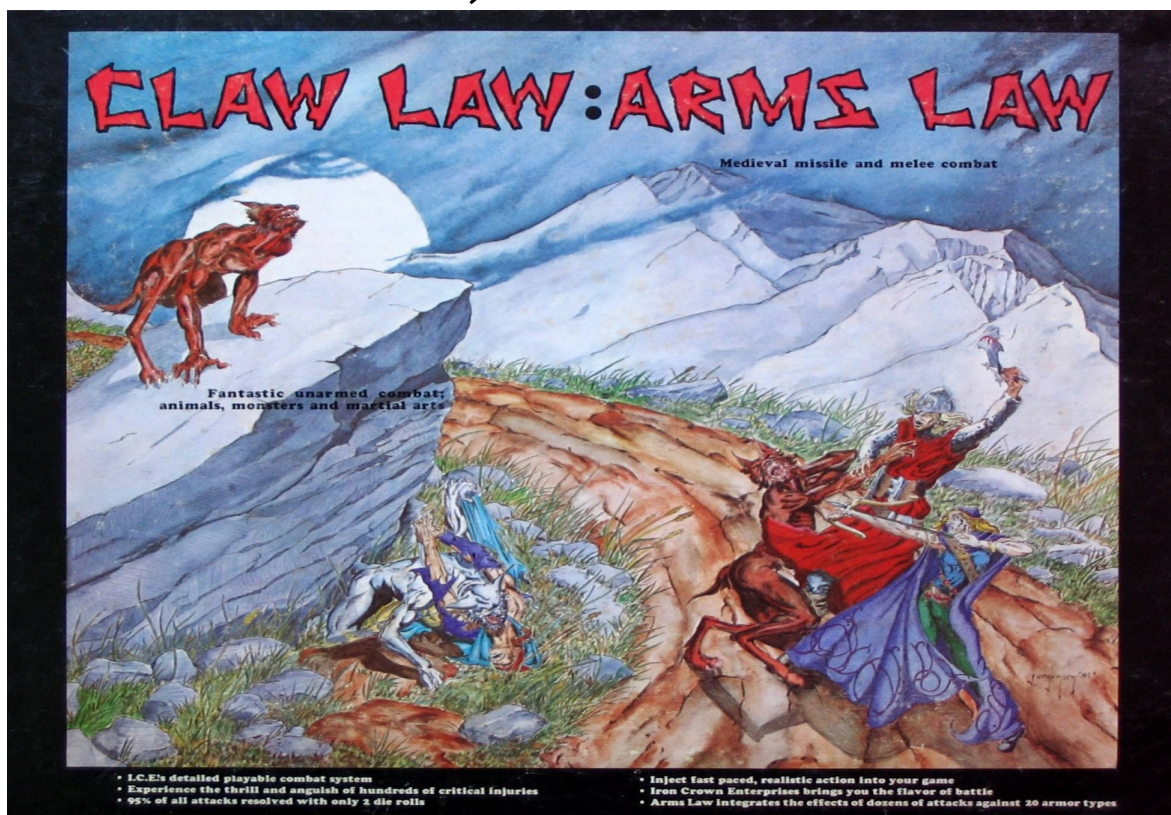


RPG REVIEW

Issue #53, December 2021



ISSN 2206-4907 (Online)

THE GAMES AND SETTINGS OF I.C.E!

***Terry K Amthor Memorial ... Pete Fenlon Interview
... Original Rolemaster Review ... Spell
Modifications for HARP .. Cyberspace/Dark Space
Stalkers... Shadow World Locales and Fecundity ...
Archery in Rolemaster ... Encanto Movie Review..
and much more!***

Table of Contents

ADMINISTRIVIA.....	2
EDITORIAL AND COOPERATIVE NEWS.....	2
IN MEMORY OF TERRY K AMTHOR.....	5
PETE FENLON INTERVIEW.....	6
REVIEWING ORIGINAL ROLEMASTER.....	11
ARCHERY IN ROLEMASTER AND SHADOW WORLD.....	17
RACES AND FECUNDITY IN SHADOW WORLD.....	21
SHADOW WORLD: THE VILLAGE OF IEDRAN.....	24
CYBERSPACE-DARKSPACE STALKERS.....	36
HARP SPELL DURATIONS.....	45
MOVIE REVIEW: ENCANTO.....	60

ADMINISTRIVIA

RPG Review is a quarterly online magazine which is available in print version every so often (e.g., Issues 40 and 44 for RuneQuest Glorantha Con Down Under). All material remains copyright to the authors except for the reprinting as noted in the first sentence. Contact the author for the relevant license that they wish to apply. Various trademarks and images have been used in this magazine of review and criticism. Use of trademarks etc are for fair use and review purposes and are not a challenge to trademarks or copyrights. This includes Rolemaster, Space Master, Cyberspace, MERP, and HARP by Iron Crown Enterprises. Various Middle-earth references to Tolkien Enterprises. Shadow World by ICE originally then Eidolon Studio. Encanto distributed by Walt Disney Studios. Art cover of Arms/Law by Matthew J. Jorgensen. Middle Earth map by Pete Fenlon.

EDITORIAL AND COOPERATIVE NEWS

Editorial and Cooperative News

Doing an issue on the games and settings of Iron Crown Enterprises is really quite difficult. As one of the early RPG companies it has, over many years, produced quite a large number of publications. In a sense this issue only touches upon the surface of some of the major games that has come out of this company, namely Rolemaster, MERP, Space Master, Cyberspace, and HARP. Other publications, such as the excellent Run Out The Guns, or The Lord of the Rings Adventure Game, or the excellent Campaign Classics, or Bladestorm and Silent Death – are all overlooked. Even with this limited scope one is faced with the challenge of the great quantity of material. Not to mention that ICE games were famously (some would say 'notoriously') detailed and modular, lending themselves to be a toolkit for extensive modifications. Sometimes these were compiled and published (Rolemaster and Space Master Companions, Rolemaster Annuals), including one from your editor.

Added to this is the fact that this is a special issue in memory of Terry K Amthor, who was the inventive genius behind the Shadow World setting used by ICE. A high-magic setting, with more than a touch of science-fantasy, Shadow World had its own massive collection of high quality campaign and setting publications; for example, The Iron Wind and the Cloudlords of Tanara are two early publications that, in themselves, contained literally years of game-play with great conciseness.

Naturally enough, one cannot discuss ICE without mentioning Middle-earth. The MERP game was, at its height, the second biggest selling RPG on the market, second only to Dungeons & Dragons. Nobody has covered Middle Earth so extensively as the enormous number of campaign settings, each extensively detailed, and the numerous scenario supplements. It is unlikely than anyone ever will. Again, one finds such extensive content that many months of game play can be easily derived from a single publication.



Having described the limitations of this issue, it is worth mentioning what one will find. For starters there is, with this editorial, a review of what was a difficult year for the RPG Review Cooperative. Whilst we made it through the year, it has not been an easy journey. However there is some cause of optimism that 2022 will see an improvement. Following this, a short recollection of the enormous contributions that Terry K Amthor made to RPG gaming. This is followed by an interview with Pete Fenlon, one of the founders of Iron Crown Enterprises, and now CEO of Catan Studio. Your editor contributes to the next article, a review of several older ICE products, specifically the original Rolemaster series. This followed by two articles by Mathieu Hatt for Rolemaster and Shadow World, one on the mechanics of

archery and the second on the fecundity between different groups in Shadow World, followed by a beautifully detailed sample village in Shadow World by Andrew C Durston and Heleen Durston. Mention must be made that Mathieu Hatt has also produced a sample cult for Shadow World (http://mathhatt.free.fr/jdr/rm/sw/docs/culte_de_Zania.pdf) and a truly extensive city (http://mathhatt.free.fr/jdr/rm/sw/waterfall_city/WaterFall%20City.pdf). Then are two articles by those associated with the Cooperative. One is extensive notes and especially characters from a Cyberspace/Dark Space campaign that has run for over two years at the RPG Review Cooperative, and the second is necessary modification to HARP spell durations by Craig Sanders. As is so often the case, the final article is by Andrew Moshos who provides again a genre-appropriate movie review, this time with Encanto which has more than a little magic in its own.

(Image of Terry Kevin Amthor, at ICE early 1980s. Note KAYPRO computer – used by Terry to develop Kevin Barret's concepts for Space Master)

Cooperative Annual Report 2021

The RPG Review Cooperative held its founding meeting in December 2015, and was subsequently incorporated by the State of Victoria on January 7th, 2016. The following is a review of our fifth year of activities. All activities have been in strict accordance with our objectives. The committee members for 2021 were Lev Lafayette (President), Michael Cole (Vice-President), Andrew Daborn (Secretary), Liz Bowman (Treasurer), and Andrew McPherson, Karl Brown, and Adrian Smith (ordinary members).

In the past year, we have published four issues of the RPG Review journal (Issues 49-52 inclusive), as two double issues 49-50, "Cyberpunk 2020, Year of the Stainless Steel Rat" and Issue 51 and 52 "Housing, Food, and Clothing". This constitutes 256 pages of gaming material. All copies of the ISSN-registered RPG Review journal have been submitted to the National Library of Australia. The RPG Review website received 31353 unique visitors in 2021, a decrease of 15%, with the top downloads for RPG Review being Issue 41 (Solo Gaming) receiving 702 downloads (the second year this has been the top-ranked issue), Issue 6 receiving 554, and Issue 39 (The Far East) receiving 518. These are the PDF downloads only, rather than any views of HTML pages. It may also be noted that the Cyberpunk 2020

3 RPG REVIEW ISSUE 53 December 2021

conference page attracted 3294 visitors for the year - and this was *after* the conference. Hopefully this downward trend can be reversed by the addition of new content and the revival of the RPG Review store.

Membership to the Cooperative dropped from 30 to 13 this year, although life members increased from 9 to 10. This rather dramatic drop can be almost entirely attributed to the fact that face-to-face conferences have, in the past, have been our main source of new members. There are 183 subscribers to our newsletter, Crux Australi (up one) which is unchanged from last year. Again, we have been limited in our usual activities (e.g., the visits to the Astor Cinema, our annual BBQ, hosting the RuneQuest-Glorantha Convention). There is expectations that this can be partially alleviated in 2022. Of course, we have continued to provide various IT support mechanisms (github, mailman mailing lists etc) with hosting donated from one of our members. We must also note that one of our members, Jeremy Byrne, sadly deceased. Jeremy was an active member of the Cooperative and participant in a number of our conventions and gaming sessions.

Following the establishment of an RPG library for members in April 2016 we reached some 350 items by the end of that year, and by the end of 2020 we had a very substantial 847 items (750 games, 94 magazines, 3 fiction books). In 2021 the library increased to 885 items (767 games, 115 magazines, 3 fiction books). The Library is a somewhat under-utilised, albeit valuable, resource for members. For game authors, we also offer discount ISBNs which we gain an advantage from bulk purchasing and we currently have five publications issued under the RPG Review name (Papers & Paychecks, Cow-Orkers in the Scary Devil Monastery, The Tinker's Toolkit, Jermlaine. A Tiny PC Race For Tier Two And Above, Half-Ogre & Ogre PC Races), with the latter two published this year. This year we extended our "stock" of ISBNs by another 10.

This has been a poor year for the Cooperative. The volume our activities, reflected also in our membership levels and the volume of our profit and loss statement, declined significantly with continued restrictions imposed by coronavirus-19 pandemic. Whilst various game sessions transitioned to an online delivery, a medium that we have done well in, we have been unable to make up for the loss in face-to-face meetings. Nor did we host any major events in the past year. We have, however, kept our head above water and have been fortunate to see even a slight improvement in our finances. As restrictions hopefully ease in 2022, we can improve our efforts both with online and in-person activities.

Financial Statement

2021 Profit and Loss Statement (Statement of Movement)

Income 363.53

(Membership 130, Stock Sales 50, Stall Sales 40, PDF Sales 143.53)

Expenses 297.2

(Publications 88, PDF Royalties 78.22 Administration 130.98)

Profit 66.33

2020 Balance Sheet (Statement of Position)

Assets 26671.34

(Bank 5770.82, PDF Account 62.52, RPG Review 425, Library 15413, RPG Stock 5000)

Liabilities Nil

Note: Bank balance includes RuneQuest Glorantha Con Trust of \$3915.39

IN MEMORY OF TERRY K AMTHOR

There is an extensive list of publications that are associated with Terry K. Amthor (October 18, 1958 – September 25, 2021) in roleplaying games, especially in Rolemaster, Space Master, MERP, and Kult. Terry's interest in speculative fiction dates back to his childhood with exposure to Star Trek, Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea, and Lost in Space along with a venture to Stonehenge and Loch Ness when he was 14. Obviously destined for writing, he was editor of the school literary magazine. Attending the University of Virginia's School of Architecture he started playing in Pete Fenlon's D&D campaign in 1976, and would then go on to be one of the founders of Iron Crown Enterprises, and wrote the first RPG publications (The Iron Wind, 1980, The Cloudlords of Tanara, 1984) that this would become Shadow World, Terry's own setting where, as chief designer, he would develop through Eidolon Studio.

One will find well over fifty RPG publications where Terry was a author, designer, or editor across game systems and setting locations. Some of the most well-known publications include material such as The Court of Ardor (1983) a "rogue" publication that was set outside the usual Middle-Earth context, but was well-respected for providing a rich and free setting, along with a well-defined story path, which is now one of the most sought-after publications in that line. Other especially notable contribution was Lórien & The Halls of the Elven Smiths (1986), which covers the Elven lands of Eregion in the Second Age, and Lórien in the Second Age and the Third Age with extensive discussion of special materials, characters, and cultures. Another publication from this setting that must be mentioned is the ill-fated Middle-earth Quest solo gamebook, "A Spy in Isengard" (1988).

As one of the authors of both Rolemaster and Space Master, he was primarily responsible for the Mentalist realm of power with Olivia Johnston for the former. But is clearly the setting of Shadow World which received his greatest attention with the Master Atlas (1989), the continent-spanning adventure and campaign pack, Jaiman: Land of Twilight (1989), Emer the Great Continent (1990), and Eidolon: City in the Sky (1992) initiating a series of publications that would be revived in the late 1990s and ongoing into 21st century with Eidolon Studio. Shadow World is especially notable for being both high magic but also with extensive science fiction elements.

In a more unusual turn compared to his other publications, Terry was responsible as editor, graphic designer, and a contributor of additional English-language material to Kult (1993), the contemporary fantasy-horror game originally published by Swedish designers, notable for its forays into challenging and mature content around madness, abuse, and illusions. Terry explained in RPG Review: "Kult was a trip, and to be honest I had trouble getting into that space. Everything is an illusion, and people around you are actually these creatures. There's some other SF that does this I think. It's very dark, even darker than CoC. ICE refused to do it."

Sometimes, one can coin a phrase that gains a life of its own, in October 1994 when such matters were first being cautiously raised in the industry ("we were invisible back then"), Terry authored an article "Queer as a Three-Sided Die", about being about being gay and a gamer. That title is now a regular global panel series where RPG industry members lead discussions on gender and sexuality issues, that has become far more well-known than Terry's original article!

The RPG Review Cooperative was honoured in our March 2018 issue (RPG Review Issue 38) to have him as an interview subject. One can easily see the enormous contribution that he made to roleplaying games, and the scope of his creativity. We can only hope that Shadow World continues to be a shared imaginary space.

5 RPG REVIEW ISSUE 53 December 2021

PETE FENLON INTERVIEW

With Pete Fenlon

Pete Fenlon is a founding member of Iron Crown Enterprises, along with S. Coleman Charlton and Kurt Fischer. He was a contributor to the core Rolemaster series (Arms Law, Claw Law, Spell Law, Character Law, Gamemaster Law), the first edition of Space Master (Future Law), early ShadowWorld/Loremaster settings (The Iron Wind, World of Vog Mur), numerous products for Middle-earth Role Playing (Gorgoroth, Mirkwood, Moria, Riders of the Rohan, Weathertop, Shadow in the South, Valar, and Maia, Lords of Middle Earth, Middle Earth Adventure Guidebook, etc) and also the cartographer of ICE's famous map of Middle Earth.

After leaving I.C.E. in 2000, Pete was involved in the development of the Microsoft alternate reality game, "The Beast", then in 2007 was appointed as CEO of Mayfair games, which was the worldwide English-language publisher of "The Settlers of Catan". In 2016, he became CEO of Catan Studio, Inc., an independent studio with the Asmodee Group.

Welcome to RPG Review, Pete!

The first question is how did you first get into the hobby of role-playing games? What was it like in the early days?

Both my parents were in the US Air Force. I grew up traveling between military bases. My parents loved games, especially bridge, and my dad taught me chess and introduced me to 3M strategy boardgames when I was 9 or 10. I loved games, including sports. I started playing wargames and sports boardgames at 10. My friends and I tinkered with the rules. I was in a great game club in high school. We played historical games and began designing our own variants and new games. At the same time, I was involved in an experimental school study that involved role playing at the end of every course stage.

At the start of my second year at the University of Virginia (UVA), I decided to join the Historical Simulation Society—the university's game club. It was September 1974. I joined a D&D game set in Middle-earth because I loved "The Lord of the Rings," which I had read while backpacking in Yosemite the year before. The unrealistic, even silly, 1st Edition D&D game system made no sense to me. The DM knew little about Middle-earth. Still, I had fun and met fellow players Coleman Charlton and Kurt Fischer. Our DM was a UVA professor. He left UVA at the end of our Spring 1975 term. He told Kurt Fischer, who had helped run the game, that he should take over as DM. Kurt asked me to co-run the game because I liked to tell stories and draw maps. I also knew a bit about Tolkien's world.

Beginning in 1975, Kurt and I began running two D&D groups in a Middle-earth (Endor) setting. We resolved to fix the silly D&D rules and make our Endor true to the books. Kurt started work on better combat tables for a project in computer science class. Coleman, who eventually earned a PhD in Computer Science, helped him. Meanwhile, I decided to overhaul the movement, economy, and experience systems.



This led me to turn toward an open-ended “D-100” system. I was studying history and anthropology, and I was also interested in creating cultures, characters, settings, and scenarios that made sense. “Vog Mur” was my first stab at writing a scenario book. The DM became a “Gamemaster,” a “GM.”

In late 1976, Kurt and I started a partnership and called ourselves “Iron Crown Productions,” for the Iron Crown of Morgoth was central to our game campaign. We tried marketing Vog Mur and what would become “Arms Law” to TSR at the first Wintercon in Lake Geneva, WI in early 1977. There, Gary Gygax was our DM in an “Empire of the Petal Throne” game. I had a long chat with David Sutherland, who inspired me to buy professional drawing pens and “do maps and art right.” We failed to strike a deal, but we learned that we had good ideas. Nonetheless, we elected to set business aside and finish university.

By this time, Dave Sweet and I were the two guys running D&D games at UVA. Mine was a little less crazy. I was trying to craft a new game system and storytelling culture that transcended dungeon crawling. Between 1977 and 1980, the game would evolve into a “proto-Rolemaster” campaign. I would introduce rules and the players would accept, reject, or help me refine them. Coleman and Kurt

would become players and fast friends. So too would Terry K. Amthor. Like another friend and player—Bruce Shelley—all three would introduce me to my now-wife, Olivia Johnston. Olivia joined my game introduced me to the artist/historian Rick Britton and his buddy Larry Simms.

We created Rolemaster for fun. For instance, I didn’t like other critical hit or magic systems, so I made up and hand drew my own lists on parchment paper. The players honed them through use and criticism. Rolemaster evolved.

After several years you and others decided to establish Iron Crown Enterprises. What was the motivation behind that?

My UVA Middle-earth game included two separate groups. One player team included the Goodman brothers, later famous for “Age of Empires.” My other group included Kurt, Coleman, Bruce, Olivia, Terry, and Larry. This group, also including players Bruce Neidlinger and Heike Kubasch, would join me when I told my gamers that I wanted to start a game company in 1980. Olivia’s sister, Melissa, encouraged the whole project. She served as a catalyst, resparking my entrepreneurial spirit.

Ever an Eagle Scout, I always liked leading teams on fun endeavors. So, we embarked on a new trail. Ours was a meta-game. Rick became our Vice President and Art Director. Coleman became our development lead... as he had always been. (I initially focused on design and storytelling... as I always had.) Bruce Shelley and Melissa took on editing, typing (primitive typesetting), and marketing. Bruce Neidlinger took on accounting. Rick, Terry, Olivia, and I contributed art and graphics. Larry focused on the warehouse. Kurt worked with printers. Iron Crown Productions became “Iron Crown Enterprises”—“ICE”—on 1 April 1980. We were headquartered by the bus station in downtown Charlottesville, Virginia.

ICE debuted with a booth at Gencon 1980 at the University of Wisconsin Parkside near Lake Geneva and Kenosha, Wisconsin. There, we sold 4 products: Arms Law (now a modular D-100 combat system), Iron Wind (a campaign setting), Manassas (Rick's own hand-drawn, silk-screen printed wargame), and our "Syrkakar" t-shirts. The t-shirts sold out. Our games sold really well, but we had brought 1000 of each (via train from Virginia) and we had to sell the remaining inventory off at 55% off to a distributor called The Armory. Our business model was to sell \$7.50 books direct to consumers. That didn't work. We laid everyone off and rebuilt our pricing for sale through distribution.

Shortly after establishing the company, ICE managed to attain the roleplaying license for Middle-earth, leading to an enormous number of publications in that setting. MERP was allegedly the second-largest selling RPG at the time. These must have been exciting times for ICE, and of course, for yourself.

ICE obtained the Middle-earth license from the Estate of JRR Tolkien in 1982. TSR purchased SPI, which had limited game rights based on The Lord of the Rings. I sent a copy of my campaign map and a proposal to develop games using an "anthropologist's care" to the Estate and their license Tolkien Enterprises. It was a labor of love. Tolkien Enterprises recognized that and granted us generous rights. We would publish games based on The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings until 2000. I got to write a lot, edit a lot, and draw a lot of maps. Terry Amthor and, later, his friend Jessica Ney-Grimm would help me guide the Middle-earth program. Coleman would take the lead design role in creating Middle-earth Role Playing (MERP), a refined, setting-specific offspring of Rolemaster. Jessica eventually took over as Middle-earth Editor.

You were very much involved in the cartography and language side of ICE's line of Middle Earth products as well as editing, can you describe how you made particular decisions for shapes and names for places?

I based my Middle-earth map on Tolkien's own sketches of Endor, my knowledge of geology and weather patterns, my understanding of the shaping of Endor and Elvish history, and analogies to our own Old World. Landscapes had to make sense. Foliage had to make sense. Fauna had to make sense. Weather had to work.

I based languages on Tolkien's own word lists, his references to real world languages influencing Endor's inhabitants, etc. I bought a lot of language dictionaries: Welsh for Sindarin, Finnish for Quenya, Old English, Indo European, Russian, Turkish, Basque, Malay, Swahili, San, etc. for other tongues. I scrupulously avoided simply using real world naming conventions like hack fantasy writers (e.g., Japanese naming conventions for people of the Far East). Instead, I worked hard on wholly new language.

There is also the quirky inclusion of Mur Fostisyr in both the north coast of the Middle Earth map and as a location north of Jaiman in Shadow World. Was there an idea to connect the two?

Terry created Shadow World in hope of exploring fresh and original story themes and an enhanced level of power and pathos. In the beginning, though, it grew out of my old Iron Wind setting, which I created in my Middle-earth campaign in 1977-78, but later set in the north of an undeveloped world. We published it as a flexible "Loremaster" setting in 1980. I reintegrated the tale into Endor when the rights permitted. Meanwhile, Terry kept it in Shadow World as he developed that setting from a Loremaster nucleus. We never planned a bridge between settings, for we were ever faithful to Tolkien.

At its height ICE was also the distributor for Hero Games, a rather different gaming line to Rolemaster, Space Master, MERP, etc. Were there ever problems with this, given the system differences?

We loved the Heroes—George McDonald, Steve Peterson, Ray Greer—and their community. Rob Bell, our Hero Games Editor, was a huge Hero System player and evangelist. So was Bruce Harlick. We played both Rolemaster and Hero System games. They were very different systems, but very good systems. It was hard to accommodate two stat summaries at the end of campaign and scenario books, but it made sense. We weren't trying to be all things for all people. We told good stories and included two stat summaries. Some of the hard core fans in each community balked at buying a few pages they never used, but they got good value.

ICE would encounter a few financial difficulties in the period, mostly relating to licensing of MERP products - starting with "Tolkien Quest", and then the "Narnia Solo" gamebooks. How significant were these events for ICE? Both occurred in the 1980s and ICE would not file for bankruptcy until 1999.

ICE never truly recovered from losing a year's worth of revenue and two years' momentum in the 1980s because of Tolkien Enterprises' debate with George Allen & Unwin over who should control and derive revenues from Middle-earth related gamebooks. Even ten years later—when we scored a huge hit with the Middle-earth Collectible Card Game—we had no margin for financial error. We performed well at times throughout the 1990's, but we didn't have the capital reserve or strength to meet the late 20th century consumer migration from analog to digital RPGs. We didn't have the cash to bid against a litany of rivals for our Middle-earth rights as Peter Jackson began developing his film trilogy.

What is your response to criticism of Rolemaster was too complex or that Middle Earth Role Playing (in particular the magic) did not represent the qualities of Tolkien's Middle Earth? If you were involved in redoing Rolemaster or MERP today what design changes would you make?

Rolemaster was always designed as a toolkit. I never used every Rolemaster rule, chart, or option in my 20+ years of campaigns. I tailored Rolemaster rules to settings, not the other way around. I always ran a setting- and story-specific game. The story—including player stories—drove the narrative. Rules are just tools. If I were to go back and revise Rolemaster and/or MERP, I'd make that clear and craft things in a more clearly modular fashion. I might add more narrative suggestions regarding the use of specific rules.

After leaving ICE you became CEO of Mayfair Games when it was acquired by IronWind. Mayfair games previously had published RPGs such as DC Heroes, Chill, and Role Aids. However, when you were there it concentrated more on the board game lines, especially Settlers of Catan, which of course you would go on to lead Catan Studio. Did you think the RPG market is saturated? Is this still the case?

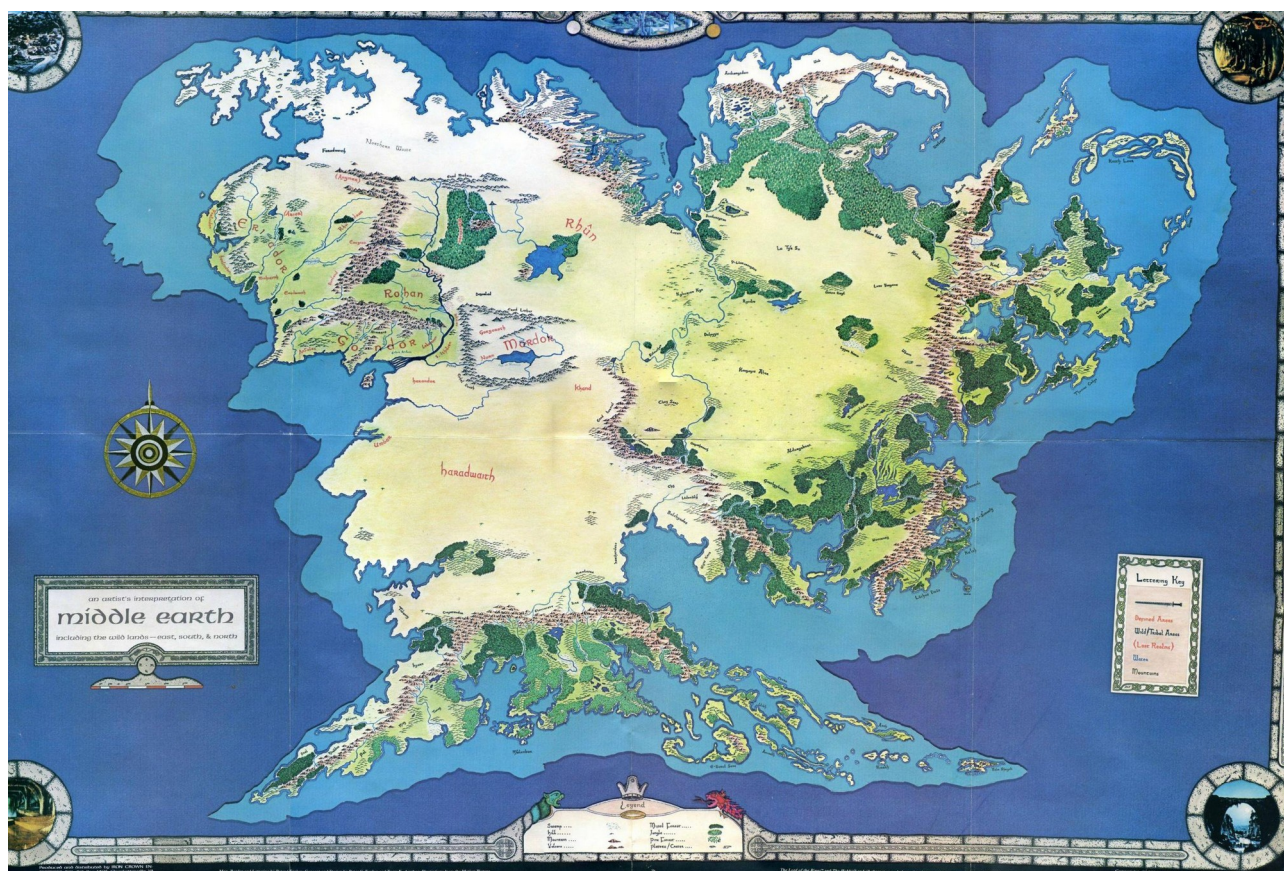
We bought Mayfair Games in 1997 specifically because of CATAN. Nonetheless, we were mindful of Mayfair's great train game portfolio, Family Business, and their marvelous RPGs. Our vision was clear. We sought to return the RPGs to their respective designers and concentrate Mayfair on board and card games. ICE would stay focused on RPGs, CCGs, and gamebooks. After working on the A.I. ARG and delving into software, I became Mayfair's CEO in 2007 so

we could stay true to that vision.

Today's RPG market is bigger and better than ever. We have access to a host of legacy designs. New designs address player and storyteller needs in new ways. We enjoy access to an amazing portfolio of new stories. We may have white noise—as in all game genres—but I don't see saturation as an issue. Players simply need to explore with a bit of care. They'll inevitably find something delightfully surprising.

Finally, part of the motivation of this issue is in memory of Terry K Amthor. Do you have any particular words for our readers in memory of him?

I loved Terry Amthor. He'll always be part of my life. He was a huge part of the ICE story. He (worked with and) introduced me to Olivia, the love of my life. Olivia and Terry created the Mentalism realm of Rolemaster. Terry and Kevin Barrett created "Space Master." Terry was a player in my game and a developer of that game; but, most of all, he was a longtime friend. While we spent less time together in later years, we always stayed connected. I was always happy to see that he made so many people happy. We should cherish—and toast—his ever-restless and creative spirit. Cheers Agonar! Cheers Terry!



REVIEWING ORIGINAL ROLEMASTER

By Lev Lafayette

The following is a review of the major RPG products by ICE; including Rolemaster, Spacemaster, MERP, Cyberspace, and HARP, with Rolemaster providing the largest contribution as the original game where others derive. A significant amount of the content here can be found in previous reviews I have published on rpg.net

Rolemaster First and Second Editions

Rolemaster, like many games of the era, started as a series of expanding house rules from a Dungeons & Dragons campaign, and were designed to modular add-ons. The initial publications were as separate books; Arms Law and Claw Law in 1980, Spell Law in 1981, then Character Law in 1982. Also in 1982 the first edition boxed set came out which consisted of Arms Law, Claw Law, Spell Law, and Character Law and the Vog Mur campaign book. These first editions notably included some pretty stunning and surreal cover art by Matthew J. Jorgensen. Internally, the publications quite obviously consisted of a great deal of hand-written text (e.g., critical tables) in a quasi-Gothic style which would be prominent in the ICE logo, and of course most of Arms Law, Claw Law, and part of Spell Law was released with may cardstock tables. Following these initially publications, Campaign Law in 1984 with an impressive piece of realist cover art by Dean Morrissey. Another version of first edition Spell Law had a highly evocative cover by Gail MacIntosh (ahh, that's what a cloak of invisibility looks like). The second edition of Rolemaster was all released in book form initially with the MacIntosh covers, and in a later print-run with covers by Angus McBride.

Arms Law/Claw Law

The content of Arms Law/Claw Law can be conceptually broken up into the tactical sequence, attack and defense capabilities, combat resolution, and supplementary material. Conflict occurs in ten-second rounds, with phases for spells, missiles, movement and maneuvers, melee, various orientation rolls if required and combined actions (e.g., spell-casting and movement). Most of the time spells and some missile attacks are presumed to take multiple rounds (usually two or three) to carry out. Opportunity actions may also be declared. In the melee phase a range of modifiers effect initiative, which includes sensible suggestions and the d100 stat for Quickness. In many years of playtesting, I have always found it preferable to use the stat bonus rather than the raw stat in all circumstances.

Attack capabilities assume characteristic and experience bonuses with weapons and various circumstance modifiers. A percentage of an attack bonus (e.g., half) should be put into defense as a parry mechanic; if a character does not have a weapon handy they may use their martial arts ability to "parry" (i.e., dodge) blows in their direction, or even terrain features, (an issue clarified in the 1989 printing), or they can use the specialist martial artist ability of Adrenal Defense. In addition a character's Quickness bonuses is added, which compares rather poorly in comparison to the skill bonuses that can be achieved. Further, shields are treated realistically with significant defensive bonuses (+20 for a normal shield). Armour comes in one of twenty flavours ("Armor Type") which is broken up into five groups; cloth-skin, soft-leather, rigid leather, chain mail and plate. Each of these groups has four sub-types reflecting in part their total coverage and in part their thickness. A metal breastplate is therefore AT17, whereas fullplate is AT20. Different ATs have different maneuver, missile and quickness penalties.

The basic resolution mechanic is a d100 roll, open-ended (i.e., if the result is 96+ roll again and add – which I believe

was an innovation of the game), plus offensive bonuses, minus defensive bonus and cross-reference the result to the AT on the appropriate chart. Excluding the variable fumble range, this gives either a result of '0' (a miss), a number of hits of damage, or a number of hits and a critical value and type (e.g., 13DP is 13 hits and a 'D' type puncture). If a critical is scored another roll is conducted on the appropriate critical table and the results applied. These results, depending on the critical, indicate the location of the blow and can include being stunned, stunned without parry, extra hits, bleeding, negatives to action, bleeding, severed limbs, broken bones, destroyed organs and instant death. The criticals are often described in a manner that takes delight in the glorious delight in the gore. Different critical tables are also provided, for scaling effects, for large and superlarge creatures.

The result charts embody several simulationist concepts which are very important to understand. Firstly, the system gets away from a typical problem where a "hit roll" succeeds by a large (non-critical) amount, but the damage is minimal. Secondly, the idea that different weapons have different types of effectiveness. The natural weapons of animals, the teeth and claws, are absolutely devastating against lightly armoured opponents but have limited penetrative power. Thirdly, likewise armour protects in different ways; a person in full plate is a lot easier to hit, but harder to do effective damage against. Whilst low-level hits are probable, achieving a critical is difficult and when it is achieved it is often of the type ill-suited to the weapon (e.g., crush criticals from a sword). Fourthly, the critical system suggests that whilst one can be battered and bruised and even knocked unconscious by "hits" ultimately it is various criticals that are a serious threat to the life of a character. It must be mentioned that the criticals and fumbles are often a cause of visceral and bloody gallows humour. Stumbling over an "imaginary turtle" is funny, but sometimes a mortal mistake.

In Arms Law each weapon is provided its own chart and with individual percentage being one of the chief contributions to the pejorative title "Chartmaster", whereas in Claw Law they are grouped into similar attacks (e.g., Beak/Pincer, Bite, Claw/Talon) and with results limited to the size of the attack and with graduated results every 3%. The Claw Law method is a lot easier in actual play. Over the various editions efforts were made in table organisation, highlighting and type to make the Arms Law tables more readable.

The supplementary material in Arms Law/Claw Law varied somewhat in each printing of the edition. The animal and monster combat charts were of course a handy feature, and there are good notes on the behaviour of wild animals. The martial arts styles table is helpful. The conversion notes from AD&D provide are handy. In the 1989 printings the encumbrance and maneuver charts were also added. The rules on the effectiveness of pole arms in massed formation, and the capacity to engage in mounted combat are sensible and usable.

However, the system does not always work as it should. It is statistically and visually obvious that the ATs 1-4 are totally out of frequency with the rest of the armour types throughout Arms Law, and the difference between AT 1 and 2 is quite notable. By way of simple example in a three way conflict between characters with broadswords and wearing either robes, no armour or a leather jerkin, the character with no armour is at the greatest advantage. In terms of parrying, the limitation of two-handed weapons to 50% of OB only makes marginal sense at best, especially when the famous parrying ability of quarterstaves is taken into consideration. Parrying also causes the rise of a quizzical eyebrow with the suggestion that parrying with a dagger can be as effective as parrying with a sword. Sometimes the internal assumption of the criticals run into problems as well; as not all fantasy opponents have internal organs, bloodflow, or for that matter are bipedal. On-the-fly interpretation is not always obvious let alone consistent.

Spell Law

The organisation of text in all printings is conceptually in four parts; Spell Rules, Channeling spells, Essence spells, and Mentalist spells. Being Rolemaster, there is also a number of tables to supplement the text for the various attack rolls, critical and fumble results and base spell resolution. The last printing had a very useful index. By the time a character is mid-level with a half-dozen or more spell-lists the possibility of the player forgetting their character's abilities is high

and increasingly so.

The core concepts in Spell Law involves realms and lists. Spells are grouped into realms of power which define the source of magic energy and largely determines the type of magic; Essence is the force that permeates the world, Channeling is the power received from the gods or other sources of power, and Mentalism is derived from the individual's force of will. Inert material reduces the ability to cast Essence spells, metal reduces the ability to receive the power for Channeling spells (perhaps like an orgone accumulator) and Mentalism, not surprisingly, is more difficult when wearing headgear. Note that these are not necessarily blanket restriction but rather they enhance the possibility of suffering "extraordinary spell failure", which is also used for casting spells faster than the norm, or casting without somatic movements (Spell Law does not have verbal or material requirements). So if your low-level wizard wants to cast fireball in a single round whilst wearing plate armour with his hands tied behind his back; go right ahead. Of course, if he ends up inhaling it that might be a problem.

Magic realms are also strongly linked to the profession classifications used in Rolemaster. "Pure" (Cleric, Mentalist, Magician etc) spell users are those who have specialist profession lists and who derive their powers from a single realm. Magicians, Clerics and Mentalists also have evil twins with their own specialist lists, which we presume are examples and not just limited to those professions. "Hybrid" spell users (Sorcerer, Astrologer, Mystic) also have the specialist lists, and have some ability in the open and closed lists of two realms. "Semi" spell users (Bard, Ranger, Monk) have some basic abilities tied to a single realm, whereas "Non" spell users (Fighter, Thief etc) aren't particularly inclined towards magic at all. The two types of healer (one Channeling, one Mentalist) are particularly interesting; one transfers their patient's wounds to themselves and then engages in the cure and the other animates prosthetics.

Apart from realms of power, spells are also organised into lists which are groups of common spells of increasing power according to the spell level. These lists are defined as "Open", the simplest and most basic to the realm, "Closed", representing magics common to a realm but rarer, more difficult to learn and more powerful, and "Base" lists which are mostly exclusive to each profession. Spell lists are learned in blocks according to the level and realm of the magic-user; it is quite common to know a spell, but lack the sufficient power to cast it. Even spell-using specialists can only learn the most basic spells of another profession from another realm and even then at great cost; there is a great deal of adaptability, but there are also limits. It would have been preferable to continue on the chart, even to prohibitively expensive levels. Something that is clearly missing is the limitation of lists, professions and even realms according to societal type or, to give a practical example, do non-literate societies have wizards? Although rules are given for learning (new) spells, the only requirements are given in terms of game mechanics and game time with vague references to "ancient tomes" and so forth.

There are a total of 162 spells lists and over 2000 spells in total, although in many cases the spells are merely expansions on the core concept of the list, for example: Summons I, Summons II, Summons III etc or, in a few cases, with similar effects replicated in different realms. Nevertheless, it is a pretty comprehensive collection that not only engages in the sort of magics that are universal to all roleplaying games (e.g., teleportation, fireballs, healing, invisibility, illusions, curses, detections etc), but also with the specifics that arise from Rolemaster's descriptive effects (e.g., various spells to repair organs, stop blood loss, fix broken bones). The levels of spell power are from 1-10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 50 and, somewhat surprisingly given the sheer quantity, do seem to be largely balanced with each other. The graduations also allow various expansions on mainstream spells in interesting ways, for example casting lightning bolts that go around corners and the like. Also of particular note is the clarity by which illusions are explained and the production of magic items from the alchemical lists.

Spell resolution requires the expenditure of power points which are derived from a caster's Intuition (Channeling),

Empathy (Essence) or Presence (Mentalism) which normally means that a spell-caster will have between zero and three power points per level (one to two is normal), and occurs as per the description in Arms Law/Claw Law with most spells taking between one and three rounds to cast, depending on the level of the caster and the level of the spell. In most cases a spell casting roll and a resistance roll is required, with the results of the former effecting the latter; spell failures are also resolved at this stage with a clear demarcation between "attack" and "non-attack" spells which is reflected in the effects. In most cases spell failure is not likely to be crippling unless the character is trying to do something like the wizard-in-plate example previous given. Various elemental attacks (fire balls, water bolts etc) have their own attack tables and critical tables, as per Arms Law/Claw Law with similar sorts of effects, benefits and occasional problems.

Character Law

The organisation of Character Law is initially clear but varied in the different editions and, in my opinion, became a bit murky. Effectively however, the key elements are Introduction and Definitions, Personal Characteristics ("stats"), Skills, Character Classes, Character Generation, Experience Levels, Background and a variety of Optional Rules, which are more "expansions and elaborations" rather than genuinely optional in the first edition, but in the second were genuinely optional with alternative stat generation methods, the "no profession" profession, etc. The latter printing editions also included an initial "Introduction to Rolemaster" chapter which included information on movement and exhaustion, healing and injuries, poison and disease, and an equipment list. It was a rather odd place to put these descriptions.

Characteristics in Rolemaster are Constitution, Agility, Self-Discipline, Memory, Strength, Quickness, Presence, Empathy and Intuition. These are rolled on d100 and distributed according to the player's desires; rolls under 20 may be ignored for PCs and any two results may be replaced with scores of '90' if they are allocated to the prime requisites for a given profession. Each stat has two values; a temporary value and a (genetic) potential. The percentage range usually represents a character's relative position within their race whose raw scores provide a bell-curved stat bonus (thus only scores of 75%+ or <25% cause any resolution modifications). In addition to these stat-derived bonuses there are racial bonuses as well. For example, an Elf with Self-Discipline of 99% would receive a stat bonus of +20. However Elves, the flighty and distractable creatures they are, also receive a racial stat penalty of -20; meaning that a highly disciplined elf is the equivalent of an average common man. Stat bonuses are an absolute standard across race and species, raw stats are a relative standard within a subspecies. Rolemaster had a good principle here, but they didn't always follow it through. On numerous occasions the raw stat was the basis for derived abilities (e.g., development points!) rather than the stat bonus itself.

The first five stats are used to determine the character's 'development points' which are allocated to skills during level advancement. The latter five tend to have a more direct influence in skill resolution. Skills themselves are categorised into six groups; maneuvering in armour, weapon skills, general skills (climbing, swimming, perception etc), magical skills, special skills (ambush, linguistics, martial arts) and the array of more prosaic secondary skills. Skills are learned in ranks which provide a bonus; rank zero is worth -25, ranks 1-10 give a bonus of +5, ranks 11-20 a bonus of +2, ranks 21-30 a bonus of +1 and ranks 31+ a bonus of 0.5 each. Skill resolution is based on an open-ended d100 roll plus the skill rank bonus, plus the stat bonus, and plus or minus difficulty levels and detailed environmental variables. In a very general sense (using the categories from the 'alternative static maneuver table'), a result of less than -25 was a blunder, a result less than 05 was an absolute failure, a result of less than 75 was a failure, a result of less than 90 a partial success, less than 110 a near success, less than 175 a success and greater than 175 an absolute success.

There are numerous exceptions to this impressive and detailed general resolution method many of which weren't really as necessary as they were made out to be. For example, for spell resolution the skill rank method generated a bonus for

learning a bloc of spells, whereas for linguistics it developed rank with relative competence expressed in a table. For Body Development (the ability to remain conscious) it developed a variable die roll for extra hits (based on race, not profession). In all cases these could have been substituted with the skill rank bonus system. One interesting skill (with a full page for description) is Channelling; the ability to send spells or power points over distance. Others include the attunement skills, being the ability to determine the power of a magic item by picking it up or, in the case of runes, by reading them and the ability to develop skill ranks in directed offensive elemental spells (i.e., like a weapon).

Character Law provides some nineteen professions, differentiated by the different realms of magical power or arms. The realm of arms includes the Fighter, Thief, Rogue and Warrior Monk. Essence users include Magicians, Illusionists and Alchemists. Channelling users are Clerics, Animists, and Healers and the realm of Mentalism includes Mentalists, Lay Healers and Seers. Hybrid spell users include the Sorcerer, the Mystic and the Astrologer whereas combining arms and magic ("semi-spell users") are Monks, Rangers and Bards. Different professions have different prime requisites (e.g., Quickness and Self-Discipline for a Warrior Monk) and different level bonuses allocated to skill groups (e.g., Fighters gain +3 per level to combat skills). A core feature of Rolemaster is that no character is prohibited from learning a skill; rather there are extra difficulties involved as the training and mind-set is conducive to some areas of expertise and not for others. Thus, a Fighter will be able to pick up a new weapon and learn it with relative ease; not so a Magician - and of course the reverse applies for learning spells. But is there really such a need to differentiate between several different classes of (for example) essence spell caster, to the point where they have specialist spells which are quite inaccessible to others of the same realm?

Character Law uses an experience points and level system for character development. Starting characters at first level are assumed to have gained the equivalent of two levels of prior experience as their adolescence and apprenticeship. At each level a character develops the skills according to development point allocations in the prior level and develops their stats towards their potential. Experience points are gained for various combat related activities (both giving and receiving damage!), travel, ideas, maneuvers, religious experiences and even the destruction of crystals for magical purposes. Experience point costs are 10,000 per level for the first five; 20,000 per level for the next five, then 30K, 40K and 50K per level after twenty. The values given and the level requirements inevitably result in pretty slow rate of development in the first few levels. This, combined with the low levels of competence in starting characters, really should suggest that RM GMs should start campaigns at perhaps level 5, rather than level 1.

Some of the more interesting optional rules in Character Law include background options (extra gifts, skills or cash), the extensive range of secondary skills (albeit with minimal description), the greater range for level bonuses for different professions, the alternative static maneuver chart and a simplified (and slightly kinder for low-level characters) experience chart. As mentioned previously most of these optional rules are closer to being elaborations and clarifications.

Campaign Law

There are essentially two parts to Campaign Law; (a) how to build a game world (b) and how to run a campaign. The organisation of the text begins with an outline/checklist, setting up the cosmological and physical structure, flora and fauna, sentient beings and culture, starting a campaign, handling play, campaign development, and ending a campaign. The style of Campaign Law is pretty dry but it doesn't waste words either. Nevertheless, the content is directed to the "dull medium" and the highly factual with the sections on religion, for example, being particularly unevocative. Magic which one could be forgiven as thinking as fairly important in a fantasy RPG world, is barely mentioned.

The cosmological comments are a mere few paragraphs and a rather obvious. However the lengthier sections on the

physical development of the world are excellent. Campaign Law states quite explicitly and clearly where mountains occur, why they occur and what sort of geographical features are likely; where rivers and lakes occur, what they have in them and how the seas affect temperature, how currents react to winds and so forth; how temperature curves change according to climate and what sort of variations (wind patterns, coastal forces etc) can occur. Later in the text a couple of pages is dedicated to random geographical generation which seems to largely correlate with the principles established.

With the single annoying feature of the temperate precipitation section of a chart not correlating at all with the equivalent temperature chart, these few pages are a rich source of solid information on the basic principles of geography and climatology. It is a personal peeve of mine to read fantasy novels (let alone gameworlds) where the authors haven't bothered to ensure that their mountain ranges are placed somewhere sensible or to ensure their rivers actually flow down hill. On this basis alone Campaign Law should be required reading.

The section on flora and fauna is likewise a solid piece of information. Basic vegetation types are noted along with their differences according to climate. For storyline purposes, exotic plants (rare, healing, dangerous etc) to "add adventure" are recommended. The fauna section describes what wild beasts live where, what sort of population can be expected, and the possibility of domestication. An thoroughly reasonable animal distribution chart cross-references terrain and mean precipitation with regional temperature. A very brief mention is made of monsters (to paraphrase 'enchanted beasts without cultural organisation') before moving on to the sentient beings and culture.

Campaign Law recommends that sentient beings are considered last because, due to their social organisation and intelligence, they are the top of the food chain and have the greatest freedom of choice; one wonders then why the Gods were placed first. This aside, the initial discussion concerns body shape and colouration and their relationship to geographical regions and population movements. This moves on to cultural descriptions themselves, starting with the sensible emphasis on physical resources and subsistence patterns, before moving on to kinship, language, religion history and symbolism, and technology (largely using the three age system, class specialisation and military system. Again all these features are sensible and quite detailed.

The second part of Campaign Law concerns with the actual operations for a setting; as it correctly states: "when the GM starts a campaign he puts the world in motion". From noting likely sources of conflict (everything from the Gods to unique individuals), the flow of events shifts its focus to the "Core Area", being where the PCs make their initial impressions. Heavy interaction between GM and players during character generation and the opening scenario is recommended (as it sets the tone of the campaign).

A key noted theme in Campaign Law is to "Avoid a Sense of Contrivance", which means detailing high priority areas and likely avenues of travel, and using this detail to assist in surprise situations. The principle is further applied to the section of campaign dynamics which, after making the well-known distinction between game-time and real-time, applies this to the three levels of game activity; "world activity" (the big events outside the PCs immediate ability to affect environment), "strategic activity" and "tactical activity". Strategic activity is largely the "daily routine" of travel, camping, information gathering and recuperation, whilst "tactical activity" is the largely real-time decision making and direct conflicts. To supplement the strategic activity an encounter table based on avoidance and activity is provided. The last section briefly distinguishes the differences in ending a "free-flowing" or "quest-orientated" campaign.

ARCHERY IN ROLEMASTER AND SHADOW WORLD

By Mathieu Hatt



I. Introduction

I've always wanted to introduce more details and realism into the archery in the Rolemaster system. First, I'll expose some new ideas for rules concerning bows and crossbows. Then, I'll give more details about the different kind of arrows that can be used. Finally, I'll give some ideas concerning the way of handling special woods for bows making in the Shadow World setting.

II. New rules for Rolemaster

In the Rolemaster system, the range penalties are fixed depending on the type of missile weapon used and are not continuous. The new rule establishes more continuous range penalties. For this we define a range multiplier as well as a point blank shot range for each kind of missile weapon.

Under a specific range, we allow a point blank shot bonus of +30 OB. Under twice this range, there is no OB mod. Beyond this range, the range multiplier is used to obtain the range penalty (simply multiply the range multiplier by the distance in meters to obtain the OB penalty). The point blank shot range, the range multiplier and the maximum range are specific to each kind of

bow. For each kind of bow there exists a maximum range.

Gareth Rees in « The physics of medieval archery »[1] states that the best long bows of the middle age were able to hit targets beyond 200 m. However such ranges are possible when dealing with 45° shots usually used in mass battles where there is no point for aiming. Relatively heavy arrows were used for this kind of shooting. As far as aimed shots are concerned, the archer aims with an angle that is slightly above the horizontal, for an easily predictable trajectory and a precise hit. In this case the range is far shorter but one can use lighter arrows.

The strength of the archer is to be taken into account to determine the maximum range. To be able to draw the bow efficiently, a minimum strength bonus is required (1 shows some impressive values for the medieval long bows: between 110 and 180 pounds!). If the strength bonus of the user is inferior, the maximum range and the range multiplier are modified accordingly (see tables at the end). If the strength bonus is too low, the bow can not even be drawn with enough energy to be efficient.

The quality of the material used for the bow also has a major influence on the range multiplier and the maximal range. Still according to 1, this factor is extremely important. One must use a low density wood that can be easily deformed without a permanent deformation, and of course with a large elastic coefficient. It seems the best wood is the one of the yew tree.

As far as arrows are concerned, several observations can be made. As the article « les flèches médiévales »[2] suggests, we can take into account three parameters: the nock, the stock and the tip.

« A large and deep nock is perfect for the war because it offers a nice handle for a fast reloading. However a narrow and small nock is better for an aimed shot since it offers a better release of the arrow. » A war nock provides a reloading bonus (-10% activity required for the reloading). A sharpshooter nock provides a +10 OB bonus.

« The ideal stock must be strong to handle the power of the bow but also flexible to resolve the archer paradox and avoid breakage on the arrival at the target. » Heavy and massive arrows are used for war (for a better inertia) and light ones are mostly used for hunting and precision shooting. When one uses an inadequate stock, he suffers a -10 OB penalty.

Tips can be classified into several categories: picks, blades and barbwires. There also exist some tips with very specific uses.

- Picks: « usually exclusively used for war, since their function is to perforate chain mails and plates Those are usually not fixed on the stock but simply forced into it. This way, when the arrow is extracted from the body, the tip stays inside, leading to difficult treatment on the battlefield and major infection risks. »
- Blades: « They are used for hunt as well as in war where their goal is to inflict large bleeding wounds on footmen with no or little protection. »
- Barbwire: « They are used in war against footmen but also for hunting large beasts like bears or boars. Thanks to their large slashing sides they inflict very large bleeding wounds, and their mass allows a deep penetration. The barbs are here to render the extraction of the tip very difficult, and only specialists using very specific chirurgical tools are able to extract them without additional damage to the target. They were however much more difficult to build, hence their greater cost. »
- Incendiary tip: « The four branches are used to maintain the combustible in place, and the tip allows penetration into the target. The four branches are then squeezed by the impact to allow the incendiary product to come in contact with the building or the target to destroy. It can also be used for bacteriological warfare during siege by shooting contaminated meat pieces that dogs will eat and then infect the people inside. »
- Cut-hock: « This axe-shaped blade is used to badly hurt horses in order to disrupt chivalry heavy charges.»



(Images from 2: picks, blades, barbwires, incendiary, and cut-hock, respectively)

The following table lists the arrows tips and their respective modifiers.

Picks	Between +10 and +15 OB against AT 11-20. Inflicted hits are halved against AT 1-10 (the power of the impact is reduced). If the arrows is inside the target (GM's discretion with regards to the critical), a difficult first aid skill check is required to extract it without leaving the tip inside. In case of a failure the tip stays inside and a difficult second aid skill check is required. In case of a failure the infection risk is important.
Blades	Between +5 and +10 OB against AT 1-4 and 7-8. Add 2 to every bleeding wound and if there is no bleeding wound, create one of 2 hits / rd. The penetration is lowered against AT 5-6 and 9-20, hence a -10 to -15 OB penalty.
Barbwires	Between +10 and +15 OB against AT 1-4 and 7-8. Between +5 and +10 OB against AT 5-6 and 9-20, due to superior mass and penetration. If the arrows is inside the target (GM's discretion with regards to the critical), a difficult surgery skill check is required to extract it. In case of a failure Add 1d10 to every bleeding wound and if there is no bleeding wound, create one of 1d10 hits / rd. These tips are rare and expensive.

The following tables list the various parameters and modifiers of the different kind of missile weapons. The values are given here for bows made of *yew tree*. For modifiers considering other material, see the last section.

The strength bonus * is the bonus required to draw the bow with the greatest result. An inferior bonus reduces the maximal range (-5 m per 1 in the bonus) and increases the range multiplier (+0.05 per 1 in the bonus). The strength bonus ** is the minimum bonus required to use the bow with efficiency. An inferior bonus forbids the use of the weapon.

Note that concerning crossbows, the * bonus is the one required to use the reloading mechanism. An inferior bonus does not change the maximum range or range multiplier but instead increases the reloading activity.

Missile weapon	Range multiplier	Point blank range (meters)	Maximum range Aimed / 45° (meters)	St bonus * (RMSS)
short bow	0.8	3	75 / 150	+5
composite bow	0.5	5	100 / 200	+7
long bow	0.4	5	120 / 240	+8
light crossbow	0.5	5	130 / -	+4
heavy crossbow	0.4	5	140 / -	+5

Examples: the penalty to shoot a target at 43 meters with a short bow is $43 \times 0.8 = 34$. With a long bow it is only $43 \times 0.4 = 17$. The penalty to hit a target at 110m with a heavy crossbow is $110 \times 0.4 = 44$.

This table lists the modifiers for each weapon and for each strength bonus variation.

Missile weapon	St min. * (RMSS)	St min. ** (RMSS)	St. bonus * - 1 Mult. - ranges	St. bonus * - 2 Mult. - ranges	St. bonus * - 3 Mult. - ranges	St. bonus * - 4 Mult. - ranges
short bow	+5	+1	0.85 - 70 / 145	0.9 - 65 / 140	0.95 - 60 / 135	1 - 55 / 130
composite bow	+7	+3	0.55 - 95 / 195	0.6 - 90 / 190	0.65 - 85 / 185	0.7 - 80 / 180
long bow	+8	+4	0.45 - 115 / 235	0.5 - 110 / 230	0.55 - 105 / 225	0.6 - 100 / 220
light crossbow	+4	+1	Reloading. +5%	Reloading. +10%	Reloading. +15%	-
heavy crossbow	+5	+2	Reloading. +5%	Reloading. +10%	Reloading. +15%	-

The following talent must be modified accordingly:

Natural archer: *ranges are increased by 25%.* Replaced by: *range multiplier reduced by 25%.*

For example the long bow is reduced from 0.4 to 0.3, the short bow from 0.8 to 0.6.

New talent:

Archer precision: as the talent *precision* but usable with missile weapons and the new skill *directed ambush* (see below). Same cost (20).

New skill:

Directed ambush: same category, cost and development as *ambush*.

- Is not usable with directed spells.
- It is required to be stealthy and the target must be unaware of the archer. The target must be still, or having a slow and predictable movement (like a sentinel).
- If the target stands still, the archer can apply all of his ranks.
- If the target is moving, the directed ambush maneuver is at -20 and only half the ranks may be used to modify the critical result.
- The skill can only be used at relatively short range (I suggest below a range penalty of 15).

III. Special Shadow World materials

In the Shadow World setting, one can use various woods to build bows: for example the *dir* or *hoen* woods. If we consider the *hoen* wood as the *yew* wood from our good old Earth, we could have the following modifiers:

Material	Range multiplier mod.	OB Bonus	Maximum range mod.
Standard wood	+0.1	-	-10%
<i>Hoen</i> wood	-	+5	-
<i>Dir</i> wood	-0.1	+10	+10%

[1] Gareth Rees, The physics of medieval archery, <http://www.stortford-archers.org.uk/medieval.htm>

[2] La confrérie de l'arc en main, « les flèches médiévales », <http://perso.orange.fr/confrerie.arc/fleches.htm>

RACES AND FECUNDITY IN SHADOW WORLD

By Mathieu Hatt

I. The Evolution

At the beginning, there is only one humanoid race blessed with a conscience on Kulthea: the Althan. They develop very fast on the entire planet, and reach a peak of magic and technology that allows them to conquer other stellar systems. Then, a scission appears between two groups: Althan similar to their ancestors, and the K'ta'viiri[1], a minority blessed with higher psychic and magic capabilities. They quickly become the ruling class of the empire that spreads across the galaxy.

During this period, the K'ta'viiri perform a lot of experiments, using their vast knowledge of genetics and thanks to their technological and magical achievements, create a lot of new races. It is believed in fact that a great number of species part of the fauna and flora of Kulthea were created by K'ta'viiri through genetic experiments. However it is a bit difficult to precisely define which race was created by the K'ta'viiri, which one is an offspring of the K'ta'viiri, or which one is both. One thing is certain: since the end of the first Era and their great civil war, the K'ta'viiri are but one small handful survivors, and their powers and knowledge is only a shadow of what they once were.

II. Races, origins, and the various genetic branches.

1. The elves.

Let's begin with the elves. According to the Loremasters, this race was the most gifted by their creators. It is even possible the elves are an offspring of the mighty K'ta'viiri, because they possess a lot in common with these beings: they are immortal, they have great inner strength and psychic and magic capabilities. No other race on Kulthea possesses such a mix of amazing abilities.

There are three distinct branches among the elves:

- Iylari
- Erlini
- Shuluri

Iylari are subdivided in three groups, Dyari, Loari and Linæri. These three subgroups are in fact of the same stock with only minor genetic differences. They are able to reproduce and it only rarely leads to bad pregnancy or unviable children. All Iylari are indeed of the same species. On the contrary, unions between Erlini and Shuluri only rarely lead to viable children and pregnancies are rare and often very difficult. They are clearly two distinct species. They are also quite different from a cultural point of view. As far as unions between Iylari and Shuluri/Erlini, they are extremely rare (essentially for cultural reasons) and almost always a failure.

The Erlin stock is almost as far from the Iylar one genetically speaking that it is from the most of the mortal one. As far as Shuluri are concerned, Loremasters believe their ancestors were Erlini and sea spirits, and that would explain their incompatibility with Erlini.

The elves all share one common characteristic: a low birth rate. The more gifted the race, the lower its birth rate. Is it a coincidence or was it a deliberate choice by the creators? There is none who actually knows...

An Iylar woman usually gives birth to a maximum of one or two children despite her immortal life and eternal youth. Loremasters have a few hypothesis to try to explain this, like a genetic restriction made by the K'ta'viiri, or a strange evolution pattern. The Iylari women usually give birth before the end of their first century of existence.

Erlini and Shuluri have more children, but rarely more than 3 or 4 before the first century, and rarely after this age. However it sometimes happens: it is not unheard of an elf giving birth to her first child at the age of a few hundreds centuries.

Elves cannot reproduce with other mortal races such as humans or dwarves, because they are too far apart genetically speaking. However the Essænce (or gods) sometimes work in mysterious ways, and may have important influence on fecundity and pregnancies. Sometimes, a divinity may grant one of its followers to bear a child even if genetics should normally prevent it. However the child is almost always sterile.

So where do the half-elves come from?

Ta-Lairi[2].

There are two kinds of half-elves. The rarest are those who come from an elven parent (Iylar, Shulur or Erlin) and a mortal one (Laan, Shay...). The probability that such a union bear a child is low, and each child is very specific with respect to the parents. Usually such a child comes from the will of a god or a strange manifestation of the Essænce. They are almost always sterile.

Most of the half-elves on Kulthea actually are an entire race of their own. These races may come from distant interbreeding between elves and mortals, supervised by the K'ta'viiri. That is why the offspring of such unions was fertile and was able to have children on their own, creating a new race. Their lifespan is usually between 1 and 3 hundreds years.

There are a few groups of Ta-Lairi:

- Eritari
- Ky'taari
- Punkari
- Sulini
- Vorloi

According to the Loremasters, Eritari have elves and thesian (an extinct species) ancestors. Hence their brown skin, large lips, and pointy ears. Ky'taari bear more resemblance to the Iylari than most other Ta-Lairi groups. They often have blond hair. Punkari possess the strongest build among the Ta-Lairi. The Loremasters believe they may have Loari (or Erlini) and Laan ancestors. Sulini have pale blond hair, blue or green eyes, and a fair skin. They may have Talath or

Lydian mortal ancestors. Finally, Vorloi is the rarest and strangest group among the Ta-Lairi. They are found only on one island, and may be the offspring of Erlini and wood spirits.

The birth rate of Ta-Lairi is low, like the one of their elven ancestors, but they still have more children, and can bear a child quite late in their life. The birth rate of the Vorloi is unknown, however for the other groups it is about three to six children between 16 and 150 to 200 years (age of the mother).

2. Nomari[3]

The Loremasters think the Nomari were a very different race once. In order to survive the interregnum[4], they lived underground for a very long time, in the deepest caves under the mountains, evolving to the race we can observe now. Their origin is quite unknown and the loremasters have no precise idea where they come from originally. There are a few races that obviously have some nomar ancestry: Hui, Haidi, Umlí, Syrkakari and Fustir-gosts.

3. Other mortals.

A large number of groups that can be related to terran ethnics can be found on Kulthea. They are very compatible and share most of their genetic stock. They remain separate ethnic groups essentially for cultural, social and geographical reasons. There are also a few rarer and stranger species that cannot easily reproduce with those “normal” human groups.

Anzeti, Duranaki, Jaaderi, Jameri, Jineri, Muadani (a.k.a. Vajaari), Myri (a.k.a. Talath), Ochu, Shay, Talath, Y’kin, Y’nar

All these mortals can have children, a woman can usually bear up to a dozen children before she reaches 40 to 60 (their lifespan is about 70 to 100 years).

You can find below the other races that are not easily able to reproduce with the ones before.

Centaurs, Droloi, Hirazi, Jhordi, Kinsai, Kuluku, Laan (a.k.a. Zori), Lydians, Mermen & Mermaids, Quaidu, Rasha-ai, Rhiani, Synshari, Zjedrahir

[1] In Iruaric, K’ta’viiri means « Lords of Essænce ».

[2] Ta-Lairi means half-elves in the Iruaric language.

[3] Nomari means dwarves in the Iruaric language.

[4] Interregnum: dark period lasting 100 000 years after the war between Utha and Kadæna.

SHADOW WORLD: THE VILLAGE OF IEDRAN

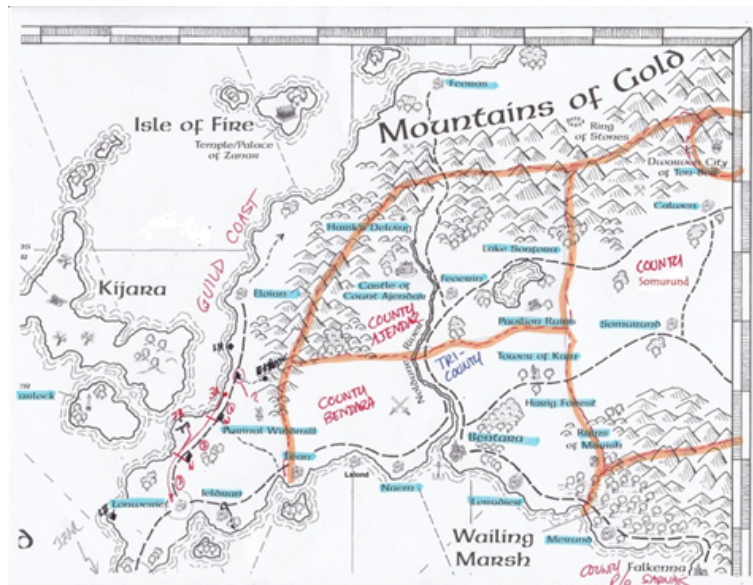
By Andrew C Durston and Heleen Durston

Summary

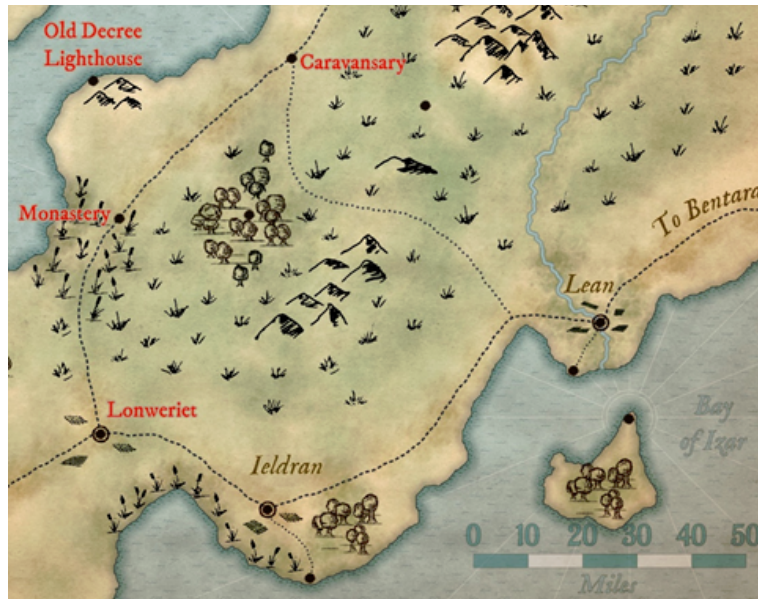
- Location: On the Bay of Izar, Guild Coast
- Status: Guild Freetown
- Population: 500 (approximate)
- Government: Mayor and Guild Council
- Market Size: Average (+0)
- Military: Mayor

Introduction

Ieldran (I-el-dran, a corruption of the Erlin word Ien*dalla, meaning the end most point of an inlet, possibly referring to the northern part of the Bay to the west) is a Guild Coast town that sits on the Bay Road, which heads west and south three days' travel to the Port of Izar and which heads east to enter County Bendara at the village of Lean on the Bay of Izar.



Map (c) 2003 Iron Crown Enterprises from Shadow World Master Atlas 4th edition



Map by Imaginary Turtles

History

As the Dark Age of Haestra (C. 4000 to 5000) came to an end, civilization re-established itself in the hills around the Bay of Izar. During that time, the various new Human and Elven settlers learned what the Dwarves already knew, the Mountains of Gold were laden with the precious metal. This led to the establishment or expansion of many sites about the Bay notably the Port of Izar where the Bay meets the Sea of Gold.

Since the growth in size and importance over the past centuries of the Port of Izar, the controlling guilds have taken it upon themselves to maintain the trading routes north of Izar where no other strong government is present, specifically west of the Mountains of Gold. In 5220 this led to the establishment of the village of Ieldran under Guild control. Hundreds of years later, the current Village Council-appointed Mayor is Sayer Fouchier the Furrier. The village population at this time numbers about 500 with a goodly number of nearby farms and ranches nearby. Unlike Lonweriet for example, small Guild settlements like Ieldran do not offer to protect nearby farmsteads in exchange for a tithe.

Local events such as the Hard Winter of three years ago and global events such as the loss of the Eye of Utha have made life interesting in Ieldran but no major disruptions have occurred. Ieldran caters to travelers and caravans on the Bay Road. Trade between local farms thrives in the fair climate (especially compared to the ocean shores to the west). Ieldran is generally friendly but behind the scenes is a simmering feud between two local families, the Goces (who make a living thatching local houses) and the Garins (who own the largest smithy in the village).

Government & Law

Ieldran is a freetown chartered by the Guilds. This implies the village is under control of local representatives of the Guilds but also is supported by the greater Guild structure of the Guild Coast and beyond. Any registered member of a

Guild has a voice in village business. They gather yearly to elect a 5 member Village Council. That Council then appoints a Mayor to run village business. The village has a small number of hired guards who uphold local laws which are based on standard Guild practice.

Taxes, tolls and fees:

Land: 5% per annum (residential), 10% per annum (business)

Sales: 10% goods value

Storage: 5% goods value per month

Religion

Iedran features a single small chapel to the Lords of Orhan. A single priest, supported by several acolytes, holds services and serves the populace.

Geography/Locations of Interest

The village is roughly rectangular stretching out along the Bay Road. A secondary unnamed road heads south to a small harbor for local fishing boats about a half a day's journey away. Farms, residences and cottages line the roads and fan out across the fields around the village. Narrow lines of hedges, stone walls or wooden fences divide the plots of land.

Quality: Indicates workmanship of goods or quality of service and may be indicative of usability or potential resale value.

The Pits (-20), Inferior (-10), Average (+0), Good (+5), Superior (+10), Unparalleled (+20)

Price: in % multiples of Character Law standard prices



1. Village Guildhall
2. Your Colorful Plume (Barbershop)
3. Light's Out Chandlery (Chandler and Candle Shop)
4. Keep Me Warm Furs (Clothier/Furrier)
5. One Fish, Two Fish (Fishmonger)
6. Good Crumbs! (Bakery/Pastries)
7. The Ubiquitous Item (General Store)
8. Spice Delights (Specialty Store)
9. Clothes To You (Tailor/Headwear/Purse-maker)
10. Whispering Bunny Tavern (Tavern/Inn)
11. Reeds & Wheat (Thatcher)
12. The Striking Iron (Blacksmith)
13. Mason/Stonecutter
14. Painter/Plasterer
15. Leatherworker (Harnesses/Saddles)
16. Liquor Store (Wine/Beer/Spirits)
17. Butcher
18. Woodworker (Carpenter/Cooper)
19. Chapel

Village Guildhall

At the center of town, near the spur to the coast, sits the Village Guildhall. The two story brick building (one of the few in the village) serves as the Guildhouse as well as Village Hall and home to the Village Guard. The Village Guildhall has a large meeting chamber plus a number of smaller rooms for offices, guard barracks and a small number of jail cells in the basement. The Village Mayor (Sayer Fouchier the Furrier) the guards and some of the Council members can typically be found here (or visiting during the day).

Your Colorful Plume (Barbershop)

Quality: Superior, Price: 125%

Next to the Guildhall is the popular barbershop, Your Colorful Plume. The single story wooden building features the barbershop in front and the owner, Kristyan Gobert's, residence in back. Ms. Gobert's business is surprisingly popular with waiting customers sitting in the chairs out front when the weather permits.

Light's Out Chandlery (Chandler and Candle Shop)

Quality: Good, Price: 125%

Across the street to the west from the barber is Light's Out Chandlery. The two story wooden building hosts Neal Tetbald's business with the store in front and workshop in the back. Neal lives in a small apartment above with his father. In addition to a variety of regular candles, plus typical items found in a general store, he also sells unique sculptured candles created in conjunction with Eloisa Digory.

Keep Me Warm Furs (Clothier/Furrier)

Quality: Good, Price: 100%

South of the barber and chandler, across the street, is Keep Me Warm Furs. The two story wooden building is home to Sayer Fouchier's business preparing furs and either reselling the pelts or creating coats and accessories. Sayer was recently elected Mayor of Ieldran. This, his business and large family, who live above the store, keeps him and his wife Elda quite busy.

One Fish, Two Fish (Fishmonger)

Quality: Average, Price: 100%

At the south end of Ieldran, along the road to the bay, is One Fish, Two Fish. The single story wooden building features the busy fish market owned by Isobella Thim. Her brothers, who live to the south, and local fisherfolk, keep the business well-stocked with local fish and shellfish. Isobella lives with her mother in a cottage nearby.

Good Crumbs! (Bakery)

Quality: Good, Price: 125%

Nextdoor to the Guildhall to the east is Good Crumbs! The single story brick building features a shop in the front, owned by Ferri Brom, and a bakery in back, run by the head pastry chef, Bernart Anchier. Brom's business was focussed on traditional baked goods (bread, rolls, etc.) until he hired Bernart who introduced finer confections inspired by Bentaran and Izaran cuisine.

The Ubiquitous Item (General Store)

Quality: Average, Price: 100%

Across the road from the Guildhall and bakery is The Ubiquitous Item. The two story wooden building is decorated with lavender accents, the favorite color of the owner Beatrix Gerbod. Beatrix sells all manner of traditional goods supplemented with crafting supplies and items created by locals with those supplies. She, her husband, a fisherman, and their kids live above and behind the store.

Spice Delights

Quality: Good, Price: 125%

Next to The Ubiquitous Item is Spice Delights. The brick two story building features a storefront, selling all manner of common and some rare spices, with a private dining room in the rear and a residence above. The owner, Richie Dodd, and his wife, Juliana, a skilled chef, live above the store. Richie has contacts along the coast and travels to Port of Izar to resupply his stock of exotic herbs.

Clothes To You

Quality: Average, Price: 100%

South of The Ubiquitous Item is Clothes To You. A single story wooden building, whose construction shows definite Elven influence, features the tailor, Orella Betan's shop in front and her residence in back. Orella inherited the store decades ago from her father and has expanded the wares to include clothes made of cloth and thread from far afield. Her husband Quinala is a scribe who works either from their house or a small cubicle in the Guildhall.

Whispering Bunny Tavern

Quality: Average, Price: 100%

Across from the Guildhall and The Ubiquitous Item is the Whispering Bunny Tavern. The two year old two story wooden building, having been demolished by a rampaging troll previously, is a warm and friendly tavern where everyone does know your name. The owner, Lunete Howkin, reopened the family business with her life savings and is doing a good business selling beer, wine and bar food. She lives with her daughter upstairs.

Reeds & Wheat (Thatcher)

Quality: Average, Price: 100%

Two buildings down from the Whispering Bunny sits Reeds & Wheat. The single story wooden, thatched roof building with storage and wagons in the back is home to the Goce family thatching business. Young Andryr Groce is the current proprietor. He and his family live in a neatly thatched cottage nearby.

The Striking Iron (Blacksmith)

Quality: Average, Price: 100%

At the eastern edge of Iedran can be found The Striking Iron. The smithy is a complex of two single story buildings, office and workshop, with areas for storage and the forges. Nichol Garin, of the Garin clan, is the current owner of The Striking Iron. He is skilled in all types of forging, including armorering and weaponsmithing, but really enjoys making small tinplate toys for local children. Currently single, Nichol currently lives in the back of the office.

Mason/Stonecutter

Quality: Average, Price: 100%

The mason sits across from the smithy. The owner has been involved in the construction of most local brick and stone buildings.

Painter/Plasterer

Quality: Average, Price: 100%

The painter's workshop is next to the thatcher's building. A number of newer buildings feature her work inside or out.

Leatherworker (Harnesses/Saddles)

Quality: Good, Price: 100%

The leatherworker is downwind of the village in the south-east corner. They sometimes work with remnants from the butcher and the furrier to create all manner of leather gear.

Liquor Store (Wine/Beer/Spirits)

Quality: Average, Price: 100%

The liquor store sits next to the bakery. They supply spirits to most businesses, especially the tavern. Wines imported from Fruit Ridge Monastery to the north are especially popular when available.

Butcher

Quality: Average, Price: 100%

Also downwind of the village, the butcher sits next to the leatherworker. The shop provides fresh meat, provided by slaughter of animals from local farmers or hunters, to all locals.

Woodworker (Carpenter/Cooper)

Quality: Average, Price: 100%

The woodworker currently resides downwind of both the butcher and the leatherworker and is considering moving. Otherwise they do a good business providing both raw materials and construction of items large (houses, wagons) or small (chairs, barrels).

Chapel

Quality: Good

At the west edge of Ieldran, the chapel is dedicated to all of the Lords of Orhan. A priest and several acolytes oversee maintenance of individual shrines, established by donation of worshippers, provide general services and conduct ceremonies such as marriages.

Population and People

Population Distribution - Ieldran

(01-55) 55% Shay, (56-75) 20% Talath, (76-80) 5% Anzeti, (81-85) 5% Haid, (86-90) 5% Yinka, (91-95) 5% Dwarves, (96-98) 3% Elves, (99-100) 2% Other

Notable People

Kristyan Gobert, 26, is a Talath who owns Your Colorful Plume, the barbershop where everyone goes to see and be seen. Kristyan has a healthy build with short legs and a cherubic face. She has long black tresses that she braids and flips to her back. Her sensitive fern green eyes are joyful and she loves to laugh. Kristyan typically wears blue skirts and puffy white shirts that have a small amount of embroidery on them. Her outgoing personality makes it a joy to have your hair cut and fashioned.

Kristyan took over the business from her mother a few years ago and turned a failing business into a thriving one. She has quite an eye for styles and her new style is often the most fashionable one. Her haircuts may cost a bit more; but everyone agrees that it is worth the extra money. She loves to talk while she works and knows lots of the local gossip in town.

Kristyan has not been particularly lucky in love. Her first love was an adventurer, Michael, who died two years ago. He was killed by a giant slime in a dungeon that he and his friends were checking out. Since then she has been out with several dates and is currently being courted by Bernart Anchier, the pastry chef.

Neal Tetbald, 22, is a Shay who works for his father, Abe, as a chandler. Together they run Light's Out Chandlery. Abe started the business many years ago; but has made rumblings about wanting to retire soon. Neal has stepped up and happily plans to take his place. Neal has a scrawny build with long arms and an oval face. His aw-shucks looks keep life interesting. He has short black hair and placid gray eyes. In the workshop attached to the shop he normally wears an apron on top of his leather pants and yellow or green jerkin. He wears a black rope for a belt which has a loop for a dagger.

Neal makes many candles for everyday use and these are what keep the shop going. Recently he met Eloisa Digory, 24, Shay, who showed him how to use multi-colored wax to create wonderful sculptured candles. He has begun selling these and they have become a veritable hit. Abe is not quite sure what to make of these new candles; but since they sell he doesn't feel he can say very much.

Neal has started to date Eloisa; but is very conscious of the fact that she is older than he is. She laughs at this and tells him that she wants to make life interesting for the both of them. One thing that troubles Neal is that Eloisa refuses to talk about her family and where she comes from. So far he has managed to push that to the back of his mind; but he keeps meaning to find out more about her.

Sayer Fouchier, 32, is a Talath who is a furrier. He owns Keep Me Warm Furs. He specializes in wolf furs and has many different color furs based on the wolves that are in the nearby forests. Sayer also imports furs from the Port of Izar to keep his merchandise unique and interesting. Sayer is tall and muscular and takes pride in his appearance. He has blond hair that he wears short. He also sports a mustache that he waxes for special occasions. He always wears leather pants with a variety of colorful woolen tops. As soon as the weather turns cold he dons a different fur coat everyday and strolls about Ieldran to show off how they look.

Sayer has made deals with several local hunters who keep him supplied with furs. He lets the hunters eat or sell the rest of the wolf as he only wants the furs. Sayer sponsors twice yearly dinners where everyone dresses up. During these dinners Sayer hires local men and women to model his coats, gloves and accessories. These dinners have become quite popular. Sayer is the mayor of the town and makes it a point to walk around town one day a week to talk to people who might have any issues. This has made him very popular with everyone in town.

Sayer has a wife, Elda, 32, who is a Shay. They have 4 children, Yon, 14, Lief, 10, Gisla, 5 and Tatsy 3. The whole family is quite happy and Sayer has begun grooming Yon to take over the business one day. One alarming incident happened last week where someone broke into Keep Me Warm furs and stole a couple of the more expensive coats. The local constables don't seem to have any idea about who would do such a thing. Sayer has looked into upgrading his store security.

Isobella Thim, 22 is a Shay who owns One Fish, Two Fish which sells fish from the ocean as well as fish caught locally in streams. She is of average height and has a round figure. She has auburn hair that she wears in a short bob. Her eyes are blue; but one of them is a glass eye. As a young child a fishing hook took her eye out and since her family was poor, they decided to go the glass eye route. This does nothing to mar her beauty. Isobella prefers to wear dresses in a variety of colors with some lace around the neck and on the arms.

Isobella inherited the business from her father 4 years ago. Her brothers, Rick and Thomas, make the journey down to the southern waters on alternate days so that they always have shellfish and other fish that can last to bring back for Isobella to sell. Local fishermen bring in fish every morning just before daylight so that the fish are fresh. Isobella has started taking some of the fish and preparing it to be served a few different ways. Most people in town are very happy about this and fish for breakfast is one of the new fashionable things to do.

Isobella lives with her mother, Heloise, 50, who helps her in the shop. Her two brothers, Rick, 18 and Thomas, 16. They also help in the store when they are not traveling. They live in a nice small cottage just to the south of town, so that they are closer to the Bay of Izar. Isobella is currently dating Atkin Rolant, 24, also Shay. They haven't made any serious plans yet.

Bernart Anchier, 27, is a Talath that works for Good Crumbs!, a pastry and dessert shop. His boss is Ferri Brom, 40, also a Talath who handles baking the bread and rolls for the shop. Bernart is more of a pastry artist than a chef. He is tall and has a muscular physique from lifting bags of flour all day. He has golden blonde hair and jasper green eyes. Bernart loves to dress well and wears custom made clothing every day along with a large apron. He has some nice tunics and vests in a variety of colors.

Bernart started working for Ferri five years ago and for the most part they get along. Most people in town couldn't really afford the fancy pastry that Bernart wanted to make. Bernart came up with the idea of having pastry tasting a couple of times a week and soon this worked out. The Good Crumb! Is now a success and lots of people come to enjoy the pastries.

Bernart is currently courting Kristyan Gobert. He hopes to propose very soon. He has been putting aside money every week to buy a proper ring for her and to buy a house for them to live in. Ferri is aware of his intent and has been suggesting places to go on dates with Kristyan.

Beatrix Gerbod, 40, is a Shay who owns The Ubiquitous Item, a general store. Beatrix is short and painfully thin. She has an attractive face with long white hair and gray eyes. Beatrix has a hard time finding clothes because everything just hangs on her. She decided to learn how to sew clothes for herself and does a fair job of it. She mostly wears skirts and tops with very little embellishment. Her favorite color is lavender so she has a few tops in different styles that are that color.

The Ubiquitous Item does an excellent business with a stock that carries all sorts of items that people need. A few years ago, Beatrix got the idea of selling a small amount of craft items in the store. She actively encourages people who have a hobby to make some items for the store and see if they sell. Lots of people in town like this idea, especially around the holidays.

Beatrix is married to Audrey Gerbod, 43, Shay. They have been together for 20 years and married for 15 of them. Audrey helps out in the store; but loves to fish and is one of the fishermen who sells to Isobella in the mornings.

Beatrix and Audrey have just two children, Nab, 14 and Tillie 12. Both help out in the store; but both hope to do something besides run the store when they are older. Beatrix is not sure who to leave the store too and it keeps her awake some nights.

Richie Dodd, 26, is an Anzeti who owns Spice Delights, a small store that carries a wonderful variety of spices for cooking. Richie is short and squat with a russet brown cherubic face and an off-kilter smile. He has gray almost black eyes and short black hair. He wears clothes that are just a season past the latest fashion. He favors brown well-tailored pants and white shirts with a colorful jacket over them. As a habit, he carries a dagger in his belt.

Richie has always loved making food taste wonderful and managed to work out a deal with a spice merchant in the Port of Izar. Once a month he hands the store over to his wife for a week and makes a trip to the Port of Izar to resupply his stock. He also has several deals with ship captains that keep an eye out for exotic spices on their travels.

Richie is married to Juliana, 24, Shay who works with him in the store. Twice a month she hosts a dinner and invites several people from town and makes a point of serving food that has a variety of spices that they sell in Spice Delights. The dinners have become somewhat legendary and it is considered an honor to be asked.

Orella Betan, 110, is an Erlini elf who runs Clothes To You, a tailor shop. She is tall and awkward looking, which she tries to hide by wearing very plain clothing. Her body is all angular except for her face which is round and lovely. She has long white hair with purple highlights that she braids in a variety of ways to keep life interesting. Her eyes are deep set and cornflower blue. Her clothes may be plain; but they are very well made and she changes the style frequently so that she can be a walking advertisement for the store.

Orella learned sewing from her father who started the store many years ago. She has expanded the shop to include a variety of cloth and thread from other locations. The store does well for being in a small town and Orella has to take on some help during the celebratory dinner and ball season to handle all the outfits. This is Orella's favorite time of year as it allows her to create unique dresses.

Orella is married to Quinala, 120, one of the few other Erlini in town. He works for the town as a scribe and they have a normal marriage. They have one child, Farro, 45, who helps out in the shop. Orella recently discovered that Farro had been visiting an illicit church and she is not quite sure what she should do about it.

Lunete Howkin, 33, is a Shay who owns the Whispering Bunny Tavern. She is a bit chunky from eating her own cooking; but has strong arms and a nonsensical smile. She has long beautiful cinnamon-colored hair which she wears with a variety of ribbons tied up in it. Her blue green eyes are almond shaped and seem to be looking everywhere and nowhere at the same time. She wears black skirts and favors yellow or orange tunics. Her clothes are usually covered by a large apron.

The Whispering Bunny has been a dream of Lunete for many years. Her family ran a tavern while she was growing up; but it was demolished by a troll with an attitude. It has taken a lot of saving for Lunete to open the Whispering Bunny; but she finally managed to do so just two years ago. The tavern sells ale and wine and a variety of food. Nothing too fancy; just good food and drink at a fair price and served with a smile.

Lunete's husband ran off with a barmaid several years ago leaving Lunete to care for her daughter, Sadie, 10. She has had several chances to date other men; but is overly cautious as she doesn't want to pick the wrong guy to be a father to

Sadie. She also doesn't want to share the business. Sadie longs for a father and frequently chats up the younger men who visit the tavern.

Andryr Goce, 25, is a Shay who owns Reeds & Wheat, a thatcher. Andryr has a compact build and is very agile. He has black hair that he wears short; but also has a full beard that he wears in plaits to keep out of the way. He has steel blue eyes that have a bit of a slant to them. Andryr favors leather pants and dark-colored tunics. He wears a stout apron when working.

Andryr and his family have been at odds with Nichol Garin who owns The Striking Iron. The feud has gone on for several generations and at times people have forgotten what the initial feud was over. Andryr's father makes sure that he never forgets. According to the legend, Andryr's great grandfather was in love with Nichol's great grandmother. They planned to be married. Andryr's family was supposed to thatch the house that the newlyweds would live in. Nichol's family was going to supply some kitchen tools and tools for using the fireplace. Unfortunately, on their wedding day a fierce storm came through the town and blew off most of the roof. Andryr's great grandfather asked for a split of the money required to rebuild the roof and Nichol's family refused saying that the roof should have been built more sturdily. The wedding almost didn't happen. The two parties both eloped and came back and lived for a while with Andryr's great grandfather while they rebuilt the roof with the strongest material they could find. The grievance is still told to all generations and the holiday dinners are a nightmare to get through.

Andryr and his wife, Aalez, 22, also Shay have been married for several years. They have 3 children, Ala, 4, Lina, 2 and Bibelena, 1 who they call "Bib". Their house is one of the nicer ones in town and has a beautifully thatched roof. The family stays mostly at home and Andryr goes daily to Reeds & Wheat. He recently told Aalez that he was working late getting ready for the next day when in fact he has been having an affair with Mawt Warner, 19. Aalez has no idea, though she is quite unhappy with the marriage.

Nichol Garin, 24, is a Talath who owns The Striking Iron. Nichol is tall and very muscular. He has very thick biceps from practicing his craft. He has yellow straw hair that he has given up trying to tame and clover gray eyes that light up at even small surprises. Nichol favors brown leather pants and green or blue tunics that he has specially made by Orella, the tailor. He normally wears a black belt with a buckle of an iron striking an anvil, which he made. While working he also wears a toolbelt that has his most frequently used blacksmith tools in it.

Nichol has heard about the feud his family has with the thatchers. For his part he just tries to stay away from the family. He is a general blacksmith and happily makes a wide variety of objects and tools for the town. He is not above crafting the occasional weapon or piece of armor; but explains that they don't reflect his best work. Nichol will also take commissions from anyone to create unusual items. This is one of his favorite parts of the job and he even enjoys creating small toys for children in his spare time.

Nichol has had eyes on Mawt Warner; but has no idea that Andryr is having an affair with her. Nichol hasn't worked up the courage to ask her out and just admires her from afar. Mawt loves to stir up trouble and has started making eyes at Nichol. Nichol will probably ask soon as he is desperate to start a family.

Adventure Threads

Reed vs. Iron - Nichol Garin's father, Vander Garin, arrives in town and demands to know why the Goce's are still in Ieldran. Vander tells Nichol that if he, Nichol, doesn't do something soon, Vander and the family take action themselves and will take back his smithy to boot. It sounds like Nichol might be in need of assistance.

Reed vs. Iron 2 - Nichol Garin spots (or someone else tells him that they spotted) Andryr Goce leaving Mawt Warner's family cottage. This might be the straw that breaks the camel's back and propels Nichol into the family feud.

Rogue Knight - 40 miles east of Ieldran where the Bay Road meets a trail that heads northwest to the Coast Road, an old (self-declared? No one knows) Knight has established a manor and offers protection to nearby farms in exchange for the usual tithe. Nominally inside the unofficial Guild Coast borders, the Guilds are intrigued and are considering sending an embassy to meet with this mysterious Knight and gauge his or her true intentions. That ambassador is likely to pass through Ieldran or even might be dispatched from Ieldran via the Mayor.

Night Rogue - Sasha Nightbough, behind the scenes leader of Lonweriet's underground, looks to sink the Ebon Fangs into Ieldran. She dispatches a traveler to town to observe and see which merchant would be most in need of her "favours."

CYBERSPACE-DARKSPACE STALKERS

By Lev Lafayette and Andrew Daborn with Rodney Brown, Michael Cole, Simon Stainsby, Gene Korolew, and Tod Foley

Background and Prior Publications

For the past two years members of the RPG Review Cooperative have been playing the Cyberspace RPG (1989) by Tod Foley mixed with the aliens from Dark Space (1990) sourcebook by Monte Cook, both publications from ICE publications. In addition, we've mixed in the setting from Stalker (2012) by Ville Vuorela from Burger Games, itself derived from the film (1979) of the same name, directed Andrei Tarkovsky and from the short-story Roadside Picnic (1972) by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky. Of course, none of these were included exactly as writ, and how it all differed is explored in this article.

Previous issues of RPG Review have included a write-ups, in a condensed and script-like manner in RPG Review Issues 48 and 51-52, as well as a scenario, "The Great Camel Race", in RPG Review 49-50. One can also review The Crotliv Convergence in RPG Review Issue 7, also set in the Dark Space universe.

Setting

The setting underwent some significant changes and was more orientated towards Cyberspace than Stalker. The date was 2090, as per Cyberspace, and the primarily location for the story was the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) region of Australia. The population of Alice Springs has grown significantly over the fifty or so years, a thriving metropolis of over a million people (as opposed to the current 25,000), driven by general population increases, a significant population shift from Darwin, and the establishment corporate presence and expansion of the Pine Gap military base. Partially due to relaxed regulations within a country's borders, partially due to relaxation of borders, and partially due to technology, the world has become a smaller place in terms of cultural mixing, and within those cultures certainly a more morphologically diverse place. Global warming has also had a profound change on the environment. Temperature increases has led to desertification moving south and the tropical belt expanding, at least along coastal regions. Instead of the hot dry summers and short winters, Alice Springs typically experiences extremely hot summers, no winter to speak of, and is punctuated with astounding storms.



One particular feature of Alice Springs is it adjacent to a "Zone" (the Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park), a large area which had received an alien visitation and currently supposed to be off-limits to civilians. Unlike the Stalker RPG, in our version that alien visitations are in both hemispheres and are scattered along the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. Why? Who knows, they're aliens. They do their own thing for the own reasons. The Tjoritja National Park actually served as a very good location. It is vast rugged landscape, providing many points for ingress. It has numerous gorges, chasms, rivers, and caves, along with

Dreaming Trials from the local indigenous people. The "Zone", as per Stalker, provides a driving location for the characters – unofficially commissioned by corporations or as freelancers, they enter the Zone to acquire alien technology which sells for a good sum on the black and grey market.

The social and technological milieu was very much in the same style and mechanics as expressed in Cyberspace, which was a typical cyberpunk setting:

"Cyberspace is a complete roleplaying game set in the corrupt, dirty, high-tech Earth of 2090 AD; where Megacorporation repression collides with Sprawl street warfare. Muscle-grafted Punks and jacked-in Netheads crawl from the gutters to scrap Media Stars and Cybernetic Mercenaries - a conflict beyond the boundaries of Good and Evil. From the depraved, polluted cities to the surreal beauty of Earth's global computer matrix, this is the world of Cyberspace."

This included the use of the CIRS from Cyberspace, a game mechanic that took the trope that the implantation of too many cybernetics would cause a character to lose Empathy. True to the content in Dark Space, and also to allow a stronger emphasis on biotechnology (c.f., Greg Egan's *Quarantine* 1992) which, in many cases, is a more probable technology than cybernetics. Instead of reducing Empathy, the creeping horror of integrating other lifeforms into one's body reduces their Self-Discipline.

The following are some example technologies introduced in the game:

Healthy Machines Nanotech [P-PF-P] With a direct injection into the bloodstream, Healthy Machines Nanotech targets areas of ill-health in the body by attacking tumours, cleansing the blood, removing cholesterol from the arteries and triglycerides from the bloodstream. Given a Rtg#, the Healthy Machines Nanotech adds its Rating Bonus to the character's Constitution Stat Bonus. This will subsequently enhance all of the character's Constitution-based skills, including Body Development. An ingrained and continuing part of the wearer's central and bloodstream system, this device counts as two for purposes of totalling the number of biological Cyber Systems implanted. Bonus to Constitution 500+(1000xRtg#). Routine to Implant (bloodstream injection sites)

Themes

"My consciousness desires the victory of vegetarianism in the whole world, but my unconsciousness dreams about a piece of juicy meat."
– Stalker, 1979

Central themes in the Stalker universe is hubris and irony; usually driven by greed or a variant thereof, visitors to the Zone will often discover that they will find what they are looking for in the Zone, assuming they survive, but often not in the manner that they desired, nor what they thought they desired. When characters enter The Zone it is imperative that this theme is explored. For a simulationist game of its period, Cyberspace does not include extensive character personality traits, however it does contain enough to get a story going.

Of course, another aspect of the Stalker universe is that there are aliens. In Stalker their motives and appearance is completely unknown. In Dark Space style, the Vlat'hachna are detailed, and are represented as monstrous beasts that would be of sort put together by H.P. Lovecraft and H.R. Geiger, which is fair enough in its own right for "squick" value, but even then is insufficiently "alien" for the thematic inclusion. A biomorph species that integrates itself in other lifeforms, perhaps a little like John Carpenter's *The Thing* is perhaps more appropriate. One component that must be included however is the capacity for the aliens to engage in psionics, for the purpose of giving a setting-based justification in the game system for the ability of the aliens to know the desires of those who enter The Zone, or create hallucinations etc. As the asyns from the Eclipse Phase RPG shows it is possible to represent this as a sort of biological power rather than a "magical" power. Making use of the Psionic lists from *Space Master* is appropriate. Another theme is the unknown; the aliens are of course an example, but it is elaborated with the Zone itself that resists

usual forms of perception (limited visibility, auditory, no radio waves, no T-Rays etc).

This is also a cyberpunk setting and as a result cyberpunk theme and motifs are also present. The issue of "body invasion" and its psychic has already been discussed as is common in Cyberpunk, Dark Space, and the Stalker setting, however in the latter it is normally not done as visceral technology (unless one finds an alien "artefact" or "monument" to use the terms from Stalker RPG). Just as the risk of integrating cybernetics or bioware is a reduction in a character's Empathy or Self-Discipline respectively, the risk for using any alien technology (from which the "biocrystal" from Dark Space serves as a particularly useful alien example) is the psychic connection that the aliens have with their devices – and now with the character that hold it in their possession. For both smaller and larger items the alien technology is often embodied culturally and contextually appropriate items; the discovery of an extremely powerful radioactive energy source in an Australian corrugated iron outhouse on the first trip to The Zone was quite memorable!

Another common theme in cyberpunk is the reduced role of social governance. This is often quite erroneously expressed that the on-the-ground reality of something like "The Wild West" (to use a US-ian motif) to be the extent of government. The truth is partial at best; to use Lasselle's term the "Nachtwächterstaat" (night watchman state) is a reality of "little people". The government will intervene to protect property and person, at least to the extent that the property and person is valuable. On the macro-economic level, the coherence between corporation and government is actually greater and more extensive than in any time in history. "Self-regulation" of industry is now normal and the usual areas of public expenditure (health, education, research, social security, policing, physical infrastructure, even military) have been largely out-sourced to private corporations who receive largesse for managing such services: "Socialism for the rich and capitalism for the poor".

Narrative

General narrative techniques of introduction, rising tension, crisis, and denouement apply both within scenarios and as long-waves across the entire story. An important aspect is to introduce key themes, characters, and conflicts quickly to introduce a rich pagentry of interactions from which the story can develop. For example, from the very first scenario the PC Stalkers found themselves making a foray into the Zone. There is a illegal corporate objective involved, but that will conflict with motivations by other characters. To add a cyberpunk theme, items collected could be subject to other bidders, testing loyalty. In short, whilst entering the Zone drives the scenario the events that occur and continue to occur drive the player to make decisions for their character, with a combination of external conflicts that bring the party together to face a common enemy as well as conflict within the party through divided loyalties, and within the characters themselves.

Scenarios which, at first blush, seem to be a bit of an interesting side quest, such as the Great Camel Race, can have significant and recurring repercussions. Winning the race with a charmingly intelligent (enhanced) camel through all sorts of tricks led to a bit of a financial windfall, but it also resulted in annoying some power corporate figures who had their own choice for victor. It was not so much the sum of money that they lost, but the lose of face, and their attempts at revenge would continue for many sessions after the actual event. Corporations of course, are artificial persons, a legal fiction that follow the collective rule of their bureaucratic leadership that can feather their own nest if something goes wrong. When the numbers suggest that the PC Zoners are, in fact, a liability, they are dispensed with as quickly as possibly, driving a decision point again for those PCs that took company loyalty seriously.

Because there is a sort-of horror or cultist theme as well, it is not surprising that another subplot involves the aliens and their earthly followers who, in the rich tapestry of contemporary Alice Springs, find it appropriate to engage in their own bit of Zoning, collecting technologies, and engaging in experiments that they claim will cure the CIRS and other ills. The fact that they actually do have contact with aliens can drive a story and interest by the PCs is one matter, but when the theme of hubris raises its head there is the discovery that alien motivations are actually alien. Not all goes well for the Church of Universal Reason.

Characters

A party with skills balanced across events makes for an interesting party where everyone gets an opportunity to be in the spotlight according to the scenario design of the GM. Providing characters with an over-arching reason to be together, but with enough different and even conflicting motivations also adds to the dynamic.

In a broad sense the Cyberspace game worked quite well. Even if more contemporary tastes prefer simpler systems, Cyberspace carried enough detail and enough style to give a good sense of a rounded character. In some senses the game mechanics were a little less the perfect; it was generally felt that there were not enough primary skills to cover the scope of activities and too many secondary skills, many of which were not actually used in actual play. For the sake of brevity, they have been removed here.

Wallace "Wallaroo" Julius Namatjira, Sleaze 7

Constitution	16
Agility	5
Self Discipline	50
Reasoning	64
Memory	55
Strength	37
Quickness	19
Empathy	40
Intuition	76
Presence	78
Appearance	45

Personality: Aloof, professional, contractually loyal, hides a massive chip on his shoulder

Beliefs: I will do whatever my contractual obligations demand of me and will carry out the full letter of my agreements in a professional manner. Of course, if this conflicts with my heritage there might be an issue.

Physical Appearance: Impeccably neat, thin. Suffers from major nervous disease (low AG and QU)

Other Factors: Social Class: Sprawl Upper Class (USprl)

Languages: English (5), Arrernte (5), Mandarin (5), Japanese (5), Woiwurrung (4), Malay (3)

Skills

No Armour	10
Light Body Armour	20
Armoured Body Suit	5
Armoured Exoskeleton	5
Melee	20
Missile	-25
Fire	25
Mounted	-25
Drive	22
Pilot	12
Environs	32
Equipment	32
Electronic Bypass	30
Mechanical Bypass	15
Ambush	0
Stalk & Hide	20
Culture	48

Streetwise	53
Administration	53
Exploit	58
Cyberdeck Operation	-25
Combat	-25
Intrusion	-20
Utility	-25
Biological Technics	5
Mechanical Technics	25
Electronics Technics	25
Software Technics	5
Cybernetics Technics	-25
Body Development	45
Perception	48
Cyber Attunement	-25
Linguistics	0

Money – 168900 (mainly from betting on The Great Camel Race)

Equipment

Heavy rifle Sml Proj Mk.3, 15 shots 5 (+15) 100 (+0) 200 (-30) 700 (-90), Microcomputer, Lesser Italian Men's Suit. Electronic Toolkit, Mechanical Toolkit, Low-light goggles, Binoculars, Laser cutter, Nerves Booster Mk 5, Healthy Machines Nanotech Mk 5 Nerve Development Nanotech Mk 10, Reinforced Light Body Armour and Sentinel Helmet, Polyastic Body Armour, Blood Loss Healer, External Readout, Chameleon Suit Mk 10 Stalk/Hide

Special Equipment: Real Estate: Moderate Dwelling

Special Status: Multi-cultural background: you are fluent (degree 5) in 3 additional languages of your choice and have an understanding of the associated cultures.

Special Wealth: Income 1500 / 200 per Month

Special Connections: Icebreaker, NetJunkie (Arcology, Corporate)

Hobbies: Astronomy 5 ranks

Steven 'Buddha' Walker, Tech Rat 6

Constitution	5	25
Agility	88	5
Self Discipline	95	15
Reasoning	89	5
Memory	82	5
Strength	24	-5
Quickness	72	0
Empathy	43	0
Intuition	3	-15
Presence	50	0
Appearance	72	0

Beliefs: The Zone can give me a family.

Physical Appearance Factors: Tall and skinny

Other Factors:

Social Class: Resource and Refining Worker

Languages: English (5), Arrernte (2), Mandarin (1)

Skills:

No Armour	45
Light Body Armour	0
Armoured Body Suit	-30
Armoured Exoskeleton	-30
Melee	0
Missile	15
Fire	30

Mounted	10
Drive	46
Pilot	16
Environs	61
Equipment	46
Electronic Bypass	-10
Mechanical Bypass	-10
Ambush	10
Stalk & Hide	35
Culture	5
Streetwise	10
Administration	10
Exploit	5
Cyberdeck Operation	-10
Combat	-20
Intrusion	-40
Utility	-20
Biological Technics	53
Mechanical Technics	68
Electronics Technics	68
Software Technics	58
Cybernetics Technics	53
Body Development	70
Perception	7
Cyber Attunement	31
Linguistics	15
Power Points	21

Money 1080

Equipment: Bolt Action rifle Sml Proj Mk.3, 15 shots 5 (+15) 100 (+0) 200 (-30) 700 (-90), Microcomputer, Beat up old 4WD ute
Toolbox, Bio-Orgs Bugs crawling under my skin! (12 softech 'buds' implanted under the skin +30 CON bonus)

Criminal background: Organised crime connection

Mental instability – Double CIRS stat

+20 OB weapon of choice -10 OB with all others

+30 Drug Tolerance but addicted to a specific drug

Homosexual

Left handed

David Jones, Tech Rat 4

Constitution	66
Agility	51
Self Discipline	50
Reasoning	100
Memory	88
Strength	46
Quickness	73
Empathy	44
Intuition	93
Presence	26
Appearance	15

Description: 23 years old 5'9" (177cm) 65kg Heavy weapon wound to face; badly scarred cheek.

Personality, Calm, Direct, Data pack-rat

Social Class: Resource and Refining Worker

Belief: With time and resources I can understand anything other people have understood.

Languages: English (5)

Skills	
No Armour	20
Light Body Armour	25
Armoured Body Suit	-25
Armoured Exoskeleton	-25
Melee	10
Missile	-25
Fire	25
Mounted	-25
Drive	29
Pilot	19
Environs	39
Equipment	39
Electronic Bypass	20
Mechanical Bypass	20
Ambush	5
Stalk & Hide	5
Culture	-25
Streetwise	15
Administration	15
Exploit	-25
Cyberdeck Operation	-25
Combat	-20
Intrusion	-15
Utility	0
Biological Technics	42
Mechanical Technics	52
Electronics Technics	72
Software Technics	72
Cybernetics Technics	67
Body Development	30
Perception	33
Cyber Attunement	19
Linguistics	15

Money 350

Equipment: Laser Cutter/Welder 150, Electric Tkit 150, Mech Tkit 100, LBA Flak Vest 80, 5mm Pistol Std 60, Microcomputer 50 (Mk1 cheapest), Holoviewer 50

Joanne "Bomber" Lancaster , Jockey 6

Constitution	79
Agility	100
Self Discipline	55
Reasoning	42
Memory	45
Strength	52
Quickness	81
Empathy	42
Intuition	51
Presence	32
Appearance	22
Description	Ex Army medic
Social Class:	Resource and Refining Worker
Languages:	English (5)

Skills

No Armour	65
Light Body Armour	35
Armoured Body Suit	-25
Armoured Exoskeleton	-25
Melee	26
Missile	41
Fire	61
Mounted	46
Drive	88
Pilot	68
Environs	68
Equipment	58
Electronic Bypass	-15
Mechanical Bypass	35
Ambush	-25
Stalk & Hide	-25
Culture	5
Streetwise	20
Administration	5
Exploit	5
Cyberdeck Operation	26
Combat	11
Intrusion	36
Utility	21
Biological Technics	-19
Mechanical Technics	41
Electronics Technics	26
Software Technics	11
Cybernetics Technics	16
Body Development	50
Perception	20
Cyber Attunement	16
Linguistics	15

Cyberware DNI w/ Vehicle Control Rigs

Obviously Artificial cyber legs (#8) with (Claws/Retractable) Blood Loss Healer (Left Femoral Artery) (Haemosclerax III x10) Air Storage - 5 Breaths (Left thigh) Concealed hand-gun holster w/ fast draw mechanism (right thigh) Lastex Armoured Crit shielding (Puncture/Slash/Shrapnel 300 + Crush/Impact 150 + Heat 200)

Money 750

Equipment: LBA Flack Armour, 5.56mm Assault Rifle (Steyr AUG C), 12 Gauge Auto Shotgun, 9mm Automatic Pistol, Combat Fatigues, Standard Clothes, GEM Car,

Other factors:

Corp Friend,

20 bonus to Mech Bypass Attempts

Right handed

Vance 'Cancer' Derling, Sneak 5

Constitution	34
Agility	28
Self Discipline	53
Reasoning	44
Memory	70
Strength	25
Quickness	30
Empathy	66

Intuition	88
Presence	26
Appearance	24

Male Age: 34 Height: 6'2 Weight: 75 Kg Hair: Blonde Eyes: Blue

Right Handed

Description: Hunched over, skinny as a rake, pale as a ghost, once may have been fit but now looks like a light breeze could knock him down, swings from moody to calm seemingly at random

Personality - Jumpy, Distant, Philosophical

Skills:

No Armour	10
Light Body Armour	25
Armoured Body Suit	25
Armoured Exoskeleton	-25
Melee	25
Missile	-25
Fire	30
Mounted	-25
Drive	15
Pilot	-20
Environs	10
Equipment	20
Electronic Bypass	45
Mechanical Bypass	40
Ambush	25
Stalk & Hide	25
Culture	35
Streetwise	30
Administration	10
Exploit	30
Cyberdeck Operation	-25
Combat	-25
Intrusion	-20
Utility	-25
Biological Technics	-10
Mechanical Technics	20
Electronics Technics	45
Software Technics	30
Cybernetics Technics	-10
Body Development	30
Perception	20
Cyber Attunement	-20
Linguistics	40
Power Points	30

Bio-Orgs: Red Dragon Slugs (lvl 5): Allows full access to Metabolic Control Psion List which are cast on Cancer 'subconsciously' and add 5PP/lvl. Enormous hunger for meat after healing.

Special Connection - Tech Rat - Corporate Middle Class

Special Status - Family has a criminal background

10 to one skill

Idiosyncrasy - +30 drug tolerance but addicted to drug

Money: 0

Equipment: Standard Clothes

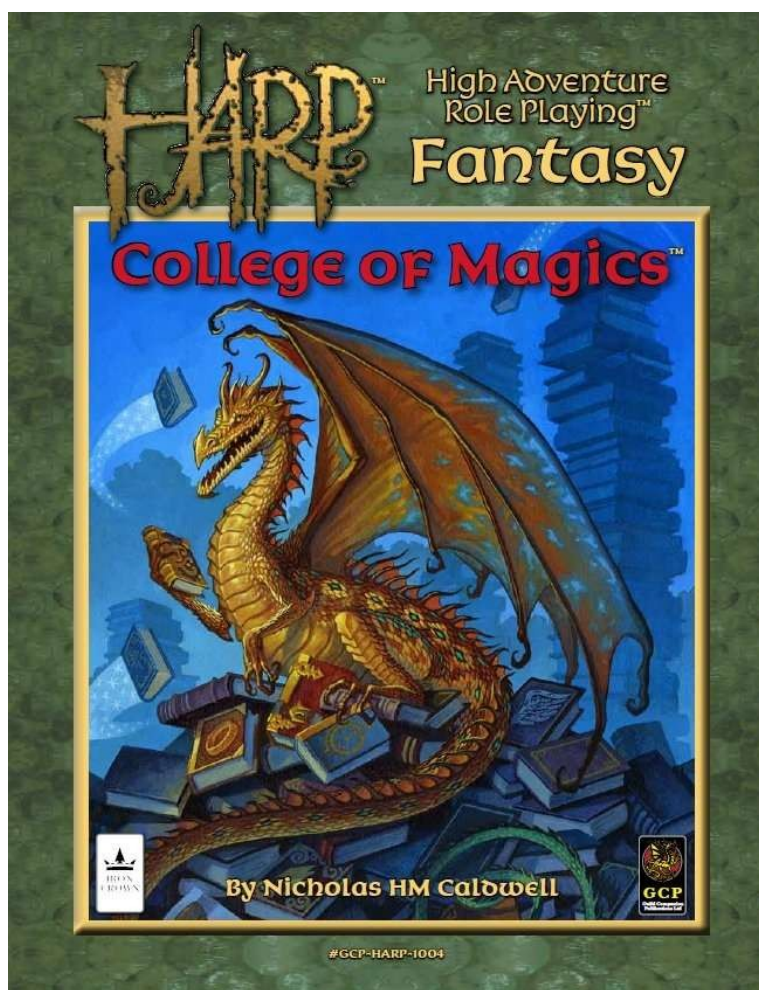
HARP SPELL DURATIONS AND COSTINGS

By Craig Sanders

This article provides alternate rules for calculating duration and duration scaling costs for spells, along with a reverse engineered and guesswork for spell costings. The first part replaces the existing duration cost tables in College of Magics and any duration scaling options listed in the descriptions of specific spells, the second applies to the HARP core rulebook.

Part One: Spell Duration

1. Duration Costs



The big problem with HARP College of Magic spell duration costs is that it leads to utility spells like Light having a duration of 10 rounds per rank (and Light doesn't even have any duration scaling options). Each round is 2 seconds long, so that's a maximum of 120 seconds for a 1st level character. Or 330 rounds (660 seconds or 11 minutes!) for a 10th level character if they've bought the maximum number of ranks allowed per level.

That kind of duration is essentially useless – Light should, as an absolute minimum, last at least a minute per rank (preferably 10 minutes per rank) and be relatively easy to scale up to longer durations. My guess is that the reason for this is to prevent long durations for spells used in combat. IMO, that's not a problem that needs to be solved -- very few combats last even 10 rounds, so even 2 rounds/rank is more than enough to last the entire combat. A duration of 1 minute/rank is rarely, if ever, going to make even a tiny difference to the outcome of any combat.

Even spells like Fire Wall with a base duration of 2 rounds/rank wouldn't unbalance the game if their base duration was 1 minute/rank - at most, it makes it

slightly easier for PCs (or NPCs) to run away and avoid being captured or killed. The chaser has to wait minutes rather than seconds before they can get past the wall and give chase - or just cast Dispel Magic. Outside of combat, a Mage being able to cast Mage Armor or other spells that last tens of minutes or even hours isn't game-breaking. At worst, it

means they don't have to spend the first round casting Mage Armor again.

So, to fix a non-problem, the HARP CoM spell creation rules cause seriously broken durations for Utility spells like Light, Fly, Water Breathing and many others -- these spells are almost completely useless with durations of 2 or 5 or 10 rounds per rank, even a 20th level caster with the maximum 63 ranks is only going to get 630 rounds (21 minutes) out of Light. With my duration costs table, it is possible to design a Light spell so that even a 1st level caster with 6 ranks will get a duration of 1 hour. For example, my version of the Light spell uses a non-standard Conjure (5) Action aspect instead of Create (30). This aspect is only for creating intangible, non-material things like light or illusions.

NAME: Light
PP COST: 6
RANGE: Touch
DURATION: 10 minutes/rank
SPELL TYPE: Utility
RR: --
SPHERES: Universal
ACTION ASPECTS: Conjure (5)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Light (5); Cloud (15) = 20
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: Radius 20' (30);
Duration: 10 minutes/rank (50) = 90

Without a Conjure aspect, there is no way that the HARP Light spell could cost any less than 9 or 10 PP (depending on whether it requires the Cloud (15) aspect or not - and, IMO, it should) - at least, not without reducing the radius from 20' to 10' and the duration from 10 rounds/rank to 5 rounds/rank. 9 PP requires 9 skill ranks, beyond the reach of a 1st level character.

In fact, many of the spells in the HARP core rulebook do not conform to the Action, Object, or Attribute costs in CoM. They seem to have been hand-tweaked to meet a desired PP cost target. IMO, this is broken - if a formula does not give the desired results, then the correct solution is to adjust the formula until it does, not to apply arbitrary over-rides whenever you don't like a particular result.

Duration Table

Here is the duration cost table I'm using for all my homebrew spells. I also use them for HARP, CoM, HARPer's Bazaar, and Codex spells by converting them as needed - e.g. any duration of "2 rounds/rank" becomes "1 minute/rank".

Duration	Cost	/rank	/rank (C)
No Duration	5	—	—
Concentration only	10	—	—
≤ 1 minute	10	20	10
10 minutes	20	50	15
1 hour	40	100	—
1 day	50	120	—
1 week	60	140	—
1 month	75	150	—
1 year	90	—	—
Permanent	200	—	—
Dormant	50	—	—

The "Dormant" duration is used for spells that embed a single casting of another spell into a Rune, Potion, Ward, etc. The embedded spell remains dormant until the rune is read, potion is drunk, etc. I derived it from the "Special (50)" duration for Potion Mastery in CoM

NOTE: I only have the original HARP and CoM rulebooks from 2004, not the newer editions published from 2013. My understanding is that the newer edition of CoM has different duration costs for Utility and Attack spells so that they end up costing 1 or 2 PP more than non-attack spells.

My duration rules don't do that. Instead, I have a non-standard Attack (20) attribute which is required for all attack spells, both those with a Resistance Roll and Elemental/Directed attack spells such as Elemental Bolt, Elemental Ball. This effectively adds 1 PP to the cost of all attack spells.

2. Duration Scaling

When scaling up the duration of a spell, the scaling cost is 1 PP (for changing the duration) plus the difference between the attribute cost of the standard duration of the spell and the scaled duration, divided by 10.

This means that the duration scaling costs vary according to the spell's base duration. That would be a pain to calculate every time, so I've included a handy table below with pre-calculated scaling duration option costs

$$\text{Scaling Cost} = 1 + ((\text{new duration cost} - \text{base duration cost}) \div 10)$$

For example, to scale up the Light spell from 10 minutes/rank (cost=50) to 1 hour/rank (cost=100) is +6 PP:

$$\begin{aligned} 100 - 50 &= 50 \\ 50 \div 10 &= 5 \\ 1 + 5 &= 6 \text{ PP} \end{aligned}$$

Casting this spell with this scaling option would cost a total of 12 PP - which would require a 3rd-level or higher character.

Concentration Spells:

The following scaling options remove the Concentration requirement from a spell.

If the caster also wishes to scale up the duration, one of them is required before other duration-extending options can be used.

Change Duration (from Concentration Only to 1 minute/rank)	+1 PP
Change Duration (from 1 minute/rank (C) to 1 minute/rank)	+1 PP
Change Duration (from 10 minutes/rank (C) to 10 minutes/rank)	+3 PP

Duration Scaling Limits

Except as may be mentioned in the descriptions for individual spells, any spell with a duration may be scaled to any other duration. Elemental/Directed Attack spells have no duration and can not be scaled to have one. While the effects (damage to creatures or objects) may linger, the created element or magical force lasts only until they reach their target. Like other spells with a duration, RR Attack spells can also be scaled to any duration - after all, spells like Charm or Sleep aren't much use if they only last for 2 rounds (4 seconds) per rank.

Duration Scaling Options Table

Look up the original duration on the vertical axis, and the desired duration on the horizontal axis. The result is the number of additional PP required to cast the spell.

From/To	10m	1h	1d	1w	1mo	1y	P	1m/R	10m/R	1h/R	1d/R	1w/R	1mo/R	1y/R
1m	+2	+4	+5	+6	+8	+9	+20	+2	+4	+8	+10	+12	+15	+18
10m	—	+3	+4	+5	+7	+8	+19	—	+3	+7	+9	+11	+14	+17
1h	—	—	+2	+3	+5	+6	+17	—	—	+5	+7	+9	+12	+15
1d	—	—	—	+2	+4	+5	+16	—	—	+4	+6	+8	+11	+14
1w	—	—	—	—	+3	+4	+15	—	—	+3	+5	+7	+10	+13
1mo	—	—	—	—	—	+3	+14	—	—	+2	+4	+6	+9	+12
1y	—	—	—	—	—	—	+12	—	—	—	+2	+4	+7	+10
1m/R	—	+3	+4	+5	+7	+8	+19	—	+3	+7	+9	+11	+14	+17
10m/R	—	—	+2	+3	+5	+6	+17	—	—	+5	+7	+9	+12	+15
1h/R	—	—	—	—	—	+2	+13	—	—	—	+3	+5	+8	+11
1d/R	—	—	—	—	—	—	+11	—	—	—	—	+3	+6	+9
1w/R	—	—	—	—	—	—	+9	—	—	—	—	—	+4	+7
1mo/R	—	—	—	—	—	—	+6	—	—	—	—	—	—	+4
1y/R	—	—	—	—	—	—	+3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Part Two: Spell Costs

NAME: Arcane Bolt

PP COST: 2

ACTION ASPECTS: Harm (5) = 5

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5) = 5

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 50' (30); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 45

NAME: Blur

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15) = 15

OBJECT ASPECTS: Bonus (3x5=15); Illusion (2x15=30) = 45

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 30

NAME: Boost Agility

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15) = 15

OBJECT ASPECTS: Stat (5); Bonus (2x5=10) = 15

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 40

NAME: Boost Constitution

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15) = 15

OBJECT ASPECTS: Stat (5); Bonus (2x5=10) = 15

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 40

NAME: Boost Insight

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15) = 15
OBJECT ASPECTS: Stat (5); Bonus (2x5=10) = 15
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 40

NAME: Boost Presence

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15) = 15
OBJECT ASPECTS: Stat (5); Bonus (2x5=10) = 15
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 40

NAME: Boost Quickness

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15) = 15
OBJECT ASPECTS: Stat (5); Bonus (2x5=10) = 15
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 40

NAME: Boost Reasoning

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15) = 15
OBJECT ASPECTS: Stat (5); Bonus (2x5=10) = 15
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 40

NAME: Boost Self Discipline

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15) = 15
OBJECT ASPECTS: Stat (5); Bonus (2x5=10) = 15
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 40

NAME: Boost Strength

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15) = 15
OBJECT ASPECTS: Stat (5); Bonus (2x5=10) = 15
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 40

NAME: Counterspell*

PP COST: 1

ACTION ASPECTS: Negate (15)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Magic (10)
ATTRIBUTES: Instantaneous (50); Range: 50' (30); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 95

NAME: Detect Magic

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Perceive (5)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Magic (10)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 100' (40); AoE: 5' Radius (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (C) (10) = 60

NAME: Detect Trap

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Perceive (5)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Item (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 100' (40); AoE: 5' Radius (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 70

NAME: Dispel Magic
PP COST: 4
ACTION ASPECTS: Negate (15)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Magic (10)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 10' (20); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 35

NAME: Guess
PP COST: 2
ACTION ASPECTS: Perceive (5) = 5
OBJECT ASPECTS: Divination (10) = 10
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Personal (5); Duration: -- (5) = 15

NAME: Landing*
PP COST: 3
ACTION ASPECTS: Levitate (10) = 10
OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5) = 5
ATTRIBUTES: Instantaneous (50); Range: Self (5); AoE: Personal (5); Duration: -- (5) = 65

NAME: Light
PP COST: 6
ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30) = 30
OBJECT ASPECTS: Light (5) = 5
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); 20' Radius (30); Duration: 10 rounds/rank (100) = 120

NAME: Mage Seal
PP COST: 11
ACTION ASPECTS: Close (5) = 5
OBJECT ASPECTS: Item (5) = 5
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 10' (20); 1 Target (10); Duration: Special (200) = 230

NAME: Minor Healing
PP COST: 3
ACTION ASPECTS: Heal (5)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Body x 5 (25)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 25
NOTE: The Object Aspect cost assumes that each point of bleeding, each 5 of penalty, or each 5% of hits is worth 1 "Body" aspect. I can't see any other way for the base spell to cost 3 PP.

NAME: Moving Ways
PP COST: 4
ACTION ASPECTS: Move (5)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (50) = 60

NAME: Projected Light
PP COST: 4
ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30) = 30
OBJECT ASPECTS: Light (5) = 5
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (50) = 70

NAME: Study Target

PP COST: 2

ACTION ASPECTS: Store (20) = 20

OBJECT ASPECTS: Mind (5) = 5

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: -- (5) = 15

NAME: Unlocking Ways

PP COST: 2

ACTION ASPECTS: Open (5) = 5

OBJECT ASPECTS: Item (5) = 5

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 25

NAME: Animal Forms

PP COST: 5

ACTION ASPECTS: Transform-Minor (15) = 15

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5); Illusion (2x10=20) = 25

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 10 rounds/rank (100) = 110

NAME: Animate Dead

PP COST: 6

ACTION ASPECTS: Animate simple (10); Control (2x20=40) = 50

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 100' (40); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (C) (10) = 60

NAME: Bless

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15) = 15

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5); Bonus (2x5=10) = 15

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 10' (20); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 50

NAME: Calm

PP COST: 6

ACTION ASPECTS: Influence (10) = 10

OBJECT ASPECTS: Emotions (10) = 10

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 100' (40); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (50) = 100

NAME: Control Animal

PP COST: 5

ACTION ASPECTS: Control (20) = 20

OBJECT ASPECTS: Creature (10) = 10

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 100' (40); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (C) (15) = 65

NAME: Control Undead

PP COST: 6

ACTION ASPECTS: Control (20) = 20

OBJECT ASPECTS: Creature (10); Death (2x15=30) = 40

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 100' (40); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: Concentration (10) = 60

NAME: Create Undead

PP COST: 14

ACTION ASPECTS: Animate Spirit (40) = 40

OBJECT ASPECTS: Death (15) = 15

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 10' (20); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: Permanent (200) = 220

NAME: Cure Disease

PP COST: 12

ACTION ASPECTS: Heal (5)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: Permanent (200) = 220

NAME: Divine Hammer

PP COST: 5

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Magic (10); Force (2x10=20) = 30

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 40

NAME: Drain Life

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Harm (5); Move (2x5=10) = 15

OBJECT ASPECTS: Life (15)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 50' (30); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (C) (10) = 50

NAME: Dreams

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Perceive (5)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Divination (10)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 1 dream (5) = 15

NAME: Guidance

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Perceive (5)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Divination (10)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (C) (15) = 25

NAME: Harm

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Harm (5)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 10' (20); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 35

NAME: Herbal Enhancements

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Item (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 10 rounds/rank (100) = 120

NAME: Holy Symbol

PP COST: 12

ACTION ASPECTS: Instill (15)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Item (5); Magic (10) = 15

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: Permanent (200) = 220

NAME: Intuitions

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Perceive (5)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Divination (10)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: -- (5) = 15

NAME: Lifegiving

PP COST: 12

ACTION ASPECTS: Resurrect (100) = 100

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5); Mind (2x5=10); Life (2x15=30); Death (2x15=30); Spirit (2x15=30) = 105

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 25

NAME: Lifekeeping

PP COST: 8

ACTION ASPECTS: Stop (5)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Death (15)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 1 hour/rank (180) = 200

NAME: Major Healing

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Heal (5)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body x 10 (50)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 25

NOTE: The Object Aspect cost assumes that each point of bleeding, each 5 of penalty, or each 5% of hits is worth 1 "Body" aspect. I can't see any other way for the base spell to cost 4 PP.

NAME: Nature's Strength

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Increase (10); Instill (2x15=30) = 40

OBJECT ASPECTS: Bonus (5); Animal (2x5) = 15

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 40

NAME: Nature's Tongues

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Discuss (5)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Animal (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (50) = 60

NAME: Neutralize Poison

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Negate (15)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Acid (Poison; 5) = 5

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 25

NAME: Plant Disguise

PP COST: 5

ACTION ASPECTS: Transform-Minor (15)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Plant (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 10 rounds/rank (100) = 110

NAME: Restoration
PP COST: 3
ACTION ASPECTS: Heal (5)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Stat (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 25

NAME: Summon Animal
PP COST: 5
ACTION ASPECTS: Teleport (20); Control (2x20=40) = 60
OBJECT ASPECTS: Animal (5); Food (2x5=10) = 15
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: Variable (5) = 15

NAME: Tree Door
PP COST: 3
ACTION ASPECTS: Teleport (20)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Plant (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: -- (5) = 15

NAME: Tree Merge
PP COST: 4
ACTION ASPECTS: Merge (5)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Plant (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (50) = 60

NAME: Tree Skin
PP COST: 4
ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Bonus x 4 (20)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 30

NAME: Turn Undead
PP COST: 7
ACTION ASPECTS: Control (20)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Death (15)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 100' (40); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (50) = 100

NAME: Changing Ways
PP COST: 6
ACTION ASPECTS: Transform-Minor (16)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 10' (20); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 10 rounds/rank (100) = 130

NAME: Charm
PP COST: 4
ACTION ASPECTS: Control (15)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Mind (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 50' (30); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (C) (15) = 55

NAME: Confusion
PP COST: 4
ACTION ASPECTS: Harm (5); Influence (2x10=20) = 25

OBJECT ASPECTS: Mind (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 50' (30); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: Concentration (10) = 50

NAME: Distractions
PP COST: 5
ACTION ASPECTS: Harm (5) = 5
OBJECT ASPECTS: Bonus x 4 (20) = 20
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 100' (40); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 70

NAME: Fear
PP COST: 4
ACTION ASPECTS: Instill (15)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Emotion (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 50' (30); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 60

NAME: Jolts
PP COST: 3
ACTION ASPECTS: Harm (5)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 50' (30); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 45

NAME: Past Visions
PP COST: 3
ACTION ASPECTS: Perceive (5)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Divination (10); Time (2x15=30) = 40
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: Special/(C) (10) = 20

NAME: Phantasms
PP COST: 5
ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Illusion (10)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 100' (40); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (C) (15) = 65

NAME: Quiet Ways
PP COST: 3
ACTION ASPECTS: Negate (15)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Sound (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 30

NAME: Sleep
PP COST: 4
ACTION ASPECTS: Control (15)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Mind (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 50' (30); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 60

NAME: Tongues
PP COST: 4
ACTION ASPECTS: Discuss (5)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Mind (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (50) = 60

NAME: Air Wall
PP COST: 5
ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Element (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 10' (20); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 50

NAME: Bladeturn*
PP COST: 5
ACTION ASPECTS: Reduce (15)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Bonus x4 (20)
ATTRIBUTES: Instantaneous (50); Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: -- (5) = 65

NAME: Darkness
PP COST: 7
ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Darkness (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 10 rounds/rank (100) = 120

NAME: Deflections*
PP COST: 7
ACTION ASPECTS: Reduce (15)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Bonus x 4 (20)
ATTRIBUTES: Instantaneous (50); Range: 100' (40); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 105

NAME: Earthen Transmutations
PP COST: 14
ACTION ASPECTS: Transform-Major (30)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Element (5); Shape (15) = 20
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 10' (20); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: Permanent (200) = 230

NAME: Elemental Ball
PP COST: 6
ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Harm (5); Element (2x5=10) = 15
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 100' (40); AoE: 10' Radius (20); Duration: -- (5) = 65

NAME: Elemental Bolt
PP COST: 4
ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Harm (5); Element (2x5=10) = 15
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 100' (40); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 55

NAME: Fire Nerves
PP COST: 4
ACTION ASPECTS: Harm (5)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Malus (5x5=25); Body (5) = 30
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 50' (30); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 60

NAME: Fire Wall
PP COST: 4
ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Element (5); Shape (15)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 100' (40); AoE: 5' Radius (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 70

NAME: Fly

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Move (5); Levitate (2x10=20) = 25

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (50) = 70

NAME: Haste

PP COST: 6

ACTION ASPECTS: Transform-Minor (15); Enhance (2x15) = 45

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5); Time (2x15=30) = 35

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 25

NAME: Icy Mist Wall

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Water (5); Barrier (2x10=20) = 25

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 100' (40); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 70

NAME: Invisibility

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Perceive (5); Negate (2x15=30) = 35

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 10' (20); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (50) = 80

NAME: Long Door

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Travel (10); Teleport (2x20=40) = 50

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 10' (20); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 35

NAME: Mage Armor

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Bonus x 4 (20); Force (2x10=20) = 40

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 30

NAME: Merging Ways

PP COST: 5

ACTION ASPECTS: Merge (10)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (50) = 60

NAME: Misfeel

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Conceal (15)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Mind (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 30

NAME: Passing

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Merge (10); Travel (2x10=20) = 30

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 30

NAME: Presence

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Perceive (5)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Mind (5); Divination (2x10=20) = 25

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: 20' Radius (30); Duration: Concentration (10) = 45

NAME: Rune Mastery

PP COST: 10

ACTION ASPECTS: Instill (15)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Item (5); Magic (2x10=20); 100 pts for 10 PP matrix capacity = 125

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: Special (50) = 70

NAME: Shock

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Element (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 50' (30); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: -- (5) = 45

NAME: Spikes

PP COST: 6

ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Element (5); Cloud (15) = 20

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 100' (40); AoE: 5' Radius (10); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (50) = 100

NAME: Stun Cloud

PP COST: 5

ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Element (5); Cloud (15) = 20

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 50' (30); AoE: 5' Radius (10); Duration: 6 rounds (20) = 60

NAME: Vacuum

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Negate (15)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Element (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 50' (30); AoE: 5' Radius (10); Duration: -- (5) = 45

NAME: Water Wall

PP COST: 5

ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Element (5); Barrier (2x10=20) = 25

ATTRIBUTES: Range: 10' (20); AoE: 5' Radius (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 50

NAME: Find Shelter

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Perceive (5)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Item (5); Divination (2x10=20) = 25
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 1 mile (120); AoE: Self (5) + 5' Radius (10); Duration: -- (5) = 140

NAME: Hues
PP COST: 3
ACTION ASPECTS: Conceal (10); Enhance (2x15=30) = 40
OBJECT ASPECTS: Bonus x2 (10)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 30

NAME: Locate Food
PP COST: 2
ACTION ASPECTS: Perceive (5)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Item (5); Mass (2x10=20) = 25
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 1 mile (120); AoE: Self (5); Duration: -- (5) = 130

NAME: Natural Trap
PP COST: 8
ACTION ASPECTS: Harm (5); Create (2x30=60) = 65
OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5); Item (2x5=10) = 15
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 10' (20); AoE: 5' Radius (10); Duration: Special (50) = 80

NAME: Path Lore
PP COST: 2
ACTION ASPECTS: Perceive (5)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Item (5); Divination (2x10=20) = 25
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: -- (5) = 15

NAME: Traceless Passing
PP COST: 4
ACTION ASPECTS: Conceal (10)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Body ((5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: Concentration (10) = 15

NAME: Dancing Weapon
PP COST: 3
ACTION ASPECTS: Move (5); Animate-Complex (2x30=60) = 65
OBJECT ASPECTS: Item (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 40

NAME: Elemental Weapon
PP COST: 3
ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Element (5)
ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 40

NAME: Guardian Blades
PP COST: 3
ACTION ASPECTS: Create (30)
OBJECT ASPECTS: Element (5); Barrier (2x10=20) = 25
ATTRIBUTES: Range: 10' (20); AoE: 5' Radius (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 50

NAME: Hammer Strike

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Harm (5); Enhance (2x15=30) = 35

OBJECT ASPECTS: Body (5); Item (2x5=10) = 15

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (10); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 40

NAME: Magic Shield

PP COST: 3

ACTION ASPECTS: Animate-Simple (10); Create (2x30=60) = 70

OBJECT ASPECTS: Bonus x3 (15); Force (2x10=10) = 25

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 30

NAME: Mighty Charge

PP COST: 2

ACTION ASPECTS: Negate (15)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Malus (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: -- (5) = 15

NAME: Resist Damage

PP COST: 7

ACTION ASPECTS: Negate (15)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Harm (5)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 5 rounds/rank (50) = 60

NAME: Steel Skin

PP COST: 4

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Bonus x 4 (20)

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 30

NAME: Warrior's Might

PP COST: 5

ACTION ASPECTS: Enhance (15)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Bonus x 3 (15); Stat (2x5=10) = 25

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Self (5); AoE: Self (5); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 30

NAME: Weapon's Fury

PP COST: 5

ACTION ASPECTS: Increase (10)

OBJECT ASPECTS: Bonus x2 (10); Item (2x5=10); Mass (2x10=20) = 40

ATTRIBUTES: Range: Touch (5); AoE: 1 Target (10); Duration: 2 rounds/rank (20) = 40

MOVIE REVIEW: ENCANTO

By Andrew Moshos



Happy families are all alike; every magical family is unhappy in its own magical way

dirs: Jared Bush, Byron Howard and Charise Castro Smith

You may ask yourself: why would a man your age voluntarily subject yourself to a new Disney animated movie, when you no longer have a child of an age where the watching of such films is not only necessary, but mandatory? Honestly, while I wave my hands at all *this* that's happening now, the very thisness of it all, the crushing familiarity of where the world is at the moment, I just wanted to feel some delight, some joy, and while such a thing is not always guaranteed by Disney, it has a pretty good track record delivering with its mainline animated efforts.

I watched it, on a night I usually reserve for horror flicks or brutal action monstrosities, because I think my soul needed it, and I was rewarded. Encanto is up there with the "good" recent animated films Disney proper has put out, since it started having to compete with Pixar (before buying Pixar, of course). I don't yet know if this has the longevity of something like Tangled, Moana or Frozen (I mean, Frozen was a global phenomenon, but no-one talks about

Frozen II), but it's definitely up there.

It does have some catchy tunes, but however great "We Don't Talk About Bruno" is, it's not going to invade the ears and minds of every reluctant parent the way that "Let It Go" is probably sung even on the outer planets of our solar system. I also like the fact, love the fact that if you could somehow resurrect Walt Disney himself, and play him the entirety of the movie, he would probably die from shock that an animated movie from the studio he created would have so many people with different skin shades in it, and that they weren't playing happy slaves on a plantation. It would kill him all over again, and that's probably a good thing. We don't need old racist zombies returning from the grave, craving our brains, money or votes.

The movie is set in Colombia, but it's kinda impossible to say when, and it's kinda irrelevant. A mother and her husband, clutching three babies, flee from either brutal government forces or heroic freedom fighters. Either way, the machetes they carry seek to end their lives and the lives of their babies. The father sacrifices himself, but somehow, through his action, and the mother's supernaturally powerful grief, a candle is imbued with some kind of magical energy which allows this woman to construct an enchanted house, an enchanted village cut off from the world. It's not just the mother and her three littlies – there were other villagers fleeing with them. But once the miracle happens, the central family gets a magical house, but the rest of the villagers get to bask in the warming glow of their benevolence.

That woman grows older, is known by all as Abuela, which years of Dora the Explorer taught me means grandmother, but all her kids, and their kids, upon reaching a certain age, unlock a new door in the magical, sentient house they call Casita, which grants them magical powers. Everyone else except our main character, Mirabel (Stephanie Beatriz), that is. Not only doesn't she have powers; she's treated sometimes like they're worried her ordinariness will rub off and make everyone else dull as well.

In truth she probably has some resentment towards the others, too. Her older sister with the luxurious hair and the power to, um, make flowers grow everywhere is a natural antagonist. Perfectly natural to resent a sister like that. Everyone else in the village, especially Abuela act like the sun shines out of Luisa's puckered, um, sunflowers, and they look at Mirabel like she just stepped in dog shit: with pity and disgust. It's unfair, I tells ya. The burdens of keeping everything together, keeping the magic in place, is enough for the sainted Abuela to become a bit of a tyrant. Who knows – maybe her cruel efforts to get everyone to conform to her conservative idea of who people should be and what people should do will actually cause the outcome she fears most?

What a turn up for the books that would be, did not see that coming. Mirabel starts perceiving that there are cracks in the foundations, glitches in the matrix, and that something has gone wrong with their personal miracle. The candle starts to flicker, and every time she tries to find out what's going on, or what happened with Bruno (shush, we don't talk about Bruno no more), everyone, but especially her hateful grandmother, try to shut her down and gaslight her, telling her she's loco. But she ain't loco. She's not even loca. She's our plucky heroine, from a long line of plucky heroines, determined and hard-working enough to see it through and, we hope, save the magic house, save the enchanted village, and vanquish the evil dragon of a grandmother.

The standard way heroines in Disney actualise their dreams is by leaving home, confronting the great unknown, facing danger and death, growing, making choices, making sacrifices. Most of that applies not at all here. She barely leaves the house, she never leaves the village. Her adventure consists of finding out what the deal is with Bruno, whose power was prophecy, finding a way to forgive her Poison Ivy-like sister for being better than her, and then rebuilding what her abuela's obsessive white-knuckle coercive control destroys, which could be everything. It doesn't feel like there's much at stake, really. Everything I've written about the grandmother is totally overstated, in that she's not a Gothel-like selfish villain who needs to be destroyed – she's just mildly misguided. Bruno turns out to be a little misunderstood. The haughty and stereotypically beautiful sister hates having to be perfect all the time.

Without even spoiling anything – after all, 'tis Disney – you know that everything's going to be okay and no-one will get hurt in almost any way, and everything that's destroyed will be rebuilt, and any magic lost will be regained. But it still didn't matter. It was as enchanting as its title would suggest, with gorgeous animation and impressively expressive characters, and incredible backgrounds. And it didn't outstay its welcome, wrapping things up in just over 90 minutes.

It bugged me a bit that they kept emphasising that all this was taking place in Colombia, but it didn't really engage with Colombian culture, history or customs on even the most superficial of levels. It's pretty much a generic Latin American idealised town, without something remotely on the level of the Mexican Day of the Dead aesthetics of Pixar's *Coco* or *The Book of Life*. And anyone that mentions the concept of 'magical realism', Colombia and then feels compelled to mention the name of the only Colombian author they've ever heard of, being the legendary Gabriel Garcia Marquez, should bite their tongue or typing fingers. This isn't 'magical realism', it's just magical magic. Plus Marquez hated that phrase to describe his writing. He probably wouldn't have loved this, but that's okay. He died an old man, and old men can't be expected to enjoy lush, colourful, female-led ensemble pieces that celebrate family and communities coming

together to help each other in times of joy and tragedy. Although... the references to the Thousand Day War, or the conflict that makes the abuela when young run out of fear for their lives... that did make me think the writers at the very least skimmed the Wikipedia page for Marquez while they were slapping this script together.

Let's not even get into the political / colonial / colourism aspects of having this powerful family (mostly light skinned latinos and latinas) lording it over the rest of the village because they have the magical powers. All rulers rule with fear, and this dreaded Abuela is no different to any other conquistador. Anyone messes with the family, with her power base, and she sends out super-strong Luisa to hurl their donkeys into the sky. Yeah, let's not get into that. I laughed, I cried a fair few times, I was delighted by this tale about black sheep in families not always being so because they're abusive arseholes or thieving addicts, but that sometimes the role a family tries to impose on them isn't right, isn't fair, and breaking out of it can help everyone. And differently-abled stars like Mirabel can get to be the ones who save everyone's bacon, just by believing in themselves more than what the people around them do.

8 times my shameful superpower is making alcohol disappear without a trace out of 10

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"I will never be good enough for you, will I? No matter how hard I try... no matter how hard any of us try." – yep, sounds about right - Encanto

Rating:8 stars

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***Issue #54, March 2022
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