

# Signs & Portents

38

Roleplayer

## The Accused

The truth is less than obvious in this Judge Dredd investigation

## Enchanted Items

Magical items ready for use in your RuneQuest campaigns

## Gladiators of Messantia

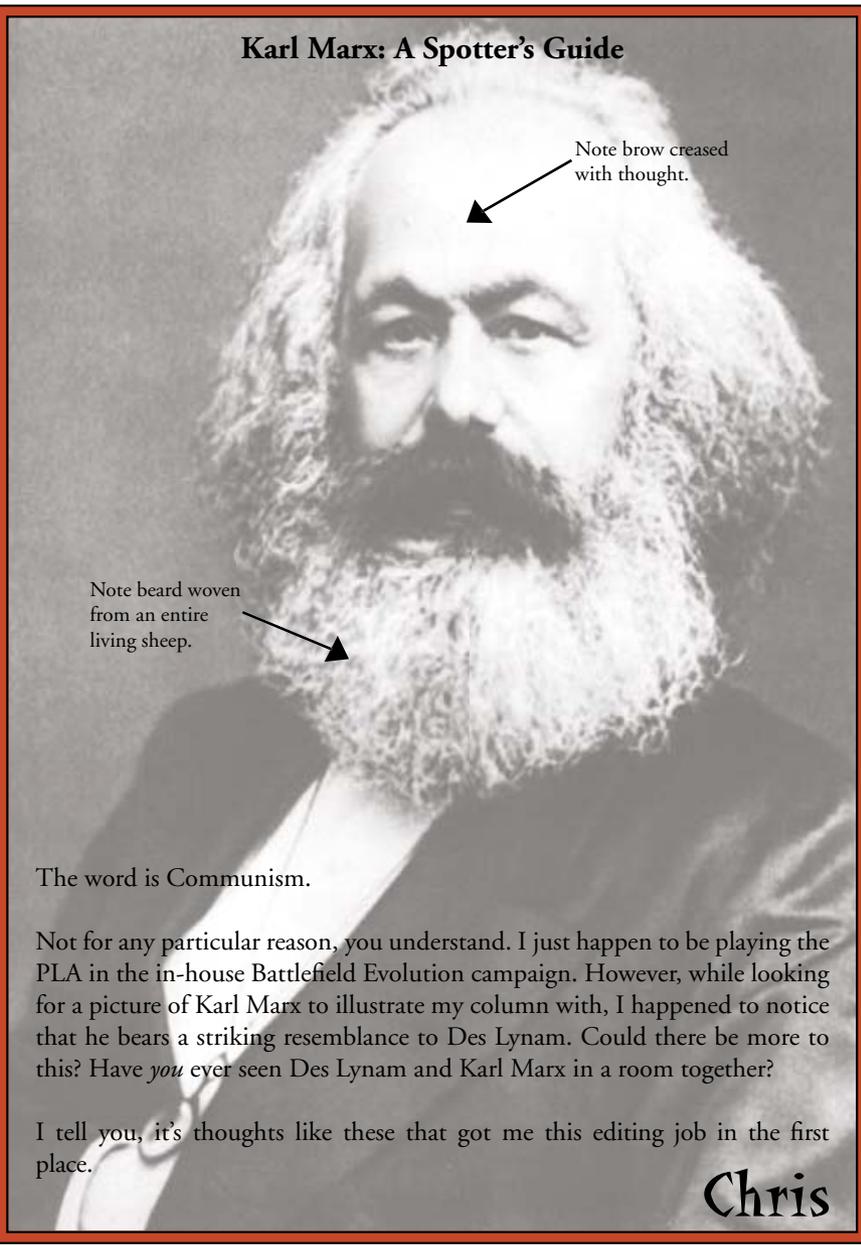
The thrill of combat, the roar of the crowd, and pots of cash for Conan: The Roleplaying Game

Plus... more of the Babylon 5 conversion guide, 101  
disguises for mimics, the Redhelm Menace, a new take  
on RuneQuest character generation, and more!

S&P Roleplayer 38  
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## Karl Marx: A Spotter's Guide



Note brow creased with thought.

Note beard woven from an entire living sheep.

The word is Communism.

Not for any particular reason, you understand. I just happen to be playing the PLA in the in-house Battlefield Evolution campaign. However, while looking for a picture of Karl Marx to illustrate my column with, I happened to notice that he bears a striking resemblance to Des Lynam. Could there be more to this? Have *you* ever seen Des Lynam and Karl Marx in a room together?

I tell you, it's thoughts like these that got me this editing job in the first place.

**Chris**

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# Signs & Portents: Roleplayer Contents

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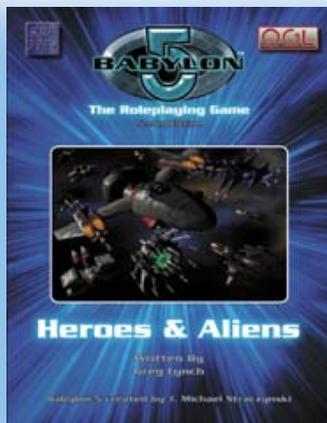
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# EYE ON MONGOOSE

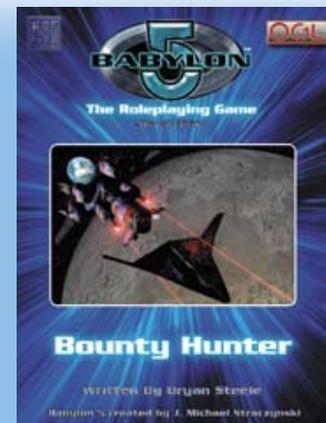
*Coming This Month*



## **Babylon 5: Heroes and Aliens**

The universe of Babylon 5 is incredibly vast and complex, a place teeming with life of all shapes and forms. Each of the great star-faring races has its own heroes and its own villains, most of whom take part in the great saga that is Babylon 5. These are the individuals who shape the events of the galaxy, their smallest action yielding consequences beyond what they imagine.

Heroes and Aliens is dedicated to all these creatures and races, the many forms of life that make the universe of Babylon 5 so deep and compelling. It is dedicated as well to the heroes and villains of Babylon 5, demonstrating their advancement in knowledge and skill throughout the scope of the story.

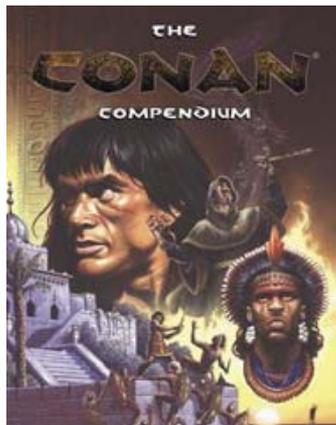


## **Babylon 5: Bounty Hunter**

Bounty Hunter is a guide to the world of freelance agents trained to bring their targets back from the far reaches of the Babylon 5 galaxy. These brave souls take up contracts from all walks of life to make their living.

The career of the bounty hunter can be dangerous, even deadly. Their lives can be at risk everywhere they go. This sense of adventure and danger draws just as many souls into the life of the bounty hunter as the career path tends to end prematurely, creating a cycle of 'fresh meat' to fill the well-worn shoes of those who could not handle the pressure of the job.

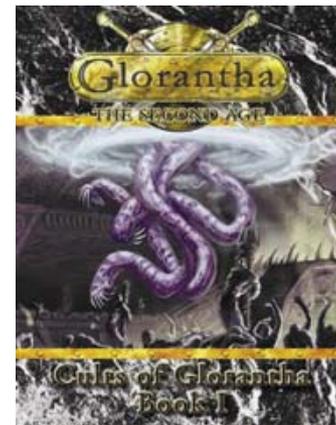
With the right mixture of raw talent, skill and a touch of luck – the next million-credit bounty could be theirs to track, confront and hopefully bring in.



### Conan: The Conan Compendium

Penned by the hand of seven of Conan the Roleplaying Game's best authors, Conan: The Compendium reprints the best articles for Conan the Roleplaying Game from Signs & Portents, as well as two never-before published adventures from Vincent Darlage and Eric Rodriguez.

Continuing the excitement begun by Robert E. Howard, players and Games Masters alike will find exciting options for their Hyborian Age campaigns. Prestige classes, codes of honour, scenarios, encounter tables, Hyborian Age cities and new rules are yours for the taking. Reprints of these articles have long been requested by the fans of Conan the Roleplaying Game and are now available. Conan: The Compendium is a wonderful role-playing complement to Conan the Roleplaying Game's rules and supplements.



### Cults of Glorantha, Book 1

The cults dedicated to Glorantha's deities are among the oldest and most powerful institutions on the face of Glorantha. Contained in this book are the secret lore and powers known only to the most ardent worshippers of the gods, whether they are the faithful warriors battling in the Storm King's image for the cause of good, or vicious, uncivilised trolls emulating the evils of Zorak Zoran in the name of personal power.

In the Second Age, the Godswar is a distant time legend and myth, but the divine warriors that shed their blood so long ago now thrive on the respect and dedication of mortal followers. Cults of Glorantha: Volume I opens the way for players to join their cults of choice and rise through the ranks from mere believers to Runelords and Runepriests, going to war and adventuring across the world in the name of their god - calling down holy power and honouring the pantheon with grand deeds.

# CONAN®

# RuneQuest

# Tales from Mongoose Hall

Matthew Sprange

Star Wars IIa

## A Lost Hope

### The Story So Far...

A group of Jedi Padawans have been placed in charge of the defence of the Bothan world of Kothlis, under siege from the forces of the Separatists. The loss of this world would mean the entire Bothan Sector could fall to Count Dooku and the players, now masterless after their Masters were killed in a trap laid out by the cunning General Syphus, must marshal their forces while convincing a divided Bothan people to take up arms and join in the struggle.

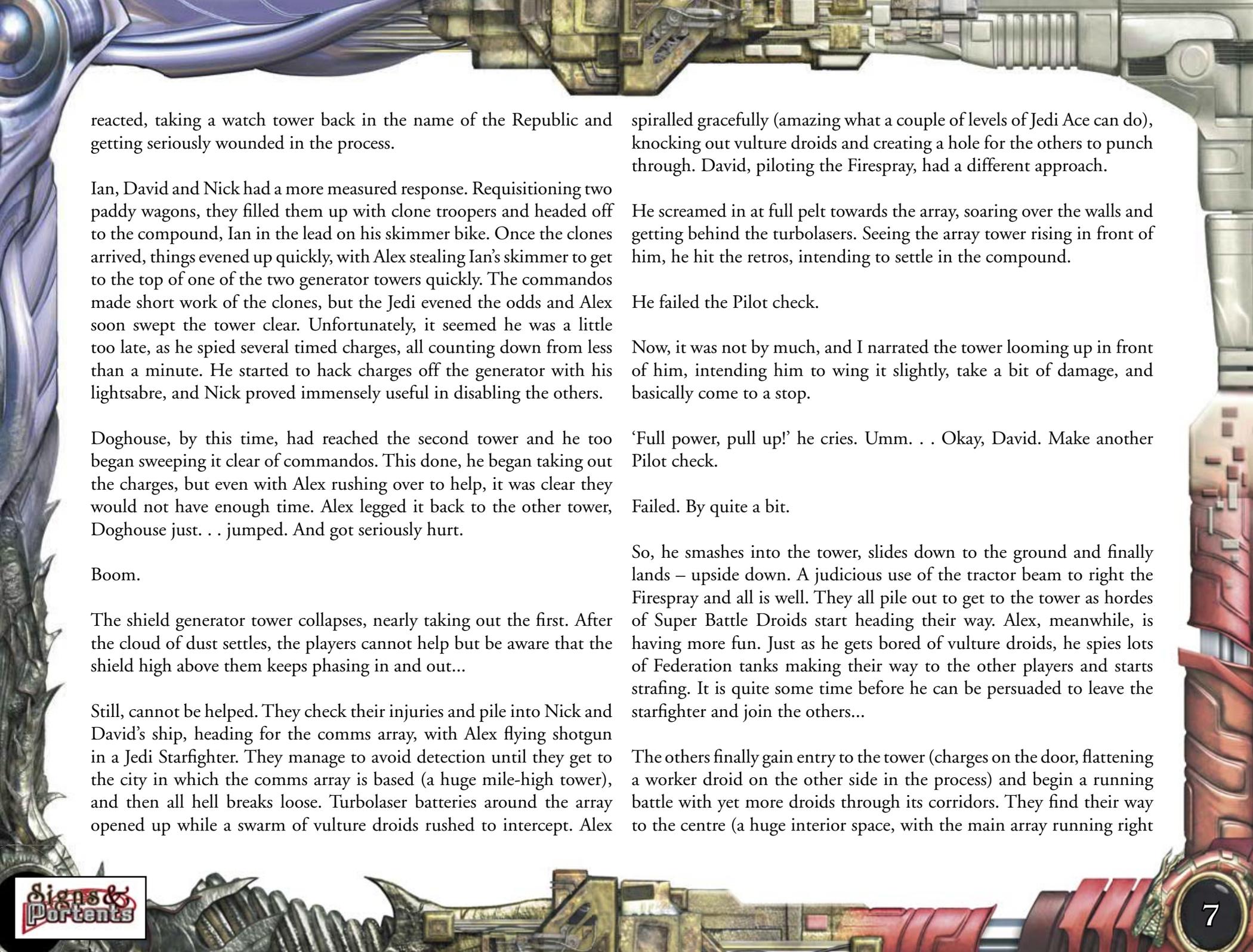
So, if you read last issue's Tales, you will know the players have a major victory under their belts, having destroyed two Trade Federation Battleships and seriously damaged another. General Itchigo (played by David) sadly fell as they challenged the minions of the Dark Side, however, and so a new character was in the offing. Coincidentally, Nick decided to join our game as well, and he and David rolled up a couple of smugglers who had already been arrested by the Bothans.

And what of the Bothans? Well, they seemed to be ecstatic after seeing half of the Trade Federation fleet destroyed. Uprisings were occurring in several other cities and in the capital of Botha'qui there was an overwhelming vote of support for the Republic (just a few abstentions).

The players debated on the next target and decided to, once more, go for the jugular – they would ignore an uprising taking place on a small island to the East and instead head straight for the main comms array on the planet, which was currently being used to direct all the droid forces present. However, after the destruction of the Trade fleet, General Syphus was not a happy bunny (no, she was not dead, having reached a life pod!), and the skies were literally full of vulture droids. Problems, problems...

The players quickly identified a good ship (a Firespray) in the starport that might have a chance of getting them to the comms array and Ian (playing the Bothan detective, remember) soon tracked down the owners. Yup, you guessed it, the two ne'er do wells currently languishing in prison. After offering them, well, not much really, Ian persuaded them to come along – just as an alarm went out. The shield generators of the capital were under attack.

As is fairly normal for this group, they were all split up doing different things in different parts of the city – so the response was less than forthright. Alex and Doghouse were on the scene first and quickly saw Separatist Commandos mowing down clone troops as they busied themselves high in the generator towers. Leaping forwards, the Jedi



reacted, taking a watch tower back in the name of the Republic and getting seriously wounded in the process.

Ian, David and Nick had a more measured response. Requisitioning two paddy wagons, they filled them up with clone troopers and headed off to the compound, Ian in the lead on his skimmer bike. Once the clones arrived, things evened up quickly, with Alex stealing Ian's skimmer to get to the top of one of the two generator towers quickly. The commandos made short work of the clones, but the Jedi evened the odds and Alex soon swept the tower clear. Unfortunately, it seemed he was a little too late, as he spied several timed charges, all counting down from less than a minute. He started to hack charges off the generator with his lightsabre, and Nick proved immensely useful in disabling the others.

Doghouse, by this time, had reached the second tower and he too began sweeping it clear of commandos. This done, he began taking out the charges, but even with Alex rushing over to help, it was clear they would not have enough time. Alex legged it back to the other tower, Doghouse just. . . jumped. And got seriously hurt.

Boom.

The shield generator tower collapses, nearly taking out the first. After the cloud of dust settles, the players cannot help but be aware that the shield high above them keeps phasing in and out...

Still, cannot be helped. They check their injuries and pile into Nick and David's ship, heading for the comms array, with Alex flying shotgun in a Jedi Starfighter. They manage to avoid detection until they get to the city in which the comms array is based (a huge mile-high tower), and then all hell breaks loose. Turbolaser batteries around the array opened up while a swarm of vulture droids rushed to intercept. Alex

spiralled gracefully (amazing what a couple of levels of Jedi Ace can do), knocking out vulture droids and creating a hole for the others to punch through. David, piloting the Firespray, had a different approach.

He screamed in at full pelt towards the array, soaring over the walls and getting behind the turbolasers. Seeing the array tower rising in front of him, he hit the retros, intending to settle in the compound.

He failed the Pilot check.

Now, it was not by much, and I narrated the tower looming up in front of him, intending him to wing it slightly, take a bit of damage, and basically come to a stop.

'Full power, pull up!' he cries. Umm. . . Okay, David. Make another Pilot check.

Failed. By quite a bit.

So, he smashes into the tower, slides down to the ground and finally lands – upside down. A judicious use of the tractor beam to right the Firespray and all is well. They all pile out to get to the tower as hordes of Super Battle Droids start heading their way. Alex, meanwhile, is having more fun. Just as he gets bored of vulture droids, he spies lots of Federation tanks making their way to the other players and starts strafing. It is quite some time before he can be persuaded to leave the starfighter and join the others...

The others finally gain entry to the tower (charges on the door, flattening a worker droid on the other side in the process) and begin a running battle with yet more droids through its corridors. They find their way to the centre (a huge interior space, with the main array running right

up the centre of the tower), only to be stalled by two Droidekas – a model they have learned to hate. Pinned down by its fire, they had to wait for the Jedi to stop mucking around with droids and tanks before they could run in and, with a few quick swipes of their lightsabres, silence the Droidekas.

Now in charge of the comms array, confusion reigns. The Jedi want to use it to contact Coruscant and the Jedi Council. Fordy wants to use it to contact the Republic Bureau of Intelligence. Nick was quite happy piling up charges he had stolen from the Separatists along the array.

The Jedi were told reinforcements were at least another month away. Fordy was told to watch the Jedi very carefully (hah!). When all was done, Nick confidently claimed he had set the devices so the explosion would be concentrated within the tower itself and only knock out the array, not damaging anything structurally – and then watched as the entire tower collapsed on the main terminus of the city outside. Ah, well.

Flying back, confident they had won the war, the Jedi were alerted to a bright flash on the horizon. They soon discovered this was General Syphus eradicating an entire city (it is the evil genius thing, you know). Correlating data with the clones and Bothans, they soon discovered that another city would be blasted in a few hours and then it would be the turn of Botha'qui. This is where something strange began to happen...

Alex and Doghouse strode into the Bothan Council to update them on the situation. But Doghouse was acting strange, demanding the Bothans do as he said, without question, and bring forward anyone who abstained from voting for the Republic for 'judgement'. Okay, a little odd I thought – was he rethinking General Syphus' previous offer to become an apprentice? (He had racked up enough Dark Side points



to give it a serious try.) Alex tried to step in, lightsabres were drawn and, well, it ended up with Alex being Force Pushed off the roof of the Council Hall, while Doghouse crept away to steal a spaceship.

To cut a long story short, the players had got together to make a little plan amongst themselves. They would portray Doghouse as having betrayed them in a very public manner and then, as Doghouse flew towards General Syphus' ship, would suddenly reveal that they were all friends and that it had all been done to make me think Doghouse had turned so that General Syphus would buy into it as well. Basically so they could all get onto her ship.

Umm, okay, I thought, nice one. But what did they think the scenario I had planned would be? End of the campaign, was it possible that I might be planning a last confrontation on, oh I don't know – the ship of General Syphus perhaps?

Anyway, that little misunderstanding out of the way, we continued. Nick, Fordy, Ian and David sneaked off the ship to plant charges on the main reactor of the ship – a long way to walk, and there would be opposition on the way. Doghouse, friend of General Syphus, went straight to the bridge, to do her bidding. Alex was 'doing an Anakin', racing up and down the hanger of the ship in his starfighter, shooting anything that moved.

Let us focus on Doghouse for a moment. Docking in the centresphere of the ship, he is escorted to the bridge – General Syphus is waiting for him with three of her Dark Jedi minions, and she is pleased to greet her new apprenticesssssss...

She soon has him busy, trying to hunt Alex down, as Doghouse's test of loyalty will be to slay his old friend. Using the force, Doghouse stretches out and finds Alex, communicating with him telepathically to visit the bridge. After some hesitation, Alex does so, grabbing a

shuttle to the centresphere. A worried Nemoidian greets him, offering to show 'his Lord' to the bridge. Alex waves him away and manages to guess correctly the way to the bridge himself (thus avoiding some embarrassment).

Meanwhile, Ian and co have infiltrated their way to the main reactor. Charges are set, timers clocked and they start a quick egress. The countdown to the ship's detonation has begun.

Alex enters the bridge, and immediately feels the presence of the Dark Side (Syphus, not Doghouse). According to their previous plan, Alex whips out the Sith Amulet he had been holding for Doghouse, and throws it to the other Jedi. Syphus, on seeing this, cries out loud – though they do not know it, she has been searching for the Sith tomb in which they found it. Summoning the Force, she snatches it out of mid-air, only to find Doghouse is using his powers to grab it too. Realising he has betrayed her, she hisses, and Doghouse feels his grip on the amulet begin to slip. Alex pitches in, and it soars to Doghouse's grasp – he turns to Syphus and her minions and, accepting the Dark Side point (another one) blasts her. Two minions drop immediately from the damage, and Syphus reels. She draws two lightsabres and rushes Doghouse as he draws his. Her assault is relentless, and he begins to suffer badly.

Alex, meanwhile, quickly dispatches the last (heavily wounded) Dark Jedi, before turning to help Doghouse with Syphus. Lightsabres spin and clash for many rounds until a savage thrust from Alex (close to death himself) skewers Syphus and her dark reign is finally at an end!

Knowing the ship is about to explode, the Jedi head back to the Firespray to meet their waiting comrades and beat a hasty retreat. Behind them the ship explodes, but they look up worriedly as the last remaining Trade Federation Battleship hangs in space above them. At that point, a

Republic Warcruiser jumps in, telling it to stand down. The Separatist ship tries to run but is mercilessly gunned down. The players are soon contacted by the Republic ship, and are introduced to Jedi Master Kit Fisto, who tells them he was en route to reinforce another battle when he heard their call to the Jedi Council.

So, campaign ended? Nearly.

The two Jedi are grilled by Kit Fisto on the way back to Coruscant, concerning their relationship with the Bothans, General Itchigo's death, and their overall conduct – at the end of it, they are feeling quite unappreciated. Ian quits his job with the Bothan police force, Fordy is pleased to go back home, while the two smugglers begin counting up all the riches they will get for helping to free the Bothan people.

Back on Coruscant, everyone is welcome in the Jedi Temple, and Alex and Doghouse are taken through a series of tests by Kit Fisto during a leisurely tour of the place. After being asked to use the Force to perform a number of seemingly pointless tasks, being tested on Jedi lore and then asked to demonstrate their proficiency of their newly constructed lightsabres, Kit Fisto smiles as he announces they are now Jedi Knights!

And much rejoicing was had among the players. Right before Master Fisto tells them that, as new Jedi Knights, they have the honour of being the temple guard that night. This didn't bother the others. David and Nick had been doing the rounds on Coruscant news channels, and were now spending the proceeds on women, wine, women, song, and women. Ian had applied for a job with the Republic Bureau of Intelligence. Fordy was skulking around the Jedi Temple, looking for dirt.

So, we ended the campaign with the two Jedi on the main entrance of the temple, ensuring no one enters who should not be there.

'Oh, hang on. Doghouse, Alex, what is that coming? Why, it seems to be a dark-cloaked figure mounting the stairs. Oh, he has a full legion behind him. What is that you say? Can you recognise him. Umm, yes, it seems to be Anakin Skywalker. What do you suppose he is doing here? No, he does not answer your challenge. Ah, he has just drawn his lightsabre.'

Now, that was where the campaign was going to end. A few Padawans rallied to the defence of the temple's entrance, but were quickly gunned down by the clones. Doghouse goes down to Anakin in a single sweep.

Then Alex wades in, strikes at Anakin and rolls a sodding critical. With loads of damage. And Anakin does not have a huge number of Wounds...

'Umm, you just killed Anakin. Ah. Umm. Okay, I guess you end up taking control of the Council and ruling the galaxy, Or something.'

Motto of the Story: If you don't want a player to roll a certain number, then don't make him take the roll!

**Next time: A return to fantasy gaming, and another bash at the world of Eberron. There are flying monsters, orcs, drow and maniacal girls with swords – and that's just the party...**

# Flight of the Redhelms

By Darrin Drader

Near the beginning of 2262, in the episode *A View From the Gallery*, Babylon 5 was attacked by a mysterious race, known only as the Redhelms. Although they were eventually repelled, they managed to cause significant damage to the station, and went on to menace other systems. Their motive for attacking was most likely to test the defenses of the various interstellar fleets and governments to see where they might be able to eke out a foothold and begin expansion, though this is purely speculation. Although this attack has since been overshadowed by the Drakh threat, there are a number of governments who fear that the incursion may have been a precursor to a full scale invasion by a new and powerful player in the galaxy.

Although never defined in the series, the Redhelms represent an untapped race that the Games Master may choose to introduce into the game. Who they are, what they want, and how they choose to interact with the other races is entirely in the hands of the GM, though some suggestions are offered below.

## Who are they?

Based on their relatively slow movement and the hardy nature they exhibited during the attack, it is conceivable that the Redhelms are a race of methane-breathing humanoid lizards. Hailing from an uncharted system, they have carved out an empire that is as old as the Centauri Republic, though not as large. Aggressors, they conquered all of the weaker alien races within their sphere of influence. Within the past several years, they achieve limited jump technology, which eventually

led to the discovery of a functioning jump gate. Their scientists studied it and learned how to activate it so that they could explore other systems.

Like the Minbari, the Redhelm society is divided into three castes. The ruling caste is also sometimes called the Planners. They make decisions on all things, from trivial decisions like urban planning, to the more important decisions, such as when to go to war, or when to make their displeasure known to their enslaved races by making an example out of one of them. The second caste is the scientist caste. Bred for their intelligence, they engineer new technologies and analyze new technologies they encounter. The portion of the brain that controls emotion was bred out of them so that their interests can be purely intellectual. The final caste is the largest – the warrior caste. This group reports to the Planners, and they enforce their will upon their subjects. The legions of the warrior caste are trained to lay down their lives at a moment's notice for their leaders, and they are often deployed en masse so that they can overwhelm their opponents. Once a defeat is evident, they are willing to retreat. Their race reproduces quickly, and because their economy is fueled by slavery, they have few obstacles to producing fighters and larger craft in the quantities needed for major offensives.

Both the Vorlons and the Shadows had contacted the Redhelms, though neither deemed them useful. The Shadows chose not to enslave them, preferring the variety that they found with the Drakh. The Vorlons found them neither particularly virtuous, or orderly, nor were they susceptible to their message that they should

become so. Ultimately, since this race did not interact with the other major races of the galaxy, they were left in relative peace. The Shadows simply observed them, and occasionally destroyed a colony, a city, or a world to see if they would be stronger when they rebuilt.

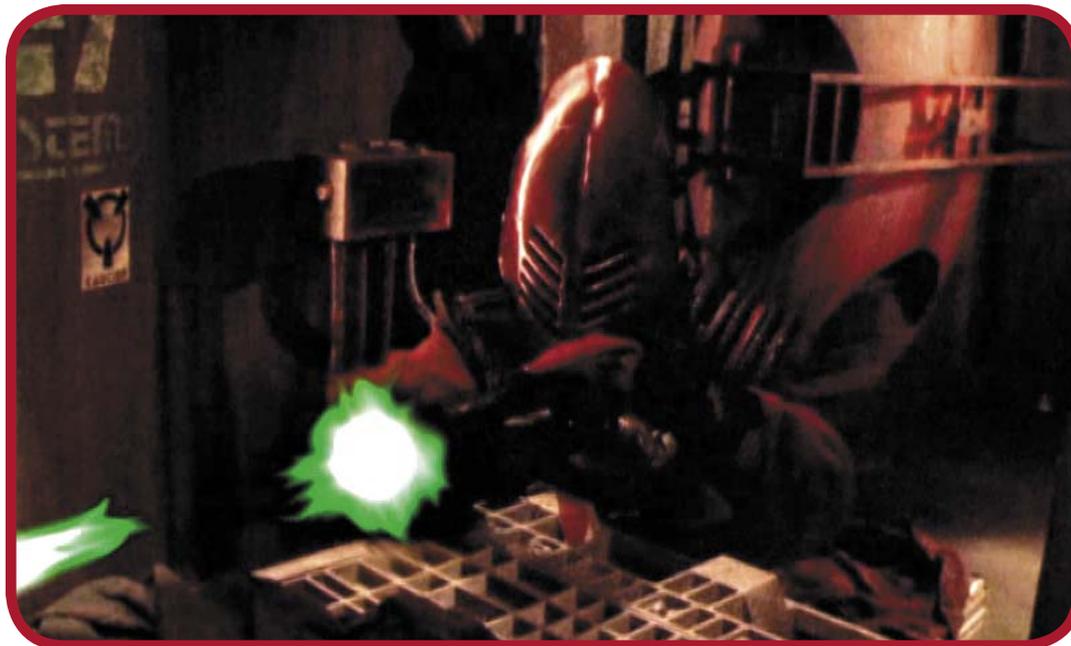
## What do they want?

The Redhelms are an aggressive species that seeks to expand their influence. They view themselves as the dominant species in the galaxy, and their other races simply exist to serve, or they believe they will be made serve the other races. They do not see a reason why they should work together with other races, and they intend to fight to the death against any adversaries that prove stronger than them. The shadows frequently frustrated them because they would attack with devastating consequences, and then leave before enslaving them. Because they are a warrior race, the Redhelms are not interested in diplomacy, and are likely to react with violence towards any diplomatic efforts.



## Suggested Racial Traits

- +2 Constitution, -2 Dexterity: Redhelms can take a beating and remain on their feet, though they do not react as quickly, nor are they as agile as some races.
- All Redhelms are of Medium size.
- Redhelms have a base speed of 30 feet.
- It takes a lot to kill a Redhelm. So long as they still draw breath, they will carry on with their assigned task. Redhelm gain Toughness as a bonus feat.
- Automatic Language: Redhelm
- The Redhelms have tough scales that grant them a natural Damage Resistance of 2. This stacks normally with any armour worn.
- Methane-Breathers: Humans cannot breathe in the Redhelms' natural atmosphere, and vice versa.
- Favoured Class: Officer (ruling caste), Scientist (scientist caste), and Soldier (warrior caste). A multiclass Redhelm's favoured class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing.



## Redhelm Armour

Redhelm armour consists of durable metal with a padded interior. The helmets are matched, red, and roughly bucket shaped with eyeslits made of reinforced glass. The armour is sealed, and has enough internal atmosphere to sustain life for three hours. Although not specifically designed for this purpose, it also provides 45 minutes of protection from exposure to hard vacuum before it breaks down completely.

## Anti-Muon Pulse Cannon

The primary type of weapon used by the Redhelm warriors is the anti-muon pulse cannon. It emits a green ray, which is composed of concentrated anti-muon particles. Ammunition includes a cartridge that contains a high grade capacitor and a shielded anti-muon canister.

Outfit	Cost	R/I	Weight	DR	Speed Reduction	ACP
Redhelm Armour	Special	Special	15 lb.	3	-10 ft.	-4

Redhelm armour and weapons can only be obtained by non-Redhelms by purchasing it from the governments that encountered the advance force, or from the black market. In either case, Redhelm equipment is so rare that each purchase will be a unique negotiation.

On Babylon 5, Redhelm gear is Restricted under normal firearm laws, and will draw additional attention from figures higher up the command chain if openly displayed or used.

Weapon	Cost	R/I	Damage	Critical	Ammo	Range Inc.	Size	Weight	Type	Features
Anti-Muon Pulse Cannon	Special	Special	2d6	x3	10	50 ft.	Small	1 lb.	Energy	AP 2, Automatic, Light

# 101 Mimic Disguises

Also suitable for use with other cunning shapechangers

By Johnathan M. Richards

Mimics have been around for a long time; so long, in fact, their origins are shrouded in mystery. Many believe mimics were first created by wizards in magical laboratories, that they are artificial in nature. This goes a long way toward explaining why they are so often used as treasure guardians. Their ability to alter their size, shape and exterior texture to 'mimic' inanimate objects helps them excel at this task; most intruders are unaware of the mimic's presence until it lashes out with a rubbery pseudopod.

Unfortunately, Games Masters do not always use the mimic's extraordinary camouflage abilities to their full potential. Invariably, the creature is disguised as a treasure chest; that particular ruse has long since become a cliché. Many Player Characters do not even worry about the possibility of there being a mimic in the area unless and until they spot a treasure chest.

Of course, the reason for this stereotype is not difficult to track down: In fantasy illustrations, the mimic is almost *always* depicted as a treasure chest.

Mimics are capable of assuming many other forms besides the ubiquitous treasure chest. In fact, they can assume just about any shape subject to their size constraint: a mimic's body fills up about 150 cubic feet, so the forms it imitates must take up a like volume. Of course, a mimic's body is highly pliable, so while 5 feet by 5 feet by 6 feet or thereabouts is the most common

configuration for a mimic, it can stretch itself out, squash itself down, or mould its flexible body into a wide variety of shapes. Furthermore, considering it has an intelligence as keen as an average human, a mimic is sure to use its shape-altering ability to its fullest potential.

The following are only some of the many potential disguises a mimic might employ. Hopefully, these initial suggestions will inspire Games Masters to devise a few cunning mimic strategies of their own and give their Player Characters something new to worry about!

## 1. The contents of a large chest

Nothing says the mimic has to be the chest itself; a mimic could crawl inside a sufficiently large empty chest and take on the appearance of a pile of coins and gems. This has the added benefit of surprise, especially since the party's rogue will have just determined there is nothing inherently dangerous about the chest before opening the lid and getting a sticky pseudopod in the face!

## 2. A bed

This could be anything from a simple wooden bed to an ornate four-poster structure fit for a queen. Bear in mind the area in which the mimic employs this tactic, as a fancy bed might seem somewhat out of place in an alchemist's laboratory and a noblewoman's guest bedroom would undoubtedly warrant better than a rude

stone slab for a bed. The best thing about the bed ploy (from the mimic's point of view) is that occasionally humanoid prey actually attempt to put the 'bed' to its obvious use, resulting in a prone victim when the mimic secretes its adhesive glue.

## 3. A door

Despite the fact most doors take up much less volume than a mimic, mimics can make a convincing 'door' by crawling into an existing doorway and making their outer surface at least look like a standard door – after all, that is all the unsuspecting prey will see of it. A mimic does not even need a true doorway; it can position itself in the middle of an underground passageway (or in the long hallway of a building) and create a 'door' facade on each of its exposed sides. This has the advantage of allowing the mimic to strike out at prey approaching the 'door' from either side.

## 4. A door frame

In a larger passageway, the mimic could skip the door altogether and just form a door frame and the surrounding section of wall, allowing potential prey to simply walk through it before lashing out at them.

## 5. An arch

Along the same lines, the mimic could form an elaborate archway in an outdoor setting such as a garden or temple area. This disguise might even be mistaken for a magical portal.

## 6. A statue

Statues are easy disguises for mimics, for they are common objects within the creatures' size constraints. Depending upon the size of the statue, the mimic's disguise might include the slab or cylinder of marble used as the statue's base. The statue disguise often works best when the mimic is among several authentic statues, 'hidden in plain sight.'

## 7. A set of stairs

The 'stairs' disguise usually works well for the mimic; people seldom expect the stairs to attack them! While the mimic's body is flexible enough to allow it to change shapes, its outer covering is hard enough to support the weight of several humanoids walking on it like true stairs without their feet sinking into the mimic's flesh. The mimic can use this trick in almost any room simply by projecting a fake 'door' at the top of the stairs with its upper body, giving potential prey a reason to climb the false stairs in the first place. Naturally, adhesive secreted on an adventurer's boots immobilises him rather nicely.

## 8. A wardrobe

This is an innocuous disguise in a furnished bedroom. The 'wardrobe' appears as a large wooden structure, rather like a closet in function but a separate piece of furniture, usually with two doors in the front and occasionally a drawer on the bottom.

## 9. A crate

Crates make excellent disguises for mimics lairing in storerooms. Given the mimic's intelligence, the 'crate' it becomes might have lettering on the side hinting at the valuables stored inside. If the mimic gets a good look at the approaching victims, it might even alter the lettering to appear in a more appropriate language! In a room filled with actual crates, the mimic might form a convenient but phoney crowbar on its own top, the better to lure inquisitive prey within striking distance.

## 10. A section of floor

In a pinch, a mimic could flatten its pliable body into the semblance of a section of flooring. This ploy works best in natural caverns, where the stone floor is uneven anyway; indoors, the ploy is most effective in very small rooms, where the mimic can cover the entire floor with its body, giving the appearance of a raised floor.

## 11. A section of wall

Mimics can also flatten themselves and stand up against the wall of a small room, passing themselves off as the true wall. Embellishments on this ploy might include adding items of interest on the false wall, such as paintings, hanging weapons or shields, or (better yet!) a wall safe to attract potential prey.

## 12. A large boulder

Boulders are easy disguises, allowing the mimic to blend in nicely in rocky areas above ground or pretty much anywhere underground. A mimic working with or for a band of giants might even be thrown at the Player Characters while in boulder form!

## 13. A pile of rocks, perhaps appearing as if from a cave-in

Rather than becoming a single large rock, the mimic might take on the appearance of a pile of smaller rocks. To draw in the victims, an item of interest might protrude from the apparent rockslide, such as a gauntleted hand holding a gleaming sword.

## 14. A stalagmite

Stalagmites are effective disguises in underground caverns, especially in areas where stalagmites and stalactites are common. The mimic just needs to position itself close by the common path, often adjacent to the cavern's entrance or exit, where prey must venture near when passing by that way.

## 15. A raised dais, perhaps with an impressive-looking tome on it

This ploy works equally well in a wizard's library, a religious temple or even a small room without any other accoutrements. The curious are just going to *have* to check out the book on the dais and then the mimic strikes.

## 16. A sacrificial altar

A table-sized stone altar, with impressive dried bloodstains and maybe a fancy-looking knife or dagger on it, is not too unusual in a world filled with secret cults and depraved religions whose evil ceremonies often involve humanoid sacrifice. If the 'freebie' weapon is not enough of an incentive to lure in the prey, the fact that many sacrificial altars have hidden caches in them often is. Come on, admit it: how many times have you seen an altar in an adventure with a secret panel where the evil priest keeps his stash of healing potions or whatnot?

## 17. A large gong

This is a less frequently seen but perfectly sensible bit of dungeon dressing that most adventurers will not think twice about. In fact, rather than suspect it is a mimic in disguise, many will spend their time ruminating on whether or not hitting the gong would be a good idea. On the one hand, it might summon foes; then again, it might cause a beneficial magical effect. A particularly devious mimic might cause the words 'GONG OF WISHES' (or something similar) to appear to be etched into the gong's surface.

## 18. A cannon

Granted, not all campaign worlds include gunpowder or smokepowder but in those that do a cannon is just about the right size for a mimic disguise. Plus, what adventurer can resist checking out a cannon, especially if it appears to be both in good condition and unguarded?

### 19. A cart or chariot

Carts and chariots (and even small wagons) are all about the right size for a mimic and they can be loaded with fake goods – formed from the mimic’s pliable skin, of course – to lure in inquisitive and greedy prey.

### 20. One of two animal statues flanking the outside entrance to a building

Many structures have a set of such statues: lions, griffons and sphinxes are all common. A wizard might specifically have just one such statue flanking his front door to provide an unobtrusive place for his guardian mimic to ‘hide in plain sight.’

### 21. A pile of large sacks, apparently each filled to bursting

It does not matter what the sacks appear to be filled with (in fact, not knowing is often the best lure) but you just *know* somebody in the party is going to want to check out the pile of unguarded sacks over there in the corner of the dungeon room. Just to sweeten the pot, the mimic might make it seem as if a small pile of coins or gems overflows from a few of the bags.

### 22. An iron maiden in a torture chamber

Of course, a mimic is too big to become a hollow, functioning iron maiden but as long as the spiked door is apparently closed, this torture device is just about the right size for a mimic and it fits in nicely with all of the other implements of pain one would expect to find in a well-furnished torture chamber.

### 23. A sarcophagus or coffin

Whether in a mummy’s tomb or a vampire’s hidden lair (or even in something as unprepossessing as a normal crypt), a mimic can easily blend in as a closed coffin or sarcophagus. This works especially well in crypts or mausoleums where several such coffins are lined up in a row; the mimic simply adds one more to the row by



*Woodpile? Or mimic?*

assuming such a form itself. A mimic might have also worked out a deal with a vampire, agreeing to assume the role of ‘decoy coffin’ as a lure for would-be undead hunters seeking the vampire’s lair.

### 24. A large barrel

Barrels can be found in nearly any storeroom and are not out of place in a well-stocked pantry or large kitchen. Lettering on the side of the barrel might indicate something particularly noteworthy, like dwarven spirits, smokepowder or even fresh water in an area (like remote sections of the subterranean realms) where such is not in abundance.

### 25. A large metal barrel, appearing to be an *apparatus of the crab*

Of course, for this ploy to make any kind of logical sense, the mimic would have had to have seen an actual *apparatus of the crab* itself so it could pattern itself after the real thing. This is not a disguise the average, free-

willed mimic is likely to come up with but those in the employ of powerful wizards might actually have a working *apparatus* close at hand. In fact, the wizard might even have suggested this ploy as a decoy for thieves attempting to make off with the real device. In any case, with the right description, most players will jump to the erroneous conclusion their characters have just had the good fortune to stumble across a two-person, lobster-shaped submarine; many will be too eager to try out the controls to worry about the possibility their new-found gizmo is really a hungry mimic. The mimic can even choose to make things *really* obvious by appearing in the fully extended, lobster like form of the *apparatus of the crab*, rather than the ‘iron barrel’ form.

### 26. A pile of stacked lumber

This is a readily believed disguise in an area where recent construction has been performed (or is still undergoing).

### 27. A large pile of firewood

This disguise works well for mimics lurking outside of fixed buildings near the forest or in a small room (like an unused pantry) just outside a large kitchen.

### 28. A large cauldron

The large cauldron disguise works best in a kitchen or a magical laboratory, perhaps in an alchemist's lab. For the mimic's bulk to fit inside the form of a cauldron, it will have to fake a substance filling the inside of the pot or include a closed lid as part of its disguise.

### 29. A storage cabinet

A wooden or metal storage cabinet is unobtrusive and can be expected to appear in nearly any room without drawing suspicion.

### 30. A small dinner table

To hide its bulk, the mimic usually employs a 'tablecloth' reaching to the floor (or nearly there, anyway; close enough in any case to prevent anyone from noticing the area underneath the 'table' is not as empty as it should be). Shiny silverware, golden candelabra or succulent dishes can be added to the appearance of the table to draw in the prey close enough for the mimic to strike. Note the appearance of food is a tricky proposition for the mimic; it runs the risk of alerting its victims to the nature of the trap if they do not smell the scents appropriate to the visible food.

### 31. A throne

A throne can appear in any large room, whether the room is intended as a throne room or not. What adventurer who has never set foot in the room before is going to notice the difference? The 'throne' disguise has the added potential attraction of foolish prey actually sitting on the seat thus offered; such victims give up much of their mobility when the mimic's adhesive kicks in and usually make for easy meals.

### 32. A large suit of full plate armour

A full set of armour, perhaps with a held shield and an appropriate weapon, is a natural garnishing in the homes of many wealthy individuals. Of course, the mimic walks a fine line here, having to make the armour realistic enough to pass as the real thing without raising the suspicions of any adventurers first spotting it that it might be animated. There is nothing worse for a mimic than having gone to all the trouble of creating an innocuous disguise only to have its intended prey raise weapons in caution as soon as they spot it. Of course, even cautious prey can be put off guard if the mimic remains immobile long enough for the adventurers to assure themselves the suit of armour is not animated, before proving them wrong and lashing out with a sticky pseudopod.

### 33. A bookcase in a library

What could be more innocuous in a library than a bookcase? Intruders (especially those with spellcasting ability) raiding a wizard's home often take the time to do a thorough check of the library; after all, they never know when they will come across a wizard's spellbook or maybe just a few loose spell scrolls. Once they are in position, the mimic strikes.

### 34. A steel cage

Obviously, a cage made solely of steel bars is outside a mimic's camouflage abilities but it could easily assume the form of a metal cage, perhaps solid on all sides but one, where there is a closed door and a narrow window slit. Mimics speak Common and can call out 'Help me!' in their best 'helpless prisoner' voice from within the 'cage' to attract gullible do-gooders who come within hearing range.

### 35. An oval throw rug

A mimic cannot squish itself as flat as a rug. To make this disguise work, the mimic must have a specially made

floor with a rug-shaped depression several inches deep hiding the rest of the mimic's body. Naturally, this ploy usually only applies to mimics working for the wizards or sorcerers who created them. Anyone standing on the rug becomes instant mimic-prey.

### 36. A well

This disguise works well outdoors. The mimic need not worry about the fact its 'well' does not in fact go down into the ground; by the time anyone is close enough to peer down the 'well,' they will easily be within striking range.

### 37. A fountain

Fountains are common sights around large manors and if a mimic employs this disguise near the abandoned ruins of an old manor house or castle keep it helps explain why the fountain is not currently working. While mimics cannot produce the supply of water to fill their 'fountain' disguises (they would require an accomplice to fill up the 'fountain' with water), they can form false coins on the bottoms of their 'fountain' receptacles to lure in the greedy.

### 38. A pillar or column, reaching from floor to ceiling

This is an excellent disguise, usable in nearly any building or underground chamber. Indoors, the column can be ornate or simple, depending upon the decor of the room; in a mine or dungeon passageway, the mimic can look like a simple wooden support beam keeping the ceiling from caving in. A mimic could also become a freestanding marble pillar in an outdoor garden or such, passing itself off as a decoration rather than a functional support.

### 39. A large grandfather clock

In game worlds where such elaborate timekeeping devices exist, a grandfather clock makes an excellent disguise for a mimic inside a mansion.



*Tapestry? Or mimic?*

#### **40. A large sled or sleigh**

The mimic can choose to be one of these vehicles stored in a shed or sitting unattended on the side of the road. It might even opt to appear overturned and abandoned, possibly still packed with goods to lure in the greedy and inquisitive. If overturned in such a way as to obscure the riding area from view, the mimic could also use its mastery of the Common tongue to moan for help as a 'victim' pinned under the vehicle.

#### **41. A wooden raft**

This is a logical choice for a mimic along a waterway, whether it be river, lake or stream. As with other 'vehicle' disguises, the mimic might opt to appear loaded down with valuables.

#### **42. A well-stocked canoe or small rowboat**

Player Characters being chased toward a river by a band of savage orcs or bloodthirsty hobgoblins might opt not to look a gift horse in the mouth if they see a canoe along the bank just waiting to be used. A smart mimic might use this ploy to good effect, especially if in cahoots with the aforementioned band of warriors.

#### **43. A long sofa**

Sofas are a common sight in most homes; they do not immediately arouse suspicion and the mimic can often strike out at sitting prey by employing this disguise.

#### **44. A wooden outhouse**

This is a common building just outside cabins and hunting lodges. Fortunately for the victims, a mimic utilising this disguise cannot actually simulate a working door, so they will not be in as disadvantageous a position when the mimic strikes as they could be otherwise!

#### **45. A low brick wall**

This would be an effective disguise along the side of a bridge over a creek, at the edge of someone's property

or even in a large dungeon cavern, presumably built to provide cover. A mimic might even get really clever and 'extend' an existing wall with its own body, patterning its outer form to mesh with the rest of the wall.

#### **46. An obvious stone trap door in the floor, complete with large handle**

This would not appear to be a secret door, merely one requiring a bit of strength to pull open. The advantage of this disguise is the mimic's potential victims often sheath their weapons so they can grasp the 'handle' with both hands! Of course, dwarves can use their stonemasonry to determine the trap door is not actually made of stone.

#### **47. A palanquin**

This is a large, enclosed box with two long handles extending from both front and rear, allowing servants or slaves to lift it and carry the important personage riding inside. While most palanquins have open windows, a mimic disguising itself as one could opt to create 'closed curtains or shutters' hiding the fact this particular palanquin is not hollow.

#### **48. A tapestry hanging on a wall**

Just like the 'throw rug' ploy, a mimic cannot actually compress its body to the mere thickness of a wall hanging or tapestry. However, it could use its body to 'fill in' a recessed portion of an existing wall (perhaps by covering an exterior window opening or the open passageway to another room) and alter its exterior to look like a hanging tapestry. Oftentimes secret doors are found behind hanging tapestries, so Player Characters might be inclined to approach the mimic just to check out the possibility.

#### **49. A claw-footed tub**

Since a mimic's body will not fit into such a shape if the 'tub' is as hollow as a real one, it usually fakes it

with a false layer of water almost to the top of the tub. This 'fake water' is not very authentic looking at close quarters but by then it is usually too late for the victim.

#### **50. A catapult or similar siege engine**

This might be a good disguise for a mimic at or near a castle. It might try to look abandoned by adopting a wooden composition and faking a missing or broken wheel.

#### **51. A wine press**

These structures are often large enough to fall within a mimic's size constraints.

#### **52. A writing desk**

This is a suitable disguise for a mimic in the home of its employer. Writing desks can be found in bedrooms, studies, libraries, scriptoriums or just about anywhere indoors. The top of the 'desk' can be outfitted with a map, writing utensils, books, ledgers, cashboxes or anything else the mimic might think of to entice its prey within range.

#### **53. A pile of loose treasure**

This would be an appropriate form to adopt in the back of a creature's den or cave, even if that creature does not normally collect treasure. In such cases, adventurers might be too excited about the unexpected hoard to worry about it being a mimic trap. On the other hand, a mimic might blend itself in with real treasure; it is not hard to imagine a dragon feeding a mimic scraps of its slain prey in exchange for the mimic's services as a hoard guardian.

#### **54. A raised magic circle on the stone floor of a wizard's laboratory**

This ploy does not even have to take place in an actual wizard's laboratory; a circular area of raised stone in the middle of an otherwise empty room makes most people think 'wizard' rather than 'mimic.' The stone circle could

(and probably should) have 'magical symbols' etched into its upper surface, perhaps around the borders of an etched pentagram or magic circle. Fancy touches like an unlit black candle at the tip of each point of the pentagram are not essential to the illusion but add that extra touch that just might make the difference.

#### **55. One of the 'stepping stones' used to cross a narrow river, stream or creek**

Of course, in this disguise, most of the mimic's bulk is under the surface of the water and thus not readily recognisable. All it needs to do is project enough of its body above the surface of the water to allow passers-by to assume it is a stepping-stone and put it to such use. In fact, by spreading itself into a narrow configuration, the mimic could form several 'stepping stones' in a row.

#### **56. A tent**

An abandoned tent is a good ploy to use along a well-travelled road, especially if the mimic can find an actual campsite with a fire pit in a clearing and so on. It is something one would not normally suspect as being out of place and weary travellers are likely to approach at night and ask to share the campsite.

#### **57. A fireplace**

Any room without a fireplace can be made to look like it has one; the mimic need only assume such a shape against any wall and remember to add a 'chimney' reaching up to (and apparently through) the ceiling. Naturally, such fake fireplaces will not be lit (the mimic lacks the ability to simulate fire) but if the mimic has a spellcasting accomplice it could always simulate a fire with a *continual flame* spell cast on a small log in the 'fireplace's interior.'

#### **58. A rotting tree stump**

This is an unobtrusive disguise pretty much anywhere outdoors but the mimic will have the best luck assuming such a shape someplace where potential prey is likely to

pass by. Alongside a game trail or a road, in the backyard of an abandoned house rumoured to hold hidden treasure or by a roadside shrine are all logical choices for such a stunt.

#### **59. A 'healing booth'**

For the mimic with a sense of humour and a low opinion of the intelligence of the average adventurer, it could adopt the shape of something that does not actually exist in real life, like a 'healing booth.' This could look like a large stone slab with a recessed area on top the size and shape of an elf or human. Naturally, it would have 'Healing Booth' written (or carved) onto its side, along with instructions for its use (probably something along the lines of having the intended recipient lie down in the recessed area and placing so many coins or gems in a slot on the side). Assuming the mimic has a bit of warning, it could alter the ploy to best apply to its upcoming victim, perhaps by altering the size of the humanoid receptacle to 'dwarf size' if appropriate or changing it to a 'Resurrection Booth' if an adventuring party approaches carrying the slain body of one of their comrades. Regardless of the specifics, this disguise works best in underground dungeons, preferably in a well-travelled area where adventurers are most likely to pass by.

#### **60. A narrow tunnel, just barely big enough to crawl through**

A mimic could fill up most of an underground passageway with its body, leaving only a narrow crawl way just big enough for a person to squeeze through by crawling on his stomach. To sweeten the pot, it could create a pile of coins or a shiny sword at the far end of the 'tunnel' to encourage a Player Character to put himself at such a disadvantage. A patient mimic will wait until the Player Character has crawled all the way to the end before closing off the entryway with its body and attacking its foolish prey.

### 61. The false bottom of a pit trap

A mimic could fill the bottom of a deep enough pit trap with its own body. If it is just being lazy, it could simply adopt the form of a layer of stone and wait for hapless prey to fall on it. It could even form a series of spikes at the bottom of a pit that does not already have them, 'upgrading' the danger of the trap. A mimic might even fake a bit of likely treasure at the bottom of the pit, to entice adventurers to enter the pit willingly. Even if they lower themselves safely by rope to get to the 'treasure,' they will be at the bottom of a pit and unable to quickly escape when the mimic lunges out at them.

### 62. A golem or shield guardian

A mimic disguised as one of these magical constructs needs to be sure it presents itself as non-threatening. It does not do any good for the mimic to adopt such a form if the Player Characters are going to attack it upon first sight. What works best is if there is a manual, instruction booklet or phoney magical device allegedly explaining how to control the construct. The phoney instructions should, of course, include touching the disguised mimic in order to 'activate' it – and that is when the mimic strikes.

### 63. A crenelation at the top of a castle wall

Castle walls are either crenelated or they are not, so a mimic is not likely to get away with trying to add a crenelation to an existing wall that does not already have them. However, this ploy works well in ruins, where part of the wall has crumbled away or been destroyed by invaders years ago. In such a case, the mimic can take the place of a pre-existing crenelation (or part of a wall, for that matter), striking out with surprise against those who pass by. Outer castle walls have the advantage of often having a very narrow walkway, so the mimic's victims will not have much manoeuvring room when it lunges for them.



### 64. A snowman

Talk about an innocuous-looking disguise! A mimic can adopt this shape pretty much anywhere outside where there is snow on the ground and can add such touches as an old hat on the snowman's head, sticks for arms, stones for eyes, a carrot nose and so on. The disguise works best immediately after a recent heavy snowfall, which would potentially cover the tracks of the individuals responsible for making the snowman. In fact, a mimic holding this shape during a snowfall will quickly be covered in an actual layer of snow, making its disguise that much more authentic!

### 65. A treehouse

This need not be anything elaborate, merely a wooden structure in the thick branches of a sturdy tree. While the mimic cannot actually make itself hollow and therefore cannot trap its prey 'inside the treehouse,' it does get to strike out at its victims while they balance themselves on a branch – not the best footing for a battle with a mimic!

### 66. A stone bench

A large stone bench could be found in an elaborate garden, along a roadside, behind a temple or any of a dozen other places where it fits in with the surroundings. As with other 'furniture' disguises, the stone bench ploy allows the mimic to attack its victims when they least expect it and often when they will not even have weapons in hand.

### 67. The smooth, stone sphere of a crushing trap

This could be part of a 'trap within a trap.' The mimic could take the place of a large, rounded stone sphere rolling down an inclined tunnel to crush those that set off the trap. Such a trap was featured in the movie, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Of course, once the Player Characters evade the first trap – perhaps by hugging the sides of the corridor as the 'stone' goes crashing by – the second trap is sprung as the mimic lashes out with its adhesive pseudopods. Of course, there is nothing saying the Player Characters will automatically evade the 'rolling stone' part of the trap, either!

### 68. A weapons practice dummy

This would not be a human-sized mock-up but rather a large, sturdy pole with various projections sticking out at different angles: targets to be hit, swinging weapons to avoid and so on. It would make an appropriate disguise for a mimic hidden in a weapons practice area or in any large room near an armoury.

### 69. 'The sword in the stone'

For the truly gullible, a mimic might pattern itself after King Arthur's sword Excalibur stuck in a large boulder. It does not matter if 'King Arthur' is not a part of the campaign world; the players (as opposed to their characters) will recognise the symbolism and hope for a powerful sword for their Player Characters if they can only pry it from the stone. This is another mimic disguise with the added benefit of the victims putting away their weapons before approaching the mimic (in this case, to get a better grip on the sword imbedded in the stone).

### 70. The petrified 'remains' of a large creature

While a mimic cannot take the form of a living animal, it can take the shape of stone and thus disguise itself as a petrified creature of the appropriate size. This works best in an area where actual petrified creatures exist, such as near the lair of a medusa or a flock of cockatrices.

### 71. A gallows

A mimic could create the illusion of a gallows: not just the wooden structure from which the noose hangs but also the platform with the trap door that is opened under the victim. Naturally, this disguise works best outside and abandoned towns are the most logical places for this to work. After all, a mimic is not going to want to try this trick in the middle of a busy city!

### 72. The stocks

These structures usually lock a victim's head and hands in place and can be found in a village square (where the

victims on display can be laughed at and taunted by the villagers — again, this works best for the mimic in an abandoned town rather than an inhabited one) or as part of a torture room or cell.

### 73. A pushcart of goods

This could be apparently where a baker, fruit vendor, leathercrafter or weaponsmith sells his wares. Pushcart vendors are usually found in marketplaces or along the sides of busy streets, so for a mimic to employ this disguise it would best be in a dark alley near a street, where the cart might look abandoned and tempt someone to investigate the possibility of 'free goods' while still allowing the mimic relative privacy in which to devour its meals.

### 74. A megalith or one of the standing stones in a trilithon

Megaliths are single stone slabs standing upright, while trilithons are formed by a stone slab lying horizontally on the tops of two vertical stones. Druid circles are often made up of these and a mimic could easily add to the number of stones in such a circle.

### 75. An obelisk

This is another easy disguise for a mimic for obelisks are usually mysterious in nature anyway and will often not be thought out of place by most adventurers. The obelisk could be covered in magical runes or symbols; a clever mimic using such a form could make its writing increasingly smaller, forcing anyone investigating the writing to come closer and closer until within striking range of the mimic.

### 76. A small, stone crypt in a graveyard

Any mimic can make itself unobtrusive in most graveyards by taking the form of a small stone crypt or mausoleum, just big enough to house one body. If there are enough wealthy individuals buried in the cemetery

for the disguise to fit in, the mimic could also disguise itself as an elaborate headstone or bit of ornate graveyard statuary.

### 77. A totem pole

The mimic can assume the form of a wooden totem pole, with 'carved' images of gods or animals. This usually works best in an outdoor environment but the ploy could be adapted to an underground environment by substituting stone carvings in place of wooden ones.

### 78. A small hut or hovel

This would have to be a very small structure (or else a very large mimic; note mimics can grow to Huge size) in a clearing in the forest or jungle or perhaps in an urban environment as part of a 'shantytown.' As when it simulates other similar structures, the mimic cannot actually become hollow and allow its potential prey to 'enter' its body cavity and it usually ensures there are no windows to be looked into to discover there is not a visible 'interior' to the structure it is mimicking.

### 79. A brick oven

This structure could be found in a kitchen, a pottery maker's shop or similar areas. It might also be found outdoors. Naturally, when a mimic adopts this form, it is always as an 'unlit' oven (one currently without a fire burning inside of it).

### 80. An enormous, sun-bleached skull

While there might be few (if any) creatures big enough to actually have such an enormous skull in real life, a mimic might adopt such a form if only to attract the curious. Mimics using this ploy often go all out to make the skull intimidating, adding demon horns, a ridge of sharp spines along the dorsal surface and the like. Oddly enough, this disguise often lures in necromancers, who if anyone should know better.

### 81. A small bridge

A mimic could take the form of a small wooden or stone bridge spanning a narrow stream or creek. Like other forms that encourage people to 'climb on', this allows the mimic to strike out at its victims when they least suspect it.

### 82. A 'meteorite'

As a variation on the 'boulder' disguise, a mimic could take on the form of a fallen meteorite. To make this trick more effective, it requires a trench behind it where the 'meteorite' would have impacted with the ground. The advantage of the 'meteorite' form over the 'boulder' form is meteorites often contain exotic metals not available anywhere else. Such metals are extremely valuable for the construction of magic armour and weapons and thus the mimic ups its chances of having intelligent prey investigate it.

### 83. A pipe organ or piano

In a church or temple, a mimic might take on the appearance of a large pipe organ or a piano. Such a disguise would also appear innocuous in the manor of a wealthy noble or well-known bard.

### 84. A marker-stone

Along a well-travelled road, a mimic might disguise itself as a marker-stone, a flat-sided boulder with the distance to a nearby city inscribed on its side or an arrow pointing the direction to a famous landmark or pilgrimage site.

### 85. A fallen tree blocking a road

A crafty mimic might take the shape of a fallen tree lying across the road, blocking the flow of normal traffic. It might appear to have fallen there naturally, perhaps having been recently struck by lightning, or possibly even placed there deliberately, in which case the Player Characters might concentrate on keeping an eye out for the bandits responsible for such an obvious trap rather than expect the fallen tree to attack them. In any case, mimics using this disguise do not usually include healthy foliage in their 'tree limbs,' preferring to take the shape of dead, leafless trees.

### 86. A recent grave

A mimic can easily assume the form of a shallow grave, simply by making its body appear as a pile of packed dirt of the appropriate size. Further enhancements might include a simple marker of some type (a stone, a pair of crossed sticks, or even a sword). Such simple graves could be found anywhere but mimics employing this tactic often do so along well-travelled roads or trails out in the wilderness, well away from large cities (where proper burial in a cemetery might be more appropriate).

### 87. An enormous globe of the world

This disguise would be appropriate in the centre of an arch-villain's lair, where he plots his nefarious schemes. The Player Characters might investigate such a globe, perhaps in the hopes of gleaning a clue about the villain's intentions. The 'globe' could be inscribed with

trade routes, the locations of various armies and so on – whatever the mimic thinks would be most enticing to its potential victims.

### 88. An extremely oversized gemstone

A mimic could potentially alter its body to take on the semblance of an enormous, single gemstone, hoping to lure in those victims with more greed than common sense. Granted, such a gemstone could conceivably exist in a campaign world, especially if it had been brought from the Elemental Plane of Earth.

### 89. A large egg

A mimic could easily take on the appearance of an enormous egg, possibly that of a dragon, wyvern or other suitably large creature. For obvious reasons, this ploy works best in the back of a cave or cavern. The mimic 'egg' could be the only one in the cave or it could be intermingled among actual eggs (either with or without the knowledge of the parents of the real eggs!), performing a guardian role or else just stealing scraps of food from the creatures lairing in the cave.

### 90. A footlocker

Footlockers are often found at the foot of a bed. They are frequently found in barracks at the end of bunk beds and thus the form provides the mimic an unobtrusive disguise in such locations.

### 91. A lifeboat

A mimic might sneak aboard a seagoing vessel while it is docked and assume the innocuous shape of a lifeboat.



*Mosaic floor? Or mimic?*

While the ship is at sea, the mimic might pick off crewmembers and passengers one by one and might only be discovered for what it is when the real need for a lifeboat arises!

#### 92. A dock

A mimic could take the shape of a small wooden dock, complete with support beams leading down into the water. This allows the mimic to prey upon people walking onto the dock (perhaps to fish) and those who might choose to use the dock to tie up their boats. In the meantime, between humanoid victims the mimic can always strike out at nearby fish in the water.

#### 93. A bale of hay or straw

This is the perfect disguise for a mimic inside a barn. Depending on the sizes of the bales, the mimic's disguise could incorporate one bale or several piled on top of each other.

#### 94. A stone water trough

As with the 'bathtub' and 'cauldron' disguises, a mimic employing the shape of a water trough needs to create a fake layer of water nearly to the top of the trough, to disguise the fact the trough is not hollow.

#### 95. A pile of bones

A mimic could take the form of a densely packed pile of bones. This works especially in the lairs of large carnivores, where one might expect bones to be strewn about, or in areas where necromancers might be found. The pile of bones might also represent the shattered remains of numerous animated undead skeletons.

#### 96. Giant fungus

In underground areas, all sorts of fungus grow wild, some reaching remarkable size. A mimic in the shape of a giant toadstool (or a cluster of smaller fungi) could be overlooked as harmless by Player Characters or actually

sought out as a food source by subterranean creatures. Most mimics using this disguise ensure they do not look like known 'dangerous' species of fungus, like violet fungus or shriekers, unless intermingled with actual members of such species.

#### 97. A nest

Given the size constraints of the average mimic, its 'nest' disguise is used on the ground rather than up in a tree. The 'nest' usually appears to have been crafted of twigs and branches and may contain a few shiny bits of 'treasure' to entice intelligent prey.

#### 98. An enormous boot

This would be a good disguise for a mimic living in a cloud giant or storm giant's dwelling. It might also be a clever tactic to use in an area where a huge giant *could* live but does not. The average band of adventurers coming across a giant-sized boot in a vast subterranean cavern spends more time worrying about where the boot's owner might be and the best tactics to use against him when he returns than wondering whether the boot is liable to spring out at them.

#### 99. A church pew

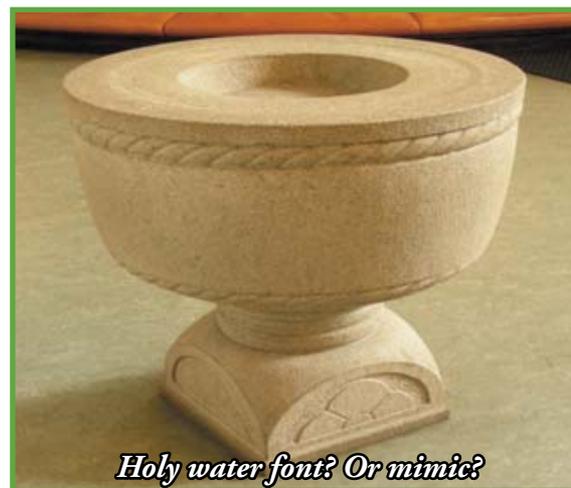
This is a nasty trick to pull on a Player Character party, especially if the church is a good-aligned one where they are apt to feel safe. Of course, the mimic would have snuck in there without the knowledge of the clerics running the church; in an evil church, the mimic might be there with the head priest's blessing.

#### 100. Barding

While only the smallest of mimics has any chance of disguising itself as a suit of human-sized armour, most can take the shape of a good set of warhorse barding. The disguise works best when it appears as if the barding is draped onto a wooden stand; the mimic's pliable form is both barding and stand.

#### 101. A holy water font

This is another mimic disguise that gets most of its effectiveness from the fact it takes place in an area where the Player Characters least expect it. It works well in abandoned churches and temples in areas with numerous undead, especially when the mimic is working with the undead. Imagine: the Player Characters are fighting a vampire and it chases them to the ruins of a church. There, in the corner of the chapel, stands a font of holy water. The desperate Player Characters approach, hoping for a weapon to use against their powerful foe, only to have the font suddenly lash out at them with a sticky pseudopod...



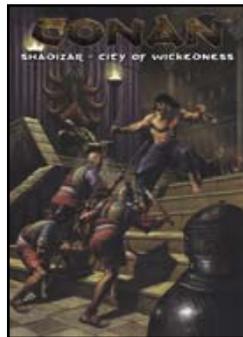
*Holy water font? Or mimic?*

There are no doubt countless other disguises a crafty mimic could adopt. Games Masters, the next time you use a mimic in an adventure, give it some credit and have it take the form of something other than the standard treasure chest! On the other hand, if you spring too many of these surprise mimic attacks on your players too often, pretty soon you will see them looking askance at every piece of furniture and statuary they encounter; mimic encounters are best when made memorable but used sparingly.

# Monty's Offer of the Month

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This month Monty has decided that a field trip around Hyboria would be good for you all. He's a city mongoose himself, so where better to kick off than in Shadizar and Messantia? For this month only you can pick up either box set for just \$40/£25 post free, or both together for \$70/£40! So, what are you waiting for? Get your walking boots on!



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# ENCHANTED ITEMS

Magical treasures for your RuneQuest games, both intriguing and useful. By Carl Walmsley

## TURNCOAT

This enchanted item of clothing has the ability to transform into an entirely new garment every time it is turned inside out. This makes it ideal for a spy or roguish type wishing to avoid detection or to give pursuers the slip.

The change from one garment to another is instantaneous, allowing a character to alter his appearance in two actions – one action to take the turncoat off and reverse it, another to put it back on. When a character reverses the turncoat, he should roll on the following tables to ascertain how the garment's appearance changes.

Given several minutes to prepare, a character can 'fashion' the turncoat into any style he chooses through a process of trial and error. Whilst the turncoat cannot match specific patterns and designs – such as a coat of arms or delicate embroidery – it can approximate most upper garments that one can imagine.

If the turncoat is ever damaged, all tears, holes and scuffmarks disappear the instant it is turned inside out to assume a new form. Only by burning every last fibre of the turncoat can it truly be destroyed.

Any Disguise skill tests made by a character who uses a turncoat receive a +20% bonus.



Jerkin



Tunic



Surcoat



Coat



Shirt

### Style (D10)

1-2	Jerkin
3-4	Tunic
5-6	Surcoat
7-8	Shirt
9-10	Coat

### Colour (D10)

1	White
2	Black
3	Red
4	Green
5	Brown
6	Purple
7	Blue
8	Yellow
9	Grey
10	Mixed (roll twice)

### Material (D6)

1	Silk
2	Cotton
3	Pelt
4	Wool
5	Velvet
6	Cloth of gold (automatically changes colour to gold)

## Eye Sphere

This small, metallic orb resembles a disembodied human eyeball, some four inches in diameter. Encased within a steel shell is a glistening gemstone iris made of sapphire or emerald. The iris is magically linked to a crystalline disk, cut from the same gemstone as was used to fashion the innards of the sphere. By placing the disk over one's eye – skilfully crafted to remain in place unaided – one can see whatever the eye sphere sees, regardless of how far away it is.

An eye sphere is capable of flight, moving slowly through the air by means of an enchantment. It may not rise more than six feet above the ground, and may not cross water or other unstable surfaces: if an eye sphere is placed above water it immediately sinks below the surface and is rendered inactive until it dries out. The movement of an eye sphere is directed mentally by 'the viewer'. Each action he spends controlling the sphere enables it to turn up to 180 degrees and to move up to 3 metres. The movements of a sphere may be as precise and delicate as if the viewer were moving his own eye.

As soon as the viewing disk is removed from the viewer's eye, the eye sphere closes its metallic lid and drifts slowly to the ground. It will awaken instantly, once the disk is once more placed upon someone's eye.

The sphere possesses the same field of vision as a human eye and can see clearly for the same distance as the viewer. An eye sphere benefits from both the Dark Sight and Night Sight traits, most likely enhancing the images witnessed by the viewer.

Spotting an eye sphere is not easy. Any Perception tests aimed at detecting one receive a -20% modifier.

An eye sphere may be attacked but, again due to its small size, is difficult to hit. All attacks against it receive a -40% modifier. An eye sphere has a single hit location with 5 Armour and 5 hits.

## Dust of Bewilderment

A sprinkle of this mysterious powder is enough to send most creatures into a hazy dream state, where reality and imagination are blurred into one.

Any time that a creature comes into physical contact with a pinch or more of this dust, it must make a Resilience test with a -10% modifier. If the test is successful, the target feels momentarily disorientated (loses 1 action), then may act normally. There are no further effects.

If a target fails the Resilience test, he enters a hazy half-waking, half-sleeping state. His actions become slow and deliberate and he takes on the semblance of one who is severely intoxicated. Any aggressive activity the creature was engaged in – even fighting – is instantly forgotten. If the creature is injured or assaulted in any way (struck in combat, tied up, and so forth), the dream state immediately ends. The creature will likely be confused about what has happened but will go back to acting in a way that is consistent with what it was doing before it came into contact with the dust.

A creature in this dream state that is not attacked or manhandled will remain this way for 5D6 minutes. During this time, the creature is extremely passive and relaxed. Normal responsibilities and priorities will be forgotten: a guard will happily allow thieves to wander in and out of the premises he should be protecting without raising the alarm or attempting to stop them; a troll will watch absently as intruders take a short cut through his lair, and so forth. At the end of its time in this dream state, the creature returns to normal with only a hazy recollection of what has happened. For the creature, any events it has witnessed will be like vague dreams that it can barely recall.

Whilst a creature is in this dream-state, it is especially vulnerable to any ploys aimed at getting it to reveal

secrets. If the creature participates in any Opposed Influence (or similar) skill tests, the creature does so with a -30% penalty to any Persistence or Perception tests made to resist attempts to get him talking.

A creature that reveals something especially important is allowed to make a Perception test when the effects of the dust wear off. If successful, the creature remembers what he has revealed, but cannot for the life of him recall why he choose to do so. While the loose-lipped character may suspect he has been duped in some way, his memory will be so fuzzy that he will not be certain about what happened.

## Black Vapours

A black vapour is said to be the last breath of a powerful undead – a malign remnant of its defeated essence.

Every Black vapour is tethered to an item that was of great personal importance to the defeated undead. A creature that takes possession of the tethered item – often a ring or pendant – awakens the vapour, which will usually hide itself nearby in a convenient nook or a pool of shadow. In size, a black vapour measures approximately one cubic foot.



Once awakened, a black vapour moves quickly towards the creature holding the item to which it is tethered, and seeks to enter the creature's body via the mouth and nose. The vapour will continue to attempt doing so for as long as the creature possesses the tethered item. A Resilience test with a -20% penalty allows the creature to keep the black vapour out of his body for one round. Doing so uses up one reaction. The vapour cannot be attacked in any way.

Should a black vapour gain access to a creature's body, it immediately heads for the lungs and seeks to drown its new host. At this point, a battle of wills ensues for – though not truly alive – a black vapour possesses some measure of its progenitor's mind. The host creature must make a Persistence test. If the test is failed, the creature's body goes into paralysing spasms, and it begins to suffocate. If the item is taken away from the host creature, the black vapour will voluntarily emerge and go back to its hiding place. Note that once the spasms begin, the host creature is unable discard the object for itself.

If the Persistence test is successful, the vapour becomes subservient to the will of its host. The vapour may be commanded to leave the host's body, though it may now reside there without causing the host harm. What is more, the vapour may be mentally commanded to attack and smother other creatures. Issuing the command to attack takes up one action. The maximum range of such an attack is the POW of the host in metres. A creature targeted in this way may make a Resilience test with a -20% penalty to keep the black vapour out of its body. Doing so takes up one reaction. If this test is successful, the vapour may not attack that creature again for 24 hours. If the Resilience test is failed, the target creature begins to suffocate (see RQ Main Rulebook, page 90).

If the host of a black vapour is killed, the vapour emerges from the corpse – or stops attacking if it was doing so – and looks for somewhere to hide that is within 10 metres of the item to which it is tethered.

If the item to which a black vapour is tethered is destroyed, the vapour coalesces into a black liquid and puddles on the ground. This liquid quickly dissipates, often leaving the image of a screaming face, in the likeness of the undead that originally spawned the vapour.

## Ghost Bell

Both the living and the dead can hear the echo of these enchanted instruments, which summon spirits to stand before the bell.

When a ghost bell is struck, all spirits within the ringer's POW x 10 in metres must make a Persistence test. If this test succeeds, the spirit hears the bell but refuses to answer its call. If the test is failed, the spirit is compelled to reveal itself and to stand before the bell. For a ghost, this would mean manifesting in the material world; for a nymph it would mean taking on physical form, and so forth.

A spirit which answers the summons must abandon any creature that it has possessed and come forth alone and in its own form.

A spirit that comes before the bell may take no aggressive action against the ringer unless attacked by him (or his companions), though it may well be angered by the summons. The ringer is free to talk to the summoned spirits for a number of rounds equal to his POW. Beckoned spirits are in no way compelled to answer any questions that are put to them, but they must listen to what the ringer has to say – at least until the summons ends.

Once the duration of the call has passed, the summoned spirits are free to act as normal. This may include attacking or seeking to possess the ringer if he has earned their enmity.

A spirit can only be subject to the sound of a ghost bell once in any 24-hour period – irrespective of whether it heeds or ignores the call.



# Inside the Chainmail Bra

By Fey Boss

A cup of coffee is the simplest thing you can order, right?

Right?

Tall, grande or venti? That's small, medium or large to some of us. Want an extra shot of espresso in that? How about caramel syrup? Whipped cream? Decaf? Steamed milk? Over ice? Latte? Americano, frappuccino, mocha? Chocolate mocha? These days, ordering a cup of coffee is every bit as involved as creating an epic level character. The difference is that while we often take the opportunity to create a cup of coffee perfectly suited to our personality and temperament, our characters tend to veer sharply away from 'who we really are' and rampage across the border into the land of 'outrageous, offensive and obscene'.

A particularly pointed example which I recall was a friend of mine playing a mage belonging to a death cult. Within the context of the game, he hunted down those whom he considered unclean and tortured them to death, using their agonies and the waning of their life energies as a sacrament to enhance his character's personal power.

Another friend always plays dashing and sarcastic young men of action. While these characters don't tend to go in for wholesale torture and murder, they do go in for despoiling innocent maidens and leading them astray, with the occasional pregnancy and resulting ducking of outraged fathers and suitors. As said friend is a

pharmaceutical student who comes up to my chin and moreover happens to be a girl of twenty, I would have to say that's fairly far from her true self.

The opposite is also true, of course: a woman I know who sticks almost entirely to online games has a habit of always playing 'good guys'. Whether it's the lab assistant who helps the genius come up with the cure for the viral plague threatening the city, or the staff-wielding seeress who tries to lead by example, she commits her gaming career to fulfilling an ethical archetype.

We all have such examples in our repertoire. If not played by us, then by someone we know – from the elfin teenaged girl who plays the commander of an elite Amazon force to the unappealing blob who insists on playing dark elf priestesses with full plate armour that in no way justifies the word 'full'. But why do we do it? Why create an alternate persona so alien to our own? It comes down to three primary reasons: safety, wish fulfillment, and exploration.

## Safety

'It's make believe. It's pretend. It doesn't count.' The entire game takes place inside an imaginary world, possibly even an imaginary universe, whose details overlap with our own only just so far. In such a world, we can explore options which simply aren't available due to constraints of common reality, personal reality or practicality.

Common reality is a limitation which we all face. When we walk away from the gaming table or computer, we don't have the ability to throw fireballs. We lack rail guns and laser cannons. We are not our characters, so within the game we replace common reality with a consensual reality to which all the participants agree. Who knew consensual reality could be defined by edition and print date?

Personal reality locks us into who we are as individuals. A male, thirty, trained as a doctor can play a female, eighteen, built like an athlete and capable of cutting off the head of a wild boar with one chop and employed doing so as the king's chief hunter. Gender, job, race, religion, everything we are can be thrown to the winds without the fear and uncertainty of unemployment, gender reassignment surgery and spiritual abandonment.

Practicality is what keeps us going to work every day and not running off to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. We accept (some of us, anyway) our limitations: that we can't fly; that we're not going to win the lottery; that even if we think we might, gravity and unemployment are awfully powerful enemies who can't be defeated with the roll of a die...

Except within the confines of a game. There, the rules of reality, whether common, personal, or practical, can be put aside in favour of a consensual reality where things are different. We can fly, steal the Queen's jewels, kill a dragon, and still be home in time for breakfast, or at least a very late tea. It is the ultimate safe venue for unsafe ventures.

## *Wish Fulfillment*

Who hasn't at some point wanted to be in someone else's shoes? Whether it's a change for the better or for the worse, gaming represents the ultimate fictional shoe store. As more and more people are finding out through MMORPGs and the essence of virtual reality, by assuming another identity, you can change your entire world.

The plain girl who couldn't get a date to the dance becomes the sexpot with the knockout figure and come hither gaze. The bookkeeper for the charitable organisation devoted to saving the west end burrowing mole becomes the daring and valiant knight with castles and keeps and scores of men under his command. The meek secretary becomes the evil hag who wipes out half the countryside with a poisonous curse.

After all, as Temujin said, the greatest pleasure is to vanquish your enemies and chase them before you, to rob them of their wealth and see those dear to them bathed in tears, to ride their horses and clasp to your bosom their wives and daughters. In daily life, the police tend to take a dim view of this sort of thing, but within the game... whatever you like!

## *Exploration*

O brave new world, that has such such people in! Scientist or poet or magician, it's all uncharted waters when you can't predict the ending. The fiction of the game is one which allows us to explore through creation, research, and ingenuity.

When we enter the game, the first thing we do is an act of creation. We make a character who will stand in for us, our substitute in this potentially hostile environment. Every act we do within this new persona becomes an act of creation, unless we're just playing ourselves. Three armed men leap out of a dark alley. What do you do? Well, if it's me, I run as fast as I can, which, not being



a cheetah or a sprinter, isn't very fast. If it's a mercenary character I'm playing, she draws and returns fire. If it's a thief, she runs like the wind, swearing in three languages. They aren't me. I'm creating them, and each decision they make is as vital to that creation as when I initially figured out their stats and chose their skills.

Of course, it doesn't end with the picking of numbers. Research lends verisimilitude and grace to roleplay, and plenty of gamers spend any amount of free time researching not only what tribes moved through what is now Germany prior to the earlier records of the Middle Ages but also what known neurotoxins will paralyse a victim without killing them in what dosage and for how long. It's research which can help determine whether a plan to assault an office building will work better by going through the back door, the top skylight or the sewer system. Ask any bank robber – or any gamer.

Even with research, you can't expect everything. Hopefully none of us will have to deal with a grenade coming in through the window in our daily lives. It gives our characters the chance to react off the cuff without prior planning, warning or experience, though. Player A tries to bat the grenade back out the window with a folder. Player B dives for cover. Player C prays to an uncaring god. How ingenious we are can determine success or failure – or define the line between continued life and rolling up a new character while the old one goes to the big scrap heap in the sky.

After all, even if your character dives headfirst out a window away from a grenade towards the assassins who threw it in the first place, you aren't the one who'll be hauled away in chains by the police for reckless endangerment of the public. It's all perfectly safe. You can hunt the bad guys down and make them pay – another thing you couldn't get away with in real life. You can explore your options, get some sort of satisfaction and a fulfilling experience out of it.

If only it were as easy to get a decent cup of coffee.

# Babylon 5 2nd Edition Conversion Guide

## Part 2

By Bryan Steele

### Converting to the 'New' Classes

This section will first compare the major differences to overall class structure in B52E, and then it will continue to the changes made to each of the Player Character Classes found in the Core Rulebook. We hope that this will be instrumental in helping our fans and readers understand how their first edition characters' class information changed and why.

#### Ten Levels vs. Twenty

Likely to be the biggest alteration from the previous edition is the limitation of classes to ten levels instead of the full twenty that all base classes once had. This means that several of the classes have condensed class features and slightly more rapid progressions. It also means that players are far more likely to broaden their characters' horizons and multiclass once or twice, and not just into Prestige Classes.

'Real' Babylon 5 characters from the series were not single-faceted descriptions of an Agent, or Diplomat, or anything like that. They were each became a mixture of several different aspects of the genre throughout their run of the character, and we hope that this ten level format will aid our players to do the same with theirs. Gone are the days of the cookie-cutter 20<sup>th</sup> level Soldier that could lead an army but was quite unlikely to be able to *drive*. Perhaps now a level or three in Officer will

help round out that veteran soldier, or even some levels of Worker if he was the barracks grease monkey. That's the idea, anyway.

#### Agent



The Agent has been a major player in the Babylon 5 RPG since its earliest inception, if only due to its huge skill base and wide variety of options that it offers for further Prestige Class development. Not to mention the ability to have a backstabbing Agent that works for Homeguard, a hired assassin Agent that stays to the Centauri Royal Houses for work, or even a good-hearted spy for the ISA – the Agent needed to be more player-choice driven in its abilities rather than a ladder of devious tricks.

#### Major Changes

The biggest and most visible change to the Agent class is the rounding out of class features. Instead of receiving Sneak Attack automatically at 3<sup>rd</sup> level and Crippling Strike at 12<sup>th</sup>; the Agent now gets the choice of taking on one of three different styles of *Opportunism*. Like the old Agent, they could choose to be lethal and add damage dice to their attacks when surprising an opponent, or they could be cruel and inflict STR damage instead. Also, as a third option to those who would rather incapacitate – we added a stunning option as well. Now not every Agent has to be a lethal killer if the player does not wish it to be, but could easily choose to take nothing but Sneak Attack dice to make their throat-slitter that much more deadly!

The loss of the 'Security Systems' feature is another choice to not force our Agent players into being criminals. If an Agent *wants* to be sneaky and good at bypassing security systems, it is their choice to do so with the skills and other features available – rather than just assuming so at 1<sup>st</sup> level.

#### New Additions

The addition of the 'Master of the Craft' and 'Multi-Skilled' class features that appear repeatedly down the list of the new Agent allows a player to truly tailor their

character into whatever Agent they wish it to be. By granting certain skills the Skill Focus feat for free, and by turning cross-class skills into class skills – both of the player's choice – the B52E Agent is much more the jack of all trades that he was supposed to be, rather than a cold blooded killer every time.

## Officer



More of a clean-up than a rewrite, the Officer did not get changed all that much except in the execution of its class features.

### Major Changes

Rallying Call is a little more difficult to use now, and can only be used a maximum of twice per day as an experienced Officer. Still, if you have to keep your people in line *that* often, something outside of a 'rousing shout' is probably in order.

Way of Command only grants a +1 bonus rather than a +2 – but it affects things OTHER than skill rolls! To hit, ability checks, skills and saves are now all affected. It is far more useful now, especially as a Fleet Officer combined with the new starship combat rules!

Legendary Speech is no more, I'm afraid. Perhaps it will

resurface at some other time as a feat or Prestige Class ability, but with all the new feat-giving and such, there just wasn't room for it!

### New Additions

Keeping the idea of the Branch Specialisation (Fleet, Ground and Pilot), the multitude of bonuses that were granted in first edition as an Officer rose in levels have now been translated as individually gained feats based on the specialisation. Several times through the character's career he will get an opportunity to add feats that actually make sense to his branch. This includes the specific granting of new feats based on the Veteran Pilot/Elite Pilot idea from first edition – which are now available as different versions for ALL branches.

## Diplomat



Probably one of the Classes that changed the least, most of the big changes to the Diplomat came in the addition of the Influence system to B52E. Using their increased rate of Influence gain and the many modifiers they will receive over time, they can do a lot more than what their former version would dare to dream.

### Major Changes

The most noticeable change is the lack of the gaining of the Contacts feat over and over again. With the way

Contacts work in the Influence system, such a class feature would be far too powerful and was re-envisioned in the new Cultural Diversity feature. Now the player can choose to add Contacts or other Diplomat-based feats at different levels instead of always choosing Contacts.

Besides Improved Diplomacy being a static bonus rather than a growing one, the only other major change is the wrapping of the Government Resources and Improved Government Resources class features into the Strong and Powerful Influence class features of the new edition. By granting better access to a Diplomat's Influence checks, all of the things that the former class features were capable of are handled and then some.

### New Additions

The Diplomat has a broader scope of bonus feats that he can choose with the new Cultural Diversity, as well as the addition of Swift Diplomacy – which makes rapid decisions actually possible with the Diplomacy skill instead of all-day affairs.

Also, with the addition of the Aide class feature, the Diplomat actually gains a follower from his government that could be a mix of secretary and bodyguard (N'Toth), an innocent student (Vir), or a devoted friend (Lennier). There is a huge responsibility in the Aide class feature, and Games Masters can have countless plots revolve around this character alone because of it.

The Influence system, although a fully new game mechanic to B52E, is a large part of the Diplomat class. It essentially is their *real* power, and Diplomat players should try to learn it very well.

## Lurker



The B52E Lurker is likely to be the least altered Class from first edition. It still is the best representation of anyone who has had to scrounge up a living from little or nothing, and is a fantastic base from any space station-based character that needs to 'just get by'. Fans of the old Lurker class will not be displeased with its new coat of paint.

### Major Changes

The Lurker did not actually change much at all. Other than the class feature of Survivor's Luck now eventually being able to be used twice per day, and not solely affecting Saving Throws, the same manner of bonus feats (now called Downbelow Feats) and turning of cross-class skills into class skills with the Multi-Skilled feature are still available.

### New Additions

Lurkers have an interesting ability to gain Influence in areas that other Classes might find it difficult. This should be used by crafty Lurker players to maximum effect.

## Ranger



Let's see... the Ranger was a first edition Prestige Class, then it became a first edition Base Class, and now it needed to be altered to be a Second Edition Base Class. It is almost wholly different from its predecessors in every way, between new abilities arriving and old ones being re-defined completely. Rather than trying to go into each of the *many* differences in great detail, it perhaps should be noted that the two classes might have several similarities between them, but they are fundamentally different.

### Major Changes

The Code of the Anla'shok was removed in favour of having a better skill base and the addition of necessary training and reflection periods for any Ranger (see Discipline of the Ranger). This primarily was for bookkeeping and noting class/cross-class skills far easier.

The Garb of Honour class feature no longer grants feats (not all Ranger training is identical, as we learned in the era of the ISA), but instead give some very expensive gear to the character for free.

The Fearless ability gives Rangers a bit of an edge against such effects without giving them total immunity...

because granting such an immunity at 2<sup>nd</sup> level is a lot like cheating. Instead it gives a bonus, which is much fairer to non-Rangers.

Removal of ISA Authority and White Star Assignment was to reflect that this class is not just those Rangers working for the ISA – they could be pre-show Minbari, or perhaps a secret faction within the Anla'shok that does not have the clout with the ISA.

Between the Darkness and the Light no longer allows Rangers to 'steal' class features from other classes, it grants useful feats instead. We *want* people to multiclass a bit, why would we want the Ranger to simply be able to act like other classes when they could just take a level or two in it? The Skill Focus feat is on that list, allowing us to eliminate the unnecessary Skill Mastery class feature altogether. Effective Crosstraining was eliminated for similar reasons.

Trust of the Grey Council, Between the Candle and the Star, Natural Leadership and Voice of Valen were simply removed because of their overall *feel*. These class features were too complicated and did not reflect well in execution on different types of Rangers. They can be far better portrayed in roleplaying moments, rather than trying to use rules to enforce them.

Live for the One now only works when the Ranger is standing steadfast and is calling upon the Die for the One class feature.

Standing on the Bridge simply had its 'math' removed. Now it is a passed save, no more damage suffered by the difference or anything of the sort. Simple, faster and easier to deal with.

Anla'shok Legend transformed into Heart of the Izil'zha, which is not the plot and canon-altering device it was.

Instead it grants the Ranger a massive boost in his uses of Ranger Influence, which can still be a huge plot factor for a crafty player – but is not a White Star Fleet automatically!

### **New Additions**

Places Unseen helps Rangers of all types serve the role of spy and courier that the show implied they were for many centuries.

The Application of Terror is really just a hat tipped to the Season 5 episode in which Delenn explains how that process works, adding an interesting mechanic to the feature in hopes that it will give ‘goody goody’ Ranger players a chance to show a darker side in their games.

### **Trader**



The Trader is a new base class completely, and therefore does not really need a conversion guide entry. It is sort of like a much specialised version of the White Collar and Blue Collar Worker thrown into a roleplaying blender and poured into a glass that says ‘unofficial Diplomat’.

It is a good look at how the Galactic Market affects the Babylon 5 universe, and can have a surprising sway on certain types of Influences.

### **Scientist**



One of the most overlooked classes in first edition; the B52E Scientist has a much broader and ‘alterable’ set of class bonuses and features. Although it suffers in its Influence abilities, it can now learn new studies on the fly and not wait five levels to do it!

### **Major Changes**

The bonus from Primary Area of Study has increased to the Scientist’s full class level rather than half, making them very skilled in their field right at the start.

Use Alien Artefact went from a single bonus that covered all manners of devices to a more believable progressive feature called Alien Technology Familiarity, which does require the character to have some technological access to the alien culture to get the bonus. A little more restrictive yes, but far more believable. No more, ‘Ah, previously unknown Kirishiac gravity generator... let me see... yes, it is perfect for our needs!’

### **New Additions**

The addition of an interesting feature called Mental Agility allows the Scientist to make rolls for skills that he might not have any ranks in, just by applying similar theories and the like. It is a good way to make a Scientist useful in nearly any situation that might fall outside their area of study.

The Linguistics skill can now be chosen in addition to Knowledge, Medical and Technical skills when choosing a Peripheral Studies.

### **Soldier**



The Soldier is more or less the same *style* of character class, but now is far better at doing what it needs to do. Based a bit more on the idea of tailoring a fighting-based character on the feats you want, rather than class features we felt you should have, it allows for a Drazi Infantry Soldier to be drastically different than say, a Pakma’ra Civility-Defence Soldier.

### **Major Changes**

Instead of getting all of the specific class features like Weapons Training and Covering Fire, we instead gave the Soldier a long list of combat and conflict-related feats that he will get to choose from repeatedly. This allows the player to make the Soldier he wishes to, possibly ignoring guns altogether and going the route of hand-to-hand or vehicle driver instead.

The Veteran class feature was condensed to a choice of free feats that really can only be received if a character has walked the Soldier path a while, rather than being a leader. Not all veterans are inspiring leaders, after all.

## New Additions

The Co-ordinated Unit class feature shows the ability of the Soldier to augment his fighting efficiency when working in groups of similarly experienced Soldiers. Although it might not be all that useful to the common Player Character, Games Masters that design units of Soldiers as opposition will quickly put the fear of the military in their players.

## Telepath



The Telepath saw a massive change to how they are created, and how they use their abilities. The entire Telepathy system got re-vamped, meaning that the Class got an overhaul as well. The B52E version is a bit more average in skills and hit points compared to the huge power shift the older version had; but it is tailored to use the new system.

## Major Changes

The creation process is no longer set up as it was for P-Rating. Instead of choosing a strength level and trusting a die roll, you now roll a 2d4-2 to decide the initial P-Rating. The good thing is if it is not high enough for what a player wants for their Teep; they can forego the bonus Telepath feat they receive at 1<sup>st</sup> level to jack up their P-Rating by +6. Of course, this only works in character generation, and not something that someone could choose to do later.

With the alterations to the Telepathy system, the Telepath Class has no reason to give 'Telepathic Abilities' – as they no longer exist in that fashion. A similar view upon the Enhanced Telepathy class feature can be taken. Instead we give a few bonus Telepathy Feats and the ability to earn Discipline Focuses, which can be a huge benefit for those characters that are always pushing their boundaries with higher-level powers.

Again, one should read the new Telepathy section in the Core rules before trying to understand why we did what we did to the Telepath. It'll save you and your character a few migraines.

## Worker



Arguably the most dismissed Character Class, the Worker saw a new touch in B52E. Rather than simply creating one Class that does its best to fit the job around its statistics – we churned up the pot some and made the stats fit the job instead.

## Major Changes

First of all, there are now three separate class advancement tables for the Worker. Each one has tailored Saving Throw bonuses for the type of Worker involved. It simply did not make any sense for a callous-handed dockworker to have the same Fortitude save as

an envelope-stuffing secretary. They also have their own Class Skills, and starting funds based on the Worker Type class feature.

The bonus Hit Points/Skill Points of first edition are gone in favour of a more balanced class. Just because someone lugs a wrench instead of a briefcase should not *necessarily* mean they can shrug off a PPG burn better, which is up to the player to place feats and ability scores where he wants to represent that.

Salary Increase is now called Expertise, but basically does the same thing.

## New Additions

The addition of the Performer Worker Type to include dancers, poets, musicians and the like makes it far easier on players wanting to use them. In first edition, these job roles did not easily fit into Blue Collar or White Collar, so they deserved their own category.

The Vocation Bonus class feature makes the Worker inherently better in his career, adding a growing bonus to the skill associated with it instead of forcing players to drop extra skill points into it level after level if they are to stay competitive.

## Other Classes

Of course, you should watch future supplements and sourcebooks for new or revised Classes and Prestige Classes, too. We are always trying to expand the Babylon 5 universe to encompass the possibilities, and we hope that you can forgive us these few 'growing pains' in the meantime. Other Base Classes that appeared in other first edition sourcebooks will be seeing second edition versions of themselves in time.

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

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# Mega-City One's Most Wanted

## Judge Giant (II)

By Matt Sharp

**Real Name:** Dormer, first name unknown.

**Class/Level:** Street Judge 7

**Hit Points:** 42

**Initiative:** +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Defence Value:** 21 (+10 Reflex, +1 Dodge)

**Damage Reduction:** 6 (body suit uniform)

**Attacks:** +9/+4 melee, +11/+6 ranged

**Damage:** By weapon

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14

**Skills:** Balance +7, Bluff +8, Computer Use +3, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (law) +7, Listen +3, Ride +9, Search +5, Sense Motive +7, Spot +5, Streetwise +7, and Technical +3.

**Feats:** Dodge, Improved Arrest, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Nerves of Steel, Weapon Focus (lawgiver) and Weapon Specialisation (lawgiver).

**Possessions:** Standard issue Justice Department equipment.

**History File:** When a young juve was found living wild on the streets after the Apocalypse War, no one was too surprised. Millions were homeless, and even more had lost their families during the conflict. However, when he was admitted into a refugee camp a routine genetic check shocked the med-judges speechless – it was found that his mother was Adele Dormer, once a famous interior designer who had vanished during the war. However, it was the identity of the father that caused the most surprise. The boy was the son of John Clay Jnr, better known to the world as Judge Giant. It seemed that one of Mega-City One's most famous judges had had a secret, extra-judicial relationship.

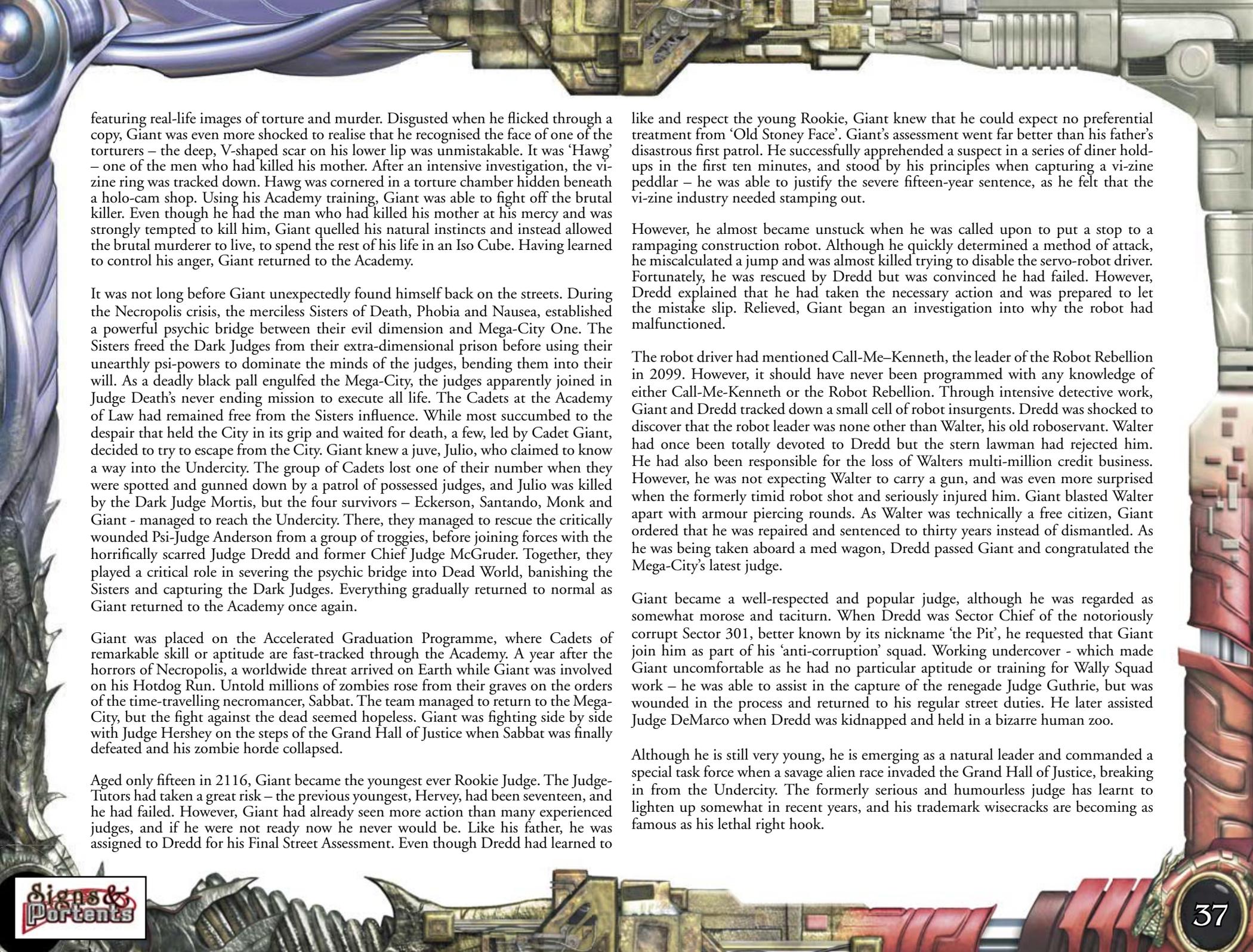
The five-year old was immediately inducted into the Academy of Law. He had soon adopted his father's name and Cadet Giant was soon one of the Academy's rising stars – like his father and grandfather, he was athletic, quick and smart. Unfortunately, it



Colin MacNeil

was soon determined that he also had a serious attitude problem. Investigation into his history soon revealed the cause. While living on the streets, young Giant had witnessed the murder of his mother for the change in her pockets – just over three credits. The culprits had never been caught, and as the judges only had his description to go on – three men, one with a deep V-shaped scar on his lower lip, called 'Hog' or 'Hawg' – so the crime would probably remain unsolved.

His Judge-Tutors quickly determined that unless something was done to deal with his attitude problem, he would be no use as a judge. In 2111, they decided to send him on a street familiarisation patrol with a senior judge. He was assigned to Judge Dredd, the judge who had granted Giant Snr his full Eagle a decade before. Dredd was shocked and disappointed to find that his old friend had breached strict Justice Department regulations when he had an affair, but was interested to see how the boy had turned out. The pair embarked on a 'typical' days patrol, Dredd teaching Giant many of the tricks that the Academy never really prepared Cadets for. During a routine street search, a vi-zine trader was captured. Vi-zines are 'snuff' magazines



featuring real-life images of torture and murder. Disgusted when he flicked through a copy, Giant was even more shocked to realise that he recognised the face of one of the torturers – the deep, V-shaped scar on his lower lip was unmistakable. It was ‘Hawg’ – one of the men who had killed his mother. After an intensive investigation, the vi-zine ring was tracked down. Hawg was cornered in a torture chamber hidden beneath a holo-cam shop. Using his Academy training, Giant was able to fight off the brutal killer. Even though he had the man who had killed his mother at his mercy and was strongly tempted to kill him, Giant quelled his natural instincts and instead allowed the brutal murderer to live, to spend the rest of his life in an Iso Cube. Having learned to control his anger, Giant returned to the Academy.

It was not long before Giant unexpectedly found himself back on the streets. During the Necropolis crisis, the merciless Sisters of Death, Phobia and Nausea, established a powerful psychic bridge between their evil dimension and Mega-City One. The Sisters freed the Dark Judges from their extra-dimensional prison before using their unearthly psi-powers to dominate the minds of the judges, bending them into their will. As a deadly black pall engulfed the Mega-City, the judges apparently joined in Judge Death’s never ending mission to execute all life. The Cadets at the Academy of Law had remained free from the Sisters influence. While most succumbed to the despair that held the City in its grip and waited for death, a few, led by Cadet Giant, decided to try to escape from the City. Giant knew a juve, Julio, who claimed to know a way into the Undercity. The group of Cadets lost one of their number when they were spotted and gunned down by a patrol of possessed judges, and Julio was killed by the Dark Judge Mortis, but the four survivors – Eckerson, Santando, Monk and Giant - managed to reach the Undercity. There, they managed to rescue the critically wounded Psi-Judge Anderson from a group of troggies, before joining forces with the horrifically scarred Judge Dredd and former Chief Judge McGruder. Together, they played a critical role in severing the psychic bridge into Dead World, banishing the Sisters and capturing the Dark Judges. Everything gradually returned to normal as Giant returned to the Academy once again.

Giant was placed on the Accelerated Graduation Programme, where Cadets of remarkable skill or aptitude are fast-tracked through the Academy. A year after the horrors of Necropolis, a worldwide threat arrived on Earth while Giant was involved on his Hotdog Run. Untold millions of zombies rose from their graves on the orders of the time-travelling necromancer, Sabbat. The team managed to return to the Mega-City, but the fight against the dead seemed hopeless. Giant was fighting side by side with Judge Hershey on the steps of the Grand Hall of Justice when Sabbat was finally defeated and his zombie horde collapsed.

Aged only fifteen in 2116, Giant became the youngest ever Rookie Judge. The Judge-Tutors had taken a great risk – the previous youngest, Hervey, had been seventeen, and he had failed. However, Giant had already seen more action than many experienced judges, and if he were not ready now he never would be. Like his father, he was assigned to Dredd for his Final Street Assessment. Even though Dredd had learned to

like and respect the young Rookie, Giant knew that he could expect no preferential treatment from ‘Old Stoney Face’. Giant’s assessment went far better than his father’s disastrous first patrol. He successfully apprehended a suspect in a series of diner hold-ups in the first ten minutes, and stood by his principles when capturing a vi-zine peddler – he was able to justify the severe fifteen-year sentence, as he felt that the vi-zine industry needed stamping out.

However, he almost became unstuck when he was called upon to put a stop to a rampaging construction robot. Although he quickly determined a method of attack, he miscalculated a jump and was almost killed trying to disable the servo-robot driver. Fortunately, he was rescued by Dredd but was convinced he had failed. However, Dredd explained that he had taken the necessary action and was prepared to let the mistake slip. Relieved, Giant began an investigation into why the robot had malfunctioned.

The robot driver had mentioned Call-Me-Kenneth, the leader of the Robot Rebellion in 2099. However, it should have never been programmed with any knowledge of either Call-Me-Kenneth or the Robot Rebellion. Through intensive detective work, Giant and Dredd tracked down a small cell of robot insurgents. Dredd was shocked to discover that the robot leader was none other than Walter, his old roboservant. Walter had once been totally devoted to Dredd but the stern lawman had rejected him. He had also been responsible for the loss of Walters multi-million credit business. However, he was not expecting Walter to carry a gun, and was even more surprised when the formerly timid robot shot and seriously injured him. Giant blasted Walter apart with armour piercing rounds. As Walter was technically a free citizen, Giant ordered that he was repaired and sentenced to thirty years instead of dismantled. As he was being taken aboard a med wagon, Dredd passed Giant and congratulated the Mega-City’s latest judge.

Giant became a well-respected and popular judge, although he was regarded as somewhat morose and taciturn. When Dredd was Sector Chief of the notoriously corrupt Sector 301, better known by its nickname ‘the Pit’, he requested that Giant join him as part of his ‘anti-corruption’ squad. Working undercover - which made Giant uncomfortable as he had no particular aptitude or training for Wally Squad work – he was able to assist in the capture of the renegade Judge Guthrie, but was wounded in the process and returned to his regular street duties. He later assisted Judge DeMarco when Dredd was kidnapped and held in a bizarre human zoo.

Although he is still very young, he is emerging as a natural leader and commanded a special task force when a savage alien race invaded the Grand Hall of Justice, breaking in from the Undercity. The formerly serious and humourless judge has learnt to lighten up somewhat in recent years, and his trademark wisecracks are becoming as famous as his lethal right hook.

# THE TOTALLY RANDOM RUNEQUEST CHARACTER GENERATION METHOD

New campaign? Stuck for ideas? Let the dice decide your fate. By Chris Longhurst.

Sometimes, when it's time to start a new campaign, you know what sort of character you want to play. He – or she – springs fully-formed into your head, along with likes, dislikes, a family history and an esoteric-but-distinctive weapon of choice. Sometimes, you don't get much further than 'he's this guy... with a thing... I think he likes crème brulee...' and so on.

That was how I felt when I began creating a character for the Mongoose Towers *RuneQuest* game. I knew from Nick (the GM) that he was going to be an Orlanthi, but that was it. While we were generating statistics, I was hit with a sudden idea: why not generate *everything* about the character randomly? I had no real preferences, so I could just keep rolling dice until I ended up with something I could work with.

This method proved popular. So popular, in fact, that everybody in the office generated their characters this way. The beauty of it is that it paints in broad strokes first and works down to the details, allowing you to stop rolling dice and start choosing options once you have a firmer idea of where the character is going. Or you can do it 'hardcore' and roll every last skill point randomly, but don't blame us if you end up with a STR 7 barbarian animal trainer who speaks six languages and is highly skilled<sup>1</sup> at lockpicking.

So, without further ado, here is the revised, expanded, and updated Totally Random *RuneQuest* Character Generation System, including options from the *RuneQuest* core rulebook and the *RuneQuest Companion*.

For even better random results, roll 1D100+1 and consult '101 Character Backgrounds' from last issue!

<sup>1</sup>That's 'highly skilled for a *RuneQuest* character', which at starting level means 'probably won't sever his own leg while trying to pick a lock'.

## PART 1: STATISTICS

This follows the usual system on page 5 of the *RuneQuest* core rulebook, with one caveat: you aren't allowed to swap ability scores around. You keep what you roll, in the order you roll it.

## PART 2: ATTRIBUTES

Derive your attributes from your statistics in exactly the same way as normal.

## PART 3: BASIC SKILLS

Once again, basic skills are wholly unchanged.

## PART 4: PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Here's where most of the dice rolling happens. First determine your background, then your profession, using the following steps.

### Step 1: Determine Background

Roll to determine your background. Once you have it, apply all the usual bonuses, rolling on the tables below for any section that starts 'Pick One' or 'Pick Two' or so on.

D8	Background
1	Barbarian
2	Peasant
3	Townsman
4	Noble
5	Civilised
6	Mariner
7	Nomad
8	Primitive

Roll again on the table(s) corresponding to your cultural background.

### 1.1: Barbarian

Roll twice, rerolling duplicates. Each skill gets a +5% bonus.

D4	Skill
1	Boating
2	Lore (Animal)
3	Lore (Plant)
4	Riding

Roll three times, rerolling duplicates. Each skill gets a +10% bonus.

D12	Weapon Skill
	Axe (roll a D6: 1-3 = 1-handed, 4-6 = 2-handed)
1	Hammer (roll a D6: 1-3 = 1-handed, 4-6 = 2-handed)
2	Blowgun
3	Bow
4	Dagger
5	Shield
6	Sling
7	Spear
8	Staff
9	Throwing
10	Unarmed
11	Reroll or choose
12	

Roll once. Gain the advanced skill indicated at its base percentage.

D6	Advanced Skill
1	Artistic Expression
2	Craft
3	Dance
4	Lore
5	Play Instrument
6	Tracking

### 1.2: Peasant

Roll twice, rerolling duplicates. Each skill gets a +10% bonus.

D6	Skill
1	Boating
2	Dodge
3	Driving
4	First Aid
5	Persistence
6	Reroll or choose

Roll twice, rerolling duplicates. Each skill gets a +10% bonus.

D10	Weapon Skill
1	1H Axe
2	1H Flail
3	1H Hammer
4	2H Axe
5	Dagger
6	Sling
7	Spear
8	Staff
9	Unarmed
10	Reroll or choose

Roll twice, rerolling duplicates. Gain the advanced skill indicated at its base percentage.

D6	Advanced Skill
1	Craft
2	Dance
3	Lore
4	Play Instrument
5	Survival
6	Reroll or choose

### 1.3: Counsman

Roll twice, rerolling duplicates. Each skill gets a +10% bonus.

D8	Skill
1	Artistic Expression
2	Boating
3	Driving
4	Persistence
5	Resilience
6	Sleight
7	Stealth
8	Reroll or choose

Roll twice, rerolling duplicates. Each skill gets a +10% bonus.

D6	Weapon Skill
1	1H Hammer
2	1H Sword
3	Dagger
4	Crossbow
5	Polearm
6	Shield

Roll once. Gain the advanced skill indicated at its base percentage.

D6	Advanced Skill
1	Craft
2	Dance
3	Language
4	Lore
5	Play Instrument
6	Shiphandling

### 1.4: Noble

Roll twice, rerolling duplicates. Each skill gets a +5% bonus.

D4	Skill
1	Evaluate
2	Dodge
3	Perception
4	Riding

Roll twice, rerolling duplicates. Each skill gets a +15% bonus.

D6	Weapon Skill
1	1H Sword
2	2H Sword
3	Dagger
4	Rapier
5	Shield
6	Reroll or choose

Roll twice, rerolling duplicates. Gain the advanced skill indicated at its base percentage.

D10	Advanced Skill
1	Artistic Expression
2	Courtesy
3	Craft
4	Dance
5	Language
6	Lore
7	Oratory
8	Play Instrument
9	Shiphandling
10	Reroll or choose

### 1.5: Civilised

Roll twice, rerolling duplicates. Each skill gets a +10% bonus.

#### **D6** Weapon Skill

- 1-3 Rapier
- 4-6 Crossbow

Roll three times, rerolling duplicates. Gain the advanced skill indicated at its base percentage.

#### **D8** Advanced Skill

- 1 Artistic Expression
- 2 Craft
- 3 Dance
- 4 Language
- 5 Lore
- 6 Mechanisms
- 7 Play Instrument
- 8 Streetwise

### 1.6: Mariner

Roll twice, rerolling duplicates. Each skill gets a +10% bonus.

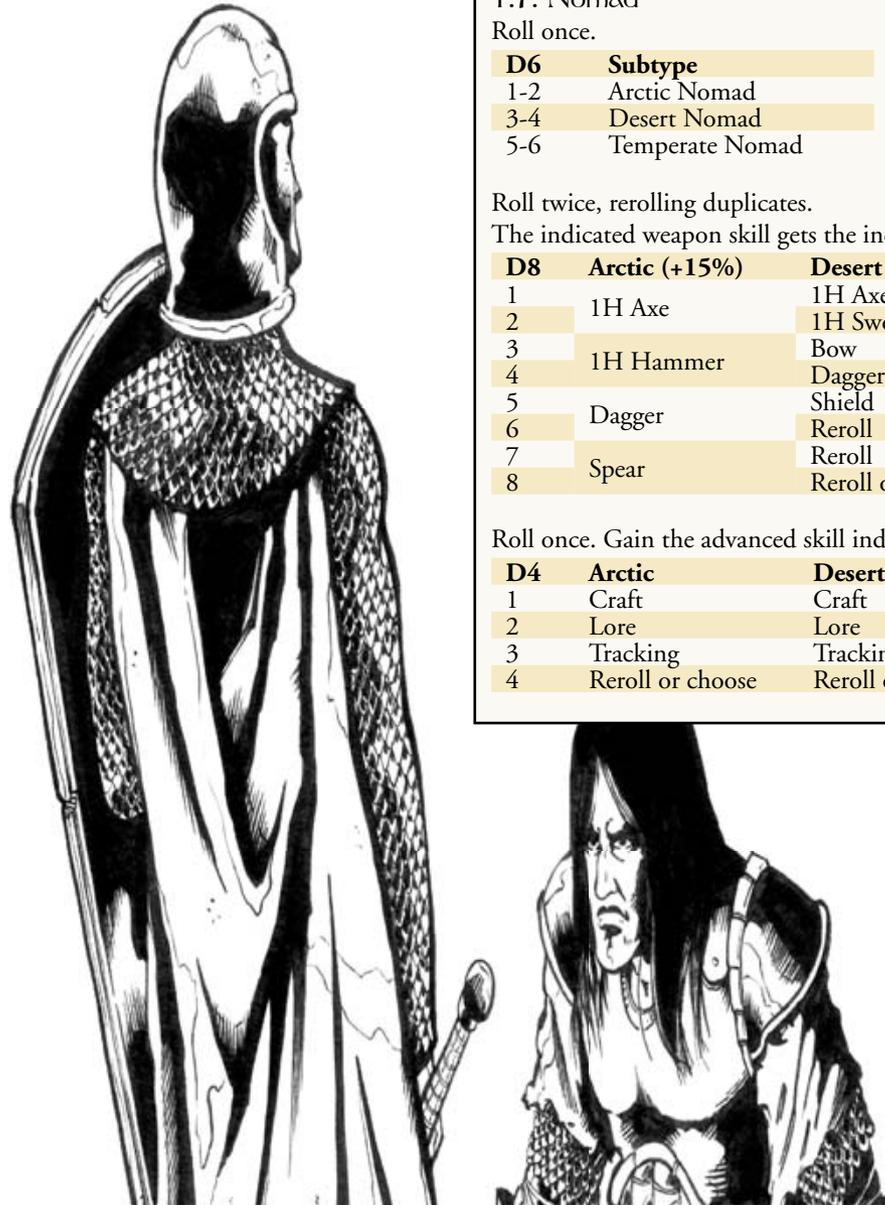
#### **D4** Weapon Skill

- 1 1H Hammer
- 2 1H Sword
- 3 Dagger
- 4 Unarmed

Roll once. Gain the advanced skill indicated at its base percentage.

#### **D4** Advanced Skill

- 1 Craft
- 2 Language
- 3 Lore
- 4 Shiphandling



### 1.7: Nomad

Roll once.

#### **D6** Subtype

- 1-2 Arctic Nomad
- 3-4 Desert Nomad
- 5-6 Temperate Nomad

Roll twice, rerolling duplicates.

The indicated weapon skill gets the indicated bonus.

#### **D8** Arctic (+15%) Desert (+15%) Temperate (+10%)

- |   | Arctic (+15%) | Desert (+15%)    | Temperate (+10%) |
|---|---------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | 1H Axe        | 1H Axe           | 1H Axe           |
| 2 | 1H Hammer     | 1H Sword         | 1H Hammer        |
| 3 | 1H Hammer     | Bow              | Blowgun          |
| 4 | 1H Hammer     | Dagger           | Bow              |
| 5 | Dagger        | Shield           | Dagger           |
| 6 | Dagger        | Reroll           | Shield           |
| 7 | Spear         | Reroll           | Sling            |
| 8 | Spear         | Reroll or choose | Reroll or choose |

Roll once. Gain the advanced skill indicated at its base percentage.

#### **D4** Arctic Desert Temperate

- |   | Arctic           | Desert           | Temperate |
|---|------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Craft            | Craft            | Craft     |
| 2 | Lore             | Lore             | Language  |
| 3 | Tracking         | Tracking         | Lore      |
| 4 | Reroll or choose | Reroll or choose | Tracking  |

### 1.8: Primitive

Roll once. Skill get +10%. Ug.

#### **D6** Weapon Skill

- 1 1H Axe
- 2 1H Hammer
- 3 Dagger
- 4 Sling
- 5 Spear
- 6 Reroll or choose

## Step 2: Determine Profession

### Barbarians, Peasants, Townsmen, and Civilised

If your background is barbarian, peasant, townsman or civilised, roll on this table. You will need to roll a D3 *and* a D8 to select your profession (unless you are civilised, in which case a D2 and a D8 are in order).

If you score a profession in *italics*, there are more dice to be rolled before you move on. See below.

D3	D8	Barbarian	Peasant	Townsmen	Civilised
1	1	Acrobat	Acrobat	<i>Alchemist</i>	<i>Alchemist</i>
	2	Animal Trainer	Animal Trainer	<i>Bard</i>	<i>Blacksmith</i>
	3	<i>Bard</i>	<i>Bard</i>	<i>Blacksmith</i>	<i>Courtier</i>
	4	<i>Blacksmith</i>	<i>Blacksmith</i>	<i>Courtier</i>	<i>Craftsman</i>
	5	<i>Craftsman</i>	<i>Craftsman</i>	<i>Craftsman</i>	<i>Diplomat</i>
	6	<i>Explorer</i>	Farmer	<i>Diplomat</i>	<i>Explorer</i>
	7	Farmer	Fisherman	<i>Mercenary</i>	<i>Knight</i>
	8	Fisherman	<i>Healer</i>	<i>Merchant</i>	Lord
2	1	<i>Healer</i>	Herdsman	Militiaman	Physician
	2	Herdsman	Hunter	<i>Peddler</i>	<i>Priest</i>
	3	Hunter	<i>Mercenary</i>	Physician	<i>Scholar</i>
	4	<i>Mercenary</i>	Militiaman	<i>Priest</i>	<i>Scribe</i>
	5	<i>Peddler</i>	Miner	Sailor	<i>Soldier</i>
	6	<i>Shaman</i>	<i>Peddler</i>	<i>Scholar</i>	<i>Spy</i>
	7	<i>Soldier</i>	<i>Priest</i>	<i>Scribe</i>	Reroll
	8	<i>Thief</i>	Sailor	<i>Soldier</i>	Reroll or choose
3	1	Tracker	<i>Soldier</i>	<i>Spy</i>	
	2	<i>Witch</i>	<i>Thief</i>	<i>Thief</i>	
	3	Woodsmen	Tracker	Town Guard	
	4	Reroll	<i>Witch</i>	<i>Wizard</i>	
	5	Reroll	Woodsmen	Reroll	
	6	Reroll	Reroll	Reroll	
	7	Reroll	Reroll	Reroll	
	8	Reroll or choose	Reroll or choose	Reroll or choose	

### 2.1: Scribes

Roll three times on the table below. Each time you roll, you may either take a new specialty at the basic percentage, or add +10% to a specialty you already know.

D6	Skill
1-3	Language
4-6	Lore

### Nobles and Temperate Nomads

If your background is noble or temperate nomad, roll on this table.

If you score a profession in *italics*, there are more dice to be rolled before you move on. See below.

D12	Noble	Temperate Nomad
1	<i>Courtier</i>	Acrobat
2	<i>Diplomat</i>	Animal Trainer
3	<i>Explorer</i>	<i>Craftsman</i>
4	<i>Knight</i>	<i>Explorer</i>
5	Lord	Herdsman
6	Physician	Hunter
7	<i>Scholar</i>	<i>Peddler</i>
8	<i>Soldier</i>	<i>Shaman</i>
9	<i>Spy</i>	Tracker
10	<i>Thief</i>	Reroll
11	<i>Wizard</i>	Reroll
12	Reroll or choose	Reroll or choose

### Mariners, Arctic Nomads, Desert Nomads, and Primitives

If your background is mariner, arctic nomad, desert nomad, or primitive, roll on this table.

If you score a profession in *italics*, there are more dice to be rolled before you move on. See below.

D6	Mariner	Arctic Nomad	Desert Nomad	Primitive
1	<i>Craftsman</i>	<i>Craftsman</i>	Animal Trainer	Hunter
2	<i>Explorer</i>	<i>Explorer</i>	<i>Craftsman</i>	
3	Fisherman	Fisherman	<i>Explorer</i>	<i>Shaman</i>
4	<i>Mercenary</i>	Hunter	Hunter	
5	<i>Merchant</i>	<i>Shaman</i>	<i>Shaman</i>	
6	Sailor	Reroll or choose	Tracker	Tracker

## 2.2: Bards, Courtiers, Diplomats, Explorers and Scholars

Bards, courtiers and diplomats roll once on the table below and gain the advanced skill at the indicated percentage. Explorers and scholars roll twice, rerolling any duplicates. If you roll a skill in *italics*, you must take a new skill of that type and cannot add +10% to an existing skill instead.

D8	Bard	Courtier	Diplomat	Explorer	Scholar
1	Artistic Expression	Artistic Expression	Artistic Expression	Language	Artistic Expression
2	Courtesy	Courtesy	Courtesy	Lore (Astronomy)	Courtesy
3	Dance	Lore (Art)	Dance	Lore (Geography)	Engineering
4	Play Instrument	Lore (Heraldry)	Language	Shiphandling	Healing
5	Language	Lore (Philosophy)	Lore	Survival	Language
6	Lore	Lore (Regional)	Play Instrument	Reroll	<i>Lore</i>
7	Oratory	Oratory	Oratory	Reroll	Mechanisms
8	Reroll or choose	Play Instrument	Reroll or choose	Reroll or choose	Reroll or choose

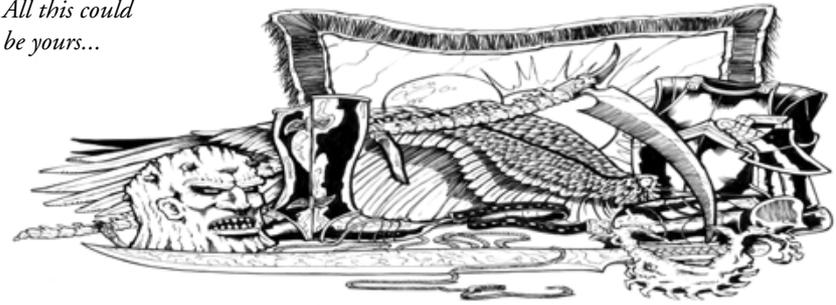
## 2.3: Merchants, Thieves and Wizards

Roll once on the table below and gain the indicated advanced skill at its base percentage. If you roll a skill in *italics*, you must take a new skill of that type and cannot add +10% to an existing skill instead.

If you are a wizard, you must also roll on the Randomly Determined Rune table until all your runes have been assigned.

D3	Merchant	Thief	Wizard
1	Language	Disguise	Language
2	Lore (Logistics)	Mechanisms	Lore
3	Shiphandling	Streetwise	<i>Runecasting</i>

*All this could be yours...*



## 2.4: Blacksmiths, Craftsmen, Knights, Peddlers, Shamans, Spies, and Witches

Blacksmiths, Craftsmen, Shamans, Spies and Witches roll once on the table below and gain the indicated advanced skill at its base percentage.

Peddlers roll in both of their columns – once for an advanced skill at its base percentage and once for a weapon skill at the indicated bonus.

Knights roll in both their columns as peddlers do, but roll *twice* for weapon skills, rerolling any duplicates.

If you roll a skill in *italics*, you must take a new skill of that type and cannot add +10% to an existing skill instead.

If you are a shaman or a witch, you must also roll on the Randomly Determined Rune table until all your runes have been assigned.

D4	Blacksmith	Craftsman	Knight Weapon (+10%)	Knight Advanced	Peddler Weapon (+5%)	Peddler Advanced	Shaman or Witch	Spy
1	Engineering	Artistic Expression	1H Sword	Courtesy	1H Hammer	Language	Healing	Courtesy
2	Mechanisms	<i>Craft</i>	2H Sword	Dance	Crossbow	Lore	Lore	Disguise
3	Craft (Armourer)	Engineering	Shield	Oratory	Staff	Streetwise	<i>Runecasting</i>	Language
4	Craft (Weaponsmith)	Mechanisms	Spear	Play Instrument	Unarmed	Survival	Survival	Tracking

### 2.5: Mercenaries

Mercenaries roll twice on each of the following tables and gain the skill bonus indicated. Reroll any duplicates.

#### D12 Weapon Skill (+15%)

1	1H Axe
2	1H Flail
3	1H Hammer
4	1H Sword
5	2H Axe
6	2H Flail
7	2H Hammer
8	2H Sword
9	Bow
10	Crossbow
11	Polearm
12	Shield

#### D8 Skill (+5%)

1	Athletics
2	Dagger
3	Dodge
4	Driving
5	Evaluate
6	Resilience
7	Riding
8	Unarmed

### 2.6: Soldiers

Soldiers roll three times on the following table, rerolling any duplicates. They gain +10% to the skills indicated.

#### D20 Skill

1	1H Axe
2	1H Flail
3	1H Hammer
4	1H Sword
5	2H Axe
6	2H Flail
7	2H Hammer
8	2H Sword
9	Athletics
10	Bow
11	Crossbow
12	Dagger
13	Driving
14	Polearm
15	Riding
16	Shield
17	Sling
18	Spear
19	Reroll
20	Reroll or choose

### 2.7: Alchemists, Healers, Priests, Shamans, Witches, and Wizards.

Any character with the runecasting skill can roll on this table to randomly determine which rune they start with. If they begin the game with multiple runes, roll multiple times, rerolling duplicates.

#### The Randomly Determined Rune Table

D6	Alchemist	Healer	Priest	Shaman	Witch	Wizard
1	Metal	Beast	Communication	Beast	Fertility	Air
2	Motion	Fertility	Law	Earth	Luck	Cold
3	Plant	Plant	Man	Man	Moon	Earth
4	Stasis	Man	Spirit	Spirit	Shadow	Fire
5			Reroll			Heat
6			Reroll or choose			Water

This table is for runes gained from a character's profession. If you are randomly generating experienced characters, roll for their extra runes on the table on page 65 of the *RuneQuest* core rulebook.



### Step 3: Free Skill Points

Count the number of free skill points you have, and divide that number by 10. Roll that many times on the following table. For each skill you roll, either add +10% to it if you already have the skill or gain the skill at its base percentage if you do not.<sup>1</sup> If you roll a skill three times, reroll any further results that indicate that skill again.<sup>2</sup>

D10\D6	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Acrobatics	Lore (World)	Craft	Shiphandling	2H Hammer	Bow
2	Athletics	Perception	Dance	Streetwise	2H Sword	Crossbow
3	Boating	Persistence	Disguise	Survival	Dagger	Sling
4	Dodge	Resilience	Engineering	Tracking	Martial Arts	Artistic Expression
5	Driving	Riding	Healing	1H Axe	Polearm	Courtesy
6	Evaluate	Sing	Language	1H Flail	Rapier	Oratory
7	First Aid	Sleight	Lore	1H Hammer	Shield	Runecasting*
8	Influence	Stealth	Martial Arts	1H Sword	Spear	Reroll
9	Lore (Animal)	Throwing	Mechanisms	2H Axe	Staff	Reroll
10	Lore (Plant)	Unarmed	Play Instrument	2H Flail	Blowgun	Reroll or choose

\*If you have no runes, you may reroll or choose a skill.

And there you have it: every table you need to construct a totally random character using the *RuneQuest* core rulebook and the *RuneQuest Companion*. Give it a try next time you're generating a character – you might be surprised at what you end up with...

*Things are not going so well...*



<sup>1</sup>For skills like Craft and Artistic Expression, you may choose whether to gain a new one or improve an existing one.

<sup>2</sup>This is for starting characters, because they cannot benefit from more than 30 skill points in a single skill – if you are creating more experienced characters, you reroll rolls after the fifth for a Seasoned character, seventh for a Veteran, and ninth for a Master or Hero.

# GLADIATORS OF MESSANTIA

BY TIM BANCROFT

The *Fortnight of Trials* in the arena is a major annual event for the city of Messantia. Not only are there games and athletic contests, but also more deadly competitions: the combat between gladiators. During this packed two weeks, reputations and fortunes are gained and lost. It is a time when a slave may win his freedom with acts of bravery and ferocity, but it is also a time when lives are lost and heroes are mourned.

The Conan supplement *Messantia – City of Riches* alludes to the gladiators of Argos. More details are provided in *Argos and Zingara*, including details of net and trident use. However, for Player Character interest a more in-depth background is required. This article provides rules and background information for a more intense involvement in the Arena.

## SCUFFLES OR CHALLENGES?

It is not just in the two weeks of the *Fortnight of Trials* that gladiators are paired to fight each other. Arena combat is a regular occurrence with small, weekly events and more intensive, monthly competitions. The smaller events are seen as training fights, some even taking place with blunt or wooden weapons and are frequently to first blood rather than to first fallen. The monthly events are more formal and encompass all the gladiatorial styles permitted in Messantia.

There are other places in Messantia where formal combat between opponents takes place. Dustbiter frequently sees combat between members of caravans whose sense

of honour has been wronged, Docksider has frequent combats where the heroes of individual ships are matched against each other for petty wagers and pride, and across the river, formal duels may be announced and fought between the nobility. Whilst these are organised challenges, all these unofficial combats are frowned upon by the watch so frequently take place in secret. Scuffles in public between two violent warriors are, of course, completely frowned upon and are liable to see the opponents thrown into jail.

This leaves the Arena as the only location in Messantia where officially sanctioned formal combat is permitted.

## GAMBLING

One of the principal reasons for ensuring that such formal combat takes place only in the Arena is the tax levied on gambling. Bookmakers are plentiful in the arena prefect and all are required to pay a percentage of their profits in taxes. To ensure that no betting agent understates their fees, regular checks are made of their activities and books. When the law was first enacted, some agents tried to pass the fees on to their customers but the fragmented, cutthroat nature of Messantian business life soon meant their customers turned to other agents.

The government of Messantia also monitors fights to ensure that they are not fixed. They will not hesitate to withdraw a betting license if they believe a bookmaker was involved, and will withdraw a trainer's license if

they believe he had rigged the contest. The licensed bookmakers are careful to protect their interests and if they have any suspicion that a fight was rigged they do not hesitate to withhold winnings until the rigging is disproved and frequently inform the authorities themselves of their suspicions.

## GLADIATORIAL COMBAT

There are three main styles of gladiators in the Arena: Formal, Matched and Freestyle. Formal gladiators wear traditional arms and armour in strictly-controlled groupings and are normally slaves, whilst Matched gladiators fight with identical, previously-agreed weapons and armour and Freestyle combatants use the weapons and armour with which they feel most comfortable. All styles are open to slaves or free people.

Most combat in the Arena is either to first blood or to first fallen. Referees always stop the fight as soon as one of the combatants collapses to the ground (0 or less hit points) though, inevitably, accidents happen and severely wounded gladiators sometimes bleed to death or are killed outright by the massive damage from an overwhelming blow. Gladiators who continue attacking their opponents after they have fallen are banned from the arena, the length of the ban depending on the severity of the attack.

Where combat is between slaves it is occasionally to the death, with the life of the defeated in the hands of the president of the games and the crowd. Whilst this

may appear to be a problem, in reality very few defeated gladiators are killed outright by their opponents *coup de grace* and are normally allowed to live.

Each win in the Arena increases a character's Reputation in the Arena (only) by one and each loss reduces his Reputation by one. Outside the Arena such bonuses are halved.

## FORMAL COMBAT

Whilst other styles have no limitations, the traditional categories permitted in the Formal combat style are extremely traditional and strictly controlled. There are a number of traditional styles outlined in *Argos and Zingara* which include the Net-man, the Fish-man, the Heavily-Armed, the Two-Weapon fighter, the Challenger and the Equites. In addition to these traditional styles, Messantia also provides for gladiators whose weapons reflect those of other cultures, such as Stygia and Zingara. These have been formalised into the following main groups of gladiators.

### THE FISH-HELM

With the face plate down, the fish helm offers great protection to the face and eyes but at the cost of almost all visibility. A combatant in a fish helm gets +3 DR and an additional +1 defence against a net attack even if he cannot see the netter. He also has a 50% chance to avoid the effects of Evil Eye range spells, as if he averted his eyes.

However, he suffers a -2 penalty on Spot, Listen and Search checks, and must make a Spot check each round - if this check result beats his enemies' Dodge defence, he can see them normally, otherwise he treats them as if they were invisible.

The **Argossean**, armoured with a targe, plumed great helm, heavy metal greaves and tightly padded and reinforced leather wraps and armour across his torso and on his limbs. Armed with only a short sword and a long knife, Warriors are typically matched against Corsairs or Nomads. The **Challenger** is very slightly more heavily armoured but has a large, rectangular shield and a broadsword. Challengers tend to fight other Challengers and Stygian gladiators.

The **Stygian** is armoured in the heavy, traditional Stygian armour and crescent-topped helm and given the traditional Stygian weapon, the khopesh. He is also given the hide-and-wood shield of the Stygian. Whilst this may seem to make him invulnerable compared to the other gladiators, his armour and weapon are made from bronze, offering considerably less protection.

The heavily armed **Corsair** or **Zingaran**, who has a targe, slightly lighter armour than the Warrior and a crested helmet with the head of a sea-dragon. With his arming sword he is sometimes said to represent the 'ancient foes of the Argosseans', though never on official documents. A similar combatant is the **Nomad** or **Shemite** who has a long lance (a hunting spear with a 10' reach) and a curved long knife as well as the targe.

The **Fisherman** or **Net-Man**, who is armed with his highly symbolic net, trident and long knife. For protection, however, all he has is a mail sleeve, light armour and an ornate shoulder guard that can be used to protect his face. He is rarely matched against the heavier gladiators other than a Fish-Man.

The **Fish** or **Fish-Man** is the most frequent opponent of the Fisherman. Armed with a short sword and targe he also has a scale corselet representing fish-scales. His uniqueness comes from his smooth, globular helmet: whilst other helmets can snag on the Fisherman's net

or become caught on his trident, the helmet of the Fish means he is well-protected against the Fisherman. A version of the Fish-Man is the **Corinthian**, who is armed with a square shield a little larger than the buckler.

**Equites** or **cavalry** are highly specialised and only fight other equites. They are considered to be more a form of entertainment rather than a true gladiator.

Occasionally gladiators will be given two weapons, either the same as their normal weapons, two identical weapons or two strange weapons. Specialists are rare as two-weapon fighting can be a lottery and are not particularly well supported by the bookmakers.

All formal gladiators are effectively slaves, though some may be freemen who voluntarily surrendered some of their rights to become gladiators. Slaves fighting in the



formal style are frequently granted their freedom after fifty wins for the risks they have taken to entertain the people of Messantia. By the time they are freed the slave's owner has typically made a significant amount of money from any prizes or gambling.

## **MATCHED COMBAT**

This takes place between two gladiators with identical weapons and armour, frequently using the traditional styles and often between gladiators with the same background (Barbarian, Soldier, Thief, Nomad or the like). A mix of slaves and free fighters take part and it can be useful for putting untrained, captured foreign soldiers to generating an income quickly. The weapons and armour are modern, well made and can be of any type, depending on agreement between the combatants or the arrangers of the fight. It is only in this form of combat that two-handed weapons are permitted.

The Matched combatants are seen as more professional as the Freestyle fighters.

## **FREESTYLE**

This is exactly what it suggests. Two combatants of roughly equal fighting capability are matched against each other and are able to use whatever weapons and armour they each prefer, with the exception of two-handed weapons. Obviously, a character in full plate will have few opponents! Freestyle matches outside of the *Fortnight of Trials* are popular amongst newcomers to the arena and amongst free people trying out being a gladiator so tend to attract little attention. Once a fighter is known, interest in his combats tends to rise.

Experience has led the Arena organisers to ban projectile weapons, although daggers, hatchets and spears are allowed. Gladiators are only allowed two weapons in the arena, at least one of which must be a light weapon, though they may forego a shield if they wish. Despite

the name, Freestyle gladiators are generally matched against those with similar armour and weapons, or of similar character level, or of similar attack modifier.

Sometimes Freestyle competitions are organised between several groups of gladiators, some armed identically.

## **TYPES OF COMPETITION**

In addition to the single, head-to-head fights there are also ladders, knockout competitions (where sometimes both combatants knock each other out, literally), and occasionally league structures. The more formal knockouts take place during the *Fortnight of Trials* whilst the ladder is ongoing and is open to all comers.

Unofficially the bookmakers keep their own ladder keeping track of the successes and losses of all gladiators they see in the arena.

## **MATCHING**

Whilst the first combat of a gladiator in the Freestyle section (see below) is highly random, by his second or third fight the measure of the gladiator has been gained and he will be placed against other combatants of a similar fighting capability. Before entering any combat in the Matched or Formal style a gladiator is assessed by experts as to his ability in a short combat. A Player Character can try to affect this assessment by making a Bluff check with a special synergy bonus of +2 for every 5 points of his base attack bonus. The DC for fooling the examiners is 16, +4 for every 'extra level' the fighter wishes to fake, or +2 for every level he wishes to hide if he is attempting to appear *less* competent.

## **CREATING A MATCH-UP**

Match-ups at the smaller events are relatively easy for Freestyle Gladiators as there is almost always someone ready to pitch in and try and earn a quick 50 silvers.

Matched opponents are more difficult unless a challenger is prepared to match the weapons and armour of a gladiator already waiting at the arena.

Formal combats not only require the correct equipment, which costs around 50% more than normal, but also requires a formal request for such a combat to be lodged with the arena authorities a week before the event stating in which category the challenger is prepared to fight. The authorities will investigate the challenger, issue a request for an opponent and, if forthcoming, arrange the match.

In all cases a registration fee of 25 silvers is forfeit before the combat.

## **MERCHANT HOUSE INTEREST**

The two houses most well known for their interests in gladiators are House Florens and House Gabrio, though House Gabrio's interest has been waning of late. Rumours abound of a secret gladiatorial pit House Florens has beneath its villa: in this recently arrived slaves from the Black Kingdoms are put through their paces before the winners are introduced to the arena.

## **PRIZES**

Occasionally a patron will award a prize to the winner of a contest or, more frequently, the winner of a series of contests. Such prizes can range from as little as 50 silvers up to 500 silvers or more to the owners of fighters in the Formal category who win a tournament. Prizes for the Formal category are double these, with the cash going to the owner of a slave.

Top gladiators in the yearly games can earn much more, including their freedom. Freedom, however, is only granted to those gladiators who have served long and well and have become popular with the crowd: the act of being freed is seen as a particular honour for both the slave and his owner.

## SPYING ON GLADIATORS

If details of a match-up can be discovered before a fight, the tactics and approach of the gladiator can be determined. It generally requires a Gather Information check (DC 15-25) to find where a particular gladiator is trained, and then entry to the training grounds is required (a simple charge ranging from 1sp to 50sp depending on the size of the ground and the importance of the gladiators. Opponents are charged up to ten times more or are banned altogether.

After studying a gladiator in practice for about an hour a character can attempt a melee combat check (against DC 15) as if fighting with the weapons the gladiator is using. If successful, the spy can make a guess as to the slaves level and combat bonus with the weapon, as well as his general style and any special moves (such as disarm) he is likely to use. This check must take into account any weapon proficiencies of the spy (so a first level scholar studying a gladiator with an arming sword will typically have a -2 modifier on this check). Two spies can work together with one able to provide an assistance bonus to the other.

Surreptitious access to training ground is sometimes possible, though anyone caught spying on the gladiators is referred to the gambling overseer.

## GLADIATORIAL COMBAT

Some players enjoy running through a combat in the arena as a means of testing their Characters' capabilities or testing tactics in a relatively low-risk environment. The match-up procedures outlined above should be followed and the Player Characters should be allowed to spy on their opponents. Sample gladiators are provided as possible opponents, some of which are specifically geared to the arena.

In one-on-one combat additional rules can be used, such as exhaustion and the use of the balance or tumble skills for individual advantage.

In the sands of the arena, keyed up and pacing about an opponent a gladiator is constantly tense, working for advantage. After a number of rounds of fighting equal to the character's Constitution he must make Fortitude save (DC 15) each round. Each failed Fortitude save

results in a loss of 1 point from Strength or Dexterity (character's choice). If either reaches zero the character drops to the ground, exhausted and unconscious.

A gladiator may try and wrong-foot an opponent within 5 feet by moving around, weaving his body or cutting back. This costs a move action to attempt and forces an opposed special Balance or Tumble check. Untrained characters may not initiate this maneuver, but can resist it with their basic Dexterity modifier. The attacker and defender make skill checks using their Balance or Tumble (whichever is better). The character with the highest speed gets a +2 circumstance modifier if he is faster by up to 10 feet, or +4 if he is faster by more than 10 feet.

If the defender loses this opposed test, he is wrong footed and at a penalty of -1 on his attack rolls and his parry and dodge defence values for one round. If he lost by 10 or more, this penalty increases to -2. If the attacker loses by 5 or more he provokes an attack of opportunity.

If the defender loses he is wrong-footed and takes a DM of -1 on his attack, dodge and parry rolls for one round, -2 if he loses by 10 or more. If the attacker fails by 5 or more and is within striking distance he draws an attack of opportunity.

The gambling odds can be used as a way of giving or taking away money from Player Characters who insist on gambling. Most Freestyle combats will have very low odds as the cautious nature of the bookies will lead them to minimise their losses (around evens, or perhaps less). Massive bets of greater than 1000 silvers are unlikely to be accepted and if Player Characters try to spread large bets around the bookies will rapidly lower their odds and may lead to the Player Characters being refused any odds whatsoever. In all cases the Games Master should remember he is in control!



# SAMPLE GLADIATORS

## FORMAL GLADIATORS

Most frequently these are slaves trained in the traditional styles of combat, though there is nothing to stop anyone else taking part. The Formal Gladiators are carefully matched against each other in terms of traditional opponents and skill. *Argos and Zingara* gives additional rules for the lower quality of these gladiator's weapons (AP -1, Hardness 75%, potentially brittle) which are included in the statistics below, excluding the bronze khopesh and the Fisherman's weapons which are made in a more functional way.

All slave gladiators train in the slave grounds around arena or in their master's household, typically in the country around Messantia.

### ARGOSSEAN, CHALLENGER, SHEMITE, STYGIAN AND FISH

#### Medium Hyborian Soldier 3

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	3d10+6 (23 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+2 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflex)
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft.
<b>Dodge Defence:</b>	12 (+1 class, +1 Dex)
<b>Parry Defence:</b>	15 (+2 class, +2 Str, +1 Parry)
<b>DR:</b>	By armour
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+3/+5
<b>Attack:</b>	By weapon
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Two-Weapon Fighting, Formation Combat (Skirmisher)
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Hyborean Qualities
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +3
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 15, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
<b>Skills:</b>	Bluff +7, Intimidate +5, Sense Motive +3, Tumble +7
<b>Feats:</b>	Power Attack, Parry, Toughness, Weapon Focus (appropriate weapon)
<b>Equipment:</b>	Varies

#### ARGOSSEAN

Equipped with a targe shield (+3 parry, -2 check penalty), plumed gladiator's helm (+2 DR), heavy metal greaves and tightly padded and reinforced armour (DR 5, -3 check penalty), short sword, and long knife. **Final statistics: DR 7, Parry Defence 18, -5 check penalty, short sword +6 melee (1d8+2 damage, 19-20/x2 critical, AP 2)**

#### CHALLENGER

Equipped with a large shield (+4 parry, -4 check penalty), plumed gladiator's helm (+2 DR), heavy metal greaves and padded and reinforced armour (DR 5, -3 check penalty), broadsword, and poniard. **Final statistics: DR 7, Parry Defence 19, -7 check penalty, broadsword +6 melee (1d10+2 damage, 19-20/x2 critical, AP 4)**

#### SHEMITE

Equipped with a helm with horse-hair plumes and tail (+2 DR), leather greaves and padded and reinforced leather armour (DR 4, -1 check penalty), war spear, and long knife. **Final statistics: DR 6, Parry Defence 15, -1 check penalty, war spear +6 melee (1d10+2 damage, x3 critical, AP 3, 10 ft reach)**

#### STYGIAN

Equipped with a Stygian large hide shield (+4 parry, -4 check penalty), Stygian bronze crested helm (+1 DR), Stygian bronze scale hauberk (DR 5, -5 check penalty), bronze khopesh, and dagger. **Final statistics: DR 6, Parry Defence 19, -9 check penalty, khopesh +6 melee (2d4+2 damage, 18-20/x2 critical, AP 6)**

#### FISH

Equipped with a targe shield (+3 parry, -2 check penalty), fish helm (+3 DR, see above), scale corselet (DR 5, -4 check penalty), short sword, and long knife. **Final statistics: DR 8, Parry Defence 17, -6 check penalty (-8 on Spot or Listen checks), short sword +6 melee (1d8+2 damage, 19-20/x2 critical, AP 2)**

The Fish also has one less rank in Bluff, Intimidate and Tumble, and an Escape Artist skill of +4.

The formal gladiators tend to fight in a cautious and defensive style. They will occasionally try a feint and very occasionally issue a fearsome cry at the start of a battle to intimidate an inexperienced opponent.

## THE FISHERMAN AND THE CORSAIR

	<b>Fisherman</b>	<b>Corsair/Zingaran</b>
	<b>Medium Argossean Soldier 3</b>	<b>Medium Zingaran Soldier 4</b>
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	3d10+6 (23 hp)	4d10+3 (25 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+3 (+2 Dex, +1 Reflex)	+4 (+3 Dex, +1 Reflex)
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft.	30 ft.
<b>Dodge Defence:</b>	13 (+1 class, +2 Dex)	14 (+2 class, +2 Dex)
<b>Parry Defence:</b>	14 (+2 class, +1 Str, +1 Parry)	18 (+3 class, +1 Str, +1 Parry, +3 targe)
<b>DR:</b>	4	6
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+3/+5	+4/+5
<b>Attack:</b>	Trident +4 melee or +5 finesse melee (1d10+1 damage, x3 critical, AP 3) or net +5 ranged touch (entangle).	Arming sword +7 melee or +9 finesse melee (1d10+1 damage, 19-20/x2 critical, AP 2)
<b>Full Attack:</b>		
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Two-Weapon Fighting, Formation Combat (Skirmisher)	Sneak attack +1d6, Two-Weapon Combat, Formation Combat (Skirmisher)
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Argossean Qualities	Zingaran Qualities
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0	Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +0
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8	Str 13, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10
<b>Skills:</b>	Balance +9, Bluff +5, Sense Motive +4, Use Rope +6	Balance +8, Bluff +5, Intimidate +3, Sense Motive +2, Use Rope +6
<b>Feats:</b>	Trident Disarm, Toughness, Exotic Weapon Proficiencies (Trident, Net)	Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Parry, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Arming Sword)
<b>Equipment:</b>	Leather greaves and padded straps with a chain sleeve and built-up shoulder piece (DR 4, -1 check penalty), trident, net, and dagger.	Target shield (+3 parry, -2 check penalty) crested helm with the head of a sea dragon (+2 DR), leather greaves and padded and reinforced leather armour (DR 4, -1 check penalty), arming sword, and small dagger.
<b>Style:</b>	The Fisherman is cautious and extremely vulnerable so they tend to try and keep away from their more heavily armed opponents. Where possible they try to trip or ensnare their opponents using the net or pin them on the trident. (For full rules for tridents and nets, see page 95 of <i>Argos and Zingara</i> .)	The Zingaran is confident but wary of those who try to surprise him and often suspects a trap. He tends towards a finesse style of attack if possible.

## FREESTYLE GLADIATORS

The most fierce and dangerous of all three classifications is, of course, the Freestyle. Gladiators rarely know whom they are matched against, and the odds are frequently erratic as the bookmakers try to calculate the results of fights between different fighters and different combinations of weapons. Whilst the bookies would quite happily see it disappear many of the less well educated Messantians love the excitement of the Freestyle match-ups.

### HYPERIO

#### Medium Argossean Soldier 3

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	3d10+6 (23 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+6 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflex, +4 Improved Initiative)
<b>Speed:</b>	25 ft.
<b>Dodge:</b>	12 (+1 class, +1 Dex)
<b>Defence:</b>	
<b>Parry Defence:</b>	18 (+2 class, +2 Str, +4 shield)
<b>DR:</b>	7
<b>Base Attack/</b>	+3/+5
<b>Grapple:</b>	
<b>Attack:</b>	Arming sword +6 melee or +5 finesse melee (1d10+2 damage, 19-20/x2 critical, AP 4)
<b>Special</b>	Two-Weapon Combat, Formation Combat
<b>Attacks:</b>	(Heavy Infantry)
<b>Special</b>	Argossean Qualities
<b>Qualities:</b>	
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 15, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
<b>Skills:</b>	Balance +5, Bluff +2, Gather Information +3, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (Local) +1, Profession (Sailor) +4, Tumble +7, Use Rope +5
<b>Feats:</b>	Power Attack, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Arming Sword)
<b>Equipment:</b>	Arming sword, poniard, brigandine coat, steel cap, large shield.
<b>Style:</b>	Unsophisticated with frequent attempts at battering through his opponent's defence (via Power Attack).
<b>Trains:</b>	In or around the Arena, no attempt to hide training, Gather Information check (DC 15) to find.

### GRANDERIO THE RED

#### Medium Argossean Soldier 4

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	4d10+8 (30 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+6 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflex, +4 Improved Initiative)
<b>Speed:</b>	25 ft.
<b>Dodge:</b>	13 (+2 class, +1 Dex)
<b>Defence:</b>	
<b>Parry Defence:</b>	20 (+3 class, +3 Str, +4 shield)
<b>DR:</b>	8
<b>Base Attack/</b>	+4/+7
<b>Grapple:</b>	
<b>Attack:</b>	Arming sword +8 melee or +6 finesse melee (1d10+5 damage, 19-20/x2 critical, AP 5)
<b>Special</b>	Two-Weapon Combat, Formation Combat
<b>Attacks:</b>	(Heavy Infantry)
<b>Special</b>	Argossean Qualities
<b>Qualities:</b>	
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 16, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
<b>Skills:</b>	Balance +7, Bluff +2, Gather Information +3, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (Local) +1, Profession (Sailor) +4, Tumble +8, Use Rope +5
<b>Feats:</b>	Power Attack, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Arming Sword), Weapon Specialisation (Arming Sword)
<b>Equipment:</b>	Arming sword, poniard, brigandine coat, great helm, large shield.
<b>Style:</b>	Variable, frequently switching to a finesse style if he thinks his opponent's defences are too strong.
<b>Trains:</b>	In a secluded yard in Redboots known to very few outsiders, giving a Gather Information DC of 20 to be found. It is also difficult to watch Granderio in the yard as he stops practising and asks watchers to leave. A watcher will need to gain entry to and hide in an overlooking warehouse nearby.



## TARGIO THE FARMER

Medium Argossean Barbarian 2/Soldier 2

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	4d10+8 (30 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflex)
<b>Speed:</b>	25 ft.
<b>Dodge</b>	13 (+2 class, +1 Dex)
<b>Defence:</b>	
<b>Parry Defence:</b>	15 (+1 class, +3 Str, +1 Parry)
<b>DR:</b>	8
<b>Base Attack/</b>	+4/+7
<b>Grapple:</b>	
<b>Attack:</b>	Greatsword +7 melee (2d10+4 damage, 19-20/x2 critical, AP 8) or broadsword +7 melee (1d10+3 damage, 19-20/x2 critical, AP 5)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Two-Weapon Combat, Formation Combat (Heavy Infantry), Fighting Madness (4 rounds), Crimson Mist (4 rounds), Versatility
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Argossean Qualities, Bite Sword, Fearless (+2)
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +7, Ref +4, Will -1
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 16, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
<b>Skills:</b>	Balance +7, Bluff +6, Gather Information +3, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Local) +2, Profession (Sailor) +4, Tumble +8, Use Rope +5
<b>Feats:</b>	Parry, Power Attack, Track, Toughness, Fighting Madness, Weapon Proficiency (Greatsword)
<b>Equipment:</b>	Greatsword OR broadsword and large shield (increase Parry Defence to 19), poniard, brigandine coat, great helm.
<b>Style:</b>	Drops into a fighting rage using Power Attack early in a fight to wear down his opponents, adjusting it with his greatsword to his advantage. He quickly switches to normal attacks if it is obvious his opponent is too skilled or is fighting defensively. His first strikes are often lethal if they penetrate.
<b>Trains:</b>	In a farmhouse outside Messantia where he lives (Gather Information check DC 20).

## HYPERIO

Whilst Hyperio has had some experience in mercenary companies, he found that the erratic nature of the employment and the constant travel led him away from his real love of fighting. He came home, to Messantia, and lives in a hostel in the Arena Prefect. He is popular with his family and a few locals from the Arena and Dockside Prefects, but has not been particularly successful, earning just enough money to keep himself in drink and lodging.

## GRANDERIO THE RED

Granderio is a popular native of Argos. Initially living out in the rural communities, he was attracted by the sounds and thrills of the arena, sold everything to buy weapons and armour, and travelled to the port to make his name. He established a name quickly and is currently 'on the up', fighting whenever he can.

## TARGIO THE FARMER

Initially living near the northern mountains of Argos, Targio was attracted by the sounds and thrills of the arena, sold everything to buy weapons and armour, and travelled south to the port to make his name. He established a reputation quickly and is currently 'on the up', fighting whenever he can. He is popular with the underclasses, being seen as a common man. When he can tries to get into match-ups where he can use his greatsword in the Matched classification but is not averse to using his broadsword and large shield.

## EXPERIO THE GREY

Born and bred in Messantia, Experio has worked his way up the ranks of Gladiators the hard way, alternating his time in the Arena with time spent as a mercenary. His nickname has been acquired as he is a clinical fighter with no showy moves and is rarely be seen celebrating a win afterwards.

## ZINGELITO THE ZINGARAN

Playing on his unpopularity as a Zingaran, Zingelito frequently attempts to arrange match-ups with locals or popular newcomers where he can play his background to the full as the 'bad guy'. He wears a tight fitting mask under his helm to hide his features and has his armour and shield painted black. Those who meet him in a tavern are often surprised to find the pleasant guy they have just had a drink with is Zingelito.

## EXPERIO THE GREY

### Medium Argossean Soldier 6

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	6d10+12 (45 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+8 (+2 Dex, +2 Reflex, +4 Improved Initiative)
<b>Speed:</b>	20 ft.
<b>Dodge:</b>	15 (+3 class, +2 Dex)
<b>Defence:</b>	
<b>Parry Defence:</b>	21 (+4 class, +3 Str, +4 shield)
<b>DR:</b>	8
<b>Base Attack/</b>	+6/+9
<b>Grapple:</b>	
<b>Attack:</b>	Arming sword +10 melee or +8 finesse melee (1d10+5 damage, 19-20/x2 critical, AP 5)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Arming sword +10/+5 melee or +8/+3 finesse melee (1d10+5 damage, 19-20/x2 critical, AP 5)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Two-Weapon Combat, Formation Combat (Heavy Infantry)
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Argossean Qualities
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 17, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9
<b>Skills:</b>	Balance +8, Bluff +6, Gather Information +4, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Local) +1, Profession (Sailor) +4, Tumble +9, Use Rope +6
<b>Feats:</b>	Power Attack, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Arming Sword), Weapon Specialisation (Arming Sword)
<b>Equipment:</b>	Arming sword, poniard, mail hauberk, great helm, large shield.
<b>Style:</b>	Steady and skilled. A constant barrage of attacks.
<b>Trains:</b>	In enclosed courts anywhere in the seedier parts of the city. As he constantly moves he is very difficult to find, requiring a Gather Information (DC 22) check for his current training location.

## ZINGELITO THE ZINGARAN

### Medium Zingaran Pirate 2/Soldier 3

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	2d8+3d10+5 (31 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+11 (+3 Dex, +4 Reflex, +4 Improved Initiative)
<b>Speed:</b>	25 ft.
<b>Dodge:</b>	15 (+2 class, +3 Dex)
<b>Defence:</b>	
<b>Parry Defence:</b>	17 (+3 class, 1 Parry, +3 targe)
<b>DR:</b>	8
<b>Base Attack/</b>	+4/+4
<b>Grapple:</b>	
<b>Attack:</b>	Arming sword +9 finesse melee (1d10 damage, 19-20/x2 critical, AP 2)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Ferocious Attack, Formation Combat (Marine), Two-Weapon Combat, Sneak Attack +1d6, Zingaran sword bonuses.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Zingaran Qualities, Pirate Code (Zingaran Trumpets), To Sail A Road Of Blood And Slaughter
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +7, Ref +7, Will -1
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 12
<b>Skills:</b>	Balance +13, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +0, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Local) +2, Profession (Sailor) +4, Sense Motive +4, Tumble +11, Use Rope +6
<b>Feats:</b>	Combat Expertise, Parry, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Arming Sword)
<b>Equipment:</b>	Arming sword, poniard, mail hauberk, great helm, targe.
<b>Style:</b>	An out-and-out finesse gladiator, he frequently attempts to disarm his opponent after feinting first. Occasionally he tries to Intimidate an opponent or, as an erratic change, springs on them first with his <i>ferocious attack</i> before they have a chance to make an action.
<b>Trains:</b>	In a courtyard in Dockside near his lodgings (Gather Information (DC 18) check to find).

# The Accused

A Judge Dredd adventure, by Marc Farrimond

## Mega-City One Criminal Code Section 59 (D)

A judge may enter a citizen's home to carry out routine intensive investigation. The citizen has no rights in this matter.

Not every mission that judges face takes place on the mean streets of Mega-City One. Sometimes events can be taken out of the hands of the judges and they may find themselves having to defend the actions of a colleague or themselves before a tribunal in the presence of their Sector Chief, the Council of Five or the Chief Judge herself!

This adventure is designed for intermediate characters between levels 9-13 and is intended to be a one-off adventure that can be further expanded by the Games Master if he so wishes. This adventure will involve the characters doing a lot of legwork and questioning others about their actions, rather than shooting things and can be used as a stand-alone adventure or integrated into a campaign.

It begins as a normal routine shift, a massive vehicle pile-up by 09:00 hours, block war by 12:00 hours and bank robbery by 13:00 hours, but it is often the most

simple of things that can cause the most problems. The judges are in the middle of a run-of-the-mill crime blitz in Les Dennis con-apts, the usual affair with the judges entering every home on selected levels of the block and conducting a search for anything that may be illegal or incriminating.

It is while the judges are conducting an investigation on level 340-c that their day begins to take a turn for the worse.

## Scene One

Read this aloud to your players:

*It is amazing what a hefty boot applied with just the right pressure can do. The door to apartment 27dd on level 340-c of Les Dennis con-apt explodes in a shower of splinters as you announce your presence to the occupants inside. 'Crime Blitz! Stand away from the door and put your hands on your head!' You yell and dive into the room in a time-practiced manner, covering every possible angle of attack. Having been on the streets of the meanest city in the world for as long as you have, not much fazes you and you think that you have seen everything that the city has to throw up at you. That was until a few seconds ago.*

*In the middle of the room is a large pile of human torsos, a cacophony of carnage that makes the bile begin to rise at the back of your throat, despite years of training. Lawgivers drawn and respirators down, with cat-like reflexes you survey the room and look for any possible chance of attack.*

*For long seconds there is nothing but silence, the only sounds are those of other judges further along the level conducting investigations of their own. Without warning, the door to the bedroom flies open and two heavily disfigured men rush into the room with spit guns blazing!*

The perps will not listen to reason so the judges are in for a shoot-out. Once the combat has been resolved, the judges are then free to investigate the rest of the apartment.

## Sons of the Kraken Cultists

	Citizen 3
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	3d6+13 (23)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+4 (+4 Dex)
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft.
<b>Defence:</b>	15 (+5 Reflex)
<b>Base Attack/</b>	+2/+1
<b>Grapple:</b>	
<b>Attack:</b>	Spit gun +6 ranged (2d6/6)
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +4
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 9, Dex 18, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 7
<b>Skills:</b>	Climb +3, Hide +5, Jump +3, Knowledge (Atlantis Station) +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Spot +10
<b>Feats:</b>	Improved Resist Arrest, Lightning Reflexes, Resist Arrest, Toughness
<b>Equipment:</b>	Spit guns

The apartment is a standard con-apt habitation unit. Larger than a conventional City Block apartment, it has a small kitchenette connecting with the main living area, a standard-sized bathroom and adjoining bedroom. A thorough search of the entire apartment (Search check, DC 15) will reveal the following items:

- 10,000 credits in cash and card chips
- Four unlicensed spit guns
- Two Kraken's Wake sonic blasters
- One kilo assorted drugs and paraphernalia
- A box filled with flyers for the Eden nightclub on Atlantis

The perps have both suffered some trauma with fire in the past, leaving their faces a charred mess. Both have no fingerprints on either hand and scarring points to the use of acids to burn away the dermis to avoid detection. The apartment is registered to a Mrs. Sal Potts, 80 years old with no previous convictions. A Search check (DC 25) will reveal a small pantry in the kitchenette, which has been sealed closed and covered by wallpaper. Inside the cramped space the judges find the decomposing body of Mrs. Potts, along with a crate containing 24 Kraken's Wake weapons (see *The Rookie's Guide to Atlantis and the Black Atlantic*). These weapons are highly illegal and have been linked to the terrorist organisation the Sons of the Kraken. Possession of these alone carries a mandatory three-year sentence.

The judges need to call back to their Sector House and get a Tech-Div forensic squad over to the apartment to carry out further investigation. Once this is under way, they are free to carry on with their crime blitz.

Shortly after the arrival of the Tech squad, the judges are about to conduct another random crime blitz:

## Scene Two

Read the following to your players:

*You are poised ready to open yet another door in the process of your crime blitz when suddenly you hear the sounds of raised voices coming from an apartment two doors up. There is obvious tension in the room and the sounds of the argument are quickly replaced by the sounds of smashing glass and a piercing female scream. You rush over to the room to investigate and are shocked at what you see.*

*Lying on the floor is a beautiful young woman of around twenty years of age. She has a very nasty gash on her forehead and a small pool of blood has begun to form around her prone body. It is clear that she is in desperate need of medical attention.*

*The shocking thing is the sight of a very senior judge stood over the limp body, with a bloody daystick clenched in his hand and a look of sheer shock on his face. Judge Ramirez is one of the most respected senior judges in your Sector House and has now been found in a compromising position with an unconscious citizen!*

The course of action that the judges need to take now should be clear: there is no real option for them other than to question Judge Ramirez about his actions and, if need be, place him under arrest for overly excessive force and then place the entire matter into the hands of the Justice Department's Special Judicial Squad.

Ramirez is a veteran of the streets, having spent over thirty years patrolling the city, being cited for both

courage and valour on more than one occasion and having also been promoted through the ranks at an alarming speed. Many thought that Ramirez would make an ideal Sector Chief and given time would be an ideal candidate for the position of Chief Judge. He was offered the position of Sector Chief in Sector 97 over ten years ago, but declined stating that the streets were his home and he would be of far better use there than behind a desk dealing with paperwork.

As the characters enter the room they find Ramirez looking as shaken as a green faced rookie fresh from the Academy, the daystick in his hand is still covered in blood. Keen eyed judges will notice (Spot check, DC 15) that he is shaking like a small child. When approached Ramirez will acknowledge the presence of the other judges and will place his daystick, boot knife and Lawgiver onto the apartment floor and will direct the characters as to what they should do next.

The woman is in a very serious state and unless she receives medical attention as soon as possible she will not last the hour. The apartment is registered to Gabby Stiles. She has lived in Les Dennis for the past two years and unlike many citizens in Mega-City One she actually has a job, working as a civilian liaison officer in Sector 190. Stiles has a good reputation for getting the job done and is well respected by both judges and citizens alike. Despite her youth, she seems earmarked for great things down the road.

Ramirez will suggest to the judges that they should cuff him, place him under arrest and wait for a Tech team to arrive, all to the letter of the law. The judges may feel odd about arresting a fellow judge, especially one who is as respected as Ramirez but they must do their duty and take matters from there!

The judges may wish to make a sweep of Stiles' apartment. If they do so they will find the following items:

- One handgun. It is legal and fully licensed to Gabby Stiles, but the judges may note with interest that the permit is signed by Judge Ramirez. It is unused and is still sealed in its box
- Two encrypted vid-data slugs
- A Sump Industries Home Pregnancy Test Kit, used and showing that the user is pregnant
- A locked safe-u-guard box with a combination lock that requires a Technical check (DC 20) to open. Inside are a dozen letters threatening to expose a passionate affair between Stiles and Ramirez. One of the letters issues a death threat on Stiles if she continues her liaison.

None of the items are illegal in themselves, though the encryption on the vid-data slugs could lead to something illegal.

A med team will arrive and tend to the injured woman, rushing her to Sector 190's St. Clooney Hospital, where she receives the treatment she needs.

The team have two options once the forensic team arrives. Either go to the Sector House with their prisoner or watch over the forensic team as they make their investigation. Of course, the team could divide into two groups and cover both options.

## The Tech Squad

Once the tech squad arrives at the apartment, it becomes quite apparent that there is some bad blood between the squad leader, Tech Judge Preston, and Judge Ramirez. Preston will make snide remarks about the senior judge that may lead the judges to wish to stay around and



make sure that Preston shows true devotion to duty and only uncovers evidence that can be used.

Preston and Ramirez go back a long way. Both came through the Academy at the same time and both graduated within a few weeks of each other. But as Ramirez rose quickly through the ranks and became a respected senior judge, Preston was held back for promotion and passed over time and time again, spending most of the past two decades working behind a desk, only occasionally getting out into the field.

If the judges do suspect anything is going on between the two senior judges they may wish to contact Sector House 190 and they will learn that Preston requested to be present when he found out that the judge under suspicion of aggravated assault was Ramirez.

The tech squad will sweep the apartment and find nothing outstanding or out of the ordinary, though the encryption on the vid-data slugs will prove somewhat a puzzle in itself.

## The Vid Slugs

The vid slugs are encrypted with a Justice Department encryption code that has not been used since before the Apocalypse War, a simple enough matter to decode for any tech judge worth his salt and the team can have the results within in moments.

Once the encryption has been broken the images on the slugs will show both Ramirez and Stiles in very compromising positions. Some of the images of the couple seem to have been taken from within the apartment itself. The evidence on the slugs is enough to seal the fate of Ramirez and must be presented to the enquiry that will be undertaken shortly. Though a few things may seem odd to the judges.

- Who took the images on the vid-slugs?
- How did they manage to get the images inside Stiles apartment?
- Who would benefit if Ramirez were to take a fall?

Of course all the evidence against Ramirez points indirectly towards Preston, but no matter how hard the judges look they cannot actually find anything that links the judge with the slugs, other than his team were handling the forensic investigation. It may seem to the judges that all the evidence is far too easy for them to find and that Ramirez is being set up by someone.

## Scene Three

Read the following to your players:

*You pull up to the Sector House and there you are met by Sector Chief Roland. He looks very dour at the task that lies*

*in front of him. As you dismount from your Lawmasters, you and your prisoner Judge Ramirez are ushered on board a H-Wagon and, moments later, the vessel takes off and heads across the city towards Sector 44 and the Grand Hall of Justice!*

Once inside the Grand Hall of Justice, the judges will be ushered into an anteroom just off the main lobby and told that they must wait there until called forward. Here the judges will have a brief respite to work out their options and what exactly is going on. It is obvious that Ramirez is being set up for a fall and that his liaison with Stiles has been uncovered by someone, most likely someone in the Justice Department itself. All the smart money points towards Preston, though if he is involved he has certainly covered his tracks very well.

## Judge Ramirez

Judge Jesus Ramirez has dedicated his whole adult life to the Justice Department, giving without question and in turn gaining much respect with both his fellow judges and citizens alike. Ramirez has fought alongside other senior judges such as Dredd and Hershey, was cited twice for valour during the dark days of Necropolis and Judgement Day and during the second Robot War he fought bravely against the robotic forces of Nero Narcos, despite losing a hand when his sabotaged Lawgiver exploded.

Two years ago, Ramirez was acting as an escort for Chief Judge Hershey while she was attending a charity gala in Sector 190. It was during this event that Ramirez met Gabby Stiles and there was some instant attraction between judge and citizen.

Duty logs for the past 20 months show that Ramirez has visited Les Dennis con-apts on over a hundred occasions, a questionable amount for one judge, especially a senior one, but was he there to see Stiles?

Recently Ramirez found out that his lover was pregnant with his child and knew that he must step down from active duty. When he found out about the blackmail letters she had received he lost his temper and struck out in anger. Unfortunately, his lover was in the way of his daystick and his blow hit her squarely on the side of the head, knocking her unconscious. Moments later the team found the judge standing over her prone body.

When questioned by the judges Ramirez will answer any questions and will be open and truthful. He will inform the judges of his relationship with Stiles, openly admitting to being in love with her and adding that the liaison had the full backing of the PSU and the Chief Judge herself was aware of it. If the judges decide to use a Birdie it will confirm he is speaking the truth as far as he sees it, but he is still guilty of an assault, accidental or not.

## The PSU

What the judges do not know is that Ramirez and Stiles were in fact having a legally sanctioned liaison that was being monitored by the PSU as part of an ongoing experiment to make the judges more human, following the increase in illegal liaisons over the years. The affair was known only to Ramirez, Stiles and the PSU, and had the full backing of Chief Judge Hershey, but over a month ago Stiles began to receive letters threatening to expose her liaison with her lover and cause problems for them both.

To complicate matters further, Stiles became pregnant. Ramirez would have been forced to step down from active duty, a fact that Stiles did not want her lover to undertake.

Finally, Stiles has been in a position to launder information to anyone who wished her to do so. She is the citizen liaison officer for Sector 190 and as such has a great deal of trust placed on her, she is also privy to knowledge that could be very destructive if it fell into the wrong hands. The final letter to Stiles states that unless she comes clean about the pregnancy and supplies certain information concerning judge patrol routes she will find herself dead before the end of the week.

As befitting his station of senior judge, Ramirez is entitled to a trial in front of the Council of Five, the Chief Judge and his Sector Chief, and as such is entitled to choose his own defence council. Ramirez will ask



the team if they will act as council for him, and will come clean completely to them about the situation (detailed above). He is unaware that the evidence against him contains Justice Department encryptions, and if questioned about just who would have a grudge against him the only person he can think of is Judge John Preston. Preston claimed 'Cadet's Rights' against Ramirez back in the Academy and ended up the loser, fuelling the hatred that had already begun to grow.

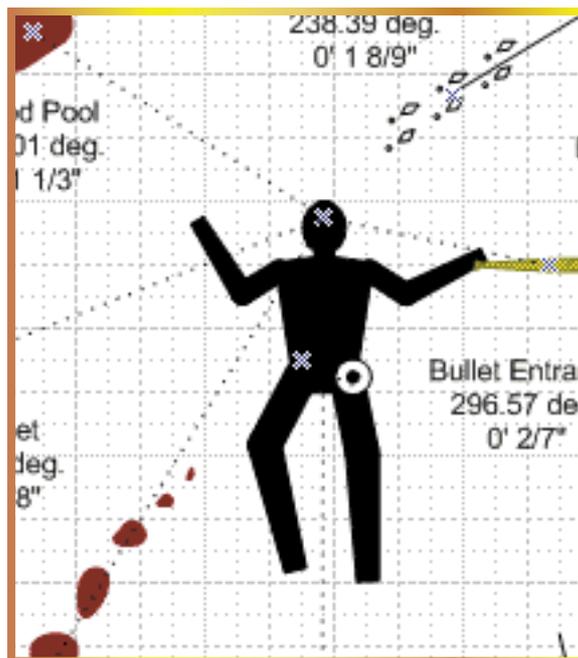
The team will now have four hours in which too gather their evidence for the defence of Ramirez and they will be given the full cooperation of the Justice Department.

The judges may wish to return to the scene of the crime and further examine the apartment, taking into account the vid data that they have just witnessed, they could try to extrapolate the location of a camera, or cameras that were used to take the images.

A Search check (DC 30) will reveal a tiny camera hidden in the light fitting, the camera is a Haynes Industries zx/303 one of the state of the art cameras that are often used by private investigators, but sadly are widely available throughout the city. The camera sends vid signals via its tiny remote, but the difficult thing is pinning down exactly where the signal is being directed towards. Anyone with a working knowledge of surveillance electronics could easily re-direct the signal.

Further investigation in the apartment (Search check, DC 20) will reveal a Justice Department Micro Transponder hidden in the light fitting in the kitchen area of the apartment. The transponder can extend the range of the cameras transmission by almost a mile, further adding weight to the fact that Ramirez was being set up to take a fall.

All this evidence will weigh in the favour of Ramirez but there is still the matter of the assault on Stiles and it may take some CSI-style reconstruction to prove the assault was an accident.



### The Blood Splatter Effect

Judges are taught the basics of forensic science while at the Academy of Law, undergoing years of intensive training into how to read a crime scene, taking in every single piece of information they can as quickly as possible to come up with conclusions. Most of the time the judges on the street are far too busy to spend much time at a crime scene and will often delegate such investigations to forensic tech teams who will then report their findings to the judge in question, but on occasion a judge may have the time to spare and make the investigation themselves.

Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. It is the basic form of physics and something that forensic analysis is built upon. If Ramirez did strike Stiles deliberately, then it would be a simple matter of extrapolating where the blood splatters lie given the position he stood in when the judges entered the room. Of course, this could be incorrect if he moved before they entered, but by making a Intelligence check with a +4 circumstantial bonus the team will be able to remember exactly where Ramirez was standing when the team entered the room (after all, judges are taught to have instant recall while they progress through the Academy) and from that extrapolate the blow of the daystick.

A Search check (DC15) will reveal a small indentation on the frame of the kitchen door that is consistent with a blow from a blunt object such as a daystick. Considering Stiles' height, it could well be that her lover was just angered at her deception and struck out at the wall in fury.

Either way, the team will have to prove that the blow was not a deliberate attempt to assault Gabby Stiles by Judge Jesus Ramirez.

If the judges wish to investigate Preston, they will discover a number of discrepancies that have appeared in his bookkeeping over the past few months. A number of surveillance devices have been booked out but never booked back in again. Likewise, Preston has given orders to other judges in the Sector House to carry out Crime Blitzes at the Stiles apartment on four separate occasions in the past year.

So far, there has been one element missing in this investigation and that is the testimony of Gabby Stiles herself. The judges may wish to travel to St. Clooney's and get a witness statement from Stiles, providing she is

well enough to speak. The team can request the presence of a Psi judge from Psi Division, who will arrive as soon as possible, but the deadline for the investigation is drawing closer. If the team includes a Psi judge, it is possible that the character will be able to take a passive mind scan of Stiles and from that work out exactly what happened. Otherwise, Stiles is still in a coma and looks likely to stay that way for the foreseeable future.

## Gabby Stiles

If the judges decide on using a Psi judge to scan Stiles, then read out the following:

*The mind of Gabby Stiles is one cluttered with confusion and fear. Images of death and birth seem to mire into one. The face of Ramirez is everywhere and the love that Stiles has for him seems to know no bounds. Probing deeper the scan reveals a confrontation between Stiles and her lover, but is still unclear if the assault was deliberate or not.*

The statement of the Psi judge conducting the scan can be entered into evidence now and although is unclear it could still be a lynchpin in the case.

## Scene Four The Trial

Once the team is sure that they have all the evidence they need, it is time for them to proceed back to the Grand Hall of Justice and act as defence council for Ramirez. The team may wish for Judge Preston to be brought forward and questioned during the hearing and he will comply, certain that Ramirez will be sent to Titan for assault.

Read the following out aloud to your players:

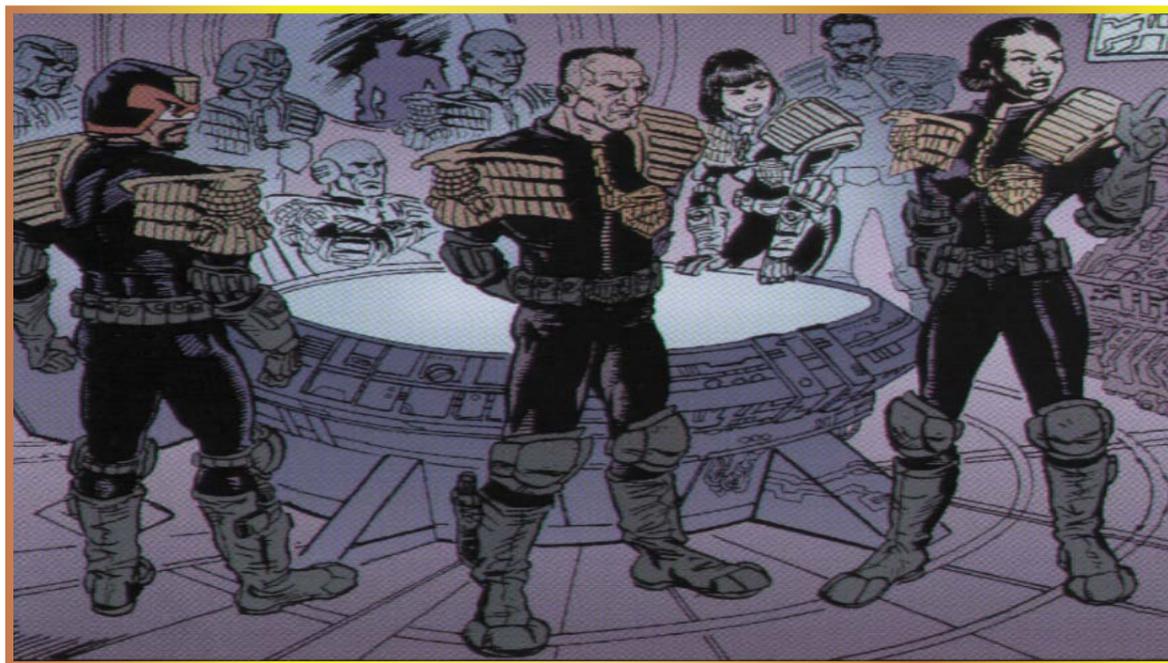
*There is a silenced hush as you enter the room and sitting around a semicircular table are the Council of Five and Chief Judge Hershey herself. Two SJS judges enter the room with Ramirez walking in front of them, hands behind his back, cuffed, and his helmet removed. The years on the street show on his face as he makes his way to the centre of the room and is read the accusations against him by Chief Judge Hershey, yet he remains taciturn, just simply acknowledging the questions put to him.*

The judges will be given their chance to defend their fellow judge after he has been questioned by the prosecuting SJS Chief. The prosecution is very thorough and paints Ramirez as a womanising judge who was overly excessive with the daystick on numerous occasions.

The judges can present their defence once the prosecution has finished. They will have to present everything they have found so far, including calling forth Preston as a witness.

Preston will be adamant that he is unaware of any problems with Judge Ramirez and that he has had very little contact with the judge for the past few years, other than to issue equipment and such, and he was also completely unaware of any liaison between the accused and the victim whatsoever.

Keen eyed judges may notice that Preston's body language is saying the opposite of his statement (Sense Motive check, DC 25) and a very difficult Spot check (DC 30) will reveal that he has an extra button on his uniform that should not be there. If asked about this, it will become clear that it is in fact a small device created



by the tech wiz that will mask his bio signs and make it appear as if he is speaking the truth. Once relieved of this device, he will break down and confess to blackmailing and threatening Gabby Stiles and that he had been planning the downfall of Ramirez for over a year.

The court now has two actions to decide upon and the results are of course down to you as Games Master. Jesus Ramirez is guilty of not informing the Justice Department that his lover was bearing his child and perhaps accidental assault. His actions could lead to his suspension from the force and as such he would only have two courses of action left, either take the Long Walk into the Cursed Earth or Undercity or leave Earth and head for one of the outer colonies and never

return. Again, what happens is entirely up to the Games Master.

Preston is guilty of a number of crimes, from trying to frame a fellow judge, perverting the course of justice, blackmail and misappropriation of Justice Department equipment. Sentencing should be harsh given his deceit and he could end up with a lengthy spell on Titan or one of the Justice Department penal work farms in the Cursed Earth.

## Expanding the Adventure

So where to go from here? The judges will have made a friend in Ramirez. Assuming that he is still an active

member of the Justice Department, they will have his experience and help whenever they need it. If Ramirez is deported from Earth he will still keep in contact with the judges wherever possible.

Preston will of course hold a serious grudge against the judges and he still has friends in high (and low) places and will try to make life very difficult for the characters.

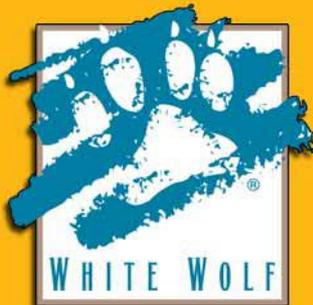
Depending on the actions of the judges, the Chief Judge herself may take notice of them and earmark them for further assignments. It is of course all down to the Games Master.



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