

GAME DESIGNER'S MANUAL  
VOLUME 4 OF THE IFGS HANDBOOK

Compiled and edited by

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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the world of IFGS game design! If you are interested in designing a game, be very sure you are ready to accept the many responsibilities and possible frustrations that come with the job. Applause and notoriety will be yours, but this may also be mixed with scrutiny of your work and some resultant criticism. You need to be able to work with people, organize a mountain of small details, assemble paperwork, meet deadlines, be a creative writer, and remain calm in the face of apparent disaster. Designing a game requires a significant amount of time and patience and is not for the weak of heart. Please note that the IFGS requires you to be at least 18 years of age to be a game designer, and it is strongly recommended that you serve as someone's game aide before you design on your own. If you have decided that game designing is something that you want to pursue, the IFGS welcomes your creative spirit!

Game designing consists of two main aspects: game design and game production. Game design involves the fun of writing a story line and creating magic items, and the more tedious aspects of filling out the required paperwork for the Sanctioning Committee. Production includes the assembling of props, costumes, transportation, obtaining NPCs, and seeing that the game runs smoothly on game day, plus much more.

This manual is intended to help you design and produce a game and make you aware of what is involved in the process. It contains ideas from individuals who have a variety of designing and playing experience and who are too numerous to acknowledge here. This volume was edited and compiled by Margo Toth; the initial compilation was done by Vicky Cade. The cover art was supplied by Dan Frazier, other art was supplied by Doug Shuler, Kevin Taylor, Scott Van Kirk, and Dave Walsh. Scott Van Kirk assisted in the technical production of this manual. Thanks also goes to our provisional chapters for their review comments.

Chapters in this book are divided into game design, and pre-game, game-day, and post-game production. For the designer new to games, Appendix 1 includes statistics on some of the more common NPC monsters and their abilities; Appendix 2 is a list of some of the more standard non magic and magic items and their suggested costs; Appendix 3 has advice from experienced game designers; and Appendix 4 is a chronology of past games in our various chapters and provisional chapters.

# CHAPTER 1: GAME DESIGN

## SECTION 1.1: BEFORE YOU DESIGN A GAME

The following sections should help you decide what kind of game you want to design. If you are new to designing, it is recommended that you start with a short, relatively simple game, and work up from there; you should also have an experienced person or two help you. It is highly recommended that you have access to some sort of word processor on a computer. You will make many revisions to your game, and the flexibility provided by a computer will save you a lot of time. The Sanctioning Committee also requires that you submit typed copy to them.

### A. Why design a game?

People design games for a lot of different reasons: notoriety, glory, to see a game written in their style of playing, because their friends ask them to, for the challenge of it, as a creative outlet, or because of altruistic reasons. Whatever your reasons are for designing a game, you should be honest with yourself and make sure those reasons will be fulfilled by the experience of designing. Many people who design games don't realize that once the design is completed the real work of production begins. Game design and production takes a great deal of time, work, and patience; it will take a lot out of you. Consider your motives well and consider whether you really have the experience for it. You should serve as another designer's aide before you strike out on your own.

### B. What is the purpose to your game?

The purpose of your game should be your first decision. What do you want to achieve in this game? Do you want a strong fighting game, a game of wits, a game with fancy props? Is your intent to run a game that makes lots of money, or just breaks even? Maybe you are interested in involving a lot of new people, or perhaps you want to challenge the more experienced players. Whatever the reasons, deciding the purpose of your game will help clarify and guide your story line.

### C. Who is the game for?

The next thing to decide is who you intend your game for: low, medium, or high level characters. The design for your game will be influenced by the number of players, their levels, and the magic items of the players. If you are designing a game for high-level characters with powerful magic items, you need to be aware of these items and the effect they may have on your game. Consider who your game is intended for, and also whether you want your game to be for a specific group of people - all characters from a certain land, clan, or class?

### D. What is the lore you want to use?

The lore for a game consists of the background information about the world in which the game is staged. This may include types of monsters, politics, history, and what is currently occurring in the land. Many game designers will pass out a few pages of lore to teams a month or so before a game so that the team can get familiar with the world to which they are going and perhaps get some clues about the game. This kind of information can really help a team in their role playing and stimulate their curiosity about the game. Other designers prefer the team to get all of their information in the game.

Currently, several worlds and associated lore currently exist for games written by designers in the Denver-Boulder Chapter, and the Dallas and Colorado Springs Provisional Chapters, and it is always an option to run a game with lore that already exists. If you use some preexisting lore, you can save yourself a lot of time as a designer and spend more time working on the story line of the game. It is always a good idea, however, to check with the designer who created the NPC character, world, or story line first so that you do not interfere with preexisting plans.

It is important to decide in the beginning of the design process where you want to stage your game (i.e. "fantasy" land). Some game designers work together and write games which all occur in one world - each of the designers will write games for various parts of the world, i.e. different continents. You are encouraged to write your game to occur in a world where a game has already been played. Many players enjoy the continuity of returning to a world that they have been to before and finding some consistency in the politics or the events. Having games recur in the same land allows players to meet the same NPC on several different occasions, and to be recognized by NPCs in the game. Players that succeed in a quest can come back to the land in another game and be recognized as heroes, and this provides greater enjoyment to NPCs and PCs alike. Games that occur in the same world with the same NPCs force the players to be responsible for their actions; for example, a player might be less likely to steal from a NPC that they might meet again.

There is another reason for limiting the number of worlds in which games are played - you can imagine the proliferation of lands if every designer creates their own world, lore, and featured monsters. To prevent a wild proliferation of worlds, try to utilize a world that has previously been worked with and that has an established background. Develop your own land within that framework and create your own lore and flavor. By linking your creation with someone else's you can create a consistent land which will lead to greater continuity, enjoyment, and understanding for PCs.

### E. What type of game do you want to run?

IFGS games can be of many different types and run anywhere from a few hours to one or two days or more. If you are a first-time designer it is strongly recommended that you only run a mini game lasting four or five hours. If you do decide to run a one-day game, you have the option of running the game on Saturday, and then running it again on Sunday for different teams. This also allows you to use some of the players you had on Saturday as NPCs on Sunday. As far as overnight games, the logistical problems involved are enormous, and are a challenge to even the most experienced of designers; don't attempt one of these until you have had a lot of design and production experience.

Games are classified according to their length, number of players, budget, and what rules they are using. You should consider the needs of your Chapter when you design a game. Major games involve a lot of new people and are one way to increase the number of members in a chapter; mini games only involve a small number of people and are unlikely to bring in many new people. Remember that bigger games are not necessarily better.

**MAJOR GAME** - games which have flyers or a draft; additionally may include games which involve multiple teams and/or are designed to run for more than six consecutive hours or to run overnight.

**MINI GAME** - games which are designed for 10 or fewer players, have game fees of \$20.00 or under (per IFGS member), use 20 or fewer NPCs (including GMs), have a budget of less than \$300, are designed to run in 6 hours or under, and are no more than 25 pages in length of submission for the listing of encounters, basic encounter descriptions, and magic items.

**INVITATIONAL GAME** - games which fall somewhere in between the guidelines for a major and mini game; can include games which have more than 10 PCs, the PC fees are more than \$20 per person, or run more than six hours, but do not have a draft or flyers. Previously called minor game.

**SPECIAL GAME** - includes those games which are not to be under the IFGS fantasy rules, i.e. Undercover games, science fiction games, and murder mysteries.

**TOURNAMENT GAME** - A type of minor game; these are usually very short, one-day games designed to run a lot of people through the game, and generally make a lot of money. Teams are usually small (4 to 5 people), and the levels, character, spell points, etc. of each player is defined before the game starts. Each team has the exact same make-up of characters. Players are given the information as to their PC role shortly before the game starts, and then they play through a set of encounters connected by a story line. Teams are then rated based on how long it took them to complete the course, and how successfully they did so.

**"BAR GAME"** - not officially a class of game, but generally includes non-sanctioned games which are designed and run for the purpose of role playing and distributing information to players; usually held indoors; usually on the scale of a mini game.



## F. What type of course do you want to run?

There are four types of courses to consider, and it is possible to run a mixture of each of these in a game.

**LINE COURSE** - in this type of course each team of PCs follows a fixed line of encounters, at approximately one hour intervals. Each team has the same encounters and the teams do not interact with each other. This is the easiest type of course to run, and it is recommended for first-time game designers. The major problem with this type of course is avoiding teams being at an encounter at the same time. You might be able to avoid overlapping of teams if you know ahead of time how fast the teams might move through the course; you could then start the slowest team last, or allow more time between each team. Encounters need to be put far enough apart so that the noise of a combat will not be heard by the following team.

**WORLD COURSE** - in this type of course all the teams of PCs have the freedom to go wherever they wish and do whatever they please. They may or may not encounter the other teams and it is usually first come, first served on information and magic items. This is the most difficult type of course to run, but can also be the most challenging for designer and players. It is difficult in these games for the designer to remain aware of where the PCs are, and there is no guarantee that the NPCs sitting up on the hill side for six hours will ever encounter any PCs. This type of course is recommended only for the most experienced of designers.

**PARALLEL COURSE** - this is a modified line course. Each team goes through slightly different encounters using the same NPCs. This type of course allows for personalization, but can also be logistically quite difficult. NPCs have to move around a lot, and planning the timing of the encounters that various NPCs are in can be a puzzle in itself

**TOWN ADVENTURE** - in this type of course a town is populated by a large number of NPCs. Players are free to go where they wish in the town and pursue whatever actions they desire. This is a modified form of a world course, but because the PCs are kept in a smaller area it is much easier to manage. While in town, PCs can buy magic, get information, complete business with other PCs or NPCs, or just spend some time getting into role. Town adventures fit well with the above three types of courses. You can easily have one team in town at a time, or have all the teams end up in town at the end of the day. Players generally enjoy town scenarios but get bored with them quickly unless there is a lot for them to do in town. Some GDs have designed "mini-quests" to occur outside of town, requiring 15 to 30 minutes or so. Players can then go on these quests if they don't have anything else they would like to do in town.

## G. How many teams do you want to play your game?

Many mini-games are designed for only one team of PCs, but you should note that mini-games do not bring in much income. Larger-scale games, for multiple teams, bring in more income and allow you to do more creative things in your game as far as props, food, etc. If you are running a game for multiple teams, do not try to run more than four teams through in a given day. This is a reasonable limit, with teams starting at 9:00 in the morning and being separated by an hour. That way the last team to start can finish the game before it gets dark.

## SECTION 1.2: WRITING A GAME

### A. Where to get ideas

Ideas for your game can come from movies, plays, conventions, television, dreams, discussions with friends, or pure creative inspiration. Sometimes an inspiration for a game can come from seeing a costume or prop that someone has, and you can build a game around that. New game ideas can evolve from other games which have been produced, and in some cases ideas for mini-games can evolve from things that happened to player(s) in another game. The Sanctioning Committee has on file copies of all games which have been run, and these are available for reading.

Appendix 1 can be used to help you with ideas for NPC monsters; it includes a description of the more common NPC monsters that have been used in the past along with their abilities. Players often enjoy the familiarity of meeting a "monster" that they have faced in a previous adventure, and using the knowledge concerning the creature that they gained in that experience. But feel free to create your own - that's what the creative aspect of designing is all about.

## B. When to start writing

Section 1.3F of this chapter describes the sanctioning process for a game and lists the amount of time the sanctioning committee requires to read and approve your game. However, what you need to turn into them is FINAL copy, so you should start writing your game AT LEAST 6 MONTHS ahead of this deadline for a major game. Writing and revising your game will take much more time than you think it will. Be aware-that in the larger chapters a significant number of games are submitted for the summer season, and the earlier you turn your game in the more priority you will be given for the run date of your choice. You will also as a matter of consequence get more help from the sanctioning committee.

## C. Story line

In writing your game, the first thing you need to prepare is a story line. The story line should consist of written text describing how you envision a team of adventurers going through your game. This is most easily done by writing the general background for the game, or lore, and then making a list of encounter descriptions which indicate what specifically happens to the characters in the game. Encounters can vary widely, and involve players meeting NPCs or monsters, getting information from NPCs, being involved in combats, evading traps, solving puzzles, and handling environmental hazards such as swamps, deserts, and cold. A good, consistent plot line is the most critical part of designing a game. Discuss your ideas with other people, and try to be as objective as you can about your game. Although there will be more discussion later concerning the sanctioning process, it is highly recommended that you turn your story line and brief descriptions of encounters into the Sanctioning Committee at this very early stage; this will likely speed up the whole sanctioning process for your game and help to avoid lengthy rewrite.

The story line should contain a strong theme, information and clues, choices and alternatives for players, and a final resolution providing the players with a chance to win or lose. The plot should provide various motivations and opportunities that will appeal to many different characters. Don't forget to acknowledge a player's behavior with either a reward or some form punishment. Players like a variety of encounters, good challenges, humor, good costuming, role playing opportunities, fighting, puzzles, romance, riches, and magic. Make allowances for the different classes and levels of characters and try to provide opportunities for each class to make their own contribution, i.e. thieves picking a lock, druids talking to animals, or rangers tracking footprints. Also realize that there are other rewards to be considered for players besides money and magic items; sometimes becoming a hero/heroine, saving the land, having a curse removed, or receiving friendship of someone important can be enough.

Players can get a lot more out of a game in the IFGS than one can get out of a movie or play, because the actors and actresses are in the flesh. Players can get real "adrenaline rushes" during a combat, or receive a kiss from a real maiden in distress. If your experience

is mostly with fantasy role-playing board games, you should realize that you are more limited as a game designer in IFGS games in some other ways. Because of real-life logistics (it's tough for a player to actually fly, climb a vertical wall, or actually become invisible), players cannot do as much as they can in a board game.

#### *CHAPTER 1: GAME DESIGN Game Designers Manual*

Many ideas that work in board games don't work well in the IFGS because you, as the Game Designer, aren't playing every NPC. NPCs also can't travel as rapidly as teams because they have to carry props and set up their encounters, and they need to encounter more than one team. Consider also that the IFGS is concerned with another concept that is not present in board games: safety. A game designer has to be sure that the locations they choose to stage encounters in their games are safe for real human beings, not something a fantasy character in a board game even begins to think about.

### D. Encounters

Once you have the story line written and the bugs worked out, you need to write a list of encounters for the game. This is the material that you will turn into the sanctioning committee. **THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR YOUR GAME.** Types of encounters include the following: fighting, informational, and miscellaneous. The encounter descriptions should include the statistics of all the NPCs involved in EACH encounter, including:

- levels
- armor, and if it is retrievable/useable by PCs
- life points (include points to death, unconsciousness and limb points)
- amount of damage the character does in combat
- spell points
- alignments
- if the NPCs have treasure on them, how much, what it is, and who has it
- spells in effect, if any
- what magic they may have on them
- any special weaknesses the characters may have
- if they are using all of their available abilities
- possible outcomes of the encounter
- length of encounter
- time to next encounter
- any props needed

Note that the category "if they are using all their abilities" reflects the fact that as a game designer you have a lot of leeway in how you define your NPCs. A 4th level cleric doesn't have to have all their spell points, or might not like to use spells and prefers fighting. A 7th level fighter could be defined as doing only 2 points of damage because they like to play with their prey. How you decide to define your NPCs needs to be stated clearly, and you have a lot of room for variation.



In addition to the description of the NPCs, you also need *to* write a brief description of what is supposed to occur in each encounter, as well as possible actions of the PCs (and reactions by the NPCs). It is helpful to estimate how long the encounter will last and the amount of travel time until the next encounter. Most of the time, these encounter descriptions are all that NPCs have to go on when they are in the game, so it is important to include all pertinent information in these descriptions. Examples of a few encounter descriptions are presented below.

### **Sample Encounter #1: Bandit encounter**

In this encounter the players will meet five bandits who try to prevent the players from passing along the road. The bandits will demand 500 gp from each of the players in order to allow them to pass safely. If the players do not pay, the bandits will attack and fight to the death. If the players pay, the bandits will let them pass safely, and will then attack them from behind. The bandits will not allow the players to try to slip into the woods around them, they will attack. The bandits are motivated solely by greed, and are an indication of how chaotic and ill-controlled things have become in this part of the land. If the bandits are captured they will not cooperate with the PCs and will try to escape at first opportunity.

NPCs:

- Three 4th level fighters (22 to unconsciousness, 26 to death, 4 limb points) each wearing leather armor (not useable by PCs); fighters have available for use all of their natural abilities; fighters with short swords will swing for 4 points plus 1 point blade sharp = 5 points of damage; any fighters with long swords will swing for 6 points of damage
- Two 3rd level clerics (14 to unconsciousness, 18 to death, 3 limb points); each wearing leather armor, not useable by PCs; one cleric has PHYSICAL PROTECT ION in effect (and is carrying a red flag); this cleric prefers spell casting to fighting; the other cleric prefers to fight; both clerics have 6 spell points remaining; clerics will have either a short sword or short staff; damage per hit will be 3 points
- alignments: neutral
- gold: the 2 clerics each have 50 gp on them
- magic: one of the clerics has a scroll for 6 points of healing (magic items described at end of game)
- length of encounter: 20 minutes
- time to next encounter: 10 minutes (walking)
- props: red flag, 8p, scroll

## **Sample Encounter #2: Zombie encounter**

In this encounter the players will run into four zombies who are near a small graveyard adjacent to the road. Zombies will have on tattered clothing and will be wearing white and gray face paint. Pieces of cardboard will be set up to resemble tombstones. When the players get within 20 ft of the zombies, the zombies will turn to fight the players. Zombies move at half speed and will walk with a shambling motion. The players can fight and destroy the zombies, they can turn the zombies, or they can simply run past the encounter.

NPCs:

- four 4th level zombies (hit points as per 4th level cleric - 4 points per limb, 20 pts to unconsciousness and 22 points to death). Each zombie swings a short sword for two points of damage; the first weapon hit of each zombie will release a toxin poison that turns the recipient into a Zombie in 2 minutes. The NPC should call out "poison." This can be avoided if the recipient has a NEUTRALIZE POISON or FREEZE POISON cast upon them, or if the PC receives 6 points of healing within 2 minutes of the weapon's hit. If a zombie is turned by a cleric of 4th or higher level, they will remain turned for 1 minute. Zombies are not affected by LI spells; note they take 2 points of damage from holy water. Once "killed" a zombie will not reanimate.
- alignments: evil
- gold: none
- magic: none
- length of encounter: 5 minutes
- time to next encounter: 15 minutes
- props: makeup, use cardboard for tombstones

### **Sample Encounter #3: Farmer along the road**

In this encounter the players will meet a farmer along the roadside, talking to some dried up weeds. The farmer is poor, destitute, and hungry. He will tell the players how the land has been infertile for the last two years, ever since the death of the king, and how it is his opinion that the king's death (or rumored assassination) put a curse on the land. His simple skills (druidic in nature) haven't had any effect upon the growing of his crops. He will ramble a lot, and ask the players for food and drink. If the players give him food and drink he will offer to heal any injured people. The farmer doesn't know much else about the events in the land, but will ramble on how hard his luck has been for as long as the players will listen. If the players haven't stopped him after 15 minutes he will wander away.

NPC:

- one 3rd level druid named Thomas (14 points to unconsciousness, 18 to death, 3 points in each limb); 16 spell points
- alignment: good
- gold: none
- magic: none
- length of encounter: 15 minutes
- time to next encounter: 10 minutes
- Props: none

## **E. Designing magic items**

Magic items and gold are the most common forms of treasure or reward in a game. You should give a lot of thought to each magic item that you design; standard +1 rings and swords are okay as treasure, but as a rule players appreciate items that are a little more creative. The effort necessary to obtain a magic item should be commensurate with the power of the magic item - the axiom "no risk, no gain" applies here. For example, if a team kills four low-level bandits, a powerful magic item is not a just reward. If a player genuinely risks his life in an encounter or sacrifices something important (like a level, an ability, or they give up all their magic), then the reward should be commensurate. In general, powerful magic items, or artifacts, are RARELY given out. Appendix 2 lists some of the more common magic items and their monetary equivalents.

The distribution of magic items should be somewhat restricted in games. The reason that they are generally restricted is that once they proliferate, they will lose their value. If *two* team members get a +1 ring of protection in each game, after four or five games everyone has a +1 ring of protection, and they are no longer a unique item. You would also have to start making your NPCs tougher so that they could effect the players and this would be a disadvantage for new players. This quickly gets into a very dangerous loop of increases. It is advantageous to design magic items that have a limited number of uses; this way players can continue getting new items with new abilities, and you don't have to concern yourself with the proliferation of powerful items.



Scrolls are good magic items to give out in a game because they are one-time use items. PCs appreciate them because *it* allows them to do things that they normally don't have access to; for example, a thief could cast a FIREBALL or a 6th level magic user could cast an 8th level spell. Note that players can use scrolls of their own level +2. Clerics also appreciate getting spell books with glyphs in them; this is one of the few ways that are available to distribute glyphs in games.

Consider that whatever magic items you have available in a game will be used by the players in all the following games in which they play. Ask yourself if you would want to deal with the items the players have as a game designer in future games.

Along with your description of the encounters in your game, you should also prepare a list of all magic items that are available in the game and a DETAILED list of the properties of each item. This is the list that the GMs will use in the game to tell players the properties of items when they do SAVVY's, so it is important to make it complete. It is helpful to put the SAVVYs on 3 x 5 cards for each GM before the game. A matching card with the name of the item can then be made for the player (i.e. long sword with orange stripe). The player can then turn the card into the bank with their treasure, making it easier to verify who ended up with what item. This is extremely useful when the item can't leave the encounter site because it is needed as a prop for other teams. Below are some examples, both good and bad, of magic item descriptions.

## EXAMPLES OF GOOD DESCRIPTIONS

### **Magic item #1: ring**

- +1 ring of protection; user subtracts one point of damage done to the wearer
- Only works for damage taken from undead creatures

### **Magic item #2: ring**

- ring of PHASE OUT
- Allows user to PHASE OUT twice per game day without spell point cost; all restrictions of the spell PHASE OUT apply
- only useable by a spell caster: druid, cleric, or magic user

**Magic item #3: short sword**

- three times per game day the sword will add +3 magic damage for the duration of one combat; damage is considered to be magical fire damage
- +3 is invoked by user yelling out "flame on"
- User of sword will be unable to fight for 30 minutes after the combat is ended; they will run away in fear from any other combats in this time period

**EXAMPLES OF BAD DESCRIPTIONS**

**Magic item #4: potion**

- Potion of healing
- Problem: how much healing?

**Magic item #5: wand**

- Wand of fireballs
- 5 charges left
- Problems: how much damage does each fireball do? Does it take standard casting times, or is it instantaneous? Is it rechargeable, and if so, how?

**Magic item #6: ring**

- ring of fire protection
- useable once per game day
- Problems: how much damage does the ring absorb? What is the duration of the protection? How do you enact the power? Suggest defining as per the spell REDWOOD.

**F. Gold as treasure**

Besides magic items, gold is the most common form of reward in a game. The means for the players to obtain gold is as variable as each game: in locked chests or boxes, on bodies of the "bad" guys, or given out as reward for successfully completing a quest. When you determine where gold will be present in your game, realize that all of the gold will not usually be found by the players -few teams are that thorough. Generally, a reasonable estimate to use for an average risk game would be a potential of about 700- 1000 gold pieces per day per team member. This amount will obviously vary based on the degree of risk involved in the game and the length of the game. The Sanctioning Committee attempts to have some degree of consistency of reward for risk between games so that everyone is treated fairly. This also helps stabilize the cost of magic items purchased in game time. If you have questions about how much gold is appropriate they will be happy to advise you.

## G. Rewards other than gold and magic

Consider other things besides gold and magic to reward players with. Although magic items and gold are greatly appreciated by players, it's fun for a player to receive something different from time to time; this will also challenge your creative skills as a designer. The following are some of the other types of rewards to consider.

Information can be a very worthwhile reward. For example, assume that a band of mercenaries has been relentlessly pursuing the players, and assume the players have done a good deed for someone in power. That person might reward the team by telling them who sent the mercenaries after them and what the greatest weakness of their enemy might be. Another grateful NPC could tell players secret knowledge about a location of treasure, or how to defeat the monster guarding the bridge. You may have to set some of these situations up in a game, but the information will be considered far more valuable than gold. Reading the character histories of the players can also give you a hint as to what type of information a player might appreciate, and this works especially well in mini games.

Other rewards to consider are fame and notoriety; let the praises be sung at a banquet for the players in game time, honoring the heroes/heroines who saved the land. Players could be rewarded with titles such as duke or duchess, or even be offered the hand of the king's daughter or son as a reward. Be creative with your rewards and the players will thank you for it.

## H. Ideas that have worked

Certain types of encounters have been used repeatedly in games because they meet so many needs of a game. They all have a set purpose, and can be presented with different variations. If you are new to designing, the list below might stimulate your imagination; if you are an old hand, you might see if there are any on this list that you haven't used, or if there is a new way to apply some of them.

**TELL US WHAT TO DO** - This encounter is very simple, and is usually one of the first encounters in the game. An NPC of some type (royalty, high level mage or cleric, etc.) meets with the team and requests a service or quest of them. The encounter provides direction and purpose to the team, and lets them know exactly what they are doing in the game anyway.

**BANDITS** - This encounter also usually occurs early in the game, and is a large-scale attack by low or medium level bad guys of various races and/or classes. The purpose of this encounter is the fun of a good combat. It warms the team up, gives them an opportunity to learn how to work together, and gives the spell casters a chance to practice their incantations.

CHOICE - In this type of encounter, the team is forced to make some kind of choice, i.e. who should we believe/who is the bad guy? The game designer always thinks the players have enough information to make this decision, and the players think they never have enough. However, when the players choose correctly, they are rewarded with a feeling of satisfaction and success.

**UNDEAD** - In this type of encounter, the team is attacked by some kind of undead creatures, again, and again, and again. This type of encounter provides for a lot of fighting, lets the clerics use their turn undead ability, and is a good encounter *to* involve novice NPCs.

**OBSTACLE COURSE** - This involves a variety of different courses, set up to test varying physical skills of the players. This is a great encounter because it usually only involves a few NPCs and once it is set up requires no real maintenance. The encounter can be designed for the whole team or for a few of the more dexterous people on the team (i.e. thieves). It really gives the players an opportunity to shine. Some of the types of obstacle courses in the past have included the following: a course of climbing ropes tightly strung between trees (a ropes course), a "swamp" with bricks or logs to jump across, and narrow boards representing bridges that have to be walked across.

**PEASANT IN THE ROAD** - This encounter is usually an informational and role-playing encounter. Players meet a person along the road who may or may not be friendly; the sole purpose of the NPC is to give certain information out to the players. The information doesn't have to be free - i.e. the NPC may ask for gold or food (real food) for the information, or may challenge one of the players to a fight. The encounter allows players to rest, regroup, and think about what has been happening so far in the game.

**YOU HAVE TO GET PAST ME** - This encounter is set up so the team has to get past a powerful monster such as a troll or dragon, by simply using their wits, **WITHOUT** combat. This usually involves puzzles, playing games with the monsters (chess, riddles, etc.), or using some part of the lore that the players know.

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**PRETTY/HANDSOME BUT EVIL** - In this encounter, the NPC is very attractive and inviting. The players are usually wary and know they will regret it if they succumb to her/him. Traitorous NPCs have been used so much in this type of role, however, that it has undermined their playability.

**NPC PICKUP** - The team acquires an NPC to tag along with them. This can be to the teams benefit or detriment. NPC pickups provide the Game Designer a way to disseminate more information to a team, provide help to a team in terms of healing or fighting, or to guide the team along the course.

**THE PUZZLE** - This type of encounter can be used on small or large scale - it can be a puzzle on a locked box, or it could be the lock on the tomb that a team needs to enter. It is the favorite of some PCs and the bane of others. **THE GD SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR THE TEAM TO BLOW THE ENCOUNTER.** What will happen if the encounter depends on the players solving the puzzle, and they can't solve it? For this reason puzzles should not generally be used in critical encounters, or there should be another way within the game for the players to complete the encounter successfully. For example, assume a game designer has a puzzle as the locking mechanism for entrance to a tomb. It would be best to work the encounter so that if the team successfully solved the puzzle, they could enter the tomb without cost; if they couldn't solve the puzzle then a **REVERSE LOCK** or **DISPEL MAGIC** spell could then be used to open the door. This way the team can still participate in the encounter even if they can't solve the puzzle, but it will cost them spell points to do it.

**PERSONALIZATION** - This is a type of encounter which is personalized to a particular person or character class. Personalization for individuals is usually only possible in mini games, but personalization for a character class is easily done in larger games. This would simply be any encounter which allows a particular character class to use their specific skills. This would involve a druid befriending plants or animals, a thief using their lock picking or hearing abilities, a ranger following a trail in the woods, a cleric meeting an avatar of their god, a monk using their leap ability to cross a chasm, etc. Players really enjoy this sort of personalization; it makes them feel unique.

**GODS** - This encounter happens when a team has to deal with some tremendously powerful being. This kind of encounter can be frustrating to the team because they feel powerless. It often doesn't make much sense to the players either, why would gods waste their time on 4th or 5th level characters? Use it sparingly.

**THE CHALLENGE** - In this type of encounter an NPC challenges the best fighter/riddle solver/caster on the team to a solo, one-on-one challenge. This type of encounter is appreciated because it lets someone be the hero/heroine. If you use it, however, be sure the rest of the team has something to do so that they don't get bored or feel left out.

**THE CREATURE** - This encounter is similar to the "You have to get past me", but involves a powerful creature with some kind of weakness. Usually the creature has something the players want and can be reasoned with or fought with, and can only be defeated if the players discover it's particular weakness or flaw. Some examples of these types of creatures in the past are the following: creatures that take double damage from fire, electricity, cold-based spells, stone creatures that can be destroyed by a **ROCK TO MUD** spell and slow-moving creatures that can be outrun.

**GRAND MELEE** - This encounter has been a finish to some larger games and puts all the teams together for a final battle. This is a difficult encounter to choreograph, and requires a LOT of NPCs so that there is a challenge to the players. When it works the players really enjoy it, but the success rate on these types of encounters has been fairly low.

**THANK YOU AND REWARD** - This is where the team receives thanks and rewards for completing their quest(s). The team may also find out the whys and wherefores of what occurred.

## **I. Pitfalls to avoid**

Below are listed pitfalls in game scenarios that you should try to avoid. These are compiled from several years of IFGS gaming experience and this list is meant to be a guide to help you in designing.

**WEAK STORY LINE** - The biggest mistake a game designer can make is not giving the central theme to their story enough substance. Frequently a designer will have the basic idea for a story, design two or three encounters dealing with that story, and then will start adding random filler encounters. These filler encounters don't add anything to the player's goals, but fill up time and perhaps give the players a good fight. Many GDs will defend their random encounters on the basis of the fact that, were the players really walking through a countryside, they would indeed have random encounters with things that had nothing whatever to do with the quest. There is nothing wrong with a good rousing fight or an interesting monster, but the problem lies with time. In the space of one day, you must take the characters, introduce them into your world, make them believe in it, give them a problem and a reason to solve it, point them in the right direction for solving it, and then let them solve it and conclude the game. This is a lot to accomplish in eight or so encounters. If they have to spend a lot of time figuring out what the problem is, then eight or so encounters isn't enough. This problem is not so serious in a 2-day game or campaign-style games, but it still exists. There are several things you can do to help without resorting to scrapping all random encounters.





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If you need to have a fighting encounter, have the bandits be working for the major bad guy, or let the bandits have some important information that will help the players. If you really have a neat monster in mind, make *it* the bad guys pet or the guardian of something the players need to finish their quest; build a lot of lore around the creature in the game. In many cases, the difference between a random encounter and a meaningful event that is significant to the game lies only in the lore the players are given before or during the game. Make the players feel a continuity of the land and its history. Take all the random encounters out of your game and look at the story. If the story will stand on its own, then the chances are that it will be a good, enjoyable game for the players. If it won't, then chances are, no matter how many random encounters you add, it still won't be a good game. It helps to look at the main theme of your game as a thread running from start to finish. Encounters which add to the theme thicken the thread and make it stronger. Random encounters tend to be loose ends sticking out, breaking the flow. If you can weave the loose ends back into the story, the thread you started out with will end up as a good strong rope that will hold the players well.

**FREEDOM OF CHOICE** - What may often be seen as the proper and the only choice by a game designer may only be one of many choices considered by the players. Expect players to do the unexpected, and give them the option in your game to make decisions.

**FORCES** - The game designer should avoid "forces" above all, i.e. forcing PCs into particular actions. Players want to feel like they always have a choice in their actions. God encounters can fall into this category and so are encounters that read "the team must" or "the players have to."

**MESSING WITH THE PLAYER'S MINDS** - This is where the game designer purposely tries to keep the players in a game confused or lost as to what is happening. This is often done with the purpose of astounding the players at the end of the game, making them say "Of course! I should have known!" or "Why didn't I think of that?" More frequently, the players will come out scratching their heads saying "Why do I play these stupid games?" The problem stems from a basic and very understandable misconception on the part of many game designers. When we read a story, the author almost invariably dumps a problem on the head of a main character and it is not at all unusual for the character to have no idea what is going on. Of course, we as the readers, are more often than not privy to information that the character doesn't have, and it is very entertaining *to* watch the character battle his way through the problem to the conclusion that we saw coming all along. It is this entertainment that tends to be remembered and not the fact that the protagonist didn't enjoy himself at all. In the IFGS, the players are the protagonists, not the readers. While in the heat of creative passion designing a game, the designer must remember this. If the players receive conflicting information designed to confuse them, they will oblige the game designer and be confused; they won't be happy or feel challenged - just confused. Of course it should not be thought that this applies to puzzles or all situations that require decision making. If the team is informed enough to realize that there is a problem or puzzle to be solved and they are given enough information to solve it, then it becomes a challenge and not confusion. Just about everybody enjoys a good, solvable challenge. If you want a good way to tell if a challenge works, find a friend and put him or her in the situation you want to put the players in - without telling them why you like it so much. If that person likes it you are probably safe. If they are confused, you can bet the players will be more so.

**NOT ENOUGH LORE** - This relates to the problem discussed above. Many GDs spend days or weeks on their game developing the background and lore to a beautiful richness and consistency. Then they base their game on that lore, and run the game without letting the players in on it. This is consistent with the reader viewpoint discussed above because many times the characters of a story have no way of knowing what has gone before. In the IFGS, there are no readers except the Sanctioning Committee and select friends, and they aren't the one for whom the game is written. If you want the people who play in your story to enjoy it to the fullest possible extent, give them the whole story. They will appreciate it.

**MOTIVATIONS** - Players will get bored if you continually use the same motivations, particularly those of greed and fear. Consider also romance, honor, humor, jealousy, hatred, loyalty, values, and alignments. The players character histories can be entertaining reading and also provide a multitude of motivations to use on a player(s). Players may get bored always adventuring for "treasure."

**LEVELS OF NPCS** - Making the NPCs too high a level for the players can result in general frustration for all players involved, and can result in player death. Teams get tired of getting beaten all the time.

**PLAYER DEATHS** - In general, player characters can accept their character's death if it is from a reasonable cause, but not from some banal or controversial reason. Death from heroism is accepted, but players shouldn't die from eating the gum drop or from simply standing in the wrong place. Encounters or situations that have the player die as a result from a single mistake are a bad idea.

**INFORMATION** - If a team has inadequate information to make a critical decision in the game, they will be extremely frustrated and justifiably angry. As a game designer you know the whole story inside out, and may feel that you are giving the team enough clues to figure things out, but are in reality telling them much too little. Try letting someone read your game who isn't playing in it, and make sure they can guess what they're supposed to do. Listen to your GMs and NPCs; if they question whether the players have enough information then it's likely they players will be lost. Also consider that even the most well-trained NPCs can mess up their roles and forget to give out an important clue; you may have to contrive a way to put the information into the game so that the team can have all the clues they need.

**CROCKS** - Putting a crock, or penalty, upon a player character can result in humiliation, anger, and resentment. There can be a fine line between offering a player a fine chance at role-playing, and humiliating them in front of their team. If you decide that you must have some sort of crock in your game (such as having a player have to sing, hop like a rabbit, etc.) it is best to make it very short term effect, or to be sure the team has a way to negate the crock.

**DELAYS** - Delays for players include having to wait for a late game to start, having to wait for an encounter to be set up, or having to wait for the previous team to finish the next encounter and move on. Players, justifiably so, generally get quite irritated if they have to wait in a game; it also makes it really hard for a team to stay "in character" if they have to wait a half-hour listening the team before them in a massive melee. If you plan well, there shouldn't be any of these kinds of delays.

**SINGLE PERSON ENCOUNTERS** - These types of encounters involve only one person on the team, and generally result in the rest of the team being bored and feeling left out ("why didn't I get to go?") If you really want to do something like this in your game, be sure you have something else planned for the rest of the team (a good time for a bandit attack).

**HIGH COST PROPS OR CONSTRUCTIONS** - With only rare exceptions, these are not worth the time or money involved. Consider that each team may only spend 15 minutes to an hour at the construction/prop that you worked on for months (although most of these are reusable). Props or constructions do NOT make a game terrific; players would rather see your energy go into good design and smooth logistics.

**TOO MUCH TIME/DISTANCE BETWEEN ENCOUNTERS** - Players will easily become bored if there is too much time between encounters, and it is harder for them to stay in role when they are spending 45 minutes walking along the road. Thirty minutes should be considered a maximum time to use between encounters, but obviously this depends upon the physical setup of the game course. If you need the players to physically cover a significant distance, make sure there are informational or role-playing encounters along the way to keep their interest.

## **J. A note about the fantasy rules**

You should try to keep the actions of your NPCs within the framework of the fantasy rules -there are few things more frustrating to a player than to see an NPC do something that they can't, or will never be able to do. However, the rules were designed with logistics and playability in mind, and what is not reasonable for PCs might be reasonable for an NPC to do. In some of these unusual cases, you may need a NPC to do something not currently in the fantasy rules, and you can write it into the game. If there isn't another way to accomplish your goal within the framework of the rules, and it is essential to the game and makes sense, the Sanctioning Committee will probably approve it.



**GLYPHS** - The Rules Committee has on file a list of descriptions for glyphs ranging from 4th to 10th level (these are in addition to those published in the rules book). If you want to use glyphs in your game, contact the Rules Committee and they will give you a copy of this list. You can create your own glyphs but they will have to be approved by the Rules Committee before you can use them. Note that there are some fairly tight strictures concerning glyphs and their effects, and it is much less work for you to use glyphs which have already been approved; however, if you feel creative, the Rules Committee welcomes your input. PC clerics are provided with good role-playing opportunities when they encounter glyphs in a game which they may know.

**RESURRECTIONS** - Resurrections are viewed to be a rare and costly thing, earned only by taking a high degree of risk or by paying a very high cost. If you are going to have these available in a game, be sure that the risk or payment by the players is commensurate with the reward of resurrection.

## SECTION 13: GAME LOGISTICS

### A. Finding land

Finding a place to run your game can be one of the most crucial elements of the game, and in many cases choosing the land site actually comes BEFORE the game design. Several different factors should be considered in choosing a locale. Obviously, you want to find some land that is relatively cheap to rent, or else the fees for the players will be exorbitant. You will want land that is relatively accessible by vehicle for transporting props and NPCs/PCs to the necessary locale. In the case of a medical emergency, you will also need good road access to evacuate any injured people. If you are in a part of the country with well-defined seasons, you will want an area that is not inaccessible due to snow-cover; this can include some of the higher elevations well into July and possibly as early as September. Consider also what a heavy afternoon rainstorm might do to dirt roads or encounter sites.

Places to consider for land rental include private ranches and farms, public parks, public forest land, schools, and camps or retreats. These will have a varying cost and each has its own merit.

Some public and private landowners will not allow people to use their land unless they have liability insurance, which the IFGS does not carry. **BE SURE TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE WITH THE LANDOWNER.** It is also best not to sign any contracts for use of the land until you know for sure that you will be running your game and the treasurer has approved the funds. Be sure to consider what will happen if the game is canceled because of bad weather or some other reason. Will you get your money back? Also be sure to set up rain dates for your game in case the weather cancels your game on the primary date.

Once you have found a site for your game, be sure to make good maps so that players, NPCs, GMs, photographers, and everyone else can easily find the location. Make sure the maps are easy to follow; you don't want people wandering around trying to find the site. It's helpful to make brightly colored or easily readable signs and post these at major turns on the road the day of the game.

## **B. Deciding on encounter sites**

Once you have decided on the land you want to use, you can start the process of deciding where to place your encounters. Foremost to consider is that encounters involving combat need to be SAFE, that is, relatively free of boulders, deadfall, cactus, steep slopes, etc. These sites are not easy to find in any terrain, so when located they are usually reserved for fighting encounters. You may have to rearrange the order of some of the encounters in your game in order to accommodate the placing of the combat scenes.

Other encounters in your game may also require specific sites. For example, a druid encounter might run better in some woods, a troll encounter would do well with a large rock, and a town site needs a lot of room to set up large tents. Encounters that require a lot of props will also need to be staged relatively close to areas with road access; it is extremely inefficient to have your game aides/NPCs carting props a mile to an encounter site. Also remember that for one-day and longer games you should have several five gallon jugs of water out on the course for PCs. Because they are very heavy, you will want to make sure you have some road access to transport them to encounter sites.

If you have major constructions in your game you need to be sure of road access. Also consider that putting up constructions can take significant amounts of time. If your buildings are used in the middle part of your game instead of at the first encounter, you buy yourself an additional few hours before they have to be finished. Consider, however, that the buildings will also have to be taken down, and the earlier they occur in the game, the earlier you can start to take them down - this might be the difference between making the after-game party, or still being on game site at 10:00 at night.

Also consider how much time you have planned between encounters, and how long it will actually take a team to physically cover the distance. If encounter 2 is at the bottom of a hill and encounter 3 is at the top of a long hill, consider realistically how long it will take players to cover that distance, especially under possibly rigorous weather conditions. Maybe you will have to add an encounter half way up the hill to keep the game flowing and players rested. It is best in this kind of situation to use an encounter that does not involve any NPCs, and oftentimes the GM can play out the encounter (one of the trees or animals decides to talk to the druid). Keep flexible.

Many landowners may have areas that they don't want you to use, i.e. horse trails, main traffic areas, or parking lots, and you will have to design your encounters around these. RESPECT the landowner's wishes above all; you may want to use their land again.

Deciding where to place your encounters can be a complex process, but is aided greatly by your familiarity with the land. Walk the land a few times before you decide where to place encounters, and become very familiar with what the land has to offer. You can also see how having the land chosen first can influence how you plan the sequence of encounters in your game.

Once you have decided where the encounters will be, mark them on a topographic or hand-drawn map of the area, by their numbers. This map will be used by the Sanctioning Committee and virtually everyone involved in the game so make sure it is legible and useful. It may be the only piece of material the NPCs or GMs have, so be sure it can be used to precisely locate encounter sites. Otherwise, you may have game personnel wandering the course for hours.

### C. Overnight games

As mentioned previously, overnight games can be a logistical nightmare, and it is not recommended you undertake one of these until you have some other designing experience. The first thing that you have to consider is where the players will camp; they will need relatively flat, protected ground without a lot of cactus, deadfall, etc. Their camp site will DEFINITELY need be near to road transportation, because all of the players gear will need to be transported to that particular site. Also consider that you will have to find sites for all of the teams, and if you want to keep the teams split (an advisable idea so that they don't give away to each other what they have found out about the game), then you will have to find four or five camp sites that are relatively far apart.

Depending on how your course is set up, it is possible for players to set up their tents and get their camp in order before the game starts. This is highly advisable. If this is not logistically feasible, realize that you will have to transport all their gear, keep each team's gear separated from the other teams, and then be sure that the gear is covered against rain. Then you should also be sure that the players get into their camp BEFORE it is dark, so that they can set up their camp. Most of this can be avoided if you let the players set up their camp first, and they will be a bit happier knowing that their tents are waiting for them.

Simultaneous with the problem of camp sites for the players, you also have the problem of where the NPCs, Game Aides, and other game personnel (including yourself) will camp. Their camp site should be near to where they are parking their vehicles so that they will have access to costume changes, food, etc. If you don't want to be too concerned with transporting NPCs to night encounters, you may want to have the NPC camp relatively near to the players camps. Noise travels far in the outdoors, so if you pursue this option, be sure the NPCs are far enough away so that they won't be heard by players. ~

Night encounters can add flavor and spice to a game and provide an opportunity to use a variety of special effects. Note that safety is paramount in these encounters because of the reduced visibility, and sites for combat situations must be chosen extremely

carefully. Informational encounters can be done quite well at night by having the NPCs actually come into the players camps. However, fighting encounters should not be held in the players camp sites because of tent stakes, tent lines, stoves, and the abundance of PC gear which is usually lying around. If you want to have a fighting encounter near the PCs camp, draw the PCs out into a clearing.

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In overnight games, at least eight hours of **DOWN TIME** is required for players to eat dinner, sleep, and compose themselves. This means that most night encounters should end by midnight. It depends on the nature of your game, but most GDs do not allow players to mingle between teams except during down time. Be sure to allow players enough time in the morning for breakfast and to pack up their camp, because they probably won't have time to do so at the end of the day. And again, if you transported their gear to their camp site, then you will need to transport it back down again that day.

### D. Feeding NPCs/PCs

Some generous game designers will choose to prepare a meal for their NPCs and (or) PCs *to be served in or out of game time*; obviously, this usually only occurs in overnight games. This is a really nice gesture, but again it takes a great deal of logistical planning. The GD needs to allot money for the food in their game budget and then have the personnel to buy the food, cook the food, serve the food, and clean up the mess from eating the food. The whole process is facilitated if the major cook has experience cooking for large groups. It is easier to provide the players a snack in game time by having fruit and (or) drink at an encounter and this gesture is usually well appreciated by the players. However, it is one more thing for the GD to be concerned with, so unless you feel that you have everything else under control, you probably shouldn't consider it.

### E. Support personnel

Your support personnel can make the experience of game designing a great deal easier; no one single person can do all that is required of a GD. Successful designers surround themselves with capable people, and also try to train new people in the process. You should therefore choose these people with care. Look beyond your immediate circle of friends and make sure that the important positions are filled with people who have some experience. It is very important to delegate most of your responsibilities to trusted people.

**WATCHDOG** - this position is required by the Sanctioning Committee. This person serves as a liaison between you and the SC; for major games the WD must be a member of the SC. The watchdog helps you and the SC work together, advises you on almost all aspects of the game, and makes sure everything goes as planned. They are also responsible for turning in a written report on how the game went after the game is over, so they need to be someone who is not adverse to this sort of paperwork. This is a **VERY** important person, probably one of your most important support people. **CHOOSE THEM CAREFULLY**, and if possible, make sure they have more experience than you do. Please note that the WD must be at least 18 years old.

**GAME AIDES** - these are the people who you spend hours talking to and kicking ideas around with, and they are invaluable when it comes to producing the game. Some of them may be helpful with



logistics and others may be helpful with the creative aspect of the game; they also make really good GMs because they know the game really well. Pick people you like to work with.

**GAME MASTERS** - these are the people who "invisibly" lead the team around, serve as a judge, and make all the decisions concerning what has happened to the team in the game that you have spent months working on. These people are critical to the success of your game, and should be selected very early on in your designing process. Since GMs are often people who are skilled in other fields, such as NPCing, Watchdogging, or even playing in the game, some designers will pick these people **BEFORE** they have even written their game - and probably wisely so. Pick GMs who you can work with and who you think are fair. They will also serve as another critic of your game ("well what if the players run away in that last encounter?") and can be very helpful. Again: **PICK THESE PEOPLE EARLY IN THE GAME PLANNING PROCESS**. You will need one for each team of players, and you should tell the GMs to arrange to get 1 to 3 scorekeepers, depending on the size of the teams. Be prepared in case the GMs didn't arrange any scorekeepers before the day of the game.

**LORE MASTERS** - These are the players that you challenge to put together a team. There are no strict requirements for a lore master, but it is best to choose someone who has had some playing experience; after all, they are responsible for the welfare of the team. Try to pick a variety of people, so that everyone who is interested will get a chance. Lore masters need to be experienced people who are capable of leading a team of players and who are sensitive enough to watch out for the team's welfare. Picking good lore masters is really important when you have a large number of novices. Good doesn't necessarily refer to a good fighter or a flashy dresser. Good refers to someone who will meet with their team ahead of time, who will make sure the novices have safe weapons and know how to use them, who will spend time telling the novices about how games are run and how to spell casting works in the game, who will make sure that everyone on the team has a ride to and from the game, and who will make sure every player gets a fair split of the treasure. These are rather stringent qualifications, so be sure to give them some thought before you challenge someone to be a lore master in a game involving novices.

**TREASURY REPRESENTATIVE** - this individual is only required for major games, and they will act as an intermediary between you and the IFGS. Their responsibility is to collect your PC and NPC fees and keep detailed records of which individuals have paid. They have to be trained and approved by the local chapter treasurer, so you may not have a large group to choose from. Pick someone you can work with and who is very responsible. The treasury representative needs to be some one who is relatively "tough" and doesn't mind collecting money from people.

**BANK REPRESENTATIVE** - this person is required for all games. The bank representative will make GM/SK and PC/NPC evaluation forms, score sheets, gold and magic forms, as well as provide the physical representation for gold pieces. They need a copy of the game and all players a few weeks before the game is scheduled to be played so that they can gather what forms and gps are needed.

**SAFETY OFFICER** - this is the individual who will be responsible for checking the weapons of the PCs and NPCs for safety, for making sure the course you have designed has the fighting encounters in relatively "safe" places (not in a field of cactus, on a steep slope, or in a boulder-strewn area), and for check-in and check-out on game day. The game safety officer **MUST** be trained and approved by the Chapter Safety Officer. There are only a few of these people around and they are an integral part of your game. Be sure to choose them early.

## **F. Game submission to the Sanctioning Committee**

The Sanctioning Committee exists to ensure that games are interesting, safe, consistent, fair to the players, and are within the scope of the rules. The IFGS will not recognize a game that has not been approved by the local Sanctioning Committee. The SC exists to **HELP** you with your game, making it consistent, playable, and fun. They have a lot of experience to draw from and the sanctioning of your game can be a good experience if you look at the SC in the right light.

You will likely be protective of your game once you have written it; after all, you created it, and how could anyone make it better? Keep in mind that even the greatest of authors had editors telling them to delete paragraphs, and that some of the plot lines made no sense. If you really do understand that the SC can only help your game, then the sanctioning of your game can really be a positive experience. If you go into the process thinking that no one is going to tell you what to do with your game, then you will have difficulties, guaranteed. |

The time it takes to get your game sanctioned will depend on your game's complexity and how thorough your game submission is. Some major games have required literally months of work, but one game turned in by a novice game designer from Dallas, Texas, was sanctioned as it was turned in without a single change! The complexity of the SC's job is based upon how well you do your job.

After you have turned in your game, a member of the Sanctioning Committee will be in contact with you to schedule a meeting to go over your game. This will occur a few weeks to months after the submission of your game, depending on how many games the SC is currently reviewing and how long your game is. If you live outside of commuting distance, you will be contacted by a member of the SC by phone. The SC will then discuss any problems they have with your game, and they will ask you to work on the problems and then resubmit an updated version of your game. This process may occur several times, depending on how much work you put into your revisions. When the SC is satisfied with the game, they will officially sanction it, and you can move ahead into production full-scale.

The Sanctioning Committee has written a manual specifically outlining the procedures for submitting game designs. This manual includes deadlines for game submissions, game classifications, and forms to fill out for encounters, support personnel, etc. It is a useful handbook and it is necessary to have in order to submit a game (available from IFGS for a minimal cost). Requests for game submissions and the final deadlines are listed in the SC handbook; the dates for requests of the submissions are summarized below. These dates are for the Denver/Boulder Chapter and other chapters may vary; you should contact your local SC for their deadlines. It is important that you turn your game in early; in 1988 the Sanctioning Committee for the Denver/Boulder Chapter had 27 games in the sanctioning process at one time.

MAJOR GAME - 6 months prior to requested game date(s)

MINI GAME - 6 weeks prior to requested game date(s)

INVITATIONAL GAME - 4 months prior to requested game date(s)

SPECIAL GAME - 4 months prior to requested game dates(s)

The treasurer also requires a copy of your budget submitted to them at this initial stage. The Sanctioning Committee encourages you to turn in a preliminary story line with a brief outline of encounters. In doing this, you save yourself a lot of time in the sanctioning process and extra work in rewriting your game; the Sanctioning Committee can start working on your game with you in the early stages.

## G. Game Flyers

If you are running a major game, once it has been sanctioned the game will need to have flyers distributed. Flyers contain the name of the game, game dates, difficulty of the game (both mental and physical), names of Lore masters, name of game designer, and any other information you desire to put on it. It also includes a registration form and ~e date, time, and location of the player draft. Enough funds to cover the printing of the flyer must be included in the game budget. Flyers are distributed through the mail in the local chapter

newsletter, at gaming stores, other games, gaming conventions, any meetings, and any other place you'd like to publicize your game.

#### *CHAPTER 1: GAME DESIGN Game Designers Manual*

You should not make up flyers until your final budget has been approved by the local treasurer and the Sanctioning Committee. It can create ill feelings when a PC or NPC is told that they must pay more than was originally advertised. An inadequate budget may also mean that you and/or your staff will not receive 100% reimbursement on your receipts because the money simply isn't there. So DON'T try to produce your flyers prematurely.

After final budget approval you may design, print, and distribute your flyers, up to your approved expense amount. IFGS will reimburse you immediately when you turn in the receipts. This reimbursement is not contingent upon your having received any fees, but it will be charged back to your game after you have established a cash flow from major PC fee collection.

Don't panic because your flyers have been out for sometime, and it is a week or two before the draft or major collection and only a few people have pre-registered. Many of those who play in IFGS games don't have a high cash flow and they usually respond to the greatest-need syndrome. When it is absolutely necessary to pay-or-not-play, they will be there with the money, but generally not before. Some major games in the past did not have much of a turnout for pre registration, but were filled the day of the draft and in some cases additional teams were even added.

### H. The player draft

The game draft should be held a minimum of two weeks before the game day, and a maximum of one month is suggested. Lore masters will select their teams at the draft. This is a good time to pass out lore to the players, run a short skit giving out information for the game, or to have NPCs and PCs to show up in costume to get everyone psyched up for the game. GMs are also usually assigned to teams at this meeting, and it provides the teams and GMs an opportunity to meet and get to know each other.

### I. Death of player characters

Different game designers have different philosophies on the death of player characters. Some designers feel that players should have the constant threat of death in order to give an edge to the game. Other designers feel that we have enough stress in our own lives and don't need this additional stress in a game. In either case, no one likes to lose a player character, especially one that they have been playing for years. There are fortunately players that enjoy both types of games, making it possible for you to design both types of games if you are so interested. It is important that you as a game designer are up-front about your own philosophy; this way no one will come away from your game disappointed or angry. Don't think that player character death is required to make a game challenging.

You should decide ahead of time what your policy is concerning PC death and let the players know about it at the player draft or on your flyer. You have two options. First, the unfortunate player can follow the team around and watch the game from a distance - this can be a real disappointment to the player (after all, they paid their money to play the whole game, not just a part of it), and in general it is not recommended. Second, you can tell all players to bring a write up for an "alternate" character to the game, i.e. a character that they have played previously, or a new character if they

want to start with one of those. That way, if a player should have the misfortune of dying in a game, they can still play the rest of the game. Leave it to the GM to come up with a clever way to introduce the new character to the team (they can be found passed out on the road, singing in the woods, may come to the aid of the party in the next combat, etc.). Whatever you decide, let the players know ahead of time so that they can come prepared (this information can be put on the flyer for the game). This is especially important in games where there is a high likelihood of player death.

## **J. Notes from the treasurer**

MAJOR AND INVITATIONAL GAMES - Whenever you design and run a game of this type you need to have a treasury representative; they are the intermediary between you and the IFGS. The representative must be trained and approved by the local chapter treasurer. Ideally your chosen representative should be able to work with you and adapt their schedule according to your individual game needs. Choose someone who is responsible and doesn't mind asking people for money.

Your treasury representative will coordinate arrangements to collect PC and NPC fees, arrange collection of money and distribution of T-shirts, collect and handle receipts for reimbursement, and communicate the financial information to you and IFGS. The treasurer, and not the representative? however, will be the one to write checks and give final approval on expenses and receipts.

If you have questions about any agreements or instructions from your treasury representative, call the local chapter treasurer. Remember that the local treasurer supersedes your treasury representative, and board policy supersedes them all. For exceptions to any board policy, you must get direct board approval.

**MINI GAMES** - The same regulations apply for these types of games as major games, but you will have no treasury representative, and you will be personally responsible for collecting PC and NPC fees, receipts for expenses, and the reporting of these items. Please use the mini game form sheet to report your game (included in the SC handbook). You may assign any or all duties to anyone you choose, but you are ultimately responsible.

Although your game may be sanctioned to play, it's existence will not be recognized (i.e. experience points for players) until the paper work is complete and turned into the treasurer. Also if you have unfinished games in existence, you may be restricted from running other games until your previous one has been completed.

You may also be held responsible for fees you don't collect. You must collect fees from all of your PCs and NPCs. There are often people involved in mini games who occasionally "forget" to pay their fees. These persons may be restricted from games if they don't pay.

**PC/NPC FEES** - You cannot get reimbursed for any expenses until you have money in your game account; this money comes from fees from NPCs and PCs. It is advisable that you consider your individual game money needs when determining a draft or collection date. Deposits for land and time-consuming props seem to be the most consistent up-front money problems, so you may want to set your money collection accordingly. Should you expectedly find yourself in a no-money position, many people in the IFGS are understanding of these needs (up-front money) and if they have the money, they will pay in advance to help you out if you ask. Your lore masters are usually your best source, but your treasurer's representative can't insist that they pay prior to everyone else (unless for some reason it had been set up with the Sanctioning Committee as such).

Fees must be collected from all players before the day of the game or they will not be allowed to play. For invitational games, player fees must be received by the treasurer one month ahead of the run date; if money is not received, then the run date will be postponed. The draft for most major games is held one month before the run date for this reason also.

It is strongly suggested that NPC fees be collected BEFORE the day of the game. This will help you avoid collection hassles on game day, i.e. the NPC may not have money with them (common), and therefore can't go on course, or they may have a previous unpaid fee due. Having your major NPCs pay ahead of time will also encourage them to show up on the day of the game. A good time and place to collect the fees is at NPC meetings before the game, and you might want to appoint your NPC coordinator(s) to collect those fees.

At the present time, NPC fees are not collected from GAs, GMs, and SKs, unless specifically requested by the GD. Their per-head expenses of insurance, land costs, etc. will be deducted from your income for the game, so please include them in your overall expenses, but not in your projected income. Although past and present treasurers have honored this precedence, there have been board discussions to require everyone to pay NPC fees. To date, there has been no formal policy made. If you want to collect fees from your staff, please notify your treasury representative and your staff.

There is currently a board policy in effect that states: If the GD doesn't collect more than 80% of their game NPC fees, then the total amount of uncollected money (NPCs x fees) will be collected against



the GD's budget prior to them being reimbursed. Please be aware of this policy and note that it is enforced.

**RECEIPTS** - To get reimbursed for expenses a person must turn in receipts for any approved expenses (supplies, food, gas, etc.). Handwritten receipts are NOT acceptable. The only exception to this is if you, as a GD, have gotten prior approval for an independent contractor (i.e. paying someone to make you a special sword), and then the contractor's social security number will suffice. Please note that at this time, the board has looked at independent contractors on a case-by-case basis, concentrating on reasonableness and competitive pricing. Hopefully, there will be a list of approved independent contractors and costs available in the near future.

Note that anything paid for by the IFGS is the property of the IFGS. You cannot give a prop to someone for the work that they put into it - if the IFGS paid for the supplies, then it belongs to the IFGS.

**T-SHIRTS** - If you decide to have T-shirts with a design of your game for sale, please get in touch with your treasury representative as soon as you decide to have them made. They will have to set up collection of fees and distribution of the actual shirts. T-shirts must be made and given to the treasury representative prior to the day of the game, if sales include prepaid sales. Your representative will most likely have someone else to help them with the T-shirts.

If you design and handle T-shirts as part of your game (SC approved), you can use the actual income from this to offset not only the expenses of the shirts, but general game expenses should you get in a money bind. The T-shirt sales are used as a part of your game account and are reflected as part of the whole in the actual game accounting. On your budget you cannot, as a general rule, use projected T-shirt income to offset estimated general game expenses. For the budget purposes T-shirts are considered to be a wash item (income=expenses). If someone else sets up T-shirt sales as a separate venture from your game, the income is not considered part of your game account and cannot be used to offset game expenses.

## Chapter 2: PRODUCTION, PRE-GAME

### SECTION 2.1: NPC MEETINGS AND ENCOUNTER COORDINATORS

Once your game has been sanctioned (or while it is in the sanctioning process) you should choose people to fill your NPC roles, and have a series of meetings for your NPCs. These meetings provide an excellent opportunity to explain your philosophy of the game, explain major roles, AND collect NPC fees (which will save you a lot of later grief). Selecting an ENCOUNTER COORDINATOR for each encounter has proven to be extremely useful in other games. This person needs to be carefully selected, as they are responsible for making sure that the NPCs for their particular encounter are at the encounter site at the right time and with the necessary props. As the game designer, you are responsible for fully briefing the encounter coordinator about the encounter - what is supposed to happen, what the coordinator should be wary of, etc. The game designer, however, is ultimately responsible for getting the necessary NPCs to fill their roles.

You may need to hold a few weapon's practices so that your more inexperienced NPCs can be trained in safe combat. These practices also provide a good opportunity to do a dry-run of the more complex combats in your game to see how they might actually work. A week or two before the game, the game designer should take their encounter coordinators to the site for the game and show the encounter coordinators the location of their encounters. This allows the coordinators to familiarize themselves with the site, and they can go there directly the day of the game, and not bother the game designer concerning where they are supposed to be. They can then be responsible for getting the NPCs in their encounter to the correct site.

## SECTION 2.2: GM MEETINGS

Game designers should also hold several meetings with their GMs before the day of the game. This is essential and CANNOT be overemphasized. The GMs are probably the most important persons on the game staff, and will be interpreting the game for the players. They probably have the most accurate view of how the players will perceive the game. Consequently, they need to know what the intent of the game designer is, so that they can answer player's questions. It is essential that each GM receives a final copy of your game at least a week in advance of the game dates so that they can familiarize themselves with the game. If they don't already own one, refer them to the GM handbook put out by the IFGS and available for a minimal cost.

Some game designers have found it very useful to play their game as a "board game", with the GMs taking the roles of the players. This allows the GMs to "play" the game firsthand and become very familiar with it. It also allows the game designer to find out where there might be possible confusions or imbalances in their games.

Even more important than the encounter coordinator walk-through for the game is the GM walk through (they can both be done at the same time). If the GM doesn't know where the course is supposed to run, there is a possibility that they and the players could get lost, which could be a potential disaster. Be sure to supply them with a well-labeled and readable map of the course.

## SECTION 2.3: PROPS, SPECIAL EFFECTS, AND CONSTRUCTIONS

The first thing you should do is put together a complete list of the props that you need for each encounter in your game. These include weapons, costumes, building materials, face paint, make up, goblets, magic items, etc. If your chapter has a quartermaster corps, this list can then be given to them, and they can collect the props AND tell the game designer what props the designer will need to purchase. If your chapter is without a quartermaster corps, then it is up to the game designer, or hopefully their appointee, to collect or make all the needed items. Some game designers will put their encounter coordinators in charge of props because the coordinators will actually be at the encounter site. **MAKE SURE YOU SAVE ALL RECEIPTS OF PURCHASES TO TURN INTO THE TREASURER FOR REIMBURSEMENT.** You will have a hard time getting your money back if you don't have a receipt.

However you obtain your props, you should organize the props by encounter, so that they can be easily distributed to encounter coordinators the day of the game. Putting small-sized props into bags or boxes labeled with the encounter name has proven to be quite

useful in the past. They can then be passed out to the encounter coordinators the day of the game, and no one will forget the ring or medallion that was needed for the encounter.

This would also be a good time to write out the properties of magic items on 3 x 5 cards. These can then be given to the GMs. You should make out matching cards to be distributed to the PC who gets the item in the game with just the name of the item.

If you have any major constructions for your game, you can solicit the help of NPCs, GMs, SKs, etc. to build them, and you should be sure to start your projects well ahead of time. Also seriously consider how you are going to get the props transported to the game site. Make sure you have the appropriate tools to put the constructions together, and be sure you have more than one of each tool needed.

Provisional chapters are encouraged to contact their sponsoring chapter to get suggestions about how to make buildings in games. The Denver/Boulder chapter several methods of building constructions in which they will be happy to instruct other chapters.

Special effects can encompass a lot of different things, including limited fireworks, smoke bombs, fog, and music, and can be a real asset to a game. They definitely need to be arranged before the game day and should be planned for in your budget. For those chapters and provisional chapters in Colorado, the Alchemists Guild can be contacted for help.

## SECTION 2.4: THE BANK

The IFGS bank needs to be informed ahead of time as to the names of players in the game so that the bank can be on site with the appropriate amount of gold to distribute to players. The bank will also need to know how many evaluation forms that they need to bring for players to fill out. Be sure the bank gets this information, whether it is supplied by you or the treasurer.

If you are giving out gold as part of your treasure, you need to get this in advance from the bank, in order to have time to divide it up for each encounter. Depending on how busy the bank is, they may do this for you. It is helpful to PCs and NPCs alike if you put their gold in a plastic bag before the game; this makes distribution and collection substantially easier.

## SECTION 2.5: TRANSPORTATION

Well before the day of your game, you should determine what vehicles you will have for transporting props, especially the larger ones, to your game site. If you need 4-wheel drive vehicles, make sure they are available and that you have drivers who have experience driving them. Be sure to have a back-up vehicle in mind in case one of them breaks down. Don't depend on one person and vehicle unless you are absolutely sure of their commitment. Vehicles can break down and emergencies can happen to any one. If the

execution of your game depends on one vehicle and that vehicle later becomes unavailable  
you are left in a really bad position.

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*Game Designers Manual CHAPTER 2: PRODUCTION, PRE-GAME.* If your only access to a truck or 4-wheel-drive vehicle is through a commercial rental company, you can write this item into your game budget ahead of time. In this case you should be sure to reserve the truck several weeks before the day of the game so that you can be sure it will be available.

## SECTION 2.6: PHOTOGRAPHERS

You should try to line up some photographers for your game before the day of the game - don't let this be the role of the GM. Photographers usually follow one team around (and can be someone's girlfriend/boyfriend/spouse) but you can also set them up at one of the more spectacular or exciting encounters. Everyone loves pictures of the game as a memory of their experience, so you can never have enough people to take pictures. Be sure any new photographers are familiar with the concept of remaining "invisible", i.e. out of the players way. If you know someone with a video recorder, a film of your game can give you the opportunity to actually see how the encounters turned out! It also provides a good means for public relations.

## CHAPTER 3: PRODUCTION, GAME DAY

It should be fairly evident from reading the above sections, that most of the work in game designing occurs BEFORE the game day. If you have done your job, the day of the game should find you rested in a position to answer questions and do some minor coordination and setup. This chapter is therefore noticeably short. If you find yourself looking for more information, back-up to chapter 2 on Pre-game production.

### SECTION 3.1: CANCELING A GAME

The most usual reason for canceling a game is bad weather - snow or rain. This is a difficult decision to make, especially when you have been working on a game for months and really want to see it run. This decision should be made with consultations between the safety officer, watchdog and game designer, but any of these three can cancel a game, without approval of the others; the safety officer, however, is the individual who is ultimately responsible.

If you cancel the game the night before the game or the morning of the game, all the individuals involved with the game need to be contacted. Don't assume that everyone will figure out the game is canceled; people have shown up to play under some remarkable conditions. The best way to get the information out is to call your GMs who can notify the players, and your encounter coordinators who can notify the other NPCs. Use your watchdog, game aides, and friends to help you make these calls. It would also be helpful if you showed up at the game site anyway, in order to inform any people who weren't contacted.

If you cancel the game during game time, it is easier to disseminate that the game is canceled. However, it is even more crucial that you remain on site until everyone has checked out or you are sure there is no one left on course. Obviously if you have canceled the game the weather conditions are bad, and you don't want an NPC left out on course wondering where everyone went.



## SECTION 3.2: TIME SCHEDULE

Be sure that all of your NPCs, GMs, SKs, and PCs know what time they should be on course BEFORE game day arrives. You should have a schedule set up for yourself that allots time to building construction, transporting props to encounter sites, and last minute briefings. Ideally, your encounter coordinators and game aides should be doing these things for you, leaving you free to coordinate everyone's efforts. If you can access the rental land the night before the game, it would be a great idea to set up your major encounters the night before. Then you can spend the next morning in coordination and relaxation. Imagine the nightmare of trying to set up your whole course before the first team starts the game at 8:00 or 9:00 am.

## SECTION 3.3: CONSTRUCTIONS

If you have any major constructions in your game they should be your first concern. Ideally, they should be put up the night before the game with the help of some friends. But if this is not feasible make sure you have enough NPCs, game aides, or friends at the game site early enough to get the constructions built before the start of game time. If you have the encounters in the middle of your game, it will allow you more time to put them up. However, the earlier they occur in the game, the earlier they can be taken down.

## SECTION 3.4: CHECK-IN

All NPCs, support personnel, PCs, and in short, anyone involved in the game needs to sign in with a designated person, usually the safety officer, when they arrive at the game site. These people must also sign-out when they leave the course. This is designed for safety reasons to prevent any injured or forgotten people from being left behind. A sign up sheet also allows the game designer to collect fees from any PCs or NPCs who haven't paid their game fee or signed a liability release form for the game. This list of people can later be submitted to the bank, so that the bank can give experience points to the participants.

The designated safety officer should also check ALL weapons before the PCs or NPCs are allowed to use them. Some safety officers will have spare safety-approved weapons on hand in case some player's weapons are deemed unsuitable; they will then rent the players the weapons at a nominal fee.

Any minor on course needs to have a sponsor that is responsible for ensuring the minor has appropriate clothing, food, and transportation to and from the game. Be sure that someone is responsible for the minor and signs the check-in list along with them.

## **SECTION 3.5: EMERGENCIES**

The most important type of emergency you should be prepared for is a medical one. These usually involve twisted ankles or knees and minor scrapes and cuts. Your safety officer should be available at all times in the game to attend to any of these emergencies. This may mean that they have to have access to a four-wheel drive vehicle; these vehicles belong first to the safety officer, not the GD. If your chapter has hand-held radios, the safety officer should be the person to decide upon their use. Irate landowners or hikers comprise other minor emergencies, and discretion and tact are usually your best tools to deal with these situations. Usually, listening to the complaint and a willingness to compromise can resolve any difficulty that has arisen. Keep your temper, and remember that you may want to use the land again.

Consider ahead of time what you will do if some of your NPCs don't turn up. You can probably count on 10-20 percent of the people not showing up, or being late. This may not be critical for the minor roles, but be sure you have people you can use for the more major roles if the main NPCs don't show. Time will teach you who you can count on to be reliable. You may have to alter some of the encounters in your game due to lack of people, but be sure you clear any of these changes with your watchdog.

The only other major problem could be the weather. It is usually better to postpone a game to the rain date than risk your NPCs and PCs coming down with hypothermia or worse. It is even more difficult to call your game when the weather becomes bad in the middle of it, but remember that safety is paramount. People play IFGS games generally for fun, and few of them will have fun in icy or wet conditions.

## **SECTION 3.6: PROPS**

Obtaining props was discussed in detail in the pre-game production section. Don't wait until the day before the game, or worse yet, the game day to start to get props together... or stop to buy glue on the way to the game... or stop to pick up just a few more things. Make yourself a detailed list ahead of time of what you need for each encounter, and be sure the list is filled before the game day. It is recommended that you appoint some trusted soul to be Props master and obtain and return all the items that you need for the game. They can facilitate the return of borrowed items.

## **SECTION 3.7: THE BANK**

Representatives of the bank should show up early the day of the game and pass out representations of gold pieces to both NPCs and PCs. This is one reason the bank needs to know ahead of time who is involved with the game. The bank will also meet the players at the end of the game, collect their gold pieces, and give them evaluation forms to fill out, along with forms indicating what treasure or magic they gained in the game. The bank should also give out forms to NPCs, GMs, and SKs to do a game evaluation. Be nice to the bank representative - their job is a thankless one.

## **SECTION 3.8: STARTING TEAMS**

Make EVERY effort to start your game on time, even if it means that things aren't exactly perfect for the first team. Few things make PCs and NPCs more irritable and dissatisfied than having to wait, and wait, and wait. You should schedule your teams starting times so that the fastest team starts first, and the slowest team is the last to start. If you need to slow a team down, you can let the encounter coordinators know, and they can possibly stretch the length of the encounter. If you need to speed a team up, you are in a more difficult position, short of the GM telling the team to get moving (unappreciated by the players).

## **SECTION 3.9: WHAT TO DO WHEN TEAMS BACK-UP**

Even the best organized games can have teams back up on each other, and there are few things that can demoralize players as much. Try to avoid this ahead of time by putting the potentially slowest team last. But if it happens anyway, there are a few strategies you can use to correct the problem. If team 1 keeps teams 2, 3, and 4 waiting, try moving an encounter that team 1 hasn't been through so that teams 2, 3, and 4 have the encounter first; this will occupy time and hopefully put some space between team 1 and 2. Obviously you can only do this with an encounter that doesn't have to be in a set sequence in the game, but there are usually a few of these in each game. Team 1 could then have that encounter at the end of the day when all the other teams were finished.



### *CHAPTER 3: PRODUCTION, GAME DAY Game Designers Manual*

Also consider that a particular team may be moving slowly because they are lacking some key information that a NPC forgot to give them. You may need to have the NPC meet them again in an impromptu encounter to release the necessary information. Be sure to clear this with your watchdog first.

You can have GMs "create" a harmless encounter to occupy the waiting teams - i.e. a tree or animal talking to the druid on the team. Obviously you can't give information to the players this way, and this tactic is only useable once or twice. If done right, however, the team doesn't need to know it's a stalling technique.

## SECTION 3.10: WHAT TO DO IN THE CASE OF OTHER DISASTERS

There comes a time in the game, when things seem to be going from bad to worse, that you may want to change a thing or two that you underestimated, over estimated, or just didn't count on... "What? The GM for team three is LOST?"... "What do you mean the NPCs killed team four? ALL OF THEM?"... "The dragon's tail is WHERE?"

These sorts of emergencies occur on occasion in a game, and, as the Game Designer, you will surely have an interest in the outcome. The main thing to remember in the face of these sorts of disasters, though, is to keep a cool head. Even if it seems that your game is falling apart, remain calm. A reasonable conclusion is more likely to be reached if you are thinking clearly than if you are irate, frustrated, and angry.

The first thing to do in a case like this is to gather the game aides that are available and the Watchdog for your game, and talk about the situation and a possible resolution. It is always important to involve other people in the decision making process, and generally the more you involve, the better. It may turn out that, in other people's opinions, you are overly concerned about the situation. This happens more often than you would imagine, mainly because games almost never come off in the way you had envisioned them. If a change to your game is needed, the Watchdog needs to be present so that they can validate the change, and so that they can later return to the SC with the reasons for the change. Sometimes a change will be as simple as contacting a GM to have them give the team a vital piece of information that an NPC forgot to give them, or it may be as complex as arranging for a GM to be replaced, for an encounter to be managed by someone else, or for a team to be brought back from the dead.

Flexibility is the key thing to resolving many such problems in a game. When a major prop is not on course, and there is no reasonable way to get it onto course, improvise. Use something else that is suitable, rearrange the encounter so the prop is not so major (e.g., hide the fact that the dragon is missing its tail by putting that portion of its body under a rock which represents its "cave", or use some black plastic garbage bags filled with trash from the first day to represent the tail), or rely on the players to imagine it as being there.

When you don't have all the NPCs you need for an encounter, consider other places you can get the number of NPCs you need, strip some from an encounter that is less critical, reuse some that aren't doing anything presently, use your game-aides

*Game Designers Manual CHAPTER 3: PRODUCTION, GAME DAY*

to fill in some of the spots that are weak. If a GM is a no-show, use someone who knows the game and the rules to fill in for them (game aides often work well for this). Don't fall into the trap of thinking that because an encounter isn't going to go the way you thought it should that it will be a bad encounter. Many times PCs won't know the difference, and will enjoy it just as fully as if it had gone as planned.

## SECTION 3.11: CONSIDERATION FOR NPC'S

Treat your NPC's with care; they are helping you out with their time and deserve consideration. Don't send two NPC's out to an encounter site five hours before they are due to meet the teams - try to use them in earlier melee encounters, or let them help in building constructions. Likewise make sure your NPC's are comfortable, have water, shade to rest in, and have adequate shelter in case of bad weather. Let your NPC's know how long of a wait they might expect and that they should bring something to entertain themselves with such as a book, a copy of the rules to read, etc. Encounter coordinators should help out with these responsibilities. Make sure your NPC's know where they are supposed to go and that they have a map showing where their encounter site is. Under all circumstances a minor(s) should have an adult sponsor with them at all times. Treat your NPC's well and they will gladly return to help you in another game.

## SECTION 3.12: REST AND DOWN TIME

Rest time and down time, should be planned into the game long before the day of the game. For overnight games, players are required to have at least eight hours of uninterrupted time. No resting time is required for one-day games but it may be a nice thing to build into a longer one-day game. Rest time can be built into a game in the form of a passive informational encounter where players are given refreshment. Remember that players are in the game to have fun, not to go on a death march.

## SECTION 3.13: THE FINEST ART: STAYING OUT OF THE GAME

Under ideal circumstances, there would be very little left for you to do on the game day but some minor coordination. If you have delegated the necessary jobs and planned ahead you should be able to stay home the day of the game and wait for the accolades to come in. In reality, you will probably get very little sleep the few days before the game, and you will be running around in circles the day of the game. However, regardless of the

condition you are in the day of the game, one thing is agreed upon: **STAY OUT OF THE GAME!** Players shouldn't see you at any of the encounters (not

even hiding in the trees), no matter how much you would like to watch them encounter your monsters. Let the game happen as it will - there is very little you can do once the game has started. The best thing you can do is remain available for whatever coordination has to be done, and in case there is some kind of emergency on the course. There will be plenty of time later to discuss the game with the players.

## SECTION 3.14: CLEAN-UP

NPCs should be responsible for cleaning up their own encounter sites, which also means taking down any buildings and making sure props are transported back to a central location. If you have a lot of large constructions, it will be necessary to enlist the help of PCs and NPCs alike. With good planning, you can have your more complex buildings used early on in the game, and then they can be taken down even before the game is completed.

Don't expect the game clean-up to take care of itself; if you do, you will be on the encounter site at midnight cleaning up while most everyone else is in town at the restaurant talking about the fun they had in your game. It is helpful, in fact, highly recommendable, to assign a particular person to be responsible for making sure things get picked up after the game; choose someone who is well organized, charismatic, and not above stopping everyone they see and asking them for a hand in taking down a building, loading some props, etc. Games can be cleaned up with remarkable speed if everyone chips in, but you will have to solicit most of the help yourself. With some good planning, the game can be cleaned up and everyone can go to the after game party together.

## SECTION 3.15: CHECK-OUT

Be sure the bank representative receives all the evaluation forms and that everyone signs out before they leave the course. There will be a lot of talk about your game at this point and you may hear some criticisms - you may also hear a lot of compliments. In any case, it's best to wait a week or two when you are removed from the game to accurately judge how your game went

Arrange a place ahead of time that everyone can go to for an after game party; most restaurants are willing to accommodate you if they know you're coming ahead of time. An after-game party is very important because it gives everyone involved a chance to exchange stories and voice opinions and feelings. It also gives you an opportunity to talk to players and find out what they really enjoyed about your game. It may also be your first real meal in days.



# CHAPTER 4: PRODUCTION, POST-GAME

## SECTION 4.1: PROPS

Be sure that all the props are collected and returned to their proper places. Work with a representative from the quartermaster corps to insure that items get returned to the right place. Be sure that wet items such as tents or clothing are dried out and that anything that is dirty such as costumes get washed. Make sure that the pieces of any buildings remain together so that the next person who uses the building will be able to put it together. If you found any problems with the props such as incomplete buildings or torn clothing, inform the quartermaster representative so that they can fix the problem instead of leaving it for the next game designer to deal with.

Regardless of how tired you are, DO NOT go to your storage locker, open the door, toss everything in it, and then slam the door and race to the after game party. Keeping props in an organized fashion, especially in small storage lockers is essential - otherwise you may spend days trying to find the scepter used in the last game.

## SECTION 4.2: THE BANK AND SANCTIONING COMMITTEE

After the game, the bank will have the GMs and SKs fill out player evaluation forms and use these scores to compute experience points for the players. There will also be forms for the PCs and NPCs to fill out, rating your game, the best PC, the best NPC, the best encounter, etc. These forms are a valuable way for you to find out what people really thought of your game, but it is best not to read them for at least a few weeks until you have recovered from your game. NPCs, GMs, and SKs will receive points for helping out in the game.

You should also turn into the bank a list of your game aides and any other individuals who were of significant help to you. The bank will make sure that these people are also reward with some experience points. It is a great way to say thank you to the people who helped you the most.

Within a few weeks of your game, you should turn a copy of your game into the Sanctioning Committee as it was played, for their records and the records of the historian. This copy of your game will include any changes which had to be made the day of the game due to unforeseen circumstances (and which were approved by the watchdog, of course). This could include changes made because NPCs didn't show up for the game, because the players couldn't follow the plot line and needed additional clues, or because the game was too difficult and PCs were dying by the dozen.

## SECTION 4.3: REPORT TO THE TREASURER

After the game is over you should collect all of your receipts, *put* them in an envelope, and label the envelope with the name of the game, your name, and the dates your game was run. This is the material that will ultimately be turned over to the chapter treasurer.

If you have run a mini-game, there is a form in the back of the Sanctioning Committee Handbook for the game designer to fill out, listing the players, NPCs, and amount of money spent and collected. These should be filled out and turned into the treasurer along with your receipts. Please note that the treasurer will not accept a wad of receipts and illegible names of people who remembered to sign in. Players will not receive any experience points and you will not be allowed run another game until these forms have been turned into the treasurer.

If you have run any other type of game (major, minor, or tournament), your treasury representative should have a list of all paid PCs and NPCs for your game. This material should be turned over to the treasurer when the game is over (if not before) and will serve as the record of collected funds for your game. You should then schedule a meeting with the chapter treasurer to get reimbursement for your expenses. Don't try to catch the treasurer when they are on their way home or on the way to work with a "quick, I need a check from you so that I can pay my rent." The treasurer has to keep detailed financial records for every game, and may or may not even be carrying the checkbook. If you schedule a meeting, you will get 100% of the treasurer's attention and gratitude. The treasurer will need the following information: number of players, number of non-player characters, and a full list of ALL itemized expenses.

If you have a lot of people on your game staff who purchased items, it would help the treasurer if you reimbursed the individuals yourself, and then requested reimbursement for these moneys from the treasurer. This prevents the treasurer from having to write hundreds of checks for small amounts.

Provisional chapters are advised to use the mini-game report form in the back of the SC manual for their games, unless the treasurer of their sponsoring chapter requests something different. When a game is finished and the appropriate forms are filled out, they should be forwarded to the treasurer with all game moneys. Because it is inadvisable to send cash through the mail, a check should be written for the cash.

## SECTION 4.4: IN CASE OF ACCIDENT

In the unfortunate case that there is an accident on the course and an individual wants to file an insurance claim, the safety officer for the game should have the required information for the injured person. The safety officer will be on the scene of the accident

and will inform the injured party of the insurance coverage at the time. Note that the medical insurance that the IFGS carries is of an extremely limited nature, and will not completely cover all the expenses of a major accident. If your local safety officer does not have the information concerning accidents and insurance, they should immediately contact the national safety officer and get this information.

## SECTION 4.5: THANK YOUS

Obviously, many different people helped you put on your game, and thanks are due *to* all of them, ESPECIALLY if you want help in the future. Go out of your way to let people know how much you really appreciated their help, and volunteer your help to them if they are crazy enough to design a game themselves. Put letters in your chapter newsletter recognizing the help of key individuals, and use the opportunity of an awards banquet to publicly thank those people who helped you. A letter to the individuals who rented you the land can also be good public relations, and make them kindly disposed to you in the future.

## APPENDIX I: FEATURED CREATURES

NPC monsters can generally be of any level, and their life points should be defined according to the rules - i.e. the undead have hit points as per a 5th level cleric. Certain creatures such as bandits are usually the same level or slightly lower level than the team, because their purpose is usually to give the team a good, but not deadly workout; however, the levels are up to the game designer. Creatures such as demons, devils, and vampires are usually significantly higher in level than the team because the GD does not usually want significant interaction between the creature and the team members. Powerful NPCs have generally not exceeded 15th level in past games, and this is a good maximum limit to use as a guide. However, note that the level of your NPCs will be dictated by the level of your players and what you envision for the NPC role.

Listed on the following pages are the properties of the more common monsters that have been used in the past games in the Denver-Boulder Chapter. These descriptions are meant to be a guide for the new and experienced designer alike, and may also be an aide to some of the newer players. Keep in mind that creativity is the essence of designer, and any of these creatures can vary in their abilities. Game Designers should realize, however, that players do enjoy some kind of consistency - it's nice if a vampire or troll has similar abilities every time they meet one, instead of having different properties based on a game designers whim. It would be best to develop a new monster if a game designer wants to substantially change the properties outlined below.

## **BANDIT**

Class: any, but tend to be fighters or thieves  
Level: any, but tend to be of the party's level or less  
Life Points: as for class and level  
Armor: 1 or 2 points  
Damage: generally not much, 3-5 points  
Alignment: neutral or evil  
Special abilities: none  
Special weaknesses: not very smart

### **Description:**

Generally human, tend to want gold from the party (thus the term "Bandit"), easy to kill but can be dangerous if treated too lightly. Travel in groups of 4 to 10; they are generally dressed somewhat raggedly.

### **Example**

Class: fighter  
Level: 2  
Life Points: 3/12/16  
Armor: 2 points (chain)  
Damage: 4 points  
Alignment: neutral  
Special Abilities: none  
Special Weaknesses: stupid, easy to trick

## **BASILISK**

Class: as a fighter for life points

Level: 4th-8th

Life Points: as per class and level

Armor: 3 to 6 points

Damage: 5-8 points

Alignment: neutral

Special Abilities: gaze causes petrification or paralysis (LI effect)

Special Weaknesses: can be neutralized by reflecting its gaze back on itself

### **Description:**

Reptilian creature with 4 or more legs; gaze can cause paralysis or petrification (LI effect); if their gaze is met by it's own reflection so that the basilisk sees his own eyes, the basilisk itself will be petrified/paralyzed; slow moving; attacks with claws or gaze.

### **Example**

Class: life points as fighter

Level: 7th

Life Points: 7/34/40

Armor: 4 points

Damage: 8 points

Alignment: neutral

Special Abilities: gaze causes paralysis at level 7. This is simulated by penlight flashlights in

the eyes of the recipient (only if the basilisk is represented by an inanimate constructed object). If the lights from the eyes strike the target for 15 seconds, the target will be paralyzed

for 10 minutes (if 7th level or less).

Special Weaknesses: Gaze can be reflected back on creature to paralyze it for 10 minutes.

## CENTAUR

Class: commonly fighter or ranger

Level: 4th-8th

Life Points: as per class and level

Armor: 1-3 points

Damage: S- 10 points

Alignment: neutral or good

Special Abilities: good with a bow, moves quickly

Special Weaknesses: none

### Description:

The torso and head are human, the lower portions of the body are that of a horse. They are generally found in woodland settings and remote areas. Tend to be shy of humans. They are commonly exceptional archers.

### Example

Class: Ranger

Life Points: 6/24/30 Armor: 2 points Damage: 6 points with sword, 3 or 4 points with bow/arrow Special Abilities: has 100% marginal/ 100% critical scores with bow and a 4 second reload time. Has the ability to do "Speed" as the monk ability once per day at no cost. Can use all ranger spells of it's level or less.

Special Weaknesses: none



## DEMON

Class: generally multi-classed, Fighter/MU is common

Level: generally greater than the party

Life Points: usually high, greater than level would indicate

Armor: high, 4-8 points

Damage: moderate to high, 6-12 points

Alignment: evil; generally fairly chaotic

Special Abilities: vary. Can be almost anything from spell immunities, to "Autocast" as the MU spell on all of their abilities. Commonly only damaged by magical weapons or spells.

Special Weaknesses: vary. Can be particularly susceptible to one form of attack such as cold or electricity.

### **Description:**

Generally humanoid and bipedal, with reddish skin. They usually have some distinguishing feature that indicates their nature (e.g., horns on the forehead, wings, or a forked tail). Tend to be servants of devils and are somewhat chaotic in nature.

### **Example**

Class: fighter/Magic-user Level: 10th vs. LI spells (12 level fighter/6th level MU) Life Points: 12/90/100 Armor: 5 points Damage: 10 points

Alignment: evil

Special Abilities: can use MU spells up to 6th level and can cast all 1st and 2nd level MU spells instantaneously, but must take 6 seconds between usages. Will only be damaged by magical

weapons or spells. Special Weaknesses: takes damage from holy water (5 points per flask).

## DEVIL

Class: generally multi-classed, commonly Fighter/Magic-users

Level: high, usually higher than the party

Life Points: high

Armor: high, 4 to 8 points

Damage: moderate to high, 6 to 12 points

Alignment: evil; also extremely lawful

Special Abilities: see demon

Special Weaknesses: see demon

### **Description:**

Physically similar to demons, but tend to be more or less human looking (at least more so than demons generally are). They are very lawful in nature and can be held to their word.

### **Example**

Class: fighter/magic-user

Level: 12 vs. LI spells (8th level fighter, 10th level MU)

Life Points: 15/100/120

Armor: 8 points

Damage: 8 points

Alignment: evil

Special Abilities: harmed only by magical weapons and spells, immune to all fire attacks, can cast any fire spell (BRANDING, FIREBALL, FIRE ARROW, FIRE TRAP, WALL OF FIRE and BLAST) instantaneously but must wait 6 seconds between usages.

Special Weaknesses: takes double damage from cold-based attacks (ICEBALL and CHILLING MIST).

## DOPPLEGANGER

Class: generally fighters  
Level: any, generally of the party's level  
Life Points: as per class and level  
Armor: low, 1-3 points  
Damage: moderate, 2-5 points  
Alignment: neutral or evil  
Special Abilities: ability to impersonate  
Special Weaknesses: none

### **Description:**

Doppelgangers are creatures which have the ability to make themselves look identical to another creature. They also tend to be able to impersonate the creature perfectly, or nearly so. They will generally kill or incapacitate the creature they intend to impersonate, and then assume the creature's role.

### **Example**

Class: fighter  
Level: 6  
Life Points: 6/30/36  
Armor: 3 points  
Damage: 5 points  
Alignment: evil  
Special Abilities: can impersonate perfectly. This is accomplished by the person who is incapacitated by the Doppelganger taking the role of the Doppelganger (i.e., the PC will play the NPC Doppelganger). Also able to do a "Crash Time" spell (as per MU spell) instantaneously once per day at level 6.  
Special Weaknesses: none

## DRAGON

Class: any, but tend to be spell casters

Level: any, but usually high

Life Points: extremely high

Armor: high

Damage: high

Alignment: any

Special Abilities: can cast spells (usually have several spells or abilities which are instantaneous), and can commonly breathe fire, ice, acid, or some similar damaging element.

Special Weaknesses: fondness for treasure, tend to be greedy and arrogant. Their pride is often their greatest weakness. Fire-based dragons take double damage from cold or ice, and cold based dragons take double damage from fire.

### **Description:**

Very large lizard-like creature. Dragons can be anywhere from 10 ft to 50 ft or more in length. They tend to be very tough, and have been known to have a fondness for human flesh, particularly that of virgins. Commonly are extremely intelligent and know a lot about general lore. Have very long lives and thus are also experts at history. Some dragons can polymorph into human form.

### **Example**

Class: druid

Level: 12th

Life Points: 20/200/250

Armor: 9 points

Damage: 15 points with a "claw"; 21 points damage from breathing ice

Alignment: good

Special Abilities: able to use spells as a 12th level Druid; can breathe ice four times a day in a

path 20 feet wide and 30 feet long for 21 points of damage to everyone in the area of effect.

Special Weaknesses: very fond of treasure, can be bribed with pretty jewels or a large amount

of gold. Likes praise, especially for its beauty.

## DRYAD

Class: generally Druid

Level: moderate, 3rd-6th

Life Points: as per class and level

Armor: low, 0-1 point

Damage: low, 1 to 3 points

Alignment: good or neutral

Special Abilities: usually able to charm just by being near to any males; the charm ability is LI.

Special Weaknesses: life is tied to their tree, so they can not go far from *it*, and if the tree dies

or suffers damage, the dryad is similarly affected.

### **Description:**

Dryads are woodland creatures that like to hide in the forest. They tend to have a special tree that is their home and to which their life is tied. They are commonly able to charm males. They are friendly but like to take permanent captives for company. They sometimes have a greenish cast to their skin. Also called nymphs.

### **Example**

Class: druid

Level: 5

Life Points: 5/22/26

Armor: none

Damage: 2 points

Alignment: good

Special Abilities: able to charm at 8th level of effect (treat as Ranger's Love Potion: Find Herbs). Cannot be killed unless it's tree is first killed.

Special Weaknesses: Takes double damage from fire, takes damage if tree is damaged on a one

point for one point basis.

*Game Designers Manual* APPENDIX 1: FEATURED CREATURES **ELF**

Class: any  
Level: any  
Life Points: as per class and level  
Armor: any  
Damage: any  
Alignment: any  
Special Abilities: can be quite good archers  
Special Weaknesses: none

**Description:**

Elves are creatures of the forest. They are humanoid in form, but are generally slight of build. They can be somewhat reclusive, and they have a tendency to be somewhat shy around people. They are commonly good archers. Usually dress in browns and greens.

**Example**

Class: ranger  
Level: 5  
Life Points: 5/22/26  
Armor: 2 points  
Damage: 5  
Alignment: neutral  
Special Abilities: 140% marginal/ 80% critical with bow  
Special Weaknesses: none

## FAIRY

Class: any, tending toward MU

Level: low

Life Points: low

Armor: low

Damage: low

Alignment: neutral or good

Special Abilities: can usually cast one spell of a mischievous nature (e.g., DROPSY, RAY OF

ITCHING, SIMON'S SPELL, or WARP) and commonly have the PHASE OUT ability.

Special Weaknesses: easy to kill, have low life points

### **Description:**

Small, magical creatures of the woodlands. They tend to be cute, spend a good deal of time giggling, and can be mischievous. This includes sprites, pixies, and imps. In the past they have been played by NPCs and by GMs or SKs who carry around small "dolls" suspended from sticks or poles.

### **Example**

Class: magic user

Level: 1

Life Points: 2 (any good hit will kill one)

Armor: none

Damage: 1 point ~

Alignment: neutral but mischievous

Special Abilities: can cast DROPSY instantaneously, but must wait 6 seconds between usages.

Special Weaknesses: none, except for their low life points.

*Game Designers Manual* APPENDIX 1: FEATURED CREATURES **GHOST**

Class: any

Level: any

Life Points: not applicable

Armor: none

Damage: none

Alignment: any

Special Abilities: can't be harmed

Special Weaknesses: can be turned

**Description:**

A ghost is an insubstantial creature that is the spirit or soul of a person who has died. They are generally not combative and seldom harm players directly. They are not "physical" in the sense that they cannot be damaged. They are undead, and so can potentially be turned by a clerical TURN UNDEAD. Often the remains of the body are nearby, and in some cases the body is their vulnerability. NPCs playing ghost characters should be draped in white sheer material (not a sheet, because the players are likely to think the NPC is invisible instead). Also includes spirits.

**Example**

Class: monk

Level: 5

Life Points: not applicable

Armor: none

Damage: none

Alignment: neutral

Special-Abilities: can't be harmed by spells or weapons

Special Weaknesses: can be turned at 5th level



## GHOUL

Class: generally fighters

Level: moderate, 4-7

Life Points: moderate

Armor: low

Damage: moderate

Alignment: evil

Special Abilities: paralysis by weapon's touch; not affected by mind-affecting spells such as CRASH TIME, SPOOK, etc.

Special Weaknesses: they are undead, so spells and items affecting undead affect them; can be potentially turned.

### **Description:**

Ghouls are undead creature that look like corpses freshly risen from the grave. They move at a normal rate and often have the ability to paralyze a victim so that the victim can be more easily consumed. They usually smell bad and the GM should inform the players of the smell. Clothing is generally tattered.

### **Example**

Class: fighter

Level: 4

Life Points: 4/20/24

Armor: 1 point

Damage: 5 points

Alignment: evil

Special Abilities: can cause the effects of HOLD BEING in the first creature that they success

fully hit. This effect occurs at level 4 and may be done instead of doing damage.

Special Weaknesses: affected by holy water (2 points damage from each flask), can be TURNED at level 4, spells and items affecting undead affect them fully.

## GIANT

Class: generally fighters

Level: moderate to high

Life Points: high

Armor: moderate to high

Damage: high

Alignment: any

Special Abilities: can throw rocks, very strong

Special Weaknesses: none

**Description:** These are humanoid creatures of large proportions. They can be anywhere from 7 ft to 20 feet in height. They are incredibly strong and are capable of doing huge amounts of damage. They have been known to throw boulders at opponents

### Example

class: fighter

level: 8

Life Points: 12/70/75

Armor: 3 points

Damage: 10 points

Alignment: Good

Special Abilities: can throw boulders (represented by garbage bags filled with newspaper) which do 8 points of damage and a knockdown to anyone they hit (this includes hitting someone's weapon).

Special Weaknesses: none

## **GOLEM**

Class: any, typically fighter

Level: any, usually moderate to high

Life Points: generally high

Armor: moderate to good

Damage: moderate to good

Alignment: neutral

Special Abilities: see IFGS Fantasy rules druid spell GOLEM

Special Weaknesses: see IFGS Fantasy rules druid spell GOLEM

### **Description:**

Golems can be of earth, wood, wind, fire, lightning, or water, and their abilities are detailed in the fantasy rules under the druid class. They generally are mindless, and have been created to guard an area or an item.

### **Example**

Class: fighter Level: 7

Life Points: 7/40/48

Armor: 3 points

Damage: 7 points

Alignment: neutral

Special Abilities: as above

Special Weaknesses As above

## GRIMISH

Class: MU

Level: moderate

Life Points: moderate

Armor: none

Damage: none

Alignment: Neutral

Special Abilities: can give and take temporary life and spell points

Special Weaknesses: none

### **Description:**

These creatures usually dress in bright colors in garish or odd clothes. They tend to bargain with the PCs for temporary Life or Spell points. The challenge consists of the Grimish asking rules questions of the PCs. The cost/prize is agreed-upon life or spell points.

### **Example**

Class: MU

Level: 5

Life Points: 5/16/20

Armor: none

Damage: none

Alignment: neutral

Special Abilities: Can give and take life and spell points

Special Weaknesses: none

## HELLHOUND

Class: generally fighters

Level: high

Life Points: high

Armor: high

Damage: high

Alignment: evil

Special Abilities: can breathe fire and track really well through any kind of terrain

Special Weaknesses: take double damage from cold-based spells.

### **Description:**

Large demon-like dogs. They are capable of tracking over any kind of terrain and are commonly associated with other creatures from hell. They have been know to breathe fire. They are most commonly played as bipedal creatures - NPCs move as normal; makeup should be done to look dog-like.

**Example** Class: fighter

Level: 8 Life Points: 8/48/54 Armor: 4 points Damage: 8 points

Alignment: evil

Special Abilities: can breathe fire 3 times per day for 15 points damage in a path 10 ft wide and 20 ft long. Can track any creature on the same plane.

Special Weaknesses: take double damage from cold based spells (ICEBALL and CHILLING MIST), and take 2 points damage per flask from holy water.

## LICH

Class: magic user or cleric

Level: high

Life Points: moderate to high

Armor: moderate to high

Damage: moderate

Alignment: evil

Special Abilities: vary. Usually are powerful in terms of spells they can cast' and commonly have other undead under their control. They commonly have immunities to some spells.

Special Weaknesses: as per undead in general. They are affected by all spells that affect undead.

### **Description:**

Theses creatures are powerful undead lords. They are generally skeletal in appearance, and have achieved their undead status by choice, preferring semi-life to true death. They tend to be powerful spell casters.

**Example** Class: cleric

Level: 10

Life Points: 8/38144

Armor: 2 points

Damage: 7 points

Alignment: evil

Special Abilities: immune to SPOOK, ENTHRALL, SIMON'S SPELL, DROPSY, RAY OF ITCHING, and WEAKNESS, takes 1/2 damage from cold-based spells (ICEBALL and CHILLING MIST), immune to poison of all sorts. Able to cast SPOOK instantaneously at level 10. Able to cast AWE at level 10.

Special Weaknesses: as per undead in general. Any spell affecting undead specifically affects them fully. Holy water causes 5 points damage per flask.

## **NINJA**

Class: generally thieves or monks

Level: any, usually about the teams level

Life Points: as per class and level

Armor: low

Damage: moderate to high

Alignment: evil or neutral

Special Abilities: usually have poisons with them and may use thief's concealment ability

Special Weaknesses: none

### **Description:**

Ninja are a type of assassin. They generally are clothed entirely in black and attack under the cover of night. They tend to use poisons, and generally have orders to kill themselves if they are spotted.

### **Example**

Class: monk

Level: 8 (killing specialty)

Life Points: 8138/44

Armor: 3 points

Damage: 6

Alignment: neutral

Special Abilities: can use thief's CONCEALMENT ability at level 8

Special Weaknesses: None

## NECROMANCER

Class: usually cleric or magic user

Level: any

Life Points: as per class and level

Armor: low

Damage: low

Alignment: neutral or evil

Special Abilities: have special abilities for the control and creation of undead

Special Weaknesses: none

### **Description:**

These are humans or humanoids that specialize in the control of undead and the gaining of powers from death. They commonly travel with undead.

### **Example**

Class: cleric

Level: 6

Life Points: 6/24/30

Armor 2 points

Damage: 4 points

Alignment: neutral

Special Abilities: can cast CONTROL UNDEAD and ANIMATE DEAD at 1/2 cost (round down).

Special Weaknesses: none



## **OGRE**

Class: usually fighter

Level: moderate, 4th - 6th

Life Points: high

Armor: moderate

Damage: high

Alignment: neutral or evil

Special Abilities: often have added immunity to CRASH TIME spells

Special Weaknesses: none

### **Description:**

These are very large and strong creatures, but they are generally not too bright. They commonly have green skin, and are very muscular.

### **Example**

Class: fighter

Level: 5

Life Points: 8/40/48

Armor: Z

Damage: 8 points

Alignment: evil

Special Abilities: 7th level with respect to CRASH TIME

Special Weaknesses: stupid, easily tricked

## SIREN

Class: usually Druid

Level: moderate, 3rd- 6th

Life Points: as per class and level

Armor: low

Damage: low

Alignment: any

Special Abilities: voice causes charm

Special Weaknesses: none

### **Description:**

These creatures use their voices to charm groups of people, for various purposes. They are generally feminine in form, and somewhat attractive.

### **Example**

Class: druid..Level: 3 Armor: none

Damage: 2 points Alignment: good Special Abilities: by singing for 5 seconds can cause a charm which has the effect on all listeners of an ENTHRALL at 6th level. Special

Weaknesses: none

## SKELETON

Class: generally fighters

Level: low 1st- 3rd

Life Points: low

Armor: low

Damage: low

Alignment: neutral

Special Abilities: immune to mind affecting spells

Special Weaknesses: as per undead in general.

### **Description:**

These creatures are undead of the lowest levels. They, as their name implies, are skeletal in form. They move at a normal rate, and are fairly easy to kill.

### **Example**

Class: fighter

Level: 1

Life Points: 3/10/14

Armor: none

Damage: 3 points

Alignment: neutral

Special Abilities: immune to all mind-affecting spells such as CRASH TIME, SIREN, ENTHRALL, SIMON'S SPELL, RAY OF ITCHING, and DROPSY

Special Weaknesses: any spell or ability affecting undead in particular affects them fully; can

be potentially turned.

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## SUCCUBUS/INCUBUS

Class: generally a spell caster

Level: high

Life Points: moderate to high

Armor: moderate

Damage: moderate to high

Alignment: evil

Special Abilities: can sometimes ENTHRALL automatically just by their presence; often steal

permanent or temporary life points, spell points, or levels. Can only be damaged by magic spells or magic weapons.

Special Weaknesses: don't like to be revealed for what they are; generally have a specific mission and won't go too far out of the bounds of that mission.

### **Description:**

These demon-like creatures often have a tail, horns, or wings that can give them away for what they are. They try to defeat or damage the players by seduction, sometimes by the promise of their bodies or by the promise of other desired things such as power. Succubus is the female form and incubus is the male form.

### **Example**

Class: magic user

Level: 9

Life Points: 12/44/50

Armor: 2 points

Damage: 10 points

Alignment: evil

Special abilities: Can cast ENTHRALL instantaneously 3 times per day at level 9; a kiss from

the creature will remove 2 permanent spell points, or 3 permanent life points if the character has no spell points; can only be damaged by magic spells and magic weapons.

Special weaknesses: none

## **TROLL**

Class: usually fighter

Level: moderate to high, 4th - 8th

Life Points: generally higher than indicated by class and level

Armor: high

Damage: high

Alignment: evil

Special Abilities: regeneration

Special Weaknesses: none

### **Description:**

These large, very strong creatures are generally not too bright but can be quite cunning. They have tough armor, high hit points, and are capable of doing large amounts of damage. They commonly travel in groups, and, perhaps the most dangerous thing about them is that they regenerate. The only way to ensure that they stay dead is to burn their bodies.

### **Example**

Class: fighter

Level: 7

Life Points: 10/50/56

Armor: 4 points

Damage: 8 points

Alignment: evil Special Abilities: they regenerate, without resting, at a rate of 5 points per 10 seconds.

Special Weaknesses: none

## VAMPIRE

Class: any

Level: generally high

Life Points: moderate to high

Armor: moderate

Damage: high

Alignment: evil

Special Abilities: able to drain temporary or permanent life points or levels by weapon strike.

They are only affected by magic weapons or spells. They are immune to many LI spells.

Often able to charm by holding eye contact.

Special Weaknesses: can be strongly affected by sunlight or holy water.

### **Description:**

These creatures commonly look quite human, though they tend to be pale with very red or black lips. They have unusually long incisors. They feed on human blood, and commonly prefer the blood of the opposite sex.

### **Example**

Class: knight

Level: 9

Life Points: 10/100/120

Armor: 4 points

Damage: 10 points

Alignment: evil

Special Abilities: immune to CRASH TIME, ENTHRALL, SIREN, SIMON'S SPELL, RAY OF ITCHING, DROPSY, and SPOOK. Take 1/2 damage from cold. Able to charm (as per magic user ENTHRALL) at 9th level if they can hold eye contact for 5 seconds.

Special Weaknesses: Affected by any spells or abilities that work specifically on undead. Holy water does 10 points damage per flask.

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## WERE CREATURE

Class: generally fighters

Level: moderate to high, 4th - 8th

Life Points: higher than class and level would indicate

Armor: moderate, 1-3 points

Damage: moderate to high, 4-10 points

Alignment: generally evil, but can be good or neutral

Special Abilities: can only be damaged by magical or silver weapons and spells, can sometimes inflict the disease/curse by doing damage to an opponent (but the disease/curse must be strictly defined in this case).

Special Weaknesses: affected by the druid spell LIGHT BEAM: MOONLIGHT.

### **Description:**

These beasts are human for part of the time, and spend the rest of their time in beast-form. The beast-form is physically stronger than the human form, and somewhat more difficult to damage. The beast form is also generally not benign. Examples of were creatures include were bears, werewolves, were tigers, and were rats. The listings below will give the statistics for the bestial form since the human form is as per any character. This condition is generally considered a curse, a disease, or both. Synonym: lycanthrope.

### **Example**

Class: Fighter

Level: 5th

Life Points: 7/40/~8 Armor 2 points Damage: 6 points Alignment: evil Special Abilities: only damaged by magic or silver weapons and spells.

Special Weaknesses: damaged by druid spell LIGHT BEAM: MOONLIGHT.

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## WITCH/WARLOCK

Class: any spell caster

Level: about the level of the team

Life Points: as per class and level

Armor: as per class

Damage: as per class

Alignment: any

Special Abilities: sometimes have the ability to see into the future (and thus give hints about the game); often times their skills are underestimated.

Special Weaknesses: sometimes they are old and do not move swiftly.

### **Description:**

This is another name for a spell caster. Much like Necromancers, witches/warlocks have some particular affinity, often dealing with nature. They are usually good with herbs or other druidic things.

### **Example**

Class: magic user

Level: 3

Life Points: 3/12/24

Armor: none

Damage: neutral Alignment: neutral Special abilities: can see into the future (of a game) and will tell the events yet to happen in rhyme and riddle. May "read" the fortunes of some of the PCs with Tarot cards for a few gold pieces. Special Weakness: none



## ZOMBIE

Class: generally fighter

Level: low to moderate

Life Points: moderate

Armor: low

Damage: moderate

Alignment: neutral or evil

Special Abilities: Often have a toxin poison on the weapon they are using which will turn those struck into zombies unless a NEUTRALIZE POISON or HEAL spell for 6 points or more is cast on the victim within a few minutes. They can sometimes regenerate. They are not affected by mind-affecting spells such as CRASH TIME, SPOOK, or DROPSY.

Special weaknesses: They generally move slowly, are damaged by holy water, and can be affected by those spells and abilities affecting undead.

### **Description:**

These are undead creatures that generally move at half speed; NPCs generally wear tattered clothing and white or gray face paint.

### **Example**

Class fighter Level 2

Life Points: 3/16/20 Armor: 1 point

Damage: 4 points

Alignment: neutral Special abilities: has a toxin poison on the weapon which will turn the FIRST victim the zombie hits into a zombie 60 seconds after the combat in which the poison is inflicted is over; a NEUTRALIZE POISON or 6-point HEAL spell will prevent the conversion as long as it is done within the 60 second period. Zombie should call out "zombie poison" on its first hit.

Special weaknesses: These creatures move at about half speed and are affected by all spells and abilities affecting undead; they can be potentially turned.

## APPENDIX 2: STANDARD ITEMS AND COSTS

Below are listed the suggested prices for the more common magical and non-magical items and services. These prices are based upon a survey of IFGS members, combined with an analysis of the cost of items in past games. Keeping prices in the same ballpark helps maintain a consistency between games and a fairness for all players involved. Imagine the frustrated PC who finds out that another character paid 500 GP for a +1 ring of protection when they paid 5000 GP! Also note that you can list the prices of items in your game at 10-20% higher in order to allow NPCs and PCs to role play bargaining and arguing about the price (note the thief ability that allows them to purchase an item at 10% below cost). The prices listed below should be considered a GUIDELINE only, but you should try to stay within the general range of the listed price.

### NON-MAGICAL ITEMS

- cup of wine 2 GP
- A stein of beer 1 GP
- A meal 2 GP
- night's lodging 5 GP
- leather 50 GP
- Chain mail 400 GP
- Plate mail 1500 GP
- Bow 30 GP
- A quiver of arrows (10) 10 GP
- Short sword 30 GP
- Long sword 60 GP
- Staff 20 GP
- Shield 50 GP

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## SERVICES

- Healing 4 points 100 GP
- Mend spell 25 GP
- Savvy 40 GP
- Foresee 50 GP
- Raise Dead 1000 GP per level
- Remove Curse 4th level 250 GP
- Remove Curse 6th level 450 GP
- Remove Curse 8th level 800 GP
- Restore 1 perm. life pt. 900 GP

## MAGIC SCROLLS

In general, scrolls should cost 100 to 200 GP per level of the scroll. Scrolls with offensive spells should cost the most, followed by defensive, healing, and information. A few examples are listed below.

- Fireball, 6th level 600 to 1200 GP
- Healing, 6 points 300 GP
- Savvy, 1 property 100 GP
- Disrupt, 24 point 800 to 1600 GP

## MAGIC WEAPONS

- +1 short sword 1000 GP
- +1 long sword 1500 GP
- +1 staff 1000 GP
- +1 polearm 1000 GP
- +1 bow 1250 GP
- +1 arrow 50 GP
- +2 weapon (2-point) 2500 GP
- +2 weapon (3-point) 3500 GP

## MAGIC ARMOR

- +1 leather 1100 GP
- +1 chain 1800 GP
- +1 plate 4000 GP
- +2 leather 2500 GP
- +2 chain 5000 GP

## P E R M A N E N T M A G I C I T E M S

- +1 spell point per day 750 GP
- +1 life point per day 400 GP
- 1 Savvy per day 300 GP
- heals 4 points per day 600 GP
- +1 ring of protection 1000 GP
- +2 ring of protection 4000 GP
- 3/4 inch lock pick 1000 GP
- 1 extra touch lock pick 1300 GP
- 4 point DEADEYE per day 600 GP
- Wand of fireballs, 5 charges, 12 pt fireballs instantaneous 2500 GP
- +1 against LI spells 1500 GP
- +2 against LI spells 4000 GP

## APPENDIX 3: ADVICE FROM GAME DESIGNERS

### **Daniel Frazier** **Denver/Boulder Chapter**

I have been asked to write a few pointers for new GDs. To keep from being ponderous, I am going to pack as much in as little space as possible.

If you haven't helped several other GDs put on a game and gotten a lot of other support experience, don't ask the IFGS to put on your game. Get experience first and learn, learn, learn.

Talk to your friends long and hard about putting on a game. Are they willing to assist you in a game or should you help them create a game? Don't ask them to Loremaster! Otherwise you may find yourself swamped.

Analyze what your strengths and weaknesses are and surround yourself with people who can cover your soft spots.

Read the GD manual, the SC Handbook, the SC Training paper and look at some other sanctioned games. There is a lot of experience available there that may be too expensive for you to get first hand.

You'll need a computer!!!!

Don't get too far along on your game before giving it to the SC. Listen to their comments. They want your game to be a good one as much as you do.

You'll need a strong story line. Don't make it difficult for them to do it.

Your plot needs to count for differing alignments, classes, levels, and gaming experience. Different PCs will make a variety of choices and you need to accommodate that.

Make sure your game is suited to those who will play it.

Advertise or recruit for the right people.

What does your game offer the new people, the romantics, the thinkers, the role players?

Our real life offers many frustrations and few opportunities to resolve them. Some of the greatest games have been where a PC was given a chance to defeat an Antagonist in a heroic manner. Does your game offer a chance at heroism?

*Game Designers Manual APPENDIX 3: ADVICE FROM GAME DESIGNERS*

If you are doing a mini-game, are you paying attention to the PCs motivations and problems or are you *just* having them play in your world? Personalize the game for them. If something oppressive may happen to them in an encounter, make sure they know why. Provide a escape clause.

If the PCs would enjoy your game even if there were no gold or magic rewards then you may have a good game. If they wouldn't then it isn't.

A PC treasures a magic item that has some memories with it. Put your efforts into the lore of the item and making it significant to the plot.

Don't give it a long list of magic properties. It needs to be easily understood and playable. If a PC has a magic item that blasts undead, give him/her some undead to blast. Don't give him/her undead that for some phony reason don't get blasted.

Have a relative read your story line. If they don't get it, neither will the PCs, your NPCs or the SC... OK?

The PCs need to be participants and not voyeurs of the game while you do things to them and around them. Their own actions need to affect the outcome of events.

Costumes can do wonders for establishing a fantasy setting. Do them if you can afford the time and expense.

Signs can also help a game. This can let people know where, when and who. They can also do the job of description. A white sign on a fence that says "20 ft high wall of stone stretching to the horizons" can eliminate work making a large prop.

Dwarf written on the forehead of an NPC may let the PCs know how to react in the encounter.

A good encounter map will let a lot of people know where they are supposed to be without wasted time and energy.

The night before the game when you're not sleeping, get some 5x8 cards, place the names of your encounter captains and aides on them, and write them their last minute instructions. Hand them out in the morning.

For most games, designate someone as a property master. This person should make sure all items get to the correct encounter.

Most items should be marked with who it belongs to and where it goes. Your job is not to do the game, your job is to delegate responsibilities to good people and oversee that they are doing their jobs.

People have to know where you are. Don't go running off and leave others without communication with you.

After the game make sure you appreciate the people who helped you.

*APPENDIX 3: ADVICE FROM GAME DESIGNERS Game Designers Manual*

**John Cade**  
**Denver-Boulder Chapter**

### **YOU ARE DISPENSABLE**

Any game designer should periodically ask "Why am I doing this? Who am I really designing this game for?" The biggest challenge is giving everyone involved a good time and they don't all enjoy the same things. The participants don't even all enjoy what you do. If you succeed, you'll be a celebrity with a lot of pressure for another game and if you mess up you'll be a villain or worse. It's worth it.

One style of game, which I've observed to work very well, has a rather simple, straight forward, achievable goal. If the PC's have to retrieve a chest, rescue a person, kill a dragon, or make good an escape then they have an end result that they can see and feel. They can visualize this sort of ending easier than trying to "save the world", "realign the cosmos", or "balance the scales of good and evil." People are stretching their imaginations to play their parts and "see" the worlds we create and if pushed too hard, they will be "shocked" out of character. Always look at your game as if you were the PC or NPC. They will not always see it the same way you do.

You are dispensable! I have been. I was rendered immobile two days before one of my game ran and my aides, GMs and NPCs ran my game - successfully. Choose reliable people (not just your friends) for your key support positions before you choose NPCs, LMs, or PCs. Your game will not run without your support people. Once you have them, always treat them well! Talk to your game crew, listen to them, include them in your plans, and treat them as you would want to be if you were one of them.

There is always "busy work" before, and on, game day, but do not get in too deep. Delegate work to those good people you talked into helping you and stay out of their way! If you get nervous, panicky, or worse, it will spread to those around you. Stay available and out of your game crew's hair. If you do the work of, or overrule, a game aide or GM, you lessen their authority in the eyes of everyone else. You talked these people into doing these jobs

so let them work. Several GDs I know should be chained to a tree on game day for their own safety as well as those around them.

Do not anticipate seeing much, if any, of your game as it runs. Trust to photogs and incoming reports and stories (and take them with a grain of salt). The first reports you usually get are the foul ups, the problems, and the complaints - stay calm and gracious. The good news, enjoyable stories, and praises move slower for some reason - be patient and confident. If your prep work was good and your game crew came through, it will run (most games will run - after being started - by momentum alone, despite numerous problems) and people will still have a good time. Don't spoil it by being a physical and emotional wreck. Make sure you spend as much effort thanking the people who helped you as you spent talking them into this. You might want to do this again. |



**Roger Spendlove**  
**Denver-Boulder Chapter**  
**Dallas Provisional Chapter**

### **WE PLAY GAMES TO HAVE FUN**

That is the only reason, and the Game Designer must always keep that in mind. Write your game so that as many people as possible can have fun with it. Give them a chance to be heroic; let the cunning and sneaky people do just that; let fighters fight and the thinkers think; challenge them, make it difficult and "dangerous", but always within their abilities to succeed. Even a simple physical accomplishment like crossing a ropes-course successfully or running up a hill to save someone can be the most memorable, rewarding and fun part of a game to a player.

Write situations into the game that can be solved any number of ways (and be aware that the players will come up with solutions you never even conceived of), and the players will subconsciously come up with the one that is the most fun for them.

But all of this is for the benefit of the players- the PCS. In a way, it is easy to produce a game that is pleasing to the PCs. But more difficult, and perhaps more important because of this, is making sure that everyone else has fun. They are entitled to have fun in a game just as much as the PCs are. And if they don't enjoy it, they will probably not come back.

The NPCs and Coordinators will put in a great deal more work than the player characters. They have to make a new costume, make props, become a totally new character every time they NPC, go on pre-game walk-throughs, set up the props, settings, and structures at the location before the game and tear-down afterwards, and frequently the person will have to do this for two or three NPC roles in the same game! Write every NPC role in your game so that it can be fun to play. And consider accepting any suggestions the person has that would make their role more enjoyable to them.

The GM usually doesn't have as much preliminary work to do (unless he or she is helping out with other things like prop construction), but their job during a game requires them to make difficult snap-decisions, be aware of everything that is going on simultaneously (as much as this is possible), and to interpret the intent of what you wrote in the game script. Make their job easier-and hence more enjoyable- by writing your game script as clear and specific as possible. Don't make them guess at what something means, or why you wrote it the way you did. Edit and proofread your script so that you have ABSOLUTELY NO ERRORS, and that everything is understandable. If you have to explain too many things later on, then you have not written the script as well as you should have.

Designing an IFGS game is very much like producing a movie. The GD is like the writer who writes the script; the Sanctioning Committee is like the Big Name Studio who

approves of it and commissions rewrites so that the audiences will like it; the GD is also the Producer who recruits the cast (NPCs) and production crew (GMs, SKs, Game Aides, NPC- and Encounter Coordinators, Quartermaster's Representative, etc.), and the Director who oversees everything while it is being

*APPENDIX 3: ADVICE FROM GAME DESIGNERS Game Designers Manual*

played/filmed. But unlike with a movie production, in IFGS we are not dealing with paid professionals. You as the Game Designer, cannot fire anyone for poor work, nor can you pay them *to* do an unpleasant job. Most of your NPCs, Coordinators and GMs are going to be your closer friends, for they are the ones you know best and can trust to do the jobs right. And you certainly don't want to put your friends through a bad experience.

In IFGS, everyone is a volunteer (including yourself); and we do it for no other reason but: TO HAVE FUN. It is your job to make sure everyone does.

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**Troy Douglas**  
**Denver/Boulder Chapter**  
**Colorado Springs Provisional Chapter**

WHAT I TELL NEW GAME DESIGNERS

There are four or five things I try to share with the "new guys" when they start out with a game in mind.

1. There is a real and profound difference between "sit-down" gaming and "live-scale" gaming that a lot of first timers don't grasp. Part of it is the fact that you have a lot of other people playing the characters that you write. It is much more like casting and direction of a play than anything else I've encountered.

2. I am a firm believer in the concept that the best and easiest way to write a game is as you walk around the site. Ideas will come to you as you walk around, and you are much less likely to try to "force" an encounter in a dangerous place if you do it this way.

3. The concept of what is safe and what is not, in the game sense is something to be always in the back of the designer's mind. Not only is the way the personnel are involved to be considered, but the effect of terrain, lighting, and any special effects need to be considered (this is another reason for walking the terrain prior to finalizing the design).

4. Continuity!!! This is making everything in the game make sense and "fit" the context of the game. It is taking the time to work out alternate solutions to the same problem and making those solutions part of the feel of the game (what would a certain character do if this happened...?)

5. Delegate! Don't try to do it all!

**Mark Mathews-Simmons**  
**Denver-Boulder Chapter**

A GD is taking on a massive job. More, the GD is taking on the job of doing all this within the written guidelines of the rules and the IFGS policies of safety (both the result of years of experience), and using the abilities of volunteers ranging from the Quartermaster to the bankers, treasurer, etc.

To maintain one's sanity while also effectively causing all of the above to happen, the GD MUST:

1. communicate
2. get competent, committed aides and delegate the work to them
3. use the already-established resources of the IFGS
4. learn from the mistakes of others

1. **COMMUNICATION:** This is the best way to get people to do what you need done. The lack of communication has ruined many good games. Tell your Game Aides everything, in writing (or be sure everyone is taking notes). Take advantage every time you meet or speak with them to tell them what is going on with every other facet of the game preparations. **MAKE YOUR GAME AIDES KNOW EVERYTHING THAT YOU KNOW**, from who is the WD to where each encounter is set and where each radio is.

You can make communication very easy by setting up a pre-game meeting schedule (I recommend one meeting every two weeks) and sticking to it. Give all Aides a copy, and as you get a Safety Officer, a Quartermaster representative, a major NPC, or whatever, give them a copy of this meeting schedule. Now they all know when and where you are expecting them (and their progress reports), and when they can discuss what they are doing and any problems they might be running into, face-to-face.

Ask any GD: there have been innumerable mistakes, missing NPCs, missing props, and resultant disasters **SIMPLY BECAUSE SOMEONE DID NOT KNOW OR WAS NOT TOLD** something.

2. **GAME AIDES:** Be discriminating. Ask three or four people who you know (only use close friends if you know that they will come through), or who already have a reputation for effective work to Aide for you. Get one experienced, reputable GD if you can.

Delegate virtually everything to these aides, then manage the work as it progresses. Your main job (after writing and scripting the game, which should be done by now) is to

manage, and dare I repeat myself, communicate. You keep things moving, and let your Aides do the physical work. If you don't pile too much on any one Aide they should be just fine, and enjoy the fact that you trust them and are letting them do it rather than not letting them do anything.

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In particular, assign one Aide as NPC recruiter and coordinator. Get their name and phone number onto the game flyer, and give them a list of every role needed, and a time table for each encounter and role, so that they can assign NPCs who could do more than one role.

Assign a third Aide to arrange all props and buildings, either by getting them from the QM or having them made. This Aide could also work with the Bank to insure that a Banker is at Game Start and Game End to give out and collect gold and treasure and get all involved registered for experience points. This Aide also gets the stuff to the encounter sites and causes the encounter to be set up.

A fourth Aide can expedite with you and the other Aides, including getting vehicles to haul everything to and from the game site to disseminating lore to the teams, making sure the NPCs have safe weapons and setting up some weapons practices, testing PCs for archery scores, disseminating game write-ups to all, working with the flyers person to get the game flyer made and distributed, etc.

Thus, you can now concentrate on coordinating these Aides, the Safety Officer, WD, Sanctioning relations, etc. Don't worry, you will have plenty to do, and if you do it no one will be able to reproach your delegation of the above jobs. Rather, you will still get all the glory for a successful game (which is why you want to thank all who helped and make sure they get recognized also), and all the blame for a disaster.

3. USE THE RESOURCES OF THE IFGS: Use the committees to gain everything from a recruitment list for NPCs (the PR committee) to props (the QM). You'd be amazed at how much work this saves. Also, ask GDs who Aided well for them in the past, what land they used, etc. Use the rules book while you're writing. Go through every ability and spell with each written encounter to allow for the PCs being able to affect things.

Why bother reinventing the wheel, when you can use everyone else's experience and the assets of the IFGS? This way, you can spend more time creating a great game.

4. LEARNING FROM OTHERS: This book, the GM Handbook, and the Rules book, comprise a three-volume set. Six years, hundreds of people's work, over thirty major games, and a massive amount of successes and failures have gone into the development of these books. Use what works: don't use what has been shown or can be argued not to work.

Ask GDs what they've done that has worked, and what has failed. There is no other way we can tell you all that we have learned in this book! Ask any experienced IFGSer what

they think of a given encounter style or plot device. NPCs will tell you what makes it fun for them. PCs will tell you what makes it fun for them. So will Aides, and all the rest. Avoid what people tell you makes it not fun. Use what people tell you IS fun. If you are well-acquainted with these, you could very well design new, better ways to do things. If not, you'll likely make the same mistakes that others have made.

This particular GD's experience includes these helpful hints: You CAN create an original, excellent game with or without using a single encounter used in the past. But the elements which make an encounter, or a game, good for all participants don't really change. These include activity, action, use of brainwork, opportunity for role-playing, the unfolding of a good story, and the feeling of being able to influence what's happening.

Things that dampen people's fun include encounters where they can only stand and watch (unless there are few, and these with darned good reasons), out-of-atmosphere incidents (you name it), story lines that don't progress or make sense, massive lateness (a little delay is forgivable), PCs encountering more than rarely NPCs who can't be discounted or dispatched (boring, no-challenge encounters), NPCs sitting uninformed for too long, wondering why the team hasn't arrived to them.

My personal preference is: putting the PCs right on the edge of life-and-death, where they have all the wherewithal to survive and win, but yet the alternative of getting killed. In doing this, the best games allow for many different PC actions, each of which affects the outcome for that team. Flowcharting of the encounters, so that many different PC actions can fit into the story line, is a valuable and worthwhile bit of extra work for the GD who wants everyone to come off the course smiling, whether they died or not.

For NPCs, make sure that they know that their roles, no matter how small, are important (otherwise you wouldn't have bothered writing them). Show them the whole game, and how they fit in. Within the parameters you set, let them develop their character's personality. And, above all, give them as much activity as possible.

**GOOD LUCK!**

**Jamie Benson**  
**Dallas Provisional Chapter**

As a novice game designer, I was very worried about submitting my first game. I thought the Sanctioning Committee would laugh at me and say "try again..." In order to quell my fears, I worked hard on submitting a complete game, in terms of plot, mechanics, and forms. It turned out the SC was quite pleased to have a game in such good shape.

I have found working with a partner who is not emotionally involved with the game helps me be more objective. It is a good idea to have someone to bounce ideas off of, help when you get stuck, recognize problems with the story line, and balance the game as a whole.

The first thing I do is come up with a sketchy story line. I let an idea germinate in my head until it is well formed enough to supply a major plot for a game. After I have a major thread, I look for minor subplots to fill the game out. The subplots are not necessarily related to the major idea of the game, but it is necessary to justify the presence of each encounter in a game to myself before the SC has a chance to look it over. If you have a good idea for an encounter, but you just can't justify its presence, save it for your next game. Think about it at a later date, and it just might grow into a full story line on its own. Don't become so attached to a sub-plot that it distorts your thinking about the rest of the game.

Once the plot and subplots are formed, the mechanics of the game must be addressed. How will the PCs get from point A to point B? What clues will they receive to help them on their way? Is there too little fighting? Too much magic? Not enough thinking involved? Will they all be killed? Think about logistics problems as you read each encounter. If you have an NPC that appears three times in your game, how will he move around to get in front of your team? Is there a long gap between some encounters and others that are too close together? PCs hate long walks and hate waiting for a team in front of them - your game rating will suffer if this happens. Maybe adding or rearranging some nuisance encounters would help the flow of the game. Go over each encounter while thinking about what wild things PCs could do that would deviate from what you want them to do. This WILL happen at some point! It will be a better game if your GMs know what to tell the PCs when they ask an off the wall question about some minor detail.

The last thing you must do before submitting a game is to fill out the required forms. This sounds trivial, but it can help you recognize budget problems with your game. I usually go through the game again, reading each encounter to identify props. I always forget to write some needed prop down, which leaves me with a budget overrun almost immediately. By going through the game with a "props" comb, I identify every tiny prop that in the end will cost a few dollars extra.



*APPENDIX 3: ADVICE FROM GAME DESIGNERS Game Designers Manual*

The final frontier: the sanctioning committee. You know your game is perfect and will wow the SC with your neat ideas. Guess again. Everyone has their own opinion on what does or does not make a good game. Many viewpoints are represented on the SC. When the SC calls you about your game, take a deep breath, relax, and listen to their suggestions. At first, you may be upset about some of their suggested changes, but given time, you will see some of their ideas will actually enhance the game for the PCs. If you feel strongly about something that they want to get rid of or change dramatically, explain your point of view and see if you can come to a compromise. The SC is there to help you balance your game in relation *to* other games, to make sure there are no safety problems, and to be sure the PCs have a fair shot at surviving long enough to have a good time.

Writing and producing a game is not a trivial task. It requires literally hundreds of hours of preparation and creative thinking to get the job done right. Be aware of the commitment that is required to see the game through to the end.

Good Luck!!

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**Dirk Hovorka**  
**Denver-Boulder Chapter**

**REFLECTIONS FROM THE DARK SIDE**

Any serious discussion of game designing should include consideration of the nature of "Evil." Evil is difficult to define because it is not an absolute. Evil exists only in relation to the concept of Good and is therefore mutable. Evil is not embodied by a "Necromancer" trying to kill everything in sight and dying pointlessly in the process because the GD wanted a bunch of Necromancers wandering around. The concept of Evil involves an "enlightened self-interest" without a conscience to guide it. Evil does not mean stupid nor does it imply a death-wish. Evil NPC characters should be able to use their full class abilities and have the option of surrendering or fleeing an encounter if it is the interest of perpetuating their lives. Evil does not mean insane, mean, petty or egotistical. An Evil nature indicates a lack of "morals" (a relative term at best) and a desire for self promotion at ANY cost. Evil requires forethought and intent - a tree, a rock, a lion or a sword cannot be Evil. They can only act within their nature. A troll that wishes to eat you or a Balrog that tries to kill you for invading his domain are not the epitome of Evil. They are also only acting within their natures. Evil wishes to use people, to manipulate situations for its own gain. This means that Evil can be nice, can reward servants, can aid those it is manipulating - all for its own end gain. Evil lacks the altruism and the selflessness of Good. Evil stops at nothing, no law, no moral, no conscience to get what it wants. Only sentience and an opposing set of morals bring the concept of Evil out of the Darkness.

So why is presenting the concept of Evil in a game so very difficult? Continuity, or more precisely, the lack thereof, is a major factor. Given the tendency of GDs to create their own new worlds and ignore existing lore and the previous experiences of PC and NPC characters, it becomes difficult for PCs to develop long term relationships with NPC characters. This in turn makes it next to impossible for NPCs to demonstrate their latent "self-interest." How can any creature be "Evil" if you only meet it once and proceed to kill it? Then it's just dead.

Continuity within and between games is important. It allows Evil to grow and to affect the PC characters. Games should not be just a matter of killing the bad guys, saving the good guys and collecting the reward. Well-designed games cause the players to "emote", to experience fear, relief, hatred, joy, friendship and the entire gammut of emotions. "Monty Hall" type games, in which the PCs never feel at risk and know that they will succeed, soon cloy the emotional palette. Like roller coasters, horror films and fast cars, games need to at least give the perception that the participating characters are at risk. It takes time for a PC to realize that an Evil is at work and to really feel that they WANT to do something (as opposed to just following the desires of the GD). Certainly a Cleric can DETECT EVIL/GOOD in an NPC and inform his companions. But wouldn't the PCs really believe it, at a "gut level", if that NPC had the opportunity to demonstrate Good or Evil

actions over a period of time? To meet an NPC on multiple occasions provides the opportunity for stony friendship or hatred on the part of PCs and NPCs alike.

PCs quickly develop ties with their traveling companions. But without continuity between games they can't gain emotional ties with NPCs, whether that tie is fear of the Evil cleric whose minions they slew or friendship with the eternally grateful lord whose wayward son they saved from the marauding hordes. Designing games in existing worlds allows the PCs the pleasure of an ongoing relationship with some NPC characters and allows the NPCs the chance to really develop a character and personality (as well as reusing costumes!). It also forces PCs to be responsible for their actions - knowing that you will be returning to the scene of your crime and will have to deal with the consequences might make PCs rethink where their best interests lie!

It is important to remember who the game is for - the PCs, NPCs, GMs and SKs. Everybody BUT the GD. If an encounter is not going to add to their enjoyment, it should be deleted no matter how much you want it. PCs enjoy being able to predict and react to some of the occurrences indicated by their environment. NPCs often enjoy replaying characters that have influenced the PCs in previous games. A game should not be a string of unrelated encounters that are individually interesting. The "Monty Python" style of non-sequitur game designing leaves the participants dazed and (if you are lucky) bemused, but lacks an essential flow of events. If a really exciting encounter idea doesn't fit within the context of the overall game you should save it for a future game.

Fantasy gaming allows opportunity for the participants to experience something outside their everyday lives - like true Evil. The majority of us are only ever touched by petty insults, ignorance, meaningless slights; not a true mind-bending soul-rending Evil. The kind that leaves you whimpering alone in the dark recesses of your mind. An encounter with such a force allows for true Heroism, for a success unlike any we ever face in our carefully turned and protected lives. It allows for the primal chest-beating exultation of victory over a worthy and frighteningly dangerous opponent that most people lost somewhere back in the beginnings of "civilization." Achieving this level of emotion requires that we be threatened at a gut-wrenching level, that we fear for something greater than our paltry lives, that we embody the very concept that creates Evil - success at any cost.

Evil is a very difficult but vital aspect of Fantasy gaming. Without it we have no measure of Good - without light and dark everything becomes the equivalent of gray. We lose some of the emotion gaming can bring forth. We can certainly experience fear of injury, death or failure, and happiness at success, survival, getting lots of nifty treasure and new toys. But we lose the burning desire, the ambition, the overwhelming obsession with defeating the advances of an Evil that has abused us, hurt, used, manipulated our friends and will continue to do so. Unless we act. In the face of that sort of Evil, we have a cause and the possibility of joy commensurate with our suffering when it is defeated, or joined. Yes, joined. Does any character ALWAYS act selflessly and altruistically? Does not a little Evil lurk within the beating heart of us all?

**Paul Hayes**  
**Denver-Boulder Chapter**

Advice on game design, hmmm? Well, don't do it. No, that should be "DON'T DO IT!"

I can see that I haven't convinced you. I guess that would be kind of hard, considering that you have read this far in this book (unless you are one of those people who just skip to the end, and if so, make sure you go back to the start 'cause there's good stuff in here), and also considering that you are still reading this looking for some kind of enlightenment. I will try to oblige you.

The things that have been said above (and below) are all what I would consider good advice, but I think I will focus on one talent that, as a game designer, you should develop. Flexibility. Put in the simplest terms, what I mean by this is that nature or skill which allows you, in the most inconvenient or uncomfortable of circumstances, to remain calm and continue reviewing different options with an eye to what will work and what will be the best of the options you have.

Your practice of flexibility should begin at the point at which you begin writing your game. You will probably have a plot or some encounters in mind. Take a long hard look at them, try them on, see if they fit the overall flow you wish to have in your game. Do this with Flexibility in mind. That is, be critical, and if something doesn't quite fit, or doesn't give exactly the taste that you want, consider other possibilities.

Don't needlessly tie yourself to your lore, or, rather, to how you perceive your lore. Consider how others will perceive it. Consider other possibilities for your basic design. Perhaps instead of bandits these should be Orcs, or Trolls, or soldiers. Perhaps instead of the "Glowing Orb of Jeshmal, unobtainable by even the most powerful of heroes, and able to blast the tops off of the mountains", it should be the "Bright Sword of Jeshmal, obtainable only by the bravest of heroes, and able to aid in the most difficult of battles." Remain Flexible in your thinking at this stage. Keep an open mind as to what you wish to accomplish, and of how to accomplish it. Don't immediately discard an idea simply because "that isn't part of my lore." Consider the merit of the idea, and change the lore to fit in good ideas.

Secondly, practice Flexibility when it comes time to deal with the sanctioning committee (or anyone else from whom you are asking criticism). They will undoubtedly have many suggestions for your game, some of which will disturb you. Retain Flexibility. Consider the ideas, weigh their merit honestly even if it means a serious amount of rewrite in terms of the game or the lore, even if it goes against your personal likes and dislikes, and make the alterations necessary to fit in good ideas and suggestions.



Thirdly, practice Flexibility when you are running your game. The "Glowing Orb" (or was that the "Bright Sword"?) didn't show up in the prop boxes at the game site. "Darn, it was such a cool prop, and I worked six weeks on it, and...", wait, Flexibility, "and we'll just have to find something else. Hey, kid, can I borrow your little red ball for the afternoon?." Ten NPCs, all in the major roles, didn't show at game time. "Rats, I was really counting on Bob and Joe in the Balrog encounter. They would have done a perfect job and...", wait, Flexibility, "and I guess we'll have to scrap the whole thing...", no, I said Flexibility, "unless we can get Ron up there from the Swamp when he gets done. Or maybe we can use one person from each of the bandit encounters."

**David McMillen and Kevin Taylor  
Denver-Boulder Chapter**

**Dear Fellow and Future Game Designers:**

We had the privilege of going over and critiquing the Game Designers Handbook as we were in the middle of designing "The Second Alliance." We found it very helpful and an excellent source of reference. One thing that cannot be stressed enough is DELEGATE! DELEGATE! DELEGATE! !! Our game turned out to be a Herculean effort and there is no way we could have tackled so ambitious a project alone. Many people feel delegation is most important in the production phase of a game, but we disagree. Sharing the load from the beginning not only cuts down on the amount of work we had to do, but also put some unique elements into the design which otherwise would never have gotten in.

Many GDs become so attached to a game that it is like a child to them. Every child grows up and every parent must learn to let go if that child is to mature into a healthy individual. Your game is no different. There is no single idea or concept in the game that we could not come up with an alternative for, if getting the game sanctioned depended on it. Let go. Working with the SC is more than getting together on a final submission and fighting over details. Involve a member or members of the SC early in your design, and this will make your sanctioning process much smoother and less painful. It might also bring to light a fundamental flaw you might not have noticed, and this could save you a major rewrite and another 20 hours at the keyboard.

After your game is written and sanctioned, the most important people in your game will be your staff and NPCs. A great game is nothing without the efforts of these people. Consequently, a fair game can be made great with a superstar performance by these people; choose them carefully. Due to the nature of the IFGS your staff and NPCs pay to do their jobs. They put on a game. Treat these people like kings. Make sure your people stay happy, don't leave them waiting. Figure out ways to utilize them more than once per day, and give them a variety of interesting things to do. These people are intelligent and should be treated as such. Treat them with consideration and your game will succeed beyond your wildest expectations. In addition to this you must motivate them, don't burn them out or peak them too early. Let the excitement build steadily right up to game time and strive to maintain that peak during the game itself. Most of all, thank each of them at least 15 times, and let them know how important they are to the game.

One important item Game Designers overlook is the second morning of a two day game. Remember that most of your NPCs have been swapping stories until about 3 AM. Supplying coffee, donuts, and other breakfast-type foods (along with enthusiasm and motivation) on Sunday morning accomplishes three things:

1. Happy, motivated (wired) NPCs.



2. Automatically brings them all together in one place for an impromptu NPC meeting. This is the place to pass along information, feedback, and reminders for the second day.

*APPENDIX 3: ADVICE FROM GAME DESIGNERS Game Designers Manual*

3. It is always a good strategy to send someone enthusiastic and appealing for wake up calls (in case your NPCs are ready to attack on sight). The most important thing to remember is to never lose sight that you are designing a game. Games were meant to be enjoyed. Everybody has some different ideas of what constitutes enjoyment in games. It is your job to create a game that will be both challenging and enjoyable to your audience, the players. A common mistake (at least for us) is to become so involved in what we are doing that we don't "stand back" enough and look at the game as a whole. Build your game slowly, craft it. Start with an idea and build on it until you have a story line, build your story line into encounters, then build your encounters into a series of interlocking components. Take time along the way to stop after each step and look at the game as a whole. Try to think from a player's point of view, envisioning each encounter as you think the players would see it. While you are doing this, get feedback from lots of people you want involved in your game. The earlier they are involved, the more it will mean to them later. Utilize as much new talent as possible - this prevents burnout and adds new, fresh elements to the organization as a whole.

Don't let your pictures (of the way it's supposed to be) cloud the reality of what it is or how it's running).

Good luck, the rewards will be worth the toils.

**Randall Fraser**  
**Cary Stephan**  
**Denver-Boulder Chapter**

## **DESIGN AND CONQUER**

Designing a game is exciting, frustrating, creative, challenging, frustrating, fulfilling, a lot of work, and wonderful. If you're designing a game, you must be prepared to experience most of the above at one point in time. Did we say it was frustrating? Oh good, just checking. The commitment required to produce a two day game is substantial. One must consider carefully whether time is available and the intention and desire are strong enough to produce the results you had in mind when you started.

The first thing that most people think about when they start designing a game is the story line. Having had the opportunity to read some of the other game designer's submissions to this manual, we have noticed a lot of them have spoken about story lines so we will not belabor the point. However, a consistent, coherent, and interesting story line is essential to any game. Make every couple of encounters relevant to the main plot in the game. Throw-in encounters tend to be frustrating for some players; too many of these encounters will bore and frustrate all the players. We recommend that you check your game design with other game designers for any flaws you may have overlooked in your original scrutiny. There is at least one obvious reason for doing this: you're biased! Other game designers will be able to point out potential pitfalls and lend your game design a different perspective; game designers have different creative strengths - use this factor to the fullest.

There is a psychology within game designing. Your PCs and NPCs are going to "live" your creation for some time and carry the memories of it with them forever. Make every game as good as you can. Utilize the great opportunity for depth presented in game, especially the major games. Don't just throw in encounters; give them background, personalizations, flavor, etc. NPCs are crucial in this - choose them wisely and let them immerse themselves in the part and make the role come alive. But watch out for frustration! For PCs this can come from plot problems and long delays between encounters; additionally, the feelings of "anyone" being able to accomplish the quest at hand, or potentially worse, the NPCs ultimately completing the big task while the PCs watch is almost certain doom for player end-enjoyment. Make the players feel good and special because they did this great adventure - in this way, the smallest adventures can have the greatest meanings for a character.

NPCs are the crucial elements for the expression of your game to the players. If they are frustrated or unhappy, the PCs will know this and our game will suffer for it. The NPCs need to know what is going on with the game, how they fit in, and the background for their part. If the PCs and NPCs feel good about your game, then you've done your job and they will always remember your game as a good or great adventure, something to tell stories about.



Consider rearranging the structure of your game so that it is unique, like putting the accomplishment of the main quest in the middle of the game - now the players can take up an interesting subplot or a totally different task. Not only is it unusual, but it is like giving the players two games for the price of one. Probably the encounter that has the most immediate impact on the PC's post-game feelings and game evaluations and ratings is the last one. The final encounter will stick with the player the most until they settle down and come off the adrenaline high associated with gaming. Therefore, make the last encounter good; not only good within the game design framework, but also for the player's feelings. Make it possible for the players to "win" in different ways; even if they fail in the main quest they should be able to feel positive about several occurrences and accomplishments within the game. You have nothing to lose and much to gain by making the players feel like winners.

So you have your story line written, what next? The next thing to do is envision the main characters. What characteristics, what personality traits would they possess? Try to imagine them in different circumstances and settings. How would they react? Then think, "Who do you know with the majority of those characteristics?" Sometimes the right person for the role is fairly obvious and other times not. If you cannot think of anyone with the traits needed, try to find a great role-player. Their challenge will be to create that particular character and use their own creativity to make it play well. Allowing them to grow, develop, and have fun with their roles not only gives the NPCs a sense of purpose, but provides personality and life to your game. The simple truth is no matter how great your story line, if you do not cast your game well it will lose much of its impact and perhaps even fall flat. Just like ongoing plots, characters who are developed over several games tend to create enthusiasm and involvement in everyone. It is vital to give major NPC roles to people who really want them. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized. NPCs who are thus motivated generally give outstanding and convincing performances. Even more importantly they enjoy doing so!

The next thing to do is evaluate the overall difficulty of the game. First, look at the fighting encounters comparing the strength of the NPCs to the strength of the average player (with regards to level). Of course this early in the design you don't know the make-up of each team. Take a second look at the fighting encounters when you know each team. Perhaps the most important reason for doing this is that now you know the collective magic strength of each team.

After evaluating the fighting encounters turn to the thinking and special effects encounters. It is critical that the game be well balanced to the players level, abilities, and expectations. A game which requires too little thought will be boring whereas a game with a convoluted plot line will confuse and frustrate the players and everyone else. Please remember picking locks is important to thieves. Try to give each class a bit of a challenge. Personalizing encounters (even just in regards to character classes) can do more for personal positive feelings and player involvement in your game than just about anything else.



Another important thing to understand is game logistics. By this is meant: how long will each encounter take, how many teams are running and how will this affect the timing of your game, walking times between encounters, etc. First let's consider pre-game logistics. This involves coordinating props, NPC meetings, selecting encounter coordinators, etc. If this is your first game, we recommend you select a game aide who is known to possess logistical strengths. With proper planning you should have ample time to complete and check all your pre-game preparations. Assigning an experienced person to aid you in this will be most helpful. With regards to props, we feel it is best for the game designer to coordinate all the encounter props the week before the game. A check list is absolutely essential. It is also helpful to segregate props according to encounter into cardboard boxes and label them appropriately (i.e. Enc #1, Enc #2). Of course an exception to this would be structures and special effects that are entrusted to and reliable crews (i.e., the Alchemist Guild).

Game-day logistics include placing NPCs in their encounter locations, making sure all structures and props are in place, placement of water, coordinating PC gear, establishing the location of the bank, safety officer, etc. If you have chosen experienced, dependable, and talented game aides your game day logistics should flow smoothly. Of course there is no guarantee of this because of a concept we like to refer to as the "Random Factors." An example of some of the random factors we personally have experienced: "I'm sorry I'm late, but someone threw a brick through my wife's car window"; "I thought the setup was in the lower quarry"; "Well I just assumed these plugs would fit the generator"; and "Sorry I'm late, but the nuclear power plant caught on fire!" Other random factors include dehydration, hypothermia, personality conflicts, lost encounter sites, and lost teams. Please remember that even though you have told your NPCs exactly what to do, on game day 90% will get "creative" and rewrite your game to make it better. The other 10% will have forgotten your name and probably their own. Well maybe not that bad. Most of your NPCs will do a fine job for you if you have prepared them adequately. We usually meet several times with the major NPCs as well as giving them an encounter descriptor. Most often, we develop the basic personality of the character together.

Enough digression, back to game day logistics. One lesson we've learned the hard way is the importance of starting your game on time. If you have a simple setup for your first and second encounters you should be able to at least come close to doing so. If your first encounter is a large town and you plan to start your first team at 9 AM-- good luck. Never, never wait overlong for late players. Let the team start and arrange for transport for the other players as they arrive. If you wait too long for the late players or attempt to ready your second team for early departure your game timing may very well go out the proverbial window. Late or missing NPCs (especially for the first or second encounters) are also bad news. We suggest you coach an excellent role-player in several of the game's major parts. What an ace in the hole. Of course, give them a major part or two to enjoy in any case.

One thing to remember, especially in a larger game, is that once it starts it will develop it's own personality. That is why most game designers stress flexibility as a

necessary strength. On the course you will encounter multiple problems of every description. Always have extra costumes, extra locks, and plenty of duct tape on hand. These will help you meet many of the game day problems you will encounter. Always have your radio switched on and working in case your input is required. Be assured it will be!!

*APPENDIX 3: ADVICE FROM GAME DESIGNERS Game Designers Manual*

Okay, let's talk about props. The more props you have in your game the more difficult your game logistics. On the other hand, a few encounters with high prop and special effect complexity can add both emotional impact and intensity to your game. If these encounters go well the players will remember their experience a long time to come. If you are a first-time game designer it may be unwise to design a game which employs a great many props. The logistical problems will drive you to drink! Of course if you have an experienced GD as your primary game aide you might consider it.

Post-game logistics will be a snap if you follow the well-known McDonalds philosophy: "clean as you go." After the last team has left an encounter, break it down and pack it. Plan for a four wheel drive vehicle to be on hand for striking the larger encounters. This advice will save you many headaches.

Make sure you have called ahead to reserve a spot for your post-game party. Some restaurants get a bit persnickety when a hundred people descend upon them unannounced. Make sure you have assigned a small, very dependable crew to return props and structures to the IFGS storage locker! They need to know the gate combination and have the locker key.

Okay the game is over, the site is clean, and it's off to the after-game party!

Well, as they say in show-business: "break a ..."--never mind, it'll be hard enough without a broken leg!