

**FORGOTTEN FUTURES X**

**THE**

**TOOTH AND CLAW**

**ROLE PLAYING GAME**

**BY MARCUS L. ROWLAND**

**WITH ADDITIONAL MATERIAL BY JO WALTON  
& ART BY SUE MASON & MARCUS L. ROWLAND**

**A ROLEPLAYING SOURCEBOOK FOR**

**JO WALTON'S**

**WORLD FANTASY AWARD-WINNING NOVEL**

**FORGOTTEN FUTURES X**

**THE**

**TOOTH AND CLAW**

**ROLE PLAYING GAME**

**BY MARCUS L. ROWLAND**

**WITH ADDITIONAL MATERIAL BY JO WALTON**  
**& ART BY SUE MASON & MARCUS L. ROWLAND**

**A ROLEPLAYING SOURCEBOOK FOR**

**JO WALTON'S**

**WORLD FANTASY AWARD-WINNING NOVEL**

**GAMES MATERIAL COPYRIGHT © MARCUS L. ROWLAND 2008**  
**MATERIAL BY JO WALTON COPYRIGHT © JO WALTON 2003-2008**  
**FOR ART SOURCES, COPYRIGHT INFORMATION AND TERMS OF USE SEE END NOTES**

Print formatting: If you print double-sided, for best results print the cover and this page single sided, and the contents pages and all remaining pages (starting with page 5, numbered as page 1) double sided. The fonts used for most text are members of the Albertus family; some other fonts are used for "handwriting" etc.

This game has been put on line as a FREE download; you are asked to register if you find it useful.  
Please inform the author if you are charged any fee to obtain it in any form.

# Contents

<b>The Death of Bon Agornin</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Society</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>A short excerpt from the most excellent novel Tooth and Claw by Jo Walton, with some unfortunately intrusive asides on a variety of matters:</i>		<i>Concerning the government of Tiamath, its rulers and the lesser classes, the courts, and the defence of the realm:</i>	
Tooth and Claw	2	Government	25-26
Jo Walton	2	The Peerage	25
Sue Mason	3	Home Life	26
Forgotten Futures	3	Legal System	27-28
Wing Binding	4	Fashion	27
Cannibalism	4	Society Events	28
<b>The Biology of Dragons</b>	<b>5</b>	The Army	28-29
<i>In which matters of nature such as the origin and perpetuation of the Draconic species, diet, flame, &amp; health are discussed, with some references to matters that may be inappropriate to a younger audience:</i>		Skin and Bones	29
Classification, Anatomy, Diet	5	<b>Religion</b>	<b>30</b>
Cannibalism	6	<i>Concerning Higher Things and matters of faith, of concern to all right-thinking dragons, and notes on:</i>	
Flight	6	Clerical Ranks	30
Flame, Reproduction	7-8	Miracles and Magic	31
Natural Weaponry	7	<b>The Yarge</b>	<b>32</b>
Health	8-10	<i>A consideration of the habits, behaviour, and life cycle of the hereditary enemies of all dragon-kind, their arts and sciences, and the horror with which they should be regarded by all dragons:</i>	
Evolution	8	Biology and Behaviour	32-33
Senses	9-10	Science	33-36
<b>Tiamath</b>	<b>11</b>	The Yarge Species	33
<i>A history of the Draconic nation and its current status &amp; economy, notes on international relationships, transport, communications, etc.</i>		Know Your Enemy	34
Location and Basic Geography	11	Our Friends the Yarge	35
History and Current Economy	12-14	Arts	36
Time	12-13	The Yarge and Dragons	36
Gold	14	Yarge Society	36-37
International Affairs	15	Dragon-Slayers	37
The Great North Coast Canal Company	16	<b>Recommended Reading</b>	<b>38</b>
Foreign Policy, Communications	17-18	<b>Cut-Out Characters</b>	<b>39-42</b>
The Railways	17		
Industry and Technology	18		
Money & Prices	19		
Currency	19		
Map Showing Tiamath & Its Neighbours	20		
<b>Out and About in Tiamath</b>	<b>21</b>		
<i>A more detailed look at modern Tiamath and its capital, Irieth.</i>			
Map Of Tiamath, Country Estates	21-22		
Map Of Irieth	22		
Irieth	23-24		
Waste Management	23		
Urban Housing	24		

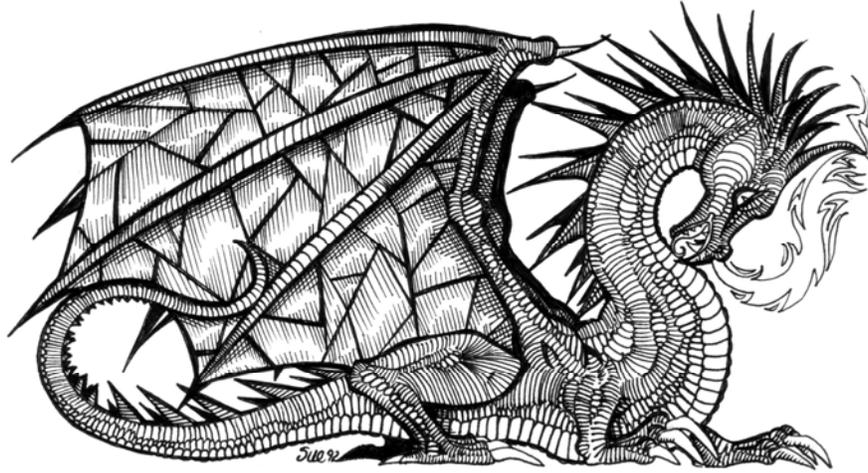
Continued Overleaf

## Don't believe everything you read...

This is an authorised derivative work based on the novel *Tooth and Claw* by Jo Walton, and on its unfinished sequel *Those Who Favor Fire*. Its content has been approved by her, but nothing in it, other than direct quotes from the original texts, should be considered to be definite canon for this setting.

Background details have been invented in areas where they were felt to be needed, and simplified to make the gaming aspects easier to handle. The only definitive sources for this world are the above works, and it's possible that any future works by Jo Walton that use this setting may contradict the game.

<b>The Rules of the Game</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>Adventures</b>	<b>95</b>
<i>In which a game originally designed for human characters is tweaked to make it suitable for dragons:</i>		<i>In which the rules and setting come together:</i>	
Example of Play	43-47	Sample adventurers	96
Game Requirements	48	<b>The Tenant of Copper Caverns</b>	<b>99</b>
Game Terms	48	<i>In which a party at a stylish country residence runs into unexpected problems:</i>	
So You Want To Be A Dragon...?	49	An Invitation	99
Dragon Names	49	The Situation	100
Dragon Character Record	51	Missions	102
Character Points	52	Copper Caverns	103
Characteristics	52	The Cast	108
Skills	53	Timetable	115
Special Abilities	55	End Game: Crime and Punishment	127
Equipment and Notes, Weapons Etc.	56	Alternative Murderers	127
Characteristics in Depth	58	Missions	128
Using Characteristics	58	<b>The Crimson Claw Assurance</b>	<b>129</b>
Common Characteristics Rolls	60	<b>Society</b>	
Better Living Through Cannibalism	61-62	<i>In which fighting piracy ensures profitability:</i>	
Optional Rule: The Meat Market	61	The Crimson Claw	129
Better in the Original Draconic...	62, 63	The Situation	130
Cannibalism and Healing	63	Travel Plans	131
Improving Special Abilities	63	Re: Your Overdraft	131
Skills in Depth	64	Tiamath to Migantia	134
Temporary Skills	64	The Rose of Migantia	135
Projects	65	Migantia to Torsine	136
Improving Skills	66	Torsine to Kog	137
Skills and Modified Characteristics	66	Kog to Voldor	138
Adding Skills	66	Voldor to Stottle	139
Difficult Skills	67	Keleg Dragon-Slayer	140
Optional Rule: Skills Below Base Value	68	The Old One	143
Skill List	68-71	Stottle to Kosp to Danithsul	147
Wounds	72	End Game: The Crimson Claw	148
Medical Skills, Recovery, and Death	73	Epilogue: Masters of the Mutoscope	149
Combat	74-79	The Situation	150
Resolving Attacks	74	Shooting Script	153
Armour	77	End Game: The Next Generation	154
Multiple Attacks	78	<b>Amazing Things Every Dragonet</b>	<b>155</b>
Weapons	79	<b>Should Know</b>	
Non-Combat Injuries	80-81	<i>In which an author needs a little help with his research:</i>	
Magic	82	Questions and Answers	157
Role Playing	83	More Questions	159
Traits	83-89	<b>Epilogue: Past, Present, and Future</b>	<b>160</b>
Running Adventures	90	<i>Some reflections on the history and possible future of Irieth.</i>	
Setting the Scene	90	<b>End Notes</b>	<b>161</b>
Plot	91	<i>Copyright information and other legal niceties related to this game, its art, etc.</i>	
NPCs	91-92	Art index	162
Rules Changes Summarised	93	Registration and Coming Attractions	163
Use With Other <i>Forgotten Futures</i> Settings	93-94		
Rules Publication History	94		



## The Death of Bon Agornin<sup>1</sup>

### I. A Confession

**B**on Agornin writhed on his deathbed, his wings beating as if he would fly to his new life in his old body. The doctors had shaken their heads and left, even his daughters had stopped telling him he was about to get well. He put his head down on the scant gold in his great draughty undercave, struggling to keep still and draw breath. He had only this little time left, to affect everything that was to come after. Perhaps it would be an hour, perhaps less. He would be glad to leave the pains of the flesh, but he wished he had not so much to regret.

He groaned and shifted on the gold, and tried to feel as positive as possible about the events of his life. The Church taught that it was neither wings nor flame that gave one a fortunate rebirth, but rather innocence and calmness of spirit. He strove for that fortunate calm. It was hard to achieve.

“What is wrong, father?” asked his son Penn, approaching now that Bon was still and putting out a gentle claw to touch Bon's shoulder.

Penn Agornin, or rather the Blessed Penn Agornin, for young Penn was already a parson, imagined he understood what troubled his father. He had attended many deathbeds in his professional capacity, and was glad to be here to help ease his father into death and to spare him the presence of a stranger at such a time. The local parson, Blessed Frelt, was far from being his father's friend. They had been at quiet feud for years, of a kind Penn thought quite unbecoming to a parson.

“Calm yourself father,” he said. “You have lived a good life. Indeed, it is hard to think of anyone who should have less to fret them on their deathbed.” Penn admired his father greatly. “Beginning from very little more than a gentle name, you have grown to be seventy feet long, with wings and flame, a splendid establishment and the respect of all the district. Five of your children survive to this day. I am in the church therefore safe.” He raised a wing, bound with the red cord that, to the pious, symbolised the parson's dedication to gods and dragonkind, and to others meant mere immunity. “Berend is well married and has children, her husband is powerful and an Illustrious Lord. Avan is making his way in Irieth. His is perhaps the most perilous course, but he has strong friends and has done well thus far, as you did before him. As for the other two, Haner and Selendra, though they are young and vulnerable do not fear. Berend will take in Haner and see her well married under her husband's protection, while I will do the same for Selendra.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt copyright © Jo Walton 2003 – the first chapter in its entirety is on line at [www.zorinth.net/bluejo/books](http://www.zorinth.net/bluejo/books)



## Tooth & Claw

*Tooth and Claw* is Jo Walton's novel of life in a world where the battle between humans and dragons ended in a draw. Told from the dragon viewpoint, it lends a new perspective to one of the best-loved fantasy icons, and was soon internationally acclaimed, winning the 2004 World Fantasy Award.

Walton's dragons live in a quasi-Victorian society, but one whose customs include trial by combat, serfdom, and institutionalised cannibalism. They fly, breathe fire, and sleep on gold, but their interests range far beyond the normal fantasy clichés; the plot of the novel is largely driven by a lawsuit between the heirs of the dragon Bon Agornin, the romances of his children, greed, religion, and the biological nature of the species.

*Tooth and Claw* was published by Tor; an Orb trade paperback should appear in January 2009. The unfinished sequel, *Those Who Favor Fire*, is on the *Forgotten Futures* web site.

## Jo Walton

Jo Walton is best known as a novelist but has also written poetry, role playing games and story-telling card games. Her first fantasy novels were the *King's Peace* trilogy (2000-2002). She won the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer in 2002 and the World Fantasy award for *Tooth and Claw* in 2004. Her first SF novel, *Farthing* (2006), was set in a world where Rudolph Hess brokered a peace treaty with Britain before America entered the Second World War, and was nominated for the Nebula and Quill awards, the John W. Campbell Memorial Award for best science fiction novel, and the Sidewise Award for Alternate History. A sequel, *Ha'penny*, was published in 2007 and was joint winner of the 2008 Prometheus Award. Game credits include the IDC series of Storytelling Card Games, most notably *Into The Dark Continent*, written with Ken Walton and others, and GURPS *Celtic Myth* (1995) and *Warhammer FRP Realms of Sorcery* (2001), both written with Ken Walton. She was born in Wales but now lives in Montreal with her husband Dr Emmet O'Brien and her son Sasha Walton.

Bon drew a careful breath, then exhaled with a little puff of flame and smoke. Penn skipped nimbly aside. "You must all stick to my agreement," Bon said. "The younger ones who are not settled must have my gold, what there is of it. You and Berend have begun your hoards already, let you each take only one symbolic piece of mine, and let the other three share what little is left. I have not amassed a great store, but it will be enough to help them."

"We had already agreed that, father," Penn said. "And of course they will likewise take the greater shares when we eat you. Berend and I are established, while our brother and sisters are still in need."

"You have always been just what brothers and sisters should be to each other," Bon said, and sighed more smoke. "I want to confess, Penn, before I die. Will you hear my confession?"

Penn drew back, folding his wings hard around him. "Father you know the teaching of the church. Not for three thousand years, six lifetimes of dragons, has confession been a sacrament. It reeks of the Time of Subjugation and the heathen ways of the Yarge."

Bon rolled his huge golden eyes. Sometimes his son, so careful of propriety, seemed a stranger to him. Penn could never have endured what he had endured, never have survived. "Six lifetimes you may have been taught, but when I was young there were priests who would still give absolution to those who wanted it. It is only in my lifetime and yours that it is forgiveness that has become a sin. What was wrong was paying for absolution, not forgiving the burdens of those who would lay them down. The rite of absolution is still in the book of prayers. Frelt would have refused me this, I know, out of spite, but I had thought you would have had spirit enough to do it."

"Yet it is a sin, father, and one the Church preaches against as strongly as priest-flight." Penn flexed his bound wing again. "It is not an article of religion, true, but a difference in practice that has arisen over time. Confession is now abhorrent. I cannot possibly give you absolution. If anyone discovered it, I would lose my position. Besides, my own conscience would not allow it."

Bon shifted again, and felt loose scales falling from him down to the gold below. He did not have long left, and he was afraid. "I am not asking you for absolution, if you cannot give it. I just think I will die more easily if I do not take this secret on with me." His voice sounded weak even to himself.

"You may tell me anything you wish, dear father," Penn said, drawing closer again. "But you may not call it



confession, or say that you are doing it because I am a parson. That could endanger my calling if it became known.”

Bon looked at the red cords on his son's wings, remembering what he had paid to have him accepted into the church and all the good fortune he had encountered there since. “Isn't it wonderful how so much came of your little friend Sher?” he said. Then he felt the pain spreading from his lungs, and wanted to cough, but did not dare. Penn had drawn breath to answer, but he subsided, letting it trickle out of his snout, watching his father's struggle in silence. Little Sher, once his schoolfellow, was the Exalted Sher Benandi now, lord of his own domain, and Penn was his parson, with his own house and wife and children.

“It is the way of the dragon to eat each other,” Bon said at last.

“These days—” Penn began.

“You know I was the only survivor of my family, the only one of my brothers and sisters to grow wings,” Bon went on, speaking over his son. “You thought that Eminent Telstie had eaten them, or perhaps his wife, Eminence Telstie? They did eat some of them, swooping down out of the sky to devour the weaklings, always leaving me alive, because I was the oldest and strongest. They held hard to the idea the church teaches that they were improving dragonkind by eating the weaklings, they were even kind to me. I did not forgive them for eating my father and my siblings. Yet I pretended to be a friend to them, and to their children, for my mother had little power to protect me or prevent them eating us all if they chose. They had taken my father's gold and we had nothing but our name. When there were but three of us left, I had grown wings, but was only seven feet long, ready to leave home to seek my fortune but in great peril if I did. I needed length and strength I could not gain from beef. I ate my remaining brother and sister myself.”

Penn lay frozen beside his dying father, shocked far beyond anything he could have imagined the old dragon could have said.

“Will I die entire?” Bon asked. “Will my spirit fall like ash from smoke as the church teaches? Or will I be reborn as a muttonwool to catch in the teeth of someone's hunger, or worse, a creeping worm or a loathsome wingless Yarge?” His eyes caught his son's, and still Penn stared dumbstruck at his father. “I have lived a good life since, as you said. I have regretted it bitterly many times, but I was young and hungry and had nobody to help me and a great need to fly away.”

Bon's scales were falling with a steady pattering. His breath was more smoke than air. His eyes were beginning to dim. Penn was a parson and had attended many deaths. He knew

## Sue Mason

Sue Mason is a well-known British artist and SF fan whose work has been hung in the National Portrait Gallery and appeared in fanzines (most notably *Plokta*) and other magazines. She has been nominated for the Hugo award for Best Fan Artist seven times, and won it in 2003 and 2005.

Her art is available from Woodlore Pyrography, [www.plokta.com/woodlore/](http://www.plokta.com/woodlore/)

## Forgotten Futures

*Forgotten Futures* is a shareware role-playing game whose core rules material, supplements, and adventures have been published on disk and on line since 1993. Previous supplements have been based on Victorian and Edwardian scientific romances and fantasies. *FF X* is a first, based on a modern fantasy with a strong Victorian feel. While it has not been possible to include the full text, as with previous *Forgotten Futures* releases, it's readily available and one of the most readable books to have been used as the basis for a *Forgotten Futures* setting.

One previous release for the game has included material on dragons; *FF VIII* is based on the children's stories of Edith Nesbit, and includes descriptions of several dragon species, some possessing strong magical powers. See page 93 for more on crossovers with this and other settings.

The first *Forgotten Futures* material was published as ASCII text files. Later releases used HTML, and all of the existing material has now been converted to that format. However, the limitations of HTML make printing difficult and layout somewhat hit-or-miss. Better results are now possible using PDF; *FF X* and future releases will appear in PDF and HTML versions.

This supplement is distributed without charge – if you find it useful and wish to encourage the author to write more please consider registering or purchasing the *Forgotten Futures CD-ROM*; visit [www.forgottenfutures.co.uk](http://www.forgottenfutures.co.uk) and follow the links to the game.



## Wing Binding

Wing binding was invented by the Yarge when they controlled the dragon lands, but continued by the dragons after their oppressors left. Two very different classes of dragons have bound wings; the clergy, to symbolize and enforce humility, and servants, who are often treated as little better than slaves. Dragons with bound wings cannot fly; additionally, tight binding (as used for servants) can have serious medical consequences such as chafing, muscle cramps, and in extreme cases atrophy of the wing muscles.

Naturally the clergy ensure that their bindings are loose enough to prevent any long-term effects, and although it is frowned upon by the Church, many pay lip-service to piety but still fly whenever it is more convenient or expedient than walking. Because of their bound wings, the clergy are legally immune from any obligation to respond to another dragon's challenge; pious hypocrites weaken this protection.

## Cannibalism

All dragons are cannibals or the potential victims of cannibals. Without consuming dragon-flesh they grow slowly and are generally sickly. It's considered essential to cull the race and consume weaklings to improve the health and vigour of the strong; this has evolved into a matter of status, with the highest ranks of society preying on the lower as a matter of right. A commoner's children are in peril from the moment they hatch. Old servants are often eaten at the first sign of weakness. Any death is the excuse for a feast, with the departed often making complex arrangements for the disposition of their remains. The plot of *Tooth and Claw* is largely driven by the death of Bon Agornin, and an argument over the sharing of his body.

Dragons appear to have no fear of disease when they eat their own dead. The effect is generally considered to be magical, and part of that magic must be that it is a potent cure for all diseases.

See page 6 onwards for an extended discussion of cannibalism.

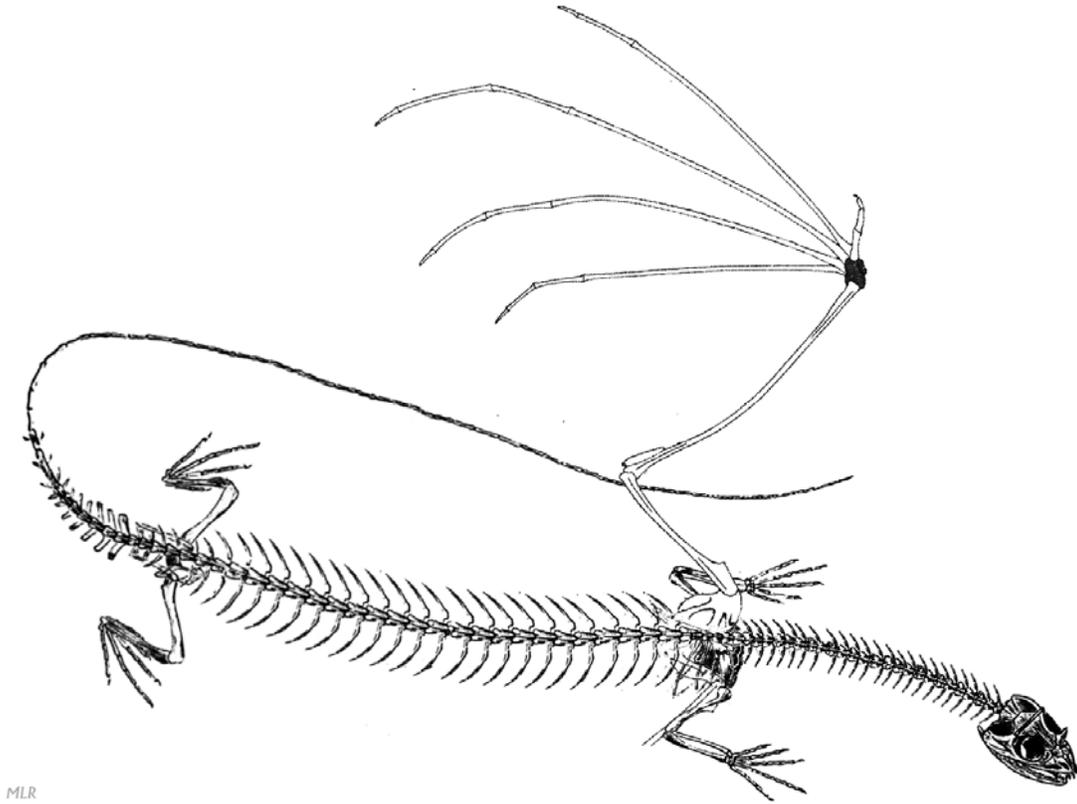
there were only minutes left. He spread his wings and began the last prayer, "Fly now with Veld, go free to rebirth with Camran at your side—" but the smoke caught in his throat and he could not go on. He had read the old rite of absolution once, in horrified fascination, his father was right that it was still printed in the prayerbook. It was absolution his father needed, and a clear spirit to go on. Penn was a conventional young dragon, and a parson, but he loved his father. "It is a custom, there is no theology behind it," he muttered. He held his claws up before his father's eyes, where he could see them. "I have heard your—" he hesitated an instant, it was the word that seemed so bad, could he call it something else? No, not to give his father the comfort and absolution he needed. "Your confession, Dignified Bon Agornin, and I absolve and forgive you in the name of Camran, in the name of Jurale, in the name of Veld."

He saw a smile deep in his father's fading eyes, which was replaced by peace, and then, last, as always, a profound surprise. However many times Penn saw this he never became accustomed to it. He often wondered what there was beyond the gate of death that, however prepared the dying dragon was, it should always astonish them. He waited the prescribed moment, repeating the last prayer three times, in case the eyes should begin to whirl again. As always, nothing happened, death was death. He delicately reached out a claw and ate both eyes, as was always the parson's part. Only then did he call his sibs, with the ritual cry "The good dragon Bon Agornin has begun his journey towards the light, let the family be gathered to feast!"

He felt no grief, no shame at having gone against the teachings of the Church to give his father absolution, no horror at what his father had done. He felt nothing whatsoever, he knew that he was in a state of shock and that once it wore off he would be quietly miserable for a long time.



A veteran of the first Yarge wars displays a captured lance and instructs his sons in Yargish tactics. Meanwhile the enemy were inventing guns.



Dragon's skeleton, sketched by the Yarge naturalist Lh'ook of Migantil.

## The Biology of Dragons

*"I see you have thought it all out," Avan said, pulling himself to his feet. "My dear maidens, have you not considered that in addition to being seventy feet long and fire-breathing, father is, or rather was, nearly five hundred years old? I am barely one hundred, barely twenty feet long, and have no fire as yet, nor much prospect of gaining any soon. I am doing well enough in my career for one who began it when I did, but that was hardly ten years ago and I don't taste dragon meat twice in a year..."*

*Tooth and Claw – 1:3*

**D**ragons are warm-blooded oviparous vertebrates; at one time classical biology considered them to be unusual reptiles, but anatomical evidence suggest that their superficial similarities are outweighed by the differences, and that they should preferably be assigned to a separate vertebrate superclass, *Draconi*, containing the dragons and some primitive six-legged wingless relatives, somewhere between the reptiles and fish. This is still extremely controversial, with many naturalists preferring the old theories. They are intelligent omnivores with a preference for meat, especially that of their own kind. Most adult dragons are capable of flight, if not restrained by the bonds of servitude or faith.

Dragons can eat most fruit and vegetables, and a variety of meat animals including beeves and swine (and in former times Yarge, with princesses considered an especial delicacy). Carcasses are generally skinned but otherwise eaten whole and raw, efficiently dissected by razor-sharp fangs and claws; cooking passes through periods of popularity, but is currently unfashionable and condemned as a Yargish aberration by the church. The best dining rooms have efficient drainage gutters in the floor; after a meal the room can be sluiced clean of blood and other fluids in minutes. Beverages include beer and wines, fruit juices, and herbal teas.

## Flight

Dragons should not be able to fly; they're heavily built, don't have hollow bones, and lack many of the muscular and skeletal features seen in other flying animals, such as the keel bones found in virtually all birds. Theoretical comparison with the larger raptors and bats suggests that at best they should be able to glide down from a height, at worse should plummet like stones. Theory is evidently wrong. Nobody, not even the dragons themselves, is entirely sure how flying works, but it is suspected that the aerodynamic processes involved in dragon flight are considerably more complicated than those of any other flying creature, and that some unknown factor adds lift. Or, as the primitive Yarge claimed, it may all be magic.

Dragons can fly for several hours without pause, at 40-50 MPH in still air, carrying substantial weights. Speed and endurance peak with dragons about 60ft long, larger dragons are slower. Flight requires no special diet, and (to give a discredited theory more credence than it deserves) has nothing to do with gas-filled bladders, whether they contain an anti-gravitational vapour unknown to science or the effluvium of an efficient digestive system. Dragons are not balloons – only the Yarge have flown by such means – and they are certainly not rockets, propelled by their f—s, no matter what Yarge satirists may claim!

### Scenario Idea: Fear of Flying

“Good afternoon, gentlemen. Yarge engineers are experimenting with a new generation of steerable balloon, with powerful lightweight steam engines and streamlined gas bags. They may be able to carry marksmen or artillery, or drop explosives on our defences. Your mission, should you choose to accept, is to discover the specifications of these ‘airships’ and learn of any vulnerabilities or weaknesses. As always, should any of you be caught or killed the secretary will disavow all knowledge...”

**Cannibalism** is an everyday event, from the culling of inferior dragonets to the “retirement” of servants who become too old or infirm for work. Dragon meat is said to be magical; it ensures health and growth, and brings male dragons fire.

The first of these claims has been verified many times; dragons who dine on the flesh of their own species build muscle and flesh at a phenomenal rate, so rapidly that some experts believe that it bypasses the normal digestive process altogether. The mechanisms involved are unknown; eminent doctors have experimented with the vivisection of condemned prisoners, but learned little except that the speed and efficiency of absorption may gradually decrease with age and size – a young dragon in good health may convert 90% or more of the weight of meat eaten to flesh, almost as fast as it is eaten; an elderly dragon is lucky to achieve 50% efficiency and may take several hours to feel the full benefits of a meal.

It should be noted that dragons do not gain any of these benefits from eating any of the related *Draconi* species.

The efficiency of cannibalism allows dragons to use nutritional and reproductive strategies which the Yarge and other outsiders might find offensive, and even dragons find distasteful, unless concealed behind elaborate excuses and euphemisms; briefly, to rear their young as a food resource. Dragonets can be fed entirely on animal flesh and fruit, building up body mass which is available for consumption in an emergency. For this reason a female dragon might choose to feed all of her young, even those who would normally be culled, keeping the weaker specimens until she or one of her healthier dragonets needs an infusion of strength. Examples might include a mother who rears then eats a sickly hatchling to ensure that she will be healthy when she lays her next clutch of eggs, or a dragonet consuming his siblings. This use of living dragons as a food reserve is also seen elsewhere; condemned prisoners are kept alive and fed reasonably well until their flesh is needed. One use for their flesh is for the purpose of restitution in civil cases involving the disposition of inherited dragon meat; once eaten it can't be recovered, short of killing the offending party, so a substitute's flesh is provided by the court. Naturally the losing party pays dearly for this service, but when the alternative is to provide the meat from your own body the price isn't unreasonable.

The other claims for dragon flesh are probably just as valid; dragons eating dragon meat definitely seem to be healthier than those that do not, and the growth spurt following a hearty meal often triggers the first release of flame in males – but the connection here is much less certain, since flame can also be triggered by anger, injury, indigestion, or the sight of an unusually attractive female.

**Flame** is generated in the throat of mature male dragons; the fuel is a complex gas which ignites as it leaves the mouth. The source is believed to be liquid secreted by a pair of glands in the throat, somewhat like the venom glands in snakes, reacting with a second fluid secreted in the mouth. Liquid secreted by the throat glands is sucked into the upper lungs then exhaled rapidly as an aerosol of fine droplets; reflexes close a series of airtight valves behind it as it is exhaled. As it passes through the mouth the droplets come into contact with the second fluid and ignite. The precise mechanism of this process is unclear, since both of the components are highly volatile; all that is known with any certainty is that the supply of these liquids is finite and slow to replenish, and that its manufacture is a severe strain on the body. Dragons using it early and too often may be destined for an early death. They may also damage their teeth and tongue.

While flame is the most obvious distinction between male and female dragons, it is a late event in the life of most male dragons – as noted above, early flame, especially when used to excess, is generally a sign that a dragon’s life will be unusually short – and there are two much more immediate differences between the sexes; the structure of the fore-limbs, and of the peculiarly delicate skin of females.

**Hands:** both sexes have five-fingered fore-limbs, but their hands are very different. Male dragons are specialised for strength and ripping power, with short broad fingers ending in claws several inches long. Females have longer but more delicate fingers and shorter claws. As a result males are rarely able to write or master other forms of delicate manipulation, and many of the arts and crafts are largely female preserves; for example, the Agornin residence is decorated with relief models of the surrounding area, constructed by one of the daughters of the house using a variety of tools and her claws. This distinction is not absolute – some male dragons, especially scholars, parsons, and artists, train with special tools such as pens with mushroom-shaped grips, and some females in manual employment develop arms as strong as many males – but these exceptions are rare.

**Blushing:** Perhaps the defining difference between males and females is the ability to blush. Males have thick dark skin with overlapping scales. Females have smaller gold-coloured scales embedded in more delicate tissues; the skin connecting the scales is suffused with small capillaries which swell and lend their colour to the skin when a maiden blushes. In the case of mild arousal (as when receiving a compliment or conversing with an attractive male) this process eventually subsides, but strong arousal causes blood to seep into the surrounding flesh; since the scales are not entirely opaque the colour-change tints

## Natural Weaponry

The main text discusses the general health and diseases of dragons, but combat injuries are by far the most common cause of ill-health, at least amongst young males.

By instinct dragons fight with their front and rear claws, by biting, and by buffeting and flailing with their heads, wings and tails, or constricting with their entire bodies. Older dragons may also use flame, although it is generally less effective in close combat than might be supposed. It can be used to attack an enemy’s eyes, but dragon armour is fire-resistant and a near-miss does little damage; biting is more effective.

All of a male dragon’s body is armoured to some extent, the most vulnerable areas being the belly, eyes, and wing membranes. Female scales give less protection.

Teeth are used to rip at the opponent’s throat, while the front claws are most often used against an opponent’s eyes, the tail to pin him down, and the rear claws to disembowel. Most serious fights end in surrender (indicated by flattening the claws and closing the eyes) or death. All of these attacks can be used against Yarge, of course, and dragon soldiers are trained to do so.

There are no dragon martial arts, as such, since their natural ability to use several different attacks simultaneously makes them redundant.

Artificial weapons such as guns are discussed in a later section.

## Scenario Idea: Duel

After a boozy evening an adventurer receives a note from a dragon of high rank with a formidable reputation as a fighter, demanding that he “repair the insult to the honour of the lady you besmirched last night.” He can’t remember much about the evening, the lady, or any besmirching that might have occurred, neither can anyone else who was there. Has a mistake has been made? If not, is there an honourable way out?



## Evolution

As previously noted, there is considerable controversy about the evolutionary history of dragons, focused mostly on their similarities to, and differences from, reptiles. The classic view was that they are aberrant reptiles; the modern view is that they and their relatives form a separate vertebrate class with misleading superficial similarities to the reptiles.

The main arguments in favour of their classification as reptiles – admittedly very odd reptiles – are the structure of their skulls, the production of eggs and their scaly skin. However, their eggs are more like bird eggs than those of reptiles, with hard glossy shells resembling mother-of-pearl; they are warm-blooded; and they have six limbs and eyes unlike those of other vertebrate species (see page 9).

Of these objections the oddity of limbs is perhaps the easiest to explain. There are examples of reptiles with four, two, or no limbs, so the class as a whole seems to have some flexibility in this area; if a random change produced a reptile with six limbs, and the extra limbs turned out to have some survival value, there seems no obvious reason why they shouldn't continue in that form. The double shoulder seen in dragons and their relatives is decidedly odd, but seems to work... but all of the other *Draconi* species are comparatively rare and if anything they are in decline.

Eggs and warm blood can be explained by an assumption that dragons are closer to birds than other reptiles; but nothing explains the structure of the eye.

The modern view is that the most reptile-like examples of dragon body structure are coincidental, or can be explained as form following function, but the reality is that their true evolutionary history diverged early, perhaps before the first amphibians ventured onto land. Despite surface similarities, and even strong similarities in aspects such as the shape of blood cells etc, the dragons and all other land vertebrates are very distant cousins, and the closest common ancestor was probably a fish.

the skin and reddens the scales themselves. This results in a deeper and permanent tint. Some folk remedies are said to reverse the infusion of blood, but there is allegedly a danger that a maiden thus treated will never be able to blush for her true love. These drugs are properly condemned by the church as encouraging promiscuity. Females are pink for the first few years after their first sexual arousal, darkening to golden-red eventually. It's generally assumed that any pink female is engaged or married, and that any red female is either married or widowed. Anything else is considered scandalous.

Close proximity to males can also trigger this change, so most well-equipped homes and all public areas include alcoves into which females can retreat to avoid male contact.

Unmated females eventually fade to grey, at which point they are permanently unable to reproduce.



A female dragon's skin: before (left) and after blushing (middle), and after several years of marriage (right).

**Eggs:** Mated females can hope to produce several clutches of 3-5 eggs in a lifetime, provided that there is a gap of several years between broods. Females only lay if they spend some time eating a diet which promotes egg production, including special herbs, dragon liver, etc., and illegitimacy is virtually unknown. Over-frequent laying stresses the reproductive system and can cause the mother to become egg-bound, which generally results in an agonizing death.



**Homosexuality:** Very much a taboo subject amongst dragons, homosexual behaviour exists but is never discussed publicly, and is most often seen in single-sex institutions such as the army, schools, etc. Females in homosexual relationships do not blush and eventually fade to grey.

**Health:** Dragons are generally remarkably healthy if they survive the first few years of life – childhood diseases and culling account for about 50% of dragonets in the first year, another 20% in the next five years. Naturally the death toll is highest amongst the poor, servants, and other lower orders, and reduced amongst the gentry. Once childhood is past a dragon in reasonable health can confidently expect to live three hundred years or more, often much longer.

Most forms of illness are signalled by abnormal coloration and defects of the scales.

*Green scales* are most often seen amongst hatchlings and dragonets, and are a sure indication that the child is fit only to be culled. The exact cause of this coloration isn't clear, but it is usually accompanied by failure to thrive and put on weight,

premature wings, deformed claws, twisted tails, and other signs of abnormality. Greenness in later life is comparatively rare, and usually a sign of serious illness; if it doesn't clear within a matter of hours the victim is usually beyond all medical help.



An obviously sickly dragonet, fit only to be culled. Note the green scales, deformed feet, twisted tail, prematurely formed but stunted wings, and other signs of ill-health. Such a specimen could never thrive.

*Scale loss* is generally a sign of impending death. This condition – in which the scales simply drop en masse from the surrounding skin – is most often seen at the end of chronic illness or extreme old age. It must be distinguished from the localised scale loss sometimes caused by parasitic infections or rot; while disfiguring, this condition is rarely lethal if treated promptly. Causes include sand and grit caught under the scales, mites, fungal infestations, poorly-treated injuries, and dietary disorders. Over-frequent bathing is believed to be a contributing factor, but so is dirty skin. Treatments include hot poultices and washing with turpentine or ardent spirits. If scales are lost treatment with a paste made from crushed herbs and finely-powdered zinc oxide is sometimes effective. For extreme cases hot tar may stop the spread of infection and promote the growth of replacement scales; unfortunately the treatment is extremely painful, and can cause more problems than it cures.

**Medicine:** As indicated above, most dragon medicine tends to be palliative, generally treating injuries and the symptoms of illness rather than the underlying causes. Dragon doctors are aware of the germ theory – or rather, they have heard of it from the Yarge, who are more advanced in this field – but have yet to develop vaccination or antibiotics, or effective anaesthetics other than large quantities of spirits. There are numerous folk remedies and tonics available, varying considerably in efficacy; some are worse than useless, some surprisingly effective.

Drugs apart, medical procedures include stitching and cauterising wounds, amputations, resetting broken bones (although amputation is much more common), and midwifery; the latter is primarily emergency treatment of egg-bound females, and rarely successful.

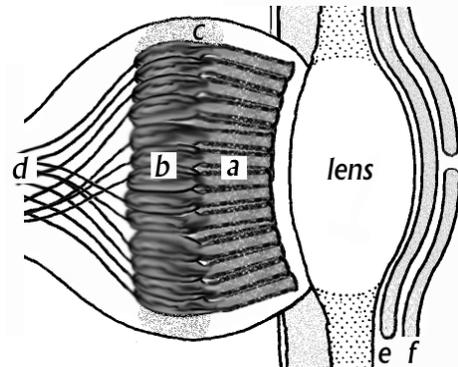
Paediatric medicine is again limited to a few palliative treatments; seriously ill dragonets are almost invariably culled, and treating them is considered at best deceitful, at worst an affront to Veld.

## Senses

### Sight

Dragons and their related species have eyes unlike any other vertebrate. Behind the lens is a complex array of crystalline rods (a), all capable of a degree of motion, connected to a bulbous mass of neural tissue (b) embedded in the muscles that move the rods (c). Nerves (d) lead to the brain. Each rod collects light from a narrow field of view; the eye focuses by aiming the rods at the point of focus and scanning across it, in a swirling circular movement. If upset or confused this movement is more agitated. The lens does not change shape or position.

Two other structures should be mentioned; a nictitating membrane (e) which snaps down from under the upper eyelid and blocks approximately 95% of ambient light, and the eyelids (f).



Dragons can see in near-total darkness, and it is believed that the bulbous neural structure somehow magnifies the effect of very small amounts of light. It's notable that the nictitating membrane is used in all but the dimmest light, and that dragons seem to see at their best in very dim and very bright light.

One of the consequences of this unusual mechanism is that dragons are never short-sighted; their eyes easily adjust to focus at any distance. They have little need for telescopes, since they can narrow their focus to magnify distant objects. In any case they are unable to use many types of optical instruments (including normal Yarge telescopes and microscopes) because their eye structure is unsuited to focusing on the virtual images presented by their eyepieces.

## Senses (continued)

### Sight (continued)

Dragons do not experience “persistence of vision,” and can distinguish a hundred or more pictures per second as separate images. By comparison Yarge perceive fifteen or more separate pictures per second as a moving image. This illusion is the basis for their recently-invented Mutoscope, an entertainment device which presents a sequence of several hundred engraved prints in rapid succession, seen as a moving scene lasting about a minute.

This may explain why the swirling of dragon eyes has been known to have a hypnotic effect on lower animals, including some Yarge. Susceptibility to this effect seems to be random; all dragons are, of course, immune.

### Hearing

The ears of dragons resemble those of other vertebrates, but their hearing is somewhat directional, focused by the external ear flaps, most sensitive in a 40° cone ahead of the dragon’s head, and comparatively insensitive to the sides and rear. Their frequency range is a little broader than Yarge, especially in sensitivity to low frequencies which Yarge can only feel as vibrations.

### Smell

As with most hunting animals the sense of smell is excellent; it is again somewhat directional, focused by the nostrils. Dragons can also “taste the air” with their tongues, collecting a broader range of chemical traces than via the nostrils alone. Both of these abilities can be impaired by over-use of flame.

### Touch

The poorest dragon sense is touch; their thick skins and scales render them comparatively insensitive to most tactile stimuli, except in the hands, wing membranes, and certain areas associated with reproduction. They feel little pain from minor injuries and abrasions, and can sleep easily on a rough stone floor, although they greatly prefer the cool luxury of gold.

Dentistry consists solely of extracting damaged or diseased teeth; dragons replace lost teeth very quickly, so there is no need for prosthetics, fillings, and the other remedies invented by the Yarge.

One roadblock to medical improvements has been the dragon inability to use microscopes; the peculiar structure of their eyes can’t cope with the virtual images produced by their eyepieces (see sidebar on previous page for more details). Recently a new invention has become available; the ‘microscope projector’ is a cross between a microscope and a magic lantern projector, which shows the specimen projected onto a white wall or screen. Yarge usually find the results too dim to be useful for research, especially at high magnifications, but dragons have no problems adapting their sight to very low light intensity, and have begun to use the device; they now have some visual proof that microscopic organisms can live on and in dragons, but no effective means of dealing with them.

The College of Physicians in Irieth is the main authority for training and certifying doctors; there is no formal training structure for midwives, nurses, or apothecaries, although the latter must serve a long apprenticeship.

Hospitals exist, but only in the most wretched parts of Irieth and other large towns. They are generally seen as little more than abattoirs; places to die, with the doctors eating or selling the corpse if there are no relatives to defend it. The commercial market in dragon meat is in part driven by such institutions.<sup>1</sup>

Obviously an article of this length can’t hope to cover every aspect of draconic biology; for more on these topics the reader is referred to *A Dragonet’s Guide to Nature* by the Blessed Jamanah; *The Biology of Dragons* by Lh’ook of Migantil (a Draconic translation is available); and *Curious Mysteries of the Dragon Heart* by ‘Dragon Q.’<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The other main commercial sources of dragon flesh (again almost always in cities) are condemned prisoners, if the expense of keeping them becomes too great and there is no prospect of using them to settle a legal dispute; the corpses of paupers, sold to settle debts; the corpses of servants, sold by masters who for one reason or another prefer not to consume former employees; and occasional suicides, who leave the income from their bodies to friends or relatives living too far away for the meat to be transported. It is to be feared that there may also be a black market in the victims of murder, or worse yet, murder with the sale of victims as the main motive; a few old records and numerous stories of the type known as ‘Irieth Myths’ describe such crimes, but there is little evidence that any have occurred in recent years. In the country cannibalism is almost always a family affair, as nature intended.

<sup>2</sup> This work is banned by the Orthodox Church, but it is possible to obtain copies by mail order from its current publishers in Migantil.



Two dragons fight for the honour of being the first to attack Yarge bandits on Tiamath's western border. Hidden amongst the bandits, marksmen load their muskets and prepare to murder the victor.  
*Mural in the Yarge embassy, Irieth*

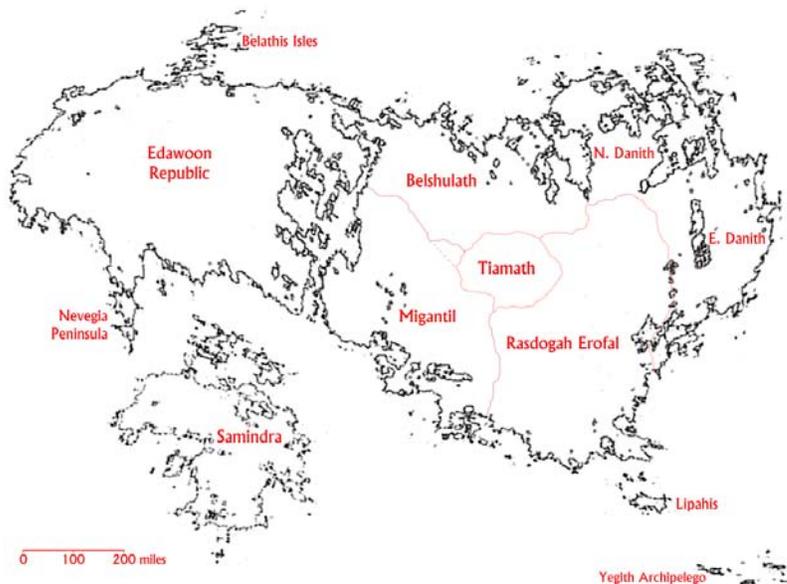
## Tiamath

*No. I really don't think this one needs a map. – Jo Walton, Tooth and Claw FAQ*

The setting for our tale is a world of diverse continents, climates, and societies whose history has largely been shaped by the existence of two competing intelligent species: Dragons and Yarge. Generally speaking the other animals and plants of the world are much like our own, though palaeontologists and zoologists would undoubtedly notice many differences; dragons didn't evolve in isolation, and there are related species surviving in out-of-the-way corners of the world. Some other geographical and astronomical details differ, of course; for example, the year is 200 days, but the days are somewhat longer.

*Tooth and Claw* is set in Tiamath, the dragon nation. It's a temperate country, roughly oval, with a total area of approximately 16000 square miles, much of it mountainous, extending about 130 miles north-south and 200 miles east-west. Most of the mountains are in the south, and the whole region is buried in snow from autumn (the month of Leafturn) through to early spring (the month of Thaw). The largest city, Irieth, is in the north. Most of the countryside that is even marginally suitable is given over to agriculture, especially grazing, but there are also forests and hunting preserves, mining districts, industrial and commercial towns, a railway system, and everything else that might be expected in a prosperous but relatively small mountainous country.

For a larger version of this map see page 20



## Time

From *A Dragonet's Book of Amazing Natural Science Wonders*, by the Blessed Jamanah.

A year is the time it takes our world to go around the sun, and it consists of 10 months, or 200 days. The months cycle with the seasons, and are named Freshwinter, Icewinter, Deepwinter, Softwinter, Thaw, Budding, Flowering, Greensummer, Highsummer and Leafturn. Each month contains four weeks, each of five days. The days of the week are named unimaginatively Firstday and then numerically. This numbering certainly dates from the Conquest, before that some claim the dragons either had no week, counting by days of the month only, or had weeks of varying lengths in different locations, with different, and much more poetic, names for days. Current religious practice accounts for much of the significance of the week, but it also forms such a useful and natural division of time, with four days given to work and one day devoted to higher things, that it seems likely that our ancestors kept some such division even if the details varied from place to place.

Each day consists of twenty hours of eighty minutes each. Each minute consists of eighty seconds. A second is defined as the time it takes to say "One rainbow in Irieth", this being the traditional phrase used to count the seconds between the lightning flash and the thunderclap. If attempting to count seconds, one should speak naturally, neither hurrying nor drawing out the phrase. There is also the "engineer's second" which is very similar in length, but defined as the time it takes a resting drop of water to fall fifteen feet. I have attempted to ascertain whether the size of the water-drop matters, and have been told it does not, such are the wonders of natural science.

**History:** The history of Tiamath is largely that of the Dragon-Yarge Wars, and frequently disputed, even by scholars nominally on the same side of the conflict. Very briefly, until about three thousand years ago there was no dragon nation as such; dragons were free to roam where they willed, and a match for anything except a massed body of Yarge troops. Because dragons are a quarrelsome species and benefit from cannibalism they tended to live in small groups, typically families whose younger males were driven off before they became a threat, dominating an area of a few hundred square miles per family. These large estates provided cattle and sheep, gold, Yarge princesses and other delicacies, and all of the other necessities and luxuries of draconic life. Occasionally a dragon would be killed by an unusually skilled Yarge warrior, or an unusually well-led war band, but this was very much the exception.

Unfortunately the Yarge discovered gunpowder and developed muskets and cannon, with catastrophic consequences for the dragons. Using their guns and superior military organization they fought a series of wars against the dragons, gradually exterminating the unwary and driving the rest into the mountainous region that later became Tiamath. The whole dragon race was in danger of extinction, until a now-forgotten leader suggested the unthinkable: surrender.

One of the conditions of surrender was the forced conversion of all dragons to the Yarge faith, later known to dragons as the Old Religion. Dragons that refused to convert were systematically wiped out. A prolonged occupation period followed, the Time of Subjugation, with dragons bound and forced to work for the Yarge overlords. During this period some of the great dragon hoards were looted by the Yarge, though others remained undiscovered.

Eventually the dragons mastered the secrets of gunpowder and rose up against their conquerors, driving them out of Tiamath, but many of the customs acquired from their conquerors were retained. The dragons remained isolated for many years, with occasional border wars continuing to the present day. Gradually trade developed, although relations between the two species will always be uneasy and many dragons who have lost relatives to the border skirmishes suffer extreme phobic reactions if they are ever unfortunate enough to meet a Yarge. Presumably some Yarge have similar reactions to dragons. Nevertheless, there is a Yarge embassy in Irieth, representing a coalition of the nations bordering Tiamath; occasionally Yarge tourists and merchants visit Tiamath, while many young dragons find a tour of Yargish lands such as Migantil to be an informative, if expensive, part of their education.



Yarge propaganda at its worst; this coin glorifies the murder of a dragonet, too young to fly, brutally slain by the sword in the years before the Yarge invented gunpowder. Incredibly, the Yarge didn't even eat their innocent victims!



Some vestiges of Subjugation remain; the Yarge ambassador is armed as a matter of course, and still demands (and receives) the right to inspect all new dragons rising to the high rank of Eminent. The reason for this odd custom is a difference in the way that political and civil powers are perceived.

Most Yarge states have a hereditary “king”, a leader whose rank approximates to the dragon rank of Majestic; the Yarge seem to believe that without such a ruler effective government is impossible. Dragons believe that power is not an automatic right; a Majestic will only be appointed if the circumstances are right, and if he genuinely has the abilities needed to take command. The machinery of government chugs along quite efficiently without a single guiding claw at the helm, and will undoubtedly continue to do so short of some unlikely destruction of Parliament and the civil service. If there is ever a real need for a Majestic, Parliament will appoint him.

Although there is no obvious *need* for a Majestic at present, the Yarge believe that if one is ever appointed it will be a sign of impending war. Previous Majestics arose from the ranks of the Eminent, hence their scrutiny. How they plan to recognize such a ruler before he takes power remains unknown; what they intend to do if they ever find one is also a mystery. They also seem to be confusing cause and effect; Majestics are appointed *because* war (or some other crisis) is immanent.

As a consequence of their defeat the dragons of Tiamath now live with a population density considerably higher than their ancestors, while retaining instincts that evolved for the needs of active omnivores with a preference for meat and a big hunting range. Under pre-conquest conditions Tiamath was the home of a few hundred dragons; today it houses hundreds of thousands. Unable to expand, and determined to avoid disruptions such as civil war, they have institutionalized violence and eugenic measures such as slavery, cannibalism and infanticide. Their nature makes these measures seem preferable to more peaceful solutions, such as birth control, but the price in terms of suffering and wasted lives is high.

**Economy:** Despite its origin in defeat, Tiamath is a wealthy nation; many dragons hid huge hoards before the surrender, concealing them until the Yarge had gone. Even today forgotten hoards occasionally come to light, and the quality and value of some of these discoveries is startling.

## Time (continued)

The figure the Blessed Jamanah gives for the length of the year, 200 days, is an approximation; it's actually 200 days 19.51 minutes, with a leap day every 82 years, taken as an extra day Six of the second week in Highsummer, followed by a special mass on Firstday. Dragons celebrate the “Sixday” holiday with carnivals, fireworks and mass flaming; the Yarge believe it to be VERY unlucky to born that day, since they are unlikely to survive to their next true birthday.

Firstday week 1 of Freshwinter, New Years Day, is also the autumnal equinox; the spring equinox is the last day of Thaw or first of Budding.

Assuming that the dragon foot is the same as our own, and that gravity is the same – both open to question – it's possible to use the Blessed Jamanah's information to determine the length of the day and year compared to Earth. The dragon second is 0.938 Earth seconds, the time it takes to fall 15ft. from rest at 1g. The other Dragon time units convert as follows:

Dragon	Earth
1 min = 80 sec.	75 seconds
1 hour = 80 min.	1 hour 40 min.
1 day = 20 hours.	33 hrs. 20 min.
1 year = 200 days	0.76 years

If the sun was like ours, a world with such a short year would orbit too close to be inside its habitable zone. A cooler star gives the world a similar climate to our own. The figures work out for a G9 star with the planet's orbital radius 0.77 AU; the sun would look a little bigger in the sky, but dimmer and slightly redder, but these differences would be barely noticeable. The long day-night cycle means that there is greater temperature variation over the course of a day and night, but greenhouse effects may compensate.

None of this is canon for this setting, but it can be used to add a little extra flavour if players want to know more about their world.

## Gold

Dragons have a strong affinity for gold, both as a source of wealth and as a source of psychological comfort and beauty. There seems no obvious reason why a dragon should prefer a bed of gold to a bed of pebbles; they are similarly hard, and if anything the pebbles retain more heat overnight. But somehow the addition of a little gold makes a big difference, irrespective of the wealth of the dragon. A dragon with 10,000 crowns banked sleeps poorly compared to one with 100 crowns in his bed.

Only the poorest of the poor and the most abused servants live completely without the precious metal; most dragons keep at least a few token coins in their homes, even if they never spend them.

Most dragons prefer to sleep on at least a portion of their hoard, rather than keeping it in a bank earning interest; this doesn't indicate distrust of banks, which are splendidly reliable (penalties for bank fraud are extreme), it simply shows to the extent to which physical possession of gold is equated with security. Unless the hoard is unusually vulnerable (as in some city homes) much of its gold will never see the inside of a bank.

Paradoxically, dragons consider gold to be less important than flesh. Most inheritance cases are about corpses, not money.

### Scenario Idea: There's Gold in Them There Holes...

An old friend who works in the Public Records Office has found a map showing the location of three buried supply caches, left in Yarge territory 370 years earlier as part of the preparations for an invasion that never happened. While ancient rations and gunpowder are of little interest, he believes that the caches included chests of gold for paying the troops. The snag, of course, is that the caches belong to the state and are well beyond the frontier, and two of the three are near Yarge settlements. Getting at them without government interference or an international incident won't be easy.

This capital was augmented by mineral wealth and eventually by trade. Today the banks of Irieth take good care of their customers' money, and backed by immense wealth their services spread far beyond the city, and even beyond the borders of Tiamath. Even the Yarge need dragon banking facilities; while their own bankers can handle investments in the short term, a few years or decades, dragons can give personal attention to accounts whose maturation is measurable in centuries, and dragon banks and their officials must obey anti-fraud laws that tend to promote honesty on pain of execution. Several Yarge royal families have used these services, and their accounts have been known to out-last the dynasties that opened them. Yarge pamphlets decrying the banks of Irieth as "funding tyranny" occasionally circulate; it's widely believed that their source is a cartel of Yarge bankers.

Banking is the most obvious example of Tiamath's financial influence, but there are many others. The banks have interests in many foreign businesses, not least insurance, via Yarge proxies. Yarge insurers tend to take on long-term civic risks (such as bridges) on the assumption that they will probably never have to pay out in the lifetime of the company; should the need arise they frequently default on their promises. Dragons, on the other claw, know that nothing lasts forever, and that sooner or later there will probably be a claim. Their premiums are a little higher, but in the event of a genuine disaster they will always pay out, which is more than can be said for some Yarge companies. Needless to say all claims must be thoroughly investigated.

Although Tiamath is land-locked, dragon companies have extensive shipping interests, and favourable tax laws mean that dozens of Yarge ships are registered there and fly the Dragon flag of convenience. Shipping insurance is a growth industry, of course. There are a few dragon-operated merchant ships, based at ports around the Migantil coast, but most dragons have no great love for the sea, and it will never be a popular career. There is no navy; should Tiamath ever acquire a seaport it would probably be necessary to create one, but even the strongest proponents of draconic expansion don't envisage that happening any time within the next few hundred years.

While financial services are the largest single source of foreign revenue, the bulk of the country's income comes from more conventional trade; Tiamath exports wines and spirits, paper, perfume oils, lead, silver, antiquities<sup>1</sup>, steel, fertilizers, wool, hides, timber, and truffles. Imports include clocks and other fine mechanical devices, heavy engineering machinery (lathes etc.), tin, mercury, silk, cotton and mineral oil.

<sup>1</sup> Some items found in hoards are of historical or archaeological value to the Yarge; they are typically sold for five to ten times their value as gold.

**International Affairs:** The map on pages 11 and 20 shows Tiamath and its near neighbours - there are three other continents, of similar or larger size, but the sea passage is so difficult, and the flying distances so far beyond the range of any dragon, that they might as well be on other worlds. So far as is known no dragons live elsewhere; it is believed that the species simply never spread to those lands.

**Migantil** is Tiamath's main trading partner, with ports along the **Narrow Sea** (the channel and complex of saltwater lakes between Migantil and the Edawoon Republic, which averages ten to fifteen miles wide and is notorious for storm waves and tidal surges) and on the South coast. The government seems to be run by a cartel of guilds and powerful merchant families, with a nominal Prince who appears to be a pawn of whichever faction is currently controlling the cartel, but the details are so obscure that even natives often seem to be uncertain how it works.

**Belshulath** is a hereditary monarchy. It also trades with Tiamath, though to a lesser extent, and offers Tiamath its only navigable water route to the coast, via the River Toris. There is a long-standing disagreement between Belshulath and Migantil over a narrow triangle of about a hundred square miles along the frontier between these nations; currently Migantil occupies it, but Belshulath has a strong historical claim. This area is important because the rail link from Migantil to Tiamath runs along its length; if Belshulath ever takes it back trade to Migantil would be seriously hampered, to the benefit of Belshulath.

The last of the nations bordering Tiamath is **Rasdogah Erofal**, whose Sultan is said to rule by Veld's divine right, although the religion that supports this belief bears little resemblance to any draconic faith. The culture is feudal, with the bulk of the population serfs owned by the Sultan or his knights. Warriors of this land are required to prove themselves by some daring feat of violence. All too often this is banditry along the border with Tiamath. The current Sultan is the first in several centuries to claim the title of "Dragon Slayer," which was once the main criterion on which the Sultan was selected. Details of this feat, and evidence for it, have yet to be revealed.

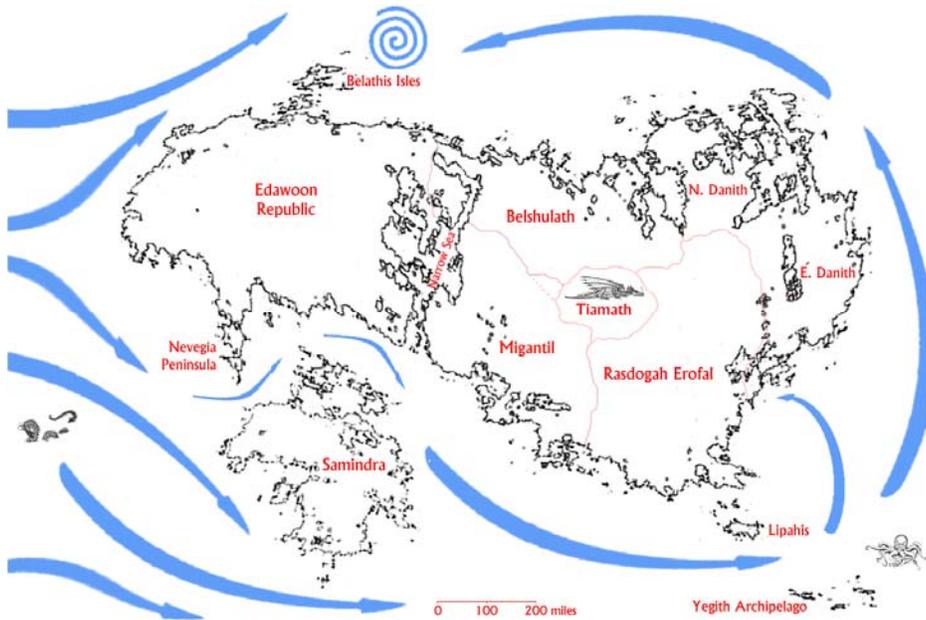
Further afield, **Danith** is currently engaged in a low-key succession war; the North is still loyal to the King, the Eastern states believe that their Queen is the legitimate ruler. Currently this dispute seems to be fought mainly through refusal to pay taxes, but there are fears that it will eventually become violent. The **Edawoon Republic** is (as usual) sabre-rattling, this time against Belshulath - the main cause is the plan to construct a canal linking the Narrow Sea to the North coast, on border land claimed by Edawoon (see overleaf). Edawoon is probably too short of funds to mount an effective military campaign, since it is fighting insurrections along the **Nevegia Peninsula** and in the **Belathis Isles**. It is rumoured that the Republic has been trying to recruit dragon mercenaries but has yet to offer sufficient payment. The Queen of **Samindra** has declared her country neutral in this conflict, but is prepared to offer asylum to refugees from both sides. Finally, the Prince of **Lipahis** has again announced that he intends to suppress the pirates of the **Yegith Archipelago**, having previously claimed victory on several occasions. Dragon missionaries (see page 31) have made many converts in the Archipelago and both churches view this announcement with some concern, believing it is simply an excuse for a war against the faith.

## Scenario Idea: The Dragons of War

Several dragons, former soldiers fallen on hard times, are approached by a Yarge claiming to represent the Edawoon Republic. Edawoon is currently fighting an insurrection along the Nevegia Peninsula, but can't seem to wipe out the last guerrillas - or "Veldless monarchist scum" as he puts it - because Queen Tara of Samindra has given them asylum. The guerrillas are abusing her protection, using fast steam launches to raid targets along the coast of the Peninsula. For political reasons the Republic cannot make any overt move against Samindra, but if something unfortunate were to happen to the boats Edawoon would be very grateful.

Of course things aren't quite as simple as is claimed - the boats actually belong to the Samindran navy, not the rebels, and the refugees are mostly innocent victims of the conflict, not guerrillas. Edawoon aims to close this escape route and use the remaining civilians as hostages to deter the insurrection. In the long term an invasion of Samindra may be explained as "defending" the country from Tiamath!

Will the dragons uncover the truth, or become pawns in the war against Tara?



Coastal trade is influenced by the major sea currents; in particular, there are adverse currents along the main coasts of the Edawoon Republic, and the maelstrom off the Belathis Isles, though rarely dangerous, adds delays. A canal linking the Narrow Sea to the North coast would bypass most of the Edawoonese coast and allow ships to circle most of the continent with the currents.



**The Great North Coast Canal Company (GNCCC):** Since most trade still goes by sea maritime affairs are obviously very important, and as already noted much of Tiamath's foreign income derives from trade and nautical insurance. The map above shows an important factor in all maritime trade – the prevailing currents around the coast. Steamers use roughly a third less fuel by travelling with the currents, so the obvious coastal trading route is South out of the Narrow Sea, possibly visiting Samindra, along the coast towards Lipahis, whose coal reserves make the island an attractive port of call, north past Danith and back to the West towards the Belathis isles. Unfortunately things then get tricky; there is no way to complete the circle without travelling against the current for at least 600 miles.

The GNCCC is a consortium of Tiamath's banks, Migantine engineering companies, and private investors in Belshulath and the Edawoon Republic. The main project proposed is an 18-mile shipping canal linking the Northern seas to the Narrow Sea, providing a safe and relatively calm route to the South coast. Secondary works would include clearing and dredging the bay to the North, and possibly constructing two shorter canals to link the northern arms of the Narrow Sea.

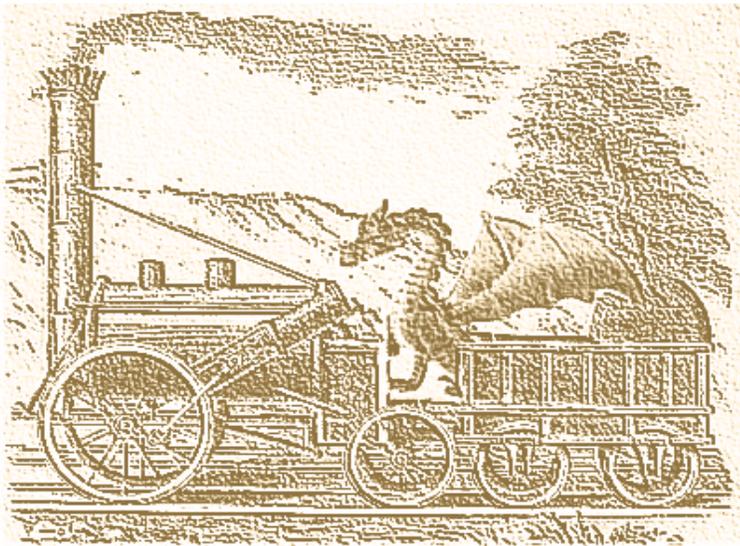
The main problem in all this is the opposition of the Edawoon Republic. The most practical route for the main canal is two to three miles east of their border with Belshulath, an area whose ownership has been disputed for many generations. Due to the structure of the rock, diverting the canal less than a mile to either side would double the cost, already estimated at fifty million crowns. Most of the profits will come from fees charged to use the main canal, benefiting the investors and the Belshulathi government, but not Edawoon. The secondary canals would be on Edawoonese soil but would earn much less; they are mostly in the plan as a sop to the Edawoonese government.

### Scenario Idea: Diplomacy!

The adventurers, representing a major Irieth investor, must discreetly convey a large bribe present to the Archon of the Republic. In return he will abstain in a crucial vote of the Republic's parliament, and talk up the secondary economic benefits of the canal. But is he an honest politician? And what if he doesn't stay bought, or the gift is publicised?

Edawoon complains that the canal would harm its coastal areas, but the reality is that the western parts of the country are sparsely populated, and the Republic has several excellent natural harbours along the Narrow Sea, and rail links to most parts of the country. If some agreement could be reached Edawoon's economy would benefit from the change. Meanwhile the sabre-rattling is deterring investment.

**Foreign Policy:** While the Yarge sometimes seem to have trouble understanding dragons, there can be no doubt that dragons are usually uncertain when they deal with the Yarge world. For the most part current foreign policy is to avoid getting caught up in another war until the time is right – when there are real territorial gains to be made. For example, the border dispute between Migantil and Belshulath might at first glance look promising, but it has smouldered for at least two hundred years without ever getting much beyond angry words. If things ever got more heated there might be a temptation for Tiamath to intervene and seize the territory, but it would disrupt trade, and might even unify the Yarge nations against Tiamath! Currently none of Tiamath's neighbours seems particularly vulnerable to invasion, so the government mostly looks to trade (especially the financial industry) as a way of gaining power and influence in the outside world, and discreetly encourages that part of the economy. There are occasional rumours of secret attempts to colonise unoccupied areas outside Tiamath, but if anything like this is occurring it is being kept very quiet indeed. Certainly there seem to be no colonies anywhere on the local continent. But as already noted there are other continents...



**Communications:** Yarge visitors to Tiamath are often surprised to find that there is a well-maintained transportation and communications network; they seem to think it odd that dragons often prefer to travel by road or rail, or send messages rather than flying with them. But goods can't move themselves and dragons often travel with unusually heavy luggage: their hoards. Add to this the fact that many younger dragons cannot fly, and that most servants and the clergy are prevented from doing so, and it becomes apparent that dragons need facilities at least as good as those available to the Yarge.

## The Railways

Although it is a comparatively recent innovation, only a few hundred years old, Tiamath's broad-gauge railway system is slowly stretching into all districts except the most mountainous.

Apart from the gauge, which is a foot wider than Yarge tracks, the most obvious difference between Yarge and dragon trains is the design of railway carriages; while goods wagons seem to be much the same everywhere, passenger wagons on a dragon train are low-sided and open to the elements, not enclosed boxes. Dragons prefer to travel with the wind in their faces, using their claws to stay aboard and on top of their hoards even if they sleep, but able to take flight if they wish to exercise during a journey. The top speed is about 25 MPH so they can easily keep up. Yarge passengers must travel in goods wagons or make special arrangements before using the railway; a few closed carriages are kept for this purpose. Engine drivers and train crew are free employees, not bound servants.

While the broad gauge is more comfortable and stable than that used by the Yarge, it means that goods and passengers must normally transfer from one train to another when they enter or leave Tiamath. The only exception is a Yarge-owned narrow-gauge line from Migantil into the capital, Irieth.

### Scenario Idea: Night Mail

A group of dragons happen to be travelling aboard the Night Mail from the Mines of Tolga to Irieth one foggy evening in late Leafturn. It's a boring journey; with the tracks shrouded in mist nobody feels like flying off for a little exercise, and it's too early and damp for easy sleep. Looking for alternative forms of amusement, someone suggests telling stories... Get the players to tell stories based on the backgrounds and interests of their characters - tales of the Yarge wars, romance, buried hoards, ghosts and quirks of fate. Nothing important depends on the outcome; it's just a way to add depth to their characterization.

## Industry & Technology

While most dragons embrace rural life in theory, in practice Tiamath is slowly becoming an industrialized urban nation. There are too many dragons, and old-fashioned agricultural methods will eventually be unable to support them all.

The most advanced industries are mining and heavy engineering. Dragons are natural tunnel-builders; a large adult male can shift several tons of rock a day with his bare claws, shaping and shoring the tunnel formed to maximise its strength. Collapses are virtually unknown, and in most cases anyone trapped can dig his own way out. Surface buildings are shaped from massive blocks of stone, with huge domes and tall spires. This expertise extends to civil engineering projects such as dams and bridges. The “engineering second” and most other units of measurement derive from these industries.

Manufacturing is based on steam power, with elaborate pulley systems taking power from the engine to the rest of the machinery. Most products are built somewhat larger and more robust than their Yarge equivalents, of course, but generally they are much alike.

Weaving and textiles aren't as developed as Yarge equivalents, since dragons make little use of fabrics; they wear hats, but don't use other clothing or soft furnishings. Most textiles are imported, with wool and hides exported since they are rarely used in Tiamath.

Chemical engineering includes the beginnings of a petrochemical industry, but largely devoted to lubricating oils, not fuels. Agricultural chemicals are still in their infancy, though the need for artificial fertilizers has already been recognized. There is also a substantial armaments industry, based mostly on black-powder weapons although some alternatives are in development. Dragon guns and cannon are still muzzle-loaded, but charges are pre-measured paper cartridges, barrels are rifled on the Minié ball principle, and percussion caps have replaced flints and fuses.

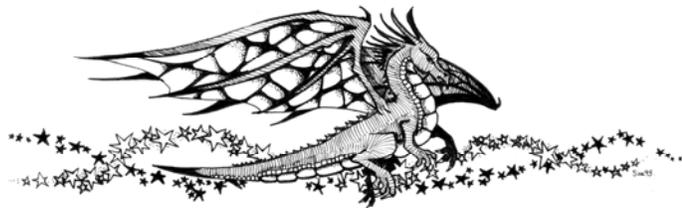
Roads are well-built and kept in good repair, and bridges are strong and durable even by dragon standards. There are no riding beasts suitable for dragons, but wagons pulled by drafters (oxen) are used for transporting goods and occasionally passengers. It takes eight to pull a wagon loaded with three medium-sized dragons and their luggage, including a modest hoard. The Yarge are known to have experimented with land steamer carriages which run on roads rather than rails, but the technology is in its infancy and hasn't reached Tiamath.

Most rivers in Irieth are too narrow and fast-flowing to be navigable; the exception is the River Toris, flowing North out of Irieth towards Belshulath and the sea, which is navigable by barge and steam launch, and one of the main routes for cargo in and out of Tiamath.

The postal service is efficient and reasonably priced. Fees are based on the distance and route used; mail is normally delivered to the nearest post office, not to individual homes. In towns such as Irieth and Tolga there are post offices in every district; in country areas the post office is normally the local railway station. Servants are sent to the station with mail, and collect any that has been delivered. For a premium above the usual fee the postal clerk delivers urgent mail, rather than waiting for it to be collected. Urban post offices employ a few fit young dragons as messengers for this purpose. In the worst case (mail from the Eastern frontier to the far West and vice versa) it might take two days for mail to reach its destination, but for most destinations a day is the norm.

Flying messengers are occasionally used to carry mail door to door, especially in towns, but on most long-distance routes the normal post is almost as fast, when allowance is made for headwinds etc., and a good deal cheaper.

Finally, it should be mentioned that military signals are sometimes sent via reflected sunlight, using the ‘heliograph’ device, and that recent developments in the study of the electrical fluid suggest that it may eventually be possible to send messages almost instantaneously by wire, over distances of several miles.



Sending messages via the electric fluid – an artist's impression  
*The Irieth Journal*, Highsummer '07

**Money and Prices:** Wealth is of course an immensely important matter to any dragon who hopes to rise even slightly above the common herd. While gold has huge psychological importance, as discussed on page 14, its more mundane significance should not be overlooked. Without an ample supply of gold it's impossible to live in any style, and good marriages become inconceivable; while romantics talk of marrying for love, realists quote the ancient draconic proverb "Never marry for money but marry where money is."

In other words, love might be desirable, but it doesn't pay the bills – and for a dragon who wishes to move in Tiamath's society the bills can be very high indeed. On a more mundane level, even commoners have to eat, and despite their lack of wealth seem to find money just as worrisome as the nobility. Fortunately the nobility have an advantage; they can generally pay someone else to administer their funds, and need only worry about the total income and outlay.

It would be tedious to devote too much space to prices since most readers can be assumed to be dragons of means, who will never have to worry about them anyway. Total wealth can be important; for example, 8,000 crowns is not an enormous fortune or a particularly good dowry, but it will pay basic expenses for a few years. Meat and other agricultural products are relatively cheap, while luxurious trinkets requiring fine workmanship (such as watches and other small mechanical devices) must generally be Yarge made and often imported. The prices that follow are typical, but add 25% - 50% (sometimes more) to all prices in Irieth.

Beeve carcass	5 cr.	Hat, dragon	1-3 cr.
Swine carcass	2 cr.	Hat, dragoness	2-5 cr.
Muttonwool carcass	1½ cr.	Magazine / journal	1/8-3/4 cr.
Lepus (rabbit) carcass	½ cr.	Book, leather binding	2 cr.
Fowl (chicken) carcass	¼ cr.	Newspaper	25-75 pc.
Beer, quart	5 pc.	Theatre performance	1-2 cr.
Beer, gallon	15 pc.	Music hall / vaudeville	½-¾ cr.
Beer, 48-gallon cask	½ cr.	Rifle for dragon	20 cr.
Spirits, Pint	50 pc.	Pistol for dragon	10 cr.
Good restaurant meal	2 cr.	Shotgun for dragon	15 cr.
Cheap meal	1 cr.	Percussion caps, 50	¾ cr.
Train fare (10 miles)	1 cr.	Powder cartridges **	3 cr.
Cart hire, mile	5 pc.	Rifle bullets, 50	4½ cr.
Drafter hire, mile	10 pc.	Pistol balls, 100	3 cr.
Steamship, 100 miles	15 cr.	Birdshot, 50 bags	4 cr.
Cargo, 100 miles, ton	5 cr.	Watch (Yarge made)	10 cr.
Letter, per oz. *	1/8 cr.	Daily wage, clerk	½ cr.
Parcel, per lb. *	½ cr.	Civil servant, per day	1 cr.
Courier, per mile	50 pc.	Lawyer, per hour	10-30 cr.

\* Most routes in Tiamath; double all prices for especially long routes or international postage.

\*\* Gunpowder in paper tube; 50 for pistol or 30 for rifle or shotgun.

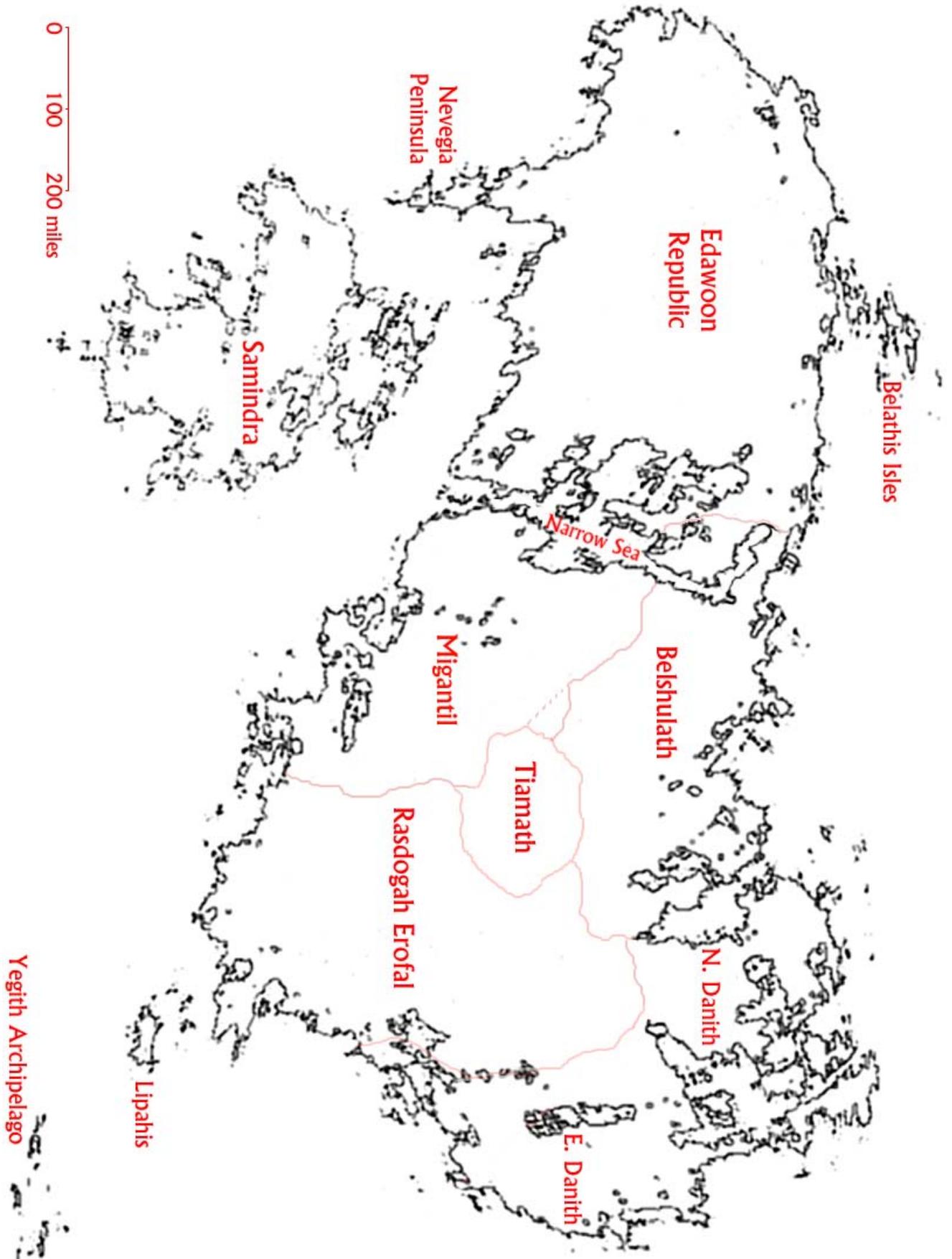
## Currency

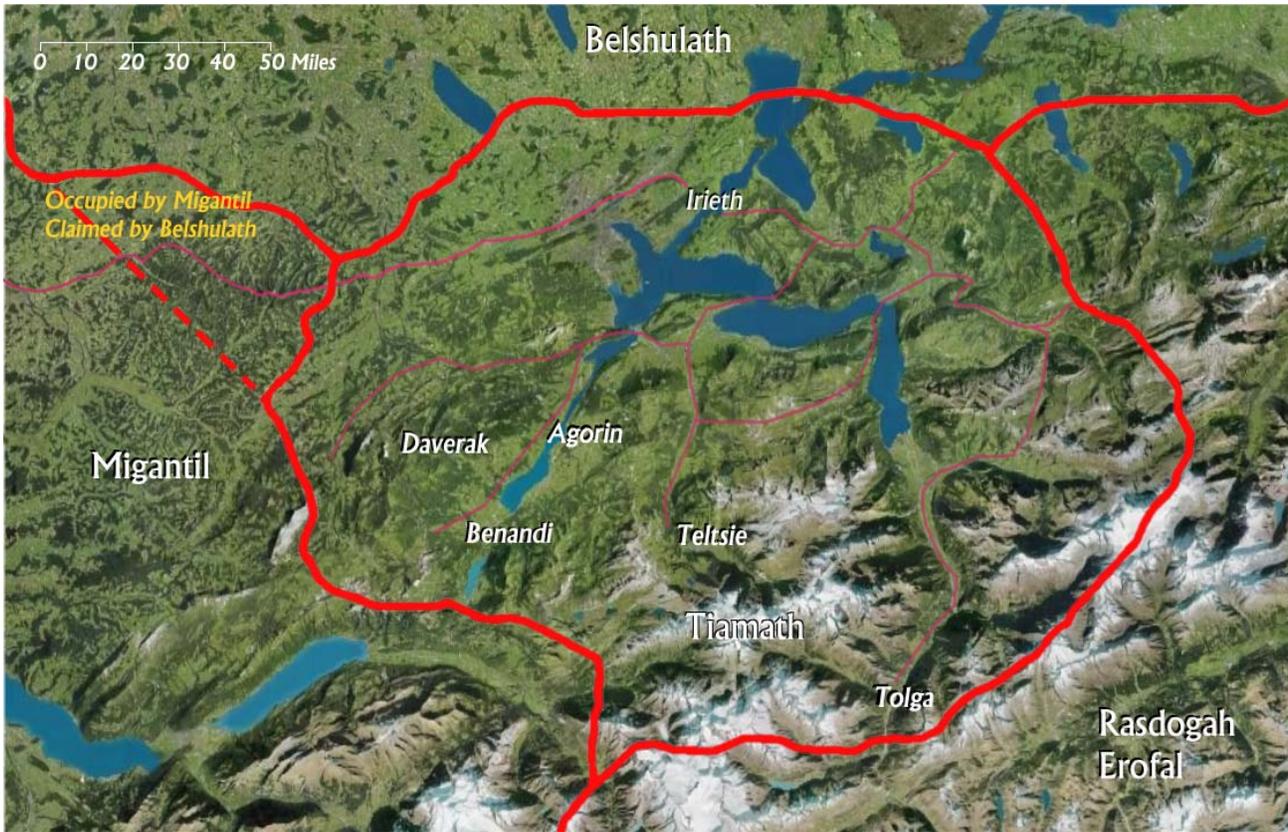
Tiamath's currency is based on the gold Crown, which has been in use for approximately 2500 years. Prior to that at least a dozen different Yarge coinages were in use, some of them long forgotten elsewhere.

Eventually financial confusion was so widespread that the Noble Assembly appointed the Majestic Thidris, whose sole responsibility was to resolve the mess. A new coin, the Crown (cr.), was designed and minted, with an agreed weight and metallic content; the other currencies could still be used, but only for their assayed value as gold. Today they are only found in the oldest hoards, with any oddities tending to be cashed in when an estate changes hands, and the Tiamath Crown is the hardest and most stable currency in the known world.

Unfortunately currency reform was not popular at the time, and Thidris was assassinated with his work only half-done. While the Crown and the smaller gold coins derived from it (the half-Crown, quarter-Crown, and eighth-Crown) were completely standardised, silver and copper coins remained in a hugely complicated mess. Things were made worse by the devaluation of silver when the mines of Tolga were first discovered; the value of silver coins plummeted compared to copper and gold, and remains unstable to this day. Silver is typically sold abroad.

For the last 850 years the value of the copper penny (pc.) has been set at a nominal 1/1000<sup>th</sup> Crown; theoretically a half-Crown is thus worth 500 pence, a quarter-Crown 250 pence, an eighth-Crown 125 pence. In practice all banks charge a commission, typically 3%, when changing copper for gold. So, for example, a dragon paying an eighth-crown for something costing 50 pence will be given 75 pence change, but the banks charge 125 pence plus the fee, rounded up to 129 pence, for an eighth crown. For this reason most merchants are happy to give small change, less eager to take it, and only the cheapest goods are priced in pence.





The geography and main railway routes of Tiamath; secondary and local lines omitted.

## Out and About in Tiamath

*The sun was setting in a blaze of cloud away west down the valley, turning the curves and meanders of the river to flame, still bright enough for them to need to shield their eyes with their outer lids. It was the last day of the month of Highsummer. The crops were well grown in the square fields, spread out like a green and gold patchwork beneath them, outlined by the ragged hedgerows. Here and there they could see low buildings, tiled in mellow red, byres for the beeves and sties for the swine. They could see no abode of dragon, for the farmers of Agornin lived, by long custom, in their own section of the Dignified's establishment...*

*Tooth and Claw – II:5*

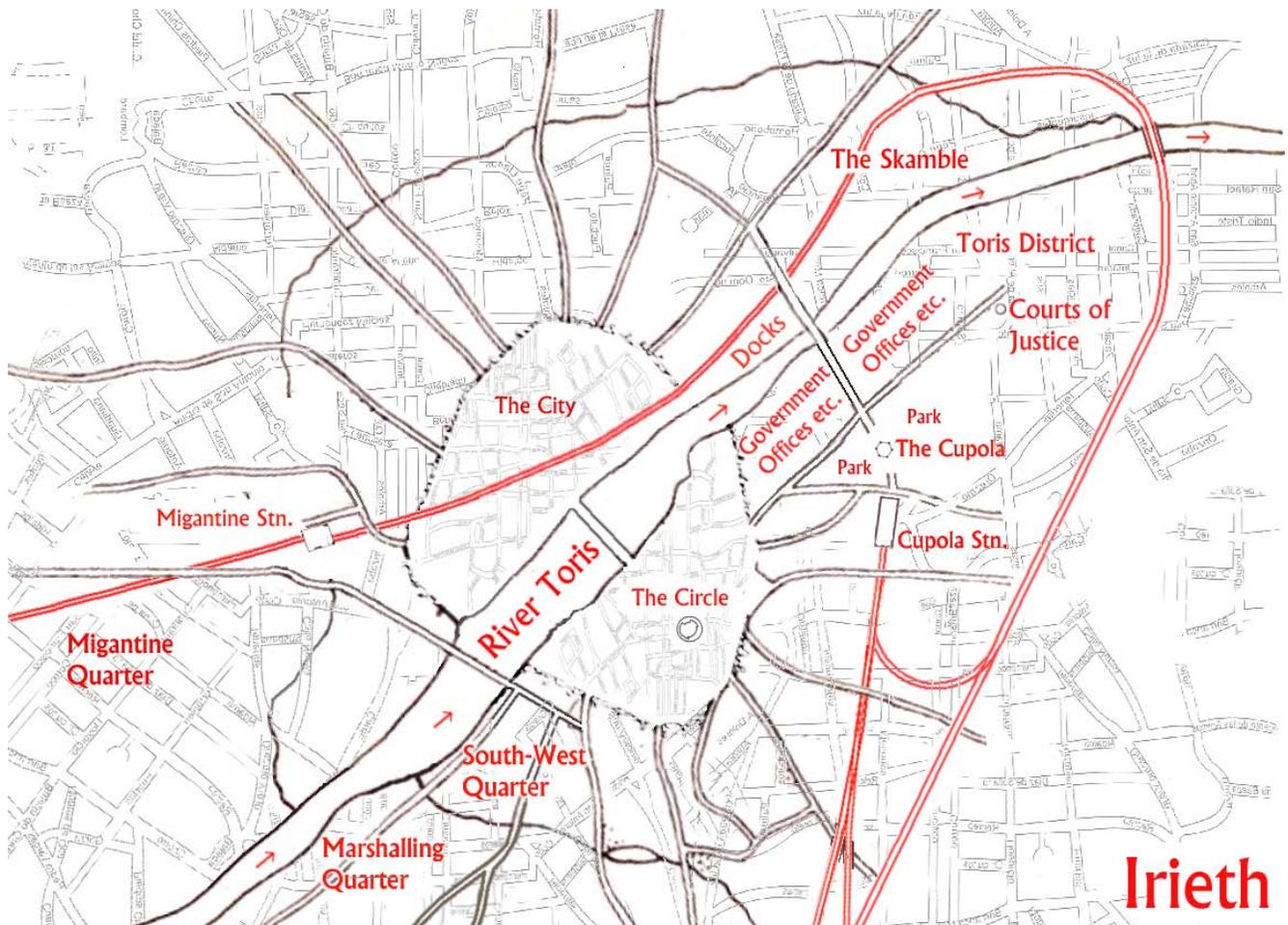
**T**ooth and Claw is set in various country districts of Tiamath and the capital city, Irieth. A few other areas are mentioned, without many details.

The country is split into the holdings of the aristocratic families, with a leavening of wealthy (but somewhat less respected) new land owners such as Bon Agornin, whose fortune was originally acquired in trade three hundred years earlier; he bought his lands and the title that went with them, then married an impoverished but well-born bride so that his children would have aristocratic blood. It isn't a coincidence that the railway and station are so close to the Agornin residence; Bon Agornin sold the railway company the right of way across a corner of his estate, one of the conditions being that there should be a station on his land. This benefited the railway, which would have otherwise had to divert several miles through harsher terrain, and the consequent ease of shipping farm goods to Irieth is one of the reasons for the prosperity of the estate. Another profitable sideline is made possible by the railway: drafters are put out to graze alongside the track, and can eventually be sold in the city with a guarantee that they are hardened to noise and will not easily be startled.

In other respects Agornin is a typical country estate, perhaps equivalent to a Yarge village. It consists of a cave complex housing the family, with their servants and some farmers and their families in connected caves. They administer the farmland for a few miles around. The district is hilly rather than mountainous, and most of the caves have been dug out by generations of occupants, not natural forces. The area controlled by a family is determined by the status, wealth, and fighting ability of the male head of the family; when Bon Agornin died no other member of his family was capable of defending his holding, and the remainder of the family were forced to split up and live elsewhere or move to the city. It became part of the nearby Daverak estate, which was somewhat larger but less conveniently located.

Benandi is larger than either of these estates, stretching for several hours' flight in all directions, and has a much more imposing residence, Benandi Place, built on several levels, a "complicated honeycomb of caves at the top of a cliff." There is a parsonage at the base of the cliffs, with a tunnel leading up to the rest of the complex, and a "splendid chapel" large enough for all the occupants inside the main residence. The caves are natural, not excavated, another sign of the family's wealth and power. Until recently the estate was run by the matriarch Exalt Benandi, the widow of Exalted Marshal Benandi and driving force behind the family's prosperity. Her son, Exalted Sher Benandi, took control of the estate after his marriage, having had to force her to yield her authority on pain of being eaten. The family also owns a large town house in Irieth and other properties around Tiamath.

Much of the prosperity of Tiamath derives directly or indirectly from mines in the Tolgar district and the Tolga estate, from factories in the same area, and from other areas like them, but most upper-class dragons prefer not to dwell upon sordid matters of trade. Instead they focus most of their attention on the other end of the railway, the city of Irieth.



*Flying in Irieth could never be the joy it was in the country. Many dragons refused to fly at all in the capital, saying it was dangerous as well as unpleasant, because of the unpredictable winds caused by the buildings and the heat of so many dragons living together. They walked the streets, or hired drafters and carriages...*

*...From up here, the city looked beautiful. He could see the patterns made of the tiles on the rooftops, and the accidental patterns made by so many rooftops together. He swept by the six towers of the Cupola, taking care not to fly directly above them, and glimpsed children playing down in the courtyard. The houses were silent, but the streets were full of early commerce – here a market selling fruit, fresh from the country, there beeves and swine being driven from the railway to their final market. The silver shining lines of the railway led from the grand arches of the Cupola station across the city...*

*Tooth and Claw – VI:22*

**Irieth** is the capital and oldest city of Tiamath. Straddling the river Toris, legend claims that it was founded by Tomalin the Great, the Majestic who led the revolt that eventually drove the Yarge out of Tiamath. Some features of the layout suggest that this is not entirely true – the remnants of the original city walls, surrounding the City (the financial district) and the Circle (the university) have a look of Yarge defensive construction. They are now largely demolished, apart from the deep foundations, the stone long since salvaged for building projects and pierced by numerous roads and a railway line. A plausible theory is that the City was originally the main Yarge garrison during the Time of Subjugation, with dragons living around it until the rebellion began. It's telling that despite these fortifications the City has apparently never been used as a seat of government by dragon-kind.

The real centre of government is, of course, the Cupola, or rather the elaborate system of artificial caves underneath its defensive towers, where Parliament meets; see pages 25-6 for more on the composition of the government. If for any reason Parliament sees fit to appoint a Majestic, a ruler analogous to a Yarge "King," his offices and apartment will also be below the Cupola. It is a criminal offence to fly over the Cupola while Parliament is in session, for fear that a vote will be interrupted or there will be some other disruption of the business of government. Sessions often continue through the night, or run continuously for several days, and there is no way to determine the status of things from above, so most prudent dragons make a point of flying wide at all times.

The Courts of Justice (discussed on pages 27-8) are also underground, in Irieth's only notable natural cave system.

## Waste Management

Like any other big city Irieth needs an elaborate infrastructure to provide the basics of civilised life: running water and sewage, rubbish disposal, fuel, etc.

One advantage that Irieth has over Yarge cities is a reduced need for water and sanitation; while dragons bathe and drink, they do so much less often than Yarge, and their droppings are mostly composed of solids, a mixture of indigestible food remnants and digestive residues, much like those of snakes. They can be shovelled away fairly easily, and doing so is one of the duties every servant has to do at one time or another.

In the country they are usually dug into fields and gardens as fertilizer; in the city the sheer quantity of material involved can cause problems.

Dumping everything in the river might seem an easy answer, but it has been tried several times in the past; not only does it pollute the drinking water supply, but sooner or later the river turns green or red with an overgrowth of algae and the fish die. Fortunately this problem suggests an obvious use for the material; it can be processed to make fertilizers, rich in nitrates and bone meal, and other chemical products. A by-law requires all homes in Irieth to have an appropriate waste receptacle, accessible from outside, which can be emptied easily. By night wagons belonging to the district waste companies prowl the streets, their crews emptying the receptacles (and also collecting other wastes such as skins, bones, etc. that have not been consumed), and eventually delivering them to a processing facility down-stream of the Skamble. There the material is sorted and most is dried, ground, and packed for shipment. About 35% is sold in Tiamath; the rest is barged downstream to Belshulath where it is an important resource for the chemical industry. Migantil companies have also expressed interest, but the cost of shipping by rail is considerably higher, and it is currently cheaper for them to buy the final products from Belshulath.

## Urban Housing

Dragons are naturally a cave-dwelling species, and in the country they generally live in natural or excavated cave complexes (see page 26). Unfortunately cities rarely have the room for such luxurious accommodation, and in Irieth in particular underground space is at a premium. The only natural cave complex is occupied by the Courts of Justice, even Parliament occupies an excavation.

Private residences are more limited; with so many homes packed so tightly together it isn't possible to build anything much like a real cave, since it would undermine adjoining structures. Some of the wealthiest and oldest houses do have artificial caves to rival anything that might be found in the country, but they are a very small exception to the rule.

A typical small town house consists of a round two-storey brick building, with a small excavated cave underneath, just large enough for the residents to sleep, entered via a shaft from the upper floor. The ground floor is used for dining, servants, etc.; the upper floor has the speaking room, and possibly a study or other offices. Unless special construction techniques are used the cave is unlikely to be completely safe for a hoard; often there is even an exit from the room to the street, to provide an escape route in the event of fire, and the door is rarely strong enough to stop a determined thief.



While this is less than ideal, some poorer homes offer nothing more than a sleeping pit dug into the floor. Some nouveaux-riche families have even begun to build Yarge-style houses with *windows* and cellars as sleeping quarters! It's hard to imagine a dragon sleeping well or feel secure in such conditions!

As should be obvious, all of Tiamath's railways lead to Irieth. As already noted all are broad gauge, with the exception of the Migantil line which terminates at the Migantine station. The design of this station is unusual, in that the narrow Migantil lines come in at one end, standard Tiamath lines at the other. Passengers need simply cross platforms to transfer from one system to the other.

The Migantine district has Tiamath's highest concentration of Yarge, as visitors and permanent residents. Despite this there is comparatively little trouble in the area and it is a popular destination for tourists and visitors seeking a frisson of foreignness without the expense of taking the Grand Tour. Many of the buildings copy Migantil architectural forms, with high vaulted ceilings. The area has a (largely undeserved) reputation for racy living, and many of the city's artists live there and practice the traditional skills of sculpting, painting, and sponging off rich relatives.

The main station and portal to the rest of Irieth is opposite the Cupola. The terminus combines passenger and freight facilities, with food and livestock mostly coming in early in the morning, passengers in the afternoon and evening.

Some other districts shown include the wealthy South-West Quarter, where many peers have their town houses, and the Marshalling Quarter, centred on the main army barracks for the city. At one time the surrounding streets were crowded with inns and less reputable facilities catering to the needs of soldiers, but these have gradually been replaced by wealthy residences. Soldiers in search of amusement must now cross the river to the Migantine Quarter, or look further afield.

Finally, perhaps the most wretched quarter of Irieth is the Skamble, a district of slums, warehouses, and breweries on the North bank of the river opposite the Cupola. The Planning Department recently unveiled proposals to redevelop the area, re-house many of the occupants, and demolish the worst of the slums. New facilities will include properly excavated homes, a new school, etc. The residents have cautiously welcomed the proposal, but critics note that it will do little to remedy the underlying problems of the area or provide new employment, and recent inflammatory pamphlets suggest that (despite the endorsement of several Old Religion priests) it is nothing more than a crude attempt to destroy Irieth's largest Old Religion community.



A fashionable young maiden risks the air currents and updrafts over Irieth, her skin burnished to perfection, her face largely concealed by a stylish but somewhat impractical example of the milliner's art.



## Society

*Some gently-born dragons who cling tightly to the rank in which they were born, or have achieved by marriage or accomplishment, do not favour those whom life has placed in rank above them. The Exalt did not suffer from this fault. There were not many who ranked above her own Exalted status, but those there were, Eminent and Eminences, Augusts and Augustas, she courted assiduously. She often regretted the loss of the Majestics and Highnesses and Honourables of old, there was nothing she would have liked so much as the thrill of having a Highness deign to drop in on a party she had arranged. Deprived of this, she made the most of August Fidrak, who endured her fussing graciously.*

*Tooth and Claw – XV:56*

**T**iamath is governed by an oligarchy of peers combined with an intermittently-appointed non-hereditary monarchy and an extensive civil service. This makes good sense to the peerage, although the commoners who are affected by their decisions undoubtedly have other ideas. Parliament, also known as the Noble Assembly, is simply a representative selection of male peers, each nominated by at least a hundred free dragons; nomination is largely the result of patronage and lobbying for seats as they fall vacant, and it is rare for new seats to be created. A Member of the Assembly theoretically gains no special privileges or income, over and above those normal to his rank, but of course the position is extremely influential – most Members find ways to benefit financially and extend their own patronage to their friends and families. Parliament meets in a complex of caves under the Cupola in the capital, Irieth. Originally the Assembly only met as necessary, but for several centuries the necessity seems to have arisen nearly every year, and there is now a fixed Parliamentary term, the Season.

In the event of a crisis requiring rapid decision-making, such as war, Parliament may appoint a Majestic – essentially a King – from the ranks of the Eminent, and if the situation demands it one or more Honourables, designated heirs or understudies positioned to take the Majestic's place in the event of his death.

## The Peerage

Dragon titles are similar in purpose to those used by many Yarge cultures, approximate equivalents being:

Dragon M	Dragon F	Yarge
Majestic	-	King
-	Highness	Queen
Honourable	-	Prince
Eminent	Eminence	Duke
August	Augusta	Knight
Exalted	Exalt	Earl
Illustrious	Illust	Viscount
Dignified	Dignity	Baron
Respected	Respectable	Squire

With the following exceptions these titles are hereditary or can be acquired by marriage:

The **Majestic**, if any, is appointed by Parliament; Majestic may also be translated as “warlord” or “dictator” depending on the terms of the appointment. His wife is the **Highness**. Any appointed heirs (succession is not hereditary) are the **Honourables**, who also act as deputies or generals. Currently these posts are vacant.

**August** is not hereditary, and can only be awarded by the Majestic. It is generally awarded for services to the state, valour, etc. Holders are accorded almost as much respect as an Eminent.

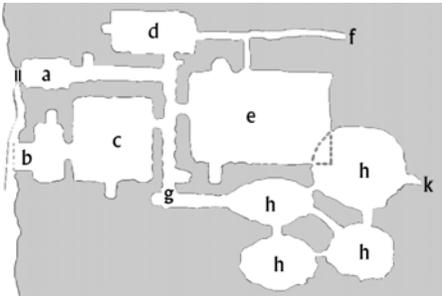
With these exceptions a title is generally an indication of the area of land held, and possibly of the size of the dragon bearing the title – it takes a big dragon or a formidable fighting reputation, which usually amounts to the same thing, to hold onto a title and govern land effectively.

A Majestic can award or create any other title, of course, adding new hereditary Peers at any level. But wholesale creation of new Peers is considered a sign of weakness, indicating that the Majestic is at odds with Parliament and wishes to weight their votes. For one-off cases an alternative that causes fewer problems is to appoint a new Peer to take over an existing title that has no incumbent.

## Home Life

Dragons base their ideas of a desirable home on their ancient and near-instinctive love of caves. In rural areas they either occupy an existing cave complex or dig their own; in towns compromises must be made, and the main indication of the value of a town residence is how closely it matches the rural ideal. The illustration shows the home of a well-to-do rural family, perhaps of Respectable rank, dug into a rocky hill. Although it is primarily excavated, not a natural cave, an attempt has been made to present the illusion of naturally rough walls. At intervals alcoves allow female members of the family to retreat from male contact.

There are two main entrances; at ground level (and accessible on foot from the nearest road) is a lobby (a) with a steel outer door. Homes near the borders incorporate defences against Yarge raiders. A ramp leads up to the main tunnel. A landing stage (b) is only accessible from the air, and leads to the speaking room (c). Also accessible from the main tunnel are the dining room (d) and ballroom (e). A tunnel (f) leads to the servants' quarters, another (g) goes down steeply to the undercaves (h), well below ground level, used for sleeping and storing hoards. Another tunnel (k) provides an escape route, emerging in a secluded area of woods some distance from the main complex. This exit is concealed and cannot be opened from the outside.



Larger rural homes have more and better rooms, and may be built on multiple levels above and below ground; they may also incorporate accommodation for more than one family.

The Yarge appear to believe that this happens suddenly; in fact it may take years for the Assembly to decide that a Majestic is needed. Several hundred years later Yarge who have no personal knowledge of events may think that it was a sudden change, of course. While the Majestic has many privileges, not least the power to appoint members of the peerage, the appointment is always fraught with difficulty, and most die (through stress-related illness or assassination, or on the field of battle) within a century of accession. If there is still need for a Majestic an Honourable will be appointed to take his place, or if this is not possible another Majestic will be chosen from the Eminent.

Below the Peerage are the commoners, free dragons without title; these include tenants of the peers (such as farmers), tradesmen, merchants, members of the Civil Service, and the general mass of the population, existing in various degrees of wealth or poverty according to their fortunes under Veld. It is possible for such dragons to rise to the peerage through marriage or by buying a title, as in the case of Bon Agornin, but rare. Commoners can serve on juries, have nominal rights under law, and may even be rich or have other forms of power, but they may not hold political office.

The "criminal classes" are those dragons with no formally acknowledged existence in the world; they do not pay taxes, cannot legally purchase property such as homes, and cannot serve on juries. The term for this class reflects the fact that it contains most of Tiamath's criminals. It's also the main source for indentured servants and "other ranks" soldiers.

The final class is that of indentured servants, essentially serfs or slaves sold into service by their families. Depending on their employer their lot varies from tolerable at best to wretched at worst, and their rights are virtually non-existent. Usually their wings are bound to prevent flight, except in the case of some especially trusted servants. A good master may eventually permit an old servant to retire, but this is far from the norm; most work until they drop, and a pitiful minority are eaten as soon as they weaken. Servants rarely grow beyond six or seven feet, and in most cases they never taste dragon flesh, or keep more than a token gold piece or two for their beds.

Recent years have seen the beginnings of a political movement for the betterment of servants, spearheaded by the writings of the Blessed Calien Afelan; whose book *The Subjugation of Servants* has attracted some attention amongst the better classes. There is little impetus for change, but he and his supporters are working to ameliorate some of the worst abuses and build up support for reform. This movement is, of course, linked to the growing freedom allowed to the Old Religion (see pages 30 onwards).

*"I know that the Judges won't order me eaten, but they have the power to do so. The law stands to allow dragons like me redress against dragons who are stronger, but the Judges can order anyone to fight anyone at any time."*

*Tooth and Claw* – XII: 47

Tiamath's **legal system** consists of an appointed judiciary with jurors selected from the available commoners (and if necessary peers) in the area where the trial is held. In rural areas this often means that it is virtually impossible to select an impartial jury in cases involving the local peer; most of the jurors will be his tenants, employees, etc. The Peers tend to regard this as a good thing, and try to arrange things accordingly, others aren't so sure. In general city courts are considered to be less biased, and anyone bringing an action against a high-ranking opponent does his best to ensure that it will go to the Courts of Justice in Irieth, where it might be treated a little more fairly. But Judges are also usually Peers, so there may still be a bias – and the Judges can choose to bypass the jury if they feel that the facts in a case have been proved beyond all reasonable doubt. For criminal cases a single Judge is usually sufficient, three Judges may preside over complex civil cases. For reasons long forgotten all court officials, including attorneys, wear woollen wigs in imitation of Yarge, the size and style reflecting their role and importance to the court. Judges (addressed as "Honourable" in court) wear tall 'justicewigs' with high piles of rolled wool.



Apart from Judges and the other court officials there are three main types of lawyer in any trial:

- *Attorneys* establish matters of fact or hand papers to the court; they wear a small tightly-rolled 'attorneywig.'
- *Queriers* ask questions or make objections, and wear a larger and more loosely curled 'querywig.'
- *Pleaders* interrogate witnesses and sum up the case; their wig is an impressive 'pleadingwig,' similar to the 'justicewig' worn by a Judge.

Some lawyers take on two or all three of these roles, changing their wigs as often as may be necessary to perform each function. While this would seem to be a disadvantage, if the other side in the case has all three types of lawyer, a one-dragon presentation can give the impression that the client is a victim in the case. It also gives the lawyer the opportunity for a good deal of "business" with the wigs, changing quickly to give an air of efficiency, slowly for pathos or to raise tension, etc.

## Fashion

Like any other society Tiamath has fads and fashions, some short-lived, others seemingly permanent. Sumptuary "laws" are imposed by the Orthodox Faith, but are theoretically no longer legally binding. A few examples follow:

**Hats:** Dragons wear hats appropriate to their status and activity; cloth caps for workers, top hats for a visit to court, frothy silk confections for a female at a party, and so forth. The sumptuary laws say that hats must be the only clothing, and forbid separate items of jewellery and Yarge-like garments. The Orthodox Faith also dislikes mantillas, mainly because the Old Religion considers them appropriate female apparel.

**Interior Decoration:** Until recently any display of wealth outside the hoard was considered vulgar in the extreme. However, for the last few hundred years there has been a fashion for decorating cave walls with patterns of light-coloured stones. Recently, and only in the most avant-garde circles, small gems have been used instead. It's very new, and mostly confined to Irieth. There's also a long-standing rural fashion for decorating caves with carved representations of the surrounding land, rarely seen in town.

Yarge paintings go in and out of fashion; most dragons think that the colours look odd, which implies that dragon and Yarge eyes may see reflected colours differently.

Doors add a little comfort to caves by keeping in warmth and reducing drafts, but they're currently considered Yarge-like and out of favour, except for sleeping chambers and other areas where privacy is expected and desirable.

**Cooking:** Although some dragons can breathe flame, cooking is a strongly-discouraged Yarge aberration. It's possible to find restaurants that will serve dragon-sized cooked meals in areas catering to Yarge visitors, such as the Migantane quarter of Irieth. Conservative dragons claim that few dragons try cooked food more than once, so it's odd that these restaurants stay in business.

## Society Events

Social life in the country tends to be ordered around the most obvious outdoor pursuits: hunting (with natural weapons or with firearms); nature study; flying; and occasionally swimming, with due care to avoid scale rot. Things slow considerably in winter, with snow and ice covering most of the areas that would normally be used for these pursuits. With the exception of snow sports enthusiasts most social life moves indoors, and it's the season for dinner parties, amateur dramatics, and domestic pursuits such as expansion of the family caves and art.

In the season, when the Noble Assembly sits and the cream of society is in Irieth, the social whirl includes unison flamings (formation aerobatics with fire), water parties, circuit walking, balls and parties, picnics in the park in good weather, and (regrettably) gambling. Irieth has more than its fair share of gambling clubs, many run by nimble-fingered Yarge, and dicing is especially popular. The theatre is at its best at these times, catering to a relatively highbrow and wealthy audience; at other times much of the fare on offer consists of vulgar vaudeville, sensational melodrama, off-colour comedy, and other material with a strong appeal to the lowest common denominator, used to pull in the audience by quantity, not quality. Dragons who have business in the city out of season, and think to take in a play in the evening, may be in for a nasty surprise! If none of these entertainments appeal Irieth has its share of museums, galleries, and public monuments... and more breweries and taverns than any other area of Tiamath, if lower amusement is sought. Visitors are strongly urged to guard their money (and their backs) if they venture into the areas where low vices are most readily found, such as Irieth's "Skamble" district.

Naturally the activities described have parallels elsewhere in Tiamath; for example, Tolga's summer flame and fireworks festival is justly famous for the quality of its pyrotechnics, attracting visitors from all corners of Tiamath.

The powers of the court are literally draconian. In civil cases the parties may be ordered to fight to the death to settle the dispute, or pay damages in money or flesh – their own or that of a condemned prisoner purchased in lieu. In criminal cases penalties include fines or involuntary servitude (enforced by chaining the wings rather than tying them normally), but the most common sentence is death. Condemned prisoners are fed well until their execution, to ensure that they make a good meal. Unwary Yarge who have been unfortunate enough to get caught up in the system, but lucky enough to be freed, often marvel at how well dragons treat their prisoners. Usually they find the explanation disturbing.

In some unusual criminal cases the court may sentence prisoners to execution *without* consumption; their bodies will be burned, not eaten, since their crimes are considered so heinous that they would contaminate anyone who consumed their flesh. It's the traditional punishment for *unjustified* assassination of a Majestic, treason, etc. This is considered more horrible than simple execution; it punishes the family of the criminal, as well as the criminal himself, unless the court makes some provision for them. Many dragons believe that they will only reincarnate as dragons if their bodies are eaten by other dragons; it's not actually religious doctrine, but for those who believe it there is nothing worse than this form of execution.

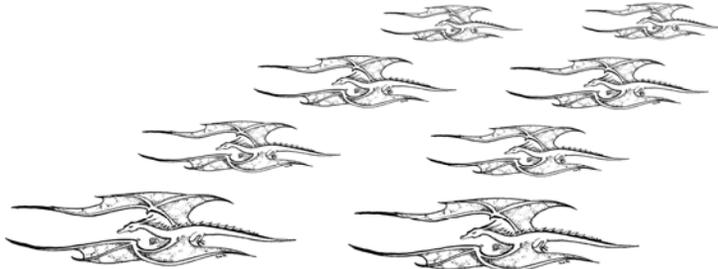
Lawyers who belong to the peerage use their title as a peer first or their honorary title as a lawyer (if higher) when coupled with their position in the court; for example, an Exalted who was a judge would be described as "Honourable Judge Arebulis," in court and in press reports of trials, "Exalted Arebulis" socially.

*In bringing the news of his friends demise to his grieving widow and dragonets (the news was all that he could bring, for the body had already been consumed by his comrades, as remains the immemorial custom of armies) he found them living in some distress...*

*Tooth and Claw – V:18*

The **army** is generally considered to be a good career for those without better prospects. It's primarily organized for small-scale and very mobile frontier skirmishes and mountain warfare. A typical unit is roughly equivalent to a Yarge company and might consist of a Marshal (Major) with eight to ten officers (Captains and Ensigns) under him, and about a hundred and fifty dragons in other ranks. About half of the unit are equipped to fight from the air, the remainder for ground skirmishing and to operate artillery. Field guns can be

flown to a firing position, but it isn't possible to fire them in flight; it takes several dragons to carry the gun, carriage, ammunition, and powder, they must then be assembled and used on the ground. All ranks carry rifles or pistols when they are in combat; they have learned by bitter experience that flame and claw alone are no match for a well-aimed bullet.



A Reserve unit practices formation flying over the Western border.

Since most military deaths occur in circumstances where it is impossible to return the body to the victim's family, it's customary for the surviving officers of a unit to eat any officers who have been killed; other ranks are eaten by their comrades and NCOs. For a regrettable minority, who could otherwise never afford dragon flesh, this is one of the incentives to serve.

One of the main weaknesses of Tiamath's current military organization is that it is ill-equipped to fight off a major invasion on the Northern plains. Recent scare stories of Migantil invasion and 'The Belshulath Peril' (such as the novel *The Fall of Irieth*) have highlighted this vulnerability, and Parliament is expected to budget for an expansion of heavy drafter-drawn artillery units and ground forces to cover this sensitive region. There is also concern that several Yarge nations are experimenting with powered lighter-than-air flight, which could counter Tiamath's main military advantage. A powered balloon carrying a few sharpshooters or dropping explosive shells could be a lethal weapon in any future war.

There are about six thousand serving soldiers, supplemented by a voluntary reserve with a thousand or so members, of whom about a third have previous military experience. There appears to be enough equipment for the serving army, the readiness (or otherwise) of the reserve is less clear. Reservists must train for one week per year.

Soldiers use their rank as peer, if any, before their military title, e.g. "Dignified Captain Thonakie." Military ranks may be used as a courtesy title after a soldier retires. Military service can occasionally be a route to the peerage, but only if an Illustrious happens to be in a mood to grant a title for heroism.

There are no 'fashionable' companies, as such, but units based in or near Irieth are often assigned to duties such as guarding the Cupola, and are much more in the public eye than those on border duty.

## Skin and Bones

One of the most distressing aspects of any Dragon-Yarge war, regardless of its size, is the treatment of the dead. Both sides regard the other as barbaric.

Before the Conquest any Yarge lucky enough to kill a dragon would probably skin him and take teeth as souvenirs – many legendary Yarge generals and kings wore dragon-hide garments – but otherwise leave the corpse intact. Usually the surviving dragons in the area would wait for the Yarge to leave then devour the corpse, honouring the slain dragon and adding his strength to their own.

At some point the Yarge learned of the peculiar virtues of dragon flesh, and began to burn their victims. Without the flesh any death weakens the surviving dragons, and this practice may have been a cause of the eventual defeat. Today Yarge military manuals explicitly recommend depriving the enemy of 'essential supplies' by these means. But to dragons wasting the dead is abhorrent, especially amongst those who believe that consumption is an essential prelude to reincarnation. They will go to great lengths to recover their dead, to consume and honour them. If possible the corpse must be returned to the victim's family; otherwise it is eaten by comrades.

For their part, dragons see nothing wrong in devouring any dead Yarge that might come their way in battle, while the Yarge have some peculiar taboos against this disposal method. For some reason the Yarge generally can't seem to understand that their dead are being honoured, and often react with savage reprisals.

Fortunately the practice of wearing dragon-skin armour seems to have died out with the development of firearms.

## Scenario Idea: Body Guard

(from an idea by Jo Walton)

The survivors of a Yarge ambush are sent on leave with orders to return the body of their commanding officer to his family before it spoils. But he was a very large dragon. Even if the adventurers can resist the urge to gorge, getting the body home without losing much of it to officialdom and other thieves won't be easy.

## Religion

*Frelt looked from the angry parson to the angry Illustrious, and preened his wings a little. He was no Illustrious's parson, but the parson for the parish of Undertor, a large area that took in six demesnes, of which Agornin was one. This was part of what had given him his independence, and his inflated sense of his own rights. He had eaten his parson's share of eyes from all the dead and unfit for all of Undertor for fifty years, and he had done it without angering any of the Dignifieds under whom he served, save Bon Agornin alone, when he aspired to marry his daughter. Now his enemy lay dead, and he was appealed to by both parties.*

*Tooth and Claw – 1:4*



Camran bearing the Tablets of Law; statue outside the gates of the Courts of Justice, Irieth

**T**here are two main dragon religions, the Orthodox Faith and its precursor, which is known as the Old Religion; they differ in many respects, but to lay members the most obvious is that the Old Religion still allows confession. Until comparatively recently the Old Religion was considered a heresy and strongly suppressed; it is now permitted, although adherents are barred from government office and certain civil service posts, but even today the gap between the religions is wide enough to cause fights and riots. While the Orthodox Faith preaches its evolutionary message above all else, the Old Religion pays more attention to charity; an Orthodox parson confronted with a dying parishioner would wait for him to die then devour him, a cleric of the Old Religion would absolve him of his sins first.

### Clerical Ranks

Both of the Dragon religions have the same hierarchy – this is to be expected, since they began as the same faith. Essentially three main titles are used, all corresponding to some extent with Yargish equivalents:

<b>Dragon</b>	<b>Yarge</b>
Sainted	Archbishop / Pope
Holy / Holiness	Bishop
Blessed	Parson / Priest

Naturally there are many subtle gradations within each of these ranks; one Blessed may have a flock of a few dozen farmers, another a parish serving some of the wealthiest and most influential peers.

A few peers pursue clerical careers. In such cases the religious title precedes the secular, e.g. “Blessed Eminent Gevon,” the secular title may be omitted to show humility.

Generally clerical status is considered inconsistent with a serious political career, but at any given time some Members of the Assembly are ordained by the Orthodox Faith. Current laws do not allow parsons of the Old Religion to hold political office, and at one time forbade it to all members of the religion.

Although Orthodox theologians tend to gloss over the details, their faith is based on the Old Religion, which *began* as a Yarge religion, adopted by dragons as a condition of their surrender after repeated Yarge victories. The harsher practices of the Orthodox Faith are a later invention, a justification for the population controls made essential by the limited territory of Tiamath. While the Old Religion seems kinder, Orthodoxy is actually better for the long-term survival of the race.

Almost all dragons belong to one of these faiths: the sincerely religious (including nearly all followers of the Old Religion); those who attend church on Firstday because everyone else does, without thinking much about it; and a sizeable minority – possibly a majority – who hypocritically profess Orthodoxy to conform. Atheism and agnosticism are not respectable positions, and there are no other dragon faiths; all were obliterated by the Yarge.

Both versions of the faith follow the trinity of Veld, Jurale, and Camran, and preach a doctrine of reincarnation based on spiritual merit; good dragons reincarnate as dragons, evildoers may come back as a muttonwool, a worm, or even a hideous Yarge! Other than that, they teach that Veld is the Creator of all things; he made the world, his blessing is increase, in vengeance he is sometimes shown as the Sun. Jurale added beauty and mercy. Finally, Camran brought Law (which he wrested from the demon Azashan), peace, and humility.

Priests bind their wings as a sign of humility, except in the event of a life-threatening emergency, or an emergency affecting the life or spiritual well-being of a follower. For example, they can fly to the death-bed of a parishioner if it will otherwise be impossible to reach her in time, or to escape from an avalanche or a band of marauding Yarge. Followers of both religions are expected to stay on the ground on the Sabbath (Firstday), but are not required to bind their wings.

A major difference between the Old Religion and the Orthodox Faith lies in their depiction of Camran as he walks towards Azashan's cave: Orthodox icons depict him as a dragon, the Old Religion shows him as a Yarge. But some Orthodox texts also depict Camran as a Yarge, allegedly to emphasise his peaceful nature and humility. The real truth, acknowledged by the Old Religion, is that the Yarge converted the dragons to their faith; all three members of the trinity were once shown as Yarge, and Azashan was originally shown as a dragoness. Scholars suspect that Azashan was once the Mother Goddess of the pre-Subjugation dragon religion!

It should not be assumed that the Old Religion is in any way disloyal to Dragonkind, or subservient to any Yarge faith. If anything the Old Religion regards itself as the last bastion of the true faith, which has long been forgotten by the heathen Yarge. Three thousand years is a long time in Yarge terms, more than a hundred generations, and in that time the Yarge version of the Old Religion has split repeatedly, and its offshoots have gone through many changes. The Trinity remain, but their roles and natures now bear little resemblance to the originals. The Draconic version has made a few changes of its own, of course. For example, Veld was a much less important figure in the original Yarge faith.

One of the few areas of agreement between the draconic churches is the need to bring the Yarge back to the Light of Veld. They jointly fund missionary work in the neighbouring Yarge kingdoms, so far with poor results. It is telling that the only major success has been in the Yegith Archipelago, a group of tiny islands sometimes known to Yarge as the "Cannibal Isles", and that there are reports that the islanders now worship dragons in general, not the Trinity in particular.

For some reason the Yarge generally seem to be very sceptical of the tenets of both Draconic faiths, especially those parts which recommend culling the young or disposing of the elderly before they become a burden on their relatives; so much so that missionaries are cautioned against making any reference to these articles of faith if an elderly Yarge or child is present. Neither church particularly needs more martyrs!

From time to time one Yarge faith or another sends missionaries to Tiamath; invariably they meet with no success.

## Miracles and Magic

Both Dragons and Yarge have persistent legends of magic (as distinct from the miracles attributed to Veld, Jurale, and Camran) in the pre-Conquest era. Mostly the dragon tales of magic describe Yarge wizards using their powers to enslave dragons and steal captive princesses from them; the Yarge versions describes wizards (who are generally dragons in disguise) stealing princesses and imprisoning them. Naturally pre-Conquest dragons ate princesses, given the opportunity, but they were perfectly capable of finding their own without magical help. If this was really the main use for magic it seems to be a peculiarly limited power.

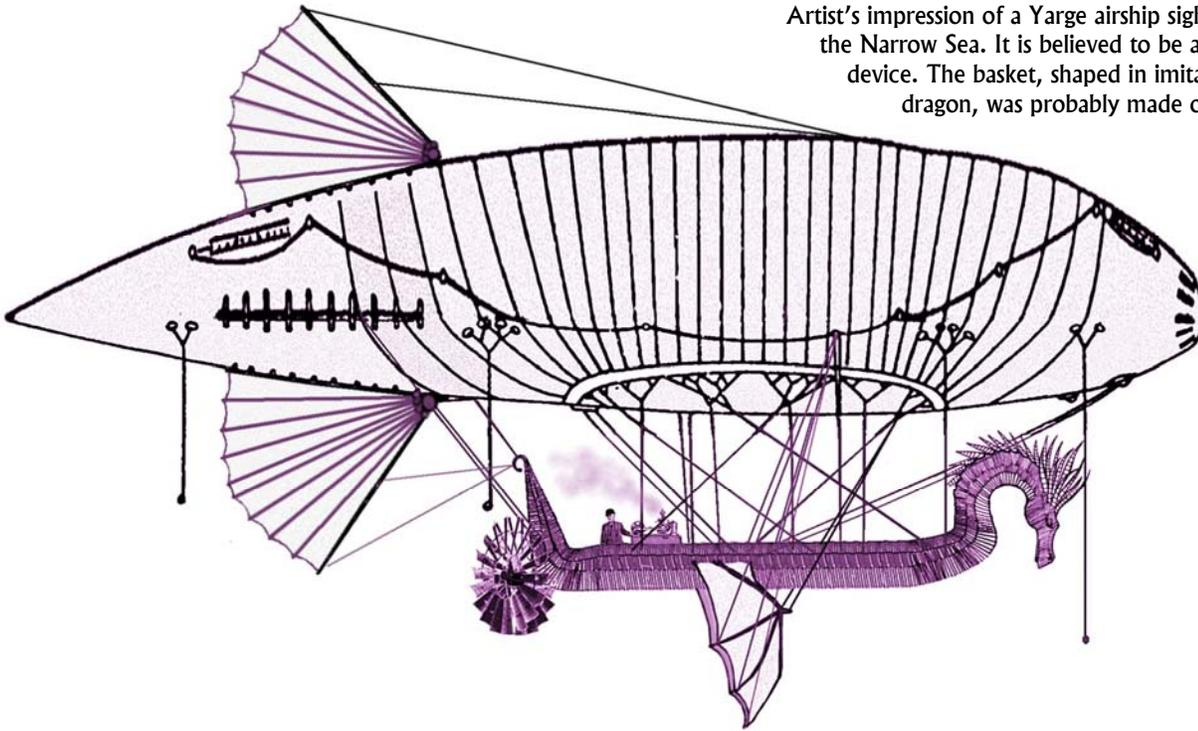
The nearest things to magic acknowledged today are the Draconic ability to fly, and to grow larger almost instantaneously by eating dragon-flesh; there seem to be no scientific explanations, or at least none that make much sense, and scientists have sought answers for centuries.

With these exceptions it seems that real magic never existed, or at least no longer works, but there are vestiges of a belief in it in Draconic and Yarge cultures; numerous variations of spiritualism and numerology attract the credulous, especially unmarried dragonesses and the lower classes, while several dragon "magicians" have formidable reputations in the Yarge world, where their mesmerism (ineffective on dragons) is attributed to magic.

## Scenario Idea: Hate Mail

An anonymous writer is bombarding Irieth society with scurrilous letters claiming that Sainted Irieth, the Archbishop of Irieth, eats dragonets *unnecessarily*, and not just to cull the unfit. It is also claimed that he is secretly flying. The adventurers are asked to look into the matter unofficially, identify the accuser, find out if there is any truth to the accusations, and make sure that the reputation of the Church is not sullied.

Artist's impression of a Yarge airship sighted over the Narrow Sea. It is believed to be a Migantil device. The basket, shaped in imitation of a dragon, was probably made of wicker.



## The Yarge

*He was utterly abhorrent to her. He stood scarcely six feet high and had no length at all, barely a foot, he was essentially flat. He wore a decent fleece hat, as anyone might, and he had covered most of his body likewise with cloth and jewels. He had hands like a maiden, but his skin was soft and smooth, entirely without scales. He looked weak and unarmored and defenseless, yet beside him the strongest dragon was as weak as a maiden. At his side hung the tube of a gun, with the like of which his kind had once overpowered dragonkind.*

*He bowed, almost folding himself in half and the exalt shuddered again.*

*"I am M'haarg, the Jh'oarg Ambassador," he said, as he straightened.*

*The vile creature could hardly pronounce the name of his own species, the Exalt noted.*

*Tooth and Claw – XVI:62*

**N**o dragon can look at a Yarge without a frisson of horror. They are the ancient Enemy, the Conquerors, the soft slug-like *things* that somehow overcame the dragons and destroyed the world as they knew it. Although they are individually weak, they have the strength of numbers and a huge advantage in land, weapons, and technology. Any dragon, even an elderly matron as described above, can kill an individual Yarge with one bite or blow, if the Yarge fails to fire first; the problem is the aftermath. Once aroused the species shows no restraint, avenging the death of even one of their kind by all possible means, even if it ultimately leads to the death of dozens or hundreds of Yarge.

Dragon philosophers suspect that the cause of this extraordinary behaviour is their short lifespan; few Yarge live even a hundred years, and most are past their prime at sixty. An obvious consequence of this short lifespan is that Yarge breed *fast*; they bear their young live, and females can give birth when they are less than twenty years old. While individual litters are small, typically one and more rarely two or three offspring, the females seem to be able to reproduce at intervals of about two years until they are approximately forty to fifty years old. While a small portion of these offspring die in infancy, most survive to adulthood. There appears to be no attempt to cull them as a matter of course. As a result a single

Yarge female may have several hundred descendants after two hundred years; by comparison, a dragon family will barely be in the second or third generation, with no more than fifteen or twenty offspring. No matter how many Yarge may be killed, there will always be more; dreams of a final cataclysmic end to the Yarge problem, as seen in the scientific romances of Segievel Yepragis, are wishful thinking. Most dragons are aware of these facts but reluctant to face them.

**Science:** Most of Tiamath's technological innovation derives from Yarge ideas; Yarge have more need for the fruits of science, since their physical capacities are so limited, and devote great ingenuity to devising vehicles of all sorts, devices to amplify their pitiful muscles, tools to perform jobs tasks that a dragon can manage with his claws, etc. Their short lives seem to incline them to take foolish chances – a dragon confronted with a thunderstorm will land, take cover, and wait it out, a Yarge might well decide to fly a kite up into the clouds to see how the lightning works! Often Yarge seem to adopt new devices before they are properly tested; it took less than a hundred years for the railway network to cover most of the rest of the continent, the dragons of Tiamath took nearly two hundred years to decide to build their own, another century to settle on details such as track width. Having said that, many Yarge devices do not stand the test of time, while anything built by dragons is probably going to be used for hundreds of years.

The most typical Yarge technology is the steam engine, in all its many guises, some of which have been adapted to the needs of dragons. An important difference between Dragon and Yarge use of steam is that Dragon engines use sensibly low pressure, typically 25 to 50 PSI; Yarge machinery usually operates at dangerously high pressure, 100 to 150 PSI, sometimes more. High pressure operation is more efficient, of course, but the danger of boiler explosions etc. is considerable, and dragons prefer to avoid it.

Trains are common throughout the Yarge world; they run their lines much faster than dragons, with speeds sometimes exceeding 50 MPH (to avoid confusion speeds are in Terran MPH or knots, not the equivalent Draconic or Yarge units), and these excessive speeds plus the narrower tracks result in frequent accidents. Passenger wagons are closed, not open, so that victims cannot even fly clear!

On the roads steam carriages and wagons have been developed in most nations. Carriages can carry four or six Yarge at 20-30 MPH; wagons carry five or ten tons of cargo at 10-20 MPH, with faster versions of both under development. The armies of Belshulath and the Edawoon Republic are experimenting with armoured wagons capable of

## The Yarge Species

Yarge are quadruped mammals (warm blooded hairy live-bearing animals) which have adapted to a vertical posture in which the rear limbs are used as legs and the upper limbs only for manipulation, as "arms" and "hands." The young are dependent on their mothers for the first two years of life, and often cannot fend for themselves until the age of ten or so.

Despite their peculiar "bipedal" posture they are surprisingly agile, generally more so than a dragon of comparable size, and their manipulative limbs are always ready for use.

Yarge have soft skin, without scales and considerably thinner than the underlying skin of dragons. Effectively their bodies have no natural defences, and are easily cut and otherwise damaged. To compensate most Yarge cover the entire body (not just the head) with garments made of wool and leather. Sometimes other materials such as silk and cotton are used. These garments provide some protection against abrasions etc. Nevertheless Yarge are unable to sit or lie comfortably for extended periods on rock, stone, or even gold, and must resort to "chairs" and "beds," raised padded nesting platforms with coverings again made of cloth.

Yarge have no natural weapons; their claws are small and ineffectual, and they have no tail or fire, and small inefficient teeth. They compensate by using artificial weapons; clubs, swords and spears, and firearms. Most Yarge visitors to Tiamath are armed as allowed by treaty; outside Tiamath it can be assumed that most male Yarge expecting to encounter a dragon will be armed, as are females if they suspect any threat to their offspring.

Despite their vulnerability the species is surprisingly adaptable, and has spread throughout the known world.

Yarge typically live 60-100 years, with about one in ten surviving past the century; maximum life span is about 140 years, but this is extremely rare.

From *A Dragonet's Guide to Nature* by  
The Blessed Jamanah

## Know Your Enemy!

Ten useful facts about the Yarge

1. Yarge are *mammals*. Females bear live young and produce milk, like beeves or swine. They eat meat, but rarely that of their own kind.
2. Yarge cook their food – you should be able to smell their camps for several miles downwind.
3. Yarge cover their *entire* bodies in clothing; it is unusual to see them dressed in a hat alone as Veld intended. Their clothing has “pockets”, compartments used to store weapons and valuables. Be sure to search any prisoners thoroughly!
4. Yarge out-number dragonkind at least a hundred to one. There may be fifty million Yarge or more! NEVER assume that you are dealing with a lone Yarge, they are usually encountered in packs.
5. Yarge are better shots, on the ground, than dragons are in the air, because they can steady their guns on rocks and other solid objects. If possible land and steady weapons before firing!
6. Yarge have several languages, and while all have similarities to Draconic, many words sound odd on Yarge lips. Yarge may have difficulty understanding dragons for the same reason. When guarding prisoners listen carefully, but pretend to understand nothing; you may gain useful information.
7. Some Yarge are susceptible to mesmerism; if they stare at your eyes they may fall under your influence. This can be useful in an emergency.
8. Yarge ride “mounts,” four-legged animals somewhat smaller than drafters. They are easily frightened by dragons, and good to eat.
9. Yarge sometimes use flags and other visual signals to send messages. Be alert for signs of such signals!
10. Several Yarge nations are developing flying machines – any sightings must be reported as a matter of urgency.

(From the *Tiamath army training manual*)

carrying a troop of soldiers and pulling a field gun; fortunately they seem to have trouble on a gradient, and would probably be less than useful on the mountain roads which are typical of Tiamath.

All of the Yarge seafaring nations have steamships (including warships) built for coastal seas, and capable of speeds up to ten or fifteen knots. Most are paddle steamers, though screw propellers are becoming more common. There are a few ocean-going ships with steam engines, but they can't carry enough wood or coal to make a complete voyage to any of the other continents under power; instead they proceed under sail unless becalmed or forced to manoeuvre against the weather. Few sailors, even Yarge, will tackle an oceanic voyage with equanimity; the risks are too great.

On inland waters steam launches and powered barges are very common, largely replacing the drafter-hauled barges of previous centuries and more recent paddle steamers. Most now have screw propellers, and a top speed around 10 MPH.

There have been several attempts to build submarines, but their usefulness is limited; the boilers must be extinguished as the vessel submerges, it isn't possible to travel more than a mile or two on stored steam pressure, and the hull starts to buckle and leak at depths of thirty to forty feet.

Finally, the cutting edge of transport technology is in the air, with powered balloons (sometimes known as “airships”) capable of carrying several men and their weapons under development in every nation. At the moment none of these devices seem to work particularly well, so far as Tiamath is aware, and all of them seem to have vulnerabilities to weather and fire that probably rule them out as serious military devices, but that may change as the technology is improved.

Yarge scientists are looking for smaller and lighter engine designs, and alternatives to steam as a power source; the problem isn't so much the engine or the fuel as the pure water an engine needs. All engines leak steam, and while it might in theory be possible to come up with a completely self-contained design which cools the steam back to water and re-uses it, so far this has not been accomplished. Lighter engines would allow faster steam carriages and wagons, and would make an enormous difference to the performance of airships. Even ships must take on fresh water occasionally, or devote valuable fuel to removing salt and other impurities from sea water before it is used. Just the ability to avoid stopping to take on water would make a significant difference to travel times, which are of course very important to the short-lived Yarge.

Steam is also widely used in factories, mines, and mills and elsewhere in industry, supplementing or replacing earlier forms of power such as windmills, water-wheels, etc.

Other areas of technology are also more advanced in the Yarge countries than in Tiamath. Yarge advances in optics were briefly mentioned in an earlier section; these include the magnifying glass and microscope, telescope, and binoculars; the latter being essentially two telescopes side by side, which are apparently more comfortable for Yarge eyes. None of these devices can be used by dragons, due to the differences in their eyes, but with the exception of the microscope they are hardly missed, and another Yarge invention – the microscope projector – is an acceptable if somewhat more cumbersome substitute.

A recent invention of greater interest is the “camera”: a box with a lens at one end, containing a glass plate coated with a layer of chemicals which are sensitive to light. If light falls onto the plate for approximately twenty seconds to a minute, and it is then treated with various chemicals, a “negative image” of the brighter parts of the scene forms on the surface, while the darker parts become transparent. With a matt black background behind the glass plate the negative image reflects light, the clear parts absorb it, so that dark and light are as the original scene! It’s also possible to put the plate in front of a bright light and trace the image onto paper, then (via a complex and laborious process) etch the resulting picture onto a printing plate, so that copies can be mass-produced in books and popular journals. By this means the camera has begun to supplant the work of the artist in some respects, although it is to be hoped that it will never do so entirely. There are obvious limitations, such as an inability to show colour. The process isn’t widely used in Tiamath as yet, although some recent illustrations in the *Irieth Journal* have been made by this method. The Orthodox Faith is currently debating the propriety of using this method to create portraits of leading citizens, as suggested in the *Journal*. The high light levels needed would make some forms of portraiture impossible – it seems unlikely that any dragon could be depicted in his home, for example – so the whole procedure does seem somewhat foreign to draconic taste, but the Faith will decide.

Yarge medicine has made great strides in the past century. The “germ theory” of disease has been essentially proven, and the technique of inoculation now prevents some of the more common illnesses. Boiled bandages and cleanliness during surgery make an enormous difference to survival after injuries of all sorts. This progress suggests that the “great plague” resulting from Yarge overpopulation, keenly

## Our Friends the Yarge

Planning to tour the Yarge nations?  
Here are five useful hints for your trip!

1. Yarge hatchlings are smelly and noisy; it’s unlikely that you will want to go near them, but it may seem polite to express an interest. Always warn the parents first, and ask permission – and avoid tactless phrases such as “what a delicious child” or “he looks good enough to eat,” even if you’re hungry. Yarge do not cull their young, and react badly to anything perceived as a threat to them.
2. All Yarge countries have laws banning dragons from flying over certain areas: cities; military areas; docks etc. Reserve flying for the countryside, and *always* follow the advice of your guide. Illegal fliers may be fined, required to bind their wings for the remainder of their stay, or even shot!
3. Yarge may not understand Draconic as well as might be expected, although their ignorance is often a ploy to put visitors at a disadvantage. To avoid confusion it’s important to say things slowly and clearly when talking to them; be ready to repeat things until you’re understood. If in doubt your guide should be able to interpret.
4. Despite anything claimed by Yarge shopkeepers etc., a Crown should pay for a modest meal for a dragon anywhere in the known world. But remember that the Yarge cook their food; you will sometimes find that nothing raw is available. Resourceful tourists pretend to enjoy such “delights,” and cooked food probably won’t kill you in moderation!
5. Yarge generally have no respect for the sanctity of the hoard, and any offers to guard your gold while you are out and about should be considered very carefully, and rejected unless you are absolutely sure that the guard is reliable. You are again advised to consult your guide before making a decision.

*The Irieth Journal*, Flowering ‘06



A Yarge warrior of the Subjugation, riding a "mount," distracts a dragon with his lance while his allies load their muskets and prepare to fire.

## The Yarge and Dragons

Most dragons have very firm opinions of the Yarge, but find it hard to imagine the Yarge view of dragons. They would probably be surprised, and a little offended, to learn that most Yarge see them as an embarrassing relic of the past, a reminder of the times when knights were bold and there was no indoor plumbing. To the majority of the Yarge Tiamath is a quaint primitive country whose natives still live in the past. Dragons are big and potentially dangerous, of course, but there hasn't been any real trouble in generations and there seems no real reason why that should change. The Yarge have the advantage of numbers and will always win, sooner or later the dragons will learn to admit that and start to live more in the real world. But they will never be entirely trusted...

Of course there are fallacies in this viewpoint; there are five or six generations of Yarge for one of dragons and many living dragons are veterans, or the widows and orphans of those killed in the last war. Border banditry continues intermittently – it has been decades since the last major incident, but that really isn't much time to a dragon. The past won't be forgotten easily.

anticipated by some dragon optimists, will not now take place. There is instead a fear that the Yarge will turn their knowledge of disease to destructive purposes, developing a plague to devastate Tiamath. There is even a theory that the outbreak of Virulent Scale Rot of '87 was an experiment in this direction. While it only killed those who were already infirm, mostly dragonets and the elderly, it could have been a trial run for something much more devastating.

Yarge experiments with the electric fluid are somewhat more advanced than those conducted in Tiamath, and the Migantil Railway Company is in the process of setting up a system of wires to allow the movement of trains to be coordinated by electrical signals, transmitted as a pattern of long and short pulses resembling the codes used for heliograph messages. Similar experiments have been begun in Tiamath. If the system works, and improves safety, it is likely to be adopted reasonably quickly by Tiamath's railways, but first its impact on other matters, such as the activities of the post office, must be assessed. Nevertheless, it seems likely to enter service within ten to fifteen years.

**Arts:** While it's easy to think of the Yarge only in terms of their numbers and science and the threat that they might pose to dragonkind, it should be remembered that the Yarge too have their great artists, philosophers, and poets. They may not always be appreciated by dragons, but they do exist, and must have some indirect effect on dragon thought and society. Numerous Yarge books have achieved some popularity (or notoriety) in Tiamath; for example, the draconic translation of *The Biology of Dragons* by Lh'ook of Migantil has been in print continuously for nearly three centuries, and sets the standard by which Draconic scientific textbooks are judged. Many Yarge plays and novels have been adapted for a draconic audience, although sometimes much changed in the translation. It may be hard to believe, but the comedy *Ten Pounds of Flesh*, with its corrupt lawyers defrauding the lovable moneylender and receiving their come-uppance in court, when their client's heart is ripped out and their fees remain unpaid, was originally conceived as a tragedy in which the moneylender is ultimately robbed of his rightful dues.

**Yarge society** looks like and is very odd to dragons; they will always be odd outsiders from the dragon viewpoint, and vice versa. They have odd and barely-pronounceable names, eat weird cooked food, have no patience, and look disgusting. But beyond all that, all of the Yarge cultures have been influenced by thousands of years of war with dragonkind, a legacy that isn't easily forgotten. While they may sometimes seem to have lost their edge, and even talk as though they are prepared to let bygones be bygones, there's still steel lurking under the surface. There are martial arts traditions everywhere, and there's a good chance that at least one member of any group of Yarge encountered will be armed and moderately dangerous. All Yarge dwellings within fifty or so miles of the

border with Tiamath are defensible. One of the reasons for the relatively slow pace of technological development is that until recently Yarge culture simply hasn't considered it nearly as important as military preparedness – but this is changing as the military usefulness of technology becomes apparent.

Yarge live and party hard, their soldiers despise any display of fear, and their languages are only marginally similar to Draconic, despite frequent “borrowings” between the languages. The range of their speech is different; dragons have a lower register, and often perceive Yarge voices as high-pitched and unpleasant.

While dragons consider their hats the only costume that can possibly be needed, Yarge cover their entire bodies. Clothing emphasises elaborate brocades, gold and silver threads, heavily layered cloth that can easily conceal weapons and provides protection against long cold nights. Both sexes use cosmetics including eye liner, blusher, appliquéd beauty spots, and perfume. They don't easily welcome dragons into their lives – tourists are tolerated for their gold and bilked of as much of it as possible, not liked – and will easily misinterpret dragon actions as hostile, even if they are trying to be helpful. A very few dragons are treated with real respect; typically after they have done something genuinely dangerous that helped Yarge, such as rescuing someone from a flood or a burning building, and only if there is no way that their actions can be interpreted as having endangered Yarge.

**Conclusions:** While much about Yarge behaviour is baffling to dragons, or seems disgustingly unpleasant, it cannot be denied that the economy of modern Tiamath is to a large extent driven by interactions with neighbouring Yarge nations; without it the financial sector would be in disarray, and the manufacturing industries would be considerably less profitable. There are drawbacks to this association, of course – most dragons with an interest in finance are aware of the disastrous panic of '98, initially caused by a run on the Belshulath florin – but on the whole the relationship benefits Tiamath, and must be encouraged while there is peace between Dragon and Yarge.

**Game note:** While none of the historical nations of our world come particularly close to the Yarge, the nations bordering Tiamath are in some respects a little like pre-revolutionary Russians, with a touch of Greek, Cossack, Mongol, and Oriental influences. Try to mix customs from multiple cultures and keep the dragons guessing!

Some details of the relationship between the Yarge and Tiamath have been omitted from this section since they would be unknown to most dragons – see the Epilogue for more.

## Dragon Slayers

Thousands of years of war have hard-wired respect for Dragon Slayers into the Yarge psyche. The invention of firearms didn't change that, but for the most part it's considered dishonourable to claim the title if all you have done is pull a trigger. While there are no official rules, at least that anyone will admit to, most Yarge only accord full respect to someone who single-handedly fulfils all of the following criteria:

1. Killed a healthy active adult dragon
2. *Without* using firearms
3. In the presence of witnesses
4. For good reason
5. At risk to their own life *and*
6. Survived.

The first criterion rules out anyone who kills a hatchling, a dragon already on the verge of death, or one that is caged or incapacitated in some way, for example by being drunk or drugged.

The second doesn't necessarily apply just to firearms; any “unfair” method (such as running down a dragon with a steam car) is similarly frowned on.

The third is just common sense – how can anyone know that you're a dragon slayer if nobody saw it happen? Witnesses are needed, preferably unbiased ones.

The fourth should be obvious; the Yarge don't want to provoke dragons unnecessarily. There must be a good reason to kill the dragon, without one there is a good chance of being considered a murderer. Staged dragon hunts of any kind are not considered good reason.

The fifth is also obvious; without risk, killing a dragon is mere butchery.

As for the sixth, the title is occasionally awarded posthumously, for an especially noteworthy feat – for example, stabbing a dragon through the roof of its mouth as it bites off your hand – but for the most part death by dragon is considered a form of suicide.

Except in time of war there are rarely more than one or two living dragon slayers. Currently the only claimants are the Sultan of Rasdogah Erofal (unverified) and Keleg of the Yegith Archipelago (verified but reasons open to question).

## Recommended Reading

Q. *What else would you suggest people read, I mean, if they were to enjoy Tooth and Claw?*

A. Anthony Trollope. Good places to start are the stand-alone books, like *The American Senator*, *The Vicar of Bullhampton*, *Is He Popenjoy?*, *Orley Farm*. Trollope wrote about forty novels and I haven't found them all yet. The series are splendid, but they have to be read in order and it isn't always easy to find them in order. There's a great Trollope resource page. Other than Trollope, a few really good modern Victorian novels are John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Margaret Forster's *Lady's Maid*, A.S. Byatt's *Possession*.

Jo Walton – *Tooth and Claw* FAQ

*"She'd like me to bring a dragon home, I suppose. It would serve her right if I did, some creature that would make the house intolerable to her."*

Anthony Trollope – *Framley Parsonage*, 1859, quoted in *Tooth and Claw*.

Referees who wish to reflect the *Tooth and Claw* setting accurately should begin by reading the book itself; the excerpts in this game can't give more than a hint of the flavour of the novel. At the time of writing (May 2008) it's out of print, but copies are readily available through numerous dealers. The unfinished sequel *Those Who Favor Fire* accompanies this sourcebook, but read *Tooth and Claw* first! *Tooth and Claw* bases much of its plot on social customs, etiquette, and the behaviour of its characters, with events driven by personalities. There is no "fiendish plot" driving events, just a series of circumstances that eventually culminate in a court case and the death of one of the characters, several romances, and the disgrace of someone with ideas above his station in life. It's entirely possible to follow this example and run a game that's based entirely on social interaction, with no violence other than that inherent in the normal personalities of dragons. For this sort of campaign the best source is probably Trollope. Numerous titles can be found on line via Project Gutenberg and other copyright-expired sources; see e.g. <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/books/index.html> and search for Trollope under author's names.

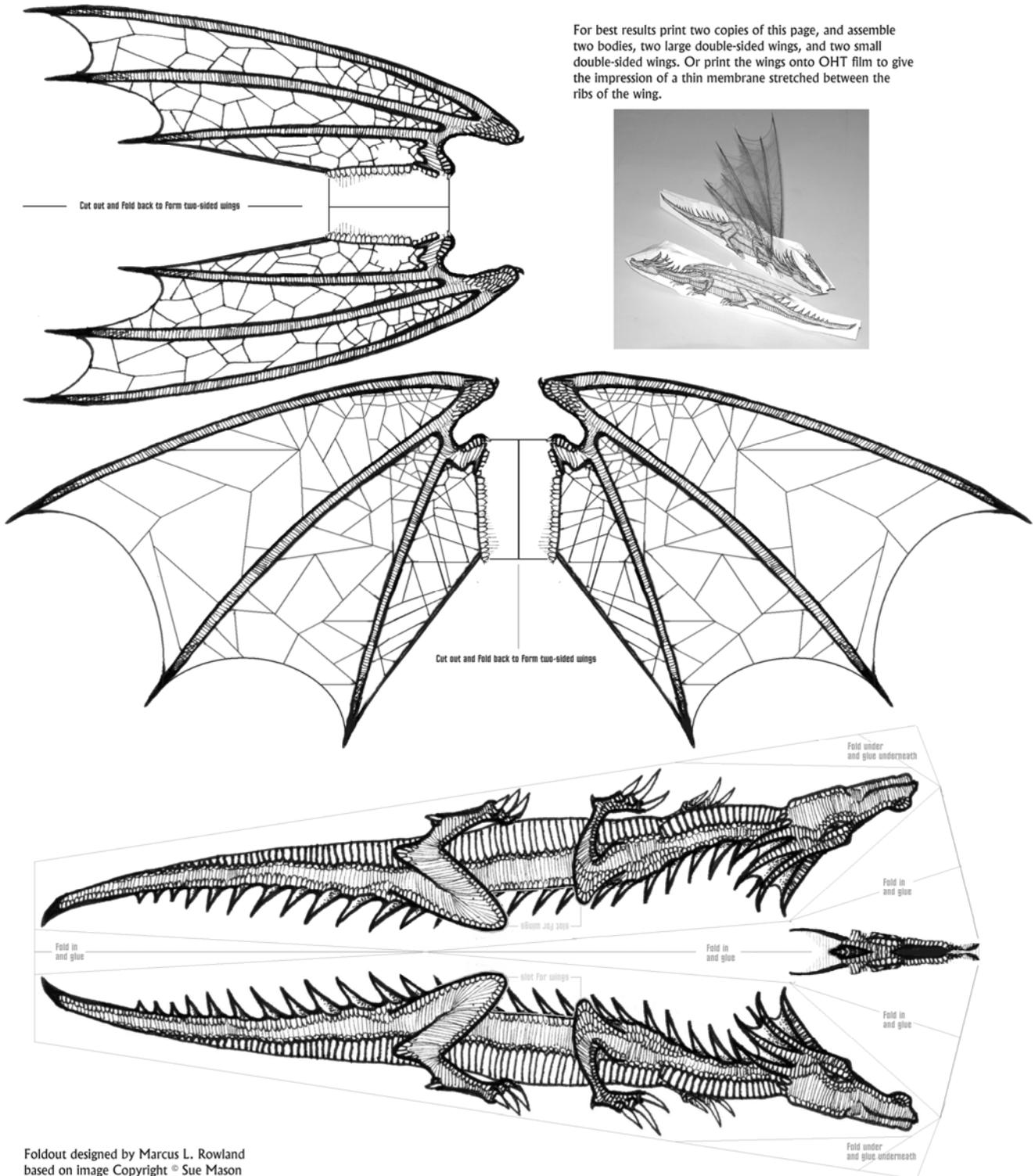
Several other authors were writing similar novels of society around the same period; see in particular the works of Jane Austen, Henry James and (a little later) John Galsworthy, also easily found on line.

If players prefer a more active type of campaign your best source is probably Victorian detective and adventure stories; the works of Wilkie Collins, most notably *The Moonstone* (1868) and *The Woman in White* (1860), are particularly good examples of the genre. In a more comedic vein *The Wrong Box* by Robert Louis Stevenson and Lloyd Osbourne (1889) offers a light-hearted tale of concealed death, inheritance, and deception with a very draconic feel; the 1966 film starring Michael Caine, Peter Cook, and Dudley Moore is also recommended, though it lacks some of the demented logic of the novel. The Wikipedia article on Tontines, the odd form of lottery which drives the plot of *The Wrong Box*, may also be a useful source of plot ideas.

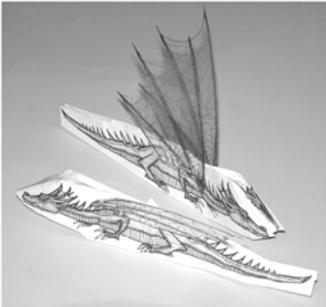
Another excellent film, though set in the Edwardian era, is *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949), starring Dennis Price and Alec Guinness, in which a distant relative of a duke decided to take the title by the simple method of killing everyone who stands in his path. The verse on page 86 derives from this film.

Adventures in Yarge territory could be based on plots in which relative innocents run into trouble abroad (see Henry James, in particular *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), *The Ambassadors* (1903), and *The Golden Bowl* (1904)), in which adventurers seek strange animals or unknown civilizations (see e.g. most of Verne's work), or any type of period military adventure. Although slightly anachronistic, novels of the Napoleonic wars or Britain's colonial wars in India may be appropriate for a dragon military campaign; see most of Patrick O'Brian's nautical novels for characters with the right period feel, Kipling's Indian Army stories, or George MacDonald Fraser's *Flashman* novels for a more cynical approach to military life. Finally, *GURPS Dragons* (2004) by Phil Masters is probably the best role-playing reference for dragons in a variety of settings, and is strongly recommended.

# Forgotten Futures X ~ The *Tooth and Claw* Role Playing Game

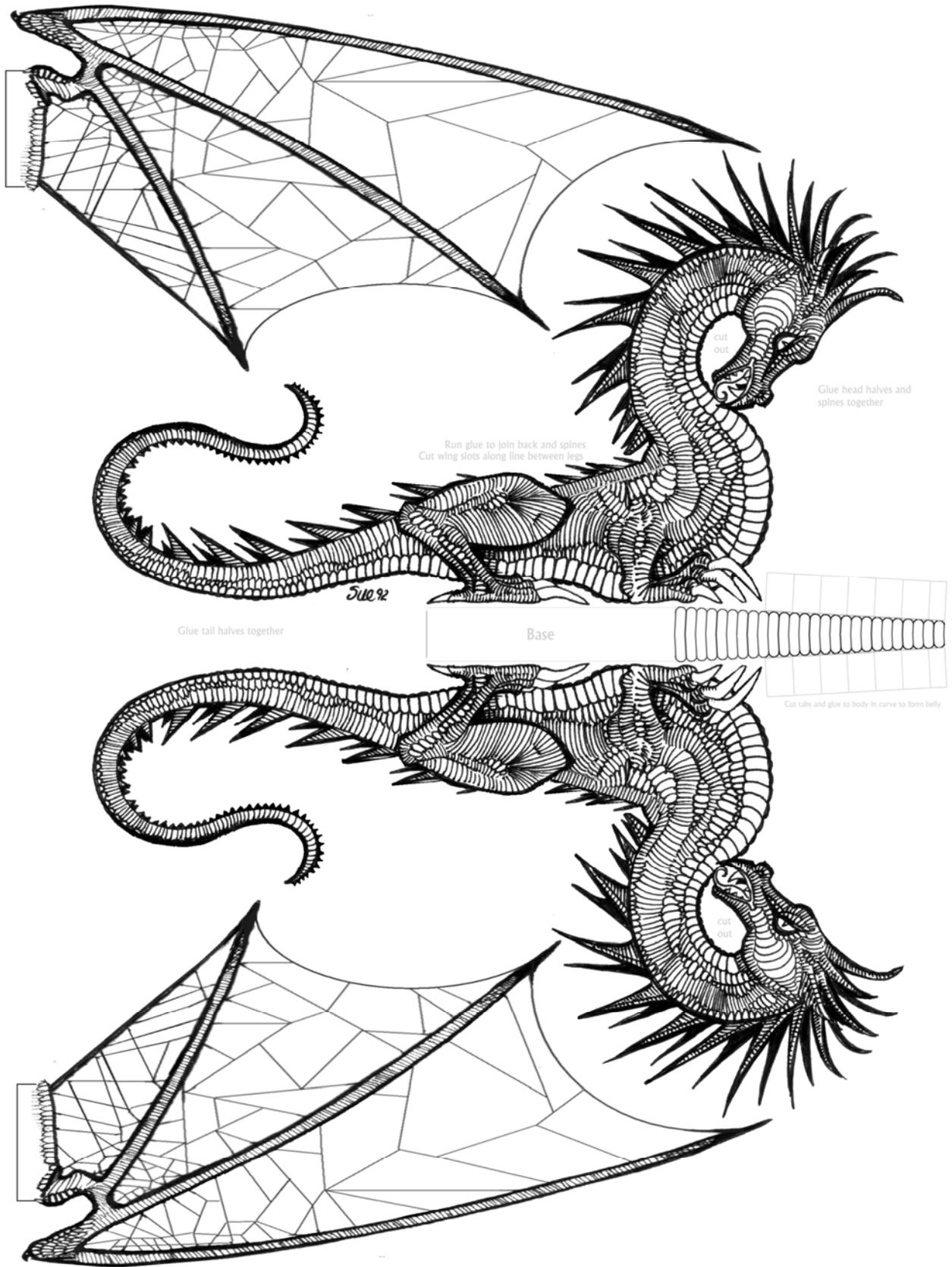


For best results print two copies of this page, and assemble two bodies, two large double-sided wings, and two small double-sided wings. Or print the wings onto OHT film to give the impression of a thin membrane stretched between the ribs of the wing.

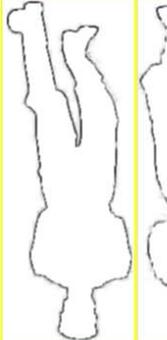
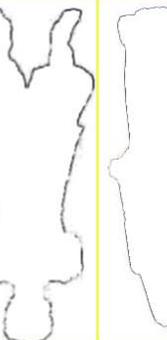
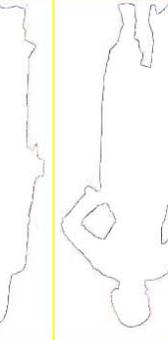
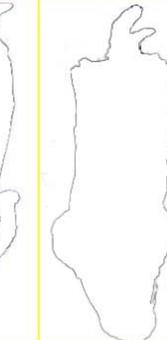
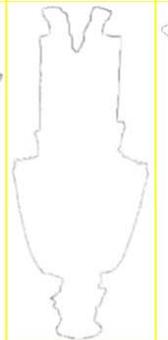
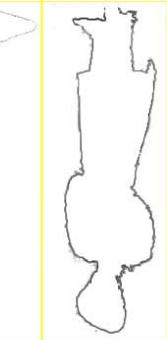
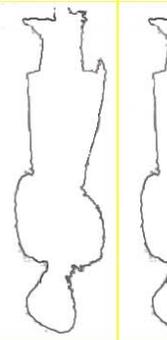
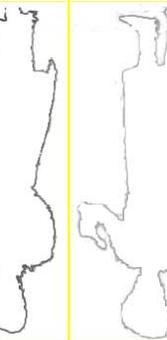
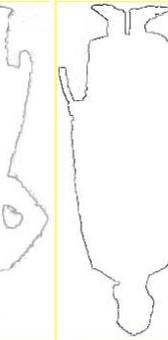


Foldout designed by Marcus L. Rowland based on image Copyright © Sue Mason

**To make two dragons, one flying, one with folded wings:** Print two copies on thick paper or card. Cut out bodies and wing assemblies. Fold the wings double and glue them together so that they are double-sided. Cut slots following the grey line from the front knee joint back down to the spine, then along the spine to the rear leg, and round the rear knee to the end of the grey line. Fold the body along its axis, add the creases as shown and glue them together, then slot the wings into the body so that the back of the wings are behind the rear knees. Optionally put modelling clay inside the body to improve stability and paint gold, pink, or red for females, blue, grey, or dark brown for males. High-resolution graphics files of these cut-outs accompany the HTML version and can be edited to add colour etc.. These figures represent large dragons and are oversized compared to the Yarge on pages 41-42.

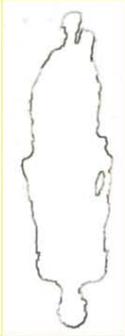
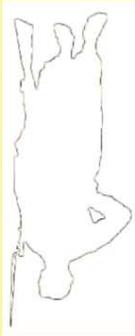
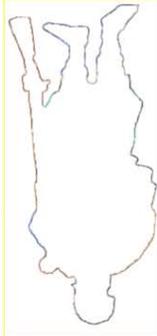
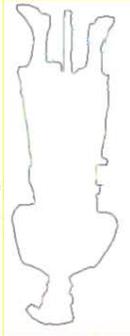
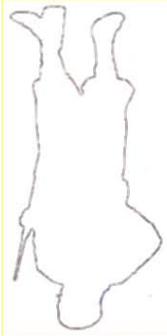
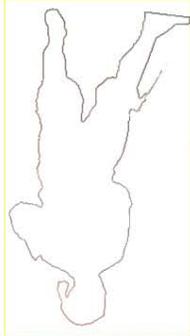
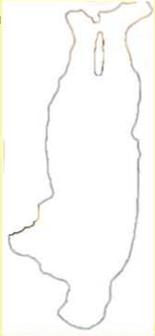
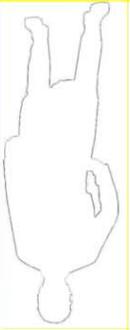
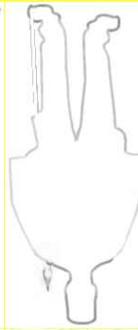


# Forgotten Futures X ~ The *Tooth and Claw* Role Playing Game

Yarge Merchant	Yarge Peasant (summer)	Yarge Soldier (dress uniform)	Yarge Officer (dress uniform)	Yarge (social wear)	Yarge (riding wear)	Yarge Bandit	Yarge Bandit
							
							
Yarge Bandit (winter wear)	Yarge Peasant (winter wear)	Yarge Princess (formal indoors)	Yarge Soldier (winter dress)	Yarge Soldier (winter dress)	Yarge Soldier (winter dress)	Yarge Sergeant (winter dress)	Yarge Ambassador
							
							

**To make model Yarge:** Print onto card and cut out individual strips and bend double, then splay out the base. For best results stick model to a metal washer or other solid base. Design based (with permission) on *Cardboard Heroes* by Steve Jackson Games.

# Forgotten Futures X ~ The *Tooth and Claw* Role Playing Game

Yarge Pirate	Keleg Dragon-Slayer	Yarge Pirate	Yarge Pirate					
								
								
Yarge Steward	Yarge Sailor	Yarge Navigator	Yarge Sailor	Yarge Captain	Yarge First Mate	Yarge Sailor	Yarge Sailor	Yarge Chief Engineer
								
								



## The Rules of the Game

**R**ole playing games (usually shortened to RPGs) are story-telling games. One player is the referee who runs the game, and has an idea of what is to happen in the story, while the other players run characters in the story. Characters are defined by a name, a description, and a list of characteristics (such as 'MIND') and skills (such as 'Marksman'). Players describe the actions of their characters, while the referee describes everyone and everything they encounter. This may sound like an impossible job for the referee, but it's easy if players are prepared to cooperate.

The *Forgotten Futures* rules as previously published worked well when dealing with the activities of normal humans, but need numerous changes to deal with the dragons described in *Tooth and Claw*. While it would be simple enough to limit this section to the changes to the system needed to run dragon characters under the existing rules, this would be unfair to any fans of the book that are running or playing the game for the first time. Instead the rules have been rewritten and to an extent simplified to make them suitable for dragon characters; this version is fully compatible with previous releases of the game, but you should be aware that the character generation system is somewhat different, with some special rules that wouldn't apply to human characters, and that everything that's irrelevant to this setting has been omitted. See the full rules (available free on line) if you want to use them for any other genre.

One aspect of the *Forgotten Futures* rules may annoy players who prefer high levels of violence; it is easy to get hurt or killed in all forms of combat, even for dragons, it takes a long time to recover if you are wounded, and most wounds require medical treatment. This seems more realistic than the systems offered by some other RPGs, in which a character can be shot three or four times and still come back for more. If you dislike this approach please feel free to amend the injury system, but please **DO NOT** distribute modified rules.

Experienced *Forgotten Futures* referees will find a summary of the rules changes and a guide to the new sections on page 93.

## Example of Play

The easiest way to understand an RPG is to see it played. In the example starting on the next page Kim is the referee, Bert and Nikki are playing Respected Paddiah and Respectable Shimmeth, brother and sister dragons from the country, and Jane is playing old Raetha, a faithful (though wing-bound) servant who is accompanying them on their first adult trip to Irieth, where they will stay with relatives whom they haven't met since they were hatchlings. As the scene begins they've spent a couple of hours designing characters, learning a little about the setting, getting ready for the trip, and travelling towards Irieth.

- Kim** Ahead of the train you can see a haze of smoke over the metropolis, and you remember the stories you've heard about the difficulty of flying over the city. Buildings appear to either side, becoming more and more frequent as you get closer to the city. Soon the train's rattling between smoky-looking buildings, click-clacking over points as it finally slows to a halt in the grand Cupola station. There's a strong smell of smoke, and an interesting smell of freshly-killed muttonwools from the direction of the station food stalls. There are crowds everywhere, dragons of all colours and sizes and even an occasional Yarge, presumably tourists.
- Jane** *(as Raetha, whose traits include irrational fear of Yarge)* Veld save us! Yarge? We'll be murdered in our caves!
- Bert** *(as Padiah, with singular lack of concern)* That's right, Raetha, we're all doomed. Mmm... must be about lunch time, should we stop for a meal before we head on to Uncle's place?
- Nikki** *(as Shimmeth)* It's a bit early, isn't it? Besides, they probably have a meal waiting for us.
- Jane** *(as Raetha)* Yes, Miss Shimmeth. If we stay here who knows what horrors we can expect from the Yarge?
- Kim** *(in sing-song street vendor voice)* "Get yer fresh swine 'ere, they're luvverly, only three crown a head. Fresh swine, three crown a head! Muttonwools, two and an 'arf crown!"
- Bert** Is that expensive?
- Kim** About twice what you'd normally pay in the country. Oh, all of you: roll to notice something – MIND against Difficulty 6, please. *(Anyone succeeding notices a small theft and presumably chases the thief – if they fail the theft will soon become apparent. The theft gives them a reason to meet two important NPCs; characters played by the referee, who will either help to stop the thief or return their property a little later.)*
- Jane** *(rolls two six-sided dice)* Eleven. Blind as a bat. *(In Forgotten Futures low dice rolls are generally good, high rolls are bad.)*
- Bert** Nine. Can I use my Detective skill instead? *(It's usually better to use a skill than a characteristic. Bert took this skill because his character is planning to look for work as a journalist and he thinks it would be useful. Detective skill includes some ability as an observer.)* That would make it... Never mind, it's still a failure.
- Nikki** Eight. But my MIND is four, that isn't good enough, I think.
- Kim** Never mind then. *(In another vendor's voice)* Honeyed pears, four for 'arf a crown. Ripe as ripe can be! *(In normal voice)* Actually they look a little over-ripe.
- Jane** *(as Raetha)* Them prices are scandalous! You could get ten for that in the country.
- Kim** A small scrawny-looking dragon wearing a porter's cap and pushing a cart says "Carry yer trunks, ladies and gentleman? 'Arf a crawn fer the first mile, then another 'arf crawn for every 'arf mile."
- Bert** *(as Padiah)* Sounds good to me. Do you know Goldsmith Street?
- Kim** *(as porter)* Like the back of me claw. Be a crawn and a 'arf. Them two trunks and the three bags?
- Nikki** *(as Shimmeth)* Didn't we have four bags?
- Kim** You did. Shimmeth's smaller case seems to have gone missing. The porter coughs reflectively and says "Veld! Someone saw you coming. Better get the rest on 'ere sharpish before someone nicks them too."

- Bert** I look around to see if I can spot the bag. Detective skill again. (*rolls seven*)
- Kim** You don't see it. Not surprising, in the bustle. (*Since none of them saw the bag stolen Kim is assuming that the thief is already out of sight.*)
- Nikki** What's in the bag? Anything valuable?
- Kim** Not really, just your second-best hat and some scale-burnishing cream and a couple of books.
- Bert** (*as Padiah*) We'd better get moving; we'll just have to chalk it up to experience.
- Nikki** (*as Shimmeth*) It's easy for you to say that, I loved that hat and a Yarge probably stole it. We'd better get on, before something *really* valuable goes missing. You'd better help Raetha load the trunks onto the cart.
- Jane** I start to lift one end of one of the trunks. (*As Raetha*) Ow! My lumbago!
- Bert** I'd better help, I suppose. What about you?
- Nikki** What about me? Which part of being a gentledragon are you having trouble with here?
- Bert** Okay, I'll help lift the trunks aboard. Oof... (*mimes lifting a heavy weight*)
- Kim** The porter helps you. (*as porter*) Veld, what 'ave you got in 'ere, yer hoard?
- Bert** (*very quietly*) Umm – yes, actually.
- Kim** (*as porter*) Blimey, we'd better not 'ang around 'ere then; right den of thieves, isn't it? But that'll be an extra 'arf crawn for excess weight. (*as herself*) As soon as everything's loaded he starts to wheel the cart towards the exit.
- Nikki** (*as Shimmeth*) Come on! And if we pass somewhere that sells scale burnishing cream make a note.
- Bert** I take a last look around for the bag, dash over to the vendor and give him a half-crown for a bag of pears, then follow them out of the station.
- Kim** As you walk from the station you see the vista of the park surrounding the Cupola, Tiamath's ancient seat of government, but turn left onto one of the avenues heading West towards your cousin's home. A couple of minutes later you hear someone say "Just a moment!" and look round to see a large elderly-looking dragon, with his wings bound with the red cords of a parson, bustling towards you carrying Shimmeth's bag. (*slightly pompous voice*) "I say, is this yours?"
- Nikki** (*as Shimmeth*) My hat! And my burnishing cream! Did you find it at the station, Blessed ...um
- Kim** (*slightly pompous voice*) Blessed Gevon of the Mission to the Yarge. At your service, Miss ...ah
- Nikki** (*as Shimmeth*) Respectable Shimmeth Oshetivon, Blessed Gevon.
- Kim** (*as Gevon*) Delighted. Fortunately my companion noticed a miscreant making off with your property and pursued him. (*as herself*) He hands you your bag. As he does so a Yarge steps out from behind him.
- Jane** (*as Raetha*) Eeek! A Yarge! Nasty squishy things they are, like to murder us all in our caves!
- Kim** (*as Gevon*) May I introduce one of my parishioners; Miss Keleg. (*As herself*) The Yarge coming towards you wears cloth over much of its body, and seems to have blue tattoos over as much of the skin you can see, including its face. It has two long curved swords in sheaths attached to its mid-section, and moves like a predator. (*As Keleg*) Ah is Keleg of de Yegith Isles, de Yarge calls dem de Cannibal Isles. (*as herself*) You notice that its teeth are sharpened to points. (*As Keleg*) Some calls me Keleg Dragon-Slayer.

- Bert** (as *Padiah*) Umm... dragon slayer? (as *himself*) I move so that I can protect everyone from her.
- Kim** (as *Gevon*) Oh, reformed, of course. Quite reformed. (as *herself*) Keleg smiles, showing her pointed teeth again. Jane, I think Raetha needs to roll her BODY against Difficulty 5.
- Jane** Thought so. (Rolls a 4) Okay, I made it.
- Kim** Then you don't faint.
- Jane** (as *Raetha*) Veld protect us all!
- Kim** (as *Keleg*) Amen, sister, praise be to Veld! (as *herself*) She moves towards you, arms outstretched.
- Jane** I retreat rapidly (as *Raetha*) Eek! Yarge!
- Kim** (as *Keleg*) You is in me prayers, sister, I is praying you find de courage to embrace in de light of Veld. (as *herself*) Make another roll, Difficulty 4 this time.
- Jane** Seven, exactly what I needed. I jump onto the wagon to get out of reach of the horrible thing.
- Kim** What's your BODY?
- Jane** Four
- Kim** The cart sags noticeably but doesn't collapse. (as *porter*) Hey, get off the bleedin' cart!
- Bert** (as *Padiah*) Tell me, Blessed Kellis, what brings you and your... um... parishioner to Irieth?
- Kim** (as *Gevon*) Unfortunately the Church is cutting back on some of its more ...ah... far-flung missions, despite our success. Did you know that nearly twenty percent of the Yegith natives now worship Veld? (as *Keleg*) Praise be! (as *Gevon*) Praise be indeed, Miss Keleg.
- Nikki** (as *Shimmeth*) But why close the missions, Blessed Gevon?
- Kim** (as *Gevon*) I fear that there may be a political element, Respectable Shimmeth, perhaps even some jealousy. Most of the missions to more civilised countries have achieved much less success, but there is something about the worship of Veld that seems to strike a chord in the heart of the Yarge of the Yegith Archipelago (as *Keleg*) Praise be to Veld!
- Bert** (as *Padiah*) Perhaps we'd better get on. Raetha, get down from there; you can walk on the other side of the cart if you're worried.
- Jane** (as *Raetha*) But Master Padiah...
- Bert** I roar "Down!" as loudly as I can.
- Jane** I sulkily climb down and make sure that the wagon is between me and the Yarge.
- Kim** (as *Gevon*) We seem to be going in the same direction. Perhaps we should stay together to protect the ladies from any further banditry.
- Nikki** I move over to Padiah and whisper "Do you think it's a good idea?"
- Bert** I whisper "Why not?"
- Nikki** I can't help thinking that all this is too good to be true – a missionary and his convert turn up to stop our stuff being stolen, when we're lugging around our hoards. I think they're setting us up for some sort of con. And you notice that they don't seem to have any luggage, why were they at the station?
- Bert** Mmm... Good point. Okay, I turn to Gevon and say "Thank you so much, but we really can't detain you and Miss Keleg; we'll be very slow getting there with all this luggage."

**Kim** (as Gevon) Oh, we're in no hurry. (as Keleg) No, we has all de time in de world. (as herself) While you were talking you've been walking on away from the station, and the streets seem to be getting a little narrower and run-down looking.

**Bert** I turn to the porter and say "Are you sure we're going the right way?"

**Kim** (as porter) Short cut, sir.

**Bert** (as Padiah) I think we'd prefer to take a more scenic route, see some of the sights on the way.

**Kim** (as Gevon) But not until we've discussed your donation to the Church mission fund. (as herself) He seems to have pulled out a large pistol from somewhere while you were talking to the porter, and Keleg has drawn her swords and is grinning at you again. The porter says "They said they 'as their hoards in the trunks."

**Bert** (as Padiah) I say! You scoundrels!

**Kim** Will Gevon and Keleg the dragon-slayer really steal your hoards? Is Gevon really a parson? Is Keleg really a cannibal? Or a dragon-slayer? Do you really want to know? Find out in our next exciting episode...

**Nikki** What? We've only been playing for a couple of hours!

**Kim** Only kidding. But I'm getting hungry, let's take a break and eat.

**Bert** Works for me...

*They adjourn to the kitchen.*

In this example players took on roles of characters of their own sex. This is advisable if they feel uncomfortable playing the opposite sex, but there is no other reason why players shouldn't run characters of different sexes, races, nationalities, or species. The referee needs to take on a wide variety of roles, which will probably take in all of the above as a campaign progresses. At a few points in these rules it has been convenient to use the term "him" or "her" when describing something that is equally applicable to either sex. This is not meant to imply that either sex should be excluded from any activity. However, female dragons are often disadvantaged by the nature of draconic society.



## Game Requirements

To use this system you'll need two six-sided dice (preferably two per player), copies of the character record form and a few tables, and some pens and paper. A calculator is occasionally useful. Metal, plastic, or card figures can be used to represent characters, but they are not essential. Some cut-out figures are provided on pages 39-42.

Online resources for referees, mostly HTML pages, can be found at the addresses at the bottom of every page. They include the complete rules, worldbooks and numerous adventures, source material, and a good deal more. The *Forgotten Futures* CD-ROM, which can be ordered from these sites, adds several hundred megabytes of additional source material, including period fiction, articles, and illustrations.

## Game Terms

Most role playing games incorporate specialised terms. *Forgotten Futures* uses some, as well as a few abbreviations and contractions, as follows:

1D6	Roll one dice (one die if you feel pedantic).
2D6	Roll two dice and add the numbers.
BODY	A characteristic, often abbreviated as B.
MIND	A characteristic, often abbreviated as M.
SOUL	A characteristic, often abbreviated as S.
Effect	Numerical rating used to calculate the damage caused by weapons and other forms of attack.
Average of...	Add two numbers (e.g. characteristics) and divide by two. Round UP if the result is a fraction. Usually abbreviated as Av, e.g.AvB&S.
Half of...	Divide a number (usually a characteristic) by two and round UP. Usually shown as /2, e.g.B/2, 1D6/2.
Third of... etc.	Divide by three (or whatever) and round up. E.g. B/3 = BODY/3.
Half average of...	Some skills are based on half the average of two characteristics. Add the characteristics, then divide by 4, then round up. e.g.AvB&S/2.
+1	Add 1 to a dice roll or other number.
+2	Add 2 to a dice roll or other number.
-1	Subtract 1 from a dice roll or other number.
-2	Subtract 2 from a dice roll or other number.
2+, 3+, etc.	2 or more, 3 or more, etc.
Round	A flexible period of time during which all PCs and NPCs can perform actions. In combat a round is a few seconds, in other situations it might be a few minutes or hours, if used at all.
Optional Rule	This means exactly what it sounds like: something that can be tacked onto the game if you want to use it, but isn't essential for play. Usually optional rules add extra realism but make life harder for players or the referee, or involve complexities which you may wish to avoid.
FF	<i>Forgotten Futures</i> (what else?).
FF I, II, etc.	<i>Forgotten Futures I, II, etc.</i>
NPC	Non-Player character, run by the referee rather than by players.

## So You Want To Be A Dragon..?

**E**ach player needs at least one character, whose details should be recorded. Use copies of the form on page 51, or write records on scrap paper or file cards. The HTML version of the rules includes links to more records in a variety of formats including spreadsheet templates, but they are designed for human characters, not dragons. Because nearly everything about a dragon character is related to his or her class and sex, you should begin by deciding what they are. Aristocratic dragons tend to be bigger, tougher, and stronger than others, but there are down-sides: increased responsibilities; increased public awareness of your activities; and a probability that any Yarge encountered will react badly to you.

Players should record their names and the name (including any title or rank), sex, and age of the character. They may wish to give their characters military names and rank, academic honours, and the like; the referee must decide if this will cause problems.

Sex (Male or Female, and [optionally] sexual orientation) are important in this setting, which in its attitudes is similar to early Victorian Britain. Unmarried female dragons are essentially second class citizens, considered incompetent to look after themselves; married female dragons are more or less at the mercy of their husbands. Widows and a few adventuresses may be able to transcend the normal limitations of their gender, but there will be frequent obstacles – onlookers will be shocked or scandalized, and there may be legal restrictions that stop the character from doing everything that she wants. For example, a female character may not be allowed to take on the legal responsibilities associated with owning a ship or a business, but must instead find a male figurehead to do it for her. Homosexuality is a taboo subject, rarely discussed publicly, but is extraordinarily scandalous if it becomes known.

Age is usually unimportant for adult characters; exceptionally young or old characters may be at a social disadvantage, otherwise there is no effect in game terms. For dragons “exceptionally young” is anything under 50 or so, “exceptionally old” is anything over 500, so there’s room for manoeuvre.

For “profession”, write in something appropriate; the referee should tell players if they have made an unsuitable choice. For this setting the choices on the next page have disadvantages:

## Dragon Names

Every dragon needs a name, often several. Numerous dragons are named in *Tooth and Claw*, and Jo Walton has coined many more on her Livejournal. Dragon names generally consist of a forename (or more than one forename) followed, in the case of peers, by a demesne name, the name of the family or estate. Often the forename is omitted from normal conversation if a dragon has a title or professional rank.

Here, reproduced with permission, are a few examples, mostly first names; those in italics are named characters in the books. Some have been used to name characters and/or locations mentioned in the sourcebook, rules and adventures:

### Male

*Alwad, Amer, Avageth, Avan, Beirandra, Bon Agornin, Blessed Calien, Chigal, Danith, Derwig, Digothien, Dunnis, Eligas, Ereg, Erofal, Blessed Frelt, Gefon, Gelath, Gelathis, Gerin, Gesuthivak, Gethack, Gevon, Glaris, Goredigis, Has, Hathor, Huvager, Ingen, Irofah, Ithelar, Ithemine, Jamanay, Kellis, Klem, Lamerak, Laperal, Liralen, Londaver, Marcanil, Mothies, Mustan, Nalnegis, Ogefon, Onaver, Padiah, Parcray, Parten, Penn Agornin, Pletsim, Rasdarie, Rasdogah, Retaiath, Exalted Rimalin, Salak, Sanjild, Sher Benandi, Eminent Teltsie, Thenacel, Thidris, Thonakie, Vimier, Wontas, Yagideg, Yenalie, Yenash, Yenish, Yepragis, Yethig, Yoverak*

### Female

*Aeslyn, Alotho, Belathis, Belcelith, Beloth, Belshulah, Berend, Dapiandrel, Dara, Direndra, Echoris, Eda, Edawoon, Egsebeth, Enadra, Felandra, Felin, Foharegis, Gegaris, Haner, Hasegath, Hethigetis, Hethikah, Hileris, Hradan, Hradin, Igememie, Issel, Keleg, Kinetika, Kitisel, Lamith, Lipahis, Lish, Lodie, Lomegis, Melbele, Mieval, Miregah, Miviell, Nelorie, Nevegia, Nevris, Nimuleris, Nolenluth, Oshenitara, Oshetivon, Raetha, Ratherodis, Samindra, Sartho, Sebeth, Selendra, Sethod, Shimmeth, Soban, Eminence Teltsie, Tiadra, Vebarie, Vesirnegie, Woyime, Yeg, Yegith, Yegithnie, Yelis, Yethagnie, Zile*



- **Indentured Servant:** Your wings will probably be bound most of the time, and you will never get to eat dragon flesh unless you have an unusual master (owner) or somehow escape from your indenture. Escaped servants are outlaws, liable for execution. You will always be poor and probably remain single. This does not apply to normal non-indentured employees, such as clerks and even some servants, although the chances of wealth are still slim at best.
- **Parson:** (*Males only*) You are expected to bind your wings unless there is a life-threatening emergency or some other crisis which requires you to fly. You are not allowed to fight, regardless of provocation. If you have been assigned to a parish you will probably be expected to conduct services on Firstday, and carry out other duties at other times in the week, which may cause problems for adventurers. If you are a priest of the Old Religion you will be distrusted by members of the Orthodox Faith and excluded from many social events. For both religions duties include helping the dying and culling the young. The pay isn't particularly good, especially if you belong to the Old Religion, but you get to eat the eyes of the dead and an occasional baby. See pages 30-31 for more on the role of religion in this setting.
- **Soldier:** (*Males only*) A military career is mostly spent at lonely border outposts in the middle of nowhere, with no female company and very little to do. The pay isn't particularly good, especially for other ranks and NCOs. Tiamath isn't planning on fighting a war any time soon and the Yarge seem to be keeping fairly quiet, so it may be decades before you see any action; while you're waiting you have to spend a lot of time away from home. If there ever is a war Tiamath's soldiers will probably be ludicrously outnumbered by a technologically superior enemy. Having said that, soldiers tend to acquire interesting skills, get to go on leave, and may be sent on undercover missions. Retired soldiers (especially officers, who can buy themselves out young) should still be fit and strong. See pages 28-9 for more on the pros and cons of a military career.

Most of the other careers are very like those in Victorian England, with similar pros and cons. Any career which requires a character to perform daily duties and doesn't give much leeway should probably be avoided, but it's always possible for a character to be retired, on holiday, or between jobs.

Try to avoid professional ranks that will give players too much power, or restrict them too badly. An aristocrat in charge of a large estate is a good example; you have a lot of authority, especially in your local area, but you're expected to spend most of your time administering the estate, leaving little time for adventures. Wealthy characters are acceptable, but should not be able to buy their way out of every problem. Avoid occupations that restrict character freedom and mobility; an obvious example is an indentured servant, but a clerk with no money, a lawyer with a full roster of clients, or a mother tied down by young dragonets aren't much better off, from a gaming point of view.

While it is possible to play a Yarge in this setting, mixed parties of Yarge and Dragons have a tendency to run into problems; Yarge can't fly or see in the dark, dragons can't fit into many of the places a Yarge can go and tend to dislike even looking at Yarge, and so forth. If you want to work around these problems use any version of the normal *Forgotten Futures* rules to design your Yarge characters.

**Example: Respected Segievel Yepragis (1)**

*Segievel Yepragis is a 220 year old gentledragon author, writer of several scientific romances including The Annihilation of the Yarge, The Fall of Irieth, and The Belshulath Menace. He genuinely believes (like many other dragons) that the Yarge are a danger to all Dragonkind and ought to be annihilated, if it can be done safely and without inconveniencing him. The referee has no trouble with any of this – his writing career and specism will be a good way to get him involved in adventures. Respected Segievel's adventures will be used to illustrate some aspects of the rules.*

The next sections of the record are completed using character points, discussed on page 52.

## Dragon Character Record

Player Name ~							
Character Name ~							
Profession ~				Age ~	Sex ~		
Length ~	Flame ~	Thick Scales ~	Tough ~	Fearsome ~			
BODY ~	Skills						
MIND ~							
SOUL ~							
MAGIC ~							
Bonus pt. ~							
<b>Wounds</b>							
Bruise	<input type="checkbox"/>	Equipment:					
Flesh wound	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>						
<i>Injury</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
<i>Injury</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Critical	<input type="checkbox"/>						
<i>Critical</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
		<b>Weapons</b>	<b>Multiple?</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
Front claws x2 (Effect B+1 M, B-1 F)		2			F	I	C
Rear claws x2 (Effect B+2)		No			F	I	C/K
Bite (Effect B+2)		No			F	I	C/K
Constrict (Effect B+1)		No			I	I	C
Tail Strike (Effect B/2)		No			F	I	I+KO
<i>Flame (Radius BODY/5 ft., Effect B/2)</i>		<i>Area</i>			I	I	K
Armour = BODY / 5 + Scales		-			-	-	-
Notes				Portrait			
							

~ This record is provided for personal use only. It may be copied freely, but must not be sold ~  
 Editable versions can be found on the distribution disk and author's web site

## Character Points

The number of character points given to players depends on the class and age of their dragons. Optionally this can be rolled randomly.

Roll	Class	Points	Roll	Age	Points
2	Servants and the Criminal Classes	14	2-4	50-100	+ 1
3-4	Commoners	19	5-7	100-150	+ 2
5-6	Respected	21	8-9	150-300	+ 3 *
7-8	Dignified	23	10-11	300-500	+ 4 *
9	Illustrious	25	12	500+	+ 5 *
10	Exalted	27	* + 2 only for servants & the criminal classes		
11	August	29	Female dragons lose 10% of the points for Class (round the total UP), but retain all points for age.		
12	Eminent	30			

This looks, and is, extremely biased. Servants and the criminal classes are denied most of the opportunities that might lead to them eating dragon meat or getting a decent education, so they are naturally stunted and uneducated. Females lose out by being confined to the home, so lose out to some extent on education and physical development. Most males (commoners and peers) get to live more active lives, and if they live long enough should gain more experience.

### Example: Respected Segievel Yepragis (2)

As a 220 year old Respected male dragon Segievel gets  $21 + 3 = 24$  character points

Character points are used for the following purposes:

1. To buy characteristics
2. To buy skills
3. To buy special abilities such as flaming, extra strong scales, etc.
4. Doubled and saved as Bonus Points for use in play (Not recommended – points accomplish more during the character generation process, and are often awarded to characters once play begins)

## Characteristics

The table to the right shows the cost of characteristics. For comparison, average Yarge characteristics are 3 or 4. 5 is above average, 6 is very good (for example, BODY [6] might be a professional athlete), 7 is extraordinarily unusual and is available only at the referee's discretion. Yarge characteristics can rarely be changed.

	Value of Characteristic						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Cost of Characteristic						
BODY	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 etc.
MIND or SOUL	0	2	3	5	7	10	14*

\* At the discretion of the referee ONLY.

For dragons things are very different; BODY is usually higher, is easier to buy, and can be improved at a later date. Average MIND and SOUL are about the same as for Yarge, and cannot easily be improved.

- BODY (B) covers physical strength, toughness, speed, and dexterity, and in dragons also determines length, the amount of armour their skin provides, and minimum flying ability. This characteristic is a good deal cheaper for dragons than for other species. Dragons MUST spend a quarter to a half of their total character points (rounded UP) on BODY. Length is  $BODY \times 3$  feet, plus or minus a foot or so. Armour Effect (see page 77) is  $BODY / 5$  (rounded UP). Yarge buy BODY for the same point costs as the other characteristics and gain no armour.

- **MIND (M)** covers all intellectual capabilities, reasoning, and observation. Dragons can buy MIND 1 through to 6 without problems, MIND 7 if the referee allows it and points are available.
- **SOUL (S)** covers emotions, charisma, and psychic ability. Dragons can buy SOUL 1 through to 6 without problems, SOUL 7 if the referee allows it and points are available.

There's a space on the record form for a fourth optional characteristic, **MAGIC**. See page 82 for a brief note on the use of magic in this setting. For most purposes the three standard characteristics are all that will be needed. This characteristic should not be purchased unless the referee has decided to allow its use. See page 58 onwards for full details of the effects of the other characteristics.

**Example: Respected Segievel Yepragis (3)**

Segievel has 24 character points. His player must spend 6 to 12 points on **BODY** and purchase other characteristics as desired; Magic will not be used. He chooses to buy **BODY 8**, making him stronger and tougher than any Yarge; as a writer he will be using the **Artist** skill, which depends on **MIND** and **SOUL**, and chooses to buy **MIND 4** and **SOUL 3**, for a total of  $7 + 5 + 3 = 15$  points. There will be no magic. He has 9 points left. With **BODY 8** he is 24ft long and his thick and scaly skin gives him some armour – the armour Effect is  $8/5$  (rounded up) = 2.

## Skills

The list that follows includes all of the skills available in the *Forgotten Futures* RPG, including some that are limited or not available to dragons or (in the context of this setting) are not available to anyone, depending on technology that has yet to be invented. Skills which are not available to dragons are marked with a darker shade; skills that are only available to dragons are in bold type. Skills that are limited in some way will show it in the notes.

Skills have a base value derived from one or more characteristics, to which at least one point must be added. For instance, **Actor** is based on the average of **MIND** and **SOUL**; a character whose **MIND** and **SOUL** average to 4 gets **Actor [5]** for one point, **Actor [6]** for 2 points, or **Actor [7]** for 3 points.

**Brawling** and **Stealth** are available at the base values shown without spending points on them. Naturally they can be improved if points are spent. Note that dragons start off with poor stealth compared to Yarge, all those scales etc. make noise, and that some other skills have different base values for dragons and Yarge. **Flying** is available free at base value for dragons, but indentured servants who have not been able to exercise their wings occasionally must start at a lower value if they are later allowed to fly.

Skill	Base value	Notes
Actor	AvM&S	Any form of stage performance.
Artist	AvM&S	Any artistic endeavour.
Athlete	B	Swimming, running, etc.
<i>Babbage Engine</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Not yet available in this setting</i>
<b>Brawling</b>	<b>B</b>	Use of teeth, claws, improvised weapons, etc. <i>Free at base value</i>
Business	M	Any financial or organisational work.
Detective	AvM&S	Good at noticing small details.
Doctor	M/2	Knowledge and licence to practice.
Driving	M	Any ground vehicle <i>if designed for operation by dragons</i> .
First Aid	M	Emergency treatment to stop bleeding etc.
<b>Flying</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Free at base value – indentured servants B/2. Dragons only!</b>

Skill	Base value	Notes
Linguist	M	Linguist/2 languages (round UP) are initially known.
Marksman	M	Use of directly aimed projectile weapons.
Martial Arts	AvB&S/2	Any martial art. Allows multiple attacks. Yarge only!
Mechanic	M	Any form of engineering etc.
Medium	S/2	A genuine medium, not a fake.
Melee Weapon	AvB&M	All close range non-projectile weapons
Mesmerism	AvM&S	Using your eyes to hypnotize Yarge. <b>Dragons only!</b>
Military Arms	M	Use of field guns, explosives, etc.
Pilot	AvB&M/2	Use for aircraft, submersibles, etc. Yarge only!
Psychology	AvM&S	Use to spot lies, calm other dragons, etc. Not usable on Yarge.
Riding	S	Dragons cannot ride, so this skill is limited to training & driving animals. Yarge base this skill on AvB&S since it is more physical for them.
Scholar	M	Detailed knowledge of Scholar/2 related fields (round UP)
Scientist	M	Use of any science.
Signals	M	Operation of heliographs etc. using Dragon codes (or Yarge)
Stealth	B/4	Hiding, camouflage, sneaking, etc. Free at base value.
Thief	M/2	Locksmith, forgery, etc. Picking pockets for Yarge only!

See page 64 onwards for full details of the use of skills, and a more detailed explanation of each skill. Male dragons do not automatically know how to write; it is not listed as a separate skill, but if male characters wish to write they must justify it via one of their other skills.

*Forgotten Futures* uses very general skills; for example, Scientist covers everything from Archaeology to Zoology, Pilot covers all aircraft, submarines, etc. (but isn't available to dragons). Players may spend up to three points per skill during character generation. If more than one point is used the player can add specialities related to the skill; some skills (such as Scholar and Linguist) automatically have them.

**Example: Respected Segievel Yepragis (4)**

Segievel has BODY 8, MIND 4 and SOUL 3, and 9 character points left. He doesn't think he needs to improve his athletic skills or brawling – he's a writer, not a warrior – but to be on the safe side, if the Yarge ever do invade, he decides to learn to shoot. He obviously needs to be able to compose prose, for which he needs the Artist skill, and Scholar is essential for research. As a peer he obviously has some business interests, so that skill will also be useful. In the end he chooses:

- Artist [6] (writer, penmanship) - 2 pt.
- Brawling [8] - 0 pt.
- Business [5] - 1 pt.
- Flying [8] - 0 pt.
- Marksman [6] - 2 pt.
- Stealth [2] - 0 pt.
- Scholar[6] (The Yarge, Military history, conspiracy theories) - 2 pt.

Male dragons can't usually write without training – holding a pen between claws is difficult. The referee accepts that in order to practice his art Segievel will have received this training as part of the Artist skill.

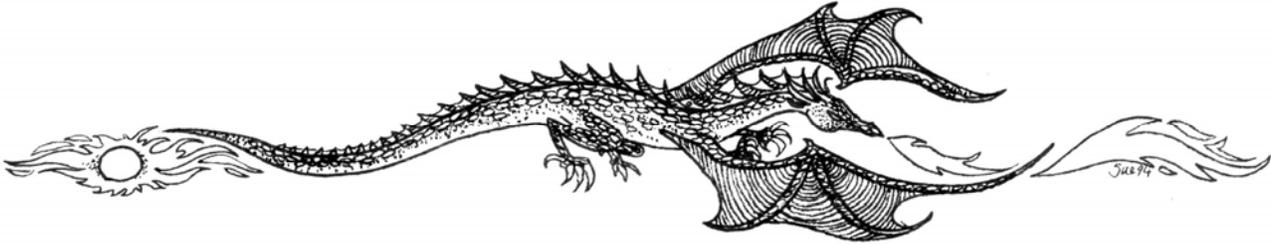
Two points are left for other things.



## Special Abilities

Dragons may have up to four unusual abilities:

- **Flame** (cost 6 points) is simply the ability to breathe flame, which is generally acquired comparatively late in life. It produces a blowtorch-like flame up to BODY feet long, spreading out in a narrow cone, aimed using MIND or Marksmanship. The Effect (see pg. 74 onwards) is BODY/2. Using flame is potentially dangerous to the dragon – it drains energy and can cause exhaustion or illness. Note it on the character record by writing “yes” after “flame ~”. *This ability is NOT available to dragonesses!*



- **Toughness** (cost 1, 3 or 6 points) allows dragons to soak up injuries without becoming incapacitated. They must still be healed, but (for example) with this ability a dragon might absorb several bullets before it is so badly injured it has to stop fighting. This is covered in more detail in the combat section, but the costs are as follows:
  - 1 point – 1 extra Injury
  - 3 points – 2 extra Injuries
  - 6 points – 2 extra Injuries, one extra Critical InjuryNote it on the character record by writing the number of points after “Tough ~”
- **Thick Scales** (cost 2 points or more) add to the Effect of armour, reducing the severity of any damage that gets through. 2 points adds 1 Effect, 4 points add 2 Effect, etc. Note it by writing the modifier for “Scales ~” and modifying the armour listed. A disadvantage is that some other skills may be impaired – for example, Stealth may be reduced because they clatter as the dragon moves, they might have some effect on dexterity or abilities such as holding a pen, etc.; the referee should decide. There is always a weakness somewhere in dragon armour – the inside of the mouth is unarmored (and doesn’t even have the normal protection of dragon skin), and even with thick scales there are probably chinks where an arrow or dagger can get in if targeted well. Finally, thick scales are more prone to parasites, infections, etc., and dragons who neglect proper care may find that they have health problems. Dragonesses don’t have thick scales on the front of their bodies, and any scales protect the back of their bodies, arms, and legs **ONLY**.
- **Fearsome** (2 points) simply means that the dragon looks unusually fearsome to Yarge, regardless of his or her true nature. Where appropriate this should give the dragon a +1 bonus in any dice roll related to a contest of personalities or wills, or an attempt to intimidate Yarge, but it will be difficult to persuade Yarge to trust the dragon. It has no effect on other dragons. Tick the “Fearsome” box.

### **Example: Respected Segievel Yepragis (5)**

*Segievel has 2 points left. He thinks about getting scales or becoming fearsome but in the end decides to buy Toughness 1. This leaves one point; he considers converting it to two bonus points for use in play, but eventually returns to skills and adds Linguist [5] for 1 point.*

## Equipment and Notes, Weapons, etc.

These sections should be completed when the character's characteristics, skills, and history have been decided. Players should simply say what they'd like to own, and describe any special status or background details; the referee should decide if this is reasonable, and if it would be useful (or much too useful!) in the game setting. It's reasonable to assume that characters have a home and enough money to live comfortably and pay normal expenses; even indentured servants will live somewhere, at their master or mistresses pleasure. At the referee's discretion characters may be rich if it will help to develop the campaign. All characters should note how much money they normally carry; a Crown is roughly equivalent to ten pounds. See the section on prices on page 19 for more on this.

## Wounds

The tick boxes in the section marked "Wounds" are left blank for use during play. Any optional boxes that aren't used should be obliterated so that they won't be used accidentally. See the sections on *wounds*, *combat*, and *non-combat injuries* beginning on page 72 for more details of this part of the game.

### **Example: Respected Segievel Yepragis (6)**

*Segievel is a gentle-dragon of modest means; he receives the income from a few tenants in Irieth, from his writing, and from occasional guest lectures. He lives in a traditional small Draconic town house in the Migantine Quarter of Irieth; he dislikes Yarge and believes in the old saying "Know your enemy," so living where he will occasionally encounter them is one way to be alert for trouble.*



*He carries a notepad and pencils at all times, of course, and has about 3000 crowns banked, 100 crowns for his token sleeping chamber "hoard", and routinely carries about ten crowns in gold and change. He owns one antique, a very fine piece of Yarge workmanship, a gold brooch representing a dragon curled up around a large ruby, at least a thousand years old and worth a couple of hundred crowns to a collector, which he uses as a hat pin. Other than that he has no special possessions. He has one employee, Sethod Woyime, an elderly widow who comes in three mornings a week to do his accounts and secretarial work, but she is a commoner, not an indentured servant.*

*With all of this decided the player has nearly completed the character record shown on the next page. For each skill he writes in any relevant specializations (see page 68-71 for more detailed skill descriptions). Since Segievel has one point in Toughness he leaves the first optional "injury" box open, but crosses off the second optional "injury" and the "critical" box. Since there is to be no magic he writes N/A instead of the value for the characteristic.*

*The final parts left are the weapons and portrait.*

*The weapons section is used to record all natural weapons (claws etc.), and anything else that the character usually carries or has handy, such as a pistol. The columns list the weapon's name, whether it is capable of multiple attacks, the Effect number which determines how much damage it can cause, and the results of any damage caused. For now it isn't necessary to worry about the use of this system; it's explained in the section on combat beginning on page 74; values for weapons are on page 79 onwards. He puts N/A for "Flame" since Segievel doesn't have this ability. All of a dragon's other natural weapons have Effect based on BODY, as shown on the record sheet. Note that dragonesses get a weaker attack with their front claws, since they are smaller than those of males.*

*Lastly, he pastes on a picture found online as a portrait of his character.*

*Segievel is now more or less ready to be used, but to add a little more depth the player looks at the list of optional traits beginning on page 83 and picks a few that look particularly appropriate; Snob, Rational Fear of Yarge, Nominally Religious and Confirmed Bachelor. Between them these traits should give him plenty of reasons to get involved in adventures. If only to get away from the pretty dragonesses his aunts want him to meet...*

## Dragon Character Record

Player Name ~						
Character Name ~ <i>Respected Segievel Yepragis</i>						
Profession ~ <i>Author / Journalist</i>					Age ~ <i>220</i>	Sex ~ <i>M</i>
Length ~ <i>24 ft</i>	Flame ~ <i>No</i>	Thick Scales ~ <i>No</i>	Tough ~ <i>1pt.</i>	Fearsome ~ <i>No</i>		
BODY ~ <i>8</i>	Skills					
MIND ~ <i>4</i>	<i>Artist [6] (writer, penmanship), Brawling [8], Business [5], Flying [8],</i>					
SOUL ~ <i>3</i>	<i>Linguist [5] (Migantine, Belshuline, Danithine), Marksmanship [6],</i>					
MAGIC ~ <i>N/A</i>	<i>Scholar [6] (The Yarge, conspiracy theories, military history), Stealth [2]</i>					
Bonus pt. ~ <i>-</i>						
<b>Wounds</b>						
Bruise	<input type="checkbox"/>	Equipment:				
Flesh wound	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Notebook, pencils, assorted personal junk of little value.</i>				
Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>3000 crowns banked, 100 in hoard, 10 crowns carried</i>				
Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Antique gold broach (Yarge workmanship) representing a dragon curled up</i>				
<i>Injury</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>around a large ruby, worth a couple of hundred crowns, used as a hat pin.</i>				
<i>Injury</i>	<i>----</i>	<i>Various hats and caps.</i>				
Critical	<input type="checkbox"/>					
<i>Critical</i>	<i>----</i>					
	<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Multiple?</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
	Front claws x2 (Effect B+1 M, B-1 F)	2	9	F	I	C
	Rear claws x2 (Effect B+2)	No	10	F	I	C/K
	Bite (Effect B+2)	No	10	F	I	C/K
	Constrict (Effect B+1)	No	9	I	I	C
	Tail Strike (Effect B/2)	No	4	F	I	I+KO
	Flame (Radius BODY/5 ft., Effect B/2)	Area	N/A	I	C	K
	Armour = BODY / 5 + Scales	-	2	-	-	-
<b>Notes</b>				<b>Portrait</b>		
<p><i>Comfortably well off; income from rents, investments, royalties, etc. Lives in Migantine Quarter, Irieth. Conspiracy theorist / "technothriller" style scientific romance writer. One employee, Sethod Woyime (part time secretary / accountant)</i></p> <p><i>Traits: Snob, Rational Fear of Yarge, Nominally Religious, Confirmed Bachelor.</i></p>						

~ This record is provided for personal use only. It may be copied freely, but must not be sold ~  
 Editable versions can be found on the distribution disk and author's web site

## Characteristics in Depth

Characteristics are three numbers which are used to determine the general physical, mental, and spiritual nature of characters.

- **BODY** represents general physique, well-being, stamina, and speed. If characters expect to spend a lot of time in combat, or performing manual labour, **BODY** should be high. Inanimate objects also have **BODY**. **BODY** is **NOT** necessarily indicative of size or weight; it's possible for something to be physically small or light and still have high **BODY** (e.g. a bantam weight boxer, a steel key), or big and have low **BODY** (e.g. a fat invalid, a greenhouse).
- **MIND** covers all mental skills and traits including intelligence, reasoning ability, common sense, and the like. Anyone in a skilled job probably needs high **MIND**. **MIND** is also important in the use of most weapons.
- **SOUL** covers artistic abilities, empathy, luck, and spiritual well-being. If **SOUL** is low the character should be played as aloof, insensitive, and unlikeable (as in the phrase "He has no soul"); if high, the character does well in these areas. It is also used for other forms of interaction, such as fast-talking, intimidation, acting ("A very soulful performance"), and other arts. If your **SOUL** is low better not try to con anyone, and forget about learning ballet (Aerial ballet, naturally!).

Dragon **BODY** is wildly variable but always high. Normal dragon **MIND** and **SOUL** are in the range 1-6, with 1 exceptionally poor, 3 or 4 average, and 6 very good, the top percentile of performance. Player characters may have **MIND** or **SOUL** of 7 at the discretion of the referee **ONLY**; this is freakishly good, far better than normal performance.

**MIND** and **SOUL** cannot normally be improved; under really exceptional circumstances changes might be allowed, but this is a once in a lifetime event. **BODY** may rise any time a dragon eats dragon flesh.

Characteristics may sometimes be reduced. For instance, someone crippled after a fall might lose **BODY**, someone suffering a severe head injury might lose **MIND**. **SOUL** might be damaged by insanity or drug abuse. If any characteristic is reduced, recalculate the values of all skills derived from it.

## Using Characteristics

Depending on circumstances, characteristics may be used against other characteristics, against skills, or against an arbitrary "Difficulty". Skills give an edge in most of these situations, as explained in later sections, but it's sometimes necessary to use them directly.

Previous releases have used a lookup table to make it slightly easier to calculate the result of actions, but it gets somewhat cumbersome with dragons whose **Body** (after a few good meals) may be 20 or more. To get the same results a small amount of arithmetic is needed:

### To do *anything* roll 2D6:

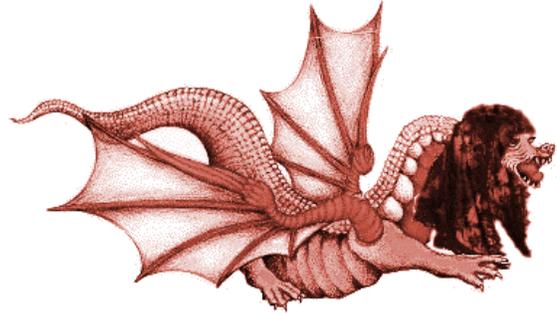
- Add the characteristic, skill or Difficulty to be overcome if it is 12 or less (otherwise see below)
- Subtract the skill, Effect, or characteristic used if it is 12 or less (otherwise see below)
- If the modified result is 7 or less it's a success. However:
- Any unmodified roll of 2 **ALWAYS** succeeds.
- Any roll of 12 **ALWAYS** fails, regardless of modifiers, and may have additional unfortunate consequences.

### Big Numbers:

If the characteristic, skill or Difficulty to be overcome or the skill, Effect, or characteristic used are over 12, divide *both* numbers by the smallest number that will reduce both below 12 and round up. e.g., if one is 20 and the other is 7, divide by 2 to get 10 and 4. If one is 32 and the other is 7, divide by 3 to get 11 and 3. Then roll as above.

When any roll is made the referee may prefer to keep the target value a secret, and simply tell the player if the result is a success or failure.

If the result is EXACTLY the number needed to succeed, the attempt has come very close to failure; referees may want to dramatise this appropriately. If the number rolled is much lower than the number needed to succeed, the referee should emphasise the ease with which success was achieved. Similarly, a roll just one above the number needed for success should be dramatised as a very near thing that came within an ace of succeeding, a very high roll as an abject failure. These dramatics aside, any success is a success, any failure a failure.



A gravid dragoness of the Old Faith (easily recognisable by her mantilla) takes a last flight before laying her eggs.

**Example: Breaking down a door**

Segievel (BODY [8]) wants to break an unusually strong Yarge door (BODY [10]) by smashing into it. Neither number is over 12 so there is no need to reduce them.

The first attempt is a roll of 7.

$7$  (the roll) +  $10$  (the door's BODY) -  $8$  (Segievel's BODY) =  $9$

It's a failure, and the door rattles but stays shut.

After a brief rest Segievel runs at the door again. On a 2 the lock breaks. The referee dramatises this by describing the wood splintering, the knob flying across the room and narrowly missing the dragonet Segievel is trying to rescue.

**Example: Arm Wrestling**

While visiting a low tavern in the Migantine Quarter, Segievel encounters a VERY drunk Yarge railwayman, a stoker who insists that he can "arm wrestle any one of you sons of lizards;" he's already defeated a couple of the other customers, but all of them are commoners, and somewhat smaller than Segievel. Some of Segievel's friends are with him, and urge him to show the Yarge "What a gentledragon can do."

Unknown to Segievel and friends, the Yarge occasionally supplements his income by performing a strongman act; he has BODY [6]. In each round each should roll BODY as attacker with the other character's BODY as defender:

Round 1: The Yarge and Segievel both roll 10, much too high to succeed. Nothing happens, apart from a slight flabby quivering of opposed muscles.

Round 2: The Yarge and Segievel both roll 3, and succeed. Again, nothing happens. Since both succeeded this is described in terms of bulging muscles, a clash of titans.

Round 3: The Yarge rolls 10 and fails, Segievel rolls 2 and succeeds. He smashes the Yarge's arm to the table and wins – but secretly knows that it was a much tougher contest than it seemed.

All other feats of strength should use BODY to attack BODY. If several characters want to co-operate in a feat of strength, take the character with the highest BODY and add the BODY/2 of each additional dragon aiding.

This system isn't perfect. For example, a dragon with BODY [10] theoretically has an even chance of lifting a BODY [10] elephant; in practice the referee should make this task much harder. Referees should be firm if players want to do something that's physically impossible, or make them tackle the job in smaller chunks. "Pass the saw; I need to cut up this elephant..."

**Example: Excuse Me, Where Is the Tiamath Consul?**

On a trip to the Yegith Archipelago Segievel is caught in a strong net trap; his wing is damaged, and he won't be able to fly for several days. His captors are Yarge savages who decide that he is their long-awaited god. They have no common language. The referee decides that his SOUL [3] must be used against the native chief's SOUL [5] to make his manner sufficiently forceful, and ensure his release.

On a 2 the natives build a sedan chair to carry Segievel back to his ship.

Note: Sadistic referees might prefer to make players act out scenes like this...

**Example: It's Up His Sleeve!**

On their way back to the ship the native witch doctor decides that Segievel's charismatic presence undermines his authority. He challenges him to a duel of magic (actually conjuring), using his skill Acting [6]. Segievel must use his MIND [4] to spot the Yarge tricks. The witch doctor begins by making a fruit "disappear"; on a 3 Segievel notices that he's tucked it into a fold of his loincloth, and points out the bulge to the audience. This causes so much lewd merriment that the duel ends in the witch-doctor's abject defeat.

**Example: I Can Take It...**

The wily witch doctor has persuaded the chief that Segievel must be tested again. This time it's a test of endurance; he must put his hand into a jar of stinging insects. Their stings are extremely painful but do no permanent damage. Segievel must use his MIND [4] to attack an arbitrary difficulty of 8.

This is a tough test; on a 6 he fails, pulling his hand out before the test ends. Fortunately he has the sense to throw some of them at the witch doctor; he also fails. The chief decides that nothing has been proved.

Incidentally, the referee might instead have asked for a roll of AvB&M, rather than just MIND, to check if the character has the will-power and endurance to overcome the pain, or SOUL to check if the character has the courage to endure it.

## Improving the Odds

At the discretion of the referee ONLY, players may spend bonus points to temporarily modify an attacking or defending value as appropriate. Players must declare that they are doing this, and mark off the point(s) used, before the dice are rolled.

This rule does NOT mean that you can spend points to perform the physically impossible. No matter how many points are spent, a BODY [1] Yarge will not lift an elephant single-handed. Regardless of points spent, a 12 is still a failure.

## Common Characteristic Rolls

Here are a few more examples of the use of characteristics. Use the table below to choose the Difficulty number for the roll.

- Characters may occasionally need sheer luck. Ask them to use SOUL against a difficulty number.
- If they need to notice things, such as a concealed movement or a faint smell, use MIND against a Difficulty number (incidentally, the skill Detective can be used to improve this ability).
- To get a bright idea use a roll of MIND against a difficulty number.

All of the above situations have something in common; they should not occur frequently, and must not be an essential stage in an adventure. There must always be an alternative which does not rely on the luck of the dice. Sometimes players get unlucky in situations where their characters should succeed; for example, in an early test of this system five adventurers missed hearing a noise at Difficulty 3, and an extra clue was needed to put them back on the right track.

Situation	Difficulty
Something that will probably happen anyway	1-3
Something that will happen if things go well	4-5
Something moderately difficult	6-9
A "million to one shot"	10
Yarge lifting an elephant	20

## Better Living through Cannibalism

Sometimes a characteristic will change. Usually MIND and SOUL stay constant, unless the character is unlucky enough to suffer brain damage, possession, or some other mishap, but for dragons BODY can change extraordinarily rapidly, as a result of eating dragon flesh.

The benefit gained is based on the BODY of the meat eaten, and on the number of Bonus Points the player is prepared to spend to gain more BODY.

The first step in determining this is to decide how much flesh has been eaten, by any of the following means:

- As evenly as possible on the basis of equal shares for everyone present. Dragons can eat a maximum of half of their own BODY (rounded up) in a single meal.
- By different sized portions and prior agreement, as in the case of a will (although even then there may be some cheating, with a “single bite” interpreted as tearing off the largest possible chunk and bolting it down)
- By intimidation – the largest and most dangerous dragon simply drives off everyone else until he’s had his fill, then the next largest takes over, etc.
- By some other contest based on the BODY or Brawling skill of the diners.

**Note:** The referee need not tell the players exactly how much meat is available; give them an approximation, and let them guess how much meat there will be for each diner.

**Sharing** is simple; divide the BODY of the dear departed by the number of diners (rounding down), and each diner gets that much meat; any left-over BODY is allocated by vote, or by giving slightly larger proportions to the largest dragons. Alternatively, the dragons can take turns eating until there’s nothing left.

**Prior agreements** should either come from the referee and NPCs – “The will says you get one bite” – or can be hammered out between players before they start dining. Get everyone to say what they intend to eat, then have them actually take meat in whatever order seems fit; in the case of a will the oldest heir will eat first, then others in order of seniority. Cheating – taking more than agreed – adds 1D6/2 BODY to the share taken. This may eventually mean that there is nothing left for the minority heirs, but that’s what lawyers are for.

**Intimidation** simply needs a show of force – claws, flame, etc. – which the other dragons can respect or respond to as they prefer. Once intimidation starts all civilised agreement has probably gone out of the window, so it may end in a fight; see later sections for the combat rules. If things go wrong there may be more meat available than was expected.

## Optional Rule: The Meat Market

Rich adventurers in Irieth may want to avoid messy food fights by buying dragon meat. As noted in earlier chapters, the meat on sale is almost always from fairly dubious sources – paupers, hospital cases, and the aged and infirm, possibly even murder victims – and usually at least a few days old. It isn’t likely to be as beneficial as a really fresh maiden aunt. Optionally, there may be a risk of serious side effects.

Every time that purchased meat is eaten, players must pay the maximum Bonus Point cost for the meal BEFORE the referee rolls 2D6:

- On a roll of 2-7 the meat is good.
- If the roll is 8-10 the meat has aged so much that it is only equivalent to half of the equivalent fresh meat, or has been adulterated in some way; perhaps some meat has been scooped out and replaced with beef, it won’t be noticed if the meat is eaten fast.
- If the roll is 11 the meat is so far gone that it has no effect, apart from filling the dragon’s belly, or is a complete fraud; beef soaked in dragon blood for a few hours to give it the right smell, or something of the sort.
- If the roll is 12 the meat is tainted; regardless of the diner’s BODY and general state of health, or the amount eaten, the result is 1D6 x 12 hours of illness, with the usual side-effects of food poisoning including vomiting, dizziness, nausea etc. It is NOT a good idea to try flying (or anything else for that matter) until the symptoms pass. Note that it may take a few hours for these symptoms to appear, until then tell the player that the meat seems to have been a little past its prime and doesn’t seem to have had much effect, let the full horror come as a nice surprise...

After this roll is made the player must still roll to see how much of the BODY is absorbed, as described in the main text; this roll may reduce things even more.

If this isn’t warning enough, follow the next purchased meal with a disease or two.

**Contests** can be resolved using the rules for opposed characteristics or opposed skills, or by use of the combat rules. This is best done as a series of rounds in which the winner of each round takes 1D6/2 Body until there is no meat left.

Note that it is considered good form to say a grace praying for the safe reincarnation of the departed before eating.

**Example: Eating Eligas (1)**

*Padiah and his sister Shimmeth have to eat their cousin Eligas, who has unfortunately been murdered by Keleg the (not entirely reformed) Dragon Slayer. In the fight Shimmeth broke a wing bone; the injury is not yet healed.*

*Padiah is BODY 9, Shimmeth is BODY 10, and Eligas was “a little bigger than Shimmeth;” actually BODY 11, but the players aren’t told that. They agree that they’ll share and share alike, and that Shimmeth will get the extra meat if there’s any excess. They decide to take it in turns to take a bite until there’s nothing left. The referee decides that it isn’t possible for them to do this really accurately; an average bite will take 2 BODY, but an occasional bite will take BODY 1 or 3. To simulate this he has them roll 1D6, with a result of 1 as BODY 1, 2-5 as BODY 2, 6 as BODY 3.*

- *In the first set of bites Padiah takes 2 and Shimmeth 1.*
- *In the second set Padiah takes 1 and Shimmeth 3.*
- *In the third set Padiah takes 3 and Shimmeth 1 (all that is left).*

*In the end Padiah has eaten meat with BODY 6; Shimmeth has eaten meat with BODY 5. It isn’t quite the result they expected, but it’s reasonable.*

Once all the meat has been eaten, a number of Bonus Points equivalent to the maximum possible gain must be paid BEFORE the result is determined. Note that it is entirely possible to eat more meat than you can pay to absorb – reasons for doing this might include gluttony or an attempt to stunt the growth of a rival.

Once points have been paid the Effect of the meal is determined by rolling the dragon’s current BODY against the MAXIMUM possible BODY after eating:

- If the roll is a natural 12 a third (round up) of the possible BODY is added.
- If the modified result is 8 or more, half of the BODY eaten (round up) is added.
- If the modified result is 5-7, two thirds of the BODY eaten (round up) are added.
- If the modified result is 4 or less, or the roll is a natural 2, ALL of the BODY eaten is added.

**Example: Eating Eligas (2)**

*Padiah is BODY 9 and has eaten BODY 6. He pays seven Bonus Points for the chance to grow. If he absorbs all of the meat his BODY will be 15. One of the numbers is over 12 so they are halved to 5 against 8. He rolls 6;  $6+8-5=9$ . This means that he gains half of BODY 6; BODY 3. His BODY can rise to 12. If it does, he will be roughly 36ft long.*

*Shimmeth is BODY 10 and has eaten BODY 5; if she absorbs all the meat she will be BODY 15 – also halved to 5 versus 8 for the next step. She pays the Bonus Points plus an extra Bonus Point to push her luck before rolling the dice. She rolls 3;  $3+8-5=6$ , modified to 5. This means that she gains two thirds of BODY 5, rounded up to 4. Her BODY can rise to 14, which will make her about 42ft long.*

**Better in the Original Draconic...**

Many dragon plays and novels revolve around cannibalism, to an extent and with an enthusiastic bias that some Yarge onlookers consider deeply disturbing.

In the romantic psychological drama *The Bleating of the Muttonwools* brilliant doctor Huvager Laperal, a specialist in mental disorders, helps a traumatised young dragoness overcome a phobia which has hitherto prevented her from eating dragon flesh. The novel ends with her cured, despite the tragic loss of her parents, and the couple dining together on her father’s brains and a nice Chianti.

Digestion takes at least one hour per point of BODY gained. Optionally this time must be spent sleeping, regardless of any danger.

## Cannibalism and Healing

If a dragon has unhealed injuries (Injury or Critical Injury, see pg. 72) when he or she eats draconic flesh the first result, before any other benefits, is accelerated healing of wounds. This is not optional, and uses up some or all of the power of the flesh. Use the rules on the previous pages to determine the BODY gained; then make an immediate Recovery roll for the dragon using the modified BODY.

If the result is a failure the wound doesn't heal and 1 point of the new BODY is lost. Repeat the process using the modified BODY until healing occurs (also costing 1 BODY) or all of the new BODY has been lost. Any remaining BODY is retained.

Minor wounds such as Bruises and Flesh Wounds are healed automatically and without any loss of BODY if even one point of BODY has been gained from the meal.

### **Example: Eating Eligas (3)**

*Shimmeth is BODY 10 and was going to rise to BODY 14, but she has one unhealed Injury, a broken wing bone that is still in splints. Before she can gain any BODY she must heal the injury. Her first roll is a 2, an automatic success, and the bones start to knit together, although it will still take a day or two for recovery to be completed. One BODY is lost, leaving her at BODY 13, 40ft.*

## Improving Special Abilities

Optionally BODY gained from dragon meat can instead be traded for a *minimal* change in one of the special abilities shown on page 55, with one BODY traded for one character point. The cost is the full cost of the ability; for example, even if the dragon already has the 3-point version of Extra Toughness, the 6-point version costs 6 points. All of the BODY needed for the ability must be supplied from food eaten, not from the dragon's existing BODY. No more than one special ability can be changed per corpse devoured, even if it is eaten in several meals; nobody is sure why.

Skills based on BODY do not rise immediately after eating; it takes a few days for reflexes etc. to attune to the new size and weight. Special abilities also take a while to appear.

### **Example: Eating Eligas (4)**

*Padiah was BODY 9 and was going to rise to BODY 12, but he decides that instead he will trade two points of BODY for extra scales, and rise to BODY 10 instead. In the morning he is 30ft long. The scales slowly appear over the next few days.*

## Better in the Original Draconic...

The slapstick comedy *Rasdarie and Nimuleris* is unique amongst Draconic plays in that the bumbling lovers of the title, and other members of the cast, are Yarge.

To simplify a complex plot, the children of two rival Yarge merchant families meet for the first time in Irieth and fall hopelessly in love, a love forbidden by their parents.

Nimuleris hits on the idea of faking her own death with a powerful sleeping potion, to break free from her family. A message warning Rasdarie and his draconic friends of the deception goes missing. When she apparently dies Rasdarie is in Belshulath on business, and won't be back for several days. Out of kindness his dragon friends butcher her "body" and salt it, so that he will be able to eat her when he returns. Hearing of this, and for some reason deeply upset, he is about to take his own life when kindly Holy Mothies (revealed in earlier scenes, unknown to Rasdarie, to be a notorious practical joker) persuades him that since her body was prepared using the rites of the Orthodox Faith, she is certain to reincarnate as a dragon. All that he need do to be reunited with his love is find an egg laid at the moment of her death and wait for it to hatch, and be sure to feed Nimuleris' remains to the dragonet.

To the astonishment of Mothies and his cronies, Rasdarie falls for this tall tale, deserts his Yarge family, is disowned by them, and sets out to find the right egg; after a series of adventures too complex to relate in the available space he is allowed to stay with it until it hatches. Unfortunately it turns out to be a male dragonet and extremely hungry. Given its first taste of Yarge flesh it soon wants more, and before long Rasdarie is the main item on the menu.

In the uproarious coda Mothies is revealed as the great-uncle of the hatchling, and the parents thank him for organizing such an extraordinary start for the child. He smiles modestly, and explains that he has simply performed his priestly duty by eliminating those too stupid to survive.

## Skills in Depth

If characters have skills the referee should assume that they are reasonably competent. For example, someone who has learned a language should be able to use it under normal circumstances without bothering to roll dice. This applies even if the skill rating is low; someone with Linguist [2] and knowledge of Migantine will still be able to read, speak, and understand it if no specialized vocabulary is needed, but doesn't sound like a native. Referees should decide for themselves the skill level needed for fluency; Linguist [7] or better sounds about right – but it's almost impossible for a dragon to imitate a Yarge perfectly, or vice versa, there are big differences in the pitch and resonance of their voices.

### **Example: It's All Migantine To Me...**

*Segievel is visiting Migantil to research his next book. He has the skill Linguist [5] and knows Migantine. He is buying a bottle of ink. No dice roll is required for Linguist, but he's not in a tourist area and it takes him a while to find a Yarge shopkeeper who doesn't run away screaming when a dragon comes into the shop.*

Dice rolls should be made if the character is working under unusual or difficult conditions, under stress, or in immediate danger. They are always used in combat. Usually a skill is used against one of the following:

1. An opponent's characteristics, e.g. MIND, BODY, SOUL.
2. An opponent's skills, e.g. Business, Martial Arts, Acting.
3. An arbitrary difficulty number set by the referee (usually when dealing with inanimate objects, puzzles, combination locks, and the like).

### **Example: Bad Tenants**

*On his return to Tiamath, Segievel's secretary tells him that one of the buildings he owns – housing a blacksmith – has been burned out. The insurers will pay for repairs, but he'll have to pay the first 200 crowns.*

*Segievel suspects that his tenants caused the fire, and wants them to pay at least 100 crowns towards the repair, but the smith and his family claim that the fire was started by a passing stranger, who was stung by an insect and flamed involuntarily, setting fire to their wood store.*

*When he considers this story carefully his knowledge of conspiracies (Scholar [6], overcoming Difficulty 5) tells him that it's highly unlikely that all of them would agree as closely as they do, down to the exact words, unless they spent some time preparing their story. He threatens them with eviction if they don't pay their fair share. Eventually the tenants cave in and admit that the fire was caused by carelessness with a hot poker, and agree to hand over the money.*

Bonus points can usually be spent to improve skill rolls, exactly as they are used to improve characteristic rolls.

## Temporary Skills

Characters may occasionally want to use skills that they don't possess. This is allowable, if it will keep characters alive or the game moving and there is some way to justify it. The character uses the skill at its lowest possible rating, but must roll for all actions including routine easy jobs, and the Difficulty of all actions is doubled.

### **Example: Look Deep Into My Eyes (1)**

*Visiting friends on military duty near the border, Segievel is waylaid by a group of heavily armed Yarge bandits who are planning to hold him ransom. They have him tied up; most of them go off to write the ransom note, leaving one guard on Segievel. After trying to break the ropes and failing miserably, he decides to try mesmerising the guard. He doesn't have this skill so it's used at its lowest possible value, av. M&S = 4*

*Normally this skill is used against the victims MIND or SOUL, whichever is higher, but because Segievel is untrained the target value is doubled. Fortunately the bandit's MIND and SOUL are both only 3, so the target difficulty is now 6. On a roll of five Segievel's mesmerism just overcomes the Yarge's resistance, and Segievel quickly orders the guard to release him. Once free Segievel quickly kills the guard – it isn't exactly sporting, but he's desperate – and flies off before the other bandits have time to react.*

Bonus points may not be used to help in this sort of situation. Optionally the referee may allow players to acquire the skill as a result of several incidents of this type.

## Projects

The skill rolls above are used to resolve short-term problems. Sometimes characters become involved in long projects, such as the creation of a work of art or development of a new invention, which should not be determined by a single roll of the dice.

Some projects simply require routine use of a skill for a prolonged period, with any failure extending the time. For example, the creation of an average quality monolithic sculpture might need five Artist rolls with Difficulty 6 at intervals of a month; any failure leads to major revision of the work, extending the time needed by two months. The project is completed when the fifth successful skill roll is made.

Sometimes practice is all that is needed. This is especially true when learning languages.

### **Example: Que..?**

*Segievel doesn't understand Edawoonese. During an adventure in the Edawoon Republic he tries to learn the language; since he already knows some related languages the referee rates this as Difficulty 8 after a week, Difficulty 7 after two weeks, and so forth. A lucky roll of 2 allows Segievel to learn the language in a week, and it's added to the list on his character record.*

**NOTE:** *This considerably underestimates the difficulty of learning a new language. Linguistic problems are not usually much fun to role-play, unless you particularly want to inflict an unreliable translator on characters.*

Research projects, such as the development of a new invention, are resolved a little differently. The referee should decide how difficult the work will be, and how long it will take, then require a series of skill rolls of gradually increasing difficulty, repeated until the final difficulty level is reached. The same procedure might also be used for creation of an artistic masterpiece.

### **Example: The Appliance of Science...**

*Segievel's friend Respected Professor Gesuthivak is trying to develop a means of sending signals via the electrical fluid. The referee decides that this project will start at Difficulty 5, but will eventually be Difficulty 10, and each stage of the project will take 1D6 months; initially 4 months.*

*At the end of 4 months the skill roll fails. Gesuthivak has achieved nothing, apart from shutting off a few dead ends. The referee rolls 1D6 again, and determines that the project will stay at Difficulty 5 for another 3 months. This cycle is repeated until there is a success, then the difficulty is raised to 6 for the next round of attempts. Difficulty continues to escalate until Gesuthivak eventually overcomes difficulty 10 to complete the invention. Most of this occurs off-stage between adventures, but occasionally it impinges on the game; for instance, the referee might tell players that Gesuthivak must spend the next 48 hours in his laboratory to finish the current round of experiments, depriving them of his skills at a vital moment, or that he will need a rare chemical or piece of equipment for the next step. Finding the missing ingredient might be an adventure in itself.*

The referee need not say that characters are attempting the impossible, but it's advisable to drop a few hints if serious amounts of time are being wasted on a completely fallacious idea.

## Improving Skills

Bonus points can be spent to attempt to improve skill ratings. These improvements are assumed to have been acquired by experience or by training. Each improvement costs the new value of the skill.

To try to improve a skill, use the relevant characteristic(s) to attack the current skill rating:

- If the result is a success, the skill has been improved.
- If the attempt is a failure, but the dice roll is not a 12, the character loses the points but does NOT improve the skill; more training is needed. After some more experience (another adventure) the player can try again. This can be repeated until the skill has been improved. A skill's rating may not be improved more than one point per adventure.
- If the result is a 12 the character has “peaked” with this skill; she loses the points, does not improve the skill, and CANNOT improve it at a later date.

### **Example: More Evidence of the Conspiracy...**

*Segievel wants to upgrade his Scholar skill from 6 to 7, reflecting his detailed study of the shadowy Migantine government. This will cost 7 points, and he must roll his MIND [4] against difficulty 7 to gain the improvement. On a 3 he succeeds.*

*After another adventure he tries again, spending 8 points for the next improvement. Unfortunately the dice roll is 12; he is beginning to encounter concepts that are incompatible with the dragon mindset, and will never raise the skill past Scholar [7].*

Characters with the Linguist skill may add extra languages by practice during the campaign, as described above, or by spending one or more Bonus points per extra language for training between adventures (most will cost one point, something particularly obscure will cost more). Only one language may be added per adventure. Improving the Linguist skill itself costs the new value of the skill, e.g. 5 bonus points to raise Linguist [4] to Linguist [5], as above.

Characters with the Scholar skill may only add new areas of knowledge by improving the skill. Any new area of knowledge must be related to those already known.

## Skills and Modified Characteristics

If a characteristic is reduced for some reason (e.g. loss of MIND due to brain damage following an injury) all related skills are reduced immediately. If a characteristic rises (e.g., if BODY rises after eating dragon flesh) skills rise without any points cost, but they do not do so immediately. It takes a few days of practice. Optionally relate the time to the characteristic increase, e.g. a week per point.

### **Example: Better, Faster, Stronger**

*Segievel dines out on his beloved late uncle, and as a result his BODY rises to 10. He has two skills related to Body; Brawling and Flying; he will need to exercise and practice for a few days. The referee lets him improve his flying between one adventure and the next, and improve his Brawling during the next adventure; after fighting for a few rounds at the original values, the reflexes needed for his increased size start to cut in and he proceeds to smite the foe with renewed vigour.*

## Adding Skills

New skills can be purchased, using the roll described above, but costs are increased.

The referee should decide if a new skill is appropriate for the character; for example, a parson shouldn't normally be allowed to buy the Military Arms skill without a good reason. The new skill is acquired at its lowest possible value.

An attempt to add a new skill costs **DOUBLE** its rating; e.g., an attempt to add a skill with rating 5 costs 10 bonus points. This represents the considerable investment in time and money needed to learn a completely new skill.

To try to acquire a new skill use the relevant characteristic(s) against the first rating the skill will have:

- If the result is a success, the skill has been acquired.
- If the attempt is a failure, the character loses the points but does **NOT** acquire the skill; more training is needed. After some more experience (another adventure) the player can try again. This can be repeated until the skill has been acquired, or until a 12 is rolled, indicating that the character is incapable of learning that skill.

**Example: I Want To Be an Engine Driver...**

The Yarge G'aarden (*MIND* [4], *BODY* [3]) has decided that he wants to be an engine driver. This skill (actually *Driving*) begins with a rating of 5, so it costs ten bonus points. To gain the skill he must use the average of *MIND* and *BODY* (4) against Difficulty 5. Unfortunately he rolls a 7, a failure. After his next adventure he pays another ten points, representing more training, succeeds on a 3, and adds *Driving* [5] to his skill list.

Note: the skill base for driving is *MIND* only for dragons.



The referee may make things easier for players if a new skill is a natural result of events in the game:

**Example: Look Deep Into My Eyes (2)**

Segievel has already used his mesmerism successfully once, and thinks that it's probably a useful skill to learn. Since he lives in the Migantine quarter it's actually quite easy for him to find Yarge to practice on, and he gets into the habit of stopping any lone Yarge he encounters, asking them a question or two about Yarge life, and trying to mesmerise them while they are answering. If he's successful he conducts a more detailed interrogation about any Yarge conspiracies against Tiamath (so far he's got a lot of "What conspiracy?" and very little else) then tells them to forget the encounter.

Normally an attempt to learn the skill would be a roll against difficulty 5, costing ten points; because of his experience the referee reduces the difficulty to 3 and the cost to six points. On a roll of 4 it's an easy success, and he adds *Mesmerism* [5] to his skill list.

## Difficult Skills

Some skills are based on half characteristics or less (*Martial Arts*, *Doctor*, *Medium*, *Pilot*, *Stealth*, *Thief*) so that they are difficult to buy at a high level during character generation. Unfortunately this means that it is easy to acquire them at their lowest level at a later date. The remedy is simple; only let characters have them after intensive training and/or an incident which explains how they have suddenly acquired the skill. They cannot suddenly be acquired between adventures.

**Doctor:** Needs several years of training at a medical school.

**Martial Arts:** Needs years of training and a suitable instructor. Not available to dragons anyway!

**Medium:** Cannot be acquired after character generation unless events in the game somehow trigger psychic sensitivity.

**Pilot:** Needs several months of training. Not available to dragons!

**Stealth:** This skill is automatically given to all characters.

**Thief:** Needs months of training and a suitable instructor; referees may optionally wish players to make luck rolls to avoid arrest while training.

## Optional Rule: Adding Skills below Base Values

Under the rule above, additional skills based on high characteristics cost more than skills based on low characteristics.

Optionally the referee may allow adventurers to add skills at less than base value with an appropriately reduced bonus point cost. By the time the skill reaches base value it will cost much more than the usual method, but this allows players to spread the cost over several adventures.

For instance, a character with MIND [5] might add Marksmanship at a low level; just enough to shoot for the pot. In this example the player might choose to take Marksmanship [3] for 6 points, not Marksmanship [6] for 12 points. Once acquired such skills can only be improved by the normal process and one point at a time. Referees are also advised to limit the number of below-base skills acquired to MIND/2; once skills are up to the usual base value they don't count towards this limit. The "difficult skills" described above may not be acquired this way.

## Skill List

The list that follows does not represent every possibility; it is just a selection of the most useful skills. Please feel free to add more, to change values and costs, or otherwise mess things up, but DON'T distribute modified versions of this document!

Skills are listed in the following format: Name, basic value (to which the points spent should be added), and explanation. The following abbreviations are used:

B = BODY, M = MIND, S = SOUL, Av = Average, / = Divided by

For example:

AvM&S = average of MIND and SOUL (round up)

M/2 = MIND divided by 2 (round UP)

AvB&S/2 = average of BODY and SOUL divided by 2 (round UP)

Skills marked with an asterisk are automatically acquired at their basic values.

### Actor — Basic Value: AvM&S

Any form of stage performance. If more than one point is spent you are good enough to earn money from one specialised type of performance, such as Operatic Tenor, Conjuror, Ballerina (aerial ballet, of course). This skill is also useful for confidence tricks. E.g. Actor (Juggler).

### Artist — Basic Value: AvM&S

Any artistic endeavour; also useful for forgery. For more than one point add a specialisation, such as Sculptor, Chef (VERY rare amongst dragons), Jeweller, at professional level. E.g. Artist (oil painter)

### Athlete — Basic Value: B

Swimming, running, etc. The advantage of training over brute strength. For more points mention a speciality such as Circuit Walking, performed at championship level. E.g. Athlete (Rock climbing).

### Babbage Engine — Basic Value: M

Use for control of any type of mechanical, pneumatic, hydraulic, or electric computer (including player pianos and card- or roll-controlled looms and organs), also for commanding androids, golems, zombies, etc. *Currently this setting has no devices of this type, so the skill is not available.*

**Brawling — Basic Value: B \***

Any form of unarmed combat, apart from martial arts. See the combat rules below. This skill normally has no specializations for dragons. Yarge tend to learn specialized combat styles e.g. Brawling (Wrestling).

**Business — Basic Value: M**

Any form of financial or organisational work, dragon-management, politics, etc. Also useful for preparing forged papers and the like. E.g. Business (politics).

**Detective — Basic Value: AvM&S**

Trained in the art of observation; good at spotting small details, noticing faint scents, little clues, unusual behaviour, etc. It can be used as an improvement over normal observation rolls, and sometimes in place of an Idea roll, or in place of the Psychology skill. Specialities might include forensics, interrogation, etc. e.g. Detective (claw-mark analysis).

**Doctor — Basic Value: M/2**

Detailed knowledge of medicines, minor surgery, etc., and a licence to practice. If more than one point is spent, the character has knowledge of a speciality (such as surgery) and the appropriate qualifications. See the rules on injuries below for use of this skill, but bear in mind that dragon medicine is not very advanced. This skill may NOT be acquired in the course of play, unless several years pass between adventures. E.g. Doctor (Herbalist).

**Driving — Basic Value: M**

Operating any ground or water vehicles (car, land ironclad, railway engine, tractor, etc.). This skill does not apply to exotic vehicles (such as aircraft, spacecraft, submersibles) whose operators require a high degree of training. Specialities might include wagons, steam cars, etc., e.g. Driving (Railway engine).

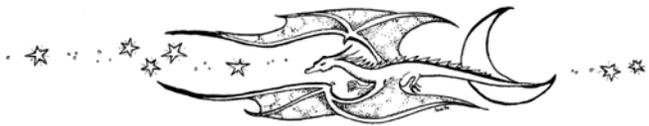
*Dragons can only drive vehicles that have been expressly designed for them!* Currently the only such vehicles are wagons and railway engines, and a few steam-launches, all slower than a flying dragon. For this reason car chase rules have been omitted. *Yarge base this skill on Av. B & M.*

**First Aid — Basic Value: M**

Emergency treatment of wounds. See the rules on injuries below. Specialisations might include nursing, midwifery, etc. e.g. First Aid (podiatry – care of damaged claws and feet).

**Flying — Basic Value: B (B/2 for formerly bound servants)**

Adult dragons can fly, typically at 40-50 MPH; speed isn't affected much by size, presumably muscles compensate, but small dragons (BODY 5 or less) are slower if they can fly at all, and very large dragons (50ft or longer) are slower and less manoeuvrable (-1 to skill). This skill is used for manoeuvring, for hovering, for flying in difficult conditions (e.g. in a storm or city updrafts) without hitting trees or buildings, and for navigation, which uses a combination of instinct, memory, and observation. Roll to push speed or fly into a headwind, Difficulty + 1 per 5 MPH. Endurance is B/2 hours for dragons who fly regularly, B/3 hours for dragons whose wings are normally bound (servants, parsons, etc.), with penalties if the dragon has been pushing speed etc. for extended periods, or if the dragon is carrying something. Once endurance is exceeded the dragon starts to slow and should receive penalties on rolls to manoeuvre, navigate, etc. The maximum that can be carried easily while flying is B/4, the maximum possible is B/2. For example, a BODY 20 dragon can fly carrying a BODY 7 cow, but will tire quickly. Dragon wingspan is typically about the same as length, but flying with less than double this room requires a skill roll.



**Linguist — Basic Value: M**

The ability to learn, read, speak and write foreign languages. Initially characters know Linguist/2 languages. More languages can be acquired very easily: see above. Characters automatically know their own native language, and need never roll to use it, without buying this skill. Specialisations are the languages known, e.g. Linguist (Migantine, Samindran).

**Marksman — Basic Value: M**

Use of directly aimed projectile weapons (e.g. gun, crossbow, throwing knives, spears, etc.) but not field guns or other specialised militaria. See the combat rules below. E.g. Marksman (Crossbow).

**Martial Arts — Basic Value: AvB&S/2**

See the combat rules below. This skill allows multiple hand-to-hand and melee weapon attacks in a single combat round, and can increase the Effect number of some attacks. E.g. Martial Arts (Baritsu)

Dragons automatically have an equivalent of this skill – they can carry out several simultaneous attacks using their natural weapons, flame, etc. The Yarge have probably developed their own martial arts – especially if they use melee weapons that can harm dragons – and adventurers may do well to be wary if they run into an unarmed Yarge who doesn't seem to be frightened of them. See the full version of the *Forgotten Futures* rules for detailed martial arts rules for Yarge.

**Mechanic — Basic Value: M**

All forms of mechanical work, engineering, building, plumbing, etc.; this covers work on existing machinery and the like, and the use of machine tools and other production equipment, but not innovative equipment design which is covered by the Scientist skill. E.g. Mechanic (Steam engines).

**Medium — Basic Value: S/2**

A genuine medium, or otherwise psychically gifted, not a fake. Fake mediums use the Acting skill instead. This skill can be used for contact with the spirit world, séances, and premonitions of impending doom: “I have a bad feeling about this...” e.g. Medium (precognitive). There is no reason to believe that there are genuine mediums in this world, but nothing in the source material makes it impossible.

**Melee Weapon — Basic Value: AvB&M**

Use of any non-projectile weapon, such as a dagger, sword, or axe. See the combat rules below. E.g. Melee Weapon (Machete). Dragons very rarely bother to learn this skill, since they have so many natural weapons.

**Mesmerism — Basic Value: AvM&S**

Usable by dragons against Yarge (and possibly animals) only, not against other dragons! The skill is used against a subject's Mind or Soul, whichever is higher, and works via eye contact; the dragon somehow persuades the Yarge to look into her eyes, and then starts to vary the focus rhythmically. If successful, the subject will obey instructions until released, but any command which goes against a subject's natural instincts (especially for self-preservation) may be resisted, requiring another roll with greater Difficulty. There are no specialities. The Yarge are aware that some dragons have this ability, and are often wary of making eye contact with dragons. There must be enough light for the Yarge to see the dragon's eyes clearly. Only one Yarge at a time can be mesmerised.

**Military Arms — Basic Value: M**

Use of field guns, mortars, explosives, and other specialised military weapons, but not hand guns and other simple portable weapons. E.g. Military Arms (Explosives).

**Pilot — Basic Value: AvB&M/2**

Use for aircraft, spacecraft, submersibles, digging machines, and other vehicles which require a high degree of skill and concentration. Includes the use of parachutes and systems such as radios, sonar, navigation, and meteorology. E.g. Pilot (Bathysphere). *Only Yarge operate machinery requiring this skill, and it isn't available to dragons.*

**Psychology — Basic Value: AvM&S**

Use to spot lies, calm hysteria, notice tension, and so forth. This skill does not include hypnosis or Mesmerism; dragons are immune anyway, and Yarge think of it as a special Dragon power and haven't worked out that they can master similar tricks. Specialities might include a particular school of psychology or a specific application, e.g. Psychology (therapy). Dragons can't use this skill on Yarge, or vice versa; their mindsets simply aren't compatible enough for deep understanding.

**Riding — Basic Value: S (av. B&S for Yarge)**

Riding or training any animal, regardless of its nature. Might include lion taming, dog handling, or running a flea circus. E.g. Riding (Muleteer). *The skill name has been kept for consistency with other Forgotten Futures supplements; there are no riding animals suitable for dragons, but the other applications of this skill may occasionally be useful. The Yarge have several types of riding animal.*

**Scholar — Basic Value: M**

Expert knowledge of specific fields such as archaeology, history, philosophy. Scholar/2 related areas of knowledge are known; for example, Scholar [5] might include knowledge of Archaeology, Antiques, and Ancient Migantil. The skill cannot be taken twice to give mastery of two unrelated areas of knowledge, but the term "related" can be interpreted as loosely as the referee permits. For example, expert knowledge of snakes (but not veterinary skills) might be added to the list above because the ancient Migantil peoples worshipped them. E.g. Scholar (Antiques, Migantil art, Migantil history).

**Scientist — Basic Value: M**

Use of all sciences. Currently it's possible to be a generalist with a good knowledge of all sciences, since developments are fairly slow. But the pace of scientific development is starting to pick up, and in a few decades it will be impossible for any one dragon to be aware of all of the work going on in all fields. For now even the specialisations are fairly broad. E.g. Scientist (Chemist).

**Signals — Basic Value: M**

This skill is simply knowledge of telegraphic and signalling techniques, including simple equipment repairs and adjustments. It also covers semaphore and other common signalling methods. E.g. Heliograph operator. In this world heliographs and semaphore are currently the only dragon equipment using transmitted codes, but Yarge and dragon scientists are working on electrical telegraphy.

**Stealth — Basic Value: B/2 \***

Hiding, camouflage, sneaking, etc. e.g. Stealth (Disguise) might be an alternative to Actor (Disguise); an Actor tries to look like someone else, while the aim of the Stealth skill is to look inconspicuous and go unnoticed.

**Thief — Basic Value: M/2**

Picking pockets, locksmith, forgery, etc. e.g. Thief (Safebreaker). Given the limitations of their hands few male dragons master this skill. Dragons don't use clothing so don't have any natural talent for picking pockets, but Yarge thieves do. *Yarge base this skill on AvB&M/2.*

## Wounds

Each character and NPC has a Wounds record, which indicates the general severity of wounds taken. It is possible (and sometimes easy) to go from “uninjured” to “dead” as the result of a single wound.

For Yarge and Yarge-sized animals, aliens, etc. the Wounds record usually has five boxes, indicating the extent of damage, as in the example to the right. Dragons use the same scale, but the “Extra Toughness” ability can add up to two more “I” boxes and one more “C” box, as described below.

**Wounds B [ ] F [ ] I [ ] I [ ] C [ ]**

- “B” means “Bruised”; if you are hurt to this extent you are stiff and a little slow, but otherwise unharmed, and recover in a day or two. It's possible to suffer multiple bruises without any additional effect, apart from spectacular flesh colours and superficial marks. “Bruised” includes all forms of minor cut and scald.
- “F” means “Flesh Wound”. This is a deep cut, concussion, or sprain, a moderately serious burn, and so forth. You are slowed, and may become infected or suffer other long-term medical effects, but there is little risk of death. If a flesh wound isn't treated promptly it may deteriorate and become an Injury (below). Recovery takes at least a week. Additional flesh wounds must be treated separately but have no other effects. Flesh wounds and other injuries to the wings (see hit locations in the next section) require first aid before it is safe to fly again, to prevent the wing membrane from tearing.
- “I” means “Injury”. This is nasty; a gaping wound, punctured lung, broken bone, skull fracture, serious poisoning, first degree burns, or the like. You need first aid and reasonably prompt medical attention; without it you will probably suffer serious medical effects. You can only move slowly. If all of your injury boxes are ticked you can barely crawl and cannot fight. Injuries need at least a month to heal, longer if there are medical complications. If all Injury boxes are ticked and you take another injury you are critically injured, as below. Small animals don't have an “Injury” box on their wounds record; any result of “Injury” is automatically “Critical”. Really big animals have three or more “Injury” boxes. And dragons, as already noted, vary.
- “C” means “Critical”. If there is only one box the victim is unconscious and will die without medical aid. If First Aid or the Doctor skill is used successfully the victim reverts to severely injured status (all injury boxes ticked), otherwise death occurs in a matter of minutes, hours at best.
- If there are two Critical boxes (as in the case of some dragons) and only one is ticked the victim is still unconscious, severely injured, etc., but won't actually be at the point of death unless another Critical injury is received, or all injury boxes have been ticked and another injury is received. Basically, this allows the dragon to soak up a lot of damage even after it is unconscious – for example, if a dragon soldier is being shot at by large numbers of Yarge.

The table shows the effects of wounds. Temporarily reduce the value of Body and BODY-related skills by the value shown, but not below a minimum of 1.

Wound	BODY	Recovery Period	Recovery Difficulty	Notes
Bruised	-	1 Day	2	Purple marks, chipped scales, etc.
Flesh Wound	-1	1 Week	4	A nasty cut etc.
Injury	-2	1 Month	6	Broken bones etc.
2+ Injuries	-4	1 Month	8 per injury	Yarge cannot fight or run, other species may be less seriously affected
Critical	N/A	N/A	8	Unconscious, dying.
Knocked out	N/A	6D6 min	4	May be additional to other wounds e.g. B + KO

Some weapons, and some other forms of damage, have two additional results possible.

- “KO” means knockout; the victim is knocked unconscious for a few minutes, but isn't necessarily permanently harmed. There is no need to record this since it is a temporary effect. Record bruises instead if appropriate.
- “K” means “Kill”. For obvious reasons there isn't any need to have a tick box for this!

**Example: It's Only a Flesh Wound...(1)**

*Segievel takes part in a boar hunt. During a sudden storm he is separated from the rest of the hunters. The weather is too bad for flying, so he decides to walk back to their rendezvous.*

*As he trudges back he literally trips over a boar and is badly cut by one of its tusks. It's a surprise attack, so he doesn't get a chance to retaliate. In the next round he would normally he would use his Brawling [8] skill for combat; because he has a flesh wound this is reduced to Brawling [7], but that's enough. Bleeding and limping a little, Segievel tucks the boar's body under his arm and heads on to the rendezvous.*

## Medical Skills, Recovery, and Death

- First Aid stabilises wounds and prevent them getting worse. On a successful roll against the recovery Difficulty of the wound, there is no possibility of deterioration. For example, this might involve splinting a broken leg, disinfecting and bandaging a wound, or putting cold tea (a common remedy) or ice onto a burn. Multiple wounds must be treated separately; for instance, someone with a Flesh Wound and an Injury, or with two Injuries, would need each treated separately.
- Without first aid the wound may eventually deteriorate; roll the recovery Difficulty against the patient's BODY.
  - If the Difficulty overcomes BODY the wound will get worse. Flesh wounds become Injuries and Injuries become Critical (usually as fevers and illnesses such as gangrene) if they get worse. If Critical wounds become worse the patient dies.
- The Doctor skill acts like First Aid, and also speeds healing. If a successful roll is made recovery time is halved. Since the Doctor skill usually begins at a lower level than First Aid, devoted healers may wish to take both skills.
- To recover from wounds without medical help, roll BODY against the recovery difficulty - AFTER the minimum recovery period. If the result is a success, the wound is healed. If the result is a failure, the illness drags on for another period before the roll can be made again.
- Eating dragon flesh can help to speed healing of wounds, as described on page 63

**Example: It's Only a Flesh Wound...(2)**

*Segievel has a flesh wound. A friend bandages it, using First Aid [5] against recovery Difficulty [4]. On a 9 he doesn't do a good enough job of cleaning the wound and applying pressure to prevent further bleeding.*

*Segievel rolls BODY [8] against Difficulty [4]. On a result of 12 the wound gets worse; by the time he reaches competent help he is bleeding severely, and must spend some time off his feet. His doctor fails to help, so his first roll for natural recovery is made after a month. Fortunately he succeeds and finally heals.*

Death is death, and is permanent in this setting. There is no reanimation and no resurrection. If you're lucky you reincarnate as a dragon, but you won't know anything about your previous life, although mediums may try to tell you otherwise.

Some examples of common forms of injury follow the combat rules below; they are clearer if you understand some details that are introduced in the combat rules.

## Combat

**C**ombat takes up a large chunk of these rules; this does NOT mean that it is the most important aspect of the game - it just means that the rules for combat are more complicated than other sections. DON'T make the mistake of thinking that every adventure must involve several fire-fights!

These rules borrow an idea that is found in some war games. All the events in a combat round occur simultaneously. If ten people are firing guns, all of them fire BEFORE the results are assessed. You can shoot a gun out of someone's hand, but he will have a chance to shoot you before he loses it. Attacks are usually a use of skill against a defence; if the attack penetrates the defence, the damage is determined by use of the attack's Effect against the BODY of the target. All of these concepts are explained in more detail below.

### Combat Rounds

A combat round is a period of approximately five seconds in which combat occurs. In this time claws might slash, shots might be fired, and so forth.

The following things can be done in a combat round

1. **Movement.** A dragon can move his or her length on foot or fly twice as far. On a Difficulty 6 BODY or Athlete roll, or a Flying roll, or on expenditure of a bonus point, this can be pushed to twice the dragon's length on foot, three times length while flying.

OR

2. An action, such as ducking for cover or opening a door. Referees may OPTIONALLY allow two actions, or an action and a movement, in a round; for instance, opening a door and diving through.

THEN

3. An attack or several attacks with some weapons and skills. Dragons are normally capable of multiple attacks with teeth, claws, flame, etc.

THEN

4. Wounds take effect.

If you don't want to move or perform any action apart from the attack itself there is a bonus on the attack, but you do NOT fire first.

Anyone taken completely by surprise CANNOT fight, move, or dodge in the first round of combat, but CAN perform a simple action. For example, intruders would have a round to attack someone who was standing a few feet from an alarm button; he would not have time to get to it first. They could not stop him pressing the button if he already had his hand on it. By definition, someone with a weapon in his hand pointed at an attacker is NOT taken by surprise!

### Resolving Attacks

Attacks are resolved in the following stages:

1. All players should state who or what they intend to attack; the referee should explain who NPCs are attacking. This should be done before any attacks are made.
2. Each character and NPC attacks the chosen target. Roll the attacking skill or characteristic against a defending skill or against a difficulty number of 6 if there is no better defence available. There are various modifiers for distance etc.
3. If the roll to hit succeeds, the Effect of the attack is used to attack the BODY of the victim. Damage is calculated according to the success of this roll.

## Rolling To Attack

The bonuses and penalties shown on the right should be added to or subtracted from the attacking skill if they are relevant.

Note that there are no fully automatic weapons in this world, and that all rules relating to them have been omitted from *FF X*; if you want to add them, see the full *Forgotten Futures* rules.

### Example: Shooting for the Pot (1)

*Segievel (Marksman [6])* sees a deer on the other side of a deep crevasse, and decides he wants venison for dinner. The deer will dodge into thick woods if it sees him coming, so he decides to shoot it. It isn't defending itself, so he must fire the shot against a basic difficulty of 6. The deer is immobile (+1) and large (+1), so his skill would normally be modified to 8; unfortunately it's a long way off (-1), and has skin coloration that makes it harder to see (-1), so the skill stays as *Marksmanship [6]*. On an 8 the shot misses; the deer is startled and runs away.

In the second round the deer is moving (-1), but *Segievel* didn't move (+1). The deer is still big (+1) and isn't trying to dodge or hide, and is no longer camouflaged, but it's still a long way off (-1), so *Segievel* uses an effective *Marksman [5]* for his next shot. On a 4 it's an easy hit.

### Example: Take That You Cad! (1)

*Yarge* students *P'ob* and *Jh'arge* have decided to settle their differences in a boxing match. Both have *BODY [4]* and the *Brawling [5]* skill.

In the first combat round *P'ob* dodges and weaves (-1) then tries to punch the immobile (+1) *Jh'arge*; *Jh'arge* stays still (+1) and tries to hit the dodging (-2) *P'ob* when he gets close.

In this round *P'ob* has an effective skill of *Brawling [5]*, *Jh'arge* an effective skill of *Brawling [4]*. On a 3 *P'ob* easily breaks past *Jh'arge's* guard, but on a 2 *Jh'arge* also hits *P'ob*.

Some attacks can be used via two or more skills; for example, a longbow might be used via the *Marksman* or *Martial Arts* skill, a club via the *Brawling* or *Melee Weapons* skill. Use whichever skill is best. If all else fails weapons may be used via characteristic rolls; these are usually poorer than skills.

Defences may also be based on skills or characteristics; for example, someone might try to avoid an arrow by ducking (*BODY* versus the attacking skill), by hiding (*Stealth* skill), or by use of the *Martial Arts* skill to catch it. If no better skill is available, the basic defending value is 6.

If the result of any attack is a success, some damage occurs. Roll for damage as described on the next page.

Situation	Modifier	Notes
Attacker hasn't moved	+1	
Target is immobile/inanimate	+1	
Target is twice Yarge sized or more	+1	
Target is very close	+1	Projectiles only
Firing both barrels of a shotgun	+1	
Target is TOO close	-1	NOT brawling
Target is running/moving fast or flying	-1	
Target is half Yarge sized or less	-1	
Target is distant	-1	Projectiles only
Target partially hidden / camouflaged	-1	
Attacking two or more targets	-2	
Attacker is ducking, dodging, or flying	-1	
Target is ducking or dodging	-2	
Attacking for limited damage	-1	See below
Attacking for minimal damage	-2	See below



## Damage

Roll to cause damage, using the Effect of the attack (see below) against the victim's BODY.

All attacks have an Effect number. For hand-to-hand weapons, martial arts, and other unarmed combat skills it is either the skill level or the user's BODY plus a bonus; for example, a club gains most of its power from the user's strength, and has an Effect equal to the user's BODY + 1. A fencing foil, like all swords and daggers, has an Effect equal to Melee Weapon skill. For firearms the Effect number is usually intrinsic to the weapon, and thus independent of the user's skill or BODY.

Damage is determined by using the Effect number to attack the target's BODY. The result of this roll will sometimes be a failure; this is interpreted as minimal damage for the weapon, from column A of the weapons table. While this is always preferable (for the victim!), many weapons have a flesh wound or worse as their minimal damage.

If the result is a success, but more than half of the result needed for a success, check column B of the weapon table.

If the result is a success, and the dice roll is less than or equal to half the result needed for a success (round DOWN), check column C of the weapon table. If in doubt, use the table above to calculate which damage column is used.

Roll Needed	Column A if result	Column B if result	Column C if result
2	3-12	2	-
3	4-12	2-3	-
4	5-12	3-4	2
5	6-12	3-5	2
6	7-12	4-6	2-3
7	8-12	4-7	2-3
8	9-12	5-8	2-4
9	10-12	5-9	2-4
10	11-12	6-10	2-5
11	12	6-11	2-5

### Example: Shooting for the Pot (2)

*Segievel's hunting rifle has the characteristics shown to the right. This means that it can only attack one target, and does the following damage:*

*A: Flesh wound*

*B: Injury*

*C: Roll the Effect against BODY again; if the result is a failure the injury is critical, otherwise it's a kill.*

*Effect [8] attacking BODY [8] succeeds on a 7 or less.*

*If the result is an 8 or more the deer suffers a flesh wound.*

*If the result is 5-7 the deer is injured.*

*If the result is 2-4 the deer is critically injured or killed.*

*On 4, then 6, the deer is killed.*

Weapon	Multiple targets	Effect	Damage		
			A	B	C
Big Rifle	No	8	F	I	C/K

### Example: Take That You Cad! (2)

*Both combatants are using fists, which are rated as follows:*

*There is no reason to modify these results, so both must use BODY [4] against BODY [4].*

*On a 9, Jh'arge just grazes P'ob. On a 2, P'ob catches Jh'arge with a perfect right hook and knocks him out.*

Weapon	Multiple targets	Effect	Damage		
			A	B	C
Fists	No	Body	B	B	KO

## Pulling Punches & Aiming To Wound

Sometimes players may want to do less than the maximum amount of damage with an attack. They should say what they are trying to do BEFORE rolling to hit, and adjust the attacking skill as follows:

- Attacking for limited damage; damage effects are limited to column A and B only, column C damage is taken as column B. Skill -1.
- Attacking for minimal damage; damage effect is limited to column A only, column B and C damage are taken as column A. Skill -2.

In other words, there is an increased chance of missing if you are pulling your punches or aiming to wound, because the attack is trickier.

It isn't possible to limit damage with shotguns and muskets, with area effect weapons such as explosives or dragon flame, or with ANY attack on multiple targets.

**OPTIONAL RULE: Hit Locations**

Players may sometimes wish to aim at a specific part of the body. To do so, modify the attacking skill and the damage Effect as on the table to the right, hit locations for dragons. For Yarge any result of Wings hits the Torso instead. This makes it harder to hit if you are aiming at someone's limbs or head, but increases the likelihood of serious damage from a head injury.

Location	Skill modification	Effect	Random hit
Head	-2	+2	2
Arms	-1	-1	3 Right, 4 Left
Wings	-1	-1	5 Right, 6 Left
Torso	None	0	7-9
Legs	-1	-1	10-12

If it is used, someone who rolls to hit a target without trying to hit a specific area should roll 2D6 for a random hit location as indicated above, and modify the Effect accordingly.

It is not possible to attack a specific hit location with area effect weapons such as grenades, or while performing any form of multiple attack. Damage from these weapons should attack random hit locations.

It seems certain that the Yarge train their best marksmen to target their shots for maximum effects against dragons; head shots (into the open mouth if possible) to avoid the scales, wing shots to ground their target and make the fight a little more even.

**Armour**

All dragons are armoured to some extent by their skin and scales, with the exception of a few vulnerable areas such as the inside of the mouth and the eyes. Yarge also have armour, although it is going out of fashion as firearms get more powerful. Armour can reduce the Effect of weapons, but doesn't modify the roll to hit; in fact, someone wearing heavy armour should theoretically be slower and easier to hit. Only the area covered by Yarge armour is protected; for example, the most common forms of dragon-hide armour were jerkins and leggings which left the rest of the body unprotected.

Armour	Effect	Notes
Dragon Hide	- B/5	melee weapons & projectiles
Dragon Scales	-1 etc.	melee weapons & projectiles
Dragon Hide Armour	-2	melee weapons & projectiles
Plate Mail	-4	melee weapon attacks
Chain Mail	-2	melee weapon attacks
Steel Helmet	-3	attacks to head ONLY
Soaked wool	-2	reduces fire damage ONLY
Asbestos overalls	-4	reduces fire damage ONLY

Chain mail and plate mail are now rarely seen in the field; increasingly the Yarge armour vehicles instead of soldiers. Helmets, however, are still popular, protecting the head and neck against bullets and shell fragments. A version designed to fit dragons is still making its way through Tiamath's army procurement system.

Dragon hide armour was always very rare, and it is believed that any still in circulation must now be at least 200 years old. The border defence forces have a standing reward of a thousand crowns for any Yarge prisoners taken wearing dragon-skin armour, if it can be verified that it is of genuine Yarge manufacture. The last corporal who tried to fake it, using another soldier's remains as the source for the skin, was sentenced to death *without* consumption. Traditionally heavy soaked wool overgarments were used to protect Yarge against dragon flame – since the discovery of the properties of asbestos they have been more or less abandoned, and most Yarge military units now have some soldiers trained to fight while wearing layers of wool and asbestos clothing that renders flame almost useless.

## Multiple Attacks

Although dragons are generally hugely outnumbered when they fight Yarge, they often make up for it by the range and number of natural weapons they can use, and by a frightening ability to use several of them simultaneously. With the exception of flame all are used via the Brawling skill; Flame is aimed via MIND or Marksmanship, whichever is better.

When a dragon is confronted by several foes in close quarters, his natural instinct is to strike at the most dangerous first, but do as much damage as possible to all of them. The snag, of course, is that it's difficult to

coordinate multiple attacks, and the maximum possible for any dragon, regardless of training, is MIND+1 simultaneous attacks. These can be made with either of the front claws (against one or two separate targets), with the rear claws against a single target, by biting, by constricting, by striking with the tail, and by firing a burst of flame.

With the exception of flame, if only one attack is made the dragon uses Brawling skill. If two attacks are made (other than the two front claws against the same target), both are made with Brawling-2; if three are made, both are made with Brawling-4; etc. This penalty is incurred even if they are made against the same target.

Flame is used via MIND or Marksmanship as stated above, but for unknown reasons it can be used with normal accuracy even if the dragon is making several other attacks. It is not possible to use flame and bite or constrict in the same round; biting blocks the mouth, constriction uses the chest muscles normally used for flaming. Effect is reduced by 1D6 outside the radius shown, 2D6 outside twice the radius, etc.

Constriction is a good attack to use against another dragon, since it pinions the wings and (if done right) prevents the victim's claws from being used against the attacker. It can be combined with biting and clawing. But it doesn't do any damage until the round *after* the attack begins, and for each round that passes the attacker must make a fresh skill roll to maintain constriction.

Finally, tail strikes are more often talked about than done; the dragon swings his or her tail like a whip and (if successful) damages someone trying to attack from behind. It's sometimes useful in crowded conditions, but usually a last resort since it does less damage than most other natural weapons.

### Example: Panic Attack

*Segievel (BODY [8], Brawling [8], Mind [4]) is cornered by a mob of angry Yarge who have spotted his mesmerism experiments and want to teach him the error of his ways. Amazingly none of them have guns. Eventually four of the largest Yarge (all Brawling [4]) advance on him with improvised clubs. Although he has no combat training he stupidly decides to fight his way out, calculating that if he hurts some at the start the others will retreat. He uses his front claws on one of the attackers, bites at another, and flails his tail at a third. All three attacks are made at Brawling [4]; on rolls of 3, 5, and 8 he connects with his teeth and the claws, but misses with the tail. Both of the Yarge he hits are injured, the attackers manage to bruise him badly without doing much real damage. As blood sprays in all directions and the others retreat a little, Segievel finally shows a little common sense and springs into the air and flies off before they manage to do him some real damage. He resolves to get some combat training!*

Natural Weapons	Multiple Targets?	Effect	A	B	C
Front claws x2	2 <sup>[1]</sup>	B+1 <sup>[2]</sup>	F	I	C
Rear claws x2 <sup>[3]</sup>	No	B+2	F	I	C/K
Bite	No	B+1	F	I	C/K
Constrict <sup>[4]</sup>	No	B+1	I	I	C
Tail Strike	No	B/2	F	I	I+KO
Flame <sup>[5]</sup>	Radius B/4 Ft.	B/2	I	C	K

1. Both front claws can be used against a single target without incurring penalties for multiple attacks
2. Female claws have Effect of B-1
3. Rear claws (one or both) can only be used against a single target, e.g. something underfoot, or held by constriction
4. Damage from constriction begins in the round *after* a successful attack is made.
5. Cannot be combined with biting or constriction

It should be obvious that until the invention of organized armies and gunpowder weapons a really large dragon could take on serious Yarge forces and would probably emerge unscathed.

Yarge can generally only make multiple attacks if they have the Martial Arts skill, or with some weapons such as shotguns. Following is a brief list of the most common weapons and forms of attack in the world of *Tooth And Claw*; weapons and rules irrelevant to this world have been omitted. For a larger list see the complete *Forgotten Futures* rules.

Note that most unarmed attacks and some weapon attacks don't show death as a possible outcome; it simply isn't very likely in the course of a fast-moving fight. Referees should feel free to ignore the suggested result in unusual conditions; for example, if someone is attacked by a mob while unable to resist, or is completely outmatched by his attacker.

## Melee Weapons

Effect is based on BODY or skill.

Weapon	Multiple Targets	Effect	Damage			Notes
			A	B	C	
Fist	No <sup>[1]</sup>	BODY <sup>[2]</sup>	B	B	KO	Yarge only
Kick	No <sup>[1]</sup>	BODY <sup>[2]</sup>	B	B	F	Yarge only
Wrestling	No	BODY <sup>[2]</sup>	B	KO	KO / I	Yarge only

<sup>1.</sup> Using the Martial Arts skill it is possible to perform one fist and one kick attack in a single round against one target, or against two targets that are close together. Against two targets the attacks are at -2 Effect.

<sup>2.</sup> Users of the Martial Arts skill can use BODY or Martial Arts for Effect in these attacks, whichever is better.

Club	Max 2 <sup>[3]</sup>	BODY + 1	F	F	KO/K	e.g. chair leg
Spear	No	Melee	F	I	C/K	e.g. bayonet on rifle.
Axe	No	BODY + 2	F	I	C/K	
Sword	Max 2 <sup>[3]</sup>	Melee + 1	F	I	C/K	
Dagger	No	Melee + 1	F	I	I/K	
Chair	No	Brawling	B	F	I/KO	
Broken bottle	No	Brawling + 1	F	F	I	
Staff	Max 3 <sup>[3]</sup>	Melee + 2	F	I	KO/C	
Whip	No	Melee/2	B	B	F	

<sup>3.</sup> Targets must be within 5ft. Multiple attacks are at -2 Effect. Multiple attacks are available with the Martial Artist skill ONLY.

## Range

For all melee weapons, targets are TOO CLOSE if they block effective use of the weapon; within a couple of feet for swords and axes, within 6 ft for whips (a lousy weapon, despite Indiana Jones), and so forth. If unsure, give players the benefit of the doubt.

## Projectile Weapons

Effect is usually based on skill (for thrown weapons), on BODY (for longbows and thrown axes), or on the weapon rather than the user for firearms etc.

Weapon	Multiple Targets	Effect	Damage			Notes
			A	B	C	
Axe	No	BODY + 1	F	I	C/K	Thrown
Dagger	No	BODY + 1	F	I	C/K	Thrown
Longbow	No <sup>[4]</sup>	BODY + 1	F	I	C/K	Hunting bow
Crossbow	No	7	F	I	C/K	Military bow

<sup>4.</sup> Maximum 2 targets if attacking with Martial Arts skill.

Weapon	Multiple Targets	Effect	Damage			Notes
			A	B	C	
Spear	No	Melee	F	I	C/K	Thrown
Typical handgun	Max 2 <sup>[5]</sup>	8	I	I	C/K	Typical Yarge pistol
Huge handgun	Max 2 <sup>[5]</sup>	10	I	I	C/K	Typical Dragon pistol
Typical rifle	No	8	F	I	C/K	Typical Yarge Rifle
Big rifle	No	10	I	C	K	Big Yarge or small Dragon Rifle
Huge rifle	No	12	I	C/K	C/K	Largest Dragon Rifles
Large Shotgun	Max 2 <sup>[5]</sup>	7	F	I	C/K	One barrel
Large Shotgun	No <sup>[5]</sup>	14* / 7 * Short range ONLY	I	C	K	Both barrels
Small Cannon	No <sup>[6]</sup>	16	I	C/K	K	Air-portable by dragons
Large Cannon	No <sup>[6]</sup>	22	I	K	K	Towed by drafters

5. Hand guns typically have two barrels and can be used to fire at two targets, or twice at one target. If firing at two separate targets each attack is at -2 to hit. If firing two shots at one target there is no modifier. Each attack is resolved separately. Shotguns can fire twice at one target (no modifier to hit, small effect), fire at two different targets (modifier -2 to hit, small effect), or fire both barrels at once (+1 modifier to hit, big effect at SHORT range ONLY). In all but the last case the two shots are resolved separately. The doubled Effect of firing two barrels simultaneously is felt at short range ONLY! Rifles typically have two barrels but can only be fired once per round, since the recoil prevents aiming.
6. Cannon fire one shot per four or five rounds of combat. The only ammunition routinely used is iron balls.

### Ammunition

All firearms use percussion caps, paper-wrapped charges, and a separate ball or bag of shot. Loading takes at least a round per barrel. The Yarge are experimenting with pepperpot revolvers and have some working prototypes, but they are still rare and unreliable.

### Range

Normal range for all hand-thrown weapons and handguns is 10-20 ft; for bows and rifles 50-100 ft; for cannon 250-500 ft. Anything closer is at short range, anything further away at long range. Targets are too close if they are closer than the end of the weapon!

### Area Effect Weapons

All explosives damage everything at full effect inside the radius shown, at effect -1D6 to double that radius, at effect -2D6 to three times the radius, and so forth. The effect of these weapons is not reduced if there are multiple targets. Dragons have been known to drop barrels of gunpowder or oil on enemy camps; it is believed that the Yarge are experimenting with rockets, rigged to explode in the air, as a defence against dragons.

Weapon	Damage Radius	Effect	Damage			Notes
			A	B	C	
Barrel gunpowder	10ft	14	F	I	C/K	+2 per additional barrel
Barrel oil / Naptha	10ft	7+7 / round	F	I	I/C	Dropped then ignited
Military rocket	10ft	7 <sup>[7]</sup>	F	I	C/K	Gunpowder rocket

7. Fired in volleys by Yarge and exploding in the air, an anti-Dragon defence.

## Non-Combat Injuries

Combat is the main cause of wounds in most RPGs, but characters occasionally run into other problems that can cause damage. For instance:

**Falling:** The damage hits automatically; the Effect number is 1 plus 1 per storey fallen, to a maximum of 20. For example, someone tripping and falling to the ground risks damage with Effect 2; someone

falling 20,000ft takes damage with Effect 20. Note that falls of less than 10ft are a common cause of accidental death in Yarge homes. Needless to say most dragons can avoid damage from falls by flying if there is room to manoeuvre.

**Train Crash:** Effect 2 plus 1 per 5 MPH. Most dragons will fly clear if they see a crash coming.

**Poison:** Effects vary with type of poison as below. Most poison gases have an increasing effect with time as shown below.

**Drowning, suffocation, etc:** Characters (Dragons or Yarge) can hold their breath without harm for BODY x 20 seconds; after that take damage with Effect 1, +1 per 20 seconds submerged. If the character survives, any damage (other than death) is cleared in a few hours, not the days required for other forms of damage.

**Fire:** Effect varies with severity of fire, starting at 1 (a match) and working up to 7 (a barrel of oil dropped by a dragon) and onwards. The effect increases for each round of exposure after the first.

**Execution:** Numbers aren't provided for execution methods; it's assumed that they will always succeed unless someone sabotages them or the victim somehow escapes *before* the execution begins.

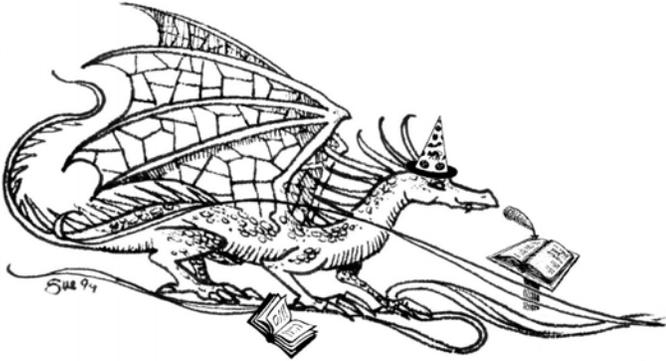
Cause of Damage	Effect	Damage			Notes
		A	B	C	
Falls	1 + 1/storey	B	I	C/K	
Train crash (inside train)	1 + 1/10MPH	F	I	C/K	
Run over	2 + 2/10MPH	F	I	C/K	
"Mickey Finn"	8	KO	KO	C/K	Knock-out drops.
A small amount of strychnine	6	I	C	K	
A lot of cyanide	10	C	K	K	
A little arsenic <sup>[1]</sup>	3	-	I	C/K	
A lot of arsenic <sup>[1]</sup>	6	I	C	K	
<sup>[1]</sup> It is possible to build up immunity to some forms of arsenic with repeated small doses, reducing the Effect of large doses. It is also possible to kill yourself trying this stunt.					
Snake venom (bite)	8	I	C	K	Bite must succeed first.
Chloroform or ether	6 + 1/round	KO	KO	C/K	
Drowning / suffocation	1 + 1/20 sec	I	I	C/K	See main text
Match	1 + 1/round	F	F	F	
Candle flame	2 + 1/round	F	F	F	
Bonfire	4 + 2/round	F	I	I	
Blast furnace	10 + 10/round	C	K	K	
Volcano	20 + 10/round	C	K	K	



## Magic

The main *Forgotten Futures* game includes optional magical rules, with a MAGIC characteristic and a Wizardry skill. The novel *Tooth and Claw* does not include any obvious use of magical powers; having said that, certain aspects of draconic biology make a little more sense if it's assumed that they are actually magical creatures, but use their magic unconsciously to maintain their own abilities and powers. How else could something the size of a dragon fly? How else could dragons convert the flesh of other dragons into their own so easily? Many dragons believe this to be the case, but have no proof.

If this is true, dragons are already using their powers unconsciously to give them many of the benefits that magicians crave: long life; strength; toughness; flight; etc. Some can breathe fire, or charm Yarge with their gaze. What else do they need magic for? Well, there's a type of mind that seems to think that more is better, and craves power and knowledge for its own sake, for personal gain, or to ensure that it is in "safe" hands. It's possible that some dragons have found the key to unlocking their real magical powers, and are secretly using them in ways most dragons can barely imagine.



If you want to allow players to go this route, you will need the main rules (available as a free download) and especially the Appendix *It's a Kind of Magic*. Most dragons should be unaware that magic exists; their magic is entirely internalised as BODY, and their MAGIC and Wizardry skill are zero. Certain dragons have learned the truth, and have found ways to use it beyond mere maintenance of their innate abilities. Of course there are snags – lots of them...

Dragon magicians must spend a quarter to a half of their initial character points on BODY and MAGIC. MAGIC is purchased for the same point prices as MIND or SOUL, and has a maximum value of 7. In other words, a dragon wizard is likely to start out unusually small and lacking in non-magical skills. At least one point must be spent on the Wizardry skill, whose base value is av. MAGIC and SOUL.

Every time a spell is cast, the magician must roll their MAGIC against the total value of the characteristics affected, or against the Difficulty of the spell, whichever is greater. If the roll fails the wizard loses BODY; at least BODY 1, optionally more. This is subtracted from the wizard's BODY or from the wizard's food; wizards have to eat dragon flesh to power their spells, or they will slowly dwindle to nothingness. This makes spell-casting a bloody business, and potentially very expensive if the wizard has to splurge on the meat market.

There's another snag; because wizards are using their innate powers in ways that nature never intended, they lose out on some of the usual draconic benefits of eating dragon meat. It takes 2 BODY of meat and 2 Bonus Points to add 1 BODY to a wizard. If a meal would normally add only 1 BODY to the wizard, there is no gain. Optionally they may be unusually vulnerable to illnesses caused by diseased or tainted meat.

Want another snag? If magic exists, some Yarge must be wizards; they outnumber dragons at least fifty to one, and some of them will know how to gain magical power by eating dragon flesh. The flesh of dragon wizards is particularly prized, of course.

The spells that are most likely to appeal to dragon wizards include transformation (typically into Yarge form if there seems to be a chance of getting near a princess), teleportation and magical portals (especially into treasure vaults), weather manipulation, and clairvoyance (to find the hiding place of gold, of course). In other respects dragon magic should work much like that of wizards in any other world; for further details see the main rules.

## Role Playing

So far these rules have said a lot about rolling dice, but little about the real meat of a role playing game; the opportunity to take on a completely different personality in a world of the imagination. Although the characters are dragons, the behaviour of dragons in this world follows certain Victorian stereotypes which may be useful.

### I Know My Place...

Dragons in inferior positions accept that they are underlings. They are happy to be employed: the idea of bettering their position, over and above promotion within their workplace, is somehow abhorrent. This attitude is especially prevalent amongst servants and others in intimate contact with their social “superiors”, who are often snobs.

### You're A Toff, Guv...

Aristocrats are the cream of society: stern but caring, almost always wealthy and learned, always polite (especially to dragonesses and other inferiors), they are genuinely superior, and even savages know them as such. Even if an aristocrat goes bad he remains noble; if his crimes are discovered he will commit suicide rather than dishonour his family by standing trial.

### A Woman's Place Is In The Home...

Dragonesses unfortunately tend to be treated as inferiors, second class citizens who must be protected from physical and moral danger. Campaigners for female rights are treated with great suspicion.

### I Say, He's A Bally Foreigner...

Dragons really don't like Yarge much. Enough said?

And so forth...

## Traits

Traits are versions of these stereotyped attitudes which can be added to characters to give them a little more personality. They fall into a few broad categories. Players should use some common sense when selecting and using traits – mostly they are just opinions, not psychopathic behaviour or raging phobias. The list that follows can easily be extended. Sometimes a character can hold contradictory opinions; for example, he might support revolutionary reform in the abstract, but still be a snob! Many of these traits, especially those relating to family or inheritance, can be used to generate plots, but referees should beware of getting too bogged down with any one character's problems. Adventures should involve all of the players wherever possible. For much more on traits see the most recent versions of the main *Forgotten Futures* rules, which include a section on melodramatic role playing.



## Class

- **Snob:** Whether or not you're a peer, you enjoy the company of the aristocracy and cultivate it whenever possible. Non-aristocrats will name-drop if they know (or pretend to know) any peers, aristocrats (who are probably not very high up the social ladder) will seek the company of their betters.
- **Social Climber:** An extreme case of snobbery, you will do almost anything to become a peer (if not one already) and climb the social tree, and to make sure that any children rise to great things. This might involve marrying for a title, divorcing to avoid disgrace, etc.
- **Social Reformer:** Regardless of your rank, you recognize that there are injustices to be put right; causes might include the treatment of servants, the rights of dragonesses, prison or hospital reform, the more dubious aspects of the dragon meat trade, etc.
- **Egalitarian:** You're a peer who tries to treat all dragons on the same basis, regardless of rank, but this may fall apart if someone tries to take advantage.
- **Revolutionary:** You want to smash the peerage and the attitudes that created it. Usually (but not always) an attitude of commoners and the criminal classes. This is more likely to be an opinion than actual behaviour.

## Religion

- **Genuinely Devout:** You honestly believe in Veld, Jurale, and Camran, professing the Orthodox Faith or the Old Religion. With very few exceptions all members of the Old Religion are genuinely devout; members are often subject to abuse and harassment, and are barred from some professions, so it would be stupid to fake it. Genuinely devout dragons won't fly on Firstday and always defer to their parsons; members of the Old Religion go to confession and females wear mantillas.
- **Unthinkingly Devout:** A majority of followers of the Orthodox Faith are unthinkingly devout, following the tenets of the religion without giving them much thought, because it's what everyone else does and you wouldn't want to look odd. They probably don't fly on Firstday but this is simply out of habit, not because there's much real belief in the rationale for the ban.
- **Obnoxiously Devout:** You profess belief (usually in the Orthodox Faith), loudly and often, paying full attention to the letter of the Laws, but not the spirit. For example, a wealthy peer might never fly on Firstday and otherwise follow the teachings of Veld, but he'd use his religious obligations as an excuse to eat one of his tenants' dragonets, claiming that it was "never going to thrive"; whereas the reality might be that he was hungry.
- **Pious Hypocrite:** Profess a religion, so as to fit in with your peers, but ignore its tenets if they don't suit you. Who does it really harm if you take a flight on Firstday? Pious hypocrites are often the idle rich, but there are also a few parsons with this attitude, who are quite prepared to remove their wing bindings to avoid a long walk, or otherwise disobey the letter or spirit of the Law, if it suits their purpose.
- **Non-conformist:** Very rare, and always treated with great suspicion, non-conformists either have no religion, or worship in some way that most other dragons would find upsetting. For example, there are a few groups of dragons who claim to follow the old pre-Subjugation faith, although they are generally regarded as lunatics, criminals, or worse. Members of some of *really* secretive cults probably fake adherence to the Orthodox Faith to cover their behaviour. Anyone who talks about finding a Yarge princess to sacrifice is probably a member of this camp.
- **Superstitious:** Regardless of any other religious belief, you follow at least one odd superstition – numerology, astrology, spiritualism, etc. Most seem to derive from Yarge sources, but dragons are entirely capable of coming up with crackpot ideas of their own. Generally considered harmless, provided the belief does not cross the lines of Orthodox doctrine.

## The Opposite Sex and Sexual Conduct

### General

- **Misodrachist:** You are a dragon who dislikes other dragons in general and the opposite sex in particular. You are probably single, of course.
- **Engaged:** You have found the right dragon / dragoness, and currently plan to marry. But do your parents approve? Or your fiancée's? Will there be religious or legal problems? Will the dowry meet expectations? One thing's certain, marriage is a complicated business, and unlikely to go entirely smoothly. That's why it's a useful source of plots and complications.
- **Happily(?) Married:** Most adult dragons marry sooner or later, and since they generally spend several hundred years married they might as well be happy. But there are many marriages of convenience, where the partners stay together simply because it gives both of them heirs and the veneer of respectability. Participants in such marriages may take lovers or keep mistresses, often with the consent of their partner.
- **Divorced:** Rare but not entirely unknown. Divorces take years to get through the courts and rarely end happily for either partner or any children. Given the dragon temperament it's rather more common to kill a transgressing partner and argue about the legality afterwards.  
Divorce carries some social stigma, and is definitely not something to do lightly – most divorcees never remarry, and it may take centuries for the circumstances to be forgotten.

### Females only

- **Virgin:** You are unmistakably gold, not pink, and a virgin. To stay this way you must avoid close contact with any male – just an accidental proximity with someone you find attractive may be enough to trigger blushing, and if contact continues you may easily end up pink, regardless of the circumstances or your intentions. Your behaviour will revolve around the need to avoid such accidents until a suitable husband is found.
- **False Virgin:** Some dragonesses who become pink accidentally or inappropriately resort to hedge medicine to restore their original gold colour. While this is possible, provided the colour hasn't set in too far, it is frowned upon by both churches and medically inadvisable.  
You can't use this method to fake innocence while leading a promiscuous life; male dragons can't consummate a relationship with a female who isn't pink or red, it's a visual cue that triggers the release of powerful hormones, and there are real risks to the drugs – if taken repeatedly or to excess they block pinkness completely and permanently, and the dragoness will never be able to mate. "Taken to excess" may occasionally mean "Taken once"; there is simply no certainty.
- **Pink:** A female dragon who has fallen under the influence of a male but may not have married him yet. Provided that marriage is immanent this is an entirely respectable position, but females who are pink without the prospect of marriage risk being regarded with disfavour by most of society.
- **Scarlet Dragoness:** You are a dragoness who is sexually active (and pink or bright red) without any prospect of marriage. This may be the result of a mishap – accidental close proximity to an attractive male, the death of a fiancée, or sexual assault – or an entirely conscious decision. Generally considered considerably less than respectable, regardless of circumstances, unless the circumstances are unusual and well known. Since conception requires a conscious decision and special diet there are virtually no unmarried mothers or illegitimate children.
- **Widow:** Mourning is customary, for years or decades after the death of your husband, even if you are privately happy about the loss.
- **Presumed Widow:** Your husband is missing, believed dead – most likely a victim of the Yarge, or some disaster (for example, a passenger on a ship lost with all hands). The trouble is that there is no

proof, and it may take years or decades for the courts to formally decide the issue. And what if they get it wrong?

- **False Widow:** One way to avoid the stigmata of pinkness or redness is to claim to be a widow; find a dragon that died in obscure circumstances or a remote area and claim to be his bride. This can be the start of a slippery slope; even if the dragoness has no initial intention of profiting from the deception, circumstances can arise in which it becomes necessary to add more lies. For example, it may turn out that a genuine bride would be entitled to a pension or inheritance, and declining it would look very odd. This could lead to blackmail or worse.

Inventing a spouse is safer, especially if you move to an area where you are not known and seem to be rich and respectable, and someone respectable vouches for you. For best results claim to be the widow of a second or third son of a noble house, or some other minor noble; few dragons can bother to keep track of minor nobility. If status is unimportant, it's always safe to claim to be the widow of a commoner – but doing so defeats the main object of false widowhood, since it will bar you from high society. While such arrangements may seem too complicated to work, they are probably more common than is generally realised; it's a good way for a noble to set up an ex-mistress so that she won't cause problems for him, and most dragons won't dig too deeply for fear that the scandals of their own families will receive similar attention.

- **Spinster:** Virgin dragons eventually fade from gold to grey. Once this stage is reached they cannot turn pink, and will never lay eggs. You are either grey, or well on the way there.

### Males Only

- **Confirmed Bachelor:** You really don't like the idea of marriage – maybe you just don't want the responsibilities involved, maybe you have a low sex drive or dislike children, maybe your One True Love died before you could propose. Most confirmed bachelors seem to have more than their fair share of married friends and interfering relatives who seem to think that they know the perfect dragoness for them.
- **Promiscuous:** Males don't have to worry about showing obvious signs of infidelity or promiscuity – it's frowned upon by both churches, but undoubtedly common. Of course this type of behaviour can lead to problems: blackmail; divorce; elaborate revenge schemes; brawls; unpleasant rashes; etc.
- **Widower:** Mourning is customary, for years or decades after the death of your wife, even if you are privately happy about the loss.
- **Bigamist:** Most common in males – dragonesses tend to lack the necessary mobility – you have two wives and two households. Given the size of Tiamath's society this is difficult to conceal, but they might be in different cities, or otherwise separated. Juggling these relationships and paying for it all is a permanent nightmare.

### Family

- **Orphan:** You're on your own, or at best have a guardian, a relative or some other associate of your parents. Unless you are reasonably big and competent this can be a dangerous situation, but a good inheritance or dowry can help to soften the blow.
- **Indifferent:** You have family somewhere, you don't bother them and hopefully they don't bother you. Until one day someone dies and you realise that you have inherited a feud, a lawsuit, several mouths to feed, or some other problem.
- **Surplus to Requirements:** You have a family, and could wish that you didn't. They're a nuisance, or possibly stand between you and an inheritance. Perhaps something could be done about eliminating them:

*"I shot an arrow in the air,  
My aunt came down in Fallro Square..."*



Complicated inheritance problems, and especially elaborate schemes to resolve them in a character's favour, can be a useful mechanism for generating plots, provided that they give all of the players something to do. Remember that most criminal conspiracies fall apart if there are more than two or three conspirators involved.

- **Supportive:** You have the support of your family, provided that you aren't planning to do anything too illegal or immoral. Since dragons regard cannibalism as moral, this gives considerable scope!
- **Unknown:** Very rare! You genuinely have no idea who your parents are. Maybe your egg was stolen and hatched by Yarge, or abandoned for unknown reasons before you hatched. Finding out the truth should be a long complicated problem.

## The Law

Note: This section relates to character's attitudes to civil law, not criminal – most adventurers will find themselves on criminal ground at some point in their careers, usually in a good cause. Characters who wish to be professional criminals should begin by adding appropriate skills and a back-story that explains their activities.

- **To Be Avoided:** You fear any involvement in the legal system, and will go to great lengths to avoid it, even if it costs you money or humiliation. Maybe your parents lost a fortune thanks to a biased Judge; maybe one of your friends was torn apart on a Judge's orders. Whatever the reason, any threat of legal action is enough to make you tremble.
- **A Necessary Nuisance:** You neither love nor hate the law; it's around, and you'll make use of the legal system if you have to, but you don't particularly enjoy the experience. It's best avoided if there are better alternatives.
- **Insanely Litigious:** For some reason you are much too fond of legal action, and will resort to it for the most trivial problems. Someone knocks a slate off your roof with a wing tip? Sue them! Someone owes you a few crowns? Bring the full weight of the law to bear! Maybe you live in an area where the Judge and potential jurors are in your pocket, maybe you've had a couple of successes and they've gone to your head. Sooner or later a case will end up in front of a court you can't influence, or will end up costing much more than you can hope to gain from it. Worse case, of course, is that you end up fighting for your life.
- **Law Bore:** You don't have any particular feelings about using the law, but you're fascinated by it and read books about interesting cases, read out law reports from the papers, and otherwise annoy your friends and family. If you're in town while a court is in session you may decide to spend some time watching a trial. Unless you have the Scholar skill with legal knowledge as at least one speciality your views are probably uninformed and inaccurate.
- **Lawyer:** You have a vested interest in the law, as a lawyer or other officer of the court. You must spend at least one point on Scholar (Law); other useful skills include Business and Acting.

## Tiamath

- **Your country, right or wrong:** Not that Tiamath ever is wrong! You love your country and everything it stands for, and anyone who says otherwise deserves a good thrashing.
- **Moderate Patriot:** You like Tiamath, within the normal bounds of common sense. Every now and again you wonder what the government can possibly be thinking, or find yourself wishing that they'd get more in tune with the Yarge nations, but if it comes to the crunch you'll support Tiamath against the rest of the world.
- **Internationalist:** You think that Tiamath's isolationism is wrong, and would prefer to see the country as part of the modern world. You would have to think very carefully before supporting military expansionism or any attempt to exploit the Yarge.

- **Cynic:** Tiamath is just another country, unique only because dragons live there. You can take it or leave it.
- **Disdain:** There isn't a patriotic bone in your body. Perhaps you feel betrayed by the government or legal system, or have some other reason to dislike your native land. Whatever the reason, you can rarely find a good word to say for your country or its government, and often compare it negatively to the Yarge lands. This does *not* mean that you're a traitor, given the right circumstances you would probably be as loyal as anyone else, but others may mistake your loyalties.
- **Traitor:** (*not recommended for player characters*) For some reason you hate your land and its government and everything they stand for, and it will take a lot to make you change your mind. You are actively working against the interests of Tiamath, to the extent of betraying state secrets to the Yarge if the opportunity arises.

## The Yarge

- **Irrational Terror:** You've bought in to the idea of the Yarge Peril and believe that hordes of the horrible flat-bodied squishy cloth-wrapped monsters will some day invade again, terrorising the dragons and ready to destroy everything you hold dear. Nothing anyone says will persuade you to change your mind. The very sight of a Yarge is enough to terrify you, so it probably isn't a good idea to visit places where they're common, such as Irieth or the Yarge nations.
- **Fear:** For some reason you're afraid of the Yarge; maybe they killed someone in your family, maybe something in their shape or movements triggers a phobia. You *know* that you're over-reacting, but you can't seem to shake your fear. If you have to talk to a Yarge you can do so, with considerable effort, but it isn't easy and you will make an excuse and leave as soon as possible.
- **Rational Fear:** You're aware that the Yarge outnumber dragons roughly fifty to one, and that their short lifespan and rapid breeding makes it unlikely that they will ever cease to be a problem. You worry about what they might do next, and how long it will be before the dragons are crowded out by sheer Yarge weight of numbers. Your reaction to individual Yarge is caution, not fear; you know that you're more than a match for any individual, it's the threat that the species as a whole poses that's the problem.
- **Curiosity:** Somehow you've never thought of the Yarge as monsters; instead you're curious about their cultures and technology, and even pay some attention to their arts and fashions. You may have tried cooked food at some time, or gone on the Grand Tour.
- **Pity:** Imagine the short lives of the Yarge! Imagine not being able to fly! You have to pity them, really. Try to be nice to them if you get the chance, the poor things are so limited.
- **Appetite:** Yarge smell good to eat, and you'd really love a juicy princess or two. But unless there's another war or something it's just not going to happen.



## Money

- **Miser:** The only good place for money is in your hoard. You spend as much time as you can asleep on piles of the stuff, luxuriating in the coolness of the gold. You spend as little as you can.
- **Investor:** You hang on to as much gold as you can, but put most of it to work making more money via investments and interest. You spend as much as it takes to keep your family fed and your home in good repair; in the long run that's a better investment than letting things fall to rack and ruin.
- **Businesslike:** You put your money to work in businesses and other areas, and are prepared to accept short-term losses for a long-term gain. You prefer active management to the more relaxed style of the investor.

- **Philanthropist:** You actually give money away if the cause seems right, provided that it won't leave you short of funds. You won't die rich, but in the long term you hope to enrich the world.
- **Spendthrift:** Hoard? What hoard? You can't hang on to gold, it just seems to run through your claws and out into the world. There may be worse things than being in debt in Tiamath, but when your moneylender tells you he wants his pound of flesh he isn't speaking metaphorically...
- **Broke:** You don't have any money, and if you did you'd probably waste it. No matter what you do, you can't seem to get your claws on cash. No use worrying about it; the time to worry will be if there seems to be a chance of earning some gold, because you know that something horrible will go wrong.

### Personality Quirks and Dramatic Developments

- **Drunkard / Addict:** You drink to excess, or have some other addiction that costs money or causes behavioural problems and inconvenience to those around you.
- **Crackpot:** You believe in some nonsensical theory that makes little or no sense to most other dragons; for example, you might believe that space travel is possible, that dragons were created magically, or that the world is flat (and yes, there is a Flat World society in Tiamath). In most other respects you're a more or less normal member of society.
- **Flamboyant:** Whatever you do, it has to be done with *style*; if you were a Yarge you'd wear a cloak, swing on the chandeliers and swash a mean buckle, as a dragon your options are more limited, but you'll do your best to leave a real impression wherever you go. Often the impression will be "who was that idiot?" of course, but it's better than going unnoticed.
- **Shy:** You're nervous and hate to be the centre of attention. You probably do your best to avoid flamboyance. Most people will regard you as painfully dull.
- **Fashionable:** Most common amongst dragonesses, you follow all of the latest dictates of fashion; darling but terrifyingly expensive hats from the finest makers, burnished scales, special diets, cosmetics, and perfumes. Most of it is wasted on males who barely notice the time of day, of course.
- **Bad Habit:** You have a bad habit that is either annoying to your friends or harmful to you – breathing flame without warning, sharpening your claws on your friends' favourite rocks, chewing your own tail, etc.
- **Sense of Duty:** You belong to the army, or have some other commitment that takes a lot of your time and is occasionally inconvenient – this could be to your family or a profession, an organization, to Science, whatever seems most appropriate for the character.
- **Reborn:** Most dragons believe in reincarnation, it's one of the tenets of their religion – it's appropriate for a character to learn (or believe) that he or she is an ancient notable reborn. Whether or not it's true is another matter. This is best combined with strong religious beliefs or a belief in spiritualism.
- **Secret:** You have a dark secret, if revealed it will mean shame or disgrace. For example, a close relative who is insane but has somehow escaped being killed and eaten.
- **Doomed:** You're dying, from a long lingering illness, war wound, curse, etc. This will eventually cause death but otherwise has no adverse effects, apart from an occasional discreet cough or momentary incapacitating pain (usually at a point where it helps the plot). This is usually best reserved for short campaigns; if it goes on too long it gets a little silly, but of course dragons live centuries, and may take years to die.



## Running Adventures

**B**y now you should understand the rules. Take another look at the example of game play in the introduction, and try to imagine how you would handle things if you were a player or the referee. This section is mainly intended for referees. It goes into more details on the running of games, backgrounds and NPCs, plotting, and the use of handouts and other aids. It's abridged considerably from the version in the main *Forgotten Futures* rules, and only deals with the world of *Tooth and Claw*.

### Setting the Scene

Players should understand the basic details of Tiamath: the nature of society (or at least how it appears to the characters), the ways in which dragons are expected to behave, and important things that everyone would be aware of.

While there's nothing to stop you giving players a long briefing, this can sometimes lead to information overload; players have too many facts to digest, and don't know where to begin. In a world as different as *Tooth and Claw* this can be a real problem.

It's more fun to establish these details in play. Tell the players about the world as they develop characters, then let characters loose in a non-threatening situation that shows them some more. The introductory scene on pages 43-47 was written as an example of this sort of setting – until late in the scene there's actually very little chance of anyone getting hurt, short of one of the players deciding to do something stupid.

An important point in this section is the use of multiple cues to give players a feel for the world:

*Soon the train's rattling between smoky-looking buildings, click-clacking over points as it finally slows to a halt in the grand Cupola station. There's a strong smell of smoke, and an interesting smell of freshly-killed muttonwools from the direction of the station food stalls. There are crowds everywhere, dragons of all colours and sizes and even an occasional Yarge, presumably tourists.*

In a few words the referee describes the noise of the train, the smells, and what the characters see. If every scene appeals to two or three senses players visualise events more clearly. This is usually good, but don't spend so long scene setting that the players become impatient. Here's another example:

*"A sombre plume of grey smoke rises sluggishly from the red brick chimney of the cottage, twisting and billowing over the slates as the breeze blows it towards you. The smoke has a strong aroma of firewood, probably cedar, but something else is added; the sickly miasma of burning flesh."*

As descriptions go this isn't bad, but it might be more appropriate in a Gothic novel. Paring it to its essential elements, we get something a little shorter:

*"Grey smoke blows towards you from the cottage chimney; it smells of wood, but there's also the sweet aroma of burning meat."*

Once the referee has set the scene, good players will react to the description to show their characters' opinions and reactions. In our example Raetha got to show her fear of Yarge, Padiah his lack of sympathy for her and interest in the scene, and Shimmeth her common sense, shown again in the later encounter with Gevon and Keleg. Once the scene is set it's possible to cut back on the descriptions, reserving them for NPCs and important locations, and save a little time - but never omit them completely.

A picture is sometimes worth a thousand words - when it's relevant. If you're an artist, consider sketching some of the scenes the players are likely to encounter, or use newspaper and magazine photographs, downloads, etc. Maps and other plans are also very helpful. A word of warning; if you only prepare pictures of vital scenes, players will soon start to assume that nothing important is happening if they don't see a picture. A few extra pictures, produced to set the scene at less vital moments, can keep them guessing. Google Image Search and Wikipedia Commons are your friends in this; no matter how strange the search string you put in, someone somewhere probably has a picture, making it very easy to produce all the irrelevant imagery anyone could possibly want.

## Plot

Most people get up in the morning with a fair idea of likely events in the day ahead and very rarely run into invading Martians, marauding dinosaurs, or deranged serial killers. It seems unlikely that in real life anyone reading this has fought a gun battle on the wings of a biplane, or unravelled a sinister web of deceit to unmask the machinations of an ancient cult and a nameless evil from beyond the stars.

Life is different in a role playing game, and characters don't lead routine lives. They are adventurers, encountering excitement wherever they go. Sinister cultists kill victims on their doorsteps, or decide that an adventurer is the reincarnation of their god. Their airliner is the one that is hijacked, their spaceship the one that picks up a strange alien parasite. They suspect weirdness in the most mundane events, and are usually right. The snag is that the referee has to prepare all this for the players.

The adventures on later pages should give you some starting points, but it's important to remember one golden rule – don't micro-manage every detail. It's easy to get bogged down in minutiae. Sometimes a broad sweeping description will advance the plot much faster than precise details. Players rarely need to know the exact length, width and height of every room their characters enter, for example, or a ten-minute description of the ornaments on a shelf. Be ready to produce a little more detail if it's asked for, or if it's important to the plot (but again be ready with some irrelevant details too), but if you find yourself spending hours describing something that does little or nothing to advance the plot there's something badly wrong. For the same reason it's a good idea to get the players used to the idea that you will occasionally move the plot along without going into a lot of detail. But be prepared for the players to do the same thing to you!

The more work you put into planning things in advance, the more likely it is that your lovingly-crafted scene or setting won't be used, your favourite NPC never encountered, because the players have thought of something that bypasses that part of your plot, missed a clue, or gone off at a weird tangent you never expected. Although it isn't obvious, the example of play omits a scene the referee had originally planned; pursuit and capture of the thief at the station. This happened because the referee made noticing the theft too difficult. Never mind; the thief (actually an associate of Gevon) will appear in a later scene. Or not, if the adventure seems to be going too slowly.

Prepare the broad outlines, of course, and have a few important NPCs detailed, but be prepared to invent details and characters on the fly as the story mutates. And don't be afraid to mislead; while it may seem unfair to give players "clues" or "hints" that are likely to lead them off the right track, in real life there are countless distractions. This applies to any clues or pictures you prepare for adventurers, of course; a few spurious or irrelevant details are easily added, and will keep the players guessing.

Adventures set in Tiamath are likely to be driven by the details of draconic society; wills and inheritance, elaborate social conventions, and occasional crimes. It probably isn't the best setting for high adventure or battles against fearsome odds. A typical story might involve a comedy of errors, a country "house" murder as in *The Affair at Copper Caverns*, or a hunt for a missing will or hoard. There may well be an element of danger, but it will probably arise from the actions of individual NPCs, not monsters, elaborate death traps, or hordes of hostile natives. For that sort of thing adventures should probably visit Yarge territory, as in *The Crimson Claw Assurance Society*, where there's scope for all of the above.

One final suggestion; don't be afraid to steal plots, provided it's only for your own amusement, but always remember to change things a little. Unless the source is really obscure you can be reasonably sure that at least one of the players will have seen or read it, but a few plot twists or changes in role will do a lot to keep them guessing.

## NPCs

Many of the characters encountered in an adventure are essentially spear-carriers, sketched out in the minimum of detail needed by the referee – for example, "Old Goredigis the family's lawyer", "The Yarge Ambassador", "a platoon of Yarge soldiers". It can be useful to have a few statistics prepared for

them, but they generally need much less than a player character; the basic stats and any relevant skills and traits. For instance, the lawyer described below might be used in almost any situation – he’s been given one speciality, but that can easily be changed.

**Goredigis: Solicitor specialising in inheritance cases, 35 ft, age 480, bachelor.**

BODY [12], MIND [5], SOUL [2] Acting (pleading) [6], Brawling [14], Business [7], Scholar (law) [8].

Flame, Tough (3 pt), Armour -3

**Quote:** *“It’s a tricky point, but historically the courts have favoured this interpretation of the laws of inheritance.”*

**Possessions:** Legal wigs, various law books, secretary. Occasionally employs a member of the city watch (illegally) as a hired investigator.

**Notes:** Goredigis isn’t in business for his health – his aim is to prolong the case as much as possible, so long as he continues to receive the maximum possible fees. He really doesn’t give a toss about the rights and wrongs of most cases, and thinks that generally the dear departed must have been a blithering idiot to leave his affairs in such a mess. Naturally he never admits any of this to clients!

**Traits:** Snob, Pious hypocrite, Lawyer, Miser

Note that it isn’t usually necessary to list all attacks for an NPC dragon, since they can easily be extrapolated from BODY and Brawling skill etc. if needed.

Dragon NPCs, in general, should be played much like Victorian and Edwardian ladies and gentlemen (who just happen to have wings, scales and occasional cannibal urges). Focus on motives and personality, and worry about the teeth and claws afterwards. The full *Forgotten Futures* rules include a wide range of human NPCs whose personalities could easily be used for draconic characters; just raise the BODY and any related skills and add a special ability or two. Players will never know if you don’t tell them. The adventures include sample characters and several detailed draconic NPCs; where possible they’ve been designed for maximum usefulness in a wide range of plots.

Yarge are more of a problem; it’s obvious that their cultures aren’t much like the traditional Victorians, and they will always be odd outsiders from the dragon viewpoint, and vice versa. It’s important to emphasise this when dragons interact with them. They have odd and barely-pronounceable names, eat weird cooked food, have no patience, and look disgusting. See page 32 onwards for more on their personalities. Dragons should start off thinking that they all look and sound alike, and take a while to appreciate their differences. Similarly, Yarge NPCs will have trouble telling dragons apart; most know that females are gold, pink, or red but that’s about it. This can be a running gag; whenever the dragons are in a Yarge area where any dragon has ever committed any sort of offensive act, someone will accuse them of being the dragons in question. Again, it probably isn’t necessary to keep a full character record for every Yarge in an adventure; a list of characteristics and the most relevant skills, plus brief notes on their significance, should be all that’s needed. For example:

**Stross, the Evil Retainer, Age 55, Yarge servant**

BODY [3], MIND [5], SOUL [3], Detective [7], Stealth [9], Thief [8]

**Quote:** *“Will that be all...”* [pauses and sneers] *“...sir?”*

**Possessions:** Heavy pistol, small bottle spirits, lock picks.

**Notes:** Stross knows at least three damning secrets about his master or mistress, and blackmails guests. An expert at oiliness, materialising just before he is called, skulking in shadows, eavesdropping, and general skulduggery.

For dragon and Yarge alike, the important point is that the referee should be able to “flesh out” such characters with some appearance of a personality as needed. For many minor characters much less is needed; for example, when describing a large group of soldiers it’s probably enough to work out what equipment they all carry, and possibly prepare the name and other details of their leader, without going into much detail on individual soldiers. As always, the aim should be to minimise the work you do preparing adventures, and maximise your enjoyment.

## Rules Changes Summarised

This version of the rules has been rewritten especially for dragon player characters. If you're already familiar with the *Forgotten Futures* rules this synopsis of the changes may be helpful. It's recommended that you use the revised rules if you are running a game with dragon characters, the ordinary rules for all other settings. The main changes are as follows:

- There's a special character record sheet for dragons. (pg. 51)
- Dragons get variable character points according to their class, age, etc., and pay a lower price for BODY. A quarter to a half of all character points must be spent on BODY. There is no maximum value for BODY. Dragons automatically have BODY / 5 armour (pg. 52).
- Various skill changes (pg. 53-54 & 64-71):
  - Two new skills, Flying and Mesmerism, have been added. They can only be used by dragons.
  - Babbage Engine is not available in this setting.
  - Pilot and Martial Arts are available to Yarge only.
  - Stealth has a low starting value for dragons, BODY / 4.
  - Dragons can only drive vehicles designed for their use. The skill base is MIND, not av. B&M.
  - The Morse Code skill has been replaced by Signals, but use remains unchanged.
  - The skill base for dragon thieves is MIND / 2.
- Dragons can spend character points to buy special abilities including flame, armour and other forms of damage resistance, and fearsomeness (pg. 55).
- The optional rules related to dice rolls for characteristics, skills, etc. have been amalgamated into the main rules and simplified a little. 2 *always* succeeds unless you are trying to do something physically impossible, the "big numbers" rule is used if *either* number is above 12. The "attack versus defence" table has been omitted (pg. 58).
- Dragons can gain BODY by eating other dragons, or trade it for special abilities (pg. 61-63).
- Dragons have natural armour, and use a different hit location table from humans (pg. 77).
- Dragons can use multiple attacks including claws, biting, constriction, flame, etc. No special skills are needed for this, just normal dragon abilities (pg. 78).
- Some changes to weapons reflecting the available technology and abilities of dragons (pg. 79-80)
- A range of character traits covering various aspects of personality are described (pg. 83-89).
- Magic is optional; if used it draws power from the magician's BODY, or from dragon flesh consumed by the magician (pg. 82).
- Generic NPCs, examples of animals, and other material not specific to this setting have been omitted.

## Use with Other *Forgotten Futures* Settings

There have been nine previous *Forgotten Futures* releases, all of them describing at least one game setting. Most of them would not necessarily be improved by the presence of dragons, but that doesn't mean that they can't exist in some form. Perhaps they live in a hidden enclave on the very edge of civilization; perhaps they're around but disguise their presence. Maybe they're just waiting to be found. For example:

*FF II* is set in a solar system in which antigravity was discovered in 1900, and most worlds are habitable. For this setting it would be very easy to add dragons – Tiamath and the Yarge countries are on Venus! There's a minor difference in the length of the year, which can easily be ignored. The first Terran explorers visited one of the other continents, where they discovered a race of flying humans and

concluded that they had never fallen from grace. Because the planet is shrouded in clouds they never saw any other part of the planet, and never realised that there were other intelligent species elsewhere. Later explorers could find them. In this sort of setting it's traditional that the Terran explorers take the human side in whatever war happens to be in progress; unfortunately this may mean that powerful flying warships will be deployed against Tiamath, with possibly catastrophic results. A neat twist on this might be that one of Tiamath's Yarge neighbours is attacked by the Terran invaders (there's ample precedent for this in pulp SF and in the source book *A Honeymoon in Space*), who have their own evil agenda; perhaps they're stealing beautiful Yarge princesses, or trying to convert the Yarge to their incomprehensibly alien cross religion. Dragons might be able to reach the Terran ships as they rain destruction down on the Yarge; if they don't help, it may only be a matter of time before the alien invaders turn their attention to Tiamath. Of course the Terrans have Maxim guns and other nasty surprises, so this won't exactly be safe or easy...

*FF III* is based on Doyle's Professor Challenger novels including *The Lost World*, and deals with some other weird science ideas including the Hollow Earth. Maybe Tiamath and the Yarge countries are somewhere in the Earth's interior, just waiting to be found when a sufficiently powerful subterrene digging machine is invented. The arrival of strange invaders from the Outside is likely to be a mixed blessing.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, *FF VIII* is based on Nesbit's children's fantasies, and is the only other *Forgotten Futures* setting with dragons, somewhat different to those of Tiamath. Nesbit's stories include several different types of dragon, and one of the adventures includes a visit to a dragon world modelled on Imperial China. Many of the dragons in this setting can use magic and take human form; some are capable of travel between dimensions. They would undoubtedly regard Tiamath's dragons as primitives, cannibals lacking in many of the skills and arts that they take for granted. On the other hand they would soon realise that the Yarge are everything they hate about the humans of other worlds, violent savages who would think nothing of killing any dragon who gets in their way. Their most likely response is an offer to evacuate any dragon who wishes to make a new home under the Dragon Emperor's rule. Or if Tiamath's dragons can't learn to travel between dimensions, the Emperor may offer military aid. Since he has a large, well-armed and under-utilised army this may be his preferred solution; a few decades of war would get rid of the over-ambitious incompetents. Of course it probably won't do Tiamath much good, especially if the Emperor eventually loses interest and pulls out his troops without giving the dragons an escape route.

Human wizards in *FF VIII* are usually children, and may be able to reach Tiamath's world under their own power. Dragons ought to regard this as being as frightening, in its own way, as an alien invasion – strange Yarge hatchlings with weird powers appearing out of nowhere are the sort of thing that's usually only seen in the most lurid scientific romances. And in the scientific romances, of course, the plucky dragon hero eventually wipes out the evil little fiends before their invasion succeeds! Humans who have previously visited more welcoming dragon dimensions may be in for a nasty surprise.

## Rules Publication History

- 1993 First published in ASCII text form.
- 1997 First printed publication (abridged rules as free booklet with *Arcane* magazine).
- 1998 Revised and converted to HTML.
- 1999 Full-length printed publication (Heliograph Inc.)
- 2004-5 PDF versions of abridged rules (edited by David Bruns)  
German PDF version of abridged rules (translated & edited by David Bruns)
- 2005 Revised and expanded HTML version.
- 2006 Updated version converted to PDF.
- 2008 Draconic translation (PDF and HTML).

---

<sup>1</sup> A version of this plot is used for an adventure in the *Diana: Warrior Princess* supplement *Elvis: The Legendary Tours*. While this game does not use the *Forgotten Futures* rules, it may be of interest to readers. But I would say that, of course...



## Adventures

**T**his section is written primarily for referees, and if you will be playing a character in any of the scenarios you are strongly advised not to read past this page. Knowledge of things to come won't make you a better player, or give you any special advantages; it just spoils a lot of the fun if you know what the referee plans to throw at you.

There are two full-length adventures on the following pages, plus an "omnibus" of short outlines with a framing plot. All of them were written for 3-6 player characters, but in a pinch can probably be run for larger or smaller groups. There are detailed stats for six characters on the following pages, used by the author for play-tests and demonstration games.

Nothing that follows is directly related to the events of *Tooth and Claw* or *Those Who Favor Fire*; it's probably best to assume that the adventures are set during the century or so between the two books.

- In **The Tenant of Copper Caverns** guests visiting a fashionable country home celebrate the New Year with a wealthy host whose wife has some odd ideas about pre-Subjugation history... but something sinister may be stirring. With political intrigue very much in the air the adventurers need to be careful not to jump to conclusions.
- Next, **The Crimson Claw Assurance Society** sends the adventurers out to sea, to investigate the disappearance of Yarge ships flying Tiamath's flag. They need to solve the mystery fast, before Tiamath's lucrative insurance businesses collapse and take down the economy with them. It's a high-stakes game with some exotic players. In the optional epilogue **Masters of the Mutoscope**, set forty years later, they get to play themselves in an all-star production based (loosely) on their adventures.
- Finally, **Amazing Things Every Dragonet Should Know** sees the adventurers helping with research for the Blessed Jamanah's latest book. It's a framing plot that explains involvement in any type of adventure, with scenario outlines that can be run alone or as part of an ongoing campaign.

Before running these adventures you will need to print out maps and other handouts, and may wish to purchase or build models and other props; for example, the second adventure needs a ship – a cut-out model can be downloaded from the author's web site, but some assembly is required – and possibly some models of sharks and other ocean creatures. It's worth mentioning here that models sold as ornaments or toys are usually much cheaper than those sold specifically for gaming purposes. See e.g. eBay for numerous models of dragons.

## Sample Adventurers

These characters have been used in play-tests and demonstration games. They are *not* a perfectly coordinated team of adventurers, just a semi-random selection of character types who might be thrown together by chance or circumstances beyond their control. Note that the character descriptions do not list money or much in the way of wealth or possessions, since they were varied from one adventure to another, and that some of the characters have been used in the examples of play in the rules.

### Respected Segievel Yepragis – Author/ Journalist, age 220, Sex M

BODY [8], MIND [4], SOUL [3], Length 24ft, Tough 1pt

**Wounds:** B, F, I, I, I, C

**Skills:** Artist [6] (writer, penmanship), Brawling [8], Business [5], Flying [8], Linguist [5], (Migantine, Belshululine, Danithine), Marksmanship [6], Scholar [6] (The Yarge, Conspiracy Theories, Military history), Stealth [2]

**Equipment:** Notebook, pen and pencils, ink, assorted personal junk of little value, hat, gold hat pin

Weapon	Mult.	Effect	A	B	C
Front claws x2 (Effect B+1)	2	9	F	I	C
Rear claws x2 (Effect B+2)	No	10	F	I	C/K
Bite (Effect B+2)	No	10	F	I	C/K
Constrict (Effect B+1)	No	9	I	I	C
Tail Strike (Effect B/2)	No	4	F	I	I+KO
Armour = Body / 5 + Scales	-	2	-	-	-



**Notes:** You are a conspiracy theorist / “technothriller” style scientific romance writer, with several moderately successful novels to your credit. You believe that the Yarge are a clear and present danger to Dragonkind, and your novels try to alert other dragons to this peril. You employ Sethod Woyime, a widow, as your part time secretary / accountant. Unlike most male dragons you have learned to hold a pen (despite claws) to write. You live in the Migantine Quarter of Irieth, where you can study the Yarge while still having the protection of draconic law.

**Traits:** Snob, Patriot, Rational Fear of Yarge, Nominally Religious, Confirmed Bachelor.

### Blessed Kellis Derwig - Parson, Age 260, Sex M

BODY [11], MIND [4], SOUL [3], Length 35ft

**Wounds:** B, F, I, I, C

**Skills:** Actor (preach) [6], Brawling [11] (see below), Flying [11] (see below), Linguist [5] (Migantine, Lipahis, Yegithi), Mesmerism [4] (affects Yarge only), Scholar [5] (Religion, religious history, Yarge religions), Stealth [3]

**Equipment:** Holy books, pen and ink, cords for wings, hat.

Weapon	Mult.	Effect	A	B	C
Front claws x2 (Effect B+1)	2	12	F	I	C
Rear claws x2 (Effect B+2)	No	13	F	I	C/K
Bite (Effect B+2)	No	13	F	I	C/K
Constrict (Effect B+1)	No	12	I	I	C
Tail Strike (Effect B/2)	No	6	F	I	I+KO
Armour = Body / 5 + Scales	-	3	-	-	-



**Notes:** A priest who has lost much of his faith, and suffers from an unfortunate addiction to gambling. You try to do Veld’s work, but it isn’t easy when you are increasingly unsure that Veld even exists. You have had a succession of dead-end parishes, and no hope of promotion within the faith. You would like to marry but can’t afford to, and don’t know a suitable female anyway. You live at your current church in one of Irieth’s slum districts.

As a parson your wings are bound when you are in public and you *may not fight under any circumstance, or fly except to save your life*, or if there is no other way to tend to the spiritual needs of your parishioners – other dragons must respect your bindings and may not challenge you.

**Traits:** Bachelor, Orphan, Moderate patriot, Curiosity about Yarge, Addiction to Gambling.

**Lieutenant Gethack Mothies, Soldier (invalided out), Age 120, Sex M**

BODY [9], MIND [2], SOUL [2], Length 28ft, Flame, Thick scales 1, Fearsome

**Wounds:** B, F, I, I, C

**Skills:** Brawling [11], Flying [10], Marksman [4], Military Arms [5], Stealth [4]

**Equipment:** Rifle & 50 rounds, pistol & 30 rounds, field kit with various useful things (some rope, water canteen, a tent, gadget for taking stones out from between your claws, etc.), hat

Weapon	Mult.	Effect	A	B	C
Front claws x2 (Effect B + 1)	2	10	F	I	C
Rear claws x2 (Effect B + 2)	No	11	F	I	C/K
Bite (Effect B + 2)	No	11	F	I	C/K
Constrict (Effect B + 1)	No	10	I	I	C
Tail Strike (Effect B/2)	No	5	F	I	I+KO
Flame (Radius Body/5 ft., Effect B/2)	2 ft radius	5	I	C	K
Hunting rifle, 2 barrels	No	10	I	C	K
Pistol, 2 barrels	No	10	I	I	C/K
Armour = Body / 5 + Scales	-	3	-	-	-



**Notes:** You have been invalided out of the army following an accident with a cannon – you have no hearing in your left ear, and your face is best described as ruggedly handsome, for somewhat scarred versions of “rugged” – Yarge find you fearsome for some reason. You’re lucky that your comrades didn’t decide that you were too badly injured to recover and eat you.

You have a small pension and have taken a succession of odd (sometimes VERY odd) jobs. Of course you have to be careful; you’re an officer and a gentleman, so some careers (such as thug, which you think you might enjoy) are out of the question. You have rooms in Irieth.

**Traits:** Promiscuous, Indifferent to your family (younger son with no prospect of inheriting), Extreme Patriot.

**Dignified Hathor Yoverack, Aristocratic young idler, Age 90, Sex M**

BODY [7], MIND [3], SOUL [3], Length 21ft, Tough 1

**Wounds:** B, F, I, I, I, C

**Skills:** Actor [4] (comic songs), Brawling [8], Business [5], Flying [9], Linguist [4] (Migantine, Rasdogi), Marksman [4], First Aid [4], Mesmerism (usable on Yarge only) [5]

**Equipment:** Light Rifle & 20 rounds, several hats

Weapon	Mult.	Effect	A	B	C
Front claws x2 (Effect B + 1)	2	10	F	I	C
Rear claws x2 (Effect B + 2)	No	11	F	I	C/K
Bite (Effect B + 2)	No	11	F	I	C/K
Constrict (Effect B + 1)	No	10	I	I	C
Tail Strike (Effect B/2)	No	5	F	I	I+KO
Light rifle, 2 barrels	No	8	I	C	K
Armour = Body / 5 + Scales	-	3	-	-	-



**Notes:** You’re just a young dragon-about-town living on some of the income from your family’s estate in the Southern Mountains. Ghastly hole, and you really don’t want to go near the place while your father is alive, which probably means for the next couple of hundred years. Meanwhile you live at your Club in Irieth, and have occasionally visited Migantil and other foreign parts. You have a strange talent for mesmerising Yarge – you just trick them into looking into your eyes, and more often than not they’ll do anything you want. You have used this talent a few times for elaborate practical jokes. You sometimes go firehunting (shooting) and have a light rifle for birds. You have learned a little first aid following some hunting accidents. You are usually accompanied by your servant, Chigal. You suspect that he spies on you for your family.

**Traits:** Egalitarian (provided nobody too awful wants to be treated as an equal), Unthinkingly Devout, Eligible Bachelor, Curious about Yarge, Spendthrift.

### Chigal, Indentured Servant, Age 220, Sex M

BODY [5], MIND [4], SOUL [2], Length 16ft

**Wounds:** B, F, I, I, C

**Skills:** Brawling [5], Flying [5] (but wings are bound), Thief [6], Stealth [4]

**Equipment:** Cloth cap

Weapon	Mult.	Effect	A	B	C
Front claws x2 (Effect B+1)	2	6	F	I	C
Rear claws x2 (Effect B+2)	No	7	F	I	C/K
Bite (Effect B+2)	No	7	F	I	C/K
Constrict (Effect B+1)	No	6	I	I	C
Tail Strike (Effect B/2)	No	3	F	I	I+KO
Armour = Body / 5 + Scales	-	1	-	-	-



**Notes:** You are Dignified Hathor's manservant, and tend to think of yourself as the brains of the pair, although he would disagree if he had any idea of your thoughts. Mostly your job is to keep an eye on him, make sure his hats are clean and his room is tidy and vermin-free, and report back to his father occasionally. You live in the servants' hovel adjoining his club.

As an indentured servant your wings are bound tightly, even if they were released you would have trouble flying at first. The only reason why you don't run off is that you would be hunted as an outlaw.

You are a moderately adept thief, mostly going after good food and spirits. You are on the verge of alcoholism.

**Traits:** Misodrachist (hates most other dragons especially your employers), pious hypocrite (pays lip-service to the Orthodox Faith), family unknown, fear of Yarge.

### Respectable Kitisel Hraden, Widow, Age 340, Sex F

BODY [8], MIND [5], SOUL [3], Length 22ft, Fearsome

**Wounds:** B, F, I, I, C

**Skills:** Actor [6], Artist (Painter) [5], Brawling [8], Business [7], Flying [8], Psychology [6], Thief (forger) [6]

**Equipment:** Writing and painting cases with various interesting inks, samples of official paper, etc. Lock picks. Several fashionable hats.

Weapon	Mult.	Effect	A	B	C
Front claws x2 (Effect B-1)	2	7	F	I	C
Rear claws x2 (Effect B+2)	No	10	F	I	C/K
Bite (Effect B+2)	No	10	F	I	C/K
Constrict (Effect B+1)	No	9	I	I	C
Tail Strike (Effect B/2)	No	4	F	I	I+KO
Armour = Body / 5 + Scales	-	2	-	-	-



**Notes:** The world knows you as Kitisel Hraden, widow of a captain killed by Yarge bandits, but 200 years ago you were feted as Kinetika Hilideris, the actress and courtesan. Following a brawl between rival lovers you became an embarrassment to the aristocrats who had formerly professed to adore you – you couldn't hide the fact that you were sexually active, and it became common knowledge that you had never married. Eventually you were booed off the stage, and had to accept that your career was over. You reinvented yourself as Kitisel, with faked documents to "prove" your respectability, and have been living off your savings and investment, and gifts from various lovers, ever since. You have mature good looks – but Yarge find you terrifying.

**Traits:** False widow, promiscuous, distrusts lawyers, pities Yarge (they have short lives and can't fly, and act so oddly when you're around), good investor, fashionable.



## The Tenant of Copper Caverns

The great cave complexes occupied by Tiamath's noble families are the draconic equivalent of the largest Yarge country houses and castles, immense symbols of fortune and power. But natural caves in desirable locations are at a premium, and the largest are invariably occupied by the oldest and grandest families. Those of less exalted status may have to find alternatives, even if they can afford the country lifestyle. One such alternative is Copper Caverns, a copper mine that became uneconomical to work several hundred years ago and was subsequently converted to residential use.



The caverns are roughly 40 miles from the mines of Tolga, about the same distance from the Teltsie estate, as the dragon flies. The main surface access is a branch line from Spalt, a small village on the railway to Tolga; when it was built the Caverns were occupied by a director of the railway company who had the authority to order such an uneconomic project. Today the tenant of Copper Caverns must subsidise maintenance of the line to the tune of 75 crowns a year. There's a weekly service from Tolga, often suspended for two or three weeks at the end of winter due to the risk of avalanches, used mainly to bring in food and guests. Beasts can be driven overland from the Teltsie estate during the summer months, and some food comes in that way, but the route is impassable once the snow sets in.

The Caverns have had several tenants; while superficially a very attractive residence, they have very little grazing nearby and are completely snowed in from Icewinter to Thaw, so despite their impressive size they tend to be a rich dragon's folly rather than a serious country estate.

The current occupant is Illustrious Vimier Tenecel, best known as owner of the *Irieth Journal* and other publishing concerns in the capital. He's a genuine member of an old noble family, not a newcomer who has bought or married into a title, but his business interests are occasionally perceived as making the family a little "shop-soiled" amongst the nobility, though not as badly as though he were involved in something like the manufacturing industries. He has a reputation as a literary and artistic patron, and the guests at his frequent parties often include authors, poets, and other figures from this world. He is currently considered a likely candidate for the next vacant seat in the Noble Assembly, since the *Journal* generally supports the majority peace faction.

One of the obstacles to Tenecel's candidacy may be his wife, Illust Hethikah Tenecel, who has written three books claiming that the Church is repressing dragonesses and has suppressed the "true" Draconic religion, a matriarchal nature-worshipping faith in which the Mother-Goddess was Azashan! This isn't quite as crackpot an idea as it sounds, since some theologians have speculated along similar lines. They generally agree that the Yarge conquerors did most of the suppressing, and that the pre-Subjugation religions probably deserved it. However, her books aren't just theology or history; she describes rituals in far more detail than can be known from anything the archaeologists have found. As authority for these startling ideas she claims to be the last High Priestess of the cult, reincarnated.

They have one son, Dignified Captain Amer Tenecel, currently at home on medical leave following a skirmish with Yarge bandits on the South-East Frontier. Most dragons won't know much about him, but those with military connections may be aware that he has a reputation as a solid courageous officer who is popular with the soldiers he leads and respected by his superiors.

As the adventure begins the adventurers have been invited to spend a few days at Copper Caverns, to join the family and other guests in celebrating the New Year. There will be a ball on New Year's Eve, the food and drink will probably be good, and anyone seeking influential friends could do a lot worse.

**Troubleshooting:** Some characters, especially members of the lower classes, may be unlikely guests at a wealthy party. Servants might accompany their employers; members of the criminal classes and other riff-raff may be another matter. Some possibilities for their presence include workmen enlarging one of the tunnels or repairing some other feature of the Caverns; temporary employees hired to help the servants cope with the number of guests; thieves casing the Caverns while pretending to be guests or servants; the lower-class lover or mistress of one of the guests, etc. The referee should discuss these problems with players and agree a solution before running the adventure. This adventure is not suitable for Yarge characters since it is set primarily in a cave complex with little artificial lighting.

## The Situation (Referees ONLY)

The host for the party is Illustrious Vimier Tenecel, a well-known publisher who is likely to become a Member of the Noble Assembly next Season.

As is well known, to obtain office Members must be supported by petitions signed by at least a hundred free male dragons. Obtaining the necessary signatures (in most cases a witnessed “X” since male dragons can rarely write) isn’t easy, and in most areas well-oiled political machinery ensures that once a dragon has been elected, he will continue to receive support in subsequent years. The most common means for a newcomer to be elected are the creation of a new constituency or the death of a previous incumbent, with the party machinery throwing its weight behind a suitable replacement.

Currently one of the older members, Illustrious Yenalle of Tolgar East, is gravely ill and unlikely to survive the winter. Tenecel is the obvious replacement; he supports the same party, he’s a major employer in Tolgar, and a personal friend of Yenalle. He’s also rich enough to be able to take on the responsibilities of a member, such as paying the expenses of the party machinery that helps to keep him in office. He’s agreed to take the seat, and the work of rounding up the necessary nominations is well under way. If there are no scandals or unexpected surprises he is almost certain to be elected.

There’s one problem. While Yenalle and Tenecel agree on many issues, they are on opposite sides of a key political dispute, one that crosses party lines. Yenalle belongs to the majority War Faction, which believes that a “short victorious war” against the Yarge should begin now, while Tiamath has some chance of winning. Tenecel supports the minority Peace Faction, which has no faith in the idea that any war is guaranteed to be short or victorious, and would prefer to postpone it until it is unavoidable.

Members of the War Faction want massive investment in armaments; some of them are so anxious to see Tiamath well-protected that they have invested their own fortunes in the industry, and will lose everything if there is a general reduction in military spending. The Peace Faction would prefer to take things more slowly, acquiring financial and political influence in the Yarge world to dissuade war. Note that the Peace Faction also believes that war may eventually be inevitable; its members are just a little less convinced of the practicality of a pre-emptive strike without some other factor (such as a war between two rival Yarge nations) to stave off the full weight of Yarge retaliation. The most pessimistic members of this faction suspect that there are secret treaties between the Yarge nations to ensure that they will unite against any draconic threat, setting aside their own differences until the danger is past.

If Tenecel is elected in Yenalle’s place, and there are no surprises in the other new Members, his vote will finally give the Peace Faction a large enough minority to force military appropriations bills to go to a second reading, causing delays at every stage of the procurement process. If Tenecel isn’t chosen the next most likely candidate supports the War Faction, which would maintain the status quo and allow Tiamath to continue to develop militarily.

To put Tenecel out of the running the war faction needs to discredit him somehow, but he appears to be doing nothing blatantly immoral or illegal. Now attention is shifting to his family and to events at Copper Caverns in general; a nice juicy scandal there might be exactly what is needed. His wife Hethikah

seems the most likely target for intrigue – her weird beliefs and outspoken attitudes are beginning to attract attention – but it's always possible that their son could harbour some dark secret. Needless to say Tiamath's other political factions also have an interest in his candidature.

Give each of the adventurers a mission related to Tenecel's candidacy, to the caverns, or to the family in general – examples for the sample adventurers can be found on the next page. Missions should give the adventurers goals which concern Tenecel. For example, the mission designed for Kellis Derwig could be adapted to any parson; the mission for Gethack Mothies might easily suit any soldier of similar age to Amer Tenecel.

Meanwhile a much more serious intrigue is about to begin, which may result in the death of Vimier Tenecel if the adventurers don't intervene.

The guests include Dignified Ereg Avageth and Dignified Goredigis Avageth, nephews of Illustrious Tenecel. Neither has much in the way of prospects; their mother, the late Oshenitara Avageth *nee* Tenecel, married for love, not money. Five years ago she and her husband were killed in a railway accident while touring Belshulath. Thanks to Yarge incompetence or malice the bodies decayed before they reached the brothers, so that they inherited little income and no flesh from their parents.

Illustrious Tenecel wasn't very sympathetic – he feels that they aren't children and ought to take more responsibility for their own lives – and now they are poor relatives, dependent on the rest of the family for charity. Somehow they've convinced themselves that killing Illustrious Tenecel and eating his body will help solve their problems – while they don't know the contents of his will, they're probably in line for some financial inheritance, and he's a large dragon. The snag is that if he disappears they won't immediately inherit, and if both nephews suddenly gain size it will be obvious what they did. The plan can only work if they can somehow provide airtight evidence of his death but delay eating his body. This isn't as impossible as it sounds; winter is approaching, and there's a glacier ten miles to the South-West which never thaws. Their plan, briefly, is to lure Tenecel out to the glacier, kill him, decapitate him, bury his body in ice, and dump his head where it will be found. Weeks later they'll return, dig out the body and share it. To make things less obvious one of them will stay close to the caverns and try to give the impression that both of them are around while the other is killing him. It's a risky plan, but if they play their cards right and don't give the game away it might just work. The snag is that they are incompetent plotters, forever whispering together and arguing (stopping and looking guilty whenever anyone notices them) and their behaviour should hopefully arouse everyone's suspicions, and lead to their undoing.

Optionally if Tenecel is killed there may be another suspect. Copper Caverns is generally considered to be played out as a mine, because the main lode has been exhausted and the value of the copper remaining is less than it would cost to extract it. Over the last few years the Yarge have begun to experiment with methods of sending signals via the electric fluid, conveyed through miles of copper wire, and the price of copper has begun to creep up to meet the demand. Tiamath's postal service and railways are on the verge of agreeing to construct a similar system, and it's a safe bet that the price of copper will rise again when there's a new local customer. The owners of Copper Caverns, a consortium trading as Tolga Mineral Rights Ltd., have decided that it's time to re-open the mine; residential use has never paid particularly well, and they hope to persuade Tenecel to end his lease thirty years early and give them vacant possession. One of the directors of the company, Respected Yoverack Huvager, is going to be at the party anyway, and his co-directors have asked him to discuss the possibility with Tenecel. They'll have a furious argument before Tenecel is killed, leaving Huvager as prime suspect.

If the brothers don't appeal as murderers, perhaps Huvager will turn out to be the killer, perhaps someone else – several alternatives are discussed at the end of the adventure, including the adventurers!

Before running this adventure you are strongly advised to read the description of Copper Caverns that follows, decide which NPCs will be used and read the outline of events, remembering that things are certain to change as the adventurers get involved. This is a complicated situation, and referees should be ready to improvise as they handle it.

<p><b>Segievel Yeparagis</b></p>	<p>Your publisher, Vimier Tenecel, is likely to become a member of the Noble Assembly. You find this disturbing since you know that he has pro-Yarge leanings and in the past has required you to amend some passages of your books to make them less “offensive” to the enemies of all Dragonkind. You have heard that his election will tip the balance of the Assembly towards pacifism, and may leave the nation unprepared for the inevitable conflict that is to come. Friends with an interest in these matters have heard that you will attend his New Year’s party and requested your help in eliminating him as a candidate. Obviously you need to do so without alienating him or harming his business interests – you still need a publisher! Whatever you do must be subtle. You have a week to think of something, and an inventive mind; it ought to be possible to find a way.</p>
<p><b>Kellis Derwig</b></p>	<p>Illustrious Tenecel has invited you to attend his New Years party and conduct services on Firstday of the New Year. He has a reputation as a generous host, and your curate can take care of things at your parish – your superiors in the Faith want you to give him more experience for him, and it’s not likely that the paupers and vagabonds who make up the bulk of your parishioners care. There is an unexpected consequence to your acceptance; your superiors tell you that Tenecel may be selected for the next vacant seat in the Noble Assembly; he appears to adhere to the Orthodox Faith, but he has friends who follow the Old Religion, and his wife allegedly has some very odd ideas about pre-Subjugation religions. The Church wants to be sure that he is genuinely Orthodox; maybe you’ll learn something from his family and friends, or by watching events over the next few days. If you do well it may help your career – Veld knows you need some sort of miracle!</p>
<p><b>Gethack Mothies</b></p>	<p>Captain Amer Tenecel, once a fellow cadet, is on medical leave and has invited you to his family’s New Year’s party. While your career was ended by your injuries, Amer expects to make a full recovery and seems to be destined for higher things, and he’s chosen to rub that in your face by inviting you to the party. He’s also engaged to Miregah Felandra, a beauty you’ve long lusted after, though it’s your impression that the engagement is based more convenience than undying love – she’d be much pinker if that were the case. Maybe there’s still a chance for you there, though you need to be discreet; Tenecel is about your size but much fitter, apart from his wound, and has a formidable reputation as a fighter. His father also has a lot of influence, and you’ve heard he’s after a seat in the Noble Assembly; it wouldn’t do to get on his bad side!</p>
<p><b>Hathor Yoverack</b></p>	<p>You’ve been invited to celebrate the New Year with the Tenecel family, friends of your parents (though you try not to hold that against them). Your father wants you to get in with the “arty” set, and suggested (not very subtly) that you might want to think about a career in publishing, which is old Tenecel’s line of business. But that isn’t his only motive; while you’re at Copper Caverns your father wants you to take a look around the place, memorize the layout, and discreetly collect samples of rock from as many different areas as possible. It sounds silly, because everyone knows that the old mine is played out, but maybe there’s something there apart from copper. With his industrial connections your father would know. What you know is that your father controls the purse-strings, and can make things very difficult for you if you don’t do as he asks.</p>
<p><b>Chigal</b></p>	<p>When you were a child your parents sold you into service; your first master was Vimier Tenecel, but he seemed to think that you were insolent, and within a few years he sold your contract on to the Yoverack family. As a result you lost all contact with your own family, and now can’t even remember their names. This is the first time you’ve returned to the Caverns, and you plan to take the opportunity to snoop a little and learn more of your family. There may still be servants around who remember the circumstances, or papers related to your indenture or sale. And you hear that Tenecel is about to enter the world of politics; it would be nice to do something to mess up his chances and get a little revenge, if you can get away with it.</p>
<p><b>Kitsel Hraden</b></p>	<p>Vimier Tenecel was one of your lovers 200 years ago, but quickly distanced himself from you when you were disgraced. You had no problem with this, although a little financial help wouldn’t have come amiss when you changed your identity. Like any other respectable widow you are expected to do Good Works such as helping charities; you chose to do so by visiting injured officers and soldiers in Irieth, and reading to them while they were bedridden. One of the patients you visited was Amer Tenecel, Vimier’s son, who has now invited you to a party at his family’s caves. It might be a little embarrassing if Vimier realises who you are, but it’s a moderately important society event and tongues could wag if you decline the invitation.</p>

## Copper Caverns

Tenecel's home is a disused copper mine in a deep rocky ravine about forty miles as the dragon flies, or sixty by rail, from Tolga.

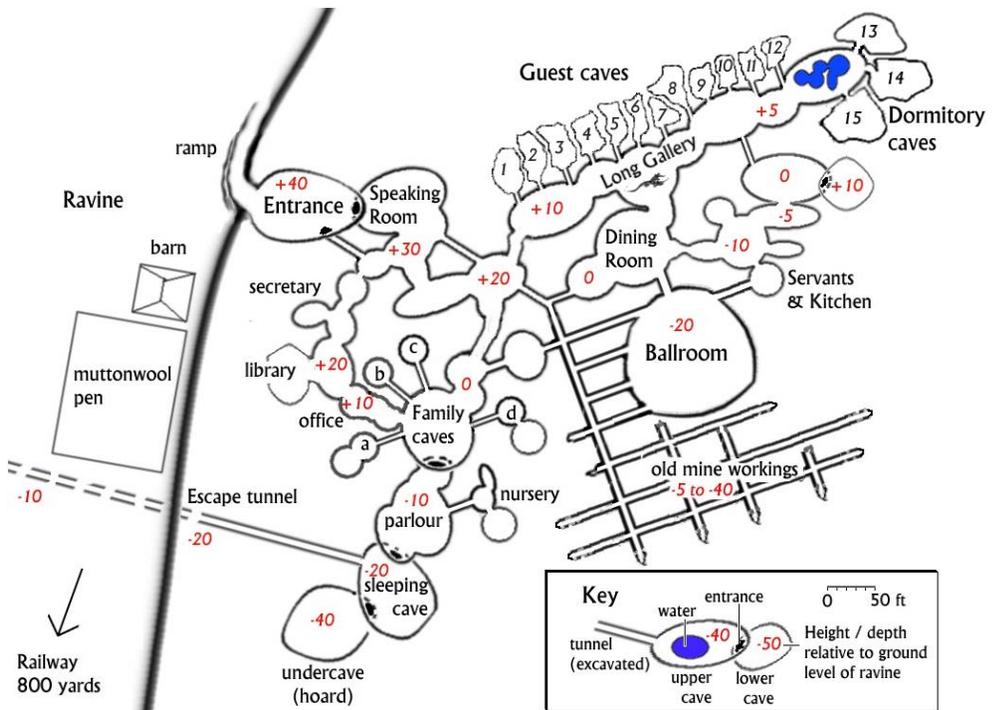
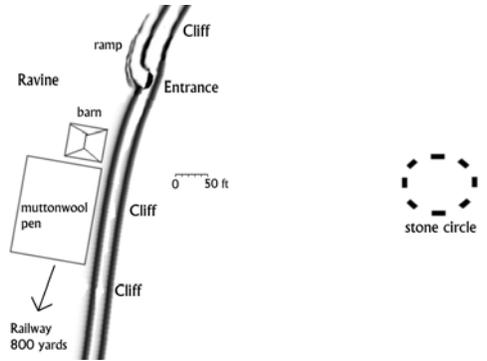
The entrance is a cave about 40ft up a hundred-foot cliff on the east side of the ravine; after traces of copper were found in the entrance to the cave system, the natural tunnels were cleared and expanded and the rubble was used to construct the access ramp and the track bed for the railway, which now terminates about a mile down the ravine – the last half-mile or so of track was buried by a landslide a hundred years ago and the tenant at that time refused to pay for it to be repaired; it was cheaper to end the line further from the cave.

Guests arriving by train will find the walk pleasant; there is a levelled path, passing pens of swine and bees (not shown on the plans), a pen of muttonwools and a barn. There is no grazing in the vicinity, apart from a vegetable garden fertilised by wastes from the animals and the caverns, so all fodder is ferried in by train, making it an expensive place to keep livestock.

Anyone flying to the Caverns will notice an irregular ring of stone blocks, each about ten by twenty feet and five feet high, on the cliff top. These give the impression of immense age and mystery, but in fact are just blocks put there to keep the rain out of old excavations; each block covers a hole drilled to find the mother-lode of ore, which originally occupied the area that is now the ballroom on the plan below. This was excavated over several hundred years, leaving a high-ceilinged cavity and a network of side tunnels originally used to search for more ore.

Miners continued to find ore in smaller and less accessible lodes until the falling price of copper made it uneconomic to continue. When this became clear, and a careful survey failed to find anything else worth mining, the mine was closed down for a few years, changed hands several times, and was eventually converted for residential use. The conversion consisted of clearing out the mining debris, closing some of the tunnels and expanding others, making the tunnels and chambers look less like a mine and more like natural caverns, digging alcoves to allow dragonesses to retreat from males, and so forth, in imitation of a natural cave complex. The plan shows the larger features but omits smaller details such as alcoves, doors and furniture.

The **entrance** is kept clear to allow visitors to glide in for a landing, although it's generally considered better manners to land outside and walk the rest of the way. Unusually this large entrance is accessible by ramp from the canyon floor; a more typical country home would have a small, separate and easily defended entrance for visitors on foot, and a main entrance with a large landing platform that was only accessible from the air. Instead the main concession to security is a pair of steel gates to close the entrance; they'd deter casual



intruders such as Yarge bandits, but wouldn't stop a military assault.

As is customary the **speaking room** contains no valuables. One of the walls is carved with an intricate three-dimensional representation of the area around the Caverns as it was when they were still a working mine, another is a representation of Tolga from the air. The ceiling is painted to match the night sky, with inlaid flecks of quartz marking familiar constellations, and there is a mosaic map of Irieth inlaid into the stone floor. This isn't very detailed, and doesn't show anything unexpected or unusual. Conservatively-minded dragons will consider the chamber as a whole to be a little ostentatious and over-decorated, artistic dragons may feel that more could have been done with the space; whatever the opinion, they can agree that it's pleasingly gloomy, with little natural light past the entrance cave. Tastefully positioned lamps and patches of cultivated phosphorescent algae and fungi provide the little light dragons need.

A member of the family will probably greet visitors in the entrance when they arrive, and servants, family or guests may be encountered there at any time.

Guests who are staying for more than a few hours will be shown to the **Long Gallery** and one of the **Guest Caves**; another long cave running parallel to the gallery, but originally much less attractive to draconic eyes, has been partitioned into a dozen artificial caves with sleeping pits and niches for luggage, sized to house one or two dragons or a husband, wife, and dragonets. Unless there is some reason to do otherwise all of the adventurers will stay in one or another of these caves; by dragon standards they're equivalent to guest rooms, comfortable but not especially luxurious. Visiting servants sleep in the servants' quarters, which are considerably less comfortable. By custom and law anything can be left in a sleeping cave and will not be disturbed, but in practice most sensible dragons travel with a sturdy trunk and lock away any valuables they're not using. They can trust members of their own class, of course, but it isn't wise to put temptation in the path of servants. Any dragon with any pretensions to wealth carries a little gold for comfort, and spreads it out before going to sleep and clears it in the morning.

Basic etiquette for such sleeping areas is that everyone ignores everyone else, as though the caves were rooms in a Yarge hotel; what goes on inside them is entirely the business of their occupants, and nobody else. There may be a little discreet gossip, but no gentle-born dragon would be crass enough to say anything too publicly, for fear of causing a scandal or provoking a lawsuit or fight. Indiscreet behaviour elsewhere in the caverns is more likely to be noticed. For example, one of the guests described below is accompanied by a colleague who is also his mistress. Provided that she says nothing too provocative and avoids displays of affection outside their guest caves nobody will pay any "official" attention.

These caves are generally occupied in the evening and overnight. At other times servants may be around to clear up, but they are more likely to be deserted. They have doors which can be bolted from the inside, but do not have locks.

There's a natural pool at the end of the gallery, fed by a slow drip of water percolating through the rock. Some impressive stalactites and stalagmites give the area an organic feel, as do phosphorescent bacteria which light the pool with a dim green glow. The pool is the main water source for the caverns, at least thirty feet deep, and contains small blind cave fish which are considered an especial delicacy. Beyond it are three **Dormitory caves**, larger and a little less comfortable than the main guest caves, with multiple sleeping pits. They're mostly used to accommodate short-term guests who don't quite merit a guest cave to themselves; for example, they'll be used as rest rooms and for guests who stay on overnight for the New Year's Ball. Cave 13 is used by bachelors, 14 by married couples, and 15 by dragonesses.

The gallery itself is ornamented with several sculptures by prominent draconic artists; neat plaques identify the artist, date, and title. It's a display of art and wealth to rival any of the museums of Irieth, though care has been taken to avoid putting anything *really* valuable on display in such a public area. Taking pride of place in the centre of the floor near the dining hall entrance is a 35ft marble statue of a dragon, believed to be Samindran workmanship; it's at least a thousand years old and badly weathered and nobody is entirely sure who is represented, but it's assumed that it was a Majestic. Visiting dragonets must frequently be dissuaded from climbing on it, for fear of damaging it with their claws.

The adjacent high-ceilinged **ballroom** is by far the largest chamber of the complex, its floor levelled, sanded and polished to near-perfect smoothness. By day a very small amount of light penetrates from the roof – three of the stone blocks capping the old bore holes are made of white quartz, and a little light seeps through, though not enough to force dragons to shut their outer eyelids. There are thousands of flecks of gold-coloured copper pyrites in the walls, giving the area a gentle golden glow to dragon eyes – any Yarge that might visit won't see much without lanterns, of course. About the only criticism that could be made is that there aren't quite enough alcoves for a really big party – unattached dragonesses might find it difficult to retreat from male advances without blushing. Other communal areas such as the gallery and speaking room don't have this problem.

The **dining room** has efficient drainage channels and blood sluices, and is decorated with carvings depicting scenes of the hunt and field; dragons hunting with claws, teeth, guns, and flame, with prey including muttonwools, beeves, deer, even a Yarge princess. It's all enough to give anyone an appetite.

All of the family and guests, and possibly some servants, will probably be found in the dining hall at meal times; the ballroom will be used for some events planned for the holiday, and servants may be setting things up or clearing them away at other times.

The **servant's quarters** include the kitchen, used mostly to brew herbal teas and other hot drinks, for the skinning of carcasses, and for the servants to dine on leftovers; a pantry, used for foods of all sorts, smelling strongly of exotic teas and spices; and sleeping caves for the male and female servants. There's room for the staff and for the servants of visitors. A low ceiling gives barely three feet of head room for an adult dragon. These chambers are predominantly utilitarian without any of the artistic touches of the rest of the Caverns. There are some beautifully carved slates with religious messages such as

*Do not despise the poor for what they must endure; Do not despise the servants, for they did not bind their own wings. - Veld XII:45*

and

*Veld made the world for our use, but Jurale in mercy added the beauty.*

*- Jurale II: 7*

but otherwise the only decoration is a large, mediocre and smoke-darkened painting of "Sunset over the Narrow Sea," by a dead and forgotten Yarge artist, which nobody wanted to exhibit elsewhere in the caverns.

The **old mine workings** are exactly what they sound like – narrow tunnels which followed traces of copper into the rock but weren't worth enlarging or converting to residential use. The ceilings are low, and adult dragons will have to creep along carefully to avoid banging their heads; they were worked by bound labourers, who tend to be smaller than free dragons. Dragonets love to play and explore the area, and there is nothing too dangerous there; the rock is hard and in no danger of collapsing. The map shows the main tunnels but there are many smaller side-tunnels and niches; it's the perfect place for a game of Hunt the Princess! The main tunnels don't so much end as choke with rubble and debris, and would probably go much further into the rock if excavated, but there is no reason to believe that there is anything worth finding if anyone does so; it's another rainy day activity for dragonets, who tend to find old nails and small fossils and occasional copper coins, but nothing valuable.

Note: if anyone with experience of mining takes a look they'll find green cuprous rocks and other evidence that there's still plenty of copper around – the mine was abandoned because the ore was worth marginally less than the cost of excavation, not because there was nothing left to be extracted.

The "family" part of the Caverns consists of a chain of natural caves used as Tenecel's office and library, some artificial caves similar to the guest caves (but a little larger and more comfortable) used for visiting family members, and some larger caves reserved for the immediate family.

Visitors wishing to see Tenecel are most likely to be taken to his office from the entrance or speaking room. Their first stop would normally be the office of his **secretary**; 'Spec Vebarie, a formidable elderly dragoness. Even when he's at home she organizes his time and makes sure that he doesn't have to handle too many interruptions. Unfortunately she's an employee, not an indentured servant, and has taken leave

over the holiday period to travel to Tolga to supervise her granddaughter's wedding; she won't be back for a week. In her absence all ledgers and all business-related papers she supervises have been locked away in several strong metal-bound chests (BODY 10, lock Difficulty 8). The documents are arranged logically and neatly, and on her return she will soon notice if anything is missing or badly disturbed. Claw marks on documents and broken locks etc. will definitely be noticed! The keys are in Tenecel's desk. There's a small carving of Camran and the Tablets of Law (see page 30) on a bookshelf which contains various business directories and books related to business and company law, otherwise the office is ornament-free and extremely tidy.

Papers related to Vimier's business or domestic purchases (such as the contracts of servants) are also in her files – there is nothing untoward about his finances, there are no real surprises in things such as letters to contractors and other businesses, but the papers concerning domestic arrangements include a series of increasingly curt letters from Tolga Mineral Rights about Vimier's tenancy of the Caverns. Anyone reading them will become aware that his lease expires in thirty years and that his landlords do not wish to renew it; in fact they would like to end it early. The reason is never explicitly stated by Tolga Mineral Rights, but 'Spec Vebarie keeps copies of letters she has sent, and Vimier makes several references to "the paltry value of copper, however it may rise" which make their motives reasonably clear.

One of the mission cards refers to the origin of a servant; if you use anything like this the records will also be filed in this office. In the case of Chigal the documents filed include his original bill of sale, with payment to an address in the poorest part of Irieth; this might be followed up in another adventure, with results to be determined by the referee.

The **library** has no real surprises; just shelves containing hundreds of books published by Tenecel's companies over the last three hundred years, bound volumes of the monthly *Irieth Journal* for the last fifty years, and some books and magazines from some of his rivals. A glass cabinet contains some real rarities, such as a first edition copy of the Yarge naturalist Lh'ook of Migantil's seminal work *The Biology of Dragons*, a first folio printing of *Rasdarie and Nimuleris*, and so forth.

The case also contains a trilogy of books by Illust Hethikah Tenecel; *Priestess of Azashan*; *The Goddess of our Ancestors*; and *The Divine Mother*. The first describes a series of dreams in which Hethikah gradually realised that she was a reincarnated priestess of the pre-Subjugation religion, the second and third go into more details of the religion and its practices. They make interesting reading for anyone familiar with the ongoing scholastic debate on the origins of the Draconic faith, mixing generally accepted theological and archaeological theories, speculation, and completely unverifiable "memories" of rituals and religious practices. Overall they are a very accessible guide to current theological thought, and if the sections on dreams are considered to be a fictional framing narrative the overall effect is not dissimilar to many other historical novels. Readers with an interest in theology won't find anything too exceptionable. Naturally she has spare copies which can be loaned to visitors, and will be flattered to be asked.

There are a couple of comfortable rock piles for readers to rest on, tables for supporting books at the optimum height for draconic readers, and some carefully placed patches of phosphorescent moss on the ceiling, set up to provide the perfect reading light. Several framed paintings and drawings decorate the walls, the originals of illustrations in some of the books. They range from landscapes and portraits to complex engineering diagrams, reflecting the diversity of his publications. There are also examples of the printer's art; a block of moveable type (if anyone can read mirror writing it's a page from the *Book of Veld*), an early woodcut printing block showing a carved image of an elderly dragon, a relatively recent line drawing of the Cupola station on a lithography printing plate, and a plate for a portrait of a female Yarge holding two swords which has obviously been engraved from a photographic original; studying the plate and reading the mirror-reversed caption will reveal her to be Keleg Dragon-Slayer.

The final cave of this chain is **Tenecel's office**, which has more bookshelves and cabinets of papers, a cluttered desk with dozens of pigeon-hole compartments and drawers, a locked gun cabinet containing a dozen shotguns and rifles in various calibres, a poorly stuffed fur-claw (bear) that demonstrates that

taxidermy isn't one of the more widely practiced draconic arts, a large pendulum clock, and a well-made sculpture of his wife wearing an elaborate head-dress that looks more like a ceremonial costume than a normal hat. The cave has the slightly messy look of a working office – even at home Tenecel tends to spend an hour or two a day writing letters and reading the latest proofs, or just hiding out if he wants a little peace and quiet. A small locked chest (BODY 8, lock Difficulty 11) holds 258 crowns and some copper, the petty cash float that would normally be with 'Spec Vebarie. There's a second entrance which leads down to the uppermost of the **family caves**.

The family quarters are natural caves which occupy the lowest level, and offer more comfort and privacy than the guest caves. The uppermost has tunnels leading to several small caverns similar to the guest caves, but somewhat larger and more comfortable.

Cave [a] is occupied by Dignified Captain Amer Tenecel, son of the family and the principal heir. Ornaments include a wooden carving of him with several other officers looking out over the mountainous South-East Frontier, his commission in a neat wooden frame, a badly damaged rifle still bearing traces of Yarge blood, two bent Yarge swords, and other souvenirs of military life. A locked chest contains his field kit, rifle, pistol, and ammunition.

Cave [b] is reserved for 'Spec Vebarie, Vimier Tenecel's secretary. The fact that she occupies one of the family caves rather than a guest cave might be interpreted as a sign of unusual closeness to the family – suggesting that she might be something more than just a secretary. There has never been any hint of impropriety, but tongues wag. One theory is that she is Vimier's mistress, another that she's his daughter by an earlier mistress. Whether there is any truth to these rumours is left to the referee; she is otherwise treated as a valued employee, not a member of the family, but that may not be conclusive proof of anything. A chest holds three modest hats with room for more, her other luggage is with her. A table holds some tools and a half-completed carved slate, another religious quote:

*Veld gives us children and Jurale  
watches the order of the world.  
Jurale I: 3*

Cave [c] holds Dignified Miregah Felandra, Amer's fiancée. She's not entirely happy about being accommodated so close to her fiancée, it smacks of impropriety, but she's prepared to put up with it if there's no better alternative. The cave is neat, kept tidy by her maid who is often present during the day.

Cave [d] is occupied by the Avageth brothers. The cave is littered with their possessions; both travel with an inordinate amount of junk and no servants to look after it. The debris includes books, knick-knacks and souvenirs, empty spirit bottles, and locked chests containing a few hundred Crowns apiece. Although neither would admit it, this is the current extent of their liquid hoards. They have a little income from their parents' estate, not enough for two dragons to live on in any style. There's a clue to their activities if anyone is looking for it – one of the chests contains a little gold and a copy of *A Dragonet's Guide to Nature* by the Blessed Jamanah, with two bookmarks. One is a page describing the effects of eating fresh dragon flesh, with the word "fresh" underlined several times. The other is a page describing Yarge food and Yarge experiments on keeping food fresh longer by storing it in ice. Again the word "fresh" is underlined.

The next natural cave is approximately equivalent to a Yarge **parlour**; it's more intimate than the speaking room, more of a private place. The ceiling and walls are inlaid with a decorative mesh of polished copper strips in an elaborate abstract geometric pattern. There are several small sculptures, all by leading draconic artists and probably more valuable than the larger works in the long gallery. Overall the impression given is one of restrained wealth and good taste.

A side cave was at one time used as a **nursery**; it is currently unoccupied.

Vimier and Hethikah normally sleep in the **sleeping cave** below, where a few hundred Crowns are spread to give the chamber a proper "homey" feel. The other furnishings include a makeup table for Hethikah, two cupboards full of hats, and bookshelves bearing an eclectic selection of titles, including several trashy thrillers and romances and a rare unexpurgated copy of *Curious Mysteries of the Dragon*

*Heart* by 'Dragon Q'. A screen covers an escape tunnel, leading out of the Caverns and across the ravine, rising to the surface amongst boulders on the far side; the exit is covered by a heavy stone block and can't be opened from the outside. In the event that the Caverns were besieged by Yarge the tunnel would theoretically allow someone to sneak out and fly off for help, or attack the enemy from the rear. In practice opening it from the inside would be difficult for even the largest dragon (BODY versus Difficulty 14) since it is fifty-odd years since it was last tested and the pivots have corroded.

Finally, the **undercave** contains the portion of Vimier's hoard that isn't invested elsewhere, about 30,000 Crowns in gold. There is nothing (apart from custom) to prevent any dragon from sneaking in and attempting to steal from it, but of course nobody but the lowest of the low would do such a thing, and any thief would undoubtedly leave his or her scent and other clues. Both the Orthodox and Old faiths regard the Sanctity of the Hoard as a central tenet of their belief, with Hoard-Thieves reincarnated as lice or worse. Vimier knows the precise arrangement of the gold; if for any reason he can't sleep he descends to the hoard and checks it, perhaps counting one of the piles – if he were ever to notice a disturbance or come up short his wrath would be terrible.

## The Cast

This adventure has a large cast of NPCs, but some of them are there mainly as witnesses and innocent bystanders, who may be questioned but otherwise have little effect on events. It hasn't been felt necessary to give them a full list of skills etc. since the most important thing about them is personality. They can easily be reused in other adventures. There should be enough NPC guests to fill all the guest caves that aren't used by adventurers; if this leaves caves empty the referee should invent more guests. Caves 1-2 and 11-12 are unoccupied.

NPCs with names in ***bold italics*** can be omitted to make room for adventurers. Information in the "Murder plot" section relates to a murder committed by the Avageth brothers. Changes will be needed if there is another murderer.

### Family

#### **Illustrious Vimier Tenecel, Age 389, Sex M**

BODY [18], MIND [5], SOUL [3], Length 53ft, Tough (3 points), Scales (-2)

**Skills:** Brawling [18], Business [8], Flying [18], Linguist [6] (Migantine, Rasdogi, Lipahi), Marksman [6], Scholar [7] (Art, Art History, Sculpture, Yarge Art)

**Quote:** "Yes, it is rather a nice piece, though the casting wasn't as good as other examples of his work. They say that the mould was dropped and repaired..."

**Equipment:** See descriptions of caverns etc. Owns several companies and can draw on their resources.

**Notes:** Vimier is one of the wealthiest dragons in Tiamath, apart from the great land-owners, with a fortune estimated at more than two million Crowns. He runs his companies well, apart from an occasional tendency to micro-manage their affairs, and has a genuine love for art. He keeps the best pieces in his collection in the Caverns, but many more are on loan to museums in Irieth and Tolga, or displayed in the offices of his companies. His collecting has been criticised by some dragons who feel that it is an ostentatious display of wealth, but he is genuinely generous to charities etc. and this silences most of his critics. This generosity doesn't always extend to his nephews, whom he regards as wastrels.

He is concerned for the future of Tiamath and feels that the way forward is increased cooperation with neighbouring Yarge states, so long as the sovereignty of Tiamath isn't threatened. He's aware that he might be offered a place in the Noble Assembly, and sees it as an opportunity to put his views before a wider public.

He loves his wife but is unhappy about her beliefs; although reincarnation is part of the Orthodox creed, he's concerned that claims that Azashan was originally worshipped by dragons may be heresy, even though he knows that some theologians have put forward similar theories. He hopes that the lacklustre success of her books will do something to make her rethink her faith, or that their son's impending wedding will take her mind off her theories.

**Traits:** Egalitarian; Unthinkingly Devout; Happily Married; Internationalist.

**Illust Hethikah Tenecel, Age 366, Sex F**

BODY [14], MIND [4], SOUL [5], Length 44ft

**Skills:** Artist [5] (writer), Brawling [14], Flying [15], Scholar [5] (Spiritualism, Superstition, The Occult)

**Quote:** *“Of course the nurturing nature of the mother-goddess must have seemed a threat to the patriarchal hierarchy...”*

**Equipment:** Elaborate head-dress she believes to be appropriate to a priestess of the Mother-Goddess, sacrificial dagger, and any resources available in the Caverns.

**Notes:** Hethikah is in most respects an ordinary happily-married dragoness, who happens to have an unusual delusion; she believes that Azashan was the Mother-Goddess (which is an idea often discussed in theological journals, and has been since long before Hethikah’s birth), and that she is the reincarnation of a 6,000-year-old High Priestess called T’Surk Walnor (which is not). She began to write about her “memories” forty-five years ago, and is currently working on her fourth book. Anyone looking at the manuscript will find it an inoffensive rehash of current archaeological theory combined with a plot that would be at home in any romance novel.

**Murder Plot:** She isn’t expecting the murder, if it occurs, and will be heart-broken by the death of her husband, then practical about dealing with its consequences.

**Politics:** Shares her husband’s internationalist views without being as heavily committed as he is; also a strong and outspoken supporter of improved civil rights for dragonesses.

**Traits:** Religious non-conformist; Happily Married; Reborn (believes she is a reincarnated priestess)

**Dignified Captain Amer Tenecel, Age 137, Sex M – Family cave [a]**

BODY [12], MIND [4], SOUL [3], Length 28ft, Thick scales 2

**Skills:** Brawling [14], Business [6], Flying [14] (currently cannot fly), Linguist [3] (Migantine, Rasdogi), Marksman [7], Military Arms [8], Signals [5], Stealth [6]

**Quote:** *“Yarge bandits? They fight well and we’ve been killing the stupid ones for a couple of thousand years. The ones that are left are the cunning ones; a bit of a claw-full, but we can cope.”*

**Equipment:** Rifle & 50 rounds, pistol & 100 rounds, field kit, hat, various souvenirs.

**Notes:** Amer’s father expected him to join the family business, and he has some training in the relevant skills, but eventually decided that he would first try life as a soldier. His father wasn’t happy about this, but they have agreed to disagree, with the proviso that Amer will resign his commission and take over the business in the event of his father’s death. He fervently hopes that it won’t happen for many years. He is currently on medical leave; he was shot and one of the ribs of his right wing was broken during a spot of unpleasantness on the South-East Frontier. He can’t currently fly since his wing is splinted, but expects to make a full recovery eventually. Meanwhile he’s editing one of the books his father is publishing, a collection of military anecdotes, and finding it heavy going.

Amer has some interesting but ultimately irrelevant stories about his military experiences, some of them funny, others surprising; for example, he might mention that the Yarge bandits that shot him were actually on the run from the authorities in their own country, who warned his unit to expect their attack.

He is engaged to Miregah Felandra, a dragoness he met at a party during his last leave; she is visiting the Caverns over the holiday, and they intend to marry in Thaw. They don’t have a huge amount in common, but their families have common business interests, his father publishes her poems, and his parents have been pushing him to father an heir given his potentially dangerous career. He regards it as a marriage of convenience, and is sure she does too.

He is the only surviving member of his clutch; one of two brothers died of scale rot at the age of seven, the other broke his neck flying into a tree eighteen years ago. There is nothing suspicious about either death, though the adventurers might initially think otherwise.

**Murder Plot:** He will be upset by his father’s death, or any failed murder attempt, then coldly practical in dealing with its consequences. If the identity of the murderer(s) is revealed he will not be merciful.

**Politics:** Doesn’t support either of the pro- or anti-war factions – he wants to see military spending continue at about its present level. He’s in favour of rights for dragonesses and to an extent an egalitarian, although he is more interested in the idea of a meritocracy than complete levelling. He would like it to be easier for really deserving members of the common herd to rise above their stations, without wanting to throw away the aristocracy. These opinions are very much secondary to his patriotism and sense of duty.

**Traits:** Unthinkingly Devout; Engaged; Moderate Patriot; Fond of parents; Grudging Respect for Yarge; Sense of Duty.

**Dignified Ereg Avageth (nephew of Vimier), Age 85, Sex M – Family cave [d]**

BODY [6], MIND [4], SOUL [2], Length 16ft

**Skills:** Actor [5] (magician), Brawling [7], Flying [6], Marksman [5], Thief [7]

**Quote:** *“And once more the cunning of the claw defeats the eye!”*

**Equipment:** Selection of mechanical conjuring tricks, huge pistol and ammo, lock picks, two pairs of loaded dice.

**Notes:** Ereg expected to be a rich young idler – instead he’s poor and has few skills that would help him to earn a living. He isn’t personable or rich enough to be an eligible bachelor, so there is no hope of a bride with a rich dowry, and he has no useful contacts in (shudder) trade. He claims an innocent interest in the art of conjuring, but there have been rumours that he cheats when dicing. If dragons used cards to gamble (their claws make this impractical) he would probably be suspect in that area too. He isn’t good enough to perform on stage; nearly all professional conjurers are Yarge (plus dragonesses at the most risqué music-halls), it goes with having fingers.

**Murder Plot:** He plans to use his acting skills and resemblance to Goregidis to cover for his brother’s absence while he’s killing Vimier. If Goregidis is caught he will of course deny all knowledge of his actions.

**Politics:** He’s very much in favour of the status quo in politics; he wants the rich to get richer at the poor’s expense. Unfortunately he’s not rich, although he likes to think of himself as deserving to be so. He has no interest in war, except to avoid it.

**Traits:** Snob; Pious hypocrite; Orphan; Addiction (gambling)

**Dignified Goregidis Avagath (nephew of Vimier), Age 85, Sex M – Family cave [d]**

BODY [6], MIND [4], SOUL [2], Length 17ft

**Skills:** Brawling [8], Business [3], Flying [7], Marksman [7], Melee weapons [6], Thief [4]

**Quote:** *“A thousand Crowns invested in railway shares at four percent would net forty crowns a year, compounded quarterly, if only we had a thousand Crowns to invest...”*

**Equipment:** Yarge machete, huge pistol, rifle and ammunition, notebook, pen, bottle strong spirits.

**Notes:** Goregidis expected to be a rich young idler – instead he inherited little, tried to play the stock market and lost much of his inheritance, then lost most of the rest in a series of unwise law-suits. He’s poor and has few skills that would help him to earn a living. He isn’t personable or rich enough to be an eligible bachelor, so there is no hope of a bride with a rich dowry, and he no longer has any useful business contacts, since he has a reputation for suing his associates.

A book in his luggage has bookmarks at a passage describing the effects of eating fresh Dragon flesh, and another describing Yarge experiments on frozen food preservation. On both pages the word “fresh” is repeatedly underlined.

**Murder Plot:** Since he’s a better shot than his brother he plans to carry out the assassination, while his brother covers for him. If he finds himself under suspicion he plans to lie as long as possible then claim that Ereg must be trying to frame him.

**Politics:** He has no interest in or knowledge of his uncle’s politics.

**Traits:** Unthinkingly devout; Orphan; Insanely litigious

## Guests

**Dignified Miregah Felandra (Fiancée of Amer Tenecel), age 97, Sex F – Family cave [c]**

BODY [9], MIND [4], SOUL [3], Length 27ft

**Skills:** Artist [5] (poet), no other relevant skills

**Quote:** *“And for the honeymoon we were thinking Migantil then a coastal cruise...”*

**Equipment:** Nothing relevant. She is accompanied by her maid, Alotho.

**Notes:** Miregah is beautiful and that delicate shade of pink which denotes a degree of chaste affection rather than unbridled passion. She is marrying for love, of course, at least as far as her friends are concerned, but the fact that one day her fiancé will become an Illustrious is definitely a plus, as is his family’s undoubted wealth. Admittedly he’s much older than her, but in a couple of hundred years the difference will hardly be noticeable. She just wishes that he’d give up his *dreadful* military career...

**Murder Plot:** Not involved, has no useful information, and will regard it as a horrible scandal.

**Politics:** A conservative with no particular interest in armaments, wants to keep her “social inferiors” in their place.

**Traits:** Unthinkingly devout; Snob

**Respected Yoverak Huvager (Industrialist), age 210, Sex M – Guest cave [3]**

BODY [7], MIND [4], SOUL [2], Length 17ft

**Skills:** Brawling [9], Business [6], Marksman [6], Science [7] (metallurgy, mineralogy)

**Quote:** *“The underlying structure of the rock suggests quite a large untapped deposit remains, though exploiting it might be more trouble than it’s worth...”*

**Equipment:** Nothing relevant.

**Notes:** He’s at the caverns as a guest, but he happens to be one of the directors of Tolga Mineral Rights, and the Chairman of the Board has asked him to try to convince Vimier to give up his lease early. Unfortunately Vimier will not take it well...

**Murder Plot:** Has an argument with Vimier shortly before his murder and, panicking, will lie about it at first.

**Politics:** He owns armaments shares but supports the peace faction, without actually doing anything to help them.

**Traits:** Unthinkingly devout; Happily married.

**Respectable Nelorie Huvager (Wife of Yoverak), age 202, Sex F – Guest cave [3]**

BODY [8], MIND [3], SOUL [4], Length 22ft

**Skills:** None relevant

**Quote:** *“How horrible! Who could do such a thing? It must have been an awful accident.”*

**Equipment:** Nothing relevant.

**Notes:** A happily-married dragoness who has no great interest in politics or business.

**Murder Plot:** Innocent bystander, loyal to her husband and will support him if he lies about his movements.

**Politics:** Has some interest in the rights of indentured servants, would like to see an end to wing binding.

**Traits:** Unthinkingly devout; Happily married.

**Glaris Avageth (Editor, The Irieth Journal), age 350, Sex M – Guest cave [5]**

BODY [14], MIND [4], SOUL [2], Length 44ft, Fearsome

**Skills:** Artist [5] (Writer, editor), Brawling [16], Business [7], Flying [16], Marksman [15]

**Quote:** *“The world of publishing was rocked to its foundations today by the tragic... no, make that horrific... the horrific murder of the Journal’s publisher at...”*

**Equipment:** Nothing relevant.

**Notes:** Avageth (no relation of the Avagath family, much to his relief) is one of Irieth’s most experienced journalists, and has risen to the top in a very competitive business despite his lack of a title. He’s at the party to discuss the *Journal’s* budget and future plans with his employer. Like many male dragons he has never been able to write well, his claws get in the way of the pen, so is accompanied by Belcelith Dunnis, who will assist him and take notes.

**Murder Plot:** He respects his employer and will be saddened by his death (or any failed attempt), and concerned at the effects it might have on the *Journal*, while at the same time realising that he’s present at an enormously important story. If anyone tries to stop the news getting out they will have a fight on their hands!

**Politics:** He supports whatever his proprietor tells him to support, so long as it doesn’t seem too insane.

**Traits:** Non-conformist (agnostic) but doesn’t discuss his beliefs; Rational fear of Yarge; Mistress (Belcelith Dunnis)

**Belcelith Dunnis (Reporter and mistress of Glaris Avageth), age 210, Sex F – Guest cave [11] (but sleeps in [5])**

BODY [11], MIND [4], SOUL [4], Length 33ft.

**Skills:** Artist (writer / reporter) [6], Detective [5]

**Quote:** *“Notable amongst the guests was Dignified Miregah Felandra, who wore a pearl-embroidered grey silk hat...”*

**Equipment:** Notebook, pen, ink, several hats.

**Notes:** Belcelith and Glaris Avageth have been together for many years and their relationship (while officially employer and employee) is easily guessed. She is attractive and well-spoken, has a fund of interesting gossip, and blends in well with the literary and artistic set despite (or perhaps because of) her irregular lifestyle. She has mature good looks and an expensive taste in hats. She edits and contributes to the paper’s arts and society columns, covers other stories as needed, and assists Glaris when his usual secretary isn’t available. Male adventurers may assume that she is easily seduced; in fact she is completely loyal to Glaris, and he to her. She is working on a comic novel.

**Murder Plot:** Heard Vimier say that he had business to take care of on the morning of his death, knows no details.

**Politics:** Bored by most politics, but hopes that Vimier will pay some attention to improving rights for dragonesses.

**Traits:** Scarlet dragoness (claims her fiancée was killed by the Yarge); Feigned fear of Yarge; Fashionable

**Eda Derwig (Romantic novelist), age 377, sex F – Guest cave [6]**

BODY [6], MIND [4], SOUL [3], Length 17ft.

**Skills:** Artist (Writer) [6], Business [6]

**Quote:** “Oh, what a remarkable adventure! Do you mind if I make a few notes?”

**Equipment:** Notebook, pen, ink, two hats, a mantilla.

**Notes:** An authoress who regards everything she hears or does as grist for her plots. She has published thirty-seven novels and has a loyal readership of bored dragonesses. She is a grey spinster.

**Murder Plot:** Vimier publishes her books; she has everything to lose if he dies. She knows nothing useful.

**Politics:** She follows the Old Religion, and hopes that Vimier will help to improve the rights of members of her faith if he is elected.

**Traits:** Genuinely Devout; Spinster; Businesslike.

**Blessed Ingen (Orthodox Parson and Theologian), age 400, sex M – Guest cave [7]**

BODY [14], MIND [6], SOUL [3], Length 44ft.

**Skills:** Scholar (Theology, Pre-Subjugation Theology, Archaeology, History) [8]

**Quote:** “Of course there is some reason to believe that the pre-Subjugation faith was somewhat... ahem... different, but I for one would prefer not to romanticize such matters unnecessarily.”

**Equipment:** Various holy texts, a hat.

**Notes:** A semi-retired parson from Tolga who will preach the Firstday service on New Year’s Day if none of the adventurers are parsons. He considers Hethikah’s work to be harmlessly inaccurate fluff.

**Murder Plot:** Not involved and knows nothing useful.

**Politics:** He’s worried that Vimier will try to promote his wife’s odd beliefs through the Noble Assembly. While they’re harmless enough in themselves, they’re potentially divisive if pushed by a member of the Assembly.

**Traits:** Genuinely Devout; Bachelor

**Has Gelath (Economist), age 204, sex M – Guest cave [8]**

BODY [11], MIND [4], SOUL [3], Length 34ft., Fearsome

**Skills:** Business [7]

**Quote:** “So as you can see, the underlying trend favours diversification of foreign investments...”

**Equipment:** Nothing relevant.

**Notes:** A pompous investment consultant who was somewhat surprised by his invitation. He has never met Vimier before, but understands that at some point during his stay he wants to be briefed on Tiamath’s financial policies and tax structure, and the current status of international trade. He is accompanied by his young daughter Sebeth, a dragoness in her teens. His wife died while laying eggs; Sebeth is their only surviving child.

**Murder Plot:** He has no useful knowledge of the murder; will be alarmed by it, and worried for his daughter’s safety.

**Politics:** He knows that Vimier expects to be appointed to the Noble Assembly, and has guessed that he will support the peace faction. He plans to invest accordingly. His political opinions are mainly attributable to his finances.

**Traits:** Widower; Over-protective father; Moderate Patriot.

**Sebeth Gelath (daughter of Has), age 18, F – Guest cave [8]**

BODY [3], MIND [3], SOUL [3], Length 10ft.

**Skills:** Athlete [6], Brawling [5], Business [4], Flying [5]

**Quote:** “Daddy is very worried about the exchange rate mechanism, but I think it will probably come out all right...”

**Equipment:** Nothing relevant.

**Notes:** A pretty child who will probably be a beautiful dragoness eventually, but will not be sexually mature for several more years. She has learned quite a lot about business from her father’s books.

**Murder Plot:** If it occurs, she saw Yoverak enter the tunnel leading to Vimier’s office about fifteen minutes before the body was found, and will leap to the conclusion that he is the murderer.

**Politics:** Mild support for the war faction.

**Traits:** Intellectually precocious; Justified fear of Yarge.

**Respected Nalnegis Kellis (Pleader), age 352, sex M – Guest cave [9]**

BODY [16], MIND [4], SOUL [3], Length 54ft., Flame

**Skills:** Actor (Legal arguments) [6], Scholar (Law) [7]

**Quote:** *“And then, when the tension was at its height, I switched to my pleading wig and asked the obvious question...”*

**Equipment:** Watch, law books, hats and wigs.

**Notes:** An old friend of Vimier who has represented him in several lawsuits and is often invited to his parties.

**Murder Plot:** If a murder is committed he will try to keep things organized; he has no other clients present, so there isn't any conflict of interest. As an officer of the court he considers it his duty to take charge and keep things under control until police arrive from Tolga. He is accompanied by his wife and three young children; they also have an older son and daughter, both married, and expect to see grandchildren within the next few years.

**Politics:** He has no strong feelings on the war / peace division, but feels that the law is currently far too slack on debtors; he wants to see some of the old laws reinstated. He would dearly love to be a judge, and hopes that his friendship with Vimier may be a stepping-stone to the judiciary.

**Traits:** Lawyer; Law bore; Believes (mistakenly) that he is good with children.

**Respectable Miviel Kellis (wife of Nalnegis), age 339, sex F – Guest cave [9]**

BODY [9], MIND [3], SOUL [4], Length 27ft.

**Skills:** Nothing relevant

**Quote:** *“Of course Penn is such a gifted pleader; everyone expects that he will be on the bench eventually.”*

**Equipment:** Nothing relevant.

**Notes:** An attractive motherly dragoness perpetually chasing after her dragonets. She is helped by her maid, Foharegis, who is staying in the servant's quarters. She is concerned that Ogefon is a little sickly, and tries to keep him away from priests and anyone else who can legitimately devour him.

**Murder Plot:** Not involved.

**Politics:** Wants more government support for medical research and hospitals generally. This is, of course, a contentious viewpoint given the attitude of both major faiths.

**Traits:** Happily married but slightly bored; she is thinking of finding a younger lover once the children leave home.

**Ogefon, Vigal and Hethikah Kellis (dragonets), all age 12, sex M,M,F – Guest cave [9]**

BODY [2], MIND [2], SOUL [2], Length 6ft.

**Skills:** None.

**Quote:** *“Last one down the tunnel's a stinky Yarge!”*

**Equipment:** Nothing relevant.

**Notes:** Three overactive young brats

**Murder Plot:** Ereg plans to use the dragonets as his alibi, and they will tend to get under foot during the investigation. They don't know anything useful, but will try to make up something interesting if questioned.

**Politics:** None.

**Traits:** Noisy brats. Ogefon is less active than the others and in bright light looks slightly green; a really strict Parson might suggest eating him.

**Servants & Employees**

**Eda (Cook / Housekeeper), age 403, sex F – servant's quarters (Bound servant)**

BODY [4], MIND [3], SOUL [2], Length 11ft.

**Skills:** Business (household finances etc.) [4]

**Quote:** *“Dinner will be served in twenty minutes, sir.”*

**Equipment:** Butcher's knives etc.

**Notes:** A typical servant, adept at skinning dead beasts and arranging them attractively, brewing teas and other refreshments, and running the day to day affairs of the household. She is in charge of the other indentured servants.

**Murder Plot:** Horrified but knows nothing useful.

**Politics:** None

**Traits:** Grey spinster; Snob

**'Spec Vebarie (secretary) , Age 265, sex F – Family Cave [b] (but not present at start of adventure)**

BODY [10], MIND [5], SOUL [3], Length 29ft.

**Skills:** Artist [5] (calligraphy, engraving), Business [8], Linguist [6] (Migantine, Rasdogi, Lipahi), Marksman [7]

**Quote:** *"I've reviewed the accounts and everything seems to be in order."*

**Equipment:** Nothing relevant.

**Notes:** An honest secretary with an extremely good memory. She is a paid employee, not an indentured servant, and completely loyal to Vimier Tenecel. She is entrusted with much of the day-to-day business of his companies. She is in Tolga preparing for her daughter's wedding when the adventure begins, and her whereabouts can be confirmed by numerous witnesses. She is a minor legatee in Vimier's will, inheriting a few hundred Crowns.

**Murder Plot:** Not involved. If she learns of Vimier's death she will return to Copper Caverns to help the family manage his estate. If the adventurers are getting nowhere she might be useful as a detective.

**Politics:** Isolationist - would like to see Tiamath close its borders and keep all contact with the Yarge to a minimum; she regards them as dangerously unstable and doesn't want to see Tiamath dragged down with them.

**Traits:** Widow; Rational fear of Yarge; Genuinely devout.

**Yethig (handyman / gardener / cattleman / etc.), age 200, sex M – outdoors or servant's quarters (Bound servant)**

BODY [8], MIND [2], SOUL [2], Length 22ft.

**Skills:** Riding [5]

**Quote:** *"So thee wants the best beeves for t'banquet, do ee? I'd best go round them up then."*

**Equipment:** Nothing relevant.

**Notes:** A strong bound servant who looks after the beeves, swine, and muttonwools, and takes care of the vegetable garden, day-to-day repairs, etc. He has an incomprehensible rural accent and secretly despises his employers.

**Murder Plot:** Knows nothing useful.

**Politics:** Supports servants' rights but has no contact with any political organisation.

**Traits:** Revolutionary; Pious hypocrite; Superstitious.

**Mieval and Yeg (Tenecel maids), ages 132 and 114, sex F – servants' quarters (bound servants)**

**Alotho (Miregah's maid), age 225, sex F – servants' quarters (bound servant)**

**Foharegis (Miviel's maid), age 94, sex F – servants' quarters (bound servant)**

All BODY [3], MIND [2], SOUL [2], Length 5-7ft.

**Skills:** Nothing relevant

**Quote:** *"Yes miss, at once miss."*

**Equipment:** Nothing relevant.

**Notes:** Uneducated servants who are often found cleaning around the caverns. The visiting maids will most likely be found in their mistresses' caves when not in the servants' quarters. Mieval, Yeg, and Alotho are already grey, Foharegis is heading that way. Foharegis is only present if Miviel is present.

**Murder Plot:** If you need to plant clues they've seen or heard something relevant, otherwise not involved.

**Politics:** Apolitical.

**Traits:** Grey or greying spinsters

**Beirandra (hired servant), age 120, sex M – servants' quarters**

**Frelt (hired servant), age 186, sex M – servants' quarters**

Both BODY [6], MIND [3], SOUL [2], Length 17 & 19ft. Frelt has flame.

**Skills:** Actor [5] (Beirandra is primarily a musician, Frelt is a comedian)

**Quote:** *"You roared... sir?"*

**Equipment:** Nothing relevant.

**Notes:** Beirandra and Frelt are actors who work in the off-season as hired servants, supplied by an agency in Irieth. Thin and easily-snapped cords bind their wings to symbolize their status. Both are handsome, stronger and larger than the average servant, and reasonably good at helping to move luggage and other servant-like activities.

**Murder Plot:** If you need to supply clues they've seen or heard something relevant, otherwise not involved.

**Politics:** Optionally one or both of them has been planted by the Pro-War faction to create a scandal. For example, they might bring cooked or rotting meat to a banquet instead of fresh carcasses, or one of them might attempt to seduce a female guest.

**Traits:** Handsome, spendthrift.

## Timetable

The party is planned to straddle the New Year, with a ball on New Year's Eve. There is only one train a week, on Threeday, and most of the guests plan to arrive on the Threeday before the New Year and leave a week later. It's unusual to fly in since they will be travelling with luggage, servants, etc., but not out of the question; these items can be sent ahead of a dragon flying there directly, but it is impolite to arrive much later than your servants.

If anyone wants to travel to the Caverns with luggage on another day they can get off a main-line train at Spalt, the junction with the branch line to Copper Caverns, and hire drafters and a cart from one of the nearby farms. There's a rough cart track alongside the railway, but the journey is uncomfortable and slow. Without a wagon the only routes out on other days are to fly or walk. The only other surface route is across country from Teltsie, but it's little more than a cattle track, unsuitable even for carts.

While this adventure mostly describes the activities of the guests in residence, a number of additional guests will fly in for the ball, leaving late that night or the following morning (if they aren't too bothered about the religious niceties of flying on Firstday).

Mail arrives or is sent on the Threeday train; if there's a *really* urgent message on other days it has to be sent by flying courier from Tolga or Spalt, urgent outgoing mail must be taken to the station at Spalt.

The main events Vimier and Hethikah plan for the week are listed below then detailed on a day by day basis on the following pages.

### Threeday week 4 Leafturn (3/4/10)

- Weekly train; guests arrive and settle in, no special activities planned.

### Fourday week 4 Leafturn (4/4/10)

- Morning and early afternoon: Hunting.
- Evening: Dicing in Speaking Room; Dragonets and dragonesses play charades in the ballroom.

### Fiveday week 4 Leafturn (5/4/10), New Year's Eve

- Morning: Guests fly in for New Year's Eve ball
- Noon: Re-enactment of authentic pre-Conquest solstice ceremony (outdoors)
- Afternoon: Guests prepare for ball, children's party for dragonets (speaking room)
- Evening: New Year's Eve Ball and feast until early hours of morning (ballroom and dining room), dicing (speaking room).

### Firstday week 1 of Freshwinter, New Years Day, the autumnal equinox (1/1/1); the Sabbath.

- Morning Service (Ballroom)
- Remaining guests from Ball fly home
- Late morning and Afternoon: Literary readings (outdoors)
- Evening Service (Ballroom)
- Story telling (Speaking Room)

### Twoday week 1 Freshwinter (2/1/1)

- Amateur dramatics: *Rasdarie and Nimuleris* – rehearsals in morning and early afternoon, performance in evening (outdoors)

### Threeday week 1 Freshwinter (3/1/1)

- Weekly train – guests depart.



The detailed descriptions that follow assume that the Avageth brothers are the only dragons present who plan to commit murder. It should be amended or abandoned altogether if things are run or develop differently.

### Threeday week 4 Leafturn (3/4/10)

Most guests arrive; the family and servants (including hired servants) are already in residence, with the exception of the Avageth brothers who are detained in Irieth on business (they're actually dodging some of their creditors). Their luggage arrives ahead of them, and is taken up to the Caverns with the rest of the guests' baggage and other goods. As the guests arrive 'Spec Vebarie leaves for Tolga, saying a few words to some of the guests (NPCs she has previously met) before she boards the train. Anyone eavesdropping will know that she is going to her daughter's wedding.

No special entertainment is planned for the day, just the arrival of guests, good food, and pleasant conversation.

### Fourday week 4 Leafturn (4/4/10)

After an extended breakfast guests are invited to join a hunt in the hills south of the Caverns. It's a gorgeous autumn day with frost in the air, and the hunt soon finds some deer and muttonwools. Lunch is eaten outdoors, with the catches of the day shared amongst the guests and augmented with carcasses brought from the caverns by servants. Due to his injured wing Amer Tenecel can't join the hunt, and any parsons or bound servants must either follow on foot or miss the hunt altogether. The Avageth brothers fly in during the afternoon, annoyed to have missed the hunt, and are settled in by the time the hunters return.

In the evening the dragonesses and older dragonets play charades in the ballroom, while most of the adult males gather in the speaking room to gamble with dice. The game resembles Hazard<sup>1</sup>, a game similar to Craps but rather more complicated. Referees may choose to use the real rules of the game, or use a series of luck rolls (SOUL versus Difficulty 6) to gamble honestly, or Thief skill versus difficulty 7 to cheat. Players should roll against each other and against NPCs, using the usual rules for opposed skill rolls. Ereg will cheat: If you are using the real rules of Hazard the referee should make a Thief roll any time that Ereg (or any NPC who cheats) gets an unfavourable dice roll; reroll one dice if the Thief roll succeeds, but the revised roll must be used, even if the result is worse than the original roll. Players make this roll for themselves. If anyone cheats any adventurers that are present should have the opportunity to notice, by means such as a Detective or Thief skill roll, a MIND roll to notice something amiss, an Acting (Conjuror) roll, etc. Optionally some of the NPCs may notice cheating by the adventurers, but won't spot Ereg unless one of the adventurers does so first.

Anyone caught cheating faces ruin. The only honourable ways out are to commit suicide; to attack and kill the accuser and claim to be innocent; or to publicly confess in church and renounce all titles and wealth. A less honourable escape route might be a change of name and move to a new location, in the hope that nobody will recognize the cheater, but again all titles and most wealth will probably be lost.

There might even be political repercussions; a serious cheating scandal may make it harder for Tenecel to get his hundred nominations, or make it more likely that he will be challenged at the opening of the Noble Assembly. It's to Tenecel's credit that he won't even think of trying to hush it up, regardless of the possible effect on his career.

If Ereg is caught cheating Goregidis will realise that it's a golden opportunity – he isn't *that* fond of his brother, after all, and will inherit Ereg's remaining money and flesh if he commits suicide (if Ereg dies in a fight Goregidis gets his money, after the winnings have been taken back, but the other combatant or combatants get the meat). Goregidis will deny all knowledge of Ereg's cheating and urge honourable suicide in the strongest possible terms. If Ereg doesn't fall for it he will suggest one of the other escape routes above, such as public confession. If Ereg somehow escapes his well-deserved fate (e.g. by claiming that his cheating was the prelude to a conjuring trick) he will nevertheless be thrown out of the Caverns by Tenecel and promptly disinherited. This makes him the obvious suspect in any subsequent murder.

---

<sup>1</sup> For full rules see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hazard\\_\(game\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hazard_(game))

If Ereg is eliminated the need to kill Tenecel immediately is reduced; Goregidis will have control of the remainder of their parents' estate, nearly doubling his income, and can try to persuade Tenecel that Ereg led him astray, and that he deserves a second change. Ereg won't like it, but it's a dragon-eat-dragon world out there, and sometimes you have to be cruel to be rich. Goregidis may even think of warning Tenecel against Ereg! There are several other possibilities:

- Ereg is thrown out and flies off; Goregidis follows him to give him "a little money to live on until he finds his feet," carrying a bag apparently full of gold but actually containing a little gold and his gun. He plans to follow Ereg and trick him into landing, kill him, and move his body to the glacier. He will return to the caves several hours later, weary and wet, claiming that he has been flying around in circles for hours, couldn't find Ereg anywhere and got soaked in a storm. In fact everything has gone as planned, and Goregidis bathed to disguise the scent of blood after disposing of Ereg's body. Next spring he will return for it; meanwhile, he intends to suck up to his uncle and pretend to be as surprised as everyone else by Ereg's disappearance. The body won't be found unless Goregidis is tracked when he returns to eat it. The main flaw in the story is that it hasn't actually rained anywhere within thirty miles or so, but don't tell the adventurers that unless they take the trouble to check.
- As above, but Goregidis is injured in the fight. He could recover rapidly by eating Ereg's flesh, but the scars would be difficult to explain. Instead he leaves the body, gun, etc. in the ice and returns, claiming that Ereg is insane; he took the money then attacked him and tried to kill him, but Goregidis heroically fought him off! This story should earn him a lot of sympathy, and help to get him back to Tenecel's good books as he makes a painful recovery. Again, the original murder plan is abandoned, since Goregidis has the full income of his parents' estate and will eventually eat the body.
- As above, but the wounded 'hero' is actually Ereg, who has killed his brother and stashed the corpse on the glacier, and is now posing as Goregidis; they were very similar in appearance and size anyway, and the wounds and Ereg's Acting skill conceal the substitution. Ereg won't abandon the murder plot, since he feels that Tenecel forced him to kill his brother – he's insane by now, but very dangerous because of his insanity. There should be give-aways in his behaviour that reveal he's Ereg, but only if the adventurers are looking for them. He will plan for a day or two before trying to kill Tenecel as described below.
- As above, but Ereg kills Goregidis and eats the body then sets off to seek his fortune under an assumed identity, trusting that his new size and scars will conceal him. Unfortunately the bones etc. will eventually be found and Ereg (or Goregidis, if the wrong conclusions are drawn) will be hunted for the murder. He can be used as a recurring villain, perpetrating increasingly ingenious and vicious plots until he is finally hunted down. Tenecel will be murdered at a later date, in revenge for his "crimes" against Ereg.
- If Ereg isn't caught cheating the murder plan continues; the adventurers have missed their first chance to save Tenecel's life, but will never know it.

None of the other NPCs are cheating. If any of the adventurers cheat then Ereg should be given a chance to spot the cheating. Naturally he will immediately denounce whoever has cheated him!

If any of the adventurers are caught cheating they should face the same penalties as Ereg; a fight to the death, suicide, ruin, etc. Dragons take their gambling seriously, and the merest whisper of a cheating scandal will be spread by everyone present. There may also be an assumption of guilt by association; "that's so-and-so, he was a friend of such-and-such, the dragon who cheated at dice at Copper Caverns."

**Troubleshooting:** If one of the adventurers is accused of cheating the others may be tempted to lend a hand in e.g. lying for him, helping him fight his way out, etc. If anyone suggests this, the referee should mention the stigma attached to cheating and the likelihood that anyone helping will be tarred with the same brush. What they do about this is up to the players, but they shouldn't rush into things without knowing the facts.

Provided that the evening doesn't end in allegations of cheating, the gamblers find their way to bed in the early hours of the morning and the night goes peacefully. If there has been some sort of scandal recriminations etc. will probably go on for hours, with events the following day badly disrupted.

#### **Fiveday week 4 Leafturn (5/4/10), New Year's Eve**

Assuming that nothing too upsetting happened the previous day or evening, Hethikah announces at breakfast that at noon she'll re-enact an "authentic pre-conquest Equinox rite" celebrating the New Year. Since she isn't stupid, and doesn't want to offend guests with more orthodox beliefs, she makes it clear that this is intended to be a historical re-enactment, not a religious ceremony. It will begin at nine forty, a half-hour before noon, and end at ten twenty or so, and will be held at the stone circle on the cliff above the caverns.

In the event the ceremony is fairly dull, not the orgy some prurient dragons might expect, the main highlights being Hethikah's curiously archaic head-dress and the slaughter of a muttonwool (standing in for a sacrificial Yarge princess, and a nice shared mid-day snack for the guests) at noon. Afterwards she invites everyone back to the speaking room, where she gives a talk on her version of ancient religion.

As the day goes on more guests (those who are not staying at the Caverns) start to fly in for the New Year's Ball that's planned for the evening; this won't be cancelled unless something very serious has occurred, since there is no easy way to stop the guests from arriving.

In all there will be about forty guests, including the adventurers but excluding dragonets. Those who are not staying at the Caverns have a long flight each way, but it's nothing too out of the ordinary for dragons in good health. Some fly from Spalt and other villages, others take a direct route from Tolga. Mostly they'll dance until the early hours of the morning then fly home. Several are accompanied by dragonets, if there is nobody at home to look after them; the younger dragonets are carried in baskets, the older can fly under their own power. While it's going to be an exciting party, the guests arriving (and the guests already in residence) aren't the *crem de la crem* of society – the *real* aristocracy will be at the Teltsie celebrations forty miles away.

In the afternoon most of the dragonesses will be seeing to their skin burnishing, hats, etc. A dragonet's party with games etc. is planned in the Speaking Room, mainly to keep the children out of the way while their mothers are busy getting ready for the ball. Any male dragons with usefully entertaining talents such as story-telling or singing will be expected to participate. In all there should be eight or ten dragonets present, enough to be a bit of a handful for the dragons running the party, ranging from ten to twenty years old (pre-adolescents and adolescents, with the oldest on the verge of sexual maturity). The aim is to tire out the dragonets before the ball begins, so that they won't be a nuisance; one of the maids is present to help manage them, and will be left to look after them for the evening.

If Ereg is still around he's expected to perform some magic tricks at the party; he and Goregidis have planned for this, and if possible intend to lure Vimier out of the caves and kill him while (apparently) busy with preparations for the performance. Unless someone intervenes it won't be hard for Ereg to pretend that his brother is also present; he'll be bustling around the props and making a nuisance of himself, and most sensible dragons will try to stay out of the way. Meanwhile Goregidis tells Vimier that he and Ereg saw a "huge furclaw" when they were flying to the Caverns the previous afternoon, and suggests that they go out hunting and bring it back as a surprise treat for the ball. Unfortunately Vimier can't go out; he has meetings planned and business to attend to. This derails the murder plan for the day.

If Ereg is dead or has been thrown out, Goregidis isn't a conjuror so isn't expected to participate in the party, except possibly by helping to keep the children under control, but will claim to be too upset to take part. If he has been injured, as in some of the options above, he has even more of an excuse not to join in.

During the afternoon Tenecel does indeed have a couple of business meetings planned, and if any of the adventurers are at the caverns on business this may be a good time to fit them in.

The Ball begins in the evening, and should be the glittering occasion that might be expected. Even if there has been a scandal the previous night the Tenecel family will try to put the best possible face on things, without attempting to hide the facts; if they deny it the truth is certain to leak out eventually, it's better to play things down without any outright refusal to discuss things. A cheating scandal thus becomes a "disagreement at the card table," a fight to the death or suicide is described as "settling things honourably."

One of the hired servants is a reasonably skilful drummer and provides the music for the evening; optionally, if any of the adventurers has pretensions to musical talent they could be invited to take a turn at the drums. If referees want to provide a sound track for this part of the evening, look for solo or group performances by military drummers without pipes and other accompaniment. There are several examples on YouTube.

During the dance try to give the adventurers things to do; encounters with members of the family and other guests, flirting, exploration of one of the disused tunnels, a quick search of Vimier's office while he's otherwise engaged, and so forth. There's no need to prepare much information about the extra guests; they won't be involved in the action, just mention them as being "a handsome young dragon who looks a little the worse for drink," "a group of attractive young dragonesses who seem to be giggling about something," "an elderly grey dragoness who is determined to flirt," and so forth. Use names from the list on page 49 if needed.

Refreshments (snacks such as candied pears, fresh fowl and of course drinks) are served in the dining room, with one or another of the servants constantly bustling in with more platters and jugs of wine and fruit cordials. This might be a good opportunity if someone wants to sabotage Vimier's political ambitions, since no one servant is watching things constantly. Adding some old or cooked meat would be relatively easy. However, given the general level of alcoholic consumption it is likely to go unnoticed or may be passed off as a joke if none of the adventurers make a fuss about it.

At 19.75, five minutes to midnight, Vimier signals for the music to stop, and servants circulate with cups of wine and other drinks. As midnight nears Vimier proposes a toast to prosperity, health, and happiness for the New Year. All dragons have a good sense of time; it's part of their natural navigational ability, so he ends just in time for everyone to drink in unison at midnight. Then the drummer plays a spritely dance tune and everyone joins in to a fast dance, resembling a Yarge square dance, led off by Amer Tenecel and his fiancé. If her condition hasn't been changed by the attention of any adventurers with designs on her virtue, she "pinks" noticeably during the dance. If for any reason she doesn't there will be some whispered speculation that she has already been closer to Amer (or some other male) than is strictly ladylike.

After the dance the older Tenecels and Miregah Felandra retire for the night, leaving Amer as the family's representative for the remainder of the evening; the Avageth brothers are also present, if still in the caverns, but will be very drunk. Anyone talking to them or suggesting that it might be time to head for their caves will be treated to a long rambling discourse about their uncle's meanness, which implies some degree of resentment. If possible this should include a cryptic reference to "*making things better*" or "*not taking things lying down*" which might imply that they're up to something, but keep it vague. If players don't seem to be noticing anything this can get a little louder, with one brother trying to keep the other quiet, but be careful not to give too much away.

During the ball more gambling takes place in the speaking room; if Ereg hasn't already been caught cheating this is another opportunity to do so.

The dance goes on into the early hours, then the guests who aren't in residence fly home, with a minority (mostly dragonesses with dragonets, and anyone too drunk or tired to fly) sleeping in the dormitory caves and staying on for breakfast and the morning service before leaving. Note that it's generally considered irreligious to fly to chapel, but most dragons turn a blind eye to someone (other than a parson) flying home *after* the service; given the location there isn't really much alternative.

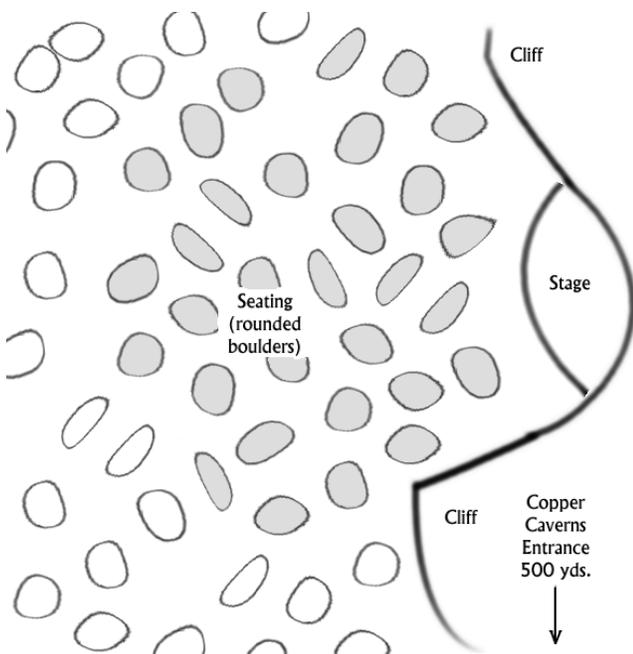
**Firstday week 1 of Freshwinter, New Years Day, the autumnal equinox (1/1/1)**

It's the Sabbath, and all good dragons are expected to attend morning service; the devout will also attend a short evening service. With the exception of servants everyone is expected to refrain from work and from unnecessary flight, although as noted above flying home *after* a service is generally ignored.

Copper Caverns doesn't have a purpose-built chapel; if there is to be a service a portable altar is set up in the ballroom, with religious icons on stands. Formerly a semi-retired parson lived in one of the guest caves, but he died two years ago and since then Vimier has fallen into the habit of inviting priests to stay for a week or two, as their duties and parishes permit, and conduct services in the ballroom on Firstday. If nobody is available the family flies to Spalt. Vimier hopes to make a permanent appointment before the parliamentary Season begins; each service is, in a sense, an audition. If none of the adventurers are priests the service will be conducted by Blessed Ingen.

Vimier is looking for someone who preaches interesting but relatively short sermons and won't have a problem with his wife's eccentricity, but might possibly persuade her to moderate her views. To be offered the position the candidate needs to preach an Orthodox sermon between a half and three-quarter hours long (40-60 minutes) and make a successful Actor (Preach) roll when he takes the Firstday morning service, with a shorter sermon and another successful roll in the evening, and handle at least one conversation with Hethikah reasonably sensibly; for example, a priest who interrupted Hethikah's "demonstration" or tried to exert too much authority probably wouldn't be offered the job. It's a good post for a Parson without much ambition, but given the location and transport difficulties may not suit an active adventurer. Vimier has enough "clout" with the Church to get someone he likes transferred to the Caverns. If the right candidate took the job he would be willing to pay for the construction of a small chapel, once he has solved his current problems with his landlords. If present, Blessed Ingen isn't really interested in the post; he's thinking more in terms of retiring to an academic position.

Since it is Firstday everyone is expected to spend the day quietly, with no hunting trips or strenuous sports. After the service several of the previous evening's guests make their farewells and fly off. Hethikah suggests that since there are several authors present, some readings might be an interesting way to pass the time – perhaps a favourite passage from an existing book, or an excerpt from the current work in progress. Since the ballroom is still set up for worship, and the weather is warm and dry for the time of year, she suggests going outdoors and combining the readings with a picnic; there's a natural amphitheatre



a few hundred yards north of the Caverns' entrance, with excellent acoustics and plenty of comfortably smooth rocks to perch on that give a good view of the "stage." The closest rocks (shaded grey) have the best view and acoustics.

For adventurers this is most likely to be an opportunity to take a look around the caverns while most of the occupants and guests are out of the way; there are still a few servants around, but the family and most of the guests are outside. Anyone avoiding the reading completely is likely to be noticed, but as the afternoon wears on it should be easy enough to make an excuse to go back inside for a while. Vimier spends most of the day outdoors listening to the readings. Amer's wing is hurting and he decides to stay inside. He'll mostly be in his own cave but visits the library, kitchens, etc. and should be a wandering hazard for anyone doing anything that is supposed to be hidden from the family.

**Hethikah** is all too willing to read from her own work in progress, *The Fall of the Temple*, “a tale of the Subjugation.” It’s a turgid passage describing the pillaging of a draconic temple by the invading Yarge, the priestess-heroine’s narrow escape from captivity, and the slaying of several dragonets and temple guards who try to slow the invaders.

**Miregah Felandra** has a new poem about nature called *Snowfall on Distant Mountains* and is pleased to recite it. It’s actually moderately good poetry, but over-long to the point where her audience may become a little restless before the final verse.

**Belcelith Dunnis** won’t be asked to read unless one of the adventurers has somehow found out about the book she’s writing and mentions it to Hethikah. She’s been working on her comic novel *Kind Hearts and Dragonets* for at least ten years, but only has a hundred or so pages written. If asked to recite she will initially decline, but with sufficient persuasion and at least one stiff drink can be persuaded to read a short passage in which the “hero,” a lecherous young dragon-about-town with more money than sense, attempts to seduce an older and considerably wiser dragoness who has her own plans for his wealth. It’s well-written and funny, but a little risqué by the standards of most dragon literature.

**Eda Derwig’s** latest romance is still an untitled work in progress. It’s about what might be expected from her, a melodramatic historical piece in which a handsome dragon engineer and beautiful young dragoness find true love while he is building the railway from Irieth to Tolga. The passage she reads describes the hero rescuing his love (whose claws are caught in the points) from the path of a runaway engine.

If you are using the sample characters, **Segievel Yepragis** will also be asked to read from his latest work. This might be an opportunity for some anti-Yarge propaganda or a vivid description of the horrible results of neglecting Tiamath’s defences. Any other characters with a literary background will also be asked to read. If adventurers are skilled in other areas of performance art (such as drumming and other forms of music) they should also be encouraged to participate.

None of this needs to be played out in detail; the adventurers should simply be aware that the readings are happening. If possible make up a few short examples of the NPC authors’ work to quote as needed.

At lunch time servants bring out freshly-killed muttonwools and swine, devoured with gusto by the assembled guests. While everyone is digesting their meat the Avageth brothers (if both are still present) start another argument, lowering their voices if anyone seems to be paying attention. Anyone who sneaks up without them noticing will hear something along the lines of “*mutter mutter get him alone mutter mutter take what’s ours mutter mutter need a good excuse...*” etc. Don’t make it clear what they’re up to, but make it clear that they’re up to something, without being too blatantly obvious.

In the evening most devout or nominally religious dragons will return to the ballroom for another service; if Ingen is preaching he will speak on the subject of literature and the arts, all of which flow from Veld, Camran, etc., with reference to the readings of the morning and the lessons (if any) to be learned from their various themes. It’s a little over-long but flattering to the authors.

No formal events are planned after supper; unless the adventurers suggest something else, a story-telling session begins in the speaking room. If any of the adventurers are at all well-known they will be pressed to tell stories of their exploits. Topics might include celebrities (draconic and Yarge) that characters have met, interesting places they’ve visited, exciting adventures and so forth. Since dragonesses are present the story-tellers will be expected to maintain some sense of decency, and particularly scurrilous stories should be avoided, but tall tales are another matter; nobody minds a little exaggeration although it’s important not to lie... at least not too blatantly. As an alternative, a tall tales contest might be more fun<sup>1</sup>; “So tell me, General, exactly how did you defeat an entire Yarge army corps armed only with your bare claws, several yards of string, and two cloves of garlic?”

---

<sup>1</sup> For more on competitive story-telling in the grand style see *The Extraordinary Adventures of Baron Munchausen*, a game by James Wallis from Hogshhead Publications. It is currently out of print but a new edition is expected in September 2008.

### Twoday week 1 Freshwinter (2/1/1)

Hethikah plans amateur dramatics for the last evening of the holiday, and expects the guests to participate. The play is the classic farce *Rasdarie and Nimuleris* (see page 63), which every dragonet learns in the nursery. It poses an unusual challenge since several of the roles are Yarge. Companies lacking the requisite Yarge actors generally use dragons in the Yarge roles, wearing simple masks and speaking in high-pitched tones to convey the main Yarge features. Hethikah has several copies of the script, some masks, and roles for everyone; the principal draconic and Yarge leads, spear carriers, hatchling dragons, etc. The main characters are

- Rasdarie (a Yarge merchant's son) – to be played by Vimier
- Nimuleris (a rival Yarge merchant's daughter) – to be played by Hethikah
- The parents of the above
- Holy Mothies (dragon preacher and practical joker) – to be played by Amer
- Several draconic friends of Rasderie
- Various relatives of Holy Mothies
- Some dragonets
- Assorted Yarge and Draconic servants, clowns, hangers-on, etc.
- 

If players ask for scripts give them the summary and a role, and tell them that they'll have to improvise the rest as they go along. They'll have the rest of the morning and afternoon to rehearse and get ready for their performances.

Meanwhile the Avageth brothers are desperate to "take care" of Vimier, if nobody has derailed things. There's no point trying to pretend that both brothers are in the caverns, so they might as well go out with Vimier and plead ignorance of his whereabouts after they've killed him. It'll look a little suspicious, but if neither of them has grown there will be no reason for anyone to think that they've eaten him

After breakfast they approach him again (if possible just publicly enough to arouse the interest of at least one adventurer) and remind him about the "enormous furclaw" they claimed to have seen a few days earlier. Vimier finally feels able to take the time for a quick expedition once he's taken care of a little business – a meeting with Yoverak Huvager who (although Vimier doesn't yet know it) wants to discuss his tenancy of the caverns. This will be a very acrimonious meeting, and anyone in the vicinity of his office should realise that some sort of argument is going on, even if they don't see Huvager. The meeting ends with Vimier refusing any suggestion of an early end to his lease, and shouting "I'll see you in court!" as Huvager beats a hasty retreat.

After the meeting Vimier gets his rifle and ammunition and prepares to go out hunting with his nephews. Meanwhile they can't resist another quick plotting session ("*mutter mutter some sort of accident...*" etc.) Don't make it clear what they're up to, but make it clear that they're up to something, without being too blatantly obvious.

If the adventurers have become involved in the play don't worry – if they missed all the clues it's unfortunate, but not the end of the world. Because if Vimier and the brothers leave without at least one adventurer deciding to tag along or follow them, a few minutes later Amer Tenecel will start to feel uneasy; he's subconsciously realised that there is something odd about the brothers' behaviour, and he's been a soldier long enough to take his instincts seriously. He can't fly after them himself, his wing is too weak, but maybe there just happen to be some stalwart adventurers around who can investigate for him...

- If the adventurers do nothing the brothers murder Vimier and return several hours later with a story about having become separated from him while hunting, and pretend to be surprised that he hasn't come back. They've left his gun and a pool of his blood on rocky ground several miles from the glacier, and concealed the body in the ice. Their "explanation" is simple – a furclaw must have attacked Vimier after they separated – but won't stand up to close examination since there is no smell

of a furclaw, and there are no tracks – although on the rocky ground that isn't entirely unreasonable. They plan to wait a few weeks before sharing the body. Optionally a problem they may not anticipate is that the area where they fake the death is actually part of the Teltsie estate, so any apparent death there will be investigated by detectives, trackers, etc. hired by one of the richest families in Tiamath.

Meanwhile, Huvager has gone out flying to calm down after his argument with Vimier. He'll return around the time that dragons start to realise that Vimier is missing, and if questioned will panic and try to minimise the argument. This may lead to his becoming a suspect. See below for later events.

- If adventurers pretend to be keen on hunting and accompany Vimier and the brothers openly, the brothers try to cover up by leading the expedition to a ridge north of the glacier, rather than to the glacier itself. The next few hours are a frustrating attempt to find any trace of the furclaw the brothers claim to have seen, without success. Eventually Vimier storms off and back to the Caverns, furious about the waste of time, while the brothers claim that "so many dragons" must have scared the furclaw away.



Astute adventurers may wonder why the brothers were flying over the area at all – it isn't on a direct route from any populated area to the Caverns. If asked about this, they make a feeble excuse about getting "a bit lost" and take off in turn, but don't catch up with Vimier before he gets back to the Caverns. Time for them to try to think of another plan... If the adventurers ask for a more detailed description of the area mention the glacier amongst the mountains, hills, trees and other scenery. If they take a look at the glacier give them a chance to notice that there is an oddly regular hole in the ice, deep enough to hold a large dragon, with a lot of loose ice around it.

By now the brothers have only one chance left before they are expected to leave – they'll try to kill Vimier during the evening's performance. This possibility is discussed in more detail below.

- If adventurers follow the trio, they will have trouble keeping up without making their presence obvious. The brothers head towards the glacier. It's a clear day and visibility is excellent, and the brothers will look back occasionally to make sure that they aren't being followed. The best solution is either to stay low, so that the adventurers aren't silhouetted against the sky, or to go very high and hope that nobody notices tiny specks in the distance. Fortunately the sun is behind the adventurers, making it a little harder to spot them against its glare.

The adventurers will be spotted if one of the brothers makes a MIND roll versus Difficulty 10 *minus* the number of pursuing dragons to notice them; e.g., if there are three pursuing dragons, Difficulty drops to 7 – this can be more difficult or an automatic failure if the adventurers make a serious attempt to avoid being noticed. If this occurs the brothers will change course to the ridge north of the glacier – the course change will be noticeable to their followers – then carry on as if they were accompanied openly, as above.

If they don't notice pursuit they continue on towards the glacier and eventually land. Vimier will be puzzled by the location – it isn't at all the sort of territory he associates with furclaws, there's nothing for them to eat – but gives the brothers the benefit of the doubt until they aim their guns at him.

Once this confrontation begins it will take a couple of minutes for the brothers to summon up the nerve to shoot Vimier; he'll be too surprised to think of fighting back at first. If the adventurers spot what's happening and push their speed they'll arrive in time to intervene. Any sort of distraction gives Vimier an opportunity to start fighting – although he supports the Peace Faction he's still a large and extremely tough dragon, he's carrying his own rifle, and it will probably take more than one shot to

kill him. The brothers won't think of surrendering; once it's apparent that they intend murder, their only likely fate is execution, so they might just as well go down fighting.

Adventurers with a political reason to dislike Vimier might think of delaying a little, waiting until he is seriously injured or even dead before intervening. This is appropriately draconic, although there might be more to be gained by saving his life and earning his gratitude.

Vimier doesn't necessarily know that the adventurers want to help him until their intentions become clear; the brothers will assume that they're on his side. It's probable that with help he'll defeat the brothers; he may be shot along the way, but given his size and toughness it may not be fatal.

The aftermath of a rescue or his death are discussed in more detail below.

- If the adventurers are late setting off they should have to work a little to track Vimier and the brothers. Fortunately there will be one witness to their departure; Yethig, the herdsman and handyman, saw them fly off and can indicate the direction. Of course he will do so faster and more accurately if someone gives him a crown or two to jog his memory...

If nobody thinks of asking him, they can still spot Vimier and the brothers if they quickly fly high and look around; draconic eyesight is good enough that they will be able to see them several miles away, since they are headed away from the sun, while the adventurers will be hidden by the glare of the sun and almost invisible; there is no need to roll to see if they are spotted.

With such a long lead the brothers and Vimier will reach the glacier well before the adventurers arrive, even if they try to pile on speed, and the murder attempt will be well under way before they arrive. Bear in mind that guns are double-barrelled but slow to load, and that Vimier is tough and will put up a spirited fight once he shakes off his surprise. The result isn't by any means a foregone conclusion. Assume that the fight will start six rounds before the adventurers arrive at normal speed, three rounds if they immediately make flying rolls to accelerate. Both sides will use their guns first then start claw-to-claw combat once they're out of ammunition. This is potentially a long and messy fight, especially if the adventurers don't make it clear which side they're on.

The aftermath is discussed in more detail below.

- Variations on the above might include one of the brothers working alone if (for example) Ereg committed suicide or was killed after a gambling incident, or an ambush in which Goregidis leads Vimier to a waiting Ereg. Things should play out much the same in either event.

If the brothers don't attack Vimier while hunting (which is the likely outcome if the adventurers accompanied them on the "hunt," or caught up before they reached the glacier) they will have one opportunity to make a last attempt in the evening. The play is the key; everyone is focused on the stage (the outdoor amphitheatre is used again) and someone lurking in the shadows should be able to get off a shot or two and beat a hasty retreat before anyone has time to react. It's by no means risk-free, and it has the disadvantage that the brothers won't get nearly as much meat, even if they succeed in killing Vimier, but by now the brothers are running out of ideas.

In order to make this work both brothers need to appear to be around the stage, and they will once again fall back on the idea of one dragon playing two parts; Ereg has volunteered to play one of Rasdarie's dragon friends, while Goregidis is supposed to be playing Nimuleris' father (and will be wearing a Yarge mask in the role). Crucially, the two characters are never on stage simultaneously, so it's relatively easy for one actor to play them both.

The plan, such as it is, is that they should be well into the second act as night falls, and in twilight conditions there will be a period of ten or fifteen minutes when everyone's outer eyelid is still shut and their ability to see into dark areas (such as the shadows further back from the stage) will be impaired. At this point there is a classic scene in which Rasdarie (played by Vimier himself) comes on stage with a group of friends (including Ereg's character), engages in some banter, then proceeds into a soliloquy to

Nimuleris [“But soft, what scent through yonder cavern seeps...”] which is interrupted by her father after two or three minutes.

Goregidis will hide Vimier’s rifle in a conveniently dark niche before the play starts, then sneak off during the first interval. After the interval Ereg will play both roles. Goregidis will get the rifle and open fire as the interruption begins on stage, fire both barrels at Vimier, then abandon it and circle the crowd in the confusion, getting the mask back from Ereg at the earliest opportunity. Since he will smell of gunpowder at this point he needs to spill something over himself to mask the scent; fortunately there will be cups of wine and other beverages where the audience are sitting, so that part shouldn’t be hard.

It goes without saying that there are a few snags. There are no external suspects so it’s obviously an inside job, and in order to make it work Goregidis needs to hide the gun before the play begins, then later move to his firing position without anyone noticing him. If the adventurers are at all suspicious of the brothers they should easily spot that he’s up to something. The biggest snag, of course, is that there is no way for the brothers to ensure that the attack will succeed – Goregidis could miss, and even if he hits Vimier the wound may not be fatal.

Play this out fairly, using the plan on page 120 to work out the movements of characters; the stage is lit by a couple of lanterns, the area around the amphitheatre (the grey rocks) is occupied by everyone who isn’t in the current scene, rocks further out from the stage are in shadow, and in twilight conditions the dragons will find it difficult to see what’s going on. Just to add a little extra confusion some of the guests will assume that it’s a surprise attack by Yarge bandits, and Amer will try to organise a defence.

- If Goregidis is caught Ereg will immediately go to plan B – denounce him as the assassin, and claim that Goregidis told him he had a rendezvous with a dragoness and asked him to cover for him on stage. Whether or not this is believed is up to the adventurers – they should be able to find evidence that Ereg was in on the plot, especially if the brothers are already under suspicion from the afternoon’s events.
- In the unlikely event that the brothers manage to kill Vimier without anything going wrong, there will still be suspicions and an eventual investigation – but the rest of the guests and family are suspect too.

Both of these murder scenarios lead to the same set of possible outcomes:

**Vimier vanishes; one or both brothers are suspect but there is no hard evidence against them.**

Amer and his mother organize a thorough search of the area where the brothers claim Vimier was last seen, probably finding the bloodstains etc. that the brothers have planted. Unless the glacier is checked within few days, the first snowfall will cover the remaining traces of Vimier’s last resting place, and it will be more or less invisible until the brothers dig him out and eat him.

One of the hired servants (or a guest who isn’t under suspicion) is sent to Tolga with a message for the local magistrate. A few hours later several Constables and a Lieutenant from the Tolga City Watch arrive. They’ll want to take statements from everyone involved, and nobody will be allowed to leave Copper Caverns until the preliminary investigation is complete. This might take a couple of days, and guests who miss the Threeday train probably won’t be happy, but the needs of the Law take priority.

There will be a strong assumption that Vimier is dead, but without proof it will take many years to settle his estate. Anyone else who can’t be accounted for at the time he disappeared also falls under suspicion; this might include Ereg (if his cheating led to his eviction from the Caverns), Huvager, some of the other guests, and possibly some of the adventurers. Everyone involved can expect to be interviewed by lawyers and officials, but unless positive proof of the brothers’ involvement is found they will never be charged. There’s a period of confusion while the court appoints administrators to run the estate; fortunately Respected Nalnegis Kellis is already familiar with Vimier’s business operations and with ‘Spec Vebarie’s help can soon get things back under control.

Things might be handled more rapidly by e.g. tricking one of the brothers into confessing or returning to the body, bringing in a tracker who might find traces of their presence at the faked crime scene, etc.

Eventually Vimier will be declared dead; his will is read and with the exception of some bequests to charity and servants, everything goes to his wife and son. The brothers will be dismayed to discover that their inheritance is one crown each, and would have been one bite each if his body had been found.

A couple of decades later the bones and other remains will finally reach the bottom of the glacier and will be found by hunters. There won't be positive proof that they're Vimier's remains, but it's enough to lead to another round of enquiries.

If they aren't caught the brothers become recluses, shunned by relatives and their few former friends, eventually declining into madness. They die paupers, their bodies sold on the meat market to cover some of their debts.

**Vimier vanishes; the brothers somehow escape suspicion.**

This is highly unlikely, but might be possible if suspicion falls on someone else. The most likely reason for this to happen is if the adventurers assume that they are too incompetent to be the true killers, and decide that someone else must be responsible. For example, they might hear about Vimier's argument with Respected Yoverak Huvager and decide he's the real villain, then "help" pin the crime on him.

If there are no suspicions the brothers can carry on with a normal (but somewhat impoverished) life, and are no worse off than they were before; once they eat the body both will be larger and healthier, in fact. They will continue to pin their hopes on the eventual resolution of Vimier's affairs, not knowing what his will really contains. After the reading they will become extremely bitter and may start to make slips which eventually lead to their unmasking. If the adventurers have meanwhile helped to convict someone else this is likely to get very messy...

**Vimier is killed; the brothers are known to have killed him.**

This proceeds much as above, but with witnesses (presumably the adventurers and possibly others, especially if an attack during the play goes wrong) who can verify that the brothers were to blame. For example, the adventurers might interrupt the assassination on the glacier, but too late to save Vimier. Naturally there will still have to be an investigation by the authorities, and it may end up being the adventurers' word against the brothers, but there should nevertheless be a much faster resolution. With definite proof of Vimier's death the will can be read immediately, his wife and son immediately take over the running of his businesses, and so forth.



If they are caught the brothers will be tried, probably convicted and eventually executed, their flesh shared between the remaining members of the Vimier family and those responsible for their capture – this might include the adventurers, members of the city watch, possibly all of the members of a large mob. Otherwise they spend the rest of their lives on the run, possibly hiding out under assumed identities, deprived of the status and wealth they expected. If they have reason to blame the adventurers for this fate they may decide to retaliate, eliminate witnesses, etc.

**Vimier survives a murder attempt.**

This is in many respects the best solution; nobody will be foolish enough to suggest that Vimier would lie about an attempt on his life, and if he helps to subdue his attackers he will be considered something of a hero. This has the potential to advance his political career, which may not suit all adventurers, but that won't immediately be obvious. With Vimier alive and the brothers destined for execution the case is soon over, although some or all of the adventurers may have to appear in court.

If for any reason Vimier can't identify his attacker – for example, someone shoots at him in the dark but nobody is caught – the situation will be tense, and there will probably be a lengthy investigation of everyone present at the Caverns. This hopefully won't be a problem for most adventurers. If it is they probably only have themselves to blame.

## End Game: Crime and Punishment

This shouldn't be an especially dangerous adventure – essentially the dragons have to stop Tiamath's most incompetent murderers – but it gives the adventurers a lot of opportunities for social networking and (possibly) immense gaffes that will destroy their standing in society. Give everyone involved

- Three Bonus points if they expose Ereg as a cheat or otherwise inadvertently prevent the murder.
- Five Bonus points if they solve the crime after Vimier is killed.
- Eight Bonus points if they catch the murderers in the act and save Vimier's life.
- Bonus points for attaining personal objectives (as on the cards on page 102)
- Additionally, reward courage under fire and other heroics, good role-playing, humour, etc., and especially anything that amuses the referee!

There may possibly be other rewards

- A share in the flesh of the murderers.
- The gratitude of an influential publisher / politician, political party or other interest group.

## Alternative Murderers

The brothers may not be the murderers. Optionally, they are bumbling incompetents, trying to summon up the nerve to kill Vimier, who attract attention while the real criminal is taking care of business.

### Dignified Captain Amer Tenecel

The motive is greed. His wing has healed well enough to let him fly, though he pretends otherwise. He will find a way to lure Vimier out of the Caverns, meet him somewhere several miles away and assassinate him then fly back. It's in his interests to have the body found as quickly as possible, of course, so a murder site somewhere along the railway between the Caverns and Spalt is probably best.

### Illust Hethikah Tenecel

She's known about Vimier's adultery for many years, but when he invites one of his mistresses (possibly Kitisel Hraden, possibly someone else) to the Caverns she decides that she's had enough. She has nothing to gain by hiding the body, so whatever she plans will be relatively simple – for example, she might shoot him in one of the side tunnels during the ball, with the noise of the shot drowned by the drums, quickly do something to cover the scent of gunpowder (such as spilling a little wine on her hands), then return to the ball. With dozens of extra guests around solving this will be tricky.

### Respected Yoverak Huvager

Their argument (described above) escalates to a fight, Vimier lunges at Huvager who grabs Vimier's rifle and fires in self-defence. It's technically dragonslaughter, not murder, but his lies will make things worse.

### Nalnegis Kellis and 'Spec Vebarie

Vebarie is Vimier's illegitimate daughter, but has no prospect of inheriting. Kellis is just greedy. They aim to give Kellis control of Vimier's companies and loot them before he is finally declared dead. Kellis planted the idea of the bear-hunting expedition to lure the brothers and Vimier to the glacier, and will use meetings and other excuses to keep Vimier in the caverns until Twoday, when 'Spec Vebarie has an alibi arranged. She is an expert shot and unusually strong, and plans to kill all three on the glacier.

Finally, an adventurer could be the murderer; alternative briefing cards for the sample characters are provided on the next page. Only one adventurer should be a murderer, the others should be unaware of the plan and should be given briefing cards from page 102. Similar motives can probably be found for most other player characters.

<b>Segiveel Yepragis</b>	Your publisher, Vimier Tenecel, is likely to become a member of the Noble Assembly. This is disturbing since he has pro-Yarge leanings and has required you to amend some passages of your books to make them less “offensive” to the enemies of all Dragonkind. His election will tip the balance of the Assembly towards pacifism, and may leave the nation unprepared for the inevitable conflict that is to come. Moreover, you have discovered that you are receiving only a fraction of the royalties you should be entitled to, and your agent seems to be unable to force Vimier to give you your full entitlement. If Vimier is killed the company will be run by his son, a soldier and patriot who will undoubtedly heed your warnings and reward you accordingly, or at least pay you your full due. Your patriotic duty is clear; Vimier Tenecel must die!
<b>Kellis Derwig</b>	Illustrious Tenecel has invited you to attend his New Years party and conduct services on Firstday of the New Year. He has a reputation as a generous host, and your curate can take care of things at your parish – but you know that his invitation is actually a demand. Tenecel caught you cheating at dice when you were still a young curate, and has used his knowledge to blackmail you ever since. Essentially you are his spy inside the Faith, and you have become aware that he and his wife are secretly working to undermine the foundations of the Church and spread a hideous distortion of the truth based on supposed “memories” of former pre-conquest incarnations. His wife is just a dupe, but now he wants you to lend your name to the alleged “authenticity” of her stories. You’ve decided that it’s time to put an end to this evil – Vimier Tenecel must die!
<b>Gethack Mothies</b>	Captain Amer Tenecel, once a fellow cadet, is on medical leave and has invited you to his family’s New Year’s party. While your career was ended by your injuries, Amer expects to make a full recovery and seems to be destined for higher things, and he’s chosen to rub that in your face by inviting you to the party. Fortunately you planned to find a way to attend it anyway – you have learned that his father, Vimier Tenecel, is secretly in the pay of Yarge interests and planning to take office as a member of the Noble Assembly, with the declared intention of working for disarmament and peace with the Yarge! Amer seems to suspect nothing, which means that you will have to take things into your own claws. Your patriotic duty is clear; Vimier Tenecel must die!
<b>Hathor Yoverack</b>	You’ve been invited to celebrate the New Year with the Tenecel family, friends of your parents. You have never told them that you hate Vimier Tenecel. When you were a child you overheard him talking to a parson, mentioning three of your dearest friends as “unhealthy” and “looking a little green”; within the week all three had been marked as unfit and eaten! You have since discovered that Vimier received a share of the flesh for his wife, who was trying to lay more eggs; fortunately she failed to conceive, but who knows how many other dragonets have been sacrificed in Vimier’s attempts to further his dynasty? One thing is clear; it must never happen again. You have an opportunity to protect future hatchlings from this evil dragon, but there is only one way to be sure that he never has another chance at fatherhood. Vimier Tenecel must die!
<b>Chigal</b>	When you were a child your parents sold you into service; your first master was Vimier Tenecel, but he seemed to think that you were insolent, and within a few years he sold your contract on to the Yoverack family. As a result you lost all contact with your own family, and now can’t even remember their names. This is the first opportunity you’ve had to return to the Caverns, and you plan to use that chance to find out more about your family, if there are still records or servants who remember your purchase, and take a fitting revenge on the dragon who ruined your life. Vimier Tenecel must die!
<b>Kitsel Hraden</b>	Vimier Tenecel was one of your lovers 200 years ago, but quickly distanced himself from you when you were disgraced. You had no problem with this at the time, although a little financial help wouldn’t have come amiss when you changed your identity. Recently you have learned that Vimier didn’t just distance himself from the scandal – he orchestrated it, taking care to keep his name out of the gossip, since his wife was starting to suspect. It has taken you several years to find a way to get close enough to take your revenge, but you befriended Vimier’s son when he was hospitalised, and he has now invited you to a party at his family’s caves. You have changed your name and appearance, and with luck Vimier won’t recognize you until you have taken your revenge. Vimier Tenecel must die!

## The Crimson Claw Assurance Society

**T**iamath's best source of foreign revenue is the financial services and insurance sector, with long-term investments and institutional insurance (of public buildings and structures such as bridges) a speciality. For some reason Yarge who would never trust dragons with their livestock or princesses are happy to give them large amounts of gold. The main reason for this, of course, is that all of Tiamath's financial institutions follow strict codes of conduct, whose penalties are literally draconian; anyone defaulting on a debt or failing to meet their contracted obligations is likely to end up penniless, eaten, or worse. For Tiamath there are many advantages; the Yarge may be more reluctant to go to war against a nation that holds much of their gold, and insures much of the property that would be at risk if a war occurred.

Over centuries Tiamath has acquired enormous influence in shipping and other forms of international commerce; favourable insurance rates are offered to vessels registered and paying taxes in Irieth and flying the dragon flag. The government encourages the trade indirectly, by giving preferential treatment to banks and insurers with an international presence when handing out government contracts. So long as there are no problems it's a nice little earner for everyone involved, and a good way to boost Tiamath's international presence indirectly.

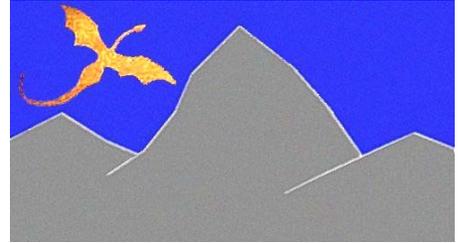
The snag, of course, that if things go badly overseas Tiamath's investors may lose a lot of money. A run of bad luck – a few shipwrecks, a collapsed bridge or dam, or the destruction of a major public building – could have serious repercussions for Tiamath's economy.

### The Crimson Claw

One of the oldest and most respected insurance companies in Tiamath is The Crimson Claw Assurance Society, a subsidiary of The Crimson Claw Bank. Their sign, instantly recognizable throughout the known world, is a red wooden replica of a dragon's claw. The bank is either the second or third largest in Tiamath, with assets estimated at 250 million crowns, and leads the field in foreign business. Similarly, the insurance society is the market leader in foreign insurance.

In common with most of Tiamath's financial institutions, very little is known of the organisation of these companies; their annual report occasionally makes a cryptic reference to "The Directors," but in Tiamath involvement in commerce is not something to boast about; while everyone assumes that the company has several nobles amongst its directors, very few outsiders know their names.

It may be useful to mention the bank or insurance company some time before running this adventure; for example, in earlier adventures you could give players handouts that might include cheques issued by the bank, newspaper cuttings with advertisements for their insurance services on the back, and so forth. Don't mention it so often that players become suspicious, just keep it in the background as a well-known name. One of the optional ways to start this adventure assumes that all of the adventurers owe money to the bank, another that they are stockholders or in search of a loan for some purpose of their own.



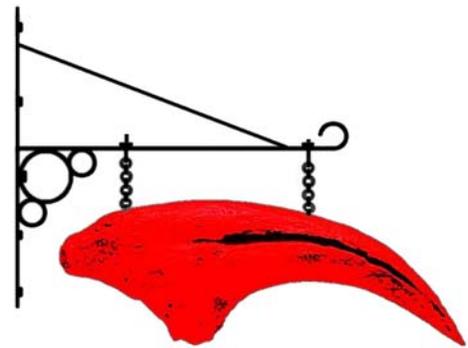
Tiamath's flag; in heraldic terms it is described as:

*Azure, a mountain of three peaks argent, in dexter chief a dragon tergiant volant to sinister or.*

Or in more conventional language:

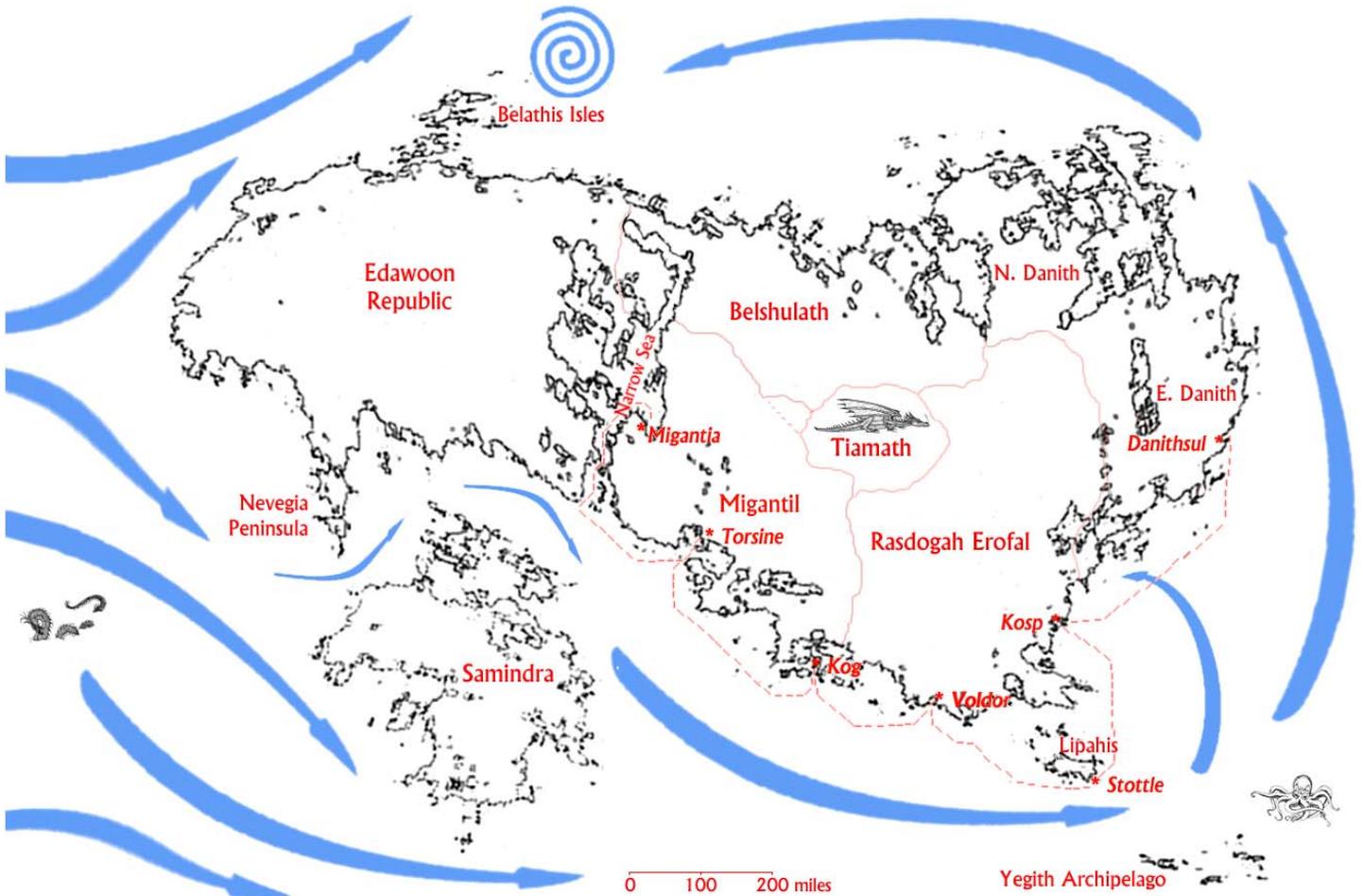
*Blue, a silver mountain of three peaks, in top left a gold dragon viewed from the back flying up and to the right.*

There have been at least five previous versions of the flag, differing mainly in the position and size of the dragon. The history of these changes is a fascinating reflection of the history of Tiamath but, alas, outside the scope of the current work; see chapter XII of *A Dragonet's History of Tiamath* by the Blessed Jamanah for a good overview of the subject.



## The Situation (Referees Only)

The Crimson Claw Assurance Society insures roughly twenty percent of the vessels of the the Migantil merchant fleet, and most of these vessels fly Tiamath's flag and are registered in Irieth. In recent weeks four of these ships have disappeared without trace; all belong to Ithelar Coastal Lines (ICL), a company which happens to have several outstanding loans with The Crimson Claw Bank and other Tiamath financial houses. If they have genuinely been sunk, and the bank can't prove that there is some sort of fraud or conspiracy that would make breach the terms of their insurance and loans, there would be a major impact on the Crimson Claw in particular, and Tiamath's banks generally.



All that is known is that all four ships were heading east along the south coast route from Migantia to East Danith, shown on the map above. They disappeared in average weather (neither better nor worse than usual) somewhere between Voldor and Kosp, on the coast of Rasdogah Erofal. The only intervening port is Stottle on the island of Lipahis; Yarge agents of the Society have questioned the harbour master there, who says that the first and third ship docked normally, the other two never arrived. This is confirmed to some extent by cargo records. Unfortunately Lipahis and the smaller islands between it and the mainland are a principality of Rasdogah Erofal, whose Sultan notoriously hates dragons and claims to be a dragon slayer (although evidence for this feat is a little thin on the ground). Employees of this government are unlikely to be very helpful to dragons or their agents.

The aim of this scenario is for the adventurers to be concealed aboard the next ICL ship headed for East Danith, and see if they can find out what's going on.

What is happening, in fact, is that pirates from the Yegith Archipelago, led by celebrity psychopath Keleg Dragon-Slayer, are sinking the ships with the aid of their secret weapon; the Old One, a sea serpent

which can sometimes be persuaded to attack ships if attracted by rhythmic drum signals. Their main reasons for this are religious – the serpent is their god, their victims will be sacrificed to feed it. Of course the pirates steal anything valuable that remains afloat. Keleg has targeted the ICL ships precisely because they fly the Dragon flag – she wants to kill more dragons, and has guessed that doing this will attract their attention.

## Travel Plans

Exactly how the adventurers become involved in this situation is left to the discretion of the referee. Some possibilities:

- They're bank employees looking for promotion; this is an opportunity for advancement.
- They're mercenaries, and this is the sort of thing they do.
- They're amateur adventurers who actually like to do things like this.
- They're shareholders, and they've been asked to help protect their investment.
- They're looking for a loan for some reason, and the bank wants a favour first.
- They're convicted criminals and have been sold to the bank. If they solve the case to the bank's satisfaction their sentences will be reduced; if they don't cooperate they will be declared outlaws, liable to execution if caught. Remind them that Tiamath is a small enough country that an outlaw rarely survives for more than a few weeks, and that dragons are rarely welcome elsewhere.
- They're in debt to the bank and will be summoned to discuss their situation. Investigating the missing ships is preferable to debtor's prison.

The last of these options is discussed below; the others will need a little preparation by the referee. Remember that some players react badly to coercion; if so another option may be preferable.

## Re: Your Overdraft...

The adventurers are summoned to a meeting with their bank manager, Respected Ogethon Retalath of the Crimson Claw Bank, to discuss their overdrafts. If adventurers would normally have lots of money, tell them that they are encountering "temporary cash flow problems," that they have been defrauded by a business partner, or give them some other reason why they are currently living on borrowed money.

If anyone tries to avoid the meeting (e.g. by ignoring the letter or making some excuse) a few toughs turn up to escort them to the bank, whether they want to go or not. If he has to do this Retalath will begin the meeting by noting an added cost of five crowns per thug employed, to be added to the relevant character's debts.

Retalath sees all of the characters together. If anyone objects he will mention that there is a twenty crown fee for private interviews. Whether the interviews are public or private, he asks a few questions to confirm the identities of the characters then asks them about their debts (let players come up with their own excuses in 30 seconds or less without hesitation, deviation, or repetition) then rejects their arguments and asks them to wait. When everyone has been interviewed he informs them that they have been summoned to meet the Director of the bank, The Crimson Claw. No other name is given, and if asked Retalath seems puzzled by the question. There

**Respected Ogethon Retalath, 25 ft, age 301, married.**

BODY 9, MIND 5, SOUL 3, Business 7  
Tough (1 pt), Armour -2

Quote: *"I'm sorry, but you've been given ample opportunities to repay your debts, and unfortunately business is business..."*

Notes: Retalath is totally devoted to the bank and his superiors, and if anyone attempts to intimidate him he will ring a small bell; a moment later several large thugs arrive to keep the peace. He has a desk loaded with scrolls and ledgers, but generally relies on an extremely good memory – if any record is damaged he will add a ten crown per document copying fee to the relevant dragon's debt. His hobbies include wine tasting and throwing elderly debtors out into the midwinter snow.

has always been a Crimson Claw since the bank was founded three thousand years ago – he is either a VERY long-lived dragon or it is an inherited title.

Retalath and several guards lead the adventurers through a series of heavily-guarded gates and down to the lowest vaults. As they go down describe corridors that gradually become tunnels that look older and more natural until it's obvious that they're either in a real cave or a very good imitation – either would be staggeringly expensive in Irieth, where it's generally believed that the only large natural caves are those occupied by the Law Courts.

Eventually the final tunnel leaves them into a huge chamber, several hundred feet across and so dark that even dragon eyes have trouble adapting to it. In the centre of the cave is a huge mound of gold coins, surrounded by a litter of old rotting bones, mostly those of beeves and swine, but including at least one or two Yarge and a couple of dragons.

Naturally the escort makes sure that none of the adventurers are close enough to the gold to take samples. Have them wait until someone says or does something then mention that the dark shadows at the top of the mound seem to be moving. Something black, monstrous and absolutely enormous is moving towards them – a dragon so vast that they are having trouble seeing it for what it is. Even on all fours he towers over them.

“Good morning. I am informed that your credit limit has been exceeded, to such an extent that the... prudent thing to do would be to sell your bodies as meat. At least we would recoup some of our losses.”

Probably someone will object. If so CC knows a little about each of them, enough to make it clear that he can't be fooled. For example, if you are using the sample characters:

**Segievel Yepragis:** “I believe that your next novel is nearly two years late, and that your publisher has requested the return of your advance. What will you do when they summon you to court, Yepragis? How will you repay the money you owe them, let alone the bank?”

**Blessed Kellis Derwig:** “Blessed Kellis. I'm so glad that you were able to come. Have the gambling halls closed today?”

**Lieutenant Gethack Mothies:** “Lieutenant, I understand that you yourself loaded the cannon that injured you. Self-inflicted wounds... unfortunate, but at least you were luckier than your sergeant and his corporal. And your wounds did remove you from the frontier just weeks before Yarge bandits attacked your company. Were there many survivors? Are they still bitter about their defeat?”

**Dignified Hathor Yoverack:** “You are a wastrel from a noble family, Dignified Yoverack. I hope that you are not relying on any inheritance to pay your debts.”

**Chigal (Hathor's servant):** Will be ignored unless he does something to attract attention. The Crimson Claw knows who he is and that he is a spy, but won't use the information unless there's good reason to do so.

**Kitisel Hraden:** “My dear Miss Kinetica, it is so good to see you again.” If she corrects him he says “ah yes, I had forgotten your – ahem – marriage. My mistake...” and smiles.

He goes on “Now as I was saying, in the old days we would have confined you to the debtors prison, fattened you up a little, and eventually sold you as meat, but the government frowns on that sort of thing these days, blasted namby-pambies. So unless you happen to be interested in an alternative we'll have to

**The Crimson Claw, 120 ft, age 625, single.**

BODY 40, MIND 7, SOUL 2, Business 12  
Tough (6 pt), Armour -8, thick scales, flame

Quote: “Ahhh... *The debtors...*”

Notes: The Crimson Claw, or CC as he is known to his business associates, is Director of the Bank, the Assurance Society, and several other companies. He is physically too big to get out of the cave without major excavation, but he doesn't care; he's on his hoard, several million crowns of his personal fortune plus millions more of the bank's money, and will eat anyone who tries to tamper with it or causes problems. CC renounced all other titles on becoming Director, and won't discuss his life prior to the appointment – adventurers may guess that he has noble blood, but will never know for sure.

have you declared bankrupt and sent to work off your debts in the Mines of Tolga, dreadful hole. Still, should only take ten or fifteen years if you're lucky..."

If anyone asks about the alternative he explains that the bank is sole owner of the Crimson Claw Assurance Society, which insures more than 22% of Migantine merchant ships, and nearly half the Belshulath fleet. "You may be aware that many Yarge ships now fly Tiamath's flag to take advantage of our low insurance rates. Until now it has been a profitable business for the bank..." He explains about the missing ships as above.

If the adventurers agree to help they will join the next ICL ship on the coastal route and resolve the matter by whatever means seems best. If they can solve it to his satisfaction their debts will be cancelled and there may even be a small reward. If they can't solve it they'd better not even think of coming back... "Retalath will arrange things with you."

**Troubleshooting:** If all of the adventurers refuse to co-operate, CC sighs and says "take them away." Armed guards pinion the debtor's wings then take them off to the Debtors Court, where they will be sentenced to spend the next decade or so in the mines of Tolga. Theoretically it's possible to appeal this sentence, but in practice condemned debtors have no money to pay for lawyers. Briefly describe several months or years of backbreaking hard labour before a forgotten relative dies, leaving one of the adventurers just enough money to pay off everyone's debts (or the heir's debts plus a good chunk of money to start again, if the other prisoners are left in the mines).

If a minority of the adventurers refuse, they'll be taken off as above, and won't be seen again until long after the adventure is over. In either case, anyone who doesn't take part in the remainder of the adventure will have a reputation as a debtor even after their debts are cleared, and will be barred from many professions, treated as a poor matrimonial prospect, etc.

The next ship on the route is a freighter, the *Rose of Migantia*. It will sail from its home port Migantia (the capital of Migantil) in four days. If the adventurers leave the following morning they'll arrive in Migantia a few hours before it sails. The Crimson Claw's agents there have made arrangements for the dragons to board secretly and use the hold space as their accommodation.

Questions that might be asked:

- **Where were the missing ships headed?** All of them were bound for East Danith via Rasdogah Erofal, calling in at Lipahis for cheap coal. They were all last seen sailing out of Voldor or Stottle.
- **Why not just board the ship at Voldor?** It's too far to fly except by the overland route across Rasdogah Erofal, whose Sultan claims to be a Dragon Slayer (you may need to explain what this means, as on page 37). The Sultan has banned all dragons from flying over his lands on pain of death. The dragons could board ship at one of the other ports along the Migantine coast, but it wouldn't save much time. Also, if pirates are involved it's probably best to keep a low profile by boarding the ship as early as possible and staying below deck in port.
- **Who else?** Yarge pirates – there are still some operating out of the Yegith Archipelago and possibly Lipahis, though their pickings have been slim in the last few decades. The Rasdogah Erofal navy is another possibility, since the Sultan hates dragons and may extend his hatred to their clients.
- **Was there anything odd about the weather when the ships were lost?** No.
- **What time of day were the ships lost?** Not known.

The adventurers may think of other questions, of course, if so the referee should improvise whatever facts are needed. They may also want to pack or buy extra equipment and supplies; anything reasonable and affordable should be allowed.

## Tiamath to Migantia

The first stage of the journey is the railway trip from Tiamath to Migantia, about 300 miles aboard a narrow-gauge Yarge train that has basic accommodation for dragons but travels frighteningly fast, sometimes as much as 40-50 MPH. The wagons for dragons are uncomfortably narrow and have open tops but high sides, making it difficult to stretch wings properly – the high speed means that they can't easily take off and fly alongside the train, as they would normally do on Tiamath's railways, though there are a few uphill stretches where the train slows and this is possible. As far as the dragons are concerned it's a boring ten hours or so with a few short stops before the train rolls into Migantia. At one of the stops a vendor sells freshly-killed muttonwools for two Crowns a head, lepus (rabbits) for a Crown, well over the usual Tiamath price, otherwise there is no food suitable for dragons on offer unless they want to try the ridiculously small portions of cooked meat, cheese, etc. that Yarge prefer. There are three or four other dragons on the train, travelling on business or as tourists, but nobody any of the adventurers knows.

The train arrives in Migantia in the early evening, and is met by Dungan M'Laden, a Yarge working for Ithelar Coastal Lines. He's been warned to expect the right number of dragons travelling as a group, and will do his best to talk to them inconspicuously. ICL have offices and a warehouse a few hundred yards from the station. The route takes the adventurers through bustling Yarge-filled streets, and anyone who is at all phobic about them should optionally roll MIND against difficulty 4 to avoid a panic attack. Along the way they may notice that the streets are cleaner and better lit than those of Iriteth, with glowing white lamps burning sewer gas. Dragons don't need street lighting, of course, since they can see in the dark.

In the warehouse M'Laden has laid on a few muttonwools, tea, etc., and a cellar for the dragons to sleep in overnight. It's a bit Spartan by dragon standards – there are no mounds of gold and it's obvious that they are in a building, not a cave – but reasonably acceptable. M'Laden can answer any questions the adventurers may have about the route, the missing ships, etc. as outlined above and below.

M'Laden has arranged for the adventurers to be loaded aboard ship the following morning, in large crates labelled as containing fragile glass ornaments. There will also be muttonwools aboard as their food, shipped as deck cargo, and a real cargo, some small printing presses destined for Danithsul, the final port of the run, which take up a little too much hold space for comfort, and smaller crates for some of the intermediate ports. She also carries a few sacks of mail.

There aren't any passengers scheduled for the first leg of the trip, but the company's contract for the route requires them to carry passengers if they have valid tickets and there are cabins available, and some may board at the later ports. The Crimson Claw Assurance Society is not prepared to pay for the cabins to prevent this, and ICL is already losing money on the run by giving the dragons most of the hold space. The dragons may think that this is poor security – if so they are at liberty to stay below decks if passengers come aboard, it's all that M'Laden can suggest.

Loading should go reasonably smoothly; at first light the dragons are asked to get into their individual crates on flatbed wagons, which drafters pull out to the quayside. After some jolting and a good deal of swearing by the dock-workers the crates are hoisted up into the air by steam crane, lurching uncomfortably, then lowered down into the forward hold. Once all of the dragons are aboard M'Laden quietly taps on the crates, and says "They're just loading the deck cargo and your provisions, you ought to sail in about an hour. You'll have to stay in the crates until they've dropped off the harbour pilot, the steward will let you know when it's safe to come out. Have a pleasant voyage, and good luck."

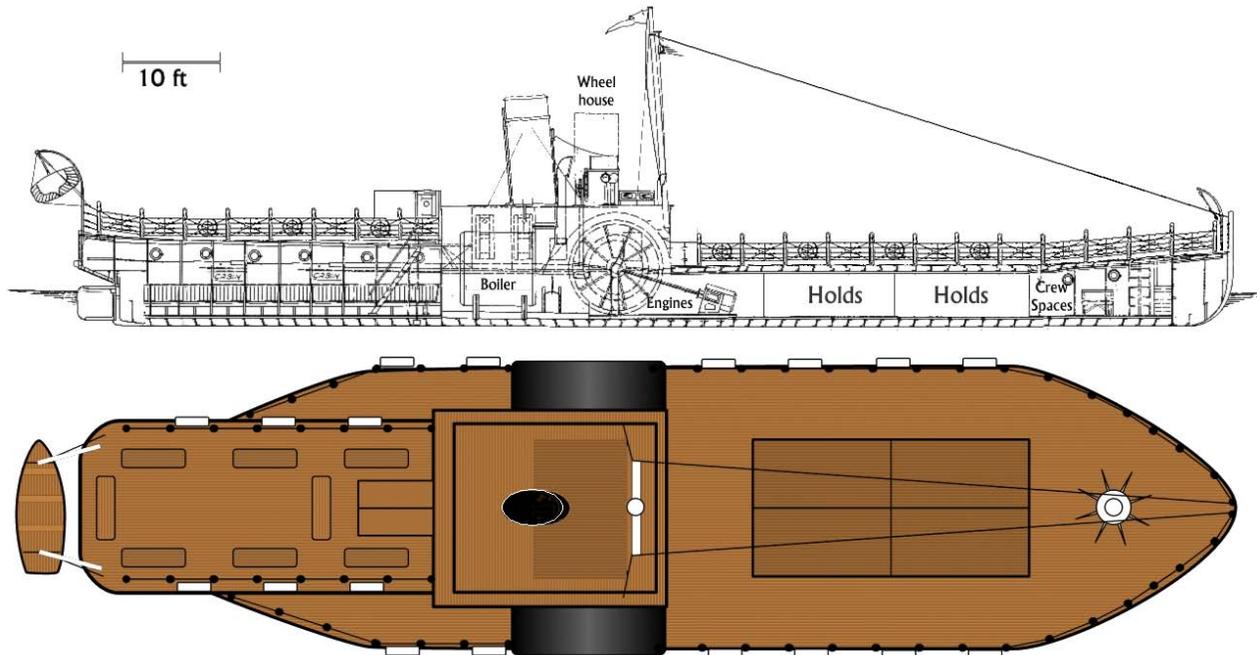
**Dungan M'Laden, Yarge, age 40, married.**  
BODY 4, MIND 3, SOUL 3, Brawling 6,  
Business 5, Linguist 4 (Belshulathi,  
Draconic)

Quote: "I'm afraid it is a bit cramped..."

Notes: M'Laden is ICL's warehouse manager, and loyal to the company. He can give adventurers any of the information on the previous page if they don't already have it. He suspects that the government of Rasdogah Erofal may have something to do with the missing ships, but without any real evidence.

## The *Rose of Migantia*

The *Rose* is a copper-sheathed wooden-hulled paddle steamer with cargo holds forward and a few cabins for Yarge aft. The holds are large enough to accommodate all the dragons with some spare room for cargo, but they will be a little cramped. She has a crew of nine, is BODY 55, and travels at about 15 knots in good weather, 10 knots or less in heavy seas.



A PDF file of printable sheets to make a simple cut-out model paddle-steamer and other boats is included on the distribution CD-ROM and available from the author's web site. The Yarge sailors and pirates on page 42 will also be useful.

The crew consists of the following Yarge, all from Migantil:

- Captain Steenie Varg;** Age 55, Male, BODY 3, MIND 3, SOUL 3, Brawling 6, Business 5, Driving 6, Marksmanship 5, Large pistol, telescope, pocket watch
- First Mate Sisu Erlend;** Age 40, Male, BODY 4, MIND 3, SOUL 4, Brawling 5, Business 6, Driving 6, Marksmanship 5, Mechanic 5, Signals 5, Large pistol
- Navigator Sorin Tollock;** Age 40, Male, BODY 4, MIND 5, SOUL 3, Brawling 5, Driving 6, Marksmanship 5, Melee Weapon 7, Signals 6, Telescope, compass, sextant, pocket watch, sword
- Engineer Jelena Gunchild;** Age 35, Female, BODY 4, MIND 4, SOUL 3, Brawling 5, Driving 5, Marksmanship 5, Mechanic 7, Large pistol
- Seaman Janthan Lubbert;** Age 31, Male, BODY 5, MIND 2, SOUL 2, Brawling 7, First aid (Yarge only) 5, Melee Weapon 6, Marksmanship 5, Large knife, first aid kit (in galley)
- Seaman Dorinn Lari;** Age 35, Male, BODY 6, MIND 2, SOUL 3, Brawling 9, Melee Weapon 7, Marksmanship 4, harpoon, two small knives.
- Seaman Ewan Gregers;** Age 37, Male, BODY 5, MIND 3, SOUL 3, Brawling 6, Mechanic 4, Melee Weapon 5, Marksmanship 5, Large spanner (as club)
- Seaman Gram Arvid;** Age 45, Male, BODY 5, MIND 3, SOUL 2, Brawling 6, Mechanic 4, Melee Weapon 5, Marksmanship 5, Rifle
- Steward Olger Andrais;** Age 22, Male, BODY 2, MIND 2, SOUL 4, Brawling 3, First Aid (Yarge only) 4, Marksmanship 3, first aid kit (in cabin), large knife.

All of them are a little uneasy about following the route of the missing ships, but reasonably positive about carrying dragons – they think that if there is trouble dragons may be able to handle it. This attitude may change, of course, if the dragons go out of their way to be unpleasant, or try tricks such as mesmerizing the crew. They're receiving hazard pay. The captain has enough rifles for all the crew in a locker in his cabin, and most of the crew routinely carry weapons, or know where to find them quickly in an emergency.

The map on page 130 shows the ports of call and principal ocean currents:

- **Migantia** is the capital and main trading centre of Migantil, the main local exports being fine mechanical devices (especially clocks and watches and domestic and office machinery) and jewellery.
- **Torsine** is a Migantine industrial town specialising in firearms and other armaments.
- **Kog** is the last Migantine port, a fishing port with extensive canning, pickling, and smoking plants.
- **Voldor** is one of Rasdogah Erofal's ports, and has one of the largest chemical factories in the country, manufacturing dyes and inks. Dragons will not be allowed ashore.
- **Stottle** on Lipahis is a mining town, most notable for cheap coal. Lipahis is a principality owing allegiance to Rasdogah Erofal, but the Prince (a cousin of the Sultan) is comparatively liberal and dragons will be allowed on shore in the port area – they aren't allowed near military installations, of course, or inland beyond the port and its immediate neighbourhood.
- **Kosp** (also part of Rasdogah Erofal) produces timber, wood-pulp paper, and nuts. Dragons will not be allowed ashore.
- **Danithsul** in East Danith is the end of the line, exporting porcelain plumbing supplies and fine art. Since the Sultan of Rasdogah Erofal took power very few dragons have visited East Danith, and they can expect to be reasonably welcome as interesting guests.

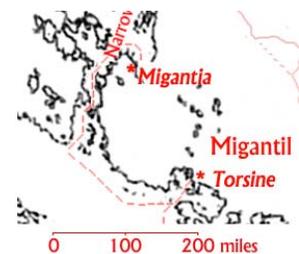
## Migantia – Torsine (approx. 320 miles)

The first part of the journey takes the *Rose* out of Migantia, South through the Narrow Sea (actually a combination of fjords and saltwater lakes, excavated over several ice ages, which nearly splits the continent in two), then South-East along the Migantine coast to Torsine.

Once the ship is in the main channel of the Narrow Sea it's generally out of sight of inhabited areas – there are forested hills to either side of the channel, and the main population centres are inland – but it passes an occasional ship headed the other way. If the dragons are out on deck or flying overhead they'll notice such ships long before they're in clear telescope range, giving them ample time to get below decks. The weather is warm but there's a brisk wind and the sea is choppy, with waves reflected unpredictably by the channel walls. Dragons don't get seasick and will find it quite pleasant on deck, a little like riding a train on a windy day.

Conditions in the hold are a little cramped but tolerable. The main problems, as far as dragons are concerned, are that it's made of wood (which might be awkward if anyone has flame and accidentally coughs), and doesn't feel very solid compared to a real cave. For the first night or two they will sleep poorly. If there are dragons of both sexes the close proximity may be embarrassing, and problematic for virgin females, but there are two holds; if some of the cargo is shifted the females can occupy one hold, the males the other. M'Laden didn't think of this, since he isn't an expert on draconic biology, but if someone suggests this before the crates are loaded they will be split accordingly.

The deck cargo of muttonwools will be ample for the dragons, provided that they don't get too greedy; more can be bought at any of the ports that they're visiting. Needless to say the animals won't be happy about close proximity to dragons, especially if they see the dragons eat. Big-city dragons may be a little squeamish about eating live food, but the sea air should give everyone a hearty appetite. Any



remains (skin, bones, etc.) dropped overboard are instantly attacked by several razortooths (sharks) that are following the ship and swimming in its bow wave; some of them look big enough to give even dragons a hard time.

**Razortooth**

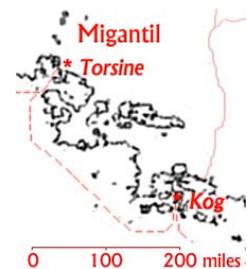
BODY 10-15, MIND 1, SOUL 1, Brawling BODY-2; Bite, Effect BODY + 2, Damage A:I, B:I, C:C/K  
Wounds: B [ ] F [ ] I [ ] I [ ] I [ ] C [ ]

At nightfall the *Rose* finally clears the last small islets at the mouth of the Narrow Sea and heads South-East along the coast towards Torsine. The sea is smoother but the waves are higher, and with a prevailing wind from the West the ship makes good time, dropping anchor a few miles out from Torsine in the early hours of the morning to wait for the harbour pilot.

Since the *Rose* hasn't left Migantine waters there isn't a customs inspection, and at about half past seven<sup>1</sup> she finally docks in Torsine.

**Torsine – Kog (approx. 250 miles)**

Torsine is very obviously an industrial town – the dark satanic mills, smoke, and smell make that clear. It's one of the main centres of the Migantine firearms and munitions industry, and while dragons aren't forbidden to go ashore, they will be discouraged from entering the industrial areas. If they are noticed paying a lot of attention to factories etc. the authorities will assume that they are spies, and send out troops to escort them back to the ship "for their own safety". The town's defences include cannon and marksmen who have trained for combat with dragons; while they aren't as paranoid as the authorities in Rasdogah Erofal, who tend to shoot first and ask questions later, they will interpret anything that looks like an attack as the prelude to a dragon invasion, and act accordingly.



If you have to play this out, use squads of 20 soldiers with steam cars in support:

**Typical Solder;** Age 32, BODY 4, MIND 3, SOUL 3, Brawling 7, Marksmanship 6, Melee weapon 7, Military Arms 6, Signals 4. Equipped with big rifle, bayonet, helmet (armour 2 to head only). Officers are MIND 4 and carry heavy pistols and swords, but are otherwise identical.

**Steam Car:** Large (BODY 18) self-propelled steam wagons with room for a driver and six soldiers, top speed 25 MPH. Armour 4 on sides, Armour 5 on top. There are gun ports on all sides; the occupants (as soldiers above) carry big rifles, there is one forward-pointing mounted gun with three barrels:

**Tri-barrel Cannon:** Effect 14, A:I, B:C/K, C:C/K

The barrels cannot be fired simultaneously but can be fired in successive rounds; the gun cannot be reloaded from inside the car. It can be swivelled to approximately 45° either side of the car.

If the dragons are determined to keep a low profile they'll probably stay in the hold anyway. Eventually some of the smaller crates are unloaded and more are loaded; they contain sporting rifles, consigned to a gunsmith in Stottle. If any of the dragons take a look (damaging the crates and annoying the crew, who will have to explain it to the shippers) they'll find good quality sporting guns, exactly as described in the manifest, designed for use by Yarge and too small and lightweight for dragons. There are also some bullet moulds, but no paper cartridges or percussion caps.

<sup>1</sup> Equivalent to approximately 9 AM in Earth terms; since the days and hours are longer than Earth, it is actually twelve Earth hours since midnight, five more Earth hours to noon. This shouldn't be important, unless you want to remind players that this isn't Earth.

If anyone was hoping that no passengers would board they're quickly disillusioned; fourteen Yarge bound for a wedding in Kog arrive soon after the ship docks – they spend the remainder of the morning moving their luggage aboard and being noisy in the aft cabins and on the aft passenger deck. The group includes women and children, and dragons who know anything of Yarge behaviour will consider it unlikely that they are involved in anything dangerous. However, three of the passengers are soldiers (as above) and have their dress uniforms (including rifles for firing a salute at the wedding) in their luggage.

The ship sails with the afternoon tide, and if there are no unfortunate incidents is roughly halfway to Kog when night falls. The weather remains calm, and all other things being equal will arrive off Kog in the early hours of the morning, and sail in with the morning tide.

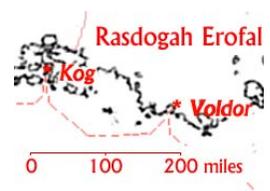
If the dragons aren't trying to stay hidden, or come out of hiding once the ship sails, all of the passengers will soon be aware that there are dragons aboard; the soldiers immediately get their guns, and children are kept below decks. There's nothing extraordinarily unusual about dragons travelling this route, but outside the big cities the Migantines aren't entirely blasé about seeing them. Reassurances from the crew should keep things from getting out of hand if the dragons don't do anything too foolish.

If the dragons stay hidden two of the obligatory cute kids will somehow work their way forward a few hours after the ship has sailed and discover them. They are twins, a boy and a girl aged twelve<sup>1</sup>, BODY 2, MIND 3, SOUL 2, no special skills, and look to be about the right size for a snack.

- If the dragons politely ask them to leave, or otherwise treat them sensibly, they will go back and tell their parents what they have seen, with results as above, but otherwise convey the impression of a sane and sensible group of dragons.
- If the children are mesmerized (neither has any special resistance) they can be made to forget that they have seen the dragons, and return aft; if questioned they will describe a hold full of boring cargo, or whatever else the dragons told them to remember.
- Harming them is a recipe for disaster; the Yarge aren't idiots and will soon realize that the children are missing. If the dragons are suspected of having done anything to them they will be held at gunpoint long enough for any evidence of their crimes to be found; if any is they will be summarily executed by all of the armed passengers and the crew. If the children simply vanish – for example, if one of the dragons throws them to the Razorteeth – there will be a lengthy investigation in Kosp, and the ship will eventually sail without the dragons aboard. Some time later the dragons will hear that it has disappeared, but their part in this adventure has ended in failure.

## Kog – Voldor (200 miles)

Kog is a fishing port, as will probably be obvious from the smell. If there have been no incidents en route the *Rose* unloads its passengers and some more of the small cargo and mail, and loads several barrels of pickled and smoked fish for shipment to Voldor. Eight passengers board the ship; no large groups this time, they seem to be travelling alone or in pairs. Even if the dragons make a specific attempt to find out as much as possible about the passengers they won't discover anything unusual about them, since there is nothing to be found.



On this leg of the journey the *Rose* sails in the early evening and runs into bad weather within an hour of leaving port – a gale blows up from the East, slowing her to a crawl. The wind is too strong for dragons to fly off the ship; they would soon be left behind, and in such bad flying conditions their endurance is halved. Most of the Yarge passengers are ill; dragons will not be, since their inner ears and brains are better at coping with the sort of movement.

Whether or not the dragons have succeeded in hiding up to this point, it's time for an emergency that will give them a little more exposure. For example:

---

<sup>1</sup> Equivalent to nine in Earth years

- A freak wave washes over the *Rose* and extinguishes her main boiler. Unless it can be relit quickly she'll drift, and there are rocks a few miles downwind. A dragon's flame might do the trick, of course. To light it is Difficulty 6, with Difficulty rising +2 per attempt made. While the dragon is trying to light the boiler, one of the Yarge passengers stumbles into the engine room to see why the ship has stopped, and gets a little surprise. If the Difficulty of lighting the boiler exceeds the BODY of the dragon trying to relight it, the dragon strains himself (one Injury) and will be coughing and unable to flame for 1D6 days. Eventually the crew will get the boiler lit in the nick of time if all dragons fail.
- A Yarge fishing boat has lost its mast and sails and is drifting towards rocks downwind of the *Rose*. The fishermen are doomed unless they can be towed to safety. Could a dragon fly the end of a rope across to them? Getting to the fishing boat will require a couple of Flying rolls at Difficulty 6; if either is failed the dragon hits a downdraft and ends up in the water, with an Athlete roll against Difficulty 8 needed to get airborne again or swim to the fishing boat. Once the dragon gets to the fishing boat it will be pulled to safety reasonably easily – though the crew will be terrified, of course.
- A freak wave washes a BODY 12 razortooth onto the deck, where it starts to snap at the panicking muttonwools penned there and smash their pens open. The crew need help to kill it or get it back into the sea.

The storm ends in the early hours of the morning, and conditions aboard the *Rose* gradually get back to normal. If you have used one of these emergencies the passengers ought to know that there are dragons aboard, since it's going to be hard to hide their presence and simultaneously deal with these problems. At around noon the *Rose* makes port in Voldor, several hours late. As the passengers go ashore they are complaining about the delay – and probably about the dragons being aboard.

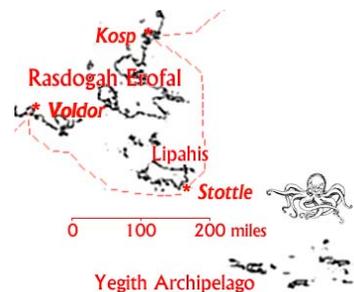
## Voldor – Stottle (250 miles)

As soon as the *Rose* docks several customs officers come aboard to search the ship and passengers (including dragons) for contraband. They'll be warned that they may not leave the ship under any circumstances, and that the penalty for flying over the Sultan's territory is death. By now the adventurers may have formed unflattering opinions of the Sultan, but they would be advised to keep them to themselves; the penalty for public libel of the Sultan is imprisonment or death. The customs officers are backed by soldiers (use the troops described on page 137) who won't hesitate to board the ship if an offence is committed. However, they are poorly paid and easily bribed; a Crown or two will persuade them to turn their attention elsewhere. Of course any gold left lying around (if the dragons have tried to make the hold feel more like home) will be confiscated as contraband.

They're interested in the guns consigned to East Danith, of course – and will open two or three of the crates to check that they are described – and in the printing presses, checking that no seditious type has been set up ready for use. But since there is nothing to find they will gradually lose interest in the holds.

While the search continues a crowd slowly gathers on the dockside, apparently waiting for something to happen. They don't seem to be particularly hostile, but there will be excited murmurs if any of the dragons makes his or her presence known. If questioned about this the customs officers shrug and say "they're peasants, who knows what they're thinking?" If anyone wants to question the onlookers, remind the dragons that they aren't allowed on shore. The crew members also have no idea what's going on; until the customs search is over they also aren't allowed ashore.

After an hour or so another group of soldiers arrives at the dock escorting a prisoner. The arrival is heralded by shouts of "Keleg!" which soon become a repeated chant. All of the Yarge, including the crew, seem to know the name. The crew start rushing around with shouts of "Tidy up!" "Prepare the best cabin!" and so forth.



While the crew are too busy to answer questions, any dragon who studies Yarge affairs can roll against Difficulty 6 to remember hearing of Keleg. But if possible delay recognition until she announces herself.

Keleg Dragon-Slayer has spent the last few days in town, and has made her opinion of the Sultan a little too public. She's being deported on the first available ship which (apparently by chance) is the *Rose*. In fact she was planning to travel aboard the *Rose* anyway; all that the deportation accomplishes is to save her the price of a ticket. Although she's a prisoner she's also a celebrity, and as soon as she is on the gang plank the commander of the escort bows and hands her a bundle of two sheathed scimitars and a bow case, while minions carry her trunk and two large bass drums aboard. She pushes the sheaths into her sash and turns to the crowd, then draws one of the scimitars and holds it up above her head. With renewed cheers she shouts "All right, you knows my name. Don't wear it out! You knows one thing that is true. I is leaving this country for now, your Sultan don't like true things. Now go, before de Sultan's men decide you knows too much. Go!" As she shouts the last words the peasants look around, seem to realise that there are police and soldiers present, and leave rapidly. She sheaths her scimitar, boards the ship, and says "I is Keleg of de Yegith Isles. Some calls me Keleg Dragon-Slayer. You has a cabin for me?" The Captain bows and welcomes her aboard, leading the way below decks. If any of the dragons are in view she grins, showing pointed teeth, and says "Later..." before following the Captain.

**Keleg Dragon-Slayer – Celebrity psychopath, Yegithi priestess and pirate (age 35)**

BODY [7], MIND [4], SOUL [4], Actor (sing, dance, drums) [6], Athlete (swim, run, gymnastics) [9], Brawling [11], Linguist [5] (Draconic, Lipathi, Migantine), Marksman [7], Melee Weapon [10], Martial Arts [9], Riding [8], Stealth [7], Thief [8]. 7 Bonus points.

Weapon	Mult.	Effect	A	B	C
2 Scimitars	2	11	F	I	C/K (always carried)
Longbow	2	8	F	I	C/K (in luggage)
3 Daggers (as hand weapons)	2	11	F	I	C/K (always carried)
(thrown)	2	8	F	I	C/K
Fist / kick	2	7	B	B	KO
Wrestling	No	7	B	KO	KO/I
Armour (dragon hide jerkin)	N/A	-2	-	-	- (under clothing, torso only)

**Quote:** "I is Keleg of de Yegith Isles. Some calls me Keleg Dragon-Slayer."

**Equipment:** Drums, clothing, various perfumes and oils, a lodestone, weapons etc. as above.

**Notes:** Keleg is a genuine dragon slayer, although she engineered the circumstances that earned her the title. Tiamath's missionaries were funding their work by excavating old Yegithi temples for gold and antiquities; she spread a rumour that there was a temple on her parents' farm then killed the first dragon to dig there, partly to avenge their insult to the pagan gods and partly to earn her name as a Dragon Slayer. She and her followers aren't cannibals, despite the usual name for the Archipelago, but have eaten dragons.

Keleg is stunningly attractive to other Yarge (dragons won't notice), especially since she is a Dragon Slayer and has the ritual tattoos to prove it.

She tries to fight in places that give her the best advantage; for example, in buildings where a dragon will feel cramped and unable to fly, anywhere that she can dive into water to escape flame, and so forth. Since the most effective dragon attacks are the teeth and claws, she will manoeuvre to get above and even onto the back of her opponent and attack vulnerable points such as the eyes, base of the skull etc.

She cannot be mesmerised – the truly insane rarely can – but she is capable of faking it to gain an advantage.

**Role Playing:** Keleg is arrogant, self-assured, and probably the most dangerous Yarge anyone will ever meet; unless she is deliberately trying to avoid attracting attention she tends to be the focus of every eye. She is never uncertain. Despite her honourable title she is a mass-murderer with a callous disregard for Yarge and Draconic life.

**Special Note:** Given the pervasive influence of certain TV shows, it is possible that at some point you will slip up and call this character a *Vampire* Slayer. You are strongly advised to practice saying the name and title (as in the quote above) several times before running this scenario.



Once word gets out that Keleg has boarded a ship carrying dragons, the crowds start to return to the dock, anticipating a fight. In fact Keleg has no intention of fighting until she is ready, and part of her game plan for becoming ready is to keep the dragons guessing about her intentions. Meanwhile the customs men finish their search and leave, another half-dozen passengers board, and the pickled fish are unloaded and some barrels of dye are taken on board, addressed to a fabric manufacturer in Kosp.

The *Rose* sails with the evening tide, bound for Stottle, where she is supposed to take on coal for the remainder of her journey – it's cheaper there than anywhere else along the South coast. Along the way Keleg plans a surprise for everyone aboard.

Keleg's plan is relatively simple; she intends to use a lodestone to interfere with the ship's compass, and lure it off course towards the South. By morning she will be half-way to the Yegith Archipelago, over the deep crevasse where the Old One lives. As the sun rises Keleg will start to play her drums, claiming that it's a rite of her faith. The real purpose is a signal to a fleet of pirate boats waiting in the area, whose crews are also ready with drums. By timing the drumbeats carefully they can attract the Old One's attention and lure it towards the ship.

As the Old One rises all of the razorteeth in the area will flee, leaving the way clear for Keleg to dive into the sea at the last moment and swim to safety. Meanwhile the Old One should tear the ship apart and eat most of its passengers and crew; afterwards the pirates will finish off the survivors. If possible Keleg plans to kill the dragons too, but she believes (mistakenly) that they don't have the endurance to fly back to shore once the ship sinks.

The dragons won't see any more of Keleg until after the ship has sailed; as night falls anyone on deck should notice her in the wheelhouse, staring down at them impassively. In fact she's planting the lodestone that will lure the ship off course, but nobody should know that. The night will be overcast, making accurate star navigation impossible. By morning the *Rose* will be many miles off course.

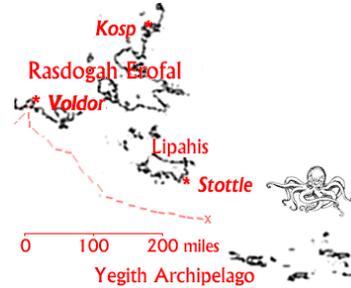
**Troubleshooting:** If for any reason the dragons ask to see Keleg, she'll eventually come to the forward deck to talk. If they seem to want to fight she tells them that she's taken religious vows, and she can't oblige them until after "the Old One, the devourer of things, has risen" when "the stars are right." She doesn't mention that she's talking about the following morning if all goes as planned. If asked for a more precise time frame she says that she'll have to pray to him for an answer; she'll start doing so tomorrow at dawn.

If anyone insists on attacking her she'll fight without mercy, with the crew witnessing and making sure that it's a fair one-on-one fight. Keleg will use all possible tactical advantages to ensure that she wins; she's entirely capable of throwing a dagger into a dragon's eye, dodging so that an opponent falls into the sea with the razorteeth, and so forth. She would greatly prefer to avoid a fight until all of the parts of her plan are in place, but has no doubts about her ability to defeat any random dragon.

On a more peaceful note, if the dragons want to ask her about the dragon she's previously killed she'll explain that he was "desecrating the temple of me ancestors" but won't mention that he was tricked into doing so. She doesn't know the dragon's name, but he was about thirty-five feet long and didn't have bound wings, so wasn't a parson. If anyone thinks to ask if the body was wasted she'll say "no"; they had to cook him for a long time, but he was "pretty good once we got the herbs and spices right." This should be a great relief to anyone who was worried that the body might have gone unconsumed, though of course it would have been better if he had been eaten by relatives. She doesn't mention the dragon-skin armour she wears under her outer clothing to protect her torso; not because she is worried about hurting their feelings, but because she doesn't want to give away a tactical advantage.

If any of the dragons think of searching the bridge after seeing Keleg there (and can find a way of convincing the crew to let them do so), they won't find the lodestone; instead they'll find a scroll containing a "magical" charm to protect the ship from dragons, which Keleg has left in a rather more obvious location to divert attention from her actions. It has no real power; it's just a piece of paper.

Overnight the *Rose* steers 10° south of her intended course, catching a current that sweeps her past Lipahis and half way to the Yegith Archipelago. At dawn the crew will still be trying to find the ship's exact position when Keleg comes out on deck to "Praise the Old One" with her drums.



Keleg plans to play a simple repetitive tune on her drums, to attract the Old One and the pirates who are escorting it towards the ship.

Assuming that nothing disrupts Keleg's plans, she takes her drums onto the aft deck at dawn and sits facing the rising sun (visible through a light morning mist) as she starts to drum<sup>1</sup>. The noise disturbs the dragons if they are still asleep or below decks. As the sun slowly rises above the horizon she continues to play. Although her concentration seems to be on the drums, she is fully aware of her surroundings and ready to defend herself – playing one-handed while holding off a dragon with one of her swords if necessary.

During the lull between one set of drum beats and the next a faint echo of the sound can be heard. On the next repeat it seems a little louder. Keleg smiles, and without missing a beat says "The stars are right, and the Old One is rising."

For a while longer there's nothing to be heard except Keleg's drums, if nobody is trying to stop her from playing, and the sound of more drums, the volume gradually rising. It's already too late to stop the attack – by the time the adventurers can hear the approaching pirates, the Old One can hear the ship's engines and the thrash of her paddle wheels.

As the mist lifts the indistinct shapes of a flotilla of small boats appear out of the mist. There are six rowing boats, each big enough for four to six Yarge, with two larger fore-and-aft rigged cutters capable of holding twenty or so. On their own they're incapable of keeping up with the *Rose*, especially if she heads into the wind, but they have already led the Old One into striking range and it is considerably faster than any current ship. On seeing them the crew of the *Rose* run for weapons – they know a Yegithi pirate fleet when they see one, and they won't be pleased about it. Unless someone stops her Keleg plays on until the Old One appears, then (if she isn't already fighting someone) dives into the sea, now clear of razorteeth which have sensibly fled, and swims towards the nearest boat or cutter.

**Pirate Rowing Boat** – Holds 4-6 Yarge pirates with large rifles and other weapons as below. One of the pirates in each boat plays drums. Maximum speed 6 knots, BODY [12].

**Pirate Cutter** – Holds 8 Yarge pirates (the rest of the crew are in the rowing boats) with large rifles and other weapons as below. Both cutters are equipped with one cannon apiece.

**Cannon:** Effect 14, A:I, B:C/K, C:C/K – one shot per 4 rounds, range 200 yards.

One of the pirates in each cutter plays drums. Maximum speed 10 knots, BODY [25].

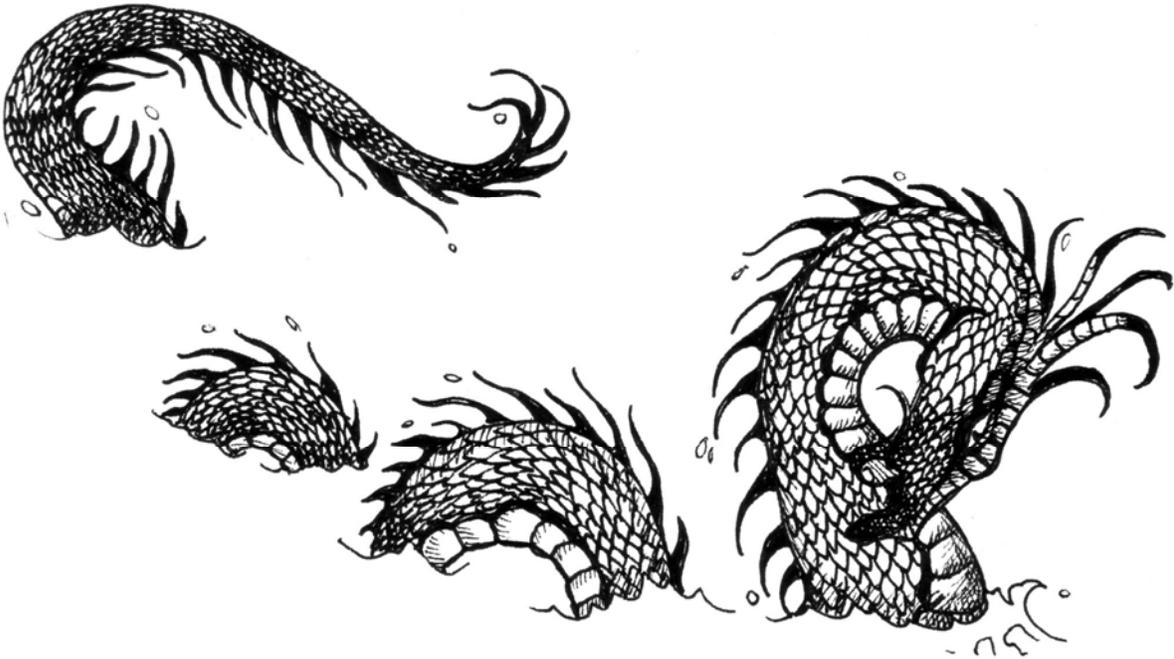
**Pirates** – BODY [4-6], MIND [2-4], SOUL [1-3], Brawling [Body+2], Marksman [5], Melee Weapon [7]

All are armed with a rifle and 1-2 other weapons, plus their fists etc.

Weapon	Mult.	Effect	A	B	C
Rifle	No	12	I	C	K
Pistol	No	10	I	I	C/K
Scimitar	No	Melee + 1	F	I	C/K
Dagger (as hand weapon)	No	11	F	I	C/K
(thrown)	No	8	F	I	C/K
1-3 Grenades	Radius 4 ft.	10	F	I	C/K (Ceramic pot grenade with lit fuse)
Fist / kick	No	BODY	B	B	KO
Wrestling	No	BODY	B	KO	KO/I

<sup>1</sup> In play testing the tune used was the opening drum beats of an instrumental version of Queen's *We Will Rock You*, looped before the other instruments began to play, but any repetitive pattern of a few notes will do.

Any dragon flying over to observe the approaching fleet sees the two yachts, each followed by three of the rowing boats, travelling in two parallel lines about a hundred yards apart. In the water between them something immensely long and sinuous seems to be swimming under the water, its outlines too vague at first to be meaningful. Gradually they become clearer and a tail rises from the sea, soon followed by the first of several loops of its body and eventually a gigantic head. As it exhales long streams of steamy moist air spread from its nostrils. It seems to focus on the ship and swims towards it, much faster than the ship can evade.



### **The Old One – Giant Sea Serpent, age 1200-ish, Length 270ft**

BODY [87], MIND [1], SOUL [3], Brawling [80]

Wounds: F [ ], I [ ], II [ ], III [ ], C [ ], C [ ]

Constrict, Effect [88], A:C, B:C/K, C:K

Bite, Effect [95], A:C, B:C/K, C:K

Tail smash, Effect [45], A:I, B:C, C:C/K

**Notes:** Sea Serpents are a species of the Draconis class, huge aquatic relatives of dragons generally believed to be mythical or extinct. The Old One may be the last of its kind, at least in the comparatively shallow coastal waters. It lives in a deep crevasse and normally eats fish, razorteeth, giant squid, whales, etc. A slow steady rhythmic beat (much like the drums or the pounding of a paddle steamer's engines) will arouse its curiosity and bring it to the surface, where it will perceive the ship as food and attack it. There are naturalists who would give anything to see one in action. It's to be hoped that the adventurers will appreciate the privilege. Note that eating the body of the Old One, or any other giant sea serpent, does *not* confer the same benefits as eating real dragon flesh. They're not closely enough related to dragons to have the same effect.

**Role Playing:** It's big and it can smash ships. It's also female and lonely. If a male dragon gets close enough for it to smell him, it will suddenly turn pink, break off its attack, and try to grab the dragon in its mouth and drag him into the water to mate. This will drown the dragon eventually, but allow a few escape attempts first. It will be annoyed if jilted.

**Models:** Large resin Loch Ness Monster models are readily available as ornaments, usually in four pieces designed to be left on a flat surface to represent the parts of the monster above water; a head, two half-loops of body, and a separate tail. They are much cheaper than any equivalently-sized gaming model.

The aim of this scene is for the pirates to attack the ship but fail to sink her; she should then limp back towards the closest port, Stottle. Try to keep things as confusing and exciting as possible, with something for all the dragons to do. For example, one of the dragons might think of dropping a heavy weight onto a pirate yacht, another might prefer to stay on deck ready to flame any pirates who come too close. The pirates will be firing cannon and rifles as soon as their yachts and boats get in range, although if the *Rose* tries to escape they won't catch up until the Old One has damaged the ship sufficiently to slow it down.

If Keleg is fighting one of the dragons she'll try to keep the fight moving and distract them and the crew from the approaching dangers. If she can, she'll give the crew the impression that the dragons are responsible for the attack and she's trying to protect the ship! She'll keep fighting until the Old One catches up with the ship, or it looks like she's about to be killed, then dive into the sea and swim for the comparative safety of the pirate fleet. Whatever happens she shouldn't be killed at this stage, unless the adventurers have made sure that there is absolutely no doubt – for example, by holding her in both front claws and flaming her or biting her head off. Short of that, she will miraculously escape. There's nothing wrong with giving players the impression that she's dead – for example, she might be fighting a dragon until the ship is hit by a cannon ball – when the dust settles she's gone and there's a gaping hole in the deck. If necessary she'll play dead – for example, in one play-test Keleg pretended to be a floating corpse until one of the dragons plucked her from the water, and promptly found a sword at his throat. When her attack failed to kill the dragon she dived into the sea from several hundred feet up, apparently preferring death to capture, only to reappear a few days later.

The Old One's attacks and cannon fire from the cutters are essentially random, targeting the ship rather than its occupants (though the Old One will happily gobble up Yarge or dragons as it smashes the ship). The pirates won't fire while the Old One is attacking the ship. For these attacks the Effect attacks the BODY of the ship, initially 55.

- Any result of **F** damages something non-essential – a porthole, one of the seats on the passenger deck, a passenger, etc. In the case of cannon there will probably be bits of wood or glass flying around afterwards, attacking anyone near to the impact with Effect 6, A:F, B:I, C:C
- Any result of **I** damages the hull, reducing the ship's BODY by 1D6+2 for cannon, 4D6 for the Old One's attacks.
  - If BODY drops below 20 the ship will start to sink; prompt repairs will keep things under control
  - if it falls to 10 or less she cannot be repaired but will take BODY x 1D6 minutes to sink.
  - if it falls to 0 or less she sinks like a stone.
- Any result of **C** damages the engines or paddles, reducing speed by 1D6 knots. Repairs may be made once the attack is over.
- Any result of **K** damages the hull (as I) and damages the engines so badly that they must immediately be stopped for repairs taking at least 2D6 hours.

Dropping something (such as a printing press, BODY 8, or piece of the ship's ballast, BODY 3) requires a marksmanship roll against Difficulty 7 to hit the smaller boats, Difficulty 6 for the cutters, Difficulty 5 to hit the Old One. Ask players to state the height they are dropping from and any evasive manoeuvres they may be taking (which can add to the Difficulty).

- Add +1 to the Difficulty per 50ft altitude of the dragon (e.g. 0-50ft no modifier, 50-100ft +1, etc).
- The Effect of the attack is the BODY of the object dropped +1 per 25ft it falls (e.g. 0-25ft no modifier, 25-50ft +1, etc).
- For attacks on the boats etc. roll the Effect against the BODY of the target as for cannon above. For attacks on the Old One use flesh wounds etc. normally.

Any successful flame attack on a boat will probably start a fire which could easily set off gunpowder (if there is a cannon aboard) or otherwise cause horrible amounts of damage. Of course the pirates are well aware of this, and if they see a dragon attacking at low altitude (the only way to get a good shot with flame) they'll concentrate all guns on it.

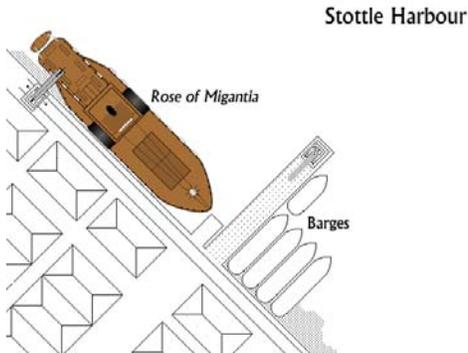
Keep things moving and don't worry too much about playing out every last detail of the combat by strict rules – if something seems dramatically right, such as a flame attack setting the sails of a cutter alight, then that's what happens. Eventually the *Rose* will sink or the pirates will break off the attack; if she isn't otherwise distracted the *Old One* will break off the attack and head for the deeps as soon as she takes two Injuries or a Critical injury, even if the pirates are otherwise winning the battle. The pirates will break off if Keleg is killed or seriously wounded, if at least three boats or both cutters are sunk, or if the *Old One* leaves and the *Rose* isn't already sinking.

- If the dragons are defeated and the *Rose* sinks it's still likely that most or all of the dragons will survive, as will some of the crew and passengers, and that the pirates will have to retreat to regroup and repair their boats. This is a difficult situation, but the navigator and Captain know the ship's position by the time it sinks; if either survives they can give the dragons the course for Stottle, a couple of hours away by air, where they can get help.
- If the crew and/or dragons can assemble some boats or rafts the dragons could tow the Yarge survivors to safety; the dragons won't be able to land, no boat could take the weight, but if they take things steadily they should be able to get everyone to shore. This would earn the dragons huge amounts of goodwill, which they may consider to be worthwhile.
- If any dragon flies to Stottle without at least one Yarge to help explain the situation he or she will be treated with great suspicion, but eventually the Prince will send a couple of armed steam launches to investigate. The dragons should have no trouble finding their way back to the wreck, led by their senses and homing instincts. If they have been reasonably fast there should be some Yarge survivors.
- If the dragons perversely decide to head for the Yegith Archipelago warn them that there are no towns on the nearest islands, and they're probably where the pirates came from. If despite this they insist on heading to the islands they should eventually run into another similar pirate fleet, minus the *Old One* and Keleg but plus more men and cannon, as described on the next page. This is probably not a good idea...
- Even if the pirates are defeated or break off it's likely that the *Rose* will sustain some damage. If the engines are still working the crew will want to head for Stottle at best speed, otherwise the ship will drift while repairs are made. Run this as a tense time with everyone scared that the slightest noise will attract the *Old One's* attention. If the ship hasn't taken much damage maybe the *Old One* will indeed reappear – again, it shouldn't be killed, and will lose interest if the dragons can hurt it or draw it away. If the ship is left to drift, there is a current along the coast and around Lipahis that will bring her back to the mainland about seventy miles North of Kosp after ten days or so.
- If Keleg is somehow taken prisoner, she will be found to be missing some time after the fight – if she was locked in a cabin the porthole is open, manacles have had their locks picked, ropes are cut, etc., and any Yarge left to guard her will be dead. If she appeared to be an intact corpse she disappears in the same way (if a rationale is needed, there are Yarge drugs that can simulate death). If she was kept in the hold with the dragons she will go missing as soon as the adventurers get distracted. She may apparently be horribly injured, but she will still somehow escape.
- If the dragons somehow take Keleg prisoner and foil all escape attempts, she will escape from the authorities in Stottle within hours of being handed over to them.

Assuming that the *Rose* or the dragons eventually arrive in Stottle, one way or another, and the survivors tell their story, there will be a huge fuss – most of Keleg's fans won't want to believe that she led the attack, and some conspiracy theorists may suspect that the dragons were really responsible, and mesmerized her to make her take the blame. The *Rose* will probably need some repairs if the ship survived at all, otherwise it will be two or three days before the next ship on the route arrives. Meanwhile the Prince issues a proclamation outlawing Keleg (if she isn't definitely 100.00% dead beyond all possible doubt) and sends messengers to Voldor and Kosp to warn of her treachery.

Meanwhile, if Keleg did survive and escape she is mustering her remaining forces for a renewed attack on the dragons. If she is (apparently) definitely dead her lieutenants decide that their dubious honour (and pirate-cred) requires them to avenge her.

Two or three days after the battle, when the *Rose* is nearly ready to sail or a replacement ship is due to arrive, the pirates have infiltrated several marksmen into the port, where they move to the roofs of



buildings overlooking the *Rose*. If Keleg survived she plans to challenge the largest and fiercest dragon (or whichever dragon has given here the most trouble) to single combat, otherwise her lieutenants intend to strike without warning. Unknown to Keleg, her lieutenants have decided that they can live without her type of insane bravado, and do better business if they don't have to worry about the Old One. They don't intend to wait out her challenge if they can make their betrayal look like they are trying to "help" her; as soon as all the dragons are in sight the snipers will open fire. None of them will be aiming at her deliberately, but accidents happen... Meanwhile another pirate

fleet will attack from the sea, the pirates intending to cause as much chaos as possible and burn the port if they can get away with it. Use four cutters and eight boats as above.

Naturally things aren't going to go as planned – the dragons probably won't be easy victims, and the Prince has guessed that there might be more trouble. There are four armed steam launches waiting in inlets to either side of the port, as soon as the pirates attack they will come out to attack them from the rear.

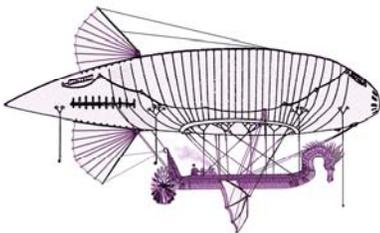
**Steam Launch** – Holds 12 Yarge sailors and marines armed with large rifles and cutlasses; stats as for the pirates above. Each launch is equipped with a rifled cannon.

**Cannon:** Effect 13, A:I, B:C/K, C:C/K – one shot per 4 rounds, range 250 yards.

Maximum speed 12 knots, BODY [25].

Additionally, the Prince has a little surprise for the pirates and for the dragons – the *Lipahis Flyer* is a dirigible airship carrying six sailors:

**The *Lipahis Flyer*** – Hydrogen-filled steam-propelled armed dirigible; the engine runs on pressure from a cylinder filled with high-pressure steam; there is no boiler, and range is limited to about 20 miles before the cylinder



cools or pressure is lost. It is armed with a steam cannon, firing balls via pneumatic pressure, and holds five Yarge sailors armed with crossbows (to avoid any chance of a gunshot igniting the hydrogen) and darts, designed to be dropped onto targets such as dragons or boats. Stats for the crew are as for the pirates above, but add Pilot [4], Military Arms [5] and Mechanic [5].

Maximum speed 20 knots, BODY [20]

**Cannon:** Effect 12, A:I, B:C/K, C:C/K – one shot per 3 rounds, range 300 yd.

**Darts:** Effect 6, A:F, B:I, C:C/K – designed to be dropped vertically

Firing the cannon reduces the Flyer's range significantly, and will only be done as a last resort. Additionally, If the cannon is actually fired the Flyer lurches and loses power and stability for the next 2D6 rounds, diving or rising uncontrollably until the crew can get the ballast re-stowed. A dragon may be able to help, but flame anywhere near the gas bag will cause a catastrophic fire.

There are also squads of soldiers ready for any attack, as on page 137 but without the armoured cars. Try to keep things as confused and fluid as possible, with dragons and soldiers chasing the pirates around the port area, desperate hand-to-hand fights on the dockside and across the warehouse roofs, and so forth, with the dragons probably participating and having a hard time distinguishing friend and foe. Keleg will do her best to kill at least one of the dragons, if she isn't killed in the crossfire, but should at last be

seen to be seriously injured or killed, if possible captured alive by the dragons. Eventually the pirates should be soundly defeated, but try to ensure that the dragons earn a good deal of the credit for the victory. For the next few days, while the *Rose* is repaired again, they will be feted by the citizens of Stottle, hopefully earning more good-will by good behaviour. They will be invited to a banquet hosted by the Mayor of Stottle – the Prince of Lipahis won't put in an appearance, since it would be politically unwise to be associated too strongly with dragons given the attitude of the Sultan of Rasdogah Erofal, but the food and wine will be acceptable, and after a few speeches the dragons that took part in the battle will be presented with large gold medallions by the Mayor. If the medallions are later weighed and assayed they'll be found to be worth about 30 crowns apiece. If the dragons killed Keleg, or captured her, they will be given a reward of 500 Crowns to be split as they like.

Eventually the *Rose* loads up on coal and a few passengers board for the next stage of the journey, from Stottle to Kosp.

### Stottle-Kosp (200 miles)

Hopefully the dragons will now assume that the worst is over, and they're nearly right. However, there's one more loose end that may need to be tied off.

If the Old One was close enough to a male dragon to scent him and turn pink she will now be following the ship and feeling somewhat rejected (unless she killed the dragon in question, in which case she will be looking for another mate); in either case she has been surfacing to follow the scent of dragons since she was first encountered, and finally catches up with the ship about half-way between Stottle and Kosp. The first intimation of this is a distant moaning roar during the night; if the dragons fly to investigate (remember that they can see perfectly well in the dark) they'll eventually spot the Old One five miles behind the ship, but slowly catching up.

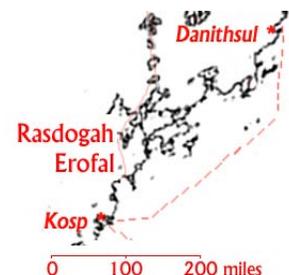
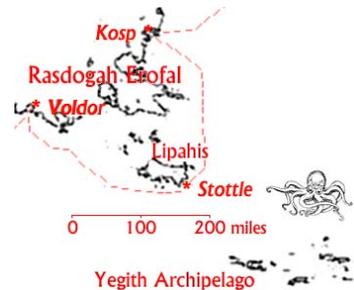
The adventurers may have some cunning plan for dealing with the sea serpent – for example, a raft packed with barrels of gunpowder, ready to tow behind the ship and kill her at a suitable moment. If so encourage them to use it. If not, they need to find ways to distract the monster and keep her from attacking the ship again. And the best distraction is, of course, a male dragon...

Play this as a love-sick sea monster trying to catch up with the object of her affections, and unable to understand why her advances are being rejected. If she isn't stopped she will eventually attack the *Rose* again, but shutting down the engines will make her lose interest. The best tactic is probably for a male dragon to lead the Old One away, or distract her with food – a few muttonwools dropped into the sea might help, or something larger if the dragons have brought something suitable along with them. Try to discourage them from using Yarge, it won't win them any friends.

Eventually the Old One will probably be injured so badly that she dives for the deep ocean, or lose interest in the ship for some other reason. Once she's out of the way the rest of the run is uneventful, and the *Rose* reaches Kosp in the early hours of the morning.

### Kosp – Danithsul (350 miles)

At Kosp the Sultan's men board to investigate the reports they've received from the Prince of Lipahis. They want to know every detail of Keleg's attack on the ship, and make sure that the information is spread by story-tellers and Rasdogah Erofal's newspapers. The Sultan aims to discredit her, and really doesn't care how he does it. Needless to say the police and reporters sent aboard the ship will be amazed that such a legend has finally been defeated, but that won't stop them from blackening Keleg's name as ordered – if it takes the testimony of a hated dragon, then that's what it takes.



After their questioning the dragons may think that the Sultan's attitude to dragons must be improving, but any attempt to leave the ship will still be rebuffed – the Sultan really doesn't want dragons anywhere in his country, and doesn't care if he hurts their feelings.

In the afternoon a deck cargo of timber is loaded, destined for Danithsul in East Danith, and the ship sets sail for an entirely uneventful run of 350 miles, arriving late the following afternoon. If anyone was expecting the Old One to re-appear they'll be disappointed.

At Danithsul there's an unexpected welcoming committee - Respected Ogethon Retalath representing the Crimson Claw, and the Yarge Dungan M'Laden representing Ithelar Coastal Lines. They've taken the long railway journey through Belshulath, North Danith, and East Danith to meet the ship, and are naturally keen to learn every detail of events. If the adventurers have done well they will be able to report that the threat to shipping is over; unfortunately the insurers will have to pay out for losses caused by piracy, but at least they can be sure that the company hasn't been defrauded. This cheers M'Laden considerably, but leaves Retalath feeling depressed; the adventurers can probably live with that.

Unless the adventurers particularly want to experience another long sea voyage M'Laden will be happy to pay their rail fares back to Tiamath; it frees up the hold, and means that the ICL won't have to feed the dragons. The total distance is about 500 miles, but since most of the journey is made at Yarge speeds, not the sane 20mph or so of Tiamath's lines, it will only take three days.

## End Game: The Crimson Claw

Once back in Tiamath the dragons have to wait a couple of days before the Crimson Claw is ready to see them. He will review their actions and question them about Keleg, the pirates, the attitudes of the Yarge government officials they've encountered, and anything else that seems relevant.

- If the *Rose* is intact, the pirates were defeated, and Keleg was caught or killed he will be delighted:
  - If the adventurers were in debt their debts (within reason) will be cleared; additionally, anyone who was actually involved in killing Keleg gets a share of the standard 1000 Crown reward for the body of a Yarge wearing dragonskin armour.
  - If they are mercenaries he gives them a generous bonus.
  - Shareholders get another 0.05% share in the company.
  - Any other rewards should be similarly lavish.
- If the mystery was solved but the *Rose* sank he's less pleased, but still inclined to be magnanimous:
  - Debtors will get 50% of their loan repaid and a six month interest-free period for the rest. They may also share the reward as above.
  - Mercenaries get a small bonus.
  - Shareholders get another 0.025% share.
- If Keleg somehow escaped and there is still a pirate threat he won't be at all happy.
  - Debtors get a few weeks grace if they at least tried hard.
  - Mercenaries get no bonus.
  - Shareholders get no bonus.
- If things have somehow gone disastrously wrong the Crimson Claw is furious. Nobody is given any rewards, and if possible the adventurers will be penalised for their mistakes.
  - He forecloses on all loans.
  - Mercenaries find that there are penalty clauses in their contracts.
  - Shareholders find the price of their shares is unexpectedly plummeting.

**Bonus points** should be awarded for heroic actions, for saving lives and improving Dragon/Yarge relations, for making the referee laugh, or anything else that seems appropriate. This is potentially a dangerous adventure, but a maximum of ten bonus points per player is probably sufficient reward. Don't forget to reward entertaining cowardice!

If anyone has been eaten all of the effects on BODY and abilities come into play before the next adventure is run.

Finally, if the Old One was rejected she's still out there somewhere, looking for her lost love...

## Epilogue: Masters of the Mutoscope

This is an optional short sequel for characters who participated in the earlier adventure. Forty years have passed, and the *Rose of Migantia* has long been forgotten. Or has it? Someone isn't so sure...

Any surviving dragons receive letters written in moderately good Draconic, with tiny Yarge lettering:

**THE MUTOSCOPE CORPORATION OF MIGANTIL  
LITHOGRAPHY STREET,  
MIGANTIA, MIGANTIL**

Honoured

I have the pleasure of inviting you to participate in the Corporation's most ambitious production to date, to be entitled *Keleg and the Dragons*. It is to be telling the story of Keleg Dragon-Slayer and her association with pirates, and of the events of the voyage of the ship *Rose of Migantia*. It is my understanding that you were present aboard the ship, and may be able to help ensure the accuracy of our production; since many of the non-draconic participants in these events have since died, we would welcome any information you can provide. Should you perhaps be interested in a more active part in our production it might also be arranged; there are, of course, several roles for dragons. In either event we are able to offer a most generous honorarium depending on the level of your participation.

Please to be making contact with our Tiamath bankers, the most eminent Crimson Claw, to make financial and travel arrangements, if this appeals. I am,

Most sincerely,  
*illegible squiggle*

P.P.J.J. Lubbert, Director

It's unlikely that the dragons will know much about mutoscopes in general, or the Mutoscope Corporation in particular, but anyone with an interest in Yarge current affairs, or investments in Yarge businesses, can probably shed some light on the subject.

Briefly, the Mutoscope is a weird invention by which Yarge can allegedly see a moving image in a rapidly-viewed series of pictures. No dragon can perceive this illusion – to dragons a series of images is simply a series of stationary images, even if shown at many times the speed a Yarge would use.

To make these images the Yarge use engravings based on a new invention; photography. Roughly one picture in five starts out as a photograph, requiring an exposure of twenty to thirty seconds; the rest are modified variations of the first, showing several intermediate stages of movement. They are viewed through a hand-cranked machine, the mutoscope. A typical mutoscope performance has about a thousand pictures, viewed over a minute or so. Typically they show a simple story, aimed at the lowest common denominator of the audience – a comic fight, some spectacle of the natural world, a short theatrical performance, scantily clad dancers, or whatever else seems to be in demand. Any dialogue is shown as white text on a dark background. Each viewing costs a penny, compared to a crown or more for a typical play – while the play usually lasts a couple of hours, there is apparently a large audience which prefers entertainment requiring a much shorter attention span. Currently they are very popular in all of the Yarge nations.



## The Situation (Referees ONLY)

The Mutoscope Corporation is entirely genuine, as is the project. What the adventurers won't initially know is that the plan is to make an epic – running to five minutes and requiring a bank of that many mutoscope machines – that is very much a whitewash of Keleg Dragon-Slayer, written especially to “set the record straight” about this beloved folk heroine. The reason for this is simple; Keleg is still around (even if the dragons think they killed her), and has script approval!

Unknown to the corporation, there is a second plot – Keleg is now confined to a wheelchair and is secretly terminally ill. She plans to provoke the dragons into killing her, so that she can go out in a blaze of glory and give her daughter Tiadra (who is present but incognito, apparently just an actress who is playing the role of Keleg) the opportunity to avenge her death and become a dragon-slayer in turn.

Unknown to Keleg, there is a third plot – Tiadra has no intention of becoming a dragon-slayer; she has no problem with her mother dying heroically, but no interest in avenging her death or following her example. If Keleg is killed Tiadra will stand well back and pretend to be overcome with grief (she's a better actress than she initially appears) then return to the Yegith archipelago to claim her inheritance, a fortune plundered during Keleg's piratical reign.

**Troubleshooting:** If the adventurers ignore the letter, don't force them to participate in the production. They'll later see glowing Yarge reviews of the epic, which make it clear that accounts of their involvement in the story have been horribly distorted, but by then it's too late.

Assuming that some or all of the dragons are interested in taking up the offer, the bank will give them rail tickets to Migantia and fifty crowns apiece to cover their travel expenses. The journey hasn't changed much in forty years, neither has Migantia when they get there. If they've arranged things properly a young Yarge will be waiting to meet them at the station, show them to a nearby hotel which has good cellar accommodation for dragons, then escort them to the studios.

The Mutoscope Corporation has three warehouse-sized “stages” near the docks. The buildings are all much the same; glass roofed, with all of the apparatus of a stage set but the audience replaced by a leather and wood bellows plate camera. There's more lighting than any theatre the dragons will have seen before; mirrors to reflect sunlight, gauzy awnings to diffuse it, and gas-powered lime lights for use if it's cloudy. Everything on the sets looks lavish; think “Bollywood” and you won't go far wrong. Since it's impossible to tell a complex story with the available tools the producers go for spectacle – for example, scenes set in the pirate's lair will have dancing girls, fire-eaters, mounds of fake gold coins (actually gilded wood), and so forth. There's no colour or sound in the final product, but having everything look realistic helps everyone get into the right mood.

Don't go into technical details about the processes involved in making Mutoscope epics unless the adventurers express an interest. All they really need to be aware of is that they require hundreds of carefully posed photographs, each slightly different from the one preceding it, taking 20-30 seconds per photograph; during each photograph everyone must stand completely still. Between exposures everyone stretches, then assistants rush in with tape measures to carefully position everyone to the next carefully choreographed pose, waits while the director screams at whoever is now in the wrong position, and does it all again. And again... and again... and again...

As soon as a photograph has been taken the photographer hands the plate to his assistant, who rushes it off to be processed. Next it is handed over to the artists and engravers who convert everything to printing plates and interpolate the missing pictures. It takes several hours to produce each second of the final epic – and occasionally there's a problem, and it has to be done over again.

While dozens of Yarge are involved, the adventurers will eventually be introduced to the cast and crew listed on the next page; naturally there are other actors, extras, and technicians of one sort or another, but don't bother to name them unless someone actually asks.

- **Garth Talbod**, director, an intense Yarge with the dictatorial manner of a drill sergeant. He feels that no day is complete if he doesn't get to make at least one actor cry.  
BODY [4], MIND [4], SOUL [4], Artist (theatrical director) [6], Business [6], Brawling [5]
- **Jamez Olen**, photographer, a short red-headed Yarge who wears thick glasses. On the set he is usually immersed in the details of his work, with a couple of assistants adjusting things, measuring the distance from the lens to each shot, and so forth. He appears to have no personality outside his work.  
BODY [2], MIND [5], SOUL [5], Artist (photographer) [7]
- **Tiadra Keela**, an up-and-coming Yegithi actress who is playing Keleg. Nobody in the production company is aware that she is actually Tiadra Kelegdottir, Keleg's daughter. She is lithe, acrobatic, and (apparently) an indifferent actress who happens to look a lot like the young Keleg.  
BODY [5], MIND [4], SOUL [4], Actor (sing, dance, drums) [7], Athlete (swim, run, gymnastics) [7], Brawling [8], Linguist [5] (Draconic, Lipathi, Migantine), Marksman [6], Melee Weapon [8], Martial Arts [7], Riding [8], Stealth [6], Thief [6]. 3 Bonus points.

Weapon	Mult.	Effect	A	B	C
2 Scimitars	2	9	F	I	C/K (carried on set)
3 Daggers (as hand weapons)	2	6	F	I	C/K (always carried)
(thrown)	2	6	F	I	C/K
Fist / kick	2	5	B	B	KO
Wrestling	No	5	B	KO	KO/I

**Quote:** "I'm sorry, I'm not quite sure of my motivation in this scene."

**Equipment:** Clothing, various perfumes and oils, weapons as above.

**Notes:** Tiadra has spent her life in her mother's shadow, and has no intention of avenging her death. She seems to have a very draconic view of life; she plans to play along with things until her mother is dead then walk away with her money.

Tiadra is very attractive to other Yarge (dragons won't notice), and with fake tattoos and swords looks and sounds a lot like her mother did forty years earlier. Although Tiadra doesn't yet know it, she is the daughter and only natural heir of the Sultan of Rasdogah Erofal.

**Role Playing:** Tiadra spends a lot of time pretending to be just another actress, and hoping that her mother won't realise that she's more interested in money and acting than in going into business as a dragon slayer.



- **Avageth Rimalin**, the only dragon in the company, aged 155. He's a distant cousin of the aristocratic Rimalins but has no title. Although he's on a salary and won't lose out if other dragons become involved in the action, he'll still be jealous of their involvement. He's worried that they might decide to go into the business and eventually compete with him for roles.

BODY [8], MIND [3], SOUL [3], Length 23ft, Tough 1pt

**Wounds:** B, F, I, I, I, C

**Skills:** Actor (Mutoscope) [5], Brawling [8], Flying [8], Linguist [4], (Migantine, Belshululine), Stealth [2]. Standard draconic attacks etc., no flame.

**Equipment:** Assorted personal junk of little value, hat

**Notes:** An indifferent actor who failed to impress the sophisticated audiences of Tiamath, but turns out to be reasonably good at standing still for extended periods. He will pay unwelcome(?) attention to any dragonesses.

**Traits:** Snob, Nominally Religious, Promiscuous.

- **R'Nald Traven**, playing the Sultan of Rasdogah Erofal, a pirate chieftain, and other roles. A plump pompous actor with a drinking problem, who fancies himself as a master of disguise provided that the disguise is a change of clothes and a false moustache or beard. Like many Yarge he has military experience and skills.

BODY [4], MIND [3], SOUL [3], Actor (Mutoscope) [4], Brawling [5], Melee weapon [6], Marksmanship [5], Military Arms [4]. He owns (but rarely carries) a large pistol, and in most of his parts has a sword of some sort.

- **Carmorn Thatcher**, playing various female roles. A statuesque woman prone to temper tantrums. She thinks that she should be playing Keleg, and regards Tiadra's selection for the role as an insult.

BODY [3], MIND [4], SOUL [3], Actor (Mutoscope) [5], Brawling (especially throwing fragile ornaments) [5]

The adventurers' first impression should be that things are completely chaotic. When they arrive, a scene set aboard the *Rose of Migantia* (which for the purposes of the production has a large ballroom) is being prepared; technicians are moving props, wardrobe assistants are helping the actors (those mentioned above, plus a dozen or so other actors and extras) into their costumes, and so forth. Tiadra is reading the script aloud, and pouting as she slowly says "I... I am Keleg, some call me the Dragon-Slayer. Look, I'm sorry; I just don't seem to have much motivation here." She sounds totally un-threatening, even to dragons.

From behind the dragons an unmistakable voice says "Like this. 'I am Keleg. Some calls me Keleg Dragon-Slayer.' You want them to feel the fear."

When the dragons look round they will see an elderly Yarge female in a wheelchair. Despite her age Keleg still bears the faded tattoos that mark her as a dragon-slayer, and radiates a presence that will make even the toughest dragon think twice before trying anything silly. The end of a sheathed scimitar is visible under her coat.

### Keleg Dragon-Slayer – Aged Celebrity Psychopath, Former Pirate (age 75<sup>1</sup>)

BODY [5], MIND [4], SOUL [4], Actor (sing, drums) [6], Athlete (swim) [6], Brawling [7], Linguist [5] (Draconic, Lipathi, Migantine), Marksman [7], Melee Weapon [8], Martial Arts [7]. 2 Bonus points.

Weapon	Mult.	Effect	A	B	C
Scimitar	2	8	F	I	C/K (always carried)
2 Daggers (as hand weapons)	2	7	F	I	C/K (always carried)
(thrown)	2	6	F	I	C/K
Fist	2	5	B	B	KO

**Quote:** "What can I say? I got old!"

**Equipment:** Drums, clothing, various perfumes and oils, wheelchair, weapons etc. as above.

**Notes:** Keleg's history is complicated (see her original details on page 140 and the *Trouble Shooting* box below), but she is still a psychopath, and still has no respect for draconic life, and very little respect for any other Yarge, with the possible exception of her daughter. She regards Tiadra as a grave disappointment; she expected her to be much more enthusiastic about slaying dragons, since both of her parents are dragon-slayers. Keleg believes that if she is killed Tiadra will naturally avenge her death.

She cannot be mesmerised – the truly insane rarely can – but she is capable of faking it to gain an advantage.

**Role Playing:** Keleg is arrogant, self-assured, and probably the most dangerous Yarge anyone will ever meet, even in her weakened condition; unless she is deliberately trying to avoid attracting attention she tends to be the focus of every eye. She is never uncertain. Despite her honourable title she is a mass-murderer with a callous disregard for Yarge and Draconic life. She has recently learned that she is incurably ill, and believes that she has nothing left to live for apart from ensuring that Tiadra carries on the family legacy. She will be happy to die to ensure this result.



**Troubleshooting:** If any of the adventurers think that they killed Keleg forty years earlier, the explanation is simple; in the excitement and smoke of battle she used a stunt double! Dragons have never been very good at telling Yarge apart, and one of the other pirates was a cousin, who looked enough like her to fool them and was also wearing a dragon-hide jerkin under her clothing. During the fight Keleg literally tripped over her double's body and fell into the sea, or otherwise inadvertently left the fight, leaving the body in her place. Later she was captured and imprisoned in the Sultan of Rasdogah Erofal's harem, which is why she dropped out of sight for many years. Eventually she escaped, pregnant, inflicting wounds en route that ensured that the Sultan has no other heirs, and spent the next few years on the run. Since then she has led a long and active life, which has unfortunately included some crippling falls and other injuries. She still has as much willpower as ever, and the same charismatic personality, but she's confined to a wheelchair and will never walk again.

<sup>1</sup> 57 Earth years

## Shooting Script

Exactly what goes into this epic depends on what happened when the original adventure was run. Generally speaking events shown in the script run more or less as the dragons remember, but at every step their and Keleg's actions and motivation will be distorted to make her seem an innocent pawn of a fiendish draconic conspiracy. The five episodes have the following titles and summaries; feel free to make changes if things went differently:

1. **Keleg and the Sultan** – The Sultan of Rasdogah Erofal tries to seduce Keleg, who virtuously spurns his advances. In retaliation he has her sent into exile, and sends a letter to an unknown recipient. The episode ends with a cheering crowd watching her board the *Rose*. In the last seconds of the episode the letter is seen again, with a dragon's claw running down the text and pausing at the words "Blacken her name!" The final words shown are: *To be continued...*
2. **Dragons Discovered!** – Aboard the *Rose* Keleg realises that all is not well. The crew are acting strangely, as though mesmerized. If the dragons were initially revealed to be aboard by children (as on page 138) the script shows them mesmerizing the children and debating whether or not to kill them, the children freed accidentally and running to Keleg, and so forth. In the final scene Keleg goes to confront the dragons, and is mesmerized by them. "And now that you are in our power," the final lettering reads, "we will destroy you." *To be continued...*
3. **Mesmerised!** – In a trance, Keleg goes to the deck and starts playing her drums. Soon the pirates and Old One appear, apparently summoned by Keleg but in reality controlled by the dragons; exactly how isn't made clear. Keleg slowly breaks free of the spell, as the dragons pretend to be trying to fight off the attack, taking care to avoid doing much damage to the pirates or Old One. In the final moments the dragons scream "Kill her!" and swoop down to attack Keleg. *To be continued...*
4. **Dragon-Slayer!** – It's time for the big Keleg versus Dragon fight, most of the fourth episode. It moves around the deck, into the ballroom (with several cannonballs ploughing through the background) then back on deck again. Finally, as Keleg is about to kill the most dangerous dragon, another explosion blows her off the deck and into the sea. The dragons are seen aboard ship, congratulating themselves on having killed her and made it look like they were defending the Yarge. *To be continued...*
5. **Revenge of the Sultan** – Keleg somehow swims ashore and tries to summon help. To her horror the Sultan arrives! Dozens of soldiers surround Keleg and take her prisoner, while the Sultan gloats that there is no escape. Time passes (indicated by a calendar with days then years ripped off) and eventually the Sultan has her dragged to his bedchamber and gloats again; "All believe you to be dead, and a murderous pirate! Now your beauty will be mine!" Keleg seizes a scimitar from one of the guards, uses it to kill several guards in rapid succession, and drags the Sultan to the window. Another guard tries to stop her and accidentally stabs the Sultan in a very sensitive area. Keleg dives out of the window, and the story ends with her riding off to freedom aboard a fiery steed, with the caption "Now you know the truth of my life, and the lies that have been told about me by my enemies. I am Keleg Dragon-Slayer. One day I will have my revenge." *The End* – followed, a few seconds later, by a question mark.

The dragons may want to correct the "facts" of the story, and anything they say will be listened to by Talbod, apparently taken very seriously... but ultimately ignored. Since there is no draconic audience for Mutoscope performances he isn't worried about losing sales by offending dragons – if anything, dragon hostility would make the series more popular. On the other hand he does want the dragons to act for him, it isn't going to be very convincing with only one dragon on stage, and if they seem to be unwilling to participate in Keleg's distortion of events he will pretend to take them seriously, and make a few apparent changes that can be cut out or presented differently in the finished epic.

Sets include the ballroom, the bridge of the ship, the hold, the deck, docks, and so forth. If dragons are shown flying they must perch on sturdy beams, carefully painted to merge in with the background of the "sky," and stay still while pretending to be gliding or flapping their wings.

Props include backdrops showing distant scenery, a huge papier-mâché sea serpent, several boats, and so forth. Weapons are generally real, not dummies – many Yarge have military or martial arts training and would spot fakes. Guns are loaded with dummy cartridges, of course, nobody wants accidents.

The whole process is muscle- and brain-numbing tedious work, and if the dragons are “acting” they must eventually start to roll their MIND against increasing Difficulty to stay still during each photograph. Avageth and Talbod will both be somewhat scathing if anyone fails and ruins a shot.

It’s likely that the adventurers will be very suspicious of Keleg and anyone she associates with, and she is counting on manipulating their paranoia to ensure that they kill her. Exactly how she does this should be tailored to the players; generally they shouldn’t need much convincing. She wants her daughter present, to give her an excuse to declare blood feud on the dragons, but doesn’t want to make it too obvious that this is her motivation. For example:

- Keleg makes sure that the dragons overhear her telling Tiadra that she won’t be able to play her properly until she understands her religion; “we goes down to the water at dawn, and I show you how to play the drums like they should be played.” Once there Keleg starts to drum as though summoning the Old One, encouraging Tiadra to join in on smaller drums. If the adventurers remember the last time this should be enough reason to want to stop them. Tiadra will naturally comply, Keleg will keep playing. If the dragons try to force Keleg to stop, she will make sure that they have no choice other than to kill her. The Old One does not put in an appearance; she never ventures into the treacherous waters of the Narrow Sea.
- While showing Tiadra how to handle a knife for one of her scenes Keleg “accidentally” throws it at one of the dragons, and doesn’t even try to pretend to be apologetic about it.
- Keleg starts talking about “the good old days” when dragons knew their place and would have known better than to come anywhere near a dragon-slayer. Make this as insulting as possible, preferably when one of the dragons is supposed to be standing still for a photograph.
- Keleg runs her wheelchair over someone’s tail.
- All else having failed, Keleg drops a few crowns when a dragon is nearby then goes after him or her with her scimitar, claiming that the dragon tried to steal her gold.

## End Game: The Next Generation

Sooner or later Keleg should succeed in provoking a dragon or dragons into killing her, expecting that Tiadra will slay her killer. Run the fight fairly; if Keleg happens to get in a lucky blow and injures or kills a dragon she will definitely die happy. Whatever happens, her dying words will be “Avenge me!”

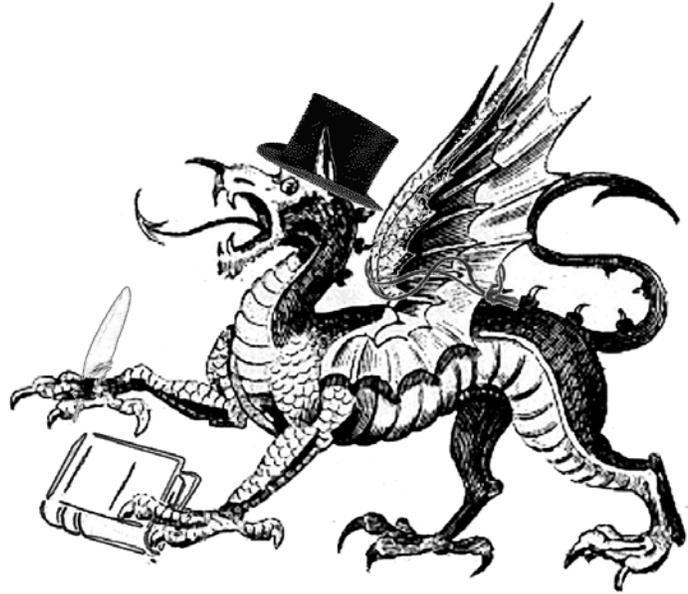
Tiadra waits until she is quite sure that Keleg is dead then says “Sorry, Mummy. That really isn’t my idea of fun.” This may surprise the dragons, or they may already be suspicious of her. Whatever, she makes quite sure that they realise that she isn’t a threat, and helps them deal with the authorities (who will otherwise assume that they have murdered their old enemy Keleg). If possible she persuades them to help make the remainder of the epic; if they are unwilling, photography will carry on without them. The end result will be Keleg’s version of events.

This shouldn’t be an especially dangerous adventure – essentially the dragons have to fight one little old lady who wants to be killed – but getting through it intact and without being branded as murderers should be good for a few bonus points. As always reward good role-playing, humour, etc.

Optionally, a few weeks after the dragons return home they receive a letter from Tiadra; while going through her mother’s papers she’s discovered proof that she’s the rightful heir to the Sultan of Rasdogah Erofal. If they are willing to help her claim her throne, she might be able to make things much better for dragons visiting that country... The dragons may or may not choose to follow up on this and help her. If they do they should eventually learn that Tiadra is just as dangerous as her mother, in her own way; a cunning and extremely ruthless plotter who regards her allies as expendable, especially if she can use them as scapegoats in her plans, and dragon involvement may be considered an act of war.

## Amazing Things Every Dragonet Should Know

The Blessed Jamanah is perhaps the best-known and most beloved author in Tiamath. Parson of a quiet country parish, he has ample time to devote to his literary career. Over the last four hundred years he has published a succession of educational books for dragonets, each a model of clarity and accuracy, covering science and natural history, the arts, history and geography, and of course religion. His fame isn't just confined to Tiamath; since his books are easy to read, and give a good idea of the draconic view of things, they are widely read by Yarge students of the draconic language and culture.



Exactly how the adventurers come to know him is left to the referee; they might be neighbours, friends, fellow authors, fans, or related to him. They should not be employed directly by Jamanah or his publishers. Whatever the reason, they will become aware of a crisis that threatens to bring his career to an abrupt halt.

For more than two hundred years *A Dragonet's Book of Amazing Natural Science Wonders* has enthralled young readers. Three years ago a young engineer happened to dip into his childhood copy, and discovered a dozen small errors in physics, astronomy, and basic calculation. For example, the original text of the section on the calendar (see Page 12) defined the second as the time for a drop of water to fall thirty feet from rest; in fact, the correct distance is fifteen feet. Jamanah seems to have mixed up the distance and the rate of acceleration due to gravity – or someone else involved in the production of the book made the mistake at a later stage, and Jamanah never noticed. It's an easy mistake to make, but in Jamanah's mind that is no excuse.

The snag is that after two hundred years nobody can remember who is responsible for the errors. Was Jamanah a little careless in his writing, or did someone make several mistakes while setting up the type? Since these errors were discovered Jamanah and his publishers have been frantically going back through all of his books, looking for more mistakes. Unfortunately they've found some – nothing quite as blatant, and nearly all of them at least a hundred years old, but nevertheless mistakes Jamanah regards as inexcusable. Someone should have caught them, either Jamanah or the publishers' readers and editors. He prides himself on his accuracy (and sometimes worries if the pride is sinful), now he worries that he has been deluding himself and his readers.

Currently Jamanah is working on a new title, *Amazing Things Every Dragonet Should Know*, a wide-ranging book which answers many of the questions he has been sent by dragonets over the last four centuries. It covers natural history, science, geography, astronomy, Yarge and Draconic culture, travel, religion, history, etc. He's as sure as he can be that everything in it is correct, of course, but some of the information is years old, and refers to fields that can change rapidly such as Yarge engineering; some comes from dubious sources; some may be difficult to verify, or require subjective opinions. He's decided that before the book sees print every fact in it must be checked, as far as is possible. And given his parish duties and the wide-ranging nature of the book, there's no way that he can do it all himself. As a result Jamanah and his publishers are trying to call in every favour they can, to get as much fact checking as possible done as quickly as possible, preferably with independent verification. About half of it is routine research that can be done by any competent hack, but the rest will need more effort.

Exactly how the adventurers become involved is left to the referee. For example:

- They happen to have information on something that isn't common knowledge, e.g. eye-witness details of the death of Keleg Dragon-Slayer (see the previous adventure).
- They are going somewhere that the book describes: "While you're visiting Samindra would you mind taking a look at the old ruined temple South of the capital? There's a theory that dragons built it..."
- They're involved in some field that's relevant to the book: "I'm sure you're right to say that the atom is indivisible, but can you *prove* it?"
- They've already said something that relates to one of Jamanah's topics, but he needs a little evidence – this is especially effective if they've wildly exaggerated something; "The Sea Serpent was five hundred feet long? How in Veld's name did you measure it?"
- One of them has an unusual skill that can be used to answer one of the questions; "You're good at mesmerism? Now that's interesting, a lot of my readers would like to know more about that..."

There are dozens of other possibilities; what's important is that the question asked is something that one or more of the characters is likely to be able to answer, but not without a certain amount of work, some nosiness, and so forth. Even an easy answer can lead to complications, of course; for instance, in the examples above:

- Keleg's heir probably won't be too happy about an entirely accurate account of her death, and if the optional ending for the adventure was used she may now be in a position to make life very awkward for anyone who blackens her mother's name.
- The Samindran temple may be full of booby-traps or venomous snakes, or contain information about the ancient Draconic religion that the adventurers might prefer to keep suppressed; perhaps the ancient dragons worshipped Azashan, or ate healthy dragonets, or warred against each other rather than the Yarge.
- Splitting the atom isn't exactly a trivial exercise, and the consequences of proving that it's possible might be much more serious than expected. Dragons need to take a long-term view of things, decades and centuries rather than months and years.
- Are the adventurers really going to find the Sea Serpent and measure it? If so, how, and how do they plan to survive the experience?
- Finding Yarge subjects who are prepared to be mesmerized, even in the cause of educating dragonets, may not be entirely straightforward...

Some of the questions relate to matters that can cause serious arguments; "why don't Yarge eat their young?" is a good example. A few of the ideas behind the questions are just plain wrong, years out of date or based on "facts" now known to be erroneous.

Once the adventurers provide an answer, they will be asked again and again. There isn't a huge amount of pressure involved; try to present it as doing a favour for someone (such as Jamanah or his publisher) who may eventually be able to do a favour for the dragons. It's always "While you're in the neighbourhood would you mind looking into this?" not "Go there and find this out."

There is no need for there to be any connection between one question and the next; there isn't a plot here as such, just a book that needs a lot of answers. Of course this research may be used to disguise other activities; for example, dragons working for Tiamath's intelligence service might be given a cover as dilettantes researching some obscure fact for Jamanah, which requires them to visit odd corners of the Yarge nations. Or dragons who have been helping Jamanah may suddenly find that the intelligence service wants to recruit them.

Following are some questions to set the ball rolling; there's no need to prepare dozens in advance, since this is intended to be an intermittent theme for adventures, not a full-time job. The first few have Jamanah's answers, and some suggestions as to how the adventurers might verify them; it's up to the referee to create a few complications, and decide where the truth might lie.

**Q: What are “pets” and why do Yarge keep them?**

**A:** *Dragons visiting the Yarge lands are often surprised to notice the presence of many domesticated animals which are not kept for food, used as drafters or mounts, or otherwise utilised in a manner that we would recognise. These animals are often referred to as “pets.”*

*Generally speaking pets provide some Veld-given capability which the Yarge do not themselves possess; for example, various species of small carnivore kept to eradicate smaller vermin, which have the agility and speed so obviously lacking in most Yarge. Larger carnivores are used as hunting animals, sent to retrieve or chase down wounded prey. Some animals have no obvious utility, but exhibit what the Yarge regard as aesthetically pleasing coloration or song.*

*There have been suggestions that Yarge may also have curious emotional responses to pets, much as they do to their hatchlings, but this seems unlikely in the extreme.*

**Plot:** *The obvious way to investigate this is for the dragons to find a few Yarge who own pets and ask them about them. There are snags, of course; for example, most of the Yarge who actually live in Tiamath don't own pets because they tend to get eaten by young dragons. Dragons visiting the Yarge countries will find that asking about pets tends to lead to an automatic assumption that the dragons want to eat them; for some reason very few Yarge seem to think that this is a good idea. Questions about the psychology of pet ownership will make the Yarge think that the dragons are planning some sort of strange psychological warfare, and so forth. As an experiment the dragons might think of buying a few pets and seeing if they experience any of the benefits claimed by the Yarge. They might even start an interesting new fashion!*

**Q: Is the Sultan of Rasdogah Erofal really a dragon-slayer?**

**A:** *Although it seems unlikely that anyone would falsely claim to have slain one of Veld's creations, it is a fact that very few Yarge have the ability to kill an adult dragon without resorting to firearms. In the event that one of them manages such a feat “for good reason,” if such there can ever be, he or she is widely celebrated as a mighty warrior, and feted in the Yarge nations. For this reason there may be occasional false claims. In recent years there have only been two dragon slayers reported; the Sultan of Rasdogah Erofal, and Keleg of the Yegith Archipelago. There is no doubt whatever about Keleg's claim; her first fight was witnessed by numerous Yarge, and subsequent attacks on other dragons have shown her to be a formidable fighter. In the case of the Sultan, however, evidence is lacking. Since the Sultan's word is law in his land the claim will not be disputed by any of his subjects; elsewhere it is regarded with a good deal more scepticism.*

**Plot:** *This will only work well if it is run after *The Crimson Claw Assurance Society* and *Masters of the Mutoscope*. The question is a real can of worms. The Sultan hates dragons and will not allow them into the country; he's also reportedly near death (or may be dead already if the dragons helped Tiadra at the end of *Masters of the Mutoscope*). Tiadra's claim to the throne of Rasdogah Erofal rests largely on being the daughter of two dragon-slayers; if it were revealed that her father wasn't a dragon-slayer it would weaken his claim to the throne, and by implication hers. Jamanah obviously doesn't know that Keleg is already dead, so this correction alone should be useful. Unless, of course, Jamanah knows something the adventurers don't... Keleg is well-known for coming back from apparent death.*

**Q: Why does the Yarge Ambassador open each session of the Noble Assembly, why are the bells of the Cupola rung seventeen times before sessions begin, and what is the origin of the Cupola drums?**

**A:** *The ritual of the opening of the Noble Assembly dates back to the end of Tiamath's subjugation by the Yarge, and our subsequent liberation. The Yarge Ambassador is present to acknowledge our freedom, and explicitly names and acknowledges the assembly of free dragons in his opening address. The drum-heads are made of the skin of the last Yarge Governor of Tiamath, deposed and killed by our rebellion, while the dragonbone sticks are leg-bones of the puppet “king” the Yarge imposed as nominal ruler under the Governor's direction, who died with the Governor. The reason why the bells are rung seventeen times is open to debate;*

*legend has it that a Yarge sentry began to ring the alarm bells of the Governor's palace as the rebels broke in, and was killed after the seventeenth peal. The speed at which a bell is rung relates to its weight and the way in which it is hung, not the strength of the person ringing it, so would be much the same for a Yarge as for a dragon. Assuming a delay of four to five seconds between peals, as with the current Cupola bells, this would suggest that the palace fell in about a minute. While unlikely, this might be plausible given a surprise attack at several points and some delay in sounding the alarm.*

**Plot:** Regardless of the true history, this may be an example of Jamanah missing the blindingly obvious. Is it really likely that the drums have had the same Yarge-skin heads for nearly 5000 years? No matter how well preserved they might be, eventually they would succumb to wear, decay, or moths. It's also unlikely that dragonbone would last so well, even when preserved in a glass case at the Cupola. When were the heads last replaced, and by whom, and who knows about it? Presumably some dragons, but are the Yarge completely in the dark?

The true history of the ceremony is another can of worms, forgotten by the dragons and contradicting much of what they think they know about their history. See the epilogue at the end of this book for the unpleasant truth.

**Q: Does magic exist?**

**A:** *There is magic in all things, of course; the magic of their creation by Veld. Many would argue that it resides especially in Dragonkind. How else to explain draconic flight, our longevity, the way we grow by eating dragon flesh, or the other unique features of our species? In legend there are other forms of magic, of course; spells to change form or cause illusions, to blast a foe with lightning or smite him with disease. The church teaches that Camran cast out the wizards, but the scriptures say little of their powers. Yarge legends depict some dragons as powerful wizards; our legends do the same for some Yarge. Certain mystical societies claim to know more, but seem reluctant to produce much evidence and can probably be dismissed from serious consideration. If there was ever any truth to these tales, it is that the ancient wizards are no more, and that we and the Yarge sometimes explain our own failures by crediting our enemies with more power than they really possess.*

**Plot:** Members of a group of dragon mystics (a cult which claims ancient secret knowledge) have somehow convinced themselves that magic still exists; their main evidence is an ancient scroll which seems to say that the key to power is to consume the flesh of a dragon who must meet certain requirements which apply to one of the adventurers. Either the adventurer has been bred especially to meet the needs of the prophecy, or the adventurer is simply the first dragon in many years to meet it (e.g., a blue-scaled male hatched on a Sixday, the special leap day that is added to the year every 82 years). He or she must be killed or eaten on another special day, and at a specific location. Possibly Jamanah has been tricked into persuading the adventurers to investigate the cult's activities; possibly he's involved in them.

Whether or not real magic actually exists or works in this setting is up to the referee; as noted earlier, it is not recommended. If sacrifice doesn't appeal, an apparent magical order might be an elaborate scam, set up to peddle "ancient occult knowledge" at vast prices and eager to pull in more suckers.

Another possibility is that a serious investigation of magical legends will reveal that dragons and their related species were created by Yarge magicians who wanted fearsome monsters to protect their homes but underestimated their creations. The first dragons turned on their masters, destroyed them, and used the last vestiges of their magic to attain their full size. There is no other magic in the world because dragons absorb it from their environment and by eating each other. This implies amongst other things that there might still be magic in countries that ban dragons (such as Rasdogah Erofal) or on the continents that dragons have never visited. In such a situation dragon flesh will definitely be the most potent source of magic around; if any Yarge magicians remain they will be very interested in acquiring some. But if dragons actually absorb magic, Yarge wizards (especially player characters) may find that attempts to use magic against dragons backfire, making them bigger and stronger, and that consuming dragon flesh has unfortunate side effects, their exact nature left to the imagination and sadism of the referee...

**Q: Why is our unit of measurement, the foot, the size of a dragonet's foot rather than an adult dragon?**

**A:** Most of the units of measurement we use derive from the Yarge; if you were to examine the hind-foot of a male Yarge closely you would discover that it is indeed approximately a foot long. Until the Conquest most dragons had little to do with measurement; we worked with natural materials, as Veld intended, and judged things such as distance and time by instinct. This was sufficient for the work of digging caves etc. After the Conquest the Yarge required the construction of castles and other structures which needed accurate dimensions, and forced Dragonkind to use their existing units. As time went by historians believe that the advantages of measurement became clear to dragons, and the units continued to be used after we regained our freedom. While there have been several attempts to devise a more Draconic measurement system, there seems to be little advantage in doing so, and several disadvantages; most notably, much of our trade with the Yarge requires common standards. With the advent of more complex engineering, steam, etc. they have become indispensable. There are small variations between the Draconic foot and those of our neighbouring countries; at various times they too have attempted to reform their systems of measurement, or impose an exact standard across entire nations, with slightly different results in each case.

Tiamath's Standard Foot is marked on a bar of gold currently held by the Department of Weights and Measures and stored in the vaults of the Treasury. Several other standards are also kept there, and are periodically used in the measurement and verification of weights for science and commerce.

**Plot:** While there's nothing wrong with these facts, if the adventurers happen to make any enquiries about the official Foot they will be arrested, questioned about their reasons for asking then pressed into service as patriots (or for whatever other reason seems appropriate).

A Treasury clerk has made an unfortunate error and included the Standard Foot in a shipment of gold bullion destined for the Archon of the Edawoon Republic (see page 16). The bribe payment is supposed to be completely secret, and it will be difficult to get the standards back once they reach the Archon. The adventurers must somehow intercept the gold *en route* to the Republic and replace the bars with an equivalent weight of bullion. Needless to say there isn't any easy way to warn the diplomats and couriers who are transporting the gold, who are naturally going to be just a *little* suspicious of any dragons who turn up out of the blue and demand access to the treasure, no matter how good their identification and story may be. They must also be careful not to drop or otherwise damage the Foot, since gold is soft and a little damage might change its length slightly.

If all else fails a new Standard Foot could be made, based on one of the Official Feet (made of durable steel) issued to government inspectors etc., but it won't be *exactly* the same as the previous one, and everyone will know it. There's no long-term effect – fortunately engineering and science haven't yet reached the level of accuracy where such a small change would be catastrophic – but if you can't trust the Treasury and the Department of Weights and Measures, who can you trust? Some loss of confidence is inevitable.

Some more questions for the adventurers to ponder; Jamanah's answers and the adventures they might lead to are left as an exercise for the referee:

Why is Tiamath's railway gauge different to that of other nations?

Why do dragonesses blush? Why do sick dragons turn green?

What is the population of Tiamath, and is it changing?

Who is the richest dragon in Tiamath?

How long can dragons live, and who is the oldest dragon in Tiamath?

Will photography ever improve to a point at which it can be used inside a proper cave?

## Epilogue: Past, Present and Future

This book has tried to give the Draconic perspective of the world it describes, and occasional glimpses of the Yarge viewpoint. Neither side has all the facts; they're distorted, sometimes deliberately, to give the most favourable version of events. The reality of Tiamath is mostly forgotten by the dragons, and little more than a legend for the Yarge.

Historically, the Yarge conquered the dragons and the dragons surrendered unreservedly, converted to the Yarge religion, and were forced to live in Tiamath; a reservation under Yarge domination. This much is more or less common knowledge, unpalatable as it may be. But there was never a rebellion, and all of the Draconic tales and "history" of the struggle for freedom are distorted echoes of the truth. This is why the Yarge Ambassador still opens the Noble Assembly; the Yarge still consider themselves to be *ceremonially* in charge, approving the opening of the Assembly and the elevation of Eminent and other nobles. They consider themselves to have veto powers, and have never quite realised that dragons now see things differently.

One of the less palatable facts hidden by the legends is that the aristocracy are for the most part descended from collaborators, the "trusties" who could be relied on to keep the rest of the dragons under control, and were given positions of power when the Yarge gave Tiamath its nominal independence. This is likely to come out sooner or later, and may be the spark that leads to rebellion.

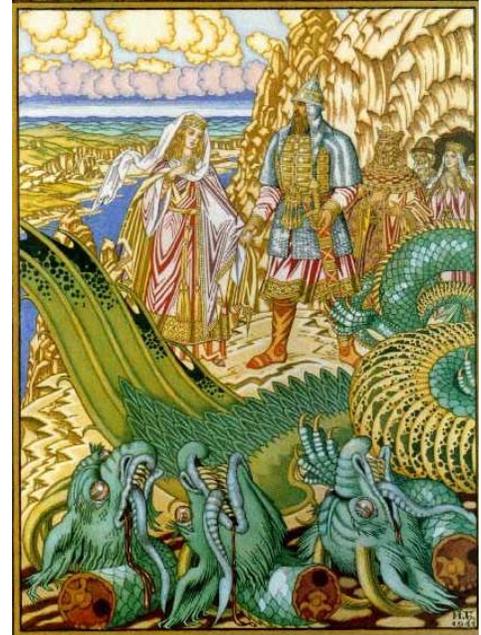
Sooner or later, and probably sooner, there will probably be another major Yarge War (as opposed to border skirmishes); a World War of all Yarge vs. all dragons. The most likely trigger would probably be the appointment of a new Majestic without restraints on his powers; the Yarge have tolerated some previous rulers with limited mandates, such as currency reform or the suppression of banditry, others have been assassinated or died before the Yarge took action, but as communications improve and populations rise on both sides any new appointment will be seen as an aggressive act.

Meanwhile the dragons are desperately short of lebensraum, and beginning to see a war as the only way to gain the space they need. Tiamath is hemmed in by enemies, but to Draconic eyes they are separate groups of enemies, to be played off against each other and possibly conquered one by one. The fact that there is only one Yarge "Ambassador" is an indication of their error; the Yarge will present a common front if there is war.

By the time of *Those Who Favor Fire* tensions are rising. In this generation there will be an all-out war, and one that the dragons will not win. Yarge countries that normally hate each other will unite to fight a real threat coming from Tiamath; it's many hundreds of years since they've had to do so, but there are still secret treaties in place, and war plans drawn up to counter any Draconic threat, backed up by a growing military-industrial complex that dwarfs anything the dragons can field.

Think of Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, arming for war, its leaders convinced that victory is inevitable. And remember the ruin that followed.

You don't have to do it that way, of course. Maybe common sense will prevail, or someone will find a formula for a peaceful long term settlement between dragons and the Yarge. Maybe the dragons and Yarge will be forced to unite against some form of external threat. It isn't likely, but for now at least *Those Who Favor Fire* remains unfinished, and the future is moot.



A Yarge princess watches admiringly as soldiers stack the corpses of their last victims for burning in the aftermath of the Conquest.

## Credits and Legalities

**M**any contributors have been involved in the various releases of *Forgotten Futures* over the last fifteen years and it's well-nigh impossible to name all of them. For this version in particular thanks go especially to Jo Walton for having had confidence in me to do justice to her work, to Sue Mason for allowing me to use so much of her art, to various play-testers at Dragonmeet 2007 and on line, and to those who have contributed to discussion of the setting, rules rewrite, etc. via Livejournal, Steve Jackson Games discussion groups, the uk.games.roleplay newsgroup, and other sites. There are too many to name, and I would hate to leave anyone out, so please accept the thought for the deed.

The biblical texts quoted on pages 105 and 107 are excerpts from *Tooth and Claw*.

At a very late stage in designing this game I learned of the existence of another RPG entitled *Tooth and Claw*, by Jared A. Sorensen and published by Memento Mori Theatricks, in which the characters are dinosaurs. There is no connection between these games other than title. For more details see his web store, [www.rpgnow.com/index.php?cPath=1512](http://www.rpgnow.com/index.php?cPath=1512)

## Shareware License and Distribution

Some confusion has recently arisen over permitted use of the *Forgotten Futures* rules, and in particular of edited versions adapted by others for their own purposes. Briefly, *Forgotten Futures* is covered by all national and international copyright laws. To protect its copyright and avoid unnecessary confusion there must be certain restrictions on its use.

In everything that follows the terms "publish" and "distribute" include putting files onto web sites, posting material to newsgroups, bulletin boards, communities, or publication in print or on disk etc., regardless of whether this is done free of charge or for profit.

**Shareware license terms:** you may copy the files as *they were originally released* and distribute them as you like, *provided that no charge is made* and that all information needed to register the game etc. is included. If possible link back to my sites, rather than moving this material to your own site, in case it becomes necessary for me to make corrections after I have put this material on line.

In legal terms, these documents are covered by the Creative Commons Attribution-No Derivative Works License, with the following exceptions:

- If for any reason you want edit the files for your own purposes (e.g. to add house rules, change rules mechanisms you dislike, or use them with a completely different game system) you may do so *for your own personal use*, provided that the changes are not put on line or distributed generally. This means, for example, that you may edit a version of the rules for the purposes of a game you run for your own friends, and give them copies of the revised rules, but may not distribute the modified files to the general public. In an on-line context any revised versions of the rules and background material etc. must be distributed by email rather than kept on a web site, or otherwise made inaccessible to non-participants. You must make it clear that the files are not as originally published, acknowledge the author's copyright, and include links back to the "official" versions.
- If you want to publish articles about the rules or settings, or describing variant rules etc. for wider distribution, you may do so; however, such articles should be limited to a description of your own work and the changes you have made. Write up a summary of your modifications only; do not publish modified versions of the entire rules set, settings, or adventures or any sizeable part of them.
- The *printed* versions of the rules and other gaming material formerly published by Heliograph Inc. were not released as shareware, differ in some respects from the versions published on line, and are not covered by these terms; you may not copy them.

For details of the Creative Commons Attribution-No Derivative Works License see

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

and

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/legalcode>

## Art

Art for this collection has been drawn by Sue Mason or Marcus L. Rowland, or found as clip-art on line and often manipulated considerably. Most of the clip-art used can be found at dozens of different sites, and it has been impossible to determine original sources in most cases. If any of this material has not in fact been released for royalty-free use please let me know. With the exception of clip art and other royalty-free material all of the artwork in this collection remains in copyright, and may not be reproduced separately without the permission of the individual artist.

- Covers Copyright © Sue Mason, coins based on images of pyrographed ornaments; photographer Michael Scott; manipulated by MLR.
- All pages Footer picture copyright © Sue Mason
- 1 Copyright © Sue Mason
- 4 Traditional dragon image, source unknown
- 5 Manipulated image based on biological images from Wikimedia commons (MLR)
- 8 (*skin*) Manipulated image of crocodile skin. (MLR)  
(*egg*) Copyright © Sue Mason
- 9 (*dragonet*) Clip art, source unknown  
(*eye*) Copyright © Marcus L. Rowland
- 11 (*top*) **A Dragon Passing Over Travellers** – George Sheringham (1884-1937)  
Image from the Art Renewal Centre archive, [www.artrenewal.org/](http://www.artrenewal.org/)
- 11, 16, 20 (*maps*) Fractally generated maps with numerous edits (MLR)
- 13 19<sup>th</sup> century British coin, edited to remove lettering (MLR)
- 17 Manipulated image from public domain sources (MLR)
- 18 Copyright © Sue Mason
- 21 Manipulated image based on satellite photograph (MLR)
- 22 Manipulated image, originally a map of medieval Paris, origin unknown (MLR)
- 24 (*plan*) Copyright © Marcus L. Rowland
- 24 (*dragon*) Copyright © Sue Mason
- 25 Manipulated image from public domain sources (MLR)
- 25, 27, 29 Copyright © Sue Mason, manipulated by MLR
- 26 Copyright © Marcus L. Rowland
- 30 Manipulated image from Wikimedia commons (MLR)
- 32 Multiple source manipulation: dragon's head copyright © Sue Mason, airship image from the *Forgotten Futures CD-ROM*, parts of several other copyright-expired images found on line. (MLR)
- 36 Image from Wikimedia commons
- 39-40 Copyright © Sue Mason, manipulated by MLR
- 41-42 Costume pictures from numerous sites, manipulated by MLR
- 47 Clip art, source unknown
- 54, 55, 56 Copyright © Sue Mason
- 57 Cropped and colored image from Wikimedia commons (MLR)
- 59 Manipulated clip art, source unknown (MLR)
- 67 From *Forgotten Futures VIII* (MLR)
- 69 Copyright © Sue Mason
- 75 Clip art, source unknown
- 81 Copyright © Sue Mason
- 82, 83 Copyright © Sue Mason, manipulated by MLR
- 86 Manipulated clip art, source unknown (MLR)
- 88 Russian Propaganda Poster 1918 (Trotsky slaying the dragon of capitalism); manipulated to remove slogans etc. (MLR)
- 89 Lucas Jennis (1625), source Wikimedia Commons.
- 95-98 Copyright © Sue Mason. Originally small images of pyrographed ornaments; photographer Michael Scott; manipulated and in some cases colored by MLR
- 98 (*bottom*) Clip art, source unknown
- 99, 123 Manipulated image based on satellite photograph (MLR)
- 103 (*both*) Copyright © Marcus L. Rowland

## Forgotten Futures X ~ The *Tooth and Claw* Role Playing Game

- 115 Clip art, source unknown
- 120 Copyright © Marcus L. Rowland
- 126 Manipulated image from public domain sources (MLR)
- 129 Both Copyright © Marcus L. Rowland
- 130 Fractally generated map with numerous edits (MLR)
- 135 (upper) Manipulated plan of *S.S Menna*, source Welsh Cultural History web site (MLR)  
(lower) Copyright © Marcus L. Rowland
- 136-147 (maps) Fractally generated maps with numerous edits (MLR)
- 140, 159 Costume picture from numerous sites, manipulated by MLR
- 143 Copyright © Sue Mason
- 146 (upper) Copyright © Marcus L. Rowland  
(lower) Multiple source manipulation (as page 32)
- 149 Source Wikipedia commons
- 152, 155 Manipulated images from public domain sources (MLR)
- 160 Dobrynya Nikitich rescues Zabava from the Gorynych; Ivan Yakovlevich Bilibin 1876-1942, source Wikimedia Commons, Russian copyright expired
- 163 (coins) Copyright © Sue Mason, coins based on images of pyrographed ornaments; photographer Michael Scott; manipulated by MLR.

### Registration and Coming Attractions

If you have enjoyed this book please become a registered user. By doing so you will encourage the author to write more *Forgotten Futures* material, and will help to support Cancer Research UK; 10% of the registration fee is donated to the charity. For full details, samples of the material available for the game and registration go to <http://www.forgottenfutures.co.uk/>

*Forgotten Futures XI* has the working title *Planets of Peril*, and will be based on the science fiction of Stanley Weinbaum (1902-1935), focusing on his unique visions of the Solar System and the worlds he described in classic stories such as *A Martian Odyssey*. It will contain at least a dozen stories, space travel rules, and everything else needed for a classic pulp SF campaign. Like *Forgotten Futures X* it will be published in PDF and HTML versions. If all goes well it will be available towards the end of 2009.



One of the first Crowns struck – note the wear and scuff-marks from nightly contact with scales. It depicts the Majestic Thidris, creator of the modern Draconic currency. This rare example sold for 75 Crowns. More copper was permitted in early Crowns, hence the reddish metal.



A Crown from the Twin Majestics period, possibly the shortest-lived and least popular government in the history of Tiamath, notable for several tax “reforms” that almost ruined the economy. Yarge collectors would pay 3-5 Crowns for a coin in mint condition, but the light wear shown reduces the value considerably.



A recent Crown, no more than 300-400 years old. As is often the case, the dragon depicted isn't a Majestic; a popular actor modelled for the mint's artists since the position was vacant. Collectors describe such coins as “Impostor Crowns,” and will rarely pay more than face value.



## Remember how the future used to be?

When vast fleets of flying ships blackened the sky...

When psychic investigators used electric pentacles...

When Venus was a paradise, never fallen from grace...

When the government's main job was to make the airships run on time...

When a gentleman could build his own spaceship and still have change of a million pounds...

When there were still dinosaurs and monsters in the unexplored corners of the Earth...

When you could find a complete role playing game with nine supplements on line...

# FORGOTTEN FUTURES THE SCIENTIFIC ROMANCE ROLE PLAYING GAME

BY MARCUS L ROWLAND

A complete ready-to-play RPG including rules, source material, game settings, and adventures based on Victorian and Edwardian science fiction. All of the core game and support material can be downloaded and used free of charge, with additional material on CD-ROM for registered users.

[www.forgottenfutures.com](http://www.forgottenfutures.com) ~ On line and on CD-ROM ~ [www.forgottenfutures.co.uk](http://www.forgottenfutures.co.uk)

Illustration by Fred T. Jane for *Olga Romanoff* or *The Syren of the Skies* by George Griffith, one of the books accompanying *Forgotten Futures*

It was a time of myth and legend... Known as the Twentieth Century... Mankind called out for a hero. She was...

## Diana: Warrior Princess

By Marcus L. Rowland

Illustrated by Aaron Williams



Imagine our world, seen by someone as remote from us as we are from the ancient Greeks, and with as many gaps in their knowledge. Imagine it converted into a TV series by a production company with the loving attention to historical accuracy we have come to expect from such series. Then imagine the RPG of that series...

Throw realism out of the window. Run adventures in which Eva Peron is Hitler's mistress, or JFK meets Queen Victoria. Zulu hordes swarm across Vietnam, the Spanish Inquisition stalk heretics in Manhattan, steam cars co-exist with ICBMs, Babbage engines, stealth bombers and sorcerers.

*This is the world of Diana: Warrior Princess.*

Available in print from *Heliograph Inc.*, [www.heliograph.com](http://www.heliograph.com) and as a PDF from [e23.sjgames.com](http://e23.sjgames.com)

Also available in PDF ~ the first *Diana: Warrior Princess* supplement ~ *Elvis: The Legendary Tours*

## From the Creator of *Forgotten Futures* and *Diana: Warrior Princess*

Imagine a world of two dimensions and plane geometry, in which the very idea of height is considered insanity and the darkest heresy. Where the only thing that matters is the straightness of your sides and the regularity of your angles. Where the slightest deviation from the norm can lead to arrest, imprisonment, execution (and consumption by your peers) or a lingering death by starvation.

*Welcome to Flatland. Enjoy your stay...*



# THE ORIGINAL FLATLAND ROLE PLAYING GAME

BY MARCUS L ROWLAND  
ADDITIONAL MATERIAL BY T. CRAIG DRAKE & MATTHEW HARTLEY  
BASED ON AND INCLUDING  
FLATLAND BY EDWIN A. ABBOTT

***Action and adventure in a world where characters are supposed to be two-dimensional!***

Whether your adventures take you to the criminal classes of The State and an encounter with legendary gang leader "Scarside" Al Gebra, across the border to Polygonia and an attempt to rescue Mad King Euclid, or into the glamorous world of politics and diplomacy with the multi-faceted polygons of the aristocracy, there's something here for you. Best of all, by buying this game you're supporting charity:

*ALL OF THE AUTHOR'S INCOME FROM THIS GAME IS DONATED TO  
MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES (DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS)*

*THE ORIGINAL FLATLAND ROLE PLAYING GAME* expands material originally published as part of the *Forgotten Futures* CD-ROM, completely rewritten and updated. It includes the novel, complete rules for the setting, three adventures and four adventure outlines, a complete wargame by Matthew Hartley (*Tusk*, *Aeronef*, etc.), full-colour cut out character figures, extensive background material, and much more. The PDF contains everything you'll need to play, with the exception of six-sided dice and (optionally) playing cards and a chessboard for the wargame.

[www.forgottenfutures.com](http://www.forgottenfutures.com) ~ [www.forgottenfutures.co.uk](http://www.forgottenfutures.co.uk)

# FORGOTTEN FUTURES X

## THE TOOTH AND CLAW ROLE PLAYING GAME

BY MARCUS L. ROWLAND  
WITH ADDITIONAL MATERIAL BY  
JO WALTON  
& ART BY SUE MASON &  
MARCUS L. ROWLAND

A ROLEPLAYING SOURCEBOOK FOR  
JO WALTON'S WORLD FANTASY AWARD-WINNING NOVEL



The war between dragons and humans ended in surrender, stalemate, and eventual rebellion. Five thousand years later Tiamath, the dragon homeland, is a modern state adapting to the power of steam, rapid communications, and overpopulation. Will an ancient society based on privilege, power, and occasional cannibalism be able to cope with the upheavals that lie ahead? Can Church, State, and the Aristocracy respond to the challenge, or will the future see an end to everything that Draconic society holds dear? Suggested by the works of Anthony Trollope and other Victorian authors, *Tooth and Claw* won the 2004 World Fantasy Award, and describes an unforgettable fantasy setting which has been adapted for this authorised RPG. Contents include

- A comprehensive guide to Draconic biology, society, and religion.
- Details of Tiamath's neighbours, friends, and enemies.
- A complete rewrite of the *Forgotten Futures* rules for dragon characters.
- Two long adventures.
- Five adventure outlines.
- Cut-out dragons and Yarge (humans).
- Illustrations by Hugo Award-winning artist Sue Mason.

GAMES MATERIAL COPYRIGHT © MARCUS L. ROWLAND 2008

MATERIAL BY JO WALTON COPYRIGHT © JO WALTON 2003-2008

FOR ART SOURCES, COPYRIGHT INFORMATION AND TERMS OF USE SEE END NOTES

If you have any comments or suggestions about this game please send email to [forgottenfutures@ntlworld.com](mailto:forgottenfutures@ntlworld.com)