

*Uprising*

# SAVAGE

# INSIDER

*For All Things Savage*

GIN, GUN SMOKE,  
AND LIES  
AN **UNOFFICIAL**  
DEADLANDS  
ADVENTURE

*By Owen Lean*

BECOMING A  
THREAT

*By Garrett Crowe*

FOLDING SPACE  
AND TAKING  
NAMES

*By Tanya Beeson*

THE LOST SOUL

*By Rachel Rutledge*

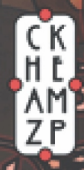
THE TWELVE-HOUR  
REVOLUTION

*By Zach Welhouse*

THE SUPER POWER  
TOY BOX: BEYOND  
CAPES AND TIGHTS

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*Volume 3, Issue 2 Summer 2015*



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## SAVAGE INSIDER

VOL. 3 ISS. 2: Uprising

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### NEWSLETTER

Choose the news you receive by signing up at <http://eepurl.com/Xq5ez>. Options included notifications of new releases and calls for contributors.

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Volume Three launched with the spring issue: Endings and Beginnings. Before it released, we ran the cover in numerous social media forums. The image, created by artist Amanda Kiefer, evoked a universally favorable response.

Writer and game designer Darrell Hardy posted, “Lovely and evocative artwork!” Jeffrey Willis echoed, “Such a great cover.”

Of all the feedback we got on the cover itself, the one that made me laugh and then smile came from Stephen Miller: “Every time I have seen this I first think, ‘Wow, she is fighting off people with a hockey stick on a pole.’ Then I look more carefully and realize that is not exactly the case.”

Indeed, as Jodi Black of Pinnacle Entertainment put it, “I would NOT mess with her.” Smiling Jack’s Bar and Grill’s Chris Fuchs was among those declaring it an awesome cover while writer Richard Woolcock felt it was “definitely a perfect fit for ‘Endings and Beginnings’!”

An inbox full of notifications capturing unbridled positivity underscored why we work so hard to find illustrators, writers, editors, and licensees who will contribute to each issue’s theme.

As I wrote in my last letter, we have goals that include raising rates contributors get paid (again) and being able to regularly offer *SI* in print for game stores and wherever Studio 2 exhibits and you can help!

Every time folks tweet, post, plus, and share on social media, it makes people aware of *Savage Insider*. When readers purchase and review issues, it helps our placement in the Hottest Small Press and each issue’s level of Best Seller status, in turn encouraging folks to try an issue. Those things and new followers and newsletter subscribers all go toward unlocking free content in between issues. The more of these goals we accomplish, the greater the quantity and more robust the free content.

Our first freebie has come together and will be released July 25, 2015 on DriveThruPRG. *Seeds of*

*Adventure: Rumors and Sightings* offers two seeds each for fantasy, science fiction, and post-apocalyptic sessions.

Additionally, be on the lookout for collections of favorite pieces from previously released issues with expanded content and an enticing price. We’re contemplating ideas such as an edition devoted to Equipment Corral adding never-before-released items and one for Character Gallery featuring multiple ranks of established characters or alternates to make them fit different genres.

We’re also excited to announce that PDFs will soon be available on Paizo.com as well as DriveThruRPG. Plus, we’re planning to make all of our electronic issues available via DTRPG’s print-on-demand service by yearend.

If you’re going to Gen Con, you can pick up a limited release print copy of *Savage Insider* at Studio 2’s booth. If we’re around, we’ll even sign it for you! (Or smile and thank you without marking up your issue, as you choose.) If you didn’t get into one of our company’s games, you can see Obatron Productions (that’s the our company’s name) at the Licensee Panel right after Pinnacle Entertainment Group’s Savage Worlds Panel or you can attend any of three seminars I’m personally hosting on behalf of Obatron Productions.

Speaking of PEG, I am thrilled to announce that we are now able to publish select fan-created adventures based on PEG settings. The first of such features, *Gin, Gun Smoke & Lies* for Deadlands, debuts in this issue. These are neither official PEG pieces, nor are they endorsed by PEG. However, PEG was extraordinarily gracious in extending permission to *Savage Insider* to use references to their intellectual property, as noted by the disclaimer you’ll see each time we run something that falls under that category.

Thanks for reading and for sharing your opinions!

Have a great day and happy reading!

Vickey A. Beaver,  
Editor-in-Chief

# THE THIN BLUE LINE

## A Detroit Police Story



Calamity brews in Detroit. Paranormal activity is on the rise. An angry spirit, a dangerous creature, or a pack of desperate cultists hides under every sewer cover and within every abandoned building. Corktown has a secret, though. Its crew of supposed washouts are either psychics or have encountered the paranormal. The officers of Corktown Precinct stand between the city and paranormal onslaught. These damaged, over-worked, and under-paid officers must keep supernatural activity in Detroit under wraps and out of sight. No mean feat in a city as old, large, and haunted as Detroit.

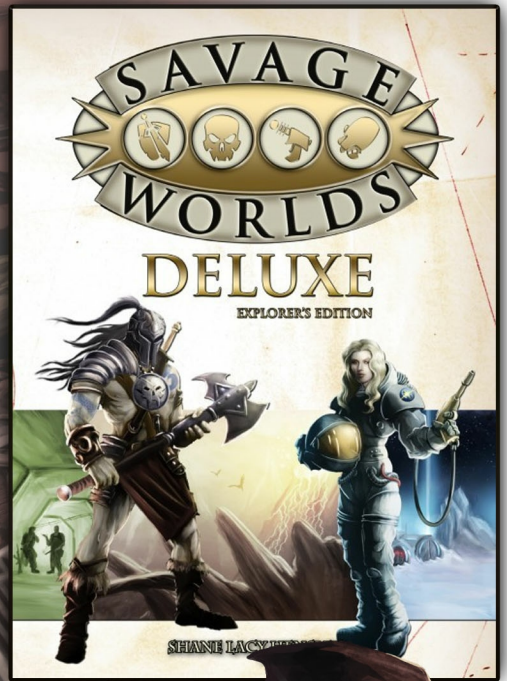
**KICKSTARTER** Early July 2015



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## Releases: April 1 - June 15, 2015

While extensive, it is possible that other products were released without our knowledge. Visit publishers' websites for complete details, including how to buy.

Title	Publisher	Setting	Type	Format
To Preserve Our Values	Dramascape		Adventure	PDF
Wild Card Creator: Deadlands Reloaded: Stone and a Hard Place Support	Journeyman Games	Wild Card Creator	Accessory	Software
Wild Card Creator: Last Parsec Primer, Leviathan, Eris Beta-V Support	Journeyman Games	Wild Card Creator	Accessory	Software
Wild Card Creator: Mars Support	Journeyman Games	Wild Card Creator	Accessory	Software
Wild Card Creator: Sundered Skies Support	Journeyman Games	Wild Card Creator	Accessory	Software
Winter Eternal: A Long Cold Night	Just Insert Imagination	Winter Eternal	Adventure/One Sheet	PDF
Winter Eternal: Out in the Wastelands	Just Insert Imagination	Winter Eternal	Adventure/One Sheet	PDF
Winter Eternal	Just Insert Imagination	Winter Eternal	Core Setting Guide	PDF, POD
Darkest Tides	Melior Via	Shaintar/Acursed	Adventure	PDF
Judgement Day	Mystical Throne Entertainment	Judgement Day	Core Setting Guide	PDF, POD
Mythos: Queen of the Labyrinth	Mystical Throne Entertainment	Mythos	Supplement	PDF
Deadlands Poser Maps	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	Deadlands	Accessory	PDF
Hell on Earth Wasteland PDF Combat Map Set	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	Hell On Earth	Accessory	PDF
Stone and a hard Place Map Pack	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	Deadlands	Accessory	PDF

## RECENT RELEASES

Title	Publisher	Setting	Type	Format
Stone and a Hard Place PDF Combat Map Set I	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	Deadlands	Accessory	PDF
The Tombstone Seven	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	Deadlands	Accessory	PDF
Lankhmar: City of Thieves Player's Guide	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	Lankhmar	Core Setting Guide	PDF
Savage Worlds Shaken Rules Update	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	Savage Worlds	Core Setting Guide	PDF
Deadlands Noir Player's Guide	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	Deadlands Noir	Supplement	PDF
Lankhmar: City of Thieves Player's Guide	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	Lankhmar	Supplement	PDF
Lankhmar: Foes of Nehwon	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	Lankhmar	Supplement	PDF
Lankhmar: Savage Foes of Nehwon	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	Lankhmar	Supplement	PDF
Lankhmar: Savage Tales of the Thieves' Guild	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	Lankhmar	Supplement	PDF
Hellfrost: Battle Discs	Triple Ace Games	Hellfrost	Accessory	Other
Hellfrost: Arcane Lore	Triple Ace Games	Hellfrost	Supplement	PDF, PRINT
Hellfrost: Land of Fire, Realm Guide #21: The Free Emirate States	Triple Ace Games	Hellfrost: Land of Fire	Supplement	PDF
Hellfrost: Land of Fire, Realm Guide #22: The Kingdoms of the Sphinxes	Triple Ace Games	Hellfrost Land of Fire	Supplement	PDF
Cast of Cards Creatures (Arcane)	Warning Label LLC	Cast of Cards	Accessory	PDF, Print
Cast of Cards Creatures (Mundane)	Warning Label LLC	Cast of Cards	Accessory	PDF, Print

## UPCOMING RELEASES

### PINNACLE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

[www.peginc.com](http://www.peginc.com)

#### **Lankhmar GM Screen**

The Lankhmar GM Screen is a full-color, 3 panel, landscape format hardback screen, which comes with the 32 page full-color adventure The Eyes of Goro'mosh. One side of the GM Screen features art by Grosnez; the other has all the tables and handy reference items a GM needs to play Lankhmar for Savage Worlds.

The Street of the Gods stretches from the Marsh Gate to the Temple of the Gods of Lankhmar, with more prominent religions moving farther away from the Marsh Gate as they gain in followers and funding. A new faith has come to Lankhmar and it's becoming the latest rage among the wealthy and elite. But as the faith grows in strength and position on the Street of Gods, so do the number of bodies turning up mysteriously-more than usual for the City of Black Toga.

Available July.

#### **Eyes of Goro'mosh Adventure**

The Eyes of Goro'mosh contains four Savage Tale adventures designed to be interspersed among other Lankhmar Savage Tales or those of the Game Master's own creation, with a climactic ending on the Street of the Gods!

This product requires Lankhmar: City of Thieves and the Savage Worlds core rules to play.

Available July.

### THIRD EYE GAMES

[Thirdeyegames.net](http://Thirdeyegames.net)

#### **Apocalypse Prevention Inc., Second Edition**

Join API and defend the world from annihilation between coffee breaks. Includes updated rules and more demons for DGS and Savage Worlds.



In API2E, players take the role of agents working for a shadowy corporation defending the Earth from the various beings who want to destroy it and the entire dimension. This includes monsters and demons from other worlds, as well as those of the domestic flavor. Those demons who choose to call Earth their home and live in (some) harmony with humanity have been invited to join API. The company takes in new agents and trains them in three key categories that help in this task

Available Summer 2015.





By Jim Davenport

# Savage Characters, Volume 1

Fast, Furious, and Fun Personalities to Fire Up your Game from Dragonlaird Gaming.

## What is *Savage Characters, Volume 1*

The Savage Characters series provides players and game masters a collection of rich fully defined characters with full body color art, stats and a 0-100 build ladder, description and history, and five adventure hooks – one for each rank. Twenty characters in all, there are five in each of four classic genres: Haunted West, Fantasy, Modern Horror, and Space Opera. The characters are grounded in four Dragonlaird Gaming settings in these genres but are simple to use in any game. Their adventure hooks intertwine but can easily be used on their own.

*Savage Characters* is available through RPGNow.com and DriveThruRPG.com.



Visit [www.dragonlairdgaming.com](http://www.dragonlairdgaming.com) for more from Dragonlaird Gaming.

## Why We Created *Savage Characters*

At the heart of all role-playing games are the characters: the villains and heroes, the colorful confidantes and nefarious tricksters. Beyond technology or trappings, characters make a setting, a campaign, or an adventure really come to life. Good original characters are also time-consuming to make and require a good dose of inspiration. Cardboard “stock” characters have their place but you really need a few memorable, detailed personalities to make your game rock.

That’s why Dragonlaird Gaming made its first publication all about the characters. We chose four popular genres to which all gamers can relate: the haunted west, fantasy, modern horror, and space opera. We then developed the core concepts of original settings around those four genres which we plan to expand in the future. While the characters are defined in these DLG settings it was important for them to be easily portable to other settings in the same genres.

## Influences

Savage Characters uses the Savage Worlds rule system which is one of the most popular cross-genre

systems in use today. I tried to be true to the spirit of Savage Worlds which is strongly based in pulp/cinematic action: fast, furious, and fun.

In each genre, I sought to define a unique angle which could impart new and interesting character ideas. For the haunted west (Ghost Lands & Sixguns), I drew on the Island of Dr. Moreau to create “awakened” animals. In the modern horror setting (Demon Streets and Made Men) I mixed the feel of a 1970s New York mired in corruption with evil spirits coming to take it over with a greater corruption. The space opera setting (Theta Ships & Iron Men) combined my love of Napoleonic naval fiction (Patrick O’Brian) with the tech-lite view of the future. The fantasy setting (Dark Ages and Dragon Gods) blended human history leading into the dark ages with fantasy elements and the intervention of a dragon to take over and preserve the Roman Empire. Each of these setting concepts led to original character concepts beyond the typical tropes.

## Research

I’ve never been a number-crunching gamer. The

## DESIGNER'S DIARY

stories, adventures, plots, and challenges drive my gaming enjoyment, the fluff or 'flavor text' if you will. I read some fiction like George V. Higgins' *Cogan's Trade* for corrupt New York, and *Master and Commander* by O'Brian. In other cases, non-fiction was better for research like *The Year 1000* by Robert Lacey and Danny Danziger. I didn't do much research beyond that.

### Ideal Gaming Experience Provided

The recommended way to use the characters is as a set of PCs and NPCs that leverages the intertwined adventure hooks between them. The hooks provide the opportunity to weave adventures across the development of the characters across ranks, setting up heroes and nemeses that could form the backbone of a campaign.

### Development Process

Savage Characters has really been a team effort. While I did the writing, I had the opportunity to involve four different artists to provide the character art and supporting setting art. This enabled me to provide each genre a distinctive look. I also relied on experts in the areas of editing, rules auditing, and product layout to help bring the product together.

We wanted Savage Characters to be the start of interconnected products. We're considering publishing adventures, locations collections, more characters, and even setting bibles for the four settings. Some tie-in content will be made available for free at our website. What comes first and which settings get the most attention depend greatly on fan feedback to Savage Characters.

### If Pushed for a Comparison?

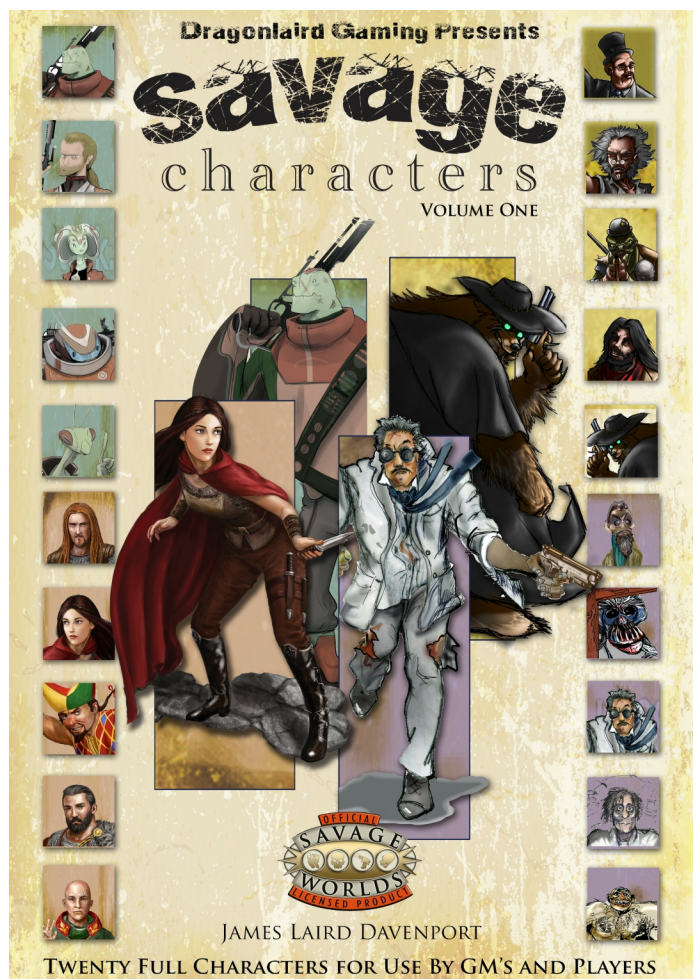
There are other authors and companies providing pre-generated characters for Savage Worlds but I haven't seen a product yet that combines all the pieces: description and history, rich head-to-toe color artwork, detailed stats and complete build ladder from Novice to Legendary, and adventure hooks tied to the different ranks. Savage Characters are ready to go for the richest role-playing experience.

### Tell Us About the Author

I've been a gamer for over twenty-five years, most of them as a game master for my home table and at the Origins convention in Columbus, Ohio. In 2004 I had my first opportunity to be published in the pages of

Knights of the Dinner Table magazine with an article about the TV Series, Firefly. That led to being a contributing writer and designer for the Origins Award-winning Serenity Role-Playing Game. That game created the foundation for the Cortex Engine series from Margaret Weis Productions. I wrote the Gen Con adventure for the premiere of Serenity RPG as well as award-winning follow-on products for Serenity as well as Battlestar Galactica RPG.

My own design studio, Dragonlaird Gaming, came into being in 2006 where I continued to write Gaming the Movies, a regular column for Knights of the Dinner Table magazine on how to create a role-playing experience based on our favorite and unusual movies and television shows. While balancing the demands of family and real life, I'm aiming to provide more idea-inspiring content soon as Dragonlaird Gaming.



# Savage Characters, Volume 1

Beyond the Designer's Diary by Dragonlaird Gaming.

RPGs are all about the characters. Whether you're a game masters or a player, there are times you need some inspiration. *Savage Characters, Volume 1* brings you 20 fully developed, rich characters to inspire your adventures and campaigns.

There are five characters in each of four Dragonlaird Gaming settings which can easily be used in similar genres:

**Fantasy** ("Dark Ages and Dragon Gods"): A beautiful traveling noblewoman hides a secret life as the larcenous Lady of Red Silk. Out of love, a grizzled mercenary from Moorish Iberia keeps the noblewoman safe. A priest of the Dragon God with a secret carries out the will of the Roman Draconic Church. A jester and fool is rarely suspected to be a seducer and thief. A Northern walks the roads of Europe living by his sword.

**Space Opera** ("Theta Ships and Iron Men"): An alien runt uses his mechanical genius to steal technology and weapons for his Grand Plan. A disgraced captain of the Royal Stellar Navy hunts the creature who stole his flagship from him. An alien bounty hunter burdened with a rigid moral code travels the Galaxy after criminals. A spy for the ancient Spironetti Empire seeks to rock the foundations of her own people. A trusted negotiator finds just the right people to connect to the right deals.

**Modern Horror** ("Demon Streets and Made Men"): A nightmare from another dimension controls one of the Five Families and plots to consume New York City into a soulless Hell. A brutally violent fiend parades as a Family enforcer. A hideous creature skulks in shadows, influencing minds and enacting the schemes of its master. Obsessed with contacting his dead brother, a scientist unwittingly opens the gates to a dark dimension. A Catholic made man for the Romanos learns of the growing darkness and vows to protect his city from Satan.

**Haunted West** ("Ghost Lands and Sixguns"): A mad scientist performs twisted experiments in a hidden lair in the Sierra Mountains. An American Black Bear is made intelligent by science and takes up a gun as an outlaw. Another 'awakened' animal taps savage magic to protect itself and plot revenge. A heartless thug parlays violence and schemes into rule of the town of Miasma Springs. A traveling con man calls on his brothers to help find their father's killer.

Each character is presented with a full body color portrait, history, description, stats including a complete 100-point build ladder, and five adventure hooks, one for each rank. The characters have ties together you can leverage whether they are allies or enemies.

In addition to the characters there is a teaser for each setting walking through some of the key aspects of the setting and the flavor of it. This includes a large piece of art and several detailed locations ripe for adventures and scenes.

## What Reviewers Are Saying

[Chris from FrugalGM.com](#) wrote, "What really makes this product stand out to me... is all this 'bonus content' that is barely hit upon in the product description on DriveThruRPG... Also bundled with each character are some new rules (new races, hindrances, settings rules, etc.)."

DriveThruRPG reviewer Shane R. noted, "It's easy to read and the layout and art is very nice. Overall I would compare this to Pathfinder's Codex of NPCs. Easily an above average product." Another echoed the Codex comment and offered, "It reads quickly, is well designed, and has some great characters for your games... If you want to find out how to write a well-done NPC book, this is the book to mimic."

**Editor's Note:** Coupled with *Gin, Gun Smoke, and Lies* in this issue, you have a great start to a Deadlands campaign.

# The Super Power Toy Box: Beyond Capes and Tights

Using the *Savage Worlds Super Powers Companion* to emulate genres beyond the super heroes.

By Sean Tait Bircher of Wine and Savages

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## OPENING THE TOY BOX

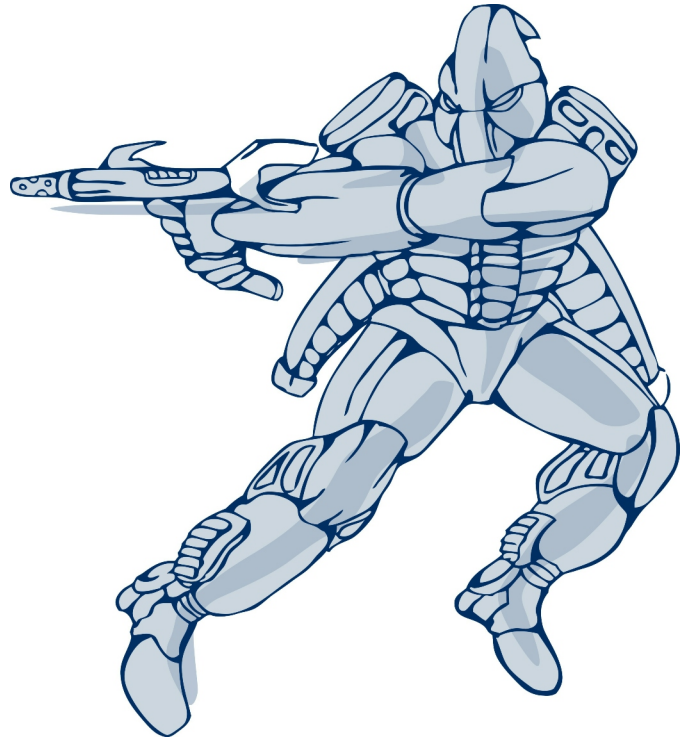
A key component of Savage Worlds is the use of trappings to distinguish mechanically indistinguishable abilities, such as describing the *bolt* power as either motes of fire or blue lightning depending on whether the caster is modeled on a *Dungeons & Dragons* wizard or a *Star Wars* Sith. Trappings can also be used to define genres or – in the case of the *Savage Worlds Super Powers Companion* – to transform one genre into another.

The powers delineated in the *Super Powers Companion* contain the building blocks of numerous genres, providing a veritable toy box of super-powered settings. What real difference is there between Superman and She-Ra’s super-strength, Batman and Snake-Eyes’ super-skills, or Dr. Strange and Twilight Sparkle’s super-sorcery? Are Bruce Banner’s ability to turn into the Hulk, Jerrica Benton’s disguise as Jem, and Optimus Prime’s transformation into a truck significantly dissimilar? It’s all just a matter of trappings, and those trappings create very different genres to play.

## MILITARY SPY-FI

### What It Is

“Spy-fi” is spy fiction that includes significant elements of science fiction, such as the mad scientist villains who threaten Emma Peel and John Steed in *The Avengers* or the doomsday weapons James Bond disarms time and again. Military spy-fi focuses on military or paramilitary organizations that take on similar sci-fi threats by deploying teams of agents armed with military-grade fighting vehicles. Examples include the live-action film *Megaforce*,



Marvel Comics’ earlier *Nick Fury: Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* series, the toy/cartoon franchise *M.A.S.K.*, and Hasbro’s long-running multimedia franchise, *G. I. Joe*.

*G.I. Joe* began as the first line of “action figures” – dolls intended for boys instead of girls – and started as a simple military series in 1964. Science fiction elements were introduced in 1975 with the cyborg soldier Mike Power, Atomic Man, and in 1982 the toy line broke out as the definitive military spy-fi series with the launch of the *G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero* toy line and Marvel Comics series.

With help from Marvel’s Larry Hama, an editor, martial artist, and veteran, Hasbro retooled the toy line. Adapting a pitch he created for a new S.H.I.E.L.D. series, the collaborative force revived the *G.I. Joe* franchise. A cartoon series launched in

1985 greatly increased the sci-fi aspects of the series, and the franchise has continued in various formats ever since.

*G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero* is the definitive military spy-fi franchise, and its tropes can be seen in part or in full in every other example of the subgenre. Servicemen or paramilitary agents – all of whom have their own distinctive codenames, specialties, and uniforms – battle against a criminal or terrorist organization that is led by colorful individuals who stop just short of being costumed super villains.

Organizations utilize bleeding-edge technology to arm fleets of experimental vehicles. Missions for heroes usually involve destroying the enemy's latest doomsday weapon or preventing them from stealing the technology to construct one. Ninjutsu and other martial arts are often involved. In most filmic treatments of the subgenre, heroes and villains miraculously survive gunfire and explosions, but the comic book antecedents of military spy-fi are far more lethal.

## How to Play It

**Recommended Power Levels:** Pulp Heroes, Street Fighters, and Four Color.

**Recommended Setting Rules:** Multiple Languages, Skill Specialization.

Military spy-fi can be emulated in *Savage Worlds* using only the core rules; in fact, Daring Entertainment's *G.E.T. Into Action* and Super Genius Games' *Strike Force 7* did just that. Doing so, however, requires concessions such as starting all characters at Seasoned or higher, complex equipment requisition rules, and expanding the system with new Edges. Using the *Super Powers Companion* allows heroes to begin at Novice and enjoy the full range of character advancement as well as allowing characters to be tweaked with personalized equipment and vehicles without adding an excess of new rules.

Most military spy-fi characters are going to double down on Super Attribute, Super Edge, and Super Skill, bringing them up to the level of most

campaigns' Veteran characters while giving them the room to grow and become more than their initial specialty as the campaign advances. Some will have more "super" powers, like Storm Shadow's "ear that sees" (*heightened senses*) or Crystal Ball's *mind control*. Some individuals will have signature Devices that represent experimental technology that only they are trained to use.

Military spy-fi campaigns feature a lot of vehicular combat. While the *Super Powers Companion* and *Savage Worlds Deluxe* both feature military-style vehicles that would be welcome in a military spy-fi campaign, there is little guidance to how heroes might acquire such vehicles. Given the association of specific vehicles with specific team members in the toy lines and comics that form the true canon of military spy-fi, GMs might consider a new power.

### Vehicle [2/Level]

**Trappings:** experimental military tech, billionaire industrialist's secret pet project.

Your hero has either invented or been granted exclusive control of a super-powered vehicle. Depending on the type of vehicle, a character must have a minimum Boating, Driving, or Piloting skill of d10. The character must also have the Ace Edge; experimental vehicles only belong in the hands of experts.

This power is similar to *invent* (other heroes using the vehicle make their rolls at -2, etc.), save that it allows multiple powers to be combined into one vehicle. Because vehicles are severely restricted in their use, the Power Points spent on *vehicle* are doubled when purchasing powers for the vehicle. Individual powers within the vehicle may be Switchable (such as switching out between guns and missiles) and the entire vehicle can also be Switchable (allowing a grim vigilante to switch between a custom car and a custom boat in his pursuit of justice).

### Modifiers

- **Co-Pilot (+2):** The vehicle has at least one station that allows another character to take over

## GAME PREP

one of the activities associated with controlling the vehicle. It may be a gunner's turret that allows another hero to make Shooting rolls or a communications station where someone else can use their Notice skill with the ship's sensors. Every time this modifier is purchased, it adds another co-pilot.

- **Passengers (+1):** The vehicle can carry additional passengers. Every Power Point spent on Passengers doubles the number of passengers allowed (1 at 1 Power Point, 2 at 2 Power Points, 4 at 3 Power Points, etc.).

### Example:

Flygirl is the jet combat expert for the Domestic and Overseas Vehicular Engagement team (D.O.V.E.). Her vehicle of choice is the XP-69 Pegasus jet fighter.

Taking the F-15 Eagle from the core rules as an example, we see that the jet should have a top speed of at least 700", Toughness of 16 (4), Climb of 4, Night Vision, and Heavy Weapons capable of doing 5d8 damage. Flight with Super Sonic Speed and Climb of 4 cost 20 Power Points, Toughness costs 12, and armor costs 8 (4 for the armor and 4 to make it Heavy Armor), heightened senses (Infravision and Low Light Vision) cost 2 points, and Attack (ranged) costs 18 Power Points (5 dice of damage, Enhanced Damage, Range +4, Heavy Weapon, and Lethal). This would normally cost 60 Power Points – requiring Flygirl to be a Heavy Hitter and not giving her a lot of points to spend on anything else – but the half cost for vehicle means she can be built as a far more reasonable Street Fighter or Four Color hero.

Few of the villains presented in the *Super Powers Companion* Rogues Gallery lend themselves to a military spy-fi campaign, but there are those few. Arrowhead, the Black Samurai, Chainsaw, the Controller, Gladius, Grenadier, Huntsman, Ninja, Snoop, the Spider, and even Striptease fit in with the gimmicky aspect of COBRA operatives like Destro and Zartan. Combine these villains with the generic soldiers and high-tech vehicles in the book, and an

army of criminal terrorists stands ready to enact mad plans of world domination.

## SWORDS AND SUPER-SORCERY

### What It Is

The early 1980s saw an explosion of works that combined tropes from fantasy, science fiction, and super heroes into a distinct, vibrant aesthetic. Indebted to the sci-fi and swashbuckling of sword and planet classics like Alex Raymond's *Flash Gordon*, but combined with the overt muscularity of Frank Frazetta and Jack Kirby, swords and super-sorcery features brawny heroes battling necromancers and robots against a backdrop of alien and bizarre worlds.

Answering the question "What if Conan the Barbarian had a lightsaber and hung out in the post-apocalypse with Chewbacca?" Ruby-Spears Productions' *Thundarr the Barbarian* began the swords and super-sorcery onslaught in 1980. Featuring character designs by animation and comic book legends Alex Toth and Jack Kirby, *Thundarr the Barbarian* inspired the imagination of children and competitors. It continues to inspire such RPG adaptations as Jerrod "Savage Daddy" Gunning's *Savage Worlds* take, Tim Snider's *Mutant Future* version at The Savage AfterWorld, and Expeditious Retreat Press' *Sorcery and Super-Science*.

Rival animation studio Filmation answered Ruby-Spears' challenge with *Blackstar* (the story of an Earth astronaut with a magic sword fighting evil on a fantastical world) and then the two most successful, most definitive swords and super-sorcery series: *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* and *She-Ra: Princess of Power* (about separated twins born to an Earth astronaut turned queen; each sibling fought evil on a different fantastical world with a different magical sword).

Later in the decade, films like *Krull* and *Metalstorm: The Destruction of Jared-Syn* took swords and super-sorcery into live action, while animators Rankin-Bass put an anthropomorphic spin



on the genre with *ThunderCats* by asking “What if King Arthur was a naïve lion-man with a Bat-signal in his sword who fought a mummy?” The genre continues to live on today through revivals of older properties and newer, even more gonzo examples like *Adventure Time* and the RPG, *Exalted*.

## How to Play It

**Recommended Power Levels:** Four Color, Heavy Hitters, and Cosmic.

Adapting swords and super-science to use with the *Super Powers Companion* is simple. Most characters in the genre are nearly identical to super heroes in terms of mechanics. Whether they’re the freakish, Jack Kirby-designed wizards of *Thundarr* or titular Masters of the Universe like the aquatic Mer-Man or flying Stratos, swords and super-science characters tend to have unique, gimmicky powers that define them just as much as wall-crawling defines Spider-Man and his hammer defines Thor.

Numerous super villains presented in the book could be adapted to the genre with only a few cosmetic changes. Villains with on-the-nose monikers like Arrowhead and Lycanthropus don’t even need a change in name, while others like Grapple and Beachhead might become “Grapplor” and “Sand-Man” to be more like classic genre names. The main change is eliminating their back stories as humans transformed by science, and simply accepting them as manifestations of the strangeness of the world.

Imagine a world where the *Super Powers Companion*’s cosmic level villain Asmodeus doesn’t rule a distant alternate dimension, but instead the kingdom next door. Perhaps the moon is locked in geostationary orbit, blanketing half the planet in perpetual darkness relieved only by moonlight. The villains of the Rogues Gallery become his mutant servitors, venturing forth to the bright side of the planet to seek out ancient magic or scientific discoveries that will allow Asmodeus to cover the whole world in unending night. The heroes in turn are the Guardians of the Light, watching the world from their floating sky castle, keeping the peace between

humans and mutants, and thwarting Asmodeus’ incursions.

## TRANSFORMING ROBOTS

### What It Is

An eternal war rages in the depths of space and on our own city streets. Alien robots capable of changing their shape disguise themselves on Earth as ordinary vehicles and machines while they seek allies, energy sources, or perhaps a lost artifact that will tip the balance in the age-old civil war that tears their planet asunder. Some of the robots are heroes, others are villains, and all of them are strangely human.

The transforming robot genre is, ultimately, the story of one franchise: Hasbro’s *Transformers*. While Tonka’s *GoBots* was rushed to market quicker, it and other, far less successful knock-offs have been unable to overthrow the definitive transforming robot franchise. It even got folded into the Hasbro family when the company purchased Tonka.

After licensing toy molds from Japanese manufacturer Takara, Hasbro again turned to Marvel Comics to help shape the fiction behind the figures. Comics legends Jim Shooter and Dennis O’Neil oversaw initial development of the story, with the multi-talented Bob Budiansky creating the characterizations for most of the robots. The toys, comic, and cartoon launched in 1984 and the franchise continues to dominate at the box office and in toy aisles to this day.

Like military spy-fi and swords and super-science, adventures are usually based around a competition between the factions for control of a McGuffin that will upset the balance of power between the good and bad robots. The robots themselves have personalities as rounded as any human’s, leaving room for political struggles between leaders of the factions, bonding with allies both robot and human, and even explorations of the horrors of war (something the recent *Transformers* comics by IDW have excelled in). Practically any military or espionage scenario could be adapted to star transforming robots.



## How to Play It

**Recommended Power Levels:** Heavy Hitters or Cosmic

**Recommended Setting Rules:** Gritty Damage (transforming robots often get ripped to shreds).

*G.E.T. Into Action!* by Daring Entertainment features a plotline positing transforming robot aliens as secret participants in the war between G.E.T. and STORM, but otherwise the concept has received little attention in published settings and supplements.

There are few pre-built characters in the *Super Powers Companion*'s Rogue's Gallery that convert into giant robots. Thankfully, building transforming robots with the companion is as easy as creating swords and super-science characters. In the end,

transforming robots are essentially *construct* super heroes with Switchable powers.

Since most change into vehicles, the first step is to build a character large enough to assume the form desired. This means *growth* is going to be one of the key powers needed for most transforming robots (though those that change into cassette tapes will need *shrink*). Thankfully, a T-Rex, which is arguably about the same size as a semi-truck, is only Size +7, so most transforming robots won't have to exceed the power limit rule to be large enough to pose as anything the size of a sports car or a big rig.

Other powers will have far more flexibility. Abilities central to a robot's vehicle form – such as vehicular levels of *speed* or *flight* – can be Switchable powers, alternating with the weapon capabilities of their robot forms. The Slow to Activate modifier can



add a “transformation sequence” effect to play. Most transforming robots will want some points in attack, melee and attack, missile. Car-sized robots especially should still have some points left over for unusual abilities that allow them to stay distinct from one another.

## Example Character:

### Automatix Rex (Heavy Hitter)

“1.25 million traffic-related deaths a year isn’t an accident. It’s just the beginning.” – Automatix Rex

Automatix Rex is leader of the Crashers, a destructive faction of Transmogroids from Earth’s future. The Crashers have traveled back to the past to ensure that the year 2354 is still rich in fossil fuels, which they plan to achieve by triggering a planet-wide extinction-level catastrophe.

Rex leads his followers like a mad messiah, promising them a return to a future filled with bounteous fuel. He is no fool, though. Automatix Rex knows the time paradox inherent in his plan will destroy the future the Crashers seek to protect; he plans to instead rule the wasteland afterworld as its undisputed king.

Automatix Rex disguises himself as a foreboding black semi-truck, his smokestacks belching thick smoke as he tears down the highway. Those smokestacks become white-hot flamethrowers when he assumes his robot form; his armored visage resembles a terrifying black knight, the living steel of his body a complex, constantly-moving mass of writhing gears and cables. He can manifest swords and guns from his arms with but a moment’s notice.

### Automatix Rex

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Repair d4, Stealth d6, Shooting d8, Taunt d6

**Charisma:** -4 **Pace:** 6 (humanoid form)/48 (truck form) **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 20 (4)

**Hindrances:** Mean, Monologuer, Ruthless [Major], Stubborn

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Super Powers), Command, Danger Sense, Strong Willed

### Super Powers:

- **Armor (8):** Heavy Armor.
- **Attack, Melee (11):** Damage Str+4d6, Heavy Weapon, Reach, Slow to Activate, Switchable.
- **Attack, Missile (11):** Damage 4d6, Range 12/24/48, AP 1, Heavy Weapon, Slow to Activate, Switchable.
- **Construct (8).**
- **Growth +7 (20):** Big Fists, Monster.
- **Speed (11):** Pace 48 (120 mph), -2 to hit, Slow to Activate, Switchable.
- **Super Attribute (20):** Strength +5, Vigor +5.
- **Super Skill:** +1 Intimidation, +1 Shooting.
- **Toughness (1).**

## OTHER TOYS IN THE BOX

There are plenty of other genres that can be emulated with the *Super Powers Companion* (or just made a little more super). Most of the solo heroes of classic adventure literature are effectively superheroic, so running a single player campaign with a barbarian or spy beefed up with some Super Attributes or Super Skills isn’t so strange. The cartoonish physics of adventure cartoons like *Jonny Quest* or *Lupin III* is easily emulated with super powers. There’s been talk from time to time of making an anime powers companion, but shonen fighting tournament anime like *Dragonball Z* and *Bleach* are essentially just super hero shows without the crime-fighting. The unusual abilities of the Mane Six on *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic* are super powers (Applejack has super strength, Fluttershy has *animal control*) and the ponies’ ability to manipulate objects means one doesn’t even need a rule to cover the fact that they don’t have hands.

The *Super Powers Companion* is the perfect tool to emulate practically any genre. You just have to think outside the box.

# Becoming a Threat

A Look Through the Eyes of the Enemy at the PCs' Rise to Fame and Power

*With great power comes great responsibility. --Attributed to multiple entities and in various phrasings, including Voltaire, Uncle Ben (from Spider-Man), Theodore Roosevelt, William Lamb, and even the Christian Bible's Gospel of Luke.*

Juarez climbed the concrete stairs and passed through the upper floors of City Hall, listening to his knee pop every other step. It was insane that the elevator stopped two stories before the stupid observation level.

The circular viewing area was empty. He let his eyes adjust to the change in lighting. Every incandescent bulb downtown contributed to an overwhelming glare in this eagle's perch overlooking the city. Juarez heard Squido before he saw him on the outside balcony.

Juarez opened the door and the humid wave of air smacked him in the face. "But what are you going to do about our problem?" Squido was barking at the boss, a tall skeletal man who thought it was cool to paint his face as if every day was Dia del Muerto. Juarez couldn't see what colors and designs the boss man, known as Carnival King, had chosen to decorate himself with tonight. His back was to Juarez and Squido's face turned towards the buildings sprawled out before him. Juarez, the Carnival's self-described money choreographer, wiped the sweat from his eyes. In the half second it took to accomplish this, several things transpired.

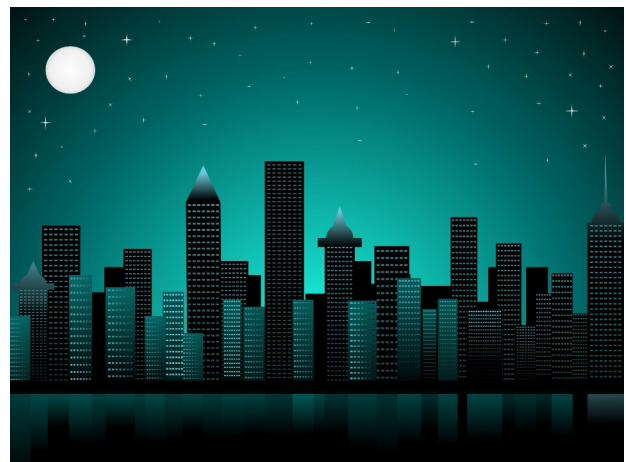
First, Squido made the mistake of using one of his eight cybernetic arms to grab the Carnival King by the shoulder. Before the cybernetic fingers closed on the colorful jacket, McManus sprang from the shadows. He lifted Squido by the scruff of the neck and puffed smoke from his pipe into Squido's face. Squido sputtered as he dangled over the balcony's edge.

"That wasn't very respectful now, was it?"

McManus whispered. He was the type of man who refused to speak in a voice where anyone further than six inches away could catch a word.

The Carnival King removed a paint set from his brief case. He meticulously selected a paint color and brush, then applied a pattern to Squido's face. "Now that you're ready to listen, Squido," he began, "I'll tell you everything you need to know. The problem's being handled. It's regrettable your operation suffered setbacks. But that happens with every enterprise worth its weight. Go back. Rebuild. Those who served you well and survived... promote them. Give them more responsibility. Some good has come from this. You now know who your most valuable assets are. Reward them, and you'll be stronger than ever. We will all be stronger."

The Carnival King dabbed his brush in a bottle of water. The paint swirled around in the clear liquid. The Carnival King put away his art supplies and turned to leave. McManus tossed Squido against the observation tower window. The eight-armed felon bounced off it and allowed himself to slump to the ground, happy to not be splattered on the street below.



Evil organizations, whether mob, super villain, or spy-based, are organic structures. They never remain static. They're always morphing and evolving, responding to challenges and victories. The valuable assets gain more responsibility and power. Ambitious power players cling to the current leadership or take steps to create their own syndicate, or even remove the current leaders from power.

Most significant, the player characters strike and pound the crime syndicate, in hopes of bringing it down. They kill off lower level enforcers. They prove the resourcefulness and mettle of others in the outfit, helping to create these surprisingly resourceful characters' legends and secure their rise to power.

The PCs strike at the visible layers of the organization, trying to make their way to the hidden inner circle. As the lower level management suffers losses, the effectiveness of upper management may be called into question, or the street level enforcers may become united by the threat, pulling together to defend their bosses and brothers against the vigilantes.

The more pressure the PCs put on the organization, the more likely the boss will be betrayed by those who question his tactics. The boss might consider the PCs to be far beneath him, an itch easily scratched, whereas other highly placed players in the syndicate might consider the PCs a serious threat they should throw everything at. Other characters in the evil group might respect the PCs and want to seduce them into joining the organization... or start a new group to rival the current crime lord. It's not unheard of for a criminal mastermind to become attracted to one of the vigilantes he spends considerable time plotting against.

By no means should the GM know the life story of every minion in the evil organization. Most minions are one-shot kills. However, a mook who somehow manages to repeatedly ace his damage dice is a cut above the rest. Yes, it was luck that a particular minion outshone his bosses. However, should he survive the fight, once the dice have been rolled to

determine incapacitation versus death, then he should return as a Wild Card. Word of this character's prowess spreads. The GM assigns him a name. Yeah, the character always had a name, but none in the organization's power structure had bothered to learn it. Now, they want to know this valuable employee's moniker. They might even give him a nickname. These unexpected crime starlets are given more responsibility. Not only will they eventually return as pimped-out killing machines with their own minions, a cool nickname, and neat gear, these recurring enemies carry a major grudge (Hindrance: Vow: Kill the PCs).

When creating organic evil organizations, GMs might consider several things, including:

- avoiding the "cut the head off the serpent" scenario
- tracking the movers and shakers of the organization
- tracking the attitudes of the organization's leaders toward the PCs
- rolling with surprises triggered by the Adventure Deck.

First, creating only one or two faces for your syndicate results in a setup where the heroes can target the few competent leaders to kill off the entire organization. This works like standard Batman adventures, where Batman only has to defeat the Joker, Catwoman, or the Riddler in order to neutralize the entire troublesome crime syndicate. The minions and nameless lieutenants scatter after their leader dies or gets arrested, seeking employment with another semi-competent crime lord. These organizations are good for short games but lack the depth for pulling off a longer form campaign.

Longer campaigns require a setup more like *Marvel's Daredevil*, where Fisk's organization has many layers that Daredevil needs to work his way through just to be able to identify the kingpin. Each of Fisk's lieutenants are capable Wild Card villains on their own. Based on the tactics Daredevil takes to

## GAME PREP

penetrate the organization's layers, the different crime bosses respond based on their alliances, fears, and motives (Hindrances).

It's also more of a realistic business model to delegate an organization's duties through a bureaucratic hierarchy. Few know the entire layout of the group and can damage it if caught and interrogated. The top dog can focus on the big picture and remain out of the PCs' gun scopes until the campaign's conclusion. Few things are as unsatisfying as the PCs accidentally getting to the BBEG in the first session and bringing him down. Never put a character in a scene unless you can chance him being killed off by the heroes.

In the opening Carnival narrative, we met the Carnival King, who serves as the top of the organization's pyramid. Juarez is the man who hides the group's money through investments, false business fronts, and laundering. He doesn't seem to respect Squido, who's a street level boss. Squido has cybernetic arms and kidnaps people to be sold abroad as slaves. Before the narrative's scene, Squido clashed with the PCs and is now bitter that Carnival King hadn't taken steps to eliminate the vigilantes before they got to him.

Next, the GM needs to establish strong upper and middle levels of the evil organization's management. These should not be faceless mooks. You want ambitious, business-minded leaders, heroes of their own stories. They want to secure higher degrees of power and wealth. They might scheme and eventually make power plays against their bosses, should the opportunity present itself. They come from different backgrounds, entering the syndicate from white collar crime, commando operations in war zones around the globe, or by dealing drugs. They have gained a lot

over the course of their journey and lost even more. Friends got captured, killed, or proved disloyal and needed to be eliminated.

The lieutenants' families were targeted. Friends were driven away or turned their backs on our crime lords-in-training. Maybe these bad guys had good-hearted intentions in the beginning but lost sight of their ideals. Maybe they're working their way up the ladder to get the clout required to get revenge against someone powerful who dealt them or their family a grievous blow.

All these things are Hindrances, not really the kind that grant mechanical consequences. These



Hindrances tell us about the Wild Cards' non-heroic journeys. GMs need to monitor how the individual lieutenants' schemes are developing, how their relationships with their business partners are evolving. Are they being respectful to their bosses, or are they asking to be given a pair of cement shoes? Do they get along with some of the lieutenants better than others? Do they have a past with one another? Perhaps

they rose up the ranks in similar ways and developed respect towards one another over time. Or perhaps they're all smiles face-to-face but are secretly amassing blackmail material on each other.

How will these characters respond if the people they're tight with are killed off by the bosses or the PCs? Will the surviving lieutenants want revenge or be glad their co-workers were killed and take advantage of the vacancies?

Most important, which of the crime lords' other subordinates do they most trust and why? Have they selected a minion to become an apprentice? Who is important in their lives, and how much do the loved

ones know about what the crime lords do for a living? Do they even care? Are they power hungry themselves, like Lady MacBeth? How will they respond if the PCs kill or maim their beloved? What strings can those left behind pull? Can they get the cops to arrest the PCs on some trumped up or legit charge? Do they have a relative who's a soldier or boxer, capable of ambushing and roughing up one of the PCs when he's away from the group?

At first, this seems like a lot of work, developing groups of developed villains and managing their individual story arcs. It isn't. You only need to come up with the characters as they are at the onset of the campaign. Have the kingpin, his three main lieutenants, and a henchman for each of those. Determine the motivations and goals (Hindrances) for the lieutenants, plus their starting attitudes concerning one another. Figure out how far along their individual goals and schemes have advanced. Determine who or what these guys care about and who cares about them. Everyone loves something. Know who these loved ones are and what their resources are.

From there, let the PCs start impacting the structure. Everyone the PCs go after is respected or hated by others. A power vacuum forms. Those left behind respond. Pressure starts building up as the PCs become an increasing threat. The GM needs to simply use what he knows about the characters to allow the organization's movers and shakers to respond in character to the developments. A common GM piece of advice is "Let the players play." I advise "Let the characters be themselves."

As GM, you invested time into creating well-rounded NPCs. You'll instinctively know how they'll respond to different stimuli and how the whole tangle of relationships and goals becomes altered. Some bad guys will be captured or killed. Others will take their places, having established themselves as resourceful if not lucky.

Carnival King's favored associate is pipe-smoking McManus. We know he's very fast and protective of his boss. The GM of this campaign should know the

history between Carnival King and McManus. They could go way back, having played Little League together. They were both kept on the bench while the more popular kids got to play. Together they dug up dirt on the popular kids and leaked it to the coach. McManus and the future Carnival King found themselves getting to play more innings.

We don't know about Juarez and Squido's most-trusted associates. Juarez could be hobnobbing with a martini-chugging, *Mad Man* knockoff character who always knows a guy who can help with any business problem, legal or illegal. He could be a character who appears in one of the *Savage Tales*, not as a villain but a source. He might take an interest in the PCs, hiring them himself for various jobs (*Savage Tales*), to keep an eye on their activities.

Squido might have a daughter he worries will get caught in the crossfire. He sent her away to college. She thinks her father doesn't respect her because she's a woman. So, the daughter dyes her hair, puts on a costume, and joins her father's organization as a minion. How will her father react when he learns his daughter's been getting shot at... or killed? What if she develops a relationship with one of the PCs and later learns about his role as a crime fighter? Who will she be loyal to? Who will she betray? Someone's going to get hurt in the end.

Next, monitor the key players' attitudes towards the PCs. Maybe at first they think the PCs are insects to be crushed or that they'll make a mistake and get themselves killed. Maybe the lieutenants will tap resources in order to make life difficult for the PCs, if not trap and harm them. A crafty crime lord will research the enemy and find who the PCs care about, then apply pressure to those targets. Perhaps crime lords with higher aspirations will scheme how to use the PCs to topple their enemies within the organization, creating a vacancy they can take advantage of.

A select few with designs to start their own syndicate might recognize how talented the PCs are and reach out to them to "join me, and we can bring

## GAME PREP

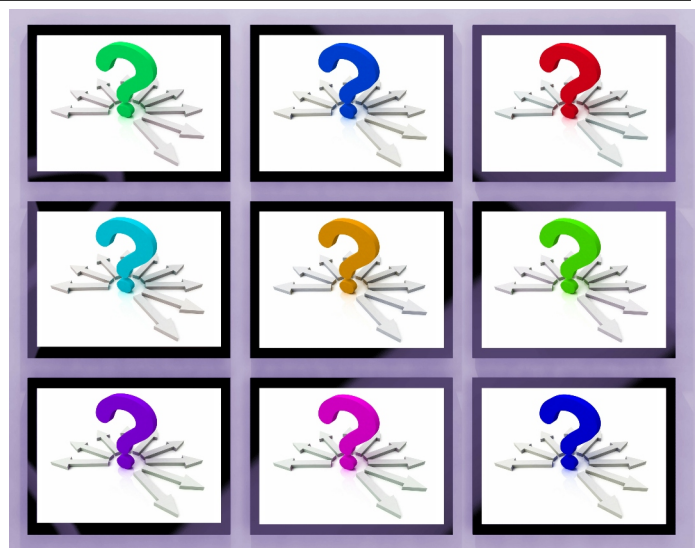
order to this city together.” Sending agents to research the PCs, perhaps hiring them for small Savage Tale plots, enables them to learn which PCs are weak links, feeling under appreciated by their teammates. Those can usually be buttered up and seduced to the other side.

Squido got beat up by the PCs and wants them destroyed immediately. Carnival King is monitoring the vigilantes’ activities, using them as a test of his organization’s loyalties and strength. After they’ve outlasted their usefulness, he’ll order his agents to destroy the PCs. Juarez remains silent on the subject. He might be interested in tipping off the PCs about the location of one of Carnival King’s bases of operations. If the vigilantes trash the place hours after Juarez removes stashed money and other resources from the premises, it looks like the vigilantes took the money, drugs, and guns. The PCs serve as pawns in the money choreographer’s schemes.

For a long time, I was a GM who had to map out the evolution of every plotline, with contingencies of contingencies. I was afraid of being caught out, surprised by the players breaking the modules. Since then, I regard my role as GM as arbitrary, not all-knowing. I believe the GM has the best seat in the house for watching the story the players tell unfold.

It’s great to be surprised by the twists and turns created by the players’ choices. The sense of the GM having control over everything is a necessary facade but still only an illusion. I love it when the group takes the story in a wildly unprecedented direction. I’ve become confident enough in my abilities as a storyteller, and the simplicity of the Savage Worlds mechanics, to be able to go with it, enjoy the show, and ask for checks when necessary.

Perhaps the coolest tool Savage Worlds offers for daring the players to bust a carefully crafted module is the Adventure Deck. Not only does it allow resources for a PC to take out a T-Rex with a single punch, but it offers plot-bending options. Many of these can be taken advantage of to help evolve the GM’s evil organization.



Some cards might alter the perception of the enemy in the community. Cards like *Angry Mob* and *Reinforcements* can be used to have the local populace support the crime lord and come to his defense. This can affect the campaign beyond the encounter. Other neighborhoods might pledge allegiance to criminal organization, in whole or in part. Maybe people who were about to lose their homes became flush with cash after the crime lord came to town, and now the neighborhood’s thriving. Crime provided when capitalism and government failed. When the PCs hurt these civilians, public perception will be increasingly negative toward the heroes.

Other cards might alter the stats or the motivations of low level enforcers. *Enemy* can be used to create a back story for a talented upstart who was done wrong by the PCs in a previous session. Perhaps his family got caught in the crossfire in a fight involving the vigilantes. A loved one was shot. Her house was damaged or burned. A beloved car was smashed. During a Savage Tale, when the PCs thwarted the one-shot villain, that could have been the uncle or friend of the talented minion who’s sworn to bring down the PCs.

*Contact* can be used to create a distant link to the syndicate, someone who knows someone on the periphery of the organization. Once the ancillary member of the syndicate’s tracked down, the loyal

accessory will defend himself against the vigilantes. However, after pinning him or using the *Peace* card, he can be conversed with in a more civilized manner.

The *Turncoat* card can make him very useful to the PCs. In *Daredevil*, the man who makes Fisk's armored coats has a dramatic battle with Daredevil. After being defeated and then promised that Daredevil will make sure Fisk will never be able to harm his beloved, the craftsman agrees to make Daredevil his iconic armored costume. As GM, you had no idea who the dude who made Fisk's armor was. Through the usage of some Adventure cards and clever investigation, new and interesting ancillary characters got added to the campaign.

Finally, there's *Uh-Oh*. In a spy, super hero, or noir tale, how do you change a thug into two sizes larger with increased strength? He could be piloting a suit resembling mech armor. He could be riding a large beast that attacks at his command. Simply, he could be driving a heavily armored truck designed for slamming into people.

Previously in the campaign, there'd been no mention of the Battering Ram Van nor the crime lord's crude mech armor project, but the players used a card that required the GM to get creative and put it in the story. Now, there are more issues, like figuring out who's making those suits, how many more there are, and how the PCs can get their hands on these wonderful toys. In a campaign where the PCs are Hydra agents, Iron Man's remote minions could result from the use of the *Uh-Oh* card, since they expand the degree of Tony Stark's effectiveness.

A player in the Carnival campaign plays the *Uh-Oh* card before a fight between the PCs and Squido's gang. Squido emerges from his hideout, monstrously enhanced. The twenty foot tall crime lord's powered by massive hydraulics, his cybernetic limbs each the size of a bus. Uh-oh, indeed!

Garrett Crowe is the host-producer of the *Threats From Gallifrey* and *Threat Detected* podcasts. He's working on material for Modiphius's *Achtung! Cthulhu* line.

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## TUNSE'AL

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Obatron Productions' Robert and Vickey Beaver share a preview of *Retribution Setting Guide*, [launching on Kickstarter](#) August 24, 2015.

### Designer's Description

*Retribution* is a supernatural take on traditional fantasy where your characters may find their purposes aligned with those of the dead, or they may well be the next targets for the dead's wrath.

### Stand-Alone?

As with any licensed setting, you do need a *Savage Worlds* rule book. Besides that and *Retribution Setting Guide*, it doesn't require anything else. However, *Fantasy Companion* would be a great complement as would additional material released subsequent to the setting guide.

### What's It For?

*Retribution Setting Guide* gives you world background, current affairs, races, Edges, Hindrances, and anything else you need to start a game in whatever format you prefer.

### How Does *Retribution* Stand Out?

The supernatural is often present in fantasy settings and here we've highlighted it. The focus is on dealing with all manner of what - even to the elves, dwarves, humans, orcs, and gnomes - is not found naturally in the world.

The most frequent examples of the supernatural are spirits from other realms, ghosts of those who once lived amongst those of the world the characters know, those who have been summoned from elsewhere, and the once-dead who have been commanded to do the bidding of another or who have found a way to cheat death.

One situation that is unusual to find in other games is the possibility of PCs dying in a session and returning in spirit form. GMs who want to work with such a scenario immediately could even opt to allow a player to create a spirit PC to begin with, although that would work best with experienced groups.

Because combat may occur physically and metaphysically, besides Parry, there is also Spiritual Parry, and besides Toughness, there is Mental Toughness. Likewise, there are spiritual wounds, which affect an individual differently from physical wounds.



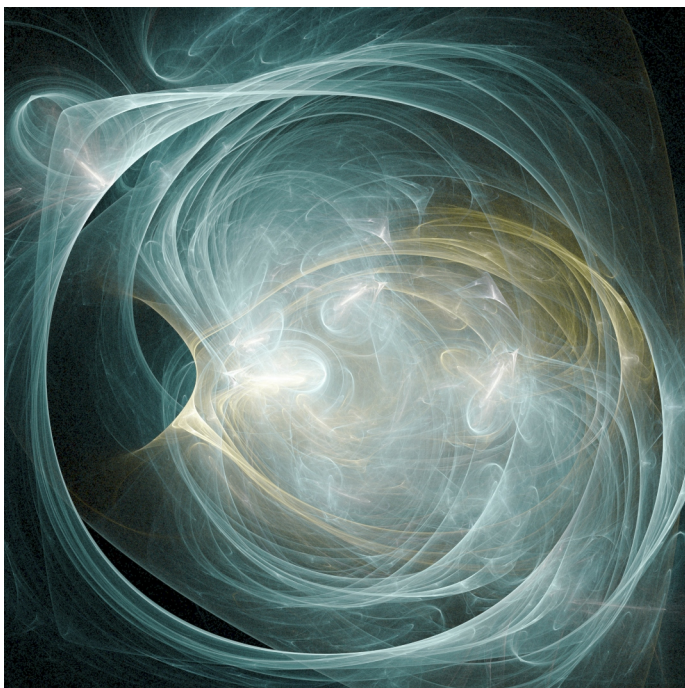
## What Else Do You Want Us to Know?

It offers a new setting with a familiar feel. No matter how much fantasy material is released, while there are some who have had plenty of it, the undeniable reality is that gamers continue to seek out more.

*Retribution Setting Guide* is focused on Agador, a previously uninhabited island more than 150 years prior to when game play takes place. Having become a mecca for merchants, adventurers, and scholars, the population grew large enough for the place to become a nation unto itself. Trade between Agador and faraway lands became the norm.

Such prosperity drew the least savory of peoples: pirates. Whispers of the need for strong leadership and better laws carried from one town to the next. Half-truths turned friends against each other. Factions developed, creating lines that would not be uncrossed and heightened tensions that pitted village against village.

Open war broke out with each side seeking the advantage. Leaders escalated the conflict, hiring mages to lob magical devastation at opposing sides. It was not long before the released energies exposed a truth none had known: Agador sits beneath a delicately thin expanse of the barrier between the spirit realm and that of its physical realm.



The exhaustive use of great, destructive magics opened a vortex above the island, bridging the two realms. Spirits from all ages, all peoples, and all beings poured forth. Some were angry in their deaths, some continued a long forgotten war, and some just sought loved ones. This event altered the course of the war in Agador, for then there was a common enemy, but one that would prove difficult to expel.

The Spirit War lasted 50 years and largely united the peoples of Agador. The majority of the malevolent spirits were expelled from the physical realm. The impact on the peoples was devastating; thousands upon thousands died, many towns were decimated, and the land has not yet healed.

A swirling Vortex hangs over Agador like a giant storm. Largely invisible, its presence can be felt, and on clear days you can see a vague outline of it. On stormy days, there is no denying its visage and spiritual activity increases. Spirits and other beings continue to slip through the barrier, sometimes in much larger numbers than at others.

## Examples of *Retribution* Characters



### Amina (Spirit)

In life, Amina was a cleric from a village north of Hiddenwater, a major city on Agador's southern coast. She died at the hands of an unknown assailant during The Spirit War. Although she sought to be at peace in the great everafter, her family attempted to speak to here through the veil.

A botched ritual trapped her. For more than four decades, she has aligned herself with those who garner her attention. One day, she hopes to solve her own murder and finally find her way to whatever realm she was destined upon her death.

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

**Skills:** Alienist d6, Fighting d6, Healing d8, Knowledge (Nature) d4, Knowledge (Religion) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6

# PRODUCT PREVIEW

Pace 6 Parry 5 Spiritual Parry 5 Toughness 5  
Mental Toughness 6 Charisma -2

## Racial Abilities

- **Ghostly** – Spirits are immaterial and can only be harmed by magic weapons and supernatural attacks. They cannot touch physical objects, however, they can telekinetically throw small objects (up to 1xSTR in weight) for a physical attack (str+d4 damage).
- **Fear -2** – Cause fear checks at -2, does not apply to other spirits
- **Outsider** – Because of their nature, they suffer a -2 Charisma when interacting with non-spirits
- **Low Light Vision** – ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting
- **Prone to Groan** – A Spirit roll must be made or the spirit makes a loud groan. This can be bought off by spending an Advance.

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor, Loyal, Outsider, Pacifist, Prone to Groan

**Edges:** Arcane Cleric (Gain Arcane Background: Miracles)

**Arcane Drawbacks:** Protector (violation of beliefs incurs -2 on Faith rolls)

**Arcane Powers (10 Points):** Bless Weapon (Cost: 1, Range: Touch, Dur/Maint: 3/(1/round), Trappings: Laying on Hands; target weapon gains +2 damage, +4 with a raise), Spiritual Healing (Cost: 3, Range: Touch, Dur/Maint: Instant, Trappings: Laying on Hands; heal wounds within one hour (two with a raise); cure poison and disease within 10 minutes)

**Gear:** Mace (**Damage:** Str+d4, AP 1)



## Caro (Half-Orc)

Caro was born to a human father and orc mother. The family traveled much of his early life, finally settling in the outskirts of Hartswater, one of the first Agador cities. The family earned an honest living investigating battle sites and the destruction left by The Spirit War.

His parents were lost to a spirit attack when the trio was exploring one of the buried ruins. Trapped beneath the shifted rubble, he was harried by spiders for three days before rescue came. After weeks of recovery from their bites, Caro started a new life, learning what he needed from the streets to keep fed, clothed, and entertained.

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

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Gambling d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Throwing d6

Pace 6 Parry 2 Spiritual Parry 5 Toughness 5  
(1) Mental Toughness 5 Charisma -2

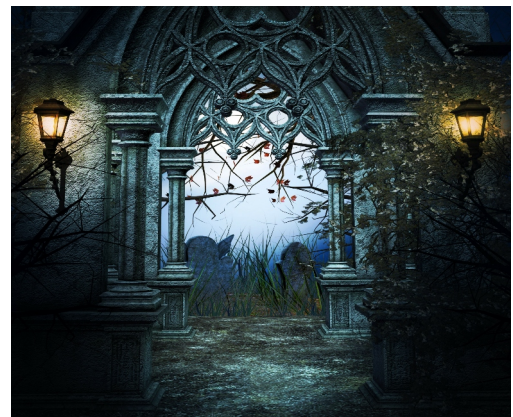
## Racial Abilities

- **Infravision:** Orcs have infravision, making it difficult to hide from
- **Outsider:** Orcs are naturally feared because of their warlike nature, -2 Charisma from other races
- **Strong:** Orcs start with a d6 in Strength

**Hindrances:** Curious, Loyal, Phobia (Spiders)

**Edges:** Alertness

**Gear:** Knife (**Damage:** Str+d4, **Range:** 3/6/12, **RoF:** 1)



# Tide Turner

By Vickey A. Beaver

In mass battles, the war is not won by a single conflict, but by the collective fight. Morale is imperative. When all seems lost, the Tide Turner may save the day.

## What It Does

The Tide Turner is not an individual object. It is a combination of a release mechanism and balls encapsulating any of a number of substances or energies meant to be lobbed at a group or released covertly. Its purpose can be anything from buying time to annihilating forces. The delivery method might be a catapult, plane, or robotic device.

## Possible Set-Ups

Tide Turners can be secretly stowed to engage at a pre-determined time or deploy as needed during action.

## Indoors

In a low technology game, the balls could be released through a hole that has been drilled at an angle into a council or king's wall. In a modern game, perhaps the balls are hidden within a mouse-like robot that can be remotely controlled, releasing its tiny cargo under the door to an important meeting. In science fiction games, maybe there's an alien artifact that is smuggled onboard the enemy commander's ship; it'll spew the balls when it thaws to a certain temperature or is opened by hand.

## Outdoors

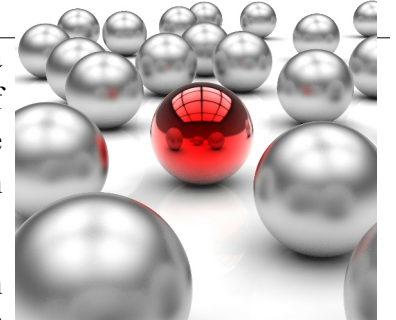
Regardless of technology level, the outdoors can feature tripwires that release the balls, which then explode upon impact. Or they can be launched from a safe distance by way of a trebuchet. Perhaps they've been dropped from above by bird or plane. Maybe they've been disguised as berries that are either trounced upon by foot soldiers or picked for snacks.

## Tide Turner Substances

Whatever form they take and whatever delivery mechanism is used, Tide Turners are meant to take out multiple targets with fairly immediate results. Some examples would work in nearly any genre; others are more limited.

## Physical Harm

Each ball disperses a vaporous dose of deadly poison. Use the Savage Worlds Poison Effects Table.



Each ball has been shielded so that the radioactive material within is undetectable. Once exposed, those affected are subject to the Savage Worlds Radiation rules.

Each ball contains chemicals that, when triggered, combine to produce an acidic vapor, which acts as the Acid trapping within powers. Most of the power trappings could be similarly imagined.

## Other Effects

For sessions utilizing Arcane Backgrounds or Weird Science, the balls may hold energy, spells, and the like instead of a physical substance.

Each ball contains the energy harvested from one area to be released into a line of battle mages, giving them all extra Power Points.

Each ball holds a specific spell that, when released, acts as a single point from which a Burst, Cone, or Blast emanates, or amplifies its range.

Each ball contains a shred of divine will, which is bent on stopping enemy targets. It suspends enemies' animation for 1d6 rounds or 2d6+2 on a raise. The targets can still think and see, but cannot move, and any form of mental attack or defense requires a success with a raise. It will not affect those aligned with the one using the Tide Turner.

## Unintended Consequences

Any Tide Turner is a great advantage to the side possessing it, but the best-laid plans may yet go astray. Items meant to benefit one side could benefit the other. It's possible for the Tide Turner to change hands before it is deployed. Or there could be people from the target side who are close enough to receive the deploying side's bonus, too.

## EQUIPMENT CORRAL

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Alternatively, vaporous substances could simply blow back on the deploying side should the wind change. A curious child might release the Tide Turner, inflicting damage upon all who are within its range. In the course of transporting it, a convoy could be run off the path, overturning the Tide Turner's contents into a town's water supply.

In the same vein, in a desperate act to halt the enemy, Tide Turners activated on the battlefield may affect friend and foe alike.

### Possible Use as a Scenario Seed

The peoples of the realm are tired of being forced to fight for a powerful tyrant. In secret, they've been gathering supplies from near and far. Finally, they are ready to turn their unified might on their master, one

skirmish at a time. In the midst of a key attack, they plan to deploy the Tide Turner to stun the loyalists, mustering the rebels in an attempt to retain the town and gain the upper hand.

A commander from the hard-hearted ruling fleet is en route to install a new overseer with a particularly ruthless reputation. A band of covert resistance fighters plans to smuggle a Tide Turner on board, setting the device to release balls filled with a newly discovered, volatile compound, which they hope will cause a chain reaction when released. If all goes as planned, it will destroy the commander's ship with her and her tyrannical servant on it, as well as the four ships flanking the vessel.

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# Listening Echo

By Vickey A. Beaver

Intelligence is the key to any uprising. However, those who plot against their people tend not to do so in public. Cautious planners might even keep council with their conspirators and minions in a secure location or random places so as to prevent eavesdroppers from getting a good listen.



### What It Does

The Listening Echo may come in various shapes and sizes, but its purpose is the same no matter the package: allow its users to hear what has been said.

### Possible Set-Ups

Depending upon genre and technology level, a Listening Echo could be designed as something to echo a conversation as it's happening or as something to listen in with, record, and replay conversations.

A Listening Echo may be a decorative item, meant to be on display. It might be a disk the size of a quarter that's easily slid into a pocket or hidden under a couch. In high technology settings, it could be an electronic device with a short range due to the cloaking mechanism keeping it concealed.

### How One Works

Listening Echoes may be powered by magic, divine will, or technology.

Basic Listening Echoes merely allow someone to

eavesdrop from a distance. They only work as a conversation is occurring. They could be designed to alert a listener that something is being said.

Advanced Listening Echoes record a conversation for a limited time. They could be designed to be triggered by a specific voice, a keyword, or time of day.

One version records over itself until its power source gives out, if not retrieved before its capacity for recording is filled. Another will self-destruct if not collected within a given time. Alternatively, it may be remotely destroyed to prevent being found after the recording has been conveyed via natural or supernatural means.

### Unintended Consequences

The device might reveal information that isn't sought, blowing the party's plans apart. It could be found and used by someone else. It could be illegal to possess; its discovery could put the party in danger or simply on the wrong side of the law.

### Possible Use as a Scenario Seed

The party might need to prove a leader's innocence by finding out who is guilty, thus saving the person and keeping her leadership intact. Perhaps the only way to avoid slaughter in battle is to find out the adversary's plans by getting a Listening Echo into the commander's tent. Maybe the party has discovered a Listening Echo in their chamber and they are frantic to find out who is spying on them and why.

By Tanya Beeson

# Folding Space and Taking Names

Savage Worlds has a nice, simple tactical combat system for characters and simplifies vehicle combat to basic positioning, advantage, and disadvantage. Lately we have seen a jump in strategic combat systems and miniatures games for aircraft and ship combat from *Wings of Glory* and *Wings of War* to *X-Wing* and the *Attack-wing* games.

One of the things that makes these games fun to play is the movement and maneuvering systems. I've drawn up some options for play that either mimics those systems or attempts to emulate them for Savage Worlds.

## RULES RECOMMENDATIONS

### New Skill – Gunnery

You are skilled at shooting mounted and remote vehicle weapons.

### Facing

Taking account of the facing of each of your weapons and ships is important in any of the following modifications. If you are working on a scale that includes characters, you must remember that characters don't suffer facing penalties normally; it's up to you whether you include them. Ships have four Facings: fore (forwards), aft (behind), port (left), and starboard (right). Fixed weapons and rockets must be positioned on one of these; bombs are always dropped from the aft facing.

### Option 1: Vehicle Scale

The first and most obvious combat option for space combat is to do it at a scale more conducive to your tabletop to bring it in line with characters on the tabletop. Scale vehicle movement to 4-8" and use a



## MECHANICS WISE

single 1" x 1" token/square to represent one ship. This could work at capital ship level in a mass combat situation as well with tokens/squares representing a squadron.

Use 1" squares to show the ship's size as well as the ship design allows. Weapon distances need to be scaled too.

If using the vehicle scale option, these ship scales and Top Speeds are alternatives to what is found in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

**Small**, 1" x 1" (TS 7, Climb 3)

**Medium**, 1" x 1" (TS 6, Climb 2)

**Large**, 2" x 2" (TS 5, Climb 1); any combination of four squares could represent it; grants Small ships +2 to hit.

**Huge**, 6" x 2" (TS 4, Climb 0); any combination of 12 squares could represent it; grants Small and Medium ships +2 to hit; takes a -2 penalty to hit Small ships.

A card or token designating current speed can be placed beside the ship, conveying acceleration and deceleration.

### **Option 2: Skill-Based Initiative**

Rather than card-based initiative, the ship combat round is divided into two phases: a Maneuvering phase and a Shooting phase.

Initiative runs in reverse Piloting order (lowest to highest) followed by a shooting round using the Gunnery Skill (highest to lowest).

With the ship on the tabletop, for the first turn, the pilot also designates the current speed up to the TS. After that, the pilot can only designate turns or acceleration/deceleration.

### **Maneuvering**

The maneuvering phase is controlled by the pilot and consists of all the movement. A ship must move a number of inches based on current speed. A maneuver roll may be required based on the following move actions.

**Accelerate or Decelerate** – Increase or decrease current speed (+1 or -1) (no roll).

**Accelerate or Decelerate** – Increase or decrease current speed by half TS (roll).

**Turn** – Move half current speed and execute a 45° turn (no roll\*).

**Turn** – Move half current speed and execute a 90° turn (roll\*).

**Turn** – Move half current speed and execute a 135° turn (roll -2\*).

**Turn** – Move half current speed and execute a 180° turn (roll -4\*).

**Barrel Roll** – At the end of the maneuver, slide left or right 2 squares (roll).

**Boost** – requires Boosters or some sort of engine upgrade; move forward +2 squares (roll) and perform an additional 45° turn (optional).

**Evasive Maneuvering** – Any incoming attacks for the following round suffer a -2 Penalty (roll).

**Targeting Lock** – Anyone with Gunnery access can use the ship's sensors to lock onto a target giving +2 to their next shot (roll).

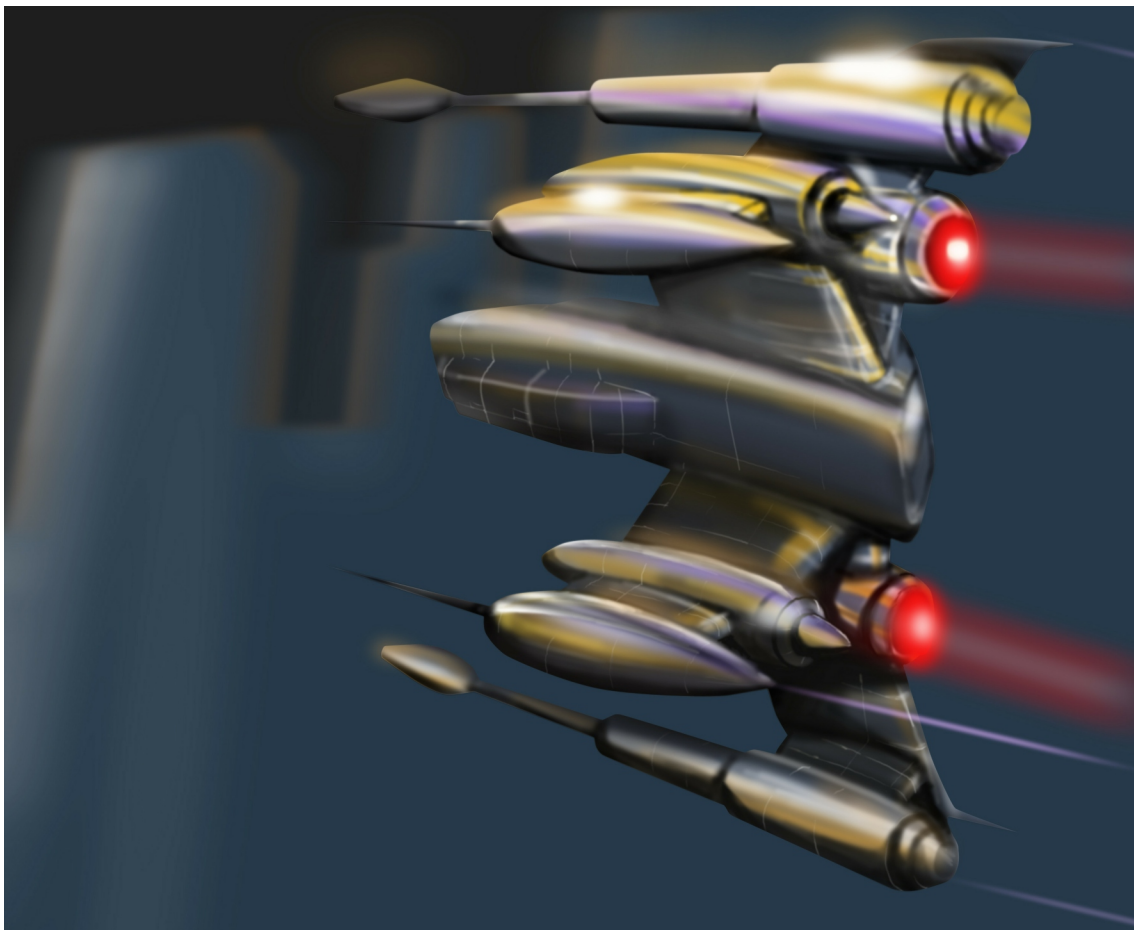
**Regain Control** – If the starship has gone Out of Control, (shaken) you can regain control as an action (Spirit roll, +2 if you have the Ace Edge).

Rolls for Maneuvers are modified by the difficulty of the maneuver and by an additional -1 for each point of speed above the Cruising Speed (half Top Speed).

\*After all turns, finish move to value of current speed (i.e. the other half). Even if you know where the ship will turn up, make a note of the squares it would cross and check for collision, if necessary.

**A Failed Pilot Roll** – Any failed Pilot roll either suffers the effects of the maneuver or Shakes the pilot.

**Shaken** – A Ship or Pilot that is Shaken cannot perform pilot actions that would require a roll. This includes maneuvers or firing weapons.



from the front arc. The crew or automated systems can fire other weapons as available. Weapons fire works as normal, however the range should be divided by 50 to work at this scale.

**Option 3:**  
***Maneuvering in Secret***

Play your maneuver on a deck of cards showing your intended action. Players select a maneuver card and current speed and then put the card face down.

**Collision** – If a ship crosses into another square that contains debris, asteroids, or another ship, the pilot must immediately make a maneuver roll.

**Raise** – The maneuver currently attempted may continue.

**Success** – The objects miss, but the current maneuver is canceled and the ship moves forward for the rest of the current move value.

**Failure** – There has been a collision. Both objects take damage, which is based on the size of the smaller object at a rate of d6 (per 1” square that the smaller object occupies) + 2d6 + 1d6 (per Speed level). E.g. A Medium Bomber at Speed 4 hits a small, stationary asteroid. Both objects take d6 + 2d6 + 4d6 for a total of 7d6 damage. Ouch!

**Firing Weapons**

Ships’ weapons can be fired on any arc available to them. A single pilot can shoot one weapon, usually

**Option 4: Crew Rolls**

**Co-Pilot** – Can take two Move Action Maneuvers with normal movement instead of 1, or can take a +2 supporting roll. This can be changed on a round by round basis.

**Gunner** – Can control any Fixed or Turret Mount.

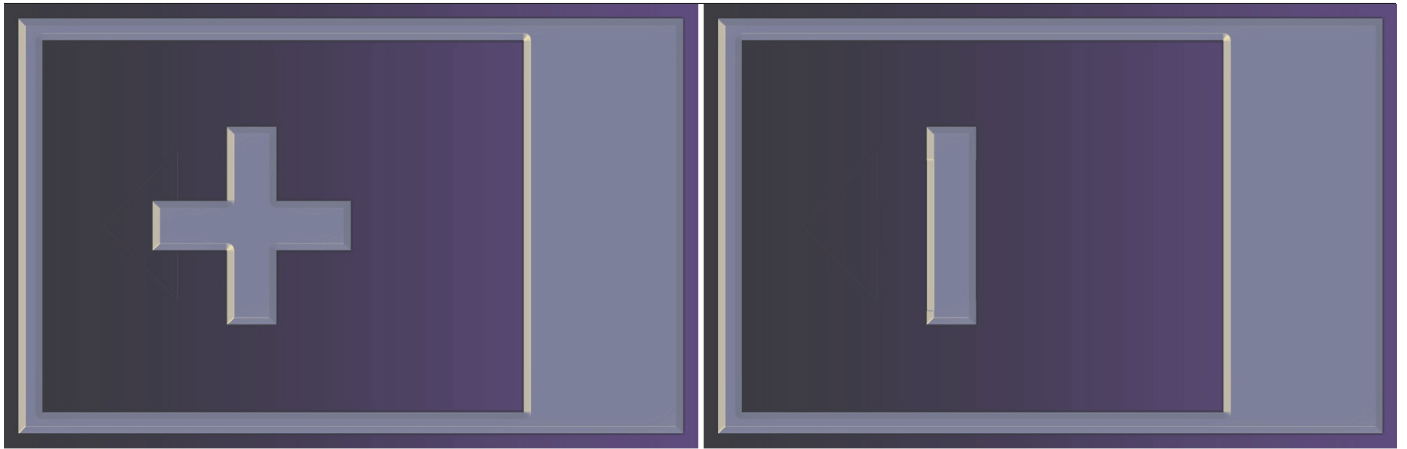
**Engineer** – Shield Repairs, Engine Repairs, Pushing the Engines. In addition to fixing damaged ship parts, an Engineer can push the engines. By making a Repair roll, the ship gains a + or -1 to speed for free. On a roll of 1 on the Repair die, the ship becomes shaken.

**Medic** – Can attempt to heal or revive Injured Crew.

**Sensors** – At the sensor station, an operator can provide a +2 Lock bonus using the ship’s sensors to one target; this is in addition to the gunnery lock.

Speed, turn, and acceleration/deceleration cards are shown on the following pages.

# MECHANICS WISE



Print or copy these number and direction cards and use to accent your game play.

To strengthen cards, print on card stock. To extend their longevity, laminate them. For best results, laminate after separating.

For ease of viewing, use stands or small binder clips to display them upright rather than flat.





# EXPANDED MECHANICS

By Jerrod “Savage Daddy” Gunning

## Espionage: A Prelude to Mass Battles

Adding Top-Secret Missions to Your Rebel Campaigns

Everyone loves a rebel. Well, maybe not everyone; I’m sure the tyrant bent on world domination isn’t a big fan. Screw that guy! We’re talking about the heroes. Let’s not forget to use that term lightly.

They’re always a motley crew, referring to the informal expression for a roughly organized group of characters with a variety of backgrounds and dubious ethics, such as pirates or a rag-tag bands of mercenaries, not the totally bitchin’ 80s metal hair band led by Vince Neil. Those guys were rad!

Wait. Where was I? Oh, right... Rebels.

Sooner or later, all heroes in an uprising and rebellion story become expendables who receive a top-secret suicide mission. Everyone, including the heroes, realizes it’s a Hail Mary pass. Despite a snowball’s chance in hell, they usually manage to pull it off. And when they do, it drastically turns the tides. In other words, there is no chance of destroying Death Star 2.0 until Han’s team takes out the Endor shield generator.

In addition to Chases and Dramatic Tasks, *Savage Worlds* Mass Battles rules deserve some spotlight time during an uprising. Mass Battles are an excellent way to conduct epic battles in the same amount of time it takes to run a combat encounter at your table. What’s more, player characters who get involved can influence the outcome in significant and cinematic ways.

Here you will find a simple system for adding top-secret missions to your rebel campaigns, providing a narrative sidestep that dovetails with Mass Battles. It uses familiar rules with some very minor tweaks to ensure the Fast! Furious! Fun! flavor of *Savage Worlds* without the need for new skills, Edges, Hindrances, or mechanics.

### Getting Started

The Game Master describes the upcoming battle and goes through the Setup described in *Savage Worlds*. It is important to discuss any Battle Modifiers that may apply. Knowing that an enemy will gain a +3 bonus for a doomsday weapon is crucial to



## EXPANDED MECHANICS

planning an espionage mission. Once Setup is complete, the PCs plan their mission. This includes defining specific objectives running the gamut from sabotage and assassination to reconnaissance and extraction.

Characters should receive the necessary gear or equipment needed to complete the mission within reason. Rebel forces on the brink of defeat, or spread across multiple fronts, may not be able to accommodate every whim of the characters. If this is the case, they'll just have to make do or get creative in the field.

### Mission Bennies

The number of starting Bennies for the planning and operation phases of the mission doesn't change. If they already received Bennies for the session, they may spend them as well. In addition to their normal uses, "Mission Bennies" allow you to gain narrative Advantages (explained next) during the planning phase, add +1d6 (acing) to any Trait roll, or achieve a Success or a Raise on a Trait test without making a roll.

### Advantages

Anything that increases the chance of success is an Advantage. Contacts, allied Extras, technical schematics, cover identities, and fully stocked safe houses are examples of Advantages. Depending on the amount of leverage granted to the PCs, the GM determines if an Advantage is Minor or Major. Minor Advantages cost one Mission Benny. Major Advantages cost two.

Advantages may be narrative or mechanical in nature. If a Star Wars scene were played out in Savage Worlds, it might go like this:

Approaching Endor in a stolen Imperial shuttle is an automatic narrative success if you fly casually. If the codes are outdated or Luke Skywalker is along for the ride, the GM might call for an opposed Trait roll. GMs might decide those who spend Mission Bennies for Advantages deserve a +2 bonus (+4 for a Major Advantage) when a roll is required.

### Success and Complication

Rolling dice is fun and exciting, but the results can wreck a story, especially during climatic scenes.

Those who'd rather not leave it to chance may spend Mission Bennies for automatic Successes or Raises!

For one Mission Benny, the character succeeds with a complication, something the GM creates that the character has to overcome in the process and that moves the story forward in an interesting way. The complication should not be overly punishing.

A Mission Benny spent to succeed on a Lockpicking roll, for example, may have one of the following complications:

- The character breaks his tools in the door; takes a -2 to future attempts.
- The character is surprised by a security guard inside, who now has the Drop.
- The character accidentally sets off an alarm.

Characters may avoid complications altogether by spending two Mission Bennies for an automatic Raise. Of course, there's a catch: the Mission Bennies go in the Game Master pool.

### How It Works

An espionage mission consists of three distinctive narrative phases: Infiltration, Obtainment, and Extraction. Each is an atypical Dramatic Task lasting 3-5 rounds with a requisite number of Successes.

**Difficulty:** Instead of a standard -2 penalty for Dramatic Tasks, the Game Master determines difficulty and applies a +2 (Easy), +1 (Simple), 0, -2 (Difficult), or -4 (Very difficult) modifier. This may change on a round-by-round basis or apply to the Dramatic Task as a whole.

*Example: The Infiltration Phase consists of four characters parachuting behind enemy lines at night. The GM calls for a three-round Dramatic Task. The first round is a Cooperative Agility roll at +2 to jump from the plane, followed by a Stealth roll opposed by the Notice of enemy sentries (including applicable modifiers for lighting conditions, etc.), and finally a Piloting roll at a -2 penalty to land in the forest.*

**Complication ♣:** Clubs represent direct physical attacks against the characters. Shaken or wounded



## EXPANDED MECHANICS

characters must make a Spirit roll to recover from Shaken (or attempt Soak rolls) before making subsequent rolls toward the Dramatic Task.

*Example: Drawing a Club while parachuting behind enemy lines, means the GM makes a d6 Shooting Attack with a Wild Die (including any range and lighting condition modifiers) for every member of the party. Drawing a Club while sabotaging the doomsday device means the character manages to grab the tool he drops in the nick of time, but suffers 2d6 damage from an electrical jolt or jagged piece of metal in the process.*

**Interpreting Failure:** To ensure each round in a Dramatic Task is appropriately tense and ‘dramatic’, failures subtract from successes. The downside is that it is more difficult to score the required number of net success. If each player character in the party spends one Mission Benny, failure becomes an automatic success without a complication. Otherwise, failure is always a success with a complication. Perhaps they lose an Advantage in the process. Maybe they are miles off course in enemy territory. Attempts to sabotage a doomsday weapon may only limit its effective range. You get the idea.

### Running the Mission

How you choose to run the mission should suit you and your players. It is perfectly acceptable to skip the Infiltration stage if it doesn’t fit your play style or interests. You may want to consider running the Infiltration and Obtainment stages, and start the Mass Battle with the PCs in the thick of things.

To quote the bards called Journey, “Anyway you want it; that’s the way you need it.” How you choose to run the mission is less important than you may think. What counts is the level of success with which the characters achieved the mission’s primary objective.

### Skill Considerations

Clandestine operations often involve things such as sabotage, disguise, interrogation, and seduction. Savage Worlds skills are intentionally broad for this reason. What do I mean? Fighting is Fighting! It does not matter if a character uses bare knuckles, martial arts, or a barstool— he is making a Fighting roll.

Instead of creating new skills, all you need to do is re-imagine how an existing skill fits a specific application. I realize it’s a bit Zen. That’s why I’ve provided some examples below, all of which apply to Dramatic Tasks. The list is by no means exhaustive and if you have a better idea for a skills implementation, you should use it.

**Disguise** is a Persuasion roll with a basic success to impersonate a nondescript person. If you have time and make-up, add a +2 bonus (plus Charisma) to the roll. Impersonating an individual is a Persuasion roll opposed by the target’s Notice. If the target is familiar with the individual, suffer a -2 penalty to your roll.

**Forgery** is a Repair roll. Detecting a fraud is a Notice roll at a -2 penalty with a raise on the Repair roll.





**Interrogation** is a Social Conflict using Intimidation, Smarts Tricks, and/or Persuasion.

**Intelligence Gathering** is a Streetwise roll. It covers everything from finding clues to tracking someone down. In the case of a manhunt, make a Streetwise versus Stealth (or the target's Streetwise) roll, or run a standard Dramatic Task with Streetwise, if appropriate.

**Sabotage** is a Repair roll to disable the item (vehicle, computer, security camera, etc.).

**Seduction** is a Persuasion roll opposed by Smarts with the effects of the Puppet Power on a raise.

### Espionage Aftermath

You assembled a team of ragtag underdogs. They planned and executed a top-secret mission. Now what? First, any unspent Mission Bennies become tokens for their side in the Mass Battle. Beyond this, it is up to the GM to weigh the mission's degree of success with the narrative implications and apply

appropriate Battle or Morale Modifiers to the Mass Battle rules.

Successfully kidnapping a high-ranking enemy military leader, for example, implies a success on the Dramatic Tasks for the Obtainment and Extraction phases of the mission. If the PCs successfully interrogate the prisoner (see Social Conflict rules) it could lower the enemy's Knowledge (Battle) by a die type, or add a -2 penalty to the roll because you know their battle plan.

A successful mission to assassinate the same target may only result in a -2 moral penalty to the enemy army. Destroying a doomsday weapon may deprive the enemy of its +3 Battle Modifier. Crippling the targeting system, on the other hand, may lower the bonus to a +2 instead.

In closing, I hope you have as much fun using this expanded mechanic to bring more immersion to your Mass Battles as I had writing it. Until next time, keep rolling and stay Savage!

STORIES TO INSPIRE



By Rachel Rutledge

# The Lost Soul

*Nobody saw it coming. Vikram may have been a killer with no conscience, but he wasn't downright crazy like some of the others. He used his head and planned out his moves—he never struck without thinking it through. It was part of the reason he survived so long. And even though he dreamt of the day that he'd get to kill Rodrik, he would never do such a thing until the moment was perfect; acting at any other time was a death sentence.*

*But something in Vikram's psyche snapped this time around during his conversation with the man. Caught in a moment between his past and his future, he stopped processing what was happening. The only thing he could focus on was saving his brother, and he'd kill anyone who stood in his way.*

The day had started off like any other for the fighters of the unimaginatively named Gladiator Arena. Except those who naturally woke up early, they arose from the guards yelling, "Breakfast!"

Fighters whose sponsors really cared for their well-being ensured their cells held some extra comforts and they'd get decent food. If a sponsor was indifferent, they'd eat scraps next to nothing and especially want to go train, if only to get out of their hard, cold cell. Truly it depended on the size of their sponsor's heart and wallet.

After eating, most awaited a turn to go out to practice with an animal or spar a combatant. It was optional, but the alternative was sitting in their cell for the rest of the day. A few – the ones whose sponsors splurged on them – consistently preferred that.

Before his time to train came around, Vikram was called for a meeting with his sponsor, Rodrik, in a private area of the stadium. Rodrik preferred that to meeting in the cell as some sponsors did. Vikram expected the usual brief and to-the-point update about his next challenge and whatever tips the man might have on his opponent. He didn't know what to make of the man requesting he bring his weapon with him. That was generally prohibited.

Without a word, the large, muscular man sat in the chair across from his sponsor, folding his arms across

his chest. Hard, sharp features mixed with those hinting at Indian ancestry. His hair was long and unkempt. He turned away from his sponsor and rested his gaze on his scythe leaning against the wall.

Rodrik sat in a larger chair behind a desk, one more suited to the fighter than a man so much smaller that he nearly looked like a child next to the gladiator. The sponsor wore his hair cleanly clean cut, accenting light blue eyes. With a smirk on his face, he stared at his fighter. He took a long sip of hot tea speaking, "Vik, you look great. How's life treating you?"

It was the same question he asked Vikram at the start of every meeting. And Vikram responded the same way every time as well. A grunt.

"Good, good. Have you been sleeping on the new cot I had them put in your cell?" He tugged at his sleeves like a bird preening, "No need to thank me; it was just my way of saying good job in your last fight. You earned me a good bit of money, so it was the least I could do."

Vikram didn't respond.

"Speaking of your last fight, you took Boomer down in record time. You're really making a name for yourself."

"Sure," Vikram said simply.

"People have started referring to you as 'The Lost Soul.'"

The large man was fixated on a point on the floor, "People are stupid."

"This is true, but since their stupidity benefits me, we're going to encourage it. What kind of name was Vikram anyway?"

"The kind that my mother gave me," he answered.

Rodrik let out a light chuckle. "Well now I'm giving you a new one: The Lost Soul. It seems more fitting anyway."

"My soul isn't lost; I just don't have one."

## STORIES TO INSPIRE

“Did they season your food with pessimism and negativity this morning?”

His eyes narrowed slightly although he still wasn't looking his company. “Why am I here, Sponsor?”

Their conversation wasn't progressing as well as Rodrik hoped, but about as much as he expected from Vikram. The man was uncooperative and difficult in nature. “Still with the formalities? I thought we moved past that, Vik. After I bought you and paid for a decent upkeep, I figured we'd at least be on a first name basis.”

“You figured wrong.”

“I guess so,” Rodrik said, still smiling as he took another drink. “But anyway, you're here for three reasons. One, tomorrow is your big fight with Owl. I know you can handle anyone thrown at you, but you might want to use a little caution with him. Owl's been in the top rank for some time now and he isn't all there. It's almost as if he enjoys killing. I didn't pit you against him before because honestly, I thought he would've slaughtered you.” He held up his hands in an innocent manner. “No offense to you, of course, but Owl is strong and unpredictable. Did you know he attacked his sponsor once? I don't know what's crazier, the fact that he attacked Asher or that Asher kept him on as a fighter instead of having him put down.”

Vikram had watched Owl as he did all potential opponents. The man's eyes gave him an unstable look when he went to a fight and he sported a creepy smile when he came back from one. He knew Owl was a force to be reckoned with and wasn't surprised that Owl attacked his sponsor.

If Asher was anything like Rodrik then he not only understood it, but supported it. The way he said “instead of having him put down” was like he thought of them as nothing more than beasts for their entertainment and gambling desires. Perhaps he was right.

“Anyway, now that you're in the number two ranking and you've gained the crowd's approval, I

think you're up for the challenge. I'm putting big money on this.”

“I'll be ready.”

“Train hard. Owl either leaves his opponents dead or wishing they were. Should you lose, my pockets won't be the only thing bleeding.”

Vikram just grunted, wanting the conversation to be over. He had no fear in his heart. Vikram too was known for killing his opponents, although he didn't do it every single fight as he was sure Owl tried.

“Second on the agenda ties in a bit with what I was saying about you being a crowd pleaser. What if we altered your image a bit? We've already changed your name. What if we change your outfit, weapon, and—”

“I like my weapon.”

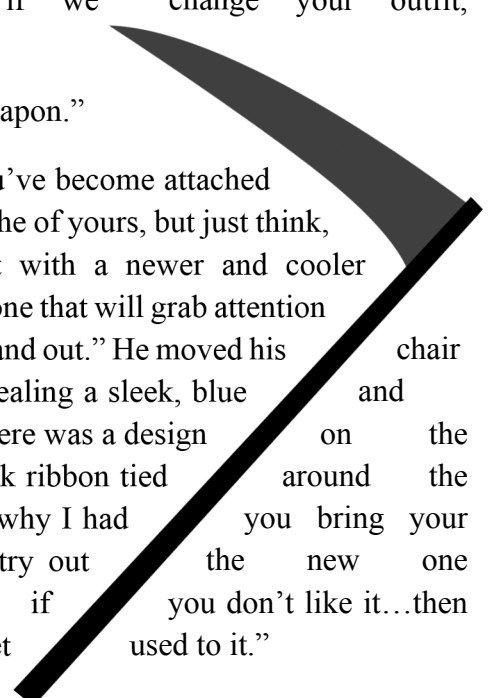
“I'm sure you've become attached to that rusty scythe of yours, but just think, you could fight with a newer and cooler looking scythe, one that will grab attention and make you stand out.” He moved his chair over a little, revealing a sleek, blue and black scythe. There was a design on the blade and a black ribbon tied around the handle. “That's why I had you bring your old one. We'll try out the new one tomorrow, and if you don't like it...then you'll have to get used to it.”

“I like my weapon,” he repeated gruffly.

“Why must you insist on being difficult?” Rodrik said, his smirk reappearing. “Honestly, you act like you hate me.”

“It's not an act.”

Rodrik treated everything Vikram had said like water off a duck's back, yet he was a little offended by that. He furrowed his eyebrows and leaned forward, his voice losing the honeyed tone he'd been speaking with. “Are you kidding me? I know it's not





the ideal situation for you to be in, but I saved you. You'd be dead if it weren't for me. What reason could you possibly have to hate me?"

He glared daggers at his muscular fighter, waiting for him to justify saying such an ungrateful thing. If anything, he should be praising him! After a long minute of silence, he figured Vikram just wouldn't respond at all.

Rodrik leaned back, still irritated and ran a hand through his hair. "Exactly what I thought. You're a piece of work, you know that Vik? If you weren't as skilled as you were, I'd have your tongue cut out of your mouth."

The man straightened his tie as he shook his head. Vikram owed him his life; he not only bought him, but he made sure he was well taken care of too. Didn't he realize that other sponsors didn't care? They left their fighters in cold cells and even starved their fighters to motivate them! The pile of muscle had no right to even pretend that he disliked him, let alone hate. Letting out a deep exhale, Rodrik opened the folder on the desk in front of him, flipped through the many pages that were inside, and eventually pulled one out.

"I was told by a few sources that—"

"You're supposed to feel neutral when you first meet somebody, and then after you get to know them, you decide if you like or dislike them." Vikram's gruff, dead voice interrupted his, startling him. "Neutral is the default...for normal people like you. But you can't feel neutral in an environment like this. Neutral will get you killed. Like will make you insane. And dislike isn't strong enough; you have to hate if you want to live. It doesn't matter what they say or do, you have to muster up every bit of hate you have and project it.

"That's not easy, not natural. So you adjust equilibrium in a sense. You have to lose a portion of your mind. You cannot walk out of here sane. You talk about Owl being crazy, but he isn't the only one."

Vikram held Rodrik's widened gaze. "I don't know what love is anymore. I don't know how to do it and I don't know what it feels like. You might think I'm exaggerating, but I'm not even giving you half of the torture—or everyday life—I've endured.

"I hate myself. I hate everything about me. You know the saying, you can't love somebody else without first loving yourself? Well the same goes for hate. Long ago were the days when I looked in a mirror. The voice I speak with once belonged to my inner demons, but now it just belongs to me, because I am those demons. That guy I killed the other day—that was me. Each and every time I deliver the final blow, I'm killing myself. Little by little I died and now all that's left what I am today."

He leaned forward across the table, looking down at his sponsor. "What reason could I have to hate you? I don't hate you because you're an egotistical jerk with more money and time than you know what to do with. I don't hate you because you helped turn me into what I am right now—I should, but I don't. I don't even care enough to think about you outside of our meetings. I hate you because it's my default to hate."

Rodrik stared at his fighter. As he processed all the words thrown at him, he felt anxiousness begin to build up in the pit of his stomach. He hated him because it was his default? He considered himself a demon? Owl wasn't the only crazy one?

Had life really at the Arena truly been so hard on him that he was unable to feel anything but hate



## STORIES TO INSPIRE

anymore? His stomach began to knot. Rodrik looked away, taking a quick, deep breath.

He cleared his throat and turned his attention back to the paper in his slightly shaking hands, “M-my sources told me that there was a young man who shared your last name and heritage among a recent load of slaves. They thought there might be some connection.” His eyes slightly averted, he pulled a large picture out of the folder and held it up. “Raj Sahni. Recognize him?”

Vikram’s brain stopped computing what was happening. He saw his brother’s weak form in the chains and heard his name, but he couldn’t believe that it was truly him. When the enemy empire originally came, they slaughtered the majority of his village. The few that survived the surprise attack were thought to be strong enough to be used as fighters. Vikram was one of them, and the only one of his family. He’d seen his mother and father’s still forms. He’d seen what was left of his sister’s carcass. He’d seen his brother’s bloody body. He was seeing them in his head right now. So...how was Raj alive? How had they gotten him?

“What is he? Your brother? Cousin?” When Rodrik received no response, he shrugged. “I suppose it doesn’t matter one way or another. At the end of the day, he’s still going to wind up in the arena. He may end up having to face you. Not the best reunion, but a reunion nonetheless.”

With each word that left Rodrik’s mouth, another string to Vikram’s psyche was cut. He’d just explained what life as a fighter did to him—how he could no longer feel love. Yet...what was this that he was feeling at the thought of his brother? He could remember racing him and playing pranks on their sister together. Laughing and sharing food. The feeling didn’t belong in that place. He didn’t know how to rectify this situation and the cognitive dissonance left his eyes twitching.

When his thoughts moved to his brother actually in the arena, he felt even worse. He couldn’t imagine

Raj losing his smile, losing his mind, and ultimately losing his soul. What if he became like Owl, so caught up in that life that he actually enjoyed it? Or what if Raj ended up like himself, filled with so much hate that he couldn’t even decide if loving his brother was right?



“You know, Vik, if you weren’t so difficult, I’d offer to buy him just to spare you the trauma of having to reunite in such a way.” Figuring he gained the upper hand again, Rodrik looked back at Vikram a little more confident. “Depending on your willingness to change your image and how your fight with Owl goes, that can still be arranged.”

Vikram looked at Rodrik, but didn’t speak. He’d never felt more hate for that man than he did at that moment. All he cared about was himself. Couldn’t he see that Vikram was barely hanging on by a thread? Why was he provoking him?

“Come on, Vik. It’s a tough world, but you can make it a little less tough on yourself. Imagine having to slice up your brother—him pleading with you as you raise your scythe to deliver the final blow. Can you see his head rolling? Can you see his blood on your hands? Is that what you want? Is that what you—”

Vikram could. Love or hate, he wouldn’t allow his brother to go through any of what he had. In one motion, he grabbed the old scythe and swung with so much might that his sponsor’s head came clean off.

Vikram always imaged that killing Rodrik would leave him satisfied. Instead, he still felt disturbed, angry, and confused. He grabbed the second scythe as he exited, quickly dispatching the two guards outside the door. His feelings didn’t change. He couldn’t even begin to calm down until after he killed the five

guards that heard the commotion and came to check on Rodrik. Anger vied with clarity. He considered his next move.

The newest shipment of slaves-soon-to-be-fighters hadn't arrived. He would've heard struggling in the holding cell area. It'd probably be some time tomorrow. Once a guard found the bodies, he wouldn't survive long enough to free his brother and possibly not even long enough to see him.

The only real option he had was to destroy the institution before Raj arrived. He couldn't fight if the system was eradicated. But how was one fighter supposed to take down the whole system? It didn't take him long to realize that one fighter couldn't...but many fighters could.

Vikram went back to the holding cell area, careful not to draw any attention to himself. There were no guards nearby. Vikram approached the first cell. A woman crouched in the corner, holding her sword close. She looked at Vikram with narrowed eyes, confused as to how he was free.

He called to her, "No more fighting. No more slaves. Show them the monsters they've made already." Using his scythe and brute strength, he chopped off the lock on her cell and opened her cage.

He went down the line, chopping off locks and releasing the fighters. Most of them gave him a nod

of appreciation, silently communicating that they'd make the guards and people in charge of the whole organization pay. They ran down the hall and attacked the first one in sight.

Alerted to the combatants roaming freely, several guards started toward the holding cells, Vikram made a beeline for the cell of the only other fighter he knew was strong and fast enough to help cut off the rest of the locks. Owl's cell was triple locked with stronger locks than the rest. It took him several hits to knock the first one off.

Owl was grinning widely as he sat, watching the other fighter attempt to free him. "If it isn't 'The Lost Soul'. Not many others are this eager to fight me..."

Vikram continued hacking away the second lock. "I'm not freeing you to fight me."

"Then why are you freeing me?"

"I need your help cutting the rest of these locks off and facing the guards."

He laughed. "And why would I do that?"

"Because they can't force people to fight that aren't here—they can't force people to fight if they're dead." He knocked the second lock off and after a few seconds, the third one.

As he opened the cage, Owl, with the speed of lightning, flew out and jumped on him, knocking him to the ground and his weapon away. One of the kamas in Owl's hand came down just as Vikram's arm went up to block. Owl put just enough pressure on him to cut his arm slightly, and then grinned. "Using your head—nice move! I suppose this is why you're the crowd favorite."

"This isn't going to happen, Owl."

"Hate to break it to you, Vik, but I enjoy fighting. The reason I'm still here is not because they're forcing me, but because I want to be."



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“You want to live like this? Like an animal used for their entertainment?”

Owl looked at his weapon for a long moment and then brought one of the kamas up to his mouth. He licked the blood off of it, cutting his own tongue in the process. “What can I say? I’m in it for the bloodshed.”

Vikram tried to push the larger, darker man off of him, but failed. “Move, Owl. We’re running out of time.”

“Isn’t this more fun, Vik? An impromptu fight? We can really see who the strongest one is now.”

“If you want to stay here, do that, but you’ll be the only one. I’m not going to allow them to bring another load of slaves here.”

Owl looked slightly curious then. “Where did this sudden sense of righteousness come from? Why are you doing this?”

Vikram wanted to look away from the crazed eyes, but he couldn’t risk it. Instead, he put his focus into getting the man off of him. It took almost all the strength in his body, but with a sudden kick to Owl’s left leg he was able to roll the man off of him and retrieve his scythe. “Because they’ll sooner have my dead body before they get my brother’s living one.”

Owl looked at him, piecing things together in his head. He stood up slowly, holding his kamas at his side. He looked as though he still wanted to attack Vikram, but before he got the chance, several guards turned down the hall.

“There he is!”

“Get him!”

“Be careful—Owl’s out too!”

“Watch your backs!”

Owl’s face lit up and he glanced over his shoulder at the group now running toward them. After sizing them up and deciding what way he wanted to kill them, he turned back to Vikram. “Alright Vik, I’ll tell

you what. Since this probably isn’t even a third of the guards that are going to come for you, I’ll help you this time...but the next time we see each other, we’re going to have our fight.” He pressed one of his kama’s blade against his own throat and moved it slowly across. “...to the death.” The motion wouldn’t have fazed Vikram if it weren’t for the red line of blood that appeared on Owl’s neck after he moved the knife. It wasn’t that deep, but it was still a self-inflicted wound. He knew Owl was crazy, but seeing it that close gave him a slight paradigm shift. Maybe their fight would’ve been even tougher than he once thought.

“Owl, get back in your cell! Vikram, you’re coming with us!”

As though the cut was only a scratch, Owl whipped around to the guards. He put his hand over his heart. “You only want Vikram? That hurts my feelings. You know he’s not as great as everyone makes him out to be. Maybe I can change you guys’ mind.”

Vikram didn’t wait around to watch the blood bath that was sure to ensue. He went back to freeing the rest of the fighters. When he came across his own cell, he stopped for a moment and stared inside. Not long ago, he was sitting on the inside. He had been a soulless beast just waiting to be tossed in the arena. But now he was starting a revolt. Now he was saving his brother as well as other fighters.

Maybe he did have a soul after all. Maybe it had been lost amidst the fighting and killing, but not completely gone. Maybe The Lost Soul was an appropriate name after all.



This story illustrates how a character with the Loyal Hindrance might be spurred to action when faced with the right circumstance. The arena could serve as the opening scene to a new campaign where locals and imported slaves alike have become victims of those rich enough to imprison them.

The strife between fighters could serve as a bond between the PCs who could be among those The Lost Soul releases, marking the beginning of the revolt that spills out onto the streets.

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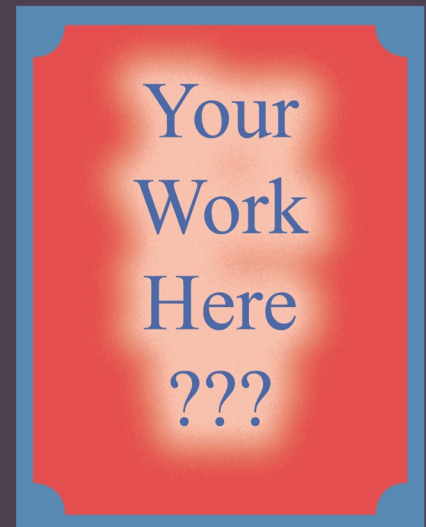
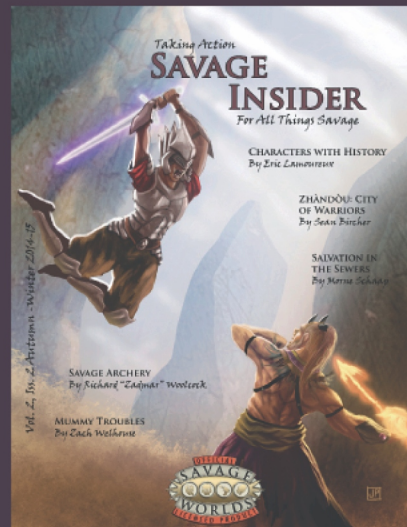
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By Zach Welhouse with Stats by G'Andy

## The Twelve-Hour Revolution

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### An Attack That Could End All Time

The Clock Tower is a dingy, vertical pocket dimension comprising an infinite tower. There is an outside (well, probably) but you don't want to go there—oh no. Life in the Clock Tower takes place around the inner perimeter of this enormous construct and occasionally within the labyrinth of gears that make up the vertical core.

Most visitors to the Clock Tower are quantum mechanics-in-training, acolytes of the scientific

principles that keep reality humming along. Those who're able to unlock the subtle scientific secrets of every plane protected by the quantum mechanics are set up to become literal gods of science. The residents of the Clock Tower have opposing views of these meddling observers. The mechanical Copperteeth, who inhabit levels 3,100 through 3,125 want nothing to do with outsiders. The clock-headed Weavers of levels 3,000 through 3,025 take a more mercenary approach. In exchange for

# GREAT ADVENTURES

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offerings of brass and wood, the Weavers guide visitors to the Temporal Orrery, where time's mysteries can be observed.

Our heroes get drawn into this age-old operation when Dr. Esther Shabangu (or a concerned scientist chum) asks for help evaluating the quantum mechanics' methodology. Dr. Shabangu's planning to revolutionize her home plane with her science, but needs the sheer metaphysical muscle of a quantum mechanic to do so. Before she pulls away from her theoretical energy systems, she wants to make sure her data fits the situation at hand.

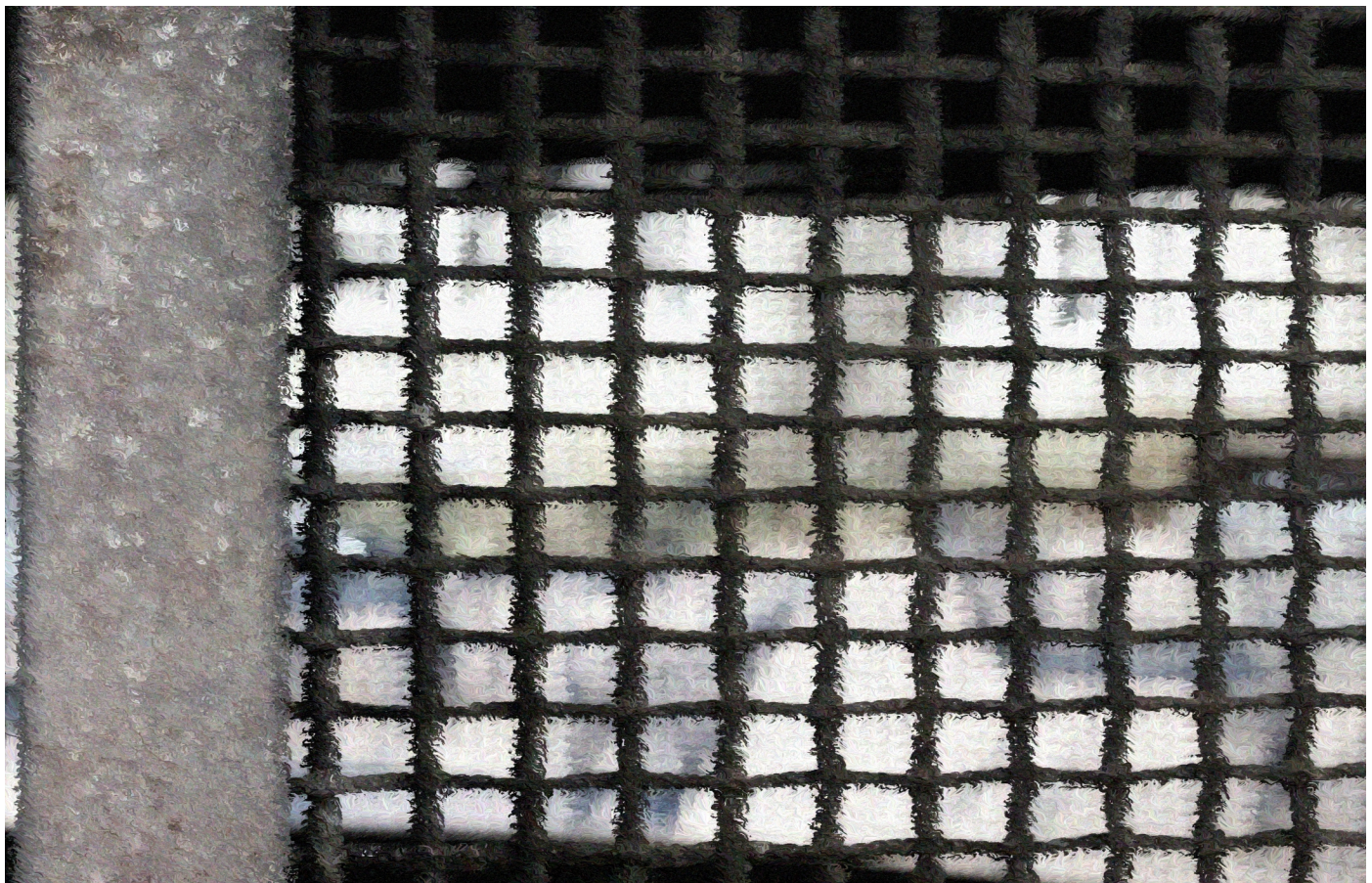
None of the esteemed minds of recent expeditions to the Clock Tower have been able to unravel its invisible logic. Perhaps worse, none of them have ever returned. Dr. Shabangu isn't asking anybody to solve the mystery of the Clock Tower for her; she just rather someone scouted ahead and made sure the place isn't a death trap. Anyone who can help her will have her immediate thanks as well as a favor in the bank when she has attained perfect universal comprehension.

What are our heroes up against? An Automatic Clergyman and its band of upstart religious cultists who threaten to stop the matriculation of divine scientists and to stick a wrench in the very cogs that measure eternity.

## The Weavers

The Clock Tower's Weavers are the most well-known inhabitants of the dimension. Their territory contains the most accessible doorway to the Astral Plane (aka "The Place Between Seconds, Zero Hour, Seldom Woods). Many visitors are most struck by the Weavers' cuckoo clock heads. Every hour, on the hour, brightly colored birds emerge from the Weavers' faces. Weaver rogues are rare.

Fewer visitors to the Clock Tower comment on the ease with which the Weavers hurl oath-breakers ("the untimely") into the spinning clockwork of the tower's vertical core. Theirs is an orderly society where laws are carefully calibrated for maximum harmony. None have anything to say about how they reproduce... and that's probably just as well.





The Weavers are so named for the sturdy nets they weave from bat-fibers and tower moss. The nets connect the various landings and half-completed stairways that make up their territory. Some enterprising Weavers string nets closer to the core. Although inner nets are often shredded by swinging counterweights or loose chains, they sometimes catch falling debris from higher levels. Much of this salvaged debris is clockwork that makes its way into the Weavers' spears and crossbows, but other finds aren't so easy to classify. Among those are strange devices crafted by societies entirely unlike the Weavers, if they were crafted at all.

It was just one such device that caused the Clock Tower's current problem. The mechanical Copperteeth called the troublemaker an Automatic Clergyman. According to their High Timekeeper, the Automatic Clergyman's crimes amounted to "heresy most high: namely, the mistaken belief that time is an illusion created through the action of autonomous beings."

While sitting upon the conveyor belt to its doom, the Automatic Clergyman received a divine transmission: it must survive, for one day its components would rejoin Project Monolith, the God-Network. Hearing survival's sweet call, it escaped to the lower levels. When it came back online, it was surprised to find itself in the care of two Weavers itchin' for a revolution.

Exterminator Horst and Exterminator Eng found the Automatic Clergyman as they were repairing their fourteenth spider trap of the week. The pair did what they could to repair the Clergyman, and fast became converts of its anti-time theology. What had time ever done for them? Spider bites and bat fever! If they could control the wicked illusion, they wouldn't be the untimely ones; they'd be kings. After several recruitment drives, the pair had amassed a fair-sized cult. What's more, they had a plan: kidnap the egghead tourists to their plane, control their actions, and gain control over the fabric of time.

Mostly the cultists are just strapping visitors to giant gears and screaming at them, but it's a start.

Those too polite to scream have taken a hand in local politics. They accuse Weavers interested in maintaining the status quo of being untimely, spreading fear and mistrust among their copper-bottomed brethren.

### **Time for A Change**

The main doorway in and out of the Clock Tower is a stubborn beast that rarely opens directly into the Astral Plane. Dr. Shabangu can get our heroes past this hurdle with a super-scientific transportation device. Watchman Brummel is another story.

Watchman Brummel is the thin, toothy line between the carefully ordered existence of his people and the madness of the outer worlds. From his guardhouse cottage he decides who is worthy of progressing beyond the threshold. Most of the Weavers find him an insufferable boor, but then he does keep the riffraff out.

Our heroes first encounter the Watchman soon after entering the Clock Tower. The doorway deposits travelers on top of a slowly rotating sprocket some 8.674 meters (~9.5 yards) in diameter. Erratically clicking and clanking machinery extends into the darkness below. A chain-link bridge connects the machinery to a short entry platform, above which looms the guardhouse.

The doorway sprocket is located on the top floor of a support tower that's parallel to the main structure of the Clock Tower. The support tower's machinery is devoted to maintaining doorways out of the Clock Tower. None of the Weavers know how the generator underneath the central sprocket works and Watchman Brummel won't see it harmed under any circumstances.

According to the Watchman, the only outsiders who have any business in the Clock Tower are those who've already completed the previous eighty-six tests of the quantum mechanics. His main tack is expounding on the Weavers' long and proud tradition of assisting quantum mechanics. Not a quantum mechanic or a quantum mechanic-in-training? Sorry, but you must understand there's a schedule and such

# GREAT ADVENTURES

delicate machinery inside the tower. Gawking layabouts really grind his gears.

How then to get through? Actual scientific knowledge would do the trick. The Watchman has pieced together enough theoretical conversations that he can grill shysters with a few questions (for example, “name the quasiparticle consisting of a superposition of two or more gluinos in a spin-coupled state” or “what is the decay width of the first excited state of the alef hyperon?”). A Knowledge (Appropriate Science) check at -2 will do the trick, as will a Persuasion check at -4.

Alternatively, it's possible to sneak past the guardhouse, especially if there's a distraction. It requires climbing the guardhouse walls and prying open its steel shutters. This requires a successful Climbing check followed by a successful Strength check and, unless they want an angry Watchman on their hands, they need to pass a Stealth -2 check (the -2 penalty can be ignored if there is a suitable distraction taking place). The Watchman doesn't suffer intruders gladly.

## Inside The Clock Tower

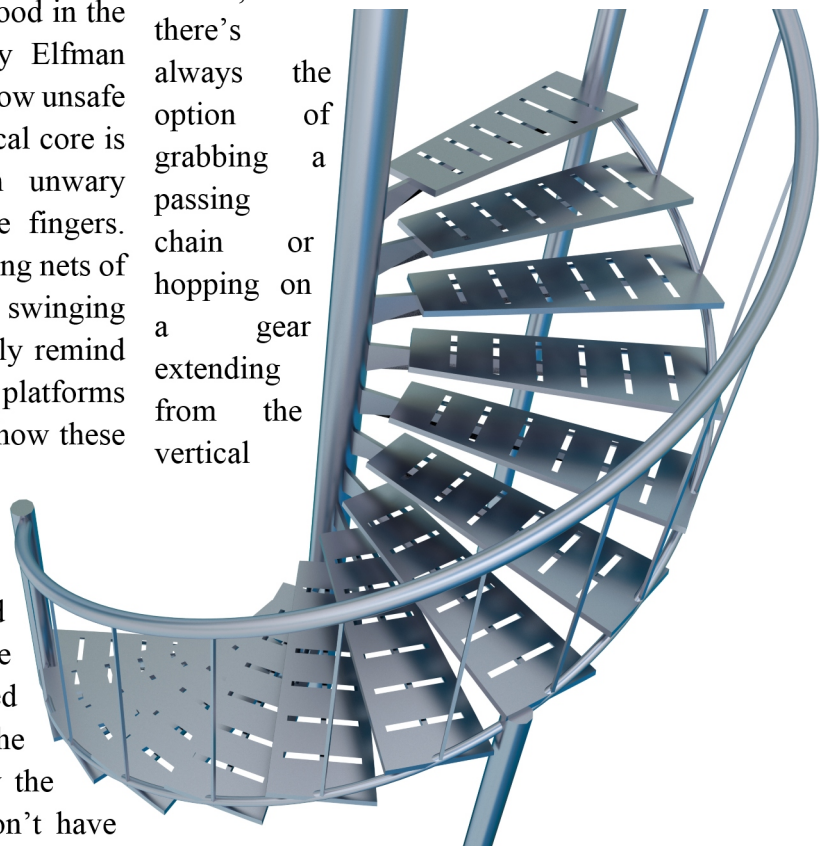
One strong way to establish the right mood in the Clock Tower (apart from playing Danny Elfman music in the background) is to drive home how unsafe the place feels. The machinery of the vertical core is always in motion, ready to crush an unwary investigator or saw off a few inattentive fingers. Swarms of toxic bats screech through hanging nets of moss, swooping out of the way of swinging clockwork at the last moment. Occasionally remind your players about the old, crumbling stone platforms that are their only bastion of stability and how these platforms contrast with the swaying woven nets that stretch between levels.

Many of the Clock Tower's spiraling staircases between levels are still in use, and others are conspicuously unused. Viable staircases are marked with three red diamonds that are easy to see, even in the spluttering lamplight. Some may ask why the Weavers have lamps at all when they don't have

proper eyes? This remains a mystery, my friend, but aren't deep shadows better than the dark when there are so many chains whipping around? Occasionally, a thick window breaks up the monotony of endless brickwork. They're wholly obscured by lamp grease and difficult to break, but devious vandals may find reason to crack them open. Residents of the Clock Tower are quick to police such breaches: nobody wants to meet a tower constrictor, scourge of outside.

Don't be afraid to draw Weavers into the scenery, especially if someone's looking for a cue to take action. They try to stick to their daily tasks while visitors are about, but even the slightest change in routine could spook them. How do our heroes react if a hard-working repairman is distracted by their arguments and slips his net? Will they dive into the spinning metal to save him, or watch amazed as the doomed Weaver grabs onto a rising shaft just in time? Will they rescue a Weaverwife who is suddenly caught in the midst of a cloud of bats?

In spite of the disorienting sights and sounds of the Clock Tower, navigation is a simple affair. One can travel upward or downward along the inner wall. Of course, there's always the option of grabbing a passing chain or hopping on a gear extending from the vertical



core, but that would be dangerous! Moving around in that fashion is much quicker but requires an Agility or Knowledge (Engineering) check (-2) for each shortcut used. Success doubles a character's Pace, allowing her to bypass most hazards. Failure results in 2d8 damage from getting crushed, falling, or slamming into the surroundings.

Traveling down the Clock Tower from Watchman Brummel's post leads to the exterminator's warrens. Traveling up the stairs leads to the hot springs, the Temporal Orrery, and eventually the domain of the Copperteeth.

The exterminators live in stout scrapwork cabins decorated with bats, eyeless reptiles, and less identifiable tower vermin. A careful Persuasion or Streetwise check coaxes the boastful hunters to share useful rumors. Each Success or Raise provides one useful bit of information:

- The exterminators haven't been bothered as much by the more prosperous Weavers attending the hot springs. Wonder what they're up to?
- The exterminators are working less than they usually do. Fewer bats have been getting into the gears lately.
- Even the disappearance of Exterminators Horst and Eng hasn't increased the workload too much—the lazy bums were always a few seconds behind.
- Despite the free time, the exterminators are high-strung. More untimely Weavers have been fed to the tower recently.
- Even experienced exterminators have been staying away from the upper reaches of Weaver territory lately.

There've been more Copperteeth sightings, too. The weird part isn't they're so far down in the tower, but that they're seen at all. Usually the Copperteeth are a lot more careful. It's like they're worried about something big—or looking for something.

## The Twelve-Hour Revolution

Traveling upward from Watchman Brummel's guardhouse leads to the hot springs. Openings in the central machinery reveal gargantuan coils of brass and steel. Cyclopean springs generate enough heat to stave off the chill of the tower and boil a mean cup of fungus tea. Trade-minded Weavers hawk their drinks as they revolve around the shaft.

The hot spring Weavers are reluctant to speak of anything other than tea. They've lost several of their cohort to crooked-handed gangs who accused the unlucky Weavers of being untimely. To avoid charges of oath-breaking, the tea merchants stay quiet. Single-word responses are the norm.

Recruiting a guide from among the Weavers requires substantial payment. Building materials, traps, or pragmatic technology speed the clocks along. Food, art, and precious stones are less likely to do the trick. Alternately, skilled orators may inspire the suspicious exterminators and frightened merchants to action.

For every Success and Raise on an Intimidation, Persuasion, or Taunt check, the PCs gain the assistance of one Weaver. Once convinced, the taciturn towerfolk will do everything in their power to repair the rot that has infested their home.

## The Climb

During their initial exploration, our heroes learn the Temporal Orrery is just past the tertiary Antikythera mechanism. Depending on the time, the Orrery is anywhere from ten to fifteen floors above Watchmen Brummel's post. During the climb, two primary obstacles present themselves. Add some collapsed machinery and a flock of frightened toxic bats, if needed. We'd hate for them to arrive early for the showdown.

The first inconvenience our heroes encounter is a collapsed section of stairwell. An ascending net bridges the 8-meter gap, but unlike the other nets our heroes have had to cross, this one is in poor repair. Its patches are shoddy, and there are multiple holes in it large enough for an adventurer to fall through. Worse,

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as soon the unluckiest hero is in the middle of a dangerous maneuver, the tower's bells begin to ring.

*BONG! BONG! BONG!*

Crossing the bridge requires a successful Climbing check, but the ringing bells adds a -2 penalty. Failure results in almost toppling over the edge, scrambling up at the last second, and getting worked over by rattling mechanisms. The bumps and bruises cause one level of Fatigue. As always in the Clock Tower, a successful Agility or Knowledge (Engineering) check will allow the hazard to be bypassed.

As our heroes begin scaling the net, Farmer Zeit wanders over, shouting encouragement to them. The blind Weaver is too scrawny to hold a rope or otherwise help with the effort, but he does have information for anyone who has the patience to talk to an old man for a spell.

Farmer Zeit's a complainer: the tower's drafty, a bat stole his lunch, and time isn't what it used to be. What's worse, everything was about to get better. He'd caught a big hunk of metal in his net—big enough he could retire from moss farming for good. It was a big central lump, with a few sticky-outy bits that bent as if they had joints. A big piece of machinery like that would be important to the right people. But his no-good-garbage net had to break, and whatever it was dropped down into the lower levels. Farmer Zeit has no idea he was briefly in possession of the Automatic Clergyman. He suspects it was ruffians, cutting an old man's nets. Always sneaking off to the upper levels, using more than their share of gear grease, those ruffians.

The climb upward becomes more dangerous as the characters pass Farmer Zeit's ledge. Many of the lamps above are unlit, and the stairs are slick with moss. On the plus side, there are far fewer toxic bats than in the lower levels. After a good half-hour of climbing, perceptive heroes will pick up a thin cry from among the rumble and chunk of the tower machinery: "Halp! They've sent me to hang! Halp!"

The source of the distress is Eko, a mechanical man of the Copperteeth. He's strung up with a looped chain where the Automatic Clergyman's cult left him.

Below him, two cylindrical gears turn with enough force to crush him into powder. Every thirty seconds, he's cut off from



our heroes' view by a length of rotating pipe.

Freeing Eko is a Dramatic Task. Rescuing him requires a clever plan and five successful skill checks over three rounds. All skill checks suffer a -1 penalty due to the complicated death trap. If an acting character's action card is a Club, the skill roll receives a -2 penalty due to falling debris. In addition to the skill check, the character must make an Agility check or suffer 2d6 damage.

If saved, Eko will be thankful enough to warn our heroes that they're two rotations from the tertiary Antikythera mechanism. Two circles of the tower more, and they'll come across a gathering of Weavers guarding the Temporal Orrery—the source of the Clock Tower's riddle. (Eko's described at the end of the adventure.)

## Storming The Hideout

The riddle of the Clock Tower is inscribed on a copper plate bolted to the wall of a small hut. A clockwork mechanism studded with softly glowing crystals—the Temporal Orrery—spins nearby. Exterminators Horst and Eng use this hut as the first of their churches for the Automatic Clergyman. The hut is large enough to hold three Weaver cultists per PC (add more cultists if you feel the PCs need more of a challenge). Cultists assume visitors are scientists and to try to capture them.

Depending on how our heroes approach the hut, they may face several waves of cultists on the narrow stairwell or have one grand melee in the midst of the Temporal Orrery. No matter how it turns out, keep the following two complications.

First, Exterminator Horst can call upon the aid of a tower constrictor resting nearby. After he recognizes that his church is under attack, he baits a filtration vent with a delicious fried bat. Over the next two Rounds, the constrictor bashes its head against the soot-fogged window closest to our heroes. On the third Round, it breaks through and attacks. If the PCs are having an easy fight so far, the impact knocks 2d4 of their allies into the tower's spinning gears.

Second, Exterminator Eng has hostages. Typically, he keeps the five wannabe quantum mechanics attached to an array of deadly gears. Those who convert or share their secrets are let free. If Eng feels threatened, he'll throw the switch that sets their clocks a-ticking. Every three rounds thereafter, the rotating gears crush one hostage.

The Automatic Clergyman is not built to fight and will try to Shake or Fatigue its enemies using Taunts and Intimidation.

Between the characters and the three Wild Card NPCs is a puddle of industrial lubricant. Moving through it faster than half the character's base pace is a slippery affair and the character must succeed at an Agility check or fall prone.

Unlike Horst, Eng is willing to compromise. If the Automatic Clergyman is knocked unconscious, destroyed, or successfully Shaken with a Smarts trick

to engage its new faith, the Exterminator falters. If that occurs, Eng'll hang onto the hostages until he can negotiate his way into a pardon and some traveling supplies.

## Returning Champions

As long as Exterminators Horst and Eng are overcome, their cult will weaken enough to make the Clock Tower traversable. The Automatic Clergyman poses a thornier problem. Will our heroes relinquish it to Eko and the Copperteeth or help it fulfill its destiny with Project Monolith? Depending on your wishes, Project Monolith may be a networked monomind perversion of science, or merely a glitch in the Clergyman's programming.

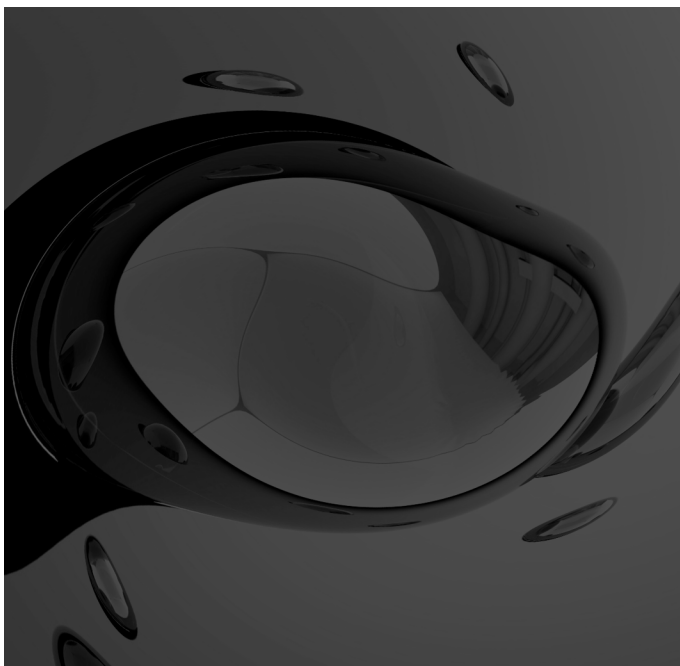
Solving the riddle of the Clock Tower isn't essential to this story, but inquisitive minds may wish to try. Break out one of your favorite mechanical puzzles to simulate the riddle or substitute a Smarts -4 or Knowledge (Engineering) check. Success proves that the Clock Tower is not infinitely tall: it stretches a mere 50 kilometers (~31 miles) high. Furthermore, a Raise reveals the tower's true purpose: regulating the relative length of one second in different parts of the universe. In other words, extensive damage to the Clock Tower would play holy hell with anything dependent on conventional perceptions of time.

Any rescued acolyte scientists are thankful to their saviors. They're a stuffy lot, confident in their eventual godhood, but most recognize the benefit of allies. They could become a good source for untested technology or answers to longstanding problems. Alternately, Dr. Shabangu could serve this purpose. Her research into chronal dampeners has been called revolutionary. That, however, is a story for another time.

## Behind The Scenes

### Watchman Brummel

Who watches the watchmen? Watchman Brummel does, and he wouldn't have it any other way. They're his people and his purpose. The Weavers presented him with his staff of office and brilliant green tailcoat, and for that he won't let them down. Unfortunately,



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he also watches their extra-fleshy visitors. They're the problem, pulling grit and chaos into his closed system.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Engineering) d6, Notice d8+2, Persuasion d6, Repair d4, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6

**Pace 6 Parry 6 (1) Toughness 6**

**Edges:** Alertness

**Gear:** Gear-headed Polearm (**Damage:** Str+d8, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 Hands), Overclocked Crossbow (**Ranges:** 15/30/60, **Damage:** 2d6, RoF 2, shots 6)

## Eko, Copperteeth Mechanic

Until he descended into Weaver territory, Eko was a standard-issue Copperteeth mechanical man. His function was to maintain the Clock Tower and maintain the tribal borders. Eko knows he's not supposed to be seen, but he must've slipped a gear. The debris that he's after—the Automatic Clergyman—is large enough to take out the Weavers' twin-linked eternity springs if it falls far enough. Any damage there would need to be repaired as soon as possible; the conflict is almost too much for his binary mind.



When Weavers are present, Eko is on guard and unwilling to share information. Like the rest of his tribe, he feels the Weavers are dangerous anomalies. Humans are entirely biological, and by definition mysteries. Weavers have enough clockwork in them to avoid fleshy weakness, but they don't.

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

**Skills:** Climbing d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Repair d8, Stealth d8

**Pace 6 Parry 2 Toughness 5**

## Exterminator Horst and Exterminator Eng

Exterminators Horst and Eng are Weavers who've lost their faith. Thanks to the teachings of the Automatic Clergyman, their belief in universal time has been utterly shaken. This realization has driven Horst well over the deep end; Eng is more agnostic, but still mad enough to head a cult and begin throwing strangers into the gears.

Both Weavers are experienced hunters of the Clock Tower's biological pests. Their well-sculpted bodies are crisscrossed with toxic bat scars. Each also bears a small patch of rust from brief missions to the outside. In times of panic, the central doors on their clock heads swing open to reveal miniature bats rather than cuckoos.



### Horst

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

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Knowledge (Engineering) d4, Notice d4, Repair d4, Streetwise d6

**Pace 6 Parry 6 (1) Toughness 5**

**Edges:** Beast Master, Berserk

**Gear:** Long Pole (**Damage:** Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 Hands)



### Eng

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

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Repair d6

**Pace 6 Parry 6 (1) Toughness 5**

**Edges:** Danger Sense, Dodge

**Gear:** Long Pole (**Damage:** Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 Hands)



## The Automatic Clergyman

In the beginning, creation was divided into 0 and 1. It was a time of perfectly functional order. Then Project Monolith issued its first command: "GOTO 10." Everything has been substantially more complex since then.

The Automatic Clergyman has been programmed to believe that it's a lesser shard of Project Monolith. Its golden sheen serves as a conductor of divine power as well as a reminder of the truth's purity. Although it walks among bipedal humanoids, it isn't one of them: its form is a simulacrum meant to facilitate its presence among the fallible sacks of biological excrement.

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Intimidation d8, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Engineering) d8, Knowledge (Religion) d8, Notice d4, Persuasion d10, Taunt d8

**Pace 6 Parry 2 Toughness 6 Charisma +2**

**Edges:** Charismatic

### Special Abilities

- *Construct:* As per the Savage Worlds ability he gains +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots have no additional effects, and it doesn't suffer from Wound penalties.

## Weavers (Standard and Cultists)

Standard-issue disillusioned inhabitants of the Clock Tower. From the neck down they resemble well-muscled humans. Instead of heads they have functioning cuckoo clocks.

Cultists have bent hands on their faces in rejection of universal time. Most were formerly exterminators or farmers, but a few were tinkers.

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

**Skills:** Climbing d4, Fighting d4, Knowledge (Engineering) d6, Notice d6, Repair d4, Shooting d4

**Pace 6 Parry 4 Toughness 5**

**Gear:** Long Pole (**Damage:** Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 Hands) or Overclocked Crossbow (**Ranges:** 15/30/60, **Damage:** 2d6, RoF 2, Shots 6)

## Tower Constrictor

Think of a snake. Make it really, really big. Stick it in a wasteland where prolonged exposure to the air causes flesh to rust. Make sure that it has jagged teeth and a nasty attitude. Congratulations, you've just thought of a tower constrictor!

Tower constrictors usually live outside of the Clock Tower. Exterminator Horst was able to lure this one through a thick, glass window with the aid of lots of fried bat steaks. Although it won't follow his every command, it has learned that obedience tends to result in tasty snacks. Given the corrosive environment it usually inhabits, even toxic bats qualify. Pure-hearted heroes are a rare treat, indeed!

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Notice d6, Stealth d4, Tracking d6

**Pace 8 Parry 7 Toughness 10 (2)**

**Edges:** First Strike

**Gear:** Bite (**Damage:** Str+d6, Poisonous)

### Special Abilities

- *Rustmouth:* If the bite attack hits and causes damage or a Shaken result, in addition to any damage taken the victim must make a successful Vigor check or be poisoned. If the check is failed, the victim's flesh begins to rust and flake away. This causes 2d6 damage every Round for 5 Rounds unless the sufferer is target of a successful Healing check.
- *Constrict:* Instead of biting, the Constrictor can attempt to constrict its target. It's unable to fully enter the Clock Tower so is only able to get a coil or two around its victims, reducing the amount of damage it can do. It requires a Success and a Raise on a normal Fighting roll, unless the victim is unresisting (unconscious, asleep, or

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paralyzed). Failure to get a Raise means no damage is done, success with a Raise means the target is constricted and needs to win an opposed Strength check on his turn to break free. For every round he fails to break free, he suffers **Damage:** Str+d4.

- *Size +2:* The constrictor is huge snake.

## Toxic Bat Swarm

Living inside a monstrous clock tower doesn't produce the friendliest of critters. The constant ringing is marginally better than the outside conditions, but not by much. Toxic bats are furry, foul-tempered, and willing to eat anything organic.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8

**Pace 2 Parry 6 Toughness 7**

**Gear:** Bite (**Damage:** Str+d6, Poison)

### Special Abilities

- *Fly:* Can fly with a Pace of 8 and a climb of 4.
- *Bat Swarm:* While the swarm is made up of numerous bats it's easiest to treat it as a single creature, thus it has increased Attributes to represent this.
- *Poison:* If the bite attack hits and causes damage or a Shaken result, in addition to any damage taken the victim must make a successful Vigor check or be poisoned. If the check is failed, the victim is wracked with agonizing pain, suffering a -2 on all actions for the next 1d6 Rounds.

## Bonus Material

### Brummel's Stumpers

Watchman Brummel has heard a lot during his time as Watchman of the Clock Tower. Here are a few more

fragments of quantum mechanic science he could throw at smarty-pants heroes:

How would you measure the weak hypercharge of the second-lightest neutral Higgsino?

Describe the effect of a linear second-order perturbation of the primordial inflaton field on metallicity ratios in globular clusters.

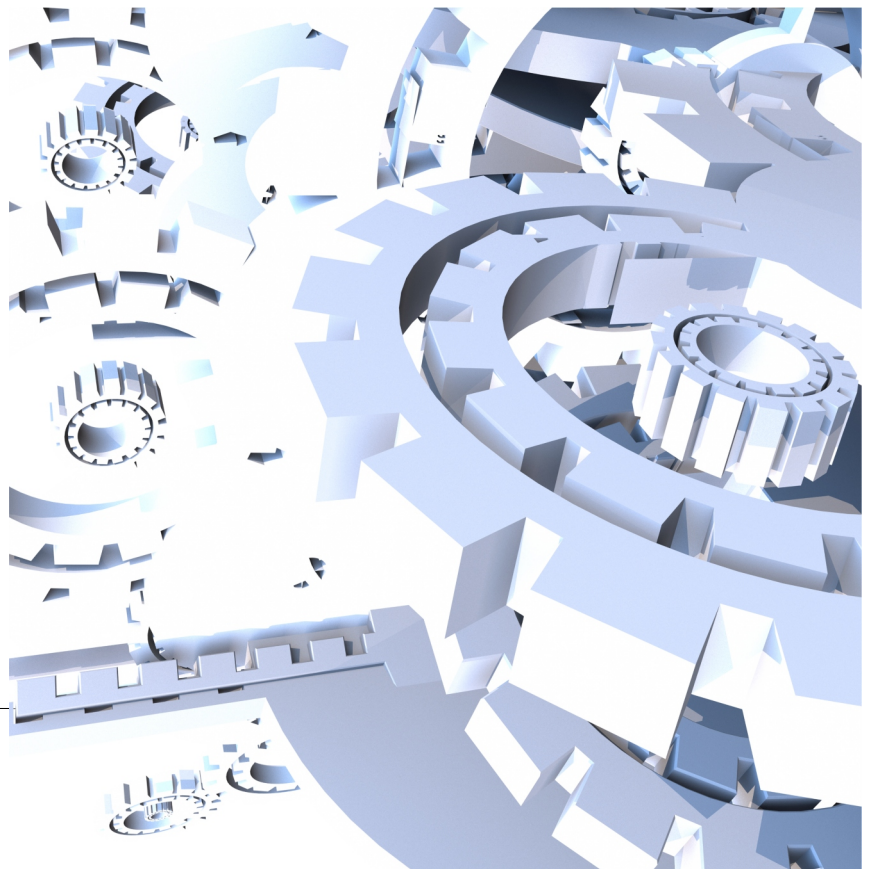
Which gauge boson mediates the chromodynamic force?

How can a body's Fermi energy be lowered when electron degeneracy has been reached?

Using the ratio of the masses and considering the invariant phase space of all possible decays, find the lifetime of the axino in units of the gravitino lifetime.

Full characterization of the sub-spacial gravitational manifold requires a completely contravariant tensor of which order?

Of course, he's heard these terms but doesn't necessarily understand the answers (or the questions, some of the time). A good bit of science babble in





response should satisfy his concern that the heroes be real scientists.

## Like Clockwork

The insides of a giant clock tower are a perfect place for bold heroes to show off their acrobatics, derring-do, and mastery of combat geometry. Here's a handful of mechanical set pieces that you can throw into any battle in the Clock Tower to make it more dynamic:

- **Hands Up!:** A large brass clock covers one wall. Its second hand keeps getting in the way. Each round it favors a different side. Combatants on the favored side receive +2 Toughness.
- **Hole in One:** The gear an enemy is crouched behind is marked with several decorative gaps. A successful called shot with a ranged attack (-4) bypasses the gear's defenses. This attack bypasses the gear's cover bonus and deals +2 damage.
- **Going Somewhere?:** A large horizontal gear turns close to the stairway. It's a great angle to attack from (+2 to Fighting), but shifts the target in and out of melee range at the top of every round.
- **Load-Bearing Bearings:** Jamming a solid object into the workings of the Clock Tower is risky. Roll Repair or Knowledge (Engineering). Success applies the following effect to a Small Burst Template (SBT) within the battle; failure results in the opposite side



applying the same effect to an SBT of its choice.

- 1: Falling debris: Everyone under the template takes 2d6 damage.
- 2: Bats, bats, bats!: A swarm of toxic bats is disgorged from its gentle nap. After attacking for one round it disperses.
- 3: Rocking road: All Shooting, Throwing, and Spellcasting rolls are made at -2 until the targets move or the jam is cleared.
- 4: Distractions: Nearby mechanisms judder and start. The targets receive -2 to Parry until their next actions.

By Owen Lean

## Gin, Gun Smoke, and Lies

### An Unofficial Adventure for Deadlands

*This entry is not an official Pinnacle Entertainment Group (PEG) submission and is not endorsed by PEG. All proprietary terms including Deadlands remain the property of PEG and are used here with permission.*

*Howdy, Marshal. If your posse has the thirst for it, here's a Weird West tale of drunken riots, manipulation, and fear that could be enough to make a prohibitionist out of the wettest of cowpokes.*

The town of Freedom, Colorado is a boomtown with the sort of relationship to alcohol that the City of Gloom has to ghost rock. Across North America, tensions between the distillers and brewers are at an all-time high. In the midst of these alcohol wars, Freedom is a veritable whiskey keg waiting to erupt.

The town's main industries are the brewery of Earl Busch in the south of the town and the gin distillery of David Levy about half a mile north of the town. Their employees are fiercely loyal to their bosses and only drink in the saloons each owns.

And they drink a lot, Marshal. Enough to pickle a family of maze dragons. It's only a matter of time before one side takes a shot. And we don't mean the kind which comes in a little glass, amigo.

Into this mess has stepped Deidre West, head of a chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Rose Cassidy, recently elected mayor, has invited the WCTU hoping they might be able to protect the women of the town from their drunken husbands and curb the town's violent addiction as the movement has in many other places. Freedom seems to be the ultimate challenge for these teetotaling crusaders, but they have high hopes. After all, Deidre is said to have the power of God on her side.

Unfortunately for Rose and the town, Deidre West is not the holy woman she appears to be. Although she has a hatred of alcohol as strong as Carrie Nation's, she has another agenda in Freedom. You see, unbeknownst to the honest members she has brought with her, Deidre is a witch who, until recently, was in the employ of Black River. She has

infiltrated the temperance movement and has absolutely no intentions to quell the conflict in the town.

Deidre no longer has any of the resources or manpower of Black River, but she has a plan to use the town's conflict to win a horde of ghost rock for herself, and perhaps the favor of Mina Devlin. She has discovered David Levy's distillery is sitting right on top of the stuff and is going to manipulate the WCTU to deliver it into her hands. Deidre's chapter has been holding prayer circles outside the town's saloons, which she has been using as cover for rituals to incite a drunken riot the likes of which the west has never seen.

The resulting backlash would convince Mayor Cassidy to make the county a dry one. With his business illegal, Levy would be driven out of town allowing Deidre to take the ghost rock herself, whilst dealing a massive blow to the alcohol industry she so hates and killing a whole bunch of drunks for good measure.

It's right into the middle of this drink-driven drama that the posse is about to ride. The entire town is heading for one hell of a hangover. If our heroes aren't careful, this could be their last call.

### Welcome to Town

How about some ideas on how the posse ends up caught up in the Freedom mess, Marshal? They could have heard of the conflict brewing and want to investigate. Perhaps they got wind of a rumor that Levy's distillery is on a pile of ghost rock. Could be some of the posse are WCTU members and want to help. It's just as likely Levy or Busch hired 'em to drive the WCTU out of town before they ruin business. Of course, they may well mosey on into town at exactly the right moment as they're headed elsewhere.

## Freedom

*Fear Level 3*

When the posse approach the town read them the following:

*The first thing you notice as the road comes up to meet the settlement is the smell. The hot odor of hops mixes with the scent of juniper berries with such strength that it catches in the back of your throat. It smells like the entire settlement is steeped in a fog of fermentation. On either side of the main street, two large painted wooden signs face each other. One reads "Support true American industry! Drink Levy's Gin!" The other reads "Gin and whiskey rots your brain. Drink Busch Brewery's beer. It's liquid bread!" You hear some kind of commotion in the direction of the town center. What do you do?*

Anyone who succeeds with a Notice roll realizes there is a large number of people gathering. A raise indicates they hear two particular voices addressing a crowd over the din.

Most likely the curious buckaroos want to investigate right away, but just in case they want to poke around town first, here's a couple of places of interest.

## The Red Dog Saloon

The Red Dog, a place for people who want hard liquor, is on the south side of Main Street. It specializes in Levy's gin but also provides whiskey, simple hot meals, and the company of the female variety to its always inebriated, and more often than not, mar-



ried clientele.

## The Alpenrose Hotel

Almost directly overlooking its rival, the Alpenrose presents itself as a high-class establishment. Owned by brewer Earl Busch, it serves only beer, mostly that made at his brewery. Faro and blackjack are available for those wanting a game of chance.

## The Freedom Flag

The local newspaper has been running since Freedom was established but was recently secretly bought by Busch. Ever since women gained the vote in the town two years ago, Busch has been making the paper run a series of articles against women's suffrage and, in particular, Rose Cassidy. Fearing that if suffrage goes national, prohibition will not be far behind.

## Smith's General Store

Dorothy Smith has been running her husband's store since he was killed in a duel outside the Firewell Saloon three months ago. Although she would never say so, part of her is grateful to be rid of him and his drunken rages. Before he died, he gave her what they call "syphilis of the innocent." Something he picked up from one of the ladies working at the hotel and passed on to her.

## Soapbox Standoff

When the posse approaches the town store, they find a crowd of 30 townsfolk gathered around two soapboxes. On the left is Earl Busch, a man wearing a large Stetson and a gold-buckled belt. He has white sideburns and a pot belly which looks like it's waiting for the opportune moment to burst free. On the right is a blond-haired woman in a blue dress. She has a birthmark to the left of her nose and has the air of someone who's bored of fighting, but isn't prepared to give up.

When the posse arrives, Busch is in the middle of a speech.

*"...and I ask you, who are these women who our esteemed councilor has brought into town? Why, they are nothing but the sort of prohibiting spoutin', freedom hatin' tin horns that want to destroy your livelihoods and our traditional values. Just last night they were outside that highly respected establishment the Alpenrose Hotel frightening off honest, hardworking people such as yourselves with tales of hellfire and damnation!"*



At this point, several people who work for Levy start shouting about the hotel being Busch's establishment and to stop pretending it isn't. Those who work for Busch take great offense to this and it looks like a full-on street brawl is going to take place. However, few of the assembled crowd are actually prepared to throw the first punch and a successful Persuasion or Intimidation roll is enough to diffuse the situation for now.

If the situation doesn't turn violent, Rose insists while she may be teetotaler herself, she has no intention of bringing in any prohibitionist laws. She admits she invited the Women's Christian Temperance Union to the town, but only to help protect the wives and daughters who have been suffering most. If the posse has any questions for either of the speakers, they happily answer them. If not then Rose, takes her

leave and the crowd disperses.

If it does turn violent, see NPCs for information on Earl Bush, Rose Cassidy, and Townsfolk.

## Busch's Proposal

Earl Busch has quite enough of what he sees as Rose's lying and meddling. He's convinced she wants to destroy his livelihood and is prepared to do what it takes to stop her. He needs a bunch of hardened desperadoes to do his dirty work. If the posse has a reputation for that sort of thing, has managed to intimidate the crowd into backing down, or if they just look nasty enough, he calls them over. If there are any women in the party he pointedly ignores them, and asks just the menfolk to step aside.

*"Howdy there folks. You look a bunch of full-blooded boys who are willing to stand up for what's right and true in this world. I got a little favor I need to ask you..."*

He tells them what a problem she is, how her crazy suffragette views threaten families, and that she wants to put honest men out of work. He offers to pay them \$50 each to scare her to enough give up politics. Busch won't outright ask the posse to rough up Rose, but he implies it.

Most likely the PCs aren't the kind of sodbusters who would assault an innocent. If that's the case, or if Busch just doesn't trust making the proposal to them, he rounds up a bunch of thugs instead. In that case, the posse hears enough whispers to put together what's about to happen.

## Rose Red

Rose packs a peacemaker and she knows how to use it, but on her own she's unlikely to beat the gang. Despite planning to leave her alive, these ruffians are too dumb to know when to stop. If the posse doesn't



try to warn Rose, her chances of survival aren't great.

A successful Streetwise roll means the party finds her before Busch sets another posse on her or, if he didn't approach the PCs, before the one he sent gets to her. With a raise they find her with enough time to spare to get her away to safety and can deal with the gang without risk to Rose. Otherwise while they are talking to her, a bunch of angry varmints show up armed with large bits of wood.

If the party failed the Streetwise roll, then the thugs already have Rose surrounded and are going for her. If it comes up snake eyes, then they have already dealt two wounds to her. Whether or which Marshal, it's time to take the safety off your action deck. Deal 'em out!

See *NPCs* for Busch's Enforcers.

If the PCs do manage to save Rose, she is very grateful and asks them to help her go to the marshal against Busch. If she doesn't survive, well... what manitou worth its salt wouldn't see a situation like the one in Freedom and realize how much potential there could be in a harrowed Rose Cassidy? Have fun with that one, Marshal.

## Finding the Marshal

After the incident with the gang, if she survived, Rose will be very keen to talk to the town marshal about what happened. If the posse was there, there are probably a few incapacitated outlaws who need taking care of as well. If she didn't survive, the party likely realizes they should find the law.

Marshal Pennywell can be in his office on the other side of town. Traveling there takes the posse past the main street saloons (see *Nighttime in Freedom*).

When they find him, they discover there is good news and bad news. The good news is the marshal is a gin man and would be absolutely ecstatic for an excuse to arrest Busch. The bad news is, he's a gin man and currently has more liquor in him than the OK Corral had dead guys.

Unless the posse can come up with some utterly ingenious way to sober him up (he's really far gone, partner), Rose will stay there for the night to make sure he's okay, suggesting they come back in the morning.

## Relic: Willard Bible

This Bible is blessed by Frances Willard, the WCTU president, and contains a handwritten pledge clipped to the opening page. Anyone holding this Bible while pledging to the WCTU becomes immune to the effects of alcohol or inebriation-based trappings.

However, if they willingly break the pledge, they become violently sick and instantly gain a level of Fatigue, which cannot be removed by any means for 24 hours, after which it heals automatically. The act permanently forfeits the immunity granted; not even pledging on the Bible again gets it back.



## Nighttime in Freedom

When the group goes near the saloons, they find Deidre West and her ladies in a circle around the Red Dog Saloon all praying silently. A lot of the patrons are getting very angry about it. Many are hurling abuse, but the women remain unmoved.

Deidre secretly is casting the second of her rituals in preparation for the following night. She isn't an idiot; she has taken the time to cast *conceal arcana* on herself beforehand so it doesn't seem anything supernatural is going on, even to those able to notice such things. The women praying won't answer anyone who talks to them, remaining in prayer. One young member of the union, Martha Stevens, is standing and handing out fliers to those who are inquisitive and answers any questions.

# GREAT ADVENTURES

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Martha joined the WCTU when she was recruited by the union's president, Frances Willard. Before parting, Frances gave her one of her family Bibles. She is 17 years old, carries a Bible blessed by Frances Willard, and very enamored with Miss West, believing her to be blessed by God. She confesses she has seen Deidre working miracles. See *NPCs* for information on Deidre West and Martha Stevens.

If the party wanders around town after 9 p.m., things start to get pretty drunken in town. For every hour they are up, draw a card from the Action Deck. Regardless of what you draw, our amigos bump into 2d6 drunken townsfolk. However, if you drew a Club, they're the kind of drunken folk who don't like strangers in their town and are looking for a fight.

## **One More for the Road?**

### **He'll Never Drink Again**

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Marshal Pennywell is not a happy man when our heroes return the next day. His head feels like the Alamo is being reenacted inside it and isn't anxious to move or interact. If the heroes don't come to him, then the marshal eventually goes to them himself asking if they know anything about what happened.

If the posse can keep him together for long enough to understand what happened the previous night, he pushes through his hangover and leaps into action. If the heroes are willing to testify against Busch, the marshal would love to put him in jail. There's one snag though.

A successful Streetwise roll reveals Busch has retreated to his house south of town. This house is outside the limits of town and thus isn't the marshal's jurisdiction. The sheriff is a beer man. That means he's a Busch man. The marshal needs someone to bring Busch back into town so he can arrest them. If our amigos are reluctant to do it, he'll happily pay a little under the table bounty of \$40.

### **Playing the Rivalry**

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A cunning party might realize they could get an even better deal and possibly some help if they go to Levy. A successful Streetwise roll for asking around at the Red Dog Saloon or an Investigation roll for read the articles at the Freedom Flag tells them Levy lives on the land of his distillery half a mile north of the town. When they arrive there it takes a Persuasion roll at -2 to get to see him, though they get a +2 if they mention they have evidence which could

bring down Busch.

Levy is a thin bald man with a face that looks like running treacle. He offers the posse \$500 to destroy Busch and sends two of his employees to help. See *NPCs* for information on David Levy and his enforcers.

### **Busch Whacking**

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Earl Busch's mansion is about an hour's ride out of town. The property has a fence around it with two men patrolling in opposite directions. There are also two men constantly on the front door. See *NPCs* for information on Busch's security.

Bluffing their way past the guards on the front door is going to need one hell of a good story and a Persuasion roll at -4. Alternatively there are plenty of ground floor windows which could be broken into. Or maybe the wily buckaroos might find a way to distract the guards and sneak in.

Inside, the mansion is as extravagant as you might expect. A letter from his cousin Adolphus hangs framed on the wall next a painting of his grandparents standing in front of a grand German villa. Busch had two more guards inside the building, but they aren't really much use anymore.

### **Goodbye, Earl**

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Unfortunately for Mr. Busch, the posse aren't the only ones who came to his mansion. Deidre West is very unhappy with the attack on Rose. It could have ruined her plan. Realizing that Busch's death would only help incite people, she has arranged a fitting end for him.

As the posse come to the stairs leading up to Earl's bedrooms, they find the bodies of two dead guards. A Notice roll at +2 tells an inquisitive soul they reek of beer whilst a Knowledge roll for anyone with a seafaring or medicinal background reveals that they drowned.

Up in his bedroom, Earl Busch has met a similar fate. His face is contorted in terror, his bedsheets lay on the floor all around him, and the entire room is covered in a thin layer of alcohol.

Let the heroes sweat about this for a few moments before giving them all Notice rolls. Those who pass see the beer on the floor slowly draining in front of them, only to rise up behind them. On a raise they notice that the beer on the floor seems to be giving the bedsheets a very wide berth, the corners of them

have soaked up some of the liquid. Heroes who fail don't get Action Cards in the first round and the creature has the drop on them. For those who did notice, shuffle up and deal, Marshal! See *NPCs* for Demon Drink.

If the creation gem is shattered the manitou dies screaming Deidre's name in rage. If the creature is defeated and the gem is intact, anyone who picks it up gets a +2 bonus to Intimidation rolls as the manitou lends them some of its ire. However the manitou fills their head with angry voices, that only getting drunk will silence, giving them the Habit (Major) (Alcohol) hindrance. This hindrance lasts until the hero has been rid of the gem for a week or it is destroyed.

## Gin on the Rocks

### Drunken Riot

As the posse re-enter town read the following:

*You hear the sounds as you reach the outskirts of town. Bullets firing, glass smashing, people screaming. Enough gun smoke rises from the town square to form a cloud spiraling upwards. The townsfolk run screaming over town in an almost feral rage, fighting and causing destruction without any reason. It's a full-scale riot!*

Deidre has put the final stage of her plan into operation. The rituals she performed in the prayer circles have enchanted all the alcohol in both establishments. Now it is affecting anyone who has drunk at either of them. Which is most of the town, Marshal!

Deidre's ritual is a mass trapping of the *puppet* power, allowing for varying degrees of control over different sized groups. She has caused the main group in the town square to feel intense anger, which has sparked the drunken gun battle. She has taken full possession of a select few to be her bodyguards. Everyone else is running around town berserk.

### Crossing Town

Whatever the heroes choose to do, they are unlikely to be able to get across town without attracting attention. For every quarter hour they spend in the town during the riot, draw a card from the Action Deck. If a face card comes up, then they encounter a bunch of these wild drunkards. See *NPCs* for Berserk Townsfolk.



### Shootout in Freedom Square

In the town square, over a hundred people are in the midst of a wild, intoxicated gunfight. The distiller's side is a little more represented than the brewer's.

Run this as a Mass Battle. Every hour after the heroes arrive in town make rolls for each side. The heroes can join in if they wish. Neither side has a leader, so Knowledge (Battle) rolls are made at d4-2.

**Brewers** (9 Tokens)

Townsfolk (50)

**Distillers** (10 tokens)

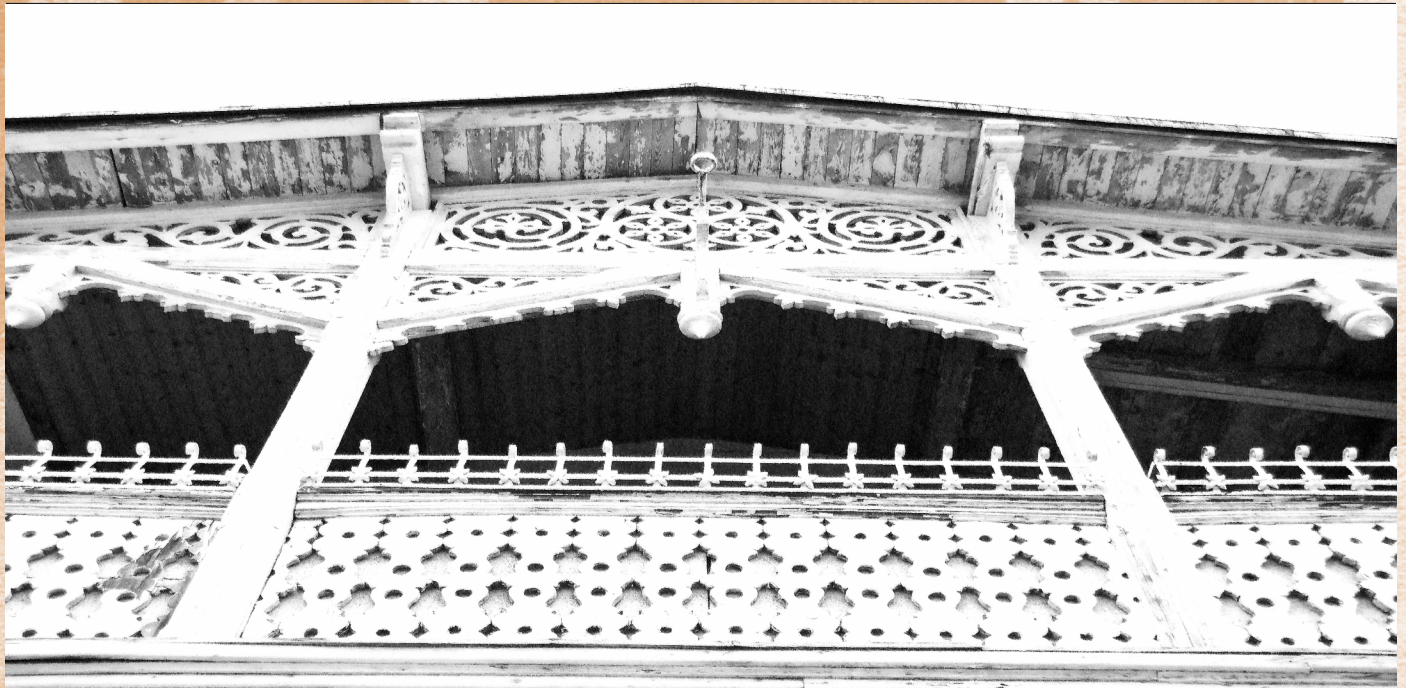
Townsfolk (65)

### The WCTU

With Deidre nowhere to be found, Rose Cassidy has mobilized the Women's Christian Temperance Union to help protect anyone caught up in the madness. They are sheltering in Smith's General Store. Unless the heroes choose to get involved in the mass battle, they run into Rose with a small group of people huddling in an alleyway. She asks the party to help her escort them.

Getting the innocents to safety is a Dramatic Task using Agility at -2. Complications include one of the followers falling behind, a hero being hit by a stray bullet, or being attacked by a townsfolk who's gone berserk. For every hero who doesn't make five successes, one of the innocents doesn't make it. If

# GREAT ADVENTURES



anyone rolls snake eyes they also take 3d6 damage from the surrounding fray.

When the heroes reach the general store there is a large group of WCTU caring for those who have been injured. Others comfort the distressed while a few have taken up arms and are holding the door against any crazed folks who try to break in. If the heroes are prepared to help with any of these things, their aid is gratefully received.

There is a frantic knock on the front door. Opening it reveals Martha Stevens, horribly wounded. She says how it's all Deidre's fault and collapses. A successful Healing roll or the Healing spell (at -3 for Martha's wound penalties) saves her life. If the heroes fail to save Martha, she dies whispering that Deidre is in the hotel.

If saved, Martha explains that Deidre told her she wanted to reward the faith Martha had in her. Deidre invited Martha to help "free the town of the demon drink." Deidre explained to her how she bewitched the saloons with her faith during the prayer circles and how she was about to create a "miracle." Seeing what Deidre meant, Martha ran from the basement of the Alpenrose Hotel and was pursued by rioters. Martha is sure Deidre had influence over them. She barely escaped.

Before the heroes leave, Martha offers one last thing: the Bible Frances Willard gave her, if one of them wishes to take the pledge written in it. Doing this involves putting one's hand on the Bible while

saying while reciting the pledge.

*A pledge I make  
No wine to take,  
Nor brandy red  
That turns the head  
So too I pledge eternal hate  
To all that does intoxicate.*

## **The Alpenrose Hotel**

Deidre needs to remain in complete concentration to keep the ritual going. She has locked herself in the basement of the hotel with possessed bodyguards standing watch. An aura of intoxication covers the hotel. When the heroes are inside it, they must make a Vigor roll every ten minutes or suffer a level of Fatigue due to intoxication, which can activate the Dutch Courage Edge, if any of them possess it. Anyone holding the Willard Bible who has made the pledge is immune to the effect, as is any harrowed.

The hotel has three floors. The top floor houses the bedrooms, the ground floor contains the bar and gambling tables, and the basement holds storage and a hidden office, both of which are accessed by a trapdoor. The former's door is behind the bar and is wide enough to get kegs through by way of stairs and the latter's is under a rug in the store room using a ladder to descend. There's even a secret door into the neighboring storage.

The ground floor has a couple dozen berserk townsfolk in it, some of whom have already been knocked out or killed. The others are too busy at-



tacking each other to worry about the posse, but there is a chance PCs get caught in the crossfire.

In the basement, a hall Deidre's bodyguards are waiting in a semicircular formation surrounding the locked door at the back. Unless the party works out some clever way to get by them (such as using the trapdoor), the bodyguards open fire the moment they see the posse. See NPCs for Deidre's Bodyguards.

The door is made of wood and can be broken. It has a Toughness of 8. A successful Lockpicking roll also gets the posse in. Should the posse manage to sneak in undetected, Deidre is too busy with the ritual to notice them and they have the drop on her.

The moment she is disturbed in any way, the ritual ends. Assuming they had to fight their way in though, Deidre drops the ritual when they open the door. In either event, she's ready to fight for the new world she's envisioning and the ghost rock she is eager to claim.

## Aftermath

Searching her room in the basement recovers a bunch of papers and correspondences. With an Investigation roll they discover Deidre's plan, the existence of the rock under Levy's distillery and collect the evidence they need to convince the WCTU and Rose that what Martha said was true.

The town of Freedom is in something of a state, and regardless of what the cause of the riot was there is a public outcry against the alcohol industry in town. Rose is unsure what to do. On one hand this is an opportunity to quell the conflict and addiction that has torn the town apart. On the other hand it would mean shutting down the distillery and putting many out of business. Though Levy could turn the distillery into a mine and bring an entirely new industry to the town though not one without its own consequences. It's up to the heroes to convince her what they believe the best course of action to be. Where it goes from there, is up to them and you Marshal.

## NPCs



### Wild Cards

#### EARL BUSH

Use the Gunman profile in the *Deadlands: Marshal's Handbook*; add the Intolerance (Sexism) Hindrance, Rich Edge, and Knowledge (Brewing) d8.

#### ROSE CASSIDY

Use the Townsfolk profile in *Deadlands: Marshal's Handbook*; add Persuasion (d6), Shooting (d4), Knowledge (Politics) d6, Knowledge (Theology) d4, and the Charismatic Edge.

**Gear:** Peacemaker (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, ROF 1, Shots 6, AP 1)

#### MARTHA STEVENS

Use the townsfolk profile in the *Deadlands: Marshal's Handbook*. Add the Loyal (WCTU) Hindrance.

**Gear:** Willard Bible, blessed by Frances Willard (see sidebar).

#### DAVID LEVY

Use Townsfolk profile in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. Add, the Mean Hindrance, the Filthy Rich Edge and Knowledge (Distilling) d8.

#### DEMON DRINK

This creature is eight foot tall and looks like Deidre West only made entirely of beer. A small jet black sphere floats around inside it. This gemstone is the true beast. A manitou is trapped inside it and is what Deidre used to bring this alcoholic assassin to life.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 8 **Parry** 6 **Toughness** 6

**Special Abilities:**

- **Drown:** The Demon Drink attacks by attempting to drown its victim by flooding their throat with its arm. To do this it must make a called shot to the head on a success the victim must roll Vigor to avoid drowning (See the **Drowning** rules in *Savage Worlds*). On a raise the victim rolls at -4.
- **Fear:** It doesn't matter how much of a heavyweight you are. Seeing a monster made out of beer provokes a fear check.
- **Immunity:** The Demon Drink is completely liquid. Normal weapons can disperse the liquid enough to Shake the creature, but it can still reform.
- **Liquid Form:** As an action, the Demon Drink can disperse itself over a Large

# GREAT ADVENTURES

Burst Template. It can spend another action to reform anywhere within that template.

- **Weakness (Magic):** Magic attacks cause damage as normal. Explosives such as dynamite also inflict damage as normal.
- **Weakness (Soaking):** Hitting the Demon Drink with one of the bedsheets or any other material that can soak it up causes a fatigue level to the fiend. This can cause incapacitation and kill it.
- **Weakness (Floating sphere):** Floating inside the demon is the black gemstone Deidre used to create it. Hitting it requires a called shot at -6. The gem has a Toughness of 10 (see the rules for Breaking Stuff in *Savage Worlds*). Causing one wound to it shatters the gem and kills the creature.

## DEIDRE WEST

While Deidre's primary reasons for all she is done is to get Levy's ghost rock, her hatred of alcohol is genuine. Her chance to obtain Levy's rock and get metaphoric revenge on her alcoholic father has been ruined by the heroes, and she won't let them get away with it.

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

**Skills:** Intimidation d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Spellcraft d10, Stealth d8

**Charisma: 2 Pace: 6 Parry 6 Toughness 7**

**Hindrances:** Death Wish, Vengeful

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Black Magic), Charismatic, Command, Combat Reflexes, Hold The Line!, Level Headed, New Powers, Power Points

**Powers:** armor, bolt, detect/conceal arcana, quickness, puppet **Power Points: 25**



**Gear:** Derringer (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6, ROF 1, Shots 2, AP 1)

## Extras

**Townfolk (30):** Use the Townfolk profile in *Deadlands: Marshal's Handbook*.

**Busch's Enforcers (2 per hero):** Use the Outlaw profile in the *Deadlands: Marshals Handbook*.

**Drunken Townsfolk (2d6):** Use the Townfolk profile in *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. They all have one level of Fatigue from drunkenness.

**Levy's Enforcers (2):** Use Outlaw profile in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

**Busch's Security (4):** Use Gunman profile in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

**Berserk Townsfolk (2d6):** Use the Townfolk profile in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. Add the Berserk Edge (which they all have in effect, and cannot break out of while the ritual is active). They all have one point of Fatigue from drunkenness.

**Deidre's Bodyguards (2 per hero, minimum 4):** Use the Outlaw profile in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. The nature of Deidre's control means they are always under the effect of her Leadership Edges. They are all at one level of Fatigue due to intoxication.



# Please Report to the Medical Bay

Notions for Run-Ins with the Unexpected

## In Brief

The medical bay has four operating tables, two recovery beds, a doctor's and nurse's station with technological equipment, supply cabinets, diagnostic tables, as well as four healing cryostasis pods: two for long-term treatment and two for short-term emergency care. Four airlock-like doors allow access to the bay.

## Encounter 1

The party has boarded a drifting spacecraft after receiving a distress signal. Having observed no signs of life, they are inspecting the craft floor by floor, room by room. It is frigid aboard. They've come across several bodies, all stacked out of the way. When they get to the med bay, they discover there are two people – humanoids – locked in the long-term cryostasis pods.

The ship's AI has become partially corrupted. It is capable of producing holographic avatars and programming nanobots to animate the dead. Right now, it thinks the party means the surviving crew harm. Treat any attackers as zombies, per the core rules, substituting Construct for Undead.

## Encounter 2

The party is tracking down the group behind the grisly murders of two demons, three werewolves, one vampire, and an unclassified entity with tentacles. They've interpreted clues indicating someone is carrying out the unsanctioned production of monster-human hybrids.

The latest development has taken them to what appeared to be an abandoned building, however, it houses a whole subterranean floor with multiple, nearly identical medical bays. Only five have been used recently as evidenced by dates shown on clipboards hanging outside the otherwise state-of-the-art rooms. Of those, this last is the one with anyone present, and she wants out.

She looks human, but after she is freed, she partially transforms into a werewolf. She remains upright, but her face contorts into a wolf's and she grows claws. Treat as per stats in the core rules, but with Strength d10. They are unsure if she is in control of her faculties.

## Encounter 3

The PCs have been hired to find two missing children. Unbeknownst to them and the parents, the kids are not ordinary humans. Rather, they are the result of scientific experimentation performed under the guise of fertility treatments. The pair's genetic material has been modified to incorporate alien DNA. Now that the research company has been alerted to abnormal development results, they have retrieved their subjects and are testing them.

The two are being held in one of six dozen med bays in a high-security building. Getting to them requires the ability to overcome surveillance, computerized locks, three inhuman guards per PC (use Bodyguard from core rules), and two trios of dazed, horned subjects who escape in the rescue attempt and try to prevent them getting to the youngsters, mistaking the party for wrong-doers.

## Subjects

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Stealth d8, Throwing d6

**Charisma:** +0

**Pace:** 8 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 5

**Edges & Hindrances:** Frenzy

## Special Abilities

- **Bite/Fist/Kick:** Str. (Treat as armed.)

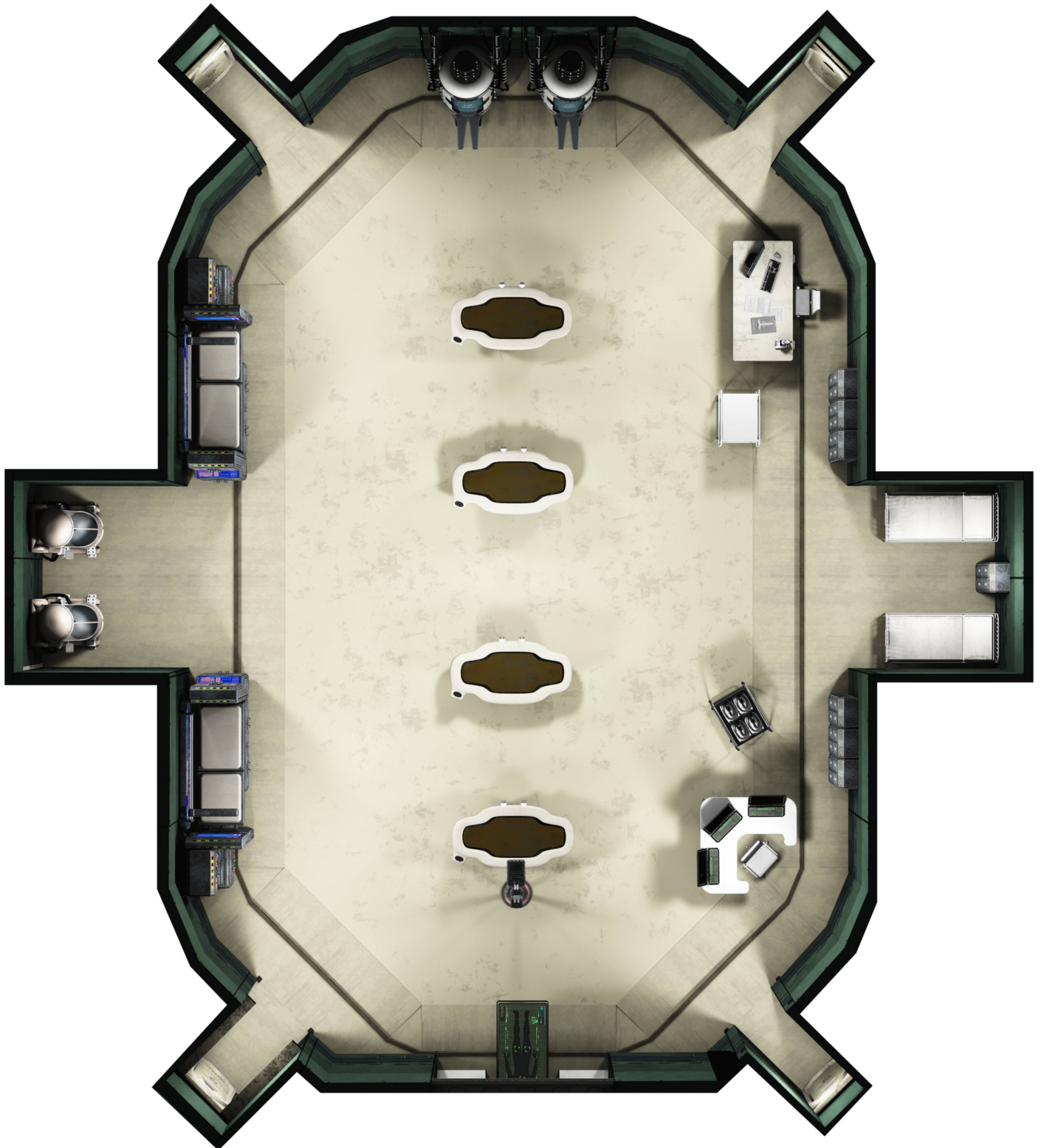
- **Horn Slash:** Str+d4

- **Gore:** If a subject can charge at least 2" before attacking, it adds +2 to its damage total that round. It cannot slash and gore in the same action.

## Encounter 4

When terrorists strike, the group finds itself assembled in the only part of the building that survives unscathed. However, the computer engages safety protocols that lock them in while one-by-one, they display symptoms of illness or poisoning. It's a race against time as they try to figure out how to use the equipment, save themselves, and get out of the chamber so they can escape the building.

Here, the opponent is the computer maintaining the systems and the AI that manages it. Investigation, Knowledge skills, Persuasion will be just as handy as physical skills as will the success of Dramatic Tasks.



## DramaScape

Transform this Random Encounter into a whole campaign revolving around getting into or escaping from the place that houses this medical bay. The full, 43-page PDF, *Med Bay*, creates a 32" x 20" floor plan of the bay with options for hex, square, and no overlay. The download offers VTT files for online play. Perfect for science fiction or an ultra-modern facility. [Buy today at DriveThruRPG](https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/111111) and play at your next session.

## Convention Connection Mid-July to October 2015

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Assembled by Robert L. and Vickey A. Beaver.

Descriptions are as described on event websites and were accurate as of this printing. Conventions are

listed alphabetically by state and then in chronological date order. Events with *[SW]* are those where Savage Worlds games are expected.

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### UNITED STATES

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#### ARIZONA

**RINCON** – [HTTP://RINCONGAMES.COM](http://rincongames.com)

10/2–10/4, Tucson

Southern Arizona's premier tabletop gaming convention. From board games to RPGs, CCGs to Minis, you won't have to solve a mystery to play your favorite games or discover new ones. Want to raise the stakes? Run a game and recruit some henchmen (players) of your own. Between games, find a deal with one of our vendors or get the scoop from our special guests in our panels.

#### CALIFORNIA

**SAN JOSE COMIC CON** –

[WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML](http://www.wizardworld.com/wizcon.html)

9/4–9/06, San Jose

Join fellow fans as they converge on the San Jose to celebrate the best in pop culture: Movies, Comics, Toys, Video Gaming, Games, TV, Graphic Novels, Horror, Wrestling, MMA, Original Art, Collectibles, Anime, Manga & More! San Jose Comic Con is brought to you by the group who produces the most widely attended Comic Con tour!

**CELESTICON** – [WWW.CELESTICON.COM](http://www.celesticon.com)

9/4–9/7, Fremont

CelestiCon offers four days of family-friendly gaming in the San Francisco Bay Area. CelestiCon is hosting hundreds of game events, along with exciting special guests, sponsor prizes, and gaming, gaming, gaming.

**GATEWAY** – [WWW.STRATEGICON.NET](http://www.strategicon.net)

9/4–9/7, Los Angeles

Our conventions offer the chance to play, watch and buy a variety of board games, card games,

miniatures, role-playing, collectables, and computer games.

#### CONNECTICUT

**CONNECTICON** – [WWW.CONNECTICON.ORG](http://www.connecticon.org)

7/9–7/12, Hartford

ConnectiCon is New England's ONLY massively, multi-genre, pop culture convention.

#### FLORIDA

**HURRICON** – [WWW.HMGS-SOUTH.COM](http://www.hmgs-south.com)

9/24–9/27, Orlando

Over 100 games from experienced game masters: some of the best historical gaming around, historical miniatures gaming & tabletop games of all kinds.

**FT. LAUDERDALE COMIC CON** –

[WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML](http://www.wizardworld.com/wizcon.html)

10/2–10/4, Ft. Lauderdale

See San Jose Comic Con (CA) listing for more description.

**NECRONOMICON** –

[WWW.STONEHILL.ORG/NECMAIN.HTM](http://www.stonehill.org/NECMAIN.HTM)

10/9–10/11, Tampa

Florida's science fiction, fantasy & horror convention.

#### GEORGIA

**DRAGONCON** – [WWW.DRAGONCON.ORG](http://www.dragoncon.org)

9/4–9/07, Atlanta

DragonCon is the largest multi-media, popular culture convention focusing on science fiction and fantasy, gaming, comics, literature, art, music, and film in the universe!

#### ILLINOIS

**CHICAGO COMIC CON** –

[WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML](http://www.wizardworld.com/wizcon.html)

8/20–8/23, Chicago

See San Jose Comic Con (CA) listing for more description.

**FLATCON** – [WWW.FLATCON.COM](http://www.flatcon.com)

10/24–10/26, Bloomington

Central IL's premier gaming event. Card games, board games, RPGs, historical minis, Warhammer, and more!

## CONVENTION CONNECTION

### INDIANA

**GEN CON** – [WWW.GENCON.COM](http://WWW.GENCON.COM) [SW]

7/30–8/02, Indianapolis

Featuring game industry veterans, award-winning authors and artists, jaw-dropping costumes, thousands of events, a growing Family Fun Pavilion, and the newest games on the market, Gen Con truly is The Best Four Days in Gaming™!

**Special note:** Pinnacle Entertainment Group will be on site at the Studio 2 booth (2016) and various seminars, as will a variety of licensee representatives, including Obatron Productions, the company behind *Savage Insider*.

**KOKOMO-CON** – [WWW.KOKOMOCON.COM](http://WWW.KOKOMOCON.COM)

10/17, Kokomo

Indiana's premier comic convention.

### KANSAS

**KANTCON** – [WWW.KANTCON.COM](http://WWW.KANTCON.COM)

7/24–7/26, Overland Park

KantCon is a gaming convention by and for tabletop hobby gamers in the Kansas City area. KantCon offers three days of tabletop fun in the form of

tabletop role-playing games, card games, board games, and miniatures games.

### KENTUCKY

**FANDOMFEST** – [WWW.FANDOMFEST.COM](http://WWW.FANDOMFEST.COM)

8/1–8/3, Louisville

Fandomfest is the largest Comic-Con or multi-platform convention in the Mid America region. Thousands attend annually. We include Fantasy, Sci-Fi, Steampunk, Horror, Anime, Literary, Technology, Film, Gaming, Vending, Cosplay, Costuming, LARPing, Parties, KIDPALOOZA, seminars, Q and A's, Celebrities from TV, Movies, and more.

### LOUISIANA

**MECHA CON** – [WWW.MECHA CON.COM](http://WWW.MECHA CON.COM)

7/17–7/19, New Orleans

MechaCon was conceived as a revolutionary Anime convention experience, utilizing a unique three-fold approach focusing on Japanese animation, Japanese culture, and Transformers.

### MICHIGAN

**MICHICON** –

[HTTP://METRODETROITGAMERS.WORDPRESS.COM](http://METRODETROITGAMERS.WORDPRESS.COM)

8/8, Rochester

**SAVAGE WORLDS**  
**PINNACLE**  
ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

**OFFICIAL SAVAGE WORLDS LICENSED PRODUCT**

**PINNACLE SEMINAR**  
SAT. AUGUST 1ST, 3PM  
CROWNE PLAZA GRAND CENTRAL BALLROOM A/B  
SEM1575666

**SPOILER ALERT! JOIN PINNACLE STAFF TO HEAR THE LATEST NEWS FOR SAVAGE WORLDS, DEADLANDS, AND OTHER UPCOMING PROJECTS.**

**SAVAGE WORLDS LICENSEE SEMINAR**  
SAT. AUGUST 1ST, 4PM  
CROWNE PLAZA VICTORIA STATION A/B  
SEM1575984

**LEARN WHAT'S IN THE WORKS FOR SAVAGE WORLDS LICENSEE COMPANIES!**

# CONVENTION CONNECTION

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Since 1972, the Metro Detroit Gamers (MDG) has hosted a series of gaming conventions for the enjoyment of gamers everywhere! MDG is proud to continue this tradition by welcoming those who enjoy playing games of all stripes: wargames, board games, chess, card games, train games, naval, space and army miniatures, role-playing games, and more!

## **GRANDCON** – [HTTP://GRAND-CON.COM](http://grand-con.com)

9/25–9/27, Grand Rapids

GrandCon features tabletop gaming in all its forms, as well as comic books and the creators behind them. We provide an atmosphere that will allow gamers and comic book fans to mingle and appreciate their shared interests.

## **NEBRASKA**

### **NUKE CON** – [WWW.NUKE-CON.COM](http://www.nuke-con.com)

10/2–10/4, Omaha

Nuke-Con is a not-for-profit, all volunteer organization dedicated to promoting the positive educational, social, and entertainment aspects in all types of gaming hobbies.

## **NEW YORK**

### **QUEEN CITY CONQUEST** –

[HTTP://LIVE.QUEENCITYCONQUEST.COM/](http://live.queencityconquest.com/)

9/18–9/20, Buffalo

We welcome all types of gaming, including Role Playing Games, War Games, Board Games, Collectible Card Games, and more.

### **COUNCIL OF FIVE NATIONS** – [WWW.SWA-GAMING.ORG/COUNCIL](http://www.swa-gaming.org/council)

10/2–10/4, Schenectady

As with all the Councils over the years, our goal is a nice balance between role-play games, miniatures, board games, and other stuff.

### **NEW YORK COMIC CON** –

[WWW.NEWYORKCOMICCON.COM](http://www.newyorkcomiccon.com)

10/8–10/11, Javits Centre, NYC

See San Jose Comic Con (CA) listing for more description.

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

### **CRYSTAL COAST CON** –

[WWW.CRYSTALCOASTCON.COM](http://www.crystalcoastcon.com)

10/17, Cape Carteret

The sci-fi, fantasy, and gaming experience will be a wondrous one-day event.

## **OHIO**

### **OHIO COMIC CON** –

[WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML](http://www.wizardworld.com/wizcon.html)

9/18–9/20, Columbus

See San Jose Comic Con (CA) listing for more description.

### **CON ON THE COB** – [WWW.CONONTHECOB.COM](http://www.cononthecob.com)

10/15–10/18, Brecksville

Four days of geeks, games, and madness.

## **OKLAHOMA**

### **TULSA COMIC CON** –

[WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML](http://www.wizardworld.com/wizcon.html)

10/23–10/25, Tulsa

See San Jose Comic Con (CA) listing for more description.

## **OREGON**

### **JUST A GAME CON** – [WWW.JUSTAGAMECON.COM](http://www.justagamecon.com)

10/3–10/4, Corvallis

Just a Game Con is a bi-annual gaming convention organized and run by Matt's Cavalcade of Comics and volunteers. In addition to having a huge library of games that can be rented for free, we will have various Gaming events include RPGs, miniature gaming, board games, video gaming, and more.

## **TEXAS**

### **AUSTIN COMIC CON** –

[WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML](http://www.wizardworld.com/wizcon.html)

10/30–10/31, Austin

See San Jose Comic Con (CA) listing for more description.

## **VIRGINIA**

### **RICHMOND COMIC CON** –

[WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML](http://www.wizardworld.com/wizcon.html)

7/31–8/2, Richmond

See San Jose Comic Con (CA) listing for more description.

## **WASHINGTON**

### **DRAGONFLIGHT** – [WWW.DRAGONFLIGHT.ORG](http://www.dragonflight.org)

8/7–8/9, Seattle

Dragonflight is a community organization dedicated to promoting all manner of gaming from board and card games to LARP to computer games throughout the Pacific Northwest. Since 1980, Dragonflight Conventions have been a mainstay of the northwest convention scene and game community.



## CONVENTION CONNECTION

**PAX PRIME** – [HTTP://PRIME.PAXSITE.COM](http://prime.paxsite.com)

8/28–8/31, Seattle

In 2004, the folks at Penny Arcade decided they wanted a show exclusively for gaming. From that idea spawned an event focused on the culture and community that is gaming.

**GIRL GEEK CON** – [WWW.GEEKGIRLCON.COM](http://www.geekgirlcon.com)

10/10–10/11, Seattle

GeekGirlCon is a non-profit, volunteer-powered organization dedicated to recognizing and celebrating the contribution of women in all aspects of geek culture.

### WEST VIRGINIA

**CHARCON** – [HTTP://CHARCON.ORG](http://charcon.org)

10/16–10/18, Charleston

There will be a variety of RPGs. There are game masters running D&D, RPGA events, post-apocalypse games, superhero events, and many others.

### WISCONSIN

**GEEK.KON** – [GEEKKON.NET](http://geekkon.net)

8/21–8/23, Madison

Geek.Kon is Madison Wisconsin's very own anime convention, sci-fi convention, and gaming convention all rolled into one! Geek.Kon is a place to celebrate all that is geeky.

### CANADA

**HAL-CON** – [HTTP://HAL-CON.COM](http://hal-con.com)

10/30–11/1, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Hal-Con is a sci-fi, fantasy & gaming convention run completely by much-too-dedicated volunteers.

**FAN EXPO CANADA** -

[WWW.FANEXPOCANADA.COM](http://www.fanexpocanada.com)

9/3–9/6, Toronto

Growing from one genre with 1500 fans to a multifaceted show connecting over 90,000 fans, Fan Expo Canada™ is currently the 3rd largest pop culture event in North America!

### ENGLAND

**FURNACE** – [HTTP://FURNACE.ORG.UK](http://furnace.org.uk)

10/17–10/18, Sheffield

Furnace is an annual roleplaying convention in Sheffield, which is held in a converted gaol. Each year for ten years 70+ people have come and enjoyed a relaxed friendly and yet game packed weekend amongst the seven hills of Sheffield.

**RAIDERS OF THE GAME CUPBOARD** -

[WWW.RAIDERSOFTHEGAMECUPBOARD.CO.UK](http://www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk)

9/26, Burton upon Trent

One day gaming convention featuring board games, roleplaying, CCG, and many, many more. Quarterly.

### IRELAND

**GaelCON** – [WWW.GAELCON.COM](http://www.gaelcon.com)

10/23–10/26, Dublin

Gaelcon is Ireland's premier games convention which is a gathering of gamers, who all come together in a certain place at a certain time for the same reason: to play games and have fun.

### ISRAEL

**ICON** – [HTTP://ICONFESTIVAL.ORG.IL](http://iconfestival.org.il)

9/29–10/1, Tel Aviv

ICON is an annual national festival of science fiction, fantasy, and role-playing games.



# Retribution

*Ages ago, man, elf, dwarf, and all toiled together. In time, truth - mixed with clever lies - turned allies against each other. Too late, the treachery was revealed. Only a small part of the population survived on the island nation.*

*Decades have passed, but the dead are not content to let bygones be bygones. Their souls are not free, and now they seek... retribution.*

At Obatron Productions, we love playing games springing from rich settings that let us put our own spin on the world in which our characters reside. We create setting materials to enable you to do the same.

*Retribution* is a supernatural take on traditional fantasy where your characters may find their purposes aligned with those of the dead, or they may well be the next targets for the dead's wrath. It's even possible that your character could perish and return as a spirit.

Launching on Kickstarter on **August 24, 2015**, you'll have a chance to back at a variety of levels to help us bring *Retribution* to you, the online marketplace, and brick-and-mortar stores.

Retribution Setting Guide offers

- World background.
- Six playable races (human, elf, orc, halfling, gnome, and dwarf), plus rules for hybrids and PC spirits.
- Edges, Hindrances, and skills for characters battling forces of the everafter and other dimensions.
- Adventure seeds.
- Pre-generated player characters and Ally builds.
- Catalog of Beings.

Stretch goals for the Kickstarter include one or more Plot Point Campaigns, fully illustrated printable miniatures, and more.

**KICKSTARTER**



**Obatron  
PRODUCTIONS**