vallis |

Bunnies and Burrows

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|------------------|
| 1st | RMIT X-Bunnies | |
| | Joe Italiano | Melissa Rogerson |
| | Jeff Webb | Ian Padgham |

Chivalry and Sorcery

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1st Audible Glamorous | |
| Shaun Tiernan | Lisa Stein |
| Julie Heron | Russell Widdicombe |

Nights of Camelot

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| Best Roleplayer | Meaghan Waters |
| Special Mention | Robert Prior |
| | Daniel Figucio |
| | Hazel Marchant |
| Watney Award for Creative Incompetence | |

Masquerade

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Best Male Costume | Gary Fay (Gandalf) |
| Best Female Costume | Hazel Marchant (Guenevere) |
| Best Group | Royal Court of H.U.S.H |
| | Ruth Burke |
| | Catherine Schmidt |
| | Catherine Wilkinson |
| | Trent Williams |
| | Craig Astbury |
| Best Performance | Craig Astbury (Court Jester to H.U.S.H) |
| Special Mention | Ewald Van Laake (King Mark of Cornwall) |

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AFTER MUCH BATTLE COMES THE SPOILS OF VICTORY



THERE HAS GOT TO BE SOMETHING HERE... KEEP LOOKING!

THIS IS ALL THEY'VE GOT!!!

AT LEAST A RUSTY SWORD IS A STEP UP FROM A TIN DAGGER!

YEAH, BUT NOT MUCH OF A STEP!!



STINGY D.M.!



SEE YOU WEDNESDAY

HEY JOLINE!! MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING HIDDEN IN THE HILT!!



SEE YOU WEDNESDAY

SNAP!!

SCRAPE SCRAPE



SEE YOU NEXT WEDNESDAY

NOPE

SIGH

EEEK?



HEY LOOK, MALCOLM'S FOUND SOMETHING!

NEXT WEDNESDAY

HEY, I THOUGHT THE RODENT'S NAME WAS REAGUN!?

EEEEKK!!!

EKK EKK EKK



HE CHANGED HIS NAME. HE SAID HE'S NOT THAT TYPE OF RAT!

WELL IT'S PROBABLY NOTHING ANYWAY, JUST SOME STALE CHEESE

OR HIS LONG LOST LOVE! HA, HA!

BREAK!

CANCEL THE RAT SOUFFLE, WE'VE GOT HOBBIT HAMBURGER, AND GIRLIE GHOULLASH TONIGHT... THE INGREDIENTS HAVE JUST DELIVERED THEMSELVES!!

TAMMY!

WE LOVE MICHAEL JACKSON FRIED, BOILED OR ROASTED

GOOOOD, THEN WE CAN HAVE THE RATS FOR DESSERT.

MALCOLM!

YEAH, AND WASHED DOWN WITH FRESH BLOODY-MARYS

YUMMY

TO BE CONTINUED SOMEWHERE IN THE MULTIVERSE

Super Squadron Module

THE SHOCKED SCIENTIST

Introduction

This module is a detective-style scenario where the players will not be able to identify their opponent immediately and thus cries of "It's clobbering time" will have to be restrained until the villain is uncovered. The players must discover the murderer of noted robotics expert Emerson Van Laake.

Emerson Van Laake was one of the world's leading researchers in the field of robotics, and as such he has created several robots which are real enough to go undetected in normal society. The robots that the players will encounter during the scenario are; Janice Bells, Graeme Hood and Kenny Grant. Dr. John Delli, an old friend of Van Laake's, is the only one who knows that the three are not human. Professor Colin Veitch somehow got wind of Van Laake's great discovery and decided to confront him to learn his secrets. Van Laake refused point blank to reveal anything. Veitch in his rage, drew his latest discovery, the ElectroGun, and shot him dead. Players should have a chance to meet all of the NPC's before they confront Veitch's robots. The GM should give Veitch a sufficient number of robots to challenge the group that is investigating the murder.

The Adventure

For the players it all begins with a short newspaper story....

Today, the body of scientist Emerson Van Laake was found in his office at Edenhope University. The respected scientist had been doing research into robotics for the Ministry of Science and Technology. He was electrocuted in his office late last night. Police are investigating the incident, but at this stage refuse to confirm whether or not there are any suspicious circumstances surrounding his death.

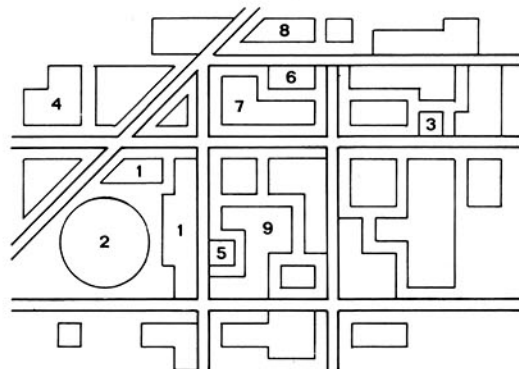
The following day, if the players have not already begun investigating Van Laake's death, they will see the following news report.

Today, police called for help from the superhero populace to assist them in the investigation of the death of scientist Emerson Van Laake. Police reports indicate that he was electrocuted while reading a newspaper in his office chair. Investigations are continuing, although police offered no hope of a quick solution in their latest release. Interested superheroes should contact Detective Inspector Fiore at Edenhope University.

Edenhope University

When the players arrive at Edenhope University, they will be directed to the main office. They will enter into a well appointed foyer area. A young girl is busily typing away at a desk. She will act as if she is very bored with the players and will not be impressed in the slightest with the fact that they are superbeings. She is from the 'school' that thinks that superheroes are definitely uncool. If the players ask her about the police or Detective Sergeant Fiore, they will be told that he has been called away and that as it's just about her lunch hour, so would they please leave. As the players exit, she will call out and say, 'He did leave his notebook, I suppose it would be alright for you to have a look at it.'

If they return, she will hand a brand new police issue notebook to the players. Upon opening it, the players will find that the first 6 pages are empty save for a name (Detective Sergeant Paul Fiore)



Edenhope University

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Sports Centre | 6. Physics Building |
| 2. Field | 7. Arts Faculty |
| 3. Medical Centre | 8. Science Faculty |
| 4. Electronics Building | 9. Library |
| 5. Greenhouse | |

on the inside cover. On the seventh page the following notes will be found:

"I knew this would be a bitch of an assignment the minute I heard that it was an university professor. All these ivory tower types haven't got the faintest idea what's involved in a murder investigation.

Emerson Van Laake was electrocuted. Don't ask me how, his body was lying slumped in a chair, with his newspaper lying face down beside him. There were no wires or instruments or even signs that such things were attached to him. There is just a body with a large electrical burn mark on the chest. No clues at all, I might get some of those superheroes in tomorrow. Don't ask me how, but the minute they turn up, things start happening. Maybe they'll stir up a lead.

Interviewed:

Janice Bells, Girlfriend and typist in Physics Dept.
Graeme Hood, sports student and friend
Kenny Grant, Van Laake's assistant
Dr. John Delli, Van Laake's friend"

From the above notes, the players should be able to find at least Janice Bells and possibly Graeme Hood and Dr. John Delli.

Physics Office and Typing Pool (Building 6)

Janice Bells will be found in this area. She will be typing at her desk. If approached about Van Laake, she will whisper to the heroes, asking if they mind walking in the gardens with her so that the other people in the office cannot overhear them. She will not

answer any questions in the office when her workmates are present. She is not disturbed at all by Van Laake's death, as she is a robot created by Van Laake, one of his masterpieces. Thus, while she has been programmed to show most emotions (such as shyness), she was not programmed to show grief at Van Laake's death.

Once in the sunlight, Janice's large violet eyes will sparkle. She is a well-built young woman in her early twenties and wears a fashionable slashed skirt and jacket. With wide open eyes she looks at you and asks; 'How may I help you?'

Janice will be as helpful as she can possibly be. She can provide the current locations of the other three people on the list. She will talk shyly at first, about Van Laake and the fact that she was his girlfriend, but she will always be very vague on details. This is because Van Laake only used her as a test in social situations to aid him in his research and so no real relationship existed between him and Janice. She can't tell the players anything about his robotics work, as she is not even aware that she is a robot. Van Laake wiped any knowledge of it from her memory, to make her reactions as natural as possible. She will speculate that Graeme Hood will be at the Sports Centre, Kenny Grant will probably be at the Greenhouse and that Dr. John Delli is at the Medical Centre as he works there. She will also comment that the Doctor at one time worked with Van Laake. She is unaware of the details of their cooperation.

Janice Bells

ST 10
AG 10
CH 16
IN 10
SA 30
EG 07
Exp 00
HT 20
DD 00
AP 53

Powers: -1 point armour

Graeme Hood

ST 25
AG 10
CH 10
IN 20
SA 30
EG 15
Exp 00
HT 25
DD +5
AP 77

Powers: -1 point armour

Sports Centre (Building 1)

The Sports Centre is a large complex dominated by the gym at its centre. If the players inquire here, they will be informed that Kenny is working out in the gym (he is a well known regular). The gym is a large single room painted brilliant, blood red with a bank of mirrors down the left side and containing approximately 30 pieces of gym equipment. In the centre of the room, are located climbing ropes, vaulting horses and tumbling mats. At the far end of the gym, the sole occupant can be seen, working out on a treadmill machine.

The man on the treadmill is Graeme Hood. He is also a robot, but unlike the other two he is aware of his true nature. Graeme appears as a large, heavily-built man with a round, baby face that gives him the demeanour of a big, dumb ox. Graeme was Van Laake's final creation.

Graeme will be quite friendly, and will be able to inform the players that Van Laake had just made a major breakthrough in his work. He was very excited about it, talking of Nobel Prizes, although he was very secretive and would not tell him any details. This is, in fact, a lie. Graeme himself is the breakthrough, a fully conscious robot. Unlike the other two which are merely automatons programmed to act as humans, Graeme is a living (if not breathing), aware being, with the potential for real emotions and creativity. Graeme will point out if an appropriate opportunity is given, that the players list is incomplete. Van Laake was also known to associate with Professor Colin Veitch, a member of the electronics section of the Physics department who operates from the third floor in the Physics Building. Graeme suspects Veitch but due to his programming cannot harm or act against a human being. Thus he cannot do anything about it, but he hopes the players will be able to.

Greenhouse (Building 5)

The greenhouse is a large glass encased building some 40 x 20 metres square and 5 metres high. It contains an abundance of lush vegetation, from the Amazon jungle. A small figure of a man can be seen mechanically planting seedlings within the building.

The figure is Kenny Grant. However, if the players have already aroused the suspicions of Professor Veitch, he will probably send two or more of his killer robots to attack the players, and they will intercept the players at this point. This is an interesting and dramatic place for a fight. The robots will smash through the windows spraying flora and fauna alike with glass shards. In addition, any projectile or beam weapon that misses its target has a 95% probability of shattering another window. Remember, glass is very expensive!

Kenny Grant was the first robot that Van Laake built, utilising his breakthrough. Therefore, he is not as sophisticated as the others. He appears as a shy, rather dull witted person. His clothes are old fashioned. He is very easily impressed and it will be dramatically apparent when the superheroes come to him for aid. He will fall over backwards to assist them in anyway possible, including providing refreshments, information on plants, etc. Kenny had been Van Laake's Assistant for the last two school terms, but he is unaware of what he was working on. Kenny was in reality only used as a gopher around the lab, executing mundane tasks such as carrying electronic parts back and forth.

Kenny cannot remember what Van Laake was working on as he 'blacked out' when Van Laake was working on him. Kenny, like Janice

Bells is unaware that he is a robot. Kenny is very enthusiastic about gardening and plants, and will prattle on indefinitely if anyone gives him the chance to bring up this topic.

Kenny Grant

ST 10
AG 10
CH 10
IN 06
SA 30
EG 05
HT 20
DD 00
AP 50

Powers: -1 point armour

Dr. John Delli

ST 05
AG 08
CH 11
IN 20
SA 14
EG 07
Exp 00
HT 11
DD 00
AP 37

Skills: Medical 51%
Robotics 21%

Medical Centre (Building 3)

The Medical Centre is a small two storey building overshadowed by two large towers. It gets very little sunshine at all, thus all the plants surrounding it have died. Mention the dead plants to the players, so as to provide a possible red herring. The players may get the idea that strange chemicals might be killing them or some other spurious idea.

The receptionist will inform the players that Dr. John Delli's room is on the second floor. The building is extremely old and the floorboards creak constantly in an alarming fashion, with a painfully high pitched squeak.

At the office of Dr. Delli, the door will creak slowly open as the players enter. The room is darkened, but they can make out a shadowy figure sitting at the desk, it lurches forward, reaching for something. At this point, make the players roll percentile dice and ask what they are doing. Keep the players on their toes! He grasps a switch on the side of the desk and the light flickers on! Seated at the desk is a man in his late forties wearing a monocle and sporting a goatee beard. A worried look crosses his face, as he addresses the players in a sepulchral voice, 'Can I help you?'

Dr. John Delli was once Van Laake's assistant when he was still a medical student and remained Van Laake's closest friend. He is dismayed over Van Laake's death, hence his brooding in the darkened room. He is the only person who knows that Graeme, Janice and Kenny are all robots developed by Van Laake. He assisted Van Laake in his study of their development and personalities and knows that none of the three could possibly have killed Van Laake because of their programming. He will never willingly reveal to the players that they are robots, as Van Laake swore him to silence, but just insist he knows none of them could have done it.

If the players mention Professor Veitch as a possible suspect, Delli will scream 'Of course, Of course!' and pace up and down the room. He will swear to the players that it must have been Veitch who murdered Van Laake, as Veitch was jealous of Van Laake's advances in robotics. He knows that Veitch can usually be found in his lab on the third floor of the Electronics Building.

Electronics Building (Building 4)

If this is the first time that the players have visited Dr. Veitch and they don't imply that they suspect he killed Van Laake, he will be happy to meet them and discuss the situation. He will pretend that he is deeply saddened at the loss of such a respected member of his profession.

Professor Veitch is a short, froglike man with a very high opinion of himself (EGO of 20). He is very sensitive about his height (Van Laake was a tall, good looking man) and turns red with rage when people mention it or make jokes about it. He is almost as good an expert in robotics as Van Laake was.

Professor Veitch killed Van Laake to steal his secret breakthrough, but could not find any of the plans or notes that Van Laake had made. Veitch used his new ElectroGun (which fires a bolt of electricity as per Lightning/Electrical 36 AP 30m range), to murder Van Laake. He will use this weapon if attacked. Veitch has access to the security system for the Electronics building which he has under total control. This includes video cameras in all corridors and most of the rooms. When playing Veitch, remember that he is, at heart, a nasty, spiteful, little, mad scientist.

Professor Colin Veitch

ST 08
AG 16
CH 06
IN 23
SA 16
EG 20
Exp 03
HT 18
DD +1
AP 56

Skills: Electronics 62%
Robotics 58%
Mechanical 71%

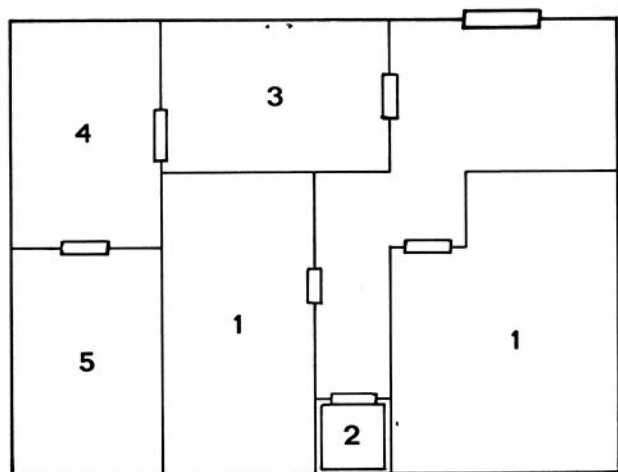
Veitch Killerbots

ST 20
AG 10
CH 03
IN 10
SA 20
EG 10
Exp 00
HT 20
DD +2
AP 55

Powers: -1 point armour
2 attacks - claws for 1d6 each
Defect: Cannot operate without being able to see.

The electronics building itself has four floors and is built of bluestone blocks. All the windows are small and there is only the one entrance to the building, the main door. There is, however, a skylight in the roof.

The first, second and fourth floors contain the laboratories and offices of scientists who have no connection with Veitch. The only potentially hostile encounters in these areas are if Veitch sends robots after the players. It could be interesting though to throw a curious scientist working late at the players, who is fascinated by the fact that superheroes are wandering through his lab. Players may use the lift to get down to the third floor if they enter through the skylight. See (2) The Lift.



Electronics Building

The Third Floor

- (1) Office. These rooms contain a desk, a chair and a filing cabinet. They are the rooms of other scientists who are working independently of Veitch.
- (2) The Lift. This will automatically open when the players approach it. If the players enter the lift, the doors will close and Veitch will override its controls and bring it to the fourth floor. He will then turn off all the safety devices and send the lift plummeting to the bottom. Unless the players can prevent this,

the lift will come crashing to the ground, inflicting 4d4 points of damage to all inside. It will take a strength of 25 or better to pry open the doors.

- (3) Professor Veitch's office. This room contains a desk, a chair and three filing cabinets. There is another door. If the players touch the door handle, they will take 1d8 electrical damage, from a capacitor connected on the other side.
- (4) Professor Veitch's Laboratory. This room is littered with electronic bits and pieces. On a table in the corner is a computer, Professor Veitch is standing on the opposite side of the table. He puts down his calculator and says 'I give up' hoping to take them by surprise.

His robots sitting on the floor will then animate and attack the players (the specific number should depend upon how many superheroes are present). If the players defeat these robots, Veitch will break morale and genuinely surrender, confessing everything.

- (5) Storeroom. Veitch keeps most of his robots in this area. There will be five of his robots here, all in various states of disrepair and construction.

End Game

If the players are captured by Professor Veitch or his robots, they will wake up strapped to chairs with electrodes positioned on their foreheads. Before them is a video monitor, Professor Veitch's ugly face breaks into a smile and cackles 'My, what great superheroes we have here. Ha! You have about three minutes in which to say your prayers before 3,000 volts is sent through your feeble little minds.' He breaks into maniacal laughter which ceases as the screen fades into darkness.

If the players cannot escape their fate, Graeme Hood will arrive at the most opportune time and rescue them.

Aftermath

After he has been captured, Professor Veitch could activate other concealed robots to engineer his escape from prison. He will then build bigger and better robots to send against his most hated foes who placed him behind bars.

Will he wreak his revenge?

What will happen to the other robots?

Will Dr John Delli have a breakdown?

by Alan Greenway

A SUPER SQUADRON Adventure

the TOME

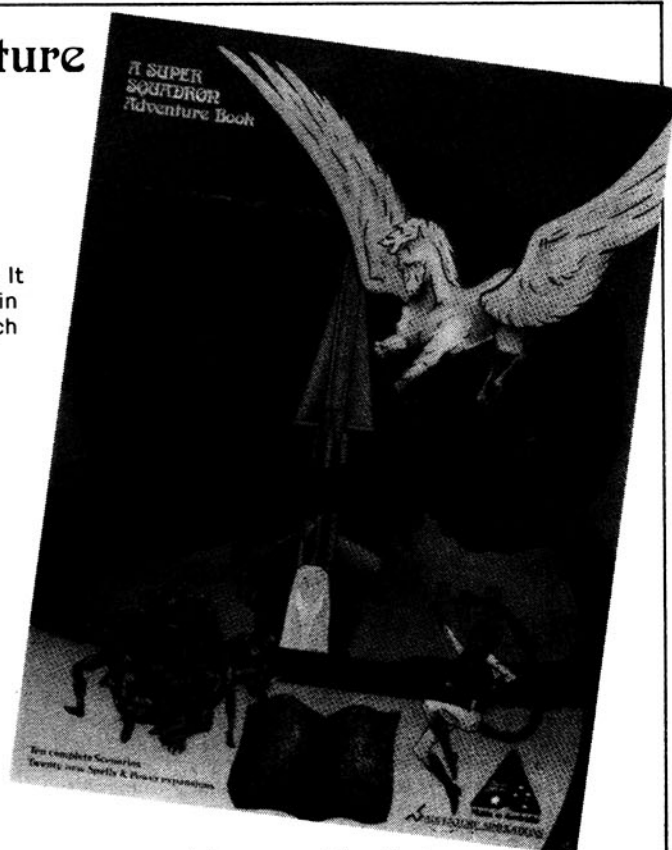
The Tome is the first Super Squadron Adventure Book. It contains ten fully detailed and exciting scenarios certain to challenge even the most capable of superbeings. Each scenario is complete in itself, and contains a number of encounters that can be played consecutively, or worked into a campaign, as desired. Comprehensive maps are provided for all relevant encounters. Inside the Tome, you will find reusable statistics for both goons and normal people, and many examples of NPC superbeings (several of which have variant powers). Also included are many new rule additions, including 11 power expansions and 22 new and revised spells, all in 56 illustrated pages.

The scenarios in the Tome can be converted to any major superhero R.P.G. with little difficulty. They are an invaluable resource for any Super Squadron Game Master. Dare you delve into the Tome?



Available at all good game stores or send direct to Adventure Simulations..

Recommended Retail \$15.00 inc. P&H from



Adventure Simulations
P.O. Box 182 Mitcham 3132, Victoria Australia.

Token Bestiary



A Token Bestiary is designed to show Gamesmasters the many different ways a simple monster can be developed into an extensive and thought provoking encounter. The three creatures presented could all be used as standard 'There it is, let's kill it' encounters or the GM can use the material provided (in addition to the basic characteristics) to generate mood and interaction to make the encounters unique and memorable.

Winter Wraith Wolves (Ghost Wolves)

No. Appearing: 4-16
 Armour Class: 4
 Move: 18"
 Hit Dice: 4 + 4
 % in Lair: Nil
 No. of Attacks: 1 bite
 Damage/Attack: 1-8
 Special Attacks: Breath Weapon
 Special Defenses: Nil
 Magic Resistance: Standard
 Intelligence: Average
 Alignment: Neutral Evil
 Size: M (3½' - 4' tall)

Ghost Wolves can only ever be active on nights of a full moon. Victims should be specifically assaulted whilst trying to negotiate some form of hostile environment or traversing remote, unnerving terrain - for example within the gnarled and huddled density of an ancient forest or decayed moor littered with thorny, skeletal vegetation and murky cesspools of virulent water. The wolves will never appear near populated zones or underground. It is also highly productive (as far as the player's conjectures are concerned) to run the encounter near a particularly gloomy landmark noticeably shunned by the local wildlife - a gothic ruin, archaic altar or a graveyard suitably overgrown after the living have ostracised it from usage.

The attack is initiated after a host of preliminary effects have indicated to even the most unobservant adventurer that something abnormal or dangerous is about to transpire. The usual cacophony of nocturnal beasts will firstly cease, abruptly so, and in concert with any cold winds that may have been blowing. Then from out of the undergrowth will appear a growing pall of mist; billowing forth silently and quickly forming into a veritable wall, alive with quivering flagellae of smoke. This ash coloured cloud will have raised itself up around the party well before their sensory intelligence suggests that their

ambulatory attachments engage a 'flee-quickly!' mode ("Hey guys, I don't think this is a natural phenomenon!").

Within the mist it is clammy and chilly, the temperature will be noticeably colder than 'outside'. All the features/detail of the local terrain will fade away until the characters find themselves isolated within a shroud of grey, shadowy fog. Everyone present will begin to feel lethargic: drained of strength and damnably tired. All movement will be inhibited by the sluggish limbs, thus the Ghost Wolves will have a distinct advantage of manoeuvrability in combat (note their AC). There will be a fearful respite lasting several minutes during which the adventurers will hear, subtly at first, a distant baying of the most desolate and eerie timbre. This auditory confirmation of monstrous life will naturally be followed by a visual one: a pack of great silvery-grey wolves charging at the party in full, feral flight. These creatures are huge and coarse with wild, knotted fur the colour of bleached bone. Their yellow fangs are long and hooked, their pink eyes shine like fire. Each wolf's aspect is very phantom-like, but they can be hit by non-magical weapons.

The pack may circle their prey several times before attacking, separating into pairs or individuals to lessen the effectiveness of 'burst radius' magics (note that all cold-based spells will not be injurious to Ghost Wolves). All beasts attack with a bite that inflicts a frosty wound - on a 'to hit' roll of 20, the victim will be injected with several nails of ice which will cause an additional 1d4 points of damage for the next three rounds unless removed. A wolf may attack by using its breath weapon rather than simply biting, but this can only be ejected if the preliminary round is spent in nonmartial activities. The breath weapon is a cloud of sleet covering an area four feet in diameter and causing 2d4+2 points of damage (saving throw for half damage applicable). If the pack disengage their assault and retire, disappearing at speed into the distance from whence they appeared, a short time later the mist will dissolve, thinning out quickly to slither away into the night.

The PC's cannot cease hostilities so easily, however a substantial spell affecting their vulnerability (Wall of Stone), position (Levitate, Leomund's Tiny Hut), or existence (Limited Wish, Teleport) will suffice in removing either the party or the problem. Spells such as Invisibility or Dispel Magic (but not Dispel Evil) will have no such powers of exorcism. By the next moon, the pack may reappear, fully healed and with full complement. They can only be ever irreversibly banished when their total number are all killed in the same combat.

The reason for the Ghost Wolves existence is left to conjecture, though such opinions as to their origins are as follows: the victims of a very evil community lycanthropy - possibly a deliberate form of nonhuman deity worship; basic spirit reincarnation of evil warriors who will still continue with some abnormal servitude; a host of transformed vampires whose frosty attacks ensure that their prey can be dragged away without substantial blood loss.

Nymphs

(Undine, Sylph and Dryad)

No. Appearing: 1
Armour Class: 9
Move: 12"
Hit Dice: 6-8
% in Lair: 100%
No. of Attacks: Nil
Damage/Attack: Nil
Special Attacks: See Below
Special Defenses: See Below
Magic Resistance: 50%
Intelligence: Exceptional
Alignment: Neutral Good
Size: M

True Nymphs encountered in a campaign should present more venues of interest than just as an aesthetically inspired interlude (usually designed to counter the mercenary voraciousness of the adventurers). Nymphs

are highly intelligent elemental enchantresses whose main concern should be the continued security of their zone of control; the preservation of a peaceful existence coupled with the ensured prosperity of the local ecosystem; and with the enjoyment of their promiscuous flirtations. There is a lot more potential in gaming for these beings other than that of seductive sorceress; they can add character and strength to wilderness based adventures.

There are three types of Nymph, the Undine, the Sylph and the Dryad. Each type has a different elemental consistency and is thus restricted to that particular environment. They are named under the singular category of Nymph because they all have insatiable courtesan tendencies and use similar magical powers. Nymphs appear as extraordinarily attractive females when assuming the guise of a humanoid - historically their youthful beauty and mellifluous voices are a helicon to all Bards. However, the personal intent of a Nymph is often misjudged by their nakedness, this is not lewd advertising but rather conventional habit associated with an invulnerability to adverse weather. All forms of their chameleonic powers lack ornaments, apparel and accoutrements. To avoid the probable uninvited interest of any excited traveller a Nymph may summon a billowing stream of iridescent dew (Elves have named it Faerie Dust) to act as an orbiting gown. This flimsy film of shimmering gossamer not only projects some subtlety of their nudity, but also gives instant visual confirmation of a practised magical ability.

Each form of Nymph has a distinct general (human) appearance, the list below details the obvious physical dissimilarities.

UNDINE (Water Nymph)

An Undine will possess an undulating mane of wavy hair and emerald-green eyes. Their bodies are blue tinted and strong, being more solid than buxom.


SYLPH (Air Nymph)

The hair of a Sylph is permanently wild and blust-

SUPER SQUADRON

WRITERS WANTED

Adventure Simulations recently released its first Adventure Book for the Super Squadron roleplaying system, 'The Tome'. As part of its production schedule, it plans to release at least two more Adventure Books over the course of the next year. In view of this, Adventure Simulations is soliciting material for adventures from interested persons. All submissions should be legibly written and preferably typed. The scenario(s) should be complete within itself, but may be single or multi part. Submissions may use existing or new characters and may be of any length. All submissions should in general use standard Super Squadron rules, however variant rules will be accepted based on individual merit. It is quite possible that official variant rules already exist, in such cases, authors will be provided with them. All interested parties are invited to send submissions to:

 ADVENTURE SIMULATIONS
P.O. Box 182, Mitcham 3132, Vic.



ery, they have sparkling blue eyes and golden skin. Their bodies are usually adolescent with slim petite limbs.

DRYAD (Earth Nymph)

All Dryads have rich brown eyes and a head of unkempt, mischievously tangled hair. Their skin has a green tint and their bodies are curvaceous yet dainty.

There are three prime powers usable by all Nymphs, but their capabilities are limited by an individual's elemental boundaries and the extent of their personal desires or ambitions. The powers Charm, Shape Change and Proliferation are described in detail below.

Charm

The charming abilities of Nymphs are notorious and often humourously encouraged, this is a lighthearted view of their most potent power. In most encounters it is effective in manipulating circumstances towards the user's advantage. There are three Charms available and these may be used in conjunction with other powers or stacked for multiple usage - the total HD or levels of the beings charmed cannot exceed (collectively) thrice that of the Nymph's HD (which is 6-8d8).

- a) Animal/Plant Control: Influenced lifeforms within a fifty foot radius of the caster get no saving throw provided they are dwellers in the Nymph's particular element (i.e a Sylph cannot control land creatures

or fish).

- b) Enamour: This affects one intelligent being for several days until dispelled. Its use can provoke various forms of interest, from mild partiality to lustful infatuation, by manipulating the visual loveliness and elegance of the caster. A successful saving throw will cancel the effects (DM can determine this after considering the target character's marital commitment, piety and virtuousness). An unsuccessful roll makes the individual a virtual slave of the Nymph.
- c) Charm: Same as Enamour, but may be cast on several targets. If used against a single person there is no saving throw, although the more devout characters (Monks, Paladins) will exercise their 'passion' with dignity and great discretion. This 'spell' basically arouses a strong commitment sexually and influences/provokes such things as lubricity, libido and priapism. Charm can sustain a relationship for up to a year, Remove Curse et al can dispel the spell.

Shapechange

This power causes drastic changes to the user's bodily construction, appearance and solidity. Each Nymph can turn invisible at will, but it takes three rounds to appear as a humanoid or to take the shape of a creature natural to their area (Dryad-animal, Sylph-Bird, Undine-Fish). These transformations can be employed without restriction

unless the Nymph is somehow restrained: i.e. tied up or held. Total HD and accumulated damage are also transferred into the selected body. A Nymph can choose not to disguise herself, thus appearing in true form: Dryad - Tree, Sylph - Cloudlet, Undine - Brine 'Cloud'. These are the original 'parent' shapes, all other images are imitations.

'The Unique Transition - a Dryad's appearance.'

"A slight murmur sighs out of the rock floor. I am touched with a subtle feeling of pregnant expectation, a faint taste of creation. Before me the tree heaves almost imperceptibly, a section of its trunk seems to turn molten. This patch of lacquered bark beats like a pulsating heart. Then it slowly changes colour, the hues and tones twist, mix and condense into a humanoid form. I can discern a thin face, eyes closed, a delicate body with small breasts and lithe limbs. A three dimensional woman of green steps out from the tree, a slight wisp of steam rises from the womb of the trunk and minute trails of sap dribble groundward as the near-liquid mass hardens..."

An extract from the diary of Sage Narok of Fordwater.

Proliferation

The effectiveness of this power is readily apparent since the Nymph's locale will be thriving with healthy life. Creatures existing within this zone will prosper and plants will grow in abundance. Every type of natural flora and fauna will be protected and encouraged to multiply or grow, the area will achieve a beauty and serenity unequal to normal wilderness tracts. A single Nymph can influence the environment within a six hundred yard radius of her abode.

Proliferation can be focused like a spell to prompt an individual object to grow or strengthen for 1d20 + 10 rounds as long as the caster concentrates on it. For example, a briar bush can be made to spread quickly and 'grab' a character (six foot rabbits can be pretty disconcerting!) or a puddle of mud can be enlarged to 'swallow' something. Alternatively the properties of this power can be contorted to heal wounds (2D8 + 2 per creature once per day) or dispel poisons and disease. This skill lends itself most aptly to players bargaining, repayments or questing. The reverse of Proliferation is Impuissance, this weakens or makes the target impotent - and can kill simple lifeforms (such as the denizens of a Cleric's Insect Plague). If used against characters, treat as a Ray of Enfeeblement (50% STR loss, -4 to save) or the Clerical spell Wither. In addition an Undine can, through the power of Proliferation, manipulate the temperature or tranquility of water; similarly a Sylph can control the winds and local humidity.

Nymphs tend to prefer quiet, isolated lives. Their main concern is the environment and any encounter or conflict with player characters will result through their treatment and respect of it. Nymphs will concede certain

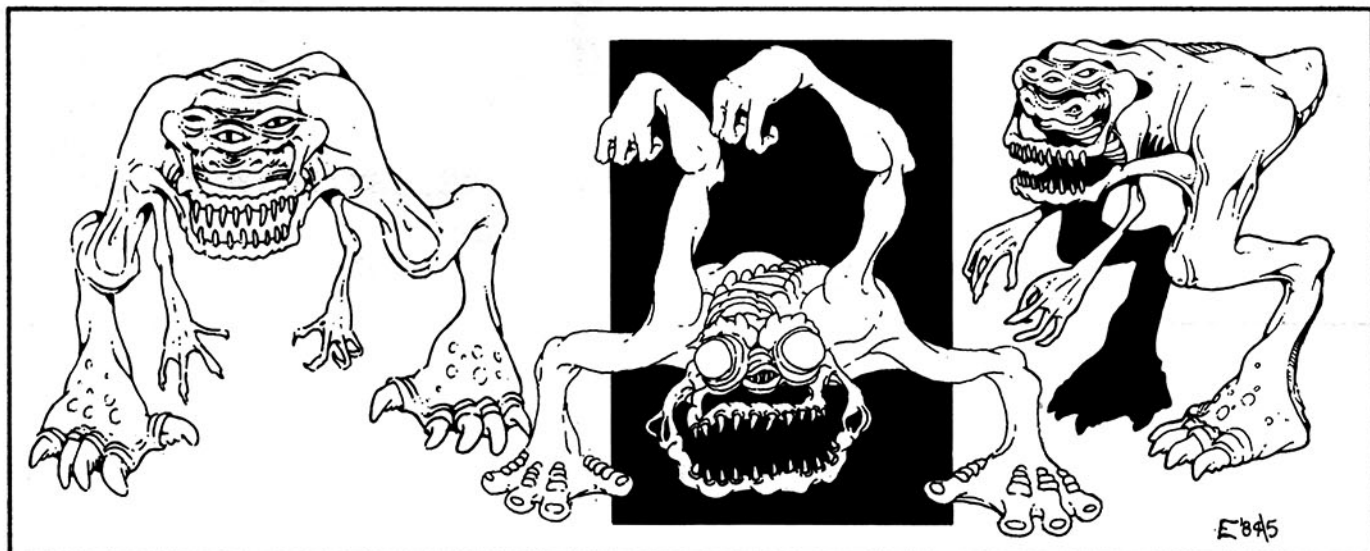
survival actions to a party of adventurers, trapping animals and picking fruit, but would become extremely distraught if they burnt live wood or slaughtered innocent animals indiscriminately. Provided that individuals acknowledge the obvious splendour and prosperity of the area, their existence will not warrant her appearance. Nymphs don't necessarily attempt to befriend every charismatic male they spy, an adequate specimen would not be as desirous as a dedicated Ranger - he/she would be quickly coerced into polite conversation quite readily. These associations are not purely for sensual reasons, sexual relations activate the same stimulation and impetuous response regardless of the type of creatures involved (note Shape Change).

Encounters with a Nymph should generally be non-violent, although they would be tenacious combatants if pitted against a dungeon-bred pack of adventurers intent on some mindless martial mayhem. Nymphs could be instrumental in relating to any PC's the history or geographic description of the local area. Not all wilderness oriented meetings should be exercises in crossbow diplomacy; appease the players' mercenary natures with role playing related experience point awards, thus justifying more cordial intercourse with the less quarrelsome beings or creatures. The Nymph and her elemental charge are splendid objects of great beauty/harmony and are deserving of any admiration or courtesy that the players are capable of showing.

SKELG (Fetch)

No. Appearing: 1-4
Armour Class: 5
Move: 8"
Hit Dice: 4+4
% in lair: Nil
No. of Attacks: 2 punches
Damage/Attack:
Male - 1D6
Female - 1D10
Special Attacks: Poison Nails
Special Defenses: Nil
Magic Resistance: Standard
Intelligence: Low
Alignment: Neutral
Size: L (6'-8' tall)

The legacy of battle (temporarily) doubles as a mutilated testimony to the victor's prowess and stamina - each victim is a ruptured icon to life's frailty and anger's terminal lusting. Often those who perished are left to rot and fester in an impromptu graveyard; in time creating an unhallowed necropolis littered with shattered skeletons and rusted weapons. Only the most cautious and (respectful) survivors subdue their triumph and place the gorey remains of the vanquished into the gritty maw of a grave. The conflict should thus be terminated always, as those brutally killed may become noisome creatures of undeath



or the obscene larder for a host of ghoulish carrion eaters.

The largest of the scavengers are Skelgs; these lumbering nomadic beasts plunder battlefields for the bloody refuse they yield or seek out scraps of flesh relinquished by carnivorous predators. These beasts ceaselessly endorse the necrophagous code - feasting upon the ravages of conflict, preying upon wounded creatures and only fighting when there is no other possible option. This dependent style of diet necessitates endless travel, moving from one place of violent misfortune to another until death takes its own parasite. It is uncommon to find Skelgs existing in one location, but not unknown as certain infamous altars of sacrifice and arenas of gladiatorial conflict allow the beasts to graze on the grisly after effects. Packs of Skelgs have also been the unwelcome entourage of a powerful, aggressive (and successful) monster who resides in an unpopular region of wilderness.

Invading armies, mindlessly intent on conducting genocide or a 'scorched earth' policy upon the hapless populace, often employ Skelgs to gorge themselves with their inanimate enemies (hygienically). Skelgs are more than likely to be found wandering (seemingly) aimlessly rather than having a stable environment.

Skelgs have tall, bipedal bodies with drab-grey or mottled-tan skin. The female of the species is physically smaller but have longer and more powerful arms. The males have three eyes (one infravision) whilst the females possess two such optical sensors, which are more bulbous and have a greater field of vision. The unique feature of these creatures is their boney, incisor-mounted facial appendages that appear as external jaws. These toothy obtrusions are pivoted on joints and set with flexible muscles, being very manipulative yet stable. Another distinguishable trait is their odour: Skelgs smell like gangrenous, putrescent flesh. Many adventurers loathe the stench as the evil aroma of death itself - an acrid miasma of inevitable cavernous doom.

Combat is usually avoided by Skelgs, but continued pressure or unavoidable circumstances will force a beast to fight. Their damage potential is rather limited, but a special ability makes them respectable opponents. The normal mode of assault is two hits per round by the creature's arms: the females pummel (1D10) and the males scratch (1D6). Both have short barbs up their fingertips, sheathed in skin. By flexing their hands, these thorny implements can be projected forward, enabling foreign objects to be hit. The talons are tipped with a cataleptic poison that causes an unfortunate recipient to lose consciousness for 1D8 + 4 rounds (unless a successful save is made). Skelgs can use this poison twice per round (i.e. - once per hand) to a maximum daily expenditure of six such strikes, then the poison glands are exhausted.

Usage of a Skelg's external jaws is restricted to either carrying or lifting sizable obstructions. These skeletal implements are often employed in transporting bodies to a more convenient feeding ground - they can be used to hold a target stationary in combat, but this requires a 'To Hit' roll and the affected character must fail a Dex x 2 roll as a % to be effective (if successful, the Skelg has +4 'To Hit' with its arms whilst the victim has -4 'To Hit' back!). If the jaws are used to bite an antagonist it will inflict a savage 1D3 injury. When the Skelg wishes to initiate a convenient withdrawal it will move backwards wildly slashing the air with its arms and fiercely snapping its huge jaws; indeed this will look discouraging but it is only for show.

Meals are consumed through a feeding orifice situated in the underside of a Skelg. Thus the flesh of a carcass is always removed by the beast and delivered to the hidden maw, bypassing the false mouth/jaws mounted before the head. Skelgs are not nocturnal hunters, preferring to shelter somewhere during the night. They are also clumsy walkers and have a strange gait that consists of a half-hop/half-step motion, however, a short burst of speed in a critical situation is possible.

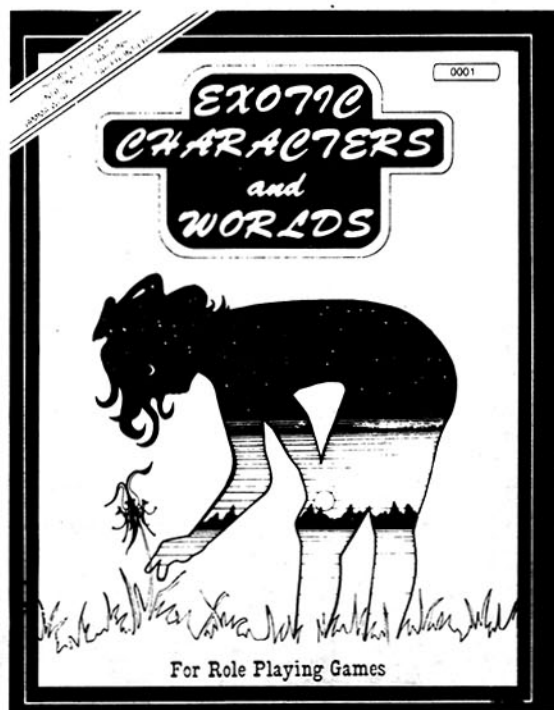
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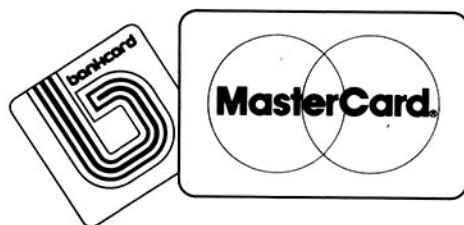
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GOBLINS

in Runequest

This article was inspired by the 'Goblins' unit in the boardgame Dragon Pass. I wish to thank Richard Barker for his assistance.

When Yelm fled from the upper world, slain by Orlanth, the Emperor of Light forced a great exodus of darkness from the Underworld. Many Gods and races of Darkness reached the surface world in this exodus. One such race were the goblins.

Goblins are an ancient group, even in the reckoning of trolls, they themselves claim to be the first children of darkness and to have explored the world before there was light. Certainly, goblins are mentioned in some texts dating from the Golden Age. Even then, they are noted as being content to inhabit the cold and dark places of the world, exhibiting little interest in events taking place within the light. The death of the Sun God, Yelm, forced them onto the surface.

During the Storm Age, goblins were a numerous race. They inhabited all of the continents of the world. However they suffered heavily from the long fight against Chaos and their numbers dwindled before the return of Yelm. Since the Dawning, goblins have been little seen and are few in number.

To most humans, goblins are little different from trolls. Such a picture says more about the lack of discernment in human perceptions, than it does about the similarities between goblins and trolls. Occasionally, trolls and goblins may be found living together in the same community; in such cases though, the goblins invariably have a position below that of the trolls. While valued to a higher degree than trollkin, they are treated as little more than pets. The closeness of troll and goblin ancestry is a subject of much debate amongst scholars and sages. Some incline to the view that goblins are a sub-race of troll; others speculate that they have a separate and distinct ancestry.

Goblin culture and society is very primitive. Few goblins use tools or weapons, having little need for either. They are nocturnal hunters who spend their daylight hours in the cool seclusion of a cave or some other shelter. Goblin communities are known to have existed far underground, though it is uncertain what they consumed to survive, since unlike trollkin they do not have the ability to eat virtually any substance. They obviously prefer flesh to any other food, though a goblin could probably manage a diet of fungi, insects, fruits and even the occasional elf.

Goblins live in extended family groups. Their small

numbers preclude complex hierarchies and each adult is considered an equal. All able-bodied goblins, save for the very young, participate in the hunt to bring in food for the family. Unless it is caught on his or her own, a goblin will allow any other family member, a fair share of his or her kill. Goblins will always hunt in groups, unless an individual goblin has somehow become separated from his or her family. Any goblin incapable of hunting will either be sacrificed or exiled from the family. For these reasons, even a shaman and his or her apprentices will also participate in the hunt, assisting with some appropriate spells.

Outsiders are treated in varying manners. Anyone approaching the family exhibiting any hostility will be considered an enemy. The group will either hide, flee or fight as the situation demands in such a case. If hungry when approached, outsiders will generally be treated as the family's next meal. Otherwise, goblins and creatures of darkness will be regarded as friends. Humans and other non-darkness creatures may be objects of curiosity. Goblins are not an aggressive race in general, though this fact is obscured by their ferocity while hunting.

Goblins have a love of music and dance which only a troll could appreciate. They dance accompanied by howling and singing, with rhythms beaten out by rocks, logs and anything else which may be improvised as a musical instrument. Music such as this forms an important part of their religious ceremonies and worship. Possibly, music is something they have picked up from the trolls.

Typically, goblins know little if any magic. What they do possess in the way of magic is limited to spirit magic, or rarely divine magic. Goblins prefer spells which are oriented toward darkness and mobility. Subere, Goddess of the Deep Dark Within, is worshipped by most goblins, though shamans tend toward her husband, Dehore. A few goblins worship Subere's daughter Xentha, Goddess of the Night as their protector, while some others worship the Hunter. Occasionally family groups worship their ancestors and, through them, Daka Fal. Despite such a variety of Gods, goblins are usually unable to support a priesthood and rely instead upon the spiritual protection of the shamans.

Goblins have long, gangling bodies. Their arms are as long as their legs enabling them to stand on two legs as well as run on all fours. Both hands and feet are large with splayed fingers and toes for climbing and running over soft ground. The hands and feet are also covered with thick, hard, leathery skin. Each finger and toe ends in a short, stumpy claw and their knuckles have

a rough, horny covering. Their elbows and knees are bulbous and knobby. The torso is narrow and rather diminutive, while the head is large and tapering. Goblins have virtually no neck and when standing on two legs, they possess an awkward, lumbering slouch. They do not wear clothing or armour. Their eyes are small and are only just capable of discerning the presence of light. Instead of eyesight, they rely on their excellent sonar and hearing to 'see' and find prey. Sunlight **does not** demoralise goblins as it does trollkin and cave trolls, but it does cause severe burns and blisters to a goblin's skin.

Characteristics		Average			
STR	2D6+12	19			
CON	3D6+6	16-17			
SIZ	2D6+12	19			
INT	2D4+4	9			
POW	3D6	10-11			
DEX	4D6	14			
APP	2D6	7			
Weapon	S/Rank	Attack	Damage	Parry	AP
Bite	3	40	1D8*		
Fist	3	25	1D6	40	10
Grapple	3	50	Special		

Skills (Base): Climb 75%, Jump 40%, Ride 00%, Swim 05%, Speak Own Language (Darktongue) 30%, Hide 20%, Sneak 30%

Armour: 3 point skin and rarely leather

Magic: See text

Notes: Goblins have two combat techniques. The first is to run and leap onto an opponent, grapple and knock-back to bring the victim down. This requires a successful jump, knockback and grapple to execute. If all are successful, the victim is not knocked back, but knocked down. After successfully grappling, a goblin may inflict its damage bonus as rending and crushing damage as well as biting the victim in its grip.

A goblin may also fist attack and parry. If it does

so, it may also bite three strike ranks after attacking with fist. This technique is generally used against prepared opponents equipped with melee weapons. If a special parry is made by a goblin against a failed attack, or a goblin makes a successful grapple which is parried, the goblin may grab its opponent's weapon. A grabbed weapon is immobilised until either the goblin or its opponents makes a special or fumbled STR vs. STR roll to release the weapon or wrench it away. Goblins do not use hand held weapons, though they may pick up and hurl rocks.

* A goblin's bite has only half its damage modifier.

CREATING A GOBLIN ADVENTURER

Roll 1D100 for occupation:

01-10 Apprentice Shaman
11-00 Hunter

Apprentice Shaman

Use the Primitive Assistant Shaman listing in *Runequest III* but substitute Goblin Lore x 1, Bite Attack x 1, Grapple x 1 and Fist Parry x 1 for Human Lore, Dagger Attack and Weapon Attack and Parry. Apprentice shamans have only fetishes, focii and tattoos for equipment.

Hunter

Use the Primitive Hunter occupation in *Runequest III* but substitute Jump x 2, Bite Attack x 1, Grapple x 2 and Fist Parry x 1 for Craft, Dagger Attack and Weapon Attack and Parry. Hunters possess no equipment. Hunters have a 25% chance of being an Initiate of an appropriate cult. Otherwise, they receive Spirit Magic as normal.

Initiate

Use the Barbarian Initiate occupation in *Runequest III* but substitute Speak Darktongue x 1 for Read/Write Own Language. Goblin initiates receive no additional equipment.

by Gary James



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Another Fine Mess!



So you've got a small problem.... your players have just stopped R'lyeh from rising, have beaten off 200 minions of ol' octopus face, rescued a handful of damsels in distress from a bunch of nasty people, invoked Yigg to help solve their latest dilemma and are now thinking of breaking into the Australian Mint in order to finance their latest expedition to South America.... using ghouls to do all the dirty work of course.

They're just a touch too sure of themselves, and who wouldn't be after all their success'. The task is now to show them what puny, insipid mortals they are in comparison to such great ones as mighty Cthulhu and Nyarlathotep.

You could probably lure them to some lonely and secluded spot (Cthuloid monsters seem to swarm to such places) and have them battle some hideous, creeping, oozing monstrosity with mega hitpoints, spells and a fiendish delight for that delectable delicacy, investigator's entrails. The problem is, armed with all the equipment and magic items they've picked up over several years of investigating, they just might overcome it and inflate their egos even more.

The whole aim of Cthulhu is to get enough power to beat the nasty 'orrible things, to prevent the end of civilisation as we know it, to keep that slime pit of putrifaction at the bottom of the sea, where it belongs. But power and megalomania seem to go hand in hand, players get trigger happy and cocksure and make enough contacts in high places to get them out of most serious troubles.

Despair not, ye frustrated G.M's. There is an escape clause. Your investigators want power, want to be able to bash up any of the creeps and joke about it later, then let them. Give them an epic quest, a search for some ultimate power. Hide it away in the depths of the Amazon, or at the peak of Everest. Make sure there are plenty of clues, red herrings and deranged cultists to keep them busy. Let them kill, crush and destroy to their heart's content, let them use their contacts to get out of trouble.... in short, keep them so busy thinking how great they are that they don't have time to realise that there is more to this than they think.

Twists, turns and tricks are the things which will frustrate and hopefully panic the investigators. Hints of clues that they have missed or sinister warnings from unknown sources will build their para-

noia. So they got rid of the guy who'd been following them from Katmandu by blowing him apart and throwing his body down a ravine, thanks to the quick warning of their trusty Sherpa's; what they don't know is that those friendly Sherpa's are worshippers of mighty Ygonolac, that the guy following them was a powerful member of the German Illuminati and intended to warn them as soon as he was certain of their goal, or an investigator for Interpol looking into a number of strange activities in the area. See if their contacts can save them from the rage of the Illuminati or the world wide influence of Interpol.

The worshippers of Ygonolac might intend to invoke their god and sacrifice the players; the players could be overcome while sleeping and bundled off to the cultist's headquarters. Even if they get out alive, they'll still have very little equipment, no clothes (Nobody gets sacrificed in snow gear) and several large mountains to climb over to safety.

Of course, the lure of the magic item, be it book or something else, needn't be real. It could be a set up to get the players to some place where they are going to be weakened not only by the forces of evil, but by nature as well e.g Whilst flying to a digging site in Egypt, the plane the Investigators are in crashes mysteriously and the pilot is killed. All their equipment is burned up, they are left with a single canteen of water and one gun (no ammunition). It's 48° in the shade, but there isn't any, and watching all the time from an abandoned Foreign Legion post four miles away is their arch enemy and his 50 devoted Bedouin followers.

If you decide that the quest is for real, you could have it funded by one cultist group who want something stolen from another group. You then have two lots of fanatics to launch at the players. Even sneakier, you could have the object of the quest stolen, exchanged or moved to a safer place just before the investigators arrive. This could be triggered by the way the investigators have gone about things or could just be an unfortunate coincidence.

Okay. So your investigators finally arrive, frustrated, exhausted, hopefully confused but full of jubilation at finally getting there. Ideally they should now be a bit paranoid, in a good state of mind for any other devious twists you might care to throw in. Driving them insane is part of the fun, but they will feel they deserve to get something for all their hard work and for all the people they had to bump

off to get there.

This is when you work the ultimate twist that is sure to make them think a bit more carefully about using magic items indiscriminately. Who is to say that anything used by the Elder Race or the Great Old Ones is going to in anyway benefit anyone but a member of those groups. A magic item tantalizingly powerful but indiscriminately dangerous makes the investigators think twice about using it in anything but an emergency, and only as an absolute last resource.

The following are three artifacts which fit this category. Despite the aid that they might potentially give players, the effort which is required to get hold of them and the havoc they wreak upon the user, make their use dangerous, at the very least.

Dust of Leng

This grey dust is from the crumbling ruins of Leng and has the power to do the following:

- 01-10% Gives the user a Cthulhu Mythos skill equal to the number rolled with a 10% chance of conferring a spell.
- 11-30% Cause a dream-like trance to fall over the character, lasting from 1-24 hours, during which their soul is freed to wander, travelling faster than thought and able to home in on that which it searches for.
- 31-60% Character dreams but can't remember of what Use of a scrying window or magic glass will reveal the dream
- 61-80% Character becomes high due to the dust and any dreams will be false. There is a 40% chance of addiction to the Dust. If so, then withdrawal symptoms of shooting pains and wracking spasms, along with the belief that terrifying creatures are hunting him/her will occur, if the drug is not taken every 24 hours. Substitution of another hard drug will stop the withdrawal symptoms, but have its own, equally bad, side effects.
- 81-90% Player believes they are in Leng, wandering amid its buildings and people, and cannot be brought back to reality for 1d6 days. During this time, there is a 40% chance that some mage of Leng may become aware of the character's presence and take some action: seek to bind them permanently, to destroy them or to help them.
- 91-95% The character's freed mind is attacked by some force from Leng, resulting in the loss of 10% Cthulhu Mythos, 20% Occult and 1d6 Pow permanently.
- 96-99% The character's freed mind encounters some duo-dimensional being e.g Hound of Tindalos, Star Vampire.
- 00-00% The character's mind is exchanged, entrapped destroyed or other

Tsathoggua's Orb

This orb is so evil that it masters all who dare to gaze into it's depths, unless they are strong enough to withstand it's foulness. Those few who have ever managed to pit their will against Tsathoggua, such as Eibon, eventually were destroyed for their arrogance by Tsathoggua himself.

The orb has a Pow of 20. The intelligence, constitution and Pow of anyone trying to use it should be added together and then halved. A result of 20 or better must be obtained to even approach the orb, and a result of 2 x Pow or less rolled on percentage to master it.

This must be achieved each time the orb is used. Once mastered, the player must state what he wishes to know, on a percentage scale of 01 to 00 the information will be absolutely correct and useful for the 01 and true but irrelevant or twisted for 00.

The after effects of using the orb are nearly as bad as being possessed by it:

- 01-10% Insanity for 1-10 days
- 11-50% Phobia for 1-6 weeks
- 51-75% Loss of 1d6hps
- 76-90% Loss of 1d10hps, 1d10 years aging
- 91-99% Permanent Phobia
- 00-00% Permanent Insanity

If a player attempts to use the Orb and fails the Orb has mastered him and the following can happen:

- 01-10% The player is influenced into carrying out a task for Tsathoggua
- 11-30% Player is warned to do something, or sacrifice someone or something to Tsathoggua or die. (If the deed is not done, an excruciatingly painful wasting disease will set in, the flesh disintegrating away and leaving just the bones and a bag of skin)
- 31-50% Player is knocked cold for 1-6 hours
- 51-70% Player is in a trance for 1-6 days
- 71-80% Player babbles incoherently as if mad for 1-10 days
- 81-90% Player goes insane for 1-6 weeks
- 91-95% Player ages 1-6 years, loses 2 points Con, 1d10 pts San, 1 point Int and 2 points Pow
- 96-99% Player becomes cataleptic for 1-10 weeks, loses 1-10% Cthulhu Mythos
- 00-00% A minion of Tsathoggua takes over to carry out Tsathoggua's will. (How the player can be saved, where they are etc. is up to the Keeper and could be used for another epic quest)

Glass of Set

Egyptian hieroglyphics surround this round, hand-held mirror. It is capable of showing only the **FUTURE**, and the use of one point of power is required per use. It can be used only once a day, for five days and then requires **48 hours of total darkness** before being used again. The repercussions if this item is abused are harsh.

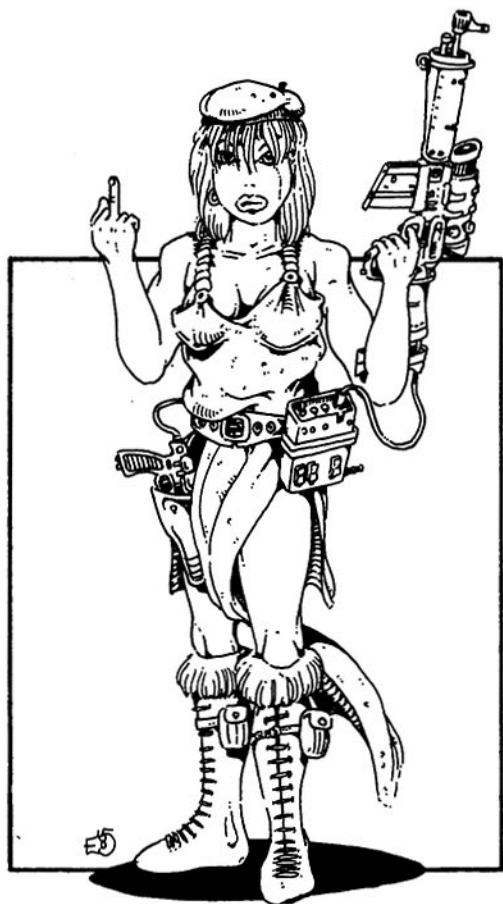
If used more than once in a single day there is a 50% chance that instead of showing the future as it might be, the Glass will show the **future of the player in the worst possible circumstances** and then use its own arcane powers to manipulate events so as to have this horrible destiny fulfilled. The closer the roll on percentile dice to 00, the worse the event, with 00, not surprisingly, the death of the player.

If the Glass is not put away in total darkness for 48 hours every 5 days, **regardless of whether it has been used**, a gate is opened for Mythos creatures to enter this world. They will never be worse than a Fire Vampire or Ghoul, however, and only one will be able to cross per hour.

In addition, the Glass has a 10% chance (91-00%) even when treated as required, of reflecting, instead of the possible future, a spell or horrible vision onto the user. Spells might blind, shrivel (d10 damage) or cause temporary insanity. Visions would cause d10 years aging, some deformity or loss of 1d6 power.

by Kelly Grant

LETTERS



TO THE EDITOR

I had just finished reading one of the 1985 MUDDA Newsletters, and couldn't help but note the number of people who were asking for assistance in some form or another. MAGinc was asking members to help decide the future of the 'The Devil's Advocate', there was an (almost) appeal to rekindle interest in RPGing by a group effort, Penny Love expressed the need for articles for TDA. Matthew Cohn appealed for people to express their interest in ARPL and Rhys Howitt was appealing for an effort to make MAGinc a powerful force in roleplaying again. These are all worthy endeavours, but consider this - at the same time as MAGinc is making these requests I am sure that the RMIT Science Fiction and Gaming Club is asking for people to contribute to their magazine 'Hypersonic' and there is a need for contributions to both 'Multiverse' and 'Breakout'. Now, of all these activities, only writing for Breakout is a financial proposition [as of this issue, contributors to Multiverse are being paid, Ed.], so everyone else is asking for, in effect, volunteer labour. I can hear you all say, "Yes, but everyone benefits from it" and I agree, but most people are basically lazy and you can only spread the volunteers so thin.

So what is the point of this letter? I believe that the effort is being spread TOO thin, and that in fact we need some consolidation. As an aside, did anyone stop to think why ARPL became a joke in the first place? I was involved after all, and I can't deny that it was ineffectual. Perhaps this was because everyone involved with ARPL was also heavily involved in keeping some other club or group running as well. There are of course other reasons which can wait at the moment. Consider also that 'Hypersonic', 'The Devil's Advocate' and 'Multiverse' all originate from Melbourne, all are aimed at a similar target market and that there is a good deal of overlap between contributors and even production staff. Similarly, there are two clubs involved in roleplaying in Melbourne who have respectable weekly meetings. There are undoubtedly people who would like to attend both. Yet both of these meetings are held on Friday evenings, less than 2km apart. More duplication of effort!

I would like to suggest the following:

- (1) That the administrators of clubs contact one another as often as possible to avoid duplication of effort. Move meetings to separate nights, or combine into one large meeting. Perhaps clubs can alternate the production of newsletters, or one can look after

the newsletters and the other meetings.

- (2) Before a club starts a new activity (or someone starts a new club) ask yourselves - who is this service for? Are they provided elsewhere? Will there be someone with sufficient free time and interest to run this indefinitely?
- (3) This will be the most contentious proposal - I would like to see 'Hypersonic', 'The Devil's Advocate' and 'Multiverse' merge, or at least form a collected pool of articles from which to draw. If the number of contributions available to Multiverse is increased this can only increase the quality and free the present contributors/producers for other tasks. If in return, Multiverse is provided to clubs which provide articles at a discount rate, all parties should benefit. There would still be a place for individual club newsletters, as there is now. I freely admit that I have no knowledge of the economics of the situation, but would hope that this stimulates at least some discussion.

The following I consider to be an addition to the main thrust of the letter above. I would not expect to see it published, but I would like my thoughts to be available to those who are interested.

First, I would like to address the points made in this first ARPL news article. ARPL was a joke. No question about it. But why? I have already mentioned that its 'leaders' were too busy elsewhere, and this would account for much of the problem, but the point to note is that until now THERE WAS NO ONE ELSE SUFFICIENTLY MOTIVATED TO TAKE OVER THE RESPONSIBILITY. This lack of leaders seems to be a general problem throughout our RPGing fraternity. Those who choose to lead are usually very capable, those who do it because no one else wants to are usually abysmal. For instance, no one can question that Rhys Howitt's contributions to MUDDA/MAGinc have been enormous. At the same time his contribution to ARPL was minimal. Don't misunderstand me - Rhys did a good job with little support, but his main effort remained with MAGinc. Similar stories would be true of other people involved in ARPL. In the same vein, I do not know of an RPG orientated club which has successfully changed leadership. The ideal situation would be one in which the natural leaders could initiate a project, then leave it to others while moving on to begin new projects such as ARPL. Unfortunately, this is not the case, for reasons which I do not fully understand, and our leaders often need to retreat from new projects to prevent the collapse of earlier ones. However, while the full reason for this escapes me, one point I would like to make is that the positions of leadership, mainly club executive offices, are not seen as desirable. I have never seen an election contested by two people who sincerely wanted the job. Instead I have seen those who took the position jeered and generally hassled. THIS MUST STOP! The next question is how to make positions such as these desirable. I don't know.

The next point in Matthew's ARPL news is the need for communication. Now, I'd like to point out that I think ARPL is a great idea, and I don't seek to discourage Matthew at all (you can tell I'm about to be a wet blanket, can't you). I would merely like to emphasize a pitfall I have encountered and which should be avoided. This does not only apply to ARPL, but to many other organisations.

Regarding communication - communication between whom? The natural answer is between people who would not otherwise make contact. Good idea. After all, what is an RPG club for if not to promote interactions that would not otherwise occur. Here comes the problem, which I would like to present on two levels. Interclub communication - this would be mainly between executives, who would hopefully keep their membership informed. Ideas would be bounced around ARPL, executives would meet at ARPL, and ARPL would be seen to be doing something. Unfortunately, role players are naturally friendly people and soon the executives of different clubs are getting along fine and they stop communicating through ARPL, or going to ARPL meetings. When a new club comes along, it is left out in the cold and may feel that ARPL is useless. I am NOT saying this must happen, just that it should be recognised as a possibility which should be avoided.

The other level is that of the membership of an individual club. My experience is drawn from that of the UNSW Role Players Association, and may not be common, but leads one to ask just who a club should be aiming to provide for. When the club was begun there were 40-50 members reasonably active, who had not previously met. They then began to play in one another's campaigns at mutually convenient times. These times generally did not coincide with club meetings, especially since many members were in more than one campaign. Soon after this attendance at meetings dropped off - the members were busy role playing at other times, and generally each campaign had an adequate number of players. They no longer needed the club as a formal organisation - there was enough communication going on amongst new friends to keep them busy. So then, when a new player came along to join the club, there was little to direct him towards - active membership had dropped to less than 10. Once again this is a tendency worth actively combating. It is also interesting to note that those who remained with the club, regularly attending weekly meetings, were the executive, who usually knew a higher proportion of the membership than the general members, were involved in more role playing, had more contacts with other clubs, and who in fact needed the formalised structure of a club least of all. This is a great way to create a disillusioned executive when, in fact, they should be the most enthusiastic of all.

I do not know if any of these processes are unavoidable, or even common. I have never seen them documented before. Similarly I

suspect that many club members are unaware of why their club has problems, or how they arose. I believe that members are uninformed and unmotivated. Vague proposals are unlikely to produce a response - they should be made more specific. Requests for assistance from members should be 'one task only'. I believe you are more likely to get a response to 'Could you please write a review of Champions III detailing how it expands the game system' than 'Could you write something for our magazine'. The same principle holds true when asking for assistance in any activity.

Finally, leaders need to find out why the masses are unmotivated, and look at successful organisations such as the Society for Creative Anachronism to see how club members can become interested and involved, rather than occasionally prodding their members to see if there is any activity. At the same time the masses need to realise that by undertaking to assist in some of the more onerous, but simple, tasks they can free active and innovative people for other tasks, and increase the rewards for everyone involved.

While not everyone may agree with what I have said, or may agree but see no solution to the problems. I can only hope that this letter will provoke some discussion which will profit as large a group as possible.

Steve Hayes
Nth Melbourne, Vic

In his letter Steve raises several valid points. In the limited space available to us, we will comment on those aspects which directly concern us here at Multiverse, though we would welcome comment from interested parties on all aspects of the letter.

While there is some duplication of effort between clubs, most clubs actually cater to different audiences and age groups, for example The Wizard's Council in Melbourne has different, though just as viable aims to MAGInc, with the result that both provide valuable, yet dissimilar services to the gaming community. Many clubs are in this position, providing a service to different groups and geographical locations and the amalgamation of services could leave some people out in the cold. We feel that the example cited by Steve is more of the exception than the rule.

As regards the merger of 'The Devil's Advocate', 'Hypersonic' and 'Multiverse', we consider that the aims of the three magazines are dissimilar. Where 'The Devil's Advocate' and 'Hypersonic' are club newsletters/magazines with limited production resources, 'Multiverse' is produced by a private group, committing its own resources (rather than those of a university) to the production of a professional roleplaying magazine for a national market.

A general comment on the rest of Steve's letter, is that the problems he documents, are to a large degree the sort of problems which face any organisation; the lack of competent executives, failure to communicate between executive and members and general apathy. Like Steve, we know of no magical solution to these problems. Ed.

I agree with Terry Symonds from Bundaberg, Qld's point (in Multiverse #1) about characters having a low strength, can you please tell my players (who sometimes end up with low characteristics) that, when I, the GM, change their characteristics that it is for their own good.

A F Boermans
Carlton, Vic

It is of course up to you, the GM, to decide what occurs in your own campaign, including the setting of minimum characteristic levels for superbeings. However, I believe that you are denying your players the fun of playing a character with a handicap. In the campaigns in which I play or run, many characters have a low characteristic or two, and it is interesting to watch the players devise a way to overcome their handicap. Ed.

It is good to see that Australia now has a quality gaming magazine of its own. Your articles are very interesting and have helped my gaming, especially Traveller and AD&D.

I have included some artwork which I hope you could find a place for in your magazine. Keep up the good work,

Mike Bell
Highton, Vic

We appreciate your compliments. It is good to receive feedback from our readers. We have put your artwork on file, and will use it as soon as possible. We appreciate all submissions, including artwork, and we will be paying contributors for their work that is published. Ed.

I am interested whether or not you can change a Super Squadron character into an AD&D character, and if so how?

Micheal Elliot
Bucasia, Qld

Yes, it is possible to convert an SS character into an AD&D character. An article on this procedure was included in issue #1. However, as the issue is out of print and stock (though I believe Jedko has a few copies), we have sent you a copy of the article (it should have arrived by now). Ed.

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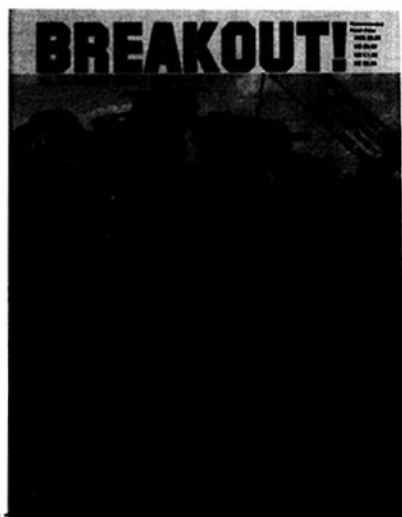
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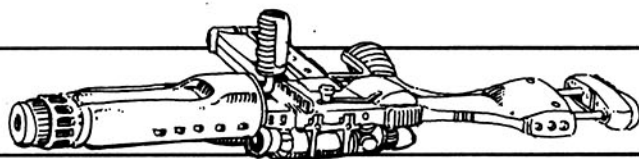
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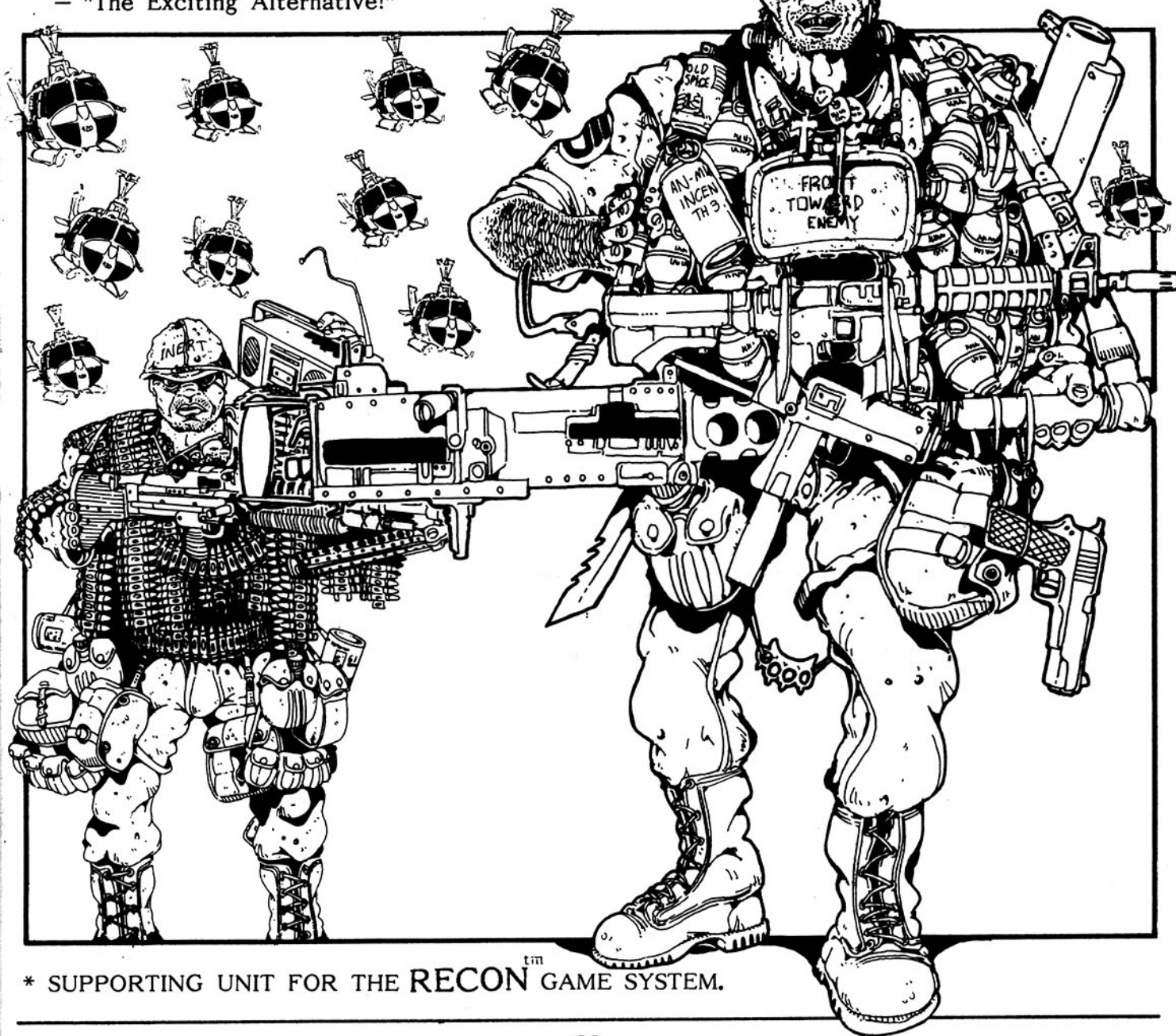
ARMOURY: (1A) The M-18 Claymore AP mine can be deployed and triggered from a personal chest mount (provided that the character is Special Forces qualified).

COMBAT: (1B) All communist antagonists (et al left-wing political exponents) come under Target Acquisition Rule 6D: 'tyrannical dictators of evil empires' — and thus suffer severe deductions in potential Divine 'Strategic' Support (DSS). This is defined as an automatic fatality when the subject is hit by player-character fire.

COMBAT: (2B) The fire-fight rule under chart 3B1(A), 'The John Wayne Factor', is doubled when used in conjunction with 'Regulation 1: Armed Men Being Offensive' (RAMBO). This enables six enemy soldiers to be hit (and neutralised) with one 5.56mm steel-jacket round (as used by Hollywood).

SCENARIO: (1C) The Vietnam war (for all insert purposes) could be won providing that upper-echelon governmental protagonists and their pacificatory media entourage are discharged from the game mechanics.

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