

# The Strange Worlds of Hank Quense

*A primer on Gundarland and Zaftan 31B*



# THE STRANGE WORLDS OF HANK QUENSE

Published by Hank Quense

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## Introduction

During the course of writing many short stories, novellas and novels, I've created two different worlds. One of them, Gundarland, is populated by humans, dwarfs, elves, trolls and other fantasy races. In Gundarland, many of the stories take place in whole or in part in the city of Dun Hythe, the country's biggest city and the largest port, hence it has its own section in the book. The second world is a race of aliens named after their home world of Zaftan 31B.

This book is designed to acquaint readers with the intricacies of both worlds.

## Part 1: GUNDARLAND

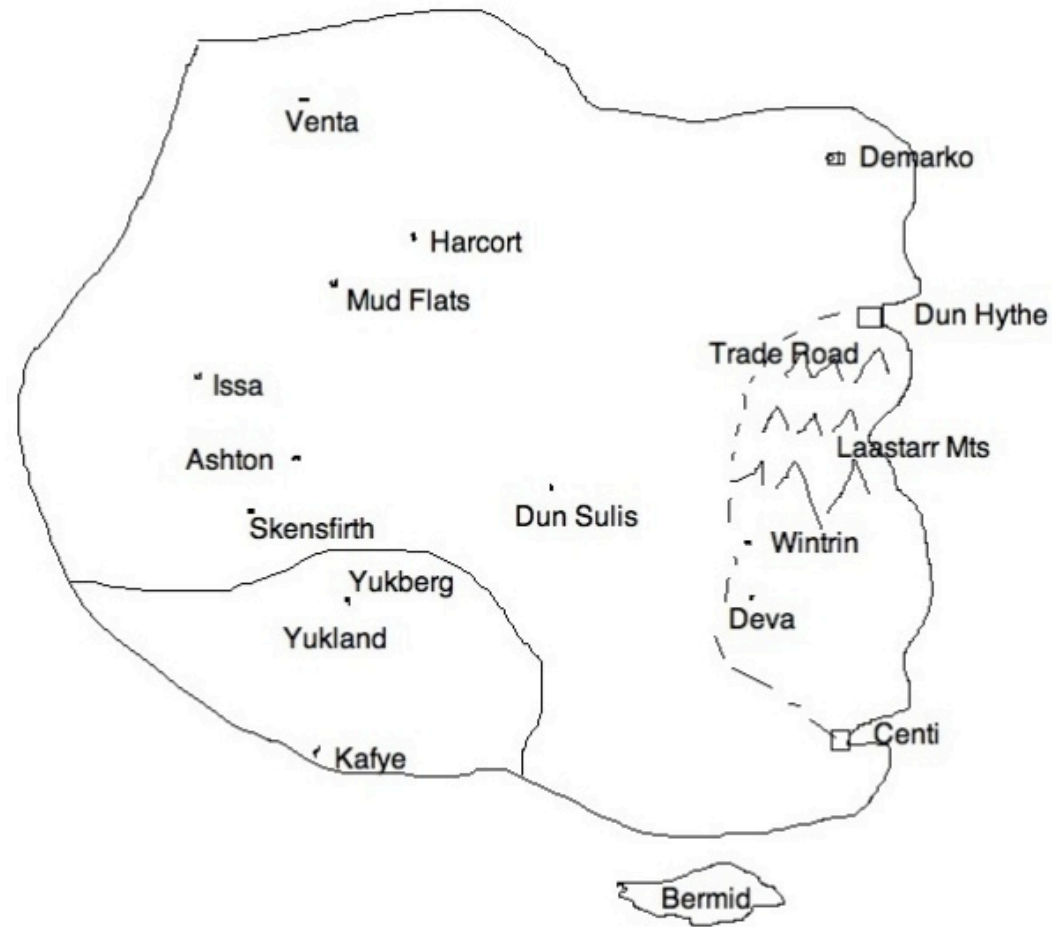
### Background

Gundarland is the largest land mass on the planet called Gundar. Populated by diverse races such as dwarfs, humans, elves, half-pints, yuks and a few lesser races, these disparate races live cheek-by-jowl in many cases and get along with no more than the usual interracial hostility.

At one time, the yuks roamed over all of the island subjecting everyone to their boorish behavior and crude manners. The other races mostly put up with them, but it was a brave hostess who invited a yuk to a dinner party. They ate with their fingers because they always pilfered the cutlery as soon as they sat down at the table. Eventually, the yuks were driven into the southwest corner of the island, a land of marshes and mountains deemed worthless by land developers.

By ancient tradition, warriors always took a double major when they studied the arts of war. The double major came in handy during the rare outbreaks of peace. Thus, in medieval times, knight-accountants, warrior-cooks and soldier-lawyers roamed the countryside seeking combat and/or

provinces ruled by dukes, warlords and an occasional madman. The principal occupation of these province leaders was making war on the neighbors. These constant wars provided employment for many dwarf warriors since the dukes prided themselves on the quality of their ax-dwarfs. Many dwarf families were proud of the generations of warriors who fought exclusively for Duke X or Warlord Y. These families ignored the fact that most of the warriors died at an unnaturally young age.



Map Of Medieval Gundarland

Whenever, the country suffers from an outbreak of peace, it results in devastating disruptions to the economy. Weapons and armor manufacturers, many of them one-anvil blacksmith shops, go bankrupt from the lack of orders. The Camp Followers Guild, which furnishes the armies

customers. Ripple effects trouble other economic sectors. Ale brewers lay off workers in response to the hordes of penniless ex-warriors. The garment industry suffers from a glut of skimpy, rip-away costumes favored by the Camp Followers Guild. The surviving blacksmiths offer reduced rates to sharpen kitchen knives and scissors. This always leads to an alarming increase in marital homicides.

While elves, half-pints and humans all felt the effects of non-war, dwarfdom suffered the most. Dwarf warrior unemployment shot up to historic highs causing hardship, worries and a frightening rise in highway brigandage. Both freight wagons and train traffic suffered equally showing that the dwarf ex-warriors are up to technological adaptation since train robberies require new and different techniques than wagon robberies. The disruption of traffic brought on more unemployment and an increase in economic hardships.

## Religion

The planet was named Gundar after the omniscient god who accidentally created the universe with an explosive sneeze caused by snorting a larger-than-average dose of His favorite recreational powder. The nodules of spittle flew through space and eventually solidified into suns, planets, comets and other celestial bodies.

Scientists call this event the Big Achoo. Medical authorities argue that infectious diseases are the result of this unsanitary beginning. Religious authorities counter that such talk is blasphemous and that the medical authorities should accept infectious diseases as Gundar's holy will. Ordinary folk think the authorities have too much free time on their hands and ought to get jobs.

The priests are known as Gundarites. The Gundarite symbol of their god is a well-used handkerchief. Some priests have used the same one for years without washing it.

Officially, the worship of Gundar is called Gundarism, but competing religions call it Snotism. So do nonbelievers.

The biggest festival occurs in the spring when Gundarism celebrates the birth of the universe. Known as the Sacred Sneezing Ceremony, the ritual culminates in everyone simultaneously inhaling crushed pepper to generate a giant sneeze. Doctors love the festival; many of them make more money in the month following the Sacred Sneezing Ceremony than they do for the

ceremony. Nonbelievers called this ceremony the Snot-fest.

Many Gundarite rituals call for a sneezing choir. Soprano choirs consist of females chosen for the musical quality of their sneezing; males have baritone and tenor choirs. By selecting choir members with specific sneezing tones, a musical composition can be preformed, but this complicated and expensive performance is reserved for most sacred rituals.

Priests conclude blessings and homilies by swiping an index finger under their noses and then wiping the finger on their chests. This is known as the Sign of the Sneeze.

## Magic

Magic always intrigues the folks in Gundarland. As a consequence, wizards are held in high regard, even the incompetent ones.

Wizard schools, early on, offered double majors in imitation of the combat schools. At first, the secondary course of study was perfunctory, but that changed when the dukes and counts began installing wizards in positions of power on the theory that if a wizard couldn't figure out a solution to a problem, he could magic the problem out of existence. This theory proved to be catastrophically wrong. The wizards rarely solved any problems and their attempts at magical solutions often compounded the original dilemma. The wizard schools, fearing a lose of tuition fees, once again took action and increased the importance of the secondary courses until wizardry became the lesser of the two curricula. Soon, graduates could barely compose spells and frequently didn't have enough magical power to blow their noses.

The Wizards Guild in Dun Hythe is the oldest and most prestigious one in the country. Under several Grand Wizards who were too cheap to pay for maintenance, it gradually declined from its former grandeur. Magic can only do so much to keep grit off the exterior stones and magic can't do anything about installing indoor plumbing.

The basement library is now sealed inside three walls, each three sheets of lead thick, and each wall has a door sealed with three spell locks, a triple-triple-triple being considered a most formidable barrier. Unfortunately, the current Grand Wiz refuses to tell anyone why he sealed the library or what is sealed inside it. He did this immediately after the librarian mysteriously died at his desk. All that is known was that his death involved a spell book, a keg of ale and a pair of moose antlers.

Long ago, the Wizards Guilds deployed a private scryer network. It

blacken the reputation of another wizard. One enterprising wizard found a novel use for the network. After developing a new spell, one that was potentially dangerous to the spell caster, he bragged about his spell on the scryer network and sat back to await news, either how grand the spell worked or the sudden, unexplained deaths of a few wizards.

Another wizard, one with a unusual talent for business, organized a public scryer network. Offices equipped with scryers were established in every city, town and large village. For a few coins, a customer could give a message to a scryer operator who would load the message and forward it to another scryer office. At the receiving end, it would be unloaded, written down and given to a messenger who delivered it a few more coins.

Half of the revenue went to the Wizards Guilds who used it to fund Magic Nights. On the longest day of the year, wizards put on a magical fireworks display to entertain the public. Sometimes, the displays went off without destroying any buildings, but that was rare. The scryer funds also paid for Wizards Night Out another annual event, this one involving lots of ale. To limit the local damage and carnage, most towns prohibited either of these events from taking place within five miles of the town limits.

## RACES

Gundarland is populated by a number of different races. This section will provide a brief introduction to the major races and their eccentricities.

**Humans:** Are taller than the other races except for some elves. Other than their size, they have no special skills. They are neither more nor less greedy, pugnacious, unfriendly, etc. than the other races. In wars, they are used as swordsmen and cavalry troops.

**Dwarfs.** Are known for their stubbornness and their love of grubbing in the dirt looking for gems and precious metal. They tend to have beards (both sexes) that are braided in intricate weaves and dyed or decorated with bits of ribbons. In war, they fight in bands armed with battle axes.

**Elves:** Are considered (by the other races) to be genetically dishonest and the elves do nothing to dissuade the others from that opinion. They are great at selling stolen goods and go to great lengths to keep their inventory levels high. They are clannish and often gather in gangs called families

clan's territory. They use longbows in combat.

Half-pints: As tall (or short) as dwarfs, they are only half as wide. They tend to be farmers and politicians. They also make splendid scouts, spies and petty thieves. For unknown reasons, almost every half-pint collects something such as colored pebbles, used flower pots or empty tin cans. Both sexes go around barefoot to display their luxurious growths of well-groomed toe hair which is considered a come-on to members of the opposite sex, a situation the other races can't fathom.

Trolls: Yellow-skinned, bald and bad-tempered, these five-foot-tall, wide-bodied creatures are mostly found in the city of Dun Hythe where a job opening for a traffic control job was accidentally filled by a troll. Within a few years, the entire traffic control force was staffed by trolls despite their stunning ineptness at directing traffic.

Yuks: Green-skinned with random clumps of black hair on their body, Yuks are considered the ugliest race in the country. Their fractured command of the common language leads many people to think they are stupid, but they are cunning negotiators and fierce warriors. Yuks consider themselves superior to all the other races and feel sorry for them.

## GOVERNMENT

Because of the large number of provinces, duchies and earldoms in the country, none of them ever reached a size large enough to become the dominant government in the country. If a count, duke or baron conquered a few of his neighbors and thus grew out of proportion to the others, the closest warlords joined an alliance -- temporarily -- and attacked the miscreant. After restoring the balance of power, the alliance would fall apart and the allies would resumed warfare against each other.

While this stalemate prevented a dictator from assuming power, it also meant there was no central government to pass universal laws. In one province, gambling may be illegal, but it frequently was legal and encouraged in an adjacent province.

The one aspect of government that all the provinces agreed upon was coinage. The basic coin was a copper penny. A hundred coppers equaled one silver penny and ten silvers made one gold penny. Unfortunately, the

and gold depending upon his whim, size of the treasury or the phases of the planet's two moons.

With time, technology advanced to the early stages of the Industrial Revolution and provided Gundarland with steam-powered engines. Fueled by peat, the engines soon produced massive pollution of the air and waterways. Meanwhile, railroads ran parallel to the Trade Road and allowed mass-produced, shoddy goods to become available everywhere. Telegraph lines crisscrossed the country bring news, rumors and lies to distant parts.

At the same time, democracy replaced the anarchy of the warlords and an inadvertent outbreak of peace caused massive unemployment among the armies and almost destroyed the economy.

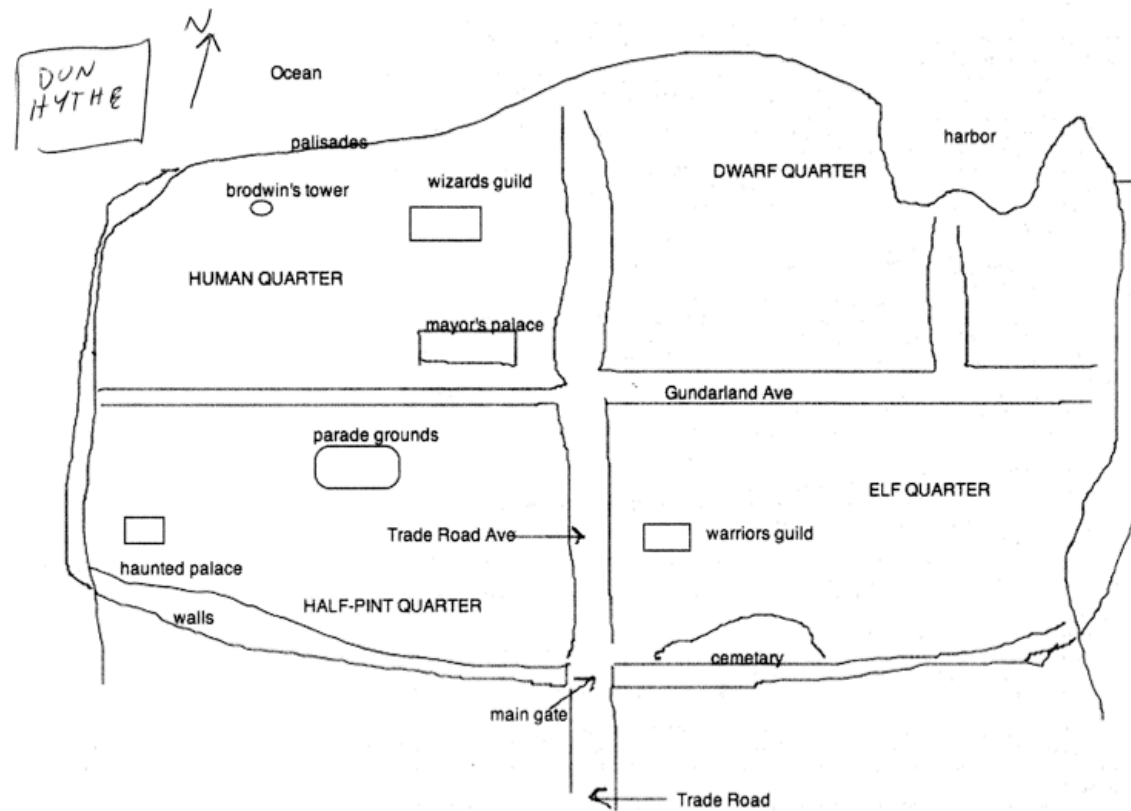
## PART 2: DUN HYTHE

### Background

Dun Hythe has always been a unique city. Since the days when dukes and warlords controlled the provinces, Dun Hythe became an open city governed by an elected mayor. This open status came about because of the city's seaport. It is the only one in the northeast and its the largest port in the whole country. Imports are unloaded from the ships and sent along the Trade Road to all parts of the land. Similarly, the Trade Road carries products to Dun Hythe for shipment throughout the known world. These imports and exports benefit the economy of all the provinces, hence the dukes' interest in keeping Dun Hythe a free city. Their greatest nightmare is that one of them would gain control of the city by violent means and use its revenues for all-out warfare against the others.

Within the city walls, two broad boulevards separate the old city into four quarters. Traditionally, one race dominated each quarter, so the four districts were named the Human, the Elfin, the Half-pint and the Dwarfen Quarters. Over time, these distinct groups melded together, and the four districts evolved into one semi-homogenous population.

Other changes occurred slowly. One of the most troublesome was the separation of the classes. The middle class and the wealthy moved outside the city walls to new suburbs while the working classes, always poor, stayed in the tenements that lined the streets in the old city.



Since the competing dukes virtually guaranteed the survival of the city, the mayor and the council neglected the walls and the militia. Both suffered from the lack of funds; the walls collapsed in many places and the militia's weekly meetings turned into ale-fests instead of training drills. Whenever peace broke out, the city's leaders became concerned that the now unemployed warriors would gather into a brigand army and sack the city. They hastily patched the walls and hired retired generals to shape up the militia. Soon after the money was spent, peace always fell by the wayside and the demand for unemployed soldiers increased and reduced the threat to the city.

The outbreaks of peace always brought an influx of unemployed warriors to the city. Homeless, searching for non-existent jobs, they survived through crime leaving the city's leading citizens praying for some warlord to declare war on his neighbors.

also a democracy with an elected leader (a mayor) who frequently is female, a situation that is unheard of elsewhere.

Dun Hythe is politically and religiously neutral. Any and all peoples and religion are tolerated, much to the annoyance of religious leaders who believe their brand of religion should be endorsed and enforced by the government.

## Troll Patrol

The Troll Patrol is an institution unique to Dun Hythe.

Long ago, the city leaders recognized the need to control and direct the heavy wagon traffic that flowed to and from the port area. They organized a foot patrol of citizens for this purpose and all went well for a while. No one knows who allowed the first troll to join the foot patrol, but word immediately spread throughout the troll community that one of their number had a paying job with unlimited donuts. Soon after that every opening in the foot patrol attracted dozens of trolls who brazenly persuaded non-trolls to withdraw their applications.

Trolls proved to be particularly inept at traffic control. A member of the Troll Patrol could station himself in the middle of deserted intersection and within minutes he would create a traffic-snarling mess. To keep the enraged wagon drivers under control, the trolls relied upon truncheons. A whack or two in the head always knocked a driver groggy and made him a lot less noisy.

The Troll Patrol did prove effective in controlling the riots started by their traffic messes. Since trolls evolved from rocks, they have rock DNA in their systems and that makes hitting a troll in his head a waste of energy. All it does is damage the weapon and focus the troll's attention on the head-hitter, much to the head-hitter's discomfort.

Trolls have a unique perspective on bribery. Frequently, a visitor who is apprehended by a Troll Patrol on a charge -- often a dubious one -- would offer a sum of money to make the charge disappear. The troll always pocketed the money and then added bribery to the charge sheet. The bribed troll scrupulously shared the bribe money with the shift desk sergeant.

Early in the process of changing from a foot patrol to the Troll Patrol, politicians discovered that it was nearly impossible to fire a troll and continue living. The fired troll took the firing personally and considered himself

obligated to avenge their family honor by slaughtering the insulter.

## Crime

Crime in Dun Hythe is a serious business and that business is a monopoly controlled by a gang of elves headed by the "Godmother", the most ruthless of all the family's female elves. Known as the Fasco family, they run gambling casinos, bawdy houses, liquor, drugs and weaponry.

The local politicians downplayed crime rather than do anything to decrease the number of visitors to the city. They pasted signs on the walls near the city gates that read, "Crime is a figment of your imagination." Since the Godmother personally "owns" most of the local politicians and tells them how to vote on issues that effect her business, she personally approved the signs.

Thievery in the city is controlled by the Thieves Guild which, in its civic pride, tries to limit the number of city residents that get mugged. Dun Hythe has plenty of wealthy visitors who come because of the shopping or because they have business in the port. These visitors are the primary targets of the Guild. Members who steal from too many local residents could find their privileges suspended for a time. Nonmembers who steal from anybody have a short life-expectancy.

Once a week, the head of the Thieves Guild carries a bag of coins and gives it to the Godmother. The money represents the Godmother's cut from the Guild revenue. The coins come from two sources. One is a tithe of everything stolen during the past week. The other money comes from the merchants and shop owners who pay a weekly protection fee. In return for the fee, the payer is guaranteed the Guild members will not steal from that establishment and members will also keep an eye out for non-Guild thieves. The protection fee doesn't include customers. If a customer buys a pricey bauble for instance, there is a good chance the bauble will be stolen before long. The thief then offers it back to the seller for fifty percent of the sale price. If the seller declines to buy it back, the bauble goes to a hock shop, another of the Godmother's lines of businesses.

## LANDMARKS

hands and too much money in their pockets. Some of the more popular ones are described below.

Grubby Shoat: This tavern, located in the port area is always crowded with sailors, dockworkers and reckless tourists. Reputed to be hundreds of years old, there is no evidence to contradict the claim. Smoke has turned the rafters and plank walls black. The dirt floor holds so many obnoxious stains that it appears to be uniform in color. The table surfaces are thin from knife carvings and the annual cleaning. The air is foul with the smell of old ale, vomit and stale pipe smoke. On the left as one struggles past the partially unhinged front door, stands a dilapidated, knife-carved bar with a fearsome, heavily armed bartender behind it. Winter and summer, a roaring fire spews light, heat and smoke in the rear of the taproom.

Wicked Bed: Located in the Elf Quarter, this bordello is headquarters for the Godmother who controls crime from her rooms in the rear of the building. Tourists flock there to sample the pleasures while hoping to see the body of someone who tested the Godmother's patience. Her bodyguards always carry the corpse through the front rooms to delight the tourists and throw a scare into the denizens of the quarter when the body is dumped in the streets.

Heroes Guild: Also located in the Elf Quarter, this Guild takes in young males who can pass a rigorous physical exam involving a lot of pointy weapons. Over the course of twelve months, the apprentice hero is taught to use and defeat multitudes of weapons, how to track low-lives through a forest, how to move with stealth in natural settings and in towns, how to estimate the value of loot. For a large fee, visitors can watch the day's training program. For a much larger fee, and after signing a waiver, a visitor can cross swords with one of the trainees.

Wizards Guild: A large, grotesque building in the Human Quarter, the Guild has seen better days, but still attracts crowds for the daily magic show when an inept wizard or two stands on the steps and entertains the crowds by pulling rabbits out of a hat or, occasionally, a startled poisonous snake to startle the wizard. Fireworks also enliven the show. Most spectators usually leave long before it's over because of the large number of duds.

## STORIES

I've written a number of stories that are set in Gundarland and Dun Hythe. Here's a list of the published ones along with a short synopsis of each:

Practical Experience: a knight-accountant, fresh from his schooling, faces the real world for the first time.

Recipe for Revenge: A warrior-cook seeks vengeance on a wizard-critic.

Desperate Measures: A wizard struggles to survive an assignment his hated Grand Wiz gave him. The Grand Wiz hopes he won't survive.

Saving the Shore: A descendant of the Ringbearer struggles to protect his small town from predatory yuks.

Ballot Blues (and Reds): The knight-accountant again. This time he gets involved in an election issue.

Rogue Wizard: The same wizard with another dangerous assignment from his Grand Wiz

All of these stories are in Tunnel Vision, a collection of previous published short stories.

Tales From Gundarland: an award-winning collection of six humorous short stories and two novellas.

Zaftan Entrepreneurs: aliens orbit Gundarland, much to the annoyance of the natives.

## PART 3: ZAFTAN 31B

### Description

Elite zaftans stand seven feet tall and weigh over 400 pounds. They have grayish-black, rubber-like skin that oozes green slime. At the top of the body, a pair of two-inch long eye stalks protrude over a cruel beak of a mouth. Atop the eye stalks sit black eyes with red irises. Eight tentacles can be used as legs or arms. The underside of the tentacles are covered with round disks that can adhere to surfaces and enable the tentacle to pick up objects.

Zaftans wear no clothes because the slime causes the cloth to smolder. The slime is toxic to most other life forms and their body odor make other races gag and retch.

occasion, such as when they are enraged, they will use all eight tentacles and can move with alarming speed.

Zaftans come in different sizes and the size determines their status and societal class:

Military and corporate officers and nobles are 7 feet tall

Middle class (merchants, military rankers, etc.) are 6 feet tall

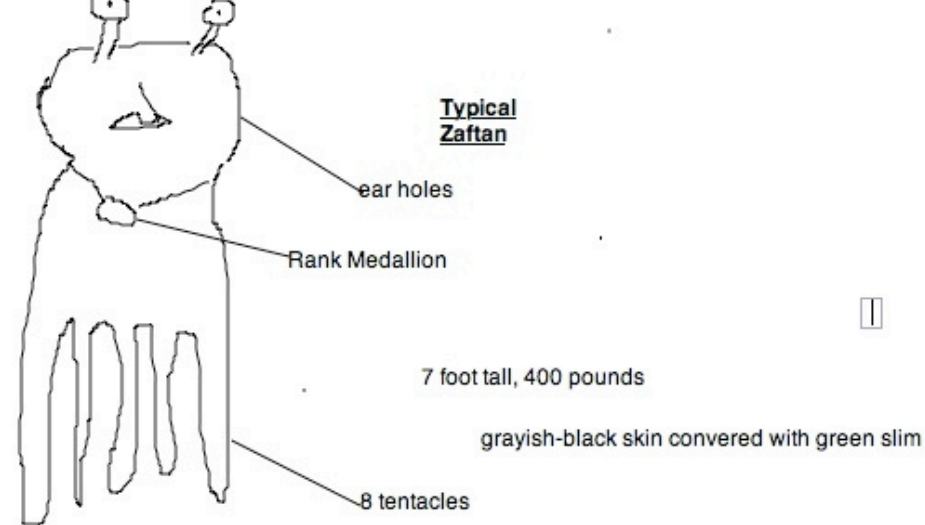
Lower classes (laborers) are 5 feet tall

Slaves are 4 feet tall and have only 6 tentacles

Zaftan females have three wombs. Each one has a menstrual cycle of approximately three months. Twice a year, a female will have two overlapping periods. Once every 15 to 18 months, a female will experience a triple period. During that time, a few females turn into berserkers. These females are the stuff of legends. Battles have been won or lost because a female warrior turned into a berserker at a critical time. Stories are told of entire local governments -- mayor, council members, police, fire and garbage collectors -- getting incapacitated by an annoyed voter who happened to be a berserker at the moment of annoyance. Often, the berserker used an ordinary implement such as a vegetable peeler as a weapon.

Zaftans have eight brains. A primary, located at the top of the torso, can control and communicate with the other seven located in major muscle groups. To perform complicated maneuvers such as slithering, the primary establishes links to one or more secondary brains and issues commands. To kill a zaftan, all eight of the brains have to be destroyed. If even one survives, it will regrow missing body parts and reestablish the other brains.

This is a pencil sketch of a zaftan as described to a native reporter by the constable of Skensfirth.



## Culture

The zaftan home planet, Zaftan 31B, is perpetually enclosed in clouds; everything is gray, brown or black. This gloomy atmosphere accounts for the pessimistic outlook of most zaftans who look on the occasional ray of sunshine as a bad omen.

To the zaftans, treachery and assassination are social skills and much prized. A successful murder results in bragging and an updated resume. Often the perpetrator is rewarded with a media interview. Pulling off a well-designed betrayal is considered a sign of superior intelligence. Successful treachery is celebrated with fame and praise from politicians or corporate executives. Promotions often followed.

Assassinations are also used to advance up the corporate, military and political ladders. One sure way to increase the chances of a promotion is to bribe a clerk to get a list of other candidates and whack them all before one of them has a chance to whack you. The clerks often make more money by selling updates on who was still in the running and who has been taken off the list because of premature death. It is not unusual for the entire field of candidates to expire before any of them can be promoted.

Zaftania is the most popular goddess in their religion. Zaftans pray to her for success in their treacherous and murderous endeavors. Zaftanus is the principal god. His primary duty is to reward great and innovative skullduggery. There are few temples or churches on Zaftan 31B since the zaftans feel that the best way to worship the deities is to screw their neighbors either literally or figuratively, or both.

## Shamans

All zaftans have eight processing units and seven of them are subordinate to the main processor located in their head. A few zaftans have the capability of linking two or three processors on a continuous basis. These become the scientists, philosophers and the insane. A very small number can establish simultaneous linkages between all eight and keep them established as long as necessary. These rare individuals become shamans. With the eight processors linked, the zaftan becomes a living and powerful parallel computer. The configuration is so robust, it can warp reality around the shaman who then manipulates the unreal space surrounding him to obtain unreal capabilities or to generate fantastic effects. Being surrounded by unreal space becomes an ordeal after a while and extended exposure leads to bizarre mental states.

Different linkages yield different results. One linkage allows the shaman to transport someone to and from an orbiting ship. Still others produce fireballs and air hammers that are useful in combat.

Space ships use a variety of shamans for specialized duties:

The navigational shaman searches for a path through space and also performs scouting duties.

The propulsion shaman maintains and fuels the sub-fusion power plant with frequent doses of energy.

If the ship is a warship, it needs several other type of shamans:

The weapons shaman aims and fires the ship's weapons. The unreal particles can devastate an enemy ship.

The defensive shaman raises and maintains the ship's defensive screen. The screen, a half-kilometer from the ship, is composed of unreal particles with a positive electrical charge. In between those particles are others with negative charges that bind the screen together.

Cloaking shamans shield the ship from other scanners.

The zaftans have never met another intelligent race that they didn't despise and consider inferior. The zaftans felt a moral imperative to raise up these inferior races by exposing them to zaftan culture. This is zaftan-speak, a euphemism for conquering and enslaving the other race.

They have developed two methods of overwhelming these inferior beings. One was the military approach and the second utilizes a corporate strategy.

In the second, the central government assigned a native race to a corporation for exploitation. The corporation sold the natives sophisticated devices at outrageous prices, prices so inflated that the natives can never pay without taking out loans -- from the corporation -- at exorbitant interest rates. While that process goes on, other corporate programs plunder the alien's mineral, cultural and artistic wealth. Within fifteen years, the corporation owned everything of value, and the natives swim in debt owed to the corporation. Anyone who didn't obey corporate orders risked having that debt called in and everyone knew zaftan debtor prisons had few survivors.

With the military option, they simply invaded the planet and destroyed the natives' ability to resist. In combat, zaftans had a huge advantage; they were extremely hard to kill because of their multiple brains. All of these brains can be linked, but can also operate independently. To kill a zaftan, all eight brains had to be destroyed. If one was left intact, it would activate a chemical and hormonal reaction that would grow replacement processors and new body parts. This advantage meant that the zaftan invaders only need a relatively small number of warriors to conquer a much larger native army.

Zaftan 31B is poor in natural resources and this led to early space exploration seeking the resources needed by the home planet. The mining corporations, of which *Furshtanker Inc*, was the largest and most powerful, did most of the exploring under government orders to find, extract and bring back the minerals. *Furshtanker Inc* developed and produced large numbers of robotic explorers to search for minerals.

## Government

The Dictator sits at the top of the vast bureaucracy of zaftans murdering each other to gain preferment. His word is law whenever he can get

the generation; he has reached the pinnacle of government by eliminating all of his competitors without getting eliminated himself, a noteworthy feat on Zaftan 31B.

Appointing cabinet members is a difficult task. Through trial and error, the Dictator learns not to share a short list of candidates or his preferred candidate with any one. Once the list or name is shared, it will be leaked and the candidate or candidates stand a good chance of dying suddenly.

Beneath the Dictator is a cadre of accomplished killers who watch for an opportunity to advance to the top of the dunghill.

The downside of this elimination process is that the government is filled by zaftans who are good at murder, but not much else. The limited or nonexistent ability to govern and make decisions doesn't bother them because these bureaucrats spend all of their time identifying possible threats to their own lives.

The same situation occurs in the corporate and military worlds leaving other races to wonder how the zaftans managed to conquer and enslave them. The answer lies in the ingenious method of zaftan diplomacy which relies on their ability to negotiate treacherously and to honor notable betrayals. To zaftans, treachery equates to honorable conduct.

## STORIES

Zaftans have appeared in a number of my stories. Here is a list of them and a brief synopsis.

Zaftig the Magnificent: a zaftan visits mid-town Manhattan searching for a performer from the future to put in his new inter-galactic variety show.

The Impresario: Zaftig again. Still searching for acts for his show.

Fool's Gold: One of the main characters in this short novel is a zaftan. Called Fafner, he is the most wanted criminal in the galaxy and his ship crashed on Earth, stranding him here.

## PART 4: OTHER STUFF

And now, a few words from the guy who makes these things up, Hank Quense.

You are now an expert on the subjects of Gundarland and Zaftan 31B. Don't waste this knowledge! You must use it or lose it! In other words, put your expertise to use by reading relevant books that will exercise and expand your expertise; to wit, read [Tales From Gundarland](#) and [Zaftan Entrepreneurs](#). Both are available in paperback and ebook editions

Zaftan Miscreants: Book 2 of the Zaftan Trilogy, is now available. For a list of book sellers go to <http://strangeworldsonline.com/ZM-main.html>

Zaftan Combatants: Book 3, of the Zaftan Trilogy will follow in January 2013.

Many more stories will be set in Gundarland. The next one, tentatively titled, *Falstaff's Big Gamble* combines Shakespeare's most popular character with two of his most famous plays, Hamlet and Othello. This will be published in early 2012. that will be followed by a Camelot and King Arthur spoof that is so bizarre it will find its way into the Strange Worlds catalog. Look for it in late 2012.

Links? You want links? Here you go:

My website: <http://hankquense.com>

Strange Worlds has its own website: <http://strangeworldsonline.com>

My blog pages: <http://hankquense.com/blog>

My Facebook fan pages: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Hank-Quenses-Fiction-Writing-Page/102293491907?v=wall>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/#!/hanque99>