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HERO HIGHWAY

RESOURCE ROAD

Miniature Hero, Part Two by William Keyes

Customizing Your Miniature

Are you one of those gamers who have seen miniatures used in RPGs for years, but you haven't had any idea on how to start using them in your own games? Then this article is for you. It should give you an idea of how to get started, without spending a lot of money while learning the basics.

> *"All right. Grond is mad now, so he's going to pick up that ice cream truck and hurl it at Doctor Lightning. What's the good Doctor's DCV?"*
>
> *"I went offensive on my last action, so it's seven."*
>
> *"Taking into account range penalties, Grond rolls and scores a hit! Doctor Lightning is now trapped under the truck, gasoline and melted ice cream pooling up around him, and he takes…."*
>
> *"Wait a minute. That's not Doctor Lightning's miniature – that's Emerald Admiral. Doctor Lightning is on the rooftop."*
>
> *"Oh. I'm sorry, I couldn't tell who was who. In that case, Grond didn't throw the truck at the Doctor but at the Admiral, who is now crushed underneath the wreckage, and…."*
>
> *"Hold on a second. Emerald Admiral's DCV is eleven. Would Grond have still hit?"*
>
> *"I don't remember what I rolled. All right, let's just start this whole phase over again. Grond is mad, so he's going to pick up a nearby ice cream truck and hurl it…."*

So, now that you have that perfect (or nearly perfect) model of your character, what are you going to do with it? You could just take it out of its blister pack and set it on the table, ready to play. You may already notice a difference between using a miniature and using card counters or dice to represent your hero on the battlefield. But is that enough?

When the tabletop is crowded with unpainted, bare metal miniatures, it can be difficult to tell one from another – especially at a distance. Is that figure with the sword Swordsman or the Black Paladin? Is the miniature with the robe and staff the Sorceress of Light, or Anubis? Lean in close to make certain you're blasting a villain and not one of your teammates!

Some of the best things about superheroes are their colorful, often flamboyant, costumes. Where would Superman be without bright blue tights and red cape? Who would care about a Batman who wasn't wrapped head-to-toe in his distinctive black cloak and cowl? Without the stars and stripes that emblazon his outfit, Captain America would be just another clown with a shield. A painted miniature brings the look and feel of these great comic book heroes to life in your game.

You spent all that time designing and building your hero, and you know every detail about him – from how many tons he can lift to where his DNPC girlfriend works. Of course you know exactly what he looks like. Now that you've found a great miniature to represent him on the battlefield, it's time to pull out all the stops and paint your superhero, just like he deserves. You'll find that a painted miniature truly comes alive on the tabletop!

As I discussed in my last article, it can be very difficult to find the perfect model. Your goal should be to find a figure that will be a good representation of your character on the battlefield. Remember that superheroes are a diverse lot – two heroes with similar powers might look completely different. Some heroes wear masks, some don't; some have big flaring gloves and boots, some don't. Doctor Lightning may wear darkened goggles to protect his identity, but the model you found doesn't have anything on his face. That's OK. If the figure is 90% accurate, that should be plenty good enough. One of the ways to make a less-than-perfect model much closer to what you want is by painting it.

And what if the figure is great, except for one or two glaring details? If the miniature that you found is carrying a gun but your hero has a Code Against Killing, how do you reconcile that? The answer is easier than you might imagine – convert the miniature to fit your ideal. Small things like weapons can be added or removed with just a little superglue and a little elbow grease.

The Tools of the Trade

What do you need to start painting? The first thing is obvious – a place to paint. You'll want to set yourself up somewhere comfortable, where you're not likely to be disturbed, and that has good lighting. Lighting is important. The last thing you want to do is hurt your eyes by squinting at a tiny miniature for an hour. I recommend a table lamp with at least a 60-watt bulb that you can set up nearby. Most hobby stores sell specialized lamps that come with a magnifying glass attached, and these are a big help when you're painting details, but I wouldn't recommend spending the money unless you're planning to paint a lot of figures. You'll also want to cover your table to guard against spilled paint. Some old newspapers will work just fine.

Next, you'll need a palette, a water cup, a rag or some tissues, and of course, paintbrushes. Palettes are inexpensive and easily available from any art or hobby store, but you don't even need to

The Medieval Village: Gate to Adventure
by David Howard

> You cross the muddy and rutted road on a rainy day. Rain drizzles down from the angry sky and a peal of thunder rips the heavens above you. You see a warm light, burning bright, through the window of a wooden building across the road and want some physical relief from the three stormy days you've experienced this week.
>
> A man in a blue linen garment and a brown cloak approaches you, gazing into your eyes when he gets close enough. "Good day friend, what are you doin' about," he asks. The man then eyes your quality longsword, his gaze lingering over its encrusted hilt.
>
> "Seeking shelter," you respond, brushing some storm-torn leaf bits off your coat.
>
> "And whereabouts are ya from?" he asks, his right eyebrow rising.
>
> "From Camelot Village over yonder," you say, tiredly pointing east.
>
> "Well, sire, tell me about yourself," he says, wrestling with a large, knotted club that is resting on his shoulder.
>
> You sigh as you realize you have encountered the village Bailiff and are about to be interrogated. This will be a long night…

THE TIME PERIOD AND REGION COVERED

I will cover the typical 13th Century village including: buildings and their functions, the medieval villager, villager professions, home life and habitat, profession and personality of lords, lords and villager relationships, nature of the medieval village, a typical day in the life of a medieval villager, Player Character origins in medieval villages, and other topics addressing and examining the medieval village.

This article will focus on British villages of the 13th Century. The village I will use as an example will be Elton, the village used by Frances and Joseph Gies in their book *Life in a Medieval Village*. I will also reference the village used by Gwyneth Morgan in her book, also titled *Life in a Medieval Village*.

TYPES AND USAGE OF MEDIEVAL VILLAGES

There are basically three types of constructed medieval villages:

- **Walled:** Either by stone or wood
- **Partially Walled:** wherein a walled keep was usually present and sections of the village may be walled in
- **Unwalled**

There are many different versions and materials used in the construction of each type, as each village was adapted to its own particular circumstances. The needs and defense technology of the particular era, region, and country the village varied greatly as well.

Unwalled villages were, by and large, the standard of the day. Within the defensive strategy of the time period, castles were highly relied upon to provide an intimidating and strategically challenging presence. So rather than rely on the individual defensive capability of each particular village, for defense of that particular village, the local authority relied upon strategically placed castles in the region to provide intimidation and tactical support. Large towns, though, were by and large walled after the 12th Century.

Villagers took refuge in the nearest castle that had room for the villagers. Thus many towns and villages were abandoned during wartime, and inhabited afterwards. As Phillip Warner states in his book *The Medieval Castle: Life in a Fortress in Peace and War*:

> The first warning would be terrified peasants from outlying areas who had lost what little property they had possessed, and been lucky to escape with their lives…. If a larger event than a raid was taking place, the district must be put into a state of defense. Peasants, cattle, stores, weapons, and food must all be brought into the castle.

Though Warner also notes that refuge for villagers in a castle was not guaranteed. It was at the sole discretion of the Baron or Castellan who commanded it.

> The castle was not held by a community as a town was, and when it afforded refuge, it did so on its own terms.