

DIANA

Warrior Princess

Marcus Rowland • Aaron Williams



DIANA

WARRIOR PRINCESS

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Diana: Warrior Princess

Introduction

Diana paused at the edge of the ravine and listened.

Nothing but the howl of a distant coyote, the soft slither of sand blown by the wind, and a faint hiss of steam from the crashed helicopter's boiler below. But she could sense there was something out there. She silently pulled herself over the rocky edge, checked her sword and bow, and crouched, waiting.

Fergie slid up beside her, cupped her hand to her ear, pointed, and whispered "That way..."

Diana turned slightly and listened again. Now she could hear it; faint music, drums and the soft twang of a sitar.

"Indians..."

Diana: Warrior Princess is a modern-day role playing game with a difference.

Imagine our world, seen by someone as remote from us as we are from the ancient Greeks, and with as many gaps in their knowledge. Imagine it converted into a TV series by a production company with the loving attention to historical accuracy we have come to expect from such series.

Throw realism out of the window. Run adventures in which Eva Peron is Hitler's mistress, or JFK meets Queen Victoria. Zulu hordes swarm across Vietnam, the Spanish Inquisition stalk heretics in Manhattan, steam cars co-exist with ICBMs, Babbage engines, stealth bombers and sorcerers.

Later sections describe the game rules and give full details of the major characters of the series. First comes the game's setting, the world of *Diana: Warrior Princess*. It should be made clear that while the game world is modelled on a TV series, and the rules emphasise the cinematic nature of the campaign, it's the real world as far as the characters are concerned. It's just a real world that behaves very oddly by normal standards...

If this doesn't appeal an appendix describes some alternate campaigns in which this is a virtual world, used for entertainment purposes or as a punishment for its unwitting inmates.

Acknowledgements

This setting is based on ideas originally discussed on the soc.history.what-if and rec.arts.sf.fandom newsgroups, and on the CIX what-if and rpg.uk conferences. Many thanks to all those who contributed to the discussions, and especially those who encouraged me to develop the setting into a complete game. Characters were suggested by Ashley Pollard, Mike Cule, John Dallman, and Megan Robertson. Tim Illingworth provided operatic information. Many thanks to playtesters at Rococon and Gencon 2001 for their suggestions.

Important source of inspiration for this game were the books *Motel of the Mysteries* by David MacCaulay, a wonderful parody of archaeology, *How Britain Won The Space Race* by Desmond Leslie and Patrick Moore, an "alternate history" of space travel, and two "articles" on the future archaeology of London, *The Discovery of London* by G. H. Boden (1903) and *When The New Zealander Comes* by "Prof. Blyde Muddersnook, P.O.Z.A.S." (1911).

The main mechanisms of the rules were suggested by the combat system used in the war-games *Aeronef* by Matthew Hartley and Stephen Blease and *Full Thrust* by Jon Tufley, all of whom have kindly allowed me to adapt them to this game. Participants in the CIX rpg.uk and sjgames.roleplaying conferences and members of Rococon helped immensely with comments and play-testing. In particular Vicky Cox, Diana Cox, Paula Dempsey, Steve Dempsey, Lynne Hardy, Madeleine Eid, Ian Miller, J.V. Meekins, Paul King, and two others whose names I've lost were invaluable in debugging the rules. Thanks to Darrin Bright, Kevin Mitchum, Paul King and Alex Stewart for plot and character ideas, and to Steve Jackson for his guest appearance.

An earlier and somewhat different version of the setting appeared in *Valkyrie Magazine* issue 23, August 2001, under the title "Diana: Amazon Princess."

The current version was initially edited by Matthew Goodman of Heliograph Inc., who still publish it as a printed book. See their web site www.heliograph.com for details.

Diana: Warrior Princess

The World

Diana's world is our own, seen dimly and through a distorting mirror, adding gods, magic, and Mystic Powers.

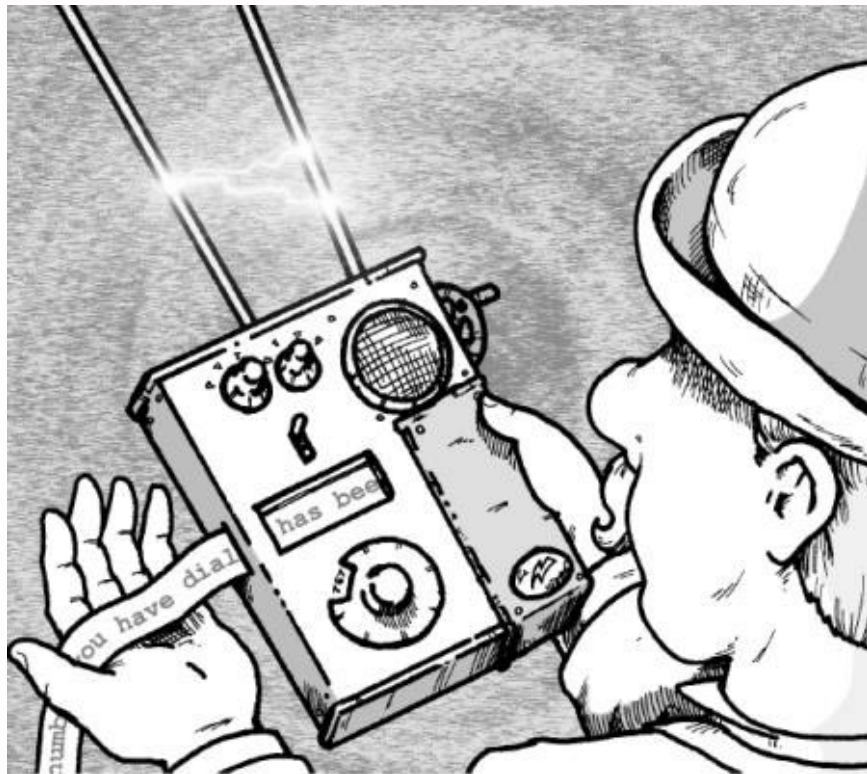
Adventures usually begin in England, which is rural (apart from London, a sprawling walled metropolis) and ruled by the autocratic Queen Elizabeth; she dislikes Diana (who divorced her son) and wants her dead. The Queen is aided by Thatcher the Sorceress, who secretly plots to overthrow Elizabeth and impose an even more tyrannical rule. The nearby country of Britannia is ruled by Queen Victoria, whose red-coated Beefeater armies are feared by all. Scotland is a land of mists and kilted bare-chested barbarians, who generally appear driving spike-festooned steam cars, a loose association of clans ruled by Queen Mary. Ireland has mists, sorcery, and leprechauns.

Europe consists of vaguely-defined countries (such as France, Germany, and Huy Brazil) mostly verrun by Nazis, Queen Victoria's Beefeaters, and the armies of other war-lords. Africa is jungle, the Middle East camels and pyramids, America is also divided into several nations and combines high-tech with steam locomotives, cowboys and river steamers.

Treat the geography, politics, and economics of this world as fuzzily as possible; mountains and other natural features seem to move to meet the needs of the plot, and there should be ample room for an extra country or two if needed. Maps should be avoided if possible, and if not should be obviously wrong (an upside-down map of Australia labelled as "Africa", for example). Money exists, but is rarely seen except as a bag of gold, a copper or two paid for a drink, a reward, or the object of a robbery. Characters always seem to have enough for their immediate needs, without a huge surplus.

Transport ranges from sailing ships and carriages to steamboats and trains to airships (with sails) to supersonic fighters and space shuttles. Whatever most advances the plot is available, and any vaguely plausible technology is used regardless of anachronism, with extra knobs, dials, and switches added to 20th century "black box" gadgets.

For example, a cellphone is a book-sized box with two long extending aerials sparking in a "Jacob's Ladder" effect. Calls



are made via a human operator and text messages come out of the side on ticker tape, but it is nevertheless possible to call to and from anywhere in the world. CDs are played on phonographs with horns and lasers for "needles". Steam cars may get their heat from peat or nuclear reactors.

Diana: Warrior Princess

Diana, Warrior Princess

Status: 40 (star)

Armour: -1

Bonus Points:

Attributes:

Animal Handler [3]

Athlete [4]

Charisma [4]

Driving [3]

Luck [2]

Marksmanship [4]

Success: 5+

Hit Points: 8

Martial Arts [7]

Mystic Power [5]

Speed [4]

Strength [3]

Thinking [1]

Quote: "I'll bring peace to this land if it kills us all..."

Back Story: Diana was an "ordinary" Princess until she began to suspect that her husband, Bonnie Prince Charlie, was unfaithful. While seeking evidence she discovered his investments in arms and the deadly drug "tobacco", both sold to children in third-world countries, and responsibility for the deaths of thousands of innocents.

Diana immediately divorced him. Somehow she retained the Mystic Powers of Royalty, despite being Royal by marriage, not birth, while Prince Charlie lost them. She has since dedicated her life to Peace, fighting war (and the war-god Landmines) whenever she encounters it. Somehow this dedication gives her superhuman strength and speed. Her actions have earned her the enmity of Queen Elizabeth, who wishes to silence her permanently, and she must be wary whenever she is in England. Landmines hopes that he might be able to "turn" her to his side.

Her best friends are Fergie, her constant companion, and Red Ken, a barbarian hero. Ken is a little too ready to use violence but his heart is definitely in the right place. She is also a friend of Wild Bill Gates, a riverboat gambler and occasional con-man who has helped her on several occasions. Prince Charlie occasionally turns up to make a nuisance of himself. Another occasional nuisance is Ron L. Hubble, a slimy fraudster.

Possessions: A powerful motorbike which behaves much like a horse; for example, if Diana leaps off to fight someone it will slow, circle back, and stop (with the engine running) somewhere convenient for Diana to leap back on. White low-cut motorcycle leathers which are always spotlessly clean, even if she has just waded through mud or a bloodbath. Camping and cooking gear and some changes of clothing in the motorcycle panniers (which seem to have implausibly huge capacity). Plenty of money, usually in gold coins. A cell-phone.

Diana's Motorbike: 10 Hits, Armour -2, Speed [6], Thinking [1]. Doesn't explode if it crashes.

Weapons: Diana's main weapons are her incredibly accurate longbow (+3 when used by Diana only), and her magic sword (+3, returns to her hands when thrown, appears to deflect or disrupt some forms of magic) which may possibly be Excalibur. Her hands and feet are lethal weapons, and she can use her Mystic Power to boost her martial arts and marksmanship (see notes). Diana will always try to disarm or knock out her opponents, to do this simply tell the referee that you are fighting to disarm or stun, not kill. Her leathers act as armour, absorbing the first hit of any attack.

Notes: Diana's Mystic Powers of Royalty protect her clothing from dirt ("How do you know she's a princess?" "She isn't covered in shit...") and lets her heal some diseases by laying on her hands (replacing the Healing attribute), but their main effect is to boost her combat and athletic capabilities, speed, and strength, but only in unusually difficult situations. She needs at least one round without combat to meditate and achieve this heightened mystical state, once she has done so she can combine the attributes. Her Mystic Powers can also boost her charisma.

