



High Fantasy in an Era of Steam
8 page Setting

They dragged the corpses back to a dry alcove. With the obstruction clear, the alarm cut off, and Books allowed himself to relax an iota. He removed his shirt to wring it dry. Rivulets of cold water dripped from his shoulder-length hair and ran down his back.

"Did you know," Maldynado said, "you are possibly the hairiest Turgonian man I've ever seen?"

Books sighed, wondering how much torment he would have to endure before the day ended.

"Let's examine the bodies, see what they're doing down here."

"I'm not even sure why you wear a shirt. I've seen sweaters with less fuzz."

"Why are you looking anyway?" Books wrestled the sodden shirt back on and pushed past him. "I thought you preferred ladies."

"Oh, I do. And you've thoughtfully reminded me why."

Books made a point of turning his back to Maldynado as he studied the corpses. They had recovered three men and one woman. All the bodies had the bronze skin and dark hair of

Turgonian citizens. Fortunately, the icy water had preserved them somewhat, and they did not stink yet. The men wore shredded gray utility uniforms, torn open where deep, garish wounds scored their chests and limbs. Someone had slashed the lady's throat. She wore a businesswoman's long black skirt and jacket, both torn and stained from the trip through the channels. All appeared to have been killed before they hit the water. Unless there was something clawed and inhuman lurking in the capital city's aqueducts. Books grimaced at that thought.

The Grand Empire of Turgonia is a magnificent land with cutting edge steam technology, burgeoning industry, and warriors of renown. It also has its fair share of enemies and dangers; nefarious plots to undermine the empire, supernatural threats to life and soul, secret societies with seditious intent, mercenary bandits, deadly assassins and unwholesome wizards threaten the empire.

Luckily, the Emperor's Edge exists; an elite band of vigilantes fighting for the good of the empire even where others would blanch or wither at the odds stacked against them.

The setting is based on the Emperor's Edge Universe by Lindsay Buroker. I heartily recommend that you give the check out her excellent work at: <http://www.lindsayburoker.com/>

This setting is intended for use with S. John Ross' **RISUS: the Anything RPG**. It is available for your use for free at <http://www222.pair.com/sjohn/risus.htm>. If you enjoy the material, consider buying **The Risus Companion** for more options and ideas.

If you have questions or comments, you can find me, **4649matt**, at the [Risus RPG Fan Forums](#). My blog, [Surprise Round 不意打ち!](#), has more ruminations on and content for role-playing games. Have fun!

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Character Creation

Whether motivated by exoneration, redemption, justice or coin, you are a vigilante fighting to protect the Empire. Vigilantes aren't usually born as such; people live and work before they fall into becoming a vigilante. What skills are useful is always hard to say, but it is a certainty that people from all walks of life have useful skills.

Use the following information in helping to create your character; everything from their profession, (see side bar for sample clichés) to the specific nation they hail from, and the various rules needed to represent them.

- ❖ Characters are built using the normal 10 dice with Hooks and Tales encouraged.
Double-Pump clichés are only available as magical clichés. If the Risus Companion is being used, Lucky Shots, Questing Dice, Side Kicks and Shield Mates are also allowed.
- ❖ Beyond the usual Clichés, each character must pick which nation they hail from. The choice of nation modifies the Cliché with the most dice, by adding additional abilities.

Sample Clichés

Aristocrat	Providing resources, Utilizing Connections, Schmoozing, Knowledgeable on Nobility
Duelist	Sword-fighting, Shooting pistols, Bluffing, Evading
Enforcer	Investigating, Interrogating, Sword-fighting, Giving orders
Gangster	Dagger-fighting, Intimidating, Skulking, Shooting crossbows
Hunter	Tracking, Shooting crossbows, Knowledgeable on nature, Trapping
Infiltrator	Sneaking unseen and silent, Climbing, Picking locks, Dagger-fighting
*Maker	Making artifacts, Making constructs, Ritual Casting, Knowledgeable on magic
Merchant	Haggling, Knowledgeable on business trade et al, Making the sale, Appraising
Negotiator	Bargaining, Negotiating, Speaking for a group, Earning trust / goodwill
Professor	Knowledgeable on a variety of subjects, Researching, Teaching, Solving puzzles
*Shaman	Healing, Elemental manipulation, Ritual casting, Knowledgeable on magic
Soldier	Sword-Fighting, Shooting rifles, pistols, Guarding, Digging
Street rat	Shadowing, Scurrying, Pick-pocketing, Hiding
*Wizard	Telepathy, Telekinesis/Warding, Ritual Casting, Knowledgeable on magic

* Indicates a Magic-using Cliché. Check with your Game-master for permission.

Places of Interest

Turgonia is an empire carved with the strength of arms Seated in the icy north and stretching to the sweltering south. Through the might and valor of Turgonia's Elite Warriors, it is the largest empire in history. These noble warriors make up the Warrior Caste and have hereditary titles ensuring enduring lines of elite warriors. Their might is complemented by Steel and Steam as Turgonia boasts industry and technology as powerful as its warriors. Superbly manufactured muskets and automated machines of war help to truly complete the Turgonian war machine. Supporting this war machine are the women of Turgonia. The mercantile and manufacturing industries are the province of women proudly serving the empire.

Atheism has been the state religion since the declarations of the Mad Emperor Motash at the turn of the century, and headless statues of deities past still litter the capital. Turgonia does not need gods or charlatans. Magic does not exist. (Though, Magic-use is a capital offense.)

Turgonian Steam technology operation

Nuria is the empire of the old world across the sea. Nuria is ruled by a wizard caste. Those who cannot access the 'mental sciences' are laborers and slaves. Nurians are spineless and shifty, though a sharp stab in the back is no less dangerous from a Nurian agent.

Nurian Secret Identity

The **Kyatt Islands** are clustered in the great sea and allied with Nuria. The Kyattese are known for academic achievements. A Kyattese cryptanalyst helped turn the tide in the last Great War.

Kyattese Area of Academic Expertise

Kendor is the country displaced south in the wake of Turgonia's conquering might. They are a tribal people with shamans still revered. They have no love for our great empire of Turgonia.

Kendorian Herbology

Mangdoria lies in the mountains to the east, also displaced from their homeland by Turgonian conquerors. Mangdorians are of the same stock as Kendorians, differentiated by their beliefs. Mangdorians believe in one god, a benevolent deity that says that pacifism is preferable to war.

Mangdorian Honest Compassion

Special Rules

Mental Sciences

The Mental Sciences are manifestations of will imposed on the world around us. The mental sciences are often simply called magic, especially amongst those lands where magic is unknown and feared. The Nurians of the old world developed them into a high science which is usually manifest in number of known styles, but the upper limit has yet to be reached with new discoveries still being made.

Nurian wizards favor the pure mental sciences. Telepathy is perhaps the area for which they are most feared and renowned. Telepathy involves the communication of minds and can be used to probe or attack, as well. There are rumors of even more sinister applications. Telekinesis is another common group with techniques to exert force directly with the mind. Skilled wizards are even capable of creating barriers and wards of mental force.

Kendorian shamans prefer elemental and healing shamanistic mental sciences. Shamans are said to be able to cure any disease ailment or wound given sufficient prowess. Significantly complex healing will likely require herbs or sacrifices. Elemental science techniques have been said to produce gouts of fire, freeze standing water or even make the shaman invisible to the eye.

Magic-using Clichés (marked with * above) must be purchased as a Double-Pump cliché. For a major magical effort or a lasting effect, the magical cliché must be pumped. Dice used to pump the cliché in this manner do not recuperate until after the magical effect is resolved or dissolved.

Made Artifacts, Made Constructs, Rituals, and Soul Constructs work similarly, but require time to be made. Determine an appropriate length of time with the Game master based on the potency of the magical effect.

When a ritual or making is complete, the ritual / making has a potency equivalent to the number of dice gained in the double pump. For example, making a construct with 2 double pump dice would yield a made construct (4). A made construct (2) might be tiny and relatively nonthreatening, but a soul construct (10) is a massive, fearsome terror.

Make a note of the roll used to create it. This will serve as a target number for uncontested attempts to resist or eliminate the magical effect.

Notable personalities

Amaranthe Lokdon

Enforcer (4), Negotiator (4), Business School Dropout (2), Lucky II

Things haven't been going her way. She's been passed over for promotion to lieutenant several times now likely due to sexism in the Enforcers and now she is wanted with a substantial bounty of 10,000 ranmyas on her head! Rumor has it that she is in league with the infamous assassin, Sicarius.

She is competent fighter but prefers to solve her issues by means other than violence when possible. Though she has a way of talking people to her side, the bounty on her head is making life difficult.

Sicarius

Trained Assassin (6), Infiltrator (6), Black Dagger+1

Sicarius is the most infamous assassin there is, with a million ranmyas bounty on his head. It is a reputation well earned. Whenever a high profile or unfathomable murder occurs, his name falls readily from wagging tongues. A garrison of Turgonian soldiers was once sent to eliminate him and if the stories hold true, he killed them to a man.

Recently rumors have been circulating that he has teamed up with a small team said to be responsible for daring and noble deeds, but these rumors are not easily believed of such a cold hearted assassin.

Emperor Sespian

Dreamer (4), Emperor (2), ???

Sespian is a young and benevolent emperor who recently came of age stepping up to fill his role as the Regent of many years stepped aside to be merely his aide.

Sespian has radical and progressive notions that the old guard of the Warrior Caste are none too happy about. Some would just as see the Regent remain in his role.

Groups of Interest

Turgonian Enforcers - The Turgonian Enforcers are the imperial peace keepers, keeping the streets safe from criminals.

Panthers - A notorious gang in Turgonia that runs a wide array of gambling outfits, especially the Maze

The Black Arrows - A street gang in Turgonia regarded as cut throats and thugs.

Forge - A mysterious organization whose members seek to subvert the Empire, few details are known about this organization.

Istapa - Wizard Hunters, a rebellious order of Nurians who seek to overthrow the Wizard Elite. They are said to have developed an immunity to mental sciences.

Bestiary

Clacker (6) Mechanical constructs with crab-like pincers. Originally used by the Turgonian military on the front lines, they are named for the incessant clacking of their claws.

Soul Construct (8) A creation of magic that makes a monster of the psyche of its creator. They are savage, feral and conventional weapons are of little use against them.

Nightmare Cat [mare-cat] (6) Kind of a cross between a panther and a bear except with longer claws and fangs than either.

Ifrit (10) Legendary creatures from another realm resembling a giant human wreathed in flame. They are said to make binding compacts granting wishes.

Death fixers (9) Seemingly Death incarnate, these dark figures wear robe and cowl concealing the dark hole where a face might be. They wield long black two-headed Axes.

Makarovi (7) Pungent, slavering, clawed beasts with an uncanny resilience. Blades and firearms can scarcely injure them. They love to devour women. They were hunted nearly to extinction.

Sentry Constructs (5) Mechanical constructs given mobility and will through magic. They are more reliable than human guards that need to eat and sleep.

Wolves (4) ferocious beasts of the wild yet with unnatural glowing eyes.

Character Sheets

Name:	Hook:
Clichés:	
Tools of the Trade:	Tale:
Notes:	

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